



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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JANUARY PROGRAM

PHIL FISCHER

A Fascinating Relationship Whitebark pine and Clark's Nutcrackers with Dr. Taza Schaming

YVAS has the good fortune of hosting Dr. Taza Schaming for the January general meeting. Since 2009, Taza has been investigating the impact of the decline of Whitebark pine on Clark's Nutcrackers, first in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and now expanding into the Cascade Range in Washington. She finished her PhD at Cornell University in 2016, and is continuing her research as a long-term study. Through her work, she is striving to create a better understanding of the intersection between conservation, ornithology, behavioral ecology, and community ecology. She plans to spend her life both teaching and working in remote, high alpine ecosystems around the world, dedicating herself to better understanding and conserving these wild lands.

Taza has provided the following background and description of her talk: Whitebark pine and Clark's Nutcrackers have a fascinating relationship: the trees provide rich, fatty seeds (with more calories per pound than chocolate), and the birds "plant" the trees' seeds—a single bird may hide up to 98,000 seeds in a year. The food caches help the birds get through the winter, and the leftovers grow into new trees. In fact, Whitebark pine trees sprout almost exclusively from nutcracker seed caches. This dependency has led to considerable concern for both species because Whitebark pine ecosystems are rapidly disappearing in the western United States. This disappearance, largely due to mountain pine beetles and invasive blister rust, has caused concern for the entire ecosystem. While Whitebark pine restoration efforts are underway, these efforts will not be effective if Clark's Nutcracker populations decline or their habitat selection changes to a degree that they are not available to disperse seeds. We have limited informa-



Dr. Schaming cradles a Clark's Nutcracker.

tion on nutcracker population status and behavior, but evidence suggests that declining Whitebark pine communities are leading to reduced local Clark's Nutcracker populations.

Here is what Dr. Schaming says about her work: "Tromping through snow, then mud and swarms of mosquitoes, I have been trapping, surveying, radio-tracking, and satellite-tracking nutcrackers since 2009, to study movement, habitat selection,

and social behavior. My ultimate goal is to determine which management actions will increase the persistence of nutcrackers throughout their range. This problem is more urgent than it first seems: these high altitude pines are essential to protect because they play a critical role in the ecosystem, including helping to retain snow (and thus drinking water) on the upper slopes of the western mountains, and providing high-energy nuts on which many animal species, including the grizzly bear, depend. Nutcrackers also play an important role in forest regeneration and conifer seed dispersal for not only Whitebark pine, but for at least ten conifer species in western North America. A decline in nutcracker populations would affect not only Whitebark pine regeneration, but long-distance dispersal of these conifer species. My results advance our understanding of the magnitude of the impact of the decline of Whitebark pine on Clark's Nutcrackers' behavior and populations. This data will aid in the design of biologically informed management interventions which will help maintain a healthy ecosystem by ensuring persistence of nutcrackers throughout their range."

Mark your calendar for Thursday, January 25, at 7:00 to see this presentation at the Yakima Area Arboretum

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



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BILL DRENGUIS

Wow, 2017 certainly went fast! December is always a busy month for YVAS and I hope you were able to attend the holiday dinner (complete with a great speaker) and participate in one of the Christmas Bird Counts.

We are going to try a few new ideas for 2018. Most notable will be the addition of several short, local "field trips". We think that it will be much easier for many birders and their families to go to a close area like Sportsman State Park for an hour or two of fun. Of course we will also offer a variety of all day trips as well.

As I hope you know, YVAS is very active in local conservation issues. The ongoing "snag awareness" program is gaining amazing traction. Several conservation and state forestry

organizations are requesting reprints of the "snag pamphlet" that YVAS members have developed. We are raising public awareness about leaving (at least some) snags for nesting habitat, and not harvesting all of them for fire wood.

We finally have a new program director! The old one (me) was, well, getting old. Phil Fischer will be bringing new energy to this position and has already lined up several quality speakers for our monthly chapter meetings. We welcome Phil and eagerly anticipate a fresh variety of programs!

I am looking forward to a great year. Please remember that we thrive on your input for new ideas and direction. Now go check your feeders and see if that towhee has shown up.



MEMBERSHIP

JOY MCKINNEY

Welcome New YVAS Member!

Yakima: Michele McGinnis

Thank you for renewing your membership!

