

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 31 No. 7

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills

About the field trips

Beginning birders and their friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Membership in Skagit Audubon is encouraged but not required for participation. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing, and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpool whenever possible and contribute to the driver's expense. Watch the email reminders for the latest information, including any changes and/or additions to the field trip schedule. To be added to the email distribution list contact Libby Mills: libbymills@gmail.com

If you plan to join a field trip some place other than the described starting point, call the trip leader the day before to ensure a successful rendezvous. Trip plans may change.

**Thursday, September 6
Wiley Slough
at Skagit Wildlife Area
8:00 a.m. to late morning**

Join Keith and Jan Wiggers for a morning of birding starting Thursday morning at 8 a.m. at Wiley Slough in the Skagit Wildlife Area. This trip is timed for an early autumn passage of migratory birds, and with high tide we hope we'll see a variety of shorebirds in the mix of shallow ponds around Wiley Slough. We could see some nice songbirds too as we explore the area, so bring binoculars and a scope if you have one. Dress for the weather and bring snacks as needed! Last year we had a good field trip at this time

Field Trips continued on page 6

SEPTEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

Ice Age Floods In The Pacific Northwest,

The Northern Reaches

By Gene Kiver

Professor Emeritus of Geology, Eastern Washington University

Tuesday, September 11, 2012
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10433 Bayview-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, Washington



Monster Rock, Eastern Washington
Photo by Gene Kiver

Ice dams that held back Glacial Lake Missoula in northern Idaho repeatedly failed catastrophically and sent dozens to perhaps hundreds of individual floods across parts of the Pacific Northwest, some as recently as 15,000 years ago. The violent transformation into a flood-impacted land left a world-famous assemblage of landforms in parts of the Pacific Northwest, particularly in the Channeled Scabland. Recognition that the largest floods known to occur on Earth were located in eastern Washington was first reported in 1923 by J. Harlen Bretz. His revolutionary hypothesis was vigorously opposed for almost four decades by most of the geological community! Acceptance of the validity of giant floods occurred in the 1940s, and in 2009 congress established the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail.

Details of floodwater flow along the northern reaches of the flood-impacted area, including Moses Coulee, Grand Coulee, the Telford-Crab Creek Scabland Tract, Cheney-Palouse Scabland, and the former ice dam location near present-day Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho, will be described in this fascinating illustrated talk.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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bctm@fidalgo.net
360-336-8753

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plwright@comcast.net
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COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation: Tim Manns
bctm@fidalgo.net
360-336-8753

Education: Jean Ashby & Sheila Pera
jeanash66@gmail.com

Field Trips: Libby Mills
libbymills@gmail.com
360-757-4139

Hikes: Joan Melcher
jdmelcher@comcast.net
360-424-0407

Bird Sightings: Pam Pritzl
ppritzl@frontier.com
360-387-7024

Membership: Sheila Pera
skagitmembers@gmail.com

Program Chair: Alice Turner
alicet2@msn.com

Publications: Jackie Boss
jackieaboss@yahoo.com
360-299-8067

Newsletter Distributor: Barbara Craner
craner2@frontier.com
360-445-3118

REPRESENTATIVES

Bob Barry
dabarrybest@frontier.com

Ivar Dolph
pidolph@frontier.com

Jack Middleton
herongate@frontier.com

Irene Perry
irene.perry@yahoo.com

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Immature Rufous Hummingbird

Photo by Joe Halton

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 1043 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA—7:00 PM Social/ 7:30 PM Program—on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. The board of directors meets at the same location at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month.

Skagit Audubon Society (SAS) membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, **The Flyer**, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. Newsletters from additional chapters can be sought by contacting their websites and membership chairs from links at www.audubon.org/states/wa/. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** please use the form below.

National Audubon Society (NAS) membership is separate from SAS membership and includes Audubon magazine. National Audubon membership does not provide Skagit Audubon membership; however, NAS will assign you an affiliation with a local chapter. To change your chapter assignment call 800-274-4201. **To join National Audubon Society** use the form below.

Skagit Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available on our website. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years

I wish to donate \$ _____ to Skagit Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____ Email _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

Skagit Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1101
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101

Please do not share my personal information with National Audubon Society. (It is the policy of SAS not to share information with any other groups.)

Using the form below to initially join the **National Audubon Society** will ensure that the **Skagit Audubon** chapter receives a cost share to support local programs.

National Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership to the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one chapter affiliation

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center Y21
P.O. Box 422246-2246
Palm Coast, FL 32142

www.audubon.org

For members receiving a paper copy of The Skagit Flyer, the mailing label includes your membership expiration date in the upper right corner. If that date is highlighted in orange it is a reminder that your membership is about to or has expired. All other members will receive an email notice when their membership is about to expire. The Skagit Flyer is published monthly from September through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's Flyer should be sent to the editor by the third Saturday of the current month. For questions or problems about your Skagit Flyer subscription, contact membership chair: Sheila Pera, skagitmembers@gmail.com



At Skagit Land Trust's August picnic there were field trips to Barney Lake, where the Trust is working to add 255 acres to its current hundred. During the event Martha Jordan of the Trumpeter Swan Society described why Skagit County hosts more Trumpeter Swans in winter than anywhere else. Wetlands such as Barney Lake, Johnson-DeBay Slough and others are important. Barney Lake is where Trumpeters reappeared in the Northwest a few decades ago when they were almost extinct. As Martha pointed out, the key is wetlands for night roosts with farm fields nearby for feeding, particularly on the corn and grass associated with dairies, on winter wheat cover crops, and potatoes. Once frozen and thawed, potatoes remaining after harvest have high nutritional value for swans. The combination of natural wetlands and farmlands enables the Skagit to support this largest of North American waterfowl. Also important is Puget Sound Energy's installing "fire fly" devices to help swans avoid collisions with power lines and the efforts of various organizations to end the use of lead shot. A few pellets ingested from sediment or soil will poison a 30-lb Trumpeter Swan.

Attempts to ensure Barney Lake's protection began decades ago. Now the final opportunity is upon us. And it's a nice coincidence for Skagit Audubon that this imperative to keep the Skagit a special place fits well with a National Audubon strategic plan theme: "Putting Farms, Ranches, and Forests to Work for Birds."

There are things we must do to safeguard our own well-being as people caring about the natural world and ones we need to do out of a sense of ethical responsibility whether or not we reap a personal benefit. We need to do the right thing not only for icons like swans but for many other species too, lest we wake up

one day to find ourselves living in a place whose wild inhabitants are recalled only in the names of subdivisions. This summer has been one of wonderful trips to the wilderness areas, national forests, and parks with which Washington is blessed. Ideological talk in a divisive election year reminds us that holding these places in public trust is not everyone's idea of what's appropriate. Our support is particularly vital now for a governmental role in preserving wild places and other habitat and for organizations supplementing this with smaller but no less vital land protection projects - - Skagit Land Trust, San Juan Preservation Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Whidbey-Camano Land Trust . . . This is the moment. Will future generations praise our foresightedness or bemoan our lack of it? The campaign to preserve Barney Lake has just until October to finish raising funds to protect a place long recognized as important to Trumpeter Swans and many other species (<http://skagitlandtrust.org/pages/savebarneylake.aspx>). Help if you can.

Another important, current need is preserving 217 acre Vendovi Island with its 3 miles of pristine shoreline. Except for a house site and dock, Vendovi is undeveloped. The San Juan Preservation Trust is approaching the last year of its campaign to raise matching funds to save this rare piece of Puget Sound. To help, go to <http://sjpt.org/places-projects/capital-campaigns-underway/save-vendovi-island/>. This project supports another topical emphasis of the National Audubon Strategic Plan: "Sharing Our Seas and Shores." While thinking about these things, take a moment to remind your elected or would-be representatives at every level of government that you value the publicly funded role in "conserving and restoring natural ecosystems," in the words of the Audubon mission, "for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."

SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING SEPTEMBER 2012**By Joan Melcher**

Great fall hiking begins this month. However, weather conditions, forest fires and smoke, logging, construction, aggressive bears, or other unexpected circumstances may cause changes in the following hikes. All of the September hikes are on a Wednesday. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

WILDERNESS HIKES: The information on the various wilderness hikes is too lengthy to print here. For information contact JOAN MELCHER: 360-424-0407 or email at jdmelcher@comcast.net

WEDNESDAY – AUG. 29 WILDERNESS HIKE**WEDNESDAY – SEPT. 5 WILDERNESS HIKE**

WEDNESDAY – SEPT. 12 MAPLE PASS LOOP*
This is one of Ira Spring's and Harvey Manning's "100 Classic Hikes in Washington". It is a 7.5 mile loop, with

a 2,000 ft. elevation gain. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. This may be done as a loop or as an in-and-out-the-same way hike. There is a 3:30 p.m. return to the trailhead.

