



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

Volume 46, Number 8

November 2021

Winter Citizen Science Projects, Part I

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

Looking for a fun winter citizen science project?
2021's Project FeederWatch begins Nov. 13!

The massive amounts of data collected by FeederWatchers across the continent help scientists understand

- long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance
- the timing and extent of winter irruptions of winter finches and other species
- expansions or contractions in the winter ranges of feeder birds

- the kinds of foods and environmental factors that attract birds
- how disease is spread among birds that visit feeders

Project FeederWatch had its roots in Ontario in the mid-1970s. Through Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory, Erica Dunn established the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey in 1976. After a successful 10-year run with more than 500 participants, its organizers realized that only a continental survey could accurately monitor the large-scale movements of birds. Therefore, Long Point Bird Observatory decided to



Cedar Waxwing
Photo by Laura Frazier/Project FeederWatch

(Continued on page 5)

Speak Up for Birds!

You are invited to the second annual Audubon in Washington Advocacy Day on December 7, 2021. Audubon Washington will be scheduling virtual meetings with legislators in our area and we'd love to have you join us in speaking up for the birds.



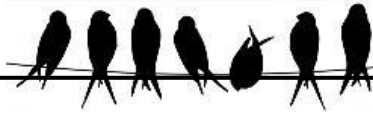
The legislature only meets for a short 60-day session in 2022, which means it's even more important to ensure Audubon's priorities are top of mind before our legislators head into the new year. We'll be advocating for policies that support bird-friendly clean energy, Puget Sound

recovery, and carbon-friendly agriculture.

To help you prepare, local Audubon leaders will be hosting preparatory meetings in late November and early December. Our state office will also host sessions to go over our policy agenda and answer any questions you may have.

Together we have the power to make sure our elected officials are ready to get to work in 2022, protecting birds and people, now and into the future.

[Register here if you would like to join.](#)



From the VAS Board

Recently, I virtually attended both the National Audubon Society Annual Meeting that was held October 1 -2 and the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) meeting that was held September 24-25. It was inspiring to listen to so many dedicated people of very diverse backgrounds and hear about the great work being done for birds at a variety of scales. One of National Audubon's top priorities is protection of migratory birds. Audubon Americas is a new strategy to protect migrating birds throughout the western hemisphere. It is a four-part strategy to protect important habitats wherever needed by working with the governments of each country, with farmers and other land users to develop and use healthy strategies for birds on these working lands, restoring or improving management of coastal habitat, and building a constituency for birds throughout the various flyways in the Americas. Here in Washington State, Audubon has placed a priority on protecting and restoring coastal habitat, the Puget Sound, and sagebrush shrub-steppe habitat so important for the Greater Sage-Grouse and others. For the past month locally, we have been urging people to limit use of outdoor lights, which aids migrating birds.

On a side note, I attended a break-out session demonstrating a new mapping tool that Audubon is developing called the Migratory Bird Explorer. It will be

able to link migratory data for hundreds of species to individual places on the landscape and provide links to individual projects that are benefiting each species down to the local level (with our input). This tool, when it's available, will help you connect with how you can interact with individual species and also how you can help.

A second priority of both National and State Audubon is building bird-friendly communities. This includes emphasizing the planting of native plants and building bird-safe buildings, including avoiding use of glass materials and designs that can lure birds to their death. Here in Vancouver, the Mayor signed a proclamation declaring Vancouver to be a bird-friendly city for a week. We have provided comments on projects that include glass in their design and on the appropriate siting of buildings in community planning.

Another priority nationally and at the state level is conserving habitat and advocating at the state and local level to protect interests of birds and their habitats. Our Conservation Chair, Susan Saul, does a wonderful job with that. There is a State Advocacy Day in December when you can participate by talking to state legislators and speaking up for the birds. Contact Susan if you are

(Continued on page 3)



Vancouver Audubon Society

PO Box 1966 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1966
 Website | vancouveraudubon.org
 Facebook | [@VancouverAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverAudubon)
 Chartered December 18, 1975

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.

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 the west end of 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.

Currently virtual meetings and programs only

Officers, Board Members, & Chairs

President | Sam Neuffer | 206-930-1032 | president@vancouveraudubon.org
 Vice President | Jared Strawderman | vp@vancouveraudubon.org
 Secretary | Craig Wallace | craig@wallfam.net
 Treasurer | Joan Durgin | 360-834-5621 | treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org
 Conservation | Susan Saul | conservation@vancouveraudubon.org
 Editor | Cindy McCormack | vas@vancouveraudubon.org
 Education | Sam Neuffer | president@vancouveraudubon.org
 Field Trips | Randy Hill | 360-975-2573 | fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org
 Membership | open | Contact any board member if interested!
 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 | Lissa Gienty | website@vancouveraudubon.org

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).



