

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

Member of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

December 2009

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, December 1, 6:45 PM before the meeting.

***Tuesday, December 1, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, December 7, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting at the home of Arden & Sherry Hagen 2203 SE 135th Ave., Vancouver, WA 360-892-8872

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

PROGRAM:

Naturally Beautiful Backyards

by Kenneth O'Brien

Kenneth O'Brien will present a program on ways to use native plants in our yards and communities.

Gardening ideas and landscaping techniques will be shared.

Naturally Beautiful Backyards is an active program of the Columbia Springs Environmental Center.

It promotes the creation of healthy and productive gardening to support our ecosystem. The center is located on old Evergreen Highway, east of I-205 bridge (12208 SE Evergreen Hwy).



VAS Upcoming Programs:

January: **No Meeting**

February **Possible Bird DVD night**

March: **?**

April: **Hagen's Peru Trip**

FIELD TRIP

Sauvie Island CBC



Leader: Tammy Bjorkman, 360-213-6489

When: December 27, Sunday

See page 2 for information on this annual event

Please Note....

There are no...

Meetings

Field Trips

Newsletter

...in January

There will be a Newsletter mailed during January for the February events

VAS News

VAS BOARD MEETING was held on November 2nd at the home of Joan Durgin. A quorum was present.

Treasurers Report. Income for October was \$873.11 with \$165.02 from donations, \$400 from Birdathon and \$240 in Newsletter subscriptions. Expenses were \$2,989.83. The major expense was Audubon Adventures \$2,145.55 and there also was \$500 for postage. Cash and investments were \$21,334.19. The CD that was turned over was put in the Lacamas Credit Union at 1.55% for fifteen months. The Community Foundation Fund was \$199,278.81 as of 30 June 2009.

Field Trips. November will be a rare bird run. The Christmas Bird Count will be 27 December.

Membership. The Newsletter will only be sent to paid up subscribers as of next month.

Conservation. National Audubon has pretty much dissolved the Washington State office. A few people will still be working out of the Center at Seward Park in Seattle.

Old Business. Bob Rowe reported tht Birdfest went well.

New Business. Since Bob Rowe has taken over as Program chair, we need someone to take over the Volunteer chair.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Ellifrit

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Elaine Armstrong • Candy Bennett • Linda Doney • Jeanne Harrison • Emily Longman • Joann Menard • Cindy Parker • Cindy Reisinger

Transfer Members: Judi Gilles • Charlene Heffler

VAS Volunteer Needed

VAS needs a new Volunteer coordinator. This person would get volunteers signed up when needed & remind them The first event that needs attention would be to organize the volunteers for the Home & Garden Show next



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Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Washington Side: Sunday December 27th, 2009

For two weeks before and two weeks after Christmas, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. The **SAUVIE ISLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - WASHINGTON SIDE** is scheduled for Sunday, December 27.

Please join us in helping to make a difference!

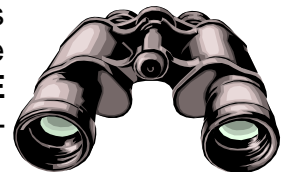
Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists participate in this annual mission. For more than one hundred years (since December 25, 1900!), the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season and help with this project. To learn more about the history of this honored tradition, check out the website at:

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/history.html>

VAS Contact Person: Tammy Bjorkman

If you have questions or would like to signup to join a team, call or email:

(360) 213-6489 or bjorkmante@iinet.com





Victory

Initiative 1033 was defeated! Thanks to all who voted against I-1033. A special thanks for those who talked to others about I-1033 or who helped in the campaign.

Washington Audubon and Audubon Council of Washington

Resolutions Proposed to the Conservation Committee

I attended the Conservation Committee meeting, which was held in connection with the Audubon Council of Washington meeting in October. Four resolutions were proposed to the Conservation Committee that were referred back to the chapters.

