

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

www.northcascadesaudubon.org

Volume 49, Issue 8

Nov/Dec 2018

General Membership Meeting with Robert Waddell

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife in Washington

As the State's human population continues to grow, more fish and wildlife species have been put at risk by loss and fragmentation of critical habitat, disturbance, and introduction of non-native species. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) oversees the listing and recovery of those species in danger of being lost in the State. WDFW biologist Robert Waddell will give an overview of the State Wildlife Action Plan which lays out the primary threats and priorities for conservation of species and habitats throughout Washington. Discussion will include the effects of species listing and recovery plans, the threats affecting recovery, and accounts of local species with greatest conservation needs.

Robert Waddell has worked as a biologist for WDFW since January 2016, most recently as the Wildlife Biologist for Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Robert works with and manages a variety of species, from mountain goats to Oregon spotted frogs. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Wildlife Ecology and Management from the University of Georgia. Robert spent two years in Mongolia as a Peace Corps Volunteer assisting a secondary school with their environmental education curriculum, performing surveys for argali and snow leopard, and capturing and radio-tracking Mongolian gazelle. He then worked as a researcher with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and studied urban mountain lions, coyotes, desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, and the ecological impacts to wildlife from desert water developments.

Always on the 4th Tuesday of the month:

November 27, 7pm

Whatcom Museum Rotunda Room

free & open to the public!

NCAS Holiday Potluck Tuesday, December 11, 6-9pm

YWCA Ballroom

1026 N Forest Street, Bellingham

Join us at the YWCA Ballroom to celebrate another great year of birds, birding, and our Audubon community. There will be live music, good food, great company, and an exciting presentation to be determined. Please bring plates, utensils, and a dish to share. Coffee and tea will be provided.

Happy holidays!

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

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

December 15.

Send materials to:

content@northcascadesaudubon.org

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

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IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution Donations to NCAS

Please consider donating part of your Required Minimum Distribution (if you are 70 ½ or older) as a Qualified Charitable Distribution to NCAS. Direct disbursements to NCAS from your retirement account are tax free. The following link provides information on this opportunity to help NCAS continue our good work.
www.fidelity.com/learning-center/personal-finance/retirement/qcds-the-basics



**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
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Explore Our Endangered Species This Fall with Audubon

Endangered Species: Artists on the Front Line of Biodiversity

September 8, 2018 to January 6, 2019 in the Whatcom Museum's Lightcatcher Building

See www.whatcommuseum.org for more information

In conjunction with this eye-opening exhibition, North Cascades Audubon Society is offering programs focusing 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 all species through informative and inspirational presentations, fields trips and more.

NCAS Membership Meeting Programs in Old City Hall, Whatcom Museum

November 27- Robert Waddell: Threatened and Endangered Wildlife in Washington State

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

NCAS Endangered Species Artist Project: The NCAS Holiday Tree

November 23 - January 2 in Old City Hall

Entrance to this display is free.

During this holiday season, NCAS will feature artistic renditions and educational information about 26 climate-challenged local birds in the Whatcom Museum's annual Holiday Tree display. This effort recognizes birds we find in Whatcom County that are predicted to experience significant population declines and range shifts as a result of climate change and other human activities. For our Artist Project, we have invited artists and craftspeople to create their artistic rendition of one of the selected 26 birds in the form of a bird ornament. Twenty artists have taken up the challenge with nearly 40 bird ornaments. At the display we will be providing information about each bird and their survival challenges. It is our hope that this effort will bring awareness to the immediacy of climate change and inspire actions to support the future of all affected birds. Thank you to the many artists who have taken up the call and responded with their inspiring art!

Featured at Whatcom County Libraries--- The Bald Eagle: A Local Treasure

Deming	Saturday, November 3 at 3 pm
Blaine	Saturday, November 10 at 1pm
Ferndale	Saturday, November 17 at 2 pm

Here in Whatcom County we have resident bald eagles year-round. Still, seeing an eagle with a wingspan of six to seven feet makes one pause in appreciation of their majestic presence. Join Audubon in exploring eagle species from around the world including serpent and harpy eagles, as well as our local bald eagles. And we'll be sharing good local eagle-watching hot spots.

