

The Avalanche



North Cascades Audubon Society Newsletter

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Volume 59: Issue 1

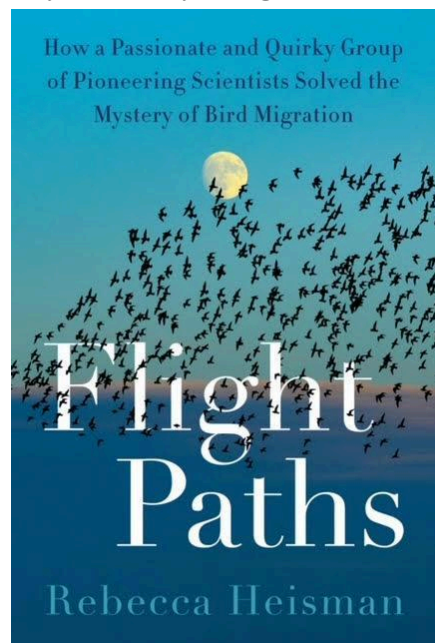
April 2024

April 23, 7:00pm NCAS Membership Meeting

Note: This is Zoom only. Use [this link](#) to register.

Wild Stories from the History of Bird Migration Research Rebecca Heisman

We have all heard amazing facts about bird migration—the long distances that birds travel, the ways that they navigate, etc. But did you ever wonder how we figured all of this out? While



working for the American Ornithological Society, Rebecca Heisman became fascinated with the varied and creative techniques that scientists have used to study bird migration, and this eventually became the basis for her book *Flight Paths: How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration*. In her talk, she'll share some surprising stories from the history of bird migration research and discuss why understanding migration is so crucial for bird conservation.

Rebecca Heisman is a freelance science writer who lives in Walla Walla, Washington, and has worked with organizations including the Audubon Society, the American Bird Conservancy,

the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the American Ornithological Society. *Flight Paths* is her first book.



North Cascades Audubon Society

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.

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WhatcomBirds:

[Whatcom Birds](#) is a bulletin board where local birders exchange news of sightings, and ask for help in identifying birds. Here are a few highlights from March.

Eric Ellingson posted pictures of this beautiful leucistic Red-tailed Hawk.



Apparently it's been around for at least 13 years, so the odd coloring doesn't seem to be a disadvantage.

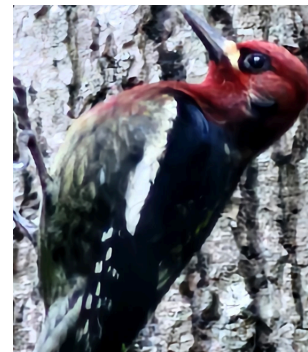
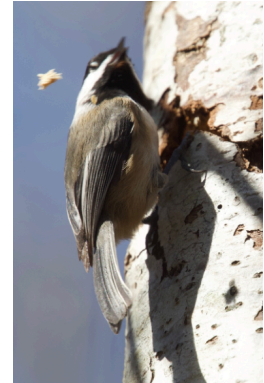
Also from Eric, a stunning series showing a Northern Harrier stealing from a Short-eared Owl. There isn't space to show the whole sequence, but here's a sample. To see the rest, click [here](#).



Andrea Warner announced that an Osprey nesting platform has been installed at Marine Park in Fairhaven.

Patrice Clark reports a Rufous Hummingbird, and a sighting of 23 Trumpeter Swans flying north on March 15.

Frederick Sears saw Black-capped Chickadees, Northern Flickers and a Pileated Woodpecker excavating nest holes at Scudder's Pond.



Ryan Ferris sent this shot of a Red-breasted Sapsucker at Fragrance Lake.

To see the rest of the reports and pictures on Whatcom Birds, use the link at the top of this article.

April Field Trips

[Birding at Semiahmoo Spit](#)

Saturday, April 6, 2024

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

Registration Required

Trip Limit: 16

Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

As we enter the month of April, we welcome the coming of spring and the northward movement of our wintering birds as well as those species that winter

farther south. That can result in some exciting birding along our coastal waters. And, possibly, some better weather too. Brant, loons, scoters, scaup, mergansers, goldeneyes and Buffleheads will still be present along with plovers, American Oystercatchers, and maybe a Whimbrel or other shorebirds. The changing season should also stimulate the activity of songbirds along the spit and might bring in some early migrants.

Please join us for what is always a rewarding outing. New or potential birders are more than welcome. We usually walk up to two miles along the spit but those who may find that difficult are welcome to drive and rejoin the group along the way.

Lake Padden Birding

Sunday April 14, 2024

9:30-11:30am

Trip Leader: Alex Jeffers

Registration Required

Trip Limit: 16

Meet at the [West Parking Lot](#) by the restrooms.

The parks and neighborhoods of Bellingham offer birders a wide array of unique habitats to explore. Join other birders each month to explore a new birding hotspot within walking, biking, or bussing distance from downtown Bellingham. This month, we will be heading to a local favorite, Lake Padden. Lake Padden hosts habitat for songbirds and freshwater ducks, making it a great place to bird as spring migration kicks into gear.

