



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

December 2011

Calendar

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

***Tuesday, Dec. 6, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, Dec. 5, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Bob & Geri Rowe
2010 SE 140th Ave. Vancouver 360-254-8699

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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	31

PROGRAM:

What's Going on in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands?

Two speakers will try to answer this question.

BRIAN WOLFE, Port of Vancouver Commissioner, will speak to the Port's projects and vision. He will comment about restoration of the Rueffner farm & pond as a wetland bank; the condition of the flushing channel; Port expansion plans; and maintaining Sandhill Crane habitat.

JEFF SCHABEL, Clark County Public Works, will speak of the Clean Water Project as a part of the VANCOUVER LAKE WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP. Several groups make up this alliance which studies the lake quality and formulates plans for improvement.

Vancouver Lake lowlands is one of the best birding opportunities in Southwest Washington. It is wise to pay attention to plans which might effect this valuable habitat.

Please Note....

There are no...

- Meetings
- Field Trips
- Newsletter

...in January

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



FIELD TRIP

Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count Annual CBC

Contact Person:

Tammy Bjorkman,
360-213-6489

When: Dec. 18, SUNDAY
All Day Event



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>

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

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



Minutes for November 7th Meeting

Treasurer's Report – Joan Durgin

Joan was absent and sent a treasurer's report in advance. Below are a few highlights.

Revenue for October 2011: \$231.83

Expenses for October 2011: \$1,871.56

Balance in the bequest fund at the Community Foundation (9/30/11): \$208,427.00.

The fund lost \$4,423.00 in the third quarter.

Field Trips – Arden Hagen

December: No field trip in December

Washington side of the Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 18th.

Membership – George Mayfield

George reports a big influx of newsletter renewals and expects more will come in for the rest of the month as a result of the reply envelope that was included in November's newsletter. Currently, our mailing list is 284 but will increase due to renewal cycle in the works.

Programs – Bob Rowe

December: Jeff Schabel from Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership. Also, Port of Vancouver Commissioner Brian Wolfe will speak on several local issues including the Flushing Channel and Parcel 3.

January: No meeting

February: Still in the planning stages with nothing firm yet.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

Welcome New Members: Mike Arneson • Joyce Baker • Elizabeth & Geoff Bennett • Marge Bennett • Tami Bridge • Dixie Caris • Rebecca Dougherty • Loyce Forsgren • Bonnie Grant • Patti Groat • John Hudson • Joann Kersavage • Carol Lapp • Patricia Lenzen • Kathleen & Melv Rodda • Pony Mii • Margret Morse • Betty Pope • Janet Sparrowgrove • Betty Tandberg • Jeanette Wargo • Brenda Wyatt

Transfer: Daniel Preller • Cathy Darragh • Jan De Grandchamp • Kathilyn Joy • Suan Mary Ainge



A Washington Big Year - Update

Many of you may recall that Tammy and I attempted to find 300 different species of birds in the state of Washington in 2010. Unfortunately, we fell short by just a few; missing some agonizingly easy birds such as Purple Finch and Sanderling! Well, it's been eating at us since and we've decided to try again in 2012.

We thought about how we could share this adventure with our fellow birding enthusiasts and use our quest as a fundraiser for Vancouver Audubon. We ran the idea by our board members and they were immediately



board to replace our regular Bird-a-thon with this new idea. Arden and Sherry Hagen then came up with the idea of making it a challenge – The Bjorkman's vs. The Hagen's!

Ideas are being tossed around on how to make it fun for everyone who donates. We've come up with some interesting options but we don't have all of the details figured out yet. We promise to have the fine points nailed down and included in our first column which will be in the next issue of "Columbia Flyway" scheduled for February 2012.

Both teams are ready to get this challenge under way first thing on January 1st and look forward to keeping everyone up to date on each team's "Washington Big Year" while also raising some money for Vancouver Audubon.

