



Calliope Crier

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the natural world. Through birding, education and conservation activities in our community, we raise awareness and promote the cause of global environmental protection.

Volume 43, Number 02

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

February 2014



FEBRUARY PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS

Yakama Nation Salmon Reintroduction Program

With Dr. David Fast



Salmon Migrating Upstream

Historically there were six stocks of Pacific salmon produced in the Yakima Basin that had an annual return from 700,000 to one million adults. All of these populations were dramatically reduced by the late 1900s due to over fishing, logging, irrigation and hydropower dams and other anthropogenic causes. The spring Chinook, fall Chinook and steelhead stocks persisted, but with total returns of less than 10,000 adults in the 1980s and 90s. Sockeye went extinct in the early 1900s as each of the four natural lakes that produced them were dammed for irrigation water storage. The summer Chinook and coho went extinct in the 1980's. The Yakama Nation has worked to reintroduce each of these species back into the Yakima through

the all-stock initiative of the Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project. Coho reintroduction began in the early 1980's as part of the US vs. Oregon program of moving salmon from the lower Columbia back to the watersheds where tribal fishing occurred. This has resulted in returns of over 5,000 adults each year since 2006. Summer Chinook and sockeye are in the early years of research to determine the feasibility of restoring self-sustaining populations. Different reintroduction strategies have been implemented for each of these species. Sockeye salmon adults that were naturally produced in the Cle Elum watershed are now returning to the Yakima basin for the first time in over 100 years.

David Fast is the Senior Research Scientist at the Yakama Nation Fisheries. He is involved in the Yakima Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP).

On February 27, he will present the efforts underway to reintroduce these extirpated stocks. David received his PhD from the University of Washington.



People line the bank to witness the First Return: Sockeye Ceremony. July 10, 2013



Dr. Dave Fast at Lake Cle Elum preparing to release sockeye.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, February 27, at 7:00 pm to see this presentation at the Yakima Area Arboretum

Visit the Yakima Valley Audubon Society's website at: <http://www.yakimaaudubon.org>



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI



I have great news on the Basic Birding Class that begins February 26. We have a full class of 40! Thanks to all the great work of the Education Committee in organizing this class of four evening lectures followed by four fieldtrips. Speaking of the Education Committee, they just received a 12-foot long banner with life-size overhead silhouettes of various birds, including the California Condor and Wandering Albatross. I'm certain this banner will prove a fantastic tool in our various events involving youngsters. I'm looking forward to seeing a youngsters look of amazement as they ponder the size of some of these birds!

Though not on the topic of big birds but rather on those "little brown jobs (LBJs)" in the shrub-steppe, I'm excited to relate a field project beginning this spring, an effort partnering the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Audubon Washington. This project is aimed at surveying some of the south-central Washington Wildlife Areas such as the Wenas, Oak Creek, and LT Murray to count sagebrush songbirds on WDFW and DNR lands in Washington. For science project, Brewer's Thrasher were songbird species we've been very protocol. with experience in birds in the field help with these surveys. I'm especially excited about this project as I've been concerned the WDFW has, for too long, shown a bias towards the "mega fauna," especially elk and salmon, for example. Management of these spectacular species may slight or even negatively impact habitat and populations of other wildlife species on WDFW wildlife areas. To a large degree, recognition and protection of shrub-steppe obligates such as the LBJs has not been a major focus of the WDFW.

The data we collect will be used to validate the Western Governors Association *Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool* distribution models for these species in Washington as well as to update the WDFW Priority Habitat Species data base. It is hoped results of this project will help guide wildlife area managers to recognize and conserve optimum habitat for these focal shrub-steppe species in the wildlife areas. Possibly, the findings will have wider applicability such as in wider-scale land use, transportation, and energy planning, as well as large-scale conservation projects.

There will be more news in March on this project. Meanwhile, make plans to attend YVAS events. There is the monthly chapter meeting February 27, Thursday morning Popoff fieldtrips on the South Greenway. Celebrate the return of the birds this spring!



south-central this community Sagebrush Sparrow, and Sage selected as priority species. The March assigned and surveying YVAS members identifying singing will be needed to



MEMBERSHIP

DEBIE BROWN

Welcome New YVAS Members!

Naches: Marilee Yearout

Selah: Sally Rodgers

Thank you for renewing your YVAS Membership!

