



# Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON SOCIETY

*A chapter of the National Audubon Society*

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

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## BIRDS CAN CO-EXIST WITH SOLAR ENERGY

Washington's farmlands and wildlife habitats are not immune to climate change. Extreme weather, drought, wildfire and flooding have impacts. Solar energy is essential to mitigating the impacts of climate change, but it's critically important to minimize its impact on our landscape.

Utility-scale solar has a significant footprint, requiring vast amounts of land to produce electricity. The impacts have not been fully considered in planning for our open spaces. Without careful planning and prioritization, our state's climate targets are in conflict with long-standing goals to protect our natural and working lands.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Futures Study, 90% of solar development will occur on rural lands. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reports that more than 54,000 acres are currently being pursued for solar. The influx of projects has slowed the permitting process as state agencies struggle to provide oversight under the State Environmental Policy Act.

One facility is already under construction in Kittitas County. The Columbia Solar project drew sharp criticism, with some concerned about aesthetics and others the loss of prime farmland. Land zoned for long-term agriculture was permitted for solar development under the assumption that the land could return to farming after the 40-year life of the facility. The Washington Department of Commerce noted in its review that a "persistent and growing" demand for solar energy would effectively lead to the loss of this valuable farmland.

On Badger Mountain overlooking Wenatchee, another project would displace more than 5,000 acres of natural habitat and rangeland. The shrub-steppe landscape in

Douglas County serves as one of the last remaining habitats of the Greater Sage-Grouse in Washington. The U.S. Geological Survey reported that the population of this threatened bird has declined by 80% since 1965. While sage-grouse and rotational grazing can find a balance on the shrub-steppe, solar panels would displace both.

**By Adam Maxwell,  
Dani Madrone and  
Susan Saul**



*Greater Sage-Grouse*  
*photo by Evan Barrientos/Audubon Rockies*

Governor Jay Inslee has seen the need for change. One of his climate proposals for the 2022 legislative session seeks to modernize the process for siting energy facilities, which is sorely needed. Permitting processes are contentious, confusing and underfunded. The state needs a simple and inclusive system that can deploy renewable energy and protect our irreplaceable natural resources.

The governor's climate plan also includes more funding for staff to support permitting. This will address the backlog of projects, ensuring environmental oversight as we work toward our clean-energy goals.

Recognizing the need for collaboration, the American Farmland Trust and Audubon Washington have partnered on these issues to find solutions on solar energy siting. Our strategies are to deploy more solar in the built environment, identify low-conflict lands for solar, and advance the dual use of agriculture and solar.

### **Prioritize Solar in the Built Environment**

We should prioritize solar in places that are already developed. Projects that have zero impact to habitat and farmland should be the priority, especially in places where

*(Continued on page 7)*



## From the VAS Board

We appreciate your support and advocacy for birds and their habitat by supporting our chapter and/or the National Audubon Society. By sharing your bird sightings, photographs and knowledge on social media and by participating in and leading field trips, you help share your love of our birds and nature. But I have several more ideas on how you can further engage others, support wildlife, and to share your ideas and goals.

The first is to serve on our Vancouver Audubon board. You might have noticed how long some of our board members have volunteered in their positions; I believe it is because they believe, like I do, that it is an important function, definitely worthwhile and fulfilling in many ways. However it typically does not involve too much time. Once in awhile a board member moves on, like potentially Sam, our president, who has completed her doctorate degree and may be relocating earlier than we would want her to. Our board meetings are on Zoom nine times a year for about an hour, we accomplish what we need to and get a chance to connect with fellow birders. Each board member I have volunteered with has added so much value and new ideas.

Another option, if you feel you don't want to serve as a board member, would be joining a committee or offering to volunteer to assist the board as needed. So please

consider it, fresh perspectives and faces are always very welcome.

Members are also always welcome to participate in our board meetings, a great way to learn or to share your ideas. The dates and time of our meetings are posted in the newsletter, just contact any board member for a meeting link.

The second idea I have for you to help support birds and conservation is to purchase a U.S. Fish and Wildlife duck stamp for \$25. I will bet many of you already do this! Duck stamp sales raise millions of dollars each year for conservation; 98 percent of the purchase price goes directly to help acquire and protect wetland habitat and purchase conservation easements for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Wetlands acquired with Duck Stamp dollars help purify water, aid in flood control, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

The winner of an annual duck painting art contest has their print used for the stamp. Federal Duck Stamps are miniature unique and collectible works of art, they are prized by stamp collectors around the world. This year's stamp features a beautiful painting of a Lesser Scaup drake. The next duck stamp is a pair of Redheads and will be available by July.

**By Joan Durgin**



### Vancouver Audubon Society

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 Facebook | [@VancouverAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverAudubon)  
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*Program meetings are usually held at the [West Park Community Room](https://www.westparkcommunityroom.com) at 4000 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).



## 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](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org)

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

### MARCH 1 – Back to the Night: Why Preserving the Stars is Not Just for the Birds

#### Mary Coolidge

For eons, the night was lit only by the moon and stars, and life on this planet evolved under regular cycles of bright days and dark nights. All that has changed in the last 130 years, and the night we know now is liberally colonized with artificial light. Most of us live in cities that are ablaze—from billboards to parking lots to streetlights—even while we sleep. Not only does this obscure the Milky Way from 80% of North Americans where they live, but the overabundance of light at night also has dire ecological consequences—not just for the millions of migrating birds that use the stars to navigate, but also for mammals, amphibians, fish, plants, as well as for human health.

Join us for an exploration of the night's wondrous mysteries, the impacts of light pollution, and learn about how you can help in the effort to preserve our starry skies while simultaneously maintaining safety and vibrant nighttime cityscapes.

Mary Coolidge has been on Portland Audubon's Conservation team since 2008. Today she serves as Audubon's Bird-Safe Campaign Coordinator, working to reduce hazards for

birds in the built environment. She splits her time between Portland Audubon and the Oregon Zoo's California Condor breeding program.

Vancouver residents are eligible to enroll in the Lights Out program.

