



# Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

*A Chapter of the National Audubon Society*

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

December 2013

## Calendar

\*\*\* BIRDING CLASS RESUMES IN FEBRUARY

\*\*\*Tuesday, Dec. 3, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

\*\*\*Monday, Dec 2, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Joan Durgin  
1548 NE 5th Ave., Camas 360-834-5621

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	31				

### PROGRAM:

## California Condor Breeding Program

by Kelli Walker

*Kelli Walker is Senior Keeper at the Jonsson Center for Wildlife Conservation, a program of the Oregon Zoo*

The Oregon Zoo began a captive breeding program in 2003 for the California Condor. These birds were nearly extinct. Now they have successfully raised over 30 chicks and of those, 21 have been released into the wild. In 1982 only 23 birds were known to exist. Now over 400 are living and over half of these are flying free in California, Arizona, and northern Baja, Mexico. Every egg from the breeding pairs in captivity counts. The Jonsson Center works with other



breeding programs including The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise and centers in California. The adult condor has a wing span of ten feet.

Kelli Walker will report about the program and show us pictures of the breeding process. This is one of our largest efforts to save a threatened species. Thankfully there is a hopeful side to this story.



### FIELD TRIP:

## CBC: December 22, Sunday



### Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Scott Carpenter, 503-753-1267

When: December 22, Saturday

Time: All Day or as much as you can participate

email Scott [slcarpenter@gmail.com](mailto:slcarpenter@gmail.com) (see page 2)

This is the annual bird count in our area around the Vancouver Lake area and Ridgefield NWR area. If you wish to participate call or email Scott for information or to sign up.

## \*\*\*Correction\*\*\*

On the front page of the November *Columbia Flyway* newsletter, we printed a notice that November is the time of year to renew your subscription. This notice mentioned you should use the enclosed envelope to send in your payment.

This was a mistake since we did not send envelopes out with that mailing.

### It's not too late to renew!

If you haven't sent in your renewal yet, please do so today to insure that you will continue to receive news on what's happening in your local Audubon chapter.

If you have questions about your renewal status, please contact George Mayfield at (360) 687-0360.

*\*\*Apologies from the editor for not catching this in time!!!*

# Vancouver Audubon

## Treasurer's Report – Joan Durgin

Revenue for October 2013: ..... \$507.33  
Expenses for October 2013: ..... \$1,222.22  
(Net loss of \$714.89)  
Cash & Investments: ..... \$24,117.82

Revenue from October includes newsletter subscriptions renewals which are starting to arrive in the mail. Along with the newsletter renewals, folks are sending in an addition donation to our general operations fund. \$1,000 of expenses is for the donation to the Paton's Bird Haven

## Old Business

GRANT EXTENSION REQUEST FROM

COLUMBIA GORGE REFUGE STEWARDS

VAS grant guidelines requires organizations who receive grants must provide a final report at the conclusion of their project. This final report to the VAS Board provides confirmation that grant monies were used as intended. Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards is requesting an extension on their project's final report which is scheduled to conclude on November 30, 2013.

**MOTION:** *Moved that Vancouver Audubon accept the request and extend the deadline for final report to June 30, 2014.*

**MOTION CARRIED (8 – 1 - 1) JOAN DURGIN ABSTAINED**

*Tammy Bjorkman, VAS Secretary*

## Christmas Bird Count News By Tammy Bjorkman

In December 2007, I took over the compiling duties of the Washington-side of the Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count (CBC) from our own Wilson Cady. Wilson "retired" from this position he held for an impressive 30 years and "graduated" into an at-large volunteer participant in this now 114 year old tradition.

Although my six years isn't nearly as notable as Wilson's tenure, I've decided it's time to turn over the reins again. I'm very thankful that Scott Carpenter has graciously stepped up and has enthusiastically agreed to take on this volunteer position.

One of the first- steps in deciding a date for the count is to check in with the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and choose a date that won't interfere with hunt days.

### **CBC: Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>**

If you haven't participated in a CBC before, please sign up today. Everyone is welcome.

