



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

September 2012

Calendar

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

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

***Monday, **Aug. 27, 6:30 pm**: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Sydney Reisbick
806 N Main, Ridgefield 360-887-7880

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						

PROGRAM:

Birding Texas

by Wilson Cady, Les Carlson & George Mayfield

A **BIG** state with lots of birds and many birding areas---
How do you cover it to maximize your birding adventure?

VAS birders, **WILSON CADY, LES CARLSON, & GEORGE MAYFIELD** will show how they met the challenge on their 2 week April, 2012 trip. They covered 2700 miles and located over 200 species. They will show pictures of some they saw and tell trip stories.



FIELD TRIP

Rare Bird Run



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: Sept. 15, Saturday

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: 134th St. Park & Ride in Salmon Creek

NOTE: The 134th St. Park & Ride has been relocated near Fred Meyers on 134th west of the old location closer to the I-5 and I-205 merge. Watch for the signs to the Park & Ride.

This will be a last minute decision depending on what birds are reported the night before. Be prepared to go anywhere in SW Washington. Bring lunch, snacks and clothing for the weather at the time.

INJURED BIRDS: WHAT TO DO?

Many of our Board Members receive many calls **especially** during Breeding Season on injured birds or baby birds that seem to be abandoned. We have no Bird Rehabilitators in the Vancouver Area that we know of. So what should you do if you find yourself in this situation?

1. Call the Portland Audubon Wildlife Care Center for information:
503-292-0304
5151 NW Cornell Rd, Portland OR
2. Call Arden or Sherry Hagen for information: 360-892-8872
If they are available and a bird requires transport to the Portland Audubon Wildlife Care Center then the volunteers suggest they receive a gas mileage compensation and a small donation to the Care Center for the care of the bird at the time of pick up.
3. Please do not call other Board Members since they are unable to help at this time.

October Program:

The BIRDS and WILDLIFE OF SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND IN THE FALKLANDS:

by **JIM DANZENBAKER**, local birder, and international sales representative for Kowa Optics.

November Program:

Show & Tell Slide Show by our members

December Program:

Malhuer NWR



Happenings in Congress, Alas

The "Homeland Security and Federal Lands Protection Act"

Federal lands protection? Huh? This is the bill that I wrote about in the December *Flyway*, the one that would allow Homeland Security to ignore 36 environmental laws on Federal lands within 100 miles from the Canadian border. The bill that includes Seattle (Clean Water Act is one of the laws that can be ignored) and the entire Olympic Peninsula in the area of no environmental protection. The bill is so extreme that I had hoped it would quietly die. It didn't. Along with a bill to allow the Sealaska Corporation to log what remains of the old growth in the Tongass National Forest, as well as other bills that conservationists have concern with, this Homeland Security bill was rolled up into one big bill, called the Conservation and Economic Growth Act (love those bill titles). The whole bundle was sent on to the Senate. Allen Gibbs from Pilchuck Audubon and who has been following Congress on this bill thinks the Conservation and Economic Growth Act will be broken up and the pieces dealt with separately. He doubts the Homeland Security Act will go anywhere in the Senate. Still. It wouldn't hurt to let our senators know we are concerned about this bad this Homeland Security bill is. And, depending on how the election turns out, the thing could rear its ugly head again in the next Congress.



The Land and Water Conservation Fund

It appears that there may be no appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) this year. At least, there has been a big set back. When the transportation appropriations bill, the bill that funds all sorts of transportation projects from bike paths to super highways, left the Senate, it included the appropriation for the for the LWCF. As the Senate version of the bill differed from the House version, there had to be a conference committee appointed to hammer out the differences between the two versions. The leadership, both Democratic and Republican, in each house of Congress appoint members to the conference committee. As it happened, our congresswoman was appointed to the transportation conference committee. At the end of June, the conference committee finally came up with a transportation appropriations bill that passed both houses of Congress. The LWCF appropriation was not in it.

