



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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April 2016



APRIL PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS

Tremor Time !



Nick in the Field

Hey everybody, what's shaking? This month's program brings back our most requested speaker. Nick Zentner, from the geology department of Central Washington University, will return after a two year absence. Nick has an infectious teaching style. It is a real treat to learn something unique about our area while being energized and entertained by the presentation.

Nick will be talking about earthquakes. (Hence the first sentence in this article). I suspect many of us will think "Earthquakes? Those just happen on the coast." Well, as a small spoiler, let me just say that it is not that simple.

Also, need I mention that Nick is a YouTube sensation? Check out his "Central Rocks" series of short videos on the internet. When the geological feature being discussed is something familiar like the Yakima River Canyon, the seismology of it all rocks you to the core.

Nick has received CWU's Most Inspirational Faculty Award and Presidential Faculty Award. In 2015, Nick received the James Shea Award, a National Association of Geoscience Teachers award that recognizes exceptional delivery of Earth Science content to the general public.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, April 28, at 7:00 to see this presentation at the Yakima Area Arboretum

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

KERRY TURLEY



Looking at the owlets at Toppenish Wildlife Refuge
Photo by Kerry Turley

As I write this column I can't help but reflect on the experience of having just spent the morning with a small group of preteen girls from Richland and their chaperone (one of their mothers) at the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR). The parents of one of the girls had visited the refuge a couple of Sundays ago and thought it would be a place that the girls, who were on spring break, would enjoy also.

They were right, the girls were overjoyed and absolutely giddy as they took turns looking at the three owlets that I had the scope set on. They were full of question as they looked at the displays in the visitor's center and seemed to soak up everything they heard and saw. They even managed to hike the whole trail around the headquarters pond, much to the chagrin of the chaperone who had the job of keeping up with them.

It was the same with a first and second grade brother and sister who visited on the previous Sunday. They could hardly contain their excitement as they saw their first garter snake and were totally turned on trying to identify the animal whose bones they found in an owl pellet. Before leaving they made their parents promise to bring them out to the refuge again.

President's Column continued on page 2

President's Column continued from page 1

In last month's column I touched on the importance of the TNWR to the education of our children and these experiences of the past few weeks only reinforces for me that children and nature go together — or should. No child can truly know or value the outdoors if the natural world remains unknown or under glass, seen only through lenses, screens or computer monitors. How can children care about nature if they haven't experienced it firsthand? We must do what we can to ensure that children have those opportunities.

From now through June we will be opening the visitor's center at the TNWR on Sundays from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM. So please consider bringing your family, children, grandchildren, students or whoever and visit this treasure we have so close to home.

This is also an opportunity, for those interested, to volunteer at the refuge. Just contact me or see me there at the refuge and I'll gladly sign you up. You might even see a few new birds while you're there.



MEMBERSHIP
JOY MCKINNEY

Welcome New YVAS Members!

Naches: Rita Fernandez
Yakima: Lora Leavenworth, Omar and Brenda Arambul, Rich and Deb Mathieu

**Thank you for renewing your
YVAS Membership!**

Naches: Jack and Carol Roth, David Churchill
Seattle: Birgitta Beck
Selah: Cathy LeCompte, Joy McKinney
Toppenish: Kathleen Ross
Yakima: Earl and Dorothy Derry, Kelly Kindlespire, Sherrie Prentice, Terry Davis, Rick Mains



**THIS MONTH'S YVAS
CALENDAR**

Apr 28 Audubon Chapter Meeting at the Yakima Area Arboretum at **7:00 pm**.

May 10 Board Meeting at Bill Drenguis's house (7808 Popularview Way, Yakima) at 7:00 pm.

Fort Simcoe Netting Removed

While on a Yakima Valley Audubon Society outing to Fort Simcoe State Park March 6 led by Eric Heisey, we entered Building 22, the so-called "barracks." We noted Say's Phoebe entangled in netting material on a wooden crossbeam. We stacked two picnic tables to provide a raised platform and Eric, our tallest participant, managed to free the bird. It was evident the beam provides a favored location for a nest site and that this bird was going to die without our intervention. Thinking there would be more birds, and possibly bats, caught in this material, I wrote to WA State Parks to hopefully have this material removed. Deanna Snow, a trip participant from Centralia, took the photo.

