

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

Member of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

February 2011

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, Feb. 1, 6:45 PM before the meeting.

***Tuesday, Feb. 1, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, Jan. 31, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Eric Bjorkman, 360-695-3116 Held at the Columbia Land Trust Office on Officers Row.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	31	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			

PROGRAM:

BIRDING the North Olympic Peninsula

by Bob Boekelheide

Birding the area around Sequim, Port Townsend and Port Angeles presents unique opportunities to not only vacation in a pleasant area, but also to find coastal species: Murrelets, Pigeon Guillemot, Common Murre, Long-tailed and Harlequin ducks, Brant, Auklets and many gulls and terns.

Bob Boekelheide is Director of the Dungeness River Audubon Center in Sequim. He is an educator and enjoys helping birders of all types see and identify these avian specialties. Learn about places to bird and special events and cruises.

Come and enjoy a fun evening presentation and check out the website at: dungenessrivercenter.org.

Bill Dygert to present at our March 1st meeting. He will present on Tukes Mountain land use decisions and dilemmas. Bill will also update us on land projects he told us about at our June meeting: Fallen Leaf Lake, Lacamas Lake, & Whipple Creek. Bill is excited to be asked and hopes to build interest and support for the Tukes Mountain opportunities.

VAS Upcoming Programs:

March: Tukes Mountain land use by Bill Dygert

FIELD TRIP

Rare Bird Run



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: February 19, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Inn at the Quay near the river, downtown Vancouver

We will try for unusual species that may be in our area. Will have info on the 18th at 7 PM on where we might travel. Bring lunch and or snacks.

March Field Trip: Columbia river Gorge

Leader: Wilson Cady

Leader: Wilson Cady, 360-835-5947

When: March 19, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Port of Camas/Washougal

All day Columbia Gorge early migrants and wildflowers tour. Bring birding gear, lunch and a sense of humor. Dress for the weather expect minimal hiking.



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Treasurer's Report – Joan Durgin

August: Revenue = \$2,175.28 / Expenses = \$566.14

Membership –George Mayfield

Newsletter mailing is currently at about 400 after renewal mailing.

Programs – Bob Rowe

February's program will be Bob Boekelheide, Center Director of Dungeness River Audubon Center Sequim, Washington. Bob will present on Birding the North Peninsula. March is Currently open and the Hagen/Bjorkman India presentation will tentatively be April's program.

Conservation – Gretchen Starke

The board discussed in depth the strategies currently being developed by the State Audubon group. The board agreed unanimously to support option A which has the lobbyist interacting directly with the legislators. Gretchen will request regular updates and pass them onto the board.

Gretchen gave an update on Tukes Mountain. Hopefully this conservation project will be possible using conservation futures monies from Clark County once all of the hurdles are cleared. It is considered a very important habitat and is a favorite of a lot of local conservation enthusiasts. There is a new federal spotted owl plan. Gretchen has a draft if anyone would like to read before comments are due on December 15th.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New members: Darrell Alder ● Gail Alexander ● Rosemary Alling ● Joe Bettis ● Nancy Bonner ● Steve Cannard ● Charlie Caughlan ● Carol Chandler ● Kelly and Gayle Cochran ● David Coonrod ● Karen Currie ● Estelle Cutler ● Joshua Dewees ● Daniel Dewitt ● Nancy Dickinson ● Robert Durham ● David Ebner ● Harriett Fisher ● Sharon Frederici ● Anne Garlinghouse ● Lisa Giacchino ● Pat Gorman ● Gilbert Graham ● Ray & Patty Grimme ● Eleanor Haldeman ● Rex Harold ● Meredith Hyland ● Jeanette James ● Kelly Johnson ● Walter Jones ● Jayne Kimball ● John Langford ● Peggy Lansverk ● Patricia Larson ● Jo Lett ● Bruce & Connie Matheny ● Harold McCarty ● Myroslaw Michalesky ● Catherine Miller ● Susan Miller ● Mary Ann Milligan ● Viola Nelson ● Eleanor Nueske ● K. Osman ● Margo Pacheo ● Carol Patterson ● Luan Pinson ● Janet & Gordon Reiter ● Neal Robison ● Irene Rogers ● Lois Ryland ● Marjorie Say ● Edith Scheel ● Joy Schultz ● Janell Sessions ● Catherine Smith ● Jim & Molly Smith ● Barbara Smoody ● Chester Stanfield ● Ray & Cathy Steiger ● Betty Taylor ● Les Troeh ● Patricia Veneri ● Cheri Williams ● Pauline Wolfe ● Jan Yochim ● Aaron Ziegler

