



Volume 42 #4 December 2008

## Christmas Bird Counts: Coming Soon To a Circle Near You

In the midst of the busy holiday season, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house in the middle of winter to go count birds.

These Citizen Scientists are taking action for conservation. By participating in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, they help scientists understand how birds are faring amid unprecedented environmental challenges. The data they collect informs the world about the State of the Birds, and provides the information we need to shape their future and ours.

Count volunteers follow routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. If observers live within a CBC circle, they may arrange in advance to count the birds at their feeders and submit those data to their compiler. All individual CBC's are conducted in the period from December 14 to January 5 (inclusive dates) each season, and each count is conducted in one calendar day.

The first CBC was done on Christmas Day of 1900 as an alternative activity to an event called the "side hunt" where people chose sides, then went out and shot as many birds as they could. The group that came in with the largest number of dead birds won the event. Frank Chapman, a famed ornithologist at the

### Count circles in our region include:

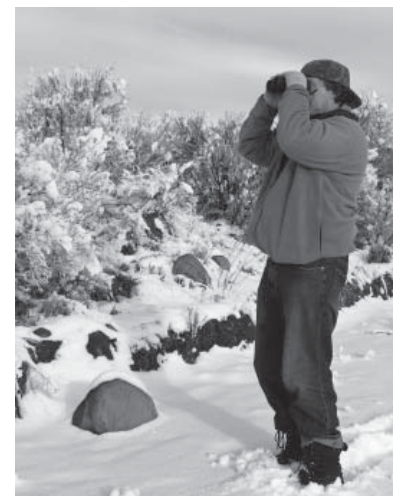
Bridgeport - December 15  
Moses Lake - December 20  
Wenatchee - December 21  
Twisp - December 28  
Omak/Okanogan - December 28  
Chelan - December 29  
Grand Coulee - December 30  
Leavenworth - January 4  
For more details see page 4

American Museum of Natural History and the editor of Bird-Lore (which became the publication of the National Association of Audubon Societies when that organization formed in 1905) recognized that declining bird populations could not withstand wanton over-hunting, and proposed to count birds on Christmas Day rather than shoot them.

CBC participants are organized into groups, or field parties, by the Compiler of each Count. Each field party covers a specific area of the 15-mile diameter circle on a specific route. And anyone is welcome to participate, since Compilers arrange field parties so that inexperienced observers are always out with seasoned CBC veterans.

The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. For example in the 1980's CBC data were used to document the decline of wintering populations of the American Black Duck, after which conservation measures were put into effect to reduce hunting pressure on this species.

There is a \$5.00 fee per field participant per count. Feeder watchers do not need to pay the fee and all observers 18 and under may count for free. These fees help to cover the costs of generating materials for Compilers, producing an annual CBC summary issue, and maintaining the CBC website and database.



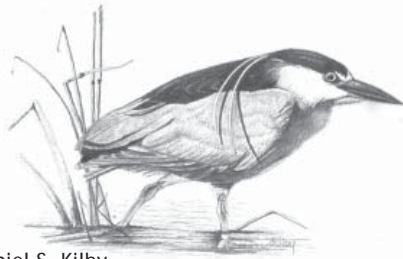
This year's Twisp compiler, Ken Bevis, scans the horizon for birds during last year's Bridgeport Christmas Bird Count.  
photo by Teri J Pieper

Mid-November as I write this and no sign of snow on the ground before Thanksgiving.

Local skiing enthusiasts are getting a little nervous. October was lovely with clear blue sky, sunshine-filled days highlighting the splendid autumn foliage everywhere. A week of rain and a bit of snow seemed to herald the 'wet gray' season that had been promised but so far that has not happened. Days are quite short, sunny and brisk with frosty nights. Bird numbers have dropped significantly at our feeders. Could it be the appearance of accipiters and shrikes that has them keeping lower profiles? Bald Eagles are now seen often in the valley. On the drive to Twisp Sunday morning, we saw five without trying very hard. It's less than five miles on the road. They appear to be feeding on salmon carcasses and the occasional dead deer. Wintering eagles replace the commonly seen in the summer Turkey Vultures as the clean-up crew for dead animals. Even with fewer songbirds, we will still be busy keeping feeders filled because at least one local mule deer has learned to get sunflower seeds out of a tube feeder.



