



The Wild Phlox

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Where Do You Go Birding?

Where do you like to bird in North Central Washington? Do you have a favorite piece of public lands that you would like to share with other members of NCW Audubon? I am starting a series of articles on our readers' favorite birding sites and would like to hear from other birders that have places they want to share with our membership. Sites should be open to the public in Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan and Ferry Counties. Please include information about seasonality, difficulty (is it rough walking or maybe a paved pathway), access, parking permits, website if there is one. If you have a favorite photo or a map, that can be included with the article. For those who know how to use them, geotagged locations are helpful. I don't know how to use that information. Maybe it's time for me to learn. And most importantly, why is it a good birding location? So, I'll get this off to a start and I look forward to learning about some of your favorite birding places in our four-county region.

Patterson Lake Trail: This trail is part of the Methow Trails system located around Winthrop and Mazama. I like to access it from the Chickadee trailhead and walk down the Cabin trail to the Patterson Lake trail. It is a well-maintained dirt surface and open to bicycles and dogs. The two trails are about two and a half miles and can be walked out and back for a five-mile walk or linked to

the Radar Creek and Magpie trails for a loop that is over four miles long. To get to the trailhead, follow the signs to Sun Mountain Lodge from Highway 20 at Twin Lakes Road or in Winthrop, turning onto Patterson Lake road and when you come to the T intersection, turn left (away from Sun Mountain) and immediately left again and you will be in the Chickadee parking lot. There is a sign that says Chickadee trailhead.

From the trailhead the trail goes into a mixed forest with aspens on one side and ponderosa pine and Douglas fir on the other side of the trail. In the spring and early summer this is a good place for a variety of warblers and other migrants and nesting birds. It is also a place to test your birding-by-ear skills. After you go by the cabins, the trail goes through more aspens and then follows the lake and offers good views of the water in many locations as it



Trail to Patterson Lake
photo by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley
skirts in and out of the mixed pine and fir forest. Early in the year, you may see Wood Ducks, Mallards and Canada Geese. During fall migration, look for a larger variety of waterfowl species. Osprey and Bald Eagles can often be seen perched or looking for prey. It's always fun to see an Osprey dive into the water and come up with a fish! On a summer evening there are Common Nighthawks flying and Common Poorwills calling. Lots of snags provide habitat for woodpeckers, Red-naped Sapsuckers, swallows and other cavity nesting birds. Some of the other birds I've seen along the way include Ruffed and Dusky Grouse, nuthatches, Lazuli Bunting, Gray Catbird, chickadees, Red Crossbill, Ruddy Ducks, Green-winged Teal, Tundra Swans, herons, various flycatchers, goldeneyes, finches, accipiters, hummingbirds, jays, juncos, kingfishers, orioles, Spotted Sandpipers, various sparrows and finches, swallows, Western Tanager and more.

You may see other wildlife in the area including bats, mule deer, painted turtles and black bears. There is a map at www.sunmountainlodge.com/PDF/Sun-Mountain-Lodge-summer-trails-map.pdf. No parking permit is required. Suggested seasons are spring, summer and fall. In the fall, the deciduous trees and shrubs put on a magnificent display of colors.

The mission of the North Central Washington Audubon Society is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of people and the biological diversity of North Central Washington."

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North Central Washington Audubon Society is on Facebook too

All phone numbers in the Wild Phlox are area code 509 unless otherwise indicated.

Manson Lakes Winter Waterfowl Field Trip

by Virginia Palumbo, Chelan

Virginia Palumbo will be leading a field trip to explore the Manson Lakes winter waterfowl on Saturday, December 1. We will meet at her house at 208 West Nixon Avenue in Chelan at 8:30 am, and survey Wapato, Roses and Dry Lakes, returning by 11:30. This is a good time to see a large number of duck species, (including Northern Shovelers, Hooded Mergansers, Redheads, Ruddy Ducks and Canvasbacks), raptors (Bald Eagles, Great Horned Owls, Red-tailed Hawks, Cooper's Hawks), and oftentimes Tundra or Trumpeter Swans. We can also count on other regulars, like Great Blue Herons and Belted Kingfishers. Bring cold weather clothing (including boots), binoculars, water and a snack, and come join us for the fun! Please RSVP to Virginia at 682-5969.



