

Yakima Valley Audubon Society 2006 Field Trip Schedule

Yakima Valley Audubon Society field trips for the entire year are presented here. Remove this four-page section from *The Crier* and keep it handy for reference. More trips may be added later. Just keep an eye on the Field Trip section in *The Crier*.

Wednesday Morning Bird Walks on the Poppoff Trail of the Yakima Area Greenway are short outings — two hours or so — on a paved or smooth path and offer an easy, close-to-town opportunity to see lots of birds in a natural setting. A variety of interesting waterfowl, birds of prey, and songbirds are easily seen on these walks. Unless stated otherwise in *The Crier*, the meeting place for these walks is at the east end of Valley Mall Boulevard (Take I-82 to Exit 34, go east to parking for Helen Jewett Pathway). Meeting time is **8 am** except **9 am** in winter. It is a good idea to check *The Crier*, as occasionally these trips will visit other areas, such as Sportsman State Park or Cowiche Canyon. At the end of April, the Wednesday Morning Bird Walks switch to Thursday. After that they won't be called the Wednesday Morning Bird Walks, for apparent reasons. The **Saturday Morning Bird Walks** are patterned after the Wednesday walks, no matter which day they are on.

January 28 Trail

Leader: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500). Meet at **9 am** at the Jewitt Pathway parking lot.

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at the Poppoff



One or two *White-throated Sparrows* have been seen regularly on the Poppoff Trail walks this winter.
Photo by Mac Knight.

February 4-5 (Sat.-Sun.)

San Juan Islands Boat Trip

Sunday, Jan. 5, from **8 am** to **5 pm**. Leader for the boat trip is acclaimed naturalist Dennis Paulson. This trip aims to highlight the San Juan Islands beginning with Deception Pass, Peapod Rock, Orcas Island, Cattle Point, and Lopez Island. Seabirds, whales, and other sea mammals will be sought. Boat trip ticket will cost \$59. "Pre boat trip" birding, too! Meet either Saturday morning at **8 am** south of Mt. Vernon to bird the Skagit Flats or **noon** north of Mt. Vernon to visit the Samish Flats. **Sign-up required by January 23!** Contact: Andy Stepniewski, 877-6639 or steppie@nwinfo.net.

February 11 (Sat.)

McNary NWR and Tri-Cities Birding

This trip offers a superb opportunity to study a variety of waterfowl, including geese, dabbling, and diving ducks at McNary Pool at the refuge at the height of waterfowl migration. Birds of prey, gulls, and songbirds will also be looked for. Leader: Bill Drenguis, phone 965-5808. Meet at **7:30 am**. at the west side of IHOP, Valley Mall Blvd.



McNary NWR should be a great place to see Cackling Geese, like this minima Cackling Goose.

February 17-20

Great Backyard Bird Count

Contact: Richard Repp, 965-1134. Count birds in your own backyard or join groups: Richard on the 17th at Sarg Hubbard Park (965-1134) at **9 am**, Larry on the 18th at their house in the Nile Valley (658-2918), Denny on the 18th at the Poppoff Trail(453-2500) at **9 am**, Kerry on the 19th at the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge (837-6930) at **9 am**. (You don't have to meet all three at the same time, just pick the place you want to bird for a few hours and go there). See article on page 6 of the January *Crier* for details.

February 25

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at the Poppoff Trail.

Leader: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500). Meet at **9 am** at the Jewitt Pathway parking lot.

March 11 (Sat.)

Birding Class: "Arboretum Birds through the Seasons."

Instructor: Andy Stepniewski. Sponsored by the Yakima Area Arboretum. (248-7337). More details will be in the February *Crier*.

2006 Field Trip Schedule (continued)

March 18 (Sat.)

Raptors in the Yakima Canyon and Kittitas Valley.

The Yakima Canyon and agricultural fields of the Kittitas Valley host lots of hawks, eagles, and falcons at this time of year. This tour offers you a great opportunity to hone your identification skills with birds of prey with an expert on raptors. Leader: Mike Roper. (453-1447). (raptornut@charter.net). Meet at **9 am** at 40th Avenue Bi-Mart.



Bald Eagles will be easy to find on the Kittitas Valley raptor trip.
Photo by George Vlahakis.

March 24-26

Sandhill Crane Festival

Celebrate the migration of thousands of Sandhill Cranes in Othello. Numerous field-trips, illustrated talks, banquet and guest speaker. There is no organized YVAS field trip to the Crane Festival this year. For more information, check out the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival website at: <http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>

April 1 (Sat.)

Bluebird Nest Box Cleanout, repair and potluck lunch

Leader: Richard Repp (965-1165). Meet the group at **9 am** at end of pavement on North Wenas Road.

