



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

February 2017

Calendar

***Tuesday, Feb. 7, 7:00 PM: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Tuesday, Feb. 28, 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
9	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

PROGRAM:

The Biology Behind Bird Bromides

Speaker: Steven Clark

Steven has spoken to us before On Global Warming & Bats. He always brings enthusiasm and energy as a teacher.

This time he will be more whimsical as he takes BIRD sayings:

“Birds of a feather flock together”,

for example, and tell us the science behind its origins.

FIELD TRIP: *Woodland Bottoms for Raptors & Cranes*

Leaders: Susan Setterberg, 360-892-8872
George Mayfield 360-687-0360

When: February 18, Saturday

Time: 9:00 AM

Meet at: Woodland Walmart Parking lot.

Take Exit 22 (Dike Access Road) off I-5. Go around the circle to the left and under the freeway (West) to the WalMart of the right. We will carpool from there. Most of the birding will be done from the car or standing along the road when safe. The trip will be about 3 hours depending on what we find.

Winter in the agriculture fields of Woodland can be very exciting and interesting. There are always lots of raptors with Red-tails, Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks. Last year we had 14 Bald Eagles by the end of the day. Depending on what is happening in the rivers, we could have fun sorting through all the gull species, scaup, goldeneye and mergansers. There is a large Great Blue Heron Rookery to view along the route. Fields, if flooded, could be filled with a nice variety of ducks. Peregrine and Kestrel are possible as is a possible Short-eared Owl in the right conditions. This is a good opportunity for photographers.



We will carpool.

Do not forget to pay your driver for gas.

Welcome New Members: Dennis Allison • Michael Beatty • Roberta Beaudin • Maura Buker • Bob Chrismer • Logan Clark • Courtney Covey Lewis • Jan De Grandchamp • Marlow Dodge • Dee Flieder • M. Gilman • Rizalina Hartlauer • Jim Jarzabek • Mike and Rita Mahaffa • Barbara Mills • Debby Mohler • Lauren Moshe • Joanne Nelson • Mark Pfaff • Susan Remmen • A. Rush • Brian Rutherford • Linda Schneider • Martha Schoen • Robert Shelton • Paul Slichter • Barbara Somers • Maureen Sullivan • Nancy Tessman • Mark Turner • Greg Vissia • Nelly Williams • D Winters

Vancouver Audubon

Christmas Bird Count Results 2016 (17)

The 117th Christmas Bird Count started with a fizzle when snow and ice prevented access to many of our birding locations on December 18th on both sides of the river. We re-scheduled for Jan 2nd. It was an anxiety producing lead up to the Jan 2nd count when the weather was still cold, wet and icy. However; though starting cold in the high 20s, everyone could get to their assigned areas (except Wilson who was stuck in the gorge and missed his first CBC in 41 years) and bird in the sunshine for the day as the temperatures moved into the mid-30s. Wind chill along the river did make some of the walking challenging for many of the participants.

We had 27 participants on the Ridgefield side of the count circle. They logged almost 38 hours on foot covering 31 miles and 39 hours birding from a car covering 151 miles. Given the cold and the icy morning, owling was somewhat limited this year with only an hour and a half reported; which might, in part, account for our low owl numbers. Coverage of the area was challenging and the number of field hours and miles, especially by foot, reflects a reduction which may account for some of the lower numbers of some species, especially those more easily found walking paths.

Many of the counters, who have long experience with this count, reported completing the counts early and having low numbers for some species. This year we identified 109 species, which is slightly lower than the recent Ridgefield averages which ranged 105 to 121 species. Our highest number for individuals of a species was again the Cackling Geese. No surprise there. However, the initial numbers are much higher than past years and they are still under review. It will be interesting to watch how these numbers fluctuate in the next several years. With all the development happening on the former farms of Ridgefield, the geese and cranes are distributing differently to find food. Test feeding fields in the Vancouver Lowlands may draw more birds there, while the usual distribution of large flocks into former farm fields will disappear. As I write this article, the numbers for geese are still being examined for our final report to National Audubon. As birds do fly, especially flocks of geese, the timing of sightings and the observation of flight direction of a flock is important to understanding the final number of birds to be noted for a count.

