



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Volume 45, Number 9

December 2020

From the VAS Board

It is the season to be grateful and thankful and your Vancouver Audubon board is thankful for many things:

by Joan Durgin

We thank our members for allowing us to change our monthly program in November to the second Tuesday to not conflict with the election night. We had good attendance but we are also always learning how to improve or ensure the speaker can be seen and heard.

We are so thankful for Don Rose, our program chair, for arranging monthly speakers. He has another timely and interesting topic for the December program, state chapter representatives will discuss climate change and the severe threat to bird populations. Don already has a program

(Continued on page 2)

RIDGEFIELD/SAUVIE ISLAND CBC

As of Nov 20th, we are still planning the Ridgefield/Sauvie Island Christmas Bird Count Circle to proceed. Lacking a complete shutdown for COVID, we will plan to go (weather permitting) on Sunday, Dec 27th.

There will be no carpooling except for existing family or isolation pods, no meetings and no equipment sharing. But we can do this with care and have a safe, great day outside counting the birds.

Please contact Susan Setterberg for further details at smsetterberg@yahoo.com or 360 980 0884.



SURVIVAL BY DEGREES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIRD POPULATIONS

Join us Tuesday evening, December 1st! (See page 3 for details)

Teri Anderson, Washington State Audubon chapter network manager, and **Adam Maxwell**, Washington State Audubon Campaigns Manager, will be giving a presentation on the landmark report, **Survival by Degrees: 389 Species on the Brink**.



Having worked as a National Park Ranger in Alaska, and in the Peace Corps in Mexico, Teri recognizes the unrivaled power of volunteer networks to impact conservation. Her work in community science in Mexico engaged local, indigenous youth in bird monitoring, resulting in new conservation policy and a birding ecotourism program. Teri is passionate about environmental education and published a field guide to birds of the

Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve and a visitor's guide to the National Park of American Samoa. She hails from Alaska and has a MS in Natural Resource Management from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She lives on a sailboat in Seattle and spends her free time working with her partner in their small business, Ballard Kayak.



Adam originally hails from Florida but had his first glimpse of a life best lived outdoors on teenage hiking trips to Vermont. He truly fell in love with the great outdoors when he moved to Seattle for graduate school. After finishing up his education at UW he took a job with the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition

advocating for strengthened and more fully funded habitat and outdoor recreation grant programs at the state and federal level. More recently, Adam spent a few years with his partner in Vermont directing field operations for the state's largest environmental advocacy organization before returning to the Pacific Northwest in March of this year. He lives with his partner and 8-year-old rescue dog in the Madison Valley neighborhood of Seattle and takes great pleasure in hiking all over Washington state, trail-running in Seattle's urban forests, and playing ice hockey with friends.

(From the Board, continued from page 1)

lined up for our February meeting and is always working on future programs.

We are thankful for Cindy McCormack to suggest and then host the social half-hour on Zoom before our program at 7:00. If you missed it last meeting, consider joining us early to talk about birds. It would be nice to see you!

Speaking of Zoom, we are even thankful for this platform so we can at least get together and be educated on interesting topics.

Jared Strawderman has agreed to be our newest volunteer and serve as our Vice-President. Many thanks for him reaching out to the board! We will take a vote of the members to put him officially on the board at our December meeting.

When we can meet in person again, we are thankful for the Esther Short Building management to allow us to use their community room free of charge. Typically in



Photo by Mick Thompson

December we apply for the dates we need to hold our meetings, but frankly we just can't guess when we will be able to meet in person again.

Last, but not least, we are thankful for committee members that are not on our board but do behind the scenes work.

Lissa Gienty on the Education Committee

and Bonnie Bingle, Mary Ann Teague and Sherry Hagen on the Audit Committee are so crucial to our mission.

By the way, Susan Saul will be recruiting for Conservation Committee members in the new year to assist with her valuable work and Cindy would love a few committee members to help with the newsletter. Both Susan and Cindy do a fantastic job, but they do it all alone.

I wanted to remind our members the reason we list the dates of our board meetings is because they are public. So now with our Zoom process it is easier than ever to attend a board meeting at 6:30pm on the last Tuesday of the month. Just send Sam an email - samneuffer@gmail.com to get the link. You would be most welcome.



