

# The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

[www.northcascadesaudubon.org](http://www.northcascadesaudubon.org)

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February 2016

## **General Membership Meeting with Lynne Givler and Keith Carpenter *From the Andes to Antarctica: Exploring the Scotia Arc***

The Scotia Arc is a narrow chain of islands in the Southern Ocean linking the southernmost Andes and the Antarctic Peninsula. Join Audubon members Lynne Givler and Keith Carpenter as they share their experience exploring this remarkable region aboard Quark Expedition's *Sea Spirit*. Learn about the natural and cultural history of the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and venture onward to the South Sandwich Islands, perhaps one of the least visited areas on the planet. Circling back towards the Antarctic Peninsula come ashore at Elephant Island where 22 members of Ernest Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition survived for 135 days. And finally step foot on the southernmost continent itself. See photos ranging from penguins to icebergs and old whaling stations to southern right whales selected from the hundreds posted by all of the travelers on the ship.

Lynne Givler's passion for natural history began peering into tidepools while pursuing a degree in marine sciences. Only later, working as a marine naturalist, did it strike her that marine birds were just as captivating as marine invertebrates. Keith Carpenter's fascination with the sea led him from surfing in sunny California to salmon fishing in Alaska. Today he remains in cold water, active in the local reefnet salmon fishery.

*Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:*  
**February 23, 7pm at the Whatcom Museum**  
**(in the Rotunda Room of the Old City Hall building)**  
*free & open to the public!*



*Photos from the 2014-2015 voyage with Quark Expeditions*

## 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 March 2016 issue is...

**February 15.**

Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McCarty at:

**[content@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto: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

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## Upcoming Board meeting: February 1

Please email the President if you would like to attend:  
[president@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto:president@northcascadesaudubon.org)

## New NCAS Initiative: Birds and Climate Change Will You Help?

***"You are what hope looks like to a bird."***

*David Yarnold, CEO and President,  
National Audubon Society*

In response to the recently released Audubon *Birds and Climate Change* report, NCAS is looking for volunteers to participate in a new work group. The goal of this work group is to develop Audubon sponsored initiatives that will help safeguard Whatcom County birds in a changing climate, and help slow the rate, or mitigate the effects, of climate change.

Initiatives developed by the work group will:

- identify achievable actions by citizen that slow or mitigate the effects of climate change, and protect habitat and survival of Whatcom County birds
- have a local focus
- be cost effective
- be manageable by NCAS volunteers

If you would like to be part of this new work group, please contact Pam Borso at [borsope@aol.com](mailto:borsope@aol.com).

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## North Cascades Audubon Society

### Board of Directors Meeting and Retreat Minutes 1/4/2016

Members Present: Ken Salzman, Carol Roberts, Paul Woodcock, Pam Borso, Steven Harper, Sue Parrott, Owen Bamford, Steve Irving, Rae Edwards, Kelley Palmer-McGee. Absent: Twink Coffman, Judy Krieger. Guests: Chris Brewer

1) **Approval of December Minutes** – The board approved the minutes as written.

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2) **Treasurer's Report** –

Sue explained the highlights of the 2015 budget. Donations were much higher than usual so our reserve increased. Membership contributions and expenditures were down slightly. Report was approved as presented.

3) **Communications & Input**

**Cherry Point Survey Class** – Class was very successful. Good turnout and 8 people were qualified to train as spotters or counters.

**Christmas Bird Count** – The number of species sighted was down slightly but it was successful considering the weather. Potluck was fun but the number of people staying is decreasing possibly because people are getting older and are more tired at the end of a long day of birding. Paul is considering structuring it differently next year, especially because we will be honoring a long time participant for his 50 years of participation. Being the 50th anniversary of the Bellingham CBC, a celebration is in order. January 2017 was suggested as a good time. Paul is also considering a special training for new people as expectations for the count need to be laid out clearly. The San Juan Ferry count had 12 people and we currently pay for 8. Paul would like us to approve 10 people for the count next year and the budget has been adjusted to allow for this. There may be an educational rate on the Ferry.

**Syre Museum** – The Syre exhibit will be open from Jan. 7 through early Feb. Paul, Pam and Ken are doing presentations. Owen and Steve will also be present during open hours for 2 of the days.

Ken is presenting at the Parkway Chateau and Adult Day Health in January.

4) **New Business**

**Domain Renewal** – Renewal of our Domain address and a new provider is required this spring and Pam presented different scenarios for accomplishing the renewal. The board decided to have Ann (Web Consultant) process the renewal.

5) **Retreat**

**Board Accomplishments** – Pam presented the accomplishments and the board added to the list of the accomplishments for the year. It was also decided to post these on the web page. Sue and Steven will format the list for the newsletter.

**Membership programs** – The board would like to continue to have a diversity of programs for the membership meetings as we have had the last year. Membership seems to appreciate the diversity. The board decided to increase PR for the January meeting because of the topic of Climate Change and its Effects on Birds (see Conservation below).

