



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

December 2015

Calendar

*****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

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: Thailand

by Arden & Sherry Hagen

Arden & Sherry Hagen will share their January 2011 trip to Thailand through photos and stories of this adventure.

The birding trip was focused in the northern part of Thailand from Bangkok to Chiang Mai in the far north. They saw over 260 species.

One might think of Thailand as a land of tropics and warm weather but that is the lower peninsula. The northern part is quite cold to freezing in the mountains where they slept on what amounted to a board covered by a sheet and not enough covers to keep out the cold.

The birds were colorful and diverse. The beautiful Red-headed Trogons, Scarlet Minivets, Green Magpies, Blue Magpies and a bird with a comical name, the Mugimaki Flycatcher which was rare to the country, were added to the list of birds seen (and photographed by Sherry).

FIELD TRIP: Christmas Bird Count

December 20th, Sunday

Compiler: **Scott Carpenter, 503-753-1267**

Time: **All Day or as much as you can participate**

email Scott: scarpenter@gmail.com

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.

(see page 2 for more info)

Please Note....

There are no...

- Meetings
- Field Trips
- Newsletter

...in January

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

February Meeting: 7 PM

Next years meetings will start 1/2 hour earlier.
See page 2.



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Vancouver Audubon

Christmas Bird Count: December 20th, Sunday

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 slcarpenter@gmail.com

Friends of Ridgefield NWR Election

The Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge will be having an election in December for Board Members. The Friends is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting educational programs of the Ridgefield NWR, and protecting and enhancing its wildlife habitat. Among their many activities are support of educational programs about Native Americans who lived in the refuge area; the natural history of the refuge and the wildlife. They are also responsible for promotion of the refuge through the annual October Birdfest and Bluegrass Festival. If you have time and are interested in becoming more involved in supporting these activities through board membership, contact Russ Roseberry at mele1@comcast.net.

GO PAPERLESS with the VAS Newsletter

If you would rather have a paperless VAS Newsletter then you can email Sherry Hagen at littlebirder@comcast.net to receive a "PDF" copy of The Columbia Flyway in color sent to you. Include the email address that you wish to have it sent to.

The PDF form is also available on line at:

www.vancouveraudubon.org

VAS Meeting Time Will Change to 7:00 PM, February 2nd

2016 will bring some changes to our general meetings starting with the first meeting of the year, Tuesday, February 2nd.



For many years Sherry Hagen, along with her husband Arden, have generously shared their bird knowledge and Sherry's beautiful photographs while leading a birding class from 6:45 to 7:15 pm before each meeting. Birding class was followed by 15 minutes of social time and at 7:30 we kicked off the meeting.

Speaking for 30 minutes causes a great strain on Sherry's voice for several days and she has reluctantly decided to step down from leading the class. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find another volunteer to take her place. So in the meantime, we have decided to open the front door at 6:30 pm and hope you'll join us for some refreshments and 30 minutes for social time with your fellow bird enthusiasts before kicking off our meeting at the new time of **7:00 pm**.

FIELD TRIP: Bald Eagles



2016 is just around the corner and with it a whole new set of Vancouver Audubon field trips. Our first of the year will be a tour specifically designed to see Bald Eagles.

Leaders: Eric and Tammy Bjorkman

Date: TBD - A decision on date will be made before the end of December. Once date is set it will be posted on our website or you contact Tammy or Eric at 695-3116. Currently, we anticipate it will be either Saturday, January 30th or Saturday, February 6th.

Meeting Spot and Time: We will meet at the Port of Camas-Washougal parking lot (just south of Highway 14 by Westlie Ford) at 8:00 am. We will carpool from here.

Please don't forget to chip in and pay your driver for gas. We'll try to have you back to your car by 4:00 pm.

Experience Level: This trip is well suited for all levels of birders, including young and beginning birders.

Description: We will head east to the Columbia River Gorge and the mouth of the Klickitat River where eagles gather to feast on the spawned out winter-run salmon.

