

# The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

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

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September 2018

## General Membership Meeting with George Divoky

### Four Decades of Change: An Arctic Seabird Struggles to Survive in a Warming World

Every summer since 1975, George Divoky has conducted research on Mandt's black guillemot on Cooper Island off the coast of northern Alaska. Studying these birds has largely been a solitary venture for George. While the discovery and initial years of the study were part of governmental research related to oil development in northern Alaska, for the past four decades the work has been conducted with occasional grants and much personal dedication.

Long-term studies, such as George's, rarely can be conducted by the government, which typically focuses on immediate agency needs. Yet it is precisely this type of extended data set that is needed to monitor the long-term cycles and trends related to climate change and other atmospheric variation. The Arctic has experienced unprecedented warming in the last four decades and Divoky's research documents how the resulting melt of snow and ice has affected a seabird population. His study provides clear evidence of the reality of climate change along with detailed insights into the lives of birds coping with a rapidly changing environment.

George Divoky is the founder of Friends of Cooper Island and serves as its director in collaboration with a governing board. George has been studying seabirds in Arctic Alaska since 1970 and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Please join us for an evening of research stories and amazing photos in the remote Arctic!

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

**September 25th, 7pm**

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room

*free & open to the public!*

### 2018 Elected Officers

Thank you to our members for electing the next NCAS officers at the May membership meeting!

President - Steven Harper

Vice President - Jamie Huson

Secretary - Deborah Kaye

Treasurer - Sue Parrott

## 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 October 2018 issue is...

**September 15.**

Send materials to:

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

## NCAS Board Members

### Officers

President	Steven Harper	360-650-9065
Vice Pres.	Jamie Huson	
Secretary	Deborah Kaye	
Treasurer	Sue Parrott	360-650-9065

### Board Members

Archives	Judy Krieger	
Conservation	Robert Kaye	
Education	Chris Brewer	336-207-7505
Volunteer Coordinator	Pam Borso	
Field Trips	Paul Woodcock	360-966-6549
Hospitality	Anne Ziomkowski	
Membership	Owen Bamford	360-393-3481
Newsletter	Kelley Palmer-McGee	360-466-8601
Programs	Steven Harper	360-650-9065
Publicity	Kirsten Anderson	
Scholarship	Nicole Huson	
Website	Jamie Huson	

### Advisory Board

Member at Large	Rae Edwards
Member at Large	Steve Irving
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)*

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## NCAS Plants for Birds Program

North Cascades Audubon has been making presentations on planting native plants for birds since March 2018. We have been presenting in our local County libraries and at garden clubs and neighborhood associations. With climate change being considered the number one threat to our birds, we can really help them by planting native species and creating natural backyard habitats. Our website and National Audubon's website list resources and nurseries available to explore. Deborah Kaye, our new Board secretary, has garnered partnerships with seven local nurseries who are delighted to have our materials to refer to. Please check out our materials and tell your friends about our Plants for Birds program.

*Clubs or associations interested in a program should contact Pam Borso at [borsope@aol.com](mailto:borsope@aol.com).*

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## Explore Our Endangered Species This Fall with Audubon

This fall the Whatcom Museum presents *Endangered Species: Artists on the Front Line of Biodiversity*. In conjunction with this eye-opening exhibition, North Cascades Audubon Society programming focuses on climate-endangered and climate-threatened birds of our area. We hope you will join us as we shed light on this crucial time for birds and all species through informative and inspirational presentations, fields trips and more.

### About the *Endangered Species* Exhibition

(September 8, 2018 to January 6, 2019 in the Lightcatcher building.) In a critically important and inspiring exhibition, artwork is displayed to celebrate biodiversity's exquisite complexity, interpret natural and human-induced extinctions of plants and animals, and focus on endangered species from diverse ecosystems. The exhibition explores the historic role of art in raising public awareness about the human activities that threaten habitats. Weaving together art, natural science, and conservation, *Endangered Species* also features creative solutions by ecological artists who revitalize habitats and reconnect people to the rich tapestry of life. The exhibition includes 70 works of art in all media – from rare books to cutting-edge video – spanning the 19th to 21st centuries.

### Related Audubon Education Programming

#### Membership Meeting Programs in the Old City Hall

September 25: George Divoky: Black Guillemots of Cooper Island

October 23: Richard Gammon: Global Climate Change: Impacts in the Pacific NW and Salish Sea

November 27: Fenner Yarborough: Threatened and Endangered Wildlife in Washington State

January 29, 2019: Maria Ruth: Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet

#### Endangered Species Holiday Tree at the Whatcom Museum: Late November to early January in Old City Hall

A collection of community-designed trees will be displayed at the Whatcom Museum over the holidays. The NCAS tree will focus on local climate-endangered and threatened birds with accompanying information about their conservation status. Artistic bird renditions are the creation of local artists and craftspeople.