The Wildlife and Recreation Coalition tracked this issue and according to them, our senators, Cantwell and Murray,

were helpful in trying to keep the LWCF appropriation alive. It is unclear to me if there will be another attempt to get an LWCF appropriation through Congress this year. After the election, you can ask me about more specifics about the Washington congressional delegation.

The Copper Mine by Mount St. Helens -- Again

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released an environmental assessment (EA) on the drilling exploration for the proposed copper mine at the edge of the Mount St. Helens Monument. They did so at the end of June, with comments due at the end of July. Short time turnaround. I received several urgent e-mails asking Vancouver Audubon to comment or sign on to a letter commenting on BLM's EA. The timing was bad (I was getting ready to leave town for a couple of days), but Vancouver Audubon has signed on to the letter sent by the Gifford Pinchot Task Force.

The GP Task Force letter expressed concern that the EA released at the end of June did not seem to be in draft form, which it should have been. The concern is that comments on the EA will not be considered. The Task Force said that there needs to be an environmental impact statement and that the proposed copper mine should be considered. The BLM treated the copper mine as speculative, which it should not have. (After all, the whole point of the exploratory drilling is to determine if there was enough ore there to make a mine worthwhile.) The Task Force's letter noted that the time line seemed to be more to accommodate Ascot (the company proposing the mine) rather than to do an adequate environmental assessment or to allow adequate time for the public to respond to the EA. Ascot wants to start drilling next summer.

Gretchen Starke



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

New Members: David Akers • Lue Anderson • Aleksandr Anisimov • Cathy Apling • Lew Bailen • Ed Bennett • Donna Bighthouse • Ann Burwell • Priscilla Chou • Karl Clark • Robert Crockford • Christine Cromwell • Gloria Fox • Jon Haralson • Stephen Harvey • Veronica Hayward • Cora-Belle Higbee • Gail Jacobson • Marianna Kearney • Jane Keith • Dovy Landerholm • N. Loughry • Linda Merz • Evelyn Miller • Barbara Peorowe • Jeanne Roll • Jeanette Steinmueller • April Surman-Oliger • Patricia Table • Hilary Tiefer • Connie Werbowski • Ronald Williams • Carol Wiseman

Transfers: Phyllis Ruell • Dennis Doss • Charlotte Kemp • Elsie Tremblay • Eric Greene • Ronald Friesz • Jennifer Nodell • Teryl Volkober

WA Big Year VAS Fund Raiser Competition

Vancouver Audubon President Eric Bjorkman and his wife Tammy are involved in a year-long fundraising competition with fellow board members Arden and Sherry Hagen. Both couples are conducting a 'Big Year' in Washington State. Throughout 2012, Eric & Sherry will keep a journal of the adventures of **Team Bjorkman** and **Team Hagen** respectively & contribute articles to *Columbia Flyway* each month sharing the high-lights and low-lights of their quest.

June 2012 Big Year Birding

Team Bjorkman:

Wow, what a year so far!

We've already topped our original goal of seeing 300 species and we still have five months remaining in 2012 to improve on this number. This is the point, however, when the challenge gets hard. Unusual birds are popping up all over the state (usually at least halfway across it!) and off we go to chase them.

For instance, one week had us driving to Nisqually NWR in hopes of spotting a reported Franklin's Gull. Unfortunately, we're unable to find the gull so that night we check the Internet and see a report of a rare bird in the Tri-Cities.

Let's go! The next day we head off to Kennewick to see a direction-challenged Northern Parula hanging around the Kiwanis Camp. Washington State is not routinely in their migration pattern.



A thoughtful birder had given the GPS coordinates for this bird on eBird and we drove to the exact spot where the bird was first seen. Luckily it was still there, singing away as if it had a great chance at finding a mate 1500 miles from home. When we arrived we knew we were in the right spot because we could see a birder lying on his back in the grass, staring into a tall cottonwood with his binoculars. This is a great neck-saving way to look for warblers, by the way. We plopped down next to him and had the bird within minutes!

