



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.

Volume 47, Number 07

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

August 2018



PROGRAM
ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI

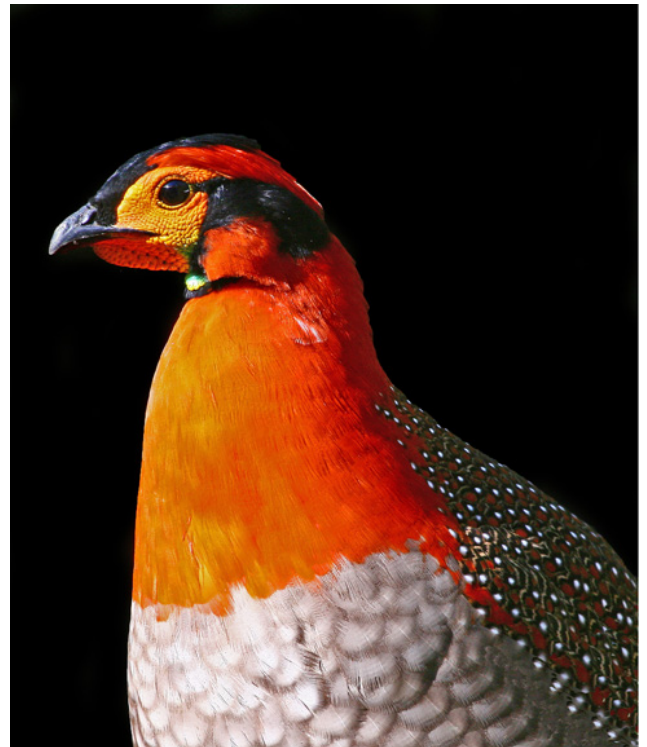
The World's Most Colorful Birds with Jim Christensen

Jim Christiansen has traveled to many parts of the world on personal quests to explore beautiful natural areas and their wildlife. Jim has documented his travels with countless photographs. From his travels to all continents except Europe and Antarctica, he has amassed an extraordinary collection of photos of beautiful birds. In this program, you'll be treated to, in Jim's estimation, the most beautiful of the beautiful. Included in this armchair tour you'll see images of gaudy pheasants, colorful waterfowl, bee eaters, rollers, iridescent hummingbirds, kingfishers, toucans, and the intricate breeding patterns on pelicans, among many others.

Jim was a high school science teacher for 37 years in

biology, 32 of those in Naches. He was a much admired and respected teacher. During his summer vacations, he traveled widely, studying nature and photographing his subjects. One story he told me was of his first trip to Africa where for 40 days he camped in his car using his rental vehicle for a blind to photograph the spectacular African big game mammals, birds, and other critters. On that tour he had a number of mis-adventures with this vehicle, but, we're most happy to see, Jim survived.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, August 23, 7:00 pm, at the Yakima Area Arboretum, to savor another of Jim's beautiful programs!



A sampling of some of Jim's wonderful photos:
(clockwise from upper left) Paradise Tanager, Blythe's Tragopan and Curl-crested Aracari.

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



**THIS MONTH'S YVAS
CALENDAR**

- Aug 23 YVAS Chapter Meeting** at the Yakima Area Arboretum, 1401 Arboretum Dr., Yakima, at **7:00 pm.**
- Sep 11 Board Meeting**—location to be determined

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.



**MEMBERSHIP
JOY MCKINNEY**

Wel- **come New Members!**
Pat and Kathy Kinney, Yakima

Thanks for renewing your membership:

- Naches:** Peggy Briskey, John and Peggy Eutenenier, Doris Robinson
- Seattle:** Jennifer Kauffman
- Selah:** Connie Buckley, Marcia and Steve Shotwell
- Toppenish:** Don and Jane Gargas
- Union Gap:** Larry Martin
- Yakima:** Marjorie Henderson, Rich and Deb Mathieu, George and Susan Vlahakis, Susie Lattomus, Scott Downes, Richard Repp, Steve and Grace Shaul, Don Sattler, Daren Ireland, Betty Peterson, Susan Talbott, Becky Drew, Mike and Alice Roper, Agnes Rambeck, Lamont McLachlan, Terry and Sherry Dahlin, George and Delia Roulston, Carol Licht



**FROM THE BOARD
BILL DRENGUIS**

I hope that everyone had a great Summer with at least a few chances to go birding.

