



Calliope Crier

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

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SEPTEMBER PROGRAM BILL DRENGUIS

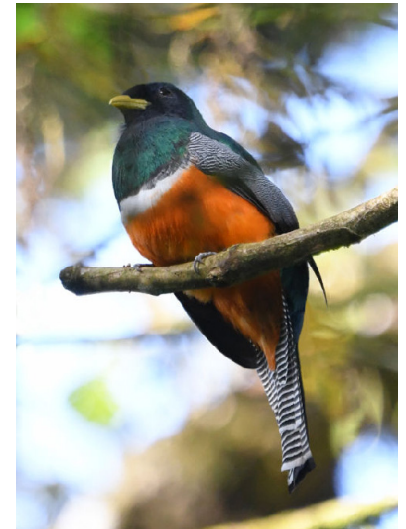
The Audubon Armchair Birders are going to Panama with George Vlahakis

I will assume that you like birds and I bet that you like beautiful photographs. Add to that an exotic location and you now know why our next chapter speaker will be a knockout. George Vlahakis recently made a trip to Panama and is inviting all of us to join him as he shows us the highlights.

I hope that you are familiar with George. Not only does he take professional grade photos, he is a member of our chapter. I bet that most of us have taken a few snapshots of birds and are often pleased with the results. Well George takes it to the next level. And he provides a humorous narrative (usually supplemented by his wife Susan).

The birds of Panama range from non-descript to spectacular, with most of them closer to the spectacular end of the spectrum. Not only will George show us photos of birds most of us have never heard of, many of them will be from families we have never heard of! So this program will be educational as well as entertaining!

So come join us on Thursday, September 28, 7 pm at the Arboretum. Imagine a trip to the tropics and you do not need mosquito repellent. George will even tell us the name of the bird in the photo.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN KERRY TURLEY

Let me start by saying yes, I keep lists, I keep them for my yard, by counties, WA State, the lower 48, the ABA region and the World; I have trip lists, year lists and life lists. You see I'm a little OCD and all of my hobbies have been performed at an extreme level. It's just my make up; I love the rush that comes from a successful chase and I'm not apologetic about it.

My listing though would be a lot harder if not for the graciousness of other birders who are willing to share their sightings with me and others like me. Birders from all over the world who, when they spot a rare bird, instantly post their sightings for all to see, or local birders who put their own competitiveness aside and call other local birders when they come across something rare so they can share in the find, even if it means they might not be the top county lister this year.

So thank you to those who regularly post their sightings to

Birdyak or eBird, as this encourages us to look in places we might miss. And a special thanks to Ryan Merrill for sharing the Red-necked Stint, found at Crockett lake on Whidbey Island, and the Swallow-tailed Gull found at Carkeek Park in Seattle. Also a special thanks to Eric Heisey for sharing the Red-shouldered Hawk he found at the Mabton boat launch (even though I missed it) and the Black Phoebe at the Lateral "C" bridge over Toppenish Creek, two great birds for the county.

With the proliferation of high quality birding software in which the average birder can manage their lists for free, there's no reason not to keep a tally of your outings. With eBird your data goes to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology where it's applied to studies concerned with bird population dynamics. Both sites put your lists to work doing outreach and conservation with real-world applications.

Say it with me. I'm a lister. And I'm OK with that.



MEMBERSHIP
JOY MCKINNEY



THIS MONTH'S
YVAS CALENDAR

Thank you for renewing your membership!

Yakima: Richard Repp, Warren and Sue Terrell, Joe and Karen Zook, Jennifer Lee, Denny Granstrand

- Sept 28 Audubon Chapter Meeting** at the Yakima Area Arboretum at **7:00 pm**. A great program will entertain and excite us!
- Oct 10 Board Meeting** — Andy and Ellen Stepniewski's house at 902 N. Conestoga Blvd.

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: No candidate at press time
 Vice President: No candidate at press time
 Director: Bob Chicken
 Director: Phil Fischer
 Director: Denny Granstrand
 Director: René Navarrete
 Director: Ken Tolonen

Kerry Turley is nearing the end of his two-year term as president of YVAS. Our by-laws state that a president cannot succeed himself (cannot serve two consecutive terms). The YVAS Board of Directors is struggling to find someone who is willing to serve as president. YVAS has not had someone to fill the vice-president position for over ten years. Many of the current board members have been on the board for over fifteen years. Its not that we are worn out, we a just looking for enthusiastic people who can bring new ideas to the chapter. We are a tight-knit group who make the board meetings quite enjoyable and, frequently, quite a bit of fun. If you are interested in joining the board, or would just like more information, please contact Kerry.