While this challenge is exhausting, it has also been a lot of fun to see what new bird will materialize for us to see next. We spent the first half of the year doing strategic trips that allowed us the best chances to see birds in their normal habitat. From now on it looks like we'll spend the remainder of the year chasing rarities.

We have certainly gained a greater appreciation for just how big this state is. The next time we commit to anything like this again, we hope it will be in Rhode Island!

VAS President, Eric Bjorkman

Team Hagen:

Migration was still going on in June and rarities were still showing up. So June 1st we headed to the Rearden Ponds on the eastern side of the state for the WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER which we did find for a quick look before it disappeared to who knows where. Next was Deer Park north of Spokane to a home where a ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK had showed up the day before and had come several times to their feeders and we were lucky enough to see it because it was not seen again after that. They told us where we could find woodpeckers up the road in the Little Pend Orielle burn area where we found the BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER we sought. We spent the night in Spokane with relatives then headed over the North Cascades Highway the next day hoping for a couple more rare birds. We did luck out on the EASTERN MEADOWLARK with the help of Ryan who found it to start with and guided us to the correct field.



With Bjorkmans having chased the CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER in Naches we just had to go there too. Eric had also found an EASTERN PHOEBE while they were there and I spotted it as we were driving on the road. We searched and searched for the warbler with no results. Birders from all over the state came and went but we stayed. I was standing by the creek when I heard it calling across the water and we used a log to get to the other side. It called several times from deep inside the foliage of the brush but would not show itself so we had to go home content with just the song. From there we drove back to the Walla Walla River Delta searching for the a Franklin Gull with no luck so back home we went. Are you getting the picture? A lot of zigzag driving!!!

A drive to Biscuit Ridge on the west side of the Blue Mts. produced 2 flycatchers at one spots. We searched for the Green-tailed Towhee which we weren't seeing but we were torn by the rare to our state Least Tern that was being seen at that very moment at the Potholes Rookery area or staying there. But we headed to Moses Lake stopping at the Delta again and this time finding the Franklin Gull. Persistence can pay off. Even though we spent the night in Moses Lake the old "no luck" set in. The Least Tern was not seen after that last report.

Another trip to Kennewick produced another rarity to the state, a NORTHERN PARULA. In fact there are 2 of them there only 1/2 mile from each other. Beautiful males singing away. We spent 5 hours trying to find the one that the Bjorkman's found so easy. A Frisbee Golf Tournament was going on and we dodged Frisbees and not the kind we used at the family picnics. These are professional Frisbees that can do major damage if they hit you. We waited out a thunder storm and finally with no Parula showing

itself we went down to the closed Kiwanis Campground, played the call at G0 campsite and the warbler there came down to us for a photo op along with a tick mark. Another trip to Okanogan and then a pelagic (ocean) trip out of Westport gave us more birds to add to our list.

by Sherry Hagen, Newsletter & Web Editor



There was no time to grab a camera or even think about it before this beautiful creature was off into the forest again. Along with the **WOLF** we saw earlier and the other animals, let me just say it pays to be out

exploring our state. After adding AMERICAN PIPIT to our Big Year List at the ridge we learned there was a INDIGO BUNTING at Vancouver Lake Lowlands. A great bird for the list in our own backyard so to speak. So we rushed back to Vancouver to add it. Within a few days we rushed off to Okanogan area again for the PAINTED BUNTING in 106° heat. This beautiful bird as someone in the area described it as the “**Rainbow Bird**”, was far out it’s range.



