



# Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

*A chapter of the National Audubon Society*

[vancouveraudubon.org](http://vancouveraudubon.org)

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April 2021

## Bird-friendly Week Proclamation

April 19-25, 2021

By Susan Saul

Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle will proclaim the first Bird-friendly Week for the City of Vancouver at the April 19, 2021, City Council meeting. The week will encompass the 51<sup>st</sup> annual Earth Day on April 22.

Bird-friendly Week will encourage all people in Vancouver to recognize climate change as a challenge that needs solutions, enjoy and celebrate our avian diversity by learning more about our native birds and their habitats, and choose small ways to make our community more bird-

friendly such as by planting native plants for bird habitat.

President Sam Neuffer will accept the proclamation on behalf of Vancouver Audubon Society.

The City Council meets remotely due to the pandemic. All City Council workshops and meetings are broadcast (live closed captioning available) on [www.cvtv.org](http://www.cvtv.org), CVTV cable channels 23 / HD 323, and on the City's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/VancouverUS](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverUS).

## BIRDS VS. GLASS

By Cindy McCormack

Why do birds hit windows?

Clear glass is transparent to us, but we can use visual clues (frames, doorways, etc) and reasoning to know that the glass is there. (However, we have all seen videos of someone running into a closed glass sliding door at full stride, if not doing it ourselves!). Birds don't have the ability to reason out the presence of glass. They see the area as clear passage, seeing either the space behind the glass, or the environment reflected in the glass, depending on lighting conditions and type of glass and it's coatings.

Unfortunately, the sheer amount of glass we use in both commercial and residential buildings have resulted in a massive death trap for birds. While some birds may recover from a minor collision, most birds will

either be killed immediately or, if able to initially fly away, die of cranial hemorrhaging or other grievous injuries (broken bills, wings, furcula, orbital bones, ruptured eyes, etc.), or just by presenting an easy target for predators while recovering. **Recent research estimated between 365 million to 1 billion birds die every year from these collisions.**



*Mourning Dove dust print after window collision  
Photo by Katie Warner*

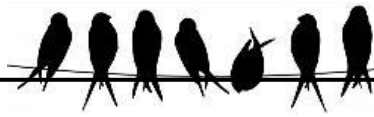
What can we do? Let's start by addressing our own problem glass!

Start by identifying and fixing your deadliest and riskiest windows--you can solve most of the problem by addressing a fraction of your glass.

Start by adding a retrofit on these priority windows:

- Any window where you have heard a bird hit or where you

*(Continued on page 5)*



## From the VAS Board

by Jared Strawderman

I've been thinking a lot about Simon Sinek's "Start with Why" philosophy recently. As a new board member I want to be able to articulate Vancouver Audubon's *Why* to others. Many of you know the vision and mission of the National Audubon Society who envision a world in which people and wildlife thrive by protecting birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. The Vancouver Audubon Society formed to put that *Why* to work by advocating to protect the land which is now Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge from development. It was exciting to listen to Curtis Helm, Principle Restoration Ecologist with the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, describe the work done and what is to come for the Steigerwald Reconnection Project during our March program via Zoom (you can view the recording on our Facebook page). This project will reconnect the historical floodplain of Gibbons Creek and Steigerwald Lake to the Columbia River. It is the largest restoration project in the lower Columbia and will enhance wildlife diversity, recreation opportunities, and was a dream of many VAS members who were involved in the original fight to protect the land.

We continue to live our *Why* through our incredible board leadership supporting advocacy and education. I look at our conservation committee and the amazing work Susan does lobbying our local and state representatives on our birds behalf. I look at Sam and Lissa adapting our education resources to an online format so that teachers can continue to engage students virtually with bird conservation topics. And I listen to our field trip chair Randy excitedly planning safety procedures to get in person trips set up again. To me, our *Why* is inspiring, organizing, and empowering our communities in Southwest Washington to support bird conservation. We do this with volunteers like you who want to make sure the wildlife that inspired us to love nature are here for future generations. If you have a passion for our *Why*, please join us in our efforts in engaging local policy makers to create more bird friendly communities, creating educational materials and website content, or brainstorming new ideas to engage more community members with our mission.

**Everyone has the ability to make an impact, ask us how!**



Vancouver Audubon Society

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*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.*

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

VAS is a non-profit organization under US IRS Code Section 501(c)(3).



