

# The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

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

Volume 48, Issue 2

February 2017

## General Membership Meeting with Steve and Martha Ellis

### Loons of the Salish Sea

Up to a thousand red-throated loons gather each year at Deception Pass. Where do they and the other loon species that grace the Salish Sea come from? What's so special about loons? This program will answer these and other loon questions. The talk will feature the special adaptations that allow loons to be so successful at pursuing fish, and will give tips on identifying each species. There will be discussion on where and when to view each of these charismatic species, but the focus will be on how loons go about fishing for a living. The program concludes with a short segment on the long history of human and loon interaction. Come and hear the haunting calls of the loons that make them so compelling.

Steve and Martha Ellis are long-time residents of Coupeville and have been giving talks on a wide variety of natural history topics for over 25 years. Steve is currently the Vice President of Whidbey Audubon Society (WAS) and lived among loons in Alaska for 24 years. Martha is a former WAS board member and belongs to the Washington Native Plant Society.

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

**February 28th, 7pm**

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room

*free & open to the public!*

***2016 Christmas Bird Count results will be posted in the next newsletter issue!***

### In this issue...

Topic	Page
Cherry Point Reserve Increases in Size	2
Deepwater Horizon: Oil Spills	3
February Field Trips	4, 5
Cherry Point Marine Birds: Free Class	5
WCC Bird Classes	5
Thank You: Estate Bequests	6
Update on Status Changes for 5 Species	6
Marbled Murrelets Need Your Help	6
2016 NCAS Accomplishments	7

### Mark your calendar:

**Wings Over Water Birding Festival**  
March 10, 11, and 12 (Fri-Sun)

[www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com](http://www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com)

**Our next board meeting is on February 6.**

Email [president@northcascadesaudubon.org](mailto:president@northcascadesaudubon.org) if you would like to join us.

## 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 March 2017 issue is...

**February 15.**

Send materials to Kelley Palmer-McGee at:

**content@northcascadesaudubon.org**

## NCAS Board Members

### Officers

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

### Board Members

Education	Chris Brewer	336-207-7505
Field Trips	Ken Salzman	756-0347
Membership	Owen Bamford	393-3481
Publicity	Twink Coffman	
Newsletter	Kelley Palmer-McGee	466-8601
Conservation	Steve Irving	384-1618
Archives	Judy Krieger	
Programs	Steven Harper	650-9065
Scholarship	Nicole Huson	
Member at Large	Carol Roberts	305-0899
Member at Large	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](mailto:president@northcascadesaudubon.org)*

## Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Increases by 45 Acres

*The following is excerpted from an article by Samantha Wohlfeil in the Bellingham Herald on January 3, 2017.*

A marine area once set aside for a proposed fourth shipping pier at Cherry Point will be included in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve and likely protected from development.

Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark announced Tuesday his decision to incorporate a 45-acre "cutout" for the pier into the reserve, after reviewing about 5,000 public comments, the majority of which were in favor of the change, and getting advice to do so from a technical advisory committee.

"This will improve habitat for the Cherry Point herring and other species," Goldmark said in a media call Tuesday. "This decision is in the public interest."

## Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20, 2017

Are you interested in contributing to a nationwide database of bird sighting data? Help the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon, and Bird Studies Canada by participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). All it takes is 3 easy steps:

1. Register for the count.
2. Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days, recording time, place, and bird numbers.
3. Enter your results on the GBBC website.

*More details can be found on the website:*  
<http://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started>

<b>Copy Source</b> <small>Imagination • Creation • Print Solutions</small>		
<b>GET NOTICED!</b>	<b>HATE LICKING?</b>	<b>HAVE A MESSAGE?</b>
<b>Posters / Banners</b> - Paper OR Vinyl - When you Buy One Poster or Banner, Get One of the same FREE! <small>Call for Details</small>	<b>We have you covered with</b> <b>Flip &amp; Seal Envelopes</b> 500 - \$99 1,000 - \$149 2,500 - \$249 <small>Regular #10, white envelopes            printed in one standard color ink</small>	<b>We can put it on a</b> <b>bumper sticker for you!</b> Buy 500 & get an additional 100 of the same FREE! <small>Up to Full color Printing            Call for Details</small>
<small>With Coupon only • Some Restrictions May Apply • Not Valid with other offers • Exp: 2/28/17</small>		
<b>www.CopySource.com</b> <b>Sales@CopySource.com</b>		<b>360.738.1280</b> <b>1122 N. State Street • Bellingham, WA 98225</b>

*Don't miss this special presentation sponsored by North Cascades Audubon Society and  
RE Sources for a Sustainable Community!*