Vancouver Audubon

Page 2

November 2021

Programs

Programs are currently scheduled as virtual events through Zoom, all start at 7:00 pm (social time at 6:30pm). All are welcome, we hope you will join us!

Contact Don Rose for more information or to get a Zoom link:

meetings@vancouveraudubon.org

Please send all topic, speaker, and program suggestions and requests to Don Rose at the above email address.

NOV 2 – YOUNG BIRDER OF THE YEAR

Katie Warner

Katie Warner is a recent new member of the Vancouver Audubon Society. She will talk about her experience participating in and winning the American Birding Association's **2021 Young Birder of the Year** award. The ABA Young Birder of the Year mentoring program exists to encourage and develop the talents of birders between the ages of 10-18. We are pleased that Katie is willing to share her experience and talents with our group. She is actively working with Vancouver Audubon Society to start a Young Birders Group here in Vancouver!



Katie Warner
Photo courtesy of ABA

(From the Board, continued from page 2)

interested in more information
(conservation@vancouveraudubon.org)

Another major priority is the Clean Energy Initiative. Washington Audubon is working on an Energy Siting tool that will help identify the best sites for siting solar and wind power within the state of Washington. Here in Vancouver, we are advocating for phasing out the use of fossil fuels to meet a clean energy future.

Lastly, we need to “expand our flock” if we want birds to survive into the future. Because a sliver of the population is not enough to institute change. We need to “create a culture of belonging” to include young and old and people from a variety of ethnic and economic backgrounds that represent the diversity found in America, including the physically challenged. Programs have been developed such as Birdability, that provides information where disabled people can easily view birds. Here in Vancouver, we are hoping to start a Youth Birder Program for youth aged 12-18 under the leadership of Katie Warner (our program for November) and Vice-President Jared Strawderman. This is a great opportunity for your children or grandchildren to become more knowledgeable about the birds that surround them. Our President, Sam Neuffer, plans to pull together a committee to discuss how Vancouver Audubon can expand our flock.

And did you notice that Lissa Gienty updated and refreshed our website at vancouveraudubon.org? Go check it out . . . and share it with a friend.

2021-22 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

JANUARY 2, 2022 SAVE THE DATE!

The 2021-22 Christmas Bird Count for Ridgefield - Vancouver Lake Bottoms and Sauvie Island Circle will be held on Sunday January 2, 2022. We will not be able to schedule a back-up date due to the way the holidays fell and the hunt days are scheduled this year. We try to minimize counting on hunt days and try not interfere with holiday celebrations. So, save the date for the CBC, and keep your fingers crossed that our winter, at least on that date, is pleasant.

Past participants will get emailed details in November. Any new participants can contact Susan Setterberg at smsetterberg@yahoo.com to be put on the notice list.

Field Trips

Interested in leading a trip or have a suggestion for a trip type or location? Contact Randy Hill at fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org. [Guidelines](#) available on the VAS website for reference, as is a copy of the [field trip waiver](#). Please review all guidelines prior to registration.

OCT. 30—WAHAKIUM COUNTY

Wait list available, trip registration full as of 10/21.

Contact Randy at re_hill@q.com or call/text for additional details: 360-975-2573

Leaders: Cindy McCormack and Randy Hill

Target species include migrating/wintering waterfowl, loons, gulls, raptors, and a wide variety of marsh, riverine, riparian, cropland/pasture and wet forest species.

Meet at 7am **to leave at 07:15** at the Salmon Creek Park and Ride to carpool within current COVID guidelines. We will head north to Longview and west on SR-4. Areas will include Altoona/Grays Bay, Julia Butler Hansen NWR, and Puget Island. Trip will likely go to **at least** mid-afternoon.

Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2; Terrain: A; <1 mile walking

NOV. 1—FIRST OF MONTH BIRD WALK

Marine Park to Tidewater Marina, 8:00am

Contact Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org to register

Bird Walks are meant to be a casual, local morning of birding. They are a great time to enjoy birds with others, find new areas to visit, and/or work on bird identification by sight and sound or to practice your eBird app with help when needed. These walks are usually easy to join or depart at any time during the morning, no commitment to participate in the entire walk if you have limited time. Please, only fully vaccinated participants at this time.

