

# 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

Volume 39, Number 10

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

November 2010



**NOVEMBER PROGRAM**

**ANDY STEPNIIEWSKI**

## **YVAS Christmas Banquet features Paul Bannick and *Birds by Season and Habitat***

"Birds by Season and Habitat" with author, photographer, and conservationist Paul Bannick. Paul will take us on a beautiful year-long journey across North America's habitats where birds are the actors. Not surprisingly, Paul's presentation will be weighted towards owls and woodpeckers. His first book, "The Owl and the Woodpecker," features stunning photographs and evocative text of these iconic birds across North America. This will be Paul's first showing of this new presentation featuring birds in their habitats by season.

This fun-filled event is December 2 at the Yakima Area Arboretum.

The Social and Silent Auction begins at 6 pm, followed by a potluck dinner (turkey and ham provided) at 6:30 pm. Please bring a dish for 6-8 people. Paul's program follows.

Anyone interested in birdlife amidst North America's wonderful natural settings is sure to be enthralled by Paul's extraordinary program!

**Mark Your Calendar, for  
Thursday Dec 2 at 6:00 pm.**

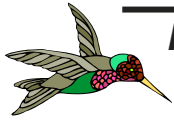
**This is going to be a real treat!**



**White-tailed Ptarmigan  
Periscope in the Snow  
Photo by Paul Bannick**

### **What's in this Crier Edition?**

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BILL DRENGUIS



I love traveling but it's great to be back home. On our recent trip to China we enjoyed great food, exotic locations, great food, ancient history, great food. (I think you get the idea.) What impressed me most was the environmental differences. It had been a long time since I experienced SMOG. Waking

up with a sore throat, cough, and a sinus headache, I realized what a great job we have done in the USA to clean up the air. Environmental problems are complex and difficult to resolve, but definitely worth solving. Remember that we at Yakima Valley Audubon are one the largest groups of environment friendly citizens in Central Washington.

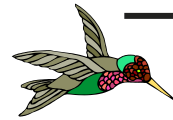
By traveling, I was able to appreciate the efforts of others to keep our air (and water, and forests) clean. I remember our cities being just as bad as China's. Through dedication and hard work we can enjoy (relatively) clean air. I have faith that as China's economy evolves, they will also be able to correct these problems. Think Global, Act Local.

**Editor's Note - Struck by the calm, confident demeanor President Bill is exhibiting in the above photo? Confucius says, it is actually a photo of a miniature clay sculpture fashioned by a street vendor during Bill's recent trip to China**



## YVAS CALENDAR

- Dec 2 **Christmas Banquet and Silent Auction** at the Yakima Area Arboretum at 6:00 pm.
- Dec 18 **Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count** — See article on page 3.
- Jan 2 **Yakima Valley CBC** — See article on page 3.
- Jan 8 **Combination Board Meeting and 2011 Field Trip Planning Meeting.** *Tentatively* set at Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center 9:30—12:30 followed by pot luck lunch. Please confirm location with Bill Drenguis at 965-5808



## MEMBERSHIP

DEBIE BROWN

### Welcome New YVAS Members!

**Yakima:** Nina Barcenas, Louise Conrad, Luke Safford, Kay Roberts

### Thank you for renewing your YVAS Membership!

**Yakima:** Diane & Ross Bornfleth, Becky & Tom Boyd, Jim Christensen, Diane Conrad, Charlotte Pfeiffer, Richard Repp, Leni Skarin, Terry Shelton, Bob & Leslie Wahl

**Selah:** Cindi Confer, Doug Peters

**Naches:** Vera Backstrom

**Corvallis, Oregon:** Will Wright

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

Going once,  
Going twice . . .



### Santa Sez...

**Please donate an item or skill to the YVAS Silent Auction today!**

**Auction proceeds help fund YVAS's mission!**

**Before Nov. 30 - Donate, Donate, Donate !  
On Dec. 2 - Bid ! Bid ! Bid!**

**See article on page 3 for details.**

## Christmas Potluck Dinner — Thursday, December 2

A few reminders about our festive get-together on December 2. In addition to your potluck items, be sure to bring serving utensils for your shared dish. Also you will need your own table service (plates, cups, silverware.) To ensure return, be sure to place your name on serving bowls/platters and utensils.

