



# 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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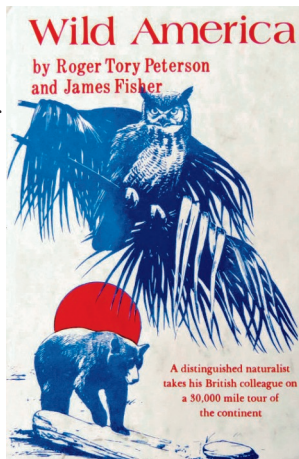
November 2018



**DECEMBER PROGRAM**  
**PHIL FISCHER**

**Wild America — Classic Book brought to life**  
**by Andy and Ellen Stepniewski**

In 1953, famed American naturalist, scientist, and author, Roger Tory Peterson, guided James Fisher, his equally acclaimed English colleague, on a 100-day tour of natural America. Their book, *Wild America*, recounts their 30,000 mile journey, starting in Newfoundland, then south along the eastern United States seaboard to the Florida Keys, then west through Texas to the fabled "Sky Islands" of southeast Arizona, north through California, Oregon's Crater Lake to the wet Olympic rain forest, and finally the Pribilof Island's fantastic array of seabird



cliffs and seal rookeries in the majestic Bering Sea off Alaska's coastline.

As a young teenage naturalist growing up in Southern California, no other book taught me more or inspired me as much to explore and learn about the natural history of North America. With their lively prose and Roger's many memorable drawings, this book is indeed a great introductory primer to "natural America." I've reread it several times over the past fifty years.

*Wild America* has proven so inspirational to so many naturalists and birders that well-known and noted naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul

**Continued on page 2**

## 2018 Christmas Potluck Dinner and Silent Auction—Dec 6

On **Thursday, December 6th**, we will be holding the annual YVAS Christmas Potluck and Auction at the Yakima Area Arboretum. There will be a silent auction for the larger items as well as the ever-popular bargain table.

We need items to auction. Do you have a special skill or hobby to create unique artifacts? Use your imagination to come up with the item to put everyone in absolute awe. How about sponsoring a dinner or brunch in your garden? Bird-related items are well received.

It helps to have the auction items on display when the first members arrive. To make this happen, you can drop items off with either of the following:

- ◆ Bill Drenguis ([509-965-5808](tel:509-965-5808) [bdrenguis@gmail.com](mailto:bdrenguis@gmail.com))
- ◆ Ellen Stepniewski ([steppie@nwinfo.net](mailto:steppie@nwinfo.net) [509-731-6805](tel:509-731-6805))

If you are not able to drop auction items off with us, Bill or Ellen may be able to pick up items before December 5th.

Doors will **open at 5:00**, at the Yakima Area Arboretum. **The silent auction, wine service, and camaraderie will be underway at 5:30. Dinner will begin at about 6:15**, so please put your food items out and, if applicable, decorate your table by then. **The silent auction will close**

**at 6:30** so we can all enjoy the program, **which will begin at 7:00 or so.**

Food assignments are grouped by your last name:

- ◆ **A-G = Potatoes, Vegetables, Salads**
- ◆ **H-P = Desert**
- ◆ **Q-Z = Main Dish**

Dishes should serve about 12 people. *It would be helpful to list the ingredients of your dish for those with allergies.* Ham, coffee, and hot water for tea will be provided; wine available by the glass with donations defraying the cost.

In addition to your potluck items, be sure to bring serving utensils for your dish. Please mark them with your name to ensure return. **You will need to bring your own table service (plates, cups, silverware).**

Plan to arrive early enough to browse through the auction items prior to 6:30. Generous bidding is essential to help fund our education and conservation activities.

Questions? Contact Bill using the information above.

**Before Dec 4 -Donate! Donate! On Dec 6- Bid! Bid!**

— Ellen Stepniewski and Bill Drenguis —

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



**MEMBERSHIP**  
**JOY MCKINNEY**

**Thank you for renewing your membership!**

**Naches:** Thomas Thrush    **Selah:** Evelyn Williams

**Seattle:** Rick and Anne Matsen, Martha Taylor

**Toppenish:** Jensen Ann Thayer

**Yakima:** Ross and Diane Bornfleth, Joyce Dennison, Diana Bailey and Stan Belsher, Robert and Leslie Wahl, Scott Downes, Jensen Ann Thayer, Eileen Gavin, Grace Anderson, Kathy Hennessy, James & Mary Stephenson, Elizabeth Anglund (*welcome back, Liz!*), Lucy Stevens



**THIS MONTH'S**  
**YVAS CALENDAR**

- Dec 6**    **YVAS Christmas Banquet and Silent Auction** at the Yakima Area Arboretum. Doors open at **5:00 pm**. Check article on page one for a list of times for this multi-event evening.
- Jan 8**    **Board Meeting** — at the new Starbucks at 5906 Summitview Avenue at **7:00 pm**.

