



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

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November 2020

RIDGEFIELD/SAUVIE ISLAND CBC PRELIMINARY PLANNING

A couple weeks ago we got word from National Audubon that our CBCs can proceed if state COVID-19 requirements allow. We also have the option of not doing a CBC this year. Karen Bachman and I have been double-checking our ability to access areas of our circle so that a count would not be compromised and checking out all the rules relative to COVID-19. Fun to have two states at this time! RNWR will give us access to the whole refuge with the stipulation that we follow COVID-19 rules of course. So, if our two sides of the Columbia River stay at their current COVID-19 status, or get better, we can do this count.

Of course, there are restrictions. We must adhere to social distancing and wear masks in accordance with local requirements. Carpooling for non-family or non-established bubble groups will not be allowed. That means people will have to drive separately to meeting spots for walking the trails. And social distancing on the trail is required. Everyone should carry a mask and a backup. If we have wet weather, a wet mask is no good. I would also caution that sharing equipment, scopes and binoculars is not advisable outside a family group or established bubble group. We want everyone to stay healthy.

To facilitate a healthy approach, there will be no gatherings pre- or post-count. We plan to identify all the territory assignments ahead of time, sending them out to you in advance. All reports and communication will be electronic, but we do a lot of that already. Because some of the groups have been up to five participants in the past, we can split some territories to facilitate everyone getting a chance to



participate. As an example, I have a 50-mile driving circuit in the Salmon Creek/Ridgefield area which I can split into two or three 15- to 25-mile segments. We can do something similar with an area of trails. For normal safety on the trails, and help with verifying sightings, we always like to have two people together, especially in remote areas. Many are repeat CBCers and know these areas well so we are asking you to suggest the safest approach for group size and territory to cover areas you want to continue doing. Karen and I will make the final assignments based on our knowledge and your input.

Our dates for the count this year are: **Sunday, December 27, 2020 count date and Monday, January 4, 2021 as a backup date.** There weren't many choices given the hunt days for Sauvie Is. and RNWR this year. **Per Audubon's direction, we must wait to make a final "go" decision until Nov 15th** as we watch for any changes in state COVID-19 requirements for outdoor activity. Of course, as usual, weather events can have an impact too and we will have our final go the day or two before the count.

If you are interested in participating this year, given the restrictions outlined above, please e-mail me at

smsetterberg@yahoo.com by October 28th. We will try to accommodate everyone who wants to participate but only if we can meet COVID-19 requirements.

Thank you all and hoping you are staying healthy and seeing some good birds.

Susan Setterberg
smsetterberg@yahoo.com
360 980 0884 (voice mail)
856 701 2542 (txt)

What is the Christmas Bird Count?

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of community science involvement. It is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada, and many countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

For more information visit

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

From the VAS Board

November is upon us! Election Day will be at the top of most of our minds through the first week, so we wanted to remind you that we shifted our program day to the second Tuesday of the month to avoid conflicting with election results viewing.

Tom Bancroft, our guest speaker last month, took us on a tour of the cloud forest of Panama—it was a wonderful way to “travel” for an evening. Don Rose, our program chair, has put together another intriguing presentation on the seabirds of Oregon and community science for our November Zoom meeting. Please contact Don if you need the link to the meeting—all are welcome!

We really have missed seeing all of you at the meetings, so we are discussing the possibility of having some social discussion, perhaps starting with your recent bird sightings before the scheduled program. This might also present a good opportunity for those looking for help in navigating through Zoom’s features. Look for the announcement in your program invitation email.

It’s also time to review the budget for the upcoming year. Joan Durgin, VAS Treasurer, has presented the budget to the board last month and now it’s available for membership review. We are planning on using the poll feature during the December meeting for the vote for the budget’s approval. Please contact Joan if you have any questions or concerns.

Susan Saul and I attended the annual ACOW meeting in October, which took place remotely this year (hasn’t everything?). Representative Debra Lekanoff was an inspiring speaker. She is the only Native American in the Washington Legislature and spoke about generational thinking, green bonds, net ecological gain, full funding for WDFW, and funding to fix state-owned culverts for fish passage. Very engaging!

Breakout sessions were helpful in hearing other chapters’ ideas and advice. We came away with several ideas that we need to discuss with the board and hopefully incorporate some of them into our own chapter!

By Cindy McCormack



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Vancouver Audubon believes in the wisdom of nature’s design and promotes this through education, involvement, stewardship, enjoyment and advocacy.

Vancouver Audubon Society

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The Columbia Flyway is published monthly September through June (except January).

Vancouver Audubon Board Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month August through May in various locations (announced in newsletter).

Membership meetings and programs are held on the first Tuesday of the month September through June (except January).

Program meetings are held at the [West Park Community Room at 610 Esther St.](#) (just across the street from the west end of Esther Short Park, or kitty-corner from City Hall). Parking lot can be accessed from Esther Street. There is an entrance at either side of the building.

