

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 45, Issue 7

October 2014

General Membership Meeting with Craig and Joy Johnson Presenting Their Film: "Birds, Backyard Habitat and Beyond"

Puget Sound area watercolor artist and photographer, Craig Johnson with his wife and writer Joy Johnson, have created a remarkable DVD that beautifully illustrates what can happen when native habitat is allowed to flourish, even in as small a space as a suburban backyard. The Johnsons illustrate the delights possible by recording the birds and other creatures that visit their backyard. This remarkable film provides a window to behaviors never before recorded. Watch and wonder as this panoply of creatures forage for food, raise young, maintain their plumage, battle for territory and much more. Using Craig's animations, graphics and photographs the Johnsons offer some simple suggestions to increase the variety of birds visiting your yard.

Craig and Joy Johnson have created and published four books containing colorful, close-up photographs of birds (most found in the Puget Sound area). Their latest photo book is titled, Our Pacific Northwest Birds & Habitat. They have also published two children's books which Craig illustrated in watercolor, most recently Harry the Woodpecker's Search for a Home, released in December 2013.

Since becoming disabled by a neurological disorder, Craig has traded a larger camera for a pocket-sized video camera that he uses primarily while on a mobility scooter in their yard. Together the Johnsons study ornithology and have spent many years observing and photographing birds. They use Craig's photos, videos, animations and graphics to share their passion for birds and hope to inspire others to protect birds and wildlife habitat.

Check out their website: www.pugetsoundbackyardbirds.com

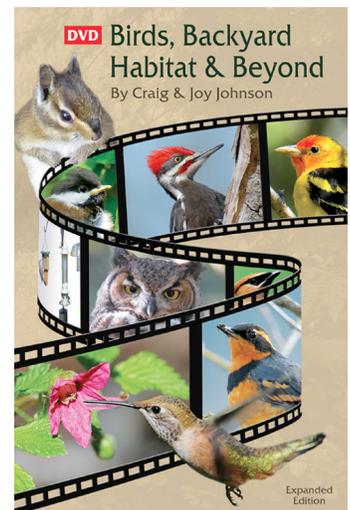
Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:
October 28, 7pm at the Whatcom Museum
(in the Rotunda Room of the Old City Hall building)
free & open to the public!

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Board meeting: October 6

Please email the President if you would like to attend:
president@northcascadesaudubon.org



Mission Statement

The purpose of this society is to promote the study and conservation of birds and other wildlife, their habitat, and the environment; to increase public appreciation of the values of wildlife, plants, and the natural environment; and to stimulate action to protect and preserve them for the future.

Avalanche Staff

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Writer/editor: Lynne Givler

If you are interested in contributing, the deadline for the November/December 2014 issue is...

October 15.

Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McCarty at:

content@northcascadesaudubon.org

NCAS Board Members

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Associated Persons

Scholarship Don Burgess

Field Guide to the Future: Nearly Half of North America's Birds at Risk from Global Warming

Many Washington State species including the rufous hummingbird, the mallard and the bald eagle are on the brink.

Article from Audubon Washington

Nearly half of the bird species in the continental U.S. and Canada are threatened by global warming. Many of these species could go extinct without decisive action to protect their habitats and reduce the severity of global warming. That's the startling conclusion reached by Audubon scientists in a new study.

Of 588 bird species examined in the study, 314 are at risk. Of those, 126 species are at risk of severe declines by 2050, and a further 188 species face the same fate by 2080, with numerous extinctions possible if global warming is allowed to erase the havens birds occupy today. 313 of these at risk species regularly occur in Washington State; 92 are considered climate endangered, and 97 are climate threatened. That means that over half of birds regularly occurring here are climate endangered/threatened including the iconic bald eagle, the rufous hummingbird and even the mallard. These species are projected to lose as much as 75% or more of their existing range in coming years, threatening their long-term survival. The study, which identifies the future projected range of Washington's climate-endangered bird species, can be accessed at wa.audubon.org.

"The greatest threat our birds face today is global warming," said Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham, who led the investigation. "That's our unequivocal conclusion after seven years of painstakingly careful and thorough research. Global warming threatens the basic fabric of life on which birds – and the rest of us – depend, and we have to act quickly and decisively to avoid catastrophe for them and us."

continued on page 7 ...

2014 Christmas Bird Count

Participate in this citizen science project!

Bellingham's Annual Christmas Bird Count will take place on Sunday, December 14. Be sure to put the date on your calendar. This is one of the best demonstrations of citizen science at work. It has been going on for over 100 years and is very important for our understanding of bird populations. If you are interested in participating please contact **Paul Woodcock at 360-380-3356**.

