



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.

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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

March 2014



MARCH PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS



This month we are delighted to have the folks from Angel Wings Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. They are a brand new non-profit organization based in Selah. This is a great time to find out how a center gets certified. What training is need to get a permit? Who issues these permits? What type of facility is needed?

My personal list of questions includes, what type of birds will they be able to handle? How do you get the birds to eat?

I remember that recently a snowy owl was injured in Yakima and had to be sent to Pendleton, Oregon. Most of us would have loved to follow the owl's progress.

I bet there are plenty of question that you have. So let's welcome a new resource to the Valley.

P.S. They may be able to bring a few live birds to the talk.



Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 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

Wow! Spring sure is a busy time in the "World of Birds," with new arrivals from the south being noted almost every day. In the past week, observers celebrated the arrival of several species of swallows and both Western and Mountain Bluebirds.

Your chapter's Education Committees Birding Basics class has been especially busy with 40 students (and a waiting list of 15!) that completed its first lecture with topics such as "Tools of the Trade" by Denny Granstrand, "Parts of the Bird" by Jeff Kozma, and "Waterfowl" by Luke Safford. The first evening session was followed by a very chilly fieldtrip to Costco (Eurasian Wigeon and Horned Grebe) and Toppenish NWR where the "early wave" of migrating waterfowl (Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, Northern Pintail, and Mallards) put on a great show. Bonus birds were nesting Great Horned Owls and raptors, including Bald Eagles and Prairie Falcons. By the time you read this the Birding Basics class will have completed the "Raptor" lecture (March 12) and fieldtrip (March 15), and be preparing for the Shrub-steppe session (April 16) and fieldtrip (April 19). Left to go will be Woodpeckers and Mountain Birds (May 28) and fieldtrip (May 31).

The Education Committee is also working on the Arborfest at the Yakima Area Arboretum April 12. Karen Zook and April Adamson are chairing this event. Nancy Lust, leader of Eisenhower High School's Environmental Club has five students signed up to help with this event, now drawing 2000+ schoolchildren!

Fieldtrips: If you have never witnessed the mating behavior of Greater Sage-Grouse, sign-up for the "lek" tour, April 13 at 5 am! Details are in this Crier. The trip is limited to 15 and hosted by the Yakima Training Center biologist Colin Leingang. The weekly Poppoff Trail fieldtrip continues to add to the database for this great spot, the stellar birding spot in Yakima. Go online to the web address at the end of this article to check out the bar graph of this "Hot Spot". The link at the bottom of this page will take you there.

Also on the calendar is a fieldtrip March 22 to McNary NWR, perhaps South-central Washington's premier waterfowl site, led by Bill Drenguis.

Conservation issues abound. Check out a piece by me next month on WA State Parks resource issues and concerns. YVAS is being asked to participate in guiding state parks to more effectively safeguard the resources in Sportsman and Fort Simcoe State Parks. The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is proving controversial. See the "Guest Reply" to our February Conservation column.

Make plans to attend the YVAS chapter meeting March 27 at the Yakima Area Arboretum March 27 featuring a program on raptor rehabilitation by a new group in the area.



MEMBERSHIP
DEBIE BROWN

Welcome New YVAS Members!

Ellensburg: Bruce Fairbanks
Naches: Marti Martinell
Selah: Clara Eustis, Cathy LeCompte, Susan Pearson
Toppenish: Lois Jones
Union Gap: Coleen Fox
Wapato: Dean & Shelley DeMaintenon
Yakima: Beth Atkin, Rob & Nancy Baldwin, Patrick & Polly Conley, Terry Davis, Gerald Farnsworth, Bill Jacobs, Julie Johnson, Lisa Leitz, Rick Mains, Troy & Elaine Krump, Jim & Sue Richmond, Linda Wilfert
Zillah: Bill Hudson

Thank you for renewing your Membership!

