



Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

A chapter of the National Audubon Society

vancouveraudubon.org

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Winter Citizen Science Projects, Part III

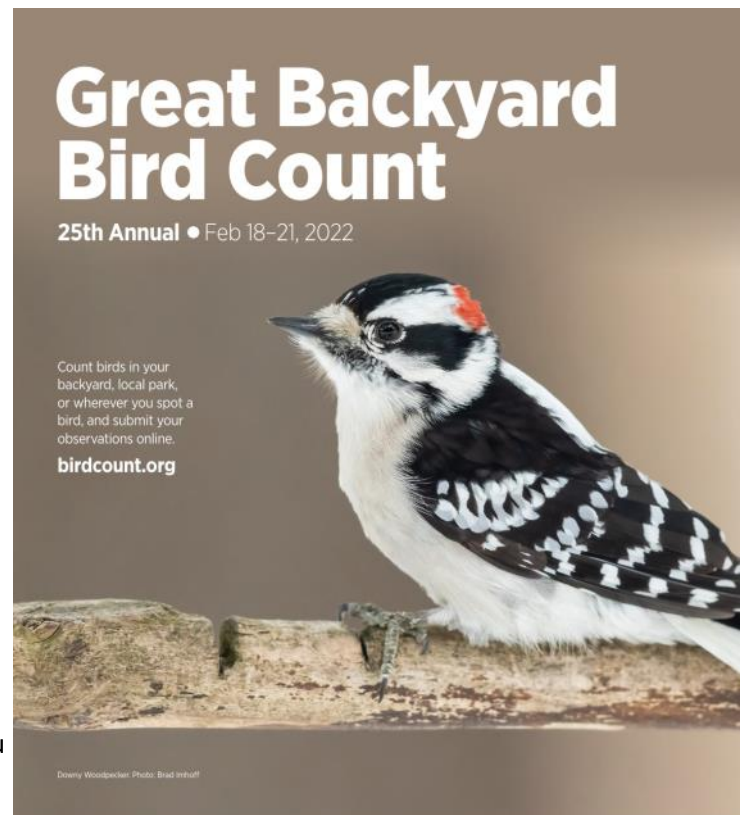
Great Backyard Bird Count

The annual [Great Backyard Bird Count](https://birdcount.org), taking place February 18th through the 21st, 2022, is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society with Canadian partner, Bird Studies Canada. Because the Great Backyard Bird Count is part of the eBird online checklist program, anyone with an Internet connection, anywhere in the world, can take part, even with a mobile device. All ages and skill levels are very welcome – if you can identify a single species of bird, we want to hear from you.

Your observations are important because no single scientist or team of scientists could hope to capture so much information about birds around the world in only four days. Each year, tens of thousands of people submit checklists reporting many millions of birds. Your information provides a long-term record of how bird populations may be changing over time.

Though it's called the Great BACKYARD Bird Count—you can count birds anywhere—at a nearby park, nature center, your schoolyard, or neighborhood—anywhere you find birds! Every sighting reported in the Great Backyard Bird Count becomes part of a permanent record that anyone with Internet access can explore. You can use the information to track migration patterns and year-to-year changes in the abundance and distribution of birds and learn about the complex patterns of bird movements. Look for trends that indicate how well birds are faring in the face of environmental changes such as urbanization, global climate change, and disease.

If you are new to the count and to data entry through eBird, there is an online course to guide you. It takes about an hour to complete and it's FREE. The eBird Essentials course demystifies the process of counting birds, plotting birding locations, reporting species, and sharing findings. Even those already using eBird will learn how to make even better use of the program. Just type "eBird Essentials" into your browser you'll find it.



Audubon

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The Cornell Lab
of Ornithology

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In addition to accepting bird observations from anywhere in the world, you can use the eBird and Great Backyard Bird programs to keep track of your bird life list, yard list, and any other lists for countries, states, provinces, and counties, which will be automatically stored and updated. You can explore what is being reported by others in your area and around the world—and you can keep on reporting your birds year-round through eBird.