## Programs

### Upcoming Vancouver Audubon Programs

During pandemic restrictions, we will be presenting 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. We will ask attendees to register in advance. VAS members will receive an invitation to the webinar through a link in their email, but invitations can be sent out on request.

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.

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

**Contact Sam for more information or to get a Zoom invitation: [president@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:president@vancouveraudubon.org)**

#### April 6 – DARLENE BETAT, BIRD NEST STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

**Darlene Betat**, Outreach Coordinator for Backyard Bird Shop, Inc. will talk about different types of bird nest structures and strategies used by our local songbirds, and tips for helping nesting birds in your own backyard.



*Hutton's Vireo nest building*  
Photo by C. McCormack

Darlene has been a bird enthusiast for 45+ years, of which more than 30 years has been in the Pacific Northwest. Her interest in birds began at age 12, thanks to a flock of Evening Grosbeaks coming into a birdfeeder in northern Michigan. She began birding in her teens and then received a BS in Biology with a focus on ornithology. She did field work in Oregon and Washington, worked for Portland Audubon for seven years, and then spent the past 17 years as part of Backyard Bird Shop's flock, where she enjoys sharing her passion and knowledge of birds with others.

**May 4 – Dr. Julia Parish**, Executive Director for COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team). Dr. Parish will talk about the importance of citizen science, how the COASST program has fared during the COVID quarantine, and how volunteers can be involved in the future.

**June 1 – Jeff Fleischer**, Coordinator for the Raptor Survey Program. Jeff has been coordinating the Raptor Survey Program for 17 years and has high quality slides and data for 31 different raptors in the west. He will discuss the density and distribution of the primary species in the project, including where different species “hang out” in the project area each winter.

**Join the meeting early! At 6:30pm we would love to see and hear from you! We can use the first half hour to chat, hear about your sightings and/or look at photos!**



#### Using eBird Mobile

April 13th, 7pm via Zoom

Let's explore the convenient and simple way to submit bird reports through eBird's mobile app (much simpler than website submissions)!

Contact Cindy ([vas@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org)) for a Zoom link.



## Prevent Bird Deaths from Building Collisions

By Susan Saul

Legislation To reduce bird collisions with federal buildings was recently reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) reintroduced H.R. 1986/S. 791 – Bird-Safe Buildings Act. This bipartisan bill is designed to reduce bird mortality by calling for federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe materials and design features. As many as 1 billion birds a year die in collisions with buildings in the United States alone.

Congressman Quigley has been the driving force behind this bipartisan legislation for more than a decade. "As more and more cities across the country, including Chicago and just this week Philadelphia, adopt policies and practices to prevent bird-building collisions, the federal government must step up and do its share," said Congressman Quigley. "We can help set an example for the country and the world and prove that bird-safe building design is cheap, easy, and effective."

Last year, the act had 46 co-sponsors, including Representatives Jayapal and DelBene from Washington State. It passed out of the House twice in 2020 but died in the Senate.

"Over the course of the last 50 years, we have seen a tragic decline of more than 25 percent of birds in North America with climate change, habitat loss, and deforestation acting as the leading drivers," said Senator Booker. "With the Bird-Safe Buildings Act, we have an opportunity to prevent a substantial number of unnecessary bird deaths by incorpo-

