

# The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

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

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May 2019

## General Membership Meeting with Jeff Duda

### Elwha River Dam Removal and River Restoration: Progress Report Five Years After the Completion of Dam Removal

After decades of debate, planning, and environmental impact studies, the largest planned dam removal project in history was conducted on the Elwha River in Washington from 2011 to 2014. The story of this river, with rugged headwaters, protected wilderness, legendary and culturally important salmon runs, and two hydroelectric dams whose placement marshaled wholesale socioeconomic and ecological changes, has become an iconic saga of change, perseverance and renewal. The two dams blocked fish migrations and disrupted sediment transport for a century, disrupting the structure and function of the Elwha River. Removal of the 64 and 32-meter tall dams and the release of a large portion of the 21 million cubic meters of stored reservoir sediment, has provided a living laboratory to study the patterns, processes and outcomes of dam removal from multiple scientific perspectives. This presentation will provide a tour of what has been called a “Science Disneyland”, share progress on the rebirth of a river ecosystem, and place this project into a larger perspective of dam removals and river restoration in the 21st century. In particular, an update of the status of salmon recolonization into waters that they had not seen in a century will be provided.

Jeff Duda is a research ecologist with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) stationed at the Western Fisheries Research Center in Seattle. At USGS for 20 years, he has conducted research to determine the ecological effects of human activities and natural disturbance regimes on a wide variety of aquatic and terrestrial organisms and ecosystems throughout the United States. Since 2004, Jeff has developed research programs in freshwater, estuarine, and marine ecosystems during and following the dam decommissioning on the Elwha River. For eight years he was the team leader of the multidisciplinary USGS Coastal Habitats in Puget Sound Elwha team. He was a Principal Investigator on a recent project synthesizing the physical and ecological effects of dam removal at the USGS John Wesley Powell Center for Analysis and Synthesis. He has published over 60 scientific journal articles and reports, which can be found online at <https://www.usgs.gov/staff-profiles/jeffrey-duda>.

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

**May 28, 7pm**

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room

*free & open to the public!*

### Save the Date!

Join a celebration of all our wonderful volunteers on Tuesday, July 30 from 6 to 8 pm at the Fairhaven Park picnic shelter. North Cascades Audubon will host a summer picnic providing food for all.

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## 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 September 2019 issue is...

**August 15.**

Send materials to:

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

## NCAS Board Members

### Officers

President	Steven Harper
Vice Pres.	Jamie Huson
Secretary	Deborah Kaye
Treasurer	Sue Parrott

### Board Members

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Education/Volunteers	Pam Borso
Field Trips	Paul Woodcock
Hospitality	Anne Ziomkowski
Membership	Owen Bamford
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### Advisory Board

Member at Large	Rae Edwards
Member at Large	Steve Irving
Member at Large	Chris Brewer
Scholarship	Don Burgess

*If you are interested in volunteering with our Audubon chapter, please contact the President at [president@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto:president@northcascadesaudubon.org)*

## NCAS Membership to Vote on Proposed NCAS Bylaw Amendments at May 28th Membership Meeting

It has been nearly ten years since amendments to the North Cascades Audubon Society Bylaws have been approved by the membership. The NCAS Board of Directors recently completed a thorough review of the Bylaws and is proposing a package of amendments. The proposed amendments will allow the Board and NCAS to operate more effectively and will remedy inconsistencies found in the Bylaws.

The proposed amendments must be approved by a majority vote of members in good standing (dues are current) at a membership meeting. The Board will be asking for a vote on the proposed Bylaw amendments at the May 27th membership meeting.

Hard copies of the current Bylaws and proposed Bylaw amendments will be available for review at the May 28th membership meeting. You can also review the two documents on the NCAS website at <https://www.northcascadesaudubon.org/about-us>

If you have any questions about the proposed amendments prior to the May 28th membership meeting, please contact Sue Parrott, Governance Committee, at [sparrott@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto:sparrott@northcascadesaudubon.org).

