



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

December 2012

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, Dec. 4, 6:45 PM before the meeting.

***Tuesday, Dec. 4, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, Dec 3, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by George & Cindy Mayfield 24315 NE 59th Ave., Battleground 360-687-0360

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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	31					

PROGRAM:

News from the Malheur NWR

by DUNCAN EVERED, Malheur Field Station Manager

If you have been to Malheur NWR in SE Oregon, chances are you have met Duncan Evered, the Field Station Manager. Duncan will update us on refuge activity, plans and problems.

How is the new mitigation island on Malheur Lake working out? Are Caspian Terns establishing an ongoing colony? Is there progress on reducing the number of carp that have destroyed lake habitat that birds depend on? What would be the impact of the proposed wind farm on the north side of Steens Mountain? Are the Sage Grouse populations stable? Is Malheur a continued collector point for out-of-range migrants? What ongoing education opportunities are ahead at the Field Station?

Duncan is very interesting to listen to, with his British humor, scientific mind, and enthusiasm.

Come with questions.

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. 30, 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 signup to join a team, call or email:

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

VAS Board Meeting at the home of Arden & Sherry Hagen on Nov. 5, 2012

Treasurer's Report

Revenue for October 2012: **\$423.26**

Expenses for October 2012: **\$379.90**

Big Year Challenge fundraising total YTD: **\$2,752.50**

Old Business

We have sponsors for 15 kits so far and we will likely start hearing from teachers this week who wish to participate. Last year our chapter provided 46 kits.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

WA Big Year VAS Fund Raiser Competition

*Vancouver Audubon President Eric Bjorkman and his wife Tammy are involved in a year-long fundraising competition with fellow board members Arden and Sherry Hagen. Both couples are conducting a 'Big Year' in Washington State. Throughout 2012, Eric & Sherry will keep a journal of the adventures of **Team Bjorkman** and **Team Hagen** respectively & contribute articles to Columbia Flyway each month sharing the high-lights and low-lights of their quest.*

November 2012 Big Year Birding

A Tale from the Trail: Team Bjorkman (355)

On Oct. 10th, we find a Spruce Grouse near Mt. Adams. This bird has been a nemesis for us this year and we only see it after we have given up looking for it. It flushes from the roadside as we speed towards home four hours after scouring the underbrush for one. Happy once again, we head off.

Before long, we find two bedraggled hikers walking along the road. They are trying to hitch a ride and the prospect of getting one on an old fire road isn't too promising. They might not see another car for the rest of the day. We stop and tell them that they are welcome to squeeze in the back with Ozzie and Rudy, our two Boston Terriers who have quite happily joined in on most of our birding ventures this year. They hop in to tight quarters and a few dozen dog kisses.

They are young men (mid-twenties) who are in the midst of hiking the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). They started several weeks ago at the beginning of the trail in British Columbia and are going as far as Mt. Hood. Due to forest fires rav-

aging the Mt. Adams area PCT hikers are being diverted around them, an additional eighteen miles of road hiking. They weren't expecting this turn of events and it clearly has their spirits down.

We have extra food and when we offer bananas, pepper jack cheese & crackers, and soda to wash it down with, they become outright giddy. They immediately perk up and we begin trading stories from our respectively nutty quests.

We ask them what their "trail names" are. It's custom to choose a nickname while hiking on the PCT and knowing this seems to make us a bit more hip in their eyes. Our car is blessed with Slo-Poke and Gimpy. We never do ask for their real names and I don't think we told them ours. It doesn't matter as we are having a great time dodging the fires and getting them back to the trail once again.



Hikers also have a name for happenstances like these. They call it "trail magic" when a non-hiker steps in and unexpectedly does something nice for them. I like that. It makes me feel good. The magic goes both ways, though. We too are enriched by our half hour with them. We get a quick look into their world and we share ours with them. It is moments like these that have filled our year with wonder and joy.

VAS President, Eric Bjorkman

(Team Hagen Report on page 5)



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Election Results: How the Environment Might Fare

During the presidential campaign, only one candidate mentioned climate change without joking about it. Fortunately, that candidate, the incumbent, won. Not that environmental issues will be a priority. The state of the economy will be first on the agenda for those in Washington DC. Then there is the Congress, alas. Not much has changed there. There still is a large lump of those who wish to repeal the 20th Century. Including Theodore Roosevelt's administration. Still, I think we can prevent the worse from happening. If the majority leader of the Senate pushes to change the Senate rules on the filibuster, it may even be possible to get a little done. Any more Hurricane Sandies or terrible droughts and more people might realize that climate change is a dangerous thing and the country must do something about it.

