

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

Member of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

November 2009

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, November 3, 6:45 PM before the meeting.

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

***Monday, November 2, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting at the home of Joan Durgin 1548 NE 5th Ave., Camas 360-834-5621

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					

PROGRAM:

SHOW & TELL

by members and guests



This program is put on by our members. It is your chance to show your vacation or wildlife photos to a willing audience.

Our projector can play either home made DVD's if you want to share video or CD with music, as well as just jpegs saved on DVD or CD.

The projector does not handle really large files very well so you will need to reduce any large ones OR bring your laptop to connect to the projector. Call Randy Hopfer for help. 360-573-6000

FIELD TRIP

Rare Bird Run



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: November 21, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM Saturday

Meet at: Inn at the Quay, west side parking lot
This is the time of year when unpredictable sightings occur, we will be looking for unusual species that in the past have included Tropical Kingbird, Costa's Hummingbird, Brambling, Redwing, etc. Bring snacks and/or lunch and be prepared for an all day trip.



VAS Upcoming Programs:

December:

Naturally Beautiful Backyards

January: *No Meeting*

February *Possible Bird DVD night*

Spring: *Hagen's Peru Trip*



message/fax (360) 253-5771

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Treasurer's Report. Income for September was \$1,060.40 with \$734.75 for Audubon Adventures and \$130 in donations. Total donations for Audubon Adventures are \$2,047.00. Expenses were \$293.68. Cash and investments were \$23,450.91. The Community Foundation fund was \$199,278.61 as of 30 June.

Programs. Bob Rowe officially took over as Program Chairman from Randy Hopfer.

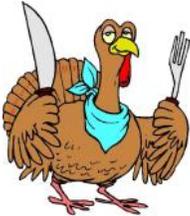
Conservation. The Rural Lands Task Force will probably recommend cluster subdivisions.

Old Business. Calendars have been ordered.

New Business. One of the CD's has come due. Chase will only give 0.02%. We can get better interest at a credit union. A motion was made, seconded and passed to authorize Joan Durgin to use her judgment on where to put the CD.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Ellifrit

Thanksgiving Day Bird Count



When: Thanksgiving Bird Count
Time: counter chooses the time that best fits his/her holiday schedule.
How long: only ONE HOUR
Where: in a count circle only 15 FEET in diameter, determined by the counter.

Actually, the circle can be considered a cylinder, since all birds seen on the ground (or water), in vegetation or flying over or through the circle can be counted. Individual birds are to be counted only once during the hour, even if they continue to pay visits. Flocks should be estimated or counted and just the highest number at any one time used.

This is one bird count which can be done in comfort (indoors) and won't take much time (one hour). Last year 431 counters in the eleven Western States and Alaska made 440 counts. They tallied 161 species of birds (plus a lot of mammals and other things, too).

See the website for the form:

vancouveraudubon.org/THANKSGIVING.pdf

Information is sent to:
Dr. John G. Hewston
Natural Resources Building
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521

Thanksgiving Bird Counts were begun in 1966 by Dr. Ernest Edwards and the Lynchburg Bird Club in Virginia. Counts slowly spread to the West.



Project FeederWatch

Embrace the winter. Count feeder birds for science!

CORNELL LAB of ORNITHOLOGY



Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People
Connection with nature promotes wellness

Project FeederWatch 2008-09 season:
November 8 and runs through April 3.

It is easy and can be a family project.

Cost is \$15 (for which you will receive *Feeder-Watcher's Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, *Winter Bird Highlights*.)

More than 100 studies have shown that getting closer to nature reduces stress and promotes a feeling of well-being in children and adults. So, filling feeders and counting the birds that visit **may be just what the doctor ordered!** For more than 20 years, that's what participants in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch have been doing--benefitting themselves and the birds.

Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges--a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment. Scientists learn something new from the data each year. Highlights of the most recent season include the largest southward movement of Red-breasted Nuthatches in the history of the project--part of an expected influx of northern birds that fly farther south when their food supplies run short. Other northern species showing up in record numbers included Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins.



Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors.

To learn more and to sign up, visit:

www.feederwatch.org or call the
Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473.

Visit the Lab's web site at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>



REMEMBER TO VOTE

Be sure to mail your ballot by November 3.

Remember that Vancouver Audubon is urging a no vote on Initiative 1033.

Tim Eyman's initiative 1033 will result in future cuts in programs and agencies that protect the environment and wildlife.

work if the cap was low enough, decreased each year, and no carbon credits were given away, but were auctioned instead.

That house bill has since languished in the Senate. The Congress and the whole nation were distracted this summer and fall by the uproar over health care. Senators John Kerry and Barbara Boxer, however, were quietly working on another bill that they introduced at the end of September. It also relies on cap and trade. There are incentives for carbon capture and storage from coal, for natural gas production, and for developing renewable energy. It promotes increasing efficiency of energy use. The Kerry-Boxer bill calls for auctioning off 25% of the carbon credits, up from the 15% in the House bill. The bill sets a pollution reduction target of 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 from 2005 levels, as well as reserving the important functions of the Clean Air Act in the area of carbon pollution.

