



# 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

July/August 2004

## AUDUBON CALENDAR

- Aug 26 Chapter Meeting at 7:00 pm** at the Yakima Area Arboretum.
- Sep 14 Board Meeting** at Andy and Ellen Stepniewski's, 291 Windy Point Drive, Wapato (877-6629) at **7:00 pm.**
- Field Trips**
- Aug 25 Wednesday Morning Birdwalk** — meet the group at the Poppoff Nature Trail parking lot at the east end of Valley Mall Blvd. at **8:00 am.**
- Sep 8 Wednesday Morning Birdwalk** — meet the group at the Poppoff Nature Trail parking lot at the east end of Valley Mall Blvd. at **8:00 am.**
- Sep 11 Clear Lake-Rimrock-Timberwolf Mtn** — meet leader Debie Brown at the 40th Ave. Bi-Mart parking lot at **7:00 am.**
- Sep 22 Wednesday Morning Birdwalk** — meet the group at the Poppoff Nature Trail parking lot at the east end of Valley Mall Blvd. at **8:00 am.**

## OTHER CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

- Aug 31 South Central Washington Interpretive Center Slide Show** at the Coroner's Office (1st St. and Lincoln) at **7:00 pm.**

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## AUGUST PROGRAM

### ECOLOGY OF PYGMY NUTHATCHES AND FLAMMULATED OWLS IN PONDEROSA PINE FORESTS

With Jeff Kozma  
Yakama Nation Wildlife Biologist

The Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*) and Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammulous*) are two bird species that reach their greatest densities within old growth ponderosa pine forests of the western United States.

Within Washington, both species are found within the drier site ponderosa pine forests typical of the east slope of the Cascades and the Blue Mountains. Both species require the large diameter, widely spaced trees associated with old-growth ponderosa pine stands to meet their reproductive, foraging, and thermal regulatory needs.

Pygmy Nuthatches forage in the foliage and cones of ponderosa pine trees for insects and pine seeds, and nest and communally roost in cavities of large diameter ponderosa pine snags.

Flammulated Owls nest in abandoned Pileated Woodpecker and Northern Flicker cavities associated with large diameter ponderosa pine and extensively forage for insects in the open understory, along the bark, and within the upper canopy of old growth ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir forests. The populations of both species are sensitive to the impacts of stand replacement fires common with past decades of fires suppression and the over-harvesting of old-growth ponderosa pine associated with some timber management practices. The Flammulated Owl is currently a candidate for listing within Washington State and is on the Partners In Flight watch list.

Jeff has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Forest Biology from SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry and a Master of Science Degree in Wildlife Science from Texas Tech University. His specialty is avian ecology and he has studied nesting birds in Pinyon/Juniper forests of New Mexico, breeding and migration biology of birds in the Chihuahuan Desert of New Mexico, and also conducted breeding bird surveys in the shrub-steppe of WA.

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

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The YVAS board met in July at the Robinsons', for our annual retreat. The meeting was actually an extended board meeting and an equally extended barbecue in their lovely setting. Below are highlights of this meeting.

Richard Repp, John Hebert, and Vera Backstrom have been discussing By-Law changes to bring these up-to-date. They believe language could be improved in nine areas. They're hoping for the draft of recommendations by the September board meeting and *Crier*. Members will vote at the October membership meeting.

Ellen distributed copies of the current financial report. To date, 20% of *The Birds of Yakima County* (reprint) have been sold. Marketing efforts were discussed.

Leslie and Bob Wahl shared an updated map of the 70-acre Hoeger Preserve. John noted we need to value the land, as now, according to Leslie, we have only have the tax value. I suggested Cowiche Canyon Conservancy may have insight on valuation. Ellen will ask them. Leslie noted that there is a proposal for a contract to purchase the five acres. A Hoeger Preserve vision statement is targeted by years-end.

