

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 51 Issue 6

September 2019

General Membership Meeting with Mary McCann and Bob Sundstrom BirdNote

Join us for a special evening with BirdNote, the popular radio program heard on KNKX and over 200 other public radio stations in the US. BirdNote narrator Mary McCann will read selected stories from the book, *Chirps, Quirks and 100 Stories from the Popular Public Radio Show*. Bob Sundstrom, BirdNote's lead writer, will share his scientific knowledge and behind-the-scenes insights about writing for radio.

BirdNote began in 2004 under the auspices of Seattle Audubon and is a product and vision of a passionate group of individuals dedicated to birds and the environment. To bring BirdNote to life, a team was gathered to craft compelling stories about the intriguing ways of birds, and ensure scientific accuracy. Dedicated staff, volunteers, and contractors, along with advisors from KPLU 88.5FM (now KNKX 88.5FM), helped form the final professional product. Generous donations from Seattle area benefactors helped make the idea a reality and BirdNote was brought to the airwaves in February 2005.

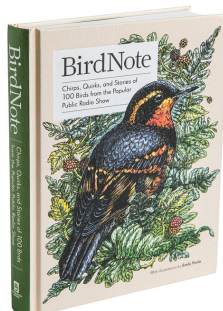
In 2006, Seattle Audubon made the decision to fledge BirdNote as a separate organization, free to pursue a focused creative effort. That nonprofit is known as "Tune In to Nature.org". BirdNote has now expanded to over 200 public radio stations across the country every day and can be found online at any time at Birdnote.org. Each show is scheduled to coincide with the time of year when it's possible to see or hear the featured bird and is designed to inspire people to listen, look, and exclaim, "Oh, that's what that is!"

Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:

September 24, 7pm

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room

free & open to the public!



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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: Kirsten Anderson

Writer/editor: Lynne Givler

Writer/editor: Alison Henshaw

If you are interested in contributing, the deadline for the October 2019 issue is...

September 15.

Send materials to:

kanderson@northcascadesaudubon.org

NCAS Board Members

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

Board Members

Conservation	Robert Kaye
Education/Volunteers	Pam Borso
Education	Chris Brewer
Field Trips	Paul Woodcock
Hospitality	Anne Ziomkowski
Membership	Owen Bamford
Newsletter/Publicity	Kirsten Anderson
Programs	Steven Harper
Scholarships	Nicole Huson
Website	Jamie Huson

Advisory Board

Member at Large	Rae Edwards
Scholarships	Don Burgess

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

Learn how to use eBird:

The eBird mobile app supports bird conservation and can improve your bird ID skills. Recently, it's become much easier to use. If you have questions or would like to give it a try, NCAS member Pauline Sterin has volunteered to show eBird to any interested birders, one-on-one.

Contact her at notesps@icloud.com to arrange a meeting.

Summary of Board Meeting:

July 1, 2019

The Board met at the Whatcom Land Trust from 7 to 9 pm on July 1st and took the following actions and/or discussed the following issues:

- For the record, the Board confirmed that all of the proposed changes to the bylaws were unanimously approved, by more than the required 25 members in good standing, at the membership meeting on May 28, 2019.
- The Board voted to make Advisory Board members Kirsten Andersen, Nicole Huson and Chris Brewer full NCAS Board members per our new bylaws.
- The Board agreed to schedule next year's Pearrygin Lake camp out for May 28-31, 2020.

All Board minutes can be found on our website: www.northcascadesaudubon.org/board-meeting-minutes

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Harrison Reserve-Kendall Community Outdoor Education Initiative Update

This initiative is a collaboration with Whatcom Land Trust (lead), North Cascades Audubon, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Whatcom Conservation District, the Mount Baker School District and Kendall Elementary PTA. It is providing environmental education to rural, underserved elementary school students using a 5.4-acre site owned by Whatcom Land Trust and 10 acres of additional pond and wetlands located adjacent to Kendall Elementary School. To facilitate the initiative the site is being replanted with bird-friendly plant species, and a boardwalk and viewing platform/bird blind will be constructed.

NCAS Role: NCAS is responsible for raising money for the viewing platform/bird blind, for assistance procuring birding education resources for Kendall Elementary School, for guidance on bird-friendly plants for habitat restoration, and other assistance related to birding education. The birding education program will be integrated with the bird-friendly habitat restoration and our partners' salmon and water quality curriculums. This will help students develop a better understanding of the conservation value of the connected natural systems of Harrison Reserve and learn actions they can take to improve natural systems function.