Naches: Norris & Alice Faringer

Selah: Doug Peters

Toppenish: Frank Brown

Yakima: Elizabeth Bohn, Greg Bohn, Julie Dueis, Susan Gallegos, Eileen Gavin, E. Gilliam, Jeff & Cindy Kozma, Kevin Lucas & Mary Giovanni, Gary Miller & Claire Carpenter, Margaret Morris, John & Elaine Pigion, Alice Presson, Barbara Riley, Luke Safford



THIS MONTH'S YVAS CALENDAR

Feb 27 Audubon Chapter Meeting at the Yakima Area Arboretum at 7:00 pm.

Mar 11 Board Meeting at Karen Zook's house at 625 Pickens Rd, Yakima, WA at 7:00 pm.



The Yakima Valley Audubon Society meets on the fourth Thursday of January, February, March, April, May, August, September, and October at 7 pm at the Yakima Area Arboretum, located at 1401 Arboretum Drive, Yakima, WA. Guests are welcome at these meetings. The Annual Meeting of the Society is held the first Thursday of December at 6 pm. The Board of Directors meets each month except December at 7 pm at locations announced in the Calliope Crier. Members may attend Board meetings; however, please notify the host because of possible space restrictions.



CONSERVATION

GREG BOHN

Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan: More Welfare for Agribusiness

The Seattle Times ran a lengthy guest opinion on December 2, 2013, that lambasted the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (Plan) for being a taxpayer subsidy for irrigated agriculture. After reading the Plan, I agree. The conservation efforts in Washington State (State) regarding wildlife and fisheries will be severely damaged if the Plan goes forward. The Plan was designed specifically to guarantee that all "junior" water rights holders receive no less than 70% of their quota in the driest water years. That amount was made with minor concern about future damage to the environment - but with major concern for increasing profits.

The Plan will flood approximately 4,000 acres of land including ancient forests adjacent to the William O. Douglas Wilderness (enlargement of Bumping Lake). The 450-ft high proposed Wymer Dam on Lmuma Creek would drown scarce and precious shrub-steppe habitat within in the majestic Yakima River Canyon. Most people don't know that the Plan also recommends two additional dams in the Yakima Canyon.

The most astoundingly, the Plan purports that 86% of total benefits will be for fish. This is a complete "smoke and mirrors" exercise. Fish benefits were "inflated" to the hilt; whereas, the benefits to agriculture were purposely "minimized". The inflated fish benefit was estimated by using a "willingness to pay" (WTP) factor obtained from a 1998 survey received from only 801 persons. Why is it inflated? The survey was only sent to people "associated with fishing", so of course they would pay more than what the average citizen would. The Plan then multiplied the WTP amount by the State's population (2.6 million men, women and children) to arrive at an outlandishly high monetary fish benefit. This is voodoo economics at its finest!

The overall cost to benefit ratio for the Plan is below the federal government's threshold, so the State taxpayers will be saddled with the entire cost of the project. The govern-

ment watchdog group "Green Scissors Campaign" stated that the Plan should be eliminated from the federal budget due to its limited benefits.

A more recent monetary value was calculated by the Pacific Northwest Project in its technical memorandum of October 13, 2003. It determined that the monetary benefit to fish was \$3.86 per acre-foot of water, while the benefit to irrigated agriculture was \$86.00 per acre-foot. Therefore, even if all of the increased water storage were to be used for both fish and agriculture, fish would still be the "loser" in benefits. The irrigation proponents are quick to say that some of the irrigation water will be returned to the Yakima River for fish; however, irrigation return water is notoriously contaminated with pesticides and other parameters. It is hardly reasonable to expect that this increased volume of pollution would actually be beneficial to fish.

There is little doubt that the Plan has been set into motion and will go "full steam ahead". You should understand that the State views the value of crops and related manufacturing (i.e. wine) as more valuable than our environment. But what irks me the most is that the politicians want you (the taxpayer) to pay for the Plan rather than those who will benefit from it. Please understand that there is no way to "mitigate" for the loss of ancient forests, roadless area, and endangered species habitat that will result from the Plan's implementation.

I am not alone in my discontent with the Plan. Twenty-nine conservation organizations, including the Sierra Club and Audubon, objected to the Plan. You should be aware that State politicians have demanded that "credible data" be used for penalty cases against agriculture businesses that pollute the environment. But, those same politicians have no such demand when it comes to getting into your pocket to pay the \$6 billion dollar price-tag for the Plan. According to them, a 1998 survey indicated that you (the public) were willing to pay for it! Is that "credible"? I think not.



