

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 49, Issue 3

March 2018

General Membership Meeting with Pam Borso and Rae Edwards

Landscaping for Wildlife

Discover how thousands of people across the nation are welcoming wildlife from butterflies to birds into their communities. Private citizens throughout our state have made Washington the leader in this movement, creating wildlife habitat in their yards, school grounds, parks and even business landscapes. NCAS President Pam Borso and Bellingham Parks Volunteer Coordinator Rae Edwards will share ways to enhance or create landscapes using native plants to support birds and other wildlife. Making room for wildlife creates more livable and enjoyable communities for citizens of all species!

Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:

March 27th, 7pm

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room
free & open to the public!



In this issue...

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Page</i>
2018 Officer Nominating Committee	2
Youth Scholarships for Conference	3
Native Plants and Birds in Your Library	3
2018 Wings Over Water Festival	3
March Field Trips	4
Spiva Butte Article	5, 6
Birds & Brews Coming Soon	5
Olympic BirdFest 2018	5
February Board Meeting Summary	6
Message from the President	7

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 April 2018 issue is...

March 15.

Send materials to:

content@northcascadesaudubon.org

NCAS Board Members

Officers

President	Pam Borso	360-319-9004
Vice Pres.	Paul Woodcock	360-966-6549
Secretary	Steven Harper	360-650-9065
Treasurer	Sue Parrott	360-650-9065

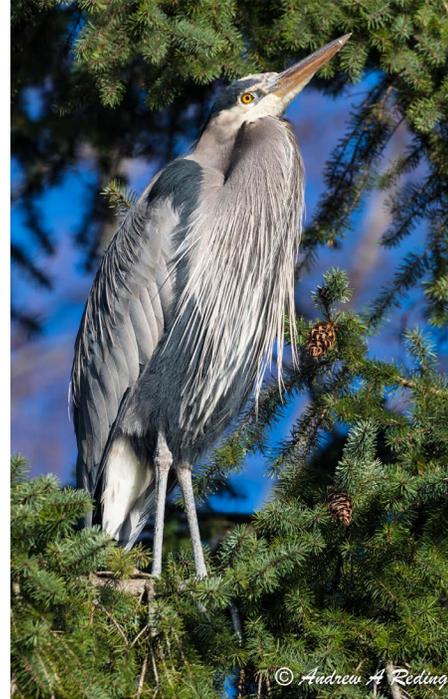
Board Members

Education	Chris Brewer	336-207-7505
Field Trips	Ken Salzman	360-756-0347
Membership	Owen Bamford	360-393-3481
Newsletter	Kelley Palmer-McGee	360-466-8601
Conservation	Steve Irving	360-384-1618
Archives	Judy Krieger	
Programs	Steven Harper	360-650-9065
Scholarship	Nicole Huson	
Website	Jamie Huson	
Member at Large	Rae Edwards	

Associated Persons

Scholarship	Don Burgess
Hospitality	Anne Ziomkowski

If you are interested in volunteering with our Audubon chapter, please contact the President at president@northcascadesaudubon.org



Great blue heron, photo by Andrew Reding

2018 Officer Nominating Committee

Officer nominations for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer must be submitted by April 15 to be published in the May newsletter issue. If you are interested in these positions, or want to nominate someone else, please contact Steven Harper who is coordinating the 2018 nominating committee at secretary@northcascadesaudubon.org.

Nominating committee members:

Steven Harper, Paul Woodcock, Owen Bamford

Be sure to attend the May membership meeting to vote for the next NCAS Officers.

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Youth Scholarships for the Western Field Ornithologists Conference September 26-30, 2018 in Ventura, California

Western Field Ornithologists is pleased to announce the availability of youth scholarships for their 43rd Annual Conference in Ventura. The scholarships are open to youths between the ages of 12 and 22, with five scholarships for those in grades 6 through 12, and two scholarships for college students working towards a bachelor's degree.

