



# Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

*A Chapter of the National Audubon Society*

vancouveraudubon.org

Chartered December 18, 1975

September 2015

## Calendar

\*\*\* Birding Classes have ENDED but may be offered on Special Occasions \*\*\*

\*\*\*Tuesday, Sept. 1, 7:30 PM: Vancouver Audubon Society's General Meeting at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

\*\*\*Tuesday, Sept. 29, 6:30 PM: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Arden & Sherry Hagen at 2203 SE 135th Ave, Vancouver WA 360-892-8872

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## PROGRAM:

### Birding a "Big Year" in Clark County

Speaker: **Bob Flores**, retired Regional NWR Manager

Bob Flores is in the middle of a "Big Year" in Clark County to find as many bird species as he can in the calendar year: 2015. This is a unique goal.

What unusual sightings has he made? What areas of the county is he going to? What is he finding in what season? If we can follow his answers to these questions, we may be able to make our own birding in Clark County more targeted and successful. We tend to gather little pieces of information about bird distribution and add them up to decide where we will try to bird next. This program will give us good information.

Bob has been posting some of his sightings on Tweeters. He has a lot of experience that he is using to strategize.

Bob Flores was formerly the manager at the Ridgefield NWR, but was promoted to regional manager and tracked and managed many Northwest National Wildlife Refuges. His service at Ridgefield NWR was long and successful. Bob retired in May 2014. Many of us have met him, or birded with him. Prior to this, he was manager at the Columbia NWR in central Washington. Randy Hill, another one of our members, has worked closely with Bob at both refuges. Randy may join Bob in telling some of their recent birding stories and outings.

## FIELD TRIP

### Ocean Shores, WA



Leader: Arden Hagen, 360-892-8872

When: Sept. 13, SUNDAY

Time: 8:00 AM

Meet at: **Salmon Creek Park & Ride at 134th St. (Tenney St) & 10th Ave.**

This is a full day of birding at Ocean Shores, primarily looking for migrating shorebirds. Bring your Discovery Pass if you plan on driving for parking.

We will carpool.

Do not forget to pay your driver for gas.

## GO PAPERLESS

### with the VAS Newsletter

If you would rather have a paperless VAS Newsletter then you can email Sherry Hagen at [littlebirder@comcast.net](mailto:littlebirder@comcast.net) to receive a "PDF" copy of The Columbia Flyway in color sent to you. Include the email address that you wish to have it sent to.

The PDF form is also available on line at:

[www.vancouveraudubon.org](http://www.vancouveraudubon.org)



# Vancouver Audubon

## Vancouver Lake Park Eco-blitz, September 26<sup>th</sup>

Join the fun, learn about the park's wildlife and contribute to science. Whether you are an expert or a novice, your time and service is needed. Clark County, City of Vancouver and the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership are partnering with the National Park Service and the Intertwine to host an Eco-Blitz on September 26<sup>th</sup> from 7 am to 2 pm at Vancouver Lake Park. This event is free and open to all ages. The Vancouver Lake Park Eco-Blitz is part of a region wide, on-going Eco-Blitz series to find and collect data on the Portland-Vancouver metro area's wildlife.

The purpose of an Eco-blitz is to raise awareness of biodiversity; generate appreciation of natural resources; establish a shared effort among science professionals, educators and the general public and create a shared database of regional species and natural resources. This effort will compile a "snapshot" of the biodiversity of Lake Vancouver Park. No expertise is required to participate. However, there is a special sign up for individuals with expertise who can lead teams to survey for many different wildlife types – birds, amphibians, furry things, insects, plants, etc. You can find more information about how to register at <http://www.theintertwine.org/blitz>. You can register for your area of interest and specify a time when you are available. While you are at the website, take a look at the wonderful photos of species already identified for the region – birds to turtles, to flowers to dragonflies.

## BirdFest and Bluegrass in Ridgefield, October 2-4

If you have ever been to BirdFest you know how much fun it can be; and if you haven't, it is time you found out. This is a great time to get the kids and grandkids involved in nature and the history of our area. Start with a Friday night viewing of Alfred Hitchcock's Birds at the Liberty Theater. Then there will be bird and nature hikes, family activities, Sandhill Crane tours, Bluegrass concerts, kayak & big canoe paddle tours, demonstrations at the Plankhouse and a marketplace for arts and crafts. Oh, and a traditional salmon bake. There are some changes this year. We will have spotting scope access inside the hunter's gate to view some of the lakes usually not accessible on the auto tour. Instead of closing the auto tour for buses, River S will be open both days.