In the conservation arena, a number of issues were discussed. YVAS sent a letter that supports WDFW efforts to acquire a 20,000-acre tract in Kittitas County known as the "Skoochumchuck." I am working on a PowerPoint presentation that will be used in efforts to bring recognition of the tremendous shrub-steppe values of the Yakima Training Center. On the Yakima County Critical Areas Ordinance, Leslie noted that a meeting is scheduled for August 5 to draft a strategy document. Regarding the proposed Black Rock Reservoir, I asked whether it's time for YVAS to take a stand on this issue. I also suggested it might be best for another chapter to bring this issue forward because of the politics involved. We noted a draft document on wind power was created in 2002 by the WA State office. At present, there is lots of wind and few environmental hurdles to meet in this state. On White Pass expansion, a notice was passed around regarding the EIS, but this issue was not dealt with in any detail. On I-297 (Hanford waste), we discussed and passed a motion that YVAS endorse this initiative. It was passed 13 to 1 with 2 abstentions, an unusual (for YVAS) non-unanimous vote. Mac Knight brought up the discontinuation of curbside recycling in Yakima County. He finds this reprehensible and disturbing. It was agreed that Mac and Leslie will draft a letter to the city, county, and the Yakima Herald-Republic.

Bob Wahl spoke on membership. At present, YVAS has 295 total members. There are 100 chapter members which is 50% of our goal. We want enough local members to be self-sustaining in terms of supporting the newsletter, chapter meetings, and other necessary expenses. I noted that good press coverage in the Herald on the "aging Cascadians" brought them 35 new members (all seniors!), something YVAS might try. Bob will

send out regular renewal notices to get national members to renew their chapter membership after their first year of free membership (given them when they join national) in order to keep their newsletter subscription. It was noted that activities bring in new members, and we can also get publicity for those activities. Suggestions for advertising were YVAS signs at the Greenway and at Cowiche Canyon; a brochure; a birding trail; and a business card. John will see about collaboration or a joint trip with the Cascadians. This would be advertised in the Cascadian newsletter. He will also explore putting links to other groups on the YVAS web site.

I thanked Denny for all his work on the *Crier*. It is a deadline-driven job that Denny has executed admirably. We agreed that Jeanne's biographical column in the *Crier* on a local birder was "great and she's doing a marvelous job." Rich's column in the *Crier* was called a "great read." I noted that the YH-R "Bird Alert" column on Thursdays may be YVAS' single most important contribution to the community.

On our involvement at the Toppenish Refuge, Betsy noted that she has a Davis High School teacher who has students who would like to help Howard Browers (refuge biologist) with mist netting and banding, an activity that attracts different people than field trips do. We felt a YVAS person committed to the project is critical for it to be successful. Leslie said we could put out a sign-up sheet at the membership meetings for persons to be trained in this activity. We discussed that Heritage College has project opportunities for students. Andy will talk with Howard about banding times and regular weekend access to the refuge. We also recognize the refuge is a good venue for classes. Discussion of volunteer staffing one day per week each in April and May was broached.

Education, an important mission, was discussed at length. We recognize birding classes are an important way to gain and keep members. We will be planning a beginning birding class for the spring of 2005. Also suggested were a day-long intermediate birding class and another on birding by ear. We discussed Parks and Recreation classes and noted we have had some modest successes with these, but had one class where no one showed up. To help beginners, Betsy and Merri suggested YVAS invest in 10 pairs of "loaner binoculars" for our scheduled classes. Further, it was suggested that binoculars and a bird book be put into the Audubon backpacks most of us have gotten with our national memberships. Mac commented we could ask in the *Crier* for people to donate these supplies. Ellen inquired about birding activities for families. Andy asked who would like to volunteer to plan these activities. Betsy agreed to think about family activities, and Andy will meet with her. We also saw the benefits of doing activities at the Arboretum. Their advertising is great! Finally, Larry said he could give a class under their locust trees (for \$20 apiece) if people bring their chairs!

WDFW has proposed YVAS finance (initial outlay \$11,000) a Golden Eagle cam project at Oak Creek. We decided to not support this as we have evidence technical and other difficulties make this project's success questionable.

(continued at top of page 3)

## President's column continued from page 2

Several of us are involved with exploring the concept of a local Environmental Education Center. We visited Snow Mountain Ranch, a potential site. The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy has made an offer on 1,800 acres on this property on the South Fork of Cowiche Creek.

Mac was congratulated on revamping and updating the YVAS web site. I've already received several queries from web site readers. Mac notes he has had a "good time" rewriting it. I urge you all to take a close look at our website.

Mac also noted we could put the Crier on the web site. We discussed possible ramifications this might have on membership, but, in the end, decided it was a good idea. The newsletter is now available on the YVAS website. An eventual benefit will be a savings in YVAS mailing costs, first to groups, and, in time, to individuals, who may elect not to receive a mailed copy.

