



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

April 2018

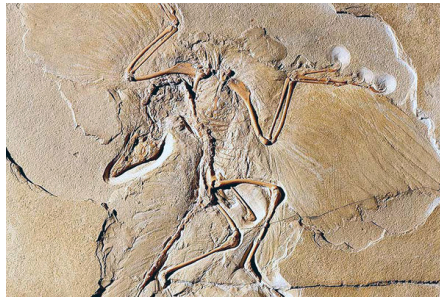


APRIL PROGRAM
PHIL FISCHER

Avian Evolution: How Birds Got to Be Birds with Connie Sidles

Have you ever thought what it would be like to fly like a bird? Soaring over the terrain getting a bird's eye view of the earth below, then descending and negotiating the three dimensional space of a forest, avoiding tree branches and other birds as you fly through the forest canopy tweaking your muscles to finely adjust your flight feathers for precise aerodynamic control and alighting on a suitable perch. But watch out! There is a hawk taking aim at you and you have to sprint into the air and do some serious acrobatic maneuvers to escape alive. That is just one vision I have for terrestrial forest based birds. There are many other types of birds with different life styles such as marine birds, grassland birds, and desert birds. This month we get to hear how birds got to be the way they are.

Let master birder and author Connie Sidles take you back in time when dinosaurs roamed the Earth and Nature began



to experiment with a new approach to flight: birds. Exciting new fossils of extraordinary detail are being found in huge numbers in northeast China, dating back to the cusp of time when dinosaurs had begun to evolve into birds. At the same time strange and wondrous, these creatures - and others being discovered all over the world - open our eyes to the ways that evolution has shaped the biome and its birds that we enjoy today.

It's a 99-million-year-old "opposite bird," a chick encased in amber. Opposite birds were an early family of birds that had a shoulder ball-and-socket arrangement opposite to those of modern birds. No opposite birds survived extinction, once modern forms evolved. We don't know exactly why, but I suspect it has to do with flight efficiency.

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

The International Migratory Bird Day is May 12

Any time of year is a great time to get out and see birds, but migration time is when flocks of colorful birds are at their peak, moving along their migratory flyways toward their breeding and wintering grounds.

Since 1993, International Migratory Bird Day has been celebrated during the second weekend in May in the Western Hemisphere. World Migratory Bird Day celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas – bird migration.

For 2018, World Migratory Bird Day celebrates the Year of the Bird and the ways we can help protect birds every day through actions, stories and art.

On Saturday May 12, 2018 we invite you to come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day at the Toppenish NWR from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Activities will include bird banding, guided bird walks,

live raptor program, children's games, and hay rides that travel into parts of the refuge that are normally closed to the public. The bird banding demonstration and first bird walk begin at 8:00 a.m. Bring your binoculars!

The refuge visitor center will be open with children's activities and learning materials. International Migratory Bird Day is an invitation to celebrate and support migratory bird conservation. It was created specifically to highlight the migration of nearly 350 species of migratory birds between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

The day serves as an opportunity to celebrate all the species of birds whose annual movements enliven our lands, waters, and skies. A free event and all are welcome! Mark your calendar now!

— Kerry Turley

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



THIS MONTH'S YVAS CALENDAR

- Apr 26** Audubon Chapter Meeting is at the Yakima Area Arboretum at 7:00 pm.
- May 8** Board Meeting is at the home of Bill Drenguis: 7708 Poplar View Way, Yakima

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.



FROM THE BOARD SCOTT DOWNES

Spring in Yakima County is well underway. As this newsletter lands in your hands, it will already be mid-April and many of our Neotropical migrants have returned, are en route or soon will be. Some migrants return from the southern United States, others from as far as South America. These birds come to make Yakima County their home for the summer and raise their young. Swallows zipping through the air, hummingbirds visiting those spring blooms, bitterns booming and black-necked stilts chattering in the lower valley marshes. Writing this, the words alone make me want to get out.

