



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 48, Number 03

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

March 2019



MARCH PROGRAM

PHIL FISCHER

Heritage Gardens Are Here, Climb On Board with Ann Autrey

What are Heritage Gardens? It helps to take a step back for a brief review the function of conservation districts in Washington State.

Conservation districts are trusted partners. They are non-regulatory entities that do not enforce any compliance or impose penalties, but instead seek to work collaboratively with landowners to help them responsibly in the efficient management of their land. Washington conservation districts help people take care of everything they can see outside their windows – from farms, to forests, to urban yards, to rivers, lakes, and coastline. For more than 75 years, they have served as trusted, non-regulatory local partners that help residents to care for our natural resources. Every one of Washington’s 39 counties is represented by at least one conservation district, and their staff stand ready to help. Their mission:

Conservation Districts are dedicated to the wise stewardship of soil, water, air, fish and wildlife.

The Heritage Garden Program was created by the Benton Conservation District and is additionally offered in Franklin and Yakima Counties in partnership with the Franklin, North Yakima and South Yakima Conservation Districts in partnership with the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington State Native Plant Society.

Ann Autrey, a Heritage Garden assistant, will be delivering a presentation on the Heritage Garden Program. This is a new gardening program to the Yakima area sponsored by the North and South Yakima Conservation Districts as well as the Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts in partnership with the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society. Heritage Gardens

are landscaped areas designed to emulate the cultural and natural heritage of the Columbia River Basin while utilizing sustainable gardening practices. Heritage Gardens do the following:

- ◆ Promote the use of native plants
- ◆ Promote both sustainable landscape and gardening techniques
- ◆ Educate our community about the history and biodiversity of the Columbia River Basin

While this issue of the Crier may arrive to you after the following event, it is placed here in the hope that you view



Group touring a Columbia Basin Heritage garden

it prior to March 23:

There is a free Heritage Garden workshop on Saturday, March 23rd from 9am to 12pm at the Yakima Arboretum. Seating is limited and you must contact Ann at ann-autrey@conservewa.net to register.

Heritage Gardens are also very attractive to our local birds. Native plants, grasses and shrubs provide both food and shelter to many varieties of birds. For more information, please visit the Heritage Garden Program website at <https://www.hgcd.info/>

Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 28, 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>



MEMBERSHIP

JOY MCKINNEY

Welcome new member!
Yakima: Felip Holbrook

Thanks for renewing your membership!

Seattle: Martha Fleming, Birgitta Beck
Selah: Cathy LeCompte, Douglas and Marjorie Peters, Mary Vance Strate
Yakima: Ken Tolonen and Margaret Morris, G'Ann Duncan, Rick Mains, Terry Shelton, Kathy and Joe Howell, Toby and Dee Hastie, Jennie Hodge, Bill Jacobs, Fern Sule and Lance Chamberlain. Tyler and Linda Shepherd, George and Kay Allan



THIS MONTH'S YVAS CALENDAR

Mar 28 YVAS Chapter Meeting at the Yakima Area Arboretum at 7:00 pm. **Great program is scheduled!**

Apr 9 Board Meeting at Starbucks on Summitview and 58th 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.

ARBORFEST — “TAKE A WALK IN THE WOODS!”

Come volunteer with the YVAS booth, enjoy the festivities, bring the family!

Once again, it is almost time to celebrate nature with families at the Yakima Area Arboretum's annual Arborfest, on **Saturday, April 13th from 10am to 3 pm**, at the Yakima Area Arboretum. This is a **free** community event, celebrating Arbor Day, spring, conservation, and nature. Featured are lots of hands-on learning opportunities, crafts, and displays for children of all ages.

The theme this year is “Take a walk in the woods!” The emphasis at the Yakima Valley Audubon booth will be birds that you might see on a walk in the woods. There will be informational displays on these birds, including photos, their habitats and conservation. Scopes will be set up. If there are no birds on the pond or at the swallow boxes,

participants can practice looking at life-size photos and bird models. We will be making the ever-popular buttons, providing materials for people of all ages to make their own button of a bird to look for on their walk.