Common Loon
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

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To join the National Audubon Society which also includes a subscription to the Wild Phlox, please see their website at www.audubon.org



Have you ever seen the birds known as camp robbers or whiskey jacks when you are hiking or camping in the forest? These friendly birds, recently known as Gray Jays have had their name changed to Canada Jays. I saw references to the Canada Jay and wondered what triggered the change. Historically they were called Canada Jays and then renamed Gray Jays in 1957 for reasons having to do with the naming of subspecies. The American Ornithological Society (AOS) recently decided that subspecies naming was no longer relevant and re-named the birds Canada Jays. It all seems rather bureaucratic and arbitrary for a sweet bird of our northern forests. In case you are not familiar with these birds, they are always on the lookout for a free meal. If you leave your peanuts or chips unattended on a picnic table, they will swoop down in small flocks and take them away. Same for dog food. And they will even take food from a person's hand. Of course, we are not supposed to feed the wildlife, but I will admit that I learned this at an early age from my father and have on occasion, been known to share my food with the lovely Canada Jays. They are a pretty and delicate gray and do not remind me of their more raucous cousins – the Steller's and other Jays.

Hopefully, you enjoyed my front-page article about one of my favorite birding places and hopefully you too will be willing to share favorite birding locations around NCW. If we get some stories about good places to bird, we will archive them on our website as a resource for all of us to explore. I'm quite sure we all have some spots that we don't want to share with the world and I completely understand that. It can be easy to slip into mindset of not wanting to invite anyone else into our region. This happened to me recently when I went hiking at Maple Pass on a weekday and found the vault toilets strewn with trash of all manner. It is a 'pack it in, pack it out' place. And on that weekday, we counted more than 100 hikers on the seven-and-a-half-mile trail. I was dismayed and will probably avoid that popular trail in the future.

Recently a series of photos went around showing an Osprey with baling twine tangled around its leg while it was still in its nest near Winthrop. It appeared that the bird never was able to fly out of the nest and it may have died up there. The local electric utility sent over a boom truck to attempt to free it, but the nest was just too high. Everyone who witnessed this was deeply saddened. Last year, the Okanogan County Conservation District began to try to educate people about the dangers of baling twine to nesting birds, in particular Ospreys. At <https://hs.umt.edu/osprey/documents/balingtwine.pdf> there is a brochure that illustrates the danger and suggests what to do with used twine. This is the second year in a row this has happened around here and I think it's time we came up with some way to address the issue of discarded baling twine and how to dispose of it properly or recycle or repurpose it.



Osprey with appropriate nesting material - a stick
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

NCW Recent Bird Sightings

Chelan: A White-tailed Ptarmigan was seen in the Enchantment Basin. Some of the sightings at the Horan Natural Area include Black-throated Gray Warbler, Great Egrets and a Ring-necked Pheasant. A Lapland Longspur was seen at Washington Pass. A Surf Scoter was seen on Lake Chelan. A Palm Warbler was seen near Wenatchee. A White-throated Sparrow was seen at the Leavenworth Fish Hatchery. At Walla Walla Park, there was a Bonaparte's Gull and a Black-bellied Plover. A mixed flock of Bohemian and Cedar Waxwings was seen at Poe Mountain.

Douglas: A large flock of Mountain Bluebirds was seen NE of Waterville. A Northern Shrike was seen near the Rock Island Grade Road.