Many visitors have remarked on the large numbers of Northern Pintail on the River S drive this season. We had a count of just over 6000 individuals which bears out this anecdotal observation; our previous high in the last three years being just over 2000. Also, unusual for us was 2100 Snow Geese in Vancouver Bottoms found by Arden Hagen in the afternoon. I suspect this was a feeding subgroup from the 7500-numbered flock moving into Sauvie Island

later in the afternoon. Arden also identified another unusual sighting, a Brant along La Frambois Road in the Fruit Valley area. The Varied Thrush have arrived in the area though not in great numbers. Twenty-eight were seen in the private property north of the Carty Unit, so it would be good to keep an eye out for them on the northern end of the refuge if you are looking for some. We missed a few nice to have species. There were no Pine Siskins, no Evening Grosbeaks, and no Pileated Woodpeckers on our side of the river. We commonly see 4 or 5 of the Pileated each year. Great Blue Heron and Great Egret numbers were down substantially over the last few years, but that could have been due to frozen, ice covered areas where they usually hunt. Sandhill Crane numbers were a little below average but they were scattered around the refuge and the lowlands. For those who want to hop across the river, the Sauvie teams did find a Harris's Sparrow, Black Phoebe and a Swamp Sparrow. Who knows if they have survived or stayed after this last snow covering storm, but you never know.

Following are the preliminary numbers for Ridgefield side of the complete circle. I am working with previous compilers to add the last ten years of our circle data to the national database. We are a little behind.

A BIG Thank You to everyone who participated in the count, persevering in less than ideal conditions.

Ridgefield Participants: George and Cindy Mayfield, Eric Anderson, Clay Crofton, Chris Bidleman, Patricia Thompson, Roger Shea, Randy Hill, Bob Flores, Barry Woodruff & team, Tom Finn, Scott Carpenter, Alex Chmielewski, Les Carlson, Joan Durgin, James Lanz, Kate Ketchum, Jean Avery, Bonnie Bingle, Arden Hagen, Ryan Abe, and Hannah Mortensen.

(CBC Results on page 3)

Meet the California Scrub-Jay

The Western Scrub-Jay has been split into 2 species. The one we have in our area and down the Pacific coast is called the California Scrub-Jay. The other is called the ... called the grayish belly.



The Unfortunate Event Last November

(Also, My Being Out of Commission for a While)

I refer, of course to the election. It appears that the president-elect is ignorant of and uninterested in environmental issues (that could be said of any issue that is not about Donald J. Trump). We are unlikely to make any progress on any of our issues. In fact, we may be hard put to save what we have already attained. It's going to be a long four years.

On a personal note, I will be having knee replacement surgery this week. I haven't been going to county meetings for a while and I have been limping around the house. After the surgery, I will be concentrating on recovery. After I get more or less mobile, I expect to be going to county hearings again. As for the county growth management plan, it is still being reviewed.

With the new county board of commissioners, the hearings will probably be mostly quiet. I think we are done with the fireworks, although there may be some action when the review of the county growth management plan is finished.

Gretchen Starke

Christmas Bird Count

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Goose	12
Snow Goose	2,101
Brant	1
Cackling Goose	14,715
Canada Goose	2,868
Canada/Cackler	90
Trumpeter Swan	76
Tundra Swan	2,078
Unidentified Swan	97
Wood Duck	10
Gadwall	475
Eurasian Wigeon	8
American Wigeon	2,387
Mallard	2,330
Cinnamon Teal	1
Northern Shoveler	792
Northern Pintail	6,053
Green-winged Teal	821
Canvasback	158
Redhead	1
Ring-necked Duck	476
Lesser Scaup	63
Scaup species	7
Bufflehead	170
Common Goldeneye	11
Hooded Merganser	55
Common Merganser	35
Ruddy Duck	442

LOONS, GREBES

Common Loon	2
Pied-billed Grebe	12
Western Grebe	1

PELICANS, HERONS, IBIS

Double-crested Cormorant	124
American Bittern	2
Great Blue Heron	63
Great Egret	31
Snowy Egret	1
Black-crowned Night-heron	8

RAPTORS

Bald Eagle	39
Northern Harrier	37
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2

Red-shouldered Hawk	8
Red-tailed Hawk	73
Rough-legged Hawk	2
American Kestrel	32
Peregrine Falcon	2