Naches: Vera Backstrom and Dotty Armstrong

Selah: Jan Brydsen

Toppenish: Frank Brown

Yakima: Ross and Diane Bornfleth, G'Ann Duncan, Kathy and Ed Medford, Clark and Debbie Satre, Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, Ken Tolonen and Margaret Morris



THIS MONTH'S YVAS CALENDAR

Jan 25 Audubon Chapter Meeting at the Yakima Area Arboretum at **7:00 pm. Great program.**

Feb 13 Board Meeting at Joe and Karen Zook's house (5808 W. Chestnut Ave.) at **7:00 pm.**

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

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday April 21

Once again, Yakima Audubon will have a booth at the Yakima Area Arboretum's annual free event for families, Arborfest. It will be held on Saturday, April 21. Once again, you are invited to help with our display or bring your friends and relations to enjoy the event. This year's theme for the event will be "Be a Tree Champion, protect our trees and forests!" Look for more information in subsequent "Crier" newsletters. For further information, contact Ellen Stepniewski steppie@nwinform.net or 509-731-6805.

Christmas Banquet Kudos

This year the YVAS Annual Christmas dinner on December 3rd was a great success. We had a very successful Silent Auction raising over one thousand dollars. A heartfelt "Thank You" to all who donated, both by giving items and purchasing them! Several folks went beyond the call of duty volunteering with auction preparation, setup and cleanup. We extend a special thanks to these folks who helped ensure the evening went smoothly! These generous members are: Bill Drenguis, Denny Granstrand, Eileen & Dan Kinney, Chris Reid, Alice & Mike Roper, Ellen Stepniewski, and Kerry Turley.



FIELD TRIPS
SCOTT DOWNES

- Jan 28 Horse Heaven Hills.** An all-day trip to the Horse Heavens Hills to explore winter birds of the uplands. We'll look for winter raptors, maybe Gray Partridge and hopefully some winter songbirds if the weather conditions are favorable. Bring warm clothes, a lunch and water. A scope is helpful if you have one but not required. Contact leader to sign up and get meeting time and place: **Scott Downes, downes@charter.net** or **833-8331**.
- Feb 17 Winter Waterfowl.** Join leader **Bill Drenguis** in finding some ducks! The duck hunting season ends in late January, so hopefully the birds will not be so skittish. We will head to **McNary NWR** and the general area where the Snake River meets the Columbia River. If the McNary area is frozen over (like last year) we could head to the Columbia by Goldendale. The trip will leave at **7:30** and should be home around 4, but you can leave any time. Bring your scopes (there should be plenty to share if you did not get one for Christmas). Bring lunch, binoculars and bird guides. **To sign up, check conditions for the trip and get meeting location, call Bill at 965-5808.**
- Feb 16-19 Great Backyard Bird Count.** On Your Own. For details see: www.birdsource.org/gbbc. **Attention eBirders!** During the four days of the count, simply continue using eBird as you otherwise would. But please make sure to go birding during the GBBC period and submit your data to eBird.

A CLASS JUST FOR YOU – DON'T MISS IT!!

LOOK, up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It' a . . . Raptor?!!

But which one? South-central Washington is rich in birds of prey, with 18 hawk species occurring regularly and several more as rare visitors. An astonishing 15 species of owls are also present in Washington.

And in addition to the sky, they can be seen on trees, branches, poles, wires, fences, bushes, the ground or over water. So what was that raptor you saw? If you are in the dark, light beckons you!

The Yakima Area Arboretum and Yakima Valley Audubon Society will present a class on these interesting birds.



Able to soar at high altitudes,



Faster than a speeding bullet?

This is a two-part class. The first is a classroom session on Saturday, March 24, from 9-11:30am at the Yakima Area Arboretum. A team of Yakima Audubon birders, including Mike Roper, a licensed falconer, and Andy Stepniewski, an accomplished naturalist and bird expert, will introduce you to various groups of birds of prey: accipiters, buteos, sea eagles, aquilla eagles, and falcons, as well

All photos by Mike Roper

as the major groups of owls. *Spoiler alert...as a bonus, there will be live birds at the class.*

For the second part, participants are invited to join in a field trip in the raptor rich lower Yakima Valley. We will meet at the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge, on Sunday, March 25, at 9am and then venture into the field for 4 hours to observe raptors where they live. Please bring water, snacks, and dress for the weather.