To keep the information consistent, it is important that we

(Continued on page 9)



From the VAS Board

"No one is too small to make a difference." -- of
Greta Thunberg

Conservation is at the heart of our Vancouver Audubon Society mission. We're in the midst of a crisis for birds. If we fail to give them the best protection we can, the current climate emergency will only get worse. With three billion birds lost over the past 50 years and two-thirds of North American species at dire risk from climate change, every additional threat pushes vulnerable species closer to extinction.

The situation is serious, but when we join together, we have the power to make incredible things happen—even in these difficult times. That means speaking up to our local elected leaders – whether in spoken comments at a hearing or meeting, in written testimony or public comments, or in a personal email message – to let them know what is important to you.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our conservation action alerts in 2021. When only a few people speak up, it is too easy for elected leaders to dismiss the comments as coming from a "small subset

By Susan Saul, Conservation Chair

passionate customers" as the Clark Public Utilities staff did during a presentation to the commissioners in December regarding public comments on the draft Clean Energy Implementation Plan (CEIP). Staff acknowledged that the public comments were "well formulated, thought out and detailed," but then they were dismissed. Clark Public Utilities was merely checking a process box. The commissioners went on to adopt a nearly unchanged final plan.

"Without pressure from the people, our leaders can basically get away with not doing anything." --Greta Thunberg



The Feedback by the Numbers section in the CEIP report actually does deliver a clear message: Customers overwhelmingly want solar and wind and do not want gas-fired or nuclear generation. Yet the final CEIP invests \$10 million on the River Road gas generating plant. That \$10 million is coming out of customers' pockets. Speculative

(Continued on page 3)



Vancouver Audubon Society

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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 400 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

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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).



Vancouver Audubon

A Long To Do List for a Short Session

The Washington Legislature is currently meeting in a 60-day session from January 10-March 10. Due to COVID, it is a virtual session again this year, which means unprecedented opportunities for citizen participation. Bills have remote committee hearings, and members will speak for and against them in virtual floor sessions. All floor sessions and committee meetings are live-streamed on TVW.org. Committee agendas, documents and bills are at leg.wa.gov.

This will be a fast-paced session with the opportunity to pass a few key bills that are good for birds and people.

Bills we are watching:

HB 1814 – Well-sited equitable access to community solar that doesn't displace habitat

HB 1099 – Updates the state's Growth Management Act to include climate change

HB 1770 – Stronger residential energy codes

HB 1672 – Conservation Futures levy lid lift

HB 1838/SB 5727 – Lorraine Loomis Act addresses water temperature in state watersheds

SB 5714 – Solar canopies over parking lots

SB 5493 – Renewable energy incentives for residential-scale systems

SB 5666/HB 1767 – Clarifies that public utilities can fund electrification retrofits

The best way to track bills is to sign up for Audubon Washington's Weekly Legislative Update "Birds at the Legislature" [here](#). The bill tracker will identify opportunities for you to take action for the birds.

By Susan Saul

(From the Board, continued from page 2)

nuclear power is still being considered while other alternatives, such as installing more community solar, are rejected.

***"Together and united, we are unstoppable." -
-Greta Thunberg***

We invite you to join the VAS Conservation Committee in 2022. Let's build our numbers so our elected officials have to listen when we speak for the birds. We are the leaders we've been waiting for.

Our VAS conservation priorities are:

- addressing climate change at the local level
- protecting Vancouver Lake and Lowlands
- defending against habitat loss
- promoting bird-friendly communities

Contact conservation@vancouveraudubon.org

Feeding birds?

Keep those feeders and baths clean!

WDFW just put out a statement reminding folks to clean their feeders:

"WDFW has been receiving a number of reports of dead or sick pine siskins and other songbirds. At this point we are hesitant to declare this an outbreak like last year's salmonellosis outbreak in birds, but we do want to remind people that if you find a dead or sick bird (common signs are that they appear tame, lethargic, and have fluffed out feathers) near your bird feeder, please take it down for a couple weeks to encourage birds to spread out and not spread salmonellosis to each other. Or, if you don't want to take your feeder down, you can thoroughly wash it every day. Information on salmonellosis in birds, as well as how to effectively clean feeders and report dead or sick birds to help us track this illness is in a [blog post we originally posted last year](#).

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.

