



# 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 46, Number 01

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

January 2017



## JANUARY PROGRAM

BILL DRENGUIS

### DO OWLS HAVE SPOTS?

Presented By Stan Sovern



Spotted Owls? I thought they had all been eaten by that other owl! And that is as much as I know about Spotted Owls. (Editor's note: that "other owl" would be the Barred Owl.)

At our next chapter meeting, our perception of the rarely spotted Spotted Owl will change. It turns out that there is a Spotted Owl expert in the

area. Stan Sovern, a researcher at Oregon State University, is based in Cle Elum and works for the US Forest Service. He has agreed to enlighten us, and here is a summary of his presentation: The Cle Elum Spotted Owl Demography Study began in 1989. The study is one of 8 long-term demography studies funded through the Northwest Forest Plan to monitor this iconic species. Each year, biologists survey known owl territories using playback methods to elicit owl responses. If owls are located, biologists attempt to determine nesting status, and band new (unbanded) adults and all juveniles produced each year. The banding data is used in a mark-recapture analysis framework for monitoring population change. Since 1989, 875 Spotted Owls have been banded on the Cle Elum Study Area. The presentation will describe the life history of Spotted Owls along with population trends.

I think you will agree that this presentation is worth the effort of bundling up and coming to the Yakima Area Arboretum on January 26 at 7pm. See you there.

*Mark your calendar for Thursday, January 26, at 7:00 to see this presentation at the Yakima Area Arboretum*



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

KERRY TURLEY

### HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017!

I hope everyone has weathered the extreme temperatures the last month has featured. It makes one appreciate the amazing adaptations of our wild neighbors that keep them warm whatever the weather!

As I was preparing the annual report to National Audubon, I was impressed with what YVAS had actually accomplished this past year and with the enthusiasm your Board of Directors has put into this year's plan for the chapter.

This year YVAS volunteers tallied over 1300 hours on such programs as Arborfest, Bluebird and Vaux's Swift monitoring, Birdathon, Bird Surveys at the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR), Open House Sundays and Student Education Days at TNWR, Youth Environment Summit, maintaining the bird blind at the Arboretum, newsletter production, two Christmas Bird Counts and field trips galore.

That's a lot of exciting things going on that you could be a part of if you are not already connected to one of them. We have a very full calendar of field trips, programs and educational opportunities for adults and youth again this year. Our programs continue to connect young people to the natural world and we are already planning for Arborfest at the Arboretum and International Migratory Bird Day at the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge, so be on the lookout for these outreach opportunities if you are interested.

To continue to be successful we need your input and energy. It's a great way to get to know your fellow Auduboners and to support our wild neighbors.

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

## Youth Environment Summit–YVAS Booth



On November 9th, Yakima County Solid Waste Division presented the 5th bi-annual Youth Environmental Summit at the Yakima Convention Center. This year over 600 middle, junior and senior high students and school staff attended this event. It provided an opportunity for these students to learn about environmental issues that affect their homes, schools and communities, and how they can make a difference.

The Youth Environmental Summit featured two guest speakers, Jen Rustemeyer, an award winning producer of the documentary "Just Eat It" and Andy Keller, environmental activist and founder of the reusable bag company, ChicoBag: ([www.chicobag.com/t-about-us](http://www.chicobag.com/t-about-us)).

Panels of students from local schools presented their environmental accomplishments and all had time for collaboration among schools. What these young folks have done, and their energy always amazes me.

The event also featured exhibits from many local environmental organizations including the Yakima Valley Audubon Society. In keeping with the "Just Eat It" theme, our exhibit included what happens when birds ingest poison from rodenticides and lead from shot or fishing weights. We also had on display photos of plastic related risks to birds such as fishing line and twine entanglements encountered by Osprey and problems resulting from ingesting plastic by foraging seabirds.

The exhibit was well received by the students, and we Audubon volunteers enjoyed our interactions with them. Thanks to our Audubon Volunteers, Bob Chicken, Andy and Ellen Stepniewski, Karen Zook, Phil Fischer, and Susan Paoletta.

— Ellen Stepniewski —



### MEMBERSHIP JOY MCKINNEY

Thank you for renewing your YVAS Membership!