The months of April and May offer countless opportunities to get out and enjoy the wonderful habitats of Yakima County. Yakima County birdlife in May is amazingly diverse, thanks in large part to the wide variety of habitats we have. Our migration count in early May typically records 190+ species, one of the highest of any county in the state!

To recognize this astonishing diversity and appreciate our returning bird friends, events in April and May are well-timed to showcase the jewels that we have right in our backyard. In this issue, read details on Migratory Bird Day at Toppenish



MEMBERSHIP JOY MCKINNEY

Welcome New Members!

Yakima: Deborah Severtson-Coffin,
Val and Ken Sveinsson

Thank you for renewing your membership!

Grandview: Janet White

Yakima: Cowiche Canyon Conservancy,
Julie Johnson, Bob and Darlene Fay, Lee and Edith Hunsperger, Terry Davis, Earl and Dorothy Derry, Rick Mains, Bob and Carrie Chicken, Susan Paoella

Selah: Gus and Mary Pooler, Jerry and Margaret Turner, Clara Eustis

Sunnyside: Lorri Gilmur-Dilman

NWR during the second Saturday in May. You can also find further information about the Birdathon/migration count and how to participate/contribute along with details on the Wenas Audubon Campout during Memorial Day weekend. This annual event brings Audubon members from around the state to our backyard to experience the astounding diversity of habitats and birds that we get to call our neighbors!

As with all Audubon chapters, all events happen because of volunteers. That is the case with field trips and events mentioned above. I would like to challenge my fellow members that if you appreciate these events, you can either volunteer to help staff such events or at least attend. Without participation and leaders we won't have these events into the future, which would be a shame. Field trips have been planned for 2018 through June, but we are still in need of some events for our fall season. Why not step up and make your mark by leading a group of your fellow Audubon members to your favorite birding spot? To be a leader, you don't have to be an expert, just a willingness to organize a group and show them a unique area that you find special!

Enjoy our wondrous Yakima County when filled with spring bird song, from the snow-capped mountains to the dry shrub-steppe and marshes of the Toppenish Valley and all the way to the Columbia. See you in the field!

Open House Every Sunday at the Toppenish Wildlife Refuge

Spread across the Yakima Valley, Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge offers a broad collection of habitats, and thus, species. Natural and managed wetlands, mixed with shrub-steppe and streams, provide homes for just about every species found in the Columbia Basin. The wildlife, in turn, attracts visitors, mainly hunters and bird watchers. The refuge is well-known for its waterfowl hunting opportunities, and those same waterfowl, along with scores of species of waterbirds, shorebirds and passerines, draw in "birders" of all

ages, sizes, skills, and curiosity.

Open House at Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) will be held every Sunday through June from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm. The most popular attraction so far this year has been the great-horned owl nest where visitors have delighted in views of the fuzzy owlets that are already peeking out of the nest. Soon the focus will turn to the many migrating birds that use this great area. Be sure to bring friends, children and/or shut-ins.

— Kerry Turley —



CONSERVATION
ANDY STEPNIEWSKI

Cheatgrass labeled #2 in list of Harmful Invasive Species

Most Yakima Valley Audubon Society members live within sight of scenic east-west trending ridges, part of the Yakima Fold Belt, which give the Yakima Valley its distinctive topography. Much of the year these ridges show a distinctive buff color, pale green for only a few months in spring during the brief period of growth in the shrub-steppe ecosystem.

The pale brown color comes mostly from dead or dormant grasses, either annuals that have finished their annual cycle of germination, growth, flowering, seeding, and death, or perennials that have flowered and seeded and gone dormant. If you get out on foot to explore our ridges and have a basic knowledge of the various grass species, you will doubtless soon appreciate that invasive weeds are abundant. Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), native to southeast Europe and southwest Asia, stands out as pervasive on nearly all our ridges. This is particularly true on south-facing slopes. In fact, on many lower elevation south-facing slopes in this part of the Columbia Basin, weeds can form the dominant component of the flora. North-facing aspects, by contrast, have retained their cover of native grasses to a much greater extent, having shown resilience to the onslaught of weedy invasives.