However, this is the third Summer in a row where the smoke has greatly affected my enjoyment of the outdoors. We all know that this is a complex issue with the key issues being forest management and global warming. Intellectually, I know that climate is the running average over the last 20 years. Three years does not make this a climate change, but I do not have 20 years to see how things turn out. I do know that living in Yakima is not as attractive because of the smoky Summers.

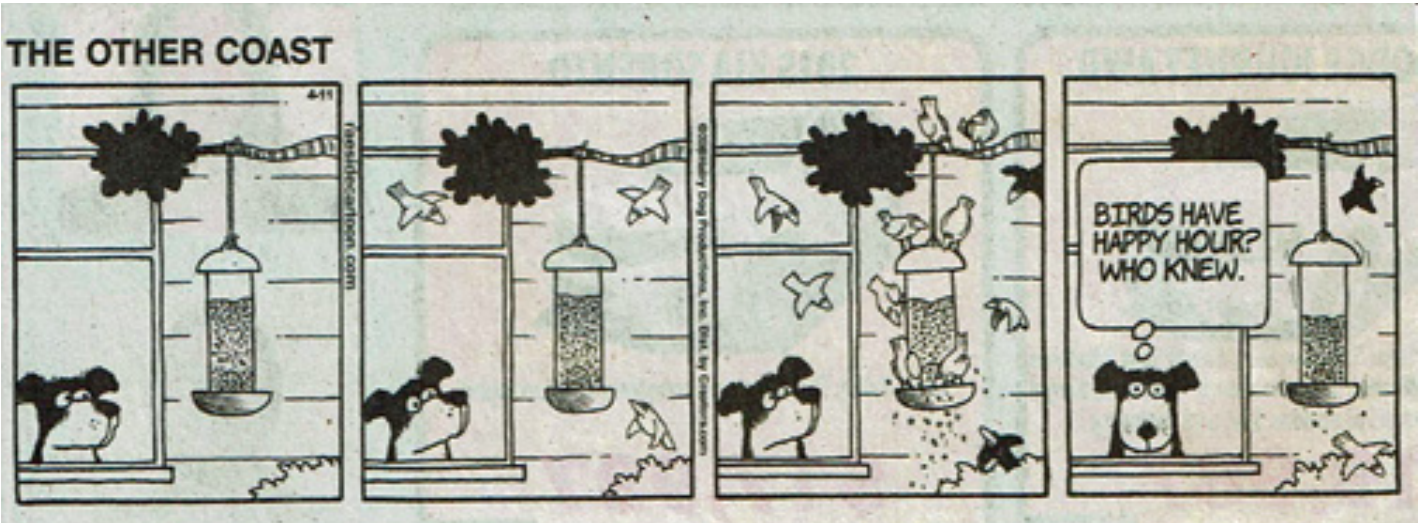
It is easy to complain, and much harder to find solutions. I do not see any leadership at all from Washington DC. (I do not believe that lowering the mileage standards

for cars is going to lower emissions.) At the state level, all I have seen is the upcoming initiative I-1631. This is a "carbon tax" proposal based on a similar "tax" in British Columbia.

For me, it is not an ideal solution; but I do not see a lot of other ideas being presented. I think that it is worth your while to read an article in the 7/2/18 Seattle Times. It is a balanced review written by Hal Bernton. He does a good job of pointing out some shortfalls in I-1631. But I do not see anyone else addressing the problem. (Mr. Google can easily find this for you)

Just my two cents.

