

Volume 52 Issue 8

September/  
October 2022



# Calliope Crier

*Newsletter of the Yakima Valley 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.*

---

## YVAS September Program

*20 Years of Field Research on the White-headed Woodpecker in Washington*

Speaker - Jeff Kozma

**Thursday, September 22nd** at the Yakima Area Arboretum  
Doors open at 6:30, and program begins at 7:00 pm.

Also streaming on Zoom. Online meeting opens at 6:45 pm.



**Photo** Male White-headed Woodpecker. Photo courtesy of Jeff Kozma.

Did you know birders and naturalists come from all across the country to Washington's eastside forests to seek out this charismatic species of woodpecker? If you ever wanted to know more about the White-headed Woodpecker, this presentation is for you!

In Washington, the White-headed Woodpecker is listed as a species of concern due to its association with old-growth

ponderosa pine forests. Although White-headed Woodpeckers have recently been documented inhabiting early to mid-seral managed forests, information is limited regarding their reproductive success and general ecology in these forests. For the last 20 years, Jeff Kozma, a wildlife biologist for the Yakama Nation, has been studying the ecology of White-headed Woodpeckers in managed ponderosa pine forests along the eastern Cascades in Yakima and Kittitas Counties. Jeff will present brief highlights from his research including nest-site characteristics, reproductive success, and nestling provisioning. He will also present a summary of findings from a long-term banding study he has been conducting since 2011 investigating adult longevity.

*We request all to wear masks inside the Arboretum for everyone's protection.*



**Photo** Jeff Kozma with a male White-headed Woodpecker. Photo courtesy of Jeff Kozma.

**About Jeff Kozma:** Jeff received his B.S. Degree in Environmental Forest Biology from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse. He later received his M.S. Degree in Wildlife Science at Texas Tech University where he studied the use of Chihuahuan Desert arroyos and adjacent uplands by migrant and breeding birds in southern New Mexico. After graduating, he began working 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 is currently working as a Wildlife Biologist for the Yakama Nation where he has been studying the reproductive biology of White-headed Woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds 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.

### Where to View YVAS Zoom Programs

Event link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85751241932?pwd=K0lseGlvbng4WGikN3NaeEdaL2VTQT09>

iPhone one-tap : US: +12532158782 Telephone: +1 253 215 8782 Webinar ID: 844 2557 6656

To view previous programs that have been recorded, please see our website at [www.yakimaaudubon.org](http://www.yakimaaudubon.org) .

## Events Calendar

Thursday, September 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 7:00 pm (Yakima Arboretum and Zoom)	<b>YVAS September Program</b> <i>20 Years of Field Research on the White-headed Woodpecker in Washington</i> with speaker Jeff Kozma.
Saturday, September 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Conrad Meadows Field Trip.</b> Join in us in search of the elusive Spruce Grouse (subspecies <i>franklinii</i> ) and other montane species. Contact Kerry Turley at <a href="mailto:kdurley@gmail.com">kdurley@gmail.com</a> to sign up. (See article for more details.)
Saturday, October 8 <sup>th</sup> 7:30 am to noon	<b>Bird Banding at Yakima Area Arboretum.</b> This banding demonstration is great opportunity to examine birds at very close range. Weather is important for the safety of the birds, so this event may need to be postponed. Backup dates will be October 9 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , or 16 <sup>th</sup> . Contact Jeff at <a href="mailto:jkozma1049@gmail.com">jkozma1049@gmail.com</a> to sign up. (See article for more details.)
Saturday, October 8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Second Saturday Bird Walk.</b> Cancelled for bird banding class. (See above.)
Friday, October 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>October <i>Calliope Crier</i> deadline</b> (send articles, questions to <a href="mailto:newsletter@yakimaaudubon.org">newsletter@yakimaaudubon.org</a> )
Thursday, October 27 <sup>th</sup> , 7:00 pm (Yakima Arboretum and Zoom)	<b>YVAS October Program</b> <i>The Biggest Stories of Mount Rainier</i> with speaker Jeff Antonelis-Lapp
Saturday, October 30 <sup>th</sup> 7:30 am to noon	<b>Field Trip to Vantage for Fall Migration.</b> Leader: Scott Downes. To sign up, contact Scott at <a href="mailto:downes@charter.net">downes@charter.net</a> .

