



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

Member of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

September 2008

Calendar

***BIRDING CLASS ... Tuesday, **Sept. 2, 6:45 PM** before the meeting.

***Tuesday, **Sept 2, 7:30 pm:** Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, **Sept. 8, 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:

Polar Bears of Churchill

by Randy Hopfer

Churchill Manitoba is one of the most well know polar bear viewing locations in the world; the people of Churchill have embraced their lives with the polar bear and have worked well to manage their coexistence.



Many polar bears migrate through this region and some den nearby, bringing in the next generation of the great white bear. Randy Hopfer will share many of the photographs that he took of the bears while in Churchill November of 2001 and describe his experience staying in the town of Churchill as well as the four nights spent on the "tundra buggy lodge" out next to Hudson Bay. Come see the beauty of this sub arctic tundra.

VAS Upcoming Programs:

Oct.. **Ecuador Pt. 2** by the Hagens

Nov. **Show & Tell** by members & guests

Dec. **Condor Tales** by Sandy Wilsbur

FIELD TRIP

Tillamook Area



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: September 14, SUNDAY

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Inn at the Quay, west side parking area



What: We will be looking for shorebirds, passerines and seabirds. This is a good time of the year for the shore. Plan on an all day trip.

The 20th Annual 2007

Columbia Flyway Wildfowl Show

September 13th and 14th

Water Resources Education Center

4600 SE Columbia Way
Vancouver, WA

www.columbiaflywayshow.com

For info call: 360-892-6738

The VAS judging team awards the coveted Audubon Award each year to the most realistic bird carving

VAS News

VAS BOARD MEETING was held on August 2nd at the home of George & Cindy Mayfield. A quorum was present.

Treasurer's Report. Income for July was \$4,314.82; included was \$1,581.35 for Audubon Adventures and \$2,676.75 from the Lake Michigan birding trip. Expenses were \$1,246.60 with \$1,000 sent to Audubon Washington. Cash and investments were \$22,194.33. The quarterly report from the Community Foundation was not available.

Field Trips. Tillamook will be 14 September, a Sunday. October is undecided and an overnigher to Boiler Bay will be on 22 November.

Membership. Membership renewal time is fast approaching – 1 November.

Conservation. The John Muir picnic is 23 August at Leverich Park. A motion was made and passed to oppose Tim Eyeman's latest initiative on transportation.

New Business. Birdfest is October 11 and 12. A motion was passed that we would partner with the Friends of Ridgefield NWR. We will commit to as much as we did last year and maybe more. We need volunteers to lead bird trips, man the scope at the blind and man the table. Sign up sheets will be available at the September and October meetings.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Ellifrit

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: Deanne • Glock • Sam Adams • Kris Andre • Sherry Backous • Lew Bailen • Barbara Beck • Mary Bergman • Christy Bryan • Tammy Burggraff • Janice Call • Carrie Cohen • Lee Combs • Ben Crouse • Doug Curtis • Melinda Darley • Barbara Doeneke • Cynthia Drakos • Ann Galvos • Lisa Garfield • Media Center Harney Elementary • Sandy Hayslip • Lisa Hergert • Gina Houser • Christine Huff • Diane Johnston • Nancy Kardonsky • Elizabeth King • Lyndalyn Kinsella • Donna Lein • Discovery Middle School Librarian, Kara Lynn-Edward • Rich Meilke • Betty Montgomery • Rosie Ojaghi • Jeanette Paiz • Amanda Pemberton • Michele Robertson • Elisabeth Roeder • L Schilling • Patricia Secrist • Debra Small • Jeff Stark • Christine Stevens • Barbara Sulis • Deborah Swarts • Richard Teutsch • Marja Yingling

SAVE THE DATES

Salmonpeople is a one man show that will be coming to Vancouver in the fall. Peter Donaldson tells the story of salmon and the people who depend on them and the need to protect watersheds. It is both educational and entertaining. The dates for the Vancouver performances are October 10th and 11th at Skyview High School.



HOLD THE DATE. BirdFest is scheduled for Sat. and Sun, October 11 and 12th this year. There will also be Friday evening

events, including a night walk on the Carty Unit (more info later). Hold the date, whether you are helping with walks, scopes at the blind or the table at the Community Center. Or, just come out and enjoy BirdFest with Bluegrass and an open Plankhouse with demonstrations.

