



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

March 2014

Calendar

***Tuesday, Feb. 25, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Eric & Tammy Bjorkman, 4110 NE 54th Ave., Vancouver 360-695-3116

***Tuesday, Mar. 4 6:45 pm: Free 30 minute class before the General Meeting

***Tuesday, Mar. 4, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29

PROGRAM

The Role of the Missoula Floods in Creating our NW Landscape

Speaker: JIM CHASE
Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Volunteer

Many of us know bits and pieces of the Missoula Floods creation of the rivers, coulees canyons, and scenery in our great Northwest. Jim is a newcomer to our corner of the country but he took an immediate interest in the subject, toured the areas, and studied up enough to have given several talks about this. He will show some of his pictures, refer to geographer studies, and recommend hikes and scenes for sightseeing. This will add to our knowledge of the Columbia River and Columbia Gorge in which we each cherish special places.

As our kids say: " It's Awesome!"

FIELD TRIP

Early Spring Birding in the Gorge

Leader: Wilson Cady, 360-835-5947
When: Mar. 9th, Sunday
Time: 8:00 AM
Meet at: Steigerwald Lake NWR parking lot at Milepost 18 on Highway 14.

We will carpool.

Do not forget to pay your driver for gas.

Celebrate the first day of Daylight Savings Time with an all-day outing up the Columbia River Gorge searching for early migrant birds and Spring wildflowers. Dress for the weather and bring a lunch and beverages. This trip will be primarily by vehicle with little walking. If you have a FRS (walkie-talkie) radio please bring it to communicate between vehicles. We will be carpooling from Steigerwald and will return late in the day.



Columbia River Gorge

Vancouver Audubon

Board Meeting Report January 28th

Treasurer's Report – Joan Durgin

Revenue for December 2013: \$3,311.93

Expenses for December 2013: \$1,128.97

New Business

1. PORT OF CAMAS-WASHOUGAL WATERFRONT PARK & TRAIL
The port is in the beginning stages of designing a waterfront park and trail for the community. They are interested in any input from the Vancouver Audubon Society in regards to elements the group would like to see in the trail design. This project is located on the old Hambleton Lumber yard site and continues further east to the port's 6th street property. The City of Washougal is doing their part in completing the section that will go from the end of our trail to Steamboat Landing so that the trail will start at the port marina park and head all the way east to the Steigerwald National Wildlife Reserve.

Tammy Bjorkman, VAS Secretary

Welcome New Members: Peg Agar • Jim Allen • R. Allen • Dena Anderson • Tara Arquette • Anne Bowling • S. Carlyle Lukas • Susan Caulk • Grant Christensson • Judie Cole • Julie Davis • Alexander Dimitrov • Philip Durkee • Meggan Evans • Suzanne Farman • Rockwell Fransen • Marie Galyon • Diane Garcia • Barbara Grovom • Kaleb Guenther • Sandy Hacker • Erin Hayes • Les Heffler • Billie Hill • Sondra Hill • Cynthia Johnson • Monica Klump • Terry Lamp • Margaret Landon • Gina Lemberg • Cheryl Luce • Esther Luers • Barbara Meisenheimer • Marlene Mejia • Mina Milligan • Nicole Newhouse •

“Birdwatchers Needed”

March 2015: Birding in Ecuador Fund Raiser Trip

If you are interested in birding this wonderful country with a great leader, Edison Buenano, and helping VAS at the same time, then contact

Arden Hagen at

**iambakerman@comcast.net or call
360-892-8872 for info.**

Arden & Sherry Hagen have been on 5 trips with Leader Edison Buenano. Twice to Ecuador, twice to Peru and the latest trip last fall to Colombia.

Colleen O'Brien • Rosie Ojaghi • Carol Patrick • Barry Peterson • Torri Phelan • Jean Potter-Openshaw • Jane Rice • Dina Riley • Kibbey Rock • Eldon Schmidt • Trink Schurian • Patricia Schwartz • Carlie Sharp • Cidney Sims • Julie Smith • Jeff Stark • Ray & Cathy Steiger • Shannon Stewart • Erik Towers • Cindy Ulrich • Jerry Walsh • Dave Warner • Dorothy Weiss • Melissa Whittington • Michael Wood • Alice Yang

OLYMPIC PENINSULA **BirdFest**
April 4-6, 2014
Come bird with us!