Invasive species pose an enormous environmental challenge not just locally, but throughout the western states. Experts in rangeland ecology have documented how these invaders have altered the region's forests and rangelands, water, and agriculture. If left unchecked, these invasive species permanently alter ecosystems. Further, the surviving native species are negatively affected. Local economies that depend upon these lands are challenged. The Nature Conservancy has estimated that invasive species management costs over \$120 billion a year and affects more than 100 million acres – an area the size of California. Additionally, they judge invasive species have contributed to the decline of 42 percent of threatened



Cheatgrass with its familiar nodding seed head.
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski



Cheatgrass and Rabbitbrush north of Moxee.
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski

and endangered species. Land managers increasingly devote enormous energy to combat the huge number of invading species with only limited resources.

With invasives posing such enormous environmental costs, up to-date information is critical to plan and prioritize management decisions in attempts to restore ecosystems. Individual states have developed invasive species lists and risk assessments. Until now, however, no such list has existed for the entire American West. The Western Governors' Association (WGA) has

addressed this need by requesting feedback on invasive species from biologists in WGA member states. Participants compiled the "Top 50 Invasive Species in the West." This compilation of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species includes the well-known cheatgrass, Quagga Mussels, salt cedar and the Emerald Ash Borer. The list also includes less well known, but still serious, examples such as leafy spurge, Red shiner, Russian knapweed, and Golden algae. This first-of-its-kind risk assessment by WGA will allow land managers to better understand the regional-level risks posed by terrestrial and aquatic invasive species and improve regional management actions. Also, the efforts of the WGA's Invasive Species Data Management Project will be used to populate the association's "West-wide Invasive Species Risk Assessment," created to help guide future work to battle invasive species. Results of the survey placed **Cheatgrass Number Two** in the "short" list of **the West's most impactful 25 invasive species!**

Efforts are ongoing by scientists to restore our hillsides to a native flora. Biological controls are just one strategy being investigated. The challenge is huge and resources to accomplish the task meager. If successful, benefits locally might be a more hopeful outlook for the imperiled Greater Sage-Grouse and many, many other species in the shrub-steppe, as well other ecosystems on the Cascade east slopes.



FIELD TRIPS SCOTT DOWNES

April 28 (Saturday). Sportsman State Park. Join Joe and Karen Zook for a morning trip to Sportsman State Park in Yakima. We will be looking (and listening) for whatever birds are there. Birds we have found there in the past include Yellow-headed and Red-winged Blackbirds, Virginia Rail, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Wood Duck, Downy Woodpecker, Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Great-horned Owl, swallows, and House Wren, to name a few. If you have never heard a Yellow-headed Blackbird sing, you may be in for a crazy treat! Like any birding trip, you never know what you are going to see or hear. Please contact the Zook's via email: gadzooks7@charter.net or phone 509-225- 9494 (email is preferred) for meeting time and place. Bring binoculars, scopes if you have them and maybe a light snack. Insect repellent is advised.

May 4-6 (Friday-Sunday). 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, Ahtanum, Yakima Training Center, Toppenish and Wenas areas. Some teams start before dawn with owling, while most teams go all or most of the day. One difference this year is teams can pick a day that weekend to maximize weather and schedules for their area. If you are interested in participating, contact Scott Downes (downess@charter.net) or (509-a 833-8331. If you don't want to join a team but believe you will be out and would like to include your sightings, contact Scott to see how to contribute.