Our fundraising supports many local and statewide issues. Vancouver Audubon has donated money to help with the completion of the state birding trail maps, we've helped to hire a policy advocate to lobby state lawmakers on behalf of all state Audubon chapters, and it also helps pay for our meeting space!

We hope you all plan to stay tuned for the big adventure!

Suet Recipe for the Birds

Melt in large pan: 2 cups lard
2 cups peanutbutter

Mix together in large bowl:
4 cups cornmeal
3 cups instant oatmeal
2 cups flour
2/3 cup sugar
2 cups cracked sunflower seeds

Mix dry ingredients into the melted lard-peanutbutter mixture. Pour into containers to fit a wire suet holder. We saved the plastic containers of suet we use to buy and then keep re-using them over and over again.



Whistling Ridge: Wind Turbines Near the Columbia River Gorge Update

The agency that makes recommendations to the governor on energy production proposals is the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). It is they who have evaluated the proposal of SDS Lumber Company to develop a wind power facility just outside the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area near Underwood. The project was opposed by several outfits, including Friends of the Columbia Gorge and the Forest Service. Vancouver Audubon is concerned about any impacts of the wind turbines on birds in a forested setting. There is evidence of spotted owls in the vicinity of the proposal. Because we don't have the resources to fully act on a proposal of such magnitude involving state and even federal issues, we agreed that Seattle Audubon could represent our interests and the interests of Audubon chapters across the state.

In early October, the EFSEC decided to recommend to the governor, who makes the final decision, that Whistling Ridge project be approved with modifications. The modifications include eliminating fifteen of the proposed fifty or so wind turbines proposed. These fifteen had the most impact on the scenic values of the Gorge and Shawn Cantrell from Seattle Audubon told me that the elimination of the fifteen turbines resolved some of the spotted owl issues, but not all of them. After EFSEC's decision, there is a twenty day period during which any of the parties can ask for reconsideration. Shawn told me that Seattle Audubon would ask for reconsideration, as would Friends of the Gorge. He thought that SDS Lumber Company would also ask for reconsideration because losing the fifteen turbines would make the project less profitable.

As I write this, I have not heard if the EFSEC has acted on the reconsideration requests or not. We learned from Friends of the Gorge that Governor Gregoire will not take comments from the public. Friends have suggested that people write letters to the editor on Whistling Ridge.

Homeland Security and Cows

Is there a connection between beef cattle and the Department of Homeland Security? What about Homeland Security and riders of four wheeled drive vehicles and motorcycles? There must be a connection because the National Cattleman's Beef Association, the United Four-Wheeled Drive Association, and the Motorcycle Industry Council are backing a bill in Congress (HR 1505 in the House) that would create a 100-mile zone along the southern and northern borders in which, on Federal land, the Department of Homeland Security could do as it darned well pleased. All -- **all** -- environmental laws and regulations could be ignored. That includes the Endangered Species

Act, of course, Wilderness designations, clean air and water acts, the National Environmental Policy Act, all of them.

Because the US-Canadian line goes through the Straits of Juan de Fuca, in Washington that zone would go as far south as Olympia and would include Seattle and Spokane. According to a map that was printed in the *Columbian*, it would cover the entire Olympic Peninsula, the North Cascades National Park, and the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Indian Reservations would also be included. The bill as it is now a compromise of sorts. The original bill would have created additional zones 100 miles back from each coast. If that had been included, Vancouver would be a part of the zone.

The weird thing is that Homeland Security did not request this bill. The Deputy Commissioner of the Border Patrol has testified that it is unnecessary. This thing was introduced by a congressman from Utah -- a state that would not be affected. Washington's Doc Hastings, 4th Congressional District, is chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee and is all for it. We can question the real purpose of this bill, considering that Homeland Security does not want it, but the cattlemen and the off-road types do.

