



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

March 2016

Calendar

***Tuesday, **March 1, 7:00 PM:** Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Tuesday, **March 29, 6:30 PM:** VAS Board Meeting hosted by Eric & Tammy Bjorkman, 4110 NE 54th Ave., Vancouver 360-695-3116

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	⑳	30	31		

PROGRAM:

Using Species Management and Outreach to Change Community Perceptions

SPEAKER: RANDY HILL

Randy will call upon his rural roots and agency experiences including nearly 20 years at Columbia NWR to highlight the tasks of managing National Wildlife Refuges for wildlife and public use.

Using a slide presentation, he will chronicle a path of community division to acceptance to broad support for "ecotourism" in a rural community dominated by conservative values.

The role of managing public lands will be examined and reflected upon. This will be a time to review the federal role in land management, and understand how different agencies are directed by varying executive and legislative mandates.

Observations and reflections about the recent crisis at Malheur NWR in Oregon will be discussed, especially as it relates to being part of neighboring communities.

Now that he has retired from federal service, he has more time for bird watching. He has been a valuable and loyal member of Vancouver Audubon Society, and thus he has facilitated good relationships and friendships between the refuges and our group.

FIELD TRIP

Lincoln City Area



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: March 5, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Target Store at Jantzen Beach Parking lot. Park in the spots facing Tomahawk Island Drive if available.

This is an all day trip. We will be looking for alcids, gulls, waterfowl and other wintering birds. Dress for "cold" and possibly damp weather. Bring a lunch, snacks & water.

We will carpool.

Do not forget to pay your driver for gas.

My Big Year: Part 1

by Bob Flores



I am sure as birders we all have thought at one time or another to do a Big Year. Over the last several years I have had those thoughts and I always ended with, "when I retire." So, as I ended my career and looked forward to having more time on my hands, the thoughts of doing a County Big Year became more frequent. With the year 2015 looming and Randy Hill urging me on, I still had yet to convince myself I was up for it. Let's face it no matter what kind of Big Year it takes a lot of time and I had yet to appreciate that extra time retirement was to bring me. But I remember it well sitting in bed next to Cindy, my wife, looking out the sliding glass door and seeing an evening grosbeak at the feeders and that was it.

("My Big Year" Continued on page 4)

Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count [CBC]