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 10 meeting.

Take Action and Advocate Effectively

Simple directions to launch you as an advocate

Part of the power of the Audubon Chapter Network is its ability to mobilize around ever-evolving conservation challenges through advocacy, legislation, and education.

These simple directions from Audubon's Policy Office will help launch you as an advocate to make a difference for birds and the environment. Conservation policy efforts will not succeed without your help! Lawmakers care about your views and opinions. As a constituent, you have a unique ability to convey your concerns about issues affecting birds, wildlife and their habitats. Helping is easy, won't take much time, and most importantly, will go a very long way in protecting our birds and wildlife!

Sign up for Action Alerts from Audubon Washington.

Join your local Audubon chapter and get involved with its conservation committee.

If you have 15 minutes, call your state legislators.

If you have an hour, schedule in-district meetings with your legislators, who often hold office hours at local coffee shops or community centers.

If you have a half-day, travel to Olympia to meet with your legislators, testify at a hearing, or submit public comments on a bill.

If you want to make a strong public statement, join other officials in signing letters and/or op-eds.

This article was excerpted from the *Audubon Washington* website. If you would like to read the entire article, go to: <http://wa.audubon.org/conservation/take-action-and-advocate-effectively>



CONSERVATION ANDY STEPNIEWSKI

Update on the Hanford Reach National Monument

Hanford Reach National Monument was under review in accordance with President Donald J. Trump's April 26, 2017, executive order. In July, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced that, after review, that no modifications should be made to the monument. The recommendation came after review of the tremendous public support of the monument. On Hanford Reach, Secretary Zinke said, "Sportsmen and women from all over the country go to Hanford Reach for some of the best fishing and bird hunting around. It's also home to some of the most well-preserved remnants of human history in the area."

In 2000, President Bill Clinton created the Hanford Reach National Monument, formally protecting over 300 square miles of shrub-steppe and riparian habitats, buffer lands surrounding active central Hanford Nuclear Reservation. Seventeen years later, another 200+ square miles of central Hanford lands are remediated and ready to be managed for other uses.

Recall the reservation was dedicated to manufacturing nu-

clear bombs during World War II. Since the 1960s, the U.S. Department of Energy has been cleaning up the resulting contamination and remediating the land. The former buffer lands to the reservation, located along the Columbia River, protected shrub-steppe habitat and the fabulous 51-mile free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River. These lands, which have been off-limits to most human access and disturbance during nuclear weapons production and cleanup, include some of the best quality shrub-steppe habitat remaining in our state. They represent the heart of Hanford, linking the outer semi-circle of the Hanford Reach with critically important lands that provide refuge for birds and other wildlife.

Audubon Washington believes that these lands serve as a vital link for biodiversity in the region and is committed to exploring options that will protect the existing Hanford Reach National Monument and ensure management of Central Hanford lands in a way that recognizes their unique conservation values within the sagebrush ecosystem.

Audubon's strategy is built upon the premise that a community of people who know and care about Central Hanford lands will be willing to serve as stewards for these lands, including advocating for them with decision-makers at all levels of government. Along with the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, Audubon Washington is working to:

- ◆ Develop a clear Audubon position on management of Hanford Central Lands.
- ◆ Conduct an outreach/listening tour to identify community needs and build a strong constituency
- ◆ Identify ways to engage the community in appreciating the value of HCL
- ◆ Empower and mobilize a powerful coalition
- ◆ Build relationships with important decision-makers

Ellen and I have been privileged to study and share with naturalists and birders some of the very best parts of the Hanford Reach National Monument. We can attest to the monument's values as an important component of Washington's shrub-steppe. Too, the Columbia River in the Hanford Reach is an invaluable salmon spawning area. We have also thrilled at sharing the areas significant scenic and recreational values.



