



# ***The Murreletter***

Society for Northwestern  
Vertebrate Biology

Volume 17, No. 1

April 2009

## **President's Message**

Greetings SNVB Members! I am happy to report that the 2009 annual meeting was a rousing success. Although travel budgets were especially tight this year we still saw good attendance at the pre-meeting symposia and regular meeting. The plenary session opened with three dynamic speakers, Chuck Fowler, Pieter Johnson, and Fred Swanson, who provided very diverse perspectives on the meeting theme - temporal issues in ecological science - related to systemic management, environmental change, and humanities. Our banquet speaker, Steve Beissinger, discussed lessons 100 years in the making as he spoke candidly about the findings he and others from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California-Berkeley are unveiling as they retrace the steps of pioneer Joseph Grinnell in the mountains of California. SNVB is privileged to offer you a forum to foster information exchange, meet future collaborators (and catch up with old pals), and develop long-lasting professional associates and friendships. We appreciate your participation.

SNVB is always looking for new and creative ways to engage existing members and recruit new members. In addition to the journal and newsletter, we have a new outlet for networking and information exchange; SNVB is officially on Facebook! We are currently 58 members strong. The SNVB Group is open to anyone to join and any group member can invite others to join.

If you are on Facebook (or are thinking about it), I encourage you to visit the SNVB Group site, become a member and invite your 'friends' to become members too!

And speaking of recruiting new members, many of you who attended the annual meeting heard me talk about how I became involved in SNVB; membership was a required part of a Mammalogy course. While some might think that requiring membership in an organization unconventional, it is an excellent opportunity to engage your students and encourage their participation in professional societies. Student membership only costs \$15, a small addition to course fees. Student members receive all of the benefits of regular membership plus they are eligible for the student scholarship (provided your university and their work occurs within SNVB's geographic scope). I encourage all of you faculty out there to consider my suggestion and make membership to a professional society part of your curriculum; I am for the summer course I'm teaching.

Thanks again to the 2009 annual meeting organizers and presenters. We look forward to seeing you next year in southern Oregon!

***-Tara***

# Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

...the oldest scientific association devoted to the study  
of terrestrial vertebrates in the Pacific Northwest

**-established 7 January 1920**

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## Who we are...

The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology was founded on 7 January 1920 as the Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Club. Long recognized as the pre-eminent union of ornithologists and mammalogists in the Pacific Northwest, the society adopted its current name in 1988 to reflect an expanded taxonomic scope that included amphibians and reptiles. The scope expanded again in 1999 to include fish. Today the society strives to promote close working relationships among ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists, and ichthyologists in our region; foster exchange of scientific information and interest in the study of vertebrates; and offer a forum for these activities through meetings and publications.

## Membership

All persons or institutions interested in the study of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fishes are eligible for membership. Individual members receive the Northwestern Naturalist and the Murreletter, our newsletter. Other SNVB publications, such as Northwest Fauna, are available at a reduced rate. Other privileges of membership include notification of all SNVB meetings, the right to vote in SNVB meetings and elections, and participation as a member of the SNVB board.

**For more information or to  
become a member visit:  
[www.snwvb.org](http://www.snwvb.org)**

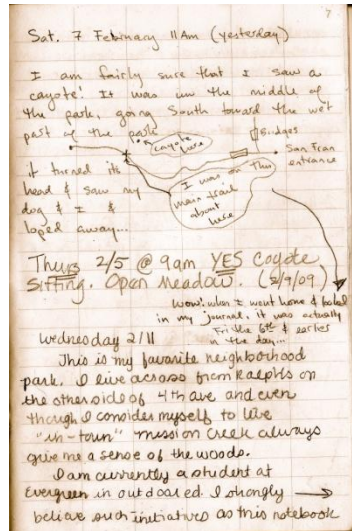
## The Murreletter

The Murreletter is published three times yearly and is distributed to the members of the Society of Northwestern Vertebrate Biology. Submission of stories, meeting announcements, and other material of interest to members of the society is encouraged. Submissions should be sent to the Murreletter Editor, Eric Lund. To receive the Murreletter Electronically, which is strongly encouraged, please provide your current address to the SNVB Treasurer, Tiffany Garcia.