NCAS Campout Report

Steven Harper, Treasurer

Our seventh annual NCAS Campout was held at Perrygin Lake State Park June 6-8 with a great group of people, great weather and of course great birding. Approximately thirty-five members, friends and visitors from Seattle Audubon joined together for two days of field trips, music, swimming and stargazing.



photo by Twink Coffman

The campout began late Friday with casual birding around the group camp and a great sing-along led by Pam Borso and musician friends. Saturday started out with field trips to Pipestone Canyon led by Doug Brown, Beaver Pond led by Sue Parrott, and Methow River Valley led by Steven Harper. Temperatures were in the low 80's so after returning from field trips many campers used the remainder of the afternoon to laze around in the shade or to swim. A great evening followed with another sing-along led by Pam Borso and a magnificent viewing of the International Space Station passing overhead. The campout concluded on Sunday with a field trip around the state

park led by Steven Harper.

Participants were very happy with the birding as the campground area was teeming with birds and a total of 109 different bird species were positively identified during the weekend. Highlights this year included golden eagles, prairie falcons, dusky grouse, a yellow-breasted chat, white-throated swifts, common poorwills, lark sparrows, a Virginia rail, veerys, a northern saw-whet owl and long-eared owls. The long-eared owl sighting was especially gratifying as it included three young owls hiding in the thickets next to the lake and was the last sighting of the weekend.



photo by Twink Coffman

We are planning on having this campout again next year, so mark your calendars for May 28-31, 2015. If you have suggestions for next year's campout or feedback about past campouts please contact me at 360-650-9065 or stevenharper2@msn.com. This campout continues to be very satisfying thanks to the participation of all the great campers.

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October Field Trips

Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair

Fall is here and migration continues. Gulls are migrating, as are warblers and vireos. Fall may not be the most productive time to bird but it can be a very exciting time, since migration often brings unexpected visitors in the form of rarities and birds that are not seen except in migration.

North Cascades Audubon field trips are open to everyone, members and non-members, free of charge. Where pre-registration is required, the number of participants is limited in order to reduce negative impacts on the environment and ensure a quality experience.

Here is the field trip scheduled for the month of October. Please check the November newsletter for more fall trips. See you in the field!

Saturday, October 4, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - 3 hours

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required

This monthly trip is co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation and is meant for birders of all skill levels. If you are not a birder but are interested in participating in one of the country's fastest growing activities, you are more than welcome to come along and enjoy the experience of learning about our feathered friends. October is a great time for shorebirds, seabirds and raptors, as well as the ever present harbor seals.

Help Wanted

Field trip leaders are needed!

We are looking for those of you with:

1. A love of and enthusiasm for birding
2. A reasonable knowledge of and skill related to identification of birds in our area
3. A willingness to share your knowledge and skill related to birding

If you would like to volunteer or have any questions about becoming a Trip Leader please contact Ken Salzman at: 756-0347 or kpsalzman@comcast.net.

photo by Casey McGee



The Whatcom County Amphibian Monitoring Project (WCAMP)

Vikki Jackson, WCAMP Project Manager

Have you ever wondered what frog makes all the racket in the spring or what those tadpoles in the pond turn into? The Whatcom County Amphibian Monitoring Project (WCAMP) may be able to help you and you can help us. We are a local citizen science group that bands together to educate, study and enjoy our local amphibian fauna.

Why should we care about these small creatures? Worldwide many amphibian species are experiencing dramatic declines in population abundance and density due in part to habitat alteration, emerging diseases and climate change. In addition many amphibian species that inhabit urban and suburban areas are threatened with habitat loss and degradation caused by increasing urbanization. Understanding the distribution and population status of local amphibians is becoming increasingly important to protect them and us.

With all the attention on amphibian loss the sad fact is we know very little about the status of amphibians in Whatcom County. In fact, in part due to WCAMP volunteers, it was recently discovered that Whatcom County is home to the Oregon spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*). This species was just listed as a Federally Threatened and occurs in only a very few places in Washington and Oregon. We have many other cool species in our county, but don't know how healthy the populations are or where they are distributed.

WCAMP provides training each spring on identifying amphibian species and their eggs. Trained volunteers working in groups and individually go into the field to collect information on the breeding success of amphibians. We also maintain a website (www.whatfrogs.org) that provides information on our local amphibian species and updates on the results of our projects. If you want to join in on the fun contact Vikki Jackson at vikki@nwecological.com to see how you can get involved.





The World Premiere of “Pelican Dreams”

Presented by the North Cascades Audubon Society. With Director Judy Irving in attendance!

