



# 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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## DEC PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS

## A Stitch In Time Saves A Place to Dine



Ken examines the woodpecker marks on a burnt snag on his property after the fire.

Just a reminder that the next chapter meeting is your Christmas potluck and it is on Thursday December 3. (Don't be offended, this reminder is for me!) Our guest speaker will be former YVAS member Ken Bevis. Describing Ken (see President's Column for more info) presents a bit of an enigma. He is a forester, a wildlife biologist, a singer, and a story teller with a flair for the dramatic. Ken, to paraphrase Forrest Gump, is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get. Until Ken opens up.

Ken now lives in north central Washington, ground central for massive wild fires the last two years. Ken will be talking about these fires from a personal perspective; he almost lost his home to the surrounding fires two years ago. (There will be pictures of helicopters dumping water onto his property).

This will be one of our most informative and entertaining speakers and a great way to close out the year! After all, who doesn't love chocolate?

Come to the Yakima Area Arboretum on December 3, 2015

## Christmas Potluck Dinner and Silent Auction

On December 3rd, we will be holding the annual YVAS Christmas Potluck and Auction at the Yakima Area Arboretum. There will be a silent auction for the larger items as well as the popular bargain table.

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. Otherwise, bird related items are well received. As auction proceeds go directly to fund education and conservation activities for our chapter, it drives our success.

It helps to have the items on display when the first members arrive. To make this happen, I can pick them up before the auction, or you may leave the items at Yakima Pediatrics (314 S. 11th Ave.), just let them know that it is for Ellen. To arrange for a pick up, you can reach me at 965 - 5808 or by email (bdrenguis@gmail.com). Denny Granstrand (2011 S. 47th Ave., 453-2500) will also accept items.

In addition to your potluck items, be sure to bring serving utensils for your dish. Also you will need your own table service (plates, cups, silverware). To ensure return, be sure to place your name on serving bowls/platters and utensils.

The doors will be open at 5:00 pm at the Yakima Area Arboretum and table decorating should be completed by 6:00

pm. The Silent Auction, wine service, and camaraderie will be underway by 6:00 pm. All foods need to be there by 6:15 pm as dinner starts at 6:30 pm. Arrive early enough to browse through auction items prior to dinner. To ease prolonged waiting in the potluck line, our president will cue individual tables to enter the serving line.

Potluck food assignments are by the first letter of your last name: **A-G = Potatoes, Vegetables, Salads; H-P = Desserts, Bread, Butter; Q-Z = Main Dish.** Dishes need to serve about 12-14 people. *It would be helpful to list the ingredients of your dish for those with allergies -milk, nuts, shellfish, wheat, etc.* We will be providing ham, coffee, and hot water for tea; punch will also be furnished. Wine will be available by the glass with donations defraying the cost.

If you are a member who has not been attending monthly meetings, this is a great time to get acquainted with some like-minded people, enjoy a great meal, and surf the auction's treasures.

If you have any questions, please contact Bill Drenguis: 965-5808 (or e-mail him at bdrenguis@gmail.com).

**Before Dec 1 - Donate, Donate! On Dec 3 - Bid! Bid!**

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



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

ANDY STEPNIEWSKI

Please make plans to attend the Yakima Valley Audubon Society's Annual Dinner and Silent Auction on December 3. As always, there will be a sumptuous potluck dinner contributed by all of you! Following this delightful repast, Ken Bevis, Yakima Audubon alumni, will share "Forest Woodlands Habitat Solutions." and its role in Northwest Forest Health. Ken is a Department of Natural Resources Stewardship Wildlife Biologist, who assists small forest landowners with forestry and habitat issues. Ken brings a unique perspective on the incredible increase of fires in eastern Washington forests, the result of extended drought and insect epidemics which have killed or weakened vast swaths of our dryside forests. Ken lives in Twisp, in the heart of the Methow Valley, which has suffered through two back-to-back summers with monstrous fires, each charring hundreds of thousands of acres. In 2014, Ken and his wife Teri watched helicopters with huge water buckets save their home (just barely) from a safe vantage across the valley. Though Ken will impart a serious message to us, he will do it with an engaging and entertaining style, as only Ken can!

Also in the holiday season are two long-running Christmas Bird Counts. Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge is on December 19, organized by compiler Eric Heisey. The Yakima Valley count is on January 2, organized by compiler Denny Granstrand. Both counts are long-running Yakima Audubon "Citizen Science" projects. Though days afield can be rigorous and challenging in winter hereabouts, we do have fun seeking out the birds that work hard to survive the rigors of winter in south-central Washington.