*Best wishes for the Holiday Season.  
Remember there will be NO Phlox in January so mark your calendar now for the program on January 20th and don't forget those Christmas Bird Counts!*



Daniel S. Kilby

**North Central Washington Audubon Society, a local chapter of the National Audubon Society, is dedicated to furthering the knowledge and the conservation of the environment of North Central Washington, our Nation, and the World.**

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**North Central Washington Audubon Society  
One Year Membership Form**

- \_\_\_ New Member National Audubon Society \$20
- \_\_\_ Renewing Member National Audubon Society \$35
- \_\_\_ NCW Audubon Wild Phlox Only \$15
- \_\_\_ Other - donation to NCW Audubon

Membership in National Audubon includes NCW Audubon membership and Audubon magazine six times per year and The Wild Phlox nine times per year. Make check payable to Audubon; mail to Post Office Box 2934 Wenatchee, WA 98807-2934.

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Chapter Code 7XCH Y10

# Fund Raising in Hard Times

by Mark Oswood

We find ourselves, unexpectedly, in a stretch of history that seems to have come loose from its anchorage. Counted-on savings, thought-to-be-secure jobs, and will-always-be-there services are all adrift. Most of us, I think, are trying to find a balance of sequestering resources against these uncertainties versus investing in a hopeful future. Nonprofit organizations are especially vulnerable to steep economic slides because donations decline just when societal needs increase. We are all inundated with the usual end-of-the-year donation appeals; this year, the urgency, even desperation, is unusual.

We are therefore even more grateful than usual that so many of you have sent donations in response to our September sending. As we have long noted, our financial needs are modest because we are an all-volunteer organization. However, our few needs are essential. So, the donors listed below have come through with the essentials to keep the chapter doing your work. Thank You.

KNUT & ANN AAGAARD	KEN HEINLE & KRIS CAMERON ✧	MIKE PATTERSON & GRETCHEN ROHDE ✧
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SUSAN FISHBURN	JOHN E. NEWELL	+ five donors who opted for anonymity
FRANK GAMELIN,	JUDY OLSON	
JEANIE & DENNIS GARRITY	MARK & JUDY OSWOOD ✧	✧ - donation of \$100 or more
DREW & CATHY GAYLORD	GARY & LINDA PHIPPEN	Great Blue Heron
H PAULINE GRAEVELL ✧	TERI PIEPER	✧✧ - donation of \$200 or more
JENNY GRAEVELL	FRANK PING	Greater White-fronted Goose
RALPH & BETTY HAGENBUCH ✧	CHRIS RADER	✧✧✧ - donation of \$500 or more
CURT & KAREN HAIRE ✧	STEVE & NAN RAYMOND	Magnificent Frigatebird
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As always, we have vigorously checked for mistakes, implementing the Integrated Gremlin Management (IGM) approach. However, gremlins will never be endangered or even threatened. So, if some gremlins are lurking in our list of donors, please let us know and we'll make corrections.

If you magneted the donation slip to the refrigerator – so that you could send in a donation in good time – but the slip fell off and slipped under the refrigerator to be eaten by the omnivorous dust bunnies – we've printed a replacement donation slip for your use.