**Naches:** Dotty Armstrong and Vera Backstrom  
**Puyallup:** Tom Sawyer  
**Selah:** Helen and Norb John, Larry & Kathryn Nelson, Jan Brydsen  
**Toppenish:** Frank Brown, James D. Hansen  
**Wapato:** Andy and Ellen Stepniewski  
**Yakima:** Stan and Lori Isley, Joyce Dennison, Phyllis Thayer, Kathy and Ed Medford, William Bucknam, Kathy Hennessy, Eileen Gavin, Jim and Mary Stephenson, Jack and Bev Vonfeld, Grace Anderson, and Joyce Lucas



### THIS MONTH'S YVAS CALENDAR

- Jan 26** **Audubon Chapter Meeting** at the Yakima Area Arboretum at **7:00 pm. Great program.**  
**Feb 14** **Board Meeting** at Dan Kinney's house (207 Santa Roza Dr. Yakima, WA) 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 Annual Meeting of the Society is held the first Thursday of December at 6pm. 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.

## In Memory of "Arboretum Bob"

Dear friends of the Arboretum, we are very sad to report that our much loved caretaker Bob Howell has passed away. His heart failed him Saturday morning December 10, leaving us in shock and dismay that one so young, just 63, can leave us so quickly. Anyone who had the good fortune to meet Bob will know that he was passionate about his work at the Arboretum and that he loved to share it with all who visited here, as though welcoming them into his own home. Bob was our protector, and our friend and he will be missed terribly. Our condolences go out to his family and to the many people who were blessed to have known him.

The above paragraph was written by the Yakima Area Arboretum staff. It came as a shock to all of us at YVAS. Bob was always there to greet us each month for our chapter meeting. He had a knack for anticipating and solving any need we might encounter. He was always thoughtful and accommodating. It was easy to think that we were Bob's favorite group but upon reflection, one realizes that every group or individual using the Arboretum felt that way.

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— YVAS Board —



<b>FIELD TRIPS</b>
<b>SCOTT DOWNES</b>

- Jan 28 (Sat) *Winter Raptor's in the Lower Yakima Valley.*** Between Toppenish and White Swan along and near Marion Drain Road is a variety of open habitats attracting large numbers of diurnal raptors in the winter months. Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, and American Kestrels are usually the most numerous followed by fewer numbers of Bald Eagles, Rough-legged and Cooper's Hawks, Prairie Falcons, and Merlins. Uncommon species include Sharp-shinned Hawks, Peregrine Falcon, and Golden Eagles. Near White Swan, we might poke around riparian habitats for songbirds including Bushtits. Join Andy and Ellen Stepniewski for this trip meeting at 8am and returning back in Yakima by 2 or 3 in the afternoon. Email the leaders for details and a meeting place (steppie@nwinform.net).
- Feb 11 (Sat) *McNary Waterfowl.*** As I write this, it is cold and snowing like crazy! Where can I go to see some birds this time of year? Down to the Columbia River of course! Every year, one of the first field trips is to the McNary National Wildlife Refuge near the Tri-cities. Hopefully, water will be ice free and attracting waterfowl. It all depends on the timing of the migrations, but in the past we have seen, snow geese, swans, pelicans, grebes (2 to 4 species), goldeneyes, scaups, and lots more. For the fanatics, there are also gulls. If the weather is cooperative, I would like to explore the Oregon side on the McNary Complex. We will leave the 40th Ave Bi-Mart parking lot (on the Joel's tire side) at 8am; returning by 4pm, it's no problem if you want to leave early. Bring your scopes, and lots of food. If you confirm with me, I can let you know if there are any changes to the schedule. Contact leader: Bill Drenguis 965-5808, bdrenguis@gmail.com.
- Feb 17-20 *Great Backyard Bird Count*** - On Your Own. For details see [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). Attention eBirders! During the four days of the count, simply continue using eBird as you otherwise would. But please make sure to go birding during the GBBC period and submit your data to eBird.
- Feb 26 (Sun). *Young birders field trip to Toppenish NWR.*** This trip is specifically intended for youth (18 and under) and their parents who are wanting an a wonderful afternoon around the Toppenish NWR while we study waterfowl, raptors and other birds that late winter brings to the refuge. We'll meet at the refuge HQ at noon and stay out until sunset (feel free to leave earlier if desired). Contact leaders Scott and Sierra Downes downess@charter.net for more information and to sign up. Sierra herself is a young birder and is eager to share the birds will fellow youth.

