

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

Member of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

February 2009

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, **February 3, 6:45 PM** before the meeting.

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

***Monday, **February 2, 6:30 pm**: VAS Board Meeting at the home of Eric Bjorkman, 360-695-3116 Held at the Columbia Land Trust Office on Officers Row.

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

PROGRAM:

The Planet Earth "Jungles" Section

The *Blue Planet* series is an epic series celebrating the Earth as never before. With an unprecedented production budget, using high definition photography and revolutionary ultra-high speed cameras, five years in the making, over 2000 days in the field, using 40 cameramen across 200 locations, *Planet Earth* is the ultimate portrait of our planet.



Join us for a relaxed evening of popcorn, treats & a wonderful production.



Jungles... are the most productive places on Earth, but surviving in the jungle is far from easy. Using state-of-the-art tracking shots and stunning aerials, *Planet Earth* moves along the dark forest floor, up through the layers of vegetation and across the canopy. This segment highlights the Birds of Paradise and the difficulty the cameraman had in capturing this incredible footage.



A male Superb Bird of Paradise performing a courtship display to a female in Papua New Guinea, from "Jungles," in the "Planet Earth" series.

FIELD TRIP

Ankeny & Basket Slough NWRs

Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: February 21, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Inn at the Quay (west side parking lot)



We will visit these two small refuges for waterfowl, raptors, and other wintering species. Several rarities have shown up during winter months at these refuges in past years. This will be an all day trip so bring lunch and snacks.

This year, Lobby Day will be February 19th

This is the day that environmentalist from all over the state go to Olympia to speak to our legislators. We will carpool up to Olympia. We usually meet as a group to get information on some of the bills then we visit our legislators.

The green priorities this year are:

1. Capping Climate Pollution
2. Promoting Energy Efficiency
3. Creating & Supporting Transit-Oriented Communities
4. Investing in Clean Water

We will also discuss Audubon priorities. I would like to have a number of our members go. It is interesting and fun. My e-mail is gstarke@pacifier.com and my phone number is 360-892-8617.

Gretchen Starke

Treasurer's Report. Income was \$335.89 with almost all of it as donations or newsletter subscriptions. Expenses were \$358.25. Audubon Adventures was the largest expenditure. Cash and investments were \$21,741.37. The Community Foundation fund was \$205,298.76, a loss of \$12,593.82 for the first nine months of the year due to market conditions.

Field Trips. There were fifteen participants in the over-nighter to the Oregon Coast. Christmas Bird Count is 21 December.

Programs. February will be a popcorn meeting.

Conservation. February 19 is Lobby Day.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Ellifrit

Welcome New Members:

Kris Ahn • Sharon Antisdal • Kathy Armstrong • Jana & Jack Bailey • David Barber • Gad Berger • Susan Blackstock • Antoinette Bleth • David Born • Wesley Dubbs • Roland Bowen • Barbara Brooks • Carlee & Darrel Buck • Jake & Dylan Burgess • Kenneth Callen • Jamie Carter • Beverly Cook • Margaret Cornelius • Jim Correy • F. Curtis • Lynne Cutshaw • Cynthia Dioetderich • Linda Drury • Mary Duncan • D. Duwe • J. E. Clancy • Kathryn Emerson • Marjorie Erickson • Diana Everett • Deborah Folkerts • Kathleen Friberg • Susan Fuller • Larry Graves • David Hauser • Pat Holm • Floyd Holmes • Nora Hough • Fiona Humphrey • Donalda Johnson • Dorothy Karschney • Robert Kenney • Patricia Knecht • Donald Knoop • Howard Koch • Priscilla Lehmann • Al Litchfield • Nichola Lo Greco • Logan • David Mann • Robert Marotta • Veronica McClaskey • J. McGinnis • Stephen McIntosh • Mike Meacham • Laurie Metzger • Tukes Valley Middle Library • A. Mr Richard Averit • Amy Munhall • Ruth Newman • Rebecca Nowacki • Pamela Orser • Shirleen Pennington • Mary Pichette • Rachel Prince • P. R. Smith • Karey Reid • K Alexa Renick • A. Rowe • Janice Rylander • Madison Sams • Jeff Shafer • Linda Shrable • Laura Stocks • Shirley Tacheron • Michael Tausch • Rita Thipado • Susan Torres • Priscilla Triebs • Cardle Varnarsdol • Angie Ward • Betty Webb • Ruth Williams • Cheryl Willis • David Wright • Dennis York

Transfer Members:

Lynette Baker • Shirley Bienerth • Anita Bingham • Willa Brooks • Randall Brown • Bill Davies • J. Dresser • Vicki Ellsberg • Arline Faruolo • Joyce French • Frieda • L Sue Frizzel Pauley • Nadeen Gilmartin • The Kent Family • Pauline Kershiner • Klein • Terry Leboeuf • Barbara & Shigezi Maehara • Dolores Oinneen • S. Peterson • Laurie Pritchard • Beverly Pryor • S. Quade • Jane Rice • Vicki & Jeff Sargeant • Ann Smith • Kyle Spencer • Christopher Swinmurn • Timothy Tolle • Johannes Van Reenen • Florence Wager • Rita Zelgert

Olympic BirdFest 2009

Come Bird With Us.