Bill (waiting for the Autumn showers)





FIELD TRIPS

SCOTT DOWNES



Sept 8 (Saturday) - Fort Simcoe. We will be carpooling to Fort Simcoe for a morning of birding. The resident Lewis's Woodpeckers are a spectacle and migrating species should be moving through the area. We might even stumble upon something to brag about! Fort Simcoe was established in 1856 and some of the original buildings are still there. The park has large Garry Oak trees that attract the woodpeckers, jays and other species. The first Acorn Woodpecker to be seen in Washington State was found at Fort Simcoe. An Acorn Woodpecker spent January through March this year at the fort attracting and entertaining many birders. Bring binoculars, lunch and snacks, beverages and water. White Swan does have a store and restaurant for those who would like to buy lunch. Plan on being back in Yakima before 3:00. Contact Denny Grandstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com) for meeting place and time.

Sept 15 (Saturday) - Chelan Ridge Hawkwatch. 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. Contact leader Bill Drenguis, 509-965-5808 or bdrenguis@gmail.com for meeting place and time. It should be a very fun day and if you've never witnessed hawk migration, this is an opportunity not to be missed.



**We might get lucky and see
a Northern Goshawk fly by.**

Sept 22 (Saturday) - Sportsman State Park. Join Joe and Karen Zook for a morning trip to Sportsman State Park. Like our April trip, this will only take a couple of hours. We will be looking (and listening) for whatever birds are there. Nesting season is over, and the birds will be quieter this time of year. We hope to get views of the birds that reside in the park most of the year, such as Yellow-rumped Warbler, Wood Duck, Downy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Great Horned Owl, to name a few. We will also keep a look out for birds in their reverse migration and other migrants who may still be in the area. 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.

Oct 6 (Saturday) (backup date of October 13 in case of weather). Bird Banding at the Yakima Arboretum. Jeff Kozma will lead a banding demonstration at the Yakima Arboretum. Jeff will introduce participants to bird capture and banding using mist nets. The goal is to capture birds as they are migrating south through the Yakima Arboretum. Jeff will teach participants various aspects of bird banding including, different mesh/net sizes and their uses, how to remove birds from nets, performing measurements on birds (e.g., weighing, wing chord, bill length, etc), how to age birds, banding codes, affixing bands to legs, etc. The best thing about capturing birds is you never know what might show up in your nets! Dress appropriately for the weather and in layers as mornings can be cool before heating up during the day. A folding camp chair would be good unless you prefer to rough it on the ground. Bring a camera to capture close up images of birds. Also, bring food/snacks and beverage if you think you'll need them. Hand sanitizer would also be good to bring as birds like to poop! To sign up and get meeting place and time, contact Jeff Kozma at 509-225-3465 or jcr_5105@charter.net



**A Wilson's Warbler is about to be released
after being banded. Jeff's banding demon-
stration will give you up-close looks at some
of the beautiful birds in our area.**



CONSERVATION
ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI

Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area Management Plan

I attended a public meeting on May 31st in Prosser hosted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) which is developing a new management plan for the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area in south-central Washington. The wildlife area consists of 17 units that cover more than 20,840 acres in Franklin, Benton, and Yakima counties. Almost half of the acreage is some kind of native shrub steppe habitat, from sagebrush to grassland. The units also include cultivated and irrigated cropland, wetlands, riparian or streamside woodlands, and open water. Many units have water access sites, most along the Yakima River. The area is popular for fishing, upland game, waterfowl and big game hunting, and bird and other wildlife watching.

The new management plan will address the status of wildlife species and their habitat, public recreation opportunities, and ongoing restoration of wetlands and native shrub steppe. One of the 17 units in the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area is the Sunnyside (Headquarters) Unit, consisting of 2,786 acres just north of Mabton and five miles south of Sunnyside, most of it in the Yakima River floodplain, including 13 miles of riverfront. It's a collection of small farm fields, ponds and lakes, wetlands, and riparian woodlands. Waterfowl and upland game bird hunting and fishing are popular.