Conducted on

December 20, 2015

Greater White-fronted Goose	4	Sandhill Crane	1,073	Song Sparrow	440
Snow Goose	1	Dunlin	35	Lincoln's Sparrow	28
Cackling Goose	12,616	Wilson's Snipe	17	Swamp Sparrow	1
Canada Goose	1,064	Mew Gull	74	White-throated Sparrow	4
Trumpeter Swan	87	Ring-billed Gull	5	White-crowned Sparrow	31
Tundra Swan	817	California Gull	5	Golden-crowned Sparrow	615
Wood Duck	8	Herring Gull	14	Dark-eyed Junco	603
Gadwall	206	Glaucous-winged Gull	41	Sparrow Species	11
Eurasian Wigeon	3	Olympic Gull (GW x W)	2	Red-winged Blackbird	191
American Wigeon	1,122	Rock Pigeon	296	Western Meadowlark	112
Mallard	1,885	Eurasian Collared-Dove	97	Brewer's Blackbird	246
Cinnamon Teal	2	Mourning Dove	52	Brown-headed Cowbird	24
Northern Shoveler	176	Barn Owl	7	Purple Finch	2
Northern Pintail	1,052	Great Horned Owl	12	House Finch	39
Green-winged Teal	505	Short-eared Owl	12	Pine Siskin	103
Canvasback	359	Anna's Hummingbird	29	Lesser Goldfinch	6
Redhead	1	Belted Kingfisher	11	American Goldfinch	39
Ring-necked Duck	69	Red-breasted Sapsucker	10	Evening Grosbeak	3
Greater Scaup	3	Downy Woodpecker	23	House Sparrow	26
Lesser Scaup	167	Hairy Woodpecker	2	<hr/>	
Scaup Species	8	Northern Flicker	112	# of People Counting	37
Bufflehead	142	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Hours by Foot	41.97
Common Goldeneye	31	Northern Shrike	2	Miles by Foot TOTAL	94.20
Hooded Merganser	84	Hutton's Vireo	1	Hours by Car	35.24
Common Merganser	82	Steller's Jay	60	Miles by Car	178.40
Ruddy Duck	87	Western Scrub-Jay	125	<hr/>	
Ring-necked Pheasant	2	American Crow	85	Total Bird Count Species:	120
Wild Turkey	-	Common Raven	5	Identifiable species count:	30,082
Red-throated Loon	1	Tree Swallow	3	<hr/> <hr/>	
Pied-billed Grebe	21	Black-capped Chickadee	255	GO PAPERLESS	
Horned Grebe	5	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	30	with the VAS Newsletter	
Western Grebe	4	Bushtit	200	If you would rather have a paperless	
Double-crested Cormorant	142	Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	VAS Newsletter then you can email	
American Bittern	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	10	Sherry Hagen at littlebird-er@comcast.net to receive a "PDF"	
Great Blue Heron	104	Brown Creeper	28	copy of The Columbia Flyway in col-	
Great Egret	98	Bewick's Wren	39	or sent to you. Include the email ad-	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	Pacific Wren	30	dress that you wish to have it sent	
Bald Eagle	40	Marsh Wren	24	to.	
Northern Harrier	78	Golden-crowned Kinglet	107	The PDF form is also available on	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	198	line at:	
Cooper's Hawk	5	Townsend's Solitaire	1	www.vancouveraudubon.org	
Red-shouldered Hawk	5	Hermit Thrush	5		
Red-tailed Hawk	100	American Robin	318		
Rough-legged Hawk	4	Varied Thrush	27		
American Kestrel	41	European Starling	2,263		
Merlin	2	American Pipit	1		
Peregrine Falcon	2	Orange-crowned Warbler	2		
Virginia Rail	4	Yellow-rumped Warbler	22		
Sora	1	Common Yellowthroat	1		
American Coot	333	Spotted Towhee	138		
		Chipping Sparrow	1		
		Savannah Sparrow	16		
		Fox Sparrow	48		

Cleaning Up the Mess: the Habitat Ordinance

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires all counties to develop critical areas ordinances. Included in GMA's directions was the requirement to protect critical wildlife habitat through an ordinance. Clark County has an urban ordinance and a rural habitat ordinance.

The rural habitat ordinance concentrates on protection of streams and riparian areas. It gives a farmer one of two choices: he or she can let the county come in and enforce the regulations in a proscriptive manner, or the farmer can develop a stewardship plan with the help of various experts.

I learned recently from Councilor Boldt that the county council (prior to implementation of the new county charter) had worked to dismantle the habitat ordinance. The technicians were let go. At this point, it is unclear to me what exactly is left. This is something that I will have to find out.

As Clark County's habitat ordinance was required under GMA as a part of our critical areas ordinance, the dismantling of it could mean we are lacking in full compliance with GMA. Or not.

The question may be moot. Councilor Boldt told us that new technicians will be hired. And trained. All of which would have been unnecessary had the commissioners in the pre-charter left well enough alone.

The Next Growth Plan Hearing

If you receive this before February 16, please consider going to the county council hearing on February 16. It will be at 10:00 on the 6th floor of the county building on Franklin and 13th downtown. This will be the first time that the full five member county council will be hearing testimony on the proposed alternatives.

The purpose of the hearing is to select a county preferred alternative that the staff can develop further and present to the state by June 30. Of course we hope that the council will thoroughly reject Alternative 4, Madore's creation. The environmental community supports Alternative 1, the no-change alternative. Alternative 1 provides for plenty of room for more growth. There is no need to add any more land.