FEB. 1 – Beyond Disney World”: A Central Florida Virtual Birding Vacation

Stan Lavender

Central Florida is a long way from Vancouver but certainly worth a trip. A world class destination for theme parks, central Florida is so much more than Disney World. With a complex ecosystem, Florida offers a huge diversity of avian wildlife. Stan will take you along on a "virtual vacation" of his favorite spots. During this grand adventure, he will share photos of many species and some memorable encounters he has had along the trail. We will explore preserves, refuges, and other hotspots from the Atlantic Ocean, over the Lake Wales ridge, the North/South spine of peninsular Florida, to the gentle Gulf of Mexico's waters. All of this within a short drive of "the Mouse's



Black Skimmer, photo by Stan Lavender

House." Remember, central Florida is so much more than just Disney World.

For most of his life, Stan has been a casual birder and photographer. Since retiring, his interest in both

have ignited. Wanting to know more about Florida's ecosystems, he has been participating in the University of Florida's Master Naturalist Program. He also has completed several of NatGeo's birding and photography courses. Encouraged by several birding and photography groups, he has been able to advance his skills in both areas. Stan leads one of the large birding groups in his hometown of The Villages, FL. Currently, the group has over 500 online members across the U.S. Every week, about 30 members explore their surroundings and enjoy the special comradery that birders share.

Stan has won multiple blue ribbons for a variety of wildlife photos. Several of his wildlife photos have also appeared on the covers for the journal of the Dragonfly Society of the Americas and a digital magazine by Rails to Trails.



Our featured speaker:
Stan Lavender

Future Programs:

March 1, **Mary Coolidge**, Birdsafe Campaign Manager for Portland Audubon, will talk about how to make your home or business safer for birds, including the Lights Out program.

April 5, **Curtis Helm**, Principal Restoration Ecologist, and **Chris Collins**, Restoration Program Lead, both with Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, will return to give us an update on the status of Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge, which is scheduled to reopen in late April of 2022.



Using eBird Mobile

February 16th, 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)!

Great for beginners or anyone looking for a review before the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Contact Cindy (vas@vancouveraudubon.org) for a Zoom link.

Safety is a primary concern for Vancouver Audubon, and we ask anyone who is feeling unwell or who has had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay at home until the risk for infection has passed. Please visit the [VAS website](#) for field trip details and requirements.

For all field trips or other outdoor activities, Vancouver Audubon requires:

- Social-distancing and masking guidelines be strictly followed.
- Participants wishing to carpool must fully vaccinated.
- Anyone, within the last 14 days, experiencing symptoms or exposure to a potential or known COVID-19 case are not permitted to attend in-person functions.
- COVID-19 specific field trip waivers must be signed by all participants.



*Masked birding is all the rage! Photo by
Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies*

Monday, February 7 WOODLAND BOTTOMS

We will explore the Woodland Bottoms route for waterfowl, raptors, cranes, gulls, songbirds and whatever. This will be mostly driving and stopping on dike roads or pullouts, or walking very short distances along the Lewis and Columbia Rivers.

Leader: Randy Hill (and possibly others.) Reserve with Randy at re_hill@q.com; phone/text 360-975-2573

Meet at Salmon Creek Park & Ride to carpool and leave by 07:30; a second meeting point further north (Ridgefield P&R or in Woodland) can be arranged for those living north of Salmon Creek or if needing to return early. End time early afternoon, and back by 2pm. Bring a spotting scope and radios if you have them.

Limit 8 plus leader(s) in 4 vehicles. Masking while in vehicles for carpooling; fully vaccinated for COVID and having no symptoms or positive test of infection is a requirement for all VAS field trips.

Saturday, February 19 VANCOUVER LOWLANDS

This local area, including Vancouver Lake, Shillapoo Lake, and areas along Lower River Road, are excellent for waterfowl, raptors, cranes, gulls, songbirds and waders. Some stop-and-go driving, but we will walk a few fairly flat trails up to ½ mile; likely no more than 6-7 miles total driving.

Leader: Randy Hill (and possibly others.) Reserve with Randy at re_hill@q.com; phone/text 360-975-2573

Meet at the Vancouver Lake flushing channel by 07:15 for carpool opportunities. Expected to go until noon or later, but can leave early if needed. A scope will be helpful.

