



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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September 2015



SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS

Sage Grouse on the Yakima Training Center

With

Dave Loomis

YTC Wildlife Biologist

One of the birds we often talk about (and seldom see) is the Sage Grouse. As you know, this is an imperiled species that is close to being listed as an endangered species. To my way of thinking, its greatest value is that it can be used as an indicator of how the shrub steppe habitat is doing.

We are fortunate to be living next to a population of these birds. Of course I am referring to the population that live on the Yakima Training Center (often referred to as the Firing Center). But how is this small group doing?

Our speaker at the September meeting will be Dave Loomis. Dave is a biologist who has been able to work around the world. Presently he is helping to study the local population of Sage Grouse. Dave will give an overview of normal Sage Grouse life and then discuss our local flock.

Expect to hear why we are so fortunate as to have a local population. How are they doing? What are their predators? How large an area do they need to succeed? Can we predict their fate? Its going to be a great talk. See you there!



Greater Sage Grouse
Photo by George Vlahakis

Come to the Yakima Area Arboretum on Sept 24, at 7:00 pm to see this program.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI

It is with deep sadness that I inform you of Jeanne Crawford's passing on September 8. Jeanne was a longtime Yakima Auduboner and past board member who loved nature and wild places. She wrote a number of articles on Yakima Auduboners for the Calliope Crier, particularly on board members. Her piece on Larry Robinson was just reprinted a few issues back.

Jeanne was also very active in Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and was a board member in that organization for

many years. She contributed to the conservancy in so many ways she was awarded that the "It Couldn't Happen Without You" Award several times. For Cascadians, she organized the "Pokies" hikers.

Jeanne was also well-known in the Yakima arts community and her love of France and Paris was known by many. As I am not a Francophone, Jeanne was always ready to help me with translation to French for notes to friends in France or Quebec.

Jeanne lived on a home with a grand old maple tree in her backyard. I will never forget her relating to me every autumn the challenge she faced in clearing the yard of a mountain of yellow and scarlet leaves from this colossal

President's Column (continued on page 2)

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

President's Column (continued from page 1)

Silver Maple tree. It was her wish that her friends and family gather under this tree to celebrate her life, the date and time to be announced.

If Jeanne was passionate about a group, she invariably volunteered to help run the organization. She worked tirelessly for YVAS, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy, and Allied Arts, and no doubt others I don't know about, so selfless was her approach to volunteerism.

Regarding volunteerism, a friend in Leavenworth sent me message a couple days ago including "WNPS" [Washington Native Plant Society] is suffering from the same problem that many organizations have – no one wants to step up to a leadership position. Your Yakima Valley Audubon Society is no different from most other organizations. Simply put, a few dedicated people are doing the Lion's share of the work to make things happen. I have to place the entire blame on myself

for allowing your chapter to lapse on filling some of the positions needed to make the chapter run smoothly. Failing to lead was not in the psyche of Jeanne. I confided in her through our years as close friends and leaned on her for help in inspiring others to take on leadership roles in our chapter. Jeanne would always say to me when I confided in the difficulty I faced trying to enlist people to help. "Andy, people don't volunteer, you have to ask them." With that in mind, I will outline the list of positions YVAS needs to fill at the October election: These include: President, Vice President, Director (filling the position vacated with April Adamson moving to Leavenworth), and both the non-elective Social and Publicity Chairs. Over the next couple weeks I will be calling on some of you whom I have come to admire and believe can assist with the positions YVAS needs to fill. I hope some of you will come forth and volunteer in the spirit of Jeanne!

Welcome New Audubon Members

Talkeetna, AK: Billy and Ute Fitzgerald
Yakima WA: Kevin Fitzgerald

**MEMBERSHIP****JOY MCKINNEY****Thank you for renewing your YVAS Membership!**

Naches: Doris Robinson

Yakima: Susan Talbott, Dan Kinney, Carol Licht, Joyce Hernandez, Horst Loechelt

Zillah: Eugene Miliczky

Please note that the above membership renewals are for Yakima Valley Audubon membership. Renewals to National Audubon are separate and are not listed here.

Attract Birds this Winter with Free Suet!

Ace Hardware donated two pallets of "dated" suet cakes to most birds relish some additional protein in their diet, even the seed eaters! At our feeders, we see chickadees, nuthatches, junco, and magpies appear to relish suet. It is particularly popular when it gets cold and snowy. These will be available at chapter meetings until the supply runs out. Even if there is a bit of insect damage,

-- Andy Stepniewski

Thank You, Loretta Olson

Joe and I would like to say a special thank you to Loretta Olson, who led the Thursday Bird Walks for a month in our absence. She did great job leading the walk. Loretta has been a regular "Poppoff walker" for a few years, with her trusty cam-

era at her side most of the time. She is very helpful, always willing to share something she has learned about a bird with others, and her photos have helped cinch many IDs and captured great moments on the Poppoff. Thanks again, Loretta!