**Conservation** – Pam made suggestions that the chapter continue to increase our focus on conservation. Climate Change is a large part of that but we need more volunteers to help us increase our efforts. The board decided to ask for volunteers at the Jan. membership meeting after the presentation. A committee was formed consisting of Pam, Sue, Owen and Steve to work on this initiative. In response to a question, Pam noted that as Chapter President she is more than willing to be the person that signs the letters and makes contact with WA State Audubon on conservation issues.

**Education** – Chris Brewer shared information on three upcoming Museum activities appropriate for Audubon involvement. One, an exhibition called Endangered Species: Artists on the Front Line of Biodiversity scheduled for Fall of 2018. Two, plans to move some of the Syre collection of birds to the Old City Hall with specific themes around threats to birds, success stories and other possible themes related to the Pacific Flyway. Three, in April 4-10 the Museum will conduct a spring break mini bird camp for kids and families. The board discussed setting up field trips or advance Museum field trips for kids. Background checks are probably needed for any people running field trips with kids. Wild Whatcom was noted as an organization we should tie in with as they already have an extensive education program with hundreds of kids. Rae can be a contact to Wild Whatcom as she works closely with them. Ken and Pam will also follow up with Jamie and Nicole Huson to explore their interests in working in this area.

**Membership** – Membership and revenue have been stable over the last 6 years. The board discussed ways to make new and current members feel more welcome. The board will continue to send thank you letters to people renewing at the 75 dollar level, send postcards to new members thanking and welcoming them, and redesign the renewal postcards. Annual accomplishment lists will be added to the web page and we will explore a survey of members requesting feedback on current activities and perhaps adding a suggestion box at membership meetings.

**Budget for 2016**– The board adjusted and approved the proposed 2016 budget in accordance with retreat objectives.

**Adjourn and Next Meeting:** February 1, 2016, 7 PM WECU Ed Ctr, 311 Holly St, Bellingham, WA

## February Field Trips

*Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair*

Winter is a great time to bird in the Pacific Northwest. Winter vagrants can be present almost anywhere and you never know what may turn up. And you don't have to travel very far to find these rarities. A number of "winter treasures" have recently shown up in and around Whatcom County. So join us for trips to Semiahmoo Spit, Drayton Harbor and Samish Flats for some great birding at three of the best winter birding spots in our area.

Our field trips are open to everyone regardless of membership in NCAS. Our goal is to offer quality field trips that are enjoyable and educational for all levels of birders. 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.

For all of these trips, please remember to dress warmly and wear appropriate footwear. There's nothing like being cold and uncomfortable to ruin an otherwise great day of birding.

### Saturday, February 6, Semiahmoo Spit

**Time: 9 AM** at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours

**Trip Leader:** Paul Woodcock

No registration required

This trip is great any time of the year but the birds can be very special in the winter. Co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, the trip covers all of Semiahmoo Spit and is a great trip for beginning birders as well as experts.

### Wednesday, February 10, Samish Flats

**Time: 9 AM - 2 PM**

**Trip Leader:** Steven Harper

To register contact Steven Harper: [stevenharper2@msn.com](mailto:stevenharper2@msn.com) or 360-650-9065

This trip will begin at the Alger Park & Ride, I5 Exit 240. We'll then scour the Samish Flats searching for all of the raptors commonly found during the winter as well as waterfowl and shorebirds feeding in the fields and tidal flats. Bring water and snacks or lunch to eat on the run. Dress warmly and bring a spotting scope if you happen to have one. We're bound to see bald eagles, rough-legged hawks, northern harriers, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels, and we'll search for other less common raptors.

*Right: horned grebe in winter plumage,  
photo by Andrew Reding*

### Saturday, February 20, Lake Padden

**Time: 9 AM - Noon**

**Trip Leader:** Ken Salzman

To register contact Ken Salzman: [kpsalzman@com-cast.net](mailto:kpsalzman@com-cast.net) or 360-756-0347

This is a good trip for both beginners and experts. Lake Padden has a variety of waterfowl during the winter in addition to the permanent residents that frequent the lake. You can expect to see buffleheads, ring-necked ducks and American wigeons, and possibly a Eurasian wigeon that has been hanging around for the last several years.



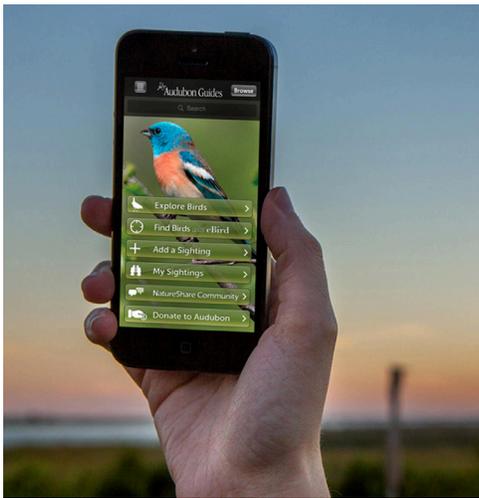
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## The Audubon Bird Guide App.... Now Free!