Here is a link to the 'Take the Pledge to Go

Lights Out' page on Audubon's website: <https://audubonportland.org/our-work/protect/habitat-and-wildlife/urban/reducing-wildlife-hazards/bird-safe-building/lights-out/take-the-pledge-to-go-lights-out/>



#### Upcoming Program:

#### April 5: Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge Restoration

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 May 1st, 2022.

We are continuing our programs via Zoom. A reminder to all attendees that you must keep your computer mic turned off during the presentation. My sincere apologies for the disruptions at the last presentation.

**Can't find your Zoom meeting link?** Be sure to check your spam folder. Mark items from Vancouver Audubon as "not spam" or mark as a safe sender to be sure it gets delivered to your inbox. Those with Gmail might also check under the "promotions" tab.

—Don Rose

## Friday, March 4 Yacolt Burn State Forest

**Leaders:** Randy Hill and Bob Flores

**Register:** email [re\\_hill@q.com](mailto:re_hill@q.com) or call/text 360-975-2573

Target species are higher elevation (above 1500') forest birds including resident late winter and early migrant songbirds, grouse, woodpeckers, owls and other raptors. Sooty and Ruffed Grouse, raptors, including Northern Pygmy-Owl, Canada Jay, woodpeckers and several finches are targets. The route continues to Dole Valley and the road toward Yacolt with creek stops to look for American Dippers. A great opportunity for some nice winter landscape views if the weather cooperates. If higher elevation road conditions are not suitable, we will plan on a lower elevation alternative.

Itinerary: Meet at 07:00 in Hockinson at the Fire District 3 eastside parking lot (17718 NE 159<sup>th</sup> St. (45.737992, -122.490038). From there, we will head up to the Yacolt Burn State Forest, where snow and road conditions will dictate travel; a **Discover Pass is required in this area**. The route intends on following paved roads, on a gravel portion of the L-1000 road, to pavement that resumes at the L-1200 road turnoff, with mostly pullout or parking lot stops. Return likely during the noon hour depending on weather. Carpooling as much as possible with AWD vehicles; spotting scopes are optional, but helpful. Limit of 5 cars, 10 total participants. Trip travel type expectations: mostly driving and stopping at key locations. Pace: 1-2; Terrain: some B- C; <1 mile walking.

## Saturday, March 19 Beacon Rock State Park

**Leaders:** Cindy McCormack

**Register:** email [vas@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org)

We will spend the morning exploring the state park to search for resident forest, riparian, and open country birds and early migrants, especially watching out for some of the shrub-steppe birds stopping by on their way north! Possible migrants include bluebirds, phoebes, shrikes, and east-side sparrows. The Peregrines should be nesting and may even be vocal during our visit. Meeting at the location will allow for customized birding times—you can leave after certain portions of the day or continue on!

We will plan on meeting at 7:30am at the picnic area of Beacon Rock SP, [Doetsch Ranch Day Use Area](#). Take Highway 14 east, about 17 miles after leaving Washougal area. Turn right at the Doetsch Ranch Rd., stay on this road (keep left) for 2/10 mile, then turn right into the day use area, parking near the restroom. Discover Pass will be required for your vehicle, which can be purchased at the kiosk if needed.

Pace 1-2, Terrain: A-D, 1-4 miles walking. We will start walking a paved loop trail, with a short stretch of sandy/rocky trail to check the river. We may then walk a paved road to the RV camp and/or hike up the River to Rock trail. Participants can leave after the first loop if desired, or continue up to view the marina, the RV camp and/or take the trail up to the pond. Bring a snacks/lunch, plenty of

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## MARCH 1—FIRST OF MONTH BIRD WALK

**Shillapoo Lake Wildlife Area, 8:00am**

**Contact Cindy at [vas@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto: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 Shillapoo's northwest access point, just across the road from the north bridge access for the Vancouver Lake Trail. Continue past Vancouver Lake park, through all the rumble strips to the two wide pullouts along either side of the road.**



water, good walking/hiking shoes. Be sure to dress for the weather.

## Monday, March 21

### Cowlitz County

Leader TBA. This trip will head north to selected rivers at Kelso-Longview, Kalama, and/or Woodland with a directed goal of finding unusual gulls and other birds taking advantage of the March smelt run. Check the VAS website for updates.

## Fri-Sun, March 25-27

### Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

While not a Vancouver Audubon trip, Randy will be going over on March 24 to scout and can offer suggestions for the route there (SR14 and US97), and birding around the Othello area once there. Contact him directly at [re\\_hill@q.com](mailto:re_hill@q.com).

## August 30-September 1

### Grays Harbor County & Pelagic

Three day trip to Grays Harbor County. Yes, this is a long way out, but it is centered around a Westport Pelagic trip. As last year this requires reservations well ahead of time; the August 27 pelagic trip is already full! It will be quite similar to last year's trip; check the trip report that Jim Danzenbaker wrote in Vancouver Audubon's archived [October 2021 newsletter](#) on the website. If you are interested in the pelagic trip please contact Randy right away by text at 360-975-2573.

*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.*

## Vancouver Audubon Officer 2022 Election Candidates

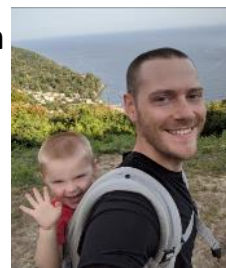


### President: Sam Neuffer

I took on the position of president in Spring of 2020, a time made uncertain by COVID-19. In that time, I and all other members of the board have been proactive in delivering programs to our membership virtually. We have kept Vancouver Audubon running under extraordinary circumstances. Under those circumstances, I have led board meetings, membership meetings, and educational outreach efforts. I am running for president again to use my experience to continue to meet the challenges that our chapter may encounter as we enter different phases of the pandemic. I thank you for your vote of confidence that I can address these challenges.

### Vice-President: Jared Strawderman

My name is Jared Strawderman and I have served as the Vice President of Vancouver Audubon for the past year. I work at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge and have a passion for birding, conservation, and connecting people with nature. What drives me is introducing people, especially youth, to the incredible diversity of birds in our area and in our own backyards. My goals are to improve how VAS engages with youth by continuing to develop a Young Birders Program, increase accessibility of our programming, and support the governance and recruitment for our organization. I look forward to continuing this work to benefit our community.