-- Karen Zook

WDFW invites public to help identify conservation and recreation priorities

OLYMPIA - State fish and wildlife leaders are asking people to share their views on the values and priorities that should drive the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) over the next several years.

The opportunity is part of WDFW's new multi-year initiative, "Washington's Wild Future: A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife," which is an effort to strengthen the department's relationships with communities, increase support for conservation and outdoor recreation, and help ensure WDFW programs and services meet the public's needs.

People can talk with WDFW managers at six regional forums in September and October. Comments will also be accepted through Oct. 31 on WDFW's website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildfuture/> and by email to WildFuture@dfw.wa.gov. People may also participate in the conversation through the WDFW Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonFishWildlife>

Public comments and proposals will help determine priorities for conserving and managing Washington's fish and wildlife in the coming years, said WDFW Director Jim Unsworth, who was hired to lead the agency in January.

"Since I joined WDFW, I have been asking people, 'If you could tell the director of Fish and Wildlife one thing, what would you say?'" Unsworth said. "This is a great opportunity

for people across the state to do just that. I want to hear about what we are doing right, where we need to improve, and where we should focus our efforts and our funding over the next five to 10 to 20 years."

Unsworth, senior WDFW managers, and regional staff are scheduled to attend the meetings, where people can discuss fishing and hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as habitat protection and restoration, licensing, enforcement, and other fish and wildlife management issues.

Later this year, WDFW will summarize the comments and suggestions from the public, as well as input from outdoor organizations, advisory groups, tribes, and state and local elected officials. The information will be used to help identify potential changes in WDFW's operations and services, and to develop future policy, budget and fee proposals.

"We face major management challenges over the next several years, and for us to be successful we need the public's support and assistance," Unsworth said. "That can only happen if the department has strong relationships with anglers, hunters, outdoor recreation groups, and others interested in fish and wildlife in Washington."

More information about WDFW is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/>

Know A Fourth Grader?

The Every Kid in a Park program managed lands and waters nationwide for an entire year, starting September 1, 2015. Parents, grandparents, educators and community leaders can find full details of this U S Department of the Interior program via the link above. Check it out!



New YVAS Website –Take a Peek

The YVAS website has been updated and has an all new, fresh look. We should now be able to feature more information and have the capability to update the site faster than in the past. As with most things new, there may still be a few bugs to work out but the end result will be a much more versatile, pleasing and responsive site. The entire board of directors appreciates the efforts of Denny Granstrand who has spearheaded the effort to modernize the site.

The address will remain the same as before: www.yakimaaudubon.org

The new home page currently discusses the issue of snag cutting in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. YVAS is



currently sponsoring a petition to curtail this harmful practice and a link is provided to take you directly to the petition. If you have not signed this online petition, please consider doing so now. Foraging and nesting trees are being needlessly removed to the detriment of wildlife! Additional information on this critical issue can be found on page 8 of the online

August Crier which, surprise, can also be found on the new website.

For pure viewing pleasure, links are provided for photo websites of YVAS members. A simple click on one of their names will let you access images that will rival most magazine photo spreads.



FIELD TRIPS
SCOTT DOWNES

Thursday morning Poppoff Walks: Sept 24, Oct 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. September 24 walk is at 7:30. On October 1 the starting time will revert to 8:30. 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 easternmost roundabout. For more information, contact the Zooks either by phone at (509) 225-9494 or by email at gadzooks7@charter.net.

Poppoff Cleanup Party. Date and details TBD. Karen and Joe Zook are organizing a Poppoff trail clean-up. Details will be posted later or announced on the BirdYak list-serv. If interested in signing up or getting more details, please contact the Zooks either by phone at (509) 225-9494 or by email at gadzooks7@charter.net.

Oct 5 (Monday) Rimrock Lake and Clear Lake. Join Joe and Karen Zook for a trip to the shores of Rimrock and Clear Lakes. Please note that this is a Monday trip. To sign up, contact the Zooks either by phone at (509) 225-9494 or by email at gadzooks7@charter.net. Meet at Bi-Mart on 40th at 7:30 AM, plan to leave by 7:45. We will carpool from there. Bring snacks, water, lunch and insect repellent. Dress for cool yet changeable weather. Layers are best, and you may need a pair of lightweight gloves. Wear sturdy footwear for walking the shore of Rimrock.

