



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

March 2012

Calendar

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

***Tuesday, Mar. 6, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, Mar. 5, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Bonnie Bingle
8705 E 51st Ave. Vancouver 360-576-0330

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	29	30	31

PROGRAM:

Birds of Trinidad & Tobago

by Eric & Tammy Bjorkman

These world travelers are at it again.



Join us to view pictures from the Bjorkman's 2011 trip to wonderful Trinidad & Tobago. These tropical islands host many beautiful species of colorful birds. They stayed at the world famous Asa Wright Nature Center and hiked several trails in this unique habitat.

VAS Upcoming Programs:

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

FIELD TRIP

Early Spring Columbia Gorge

Leader: Wilson Cady
360-835-5947

When: Mar. 10, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Where: Meeting Spot: Steigerwald Lake NWR Parking Lot at milepost 18, Highway 14



Explore the Columbia River Gorge looking for early migrant birds and wildflowers. This is an all-day trip so dress for the weather and bring a lunch and beverages. People who do not want to be out all day can drop out and return home at any time. If you have a FRS Radio (walkie-talkie) please bring it for communication between vehicles on the road.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Susan Adams • Susan Boyd Lusarreta • Dolores Farmer • Wendel & Mandy Johnson • Alta Lampman • Corey Lockbeam • Sumaya Mitchell • Ernest Santner • Linda Stassel • Elizabeth Stout • Pamela Tellez • Julia Thomas • Linda Thompson • Ermadean Walker • Dennis P. Weaver

Transfers: Deborah Hyde-Sato • Jean Gammon • Barbara Mills

Audubon Websites

Get Into Birds

<http://getintobirds.audubon.org/get-started-birding>

On-line Guide to North American Birds

<http://www.audubonbirds.org/>

Bird Profiles:

<http://birds.audubon.org/species>

VAS BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 6

INTERNAL CONTROL PRESENTATION

The Board of Directors is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of all accounting information and for the adequacy of our internal controls. The objective of an internal control system is to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that the assets of Vancouver Audubon are safeguarded against unauthorized use and that financial statements are not materially misstated. We hired CPA Mike Plymale to help us create a system to oversee our internal controls. Over the next few months, the Board will be implementing his recommendations and improving our internal controls.

TREASURER'S REPORT – JOAN DURGIN

Revenue for December 2011: \$150.72

Expenses for December 2011: \$936.06

Revenue for January 2012: \$2,066.99

Expenses for January 2012: \$150.00

Balance in the bequest fund at the Community Foundation as of 12/30/11: \$213,249.20

MEMBERSHIP – GEORGE MAYFIELD

George led a discussion about the possibility of changing the newsletter renewal date to match the calendar and avoid the confusion that the November date currently does. There will be more discussion on this topic at a later meeting

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

WA Big Year Competition Fund Raiser

*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.*

As I write this it is the seventh of February and we're at 142 bird species. Prorate that out and we'll see over 1700 before December 31st! As we all know, that certainly won't happen. The one year record for Washington is 359. When the late Patrick Sullivan ended the year with 349 species, he ended up putting more than 60,000 miles on his vehicle that year. Last year, Ryan Shaw saw 351 species. A very impressive number indeed.

First and foremost, this is a fund raising opportunity for Vancouver Audubon. With that said, the competition is heating up and the Hagen's are more than worthy opponents. For me, though, this is simply a lot of fun. Let me

share with you my favorite moment to date.

We are looking for a Glaucous Gull at Westport when a male Long-tailed Duck drops down from the sky and lands in the water right next to us. We already have one of these gorgeous birds for the year but this is our first ever male. It swims away from us, heading towards the docks across the harbor.

We run back to the car and drive around to the pier we think it is bound for. As we walk down the float we can see that there is no access to the end of the dock. A crab processing plant is placed firmly in our way. While we are trying to figure out what to do, a man standing nearby starts a conversation with us. We soon learn he works there and when we tell him about the duck, he is intrigued. He invites to go through the plant and take a better look.