RAILS, CRANES

Virginia Rail	2
American Coot	967
Sandhill Crane	1,331

SHOREBIRDS

Killdeer	12
Greater Yellowlegs	2
Long-billed Dowitcher	11
Wilson's Snipe	9

GULLS

Mew Gull	3
Ring-billed Gull	26
California	3
Herring Gull	22
Western Gull	1
Glaucous-winged Gull	86
Unidentified Gull	103

DOVES, PIGEONS

Rock Pigeon	102
Eurasian Collared-Dove	16
Mourning Dove	85

OWLS

Barn Owl	4
Great Horned Owl	5
Short-eared Owl	7

HUMMINGBIRDS

Anna's Hummingbird	9
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KINGFISHER

Belted Kingfisher	7
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WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker	11
Downy Woodpecker	18
Hairy Woodpecker	6
Northern Flicker	63

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo	1
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CORVIDS

Steller's Jay	36
California Scrub-Jay	92
American Crow	76
Common Raven	9

CHICKADEES, BUSHTITS

Black-capped Chickadee	158
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	11
Bushtit	167

NUTHATCHES, CREEPER

Red-breasted Nuthatch	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	6
Brown Creeper	13

WRENS

Bewick's Wren	11
Pacific Wren	21
Marsh Wren	12

KINGLETS, GNATCATCHERS

Golden-crowned Kinglet	64
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	100

THRUSHES

Hermit Thrush	4
American Robin	280
Varied Thrush	30

STARLING

European Starling	816
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PIPITS

American Pipit	49
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WARBLERS

Townsend's Warbler	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	10

SPARROWS

Spotted Towhee	73
Savannah Sparrow	7
Fox Sparrow	41
Song Sparrow	329
Lincoln's Sparrow	9
White-throated Sparrow	4
White-crowned Sparrow	17
Golden-crowned Sparrow	354
Sparrow Species	100
Dark-eyed Junco	462

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

Red-winged Blackbird	242
Western Meadowlark	94
Brewer's Blackbird	112

FINCHES, WEAVER FINCH

Purple Finch	4
House Finch	51
Lesser Goldfinch	2
American Goldfinch	14
House Sparrow	9

NOV. 16, Bob Flores and Randy Hill found and photographed the state's first **BLUE GROSBEAK** at Neah Bay, Clallam County. They also got to see the state's first **DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** there too.

Two **RED PHALAROPES** were found by Les Carlson, at the 39th Avenue Pond in Hazel Dell, this is the hardest phalarope to see in our area as it is a species of the open oceans. Another two were found the next day at Ridgefield both pair stuck around for a couple of days allowing many people to see these rare visitors.

NOV. 17, Barry Woodruff, Walker Berg, Garrett Berg and I did some birding, finding a **PACIFIC LOON** and the **PELAGIC CORMORANT** in the Columbia River at Washougal. In Skamania County we found five **TRUMPETER SWANS** at Franz Lake and **WILD TURKEYS** and **CALIFORNIA QUAIL** in Underwood, in Klickitat County we saw **LEWIS'S** and **ACORN WOODPECKERS**.

NOV. 18, A **BROWN PELICAN** was seen in Clark County near the I-5 Bridge by John Bishop and Luke Hanes, there are only a couple of records for Clark County.

NOV. 21, John Bishop saw a female **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** and a **PACIFIC LOON** from east of the Vancouver Marine Park.

NOV.27, While birding in Skamania County, Matt Bartells found four **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS** and a **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL** near Underwood. At Rock Creek Pond, in Stevenson, he found a male **EURASIAN WIGEON**, a **REDHEAD** and the only **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** reported from the county in 2016.

NOV. 28, A **RUFFED GROUSE** began visiting a hawthorne tree in our yard and was there daily for several weeks until the fruit was gone.

NOV. 29, Forty **BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS** were found in Trout Lake, Klickitat County, by John and Loraine Allinger. This species of waxwing seldom comes this far south but this winter they have been showing up in unexpected places.

DEC. 2, Maryanne Teague's neighbor photographed a male **PINE GROSBEAK** at their feeder above the Pearson Airport, there are less than five records of this bird in Clark County.

DEC. 7, On Larch Mountain, Jim Danzenbaker found a **BOHEMIAN WAXWING**, along with forty **EVENING GROSBEAKS** and a **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE**.

DEC. 11, A visit to the Ridgefield NWR by Eric and Tammy Bjorkman turned up a late or over-wintering **CINNAMON TEAL** and a juvenile **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK**.