Daniel S. Kilby

Here is my/our donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please make checks payable to NCW Audubon  
 and mail to PO Box 2934, Wenatchee 98807. Thank You!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Donors will be acknowledged (name but not address) in a future issue of the Phlox. If you do not wish to be acknowledged in the Phlox, please check here

# Christmas Bird Counts Around the Region

**Bridgeport, December 15.** Meet 7:00 a.m. at the Bridgeport Bar gas station/mini mart, known as G K's Country Market. (Same place the last 2 years). Contact Meredith Spencer at 509-686-7551 or merdave@homenetnw.net. The evening meeting place will be announced that morning. The last two years this count total has seen 101 and 100 species. This is a fun count to see winter rarities and large numbers of waterfowl on the Columbia River

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**Moses Lake, December 20.** This count features a Chili Feed at the compilation. For the itinerary contact Doug Schonewald at dschone8@donobi.net or 509-766-0056.

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**Wenatchee, December 21.** Please contact Dan Stephens at 509-682-6752 or DStephens@wvc.edu. This count needs both area leaders and well as general participants.

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**Twisp, December 28.** Meet 7:15 am at Local on Highway 20 in Twisp. Tess is opening early for the CBC in order to have coffee and pastries and lunch items (to go) available for birders. Regroup that evening for hot soup and a potluck at Teri and Ken's house. For more information contact Ken Bevis at 509-997-0995 or krbevis@methownet.com.

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**Okanogan/Omak, December 28.** For info call Heather or Todd at 509-846-0475 or Gordon Kent 509-422-6116, or e-mail heather@eaglesun.net. Meet at Heather and Todd's house at 6:45 am and again at the day's end for compiling the lists and to discuss the sightings and warm up with a potluck/chili feed.

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**Chelan, December 29.** The Chelan Christmas Bird Count will meet for breakfast at 7:00am at the Apple Cup Cafe (804 E. Woodin Ave.), where groups will be assigned to the seven areas of the count circle. Return to the Apple Cup Cafe about 4:45pm for dinner and to report counts. Questions? Contact Steve Easley at 509-682-2318 or seasley@wenva.com.

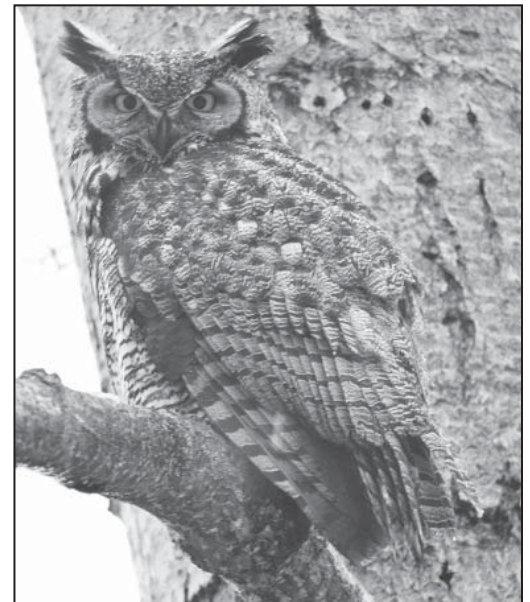
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**Grand Coulee, December 30.** Participants will meet at Flo's Café, 316 Spokane Way, Grand Coulee, WA at 7:00 AM. Seven or eight groups will cover a variety of habitats from large reservoirs, pine/fir

woods, sagebrush, wheat fields and small towns that make up the count circle. Maps and field sheets will be provided. Meet again at 4:45 at Pepper Jacks Bar & Grill 113 Midway Ave, Grand Coulee to compile the day's numbers. If you would like to participate please contact David St. George 509-667-7472 or hartashkip@yahoo.com.

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**Leavenworth, January 4.** The 2008 Leavenworth Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, January 4th (Yes, that's in 2009). The Leavenworth count circle is centered near the bridge over Highway 2 in Peshastin. It covers areas of Tumwater Canyon, Icicle Canyon, the Chumstick, the Blewett area, and the Wenatchee Valley down to Cashmere. This is the eighth year for the Leavenworth Christmas Bird Count. In past years there have been good numbers of woodpeckers, nuthatches, dippers and an occasional warm-weather species. More species are seen every year, and hopefully that trend will continue. People are needed to observe feeders for part or all of the day – this information is an important part of the CBC. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. If you are a beginning birder, you will be paired with a veteran counter for the day. We will not meet in the morning of the day on the 4th, but will gather for refreshments and compiling results starting at 4:30 in the afternoon, location to be determined. For more information about the Leavenworth count, contact Karen Haire at karenhaire@nwi.net or 548-4566.



