



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

February 2012

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, Feb. 7, 6:45 PM before the meeting.

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

***Monday, Feb. 6, 6:00 pm (time change): VAS Board Meeting hosted by Tammy & Eric Bjorkman 4110 NE 54th Ave., Vancouver, WA 360-695-3116

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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			

PROGRAM:

Bird Rescue at The Wildlife Center of North Coast

by Sharnelle Fee

SHARNELLE FEE, Center Director, will show us birds that are being rehabilitated and discuss the mission and methods of their operation. This center in Astoria provides professional medical care for all native wild birds and animals. They assist over 2,000 wildlife patients a year. It is an all-volunteer organization with 100% of each donation dollar going directly to the care of wildlife. Sharnelle will bring a Brown Pelican, Northern Fulmar, Common Murre, Spotted Owl and Saw-whet Owl to show us.

WA Big Year 2012

FUND RAISER COMPETITION for VAS Team Bjorkman vs. Team Hagen.

YOU CAN WIN A GREAT PRIZE by buying tickets & choosing which team you think will win & their final count for the year. The **Grand Prize** will go to the person who chooses the winning team & the number of species seen closest to the number they saw. Buy raffle tickets for \$20 a piece, fill them out and drop them in the box. Remember this is a Fund Raiser so we hope you buy lots of tickets that give you a better chance of winning (only one prize per person) and supporting VAS. A 2nd & 3rd prize will be drawn from the winning teams tickets then other prizes will be given away by drawing from all the tickets. All details will be spelled out at the February VAS Meeting along with the prizes that have been donated. This info will be included in the next Flyway. **See page 2 for more.**

FIELD TRIP

Breakfast, Birds & Banter "Limited to 12 Participants" Sign up Only



Leader: Arden & Sherry Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: Feb. 18, Saturday

Time: 8:30 AM

Where: At the home of Arden & Sherry Hagen at 2203 SE 135th Ave. Vancouver, WA

This will definitely be a "SIGN UP ONLY" field trip. We will share a somewhat POTLUCK breakfast. Arden will make pancakes, etc. We will watch birds in the back yard and talk....Birds, Birds, Birds.....

Information will be on the sign up sheet of items you can bring for the breakfast like juice, coffee, rolls etc.

Bring slippers if you like, this is a **No Shoes inside home.**



VAS Upcoming Programs:

March: *Birds of Trinidad & Tobago*
by Eric & Tammy Bjorkman

April: *Spotted Owl Status & Conservation*
by Betsy Glenn, Oregon Fish & Wildlife

WA Big Year 2012

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 journals of the adventures of **Team Bjorkman** and **Team Hagen** respectively & contribute articles to *Columbia Flyway* each month sharing the highlights and lowlights of their quest.

Team Bjorkman: January 1st - After months of planning and preparation we are ready. We start the year off in Walla Walla to take advantage of the cold weather that is so attractive to winter species visiting eastern Washington. We have high hopes for Snow Bunting, American Tree Sparrow, Gray-crowned Rosy-finches, and Bohemian Waxwing. Maybe we'll get lucky and get a Snowy Owl or a Gyrfalcon.

We've rented a small house in town that is perfect for our trip. They allow pets and we bring Ozzie and Rudy with us. They are our two Boston Terriers and unwitting volunteers to our quest. I can hardly sleep in anticipation of the year's first bird. I dread the possibility that it will be what our friend Wilson calls a 'Sky Carp' or European Starling.

At 8:00, we drive through town on our way to search for Northern Saw-whet Owls at Fishhook Park, we keep our heads down and try to tunnel our vision on the road in hopes of missing any unwanted 'firsts' for the year. Then we hear them, the unmistakable honking of Canada Geese. We look up to see the familiar 'V' shape of a flying flock (say that fast three times!) soaring over the car. Whew! A minor disaster averted. The 'Sky Carp' makes an appearance at number seven.

We quickly discover that our plan has a hole in it. Winter has decided to stay away from Walla Walla this year. It's warm! We barely need a coat and the only reason we do is that the wind is blowing enough to keep a chill on. Our hopes sink but the dogs are happy as they run around without getting frostbitten.

We don't give up hope, though, and we apply dogged (a pun?) determination in finding what species we can and end up with a respectable number. We got a Prairie Falcon and then a nice Merlin. Long-eared Owls are easily found in their normal spot along the road to Windust Park in Franklin County.