I, along with Treasurer Karen Zook, just completed the YVAS Annual report to National Audubon, in which we detail our chapters accomplishments. Each time I do this, I am amazed and heartened by the enormous contributions we all make as volunteers on a wide variety of projects. While many on the YVAS board are putting in lots of time and effort, Teresa Lorenz drew my attention to the extraordinary efforts the *Calliope Crier* team performs, strictly as volunteers, with each issue of the YVAS newsletter. Ellen and I agree and so we want to especially recognize Elizabeth Bohn, Richard Repp, and Denny Granstrand.

Elections were held at our October chapter meeting. President starting in March 2016 will be Kerry Turley. Thank You Kerry for stepping up and assuming this position! New on the board is retired forester Bob Chicken, a knowledgeable professional and naturalist. Ellen and I just attended a Yakima Area Arboretum "Naturalist Walk," which Bob led. We enjoyed this walk where Bob shared the basic tree groups on the arboretum grounds, deciduous and evergreen. We were impressed with Bob's interpretive style, relaxed and interesting. We welcome Bob and are certain he will make great contributions to Yakima Audubon's mission.



## MEMBERSHIP

JOY MCKINNEY

### Welcome New Audubon Members

**Yakima:** Philip Murphy

### Thank you for renewing your membership

**Naches:** Thomas Thrush

**Richland:** Connie Estep

**Toppenish:** Jensen Thayer

**Yakima:** Becky and Tom Boyd, Sue Spain, Bob and Leslie Wahl, Terry Shelton, Scott Downes, Alice Presson, Bev and Jack Vonfeld,

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



At the October chapter meeting, the following positions were filled by a unanimous vote:

President – Kerry Turley

Director – Bob Chicken

Director – Denny Granstrand

Director – Ken Tolonen

This will mark the second time Kerry will serve as our President as he previously held the office for the 2008 -2009 term. Bob Chicken will be new to the Director Position while Ken and Denny are returning incumbents. We are fortunate to have capable and willing individuals to guide YVAS through the unseen challenges ahead.

## What's White in the Woods?

Phil Fischer and I have been involved in a multi-partnered research project centered on white-headed woodpeckers. We appreciate the help and support from YVAS in our woodpecker monitoring effort. As we wrap up our field work for the year, here is an update on our 2015 field season.

Unlike Audubon's Vredenburg bluebirds, which had lower-than-usual nest productivity, our white-headed woodpeckers had a fabulously successful nesting season. Twenty-eight nests were monitored and we managed to radio-tag thirty-nine woodpeckers. Our smallest brood contained 3 nestlings and many nests fledged 4 chicks. To put this in perspective, large broods of 4+ woodpecker chicks are common in southern parts of the white-headed woodpecker's range (California), but they are rare in the mountains around Yakima. The nesting season was unusually hot, with 2 weeks of 90-degree weather, but this did not seem to negatively affect the young woodpeckers.



YVAS's April Adamson helped us radio-tag nestling woodpeckers this summer in Rattlesnake Creek (Naches Ranger District, Wenatchee NF).

Once nestling woodpeckers fledge, we begin tracking them with radio transmitters. Young woodpeckers are fed by their parents for a month post-fledging. The families stay together in a group that is most often led by the father. After a month, the juveniles begin dispersing from their home territory. Our observations indicate that the juve-

niles leave home of their own volition – rather than being aggressively driven off by their parents. Perhaps, like some teenagers, they have an innate desire to stretch their wings and explore. We have found that juveniles may travel more than 30 miles in their first month of independence. Some wander back-and-forth across mountains in circuitous routes. Others appear more decisive and make direct unidirectional movements away from home. With the range of different behaviors we have seen, it is hard to make generalizations about what is “normal” for young woodpeckers.

Thanks to our phenomenal volunteer pilots and trackers, Kevin Lucas, Ken Seright, and Roy Lewallen (Roy is with L i g h t H a w k , [www.lighthawk.org](http://www.lighthawk.org)) who have logged >50 hours tracking woodpeckers from the air. Our field season would not have been successful without them. We also extend a big thank you to YVAS members for their continued support of woodpecker research and look forward to many more field seasons to come.



After tagging, we place nestlings back inside their nest cavity to fledge naturally. This little guy was inquisitive – and eager to fledge – and watched us from his nest as we drove away.