## Membership – Joy McKinney

### Welcome New Member!

Joyce Fowler, Seattle

### Thank You for Renewing Your Membership

Mike Hoge, Pat and Kathy Kinney, Carol Licht, Lucy Stevens, Ralph Wood

## Field Trips – Sarah Shippen

### Spruce Grouse Trip to Conrad Meadows

Saturday, September 24th, 6:00 am – 4:30 pm

Join in us in search of the elusive Spruce Grouse (subspecies *franklinii*) and other montane species. Located adjacent to the Goat Rocks Wilderness, Conrad Meadows is the largest subalpine meadow in the State of Washington. The meadows are at 4000' elevation, and the South Fork of the Tieton River meanders through it. The habitat includes lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann's spruce, and occasional mountain hemlock and, more importantly, patches of grouseberry (*vaccinium scoparium*), a very important indicator species for spruce grouse.



This will be a full day trip, departing at 7:30 am and returning by 3:00 pm, and will involve fairly easy hiking of around three miles.

**What to bring:** Dress for changing weather. Bring lunch, snacks, fluids, sunscreen, hat.

**Leaders:** Kerry Turley

**To sign up and for meeting location and other details,** contact Kerry at [kdturley@gmail.com](mailto:kdturley@gmail.com) or 509-840-0980.

## Education – Ellen Stepniewski

### Bird Banding Demo at the Arboretum

Saturday, October 8th, 7:30 am – noon

When we look at birds in the field, we often wish we could be closer to the bird to see better. This banding demonstration will be a great opportunity to examine the birds and all their details at very close range. Among other things, bird identification involves colors or length of different feathers. It will be a chance to see where these feathers are on a real bird. Participants may hold the birds for release.

Jeff Kozma will lead a banding demonstration at the Yakima Arboretum. The goal is to capture birds as they are migrating south through the Yakima Arboretum. Jeff bands birds in his work and research project, and he will introduce participants to bird capture and banding using mist nets. Nets will be put up near the Yakima Arboretum Sparrow Patch feeding area to increase our chances of catching birds. The sparrow patch will be up and running with food a few weeks before the banding date. Jeff will demonstrate various aspects of bird banding including different mesh/net sizes and their uses, how to remove birds from nets, performing measurements on birds (e.g., weighing, wing chord, bill length, etc), how to age birds, banding codes, affixing bands to legs, etc.

The best thing about capturing birds is you never know what might show up in your nets! Birds we captured in previous years included Spotted Towhee, White-crowned Sparrow, Bewick's Wren, Song Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, etc.

Dress appropriately for the weather and in layers, as mornings can be cool before heating up during the day. A folding camp chair would be good unless you prefer to rough it on the ground. Bring a camera to capture close up images of birds. Also, bring

food/snacks and beverage if you think you'll need them. Hand sanitizer would also be good to bring as birds like to poop!

**To sign up and get meeting place and time**, contact Jeff Kozma at [jkozma1049@gmail.com](mailto:jkozma1049@gmail.com). The class is limited to 10 people.

(Jeff is also running a color banding project on Golden-crowned Sparrows at the Yakima Area Arboretum to determine whether the same birds return to the same area in subsequent winters. Anyone who observes the bands on these birds can report them.)

## YVAS Volunteers Needed!

Yakima Audubon needs members to help with several important tasks. Elections are upcoming and we need volunteers to ensure that we remain an active, vibrant chapter. We are needing a Vice President, Field Trip Chairperson, and we have two open positions on the Board of Directors. Being on the board isn't time consuming, and it's a fun way to get involved and help YVAS fulfill its mission of education and conservation.

**Vice President** - The vice president helps to assist the president in management of the board and oversight of the chapter. At meetings, chapter or board, that the president is missing, the vice president assumes the duties of the president. The vice president would also assume the role of the president once the current president has completed their term in 2024. A successful person would be somebody who enjoys being organized on various tasks and a willingness to pitch in and help the board on various tasks.

**Field Trip Chair** - The field trip chair is responsible for coordinating the field trips. This person works with the field trip leaders to schedule and publicize our trips. You don't have to lead field trips unless you would like to. You also do not need to be an expert birder. Skills preferred are good organization and a willingness to reach out to potential leaders and coordinate trips.

**Board of Directors** - Directors are not tied to any specific task. They can volunteer to help with other committees or come up with ideas on their own. The most important thing that directors do is provide ideas and input. We need help with new ideas! This requires attending monthly board meetings as available and participating in discussions and providing input.

If you're interested in a board position, please contact Scott Downes, the current president, at [downess@charter.net](mailto:downess@charter.net). We look forward to welcoming your ideas and presence!