Granger: Kyle Heisey & Diane Liebe
Seattle: Teri Martine
Selah: Cindi Confer Morris
Tieton: Sandra Wasson
Toppenish: Kathleen Ross
Union Gap: Louise Sisk
Yakima: Rebecca Buell, Lyle Conrad, Bill Drenguis, Karen Hyatt, Ron Sell & Lind Knutson, Jenifer Parsons



**THIS MONTH'S YVAS
 CALENDAR**

- Mar 27** Audubon Chapter Meeting at the Yakima Area Arboretum at **7:00 pm.**
Apr 08 Board Meeting at Andy and Ellen Stepniowski's house, **291 Windy Point Dr.**, Wapato, 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.

Guest Opinion

Submitted by Stan Isley

The Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan Deserves Our Support

In the Conservation column in February's *Calliope Crier*, Greg Bohn offered his criticism and condemnation of the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (Integrated Plan). I was invited to provide a different perspective for this month's newsletter that explains why I strongly support the Integrated Plan. Here's why the Integrated Plan deserves our support... Please read on.

So Who Is Stan Isley and Why Does He Support the Integrated Plan?

I am a lifelong environmentalist and I have been privileged to work for the last 20 years for both state and federal government agencies on water conservation, instream flow restoration, and salmon recovery projects in the Yakima Basin. I know the details of water management and water use in this basin, and I also know the fish and stream flow problems we face. The Integrated Plan is our only hope to restore healthy streams and fish populations to the Yakima Basin. Additionally, Integrated Plan implementation would also prevent serious drought-year crop losses with their negative impact on our local economy. The Integrated Plan represents a 'win-win' opportunity for both the environment and agriculture.

The Way It Was

Two hundred years ago, more than half a million adult salmon returned each year to the Yakima Basin to spawn. This huge, self-sustaining fishery was the foundation of the economy of the native people of the Pacific Northwest for hundreds of generations.

The 'Settling' of the West

A little over a hundred years ago, the people of the United States decided to subsidize the development of water projects all around the American West, including the dams and reservoirs and irrigation canals within the federal Yakima Reclamation Project. In just a few decades, the facilities were built that now support the irrigation of about 500,000 acres in the Yakima Basin. Agriculture is now the foundation of our regional economy.

Yakima Basin Irrigation and Drought Years

The existing 5 federal storage reservoirs hold 1 million acre-feet of water, which is less than half the total annual water demand each year in the Yakima Basin. During drought years, the basin's water supply is inadequate to meet every water demand. During those drought years, there's a shortfall in water supply for the Yakima Reclama-

tion Project's 1905-priority water rights, representing over half the total water used to irrigate the Project's 500,000 irrigated acres. For example, in the 1994, 2001, and 2005 drought years, there was, respectively, only a 37%, 37%, and 42% water supply to those water rights. Irrigation districts like Roza Irrigation District and Kittitas Reclamation District suffered many millions of dollars of crop losses in those years.

Declining Salmon Runs

During the development of the western United States, little attention was paid to the protection of stream flows and salmon, with the focus being on using water for off-stream uses. For many reasons, the seemingly limitless salmon runs disappeared, one after another. The Yakima Project reservoirs were built without fish passage, and salmon lost access to hundreds of miles of former stream habitat above the dams and in the many small tributaries to the Yakima River that were blocked by irrigation diversions. Salmon numbers declined to one percent (1%) of their historic numbers and three species were exterminated from the Yakima Basin. Two other species are now listed as threatened species here in our basin. Sadly, the construction of the existing dam at Bumping Lake Reservoir in 1910, without fish passage facilities, was the final action that exterminated the once-abundant run of sockeye salmon in the Yakima Basin.

Past Restoration Efforts Not Enough

Many people have worked for the past 30 years, trying to implement water conservation projects, improve fish ladders and fish screens and fish habitat, and restore stream flows in the Yakima Basin. But our efforts have only helped a little, increasing salmon returns to perhaps 3-5% of their historic numbers.

Enough History... Why Should You Support the Integrated Plan?

- The Integrated Plan has been developed by experts who have worked on the Yakima Basin water problems for the last 30 years, as the solution to many of those problems.