— Teresa Lorenz —

## Toppenish Christmas Bird Count - December 19

The Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count, now in its 33rd year is set for Saturday December 19th. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Branding Iron Restaurant in Toppenish (junction of US-97 & SR-22). You will be assigned to a team to cover a specific portion of a 15-mile diameter circle in the Lower Valley.

Interest and enthusiasm are key requirements. We will train you! Following the count, at 4:30 to 5:00 p.m., we meet at

Andy and Ellen's house in Parker Heights to go through the tally, warm up with a bowl of soup, potluck contributions (salads, desserts, etc.), drinks (hot and cold!), and recount the day's experiences.

Perhaps this year we will find our first Snowy Owl for the count!

**Toppenish CBC Compiler: Eric Heisey**  
([magicman32@rocketmail.com](mailto:magicman32@rocketmail.com) or 314 - 9570)

## Yakima Christmas Bird Count - January 2

Birders have been meeting on cold mornings for the start of the Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count for the past 45 years.

How many birders have participated in the count? Many! In fact, the count has been going on for so long that most of the participants in the early counts are now deceased. It is in their memory that we gather the 46th edition of the Yakima Valley CBC. We will meet at the Old Town Station at 2530 Main St. in Union Gap (northwest corner of Main St. and Valley Mall Blvd.) on Saturday January 2nd at 7:00 a.m. to separate into birding teams for a delightful day of birding.

How many birds have been counted in all of those years? The species total is 151 and the total of individual birds tallied is 832,265! That is a lot of birds and many miles walked and driven to find them. After the day of birding we meet for the compilation pizza dinner at Ron and Debie Browns' home. Directions will be given to participants on the morning of the count. Bring a potluck beverage or item that compliments pizza (salad, dessert, etc.) and plan on an entertaining evening of camaraderie.

**Yakima CBC Compiler: Denny Granstrand**  
([dgranstrand@gmail.com](mailto:dgranstrand@gmail.com) or 453-2500)



## FIELD TRIPS SCOTT DOWNES

**Poppoff walks: December 3, 10, 17, 31, January 7, 14, 21.** 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. on the north side of the easternmost roundabout. A two to three hour stroll in the city of Yakima's best birding venue. *In severe winter weather* and/or for more information, contact Karen and Joe Zook either by email at (gadzooks7@charter.net) or by phone at (509) 225-9494.

### Your Dream Field Trip and the 2016 Planning Meeting

Yakima Valley Audubon will meet on January 9th at 9 a.m. at Denny Granstrand's home (2011 S. 47th Ave.) to plan field trips for 2016. To make 2016 a successful year for YVAS field trips, we need your input. Please email me, Scott Downes, downess@charter.net, if you have been on a field trip in the past and/or would like to go on field trips in 2016 with the following information:

- ◆ What are some places you really wish a field trip would go to? Maybe you wish there were more local trips, maybe you wish we would go to farther reaches in the state?
- ◆ Is there a particular field trip you've been on with YVAS that you want to make certain occurs again?
- ◆ While many field trips happen on Saturdays, some field trips happen on other days of the week, including some on weekdays. What day(s) would you prefer for a fieldtrip?
- ◆ Birds are often a focus on YVAS field trips, but other flora and fauna are abundant in our area. Do you wish that YVAS would offer a more general nature trip, say focusing on butterflies or spring wildflowers?

While these are some of the questions that will help to shape trips in the future, please feel free to share your thoughts on anything that may improve field trips for you and/or others.

What would you like to see a YVAS trip(s) focus on? Suggestions from past trip leaders are also welcome. Please email me by December 15th your feedback so that I have time to review your input and to incorporate it into our planning meeting. If you want to lead a field trip for 2016, please save January 9th on your calendar and try to attend the planning meeting. If you can't make that date, you can also email me your preferred date and destination and we'll work to fit it into the schedule.

— Scott Downes —

### YVAS trip report-Vantage November 8th, 2015

Eight of us enjoyed a very nice day of birding, spending most of our time on the western shore of the Columbia River at Vantage. Our first stop after traversing the Yakima River Canyon was at Tjossem Pond just south of Ellensburg. This pond near the corner of Tjossem Road and Berry Road traditionally has hosted many unusual birds in the fall. Today also had its share of nice surprises, in addition to the two Trumpeter Swans present there was a Bonaparte's Gull, fairly unusual in the valley away from the Columbia River. The trip then traveled towards Vantage, stopping at the Ginkgo Overlook where everybody had very accommodating looks at Canyon and Rock Wren and some distant Chukar. A Townsend's Solitaire also perched nicely. A young Trumpeter Swan here was unexpected for the deep waters of the Columbia above the bridge. We also spent some time here learning about the area geology and doing some shrub identification to round out our experience. Three bighorn sheep ewes also showed themselves here.