We will need **VOLUNTEERS** to help for all or part of the event, assisting with setting up, and taking down the booth as well as interacting with participants. Hundreds of children and families will participate in our activity and

we need volunteers to help. Please consider joining us for this fun and educational activity. Set up will start at 8:30. Please contact Ellen Stepniewski at 731-6805 or steppie@nwinfo.net for more information or to volunteer.



One child's button made at the YVAS booth



The YVAS booth and displays at last year's Arborfest



Kids are lined up making buttons at last year's Arborfest



CONSERVATION
ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI

Audubon is committed to transforming our communities into places where birds flourish

Jeff Kozma recently gave a well-attended class "Gardening for Birds" for Yakima Audubon and the Yakima Area Arboretum. Jeff stressed planting of native species in his class and included a handout with a list of suitable trees, shrubs, and wildflowers that attract birds. The goals and content of this class mesh very well with a key conservation goal of the National Audubon Society: creating bird friendly communities. What follows is National's message on this topic.

Where birds thrive, people prosper. From urban centers to rural towns, each community can provide important habitat for native birds. In turn, birds offer us a richer, more beautiful, and healthful place to live.

Over the past century, urbanization has taken, fragmented, and transformed ecologically productive land with sterile lawns and exotic ornamental plants. We've introduced walls of glass, toxic pesticides, and domestic predators. The human-dominated landscape no longer supports functioning ecosystems or provides healthy places for birds.

The Solution

Each community has a unique ecological and cultural story to tell. Creating Bird-Friendly Communities is Audubon's commitment to the sustainability of our urban, suburban, and rural places. We can restore and reconnect these places. We can reestablish the ecological functions of our cities and towns. We can provide an essential, safe habitat for birds. With simple acts of hope, everyone can help make their community bird-friendly.

Plants for Birds

By simply choosing native plants for our yards and public spaces, we can restore vital habitat for birds in our communities and help them adapt and survive in the face of climate change. Audubon's Plants for Birds (www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds) program is designed to enable anyone to have a positive impact by planting for birds, right where they live. Visit the plants database to create a customized list of plants native to your area, get connected to your local Audubon and native plant nurseries, and help us get one million plants in the ground for birds.

Bird-Friendly Buildings

Glass and lights present major hazards to birds, killing hundreds of millions of birds each year. Birds hit buildings at all hours during the day and night. At night migrating birds can be distracted by bright lights in our cities. During the day the problem is reflection or other confusing aspects of glass. Audubon chapters, centers and programs across the country are working to make buildings safer for birds - both day and night.



Black-capped Chickadee on a cedar tree in a Yakima area yard



Pine Grosbeak in a mountain ash tree



Female Purple Finch in a crabapple tree



FIELD TRIPS

SCOTT DOWNES

April 26 (Friday). Sunnyside Wildlife Area. Sunnyside Wildlife Area has graciously offered a tour of the headquarters unit. During this tour you will get to experience the unique marsh habitats and the wonderful spring birds that both use these marshes for breeding in addition to migration stopovers. During similar periods last year, birds such as Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teal, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet and Wilson's Phalarope were present on the refuge. In addition to these regular waterfowl and shorebirds, the refuge also hosted unusual species such as Sandhill Crane and White-faced Ibis. Participants should be prepared for a mixture of driving and walking and will need to carpool in a minimum number of vehicles for the tour. Water, food and bug spray are encouraged. Scope is helpful but not required. The trip will be limited to 15 individuals, so you must contact the leader to sign up. To sign-up contact Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)

April 28 (Sunday). Xupnish (formerly Zimmerman Ponds) — South Lateral A Road and Toppenish Marion Drain Rd. field trip. Each spring, snow-melt in the Cascades rushes down Toppenish Creek filling ponds and flooding valley bottoms, creating a bonanza for water and marsh birds. The marshes, fields, and riparian patches in the lower valley rise to their birding peak in late April. We'll look (and listen) for American Bittern, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Cinnamon Teal, Virginia Rails, Sora and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. The Zimmerman Farm was restored by the Yakima Nation and is closed to the public except by special permit. This is a great half day field trip and with the refuge visitors center opening at noon there will be birding opportunities close by for those who want to extend the day. Meet at 7:30 am at the Valley Mall parking lot north of Sears (old IHOP location) to carpool. To sign-up contact Kerry Turley (509-840-0980 or email him at kdturley@embarqmail.com).