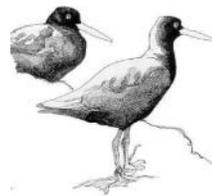
Sequim, Washington, April 3-5, 2009

Grab your binoculars and join the Olympic BirdFest 2009 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 3-5, 2009.

The stage is set...quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, and Pygmy owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours; and a traditional salmon bake at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center.



Harlequin Duck



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: (<http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>), or calling for a brochure.

Also this year! Follow your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular San Juan Islands on April 5-7, 2009. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands, and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get program information and registration forms online at: <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>.

Or contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076, E-mail us at info@olympicbirdfest.org, Or write to us at:

Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450
Sequim, WA 98382

VAS Upcoming Programs:

The Wildlife Photography of Nate Chappell featuring Namibia & Thailand.

March *Birds of Thailand, Namibia, etc*
by Nate Chappell

April *Aububon Portland Wildlife Care Center*
by Bob Sallinger



Further Notes on the Election

Unfortunately, the final outcome of the county commissioner race turned out to be bad for the environment. The candidate who was friendly to the idea of growth management was ultimately defeated by 209 votes. The board now consists of one member who is generally in favor of environmental protection and growth management but who has made compromises he may not have had to, one who opposes all regulation and inconvenience for the developers (the new one and, according to today's paper, who wants to eliminate all impact fees so that the taxpayers will completely subsidize sprawl), and one who generally favors the developers but who sometimes can be persuaded to favor measures to protect agriculture – sometimes. This is most unfortunate. Sprawl in Clark is likely to continue, only more so. At the moment, it will be only the recession to slow it down. Which is a bad way to protect habitat.

The really sad thing is that the number of undervotes is over 16,000. This means that more than 16,000 voters voted for president, but failed to vote for county commissioner in commissioner district 1. As Barack Obama won Clark County by over 11,000 votes, a high number of voters who voted for Obama failed to vote for commissioner. Assuming that voters for Obama were more likely to be concerned about the environment than about the welfare of developers, the failure of too many of them to vote for county commissioner means that they gave an indirect vote to the developers' friend. Voting does matter!

Wetlands Mitigation Bank & Songbirds

The Port of Vancouver has asked Vancouver Audubon for help in a survey of birds using the property that used to be the Rufner farm. In cooperation with a private firm, the Port intends to use the property as a wetland mitigation bank. The private firm is planning to improve the property for habitat, with an emphasis on song birds. Wetlands would be created and the existing pond would be improved. The firm then would run the bank and sell the credits. Developers who want to develop on wetlands (thereby destroying or impairing the wetland and reducing or eliminating wetland functions) would purchase credits from the wetland bank to mitigate the loss of the wetland.

One of the first steps is determine what birds use the property at present, that is, to develop a base line of bird populations and species mix. Last spring, the firm contracted to have done a preliminary survey of sorts. The survey will continue this year. The port has asked us to help with bird observation. Wilson Cady will be involved and we will be asking members to volunteer. Think of it as birding for a good cause!

Our relationship with the Port of Vancouver is so much better than it was ten years ago. Despite some reserva-

tions about the idea of wetland bank mitigation (see below), I think we should fully cooperate with this survey. Good will come of it. Habitat will be improved and there will be some mitigation for loss of wetlands. And the port is truly trying to conduct the business they are required to do under law (run a port facility and encourage industry to provide jobs) with as much concern for the environment as possible. This is the result of a port commission that often tends to be sensitive to environmental concerns. The port commissioners are elected officials. In every odd numbered year, one of the port commission seats is up for election. Because of the nature of the land where the port is located, every member of every environmental group in the greater Vancouver area should be concerned about who is elected to the port commission. By the way, there are two other ports in Clark County: the Port of Ridgefield and the Port of Camas-Washougal. Members in those port districts should pay attention to who gets elected to those commissions.

The Wetland Bank Service Area

Wetland mitigation banks sound like a good idea, and they may in fact help in reducing the impact of wetland loss. But, there must be certain criteria for wetland mitigation banks for them to work as intended. The intention is to mitigate for the destruction of a wetland through development by having the developer, in effect, buy a piece of a superior wetland elsewhere. But, the functions of wetlands must be kept in mind. Wetlands not only provide wonderful habitat for many species of wildlife, they help prevent flooding and they clean up pollution. They prevent flooding by acting as sponges, sopping up flood waters and allowing them to seep into the ground water. They clean polluted waters by filtering out the pollution through their vegetation. So, a mitigation wetland bank needs to be located where it can provide these three functions to make up for the lost wetland.