Talk with Congresswoman Jamie Herrera Buetler

Val Alexander, from Friends of Clark County, and I had an appointment with the congresswoman. The conversation went reasonably well, I thought. We discussed the bill I described above. The first she had heard of it was the day before when a delegation from a group of private pilots had expressed concern about it. My impression is that the congresswoman would oppose HR 1505, or at least would question it. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations are a different matter. She is under the impression that EPA is not using science when promulgating regulations. When I asked why she thought so, she did not answer, but said something about testimony from EPA saying that they did not consider economics. It has been my observation that any lack of using the best science on the part of EPA is toward more lenient regulations rather than more strict regulations. And so I told her.

Gretchen Starke





- Sept. 26, Randy Hill and Alex Chmielewski spotted an immature NORTHERN GOSHAWK on the Ridgefield NWR, and Bob Flores relocated it on Bachelor Island and later on River S Unit near Bachelor Slough. A RED-SHOULDERED HAWK continued near the Kiwa Trail, and a BLACK PHOEBE was along Bower Slough north of the auto tour route. Khanh Tran hiked the Killen Creek Trail in Skamania County, on the north side of Mt. Adams, and found some nice birds. He had started out with a NORTHERN PYGMY OWL at the Trout Lake Ranger Station. BLACK SWIFTS and AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS were along the upper trail. As they approached the alpine meadows, PINE GROSBEAKS were calling in the distance with one immature, coming in for close looks. A few raptors were up high including one NORTHERN GOSHAWK and a PRAIRIE FALCON. Close to sunset, they had an adult male SPRUCE GROUSE along the trail.
- Sept. 27, Ken Knittle spotted a GREATER YELLOW-LEGS at the Rock Creek mouth in Stevenson, the 202 bird that he has seen in Skamania County.
- Oct. 1, Tom Mansfield and Ken Knittle birded the Clark County area starting at Ridgefield NWR when the gates opened. Birds seen there were lots of GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE, SANDHILL CRANES, 1 PECTORAL SANDPIPER, 4 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS, and 2 PEREGRINE FALCONS. At the Woodland Bottoms they found a dull-colored MERLIN. They then headed up to Silver Star Mountain, by way of Sunset Falls. At the parking area, in Skamania County, they found 2 GRAY JAYS, 2 PURPLE FINCHES, 5 BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS. They watched the Gray Jays fly from down below in Clark Co. to Skamania Co. The Bohemian Waxwings were first in Skamania County then flew into Clark County for the first county record of this species. They finished the day at the Vancouver Lake flushing channel where there were 2 CASPIAN TERNS and 3 COMMON TERNS.
- Oct. 2, In Battle Ground, Jim Danzenbaker had some great yard birding having spotted 16 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE, 4 WOOD DUCKS, 1 GREAT BLUE HERON, 1 COOPER'S HAWK 4 BAND-TAILED PIGEON 2 VAUX'S SWIFT 1 BLACK SWIFT 250 VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW in two flocks, 2 SWAINSON'S THRUSH, 4 VARIED THRUSH, 101 AMERICAN ROBINS, 571 CEDAR WAXWINGS, 9 YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, 1 ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS, 3 YELLOW WARBLERS, 2 BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS, 19 PURPLE FINCHES and 56 EVENING GROSBEAKS among many more species.
- Oct. 5 – 9, A trip to San Diego for a pelagic birding tour provided Barry Woodruff and I the chance to find many of the area's specialty birds including NUTTALL'S WOODPECKER, CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER, OAK TITMOUSE, CALIFORNIA THRASHER, CALIFORNIA TOWHEE and LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH. The boat trip had good birds too, I added XANTU'S MURRELET, LEAST, ASHY and BLACK STORM-PETRELS and a real prize of 2 RED-BILLED TROPICBIRDS to my life list. Other seabirds seen were BLACK-VENTED SHEARWATER and ELGANT TERN.
- Oct. 8, During BirdFest, Jim Danzenbaker watched as a steady stream of 167 TURKEY VULTURES flew over the church parking lot near the entrance to Ridgefield NWR. At the Carty Unit there was a juvenile LEWIS'S WOODPECKER first spotted by Carlo Abbruzzese, while leading the Beginning Birding Walk. Will Clemons and Jim Danzenbaker had it later across Duck Lake from the Plankhouse.
- Oct. 11, Ken Meyer found 50 SNOW GEESE on Rest Lake at the Ridgefield NWR.
- Oct. 12, Jim Danzenbaker watched a raptor migration in Battle Ground that included 3 SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, 1 COOPER'S HAWK, 1 RED-TAILED HAWK, 1 BALD EAGLE, a NORTHERN HARRIER, 1 AMERICAN KESTREL, 1 MERLIN and a streaming line of 172 TURKEY VULTURES.
- Oct. 15, Kevin and Carol Healy found two PACIFIC LOONS at the "Tidewater Cove" area of the Columbia River, near the Water Resources Center. Bob Flores had a calling SAY'S PHOEBE by Gee Creek north of the creek near Carty and NE 10th Ave.
- Oct. 17, Arden Hagen went fishing at Horseshoe lake Monday and saw 2 HORNED GREBES there.
- Oct. 19, Mike Clarke spotted a RED-NECKED GREBE on Vancouver Lake from the boat launch at the end of La-Frambois Road. He also found a MERLIN and 37 WESTERN MEADOWLARKS.
- Oct. 21, Susan Saul counted 10 GREAT EGRETS in the pond below Crown Point. Apparently egrets have been congregating there all fall. John and Lorraine Allinger also reported seeing these birds the same day. Todd Kapral saw a pure "Yellow-shafted" NORTHERN FLICKER at his Washougal home, this is the subspecies that nests in the Rocky Mountains and east of there. George and Cindy Mayfield found the first WHITE-TAILED KITE for Clark County this year working the area over Rest Lake and the fields to the south
- Oct. 22, Debby Bailen reported that they had the first RUFFED GROUSE in their yard in their six years of living on Livingston Mountain.
- Oct. 23, Christopher and Adrian Hinkle were birding on the Oregon side of the Columbia River above Bonneville Dam and spotted a WESTERN GREBE and four SURF SCOTERS on the Washington side (Skamania County).

