

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 46, Issue 7

October 2015

General Membership Meeting with Larry Schwitters *Vaux's Happening*

Vaux's Happening is an ongoing citizen science project, launched nine years ago by local Audubon chapters in the Seattle area to gather the data necessary to make a compelling case for preserving the chimney at the Frank Wagner Elementary School in Monroe. This site has proven to be one of the most significant Vaux's swift communal migratory roost sites in North America. Vaux's Happening quickly expanded into an attempt to locate, raise awareness of, and hopefully preserve the important roost sites used by this species all along their migratory path. In the last fifteen migrations the project has documented over seven million Vaux's swift roosting events from San Diego to the Yukon. Join Larry Schwitters, one of the projects founders and coordinators, who will share images and information captured by the project's chimney surveillance cameras and precision temperature recorders.

Larry Schwitters holds a Master's of Science degree and spent 30 years in the trenches of public education, mostly as a middle school science teacher and coach in the Seattle area. He spent four years tracking down black swifts at Washington State's waterfalls for the American Bird Conservancy before his involvement with Audubon's Vaux's Happening project. The Vaux's Happening project was featured in the online issue of the Smithsonian Magazine (www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/The-Disappearing-Habitats-of-the-Vauxs-Swifts.html) and in High Country News (www.hcn.org/issues/44.12/save-a-chimney-save-a-swift).

Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:

**October 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: **October 5**

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

Upcoming Holiday Potluck: **December 8**

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 Nov/Dec 2015 issue is...

October 15.

Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McCarty at:

content@northcascadesaudubon.org

NCAS Board Members

Officers

President	Pam Borso	319-9004
Vice Pres.	Paul Woodcock	380-3356
Secretary	Steven Harper	650-9065
Treasurer	Sue Parrott	650-9065

Board Members

Education	Rae Edwards	
Field Trips	Ken Salzman	756-0347
Hospitality	Carol Roberts	305-0899
Membership	Owen Bamford	393-3481
Publicity	Twink Coffman	
Newsletter	Kelley Palmer-McGee	466-8601
Conservation	Steve Irving	384-1618
Archives	Judy Krieger	
Programs	Steven Harper	650-9065

Associated Persons

Scholarship Don Burgess

Mark Your Calendars
NCAS Holiday Potluck
at the Lairmont Manor
December 8, 2015



Tompotika Tarsier Survey: Science in the Jungle

January 25 through February 10, 2016

Tarsiers (*Tarsius spp.*) are tiny group-dwelling creatures that roam tropical forests at night looking for insects and other invertebrates, and are among the world's smallest primates. With at least eight species endemic to different parts of Indonesia's island of Sulawesi, tarsiers can be distinguished primarily by their calls. In Sulawesi's Tompotika region, where the Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AITo) works with local people to conserve their natural heritage, tarsiers are present, but have never been studied. Even what species they belong to is unknown. Join a small group of citizen scientists conducting the first-ever survey of tarsiers in Tompotika. Make a permanent contribution to our knowledge of the natural world while experiencing the wonders of the Sulawesi rainforest! When we're not tracking tarsiers in the jungle, we'll be spending time observing unique and endangered birds, bats, and other wildlife, snorkeling the world's richest coral reefs, and spending time with local villagers.

For further information contact:

Marcy Summers, Director,
The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation;
21416 86th Ave. SW,
Vashon, WA 98070;
206-463-7720 ;
info@tompotika.org;
www.tompotika.org



Photo by Robin Moore

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North Cascades Audubon Society

Board Meeting Minutes - September 7, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Pam Borso at 6:30 pm in the meeting room of Woods Coffee on Bay Street.

Board Members Present: Pam Borso, Paul Woodcock, Steven Harper, Twink Coffman, Sue Parrott, Ken Salzman, Carol Roberts. **Absent:** Rae Edwards, Steve Irving, Owen Bamford, Steve Irving, Kelley Palmer-McCarty

Secretary's Report: The August report was approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Sue presented the updated treasurer's report. Questions were raised regarding how to characterize large donations submitted as memberships. It was decided to designate anything over \$100 as a donation. Sue noted that \$150 in scholarship donations were given to Whatcom Museum for children participating in the summer birding classes.

Communications and Input

- Pam reported that she signed on to letters supporting opposition to Army helicopter training flight proposals in North Cascades wilderness areas submitted by Washington State Audubon and Washington Wild.

- The concern by a member regarding links not working on our website turned out to be a non-issue as the member later had no issue with the links.

Unfinished Business

- 150 newsletters were sent out as first class postage and 12 newsletters were given to Wild Bird Chalet to hand out. A new endorsement will be added to the newsletter to request address information on forwarded newsletters.

- The night migration event proposed for John Bower's home will be put off until next year because of potential family travel issues.

- Ken continues to work on the NSEA eagle presentation on Oct. 3.

- The Pearrygin Lake campout has been firmly scheduled for June 2-5, 2016.

- The December Holiday Event has been firmly scheduled for Dec. 8 at the Lairmont Manor. Carol will coordinate table cloth procurement and other details for the event.

