



Calliope Crier

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the natural world. Through birding, education and conservation activities in our community, we raise awareness and promote the cause of global environmental protection.

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A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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MAY PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

KERRY TURLEY

Have Talons, Will Fly

Use a bird to chase a bird! We are all familiar with the ideas of birds competing with each for habitat and resources. Those of us who use feeders to attract birds undoubtedly have learned that raptor species preying on small birds can cause a tsunami of fleeing feathers. Living in an agricultural area, we also should know about the damage that birds which forage in huge flocks (such as starlings) can do to our local crops. Is there a safe, ecologically sound way to use these known facts?

Well, the speaker at our next chapter meeting has an answer. Meet Yakima's own Ben Dover, a former orchardist who now sings the praises of American Kestrels. They are our smallest falcon and like all falcons, are skilled hunters. Do good things happen if Kestrels are living in your orchard?

Come to the meeting and let Ben explain what happens if a grower installs nest boxes for Kestrels. He has talked to many of the fruit grower groups in the area and will finally be sharing his experiences with us.



Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 26, at 7:00 to see this presentation at the Yakima Area Arboretum

Every Memorial Day Weekend since 1963 birders have camped out to observe wildlife and make friends in the Wenas Valley and I am surprised at how few of our chapter members take advantage of this opportunity to meet and bird with some of the nicest people in Washington.

According to the Wenas Audubon Website (www.wenasaudubon.org):

"The purpose of the Wenas Campout is to provide Auduboners and their friends with a variety of natural history and recreation opportunities in a beautiful area that supports a fascinating assortment of spring flora and fauna and offers the spiritual fulfillment of simply being outdoors in the spring."

This gathering is held in the Wenas Creek Campground and the camping is primitive, but it's about as nice a place for group camping as there could be and a wonderful place to introduce children to the wonders of nature.

There are evening programs on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and field trips scheduled Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. There's not only camping and field trips but also family activities and nature journaling. Love of nature of all varieties means there may be insect hunts or bat watching as well. Best of all, the entire event is open to all and is FREE (although they will ask for donations for the porta potties).

The highly diversified habitat of this area attracts and hold some of the most sought after birds in Yakima County, such as the Western and Mountain Bluebird, Common Poorwill, Gray Catbird, Calliope Hummingbird, White-headed Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, American Redstart, or Pygmy Nuthatch. If you are really lucky you might even score a real rarity like Blue-gray

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President's Column continued from page 1

Gnatcatcher, Dicksissal or Flammulated Owl. In fact over the years the bird list for the campout has grown to an astounding 257 species.

The campout offers several field trips for birds and plants. So if you get a chance take a trip up to the Wenas over Memorial Day weekend, even if only for a short day trip and enjoy some of the best that nature has to offer in Yakima County.



THIS MONTH'S YVAS CALENDAR

- May 26** Audubon Chapter Meeting at the Yakima Area Arboretum at 7:00 pm.
June 14 Board Meeting at Sharky's Pizza Shack (2201 W Lincoln Ave, Yakima) at 7:00 pm.



MEMBERSHIP JOY MCKINNEY

Welcome New YVAS Members!

Yakima: Bettie Bren

Thank you for renewing your
YVAS Membership!

- Naches:** Teresa Lorenz, Peggy Briskey
Selah: Lynne Alvord
Sunnyside: Myra Dorsey
Toppenish: Don and Jane Gargas
Yakima: Kim Cody, William Sable, Jeff and Cindy Kozma, Bob and Carrie Chicken, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy, Gary and Sharon Slagle, Vi Whitmire, Karen Hyatt
Zillah: Bill Hudson

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

Hoeger Preserve Returned

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society has relinquished its interest in the Hoeger Preserve and full ownership has been returned to the Hoeger family.

In 2004, YVAS obtained 75 acres of land in East Valley for the purpose of creating a preserve for Conservation Education. There are several parcels. This land has been referred to as the Hoeger Preserve. Tax wise, the land qualified for and was placed in Conservation Status meaning the land was not subject to taxes.



YVAS's interest in this land was obtained by gift from three members of the Hoeger Family. There were fees associated with closing costs, etc. but essentially, the land was a gift.

The land is remote. It has been surveyed and there are legal access rights linking the property to a county road but no road exists to the property. There are no utilities or water sources on the property. It is located adja-

cent to the U.S. Army's Yakima Training Center. The plant communities there can best be described as shrub-steppe. Over the years, we have tended to a minor infestation of Scotch Thistle which is a noxious weed.