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

Dave Irons and Shawneen Finnegan found a SURF SCOTER at Vancouver Lake. There was also a group of 22 BONAPARTE'S GULLS and lots of WESTERN and 1 CLARK'S GREBE and several HORNED GREBES on Vancouver Lake. Just to the west of the lake, 65 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS flew over them. The numbers of CACKLING GEESE and SANDHILL CRANES along Lower River Road just past Vancouver Lake were astounding with an estimated 20,000 Cacklers, 280 SNOW GEESE, and 550 SANDHILL CRANES.

- Oct. 23, Stuart Johnston spotted an ANCIENT MURRELET on the Columbia River immediately below The Dalles Dam, in Wasco County, Oregon.

- Oct. 24, Visiting birders, Caleb Gordon and Julia Willmott, photographed a juvenile VERMILION FLYCATCHER at the River S Unit of Ridgefield NWR. This was the fifth record of this species in Washington State and the second one for the refuge, the other being in the winter of 2004. Cindy and George Mayfield had seen this bird the day before at the same location and noted the facial mask and fly-catching activity but did not identify it. This rarity stuck around through at least the first week of November allowing Lyn Topinka and Roger Windemuth to get great photos of it, others who reported seeing this bird included Ken Knittle, Gerald Hamilton, Mike Clarke and Steve and Sybil Kohl.