We wondered what reason WA Parks might have for placing netting all along the cross beam and could only conclude this material was placed to dissuade birds from nesting along the beam, which might result in droppings on the floor. The netting had evidently partially detached and became a hazard for these birds.

I wrote the park department: "We encourage WA State Parks to explore other methods of discouraging birds from using this beam if we have concluded correctly the reason for this material being placed in that location. One option might



Say's Phoebe
Photo By Deanna Snow

be to seal the building. Another option which would allow the birds to continue using the beam, would be to place a 'mud room' mat, a rubber tray (sold at Costco for ~ \$ 12.50 under a nest) to collect droppings. This tray could be cleaned periodically by parks staff. Yakima Valley Audubon Society would gladly play for this tray from Costco, thus allowing an interesting wildlife species to continue using this building. We hope to hear from WA State Parks soon on this issue so as to prevent any more mortality to protected wildlife at Fort Simcoe

State Park. I am copying this message to Doug Peters, WA State Parks Commissioner and Christi Norman, WA Audubon Program Director, reinforcing in the strongest possible terms, our goal to minimize suffering of wildlife and practice 'Embrace Your Wildlife' as emblazoned on the WA State Parks website home page."

Lisa Lantz, Stewardship Program Manager at WA State Parks wrote on March 29 "I wanted to follow up and let you know that the netting has been removed at Ft. Simcoe."

— Andy Stepniewski —



FIELD TRIPS SCOTT DOWNES

- May 14 (Saturday)- Yakima County Migration Count.** YVAS's annual "Birdathon" will be a county-wide bird count, as we try to tally species from different sectors in the county. Scott Downes will be putting teams together to cover all of the best areas to bird around Yakima including the White Pass, Chinook Pass, Lower Valley, Yakima Training Center, Toppenish, and Wenas areas. Some teams start before dawn with owling, while most teams go all or most of the day. If you are interested in participating, contact Scott Downes (downes@charter.net).
- May 15 (Sunday)- Bird banding class** led by Jeff Kozma through the Arboretum and assisted by other YVAS leaders. Weather dependent, backup dates of May 21 and 22. Refer to Jeff's article in the Crier on this.
- May 22 (Sunday)- Horse Heaven Hills.** Eric Heisey will lead a trip to the Horse Heaven hills. The Horse Heaven Hills are part of a large plateau just south of Mabton, extending from Bickleton east to the Tri-cities. The Hills support some of the less commonly found species in Yakima County, with a wide variety of shrub steppe habitats, with intermixed riparian. This is most likely the best place in the county to see Grasshopper Sparrows, which are almost abundant, singing incessantly from the tops of small Sagebrush. This trip should also feature many other birds of the shrub steppe, and can often boast a surprise or two. This will likely be a half day trip, as after a certain time, the birding will become difficult. For a time and meeting place, please contact Eric Heisey at magicman32@rocketmail.com.
- May 27-30 (Friday-Monday)- Memorial Day Wenas Campout.** The annual Memorial Day weekend Wenas Audubon Campout at the Wenas Creek Campground on Audubon Road. Birding field trips and flower walks abound at this casual and friendly gathering. In past campouts activities have included field sketching, bat and owl prowls, and much more. You do not need to be an Audubon member to attend. Drive up for a day or camp. All are welcome. Visit the Wenas Audubon website (www.wenasaudubon.org) for directions and complete information.
- April 28; May 5, 12 and 19- Thursday Morning Bird Walk.** Meet the group at the Poppoff Trail/ Jewett Pathway parking lot at the east end of Valley Mall Blvd., at the north side of the easternmost roundabout. Time will change to 7:30 sometime during the spring, unknown if that will start in May or not. Check BirdYak listserv for an announcement or contact Karen Zook to confirm meeting time. This walk is a great chance to check out a diverse habitat area in Yakima with local birders. There is a small change this year for Poppoff walks. There is a commitment to have a leader for the first Thursday of the month (May 5th for this newsletter), but the remaining walks will be group led. Group led is whoever shows up at the meeting time, start the walk, don't wait for a designated leader. Contact Karen Zook if you have questions – gad_zooks7@charter.net

Examine Birds –In Your Hand

Class: Introduction to Bird Banding

Instructor: Jeff Kozma, TFW Wildlife Biologist – Yakima Nation, with help from volunteers.