At the state level, the election for governor was close, but in the end, the candidate more knowledgeable about the environment won. As for the legislature, overall, there probably won't be much change. The biggest problem we will face is that when budgets are tight and the economy is sour, environmental issues will, at best, be shoved into the back seat, or at worst, be attacked. Just like the last legislature. We will hear calls to get rid of regulations so as to encourage job growth. As if it was regulations instead of demand that drives the economy. We will miss Craig Pridemore.

Locally, things will be grim. The incumbent who was most hostile to the environment and growth management won his race. The more reasonable incumbent up for re-election was defeated by -- a tea party person. This person's campaign was mostly based on opposition to light rail and taxes. One of his campaign pieces said he would get rid of park fees. So, if he won't raise taxes and eliminates park fees, does that mean he will eliminate parks?

Speaking of parks, the proposed levy for a Vancouver parks district went down. Sadly, I was not surprised. Aside for a lot of signs, the campaign for it was practically invisible. To pass a tax in this county (or anywhere, I suppose), there must be a vigorous campaign, complete with phone banking and doorbelling.

Camp Bonneville Cleanup Proceeding

Unlike the previous firm, which seemed more interested in fine dining than in cleaning up Camp Bonneville, the new outfit, Weston Solutions, that the county recently contracted with is busy removing things that might go boom. The county recently held an open house to inform the public on the progress being made, and I attended. Just to illustrate the complexity of the situation, along with Weston and the county, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington Department

of Ecology (DOE) were also presenters. And, because it was their mess, the army is paying for the cleanup.

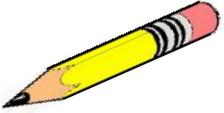
There are several environmental concerns. The most obvious problem is the unexploded ordnance. Although, this is more about human safety than threats to wildlife and the environment, the munitions must be dealt with. In spots, there is contamination of the soil and water, thus the involvement of EPA and DOE. The most notable of the contaminants are lead (678 tons of lead-contaminated soil have been removed) and perchlorate. But, Vancouver Audubon's biggest worry is the cleanup itself. Except for where the buildings and the dump are, Camp Bonneville has roughly 1000 acres of untouched (except for military shelling) forested wildlife habitat. Animals as large as bears and elk use the area. We do not want Camp Bonneville to be turned into a moonscape in an effort to remove all potential dangers. At the open house, I was assured that would not happen. Although, there will be trails, and the ground adjacent to the trails will be cleared and replanted, the best habitat will be fenced off and left alone.

The county is logging a portion of Camp Bonneville, according to a forest stewardship plan. The trees involved are a planted plantation. They are growing too close together and are stagnant. It is a fire hazard. The county plans to replant, not only with trees, but also understory, shrubs and groundcover. For the plan, the county has received dual certification from the Forest Stewardship Council and the American Tree Farm System's Sustainable Forest Initiative.

There is still the possibility that fearful neighbors will insist on every single bullet be picked up (not really possible). And who knows what the change in regime in the board of commissioners might mean. We still need to keep an eye on what is happening at Camp Bonneville, but so far so good.

The Intertwine Study

Some time back, Vancouver Audubon gave a grant to the Columbia Land Trust to help finish an inventory of the natural resources, including plants and animals, of the Portland-Vancouver metro area. The main organization involved in the inventory was Intertwine. Intertwine is a coalition of groups, including various governmental agencies and private non-governmental organizations, interested in promoting trails and maintaining nature in urban areas. The inventory is now completed. At the fall meeting of Intertwine, Vancouver Audubon was recognized among the groups that had contributed to its completion. We now have a copy of the inventory. We are pleased to have helped, even a little, in this important work.