Limit 10 plus leader(s) in 5 vehicles. Masking while in vehicles for carpooling; fully vaccinated for COVID and having no symptoms or positive test of infection is a requirement for all VAS fieldtrips.

FEB. 1—FIRST OF MONTH BIRD WALK

Fort Vancouver, 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 [parking lot on the south side of O.O. Howard House](#) at 8am. This lot is located at the intersection of Ft. Vancouver Way and McClellan, a block south of the Evergreen/Ft. Vancouver Way traffic circle.

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.

Dec. 9, Eric Bjorkman saw an unusual looking hawk at the Ridgefield NWR River S Unit that he thought looked a lot like a Rough-legged Hawk but it didn't really fit. He was just about ready to get a photo when it flew but got a good look at the underside of its wings and realized that he was looking at his first for Clark County **SWAINSON'S HAWK** (Code 4) which was a light juvenile bird.



Red-breasted Merganser
Photo by Mick Thompson

than the **SNOW GEESE** and with a shorter triangular bill it was in with. It might be the same juvenile bird previously reported from there earlier in the fall although there could be more as picking a Ross's out of the thousands of Snow Geese is a good example of what I call playing "Where's Waldo?"

Dec. 30, an adult male **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** was found by Randy Hill in the Columbia River



Black bear tracks, photo
by Wilson Cady

Dec. 17, not all the visitors to our feeders are birds, after a snowfall I found **BLACK BEAR** tracks all around our house. This is why we have to take our bird feeders in every night.

Dec. 23, an overwintering female/immature **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** found by Max Merrill at the Ridgefield NWR River 'S' Unit along with **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** and **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** gave him a rare for our area three-warbler day in the winter.

Dec. 24, Becca Reeves and Mason Sieges spotted a **PACIFIC LOON** (Code 4) in the Columbia River off of Blurock Landing, she described it as smaller than a Common Loon, about the same size as a nearby **COMMON MERGANSER** with a more rounded head, slender bill, and a "hooded" appearance.

Dec. 26, a **RED-THROATED LOON** (Code 3) spotted by Randy Hill at Blurock Landing may have wintered locally, this is a bird that is usually found on saltwater but the Columbia River seems to suffice for a few of them.

Dec. 28, Darchelle Worley and Brian Pendleton were able to pick out a juvenile **ROSS'S GOOSE** (Code 3) at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park, they are a small white goose similar in size to the **CAKCLING GEESE** and smaller

at Wintler Park in Vancouver, this is another of the species we get here in the winter that are usually found on saltwater. The others include Greater Scaup, any of the scoters, any of the loons other than a Common Loon and Red-necked Grebe. These birds could be coming up the Columbia River from the Pacific Ocean or down the Puget Trough from the Puget Sound and Salish Sea or possibly by coming south from the Arctic Ocean between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains and then down the Columbia River Gorge or a mix of them all of them. We are in a location where we can also get birds from the south, since Clark County is the southernmost county in the state. Examples of birds from the Willamette Valley are Red-shouldered Hawk, Lewis's Woodpecker, Acorn Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, California Scrub-Jay and Lesser Goldfinch. The Columbia River Gorge allows easy access for birds more expected east of the Cascades, a very good example of this are the Eastern Kingbirds and Yellow-headed Blackbirds that nest in Clark County along with annual sightings of Say's Phoebe and Western Kingbirds. Other recent visitors from the interior include American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt and Black Tern of the 510 species ever seen in Washington 329 have been reported from Clark County.

Jan. 2, Mike Clarke made the first 2022 report of the continuing **RED-NECKED GREBE** (Code 3) along the Vancouver Columbia River Boardwalk.

Jan. 3, a very rare winter sighting of a first fall male **WESTERN TANAGER** was documented with four photos by Chris Nixon and three friends at a feeder on E Reserve St.

(Continued on page 7)

(Afield, continued from page 6)

in Vancouver. I can't remember a local winter report of one in the 45 years I have been compiling this column.