- The Integrated Plan has the support of the major water managers and stakeholders in the Yakima Basin, including the Bureau of Reclamation, Yakama Nation, Department of Ecology, Department of Agriculture, irrigation districts, the county and city governments, fisheries agencies, both Democrat and Republican Party organizations, and many others.

- A long list of environmental organizations support the Integrated Plan, including American Rivers, Conservation

Guest Opinion (continued from page 3)

Northwest, Forterra, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, The Wilderness Society, Trout Unlimited, Washington Environmental Council, YELF, and more.

- With this diverse base of support, the Integrated Plan is likely to succeed at obtaining its necessary authorization and ongoing funding from both the Washington State Legislature and Congress.

- The Integrated Plan will be expensive, but will be implemented over a 30-year time period.

- Fish passage facilities and stream habitat restoration projects are projected to restore Yakima Basin salmon numbers to perhaps 40-50% of their original run sizes. Upon full implementation of the Integrated Plan, average returning adult salmon runs are projected to total 260,000 fish each year, which would restore both healthy tribal fisheries and recreational fisheries.

- New Integrated Plan water storage projects will provide a 70% water supply during drought years to Yakima Project irrigation right holders like Roza Irrigation District and Kititas Reclamation District. The irrigators agree to make do with this compromise 70% level of drought-year water supply by improving their water use efficiency, thus the Integrated Plan will result in new and increased water conservation in the basin. These actions will prevent millions of dollars of crop losses during future drought years.

- New Integrated Plan storage water supplies will be used to improve irrigation water supply, but on existing acreage only, and will not be used to increase the number of irrigated acres in the Yakima Valley.

- Integrated Plan water will also be used to improve stream flows and habitat for fish, and for municipal and domestic water supply.

- Last year's purchase of 46,000 acres of Teanaway forest lands to create the Teanaway Community Forest is the first step in protecting up to 200,000 acres of forest and shrub steppe lands under the Integrated Plan.

- The Integrated Plan will fund additional water conservation and water use efficiency improvements throughout the Yakima Valley.

- The Integrated Plan also proposes designation of 21,000 acres of new wilderness and 200 miles of wild and scenic river corridors in the Yakima Basin.

So What If We Don't Support the Integrated Plan?

Failure to implement the Integrated Plan would mean we'll never restore healthy salmon runs to the Yakima Ba-

sin, even though people like me will continue to work with our existing limited funding and authority on water conservation and habitat improvement projects. But our efforts will fall short, unless the Integrated Plan is funded and implemented.

Correcting Some Errors in Last Month's Calliope Crier Article:

- The Integrated Plan will in fact greatly ENHANCE wildlife and fisheries conservation efforts in the Yakima Basin.

- The Integrated Plan proposes only one new dam in the Yakima Canyon: the Wymer Dam, situated off-channel, on Lmuma Creek, NOT on the Yakima River. The Integrated Plan does NOT recommend two additional dams in the Yakima Canyon.

- The Integrated Plan is indeed primarily a fish and habitat restoration plan, but its multiple benefits have garnered it diverse support from the Yakima Basin's water users, water managers, and fish and wildlife managers.

- The Integrated Plan cannot be dismissed as a taxpayer subsidy for irrigators; it is a plan to fix the problems caused by the development, over the last hundred years or so, of the irrigation reservoirs and irrigation systems in the Yakima Valley.

- The Audubon Society has NOT taken a position opposing the Integrated Plan. Audubon may well, after considering the many benefits of the Integrated Plan, join the other major environmental organizations on the list of Integrated Plan supporters.

Closing

The Integrated Plan is the first and only real chance I've seen in my entire career to truly restore flows, habitat, and fish, to the Yakima Basin. Its additional benefits to irrigation and municipal & domestic water supply will shore up our Yakima Valley economy and provide water for people too. This carefully-crafted plan offers a huge list of benefits that vastly outweigh its few negative impacts. Inundating a strip of old growth forest by enlarging the Bumping Lake Reservoir is unquestionably the most negative impact, in my opinion. I believe restoring salmon to the Bumping watershed, and to the entire Yakima Basin, is worth the loss of these old growth trees. Restoring fish 'forever' is certainly worth the cost, at almost any price. My two cents... Thanks for reading.