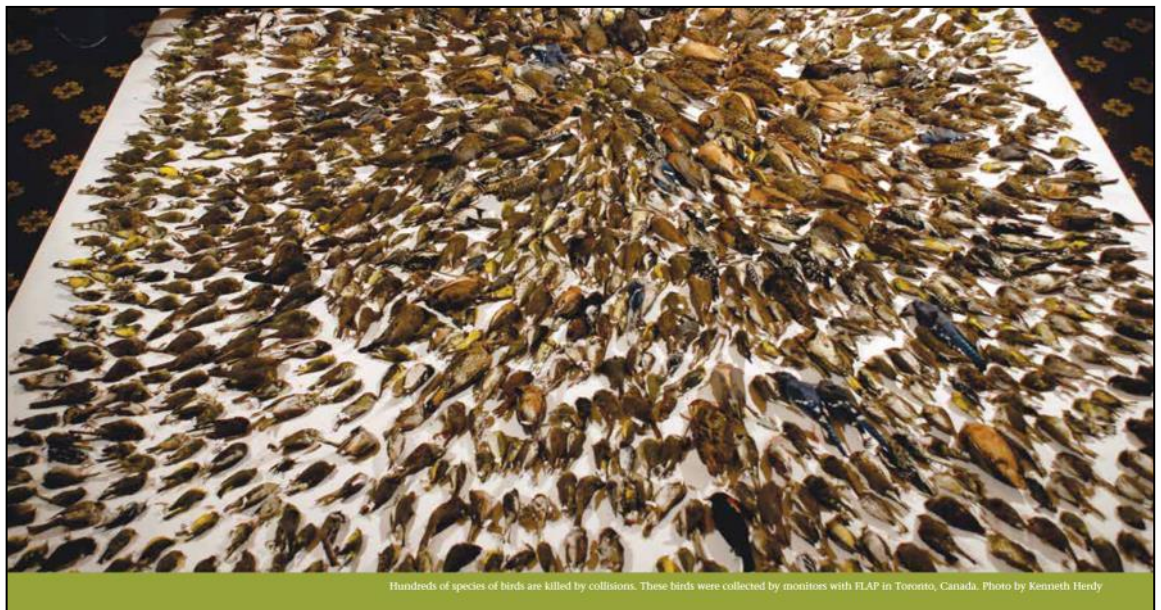
**Building collisions kill 300 million to a billion birds each year, and many of these needless deaths can be prevented.**

rating low-cost bird-safe building materials and design features into our federal buildings."

Many bird-friendly design techniques — such as installing screens or grilles on windows and minimizing the use of glass on lower floors — are already used in some federal buildings to control heat and light, or for security. The bill would require the General Services Administration to apply similar bird-safe measures, where practicable, to all new and existing federal buildings.

The legislation would help address one of the greatest human-caused threats to birds. A study published in Science in fall 2019 reported that the U.S. and Canadian breeding bird population dropped by more than one-quarter since 1970. A 2014 study found that the widespread White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Ovenbird, and Song Sparrow are among the species most commonly killed by collisions with buildings.

**Please urge Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler and Senators Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray to join as co-sponsors of HR 1986/S 791, a common-sense solution to help birds avoid collisions with buildings. <https://act.audubon.org/a/bird-safe-buildings-act>**



Hundreds of species of birds are killed by collisions. These birds were collected by monitors with FLAP in Toronto, Canada. Photo by Kenneth Herdy

(Continued from page 1)

have found a dead bird.

- Large windows, especially those that reflect habitat (including sky) or through which you can see sky or greenery on the other side of the building.
- Windows near bird feeders and bird baths.

Then keep paying attention and take regular walks around the house. If another bird hits a window, add a retrofit. Soon, you will have retrofitted a handful of your windows and saved a lot of birds!

How do we prevent the collisions? Here are some effective options:

- Use screens. Screens can help break up reflection and can provide a little cushion effect if the bird still collides with that window, lessening the risk of injury. Insect screen can work, but you can also protect birds with lightweight netting over the window or removable screens. Several companies ([birdscreen.com](http://birdscreen.com), [birdsavers.com](http://birdsavers.com), [easyupshades.com](http://easyupshades.com)) sell screens or other barriers that can be attached with suction cups or eye hooks.
- Apply visible patterns **to the outside** of the glass. (Patterns on the inside are often ineffective because they can be hidden by reflections on the outside of the glass.) There are several commercially available, but homemade remedies can be just as effective! People focus on the patterns, but birds focus on the spaces. For the birds, patterns must appear to be solid objects with adjacent spaces that

are too small to fly through. Most birds will avoid glass with vertical or horizontal stripes (or other markings) **spaced 2" apart.**

- ⇒ Make a pattern with tape. Stripes should be at least 1/8" wide to make the pattern clearly visible from ten feet away. White stripes tend to perform better because they reflect most light and are visible against more types of background reflections. A translucent line won't show up as well. Patterns of dots can also work if the diameter of the dots is at least 1/4". Of course, since the spacing is what's important, it can be any pattern.
- ⇒ Create window art with Tempera paint freehand with brush or sponge, or use a stencil as a template. Tempera is long-lasting, even in rain, and non-toxic, but comes right off with a damp rag or sponge. Find stencils at craft stores or download stencils for free at [spraypaintstencils.com](http://spraypaintstencils.com).
- ⇒ One-way window film: white CollidEscape is see-through from the inside, opaque from the outside.
- Apply a hanging cord system (Acopian or zen curtain)



Commercially available examples of retrofit solutions:

[Acopian BirdSavers](#)

[FeatherFriendly](#)

[Bird Screen](#)

[ABC Bird Tape](#)

Replacing windows or doors with glass? Be sure to ask about bird-safe glass if they will not be fitted with screens.