Prospects for development of the property never materialized. Development of infrastructure like roads and interpretive facilities would be very expensive. Its suitability for conservation education is far from ideal due to remote location and vegetative cover.

The gift of this land by the Hoegers included a clause which stipulated that the land would revert to the Hoegers if a use other than conservation purposes developed. This restriction precluded YVAS from selling, developing or in any way managing the property for uses other than those related to conservation. In other words, YVAS did not have what might be termed clear title to the property.

As it became clear over the years that YVAS was not in a position to make substantial use of the property for conservation education, the Board of Directors began to explore options for the future of this land. Last Fall, the Hoeger family members were approached about taking back YVAS's interest in the property. This Spring they agreed to take back full possession of the land. With the help of a local attorney, YVAS's interest was relinquished by quit claim deed in March 2016.

--- Jan Gano --

Ownership is complicated

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society meets on the fourth Thursday of January, February, March, April, May, August, September, and October at 7 pm at the Yakima Area Arboretum, located at 1401 Arboretum Drive, Yakima, WA. Guests are welcome at these meetings. The Annual Meeting of the Society is held the first Thursday of December at 6 pm. The Board of Directors meets each month except December at 7 pm at locations announced in the Calliope Crier. Members may attend Board meetings; however, please notify the host because of possible space restrictions.



<i>FIELD TRIPS</i> <i>SCOTT DOWNES</i>

- May 27-30 (Friday-Monday)**- 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.**
- June 4 (Saturday)**- **Woodpeckers in burns.** We will be looking for woodpeckers in one of the areas that had a forest fire in the last couple of years. Woodpeckers are attracted to burns because the burns attract beetles, which lay their eggs on the burned trees. The woodpeckers search the bark of the trees trying to find the beetle larvae (grubs). Be sure to wear long pants and sturdy shoes because we won't be hiking on trails. We will also make some stops in other areas to add to the bird list. We should be back in town by 4:00. **Please e-mail Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com) or call 453-2550** for more information and the meeting time and place.
- June 11 (Saturday)**-**Comeau/Leier Ranch in the Wenas.** The lower east slopes of the Cascades are a hotspot for natural diversity, both plants and animals. One of the real gems in the region is the "Green Ranch." Gary Green, prior to his death a few years back, handed over caretaking of his 400-plus acre ranch in the Wenas to Carolyn Comeau and Jim Leier. Biologists have termed this place the "Miracle Mile," a gorgeous section of Wenas Creek near the end of the pavement on N. Wenas Rd. The ranch boasts a mile-long stretch of Wenas Creek, with outstanding riparian habitat, along with Ponderosa Pine uplands, and brushy draws. There is even shrub-steppe habitat. The mosaic of habitats attracts a very nice selection of birds dependent on these plant communities. Join Andy and Ellen Stepniewski on this walking tour. Wear boots or sturdy shoes for a 2-mile amble through the ranch targeting birds and plants. **Call Andy (509-949-7404) or email him (steppie@nwinfo.net)** for meeting time and place and more details on this special trip to Carolyn and Jim's private ranch.
- June 25 (Saturday)**-White Pass Highway. The White Pass Highway displays most of the range of habitats found on the bird-rich east slopes of the Cascades. At lower elevations is shrub-steppe, followed by Oregon white oak. As we proceed higher, one encounters the ponderosa pine zone, then the mixed-conifer zone, and finally the subalpine. Along the way are ponds, lakes, marshes, and rivers. All this habitat diversity means there is tremendous bird diversity. On this day trip, we'll visit the full range of habitats, targeting the 110-plus species found at the height of the breeding season along the way. Leaders are Andy and Ellen Stepniewski. **Call Andy (509-949-7404) or email him (steppie@nwinfo.net) for location of our 7 am start and details for this full day trip.**
- May 26; June 2, 9, 16 and 23- 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. ***Check BirdYak listserv for an announcement and 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 (June 2nd 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 – gadzooks7@charter.net**

Conboy Lake Field Trip Recap

Twelve of us made a trip to Conboy Lake NWR April 17. winnowing, and saw a few Yellow-headed blackbirds and Black-necked stilts there as well. It was a great day. We had a great group, perfect weather and good birds.