**Program continued from page 1**

retraced Roger and James route a few years back and wrote *Wild America Revisited*. Scott's account notes a few great disappointments along the way where habitats and their flora and fauna have suffered. Otherwise, he finds much of what is celebrated by Peterson and Fisher remains, protected formally in America's great system of national parks, wilderness areas, and many national wildlife refuges, national monuments and other preserves.

Join Andy Stepniewski on this armchair tour of North America, and see and hear, in Peterson and Fisher's own words, their celebration of *Wild America*, its birds, flora and fauna, and doses of its cultural and historical legacy.



**FROM THE BOARD**  
**DAN KINNEY**

***"Once you have tasted flight,  
you will walk the Earth with your eyes turned skyward,  
for there you have been, and there you long to return."***

**Leonardo da Vinci**

I have always been fascinated with flight. My earliest memories were out on my grandmother's country farm, where she gave me a field guide and sent me out in the garden to look for birds. I grew up with urban birds like the "Kentucky Cardinal", the Blue Jay, and the Mockingbird. I always enjoyed the woods, ponds and the wildlife, but it was the birds that really caught my main interest.

It must be a natural desire to want to fly. Leonardo de Vinci envisioned a vertical flying machine back in 1493. The French were the first to fly; they achieved flight in a hot air balloon in 1783. But it wasn't until 1903 that the Wright Brothers unlocked the "secrets of flight" and made history with a 12 second flight covering 120 feet. I learned to fly in college and obtained my Private Pilot's

License in 1968. By the following year, I was an Army Aviator flying helicopters, including a tour in Vietnam.

A Bald Eagle program brought me to my first Audubon meeting in 1981. I loved birds but was not a birder, so I had to learn the trade and fortunately two retired school teachers, Zee Butler and Emily Craig took me under their wings and tutored me on many field trips, Christmas Bird Counts, Wenas Campouts, etc. I truly learned a lot, and feel I am an OK amateur birder, but certainly not in the

class with YVAS's talented cadre of avian identification experts. I blame some of that to my loss of hearing suffered from those rotor blades whirling above my head. (*Editor's note: We thank Dan and all other veterans for their service to our country!*) I did

find a niche with the environment and fought for conservation issues for over 15 years as the YVAS Conservation Chairman. I am especially proud of our work to save the Spotted Owl and Old Growth Forests, and our work on moving gravel mining out of the river corridors.

I am enjoying retired life now but find myself still fascinated by flight. While I remain active in Yakima Valley Audubon, I am also a Docent at the McAllister Museum of Flight at the Yakima airport. It is a unique combination

of merging my interest in flying by combining the natural flight of birds with man's mechanical development of aviation. I find it quite a combination of the blending of the two sciences, both offering enjoyable and educational recreational opportunities. It goes without saying, no matter where my wife Eileen and I go, I still keep an eye open for the birds and never pass up an opportunity to visit an Air Museum.



Dan has been an actively involved with YVAS for nearly 40 years including stints as President and Vice President as well as Conservation Chairman. Dan helping at the youth event featured on pg 3.



## STEPPING UP

ELLEN STEPNIWSKI

On October 30th, Yakima County Solid Waste Division presented the 6th bi-annual Youth Environmental Summit at the Yakima Convention Center. This year over 500 middle, junior and senior high students and school staff attended the event. It provided an opportunity for these students to learn about environmental issues that affect their homes, schools and communities, and how they can make a difference.

The Youth Environmental Summit featured two guest speakers. Roger Williams is the producer of the film, River Blue. The portion of the film he showed explained both the pollution caused by the garment industry, (including the blue dye used in making jeans), and some solutions used in progressive factories. Dylan

D'Haetze, at age 13, made a series of films documenting plastic trash. The film also shows how kids can make a difference in a world that is increasingly dependent on plastic. Both

## Youth Environmental Summit (YES) Earns resounding YES!!!

presentations were well received by attendees.

Panels of students from Port Townsend high school presented their environmental accomplishments and all participants had time for collaboration among schools. What these young folks have done coupled with their energy and enthusiasm always amazes me.

The event also featured exhibits from many local environmental organizations including the Yakima Valley Audubon Society. In keeping with the environmental theme, our exhibit included photos of plastic-related risks to birds such as fishing line and twine entanglements encountered by Osprey and the dire consequences of seabirds ingesting plastic too readily available in their habitat. The exhibit

was well-received by the students, and we Audubon volunteers enjoyed our interactions with them. Their future, as well as ours, may well rest in their hands.



