



November 2023
Volume 52, Issue 9

The Calliope Crier

Newsletter of the Yakima Valley Audubon Society
A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

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.

December Program and Potluck Dinner

Yakima Valley Audubon Society presents:

Getting to Know Washington's Woodpeckers

Presented by Jeff Kozma

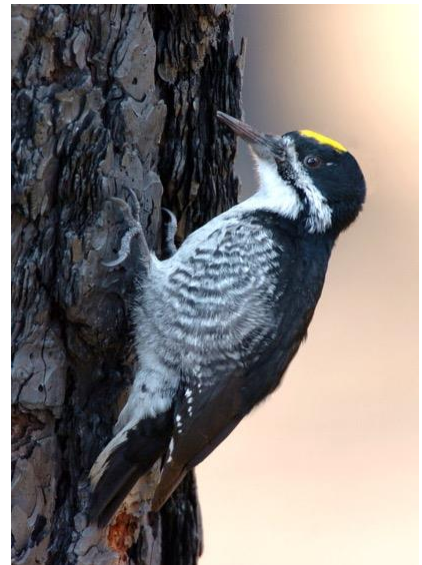
Wednesday, December 6th (Yes, it's Wednesday this year!)

At the Yakima Area Arboretum

Social time begins at 5:30, Potluck dinner 6pm, Program 7pm

IN PERSON only at the YAKIMA AREA ARBORETUM

This will NOT be streamed on Zoom but will be recorded.



Black-backed Woodpecker, photo by George Vlahakis

Jeff Kozma, TFW Wildlife Biologist with the Yakama Nation and lead author of the Birds of the World account for the White-headed Woodpecker, will share beautiful photographs while reviewing key plumage and vocal characteristics needed to identify all 12 of Washington's breeding woodpecker species. Jeff will also discuss characteristics that make woodpeckers so unique, and habitat and behavioral differences between the species to further aid in identification. Please join us and get to know these fascinating birds!



Jeff received his B.S. Degree in Environmental Forest Biology from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse and his M.S. Degree in Wildlife Science from Texas Tech University. He has been birding since he was 13, when he received his first bird field guide from a family friend. He worked as a Wildlife Biologist at the Yakima Training Center where he monitored Sage Grouse, did raptor and non-game bird surveys, and was involved with restoration of seeps, springs, and riparian areas. He currently works as a Wildlife Biologist for the Yakama Nation where he has been studying the White-headed Woodpecker ecology in managed forests since 2003, as well as reviewing timber sales on the ceded lands of the Yakama Nation to help protect habitat important to state and federally listed species, as well as state species of concern.

January's program date and topic will be announced in January's newsletter.

Recording of October's program, *Bluebird Country*, by **Karen Zook** is available to view at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ex3i93RwLi0>

Holiday Potluck Dinner

Wednesday, December 6th, 6:00 PM

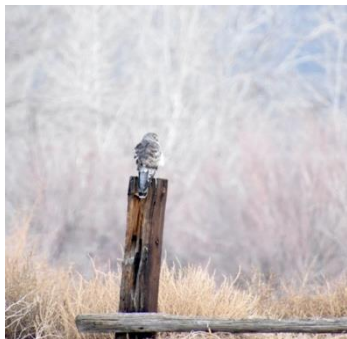
Join your Audubon friends on Wednesday, December 6th, for the annual YVAS Holiday Potluck at the Yakima Area Arboretum. **Doors will open at 5:30**, for social time, and time to set out your potluck food. Dinner will begin at 6:00. **The program will begin at 7:00.**

Ham will be provided. Food assignments are grouped by *your last name*:

- ◆ A-G = Bread, Dessert
- ◆ H-P = Main Dish
- ◆ Q-Z = Potatoes, Vegetables, Salads.

Dishes should serve about 10-12 people. It would be helpful to list the ingredients of your dish for those with allergies. In addition to your potluck items, be sure to bring serving utensils for your dish and mark them with your name to ensure return.

You will need to bring your own table service (plates, cups, silverware). Please feel free to bring a tablecloth and table decorations if you would like.



Male Northern Harrier

Join the Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count!

~ Scott Downes

Saturday, Dec. 30th, all day

The Yakima Valley Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is on Saturday, Dec. 30th, with Scott Downes as compiler. The Yakima Valley count circle covers the Yakima Valley from east of Moxee to West Valley, much of Selah and a little bit south of the Union Gap. This count includes both walking and driving routes. Volunteers may join an established route leader or sign up to count birds at their feeders if you live in the count circle. Volunteers wishing to join a route should contact the compiler to be assigned to a route. If you live in the count area and wish to count

your feeders, please also contact Scott at the email below. The count is always a ton of fun, as we typically see a lot of birds and spend the day in some great birding areas.

What to bring: It can be cold, so be sure to bring plenty of layers as teams are outside for much of the day! Make sure to also bring lunch, and a hot beverage is always nice, too.

To sign up and for meeting location and other details, contact Scott at downess@charter.net



House Finch

Toppenish CBC

Due to lack of compiler and participation, there will be no Toppenish CBC this year. The count may resume in 2024 depending on participation and having a compiler.

You can help birds from the comfort of your armchair!

Project FeederWatch turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. **FeederWatch** is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. **You don't even need a feeder!** All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water, or food that attracts birds. **The schedule is completely flexible.** Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing, then enter your counts online. Your counts allow you to track what is happening to birds around your home and to contribute to a continental data-set of bird distribution and abundance. *-excerpt from Cornell Lab of Ornithology website*

To learn more about Project FeederWatch: [click here](#)



Anna's Hummingbird hanging out by heated feeder.