Officers, Board Members, & Chairs

President | Sam Neuffer | 206-930-1032 | samneuffer@gmail.com
Vice President | Jared Strawderman |
Secretary | Craig Wallace | craig@wallfam.net
Treasurer | Joan Durgin | 360-834-5621 | jdurgin1@hotmail.com
Conservation | Gretchen Starke | 360-892-8617 | gstarke@pacifier.com
Conservation | Susan Saul | conservation@vancouveraudubon.org
Editor | Cindy McCormack | 509-939-4448 | vas@vancouveraudubon.org
Education | Sam Neuffer | 206-930-1032 | samneuffer@gmail.com
Field Trips | Randy Hill | 360-975-2573 | re_hill@q.com
Mailings | Bonnie Bingle | audubonnie@comcast.net
Membership | George Mayfield | 360-687-0360 | gomayf@comcast.net
Programs | Don Rose | meetings@vancouveraudubon.org
Refreshments | Cindy Mayfield | 360-687-0360 | gomayf@comcast.net
Sightings | Wilson Cady | 360-835-5947 | gorgebirds@juno.com
Website | Cindy McCormack | vas@vancouveraudubon.org

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

Vancouver Audubon Society

PO Box 1966 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

Website | vancouveraudubon.org

Facebook | [@VancouverAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverAudubon)

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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 usually 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

My apologies for technical difficulties that occurred with our last virtual meeting. Every month is a new learning experience! This month will be our fourth virtual meeting 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.

This month we will try something different. We will require attendees to register in advance in order to allow a poll (vote) on our budget and other business. Members will receive an invitation to the webinar through a link in the email and they will be required to register in advance to attend the meeting.

Starting at 6:30pm, the first 30 minutes of this meeting will be a social time when members will be able to interact through live audio and video. During the presentation starting at 7:00, no audio or video will be allowed for attendees. Written questions submitted through Chat or Q & A can be answered at the end of the program.

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

Teri Anderson, Washington State Audubon chapter network manager, and **Adam Maxwell**, Washington State Audubon Campaigns Manager, will be giving a presentation on the landmark report, **Survival by Degrees: 389 Species on the Brink**.

Audubon scientists took advantage of 140 million observations, recorded by birders and scientists, to describe where 604 North American bird species live today. They then used the latest climate models to project how each species' range will shift as climate change and other human impacts advance across the continent. As the climate changes, so will the places birds need. The results are clear: Birds will be forced to relocate to find favorable homes, and they may not survive. Audubon Washington will present the study and provide some concrete ways to help our feathered friends.

What's on tap?

The following programs are currently scheduled, all start at 7:00 pm (social time at 6:30pm). We hope you will join us!

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: meetings@vancouveraudubon.org



Join the meeting early! At 6:30pm we would love to see and hear from you! We hope to have a way to allow for more audio and video participation during the first half hour while still using Zoom's webinar format.



Zoom Webinars and 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.

AUDUBON VIRTUAL ADVOCACY DAY

DECEMBER 9TH

By Susan Saul

We want our legislators to start the 2021 Legislative session with Audubon's bird-friendly priorities in mind. Since we won't be able to meet with our legislators in person, we will be meeting over Zoom.

If you live in the 49th Legislative District, join us for our Virtual Advocacy Day with Senator Annette Cleveland and Representative Sharon Wylie on December 9 by signing up at this link:

<https://bit.ly/2HitOYs>

We will be discussing Audubon's legislative priorities for the 2021 session:

1. Funding Conservation – Since state government is facing a budget shortfall due to COVID, the Legislature will be looking for places to cut spending. We will ask our legislators to protect conservation funding in the state's operating budget, particularly for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. We will ask for the Legislature to invest \$140 million in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, which funds outdoor projects all across the state, from urban parks to working farms to mountain trails.

2. Reducing Transportation Emissions – A Clean Fuels Standard failed to pass the Legislature last year, so we will be asking them to take it up

again. A Clean Fuels Standard will require oil refineries and distributors to ensure that Washington's fuel supply gets cleaner over time, reducing carbon pollution from gasoline and diesel by 10% over 10 years. Producing local, low-