We made a few stops along the way, including Brooks Memorial State Park and a roadside viewpoint of the Klickitat River. The viewpoint is one of the few places I know of where you can look DOWN on soaring Turkey vultures! In addition to the Turkey Vultures, we also added Brown Creeper, Town-

We started off with a quick stop at the Toppenish NWR green gate along Hwy 97. We picked up 21 species there, including the Black-bellied plover (a rare visitor to our area) which many of us had not seen. We heard Wilson's snipes

Conboy Lake Field Trip Recap (Cont. on page 4)

Conboy Lake Field Trip Recap (Cont. from page 3)



Pileated Woodpecker
Photo by Karen Zook

send's warbler and Pine Siskins, and we had great looks at a Pileated Woodpecker excavating a nest cavity. It was really something to watch her tossing quarter-sized chips out of the cavity.

As we drove through the Goldendale area, we spotted Western Scrub jay, Wild turkey and a Magpie.

Finally we reached our destination - the refuge. We walked refuge paths and also drove the roads around and through the refuge. We

found some great birds there, including Sandhill cranes, Pygmy nuthatch (also excavating a nest cavity), Western Bluebirds, Calliope hummingbirds (two displaying males), Red-breasted sapsuckers and my "birds of the day" Purple finches. The purple finches were heard when we first got out

of the cars at the refuge visitor's center, but after lunch and a brief walk around they came down to the feeders at the center.

We had great looks and great photo ops! There were also several Common Yellowthroat singing (we even got looks at a couple), and a Nashville warbler.

In addition to the birds, the scenery was hard to beat: great views of Mount Adams, peek-a-boo views of Mount Hood, green fields with blooming trees and plants.

Our species count for Conboy Lake NWR was 44, for Klickitat County, 55 and the total for the trip was 62. It was a long day, but a really fun day.



Pygmy Nuthatch
Photo by Karen Zook

Karen Zook



CONSERVATION

Preventing Window Strikes



Glass collisions are a huge problem for birds. The American Bird Conservancy estimates that up to a billion birds die in collisions with glass each year in the United States. Although most people have seen or heard a bird hit a window, they often believe it is an unusual event. Add up all those deaths and the number is staggering.

Both common and rare bird species hit windows. According to a 2014 study, species commonly reported in glass collisions include White-throated Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are frequent victims, along with Wood Thrush and other species of conservation concern. Joe and I had a Red Crossbill hit one of our windows at our home here in Yakima, and at our home in Sequim, a Cooper's hawk was chasing a Varied thrush and both struck our window – the hawk survived, the thrush did not.

Bird Collision Facts

- Glass kills between three hundred million and a billion birds each year – the majority on home windows.
- Birds can't see glass and don't understand the architectural cues, such as window frames, mullions, and handles, that help people detect it
- Unlike some sources of bird mortality that predominantly kill weaker individuals, there is no distinction among victims of glass. Because glass is equally dangerous for strong, healthy, breeding adults, it can have a particularly serious impact on populations.
- Even small windows can be dangerous to birds that are accustomed to flying through small gaps between trees and shrubs.

Bird feeder and bird bath placement are important in helping to prevent collisions.

Almost 50 percent of bird collision mortality happens on home windows, and the most likely place for birds hitting windows is near bird feeders. It may seem odd, but feeders are safest when they're closest to windows—because if a bird takes off from the feeder or bath and hits the window, it

won't be going at top speed and has a better chance of surviving. Place feeders and baths CLOSER than 3 feet to a picture window (or even affixed to the glass or window frame), or FARTHER than 30 feet from a window.

There are other things you can do to make your house and yard safer for birds.

If you have outside screens on all your windows, you're already on your way to having a bird-friendly home. The patterns made by mullions in colonial windows also reduce the likelihood of collisions.

Most birds will avoid glass with vertical stripes spaced four inches apart or horizontal stripes spaced two inches apart. Stripes should be at least 1/4" wide. Generally, white stripes perform better, as they are visible against more backgrounds.

Tape and decals are readily available on the internet or at stores for bird lovers. They are inexpensive and rated "highly effective" by the American Bird Conservancy. However, one or two decals on a small window may help reduce collisions, but become less effective as window size increases because birds will simply try to fly around them. Tape is a cost effective way to make windows safe for birds and it is a quick way to treat large areas of glass. The ABC sells tape, but there are many options for decals and tape out there. The ABC tape can be ordered from <http://www.abcbirdtape.org>

Patterns and even artwork done on glass with tempera paint will last a surprisingly long time, are easily removed or replaced and are non-toxic.

