

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 48, Issue 1

January 2017

General Membership Meeting with Belinda Rotton and Richard Kessler

Birding on the Skagit and Whatcom Wildlife Areas

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW's) Skagit Wildlife and Whatcom Wildlife Areas are popular public access sites for birding in the Pacific Northwest. Wildlife Area Managers Belinda Rotton and Richard Kessler will provide an overview of site history, current management practices and initiatives, and new project developments at these sites. Information will also be provided on the planning process and opportunities for public involvement at the wildlife areas.

Belinda is the Wildlife Area Manager on the Skagit Wildlife Area focused on waterfowl, wetland management, and salmon recovery. She has worked for WDFW on the Skagit Wildlife Area since 2005. She received her BS in Biology from the University of Arkansas, worked as a biologist for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and received a MS in Wetland Ecology and Management from the University of Missouri.

Richard is a graduate of The Evergreen State College and has worked for WDFW since 1991, starting in the Upland Wildlife Restoration program in Eastern Washington. In 1993 he became Wildlife Area Manager for the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area, Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, McNeil Island, and West Rocky Prairie. Richard worked restoring native prairie, managing the first release site for endangered western pond turtles, and managing hunting dog field trials and a wildlife nest box program using prisoners of McNeil Island. In 2009 Richard started managing the Whatcom Wildlife Area which includes the Lake Terrell, Tenant Lake, Nooksack, BP and Intalco Units. He manages these units for wildlife breeding, winter feeding of waterfowl, pheasant release, waterfowl hunting, fishing and boating.

Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:
January 24th, 7pm
Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room
free & open to the public!

Mark your calendar

for a special presentation in February

**Deepwater Horizon Disaster:
Effects of the Oil Spill on the Local People and Wildlife**
Wednesday, February 15, 7-9pm
Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room
Free & open to the public
See page 6 for more details

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-McGee

Writer/editor: Lynne Givler

If you are interested in contributing, the deadline for the February 2017 issue is...

January 15.

Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McGee at:

content@northcascadesaudubon.org

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Male northern harrier, photo by Andrew Reding

NCAS Holiday Potluck

Cancelled due to weather

Please join us out in the field or at meetings!

Unfortunately our December holiday potluck was cancelled due to the wintry weather. We hope you all stayed safe and warm that night, although we missed seeing all of you and celebrating the season together.

We are sad to have missed our annual event, but we encourage all members to join us throughout the coming year on birding trips across the county, monthly meetings at the Museum, and our annual campout in the spring. Happy birding out there.

Happy holidays and happy new year!

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Lois and George Garlick Memorial Fund

Thank you to our donors!
We raised \$875 with your generous contributions.

North Cascades Audubon would like to acknowledge the generous members who contributed to the Lois and George Garlick Memorial Fund. Our goal was to raise \$800 and you helped us raise \$875.

Bob and Mary Jo Aegerter
Jacquelyn Anderson and Jim Ashby
Jamie K. Donaldson in honor of Gloria Newman
Stephen Frank
Judy and Milt Krieger
Patricia Otto
Diane Smith
Sheila Sondik and Paul Sarvasy
Gayle Stebbings in honor of Paul Woodcock
Karen Summers
Elsie and Richard Zarnowitz
Marion Heath

Lois and George Garlick were members of a small group of dedicated conservationists who founded North Cascades Audubon Society in 1970. This memorable pair of individuals dedicated their lives to the protection of wildlife and the environment of Whatcom County and were instrumental in refurbishing the Whatcom Museum's historic bird collection in the late 1970's. The funds NCAS raised will be used to cover the costs of taxidermy for a trumpeter swan to be added to the Whatcom Museum's bird collection. A plaque will accompany the trumpeter swan, dedicating this gift in memory of the Garlicks.

Open Mondays at Our New Location

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

108 Ohio St.
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Female northern harrier, photo by Andrew Reding

January Field Trips *Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair*

While winter may not provide the best weather to get outdoors, it does provide some of the best birding to be had in the Pacific Northwest. Not only do we get to see many avian species that are absent during warmer months, winter often provides vagrant species that we seldom see in the area. Indeed “chasing” these treasures can be quite the sport!

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. Our field trip leaders, and many of the participants, are enthusiastic about answering questions and helping everyone to focus in on the birds we encounter. 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.