**Further out.. Save the date:**

- March 18. ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS TO YOUR YARD - A CLASS.** Signup through the Yakima Arboretum. Hummingbirds are truly amazing birds! Learn from biologist and expert birder Jeff Kozma on how to identify the four species of hummingbirds regularly found in WA and how to attract them to your yard with feeders and/or by landscaping with plants that provide nectar. More details in the February Crier.
- March 25 OR, April 1 OR April 8<sup>th</sup>.** **Greater Sage-grouse lek trip on the Yakima Training Center (YTC)** (exact date to be determined later by the YTC). For this trip all adults will need to meet access requirements to the YTC which is either passport or enhancement driver's license. More details to come in the February edition of the Crier.

## Weekly Poppoff Walks are Going Away, but New Opportunities Await

After walking the Poppoff weekly for five years, we have decided that it is time for a change. We are discontinuing the walks for now. We will not be abandoning the Poppoff entirely, but will include the Poppoff in a list of local walks which we will do from time to time, hopefully monthly. Our plan is to change the day of our trips to Wednesday, and to visit a variety of different locations including (but not limited to): Sportsman State Park; the Greenway starting at Sarg Hubbard and walking to the Arboretum; Selah Cliffs and of course the Poppoff. For now, we are not scheduling these trips, but plan on announcing them on BirdYak and Facebook a few days prior to the trip. We will see how things go from there.

Of course, most of you know where the Poppoff is and where to look for the birds there, so please continue to visit there. If there is someone out there who would like to continue the weekly walks at the Poppoff AND wants to lead the walks, please let me or our Field Trip Chair Scott Downes know. Hope to see you out birding!

--- Karen Zook --

## Toppenish NWR Christmas Bird Count 2016 finds 96 species

Another year, another Toppenish Christmas Bird Count! On December 17th, thirteen courageous birders spent the day birding the 15 mile diameter circle that makes up the area for the Toppenish Christmas Bird Count. Temperatures were low, but spirits were high as we set out for the day.

Despite the skeleton crew this year, we set a new count record with 96 species! Somewhat surprisingly, we also tallied our lowest individual tally in almost thirty years, with only 12,578 individual birds seen (the count average is 20,435). The significantly low individual count could largely be due to the frigid temperatures leaving very little open water. Waterfowl numbers were only slightly below average, but we did have an all time low count of Mallard with 617, the average total is 4259, so this could have done a lot to impact the overall individual count. The frozen water also had a noticeable effect Marsh Wren numbers, with the tally of 2 birds being the lowest since 1989. Another species with all time low numbers was American Goldfinch, with the 78 individuals observed falling well short of the average of 231. Raptor numbers however were exceptionally high, with new high counts of Red-tailed Hawk (222; this includes 2

Harlan's Hawks, which was also a high count), Bald Eagle (19), and Sharp-shinned Hawk (13). We had several notable birds on the count as well, with two count firsts; Gray Partridge and Long-billed Dowitcher. Other notable birds were 2 Harris's Sparrows (a high count), a Snow Goose, 3 Bohemian Waxwings, an American Tree Sparrow, and the second count records of Barred Owl, Greater Yellowlegs, and Wild Turkey. We had the first count record of a pair of Wild Turkeys last year, and this years count of 8 might indicate that they bred in the area.

I want to thank all who came out and participated in the 34th Toppenish Christmas Bird Count, and in particular Andy and Ellen Stepniewski. They have hosted the post-count dinner for many years and have done much to aid me in my compilation efforts. I would also like to thank the Yakima Nation, private landowners, and the Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge personnel for their support, we certainly would not be able to do the count without their help and cooperation. Thank you all for the great count, and I hope to see you at the Branding Iron at 7:00 am next year!

— Eric Heisey —

## Harsh Conditions Hamper 2016 Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count

The 16 people doing the Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count on January 2, 2017, suffered through the most uncomfortable weather conditions in many years. Considering the temperatures varied between a low of about 20° and a high of 25°, it was a miserable day to be searching the count circle for birds due to the persistent wind. And the numbers of birds seen certainly verify that.

Our species total was respectable, with 88 species seen on count day plus two count week species. The total count of individual birds seen was 11910, which is the lowest total since 1982! The wind, which varied between 5 and 20 mph, was cold, cold, cold, and kept the birds quiet and in the bushes.

One species was added to the all-time count list. Stan and Lori Isley found an American Bittern on Department of Reclamation property south of Hwy 24 and west of Riverside Road. This is a very rare wintering species in Eastern Washington. Considering this was the 47<sup>th</sup> time Yakima Audubon birders have done this count, it is exciting that new species are still being added to the all-time list.