Rich updated us on the Bluebird Trail. He said monitoring is going well. He will check if there are unused boxes or have

troubles with wrens and that need to be relocated. He noted House Sparrows have been claiming the boxes near Wenas Lake. Larry kindly offered to make more boxes. I suggested we develop a PowerPoint bluebird slide show. Leslie suggested that such a program be coordinated with Bill Ryan.

On field trips, it was suggested some Sunday trips to the Popoff Trail be considered next year and perhaps walks earlier (7 a.m.) in hot weather. Another suggestion was to go to the Toppenish Refuge on some of these trips.

John noted he is not a candidate for president, contrary to murmurs he has heard, so the Nominating Committee will be looking for another candidate.

Betsy voiced thanks to Don for his efforts with the group. He and Carlene are currently thinking of moving to the Sequim area.

— Andy Stepniewski —

### **NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS**

#### **Welcome New NAS/YVAS Members!**

Yakima: Mary Schneider

#### **Thank Your for renewing your YVAS Membership**

Anacortes: John & Kay O'Connell

Naches: Helen Lamb, Katherine Vornbrock,

Seattle: Birgitta Beck

Selah: Kay Shemanski, Mary Vance Strate

Yakima: Alvin Larson, Dale Johnson, Cheryl Meenach,  
Loni Rossow, Roberta Walker

Please note that the above membership renewals are for Yakima Valley Audubon membership. Renewals to National Audubon are separate and are not listed here.

— Bob Wahl —

### **Bring On Those Cookies!**

Cookie bakers (or bringers of the already made variety) for Aug. are Alice Nevue, Merri Knight, Ellen Stepniewski. Remember, this includes help in the kitchen, setting up, take down, and maybe tinkering with the coffee (making, cleaning up pot, etc.). For those interested in something cooler, in view of the current heat wave, anyone wishing to volunteer to bring something cold to drink would be welcome (a bottle of Costco juice, or whatever). Doing so also relieves your conscience of having to donate to the coffee fund (which, by the way is not just for coffee, but napkins, teas, "sugar" etc.) So no cut backs on donations! And thank you all, cookie bakers & helpers of meetings past. From all the smiles & empty plates going home, you now your efforts are appreciated.

— Connie Hughes —

## **It's Election Time Again**

### **Several Important Positions Need Candidates**

This election season presents members of the Yakima Valley Audubon Society an extra opportunity to vote. It is time to elect some of the officers for our Board of Directors. The positions of President-elect, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are up for election. Here's the present slate:

President-elect -- Vacant

Vice-President -- John Hebert

Secretary -- Vera Backstrom

Treasurer -- Ellen Stepniewski

The Nominating Committee of our chapter is actively searching for interested people to fill empty elected positions. President-elect is the most critical. Andy Stepniewski will be serving as president until the end of 2005. It is important to

find someone to take over for him soon enough for them to receive proper training for the position. There is also an opening on the Nominating Committee. Please contact Jean Chott (965-4067) if you are interested in running for one of these positions. Any interested people are encouraged to call Andy at 877-6639 or e-mail at [steppie@nwinfo.net](mailto:steppie@nwinfo.net) for more information.

The positions of secretary and treasurer were filled by a vote of the Board of Directors during a reshuffling caused by Don Chesebro and Carlene Moberg's resignation due to their planned move from the Yakima area. If anyone is interested to filling either of those positions and turning this into a real election, please call Jean. Nominations from the YVAS membership will be accepted for all of these positions.

## CONSERVATION

### Part 2: Excerpts from The Real Clear and Present Danger

Richard Steiner's Seattle Post Intelligencer article entitled *The Real Clear and Present Danger*, provides some key indicators of our current environmental condition. These are designed to give you some facts and some food for thought. If you have any comments please e-mail me at [insur3@charter.net](mailto:insur3@charter.net).