Ferry: NW of the Kettle and Columbia River confluence there were reports of a White-throated Sparrow, Western

Screech Owl and a Northern Pygmy Owl. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was observed at the Wapaloosie Trailhead

Okanogan: A juvenile White-winged Scoter was seen on a pond on the west side of Cameron Lake Road. A Snow Bunting and a Northern Saw-whet Owl were seen near the site of the Chelan Ridge HawkWatch. At HawkWatch they have been seeing and catching many Northern Goshawks. Rough-legged Hawks are also migrating through. A Long-billed Dowitcher, a Great Egret and a Surf Scoter were seen at Cassimer Bar. A Pacific Loon was seen on the Methow River near Pateros. A Black-backed Woodpecker was seen off McFarland Creek Road in the Methow Valley. Red-necked Grebes were seen on Patterson and Pearygin Lakes. Western Grebes were seen at Pearygin Lake. A Common Snipe was seen in Winthrop.

compiled from the ncwabird email list
and eBird and Tweeters by Teri J Pieper

Fodder From the Feeder

I regrettably missed the deadline for the October issue, so here it is, September 23, and I am watching all the lovely birds that I missed during August while I was away, and it was no doubt, too smoky for many of them. Today I have seen eighteen species in my garden, including a hummingbird I could not identify, and a lovely female White-headed Woodpecker. I had not seen House Finches since the smoke and fires arrived, and I saw a couple today. The only birds I saw when I was here in August were American Goldfinches. All of this was timely, as I was researching what fire and smoke do to bird populations and finding the news is not all bad! This jived with my real time observation - as our smoke and fires have abated, the birds have returned.

According to Andy McGlashen in an October 2017 article on the Audubon website: In general, wildfires don't pose huge mortality threats to birds when they are active. Yes, fire may kill some nestlings and weaker birds, but as most fires occur in late summer and fall, many birds are finished nesting and even migrating. Guess what? The good news is that birds just fly away. And fire benefits many species. A newly-burned forest can provide a feast for woodpeckers that feed on the bark beetle larvae infesting the burned trees. Habitats newly opened by fires are a boon for Dusky Flycatchers and Mountain Bluebirds making for easier insect hunting, and White-headed Woodpeckers nest in these areas and forage in the surrounding intact forests. Kirtland's Warblers only nest in the fire dependent jack

by Karen Mulcahy, Winthrop

pine forests of the eastern USA. Red-headed Woodpeckers can have a population boom after fire devastates an area.

Of course, the benefits are only half of the story.

Smoke can make it harder for birds to flee the flames, especially the low-flying species that may succumb to the effects of smoke inhalation on their lungs and exhaustion. Resident birds may escape and find nearby suitable habitat, but maybe not if the fires are widespread and burn for a long time, as we have seen in North Central Washington. Fire that destroys old growth forests causes its inhabitants, such as Pileated Woodpeckers, Townsend's Warblers, and Golden-crowned kinglets to flee in search of new places that are not easily found. Fire destroys the grassland habitat of Greater Sage-Grouse and invasive plant species often repopulate the land first, making it unsuitable for the grouse. One interesting article I read from 2004 documented Project Feeder Watch reports of increased abundance of Pinyon and Steller's Jays, as well as Clark's Nutcrackers at feeders following widespread fires across the west in 2002. I think this is a good example of community-based science providing some important data. After our devastating 2014 and 2015 fires, my feeders were mobbed by Clark's Nutcrackers in 2016. In 2017, there were far fewer coming around.

We know with climate change, that fires will continue to be an issue for our area. I am wondering what, if any, studies this will spark. I am curious to see what happens this winter at the feeders.

Local Loon Tales

A Highland Wonders Presentation

On November 2, Dan and Ginger Poleschook will return to the Highland Wonders education series to update our community on how our local loons have fared in the seven years since their last presentation in Tonasket. Come and hear the stories of our local loons – where they hatched, adventures they have experienced, obstacles they have overcome, and which loons at which lakes are related to each other. Some stories will reflect loons as being highly intelligent, beyond their basic survival skills and genetic influences, and will provide examples of loons having long-term memories of places and people. Learn ways in which people have helped loons survive, and what we can do to increase and protect future populations of the Common Loon.



Common Loons on Lost Lake
photo by Ginger and Dan Poleschook

by Julie Vanderwal, Okanogan Highlands

Dan and Ginger have been working on conservation of Washington's not-so-common loon since 1996, including an annual survey of nesting and chick hatching and survival.