It is typical for a count to have eight or ten species that break the record for individuals seen. This year we had only two – two Snow Geese were seen by Andy Stepniewski and Lamont McLachlan on a pond west of Riverside Road and five Yellow-headed Blackbirds were spotted in a large blackbird flock in Union Gap by Eric Heisey and Annika Willett. The previous record for Snow Goose species was one and for Yellow-headed Blackbird was two. Other species tied the record for numbers seen, but each of them were species we normally see in low numbers.

We did have some highlights, though. Along with the

Snow Geese, one Greater White-fronted Goose was seen by Scott and Sierra Downes. It is possible two Great Egrets were seen but, since the sightings were fairly close in location, two groups may have seen the same one.

Eric Heisey and Annika Willett found a Peregrine Falcon, only the fourth seen on our count. It was part of a 4-falcon day for them, which included American Kestrel, Merlin and Prairie Falcon.

Debie and Ron Brown saw an Osprey on their Selah route, for the second year in a row. It is only the fifth time for that species to be seen.

It is interesting to note the numbers of European Starlings that have been seen on recent counts. More years than not, starlings are the species with the highest total number seen. In the last three counts, numbers of starlings have fallen from 3720 in 2014 to 1905 in 2015 and this year we saw only 892, the lowest total since 1983! In the fall, we occasionally seen more starlings in one large flock that we saw on this year's count. One wouldn't expect that they are dying off the early winter. Perhaps they are suddenly migrating south for the winter. That might be a good topic for a graduate student's masters thesis.

But all in all, at the compilation dinner, which Debie and Ron graciously hosted, everyone said it was a difficult day to be out finding birds. We were lucky that everyone drove safely and there were no serious events. Though, one driver learned that when you drive your car into deep snow that has drifted over the road, it takes about an hour to dig yourself out! Inquiring minds might be able to discover the rest of that story!