**You don't need to be an expert to help out.** Each group will have a leader who'll assist with identifications so all you'll need to do is help count (this ability is particularly helpful for large flocks of geese!). It's that easy! The CBC is a great way for expert and novice birders to participate in a program that benefits birds all over the Americas. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations and to help guide conservation action.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

To sign up or get answers to your questions, contact:

Scott Carpenter at (503) 753-1267 or  
email him at [scarpenter@gmail.com](mailto:scarpenter@gmail.com)

## **Please Note....**

**There are no...**

- Meetings
- Field Trips
- Newsletter

**...in January**

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



**\* Wildlife Tile Murals \***

**For an "Extra Special" Holiday Gift !**

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Tile- and more...

**Cathy Fischer (360) 624-2657**  
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**Welcome New Members:** Jessica Columbo • Rosalie Cooke • Robert Folkerts • Mary Harkness • Laurie Hilton • Wanda Koch • Nick and Cindy Lagos • Kay Reamensnyder • John Ries • Debbie Witcher



## Things Are Worse Than We Thought Department of Environmental Services: Stormwater Management Program

The Director of Environmental Services hired someone, a Chris Clifford, whose job we couldn't figure out for awhile. One version is that his job is to prevent the county from being sued. What his real job is, however depends on your point of view.

First, understand that the county stormwater fee is a huge \$33 per year. That amounts to \$2.75 per month, a staggering amount that only the very rich can afford. Right? It is the lowest amount charged by any jurisdiction from around here and among the lowest in the country. The Director of Environmental Services is determined to not raise the stormwater fee. At all.

But, there is that pesky court decision, the result of a lawsuit against the county. The county must get a permit to discharge stormwater into the waters of the county. To do that, the county must meet the requirements of EPA and the state Department of Ecology.

So, apparently Clifford's job is to avoid lawsuits by making sure the county meets the stormwater requirements. But, in order to keep the stormwater fee low, the Director seems to be determined to eliminate or reduce any program not absolutely required by the stormwater permit. Thus, green infrastructure programs have to go. Public outreach and education must be reduced to a bare minimum. Digging out those programs appears to be the other side of Clifford's job.

The Watershed Stewards program was eliminated. Suddenly, without adequate explanation. That is just a start. Other cuts are buried in the proposed county budget for 2014.

The Growing Green Program provides for the planting of native vegetation on county lands. The proposed budget puts this program on hold, saving \$257,849 for the Clean Water Fund. It probably doesn't matter that the maintenance of public lands could increase. Regular mowing costs more than simply letting the native plants grow, with minimum attention to weeds.

The Master Gardener Program is being reduced from \$40,000 to \$24,000, a loss of \$16,000. This program is part of the public outreach and education program.

The Small Acreage Program, also part of outreach and education and run by WSU Extension assists rural landowners who have small farms. It teaches such landowners how to manage their animals and crops to avoid polluted runoff. That would include methods of handling manure and how to keep mud from flowing into the creeks. The budget cuts the program by \$10,000. From the description of this program, it appears to me that it helps rural landowners to comply with the habitat ordinance. I need to find out more about that.



## Department of Environmental Services: The Forestry Program

How about expanding logging on county lands? It already is being done at Camp Bonneville -- not a problem as the forest at Camp Bonneville does need attention and the logging is being done carefully, and as planned, the replanting will be done with native species. But expanding the program to other county lands? Here is an excerpt from the 2014 county budget. "The Department of Environmental Services is requesting general fund budget capacity to expand the County's Sustainable Forestry Program and support forest stewardship planning activities on county lands other than Camp Bonneville. (The Director) is exploring options for certifying additional county properties in accordance with the American Tree Farmers System's Sustainable Forestry Initiative (FSI)".

As you can see, this is the industry standard, as opposed to the standards developed by the conservationists, CSF. But the real problem is the open-ended nature of this budget item. Which county lands? For now, the logging is planned for Spud Mountain and Green Mountain (I don't know if logging on these lands is okay or is a problem -- are any of you familiar with these areas?), but "county lands" includes a lot of territory. Would it eventually include greenways and conservation lands? Who would make the decisions?

## What Now?

November and December when the county prepares and adopts the budget for the following year. Most of the time, we citizens pay little attention to the process. That must change this year. There will be hearings. If you can attend the commissioner public hearings (Except for the first Tuesday of the month, hearings are held at 10:00 AM on the sixth floor of the county building on Franklin. The first Tuesday, hearings are at 6:00 PM.) Contact all three county commissioners and let them know what you want in the budget. I can let whoever gives me their contact information (preferably e-mail) know what is going on. Just remember, it said that in a democracy people get the government they deserve.