This guy is a life-long fisherman. He's been working on that same pier for nearly 30 years. He's seen it go from locally owned and thriving to bust. It's now corporate owned and he works for that company. Life has changed dramatically for him and Westport over that span of time. I tell him that my father and grandfather were professional fisherman right here in Westport in the late 40's when they moved across the country from New Hampshire.

We walk around the end of the building and there it sits. Our fisherman friend is blown away. In all his time there, he's never seen one of these ducks. He points out the loons and cormorants and tells us he calls them 'hell divers' for their ability to stay underwater for ridiculous lengths of time and for their proficiency at fishing. He really seems to be enjoying our time together. It's a good day.

The birding is what drives us, but it is these types of interactions that are dear to us. This state is grand and the people in it are diverse and interesting. My challenge to you would be to pick a spot in Washington where you've never been before and visit it this year. When you stop at a store, a gas station, a motel, or a restaurant, tell them why you're there. Let them know that you're supporting their economy. Who knows - you might even make a new friend in the process.

VAS President, Eric Bjorkman



message/fax (360) 253-5771

Everything for the Wild Bird enthusiast™

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



The Legislature is in Session

And the attacks are on. An example of a bad bill attacking the Growth Management Act was one that would have made it more difficult to appeal a local land use decision. As it is now, if you testify at a hearing, you have what is called standing, that is, you have a right to appeal the decision, even if you do not live next door to the proposed development. This bill would have removed that right. In addition, it would have raised the filing fee an additional \$400. Fortunately, Senator Pridemore is chairman of the committee to which the bill was sent and the senator made sure the bill went nowhere. Another bill, described in the environmental coalition Hot List as a "kitchen sink of bad environmental policy," is, as of this writing, still alive and in Ways and Means. Yes, elections do matter.

Lobby Day

Vancouver Audubon, the Sierra Club, and Friends of Clark County were represented in the group that went to Olympia on Environmental Lobby Day. Of the nine legislators representing the majority of Clark County, we saw six in person, talked to the aides of two, and left material with Joe Zarelli.

Ed Orcutt (18th District): We asked him to oppose the sewer bill (HB 2267). Val Alexander of Friends of Clark County told him that the bill would make the situation at the La Center-I-5 junction worse. He didn't really respond to that. Instead, we got into a pointless discussion about a matter that came up last year.

Sharon Wylie (49th District): She would have no problem opposing HB 2267. She was cautious about adjustments to I-937. Generally, she is supportive of our issues.

Paul Harris (17th District): We talked to his aide as he was in committee. The aide, Joe DePinto, seemed receptive, but he couldn't really speak for his boss. On the issue of toxics and kids, DePinto said that Harris is concerned about toxics and does not want to harm kids, but he would need proof that a given chemical was harmful. What would be adequate proof, he did not say.

Don Benton (17th District): As is usual, he greeted us cordially. I and two others had to leave after five minutes to get to another meeting. Past experience is that he may say something that we want to hear, but that he would vote another way.

Jim Moeller (49th District): We spoke to his aide, Maureen Gallegos. Moeller is likely to be supportive of the Growth Management and is likely to oppose HB 2267. On I-937, he is concerned about the issue of small PUDs that obtain 100% or nearly 100% of their power from hydro. This is a problem because they would have to buy power they don't need. Moeller is very interested in keeping power rates low for low

income people.

Ann Rivers (18th District): She seemed receptive to what we had to say. We talked a bit about toxics, but more about the Growth Management Act. On the sewer extension bill, she seemed to lean toward opposition. She said that the City of La Center was behind the bill. Rivers realized that the bill would open up more land for development. However, she also seemed supportive of decreasing regulation. She cited one example of the Department of Ecology taking too long to issue a permit.

Tim Probst (17th District): He generally seemed sympathetic to our issues. He mentioned that measures to increase revenue "have not been polling well." That includes closing loopholes.

Craig Pridemore (49th District): He has been working with FutureWise, the statewide organization that supports the Growth Management Act, to either kill bad bills or to fix bills that can be salvaged. Craig is very supportive of GMA. On I-937, he is understanding of small PUDs using hydropower being required to buy power they don't need. On increasing revenue and the polls, Craig was more optimistic than Probst. "Polling badly" meant 54%. He is optimistic that there is time to build support for revenue measures.