For more comprehensive list of tested methods, visit American Bird Conservancy's site: [https://abcbirds.org/glass-](https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/products-database/)

[collisions/products-database/](https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/products-database/)

## Join the iNaturalist Bird Window Collision project!

This project will help quantify mortality of birds due to window collisions, identify hotspots of mortality, and propose mitigation measures. It's simple, when you find a collision victim, you take a photograph of the remains or live bird and upload it to the site through the project's portal. Simple!



Join the project <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/bird-window-collisions> or through your iNaturalist app.



*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](http://wabirder.com) and click on Checklists.

**Feb 20**, Ken Vanderkamp described a **CLARK'S GREBE** (Code 3) that he saw about half-way out on the river from the Vancouver-Columbia River Boardwalk as, "Like Western but with bright orange-yellow bill and white of face over the eye".

**Feb 20**, a **TURKEY VULTURE** was seen by Jim Danzenbaker over his Battle Ground yard.

**Feb 25**, the first **RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** reported from Clark County this Spring was from the feeders in Debbie Meader's Camas area yard where she has had dozens of wintering Anna's Hummingbirds.

**Feb. 26**, While working in her Vancouver yard Susan Saul heard two calling **OSPREY** overhead. Their average return date here is March 16th.

**Feb 27**, all 3 wintering **ACORN WOODPECKERS** (Code 5) at the Fort Vancouver NHS were again seen by Cindy McCormack in the oaks along Hathaway Rd.

**March 2**, Susan Saul observed an **ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD** gathering fluff from last year's pearly everlasting flower stems in her yard for nesting material. She watched it pull off a beak full of fluff and fly off with it.

**March 2**, a **SAY'S PHOEBE** (Code 3) was seen by Robin Rose at the Steigerwald Lake NWR perching on the east end of old barn roof and adjacent post. These members of the flycatcher family nest east of the Cascades and are one of the earliest migrants to pass through our area.

**March 2**, a **SAY'S PHOEBE** was found by Brad Vrilakas on Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam in Skamania County. They are a Code 3 in Skamania County too.

**March 2**, the first **RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** for the year was at our feeders in Skamania County. As usual it was a male, as they arrive earlier than the females and establish breeding territories that they defend from everything.

**March 3**, Roger Windemuth saw the **LESSER YELLOWLEGS**

on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit. Sometimes a bird like this one is remarkable not because it is here but rather because when it is here and this bird arrived about three weeks earlier than average.

**March 3**, on Strawberry Island, below Bonneville Dam, Cindy McCormack spotted a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK**

which is a Code 4 bird in Skamania County. This bird has been reported from there a couple of times this winter.

**March 3**, our first of the year **BAND-TAILED PIGEON** arrived at our feeders, in a few weeks there will be several dozen coming at a time.

**March 3**, a **RED-NECKED GREBE** was located by Kevin Black along SE Columbia River Drive in Vancouver.



*Rufous Hummingbird, photo by Mick Thompson*

**March 4**, Jim Danzenbaker saw his first **GOLDEN EAGLE** in the lowlands of Clark County at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit. He had it in view for ten minutes as it slowly disappeared heading northwest, he described it as a "Large dark raptor. Slight amount of white at base of the tail and on the tail. Wings held in slight dihedral. Slight bit of white still showing on long wings which were narrower than Bald Eagle wings. Slight lightish coloration on head and nape."



*Golden Eagle, photo by Bud McCormack*

**March 5**, the continuing **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit was spotted by Robert Flores.

*(Continued on page 7)*

**March 6**, the **GOLDEN EAGLE** at the Ridgefield NWR was also reported by Tim Browning.

**March 6**, a **GOLDEN EAGLE** was found by Russell Koppendrayner and Becky Kent in the Woodland Bottoms at the north end of Dike Access Rd, Cowlitz County. Their description matched that of the one seen earlier on the Ridgefield NWR.

