



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

September 2011

Calendar

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

***Tuesday, **Sept. 6, 7:30 pm**: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

***Monday, **Aug. 29, 6:30 pm**: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Arden & Sherry Hagen's, 2203 SE 135th Ave., Vancouver 360-892-8872

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	31	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:

FRIENDS OF THE GORGE:

UPDATE ON TARGETED ISSUES

Speaker: Anna Gilbert, Conservation Organizer,
Friends of the Columbia Gorge

This program will highlight the issues that Friends of the Columbia Gorge are addressing: Cape Horn Overlook; land conservation acquisitions; constructive opposition to the casino in Cascade Locks; negotiations with The SDS mill owner in Bingen over siting of his proposed wind farm on the edge of the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area and his proposal to build a resort at the Broughton mill site. The role of Friends has been more critical during the current period when the Columbia Gorge Commission has had to face severe staff cutbacks that challenge the commission's capacity to regulate gorge development decisions. Friends also has a full lineup of gorge hikes and exploration opportunities to learn about.



FIELD TRIP

Steigerwald NWR

Beginning Birding Trip



Leader: Wilson Cady, 360-892-8872

When: September 11, SUNDAY

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: Meet at the Steigerwald Lake NWR parking lot at Milepost 18, Highway 14.

This trip will focus on basic birding techniques and identification tips. Bring binoculars, bird book, lunch and beverages. We may walk the trail at the refuge or drive to other areas depending on the birds present.

The 24th Annual 2011

Columbia Flyway Wildfowl Show

September 10-11

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

Special Presentation – Christi Norman (Audubon Washington, Birding Trail Program Director)

Christi gave the board a detailed update of what is happening with the Great Washington State Birding Trail. Audubon

Washington is currently working on the last loop – Puget Sound. The money received from the 26 state chapters has been used

for leverage in seeking other funds and publicity of current efforts. Signage design has been approved and next steps are to

raise the money to pay for signs at all sites. They are also looking at producing an Iphone application that will tell the user

where all birding trails are throughout the state. Christi is also looking for help from the chapters on crafting a conservation initiative.

Treasurer's Report

Revenue for June 2011: \$751.33

Expenses for June 2011: \$680.45

Respectfully submitted, Tammy Bjorkman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members:

Georgia Bailey • Judith Brown • Anita Carpenter • Ed & Charlene Hiss • Larry Clement • Bud Cleve • Velma Cruza • Daniel Damon • Robert & Jeanette Dimick • Marjorie Dutson • Janice Evans • Shu Feng • Ian Fujisaki • Geraldine Fukatsu • Wendy Fuller • Maryann Glasow • Susan Greb • Stephen Harvey • Marcus Heinrich • Mary Henry • Thomas Holder • Mary Jackson • Lee Johannes • Fern Johnson • Clark Library • Margarita Margeson • David Nichelson • James O'Lennick • Robert O'Sullivan • Mary Onslow • Bryan Plaisted • Bonnie Poffenroth • Linda Stark • Golda & Stephen Mickey • Darian Walton • Eleanore Webb • Eugene Wigglesworth • Delma Woodruff.

Transfer Members: Janet Anderson • Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Ansell • Doris Baldwin • Charles Farless • Ivy Nelson • Stephanie & Bill Taulbee



in Ridgefield, Washington

October 8 & 19, 2011

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

The North (Carty) unit is open both days, including the replica of the Chinookan Plankhouse. The Plankhouse has children's activities, talks and demonstrations 10 AM to 4 PM both days. Geocaching as well. See website.

Volunteers needed! Refuge staff needs us to lead as many nature walks as we can cover. There is also a bird species identification project (The Big Sit) in the bird blind on the River S. VAS needs people to man our table in the Marketplace. We appreciate your time if you can help. There will be sign-up sheets at the September meeting.

Leading tours or helping with the Big Sit qualifies you for a special "behind the scenes" Crane Tour especially for Birdfest volunteers after the festival. People pay \$25.00 for this tour during Birdfest.





Clean Water Program

Clark County does have a program to clean up streams. This summer, I was contacted by a consultant to attend a focus group to discuss the county's clean water program. As is usual, the group consisted of people with various interests. We were told about the various elements of the clean water program, such as development and maintenance of stormwater pipes and grassy swales, water quality monitoring, enforcement, and education. We were asked to choose those we thought were most important. Most, including myself, thought that developing the storm water projects was most important. Monitoring and enforcement were also considered important. We were then shown a chart that compared the county stormwater management fee with what other jurisdictions in the area charged. In Clark County, the stormwater is \$33. A year. In the county, we have the cheapest stormwater management program around. In contrast, Vancouver's annual fee is, maybe, about \$80. Camas' and Washougal's fees are even higher. Gresham and Tacoma have fees over \$100. Comparing cities from Eugene to Bellingham, the average annual fee is \$101.69. Portland's fee, at \$261.48, is an outlier. It is probably that high because of their project to separate stormwater sewers from sanitary sewers.