FIELD TRIPS

LUKE SAFFORD

Feb 27, Mar 6, Mar 13, Mar 20, Mar 27 - Thursday Morning Bird Walk —Weather permitting! Meet the group at the new Poppoff Trail/Jewett Pathway parking lot at the east end of Valley Mall Blvd., at the north side of the eastern most roundabout at **8:30 am**.

Mar 22 McNary NWR and Tri-Cities — This trip offers a superb opportunity to study a variety of waterfowl, including geese, dabbling and diving ducks at McNary Pool at the refuge during waterfowl migration. We will look for birds of prey, gulls, and songbirds at a variety of locations in Benton and Walla Walla County. Contact trip leader Bill Drenguis (bdrenguis@gmail.com) to get the location and time to meet the group and for trip details.



BIRD SIGHTINGS

DENNY GRANSTRAND

Sometimes birds show up in the oddest places. Take, for instance, the small settling pond at the Union Gap Costco store. Throughout the year the water level changes, which attracts different types of birds. During winter months when the pond isn't frozen, lots of ducks, usually Mallards, can be seen. In fall, when the water is lower and there is some exposed mud, shorebirds come in.

On Jan. 22 I was shocked, I mean shocked, to find a Mew Gull standing on the bank of the pond in a group of Mallards. Mew Gull is a rare visitor to Yakima County, with only three or four previous sightings. I added a new species on my Yakima County list at the Costco Pond! The gull flew away soon after I first saw it but returned for several days and was seen by many birders. Kevin Lucas spotted a California Gull on the pond on Jan. 25.

Before the last cold spell that froze the pond, there were as many as 24 Lesser Scaup and two Greater Scaup on the pond. Scaups are diving ducks which usually favor deeper water so it was odd to see so many in this shallow pond.

A Horned Grebe, an uncommon visitor to anywhere in Yakima County away from Priest Rapids, was found at the Costco pond on Feb. 17. by Mary Giovanini and Kevin Lucas. It was also seen the next day. Horned Grebes' diet consists of insects, crustaceans and fish. It is doubtful there are any fish in that pond but there must be something for a grebe to eat.

Linda and Sarah King were birding around the Toppenish NWR on Jan. 18 and were delighted to find a Sandhill Crane in a field along Lateral C. This may be the first record of a



Mew Gull at the Union Gap Costco Pond
Photo by Denny Granstrand



Horned Grebe
Photo by Denny Granstrand



Sandhill Crane
Photo by George Vlahakis

Sandhill Crane in the Yakima area during winter.

Andy Stepniewski led a YVAS field trip through the Lower Valley to Fort Simcoe on Feb. 1. The target was raptors, which were out in full force. The first stop in Toppenish found the Peregrine Falcon that is feasting on the pigeons and hanging out on the large water tower. Other raptors were everywhere. Red-tailed Hawk, as expected, was the most common, followed by Northern Harrier, American Kestrel., and Cooper's Hawk. We tallied only a few each of Bald Eagle, and Rough-legged Hawk and saw only one Prairie Falcon. By February, many of these fine desert falcons are back by their nesting cliffs so we were not surprised to see so few. Everyone in the group was excited when the Sandhill Crane was sighted in a field east of Lateral C. A big surprise, and disappointment, were three large gulls that were seen flying near Pom Pom Road when the group first got out of their cars. The disappointing aspect was that the gulls flew behind some trees almost immediately after they were first seen and could not be identified. What were three gulls doing in that area? A final stop along Lateral C at dusk found three Short-eared Owls.

Bird Sightings Continued From Page 4

Another interesting find was a flock of about 250 American Goldfinches feeding in thistles along Pumphouse Road. No one in the group remembered seeing such a large flock of goldfinches before in Yakima County.

The Horse Heaven Hills south of Mabton can be a wonderful place to go birding, especially when there is snow on the ground. When there is a good snow cover on the ground,



Snow Bunting

Photo by Ellen Stepniewski

Horned Lark flock together and can be seen in the hundreds or even thousands. Occasionally, Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings can be found in those large flocks. Scott Downes found two Snow Buntings and one Lapland Longspur in one lark flock and two buntings and two longspurs in a second large flock on Feb. 4 along Ridge Road. Scott also saw three Gray Partridges in the area.