Pickford Film Center
Friday, October 3; 6:30 PM

Pre-screening reception at 5:30 PM
Q & A with director to follow
Encore screening Saturday, October 4 at noon

What’s it like to try to get to know a flying dinosaur? Sundance and Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Judy Irving (“The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill”) follows a wayward California brown pelican from her “arrest” on the Golden Gate Bridge into care at a wildlife rehabilitation facility, and from there explores pelicans’ nesting grounds, Pacific coast migration, and survival challenges. The film is about wildness. How close can we get to a wild animal without taming or harming it? Why do we need wildness in our lives, and how can we protect it?

For ticket information go to
www.pickfordfilmcenter.org

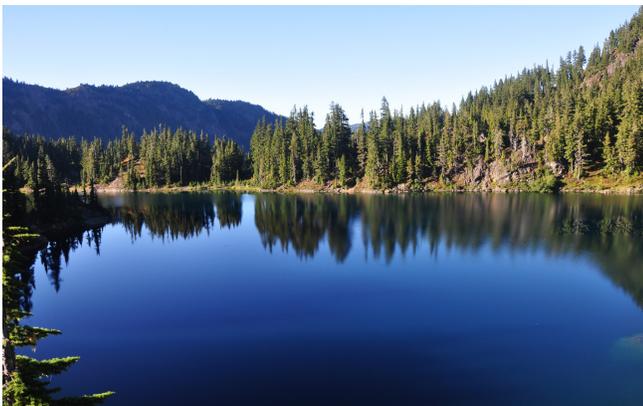


photo by Casey McGee

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Field Guide to the Future (continued from page 2)

To understand the links between where birds live and the climatic conditions that support them, Langham and other Audubon ornithologists analyzed 30 years of historical North American climate data and tens of thousands of historical bird records from the U.S. Geological Survey's North American Breeding Bird Survey and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Understanding those links then allowed scientists to project where birds are likely to be able to survive – and not survive – in the future.

The study also reveals areas that are likely to remain stable for birds even as climate changes, enabling Audubon to identify “stronghold” areas that birds will need to survive in the future. The result is a roadmap for bird conservation in coming decades under a warming climate. The study provides a key entry point for Audubon's greater engagement on the urgent issue of global warming. Responding to the magnitude of the threat to our birds, Audubon is greatly expanding its climate initiative, aiming to engage a larger and more diverse set of voices in support of protecting birds.

The 25-strong Audubon chapter-network in Washington State and the Audubon Washington office are actively engaged in bird and habitat conservation. Some of these activities include community-science efforts to protect the sagebrush songbirds of Eastern Washington, advocacy work to safeguard food and habitat resources for marine birds, youth conservation leadership training, and advocacy concerning oil and coal transport, contributing to a brighter future for birds and people in our region.

Solutions will include personal choices to conserve energy and create backyard bird habitat, local action to create community climate action plans, state-based work to integrate Audubon's climate science into work on marine bird conservation and sagebrush steppe habitat prioritization, and other efforts to identify and protect bird habitats.

For more information, visit
wa.audubon.org or audubon.climate.org.



Rock ptarmigan, photo by Kelley Palmer-McCarty

NCAS Program Chair Wanted

Our chapter's meeting programs are a central part of our educational efforts. Choosing pertinent topics, finding qualified presenters, arranging for the venue and seeing to all the necessary details required to facilitate a successful meeting is no small task. Nevertheless, the chapter has been functioning without a Program Chair for over four years and these tasks are being performed by other board members. Finding an energetic volunteer to fill this role would greatly enhance the functioning of our board and allow NCAS to better serve our community. Currently NCAS presents educational programs at eight monthly meetings annually, September through May. Those meetings, plus the Holiday Potluck in December, are the extent of our programming efforts and the responsibilities of the Program Chair. This is the status quo and not a limitation if someone out there wants to do more. Your board members are enjoying themselves doing Audubon work. There is always more that could be done. If you are interested in joining the NCAS team as Program Chair or in another capacity please contact Pam Borso at:

president@northcascadesaudubon.org

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North Cascades Audubon Society Membership

We hope you will support North Cascades Audubon by joining the chapter **locally**. Your commitment to Audubon is important to us. We will continue to provide you with information regarding local chapter activities through our website and all activities will remain FREE and open to the public. If you are interested in receiving a paper copy of the newsletter, you can join the local chapter for one year at any of the levels to your right. The newsletter is published monthly between September and May, including a double issue for November/December. All issues are also available online. If you do not wish to receive a paper copy, email membership@northcascadesaudubon.org.

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