#### Biodiversity

Ecologists fear we are losing between 50 and 150 species each day, a rate thousands of times higher than the evolutionary background extinction rate of about one species a year. Some estimate that we have lost perhaps 600,000 species since the "bioticholocaust" began around 1950; if present trends continue, half of all species on Earth would be extinct in the next 50 years. Over-hunting, invasive species, pollution and climate change are factors in this sixth mass extinction event, but by far the greatest cause is habitat loss. The lost ecological services could be devastating. It may take 5 million to 10 million years for biological diversity to recover

#### Forests

Half of Earth's original forest cover is gone, and an additional 30 percent is degraded or fragmented. Only 20 percent of the original forest on Earth remains today as large, relatively

undisturbed "frontier forests." And half of this frontier forest is threatened by human activity, mostly by logging. Another 100,000 square miles of forest is lost each year, mostly in the tropics, and only a very small amount of this forest loss is offset by re-growth.

Since 1960, about 30 percent of the Earth's tropical forests have disappeared and with them, thousands of species. Between 50 percent and 90 percent of the terrestrial species inhabit and depend upon the forests, and more than half of the threatened vertebrate species on Earth are forest animals. The link is clear: lose forests - lose species.

#### Oceans

Once thought to be inexhaustible, the Earth's oceans are more polluted and overex-ploited than at any other time in history. Seventy percent of world fish populations are either over-fished or nearly so. Marine pollution has increased dramatically, and warming ocean temperatures have killed more than a fourth of the world's coral reefs. The 1998 coral "bleaching" event killed almost half of all Indian Ocean corals in just a few months, and Australia's Great Barrier Reef is threatened with complete collapse by the end of the century if warming continues.

— Dan Kinney —

### ***Get the Lead Out***

In the United States and Canada, it is estimated that hundreds of tons of lead fishing tackle are deposited in marine and fresh-waters annually, primarily through the loss of sinkers and jigs while fishing. More than 20 species of water birds, including loons, have the potential to accidentally ingest lead fishing tackle while feeding. Loons and other birds normally ingest small pebbles, "grit", which enables their gizzard to break down fish bones, normal component of their regular diet. Unfortunately, birds often mistake lead fishing tackle for the pebbles they normally consume.

Ingestion of lead fishing sinkers or jigs results in lead toxicity, and eventually death, as the lead is broken down by the acidic conditions of the stomach and absorbed into the bloodstream.

Efforts to reduce mortality in water birds due to lead poisoning have been made on an international front in Great Britain and Canada through environmental policies banning the use of lead fishing sinkers and jigs. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently considering banning the use of lead fishing tackle on all national wildlife refuges. If you fish please remove "split shot", "egg sinker", and "lead-headed jigs" from your tackle box. The birds thank you.

### **Recycle Those Rechargeable Batteries**

The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC) can help you recycle your portable rechargeable batteries. These batteries are commonly found in cordless power tools, cellular and cordless phones, laptop computers, camcorders, digital cameras, and remote control toys. RBRC recycles the following battery chemistries: Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd), Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH), Lithium Ion (Li-ion) and Small Sealed Lead\* (Pb).

You can recycle these at local hardware stores like Home Depot, Roys, Smooty's, or Steins. For more information see [www.rbrc.org](http://www.rbrc.org).

### **Thank You To Folklife Booth Volunteers!**

Thank you to the following volunteers for the Yakima Audubon Booth at the Yakima Folklife Festival on July 10 and 11: Bill Drenguis, Denny Granstrand, John Hebert, Dan Kinney, Mac and Merri Knight, Alice Nevue, Andy Stepniewski, Richard Repp, Leslie and Bob Wahl. Thanks also to Larry Robinson for building the bird houses. Sales were good and many people took the free information available. There were a lot of bird questions and interest shown in Audubon. This event also provided a good way to let the public know about the reprinting of "Birds of Yakima County".

— Bob Wahl —

## LOCAL FIELD TRIPS

Please call the leader before the trip to let him/her know you are interested in going. That way, if plans need to be changed, he/she can call you. Also, if no one calls, the leader will know to cancel the field trip and won't be sitting around at the meeting place all alone! Be sure to wear clothing appropriate for the weather and take lunch, snacks and beverages. Also please make a contribution to the driver for gas when you carpool. Contribution should be 15 cents per mile divided by number of people in car, including the driver.