Andy and Ellen Stepniewski toured the hills with Eric Heisey on Feb. 9 and found over 3000 Horned Larks and 8 Lapland Longspurs. The most surprising thing they saw was a porcupine in an area with no trees in sight.

Winter is a good time to look for rare gulls at the Yakima River Delta in Kennewick. On Feb. 13 I found a Glaucous Gull and a Lesser Black-backed Gull in amongst a flock of Ring-billed and California Gulls. There were also a few Herring Gulls mixed in.

Gulls are abundant in Clarkston during the winter, feasting at the landfill and loafing at Swallows Park. I joined Andy and Ellen on a weekend gull chase Feb. 14-16 and we were not disappointed. We were able to find and photograph a Lesser Black-backed Gull, a Glaucous Gull and a Iceland Gull. In the flock of about 250 gulls at Swallows Park were over 30 Herring Gulls, which seemed to be a high count for that species in Southeast Washington.

The Lesser Black-backed Gull is a European Gull whose numbers during the winter are increasing in the U. S. Some gull experts think they are now nesting in North America, possibly in the Hudson Bay area.

OLYMPIC PENINSULA
April 4-6, 2014

BirdFest

Come bird with us!

- ◆ San Juan Island Cruise
- ◆ Neah Bay Trip
- ◆ Guided Birding Trips
- ◆ Bird Drawing Class
- ◆ Auction & Raffle
- ◆ Photography Workshop
- ◆ Gala Banquet with speaker
Noah Strycker

For more information:
www.olympicbirdfest.org
info@olympicbirdfest.org
or 360-681-4076

For lodging and visitor information, call 800-942-4042 or click www.olympicpeninsula.org

First Federal www.visitsunnysequim.com
800-737-8462

Olympic BirdFest 2014 April 4-6, 2014 Sequim, WA

Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Noah Strycker: “Bird World: the fascinating parallels between bird and human behavior”. The festival with the most spectacular setting!

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 6-8, 2014. Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Birdfest website address: www.olympicbirdfest.org

E-mail address: opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com

Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, 360-681-4076

The Olympic BirdFest is a partnership of the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, Dungeness River Audubon Center and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Proceeds from this festival help support the educational programs of the Dungeness River Audubon Center.

Birding Basics - A class sponsored by the YVAS and Yakima Area Arboretum

Yakima Audubon Society experts will conduct Birding Basics, a class that will teach you how to watch and appreciate birds and their world, both at feeders in your yard or out and about in the rich mosaic of natural habitats around Yakima. Learn about the “tools of the trade,” too, including binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, and birding apps. In four Wednesday evening lectures at the Arboretum (7 – 8:30 pm), followed by Saturday fieldtrips to local spots rich in birds, this class will address four main themes:

February 26 - “Waterbirds” This lecture will focus on the wide variety of waterfowl, both geese and ducks, that form the bulk of the first wave of northbound migrating birds. More than 20 species of ducks and geese stream north as soon as the ice and snow melts locally. The class will focus on waterfowl and how to differentiate these species plus tidbits on their biology and habitat requirements. We’ll introduce you to the various other waterbirds such as loons, grebes, cormorants, and pelicans. Luke Safford will present this lecture. Luke is an active birder and waterfowl hunter. His perspective will be most interesting on this much-loved group of birds. The field trip to Toppenish NWR will be on March 1, where the early waterfowl migration should be in full swing.

March 12 - “Raptors” Birds of prey always command attention due to their size, dramatic predatory habits, and mastery of the skies. We’ll cover the basic groups of daytime or diurnal raptors such as eagles, soaring hawks, falcons, and “bird hawks.” The Yakima region is also rich in owls, those mysterious nighttime predators. Denny Grandstrand, longtime Yakima Audubon member, has studied and photographed raptors for over 35 years and will share amazing images of these incredible birds. The fieldtrip on March

15 will be to the Toppenish NWR and nearby fields, an area rich in raptors.

April 16 - “The Shrub-steppe” The hills surrounding Yakima appear brown and lifeless for much of the year. In this lecture, you’ll see this landscape of gray shrubs and intermixed bunchgrasses, the “shrub-steppe,” comes alive each spring with colorful wildflowers and a variety of colorful and not-so-colorful birds. Andy Stepniewski has studied the shrub-steppe for more than 35 years and guarantees you will come away from this class with a new appreciation for the “barren” hills around Yakima. The fieldtrip on April 19 will take you to local areas of shrub-steppe habitat.

