General Membership Meeting with John Bower

*Bird Migration in the Pacific Northwest*

The Pacific Northwest is an exciting place to experience bird migration, with birds moving through this region in almost every month of the year. Migration patterns in the Northwest are complex. Tremendous numbers of shorebirds, marine birds, and songbirds migrate along the Pacific Flyway, some of them flying all the way from the Arctic to as far south as the Patagonia region of South America. Many other species migrate from near and far to spend part of the year in the Northwest, including hawks, eagles, and marine birds. And some species are altitudinal migrants, moving between the mountains and the lowlands at different times of the year. In this program John Bower will investigate these different migratory patterns, highlighting migratory hotspots in this region, as well as underscoring the importance of local ecosystems for maintaining migratory bird populations.

John Bower teaches field biology, ecology, natural history, evolution, environmental issues, and popular music studies at Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Washington University. His current research involves repeating important components of the 1970’s Marine Ecosystems Analysis (MESA) census to document recent marine bird population changes in inshore marine waters. His past research includes conservation biology of seabirds and the endemic Juan Fernandez firecrown hummingbird on Chile’s Isla Robinson Crusoe, and acoustic communication in birds and whales.

*Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:*

**April 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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**Upcoming Board meeting:**

*April 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
Designer/editor: Kelley Palmer-McCarty
Writer/editor: Lynne Givler

If you are interested in contributing, the deadline for the April 2015 issue is...

March 15.
Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McCarty at:
content@northcascadesaudubon.org

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Associated Persons
Scholarship   Don Burgess  

Annual Elections: Secretary And Other Board Positions Are Available

Our annual elections will be taking place at our membership meeting in May. If you are interested in joining our Board, please contact Ken Salzman:

360-756-0347 or kpsalzman@comcast.net

Annual NCAS Campout
at Pearrygin Lake State Park

Thursday, May 28 to Sunday, May 31

For the fourth year NCAS has reserved the group camp at Pearrygin Lake State Park, just north of Winthrop, for a weekend of outstanding birding. Organized field trips and sing-alongs will be scheduled from Friday evening through Sunday morning. This year we have added Thursday night for those who want to come early and bird on their own. The birding was exciting last year so if you enjoyed it, please come again. If you missed it, here is another chance. Birds such as ruffed grouse, red-naped sapsucker, common poorywill, white-breasted nuthatch, redhead, veery, MacGillivray’s warbler, Nashville warbler, lazuli bunting and even a long-eared owl were seen within easy walking distance from the campground. Our group listed over a hundred species during the three day period. The group camp is separated from the main campground and situated in the midst of excellent habitat. The site is accessed by a narrow, gravel drive and is designated for tent camping only but very small RVs and vans can be parked in the adjacent lot. Cost for Friday through Sunday is $20 per camping unit and $10 additional if you stay Thursday night. For more information and to sign-up (required) contact Steven Harper at stevenharper2@msn.com or 360-650-9065.
The future for our west coast marine life just got a little more secure. On Tuesday, March 10, 2015 the Pacific Fisheries Management Council approved new protections for forage fish species, a move that signals a shift towards a more ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

The Council is responsible for managing fish stocks in federal waters (3-300 miles) off of Washington, Oregon, and California and has been working to develop protective measures for unregulated forage species over the past three years.

Forage fish are increasingly in the limelight for the critical role they play in supporting the marine food web, as well as the rising global demand for fish meal and fish oil. The Council’s action takes a precautionary approach to forage species management. New fisheries must first demonstrate that harvest will not harm the ecosystem before they are approved. Although some well-known forage species such as anchovy and sardine are managed through existing fishery management plans, many other species, including sand lance, smelt, and pelagic squid, are not.

Among the seabirds that will benefit in Washington State are the tufted puffin, which is currently being considered for listing as a State endangered species; the marbled murrelet, a State endangered seabird which feeds its young with sand lance and smelt; and various auklet and storm-petrel species, which feed on a wide variety of forage species. Dozens of other visiting and resident birds also rely on forage species.

“Our marine birds face enormous risks,” said Gail Gatton, Executive Director of Audubon Washington, “including ocean acidification, habitat loss, oil spills, and climate change. We’re thrilled that the Council took action to tackle at least one of the threats these birds are facing – diminished supplies of their major food source.”

Trina Bayard, Director of Bird Conservation at Audubon Washington, called the Council’s decision a win for birds, fish, and people alike. “Forage species are the bread and butter of the marine world, providing food not just for marine birds like the tufted puffin and the western grebe, but for economically important fish such as salmon and lingcod. The Council has taken an important step to ensure that forage species, and the human, wildlife, and economic values that they support, can be sustained for generations to come.”

Coincidentally, this landmark decision comes at a time when forage fish are facing an important juncture in Washington State waters. Senate Bill 5166 would help fill important gaps in our understanding of regional forage fish populations, including Pacific herring, Pacific sand lance, and surf smelt. This includes basic information like how many there are, and where and when they spawn. Without this information, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the agency responsible for managing these species, is essentially operating in the dark.

The protection and recovery of west coast forage fish populations is a high priority for Audubon throughout the Pacific Flyway. Audubon groups in Washington, Oregon, and California partnered with Pew Trusts and a broad range of other groups over the last three years to advocate for these protections. In Washington, 18 local Audubon chapters ranging from the Olympic Peninsula to Spokane voiced support at key junctures along the way. The rule must now go before the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval.
April Field Trips

Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair

Spring is here and the avian population is on the move and changing. Hummingbirds, swallows, warblers and other birds that spend their winters in warmer climates, some as far away as Central and South America, are on their way back to the Pacific Northwest. Our resident birds are also becoming more active as we approach mating season. In short...... it’s a great time to go birding.