Thursday, January 5, Samish Flats

Time: 9 AM - 1 PM

Trip Leader: Steven Harper

Trip Limit: 11

To register contact Steven Harper:

stevenharper2@msn.com or 360-650-9065

This trip will begin at the Alger Park & Ride, I-5 Exit 240. We’ll 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. Bring water and snacks or lunch to eat on the run. Dress warmly and bring a spotting scope if you have one. We will see bald eagles, rough-legged hawks, northern harriers and red-tailed hawks, and will search for other less common raptors.

Saturday, January 7, 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 the spit and is great for novice as well as experienced birders.

Right: western meadowlarks, photo by Andrew Reding

Thursday, January 19, Padden Creek Watershed

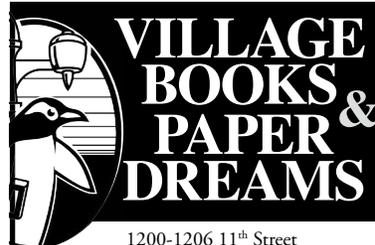
Time: 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Trip Leader: Bob Myhr

To register contact Bob Myhr:

romyhr@comcast.net or 360-933-4352

See wintering waterfowl and resident songbirds at different locations in the watershed - lake, creek, park and estuary. Plan to carpool and come prepared for the weather. All levels of birders welcome!



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Saturday, January 28, Lake Padden

Time: 9AM - Noon

Trip Leader: Ken Salzman

Trip Limit: 12

To register contact Ken Salzman:

360-756-0347 or kpsalzman@comcast.net

Winter at Lake Padden is especially good for waterfowl. Some of the typical ducks to be found are American wigeon, canvasback, scaup, ruddy ducks and bufflehead. In the past two years we have also had Eurasian wigeon. Passerine species will also be present. This is an easy walk and a great trip for beginners. Bring a scope if you have one.

Saturday, February 4, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No Registration Required

Mid-winter can be very exciting at Semiahmoo Spit as you never know what might show up. Co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, this monthly trip covers all of the spit and is appropriate for all levels of birders.

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:

360-756-0347 or kpsalzman@comcast.net.

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Used - Rare - Recent Titles35 Years Book Buying Experience Shows in Our
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Work Group Update***"You are what hope looks like to a bird."*

David Yarnold,

CEO and President, *National Audubon*

A small group of NCAS members have been meeting since last spring to develop an initiative to address the significant and potentially devastating impact of climate change on birds, spurred by National Audubon's Birds and Climate Change Report. As expected, the group had many ideas, but realism and capacity took a front seat to their energy and idealism.

The work group has chosen an initiative that involves outreach and education to community members, with the belief that individual action can make a difference. The proposal is to have an informational table at the Bellingham Farmer's Market one Saturday per month, starting in April 2017. The table will have educational material that focuses on things people can do in their home, yard and community to help offset the effects of climate change on birds. Five locally loved birds impacted by climate change will be featured as the group's ambassador birds: bald eagle, trumpeter swan, rufous hummingbird, violet-green swallow and tree swallow.

This initiative will only be successful if enough volunteers can help staff the table at the Bellingham Farmer's Market. Volunteers will be given a brief training.

The Birds and Climate Change Work Group will be meeting monthly prior to April to make sure everything is in place for successful tabling. The next meeting is Monday, January 9 from 7 – 8:30 pm at the Roots Meeting Room at the Cordata Community Food Coop.

If you have not yet signed up to help with tabling or would like to join the Birds and Climate Change Work Group, please contact:

Pam Borso at borsope@aol.com or 360-319-9004, or
Sue Parrott at parrottdv@yahoo.com or 360-650-9065.

Deepwater Horizon Disaster: Effects of the Oil Spill on the Local People and Wildlife

Wednesday, February 15, 7 – 9 PM

Whatcom Museum: Old City Hall

Don't miss this special presentation by Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation, Gulf Coast Conservation/ Mississippi Flyway at National Audubon. Melanie played a pivotal role in Audubon's response to the 2010 explosion of the offshore drilling rig, the Deepwater Horizon. She initiated wildlife survey and rescue efforts, and provided biological interpretation regarding the relief efforts to news media, the public, and the environmental community. Her talk will focus on the oil spill's effects on people and wildlife, prevention efforts, and her thoughts about the particular risks facing Native Americans and others living by the Salish Sea in the event of an oil spill.



Anna's hummingbirds are among the most common hummingbirds along the Pacific Coast, yet they're anything but common in appearance. With their iridescent emerald feathers and sparkling rose-pink throats, they are more like flying jewelry than birds. Though no larger than a ping-pong ball and no heavier than a nickel, Anna's hummingbirds make a strong impression. In their thrilling courtship displays, males climb up to 130 feet into the air and then swoop to the ground with a curious burst of noise that they produce through their tail feathers.