Sandhill Crane tours will be more limited, so get your reservation early if this is one activity you can't miss. For program details, go to:

[www.RidgefieldFriends.org](http://www.RidgefieldFriends.org)

## Volunteers Needed at BirdFest

Vancouver Audubon has long been a supporter of BirdFest by leading bird walks and participating in the marketplace. We need volunteers to lead or assist on bird walks on the Kiwa trail, staff the scope viewing station and staff the VAS information table at the marketplace.

We can use both generalist naturalists, people with some birding expertise and some folks who are just willing to help the trip leader handle a larger group. Most folks who visit the scope station or go on the walks have limited knowledge of the birds around them so sharing your knowledge about the birds you love will be very helpful. Please contact Susan Setterberg if you are interested in helping us support BirdFest and spread information about birds and the club. Send an email to Susan at [smsetterberg@yahoo.com](mailto:smsetterberg@yahoo.com) or talk to her at the September club meeting about what you might do to help.

## Camera Photographers and Cell Phone Photographers Contests

For the photographers out there, show off your beautiful pictures by entering the Ridgefield NWR photo contest. The images must be from within the boundaries of the Ridgefield NWR. Entries are due by Tuesday, September 1 to [www.prophotosupply.com](http://www.prophotosupply.com). There are prizes for adult and youth categories. The winning entries will be announced at BirdFest, October 3. See complete rules at: <http://ridgefieldfriends.org/friends-of-the-refuge/photo-contest/>.

Don't have a fancy camera, just that new photo snapping smart phone? Well there is also a contest for you. Sponsored by the Ridgefield Art Association, a cell or mobile tablet photo will require a bird as subject. However, it can be taken in the local Washington/Oregon area. Due date for entries is September 19<sup>th</sup> to [ridgefieldartists@live.com](mailto:ridgefieldartists@live.com). Rules for this contest are at: <http://ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest/cell-phone-photo-contest/>. The top 20 submissions will be printed and displayed at BirdFest for the public to vote for a People's Choice Award.

## Conservation in Ecuador: the Galapagos

My Audubon connections gave me a chance to visit the Galapagos last June. I had been wanting to go on another trip, had the money saved and my passport in hand, but needed to find a trip that I could handle, given my decreasing physical strength. Last summer, an e-mail landed in my in-box from the Burlington, Alabama, Audubon. Seems they were planning a trip to the Galapagos and they needed more people to fill out the required 20 people to make the trip. After many e-mails and phone calls back and forth, I almost was convinced I could do it. I didn't quite believe I was going until the taxi came to take me to the airport -- at 3:00 in the morning. I'm so glad I went. It was a wonderful trip.

Ecuador established 97% of the Galapagos as a national park in 1959, the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin. Organized tourism started in the late 1960s and the Marine Resources Reserve was established in 1986. The Galapagos is designated by the UN as a natural heritage site.

Humans do live on the Galapagos; in fact there are cities, as well as farms. To minimize human impacts, the Ecuador government has limits on who may live there. One of the biggest environmental problems is the introduction of invasive species, animal and plant. As an example, goats have overrun some of the islands and the government took measures to get rid of them. Or try to. Tourism is encouraged, but controlled. Every tour boat must have a certified naturalist aboard. (On our tour boat, we had two excellent naturalist-guides.) These naturalists undergo rigorous training in the natural history of the Galapagos, as well as training in languages.

The rules for the national park are strict. Some are designed to prevent the introduction of invasive species. Several examples I saw follows. As our plane approached the islands, the flight attendants opened the overhead bins and sprayed the contents. One of our group took food with her on one our landings, and she was told that she could not eat that on the beach. In order to protect the green sea turtle eggs, we were not permitted to go over the dune. Tourists are limited to designated beaches (which was plenty); we had to take all our meals on the boat. Although any animal species that arrives in the Galapagos by way of human agency is considered to be non-native and is not wanted, any animal that arrives on its own is considered native. An example is the cattle egret, which has managed to find its way to the Galapagos from the South American mainland, a distance of 600 miles. Our guide said the egrets are changing the ecology, but since they arrived on their own, the government considers them native and plans to leave them alone. Personally, I'm not sure that is a wise move.