Transfer members: P. Beard ● Kraig Beveridge ● Mary De Goede ● Drew & Judith Dillman ● Herman Goellnitz ● Jansen

What a Year

I'm not sure how this whole thing started, but I found myself on January 1st driving to Walla Walla to begin my quest for 300 species of birds seen in Washington for the calendar year of 2010. I think it began with an innocent (I thought) rhetorical question to my wife, Tammy- "I wonder how many different birds we do see in the state in one year?"

Now, I know this about my wife. She's competitive and it drives her more than she cares to admit. I should be careful about what I mutter in her presence. Before I knew it we were going to see 300 birds this year, dammit! The funny thing about this is that we know a lot of 'listers' and we've always shied away from that sort of mania. It's possible that we've even scoffed at it a time or two. It sometimes seems as though they have a list for every situation- birds seen in each county, birds seen in the rain, birds seen while driving over 55 mph, etc. Yet here we were, driving east on I-84 in the snow and ice to begin our listing quest. I'm sure the first bird of the year was something exotic - probably a crow or a starling, but we were on our way.

Our year already had a full schedule. We were going to Arizona for 10 days in May, Boston in August for a week, and a 16 day trip to India in November. Why did we think this was the year to tackle this?

We started off well with a nice prairie falcon, some long-eared owls, and a rummy merlin standing in someone's driveway, who may have been hit by a car or something. We were getting some tough ones out of the way. I'll admit I was getting a little cocky.

We ended up spending time on Puget Sound, up and down the coast several times, the Okanogan highlands (twice), the northeast corner of the state (twice) Othello and vicinity (at least twice), a pelagic trip, and various other short jaunts. And now here I sit in a cozy little cabin just out of Tonasket on Christmas Eve. I just got my 290th bird today, a chukar, and I'm feeling far less cocky. I have to admit to myself that 300 is probably out of reach.

It's hard not to feel like we've failed at something but that would be silly. We've seen some fantastic scenery and some great birds. More importantly, we have shared time together doing something we both love to do. How can you explain to someone the thrill of hearing common nighthawks diving above your campsite if they've never experienced it? Or relating to someone who doesn't like the ocean the joy one gets from seeing a breaching humpback whale that your boat has stumbled across as you look for sea birds?

The point is, get out there and have some fun with birding. Whether you keep a list (or several) or you keep none at all, simply get out and enjoy the great northwest. It will make your life richer!

Note: Eric finished the year with 292 and Tammy with 284.



KEEP THE DATE

February 15th is the Environmental Lobby Day. This is the day that environmental groups meet in Olympia to talk to our legislators. Contact me, Gretchen Starke (contact info on top right of this page). Lobby Day is interesting and fun. Find out what sort of people our legislators are by talking to them face to face. Tell them our priorities.

- Funding demonstration projects to handle storm water pollution, to be funded by a tax on petroleum products. Done right, this could be budget neutral. This priority is a leftover from last year.

Our Legislators & How to Reach Them

The legislature has a toll free hotline where you can leave a message: 1.800.562.6000. The generic format for a legislator's e-mails is: lastname.firstname@leg.wa.gov.

The following are the legislators and their Olympia numbers. For the 17th District, Senator Don Benton, (360) 786-7632; Tim Probst, (360) 786-7994; and Paul Harris. Harris was just elected last fall and has no office or number assigned as of this writing. He can be reached through the Republican House Caucus number, 360-786-7791. For the 18th District, Senator Joe Zarelli, (360) 786-7634; Ed Orcutt, (360) 786-7812; and Ann Rivers. Rivers was also newly elected and can be reached through the Republican House Caucus. For the 49th District, Senator Craig Pridemore, (360) 786-7696; Jim Moeller, (360) 786-7872, and Jim Jacks, (360) 786-7924. As soon as the legislature convenes and the information about the legislators offices, aides, and committee assignments is available, I will have it posted on our website.