Adverse winter weather may cause cancellation, registrants should check their email and/or texts the evening before for updates.

We will meet at the [Marine Park's north parking lot](#) along SE Columbia Way.

NOV. 19—VANCOUVER LOWLANDS AND POST OFFICE LAKE

Date subject to change; check website for updates



VAS field trip, photo by Steve Bredthauer

Contact Randy at re_hill@q.com or call/text for additional details and to register by 11/13: 360-975-2573

Leaders: Bob Flores and Randy Hill

Target species are a wide variety of fall migrant/wintering waterfowl, waders including Snowy Egret and Sandhill Crane, raptors and a variety of wetland, open pasture, cropland and bottomland forest species. This trip enters private land with specific limited access for our group, and is adjacent to waterfowl hunting areas.

This is an excellent opportunity to view the usually inaccessible Post Office Lake.

We will start at the Vancouver Lake flushing channel, then move toward the end of Lower River Road and walk on the old paved access road to Post Office Lake, an important wintering area on Ridgefield NWR for waterfowl (especially Canvasbacks). Other areas could include Frenchman's Bar Park and the Shillapoo Wildlife Area from different access points. Trip will end around noon.

Bring your Discover Pass, County Park Pass and spotting scope if you have them.

Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2 Terrain: A-B. 2-3 miles of walking.



VAS Trip Report

By Randy Hill

Woodland Bottoms 10/10/2021

With unsettled weather in the forecast, four of us met for a Sunday morning trip on Dike Rd and various access points to the Lewis and Columbia Rivers. It was showery when we headed to our first stop at the Martin Access to the Lewis River, the start of our clockwise route around and through the Lewis River floodplain. A few Sandhill Cranes and several flyover flocks of Cackling Geese were vocal in route. The sounds of spring were few in the bottomland hardwood forest, but there were plenty of resident species to keep us tracking to calls and an occasional song: Belted Kingfisher, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Bewick's Wren, Song Sparrow, Spotted Towhee among transients. The dike road had little traffic, so stops for scope views were manageable for a Merlin that perched treetop after chasing prey, and to ID users of blackberry patches, the retention pond and open views of the Lewis River near the dairy. Raptors accumulated in the first hour with a Cooper's Hawk, black-morph Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel and Northern Harrier. As we continued west, the raptors increased with a kestrel chasing a Red-tail as well as several Western Meadowlarks in a short grass field. We also found a flock of 3000+ small geese (mostly Cacklers) and a distant group of Snow Geese.

Austin Point, just downstream of the Lewis River confluence with the Columbia, looks directly to the town of Saint Helens. A few Turkey Vultures were rising high above town, but the river had little more than some

distant gulls. A Greater White-fronted Goose called overhead, but we headed into vehicles as another shower struck. A drive east on Whalen Road was a mix of scattered small crane flocks, starlings, and the giant oak trees near the pumpkin patch that started the deluge of California Scrub-Jays moving acorns from source to cache sites. The seasonal wetland that can hold 2000+ wigeon and 500+ cranes when flooded from fall rains appeared completely dry. The route back west on Caples Rd had few species, as did Martin's Bar. Nearing noon we took Dike Rd Extension and found several groups of Wood Ducks and Black Phoebe in two spots. There was no wind when we reached the raptor migration viewing area, but still off-and-on showers, where a Sharp-shinned Hawk, several kestrels and harriers were seen on our way to the last area of Guild Rd. We stopped short at Stenerson Rd, infamous for a long-staying Siberian Accentor in 2020, and marveled at the numbers of harriers, Red-tails, and crows in the fields. With the wind picking up but still occasional showers we did a final scan of Guild Rd with numbers of Savannah Sparrows and Great Egrets, but ended with one more shower. But it ain't over till it's over. After we parted, Susan called us back for our ninth raptor, a Red-shouldered Hawk, that posed nicely as it preened from a nearby fencepost and farm equipment. A fitting end to an early fall visit, where raptors and waterfowl numbers will increase over the next two months.



(FeederWatch, continued from page 1)

expand the survey to cover all of North America.

Realizing they would need a strong partner in this venture, Long Point approached the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and a perfect match was soon made. The Cornell Lab's connection to thousands of bird enthusiasts across the United States, its sophisticated computer systems, and Long Point's experience at managing feeder surveys made Project FeederWatch a hit from the start.

