



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

June 2012

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, Jun. 5, 6:45 PM before the meeting. See Below

***Tuesday, June 5, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, June 4, 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
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

PROGRAM:

The Founding of Vancouver Audubon Society

Who are we?

How did we get going?

What have we accomplished?

A panel of early members will report about early VAS history, accomplishments, environmental battles, successes and alliances. Among the topics to be covered: Establishment of Steigerwald NWR, the Columbia Gorge Scenic Act, Hazel Wolfe's visit, Christmas Bird Count, and endowments.

Panelists: Don & Sue Cannard
Wilson & Susan Cady, Gretchen Starke
Bill Feddeler, Arden & Sherry Hagen

Attendees are invited to join in the discussion.

Bird Class surprise at 6:45 PM
**BUTTERFLIES, DRAGONFLYS
& DAMSELFLYS**
by Dan Nelson



**NO MEETINGS
NO NEWSLETTERS
NO FIELD TRIPS**

UNTIL NEXT SEPTEMBER

The September Newsletter will come out the end of August. Check the website for updates on the Washington Big Year Competition or any other information.

www.vancouveraudubon.org

**Have a great summer of
fun and birding.**

See you September 4th

Treasurer's Report – Joan Durgin

Revenue for March 2012: **\$151.57**

Expenses for March 2012: **\$500.09**

Balance in Community Foundation account:
\$212,918.00

Old Business

Software needed for VAS's new internal controls has been ordered from TechSoup. Tammy expects all requests will be granted and the costs of products will be provided at a greatly reduced price.

New Business

Eric brought up the idea of producing VAS merchandise for retail sales and to use as thank you gifts for volunteers & presenters. There is enthusiasm for this idea and we will continue to explore options and designs.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

WA Big Year VAS Fund Raiser Competition

*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 journal of the adventures of **Team Bjorkman** and **Team Hagen** respectively & contribute articles to Columbia Flyway each month sharing the high-lights and low-lights of their quest.*

A not-so-peaceable kingdom

It's about 6:00 pm and we're standing by a dirt road at Ridgefield NWR, talking with refuge employee, Randy Hill. It's a nice evening and the light is starting to dim as the sun works towards the horizon. Then it happens.

We hear a crash followed by a skidding noise. A Peregrine Falcon has just raced in and taken a Cinnamon Teal from the knee-high grass just off the road from where we're standing. With the teal in its talons, it skids across the road for at least five feet before coming to a screeching stop.

As it does, the falcon tumbles over backwards onto its back without loosening its grip on the ill-fated duck. It then pops upright without missing a beat. This scene is playing out less than 50 feet from us.

The falcon is unfazed by our presence and begins the gruesome task of disassembling its prey. We watch as it effortlessly snips the head cleanly from the body and pluck the feathers off. It takes about five minutes to clean and devour the duck and when finished, its stomach is distended from eating so much. We wonder if it will be able to fly in this condition.

The scene continues as the Peregrine walks over to the grass and cleans its beak by wiping its face back and forth; and then it begins to stamp its feet as one would to



knock snow or mud from their boots. When satisfied that it is clean enough, it takes flight. The bird stays low for some time before gaining altitude and landing in a tree a few hundred yards away.

Wow, what a show! Yes; it was gruesome, but it was also fascinating.

We walk over to examine the scene. Not much is left of the teal but a pile of feathers and a carcass. The head lies next to a patch of blood where the kill was obviously made. A skid mark that nearly crosses the entire road ends here too. It is a violent but natural scene.

This experience and others less brutal are what this whole year is about for us. In four months, we have witnessed many exciting moments like this and the next eight are sure to bring many more. Not everyone has the opportunity to get to the remote and wild places in this state, but I urge you to get out when and where you can so you too can share these same types of experiences. Nature is exciting and wondrous and Washington has endless opportunities to experience it. We look forward to seeing you out there! *VAS President, Eric Bjorkman*

Team Hagen

For those of you who were at the May meeting you saw that after 4 months of birding Teams Bjorkman & Hagen were tied at 227 Washington species. That was a surprise. We know that we have different birds on our list. We call this a friendly competition but then things got really interesting as Bjorkmans traveled with us, to the coast for reported birds. Of course along with the new ones we both picked up, the Bjorkmans were also seeing some of the birds Arden & I already had so they were gaining on us. Then the next day a Ross's Goose & Wandering Tattler along with a White-tailed Kite were reported so of course back to the coast we were headed the next day. I got a called that night from Eric. "Are you going to the coast? Can we go with you?" "Yes" so off we went again. Eric had set up a trip for the 4 of us for the next Friday to the mountains NW of Olympia after **Mountain Quail** coming to a feeder, a rare resident bird in Washington and a species that I was lacking in my photo collection so in that since it was a LIFER to my photos. Not a great photo but a photo. From there we checked out Nisqually NWR for a couple more species. Arden & I knew we had our birding cut out for us this month BUT it is a big migration month so hopefully we can rake in some numbers despite the Bjorkman's having a Pelagic trip (ocean birding trip) planned this month. We have a pelagic trip next month to catch up on those species we hope. Many of the birds they already have we know we can easy see with just a few trips to the right areas. Arden & I are visiting many places in the state that we have never visited before that are absolutely beautiful & we can't wait to go back to them when we aren't so rushed to just find birds. *Sherry Hagen*