*"The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."*

*William Butler Yeats*

Gretchen Starke

# Vancouver Audubon

**Congratulations to Gretchen Starke,  
Vancouver Audubon Conservation Chair,  
on her receipt of the first annual  
Helen Engle Volunteer of the Year Award!**

## *The Backyard & Beyond...*

Arden and I took another South American adventure. This time to Colombia. We never thought we would ever be birding in Colombia. The country that holds the record for the most species in the world but also in the news for years as at a country NOT TO GO TO due to the drug lords and guerrilla warlords that ruled much of the land and kept it in turmoil. When our Ecuadorian "adopted..sort of..son-bird guide", Eddy co-owner of Swordbilled Expeditions, said to us a few years ago that he was going to Colombia to explore it for birding I feared for his life but at the same time we were hearing ads on TV in Peru that it was now safe to travel there. He made many trips there and found the safe places and best places to bird. He scouted it out for hotels, lodges and restaurants to take his clients to & set up itineraries. Having been to northern and southern Ecuador plus twice to Peru with him we decided to go to Colombia. He set up the trip. We flew into Bogota and started birding at a park where they had already set aside a section of it from the people just for the birds. Colombia has progressed very fast realizing it has a gold mine that birders & nature loving tourists want to visit on it's beautiful country side. And boy do I say beautiful!!! We drove west from there over the mountain to bird. One place we stayed was Rio Blanco Lodge owned by the mayor. Next morning we went out with Juneir who feeds several species of antpittas. For those of you who don't know what an antpitta is, it would be like getting a Virginia Rail (or more like a Black Rail) to eat out of your hand when you call it. Amazing. We saw the remains of a city of 5000 wiped out by the same type flow as Mt St Helens in 1984. They did not heed the warning & were covered by the flow. We flew north to Barranquilla then drove up into the Sierra Nevada Mts to the El Dorado Lodge where we birded to San Lorenzo Ridge picking up the endemics of the area. My target bird was the White-tailed Starfrontlet, a hummingbird that did not let me down. Gorgeous! We learned that the druglord & guerrilla activity inadvertently helped save the land here from being destroyed. Some of the old drug fields are now shade grown coffee plantations. The government has saved the land into National Parks and lodges are going up. Men are learning how to feed the antpittas to draw birders and feeders are being set up. We really enjoyed our whole trip with Eddy to Colombia. Now he tells us he is going to add Brazil and Argentina to his list of countries. Brazil sounds like too much jungle for me but Argentina....

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding 😊



As Conservation Chair for more than two decades, led Vancouver Audubon in conservation efforts including the Northwest Forest Plan, the Land and Water Conservation Funds, and Shoreline Master Plans.

- Champion for the mighty Columbia River while working at the Army Corps of Engineers.
- Tireless fighter for the passage of Growth Management Act, wetlands and Critical Area Ordinances in the City of Vancouver and Clark County.
- Along with her husband, led the effort resulting in special designation for the Catherine Creek Recreation Area.
- Activist in formation of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Chapter volunteer for the Southwest Loop of the Great State Washington Birding Trail.



### **INJURED BIRDS: WHAT TO DO?**

**Please check our website at:  
[www.vancouveraudubon.org](http://www.vancouveraudubon.org)  
or call Arden or Sherry Hagen  
at 360-892-8872**



Oct. 14, A GREAT EGRET at Rock Creek Lake in Stevenson, was reported by Carl Schilt. This is a new location for an egret sighting in Skamania County.

Oct. 15, A visit to Frenchman's Bar County Park provided Bob Flores with about 30 Steller's Jays making fall movement along with three Pacific wrens and 2 white throated sparrows. The Vancouver Lake lowlands had about 100,000 cackling Geese and 1 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE. These large goose flocks are good spots to play "Where's Waldo", by scanning these congregations you can find other goose species such as Brant or Emperor Goose.

Oct. 17, Scott Carpenter reported seeing 20-25 AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS on Vancouver Lake.

Oct. 19, A very late BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK was at Bob Flores' Ridgefield area feeders.

Oct. 22, Jim Johnson found a SWAMP SPARROW hanging out in dense vegetation along the Columbia River between Blurock Landing and Frenchman's Bar Park.

Randy Hill said that there was a nice collection of sparrows, including a WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, at the feeder at the Ridgefield NWR office on the Carty Unit.