The Audubon Policy Advocate

We have one! Enough chapters sent enough money (Vancouver Audubon has pledged also) to enable us to hire a lobbyist. He is Neil Beaver and, according to the message I received, he is eager to go. After last year when we had nobody, this is, indeed, good news.

Electricity News: Producing it and Moving it

Briefly, there are three big controversies about electricity in southwest Washington. There are the proposed BPA transmission lines that nobody wants near. Vancouver Audubon is concerned about harm to forest environment and possible wetlands. People living east of Vancouver (in subdivisions, some of which were not wanted when they were proposed in the 1980s and 1990s) don't want them near their houses. There are two proposed wind turbine farms proposed: Radar Ridge in Pacific County and Whistling Ridge just outside the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area near White Salmon. In the decision making process for Whistling Ridge, Seattle Audubon is taking the lead on behalf of Audubon. More about these issues later this year.

Gretchen Starke

Legislator Outlook is Grim...

...because of the recession, state revenue is way down. As you saw in the news, the legislature met briefly in December and cut the present budget even more. The governor came out with her budget and even she didn't like it. Because the voters turned down tax measures (even the idea of paying a few cents more for candy bars and soda pop was too much for some people -- what are we coming to?), revenue will not be discussed. Washington is required by the state constitution to balance the budget. This will mean cut, cut, cut. Whole programs may be in jeopardy.

In early December, on behalf of another organization, I attended a legislative forum in Olympia. The keynote speaker was a legislator from the Olympia area. He said that, once the expenditures required by the constitution and the federal government were accounted for, the legislature could make deep cuts to only 31% of the budget. Among the agencies that are *not* mandated by the constitution, are State Parks and Fish and Wildlife. The governor has already recommended suspending the Wildlife and Recreation Fund for the next fiscal year.

A personal note: I talked to Senator Pridemore for a few minutes. He said that, under this budget, people will die.

Environmental Legislative Priorities

Every year, some 25 environmental organizations select four issues that all organizations will help to get through the legislature. These are the four environmental priorities for this year.

- The budget. We need to work to minimize cuts to environmental programs .
- A coal-free Washington. The focus will be on TransAlta, a coal burning power plant near Centralia. Of all the fossil fuels, coal emissions produce the most CO₂ , as well as producing other pollutants harmful to human health. TransAlta is the only coal powered plant in Washington. It also receives a state subsidy.
- Reducing phosphorus in fertilizer. This is an east-of-the-mountains issue. Excess phosphorous from lawn fertilizer is getting into the streams, polluting the water.



- Nov. 5, After winding up bird banding operations at the St. Cloud Recreation Area in Skamania County, Cathy Flick and Stuart Johnston stopped at Skamania Landing for a close view of the **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** and **ACKLING GEESE**. They then checked the Skamania County Fairgrounds in Stevenson and relocated the **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** first found on Oct. 30th.
- Nov. 7, A female **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** was the latest record for a hummingbird at our place on Mt. Pleasant, in Skamania County.
- Nov. 8, Brian Sullivan reports that he found a **RUSTY BLACKBIRD** in a flock of Brewer's Blackbirds near Ridgefield. This is a rare visitor from the East Coast where their numbers are in a steep decline. We had another **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** check out the birds around the feeders on our property.
- Nov. 9, Barry Woodruff and I birded the Woodland Bottoms finding the **BLACK PHOEBE**, **WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS**, **SURF SCOTERS**, **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER**, **EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES**, **THAYER'S GULL** and **BLACK PHOEBE**.
- Nov. 10, The Ridgefield NWR **BLACK PHOEBE** was seen by Roger Widemuth and Randy Hill after a week long absence. Another **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** cruised past our feeders, normally we only see one or two of these raptors a year and this was the seventh one this year.
- Nov. 11, Susan and I checked several spots in Skamania County finding a **GREAT EGRET** at Franz Lake along with **TRUMPETER SWANS** and at Bonneville Dam we saw a **SURF SCOTER** and a **BLACK SCOTER**, the first seen in Skamania County.
- Nov. 12, Tom Mansfield and Ken Knittle birded Skamania County beginning on Mt. Pleasant where **BARN OWL** and several **WILSON'S SNIPE** were heard. Hamilton Island produced **WESTERN MEADOWLARKS**, which can be a tough bird to find in Skamania County. At the fairgrounds in Stevenson they found an **EARED GREBE** and had a fly-over **PEREGRINE FALCON**. A drive up Ryan-Allen Road to the pond produced both **VIRGINIA RAIL** and **MARSH WREN**.
- Nov. 14, Roger Windemuth was at the Ridgefield NWR and reported finding a **NORTHERN SHRIKE**. Ken Knittle also went down to the Ridgefield Refuge and saw the long staying **BLACK PHOEBE**. Bob Flores found **13 EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES** lined up on the power lines by the corner of S 85th and Ne 279th.
- Nov. 16, Bob Rowe and Les Carlson were at the Steigerwald lake NWR and saw a **NORTHERN SHRIKE**, a life bird for Les.
- Nov. 18, While on Hayden Island, Lyn Topinka photographed some **WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS** that were in a