## Citizen Science

### Mission Creek Community Naturalists: Knowing Your Neighbors and Neighborhood Park Through Field Notes

A couple months ago I started a little project to find out more about the plants and critters that inhabit Mission Creek Park, which is several blocks away from my house near downtown Olympia, Washington. The park encompasses the headwaters of Mission Creek, one of those small often forgotten urban streams half wrapped in culvert and English Ivy that still goes about its business flowing downhill to the Salish Sea. I posted a short mission statement and left Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks® at the five major entrances to the park, asking visitors to jot down anything from the weather and animal sightings to the name of their favorite tree. I fully expected lots of jokes and little yellow piles of vandalized notebooks scattered throughout the wetlands and surrounding forest. To my surprise and delight the following week I collected five intact notebooks filled with great stories of coyotes, pileated woodpeckers, and poems! I started a blog as a place to submit the notebook entries for all to track the observations: [www.missioncreeknaturalist.blogspot.com](http://www.missioncreeknaturalist.blogspot.com).



The project is young, but already I have met professional and vigilante restoration ecologists, great birders and botanists, poets, a couple great dogs, and it isn't even spring yet. By far the greatest benefit I can hope to come from this experiment is already happening. People are writing questions and others are responding. Bird inquiries are being answered based on field note descriptions, and thank you notes have been left to unknown individuals who took the time to cut away ivy and scrub off spray paint.

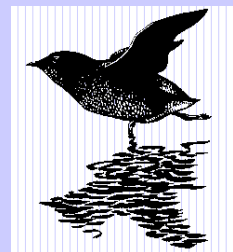
My neighbors are teaching and encouraging each other about the nature and needs of a little forgotten stream that is getting a second chance. By no means am I responsible for the people's passions and interests in the park, but I hope that the often forgotten art of taking good field notes can provide a forum for people to learn and share, and be a place for many future new discoveries to come. —F. Teal Waterstrat

## SNVB to Launch New Website!

In May our society will launch its new website, a project completed by design students at Clark College in Vancouver, WA in collaboration with several SNVB board members. Be sure to check it out at [www.snwvb.org](http://www.snwvb.org). Ideas and feedback are welcome. We hope to add options for both online membership and annual meeting registration and payment as well as membership only access to articles from the Northwest Naturalist.



As always you can find information about our student scholarship, and contact information for our board members. And Don't forget you can download all previous issues of The Murreletter there in .pdf format.





This international joint meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists will be at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower. SNVB member R. Bruce Bury is the Chair, Local Host Committee. Co-chairs are Stan Hilman, Portland State University, and Carl Ferraris, Portland, OR. Other SNVB members on the committee include Tara Chestnut, Dede Olson, Marc Hayes, and many others. We will lend a hand providing local flavor and leading most of the field trips. We need volunteers for this invasion of approximately 1,000 visitors. Please contact any of the folks named above or RB Bury (buryb@usgs.gov). Thank you.

The meeting has 8 symposia, including one honoring Robert "Doc" Storm. The reception is outdoors at Oaks Parks, about 5 miles upriver from the Hilton Hotel. Deadlines for presentations and early registration: March 31. Please see web page for information on how to register, submit presentations, and for all other details:

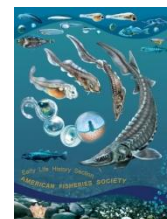
<http://www.dce.k-state.edu/conf/jointmeeting/events.shtml>

Organizing Societies:

- 25th annual meeting of the [American Elasmobranch Society](#)
- 89th annual meeting of the [American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists](#)
- 52nd annual meeting of the [Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles](#)
- 67th annual meeting of the [Herpetologists League](#)

Participating Societies:

- [Early Life History Section \(ELHS\)](#), American Fisheries Society
- [Herpetological Conservation and Biology \(HCB\)](#)
- [Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology \(SNVB\)](#)



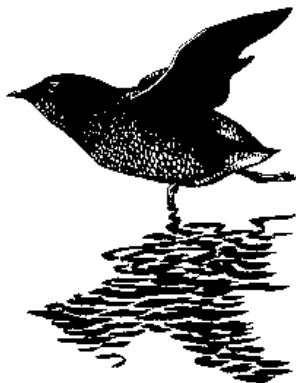
## Update on Northwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

February was a busy month for Northwest PARC! We held an *Ephemeral Wetland Construction Workshop* on 16 February 2009 at Tualatin Hills Nature Park in Portland, OR. Thomas Biebighauser (US Forest Service) and Elke Wind



(E. Wind Consulting / NW PARC) instructed the course, which was attended by 20 participants from Alberta, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Washington DC.