April 8 (Sat.)

Vantage Loop

Join an expert on shrub-steppe birds on this trip with stops in the very best quality sagebrush, cliff and pothole habitats in the western Columbia Basin. Sage Thrasher and "desert" sparrows such as Sage, Brewer's, Vesper, and Lark Sparrows will be targets of this trip. Sites on the itinerary include the Quilomene Wildlife Area, the Wahluke Slope of the Hanford National Monument. Water birds at Vantage and Priest Rapids WMA will be another focus of this comprehensive tour. Leader: Scott Downes, (469-7807). downess@cwu.edu. Meet at **6:30 am** at K-Mart. Return late afternoon.

April 23 (Sun.)

Zimmerman 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. Leader: Kerry Turley. (837-6930). Meet at the west side of IHOP, Valley Mall Blvd. **8 am**.



Black-necked Stilts should be back in time for the Zimmerman Ponds and Toppenish NWR field trip.
Photo by Mac Knight.

April 29

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at the Poppoff Trail.

Leader: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500). Meet at **8 am** at the Jewitt Pathway parking lot.

May 6 (Sat.)

South Fork Ahtanum Creek Flower and Bird Walk

Spring color and song are highlights of a trip into the shrub-steppe and oak and pine habitats west of Yakima. Flowers include Bitterroot, two types of fleabanes, penstemons, and Mariposa Lily. Amble over open slopes on DNR land. Birds on tap include Lewis's Woodpeckers, Western Bluebirds, American Kestrels and House Wrens. Half-day trip. Leader: Phelps Freeborn. (454-0871). Meet at **9 am** at Rosauers (72nd and Tieton), north end of parking lot.

May 13 (Sat.)

Migratory Bird Day

Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge. Field trips at the refuge. Meet at headquarters **9 am to 1 pm**. Watch for details in the April *Crier*.

2006 Field Trip Schedule (continued)

May 13-14 (Sat.-Sun.)

Dixie Hummingbirds Overnight Trip

The hummingbird spectacle in Dixie, which is just north of Walla Walla, has been the target of several YVAS field trips in the past. On this trip, we will have the best hummingbird experience possible. In the evenings in May, up to 300 hummingbirds can be seen visiting the feeders at Tom Lamb's house. We will be able to stand beside a feeder, encircle it in our hands and have hummingbirds land on our hands to feed! Check the April Crier for details on arranging carpooling and overnight accommodations. Trip will depart at **3 pm** on Sat. Hummingbirds in Walla Walla Saturday evening, overnight in Walla Walla. Search for the Green-tailed Towhee at its northern limits on Biscuit Ridge Sunday. Return at your leisure. Leader: Denny Granstrand (453-2500).



Close-up views of hummingbirds, such as this male Black-chinned Hummingbird, will be yours on the Dixie Hummingbird trip. Photo by Mac Knight.

May 20 (Sat.)

YVAS Birdathon

Two teams will compete for the best species list at two wonderful birding areas: the Green Ranch in the Wenas and the Snow Mountain Ranch south of Cowiche. Details haven't been worked out yet but it promises to be an exciting day of birding at each location. Expect lots of colorful (and some not so colorful) Neotropical birds such as flycatchers, swallows, warblers, orioles, and grosbeaks. Leader: Denny Granstrand, (453-2500). Details will be in the April Crier.

May 26-29

Wenas Campout

For over forty 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. Contact: Andy Stepniewski, 877-6639. More information can be found on the Wenas Campout website at: <http://www.nwlink.com/~cyrus/wenas.htm>. There will no official YVAS trips to the campout.

June 3 (Sat.)

Woodpeckers in the Ahtanum

Jeff Kozma, Wildlife Biologist for the Yakama Nation, discovered a wonderful variety of woodpeckers nesting in aspen trunks at middle elevations in the Ahtanum. Join Jeff as he leads you to this impressive concentration of woodpeckers and other mountain birds, including Lincoln's Sparrows. Leader: Jeff Kozma, (225-3465). Meet **6:45 am** at Wide Hollow Elementary School (72nd and Nob Hill). Car pool from there. Bring lunch, beverage, sun screen, etc., for trip to last at least until **2 pm**, though you could head home earlier if you need to.

June 10 (Sat.)

Flycatcher Identification Class

An "intermediate" tutorial on this drab-colored group. We will head out to the Wenas. There is perhaps no better place in Washington to study this challenging group of birds, many of them very similar in appearance. However, many of them are particularly choosy about their breeding habitat, and have distinctive (somewhat!) songs and calls, thus "demystifying" identification. No less than 12 species are possible, including six **Empidonaxes**! Here, over a small distance we'll get a chance to study this group. Plan to be out until **2 pm**. Leader: Andy Stepniewski (877-6639), or steppie@nwinform.net. Bring walkie-talkies, if you have them, for the tutorial *en route*. More details will be in the May Crier.