### Secretary: Craig Wallace

Wildlife photography and just being outdoors are two of my greatest joys. Although the majority of my working life was spent in the private sector, my B.S. is in Fisheries and Wildlife management, and I worked for the Utah Department of Natural Resources as a fisheries biologist for several years out of college. I've lived in Vancouver for the past 18 years, and been a member of VAS since shortly after I moved here. Serving as Secretary on the VAS board for the past two years has given me the opportunity to give back something to this great organization, and I would like to continue serving as secretary.

### Treasurer: Joan Durgin

For 35 years my professional life was a CPA. I audited governmental organizations and non-profits for ten years then served as the Finance Director for the City of Camas for 20 years until retirement. During this time I volunteered as treasurer for the Vancouver Audubon for 10 years, until 2016 when I stepped aside for 2 years until I was re-elected in 2018 and have served ever since. I am willing to serve another term as treasurer because I feel it is an important function of our chapter. I will strive to retain our sound financial condition and continue good accounting practices. I'm not acting alone in this function, it benefits from a team, the Finance Committee. I appreciate their time to audit my accounting and all detailed transactions several times a year.



# The 122<sup>nd</sup> Audubon Christmas Bird Count Report

Another successful CBC is under our belts! We counted the ORSI, or Sauvie Island Circle, which includes Vancouver Lake Bottoms, Salmon Creek/Hazel Dell areas, Ridgefield and land north to the Lewis River. It reaches east across I-5, just north of the I-5 and I-205 intersection, and includes the Columbia River between Sauvie Island and Washington.

We had plenty of Vancouver Audubon members joining us on January 2, 2022. We were able to cover some new territory in Ridgefield on the new trails around the new developments. It is not the same birding with all the farm fields gone, but rewarding, nonetheless. We had 71 participants in the circle with forty-four of them on the Washington side. It is a new high for us. There were four feeder watchers with 27 species identified among the 185 birds seen in just under 8 hours.

It was one of our coldest starts, with some areas below freezing in the morning. Fortunately, the rain stayed away until late in the day, with only a couple teams getting caught at the end. Many shallow ponds and wet spots in fields were frozen early in the day. Waterfowl was concentrated wherever they could find open water. A few ponds/lakes had high numbers while others had no waterfowl to count. We fell a little short of last year's mark of 132 species (a circle high), having found 128 species this year but that is still the second highest number of species for our count, which we started in 1968.

Several commented that numbers seemed low. Compared to last year, that is true with 109,420 last year versus only 92,027 birds counted this year. Our Canada/Cackling Goose numbers were down by about 9,000 from last year, while the Snow Geese were down by about 8,000. Coots were down by 1300, and we saw only half of our scaup species this year. So, a lot of differences in waterfowl numbers. What I noticed while looking at the tally sheets was small birds seemed to be bunched in some territories. For example, there were high numbers of Dark-eyed Junco in some territories and none where you usually expect

them.

**By Susan Setterberg**

A couple nice surprises found their way onto our lists. A single male Surf Scoter was spotted from the Roth unit of the RNWR on the Columbia River. This looks like the only Surf Scoter ever found in our circle. Equally exciting is the Black-billed Magpie found near a farmstead on the southern edge of Ridgefield. The only previous counts with magpie were in 1967 and 1972. Looking at weather preceding our count, we had good ESE winds the two days before which probably brought us the magpie from eastern Washington or Oregon. We had a Common

Yellowthroat on the Oregon side of the river during count week but missed it on count day. They are very infrequent on our counts. Black-bellied Plover were found on Sauvie Island. They are infrequent CBC visitors too. We haven't seen them since the mid-1990s.

Trumpeter Swans were a new high this year. We had 600 overall, with 538 being on the WA side. Many easier-to-access ponds were full due to our atmospheric rivers



*Trumpeter Swans*

*Photo by Brad Lewis/Audubon Photography Awards*

preceding the count, providing a water depth that swans particularly like for foraging. Looking at past data, we didn't always distinguish Trumpeter Swans so it is hard to say if there is a big increase over time but it is good to see a strong presence of these lovely birds.

There were a couple other species with new high numbers. The Spotted Towhees came in at 294 this year which is almost double the previous six years. With the increase in teams and more people scouting local neighborhoods, that probably accounted for some of the uptick. We had a new high of 142 for Varied Thrush with about two-thirds found on Sauvie Island. Our previous high was in 1988 with 131. The count range varies a lot over the years, with single digit lows to our high this year, with an average of 39 birds/year. Always nice to see a Varied Thrush! Of the 19 years we have had Common Raven on our CBC, this year also had a high count of 74, with the largest group being on the Oregon side of the

*(Continued on page 7)*

*(Solar, continued from page 1)*

energy is most needed.

The governor has proposed \$100 million in investments toward solar energy, including incentives for projects on preferred sites that do not displace critical habitat or productive farmland. A bill is moving through the Washington Legislature but has not yet passed.

Locally, the City of Vancouver is developing a climate action plan that will include solar in the urban environment, and Vancouver Audubon is urging Clark Public Utilities to offer more community solar projects where customers get the benefits of solar energy on a subscription basis without having to invest in any equipment or install solar panels of their own.

## Identify Least Conflict Rural Lands

Knowing the built environment cannot provide all of our energy needs, the next strategy is to identify appropriate sites for rural lands. Each county has unique open spaces and opportunities. Local planning tools are needed to support decision-making. Klickitat County has a tool that could serve as a model. An overlay map in their land-use system directs where alternative energy should go, as determined by county planning.

We need a clear-eyed assessment of potential conflicts in the landscape. This summer, Washington State University will convene stakeholders to explore the conflicts in the Columbia Basin. This work will be modeled on the San Joaquin Valley Least-Conflict Lands Project in California, a stakeholder-led process that included the solar industry, farmers, ranchers and environmental advocates.

Using data provided by the stakeholders, these groups identified 470,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley for

potential solar development. They also built relationships that will serve them well as they navigate difficult decisions around resource management. The Columbia Basin will benefit greatly from a least-conflict project such as this, especially if the interests of tribes are included early in the process.