The NW PARC Annual Meeting followed the workshop on 17 February 2009 at the Oregon Zoo in Portland, OR. Sixty attendees listened to plenary speakers Andy Blaustein (Oregon State University) and Thomas Biebighauser, who provided an overview of herpetofauna conservation issues in the NW and an example of what can be done to restore or create critical wetland habitats. The group actively discussed herp conservation issues in the NW and formed several teams to accomplish specific tasks over the next year: (1) Communications / Social Sciences, (2) Training, (3) Funding, (4) Inventory and Monitoring, (5) Linkage Areas / Important Herp Areas, (6) Impacts of Disturbance, (7) Restoration, (8) Disease, (9) Species Based Best Management Practices. Meeting attendees also participated in a Ranid Reintroduction Workshop (organized by Kris Kendell) and behind the scenes zoo tour to learn about captive breeding programs. PARC's *Habitat Management Guidelines for Amphibians and Reptiles of the Northwestern United States and Western Canada* was distributed to meeting attendees. David Pilliod (US Geological Survey) was selected to replace Dede Olson (US Forest Service) as co-chair of NW PARC, a two-year position.



## BIODIVERSITY CENTER FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES

### NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### BIRDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA – SPECIES UPDATES:

Since the publication of the 4-volume set “*The Birds of British Columbia*” (1990-2001), the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies (BCFWS), a non-profit organization established in 2004 in British Columbia, has been publishing updated species accounts as “Featured Species” in



their bi-annual journal *Wildlife Afield*. The comprehensive accounts may be of interest to members, especially authors revising their *Birds of North America* accounts. The species' profiles may also be helpful in preparing status reports, developing species management plans as well as providing insight into significant changes in arrival and departure dates and length of stay for species in British Columbia over the past 120 years. To date, published accounts include **Canada Warbler** (66 pp.), **Common Loon** (75+ pp.), **Common Nighthawk** (53 pp.), **Heermann's Gull** (53 pp.), **Semipalmated Plover** (7 pp.), and **Turkey Vulture** (20 pp.). Accounts in preparation include **Clark's Grebe** and **Forster's Tern**.

Other published wildlife species include **Moose** (33 pp.), **Thinhorn Sheep** (9 pp.), and **Wood Frog** (9 pp.).

These accounts, except Common Loon which will be posted in September 2009, are available on-line as PDF files at [www.wildlifebc.org](http://www.wildlifebc.org). As well, 135 additional “Feature Articles” and “Notes” can be downloaded for the first nine issues of *Wildlife Afield*. These include an assortment of peer-reviewed articles on status, distribution, food habits, natural history, population trends, conservation, and effects of climate change for amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals in British Columbia.

A single supplement to *Wildlife Afield*, also on-line, has been issued as “*Roads and Wildlife*”. This 60-page booklet contains eight papers on highway mortality in British Columbia and announces a provincial ROADWATCH BC program.

For more information contact R. WAYNE CAMPBELL, Director, BCFWS ([rwcampbell@shaw.ca](mailto:rwcampbell@shaw.ca)) or visit the web site.

*Submitted: 10 February 2009 (R. Wayne Campbell, Director BCFWS, Associate Editor, Wildlife Afield)*

## Member Photo



Marc Hayes photographed this female Northern Red-legged frog (*Rana aurora*) in situ during fall migration on 14 October 2005 on the Cooper Point Peninsula in West Olympia.

Keep an eye out for Red-legged frog breeding activity in your neck of the woods. It's that time again!

### Pierce County BioBlitz Announcement



Spring is around the corner and the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance is excited to announce that we are planning a BioBlitz! We thank you for your past participation, and hope you had a great time and are able to explore a new area with us.

You are invited to join us for BioBlitz 2009: Roy/McKenna area of the Nisqually Biodiversity Management Area (BMA). The Nisqually BioBlitz will occur on May 15 and 16 from 3:00pm on Friday to 3:00pm on Saturday.

Yes, this is a true 24-hour biological survey!

The habitats identified in the area include Garry oak stands, remnant prairies, several riparian wetlands, and second growth conifer forests - an incredible mix of habitats. There is potential for some exciting finds, including rare and threatened species of butterflies and mammals.

