



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

May 2011

Calendar

***NO BIRDING CLASS DUE TO THE ANNUAL SPRING POTLUCK at 6:30 PM

***Tuesday, **May 3, 7:30 pm**: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, **May 2, 6:30 pm**: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Gretchen Starke
308 SE 124th St., Vancouver 360-892-8617

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:

Peru

by Doris ValenciaPucila

Doris Valencia-Pucila is an active conservationist and naturalist guide in her homeland of Peru for over a decade. She is leading an effort to educate Peruvian youth about the critical importance of restoring and conserving the fragile ecosystem of the country. As in many South American countries, the forests of Peru have been heavily logged with native trees being replaced by agriculture, non-native species such as eucalyptus or for grazing cattle. As a result the native trees, plants communities have diminished rapidly, impacting Peru's critical water supply, soil, and native wildlife. Doris's approach to this problem has been to educate Peruvian youth on the environment through both classroom training and participation in extensive native plant restoration activities. She has started the Monterosa Plant a Tree Project to help restore important habitat in the Lucumayu Valley of Peru.

Doris also promotes conservation through ecotours that she leads. Her college degree, background, and experience make her a highly regarded naturalist in Peru. She has guided for many birding companies such as Victor Emanuel and Portland Audubon. She enjoys sharing her knowledge of the rich history, customs, folklore, music and food of the region and leading tours to places such as the new seventh wonder of the world, Machu Picchu.

Her trip to the United States is intended to educate Americans on the rich natural and cultural history of Peru, the challenges Peruvians face to protect it and to promote ecotourism opportunities in Peru.

FIELD TRIP

Powell Butte, Portland



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: May 14, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: The parking lot south of the Chevron Station on Chkalov (this is south of the Fred Meyers at Mill Plain & Chkalov).

Note: Our old meeting spot is now a FM gas station.

This is a great local area for resident and migrating passerines. This field trip will last until at least early afternoon so bring snacks/lunch & drinks.



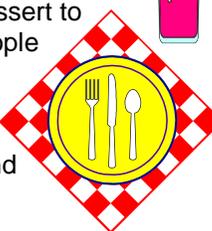
ANNUAL MAY POTLUCK



When: May 3, 2011
Time: 6:30 PM
Where: Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert to serve at least 10 people to share. Bring your own table service (plate, utensils, cup, napkins, etc) and your own drinks.





Treasurer's Report

March: Revenue \$136.44. Expenses \$203.12

Conservation

Gretchen is setting up a meeting with Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler. Anyone interested in attending should contact Gretchen. She is also arranging a time to meet with *The Columbian* to discuss their coverage of environmental issues.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

Summer Field Trip:

Pelagic Birds & Shorebirds

Aug. 26, 27 & 28 Westport, WA

Come for any part of this loosely organized outing. We will drive down on Friday, take a pelagic trip on Saturday and look for migrant shorebirds and more on all of the days. There are numerous hotels and campgrounds in the area to choose from and we will meet each morning to carpool and explore the area. For those who do not go out to sea, this is peak migration time for shorebirds and other species and there are plenty of places to bird in the Gray's Harbor area. On Saturday there is a Westport Seabirds Pelagic Trip that will go about 35 miles off shore in search of albatrosses and more. To take part in the pelagic trip you will need to reserve a spot by calling Westport Seabirds (360) 268-9141 (leave a message and time of day for call back, after 5:00 p.m. PST is the best time to call), or by e-mail (pmand001@comcast.net). The cost of the pelagic trip is \$130 per person.

For more information contact Wilson Cady at:
360-835-5947 or gorgebirds@juno.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Brook • Rosie Agaghi • Theresa Ahrens • Kathi Anderson • Jane Arends • Kate Barnes • Nancy Blum • Bette Bruhn • Delores Burns • Chan • Martha Cocklin • Darrell Couch • Theresa Coulam • Barbara Florence • Marianne Gillmer • Victoria Hegerich • Rochelle Hendricks • Jean Hotchkiss • J. Kagey • Nancy Kardonsky • Zoe and Jim Kendall • Carole Kirk • Wendel & Mandy Johnson • Lily Martin • Rich Meilke • Betty Mills • Susan Murphy • Teri Parmeter • Susan Pederson • Amanda Pemberton • Barbara Persinger • Michele Robertson • Richard Rothstein • Michelle Rutherford • Monica Scheel • Reinhold Schouweiler • Benjamin Scott • X. Sharp • Richard Stilwill • Josephine Thorson

Transfer: Seley Moore



A big 'Thank You' to Backyard Bird Shop!

At our April general meeting, Colleen Kohler from Backyard Bird Shop (BYBS) presented Vancouver Audubon with a donation of \$254.65 on behalf of this local company. BYBS pledged one cent from their Vancouver stores for every pound of black oil sunflower seed that they sold during a certain time period (You can do the math!) to our group. We're very grateful for their generosity and look forward to our continued partnership.