Registration for the class begins January 19 and will be limited, so please sign up through the Yakima Area Arboretum at www.ahtrees.com/calendar.htm. For further information, call the Arboretum at 509-248-7337. Cost for this class is \$25 for Audubon and Arboretum members and \$35 for non-members. Youth 12 – 18 yrs. \$10.

— Ellen Stepniewski —



It's a super-flying raptor!

Ice make things slick on the 2017 Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count

I think in the 30+ years I have been doing Christmas Bird Counts I have seen almost any possible type of weather. There are times when weather can be considered "bad" but still doesn't disturb the birding. Cold temperatures come to mind. This year was different from any that I can remember.

We had freezing rain almost the whole day before the count and it didn't stop until around midnight. That made getting around on CBC day very difficult and, probably, dangerous at times. At least the wind wasn't blowing.

A small group of birders met for breakfast before the count, with several teams already out sliding around. For the first time, we had four people doing routes by themselves. Plus, two people on two two-person routes had to leave early, which meant we ended the day with six one-person teams. You have to make due with the resources you have.

By the time we were all out birding, the weather was pretty good. The cold temperature was 30°, which was certainly pleasant enough. We all wondered why the birds weren't out scurrying around. Many stops that should have been birdy were very quiet. It wasn't until after noon that the birds seemed to notice it was a pretty nice day. With the high temperature being 52°, it was one of the warmer CBCs we could remember.

We did have some good highlights. While we only had one "new high" in the numbers of individual species, we didn't have any "new low". Now the cool stuff: Trumpeter Swans were found for only the third time on the count, one by Jeff Kozma on Buchanan Lake and one by Stan and Lori Isley on a newer gravel pit pond along Riverside Road.

Two Great Egrets were discovered, one by Stan and Lori

on the Bureau of Reclamation property that they cover, and one on my route flying south over the Yakima River in the Union Gap.

As their home is in their route, they stopped there long enough to find a Lesser Goldfinch at their feeder. Moving on, 21 Common Redpolls on Douglas Drive were an unexpected surprise. Those cute rarities stayed in that area until at least Jan. 4.

Kerry Turley and Bill Drenguis were scouring the YTC and flushed nine Long-eared Owls from an evergreen tree, the first on the count since 2011.

Steller's Jays have been down in the valley for well over a month prior to the count and I expected that we would find lots of them. The total for the day was 17, which is the all-time high!

Jeff Kozma found two Mountain Chickadees, one in the Tahoma Cemetery and one on S. 18th Ave. Ellen Stepniewski called in a Rock Wren on the ridge above Windy Point Ranch. Jennie Hodge and Karen Ramey pulled out a Townsend's Solitaire in Selah.

Jeff Kozma saw a White-throated Sparrow at the arboretum bird blind and Eric Heisey corralled a Harris's Sparrow and a Red Fox Sparrow at the Poppoff Trail sparrow patch.

We thank Ellen and Andy Stepniewski for hosting the compilation dinner. Ellen's great chili warmed us all up.

We ended up with a good count total of 91 species with two "count week" birds. The 14233 individual birds we found is below the all-time average but part of a continuing trend..

— Denny Granstrand —

Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count 2017 finds 81 species in heavy fog

The 35th annual Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count was held on December 16. The day started with fog which, as we know, often plagues the Columbia Basin in winter. I groaned to myself a bit, not at all enthusiastic about spending the day freezing out in the cold and fog once again in "The Palm Springs of Washington." But, as is usually the case, the fog lifted by mid-morning and the world brightened and the birds appeared, though not in the usual numbers.

We met at 7 am at the Branding Iron Restaurant just south of Toppenish. After a hearty (and greasy!) diner breakfast, 14 observers set out in seven teams to canvas the 15-mile diameter circle centered on South Wapato and Larue Roads. We tallied 81 species, about on par with our long-term average of 80, with 13,067 individuals, which is well below the mean of ~20,000 birds. All teams remarked at the dinner tally that birds seemed fewer in number than usual and the data reflects this.

We observed 15 species of waterfowl, though only 712 Mallards, which usually numbers in the low thousands. An impressive 77 Tundra Swans were seen, with 53 at Zimmerman's, the Yakama Nation preserve. Perhaps reintroduction

of "Indian Potato," a water plant with a nutritious root relished by swans, has benefited this species.