We should have great looks at immature and mature bald eagles perched in trees or soaring overhead. Using our binoculars and scoping scopes we'll scan the trees searching for these majestic birds while listening for their high pitched screeching calls. We'll also stop along the way to look for other wintering birds.

What to Bring: Snacks, lunch, drinks, binoculars, and dress for any weather. If you have FRS (two-way) radios, please bring them as this is how we'll stay in touch between cars throughout the day.

Elections Matter, Post Mortem Addition: What Happened November 3 and How It Affects the Environment

Locally, we had one race that attracted attention and support from Washington Conservation Voters. Because of the proposed oil port pushed by the Port of Vancouver, who is elected to the port commission is of concern by many in the state. There was one candidate who supported the oil port and one who opposed it. The candidate who has opposed the oil port ever since the Port first made the proposal public won the election.

The election results for county council were, in a way, mixed. I will speak only to the race for county chair because the possible effects on the environment of that election would be considerable. Because of the antics of County Councilor Madore concerning the fate of number of issues important to wildlife such as update of the growth plan, fate of the legacy lands program, and parks, who becomes county council chair is critical. The two candidates who advanced to the general election were fine -- they would listen to the public and they both opposed Madore's Alternative 4. Madore was not happy, so he recruited a candidate that had views closer to his for a write-in campaign. Fortunately, that effort failed and failed badly. I think we can work with the winner of that office.

There were two statewide initiatives. One was a tax limitation measure (sponsored by guess who -- Tim Eyman), a complicated thing that passed, but will face a legal challenge. From an environmental perspective, tax limitation measures are bad because they restrict the ability of Washington to respond to needs of the environment. Management of natural resources and environmental protection are low on the totem pole of fiscal resources in the best of times. When money is tight, birds get short shrift. The other measure was an initiative that blocked sale in the state of items made of body parts of elephants, rhinos, certain wild cat species and pangolins (scaly anteaters). That passed overwhelmingly.

Trans Canada and the Oil Pipeline

News just this morning!! President Obama has rejected the Keystone Pipeline. The side effects of this decision go beyond a pipeline crossing our country taking oil to refineries in Texas. Anything that can be done to slow or (hopefully) stop the extraction of the gooey sludge from the boreal forests of Alberta is good. The extraction of that fuel (when it comes out of the ground it isn't exactly oil -- it is closer to being a solid than a liquid) itself releases greenhouse gases. Further, the permanent destruction of the forest results in the loss of the trees that take up CO₂.

It seems that one reason the president made this announcement now is because of the upcoming conference on global warming in Paris. He wants the U.S. to be a leader in the effort to deal with this terrible problem and approving the Keystone pipeline would really look bad.

Back to that Update of the Growth Plan and County Councilor Shenanigans

True to form, at the October hearing Councilor Madore did have a rude surprise for us all. He came out with a proposal, complete with documents, to increase the projected county population. The projected county population is used in the planning process to determine how much housing would be needed, how many roads, and so on. If the projected population number is increased, the county would need to allow for more housing. Several things were wrong with what Madore did. At the beginning of the update, the county councilors approved a mid-level population projection. If the numbers were increased, the assumptions would change, and it might be necessary to start all over again. The plan is due in Olympia by the end of next June. And Madore forgot about the need to inform the public! — Until the legal staff stopped the discussion. So, November will have a county councilor work session (scheduled for the Monday after this writing), a couple of open houses (way out in the country), and a public hearing. Oh, yes, Madore's plan calls for five, two-and-a-half, and one acre lots all over the rural area of the county, including in the agriculture and forest zones.

Legacy Lands Sale Effort

Councilor Meilke is still trying to sell that legacy lands parcel. The two councilors are coming up with complicated schemes, some involving land swaps, in an effort to come up with a plan that will pass the scrutiny of the state agency. Stay tuned.

Gretchen Starke



Photo



*Using spider web to affix its nest to a single bulb in a strand of holiday lights, this tiny Anna's Hummingbird successfully hatched two chicks.
from Cornell Lab*

Oct. 11, Birds at our home on Mt. Pleasant, east of Washougal, were a calling **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL**, 2 **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRES**, and 150 **PINE SISKINS**.