July 2012 Big Year Birding

Side Effects

HBO is currently showing a program called "Birders: The Central Park Effect." It's a very good and, at times, amusing representation of the hobby and the people it attracts. Tammy and I found ourselves chuckling at several of the featured birders as we absolutely saw ourselves in them and, while we hoped differently, we know we are as nerdy. The reason I'm bringing this up is that one of the birders featured had the best explanation of why he was a birder that I have ever heard. I feel exactly the same way but I've never been able to express it as eloquently as he does. This man had a very similar start to birding as we did in that he thought it wasn't for him, but he found out differently when his friends took him to the park one day. This is when he first discovered a Veery and was surprised that he'd never noticed them before. Just like that he suddenly had a birder's eye. Now the trees were alive with brightly colored ornaments as the warblers, grosbeaks, and thrushes all began to stand out to him. He was transformed.



Veery

Corthorax fuscescens



What he said was this- "It was one of those rare times in an adult's life when their world seems more magical than less". I felt that the first time I saw a Western Tanager and I still feel it 15 years later.

This journey we've been on this year has been grueling, yes, but more than that it has opened up a new world to us. We've met people we knew only from their "Tweeters" posts and we've made many new friends along the way. We've shared great birds and spectacular scenery with countless strangers, and are keeping in touch with many of them. Some of our new friends are on their own "Big Year" quests; or have helped us locate a hard-to-find species; or offered their property as a place to pitch our tent for a night or two.

It's been a great ride and I'm looking forward to more magical moments during the second half of the year.

VAS President, Eric Bjorkman

The Adventure Continues

This has been more than a birding adventure this year. As we passed the entry booth for Hurricane Ridge in Olympic NP, a large **COUGAR** crossed in front of the car. Wow! If I had only been able to click my eyelids and get a photo.

Other birds have been harder to get like the Green-tailed Towhee in the Blue Mts along Biscuit Ridge. A hike down a canyon and out almost killed me and no towhee. A few weeks later with help we would get it along the road but not until we had already climbed down the canyon again! I was ready to give that one to the Bjorkman's at one point. Mid month we headed to the NE corner of the state. A place that Arden & I have not birded. After not finding the Boreal Owl or Chickadee we crossed the North Cascades where we at least heard the Boreal Owl but no Ptarmigan or chickadee. We were almost struck by lightning at Hart's Pass Lookout. Scary! I asked Arden "what are we doing?" Back home we were resting when the message came in that a RUFF and CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR were at Ocean Shores just 3 hours away. We jumped in the car at 3:30 PM and got back at 11:30.

It has been like this for months. Rushing off for a bird or two, then try to get a few days rest. But there are family gatherings, shopping, yard and house to take care of. It has been a busy year to say the least. But it has been exciting. And we still have months to go.

by Sherry Hagen, Newsletter & Web Editor

	Bjorkmans	Hagens
Feb 7	142	161
Mar 6	161	181
Apr 3	189	190
May 1	227	227
Jun 5	293	305
Jun 30	316	326
July 31	327	338



June 10. Ken Knittle found Skamania County's first **LEAST FLYCATCHER** at Home Valley Park.

June 20. Les Carlson, George Mayfield and I did a "Big Day" in Skamania County attempting to find as many birds as possible in the county on one day. We ended up with a total of 73 species, our highlight was finding two **EASTERN KINGBIRDS**, the first ever reported from this county.

June 25. Randy Hill Saw all four fledged **BLACK PHOEBES** this afternoon with one of the adults at the River "S" Unit of the Ridgefield Refuge. This is the second year that these birds have nested here for the only known breeding records for Washington State.

June 29. Bob Flores Steve Mlodinow, Bill Twiet, Randy Hill heard a **BLUE JAY** while birding around the Fruit Valley sewer ponds. They then spotted an **INDIGO BUNTING**, only the second one ever reported from Clark County. This bird remained here for over a month allowing many birders to add this species to their state and county lists.

July 13. Eric and Tammy Bjorkman found a **SNOWY OWL** sitting on a telephone pole near Havillah, in Okanogan County. This was most likely a bird that came down from Arctic during last winter's irruption and did not return north in the spring. Unfortunately the bird died after it was captured a few weeks later after it seen to be in stress.