- Should lead be banned in fishing gear to be used in lakes where loons breed? As it is now, the population of the common loon has been declining (a common bird becoming less common?). There is also a problem of a high concentration of lead sinkers and other fishing gear lost in lakes in Washington where the common loons breed. Lead is not good for loons or other living things. Vancouver Audubon has approved this resolution.
- Should wind turbine farms be located in marbled murrelet habitat? Should there be different rules for locating wind turbine farms on the west side of the mountains than there are for the east side? Another resolution dealt with a proposed wind farm on the coast, in the Nema Marbled Murrelet Management Area. The issue of wind turbines and birds is a hard one for Audubon as we have two conflicting values here. Not all chapters have approved this resolution, but Vancouver Audubon did say yes.
- As the lands at Hanford under the control of the Department of Energy (DOE) are cleaned up, should they be transferred to the Hanford Reach National Monument, assuming the Fish and Wildlife Service determines them to be suitable for inclusion in the monument? Lower Columbia Basin Audubon proposed this resolution for fear that Representative Doc Hastings would attempt to block the transfer of these lands. He desperately wants this rare shrub-steppe habitat developed for industry or agriculture. Vancouver Audubon approved this resolution.
- Should Hanford be included in a group of National Environmental Research Parks that was originally established by executive order in 1972? A bill is in Congress that would give Congressional authorization and would provide money to fund these research parks. The parks were established for environmental research and monitoring on sites that had been used for the development

of nuclear weapons during World War II and the Cold War. The Congressional bill includes sites such as Los Alamos and Savannah River. But, not Hanford. Thanks to Doc Hastings who succeeded in amending the bill to exclude Hanford. Vancouver Audubon approved this resolution.

SAVE THE DATE: Lobby Day will be January 26th in 2010. I encourage you to consider going up to Olympia on Lobby Day. It's a lot of fun and the legislators are always happy to see their constituents -- most of the legislators, anyway. I will start making arrangements after Christmas.

Speaking of the Legislature ...

Audubon will work on clean water issues; specifically we will work toward levying a fee on petroleum products, to be paid for by the refiners. Pollution from vehicles dripping oil onto city streets is a huge source of pollution in Washington waters, including the Columbia. The money from the fee would be used to help clean up storm water pollution. I would also hope that global warming would also be addressed in the 2010 legislative session.

Washington Audubon: The State Office

Is no more. The bad news we received at the council meeting is that National has pulled the plug on hiring a new executive director for the state office. The Birding Trails project under Christi Norman has been transferred to the Seward Nature Center in Seattle, as has the science coordinator, Don McIvor. Our lobbyist and policy person, Miguel Perez-Gibson, will remain on contract for a while. It is unclear if there will be money to fund him for the 1-2010 session of the legislature. A group of us at the council meeting met and cooked up a plan to salvage what we can. The first step was to send out a survey to all the chapters to find out what chapters want and need from a state office. This has been done. As Vancouver Audubon's conservation chair, I think that a functioning State Office is necessary for Audubon to have strong voice in our state and our communities. We are the only environmental or conservation group in Washington that has chapter in every legislative district and that means a lot. A state office helped pull us all together.



Gretchen Starke



Oct. 14, Bob Flores found a SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER with 4 PECTORAL SANDPIPERS on Rest Lake. The Sharp-tailed is a bird from Eurasia that closely resembles a pectoral Sandpiper and often associates with them when on this continent.

Oct. 16 Tom Mansfield and Ken Knittle had a great day of birding starting at the Ridgefield NWR and saw the SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER, many Pectoral Sandpipers, lots of LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS and a RED-SHOULDERED HAWK. On their way to Skamania County they drove down Blair Rd. in Washougal and found 4 EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES. At Kidney Lake near Bonneville Dam a tan striped WHITE-THROATED SPARROW popped up. Not far away a flock of EVENING GROSBEAKS flew over. At the juvenile fish facility on Hamilton Island was a WESTERN GULL, an unusual species that far upstream from the ocean. At Rock Creek, near Stevenson there was an immature SNOW GOOSE and a CACKLING GOOSE. At the Wind River mouth they scoped 6 HORNED GREBES and a COMMON LOON. On the Underwood-Cook Rd. they found a female WESTERN BLUE-BIRD near where they had been during nesting season and in the residential area there were CALIFORNIA QUAIL. North of Willard a MERLIN shot overhead.

Arden Hagen reported that a female WESTERN Tanager stopped for a bath in their yard. This was about 2 weeks later than their historical yard records.