## **Deepwater Horizon Disaster: How Oil Spills Affect Local People and Wildlife**

Wednesday, February 15, 7 – 9 PM, Whatcom Museum: Old City Hall



Melanie Driscoll, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon's Gulf Coast and Mississippi Flyway, will discuss the need for prevention of oil spills, preparedness for an organization to find a role in the event of a major spill, and her thoughts about the particular risks facing Native Americans and others living by the Salish Sea. Her perspective comes from her involvement in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil disaster and subsequent years of involvement in the response and now restoration efforts. She will discuss that spill's effects on wildlife, the environment, and local communities. During the disaster, she initiated wildlife survey efforts and provided biological interpretation regarding the relief effort to news media, the public, and the environmental community. She also led Audubon's conservation planning in response to the disaster and initiated Audubon's volunteer response effort.

## **Marbled Murrelets Need Your Help!**

*The following is excerpted from an article by Mary Porter-Solberg and Bob Phreaner in the Harlequin Happenings, the newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society.*

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released two linked draft environmental impact statements (DEIS) on December 2, 2016: the Sustainable Harvest Calculation (SHC) and the Long Term Conservation Strategy for the Marbled Murrelet (LTCS). The deadline for comments on both documents is March 9.

### **Long Term Conservation Strategy for the Marbled Murrelet: DEIS**

The DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service worked together to develop six alternatives within the range of the marbled murrelet to analyze in this DEIS including the "no action" alternative. The alternatives differ in the amount of forest land designated for marbled murrelet conservation, where conservation is located, and how conservation areas will be managed. Independent scientific analysis has shown that none of the current alternatives are sufficient to protect and restore this bird's population on State forest lands. The DEIS and additional information about this proposal are at [www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/mmltcs)

### **The Sustainable Harvest Calculation: DEIS**

This proposal will establish a sustainable forest harvest level for the 2015 to 2024 fiscal planning decade for State trust lands in western Washington. Five alternatives are analyzed in this DEIS, including a "no action" alternative. One of the objectives of the SHC is to coordinate with the LTCS environmental analysis to integrate the effects of the various LTCS alternatives on sustainable harvest levels. The DEIS and additional information about this proposal are at [www.dnr.wa.gov/sustainable-harvest-calculation](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sustainable-harvest-calculation).

**Open Mondays at Our New Location**

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

108 Ohio St.  
corner of Cornwall  
Bellingham  
360-734-0969  
WildBirdChalet.com



## February Field Trips

*Ken Salzman, Field Trip Chair*

Winter is a great time to bird in the Pacific Northwest. Winter vagrants can be present almost anywhere and you never know what may turn up. And you don't have to travel very far to find these rarities.

An excellent place to venture in winter is Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, and this month NCAS will be visiting this great birding spot.

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.

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, February 4, Semiahmoo Spit

**Time:** 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours

**Trip Leader:** Paul Woodcock

No registration required

This trip is great any time of 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 a great trip for novice as well as advanced birders.

### Tuesday, February 7, Whatcom Falls Park

**Time:** 9:30 AM at the Scudder Pond Trailhead -

2 to 3 hours

**Trip Leader:** Doug Brown

**Trip limit:** 10

To register contact Doug Brown at 360-647-1657 or [birdbrain53@comcast.net](mailto:birdbrain53@comcast.net)

This walk along Scudder Pond and Whatcom Creek will introduce you to a diversity of habitats making Whatcom Falls Park one of the premier birding spots of Bellingham. We can hope to see wood ducks, hooded mergansers, American dippers and a variety of other passerines. The trip will proceed, rain or shine, so come prepared for our unpredictable winter weather.

### Thursday, February 16,

### George Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, B.C.

**Time:** 8:30 AM at Ferndale Park & Ride;

Returning at ~4PM

**Trip Leaders:** Jane and John Aspnes

**Trip limit:** 15

To register and arrange carpooling, contact Jane or John Aspnes at 360-303-2675 or [jaspnes@alaska.edu](mailto:jaspnes@alaska.edu).

February is a good time for hawks, eagles, owls, sparrows, woodpeckers and extensive waterfowl. We will be joined by Ginger and Dave Ridgeway, so there will be at least two scopes operating (tall and short!). Two or three 4-passenger vehicles will be needed in addition to the trip leaders' vehicle. The gate fee at Reifel is \$5 adults/\$3 seniors. Bring a sack lunch which you can enjoy in a nice on-site warming cabin.

A passport, NEXUS card, U.S. passport or enhanced driver's license is required for the border crossing. Jane and John would like to have NEXUS card holders ride in the same car(s), so coordinate with them when you register.