flock on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, just east of the I-5 Bridge.

- Nov. 20, While viewing the Hayden Island **RED-NECKED GREBE**, **SURF SCOTERS** and **WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS**, Shawneen Finnegan and Dave Irons had a dark-morph **PARASITIC JAEGER** fly by, a rare bird away from the ocean. Over the next two weeks **EARED GREBE**, **LONG-TAILED DUCK** and a **TUFTED DUCK** were seen in this flock. **BROWN CREEPERS** are seldom seen during the winter at Steigerwald Lake NWR but Dan Nelson spotted five of them there in the cottonwoods.

- Nov. 21, Two **WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS** were at Bob Flores's feeders in Ridgefield. While on the River "S" Unit Auto Tour Route, Ridgefield NWR biologist, Alex Chmielewski spotted a • for the first record of this Arctic species in Clark County. Later Bob Flores and Randy Hill saw the bird and posted it to the web. I headed out there as soon as I saw this posting where I met up with George and Cindy Mayfield and Barry Woodruff for whom this was a life bird. This bird stuck around for at least four more days allowing many people close observations of this lovely bird.

- Nov. 23, a **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** was a surprise at this time of year for Lyn Topinka as she birded the Ridgefield NWR River "S" Auto Tour Route. Gary Settje added the **SNOW BUNTING** to his Clark County list.



- In addition to the Snow Bunting, Scott Carpenter reported a single **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** circling Rest Lake at the Ridgefield NWR. He and Will Clemons also saw a young **GREEN HERON** there.



A flock of about **13-15 GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCHES** seen along Cedar Creek, by Tyler Hicks, were the first report of this species in Clark County in at least a decade.

- Nov 25, Tyler Hicks saw the cooperative **SNOW BUNTING** at the Ridgefield NWR, as did Wendy Duncan and Krista Wilson on this, the last day it was seen. A **PELAGIC CORMORANT** was found by Matt Bartels at the end of Lower River Road for only the second record of this species in Clark County. Bill Freeman added a life bird, the endangered **RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER**, during a Thanksgiving Day visit to Texas.

- Nov. 27, While boating on the Columbia River at the mouth of the Lewis River, **5 SURF SCOTERS** flew over Bob Flores for the first record of this species in Clark County in 2010.

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

• Nov. 28, In her Camas yard, Carol Kohler watched a single **STELLER'S JAY** chase of a **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**. She reports that she still had a **RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** coming to her feeders. This is highly unusual as by the end of September they should all be in Mexico, this is the latest record I have heard of in Clark County.

• Dec. 3 Arden and Sherry Hagen watched as a young male **COOPER'S HAWK** took a Starling in their backyard. Bob Flores relocated the previously seen **PELAGIC CORMORANT** near the end of Lower River Rd.

• Dec. 4, The VAS field trip to Newport on the Oregon coast led by Arden and Sherry Hagen encountered variable weather but great birds. At Boiler Bay there was a flock of **ANCIENT MURRELETS** very close to shore that gave us fairly nice views between their feeding dives. Newport Bay was full of waterfowl including hundreds of **BRANT** and all three scoters along with thousands of **PINTAILS**. We spent a long time at one view point picking through hundreds of scoters, Bufflehead and scaup before we all were able to get views of a female **LONG-TAILED DUCK** that spent most of the time underwater feeding and never came up in the same place twice.

