

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON *A chapter of the National Audubon Society*



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Steigerwald Lake NWR Reopening Event May 7th 12pm-4pm

Celebrate a great conservation story and the reopening of Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge! While the refuge officially opens May 1st, staff and partners ask the community to come celebrate with us on May 7th. Walk the new trail, participate in family friendly activities, talk to Volunteer Refuge Ambassadors about what the refuge has to offer, and chat with us about how you like to engage with nature. This is not just an opportunity to take a walk and learn about this amazing restoration along the Columbia River, it is also the beginning of this Refuge growing up with the community. We want to learn from you and understand how we might work with partners to break down barriers you face to enjoying the outdoors.

Shuttle Access Only on May 7th until 5 pm

To accommodate a larger than usual crowd, the Refuge parking lot will be closed, and access will be by a shuttle leaving regularly from the Pendleton Mill Store at 2 Pendleton Way in Washougal. The shuttle will be mask friendly and wheelchair accessible. If you have questions about this or need alternate accommodations, please call Park Ranger Josie Finley at 360-608-2059.

The refuge can also be accessed from 6 am to 8 pm via a trail connection from William Clark Park at South Index Street at South 32nd Street, Washougal, WA. The parking lot will reopen at 5 pm for regular visitation and the automatic gate closes at 8 pm.

Kiwa Trail: VIP guests only this spring (AKA endangered Sandhill Cranes!)

Do you know anyone who's hometown "claim to fame" is being part of an endangered species recovery story? Well, if you live in Ridgefield you've heard this once with the Columbian white-tailed deer, who now thrive on the refuge. Now we celebrate the return of a pair of Lesser Sandhill Cranes



Sandhill Crane with new colt
Photo credit: Scott Helfrich/Audubon Photography Awards

nesting again on our Kiwa Trail. This could be the beginning of a success story that everyone who loves this place can be proud of.

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge has been working for decades to help protect cranes by providing a healthy place along their migration route to rest and recharge. Part of this is keeping pieces of the refuge closed to human disturbance, something this species needs more than others. Refuge staff and partners also work hard to

provide opportunities for the public to find healthy connections to nature and see these natural wonders. By opening areas that are less sensitive to repeat use, we can provide spaces for all of us to thrive.

Occasionally, use of these open areas need to be adjusted, to keep a balance and accommodate the many changes that both wildlife and people go through. We thank our visitors for understanding and supporting the need to delay opening of the Kiwa trail. If we give these cranes space, they can successfully increase their population. And we can return to our beloved trail when that colt (baby crane) is big enough to move around the refuge without danger from disturbance. For more information about Lesser Sandhill Cranes: [Wash- ington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Species Profile](https://www.wa.gov/Departments/Fish-and-Wildlife/Species-Profile)



From the VAS Board

Happy Spring to you all! While I feel pretty lucky to live in an area where we have a very impressive amount of wintering birds, isn't it exciting to have Arctic breeders passing through and summer residents begin to arrive for the season? It seems that almost every day brings in someone new. What's even more impressive is the journey some of those little squirts make every year! Take the Yellow Warbler. 8 grams (that's about the same as three pennies!). That little bird will nest here, raise a brood that hopefully isn't a single cowbird, fatten up and head all the way to South America for the winter. Then that same bird, if it makes it, will return to the same exact same area to do it all again the next spring. Amazing!

We have several great field trips to take advantage of the season and those new arrivals. Randy has done a great job of introducing several local types of birding options, including rotating the day of the week on which they are held. I hope you can join one, they are great opportunities to appreciate our local birds, learn from expert birders, enjoy the company of others and nature.

This spring has brought another treat. Thanks to the very talented Jennifer Wallace Wilson (daughter of our Secretary Craig Wallace), we have a new logo! She donated her impressive talent and time to create several options for consideration. The board had a really tough time choosing

from the options she gave

to us, they were all wonderful. The logo you see below was the one we finally decided to adopt. We are adding it to our letterhead, website, social media, and newsletter. Perhaps logo wear or window clings in the future?

We also are welcoming a new addition—Karen Pickering has volunteered to take on the vacant position of Membership Chair. We are very excited to have her on board! I'm sure she will bring some fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the table for streamlining membership support.

Ken Pitts will be presenting for our May program, sharing his expertise and experience in taking nature photos—you won't want to miss this one! Ken is an excellent presenter and mentor, so this promises to be an interesting and engaging webinar. All are very welcome. Sign on a bit early (6:30-7:00) to share your bird sightings, ask identification or location questions, or just to chat. If you haven't received the Zoom registration link, contact [Don Rose](#).