We will be looking for gulls, grebes, ducks, possibly loons and other water birds and will also check our favorite spots for dippers. Bald Eagles are often present at Rimrock this time of year. We don't want to leave out the forest birds: Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Brown Creepers, kinglets, thrushes and maybe some late migrating warblers and or raptors are possible. Of course, we will be watching for woodpeckers of all kinds, too. In past years, Surf and White-winged Scoters have been seen at Rimrock and Clear lakes, along with some unusual gulls. Fall is a great time of year for these mountain lakes, and you never know what we might find. Time permitting, we will explore the Tieton Airport Marsh area, and possibly check out some of the small lakes near White Pass.

Oct 10 (Saturday). Priest Rapids Lake by canoe or kayak. Join Andy and Ellen Stepniewski on this canoe or kayak expedition. We will put in at the marina in Desert Aire and take out at Priest Rapids Dam. This is an all-day trip. Email Andy at steppie@nwinfo.net to sign-up and learn about the details of time and place to meet, and other logistics.

The proven hot spot for unusual birds in Yakima County is Priest Rapids Lake on the counties eastern boundary. October is a good month for seeking out these birds that are using the Columbia River corridor on their journey south from their boreal and arctic breeding grounds to the Pacific Ocean. The weather is usually nice, too, cool in the morning and beautifully sunny and warm in the afternoon paddling the waters below the gorgeous basalt cliffs is an experience you won't soon forget! Species we'll target include Common and Pacific Loons, grebes (all six Washington species are quite possible), Herring and Sabine's Gulls, and many species of waterfowl with Surf and White-winged Scoters being possible. Wind or rain will modify or cancel this trip!

Fun Seahawk Spectacular Event at Yakima Co-op on Saturday, October 17



YVAS will have a booth at the Yakima Co-op's Fall Event on Saturday, October 17 from 10am to 2pm. Our booth will focus on the birds that frequent feeders in our area with a variety of photos and handouts. Our volunteers will answer visitors' questions about birds.

The Co-op is touting this event as having something for everyone! Face painting, Elsa the Snow Queen, and more for kids. A local radio station will be broadcasting. Motorcycles, tractors, and antique farm equipment will be on display. Animal Communicator Melissa Henyan will be on hand. Donuts, coffee, juice and

apples will be available. Lots of great event day coupons for merchandise at the Co-op.

Blitz, the Seattle Seahawks mascot, is scheduled to arrive at 12:12 in company with Sea Gals. There will be an opportunity to win two tickets to the November 22 Seattle Seahawks vs San Francisco 49ers game.

This free event will be at the Yakima Co-op located at 501 South Front Street. Mark your calendar and plan to attend with family and friends.

If you would like to volunteer to help at the YVAS booth or need more information contact Richard Repp (rich72@aol.com).



BIRD SIGHTINGS

DENNY GRANSTRAND

Wenas Lake, that bastion of fall shorebirding in Yakima County, is now (on Sept. 14) barely more than a pond. Due to the low amount of precipitation last winter and the lake being drawn down in the fall for irrigation, the water is at an all-time low, at least in my memory. There is lots and lots of mud but the shorebirds tend to hang out and feed only close to the water's edge. I guess birders venturing to the lake are getting more exercise due to the long walk to get to where the shorebirds are.

Visits to the lake in recent weeks have found some interesting shorebirds: Semipalmated Plover, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Baird's Sandpipers, Red-necked Phalaropes and Long-billed Dowitcher are the highlights. It is interesting that visits to the lake usually don't generate a long list of shorebirds but through the migration season we come up with a pretty good list.

Along with shorebirds, there are many other migrants to see at the lake. Swallows can be found in the 100s skimming the water's surface. Many species of ducks and, frequently, a few Double-crested Cormorants are rest on the water. A Red-necked Grebe, a rare migrant in Yakima County away from Priest Rapids, was seen on August 27 in the company of a cormorant or two. A Peregrine Falcon was seen swooping over the ducks on Sept. 6 and 13.

Eric Heisey picked six Bushtits out of the bushes at the north end of the lake on Sept. 6, the first time I have heard of this species being at Wenas Lake.