Oct. 17, Jim Danzenbaker found shorebirding at the Ridgefield NWR, River "S" Unit very rewarding with many birds present on Rest Lake. He saw the continuing SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER, 6-8 PECTORAL SANDPIPERS, 12 LESSER YELLOWLEGS, 2 GREATER YELLOWLEGS, 250 LONG-BILLED, 25 WESTERN SANDPIPERS, 15 LEAST SANDPIPERS, and 6 DUNLIN. A PEREGRINE FALCON, MERLIN, and two NORTHERN HARRIERS were also actively shorebirding this morning. Oct. 18, Tom Mansfield and Ken Knittle spent the morning birding the Woodland Bottoms along Dike Rd. They began pre-dawn with Great Horned Owl, Short-eared Owl, and later they had singing Western Meadowlarks, Horned Larks in a grass seed field, and several Wilson's Snipe taking off from the fields. A stop at Vancouver Lake produced a Clark's Grebe with Western grebes and 7 Great Egrets flying over the lake. The Lower River Rd. produced a fairly large flock of Snow Geese with the other normal geese and lots of SANDHILL CRANES. A quick stop at Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit produced a Greater White-fronted Goose on a island in Rest Lake and a distant Eurasian Wigeon. Susan and stopped and checked Sprague Lake in Adams County on our way to Spokane, finding a COMMON LOON and five species of grebes including RED-NECKED GREBE and EARED GREBE. On our way home the next day we saw a PACIFIC LOON at the same spot and a late PECTORAL SANDPIPER at the Hatton Coulee Rest Area ponds.

Oct. 19, Jim Danzenbaker was listening to the night flight in the early morning and heard a SOLITARY SANDPIPER,

SWAINSON'S THRUSH, hundreds of AMERICAN ROBINS, a large number of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, VARIED THRUSH, PURPLE FINCH, AMERICAN PIPIT, CEDAR WAXWING, and a flock of 14 NORTHERN PINTAIL being a surprise and his Battle Ground yard bird #112 for this year. We had a calling BARN OWL circling over our Mt. Pleasant, Skamania County home when we got back from Spokane.

Oct. 20, At the Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge, Laura Whittemore found CACKLING GOOSE, MUTE SWAN, TUNDRA SWAN, EURASIAN WIGEON, AMERICAN BITTERN, PEREGRINE FALCON, PILEATED WOODPECKER, WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH, and BROWN CREEPER.

Oct. 21, A very late female RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD was attracted to the last crocormisa blooms in our garden.

Oct. 26, Tyler Hicks reported one very late female BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK hanging around their feeders in Ridgefield. Susan and I made a day trip to the Hoquiam Sewage Treatment Plant in Grays Harbor County to look for some rare birds reported from there that were new Washington birds for us. We saw the CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR that brought a number of birders there and began a "Patagonia Picnic Table Effect" where an increased number of people with binoculars in one spot begin finding other rare species. We then saw the second bird that had been found, a female ORCHARD ORIOLE. We headed home without seeing Tropical Kingbird, Palm Warbler or Clay-colored Sparrow also seen there in this week.

Oct.31, Tammy and ERIC Bjorkman drove up to see the Black-tailed Gull at Commencement Bay and were able to get good photos of this rare Eurasian visitor, the second record for Washington State. Susan and I were surprised to have a TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE and a TOWNSEND'S WARBLER in the yard at the same time.

Nov. 2, George Mayfield found a NORTHERN SHRIKE at the Ridgefield NWR. These lovely little predators have suffered and extreme population crash over the last twenty years. Susan and I did another single day run to see a female BROWN BOOBY that was reported from near Coos Bay, Oregon. This relative of the cormorants is rare north of Mexico and was the fourth record from Oregon and the first one we had ever seen.

Nov. 3, A GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, 2 SNOW GEESE, and 50 DUSKY CANADA GEESE were seen at the Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit by Scott Carpenter who also saw 2 BAND-TAILED PIGEONS at the Carty Unit.

Nov. 4, Sherry and Arden Hagen also made the trip to see the BROWN BOOBY at Coos Bay which was a life bird for them too.

Nov. 6, Two adult and five immature SNOW GEESE were reported from the Ridgefield NWR by Randy Fortish.

During the November the local birding focus changes to waterfowl and raptors as the wintering ducks, geese, hawks and owls arrive. Many of these birds can be ob-

served from your vehicle by driving the Auto Tour Route at the Ridgefield Refuge. Other good spots to check are the Vancouver Lake and the surrounding fields and ponds in the lowlands. The diked in area of the Woodland Bottoms, west of I-5 has many wintering birds hunting and feeding over these croplands. The recently opened two mile long walking trail at the Steigerwald Lake NWR lets you view the fields and ponds at the mouth of the Columbia River Gorge. For directions to these sites visit the Vancouver Audubon Society webpage. If you come upon anything you feel is interesting or out of the ordinary please contact me or Arden and Sherry Hagen as soon as possible.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

Ridgefield NWR is Recruiting Volunteers...