Programs

Upcoming Vancouver Audubon Programs

We had an excellent tour through the Panama Cloud Forest last month. November will be our third virtual meeting and webinar using Zoom, which allows Vancouver Audubon Chapter members to participate in meetings and educational presentations through their home computer, laptop, or even your smart phone. Members will receive an invitation in their email to join the virtual meeting at the designated meeting time through a link in the email. An internet connection is required. Participants will be able to interact with written questions at the end of the program.

What's on tap?

The following programs are currently scheduled. All meetings will start at 7:00 pm. We hope you will join us!

November 10 – SEABIRDS AND COMMUNITY SCIENCE: UNVEILING MYSTERIES OF SEABIRDS TO HELP PROTECT OREGON'S ICONIC COAST—Joe Liebezeit, Staff Scientist and Avian Conservation Manager for Portland Audubon

Joe has 7 years of experience with Portland Audubon, and 12 years additional experience with the Wildlife Conservation Society in Alaska. In this talk, Joe will describe the wonders of seabirds as well as another unique coastal bird, the Black Oystercatcher, that make their home or visit Oregon's shores and marine waters. Joe will describe Portland Audubon's on-going marine conservation efforts and community science projects focused on coastal bird species and report on new findings. These projects rely on participation of members of the public and are helping to inform efforts to conserve, protect, and better understand Oregon's iconic rocky shoreline and recently designated system of Marine Reserves and Protected Areas. Learn how you can help too!

December 1 - SURVIVAL BY DEGREES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIRD POPULATIONS

Teri Anderson, Washington State Audubon chapter network manager, and **Trina Bayard**, Washington State Audubon Director of Bird Conservation, will be giving a presentation on the landmark report, Survival by Degrees, that describes the projected impact of climate change on North American bird species.

February 2 - THE DINOSAUR AMONG US—Kim Adelson, Ph. D.

Virtually all paleontologists agree that birds evolved from dinosaurs, and most even go so far as to claim that birds are, in fact, living dinosaurs. Come learn about the remarkable similarities between birds and the creatures they evolved from. We guarantee that you will not only be surprised as to how dinosaur-like birds are, but also how very bird-like dinosaurs were. You will never think about *T. rex* in the same way again!

Contact Don Rose for more information or to get a Zoom invitation: drose1103@gmail.com

Field Trips

All field trips and bird walks are postponed until COVID-19 restrictions allow for group gatherings or until it is safe to do so.



We miss birding and exploring with you!



Zoom Meetings

Chances are, you have had the opportunity to participate in a meeting, lecture, or class via Zoom since the pandemic restrictions began. If not, or you just want a little help, here is a [link for instructions for participants](#).

Although it's not the way we prefer to host meetings (which would be in person!), it's fairly easy, so we hope you will join us for the upcoming programs. VAS will be sending out invitations to our membership before an upcoming meeting. You will receive a confirmation email, which will include a "Join Meeting" link.

GOLDENDALE PUMPED STORAGE PROJECT THREATENS WILDLIFE AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

By Susan Saul and Columbia Riverkeeper

Rye Development wants to build a massive pumped storage hydroelectric project along the Columbia River in Klickitat County near the John Day Dam. The Goldendale Energy Storage Hydroelectric Project would be the largest of its kind in the Pacific Northwest.

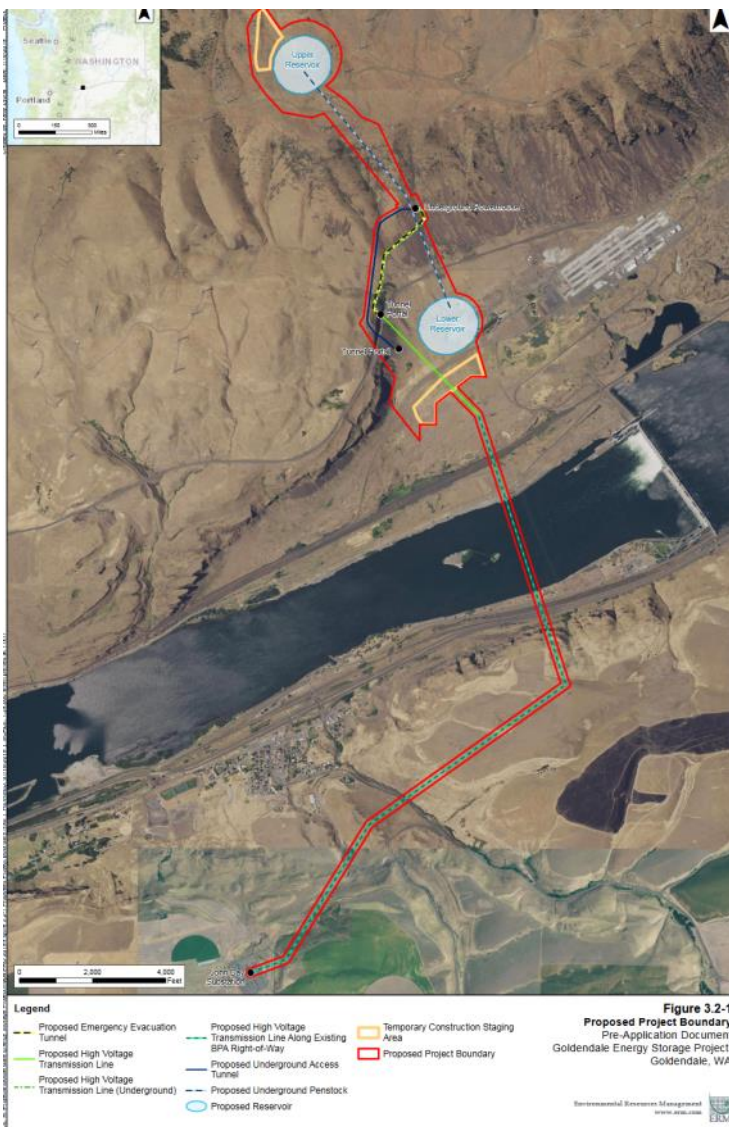
Rye's plan would excavate two reservoirs: the hilltop reservoir would span 60 acres and the lower reservoir would cover 63 acres. Pumped storage would generate hydroelectricity for peak periods of demand. When