WEDNESDAY – SEPT. 19 WILDERNESS HIKE**WEDNESDAY – SEPT. 26 CUTTHROAT PASS***

This hike is on a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail either as a round trip, 10.0 miles, or as a one way to Cutthroat Lake trail head, 10.5 miles. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. Northwest Forest Parking Permit required. Return to the trail head at 4 p.m. NOTE: If you plan to do this hike, contact Joan Melcher (contact information above) for additional information which is too lengthy to print here.

WEDNESDAY – OCT. 3 WILDERNESS HIKE

* Northwest Forest Pass (parking permit) required.



This column reports submitted sightings. Any rare sightings should be accompanied by detailed written documentation and if possible a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is extremely helpful. Do not hesitate to call any observer to help document unusual sightings. Also do not hesitate to call if you need clarification on locations.

Please submit your sightings to Pam Pritzl
ppritzl@frontier.com or 360-387-7024.

WATERFOWL

Brant 3 on Samish Island on 6/17 (RM)
Blue-winged Teal 1 on Samish Flats on 6/30 (SAS)
Harlequin Duck 1 immature on Boulder River on 7/25 (SASH)
Surf Scoter 1200 off Bayview on 7/30 (GB)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ruffed Grouse 3 at Barnaby Slough on 8/7 (GB)
Sooty Grouse 1 on Sauk Mtn on 8/1 (GB)

HERONS, IBIS

Green Heron 1 immature at Skagit Game Range on 5/19 (GB)
White-faced Ibis 1 at Skagit Game Range on 5/19 (GB)

RAPTORS

Osprey seen near Camano Island home in July (S&RP)

SHOREBIRDS

Semipalmated Sandpiper 3 at Channel Drive on 7/23 (GB)
Pectoral Sandpiper 1 at Samish Flats on 7/23 (GB)
Wilson's Phalarope 1 on Samish Flats on 7/13 (RM)

JAEGERS, GULLS

Bonaparte's Gull 1 at Martin Rd on 6/16 (GB)
Heermann's Gull 2 off Green Point on 8/4 (GB)

ALCIDS

Marbled Murrelet 4 off Green Point on 8/4 (GB)

DOVES, PIGEONS

Band-tailed Pigeons over 70 on Francis Rd on 5/27 (JA)

OWLS

Northern Pygmy-Owl 2 at Illabot Creek on 7/18 (GB)
Short-eared Owl 3 at West 90 on 6/30 (RM)

NIGHTHAWKS, SWIFTS

Common Nighthawks 2 at Illabot Creek on 7/18 (GB)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Black-chinned Hummingbird 1 (first found by RM) near Marblemount on 6/9 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Red-naped Sapsucker 1 at WA Pass on 6/30 (SAS)
Pileated Woodpecker seen at Camano Island home in July (S&RP)

FLYCATCHERS

Least Flycatcher 1 at Corkindale 6/8-7/1 (RM); 1 at Corkindale on 6/9 (GB)
Gray Flycatcher 1 at Marblemount 6/8-6/10 (RM); 1 at Marblemount on 6/9 (GB)
Dusky Flycatcher 2 at Newhalem 6/8, 1 Sauk Valley 6/8 (RM)
Western Kingbird 1 at Van Horn Ponds on 6/9 (GB)
Eastern Kingbird 7 at Marblemount 6/10 (RM); at least 1 at Barnaby Slough on 8/7 (GB)

VIREOS

Cassin's Vireo 1 near Newhalem on 6/30 (SAS)
Hutton's Vireo 1 at Camano Island home on 5/18 (PP); 1 in Birdview on 5/26 (GB)
Red-eyed Vireo 1 near Newhalem on 6/30 (SAS); 2 still singing at Barnaby Slough on 8/7 (GB)

CORVIDS

Gray Jay 1 on Sauk Mtn Road on 8/1 (GB)
Clark's Nutcracker 2 at WA Pass on 6/30 (SAS)

LARKS, SWALLOWS

Purple Martin 3 at Ship Harbor on 7/23 (GB)
Bank Swallow 2 at Skagit Game Range on 7/30 (GB)

CHICKADEES, BUSHTIT

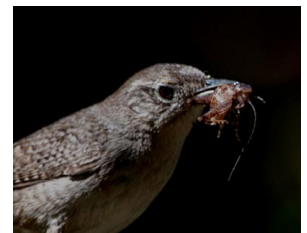
Mountain Chickadee 2 at WA Pass on 6/30 (SAS)