May 12 (Sat). Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day at Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Activities will include bird banding, guided bird walks, live raptor program, children's games, and hay rides. See article in this Crier for more information or contact Kerry Turley at: kdturley@gmail.com

May 19 (Sat). Bethel Ridge Owls. Scott D. will lead an evening owl trip to Bethel Ridge. This trip will explore the forested slopes of Bethel Ridge Road. Target species include Flammulated Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Barred Owl and Common Poorwill with the possibility of Great Horned Owl and Long-eared Owl. Trip will leave Yakima around 7:00 pm, getting to Bethel Ridge near dusk. Trip likely getting back around midnight or slightly after. Dress in layers for varied weather. Some owls may be heard only. Playback may be used. Binoculars useful if owls are cooperative for looks, scopes probably not. Trip is limited to 8 participants, so is likely to fill early. Contact Scott for meeting place and time if interested in attending: Scott Downes (downess@charter.net).

May 25-28 (Friday-Monday). Memorial Day Wenas Campout. The annual Memorial Day weekend Wenas Audubon Campout. Located 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, but a Discover Pass is required. Drive up for a day or camp. All are welcome. Visit the Wenas Audubon website (www.wenasaudubon.org) for directions and complete information.

Aug 24-26 (Friday-Sunday). Washington Coast Pelagic Boat Trip and Shorebirding. This is an extraordinary opportunity to view seabirds in deep waters beyond the Continental Shelf off the Washington coast as well as migrating shorebirds along the coastal estuaries. It involves two nights in a motel or camping (August 24 and 25) and a nine-hour boat trip (\$150.00) on a Westport Seabirds Pelagic Trip. Late August is a very good time to view a high diversity of bird species not normally seen from shore such as albatrosses, shearwaters, fulmars, storm-petrels, skuas, jaegers, terns, and gulls. Marine mammals such as whales, dolphins, and porpoises are also often seen. Late August is also excellent for lots of migrating shorebirds. More than 20 species are possible! Friday afternoon and after the boat trip on Saturday and again Sunday morning we will scour the top shorebird locations in the Grays Harbor area. Contact Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net) or 949-7404 for more information about the trip, lodging or to sign up. **You must book soon so he can reserve spaces on the boat. Early reservations are a must for both the boat trip and accommodations in August.**

In Memory of Linda Knutson

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society and the Yakima Area Arboretum lost an enthusiastic supporter on March 6, 2018, when Linda Knutson passed away after a year-long battle with kidney cancer, which she faced with incredible courage and dignity.

Linda and her husband, Ron Sell, created a spectacular four-acre garden, which was among the finest private gardens in Washington State. Sculptures created by Linda and Ron lead visitors along the many paths that wind through the grounds. It is a place of great beauty and peace, an inspiration to those who visit. Garden clubs from around the Northwest tour their garden every year, getting ideas from a person who would have to be called a “garden guru”.

Linda was also a very creative and gifted chef and delighted in treating her guests to delicious dinners. Linda and Ron donated “Dinner in the Garden” to the YVAS Christmas Banquet Silent Auction for many years. Those were amazing evenings of great food and wine, every course served in a different area of the garden, each with its own water feature!

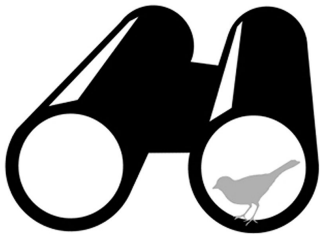
Touring the garden was a highlight of the evening. The dinners also raised substantial amounts of money for the auction.

The Yakima Area Arboretum also benefited from Linda’s talents when she helped manage the plant sale every spring. She researched which plants to buy, located the nurseries that had the plants and ordered them. She and Ron also drove to nurseries in Western Washington and Oregon to pick up many of the plants. Linda enjoyed offering advice about plants to the people who attended the sale. Many gardens in Central Washington were improved by Linda’s advice, artistry, and wisdom.

Linda enjoyed participating in the Christmas Bird Count. She liked to keep up the tally sheet and delighted in taking an active part in finding the birds.

Linda Knutson was a rare gem and will be sorely missed. Her legacy lives on in the positive impact she made on all of the lives she touched.