electricity on the grid is abundant, Rye would pump water from the lower reservoir into the higher one. Then, when there is demand for electricity, Rye would release water in the upper reservoir through turbines and back into the lower reservoir. The energy-generating capacity: 1200 megawatts. Rye claims the \$2 billion project would be complete by 2028.

The Yakama Nation is opposed to this project. It would impact at least nine culturally significant sites including archaeological, ceremonial, burial petroglyph, monumental and ancestral use sites. The Yakama Nation explains that the Columbia River was dammed over the last century, impacting many of their rights, interests and resources, including fishing sites, villages and burial sites. This project is another example of energy development that comes at a cost to native people.

The proposed project would use a lot of water. Initial fill for the reservoirs would use 2.93 million gallons from the Columbia River. Rye would also use roughly 1.2 million gallons of water per year from the Columbia for "periodic makeup" to offset losses from evaporation and leakage. Rye also wants to be able to refill the reservoirs if they need to be emptied for repair. Rye calls the project "closed-loop," a misleading description due to its plans to use Columbia River water to sustain the reservoirs.

The project also would have serious impacts on birds. The introduction of two large water surfaces would attract many more birds to the area, which is located near a large wind energy project. Wildlife biologists have raised concerns that the reservoirs would increase wind-turbine bird kills, particularly for Bald and Golden Eagles and Prairie Falcons that nest in the area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has repeatedly noted that the history of mortalities shows a landscape already compromised by wind power infrastructure. Golden Eagles, in particular, appear to have difficulty navigating the wind currents affected by existing wind towers. The project would further alter the wind currents potentially resulting in higher bird mortalities. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife also has raised wildlife habitat concerns



(Continued on page 5)

2021 Budget Proposal

It's that time of year again! Below is the board's proposed budget for 2021. Please contact our treasurer, Joan Durgin at jdurgin1@hotmail.com with any questions or comments regarding the budget. At the December 1st virtual meeting we will do an online poll to all attendees for the approval of this budget. Your vote will be anonymous and we will immediately show the results of the poll. Thank you for your flexibility this year on the budget approval process.

(Conservation continued from page 4)

about the project.

Pumped storage requires significant upfront capital investment and lengthy permitting processes. Experts question the financial viability of this project. Rocky Mountain Econometrics (RME) developed a model of market forces and financial viability of the project. RME concluded:

"It is possible that the Goldendale Pump Storage Project is being proposed with full knowledge that it will fail. Further, bankruptcy may be an unstated but integral part of the Goldendale business plan as a means of shedding sufficient debt to survive in the current wholesale power market. These results, as detailed in the report's Appendix Alternative Debt Structures, give us pause as to whether any adverse impacts to public values such as water quality, water quantity, flow regime, fish and wildlife, tribal and cultural resources, surrounding communities, and/or recreation are worth the risk of generated energy storage." Bottom line: Rye Development would cause the loss of irreplaceable cultural resources and significant environmental damage for speculative benefits.

Rye already has secured water rights for the project from the Klickitat County Public Utility District. It needs a hydropower license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and a Clean Water Act 401 water quality certification from the Washington Department of Ecology. The project will also undergo federal National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act reviews. Rye estimates FERC will release a draft Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement in summer 2021. After the FERC process, the developer will need to apply to the Bonneville Power Administration for transmission interconnect approval.

You can oppose this project by signing Columbia Riverkeeper's petition asking Governor Inslee and Senators Murry and Cantwell to stand in solidarity with the Yakama Nation.