## Solar and Agriculture in the Same Space

The governor's budget includes funding for agrivoltaic research, more commonly known as dual-use solar. Early research for dual-use has shown the potential to conserve water, extend growing seasons, protect from extreme temperatures and create shade for livestock.

On a farm that incorporates solar energy, panels are mounted higher off the ground and farther apart to make room for crops or livestock. They are designed to track the sun throughout the day, which provides both light and shade to the soil below. The understory creates a microclimate, which could help the soil retain moisture, give plants and livestock a break from the hot sun and cool solar panels for greater efficiency. Agrivoltaic research will advance partnerships between farmers and the solar industry to find out what works in Washington.

Transitioning away from fossil fuels means major changes to the way we use land in both rural and urban communities. State leaders are paying attention and actively seeking solutions. We must continue moving forward with solutions that are protective of habitat and farmland while efficient at advancing renewable energy.

*Adam Maxwell is the senior policy manager at Audubon Washington.*

*Dani Madrone is the Pacific Northwest policy manager at The American Farmland Trust.*

*Susan Saul is the conservation chair at Vancouver Audubon.*

*(CBC results, continued from page 6)*

circle. Although harder to find on our side of the Columbia River, Wilson's Snipe also came in at a new high with 60 sightings this year.

If you are interested in digging deeper into historical data for our circle, use ORSI as the circle code. Go to <https://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/>. Thank you to all the participants. For those of you who didn't get a chance

to count this year, we are looking for an early count date next year. The window is December 14<sup>th</sup> to January 5<sup>th</sup>. We will post a save the date in the November VAS newsletter and details in the December newsletter. First timers to experts are welcome. It is hoped that next year we will have a less need for COVID restrictions and can pair up more people on teams.

*See next page for data summary.*

CBC results, continued  
from page 1 & 11

Feeder Watch	
watchers	4
hours	7.75
species	27
total	185

Effort Data				
		OR	WA	Total
Hours on foot		34.6	53.7	88.3
Miles on foot		40.2	59.8	100
Hours by car		9.55	39.5	49.05
Miles by car		37.4	146.4	183.8
Hours Owling		1	3.8	4.8
Owling Distance		3	7.9	10.9
# of teams		10	19	29
# of people		27	44	71

## Weather

From Alex (Roth West): Low 30s, cloudy with some brief showers, Wind 05-SW. On Ridge (Susan) 32 to 41 9:30 to 3:00, calm; Karen (north Sauvie) reported early temps in the high 20s with Columbia river like glass. All standing water had ice or ice crystal edges. Sauvie got more early light rain than WA side.