For More Information:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/YBIP.html>

YELF Film Series

We've had a change for March and will NOT be showing *Trashed* with the IKE Environment club. Instead we will be showing *Bidder 70*, see link below for more information on the film. This film is co-sponsored by the YVCC Diversity Series and the Wesley United Methodist Church.

**Tuesday, March 25,
2014 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Wesley United Methodist Church
14 North 48th Ave. - Yakima
<http://www.bidder70film.com/#!about/cee5>**

For April we have:

A Sea Change: Imagine a World Without Fish

**Thursday, April 17, 2014 - 7:00 pm
Yakima Valley Community College, The Parker Room -
Deccio Building**

"A Sea Change follows the journey of retired history teacher Sven Huseby on his quest to discover what is happening to the world's oceans. After reading Elizabeth Kolbert's article "The Darkening Sea" in *The New Yorker*, Sven becomes obsessed with the rising acidity of the oceans and what this "sea change" bodes for mankind. His quest takes him to Alaska, California, Washington, and Norway as he uncovers a worldwide crisis that most people are unaware of. Speaking with oceanographers, marine biologists, climatologists, artists and policy experts, Sven discovers that global warming is only half the story of the environmental catastrophe that



awaits us. Excess carbon dioxide is dissolving in our oceans, changing seawater chemistry. The increasing acidity of the water makes it difficult for tiny creatures at the bottom of the food web – such as the pteropods in the films – to form their shells. The effects could work their way up to the fish one billion people depend upon for their source of protein." Synopsis

courtesy of A Sea Change.net.

Co-sponsored with Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC)

We are still confirming logistics for the May film which will be:

The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil

"When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, Cuba's economy went into a tailspin. With imports of oil cut by more than half – and food by 80 percent – people were desperate. This film tells of the hardships and struggles as well as the community and creativity of the Cuban people. They share how they transitioned from highly mechanized agriculture to using organic farming and urban gardens. It is an unusual look into the Cuban culture during this economic crisis. The film opens with a short history of Peak Oil, a term for the time when world oil production will reach its all-time peak and begin to decline forever. Cuba, the only country that has faced such a crisis, is an example of options and hope." Synopsis courtesy Power of Community.org

— Lori Isley —



**FIELD TRIPS
LUKE SAFFORD**

Mar 27, April 3, April 10, April 17, April 24 - 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**.

Apr 04 Bluebird Box Cleanout - This year we will be doing the cleanout on a weekday, Friday April 4. If you can't make that date and dearly wish to participate, contact Rich prior to April 4 and he can set aside a block of nest boxes for you to clean on your own between April 5 and 13. Contact **Richard Repp (965-1134 or email him at: rich712@aol.com)** if you would like to help out.

April 13 Sage Grouse Lek on the YTC – This special trip is limited in number of participants and you will need to sign-up early to get a spot. The YTC requires photo ID for all participants and we will be quick to adhere strictly to all of their special rules. We will meet in a later determined spot in Yakima to carpool and arrive at the gate at 5am. Kevin Lucas is the Point of Contact for this trip. If you would like to sign-up for this trip please contact him at vikingcove@gmail.com.

Shrub-steppe Songbirds Survey Needs Your Help!



The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is surveying their wildlife areas for shrub-steppe species of concern and have enlisted Audubon volunteers around eastern Washington. It is hoped results from these surveys will help WDFW manage wildlife areas with an eye to maintaining and fostering shrub-steppe habitat. Matthew Vander Haegen, a Senior Research Scientist for WDFW is spearheading this project. WDFW needs Audubon volunteers to survey the sites Matthew has identified.

For 2014, there are three survey points on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area and six on the Wenas. The protocols for the surveys are not yet finalized but these should be completed soon.