Mike and MerryLynn Denny find a Long-tailed Duck at the Walla Walla River delta and call our cell phone to let us know. Before we started this journey, we recruited them for scouting help and as luck would have it they were already planning on doing a 'January 1st Big Day' in their county. We find the duck not too far from a large raft of decoys that nearby hunters have placed in the river.

We can only hope they don't pluck this rare visitor out of the sky.

So now the year is officially under way! We may not have had the best conditions for birds and our count could have been higher, but once again this little hobby has taken us out of the house and into some beautiful and interesting places. We'll meet people from all walks of life and reconnect with old friends. The competition is fun and we'll do our best, but these are the real reasons why we'll enjoy the challenge so much. *by Eric Bjorkman*

Team Hagen started the year with a **Common Redpoll** on our deck. A very good bird to see and we didn't even have to go anywhere, We had talked about leaving town that day and birding up north. If we had done that we would have missed the Redpoll at our house. Instead we decided to bird our yard then the Vancouver Lake area seeing birds like the **Northern Mockingbird** that has been visiting a neighborhood & lots of species for a good start to the competition. January **2nd** we headed to the Washington coast having a great time but fighting a storm that came in. We fought 35 mph winds at Ocean Shores and decided not to even try to walk out for the Snowy Owls. That would have to wait. January 7-10 we drove to Wenatchee & the Waterville Plateau. We saw the **Northern Hawk-Owl** in the hills around Chelan for a great bird for the list. We chased Gyrfalcons but missed every one of them & didn't find others we thought would be there. Back to Ocean Shores on the 14th and we braved the storm & walked out until we saw a **Snowy Owl** & 9 more species to add to our list. We are going to try our hardest to be the winning team but all birds are up for grabs.

by Sherry Hagen

VAS Washington Big Year Competition Fund Raiser

Pick the Team you think will win the competition (check mark)

Tammy & Eric Bjorkman _____

Sherry & Arden Hagen _____

Enter the number indicating your guess as to how many bird species the winning team will see.

_____ (1 to 500) *Record of species is 359 in a year*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____



Environmental Legislative Priorities for 2012

As of this writing, the legislature is in session. It started January 9. Lobby day this year is January 25, early because it is a short-session year. It is unlikely you will receive this before then, But, just in case you do, and if you are interested in going up to Olympia, contact me at gstarke@pacifier.com or 892-8617.

The environmental priorities this year reflect the realities of the economy and the state budget, being mainly a holding action. The priorities are: getting all toxics out of fire retardants (protecting our kids); sustaining I-937, the clean energy initiative the voters passed a few years ago; and preventing the dismantling of current environmental protection laws. The economy is the perfect excuse to attack regulations.

Unfortunately, for the first time since I became active in Audubon, it appears that there will be no Audubon presence in Olympia. What with National Audubon withdrawing financial support a few years ago and this year there being confusion and lack of sufficient support among the chapters, it is probably too late to hire anyone. There was money available carried over from last year, being held by Tahoma Audubon. In December, the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) passed a resolution asking the chapters if the money, left over from last year, could be used for a lobbyist. Nearly one half the chapters did not respond in time. So, probably, no lobbyist, and that for a session that will be most critical for the environment.

Willapa Bay Dike Removal and Congress

To follow up on an item I wrote about last fall, Congresswoman Jamie Herrera Buetler directly interfered with the Fish and Wildlife Services' plan to remove the dikes at the Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Removing the dikes would improve habitat for salmon and birds. The waterfowl hunters were especially upset at the dike removal proposal. They went ballistic. The "walk in" hunters were especially angry. As an example of a walk-in hunter, I learned of one hunter who had enjoyed the privilege of walking out his door and shooting a goose practically from his back yard. The strange thing, it appears that the hunters were working from one of the drafts of the plan, rather than the final plan. During the collaborative process, many of the concerns of the hunters and the cranberry growers were addressed, but the hunters acted as if that had not happened.

Willapa Hills Audubon has been working with FWS during the lengthy planning process. Charlotte Persons of Willapa Hills sent out an e-mail just before Christmas asking for letters to our senators. I got much of the information on this issue from Charlotte. Jamie had inserted an item in the Federal budget forbidding FWS to use any money to remove the dikes until April of this year. This

was to give the FWS even more time to work with stakeholders. This sounds like redundancy, as the FWS had already had plenty of public input. However, it also gives us time to contact our senators and, yes, to contact Jamie herself to give her a chance to correct her mistake.

