



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

May 2012

Calendar

NO BIRDING CLASS DUE TO ANNUAL POTLUCK Potluck at 6:30 PM

***Tuesday, May 1, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, April 30, 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
29	30	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			

PROGRAM:

FALCONS & FALCONRY: RECREATIONAL SPORT AND COMMERCIAL BIRD CONTROL

by KORT CLAYTON, Biologist and Falconer

Kort Clayton will present this program which will inform us about recreational falconry and his business, Airstrike Bird Control.

Kort is a Master Biologist who flies falcons for a hobby and for commercial uses, such as scattering gulls from landfills and transfer stations or starlings from vineyards and berry fields. Kort has consulted with industries about environmental planning, wind turbine siting, and oil/gas rig mitigation planning. A January 17th Columbian article, "Scavenging seagulls fail to fly with falcons" featured his work with Metro Transfer Station in Portland. He has presented to other groups and will plan to bring one of his falcons to show.

This will be a special opportunity to learn about falcons, their unique abilities and how they interact with man and nature.



FIELD TRIP

Lacamas Lake

Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: May 19, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Port of Camas-Washougal
Parking Lot south of Hwy 14.



We will be looking for arriving migrants and nesters of the park. This will be a half day trip.

June Program:

Founding of Vancouver Audubon Society: A panel of early members will report about VAS accomplishments, history highlights, environmental battles and successes, and alliances.



ANNUAL MAY POTLUCK

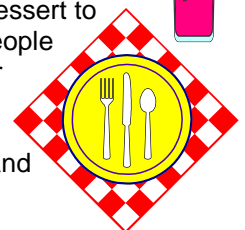


When: May 1, 2012

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.



VAS Board Meeting at the Home of Marilyn Hall on April 2nd. A quorum was present.

Revenue for March \$244.32
Expenses for March \$383.82

Old Business

The board is making progress on implementing the new internal controls recommended by Mike Plymale.

New Business

Board elections: A nominating committee was appointed and they will call for nominations at meeting with elections scheduled for May.

Yard Sale: Backyard Bird Shop has donated discontinued merchandise for our sale. The clean up and pricing of items will be held on Thursday, May 17 and the sale held the next day at Joan Durgin's house. Request for volunteer help will be made at the general meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

rence's Goldfinch. Things are going great!

Then the unimaginable happens- **snow!**

It snowed for two days which put a virtual stop to our quest during that time. With little to do, I checked the website for Sandia Crest to see if the birds were still there. The last entry was from two days prior and it announced that the feeders had been brought down and the viewing season was officially over. This is getting depressing. At least we didn't drive all of the way there to find this out.

Our plans have now changed. The snow clears and we get the Black-capped Gnatcatcher at Patagonia State Park. A tough search finally nets us a Black-chinned Sparrow in Florida Canyon. We try several spots but fail to find any Mountain Plovers. We start monitoring various birding websites to find out if any possible new birds are showing up.

Instead of NM, it's off to Bakersfield, CA to see the Spotted Dove (not a 'lifer'...we saw it in India in 2010 but still new for North America) and then up to Davis, CA for an Iceland Gull. I'm now at 599 and Tammy is at 598. It's now apparent we won't find any more new species to add to our lists, so we head back to Washington to finish our trip with a run through the state again.

We're happy with the way this turned out. We decided that getting to number 600 would be more meaningful to us if we could get there with birds found during our 'Big Year' competition. So now the tough part begins. Will number 600 be a Flammulated Owl? Maybe it'll be a Laysan Albatross. Either way, we're looking forward to the challenge!

VAS President, Eric 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.*

On March 14, we decided to take a break from the challenge by driving to Arizona and New Mexico. We're in search of enough new 'life birds' to get us both to 600 species seen in North America. At the start of this trip Eric has 591 and Tammy is at 590. Our plan is to get certain birds in AZ before driving to Sandia Crest in northern NM, a well-known spot to see all three rosy-finch species at once.

We start off with a bang by getting the Nutting's Flycatcher that has been hanging around a canyon near Parker, AZ for two months. The next day we add Le Conte's Thrasher, Rufous-capped Warbler, and Law-

THE FUND RAISER: You can support Vancouver Audubon by buying raffle tickets, making pledges per species seen or giving donations that will go towards VAS's annual operating fund which helps make it possible for us to support local & statewide issues and initiatives.