BIRDATHON—DOLLARS FROM DONORS, BIRDS FROM BIRDERS



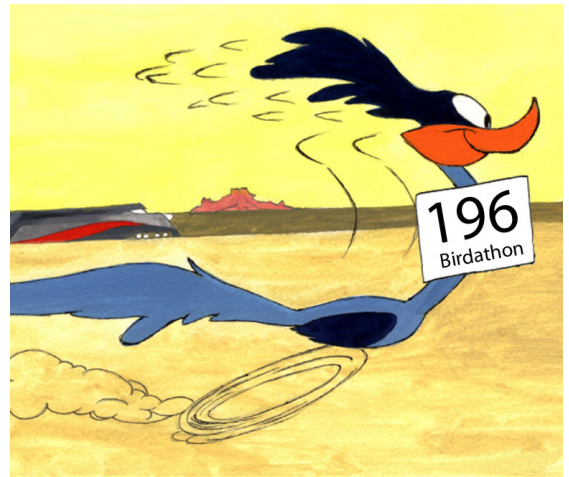
BIRDATHON

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 4 thru 6** and will entail a 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? .

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.



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

Toppenish NWR to Fort Simcoe field trip on March 17

A big group of 17 Yakima Valley Audubon Society members and guests headed out to the Lower Yakima Valley, targeting the spring waterfowl migration, raptors, and early spring arriving birds. The weather was good, coolish as is normal, but thankfully, not too windy.

Beside US-97, on the approach to the refuge, a pretty group of 15 or so Tundra Swans swam serenely in ponds by the side of the highway. Once in the refuge, we assembled at Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge headquarters where a Great Horned Owl sat quietly on its nest in a tree above the parking area. A short walk around the display pond and at several stops along Pumphouse Road added eight other species of waterfowl. Also along Pumphouse Road, we added raptors to our list: Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel and Prairie Falcon. We tallied a couple of Northern Shrikes, regular winter residents hereabouts. Mid-March is when this species typically migrates north. A beautiful sky-blue Mountain Bluebird on a fencepost by an open field was a surprise, a species rarely noted in the Lower Yakima Valley. Also surprising was a group of three Rock Wrens on the "soft cliffs" by the edge of the Indian Nation dump. A stop in the sagelands was good for scope views of a Sagebrush Sparrow, an early species to migrate north into south-central Washington. Tree Swallows, another early migrant, were about, too.

Moving west to Lateral C Road, we kept our ears and eyes tuned for both Red-shouldered Hawk and Black Phoebe, both rarities noted there this winter. We missed both these species, but we did spot several Eurasian Wigeon males, lovely birds indeed, with their reddish heads, pinkish breasts, and pale gray bodies. Tiny Cackling Geese mingled

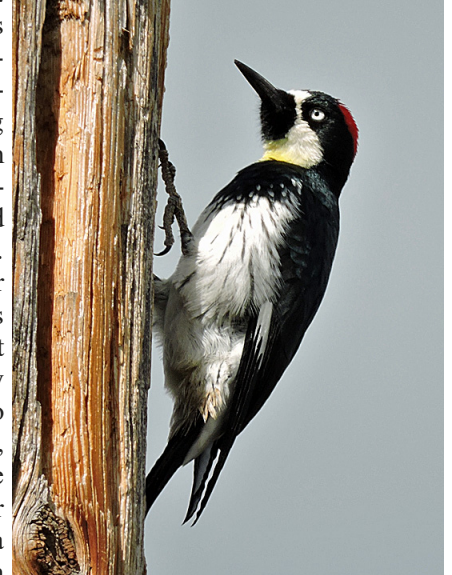
with larger Canada Geese out in the wet fields here, too.

Our lunch stop was at Fort Simcoe amidst the beautiful Oregon White Oaks.

Along with the always beautiful and charismatic Lewis's Woodpeckers, fly-catching in the afternoon sun was the Acorn Woodpecker, first reported here in mid-January. This very rare visitor from the south gave us great views as it perched on a utility pole, then shifted to high oak branches, from which it made forays out into the air for bugs. California Scrub-Jays posed on distant oak boughs, but we could not relocate the Lesser Goldfinches, another visitor from the south noted here earlier in the winter.