Yakima Audubon is headed back to Malheur NWR the end of May!

Our journey in 2012 to Malheur was so memorable we've decided to head there again. Since our visit to this iconic refuge in the northern Great Basin, a sad chapter in our nation's history occurred two years ago when armed militia tried to take this incredible place away from the American people. Luckily, their occupation of the refuge was short-lived and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has returned to welcoming birders and naturalists.

We leave Friday morning, May 31 and plan on three nights in Burns Oregon (May 31-June 2), We'll have two full days to explore Malheur's lakes, marshes, riparian habitats and its vast shrub-steppe. On our last trip, we tallied 148 species! We'll seek Great Basin waterbird specialties such as White-faced Ibis, Franklin's Gull, Forster's Tern, and Wilson's Phalarope as well as raptors such as Ferruginous Hawk and Golden Eagle. Shrub-steppe species present include Black-throated and Sagebrush Sparrows. Too, this



Wonderful birds, such as American Avocet, await us at Malheur NWR
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski

trip coincides with spring migration of landbirds and we'll be sure to check out the lush plantings at refuge headquarters where "lost" eastern birds are attracted to the tall trees. En route, we'll make stops in pine forests where we'll "pad the list" with mountain species such as woodpeckers, finches, and sparrows such as smartly attired Green-tailed Towhee.

We plan to stay at the Best Western in Burns/Hines. You are welcome to stay at another motel in Burns, or camp, but it appears that rates increase toward the date, so making reservations soon is advised.

Contact leader Bill Drenguis (509-965- 5808, 509-731-8632, bdrenguis@gmail.com) if you're interested in another trek to one of America's most fabu-

lous wildlife preserves, noted not only for its birdlife, but also for its astounding Great Basin geology, desert vegetation, and wild, dramatic vistas, emblematic of the Basin and Range Province.

Hardy YVAS birders brave the cold to bird the Toppenish NWR and Fort Simcoe

Nine very hardy Auduboners gathered on a cold and gray early March 2 morning for a trip to the Lower Valley. Below normal temperatures and complete snow-cover has plagued the Yakima region since early February but the steady light snowfall we encountered in Toppenish let up as we approached the refuge and we ended up having a grand day!

We started at the "burned-out" shack on Pump-house Road noting small numbers of the "early wave" of migrating waterfowl: Canada Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, and Green-winged Teal. Red-winged Blackbirds. It came as no surprise Say's Phoebe, usual here, was nowhere to be seen or heard. Though our earliest returning fly-catcher, this early March has brought nothing remotely resembling springtime weather.

We moved west to Old Goldendale Road where all the ponds were totally frozen. A rare Harris's Sparrow was poking about on the pavement, either for grit or seeds. This was the only "Zono" we saw all day, quite incredible!

Again westward on Pumphouse Road, we made several more stops for two separate coveys of Chukars, attracted to the roadside probably for grit. All the juncos we saw today were on or along the roadsides, making us wonder if this seed-eater was being stressed by the snow-covered landscape. Another stop was good for a Loggerhead Shrike and another for an adult Golden Eagle, which obliged by perching on a naked sagebrush trunk on a hillside, affording a decent, though distant view through our scopes.

Lateral C as it crosses over Toppenish Creek had the most open water and our only Tundra Swans (and Bewick's Wrens) of the trip. Noteworthy here were about 40

