



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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October 2015



OCTOBER PROGRAM

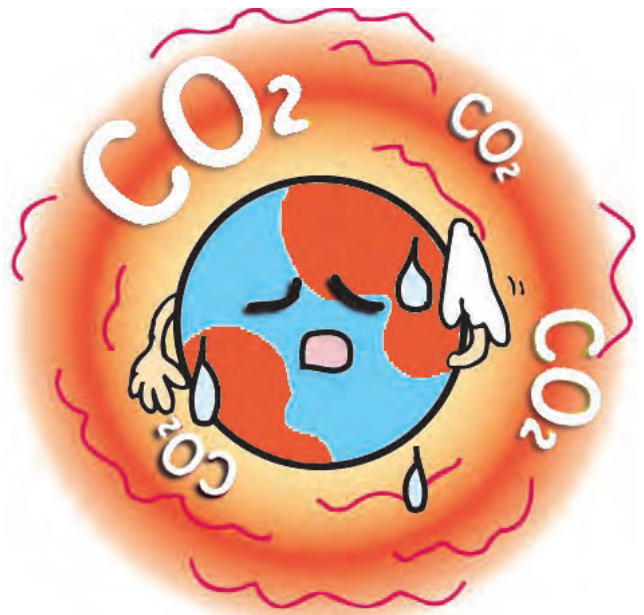
BILL DRENGUIS

Climate Change and How You Too May Champion Conservation

October's program will be doubly informative!

First, the topic will be global warming. For many of us, this presentation will be a great review of current science. Topics that will be addressed include: What is the link between global warming and climate change? Are there any predictors for Central Washington? How strong is the link between carbon dioxide and global warming?

Second, many of us feel strongly about conservation issues. However we are lost when it comes to expressing our concern. This program is presented by a panel of members of the Kittitas Audubon Society. They have taken it upon themselves to present their ideas to the general community. While enjoying the talk, take some time to realize what a few motivated individuals can do. As noted cultural anthropologist and writer Margaret Mead stated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."



Come to the Yakima Area Arboretum on October 22, at 7:00 pm to see this program.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI

Sage Grouse was the big news on the conservation front in the American West this past month. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees the Endangered Species Act (ESA), decided not to list the Greater Sage-Grouse as an endangered species, stating this action was not warranted. Instead, the agency chose to rely on collaborative agreements between various "stakeholders" in the issue: Federal and State governments, private land owners, and the energy business, to protect

this iconic grouse and the quality of the vast "sagebrush sea" ecosystem, on which the bird depends for its survival.

This decision by the USFWS has already prompted controversy with the pro-business side (ranchers and the energy sector primarily) saying restrictions go too far while environmentalists insist the protective measures are inadequate and the grouse will likely continue to decline.

The greater sage-grouse has become the "spotted owl of the sagebrush sea," and ranges over about 70 million acres of the Intermountain West. While the spotted owl became the species that altered and reduced logging of old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest, and changes in logging practices on a land-

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)

scape-scale, numbers of this owl continue to decline, and the species seems headed for extinction, especially in northern parts of its distribution. For the grouse, it is hoped protective measures brought on by the big collaborative effort will slow and reverse population declines in this species. The USFWS executive summary warranting non-listing states their findings:

“Based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we have determined that the primary threats to greater sage-grouse have been ameliorated by conservation efforts implemented by Federal, State, and private landowners. In 2010, we identified habitat loss, fragmentation, and inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms as factors leading to a warranted determination. Since that time, regulatory mechanisms through Federal and three State plans that incorporate conservation principles identified by the scientific experts have substantially reduced these risks in approximately 90 percent of the breeding habitat through avoidance and minimization measures. Advancements in oil and gas technologies have reduced the anticipated footprint of future development; the future conversion of sagebrush habitats to agriculture is unlikely to impact greater sage-grouse because high densities of breeding sage-grouse do not occur in habitats that are suitable for agriculture; and renewable energy development, although still a potential, is unlikely to occur in areas where greater sage-grouse occur in the highest densities. Fire and invasive species continue to occur in greater sage-grouse habitats, especially in the Great Basin, but existing management and commitments for suppression, restoration, and noxious weed treatments are reducing that impact.

Range wide, a number of relatively large greater sage-grouse populations continue to be distributed across the landscape and are supported by undisturbed expanses of habitat. Some habitat loss associated with energy development, infrastructure, wildfire, and invasive plants will continue into the future. However, regulatory mechanisms provided by Federal

and three State plans reduce threats on approximately 90 percent of the breeding habitat across the species' range.”