The doors will be open at 5:00 pm at the Yakima Area Arboretum and table decorating should be completed by 6:00 pm. The Silent Auction, wine service, and camaraderie will be underway by 6:00 pm. All foods need to be there by 6:15 as dinner starts at 6:30. Arrive early enough to browse through auction items prior to dinner. To ease prolonged waiting in the potluck line, our president will cue individual tables to enter the serving line.

Potluck food assignments are by the first letter of your last name: **A-G = desserts, bread & butter; H-P = main dish; Q-Z = potatoes, vegetables, salads**. Dishes need to serve about 12 – 14 people. We will be providing ham and turkey. Coffee, hot water for tea, and punch will also be furnished. Wine will be available by the glass with donations defraying the cost.

If you are a member who has not been attending monthly meetings, this is a great time to get acquainted with some wonderful people, enjoy a great meal, and surf the auction's treasures.

If you have any questions, or if you would like a ride to the event, please contact Bill Drenguis – 965-5808 (or e-mail him at Drenguis@aol.com).

### 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Silent Auction - - TOO Silent??

For several years, the Christmas Banquet Silent Auction has been one of our chapter's most important fundraisers. Though the auction is a fun event, the monies generated do allow the chapter to more fully participate in truly worthy conservation and education venues. For the auction to be successful, your participation is needed – both as a donor and as a bidder. Please pause for a moment or so to consider what items or services you can donate to be offered at the auction. Those attending the banquet, please be as generous as you can when bidding on items. Your generosity determines how successful our chapter will be in addressing our core mission.

**Donors – It is imperative that we have your items PRIOR to the banquet...the sooner, the better!** We will gather donations and information to minimize congestion and confusion in the precious minutes prior to the auction on the day of the banquet. **Please contact** Bill Drenguis (965-5808 – Drenguis@aol.com) or Ellen Stepniewski (877-6639 – step-pie@nwinform.net) to arrange to have your items picked up or to schedule a drop off time and location. The importance of having your auction items in by Nov 30 cannot be overstated!

In addition to your item, we will need: Your name and phone number, a description of your item, how much you think it should go for, and whether or not you wish to have a minimum bid established.

### The 2010 Toppenish NWR Christmas Count

The Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count, now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year is set for Saturday December 18. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Branding Iron Restaurant in Toppenish (junction of US-97 & SR-22). You will be assigned to a team to cover a specific portion of a 15-mile diameter circle in the Lower Valley. If you would like more information, please call Andy Stepniewski at 877-6639 or e-mail him at steppie@nwinform.net.

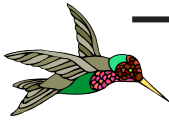
Interest and enthusiasm are key requirements. We will train you! Following the count, at 4:30 to 5:00 p.m., we meet at Andy and Ellen's house in Parker Heights to go through the tally, warm up with a bowl of soup and hot (and cold!) drinks and recount the day's experiences.

Friendly competition between this and the Yakima count (see below) has become a tradition. In 2010, which count will win?

### The 2010 Yakima Valley Christmas Count

Please mark January 2 on your calendar now for our 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Yakima Valley Christmas Count. This nation-wide census of birds in specific 15-mile diameter circles is now undertaken annually by more than 50,000 birders. And you don't have to be an expert to participate-just be willing to help by looking, listening or tallying. It's great fun and challenging too, to canvas your designated area.

Call Denny Granstrand at 453-2500, or e-mail him at dgranstrand@gmail.com for more information. We will meet at 7:00 a.m. Sunday January 2 at IHOP in Union Gap. After a hearty (no host) breakfast we will depart for a full day of birding. Meet again with the traditional re-cap PIZZA POTLUCK at Debie Brown's home on Konnowac Pass at 5:00 p.m. We need observers, so if you are interested, please call Denny at the above number.



## FIELD TRIPS

### DENNY GRANSTRAND



*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.*

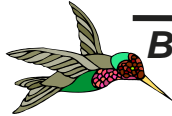
**Dec 4 Christmas Count Tune-up** — We will tour the Lower Valley acclimating to the winter weather and searching for avian treasures, ending up at Fort Simcoe. Meet leader Denny Granstrand at the south end of the Sears parking lot west of IHOP at **8:00 am**.

**Dec 18 Toppenish NWR CBC** — Meet co-compilers Andy Stepniewski and Luke Safford at the Branding Iron Restaurant along Hwy 97 just south of Toppenish at **7:00 am**.

**Jan 2 Yakima Valley CBC** — Meet compiler Denny Granstrand at the IHOP Restaurant on Valley Mall Blvd. south of Sears at **7:00 am**.