Date: First date – Sunday, May 15th; second date - Saturday, May 21st; third date - Sunday, May 22nd. Only one date/class will be chosen...see explanation below.

Time: 7:00 AM – 12:00 PM (end time flexible depending on weather)

Location: Yakima Area Arboretum (park at Jones Building and proceed as a group to the Sparrow Patch bird feeding area).

This class will introduce participants to bird capture and banding using mist nets. The goal is to capture birds as they are migrating north within the cottonwood gallery forest along the Greenway/Yakima River. Jeff will teach participants various aspects of bird banding including, different mesh/net sizes and their uses, how to remove birds from nets, performing measurements on birds (e.g., weighing, wing chord, bill length, etc), how to age birds, banding codes, affixing bands to legs, etc. Participants will be given the oppor-

tunity to hold birds prior to releasing them. This should be a fun and rewarding class. The best thing about capturing birds is you never know what might show up in your nets!

What to bring:

Dress appropriately for the weather and in layers as mornings can be cool before heating up during the day. A folding camp chair would be good unless you prefer to rough it on the ground. Bring a camera to capture close up images of birds. Also, bring food/



Jeff's Banding
Photo By Kevin Lucas

Spring Cleaning on the Vredenburg Bluebird Trail

Mother Nature seems to present a different challenge every year when we schedule a work party to ensure the 132 nest boxes on the trail are clean and ready to accept the year's new residents. This winter covered the Wenas area with a thick blanket of snow. With warming temperatures came a rapid run off that severely damaged the dirt and gravel road that services the trail. Water ripped across the road in many places and the road shoulder was turned into a pretty scary collage of crevices!

In scouting the trail the Thursday prior to the scheduled Saturday, April 2, cleanout effort, it appeared that the temporary patches that Yakima and Kittitas County road crews had thrown down would likely limit through travel to high clearance vehicles only. Particularly onerous was a one-mile stretch from the Umtanum Falls Trail parking area that twists upwards to the Kittitas County line at Box 82.

As a result, we decided to attack the trail from two ends. Gus and Mary Pooler also maintain a trail of twenty boxes along Durr Road at the extreme north end of the Vredenburg Trail. Traditionally, they drive to Ellensburg on the highway and after checking their boxes, they work downhill. This year, we sent a second team comprised of Jennie Hodge and Karen Ramey up I-82 to Ellensburg to pick up where the Poolers would leave off and work their way to Box 82, just above the extreme washout area and then retreat home through Ellens-



Jim Hertel got the job done !
Photo by Elizabeth Bohn



burg.

Joe Zook and Mike Roper showing off their carpenter skills repairing a bluebird nest box.
Photo by Karen Zook

Elizabeth Bohn and I met Jim Hertel at the southern end of the trail to attend to the first quarter of the trail. Picking up from there to Box 71 near the Umtanum Fall Trail parking area, were Joe and Karen Zook teamed with Mike and Alice Roper. This group caught Elizabeth, Jim and I just as we finished the first section. Jim turned back while Elizabeth and I scooted ahead to navigate the one-lane portion between Box 71 and Box 81. Fortunately, we met no downhill bound vehicles, but did encounter several groups of hikers who left a dozen cars at the barricade near Box 82 to trek by foot to access the falls trail.

Most interesting sighting of the day occurred at Box 23 by the Zooks and Ropers where a Western Bluebird female was busily removing the bark chip bottom nest layer that White-breasted Nuthatches had painstaking placed in the box during the prior few days.

Many thanks to our human participants in preparing the trail for another season. And now Mother Nature will take over...may the chips fall where they may.

— Richard Repp —



CONSERVATION

Safe rat control – and how rats kill wildlife and pets.