Whatcom Falls Park

Saturday April 20, 2024

8:30-10:30am

Trip Leader: Joan Sauber

Registration Required

Trip Limit: 12

Meet at Whatcom Falls Park parking by the fish hatchery, Silver Beach Road.

Let's explore Whatcom Falls Park. We'll start in the parking lot, and make our way through a wooded section to Derby Pond. There should be opportunities for various viewings there. We'll continue up the trail that will lead to the wetlands adjacent to Scudder Pond on the northwest side with a possible short side trip to view the old trestle. After spending some time in the wetlands area, if time permits, we will work our way over to Scudder Pond. The loop continues back along Whatcom Falls Creek and eventually to our starting point. Of course, no trip would be complete without a view of the old stone bridge built by WPA to view the falls.

There are bathrooms available. We will be walking mostly on gravel paths although some of the forest paths have uneven ground. There will be very minimal elevation gain. If we make our way to Scudder Pond, viewing from Electric Avenue, we will need to be careful since the viewing area is right next to the road where there are no sidewalks.

Beginning Birding by Ear at Point Whitehorn

Sunday April 21, 2024

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm

Trip Leaders: Pam Borso and Phil Calise

Registration Required

Trip Limit: 12

Join Pam and Phil to hone your skills in identifying birds by ear as you learn to recognize avian species by their calls and songs. This will be a fun trip for beginners as well as for experienced birders who wish to stay in tune with our feathered friends. We will find resident species in woodland habitats as well as some newly arrived migrants. Note that the trip will not involve walking down to the beach.

[Spring Birding at Fairhaven Park](#)

Sunday April 28, 2024

Time: 7:30-10:00am

Trip Leaders: Sue Parrott & Steven Harper

Registration Required

Trip Limit: 12

Meet at main parking area at Fairhaven Park - 107 Chuckanut Drive North, Bellingham.

With an early start of 7:30 am, we hope to hear and see spring migrants as well as resident birds in the varied habitat of Fairhaven Park. We will start by birding around the edges of the park and follow the trail towards Hundred Acre Wood. Depending on what we find, we might also walk along the Interurban Trail. We will be walking on lawn and on gravel trails with minimal elevation except for a few areas. Bring your binoculars, dress to stay warm, and get ready to look and listen to the magic of spring.

[Birding at Semiahmoo Spit](#)

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm

Trip Leader: Paul Woodcock

Registration Required

Trip Limit: 16

Meet at Semiahmoo County Park parking lot.

When spring arrives and migrant songbirds begin to return to the Pacific Northwest, our focus tends to shift to the wooded shoreline of Drayton Harbor. Most of our marine species will still be present so, after checking the beaches to see who is there on the water and the spit, we will focus part of our time on trying to find spring migrants such as Rufous Hummingbird, Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Black-headed Grosbeak and, hopefully,

swallows overhead as well as others. Resident species from Bald Eagles to chickadees will also be present. Please join us to enjoy spring birding at Semiahmoo and Drayton Harbor.

Whether you are a novice birder or more experienced, you will enjoy the birds and the fine company on this relatively easy walk of less than two miles.

Pearrygin Lake State Park

2024 Campout

SAVE THE DATE

North Cascades Audubon's 2024 annual campout at the Pearrygin Lake State Park



group camp is scheduled for **Thursday, May 30 through Sunday, June 2nd**. We are not taking reservations at this time, but we wanted you to know the dates so you can put it on your calendar! Reservations will open in May - watch the NCAS website and newsletter. The group camp at Pearrygin Lake State Park is reserved for tents, vans and small pickup campers for 3 nights for time to camp and bird together. If you would like more information at this time, please contact info@northcascadesaudubon.org.

But if you intend to come, read on.....

NCAS needs one or two volunteers to coordinate and organize NCAS's annual campout at Pearrygin Lake State Park group camp.

The responsibilities involve handling registration for the campout and all communication regarding the campout. This includes registration for those using the group camp and communicating with those camping or lodging in other areas. The coordinator needs to be aware of space limitations and parking capacity for the group camp and handle registration accordingly. In addition, the coordinator is responsible for ensuring there are field trip opportunities for participants. The coordinator/organizer should plan on camping at the group camp. Please contact sharper@northcascadesaudubon.org as soon as possible if you are interested!



WHATCOM
LAND TRUST
EST. 1984

Help Whatcom Land Trust Celebrate 40 Years of Conservation, Care and Change

By Claire Johnston & Lorraine Wilde

Since 1984, Whatcom Land Trust (the Trust) has worked to protect and steward Whatcom County's special places for future generations of all species. NCAS members likely feel the impact of their four decades of work each time they bird at one of the 19 Whatcom County public parks created with the help of Whatcom Land Trust—including Galbraith Mountain, Stimpson Family

Nature Reserve, Teddy Bear Cove and portions of the Chuckanuts.