New Business

- Steven asked whether board minutes should be in the newsletter and it was noted that it was past policy that this should be happening. Steven will submit minutes for publication beginning this month.

- The board discussed having a "kids group" participate in the Christmas bird count. Ken will follow up to see if this can be arranged.

- The Syre Bird Exhibit will be open from approximately Jan. 4 through early February.

- Board agreed to pledge \$1000 to Washington State Audubon for 2016.

- ACOW will be in Burlington on October 24. Board members are encouraged to attend. Pam will investigate whether they need volunteers.

- Whatcom County Council has established a Wildlife Advisory Committee and is looking for members. 7 of the 11 members must have technical expertise related to wildlife.

- The Cherry Point Bird Survey training has been scheduled for Tuesdays from Nov. 3 – December 15 with the exception of Nov. 24 and Dec. 8.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:00 pm

Next Meeting: October 5, 2015 7:00pm at the WECU Education Center, 311 Holly Street, Bellingham.

Steven Harper, Secretary

October Field Trips

Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair

Fall is here and birds have already been on the move for a couple of months. Gulls are migrating as are vireos and warblers and, while early fall is not the most productive time to bird, it can be exciting since migration often brings unexpected oddities.

North Cascades Audubon field trips are open to everyone, members and non-members, free of charge. The number of participants is often limited in order to reduce negative impacts on the environment and ensure a quality experience by requiring advance registration. See you in the field!

Saturday, November 7, 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 & Recreation 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. October is a great time for shorebirds, seabirds and raptors. This trip typically produces more than 20 avian species as well as the ever present harbor seals.

<p><i>Whatcom County's Favorite Bookstore since 1980</i></p> <p>VILLAGE BOOKS</p> <p>1200 11th Street <i>in Bellingham's Historic Fairhaven</i> 671-2626 • 800-392-BOOK www.villagebooks.com</p>	<p>Every time you click through from Audubon's website to Village Books' website and buy books, Audubon gets 5.5% of the purchase!</p> <p><i>Building Community One Book at a Time</i></p>
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Calling New and Seasoned Birders Alike:

November 3, 10, 17, Dec 1, 15, 6-8pm

RE Sources Main Room (2nd floor, above the RE Store), 2309 Meridian St.

Join us for the third annual birding identification series, featuring 15 common marine birds. This course is specifically designed so that you can take part in our ongoing citizen science census of Cherry Point birds, sponsored by the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee, North Cascades Audubon Society, and RE Sources North Sound Baykeeper. Instructors include Pam Borso, Paul Woodcock, and John Bower. There is no fee. Registration is encouraged; e-mail Lyle Anderson at lyleand2@comcast.net to register.



© Andrew A Reding

Male surf scoters, photo by Andrew Reding



for Padden Creek

no
 people could not build the Grand Canyon
 not because it is too long or too deep
 but for the same reason people couldn't build
 the little stream behind my house
 they both depend exactly
 on elements outside of knowable awareness
 yet wholly common to rocks and water
 and the rightness of rain

Joy of Birding (Beginning Birding) Thursdays, October 22, 29, and November 5, 2015

North Cascades Audubon Society Board member Ken Salzman will be teaching a beginning birding class on three consecutive Thursday evenings (October 22, 29, and November 5). A fourth four-hour session will take place in the field (date TBA) for a hands-on experience. The class is designed for beginning birders and individuals who want to learn about birding equipment and basic bird identification.

Art of Photographing Birds November 17, 19, and 21, 2015

Ken will also be teaching a class on bird photography on the evenings of Tuesday, November 17 and Thursday, November 19 with a photo field trip on Saturday, November 21 to Semiahmoo.

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

To register for the Joy of Birding (beginning birding) or the Art of Photographing Birds go online to Whatcom Community College (<http://whatcom.ctc.edu>) or call (360) 383-3200.

Scott
 5.6.14



Photo by Andrew Reding

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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Clock Ticking on Land and Water Conservation Fund

The following article is from the National Audubon Society.

Now in its 50th year, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has preserved habitat in every state, and provided open spaces for outdoor recreation such as birding and hiking. On September 30, however, this vital federal program is set to expire.

The LWCF utilizes a small portion of fees from offshore oil and gas drilling in order to set aside some of the nation's most treasured places, including National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and even neighborhood parks and historic sites. The program can be funded up to \$900 million every year, without using taxpayer dollars. In most years, federal spending has fallen far short of this authorization, so achieving full, annual funding is another key legislative goal in addition to renewing the act. Despite being chronically underfunded, LWCF has resulted in significant impacts for conservation by protecting nearly five million acres across the country, including nesting and migratory habitat for birds.

In Congress, there have been bipartisan efforts to reauthorize this critical program. In the Senate, S 338 and S 890 would permanently authorize and fully fund LWCF, along with HR 1814 in the House. Additionally, as part of a bipartisan energy package, the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015, an agreement was brokered that would reauthorize LWCF, but the debate on that bill continues.

Time is running out, and it's critical that our elected officials recognize the importance of LWCF. If you haven't already, you can take action by writing to your Members of Congress today. Visit National Audubon Society's Action Center to help make a difference.