May 28 - “Woodpeckers and Mountain Birds” The forests around Yakima contain more species of woodpeckers than almost any other region in North America. This is due to the mosaic of forest types—from “Wetside-to-Dryside” in close proximity. This class will focus on this interesting and colorful group by Jeff Kozma, a professional biologist and an authority on this group of birds. A wide variety of other birds inhabit our Cascade east slopes, some residents year-round, others pouring north from their winter quarters in the tropics. We’ll introduce you to the wonders of Neotropical migrants, too. The fieldtrip on May 31 will be by “leader’s choice” into a forested area in the nearby Cascades.

Attendance will be limited. To register online, use the Arboretum website www.ahtrees.org, or by phone contact the Yakima Area Arboretum (248-7334). The cost for four lectures and four fieldtrips is \$65 for Arboretum or Yakima Audubon members, and \$85 for non-members (this includes local Audubon membership for one year). Fieldtrips will be car-pooling affairs, with riders sharing the cost of gas.

YELF Film In March. Date TBA.

Jeremy Irons stands on a beach beside the ancient Lebanese city of Sidon. Above him towers a mountain of rubbish—a pullulating eyesore of medical waste, household trash, toxic fluids and dead animals—the result of thirty years of consumption by just one small city out of how many in the world? As the day’s new consignments are tipped on top, debris tumbles off the side and into the blue of the Mediterranean. Surrounded by a vast reach of plastic bottles, a forlorn Jeremy Irons stares at the horizon. “Appalling,” he mutters.

In the new docu-feature TRASHED, a Blenheim Films

production, produced and directed by British filmmaker Candida Brady (Madam and the Dying Swan), which was selected to receive a Special Screening at the Cannes Film Festival, Irons sets out to discover the extent and effects of the global waste problem, as he travels around the world to beautiful destinations tainted by pollution. This is a meticulous, brave investigative journey that takes Irons (and us) from skepticism to sorrow and from horror to hope. Brady’s narrative is vividly propelled by an original score created by Academy Award winning composer Vangelis.

Yakima Valley Audubon Society Membership

Join/renew your annual membership to YVAS to receive ten issues of the *Crier* and all chapter membership benefits.

Yakima Valley Audubon Membership\$ 25
 Yakima Valley Audubon Senior (62+)/Student Membership\$ 15
 Yakima Valley Audubon Life Membership\$ 500/household

I do not wish to receive any solicitation/communications from NAS check if applicable)