Gretchen Starke 



- Oct. 12, Jim Danzenbaker drove the Ridgefield NWR auto tour loop and noticed a few shorebirds feeding on the abundant mud. He was surprised to find one very bright immature **SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** and an immature **BAIRD'S SANDPIPER**.
- Oct. 13, There were two **SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPERS** at the River "S" unit of the Ridgefield NWR, first reported by Randy Hill and enjoyed by many of the folks at BirdFest. Zak Pohlen and Tyler L Hicks were among those who were able to readily relocate the previously reported Sharp-tailed Sandpiper on Rest Lake.
- Oct. 14, It was a good day for finding hawks on the River "S" Unit, Will Clemons was helping out on tour busses at Birdfest when he spotted a juvenile **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** hovering and swooping on prey. An adult light morph **SWAINSON'S HAWK** was also seen on the River "S" by Roger Moyer of Chehalis. Scott Carpenter reported at least two **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS** were present, a stunning adult and an immature bird. He also saw a juvenile **BLACK PHOEBE** in the ash woods that are south of the Kiwa Trail parking lot. It had a leg band, so presumably it is one of the birds that was born at Ridgefield this past summer. A juvenile **NORTHERN SHRIKE** also made a brief appearance right next to the road.
- Oct. 15, **SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** was seen from the observation blind by Jim Danzenbaker and Randy Hill during their early morning BirdFest big sit duties. Amy Hill saw the Sharp-Tailed Sandpiper on the last bus out of the River "S" Unit that evening.
- Oct. 17, Les Carlson, George Mayfield and I birded the high elevations of northeast Skamania County finding low numbers of birds. But we did find two **SPRUCE GROUSE**, a life bird for George. We tried in several habitats before locating a **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL**, a lifer for both Les and George. To top the day off George spotted a small tern at Drano Lake that turned out to be first **ARCTIC TERN** for the county.
- Oct. 19, Arden and Sherry Hagen were with Les Carlson at Westport, Gray's Harbor County, when they found Washington's third record **COMMON EIDER** just off the viewing platform next to the marina. This was a great bird to find to break the State Big Year record. Further south they had a **TROPICAL KINGBIRD** at Tokeland and a **WHITE-TAILED KITE** near Raymond.
- Oct. 20, Jim Danzenbaker had a single **COMMON RED-POLL** to highlight a morning visit to Ridgefield NWR, the bird was a flyover at the head of the entrance canyon for the River "S" Unit. The Hagens and the Bjorkmans located a **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** at the Westport Marina. This is an European Gull that nests rarely in the northeast arctic Canada.
- Oct. 22, Carol and Don Kohler went to Westport chasing rare birds. Carol got three life birds, **TROPICAL KINGBIRD**, **WILSON'S PLOVER**, and **HUDSONIAN GODWIT**. Don also got **COMMON EIDER** for a lifer, a bird Carol had seen in Maine. Randy Hill spotted a tan-striped **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** was in the shrubs in front of the Ridgefield NWR Carty Office during the noon hour today. Susan and I birded up the Gorge after receiving a phone call from our son on a boat in the Columbia River near Stevenson, reporting flocks of **SURF** and **WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS** between there and Hood River. We found no scoters but did have **RED-NECKED**, **WESTERN**, **HORNED** and **EARED GREBES**.
- Oct. 23, Les Carlson found a small flock of **SNOW GEESE** and a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands. Two circuits of the Ridgefield NWR Auto Tour Route by Ray Korpi, resulted in views of a **BLACK PHOEBE**, a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** interacting with a **NORTHERN HARRIER**, a **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** and **SANDHILL CRANES**, including some dancing.
- Oct. 25, I was joined by Les Carlson for a day of birding in Skamania County. Our best birds were a **COMMON LOON** below Bonneville Dam. Two **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS**, one on Mt. Pleasant and the other at Skamania Landing.
- Oct. 27, After a report of a **NORTHERN WHEATEAR** having been seen the previous evening at Westport, Susan and I headed there. We not only found that bird and the Common Eider, we also unsurprisingly saw both the Bjorkmans and the Hagens there in the pouring rain. A life bird for most of us and the 600th bird on Tammy Bjorkman's North American list.
- Oct. 28, Carol and Don Kohler returned to Westport and picked up the **NORTHERN WHEATEAR** and a **PALM WARBLER** for life birds.
- Nov. 2, Randy Hill did a quick check of a section of the Columbia River between I-5 and I-205. At Wintler Park there was a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** along the open stretch of trail and a dozen **LESSER GOLDFINCHES**. At the Water Resources Education Center he found 4 **COMMON LOONS** and 2 **PACIFIC LOONS**. Near the boat ramp downstream there was a male **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**. A **RED-NECKED GREBE** was further downstream, a little west of McMenamin's Brew Pub.
- Nov. 3, A very late **OSPREY** was spotted at the Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit by Randy Hill. I saw a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** that returned to our feeder after first being seen the day before by Susan.
- Nov. 4 & 5, Bob Flores alerted people to a **PARASITIC JAEGER** that was reported to him from Vancouver Lake in the evening of Nov. 4. The next day it was seen by Les Carlson, Arden and Sherry Hagen and Lyn Topinka. A **SNOW GOOSE** was found at Skamania Landing by Tom Mansfield, when I went to see it, I also found a late **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** there and a family of **TRUMPETER SWANS** on nearby Franz Lake.

