



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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MAY PROGRAM

PHIL FISCHER

Seattle's Adaptable Urban Cooper's Hawks

You would think someone born in Cooper Hospital and raised in Audubon, NJ would be a child prodigy birder. But Ed's mid-life conversion involved taking Bud Anderson's Hawk ID class in 1991. He went on to volunteer on Fall Migration hawk banding projects in the Goshutes Mountain, NV, Florida Keys and Cape May, NJ, in addition to Diamond Head, Chelan Ridge and Entiat Ridge in Washington State. He currently manages two research projects – one on Urban Nesting Peregrine Falcons and the other on Seattle's Cooper's Hawks. He volunteered on Falcon Research Group's 17-year study of nesting Peregrine Falcons in the San Juan Islands and just completed his 24th year monitoring & banding nesting Peregrines in the Seattle area. For the last 6 years he has worked with a group of volunteers studying the expanding urban population of Cooper's Hawks in Seattle. He holds a Federal Master Raptor Banding Permit. He is a graduate of the Seattle Audubon Master Birder Program and a recovering lister.



Ed Deal with a juvie Cooper's Hawk

You're most likely to see one prowling above a forest edge or field using just a few stiff wingbeats followed by a glide. With their smaller lookalike, the Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawks make for famously tricky identifications. Both species are sometimes unwanted guests at bird feeders, looking for an easy meal (but not one of sunflower seeds).

Ed Deal's program topic is "Seattle's Adaptable Urban Cooper's Hawks". In the last 25 years, Cooper's Hawks have colonized many N. American cities and suburbs. Ed will discuss the Seattle study results as well as give an overview of the breeding cycle of this once elusive accipiter.

Here are a few fascinating facts about Cooper's Hawks snipped from Cornell Lab's *All About Birds* website:

Among the bird world's most skillful fliers, Cooper's Hawks are common woodland hawks that tear through cluttered tree canopies in high speed pursuit of other birds.

Once thought averse to towns and cities, Cooper's Hawks are now

fairly common urban and suburban birds. Some studies show their numbers are actually higher in towns than in their natural habitat, forests. Cities provide plenty of Rock Pigeon and Mourning Dove prey. Though one study in Arizona found a downside to the high-dove diet: Cooper's Hawk nestlings suffered from a parasitic disease they acquired from eating dove meat.

A Cooper's Hawk captures a bird with its feet and kills it by repeated squeezing. Falcons tend to kill their prey by biting it, but Cooper's Hawks hold their catch away from the body until it dies.

Life is tricky for male Cooper's Hawks. As in most hawks, males are significantly smaller than their mates. Males tend to be submissive to females. Males build the nest, then provide nearly all the food to females and young over the next 90 days before the young fledge.

The oldest recorded Cooper's Hawk was a male and at least 20 years, 4 months old. He had been banded in California in 1986, and was found in Washington in 2006.

For more information on accipters (and other birds) check out Cornell Labs site: www.allaboutbirds.org

Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 24, at 7:00 to see this presentation at the Yakima Area Arboretum

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



MEMBERSHIP
JOY MCKINNEY

Welcome New Members

Yakima: Kerry Hager

Thanks for renewing your membership!

Goldendale: Robert and Mary-Lane Baker

Naches: David Churchill

Seattle: Teri Martine

Yakima: Kim Cody, Alice Presson, Vi Whitmire,
Connie Hughes

**Fieldtrip planning meeting –
Input needed**

In January fieldtrips for YVAS were planned through July. During the June board meeting, fieldtrips for August-November will be planned. Some were penciled in during the January meeting, but we are in need of more trips, particularly for October and November. If you know of a place that you think members would enjoy visiting, please send me the details, Scott Downes, downes@charter.net, so we can add the trip to the list for the fall.

“Hunting for birds” with Cub Scouts

A few years ago, YVAS obtained a grant to buy some life-sized bird models. We used these for events, including the Yakima Greenway’s “Kiddin’ Around” program. This year, when we received a request from a Terrace Heights Cub Scout group for something educational for one of their meetings, we recreated a similar event at the Yakima Area Arboretum.

Yakima Audubon volunteers hid the bird models and some life-sized photos in the arboretum. The scouts had a picture field guide of just these birds and were turned loose to hunt for birds, identify them and check them off on their list. After that, they moved to the bird blind to watch real birds. With so many parents and siblings of all ages, as well as rambunctious Cub Scouts the event was noisy and energetic as the scouts spread out through the area. At the bird blind, watching real birds, it was amazing to see so many of them attentive. Sierra Downes (daughter of Scott and Melisa), an avid, competent young birder, was one of the volunteers, and the young scouts really seemed to connect with her.