I want to back up a bit on this issue and provide some history. Conservation of this grouse began in a big way in the late 1990s, when biologists documented declining populations over significant parts of the range of the grouse. A petition to protect the greater sage-grouse under the ESA in 2005 prodded the USFWS to evaluate the bird's status. At that time, the agency determined that the grouse didn't need federal protection. Political interference tainted that decision and the USFWS had to give their decision a second look. The result of this second decision was that the grouse took a seat in the “endangered species waiting room.” Another lawsuit gave the USFWS until September 2015 to decide whether or not to list the grouse. Collaborative conservation kicked into high gear with the looming possibility of federal protection and all its attendant restrictions. Five years of intense efforts and unlikely partnerships are what led the Department of Interior to conclude protection of the sage grouse didn't require federal intervention. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell called the vast collaborative efforts to study the grouse, its numbers and habitat the “the largest, most complex land conservation effort ever in the history of the USA, even the world.” Sally acknowledged “We've got a lot of work ahead in the weeks, months and years ahead, we need to implement the state and federal plans and the rangeland fire strategy, learning what's working, incorporating science into decisions, and staying committed to what's right for sage grouse.”

While some on both sides of the debate are not happy with the Feds decision and lawsuits might challenge the not-to-list decision and the habitat guidelines and restrictions guiding use of over 67 million acres found in the final Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service plans for managing sage grouse, there seems to be hope that the huge collaborative efforts will yield a better outcome for the grouse than ESA listing.

Welcome New Audubon Members

Yakima: James and Mary Stephenson



MEMBERSHIP

JOY MCKINNEY

Thank you for renewing your membership

Yakima: Denny Granstrand, Lucy Stevens, Mike Finney, DeAnn Afualo, James and Mary Stephenson, William Bucknam, Joyce Dennison, Jim and Jackie Hertel, Mary Lou Rodzilsky, Richard Repp

Leavenworth: Bob and April Adamson

Selah: Joan Matson, Mary Vance Strate, Bee Faith

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

Another View of the Sage Grouse Decision by Wyoming Nature Conservancy

October 2, 2015

The first text came in at 5:02am, from my brother in-law in Texas:

“So what is your take on the sage-grouse ruling?”

Similar texts and calls followed from other friends and relatives.

Why all the early morning interest in a bird? Because that Tuesday, September 22, the Department of Interior announced they would not be listing the Greater Sage-Grouse, a bird native to America’s sagebrush country, as an endangered species.

The day of the announcement was a strange one. This beautiful dancing bird has been in my thoughts almost daily for the past nine years, as it has also been for the hundreds, maybe thousands, of other scientists who are working on sage-grouse. But suddenly, because of all the national new coverage, this species was now in the consciousness of many other Americans, too.

So my response to their questions whether it

was a good sage-grouse decision: in short, yes. But, of course, there are caveats and subtleties.

Make no mistake sagebrush country is in great peril. The scientific weight of evidence is overwhelming. Sage-grouse numbers are a tiny fraction of historical counts, and populations of other species that live in this habitat, such as mule deer, pronghorn, and pygmy rabbits, are down as well. These numbers are low because the entire system is slowly converting to one overrun by invasive species, rampant wildfire, and little refuge from the presence of humans.

The peril to the sagebrush isn’t just energy development or ranchers or urban sprawl. It’s all of us using the sagebrush ecosystem — the proverbial “death by a thousand cuts.” We’ve made it our home, played in it, drilled it, grazed it, allowed invasive species to proliferate, and not paid enough attention to the consequences.

Running through the sagebrush just this morning, I passed through a patch of cheatgrass, a flammable non-native grass

that has invaded native sagebrush stands throughout the West. This kind of place, a flat opening in the sagebrush, may very well have been a lek site forty years ago, but was abandoned when cheatgrass and residential development encroached (a lek is a breeding area where male grouse dance and parade to attract female partners). Cheatgrass is terribly pernicious. Once it dominates a sagebrush patch it sets up an unnatural fire cycle that makes it incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to restore sagebrush back to its native condition.

On the heels of these building challenges, eight years ago

we began an attempt to heal these cuts through the largest landscape-scale conservation effort in US history, spurred by the threat of an endangered species listing for sage-grouse.

Western states responded by crafting plans to conserve sage-grouse. For years these plans were drafted and revised. There were countless meetings. Scientists debated buffers, thresholds to distur-

bance, and indirect effects such as noise; they published a massive number of studies on everything from how much development grouse can tolerate to how far they migrate to wintering areas. Someone even made a robot grouse.