In the winter of 1987-88, more than 4,000 people enrolled. FeederWatchers represented every state in the



*Lesser Goldfinch, photo
by David F Smith/
Project FeederWatch*

U.S. except Hawaii and most provinces in Canada, especially Ontario. The dream to systematically survey winter feeder birds over a wide geographic range was in place.

Since then the number of project participants has grown to more than 20,000. Project FeederWatch continues to be a cooperative research project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada (formerly the Long Point Bird Observatory and later Bird Studies Canada).

Today, FeederWatch is a proven tool for monitoring the distribution and abundance of winter bird populations.

Visit <https://feederwatch.org/> for more information and to join!

Continued next month, Part II: Annual Christmas Bird Count

2021 Northwest Power Plan: Your Voice Matters!

By Susan Saul

Birds tell us that human-induced climate change poses the greatest threat ever to their – and our – very survival. To achieve the needed cuts in emissions in carbon dioxide and other global-warming pollutants, we must stop relying on fossil-fueled power plants for our electricity.

As residents, customers and consumers, we must engage in promoting clean energy choices by our regulatory agencies, public utilities, cities, ports and counties.

Your Opportunity to Act

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the region's official power planning agency, has released its draft 2021 Northwest Power Plan. The public has until **November 19, 2021**, to submit [written comments](#).

The Council's power plan is important. It helps determine how much clean energy and energy efficiency we use by providing a blueprint for power system decisions throughout the region. It guides the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) choice of resources to meet public utilities' needs and establishes benchmarks for the long-term plans of both public and investor-owned utilities. The plan is updated every 5 years.

BPA is a nonprofit self-funded federal agency established in 1937 to manage and market power across the Northwest. It currently manages power generated by 31 federal dams, several private power plants, and one nuclear power plant. It owns and operates the largest high-voltage transmission grid in the region and it supplies approximately one-third of the Pacific Northwest's electricity.

The 2021 Northwest Power Plan comes at a critical time.

The region needs to replace the energy and capacity services from retiring fossil fuel resources and meet aggressive economy-wide greenhouse gas reduction goals in Washington and Oregon, while maintaining reliability and affordability. As we begin to see the impacts of climate change on the grid, the importance of having a clean, flexible, and resilient power system has never been greater.

Previous plans focused on energy efficiency and new renewables to meet power needs, and thus helped build the Northwest's clean energy economy. Since the release of the first Northwest Power Plan in 1983, the region's

utilities have acquired more than 7,200 average megawatts of energy efficiency – more than twice the annual average power generation of Grand Coulee Dam.

The 2021 Plan can maintain that momentum, but only if public voices let the Council know which parts of the 2021 Plan we support, and which parts could be improved.

The draft plan contains these elements that we support:

- Addresses the impacts of climate change.
- Includes 3,500 megawatts of renewable resources, primarily solar and wind.
- Incorporates an equity lens on regional electric system planning.
- Uses a climate-adjusted baseline to reflect shifts in hydropower generation and increases in peak demand.

Improvements Needed:

- Stay the course on energy efficiency. The target needs to be at least 1,000 megawatts by looking for opportunities in new technologies like high efficiency electric heat pumps, on-demand water heaters, and smart homes and buildings.
- Continue BPA's leadership role in providing energy efficiency and clean energy equitably in the region, especially in rural communities.
- Incorporate clean technologies that are already available and cost-effective in the region, especially demand response, energy storage, and renewable + storage systems.
- Recognize the role of customer-side resources, distributed generation, and electrification in meeting aggressive decarbonization goals in Washington and Oregon.
- Modernize the electrical energy grid. Establish a more resilient, reliable and decarbonized energy system that can minimize outages, restore service more rapidly, abate peak demand, optimize efficiency programs, and use resources effectively. Ensure energy affordability by encouraging optimal grid investments.

Background Information:

[2021 Northwest Power Plan Brochure](#)

[Northwest Energy Coalition Brochure](#) (explains the Northwest Power Plan)

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. 17, four late migrant **PURPLE MARTINS** foraging over a group of perched **TURKEY VULTURES** were reported from the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit by Jeanelle Richardson. She said that they were noticeably larger size compared to nearby **BARN SWALLOWS** and **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS** with two of the Purple Martins affording views of light bellies (females or immatures), slightly forked tails.

Sept. 19, at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, David Irons spotted a late **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** among the other swallows, he picked out by the bird's brown back and wings and drab white underparts.

Sept. 20, Mike Clarke found a **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** with flock of **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS** resting in shrubs along the fence line adjacent to a cornfield at Shillapoo Lake in the Vancouver Lake lowlands. While these beautiful blackbirds nest in Clark County they usually migrate out of our area by this date.