Oct. 12, In Battle Ground, Jim Danzenbaker spent a couple of days watching for raptors over his yard, spotting: 17 **TURKEY VULTURES**, 2 **SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS**, 1 **COOPER'S HAWK**, 3 **RED-TAILED HAWKS** (one migrant, the other two locals) and a **PEREGRINE FALCON**.

Kevin Black birded the St. Cloud Wayside in Skamania County, where always seems to a good amount of birds, the highlights were: 1 **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**, **HAIRY** and **DOWNY WOODPECKERS**, 1 **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE**: 1 **FOX SPARROW**, flock of heard only **EVENING GROSBEAKS** and a flock of **PINE SISKINS** that flew over. Oct. 14, For his raptor watch, Jim Danzenbaker had 1 **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** and an **AMERICAN KESTREL** (a new yard bird for this year). He also had about 100 **AMERICAN ROBINS** each morning with lesser number of the following: **VARIED THRUSH**, **AMERICAN PIPIT**, **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER**, **EVENING GROSBEAK**, **PINE SISKIN**, **PURPLE FINCH** and **AMERICAN GOLD-FINCH**.

Oct. 14, A **BARRED OWL** was photographed by Pamela Gunn, close to the NorthWynd Condos, near Beaches Restaurant.

Oct. 17, A single **BLACK BRANT** was found by Randy Hill, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands, it was mixed in with Canada/Cackling Geese about 1/4 mile north of the transfer station off Lower River Road.

We added a new bird to our property list when 6 **COMMON MERGANSERS** flew over our ridgetop home heading from the Columbia River towards the Washougal River. Other birds at home were **GREAT HORNED OWL**, **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL**, **COOPERS HAWK** and **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**.

Oct. 18, Another **BLACK BRANT** was found in a group of **CAACKLING GEESE** at the intersection of Hillhurst and Carty Rd. by Bob Flores. This was a different Brant than the one that Randy Hill reported on Lower River Rd.

Oct. 20, In Battle Ground, Jim Danzenbaker's yard was discovered by a flock of about 45 **PINE SISKINS**. He watched them as they took over all of the feeders much to the chagrin of the local chickadees which were powerless to regain control of the feeders. When the flock had grown to about 80+ siskins he decided to have some fun with them, he took the chair out to the deck and sat next to the feeders with some seed in his hand and some scattered on the ground nearby. Very soon after, they were eating out of his hand and landing on his feet, legs, shoulders, hands, head, and arms. Included in the flock were at least ten **AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES**.

Oct. 23, Jim Danzenbaker felt that he had to escape Battle Ground and headed for the hills ending up on Larch Mountain for about 3 hours with the following results (he only counted migrants flying through): 1 **BALD EAGLE**, 3 **RED-TAILED HAWKS**, 1 **MERLIN**, 8 **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET**, 1 **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE**, 34 **VARIED THRUSH**, 19 **AMERICAN ROBIN**, 10 **DARK-EYED JUNCO**, 314 **PINE SISKINS**, (flock sizes from 15-80), 4 **EVENING GROSBEAK**, and 26 **RED CROSSBILL**.

Oct. 24, Bob Flores was surprised by the numbers of **RING-NECKED DUCKS** among the **AMERICAN WIGEON** and **MALLARDS** on Vancouver Lake. He also 5 **GREAT-ER YELLOWLEGS**, 19 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS**, the lake has had a large number of pelicans this fall. At the Fruit Valley Sewage Lagoons he had 350 more **RING-NECKED DUCKS** with only 6 **GREATER SCAUP**. Other ducks present were **AMERICAN COOTS**, **AMERICAN WIDGEON**, **RUDDY DUCK** and **MALLARDS**. These lagoons are easy to bird from the top of the levee on the south side of the plant.

Oct. 27, Susan and I birded in Skamania County with our best sightings being a continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** at the St. Cloud Recreation Area, 10 **GREAT EGRETS** and 2 **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** at Skamania Landing.

Nov. 1, A late **OSPREY** was reported from the Carty Unit of the Ridgefield NWR by Erik Knight. A few Osprey have wintered in the Northwest in the last few years.