Of Mountain Snowpack, Elk and Songbirds

An interesting item from *The Columbia Basin Bulletin* reported on a study on the effects of global warming on songbird habitat in the mountains. For the past 22 years, snowpack has been declining in the mountains of Arizona. The number of deciduous trees and songbirds have also declined. What was the connection, if any?



For six years, experimental areas were fenced to keep out elk, thereby mimicking the effects of heavy snowpack. The numbers and kinds of plants and the numbers of songbirds in the fenced areas were compared to plants and birds in areas outside the fences where elk had access. The biologists found that, within the fenced areas, the plant and songbird populations were recovering.

The study demonstrated that the reduction of snowpack in the mountains has made forage more available for elk, forage that used to be covered with snow for longer periods. The elk, being lazy, now stay at higher elevations, munching on shrubs and trees, shrubs and trees that had provided nesting habitat for songbirds. Fewer songbirds nested, and those that did nest suffered more predation. Just goes to show you that everything is connected to everything else.

Gretchen Starke



Jan. 12, Arden and Sherry Hagen saw the **TUFTED DUCK** and a female **SURF SCOTER**, at Marine Park in Vancouver. There were two Tufted Ducks being seen there, one of which showed signs of being a hybrid, probably with a scaup. That duck had a short blunt tuft and grayish on the back unlike the other bird. Many people including Lyn Topinka, Jim Johnson, Dave Irons, Shawneen Finnegan, saw these birds and contributed photos to the identification discussion.

Jan. 13, Harry and Gay Leslie were looking at birds near Vancouver Lake when they spotted **75-100 SANDHILL CRANES** near Vancouver Lake County Park. In early spring these birds will begin doing their spectacular mating dance before departing for the north in early April. Barry Woodruff and I went on a four day Washington Ornithological Society winter birds field trip centered out of Omak, in Okanagon County. We had some good winter species including **YELLOW-BILLED LOON, GYRFALCON, NORTHERN HAWK-OWL, BOHEMIAN WAXWING, AMERICAN TREE SPARROW, SNOW BUNTING, PINE GROSBEEK, GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH and COMMON REDPOLL.**

Jan. 14, Arden and Sherry Hagen saw a **YELLOW-BILLED LOON** at the Ilwaco, WA Marina, this is the least common of the four loon species found in the U.S. The winter birds have finally showed up at Nancy Ellifrit's feeders when she had **20 PINE SISKINS, 14 EVENING GROSBEEKS and 1 YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** along with **20 MOURNING DOVES**, which is more than usual for her Ridgefield area home.

Jan. 20, Randy Hill counted **18 HORNED LARKS** at the Steigerwald Lake NWR in Washougal, this is an uncommon bird in Clark County.

Jan. 21, Steve Kohl spotted a **HORNED LARK** on the road on the Auto Tour Route at the Ridgefield NWR, showing how widespread this incursion was. Wendy Duncan reported that there were flocks of **HORNED LARKS** along Highway 14 near Washougal. Carol and Don Kohler traveled to Woodburn, Oregon and saw and photographed their life **BRAMBLING** that was visiting a feeder there.

Jan. 22, **HORNED LARKS** were still being found in Washougal, according to Ken Knittle. I saw these birds and then drove up to Bonneville Dam, in Skamania County, where there was a flock of several hundred there too.

Jan. 23, Barry Woodruff and Al Larabee had a **SURF SCOTER** on Rest Lake at the Ridgefield NWR. This is a mollusk eating duck normally found on salt water. George Mayfield and Les Carlson had a nice day of birding in western Clark County. With 71 species tallied, the highlights being **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK and SWAMP SPARROW.** Some others sightings were **AMERICAN BITTERN, CANVASBACK, PURPLE FINCH and RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER.**

Jan. 25, Scott Carpenter reported a **SWAMP SPARROW** at Ridgefield NWR. Other birds he saw at the refuge this past week included a **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, two HORNED GREBES, 2-3 RED-**

SHOULDERED HAWKS, 1-2 GOLDEN EAGLES, at least one **BLACK PHOEBE,** a very bright **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER,** and the continuing flock of **cooperative PURPLE FINCHES.** After a long period of no **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** sightings, he located one again. Post Office Lake continued to host **300+ CANVASBACKS.**

Jan. 27, Lyn and Gene Topinka drove to Ilwaco and saw the long-staying **YELLOW-BILLED LOON** in the marina there.