Conservation- Stan Isley

[editor note: Please give a shout out to Stan for his commitment to conservation these past two years. He is retiring from the Board. Thank you, Stan!]

Recent Conservation Committee Actions

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society (YVAS) Conservation Committee has taken the following recent actions, with the approval of the YVAS Board of Directors:

WDFW Status Review for Northern Spotted Owl

The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) regularly conducts status reviews of species listed as endangered, threatened, or sensitive, under Washington State law. WDFW is currently conducting a periodic status review of the Northern Spotted Owl, currently listed as endangered in Washington. On October 18, 2023, I sent WDFW a letter indicating that YVAS supports retaining the current endangered species status for

Northern Spotted Owls. You can find more information [here](#).

Request to Designate Burrowing Owl as a Listed Species

In response to the continued range retraction and decline of Burrowing Owl numbers in Washington State, Glen Mendel of the Blue Mountain Audubon Society chapter (BMAS) in Walla Walla, prepared a detailed report entitled *The Burrowing Owl in Washington*, dated October 2023. At the October 5, 2023 Audubon Shrub-Steppe Committee meeting, Glen discussed his intent to submit his report to WDFW, along with a request from BMAS for WDFW to list the Burrowing Owl under Washington State law as either a sensitive or a threatened species. Glen asked YVAS and other Audubon chapters to sign on to BMAS's request. On October 11, 2023 I wrote a letter informing BMAS that YVAS signs on in support of BMAS's

letter to WDFW requesting listing of the Burrowing Owl.

Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan, North Cascades Ecosystem

The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have released a Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, North Cascades Ecosystem (Draft Restoration Plan), seeking public comment on the plan through November 13, 2023. Grizzly Bears are ‘functionally extirpated’ from the North Cascades Ecosystem at present. The Draft Restoration Plan calls for restoring a self-sustaining population of Grizzly Bears to the North Cascades Ecosystem, which historically was a part of the bear’s natural range. On October 11, 2023, I sent a letter to the Superintendent of the North Cascades National Park Complex, communicating YVAS’s support for the Draft Restoration Plan, and I also submitted online comments at the NPS portal indicating YVAS’s support for the Draft Restoration Plan. You can find more information [here](#) and [here](#).

Signing on to Audubon Washington Comments to Scoping Documents for Clean Energy

The Washington State Clean Energy Transformation Act of 2023 requires the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) to prepare non-project programmatic environmental impact statements (PEIS) for utility-scale onshore wind energy projects and utility-scale solar projects by June 30, 2025. Ecology recently released two draft scoping documents that, when final, will guide Ecology’s preparation of the two PEIS’s, and

sought public comments through October 27th on the draft documents. Audubon Washington obtained input from Audubon chapters, including YVAS, and prepared comments to improve and strengthen the scoping documents. On October 11, 2023, I sent a letter informing Audubon Washington that YVAS endorses and joins as co-signer to Audubon Washington’s comments to Ecology on the clean energy PEIS scoping documents. You can find more information [here](#).

Proposed Wallula Gap Solar Energy Project

And finally, I note that on October 5, 2023, I and some of our Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society colleagues participated in a Zoom call with the proponents of the proposed Wallula Gap Solar Project. This project is at the early planning stage and the proponents have not yet submitted any permit applications. Despite its name, it is not located very close to Wallula Gap, rather its proposed site is on the south slope of the Horse Heaven Hills north of Plymouth Washington, in the middle of irrigated crop circles. The developers sought our input on how to responsibly develop their proposed solar project while avoiding negative environmental impacts. It was a refreshing meeting with proponents who seem to want to ‘do it right’ as they develop their clean energy project, and we Auduboners communicated their proposed site probably has good potential for low environmental impact.

~Stan Isley, YVAS Conservation Chair



Toppenish Creek, Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge



Golden-crowned Sparrow

Membership – Joy McKinney

Thank you for renewing your membership!

Denny Granstrand, Clark and Debra Satre, James and Mary Stephenson



Meet Your YVAS Board and Committee Members

As you can see, more volunteers still needed. Please consider joining the Board, we would like to get to know you!

President	Sarah Shippen	Newsletter Chair	Volunteer needed	Toppenish Refuge Volunteer	Kerry Turley
Vice President	Volunteer needed	Conservation Chair	Volunteer needed	Toppenish CBC	Volunteer needed
Secretary	Deborah Severtson-Coffin	Education Chair	Volunteer needed	Yakima CBC	Scott Downes
Treasurer	Rich Mathieu	Field Trips Chair	Kerry Turley & Bill Drenguis	Yakima Migration Count	Scott Downes
Director	Bill Drenguis	Director	Sandra Hulteen	Arboretum Bird Blind	Kathy and Joe Howell
Bluebird Trail	Karen Zook	Membership Chair	Joy McKinney		
Programs Chair	Volunteer needed	Website Administrator	Mary Lane		

To Contact YVAS

YVAS Information: info@yakimaaudubon.org
 Newsletter content: newsletter@yakimaaudubon.org
 Bird questions: birds@yakimaaudubon.org
 Donations: donations@yakimaaudubon.org

For more information about Yakima Valley Audubon Society, visit our website: <https://yakimaaudubon.org/>

To Join: https://yakimaaudubon.org/assets/pdf/yvas_membership_form.pdf