I have a strong feeling that the county is contemplating to, maybe, perhaps, suggest raising the stormwater management fees. I think they should. I also think we should make sure that the projects are truly effective and environmentally friendly -- not simply concrete deserts. As for the present stormwater management program, I have heard enough complaints about it to conclude that it is not adequate. But, for \$33 a year to try and keep stormwater pollution out of our streams -- sounds as if we are getting what we are paying for.

Gravel Mining Overlay Zones to be Updated

The county currently has a provision for establishing surface mining overlay zones that are placed over the underlying zone. The overlay maps cover areas where there is currently mining or where gravel deposits are known and usually where the land owner wanted one. Because of changes the legislature has made to the surface mining law, the county needs to update the maps and policies concerning surface mining, that is, gravel mining. The maps must show the gravel deposits in the county that meet threshold criteria as determined by a geological survey by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The DNR has classified gravel deposits as identified, hypothetical, and speculative. Clark County staff has recommended that identified and hypothetical deposits be "considered for designation as resource lands." In addition, the staff has recommended that areas within the Urban Growth Areas be removed (unless there is active min-

ing occurring right now), removing parcels smaller than five acres, and consider removing critical areas for hypothetical deposits.

The staff presented the issue to the county commissioners in early August. The commissioners will appoint a task force to provide specific recommendations. The staff suggested that the project be completed in 2012 so that it "can be folded into the Rural Lands Review."

Ducks or Salmon? Shorebirds or Waterfowl?

The Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge had been working for a number of years on a new comprehensive conservation plan. There has, of course, been public involvement, which has been going on since 2008. With the focus so much on salmon recovery, the refuge decided on the plan to take out dikes and turn pasture and duck ponds into tidelands and brackish water. The duck and goose hunters finally woke up and started squawking. Never mind that there is plenty of goose habitat in the Columbia delta. Our congresswoman heard the squawking and pressured the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (a state agency!!), which was planning to provide money for the project, into withdraw the funding the project that it had previously approved.

Two things are wrong here. In this case, based on the population status of the animals involved, salmon, shorebirds, and tidal flats should take precedence over waterfowl and elk. It appears to me that the science supports the removal of the dikes. The second thing that is wrong is the interference of a member of congress in a agency and state decision that was based on science and the priorities of the Pacific Northwest.

(All members of congress, it seems, yield to the temptation to directly interfere in valid agency decisions from time to time.)

Gretchen Starke



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Regionally, we had a cool and rainy nesting season with a lingering snowpack at higher elevations. This shortened the time that these areas were usable by species that feed on insects, nectar, or fruit, which is just about all of the migrant birds. With the extreme heat, drought and fires in the southern half of the nation there was a dispersal of birds from those regions, but so far only a few birds that may have come from there have shown up here.

- May 6 - 17, Les Carlson, George Mayfield, Barry Woodruff and I birded Southeast Arizona, finding 204 species. We added life birds for everyone including my first **COMMON BLACK-HAWK**, the last North American hawk I had not seen. The real excitement came in the Chiricahua Mountains when the Horseshoe 2 Fire caused us to partake in an emergency evacuation.
- June 8, Tim Tuttle and Charlie Caughlan, were doing volunteer work at the Ridgefield NWR when they spotted a **BLACK-THROATED SPARROW**. This is a bird normally found in the desert Southwest and only the second record of this species from Clark County. The nearest known nesting population consists of a few pair near the Ginkgo Petrified Forest in Kittitas County.
- June 18, Ann Marie Wood was birding at the Ridgefield NWR when she spotted a **SANDHILL CRANE** and a **RED-HEAD**. The crane was a late migrant or perhaps an injured bird that was unable to migrate to their arctic nesting grounds. Redheads are now nesting in Clark County on the refuge.



- June 18 – 21, Barry Woodruff and I lead a field trip for the Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) focusing on Klickitat County. We found 126 species in that county including **MERLIN, PRAIRIE FALCON, PEREGRINE FALCON, BLACK-NECKED STILT, ACORN WOODPECKER** and **SAGE SPARROW**. The WOS tours are a great way to explore the various habitats of our diverse state with

knowledgeable guides. Membership in this group is inexpensive and the field trips are free.

- June 26, Ann Nightingale and Jim Danzenbaker heard a **RED-EYED VIREO** singing at Jim's Battle Ground home. This is only the second one he has had for his yard. They then went to Larch Mountain to see **HERMIT WARBLERS** which were very easy to find. In the process, they heard **2-3 RED CROSSBILLS**.
- June 30, Jim Danzenbaker had another **RED-EYED VIREO** singing from the woods beyond my Battle Ground, back deck.
- July 1 – 4, Les Carlson, Carol Kohler, Barry Woodruff and I joined Ken Knittle for a WOS tour of northeast Washington. We traveled to the Pend Orielle County meeting

spot in three vehicles following different routes so everyone's list was different. I saw 132 species on this trip including several of the specialty birds of that part of the state, such as nesting **COMMON LOON, RED-NECKED GREBE, BOREAL CHICKADEE, PINE GROSBEEK, AMERICAN REDSTART, NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** and **BOBOLINK**. A close encounter with **MOUNTAIN GOATS** was an added bonus along with sightings of Moose and Black Bear.