As for what I saw there, I am thinking of one day on the beach with the sally lightfoot crabs all over the place, a Galapagos mockingbird hopping within six inches of my foot, a pair of American oyster catchers that I walked be-

tween without them paying any attention to me, blue-footed boobies peeling off like fighter jets and diving into the surf just off shore from where I was standing, and a lava gull on a rock that I was sitting on. There was no reaction from the bird. Add to that a turquoise sea and a warm day. It was wonderful!

## Back to Clark County

### The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Update of the Growth Management Plan

From the sublime to the ridiculous. The draft supplemental environmental impact statement has been released. There will be joint planning commission-county council hearings on it on September 1 and September 3 at 6:00 on the sixth floor of the county building on Franklin. Comments are due September 17 by 4:00. You can download it from the county website at <http://www.clark.wa.gov/planning/2016update/alternatives.html>. I haven't had a chance to look at it yet. Judging from the article in the *Columbian*, it appears that Alternative 4 is as bad as we feared it would be. Sprawl all over the place. It would require many more public services, especially roads, that the taxpayer would have to pay for. Or, more likely, public services would decline.

## Councilor Mielke's Fire Sale: the Surplusing of Conservation Land

As of this writing, the county councilors have an item on next week's hearing agenda to start the process of selling county land, land that is supposed to be used for conservation purposes.

The land in question is near Paradise Point State Park near the Lewis River. Part of it provides a view of the river. The money used to purchase the land was from state grants and there are deed restrictions. If the county sells the land, the county must buy land to replace it, land of equal or better conservation and monetary value. The item to sell the land is not on the regular hearing agenda, no, no, it is on the consent agenda. This means it could be approved in one single vote, along with numerous other items such as approving the minutes of the last hearing or buying office equipment. The selling of conservation land is no more important to the councilors than contracting to pave a section of road. Sneaky.

People who are there may comment on consent agenda items, and they may request the councilor pull specific items from the consent agenda for further discussion by the councilors. Or one of the councilors may make such a request. People will be at the hearing next week. Stay tuned.

Gretchen Starke 

Here are only a few of the latest sightings from this summer, there were some very nice birds seen earlier, including Skamania County's first **BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER** which was found at the St. Cloud Recreation Area by Cathy Flick. Also in Skamania County was an intriguing **SANDHILL CRANE** in suitable nesting habitat at Lone Butte Meadows, photographed by Jennifer Gilden.



ing through until about October. Songbirds move around in flocks of mixed species prior to migrating and are quieter than in the Spring but can often be found by listening for chickadees that might be traveling with the flocks. As of early August, the number of species reported from Clark County for the 2015 Cumulative County List Project was at 219 and in Skamania County the list stood at 179. Please continue sending me your sightings for these lists and this column.

Wilson Cady, gorgebirds@juno.com

July 25. Eric Bjorkman found a **BREWER'S SPARROW** at the Steigerwald Lake NWR. The bird stayed long enough for Bob Flores to add it to his Clark County 2015 year list which is already a new record number.

July 31. **ROCK WRENS** are very rare in Clark County, so a family group of five found on Larch Mountain by Bob Flores was exceptional. He and Randy Hill returned a few days later and found six Rock Wrens there along with large numbers of other birds including; **1 NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL, 3 PACIFIC-SLOPED FLYCATCHERS, 4 WARBLING VIREOS, 2 WESTERN BLUEBIRDS, 1 TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE, 2 YELLOW WARBLERS, 23 ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS, 8 BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS, 2 HERMIT WARBLERS, 28 MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLERS, 1 WILSON'S WARBLER** and a **CHIPPING SPARROW**.

Aug. 5. Bob Flores found **SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS** at Long Lake, on the Ridgefield NWR, River S Unit, these shorebirds are usually found in salt-water habitats. He also had a **SEMIPLMATED SANDPIPER** at Shillapoo Lake in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

Aug. 8, We had a good day of migrant bird watching at our place with **RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD, BROWN CREEPER, WESTERN TANAGERS, YELLOW WARBLER, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER, TOWNSEND'S WARBLER, HERMIT WARBLER** and **WILSON'S WARBLERS** in the morning,

Migrant shorebirds began showing up in numbers during the first week of August and will continue mov-

## Updated Constitution and By-laws for VAS

This summer, a small committee drafted an update of our Constitution and By-laws, which guide how we operate the club activities. In a recent review of the club's grant procedures for our endowment fund, it was determined existing By-law guidance could be made stronger. Once we got into it, a revision of the whole document seemed useful. To summarize, we have simplified the language, added our mission statement; defined membership; clarified our purpose; updated the duties of the officers and committees; massaged the program activities to meet current needs and revamped procedures incorporating the use of "e" communications. Copies of the proposed update will be available at the September meeting for discussion and they will be posted on the website. We will vote on the proposed changes in October.