Speaking personally, I don't know whether to celebrate or cry. Certainly the perfect must not be the enemy of the good. Both the House bill and the Kerry-Boxer bill are steps in the right direction -- mostly. We will have to support one or both of those bills. We must work to improve whichever bill finally emerges from the Senate. But, at a time when the atmospheric CO₂ level is about 10% over what it should be, is taking ten years to reduce our country's contribution from 2005 levels really adequate?

Our leaders, most of them, are beginning to realize that global climate change is a problem that must be addressed, but few seem to understand how soon and how drastically we must act. One thing is sure: judging from the health care debate, to keep even these relatively weak provisions in either bill will require a stiff fight in -- and out of -- Congress. Nevertheless, it is important to get a bill to President Obama's desk. Then, we must start in right away to work to strengthen the law.

Gretchen Starke

Welcome new members: Tony Ames • Harry Beard • Terill Buren • Ivera Campbell • Paula Clark • Faye Clements • Cascade Com Lib • Theodore Dorn • Tom Duffy • Fred & Shirley Guttler • Gary Hall • Charlene Heffler • Tyler Hicks • Chris Hurter • Eleanor Krapp • Marlene McKee • Eric & Jean Mellesdal • Beverlee Miller • Kendra Miller • Verna Miller • Sondra Nakamura • Kathleen O'Hara • Jane Olson • Kadi n & Kiera Schaefer • Donna Smith • Jan Taylor- Taskey • Thompson Family • Thomas Underwood

Welcome transfer members: Virginia Adams • Deanna Baderoch • Jean Westphal

350: The Most Important Number in the World

That is the number of parts per million of carbon (ppm) in the atmosphere that scientists who study climate change say is the safe upper limit. More than that and the world is really in trouble. The atmosphere now contains 387 ppm.

The writer, Bill McKibben, was in Portland in September. An interview with McKibben appeared in the September 11th issue of *The Oregonian*. He has been working on organizing people all over the world to bring awareness to the urgency of the situation, with a focus on October 24 as a day of action. As I write this, October 24 is in the future, but will be in the past by the time you are reading this. Unfortunately, as far as I know, nothing was planned in Vancouver.

In response to a question about whether it was realistic to expect quick action from our lawmakers, McKibben said, "Politically realistic or reality realistic? The problem is, our political and economic system would like slow, cheap solutions that cause as little disruption as possible. Physics and chemistry, on the other hand, have already laid out their bottom line -- above 350 ppm CO₂, the world won't work right. . . . since physics and chemistry are unlikely to negotiate, we have to meet their demands, hard as that may be." McKibben went on to say that, while Obama is better on this issue than was Bush, "that's not the bar he has to clear."

Last summer in Washington D.C., the House of Representatives passed an energy bill that addressed the problem of global climate change. It was a weak bill, but it was something -- a baby step forward, mostly in the right direction (although the targets were too low and the deadlines were too far in the future -- but in a rational world that could be fixed later). To lower carbon emissions, the bill relied on the market system -- a cap and trade system in which the right to produce carbon emissions are traded. If a company could not meet its carbon cap, it could buy credits from a company who was below the cap. Although not as effective as a straight forward carbon tax, it could



Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count (CBC)

Washington Side: Sunday December 27th, 2009

For two weeks before and two weeks after Christmas, tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas will take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. The **SAUVIE ISLAND CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - WASHINGTON SIDE** is scheduled for Sunday, December 27.



Please join us in helping to make a difference!

Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists participate in this annual mission. For more than one hundred years (since December 25, 1900!), the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season and help with this project. To learn more about the history of this honored tradition, check out the website at:

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/history.html>

VAS Contact Person: Tammy Bjorkman

If you have questions or would like to sign up to join a team, call or email:

(360) 213-6489 or bjorkmante@iinet.com



Sept. 12, I scouted around the Vancouver Lake area and first checked Ruefner's Pond, where there were **20 GREAT EGRETS, 4 GREATER YELLOWLEGS, 2 LESSER YELLOWLEGS, 8 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** and **1 SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER**.

I walked out at the Flushing Channel to check the shorebirds on the mudflats in the bay. There was a large flock of **WESTERN SANDPIPERS** that contained only one other species, a single **BAIRD'S SANDPIPER**. A **PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER** and several **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES** were in the woods between the lake and the road.

Sept. 17, Susan and I had a chance to closely observe a female **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** at our sunflower seed feeder. This was the first record for this species in Skamania County.

Sept. 18, I led a field trip to Vancouver Lake for the Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) Convention which was held in Kelso this year. A single **SNOW GOOSE** with a flock of **CAACKLING GEESE** on the lake was a surprise. We also managed to relocate the **SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** first seen on Sept. 12. Other birds of interest were **CASSIN'S VIREO WARBLING VIREO** and my first of the fall **LINCOLN** and **GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS**.

Sept. 19, Despite the rain and clouds we encountered on the WOS Silver Star Mountain field trip we did locate 3 **MERLIN**, including one that perched in a tree for long scope views.