Team leads will do some additional surveys before and after the event. Taxa that will be surveyed include mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile, invertebrate, and plant. This BioBlitz has three main objectives:

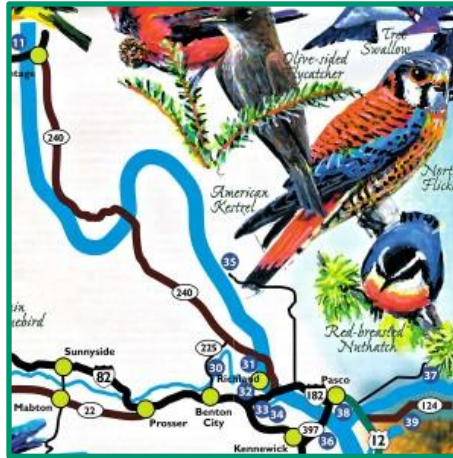
1. Validating the species predicted to inhabit the area based on modeling conducted as part of our larger Pierce County Biodiversity Network Project.
2. Engaging community members in discovering the biological richness of the region leading to conservation actions
3. Enjoying a great field day for all participants as we inventory the area's beautiful remnant prairies.

This is an intensive event and our team participants work hard documenting as many species as possible against the clock. In appreciation, meals, snacks and a t-shirt are provided for all participants. Funds are also available to reimburse any travel expenses. The members of the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance thank you in advance for your assistance.

For more information:  
contact Krystal Kyer at [kkyer@tahomaudubon.org](mailto:kkyer@tahomaudubon.org)  
or go to:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/natmap/bioblitz/nisqually/>

## Trail maps offer casual birder a wing up

It's just a map. No big deal, right? Well, not so fast. The Sun and Sage Loop, the newest route map of what Washington Audubon has dubbed the Great Washington State Birding Trail, is yet another reason for people from other parts of the Pacific Northwest to come to this part of the state, where they may just spend their money on restaurants, lodging and fuel. Or, at the very least, it will help casual or beginning birdwatchers figure out what kind of bird that might be sitting in the branches above them.



A portion of Washington Audubon's map of the Great Washington State Birding Trail. (Courtesy photo)

But back to that tourism dollar, which can have a profound impact on communities hit hard by recession.

"People in hard economic times don't stop recreating," said Hilary Hilscher, an Audubon Washington spokeswoman for the Greater Washington State Birding Trail.

"We need some sort of recreation to get us out of our day-to-day world, and (during an economic downturn) people tend to go to their local parks and wildlife areas, looking for someplace close to home."

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2006 people in Washington spent \$1.5 billion related to watching wildlife, more than they spent on hunting or fishing. The 851,000 who traveled away from home to seek out those sightings spent an average of \$519, most of it on food and lodging.

Christi Norman, program director for Washington Audubon's birding trail series, pointed to two studies done in Virginia and Texas, both among the 38 states that already have designated birding trails.

The Texas study "said that for every 100 birders who come to your community, you get 1.4 new jobs," Norman said, then added with a laugh. "If they're like me, (that job) will be at the wineries."

The Virginia study, done by the state's game/fisheries department to assess the impacts of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, would also lead one to assume Central Washington's tourism destinations, such as wineries, would be benefitted by the state's birding-trail series.

Respondents in that 2007 study, who had either requested the birding trail guide or were contacted while visiting sites on the map, tended to be middle-aged, well-educated and have median annual incomes above \$75,000 — the very demographic targeted by the wine tourism industry.

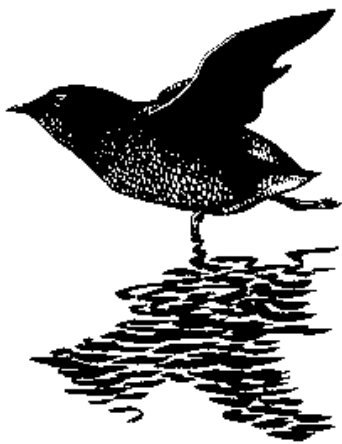
March 23, 2009 by Scott Sandsberry  
Yakima Herald  
[www.yakimaherald.com](http://www.yakimaherald.com)

## You Too Can Submit Articles!

If you have an idea for an article, a seminar, workshop, or training announcement, or would like to advertise a job or student announcement, please submit to the Murreletter. The Murreletter is published three times per year and reaches the entire SNVB membership.

Please send articles  
To Eric Lund at:  
[snvb.murreletter@gmail.com](mailto:snvb.murreletter@gmail.com)





For more information about the

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check out our website:

**[www.snwvb.org](http://www.snwvb.org)**