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## Pearrygin Lake Campout and Field Trips: Thursday, May 30 through Sunday, June 2

Steven Harper, President

Our twelfth annual NCAS Campout will be held at Pearrygin Lake State Park group camp with great people, great weather and of course great birding. There is lots of room for people with tents. Vans or small pickup top-pers are allowed in the parking area. RVs and trailers are not allowed, however reservations can be made in the Pearrygin Lake State Park Campground. Picnic tables and grates are available for cooking (bring your own food) and water and a toilet are on site. A swimming area is also on site to enjoy after a warm day of birding. Showers and full-service bathrooms can be accessed 1 ½ miles away in the main campground. Reservations can also be made at motels in the Winthrop area for those not wanting to camp.

Of course the primary focus of the campout is birds. Field trips will be scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. Campers are free to roam on their own on Thursday and Friday or set up impromptu field trips. There will be plenty of time for lounging and enjoying the sunny and clear weather and for visiting. In past years several people have brought their musical instruments and we've had a sing-along on one of the evenings. Other entertainment is also appreciated! Cost is \$10/night for each party.

Reservations are required. To make a reservation or if you have any questions please email or call Steven Harper at [sharper@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto:sharper@northcascadesaudubon.org) or 360-650-9065.

## 2019 NCAS Officer Nominations

NCAS members should be sure to attend the May general membership meeting to vote for our 2019 officers. All current officers remain eligible and all have agreed to run for reelection in their current positions. The 2019 candidates:

**President** - Steven Harper  
**Vice President** - Jamie Huson  
**Secretary** - Deborah Kaye  
**Treasurer** - Sue Parrott

Additional nominations may still be made and accepted at the May meeting.

### We Value Your Community Support: Join or Donate Today!

With your efforts and involvement, the North Cascades Audubon Society is thriving in Whatcom County! We pride ourselves in providing all of our services free to our community. We hope that you join us in sustaining this vision by donating, becoming a member or by including NCAS in your estate plans. See the last page of the newsletter for a membership sign-up form.



Swainson's thrush, photo by Andrew Reding

© Andrew A. Reding

## What's the Point?

**Saturday, June 15: 9am to 1pm**  
**Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve**

Come explore the intertidal world on the lowest Saturday tide of June at Whatcom County Park's Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve. The low tide provides a chance to discover sea anemones, sea cucumbers, crabs, a wide diversity of seaweeds and many more fascinating inhabitants who are normally out of sight under water and foam. Spend high quality time in small groups with naturalists who double as storytellers, recounting the incredible life stories and survival strategies of the intertidal residents.

There will be beach tours for kids and adults, a geology tour explaining the area's geologic history, plant and bird walks along the ¾-mile trail through upland forest, a sea shell display on the beach where you can find out which animal lives in what shell, and a watershed model that demonstrates how storm water can pollute the Salish Sea. What's the Point is an annual event sponsored by the Whatcom Land Trust and the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, with participation by NCAS and several other organizations. Where did the name What's the Point come from? Well, the Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve is located northwest of Cherry Point and southeast of Point Whitehorn. The "point" is- come and get to know your magnificent park and beach!

## CAUTION: Bird feeding makes you happy!

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

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 Bellingham  
 360-734-0969

[WildBirdChalet.com](http://WildBirdChalet.com)



## May & June Field Trips

*Paul Woodcock, Field Trip Chair*

The next few months provide what I feel are the most exciting birding opportunities of the entire year, the return of our neotropical migrants, colorful friends such as western tanager, Bullock's oriole, Wilson's warbler and black-headed grosbeak. These and other species add color and lots of excitement to all our lives, especially to those who seek out their company. The songs of these travelers added to those of our breeding, resident species enrich the aural landscape of our yards, parks and forests, especially at this season.

This is not like watching ducks on the water, though it can be as easy as sitting on a park bench listening to the chorus of Swainson's thrushes at dusk. Should you wish to take on the challenge, there can be a primal thrill in finding that Townsend's warbler sixty feet over your head in a Douglas fir, despite the pain in your neck. We urge you all to spend some time outdoors enjoying our northwest spring. Simply smell the blooming landscape and take in the sounds of our breeding birds or, if you like, join us on one of the outings listed below.

