



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

October 2011

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, Oct. 4, 6:45 PM before the meeting.

***Tuesday, Oct. 4, 7:30 pm: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, Oct. 3, 6:30 pm: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Arden & Sherry Hagen
2203 SE 135th Ave., Vancouver 360-892-8872

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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:

Local Birders Visit Arizona

by Wilson Cady, Barry woodruff,
Les Carlson & George Mayfield



Arizona's birding variety offers Northwesterners a chance to see many species that go no farther north and are therefore hard to get for most of us. So it is a treat for the eyes. Our own dedicated VAS birders spent two weeks in Arizona this spring and found hundreds of species.

They will show pictures and tell tales of their adventures.

FIELD TRIP

Rare Bird Run



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: October 22, 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).

Be prepared for a full day of birding if something really rare is around. Otherwise we will be birding locally.





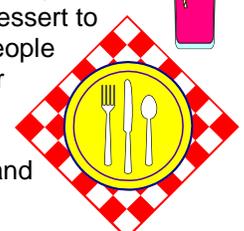
ANNUAL FALL POTLUCK



When: October 4, 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 – Joan Durgin

Revenue for July 2011: \$1036.30

Expenses for July 2011: \$0 as of today

Field Trips – Arden Hagen

September: Steigerwald NWR Beginner Birder Tour with Wilson Cady - Sunday, September 11

October: Rare Bird Run – Saturday, October 22

Programs – Bob Rowe

October: George Mayfield, Les Carlson, Barry Woodruff, and Wilson Cady will give a presentation of their May 2011 trip to Arizona.

November: Show & Tell

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

Earl Ford New Plumas Forest Supervisor

VANCOUVER, WA – Long-time Natural Resources Staff Officer and civil rights activist Earl Ford has postponed his planned retirement so he may continue to contribute to the greatest good. He will move to Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region as the Forest Supervisor on the Plumas National Forest in Northern California.

Ford's involvement with the NAACP - Vancouver Branch and commitment to training youth in the greater Vancouver and Metro area has made him invaluable to the success of innumerable young people.



Ford has led crews doing work all over the Forest under his Urban Youth program. He spent time daily interacting and providing wisdom and perspective to all seeking his advice. In short, Ford has been a very large part of Forest Service outreach to underserved youth in the area.

Ford will make this move in September. He wants the people of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Southwest Washington communities to know he will continue in his new position providing the strength and resilience found in diversity.

"My 20 years on the Gifford Pinchot has been a growing experience for me," he said. "We started this motto, we wanted the Gifford Pinchot National Forest to be – A Great Place to Work – and I feel we have made significant progress toward that goal, both on the Forest and in the community."



Ford spoke about expanding diversity and showing we can all live and work together. "With increased diversity, we've improved the strength of the Forest through an enhanced tapestry of individuals."

"I am thankful to the people of the Gifford Pinchot and Southwest Washington," Ford Continued. "One thing I can guarantee, I've gotten more than I've given."

"The Gifford Pinchot will not be the same place without Earl," said Gifford Pinchot Forest Supervisor, Janine Clayton. "We have all benefited from his tenure on the Forest and wish him every success in his new endeavor."



message/fax (360) 253-5771

Everything for the Wild Bird enthusiast™

8101 N. E. Parkway • Vancouver, Washington 98662 • (360) 253-5771



Caspian Terns and Salmon: Is There Now a Natural Control for the Birds?

And, if so, has that "control" gone too far? To recap the issue, over ten years ago, Caspian terns began to nest in great numbers on a man-made island in the Columbia River estuary, reaching 10,000 pairs in 2002. In fact, two-thirds of the Caspian terns in the western US were nesting on Rice Island. The terns were eating a lot fish, many of which were salmon smolts -- including listed species. What to do? Salmon were protected and Caspian terns were protected. The solution proposed by the Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the state wildlife agencies, was to encourage the terns to relocate from Rice Island, downriver to East Sand Island, closer to the ocean. Although there was controversy about the proposal, even within the Audubon family, the relocation worked and the terns thrived. There they varied their diet, catching more marine species and fewer salmon per bird.



The Caspian tern colony grew larger, and while the number of steelhead and salmon smolts eaten per bird went down, the total number of salmon eaten began to rise, again. The agencies are working on relocating some of the terns to other locations.

The latest proposal is to try and relocate terns to Malheur.

Concern for salmon was not the only reason to want to relocate some of the terns. There was also worry that, if a disaster of some kind hit this huge colony, it would have a disastrous effect on Caspian tern populations as a whole. In the present situation, too many of our tern eggs are in one basket. This concern was born out this summer. Bald eagles hit the tern colony. The eagles flew over the tern colony, flushing the terns from their nests. Sometimes the eagles would snatch an adult tern from the nest. Gulls flew in and grabbed the tern eggs, sometimes within 30 minutes of being laid. The eagles would fly over at dusk and into the early night. The dusk and night flights seemed to spook the terns more than daytime flights by eagles, which had occurred in previous years. The result is that this year the Caspian tern nesting failure has been essentially complete. Last year nesting success was not so great, either. The average number of chicks per breeding pair last year was 0.05.