## ORSI Circle 2021-22 CBC - Jan 2, 2022

Species	Oregon	WA	Total	# sp	CW	Species	Oregon	WA	Total	# sp	CW	Species	Oregon	WA	Total	# sp	CW
Greater White-fronted Goose	2	3	5	1		Bald Eagle	66	64	130	1		Horned Lark		1	1	1	
Snow Goose	9,034	3409	12,443	1		Red-shouldered Hawk	3	5	8	1		<i>Swallow sp.</i>					0
Ross's Goose				0		Red-tailed Hawk	60	51	111	1		Black-capped Chickadee	95	158	253	1	
Brant				0		Red-tailed Hawk (Harlan's)	1		1	0		Chestnut-backed Chickadee	9	23	32	1	
Cackling Goose	#####	13592	23,769	1		Rough-legged Hawk	1	3	4	1		Bushtit	65	273	338	1	
Canada Goose	1955	2043	3998	1		<i>Buteo sp.</i>		1	1	0		Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	5	6	1	
Cackling/Canada Species		297	297	0		Virginia Rail	1		1	1		White-breasted Nuthatch	16	18	34	1	
Trumpeter Swan	62	538	600	1		Sora Rail				0		Brown Creeper	22	28	50	1	
Tundra Swan	753	1778	2,531	1		American Coot	1213	809	2022	1		Pacific Wren	14	27	41	1	
<i>Swan sp.</i>	150	1045	1195	0		Sandhill Crane	2,406	2733	5,139	1		Marsh Wren	1	13	14	1	
Wood Duck	4	22	26	1		Black-bellied Plover	5		5	1		Bewick's Wren	20	51	71	1	
Gadwall	165	226	391	1		Killdeer	159	96	255	1		Blue-gray Gnatcatcher					0
Eurasian Wigeon	1	8	9	1		Greater Yellowlegs	8	2	10	1		Golden-crowned Kinglet	33	49	82	1	
American Wigeon	2,213	1650	3,863	1		Lesser Yellowlegs				0		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	48	96	144	1	
Amer X Eur Wigeon (hybrid)	2		2	0		Dunlin	274		274	1		Townsend's Solitaire					0
Mallard	3,940	3070	7,010	1		Least Sandpiper	2		2	1		Hermit Thrush	13	5	18	1	
Cinnamon Teal		5	5	1		Western Sandpiper	1		1	1		American Robin	70	204	274	1	
Northern Shoveler	311	766	1077	1		Long-billed Dowitcher				0		Varied Thrush	90	52	142	1	
Northern Pintail	3,519	2165	5,684	1		Wilson's Snipe	62	18	80	1		European Starling	650	2097	2,747	1	
Green-winged Teal	3,010	908	3,918	1		Mew Gull (Short-billed)	204	20	224	1		American Pipit		69	69	1	
Canvasback	270	357	627	1		Ring-billed Gull	9	9	18	1		Cedar Waxwing		6	6	1	
Redhead	1		1	1		California Gull	17	2	19	1		Orange-crowned Warbler		4	4	1	
Ring-necked Duck	768	375	1,143	1		Herring Gull	4	4	8	1		Common Yellowthroat					0
Greater Scaup	180	49	229	1		Iceland (Thayer's) Gull				0		Yellow-rumped Warbler	9	17	26	1	
Lesser Scaup	11	413	424	1		Western Gull		1	1	1		Townsend's Warbler					0
<i>Scaup sp.</i>		306	306	0		Glaucous-winged Gull	41	32	73	1		Chipping Sparrow					0
Surf Scoter (male)		1	1	1		Olympic Gull (GW x W)	6	20	26	0		Clay-colored Sparrow					0
Bufflehead	44	182	226	1		<i>Gull sp.</i>	34	26	60	0		Fox Sparrow	58	56	114	1	
Common Goldeneye	8	30	38	1		Rock Pigeon		113	113	1		Dark-eyed Junco	262	313	575	1	
Barrow's Goldeneye				0		Band-tailed Pigeon		1	1	1		White-crowned Sparrow	184	112	296	1	
Hooded Merganser	20	76	96	1		Eurasian Collared-Dove	2	11	13	1		Golden-crowned Sparrow	845	704	1,549	1	
Common Merganser	72	133	205	1		Mourning Dove	208	49	257	1		Harris's Sparrow	1		1	1	
Red-breasted Merganser				0		Barn Owl	3	8	11	1		White-throated Sparrow	4		4	1	
Ruddy Duck	32	83	115	1		Great Horned Owl	6	9	15	1		Vesper Sparrow					0
<i>Duck sp.</i>	100	186	286	0		Barred Owl		1	1	1		Savannah Sparrow	10	9	19	1	
California Quail	22		22	1		Short-eared Owl		5	5	1		Song Sparrow	239	422	661	1	
Ring-necked Pheasant				0		Anna's Hummingbird	7	42	49	1		Lincoln's Sparrow	5	5	10	1	
Red-throated Loon	1		1	1		Belted Kingfisher	11	9	20	1		Swamp Sparrow		1	1	1	
Common Loon		1	1	1		Lewis's Woodpecker				0		Spotted Towhee	83	211	294	1	
Pied-billed Grebe	4	18	22	1		Red-breasted Sapsucker	24	15	39	1		<i>Sparrow sp.</i>	145	36	181	0	
Horned Grebe	1		1	1		Downy Woodpecker	19	23	42	1		Red-winged Blackbird	305	569	874	1	
Red-necked Grebe				0		Hairy Woodpecker	2	11	13	1		Western Meadowlark	29	19	48	1	
Eared Grebe				0		Downy/Hairy Woodpecker sp	1		1	0		Rusty Blackbird					0
Western Grebe		3	3	1		Northern Flicker	55	86	141	1		Brewer's Blackbird	188	149	337	1	
Double-crested Cormorant	164	131	295	1		Pileated Woodpecker	3	3	6	1		Brown-headed Cowbird	3	20	23	1	
American White Pelican	10	24	34	1		American Kestrel	24	67	91	1		<i>Blackbird sp.</i>		1200	1,200	1	
American Bittern		1	1	1		Merlin	5		5	1		House Finch	171	26	197	1	
Great Blue Heron	45	94	139	1		Peregrine Falcon	2	2	4	1		Purple Finch	3		3	1	
Great Egret	38	40	78	1		Black Phoebe	2	4	6	1		Red Crossbill					0
Snowy Egret				0		Northern Shrike	1	2	3	1		Pine Siskin	5	49	54	1	
White-faced Ibis				0		Hutton's Vireo	2		2	1		Lesser Goldfinch	20	13	33	1	
Black-crowned Night-Heron				0		Steller's Jay	14	79	93	1		American Goldfinch	1	26	27	1	
Northern Harrier	26	50	76	1		California Scrub-Jay	95	144	239	1		Evening Grosbeak					0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	3	1		Black-billed Magpie		1	1	1		House Sparrow	6	9	15	1	
Cooper's Hawk	3	6	9	1		American Crow	112	124	236	1			37119	34086	71,205	40	
						Common Raven	64	10	74	1							



# VAS Field Trip Report

## Vancouver Lowlands—February 19, 2022

**By Randy Hill**

Nine of us met at the Vancouver Lake flushing channel at 7:15 to embark on a discovery of what's around some areas of the "Vancouver Bottoms" A.K.A. Vancouver Lowlands. Much of this area is within areas of the Columbia River floodplain, where dams and levees have eliminated most flooding during all but "real flood" events. Since there still are big floods that cannot be eliminated, most of this area still has little development, or areas that can withstand some flood water seasonally, including parks, wildlife management areas, drainage corridors and agriculture for crops and grazing. All of these are attractive for quite a diversity of birds that winter in SW Washington.

Vancouver Lake is a large but shallow former "high flow" river channel and lake. With a channel constructed to improve poor water quality resulting from polluted tributaries and failing septic systems upslope, Columbia River water enters with both fresher water and other contents from the Columbia, especially fish. That is where we found Double-crested Cormorant, Common Merganser, several gull and grebe species that dive for small fish, and other waterfowl that find shorelines with seed and vegetation to eat as well as the security of large open water for visibility. Sandhill Cranes also use the shallow edges of the lake to roost and sometimes forage, and we heard and saw several flyovers. Bald Eagles are known for taking fish (dead or alive), but they are also a top level predator on birds as large as cranes and Canada Geese. They tend to keep things moving.

We shifted to Blurock Landing, which includes the Columbia River west connection of the flushing channel. Greater Scaup and Common Goldeneyes were found on the river, and plenty of

sparrows were using the brushy blackberry edges, plus a showy Varied Thrush. A view of the Columbia Land Trust (CLT) parcels known as Cranes Landing to the north and west were visible from the elevated paved trail, and the flocks of Cackling and Snow Geese were just starting to arrive as we headed to Frenchman's Bar Regional Park.



*Violet-green Swallow showing the white saddle patches, violet rump, and bright green back.  
Photo by Greg Johnson*

We were not here for walking dogs, as most visitors seemed to do. A Barred Owl that uses a patch of trees to roost during the day was at his usual spot. A walk south produced views of 700+ Sandhill Cranes that typically feed in fields managed by CLT. They were there for their morning feeding along with more Cackling Geese and gulls. Three species of blackbirds and five of

sparrows were found on the hike south. To the east over CLT lands, massive flocks of geese were being hazed and moved around by Bald Eagles flyovers.