### County Library Programs / Field Trips

*Featured at Whatcom County Libraries---*

#### *The Bald Eagle: A Local Treasure*

South Whatcom	October 6 at 2pm
Deming	November 3 at 3 pm
Blaine	November 10 at 1pm
Ferndale	November 17 at 2 pm

If you've never seen a tree full of bald eagles, you may want to experience it this winter, especially since we live in one of the few places where you can. While some eagles are year-round residents, large numbers migrate here in winter to feast on salmon spawning in our rivers. Audubon presents on the intriguing lives of eagles and offers suggestions on how to observe these majestic birds without disturbing them.

### Eagle-Watching Field Trips

NCAS will offer eagle-watching field trips this December into early January. Stay tuned for specific dates!

## Gardening Green: Sustainable Landscaping Class

*September 17 – October 3*

*Mondays and Wednesdays, 9AM – 3PM (6 sessions)*

*Morning class presentations held at WSU Extension: 1000 N. Forest St. Bellingham; followed by afternoon landscape tours.*

Gardening Green, sponsored by Whatcom County Public Works, provides practical information and simple yet powerful actions to protect the environment and human health. This is a relaxed, fun class that incorporates presentations, demonstrations, hands-on experiences, a native plant walk, and tours of sustainable landscapes. By the end of class, you will have completed a master plan of the changes you want to make. Includes an on-site consultation at your property and a class manual. Food production is an important part of sustainability but due to time constraints, this class focuses only on landscaping.

Participants "pay" for this FREE class by completing a program evaluation, making a Best Management Practice Pledge, doing a follow-up survey in 6 months, and sharing what you've learned with 12 or more family members, friends, and/or neighbors.

To register contact Sue at [sl-taylor@comcast.net](mailto:sl-taylor@comcast.net) or 360-671-3891. Provide your name, address, phone and email.

## September Field Trips

*Paul Woodcock, Field Trip Chair*

After a few years of other duties, I find myself back in the familiar position of Field Trip Chair for NCAS. I wish to start by thanking Ken Salzman for adeptly arranging a steady flow of birding experiences over the past six years. Additional thanks to all the volunteer trip leaders who have donated their time, skill and enthusiasm to our efforts to share our local fauna and sometimes flora with other members of our community. Please keep volunteering and giving your input; you are appreciated.

Suggestions, feedback or criticism are important to any program intended to serve the public. Please feel free to contact me (360-966-6549 or woodypaulo3@gmail.com) with your comments or ideas concerning our field trip program. It is not my plan to greatly change what we have been doing. But all programs serving our community and its environment should grow and evolve, if necessary, to serve a growing community with a changing environment. So let us know what you think.

We always seem to start out slowly in the fall. People are busy, our exciting migrants are departing, wintering species have not yet arrived and there does not seem to be much enthusiasm for field trips. But the fall season has some of our most glorious days, shorebirds are moving, and it is a great time to get in touch with our resident birds and experience juveniles learning to get on in the world. Join us in September on one of the two trips below and/or on future trips.

NCAS field trips are open to everyone, members and non-members, free of charge. We often limit the number of participants to reduce negative environmental impacts and to assure a quality experience. Our goal is to enjoy ourselves observing nature and to learn about local flora, fauna and habitat in the process. Please join us in the field!

### Saturday September 1, Semiahmoo Spit

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

**Trip Leader:** Paul Woodcock

No registration required

Come and join us on the beaches of Semiahmoo Spit at the only designated Important Bird Area in Whatcom County. People with all levels of birding experience participate as we check out the birds of Boundary Bay and Drayton Harbor plus migrating songbirds and shorebirds. Leave early or linger longer; it is a great place to spend a late summer morning. Look for surprises this time of year. Last month we had a brown pelican. Co-sponsored by NCAS and Whatcom County Parks & Recreation.

### Saturday, September 29, Lake Padden

**Time:** 9AM - Noon

**Trip Leader:** Ken Salzman

To Register Contact: Ken Salzman, 360-756-0347 or kpsalzman@comcast.net

Lake Padden is a wonderful place with varied recreational opportunities as well as being an excellent spot to experience wildlife, including a number of bird species year around. This is a great trip for both beginner and expert birders. Please join us for an easy and leisurely walk.

## 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 Paul Woodcock at:

360-966-6549 or woodypaulo3@gmail.com.

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## Wings Over Willapa

### Saturday, September 29 on Washington's Long Beach Peninsula

The Long Beach Peninsula, located in the southwestern-most corner of Washington State, will be host to a new festival showcasing the extraordinary birding opportunities in and around this 28-mile long finger of land. Wings Over Willapa will celebrate the region's birds and nature, as well as the art they inspire with classes, workshops, guided tours and more. The event is timed to the start of fall migration in this key migration area along the Pacific Flyway.

