



May 2026

# THE HOOTER

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[KAS Membership Form](#)

## Monthly Program Meeting May 28: 7:00 PM @ Hal Holmes Nightjars of Kittitas County

*Presented by Dan Reiff, PhD*

Dr. Dan is a clinician, author and videographer who has studied birds for the last 18 years. He grew up in Puyallup, Washington, when it was a small town, surrounded by daffodil, tulip, strawberry, raspberry, and blueberry farms. He has a long history of fly fishing for trout and steelhead.

He is very fond of Kittitas County, including the people, birds and environments. He has degrees in Environmental sciences (BS), Public health (MPH), and Clinical psychology (PhD) and was trained as a clinician and scientist in Clinical psychology.

Dr. Dan has focused his research efforts on the behavior of several species of birds and has captured well over 300 TB of video focused bird behavior. This includes diurnal, crepuscular and nocturnal observations and filming. Dr. Dan has a special research interest in the stereotypical and unique behaviors of owls and nightjars.

He has spent many enjoyable hours doing video and audio recordings focused on the behaviors of the numerous in several locations and generations over the last 10-16 years.

Dan's presentation will be video focused on the behaviors of the Common Poorwill and the Common Nighthawk. He will also share stories of his several hundreds of hours of research experiences filming in very low light and darkness, including encounters with animals that are active during the night.



## 2026 Officer Election

The 2026 KAS officer election will take place in the near future. Each member will receive an email with a link to a Survey Monkey poll. Under our bylaws, we have four Elected Officer positions: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Elected Officers appoint Additional Officers to the board, e.g., Field Trip Officer, Education Officer, Archivist. If you have any interest in seeking an Elected Officer or Additional Officer position, or in volunteering, please send an email to [boardmembers@kittitasaudubon.org](mailto:boardmembers@kittitasaudubon.org).

## First Saturday Bird Walks

Since October of 2002 KAS has offered the monthly First Saturday Bird Walk in rain, wind, snow, and sunshine. One need not know anything about birds or nature. Trip leaders and participants will provide some guidance and help with bird ID. All you need is a pair of binoculars and garb for the weather, and kids are welcome. Walking on park paths (pavement to dirt) usually takes about three hours.

**May 2 ~ First Saturday Birdwalk**, Irene Rinehart Park. Two spring months, May and June, celebrate the arrival of many migrant songbirds singing, courting and nesting. May is a great time for a big count of active bird species. Come join the group to stretch your legs and spot a variety of birds. 8 AM meeting time at Rinehart parking lot by the river for a 3+ hour walk. Leaders, Terry & Patt.

**May 14, Thursday ~ Robinson Canyon hike.** Featuring a hiking loop up a bird-rich crease in the hills of Ellensburg's **backyard**. Our group has done this walk many times to find colorful forest birds. Expect tanagers, finches, buntings, flycatchers, bluebirds and maybe a chat. We will meet at 8 AM at Super One parking lot to carpool. Please RSVP with Steve M at [fieldtrips@kittitasaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@kittitasaudubon.org)

**May 28, Thursday ~ Suncadia Trails birdwalk.** Join Cle Elum folks on an exploration of their woody paths. A 3-mile walk will start at Nelson Dairy and loop through woods, riparian habitat and the river bank. Thanks to John Crowley and Judy H for planning this special trip. Ellensburg birders will tentatively meet at 8 AM at the west side of the Super One parking lot to carpool. Please RSVP with Steve M at [fieldtrips@kittitasaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@kittitasaudubon.org)

## Get Intimate with the Shrub Steppe!

Info and volunteer opportunities:

KEEN's 2026 *Get Intimate with the Shrub Steppe* event is happening Friday May 8 through Sunday May 10. Kittitas Audubon will host a science booth on Saturday, 9 am – 1 pm at YCIC (Helen McCabe State Park), with birding maps, fun feather ID quiz, and more. If you would like to volunteer at the booth handing out info and sharing your bird enthusiasm with visitors, we have open shifts 9-10, 11-12, and 12-1. Contact Kris: [ernest.kristina@gmail.com](mailto:ernest.kristina@gmail.com)

Other birding events at GISS:

**Twilight Owl & Snake Walk** - Deb Essman and Dr. Dan Beck, Friday 6:00PM-9:00PM YCIC  
**Passerines & Raptors of the Yakima River Canyon**—Deb Essman, Saturday 6:00-10:00am Umtanum Creek Recreation Area  
**Shrub-Steppe Obligates: Birds & Habitats**— Scott Downes, Saturday 8:00-11:00am WDFW Public Lands off Vantage Highway green gate  
**Falconry & Conservation**—Northwest Gamehawkers - Toby Cantwell, Saturday 4:30-5:15pm IOOF  
**Passerines & Raptors of the Yakima River Canyon** —Deb Essman, Sunday 7:00-10:00am Umtanum Creek Recreation Area  
**Birding By Ear**— Walter Szeliga, Sunday 6:00-9:30am YCIC

Pre-registration is required for field trips and lectures/presentations (not required for science booths). Find more info on these and other activities plus how to register here: <https://www.keen-ycic.org/giss>

## From the Desk of the KAS President

By Steven Loitz, KAS President



### MANASTASH RIDGE TRAILS SUMMER BIRDING MAP

I have created a CalTopo map (link: <https://caltopo.com/m/A35N0SG#>) of some summer birding hot spots on the Manastash Ridge Trail system. The trailhead is located the south end of Cove Road. Summer birding hotspots are marked with waypoints.