**March 9**, Drew Meyer was hiking the Wind Mountain Trail near Home Valley in Skamania County, when he heard and saw 2 **SOOTY GROUSE**.

**March 10**, at the Captain William Clark Park on the Columbia River in Washougal a **RED-NECKED GREBE** was identified by Ken and Robert Vanderkamp. This is a nicely wooded park with a sandy beach that is a nice spot to check while walking the Washougal Dike Trail to the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

**March 10**, Ken Pitts reported the lingering **SWAMP SPARROW** that wintered on the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit. This Code 3 visitor from east of the Rocky Mountains becomes even rarer after mid-March.

**March 11**, an early returning **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** was seen on North Quigley Lake on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit by Ruth Meyer.

**March 15**, the distinctive call of a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** was heard by Carol Pinegar while she was visiting the La Center Bottoms. They normally arrive about the end of the month but a few manage to spend the winter here too.

**March 17**, 2 **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** (Code 4) were photographed by Jared Strawderman at Beacon Rock State Park in Skamania County. They were in the open field section below Highway 14 feeding from tops of shrubs to the ground on the west side of the loop trail.

**March 19**, while conducting a goose survey on the Ridgefield River "S" Unit, Susan Setterberg had a flock of 25 **DUNLIN** flying around opposite the Kiwa gate and two **TURKEY VULTURES**.

For the Washington Cumulative County List Project so far in 2021, 159 species have been reported in Clark County and 110 birds have been found in Skamania County as of March



Mountain Bluebird,  
photo by J Arthur Anderson/Audubon  
Photography Awards

20th. This list of birds seen in a county by anyone is updated every two months and can be seen at: [WashingtonBirder.com](http://WashingtonBirder.com)

As we enter the month of April, the migration will become more apparent with the arrival of several species per week through the end of May. Among the early arrivals that will soon be everywhere are Cinnamon Teal, Common Yellowthroat, Orange-crowned Warbler and Brown-headed Cowbirds. For a look at the average arrival dates of migrant birds in our area check this site: [Willamette Valley Spring Migration Phenology](http://WillametteValleySpringMigrationPhenology.com) | [birds over portland](http://birds-over-portland.wordpress.com) ([wordpress.com](http://wordpress.com)).

Please continue to share your bird sightings by posting them on the Audubon Afield Facebook site, by entering them into eBird, or sending them to me for use in this column and the year list project.

For the second year in a row the annual Memorial Day Weekend Audubon Wenas Campout is being canceled due to the pandemic, the only other time it has been canceled since it began in 1963 was when Mt. Saint Helens erupted in 1980, covering the campground with ash. Except for these three occasions, I hadn't missed a year since 1976.

*By Wilson Cady*

## Seeking Conservation Committee Members

VAS has formed 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.

If you are interested or just want to find out more, please contact Susan Saul: [conservation@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:conservation@vancouveraudubon.org).

## NWR Updates

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

### Ridgefield NWR

**Entrance fee program has been reinstated.**

**Automatic Gate times for all units: 7:00am to 7:30pm Automatic**

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

**Restrooms now open and cleaned weekly. Supplies may run low.**

#### "S" Unit

**Auto Tour Route: Open Daily**

Vehicle traffic only. No bike or pedestrian access. To limit disturbance to wintering waterfowl, please remain in your car on the auto tour route, except at the restrooms.

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

#### 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:** Lookout open year-round. Trail to Plankhouse closed for the season.

**All other public use facilities and access to those facilities (including the Plankhouse 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 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 and the Columbia River Dike Trail (the levee trail) that parallels the Columbia River.

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>.

## **CALL FOR CLARK'S NUTCRACKER NEST SIGHTINGS**

I'm seeking help in locating Clark's nutcracker nests for my Nutcracker

Ecosystem Project and the Cornell Lab of

Ornithology Clark's

Nutcracker/Whitebark

Pine Ecosystem

initiative. Nest sightings

will assist studies of the

role of Clark's

Nutcrackers in conifer

ecosystems, the effects

of climate change on the birds and coniferous forests,

and educational efforts to elevate awareness.