"Explore the northern tip of Long Beach and spot snowy plovers and thousands of waterfowl, cross to Long Island and walk through a native, old growth cedar forest, and head out to sea for possible sightings of albatross," says David Ryan, event organizer. "Whether you're an experienced birder or getting acquainted with the outdoors, nature lovers of all ages are sure to find plenty to do."

Among the many tours offered will be an East Sand Island kayak trip, a bird walk at Cape Disappointment State Park, a pelagic trip departing from Ilwaco, "Beach Birding by Bicycle," two barge trips into Willapa Bay, as well as self-guided tours at Tarlatt, Teal and Greenhead Sloughs. Guided tours at the Leadbetter Unit of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge will include a tour of the beach and dunes, and a tour with an animal tracking specialist of the bay and forest side.

Presentations will include beginning birding, nature photography, shorebirds, pelagic birds, eBird, among others. Bird box building, a decoy carving demonstration, beach baskets, feather raku pottery, stationary making, and a paint and sip class are some of the indoor offerings. Capping off the day will be a gathering with a keynote speaker, food and drink, and a silent auction at the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum, the event headquarters.

Hosted by the Friends of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, space is limited, and registration is required for each of the events. For more information, go to <https://friendsofwillaparefuge.org/wings-over-willapa/> or email [wingsoverwillapa@gmail.com](mailto:wingsoverwillapa@gmail.com).

## North Cascades Audubon 2018 Scholarship Recipients

This past May, North Cascades Audubon Society was pleased to award grants to three graduate students at Western Washington University to help fund their research. These students and their diverse research topics showed goals that aligned with our mission as a chapter 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."

**Caitlin O'Brian** was awarded \$930 for her research on development of cryopreservation methods for male pinto abalone.

**Holly Flann** was awarded \$500 for her research on the effect of a coevolved parasitic nematode on fitness of the desert horned lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*) in the Alvord Desert.

**Patrick O'Brian** was awarded \$500 for his research on ultrasonic telemetry to describe space use by non-native European green crabs and native Dungeness and red rock crabs.

The Scholarship Committee along with the Board are looking forward to keeping up to date with these students as they further their research and education at Western. Thank you for your continued support of NCAS and the scholarship opportunities awarded to students around the county.

**CAUTION: Bird feeding makes you happy!**

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## Summary of NCAS Board Meeting

*July 2, 2018*

The Board met at the home of Steven Harper and Sue Parrott from 7 to 9 pm on July 2 and took the following actions and/or discussed the following issues:

- The following Board members were installed into office: Steven Harper - President, Jamie Huson - Vice President, Deborah Kaye - Secretary, and Sue Parrott - Treasurer. After five years of service as President and Vice President respectively, Pam Borso is now our Volunteer Coordinator and Paul Woodcock is our Field Trip Coordinator.

- Sue reviewed the Treasurer's Report and noted that scholarships were dispersed to three students.

- Our grant proposals to Audubon and Cornell for the Harrison Reserve project were unsuccessful. The Board discussed the possibility of organizing a fundraising campaign to raise money for a specific aspect of the Harrison Reserve project, such as a bird blind or classroom birding kit. The Board agreed to continue this discussion at the next Board meeting.

- In collaboration with the Whatcom Museum's upcoming exhibit on endangered species, the Education Committee has created the Endangered Species Artists Project. Our 2018 Holiday Tree displayed at the Whatcom Museum will feature decorations created by local artists depicting climate threatened and endangered bird species.

- Local citizens who oppose a proposed change to the County ordinance to allow for the development of motorized vehicle trails / parks on State lands zoned Commercial Forestry, have requested NCAS's help with their petition drive to collect signatures in opposition to the proposal. The Board will discuss the actions NCAS might take in support of the petition at the August Board meeting.

- The Conservation Committee is exploring ways to engage with local homeowners and other stakeholders in protection and stewardship of the Semiahmoo Important Bird Area.

- Seattle Audubon has received a grant to expand its monthly seabird surveys to include sites in Whatcom

County. The Board will work with Seattle Audubon in furtherance of this effort.

- The Board agreed to provide our logo and a suitable photo to the Whatcom Land Trust for inclusion in the ad that is currently showing at the Pickford Theater to highlight WLT and NCAS' partnership and cooperative efforts in the community.

- The Board discussed adding a photo release to our field trip liability release form.

- Western Washington University is hosting a presentation by Jane Goodall at the Mount Baker Theatre on October 8. The Education Committee will find out if it is possible to have a NCAS table at the event.