Recent news stories have highlighted problems that many homeowners face with invasive Norway rats in Yakima. While it is tempting to head to the nearest hardware store to buy rodent poison (aka rodenticides), it is important to consider that these poisons are extremely harmful and often lethal to wildlife, pets, and sometimes even children. Many of the products on shelves in your nearest hardware store have been banned in other countries. They have only been allowed in the U.S. due to aggressive lobbying campaigns by manufacturers.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states on their website that accidental ingestion of rodenticides poisons an estimated 10,000 children annually. This is especially problematic for brightly colored poisons like d-CON that are naturally attractive to children. Poisons for rodents are designed to be tasty and alluring. The EPA reports that rat poisons “are, by far, the leading cause of [pesticide-related] visits to health care facilities in children under the age of six years and the second leading cause of hospitalization.”

Pet dogs and cats are even more susceptible because they may also consume poisons indirectly, if they eat a rodent that ingested poison. Poisons such as d-CON contain long-acting anticoagulants. These are chemicals that prevent blood clotting. The anticoagulants eventually lead to internal hemorrhage and slow death over 2-30 days or more, depending on amount consumed. Some rodenticides are designed to allow rodents to live for days or weeks with the rodenticide within their blood-stream. By this means, one rodent may attract many other rodents to a bait pile, or live long enough to store rodenticides in a nest where other rodents are likely to encounter it. While this is a brilliant strategy for controlling rodent populations, it is exceptionally harmful for wildlife and pets because poisoned rodents may be consumed throughout a long period before they die. After much pressure from the EPA and conservation groups, d-CON’s parent company has agreed to stop making 12 of their most deadly rodenticides but these products are still available and may be encountered for years to come. The remaining poisons on the market still pose concerns for non-target animals and humans.

Research in California has shown that d-CON has been implicated in the deaths of 25 different wild animal species, including hawks, fishers (a rare forest carnivore that is endangered in Washington), the endangered San Joaquin kit fox, and the endangered northern spotted owl. A California Department of Fish and Wildlife study found among nearly 500 wild animals tested between 1995 and 2011 for anticoagulant rodenticides, 70 percent had anticoagulants in their system. Species included bobcats, eagles, foxes, hawks, and owls.

While there are no national databases that record poisonings of pets, rodenticides are estimated to cause the death of thousands of household pets annually. If a pet consumed a relatively low dose, owners may not be aware of the poisoning for days, even while the rodenti-

cide slowly causes hemorrhage. Cats, being more independent than dogs, may be particularly susceptible to mortality because they may not return home immediately when they feel sick. Past a certain point there are limited options for veterinarians to use to save a pet. It can be agonizing to watch a beloved pet die a slow and painful death, in an oxygen chamber, at a veterinary hospital.

Nobody wants rats in their home but *please* consider using other methods besides rodenticides. There are many ways to control rat populations that are safer for children, pets and wildlife. Please consider:

- Using snap-traps, set in places that rats frequently use but which are not used by pets or wildlife, such as under porches, in hideaways in barns, sheds, and garages. Snap traps are among the cheapest and most commonly used modern devices for controlling rodents because they work!
- ◆ Employing live traps (such as Sherman Traps) and disposing of trapped rodents by freezing.
- ◆ Keep the areas around you garbage, bird feeders, and fruit trees free of any item that can be consumed by rats. Rats will only occupy an area if there is food for them to live on.
- ◆ Seal all gaps on the outside of your home and replace worn weather stripping on windows and doors to keep rodents out.
- ◆ Keep your outdoor space clean and organized – trim plants and trees and keep your trash cans tightly shut.

Also, check out these helpful webpages for articles, information and tips:

- ◆ <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/january-february-2013/poisons-used-kill-rodents-have-safer>
- ◆ <http://saferodentcontrol.org/>
- ◆ <http://www.wildcarebayarea.org/advocacy/take-action-against-rodenticides/>



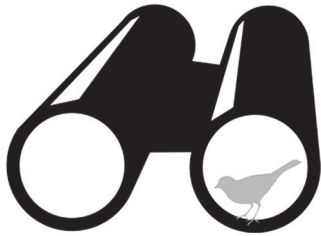
Pumpkin - died a painful death from rodenticide poisoning, November 21, 2013. Photo by Phil Fisher

Examine Birds—In Your Hand. (Cont. from page 6)

snacks and beverage if you think you'll need them. Hand sanitizer would also be good to bring as birds like to poop!