The map is best viewed in the Topo map layer. The following is an incomplete sampling of birds which might be seen or heard at, from or near a waypoint in summer months:

KRD ROAD: Lazuli Bunting, Western Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat, Western Wood Pewee, Bullock's Oriole, Say's Phoebe, House Wren, California Quail, Spotted Towhee

BS2040 (Boy Scout Trail, 2040'): Spotted Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Black-billed Magpie, Bushtit (some years)

BS2480: Nashville Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cassin's Vireo, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-Crowned Kinglet, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Purple Finch, Cassin's Finch, Gray Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak

BS2580: Cassin's Vireo, Horned Lark, Cassin's Vireo, Dark-eyed Junco, Chipping Sparrow

WB2600 (Westburg Trail, 2600'): Western Bluebird, Lewis's Woodpecker, Chipping Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Vesper Sparrow

WBBSJCT (junction of Westburg and Boy Scout trails) and WB3280: Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Bluebird, Vesper Sparrow, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle

JCT3495 (junction of ridge road and Cheeky Bugger): Lark Sparrow, Sage Thrasher, California Quail, Wild Turkey

OLD ROAD CUT: Yellow-rumped Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Cassin's Finch, Chipping Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Townsend's Solitaire

CB3180 (Cheeky Bugger Trail, 3180'): Pileated Woodpecker, Townsend's Solitaire, Cassin's Finch, Ruffed Grouse, Sooty Grouse, Chipping Sparrow, Gray Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hammond's Flycatcher

PRATER3160 (Prater Trail, 3160'): Cassin's Finch, Ruffed Grouse, Sooty Grouse, Chipping Sparrow, Western Wood Pewee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Kestrel, Lewis's Woodpecker

IMBY2520 (IMBY Trail, 2520'): Gray Flycatcher, Chipping Sparrow, Western Bluebird

## Wenas Campout: Birds, Blooms & Bugs

*Nancy Merrill, Wenas Audubon*

The 60th annual event last year and had nearly 200 attendees. It is a pure volunteer, no registration required rustic camping weekend in the Wenas (Cascade Camp) Campground, held the weekend after Memorial Day to avoid the large general camping, ATV, etc. crowds of Memorial Day weekend.

This year's campout is May 29 – Jun 1. For more details about this and other events around the state, visit the Washington Audubon website: [Bird Festivals in Washington | Audubon](https://www.washingtonaudubon.org/)

Find more information about the Wenas Audubon on the Web or on Facebook:

<https://wenasaudubon.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/wenasaudubon>

I'm writing to you because I hope to find contacts within each state chapter. I want to learn about your local chapter priorities and interests across the state and grow the birding community across Washington along with the campout.

Please let me know the best contact name and contact info to initiate a visit or just a phone call for my introduction and education of your chapter.

Thank you for allowing me to introduce myself and I look forward to meeting and visiting each chapter over the next year if there is a good mutual date available.

Happy Birding!

## Report on the April KAS Program Meeting: Making Lemonade with Lemons!

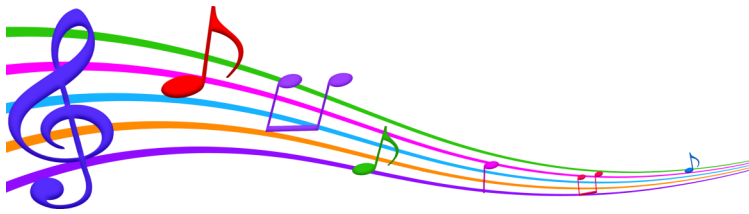
*By Lesley M. KAS Secretary*

A short time before the scheduled program meeting in April, our featured speaker had to bail out, leaving the Board scratching our heads about ways to fill the void on Thursday night. Steve Loitz, our KAS President, came up with the idea of hosting a trivia contest to be focused on various films, plays, music, etc. whose titles or characters included names of birds. We also included a small slide show featuring pictures of birds from members' files, both local and international.

Although the turnout was smaller than we hoped, the evening was a success. We had a short slide show of both common and exotic birds, then divided into teams of 5 people each to play Bird Trivia. It was fun, and your Secretary learned several things:

1. our president is an amazing fountain of trivia, both bird and otherwise, and was even in a "Jeopardy!" contestant pool in a past life,
2. I had incredible team-mates, far more knowledgeable than I about anything entertainment of any sort!,
3. birds and their habits (nesting, singing) crop up in all sorts of ways when humans name things!

Maybe next year, we'll do this again. It was a great way to combine knowledge, or to be clueless, with fellow Audubon members, snacking all the while. Should we all start thinking of possible questions to stump our friends next year?