Map of the Hanford Reach National Monument

— Andy Stepniewski —



FIELD TRIPS

SCOTT DOWNES

September 30 (Saturday) — Sunrise-Mt. Rainier led by Andy and Ellen Stepniewski.

This will be the fourth in a series of Yakima Valley Audubon Society “natural history” trips led by Andy and Ellen this season. The first on March 25 targeted the shrub-steppe, the second on June 10 the lower forest zones (Oregon White Oak, Ponderosa Pine, Interior Douglas-fir, and Mixed-conifer), the third on July 15 the Subalpine. This trip will head to the Alpine Zone, featuring the treeless land above the trees. We plan a 7-mile hike in Mt. Rainier National Park from Sunrise to Fremont Lookout, where White-tailed Ptarmigan has often been seen. A very early start is planned to beat the crowds. Contact Andy at steppie@nwinform.net for more info, including a the meeting time and place.



Note: The Sunrise-Mt. Rainier field trip may be cancelled, rescheduled or the location may be changed due to road closures caused by the Norse Peak fire. Contact Andy or watch BirdYak for further news.

October 14th (Saturday) — Chelan Ridge Hawk Watch. Road Trip!! Led by Bill Drenguis — Hawk Watch International surveys the hawk migration over Chelan Ridge every fall. This is one of two chief survey areas in the Pacific Northwest (the other Bonney Butte in Oregon). The scientists are there from September thru October. The bad news is that the site is about an hour out from Pateros. The good news is the hawks wait until the thermals are warm before they start to travel. Visit Chelan Ridge Hawkwatch site to get more information on species that might be seen: <https://hawkwatch.org/migration/item/74-chelan-ridge-hawkwatch> To get to the site there is a 0.75 mile walk from the parking lot on the US Forest Service Road. The trip may make several stops along the way to check out other birds and stretch the legs. The trip will leave Yakima at 7:00 am. Contact leader Bill Drenguis, 965-5808 or bdrenguis@gmail.com for meeting place and to get the latest on weather forecast including possibility of smoke and any potential road closures. It should be a very fun day and if you’ve never witnessed hawk migration, this is an opportunity not to be missed.

Christmas Bird Counts—mark your calendar; there will be more information in upcoming Criers

Toppenish NWR CBC — Dec. 16, 2017

Yakima Valley CBC — Dec. 30, 2017



BIRD SIGHTINGS

DENNY GRANSTRAND

Fall migration is underway and with it come birds on their way south and, occasionally, birds that seem to have gotten lost and end up in our area. That is the case with three great sightings that have been in our area made recently.

On Sept. 7, Eric was birding at the Mabton-Sunnyside boat launch north of Mabton and discovered a Red-shouldered Hawk. He watched this small buteo as it chased a Red-tailed Hawk, and even got an audio recording of it calling. Unfortunately, the Red-shouldered Hawk didn’t pose for photos.

They nest in California and south-western Oregon and tend to wander after breeding season ends. As their breeding range increased north into Oregon, more were being in Washington. Most of the sightings in Washington have been from the southwest section of the state. They are much rarer in Eastern Washington.

This is the second Red-shouldered Hawk to be found in Yakima County. The first was found by Kevin Lucas and Mary Giovanini at the Parker Bridge on Dec. 30, 2012. That bird continued in the area for at least a month.

Jennie Hodge and Karen Raney stopped by Kerry’s Pond on the Yakima Valley Highway on Sept. 9 and discovered a juvenile Sabine’s Gull. Sometimes good numbers of these small gulls are seen migrating through Priest Rapids but they are rare away from the Columbia River.

Eric was on his way to Yakima on Sept. 13 to see some friends when he took a shortcut which included a stop on Lateral C. Within minutes of stopping by the bridge over Toppenish Creek, he heard a Black Phoebe calling and was also able to get a look at it. Eric made some quick phone calls and other birders headed down there and were able to see it. It stayed until the next day but hasn’t been reported since.

This is the second record of Black Phoebe in Yakima County. The first was found at the north end of Clear Lake on May 15, 1988 by a group that included Andy Stepniewski and Scott Ray, who were doing a Washington Big Day with two guys from Seattle. It was a one-day wonder and was not seen again.