So, I was startled to learn that the service area for the port wetland mitigation bank covers the Columbia slope from the Cowlitz River to Bonneville Dam. As I said in my comments to the Department of Ecology (DOE), the lead agency in providing for the administration of the bank, "... How a wetland in Clark County, even near the Columbia shore, would prevent flooding from the Kalama River, ... is not clear. A destroyed wetland in Longview that had filtered pollutants from an industrial plant cannot be replaced by a wetland in Clark County." Nancy Ellifrit pointed out to the port that the habitat along the lower Columbia is quite different than habitat in the Columbia River Gorge. Each project that would use the bank's credits would have to be approved individually, so maybe the mitigation would work. We will need to keep an eye out.

Gretchen Starke



Nov. 13, Barry Woodruff and I did a little birding in the Columbia Gorge and were delighted to spot an adult **WESTERN GULL** at Bonneville Dam along with about **300 BONAPARTE'S GULLS**. The Western Gull is a dark colored gull that you often see along the ocean beaches but is uncommon this far upstream. The Bonaparte's Gulls were migrants from their northern breeding grounds.

Dec. 12, Steve Mlodinow and David Irons were birding the Vancouver Lake area and Ridgefield. Along Lower River Road, past the Fazio Sandpit, they pished a **NASHVILLE WARBLER** in with a flock of sparrows and kinglets. In the flock of blackbirds near Fazio's feedlot was a male **TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD**

Dec. 14, The increased number of "irruptive" finches this winter was demonstrated by the **115 PINE SISKINS, 10 EVENING GROSBEAKS** AT Jim Danzenbaker's home in Battle Ground. Iruptive means that they do not migrate to the same area every year but rather show up do to fluctuations in their food supplies.

Dec. 15, Carol Kohler reported a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** at their feeder in Camas. This is a bird that breeds east of here and shows up as an uncommon winter visitor.

Dec. 19, Ken Knittle spotted a drab **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** at his feeder here in Vancouver, WA. This was the first of this species for his yard.

Dec. 20, Two different people reported having flocks of **WILSON'S SNIPE** in their back yards during the snowstorms. These birds would have been looking for enough bare and unfrozen ground in which they could probe for worms and grubs.

Dec. 21, A **FOX SPARROW** and a **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** were great additions to Jim Danzenbaker's Battle Ground yard list. Carol Kohler had **3 FOX SPARROWS** and had her first "**Slate-colored**" **Junco** of the year. The next morning when she went out to feed birds the next morning a Lesser Goldfinch was at the feeder.

Dec. 24, Arden and Sherry Hagen saw a **BARN OWL** fly over Highway 14 at the Steigerwald Lake NWR in Washougal.

Jan. 2, The **SWAINSON'S HAWK** along LaFramboise Road in the Vancouver Lake lowlands remained to be found by Lyn Topinka for the Christmas Bird Count. This is a species that if it hadn't been well documented and photographed would not have been consider a valid sighting as this species is virtually unheard of as a wintering hawk in the United States.

This winter has been a hard one for both wildlife and wildlife watchers. Few people ventured out during the snowstorms and even the road into the Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit was closed for a while.

Waterfowl numbers seemed to drop when the small bodies of water froze over and food in the fields was unavailable under a layer of snow.

The total species of birds reported to me that were

seen by anyone in Clark County during 20008 was down to 217 from a cumulative total of 234 in 2007. The number of species seen in Skamania County last year rose from 169 to 178. We will be keeping track of birds seen in both of these counties in 2009 so please send me your sightings for this column and the county Cumulative List Project.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival April 24-26, 2009 Hoquiam, Washington 1-800-303-8498 www.shorebirdfestival.com

EACH SPRING, hundreds of thousands of shorebirds stop to rest and feed in Grays Harbor estuary on their migration northward. Coming from as far south as Argentina, these Arctic-bound shorebirds are among the world's greatest migrants. Some birds travel over 15,000 miles round trip! Tens of thousands of shorebirds feed on the open mudflats in the estuary. This concentration of birds offers people a great chance to view a number of shorebird species, and with luck, to see the birds fly together in beautiful formations while trying to escape the fastest creature on earth, the Peregrine Falcon.



message/fax (360) 253-5771

Everything for the Wild Bird enthusiast™

8101 N. E. Parkway • Vancouver, Washington 98662 • (360) 253-5771

The Backyard & Beyond...