- ♦ *San Juan Island Cruise*
- ♦ *Neah Bay Trip*
- ♦ *Guided Birding Trips*
- ♦ *Bird Drawing Class*
- ♦ *Auction & Raffle*
- ♦ *Photography Workshop*
- ♦ *Gala Banquet with speaker Noah Strycker*

For more information:
www.olympicbirdfest.org
info@olympicbirdfest.org
or 360-681-4076

Location: Sequim, WA

Description: Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Noah Strycker: “Bird World: the fascinating parallels between bird and human behavior”. The festival with the most spectacular setting!

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 6-8, 2014. Register separately at

www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon

Birdfest website address:

www.olympicbirdfest.org

E-mail address: opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com

Latest in the Legislature: Oil Transport Safety

The bill to improve safety of transporting oil (HB 2347) made it out of the Environment Committee before the cut-off and, as of this writing, is now in appropriations. This bill would require that the government (and, through a website, the people of Washington) be informed of anything related to oil to be transported through Washington. That includes where the route is, when it is going to be transported, and mode of transport. It also provides that the WSU, in cooperation with the Department of Ecology (DOE) and emergency management, will do a study on the best way to respond to a disaster involving oil transportation. In addition, it provides for training for personnel involved with transporting oil, including river and harbor pilots. All in all, this bill would help us cope with the increased transport of a substance that more and more seems to be even more dangerous than the potential for fouling our rivers and ocean.



A note of interest to voters in Clark County: Representative Sharon Wylie is a co-sponsor. If you live in the 49th District, thank her. Representatives Harris (17th District) and Pike (18th District) voted against the bill in committee. If you live in those districts, you might ask them if they are unconcerned about the welfare, or even lives, of their constituents. Especially those of you in the 18th, as the district includes the Burlington-Northern Santa Fe tracks.

Latest in the Legislature: Anti-Environmental Senate Bills

The "Protecting Water Quality" While Maintaining and Enhancing the Viability of Agricultural (SB 6087) bill doesn't. Doesn't protect water quality, that is. This bill, called the poop bill according to Audubon's legislative ob-

server, Jennifer Syrowitz, would yank DOE's ability to regulate agricultural water runoff. Farmers' profits and convenience trumps clean water in the Yakima Valley. This bill was introduced by Senator Honeyford, 15th District. We share a tiny piece of that district with Yakima. It is in the Senate Rules Committee as of this writing.

The Capping the Amount of the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Fee (SB 6264) limits that fee to \$100, a ridiculously low amount that doesn't begin to cover the cost of the program. It's in Ways and Means. The Adjusting the Dollar Threshold for Substantial Development Under the Shorelines Management Act (SB 6368) would eliminate permits for shorelines development such as docks and boat ramps. These may seem like minor developments, but, if unwisely placed, they can have harmful effects on shoreline wetlands.

These few bills can give you the flavor of what is going on in the state senate. They may seem minor, but it is nibble, nibble, nibble away at the environmental protections we have worked so hard over the years to put in place.

The Climate Change Task Force

You may have that last December, the task force that Governor Inslee appointed to consider various ways the state could deal with climate change suddenly quit. The task force was supposed to come up with recommendations to present to the legislature. The recommendations were supposed to include analyses that would help the legislature to make decisions.

One side tried to come up with solutions, the other side was so wrapped up in economics they couldn't understand the seriousness of the issue. In fact, it is my observation and impression that even those elected officials and business leaders agree that climate change is real and that we need to do something, sometime, do not really understand the gravity of our situation. Solutions are suggested that would have been wonderful thirty years ago, and even these are shot down by those who claim they are too expensive, take too much out of the economy, are too hard on business.

The task force hasn't disappeared. There will be continued discussion. And the climate will continue to do what it has been doing, however long we humans talk.