<https://www.columbiariverkeeper.org/take-action-goldendale-pumped-storageproject>

	2019 Actual	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
Revenue			
Bank interest	12	10	20
Refreshment box/book sales	46	25	30
Memberships	1,280	1,600	1,450
Donations	5,064	1,500	1,450
Doris Troxel Trust	648	600	765
Audubon Adventures	797	300	
Backyard Bird Shop donations	850	600	500
Nat'l Audubon Society		1,785	1,785
Refund grant & postage meter	1,092		
Comm Foundation Drawdown	7,783	7,000	7,000
Total Revenue	17,572	13,420	13,000
Expenses			
Supplies/software	253	50	100
PO Box fee	118	125	150
WA Non-profit fee	10	10	10
Refreshments	84	100	100
Conf/Comm mtgs	125	750	100
Audubon Washington	2,000	2,000	2,000
PDX Wildlife Care Center	250	250	500
Intertwine Alliance	250	250	
Columbia Land Trust	100	100	100
WA Environmental Council	100	100	100
Friends of Columbia Gorge	100	100	100
Nature Conservancy	200	100	100
Columbia Springs	100	100	100
Printing	556	200	100
Postage	292	275	15
Audubon Adventures	184	600	500
Home & Garden Show		100	100
Grants	1,500	7,000	7,000
Speaker travel	466	1,000	1,000
Website	109	110	125
Zoom			600
Misc		100	100
Total Expenses	6,797	13,420	13,000



Joan, thank you for all your hard work as our treasurer! You do an amazing job!

The Rookery

Send submissions to
vas@vancouveraudubon.org

A place to share for young nature enthusiasts!



Pastel drawing by Avery Brock at age 12

**Joke by
Lilliana Brock, age 6:**

**What do birds say on
Halloween?**



"Twig or Tweet!"

Whoo Whoo Is That I Hear?

By Elizabeth A. Barnett, age 10

For many long years I have painstakingly searched for the elusive Barn Owl; after all, it is my all-time favorite owl! Sadly, I haven't even seen a short glimpse or found a stray owl feather. But, on the bright side, we have fortunately found and inspected dozens of interesting regurgitated pellets. Yay!

I have looked twice in a Cathlamet barn, by the Columbia River multiple times, at Frenchman's Bar, in the trees in east Vancouver, and finally, at Cape Disappointment State Park without avail.

Some places I intend to look for ANY Barn Owls are grasslands, marshes, woodlots, and more barns (as they are the *Barn* Owls). Where else should I look?

Some neat facts I know about my favorite nocturnal birds are; A Barn Owl can hear a mouse's heartbeat from a good distance away. Barn Owls cough up crude pellets twice a day! The Barn Owl's flight is totally silent so their unknowing prey cannot hear them coming. Barn Owls can live up to 20 years depending on if they're in captivity or if they are in the wild. Barn Owls cannot digest everything they eat, instead they regurgitate undigestible things like hair and bones into pellets. Also, Barn Owls eliminate their prey by crushing the back of the victim's skull.

I have always wanted to see a Barn Owl. Maybe one day I will be so lucky as to run into my favorite owl!



*Barn Owl
Photo by Roger Windemuth*

Abundance Codes used in this column:

(1) Common, (2) Uncommon, (3) Harder to find, usually seen annually, (4) Rare, 5+ records, (5) Fewer than 5 records

These codes vary for each county, to see all 39 WA county checklists go to wabirder.com and click on Checklists.

Sept. 19, a **SNOWY EGRET** (Code 4) at Shillapoo Lake in the Vancouver Lake lowlands was reported by April and Erik Brown. These small egrets are rare in Washington, but we have had one in the Vancouver Lake lowlands the last two years.

Sept. 20, the incursion of **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** (Code 3) continued when one was found on Strawberry Island, below Bonneville Dam in Skamania County, by John Davis.

Sept. 21, At the end of Lower River Road in the Vancouver Lake Lowland Luke Haines saw the continuing **BLACK-NECKED STILT** (Code 4).

Sept. 21, the continuing (Code 4) **EARED GREBE** was reported by Ken Vanderkamp at Shillapoo Lake, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

Sept. 22, by Susan Kirkbride and Don Rose both reported finding the **BLACK-NECKED STILT** in the Vancouver Lowlands at the end of Lower River Road.

Sept. 22, Roger Windemuth photographed a **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** (Code 5) on the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, River "S" Unit, there are so few records of this east coast species in Clark County that this was the first record of them entered into eBird.

Sept. 22, Ellen Jones and Cindy McCormack both independently confirmed that the **EARED GREBE** continued at Shillapoo Lake.

Sept. 22, Jim Danzenbaker heard the dry rattle call of a **LAPLAND LONGSPUR** (Code 5) three times from the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Lake overlook off Division St, This bird was flying south in with a flock of **AMERICAN PIPITS**.

Sept. 24, Cindy McCormack, Les Carlson and I did some social distance birding in Skamania County starting at the St. Cloud Wayside where we found 44 species, the best of

which were 3 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS**. We had another 43 species at Strawberry Island and the most unusual bird there was a **MARSH WREN** (Code 3) which are hard to find in Skamania County. The Rock Creek Mill Pond in Stevenson is always a good place to check, here we found 5 **RUD-DY DUCKS** (Code 4) and a lingering **YELLOW WARBLER**.