Last spring and this fall approximately 5,800 red osier dogwood, Sitka willow and Douglas spirea have been or will be planted with grant money received from National Audubon. The planting was done with guidance by the Land Trust but was primarily accomplished by students from 11 classrooms at Kendall Elementary School. Construction of the 500' boardwalk and viewing platform is taking much longer than anticipated because of the number of permits required by the myriad of agencies having jurisdiction over the wetlands. To date, a wetland delineation and geotech survey are finished, County permits are drafted, construction contractors have been lined up, and we are waiting on final designs from the engineer. If we have a dry autumn, we will hopefully build the boardwalk before the end of the year.

Fundraising Goal: NCAS has committed to raising at least \$11,000 for this program, including \$5,500 from our members. So far, thanks to generous donors, we have raised \$3,450 but we still need to raise an additional \$2,050.

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.



How Can You Help? Please consider donating money to the Harrison Reserve Initiative. Donations are tax deductible and if donated as part of your retirement RMD, tax free. All donations will be matched dollar for dollar. Donations can be sent to our mailing address.

For more information on the project please contact Steven Harper at sharper@northcascadesaudubon.org or 360-650-9065.



Kendall Elementary students help out at a recent work party, photo courtesy of Whatcom Land Trust

CAUTION: Bird feeding makes you happy!

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

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September Field Trips *Paul Woodcock, Field Trip Chair*

August is about to make its exit and fall is in the air. Shorebird migration is well under way and many of our neotropical migrants have already headed south while others will soon follow. Young birds from this summer are learning how to survive in their environment. This is also the season when NCAS begins a new year of meetings, programs and field trips. So if you have not engaged with us before this is a good time to get started. Late summer and early autumn is usually a great time to be in the field here in the Pacific Northwest. If you are new to birding, would like to get started or are just curious, you are welcome to join us on one of the easy and fun outings listed below. Birding can be a positive experience on many levels, fresh air and exercise, beautiful creatures to search for and appreciate, and amiable companions with whom to share the experience with. Join us, you will not be disappointed.

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.

Wednesday, September 4: Tennant Lake & Hovander Park

Time: 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Trip Leader: Pauline Sterin

Registration Required: Contact Pauline at notesps@icloud.com or 410-353-7116.

Meet at Tennant Lake Interpretive Center and Fragrance Garden parking lot, 5236 Nielson Ave, Ferndale.

Warblers are migrating and resident birds are beginning to forage in mixed flocks. Tennant and Hovander together make a great location to see these and other species. Join Pauline for some relaxed birding on the boardwalk, the trails between Tennant and Hovander, and along the Nooksack River. The walking is relatively

easy, the total distance should be less than two miles, and restrooms are nearby. This is an excellent trip for beginners but birders of all skill levels are welcome. Expect to see waterfowl, wrens, chickadees, warblers, sparrows and other species.

Saturday, September 7: Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM - Noon


Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required.

Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

Join local birders on the beaches of Semiahmoo Spit, the only designated Important Bird Area in Whatcom County. 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. Expect to see common loons, grebes, a few ducks and other waterfowl, great blue herons, migratory and resident songbirds, bald eagles and probably a few surprises. Hope to see you there!

(continued on next page)



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Saturday, September 14: Sardis Raptor Center

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Trip Leaders: Deborah Kaye & Pam Borso

Registration Required: Contact Deborah at dkaye@northcascadesaudubon.org or 360-510-4964.

Meet at Sardis Raptor Center, 7472 Valley View Road, Ferndale.

Join Deborah Kaye and Pam Borso for a tour of Sardis Raptor Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping rescue, rehabilitate and release raptors. Founded in 1989 by its present director, Sharon Walters, Sardis operated as a rehabilitation center for all species until 1995 when it began to specialize in birds of prey. Since its inception, thousands of hawks, owls, falcons and eagles have been treated and released, soaring to freedom as a result of Sardis' efforts. Sardis is also home to several permanent resident species of hawks, owls and eagles whose injuries prevent them from being released. These birds, who some of you may know from Sardis' educational program, "Hunters of the Sky", will be introduced to you on our tour. We will learn all about the individual history of these amazing creatures, their habitat in the wild, role in the environment and more. Please join us for this family-friendly field trip.

Saturday, September 21: Whatcom Creek Trail to Raptor Reach

Time: 9 AM - Noon

Trip Leader: Richard Carpenter

No registration required. Meet at the Maritime Heritage Center Parking lot at 9 AM.

Join Richard to walk the Whatcom Creek Trail from the waterfront to the "Raptor Reach" area, near Woburn Street. On this surprisingly birdy trail you can expect

to see ducks, chickadees, sparrows, wrens, waxwings, woodpeckers, towhees, finches, and probably some warblers and other migrants. Also there might be a raptor or two and a few surprises along this City of Bellingham trail. This can be rewarding urban birding for anyone with an interest.