When: November 2nd, at 6:30 pm. (Dinner benefiting the Community Cultural Center (CCC) at 5:15 pm, followed by the presentation with tea, coffee and desserts.) Cost: Presentation is free; dinner is \$8 for CCC members and \$9 for non-members; desserts by donation (benefit for the CCC). Where: Community

Cultural Center of Tonasket,
411 S Western Ave

For more info about this and other free upcoming educational events, visit www.okanoganhighlands.org/education/hw, or contact julie@okanoganhighlands.org or 476-2432. Past event videos are available on YouTube on the channel, "OHA's Highland Wonders."

Celebrate Volunteers and Community-Based Science

by Susan Ballinger, Wenatchee

Wenatchee Naturalist program coordinator, Susan Ballinger, extends a warm welcome to NCWAS members and friends to attend a gathering on Sunday, November 18 from 2-4 pm. Audubon Washington's Christi Norman and NCWAS Board members, Richard Scranton and Bruce McCammon, are guest speakers at the annual Wenatchee Naturalist volunteer recognition social. They will give presentations about the Sagebrush-Songbird survey and the newly formed Friends of Horan grassroots group. This event will be at the Wenatchee Valley College campus theater with free on-campus parking. Beverages are provided, and attendees are asked to bring a finger-food snack to share potluck style.

This mission of the Wenatchee Naturalist program is to cultivate awareness, understanding, and stewardship of the Wenatchee River region by developing an active corps of well-informed community volunteers. To date, 188 people have completed the fifty-hour course, with 24 people enrolled in the current class offered through Wenatchee Valley College Continuing Education. Upon course completion, participants can voluntarily pledge to complete twenty plus hours of volunteering in support of conservation, either through board service, land stewardship, community science, or education and outreach. For example, twelve people have served as volunteers for the Sagebrush Songbird Survey. As of 2017, 94 people have earned their twenty plus hour service pin, and a total of 8407 hours of volunteer service have been reported. On November 18, volunteers will be celebrated for their 2018 service prior to the guest speaker presentations.

Audubon Washington's Christi Norman talk will focus on the 2018 accomplishments of the Sagebrush Songbird Survey. The survey is a partnership between Audubon WA and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as a collaborative, community-based science research program. The goal is to improve knowledge of Columbia Plateau shrub-steppe bird distribution, and to test and improve accuracy of scientific sagebrush obligate songbird species distribution models. Now in its sixth year, over 200 volunteers have collected field data and posted it

to eBird. The data is then incorporated into the WDFW Priority Habitats and Species database, a legally-recognized source for best available science in our state. Co-presenter, Richard Scranton will highlight NCWAS's leadership team of volunteers who do essential field work logistics planning and volunteer coordination. Local community-based science volunteers will be recognized and celebrated.



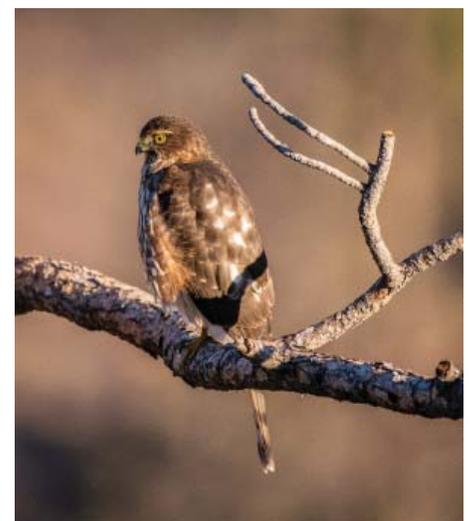
Horan Natural Area
photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

Bruce McCammon will briefly introduce the Friends of Horan. Under Bruce's leadership, NCWAS started a Facebook page to encourage communication about conditions in the area and events that may take place in or near the Horan Natural Area. The Horan Natural Area is at the confluence of the Wenatchee and the Columbia Rivers and is

widely used by birders, nature lovers and people out for a

walk. NCW Audubon is very committed to improving conditions in the Horan area for long-term ecological sustainability and educational use. NCWAS is working with the Chelan PUD, the City of Wenatchee, and Washington State Parks to develop a common view of desired future conditions in the Horan. Planning efforts for the Confluence Parkway project and relicensing of the Rock Island dam will provide opportunities to recognize the value of the Horan Natural Area and plan for enhancement activities that will lead to long-term benefits for birds, wildlife and our community.