A Personal Note

This piece does not quite meet my standards. Due to the fact I came home from a six day stay in the hospital a day before it was due, I had to do this in a hurry. No worry, it was just another way my gut was acting up. I'll just have to keep an eye on how and what I eat and pay attention to symptoms.

Gretchen Starke 

Birds of a Feather

Winter Roost Together

By Jamie Bails, WDFW habitat biologist

Winter can be a critical time for the wildlife species that don't migrate out of Washington or hibernate until spring. For some birds like crows, chickadees, robins, and blackbirds, a communal winter roost can make the difference between life and death. Communal winter roosts can provide protection from predators with safety in numbers, foraging opportunities alongside experienced birds, and even warmth with shared body heat in small spaces. Roosts can also provide the *social interaction necessary to find mates, come spring.*

Crows are among the best known and studied communal winter roosting species in Washington. One of the largest crow roosts - up to 10,000 birds -- is on North Creek in King County, just east of the University of Washington Bothell campus.

Social hierarchy seems to play an important role in the organization of the roost site. Senior members may occupy higher perches, while younger individuals settle in the lower areas. At night, most crows move down into the thicker branches to reduce the effects of wind and rain. Research has also shown that the young crows form circles around the elders, maybe as trade for a day of good foraging and companionship. Thus, the elder crows are afforded more protection from predators, like great horned owls. With many eyes and ears watching, it would be difficult for any predator to attack an individual in this roost.

The term "roosting" generally refers to communal birds that remain together in large flocks like this. But it can also refer to a period of inactivity, similar to sleeping at night. Some birds roost alone, only pairing up for nesting season.

Many species roost in cavities made by woodpeckers in decaying old trees with broken tops, called "snags." Smaller species, like bushtits, kinglets and juncos are more likely to roost in closed cavities, alone or in small groups. Three to four black-capped chickadees will group together in a confined space, using their body heat to warm the air around them and save energy.

Larger birds like robins, stellar jays, and varied thrushes, often roost in the canopy of evergreen trees or tall shrubs.

Birds that overwinter here generally are built to stay warm, given enough food and shelter. They fluff up their feathers, draw their head in or tuck it under a wing, and shiver. They may scrunch down by bending their legs, or tuck one foot up under their feathers to further reduce heat loss. During the night their body temperature may drop 10-15 degrees to slow their metabolism and conserve energy. This survival technique, called "nocturnal hypothermia," is

used for the most extreme cold nights.

Male red-winged blackbirds are known to flock together at night in winter, usually in dense evergreens, thickets or shrubs near agriculture fields, pastures and grasslands. Such roost sites can be located when you see large flocks soaring across the fields in search of insects. Once breeding gets underway in spring, male blackbirds night roost alone near their female and her nest.

You can provide winter roosts for resident birds on your property in several ways

Maintain clusters of trees, shrubs and large brush piles

- Maintain a "snag" or dead or dying tree, if it's not a safety hazard
- Provide an artificial cavity or roost box in a sheltered spot like the south side of a building or tree; these can be the same as nest boxes, cleaned out after last summer's use

INJURED BIRDS: WHAT TO DO?

We have no Bird Rehabilitators in the Vancouver Area that we know of. So what should you do if you find yourself in this situation?

Many Birds that hit a window just need some time to rest to get "their wind back" before taking off again.



Try putting them in a box with plenty of air for an hour or more until you hear movement then take them outdoors and test if they are ready to fly off.

1. Call the **Portland Audubon Wildlife Care Center** for information:
503-292-0304
5151 NW Cornell Rd, Portland OR
2. Call Arden or Sherry Hagen for information: 360-892-8872
If they are available and a bird requires transport to the Portland Audubon Wildlife Care Center then the volunteers suggest they receive a gas mileage compensation and a small donation to the Care Center for the care of the bird at the time of pick up.
3. There is 24 hr **Animals Hospital called DoveLewis** in downtown Portland that will take the bird overnight if the Portland Audubon Wildlife is closed.
1945 NW Pettygrove 503-228-7281
4. Please do not call other Board Members since they are unable to help at this time.

In the meantime....