As to why there was so much eagle disturbance this year, some of the researchers speculated that possibly that the higher snow pack in the mountains and higher than usual river flows meant that the marine fish the eagles usually fed on were not on hand. Don Lyons, one of

the researchers, did not worry about two consecutive years of low reproductive success. Caspian terns are long-lived, 20 years or more, and the birds will have more chances to become parents.

I obtained much of the above information from *The Columbia Basin Bulletin*, a newsletter I continued with, even after retiring from the Corps. On a personal note, I was at the coast in early August and stopped at Yaquina Head Natural Area, which is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The volunteer naturalist there said the same thing had happened with the sea birds nesting on the rocks there. The eagles harassed the nesting birds and the gulls snatched the eggs.

Several Items From the Association for the Advancement of Science

Two months ago the US Geological Survey released a report stating that there were "major uncertainties in the science needed to support oil and gas activities" in the Arctic Ocean. Nevertheless, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement issued conditional permits to conduct exploratory drilling in the Arctic Ocean next year. The Bureau said that they had found no evidence that Shell's drilling would result in significant environmental harm.

China's Three Gorges Dam has indeed caused the environmental harm that was predicted. Two problems turned out to be worse than predicted: bad water quality and erosion. And, apparently, "the potential for spreading a snail-borne disease apparently wasn't even on planners' radar." The cost of mitigation will be \$26.45 billion and will take ten years.

Back to Asia again. Laos has plans to build a dam on the main stem lower Mekong, much to the distress of the three other countries in the Mekong basin. Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand belong to the Mekong River Commission and before any major hydropower project can go forward, there must be consultation with all the countries affected. The other three countries are not satisfied with the information that Laos has provided. There is already a new dam on the upper Mekong that may affect the natural emptying and filling of Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia, which a million people depend on.

The Ogoniland coastal region in Nigeria is an oil pollution mess. The United Nations Environment Programme has reported that the oil pollution has "penetrated further and deeper than many have supposed" The problem has been caused by the oil companies' failure to maintain their facilities and by thieves punching holes in the oil pipes. The oil has gotten into the mangrove swamps.

Gretchen Starke



• **Aug. 6-10**, Eric and Tammy Bjorkman were on the Long Beach peninsula from Saturday thru Wednesday and saw large numbers of birds. They estimated that they saw at least **1,000 BROWN PELICANS** each day and the **CASPIAN TERN** numbers were about the same. On Sunday, they saw a large movement of **SOOTY SHEARWATERS**, as a steady stream of them went by for over two hours. The shearwaters migrate along our coast line in late summer and fall on their way back to their southern nesting grounds on islands around New Zealand and lower South America. Their migration route is a clockwise circle along the entire coast line of the Pacific Ocean.

• **Aug. 9**, Susan and I along with, Jeff Jendro, Anne Kahle and Russ Koppendrayer, enjoyed the hospitality of Mike Hill in Lexington, WA, just north of Kelso, for up close views of a stunning adult male **HOODED ORIOLE** that was coming to his hummingbird feeder. This was the eighth Washington State record for this bird from California and the Southwest.

• **Aug. 12**, John F. Gatchet birded the Ridgefield NWR for twelve hours finding 79 species of birds. Notable sightings were: **3 GREEN HERON** and one **AMERICAN BITTERN** in his binocular view at Long Lake, 3 juvenile **SANDERLING** at the north end of Rest Lake and a **PEREGRINE FALCON** that was making them prone to flight. A **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** was in the trees just beyond the



Kiwa Trail parking lot. A **BANK SWALLOW** was at Canvasback Lake. At the Carty Unit, beyond the Plank House, he spotted a **CHIPPING SPARROW**. He also counted 18 **PURPLE MARTIN** in the trees at the Carty Unit. After 3:00 pm there were 100's of ducks arriving at the refuge and this is when **RED-TAILED HAWKS** and

KESTRELS started showing up as well.

• **Aug. 12**, Randy Hill made a quick stop at the Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel and found a **CLARK'S GREBE** associating with what appeared to be a very orange-billed **WESTERN GREBE** and another that wasn't quite as bright-billed. On the way back looking north there were at least a dozen **GREAT EGRETS** on a distant wetland, and at Ruefner Pond there were seven species of shorebirds including a **SANDERLING**. At our home on Mt. Pleasant in Skamania County, we had a **RED-EYED VIREO** and two flocks of **RED CROSSBILLS** that flew over calling.