For more information, contact Susan Ballinger at skylinebal@gmail.com



Cooper's Hawk
photo by Teri J Pieper,
Methow Valley

“What’s That Bird?” at Salmon Fest

by Susan Sampson, Wenatchee

“What’s That Bird?” was a big hit at the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival family day on Saturday, September 22. At least 354 adults and children old enough to look for birds visited our tent to borrow binoculars and search for replica birds in the shrubbery around us. In addition, some 200 more schoolchildren visited together with their classmates and teachers on the prior Thursday and Friday. Teachers and diligent birders went home with smaller versions of the poster Bruce McCammon prepared for NCWAS that features strictly local birds.



Mark Oswood talks to students
photo by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

Mark Oswood organized the day’s activities. He was helped by Bruce McCammon, Dianne McCammon, Ann Fink, Monica Maxwell, Merry Roy and Susan Sampson. In addition, Eastmont High School student Luis Sotelo-Millan was assigned by the festival organizers to assist on Friday. He pitched right in and was especially helpful in communicating with visitors whose first language was Spanish.

Our battered old binoculars got quite a workout, and a number had to be retired to the injured reserve basket.

Social Success

by Merry Roy, Wenatchee

Several weeks ago, the NCW Audubon Chapter had their social at the museum in Wenatchee. Almost fifty people, a fair number new to Audubon and to Wenatchee, gathered for conversation, cookies, meeting Audubon board members, viewing winning photos from the first ever NCW Audubon photo contest, and hearing Bruce McCammon share about how he developed his app for bird identification, aimed especially at beginners.

The two questions I heard over and over at the end of the program were “When can we get that app?” and “When will Audubon have their next program?” I’d say the evening was a success. And it is rumored that northern chapter members will be planning a social in the Methow Valley. Keep tuned!

NCWAS 2019 Photo Contest

by Bruce McCammon, Wenatchee

The inaugural NCW Audubon contest in 2018 resulted in 114 photo entries in three categories: Adult Enthusiast, Professional and Youth. Three highly-qualified judges ranked the entries to determine the winner and honorable mention photos in each category.

Riding on the heels of success in 2018, NCW Audubon will hold another photo contest in 2019. Details are still being developed but the contest will open on December 1, 2018 and close for entry on March 30, 2019. Photo categories this year will be: Youth (18 and under) and Adult. Anyone can enter the contest. All photos must display a bird(s) that can be seen in Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan and Ferry counties. In support of the Washington Audubon Sagebrush Songbird Survey, we encourage photographers to represent birds found in the sagebrush communities of North Central Washington. Winners will be announced in April. We plan to prepare prints of the winning photos for display at the 2019 Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest.



2018 winning photo
Cedar Waxwing
by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

Further details about the contest will be presented on the NCW Audubon website (www.ncwaudubon.org) and in the December issue of the Wild Phlox.



Western Grebe
photo by Janet Bauer, Winthrop

Audubon News from the Methow

by Julie Hovis, Winthrop

Early October was a busy time for NCW Audubon in the Methow Valley. On October 2, the winning photographs from our 2018 Bird Photo Contest were displayed at the Methow Conservancy's First Tuesday program in Winthrop. The venue was perfect as the evening's speaker was Stan Senner, Vice President of Bird Conservation for the National Audubon Society, who spoke about the marvels and perils of migratory birds in the Pacific Flyway. The audience enjoyed viewing the photos before and after Stan's presentation and were impressed by the remarkable talent of the winning photographers. If you haven't seen them yet, they will be on display at the Methow Valley Citizens Council's office in Twisp through mid-November. MVCC is located at 313 E. Methow Valley Highway (between the Twisp Eagles Aerie and Windermere Real Estate). Many thanks to the Methow Conservancy and MVCC for providing opportunities to showcase our contest winners. Planning for the 2019 Bird Photo Contests has begun; for more information please see the article on page 6.