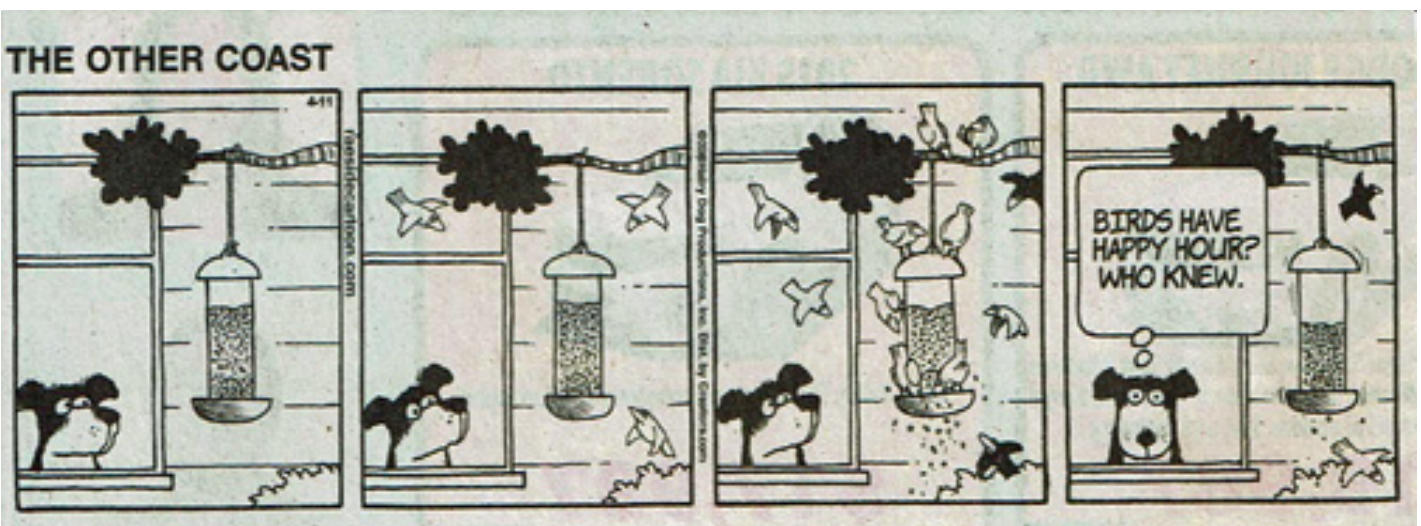


A group of hardy birders braving the snow!

Killdeer flying high over the creek. These early migrants most probably were a little shocked (and perhaps stressed) to find so much snow.

Our final stop was at Fort Simcoe. The park gate was closed but we found birds, including lovely Lewis's Woodpeckers, just to the west of one of the park staff houses in the oaks by the small spring. These birds seemed to be actively flycatching, which surprised us because the temperature was barely above freezing. Varied Thrushes and a Spotted Towhee were coming in for drinking and bathing while California Scrub-Jays called raucously from the treetops.

— Andy Stepniewski —



Nature loses Helen Engle, a true legend in both Washington State and the entire U. S.

The following was clipped from an email that Washington Audubon VP & Executive Director Gail Gatton sent out on March 13.

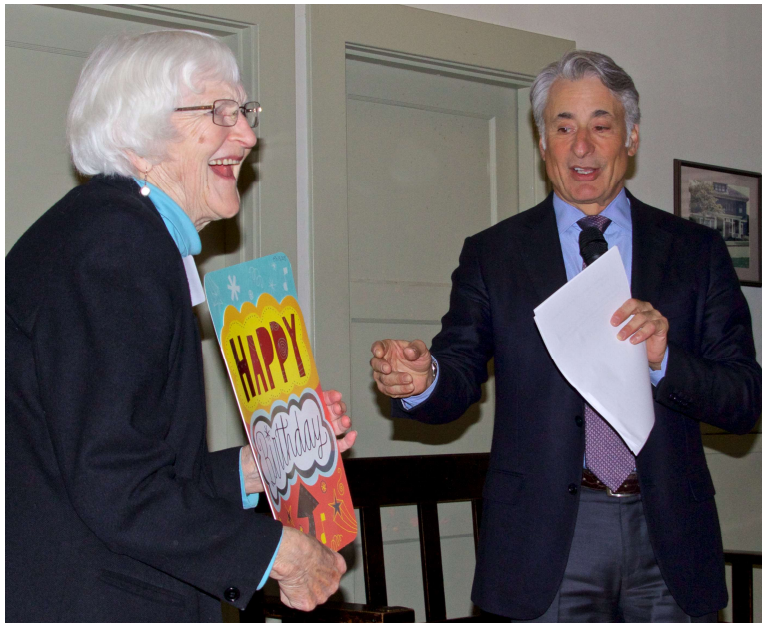
We pause today to remember someone who made, and continues to make, a difference to generations of people and birds, not just in Washington, but across the entire Audubon network. Our dear Helen Engle passed away late Monday afternoon, wrapped in the love of her children and grandchildren.