Our last area was the north end trail of Vancouver Lake, with a view up and down Buckmire Slough and of tall hardwood forest. We also took a short walk out into Shillapoo Lake Wildlife Area. It was getting cold, but that didn't stop the birds, including the first Violet-green Swallows of 2022 with several Tree Swallows, and lots of calling blackbirds. Waterfowl was found in abundance on the lake (including our only swans of the day), a dozen Bald Eagles on the periphery to keep them alert, lots of coots, egrets, more Sandhill Cranes, cormorants, and a Great Horned Owl sitting on a distant nest.

It was just another typical winter birding day in the Vancouver Lowlands.



*Barred Owl wintering at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park. Photo by C. McCormack*

*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.

**Jan. 21**, a **TENNESSEE WARBLER** (5) was spotted by Erik and April Brown coming to their suet feeder in Vancouver. This species of warbler is normally found on the East Coast and is rare in Washington state at any time much less than in the winter when they are rare anywhere in North America instead of in the tropics. They welcomed visitors to their yard to view this bird and thanks to their hospitality, dozens of birders from all across the region were able to see this lovely bird.

**Jan. 22**, Brodie Cass Talbott and Nick Mrvelj picked out an adult **RED-THROATED LOON** (3) from Marine Park describing it as smaller than a Common Loon with a more slender, upturned bill. There had been an influx of them along the Columbia River in the past few weeks.

**Jan. 23**, a **RED-THROATED LOON** was seen from the Vancouver-Columbia River Boardwalk by Robert Vanderkamp who also spotted another **RED-THROATED LOON** a couple of miles upstream at Marine Park. His second one of the day was in nonbreeding plumage with a white neck and face, dark upturned bill, speckled back, and was the second one seen in two days at this location, one an adult and the other a juvenile.

**Jan. 26**, Cindy McCormack was surprised to hear the call of a **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** in the Vancouver Lake lowlands this time of year, she tracked down finding the bird skulking at the base of blackberries and shrubs. Interestingly, last winter a MacGillivray's was also found in the lowlands, about 1 mile away from this sighting.

**Jan. 26**, Zachary Hayes was jogging along the Frenchman's Bar Trail when he saw on and photographed a gorgeous **LONG-EARED OWL** (5) perched on the fence line. This species is normally found east of the Cascades and tends to stay hidden in thick brush making them very hard to locate.

**Jan. 27**, in the early morning, Robert Flores searched the Frenchman's Bar Trail while it

was still dark and relocated the **LONG-EARED OWL** (5) found the day before by Zachary Hayes. Kevin Black was the only other birder that I heard of that was lucky enough to see this rare visitor.

**Jan. 28**, while birding on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, Ken Pitts heard a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** calling and waited until it surfaced for a photo. The deep yellow throat and rump underparts distinguished it from a possible Orange-crowned Warbler. He has had this over wintering bird at the same location in the previous weeks.

**Jan. 28**, John Davis saw the long-staying **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (3) at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery on the Columbia River near Underwood in Skamania County where it has been seen occasionally all winter.

**Jan. 31**, at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, Nancy & Bill LaFramboise located the continuing **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**.

**Jan. 31**, John Davis photographed a **SAY'S PHOEBE** (3) at the Wind River Mouth in Skamania County. It was foraging from a log jam and shrubs along the shoreline near the boat launch parking lot. He described it as smaller than a robin with a grayish brown back and head, rufous belly and undertail coverts with a dark tail. This was either the latest or earliest report of one of these members of the flycatcher family in Skamania County, they are another east-of-Cascades breeding species.

**Feb. 3**, Abby Haight found a **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED X CACKLING GOOSE** (hybrid) at the Vancouver Lake Regional Park. This bird has a white neck and head making it look much like a blue morph of a Snow Goose, but lacking the characteristic black "grin."

**Feb. 3**, Les Carlson and I birded Skamania County finding a **GREAT EGRET** (3) from the Franz Lake overlook among the Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. A quick stop along highway 14

*(Continued on page 11)*



*Say's Phoebe*  
Photo by Les Carlson



to view the waterfowl on Rock Creek Mill Pond produced 2 **REDHEAD** (3) and an equal number of **CANVASBACK** (3). At the Wind River mouth, we saw the continuing **SAY'S PHOEBE** first found by John Davis, on the log jam by the boat launch parking lot. This is the second one of these birds I have seen at this location, presumably feeding on insects over the slightly warmer water. Across the highway at the Home Valley Park we walked down to the swimming area on the Columbia River where we found a raft of over 1,400 ducks including one more male **REDHEAD**. At Drano Lake we drove up the road to the Little White Salmon Fish Hatchery checking the waterfowl along the arm of the lake where the river enters it finding a winter plumaged **RUDDY DUCK** (4) among the **BUFFLEHEAD**, **COMMON** and **BARROW'S GOLDENEYES** and **HOODED MERGANSERS**. Our final stop of the day was at the St. Cloud Wayside on the way home where there was a flock of diving ducks that numbered into the thousands, but we found few birds other than scaup and a pair of **HORNED GREBE** among them before they were flushed by a tug and barge.

**Feb. 4**, the continuing **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED X CACKLING GOOSE** (hybrid) at the Vancouver Lake Regional Park was reported by Valita Volkman.

**Feb. 5**, at the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit, an Immature **HARRIS'S SPARROW** (4) with tan cheeks, pinkish bill, was seen by Barbara Petersen feeding on ground with 40 **GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS**. There was one reported from here earlier in the fall.

**Feb. 5**, the first year male **WESTERN TANAGER** seen earlier this winter on East Reserve St in Vancouver by Chris Nixon was seen feeding in cotoneaster shrub along with bunch of Robins only a 1/2 block from where he saw it a couple of weeks ago.

**Feb. 7**, Brian Pendleton and Darchelle Worley were birding the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit when they heard the high pitched "cheat" calls of a **SWAMP SPARROW** (3) calling near marker 9. There has been one reported from near that location all winter.