On October 5 NCW Audubon teamed up with the Methow Conservancy's fourth grade Schoolyard Science program to host a "What's That Bird?" program at the Methow Valley Elementary School. Outfitted with binoculars, a checklist, and the Common Birds of North Central Washington poster, students were guided along a trail behind the school and challenged to find and identify eleven hand-carved, life-sized birds "hidden" in the surrounding trees and shrubs. Before heading out on the trail, we spent some time in the classroom talking about bird identification and how to use binoculars. The students' level of enthusiasm as they searched for birds was amazing and several showed signs of becoming expert birders. Thank you Janet Bauer (NCW Audubon) and Sarah Brooks (Methow Conservancy) for organizing this event and making it a huge success!

NCWAS reaches 1000-2000 students per year with "What's That Bird!"

Standing on the shoulders of Giants: Revising Hitchcock and Cronquist's *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*

by Olivia Schilling, Wenatchee

The Wenatchee Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society is bringing David Gibling, Collections Manager from the UW Herbarium to talk about the newly-released *Flora of the Pacific Northwest, 2nd Edition*. This program will be on November 8 from 7-8:30 pm at the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center, 127 South Mission Street.

For the past 45 years, Hitchcock and Cronquist's one-volume *Flora of the Pacific Northwest* has been the most widely used field manual for identifying the vascular plants of our region. The innovative design of detailed keys supported by extensive illustrations set the standard for how to produce a regional flora. However, advances in plant taxonomy, nomenclatural changes, the discovery of undescribed species, and the documentation of native and introduced species not previously known from our area have all contributed to "Hitchcock" being of limited use for botanists today. The talk will cover the origins of the first "Hitchcock", an overview of project operations, and highlight some of the significant changes contained in *Flora of the Pacific Northwest, 2nd edition*.



Hooded Mergansers
photo by Peter Bauer, Winthrop

Save the Dates: Christmas Bird Counts

by Teri J Pieper, Methow Valley

Christmas Bird Count season is right around the corner and this is your reminder to save the dates. The season opens on December 14 and goes through January 4. So far, I have heard from three compilers. Bridgeport's count will be on December 14, Chelan's will be on December 28 and Wenatchee's count is on December 29.

Each count takes place in an established fifteen-mile wide diameter circle and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through the designated 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 you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher. If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler.

Next month I plan to include a list of all the Christmas Bird Counts, the dates, compilers and contact info in our four-county region. They usually take place in Twisp, Okanogan, Bridgeport, Chelan, Wenatchee and Leavenworth.

November Wild Phlox

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North Central Washington Audubon Society Calendar

Items in bold text are sponsored or co-sponsored by NCWAS

1st and 3rd Wednesdays	Beebe Springs Bird Counts	NCWAS and WDFW Community Science. See www.ncwaudubon.org/events.html
November 2	Local Loon Tales	Okanogan Highlands Alliance in Tonasket. See page 4
November 6	Wolverines of the North Cascades	Methow Conservancy 1st Tuesday presentation. See www.methowconservancy.org/events.html
November 8	Revising Hitchcock and Cronquist's <i>Flora of the Pacific Northwest</i>	Native Plant Society in Wenatchee. See page 7
November 15	North on the Wing	Travels with Songbird Migration by Bruce Beehler. See last month's Phlox. At the Wenatchee Valley Museum. 7:00 pm.
November 18	Celebrate Volunteers and Community-based Science	Wenatchee Valley College. See page 5
December 1	NCWAS Photo Contest Begins	Get your entries ready! See page 6
December 2	Manson Lakes Field Trip	Birding with Virginia. See page 2
December 14	Bridgeport CBC	Get ready to count birds!
December 28	Chelan CBC	And more birds!
December 29	Wenatchee CBC	And still more birds!

You can find the Wild Phlox online at our website - www.ncwaudubon.org
 The beautiful photos are even nicer in color.



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Visit the NCW Audubon Society website for updates on these and other events www.ncwaudubon.org