DEC. 12, Les Carlson and George Mayfield decided to do a Clark County Big Day as there was not one listed for the month of December. They had a good day of birding with 67 species counted and the mark for someone to beat next year. Some of the better birds being three **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS**, and a **GREAT HORNED OWL** at River S, six **SNOW GEESE** with **ACKLING GEESE** north west of the recycle center on old lower river road and a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** at the Water Resource Center feeders.

DEC. 17, Five **SNOW GEESE** were spotted in a field in Washougal by Cherie Kearny. There has been a small flock of these geese seen on the Steigerwald Lake NWR and Columbia River but they usually don't come into town.

DEC. 18, Four male **EURASIAN WIGEON** were spotted by Randy Hill from the overlook area off NW Bernie Drive where Burnt Bridge Creek crosses under Fruit Valley Road before entering Vancouver Lake. From the end of LaFramboise Road he spotted an **EARED GREBE** on the lake.

DEC. 22, A visit to Larch Mountain by Jim Danzenbaker, provided him with **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS** along with **RED CROSSBILLS** and **EVENING GROSBEAKS**. The White-winged Crossbills are a new bird for the Clark County checklist.

DEC. 24, A **BARN SWALLOW** was seen fly over Rest Lake on the Ridgefield NWR by Gerry Ellis.

DEC. 26, Les Carlson had 5 raptors on his morning bike ride in Hazel Dell, with **COOPER'S HAWK**, **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK**, **RED-TAILED HAWK**, **MERLIN** and **AMERICAN KESTREL**.

DEC. 27, Kevin Black went looking for the White-winged Crossbills that had been found on Larch Mountain. He didn't find them but did have **RED CROSSBILLS**, **EVENING GROSBEAKS** and two **GRAY JAYS**.

JAN. 1, A flock of **PINE SISKINS** visited Randy Hill's feeders, they have been very scarce in our area this winter.

JAN. 2, A **BRANT** was found near the Fruit Valley wastewater plant by Arden Hagen. This species of goose is usually found on saltwater and mainly feeds on eelgrass that grows there.

JAN. 4, Randy Hill found the **BRANT** back on LaFramboise Road near the Fruit Valley wastewater plant.

JAN. 6, A **BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** was found by Barry Woodruff on the Ridgefield Auto Tour Route.

JAN. 13, A **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** was found by Pamela Gunn along the Vancouver Waterfront Trail near McMen-

Vancouver Audubon

iman's. While looking for this bird Luke Hanes spotted a **RED-NECKED GREBE** offshore in the Columbia River.

This has been an unusual winter with our multiple snow and ice storms. In just the first two weeks of January we were only able to get out of our driveway on two days, so I have done little birding since early December and missed participating on the Christmas Bird Count for the first time in forty-one years. With the heavy snow covering much of the natural vegetation our feeders have been getting a lot of use with as many as a hundred juncos there at a time. What has been unusual is the near lack of Varied Thrushes at our place this winter.

We will be keeping track again of all of the species seen in each Washington county in 2017. Last year, 227 species of birds were reported from Clark County and 188 from Skamania County, the two counties that I compile the data for this state wide effort. To see the checklist and previous year's results go to: http://www.wabirder.com/county_yearlist.html

Although it is a very cold and snowy day while I compose this column, it is only about a month until the first Spring migrants start arriving with Tree Swallows showing up by the second week of February and Rufous Hummingbirds by the end of the month, for an idea of what the average return dates for birds in our area go to this page: <https://birdsoverportland.wordpress.com/oregon-migration-phenology/>

Wilson Cady (gorgebirds@juno.com)

BIRD ON THE BORDER!

5TH LAREDO BIRDING FESTIVAL



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Great Backyard Bird Count

The four-day Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 17 – 20, is a great way for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with nature and make a difference for birds. It's free and easy. To learn how to participate, visit www.birdcount.org.

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the GBBC was the first online citizen science project to collect data on wild birds. Now, more than 160,000 people of all ages and walks of life in more than 130 countries join the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.



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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.*

February 2017

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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Chapter Code: Y13

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For more Info Call:
George Mayfield 360-687-0360 (membership)
Eric Bjorkman 360-695-3116 (VAS President)

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

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For additional information on membership to National Audubon, got to <http://www.audubon.org/>

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