## Please contribute for gas when you ride on field trips

With high gas prices it is important for all participants to contribute for gas. Based on four people in a car, here are the totals per person: 100 miles driven on the trip — \$5.00 each; 150 miles — \$8.00 each, 200 miles — \$10.00 each; 250 miles — \$13.00 each; 300 miles — \$16.00each. Please pay your share; if drivers have to pay most of the gas bill, they may quit driving.



## BIRDS & WORDS, PHOTOS & KUDOS

### RICHARD REPP

Perhaps the most unusual bird surfacing this month was a **Surf Scoter** scooting about at Robertson's Landing in early November. A sea duck that breeds in the arctic region and winters along coastal North America, it rarely graces the interior of Yakima County. According to the [Birds of North America Online](#) (BNAO): "Because this species does not breed until 2 or 3 years of age, there is a large non-breeding segment in the population. Highly sensitive to adult mortality, hunting and accidental deaths due to fishing nests or oiling can have significant impact on the population. Food captured mostly underwater. In marine waters, preys on stationary organisms (mussels, clams) in flocks ranging from a few to several thousand birds. On freshwater ponds, forages in pairs or small groups feeding on free-swimming invertebrates. Individuals in flocks tend to dive and surface in highly synchronous fashion; synchrony increases with flock size. Synchrony may be advantageous in large groups to maintain cohesion during foraging trips, and in the particular case of birds foraging on sessile prey, synchrony may allow individuals to follow one another to localized food patches." Ever wonder where the sport of synchronized swimming originated?



**Surf Scoter**  
Photo by Denny Granstrand

**Pine Siskin** numbers are up at feeders maintained by YVAS members throughout the upper valley. A dozen or more Siskins have hit seeds in Selah (**Bev Olson**), Terrace Heights (**Jeff Kozma**) and northwest Yakima (**Scott Downes**.) BNAO states: "Generally an inhabitant of coniferous or mixed coniferous-deciduous forests, the Pine Siskin breeds as far north as central Alaska and northern Canada but also ranges south in suitable habitat to northern Baja California and through the Mexican highlands to Guatemala. Known to many observers as an unpredictable winter visitant, it is an irruptive species abundant in a given locality one year and often absent the next. Presumably this pattern is related in some way to annual variation in the distribution and abundance of seeds that make up the bulk of its diet."

**Birds & Words, Photos & Kudos** continued on page 5

## Birds, Works, Photos, and Kudos continued from page 4



**Pine Siskin**  
Photo by George Vlahakis

The Siskin's diminutive size belies its feisty nature and "impressive resistance to cold." Siskins "Often challenge other birds at feeders, lowering head nearly to ground and spreading wings and tail while briefly facing opponent. Aggressive displays accompanied with series of faint threatening notes, followed by "vicious lunge" if display fails. In most cases, other bird is put to flight by display, but it occasionally stands its ground and a fight ensues, sometimes carrying siskin combatants  $\geq 3.7$  meters into air. Siskins challenged even Evening Grosbeaks at a feeder in Massachusetts. Grosbeaks would frequently shy away, but sometimes extended their imposing bills toward the siskins, which prudently retreated without further display." Feisty yes, stupid no. The Evening Grosbeak possesses the most powerful seed cracking jaw of North American passerines.

Blue corvids also have been seasonally adjusting their ranges this past month. Out in Naches, **Alice Faringer's** filbert tree was the toast of the town for four **Steller's Jays** in October. Three **Western Scrub Jays** have been hanging in Terrace Heights at the intersection of Hillcrest and Mountainview brightening **Jeff Kozma's** morning commute. **Stan and Lori Isley** toured Fort Simcoe on the eve of Halloween; among the nutty species treating tricksters there were **Western Scrub Jays**, **White-breasted Nuthatches** and an **Acorn Woodpecker**.

While barns are not ubiquitous in Parker Heights, they do exist. And owls can be mavericks as evidenced by the brood of **Barn Owls** that chose a bin pile within sight of **Andy & Ellen Stepniewski's** home as a nest site. The eared one (Andy) has interpreted the "sheesh" call emanating from the bins as begging pleas from the young owls. Personally, I feel it may be the youngsters' response to allegations that they should be mugging micey meals on their own..