### Information you should know about NCAS field trips:

Our field trips are free and open to anyone who is interested. Bring your friends!

Beginning birders are very welcome.

Carpooling is encouraged and even required for some sites with limited parking.

Preregistration is often required to limit numbers and reduce disturbance.

Dress for the weather, in layers, and wear waterproof clothing and footgear as needed.

Severe weather may cancel a trip; contact your leader if concerned or if you cancel.

Bring binoculars, scope, field guide or a necessary parking pass if you have them.

Pets are not allowed on field trips.

Like most organizations, NCAS now requires participants to sign a waiver to participate.

We are always looking for trip leaders or assistants. If you're interested, please contact us.

### Saturday, May 4: Semiahmoo Spit

**Time:** 9AM - Noon

**Trip Leader:** Paul Woodcock

No registration required

Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

This is the month to switch gears out at Semiahmoo. Most of our wintering waterfowl have departed north to the interior, so we will divide our time between the beaches and the wooded shoreline. Expect to see rufous hummingbirds, orange-crowned and Wilson's warblers, common yellowthroats, and possibly black-headed grosbeaks as well as our charming local marine and forest residents. Whether you are a beginner or a long-time birder, you will enjoy being part of an amiable group of regular participants on this monthly outing cosponsored by Whatcom County Parks. Beginners will find experienced birders willing to share their knowledge.

### Saturday, May 11: Whatcom Creek Trail, Raptor Reach

**Time:** 9AM - Noon

**Trip Leader:** Richard Carpenter

No registration required. Meet at parking on east side of Woburn Street just south of Whatcom Creek.

Join Richard on "World Migratory Bird Day" to check out migrant and resident birds along Whatcom Creek from Raptor Reach east into Whatcom Falls Park. Expect to see chickadees, sparrows, wrens, woodpeckers, towhees, finches, and warblers and other migrants. Also, there might be a raptor or two along this City of Bellingham trail which traverses the fire zone of the 1999 pipeline explosion.



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### **Wednesday, May 22: South Whatcom County WLT Lands**

**Time:** 7:30AM - 2PM

**Trip Leader:** Bob Myhr

**Registration Required:** Contact Bob at:  
romyhr@comcast.net or 360-933-4352

The group will meet at Fairhaven Park parking lot to carpool to south Lake Whatcom, Samish headwaters, Saxon Road, and other Whatcom Land Trust areas. A Washington Ornithological Society field trip last year found 48 species at these sites. Expect to find woodpeckers, swallows, grosbeaks, warblers and raptors. Please prepare for the weather and bring a snack, and please be aware of beginning and ending time. Space will be limited, so be sure to register soon.

### **Sunday, May 26: Point Whitehorn, Beginning Birding by Ear**

**Time:** 9AM - Noon

**Trip Leaders:** Phil Calise and Pam Borso

**Trip Limit:** 15

**Registration Required:** Contact Pam Borso at:  
borsope@aol.com or 360-319-9004

Join Pam and Phil to hone your skills in identifying birds by ear as you learn how to recognize avian species by their calls and songs. This will be a fun trip for beginners as well as experienced birders who want to stay in tune with our feathered friends. We will find resident species of woodland and marine habitats as well as some newly arrived migrants.

### **Saturday, June 1: Semiahmoo Spit**

**Time:** 9AM - Noon

**Trip Leader:** Lynne Givler

No registration required

Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

Another first Saturday field trip like the May 4 trip but with a different leader and probably some different birds too. Every month is different at Semiahmoo so take part regularly. Summer birding at Semiahmoo includes lots of breeding songbirds as well as the usual resident species. Warblers will be singing as well as willow and Pacific-slope flycatchers and you might see a summering harlequin duck or black oystercatchers on the beach.

NOTE: Semiahmoo trips will continue through the summer on July 6 and August 3.