You'll be able to identify this Pacific-slope Flycatcher after you graduate from the Flycatcher ID class. Photo by Mac Knight.

June 17 (Sat.)

Umtanum Falls

Downhill from the Umtanum Road is a hidden Shangri-la in the Wenas, Umtanum Falls. About an hour's walk through Ponderosa Pine forest and groves of riparian woodland, filled with colorful birds, takes you to this beautiful waterfall. A $\frac{3}{4}$ day trip, about 4-mile hike total. Leader: Debie Brown. (248-3878). Meet at **7 am**. at 40th Avenue Bi-Mart.

2006 Field Trip Schedule (continued)

July 28-30 (Fri.-Sun.)

Car Camping and Hiking Trip to North Side of Mt. Adams

Contact: Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, 877-6639 or steppie@nwinfo.net. Target bird: the ever-elusive White-tailed Ptarmigan! Though, for Yakima County, "ever-elusive" is certainly an understatement. This bird has been the subject of many, many miles of hiking and hour upon hour of scouring steep mountain sides of searching. We will try once again. More news in the June *Crier*.



White-tailed Ptarmigan
The target of our affections (and efforts).
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski

August 12 (Sat.)

Chinook Pass Hike

The wildflower display at Chinook Pass is justly famous, as are the views of Mt. Rainier. But wait! There are lots of mountain birds to be looked for, including various raptors, Blue Grouse, swifts, hummingbirds, jays, various warblers, and sparrows should be encountered on this 5-mile hike. Should be back in Yakima by 3 p.m. Leader: Debie Brown, 248-3878. Meet at 7 am at 40th Avenue Bi-Mart.

Sept. 10 (Sun.)

Columbia Basin Shorebirds

We'll head east out into the basin and search sites, including Othello, Potholes Reservoir, and "County Line Ponds" for migrant shorebirds and other water birds. 15 species or more species of "waders" are possible at this time. Full day. Leader: Andy Stepniewski, 877-6639 or steppie@nwinfo.net. Meet at 7:30 am at 40th Ave. Bi-Mart.

Sept. 30 (Sat.)

Spruce Grouse and Boreal Owls in the Ahtanum

Just west of Yakima on the slopes of Darland Mountain are outpost populations of two "boreal" bird species: Spruce Grouse and Boreal Owl. This trip will be a search for these two very uncommon and mysterious birds in this area. Leader: Denny Granstrand. Meet at 1 pm at Denny's house at 2011 S. 47th Ave., Yakima. Contact Denny at 453-2500, dgranstrand@charter.net.

Oct. 7

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at the Poppoff Trail

Leader: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500). Meet at 9 am at the Jewitt Pathway parking lot.

Oct. 21 (Sat.)

Fort Simcoe and Medicine Valley

Journey out to this marvelous grove of Oregon White Oaks at historic Fort Simcoe where Lewis's Woodpeckers, surely one of the most charismatic of its clan, can be numerous. Look for other birds of oak woodlands such as White-breasted Nuthatch and Western Scrub-Jay. Not far away is Medicine Valley, which can be excellent for birds of prey. Half-day. Leader: Kerry Turley. (837-6930). Meet at 8:30 am at west side of IHOP, Valley Mall Blvd.

Nov. 4

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at the Poppoff Trail

Leader: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500). Meet at 9 am at the Jewitt Pathway parking lot.

Nov. 12 (Sun.)

Grand Coulee Waterfowl and Raptors

Late fall finds swarms of waterfowl of many species migrating south through the stupendous Grand Coulee lakes. On the uplands around the coulee are expansive fields, attractive to numerous raptors. Leader: Andy Stepniewski, 877-6639 or steppie@nwinfo.net. Meet at 7:30 am at 40th Avenue Bi-Mart.

Dec. 2

Saturday Morning Bird Walk at the Poppoff Trail

Leader: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500). Meet at 9 am at the Jewitt Pathway parking lot.

Dec. 16 (Sat.)

Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count

Compiler: Denny Granstrand. (453-2500), or dgranstrand@charter.net. Meet at 7 am at Sportsman's Park central fireplace.

Dec. 17 (Sun.)

Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count.

Compiler: Andy Stepniewski. (877-6639), or steppie@nwinfo.net. Meet at 7 am at Branding Iron Restaurant in Toppenish. Look for more news on both counts in later *Criers*.