Upcoming Field Trips

October:

Destination Pending. This is a sort of in-between month. Many birds have moved out of the area and the others haven't quite all moved in but it can be a good time for rare birds to show up.

November:

Overnigher to Lincoln City and trips to Boiler Bay. This is a time of year for alcids and seabirds to show up in the bay to feed.

December:

The Annual Christmas Bird Count

Get Ready for

NOVEMBER'S SHOW & TELL

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



message/fax (360) 253-5771

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Connecting Green Alliance The Coming Election

Once again it is time to select those who will be making the decisions on how well our environment will be protected. By the time you read this, the primary will be over. Those candidates who survive the primary will face off in the general election. This year, the primary will have been different in that the top two in a race will advance to the general election. It may be that two people in the same party will be running against each other in the general election. That could happen in Clark County.

There are two seats being contested for the county commission. The fate of birds and other wildlife depends on who are the county commissioners. Clark County has experienced high growth for as long as I have lived here. In deciding who to vote for, try to determine which candidates favor the developers and which are willing to restrict development to any extent to save our quality of life.

The legislature passes the laws and whether or not the laws are good for the environment depends on who is in the legislature. Four legislative districts are partly or wholly in Clark County, although we have only a few precincts of the 15th district. Every House and Senate seat in Clark County (from the 17th, 18th, and 49th districts) will be voted on.

Statewide races that are important to the environment are the governor (naturally), the commissioner of public lands (an often overlooked office) and the justices for the Supreme Court. The commissioner of public lands administers the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the DNR manages the state forests and tide lands. You can see how important the state forests are to birds. In addition, DNR issues permits for logging and is supposed to overlook logging by private land owners. If a mistake is made and a company is permitted to log extensive clear-cuts on a steep slope, the result can be disastrous floods. Such as happened last December.

Vancouver Audubon cannot recommend any specific candidate for political office. However, if you want to check the endorsements by Clark Conservation Voters, the web-site address is:

<http://www.wcvoters.org/counties/clark-conservation-voters/endorsements>

Certain statewide races are also included on this page. These are just for a guideline, of course, if you are so inclined. Check out other sources for information on candidates, including *The Columbian*, *The Oregonian*, and the Voters Pamphlet. Depending on your interests, other organizations such as labor and business also endorse candidates, as does the Sierra Club.

The legislative scores from the Washington Conservation Voters for each of the incumbents is as follows:

Senate:

- 17th District, Don Benton – 07 and 08 session, 46%, life time score, 27%;
- 18th District, Joseph Zarelli – 07 and 08 session, 33%, life time score, 23%;
- 49th District, Craig Pridemore – 07 and 08 session, 100%, life time score, 1007% (Pridemore has no opposition)

House:

- 17th District, Jim Dunn – 07 and 08 session, 9%, life time score, 17%
Deb Wallace – 07 and 08 session, 91%, life time score, 94%
- 18th District, Jamie Herrera – 07 and 08 session, 33%, life time score, 33%
Ed Orcutt – 07 and 08 session, 36%, life time score, 64%
- 49th District, Bill Fromhold – Bill Fromhold is not running this year. But, he has been a good friend of the environment.
Jim Moeller – 07 and 08 session, 100%, life time score, 94%

Caspian Tern Update



Some of you might remember the fuss about the Caspian terns nesting near the mouth of the Columbia that were eating a lot of juvenile salmon, including listed salmon. The fuss was about

the plan several Federal agencies (the Corps of Engineers, U.S Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service) had for moving many of the terns to an island closer to the ocean. The terns were not to be injured in any way, but were to be discouraged from nesting in the old site and encouraged to nest in the new site by such means as habitat

manipulation, placing tern decoys, and playing tern calls. Seattle Audubon and National Audubon sued to stop the plan. The chapters on the Columbia (including Vancouver Audubon) were either in favor of the plan or neutral.

After going through the courts, the plan was put into effect and it worked. The new tern colony boomed. This caused a new problem – too many terns eating too many juvenile salmon. The agencies developed a new plan to locate many of the terns away from the Columbia, using similar techniques. Two such nesting sites have been prepared. A nesting site at Crump Lake in southern Oregon that was constructed in February attracted more than 135 nesting pairs of Caspian terns this June. A third site is planned for Summer Lake in south central Oregon. Apparently, Caspian terns are a flexible species.