**Feb. 7**, Cindy McCormack was conducting a survey in the Vancouver Lake lowlands for the Columbia Land Trust when she found a **BRANT** (3) and heard both a **HORNED LARK** (4) and the continuing **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER**. Brant are usually found on saltwater where they feed



*Say's Phoebe, photo by Wilson Cady*

mainly on Eel Grass. We do have a Horned Lark subspecies that breeds on sand bars and dredge spoil islands, the Streaked Horned Lark, which is an endangered species.

**Feb. 8**, we had two **BAND-TAILED PIGEONS** check out our feeding area, this was the second earliest date that we have had them return, the earliest was on Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1995

**Feb. 9**, near the Upper Larch Mountain Lookout, Gregory Johnson found the first **SOOTY GROUSE** (3) reported from Clark County this year. These birds formerly called Blue Grouse before they were split into two species, the other now called Dusky Grouse and found along northern Cascades east of the mountains, in northeast Washington and the Blue Mountains. Locally they are found in higher elevation coniferous forests which we only have a couple of areas of in eastern Clark County.

**Feb. 10**, Dan van den Broek saw the continuing **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED X CACKLING GOOSE** (hybrid) at Shillapoo Lake in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

**Feb. 11**, 15 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** (4) were seen flying east up the Columbia River in Skamania County upstream of Cape Horn by Roger Moyer while he was driving a semi-truck on I-84. This is the first winter record of this species for this county.

**Feb. 12**, Wendy Temko, Candace Larson, Ted Mag and Dianne Seymour, found the **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED X CACKLING GOOSE** (hybrid) back at the Vancouver Lake Regional Park. This bird is moving around a lot with the **CACKLING GEESE** flocks and can be found by playing "Where's Waldo" with the large flocks of geese looking for the one different looking bird.

**Feb. 12**, the over-wintering **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit was spotted by Pat Snyder. This bird is usually accompanying a group of **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** allowing easy comparison between the two very different sized species.

**Feb. 12**, while birding the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, Dave Baker's first thought was that he was seeing a Nashville Warbler with a bird that had a yellow body and gray head but on closer examination he saw that the eye ring was faint, not bold as what a Nashville would have, and there was a faint eye stripe making it an **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** of the *orestera* subspecies while the

(Continued on page 12)

other subspecies found here, the *lutescens* is all drab green. He also came across a continuing female **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** while birding there.

**Feb. 13**, a **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** was found at the Casee Center by John Bishop.

**Feb. 13**, Ken Vanderkamp found the two continuing **RED-NECKED GREBES** (3) and a **RED-THROATED LOON** along the Vancouver-Columbia River Boardwalk and a **PACIFIC LOON** (4) at Marine Park.

**Feb. 14**, the **BRANT** and the **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** in the Vancouver Lake lowlands, were reported again by Cindy McCormack.

**Feb. 15**, the long staying **TENNESSEE WARBLER** was reported by Phil Bartley.

**Feb. 15**, two **COMMON YELLOWTHROATS** were heard by Ken Pitts near markers 9 and 10 on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit where there have been recurring reports over the last month and a half.

**Feb. 16**, Chris Nixon reported a first winter male **WESTERN TANAGER** feeding on maple buds in the same tree as some **CEDAR WAXWINGS** at the Fort Vancouver NHS. He assumes that this is the same young male he has been seeing for over a month as all of the sightings were within half a block of each other.

**Feb. 17**, while birding the Vancouver Lake lowlands Eleni Kondilis spotted 2 **SHORT-EARED OWLS** hunting over an open field near Vancouver Lake Park and a male **EURASIAN WIGEON** in the lake at the park.

**Feb. 17**, the long continuing **RED-THROATED LOON** at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park, was reported by Cindy McCormack, Randy Hill, Ken Vanderkamp and Robert Vanderkamp who also posted a **PACIFIC LOON** at nearby Blurock Landing.

**Feb 18**, Debbie Meader was birding at Captain William Clark Park, in Washougal when she found and photographed the first **SAY'S PHOEBE** (3) reported from Clark County this year. It was found next to the dike trail, hunting insects from the fence. These birds only pass

through our area on their way to their breeding grounds east of the Cascades and while they are found annually here, they are only here during the short migration period.

**Feb 18**, Cindy McCormack once again found the over-wintering **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** in the Vancouver Lake lowlands while conducting a census at the Columbia Land Trust's Cranes' Landing

**Feb. 19**, 2 **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS** were reported from Shillapoo Lake by Randy Hill, these green-backed swallows show a white patch on their rump in flight and the white on the head extends above eye. This is the third swallow species seen in Clark County this year, yet to arrive are Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow and Purple Martin.

**Feb 19**, John Davis found the wintering **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** foraging in the oaks at the Little White Salmon Fish Hatchery in Skamania County.



For the Washington Cumulative County List Project as of Feb. 20, 2022, **153** species have been reported in Clark County and **109** birds have been found in Skamania County so far this year. These numbers will now begin to increase rapidly with the arrival of the migrant species. I haven't seen any reports of Rufous Hummingbirds yet but ones usually arrive before the end of February.

There are two things that affect a bird's rarity status, the first being out of its normal range like the reported Long-eared Owl, Harris's Sparrow and Swamp Sparrow. Being here in the wrong season can make a common species into a rarity too, like the McGillivray's Warbler and Western Tanager in this winter's sightings. Occasionally you get a bird that is both out of place and out of season, like the Tennessee Warbler that April and Eric Brown have had coming to their feeders, to the delight of the many birders they shared it with. The rarity codes for the county checklists don't reflect the seasonal abundance of a species but you can find that on eBird by entering a county and state into explore and the clicking on Bar Charts. This type of abundance chart for Washington birds can also be seen in the online version of the Washington Ornithological Society's book, [A BIRDER'S GUIDE TO WASHINGTON \(wabirdguide.org\)](http://www.wabirdguide.org)

*By Wilson Cady*



# 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](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org).

**Hmmm...a partial photo, but definitely enough to identify!**

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



Quiz photo by Cindy McCormack

## February's Bird ID Challenge Discussion

Look at the incredible variety of patterns on this bird! The cryptic birds can be surprisingly beautiful. We've got spots, dots, speckles, barring, chevrons, stripes, streaks, mottling, vermiculations and scalloping. Besides the black, grays, buff and white, there are numerous rich shades of brown.