Also in the waterbird department, a lone Western Grebe was found... only the third occasion we've had this species on the count.

Twelve diurnal species of raptors were seen. Despite the fog, 150 Red-tailed Hawks were counted, above the mean of 120. We had a "four falcon day," with Peregrine, Prairie, Merlin, and American Kestrel.

We had only three species of owls: Barn, Great Horned, and Short-eared. Perhaps this reflects a lack of effort to get out in the darkness and cold to try for owls. Can you imagine that?

In the dove department, we had an amazing 689 Eurasian Collared-Doves. This species has staged a most impressive increase since it was first noted on the count in 2009. The oft-asked question whether Mourning Doves are being impacted by their Old World colonizer is, well, perhaps yes. Only 138 MODOs were seen, well below the 200+ long-term mean.

We noted only 45 Horned Larks and all were seen by one team in their breeding habitat on Toppenish Ridge. Zero were noted by the other six teams in the Lower Valley floor. I

The Data — The Christmas Bird Counts Species by Species

	<u>Yakima</u>	<u>Topp</u>		<u>Yakima</u>	<u>Topp</u>
ACKLING GOOSE	CW	46	BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE	421	163
CANADA GOOSE	836	608	AMERICAN CROW	115	490
TUNDRA SWAN		77	COMMON RAVEN	118	70
TRUMPETER SWAN	2		HORNED LARK	29	45
WOOD DUCK	76	7	BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	54	19
GADWALL	18	3	MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE	2	4
AMERICAN WIGEON	59	37	RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	14	2
MALLARD	485	712	BROWN CREEPER	2	1
NORTHERN SHOVELER	11	2	ROCK WREN	1	3
NORTHERN PINTAIL	3	550	CANYON WREN		8
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	65	130	BEWICK'S WREN	49	25
CANVASBACK	4		PACIFIC WREN	3	
RING-NECKED DUCK	26	16	MARSH WREN	3	3
LESSER SCAUP	2	2	AMERICAN DIPPER	1	
COMMON GOLDENEYE	326	24	GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	4	9
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE	1		RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	11	9
BUFFLEHEAD	22	1	TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE	1	
HOODED MERGANSER	20		HERMIT THRUSH	10	
COMMON MERGANSER	162	20	AMERICAN ROBIN	168	73
duck sp.		1	VARIED THRUSH	33	27
CALIFORNIA QUAIL	881	225	EUROPEAN STARLING	2098	1486
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	1	50	CEDAR WAXWING	123	100
PIED-BILLED GREBE	12	23	YEL.-RU. (MYRTLE) WARBLER	15	
WESTERN GREBE		1	YEL.-RU. (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER	34	5
AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN		CW	SPOTTED TOWHEE	36	11
GREAT BLUE HERON	21	34	FOX SPARROW (SOOTY)	20	3
GREAT EGRET	2		FOX SPARROW (RED)	1	
BALD EAGLE	30	11	SONG SPARROW	123	91
NORTHERN HARRIER	18	25	LINCOLN'S SPARROW	1	1
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	19	5	WHITE-THROATED SPARROW	1	
COOPER'S HAWK	13	10	HARRIS'S SPARROW	1	
ACCIPTER, SP.	1	1	WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	399	389
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK		CW	GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW	110	13
RED-TAILED HAWK	156	150	DARK-EYED (SLATE-COLORED) JUNCO	4	1
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK		CW	DARK-EYED (CASSIAR'S) JUNCO	1	
GOLDEN EAGLE		1	DARK-EYED (OREGON) JUNCO	780	384
AMERICAN KESTREL	72	71	RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	1137	1922
MERLIN	5	6	WESTERN MEADOWLARK		2
PEREGRINE FALCON		1	BREWER'S BLACKBIRD	284	1839
PRAIRIE FALCON	2		BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	9	42
VIRGINIA RAIL	7		blackbird, sp.	300	300
AMERICAN COOT	39		PURPLE FINCH	5	
KILLDEER	10	6	HOUSE FINCH	593	780
WILSON'S SNIPE	6	5	PINE SISKIN	12	15
ROCK PIGEON	495	517	COMMON REDPOLL	21	
EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE	558	689H	AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	129	75L
MOURNING DOVE	114	138	LESSER GOLDFINCH	1	
BARN OWL	2	1	HOUSE SPARROW	946	269
WESTERN SCREECH-OWL	1				
GREAT HORNED OWL	7	6	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	14233	13022
LONG-EARED OWL	9		TOTAL SPECIES	91	81
SHORT-EARED OWL		1		+4 FORMS	+1 FORM
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD	7		COUNT WEEK SPECIES	2	2
BELTED KINGFISHER	16	6	TOTAL SPECIES SEEN ON BOTH COUNTS		100
RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER	CW				
DOWNY WOODPECKER	39	16	N — New species or subspecies for the count		
HAIRY WOODPECKER	1	2	H — All-time high for individuals of that species		
NO. (RED-SHAFTED) FLICKER	162	91	L — Very low number of individuals of that species as compared to other years		
NORTHERN SHRIKE	3	4	CW — Seen count week (three days before the count or three days after) but not count day		
HORNED LARK		45	Bold Face — Unusual species for our counts		
STELLER'S JAY	17H	4			
CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAY	39				