Great-horned Owl near Pearygin Lake.  
photo by Teri J Pieper

# January Program Features Another Fine Film: *Oil + Water*

Our NCWAS January program is the January offering in the Wenatchee Valley Environmental Film Series.

North Central Washington Audubon Society is the sponsor for the film *Oil + Water*. This film, a winner of numerous awards at recent film festivals, is a quest. Two world-class kayakers set out from northern Alaska, determined to drive their highly remodeled Japanese fire truck to the tip of South America. The truck was converted to run on biofuel and the 21,000 mile trip became the longest ever petroleum-free road trip. Along the way, the kayakers had some of the

best whitewater paddling in the Americas and held workshops, demonstrations, and gatherings to promote sustainable energy. The actor Patrick Stewart, in presenting the 'Best Picture' award to *Oil + Water* at the Jules Verne Adventure Film Festival, described *Oil + Water* as "... one of the most extraordinary accounts of man's enthusiasm, passion, courage, and more than anything else, the desire to have a good time."

The film showing will be at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center, on Tuesday, January 20th, at 7:00 p.m. Please note the day and time, different from our regularly scheduled programs.

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## Book review

### "Birds in Flight, the Art and Science of How Birds Fly"

By Carrol L. Henderson. Voyageur Press.

by Teri J Pieper

Who has not watched birds moving through the air and wondered to themselves 'how do they do that?'. I wonder about this whenever I watch birds in flight. I am someone who has never been able to understand the concept of flight, be it birds or aircraft or bats. Why does a Northern Shoveler simply lift straight into the air and why do Common Loons need the entire length of a small lake to become airborne?

In this new book by Carrol L. Henderson, the writer attempts to explain this so that I and everyone else can understand it. While I am still unclear on how they fly, I can see now why various species fly, land and take off in different manners. Through well written text and beautiful photographs, Mr. Henderson shows the reader the flight differences in birds from around the world.

Topics covered in the book include

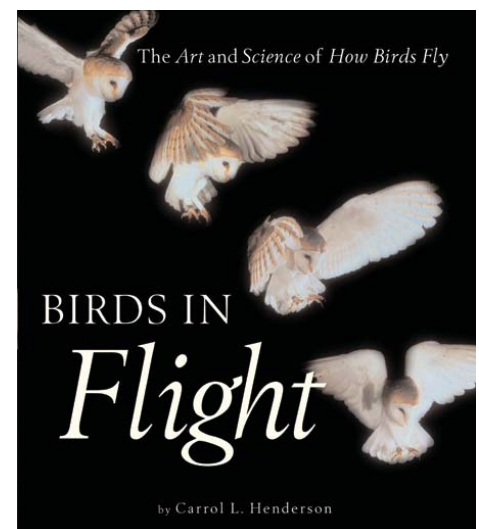
aerodynamic principles (the part that continues to lose me), feathers and bones, wings, the tail, types of flight and the art of landing.

His comparison of the different body types of different bird species goes a long ways to explaining the difference between a shoveler and a loon or a hummingbird and an albatross. The shoveler flushes up from the water with a powerful down stroke of its wings. The loon must run into the wind while flapping its wings until it achieves enough speed and lift to become airborne. The hummingbird becomes airborne by hovering on its perch and then lifting upward and backward. The albatross must take off into high wind that helps generate lift as the bird runs along the water's surface.

The images alone are enough to make a bird lover want this book. Henderson's photos are mixed with photos from other photographers

to produce an exhilarating view of birds in flight.

The author is a wildlife biologist with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Additionally he leads birding tours around the world. He has photographed wildlife in sixteen different countries and has observed more than 2500 bird species.