NEW-- Eagle-Watching Field Trips

Sunday, December 9 and

Saturday, December 29 at 9 AM

Each trip is limited to 15 participants.

Contact Chris at 336-207-7505 or chrisboyd353@gmail.com, for more information and to register.

Come late fall, migrating eagles arrive to join our resident birds for the annual spawning salmon runs in coastal Washington rivers and creeks. In one of the largest eagle migrations in the lower 48 states, these impressive birds congregate in large numbers to feast on dead and dying salmon. Rivers like the Nooksack and Skagit are prime sites, offering spawning salmon the habitat needed to deposit their eggs, and nurturing havens for the next generation. For the bald eagle, whose Latin name, *Haliaeetus leucocephalis*, literally means "sea eagle with a white head", the salmon are both an easy and nutritious meal. Eagles can best be viewed in morning hours, feeding on the spent salmon from the river or on those washed up on gravel bars. Once the eagles have had their fill they are often seen perched in nearby trees. At night, the riparian forest provides a roosting site.

Our eagle-watching trips will take you to key sites along the Nooksack River. The trips are organized by Chris Brewer (an NCAS Board member and volunteer interpreter for the Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center) and are co-led with two long-time volunteer USFS Eagle-Watchers- Veterinarian Dorrie Jordan and Skagit Valley Community College ecology professor Steve Glenn.

November & December Field Trips

Paul Woodcock, Field Trip Chair

Our Northwest fall is in full swing. With the coming of November, wintering buffleheads, goldeneyes and greater scaup will be joining the harlequins, scoters, loons and grebes already gracing our coastlines. In our grasslands and estuaries, rough-legged hawks, falcons and common ravens mix and mingle with the growing numbers of red-tailed hawks. And we should not forget the golden-crowned and Lincoln's sparrows, varied thrushes, western meadowlarks and other passerines that augment our resident songbird populations during the winter. It is a great time to go birding with NCAS. Please join us on one of the birding outings listed below.

NCAS field trips are free to all who wish to attend. Some trips require preregistration with the trip leader in order to limit numbers.

Saturday, November 3, Semiahmoo Spit

Time: 9 AM - Noon

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

No registration required. Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

Come and participate in this monthly birding experience at Whatcom County's only designated Important Bird Area. The beaches can be pleasant and inviting this time of year, but fall can also be nasty so come prepared for whatever the day might bring. The birds are always there! Expect to see cormorants, grebes, loons, harlequins and other sea ducks feeding over the eelgrass beds and on the open water. And we will not neglect the songbirds behind us on the spit. This trip is co-sponsored by Whatcom County Parks.

Thursday, November 15, Fairhaven Park, Padden Lagoon and Mud Bay

Time: 8:30 - 11AM

Trip Leader: Bob Myhr

Registration required: Please contact Bob at romyhr@comcast.net or 360-933-4352.

Participants will meet at Fairhaven Park to carpool for this south-side birding expedition. Species expected include woodpeckers, sparrows and other resident songbirds as well as wintering waterfowl. Everyone is welcome, whatever your level of birding experience. Please come prepared for whatever the weather may bring.

Saturday, November 17, Wings and Wine

Time: Meet at 2 PM at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

No registration required.

Birders and interested friends of all experience levels are welcome to join the North Cascades Audubon Society for Wings and Wine, come rain or come shine! We'll start at Semiahmoo Spit for a guided walk along beautiful Semiahmoo Bay and Drayton Harbor. We'll spend about 1.5 hours viewing and learning about our amazing local and transient winter birds. Those interested will then make the short drive over to The Vault, a lovely wine bar located at 277 G Street in Blaine. We'll be just in time for happy hour and will share some lively "bird talk". The Vault serves great wines, craft beers, non-alcoholic beverages and has a nice food menu. So let's raise a glass to the birds!