The group continued south of I-90 along Huntzinger Road and viewed some large concentrations of waterfowl, but unfortunately were out in the middle of the river. Some of the geese were close enough to pick out three Cackling Goose from the more numerous Canada Geese. We also watched an adult Bald Eagle hunting an American Coot, including sitting in the river waiting for the coot to surface. Eventually the ea-

gle was successful and flew off with its meal, being chased by several gulls. A nice passerine stop at The Cove Recreation Area (formerly Getty's Cove) produced a nice flock of Pine Siskins and two Brown Creepers, both nice birds for along the Columbia. Out in the river, the group managed to find four Red-breasted Mergansers, unusual for Eastern Washington but somewhat expected for Vantage in the fall and winter months. A small smattering of Redheads, Canvasbacks and quite a few Ruddy Ducks were mixed in with the hundreds of Scaup; both Greater and Lesser. Try as we might no scoters or long-tailed duck could be picked out.

Our final stop was below Wanapum Dam, looking at gulls on the islands that are actually on the Grant County side as the river get narrow here and the county line follows the original channel, thus much of the current river is in Grant County below the dam. Several interesting gulls caught our eye including a rare first winter Western Gull and a first winter Thayer's Gull. Though these identifications are tough, at least everybody in our group was able to view these unique species and learn how to these birds were identified to their species. An excellent day with mostly calm conditions, periods of sun and relative warmth. We ended the day with a trip total of 67 species. Thank you to the participants for their excellent eyes and good company.

— Scott Downes —



## BIRD SIGHTINGS

### DENNY GRANSTRAND

The list of bird species seen in Yakima County in 2015 stands at 256 with about six weeks left in the year. This is the highest total for any county in Eastern Washington in 2015 and is tied for third among all the counties in the state. Many of the counties in Western Washington border salt water, which gives them many species that are rarely or never seen in Eastern Washington. That is why birders from Western Washington have a distinct advantage over us Easterners when it comes to the year list.

Since consistent record keeping for the counties in the state started in 2007, our total so far ties for second lowest for Yakima County. That doesn't mean that the birders are slacking off. Some years just bring more vagrants than others. There are still about eight species that haven't been seen this year that are occasionally seen in the last month of the year, so we might see the total for this year get higher. Plus, there is always the hope that a rarity or two are found.

There are two ways you can keep up on the numbers of species seen in different counties in the state. One is the Washington Birder website: <http://wabirder.com/>. Click on "Matt Bartel's County Yearlist Project" in the lower left corner of the screen. You will see a spreadsheet showing all of the species seen in each of the counties in Washington.

The other way is on eBird:

[www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org). Click on "Explore Data", then "Explore a Region". Type in the county you want, then click on the name of the county when it pops up. You will see a box that says "All Years". You can type in the year you want to study and the list for that year will magically appear. With eBird, the opportunities for exploring are endless!

The bird feeding stations at the Yakima Area Arboretum and along the Jewett Pathway of the Yakima Greenway are stocked with birdseed and are attracting lots of birds. The highlight so far are two White-throated Sparrows at the Jewett spot and two at the arboretum. I started taking birdseed to the arboretum in 1998 in the hopes attracting White-throated Sparrows and Harris's Sparrows and keeping them around long enough to be seen on the Yakima CBC. It has worked for White-throated Sparrow



**White-throated Sparrow**  
Photo by Denny Granstrand

at one or the other of the stations nine times since one was first seen on the CBC in 1998. Two other years we have gotten it as a count week bird. The only White-throated Sparrows ever seen on the Yakima CBC were ones found at one of the feeding stations.

Harris's Sparrows are a little harder to come by. Harris's Sparrow has been found on the Yakima CBC five times, with only one of those being at one of the feeding stations. Harris's Sparrows, when they are found in our area, are usually found out among flocks of White-crowned Sparrows.

## Duck Stamp Information for Birders and Photographers — Duck Stamps Aren't Just for Hunters!

Over-draining of wetlands, degradation of prairie grasslands through increased mono-crop agriculture, and cycles of over-harvesting of waterfowl on ever-dwindling habitat: During the Dust Bowl of the Depression years, these events culminated in a drastic loss of waterfowl. An important step taken to address this crisis was the creation of the Federal Duck Stamp in the mid-1930s, an action that sought to strengthen a National Wildlife Refuge System in desperate need of support.