For information or donating email or call:

Tammy Bjorkman at 360-213-6489

bjorkmante@iinet.com

There are great prizes to be won.



Carbon Emissions and the Environmental Protection Agency

Most rational people now realize that global climate change is a serious problem. Some even know that carbon dioxide produced by human activities is the cause. Climate change is already causing problems for birds. There are the changes in habitat, of course. But, the shifting patterns of plant growth and insect emergence will be disastrous for some species. A study conducted several years ago in Europe found that the caterpillars that great tits feed their young on were emerging before the birds had arrived from their migration. With fewer caterpillars available, fewer chicks fledged.

Coal burning produces a large chunk of the carbon dioxide emissions. Absent positive action by Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the only entity left that can push for reduction of carbon emissions. They can do so under the Clean Air Act. In fact, they have been working on it. National Audubon sent out postcards for people to sign and send back, postcards that urged EPA to curb carbon pollution from new coal fired plants. By the time I received those cards, EPA had already acted. The regulations they have just proposed were strict. The environmental groups are happy and the coal mining industry is not. In recent years, however, the power industry have been going for natural gas plants. Now, what EPA needs to do is issue regulations for existing power plants. That will be forthcoming. And, we have to be alert to reactions from the industry and from Congress -- especially in an election year.

Bird-Friendly Wind Turbines?

With the right guidelines, yes. The Secretary of the Interior has just recently issued such guidelines. A citizens advisory, which included experts from several environmental groups (one of which was from Massachusetts Audubon), helped develop the guidelines. One issue that Audubon helped on involved habitat fragmentation caused by wind turbine farms. A wind developer following the guidelines would be careful to ensure that the wind farm wouldn't cut up the habitat. Under the guidelines, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife would have a say in any wind power development. Any developer who failed to follow Fish and Wildlife's recommendations could be liable under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The guidelines are voluntary, not mandatory. This does not mean the wind power industry can ignore them. As David Yarrow, National Audubon President, said in an e-mail sent to conservation chairs, " 'Voluntary' means that virtually every major wind company in the U.S. has voluntarily pledged to comply with these guidelines. It does not mean that following the guidelines is optional." The administration -- and Audubon -- prefers to have industry buy-in. Much easier and less complicated to enforce a voluntary agreement than mandatory rules.

But the Interior Department must have strict enforcement of the agreements and Audubon will be pushing for that.

Back to State Issues: a Horrible Bill is De-Fanged

I contacted some of you about SB 6406 in the legislature, a bill that as introduced would have deregulated just about everything in sight. It would have unraveled much about Growth Management, including making it much harder for citizens to appeal land use decisions. It also would have made it harder to deal with polluting stormwater. The Growth Management provisions were fixed about midway through the session. I received word early in April that much of the stormwater issues have been dealt with and "the new version of SB 6406 strikes an acceptable balance between the needs of local government, industry, and environmental protections."

As of this writing, the legislature is still in special session, haggling over the budget and not much information is getting out to the public. I'll let you know next month what the damages will be.

Gretchen Starke

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Kate Baum • Kathryn Baxter • Anita Bingam • Kim Brouillet • Judith Burraston • B & C Kimsey • Jeni Coons • Richard Crum • Dawnmarie Dancy • Hope Davis • Kelli Dizmang • Patricia Downey • Peter Durant • Ivan & Frances Rutherford • Patti Gaines • Gaylynn Grant • David Harris • Deanna Kogler • Paul Kubiak • Anita Liggett • Doug & Mary Ann Glover • Fred McGhee • Chelsea Meats • Freida Moisant • Susan Ochs • Gary Ostenson • Judith & Paul T Kuter • Esther Perkins • Michele Phillips • Jubilee Roth • Helen Sareen • Jenny Schrock • John Schwartz • Sheila Scott • Stefanie Sharp • Rex Tolstrup • Jennifer Wasson **Transfer Members:** Karl Tollefson • Deanne Neth



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March 10. His first **RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** of the year was at Randy Hill's yard near Ridgefield. We had a nice turn out for the VAS Columbia Gorge field trip and some good birding and a few early wildflowers at Catherine Creek. Out of the 56 species we saw the ones I found most notable were very cooperative **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, CANYON WREN, WESTERN BLUEBIRD** and **DIPPERS**.