The Legislature is in Session

To my regret, I missed noticing the start of the legislative session. Too focused on the local issues. But, I have awakened, now. And, as usual, there are a slew of anti-environmental bills. Several have to do with fossil fuels, something that should be of interest to us down here. One senate bill (SB 6224) would cut the timeline for reviewing energy projects. Such as large oil terminal projects, for example. The Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) would have insufficient time to adequately evaluate an energy proposal.

As of this writing, SB 6224 is in rules. Members of rules from Clark County are Benton and Rivers. Rivers co-sponsored this thing. Those of you in the 18th District might ask Senator Rivers why she did that, given the unhappiness that much of Clark County has about the proposed oil facility here.

Does Disc Golf and Songbird Habitat Mix?

Well, no. Not in the same location, especially given that a disc golf course, apparently, be cleared of brush. The same brush that songbirds use for habitat. Thanks to the alertness of our president, Eric Bjorkman, the County Parks Department is now aware that there might be a problem with their proposed disc golf course at Frenchman's Bar Park. Hopefully, we can meet with the Parks Department to discuss this issue.

Gretchen Starke 

Welcome New Members: Peter Bosen • Myrna Brown • Alma Chaffee • Elsie Chan • Marina Dimitrov • Patricia Downey • Charles Godown • Diane Green • Corrina Hall • Margaret Henkle-Bessert • Camryn Lee • P. Loren • Jan Mac Kenzie • Bruce And Connie Mathey • Richard Mcshan • Yvonne Newland • Carl Pearson • Joan Regor • Jacqueline Schroeder • Terri Schulte • Hendrik Sharples • B Sharrock • Mary Ann Sheehan • Ila Stanek • Arlene & Steve Hee • Marti Tom • Glenna Van Duzer • George-Jo Vogel • Jackson Wolfe • Sherrie Woodworth

Welcome Audubon Adventures Teachers: Amanda Baron • Anne Bowling • Melissa Coleman • Ann Corlett • Colleen Davis • Jennifer Flores • Barbara Grovom • Per Junkerman • Carla Kelly • Michael Lake • Hana Lapham • Kathleen Lawrence • Jessica Lee • Kara Martin • Rachel McClain • Talicia Miller-Poole • Nicole Newhouse • Dinah Nguyen • Rosie Ojaghi • Lauren O'Neal • Carol Patrick • Sara Rodin • Andy Schlauch • Tara Sciorba • Ben Scott • Angelene Shelton • Jeff Stark • Scott VanHouse • Connie Vernon • Kistina White • David Wright • Alice Yang



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Jan. 3, The continuing **HARRIS'S SPARROW** at Skamania Landing was hiding in the blackberries near the south-side of the bridge. Ken and Laurie Knittle saw it around when it jumped on a rock 15 feet from our car.

Jan. 8, Lyn Topinka found a **PALM WARBLER** on the Ridgefield Auto Tour Route, with a name like that you know they are not a regular visitor here.

We had a female **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** come to our feeder in the Columbia Gorge, the previous earliest Spring record we have ever had was in March.

Jan.10, Birding in the Gorge, Susan and I found 5 **TRUMPETER SWANS** at Franz Lake NWR, the **HARRIS'S SPARROW** at Skamania Landing

Jan. 15, A "HARLAN'S" **RED-TAILED HAWK** was seen by George Neavoll feeding on ground at the Ridgefield NWR. He described it as a black bird, with white stippling on the breast - a real beauty. He also had a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** in the Oregon Ash woods along Canvasback Lake, **SANDHILL CRANES** heard, but not seen, were embedded in huge flock of wintering **TUNDRA SWANS**.

Jan. 18, Russ Koppendrayer found a juvenile **GLAUCOUS GULL** on the lawn near the waste treatment ponds for Walt's Wholesale Meats in the Woodland Bottoms.

Jim Danzenbaker heard and then saw a **SWAMP SPARROW** about 100 yards beyond the Kiwa Trail entrance in the ash grove along the auto loop at the River "S" unit of Ridgefield NWR.

