

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

Member of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

October 2010

Calendar

***NO BIRDING CLASS DUE to the Potluck

***Tuesday, Oct. 5, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

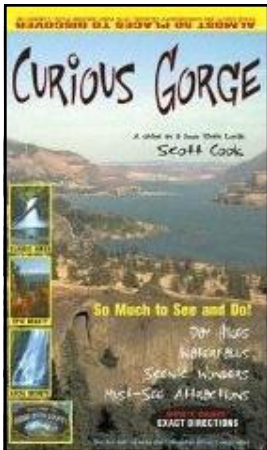
***Monday, Oct. 4, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Bob & Geri Rowe
2010 SE 140th Ave. Vancouver 360-254-8699

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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:

"Curious Gorge"

By Scott Cook



The speaker is **Scott Cook**. His topic: "**Curious Gorge**", the title of his book on Hikes and Explorations in the Columbia River Gorge. The author also includes many places the typical hiking guide leaves out. It covers hidden waterfalls, wild-flower nooks, historic oddities, swimming holes, places to watch salmon spawn, lakes, viewpoints, gorge oddities such as the Trout Lake Ice Cave & other attractions.

His book will be available for sale.

FIELD TRIP

Rare Bird Run



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: October 23, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Inn at the Quay (near I-5 bridge) west side parking lot where we will car pool

We will look for unusual migrants or rare birds showing up in our area.

VAS Upcoming Programs:

Show and Tell by Our Members

Call Bob Rowe for instructions on preparing your photos for show 360-254-8699

ANNUAL FALL POTLUCK

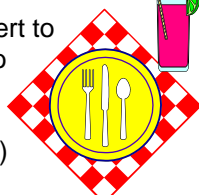


When: October 5, 2010

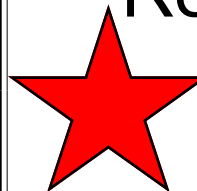
Time: 6:30 PM

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.



The Columbia Flyway Renewal Notice



Remember that **November 1st** is the deadline for renewing your Columbia Flyway subscription.

If you have **NOT** paid already, you will see an "Unpaid" notice on the lower right hand corner of your mailing address. If you want to continue receiving the flyway then see the coupon on the back page of this publication for mailing in your \$10 renewal.

Treasurer's Report

Revenue for August: \$1533.51. The yard sale brought in \$315.80 and Audubon Adventures \$1117.35.

Expenses for August: \$209.35

Balance in Community Foundation as of 8/30/10:
\$207,427

Membership

No new information to report. 483 newsletters were mailed on August 30th

Conservation

Whistling Ridge – Seattle Audubon is taking the lead as intervener. Gretchen sent out a letter on behalf of Vancouver Audubon.

Shoreline Management Plan – Gretchen asked board contact her if they have any feedback.

Old Business

Yard Sale was a success. Eric will write a thank you to our benefactor and bring in leftovers to be sold at next general meeting.

New Business

Grants: The board approved a grant of \$5,000 to Columbia Land Trust's Urban Conservation Program. \$2,000 will be given to the Friends of Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Program with the approval for an additional \$3,000 in the future assuming the bequest fund has enough of a gain to remain above \$200,000.

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Mike Ahlfors • Alvin Allen • Debra Carver • Joanne Cheek • David Cowles • Carol Hardesty • Beth Horton • Don Humphrey • Ronna Johnson • Irene Judd • K. Pritchard • Al Rasimas • Teri Rice • Richard Scherer • Patricia Silver • Sharice Weimann



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in Ridgefield, Washington October 9 & 10, 2010

<http://www.ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest.php>

Join the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Staff as we celebrate the coming of fall and the wildlife that make the Refuge their winter home. BirdFest and Bluegrass is an opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of fall migration and bluegrass music throughout Ridgefield.

Vancouver Audubon is one of the partners who help put on BirdFest & Bluegrass each year. BirdFest is always the second weekend in October. Saturday Oct 10th we lead birding trips on the Carty and River S Units. Sunday Oct 11th we lead birding/nature trips on the Kiwa and man scopes at the Observation blind.

“The Sit” is our newest event. We will be helping to train people/visitors to do “citizen science” from the Bird Blind. Our scope will alternate between a particular area (the study site) and everywhere else. People who come to the blind will learn to help count the birds on the study site. Then our scope can focus where ever there are interesting birds.

At the October VAS meeting, there will be sign-up sheets for volunteers to lead walks, man scopes and man our outreach table in the Marketplace.