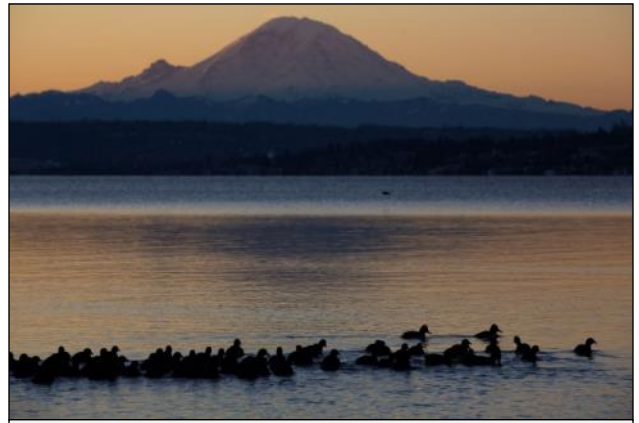
carbon fuels will create jobs in Washington, give consumers more choice at the pump and ensure healthier air now and for future generations. Washington is now the last West Coast jurisdiction without a clean fuels standard, and it's time we catch up with California, Oregon and British Columbia.



3. Climate Resilience – We will support legislative action to update the Growth Management Act to address climate change, housing affordability and environmental justice. By making our urban areas affordable and accessible to all through affordable housing policy, preventing disproportionate impacts of local pollution on communities of color, and ensuring that cities and counties are planning for climate change, we have the opportunity to transform the lives of Washingtonians and the natural environment around us. Washington has a brief window to make big changes to the GMA before our cities and counties embark on their next comprehensive plan updates, which will lock in policy for the next decade.

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.



American Coots photo by Luke Franke/Audubon

	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

Seeking Conservation Committee Members

In January 2021, VAS would like to form a Conservation Committee to take the lead in planning and directing the environmental priorities and activities for the chapter.

Committee objectives are:

- Identify, study, and evaluate environmental problems and opportunities and select priorities for action.
- Inform members about conservation issues and projects and encourage them to act individually and in cooperation with other members.
- Represent the chapter's views by meeting with officials, speaking at hearings and other forums and submitting written comments when appropriate.
- Educate the public about conservation matters and urge them to act on priority issues.

VAS has a Zoom account so we should be able to meet virtually from the comfort and safety of our homes.

If you are interested or just want to find our more, please contact conservation@vancouveraudubon.org.



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

A Snipe Hunt

By Thomas Bancroft

The organic muck on the beach formed a rolling carpet with lots of bumps and depressions; wave action during the last storm molded this place. The shoreline was wide, maybe a dozen feet, from the water's edge up to the growing plants and then curled around Juanita Bay. I was snipe hunting and had my binoculars up to my eyes. One of these shorebirds should be hiding here.

One night back in the mid-1960s, I was sent on my first snipe hunt. All the new scouts were gathered together, and the camp counselors had us bring a t-shirt to hold one of these elusive creatures. The head person held a flashlight tight to his chest, shining it at his chin as he gave us directions. The light created a ghostly look, making his voice sound ominous. We were to search the dark woods, making grunting sounds to attract a snipe and then grab it, wrapping it in our spare shirt. "Don't come back until you have one," was his last words. That critter, though, was imaginary, and the older Boy Scouts had sent us on a fool's errand. I knew snipes existed by high school and had found this bird in swampy areas in Western Pennsylvania.

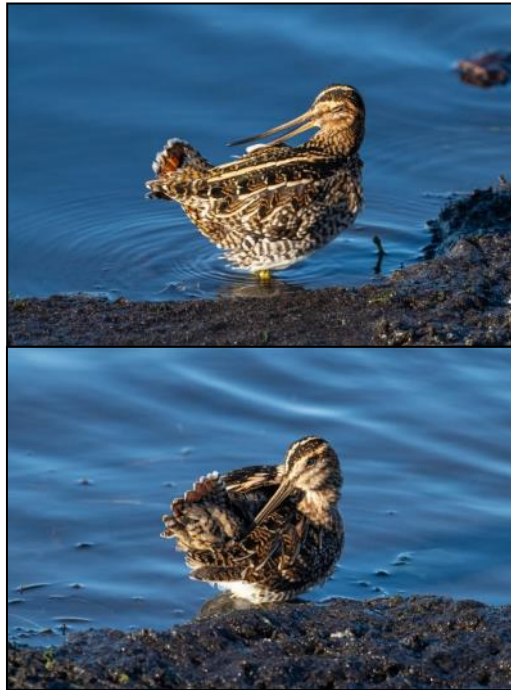
Behind a row of muck was a little cinnamon, off white, and black with some long creamy-colored lines, the back of a snipe. She had her long bill tucked under her back feathers, and her eyes closed. One yellow leg held her up from the mud. Her exquisite plumage was what I needed, and my spirits seemed to rise. It was early November, and the coronavirus pandemic of this past year had cast a heavy weight on my soul. Isolation, distance, masks, and Zoom seemed the way of life. I needed contact with something alive, mysterious, and wonderful.