A true scout salute to volunteers Bill Drenguis, Denny Granstrand, Kerry Turley, Sierra and Scott Downes and Andy Stepniewski for their guidance and patience.



Birds’ future hope take a peek.

---Ellen Stepniewski---

Sportsman State Park Field Trip

Twelve of us spent the morning of April 28 enjoying the birds, plants and scenery of Sportsman State Park. We started off witnessing what appeared to be a mating display between two Ospreys. That was a first for all of us.

As we moved on through the park, we saw and/or heard 27 species. On the viewing platform over the marsh, we had great views of a Sora. It even provided nice photo ops! We watched as it would dart out from the cattails, walk around and bit and then disappear again, only to reappear later in another spot. We must have spent half an hour watching this bird, along with the Yellow-headed and Red-winged blackbirds in the Marsh.

Other highlights were Pelicans soaring overhead and a very active Cooper’s hawk, which was very loudly kek-kek-kek as he flew over.

Although it was a short trip, it was fun. We hope to do another trip like this soon.



**Sora caught flat-footed
By Mike Roper**

---Karen Zook---



FIELD TRIPS SCOTT DOWNES

- June 9 (Saturday)** – Oak Creek Canyon. Oak Creek Canyon is an under-birded area with lots of potential. Several years ago, a Chestnut-sided Warbler and Eastern Phoebe were found there! Regular nesting species include Lewis's Woodpecker, Cassin's Vireo, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak and Lazuli Bunting. We will traverse a variety of habitats, ending in the coniferous forest. Please contact field trip leader Denny Granstrand at dgranstrand@gmail.com for meeting location and time.
- 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.
- August 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 Friday afternoon, after the boat trip on Saturday and again Sunday morning we will scour the top shorebird locations in the Grays Harbor area. Please 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.**

Earth Fest at Yakima Valley College



Bob Chicken (hat) reviews info with students

In the preface of “A Sand County Almanac”, Aldo Leopold wrote: “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land to survive the mechanized impact of man, nor for us to reap from it the esthetic it is capable of contributing to culture.”

Land use was one of the themes of the Earth Fest held in conjunction with Earth Day at Yakima Valley College. With other local outdoor and environmental organizations, Yakima Valley Audubon Society hosted an educational station. In keeping with themes derived from Aldo Leopold’s writing, our booth featured the Shrub-Steppe. We focused on not only what is special about this incredible habitat around us, but embracing enjoying and preserving it.

College students toured the various stations hosted by YVAS and others. All of us who volunteered were impressed by the at-

attention students paid to the messages and felt renewed hope for the future.

Members Bob Chicken and Andy Stepniewski joined me in participating in this event.

---Ellen Stepniewski---

CRIER READERS: Due to the absence of key people involved with the production of our monthly newsletter, this edition has been shortened to four pages. We hope to be back at full strength for our next issue. Thank you for your patience!

----Crier Crew---

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Dead Trees Need Champions Too!!

Arborfest at the Yakima Area Arboretum this year was again a rousing success. Arborfest is a free community event, celebrating Arbor Day, spring, conservation and nature. Championing snags (dead trees) is a natural springboard for celebrating birds and other animals that require snags, as well as educating families on the importance of snags. Yakima Audubon's booth, with a display of photos of common birds that create cavities in snags combined with images other birds and animals that subsequently use those holes, attracted hundreds of kids. The booth also showcased our local habitat with photo collogues and offered information about YVAS.

The cardboard "snag" Renee created was a hit for young children who could climb inside, pretending to be a young woodpecker, and beg for gummi worms. I was amazed at the number of adults attracted to this so they could take a photo of their child inside the snag.



**Button, Button, Who has the button?
Volunteers master the crowd.**

Button making was obviously enjoyed by the kids. They colored pictures of birds and had their artwork transformed into a button they could wear. It was encouraging to see multiple children putting a date on their button as they have a collection of those they have made each year.



**Two youngsters show off
their artwork .**

Who were the volunteers who made this happen?? Our grateful thanks go to Bill Drenguis, Chris Reid, Denny Granstrand, Dotty Armstrong, Renee Navarette, Silvia Ernst, Susan Paoella, Susan Vlahakis, Vera Backstrom and Andy Stepniewski.

If you missed this event, plan to attend and/or help next April. Smiles and fun are contagious.

---Ellen Stepniewski---