Initiatives like the Natural Resource Conservation Service-led Sage Grouse Initiative launched efforts to increase the health of the sagebrush ecosystem by enrolling ranchers in programs to increase the sustainability of their ranching operations and benefit grouse, made new funds available for voluntary conservation easements, and supported research to understand the benefits of these actions.

At the heart of this effort was collaboration — a coming together of citizens and scientists from industry, government, non-profit, and the private sectors.

The Department of Interior’s decision of “not warranted” for greater sage-grouse is right not because the sagebrush system doesn’t need our help. Quite the opposite — truly in the



“Sagebrush Sea” - west of Dillon, MT
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski



FIELD TRIPS
SCOTT DOWNES



Wh.-crown. Sparrow at Poppoff walk
Photo by Karen Zook

Poppoff walks: October 22, 29. November 5, 12, 19 (Thursdays). Thursday morning birdwalks start at 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 Karen and Joe Zook either by phone at (509) 225-9494 or by email at gad-zooks7@charter.net.

Vantage, November 8 (Sunday). Vantage and the Columbia River are the focus of this trip. We'll travel through the Yakima Canyon and Vantage Highway on route to Vantage and keep an eye out for raptors. Late fall can be impressive at Vantage for waterfowl numbers in the hundreds to thousands and often unusual diving ducks/loons are seen at this time of year including scoters, possibly long-tailed duck and Pacific loon. Field trip will leave Yakima at 7:00 am. Expect a return to Yakima around 5:00 pm. Bring lunch, water and dress for varied weather conditions. We could get nice weather near 60 degrees or it could be near freezing at Vantage. Scope is helpful, but not required to attend. We'll be carpooling. Contact leader Scott Downes for meeting location, downes@charter.net.

Fall Field Trip Report from Rimrock and Clear Lakes

Eight of us explored the shores of Rimrock and Clear Lakes yesterday. We saw 42 species, and not really large numbers of any particular bird. We had perfect weather - a bit cool in the morning, but sunny and clear with calm winds. The fall color is starting to show as well.

Rimrock netted only 12 species. Nothing out of the ordinary: A handful of bald eagles, plentiful California gulls with a couple of Ring-necked gulls and one Herring gull, a lone Western grebe, a few Hooded mergansers and lots of Common mergansers.

Tieton Airport Marsh was a great stop. We were fortunate to spot a pair of White-headed woodpeckers. One of them - a female - was bathing at the water's edge when we first spotted her. We also found two Western bluebirds there. We had our best selection of what I call "little forest birds": song sparrow, Spotted towhee, Ruby-crowned kinglet, Red-breasted nuthatch, Yellow-rumped warblers, a lone Pine siskin and a lone Junco.

We were surprised there when a large military helicopter came down and buzzed over the airstrip. It was flying very low and startled the heck out me! We looked for the dragonfly eating Merlin but did not get to see it in action. Joe and Jennie spotted it overhead, but the rest of us



YVAS members bird on!
Photo by Karen Zook

were watching the male White-headed woodpecker and missed it.

As we were driving down to Clear Lake, Lamont spotted a Ruffed grouse right next to the road.

The highlights at Clear Lake were six American Dippers, an Osprey and a Common Loon. The dippers were dipping and flying, chasing each other around and perched along the creek by the spillway. The Osprey did a slow fly over the spillway and the creek below. It must be eating well, as there are still a lot of fish in the creek, although many have already died. We spotted some Chestnut-backed chickadees - always a treat - near the spillway as well.

The Common loon was out in the lake by the island. As loons will do, it kept diving and resurfacing in a different spot, making long looks impossible. A few of us took photos and zoomed in to confirm ID. Digital cameras are so helpful with on the spot bird ID's.

It was a good day with great company and some nice birds.



American Dipper
Photo by Karen Zook

— Karen Zook —



Looking Back on the Vredenburg Trail with Fond Memories

As this issue is sent to many involved with the Vredenburg Bluebird Trail who are not members of the Yakima Valley Audubon Society and may not be aware of the loss of six YVAS members who contributed greatly to the trail's establishment and success, we remember with affection Jean Chott (December), Kay Marsh (March), Virginia Vredenburg (May), Larry Robinson (July), Don Knoke (August), and Jeanne Crawford (September).

The following article, featuring the trail and Virginia, was penned by Jeanne Crawford and printed in the Yakima Herald...date unknown but likely in late 1995. A fitting review of the trail's founding and early success:

Volunteers reap success of Wenas bluebird trail

By Jeanne Crawford
Special to the Herald-Republic

An estimated 386 young bluebirds are now wintering in areas south of here – in both eastern and western Oregon, eastern Nevada, eastern California, even perhaps in northern Mexico – fledged from the 125 nesting boxes made available to their parents by the Yakima Valley Audubon Society.