Following the creation of the Federal Duck Stamp in 1934, the Refuge System grew exponentially over the next decade. In response to the application of scientific and increasingly modern wildlife management techniques, waterfowl populations began to rebound. The Federal Duck Stamp program became central to bird conservation during this vital period.

Birders and wildlife photographers have played a key role in helping to generate these important monies for habitat protection. Your continued purchase of Federal Duck Stamps means that we can continue to acquire and protect important areas for birds and other wildlife.

Refuge visitation is now approaching 46 million people per year, and according to recent USFWS figures, more than 80

percent of these visitors engage in wildlife watching, specifically birds. Buying a Federal Duck Stamp gets you free admission to any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee. Each stamp is valid from July 1 through June 30 of the following year.

The official name of the Duck Stamp says it all - the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. Among the birds directly benefiting from Duck Stamp revenues are water-dependant birds such as the American Bittern and Virginia Rail; shorebirds such as the Black-necked Stilt and American Avocet; raptors such as the Northern Harrier; and wetland-associated songbirds such as the Common Yellowthroat and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Many of the country's most popular birding destination are national wildlife refuges that were established or expanded using Federal Duck Stamp dollars. Refuge visitation is now approaching 46 million people per year, and according to recent USFWS figures, more than 80 percent of these visitors engage in wildlife watching, specifically birds. Just as importantly, these visitors are part of the millions of Americans increasingly interested in wild birds and birding.

## The Poppoff Cleanup

On Monday, October 12, ten of us spent a couple of hours cleaning up the Poppoff Trail. We had a fun and productive time, and we ended up with fifteen large bags of garbage!

Thank you to Ellen, Jan, Joe, John, Kevin, Lee, Loretta, Mike and Steve for making this cleanup a success.

The interesting find of the day went to Kevin, who found a

very unique "homemade" hammer, although there were a few other interesting items as well.

YVAS has decided to "adopt" this section of trail and we plan on more cleanups in the future. Whoever thought that picking up garbage could be so fun?



Kevin Lucas, Mike Roper, and John Hebert



Steve Shaul, Jan Gano, Joe Zook, Lee and Loretta Olson

Participants not pictured in the photos are Ellen Stepniewski and Karen Zook.

— Karen Zook —

## Remembering Loretta Olson

YVAS member, Poppoff walker and friend Loretta Olson passed away October 21. We will miss her.

Loretta was one of our most steadfast Bird Walk regulars, almost always with her camera. She took literally thousands of photos of birds! She was new to birding when she started walking with us, but she learned fast and was always willing to share what she had learned with others.

Since she took so many photos, there were times (lots of them) when she would drop behind on the Bird Walk to try and get a photo of a particular bird. Sometimes she would fall so far behind that I would go back to check on her, only to have her walk toward me and say, "Did you see the Hermit thrush back there? I got some great shots. It posed for me."

I would like to share a few thoughts about Loretta from those who spent time birding with her:

Steve Shaul: "For me, Loretta was one of those people you just like at first meeting. All the more reason for me to be greatly saddened by her passing even though we met only recently."

Andy Stepniewski: "Loretta said to me on a Poppoff walk I was along on, 'I wouldn't miss one of these walks.' So, as Karen notes, she missed these only in her final weeks, a testament to her love of the birds and great friends she shared



Loretta Olson  
Photo By  
Karen Zook

these beautiful birds with. I heard tonight that Lee, her husband says Loretta took 100,000 bird photos. While on the Sheep Lake hike last year, I noted her taking lots of photos. Loretta replied, 'Now I get to go home and relive this beautiful walk by viewing all these photos.' I thought that was pretty cool."

April Adamson: "She was a lively lady and a feat companion on the bird walk."

Mike Roper: "I'll really miss her. It made me smile inside every time I heard her shutter machine gunning away."

Luke Safford: "Loretta was always joyful and was so pleasant to have on our walks. She opened up her backyard to our family to pick cherries and I enjoyed her company."

Richard Repp: "She had real character. I find some solace that she was confident and comfortable with her choices at the end. Strong and brave."

Joe Zook: "I seldom saw Loretta with her hands at her sides – they were on her camera, ready to take a shot at a mo-



Loretta's Favorite Photo

ment's notice. She was a good person, a good bird spotter and fun to be around. I'm sorry that she is gone."

These are but a few memories. Loretta touched the lives of many. Our condolences to her husband Lee and her family. Loretta did not want a memorial service.

— Karen Zook —

### 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.

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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](mailto:joycatbird@gmail.com) or 698-4110.**

### **2015 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD**

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