• **Aug. 13**, Randy Hill and Bob Flores had two immature **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS** on the River S Unit auto

tour route.

• **Aug. 14**, Roger Windemuth and Ken Meyer saw an immature **SNOWY EGRET** on the south part of Rest Lake that also seen by Bob Flores later in the day. There are only about five records for Clark County of this small egret.

• **Aug. 15**, The **SNOWY EGRET** was still on Rest Lake, according to Randy Hill. He also heard a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** calling in the Oregon Ash forest past the Kiwa Trail parking lot. Amy Wright photographed a **BARRED OWL** on NE 123rd Avenue, Vancouver near Mill Plain, these owls are now well established in the county after arriving here about a decade ago. Susan and I were unable to find the Snowy Egret at the Ridgefield NWR but did find: a **GREEN HERON**, **2 RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS**, **3 SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS** and a **SOLITARY SANDPIPER**.

• **Aug. 19**, Ken Myers re-found the **SNOWY EGRET** at the Ridgefield River S Unit after an absence of several days.

• **Aug. 18 – 21**, Les Carlson, Jim Danzenbaker, Barry Woodruff and I attended the Washington Ornithological Society Conference at Port Angeles, on the Olympic Peninsula. There were field trips to all of the habitat types in the area including the high mountains of the Olympic National Park. My favorite sightings from the field trips that I went on were **HARLEQUIN DUCK**, **SURFBIRD**, **SOOTY GROUSE** and **GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH**. Next year the conference will be held in Spokane during June, I highly recommend these conferences for the great low cost field trips and wonderful participants. Don't let the organization's name scare you, it is open to all birders. For more information go to <http://www.wos.org/>

• **Aug. 24**, Jim Danzenbaker, checked the Ridgefield NWR River S, finding: **7 Northern Pintail**, a **SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER**, and 4 **SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS** on Rest Lake.

• **Aug. 26**, Fourteen VAS members caravanned to Westport, in Gray's Harbor County, for a weekend of shorebirds and seabirds. Our stop at Bottle Beach was timed for high tide when the shorebirds would be close for easy observation, the birds were there but so was the fog. We did see hundreds of **MARBLED GODWITS**, **DUNLIN**, **SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS**, **WESTERN SANDPIPERS**, **LEAST SANDPIPERS**, and a couple of dozen **BLACK-BELLIED PLOVERS** and **2 RED KNOTS**. In the Westport harbor we found more **MARBLED GODWITS** and a **BAR-TAILED GODWIT**. The last species mentioned is a rare Eurasian species that we saw on all three days of this outing and there were two different individuals present.

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

• **Aug. 27**, A total of sixteen VAS member went out on the Westport Seabirds pelagic bird tour in warm weather with clear skies and moderately choppy waters. We almost immediately started seeing **SABINE'S GULLS**, **SOOTY SHEARWATERS**, and **RHINOCEROUS AUKLETS**, all species that are usually seen farther off shore. Once we did get beyond thirty miles out, we encountered **BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS**, **PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER**, **NORTHERN FULMAR**, **SOUTH POLAR SKUA**, **POMARINE JAEGER**, **PARASITIC JAEGER**, **LONG-TAILED JAEGER**, **FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL**, **LEACH'S STORM-PETRELS** and **RED PHALAROPES**. Members of the alcid family included two, close to the boat, **TUFTED PUFFINS** that were a treat along with **CASSIN'S AUKLETS** and many **COMMON MURRES**. Both **ARCTIC** and **COMMON TERNS** were seen perched on floating debris. A lucky few saw a single **FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER** and couple of **BULLER'S SHEARWATERS**. The most unusual birds seen were a **GREAT BLUE HERON**, a few **BARN SWALLOWS** and a **PEREGRINE FALCON** carrying a Red Phalarope. Mammals seen were several **HUMPBACK WHALES**, **STELLER'S SEA LIONS**, an **ELEPHANT SEAL** and many **NORTHERN FUR SEALS**.



Shorebirds were present at the Ridgefield NWR, where Jim Danzenbaker found, **25 KILLDEER**, **8 SEMIPALMATED PLOVER**, **25 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER**, **1 SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER**, **150+ WESTERN SANDPIPER**, **35+ LEAST SANDPIPER**, **6 PECTORAL SANDPIPER**, **1 SOLITARY SANDPIPER**, **1 SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER**, **3 GREATER YELLOWLEGS** and **3 WILSON'S SNIPE**. Ken Meyer once again spotted the elusive **SNOWY EGRET** at the Ridgefield NWR.

• **Aug. 28**, The VAS tour continued with a drive south to Pacific County with a stop at North Cove, where on a rocky point there were **WANDERING TATTLER**, **SURFBIRD** and **BLACK TURNSTONE**. At Tokeland we added **WILLET**, **LONG-BILLED CURLEW** and **PURPLE MARTIN** to the trip list.