Since 1982, the society has maintained a 15-mile long bluebird trail along Wenas Road beginning where the road's pavement ends and continuing to its junction with Durr Road.

Virginia Vredenburg and her late husband, Harold, put out the first boxes in 1981. "The first time I looked into a bluebird box and saw those darling little birds, it was love at first sight," she recalled.

Following the lead of the late Bill Thoren, a birder who had found the Wenas area similar to the Montana he had left and who put out the first bluebird boxes, the Vredenburgs and other Auduboners spent a cold, wintry day in an Oak Creek Game Range barn building boxes. In spring 1982, they put out 58 homes for the songbirds.

In 1994, the Wenas trail was re-named the Vredenburg Bluebird Trail in honor of the couple.

According to Vredenburg, who is the continuing trail chairman, there are two species of bluebirds in this area, the mountain and western. Male mountain bluebirds are all blue and male westerns are blue with rusty breasts. Females of both species are dressed in more subdued colors.

The western bluebirds prefer trees. The first half of the Wenas Bluebird Trail is at lower elevation, around 2,000 feet, where trees are plentiful.

The mountain bluebirds choose a more open habitat, offered at the easterly end of the trail at about 2,500 feet.

Bluebirds begin their return to the Wenas the last week in February, according to Vredenburg. The last Saturday of March is traditionally set aside for Audubon members to go en masse to the Wenas area to repair boxes and install new ones where necessary.

From the end of April to mid-August, weekly monitoring is shared by members who check each box, trying not to frighten sitting birds while counting eggs and, later, the hatched babies.

Bob Boekelheide, wildlife biologist, banded bluebirds, including the tiniest chicks, over a period of several years and found that they do indeed return to nesting boxes within a few hundred yards of where they had previously nested or had hatched.

The bluebird trail is a major project of the Audubon Society. The houses are "rented" to subscribers, two years for \$5. More than 100 of them are currently leased out, many to Western Washington Auduboners.

In addition to the Audubon Society's Vredenburg trail, there are six additional ones, privately maintained and monitored by bird lovers who "just want their own project," Vredenburg said.

The six trails include more than 200 boxes, about half of them in the Wenas, the others along Chinook Pass highway and the South Fork of the Ahtanum.

Vredenburg also tallies the totals from these trails. In 1995, 597 bluebirds were fledged from these nests, making a grand total of 983 fledged bluebirds.

Complete records of the past 14 years are in Vredenburg's files: box number, its renter, how many eggs laid, how many baby birds hatched, how many fledged, how many times the nest was used.

Her complete 1995 report appears in the October issue of the Society's monthly newsletter, The Calliope Crier.

According to Birder Andy Stepniewski, the bluebird trail project has increased available habitat for the nesting birds.

The birds would have no other place to go, he said, as all available habitat is occupied. He said that both species have declined greatly over most of their ranges because of loss of natural cavities for nesting, logging operations and removal of snags. Many remaining nesting cavities have been taken over by the aggressive starling, he said.

"The language of friendship is not words but meanings. A man's interest in a single bluebird is worth more than a complete but dry list of the fauna and flora of a town."

— Henry David Thoreau —

2015 VREDENBURGH BLUEBIRD TRAIL

Box	Sponsor	Species	Eggs	Flg.	Paid thru
1	Harold Vredenburg	W	7	4	2020
2	Friedenson Family	W	6	5	2015
3	Tanager Nevue	W	9	6	2016
4	Steven & Marcia Shotwell	W	12	4	2016
5	Sparrow Nevue	W	8	3	2016
6	Don Peterson Memorial	W	5	4	2015
7	Nita Coleman	W	6	5	2015
8	K. Lucas & M. Giovanini	HOWR	x	x	2015
9	Bob Wahl	W	7	6	2015
10	Joe & Alberta McGuire	W	9	4	2015
11	Steven & Marcia Shotwell	W	11	0	2016
12	Russell Shelden Memorial	W	11	5	2015
13	Karen & Joseph Zook	W	5	0	2016
13A	Lyle & Vicky Whiteman	W	12	6	2015
14	Jeanne Crawford	W	6	5	2015
15	Joy McKinney	W	5	0	2017
16	Rachel Bold	HOWR	x	x	2015
17	Michael West	W	6	0	2017
18	Nita Coleman	HOWR	x	x	2015
19	Janna & Steven Hayes	CHIP	x	x	2015
20	Abigail Chipps	W	5	0	2015
21	Pete & Pam Neumann	W	5	3	2015
22	Leslie Wahl	W	5	5	2015
22A	Robert English	W	6	5	2015
23	Ellen Peterson	W	5	4	2013
24	Virginia Gill	W	4	3	2016
25	Don Peterson Memorial	W	5	1	2015
26	Arlene Wood Memorial	W	8	3	PMBD
27	Kay Marsh Memorial	W	9	5	2030
28	Sherry Morris	W	10	6	2015
29	Donna Zimmerschied	W	10	4	2015
30	Betty & Greg Neumann	W	5	5	2015
31	Donna Zimmerschied	W	6	6	2015
32	Larry & Doris Robinson	W	5	5	PMBD
33	Stan & Lori Isley	W	5	0	2016
34	Sarah Burke	W	6	6	2015
35	Joe & Alberta McGuire	W	4	0	2015
36	Larry Robinson	W	6	4	2016
37	Alice Presson	W	6	5	2016
38	Charlotte Pfeiffer	W	5	0	2015