We are also seeking volunteers with communication, Microsoft Office, and/or web skills to join our Communications committee and help us support our YVAS mission and outreach to the general public. It doesn't require a lot of time, and your creativity will be welcome. If you're interested in sharing your skills and ideas, please contact Anita Osterhaug, [osterhaug@gmail.com](mailto:osterhaug@gmail.com).

## Conservation – Stan Isley

### North American Grasslands Conservation Act of 2022

*Status of this Bill, S.4639, and Section 2. Findings*  
On July 27, 2022, Senator Ron Wyden [D-OR] introduced in the U.S. Senate S.4639, the North American Grasslands Conservation Act of 2022, co-sponsored by Senator Michael Bennet [D-CO] and Senator Amy Klobuchar [D-MN] – “A bill to establish a North American Grasslands Conservation Council, and for other purposes.” This bill was read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, and it awaits further processing.

As we all know, our sagebrush steppe and native grasslands in North America are endangered landscapes, and the birds and other wildlife species that live in these landscapes are showing alarming population declines. This bill proposes to address these problems and also to support farmers, ranchers, and Tribal partners.

S.4639, in its Section 2. Findings, states:

“Congress finds that –

(1) the maintenance of grassland bird species and working lands that are critical for rural economies and carbon sequestration are dependent on the conservation, restoration, and management of grassland ecosystems...;

(2) grasslands cover 358,000,000 acres of the United States, 85% of which are privately owned and serve as an important habitat for 29 breeding obligate grassland bird species;

(3) sagebrush occupies 161,000,000 acres of 14 western States;

(4) over the last decade alone, millions of acres of grassland ecosystems in North America have been converted to cropland and residential and commercial development;

(5) grassland ecosystems are threatened by fragmentation, invasive species, wildfire, degradation, and land conversion;

(6) on average, about 1,200,000 acres of sagebrush burn each year in the United States due to invasive annual grasses that fuel catastrophic wildfires;

(7) in addition to the wildfires described in paragraph (6), there has been a decrease in the number of working farms and ranches due to (A) pressure to convert or sell land; and (B) challenge in keeping ranching profitable; and

(8) effective restoration strategies...require...”

These findings capture quite well the problems we see in our sagebrush steppe and native grasslands across the United States. The 2019 report, “[Decline of the North American Avifauna](#),” by Ken Rosenberg, et al. (Cornell Lab of Ornithology and its contributing partners), concludes that grassland birds have declined by 53% since 1970, a loss of 720 million breeding birds. Species like Lesser Prairie Chickens and Gunnison Sage Grouse teeter at the edge of extinction, and many species of birds and other wildlife have suffered drastic population declines in our grasslands and sagebrush steppe lands.

© 2022 Yakima Valley Audubon Society

*Details of the Act, S.4639*

- S.4639, the North American Grasslands Conservation Act of 2022, would create a North American Grasslands Conservation Council and Regional Grasslands Conservation Councils, comprised of Federal, State, Tribal, conservation group, and farmer/rancher group representatives, who would develop a North American Grasslands Conservation Strategy, and recommend and select grassland conservation projects.

- S.4639 would create a Grassland Conservation Grant Program, to support voluntary grasslands conservation projects for conservation, restoration, management, and education activities.

- S.4639 would fund research of native seed crop systems and regenerative grazing.

- The purposes of the S.4639 grant program include funding projects that conserve grasslands, restore degraded grasslands, increase carbon sequestration, improve grassland and rangeland health, mitigate threats of wildfire and drought, improve biodiversity and support habitat connectivity, and restore watersheds.

- S. 4639, would authorize more than \$290,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026, to carry out the program.

This Act, S.4639, is a voluntary public-private partnership that would jump start us down the long path of conserving and restoring the health of our iconic North American grasslands and sagebrush steppe lands and would go a long way towards restoring healthy populations of the grassland birds and wildlife species we value so much.

### ***Take Action***

I encourage all of you to watch the progress of [S.4639](#) as it progresses through its congressional review process.

Please also let your Senators and Representative know that you support S.4639, the North American Grasslands Conservation Act of 2022, and that you

want them to co-sponsor the bill. Ask your legislators to approve this bill and send it to President Biden for his signature into law.

Additional information: “[About the Grasslands Act](#)”.

*For more information about the Yakima Valley Audubon Society, or to join, visit our website, [yakimaudubon.org](http://yakimaudubon.org).*

*To contact us, email [info@yakimaudubon.org](mailto:info@yakimaudubon.org).*