Our trip list was 47 species, a nice total and a warm-up for the steady influx of spring arrivals over the next two months.

— Andy Stepniewski —



**Acorn Woodpecker
at Fort Simcoe
Photo by Denny Granstrand**

Raptors enthral arboretum class participants

The raptor class room at the Yakima Area Arboretum was full-to-capacity with over 40 attending March 24. The class was presented in three parts. Yakima Valley Audubon Society members first presented a classroom session on both diurnal and nocturnal raptors of our area, with a handout and PowerPoint.

Next, we went outside where local falconers displayed their live birds including a Great-horned Owl, a very talkative American Kestrel, a hooded and thus sedate Peregrine Falcon, an immature Red-tailed Hawk, and finally, a beautiful Harris's Hawk. Everybody present was captivated by this demonstration, from beginning raptor enthusiasts to seasoned birders, plus school age kids.

Finally, on the 25th, many of the participants braved blustery early spring weather to meet at the Toppenish Refuge to try their



**Mike Roper shows his Harris's Hawk
to two class participants
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski**

hands (binoculars) at finding and identifying real birds. Many raptors cooperated, including a Golden Eagle at the start of the trip, several displaying Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, and three different Great Horned Owls on their nests.

Thanks to class presenters Mike Roper, Denny Granstrand, and Andy Stepniewski. A big thank you goes to falconers Steve Seibert, Jean Ragland, Leo Dominguez and Mike Roper. Thanks also to Colleen and Garrett at the Arboretum who helped with registration and publicity.

Yakima Audubon will present another class next year for the Arboretum, so let the board know if you have something you would like to learn about or are an expert in teaching.

— Ellen Stepniewski —



2018 "YEAR OF THE BIRD"

www.birdyourworld

If you have not been following the "Year of the Bird" activity sponsored by the National Audubon Society, the National Geographic Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birdlife International (plus over 100 supporting groups), you are missing out BIG time. Whether your primary focus is on birds or a more sweeping view of nature or a more cosmic concern on mankind's assault on planet Earth and the outlook for generations yet unborn, there are many stories accompanied by astounding images just waiting for you to click on the website listed in the title of the article. And we have another eight months ahead loaded with more gifts...all free and yours for the taking.

Locally, right here in the Yakima Valley, I hope to ignite some enthusiasm for two birds that have touched me with the sights and sounds of spring each April.

First up is the White-crowned Sparrow. I realize that these sparrows do maintain a sizeable population year-round in the valley and many of you may be entertained by them at your feeders during the dead of winter. However, it is in April when White-crowned Sparrows arrive by the countless thousands to the Yakima Valley as noted by Andy Stepniwski in his Wildlife Moment in the Yakima Herald a few years back.

At press time, a few have shown up in my residential neighborhood which is close to Eisenhower High School. Andy's article stated they can be found "...almost everywhere with brush at lower elevations in spring. For a couple weeks about mid-April, they become easy to spot at feeders in residential yards. By May 10, most all have flown north. They reappear in large numbers again in September and diminish by October. In

winter, most depart for winter to the American southwest. Some however, stay to winter in weedy areas of the Yakima Valley."

Have some doubts as to the identity of those scads of yellow-billed birds bouncing through your grass and shrubs? Look closely and use this tip from Andy: "White-crowned sparrows are distinctive because of their black-and-white striped head pattern. Though striking, it has cryptically patterned brown upperparts and pale gray underparts, making this sparrow tough to see sometimes."

Those of you blessed with effective hearing ranges may also be tipped off by their vocalizations. "Male white-crowned sparrows sing throughout the year except on the coldest winter days. Their song has a slightly mournful quality with a clear beginning whistle, followed by trills and buzzes."

