Columbia Flyway
VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society
Chartered December 18, 1975
vancouveraudubon.org

April 2018

Calendar

**Tuesday, Apr. 3, 7:00 PM: Vancouver Audubon Society’s General Meeting** at the Genealogy Society at 717 Grand Boulevard (Grand & Evergreen) in Vancouver, WA

☐ Tuesday, Mar. 27, 6:30 PM: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Bonnie Bingle
8705 NE 51st Ave. Vancouver 360-576-0330

☐ Tuesday, Apr. 24, 6:30 PM: VAS Board Meeting hosted by Eric & Tammy Bjorkman, 4110 NE 54th Ave., Vancouver 360-695-3116

PROGRAM:

**Classic Hikes in Washington**

Speaker: Craig Romano

Award Winning Author and Outdoor Writer, Craig Romano will present on Classic Hiking opportunities in our state.

He is author or co-author of 20 books. Bring your questions about areas to hike and imagine being on the trail and exploring alternative places to go birding.

FIELD TRIP

**Ridgefield NWR “Work Party”**
(and closed to the public areas of the refuge)

Leader: Randy Hill, 360-576-5007
When: April 21, Saturday
Time: 7:45 AM
Meet at: River “S: contact station at the beginning of the tour route

After meeting at the stations, we will depart in government vehicles to visit Purple Martin nest areas, put up gourds for the nesting season, look for banded birds and get an education about the Western Purple Martin recovery project.

There will be very little work involved but participation requires a signature on a group Volunteer Services Agreement for the day and to ride in a government vehicle. Limit of 12 individuals. Highlights of the day will be access to closed areas of the refuge on Bach-elor Island and down to the Ridgeport Dairy Unit during a very good period for spring migrants.

It is important that you sign up with an email address or phone number in order to be contacted in case of a late cancelation of the trip. Otherwise you may show up and no one is at the meeting place.

Vancouver Audubon Election of Officers are coming soon
Nominations from the floor will be accepted.

The following people have agreed to run for positions on the board.

President: Arden Hagen
Vice President: Sam Neuffer
Treasurer: Joan Durgin
Secretary: Carol Kohler
Feb. 12, The first of the year (FOY) COMMON YELLOWTHROAT was seen by at Steigerwald Lake by Rick Detroye. We had a FOY TOWNSEND’S SOLITAIRE eating crabapples in our yard in Skamania County.

Feb. 13, A GLAUCOUS GULL was found by Randy Hill in the Vancouver Lake lowlands near the recycling center on Old Lower River Road. This large all white gull is from the Arctic and is a rare visitor this far south.

Feb. 14, Randy hill found BLACK PHOEBE, Red FOX SPARROW, and HARRIS’S SPARROW at Vancouver Lake Park.

Feb. 20, Another FOY was a flock of about ten WESTERN BLUEBIRDS were found by Steven Clark along the Washougal Dike at Steigerwald Lake.

Feb. 21, Cindy McCormick and Les Carlson had a nice day of birding in the Vancouver Lowlands finding a total of 86 species for the day. They started out in the morning at 21 degrees and with two target birds for Les, a GLAUCOUS GULL and WESTERN SCREECH OWL and they came surprisingly easy. Other nice finds were the continuing SNOWY EGRET, PEREGRINE FALCON and MERLIN along with a flock of 250 CEDAR WAXWINGS and seeing several thousand SNOW GEESE in the air is always a treat.

Feb. 24, Tammy and Eric Bjorkman drove to Grayland in Gray’s Harbor County where there was a dead sea lion on the beach with about ten BALD EAGLES hanging around and feeding on it. While it was too early for shorebird migration which peaks in April, they did see three SNOWY PLOVERS, a state endangered species.

Steven Clark and Sherrie Kearney spotted a TURKEY VULTURE from Highway 14 near the 205 Bridge on Saturday. The next morning, they had their first male RING-NECKED PHEASANT in their Washougal backyard near Steigerwald Lake, where there has been a small population of these birds since the 1970’s.

Feb. 26, A single BAND-TAILED PIGEON showed up at our feeders despite our having about a foot of snow on the ground, this is about the average return date for our place.