New Birding App Testers Needed

A Letter from Chris Duke

Hello North Cascades Audubon,

I am a PhD student at Washington State University and I have just released a new, free App that I've been developing for iPhone and iPad that I feel is in line with the Audubon Society's goals of increasing knowledge and accessibility of birds to the community. The App is called *Kea: Learn Birds Through Play*, and it is designed to make the process of learning to recognize birds faster and more fun by turning it into a game. Our initial version was kindly tested and critiqued by Audubon members, and we have incorporated their feedback into the current version. I am writing today to ask if any members of your organization would be interested in primary testing the latest version of the App.

To provide a bit more background information, *Kea* uses a series of different games that help users recognize images of birds, rather than rote memorization. As a level is passed, the user earns tokens that can be used to unlock new levels, modes, and habitats. Users start with "Backyard Birds" levels, to allow them to recognize the birds they are most likely to see close to home. A user can also play with levels organized according to taxonomy, rather than habitat. They can use their learning to unlock all the birds in North America, Europe, and Costa Rica including pelagic species and rarities. For more advanced birders, modes can be unlocked to learn the scientific names of all species, or in a timed mode that sharpens rapid identification skills.

Since *Kea* is designed to be free to use, Beta testers would be asked to download and try out the App, then provide feedback through a questionnaire. If they are interested, they can then elect to be part of our Beta Testers group, further helping to direct the future of *Kea*. Beta testers for the initial release of *Kea* will be given access to all future updates

continued on the next page...

Open Mondays at Our New Location

Mon-Fri. 10-5:30
Sat. 10-4

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The Importance of a Good Snag

by Susan Setterberg

From the October 2015 issue of Columbia Flyway, the newsletter of the Vancouver (WA) Audubon Society

Standing dead and dying trees, called snags or wildlife trees, are important for wildlife in both natural and landscaped settings, occurring as a result of disease, lightning, fire, animal damage, too much shade, drought, root competition, as well as old age. If you are a woodpecker, there is nothing more appealing than a good snag. It provides food under the bark and in the hollows, and shelter for the new family you might be contemplating. Snags are not only attractive to woodpeckers, but many other cavity nesters seek them out. West of the Cascades 39 species of birds and 14 species of mammals depend on tree cavities for their survival. East of the Cascades 39 bird species and 23 mammal species depend on these snags (Pederson, USDA Forest Service).

Snags enhance local natural areas by attracting wildlife species that may not otherwise be found there. Birds, small mammals, and other wildlife use snags for nests, nurseries, storage areas, foraging, roosting, and perching. In western Washington, the felling of snags is prohibited. However, on National Forests in eastern Washington, snag-felling by the public is a lawful practice. Each year hundreds to thousands of snags are cut and removed by hunters, woodcutters, and other visitors to the forest. Yakima Valley Audubon Society is working to stop the culling of forest snags in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest of eastern Washington. The Okanogan-Wenatchee manages nearly 1.5 million acres and some of the most beautiful pine forests of the eastern Cascade Range.

The area in Washington State open to snag felling totals 1.1 million acres, or 26% of the Okanogan-Wenatchee-Colville National forest complex. This forest is home to five at-risk woodpecker species in Washington State, including the black-backed woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, Lewis' woodpecker, and American three-toed woodpecker. Other cavity-nesting birds threatened by snag-habitat loss include the flammulated owl, mountain bluebird, and pygmy nuthatch.

What can you do to help preserve these at-risk species? Please consider signing the petition to be delivered to Jim Pena, Director, National Forest Service, Region 6. The petition is at: <https://works.audubon.org/petition/snagged-end-snag-cutting-federal-lands>. It will take a minute or two of your time to sign it. Let's support our precious birds and mammals.

...continued: New Birding App Testers Needed

of *Kea* before they become generally available, and will have a say in the future directions for the App, such as our upcoming level-building expansion, or our Thailand and Australia versions.

We are also currently just at the start of our crowdsourcing campaign to raise funds for our upcoming expansions. We're offering discounted unlocks for all of our current expansions, as well as opportunities to get involved in directing *Kea's* future. Anyone interested can check us out at several crowdsourcing sites to help keep *Kea* a free resource for the birding community: Kickstarter, IndieGoGo, and GoFundMe.

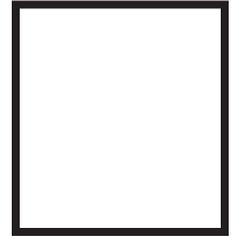
Anyone interested in primary testing *Kea* on their iPhone or iPad can email me at keabirdlearning.info@gmail.com. I will send them a questionnaire, and once they turn it back to me, they can choose to be on the advanced notice list for future expansions if they like. The App itself can be accessed through Apple's App Store, and the Android version should be available this fall.

I'm very excited about bringing this tool to the birding community, and can't wait to hear great feedback that can make it better. Thank you very much for your time, and happy birding!

Best,
Chris Duke

North Cascades Audubon Society
PO Box 5805
Bellingham, WA 98227-5805

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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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