In Battle Ground, Jim Danzenbaker listened for migrant birds in the early morning hours hearing about **120 SWAINSON'S THRUSHES** fly over giving their distinctive migration call. Bob Flores sat in his Ridgefield backyard where **WESTERN TANAGERS** were packed in and had a **WILSON'S WARBLER**, but the big surprise was a **WESTERN KINGBIRD** that only stayed a few minutes.

In October, the waterfowl that nest in northern Canada and the Arctic will continue to arrive but most of them will

still be in eclipse plumage and more difficult to identify. Eclipse plumage is during the feather molt cycle when the males have a plumage much like that of a female. By the end of the month the males will be regaining their coloration and be easier to assign to a species. Other of our winter birds that should be arriving will include the Sandhill Crane, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Varied Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Please report the arrival dates of the winter birds and any late migrants for use in the column and the 2011 Cumulative County List Project. As of the end of August, 217 species had been reported as having been seen this year in Clark County. For Skamania County the number was 180. If you do see an unusual bird in our area, please contact me or Arden and Sherry Hagen as soon as possible.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

New documentary celebrates Mt. St. Helens recovery

A new, 17-minute high-definition film documenting this gradual return of flora and fauna to the area around the Mount St. Helens National Monument has debuted at the Johnston Ridge Observatory in the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

Green is slowly encroaching inward from the outer edges of the 230 square-mile, gray-and khaki-colored blast zone area around Mount St. Helens. A flicker is shown feeding it's young nesting in a snag left over from the Mount St. Helens eruption.

Bouquets of alder, willow and douglas fir trees are now blossoming in an area that had been transformed into a wasteland over 30 years ago when the youngest volcano in the Cascade Mountain Range erupted. Elk, cougars, salamander and frogs have returned in what has become a rebirth of sorts.

The film, "Mount St. Helens: Eruption of Life," has much of the footage used from "Zero to Life," a film that aired during the 30th anniversary of the May 18, 1980, eruption. Animations of the devastation are also added to help viewers see how ash, mud and debris laid waste to the surrounding area. Segments depict plumes of smoke & clouds of ash traveling 15 miles into the sky & blocking out the sun. A tidal wave of murky gray magma is shown rushing down the north face of the volcano, toppling thousands of trees & scorching the earth. An eruption that lasted only moments scarred the surrounding area for decades.

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1966
Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Vancouver, WA
PERMIT# 976**

vancouveraudubon.org

*Mission Statement:
Vancouver Audubon
believes in the wisdom
of nature's design and
promotes this through
education, involvement,
stewardship, enjoyment
and advocacy.*



October 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.

VANCOUVER AUDUBON ** NEWSLETTER & DONATION COUPON

Help support Vancouver Audubon

I wish to subscribe to Vancouver Audubon's newsletter "The Columbia Flyway" for \$10/year.
 I wish to support Vancouver Audubon with an additional donations of \$_____

**Flyway Renewal
date:**
November 1st
every year

Renewals: please send your renewal directly to National Audubon with the forms sent to you. Thanks!
*** This will **not** include *The Columbia Flyway* ***

C9ZY130Z

Do Not share my name or any of my personal information with other organizations

Please include this coupon and make check payable to and send to:
Vancouver Audubon, P.O. Box 1966, Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

For more Info Call:
George Mayfield 360-687-0360
Eric Bjorkman 360-695-3116

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____

President.....	Eric Bjorkman	.....695-3116	.....	bjorkmante@iinet.com
Vice-Pres	Marilynn Hall	.....253-6865	.....	marilynnhall@comcast.net
Secretary.....	Tammy Bjorkman	.....213-6489	.....	bjorkmante@iinet.com
Treasurer	Joan Durgin	.....834-5621	.....	jdurgin1@hotmail.com
Education.....	OPEN			
Conservation.....	Gretchen Starke	.....892-8617	.....	gstarke@pacifier.com
Membership	George Mayfield	.....687-0360	.....	gomayf@comcast.net
Field Trips	Arden Hagen	.....892-8872	.....	iambakerman@comcast.net
Publicity.....	Tracy Snow	.....503-335-5361	.....	tracy.now@orport.ang.af.mil
Programs	Bob Rowe	.....254-8699	.....	rowe9629@comcast.net
Sightings	Wilson Cady	.....835-5947	.....	gorgebirds@juno.com
Editor.....	Sherry Hagen	.....892-8872	.....	vas@pacifier.com
Mailings.....	Bonnie Bingle	.....576-0330	.....	audubonnie@comcast.net
Volunteer Cor.....	OPEN			
Refreshments	Cindy Mayfield	.....687-0360	.....	gomayf@comcast.net