Helen provided something worthwhile to our world, and especially to the Audubon community. Along with Hazel Wolf, Helen is responsible for starting nearly every chapter in our state during the time period 50 or so years ago when Audubon put effort into building out the grassroots network that is still one of our major strengths today. Her own local chapter, Tahoma Audubon, just celebrated its 50th anniversary in February. Helen was a fierce advocate for the birds, who took that passion everywhere, from the state capital to the halls of congress. She served on the National Audubon board and was honored with a lifetime achievement award in 2013.

We are very grateful to have known such a profound person as Helen. As recently as this past year, Helen was still emailing me to make sure we were working on the things she thought important. She was also a constant



Helen Marie Engle
February 18, 1926 to March 11, 2019



**Helen Engle with
National Audubon CEO David Yarnold**

supporter, taking the time to write and point out the positive things she thought Audubon was doing. One of my fondest memories is from just about 4 years ago. Then the conservation community writ large had stopped organizing a big lobby day in Olympia during the legislative session. Audubon decided to hold one because our members wanted to have a voice in Olympia. Our national CEO, David Yarnold, was here for the occasion, and of course, Helen was there. It was Helen's birthday and when we presented a card to her, she said, "There's no place I'd rather spend my birthday than with my Audubon community speaking out for the birds." I have attached a photo from that day that shows the joy Helen brought everywhere with her.

The family is planning a public celebration of her life later this spring.

A local note - When YVAS hosted a Washington Audubon gathering of state chapters in October a few years back at the Yakima Area Arboretum, Helen was excited to learn that Wood Ducks, a species she had not seen, were early morning visitors at the pond there. Perhaps she did not maintain a personal life

list of species seen, but without a doubt, her enthusiasm and tireless advocating for all things in nature was unmistakable. While amiable in spirit, she was heroic in providing a voice for birds and nature.

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.

2019 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

President	Bill Drenguis (bdrenguis@gmail.com)	965-5808	Membership	Joy McKinney (joycatbird@gmail.com)	698-4110
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Education	Ellen Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	731-6805	Website	www.yakimaaudubon.org	
Field Trips	Scott Downes (downess@charter.net)	469-7807	Toppenish CBC	Eric Heisey (magicman32@rocketmail.com)	
			Yakima Valley CBC	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	952-2550
			YVAS Email	(birds@yakimaaudubon.org)	
			YVAS Facebook	(http://www.facebook.com/yakimaaudubon/?fref=ts)	

Birds you might see on the YVAS field trips in April



Wilson's Snipe



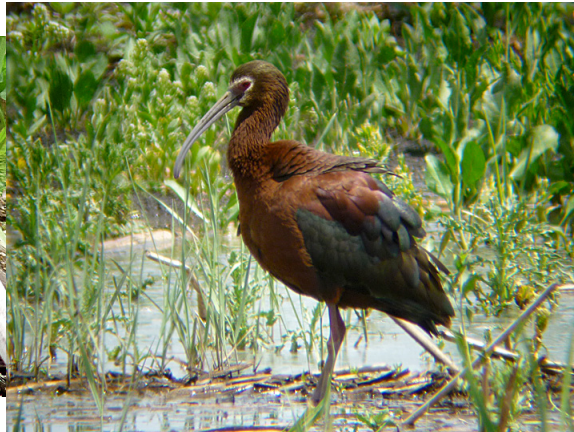
Common Yellowthroat



Wilson's Phalarope



Virginia Rail



White-faced Ibis—if we're lucky!



Black-necked Stilt

Coming Attractions:

Mar 28 Chapter Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

Apr 13 Arborfest - Take a Walk in the Woods

Apr 26 Sunnyside Wildlife Area field trip

Apr 28 Xupnish (Zimmerman's) field trip