Jan. 8, Susan and I were able to get out of our snowy driveway and headed up the Gorge to do some Skamania County birding. We found it difficult to find any place to stop and bird due to three feet of snow blocking most side roads and pull-off areas but we did find a slightly out-of-range **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (Code 3) flycatching at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, and in Underwood we counted 34 **WILD TURKEYS**.

Jan. 8, from the pedestrian bridge at the Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit, Ken Vanderkamp and Robert Vanderkamp had very good views over several minutes of the continuing **HARRIS'S SPARROW** (Code 4) there. It was near the Plankhouse the last time it was reported in December.

Jan. 10, Gregory Johnson got two photos of a **SORA** at the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit, while they are a common summer bird these small rails are rare in the winter.

Jan. 10, a **SWAMP SPARROW** (Code 3) found by Jen Sanford at the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit was probably the same bird reported from there since last fall.

Jan. 11, Samuel Holman found a flock of 11 **COMMON REDPOLLS** (Code 5) at Bob's Welding and Auto Repair in Carson in Skamania County. They were feeding in a birch tree on the seeds in their small cones which is their major food source in the Arctic although they will also eat the seeds in alder cones while here. These small pale finches look much like Pine Siskins with a red forehead, a black throat patch, streaking on the sides, with darker wings and back, and bold wingbars on most of the birds. These two finch species may be seen together so watch for them in flocks of Pine Siskins. Samuel reported that there were 10 **PINE SISKINS** there too along with 5 **EVENING GROSBEAKS**.

Jan. 12, a **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** was spotted among 10 **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** by Roger



Wild Turkey flock,
photo by Wilson Cady

visit so drove around the neighborhood looking at feeders and visiting the cemetery finding a **MERLIN**, (Code 3) 18 **WILD TURKEYS**, a **HUTTON'S VIREO** and a nice flock of **EVENING GROSBEAKS** before returning to Bob's Welding and seeing the redpolls. From snow-covered Carson, we headed back down river stopping at Stevenson where the most surprising sight was 2 **BARN SWALLOWS** flying over the Columbia River in the 37-degree weather. These are the first redpolls that I have heard about in Skamania County since 2012 when a couple visited our feeders.

Jan. 14, John Davis was also able to locate the continuing **COMMON REDPOLLS** in Carson, Skamania County.

Jan. 14, At the La Center Bottoms, Robert Vanderkamp spotted a **RED-THROATED LOON** feeding and diving in the Lewis River near the highway bridge. He described it as being in immature plumage with a white face, mostly white neck, speckled back, and with the distinctive upturned grey bill. There were multiple reports of this loon species locally and from other areas of western Washington indicating the arrival of a wave of migrants from their arctic breeding grounds.

Jan. 15, locally, another **RED-THROATED LOON** was reported by Thomas Tinsley, this one was in the Columbia River at Blurock Landing, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

Jan. 15, Thomas Tinsley also saw the Blurock Landing, **RED-THROATED LOON** with a speckled back, slightly upturned bill and no necklace.

Jan. 15, Ken Vanderkamp also found 2 **RED-THROATED LOONS** along the Vancouver Columbia River Boardwalk.



Common Redpoll, photo by Wilson Cady

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Jan. 15, Becky Kent and Russ Koppendrayer were birding at Drano Lake, Skamania County when they also spotted another **RED-THROATED LOON** which are more uncommon in Skamania County than in Clark County.

Jan. 15, a female type **TUFTED DUCK** (Code 4) was picked out of a flock of scaup by Randy Hill at Blurock Landing. There were several reports of these Asiatic nesting diving ducks from there last year too.

Jan. 15, Along the Vancouver Columbia River Boardwalk, Ken Vanderkamp had a closeup view of its unique profile; stout bill, larger size, white mark on head of a **RED-NECKED GREBE**.

Jan. 15, Becky Kent and Russell Koppendrayer made a successful search for the **COMMON REDPOLLS** in Carson and then continued to bird Skamania County finding a **RED-THROATED LOON** at Drano Lake and the continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** at Spring Creek Fish hatchery near Underwood.

Jan. 15, While birding at the Ridgefield NWR River 'S' Unit Ken Pitts had a three warbler winter day finding a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** in a cooperative group of **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS**, **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS**, and **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES**.