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Camp Bonneville Forestry Plan

I receive the county commissioners' schedule for each week -- their hearings and work sessions. Part of each commissioner hearing has what they call the consent agenda, routine stuff, such as permission to pay a bill or authorizing a department head to sign a contract, that doesn't require discussion. That is how I found out that the county has a forest management plan for Camp Bonneville.

The item on the consent agenda would authorize the county administrator to sign contracts that would implement the forest management plan for Camp Bonneville. Being concerned, I attended the hearing. At my request, the commissioners pulled the Camp Bonneville item from the consent agenda for discussion. This is what I learned from the county forester and a quick look at the Camp Bonneville Forest Stewardship Plan (which is on line).

The purpose of the plan is to improve forest health. There are a lot of trees that were planted and are growing too close together. Along Lacamas Creek, there is no viable riparian area in that the trees are so close together that there is no understory or other vegetation. Any money generated will go back to the park, not the county general fund. There will be no clear cuts. Replanting will include a diversity of tree species, understory (smaller trees such as dogwood and vine maple), and other vegetation. Creating greater habitat complexity is one of the goals of the plan. And the forest stewardship plan has received dual certification from the Forest Stewardship Council and the American Tree Farm System's Sustainable Forest Initiative. The Forest Stewardship Council is an international organization and it is not without controversy, but as far as I could tell, it is not owned by the timber companies. The county getting the certification is probably a good thing. I am reasonably satisfied that the county is heading in the right direction. This does not mean we should be complacent. I did not ask about the compatibility of unexploded ordinance and logging (kaboom?).



The Black Energy Source: Coal

Last December, the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) approved a resolution opposing all proposals to export coal from the Pacific Northwest. Vancouver Audubon hasn't done anything active on this issue because we have been involved with other issues. (Anybody who might be interested in taking this on, please contact me at gstarke@pacifier.com. The local group has monthly meetings on Wednesday evening.)

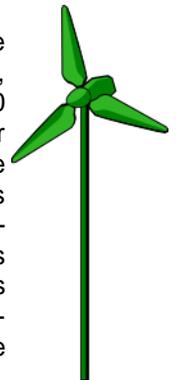
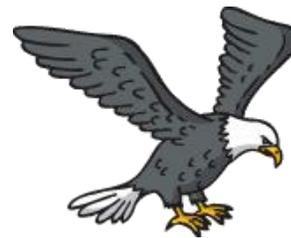
The WSACC resolution first cites the great environmental issue of our time, global warming. If China burns

that coal, the world is put at greater risk of tipping over into runaway global warming with serious problems for birds and people. True, China might get the coal from elsewhere, but why should we make it easier for her to obtain it? Besides, we in the Pacific Northwest would receive the dubious benefit of breathing old-fashioned pollution from the burning of coal, riding in on the winds from the west. Secondly, the resolution cited the environmental and public health problems of transporting coal. Extremely long unit coal trains would be coming through the Columbia River Gorge and Vancouver should the proposed coal exporting facility at Longview be approved.

Eagle Take Permits and Wind Power

The US Fish and Wildlife Service issues permits, called incidental take permits, for developments that may harm some individuals of a protected species. This is allowed under the Endangered Species Act, especially if the industry or company has developed a habitat conservation plan that protects, in general, protected species. An example might be an incidental take permit to take salmon when operating a hydroelectric dam. The take permits are for a specific time for a specific number of individuals and have specific conditions under which the project must operate.

The wind power industry has asked the USFWS to change their existing take permit, which is now for five years, to run for 30 years. National Audubon opposes a 30-year term and has let both the USFWS and the wind industry so. There are too many gaps in data concerning both golden and bald eagles and, given the uncertainty on the status of eagle populations and welfare, 30 years is way too long. National will be preparing formal comments and will be asking for the chapters to sign onto the letter.



Gretchen Starke





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April 4. An male adult **SURF SCOTER** that was being seen on South Quigley Lake of the River "S" Unit at Ridgefield NWR was photographed by Roger Windemuth.

April 6. I spotted a **SNOW GOOSE** and a **SAY'S PHOEBE** at the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

April 8. Les Carlson had a good morning at Steigerwald with his first for both the state and county in 2012, **SAY'S PHOEBES, CASPIAN TERNS, COMMON YELLOW-THROAT** and **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW**.