Vancouver's Tree Canopy

The City of Vancouver has a urban tree program and the goal is to have 28% of the city be in tree cover. The 2011 assessment of the state of trees in Vancouver was finished in September and is available on the city's park website (http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/parks_trails/urban_forestry/pdf/canopyreport2011.pdf). Tree canopy was mapped by using color-infrared satellite imagery, taken in 2010. The city needs to do a lot more to reach the goal -- it is down by 9.4%. Only 18.6% of the land is covered by tree canopy. To reach the goal, Vancouver needs to encourage the growth of approximately 176,300 more medium-sized trees. The number of acres in Vancouver that are biologically suitable for growing trees is a little over 14,700. By my calculations, we'd need to have a little over 12 trees per acre of non-forest, but suitable land, to reach the goal. It could be done, but we wouldn't want to have more of the suitable land covered in asphalt or cement. Trouble is, between 2003 and 2010, Vancouver lost 253 acres of trees, mostly from development.

Neighborhoods varied in loss or gain of forest cover. Fircrest (my neighborhood, alas), Ogden, and West Minnehaha lost the most, while Fishers Landing East, Fruit Valley, and Columbia Way gained the most. It seems to me that where I live, the sound of the chain saw is much too frequent. Every little storm seems to freak people out. Not surprisingly, most of the canopy loss was on private land, especially that land that was zoned medium density residential. There was some loss on public land -- 19 acres. One number that surprised me -- public rights of way had a net gain of 122 acres.

Having a tree ordinance and an urban forest management plan is a good thing, but I think maybe the city council should consider trees more when dealing with development. As one example of the value of trees is the use of trees to manage storm water runoff. It is a lot cheaper and more natural than using concrete. We should keep an eye on the tree canopy in all our cities. In the county, too.

Gretchen Starke



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Nov. 6. Susan and I ventured to Ridgefield where we joined the throng of birders who were creating a traffic jam on the Auto Tour Route, to view the **VERMILION FLYCATCHER**. one here. Randy Hill had a quick look at sand spit in the Columbia River just north of the Lewis River on it were **32 BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS**, and **7 DUNLIN**. The huge duck flocks were mainly **GREATER SCAUP** and included a single female-plumaged **SURF SCOTER**, and a dull **CANVASBACK**.

Nov. 14. Tammy and Eric Bjorkman found that the **RUSTY BLACKBIRD** wThis bird remained for over a month and drew birders here from throughout the Northwest. We then went to Woodland and saw a **RUSTY BLACKBIRD**, which an easy find as it was being photographed by Lyn Topkinka when we arrived. This is a bird from the eastern half of the United States and decreasing in numbers.

Nov. 11. Randy Hill reported that on the Ridgefield NWR there were **2 BLACK PHOEBES** at the bridge over Lake River.

Nov. 13. A **WHITE-FACED IBIS** was seen by Gerry Ellis as it flew into Rest Lake at the Ridgefield NWR. This is an unusual species at any time in Washington and this was an exceptionally late date for as not that easy to spot in the large flock of blackbirds/starlings, but they lucked out as it was bathing in one of the mud puddles.

Nov. 19. Jeff and Lauretta Young enjoyed the sunshine and the lingering **VERMILION FLYCATCHER** at the Ridgefield NWR.

Nov. 20. Bob Flores had a over-wintering **HOUSE WREN** mixed in a forging flock in the Ash forest on River S Unit. This is the same area that one was found last winter. 4 **SNOW GEESE** were in the large field past Rest Lake.

Nov. 20. Les Carlson, Barry Woodruff and I made a trip to Ocean Shores, in Gray's Harbor County, in a successful search for their "lifer" **SNOWY OWL**. A **ROCK SANDPIPER** on the Point Brown Jetty was another a life bird for both of them and a female **KING EIDER** was a new bird for Les.

Nov. 23. Jim Danzenbaker found 1 **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** and **2 PACIFIC LOONS** along the waterfront trail west of Wintler Park. Vancouver Lake had four **BONAPARTE'S GULLS** at the flushing channel and **2 RED-NECKED GREBES** with a flock of **18 HORNED GREBES**. Both the scoter and the Pacific Loon were new county birds for him.

Nov. 24. While in his Ridgefield yard, Bob Flores heard a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** screaming from Gee Creek just west of Carty Rd and 10th Ave. Very few people in the State have this hawk on their yard list.