According to Board member Rand Jack, who helped co-found the organization forty years ago, the Trust, "looked to protect a variety of land—particularly natural areas—that would provide [access] opportunities and protect habitat for animals that were here long before we were," he said.

As the Land Trust grew and added more properties, they worked to align conservation strategies with other community groups, the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe and other government entities working toward shared conservation values. The Trust's individual properties are connected to the larger ecosystems of Whatcom County, and their protection and management have a large impact on habitat health and connectivity, river system function and climate resilience.

Whatcom Land Trust has now protected more than 26,000 acres of land through conservation easements, land ownership and facilitation. The Trust hosts one of the largest volunteer programs in the Pacific Northwest.

Save the dates and join the community at these upcoming 40th Anniversary events.

Volunteer Ambassador Training
Wednesday, April 3, 5:30-7 p.m.
412 N. Commercial St. Bellingham, WA

40th Anniversary Party at Structures Brewing
Friday, April 12, 5:30-8 p.m.
601 W. Holly Street Bellingham, WA

A casual, fun kick-off celebration with toasts from community leaders, live music, a raffle and birthday cake.



Maple Creek Reach (Photo- Rich Bowers)

Earth Day Work Party at Ladies of the Lake

Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Join volunteers along Fir Creek (next to Lake Whatcom) which is home to native kokanee and other wildlife. They will be removing blackberry and clearing other invasive species surrounding hundreds of saplings that have been planted there in the last few years.

Head to <https://rb.gy/u8wua9> for the address, carpool information, what to wear and more. RSVP is not required but signing up beforehand at <https://rb.gy/7u6v7o> will make signing in quicker and easier.



WLT at California Creek (Photo- WLT)

**Rand Jack & Whatcom Land Trust
Fireside Chat at Whatcom
Museum**

Friday, May 3, 5 - 6:30 p.m.

The community will celebrate the latest art exhibition by Whatcom Land Trust co-founder Rand Jack, *Carving Birds and Conserving Land*, at Whatcom Museum. Jack will share conservation stories from the last forty years and answer audience questions about his exquisite wooden bird carvings and conservation work.

Follow Whatcom Land Trust on social media or scan below to sign up for Whatcom Land Trust’s e-newsletter so you don’t miss out on other events. Stewardship work parties, guided birding and hiking opportunities on Trust properties and much more are planned for the months ahead.



Phil Calise Receives Silver Wings Award at Wings Over Water Festival March 16, 2024



By Pam Borso

The first Silver Wings Award was presented to Jim Jorgensen, one of the founders of the Wings Over Water Festival in 2003. Jim was a geology teacher and also taught ornithology at Blaine High School for many years. He also initiated and was active in creating Marine Park in Blaine, one of the main bird viewing areas along the Blaine shoreline. The award was presented to Jim at the Wings Over Water Festival in 2019. Jim passed away in May 2023. The renamed Jim Jorgensen Silver Wings Award is presented annually at the WOW Festival to someone who has shown outstanding achievement in the observation, education, and stewardship of the birds and their habitat in the Pacific Northwest.

This year, the award went to Phil Calise. Phil has been an outstanding birder for a number of years in Whatcom County. He participates in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, Cherry Point bird surveys, and Whatcom Land Trust surveys. He has led many field trips for Wings Over Water festivals as well as for the North Cascades Audubon Society both locally in Whatcom County and for our annual campout at Pearrygin Lake near Winthrop. His regular contributions to eBird are valuable for people seeking birds in our area.

Our congratulations to Phil Calise on receiving this prestigious and richly deserved award.

CAUTION: Bird feeding makes you happy!

Mon-Fri: 10 - 4:30
Saturday: 10 - 4

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Seeking Spanish Speaking Volunteers

Do you speak Spanish? Are you interested in sparking the joy of birding in the lives of young people? We are seeking volunteers fluent in Spanish to introduce concepts of the avian world to school age kids with partner organizations. Opportunities may include field trips or in-classroom learning and may be conducted during the school year or during summer break. If you're interested contact [Pam Borso](#) our Volunteer Coordinator.



Thanks to all the volunteers who made it such a success!

Field trip guides: Pam Borso, Paul Woodcock, Alex Jeffers, Lynne Givler, Keith Carpenter, Helen Dolesji, John and Jane Aspnes, David Drummond.

Reifel trip guides: John and Jane Aspnes, Eric Ellingson, Marsha Kolinski.

San Juan boat cruise guides: Marjorie Leon, John Horner, Rae Edwards.

BirdTastic: Chris Brewer

Viewing stations: Robert Kaye, Deborah Kaye, Lyle Anderson, Stephen Chase, Josiah Chase, Alison Henshaw, Vanessa Story, Amy Brightman, Blanche Burche, Rachel Rothberg, Justin Bajema, Pauline Sterin.

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. All activities are 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. 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 and mail to NCAS, PO Box 5805, Bellingham 98227. Please make sure you include your email address. You can also [join online](#). Does your company match donations? Let them know you donated to North Cascades Audubon Society

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_____ \$50 Prairie Falcon
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