**VILLAGE BOOKS AND PAPER DREAMS**

IN HISTORIC FAIRHAVEN & DOWNTOWN LYNDEN

Every time you click through from Audubon's website to Village Books' website and buy books, Audubon gets 5.5% of the purchase!

Building Community Since 1980

[villagebooks.com](http://villagebooks.com) • 360.671.2626 • Open Daily • Free Events!

**Monday, February 20,**  
**Skagit Flats, Samish Flats and Fir Island**

**Time:** 9 AM to 4 PM

**Trip Leader:** Steven Harper

**Trip Limit:** 11

To register contact Steven Harper at [stevenharper2@msn.com](mailto:stevenharper2@msn.com) or 360-650-9065.

This will be an all-day field trip searching the Samish Flats, Skagit Flats and possibly Fir Island for raptors, snow geese, trumpeter swans and any other interesting birds that happen to be around. The trip will begin and end at the Alger Park & Ride, I-5 Exit 240. We will carpool in three cars while we search for birds. Bring water, hot beverages, snacks and lunch to eat on the run. If we have time we will stop in at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center for a break and to warm up. Dress to keep dry and warm, and bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. We will see bald eagles, rough-legged hawks, northern harriers, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels, and will search for less common raptors such as short-eared owls and merlins.

**Saturday, March 4, Semiahmoo Spit**

**Time:** 9 AM at Semiahmoo Park - ~3 hours

**Trip Leader:** Paul Woodcock

No registration required

This trip offers a wide range of bird species any time of the year but the birds can be very special in winter. Spring won't be far away so there could be some surprises. Co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, the trip covers all of the spit and is great for novice and advanced birders.

**Birding in the Pacific Northwest (Beginning Birding)**

Thursdays, March 23 - April 6: 6-9 PM at Whatcom Community College (WCC)

Field Trip: Saturday, April 8: 8:30AM- 12:30PM

North Cascades Audubon Society Board member Ken Salzman will be teaching a class for beginning birders and individuals who want to learn about birding equipment and basic bird identification.

**The Art of Photographing Birds**

Tuesday, April 11; Thursday, April 13; and Tuesday, April 18: 6-9PM at WCC

Field Trip: Saturday, April 15: 9AM-2PM

Ken will also be teaching a class on bird photography that includes a photo field trip. The final class will be a critique session.

*For more information contact Ken at [kpsalzman@comcast.net](mailto:kpsalzman@comcast.net). Register online at [www.whatcom.edu](http://www.whatcom.edu)*

**Marine Birds of the Cherry Point Region - Free Class!**

**Wednesday, February 22 and**

**Thursday, February 23: 6:30-9:30PM**

**Saturday or Sunday Field Trip, TBA**

*Classes Held at RE Sources for Sustainable Communities in Bellingham*

If you have wondered what all those birds are when you look out on the Salish Sea, here's your chance to find out! North Cascades Audubon Society, in collaboration with the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizenship Committee and RE Sources, will again be offering classes on marine bird identification. We will go over the key physical features of more than 30 species, their behavior, and other interesting facts about their life histories. We have been conducting surveys of marine birds for several years as an offshoot of earlier Salish Sea-wide surveys (Marine Ecosystem Analysis 1978-1979 and the WWU/John Bower Marine Bird Census 2003-2005). These classes are meant to increase awareness of these birds and the reasons we have been monitoring them. Previous class participants are welcome to attend.

*To register contact Lyle Anderson at*

*[Lyleand2@comcast.net](mailto:Lyleand2@comcast.net),*

*360-739-9249 or 360-527-3025.*

## NCAS Honored with Bequests from Mary Esther Reid and Joan Casey

The work and accomplishments of the North Cascades Audubon Society would not be possible without the support of our members. Thank you to all who have joined, and to those of you who have made contributions over and above the membership options.

Over the past few years, NCAS has been honored to be the recipient of two estate bequests. In 2015 we received a bequest from the estate of Mary Esther Reid, and in 2016 a bequest from the estate of Joan Casey. We are grateful to these donors who kindly included the North Cascades Audubon Society in their estate planning. We welcome you to consider doing the same.

---

## Update on Status Changes for Five State Species

*The following is from the Whidbey Audubon Society Newsletter, Shorelines January 2017*

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission removed bald eagles and peregrine falcons from the State list of "sensitive species," reduced the status of the white pelican from endangered to threatened, and added the marbled murrelet and the lynx to the endangered list. The Commission is a citizen panel appointed by the Governor to set policy for the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW). The Commission's action to reduce the State's protective status of bald eagles and peregrine falcons reflects the species' steady recovery since the 1970s, when the pesticide DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) was banned under federal law. For more information go to the WDFW website at [wdfw.wa.gov](http://wdfw.wa.gov).