Anyone with children should come to BirdFest because there will be activities at Davis park and the Plankhouse. There will be geocaching on the Carty for teenagers and families. **The whole schedule is on the website of the Friends of the Refuge, www.ridgefieldfriends.org.**





Election 2010 Candidates

In our democratic system, there is no such thing as an unimportant election. Whether or not the presidency is on the ballot, it is vital that every eligible voter cast an informed ballot. The emphasis is on informed. For environmentalists this year at the national, state, and local levels we will choose whether or not we have a chance to deal with our environmental problems or have no chance whatsoever.

At the federal level, we will elect a senator and a congressperson. It is congress that passes the laws. Presidents can propose legislation, can push for legislation, but if congress won't do it, it doesn't happen. In this election, the senate is extremely important. In the last two years, the senate has been a place where, as someone said, that good bills (or decent bills) go to die. The rules of the senate have allowed a minority of senators to block attempts at legislation. I hope all you of have paid attention these past two years and can tell where the problems are.

At the state level, we will elect house members of the legislature. Again, the legislature passes the laws. Any governor can do only so much. We will also be electing a justice for the supreme court. The court interprets the laws as they are brought before the court through litigation. Obviously, the judicial philosophy of a judge can influence his or her decisions.

At the local level, we will elect a county commissioner, a Vancouver city council member (because there is a vacancy on the council), and a Public Utility Commissioner. The county commissioners pass ordinances and administer the county offices. How the county grows depends on who the commissioners are.

As a nonprofit, we cannot endorse any candidate for partisan office. I can give you hints on where to find information. Check your voters pamphlet of course. It is helpful to know who is contributing to various candidates. The information is on website of the Public Disclosure Commission which is <http://www.pdc.wa.gov/default.aspx>. There is some information on the Washington Conservation Voters (WCV) website -- <http://wcvoters.org/> -- and you can look at endorsements. Unfortunately, there isn't much on Clark County because there is no local chapter. The Sierra Club can endorse candidates, so check them out. The local website for endorsements is <http://washington.sierraclub.org/loowit/main/elections.asp>.

Ballot Issues

Initiatives are put on the ballot by enough people signing a petition within a specific time. Referenda are put

on the ballot by the legislature. This year we have six initiatives and one referendum. I will discuss only those that will affect the environment. These includes money measures, because without adequate money, state and local agencies can do nothing to protect the environment. No taxes, no government services. That includes protecting wildlife, providing parks, and monitoring polluting industries. Audubon can comment on issues that affect the environment.

Initiative 1053 is another Tim Eyman special. It is a rerun of an initiative that he had before. The legislature this last session set it aside because they needed to vote for ways to fund vital state services. This initiative would require a two-thirds vote of each house of the legislature in order to raise or impose any tax or fee. Among the backers are the oil industry and the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW). Among the taxes these industries hope to derail are a proposed hazard substances tax. From their point of view, reducing the influence of the departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife would be nice too. The WCV opposes this initiative.

Initiative 1098 would establish an income tax, while reducing some other taxes. The income tax would apply only to those individuals that earn more than \$200,000 and couples that earn more than \$400,000. I mention this initiative because Washington's tax system is unstable and instituting an income tax would bring more stability. Stability in income helps keep state agencies functioning.

Initiative 1107 would repeal the mostly temporary sales tax the legislature established on candy and soda pop. Even with the candy tax, the state faces an ongoing budget crisis. Those who support environmental protection and natural resource management will be struggling to retain a minimum funding for these programs during the next legislative session. Should this initiative pass, the state would lose an estimated \$352 over five fiscal years. That is money the state agencies and our schools can ill afford to lose. This will make the budget situation even worse. Surely paying a few cents more for a candy bar or bottle of soda pop is worth keeping teachers in the classroom. It is no surprise that the major backer of this initiative is the beverage industry. These big corporations do not give a rip about Washington citizens or our quality of life. The WCV opposes this initiative.

Referendum 52 would authorize the state to issue \$505 worth of bonds to be used to fix up schools, including weatherizing them. These bonds would put people back to work and enable school districts to save on energy. Saving energy is good for the environment. The WCV supports this referendum.

Gretchen Starke



**Elections
are just
around
the corner**



Aug. 14. Jim Danzenbaker visited Ridgefield NWR, River "S" Unit and was treated to an incredible shorebird feast on Rest Lake with the following sixteen species: **8 KILLDEER, 2 SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS, 75+ GREATER YELLOW-LEG, 40+LESSER YELLOWLEGS, A SOLITARY SANDPIPER, 1 SPOTTED SANDPIPER, 1 PECTORAL SANDPIPER, 5 BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS, 5 SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS, 50+ LEAST SANDPIPERS, 4 WESTERN SANDPIPERS, 210 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, 1 SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER, 1 WILSON'S SNIPE, 11 WILSON'S PHALAROPE, and 3 RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.** I had a **CLARK'S GREBE** at the Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel, and at the Ridgefield NWR, there was 1 **PEREGRINE FALCON, a SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, and a BAIRD'S SANDPIPER.**

Aug. 17. A **BREWER'S SPARROW** at Bob Flores's feeder was only the third record for Clark County to my knowledge.