Jan. 28, Two **WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS** were found in a flock of Golden-crowned Sparrows in the Woodland Bottoms by John and Loraine Allinger. They had also reported that there were many loons in the Lewis River including two that may have been **YELLOW-BILLED LOONS,** although their photos were inconclusive. If they were that would have put all four North American species in one spot.

Jan. 30, I received photos taken by Wendy Duncan of a male **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** at Cottonwood Beach in Washougal. Thanks to her reporting of this rare visitor from east of the Cascades many people were able to see this great bird. Randy Hill, Bob Flores, Barry Woodruff, Randy Fortish, Scott Morrison, Danielle and Kelly Johnson, and Arden and Sherry Hagen were among the people who reported seeing this woodpecker.

Jan. 31, Jim Carr, who lives in the Salmon Creek area of North Vancouver, reported that a **COOPER'S HAWK** that has moved in to his neighborhood. During the winter time these bird eating hawks will visit bird feeders searching for weak or slow birds to eat, much like a lion stalking prey at a waterhole. Gene and Lyn Topinka went out to Woodland Bottoms to look for the Loons which have been reported on the Lewis River and found **COMMON, RED-THROATED and PACIFIC LOONS** there that may have indicated the presence of smelt in the river.

Feb. 1, 3 **BARN SWALLOWS** were at Ridgefield NWR according to Scott Carpenter, who also reported that Post Office Lake had one **HORNED GREBE** and one **EARED GREBE.**

Feb. 2, Lyn Topinka called saying that she was looking at a male **TUFTED DUCK** at Lacamas Park in Camas. I hurried out there and saw this bird in an unusual location of a shallow backwater where it may have been feeding on the non-native Apple Snails that are in this lake. I then went to Washougal and found the **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** there. Lyn's quick reporting of this bird allowed many people to see this Eurasian species. Bill Meyers and his wife found a **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** while walking along the Columbia River dike along the Steigerwald Lake NWR. This bird also stayed around for several days allowing Barry Woodruff, Randy Hill, Bob Flores, George Mayfield, Les Carlson and Carol and Don Kohler to see it.

Feb. 3, The **Vermilion Flycatcher** that had been at the Ridgefield NWR last fall was re-found by Alex Chmielewski, the refuge biologist. It had returned to the

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

same area it was using last fall, Randy Hill also saw it later in the afternoon. Sybil and Steve Kohl headed to Ocean Shores, in Gray's Harbor County to view the **EMPEROR GOOSE**, **5-6 SNOWY OWLS** on Damon Point and the **SURFBIRDS** and **ROCK SANDPIPERS** at the jetty. Les Carlson and I checked the Ridgefield NWR finding a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK**, **MERLIN** and a **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** before my truck died stranding us along I-5.

Feb. 5. Ray Korpi saw the long-staying **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** near 53rd and Harney in Vancouver.

Feb. 6. Les Carlson passed the 100 species mark for species seen in Clark with **30 WESTERN MEADOW-LARKS** and a **SHORT-EARED OWL** north of Vancouver Lake Park.

Feb. 9. When I checked there, the **MOUNTAIN BLUE-BIRD** was still at the Steigerwald Lake NWR along with a **CANVASBACK** and **17 WESTERN MEADOWLARKS**.