Bird Sightings continued on bottom of page 6

Lower Valley Shorebird field trip finds 80 species

On August 16th I was joined by Annika Willette for a day of shorebirding around the lower valley. We started at the Kerry's Pond, which was relatively productive. As soon as we got out of the car to scope the pond most of the ducks flushed, but we were still able to pick out Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Mallard, and Redhead. There may have also been a few Blue-winged Teal with the large flock of teal that flushed. We were also able to pick out our first 7 shorebird species for the day here; Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, Wilson's Snipe, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, and the highlight of the stop, 5 Solitary Sandpipers! When we first got out we were only able to see one Solitary Sandpiper, but after a few minutes the birds flushed and we were able to count 5 of them flying off, calling. As their name suggests they are most often seen by themselves or in small groups of two or three birds, five was the most I think I've seen together before!

After the cow pond we headed to the Emerald Rd which overlooks the Yakima River below Cherry Hill. Along the way we stopped at my house to see Black-chinned, Rufous, and Anna's Hummingbirds visiting my feeder. Also around my yard were three migrant Red-breasted Nuthatches and a Lazuli Bunting. Heading down to the west bend of the river now, we walked along the road and were able to scope more Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and a Greater Yellowlegs along the cobble bars of the river. Also spotted here were the typical river summer residents like American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, and Osprey. We headed east about a half mile and walked the orchards for migrants. Present were Wood Ducks, Warbling Vireo, Eastern and Western Kingbird, House Wren, Cedar Waxwings, Yellow Warbler, Gray Catbird, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Purple Finch. Along the river again I remarked, "I'm surprised we haven't seen a Great Egret yet, this is their time of year here." Sure enough, a few minutes later at the east river bend over-

look a Great Egret flew over our heads! Continuing out Emerald Rd we visited Morgan Lake briefly, which was very scummy and had no birds on it. Still, we were treated to nice looks of Swanson's Hawks and American Kestrels which were hazing each other and heard a migrant Western Tanager calling from the large Elm trees lining the road.

We briefly stopped at the Mabton Boat Launch as well, almost certain that the pond west of the boat launch would have no water but still hopeful. Sure enough, the pond was dry, but another Great Egret and a migrant MacGillivray's Warbler made it worthwhile. From here we went on to the place where we spent the most time, the Grandview Sewage Ponds. These ponds almost always contain a wide array of ducks and shorebirds, and we were not disappointed! We were able to add Blue-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Duck to our duck list for the day. We also found 10 species of shorebirds here; Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Least, Western, and Spotted Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Red-necked Phalarope, and the highlight of the entire trip, two Semipalmated Plovers! We had great looks at one of the plovers, while we only noticed the other when they flushed with a Killdeer. A good bird for the county! Other birds of note were Virginia Rail, Sora, and Marsh Wren.

We drove out to Prosser along Hwy 22 in hopes of finding some flooded fields along the way. We didn't find any, but stopping at the Prosser bridge there was a flyover Red Crossbill, an uncommon/rare migrant in Benton county. We stopped at

the Van Belle Reservoir and Kerry's Pond again on the way back to Granger and were unable to pick out anything new. We had 80 species on the day, a pretty good total considering many of the mountain migrants hadn't peaked yet! It was a good trip!



Semipalmated Plover at Grandview STP
Photo by Eric Heisey



Solitary Sandpiper at Kerry's Pond
Photo by Eric Heisey

Climate Change — the number one threat to birds

For decades, climate change has been one of our greatest conservation challenges and has become one of the leading threats to birds and other wildlife in Washington and across the nation. The National Audubon Society's Birds and Climate Report found that 189 of Washington's most iconic and beloved bird species are threatened by climate change. Many of these species are currently threatened by other factors, such as habitat loss, while others are species we previously considered secure but could face significant shifts in their ranges as a result of climate change.

Now, more than ever, we have a responsibility to be the voice of the birds and aggressively combat this urgent threat head on by protecting the places that birds need to thrive and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Over the next five years Audubon Washington is focused on:

Increasing habitat protection in focused areas of Eastern

Washington that are expected to provide essential habitat for birds under a future warmer climate.

Ensuring resilient coastal estuaries will continue to support marine and shorebird populations along Pacific Flyway migration routes.

Advocating for a price on carbon emissions and new, renewable energy alternatives that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Washington State.

Building a stronger, more diverse force for action on climate change to monitor birds and advocate for solutions to tackle this threat.