To register: Registration is open starting May 1st. Contact Jeff Kozma at 509-225-3465. The class is **FREE and is limited to 12 participants** so don't delay in registering because space is limited! Sign up is on a first come, first served basis, but there will be a waiting list (see below). Please notice that there are multiple dates for this class. This does NOT mean three classes will be held. There are multiple dates because mist netting is weather dependent. Mist nets cannot be used under windy or rainy conditions. Therefore, if the class is

canceled on May 15th due to weather, the class will be rescheduled for May 21st. Likewise, if the class is canceled on May 21st due to weather, the class will be rescheduled for May 22nd. Because of this, participants have to be flexible on the dates they can attend the class. If you sign up for May 15th, but can't make the other dates if the class is cancelled, a person on the waiting list will be notified of an opening to fill your slot. When registering, please let Jeff know if you can attend all the potential dates and make sure you leave your phone number so you can be contacted of possible class cancellations.



BIRDATHON

county-wide birding effort. In this endeavor, up-wards of 10 teams, each with a mapped portion of Yakima County, head out into the field to tally as many species and individuals as they can find. Each team's tally will be added into an overall spreadsheet, Christmas-count style. In 2011, teams set a record by finding 195 species. Can we break that record?

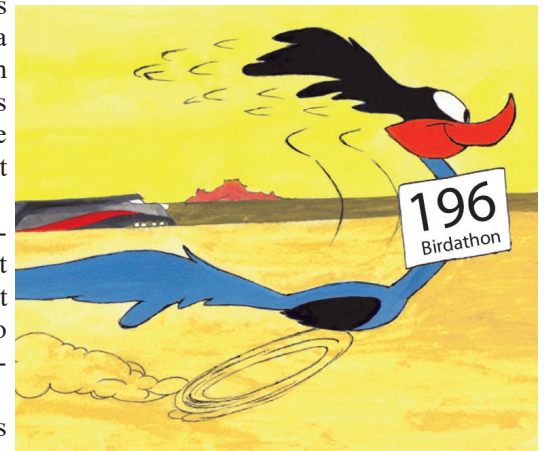
We need birders to help assist with this fun effort. Scott Downes is organizing this year's birding efforts. If interested in participating, contact Scott to see which teams can use help. E-mail is preferred at downess@charter.net or phone him at 469-7807. You do not need to be an experienced birder to enjoy the spectacle of spring migration. Full day or part day, if you are willing to participate, please contact Scott to work out details.

Everyone making a Birdathon pledge will be mailed a recap of the day's birding detailing the species seen as well as a narrative of the highlights the birding teams encounter. But most of all, donors may revel in the knowledge that they have contributed to the overall success of YVAS.

DOLLARS FROM DONORS, BIRDS FROM BIRDERS

Spring is the season for great birding throughout Yakima County. It is also the time for Yakima Audubon's BIRDATHON, the chapter's appeal to members for financial support. Please join in and contribute to BIRDATHON. Monies donated are used for the chapter's operating expenses, including the informative and beautifully illustrated newsletter, bringing great programs to our chapter meetings, important conservation issues and efforts, education, outreach, and more.

This year's BIRDATHON is **May 14** and will again entail a



YVAS Birders Chase 196!

--- Dan Kinney --

Yes, I want to help support YVAS by making a Birdathon pledge!

I Pledge \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

You can include your check now (payable to Yakima Valley Audubon Society), or we will bill you following the Birdathon.

Send form to: Yakima Valley Audubon Society, P. O. Box 2823, Yakima WA 98907

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: YVAS Membership
 P.O. Box 2823
 Yakima, WA 98907

*** If you have any questions on membership, please call Joy McKinney at 698-4110**

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| Field Trips | Scott Downes (downess@charter.net) | 469-7807 | | | |

Conboy Lake NWR and Klickitat County 2016

Images
from the April 17
YVAS Trip



Photos By Karen Zook