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# Vancouver Audubon

## National Audubon News

Recently the Cape Hatteras National Seashore rolled back protections for nesting shorebirds and sea turtles. And now they're talking about reducing protections even more.

Worse still, nest watchers are reporting one of the worst breeding seasons for Piping Plovers in more than a decade.

As you know, Cape Hatteras National Seashore is one of America's most critical habitats for a wide variety of nest and non-nesting bird species and sea turtles. It's a globally significant Important Bird Area. But it has also become a battleground between conservationists and off-road vehicle (ORV) enthusiasts who would prefer the barrier islands become a barren playground for four-wheelers.

We were making progress. Since 2008, off-road vehicles have been restricted from small portions of the beach for small portions of the year to protect nesting plovers, terns, oystercatchers, other birds, and sea turtles.

Wildlife has rebounded since 2008. But opposition by extremist ORV interests has been mean-spirited and unrelenting. Last year Congress intervened in favor of the off-roaders, leading to the current round of conservation cut-backs.

Amidst this controversy, Seashore staff report that only two Piping Plover chicks fledged this year, the lowest count since 2004. The news is a stern reminder of how quickly hard-won conservation gains can be lost.

If you wish to donate to help, see info at:

[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)



This bird was famous and we were there alone. We watched the area not knowing where the nest was. Arden spotted it flying low to the creek just below us. It was soon flycatching from a low branch and I hiked the short distance to get better photos. Then the bird took off.

Birders began showing up. No bird!!! Then I spotted it for them. One the guys eventually saw it go into the nest. So we left when it seemed to stay put in the nest.

We had a heard bird on our list, the **Buff-collared Nightjar** that is rare to our country. Several had shown up this year in a couple of spots in AZ. We hoped to add it to our "seen" list and I was hoping to get a photo. We tried the one at Madera Canyon, Proctor Road but again only heard the bird as it flew around right after dusk.

So we decided to drive to California Gulch/Warsaw Canyon Confluence near Ruby, AZ. It is a rough road down near the Mexican border. We searched under all the bushes hoping to find one perched on the ground as they do but with no luck. Several had been reported in this area.

While we waited for dusk, Arden birded around the area and I sat in the car with the keys and read my camera/flash manual. Arden came to get me to take a photo of a bird. As soon as I got out of the car, I asked "Did you get the keys". Of course he didn't see them sitting on the seat and I forgot to get them. We went for the photo and then came back to tackle the problem of being far far off the beaten path, next to the Mexican border and no one else around for many miles.

Arden found a stick with a little hook on the end. Luckily the vehicle had door locks that could be flipped. Many cars have smooth ones now. He found a large rock he could handle and decided to break the small window in the side back of the SUV. Whack!!! And it was done. He cleared the glass left in the window, reached in with his stick and opened the door. We cleaned up the glass.

Back to the Buff-collared Nightjar search. It soon got a little darker and we heard one calling on the hillside near us. Before long it flew down to a bush in front of us. Wow!! We could see it with our eyes but when I put the camera up to take a photo it wouldn't focus. What was wrong? I had the big flash on too. No, my chance of a photo is going to disappear as soon as it takes off. Panic!!! Then the nightjar flew but landed on another bush in plane sight. Ready with the camera....no focusing. Everything was ready. What is wrong. Later it dawned on me. There was no flashlight on it like we always do with birds at night. I never thought of it since we could see it and neither did Arden. The bird flew again and we never got on it again. Dang it!! I missed my chance at a photo. Now we will have to try again another time.

Sherry Hagen, Happy Birding ☺

## The Backyard & Beyond...

Arden & I made a birding trip to Arizona in June to add another Life Bird to our ABA (North America) bird list. A **Tufted Flycatcher** had been seen in Ramsey Canyon in SE Arizona. One of our favorite places to bird. By the time we were able to go a nest had been built. Wow!!

We immediately began to hike the strenuous Hamburg Trail. I had to stop a lot to get to the well marked spot. At times I thought I couldn't make it being out of breath and faint but I finally did. We were the only ones there.

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**September 2015**

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

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