- July 3, Jim Danzenbaker, Shawneen Finnegan, Dave Irons and Anne Nightingale birded Silver Star Mountain, finding **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL, TOWNSENDS SOLITAIRE, GRAY JAY** and more **RED CROSSBILLS**.
- July 20, Jim Danzenbaker had a calling **BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** at Rest Lake on the Ridgefield NWR. There was also a flock of 81 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** on the lake. These birds were rare in Washington thirty years ago and few records came from our area, now they are nesting on the Columbia River near Astoria.
- July 21, After hearing a **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** calling the day before, Carlo Abbruzzese saw it in the Washougal Oaks Natural Area, above the Steigerwald NWR. This was the second record of this species for Clark County.
- July 28, Anne Kahle, Barry Woodruff and I explored Skamania County looking for species they had not seen before in that county. We ended up with 67 species for the day including a **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** and **BANK SWALLOWS** near Greenleaf Slough in North Bonneville. This was only the second time that I have seen these swallows in Skamania County.
- July 29, Tom Mansfield relocated the female **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** at the North Bonneville feeder. On Oklahoma Road, north of Willard, he spotted eight juvenile **HARLEQUIN DUCKS** on a rocky sandbar in the Little White Salmon River.



- June 30, Russ Koppendrayner spotted a **PRAIRIE FALCON** as it flew over the parking lot of the Johnston Ridge Observatory in the Skamania County sector of the Mt. St. Helen's National Monument.
- Aug. 9, After Mike Hill posted online that for the last week a male **HOODED ORIOLE** had been coming to a hummingbird feeder at his home north of Kelso, Susan and I headed up to see this gorgeous bird. This is only the eighth record for Washington State.

By mid August the migrant species were beginning to move through our area. Shorebirds will be harder to find this fall due to the continuing high water level of the Colum-

("Afield" Continued on next page)

("Afield" Continued)

bia River covering the mudflats and sandbars. Places like Rest Lake on the Ridgefield NWR and the other ponds away from the river are among the better spots to check for these birds as they are not affected by the high water from the late snow melt. By September most of the Rufous Hummingbirds and most species of swallows will have moved out of here. Our wintering waterfowl will not arrive in numbers until early October but there will still be plentiful opportunities to find migrant birds such as vireos, warblers and others in mixed flocks. One of the easier ways to find these flocks is to listen for the chickadees that may be traveling with them. Please report your sightings this fall for inclusion in this column and the 2011 Cumulative County List Project. By the end of July people had reported seeing 210 species of birds in Clark County and 173 species in Skamania County. If you do find an unusual or unknown bird please contact Arden and Sherry Hagen and me as soon as possible.

Wilson Cady gorgebirds@juno.com

The Backyard & Beyond...

Arden and I took off for Las Vegas before Father's Day Weekend. He had won a spot in the World Series of Poker at the Rio. I went along hoping we could do a little birding sometime during the trip. Well, Arden only lasted 4 hours in the tournament. There were over 3000 players vying for just under a half million dollar 1st prize with lots to share between the top players. During the first day **all but** around 350 of those were eliminated so he wasn't alone (unfortunately for Arden, all those would win money). By the end of the 2nd day there were only 27 players vying for those top positions. This left us with some time to go birding around Vegas. We headed to the canyons northwest of Vegas where the weather was beautiful and sunny and in the mid to high 60's compared to the over 100° in Vegas. I was able to get a good photo of a Black-chinned Sparrow that I wanted.



Black-chinned Sparrow

The next night we decided to drive up to a canyon following 1989 instructions to find a Gray Vireo. Due to a change in freeways, housing growth, business area and road changes, the instruction for getting out of town and



on the right road were a mess. Luckily when we did get the area hadn't change. It didn't take us long to find a very cooperative Gray Vireo that came right up to me for the photos. Since I had never photographed this species it added one to my Photos Life List. We left Vegas stopped at the Desert NWR, where we found birds & a Western Pip-strella Bat coming in to roost.



Before crossing into California, we stopped at Palmetto Ghost Town which wasn't much but I found a cooperative Rock Wren for photographing. We headed north and the next morning we birded in the Crystal Basin Mountains just south of Lake Tahoe, CA. A stop at Burney Falls gave us views of Black Swifts but they were too fast for better photos. During the trip I added 1 new bird photo, 1 new butterfly & photo along with 19 new birds in Nevada and 4 in California.



In August I got an email from lady in Vancouver who had a "white" hummingbird coming to her feeder. She was kind enough to set up a day and time to come view the bird and try and photograph it. It took a couple hours and 3 visits from the bird to get in the right spot to get a rather good photo of this bird which we decided was a female Anna's Hummingbird. It has obviously been in the area for over a year. How exciting to view this little jewel. It looked like a little white fairy as it flew among the green trees.



Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding 😊

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

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



September 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.

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