• Dec. 5, The **PELAGIC CORMORANT** was also seen by Jim Danzenbaker near the end of Lower River Road in the Vancouver Lake lowlands. In Washougal, Steven Clark had **2 LESSER GOLDFINCHES** at his feeder. Although this is only about five miles from our place I have yet to see one in Skamania County. A **NORTHERN SHRIKE** was spotted by Gary Settje at the Ridgefield NWR. These lovely songbirds with the habits of as raptor have been in decline for decades.

• Dec. 6, Dwight Porter photographed a **MALLARD x AMERICAN WIGEON hybrid** at the Ridgefield NWR, only the third record of this combination for Washington State.

• Dec. 11, A very late **HOUSE WREN** was found by Jim Danzenbaker and Ann Nightingale at the Ridgefield NWR, the only winter record of this species from Clark County to my knowledge. The next day they saw **8 TREE SWALLOWS** there.

• Dec. 13, Steve and Sybil Kohl of Brush Prairie to McKinleyville, CA, to see a **BROWN SHRIKE** reported from there. This is only the fourth sighting of this Asiatic bird in North America. Scott Carpenter photographed an apparent hybrid **GOLDEN-CROWNED x WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** at the Ridgefield NWR.

• Dec. 17, For our Christmas Bird Count, Eric Bjorkman, Les Carlson and I covered the private property between the Lewis River and the Ridgefield Refuge, finding **15 TRUMPETER SWANS**, over **800 SANDHILL CRANES** and **4 HUTTONS VIREOS** among the 58 species we counted.



• Dec. 19, Lyn and Gene Topinka had a **HERMIT WARBLER** in their yard, while Townsend's Warblers are fairly common locally in winter hermits are seldom reported.



• Dec. 23, Bob Rowe went to Boiler Bay and found the **ANCIENT MURRELET**, a life bird, and **MARBLED MURRELET** and on the way home he spotted a lifer **WHITE-TAILED KITE**.

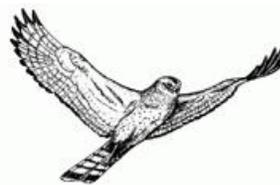
• Dec. 28, Arden and Sherry Hagen invited Les Carlson, Barry Woodruff and I to join them for a drive to Humboldt Bay to see the **BROWN SHRIKE**. When we got the spot the bird was being seen at we were delighted to find Bob Flores, Ridgefield NWR Project Leader, already there. Within minutes after walking the trail to where the bird was, Bob picked it out on some grass clumps several hundred yards away. Sherry added 9 species to her California list while I checked off six new state birds for me.

• Jan. 2, Jim Danzenbaker was taking part in the Portland Christmas Bird Count and spotted some good birds on the Washington side of the river and alerted Bob Flores, Randy and Elaine Hill and I of the birds. We all headed for the Tidewater Cove waterfront trail and got to see at least 1 **TUFTED DUCK** and several **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** in the flocks of scaup there. I called Les Carlson and he got to see the bird too.

• Jan. 3, A **BLACK SCOTER** was found with the **TUFTED DUCK** by Jim Danzenbaker, I headed down there but did not see the scoter, which for me would have been a new species in Clark County. Barry Woodruff made a successful trip to see the **TUFTED DUCK**. Scott Carpenter came across another **BLACK PHOEBE** along La Frambois Road in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands. 2010 was a record year for the numbers of this species in Washington.

For the Statewide Cumulative County Year List Project 236 different species of birds were reported as being seen in Clark County during 2010 and 199 species were reported from Skamania County. To see the complete list go to: <http://www.wabirder.com/bartel.html> If there is something missing from the lists for Clark or Skamania County please let me know. The 2011 list is now being compiled so almost any bird reported will be the first for the year list.

I want to thank all of the people who have, contributed their sighting information over the thirty-five years that I have compiled this column since the founding of Vancouver Audubon, without your input it would not have been possible.



This column started in 1975, after I mistakenly mentioned the need for one to our first chapter president, Don Cannard, and he asked if it would be ready for the next newsletter.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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



February 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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