American Pipits and Savannah Sparrows visit the areas of the dry lake bed in the fall in sometimes quite high numbers. The pipits favor the mudflats and the Savannah Sparrows stay tucked into the expansive beds of smartweed until flushed. Eric found 65 Savannah Sparrows and 75 pipits on Sept. 6. Other interesting migrants included 25 Orange-crowned Warblers, two Yellow Warblers, ten Yellow-rumped Warblers, two Wilson's Warblers and two Lincoln's Sparrows.

Two Semipalmated Plovers were found at the lake on about Aug. 30. This cute, small plover is a rare species for Yakima County and, when it is found in Yakima County, is usually at Wenas Lake.

The Thursday morning bird walks on the Poppoff Trail have a dedicated group of birders showing up every week, led now by Karen and Joe Zook. These weekly walks have been going on for over ten years and have generated a list of 156 species! That is an big list for a location so close to town. It also shows what can be achieved by visiting a location on a weekly basis.

The walk on Sept. 10 found 35 species including one Great Egret, four Osprey, one each of Sharp-shinned Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, six Western Tanagers and a Black-headed Grosbeak.

Scott and Sierra Downes's yard in north Yakima attracted two Lesser Goldfinches last winter. Two Lesser Goldfinches showed up again at the thistle feeder on Sept. 5 and four were there a few days later. This species used to be quite rare in Yakima County but they were discovered nesting at the south end of the county along SR 97 several years ago and have been seen fairly regularly in town in the past five years.



Long-billed Dowitcher at Wenas Lake
Photo by Denny Granstrand



Lesser Goldfinch (above)
Photo by Karen Zook



Semipalmated Plover at Wenas Lake in 2007
Photo by Denny Granstrand

Nature Loses Two Central Washington Pillars

Don Knoke 1920 - 2015

Don Knoke, 95, of Thorp, died peacefully in his sleep in August 2015. Don was born in 1920 to M.C. (Speed) and Etta (Ellison) Knoke in Thorp, Washington. He grew up in Thorp, graduating from Thorp High School in 1938. He attended the Central Washington College of Education (now Central Washington University), going on to earn a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Washington in 1942. While commuting to the University of Washington from Bellevue, he met Ruth Vogel, a friend of his cousins. During his last college course, he and Ruth traveled and camped in the Pacific Northwest while learning about native plants from Professor C. Leo Hitchcock, well-known botanist. Don & Ruth were married in March 1944. During World War II Don was a Navy pilot, afterwards returning to the family farm near Thorp where Don became the fourth generation farming the family homestead.

Don was an avid outdoorsman his entire life. He was a founding member of the Kittitas Valley Rifle and Pistol club. When his children were young, he served on the Thorp School Board. Along with his many talents Don also performed in a dance band, alternating between clarinet and saxophone.

In the 1980s, Don and Ruth traveled around the U.S. as well as Mexico, Hawaii and New Zealand to look at wildflowers and birds. After retiring at 72, he and Ruth, who preceded him in death, spent their winters in Coupeville and summers on the family farm. He was very active in every aspect of the Washington Native Plant Society, including volunteering with the University of Washington Herbarium. He spent many hours walking tirelessly over the hills of Central Washington identifying and recording plant life.

Don was a fixture at Washington Audubon's Annual Memorial Day Campout in the Wenas where he faithfully collected and displayed dozens of specimens of the area's abundant wild flowers and native plants to enlighten fellow campers of nature's bounty. He also led field trips to share the very roots of the Wenas habitat with those whose interest he piqued.

Donations in Don's honor may be made to Washington Native Plant Society or the University of Washington Herbarium. A memorial service will be held on October 29 at 3:00PM at the Mercer Creek Church 1407 North B Street, Ellensburg.

Jeanne Crawford 1918 - 2015

The information below was adapted from March 10 and September 10, 2015 articles by Scott Sandsberry in the Yakima Herald. See Andy Stepniewski's President's Message in this issue for Jeanne's impact on our chapter.

Jeanne was born in Buffalo, N.Y., and graduated from Pennsylvania's Bucknell University, where she worked on the college newspaper - beginning what would be a long career in journalism.

She worked as one the first female reporters at the Buffalo Courier Express until World War II, when she joined the Women's Army Corps and served as a sergeant in the Fourth Air Force.

After the war, she moved to Alaska and became co-owner, editor, reporter and typesetter of the weekly Kodiak Mirror. From there, she moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, where she worked as a correspondent for the Deseret News newspaper of Salt Lake City, and in 1961 moved to Yakima.

Over her more than five decades in Yakima, Jeanne threw her unbridled energy in support of art, education and conservation throughout this part of the state. She was an unrelenting and fearless champion for her many causes.