July 17. Jim Danzenbaker found the ponds at Ridgefield NWR perfect for shorebirds when he visited the refuge. The early migrants he saw were **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, KILLDEER, SEMIPALMATED PLOVER, LEAST SANDPIPER, WESTERN SANDPIPER, GREATER YELLOWLEGS, LESSER YELLOWLEGS, PECTORAL SANDPIPER** and **WILSON'S SNIPE**.

Arden and Sherry Hagen photographed a male **BROAD-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** at a feeder in the Walla Walla County town of Dixie. This is a very rare bird in Washington, and the Blue Mountains are the best area to find one here.

July 18. A **RED-EYED VIREO** was singing in Jim Danzenbaker's Battle Ground yard. This was the latest record of this bird for his yard to date.

Eric Anderson saw **3 WESTERN KINGBIRDS** south of Ridgefield, consisting of an adult feeding 2 young, they are a very scarce breeding species in Clark County.

July 21. Arden and Sherry Hagen rushed over to see a **RUFF** and a **CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR** that had been reported from Ocean Shores in Gray's Harbor County. Sherry also saw a **STILT SANDPIPER** but Arden missed this bird.

Susan and I explored the area of Skamania County that is southwest of Mt. Adams and north of Trout Lake finding our first **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** for that county.

July 24. Barry Woodruff, Les Carlson and I ran another Skamania County Big Day and came up with 86 species. We had several good birds on this day including **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, GREEN HERON, two WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS, and MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE**.

July 28. Another visit to Biscuit Ridge Road, near Dixie, Walla Walla County, provided Arden and Sherry Hagen with an adult **GREAT GRAY OWL** and a **GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE**.

July 30. A **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** was seen and heard between Ridgefield and Battle Ground by Ken Knittle. There have not been any nests found of this hawk in the state yet despite their occasionally being seen here during breeding seasons.

Aug. 1. Randy Hill reported that the Ridgefield NWR team banded a second brood of **4 BLACK PHOEBES** on the River "S" Unit. After banding the phoebes they banded three young **EASTERN KINGBIRDS** that also nested on the refuge.

Aug. 5. A **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** reported in College Place; Walla Walla County was relocated by Arden and Sherry Hagen. This east coast warbler is very rare in our state.

Aug. 8. Ron Friesz had a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** in the trees along Ridgefield NWR River "S" Unit Auto Tour route. This small forest dwelling hawk had never been seen in Washington State until about twenty years ago.

Aug. 9. An **AMERICAN AVOCET** was reported from the Carty Unit by the staff at the Ridgefield NWR. This gorgeous shorebird is very rare in western Washington.

This has been an excellent year for unusual species in our area as well as state-wide. For our two teams of VAS birders doing a Washington State Big Year this has been a real boon. I would expect that we will continue to see out of place birds through the rest of the year giving the Bjorkmans and Hagens a chance to add more birds to their already impressive year lists.

The month of September will be exciting for birders as we continue to see migrant shorebirds passing through along with the neo-tropical species that nested both here and to the north. Mixed flocks of these warblers, vireos and others can be found traveling with feeding groups of chickadees. White-fronted Geese, one of the earliest migrating waterfowl, will be passing over in large numbers with a few small flocks setting down to rest in the Ridgefield/Vancouver Lake Lowlands. Most waterfowl won't start arriving until October and the earlier arrivals that are seen are often in eclipse plumage, making them harder to identify. Please let me know of the migrants that you notice for inclusion in this column and for the County Year List Project. As of early August 215 species have been reported from Clark County in 2012 and 170 birds have been seen in Skamania County. to see the complete list for all 39 counties go to: <http://wabirder.com/bartel.html> If you have seen a species not checked off please let me know. If you find anything unusual or interesting please contact me, the Hagens and the Bjorkmans as soon as possible.

Wilson Cady gorbirds@juno.com

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



September 2012

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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