Jan. 24, At the Steigerwald Lake NWR there was a spectacular show of four **SHORT-EARED OWLS** and Gerry Ellis also we had three **BARN SWALLOWS** and at least one **TREE SWALLOW** in flight over the wetlands.

Randy Hill and Bob Flores refound the **PALM WARBLER** at the Ridgefield NWR, River S Unit.

Jan. 25, The continuing Ridgefield NWR **PALM WARBLER** was a new bird for Les Carlson's Clark County list.

Jan. 27, Another highly unusual bird for this time of the year was a male **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** coming to Barbara Wilson's hummingbird feeder in Vancouver. This species usually arrives here in April, and this one could possibly spent the winter here.

Jan. 28, Despite the lower than normal numbers of Cackling Geese wintering here this year, Lyn Topinka reported **SNOW GEESE** from the Vancouver Lake lowlands. Another highlight were about 30 **WESTERN MEADOW-LARKS** along the LaFrambois Road entrance to Vancouver Lake.

Jan. 29, a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** was seen by Ryan Abe, a few of these birds from east of the Rocky Mountains winter here yearly, but this year they have been reported in lower numbers than usual.

Jan. 30, At the Ridgefield NWR, Bob Flores found either a wintering or very early **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**.

Jan.31, A **EURASIAN WIGEON** and an early **GREEN HERON** was seen at the Ridgefield NWR River S Unit by Rick Scherer.

Jan. 29-Feb. 1, Susan and I enjoyed the VAS birding

trip to Okanogan County, led by Arden and Sherry Hagen. We saw many of the winter specialty birds including **LONG-EARED OWL, SHARP-TAILED GROUSE, PINE GROSBEAK, WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL, GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH, COMMON REDPOLL** and **SNOW BUNTINGS**.

Feb. 5, Les Carlson and I birded in Skamania County, finding 20 **TRUMPETER SWANS** at Franz Lake, the **HARRIS'S SPARROW** at Skamania Landing and a **MERLIN** there too. Rock Creek Cove in Stevenson had one **RUDDY DUCK**, a scarce bird in the county. And at Underwood we found **WILD TURKEYS, CALIFORNIA QUAIL** and another **Merlin**.

The first early migrant birds have already begun arriving, with several species of swallow already reported. By the end of February, the first Rufous Hummingbirds will be back, I begin looking for them when I see the first Salmon-berry blooms. Other birds that often return before the end of February include; Turkey Vulture, Osprey and Say's Phoebe.

Here is a link to a site that gives the average arrival dates for the Portland area, <https://birdsoverportland.wordpress.com/oregon-migration-phenology/>

The 2016 Cumulative County List for Clark County was at 116 species reported so far from Clark County and at 88 for Skamania County, these numbers will rapidly increase as the migrants return. Please continue to send me your sighting reports for this list and column.

Wilson Cady, gorgebirds@juno.com

("My Big Year" Continued)

I looked at Cindy and said, "I want to do a County Big Year. Are you going to be OK with that?" She knows all too well what it meant. Being the ever supportive spouse she agreed and I started my year long journey.

I did not create a master plan of attack, although I did have a few rules I placed upon myself. First was to maximize the time in the field and to concentrate on expected species before they became common. My first rule makes sense and for me being retired allowed me to spend the maximum amount of time in the field.

I have a habit of carrying a notebook with me while birding so I can document dates, places, species and yes often time spent. Using my notebooks I documented bird sightings for 212 days last year of which 192 of those days I birded away from my house. Of those days away from home I spent 628 hours in the field for an average of 3.3 hrs per day birded. I was one tired birder when the calendar showed 31 December. The second rule I felt would serve me well if I could knock out expected birds early so I could spend more time looking for those birds that were unexpected. But for one reason or another were not showing for me. (Cont. on next page)

My Big Year (cont.)

What was not expected were all the early, some the earliest ever recorded, arriving migrants last year so I feel this tactic was successful. Finally, I wanted to engage the local birding community to assist me. This turned out to be very successful. Otherwise, I would not have found Brewer's sparrow and black-legged kittiwake, a first for the county. I could never thank all of those folks who helped me enough. It really made the difference.