Jeanne served as executive director of Allied Arts in its formative years, and was publisher-editor of the original Yakima Sun weekly newspaper.

Jeanne helped raise the respective public profiles of Yakima Valley Community College's women's programs, the Warehouse Theatre, the Larson Gallery and Heritage University.

She authored two books about Yakima — "As The Valley Was," published by Yakima Federal Savings and Loan in

1968, and "Wheels Led the Way," published by the Yakima Valley Museum in 1973.

When the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy was just getting its feet wet with fundraising and land acquisition some 30 years ago - ensuring perpetual public access to one of the Valley's geological marvels - Jeanne Crawford was on the CCC board and was, with her headstrong, no-nonsense approach, without question one of its driving forces.

Those annual, expert-guided Earth Day hikes through Cowiche Canyon? They began largely because of two people - naturalist Andy Stepniewski, the Valley's preeminent birding authority, and Jeanne Crawford. Nearly a quarter-century ago, the Conservancy honored her with what it called the "It Couldn't Happen Without You" Award.

When Heritage College (now University) was in its infancy two decades ago, Jeanne became its first public-relations/marketing person. Said Heritage's founding president, Kathleen Ross, "No one is more enthusiastic or hard-working for causes that improve quality of life in the Yakima Valley than Jeanne Crawford."

Fifteen years ago, when Jeanne became an active member the Cascadians, she immediately became the group's chief chronicler, scheduling the weekly activities of the Cascadian Pokies and participating well into her 90s. Diane Gillan, the Cascadians' current newsletter editor, once remarked, "...I've always said she's the easiest person to work with because she tells you exactly what she wants. We owe her so much. She is a mover and a shaker right here in our midst. She's amazing!"

Jeanne Crawford and Don Knoke... both amazing. Both inspirational. Both irreplaceable!

Yakima Valley Audubon Society Membership

Join or Renew my annual membership to the Yakima Valley Audubon Society to receive 10 issues of the Calliope Crier and all chapter benefits. National Audubon membership and Audubon Magazine are not included.

Yakima Valley Audubon Membership\$ 25.00 per household
 Yakima Valley Audubon Senior (62+) OR Student Membership\$ 15.00 per household
 (please circle which apply)
 Yakima Valley Audubon Society Life Membership\$ 500.00 per household

I do not want to receive any solicitations or communications from NAS (please check if applicable)

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Please make any corrections to your contact information as needed.

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Please return this form and your check payable to: **Yakima Valley Audubon Society (YVAS)**

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

If you have any membership questions, contact Joy McKinney at joycatbird@gmail.com or 698-4110.

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Worsening Wildfires Could Halve Sage-Grouse Populations

By Douglas Main 9/14/15 from the online version of Newsweek.

Populations of greater sage-grouse, chicken-sized birds known for their colorful plumage and outlandish mating dance, have declined from 16 million a century ago to somewhere between 200,000 and 500,000 today. Their decline has been driven primarily by habitat loss and degradation, and in some places it's even worse than others. Canadian populations of the bird declined 98 percent between 1988 and 2012.

But a new threat can be added to the list: wildfires. If worsening fires can't be subdued, they are likely to reduce the population of these birds by half over the next 30 years, according to a study by researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The fire threat goes hand in hand with the decline of sagebrush habitat generally, which is "recognized as one of the most imperiled ecosystems in America," according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). This habitat type is found in the Great Basin, a vast area of the American West that stretches south to Arizona and north to Idaho. The area is dominated by the aromatic shrubs upon which sage-grouse



Photo By George Vlahakis

feed. Invasive grasses such as cheatgrass, which can outcompete sagebrush and burn more quickly and fiercely, are largely responsible for the decline.

The new USGS study identifies "potential ways to avert sage-grouse declines by classifying areas for their resilience to disturbance and resistance to invasive species such as cheatgrass, and then applying suitable strategies," the Associated Press reported. "Public land managers have already been doing that, but the USGS report could fine tune those efforts."

The findings come shortly before a September 30 deadline by which the FWS must decide whether the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) deserves protection under the Endangered Species Act and could help factor into that decision, Boise State University professor John Freemuth told the AP. The status of the bird has proved controversial; environmentalists say that the bird needs protection, while others argue an endangered listing would have an economic impact in the billions of dollars because of lost development and business opportunities.

Coming Attractions:

Thurs. Poppoff Walks: Sept 24, Oct 1, 8, 15

Poppoff Cleanup. Date TBD

Oct 5 (Rimrock Lake and Clear Lake

Oct 10 Priest Rapids Lake Canoeing