*Clark's Nutcracker, photo by Cindy McCormack*

Very few nutcracker nests have ever been documented, so any and all new nest information is wonderfully helpful. Nests are made of twigs/sticks and are ~8-12" wide, ~4-9" high, and 8-60' off the ground, primarily in conifers. Nests can be found in live or dead trees, and dense or open stands of trees. Nest building tends to begin in late-February/early-March (but may be earlier or later depending on the location and year), and seeing nutcrackers carrying twigs for building is the most easily observable sign of nesting. Nestlings should all have fledged by mid-June.

If you spot Clark's Nutcrackers nesting, please send GPS point and/or other location information, such as tree species and height of nest in the tree, as well as nest status (building, eggs, nestlings), date located, and any other details to [tazaschaming@gmail.com](mailto:tazaschaming@gmail.com). I'd also love observations of juveniles. Please let me know if you have any questions!

For more information and photos of nests, see

[www.thenutcrackerecosystemproject.com](http://www.thenutcrackerecosystemproject.com)

*Thank you! Taza Schaming*

### **Field Trip Update**

As the vaccine rollout progresses and when COVID restrictions are lifted, the board will be discussing the possibility of resuming field trips and bird walks. We hope this will be an option in the near future!

Be sure to watch the newsletter, website, or the VAS Facebook page for updates!



# 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](mailto:nwbirder@gmail.com).

**Can you identify the bird in this picture?**

**Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.**



## February's Bird ID Challenge Answer

Hmm. A brown bird. Where do we go from here?

Let's start with habitat. Perched on a pine tree, on top of the branch. While not very helpful, it hints that this bird prefers to be near some cover. It also perches upright on the branch, not clinging against the branch like a woodpecker, creeper, or nuthatch.

Now, let's look at the overall shape.

My first impression of this bird is the "plumpness" of the center on a fairly

long profile. This bird is quite deep-chested, making the large head appear smaller. The tail is relatively medium-long, as are the wings. It is standing on some rather long legs. Does this shape remind you of any common bird? It should! A very common yard bird related to this bird has this similar shape: long-bodied and strong-legged, with full chest, largish head, and mid-sized narrow bill. *If you are having trouble figuring out which family it belongs in, try viewing without looking at color (or just a silhouette) the shape should help you get this bird into the correct family.*

The very large eye in an already good-sized head is also a common feature this family. Beautiful!

The very easily recognized American Robin has a very similar shape and should help you narrow down the quiz bird to the thrush family. Washington birds in the thrush family include the aforementioned American Robin, as well as the Varied Thrush,



*March's quiz bird*  
Photo by Bud McCormack

Townsend's Solitaire, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Veery, and the bluebirds. All have a similar body profile.

Ok, so now we figure we have some type of thrush. Which one? We can't really see the breast, so we will have to make do with what we can see!

- Long, pink legs
- Black bill (appears somewhat long and narrow, but difficult to tell for certain in this photo)

- Face brown, lores brown

- **Distinct, narrow, white eyering** around the large, dark eye
- **Head, back, and wings an earthy brown, contrasting with a russet-red rump and tail**
- Sides washed in dull brown

The bold items will be key!

Let's eliminate the obvious: Since this isn't blue, we can immediately rule out bluebirds! American Robins are stouter than this bird, with longer wings, russet on the breast, and a yellow bill. Townsend's Solitaire are overall more gray, have a much longer tail (white outer tail feathers!), wider eye ring, and peach-colored windows in the wing, even visible on a closed wing. Varied Thrush have orange in wing, head, and breast.

This leaves us with the Swainson's Thrush, Veery, and Hermit Thrush. The *Catharus* thrushes.

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Bird ID Challenge, continued from page 9)

Swainson's Thrush has a thicker, distinctly buff eye-ring and buffy line over lores that connects to eye-ring to create "spectacles", and a strong buff wash on the lower cheeks. The upperparts of the body will be consistent in color. The wings and tail might vary in shade from the upperparts, but the rump and back should be similar. The wings are also longer than shows in this bird.

Veery have a very plain face, since they lack the contrast of the eye-ring, and they have a very uniform russet color on the upperparts, from head to, and including, the tail. They also have much cleaner, whiter sides than either Swainson's or Hermit Thrushes.

So, that leaves us with the Hermit Thrush! Do our field marks match? The shape points us to the thrush family. The distinct but narrow, and very white eye-ring with the upperpart coloration (brown back, russet rump and tail), all point us to **HERMIT THRUSH**.