Cords or netting can be mounted in front of glass, as can external motorized shades and screens. One example using vertical cords is called Acopian Bird Savers. Joe and I have installed these on our windows and they are highly effective. We have not had a window strike on any of the windows where these are installed. They are also fairly inexpensive and easy to install. Check out their website here: <http://www.birdsavers.com/> You may purchase them from the website, but if you prefer, they will give you instructions on how to make your own.

Not all windows are equally hazardous. Check to see which of your windows are most reflective and closest to areas where birds are active, like feeders. Collisions happen more frequently when more birds are present, such as during spring and fall migration and when many young birds are present.

There are other products, such as a window film called Collidescape, which will reduce glare and cooling costs while also protecting birds, and Feather Friendly, which is adhesive dots applied to the outside of your windows to create a pattern. For more information on these or any of the other solutions for bird collisions, please visit the American Bird Conservancy's website at <https://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass/>.

Zimmerman Field Trip

Nine intrepid birders participated in the annual field trip to the tribal lands of the Yakama Nation. Once a year the Yakama Nation allows us access to the 150 plus acres of closed wetland located along the Marion Drain at the end of Lateral "A" road, known as the "Zimmerman" property. Each spring, snowmelt in the Cascades rushes down Toppenish Creek filling ponds and flooding valley bottoms, creating a bonanza for water and marsh birds. This year the marshes, fields, and riparian patches had lots of water and the early warm



American Bittern
Photo by Kerry Turley

weather induced good plant growth which made it unsuitable for such species as Black-necked Stilts, and American Avocets, but very good for Cinnamon Teal, Virginia Rails, American Bittern and Yellow-headed Black-birds. The trail around the wetland was beautiful and filled with winnowing sounds the Wilson's Snipe and the calls of the Common Yellowthroat and Marsh wrens. At the end of the three and a half hour birding hike everyone was very pleased with both the hike, the low number of ticks (only seven all day) and the forty-three bird species identified.

— Kerry Turley —

ARBORFEST- " After the Fire"



Before the Rush

Yakima Audubon's booth at the Yakima Area Arboretum's Arborfest this year was again a rousing success! Arborfest is a free community event, celebrating Arbor Day, spring, conservation and nature. This year's theme "After the Fire" fit perfectly with the ongoing Yakima Audubon project highlighting the value of standing dead trees in the forest. It turns out standing dead trees have incredible value for wildlife. Yakima Audubon just produced a beautiful brochure on snags and this was distributed to visitors to our booth, along with other YVAS brochures about birding the Arboretum and wildlife viewing. There was a display board with photos of cavity creating birds (woodpeckers), and birds that take advantage of these cavities for nesting.

Button making was obviously enjoyed by the kids. They colored pictures of birds making or using cavities in snags and had that artwork transformed into a button they could wear. One measure of success was when Jeff Kozma, who had woodpeckers on display at the Yakama Nation booth, reported a girl came up to his booth, and identified his White-headed Woodpecker by showing him the button she had just made.



Artistic Button close-up
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski

Another big hit, even for parents, was the sectioned trunk that Phil Fisher brought. All seemed amazed when he opened the section of tree and



AJ Dart in the snag being fed gummy worms.
Photo by Laurie Chandler (AJ's mom)

they could see how large and deep a nest was inside that tiny woodpecker hole.

Greatly enjoyed by the younger kids was a cardboard "snag" created and artfully decorated by Renee Navarette. This was large enough for them to crawl into via a back opening. They could then beg for gummy worms, using their fingers as beaks to be fed by a puppet adult woodpecker. Richard Repp did a great job of encouraging the kids to try this.

Thanks to all the volunteers who made this happen!!! Our grateful thanks to Karen Zook, Joe Zook, Phil Fisher, Kerry Turley, Rich Repp, Ellen Stepniewski, Chris Reid, Justine Repp-Faith, (she reports it is her 10th year helping with the YVAS booth!), Carrie Chicken, Bill Drenguis, Laurie Chandler, Jamie Dart, Emily Dart, Silvia Ernst, Pam Bullion, Julie Kawakami, and Renee Navarette.

Please come help next April !



Another Gummy snatched.
Photo by Kerry Turley

— Ellen Stepniewski —

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**

2016 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

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			YVAS Email	(<i>birds@yakimaaudubon.org</i>)	



**WHO was found on the
YVAS Birdathon**