FREE FILM SCREENING FRIDAY FEB 23 7:00-9:00 PM

Last Stand: The Vanishing Caribou Rainforest

Where: Yakima Valley College Parker Room

Presented in Conjunction with the Yakima Environmental Learning Foundation (YELF)

Did you know that the last inland temperate rainforest on planet earth extends into northeastern Washington State? Or that this ecosystem is breaking down? And functioning as a canary in a coal mine is the majestic mountain caribou with only eleven individuals remaining in the Selkirk Mountain population that touches extreme northern Idaho and lower British Columbia as well as a tiny corner of our state.



The entire Selkirk herd
Photo by Spokesman Review

Last Stand is a half-hour cinematic journey into the tragically threatened world of endangered mountain caribou, their home in the world's largest remaining inland temperate rainforest, and the critical human choices that will ultimately decide the fate of this stunning ecosystem. The film exposes the failure of agencies in the U.S. and Canada to regulate industrial resource extraction effectively, to honor the treaty rights of indigenous peoples, and to protect the integrity of the natural systems of this region, and gives voice to First Nations, scientists, foresters, conservationists, and recreationists attempting to chart a new path forward before it is too late.

The Selkirk Mountain caribou population is now isolated from the mere 1500 caribou scattered among other popula-

tions in the shrinking and fragmenting British Columbia ecosystem. The solution hinges on restoring and reconnecting the landscape. Can the ecosystem rebound? A voice from the film pleads that while that will not happen in our lifetime, it could in "somebody's...IF WE WANT IT BAD ENOUGH."

In 2009, the Selkirk caribou population was 46; 27 were counted in 2012 and 18 in 2014.

You can see a photo of the remaining 11 to the left.

A trailer for the film can be

found at: <https://laststandfilm.org/>

The film's associate producer, Marcus Renerson, will attend the event as emcee and host of the screening, which will feature breathtaking scenery...something in grave danger on many fronts.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this FREE event. Refresh your soul, open your eyes, and challenge yourself to make your opinion heard.

The Parker Room is in YVC's Deccio Building on the northeast side of the campus. Parking available on 12th Ave.

Hope to see you there.

Toppenish NWR CBC (continued from page 4)

might attribute this to a complete absence of snow anywhere in the count circle.

Several "mountain" species were recorded including five Steller's Jays at the Bush house, a well-treed enclave near Zillah. Jeff Kozma has noted a near-complete failure of Garry Oak acorns in the Cascade foothills and perhaps this is one reason these raucous birds have put in a significant appearance in Toppenish and Yakima this winter. Pine Siskins were another "Bush House specialty." Purple Finches, another finch and breeder in lush riparian habitat along the base of the east slopes of the Cascades can usually be found in the numerous ash trees at the Mount Adams Golf Course, but this year could not be found. Finally, Brown Creeper, another species of the conifer forests, was counted, for only the seventh time in the count's history.

As is usual, the Dry Creek hikers, who do an impressive

day-long trek amidst the basalt cliffs south of Toppenish Ridge, added several species not found by the other teams such as Rock and Canyon Wrens, and Hairy Woodpecker. They focused on Bushtit, a species of localized occurrence in Yakima County (and indeed anywhere east of the Cascade crest) often found along Dry Creek in the past but none were noted despite their valiant effort. I attribute this to the continued degradation of the habitat by the thousands of feral horses on the Yakama Indian Reservation.