Heading back west we stopped at Skamania Landing where we located 45 species including another **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER**, a **WARBLING VIREO**, 1 **WESTERN Tanager**, a **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER**, a **TOWNSEND'S WARBLER**, a **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** and a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**.

Sept. 25, an immature **BOBOLINK** (Code 5) was photographed at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, by Tina and Gregory Johnson. Bobolinks nest on the Toppenish NWR in Yakima County and in northeast Washington. Tina also photographed a **WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, while a common breeding bird here this is a very late date to still have one of these fly-catchers here. These two sightings are

among of the joys of birding, finding an out of place bird or an out of season bird.

Sep 27, another late migrant **WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE** was seen by Alan Knue and Charles Enlow at the Ridgefield NWR--Carty Unit.

Sep 28, a single **SNOW GOOSE** (Code 4) was spotted flying over Strawberry Island, Skamania County, by John Davis.

Sep 28, Anne Tucker found another **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, near Underwood in eastern Skamania County.

Sep 28, Jim Danzenbaker was birding on lower Larch Mountain when he was alerted by some unfamiliar finch calls. He scoped them and saw the very straight culmen, peaked cap, and weak face pattern of 3 (Code 4) female type **CASSIN'S FINCHES**. This finch is usually found in the

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Lewis's Woodpecker, photo by Mick Thomson

Ponderosa Pine forests east of the Cascades but the Columbia Gorge allows these and other unusual for western Washington species to easily reach our area. The Black-necked Stilt, Lewis Woodpeckers, Acorn Woodpecker and Red-naped Sapsucker in this column are all examples of that easy passage through, instead of over the mountains, this combined with Clark and Skamania County being the southernmost of Washington's counties make for some good birding opportunities.

Sept. 29, Jim Danzenbaker spotted an adult light morph **BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (Code 5) in with a kettle of about 30 southbound **TURKEY VULTURES** and one **NORTHERN HARRIER** while at the north end of Woodland Bottoms, Cowlitz County. This is part of a pattern of Broad-winged Hawks he has noticed in this location, he said that he saw two in similar circumstances on September 26 and 28 of 2018. As he posted, "Since the wind was from the WNW, I decided that this particular flock of TVs was going to head southeast along the east fork of the Lewis River (just south of Woodland on I-5) as far as the river meandered southeast to Clark County. The river turns east around Day-break Park, Clark County and I think that's where the raptors veer off from following the river and continue southeast from there. That path puts them heading south on the west edge of Battle Ground. That was a theory I had formulated several years ago. I'm happy to say that the theory seems to have worked. Today, I arrived on the west edge of Battle Ground (1/2 mile north of my house) and, 20 minutes later, a kettle of TVs and one Northern Harrier appeared and a light morph adult **BROAD-WINGED HAWK** was with the kettle! I was super excited! This made the **SAY'S PHOEBE** that I found on Larch Mountain in the morning seem pretty average"

Oct. 2, Bill Bradford and Lora Minty were at Horseshoe Lake on the northwestern side of Mt. Adams in Skamania County when they found a **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** (Code 4) after they heard it tapping on a tree near the restroom.

Oct. 2, Cindy McCormack was at Les Carlson's Hazel Dell area front door when she looked up as 42 **TURKEY VULTURES** drifted by with a smaller hawk. This kettle was followed by 15 more Turkey Vultures for a total of 57 in less than 5 minutes.

Oct. 03, on lower Larch Mountain another **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** and a late **WESTERN TANAGER** were spotted by David Irons, Shawneen Finnegan and Jim Danzenbaker

Oct. 3, We also had a **WESTERN TANAGER** and a late **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** at our place east of Washougal.

Oct. 6, Cindy McCormack found another **ACORN WOOD-PECKER** and identified a **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (Code 4) at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, this is another east of the Cascades woodpecker.

Oct. 7, the continuing Fort Vancouver NHS **ACORN WOOD-PECKER** was seen by Les Carlson.

Oct. 9, Jim Danzenbaker had his eyes to the sky from 10:15am-1:45pm at the north end of the Woodland Bottoms in Cowlitz County with the following results: 186 **TURKEY VULTURES**, 7 **SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS**, 2 **COOPER'S HAWKS**, 5 **NORTHERN HARRIERS**, 2 **OSPREY**, 1



Acorn Woodpecker, photo by Les Carlson

BALD EAGLE, at least 18 **RED-TAILED HAWKS**, 2 **SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS**, 1 **COOPER'S HAWK** and 3 **PEREGRINE FALCONS**.

Oct. 10, We had a tan-striped form of **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** at our feeders. This Skamania County Code 4 species breeds east of the Rocky Mountains but is annual in our region in the winter.

Oct 13, 1 Female/immature plumaged **SURF SCOTER** (Code 4) was spotted by Randy Hill at the Rock Creek Mill Pond in Stevenson, Skamania County. Just west of there, on Ashes Lake, he spotted an amazing flock of 21 more **Surf Scoters** In Ashes Lake, all of them in sub-adult/female plumage.