The WFO conference includes scientific presentations, workshops, field trips, sound and visual identification panels, plus social activities. The conference is an opportunity to meet those who work in field ornithology, bird conservation, biology and other fields, and to mix with other youths who share your interests.

The application deadline is April 28. To apply go to:
https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/docs/2018/WFO_2018_Conference-Youth_Scholarship_Application.pdf

For additional details about the conference see: <https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php>
Registration opens in June.

“Native Plants and Birds” Coming to Your Local Libraries!

Saturdays

Blaine: March 3 at 2 pm

South Whatcom: March 10 at 2pm

Ferndale: March 24 at 2 pm

Deming: April 14 at 3pm

Discover the benefits of native plants in your yard for birds, bees, bugs and beauty! North Cascades Audubon Society will share how and why growing native plants will improve your backyard habitat. You'll pick up great gardening ideas your birds will love and plenty of materials to get you started.

2018 Wings Over Water Northwest Birding Festival

Friday - Sunday, March 16-18

The 16th Annual Wings Over Water (WOW) Festival celebrates the incredible variety of migratory birds that flock to the coastal waters of Drayton Harbor, Birch Bay and Semiahmoo Bay. Designated as an Important Birding Area (IBA) on the Pacific Flyway, this area is one of the country's premier bird viewing areas where you can observe a large variety of birds close at hand. Activities at the festival include wildlife field trips, bird observation stations, speakers, workshops, kids' activities, and wildlife cruises.



Be sure to check wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com as the festival time approaches for more details.

CAUTION: Bird feeding makes you happy!

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

108 Ohio Street
Bellingham
360-734-0969

WildBirdChalet.com



March Field Trips

Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair

As winter comes to a close and spring begins, birding in the Northwest can be exciting. Already there are signs of an early spring. For all those who prefer better weather and the beginning of migration, March is the time to grab your binoculars and start having fun.

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. 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, March 3, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required

With spring on the way, this trip to the spit should be productive and a lot of fun. The trip covers all of the spit and is co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Thursday, March 22, Lake Terrell

Time: 9 – 11 AM; meet at Lake Terrell parking lot

Trip Leader: Bob Myhr

To register contact Bob at romyhr@comcast.net or 360-933-4352

This will be a short trip to Lake Terrell looking for early swallows, waterfowl and passerines. A Discover Pass is required to park at the site, so carpooling is encouraged.

Right: foraging lesser scaup, photo by Andrew Reding

Saturday, April 7, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required

Spring is here and migration is in full swing. Co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, the trip covers all of the spit. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Sunday, April 8, 9:30 am

FREE FAMILY BIRD WALK:

Scudder Pond and Whatcom Falls Park

Meet at Bloedel Donovan parking lot:

2214 Electric Avenue

Look who's here! Bring the family on a spring jaunt by Scudder Pond and into Whatcom Falls Park. Audubon birders will engage kids and adults in exploring water and forest birds and learning how they live in urban nature. Join us for as long as you like on this easy walk on flat ground. It's suitable for children 5 through teens, but all are welcome. Dress for the weather and come rain or shine. Bring binoculars if you have them.

For more information contact Chris at 336-207-7505 or chrisboyd353@gmail.com



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Creating a Nature Preserve in Central Washington or A Conservation “Field of Dreams”

By Ferdi Businger

This piece has been shortened to fit into the newsletter. The full letter can be found at the NCAS website.

A little over five years ago I made a trip to central Washington to look at a large piece of property that was listed for sale. It was more an excuse to go on a road trip than any serious intention to buy a 1000- acre “rattlesnake ranch” as one friend later dubbed it. Nevertheless, the realtor Mike Jernquist insisted on driving five hours to show me the land. As we walked it, I asked him jokingly how much he had paid the hawks, ducks, and herons to put on a show for me that day. It was love at first sight and this magic place, having called me, now owned me. It was a big stretch for me to buy this land. I had no money in the bank, but owned two properties on Sinclair Island, which included my primary residence. I needed to borrow money for the down payment, and to sell almost everything I owned to make it work. Despite my lifelong interest in conservation, I did not initially set out to create a wildlife preserve. I had no idea what I was walking into when I bought the property. I didn’t know it was prime sage grouse habitat, that the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife had tried to buy it years earlier, and that the Nature Conservancy had also expressed an interest. All I knew was that this was an exquisite landscape.