- Oct. 25, Our son, Brad, called us early in the morning to report that he had seen a murrelet in the Columbia River as he was speeding up river from the Cascade Locks boat ramp on a sturgeon research boat. I posted it to the birder email lists and then Susan and I went to search for it without success. Jay Withgot and Shawneen Finnegan did find it on the Washington side of the river in Stevenson, it was an ANCIENT MURRELET, for the second county record of this species. The bird continued to be seen into early November at Cascade Locks. A WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was seen by them in flight doing a giant u-turn from one side of the river to the other. A RED-THROATED LOON was also on the Skamania County side of the Columbia. During the unsuccessful searches that Susan and I made for the murrelet in the next several days we saw the RED-THROATED LOON, WESTERN, CLARK'S, RED-NECKED, HORNED, EARED, and PIED-BILLED GREBES. Jack Ritter found a GREAT GRAY OWL at Panakanic Meadow, southeast of the Conboy Refuge in Klickitat County. Bob Rowe and Les Carlson searched for it without any luck but did find a ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK and a NORTHERN SHRIKE as a consolation prize.

- Oct. 29, Carol and Kevin Healy reported that the escaped BLACK SWAN continues to be seen at Marine Park in Vancouver. At the Ridgefield NWR, Bob Flores found two WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS, 2 EURASIAN WIGEON, 61 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS on Rest Lake, 6 SANDHILL CRANES and several LINCOLN SPARROWS.

- Oct. 30, Randy Hill spent all morning with Bob Flores, Steve Mlodinow and Bill Tweit at Vancouver Lake and

Lower River Road, then finished the day off with a few hours on River S Unit at Ridgefield NWR. Highlights of the day included the VERMILION FLYCATCHER, over 600 SNOW GEESE and five grebes including CLARK'S and RED-NECKED, all three mergansers, and BONAPARTE'S GULLS. Jeff Jendro found a winter plumaged CLARK'S GREBE in a mixed raft of WESTERN and HORNED GREBES in the Columbia River at the Woodland Bottoms. While watching three otters in the Columbia River on Dike Road, just south of Whalen Road, he had a fly-by PELAGIC CORMORANT.

- Nov. 1, A BLACK PHOEBE was seen at the Ridgefield boat ramp by Fran Lenski, only a few years ago these birds were unheard of in Washington. A tan-striped morph WHITE-THROATED SPARROW was in Arden and Sherry Hagen's Cascade Park yard. Les Carlson also has these east coast species visiting the feeders in his yard.

- Nov. 2, Ryan Merrill located a PARASITIC JAEGER at Vancouver Lake along with 2 CLARK'S GREBES, 1 RED-NECKED GREBE, 3 BONAPARTE'S GULLS, a RED-BREASTED MERGANSER and a DUNLIN. His quick reporting of the bird allowed Randy Hill and Jim Danzenbaker to see the bird too. Arden and Sherry Hagen drove to Tacoma and Commencement Bay to see the continuing BLACK-TAILED GULL, an Eurasian bird with only a few records for this State.

- Nov. 3, Dan Waggoner picked out a male RUSTY BLACKBIRD in a large mixed flock of Brewer's and Red-winged Blackbirds and Starlings on the Woodland bottoms. A visit to the Takhlakh Lake area of Skamania County before the snows began in earnest provided few birds for Les Carlson and me but the ones we did have were nice. The best bird of the day was a male SPRUCE GROUSE that stood in the road allowing a great photo opportunity. The most surprising find was a WILSON'S SNIPE along the frozen shoreline of Council Lake.

Nov. 4, Jeff Jendro not only re-found the male RUSTY BLACKBIRD at Woodland but spotted a female in the flock too. Les Carlson, George Mayfield and Bob Rowe were all able to see the female and add another bird to their Life Lists.

As of the end of October, 223 species of birds had been reported from Clark County in 2011 and 194 have been found in Skamania County. You can see the entire lists for each of Washington's counties by going to:

<http://www.wabirder.com/bartel.html>

The winter birds have arrived and will have settled into a routine that will last through the season. This allows us to do a population survey through the Christmas Bird Count which is scheduled for December 18th this year, please contact Tammy Bjorkman to sign up for this fun team effort. If you find bird you can't identify or feel may be a rare sighting, please contact me or Arden and Sherry Hagen as soon as possible. And continue to send your sightings to me or post them on Tweepers for inclusion in this column.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

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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 2011

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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