Oct 13, 1 **CLARK'S GREBE** (Code 30 and a **PACIFIC LOON** (Code 4) were found on Vancouver Lake by Jim Danzenbaker.

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Oct 13, John Davis birded Strawberry Island, Skamania County noting one group of about 45 **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS** flying west against the wind during a break in the rain.

Oct. 13, we had a **RUFFED GROUSE** wander through our bird feeding area ignoring the grain on the ground but it ate a few leaves as it went along.

Oct. 14, a **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (Code 4) was spotted at Vancouver Lake by Bob Flores.

Oct 15, a lingering **WILSON'S WARBLER** was identified by its chip note by Cameron Cox and Jim Danzenbaker on lower Larch Mountain.

Oct 15, on Strawberry Island, Skamania County another **ACORN WOODPECKER** (Code 5) was encountered by Les Carlson, John Davis and his wife in the parking area along the north side of the wetland ponds, it then flew across the road and landed in a cottonwood for a few seconds where they were able to get a photo.

Oct 15, **TREE SWALLOWS** are early migrants, so one seen by K.C. Anderson at Shillapoo Lake was notable.

Oct 16, from the Columbia River Boardwalk in Vancouver, Ken Vanderkamp spotted a **RED-NECKED GREBE** (Code 3).

Oct 17, Andrew S. Aldrich found another **RED-NECKED GREBE** at Marine Park not too far off the boat ramp.

Oct 18, as part of an apparent influx of migrant **RED-NECKED GREBS**, John Davis had another one at Strawberry Island, Skamania County.

Oct. 19, a male **LONG-TAILED DUCK** (Code 4) was seen from Marine Park by Randy Hill flying up the Columbia River. Later, this bird or another was reported from the Ore-

gon side of the river just upstream of the I-5 Bridge. I think this is one of the most beautiful North American ducks, they are a saltwater species and unusual south of the Olympic Peninsula.

Oct. 19, in Skamania County, John Davis birded Strawberry Island where he had 320 **CAKCLING GEESE** (Code 3) flyover and photographed a juvenile **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** (Code 4).



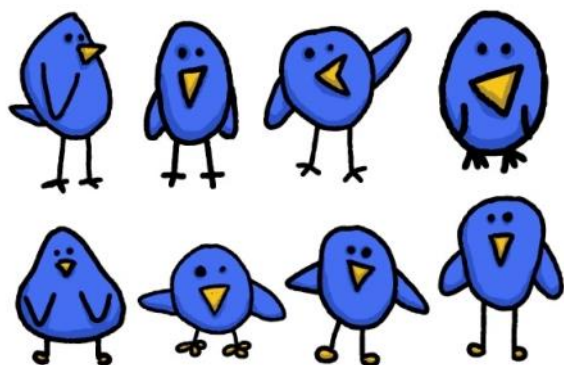
*Long-tailed Ducks in flight
photo from Creative Commons*

Oct. 20, After the Long-tailed Duck was reported the prior day birders including Jen Sanford, Jim Danzenbaker and Bob Flores checked the Vancouver Waterfront finding 46 **SURF SCOTERS**, 2 **WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS**, 8 **BONAPARTE'S GULLS** the continuing **RED-NECKED GREBE** and 16 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS**.

Despite our smokey conditions during the Fall migration period and people reducing their traveling and social distancing, the 2020 Cumulative County Year Lists for both Clark and Skamania County are about the same as last year. So far 228 species have been reported from Clark County and 2002 from Skamania County as of Oct. 20th. This last period provided us with some very interesting birds and the migration hasn't ended yet. More waterfowl including both Tundra and Trumpeter Swans have yet to arrive and the arriving flocks of ducks and geese may have some out of place birds among them such as Eurasian Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Emperor Goose or other wanders from Asia. Our wintering raptors are just beginning to arrive but so far there have been no reports of Rough-legged Hawks or Short-eared Owls here yet.

Please send me or post your bird sightings to eBird, TWEETERS or on the Vancouver Audubon Afield Facebook site for use in this column.

By Wilson Cady



**Vancouver Audubon
is on Facebook!**



Follow our page [@VancouverAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverAudubon) to get up-to-date announcements, news, and events from Vancouver Audubon! We also added a group page "Afield"—you can find the group by just selecting the button "Visit Group" under our page banner. Join the group to share your nature photos and experiences, or to even get ID help!

Bird ID Challenge

By Cindy McCormack

Let's make use of those partial or poor photos or just birds that can be a challenge to ID! If there are identifiable features in the photo, submit your photo for our next challenge.

Uncertain about identification or if photo has enough info? Don't hesitate to send it in for discussion and review.

Of course, if you wish to share your good photos with your fellow VAS members, you are welcome to submit them for publishing. Send questions, comments, and submissions to [Cindy](mailto:Cindy@nwbirder@gmail.com) at nwbirder@gmail.com.