### **Saturday, June 8: Boulevard Park, Taylor Dock**

**Time:** 9AM - Noon

**Trip Leader:** Richard Carpenter

No registration required

Meet at Boulevard Park parking lot near the coffee shop.

Come and celebrate "World Ocean Day" with Richard and fellow birders at the Bellingham waterfront on a birding stroll to Fairhaven checking out the gulls, cormorants and summer ducks plus a variety of songbirds along the way. Swallows, sparrows and finches will be present plus probably some surprises.

### **Wednesday, June 12: Hoag Pond, Padden Lagoon and Mud Bay**

**Time:** 8- 11AM

**Trip Leader:** Bob Myhr

**Registration Required:** Contact Bob at  
romyhr@comcast.net or 360-933-4352

The group will meet at the Fairhaven Park parking lot to carpool for an urban birding excursion to observe nesting songbirds and recent fledglings. Expect a variety of migrant and resident species including sparrows, warblers, woodpeckers, herons and more. Everyone is welcome.

### **Friday, June 22 Family Bird Walk: Scudder Pond and Whatcom Falls Park**

**Time:** 9 AM at Bloedel Donovan parking lot,  
2214 Electric Avenue

No registration required

**Contact:** Chris Brewer at 336-207-7505 or  
chrisboyd353@gmail.com for more information

Who's that bird? Bring the family on an outdoor adventure to discover birds in some birding hotspots. Local Audubon birders will engage kids and adults in an exploration of water and forest birds. This easy walk on flat ground is suitable for children 5 and up with an adult. Walk with us for as long as you like. We'll end around 11:30.

Dress for the weather and come rain or shine. Bring binoculars if you have them; some are available through Audubon.

## Stimpson Family Nature Reserve

*By Lorraine Wilde (writing on behalf of the Whatcom Land Trust)*

Many don't know about or haven't yet explored this hidden gem of Whatcom County. Near Sudden Valley, Stimpson Family Nature Reserve lets you explore a largely undisturbed second-growth forest and two ponds along a four-mile loop trail. Due to the diverse, high-quality habitat, the reserve supports a variety of bird species.

Its path to becoming a nature reserve was a winding one. It resulted from a partnership forged between the Stimpson family, Whatcom Land Trust, Whatcom County Parks, Western Washington University (WWU) and the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

In the fall of 2000, seven Stimpson siblings donated 116 beautiful acres in the Lake Whatcom Watershed to Whatcom Land Trust. The Trust sold watershed conservation and recreational use easements to Whatcom County. Those proceeds were used to buy an adjoining 80 acres purchased from the Trillium Corporation and to set up a fund to develop and manage the property. WWU also donated two small, forgotten but critically-located parcels to the Trust.

In September 2002, the DNR signed an agreement making the 138-acre Lake Louise Natural Resources Conservation Area a part of the reserve, turning over management of the now 350-acre property to Whatcom County Parks.

On October 11, 2003 three generations of Stimpsons gathered to help dedicate the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve. Susan Stimpson Trimmingham said at the dedication that in its purest sense this reserve "is a gift from our community, for our community; from the past, for our present and future."

The 4-mile loop trail skirts a vibrant beaver pond, and weaves through a mature forest of Douglas fir and cedar trees, beside many pocket wetlands, along streams and over sandstone ridges. The reserve has remained a quiet place to experience the intricate grandeur of nature. Interpretive signs encourage adults and children to discover what nature is all about.

A wide variety of native plants, including towering trees and well-worn snags, support a thriving variety of birds. Northern flicker, red-breasted sapsucker, and pileated, downy or hairy woodpeckers can be spotted year-round. You might also see the red-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, evening grosbeak, Hutton's vireo or Pacific wren. Birds that migrate here to nest include western tanager, Swainson's thrush, warbling vireo, black-headed grosbeak, and Pacific-slope and willow flycatchers. Nesting warblers might include common yellowthroat and orange-crowned, yellow-rumped, black-throated gray, Wilson's and Townsend's warblers. Don't forget to look for ring-necked and wood ducks, buffleheads, mallards, and hooded mergansers in the ample wetland and pond areas. Migrants passing through the area and other surprises might also be present, depending on the time of year.