Keep the bird in a box with small air holes.
You might offer water via a dropper, and if necessary watered down puppy chow to supply nutrients.

Jan. 18, A male **TUFTED DUCK** was found at Marine Park by Randy Hill, this is the same spot one wintered last year too.

Bob Flores reported finding a **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** among about 100 scaup on the Columbia River, viewed from Wintler Park. This is a sea duck and rare on inland waters.

Jan. 19 The Cassiar's **Slate-colored subspecies of DARK-EYED JUNCO** continues to visit the feeder at Carol and Kevin Healy's home. They also have **two TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS** (male and female) visiting their feeders.

Jan. 20, Two male **TUFTED DUCKS** were seen by Lyn and Gene Topinka, one at Marine Park in Vancouver and one at Fallen Leaf Park in Camas, where one has wintered for the last three years.

Randy Hill also spotted a hybrid between a **TUFTED DUCK** and a scaup at Tidewater Cove, on the Columbia River, and a female **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** near McMenamins Brew Pub.

Jan. 23, George Gerdts found and photographed a juvenile **GOLDEN EAGLE** at the Ridgefield NWR, where they are unusual. Juvenile Bald Eagles are often mistaken for Golden Eagles, but we do have some Golden Eagles that nest in the nearby Cascades.

Jan. 31, Les Carlson, George Mayfield and I spent the day birding in Skamania County, our first stop on the Clark-Skamania County line produced four raptor species including a **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** and a **MERLIN**. The Rough-legged Hawk was a new county bird for both Les and George and my first in twelve years. At Rock Creek Cove we located a bright adult **GLAUCOUS GULL**, another addition to George and Les's county lists, we ended the day with a total of sixty species for the day.

Feb. 2, A visit to the Ridgefield NWR River S Unit provided Dave and Sherry Hayden with views of **2 GREAT HORNED OWLS, 2 AMERICAN BITTERNS, 1 BLACK PHOEBE, 1 ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** and over **40 AMERICAN PIPITS**.

The **RUSTY BLACKBIRD** in Washougal continued to come to the seed spread by Steven Clark in front of his home.

Feb.5, April Hughes, who lives in the Falcon's Nest subdivision in Orchards, photographed a male **AMERICAN KESTREL** eating a mouse it had caught near her feeder. These small falcons are seldom reported to me from feeders, usually it is Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks that are hunting birds around feeders.

John Gatchet looked for the **TUFTED DUCK** seen in Cam-

as and found it in the slough southwest of Round Lake in Lacamas Park. At the Ridgefield NWR, he counted **104 SANDHILL CRANES** flying through at the River "S" Unit. And there he also watched **35 WILSON SNIPE** pulling some kind of grubs from an area of dry grass.

Feb. 7, Eric and Tammy Bjorkman reported a nice selection of birds coming to their feeders in Vancouver during the snowy weather including a **HERMIT THRUSH**.

Feb. 8, On a field trip to the Okanagon County area, Joan Durgin and Wendy Duncan had a great selection of birds including their lifer **GREAT GRAY OWL**. A field trip there in late winter can provide you with many exciting species, it will be interesting to see what the VAS field trip in February found.

While checking the Vancouver Lake Lowlands during the snowstorm, Scott Carpenter had a personal high count of about a dozen each of **Sooty FOX and LINCOLN'S SPARROWS** for this location. Vancouver Lake only had a small amount of open water, with **8 or so COMMON MERGANSERS**.

I did very little birding in January as the conditions in the Gorge where we live were brutal, temperatures as low as 10 degrees and non-ending winds. But we did have a large number of birds coming to our feeders, many were there daily but there were a few species that only showed up occasionally like Mourning Doves and Purple Finches. As we move into March the first Turkey Vultures, Osprey and Rufous Hummingbirds will arrive along with more Tree Swallows. By the end of the month there will be a steady increase in the number of returning species with migration peaking here in late April.

As of the writing of this column there had been 121 species of birds reported from Clark County and only 69 species reported from Skamania County for the 2014 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



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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.*



March 2014

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

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*** This will **not** include *The Columbia Flyway* ***

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

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