Sept. 22, while birding at Marine Park in Vancouver, Ken Vanderkamp heard a **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** fly by, giving their characteristic calls.

Sept. 23, Les Carlson was birding Strawberry Island, in Skamania County, when he spotted four **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** (code 3) with their pink bellies and crow like flight crossing the Columbia River to the Oregon side. They had previously been seen this fall crossing the river in the same area.

Sept. 23, at our place six miles east of Washougal we had thirty-one **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** fly over heading east up the Gorge and a flock of thirty **VAUX'S SWIFTS** over our field that contained three **BLACK SWIFTS** (code 3) easily picked out by both their larger size and different flight pattern.

Sept. 25, a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** (code 4) at Strawberry Island in Skamania County was seen once again by John Davis. At least one of these birds has been present there this entire summer.

Sept. 25, Jim Danzenbaker was birding on lower Larch Mountain, when he spotted an adult **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (code 4) when he watched it fly away he saw that it was traveling with a second one.

Sept. 29, another **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** was seen in flight by Jim Danzenbaker on lower Larch Mountain.

Oct. 1, Jim Danzenbaker and six friends enjoyed viewing the raptor and vulture migration at the north end of Woodland Bottoms, Cowlitz County. With migrating birds in view the entire four hours they were there they saw nine species of raptors (including falcons). 778 **TURKEY VULTURE**, 7 **RED-TAILED HAWK**, 7 **OSPREY**, 2 **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK**, 2 **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK**, 6 **COOPER'S HAWK**, 1 **NORTHERN HARRIER**, 3 **PEREGRINE FALCON**, 2 **AMERICAN KESTREL**, 2 **BALD EAGLE** and they also counted 139 **BAND-TAILED PIGEONS** heading south.

Oct. 1, on a VAS outing, Cindy McCormack, Randy Hill, April Brown, Don Rose, Jean Avery, and Erik Brown found two **WESTERN TANAGERS** along the Salmon Creek Trail, this was a late date for them but other lingering tanagers were reported from several western Washington areas this fall. Both birds were seen, and one was also heard calling with their typical "pri-dic" call.



Western Tanager, photo by Mick Thompson

Oct. 2, a **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** found by Byron Palmer at the Ridgefield NWR might have been one of the ones spotted earlier on Larch Mountain. In the 1970's and 80's Lewis's Woodpeckers were a species that were seen there on a regular basis and were possibly nesting there.

Oct. 2, a lingering **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** was spotted by John Davis on the Strawberry Island Trail below Bonneville Dam in Skamania County. This is a great level low elevation walking trail with a lot of berry and fruit producing plants that attract birds year around.

Oct. 2, a male and two female type **CASSIN'S FINCHES**

(Continued on page 8)

(Afield, continued from page 7)

(code 4) were seen in flight on lower Larch Mountain by Jim Danzenbaker. This is a species that is associated with Ponderosa Pine forests east of the Cascades but in our area they and other species can easily move down the Columbia Gorge.

Oct. 3, yet another adult **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** was seen on lower Larch Mountain by Jim Danzenbaker. I wonder where these birds are heading since we get so few other reports of them from this area.

Oct. 3, we had a single late **WESTERN TANAGER** in our bird bath.

Oct. 4, along the Vancouver-Waterfront Renaissance Trail, Mike Clarke photographed two **RED-NECKED GREBS** (code 3), one near the I-5 bridge the other very close to shore associating with Mallards.

Oct. 6, Bob Flores spotted three hawks soaring south over his house in Ridgefield. The first two were well past before he could identify them, but the last hawk was a light phased **SWAINSON'S HAWK** (code 4) identified by the dark primaries and secondaries contrasting with the white coverts.

Oct. 6, Ana Novak reported seeing a very late **WILSON'S WARBLER** while walking the Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway Trail.

Oct. 7, a **SNOW GOOSE** in Skamania County is a (Code 4) bird so one found by John Davis on Strawberry Island and seen later in the day by Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson was a noteworthy first sighting for the county this year.

Oct. 8, CJ FLICK banded two **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** at the St. Cloud Wayside, along Highway 14 in Skamania County, where she has been bird-banding for the last 22 years, she has banded Swainson's Thrush here as late as Oct 13th.

Oct. 8, Christy Kuhlman reported

seeing another very late **WESTERN TANAGER** on 120th Ct.

Oct. 9, a **RED-NECKED GREBE** was photographed by Karen Pickering and Cindy McCormack at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park.