Aug. 18. Stuart Johnston found a **LONG-TAILED JAEGER** in the Columbia Gorge near Hood River. These are birds that breed on the Arctic tundra and are usually found over the oceans.

Aug. 19. I checked in Skamania County for shorebirds which are difficult species to find in that county. At the Bonneville Hot Springs Resort I spotted **2 SOLITARY SANDPIPERS,** a bird that had only been seen three previous times in the county. Later in the day I spotted a third one at the Pierce NWR. I then went to Rock Creek Cove at Stevenson where I located a **SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, 1 SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER, and 4 LEAST SANDPIPERS,** the first two species were new additions to the Skamania County list. The internet report of these birds brought many "County Listers" to add these birds to their lists. A county lister is a person who is attempting to see at least 100 species in every one of the 39 counties in Washington. A couple of people have now surpassed 150 birds per county.

Aug. 20. **1 SOLITARY SANDPIPER** at the Bonneville Hot Springs Resort pond and **1 LEAST SANDPIPER and 1 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** on the mudflats at the mouth of Rock Creek were reported by Russ Koppenrayer. Stevenson resident, Peter Johnson was delighted to see **4 LEAST SANDPIPERS, 1 SEMIPALMATED PLOVER and 1 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** at Rock Creek in Stevenson.

Aug. 21. Tom Mansfield reported that the **2 SOLITARY SANDPIPERS** were still at the Bonneville Hot Springs and he had **12 LEAST SANDPIPERS, a WESTERN SANDPIPER, SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER, and a BLACK SWIFT** at Rock Creek in Stevenson. At Skamania Landing he spotted the first **GREEN HERON** reported in Skamania County this year. Grace and Ollie Oliver also were there and saw all of the birds except the Semipalmated Sandpiper. Steve Mlodinow, Tracy Clark and Bob Flores spent the

day birding Clark County. Two highlights were a **GRAY CATBIRD** at Capt. William Clark Park in Washougal and a **RED-NECKED GREBE** at the Vancouver Lake flushing channel. Two **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS** were seen west of the Hunter Gate, on the Ridgefield NWR River S Unit. Will Clemmons and Carol Ledford birded at the Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit and found a juvenile **BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON,** a species that shows up here late in the year after dispersing from there east of the Cascades breeding areas. **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE, PECTORAL SANDPIPER, SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER, and GREAT HORNED OWL** were located at the Ridgefield NWR by Bill Bradford.

Aug. 23. Randy Hill reported that there were two **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS** over the weekend at Bachelor Slough on the Ridgefield NWR, and **4 EASTERN KINGBIRDS,** which apparently nested this year as two were somewhat dependant young. One or two adult kingbirds were seen intermittently in July and August on the refuge.

Aug. 26. Susan and I watched a **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** at our feeders in western Skamania County. We get a couple of these per year during migration in both the Spring and Fall, They are more common in mountainous areas east of the Cascades where they nest.

Aug. 27. A **PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER** was photographed by Randy Hill at South Mantrap Lake on the Ridgefield NWR. The report of a **LESSER SAND-PLOVER** at Ocean Shores, in Gray's Harbor County, caused me to make a one day run down there to see this new bird for the Washington State list and a lifebird for me. This bird, formerly called Mongolian Plover, was in breeding plumage. Other unusual birds seen included a **STILT SANDPIPER** and a female **KING EIDER** that has been there for about a year.

Aug. 29. Bob Flores found an **AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** on Rest Lake on the River "S" Unit of the Ridgefield NWR. I was able to get there in time to add it as bird number 272 on my Clark County list. Today, 29 August, Cathy Flick and Stuart Johnston were banding birds at the St. Cloud Recreation Area and caught an **OVENBIRD** in the mist net, only the second record for Skamania County.

Sept. 2. Bob Flores was birding around Ridgefield NWR and found the following highlights along the Columbia River; **1 RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, 1 RED-EYED VIREO, 2 YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS, and 1 LINCOLN'S SPARROW.** On the River "S" Unit he spotted **2 GREEN HERONS.**

Barry Woodruff and I returned to Ocean Shores so that he could add a few birds to his life list. Additions to his list

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

were the **KING EIDER**, **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER**, a juvenile **RUFF**, **WANDERING TATTLER**, and a **HARLEQUIN DUCK** which was Barry's 500th life bird.

Sept. 4, A **HERMIT WARBLER** was among the migrant birds at our home.