# The End of Autumn, Not Yet Winter

by Bob Spiwak

It's a rainy Sunday that has followed an equally rainy Saturday on the heels of a rainy Friday the day after our first snow of the year. Encouraging as it was for the eye and psyche; the NOAA forecast countered our emotional highs with forecasts of Pineapple lows to follow. And here we are, watching the wet.

Even the fog that I love photographing is not cooperating. No matter how high I went on an easy uphill trail through the ponderosas this morning the misty, mysterious tree trunks always seemed to be two steps ahead. Giant steps. Accompanied by frequent showers and a dog on this jaunt, the camera hung inside my jacket like a rectangular chest enhancer. Camera at the ready, but out of the rain.

The clump of river birch that supports two feeders and three wind chimes is leafless and disconsolate, its nakedness so blatant that it shocks the puritanical sensibilities of the winter congregations of nuthatches, chickadees and Stellar Jays. Well, not really, of course.

Gloria and I quit feeding the birds when natural food becomes available. We do this for a number of reasons; intellectually, we have read this is the thing to do, read it in several bird books and magazines. In a more practical vein, it seems to keep the rattlesnakes away. Our deck overlooks a small pond at the base of a big

rocky mountain where the serpents (*crotalis pacificus*) live. There are, aside from the hummingbird gas pumps, at least six empty feeders on the deck in the birch clump and a gnarly, willow that the chickadees love.

Of course a lot of seed gets scattered from the feeders to the ground next to the pond, and while some birds follow it, squirrels, pack rats, chipmunks, mice, and voles are regular constituents. These birds and mammals attract the shoulderless reptiles, who are not welcome underfoot or sunning on the path to the rest of the feeders. Those are for birds out in the wild places, and not metro-dwellers like the spoiled avian yuppies who feed on the deck.

The sun, mocking, has just broken through. We know, according to NOAA, that there will be at least another three days of rain. But the mere appearance of sunshine sets the mind to consider grabbing cameras, or canoe paddles - anything to keep from pressing a button and feeding our NFL addiction.

But it also reminds me to get the chairs and table off the deck before the snow comes and the feeders are filled. And that reminds me to post the resident snow shovel in its place so we can haul fifty pounds of seed from the car to the can.

Time to go to work. And the rain is back.

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## Upper Basin Birders 2008 Highlights

by Sally Soest and Heather Murphy

Since 2002 the Upper Basin Birders, a group of volunteers, have been doing habitat-based bird counts around Fish Lake and Lake Wenatchee in Chelan County. Heather Murphy, retired US Forest Service wildlife biologist, recruited the Upper Basin Birders to continue work on a USFS study that began in 1999 but ran out of funding. Surveys run from April through October. To participate with the Upper Basin Birders, email Gretchen Rohde at [design@thedesignranch.com](mailto:design@thedesignranch.com)

The 2008 season saw some exciting advances in our record keeping and data use. Our sightings are now entered into the online resource known as eBird (<http://ebird.org>). It is a huge, sophisticated, but easily

accessible database available for scientific analysis. Our data, both past and current, now joins that of scientists, citizen science groups (like ourselves) and individuals across the continent. Data from eBird is available to the Cornell Ornithology Lab, Partners in Flight, and other organizations for analysis of species trends, habitat conservation and to guide decisions about the preservation of our avian species and their needed habitats.

One of the highlights of the season happened on October 6. Five White-winged Scoters were observed on Fish Lake! Many birders never see scoters away from the salt water so this was quite a highlight.

*Please see photo and species list from October 6, next page.*

## Ms Bluenose

Gloria Piper-Roberson

Third in a Series on Washington State Symbols

**M**s. Bluenose is a steelhead trout; a cut above her cousins, Rainbow and Cutthroat. Ms. Bluenose is, in one way, like Ms. Salmon, anadromous. However, unlike Ms. Salmon, she does not die after returning from the sea to fresh water to spawn. Indeed Ms. Bluenose may come and go several times spawning each time.