Oct. 9, a **RED-NECKED GREBE** reported from the middle of the Columbia River just downstream of Frenchman's Bar Park by Tony Kutzen may have been the same one seen earlier in the day.



Red-necked Grebe at Frenchman's Bar, digiscoped /CMcCormack

Oct. 9, Cindi Morrow reported seeing 40 **TREE SWALLOWS** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit and another eight near Vancouver Lake Regional Park.

Oct. 9, on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, Van McClelland identified and photographed two **CASSIN'S FINCH** by their unstreaked bellies (versus house finch), crest on head, and a red color not like that of a House or Purple Finch. The tail was heavily

notched (versus a house finch), the red ended on throat/upper chest (versus a purple finch that has a pink cast to the breast).

Oct. 10, another very late **TREE SWALLOW** was reported from the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit by Amy Horlings.

Oct. 10, while in the Douglas Carter Fisher Neighborhood Park, Mike Clarke heard the "brrridit" call of a **WESTERN TANAGER** 4 or 5 times coming from tops of firs in southwest corner of park.

Oct. 12, a **TRUMPETER SWAN** was first heard then seen by Gregory Johnson at the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit.

Oct. 12, a white-striped form of a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** made a one-day visit to our bird feeders.



Wilson's Warbler, photo by Mick Thompson



White-throated Sparrow, photo by Aspen Allen/Audubon Photography Awards

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Oct. 13, the first migrant **SURF SCOTER** (code 4) of this winter was spotted by John Willis at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery near Underwood in Skamania County.

Oct. 13, Kevin Black had a **CHIPPING SPARROW** on NE 53rd Ave, in Vancouver.

Oct. 15, Peter Zika spotted another lingering **TREE SWALLOW** at the Shillapoo Wildlife Area on LaFrambois Road in Fruit Valley.



Chipping Sparrow, photo by Mick Thompson

Jim Danzenbaker. He also reported a **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL** and 233 **AMERICAN ROBINS**.

Oct. 19, 6 **TUNDRA SWANS** were seen and heard by Robert Vanderkamp at the Carty Unit of the Ridgefield NWR but his best sighting there was of a **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** ([code 3](#)).

Now that most of the neotropical migrants have flown south for the winter, much of a birder's focus will change to the waterfowl that arrive in our region from the far north to

Oct. 16, Jim Danzenbaker made another visit to the lower



Northern Pygmy-Owl, photo by CMcCormack

area of Larch Mountain where he found two **NORTHERN PYGMY-OWLS**, a **BARRED OWL**, one flock of 120 **AMERICAN CROWS**, 29 **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS** and 1,305 southbound **PINE SISKINS**.

Oct. 17, I flushed a **RUFFED GROUSE** in our driveway, the first one

seen here this year. When I checked my records on eBird I was surprised to find that most of my records here years came in October, I assume that they are attracted by the fruit bearing trees that we planted for the wildlife.

Oct. 18, an **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** was a surprise visitor to our bird bath and the latest date we have had one at our place.

Oct. 19, Jen Sanford photographed 19 **SURF SCOTERS** on the Columbia River at Marine Park.

Oct. 19, a **SAY'S PHOEBE** (code 3) was an unexpected sighting on lower Larch Mountain by

winter here. Among the flocks of ducks and geese that nest in the Arctic there are always a few stragglers that wandered across the Bering Strait from Asia. Some of these Eurasian birds are annual and seen in good numbers like Eurasian Wigeon and the "Common" Green-winged Teal, a Eurasian sub-species that has a white horizontal line over the wing rather than the white vertical line in front of the wing on the North American variety. There has already been Emperor Geese reported in both Washington and Oregon and the majority of the birds are yet to arrive. Even if only one in ten thousand waterfowl is a rare bird that means there could easily be several rarities in the flocks at Vancouver Lake and the Ridgefield NWR every winter but finding them means spending time playing *Where's Waldo?* while looking through the flocks this winter.

As of October 19th, 227 species have been reported from Clark County in 2021 and 196 species have been reported from Skamania County.

To see the lists which are updated every two months, and compare with past year's lists go to: http://wabirder.com/county_yearlist.html.

If you have any additions or corrections please contact me.

By Wilson Cady



Tundra Swans, photo by Mick Thompson

2022 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 treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org with any questions or comments regarding the budget. At the December general 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 again this year on the budget approval process.