This month's challenge is terrible picture! Trust me, there is a bird there and you can identify it—even with this cruddy photo.

Can you find and identify the bird in this picture?

Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.



September's Bird ID Challenge Answer

Well, this bird seems to only want to show it's underside here! Even with this one-dimensional ventral view, we can identify this bird.

So, how are we going to even start with this bird? We've got quite a bit of information here, so let's start with general impressions.

It appears to be quite acrobatic, balancing on a thin branch while reaching both down and over to select a nightshade berry off of the vine. So, we have a fruit-eating (frugivorous) perching bird (passerine).

Hmmm...it's eating fruit with a fairly massive bill! See how wide that bill is at the base? Wow, that bird must have some pretty heavy-duty jaw muscles! Let's also take note of the color of that bill—seems to be a pale, maybe pinkish in color.

Moving "south" on this bird, we see some color on the chin and upper breast. It appears to be reddish, similar in color to the berry he is plucking off of the inflorescence. So are we seeing true color or are we seeing reflection/transmission of color from sunlight and something in the tree. What about staining? He IS eating red berries after all, so some things to consider...let's keep looking...



October's quiz bird, photo by Roger Windemuth, Sept. 22, 2020 at Ridgefield NWR

Wow, that sure is a crisp white abdomen and undertail coverts! So lighting and staining probably aren't issues for the coloration up higher, but let's keep them in mind.

That tail! Look at the beautiful perfect white panels in those tail feathers! The sun is shining a bit through the rightmost tail feather (r6), so it doesn't look like the sun is in a good position to throw color up onto the

chin—we can eliminate reflective lighting as a factor here.

So, what birds do we have with a massive bill that will eat fruit? And why such a stout bill to eat fruit? This bird must also tackle some harder food, like hard seed shells. Stout seed-eater bills should point us to the finches, buntings, cardinals and grosbeaks. Let's eliminate Northern Cardinal and Pyrrhuloxia right away. Besides the fact that they aren't found in our area (and several other reasons), neither have white panels in the tail feathers. Just going on the white panels on the tail alone, we can also eliminate the stouter-billed buntings.

Although this bill is too stout for most in the finch family, the Evening Grosbeak does have a fairly massive and pale-

(Continued on page 11)

colored bill. However, neither sex have clean white abdomens. The male has a solid black tail, and the female only has small white spots near the end of the tail.

So, that leaves us with the cardinal family grosbeaks (different from the finch family grosbeaks—I know, that can be a little confusing!).

We do have a very common cardinalid grosbeak in our area during spring and summer, the lovely Black-headed Grosbeak. The male does have white windows in the tail feathers. However, this photo was taken in late September, which is fairly late to still find one of our Black-headed Grosbeaks, since most of them have left by mid-September. Looking at those clean white and unstreaked underparts doesn't fit with a Black-headed Grosbeak either. They have a light to dark buffy background, not bright, clean white!

Well, the very closely related Rose-breasted Grosbeak is known to disperse widely during migration and they tend to have a later post-breeding migration. (This is a great time to visit [eBird's animated migratory maps!](#)). We've already likely eliminated our common bird with a few field marks, so let's consider something a bit more unusual!

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks males do have white panels in their retrices, and they also have a brilliant white abdomen and undertail coverts. The pinkish triangular bib on the upper chest certainly fits with a young male Rose-breasted!

Uh-oh! Where's the black head then? Why the fine streaks on the pink chest? Males in their first basic plumage (so an immature or subadult male) will have varying amounts of black feathers (you can see a few at the bill base and along the edge of the throat). The pink will also be variable. They will somewhat resemble a female more than an

adult male in body plumage (but not in the remiges (flight feathers)).

Another item to consider is the bill color. But, as this seems to be an immature bird, it can also make judging bill color a little complicated. Younger birds don't yet necessarily have the full bill color of an breeding adult. We also can't see the upper portion of the bill (the upper mandible) in this photo for comparison. With these considerations, bill color in this case should be used with caution. With the other field marks we have discussed, the light apricot color of the lower mandible help confirm the identity of this ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK male found by Roger Windemuth at Ridgefield "S" unit this last September.

The additional view he took also shows the clean white supercilium and malar, which should be more buffy in a Black-headed Grosbeak.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ridgefield NWR, Sept 22, 2020
Located and photographed by Roger Windemuth

Vancouver Audubon Society Support & Donation Form

Membership dues support education, speaker programs, newsletter, and conservation projects.

**Renewal date:
September 1st**

_____ I wish to become a supporter of Vancouver Audubon for \$20/year or \$_____

Please include this form and make check payable to and send to: Vancouver Audubon, P.O. Box 1966, Vancouver, WA 98668-1966 **-OR-** join/renew/donate online at vancouveraudubon.org

VAS will not share your information with any other organization. VAS is a non-profit organization under US IRS Code Section 501(c)(3).