# BOARD NOTES

Compiled by Lesley McGalliard  
Condensed by Gloria Baldi

The KAS Board met on March 5th with the following items discussed.

With spring comes migration and you will again spot Ospreys, Turkey Vultures, Mountain and Western Bluebirds, various Warblers and Swallows, as well as those species that are not as visible. So keep your eyes peeled.

Watch for announcements of field trips in May with destinations to Robinson Canyon and Sun-cadia.

Please remember that our May meeting will be the 4th Thursday, May 28th, rather than the 3rd because of a conflict with the City of Ellensburg scheduling.

Regarding Climate Change, Barry Brunson sent a report bemoaning the fact that on February 12th, the EPA finalized a revocation for the 2009 Endangerment Finding, a policy that determined that CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and other greenhouse gases endangered public health. In addition, the current administration is forcing Craig Station Power in Colorado to keep open and maintain a coal-fired power plant that it had planned to close this year and replace with solar and wind projects. Via an executive order, the President is also directing the Defense Department to purchase additional energy from coal plants. In spite of these, Barry encourages us to "keep up the fight".

Judy Hallisey attended both and Conservation and Shrub-steppe Audubon WA meetings.

Brent Renfrow again mentioned the Lights Out Program that National Audubon is highlighting. Ideas for how KAS can distribute the information was discussed.

Two letters to WA state legislators regarding Wild Salmon and the WA Wild Legacy Trail Fund were signed on.

Judy Hallisey submitted the KAS Annual report to National Audubon, which allows us a rebate based on membership.

There was no Board meeting in April; thus, our next meeting is May 7th. Come join us at 4:30 in the courtyard at the First United Methodist Church across from the Ellensburg Public Library.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**Note:** It has been 20 years since red dye in hummingbird feeders was an issue, and birders know it should never be used. Perusing past Hooters I found the following...especially since it's time for hummingbird feeders to be hung.

In the April 2008 issue of the HOOTER was an article from Bird Watchers Digest which, in part, stated that "it certainly seems logical that adding food coloring to hummingbird nectar solution might not be good for the birds drinking it, but the fact is, we don't have any scientific proof to that effect. So it's one of those innocent-until-proven guilty things." The article does go on to say that it is not necessary, so save your money.

In the very next HOOTER, KAS member Peggy Schnebly responded with the following article.

### **THINK TWICE ABOUT RED DYE IN HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS**

It is very difficult to convince the successful feeder of hummingbirds that red dye in the nectar is NOT necessary to attract the little charmers. For years (probably since the 1976 banning of red dye No.2 in the United States) there has been some question as to the safety of consuming ANY of the red dye by man or beast. Two recent articles seem to be at odds about this.

The April 2008 HOOTER has an article entitled "Top 5 Bird Feeding Myths". It states we don't have any scientific proof that the dye may be harmful. It also classifies it as one of those "innocent until proven guilty things". One is left with the impression that it is okay to keep using red dye.

The magazine WILDBIRD May/June 2008 has an article entitled "Seeing RED Over Dye". It states that hummingbird experts have long discouraged the use of dye in nectar as unnatural and unnecessary.

Studies have shown that synthetic dyes have adverse effects on humans, lab animals, and even cell cultures. A university in Japan found Red No. 40, in very low doses, damaged the DNA of rats. Some hummers drink nectar two and a half times their weight. That would equal 10 times more than the rats were given. It is interesting to note that Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland have all banned Red No. 40, but the US Food and Drug Administration approved it over twenty years ago.

My feeling is that we should "err" on the side of caution. Just tie a big red ribbon 'round the old bird feeder.'



# Membership Form

## Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **NEW** Membership \_\_\_\_\_ **RENEWING** Membership

### Regular Memberships (per year):

\_\_\_ Individual \$20 \_\_\_ Family \$30 \_\_\_ Student \$10

### Premium Memberships (per year):

\_\_\_ Bluebird \$50 \_\_\_ Kestrel \$75 \_\_\_ Hawk \$100

### Lifetime Memberships:

\_\_\_ Lifetime Individual \$300 \_\_\_ Lifetime Family \$500

### Charitable Donation: (please enter dollar amount)

Scholarship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Nest Boxes \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_ General \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Your generous donation to a specific project is symbolic. Kittitas Audubon is a chapter of Nation Audubon Society serving the communities of Kittitas County, Washington. Go to [kittitasaudubon.org](http://kittitasaudubon.org) for more information. KAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation*

**May we print your name** in the Hooter to acknowledge your membership/donation? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

### GIVE THE GIFT OF KITTITAS AUDUBON!

Please send gift recipients name, address, email, and phone to address below.



Please make checks payable to:

Kittitas Audubon Society PO Box 1443

Ellensburg WA 98926

**THANK YOU!**

Download Application: [Click Here](#)



Thank you for renewing your membership

Lloyd Chapin  
Gordon Crane

And welcome new member

Alan Jones  
Joy McKinney

*The mission of Kittitas Audubon Society is to develop an appreciation of nature through education and conservation, with a focus on birds. The goal of KAS is to be a vibrant active organization recognized in Kittitas County.*