Now for those of us whose hearing range misses high frequency bird songs, the second species that assures me that spring has arrived bombards the air space above wetland habitats common in the Yakima Valley. As stated in the Birds of North America Online (BNAO), Wilson's Snipe, "...during spring migration, and particularly on the breeding territory, this species engages in spectacular flight displays, during which individuals produce a haunting, tremulous sound (Winnow) with their outspread outer tail feathers." Winnow?? To me it sounds more like crazed laughter emanating from high above mocking any effort to lay eyeballs on the prankster.

It is said that Wilson's

Snipe breeds wherever a sufficiently wide strip of bog, marsh, or swamp exists. It requires soft organic soil rich in food organisms just below

Continued on page 8



Adult White-crowned Sparrow



Immature White-crowned Sparrow

2018: Year of the Bird” continued from page 7

surface, with clumps of vegetation offering both cover and good view of approaching predators. Our valley is rich with marshy edges of ponds, streams and rivers that provide suitable habitat; that said, this Snipe will avoid marshes with tall, dense vegetation such as cattails, tules, and reeds.

I hear these birds every spring on the road past Wenas Lake and in the flooded fields along Lateral C and over the Zimmerman Ponds at the south end of Lateral A. Check ‘em out if you are hankering for a good laugh.

So what does it look like? Good luck as this is an elusive species; the usual view of a Wilson's Snipe is as it flushes from grass or sedges, escaping in rapid, zigzag flight while uttering a rasping *scaipe*. A Sibley field guide, always sparse on words, describes it as “dark brownish overall, with bold cream-colored stripes on back. Very stocky and long-billed, easily distinguished from dowitchers by more crouching posture, shorter legs, and darker color.” BNAO chimes in that

“the eyes of the snipe are set remarkably far back on its head, providing full vision to both sides and a binocular overlap to the rear. This arrangement enables a bird to detect the approach of a predator while its beak is fully buried in the substrate.”

And that it is why that crazed laughter from wetland spring skies makes hearing a snipe less challenging than seeing one. Fortunately, for all their cryptic coloration, this species also seems to enjoy posing on a wooden fence post emulating a frozen metal statue. Click on the Resources tab on YVAS homepage and then browse the photo collections of local photographers. Often as not, photos of a Snipe will be of a post topper. Should you tire of shorebird images, wander through the delightful folders each photographer has generously shared with us.

Finally, do not delay in checking out www.birdyourworld.com. Countless adventures, tips and suggestions on improving our world await you there.



Wilson's Snipe on a fence post along Lateral C



Wilson's Snipe in its preferred habitat

— Richard Repp —



Earth Day at YVCC



YVCC is again planning to celebrate Earth Day on May 1 from 11 - 2. Yakima Valley Audubon will again bring a display about shrub-steppe habitats in our area and their importance. We need help to staff the booth! If you would like to help with this event, please contact Ellen Stepniewski 509-731-6805 or email steppie@nwinfo.net.

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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	Phil Fischer (pcfischer@gmail.com)	731-0211	Special Committees:		
	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500	Bird Rehabilitator	Connie Hughes (owlbirdlady@gmail.com)	457-5661
	Ken Tolonen (8rivard@gmail.com)	965-4584	Bird Reports	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
			Social	Nan Ide	
Standing (Voting) Committee Chairs:			Webmaster	Reneé Navarrete (renee@digitalcardboard.com)	654-9646
Refuge Keeper	Kerry Turley (kdturley@gmail.com)	837-6930	Website	www.yakimaaudubon.org	
Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (bbirder247@aol.com)	965-1134	Toppenish CBC	Eric Heisey (magicman32@rocketmail.com)	
Conservation	Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	949-7404	Yakima Valley CBC	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	952-2550
			YVAS Email	birds@yakimaaudubon.org	
			YVAS Facebook	http://www.facebook.com/yakimaaudubon	

Yakima Valley Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2823
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Coming Attractions:

- April 26 Chapter Meeting - 7:00 p.m
- April 28 Sportsmans State Park field trip
- May 4-6 Yakima County Birdathon
- May 12 International Migratory Bird Day
- May 19 Bethel Ridge Owls field trip