This spring, Noel Ferguson, the Assistant Manager of the wildlife area, administered a part of the area differently than was done in past years. He pumped water into retired and diked impoundments (similar to rice paddies), quickly attracting many birds, including a White-faced Ibis, a rarity in south-central Washington. Many Black-necked Stilts and a few American Avocets also appeared, as well Virginia Rails and Soras, not to mention scores of ducks. For a few months in the spring of 2018, this area was a premier wetland.

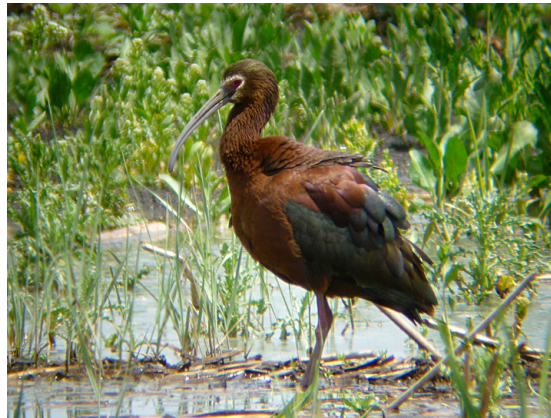
At the public meeting, it seemed that creation of this wetland was not contrary to the usual focus on waterfowl management of this unit. So, after the meeting, I approached Noel to ask if he was going to keep the area wet through the summer and he replied he was going to let it run dry in preparation for fall waterfowl hunting. I asked if he might consider keeping at least one or two of the impoundments as marsh through the summer because of the diversity and abundance of wetland birds that were nesting on the unit.

Unfortunately, most of the area appeared dry in July, so I approached Noel for an explanation. He promptly replied that he understood my concern about the ducks and shorebirds at the rice paddies. He was getting ready to rebuild the dikes in the eastern cells of the paddies and began draining them at the beginning of July. At that point, according to Noel, most of the ducks and shorebirds had moved on except for a few stragglers including a couple of Black-necked Stilts, some Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teal and some Mallards. As far as he could tell the stilts were not nesting and ducklings were pretty mobile at that point.

Noel had been asked by the WDFW regional biologist and the Yakama Nation duck biologist to drain the western cells so that they could set up their duck traps for banding in August and September. That was done and he was planning on filling the western cells again.

He reported having similar concerns about displacing nesting birds with different activities here at the Wildlife Area. Breaking with traditional protocol here, after seeing all of the shorebirds, ducks, cranes, egrets, pelicans, ibis, gulls, and even deer utilizing the wetlands, he stalled on draining the rice paddies five months longer than has been done in the past.

Additionally, he reported that Giffen Lake, just north across the access road from the rice paddies, has plenty of open water. Also, there are two swales just west of Giffen Lake that he has been filling with water on a weekly basis to grow millet for upland birds and ducks. North of the swales and just SW of his office is a system of wetlands that extends about 1 mile to the west and still had water. In fact, there had been a colony of about 30 great egrets hanging out just west of the haystacks in that wetland



A White-faced Ibis (though not this one) was found by Jason Fidorra at the Sunnyside Wildlife Area Headquarters



Forster's Tern at Sunnyside Wildlife Area Headquarters

at that time.

From all the positive changes Noel has made, it is clear, as he says, that he has conservation of our birds at the forefront of his planning with the activities that he is doing out there. He reports he aims to improve the habitat and make this an even better place to observe wildlife in years to come. He and other WDFW managers have invited birders to utilize the area and, further, to contribute their sightings to eBird, the global database on bird status and distribution.

(See page 5 for a comment sheet where you can share your thoughts on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area Management Plan.)

