

## 2012 Yakima Valley Audubon Field Trips

- Weekly **Thursday Morning Bird Walks** – Meet the group at the new parking lot at the east end of Valley Mall Blvd. north of the roundabout at **8:30 am**. The meeting place may change occasionally. See The Crier for more details.
- Jan 28 **White Swan Raptor Tour** - Toppenish to Fort Simcoe – We will tour west from US-97 south of Toppenish along Marion Drain Road. Winter sees a large number of raptors in the Lower Yakima Valley. This is a great tour to sample these birds. Expect upwards of 10 species. Study up on the common species: Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Prairie Falcon. We'll keep an eye out for scarcer types such as Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin and Golden Eagle. A walk around Fort Simcoe will be good for stretching our legs. On our return we'll take a look at the water towers in Toppenish for Peregrine Falcon. Also, we won't ignore owls if we encounter one! Back by 4 pm. Bring lunch and dress for the weather. Contact leader Andy Stepniewski to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- Feb 16 **Great Backyard Bird Count Kickoff Walk** – Meet Richard Repp at the north parking lot at the Yakima Area Arboretum at **9:00 am**.
- Feb 18-21 **Great Backyard Bird Count** – Check BirdYak for possible field trips, which will include American Robin counts on the north side of Suntides Golf Course; submit your lists to the GBBC website address at: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.
- Feb 18-20 **Grays Harbor County President's Weekend** – Winter birding in Grays Harbor County can be exciting with the many winter visitors and rarities that show up. We will tour many of the top birding spots in the county looking for Snowy Owl, Emperor Goose, Rock Sandpiper, King Eider, Black-legged Kittiwake and the many more common winter species. Contact Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com or 453-2500) for more information, carpooling and motel ideas.
- Mar ? **Sage Grouse Strut** – The Yakima Training Center has the second largest population of Sage Grouse in Washington State. We will travel with a YTC biologist to one of the breeding leks on the YTC to watch the male Sage Grouse strut their stuff to try to attract females. Only a limited number of people can be on this trip. If you make a reservation, please be sure to show up. Contact Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinform.net or 877-6639) to reserve your spot. You do not need an YTC Outdoor Recreation Pass to go on this trip. Meet at the YTC entrance at about **4:30 am**. More information will be in The Crier.
- April 7 **Bluebird Box Cleanout** – Meet at the end of the pavement of North Wenas Road where it intersects with Maloy and Audubon Roads at **9:00 am**. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, bring gloves and, if you have them, a putty knife or old ice scraper. The past few years have demonstrated that clothing for wind and rain protection are almost mandatory. After the cleanout, we will meet at the parking lot for the Umtanum Falls Trail (between Boxes 71 & 72) for a potluck lunch. We will finish at 1:00 pm. Contact Richard Repp (965-1134 or email: rich712@aol.com) if you would like to help out.
- April 21 **Zimmerman's Ponds and Toppenish NWR** –Each spring, snowmelt in the Cascades east of Mt. Adams rushes down Toppenish Creek filling numerous ponds and flooding valley bottoms, creating a bonanza for water and marsh birds. The marshes, fields, and riparian patches near Toppenish are at their peak in late April. Look for Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Cinnamon Teal, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Contact leader Kerry Turley (kdturley@embarqmail.com or 837-6930) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- May 5 **Umtanum Creek in Yakima Canyon** – We will wander up Umtanum Creek west of the suspension bridge in the Yakima Canyon looking newly-arriving migrants, which should be numerous. A Discovery Pass or WDFW parking pass will be required on all vehicles. Contact leader Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com or 453-2500) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- May 12 **Migratory Bird Day at Toppenish NWR** – Contact Kerry Turley (kdturley@embarqmail.com or 837-6930); meet at the wildlife refuge headquarters at **8:00am**. Scheduled to last until noon.
- May 19 **Migration Bird Count** – Luke Safford will be coordinating a county-wide bird count, trying to top the record of 195 species seen last year. Scott will be putting teams together to cover the entire county.

Contact Luke (thbcluke@thbc.com) if you are interested in participating. This event is YVAS's annual birdathon. More information on that will be in *The Crier*.