Did you help with the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for 2008 which was actually held Friday, January 2nd due to the snow and bad weather that we had before Christmas? Most of you were like me and choose to stay home and warm (or elsewhere anyway). Arden had help with the count so I choose to stay home. The weather that day went from ice & snow in the morning to some sunshine then rain in the afternoon. Arden reports that the numbers of birds were down for the Vancouver Lake area but a couple of good species were found like

NORTHERN SHRIKE and a rare **SWAINSON'S HAWK**. The total tabulation has not been reported but other's have said that the counts in their areas were down too. This leads me to an article I read about the CBC in the high arctic on January 5, 2007 at the hamlet of Arctic Bay, Nunavut in Canada at 73° 02" latitude on the north coast of Baffin Island. The number of participants equaled the number of species.... ONE. Only one species has ever been recorded north of 70° on any CBC and that one species is a **COMMON RAVEN**. A total 87 ravens were counted that year. But 2 other years there were no species to report at all. Clare Kines, the participant spotted ptarmigan tracks but could not find the birds. Prudhoe Bay, Alaska has tallied from 3 to 129 ravens in their past counts. Other CBC's in the Arctic tally only ravens too but these counts are important too since they provide information about the conditions of the arctic during these times of climate change.



The following sections are meant for the enjoyment of the reader and were found in other newsletters.

The Laws of Birding

Laws Concerning Rare Birds

- Rare birds reported on Wednesday are usually gone by Saturday.
- During spring and fall, all major flights will occur on a weekday.
- The farther you travel to see a particular bird, the less likely you are to find it.
- Good birds appear when you have a bagel with cream cheese in your hand.

Laws Concerning Field Marks

- Whenever you are out birding without a field guide and see a new bird, the field mark you think is the important one is never the important one
- A bird will always fly before you can look at the important field mark.

Laws Concerning Life Birds

- You might look for a particular bird for 20 years without finding it, but once you DO find it, you find them everywhere. They turn up in your driveway, on your porch—they turn up EVERYWHERE! They suddenly become robin-like in their numbers.
- The bird that you struggle through difficult terrain, endure multiple injuries, and screwed up your schedule for, will be waiting for you above your car in the parking lot.

Laws of Identification

- If a small brown bird flies across the road, it's a Song Sparrow
- If there are two or more birds in a tree and one is a rarity, the only one you can't see is the rarity
- Dull birds with difficult plumage are always seen on overcast days
- Woodpeckers and creepers spend more time on the far side of the trunk
- A bird is most visible when you look in your field guide and least visible when you go back to look for the next field mark
- Birds are most visible when your binoculars are down
- The rarer the duck or goose, the farther from shore it will be
- Birds which can be distinguished by voice only sing when aircraft are overhead
- If you have seen the bird before, it's an escapee. If it's a lifer, it's a wild bird

Laws of Photographing Birds

- Your best photographic opportunities will occur when you do not have a camera
- The lens you have with you is never long enough
- If the lens is long enough, the bird will be too close to focus

Laws of Scopes

- If you need the scope, it's in your trunk. If you do not need it, it's on your shoulder

Number One Law of Birding

- Common species are more common than rare species.

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding 😊



VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1966
Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Vancouver, WA
PERMIT# 976**

vancouveraudubon.org

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



February 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.

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 \$_____

**Flyway Renewal
date:**
November 1st
every year

Renewals: please send your renewal directly to National Audubon with the forms sent to you. Thanks!
*** This will **not** include *The Columbia Flyway* ***

**Y-13
7XCH**

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

Please include this coupon and make check payable to and send to:
Vancouver Audubon, P.O. Box 1966, Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

For more Info Call:
Eric Bjorkman, 360-695-3116
George Mayfield 360-687-0360

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____

President.....	Eric Bjorkman	.....695-3116	.....bjorkmante@iinet.com
Vice-Pres	Marilynn Hall	.....253-6865	.....marilynnhall@comcast.net
Secretary.....	Nancy Ellifrit	.....574-3621	.....nellifrit2@msn.com
Treasurer	Joan Durgin	.....834-5621	.....jdurgin1@hotmail.com
OPEN.....	Education.....		
Conservation.....	Gretchen Starke	.....892-8617	.....gstarke@pacifier.com
Membership.....	George Mayfield	.....687-0360	.....gomayf@comcast.net
Field Trips.....	Arden Hagen	.....892-8872	.....iambakerman@comcast.net
Publicity.....	Tracy Snow	.....503-335-5361	.....tracy.now@orport.ang.af.mil
Programs	Randy Hopfer	.....573-6000	.....rhopfer@hotmail.com
Sightings	Wilson Cady	.....835-5947	.....gorgebirds@juno.com
Editor.....	Sherry Hagen	.....892-8872	.....vas@pacifier.com
Mailings.....	Bonnie Bingle	.....576-0330	
Volunteer Cor.....	Bob Rowe	.....254-8699	.....rowe9629@comcast.net
Refreshments	Cindy Mayfield	.....687-0360	.....gomayf@comcast.net