With that thought, the Wilson's Snipe stretched and turned to walk down to the water's edge. Her six-inch bill began to probe into the mud. Her eyes set well back on



the sides of her head allowed her to see behind her while she searched for invertebrates. Apparently, the bill tip is flexible, allowing just the end to separate to grab a worm. A second bird joined this one, and they moseyed along the shoreline while I settled to watch these beautiful examples of adaptation.

A couple of dozen yards along their stroll, they stopped, turning their bills back along their sides, and began to preen. One twisted its tail, showing the barring and brown tips, pulling that bill through some under-tail coverts. As a



flying snipe descends, the wind flowing over spread rectrices makes that incredible eerie winnowing sound so crucial in their courtship and territorial defense. Each of the last few summers, I've been able to listen to it in the mountains of Washington, joy filling my body.

Here on the shores of Lake Washington, one began to pull on its scapular feathers, the upper mandible bent upward near its tip, and I realized I'd just seen the end flex. These individuals continued preening, working their sides, breasts, and tails. Eventually stopping all activity, they put their bills under their back feathers and closed their eyes. I'd been watching them for close to an hour, and the chilly

November temperatures had penetrated my bones. But these avian marvels had given me a sense of peace and serenity. Hope had returned to my soul.



Ssslithery Ssserpents

By Elizabeth Barnett, age 10

Sometimes snakes are misunderstood and seen as “scaly monsters” or “mindless serpents”, but they’re really not! They have an unfair reputation.

Some people demonize snakes or hunt them for fun (as people do to many animals, sadly). Some snakes are deadly, but most are still cute. Some are smart and some are swift—there are many different types of snakes. I’ll list five: black mambas (deadly), garter snakes (friendly), rattlesnakes (territorial), king cobras (musical, haha).

You can find lots of different snakes in many different habitats. I once found a Rubber Boa under some tin at my grandparent’s house. He was SOOO cute and friendly. I have also found garter snakes, bull snakes, and when I was little, I even saw some rattlesnakes!



The author with a Northern Rubber Boa (*Chamaelaea bottae*)



A baby garter snake

Something I have learned from experience, if you pick up a garter snake they WILL urinate in self-defense. Sometimes even the best soap can't really get the smell off! And, beware, some other snakes do the same thing!

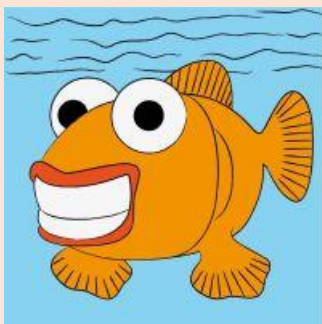
People do die from venomous snake bites; however, this does not justify the mass loathing that we hold against these slithery serpents. I personally love snakes—some are just so cute and smart!

Can You Swim the Swim of the King?

By Jason Barnett

Joke by
Jason Barnett, age 12:

Why was the fish kicked
from the Salmon group?



'Cause he was being pretty
shellfish.

I recently visited the nearby fish ladder at the Bonneville Dam. I was very intrigued by one particular fish. It was a very large fish we identified as a KING SALMON. This fish lazily swam by the window the entire time I was there. He had a very large gash in his side which looked quite gruesome. I wondered how he got the massive injury. This friendly fish sparked my interest and I just had to look up some more facts and learn more about my new “friend”.

King salmon, also known as Chinook salmon or *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, can be found up the cold waters of the Pacific coast from Kotzebue Sound, Alaska to warmer waters of Santa Barbara, California. The salmon lay their eggs in fresh water. The eggs then hatch and the young fish head out to spend most of their lives in saltwater. Nearing the end of their existence, an average of 4-5 years, they return back to freshwater to lay their own eggs. It’s a cycle, really.

These interesting ichthyofauna usually range from 20 to 50 pounds in weight; some of these fish can get absolutely gigantic, weighing more than a 100 pounds. The world’s record for largest king salmon ever caught is 126 pounds! These fish are usually three to four feet long. The longest King Salmon was about 5 feet long. That’s the size of an average human!