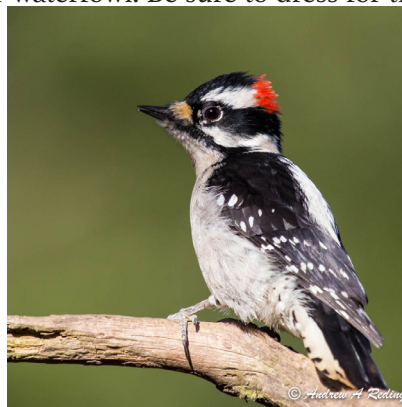
Thursday, September 26: Fairhaven Park, Padden Lagoon, & Mud Bay

Time: 8:30 - 11 AM

Trip Leader: Bob Myhr

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

Meet Bob and the group at Fairhaven Park for some south-side urban birding. Expect to find resident and migrating sparrows, thrushes, woodpeckers and arriving winter waterfowl. Be sure to dress for the weather.



downy woodpecker, photo by Andrew Reding

Permanent Great Blue Heron Reserve at Point Point?

YES!
HOW?

BY YOU URGING CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS TO JOIN OUR MAYOR IN ADVOCATING for City acquisition of ALL the remaining undeveloped property on Shorewood Drive next to the colony to create a permanent, protected heron reserve.

Contact City Council members at ccmail@cob.org or 360 778-8200

Info: www.nwcitizen.com/page/herons

Hérons are a Priority Species regulated by the WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife and must be protected.

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Edfro Creek Reserve

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

Looking for a new adventure? Try the 135-acre Edfro Creek Reserve near Acme, at the confluence of Skookum Creek and the South Fork of the Nooksack River. It is a very accessible wilderness with a wild quality but a maintained out-and-back trail of about 4.7 miles. About the first mile is on the Reserve, purchased from a logging company in 2003 by Whatcom Land Trust and protected as a Reserve.

Continuing for about another 3.7 miles into DNR property, the trail was once known as the “Thousand Puddles Trail,” and was formerly used by ATVs. It is now gated and mostly gravel for the first mile or more. The DNR portion was clear cut around 2011 and is less maintained than the first mile of trail, which parallels the South Fork Nooksack River, running close to the river, crossing small creeks along the way.

The trail has been much improved since its Thousand Puddle days. Since at least 2015, the Trust has partnered with the Washington Conservation Corps to conduct trail improvements. The Whatcom Chapter of Backcountry Horsemen also participates in regular trail maintenance activities to keep it accessible.

From the trail you can appreciate wonderful views of the Nooksack River as you stroll through lush second-growth forested wetlands among maple, cottonwood and alder trees. The Lummi Nation has planted conifers along the river and trail. The moss-covered forest canopy offers protection on rainy days. Watch out for nettles along parts of the trail.

More than 60 species of birds have been reported in spring and summer at the Reserve. Given the right season, you might spot common and hooded mergansers and American dipper bobbing in the river, belted kingfishers defending their territories along the shore, spotted sandpipers probing the sediment, and black and Vaux’s swifts sailing along the river’s surface for insects. Along the trail are trees large enough to attract red-breasted sapsucker, northern flicker, and downy, hairy and pileated woodpeckers.



Left: A July view of the South Fork Nooksack River as it runs past Edfro Creek Reserve. Not glacier fed, it develops this beautiful clear water much earlier in the year than other spots. (Photo: WLT)

Right: Walking the trail at Edfro Creek Reserve toward Dye’s Canyon. The trail runs eastward along the South Fork Nooksack River. (Photo: WLT)

You might see an occasional bald eagle roosting in its nest. The wetland vegetation along the trail offers cover and forage for Hammond’s and Pacific-slope flycatchers, warbling vireo, golden-crowned kinglet, western tanager, black-headed grosbeak, and several species of warbler.

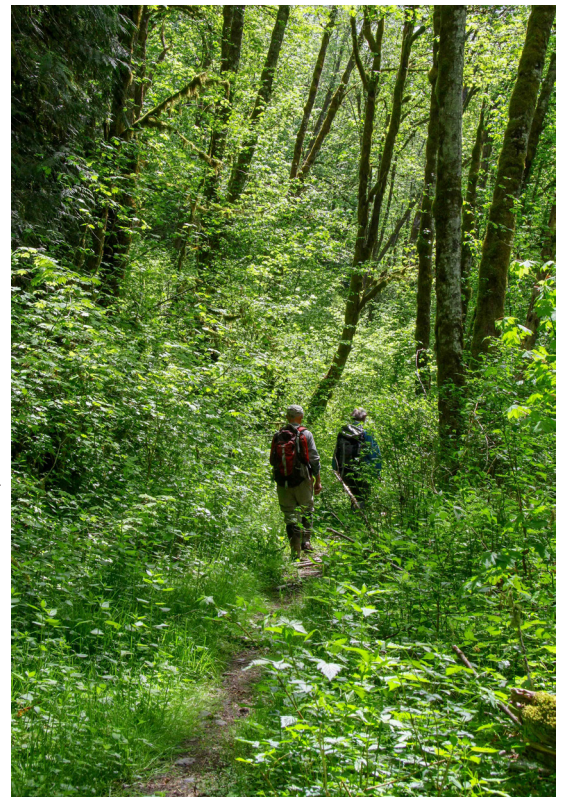
A little over half a mile up the trail is a pond formed by beaver activity. You’ll see evidence on the small trees in the area. There is also evidence of elk passing through (tracks, beds and droppings). Several species of bats have been noted to use the property. Morel, oyster and other mushrooms have been found there too. Anglers also occasionally fish for silver salmon migrating up the river.

