

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 46, Issue 1

January 2015

General Membership Meeting with Mitch Friedman *The Status of Carnivore Recovery in Washington State*

Join Mitch Friedman, Executive Director of Conservation Northwest, as he presents an overview of population status and trends, recovery efforts and legal protection levels for gray wolves, grizzly bears, lynx, fishers and wolverines in Washington State. The Washington State populations of these carnivores were all drastically reduced or eliminated during the past 150 years. Mitch will discuss what is being done to bring back these animals. Mitch will also talk about the *Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Washington* and the key role Conservation Northwest is playing investing in conflict avoidance efforts to build increased social tolerance for wolves.

Mitch Friedman founded Conservation Northwest in 1988. He has a degree in zoology from the University of Washington and has received conservation awards from *Sunset Magazine*, Society for Conservation Biology, The Wilderness Society, and others. At Conservation Northwest Mitch has led the effort to infuse landscape scale conservation biology into advocacy strategies. The success of this approach is evident in great gains protecting habitat connectivity between the North Cascades Ecosystem and wild areas to the south (Central Cascades), east (the Rockies), and northwest (B.C. Coast and Chilotin Ranges), as well as recovery of native carnivores including gray wolves, fishers, lynx and wolverines.

Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:
January 27, 7pm at the Whatcom Museum
(in the Rotunda Room of the Old City Hall building)
free & open to the public!

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Upcoming Board meeting: January 5

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

Designer/editor: Kelley Palmer-McCarty
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If you are interested in contributing, the deadline for the February 2015 issue is...

January 15.

Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McCarty at:

content@northcascadesaudubon.org

NCAS Board Members

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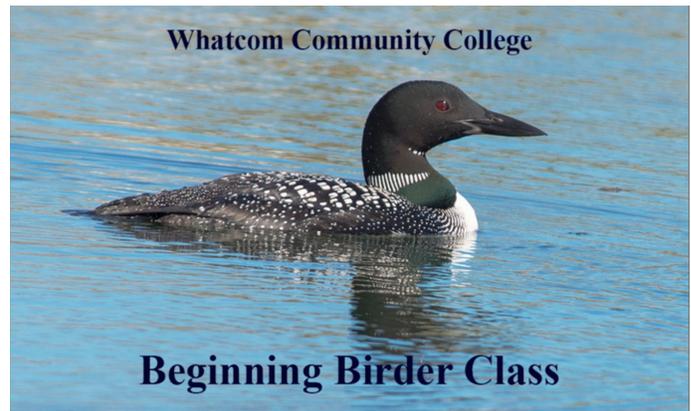
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Associated Persons

Scholarship Don Burgess



Starting in February 2015, North Cascades Audubon Society Board member, Ken Salzman, will be teaching a beginning birder class. The class will take place on three consecutive Saturdays (February 21, 27 and March 7) with the first two sessions in the classroom and the third in the field for a hands-on experience. The class is designed for beginning birders and individuals who want to learn about birding equipment, how to use it, and basic bird identification.

For more information you can contact Ken at kpsalzman@comcast.net.

To register you can go online to Whatcom Community College or call (360) 383-3200 to register for the *Joy of Birding Class*.

Happy New Year from NCAS

We'd like to give a big shout out to everyone who has contributed to our birding community in the past year. Whether you have attended a field trip, a meeting, or a workshop, or whether you have donated your time to our cause, we thank you.

Thanks from all of us!

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Whatcom Museum and the North Cascades Audubon Society Co-Sponsored Programs

The following programs are approximately one hour long unless otherwise indicated.