Nov. 25. Dave Irons, Shawneen Finnegan and Jim Danzenbaker birded in Clark County, relocating the **VERMILION FLYCATCHER** at Ridgefield. They also birded the Columbia River from Wintler Park east of Vancouver, where they had **2 PACIFIC LOONS**, **4 COMMON LOONS**, and one **RED-THROATED LOON**.

Dec. 1. Susan and I checked a few areas in Skamania

County and spotted a female **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** below Bonneville Dam at the western Hamilton Island parking area.

Dec. 3. Steve and Sybil Kohl visited Ocean Shores to check Damon Spit where they saw at least **7 SNOWY OWLS** on driftwood near the tip of the point. In the late afternoon, as they drove North through the town of Ocean Shores there was a **BARRED OWL** perched on the electrical wires.

Dec. 4. A **RUSTY BLACKBIRD** was found on Lower River Road in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands by Bob Flores, an addition to the Clark County year list. He also saw a **COMMON TEAL**, the Eurasian form of the Green-winged Teal, in a pond there. Carol and Don Kohler went to Ocean Shores and saw four of the reported **SNOWY OWLS**.

Dec. 5. Susan and I went to Ocean Shores so she could see the **SNOWY OWLS**, and bumped into Arden and Sherry Hagen who said that there were now eight owls on Damon Point. After we were told by other birders that an **EMPEROR GOOSE** was on the golf course in town we stopped there to view it too.

Dec. 7. While doing a goose survey on the Ridgefield NWR, Scott Carpenter heard the trill of a single **COMMON REDPOLL** near the edge of Post Office Lake. Also, Post Office Lake itself had **250+ CANVASBACKS** and 1 male **REDHEAD** among the hundreds of **RING-NECKED DUCKS**.

Dec. 8. A **SNOWY OWL** showed up on the Ridgefield NWR Auto Tour Route, the first one in Clark County since 2006. This stunning bird attracted dozens of people to the refuge for the opportunity to see and photograph this rare visitor.

Dec. 9. The Ridgefield Snowy Owl was not on the refuge when Les Carlson and Bob Rowe searched for it, so they headed for the Vancouver Lake Lowlands. At Post Office Lake at the end of Lower River Road they found a **SNOWY OWL**, most likely the same bird. After being alerted by Randy Hill, Bob Flores was able to see the bird in the fading light. Ray Korpi heard a **COMMON REDPOLL** in Vancouver. Along with the Snowy Owls we are getting some of the northern finches coming into our region this year. Unusual species to look for at your feeders would be Common Redpoll, White-winged Crossbill and Pine Grosbeak. Please contact other birders as soon as possible if one is seen.

Dec. 10. A **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** was spotted by Dan Friesz in his Vancouver yard, the third record of this species in Clark County. It stayed through the reporting period and has provided many people with good views of this bird for their 2011 and 2012 bird lists.

Dec. 11. Les Carlson and I joined Tim Brennan, Nina Bohn and Jon Leland for an attempt to set a new Big Day record for the number of species seen in Skamania County during a single day in December. We ended up the new record with 70 species. Our best birds were a **TRUM-**

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

PETER SWAN, TUFTED DUCK, and CANYON WREN.

Dec. 14. Mike Clarke re-found the **SNOWY OWL** in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands, at Shillapoo Lake. Ray Korpi spotted **4 TREE SWALLOWS** at Vancouver Lake while searching for the Snowy Owl.

Dec. 15. Barry Woodruff and Les Carlson stopped and saw the **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** while taking a journey to see their life **MOUNTAIN PLOVER** south of Portland.

Dec. 16. When Bob Rowe visited Ocean Shores to see the **SNOWY OWLS** he counted 13 of these spectacular birds.

Dec. 18. A **WESTERN SCREECH-OWL** was seen at close range on the Ridgefield Auto Tour Route by Randy Fortish. An **AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** was found by Scott Carpenter on Bachelor Island during the Ridgefield CBC.

Dec. 24. Randy Hill, Les Carlson and Barry Woodruff returned to Ocean Shores and saw the **SNOWY OWLS**, a **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** and the **KING EIDER**.

Dec. 25. Eric and Tammy Bjorkman were joined by Sherrie Kearney and Steven Clark for a walk on the Washougal dike where they saw **14 TRUMPETER SWANS** flying overhead.

Dec. 31. Randy Hill spotted a **TUFTED DUCK** on the Vancouver waterfront trail but was unsure if it was a hybrid.