So, what do we have here? Overall, this bird appears to be a rather round, large-bodied bird with big feet, short legs, and a relatively small head. The wing is relatively short and round.\* The bill is small with a curved culmen.

That will help us reach the gallinaceous birds, or the chicken-like birds (grouse, partridge, turkey, pheasant, quail, etc.). They are relatively big, oval-bodied birds with big feet, a big clue to their preference to walk or run. Their medium



Quiz photo by Greg Johnson

to short, rounded wing on a stout body allow for short, but fast, bursts of flight, sometimes right out of the vegetation at your feet! They use those small bills with slightly curved culmens to forage for mostly seeds, fruits, buds, plants and invertebrates.

So, which type of landfowl can we find in our area? That can be a bit complicated, since some of the birds in this order can be raised and released for hunting purposes. Turkey, pheasant, partridge and quail are examples. This bird does not have the long neck of a pheasant or turkey, so it's easy enough to eliminate them from

consideration. It would also be very unusual to see a Ring-necked Pheasant perched on a tree branch!

With the complex cryptic patterning on this bird, we can also remove partridge and quail from our list.

The partridge (Chukar and Gray Partridge) are more commonly encountered in eastern Washington, are more solid gray in color with sharply contrasting orange and black markings. They also have smoothly rounded crowns,

(Continued on page 14)

*\*The wing isn't open, so how can we tell the length and the shape? Note how the primaries do not reach the tail, even in this position, which tells us that the wing is relatively short. Now look at the primaries. The outer-most primaries are shorter than some of the inner primaries, and there are several inner primaries that are similar in length, this will tell us the wing is rounded when open (rather than pointed).*

unlike the peaked appearance of our quiz bird.

Of the quail, rarely encountered in our area, only the Bobwhite would have a slightly peaked crown, but they have a very strong, obvious facial pattern, like most quail. They also have a much shorter tail than the one on our bird, even though we cannot see the full length on this bird.

So, we easily eliminated pheasant, turkey, partridge and quail from consideration. This would leave us with grouse! Our native grouse species do have cryptic plumage making them difficult to spot at times. One of the easiest ways to find a grouse is to watch the roadsides early in the morning in the appropriate habitat. In our corner of the state, we really only have two grouse species to consider. Ruffed and Sooty Grouse.

How do we know which we have here? The simplest in this position is actually to look at that little head! The peaked appearance of the crown is a big clue. This grouse has a small crest, even at rest, although it can be raised higher or flattened (often flattened when they are trying to sneak away). Also take a look at the narrow, short, whitish eyeline.

Our bigger grouse, the Sooty Grouse, does not have either of these features. The adult male Sooty Grouse is a beautiful deep gray color so is easily recognized, but the female and young birds are very cryptic, somewhat like our quiz bird. They are a bit more mottled overall, making them look plain in comparison to this quiz bird. Ruffed Grouse do have short crests giving their head a peaked appearance, complex plumage, and a short, pale eyeline.

Sooty Grouse's preferred habitat is coniferous forest, although they can be found in the deciduous growth in those forests. Ruffed Grouse prefer mixed deciduous-coniferous forest, especially riparian areas, and mid-regeneration forest. In fall, winter, and early spring, you can often find them perched on a branch, nibbling at buds, catkins, or fruit.

This **RUFFED GROUSE** is sitting quite nicely, almost posing for this photo. So, how do we tell the difference between a



*Ruffed Grouse. Peaked head, short white eyeline. Note the feathered legs! The black sub-terminal tail band is also visible, and the neck feathers concealing the ruff feathers are bulging out a bit.*

*Photo by Bud McCormack*

Ruffed and Sooty Grouse when it flushed out right from our feet, giving your heart a workout? Since it's probably the only thing you will see well during that short flight, focus on the tail. The Sooty Grouse has a thick, pale band across the end of the tail (terminal band). The Ruffed Grouse has an obvious black (or blackish) sub-terminal band.

If you look closely at the sides of the lower neck, just above the bend of the wing, you can see a few white feathers. Just below those, you can see where the elongated tuft of feathers that make up the bird's namesake "ruff" are concealed. Both sexes have a ruff, but the female's is smaller. When erected, these black or blackish feathers form a dark "ruff" around the neck.

Early to mid-spring is a great time to visit Ruffed Grouse habitat to listen for a "drumming" male. You will often feel this sound in your chest before you hear the deep, thumping sound. He will often perch on a fallen log, which probably acts as a resonating chamber.

The progressively faster thumps are created by air rushing to fill the vacuum created under the wings when they are rapidly flapped in front of the body. Amazing!



*Drumming male Ruffed Grouse  
Photo by Larry Swanson/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.

**Oak-to-Wetlands Trail: Open**

**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 & Carty Trail: Closed for season, but port entrance lookout open year-round.**

### [Steigerwald Lake NWR](#)

**Closed to All Public Access for Restoration**

We are looking forward to visiting Steigerwald again on May 1st 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](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).*

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>March 2022</b>						
		1 8am Bird Walk 7pm Program	2	3	4 Field Trip Yacolt Burn State Forest	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Field Trip Beacon Rock SP
20 VAS newsletter deadline	21 Field Trip Cowlitz Co.	22	23	24	25 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival	26 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival
27 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival	28	29 Board Mtg	30	31		

#### VAS Events

Mar 1 (TUE): Bird Walk: Shillapoo Lake Wildlife Area, 8am

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

Mar 4 (FRI): Field Trip, Yacolt Burn State Forest

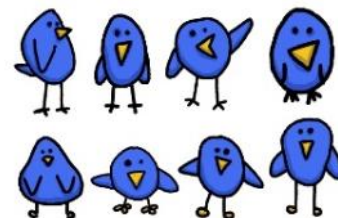
Mar 19 (SAT): Field Trip, Beacon Rock State Park

Mar 20 (SUN): Deadline for submissions for April's newsletter

Mar 21 (MON): Field Trip, Cowlitz Co.

Mar 25-27 (FRI-SUN): Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

Mar 29 (TUE): VAS Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm



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