**** *The Life of the Snowy Owl with Paul Bannick* (see page 6 for more details)**

Saturday, **January 10**, 3 PM at Whatcom Museum / Old City Hall

\$5 admission, two for \$5 for Audubon and Museum Members

Through intimate images, personal stories and video recordings from the Arctic tundra, renowned wildlife photographer Paul Bannick takes you on an exploration of the four seasons of the snowy owl. You'll see unique, never-shared images of spring courtship and nesting, nestlings in the Arctic and winter migrations to the lower 48 states. In these changing times of climate and habitat, witness the adaptations of snowy owls and their neighbors including the willow and rock ptarmigans, red-throated and Pacific loons, snow buntings, Arctic foxes, and polar bears.

**** *Brown Bag: Winter Birds of the Salish Sea with Joe Meche***

Thursday, **January 15**, 12:30 PM at Whatcom Museum / Old City Hall

\$3 suggested donation/Museum members free

The Salish Sea is one of the most scenic and biologically-rich bodies of water in the world and home to a fascinating variety of birds and marine mammals. With glacier-clad peaks in every direction, and enchanting islands, sheltered coves and estuaries ever-present, this highly-accessible area beckons to our resident and migratory birds. Join Joe Meche as we take a virtual tour of winter birds in this familiar and beautiful ecosystem.

**** *Bird Tour: Not Just a Pretty Face: Bird Features and Behavior* with Owen Bamford**

Saturday, **January 17**, 2 PM at Syre Education Center

Free with \$5 admission, includes entrance to all Museum buildings/Museum members free

Birds come in many shapes and colors with each species sporting unique eyes, beaks, feet, wings and builds. Not just for style, these features are essential to how different species "make a living" in the world. Audubon board member and retired biologist Owen Bamford reveals how a bird species is uniquely structured for its way of life.

**** *Bird Tour: How Do They Do It?* with Chris Brewer**

Thursday, **January 22**, 2 PM at Syre Education Center

Free with \$5 admission, includes entrance to all Museum buildings/Museum members free

Find out about bird flight and how birds make it happen with museum educator Chris Brewer. What makes feathers work and how are bird bodies adapted for making long migratory treks? See our birds of prey, shorebirds, waterfowl and little brown branch hoppers while you're here.

**** *Bird Tour: Look Who Just Flew in! Migrating birds of Whatcom County* with Paul Woodcock**

Saturday, **January 24**, 2 PM at Syre Education Center

Free with \$5 admission, includes entrance to all Museum buildings/Museum members free

Discover who migrates into our area and where they go when they leave. Paul Woodcock, a long-time Audubon member and past president, will talk about local migrators and share fascinating facts about their journeys.

**** *Bird Tour: Meet our Raptors!* with Pam Borso**

Sunday, **January 25**, Audubon at the Museum 1-4 PM, tour at 2 PM at Syre Education Center

Free with \$5 admission, includes entrance to all Museum buildings/Museum members free

Pam Borso, current North Cascades Audubon Society president, introduces key raptor species from our area and shares how these birds of prey are faring in our changing land and sea habitats. Pam will be on hand between 1 to 4 pm to talk informally with visitors and do her presentation at 2.

**** *Family Activity Day: Migration Mysteries Unlocked, the Snowy Owl and More***

Saturday, **January 31**, 10 AM to 4 PM at the Lightcatcher and Syre Education Center

\$3 reduced admission/Museum members free

Whooo's that? Explore the mysteries of Pacific Flyway birds that visit us in the winter—especially the snowy owl. Join us for bird art and activities in the Lightcatcher, including making your own crafty bird seed feeder. Your admission gives you a special treat—entrance to the Syre Education Center to see our four snowy owls and over 250 other species of birds that spend time in Whatcom County. Enjoy bird films, treasure hunts and migration fun facts.

January Field Trips

Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair

While the weather isn't always ideal in winter in the Pacific Northwest, the birds don't seem to mind and January is one of the best months for birding in our area. Seabirds and waterfowl winter in the area and there are a number of resident spies to be seen.

All NCAS field trip are open to everyone whether or not they are members. Our goal is to provide quality field trips that are enjoyable and educational. We hope that beginning birders will not be afraid to join us. Our field trip leaders, and many of the participants, are enthusiastic about answering questions and providing a worthwhile experience to all participants. So join us for the fun and please dress appropriately for the weather in order to have the best and most pleasurable birding experience.