Les Carlson and I joined Khanh Tran for an exploration on Mt. Rainier in search of ptarmigans, we found none but did have SOOTY GROUSE, SPOTTED OWL, NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL and the fifth record of a SNOW BUNTING in Pierce County.

Oct. 24, This is the time of year when owls become more vocal, Bob Flores had a BARRED OWL and 4 GREAT HORNED OWLS on the Ridgefield River S Unit. Also of note he had a BLACK PHOEBE, 4 CANVASBACK and 8 TUNDRA SWANS.

Oct. 25, A PRAIRIE WARBLER at the Westport Jetty in Gray's Harbor County was a very good find by Bob Flores. This is a bird of the East and Gulf Coasts and very

Oct. 26 Ron Escano reported seeing PEREGRINE FALCON, RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, BROWN CREEPER, PACIFIC WREN and a WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, SWAMP SPARROW while leading a Steigerwald Lake NWR tour. These free tours are offered several times each summer on the refuge.

Oct. 29, The first 2 White-throated Sparrows, that Ray Korpi has seen on the Clark College campus, in 20 years, were located by the Welcome Center on the campus.

Nov. 3, Bob Flores had 42 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS and 51 WILSON'S SNIPE along the east side of the Ridgefield NWR auto tour route in the disked areas. There

were another 278 dowitchers on Rest Lake and 2 DUNLIN as well. 4 TRUMPETER SWANS flew over near the Kiwa Trial gate.

Les Carlson, George Mayfield and I did some birding in Skamania County, finding 3 EURASIAN WIGEON, one at Skamania Landing and two at Rock Creek in Stevenson. We then went to the higher elevations around Indian Heaven and found a SOOTY GROUSE and the real surprise of the day, a female SURF SCOTER on Mosquito Lake.

Nov. 4, At the Ridgefield NWR Carty office feeder, 2 WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS were seen by Randy Hill, he said that neither bird was a repeat from the one two weeks ago. TRUMPETER SWANS were calling from Carty Lake. He said that here has been a RED-SHOULDERED HAWK calling from near the Plankhouse.

During the winter raptors will hunt the birds attracted to our feeders, this is completely normal and to be expected. What Rob Conway of Camas found that was unusual was a COOPER'S HAWK eating a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK at his feeder.

Nov. 6, A "Yellow-shafted" NORTHERN FLICKER, that appeared to be pure was at Colleen Sibelman's Ridgefield feeders. This is the subspecies that breeds in the Rocky Mountain region and occasionally show up here during the winter.

Nov.7, Lyn Topinka found a PELAGIC CORMORANT and SURF SCOTERS in the Columbia River in front of the Red Lion Inn. A WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was picked out of the flock later by another birder. These birds can easily cross the river and might be seen from the Waterfront Trail, both species are very rare inland from the ocean.

The wintering ducks were just beginning to arrive in early November, but soon there will be rafts of scaup on the Columbia River, that like the flocks of geese, can hold a few surprises. These flocks are gathered over sand and gravel bars feeding on freshwater clams and mussels. Other species that can join the scaup to feed on these mollusks are scoters, goldeneyes and Long-tailed Ducks. Please contact me, Arden and Sherry Hagen or Eric and Tammy Bjorkman as soon as possible if you spot any birds you think might be unusual in our area.

As of the writing of this column there had been 214 species of birds reported from Clark County and 195 species reported from Skamania County for the 2013 Cumulative Year List project. For more information on this list go to: <http://www.wabirder.com/bartel.html> If you have seen a bird not checked off for this year please let me know. And please continue to send me your sightings for this column.

Wilson Cady [gorgebirds@juno.com](mailto:gorgebirds@juno.com)

**VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY**

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



**December 2013**

**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.

**VANCOUVER AUDUBON \*\* NEWSLETTER & DONATION COUPON**

**Help support Vancouver Audubon**

I wish to subscribe to Vancouver Audubon's newsletter "The Columbia Flyway" for \$10/year.

I wish to support Vancouver Audubon with an additional donations of \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Renewals:** please send your renewal directly to National Audubon with the forms sent to you. Thanks!

\*\*\* This will **not** include *The Columbia Flyway* \*\*\*

**Do Not share** my name or any of my personal information with other organizations

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For more Info Call:  
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Eric Bjorkman 360-695-3116

**Flyway Renewal  
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every year

**C9ZY130Z**

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