This article was excerpted from the *Audubon Washington* website. If you would like to read the entire article, go to:

<http://wa.audubon.org/conservation/birds-and-climate-change>

Bird Sightings continued from page 4

Black Phoebes nest in the Southwest, California and up into southwestern Oregon. They also wander into Washington and are seen annually in Western Washington. In Eastern Washington, Black Phoebes have only been found Benton and Yakima Counties.

While Debie Brown and I were searching for the Black Phoebe on Sept. 16, Debie got a look at a Red-shouldered Hawk that was along the south side of the trees west of Lateral C. After looking for it was a few minutes, and dipping on it and the phoebe, I was walking toward my car to leave when I noticed a group of soaring birds west of the road. I got them in my spotting scope and discovered the Red-shouldered Hawk was one of them, along with one Cooper's Hawk and four or five Common Ravens. Debie was also able to get a view of the hawk through her scope. As you have probably already figured out, this was the third record in Yakima County of a Red-shouldered Hawk.



Red-shouldered Hawk, though not one of those mentioned in this article

Richard Repp has been keeping track of the Vaux's Swifts that roost overnight in the large, brick chimney at Johnson's Auto Glass on S. 1st St. His high count for this Fall migration was 700 dropping into the chimney on Sept. 7. On the 9th he counted 650 swifts. He has also seen a Peregrine Falcon and an American Kestrel in the area several evenings.

Jared Seveyka birded the Yakima Training Center on Sept. 16 and, among 24 species, found three Greater Sage Grouse, two Sandhill Cranes, two Peregrine Falcons, and one lingering Sage Thrasher. Thrashers nest on the training center but they are usually gone by this date. The latest record for Sage Thrasher in Yakima County is Sept. 19.

Jeff Kosma was out in the Wenas on Sept. 18 and stopped a few times along Audubon Road. He came up with five raptors — Golden Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and American Kestrel — among a list of 13 species in 15 minutes.

Recent trips to Wenas Lake by numerous birders have found Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Osprey, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, California Scrub-Jay (possibly the first report of a scrub-jay that far up in the Wenas), American Pipit and a good variety of migrating passerines.



Black Phoebe, though not the one Eric found on Lateral C

Yakima Valley Audubon Society Membership

Join/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 Society Membership.....\$ 25.00 per household
 YVAS Senior (62+) ____ OR Student Membership ____ (please check one).....\$ 15.00 per household
 Yakima Valley Audubon Society Life Membership\$ 500.00 per household

New Member __ Renewing Member __ (please check one)

In addition to my membership payment of \$ _____, my check includes an additional donation of \$ _____
 __ I do not want to receive any solicitations or communications from NAS (please check if applicable)
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Please make any corrections to your contact information as needed.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

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Email address _____

Please return this form and your check payable to: YVAS Membership, P.O. Box 2823, Yakima, WA 98907

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

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A California Scrub-Jay visits S. 47th Ave.

I looked out our kitchen window on Sept. 12 and was startled to see a California Scrub-Jay in the birdbath. While scrub-jays are now common in many neighborhoods in Yakima and Selah, this was only the second one I have seen in our yard. The first one showed up on Aug. 30, 2016.

I expected this attractive jay to be another on-day wonder but it has stayed in or near our yard. As I write this on Sept. 21, it is still here. It is a nice touch of color among the much more common House Finches and House Sparrows in our yard.

My brother has California Scrub-Jays at his house in Selah. He feeds them peanuts, which he places on the deck railing. When it seemed that the scrub-jay at our house was staying around, I



bought a bag of peanuts and put them in a bird feeder. I haven't seen the scrub-jay near the feeder, so I started scattering some peanuts along the driveway where it likes to hang out.

I have seen it pick up a few peanuts and fly into our hazelnut trees, but it doesn't seem to be making a steady diet of them. Most of the peanuts are hauled away by magpies or picked up at night by raccoons.

Just before I sent the Crier off to be placed on our website, I noticed we now have a second California Scrub-Jay in our yard. This could be the start of something!

— Denny Granstrand —

Coming Attractions:

Sept 28 YVAS Chapter Meeting

Sept 30 Sunrise-Mt. Rainier field trip

Oct 14 Chelan Butte Raptor Watch field trip