I'd also like to include a special shout out to Colleen as the driving force behind our chapter's "Audubon Adventures" success. Colleen works as the volunteer coordinator in matching local classrooms and Vancouver Audubon members who sponsor them. Once a donation is made to the program, the classroom receives an educational packet that teachers can use to help students learn about nature and wildlife.

We are fortunate to have both Backyard Bird Shop and volunteers like Colleen in our community. Thanks so much.

VAS President, Eric Bjorkman

Celebrate Migratory Birds at Ridgefield NWR

When: MAY 8, the Second Sunday
Where: Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit

An afternoon plankhouse presentation by Melissa Darby, all about wapato, and a Bird Walk by Vancouver Audubon. Check website calendar for more information - www.ridgefieldfriends.org

"We need leaders for the walk, so please let Katie, Friends of Ridgefield NWR, know if you will be able to help."



A New Rule for Forest Service Planning: What Will be the Fate of Wildlife?

In Forest Service language, the planning rule, required by the 1976 National Forest Planning Act, establishes a framework that functions sort of like a constitution or set of bylaws.

Each national forest must follow the rule in developing the forest land management plan that provides direction for the individual projects on the forest, whether they are a logging sale, a campground development, or restoration of a stream. The Forest Service is in the process of updating the rule and it is now in the public input phase.

I hadn't been following this issue, but decided to go to a public forum that was held in late March. There, I had a chance to talk to some of the people who had been working on the rule, as well as listen to presentations and answers to questions.

To protect fish and wildlife, the new rule would use an ecosystem approach. Forest planners would have to consider water sheds, riparian areas, and upland areas, each as a distinct ecosystem. This is what the Forest Service calls the coarse filter and it would help to keep "common animals common,." But, the rule would also require forest plans to protect species at risk and species of concern. Species at risk include those that are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act, as well as listed species. The Forest Service calls this the fine filter. One improvement is that invertebrates and plants would have to be protected as well as vertebrate animals.

The proposed rule would emphasize sustainability and restoration. Consideration of adaptability, especially to climate change, would be important. Best available science would have to be used. Monitoring is of particular importance. In answer to a question I had, the presenter said that if the budget for the Forest Service is cut for any year (highly likely in these times), money would be shifted in order to keep up the monitoring.

In general, my first impression is that, at worst the proposed rule would make things no worse for wildlife and at best it could be an improvement. Comments on the rule are due the middle of May. I will be better able to judge after looking it over.

Camp Bonneville: the Issue May Rise Again

Camp Bonneville is that former Army base, those wild tree-covered hills in the northeast corner of the county. The Army,

which used the base from the early 1900s until about fifteen years ago, closed the base. It was transferred over to the county. The county wants to use the land as a park, as well as some other uses. The problem is -- and it is a huge problem -- the army used Camp Bonneville as a giant firing range. There is an unknown number of unexploded shells and other ordnance throughout much of Camp Bonneville.

The army is to pay for the cleanup and the county is to hire an outfit to do the job. There had been a team working on the cleanup, but that all blew up (pun intended) over a three-way disagreement among the army, the county, and the contractor and his team. Among the issues were the amount of money the army allowed for the cleanup and the restaurant and liquor bills run up by the contractor. Now, apparently, the county is getting ready to hire another contractor.

Camp Bonneville is forest-covered over most of its more than 3,000 acres. Much of it is wonderful wildlife habitat. Animals as large as black bears and cougars have been seen there. For us, the important thing is that the effort to find all the unexploded ordnance not turn Camp Bonneville into a moonscape. We will need to continue to monitor this situation.

Ocean Acidification: It's Real, Not Hype

Last month, the Beyond Coal Coalition sponsored a speaker to present the latest findings on ocean acidification. The speaker was Dr. Feely who studies ocean chemistry. The ocean is becoming more acidic as a result of the increasing CO₂ in the atmosphere dissolving into the water. Ocean water is naturally slightly basic on the pH scale. As it moves toward the neutral point (7 on the pH scale), animals, such as clams and lobsters, that develop shells will be unable to do so. Even now in some species, shells are thinning. Considering that tiny animals that are part of the plankton have shells, the acidification could throw the biological balance in the ocean completely off kilter. By the way, there is a website that purports to show that ocean acidification is not a problem. At my request, my son (who has a background in physics) checked the website and found it very poor science. He also found that it is funded by Exxon-Mobile. Big surprise.