Many thanks to all participants who contributed to this count, braving the gloom and cold at dawn but persevering and completing a pretty darn reasonable count! And a heartfelt thanks to Debie and Ron Brown who hosted the apres-count tally get together at their lovely home on Konnowac Pass.

— Andy Stepniewski —

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)
 __ 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 membership questions, contact Joy McKinney at joycatbird@gmail.com or 698-4110.

2017 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

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			YVAS Facebook	(http://www.facebook.com/yakimaaudubon/?fref=ts)	



Psst....Have you heard? 2018 has been designated as the year of the bird.

How so you ask?

Well in the latest Audubon magazine, David Yarnold, CEO/PRESIDENT, AUDUBON, states that the charismatic editor-in-chief of National Geographic magazine (Susan Goldberg) called and asked about an alliance between the two organizations to declare 2018 as The Year of the Bird. What if other organizations could come together and use all their storytelling expertise to elevate birds and the important place they have in our ecosystems?

After all in 2018, we mark the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most powerful and important bird-protection law ever passed. In honor of this milestone, nature lovers around the world are joining forces to celebrate the “Year of the Bird” and commit to protecting birds today and for the next hundred years

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and BirdLife International were quickly aboard as lead co-partners resulting in dozens of other organizations lending support for the project. During the entire year, Audubon and Nat Geo will feature stories and stunning photography from around the world.



Above photos from www.birdyourworld.org

But the Year of the Bird isn't a passive exercise – you, me, all of us have a critical role to play. Suggestions and simple actions will be outlined to help protect birds, spread joy and inspire countless among us. To this end, a collaborative web site will be created at: www.birdyourworld.org. Once up and running, it should be great.

National Geographic magazine is renowned for its color photography. The Year of the Bird issue is no exception! For a taste, go to: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/projects/year-of-the-bird/>

Once you get past the drop dead image of a Painted Bunting at the site, be sure to scroll all the way to the bottom where you can explore stories from the other three lead partners. Audubon features How Birds Bind Us. The BirdLife International link explores How Small Actions Can Make a Big Difference. Finally, Cornell Lab, as, after all it is a new year, offers 6 Resolutions to Help You Bird Your World. Resolution number 6 at the link is simply, “Pay it forward. As the weather gets nicer and the birds more colorful, invite a friend to go birding with you. Lead a bird watching trip. Join a local or national bird group.”

Now you don't have to read all the articles in one sitting (though I can't imagine why not), but just remember that the link is waiting for you right here in the online January Crier. Better yet, bookmark it on your browser.

While exploring content on the Nat Geo link, be sure to click on “Count Me In”. You merely enter your email address to join nature lovers from around the world in making 2018 the Year of the Bird. Each month you will be sent one simple action you can take to make a difference for birds and for the planet.

Why bother? When I first started seeking birds at the turn of the century (18 years ago folks), with a little guidance and effort I could go out into Yakima County and with a reasonable effort, I could find a Ferruginous Hawk, a Burrowing Owl, a Bobolink and a Sage Grouse. Last year in Yakima County, I did not have the thrill of seeing any of those species. Did you? Back then Evening Grosbeaks would come to my backyard feeder by the dozens...rare now is the visit of one or two.

According to Washington Audubon, 189 climate-sensitive bird species occur in Washington. How many will wink out without being enjoyed by future generations? If you take the “Count Me In” pledge and only complete one action in the coming year, you will have done something.

If we love birds, we must tune into 2018 The Year of the Bird!

--Richard Repp--

Last year (2017), did you see any or all of the species pictured below in Yakima County?

How many of these four species will still be found in Yakima County in 2050?



**Female Bobolink by
Jan Gano**



**Evening Grosbeak
George Valhakis**



**Ferruginous Hawk by
Mike Roper**



**Burrowing Owl by
Jan Gano**

2018 YEAR OF THE BIRD PARTNERS



Joined by more than 100 organizations that work to protect birds and their habitats.

Coming Attractions:

Jan 25 Chapter Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

Jan 28 Horse Heaven Hills field trip

Feb 17 Winter Waterfowl field trip

Feb 16-19 Great Backyard Bird Count