Jan. 7. The **TUFTED DUCK** was relocated by Randy Hill at Marine Park. His quick posting of this bird allowed many other birders, including William Risser and Mike Clarke, to see this rare Eurasian species. Randy Fortish picked up his life **SNOWY OWLS** and **EMPEROR GOOSE** at Ocean Shores. Arden and Sherry Hagen started the birding year out nicely with a **COMMON REDPOLL** at their feeders. Barry Woodruff, Les Carlson and I set a new Skamania County January Big Day record with 58 species despite strong East winds all day.

Jan. 2. Marilyn Hall and Betty Montgomery, birded at the Tualatin River N.W.R. in Oregon. An **EMPEROR GOOSE** was behind the visitor's center, and there was a nice flock of **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS** in a field by the main trail.

Jan. 7. The **TUFTED DUCK** was relocated by Randy Hill at Marine Park. His quick posting of this bird allowed many other birders, including William Risser and Mike Clarke, to see this rare Eurasian species.

Jan. 9, Steve and Sybil Kohl went to Woodburn, OR to see a **BRAMBLING** coming to a feeder there. This gorgeous finch is another rare visitor from Asia. Bob Rowe and Les Carlson were also able to add this species to their lists a few days later. Tammy and Eric Bjorkman photographed a gorgeous male **LONG-TAILED DUCK** at the Westport marina while birding in Grays Harbor County adding species to their Washington year list competition with Arden and Sherry Hagen.

Arden and Sherry Hagen got to see and photographed the **BLACK-VENTED ORIOLE** (a rare visitor from Mexico) at Bentsen Rio Grande State Park in Texas. This is the

713th species they have seen in the American Birding Association bird list area.

A total of 233 species of birds were reported from Clark County in 2011 and 195 species were reported on the cumulative year list for Skamania County. To see the year lists for each county in the State go to:

<http://www.wabirder.com/bartel.html>

Please continue to report your bird sightings for Clark and Skamania Counties for the 2012 list. The lists for 2012 are at; Clark County 55 and Skamania County 68, only because there have been few reports from Clark County, not because there are fewer birds there. But Tufted Duck, Northern Mockingbird and Common Redpoll were all very good sightings to start the year's tally for Clark County.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

In early December Arden & I flew to Texas to use up a "use it or loose it" SWA ticket. But by chance there was a **BLACK-VENTED ORIOLE** at Bentsen State Park and we got to see it for out #713 North American species & of course, I photographed it. We had a great time that week knowing that we would be almost exclusively birding in the state of Washington in 2012 doing the WA Big Year for VAS as a Fund Raiser. We may just have to sneak away just to get a lifer in the states this year & not be skunked. We've always managed to get at least one lifer per year so we don't want this year to be the first since there are still plenty for us to see. Having the **Common Redpoll** be my first bird of the year was really a treat. I told Tammy Bjorkman this info on the phone while they were in Walla Walla starting their quest for the most WA birds this year and I heard Eric say in the background something like "Oh Great! I quit right now".

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding 😊

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Glenn Baker • Kim Brouillet • N. Burgstahler • Kathryn Bussman • Kenya Byrnes • Matthew Case • Mary Cheney • Paul Christensen • Daniel Cole • Patricia Cooper • Brendan Cowles • Marjorie Cromwell • Sue Ericsson • Betty Eves • Naomi Fox • Donna Gatlin • Tom Gawlista • Don Generaux • Pam Gunn • Gene Hendrickson • Gladys Hill • Charlene Hiss • Barbara Holdt • Donna Hubbard • Sherry Hughes • Dennis Johnson • Phyllis Kniss • Doreen Krsek-Parker • Christy Kuhlman • Crystal Leighty • Barbara Ludwig • Store Manager • Rosemary McCuiston • C. McDougal • Carol Nelson • Valeria Ogden • G & C Oleary • Michelle Pederson • Dana Peterson • Tim Pfeifer • Peter Popper • Shelby Rama • Kim Ramos • Sarah Roth • Eldon Schmidt • Kaye Schroeder • Katherine Semple Pierce • Dwayne Sheets • Frank Shipman • Lynda Skau • Robert Skucas • Sloniker • Carol Smith • M. Smith • Lois Streeter • Douglas & Taylor • Jean Tobkin • Rachel & Jean Vashaw • Carl Warkentin • Dana Welch • Doris Williams

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VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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



February 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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