	<u>2020 Actual</u>	<u>2021 Budget</u>	<u>2022 Budget</u>
Revenue			
Amazon Smile			\$10
Bank interest	\$16	\$20	20
Refreshment donations	3	30	10
Memberships	1,424	1,450	1,800
Donations	1,346	1,450	1,500
Doris Troxel Trust	1,889	765	700
Backyard Bird Shop		500	500
Nat'l Audubon Society	1,785	1,785	1,785
Comm Foundation Drawdown		7,000	7,000
Total Revenue	\$6,463	\$13,000	\$13,325
Expenses			
Supplies/software	99	100	100
PO Box fee	130	150	175
Non-profit filing fee	10	10	10
Refreshments	26	100	35
Mtg. room rental			150
Conf/Comm mtgs		100	
Audubon Washington	2,000	2,000	2,000
PDX Wildlife Care Center	250	500	500
Young Birders Club			200
Insurance			1,400
Intertwine Alliance	250		
Columbia Land Trust	100	100	100
WA Environmental Council	100	100	100
Friends of Columbia Gorge	100	100	100
Nature Conservancy	100	100	100
Columbia Springs	100	100	100
Printing		100	
Postage	11	15	30
Audubon Adventures		500	
Home & Garden Show		100	
Grants	800	7,000	7,000
Speaker travel		1,000	500
Website	103	125	125
Zoom	596	600	600
Misc		100	
Total Expenses	\$4,775	\$13,000	\$13,325

Sandhill Cranes are here for the winter!



Adult Sandhill Cranes
Photos by Mick Thompson

Good places to view the cranes right now include the auto tour route at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and Vancouver Lowlands including the fields along Old River Road, Vancouver Lake (south shallows), and from Frenchman's Bar County Park (view the Crane's Landing fields to the east from the north parking lots).

Please **DO NOT** climb the berms along Lower River Rd to look into the Columbia Land Trust fields. It is trespassing on private property and disturbs the cranes and other wintering waterfowl. Thanks!



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

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@vancouveraudubon.org) at vas@vancouveraudubon.org.

Hmmm...we have three brown ducks here with white face spots...what are they?

Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.



October's Bird ID Challenge Discussion

Late fall and winter are prime times for waterfowl in our area. Ducks, geese, and swans winter with us in large numbers, giving us some great opportunities to observe, or, as Wilson mentioned in his *Afield* article, to play "Where's Waldo" to try and find something a little more unusual in the flocks of wintering birds.

There are times, especially after coastal storms, that we can get some normally ocean-going birds up the Columbia River, it's tributaries, on inland lakes, or believe it or not, sewage treatment ponds! We will be checking the river for these types of birds, like our quiz bird, on November's bird walk along the Columbia River.

So, let's "dive" into the water bird in the quiz photo. Obviously, this bird is comfortable on water. It floating nicely, even if a bit rough-looking. For this bird, it's probably best to ignore plumage since it appears very worn and bleached. I'm betting this bird can't even fly well (at the time the photo was taken) since the flight feathers appear to be severely worn. Let's look at the shape—everything we need is there for identification.

We have a rather evenly sloped body, with the tail end sloping down into the water without a noticeable tail showing. The peak of the back is well centered. The body sits fairly low in the water (think of it as sitting *IN* the water, rather than *ON* top of the water, like a Mallard does). Birds that sit in the water tend to be diving birds (rather than dabblers, like Mallards and Gadwall).

The bill shape alone will rule out ducks. It is very pointed, very unlike the more spatula-like bill of many ducks. Mergansers have a narrow bill, but it is blunt-tipped, not pointed. So, not a duck, goose, or swan.



Quiz photo by Don Rose

So, that pretty much leaves us with grebes and loons. Both can have sharply pointed bills, both sit low in the water with the body generally held horizontally on the water's surface, both are accomplished divers and have a similar fusiform body shape.

So, how are we going to decide between grebe and loon?

(Continued on page 12)

Grebes that we can expect to find in our area can be quite variable in size, bill length (and sharpness), and in relative neck length. Loons, overall, have very pointed bills and are quite thick-necked.

The bill on the quiz bird is quite pointed, but notice the color, kind of a blue-gray, and the shape of the lower mandible.

Length of the bill alone will eliminate all of our small grebes (Pied-billed, Horned, and Eared). These grebes have rather short bills and aren't so angular. The color of the bill will also eliminate our larger grebes (Western, Clark's, and Red-necked). They all have bills with some degree of yellow or orange. That angular look to the lower mandible also helps eliminate them.