I am really excited to see the return of these fish next year. I’m hoping to go back to the fish ladder to see the massive numbers of fish returning to spawn.

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.



Clark's Grebe photo by Mick Thompson

Oct. 20, Bill Shelmerdine found the continuing **CLARK'S GREBE** at Vancouver Lake where it was with the more expected **WESTERN GREBES**.

Oct. 21, This has been a great year for finding a **SURF SCOTER** in our area,

five were spotted by John Davis flying down the Columbia River at Strawberry Island in Skamania County.

Oct. 21, near the boat docks at Wintler Park, Gregory Johnson found the **RED-NECKED GREBE** that was reported from there earlier this fall.

Oct. 22, two more **RED-NECKED GREBES** were reported from Marine Park by Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson.

Oct. 22, Randy Hill reported finding the **RED-NECKED GREBE** at Marine Park and another one from the Vancouver--Columbia River Boardwalk.

Oct. 22, a **PACIFIC LOON** was seen by Ken Vanderkamp from the Vancouver Columbia River Boardwalk.

Oct. 26, at Drano Lake in Skamania County, another **RED-NECKED GREBE** was spotted by Michael Hobbs who also reported a very late **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** there. What seems like a strange name for a lake comes from the John Drano who built the log flume that used to run to the Broughton lumber mill by the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery. This was the last working log flume in the United States and was the one that was featured in a Lassie movie.

Oct. 27, Cindy McCormack reported that the two **ACORN WOODPECKERS** continued at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site and that there was a **YELLOW-SHAFTED NORTHERN FLICKER** with a solid black malar, complete solid orange nape mark, solid tannish face contrasting with a gray crown and nape and with yellow rather than orange shafts. She said that she could not see any characters usu-

ally seen in an intergrade Northern Flicker.

Oct. 27, Christy Kuhlman spotted a **TURKEY VULTURE** at Florence Robison Park, this is at the tail end of the expected time frame to find one in Clark County, although there are a few records from the month of November.

Oct. 27, according to Fran Lenski the Tundra Swans have returned to Salmon Creek, accompanied this year by a large group of **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS**. He says that the birds are best viewed from the bridge over the creek on NW 36th Avenue.

Oct. 28, Jim Danzenbaker went up to the 2,000' level of Larch Mtn where he had been seeing 500-800 Pine Siskins a day. On this visit, the Pine Siskin number was lower but the Red Crossbill number had started to go way up. His previous high for the last ten years had been 64, which he had earlier in the week, but he more than doubled that with a count of 153. That excitement was soon eclipsed when he heard a double-noted call that sounded vaguely familiar. After several minutes of searching he finally located the bird--a female-type **PINE GROSBEAK**. This was not only the first one he had ever seen in Clark County, it was his first one seen in Washington. He also reported that he had a pair of flyby **WOOD DUCKS** and a **COMMON LOON** which were both new site birds (elevation here is about 2000 feet). The eBird species list for this location is now 114 species.



Snow x Ross's Goose
Rock Cr Mill Pond, Stevenson, WA
photo by Wilson Cady

Oct. 29, Carol and Don Kohler were fishing at Laurance Lake near Parkdale, OR. and saw some **SURF SCOTERS** on the lake, surprisingly I have also found them on some high elevation lakes in Skamania County. These sea ducks breed along the Alaskan and Canadian northern coast and might be traveling south down the trough between the Rocky and Cascade Mountain ranges.

Oct. 29, Cindy McCormack, Les Carlson and I did some social distancing birding in Skamania County and found a **MERLIN** and a hybrid **SNOW X ROSS'S GOOSE** at Rock Creek in Stevenson. After we left Russ Koppendrayer

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found Skamania County's first **BLACK PHOEBE** in the same spot. We then traveled to the Takhlakh Lake area on the north flank of Mt. Adams for high elevation species including **CANADA JAYS** and **CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS** and were surprised to find a female **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** at Horseshoe Lake, this is migratory species that is rare in Washington during the winter.

Oct. 30, another **SURF SCOTER** in Skamania County was reported by Edward Pullen from the mouth of the Wind River.