Sept. 5, Bob Flores and Randy Hill were in Adams County, at Bassett Park in Washtucna, when a **LONG-TAILED JAEGER** and a **PARASITIC JAEGER** were seen flying past the park. The birders there followed the birds south photographing them and were able to add them to their Franklin County lists as they crossed the county line.

Sept. 6, Jim Danzenbaker was surprised to see a single **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** flying north from his yard in Battle Ground, another new yard bird, county bird, and state bird for him. This species used to be a regular bird in Clark County in the mid-70's but are now very uncommon here.

Congratulations go to **Nancy Ellifrit for seeing her 590th** species, a Common Poorwill, on the Vancouver Audubon field trip to the Malheur NWR, in Oregon.

By the time that you read this column the neo-tropical songbirds and shorebird migration will be winding down and the winter species will be arriving. The swans, ducks and geese that breed north of here, all the way to the Arctic Ocean, will fill the local wetlands including the Ridgefield and Steigerwald Lake Refuges and the lowlands around Vancouver Lake. Hawks and eagles will become more plentiful with the addition of birds from the north like Rough-legged Hawks and birds from the higher elevations moving to the valleys following the waterfowl or to feed on the plentiful rodents in the grasslands. Every year a few rare birds will be found in these flocks including European species can be present in our area. Emperor Goose, Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Baikal Teal, Long-tailed Duck and Tufted Duck have been seen in Clark County so look over any flocks carefully for anything that looks different. If you do see something unusual or that you don't recognize please contact Arden and Sherry Hagen or me as soon as possible. And please continue to send me your sightings for this newsletter. As of the end of August 213 species had been reported this year from Clark County and 175 species from Skamania County.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

Arden & I made a driving trip to Arizona in late August. We tried for the Himalayan Snowcock in the Ruby Mts. of northern Nevada on the way down. All that resulted in was the "Wounded Knee Saga". From an altitude of 8,800 feet, we began hiking from the parking lot in the dark just after 4 AM. The idea is that you get up to the Island Lake at 9,650 feet area early enough to watch the snowcock's fly down the slope at first light and begin feeding as they make their way back up the rocky mountain calling constantly. There is

a point in the very early morning when the darkness is turning into lightness... you know long before sunrise... when you feel you can see well enough to turn off the flashlight and hike without them. Just as we did so, I stumbled and came down full force on my left knee against the sharp edge of a stone step. As I am lying there in excruciating pain, I manage to say "Is my camera OK? Are my binoculars OK?" I checked them and a great relief came over me. It would have been a disastrous trip without either of them. The pain quieted down and I was able to stand and even hike up the rest of the mountain trail. Unfortunately, the Snowcock's don't read the World Wide Web and its source of information about them. Where they were that day is anybody's guess but they weren't in the Island Lake bowl of this particular part of the Ruby Mts. It was beautiful up there with the little Island Lake nestled in this mountain bowl with rocky cliff edges on 3 sides. They call it a "Hanging Valley". Plenty of places to watch for snowcock. We enjoyed the coyote pair that howled together just a short distance away before going down to the marshy area to hunt below us. We enjoyed the big buck deer resting beneath the trees on the grassy slope. We enjoyed all the mountain species of birds that foraged right next to us but we did not see or even hear a peep from the snowcock. After about 3 hours we gave up since the "book" says they come at first light. Arden thinks we will try it again some time. We met a guy who said one easy way to see them is to hire a helicopter in May who will fly around the mountain and you get an aerial view... hummm. From there we drove to Arizona and picked up a doctor friend at the airport who flew in from Indiana. She had never birded in Arizona so this was to be her big adventure adding many species to her life list. Oh, yea, the "wounded knee"... Well, I could walk, I could even hike but after sitting it gave me pain upon standing up. I would struggle walking for a few feet in pain, then it would go away and I was fine. Our doctor friend couldn't figure it out. Didn't make sense. On our last day with Suzie we showed her a Gilded Flicker and then a Harris Hawk for number 45 & 46 lifers just before taking her to the airport to rent a car and then each of going our own ways (we were headed home). But the Harris Hawk gave her #499th lifer. She knew we were stopping at the Salton Sea for an almost sure lifer for us, the Yellow-footed Gull that does a post breeding migration to this area of southern California. Finally, she asked if we minded if she followed us to the Salton Sea. We were delighted to have her. We drove to El Centro, spent the night and the next morning our LIFER for the trip came rather easily as we approached the Salton Sea via a gravel dike road. Suzie now had her 500th lifer. She went back to Tucson and the next morning with instructions from me on a place that reported a bird we missed during the week, she picked up her 48th lifer of the trip. She was one happy camper. "Wounded Knee?" Well, it is better but still hurts at times. So far I have refused to go to the doctor over it.



Sherry Hagen,

Happy Birding ☺

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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October 2010

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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