— Denny Granstrand —

## The Data — The Christmas Bird Counts Species by Species

	Yakima	Topp		Yakima	Topp
GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE	1		NO. (YELLOW-SHAFTED) FLICKER		1
SNOW GOOSE	2	1	NORTHERN SHRIKE	4	12
ACKLING GOOSE	13	2	STELLER'S JAY	2	
CANADA GOOSE	836	1018	CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAY	27	
TUNDRA SWAN		11	BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE	121	155
WOOD DUCK	76	2	AMERICAN CROW	97	329
GADWALL	18	16	COMMON RAVEN	55	117
AMERICAN WIGEON	59	40	HORNED LARK	8	241
MALLARD	485	617	BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	55	13
NORTHERN SHOVELER	11	24	BUSHTIT		40
NORTHERN PINTAIL	3	142	RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	3	1
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	65	112	ROCK WREN	1	5
CANVASBACK		4	CANYON WREN		9
RING-NECKED DUCK	26	152	BEWICK'S WREN	27	37
<b>GREATER SCAUP</b>		<b>3</b>	PACIFIC WREN	4	2
LESSER SCAUP	2	4	MARSH WREN		2L
COMMON GOLDENEYE	108		AMERICAN DIPPER	3	
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE	10		GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	13	4
BUFFLEHEAD	22	5	RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	15	23
HOODED MERGANSER	21		HERMIT THRUSH	14	8
COMMON MERGANSER	121	10	AMERICAN ROBIN	1284	539
<b>RUDDY DUCK</b>		<b>3</b>	VARIED THRUSH	5	9
CALIFORNIA QUAIL	256	294	EUROPEAN STARLING	892L	1293
<b>GRAY PARTRIDGE</b>		<b>2N</b>	AMERICAN PIPIT		6
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	4	26	BOHEMIAN WAXWING	1	3
<b>WILD TURKEY</b>		<b>8H</b>	CEDAR WAXWING	276	251
PIED-BILLED GREBE	8	37	<b>ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER</b>	<b>1</b>	
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT		1	YEL.-RU. (MYRTLE) WARBLER	15	4
GREAT BLUE HERON	20	24	YEL.-RU. (AUDUBON'S) WARBLER	78	28
<b>GREAT EGRET</b>	<b>2</b>		SPOTTED TOWHEE	32	21
<b>AMERICAN BITTERN</b>	<b>1N</b>		<b>AMERICAN TREE SPARROW</b>		<b>1</b>
BALD EAGLE	28	19H	SAVANNAH SPARROW		5
<b>OSPREY</b>	<b>1</b>		FOX SPARROW	6	
NORTHERN HARRIER	19	54	SONG SPARROW	122	186
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	4	13H	LINCOLN'S SPARROW		5
COOPER'S HAWK	7	12	<b>WHITE-THROATED SPARROW</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
ACCIPITER, SP.	1	5	<b>HARRIS'S SPARROW</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2H</b>
RED-TAILED HAWK	100	220H	WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	449	1289
<b>HARLAN'S RED-TAILED HAWK</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2H</b>	GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW	107	68
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK		4	DARK-EYED (SLATE-COLORED) JUNCO	4	
GOLDEN EAGLE	2	1	DARK-EYED (OREGON) JUNCO	107	759
AMERICAN KESTREL	45	89	RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	1808	927
MERLIN	3	3	WESTERN MEADOWLARK		24
<b>PEREGRINE FALCON</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD</b>	<b>5H</b>	<b>1</b>
PRAIRIE FALCON	2	3	BREWER'S BLACKBIRD	72	375
VIRGINIA RAIL	4	2	BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	2	39
AMERICAN COOT	11	50	PURPLE FINCH		18
KILLDEER	12	25	HOUSE FINCH	769	339
<b>SPOTTED SANDPIPER</b>	<b>3</b>		AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	131	78L
WILSON'S SNIPE	10	22	LESSER GOLDFINCH	CW	
<b>LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER</b>		<b>1N</b>	HOUSE SPARROW	1046	524
<b>GREATER YELLOWLEGS</b>		<b>1</b>			
ROCK PIGEON	216	822	<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>11910</b>	<b>12578</b>
EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE	337	433	<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>96</b>
MOURNING DOVE	141	240		<b>+3 FORMS</b>	<b>+2 FORMS</b>
BARN OWL	1	5	<b>COUNT WEEK SPECIES</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>WESTERN SCREECH-OWL</b>	<b>CW</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>TOTAL SPECIES SEEN ON BOTH COUNTS</b>		<b>109</b>
GREAT HORNED OWL	5	16			
SHORT-EARED OWL		1	<b>N</b> — New species or subspecies for the count		
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD	9		<b>H</b> — All-time high for individuals of that species		
BELTED KINGFISHER	17	6	<b>L</b> — Very low number of individuals of that species as compared to other years		
DOWNY WOODPECKER	48	15	<b>CW</b> — Seen count week (three days before the count or three days after) but not count day		
<b>HAIRY WOODPECKER</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>Bold Face</b> — Unusual species for our counts		
NO. (RED-SHAFTED) FLICKER	96	169			

## Malheur Land Issues Continue

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society has a special fondness and link to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in eastern Oregon's Basin and Range country. Ten of us undertook an epic three-day journey there in May, 2012. We experienced first-hand its extraordinary birds, marshes, and wonderful desert mountains and valley sage lands. We had no inkling that this refuge, less than three years later, would become the center of National attention when armed anti-government militia seized Malheur's headquarters and demanded transfer of these public lands back into private ownership. Nearly a year ago (February, 1, 2016), I wrote for the Yakima Herald-Republic on occupation of Malheur NWR by these militants ("Teddy Roosevelt wouldn't like what's going on in Oregon"). In that piece, I made a case for maintaining and expanding America's national wildlife refuges in this country, recognizing these reserves

protect many of our countries most important ecosystems and their priceless wildlife heritage. The occupation of Malheur came to an unfortunate end, with bloodshed and one death. What did not come to an end was the anti-government movement, mainly spearheaded by folks in the West, to undermine protection of the vast natural legacy in the United States conservationists have worked tirelessly to protect for over a century. Pondering the ramifications of our recent Federal election, I predict maintaining America's incredible network of parks, refuges, and other protected public areas, is at risk.

As part of an overall plan to reverse the steady decline in sage grouse numbers throughout its range in the shrub-steppe, The BLM amended Oregon's "resource management plan" for federal lands last year.

Malheur NWR lies in Harney County. There, the local Soil and Water Conservation District is hoping the new regulations to protect the Greater Sage-Grouse will be revised under the Trump administration in the coming months. To accomplish their goal, the district has filed a lawsuit that seeks a court order that will require the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reconsider these rules, which Malheur area ranchers see as overly burdensome.