Saturday, January 3, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - 3 hours

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required

These monthly trips are co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks and are meant for birders of all skill levels. If you are not a birder but just curious, you are more than welcome to come along and share the experience. January is an excellent time to go birding at the Spit.

Thursday, January 8, Samish Flats

Time: 9 AM - 1:30 PM

Trip Leader: Steven Harper

Pre-registration required

To register contact: Steven Harper, 650-9065 or stevenharper2@msn.com

Raptors will be the focus of this trip as peak populations should be present at this time. We will also search for snow geese, swans, waterfowl and shore birds in Samish Flats. Trip will be limited to no more than 12 participants.

Wednesday, January 14, Semiahmoo Spit and Drayton Harbor

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - 3-4 hours, Meet in gravel parking lot behind the Semiahmoo Restaurant

Trip Leader: Steven Harper

No registration required

Contact Steven Harper, 650-9065 or stevenharper2@msn.com for more information

January is an outstanding time for viewing waterfowl, grebes, loons, scoters and other visitors to the spit. Trip will focus on Semiahmoo Spit and Drayton Harbor.

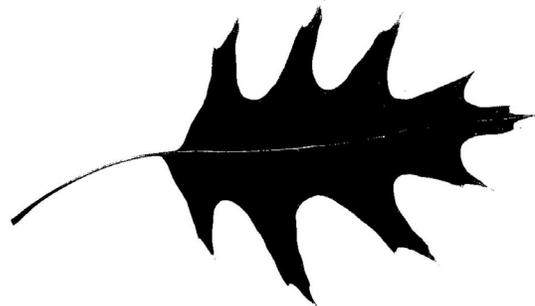
Help Wanted

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.



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Saturday, January 24, Lake Padden

Time: 9 AM - 12 PM

Trip Leader: Jim Easton

To register contact Jim Easton, 715-2029 or jbeaston@comcast.net

Winter is a great time for waterfowl at Lake Padden. You can expect such species as American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup and Bufflehead, just to name a few. Rarities in the past few years have been male Eurasian Wigeon and Red-head. And there are always a number of passerines and a raptor or two.

Saturday, February 7, Semiahmoo

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - 3 hours

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required

These monthly trips are co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks and are meant for birders of all skill levels. If you are not a birder but just curious, you are more than welcome to come along and share the experience. This time of the year, Semiahmoo Spit is one of the best places to bird in all of Whatcom County.

Access to Lummi Nation Lands

The Lummi Flats and Lummi Bay areas of the Lummi Indian Reservation are well known to be excellent birding places. This past December the sighting of a yellow-billed loon in that area attracted many local birders, as well as some from outside the area, to look for the loon which had been sighted from shoreline under jurisdiction of the Lummi Nation.

We want to remind all members of the birding community that access to Lummi Nation lands is restricted and only allowed with a "Letter of Permission" from the Lummi Planning Department. This restriction includes the gravel road west from the intersection of Kwina and Hillaire Roads to the base of the aquaculture dike.

"Letters of Permission" may be obtained from the Lummi Nation Planning Department located in the Lummi Tribal Center, 2665 Kwina Road. The letter will specify the areas on tribal lands which may be accessed. In the spirit of community and cooperation, please respect these official policies of the Lummi Nation and please spread the word to other birders to do the same.

Thank you from the North Cascades Audubon Society



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Unlocking the Mysteries of the Snowy Owl

Unlocking the mysteries of the snowy owl is the theme of a month-long exploration of snowy owls and other winter migratory birds at the Whatcom Museum — **January 8 - February 5, 2015.**

The Syre Education Center, one of the three Whatcom Museum buildings, holds the 500+ taxidermied-bird collection, which focuses on birds of Washington. The Syre building opens to the public only three or four times a year. Admission of \$5 provides entry to all three buildings during this time (Thursday - Sunday, 12 - 5 PM).