This summer started off slow with cold temperatures and persistent rains that affected the early nesting of many species. Hardest hit were those birds that rely on flying insects such as the swallows and Purple Martins. While we had swallows start nests in all of boxes at our place they eventually abandoned the nests and eggs and dropped to lower elevations to find food. Two pair did return later in mid summer and successfully re-nest. Their were reports of dead adult Purple Martins under nesting structures in the Puget Sound area and I noted reduced activity at the Steigerwald Lake colonies. One of the Purple Martins banded as a chick last year at Steigerwald Lake was seen nesting in Sacramento, California and another was found dead under a nest colony at Tulalip Bay in Snohomish County. This is one of the reasons we are banding the birds, to see where they disperse to and if they mingle with other populations.



Although I did not get out and bird as much as I would like to have there were some interesting sightings this summer.

June 13, Arden and Sherry Hagen called me when the first **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** ever reported from Clark County showed up in their backyard. This is a large dove usually found in southern Arizona and Texas and was a new "State Bird" for all of us.



June 14, I visited Vancouver Lake, where from the mouth of the Flushing Channel, I counted **43 WESTERN GREBES** and **5 CLARK'S GREBES**. One **BLACK SWIFT** was also seen flying over the lake from this spot. The Flushing Channel is a great site from which to scan for a wide variety of waterfowl, loons, gulls, terns and shorebirds.

June 16, Roger Windemuth found and photographed 2 **FOR-ESTER'S TERNS** at the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). I got a phone call from Bob Flores letting me now that they had moved from the River "S" Unit to the Carty Unit and I hurried out there to successfully add another species to my "County List". That afternoon I also spotted a **YELLOW-BREADED CHAT** at the Steigerwald Lake NWR in a patch of blackberries where they have nested for at least five years.

June 8, Susan and I went up to Elk Meadows RV Park at Trout Lake and walked the nature trail along the creek. By playing the taped calls of **GRAY CATBIRD** we were able to locate six of these birds that are very scarce in this area. We attempted to bird to the North and West of Trout Lake but found most of the roads still blocked by either snowdrifts or fallen trees.

July 3, Bob Flores had a **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** visit his feeders in Ridgefield. Black-chinned are normally found on the eastside of the Cascade Mountains at higher altitudes though I suspect they may be nesting on Silver Star Mountain here in Clark County.

July 11, Susan and I drove up to Mt. Saint Helens for the day and while at Johnston Ridge we had a **BANK SWALLOW** fly in

front of us. These swallows have begun nesting in cliffs formed from volcanic ash along the Toutle and Cowlitz River. These are colony nesters that are rare on the westside of the Cascades.

July 17, A **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** visited our feeders on Mt. Pleasant, this is another eastside nesting species and was probably a bird that was wandering after breeding season.



July 20, Another wandering hummingbird, a **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD**, was at our feeders.

Aug. 1, Eric Bjorkman went down to Officer's Row in Vancouver after his wife, Tammy, alerted him to 2 juvenile **COOPER'S HAWKS** that were hanging out around the Columbia Land Trust offices.

Aug. 3, A **PALM WARBLER** was found by Al Larrabee along the Kiwa Trail at the Ridgefield NWR. This is a great species to locate as there are only a hand full of prior Clark County records.



Aug 5, Shawneen Finnegan and Bill Clemons banded the River "S" Unit at Ridgefield NWR and found a **REDHEAD** with babies in tow, **BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, RED-NECKED PHALAROPE, WILSON'S PHALAROPE** and a **WILSON'S WARBLER**.



Carol Kohler joined Ken Knittle on a birding trip to Okanogan County and picked up **BOREAL CHICKADEE, RED-EYE VIREO, PINE GROSBEAK,** and **AMERICAN WATERTHRUSH** as life birds. This is one of my favorite areas in the state to bird with a wide variety of species and great scenery.

September is a great time to get out and bird, the weather has cooled down and there should be plenty of migrant birds moving around along with shorebirds and some returning waterfowl. I would recommend visiting Vancouver Lake or the Ridgefield NWR several times during the month as the species present will change almost weekly and sometimes daily. A trip to Bird Creek Meadows, on Mt. Adams, is always productive in the late summer and quite enjoyable as the insects are gone. Besides the birds this is one of the most scenic spots in south-west Washington. As always please send me your sighting reports for this column and be sure to call either Arden and Sherry Hagen or myself if you find an unusual or unidentifiable bird.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

Did we have a summer? I blinked and it seemed to be over before it started. The weather seemed to be too cold or too hot and not much of the in-between. Luckily, we have 1 of our best months of weather yet to come, September. We can only hope!!