According to the complaint filed by the district, the agency unlawfully ignored a "rural community alternative." That option would have focused on limiting wildfire and the spread of invasive species, the big threats to sage grouse, from their perspective. This alternative was developed by local BLM officials, scientists and ranchers. Rather, the national BLM adopted a plan that ranchers fear will lead

to reduction of grazing on public lands. The district's attorney, Karen Budd-Falen, said the rural community alternative was not disregarded for scientific reasons, but rather for expediency, which the attorney says isn't a valid reason. The Department of Interior, which oversees BLM, doesn't comment on pending litigation. Their spokesperson, however, says the plan "was based on the best available science and was developed collaboratively with state and local partners.



**YVAS Members scope out Malheur NWR.**  
Photo by Ellen Stepniewski

We continue to believe the plans are both balanced and effective — protecting key sage-grouse habitat and providing for sustainable development. The plans are critical to the (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's) determination that the greater sage-grouse does not need the protection of the Endangered Species Act, and we look forward to implementing them in collaboration with states and stakeholders." The suit states ranchers will be subject to "unrealistic grass height requirements for cattle to be allowed to

graze. In a lot of areas, the grass doesn't grow that high no matter what." It turns out ranchers depend on federal lands for their grazing and claim they have no ready alternatives for forage while the BLM calibrates its new monitoring strategy, she said. "These grazing allotments are part of these guys' ranches." The lawsuit states it would be an onerous requirement for ranchers to construct the improvements, such as fencing because there are restrictions on perches that grouse predators hunt from.

From the perspective of environmentalists, quality sage grouse habitat contains not only sagebrush, but a vigorous bunchgrass component, among other elements. Eliminating the grass cover and grouse populations inevitably decline, thus the grass height requirement for grazers.

Proponents of the lawsuit hope for an outcome that would require the BLM to lean more to the recommendations in the rural community alternative which are perceived as less burdensome to the ranchers. The attorney stated, "The Trump administration can't predetermine a decision," but it can restart the process.

I, along with countless other conservationists in America, believe we need to be prepared for a long siege by those in our country who wish to revert huge chunks of our world-acclaimed parks, refuges, and wilderness to those whose motives and actions may hugely compromise the ecological value of these natural areas. The lawsuit in Harney County is probably just the tip of the iceberg of threats to our natural legacy and will likely be repeated in many of our "Special Places" in the next few years.

### 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.

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

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form and your check payable to: YVAS Membership, P.O. Box 2823, Yakima, WA 98907

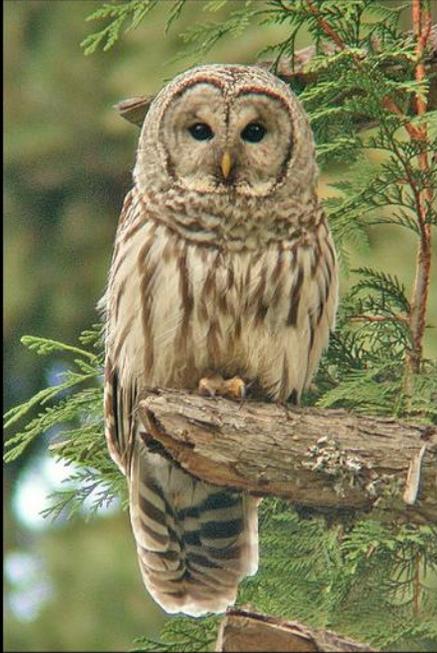
**If you have any membership questions, contact Joy McKinney at [joycatbird@gmail.com](mailto:joycatbird@gmail.com) or 698-4110.**

### **2017 YAKIMA VALLEY AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD**

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# DARK EYED BEAUTIES

WE HAVE FOUR SPECIES OF OWLS LOCALLY THAT HAVE DARK EYES. CAN YOU SPOT THE PHONY?



IN A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE, BARRED OWLS ARE BEING REMOVED FROM THE ENDANGERED SPOTTED OWL'S HABITAT. OUR JANUARY PROGRAM IS SURE TO TOUCH ON THIS TOPIC. JOIN US ON JANUARY 26 AT THE ARBORETUM.

PHOTO CREDIT: CLOCKWISE FROM THE LEFT, BARRED OWL, BARN OWL, SPOTTED OWL, NORTHERN PYGMY OWL (ALL 4 DENNY GRANSTAND), FLAMMULATED OWL (INTERNET).