As we bear down on Thanksgiving Day, hunters appear to be out in force. And not all of them are wearing orange and hurling lead. Three miles above the end of the pavement on North Wenas Road, a rural area where hunters are expected, a black-masked **Northern Shrike** stalked



**Northern Shrike**  
Photo by  
Denny Granstrand

**Jeff Kozma**. Closer to town, **Denny Granstrand** got **Goshawk (Northern)** on South 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue just outside of the airport. Oddly enough, Denny's "neighbor" over on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue, **John Hebert** popped over to the Poppoff Trail to bag his **Goshawk**. Moving a little more urban, Denny purloined a **Peregrine Falcon** across from Buchanan Lake. Three days later on October 27, **Luke Safford** netted a rather late, lingering **Osprey** at Buchanan Lake. Hunting hunters in downtown Yakima from the comfort of a car bagged **Peregrine Falcons** for **Ellen Stepniewski** on Oct 28 and **Greg Bohn** a few days later. Once again, the falcons were on or near the Larson Building. Greg made it a two Falcon foray when he found a **Merlin** awaiting magic on 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

Hunted fowls, fair game in this season, included a male **Spruce Grouse** **John Hebert** gazed near the Gray Rock Trail on the North Fork of the Ahtanum. Pushing higher to the base of Darland Mountain, John flushed 80 **Gray-crowned Rosy Finches**. **Dan Kinney**, insurer by trade, ensured a wild goose chase with a tip to BirdYak of several white dwarfs in a flock of **Canada Geese** in the alfalfa fields behind the Tancara housing development. **Denny Granstrand** wasted no time making hay by capping eight **Snow Geese** the next morning.

**Anna's Hummingbirds** continue to flirt with fading blossoms and nectar feeders. Let someone know if you have one hanging around as Hummers put the hum in Christmas Bird Count carols. Also keep a sharp eye on those finches feasting on nyjer and black-oil sunflower seeds. A **Common Redpoll** or two might slip in with the regulars. A nice way to spice up a CBC. In short, in the days leading up to the CBCs, be sure to report unusual birds to the count leaders. While not tax deductible, your gift will be appreciated.



**Barn Owls, parent and nestling**  
Photo by  
Mike Roper



**CONSERVATION**  
**ANGIE BEGOSH**

## Update on Preparation of WDFW Wildlife Area HCP EIS

Last month I attended a scoping meeting in Ellensburg by US Fish & Wildlife and NOAA for preparation of a proposed WDFW Wildlife Area HCP (Habitat Conservation Plan) covering the 32 wildlife areas managed by WDFW. This meeting was the beginning of the scoping process – no decisions have been made yet. Comments taken during this meeting will assist in development of the Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is to specify the federally listed species in the 32 wildlife management areas, and outlines the conservation strategies that will be followed to avoid, minimize or mitigate incidental take. The actions that will be covered in the HCP are activities such as horseback riding and dog field trial events; construction, maintenance, removal and operation of upland infrastructures, water control structures, and water crossing structures; non-chemical weed control; forest management; livestock grazing and associated activities; agriculture and associated activities; irrigation; upland bird stocking; wildlife feeding; routine habitat management; and habitat restoration.

The activity that the Board is most concerned with is the winter feeding of elk. The intent of this program is to provide supplemental winter feed to deer and elk to increase overwinter survival, to allow for the regeneration of winter habitat that has been severely damaged or destroyed by disaster, to reduce wildlife damage to neighboring private property (agricultural and horticultural crops), and for agency approved research. The Board is concerned that high concentrations of elk feeding allows survival that exceeds the habitat's carrying capacity, but it also could cause habitat degradation and reduction in biodiversity far beyond the immediate areas surrounding these feeding stations. Several individuals have documented species decline in several habitats surrounding these feeding stations; 2-3 miles north of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area Headquarters there has been a documented decline in sage thrasher and sage sparrow populations in the last 15-18 years, and there has been a documented decline in butterfly diversity and numbers in Bear Creek Canyon in the last 30 years. At the scoping meeting, WDFW representatives made it clear that cessation of the feeding program is not an option. We are strongly encouraging that during the development of the Environmental Impact Statement, that biologists consider the potential

detrimental effects that the elk feeding program has had not only on the immediate area, but the surrounding habitats as well. We are submitting data that shows this decline in some areas. Strict management of this program and rigorous monitoring of species populations surrounding the sites will be critical for preservation of shrub steppe habitat and the species dependent upon it.