To get there from Bellingham, take the Whatcom Transit Authority Bus 512 toward Sudden Valley. It departs every hour from the Downtown Station (check the schedule before you go). By car, head out Lakeway Drive to Geneva, turn right on Austin Street, which becomes Lake Louise Road and drive approximately 1.25 miles to the reserve. You'll see a sign and parking lot on the left. Or access Lake Louise Road from the south via Cain Lake Road to Lake Whatcom Boulevard. Use your birding skills to help with conservation of this marvelous public resource by joining Whatcom Land Trust for their Bio Blitz Work Parties on May 10 and/or 11. Volunteers and staff will be removing invasive species and gathering biological inventories. Check the Trust's Facebook events and their website's Stewardship page for more details.

*Right top: WLT volunteer work party  
Right bottom: barred owl  
Photos by: Alan Fritzberg*

## Go Birding and Make a Difference!

Are seabirds in the southern Salish Sea increasing or decreasing in numbers? Which species are changing their range? Help us find out. The Puget Sound Seabird Survey (PSSS) is a community and citizen science project managed by Seattle Audubon that empowers volunteer birdwatchers to gather valuable data on wintering seabird populations across the southern Salish Sea.

You can contribute to this vital seabird science by joining the thirteenth season of this exciting project. We are now recruiting enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers to help us monitor the status of our local wintering seabirds. Training on survey methodology will be provided at a location near you in September and early October. Volunteers should ideally be able to identify Puget Sound's seabird species and be available on the first Saturday of each month, October through April, to conduct a 30-minute survey. But, if determining between lesser and greater scaup is a challenge, we'll team you up with more knowledgeable surveyors.

*Learn more, including training locations, at [www.seabirdsurvey.org](http://www.seabirdsurvey.org) and email Toby Ross, Senior Science Manager [toby@seattleaudubon.org](mailto:toby@seattleaudubon.org) if you would like more information or to take part.*



## Summary of Board Meeting: March 4, 2019

The Board met at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship from 7 to 9 pm on March 4th and took the following actions and/or discussed the following issues:

- Patrick Varnes, scholarship recipient, shared his work on an ultrasonic device he created called the Crab Tracker, which he plans to use to chart the distribution of native and non-native crab (invasive European green crabs) species in the Salish Sea.
- The Board voted to approve the 2019 budget.
- The Board agreed to acknowledge donation amounts on all correspondence and to add language regarding our organization's non-profit status and tax deductible contributions to membership acknowledgement post-cards.
- The Governance Committee will submit a draft of proposed changes to the bylaws for the Board to consider at the April Board meeting. This timeline will allow for the Committee and Board members to resolve any issues and finalize proposed amendments to the bylaws by the May Board meeting. Members will be notified via email of the proposed changes 15 days prior to the May membership meeting with a vote on the bylaws conducted at the May membership meeting.
- The Board agreed to incorporate a brief report by one standing committee chair per membership meeting as a way to highlight the committee's efforts and to generate interest in volunteering for NCAS.
- The Board voted to combine Publicity and Newsletter into one committee.

**HENDERSON BOOKS**

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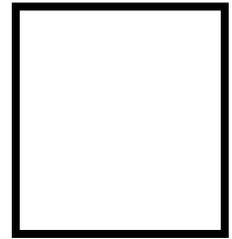
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The Avalanche is the newsletter of the North Cascades Audubon Society, PO Box 5805, Bellingham, WA 98227. It is published 8 times a year; subscriptions start at \$20 per year. The editors welcome articles, artwork, photographs, and letters. Opinions 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. Paper newsletters are provided to current, paid members. Help support us - and receive a paper newsletter - by joining the local chapter 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).

Please check your mailing labels for accuracy, including the expiration date. To make any necessary changes, please send an email to [membership@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto: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
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other
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