Gretchen Starke

VAS BIRDATHON 2011 FUND RAISER - May 16

I would like to donate \$ _____ in support of the VAS's Birdathon

I would like to pledge \$ _____ per species in support of the VAS's Birdathon

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Telephone number () _____

Please Mail to: **Vancouver Audubon Society**
P.O. Box 1966
Vancouver, WA 98668

OR

Arden Hagen
2203 SE 135th Ave.
Vancouver, WA 98683-7133



- March 10, Michael Hobbs, of Seattle, birded Skamania County on his way to lead a field trip in Klickitat County for the Washington Ornithological Society. His best birds were: **CANVASBACK** at Franz Lake, one **WESTERN GULL** at Bonneville Dam, a **SAY'S PHOEBE** at Skamania Landing and a **VIRGINIA RAIL** in the Ryan-Allen Road Pond in Stevenson.

- March 12, While driving the Ridgefield NWR auto tour route Donald Wardwell spotted two **HOUSE WRENS** that were in separate locations. At least one of these wrens wintered here. There was also a small flock of **LESSER GOLDFINCHES** feeding in the tease. Jim Danzenbaker had a male **LESSER GOLDFINCH** at his feeder in Battle Ground for the fifth year in a row. Just a few years ago a Lesser Goldfinch was a rare bird in Clark County but now their population is exploding here.

- March 15, Scott Carpenter photographed a possible **CAKCLING x BARNACLE GOOSE** at Ridgefield that resembled the hybrids that were present when the Barnacle Goose showed up on Feb. 22.

- March 16, Eric Anderson spotted a **SAY'S PHOEBE** right outside the Ridgefield NWR office, the first of the year for Clark County. **73 WILSON'S SNIPE** were counted by Tom Shreve in the area that had been recently plowed at the Ridgefield NWR.

- March 17, The Ridgefield NWR **SAY'S PHOEBE** was just east of the office, on private property, and a sizable flock **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** flew over the Refuge according to Eric Anderson. In northern Vancouver, Ken Knittle had his first **RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD** on March 17, the first female reported this Spring. While Les Carlson was riding his bike on the Washougal dike trail between Steamboat Landing Park and the Steigerwald Lake NWR and had great looks at a **SAY'S PHOEBE**.

- March 18, Randy Hill spotted a **RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD** at their feeders.

- March 19, While Jim Danzenbaker's was listening for owls at his yard in Battle Ground, he was rewarded with 1 **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** and 1 **GREAT-HORNED OWL**. During the day, raptors became more noticeable with **9 RED-TAILED HAWKS**, **2 COOPER'S HAWKS**, **2 TURKEY VULTURES**, **1 AMERICAN KESTREL** and a **BALD EAGLE**. A male **RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD** visited the feeder twice quite to the disgust of the two local **ANNA'S HUMMERS**.

- Eighteen VAS members joined me for the Columbia Gorge field trip. Our first good bird was spotted by Randy Hill, a male **EURASIAN WIGEON** sleeping on a berm at the Washougal Sewage lagoon. A stop at Underwood, in Skamania County, provided us with a **CLARK'S GREBE**

that was floating in the Columbia River near a group of **WESTERN GREBES** that were doing their mating dance.



The flock of **WILD TURKEYS** in Underwood, were very obliging, allowing close views as usual. At Catherine Creek we found **GOLDEN EAGLE** and **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS**. And the **ACORN WOODPECKER** near Lyle, in Klickitat County only gave us glimpses as it hid on the back of the granary tree. We end up with a total of 66 species for the outing.

- March 20, Four **TURKEY VULTURES** drifted over the Steigerwald Lake - Friends of the Columbia River Gorge tour that I was leading, my first of the year for Clark County.

- March 22, A very gray plumaged **MERLIN** was seen by Randy Hill and myself while we were conducting a tour of the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

- March 24, At the Ridgefield NWR another **SAY'S PHOEBE** was found by Randy Hill on Bachelor Island, which is a closed area. In Washougal, Eric Bjorkman saw a **TURKEY VULTURE** over the Orchard Hills Golf Course.

- March 25, Randy Hill and Bob Flores had two **BLACK PHOEBES** on Bachelor Island.

- March 26, Eric Anderson had his first of the year **OSPREY** along the Columbia in Vancouver.

- March 27, Another Clark County **OSPREY** was seen by Eric Bjorkman over the Orchard Hills Golf Course in Washougal. Soon they will be very common along local waterways.

- March 31, A pair of **SHORT-EARED OWLS** were seen by Wendy Duncan, at the Steigerwald NWR. She photographed them a week after this date in the same location. There are no known recent nesting sites in western Washington, although 25 years ago they did nest at Steigerwald. Susan and I headed to Klickitat County in search of sunshine and birds and found both. The best birds seen were **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK**, **LONG-BILLED CURLEW**, **CHUKAR**, **ROCK WREN** and **SAGE SPARROW**.