...for our fall/winter habitat restoration season. Our volunteers are vital to restoration efforts on the Refuge. Last season we clocked over 1,000 volunteer hours removing invasive rice field bulrush and yellow water iris. Many thanks to those of you involved in this effort!

Tree Planting

Saturdays: Nov 7, 21*, Dec 5*, Jan 23, Feb 6, 20, Meet at Carty Unit Kiosk, 28908 NW Main Ave, Ridgefield (use Refuge entrance one mile north of downtown Ridgefield), and **March 20*, Meet at River S Unit Kiosk** (Beginning of auto tour route - use entrance ¾ mile south of Ridgefield off 9th Ave/ S. Hillhurst Road). We will plant potted/bare root trees and cuttings under oaks and on floodplain habitat. Shovels and other tools will be provided.

Ivy Removal

Wednesdays: Nov 18, Dec 9, Jan 27, Feb 24. Meet at River S Unit Kiosk. We will cut and pull English ivy, bag the plants and load into a truck for removal.

Tree Plantation Repair

Wednesdays and Saturdays: Feb 3, 10, March 6, 10. Meet at Carty Unit Kiosk. We will tend plantings, remove/repair tree tubes, protectors, fencing, and otherwise take care of our plantings.

Contact Lori Summers, lori_summers@fws.gov
(360) 887-3883 x 14

It is fall again and winter will soon be in full swing. Our little feathered friends are coming back hoping that we have our feeders out and filled with seed and suet. Our regular visitors like Song, Fox, White-crowned & Golden-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Spotted Towhees prefer to feed on millet placed upon the ground but will feed on platforms. Chickadees, finches, & nuthatches like black oil sunflower seeds or chips in hanging feeders. Others like Bushtits, kinglets, wrens and woodpeckers like the suet feeder. Jays will eat peanuts and sunflower seeds but also like suet and are good at the acrobatics to get their share. Arden & I leave the leaf litter on the ground for Varied Thrush, towhees and sparrows to shift through for bugs and worms. You never know what species might show up in your yard. We have hosted Mountain Chickadee, "Eastern" Blue Jay, Townsend's Warblers, Hermit Thrushes & White-throated Sparrows over the years. It is a fun winter when beautiful Townsend's Warblers with their bright yellow, black & white feathers flash about the yard. Since Anna's Hummingbirds are resident species in our area, Arden keeps the sugar water feeder going all year. Last year, with the cold weather we had, presented a big challenge to keep it thawed. This isn't too big a job when you are home and can bring it in at night and put a light next to it during the day to warm it from freezing but.... when you leave town that really presents a problem but so far we've been able to keep our littlest feather friends supplies with fresh drink even in the worst of weather.

Birding in the Pacific Northwest in the winter can result in some pretty rare species. Already this year, a Brown Booby has shown up at Coos Bay and a Black-tailed Gull is hanging out in the bay at Tacoma. Here are **just a few** of ones Arden & I have seen over the years.

- Arctic Loon (Jan) Brownsmead, OR
- Baikal Teal (Jan) Kent, WA
- Falcated Duck, wintering Eugene area
- King Eider (Jan) Newport, OR
- Gyrfalcon (Nov) Ankeny NWR, OR
- Temminck's Stint (Nov) Ocean Shores, WA
- Bar-tailed Godwit, wintering at Tokeland, WA
- Wood Sandpiper (Oct) Fernridge, OR
- Black-tailed Gull (Dec) Brainbridge Island, WA
- Bean Goose (Dec) Hoquium, WA
- Gargany (Dec) Richland, WA
- King Eider (winter) Newport, OR & Oak Harbor, WA
- Smew (Feb) Stevenson, WA
- Eurasian Kestrel (Nov) Skagit Valley, WA
- Eurasian Dotterel (Oct) Ocean Shores, WA
- Great Gray Owl (Feb) Skagit Valley, WA
- Redwing (Dec) West Olympia, WA
- Brambling (Dec) Naselle, WA
- Pyrrhuloxia (Nov) Pheoria, OR
- Harris Sparrow, various places in winter

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding ☺

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Vancouver Audubon
believes in the wisdom
of nature's design and
promotes this through
education, involvement,
stewardship, enjoyment
and advocacy.*



December 2009

THE COLUMBIA FLYWAY is the monthly newsletter of the Vancouver Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Publication **deadline** is at the board meeting each month.

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