- Aug 25 Wednesday Morning Birdwalk** — Meet the group at the regular place at the parking lot for the Poppoff Trail at the east end of the Valley Mall Blvd. at **8:00 am** for a leisurely tour of a nearby birding area.
- Sep 8 Wednesday Morning Birdwalk** — Meet the group at the regular place at the parking lot for the Poppoff Trail at the east end of the Valley Mall Blvd. at **8:00 am** for a leisurely tour of a nearby birding area.
- Sep 11 Clear Lake-Rimrock-Timberwolf Mtn** — Meet leader Debie Brown at the 40th Ave. Bi-Mart parking lot at **7:00 am** for a full day of birding that is sure to end with a long list of great sightings. In past years this trip has found Broad-winged Hawk, Common Loon and Common Tern along with lots of forest species.
- Sep 22 Wednesday Morning Birdwalk** — Meet the group at the regular place at the parking lot for the Poppoff Trail at the east end of the Valley Mall Blvd. at **8:00 am** for a leisurely tour of a nearby birding area.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS



Perhaps we are in the midst of a season that many of us find perplexing concerning birds. Plumages of juvenile and molting adults conflict with the fresh spring feathering we are more familiar with. Rising temperatures add another layer of glass, one enclosing us within an air-conditioned atmosphere, to our viewing arsenal.

Exactly one week after the official arrival of summer, a male Rufous Hummingbird signaled the beginning of fall migration by dueling with a Black-chinned Hummingbird at the Parker Heights "Green House" of President Andrew Stepniewski. Vice-president John Hebert confirmed the proclamation by meeting with 15 shorebird ambassadors from the Arctic at a conference held at the Zimmerman Ponds at the end of Lateral A the same day. In attendance, were Least and Western Sandpipers as well as two Black Terns. In a later photo-op, the two Terns posed for Editor Denny Granstrand in a manner that may have endorsed the other president's stand on marriage.

The biggest story (and bird) of the season has been the American White Pelican. On July 2 from the top of Rattlesnake Ridge, Andy spied a night roost of 30 to 40 birds on a Yakima River island near I-82 exit 40. Two weeks later, he documented 110 in flight over Parker Heights. Viewing Pelicans is inspiring but their movement may indicate suitable breeding habitat is shrinking.

The aerial antics of Common Nighthawks have captured the eye of many. In West Valley, Sherrel and Bruce Hailstone track their flights over the remains of Congdon Orchards while Bill Drenguis' balcony a bit north affords an eye-level, middle of the action feel. On Aug 5, Andy and Ellen observed an evening flock of 30 slowly moving east towards the lower valley hinting at migration two weeks early for this species.

The same evening at Konnowac Pass, Debie Brown estimated that close to 100 were actively foraging. Common Poorwill have radiated from Scott Ray's rural residence recently supplying summer shape to previously invisible spring calls.

Caspian Terns made an ephemeral run through the heart of the county in mid-July. Two over Wenas Lake were quickly followed by two at the Poppoff Trail ponds, two near I-82 exit 43, and then as a grand finale, four roused the attention of Dave Woodall at Lake Aspen.

Cool locations have produced some of the hottest birding. Numerous species common to wetter Western Washington forests highlighted the Stepniewski's list of 40 compiled on the Dewey Lake Trail. Found, but not lost, were Black-throated Swift, Red-breasted Sapsucker and Northern Goshawk. Teaming with John, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July delegation delighted in the discovery of singing Black-throated Gray Warblers along the Mt Adams highway. Stopping to smell the roses with the Native Plant Society on an outing to Bear Gap, Andy sniffed out two juvenile Pine Grosbeaks giving "virtually unequivocal" evidence of breeding within Yakima County. The Society also introduced him to "yellow lousewort"...an epithet we are sure to hear again in this campaign year.



*Common Nighthawk*



*Pine Grosbeak*

**Bird Sightings** continued on page 5

## South Central Washington Interpretive Center Slide Show

In the Coroner's Office at N. First Street and Lincoln Avenue (the former Pizza Hut)

For several months, a group comprised of members from the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy, Yakima Valley Audubon Society, environmentalists, and educators has been meeting to explore the vision and development of an interpretive center in the region. One site that has been mentioned is Snow Mountain Ranch, a 1,800-acre ranch along the South Fork of Cowiche Creek. Acquisition of this ranch is an ongoing project of the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy. This ranch encompasses a biologically rich riparian zone along the creek, documented by the WDFW as important habitat for anadromous fish. It also contains a broad swath of shrub-steppe habitats on the north face of Cowiche Mountain.