The wildlife area managers have approved these points but area closures for elk may prevent surveys until May at some points

This is a project I have been pushing for to raise awareness of wildlife values other than elk and deer

on WDFW wildlife areas. I am anxious to hear from any of you who have demonstrated field abilities with this type of surveys. The ability to detect these birds by ear is the primary prerequisite. Hiking off-trail may also be required.

Please e-mail me (steppie@nwinfo.net) if you are interested in helping with these surveys.



- Andy Stepniewski -

Arborfest April 12, 2014 – “A Walk in the Woods”

Get ready to celebrate nature's art at the 15th annual Arbor Festival on Saturday, April 12 from 10 AM to 3 PM. The Arbor Festival is a FREE family community event celebrating our state and national Arbor Days, spring, conservation, natural science and art.

This year's Arbor Festival theme is “A Walk in the Woods,” and it will showcase the wonders you might see on a walk in the woods – including birds! This event, featuring many hands-on learning opportunities, crafts and displays, is held on the grounds of the Yakima Area Arboretum.

This event has something for everyone, young and old. Over 30 organizations sponsor booths and stations with a wide variety of activities to teach about the environment, science and art in environmentally friendly ways.

The YVAS booth will be providing materials (and perhaps some inspiration) for participants to create their own bird

button. This activity is sure to bring smiles to children and adults alike. Some of these children are quite artistic, as evidenced by many of the magnets/buttons which were created last year. It is fun to watch them design and complete their project, and share their creation with others.



Hundreds of kids will participate in this activity, and we need volunteers to help. Please consider helping with this fun and educational activity. The event runs from 10 to 3, and we will need volunteers to help for all or part of that time, and volunteers to assist with setting up and taking down the booth. Set up will start at 8:30 AM. Contact Karen Zook by phone at 225-9494 or email her at gadzooks7@charter.net to volunteer, or for more information.

Arbor Festival is fun! Please be sure to save the date, and let your family and friends know about this fun-filled family event.

— Karen Zook —

A Recap from the Birding Basics Class

The Birding Basics class started their first fieldtrip focusing on waterfowl on a cold and breezy Saturday morning at the Yakima Area Arboretum pond where Canada Geese (1), Mallard (2), and a pair of Wood Ducks (3) started our list of this clan.

We next hit the Costco pond where a beautiful Eurasian Wigeon (4) has joined a small group of American Wigeon (5). Mallards and good numbers of Lesser Scaup (6) plus the continuing Horned Grebe all floated calmly.

We were given permission by Rich Albers, refuge manager, to tour Toppenish NWR and did an "auto tour." Though the hunting season ended a month ago, all the



Andy Stepniewski leading the field trip

waterfowl were very

At Costco on the Birding Basics class. The students are peering at Eurasian Wigeon and Horned Grebes, among other waterfowl. Photo By Vera Backstrom



skittish and most took off as soon as they saw our vehicles approach. We stopped before we arrived at some of the pools and, with this strategy, had great views of waterfowl of the "early" wave contingent: small parties of beautiful

Tundra Swans (7) among scads of Northern Pintails (8) and, of course, Mallards. A few saw a handful Am. Green-winged Teal (9). The other conspicuous waterbird, not waterfowl, was American Coot.

At refuge headquarters a pair of Great Horned Owls are on an old nest in the first big deciduous tree south of the visitor center. Raptors noted at the refuge included good looks at Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, and an

American Kestrel. In the willows along Toppenish Creek, we spished up Bewick's Wren, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Song Sparrows. Landbirds were not overly conspicuous today save for Red-winged Blackbirds.

Jeff Kozma mentioned seeing lots of raptors around a squirrel colony on Pumphouse Road near Lateral C. After lunch many of us headed in that direction with Jeff as guide. We were not disappointed! We had great views of three Prairie Falcons, at least one each of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawk, a number of Red-tailed Hawks, a few American Kestrels. Bald Eagles were off in the distance, too. We enjoyed quite a spectacle here.

There was another Eurasian Wigeon in the shallow wetlands west of Lateral C and just north of Toppenish Creek.

2014 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

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FIRST SIGN OF SPRING