March 11. Susan Saul saw a **TURKEY VULTURE** at the Deschutes River on the Oregon side of the Columbia Gorge.



March 12. Scott Carpenter found a white morph **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** at the northern end of the parking lot of Vancouver Lake Regional Park.

March 15. A **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, in Skamania County, was a good find for Ann Marie Wood.

March 16. Carol Kohler saw her first **TURKEY VULTURE** of the year today on Highway 14 at about 192nd. The vultures used to nest on the cliffs at the former rock quarry there and still may be using the area.

March 17. Eric and Tammy Bjorkman found three lifebirds while in Arizona, **LECONTE'S THRASHER, RUFIOUS-CAPPED WARBLER** and **LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH**.

March 25. Kimberly and Jeffrey St Clair did their final raptor run for the winter on the Washougal Dike and the Steigerwald Lake NWR. They counted **10 RED-TAILED HAWKS, 7 BALD EAGLES, 4 NORTHERN HARRIERS, 1 RED-SHOULDERED HAWK, 2 OSPREY 3 AMERICAN KESTRELS** and **1 PEREGRINE FALCON**.

Kelly and Danielle Johnson visited Sauvie Island, which is just across the Columbia River from Vancouver Lake and the Ridgefield Refuge but attracts a different mix of birds. In about three hours they found 40 species of birds including a **SNOW GOOSE** flock for an addition to their life-list.

Sidra Blake and Tyler L Hicks birded the Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit and observed, **1 SAY'S PHOEBE** at the headquarters and **2 LINCOLN'S SPARROW** and they also heard **RED CROSSBILLS** flying overhead. **EVENING GROSBEAKS** have been regular at their feeders and a **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** was calling from below their house above the River S River Unit of the refuge.



While Les Carlson, Barry Woodruff and I were doing a Big Day in Skamania County, Susan called me to let me know she had

just seen the pair of **OSPREY** at their nest at the junction of I-205 and Hwy.14. Barry and Les did see these birds on their way home that evening. We found a total of 70 species in Skamania County for a new March Big Day record, the best bird was a **COMMON LOON** on Drano Lake.

March 26. A white-striped morph of a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** was seen in their yard by Ruth and Roger Phillips.

April 1. The first **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** reported for the year in Clark County was found by Erik Knight at the Steigerwald Lake NWR. George and Cindy Mayfield reported that **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** had returned to the Ridgefield NWR, these lovely birds are a scarce species on the west side of the Cascades. Susan and I went up the Gorge and found **CASPIAN TERNS** and **OSPREY** had arrived back to Skamania County.



April 2. At the Steigerwald Lake NWR, Lyn and Gene Topinka found two **SAY'S PHOEBES**.

April 3. A male and a female **SURF SCOTER** were seen and photographed by Randy Hill and Roger Windemuth. These birds stuck around for several days allowing many people to see these birds that are normally associated with saltwater environments.

April 6. I birded at the Steigerwald Lake NWR and found a **SAGE THRASHER**, the sixth record for Clark County. I also saw two **SAY'S PHOEBES** along with my first **CLIFF SWALLOWS** and **SAVANNAH SPARROW** of the year. Both the Bjorkmans and Hagens were able to relocate the Thrasher. Both Barry Woodruff and Lyn Topinka saw the continuing **SURF SCOTERS** at the Ridgefield NWR.

Eric and Tammy Bjorkman were birding in Klickitat County and saw two **EARED GREBE'S**, one was in breeding plumage. They also spotted a **CLARK'S GREBE** there both species are rare in that county.

Cathy Flick found two male **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** in western Skamania County, near Cape Horn.

Nancy Ellifrit had **PINE SISKINS** and **EVENING GROSBEAKS** show up at her Ridgefield area yard in early-mid January, a little later than usual. The Pine Siskins left in mid-March but she still had a dozen or so Evening Grosbeaks. She did not have any American Goldfinches spend the winter this year and her first of the season **FOX SPARROWS** were in her yard on the March 24th.