### Bird Sightings continued from page 5

Also tapping into the shade, a Red-naped Sapsucker captivated Jeff Kozma's attention by drilling a grid of sap holes into an aspen for two young fledglings. Jeff was unfazed by the Calliope Hummingbird that hovered to pilfer sap (and attracted insects) but a male Western Tanager utilizing the same strategy was a new twist.

The coolest adventure of the summer was the "Project Ptarmigan" field trip in to the Goat Rocks Wilderness Area. Andy's write up of the trip on BirdYak is an added treat. Rubbing elbows with glaciers and Gray-crowned

Rosy Finches took some of the sting out of not finding Ptarmigan. Other more extensive searches have also come up empty, WMD for example.

Hot locations producing cool birds have also been evident, most notably the Grandview Waste Water Treatment Plant (dubbed the Frying Pan by John) and Wenas Lake, affectionately known as the

Mud Oven. On Aug 3, the Frying Pan sizzled with 12 species of shorebirds including 100 Western Sandpipers, 9 Greater Yellowlegs, 2 Lesser Yellowlegs, 10 Wilson's Phalaropes, several Semipalmated Sandpipers and a single Semipalmated Plover. On July 6 at the same location, John ruminated 50 bright breeding plumage male Ruddy Ducks amongst 500 assorted ducks in various eclipse plumages. Species number 228 on his county year list was an over-easy Pectoral Sandpiper, the coolest thing on a 100-degree day, served up on Aug 11. Baked treats from the Mud Oven have included a Short-billed Dowitcher seen and heard on July 22, 6 Red-necked Phalaropes on Aug 2, a breeding plumage Bonaparte's Gull on Aug 3, and an adult Bald Eagle cruising above seven species of shorebirds on Aug 5.



*The frustratingly illusive*

Mike Roper swept the Spotted Sandpiper award with the discovery of ten on a small pond along 33<sup>rd</sup> Street mingling with two Least Sandpipers. Kerry Turley had a hot day on July 6 with 65 species in a lower valley romp starting at the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge with Fort Simcoe serving as the western boundary. He totaled nine species of shorebirds including American Avocet and Wilson's Phalarope. Most striking was the total of zero Lewis' Woodpeckers at the Fort.

Three species never documented before in the state have caused a few YVAS birders to wander. The Yakima River Delta in Richland had a Little Stint, a small shorebird; North Cove near Tokeland featured a Black-tailed Gull; and a Common Eider was afloat at Port Townsend. A rare Bar-tailed Godwit north of Sequim increased the attraction. Denny has notched all four, getting the gull on his second try. He was lucky enough to make the second trip while in Aberdeen for a friend's birthday. He also attests that "good things can happen when you do your chores" as he recently added yard bird number 79 while taking out the garbage. Chris, his spouse, now has a viable quote to counter any chase proposal.

Are our year-round resident birds affected by the attention received by the rarities? A Great Horned Owl standing in the middle of the road, as if in protest, blocked the path of Phyllis Ingram recently. After being properly acknowledged, the peevish owl moved to the shoulder of the road to finish its meal.

Our assignment this month will be to do our chores, look up and bird on.

Please e-mail me with your bird sightings at Rich712@aol.com and call me at 965-1134.



*Spotted Sandpiper*

— Richard Repp —

## PROFILES

Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of profiles of current Yakima Valley Audubon Society members. It follows an earlier series about pioneer Auduboners.

Writer's Note: No, the Crier editor did not choose himself as this issue's Profile. Each Auduboner profiled selects the next one. Watch for Denny's choice in the September Crier.

### From Milk Jugs to Digital Camera: Denny Granstrand's Birding Life

The Ring-necked Pheasant, metal in full living color (salvaged from an antique store and painted by Deb Davis) atop the house number is a clue that a birder lives there.

And the eight by ten living color photo of a Spotted Owl, ready for the profiler to see, is an indication of Denny Granstrand's growing expertise in a new facet of his more than two decades of birding.

Added to that, his business is named Osprey Home Inspection. Why? "Because no one can spell or pronounce my last name," Denny explains. ("I've counted the different ways it's been spelled for me or family members: 27!")

"Birding is my spiritual outlet," he says. "My enrichment comes from looking at birds."

Take their pictures has changed the way he goes birding, he says. "If I get three or four good pictures, it's a fine day."