Box	Sponsor	Species	Eggs	Flg.	Paid thru
39	Maia Mittlestaedt	W	5	5	2016
39A	Joan Gilman	W	6	4	2016
40	Gertrude Repp Memorial	W	11	1	2015
41	Joan Gilman	W	6	0	2016
42	Lavina Doty	W	8	0	2016
43	Maia Mittlestaedt	HOWR	x	x	2016
44	Dorothy Munroe	W	6	6	2015
45	Jerry & M. A. Ruthruff	W	10	5	2016
46	Nature Art. Garden Club	M	5	3	2015
47	Irene Gilman Memorial	W	6	6	2016
48	Tomas Sawyer	W	5	4	2016
49	Ellen Stevenson Family	W	5	5	2016
		M	4	0	2016
50	Tom Mansfield	W	10	3	2033
51	Ron Sell	W	2	0	2015
52	Linda Knutson	W	6	5	2015
53	Megan & Steven Pooler	W	11	5	2015
54	Rene Peterson	W	6	5	2013
55	Alex Peterson	W	8	5	2013
56	Denny Granstrand	W	5	2	2015
57	William & Kelley Strange	W	6	1	2014
58	Karen & Joseph Zook	W	10	9	2016
59	Denny Granstrand	W	5	5	2015
60	Megan & Steven Pooler	W	9	6	2015
61	John Meyer Memorial	W	6	5	2017
62	Martha Anderson	W	5	5	2016
63	Tom Wilson	W	7	6	2016
64	Mike & Carolyn Wood	W	4	4	2016
65	Lucky Hall	W	6	5	2016
66	Carol Phillips	W	6	4	2016
67	William & Kelley Strange	W	5	1	2014
68	Ruth Knoke Memorial	W	10	0	2015
69	Janet White	W	6	3	2016
70	Irene Gilman Memorial	W	4	0	2016
71	Helen Stuckey	W	9	5	2015
72	Nancy Born	W	11	0	2015
73	Chris Sorenson	W	5	3	2015
74	Hannah Born	W	0	0	2015
75	Ryleigh Hayes	W	5	0	2015
76	Margaret Morris	W	9	0	2015

2015 VREDENBURGH BLUEBIRD TRAIL REPORT CONT.

Box	Sponsor	Species	Eggs	Flg.	Paid thru
77	Shannon O'Malley	M	10	0	2016
78	Conner O'Malley	M	9	5	2016
79	Toppenish Garden Club	W	4	0	2015
80	Adam Newhouse	W	6	5	2015
81	Hunter Headley	W	5	5	2015
82	Ariana Faith	W	5	5	2015
83	Toppenish Garden Club	W	5	5	2015
84	Cailin O'Malley	W	4	4	2016
85	Bettie Soden Memorial	M	10	4	2018
86	June Rayner Memorial	W	3	3	2016
87	Maureen O'Brien	W	9	5	2013
88	Marie Brangwin	W	11	8	2015
89	Peter Sorenson	M	9	3	2015
90	Bill & Edith Ryan	W	6	4	2015
90A	Sandra Bowman	M	9	0	2016
91	Patrick Burke	W	5	3	2015
92	Les Burke	M	10	0	2015
93	P. Kevin Gilman Memorial	W	6	0	2016
94	John & Sally English	W	2	0	2015
95	Joyce Meyer	W	0	0	2017
96	Sophia Peterson	W	5	5	2013
96A	Ewell & Rosemary Jones	W	11	6	2015
97	Alwin Berger Memorial	W	5	5	2016
98	McCrone Family	W	5	5	2015
99	Ken & Laurie Knittle	W	10	5	2033
100	Susie Lattomus	W	6	0	2016
101	Amy Sinden	M	5	2	2015
102	Jean Chott	W	11	0	2015
103	Bob & April Adamson	W	6	3	2015
104	Richard Repp	M	4	3	2015
105	Jim Ehret	M	0	0	2015
106	Joan Miler	W	2	0	2014
107		M	6	0	2014
108	Raleigh Watts	W	5	0	2015
109	Andy & Ellen Stepniewski	W	5	2	2015
110	Martha Fleming	W	6	0	2015
111		M	10	7	2015
112	Dotty Armstrong	M	5	5	2015
113	Lavina Doty	W	2	0	2015
114	P. Kevin Gilman Memorial	M	10	4	2016