The months of April and May are when many of the migrants begin to arrive and is a great time to see the shore-

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

bird and sandpiper migration. The Grays Harbor area is an excellent spot to see a wide variety and good numbers of these birds. A good way to experience these birds with qualified guides would be to attend the annual Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival, May 4-5. For more information or to sign up go to their webpage at:

<http://www.shorebirdfestival.com/>

Please keep track of the arrival dates for migrant birds for inclusion in this column and for the 2012 Cumulative Lists for Clark and Skamania Counties. So far 148 species have been reported this year from Clark County and 105 species in Skamania County.

WENAS CAMPOUT MAY 26 – 28



The annual gathering of the Audubon Chapters of Washington takes place on the Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Forest Campground east of Selah, in Yakima County. This campground is situated in a valley that spans many habitat types, from grasslands, to sub-alpine meadows. This variety of plant communities hosts a wide range of birds along with many wildflowers. Birds seen here on a regular basis include Poorwill, White-headed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Calliope and Black-chinned Hummingbirds, and both Western and Mountain Bluebirds to name only a few of the over two hundred species on the area checklist.

The Native Plant Society will once again be joining us and will, as usual, have a display board with specimens of the flowers identified and labeled.

There are numerous field trips scheduled every day covering most habitat types and focusing on all aspects of the natural history of the Wenas Valley. These trips include all day and part day hikes and auto tours. For those that wish to just stay in the campground area there are workshops and classes both in the mornings and afternoons, some of these are designed for children.

Rustic would be the best description of this campground, there is no water or power, and portable outhouses are the closest thing to luxury. Every form of camping from Motorhomes to pup tents will be seen here, many people attend yearly to visit and relax, or explore on their own. Bring your own water and all other supplies. Campfires are not always permitted, check the website the week before the campout.

There are no fees charged to attend this gathering and it is open to everyone who enjoys the outdoors. This is probably the only spot in the State where you are guaranteed a camping space on the Memorial Day Weekend.

Directions: Take Highway 97 north from Yakima, leave the Freeway at Exit 30A to the town of Selah, when you reach Naches Avenue turn right and go to Wenas Avenue

and follow it 21 miles to the end of pavement. Here you take the gravel Audubon Road, 2.5 miles to a bridge that crosses the creek and leads into the campground. Before you leave Selah fill your gas tank and avoid having to return to do so later.

For more information go to:

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

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

March was kind of a slow month for the competition. Tammy & Eric took off to AZ-CA to pump up their life list while Arden & I took it easy and stayed closer to home visiting the local refuges and the gorge picking up a few species, very few. Having birded heavy this winter and getting a lot of the rarities and harder winter birds it was time to wait for the spring arrivals and that is just starting to pick up. The next couple months should be pretty active around the state. People laugh at this "competition" between the Bjorkman's and us since we are friends and occasionally share information. I sincerely hope they reach their goal of 300 plus species this year since they fell short a couple years ago on their quest. As for us I just hope we "beat them" in a friendly way. I got a call on April 6 around 5 PM from Wilson Cady that he was at Steigerwald and had a **SAGE THRASHER** in view at the barns. I wasn't feeling good having been on the migraine train again this week but we grabbed our stuff and jumped into the car and drove to the refuge AFTER calling the Bjorkman's to let them know. Thus the friendly competition. But this was a rare bird for the county. Arden talked to Wilson as he was about to head out. Then we walked out to the barns in the beautiful warm sunshine and picked up **BARN SWALLOW** on the over the lake. We searched the barn area to no avail for the thrasher but Arden did stir up a **BARN OWL** for the count list too. Staying in touch with Bjorkman's that we were about to give up and they hadn't arrived, they decided to head back home. I walked west on the dike for some bird photos and spotted what I thought was a thrush. We needed thrushes so I motioned for Arden to come then I realized it had yellow eyes. It was the **SAGE THRASHER** we were seeking. I called Bjorkman's and told them I had the bird in sight as it worked the cleared ground between the dike and the river for over an hour. It took Tammy & Eric a while to drive, park and walk to the area. All the time it was getting darker but the bird stayed and they got to add it to their year list too. So the word for the day was "**BARN**". We added Barn Swallow, Barn Owl that was roosting in the barn and saw Sage Thrasher that had been at the barn and was then across from the barn.

A big thanks to everyone who has been following both our adventures and supporting Vas through donations or pledges.

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding ☺

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 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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