After I had taken the plunge, I was contacted by Michael Brown who worked with Pheasants Forever and the US Department of Agriculture. He was interested in applying for grants to do wetland restoration work on the property. I soon reached out to the Foster Creek Conservation

Continued on page 6 ...



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—AND—
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Birds & Brews Coming This May

We are excited to announce another Birds & Brews event. Keep an eye out in our April newsletter for the exact date, time and location. It’s sure to be another great day spent connecting with the community over a pint and our shared passion for birds!

Olympic BirdFest 2018

Friday-Sunday, April 13-15, Sequim, WA

Visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest - marbled murrelets, rhinoceros auklets, harlequin ducks, American dippers, black oystercatchers, long-tailed ducks, and more. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, a live auction and raffle, a gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker is nature guide/photographer Claudio Vidal. Join our festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 10-12. Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon. Extend your festival with our Neah Bay post-trip on April 16-17: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington. Program information and registration can be found at:

www.olympicbirdfest.org



Northwestern crow, 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:

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

Continued from page 5 ...

District, the US Fish & Wildlife's Wenatchee office, and the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT). Tours of the property followed. There was enormous enthusiasm for protecting this land and I was easily convinced that this was its highest use. More difficult was figuring out how to do it. This is where a very good friend of mine and fellow conservationist, Valerie Tarico, stepped in. Valerie and her husband, Brian Arbogast, offered to put up a \$25,000 matching grant, and she offered to partner with me on the fundraising campaign. Early on it became clear that public funds were going to be hard to come by in this political climate, and that a private effort was our best hope. I also felt that the land might be in better hands if it was owned by a private land trust. Valerie's encouragement provided the catalyst to move things forward.

So where do things stand today? Wetland restoration work is mostly completed. A campaign is underway to raise money so that the CDLT can buy 1394 acres, including Spiva Butte, a four-acre lake, three springs and riparian corridors. The plan is that CDLT will own the land in fee and the Foster Creek Conservation District will be given a conservation easement. They will then co-manage the property. As of today, we have raised two-thirds of the total \$650,000 campaign cost, which includes the discounted cost of the land. (I have agreed to sell it for \$44,000 less than I paid for it.) A very generous couple has donated the entire \$180,000 stewardship cost and the CDLT has kicked in its staff costs to the tune of \$20,000. We have also raised an additional \$185,000 to date from private donors, including a \$7000 donation from Conservation Northwest.

So what does this property have to offer in the way of conservation? There are sage grouse leks on two adjacent properties. It is also used by sharp-tailed grouse, sage thrashers, great horned and short-eared owls, and northern harriers. A western king bird pair nests in the same aspen grove every spring. Pheasants and quail are common and mountain bluebirds are occasionally seen. Both the black-crowned night-heron and the great blue heron frequent the lake, in the company of numerous duck species. Beavers, badgers, porcupine, mule deer, jack rabbits, cottontail rabbits, and coyotes are just some of the mammals that have been seen. There are populations of pygmy short-horned lizards and western skinks. Snakes include wandering garter snakes, western yellow-bellied racers, great basin gopher snakes, and northern Pacific rattlesnakes. The top of Spiva Butte is a location where butterflies of several species do their "hill-topping", a wonderful sight. And the wildflowers are epic.