Then there is that really thick, short neck. While a Red-necked Grebe can appear to be thick-necked at times, they don't have anything on the loons. Loons have relatively large heads, but they sit on a very stout neck. Their bills also have a bit more mass to them than any of the longer-billed grebes.

So, we have a loon here. Which one? The angle you see on that lower mandible is a big clue, as is the way this bird holds its head.

That lower mandible has an sharp upwards angle from about the mid-bill to the tip. It gives the bill the look of bit of a upwards slant overall. In addition to the bill shape, this bird is holding the bill above the horizontal. Giving it the "nose up in the air" appearance. No, it's not a arrogant bird, it just looks that way! (Although, the full breeding-plumaged version of this bird has every right to be proud!) The bill's angle and head posture is quite typical of the **RED-THROATED LOON**.

This Red-throated Loon was photographed near Damon Point in Ocean Shores during a VAS field trip at the end of August. It has the characteristic upwards angle to the lower mandible, and bill held above the horizontal, as

typical for this species. In comparison to other loons, this loon also has a quite slender appearance, however in comparison with the larger grebes, it still appears to be stocky, especially the neck.

So why is the head so white and splotchy? This appears to be a first summer bird (first alternate plumage) at the end of the season with heavy wear and bleaching. It would be close to (or starting) the second basic (winter) plumage molt at the time the photo was taken. Next spring, it will molt into the second alternate (breeding) plumage, which looks a bit like a splotchy version of the definitive alternate plumage that it won't achieve until the following spring.

Presumed time line:

- Summer 2020: Quiz bird hatched, molts into juvenile plumage which it keeps through spring 2021.
- Spring 2021: molt some feathers into 1st alternate plumage.
- August 2021: quiz photo taken (end of 1st alternate)
- Fall 2021: 2nd basic plumage
- Spring 2022: 2nd alternate plumage
- Fall 2022: Definitive basic plumage
- Spring 2023: Definitive alternate plumage—gorgeous!



*Red-throated Loon, 2nd alternate plumage,
August 2021, photo by CMcCormack*

*Red-throated Loon, definitive alternate plumage
photo by Mick Thompson*



*Red-throated
Loon,
definitive
basic plumage*

*Correy Nimmer/
Audubon
Photography
Awards*



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. 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 micro-waved for 1-3 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.

NWR Updates

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

Ridgefield NWR

Entrance fee

Automatic Gate times for all units: dawn to dusk, times posted at the entrance and on website

"S" Unit

Auto Tour Route: Open Daily

October 1 to April 30, auto traffic only.

Kiwa Trail: Closed for season as of Oct. 1, reopens May 1

Carty Unit

****New Construction ****

The construction of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge's Multi-Purpose building is continuing. 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.

Steigerwald Lake NWR

Closed to All Public Access for Restoration

[Video update of the Steigerwald project](#)

We are looking forward to visiting Steigerwald again next spring if all continues on schedule!

Vancouver Audubon Society Support & Donation Form

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

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

**Renewal date:
September 1st**

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/>



October 2021

24	25	26 Board Mtg	27	28	29	30 Wahkiakum Field Trip
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

November 2021

Oct. 31	Nov. 1 Bird Walk	2 Program	3	4	5	6
7 Daylight Savings Ends	8	9	10	11 Veteran's Day	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 Post Office Lk Field Trip	20
21	22	23	24	25 Thanksgiving	26 Native American Heritage Day	27
28	29	30 Board Mtg				

Oct 26 (TUE): VAS Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm

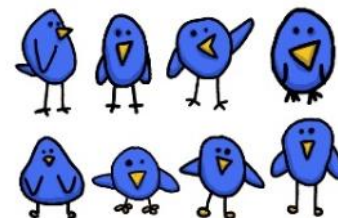
Oct 30 (SAT): Field Trip to Wahkiakum County

Nov 1 (MON): Bird Walk: Marine Park to Tidewater Marina

Nov 2 (TUE): Zoom Program, Katie Warner: Young Birder of the Year
6:30pm social/program 7pm

Nov 19 (SUN): Field Trip to Post Office Lake/Vancouver Lowlands

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



Contents

VAS Board & Chairs	2
From The Board	2
Programs	3
Field Trips	4
Conservation	6
Wilson Cady's Afield	7
Bird ID Challenge	11
NWR Updates	13
Membership/Donation form	13
Injured Wildlife	13

backyardbirdshop.com



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

THE COLUMBIA FLYWAY is the monthly newsletter of the Vancouver Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Publication **deadline** is the 20th of the preceding month unless otherwise posted.