April 10. Sherry and Arden Hagen had their first of the year **HERMIT THRUSH** in their Cascade Park yard.

Les Carlson, George Mayfield, Barry Woodruff and I conducted a Skamania County "Big Day" coming up with a new record of 77 species. The best birds of the day were **EARED GREBE**, and all four of the common pigeons and doves.

April 11. Randy Hill was crossing Bachelor Slough in a closed area of the Ridgefield NWR when he spotted a **SAGE SPARROW**. This was the third Clark County record of this desert species. Also in the closed area there was a pair of **BLACK PHOEBES** near the location where the first for Washington State nesting occurred last year.

April 12. Jen Sanford walked the dike trail at Steigerwald Lake NWR from the parking area at Captain William Clark Park and found a **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** just west of the barns, this is a east of the Cascades breeding species. There were three **PURPLE MARTINS** checking out the nesting gourds, about a dozen **CASPIAN TERNS** streaming eastward along the Columbia, and six **SNOW GEESE** mixed in with a large flock of **ACKLING GEESE**. I finally saw a **EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** at our feeders, where Susan spotted the first one seen in Skamania County last year.

April 13. Steve Parsons photographed a **BREWER'S SPARROW** in the blackberries near three trees at south end of Rest Lake on the Ridgefield NWR. This is another bird normally found on the east side of the Cascades. Arden and Sherry Hagen were at Crow Butte Park in Benton County and had **4 AMERICAN AVOCETS, 2 BLACK-NECKED STILTS** and **2 WHITE PELICANS**, These birds were still there when Susan I also stopped by later in the afternoon. Lyn Topinka saw the **EARED GREBE** at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, off of Highway 14, in Klickitat County.

April 14. At Vancouver Lake, Kelly Johnson found 41 species including **WHITE-CROWNED, GOLDEN-CROWNED** and **WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS** all at one time in a small patch of shrubs, the first **GREEN HERON** reported to me this year and **RED BREASTED SAPSUCKER, COOPER'S HAWK, CASPIAN TERN, BROWN CREEPER**, and **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**.

At the Steigerwald Lake NWR, Bob Flores was on the dike

along the Columbia River between the William Clark Park and the refuge when he spotted **6 SNOW GEESE** and a **BRANT** with the **ACKLING GEESE** in the open field. This was the first Brant ever seen on this refuge.

April 15, On his way to work, Randy Fortish stopped by the Ridgefield Refuge and saw a **PURPLE MARTIN** at the gourd nests. He also found an **OSPREY, SAVANNAH SPARROWS, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** and both **GREATER AND LESSER YELLOW-LEGS** in large numbers.

April 17, At the Steigerwald lake NWR, Mike Clarke spotted another east of the cascades species a **VESPER SPARROW**.

April 18, Scott Carpenter and Roger Windemuth saw a **LONG-BILLED CURLEW** at the Ridgefield NWR. This species is also one of the east of the Cascades nesters.

April 20. Mike Clarke found a **BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** and a group of about **15 DUNLIN** in a flooded field next to Ruffner's Pond along Lower River Rd. in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands.

April 21. Randy Hill had a hooting **SOOTY GROUSE** up toward Larch Mountain along with plenty of calling **BAND-TAILED PIGEONS** and **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS** singing everywhere. A **SAGE THRASHER** was seen and photographed at Ridgefield NWR in an area closed to the public.

April 22. Bob and Geri Rowe spotted A **RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER** at Salmon Creek Park on the trail near the turtle pond.

April 25. While birding between Larch and Silver Star Mountains in Clark County, Mike Clarke found six species of warblers, **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, COMMON YELLOWTHROAT, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER, TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** and **WILSON'S WARBLER**. Bob and Geri Rowe found a **BLACK THROATED GRAY WARBLER** at the LaCenter Bottoms.

April 26. A **BURROWING OWL** was photographed at the Evergreen Airport on Mill Plain, another species that breeds in eastern Washington. At one time they did nest in Clark County according to Don Cannard. Randy Hill reported from the Ridgefield NWR that the count on **SOLITARY SANDPIPERS** reached 4 at three different ponds. **2 RED-NECKED PHALAROPES** were seen landing on Long Lake and both pair of **BLACK PHOEBE** have active nests.

April 27. Bob Rowe heard a **BARRED OWL** at Curtain Creek Park, west of the Fairgrounds. Alex Chmielewski found and photographed at least four **SOLITARY SANDPIPERS** at Ridgefield Refuge.

April 28. Randy Fortish led a birding tour for the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards to the Pierce NWR in Skamania

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

County. The fifteen participants on this visit found 38 species of birds including the first of the year **WESTERN WOOD PEWEE**.