An amazing **SUMMER TANAGER** was photographed in the Woodland Bottoms by Lora Minty.

Nov. 3, A **WHITE-FACED IBIS** at Shillapoo Lake, in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands was the 222nd bird seen in Clark County by Bob Flores in 2015. He and Kevin Black walked the now closed to vehicles road to Post Office Lake and found some interesting birds including 3 **BONA-PARTE'S GULLS**, 6 **CINNAMON TEAL**, 7 **CANVAS-BACK**, 35 **DUNLIN**, 40 **GREATER YELLOWLEGS**, 7 **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** and a **PEREGRINE FALCON**.

Waterfowl have arrived in large numbers and the first of the wintering Rough-legged Hawks have been reported locally. A few Eurasian Wigeon have been seen among the flocks of American Wigeon and the numbers should increase with the arrival of more ducks and geese from the Arctic. By checking blackbird flocks one might spot either Tri-colored and Rusty Blackbirds, both species that normally are found in other regions. And gatherings of gulls also give a person a chance to play "where's Waldo" by looking for something that is different than everything else in the flock.

There have been many reports of both **Evening Gros**

(Afield continued on next page...)

Vancouver Audubon

(Afield....) **beaks** and Pine Siskins in our area this fall, as winter arrives watch for any of the other northern finches to join them at your feeders. Possibilities would include Red Crossbill, Common Redpoll and Pine Grosbeak, all of which love sunflower seeds. If you happen to get one of these or any other unusual species please contact me, Arden and Sherry Hagen or Eric and Tammy Bjorkman as soon as possible. As of the end of October, 227 species of birds had been reported as having been seen in Clark County in 2015, while 190 species of birds have been reported from Skamania County.

Wilson Cady, gorgebirds@juno.com

Noah Stryker's Quest to See 5000 Bird Species in the World in 2015

Noah Stryker has been on a quest since January 1st to see 5000 World Species of birds in one year. The old record of 4341 was set by a British Couple, Ruth Miller & Alex Davies in 2008.

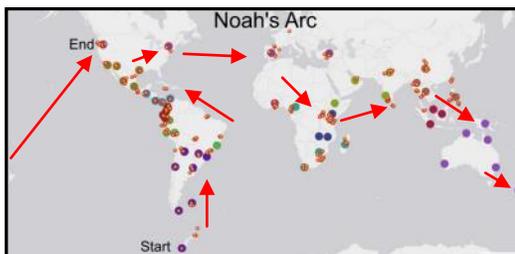
Day 259, September 16, in India, his 27th country, Noah saw his **4342nd species**, a Sri Lanka Frogmouth. This birds roost site was known by his guide. When they arrived that afternoon, they were met by a crowd, reporters, photographers and a local TV crew to witness this historic event.

Noah had done it. He had passed the old record and now back to his quest to see 5000 species.

Day 299, October 26 at 7:30 AM in the Philippines, his 30th country, Noah saw a "little ball of color" for his **5000th Species**. A scarce and very rare endemic in the country gave Noah his goal. This bird, the **Flame-colored Flowerpecker** stayed just long enough for a quick photo and it was gone.

Noah would go on that day to add more birds for a total of 5012 species for the year. BUT... Noah still had over 2 months to bird the rest of his route.

As of Nov. 7th, Day 311, while birding in Malaysia, Noah reported a total of **5145 species** seen and he still has until December 31st. He hasn't even been to Australia yet. Wonder what his total will be?



Olympic BirdFest 2016

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Grab your binoculars and join the 12th annual **Olympic BirdFest 2016** celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 15-17, 2016.

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Come bird with us and experience with others the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ...you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by going online (www.olympicbirdfest.org).

Precede your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular **San Juan Islands** on April 12-14, 2016. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands, and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get cruise information and register online at: www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Extend your Birdfest weekend with the **Neah Bay post-trip**, April 17-19, 2016: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders.

Contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076,

E-mail us at info@olympicbirdfest.org,

Or write to us at:

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and advocacy.*



December 2015

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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