Box	Sponsor	Species	Eggs	Flg.	Paid thru
114A	Justine Repp-Faith	M	10	7	2015
115	Vera Backstrom	W	9	5	2016
116	Dorothy Munroe	W	9	8	2015
117	John & Ann Brangwin	M	6	6	2015
118	Noel Knoke	unused	x	x	2015
119	Jack Whitnall	W	6	3	PMBD
120	Apple Blossom Garden Club	W	0	0	2015
121	Andy & Ellen Stepniewski	W	6	6	2015
122	Lavina Doty	TRES	4	3	2015
123	Alice Nevue	W	4	4	2016
123A	Jeff Kozma	W	6	6	2016
124	Mt. Clemen Garden Club	W	4	2	2015
		M	5	5	
125	Virginia Vredenburg	W	6	4	2020
	TOTAL FLEDGED				423
	Western Bluebird				366
	Mountain Bluebird				54
	Other Species				3

- ◆ **Sponsor's name in BOLD TEXT indicates payment at Mountain Bluebird Rate (\$10 per year)**

Key

Flg = Fledged

M = Mountain Bluebird

W = Western Bluebird

MOCH = Mountain Chickadee

TRES = Tree Swallow

HOFI = House Finch

HOSP = House Sparrow

CHIP = Chipmunk

HOWR = House Wren

WBNU = White-breasted Nuthatch

PMBD = Proclaimed Memorial by Board of Directors

Vredenburg Bluebird Trail Nest Box Sponsors

Sponsors – please check the Paid Thru column in the trail recap on pages 6 & 7. If your sponsorship expires in 2015, please consider this your first cue to remit your renewal. Reminders will be sent to sponsors that have not been renewed by Dec 31.

Mail your check (payable to YVAS) to:

YVAS
P O BOX 2823
Yakima, WA 98907

To avoid confusion, please enclose a note indicating your box number(s) and number of years you are paying for. An email address or phone number will allow us to quickly resolve any payment questions. All of the sponsors' names in bold text on pages 6 & 7 (115 of the 132 boxes) have elected to pay the Mountain Bluebird rate of ten dollars per year. The option to renew at other variable rates is limited to sponsors of record in 2010. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 509-965-1134 or email at rich712@aol.com.

In the upcoming nesting season, I hope to send email progress reports on the happenings along the Vredenburg Trail to sponsors who we have addresses for. If you would like to be included, use my email contact info above to have your name (or the name of person you sponsor a box for) added to this list.

— Richard Repp —

Thank you Monitors

A hearty thank you is extended to all the volunteer monitors who gathered data during the nesting season: Susie Lattomus, Marion Mann, Mary Belzer, Dorothy Brink, Diane Gillan, Nancy Born, Hannah Born, Pat Stebing, Joe and Karen Zook, Martha Fleming, Liz Angland, Jan and Judy Gano. Additionally, birding enthusiasts attending the Washington Audubon Memorial Day Wenas Campout assisted with the monitoring. Campers participating this year: Rachael Levy (Seattle), Jeanette Henderson, Courtney, Doug and Brooke Shurman (Seattle), Doug and Rowan Stark (Bellingham), Blake Borsecnik (Bellingham), James Lanz (Vancouver), Stephanie Chebowski (Snohomish), and Linda Keith (Seattle).

The nesting season started off with a surprise during our annual spring cleanout on April 4 when a female Mountain Bluebird was discovered on a nest with five eggs. This is weeks earlier than our expected onset of egg laying. Three nestlings were deemed to have fledged from that box in mid-April. Such an auspicious start hinted that this could be one of the best nesting cycles ever as we enjoyed a mild spring free of rain or cold temperatures.