A *Washington Ornithological Society* field trip in Clark County led by Randy Hill came up with 90 species including **SOOTY GROUSE, SOLITARY SANDPIPER, BARN OWL, BLACK PHOEBE, HERMIT WARBLER,** and **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER**. The next day some of the group joined him in a visit to the Vancouver Lake Lowlands where they saw **WESTERN KINGBIRD, WESTERN Tanager, BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK, YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** and many **LESSER GOLDFINCHES**.

In the Vancouver Lake Lowlands, Mike Clarke had **54 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** at the Shillapoo Wildlife Area, a pair of **WESTERN KINGBIRDS** and a **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** near Vancouver Lake.

April 29. A morning of birding in the Salmon Creek and Vancouver Lake areas of Clark County that provided Randy Hill four first of the year species, **WESTERN KINGBIRD, WARBLING VIREO, WESTERN Tanager,** and **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK**. He and his wife did an afternoon walk from Wintler Park downstream to the condos along the Vancouver waterfront trail. A **PACIFIC LOON** was hanging on in the bay where the trail is closed. Adrian Hinkle, Christopher Hinkle, and Em Scattaregia hiked the Hamilton Mountain Trail, at Beacon Rock State Park, in Skamania County and heard 2 singing **CANYON WRENS** on the way up. An adult **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** flew by the summit, and they had a couple **PEREGRINE FALCONS** too.

April 30. Susan saw many migrant species at our place east of Washougal while I was still in Texas. Species present were **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD, PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER, WESTERN Tanager, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER,** and **WILSON'S WARBLER**.

April 31. **EVENING GROSBEAKS** were at Bob and Geri Rowe's feeders.

May 1. A **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** was seen from Carol and Don Kohler's yard in Camas for a new "yard bird". These lovely birds are very uncommon in Clark County but fairly common in the oak forests of Klickitat County. A **WILSON'S WARBLER** was seen by Lyn Topinka flitting around in their backyard in Vancouver.

May 2. Eric and Tammy Bjorkman witnessed a **PEREGRINE FALCON** kill of a **CINNAMON TEAL** at the Ridgefield NWR. It happened about 50 feet from where they were standing and the feast took place while they watched and photographed the event.

May 3. A flock of **38 HORNED GREBES** in breeding plumage were found in the Columbia River at the Capt. William Clark Park in Washougal by Wendy Duncan and Krista Daniels. Randy Hill got a couple of looks at what his wife and daughter had seen earlier in the morning, a female **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD**, at one of their feeders in Ridgefield. This is the smallest North American humming-

bird and in Washington it breeds east of the Cascade Mountains.

May 4. A **WESTERN Tanager** was outside Mark Silliman's office window. A male **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** and a **NASHVILLE WARBLER** were at our place in western Skamania County.

May 5. Another **SOLITARY SANDPIPER** was seen and photographed at the Ridgefield NWR by Bruce Dishaw. An **OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** singing away at the top of a tree was a new yard and year bird for Eric and Tammy Bjorkman.

May 6. Roger Windemuth saw a flock of about 7-10 **NASHVILLE WARBLERS** as he entered the Ridgefield NWR's River S Unit.

May 7. Tammy and Eric Bjorkman birded Larch Mountain and found quite a few **MACGILLIVRAY'S** and **HERMIT WARBLERS**. They also had a booming **SOOTY GROUSE** there.

May 9. Susan and I saw 42 species of birds at our place while having coffee on the deck. We had **HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER, WESTERN Tanager, ORANGE-CROWNED, NASHVILLE, BLACK-THROATED GRAY, YELLOW-RUMPED, TOWNSEND'S** and **HERMIT WARBLERS** and one **SWAINSON'S THRUSH**.

May 10. At Vancouver Lake's Shillapoo Wildlife Area, Mike Clarke found a **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER**.

From April 17 to May 1. Les Carlson, George Mayfield, Jeff Jendro and I did a 3,000 mile road tour in **Texas** and came up with 280 species of birds. We saw many of the Texas specialty birds and some very unusual ones including Groove-billed Ani, Yellow-green Vireo, Tropical Parula, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, White-collared Seedeater, and if it is accepted as a wild bird, the first Tropical Mockingbird in North America. Both Les and George went over the 500 species mark for birds seen in the Lower Forty-eight states.

By the end of May the latest migrant species of the state, the Common Nighthawk will be arriving. The breeding season is when the birds will be most active and vocal making them easier to find. There will still be some out of place or lost birds that will add spice to birding but there will not be the concentrations of birds you find during the wintering seasons. So far for the year 189 species have been reported from Clark County and 141 birds were seen in Skamania County, to see the complete list for all 39 counties go to:

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

If you have seen a species not checked off please let me know. If you find anything unusual or interesting please contact me, the Hagens and the Bjorkmans as soon as possible.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com



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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.*



June 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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