WRENS

House Wren 1 at Corkindale on 5/20 (GB); 1 at Bayview State Park on 6/30 (SAS)

House Wren with Insect

Photo by Joe Halton



DIPPER

American Dipper 1 adult feeding chick at Big 4 on 6/21(SAS)

THRUSHES

Mountain Bluebird 1 at Gorge Lake 6/7-6/8 (RM)
Veery 1 singing near Newhalem on 6/30 (SAS)
Hermit Thrush 3 at Hardy Burn on 7/25 (GB)

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Field Notes continued from page 4

PIPITS

American Pipit 12 at Marblemount 6/8 (RM); 15 near Marblemount on 6/9 (GB)

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 2 at Illabot Creek on 7/18 (GB)

Black-throated Gray Warbler 2 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 7/25 (PP)

Townsend's Warbler 2 at WA Pass on 6/30 (SAS)

American Redstart 1 at Diablo Lake 6/10, 1 at Gorge lake 7/1 (RM)

MacGillivray's Warbler 1 at Big 4 on 6/21 (SAS); 1 on Martin Rd on 8/7 (GB)

Wilson's Warbler 1 at Hardy Burn on 7/25 (GB); 1 at Camano Island home on 7/31 (PP)

Hooded Warbler 1 at Newhalem 6/1 (RM)

Ovenbird 1 at Sauk Valley on 6/22 (RM)

SPARROWS

Chipping Sparrow 4 at Big 4 on 6/21 (SAS)

Clay-colored Sparrow 1 at Newhalem 6/1-6/2 (RM)

Brewer's Sparrow 1 at Newhalem 6/2 and 6/8 (RM)

Vesper Sparrow 1 at Diablo 6/16 (RM)

Lark Sparrow 1 at Diablo 6/22 (RM)

Black-throated Sparrow 1 at Martin Road on 6/16 (GB)

White-crowned Sparrow ("Gambell's") 1 at Marblemount 6/10 (RM)

Indigo Bunting 1 at Sauk Prairie 8/7 (RM)

Lazuli Bunting 2 (pair) at Nookachamps Creek (JA)

Photo by Joe Halton

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

Bobolink 1 at Marblemount 6/8 (RM); 1 near Marblemount on 6/9 (GB)

Eastern Meadowlark 1 at Marblemount 6/1-6/2 (seen through 6/4 (RM); 1 near Marblemount (found by RM) on 6/1 (GB)

Western Meadowlark 1 at Corkindale 6/22 (RM)

Yellow-headed Blackbird 4 at Marblemount 6/10-6/11, 11 at West 90 6/30 (RM); 1 at Skagit Game Range on 7/30 (GB)

FINCHES, WEAVER FINCH

Cassin's Finch 2 at WA Pass on 6/30 (SAS); 1 at Hardy Burn on 7/25 (GB)

Red Crossbill at Camano Island home in July (S&RP)



Red Crossbill

Photo by Joe Halton

Evening Grosbeak

1 at Camano Island home on 7/8 (PP)

(JA) Jean Ashby; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (SASH) Skagit Audubon Society Hike; (S&RP) Sheila & Ron Pera; (PP) Pam Pritzl

Register Now for Fall 2012 ACOW

Register now for the 2012 annual meeting of Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), hosted by Kitsap Audubon Society. This one-day meeting will be held on Saturday, October 6th, at the new Poulsbo City Hall. The keynote speaker is David Yarnold, President and CEO of National Audubon Society (photo right). The new Pacific Flyway director, Michael Sutton, will also speak.

Highlights of the day include a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new and final Puget Loop map of the Great Washington Birding Trail, with Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson and Birding Trail Director Christi Norman.

The annual ACOW brings together leaders from the 26 Washington State Audubon chapters and Audubon Washington staff for workshops and presentations on a host of topics of interest to Audubon members throughout the state. There will be regional breakout sessions to exchange information and review progress at the state and chapter level.

Additional events are planned for those arriving on Friday or staying through Sunday, including field trips to local birding hotspots, an evening presentation on the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project, and a meeting of conservation chairs to discuss shared priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

A block of rooms with special rates from \$79-98 per night is being held at the Poulsbo Inn & Suites, conveniently located right on State Hwy 305 as you enter Poulsbo. Hotel reservations may be made by calling 360-779-3921 or email manager@poulsboinn.com. Audubon ACOW is the group name.