---

## NCAS Board Meeting Minutes

*Stay informed of the actions taken by North Cascades Audubon Board Members.*

We feel it is important to keep our members up-to-date on decisions made by the North Cascades Audubon Society board. That is why we publish our monthly board meeting minutes in the newsletter and on our website. This month, we are featuring our 2016 accomplishments in line with our organization's mission statement on the next page. You can find the annual budget meeting's minutes online by clicking "About Us" --> "Minutes."



*Trumpeter swans, photo by Andrew Reding*

**HENDERSON BOOKS**

**734-6855**

**Cash Paid for Books**

Bellingham's Largest Used Book Store

**Used - Rare - Recent Titles**

35 Years Book Buying Experience Shows in Our  
Quality Stock and the Prices We Pay

**116 Grand Downtown Bellingham**

## 2016 North Cascades Audubon Society Accomplishments

*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.*

**Consistent with the mission statement, the North Cascades Audubon Society accomplished the following in 2016:**

### 1. To promote the study and conservation of birds and other wildlife:

- In collaboration with ReSources and the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizens, NCAS trained citizen scientists to assist with the Cherry Point Bird Survey. Participants attended five training sessions and then, throughout the year, conducted eight bird surveys in three locations in the Reserve. Data is compiled in accordance with the MESA Study protocol.

- In partnership with the Whatcom Land Trust, 20 citizen scientists/birders conducted bird surveys on twelve select Whatcom Land Trust properties. Bird surveys were conducted in May, June and September.

- Coordinated all aspects of the annual Whatcom County Christmas Bird Count, involving over 70 volunteer citizen scientists

- Provided three scholarships to WWU students engaged in research relevant to conservation of birds and their habitat

- Provided \$500 in youth scholarships to attend the Whatcom Museum Summer Bird Camp

- Entered into a collaborative agreement with the Whatcom Land Trust

### 2. To increase public appreciation of the values of wildlife, plants and the natural environment:

- Hosted eight educational programs for the public at the monthly NCAS meetings

- Partnered with the Whatcom Museum in five educational programs at the Syre including a bird photography workshop, two summer Bird Camps for youth involving field trips and presentations, and the Museum's 75th anniversary celebration

- Co-sponsored Wings Over Water in Blaine and Birch Bay

- Organized 26 field trips for the public to identify birds in Whatcom and Skagit Counties

- Hosted the annual campout, with birding field trips, at Pearrygin Lake State Park

- Built and distributed swallow and chickadee nest boxes

- Participated in Backyard Habitat and Native Flora Fair

- Presented to various community groups including Sue Taylor's Green Gardening class, Parkway Chateau, Adult Day Health, and Summit Place Senior Living

- Hosted bird walks at Birch Bay State Park

- Wrote three articles for the Bellingham Herald

- Accomplished fundraising effort for George and Lois Garlick Memorial which will be used to present a mounted trumpeter swan to the Whatcom Museum in their name

### 3. To stimulate action to protect and preserve them for the future:

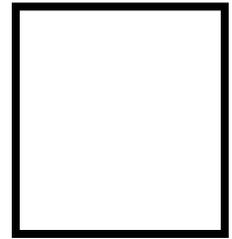
- Formed a Climate Change Action Group and held five meetings

- Paul Woodcock represented NCAS on the Whatcom County Wildlife Advisory Board and Pam Borso represented NCAS on the local Environmental Caucus Working Group.

- Actively supported Initiative I-732 (the Washington Carbon Emission Tax and Sales Tax Reduction), including covering the issue in the newsletter and distributing flyers at monthly meetings and other events

- Joined with local chapters, WA State, and National Audubon in submitting comments on issues related to public policy implications for birds and their habitat. Issues included: supporting Presidential Policy Protecting Public Lands & Wildlife; protecting imperiled seabirds; opposing construction of a pellet plant and the export of raw logs from the Bellingham waterfront; preserving Important Birding Area (IBA) in Clark County; opposing Army helicopter training in North Cascades National Park; opposing development in Burns Bog, B.C.; opposing coal terminal at Longview; opposing development in the buffer area of the Bellingham heron colony; opposing expansion of the Twin Sisters Swen Larson Quarry in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest; opposing industrial development at the Weyerhaeuser Campus in Federal Way; supporting Congressional funding of programs and policies that protect our nation's birds and other wildlife; urging PSE to replace their Colstrip coal mine in Montana with renewable energy; and urging the Army Corps to finally publish the BP Cherry Point EIS.

**North Cascades Audubon Society**  
PO Box 5805  
Bellingham, WA 98227-5805



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Find us at [www.northcascadesaudubon.org](http://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. 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](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
- \_\_\_ I'd like to go paperless. (include email below)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_