Sunday, November 25, Lake Padden

Time: 9AM - Noon

Trip Leader: Richard Carpenter

No registration required. Meet at the Lake Padden Park swimming area parking lot.

This bird walk will be primarily to view the migratory waterfowl, down from the north and wintering on the lake. Please bring spotting scopes if you have them. Hope for sunshine but be prepared for cold and wet weather.

Saturday, December 1, Semiahmoo Spit**Time:** 9AM - Noon**Trip Leader:** Paul Woodcock

No registration required. Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

To misquote Will Shakespeare, "Once more unto the beach dear friends." Join us for another first-Saturday morning at Semiahmoo. Every month is different. Check it out. See November 3 trip above for more information.

Saturday, December 8, Samish Flats**Time:** 8AM - ~Noon**Trip Leader:** John Horner**Limit:** 15 participants

Registration required. Please contact John at 360-599-6849 to register.

Raptors, those steely-eyed, fleetingly seen winter visitors are poised to return to our corner of the world. Not to be elitist, we will happily focus our optics on more than just raptors. Please join John Horner and other enthusiasts on a half-day caravan through the lovely Skagit Flats. Parking is marginal throughout the Flats. Plan to form a four-vehicle carpool. Fortify yourself with warm, wind-and-rain-proof clothing, hearty snacks and a hot beverage. If you have a spotting scope, a valid Discover Pass and/or a multi-passenger vehicle you are willing to share, please mention this to John when you register. Plan to register early as this trip may fill quickly.

Saturday, December 15, Boulevard Park, Taylor Dock & Marine Park**Time:** 9AM - Noon**Trip Leader:** Richard Carpenter

No registration required. Meet at Boulevard Park parking lot, west end near the coffee shop.

Join Richard for a morning bird walk to check out the waterfowl and other birds along the waterfront of the park, Taylor Dock and other areas of Fairhaven as the weather allows. It may well be cold so be prepared. And there are places to get hot drinks along the way.

Saturday, December 15.**San Juan Ferry Christmas Bird Count****Sunday, December 16.****Bellingham Christmas Bird Count***See page 6 for more details.***Saturday, January 5, 2019, Semiahmoo Spit****Time:** 9AM - Noon**Trip Leaders:** Jane and John Aspnes

No registration required. Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

Start the New Year with a birding trip to Semiahmoo/Drayton Harbor Important Bird Area. This monthly trip is a great birding experience for beginners and experienced birders alike. See November 3 trip for more information.

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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2018 Christmas Bird Count

San Juan Ferry Christmas Bird Count:

Saturday, December 15

Make your holidays memorable by participating in NCAS's one-of-a-kind Christmas Bird Count (CBC) aboard the Washington State Ferry from Anacortes to Sidney B.C. and back. NCAS will cover the cost of the ferry passage for a limited number of counters. This challenging count has been conducted annually, whatever the weather, since the mid-1970s. This is the last year that Clayton and Linda Snider will be leading this count. They are looking for a few volunteers to assist with some challenging birding. If you are interested in participating in the San Juan Ferry CBC please contact Clayton or Linda Snider at 360-738-2232.

Whatcom County Christmas Bird Count:

Sunday, December 16

Annually between December 14 and January 5, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the world take part in an adventure that has become a holiday tradition. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists go out on an annual mission to count birds - often from dawn to dusk. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of our natural environment has driven dedicated people to get out in woods, fields and wetlands to celebrate the holidays. The National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a citizen science effort, conducted by thousands of community members whose purpose is to collect data on bird populations across the continent while celebrating the holidays and enjoying the wonders of nature. The CBC in Bellingham has been held annually since 1967. So come celebrate and participate!

For more information on the Whatcom CBC please go to: northcascadesaudubon.org/birding/christmas-birdcount/# Participation in the Bellingham CBC is free. Results will be published by National Audubon in an online version of American Birds during the summer of 2019. You can find much more information on this event, as well as annual results and summaries, at birds.audubon.org/christmasbird-count.