Most days, you’ll not see another person on the trail, feeling like you have it all to yourself.

Getting There

From Highway 9, take the Saxon Road to the end. On the left is Skookum Creek Fish Hatchery. Park at the Hatchery, walk over the road bridge that crosses Skookum Creek and stay to your right. Go through the logging road gate which is often open. The trailhead is on the right, marked by large concrete barriers to prevent vehicle traffic, sloping downward toward the creek.

Plan your next adventure to Edfro Creek Reserve, accessible wilderness with ample river, pond, wetland and second-growth habitat that’s home to thriving avian communities.



Racing Extinction - A Documentary

Monday, September 23 at 5:45 pm

Please join our friends at the Multifaith Network for Climate Justice for a free community screening of the film, *Racing Extinction* at the Pickford Film Center. The showing of this compelling documentary is one of a number of events highlighted during the City of Bellingham's All In for Climate Action Week.

Scientists predict that humanity's footprint on the planet may cause the loss of 50% of all species by the end of the century. In the groundbreaking documentary *Racing Extinction*, director Louie Psihoyos and the group behind the Academy Award-winning film *The Cove*, assemble a team of artists and activists on an undercover operation to expose the hidden world of endangered species and the race to protect them against mass extinction. Spanning the globe to infiltrate the world's most dangerous black markets and using high tech tactics to document the link between carbon emissions and species extinction, the documentary reveals stunning, never-before seen images that truly change the way we see the world.

Sponsored by the Multifaith Network for Climate Justice, North Cascades Audubon Society, the City of Bellingham, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, Mount Baker Group of the Sierra Club, and the Bellingham Chapter of Climate Reality Project.



Bellingham Bird Podcast Wins Grant

Compiled by Kirsten Anderson

A bird study podcast, [Return of the Birds](#), won a WDS Foundation 'Scholarship for Real Life' grant at the World Domination Summit (WDS) in Portland, OR, June 30.

Return of the Birds, is the serialized audiobook podcast of *Wake-Robin*, by John Burroughs, published in 1871. *Wake-Robin* is a 148-year-old nature study of various birds' spring migrations and summer residencies.

"Burroughs' attention to detail and playful characterizations turns these birds into little individuals with personalities and emotions," said Peter Meddick, podcast host and audiobook narrator. "But it's the way he describes their songs - I wanted to compare what he wrote with what the bird song really sounded like."

Working with the Macaulay Library at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Meddick wove dozens of field recordings of bird vocalizations into the narration, taking the individual parts and making something bigger as a whole.

The podcast is a do-it-yourself labor of love, time and finances. The episodes are produced after school, at night, and on weekends. After building a sound booth and recording studio, the Meddicks learned the craft of sound engineering and production and dove into the labor-intensive world of online marketing.

The WDS Foundation grant will help cover the podcast's bird vocalization licensing costs, sound engineering and marketing.

Meddick says his wife and two teenagers will all be working on the project during their summer break. From initial sound edits, to searching for the best bird vocalizations available from the Macaulay Library, to running new social media initiatives, there is plenty of work to go around the dining room table.

New episodes of the *Return of the Birds* podcast are available every other week. You can listen and subscribe to *Return of the Birds* for free on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, Breaker, and at returnofthebirds.com

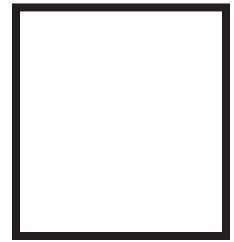
Return of the Birds is produced by 44from26, the Meddick family owned and operated media experiment, creating high quality serial audio entertainment.

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. Our chapter is locally funded, and we do not receive any portion of donations you make to National Audubon. 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.

We are encouraging members to receive newsletters by email but if you prefer, a paper newsletter is provided to current, paid members. Help support us 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 currently receive a paper copy please check your mailing label for accuracy, including the expiration date. To make any changes or to switch from a paper copy to an email copy please email: membership@northcascadesaudubon.org.

Join or Renew (circle one)

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