Our field trips are open to everyone regardless of membership in NCAS. Our goal is to provide quality field trips that provide enjoyment and education for all levels of birders from beginning to advanced. Our field trip leaders, and many of the participants, are enthusiastic about answering questions and providing a worthwhile experience- so join us for the fun!

Even though temperatures are warmer now, please be sure to dress for the weather and wear appropriate footwear. There’s nothing like being uncomfortable to ruin an otherwise great day of birding.

Saturday, April 4, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours
Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock
No registration required

Semiahmoo Spit is always a great place to bird. Although many of the regular winter birds will have departed, there are always a number of species that will be seen on this trip. Co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, the trip covers all of the spit. This is a great trip for beginning birders but experienced birders also love this monthly trip.

Wednesday, April 22, Earth Day at Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve

Time: 9 AM – ~3 hours
Trip Leader: Lynne Givler
Trip Limit: 12
To Register: Contact Lynne Givler at lynne.givler@gmail.com or 360-966-4909.

Celebrate Earth Day at this special Whatcom County park. We’ll spend the first part of the morning strolling through a mixed forest looking and listening for birds and also checking out all the interesting plants that are “springing” to life. We’ll then descend to the beach where we’ll spend some time in a citizen science activity, identifying and counting all the bird species we encounter. This is your chance to contribute to a greater understanding of bird populations in the area. All the information we gather will be submitted to eBird, an online checklist and database program launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

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.
Bird Survey Volunteers Needed

North Cascades Audubon Society and the Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) are cooperating in a project to survey birds on select WLT properties. Volunteer bird surveyors are needed to visit and survey these sites three to four times each year beginning May 2015. The purpose of the project is to develop a baseline understanding of the birds on these parcels and to provide data for potential grant opportunities. If you are interested please contact Steven Harper at steven-harper2@msn.com or 360-650-9065.
Getting Down and Dirty for the Birds!

**Saturday Work Parties with the Whatcom Land Trust**

If you’re interested in helping improve habitat for birds, fish and all wildlife, join the Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) in a Saturday work party on one of their conservation sites. The necessary tools and gloves will be provided and carpooling is always encouraged. Some of these sites have limited parking and access, so it’s important that you sign up by contacting WLT’s Volunteer Coordinator, Dennis Conner at Dennis@whatcomlandtrust.org or 360-650-9470 #107.

**Saxon Road Farmland (New!) - Partnered with NSEA**

March 28, 9am- Noon

Come see one of WLT’s newest additions to their integrated Flood, Fish and Farm conservation project along the South Fork Nooksack River. Partnering with Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA), volunteers will plant native trees and shrubs along the creek. Directions: From Hwy 9, turn onto Maleng Road, and look for WLT signs on the right for parking.

**Bottiger’s Pond**

April 18, 9am-Noon

Along the North Fork Nooksack River is WLT’s furthest east habitat conservation site. A wide array of tasks are included in this work party, including invasive blackberry removal, planting of native trees, trail maintenance, and general land management activities. Directions: From Bellingham, travel almost 35 miles east on Mt. Baker Hwy toward Glacier. After the Cornell Creek bridge, look for WLT signs to park along the right side of the highway.

**EARTH DAY! - Maple Creek Reach**

April 25, 9am-Noon

Come join in on this Earth Day volunteering opportunity. This site underwent extensive salmon restoration work over the summer of 2014, but there is still more to do! Volunteers will be planting native trees and removing invasive plants. Directions: From Bellingham, travel east on Mt. Baker Hwy to Maple Falls, look for WLT signs on the right after the town of Maple Falls and just past the Maple Creek bridge.

**Jensen Family Forest Park**

May 2, 9am-Noon

Meet at this park, conserved by WLT and managed by Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, to remove invasive plants and maintain a short forested trail. Directions: From Bellingham, travel north on I-5 to Custer and take the exit for Birch Bay - Lynden Road (Exit 270). Turn right on Birch-Bay Lynden Road and turn right onto Stein Road after 1.5 miles. Look for WLT signs, the parking lot will be on the right.
Fun with Feathered Friends:  
**Bird Camp for Kids**

An experience to remember! This camp engages young people in playful exploration of the amazing world of birds. Kids will join members of the North Cascades Audubon Society and Whatcom Museum staff in exploring the Museum’s unique 500+ mounted bird display and go on birding/nature walks nearby. They’ll also learn how to do backyard birding as they make bird feeders and discover who comes to feed from them. “Campers” will even make their own bird nest! We’ll have plenty of creative art projects, do fun game-based science and enjoy Celebrating Urban Birds with the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology activities.

**Session 1:** July 13-17  
**Session 2:** July 27-31  
*(Sessions are Monday through Friday, from 9 AM to 4 PM)*

**Ages:** 8 to 14; 15 participants each session  
**Cost:** $190; $170 Museum members  
**Registration and Information:** Chris, cbbrewer@cob.org / 360-778-8960

Photographs courtesy of Mary Jo Maute
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. Each membership applies to one household.

Does your company match donations? Let them know you donated to North Cascades Audubon Society.

___ $20  Kestrel
___ $35  Merlin
___ $50  Prairie Falcon
___ $75  Peregrine Falcon
___ $100 Gyrfalcon

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