Paul Bannick Presents January 10 at 3 PM

Headlining the event is well-known naturalist, author and wildlife photographer Paul Bannick, who will be in Bellingham January 10 narrating a presentation of his award-winning images and never-before seen footage of the elusive snowy owl. The event is co-sponsored by the North Cascades Audubon Society and will be held at the Whatcom Museum Old City Hall at 3 PM. Admission is \$5, with a two-for-one rate for museum and Audubon members. Bannick, who wrote the best-selling *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, has focused his career on expanding public understanding and appreciation of wildlife.

Visit Our New Location

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www.paulbannick.com

On a Wing and a Prayer: Bud Anderson and the Raptors of Winter

Thursdays, January 8, 15, 22, 29, and February 5; 7–9 PM

An all day field trip is included, the date to be determined during class
Classes held at Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, 1207 Ellsworth Street

Raptor expert Bud Anderson will teach participants raptor identification and behavior in this class sponsored by Whatcom Land Trust. From beginners to seasoned birders, many people take this class more than once – some many times. It will change the way you drive the roads of Whatcom and Skagit counties.

To register, mail a check payable to Falcon Research Group for \$175 to:

Falcon Research Group

Box 248

Bow, WA 98232

Include your address, phone number and email address.

Questions: Bud Anderson, (falconresearch@gmail.com or 360-757-1191) or Rand Jack (randfjack@gmail.com).

Laredo Birding Festival 2015

February 4-7, Laredo, Texas

Come experience a terrific line-up of events and trips that feature the best of the Laredo region's birding hotspots and scenic South Texas ranches. Don't miss the opportunity to spot the prized bird, the white-collared seedeater, and hundreds of other avian beauties that nest throughout the area's unique river ecosystem. Several ranches have been added to the scheduled trips this year, and past festival favorites will continue to be offered such as "Bird 'til You Drop" and "Birding on the Rio Grande".

For more information and details, visit: www.laredobirdingfestival.com.

Questions? Call (956) 718-1063 or email laredobirdingfestival@rgisc.org.

Seeking Volunteers for 2015 Cherry Point Bird Surveys

**Tuesdays, January 6, 13, and 20, and
February 3 and 10;
6 – 8 PM**

Attention birders, bird-lovers, and Cherry Point aficionados, here's an opportunity to use and hone your birding skills, meet other birders, and help Cherry Point all at the same time. Following up on the past two seasons of successful trainings and surveys focused on seven birds, this class will focus on the identification of *fourteen* key birds at Cherry Point. Participants will then be able to take part in Cherry Point surveys and help build trusted bird survey databases. A report for the 2013-2014 season can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/a/re-sources.org/main-2/programs/baykeeper/whatcom-and-skagit-county-aquatic-reserves>



Cherry Point, photo from ReSources

This project is under the direction of Dr. John Bower, Fairhaven College, Western Washington University, and is sponsored by the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stakeholder Committee, with support from the North Cascades Audubon Society (NCAS), Washington Environmental Council, and ReSources for Sustainable Communities. NCASes Pam Borso and Paul Woodcock will be assisting Dr. John Bower with the classes which will be held at ReSources.

To register, contact Wendy Steffensen at ReSources: wendys@re-sources.org

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The Avalanche is the newsletter of the North Cascades Audubon Society, PO Box 5805, Bellingham, WA 98227. It is published 8 times a year; subscriptions start at \$20 per year. The editors welcome articles, artwork, photographs, and letters. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of this organization. Original material may be reprinted if appropriate credit is given. The North Cascades Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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.

Please check your mailing labels for accuracy, including the expiration date. To make any necessary changes, please send an email to membership@northcascadesaudubon.org.

Join or Renew (circle one)

Please make checks payable to North Cascades Audubon.

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