March 4-5, Randy Hill led a Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) field trip on Friday afternoon and Saturday. Nine birders gathered for the Woodland Bottoms venue, featuring the skilled leadership of Russ Koppendrayer, touring a well-planned route with strategic access points to the Columbia River. Guild Road produced 1,200 SNOW GEESE and the first of four ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS. In addition to wintering SANDHILL CRANES, a few other highlights included a continuing BLACK PHOEBE at the north Dike Road pump station, and a total of four RED-BREASTED Mergansers in separate locations on the Columbia River. Saturday was even better. Eleven birders enjoyed the co-leadership of the current and immediate past WOS Presidents, Cindy McCormack and Jim Danzenbaker. With stops at Salmon Creek, Fruit Valley Park, Old Lower River Road, Vancouver Lake, Frenchman’s Bar, the end of Lower River Road (including a special access opportunity to Post Office Lake), and a few stops along the Vancouver waterfront ending in Wintler Park, they enjoyed a cumulative 101 species. That would qualify as a new big day record for Clark County for the month of March and would equal the total set last month on February 9. A few highlights include 23 species of waterfowl without a visit Ridgefield NWR, a very active group of songbirds at Fruit Valley Park with TOWNSEND’S WARBLERS foraging on the ground, a continuing WESTERN SCREECH OWL, the continuing SNOWY EGRET at the end of Lower River Road, a sub-adult GLAUCOUS GULL with other gulls floating down the Columbia River tending a sea lion “on bait,” 320 CEDAR WAXWINGS in two trees over berry bushes, and the usual mundane SNOW GEESE and SANDHILL CRANES. A $25 individual or $30 for a family membership to WOS allows you to go one four of these field trips a year that are led by experienced birders and held all over the state. http://wos.org/

March 5, Near sunset, Barbara Smoody observed a STARLING murmuration near I-5 and I-205 in north Vancouver. Viewing was limited due to fencing after construction of the 139th overpass, but you can get some views from the Park and Ride lot, or at the access to Mountain View Veterinary Clinic on NE 16th Ave. I got a second call about a week later from another person who had spotted the flying swarm of Starlings there.  

March 6, The first RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD reported from Clark County was a male Jack Burkmann photographed at his feeders in Vancouver. He also noted that the ANNA’S HUMMINGBIRDS at his place were gathering nesting materials, it always amazes me how early these little birds start nesting.

March 6, My FOY TURKEY VULTURE was flying over Lady Island in Camas.

March 9, I saw 2 TURKEY VULTURES at the Fisher Rock Quarry and 1 at 4th Plain and 205.

March 10, Les Carlson and I spent the afternoon trying without luck to find a couple of birds that had been reported from Skamania County. We did see 4 WESTERN BLUEBIRDS at Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam.
where we also saw 3 TURKEY VULTURES. At Rock Creek pond in Stevenson we encountered a flock of TREE SWALLOWS, all three species were the FOY for Skamania County.

March 11, More WESTERN BLUEBIRDS flew by Jim Danzenbaker while he was birding on Larch Mountain, there must have been a push of migrants this weekend.

Susan and I went back to Strawberry Island at Bonneville Dam and found Lyn and Gene Topinka looking at the WESTERN BLUEBIRDS, a SAY’S PHOEBE and 5 WESTERN MEADOWLARKS. Lyn and Gene found two more phoebes on the island near the juvenile fish facility by the boat ramp.

At least 2 more SAY’S PHOEBES were found at the Steigerwald Lake NWR by Benjamin Byerly, obviously there was a push of these phoebes and bluebirds through the area over the weekend.

March 12, A female MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD was found by Jared Strawderman near the Steigerwald Lake NWR office field perched on a post near the oak plantings. A much more uncommon visitor in Clark County than Western Bluebirds.

At the Steigerwald Lake NWR, Cindy McCormack saw 3 SAY’S PHOEBES, TREE, VIOLET-GREEN and BARN SWALLOWS, and 2 WESTERN MEADOWLARKS.

Both the SNOWY EGRET at the end of Lower River Road and the SWAMP SPARROW at the Ridgefield NWR continued to be seen through this reporting period. The migration will really become evident in April with the return of the vireos, warblers, swifts, Purple Martins, swallows and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. By the end of the month Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeak and the flycatchers will be here too.

The 2018 Cumulative County List of birds reported in Clark County as of March 1 was at 146 (158 in 2017) and Skamania County was only up to 84 (88 in 2017). Apparently few people like to bird in the snow and cold winds in the Gorge during winter. The lists for all 39 counties can be seen at: http://www.wabirder.com/county_yearlist.html

Welcome New Members: Aldon Arquette • James Baird • Gerda Benda • David Bowden • Donelda Denney • Paul Downs • Diana Gijselaers • Annabel Hatch • Mike Hiner • Karl Holschuh • Susan Nickerson • Lynda Paige • Dina Roberts • Robert Taylor • Roseann Thomsen • Janis Walker • Linda Wilson

“Like birds? Like scenic river canyons?”

Yakima River Canyon 2018 Bird Fest, May 11-13

Come join us for a weekend of field trips, workshops (avian illustration, photography, native plants for birds), a river raft trip, falconry demonstrations, keynote speaker John Marzluff from the UW (corvid and urban bird specialist) banquet, silent auction, and good company with other folks who also share your passion. In and around Ellensburg, WA. Don’t miss the Yakima River Canyon 2018 Bird Fest, May 11-13, in and around Ellensburg, WA and Kittitas County. Visit the website www.ycic.org for schedule and registration information."


April 2018

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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For additional information on membership to National Audubon, go to [http://www.audubon.org/](http://www.audubon.org/)

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