To [register online](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/263251) for the ACOW meeting, go to <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/263251> - password is audubon. Registration cost is \$30 and includes morning and afternoon snacks, plus a boxed lunch. To register by check, please contact Joseph Manson at (206) 652-2444 x100 or jmanson@audubon.org.



Field Trips continued from page 1

and place, so join us as we visit one of the of Skagit's migrant magnet spots. Don't forget your Discovery Pass for parking. Leaders: Jan and Keith Wiggers, jkwiggers@gmail.com

Sunday, September 9

Vaux's Swift Roost

Old Northern State Hospital, Sedro-Woolley

6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

During migration, Vaux's Swifts roost for the night in a tall smokestack at former Northern State Hospital in Sedro-Woolley. Daily counts in Fall 2011 found more swifts using this spot than at any other known roost site in the western U.S. Fall migration numbers are generally much higher than Spring counts at this roost. As night falls, thousands of swifts converge above the stack in a great swirl before diving in. We have permission to watch from the grounds of the former hospital (now a closed Job Corps campus), and we hope our chosen date coincides with clear weather and many swifts. On prime evenings, this is one of Skagit's great avian phenomena. Bring binoculars, folding chair, spotting scope (optional). Dress for the weather. Meet in front of the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20, just west of where Highway 9 turns north) at 6:15 p.m. to arrange carpools. Leader: Tim Manns (360-336-8753 or bctm@fidalgo.net)

Saturday, September 22

Skagit Flats, Fir Island, Wiley Slough

Shorebird Migration

9:00 a.m. to noon or so

We'll visit the Game Range, plus Hayton, Jensen, and maybe North Fork Access areas. This will be another chance to examine some of our best shorebirding areas at high tide during fall migration. Join Gary Bletsch for this opportunity to scope out the wetlands and shorelines of Fir Island before the waterfowl hunting season begins. Dress for the weather and don't forget to bring along some snacks. The Discovery Pass is required for parking at all these wildlife-watching areas. Leader: Gary Bletsch, garybletsch@yahoo.com

Saturday, September 29

Montane Birds & Hawk Migration

Cutthroat Pass

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

(Round-trip time from trailhead to pass)

On this 10-mile roundtrip hike to 6,800 feet (2,000 foot elevation gain) through forest and subalpine meadows, we'll look for higher elevation and East Side species such as Mountain Chickadee, Gray Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, and more. At the pass, we may see some raptors migrating southward. (Trail description: <http://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/cutthroat-pass-1/>). Meet at the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20 just before Highway 9 North) at 6:30 a.m. to arrange carpools or at the Rainy Pass Trailhead North (SR20, milepost 158) at 8:30 a.m. Each vehicle parking at the trailhead will need a Northwest Forest Pass or other applicable pass. Bring snacks, lunch, water. Wear hiking boots and bring layers of clothing for a range of weather and temperature. Required: Contact the trip leader if you plan to participate. Leader: Tim Manns (360-336-8753 or bctm@fidalgo.net)

Visiting with Raptors: Third Annual Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival

Join the Methow Valley Ranger District, North Central Washington Audubon Society, and HawkWatch International this fall for the 3rd Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival! This family event combines free activities in Pateros with trips to the Chelan Ridge site to learn about and celebrate raptors as they journey to winter territories. Chelan Ridge sits 5,675 feet above sea level along the flyway of migrating raptors like the Broad-winged Hawk. Biologists who live at the Ridge during the migration season will offer insight into what it is like to live and breathe raptors and show how the birds are banded and tracked. In Pateros, there will be fun for all ages. An owl pellet station features hands on science, while WSU students will introduce visitors to live owls, hawks, and eagles. Attendees can also go on birding field trips with experts to identify waterfowl and migrating songbirds while exploring along the Columbia River.

This festival is scheduled to coincide with the peak of southbound migration of raptors at Chelan Ridge ~ the best place in Washington to view fall migrating raptors. This interactive event will take place at Memorial Park in Pateros, Washington on September 8th, 2012 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Reservations and information for field trips and the shuttle to Chelan Ridge can be found on NCW Audubon's website, ncwaudubon.org, or by searching North Central Washington Audubon Society on Facebook

Contact: Bridget Egan, North Central Washington Audubon Society mtnegan@gmail.com, 509-433-7306



Whooping Cranes Continue their Migration following a Light Sport Aircraft Thanks to an FAA Exemption

Taken from: AVS Flyer: News for FAA Aviation Safety Employees, Edition 3; Issue 17, Aug. 16, 2012, p.2

Operation Migration (OM) is a conservation group reintroducing endangered whooping cranes into eastern North America. In the 1940s the species was reduced to just 15 birds. Since only one wild flock of whooping cranes exists migrating naturally each year from Canada to Texas, there is a danger of the birds being wiped out. OM is establishing a second flock which is being taught to migrate from Wisconsin to Florida.