Jan 15, the **BARRED OWL** being used as the Audubon Afield Facebook banner was photographed by Roger Poissant in Northfield Park.

Jan. 16, John Bishop was at the Swift Creek Ski Area in Skamania County when he spotted a female **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL** in a flock of **RED CROSSBILLS**.

JAN.16, At the Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit, Cindy McCormack and Karen Pickering found a **HUTTON'S VIREO** and 7 **RED CROSSBILLS**. From the Ridgefield NWR Carty Lake overlook off of Division St, they saw the continuing **MUTE SWAN**, likely an escaped or released bird. It is a

distinctive clean white swan with an orange bill and black fleshy knob among the Trumpeter Swans.

Jan. 16, A very early **BARN SWALLOW** was seen from the Ridgefield NWR Carty Lake overlook by Karen Pickering.

Jan. 17, Mike Clarke reported the continuing **RED-NECKED GREBE** at the Vancouver Columbia River Boardwalk, where they seem to be annual in the winter.

Jan. 17, Janis McLaren was also able to locate the **RED-THROATED LOON** at Blurock Landing, this has been an excellent year to find them as they have been widespread.

Jan. 17, the first **TREE SWALLOW** of 2022 was seen by Ken Pitts at the Ridgefield NWR River S Unit, their normal average return date here is on Feb. 9th.

Jan. 20, Cindy McCormack, Les Carlson and I birded along Highway 14 in Skamania County again, this time we were chasing the earlier reported **RED-THROATED LOON** and 2 **COMMON LOONS** at Drano Lake. The Red-throated Loon was a new county bird for Cindy and Les and only the fourth one that I have seen in the county in fifty years. We then went further east to the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery where the best bird was the continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER**. We were disappointed by how few rafts of ducks that we saw today, far fewer than in most years.

It may seem like spring is still a long way off, but we will soon be seeing returning spring migrant birds. Among the earliest returning birds are Say's Phoebes, Tree Swallows, Western Bluebirds, Loggerhead Shrikes and northbound Sandhill Cranes. We have had Rufous Hummingbirds here by the end of February in past years. I like to know about when to expect to see or hear each of the Spring migrants

and use this link to the Willamette Valley Spring Migration Phenology which gives the average return date of many of our local birds. [Willamette Valley Spring Migration Phenology | birds over portland](#)

So far this year, the number of birds reported for the



Lewis's Woodpecker
Photo by Wilson Cady



Barred Owl, photo by Roger Poissant

(Continued on page 9)

(Afield, continued from page 8)

Washington Cumulative County Checklists stands at 137 species in Clark County, while Skamania County has tallied 91 species.

I get many of the sighting reports used on this collection of the birds seen in each county from eBird postings, and I highly recommend using this free service to record your bird sighting lists, which also adds them to the millions of sighting reports used by researchers, scientists and birders worldwide. eBird can be found at <https://ebird.org/pnw/home>. It is an easy-to-use checklist system that puts your sightings into a worldwide database maintained by Audubon and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, providing the information for use by researchers as well as



Northern Pygmy-Owl, photo by Greg Johnson

birders. This is a perfect spot to keep checklists of your sightings while traveling or at home, you can add notes, recordings, and photos too. It is available for your computer as well as a cellphone app you can use while birding in the field.

Even if you don't wish to enter checklists there is a lot of information to be found on eBird, including information on birds and their calls as well as recent and historical sight records. Just go to Explore and put in your county then select All Years or Current Year. The list of birds you get

can be viewed in many ways, by name, when first seen, when it was last seen or by date. Using eBird to check for recent sightings allows you to have a good idea of what you have a chance of seeing when deciding where you want to go.

Please continue to post your sightings on eBird or send them to me for inclusion in this newsletter.

By Wilson Cady

(GBBC, continued from page 1)

all count birds in the same way. You can count at any location for at LEAST 15 minutes, but you're welcome to watch much longer than that. Keep track of the total amount of time you spend watching and roughly how far you walked if you're hiking. Please make your best estimate of the number of individuals of each species you saw. For instance, if you're watching at a feeder and see three chickadees, then four chickadees, then one chickadee, you would report them as four chickadees, not eight.