If I would have mentioned that the photo was taken in February



Hermit Thrush  
Photo: Laura Sprinkle, Great Backyard Bird Count

on the Washington coast, that also would have narrowed it down, since Hermit Thrush is our only wintering *Catharus* thrush, switching from their summer diet of mainly arthropods to a winter diet heavily supplemented with fruits. They have a habit of cocking tail upward and flicking wings (tail lifted rapidly and lowered slowly), which is distinctive among *Catharus* species.

*Catharus* thrushes have some of the most beautiful, complex songs with an ethereal resonance. If you haven't listened to them, try the links below.

The Hermit Thrush song begins with a long, relatively low introductory note, and overall sounds a bit sad (I remember Hermit = alone = sad song for my song mnemonic). The primary calls, a single, low *tchup* and a nasal *weeh*, are distinctive from those of other *Catharus* thrushes, but the most common call-note, a low "chuck", often given in twos or threes, is quite similar to the call-note of Varied Thrush, another of our wintering thrushes.

[Hermit Thrush Song](#) [Swainson's Thrush Song](#)

[Veery Song](#)

## PURPLE MARTIN SIGHTINGS AND BAND NUMBERS NEEDED!



Purple Martins, photo by Randy Hill

It's that time of year again! The first Purple Martins are arriving for the season and we are looking for reports of banded birds!

We have several banded birds returning every year and need

your help in getting the numbers recorded.

Birders will need a spotting scope to read the bands, photographers might be able to get photos of the bands good enough to read.

Every banded martin will have an aluminum band on one leg and a color band on another. The color band (green if banded in Washington) will have a single letter followed by three numbers. The aluminum band will have 9 digits; 4

on the top row, 5 on the bottom row.

Any information on the banded birds would be appreciated!

Information needed:

- Location of bird
- Which leg has the color band
- Band numbers
- Sex/age of bird if possible

Any questions?

Birds to report?

**Please contact Cindy at [nwbirder@gmail.com](mailto:nwbirder@gmail.com).**



Aluminum and color bands, with example of flattened bands for demonstration.

## INJURED WILDLIFE: WHAT TO DO?

### 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. 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.**

## Lights Out!

Every year, billions of birds migrate north in the spring and south in the fall, the majority of them flying at night, navigating with the night sky. However, as they pass over big cities on their way, they can become disoriented by bright artificial lights and skyglow, often causing them to collide with buildings or windows. While lights can throw birds off their migration paths, bird fatalities are more directly caused by the amount of energy the birds waste flying around and calling out in confusion. The exhaustion can then leave them vulnerable to other urban threats.

Audubon's Lights Out program is a national effort to reduce this problem. Here are ways to contribute to the Lights Out solution:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish pot and flood-lights
- Substitute strobe lighting wherever possible
- Reduce atrium lighting wherever possible
- Turn off interior lighting especially on higher stories
- Substitute task and area lighting for workers staying late or pull window coverings
- Down-shield exterior lighting to eliminate horizontal glare and all light directed upward
- Install automatic motion sensors and controls wherever possible
- When converting to new lighting assess quality and quantity of light needed, avoiding over-lighting with newer, brighter technology

## 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](http://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/>



## March 2021

28	29	30 Board Mtg	31			
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

## April 2021

				1	2	3
4	5	6 Program	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 eBird Mobile	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24
City of Vancouver's Bird-friendly Week						
25	26	27 Board Mtg	28	29	30	

**MAR 30 (TUE):** VAS Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm

**APR 6 (TUE):** VAS Program: Bird Nesting Structures, social 6:30pm, program 7pm via Zoom

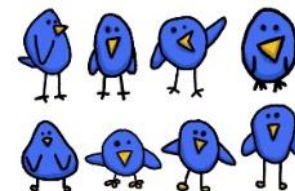
**APR 13 (TUE):** Using eBird Mobile, 7pm via Zoom

**APR 19-25:** 1st Vancouver Bird-friendly Week!

**APR 22 (THU):** EARTH DAY

**APR 27 (TUE):** VAS Board Meeting, 6:30pm, Zoom Mtg.

**MAY 4 (TUE):** VAS Program, COASST



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**Open for curb-side pick-up! Visit**

**[backyardbirdshop.com](http://backyardbirdshop.com)**



**8101 NE Parkway  
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