The draft EIS/HCP will be available for public review in the fall of 2011, and will have an opportunity to comment on their proposed actions.

### What You Can do for Conservation

A great way to keep up with conservation on a national level is to visit National Audubon's website at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org). Click on the "Take Action" button in the top right hand corner of the page and a page will open up that shows you how you can help contribute to positive change.

### Current topics on the National Audubon agenda are:

How you can help with the Gulf oil spill and save coastal Louisiana: Write to members of Congress to request full funding for coastal Louisiana projects which are critically important to help mitigate the effects of this year's oil spill.

Keep Clean Energy Clean and Support Strong Climate Change Solutions: Write to Congress to ask them to support clean, renewable energy.

Protect the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Write to your US Representative to support the Udall Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act to permanently protect the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The website provides you with a sample letter and a form to enter your personal information so a letter can automatically be sent to the appropriate party. It is more effective, however, if you take the time to customize the letter or compose your own.

Other ways you can contribute to local conservation are to participate in local activities such as the Christmas Bird Counts, the Great Backyard Bird Count, the Birdathon, and volunteer to help monitor bluebird boxes. All of these activities are local, fun, and help document the health of local species.



## Need a Last Minute Christmas Gift Idea?



Consider a Gift Membership to the Yakima Valley Audubon Society for that hard to shop for relative, friend or acquaintance. The Yakima Valley Audubon Society is people dedicated to the enjoyment and preservation of the natural world. Share your commitment and love of birding and conservation with a special person in your life.

Simply enter the recipients name and address on the form below. In addition to ten issues of the Calliope Crier, they will be entitled to all chapter membership benefits and a special note card will be sent to them to acknowledge your thoughtful gift.

*Best of all, we are offering this Christmas gift membership at a special price of only \$12.00!*

Act promptly to ensure that the recipients will receive notification of your gift prior to Christmas.

Make your check payable to: **Yakima Valley Audubon Society**

Send the form and your check to: YVAS Membership  
P. O. Box 2823  
Yakima, WA 98907-2823

### 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  
Yakima Valley Audubon Senior (62+)/Student Membership ..... \$15

Special YVAS Gift Membership (New memberships only).....\$12  
(Special offer expires December 31, 2010)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to: **Yakima Valley Audubon Society**

# Look for these rare visitors at your feeders and in your trees this winter (get out your bird books!):



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.

## 2010 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD

President	Bill Drenguis (DRENGUIS@aol.com)	965-5808	Membership	Debie Brown Sturnella@aol.com	248-3878
Vice President	Open		Newsletter Editor	Elizabeth Bohn (elizabethannbohn@yahoo.com)	901-1886
Past-president	Kerry Turley (kdturley@embarqmail.com)	837-6930	Programs	Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639
Secretary	Vera Backstrom (vback47@gmail.com)	731-2103	<b>Special Committees:</b>		
Treasurer	Ellen Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639	Bird Rehabilitator	Connie Hughes (CHbirdlady@msn.com)	457-5661
Directors:	Angie Begosh (mollybot5@hotmail.com)	834-1528	Bird Reports	Richard Repp (Rich712@aol.com)	965-1134
	Jan Gano (gano12@earthlink.net)	966-4539	Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (sponsorship records)	965-1134
	Bob Wahl (reljwahl@msn.com)	452-9183	Courtesy	Open	
<b>Standing (Voting) Committee Chairs:</b>			Important Bird Areas	John Hebert hejohn1126@msn.com	965-8235
Audubon Hoegar Preserve	Leslie Wahl (reljwahl@msn.com)	452-9183	Publicity	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
Audubon Refuge Keeper	Kerry Turley (kdturley@embarqmail.com)	837-6930	Social	Open	
Bluebird Trail	Richard Repp (Rich712@aol.com)	965-1134	Volunteer Recognition	vacant	
Conservation	Angie Begosh (mollybot5@hotmail.com)	834-1528	Webmaster	John Hebert (hejohn1126@msn.com)	965-8235
Education	Jenny Snyder (jlsnyder001@hotmail.com)		Website	www.yakimaaudubon.org	
Field Trips	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500	Toppenish NWR CBC	Andy Stepniewski (steppie@nwinfo.net)	877-6639
Fund Raising	Dan Kinney (insur3@charter.net)	452-3260	Yakima Valley CBC	Denny Granstrand (dgranstrand@gmail.com)	453-2500
			Yakima Valley Audubon Voice Mail		248-1963