- April 1, A **CANYON WREN** was heard on Beacon Rock by Wil Niosi, this is the only west of the Cascades location where these birds are seen with any regularity. Bob Rowe went to Leahy Junction, in Douglas County, to see the **SAGE GROUSE** dancing on their traditional spot called a lek. Birds come from miles to display to potential mates at these leks.

- April 2, The first **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** and **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** of the spring for Clark County were found by Jim Danzenbaker, at the

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit.

- April 3, A **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** was spotted at the Steigerwald Lake NWR by Roger and Ruth Philips. This is a species that nests east of the Cascade Mountains and is only seen occasionally in Clark County. **PURPLE FINCHES** and **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** were new arrivals at our property in Skamania County.
- April 4, A new nesting location for **GREAT EGRETS** was spotted by Ray Korpi, in the trees on the west side of I-5, just north of the main exit for Kalama on I-5. A **SAY'S PHOEBE** was reported separately by both Jim Danzenbaker and Alex Chmielewski on the Ridgefield Auto Tour Route.
- April 6, 3 **LINCOLN'S SPARROWS** were found by Dan Nelson along the LaFramboise Road access to Vancouver Lake in the Fruit Valley neighborhood. The locally breeding subspecies, the "Pacific" **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW** arrived back on territory in our yard. The subspecies here in winter is the "Taiga" which breeds north of here into the Yukon. The most noticeable difference is the coloration of the lores and bill color, which is shown in most bird books.

Last fall, Lyn Topinka noticed an odd-headed coot at King's Pond in Vancouver and early in March, a second "odd-headed" coot was there and she began to take notice ... and take pictures. These birds resembled Caribbean Coots but with help from others she found that they are "White-shielded American Coot morphs".

Her photos are at: http://columbiariverimages.com/Birds/KingsPond/kings_pond_odd_coots.html



Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

How have you been doing on your backyard bird feeding this winter? Arden & I have had a blast with the great numbers of birds in the 38 different species visiting our feeders, trees, water features and yard. Not bad for a normal backyard planned for increased bird activity. Our pair of Mallards are back this spring after an absence of 2 years. They use the small man made pond for bathing, eating (whatever they are finding), sleeping and "Mating". They eat millet or cracked corn out of 2 different covered ground feeders. They come and go all day long. A couple years ago the female dropped an egg outside the pond. She may have dropped it upon taking off for flight (?)

We've had at least 5 Townsend's Warblers this winter. Each of which have their own distinct markings. As I was

trying to figure out how many via photographs, Arden saw 5 at one time. We also have a number of Northern Flickers. Ever since we moved here 34 years ago and started feeding birds we have had both "Red-shafted" & "Yellow-shafted" Flickers. As the years passed the number of "true" Red-shafted lessened as the number of "Hybrids" between the two subspecies grew. Some have both the red mustache of the 'Red' and the red nape of the 'yellow' and the under tail and wing color can be anywhere between yellow to orange to red. We may never know how many we have before they disperse for breeding season. I am trying to do a late comparison to see how many different ones I can identify. One winter we had at least 11 since I saw that many sitting in a tree at one time. Was there more?



We've had a large number of Bushtits again this winter, probably 40 to 60 at one time. The past week or so they have obviously paired up for breeding season. My question: How do 40-60 Bushtits that use your feeder in the winter decide which pair get your yard in breeding season? They say there is a hierarchy in the bird world in the groups that feed together so I suppose the top ones get to choose their breeding grounds too. Wonder how they let the others know they are staying put and you all move on?

Some of the best months of birding are upon us with the spring migration already having started. Where are you going this spring to watch birds. Putting birds on your life list is a very rewarding feeling but just watching birds and their interaction with each other and their environment can be just as or more so rewarding.

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding ☺

OUR OLDEST BIRD: AN ALBATROSS ON MIDWAY survives the Tsunami with her young chick. She is 60+ years old

In February, John Klavitter, deputy manager of Midway Atoll NWR, spotted and photographed a Laysan Albatross that has been determined to be the oldest known U.S. wild bird. This female Laysan Albatross – given the name **Wisdom** – was first banded in 1956 by Chandler Robbins. Wisdom was incubating an egg at the time and was assumed to be at least five years old, which would make her over 60 years old today.

In February, **Wisdom** was spotted with a chick, making her a very experienced mom. In fact, Wisdom has likely raised 30 to 35 chicks during her lifetime "To know that she can still successfully raise young at age 60-plus, that is beyond words," commented Bruce Peterjohn.

Although albatrosses are known to mate for life, it is unknown if Wisdom has had the same partner all these years. This fascinating story was picked up by news bureaus and media around the world after the drama of the Pacific-based tsunami last month.

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.*



May 2011

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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George Mayfield 360-687-0360
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