Create a separate bird checklist for each day you participate. Submit a separate checklist for each new location, even if it's on the same day. You can submit multiple checklists on the same day from the same location if the two counts were at different times—early morning and late afternoon, for example.

When you're ready to report your results, go to the Great

Backyard Bird Count website at birdcount.org and click on the "Participate" tab on the home page to choose the best way for you to submit your data. If you are new to the count or have not participated since before 2013, you'll first be asked to create a free Great Backyard Bird Count account. If you already have an account for the Great Backyard Bird Count, eBird, or another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, please use that same username name and password to log in; you do NOT have to create a new account.

Register for GBBC's FREE 2022 Webinar!

Join GBBC experts as we brush up on bird ID, unlock the mystery of bird songs, and practice counting birds no matter how large the flock or busy the feeder. This webinar is designed for birders of all ages and experience—you'll leave confident and ready to be part of the GBBC!

[Register for Webinar on Wednesday, February 16, 2pm ET \(11am PST\)](#)



White-throated Sparrow, photo by Greg Johnson

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

Not a poor or partial photo, but an excellent photo of a bird that can be challenging to find.

Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.



Quiz photo by Greg Johnson

December's Bird ID Challenge Discussion

It's a LBJ! (A little brown job!)

Some might find the little brown birds a bit boring, but if you look closely, you will see some fabulous detail in most of these birds. For instance, our quiz bird is not only brown, but many shades of brown! Such a beautiful, warm and rich shade overall, with some very interesting field marks. Take a look at the wing and note the barring, even at this angle, is quite obvious. The

supercilium (the line above the eye) is a lighter, but still a warm shade of reddish-brown. It matches the mostly unmarked throat. The auriculars (cheek) are a mix of the dark and light in a subtle spotted pattern. Even the belly has some dark and light spotting. Gorgeous! But also great for blending into the background of dense, wet forests!

If you will note the cedar branches behind the bird, it may give a good indication of the small size of this particular bird. We can't quite make out the tail in this photo, but that bill is noticeable long, and thin, even if it is wide open! That long and thin bill helps us eliminate all the sparrows and finches (many of the LBJ's in our area).



Photo by Mick Thompson

The combination this bill and fine barring in the wing should lead you directly to the wrens. But which wren? We have several regularly-occurring species in Washington: Rock, Canyon, House, Pacific, Marsh, and Bewick's. The tail would help us easily identify this bird, but it isn't very visible. However, the other markings we just noted are enough to make the ID.

The very rich, almost rufous-brown of this bird with that light reddish-brown supercilium will give it away. The clear reddish-brown throat and speckled belly are just extra-nice field marks to note. It's skulking behavior is also a helpful clue, as is its preference for dense thickets and riparian habitat. This time of year, it can be found by its rather hard call, often given in paired notes. The song is a wonderfully complex and long song (often 5-10 seconds), and can be quite loud for such a diminutive bird. If it is singing close by, you likely won't be hearing much else!

(Continued on page 11)

So let's eliminate some of the wrens from our list:

Rock Wren, besides preferring rocky habitat, this rather large wren does have a pale supercilium, but is a much plainer gray, gray-brown and buffy color. It also has much longer legs.

Canyon Wren, which prefers large, vertical rock cliffs, is a very bright rufous color, but has a very bright white throat. It also does not have a supercilium stripe, but a rather dark mask.

Marsh Wren...can you guess...prefers marshes! Especially marshes with cattails. Their call can have a somewhat similar cadence as our quiz bird (often given in pairs), and does have a supercilium stripe, but it is a very bright white stripe. The throat and breast is somewhat whitish, with no spotting. The crown, nape, scapulars, rump, and wing coverts are a beautiful rufous color. The back is black with white stripes.

Bewick's Wren, a very common bird in our area, also has a supercilium stripe, but is white or whitish. It also has a white throat and light gray belly. The back is a plain, unmarked brown (compare with the Marsh Wren's black and white).

House Wren, probably closest to our quiz bird so far, but is a much duller gray-brown. Not nearly as rich or rufous-brown as the quiz bird. House Wrens can show a very

subtle pale supercilium, but it is very indistinct and more of a buffy color when noticeable. This is probably our plainest-looking wren.