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area Management Plan

Includes units in Yakima, Benton, and Franklin Counties

~~~ **Comment Sheet** ~~~

Please share your thoughts about the **Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area** by answering the questions below and adding any other comments or questions you have.

**What interests you about the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area?**

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**What particular wildlife, fish, and/or habitats** (elk, salmon, shrub-steppe) **are you most interested in or concerned about?** *(Please indicate wildlife area units and be specific.)*

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**What changes or improvements would you like to see on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area?** *(Please indicate wildlife area units and be specific.)*

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**What land management activities are you most interested in or concerned about** (wetland restoration, weed control, etc.)? *(Please indicate wildlife area units and be specific.)*

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**Provide any additional feedback: Questions, suggestions or other input about the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area and the planning process.**

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**If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please provide your name and email or mailing address.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information  
contact Phillip Buser at (509) 572-5037 or Patricia Jatczak, at (360)902-2815  
or Email: [sunnyside-snakeriver@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:sunnyside-snakeriver@dfw.wa.gov)

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
1111 WASHINGTON ST SE, OLYMPIA, WA 98501

**Wildlife Area Website:**  
[https://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife\\_areas/sunnyside-snake\\_river/](https://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/sunnyside-snake_river/)



## Birds learn another 'language' by eavesdropping on neighbors

For birds, understanding neighborhood gossip about an approaching hawk or brown snake can mean the difference between life or death.

Wild critters are known to listen to each other for clues about lurking predators, effectively eavesdropping on other species' chatter. Birds, for example, can learn to flee when neighbors cluck "hawk!" — or, more precisely, emit a distress call.

The fairy wren, a small Australian songbird, is not born knowing the "languages" of other birds. But it can master the meaning of a few key "words," as scientists explain in a paper published Thursday in the journal

"We knew before that some animals can translate the meanings of other species' 'foreign languages,' but we did not know how that 'language learning' came about," said Andrew Radford, a biologist at the University of Bristol and co-author of the study.

Birds have several ways of acquiring life skills. Some knowledge is innate, and some is acquired from direct experience. Radford and other scientists are exploring a third kind of knowledge: acquiring information from peers.

Radford and colleagues at Australia National University wandered around the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra with customized "tweeter speakers" affixed to their waists, looking for solitary fairy wrens. They wanted to be certain that the birds would react only to sounds, not other birds' behavior.

The scientists first played the birds two unfamiliar recorded sounds. One was the alarm cry of an allopatric chestnut-rumped thornbill, a bird not native to Australia. The other was a computer-generated bird sound dubbed "buzz."

On first hearing these sounds, the 16 fairy wrens had no particular reaction.

The scientists then trotted around the park and continued to play customized recordings. They attempted to train

half the birds to recognize the thornbill's alarm cry as a warning sound, and the other half to recognize the computer-generated "buzz" as a distress call. They did that by playing the previously unfamiliar sounds in conjunction with noises that the birds already associated with danger, such as fairy wrens' own distress cry.

After three days, the scientists tested what the birds had learned — and their feathered pupils passed the test.

The two sets of fairy wrens responded to the sound they had been trained on by fleeing for cover, but remained indifferent to the other sound.

Twelve of the 16 birds fled at every playback; the other four birds fled in response to two-thirds or more of the playbacks.

To put it in human terms, it's as though a person who only speaks English had learned that "Achtung" means "attention" or "danger" in German simply by listening to people yell phrases with similar meanings in multiple languages at once.

"Until this study, we had limited knowledge about how an animal learns what calls from other species actually mean," said Christopher Templeton, a biologist at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, who was not involved in the study.

Previous research had shown that fairy wrens can learn the meaning of distress calls when actually encountering a predator.

"What this new study does is remove the predator entirely. It shows that these birds can learn to associate new sounds with danger, without having to learn through trial and error," said Templeton.

In other words, one bird's distress tweet can go viral.

"If you can only learn in the presence of a predator, that's quite dangerous," said Radford, the study co-author. "The capacity to learn by associating sounds with meaning makes sense, biologically."



**Fairy Wren in Australia  
Borrowed from the Internet**

### 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.

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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](mailto:joycatbird@gmail.com) or 698-4110.**

### **2017 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD**

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# Coming Attractions:

**Aug 23 Chapter Meeting - 7:00 pm**  
**Sep 8 Fort Simcoe field trip**  
**Sep 22 Sportsman Park field trip**  
**Oct 6 Bird Banding at Arboretum**