**YVAS President Bill Drenguis assists two students grapple with the unintended consequences of plastics**



## STEPPING UP

VERA BACKSTROM

## When the phone rings, it just may be opportunity calling. Be sure you answer!

I received a call in the summer asking if "someone" in our Audubon group would be willing to give a talk on birds to a summer adventure class for young girls at a local LDS church. I said, "Sure, I'm available"!

On the appointed day in July, I filled my car with YVAS's realistic looking bird models, our bird exhibits, a variety of bird books from my shelves, and my own bird audio books which play bird songs on demand. I met the girls at their church, and they helped me carry everything into the meeting room, where we talked about local birds for an hour and then made cupcakes with bird nests on top courtesy of ingredients provided some of the girls' mothers.

I'd told the girls that our club puts out bird seed during the winter months at a bird blind at the edge of the Arboretum, and I

later received another call asking if I would show the blind to the girls in mid October. Our club had already started putting seed out, so I agreed, and we met in at the Arboretum in the late afternoon on October 15. Happily, most of the girls

sported binoculars, and I handed out the pamphlet YVAS had created depicting many birds commonly seen in the Arboretum.

Off we went, and although there weren't too many birds at the blind in late afternoon in mid October, the girls were enthusiastic and spotted white crowned sparrows, fox sparrows, house sparrows, quail, juncos, and squirrels.

A good time was had by all, and now the girls and mothers will be able to take friends and other family members to the blind on a winter's day and see a lot more of nature's wonders.



**A dozen young ladies clamor for a view at the YVAS bird blind at the Arboretum**



## FIELD TRIPS

### SCOTT DOWNES

**Dec 15 (Saturday) — Toppenish NWR CBC.** Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net) will coordinate leaders and participants while Eric Heisey (magicman32@rocketmail.com) will be the compiler of the Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count. Meet at 7 am at the Branding Iron Restaurant (just south of Toppenish on US-97) for a no-host breakfast. Teams will be finalized at breakfast before heading out into the census areas. Post-count pizza dinner beginning about dark at the home of Debie and Ron Brown at 240 Meadowlark Lane on Konnowac Pass. Pizza furnished but beverages, deserts, and side dishes appreciated.

**Dec 29 (Saturday) — Yakima Valley CBC** Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com) is the compiler for the 49th Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count. Meet at 7 am at Old Town Station Restaurant at the corner of South 1st Street and Valley Mall Blvd. for a no-host breakfast. Teams will be finalized then. Post-count soup (provided) and potluck dinner (deserts, drinks, etc. appreciated) beginning at dark at the home of Andy and Ellen Stepniewski. 902 N. Conestoga Blvd.

**Jan 5 (Saturday) — Field Trip Planning Meeting 9:00 am — You are invited to help plan the 2019 field trip schedule!** Bring your ideas of great birding sites that you and/or others would enjoy visiting. The meeting will be held at the home of Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, 902 N. Conestoga Blvd. Contact Field Trip Chair Scott Downes at downes@charter.net if you are interested in attending.

### YVAS Election Results - As expected, a bird wave emerges

At the October chapter meeting the following position (as required by YVAS bylaws), were filled by unanimous acclamation. All elected are avid avian advocates; we are fortunate to have such qualified candidates step forward! Our sincere thanks to each one of you.

- ◆ **President —elect** — Renee Navarette
- ◆ **Secretary** — Vera Backstrom
- ◆ **Treasurer** — Karen Zook

## Put the Christmas Bird Counts on your calendars

### Toppenish NWR — Dec 15                      Yakima Valley — Dec 29

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns—whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won.

Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them.

CBCs are currently conducted all around the United States, Canada and south all the way to Ecuador and Brazil. Well over 2000 CBCs are done annually in the same three-week period from Dec 14 through Jan 4. Many thousands of people are out on their CBC enjoying everything from tropical weather to stomping around in snow and freezing conditions.

The Yakima Valley CBC was started in 1970, so this year we will do our 49th count. The past 48 counts have found 151 different species of birds, with an average of about 90 species on the last ten counts. Last year yielded 91 species, down from a record 97 three years before.

The Toppenish NWR count originated in 1983 and though started 13 years later has a similar all-time species total. Despite the two counts being so close together geographically and only two weeks apart, there are always species found on each that are missed on the other.

All Christmas Bird Count data is compiled by National Audubon and is frequently used by ornithologists to compile population trends of bird species. The spread across the continent of species such as European Starlings, Cattle Egrets and Eurasian Collared-Doves can be charted from Christmas Count data. Locally, the growing influx of both California Scrub Jays and Anna's Hummingbirds during the winter months is readily evident in Yakima County.

Birders of all levels of bird identification skill will participate with each group having an experienced leader. All are welcome - be they first timers or veterans of one or more counts. The post count potluck dinners are memorial for both the camaraderie and humor shared by fellow bird lovers.