If you are interested in participating in the Bellingham CBC please contact Doug Brown at bblackcat@comcast.net or 360-647-1657.

CAUTION: Bird feeding makes you happy!

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

108 Ohio Street
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360-734-0969

WildBirdChalet.com



How Our CBC Works

The Bellingham CBC circle is comprised of over 100,000 acres of Whatcom County stretching from Cherry Point to the west end of Lake Whatcom, and from Willeys Lake to Fairhaven Park. The circle is divided into 25 areas and each area is assigned a leader, an experienced birder who organizes the counters in his or her area. It is the leader's responsibility to gather the group needed to assure an accurate count. Many of our leaders have been faithfully doing this work annually for decades. Whatever the weather, most of the count parties are in the field from dawn to dusk on count day, or longer if they are searching for owls. The goal is to carry out useful citizen science while enjoying the CBC holiday tradition.

Volunteering

It is our goal to include all who wish to volunteer for the CBC experience, but in turn we ask that all volunteers consider the conditions and take the time commitment seriously. If you are interested please contact Doug Brown at bblackcat@comcast.net or 360-647-1657. He will refer you to an area leader who needs assistance.

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Harrison Reserve-Kendall Elementary School Birding & Environmental Education Initiative

The **Harrison Reserve-Kendall Elementary School Birding & Environmental Education Initiative** is a collaboration with Whatcom Land Trust (lead), North Cascades Audubon Society, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Whatcom Conservation District, the Mt. Baker School District and Kendall Parents Teacher Association. The initiative will provide environmental education to rural, underserved elementary school students using a 5-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 partner's salmon and water quality curricula. 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.

Fund Raising Goal: NCAS needs to raise at least \$11,000 for the initiative. We need to raise at least \$5,500 of this total from our members. The Board has agreed to match dollar for dollar \$5,500 in funds from a bequest targeted towards education. In addition four members have agreed to match the first \$2,000 in donations.

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, they're tax free. All donations will be matched dollar for dollar. Donations can be sent to us at our mailing address or by using PayPal. For more information on the project please contact Steven Harper. (stevenharper2@msn.com or 360-650-9065)

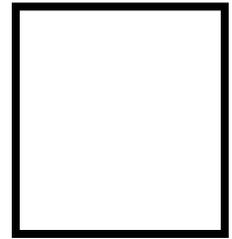
Summary of NCAS Board Meeting

September 3, 2018

The Board met at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship from 7 to 9 pm on September 3 and took the following actions and/or discussed the following issues:

- The remaining \$1,000 of our \$3,000 scholarship budget has been reserved for a possible Beginning Birding class to be offered at Whatcom Community College.
- Audubon will staff a booth at the Bellingham Farmer's Market twice per year.
- Reservations for the Pearrygin Lake Campout have been made for Thursday-Sunday, May 30-June 2.
- Updated job descriptions for Board members and Committee Chairs will be submitted to the Board for approval.
- The President will invite a representative from the Whatcom Land Trust to an upcoming Board meeting to share their strategies for fundraising and recruiting new members.
- The Conservation Committee signed on to a national letter opposing attacks on environmental issues in the 2019 Appropriations Bill.
- The Board voted to adopt a proposal to establish a fundraising goal of \$11,000 to construct an elevated viewing platform/bird blind and interpretive signage for the Harrison Reserve project. This goal includes raising \$5,500 from NCAS general membership and matching dollar for dollar up to \$5,500 from NCAS reserve funds. NCAS will continue to pursue grants for this project.
- A photo release will be added to our field trip liability release form.
- The Board voted to co-sponsor a Candidate Forum with RESources for Sustainable Communities for three Whatcom County positions on the November 2018 ballot. These positions are: County Council at Large, Public Utility District #1 Commissioner and County Prosecutor. The Forum is planned for October (date TBA).

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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.

Please check your mailing labels for accuracy, including the expiration date. To make any necessary changes, please send an email to membership@northcascadesaudubon.org.

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