The morning of Friday the 13th (June), while visiting with my cousin in the kitchen over breakfast, Arden and I both noticed a dove among the 40 or so Band-tailed Pigeons that immediately drew our attention. It had landed just outside the kitchen window. It had white-wings!!! It took a second to register that it was a **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** usually found in the southwestern USA and Mexico. They do show up in other areas occasionally but this is the first record for Clark County and only the sixth (?) for Washington. I immediately called Wilson who got to our house as soon as he could. We waited a little while and it showed up again for long looks as it fed in the yard. I grabbed the camera for some photos. Wow!!! What a thrill. Unfortunately, we were leaving the next day for Idaho for a birding vacation with Teague's at our friends the Zeillemakers. Therefore, we couldn't host anyone in the house to try to see it. We had friends feeding the birds while we were gone and checking for it but not being experienced birders that weren't sure. When we got back a week later, we never saw it again.

In May, Arden & I led another VAS Fund Raiser Birding Trip to Wisconsin-Michigan taking 8 people with us. Wilson had to back out as co-leader due to a medical problem with his leg. Cindy Mayfield also had to cancel due to an inner ear problem. But the rest of us had a great trip full of birds, fun and laughter. We knew before we started that there would be a lot of driving to cover that much territory. We saw lots of the scenic areas as we headed out from Chicago to Wisconsin, then making our way north to Upper Michigan, south through Michigan and back to Chicago.

On Monday morning, we had a meeting scheduled with a young man, Ashley, who was studying the **GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKENS** in Wisconsin and he led us in two groups to "leks". It was 4 AM & freezing out. We huddled into tent blinds and waited for the chickens to show up and when they did..... The show was on. Females walked through the strutting males and they raved in high gear as they each tried to attract female to make a choice for the father of they next brood. As the sun rose, other birds began to chime in too. We watched Short-eared Owls, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlarks, Sandhill Crane and others. When the female prairie-chickens left the lek the males quieted down, snuggled into the grass and when flushed by a Northern Harrier took off to the taller grass for their rest of their days activities of feeding and taking cover. Ashley told us later that they had seen a Harrier take a Prairie-chicken so no wonder they took off. He also told us about the Whooping Cranes that were easy to see at Necedah NWR that was not that far away so we threw that into our agenda and off we went.

The **Whooping Crane** were easy to see from the observation platform. After that we drove the refuge looking for some other specialties. I was able to call up a **SEDGE WREN** for close looks and photos. Yea! We found a **Hog-nosed snake** of the road and tried to scoot it off the road but he was persistent not to move until I left it alone.



Another planned tour was to **Seney NWR** in Upper Michigan with guide Jennifer. She took us out in a small bus for a tour of the refuge usually closed to the public. This was great. The refuge was not to open to the public until the next day so we had it to ourselves.

We visited White-fish Point on the east side of Upper Michigan. This is a great migration point for birds heading to Canada. It was amazing to see a thousand or more **Blue Jays** as they circled overhead or fed at the feeders.

A highlight bird of the trip was the **KIRTLAND WARBLER** at Grayling, Michigan. We met for the early morning guided trip to a very cooperative male that spread his territory on both sides of the dirt road and performed his mating song from many branches as we oohed and aahed.



At the Sarett Nature Center, we searched the short grass for **HENSLOW'S SPARROW**. We could hear them calling in the grass but this secretive little brown job would not come into view. Then as part of the group were headed back to the vehicles, Bob Rowe spotted one near the trail, singing on a twig that stuck up above the grass. WOW.... Arden and I finally got a lifer on the trip. Everyone else was picking up life birds (ones never seen before) on the trip but having only a few species that would be new for us, it was very hard. We realized that due to the unusual cooler weather we were having over most of the USA, the birds were later than usual for returning to the breeding grounds. Many of the species we were looking for had just shown up at some of the birding spots south of us. Darn.

A late July into August, we took a weeks vacation to Alberta Canada via Glacier Park in Montana. Again Arden and I only had a chance to pick up 2 species on the trip. We heard a Connecticut Warbler but it would not come into view for a count. So as a last chance to add new species to our life list this year and to reach our goal of 700 species by next September 1st (30 years of birding), we booked a pelagic trip out of New Jersey for late August.

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding ☺

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



September 2008

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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