So, that leaves us with **PACIFIC WREN!** Which does have a preference for dense thickets in wet forest and riparian areas. The very short, stubby tail of these birds is often held up at a sharp angle. They often move through the undergrowth or between patches by quickly running or quick, low flights barely above ground, giving the appearance of a rodent scurrying by.

If you have an older field guide, it may list this bird as Winter Wren. In 2010, Winter Wren was split into three species due to a discovery of combination of differing songs and genetics: Pacific Wren (west), Winter Wren (east), and Eurasian Wren (Europe).

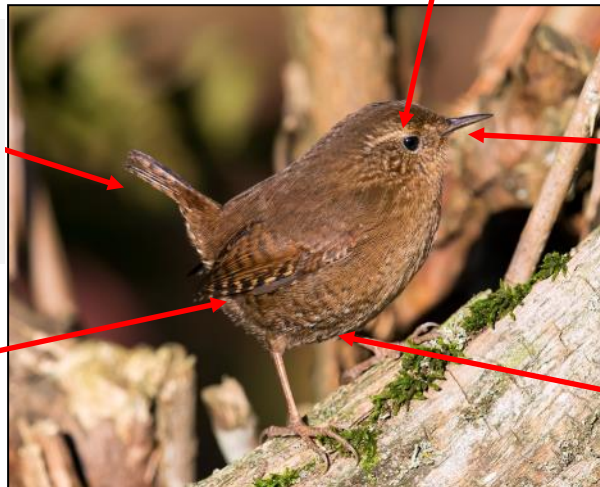
Rich, light reddish-brown supercilium

Very short, stubby tail, often held up in a sharp angle.

Dense, fine barring in the flight feathers

Narrow, thin bill. Rather short in comparison to our other wrens.

Light- and dark-spotted belly



Pacific Wren, photo by Mick Thompson

Photo by Cindy McCormack



Bird's Nest Fungus

Bird's Nest Fungus—sounds like an infection one would get from a bird's nest, doesn't it? But it is really named for the appearance of the fruiting bodies of this really cool fungus, which resemble miniature bird nests, complete with tiny "eggs". These "eggs" are actually small spore-containing structures called peridioles. The shape of the cups are perfect for the dispersal method of this organism—a raindrop (or moisture dropping from the trees) hits the cup, propelling the "eggs" out, sometimes more than a meter away! The peridioles will stick to the

object they hit, eventually drying and opening to release the spores. Amazing!

This fungus lives on decaying woody debris or other plant debris in moist areas, and are a delight to find. This particular photo was taken in the Columbia Gorge near North Bonneville in early March.

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/>



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
January 2022						
23/30	24/31	25 Board Mtg	26	27	28	29
February 2022						
		1 8am Bird Walk 7pm Program	2	3	4	5
6	7 Field Trip Woodland	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 eBird Mobile 7pm Zoom	17	18	19 Field Trip Van Lowlands
20 VAS newsletter deadline	21	22 Board Mtg	23	24	25	26
27	28	Mar. 1 Bird Walk & Program				



Jan 25 (TUE): VAS Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm

Feb 1 (TUE): Bird Walk: Ft. Vancouver, 8am

Feb 1 (TUE): Zoom Program, Central Florida Birding Vacation, 6:30pm social/program 7pm

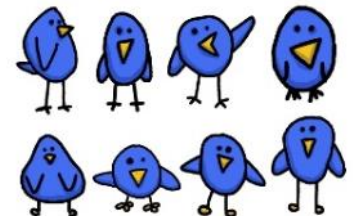
Feb 7 (MON): Field Trip, Woodland Bottoms

Feb 16 (WED): Using eBird Mobile, 7pm via Zoom

Feb 19 (SAT): Field Trip, Vancouver Lowlands

Feb 20 (SUN): Deadline for submissions for March's newsletter

Feb 22 (TUE): VAS Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm



Contents

VAS Board & Chairs	2
From The Board	2
Conservation	3
Programs	4
Field Trips	5
Wilson Cady's Afield	6
Bird ID Challenge	10
NWR Updates	12
Membership/Donation form	12
Injured Wildlife	12

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