## HawkFest 2018

Saturday, September 15, 8 AM – 3 PM  
Pateros, WA

Join the Chelan and Entiat Ranger Districts, North Central Washington Audubon Society, and Hawkwatch International this fall for the ninth annual HawkFest! This family event combines free activities in Pateros Memorial Park with trips to Chelan Ridge to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to winter territories. The trip to and from Chelan Ridge lasts four hours and includes seeing banded raptors released. There will be a field trip to Wells Wildlife Refuge From 8 AM to noon. At the park, participants will find vendors, live raptors, interpretive booths, and projects for kids.

On Thursday night, September 13 in Chelan, and Friday night, September 14 in Pateros, Dr. Dave Oleyar from Hawkwatch International will offer a workshop on raptor migration and field identification. He will also highlight his research on flammulated owls.

More information and on-line registration for the trip to Chelan Ridge, the Wells Wildlife Refuge field trip, and the two workshops is available at [www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org).

## Puget Sound Seabird Survey Expands to the Canadian Border

By Toby Ross, Seattle Audubon Society

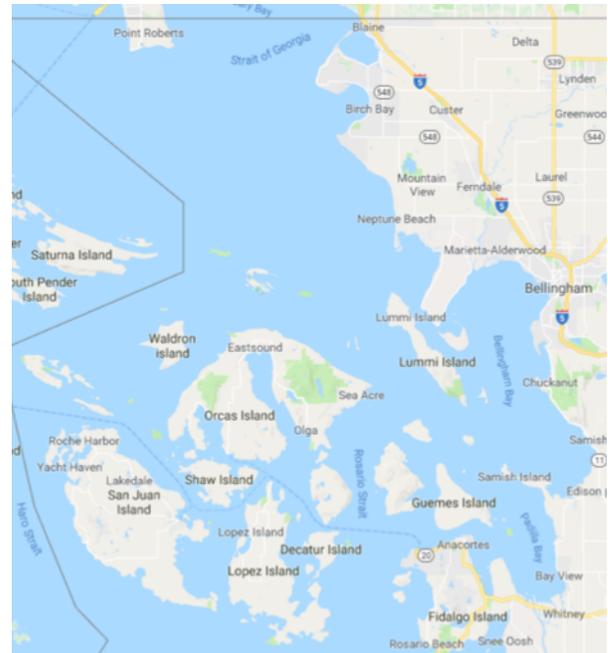
*Note: Training on the survey protocol will be provided at Birch Bay State Park on Thursday, September 20, from 5:30-7:30pm.*

Seattle Audubon's Science Program recently received funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program through the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. This two-year grant will expand the Puget Sound Seabird Survey (PSSS) northward from Deception Pass to Blaine, including the San Juan Islands. However, what's different about this project expansion is that we'll also be creating an accompanying oil spill action plan that will be used when an oil spill occurs that impacts the U.S. waters of the Salish Sea. With the increase in oil transport traffic via rail and tanker, and the oil refineries in Anacortes, Bellingham and Ferndale, without being too sensational, it's not a matter of *if* an oil spill occurs, but *when*. When that does happen, we expect the Seattle Audubon phones to be very busy with calls regarding the spill. Therefore, we need an action plan that we can use in those circumstances.

The project will initially identify approximately 20 new survey sites within the area of focus (see U.S. portion on map). We have reached out to a number of individuals, organizations and tribes within the focal area to garner suggestions for potentially useful sites for the surveys. North Cascades Audubon has been extremely helpful in this respect. We have been in conversation with North Cascades Audubon leadership, as well as John Bower at Western Washington University, and they have graciously agreed to let us add a couple of survey aspects to the al-



*White-winged scoter, photo by Doug Schurman*

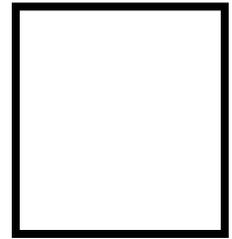


ready excellent work being done at the Cherry Point sites. These additions will enable us to collect data at the same time the Cherry Point data are being collected.

The surveyors who already conduct the Cherry Point surveys will help us at those sites, but if anyone else would like to help us with surveys at other sites along the coast, we'd be delighted to have you join us. Training on the survey protocol will be provided at Birch Bay State Park on September 20, from 5:30-7:30pm. In addition to the survey protocol training, we'll be adding an additional oil spill training for all volunteers – those who will survey the 20 new sites, as well as those who already survey the 122 established survey sites. The oil spill training will focus on what to do in the event of an oil spill, including conducting an ad-hoc seabird survey, and reporting on observed oil on the water and beach at the survey sites. Lastly, during this grant period we will conduct a practice drill to determine how many of our volunteers would actually be available to conduct surveys at a specific time, and which geographic areas would be covered by those available volunteers. Once this expansion project is complete, the PSSS will cover all Salish Sea basins in the U.S. except the Hood Canal.

Please reach out to Toby Ross, Senior Science Manager [toby@seattleaudubon.org](mailto:toby@seattleaudubon.org) with further questions or to take part.

**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. 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
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other
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