When Bluenose is between one and four years old, she leaves the fresh river water in which she was born. She swims through streams and creeks, weaves down tributaries, passes through the estuary, and out to the open sea. Bluenose travels alone, rather than in a school of fish, leaving behind two of her landlocked cousins, Rainbow, and Cutthroat.

During her one to five year stay in the open sea, Bluenose can grow up to a length of 45 inches and put on up to 40 pounds. If she chooses she will return to fresh water during fall, winter or early spring. This is the winter run. However, she may prefer the summer run and enter fresh water in spring, summer or early fall. Throughout her lifecycle, Bluenose relies on the streams, rivers, estuaries, and marine habitat for her survival, feeding on small crustaceans, insects, and small fish.

After returning to her birth waters and once the site she picks satisfies her needs of a good flow of water to supply oxygen, she leisurely digs a pit in the gravel. This activity may go on from one to eight hours, depending on her standards. When she finishes, she will have a nest four inches deep and about her own length. When Bluenose begins to lay her bright pink eggs, a male quickly fertilizes them. This process takes about two seconds. She then covers the eggs with small gravel and moseys upstream to start a second nest. Bluenose continues this process for a day or for a week or until she is rid of all her eggs. Thus, she finishes with motherhood. She may, later, return to the sea or she may not. Like any female, Ms. Bluenose is unpredictable. She will do her own bidding.

With her head the color of steel-blue, scales shiny with flecks of silver, her back spotted gray from head to tail, her belly intensely white, and a hint of opalescent pink down her sides, this steelhead trout is quite striking; one of the top five sport fish in North America. At present, only Native Americans are allowed to fish for steelhead commercially in Washington or Oregon.

In 1969, Washington State Legislature adopted the beautiful steelhead trout as its State symbol.

Resources: Curtis, Brian Life Story of the Fish, His Morals and Manners, Morrow c1949  
[www.streamnet.org/ff/Lifehistory/steadlead\\_facts.html](http://www.streamnet.org/ff/Lifehistory/steadlead_facts.html)  
[www.nwtrapper.com/kids/steelhea.htm](http://www.nwtrapper.com/kids/steelhea.htm)



Upper Basin Birders, volunteering their time to observe and record bird sightings on Fish Lake, October 6, 2008. Left to right: Sally Soest, Polly Feehan, Gretchen Rohde, Heather Murphy, Susan Ballinger, Edgar Meyer. Not pictured, photographer and Captain Mike Patterson.

### Upper Basin Birders' Species List October 6, Fish Lake

gull sp.	American Coot
American Wigeon	Northern Flicker
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker
Blue-winged Teal	American Crow
Northern Shoveler	Black-capped Chickadee
Ring-necked Duck	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Lesser Scaup	Song Sparrow
White-winged Scoter	White-crowned Sparrow
Barrow's Goldeneye	Dark-eyed Junco
Common Merganser	Red-winged Blackbird
Pied-billed Grebe	Bald Eagle
Horned Grebe	
Red-necked Grebe	
Great Blue Heron	

**December 2008 Wild Phlox**

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**North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar**

December 15	Bridgeport CBC	Contact Meredith Spencer at 509-686-7551 or merdave@homenetw.net
December 20	Moses Lake CBC	Contact Doug Schonewald at dschone8@donobi.net or 509-766-0056
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December 30	Grand Coulee CBC	Contact David St. George 509-667-7472 or hartashkip@yahoo.com
January 4	Leavenworth CBC	Contact Karen Haire at karenhaire@nwi.net or 548-4566
January 20	Audubon Program	<b>Environmental Film Fest: Oil + Water, see page 5</b>
June 6 and 7	NCW Audubon goes north	A field trip to the Methow Valley. Mark your calendars.



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Visit the NCW Audubon Society website for updates on these and other events  
[www.ncwaudubon.org](http://www.ncwaudubon.org)