Summer Happenings

Photo: Summer in the North Cascades

With the record heat gone, we hope you’re enjoying the picturesque summer days the Pacific Northwest is known for. Warm days and cool nights provide ideal conditions for a variety of migratory birds to spend their summers raising young in the wide array of habitat our area has, from salt water beaches to the alpine. Bird on!

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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: Jamie Huson
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If you are interested in contributing, the deadline for the September 2021 issue is...

**August 15**

Send materials to:

jhuson@northcascadesaudubon.org

NCAS Board Members

**Officers**

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<td>Jamie Huson</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Deborah Kaye</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Sue Parrott</td>
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**Board Members**

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**Advisory Board**

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Summary of April 1, 2021 NCAS Board Meeting

The Board conducted a virtual meeting on April 1st from 7 to 9 pm. During the meeting, we officially welcomed the newest Board member Alex Jeffers. We also discussed the upcoming election of officers, Pearrygin Lake Campout logistics, scholarships, and upcoming classes being offered. Furthermore, the Board discussed the transition of membership meetings and other activities as the COVID-19 situation evolves, looking forward to fall and beyond. Complete minutes of the NCAS Board meetings may be accessed on our website through the following link: [Board Meeting Minutes](#).

*Photo: Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Tom Benson/Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND-2.0)*

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

**Helen Macdonald, Vesper Flights-Virtual Reading**  
*Tuesday, July 27, 2021*  
*2:00- 3:00 PM*  
Register Online

Village Books and the North Cascades Audubon Society are pleased to bring Helen Macdonald, author of *H is for Hawk*, to the Virtual Readings Gallery. Join us on zoom for this great event!

In *Vesper Flights*, Helen Macdonald gathers her best loved essays that explore the human relationship with the natural world along with new pieces in a collection both moving and frank, personal and political, meditating on notions of captivity, freedom, immigration, and flight.

"[E]xhilarating... No one describes the everyday natural world with greater power or beauty." -Slate

"Dazzling... Ms. Macdonald reminds us how marvelously unfamiliar much of the nonhuman world remains to us, even as we continue to diminish it." -Wall Street Journal

Helen Macdonald is a writer, poet, illustrator and naturalist, and an affiliated research scholar at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge. She is the author of the bestselling *H Is for Hawk*, as well as a cultural history of falcons, titled *Falcon*, and three collections of poetry, including *Shaler’s Fish*. Macdonald was a Research Fellow at Jesus College, Cambridge, has worked as a professional falconer, and has assisted with the management of raptor research and conservation projects across Eurasia. She now writes for *The New York Times Magazine*.

**Scintillating Shorebirds**  
*August 24, 25, 26*  
Register Online

This amazingly diverse group of several families are both Northwest residents and migrants from the High Arctic in fall passage. Join us to better learn their field ID, bio-ecology, micro-habitat associations, dispersal routes and behaviors. We will review different approaches to speciate and appreciate such intriguing and efficient organisms in two powerpoint-imaged discussions.

Then with binoculars and spotting scopes in hand, we will practice these skills along the shoreline on our field trip. Don’t miss this fun and insightful experience!

**Classes**: August 24 and 25 from 6-8PM via Zoom

**Field Trip**: August 26 from 5-8 PM, via caravan from: South Birch Bay State Park, to Semiahmoo Spit, Drayton Harbor and Blaine shores.

**Instructor**: David Drummond, Wildlife Biologist Naturalist-Educator has taught many classes on diverse natural-cultural history subjects, but by far one of his all-time favorites is the Shorebirds of Northwest America~ David enjoys helping you connect with the biosphere’s synergies!

**Pricing**: $45 for members, $60 for non-members. Discount applies to North Cascades Audubon Chapter members. Class will be conducted over Zoom (and recorded if you cannot make the live session). Maximum of thirty participants.
Check Out Our Recordings of Virtual Field Trips, Membership Meeting Presentations, and Educational Programs
By Sue Parrott

How would you like to go on some virtual field trips around Drayton Harbor and Semiahmoo Spit? Thanks to Wings Over Water, the North Cascades Audubon Society web page has recordings of three virtual field trips - Birch Bay State Park, Semiahmoo Spit, and Blaine Marina. Click on the Birding tab along the top of the NCAS home page, and then click on Field Trips. A link to Virtual Field Trips will be on the right side of the page.