*N. Saw-whet Owl, by Gary Zeng/
Audubon Photography Awards*

Nov. 1, a group of local birders got to see a **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** when Cindy McCormack alerted them after she had found one being mobbed by jays on the Burnt Bridge Creek Trail. As usual for these little owls it was in a thick evergreen and was hard to see.

Nov. 04, the two **ACORN WOODPECKERS** at the Fort Vancouver NHS were seen again by Cindy McCormack.

Nov. 07, Jessie Garza had a female **WILSON'S WARBLER** foraging in a pine tree in their Vancouver backyard right after a large number of goldfinches had passed through a few minutes earlier. During the winter you can find mixed species flocks of birds traveling together for safety so it is always good to look through flocks of finches, chickadees and sparrows for anything that looks different, I call it playing Where's Waldo?

Nov. 7, a tan striped form of a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** joined the flock of birds at our feeders east of Washougal.

Nov. 08, Susan Saul, Cindy McCormack and Paul Slichter located three **RED-NECKED GREBES** on Yale Lake from the trail along the south side of the lake. I seldom see any reports from the impoundments on the Lewis River but they should be attractive to loons as well as diving ducks.

Nov. 08, Kevin Black first heard and then saw the **ACORN WOODPECKERS** at the Fort Vancouver NHS as did Robert Vanderkamp and April and Erik Brown who added that they were being seen north of the Auditorium.

Nov. 10, a **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** was reported by Jim Danzenbaker from Wintler Park.

Nov 11, in Skamania County, John Davis found a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** at the mouth of the Wind River that appeared to be a juvenile with a streaked upper breast and barred belly, orange wing coverts, barred tail and the white wing crescent that was seen in flight while it was being mobbed by about a dozen ravens.

Nov. 11, on Larch Mountain, Kevin Black heard first one female or young **PINE GROSBK** that was perched and then heard another sounding farther away. He thought that there were possibly three in the area as numerous calls were being made simultaneously.

Nov. 11, a **SWAMP SPARROW** was identified by Ken Pitts in the grasses long the Auto Tour Route at the Ridgefield



Pine Grosbeaks on Larch Mtn, photo by C.McCormack

NWR--River 'S' Unit. This is an east of the Rocky Mountains species.

Nov. 12, eleven **PINE GROSBK**s, three **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS** and two **CASSIN'S FINCHES** foraging on Noble Fir cones were reported from the Larch Mtn Trailhead by Jim Danzenbaker, Bob Flores Cindy McCormack, John Bishop, Tim Shelmerdine and Les Carlson. In the forty-five years that I have been compiling this column we have never had an incursion of these northern finches like was occurring here this winter.

Nov. 12, walking the Strawberry Island Loop Trail below Bonneville Dam on a daily basis has paid off for John Davis this year with his latest good find there of a **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** that he was able to photograph.

Nov. 13, a female **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** and **RED-NECKED GREBE** were the rewards of a visit to Marine Park

(Continued on page 10)

by Andrew S. Aldrich.

Nov. 15, on her second attempt to see the **ACORN WOODPECKERS** at the Fort Vancouver HS, Teri Martine spotted two of them in the trees next to and just north of the auditorium.

Nov. 15, one **PINE GROSBEAK** was reported by Jim Danzenbaker and Gregory Johnson from Larch Mountain, Jim thought that these were probably continuing birds instead of new arrivals.

Nov. 15, more **PINE GROSBEAKS** were found by John Bishop at the Grouse Vista Trailhead in Clark County and then twenty minutes later he had them on the same trail after it crossed into Skamania County.

Nov. 15, Jen Sanford and Jacob Durrent also found and photographed the Larch Mountain **PINE GROSBEAKS**. And later in the day they photographed an **IBIS** flying over the Fort Vancouver Historic Site, this most likely was a White-faced Ibis but without a better view a Glossy Ibis could not be ruled out.

Nov. 16, two **RUFFED GROUSE** spent the morning feeding on the fruits of one of our hawthorns, where they are annual after the first freeze ripens the haws.

Nov. 16, Karen Freiheit spotted a juvenile **BLACK-NECKED STILT** along the Auto Tour Route on the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit. This rare shorebird wasn't the first one here this year as an adult was seen in May in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

Nov. 19, forty-one species were found by Cindy McCormack on a three-mile walk in the Fort Vancouver Historic Site. The highlights were a **MERLIN**, the three continuing **ACORN WOODPECKERS** and a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW**.