By the time the month of March starts we will be seeing some of the first birds of the Spring migration with the return of Turkey Vultures, Osprey, Say's Phoebes, Rufous Hummingbirds, Cassin's Vireos, and the swallows. I am hoping that the exciting birding that we have had locally this winter will continue through the Spring. As of the writing of this column there had been 125 species of birds reported from Clark County and 75 species reported from Skamania County for the 2012 Cumulative Year List project. For more information on this list go to: <http://www.wabirder.com/bartel.html> If you have seen a bird not checked off for this year please let me know. And please continue to send me your sightings for this column.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

*This Washington Big Year Competition Fund Raiser is a lot of fun and **HARD ON THE BODY**. But then this has been a busy & exciting beginning of the year for birding in Washington with all the "not so normal" & rare birds showing up.*

One of the rarest birds that has shown up is the **McKAY'S BUNTING** at Damon Point in Ocean Shores. First reports were "is it a McKay's?" then it was confirmed. The McKay's Bunting breeds only on two islands in the Bering Sea, St. Matthew & Hall islands, & winters on the western coast of Alaska. It doesn't venture down to the lower 48 very often. This would be a lifer for both Arden & I. We had to go see it. We had so much to do that next day, Saturday Feb., 11 so maybe we would wait until the next Tuesday. I found out our competitors for the VAS WA Big Year Fund Raiser, Tammy & Eric Bjorkman were also headed there. In December we had missed the Ross's Gull in Okanogan by 27 hours. Did we want to risk a repeat on this lifer? Next morning we dropped everything & threw our stuff in the car & headed off on the 3 hour drive to Ocean Shores. We had dropped everything in January and drove 2 days straight to

below Lake Havasu in Arizona for a rare **Nutting's Flycatcher** which we saw then drove 2 days back home so 3 hours to Ocean Shores was a no brainer. Right? I had quickly printed the instructions on where it was found from Tweeters (WA Birders on line). We got there & it was raining & windy. Then I realized I did not have my poncho to cover my camera, binoculars & clothing. We grabbed our large umbrellas. Arden read the instruction & I followed him as we headed out on the long walk to Damon Point. I kept asking him if this was the right way & he assured me it was. Finally I brought out my smartphone with the GPS on it & showed him we **were not** in the right area so it was an even further walk than planned. Yikes! Tammy left a phone message that they had parked next to us & were on their way to the point. It was really hard walking & fighting the wind & rain that was coming in sideways & was now going right through our rain pants. We finally got to the right spot & Bjorkman's were already there starting their search in the grasses & bare spots near the end of the spit. We all decided to walk in a grid so as to cover more area. All of a sudden, I flushed the McKay's Bunting that was not more than 5 feet in front of me. I called to the others "Right here" & pointed just a few feet in front of me. What an absolutely beautiful little bird. I threw down the umbrella so I could concentrate on getting a photo which meant that rain was now soaking my coat, hair & gloves. The Bunting was very cooperative by walking short distances, stopping or flying only a few feet. Eric and I took as many photos as we could while fighting the fog & rain that would get on the camera lens. I hoped that I had at least one decent photo. As other birders started to arrive to find this rare little bird, we de-



ecided to head back. My umbrella turned inside out several times to the point where it was a tangled mess. My left eye was covered in salt water so I was one eyed for a while, my jeans were soaked as was my coat. Many people asked about the Snowy Owls on the point as we walked back and we said yea they are there but that wasn't our target bird this day. It was #715 ABA lifer the McKay's Bunting. YEA!!

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.*



March 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.

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* ***

C9ZY130Z

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:
George Mayfield 360-687-0360
Eric Bjorkman 360-695-3116

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.....	Tammy Bjorkman	.....213-6489	.....	bjorkmante@iinet.com
Treasurer	Joan Durgin	.....834-5621	.....	jdurgin1@hotmail.com
Education.....	OPEN			
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	Bob Rowe	.....254-8699	.....	rowe9629@comcast.net
Sightings	Wilson Cady	.....835-5947	.....	gorgebirds@juno.com
Editor.....	Sherry Hagen	.....892-8872	.....	vas@pacifier.com
Mailings.....	Bonnie Bingle	.....576-0330	.....	audubonnie@comcast.net
Volunteer Cor.....	OPEN			
Refreshments	Cindy Mayfield	.....687-0360	.....	gomayf@comcast.net