The year started out very well with a pelagic cormorant showing up on the Columbia River and white-tailed kite at Steigerwald Lake NWR in January. Both were no where near an annual event. The last recorded sighting for the kite was 2007 for the refuge and 2012 for Clark County. The previous sighting for pelagic cormorant was 2010 on the Columbia River. I was feeling good as I hit 100 species in the first ten days.

This quick rise in numbers was expected in the early months but what was not expected were missing species I have seen during early months of the year. I spent endless hours on the Steigerwald Lake NWR dike looking for Say's phoebe and mountain bluebird both seen by me three times during the last five years. During this same month who would have thought thousands of snow geese would visit the Vancouver Bottoms and produced a Ross' goose or a group of acorn woodpeckers being found by Cindy McCormack at Fort Vancouver?

The Columbia River and Vancouver Lake produced year birds as the transition from January into February and March the tufted duck appeared again both pacific and red-throated loons were found. An eared grebe was seen on Vancouver Lake and Bonaparte's gulls began to show, and in large numbers at times, in what would be a great year for them. But no one including myself expected the following: When the large schools of smelt worked their way up the river, I bolted to Lower River Road hoping to catch a wandering Heerman's gull following the smelt and large flocks of gulls. The Heerman's never showed, but to see a pigeon guillemot fly by within 25 yards was beyond belief. When I saw it fly by I actually froze thinking to myself, "Did I just see that?" One would have thought that would be the bird of the year and maybe it was but December had its own surprises.

One of the most rewarding events of the year was my concentration on birding the Larch Mountain area. It was very productive as western bluebirds were found at several locations and are thought to have nested. A rock wren family was found at the top of the mountain and a northern goshawk was seen several times surely on territory.

I finally found ruffed grouse booming and in more than one location. The greatest find of all, in my mind, is the finding of a migrant funnel, a pass where songbird migrants pour over by the hundreds. As the earliest of spring began migrants began to show up and this year produced many noted early arrivals and this trend continued through the remainder of the year.

Spring included a morning where just fewer than 1,300 yellow-rumped warblers were counted at Frenchman's

Bar Regional Park. This number includes only those yellow-rumped warblers I could identify as many blew through without being identified in the rush of migrants through the trees. Spring shorebirds were beginning to show and thankfully we had water in our wetlands with long-billed curlew the highlight. I found my number at 203 at the end of May feeling good and savoring the thought of fall migration.

"My Big Year" by bob Flores will be continued next month...stay tuned.

Malheur Wildlife Refuge

National Wildlife Refuges provide some of the most open and people-friendly ways for the public to visit, appreciate and learn more about our nation's most bountiful places and the wild things that inhabit them. Our local area is especially privileged to have three particularly special Refuges, each with its own mix of landscape, wildlife and history: Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge in Washington and Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge just south of us in Oregon.

Recent events in another of our not-too-distant and unique Refuges, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon, show us that these public lands are fragile in a way we never anticipated. More than ever, they need your support to ensure that they remain open to everyone while protecting sensitive species and landscapes as they are intended.

If you would like to directly support Malheur, Tim Blount, the Executive Director of the Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, suggests the following:

Stay positive!

Share images of the lands and wildlife that make Malheur special, either your own or from the Friends at <http://www.malheurfriends.org>.

Spread awareness by sharing messages about why the Refuge System in general is so important.

Donate or join the Friends today. You can find information at <http://www.malheurfriends.org/membership.html>.

Did you know that for every \$1 Congress appropriates to operate refuges, they return on average nearly \$5 to local economies in jobs, sales, income and tax revenue? In some communities, wildlife refuges provide an even greater boost to the economy. Malheur NWR is one such economic engine, returning over \$7 in the local economy for every \$1 appropriated by Congress.

Thank you for supporting our National Wildlife Refuges!

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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March 2016

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