Did you miss some of our outstanding Virtual Membership Meeting Presentations or Virtual Educational Programs? Do you know that in over 40% of bird species in North America the female bird sings...not just the male? (Dr. Lauryn Benedict - She Sings Too!) And would you like to be immersed in the bird songs and sights of the Panama Cloud Forest? And did you know passerines originated in Australia? (Panama’s Cloud Forest - Dr. Thomas Bancroft)

NCAS has been fortunate to have dynamic and published ornithologists from around the U.S. speak at our monthly membership meetings. To check out any programs you may have missed, click on the About Us tab along the top of the NCAS home page, and then click on Recorded Virtual Programs. You will see there is a list of recorded programs from the last nine months for both membership meetings and educational programs. HAVE FUN and expand your understanding of birds!

2021 Scholarship Recipients
By Jamie Huson

Each year NCAS awards scholarships to research projects that align with the goals of the organization to conserve and promote wildlife. These studies will be conducted during the summer of 2021 with results expected in 2022, which we will publish online and in the newsletter. This year’s recipients are:

Alexander Harris (WWU) - $500 for a case study analysis to evaluate which model of community forestry is optimal for salmonid recovery in the Nooksack Watershed.

Elizabeth Diehl (WWU) - $500 to study the effects of fluctuating temperature and pH on the shell and radula morphology of post-set pinto abalone (Haliotis kamtschatkana)

Janelle Chojnacki (Humboldt State University) - $480 to quantify the impact of anthropogenic food sources on raven home range size and raven movement patterns in and around Humboldt County, to understand the impact to plover nesting predation caused from human food availability to ravens.
Highlights from Whatcom Birds
By Jamie Huson

In 2019 NCAS started hosting Whatcom Birds birding group on our website. It’s completely free to use and only requires you to login if you wish to post something. Join today and get updates on what birding adventures people are having in the local area. Here are updates from late spring and early summer:

Spring seemed to get off to a slow start with many reporting smaller numbers or late arrivals of migrants and nesting. A notable post provided a reliable place to see lazuli buntings on this side of the Cascades.

A lively retelling of a bald eagle’s attempt to ransack a chicken coop was a great read from the first week of July. Most recently a red-necked phalarope was spotted along with a flock of American white pelicans over Bellingham.

In early June a variety of shorebirds were spotted in and around Semiahmoo Spit. Around that time many migrants began showing up as well. A rarely seen rose-breasted grosbeak was spotted on a feeder. In the east county a gray catbird was seen on one of the properties NCAS surveys in partnership with the Whatcom Land Trust. By mid June the babies had started fledging at the Post Point Heron Colony in Fairhaven.
High Country Adventures  
*By Jamie Huson*

The North Cascades Ecosystem has a short summer with snowpack melting out in July or August and freezing temperatures possible year round in the highest elevations. Take advantage of this precious short window by making a trip to the high country and bringing along a pair of binoculars.

More than likely you’ll start in a low elevation valley cut by a stream. In mountain streams you’ll find harlequin ducks bobbing along a swift current with ducklings in tow. These unique birds spend their summers raising young in an unlikely place, the upper headwaters where snow and glacial melt keep water temperatures frigid year round. As you hike along, admire the old-growth trees in the valley. A variety of migratory birds utilize our forests for breeding. One of the most commonly heard is a local migrant, the varied thrush. These birds move from low elevation areas near the Puget Sound in winter to mountain forests to breed and are noted by their haunting call echoing through the forest. These dense forests also host grouse, swallows, songbirds and other passerines, woodpeckers, owls, and more.

As you gain elevation and emerge from the forest you’ll reach the high country. Perched along mountain tops you’ll see a variety of hawks or a peregrine falcon cruising wildflower laden meadows in search of a rodent. Those same wildflowers are visited by Anna’s, rufous, and calliope hummingbirds. In the rocky scree of the alpine zone you might stumble across a white-tailed ptarmigan, recently proposed for listing as Threatened. Another exciting sight in this high elevation zone is the lively gray-crowned rosy-finch, flitting between dwarf evergreens in search of cones.

Adventures in the North Cascades are a special experience for anyone who takes on the challenge. Plan ahead and be sure to check conditions. Birds will vary by habitat and there are many species that stick to either east or west of the Cascade Crest. A complete list of verified sightings within North Cascades National Park is available online through the National Park Service.
North Cascades Audubon Society
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Bellingham, WA 98227-5805

Find us at www.northcascadesaudubon.org or through social media: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at @NCascadeAudubon

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’re Paperless!
We hope you are enjoying our fully digital newsletter which allows us to be more environmentally friendly! The newsletter will continue to be e-published monthly between September and May, including a double issue for November/December. Please help us ensure you will continue to receive our newsletter by verifying we have the correct email address on file. To make any changes to your contact information please email: membership@northcascadesaudubon.org

Join or Renew (circle one)
Please make checks payable to North Cascades Audubon. You can also join online here. 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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Address:________________________________________
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Email: (required to receive newsletter)
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