Denny started digital photography in 2002, when Andy and Ellen Stepniewski (though it was Ellen Quiring then) found an Arctic Loon at Priest Rapids. Andy and Denny chased and found it the next weekend. "I tried five or six times with a 35mm point-and-shoot and a disposable camera to get a photo of that loon but they just didn't work. I found a cheap digital camera and started to get some pretty good photos, but by then the loon, of course, was gone.

His "tinkerer's project" followed: attaching a newer and better and more expensive digital camera by bungee cord to his scope. He is successful at a moderate distance and "it helps if the birds sit still. This one (the Spotted Owl) did, for a one and a half second exposure." His photos are acclaimed by local birders and he has gathered them into a program seen by YVAS and The Cascadians.

Denny began birding in the late 1970s, when, on a year-long cross country tour, he lived in a woodsy cottage in New Hampshire, three miles from town. Neighbors suggested he feed the birds so he cut holes in milk jugs and hung them from a tree. He stood by the tree and had chickadees and redpolls eating out of his hand, and "became a bird watcher immediately. It was a cosmic experience," he adds.

When he returned to his hometown, Yakima, in 1978 he met and was mentored originally by Zelia Butler and Emily Cragg. Upon joining Audubon and elected to the board for 1985-1986, he served as president the following two years, 1987-1988.

He fills several positions in the Yakima Valley Audubon Society. He's been editor of The Crier since January 2001, volunteering to succeed Maia Kelly. (Denny's degree is in advertising but after a year in that field, he decided to spend his life as a carpenter because "I like working with my hands.")

Until June of this year, he wrote the Bird Alert column for the Herald-Republic.

He took over as compiler for the Yakima Valley Christmas

Bird Count in 1995, which started a "serious competition" with Andy Stepniewski's Toppenish CBC. Denny has covered the same route in the Yakima count for 19 straight years and 18 straight years on the Toppenish count.

He is one of YVAS's "serious birders who when they see a rare bird promptly call the others, who might come right away": Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, Kerry Turley, Richard Repp, John Hebert and Debie Brown.

Like most birders, Denny keeps lists: life, state, Yakima County, year, yard, and now Texas, where his son Corey is in culinary school and where he hopes to visit a couple of times a year.

In 2000, Denny challenged members of YVAS to a year's Yakima County contest and you'll remember their monthly updates at meetings. Andy won, 255 to Denny's 250, and was gifted with a hand-framed certificate reading "Champion BS'er (Bird-Sighter)". Ellen, who started late, ended up with 240, Denny recalls.

You'd think that Denny goes birding every day and he'd probably like to, but he says that "I'm lucky to get out for two whole days in a month, though sometimes I sneak in another half day."

What is the draw of birds for Denny Granstrand? "It's a wonderful way to be out and enjoying nature. They're all beautiful and wonderfully different."

Denny is generous with his birding skills. For the annual auction of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima, which he and his wife Chris attend, he offers a birding trip. Ann Ingham, church founder and frequent purchaser of Denny's trips, including one to see Spotted Owls (they dipped, which means they didn't find one), says that "I see birds when I go with him that I'd never see by myself."

Denny and Chris, librarian at Garfield Elementary School, have spent hours and hours remodeling their home at the south end of 47th Avenue and more hours and hours developing their garden ablaze in early summer with vivid blue bachelor buttons and golden calendula, and volunteer sunflowers whose seeds the birds will be eating soon.

Denny admits to other passions besides birds: baseball—though its difficult to root for the Mariners this year, butterflies, history, the Shakers and Amish, Sherlock Holmes.. He has studied quantum theory, he says, hoping to eventually read and understand Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time", though other interests may get in the way. He also admits that it is all "way over my head".

And Chris? "I'm her fan, too." Should she be interviewed for this story? "That might be dangerous!" So she wasn't!

— Jeanne Crawford —

# New Bird Species Found In The Philippines

## An international expedition has found a new member of the rail family on a remote island in the northern Philippines.

The team of Filipino and UK researchers discovered the bird, a rail, living by a stream in the forests of Calayan.

They think the birds number only about 200 pairs at most, and since they are found nowhere else they might soon be at risk from development pressures.

They say the Calayan rail is flightless "or nearly so": it belongs to a global family including coots and moorhens.

### Chance discovery

The expedition was funded by the UK-based Oriental Bird Club and the Rufford Small Grant Committee.