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

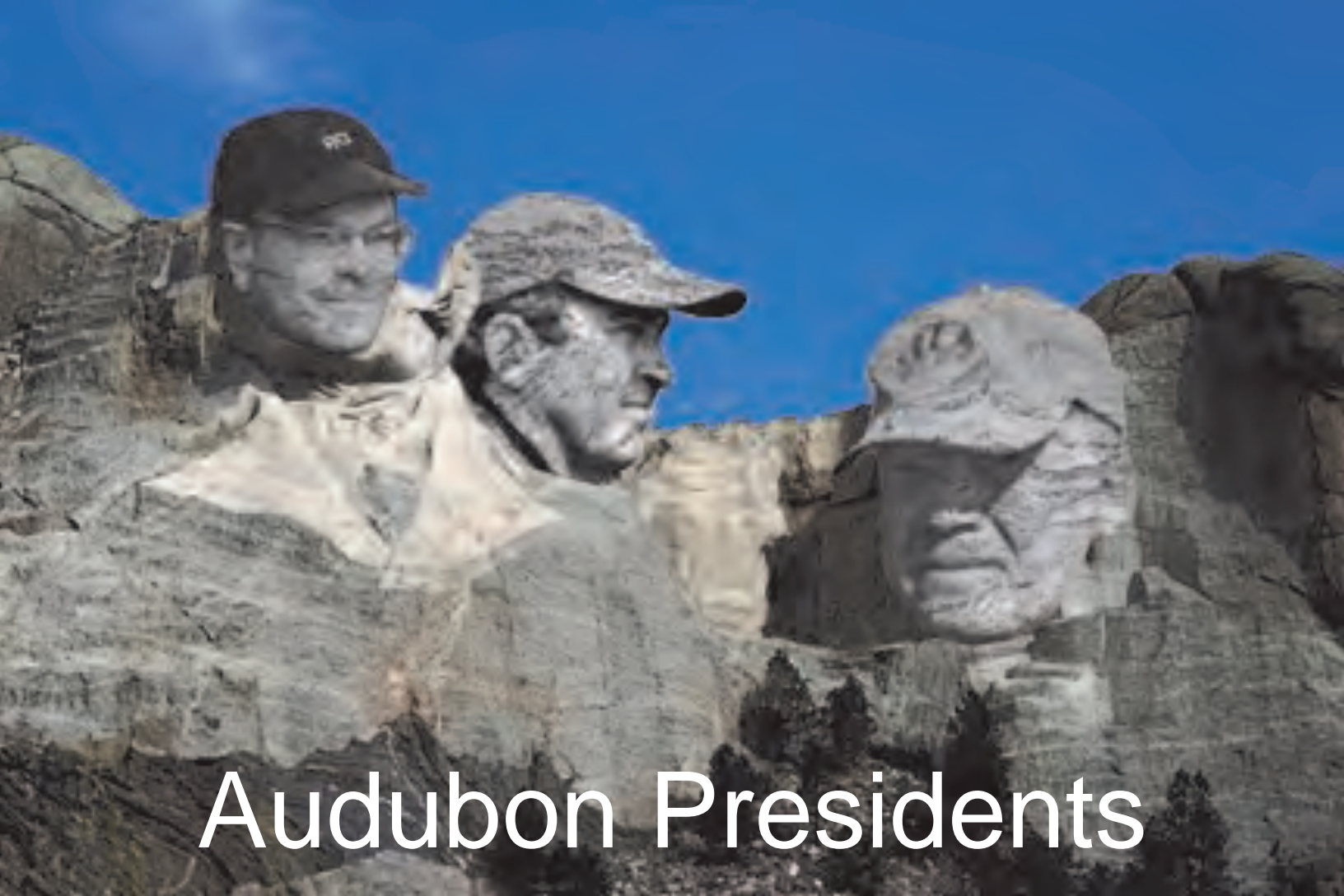
Please make your check payable to: **Yakima Valley Audubon Society**

Send the form and your check to: YVAS Membership
 P. O. Box 2823
 Yakima, WA 98907-2823

*** If you have any questions on membership, please call Debie Brown at 248-3878**

2014 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

President	Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639	Fund Raising	Dan Kinney (insur3@charter.net)	452-3260
Vice President	vacant		Membership	Debie Brown (sturnella@aol.com)	248-3878
Past-president	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500	Newsletter Editor	Elizabeth Bohn (elizabethannbohn@yahoo.com)	901-1886
Secretary	Vera Backstrom (vback47@gmail.com)	731-2103	Programs	Bill Drenguis (bdrenguis@gmail.com)	965-5808
Treasurer	Karen Zook (gadzooks7@charter.net)	225-9494	Special Committees:		
Directors:	Ken Tolonen (Trivard@gmail.com)	965-4584	Bird Rehabilitator	Connie Hughes (owlbirdlady@q.com)	457-5661
	Joy McKinney (joycatbird@gmail.com)	698-4110	Bird Reports	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
	April Adamson (read2learn@aol.com)	248-6944	Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (rich712@aol.com)	965-1134
			Important Bird Areas	John Hebert (hejohn1126@msn.com)	965-8235
Standing (Voting) Committee Chairs:			Publicity	Vacant	
Audubon Hoeger Preserve	vacant		Social	Vacant	
Audubon Refuge Keeper	Kerry Turley (kdturley@embarqmail.com)	837-6930	Volunteer Recognition	Vacant	
Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (rich712@aol.com)	965-1134	Webmaster	John Hebert (hejohn1126@msn.com)	965-8235
Conservation	Greg Bohn (gsanpdro@charter.net)	901-1882	Website	www.yakimaaudubon.org	
Education	Ellen Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639	Toppenish NWR CBC	Luke Safford (luke@terraceheightsbaptist.com)	833-6081
Field Trips	Luke Safford (luke@terraceheightsbaptist.com)	833-6081	Yakima Valley CBC	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
	Jan Gano (gano12@earthlink.net)	966-4539	YVAS Email	(birds@yakimaaudubon.org)	



Audubon Presidents

Coming Attractions:

1. 1st Birding Basics Class Feb 26
2. Chapter Meeting Feb 27, 7 pm
3. McNary NWR and Tri-Cities Mar 22