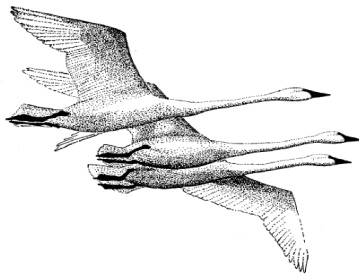
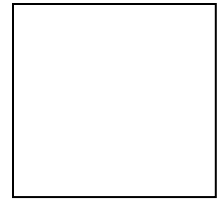
Last fall's migration was interrupted by nonconformance with FAA regulations but AFS inspectors found a way to do the right thing—the right way—and still help OM get the birds to their winter home safely. This is OM's 12th season teaching the birds to follow a light sport aircraft in migration. The whooping cranes are hatched at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland where OM staff get the birds accustomed to their handlers and the aircraft before they are transported to Wisconsin where they learn to fly. The staff spends the summer training with the birds as they get stronger. In the fall, the migration begins. The birds follow the three costumed pilots in their Cosmos Phase II trikes. They fly about 50 to 100 miles every day, and only fly in good weather. The OM pilots lead the birds on a one-way trip, which takes about three months, and then the birds are wild.

In 2010, the Milwaukee FSDO received a complaint from a former OM pilot that the organization was using private pilots for a commercial operation. An aviation safety inspector spoke with an OM representative who explained that the time the staff spent flying was as volunteers. The inspector accepted the explanation, and the matter was considered closed. Then, in 2011, the same person filed a formal complaint with the FAA and letters of investigation were sent by the FSDO to OM and its three pilots. Last December, inspectors determined that OM was not fully in compliance with regulations. "We began our investigation and OM was, in fact, using private pilots for a commercial venture," said John Thiem, Manager of the Milwaukee FSDO. However, the pilots and the birds were already in migration, and had reached Alabama at that point. The OM pilots voluntarily grounded themselves. Public outcry ensued against the FAA for grounding the whooping cranes. Even former President Jimmy Carter called Aviation Safety Inspector Tom Glista, Manager of the General Aviation Operations Branch (AFS-830), to intercede on the birds' behalf. "OM worked with us to apply for an exemption," John explained. "The exemption was granted in less than 15 days for last year's migration to move the whooping cranes." Through it all, the OM staff was gracious and accepted the necessity of complying with federal aviation regulations. "The FAA understood the situation and knew how close we were to finishing," said Joe Duff, CEO of OM. "They were very understanding. They issued a temporary waiver to allow us to finish the migration, and agreed to work with us to find some permanent solution. The difficulty for us is our aircraft can only be registered as light sport aircraft, and it is the only aircraft that is the right size, shape and speed envelope that is able to fly with birds. Fortunately, the FAA recognized that what we're doing is important and realized there was no category for us so they worked with us to develop an exemption." "This past year, OM was granted a two-year extension," said Larry Buchanan, Manager of the Light Sport Aviation Branch (AFS-610). "The agreement allows OM to continue and, in that period, they have to meet certain requirements, and then they'll have a permanent solution."

There are now more than 100 whooping cranes that migrate south in this pattern for the winter. This is the first flock to use this pattern since the 1870s. OM will keep working with the birds to add generation after generation of birds until there are enough birds for the population to become self-sustaining.



SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1101
MOUNT VERNON WA 98273



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check your
address label
for membership
expiration date!

September 2012 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29 Hiking: Wilderness Hike	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	1
2	3	4 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00	5 Hiking: Wilderness Hike	6 Field Trip: Wiley Slough	7	8 Third Annual Chelen Ridge Hawk Migration Festival
9 Field Trip: Vaux's Swift Roost	10 Adopt-A-Trail Work Party	11 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	12 Hiking: Maple Pass Loop	13	14	15 Deadline SAS October Flyer
16	17	18	19 Hiking: Wilderness Hike	20	21	22 Field Trip: Shorebird Migration: Skagit Flats, Fir Island
23	24	25	26 Hiking: Cutthroat Pass	27	28	29 Field Trip: Montane Birds & Hawk Migration at Cutthroat Pass
30	Oct. 1	Oct. 2 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00	Oct. 3 Hiking: Wilderness Hike	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org

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