Nov. 19, two **SURF SCOTERS** were seen on Vancouver Lake by Don Rose, a continuation of the earlier influx of these birds into our area.

Nov. 19, At the mouth of the Wind River in Skamania County, Joshua Holman picked out an adult **GOLDEN EAGLE** among the thirty-seven **BALD EAGLES** on the sandbars there. The Columbia River has been at a low water level above Bonneville Dam this winter and there are exposed sandbars at the mouths of the rivers where you can see numerous eagles feeding on spawned out salmon.

Nov. 20, Ryan Abe found a lingering **OSPREY** at Daybreak Regional Park most of these birds left the Pacific Northwest by the end of September.

The 2021 Cumulative County Checklist of all of the species reported as of 11-20-2020 for Clark County was at 233 and in Skamania County 205 species have been reported so far this year. This surprisingly despite the shutdowns is about average for our counties, to see the list go to this site and please let me know of any corrections or additions that are needed.

http://wabirder.com/county_yearlist.html



Ruffed Grouse
photo by Wilson Cady

While raptors and waterfowl will be central to a lot of wildlife viewing this season, I expect the incursion of Pine Siskins, Pine Grosbeaks, Red Crossbill and White-winged Crossbill to continue through the winter with the possibility that some of these birds may drop down into our residential areas when we begin to get snow. This group of finches follow food sources such as the cone crops on conifer trees and birches along with fruit bearing trees and don't

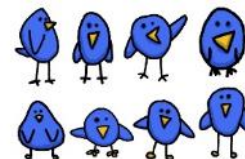
have what we think of as a wintering ground. While they are referred to as northern finches as they breed in the forest that extends from Alaska to the east coast the birds arriving here this winter may have come from the forests of central and eastern Canada where there was a poor crop of seeds this winter while here on the west coast there is a good food supply. While mainly focusing on the East Coast, for more information on this event check this Winter Finch Forecast with its projection that was based on the cone crop inventory including in our region: Winter Finch Forecast – FINCH RESEARCH NETWORK (finchnetwork.org)

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.

Can you identify the bird floating in the Columbia River in this picture?

Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.



November's Bird ID Challenge Answer

Yipes! This is a terrible bird photo! Yes, there is a bird in this cruddy photo...I have a perfect excuse...I took it with my phone (in one hand) through my binoculars (in my other hand), all while looking high up the tree. Oh, on a moving target too!

All the excuses aside, let's see if we can figure out what this is!

Starting with habitat, the tree is obviously an oak (look at those lobed leaves). We appear to have a broken branch in the photo.

Looking closer, we can see some black and white on the underside of that branch. Wait just a minute...UNDER the branch? Yep, we have a bird gripping onto the underside of that branch!

Zooming in a bit gets you a fuzzy view, but field marks are all there for an identification. First, let's figure out where our key body parts are located. This will help with getting the correct perspective and help us find the field marks.



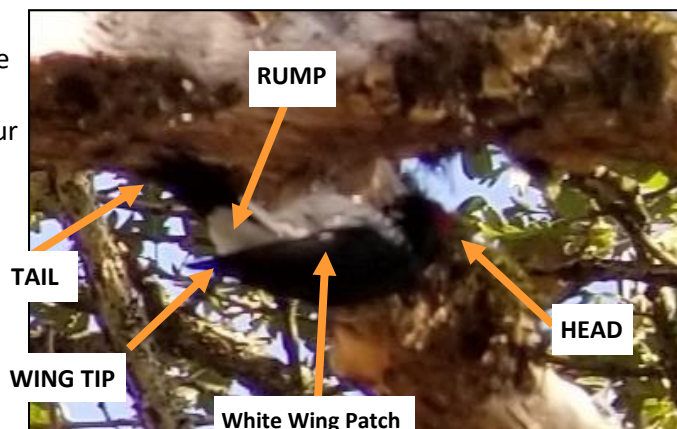
November's quiz bird

Start with one you can make out in this photo. The most obvious features to me are the folded wing and the tail.

The tail is on the left end, pressing against the underside of the branch. The point of the folded wing is protruding to the left. Since the wing normally sits above the tail, we can tell that this bird is upside down (belly up, but not in the bad way)!

With those two body parts, we can start finding those field marks. So, we have a black tail, being held tightly against the branch. Above the tail (below in this photo!) we can see a bright white rump. The folded wing (and as much of the back that we can see) appears to be solid black, except a small white square at the base of the primaries. The belly and undertail coverts of this bird appear to be white.