- May 25-29 **Malheur NWR in Southeast Oregon** – Malheur is the premier national wildlife refuge in the northwest United States. It hosts many nesting species in a wide variety of habitats and has an impressive number of migrants, including many rarities which include nearly all of the eastern warblers. Because of the extreme distance (350 miles), this trip is planned for five days, though you can join the group for fewer days if you would like. Contact Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinform.net or 877-6639) for more information and to reserve your spot.
- May 25-28 **Wenas Campout**-- For over 40 years, Auduboners from across the state have gathered in the Wenas to watch birds, hike, and admire the flower show. What makes the Wenas so special to naturalists? It has to do with its position at the lower edge of the Ponderosa Pine Zone as it intermingles with the upper Shrub-steppe Zone. An amazing array of flora and fauna occurs here. Visit the Wenas website for more information. Lots of fieldtrips and hikes are offered on this three-day Memorial Day weekend. See *The Crier* for details or visit [www.wenascampout.org](http://www.wenascampout.org).
- June 2 **Hardy Canyon in the Wenas** – One of the premier birding walks in the Wenas. We will find many of the nesting species in the Wenas and maybe chase rarities found during the Wenas Campout. Contact leader Debie Brown (Sturnella@aol.com or 248-3878) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- June 9 **Woodpecker trip to Bethel Ridge** – Jeff Kozma is one of the leading experts on cavity-nesting birds. He has mapped the nest cavities of many species on Bethel Ridge. Join Jeff as he leads us on an exploration of the varied habitats that host these species. Contact Jeff (jcr\_5105@charter.net) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- MJune 30 **Colockum Pass in Kittitas County** – Colockum Road and the Colockum Pass area north of Ellensburg goes from shrub steppe to subalpine meadows and features many of the breeding species found in on Bethel Ridge but with better habitat and more birds. Contact Scott Downes (downess@charter.net) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- August ? **Wenas Lake for Shorebirds** – Wenas Lake frequently hosts good numbers of migrating shorebirds in late summer and early fall. Numerous of the first sightings for Yakima County have occurred here. We will traipse out onto the mudflats for shorebird viewing, then head to the riparian area upstream from the lake searching for migrating species. Rubber boots are almost necessary. This will be a mid-week trip and the date will be announced on BirdYak. Meet at 40<sup>th</sup> Ave. Bi-Mart at **5:00 pm**.
- August 25 **Chinook Pass, Sheep Lake, Sourdough Gap** – A 2-mile easy hike to Sheep Lake is great for migrating hawks, eagles, and falcons. Songbirds such as sparrows and finches (Pine Grosbeak is possible) flit in the trailside thickets. An optional extension 1 mile farther to Pickhandle Gap for rosy finches and more raptors. Great for Mountain Goat viewing too. Fall colors can be superb! We will return by mid-afternoon. Contact leader Ellen Stepniewski (steppie@nwinform.net or 877-6639) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- Sept 7-9 **Grays Harbor County Shorebirds and Pelagic Trip** – We will join a Westport Seabirds Pelagic Trip (<http://www.westportseabirds.com/>) on Sept. 8. Contact Westport Seabirds as soon as possible to reserve your spot on the boat. After the boat trip and Sunday morning we will scour the top shorebird locations in the Grays Harbor area. Contact Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinform.net or 877-6639) for more information and motel ideas.
- Sept 22 **Sunrise at Mount Rainier National Park** – September is a lovely time to hike the trails above Sunrise. We will go to either Burroughs Mountain or Fremont Lookout searching for White-tailed Ptarmigan, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch and other subalpine species. There should be a few migrating hawks, too. The flowers should be spectacular! Contact Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com or 453-2500) to say you are going and to get the location and time to meet the group.
- Dec. 15 **Toppenish CBC** – Compiler: Luke Safford (thbcluke@thbcyak.com). Meet **7:00 am** at the Branding Iron Restaurant in Toppenish. See *The Calliope Crier* for details.
- Dec. 29 **Yakima CBC** – Compiler: Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com or 453-2500). Meet **7:00 am** at IHOP on Valley Mall Blvd. See *The Calliope Crier* for details.