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

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EMAIL ADDRESS _____ (req'd for newsletter)

For additional information on membership to National Audubon (Chapter # Y13), go to <http://www.audubon.org/>

NWR Updates

Ridgefield NWR

Auto Tour Route on the River “S” Unit is open to vehicle traffic **ONLY**. No bikes or pedestrian access at this time.

Carty Unit: The construction of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge's Multi-Purpose building is well underway! The parking lot will remain open to the public during most of the construction window. Check the website for intermittent safety closures.

Spur trail from Main Street Bridge Closed During Construction

The pedestrian trail from Main Avenue to the trail head at the Carty Unit will remain closed during the duration of the construction. Visitors can still drive in or walk in from the sidewalk through the main entrance gate.

Port entrance: Lookout open year-round. Trail to Plankhouse closed for the season. Reopens May 1st.

Partial Trail Closures on Thursdays through October

The Oaks to Wetlands Trail north of the large oak tree overlook (marked by interpretive panel and signage about restoration) will be closed to all public access on Thursdays to provide work crews safe distancing while they continue work in this restoration area. Please respect this closure for their safety and your own.

Current gates times are 7:00AM to 6:30 PM. Check the website for gate times on the day of your visit. Note that gates close automatically.

There is no public access to bathrooms, informational kiosks, refuge office and the viewing blind due to the inability to uphold necessary social distancing guidelines during the pandemic. The Refuge is fee free at this time.

Information current as of publication. Check the alerts on the [website](#) for current information.

Steigerwald Lake NWR

Closed to All Public Access for Restoration

[Video update of the Steigerwald project link](#)

The Steigerwald Reconnection Project has begun. To ensure the safety of our visitors and our crews, the Refuge's trails are closed to all public access at this time. This closure includes the Refuge's parking lot, restrooms, and access to both the Refuge's interior trails (currently) and the Columbia River Dike Trail (the levee trail) that parallels the Columbia River (as of July 6th, 2020).

The Refuge Trails and Dike Trail east of Captain William Clark Park, will be closed to all public access until the Spring of 2022. Please respect this closure while habitat and public use opportunities are enhanced.

For more info, visit <https://www.refuge2020.info/steigerwald-reconnection-project>.

INJURED WILDLIFE: WHAT TO DO?



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**Injured Wildlife Hotline:
503-292-0304**

The nearest wildlife care and rehabilitation center is operated by Portland Audubon. Here are some general guidelines from their [Wildlife Care Center](#):

1. [Prioritize your safety](#)
 2. [Safely contain the animal](#)
 3. **Keep the animal calm and secure until you can take it to the Wildlife Care Center**
- **Do not handle the animal** any more than necessary to contain it – this is for your protection as well as for the animal's well being. Wild animals are terrified of humans. They may fight back, try to flee, or freeze. Many people mistake the “freeze” behavior for tolerance or enjoyment of contact, when in reality it is a fear response. Limiting contact will reduce stress on the animal.
 - **Keep the animal in a warm, dark, and quiet space.** Keep them away from children and pets.
 - **Many animals benefit from a heating pad** set on low under half their enclosure, or a sock filled with dry rice and microwaved for 2-3 minutes.
 - **Do not feed the animal.**
 - **Be cautious when choosing to leave water.** Many wild animals do not drink standing water, and attempting to help them drink can result in pneumonia. In addition, if an animal spills its water and gets wet, it could get cold and may die. If in doubt, it is better not to leave water.

Bring the animal to the Wildlife Care Center as soon as you can. If you can't bring it to the center during our open hours, or you believe the animal is in critical condition and needs immediate attention after hours, the Wildlife Care Center has a partnership with the [24 hour Emergency Veterinary Hospital Dove Lewis](#). To get in touch with them, call (503) 228-7281.

If you are unable to transport to the care center, try calling Arden 360-892-8872. If he is available to transport a bird, you will be asked to donate a gas mileage compensation and a small donation for the Care Center for the care of the bird at the time of pick up.

The Wildlife Care Center admits native wild patients and operates its Injured Wildlife Hotline from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., 365 days a year.

Upcoming Events

October 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27 Board Mtg	28	29	30	31 Halloween

November 2020

1 Daylight Savings ends	2	3 Vote! Election Day	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Program	11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Dec/Jan newsletter deadline	21
22	23	24 Board Mtg	25	26 Thanksgiving	27 Native American Heritage Day	28
29	30	Dec. 1 Program	2	3	4	5

Oct. 27 (Tuesday): VAS Board Meeting (via Zoom)

Nov. 10 (Tuesday): VAS Program, **SEABIRDS AND COMMUNITY SCIENCE: UNVEILING MYSTERIES OF SEABIRDS TO HELP PROTECT OREGON'S ICONIC COAST—Joe Liebezeit**, 7pm via Zoom. Contact Don Rose for registration

Nov. 24 (Tuesday): VAS Board Meeting (via Zoom)

Dec. 1 (Tuesday): VAS Program, **SURVIVAL BY DEGREES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIRD POPULATIONS**

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