Sept. 20, My WOS field trip to Mt. Saint Helens we had better weather and large flocks of migrant warblers, vireos and flycatchers. The most numerous warblers were **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS** with over a hundred seen during the day.

Sept. 21, My final trip of the WOS Convention included a stop at the Steigerwald Lake NWR where we saw **MUTE SWAN, TUNDRA SWAN** and a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK**. I went as far east as Balch Road, near Lyle, in Klickitat County. At this last spot we saw dozens of **LEWIS' WOODPECKERS** and **2 ACORN WOODPECKERS**.



Sept. 25, Lyn Topinka found one adult and 2 juvenile **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** on Lacamas Lake, where they are very uncommon.

A female **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** came to our bird bath on Mt. Pleasant, east of Washougal.

Oct. 3, On a Friends of the Columbia Gorge hike that I led to Steigerwald Lake, we once again saw

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

a **MERLIN**. Up to three of these birds at a time were reported from here during the last week.

Oct. 4, On Mt Pleasant, in Skamania County, Martha Taylor and Chris Bennett saw lots of **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS, MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER, GOLDEN-CROWNED** and **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS** and **CHIPPING SPARROW**. East of Stevenson they found a juvenile **RED-NECKED GREBE**.

On the Vancouver Audubon trip to Steigerwald Lake we had a flock of about **200 SNOW GEESE** fly over. We also had **CANADA GEESE, CACKLING GEESE** and **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** on this outing.

Oct. 9, George Neavoll spotted **2 LINCOLN'S SPARROWS** in the shrubbery by the observation blind at the River "S" Unit of the Ridgefield NWR.

During the Washington Ornithological Convention several good birds were found including the first **LARK SPARROW** for Clark County at the Ridgefield Refuge. A **NORTHERN WHEATEAR** was reported from the Tillamook area and despite leading field trips for the convention, Bob Flores and several other people got to see this bird by running down in the evening and driving right back to Kelso.



This fall's migration was slow and late at our home but the birds that finally showed up in October were very numerous. We have about a dozen mature European Mountain Ash trees that were loaded with berries until a massive flock of **AMERICAN ROBINS, HERMIT THRUSH** and **VARIED THRUSH** showed up and stripped them bare in a single day. These birds moved on but were replaced on a daily basis by equally large flocks for the next week working over our crabapple grove and hawthorns. There were times when we had a dozen robins in the birdbath at a time and several dozen in the shrubs around it.

Please continue to send your sightings to me for inclusion in this column and for the cumulative county list project. So far this year people have reported seeing 211 species in Clark County and species in 164 Skamania County. You can see the complete lists by going to: <http://www.wabirder.com/bartel.html>, if you have seen any birds this year not on a county list please contact me to have it added. We have not had some fairly common

birds reported this year including California Quail and Western Screech-Owl.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

Arden & I just completed a 3 week birding tour of Peru returning home on October 11. It was a rather grueling trip. We again went with the same guide that we had on our two trips to Ecuador. He is a great guide and can identify a bird by either a flyby or calls faster than you even know a bird is in available for ID. Arden had been suffering from nausea & dizziness for several weeks before we left. His diagnoses had been changed and we still aren't sure what is wrong. The day before we left he was so sick we didn't know if he would be able to go but the next morning he was better. Our birding adventure started in Lima and along the coast. We went on a 2 hours pelagic trip out to an island of nesting birds of several species including Humboldt Penguins. From there we flew to Cusco in central Peru at an elevation of just under 11,000 feet. We birded the area that afternoon. The elevation is hard on the body of those not use to it and my breathing was quite labored. We then headed down in elevation to the little village of Ollantaytambo. The lodge had beautiful gardens and some very cooperative hummingbirds. We visited Machu Picchu, the famous Inca ruins high in the Andes but back in Cusco I developed altitudinal sickness and that was scary. After a couple hours of severe shakes comparable to a 7.5 earthquake, I calmed down but was nauseated and with labored breathing. As we moved down in elevation over the next few days the symptoms lessened but then the reality of birding in the hot humid Amazon set in. Arden had at least 3 bad episodes over the three weeks and that wore him out. What a pair we turned out to be. There were many times we wondered what we were doing there. We aren't that young anymore and maybe we'll have to think twice about jungle or high mountain trips. Towards the end of the trip, we went to a town near the Bolivian border with Peru to visit a Harpy Eagle nest. We did not know what we were in for. Eddy wanted us to have this special opportunity to see the amazingly huge eagle that sometime in the future could become



extinct if the efforts to save it are unsuccessful. We did not realize we would have to climb a ladder made of steel cable with re-bar steps to a make-shift platform 115 feet high in a tree. After the researcher went up, I climbed the ladder carrying my backpack of camera equipment. It was a very hard task and I kept saying to myself, I can do this, I can do this. Arden couldn't believe I did make it especially after he almost didn't make it up to the top. Even though our medical problems slowed us down some, we were still able to add over 200 species to our life lists. We haven't had time to do the final count. We plan on doing a program for Audubon next spring so if you are interested in our adventure in Peru join us then.

Sherry Hag en, 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.*



November 2009

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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every year

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