In addition to enthusiasm, bring snacks, drinks, and dress for weather conditions.

Contact/additional information for both counts can be found in the Field Trips article at the top of this page.



**Immature Anna's Hummingbird in December in Cowiche Canyon in 2004**



## It's winter in the Yakima Valley but I think I just saw a hummingbird. Is that possible??



**Female Anna's Hummingbird at the same house in 2005**

**Q:** It's fall (or winter) and there are still hummingbirds in my yard – shouldn't they have migrated by now?

**A:** The hummingbirds seen in October thru February /March in the valley are almost certainly Anna's Hummingbirds, a species which is steadily expanding its range northward. This is the only hummingbird species that does not migrate south from our area to winter in warmer climates; rather they are year around residents in Washington State with Yakima area populations expanding in recent years.

**Q:** How do hummingbirds survive in winter? Should I feed them?

**A:** Hummingbirds are uniquely adapted to surviving winter. They have a very high metabolism which requires a lot of energy to sustain. To conserve energy at night, they go into a state called torpor, where they lower their metabolism to almost nothing (kind of like a really short hibernation) in order to survive the cold.

Many people do not know that the main source of food for hummingbirds is insects rather than nectar. Drinking nectar gives them the energy they need to sustain their metabolism and hunt insects. There are some insects active in winter, but not many, so having a reliable source of nectar is important to their survival. So, if you plan on putting up a hummingbird feeder in the winter, plan on keeping it up until the temperatures warm in the early spring.

If you are putting up a feeder, there are a few things to remember. First, keep the feeder clean. This is essential. Change the nectar at least once a week (more often when it is warmer outside), and clean the feeder every time you change the nectar. Wash the feeder with a mild detergent and hot water and rinse well.

Second, place the feeder out of the reach of cats, at least four feet off of the ground. Third, if it is cold and the feeder freezes, keep a second feeder available. Keep two feeders full of nectar, and when one starts to freeze, bring it inside to thaw and put the other one up. After it gets dark, bring feeders inside and put

them in the fridge until daylight (yes, literally daylight – these birds are hungry when awaking in the morning! It's best to put feeders out just before daylight).

The recipe for nectar is simple: Four parts water to one part sugar. Use only cane or beet white table sugar – NO brown sugar - NEVER use honey or artificial sweetener, and NEVER add red food coloring to the nectar. Bring water to a boil, add sugar, cool and store unused portion in refrigerator; the nectar will safely store for a week to 10 days.

An alternative to bringing feeders in and out of the house during freezing weather is a heated hummingbird feeder. For information on where these feeders are available check the YVAS website home page blog: <http://yakimaaudubon.org/> Or for those of you embracing social media, visit YVAS at our ever changing Facebook page:

◆ [www.facebook.com/pg/yakimaaudubon/posts/](http://www.facebook.com/pg/yakimaaudubon/posts/)

One thing to remember about using heated feeders is that you need to watch the nectar carefully. Because of the heat, it spoils more quickly than you might expect and you may need to change it more often.

**Q:** Will putting up a feeder for Anna's hummingbirds keep other hummingbird species from migrating?

**A:** NO. That is a myth. We have four species of hummingbirds that visit/live in our area for part of the year. Many people

keep hummingbird feeders up year long, and the only species that stay are the Anna's. The other species are genetically programmed to migrate, and a feeder hanging in your yard will not stop them.

**Q:** Where can I learn more about hummingbirds?

**A:** A good place to start would be the links referred to above for YVAS.



**Male Anna's Hummingbird that spent a winter at a house on 53rd Ave in Yakima**

*Editor's note: Thanks go to Karen Zook for developing this article. And with your help, perhaps many of this winter's tiny residents will survive and prosper for many years to come!*



**Charlie Brown and Linus Van Pelt contemplate what irruptive species might be coming this winter.**



**Common Redpoll in a birch tree on Douglas Drive on January 1, 2018**

For many birders, heavy snowstorms and watching birds at the backyard feeders go hand-in-hand. What better way to enjoy our feathered friends' antics than from the comfort of our homes.

### 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).**

### **2018 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD**

President	Bill Drenguis ( <a href="mailto:bdrenguis@gmail.com">bdrenguis@gmail.com</a> )	965-5808	Field Trips	Scott Downes ( <a href="mailto:downess@charter.net">downess@charter.net</a> )	469-7807
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Education	Ellen Stepniewski ( <a href="mailto:steppie@nwinfo.net">steppie@nwinfo.net</a> )	731-6805			

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

Dec 6 YVAS Christmas Banquet and Silent Auction

Dec 15 Toppenish NWR CBC

Dec 29 Yakima Valley CBC

Jan 5 2019 Field Trip Planning Meeting