However, as summer wore on with unyielding heat, the habitat and insect population seemed to dry up. This was one of the poorest cycles in recent years for second nesters. By August 6, the last three boxes to fledge young signaled the end of the season.

May we be inspired by the grit, grace and greatness of the six bluebirders mentioned on page 5 who passed away this past year. They left a legacy to be sure.

— Richard Repp —

Vredenburg Fledged Bluebirds 1982-2015				
	WEBL	MOBL	BB sp	BB tot
1982	72	54		126
1983	125	66		191
1984	144	133		277
1985	115	82	17	214
1986	259	150		409
1987	299	209		508
1988	311	151		462
1989	319	148		467
1990	304	118		422
1991	204	87		291
1992	211	147		358
1993	267	125		392
1994	310	167		477
1995	258	128		386
1996	319	152		471
1997	413	120		533
1998	347	141	62	550
1999	276	118	7	401
2000	383	115	44	542
2001	347	105	6	458
2002	315	81	59	455
2003	283	93	19	395
2004	332	90	17	439
2005	320	16		336
2006	235	66		301
2007	334	91		425
2008	518	51		569
2009	504	74		578
2010	344	34		378
2011	369	52		421
2012	311	57		368
2013	406	78		484
2014	514	39		553
2015	366	54		420
TOTAL	10434	3392	231	14057
WEBL = Western Bluebird MOBL = Mountain Bluebird BBsp = Bluebird Species				

"The bluebird carries the sky on his back."

— Henry David Thoreau —

Silent Auction - First Call

On December 8th, we will be holding the annual YVAS Christmas Auction at the Yakima Area Arboretum. There will be a silent auction for the larger items as well as the popular bargain table for low-priced, well, bargains.

However, we need items to auction. Think of your talents and/or resources. How about sponsoring a dinner or brunch in your garden? Maybe you could offer a weekend at your vacation cabin.

Use your imagination to come up with the item to put everyone in absolute awe. Otherwise, bird related items are always very popular.

As auction proceeds go directly to fund YVAS education and conservation activities, an evening of festive bidding is essential for our success.

It helps to have the items on display when the first members arrive. To make this happen, I am willing to pick up your donations in prior to Dec 7th.

To arrange for a pick up, you can reach me at 965 - 5808 or email me at (bdrenguis@gmail.com). Ellen Stepniewski will also assist in gathering items prior to auction night. If you can't reach me, please call Ellen at 877-6639 or email her at (steppie@nwinfo.net). Please help make this one of the most successful auctions ever!

— Bill Drenguis —



Election at October Chapter Meeting

At the October chapter meeting we will be having an election of officers, as specified by the YVAS bylaws. Here is the current slate of candidates for positions to be filled this year:

President: Kerry Turley
 Vice President: (no announced candidate)
 Director: Bob Chicken
 Director: Denny Granstrand
 Director: Ken Tolonen
 Director: (two additional positions open)

YVAS bylaws allow nominations from the floor at our October chapter meeting for any elective office provided the nominee has agreed to serve if elected. The YVAS Board will strive to field nominees at their October 13 meeting . . . that could be your lucky day!



Thank you April Adamson.

Yakima Valley Audubon extends a Leavenworth. April, though a self-hearty THANK YOU to April Adamson acknowledged birding "Newbie," contributed to Yakima Audubon on various events (depicted in photo on the left with husband Bob) for her service on the board. April served several years as a Director and was an integral member of the Education Committee. Her vivacity and optimistic outlook will be dearly missed. April and her husband Bob have retired from teaching positions in the Yakima area and have relocated to Plain, a lovely vale north of

Photo was taken by Karen Zook.

From Andy and all of us on the Yakima Audubon Board.

Sage Grouse Decision by Wyoming Nature Conservancy (Continued from page 3)

next few decades we could lose this ecosystem to cheatgrass, fire, and development.

Scientists will need to continue monitoring sage-grouse numbers, as this one is doing on a Conservancy-protected property in Wyoming.

But the decision is right because collaborative conservation is the only strategy likely to work. We desperately need an all-hands-on-deck approach where those who work with these lands daily – largely ranchers and federal land managers – are critical partners that understand the danger, believe that they can succeed, and have backing at the highest levels of government to make decisions that support sagebrush health.

At the announcement Tuesday, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell suggested the “epic collaborations” of the sage-grouse

efforts represent a new model for conservation in America. I agree.

While I can find gaps and weaknesses in these plans, I refuse to allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. This is a favorite saying of my friend Paul Hansen, who was a conservation champion of the Clean Air Act in the 1960s—an era when we seemed to know how to do collaborative conservation better. Maybe we took another step in that direction this past week.