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

Nov.6, Blair Bernson was birding with Cara Borre at the Ridgefield NWR where the highlights were a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** and a **BLACK PHOEBE**. Both of these species were not even found in Washington State twenty-five years ago.

By early December, most of the waterfowl and other birds will have settled in for the winter. The annual Christmas Bird Count is a good way to census bird populations as they are now longer moving around. I encourage joining in on this annual citizen science effort that provides data for researchers and habitat managers.

Mountain Chickadee seem to be invading the lower elevations this winter with birds being reported from feeders in Portland and other areas. Check the birds at your feeders for this unusual visitor to our area. birds that are being seen in our area in good numbers this year are the "winter" finches, Evening Grosbeak and Pine Siskin, check the flocks of Siskins for Common Redpolls that may be in the flocks. So far 230 birds have been reported from Clark County in 2012 and the Snow Goose, in Skamania County, was the 200th bird seen there this year.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

**WA Big Year
VAS Fund Raiser Competition**

November 2012 Big Year Birding (cont.)

Back to WA Birding: Team Hagen (366)

After our trip to Australia, we had a few days rest since our pelagic trip had been cancelled due to weather. Then it was back to WA birding and we headed to Tacoma to add **Slaty-backed Gull** to the list which was **#358**, just one away from the WA year record. The make-up pelagic trip was then cancelled. We had expected we might have added several species on the trip & were disappointed. But we decided to head to the coast anyway and see what we might find. The weather at that point was really nice. We were headed to the marina at Tokeland when we came upon other birders stopped along the road and looking up at the power lines. I pulled over and right above us was **#359 a Tropical Kingbird to tie the all time WA year record**. That was easy. Les Carlson was with us in his own vehicle and he was on a quest to see 300 species in the state this year himself. Since this is a friendly competition, or at least after the first 7 months or so, I called Bjorkman's who were up viewing the Slaty-backed Gull and told them about the Tropical Kingbird. They would be right over. After a couple stops we reached Westport towards late afternoon where we found the **3rd state record** of a **Common Eider** for

#360 to break the state record. Wow, and "we" found it ourselves. I posted it and called Bjorkmans and before 30 minutes people were showing up for the Eider. The next morning the 4 of us in this competition spotted a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** for **#361**. We all went our separate ways. Arden & I headed to Bremerton area looking for the Parasitic Jaeger at the point which we had missed by not being on the pelagic trip. No deal so we headed back to Westport after Carol Kohler called that **Lapland Longspurs** were at Westhaven ST PK. We searched and after almost giving up we made one more pass and I came face to face with one for **#362**. Not bad for having missed the pelagic trip we were depending on. The next weekend a **Northern Wheatear** was reported at Westhaven so we picked up Bjorkmans and in the pouring rain and wind we did see this Washington rarity for **#363**. By the November meeting we had made a few more trips. A Rusty Blackbird was reported at Brady Loop Rd. We were on the way to Westport and just minutes away from the turn off. We pulled up & sure enough the small flock of blackbirds were at the pond's edge next to a house but the dogs started barking which brought out the owner. He wanted to talk about birds but the dogs kept barking so he threw a rock into the pond to give them something to chase and shut up. Unfortunately that scared the birds and they flew away and joined several hundred other "blackish" birds. We decided to chase a Palm Warbler in Bellevue but we did not find it so we drove back to Montesano. The next morning we found the **Rusty Blackbird** for **#364**. We joined up with Bjorkmans after that and Eric located 2 **Palm Warblers** at Ocean Shores all marina area for **#365**. Then on the 5th we saw the **Parasitic Jaeger** for **#366** after Les Carlson relocated it at Vancouver Lake & called us back to the area. We had been searching for this species but had pretty much given up since they were about done with migration. And now it was in our own backyard so to say. WOW what a few weeks. We thought it would be a slow month. We were wrong luckily. It has been a GREAT YEAR for birding in Washington.

Sherry Hagen, Newsletter & Web Editor

	Bjorkmans	Hagens
Feb 7	142	161
Mar 6	161	181
Apr 3	189	190
May 1	227	227
Jun 5	293	305
Jun 30	316	326
July 31	327	338
Sept 4	336	356
Oct 2	346	357
Nov 6	355	366



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



December 2012

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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