Since I'm an avid photographer, I've created a book, *Spiva Butte Nature Preserve*. Spiva Butte is the high point on the property, named after the original homesteading family. I'm currently working on a second volume. When the project is completed I will make a third and final volume and credit everyone who has donated to, and in other ways supported, this effort. I feel enormously grateful for all the help, both financial and moral, that this "field of dreams" has inspired. A big thank you to the entire conservation community, as well as to my ranching and wheat farming neighbors who have been most gracious in their support.

NCAS Board Meeting 2-5-18 Summary

Note: See the NCAS website for the complete minutes.

The Board met at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship at 7 pm, Feb. 5 and welcomed two new potential board members, Robert Kaye and Kirsten Anderson. Robert is interested in working on conservation efforts and Kirsten would like to work on publicity. The Education and Scholarship Committees presented updates to their yearly work plans.

The Board made the following decisions:

- Send thank you notes to Ken Salzman and Twink Coffman for their service on the Board.
- Establish a nominating committee to choose new officers for the coming year.
- Change the deadline for scholarship applications to May 15.
- Provide \$700 to assist with the construction of an educational sign at Derby Pond on the proper feeding of waterfowl in partnership with the City of Bellingham.
- Contribute \$1,000 in matching education funds to the Whatcom Land Trust provided they receive the Cornell Lab grant.
- Provide a summary of Board meeting minutes for the newsletter instead of the full set of minutes and use the additional space for educational articles on birds.
- Hold the 2018 Christmas Bird Count potluck at the Community Food Coop Community Room.
- Hold future monthly Board meetings at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship.
- Take advantage of the Vancouver Avian Research Center offer of a field trip for Board members to the facility in May.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Message from the NCAS President

NCAS Goals for 2018

Each January, the North Cascades Audubon Society Board of Directors holds a planning retreat. At the retreat the Board reviews accomplishments from the previous year, sets goals and priorities for the coming year, and approves a budget that will allow NCAS to achieve these goals.

Keeping in mind our three-pronged mission statement (to promote the study and conservation of birds and their environment; to increase public awareness; and to stimulate action to preserve and protect birds and the natural environment), the Board agreed to continue the following activities in 2018:

- Coordinate the annual Christmas Bird Count
 - Collaborate with RE Sources to continue data collection through the Cherry Point Bird Surveys
 - Host birding field trips throughout the year
 - Continue NCAS partnership with the Whatcom Museum through a regular monthly presence at the Edson Bird Gallery
 - Hold eight membership meetings per year as well as a holiday potluck, with a speaker at each event; and publish eight newsletters per year
 - Coordinate and host an annual campout (at Pearrygin State Park again this year)
 - Continue to work with Whatcom Land Trust and conduct bird surveys at select Land Trust properties
 - Offer scholarships to WWU students
 - Participate in Whatcom County events such as Wings Over Water and Backyard Habitat & Native Flora Fair
- The Board selected some new areas of focus in 2018, and with the recent formation of an Education Committee, is well on its way to achieving some of the goals noted below:*
- Increase outreach to young adults, children and families by hosting events appropriate to these age groups
 - Expand outreach to Whatcom County through presentations and field trips throughout the county
 - Develop conservation education programs, including a new Plants and Birds presentation in collaboration with the Native Plant Society and local nurseries
 - Create a Volunteer Coordinator position on the Board to schedule volunteers to table at educational presentations and to recruit new volunteers
 - Reformat the NCAS web page
 - Develop a bald eagle interpretive program
 - Partner with the Whatcom Land Trust and submit a grant to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to provide educational programs
 - Increase active membership base and member donations

The Board looks forward to an active and exciting year in 2018. Birds depend on us to protect the habitat and natural environments they need to thrive and survive. Please join us in whatever way you can. Remember, you are what hope looks like to a bird!

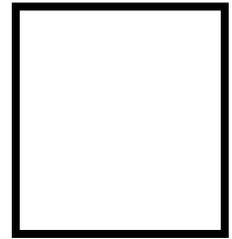
Pam Borso



*Common merganser,
photo by Andrew Reding*

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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.

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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