The head is going to give us a bit of trouble, since it's difficult to make out and the bill is not visible. We can, however, see that it has a lot of black, a



(Continued on page 12)

patch of bright red against the black, and a bit of light color showing.

Okay, that seems to be it for field marks. So, can you figure this out yet? If you have, excellent! Otherwise, let's continue...

The stiff tail prop is a really good clue, as is a bird gripping the underside of a branch while maintaining a parallel position against that branch.

Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, and woodpeckers are all birds that primarily forage by grasping tree trunks and branches while staying parallel to the surface of the tree. Nuthatches have a very short tail, not really useful as a prop. Creepers and woodpeckers both have long, stiff tails that can be useful as a stabilizing prop.

This obviously isn't a Brown Creeper since it doesn't look like a piece of brown bark. (Don't get me wrong, they are a beautiful piece of bark)!

So this leaves us with the woodpeckers. What woodpeckers have a solid black tail? Not Downy or Hairy, they both have white outer tail feathers. They both also have black and white striped flight feathers and white on the back.

Northern Flickers have dark tails if you can't see the central shaft color, but they have some black barring on the sides of the rump, brown backs with black barring, and do not have any black and deep red in the head.

Pileated Woodpeckers do have black tails and backs, but the rump is also black, as is the belly and undertail.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers have black tails, but with central white feathers with black barring. Only the central rump is white, and the head doesn't show much black at all. They would also show a large white patch in the folded wing.

Well, we struck out with our common woodpecker species. Let's try something less common. Three-toed and Black-backed Woodpeckers have white in the outer tail feathers. What woodpeckers are possible in Washington that appear to have all-black tails? Lewis's Woodpecker (no white rump), Williamson's Sapsucker male (they would have a large white patch showing on the folded wing), White-headed Woodpecker (no white rump, all black body, and the red on head would be in white crown), and Acorn Woodpecker. Hmm. This IS in an oak tree. Oak trees produce....Acorns!

An Acorn Woodpecker does have a black tail, white rump, white abdomen and undertail coverts, a solid black back, a large white patch at the base of the primaries that is only visible as a small white spot on the folded wing. The bright red crown contrasts nicely with the black in the face. They do have a cream-colored forehead patch and throat, which would explain a bit of the pale color we are seeing on a bit of the blurry head.

The quiz photo is of one of three **Acorn Woodpeckers** currently being found at Fort Vancouver.



Acorn Woodpecker
photo by Heather Roskelley

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 _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____ (req'd for newsletter)

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

NWR Updates

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

Ridgefield NWR

All Refuge units remain fee free until further notice.

Automatic Gate times for all units: 7:00am to 5:00pm

Note that gates close automatically. Vehicles must exit the Refuge before the gate closes and there is no entry before or after hours.

"S" Unit

Auto Tour Route: Open Daily

Vehicle traffic only. No bike or pedestrian access.

Kiwa Trail: Closed for the season. Will reopen May 1st.

No public access to bathrooms, informational kiosks, and the viewing blind

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

Carty Unit

****New Construction ****

The construction of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge's Multi-Purpose building is well underway! The main entrance looks a bit messy however you can still access the trail from the lower parking lot.

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: Look out open year-round. Trail to Plankhouse closed for the season.

All other public use facilities and access to those facilities (including the Plankhouse, restrooms, and the Refuge Office) are not available to the public.

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

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Program	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Lyle CBC	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26
27 Ridgefield CBC	28	29	30	31	Jan 1 Happy 2021!	Jan 2

NOV 24 (TUE): VAS Board Meeting (via Zoom)

DEC 1 (TUE): VAS Program, **SURVIVAL BY DEGREES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIRD POPULATIONS**, 6:30pm social, 7pm presentation via Zoom. Contact Don Rose (meetings@vancouveraudubon.org) for link.

DEC 20 (SUN): Lyle Christmas Bird Count

DEC 27 (SUN): Ridgefield Christmas Bird Count

JAN 26 (TUE): VAS Board Meeting (via Zoom)

FEB 2 (TUE): VAS Program, **THE DINOSAUR AMONG US**—Kim Adelson, Ph. D.

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**8101 NE Parkway
Vancouver, WA 98662
(360) 253-5771**

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