Rufford Small Grants are UK awards of up to \$9,215 aimed at small conservation programmes and pilot projects.

The discovery of the Calayan rail is described in Forktail, a journal of Asian ornithology published by the OBC.

The researchers, the Babuyan Islands expedition team, were surveying the birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians of the Babuyan group at the northern end of the Philippines archipelago.

On 11 May one of the team, Carmela Espanola, was walking in the forest almost 1,000 feet up the slopes of Calayan when she spotted a small group of unfamiliar dark brown birds with distinctive orange-red bills and legs near a stream.

Her notes and photographs, with her recordings of their loud, harsh and rasping calls, helped to establish that the birds were new to science, though not to the island's people, who call them "piding".

The team saw adult and juvenile birds several times over the next few days round their rainforest camp, and estimated there are probably 100-200 pairs in the area, which contains

coralline limestone outcrops, caves and small streams.

### Reluctant aviator

In order to register the rail as a new species the expedition had to kill one bird, and when they dissected it they found its flight muscles were too weak to carry it far, prompting their conclusion that it is "almost" flightless.

Richard Thomas, or BirdLife International, told BBC News Online: "The Calayan rail has never been seen to fly, but it may be like the Okinawa rail, which flutters up into the trees like a chicken in order to roost." Of the 20 species or subspecies of rail that have become extinct since 1600, 90% were flightless.

Most members of the rail family are waterbirds, though in tropical parts of Asia many are forest dwellers like the Calayan rail.

Genevieve Broad, the co-leader of the expedition, said: "I felt sure the Babuyan Islands would hold some interesting discoveries, but I didn't expect to find a totally new species.

### Alien threats

"I hope this will bring the recognition these islands deserve as an important site of biological diversity."

The island's population numbers about 8,500 people, and there is thought to be no imminent threat to the rails.

But conservationists are concerned that new roads around the island and to its centre could mean new settlements, habitat loss and introduced predators like cats and rats, which have been implicated in most flightless rail extinctions.

## Bequests To Our Chapter

bequest (bi-kwest'), n.

1. A disposition of assets by will.; 2. A legacy;
3. A gift in your will to protect birds, wildlife, and habitat.

As a member of the Yakima Valley Audubon Socitey, you have helped protect birds and the natural environment with your support. Now, help shape the future by including a gift to Audubon in your will. Bequests may be made directly to our local Audubon chapter or to Audubon Washington (the state office).

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Sample language for your attorney:

I bequest to the National Audubon Society., a not-for-profit corporation with its principal offices located at 700 Broadway, New York, NY 10003, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_% of my estate). This gift is applied 100% to the permanent endowment of \_\_\_\_\_ (name your local Audubon chapter or Audubon Washington,) or specify \_\_\_\_\_% for both.

For further information contact: Leslie Wahl at 452-9183 or e-mail her at: rewahl@televar.com .

Use the following form for membership in the Yakima Valley Audubon Society. A separate membership is required for the National Audubon Society. Please use the form sent to you for renewal of your National Audubon Society membership. Current membership will be honored until their expiration date. At the time of the renewal of your National Audubon Society membership you will need to send in a membership to the Yakima Valley Audubon Society in order to continue to receive the *Calliope Crier* and other local membership benefits.

### YVAS MEMBERSHIP

Join or renew your annual membership to the Yakima Valley Audubon Society to receive ten issues of the *Calliope Crier* and all chapter membership benefits. National Audubon membership and *Audubon Magazine* are not included with your YVAS membership.

Yakima Valley Audubon Membership ..... \$25

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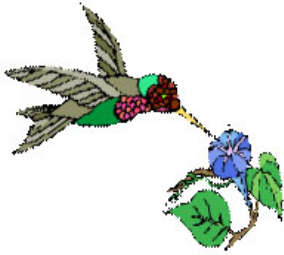
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The Yakima Valley Audubon Society meets on the fourth Thursday of January, February, March, April, May, August, September, and October at 7 pm at the Yakima Area Arboretum, located at 1401 Arboretum Drive, Yakima, WA. Guests are welcome at these meetings. The Annual Meeting of the Society is held the first Thursday of December at 6 pm. The Board of Directors meets each month **except** December at 7 pm at locations announced in the *Calliope Crier*. Members may attend Board meetings; however, please notify the host because of possible space restrictions.

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