Audubon Bird Guide: North America is an outstanding mobile field guide resource completely updated to the current AOU checklist. The app includes 821 species; advanced gallery view for easy comparison and search; field mark call outs; a “Find Birds with eBird” feature powered by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology; and a social community of birders who observe, identify, and share their observations and photos in the mobile app and online.

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- Identify 821 species with in-depth descriptions including information on appearance, habitat, behavior, and more.
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- Browse species in a gallery view and filter by shape, region and color, aiding quick identification.
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- Post, keep lists, and share sightings with friends and followers with Audubon NatureShare’s easy and user-friendly interface.

*The above article and image were excerpted from the National Audubon Society website.*

## 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](mailto:kpsalzman@comcast.net).

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*Common loon in winter plumage, photo by Andrew Reding*

## 19th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count Friday, February 12 to Monday, February 15, 2016

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the four-day event and report their sightings online at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from beginning bird watchers to experts, and you can participate from your backyard, or anywhere in the world.

Each checklist submitted during the GBBC helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing, and how to protect them and the environment we share. Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2014 GBBC data highlighted a large irruption of snowy owls across the northeastern, mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes areas of the United States. The data also showed the effects that the polar vortex had on bird movement around the country. Last year, more than 140,000 participants submitted their bird observations online, creating the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations ever recorded.

Please visit the official website at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org). For results of the 2015 GBBC, take a look at the GBBC Summary, and be sure to check out some of the images in the 2015 GBBC Photo Contest Gallery. On the program website participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during and after the count. Be sure to check out the Explore a Region tool to get an idea of what you can expect to see in your area during the next GBBC. The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from Wild Birds Unlimited.



### 2015 Great Backyard Bird Count Statistics:

Checklists submitted: 147,265

Total species observed: 5,090

Total individual birds counted: 18,726,079

*The above article and image were excerpted from the National Audubon Society website.*

## 2015 North Cascades Audubon Society Accomplishments

### 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.

*Consistent with the mission statement, North Cascades Audubon Society accomplished the following in 2015:*

### 1. To promote the study and conservation of birds and other wildlife:

- In collaboration with RE Sources and the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizens, NCAS conducted two five-week classes to train citizens to assist with the Cherry Point Bird Survey. Throughout the year, these trained citizen scientists conducted eight bird surveys in three locations in the preserve. Data is compiled in accordance with the MESA Study protocol.
- In partnership with the Whatcom Land Trust, 18 citizen scientist/birders conducted bird surveys on 11 select Whatcom Land Trust properties. Bird surveys were conducted in May, June and September.
- Coordinated all aspects of the annual Whatcom County Christmas Bird Count, involving over 70 volunteer citizen scientists.
- Provided one scholarship to a WWU student engaged in research relevant to conservation of birds and their habitat.
- Provided three youth scholarships to attend the Whatcom Museum Summer Bird Camp.

### 2. To increase public appreciation of the values of wildlife, plants and the natural environment:

- Hosted eight educational programs for the public at the monthly NCAS meetings.
- Partnered with the Whatcom Museum in six education programs at the Syre, two presentations by Paul Bannick, and a Summer Bird Camp for youth.
- Co-sponsored Wings Over Water in Blaine and Birch Bay.
- Organized 24 field trips for the public to identify birds in Whatcom and Skagit Counties.
- Hosted the annual campout, with birding field trips, at Pearrygin Lake State Park.
- Built and distributed swallow and chickadee nest boxes.
- Participated in Backyard Habitat and Native Flora Fair, Point Whitehorn Celebration, and Pickford Theater October release of the film "The Messenger".
- Presented to various community groups such as Birchwood Garden Club and Parkway Chateau.
- Wrote four articles for the Bellingham Herald.

### 3. To stimulate action to protect and preserve them for the future.

*Joined with local chapters, Washington State and National Audubon to comment on issues related to public policy implications for birds and their habitat. Issues included:*

- Navy Radar Detection Training
- Mt. Baker DEIS pesticide use
- Migratory forage fish policy
- Columbia River cormorant slaughter
- Excelsior Goldmine permitting
- Army wilderness helicopter training
- National Audubon Sage Grouse Habitat letter
- Mt. Baker geothermal permitting
- Pacific Fisheries Management Council: to amend fish consumption water quality standards
- Expansion of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Support of the North Cascades grizzly bear recovery plan
- Comment on Shell EIS for expansion of oil train traffic in Anacortes
- State Audubon fossil fuel divestment resolution
- Comment on Grays Harbor Westway Imperium Terminal Expansion

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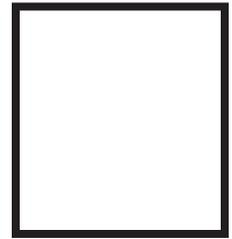
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## **North Cascades Audubon Society Membership**

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](mailto:membership@northcascadesaudubon.org).

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## **Join or Renew (circle one)**

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