Size & Shape Tiny among birds, Anna's are medium-sized and stocky for a hummingbird. They have a straight, shortish bill and a fairly broad tail. When perched, wingtips meet the tip of their short tail.

Color Pattern Anna's hummingbirds are mostly green and gray, without any rufous or orange marks on the body. The male's head and throat are covered in iridescent reddish-pink feathers that can look dull brown or gray without direct sunlight.

Behavior Anna's hummingbirds are a blur of motion as they hover before flowers looking for nectar and insects. Listen for the male's scratchy metallic song and look for him perched above head level in trees and shrubs.

Habitat Anna's hummingbirds are common in yards, parks, residential streets, eucalyptus groves, riverside woods, savannahs, and coastal scrub. They readily come to hummingbird feeders and flowering plants, including cultivated species in gardens.

*This information is from www.allaboutbirds.org, maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
Above photos are by Andrew Reding.*

North Cascades Audubon Society

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 5, 2016

Board Members Present: Carol Roberts, Pam Borso, Ken Salzman, Rae Edwards, Steven Harper, Sue Parrott, Paul Woodcock

Gabe Epperson and Rich Bowers from the Whatcom Land Trust came and presented their interactive conservation plan and survey and we participated in providing input. They are seeking input from various community groups and individuals to guide their future acquisitions and management.

1. Additions to Agenda

2. Approval of November Minutes- Approved

3. Treasurer's Report- Sue fielded questions regarding the report. She noted we received a thank you letter from the Northwest Swan Conservation Association. All newsletter advertisers have re-upped for 2017.

4. Communications & Input

- CBC update – Doug is doing a good job helping out Paul with organizing the count. We need a few more people to help out. For 2017, Paul shared his idea about setting up an intro CBC field trip to give people a taste of what it is like before they become fully involved. He is also investigating ways to get kids involved.

Wings Over Water – March 10-12. Paul Bannick will be speaking. NCAS feels that viewing stations are a valuable part of the festival, however they need to be publicized more. In the past lack of publicity has led to underutilization.

- Cherry Point Bird Surveys – We have increased the number of birds we are surveying to 30 species. Because we already have plenty of people that have passed the written test and are eligible to be trained as counters we will not have a class this year. Instead, we will focus our efforts on training these people. Pam and Lyle Anderson may organize and present a short class and field trip on ocean birds.

- Hospitality - We have a new Host person and that is Anne Ziolkowski.

5. Old Business

- Garlick Memorial Award Report and Swan Update – No update on swan preparations. Owen has heard from 6 of the people who donated money, and acknowledgement will be made of their donations in the January newsletter.

Bird Panels at the Whatcom Museum – Pam and Paul have been reviewing the information from the museum staff and providing suggestions on content. Rae agreed to participate in the review.

- Holiday Potluck Update – Carol reported that everything is good to go and we will be buying some meat item to supplement the potluck. Board approved spending up to \$100 on the food.

6. New Business

- Retreat items – Sue would like to review last year's retreat goals to see what we have accomplished. Pam will send out these goals before the retreat. Carol asked if we could also discuss updating and improving the membership database. Other ideas will be solicited via email. Ken Salzman will purchase pizza and Sue will bring deli salads for the retreat. We discussed an email that was submitted to Whatcom Birds regarding using CBC and eBird data for guiding input to the Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance. Pam will follow up with this person and also Judy Krieger who was interested in investigating whether archived data would be helpful.

7. Upcoming Programs

Dec. 12: Holiday Potluck – Doug Brown Slides

Jan. 24: Belinda Rotton and Richard Kessler - Birding on the Skagit and Whatcom Wildlife Refuges

Feb. 15: Melanie Driscoll - Deepwater Horizon Disaster: Effect of the Oil Spill on the Local People and Wildlife

Feb. 28: Steve and Martha Ellis - Loons of the Salish Sea

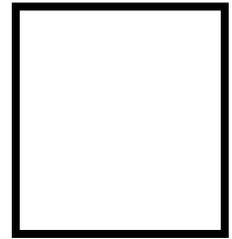
March 28: Matt Christensen and Sarah Brookes - Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society – Stewardship North of the 49th Parallel

April 25: Jonathan White - Tides: The Science and Spirit of the Ocean

May 23: ?

Adjourn - Next Meeting (Planning Retreat): January 2, 2016 5-9 PM WECU Ed Ctr., 311 Holly St, Bellingham, WA

North Cascades Audubon Society
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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.

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