And so now begins the next chapter in this saga: taking action to implement all the plans, securing full funding from Congress to support these actions, and following up on our progress.



BIRD SIGHTINGS **DENNY GRANSTRAND**

When you hear people talk about birding at the Grandview Sewage Treatment, if you imagine the Yakima Sewage Treatment and wonder how anyone could find birds there, I can understand your bewilderment.

The Grandview STP (GSTP) is completely different, with a couple of treatment ponds and a series of more normal looking lower ponds. There are frequently birds galore on the lower ponds. Andy and I have speculated many times about the potential for rare shorebirds at Grandview if someone had the time to visit there on a regular basis.

That time has come. Kevin Lucas has made numerous trips to Grandview this fall, along with other YVAS birders. Kevin has discovered some outstanding birds!

On Sept. 28, Kevin discovered a Black-bellied Plover! This



**Black-bellied Plover (back) with
a Long-billed Dowitcher**
Photo by Kevin Lucas

is only the fourth sighting for Yakima County. Black-bellied Plovers are common on the coast of Washington, where they are seen in spring and fall migration and where they spend the winter.

A week later, on Oct. 5, Kevin again visited GSTP and came up with an even rarer bird: a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. It is only the second Sharp-tailed Sandpiper found in Yakima County. The first was found in 1973 at the Sunnyside Wildlife Area.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Photo by Kevin Lucas

I happened to arrive at GSTP within an hour or so of Kevin discovering this rarity and he pointed it out to me as I was setting up my spotting scope on the rocks above the pond. We both got great views and photos of it, then got on our cell phones and called other birders. Nine birders in all were able to add this very rare visitor to Yakima County to their county list.

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

New Member _____ Renewing Member _____ (Please check one)

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

I prefer to read the Crier online and not receive my copy by mail (please check if applicable)

Please make any corrections to your contact information as needed.

NAME _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

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

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

2015 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

President	Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639	Membership	Joy McKinney (joycatbird@gmail.com)	698-4110
Vice President	vacant		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	Fund Raising	Dan Kinney (insur3@charter.net)	452-3260
Directors:	Ken Tolonen (7rivard@gmail.com)	965-4584	Special Committees:		
	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500	Bird Rehabilitator	Connie Hughes (owlbirdlady@gmail.com)	457-5661
Standing (Voting) Committee Chairs:			Bird Reports	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
Hoeger Preserve	Jan Gano (gano6065@gmail.com)	966-4539	Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (rich712@aol.com)	965-1134
Refuge Keeper	Kerry Turley (kdturley@embarqmail.com)	837-6930	Important Bird Areas	John Hebert (hejohn1126@msn.com)	965-8235
Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (rich712@aol.com)	965-1134	Publicity	Vacant	
Conservation	Greg Bohn (gsanpdro@charter.net)	901-1882	Social	Vacant	
Education	Ellen Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639	Volunteer Rec.	Vacant	
Env. Science	Teresa Lorenz (teresajlorenz@gmail.com)	731-5226	Webmaster	John Hebert (hejohn1126@msn.com)	965-8235
Field Trips	Scott Downes (downess@charter.net)	469-7807	Website	www.yakimaaudubon.org	
			Toppenish CBC	Eric Heisey (magicman32@rocketmail.com)	
			Yakima Valley CBC	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
			YVAS Email	(birds@yakimaaudubon.org)	

Elizabeth Bohn, Ken Tolonen and Richard Repp staffed a YVAS booth at the Yakima Co-op's Fall Event on October 17. The event had a variety of exhibits and vendors that appealed to all ages but definitely had a Seattle Seahawks football theme. Blitz, the Seahawk mascot, made an appearance accompanied by two Sea Gals. The Co-op's staff did a great job organizing and really made attendees and vendors feel welcome and appreciated. In addition, free donuts, coffee and sodas were provided throughout the celebration.



Nicholas Mejia, an enthusiastic young birder from Mabton, beams after acing our quiz board.



Blitz, the Seahawk mascot, scans the crowd planning his next prank.



Julian Bohn is delighted by a live bird at another exhibit.



During a lull, Richard (aka the Befuddled Birder) attempts to improve his bird knowledge. As expected, it proved futile.



Editor Elizabeth Bohn seems pleased with poster she created while Ken Tolonen looks on

Coming Attractions:

Thursday Poppoff Walks:

Oct 22, Oct 29, Nov 5, 12, 19, 26

Field Trip: Nov 8,

Vantage and the Columbia River