The annual [Wenas Audubon Campout](#) planning is in the works after a two-year interruption in the very popular Memorial weekend event. The planning committee is pleased to have DNR permits and event organization progressing. This is the spring to get back to camping out!

By Cindy McCormack, VAS Editor



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

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The Columbia Flyway is published monthly September through June (except January).

Vancouver Audubon Board Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of the month August through May.

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](#) (1000 10th Ave. just across the street from the NW end of Esther Street, just past the intersection of 10th and 11th). Parking lot can be accessed from Esther Street. There is an entrance at either side of the building.

Currently virtual meetings and programs only

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

Sunday, May 1

First-of-Month Bird Walk

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Meeting time: 6:10am

Meeting location: [Steigerwald NWR parking lot](#)

Register: vas@vancouveraudubon.org

May's bird walk: Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge

It's going to be an early start, but it's opening day! Let's check out the new trail and the birds using the new habitat!

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.

We will meet at the new parking lot, located to the west of the old parking lot, on the south side of SR14.

Saturday, May 7

WSU Vancouver Campus Walk

Leader: Randy Hill

Meeting time: 7:00am

Meeting location: [Orange Lot 2](#) (access @ Salmon Cr. Ave)

Register: email re_hill@q.com or call/text 360-975-2573

Targets are migrant and nesting songbirds including several warblers, flycatchers, woodpeckers, raptors, and a few wetland species.

We will meet at 7am at Orange Lot 2, which is accessible from the Salmon Creek Avenue entrance to the loop road; also the C-Tran #19 bus that stops along 29th Ave. We will walk both paved and established trails, including a few that are mowed or primitive along some of the field edges, the BPA powerline corridor and near Mill Creek.

Limit of 12 total participants.

Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2 Terrain: A-B with a few steeper slopes, plus some stairs and hillside trails; 2-3 miles walking.

Saturday, May 14

Klickitat Co. Migration Count

Leader: varies

Meeting time: TBD

Register: email re_hill@q.com or call/text 360-975-2573

The Klickitat County Annual Spring Migratory Bird Count has several sectors that could use some help during this long-running annual census. Typically a great day of birding! Habitats would vary depending on sector you might wish to join.

Contact Randy or Cindy (vas@vancouveraudubon.org) if you are interested. We can put you in touch with one of the sector leaders.

Tuesday, May 17

Vancouver Lowlands

Leader: Randy Hill

Meeting time: 7:00am

Meeting location: [Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel](#)

Register: email re_hill@q.com or call/text 360-975-2573

Target species are a wide variety of migrant and nesting waterfowl, waders, shorebirds, raptors and both wetland and bottomland forest songbirds.

Itinerary: Meet at 7am at the Vancouver Lake flushing channel to scan the lake. By 07:15 we will move to Frenchman's Bar Park and Shillapoo Wildlife Area at the end of Lower River Road. Additional areas for those wanting to continue could include portions of Vancouver Lake hiking trails and Shillapoo Lake. Trip will end around noon or later with opportunities to drop out between sites.

Carpooling as possible although total driving less than 10 miles. Spotting scopes highly encouraged, and bring Discover Pass and Clark County Regional Parks parking pass if you have one.

Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2 Terrain: A-B plus an optional 250 yard stretch that crosses a cattle pasture. 2-3 miles walking.

Limit of 5 cars, 10 total participants.

Please visit the [VAS website](#) for field trip details and requirements.

(Continued on page 4)

VAS Programs

Programs are held the first Tuesday of the month. Programs start at 7:00 pm, with a casual 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.

Upcoming Programs:

May 3 – Nature Photography

Ken Pitts, Photographer and birder, will talk about tips on taking pictures in nature and ethical bird photography. Ken will also touch on his personal journey as a photographer and special places he likes to photograph birds in SW Washington.



Ken Pitts has 40 years of science teaching experience and is currently a waste reduction outreach specialist for Oregon Metro. He has been a serious birder for the last decade and currently volunteers for the Gorge Refuge Stewards and spends his free days photographing wildlife and inviting others to fall in love with nature. Ken will be retiring in June of 2022 and looks forward to expanding his volunteer, birding, and photography opportunities. He was featured last December in a webinar sponsored by Friends of the Columbia Gorge titled "Photography, Community, & Nature." His photography documenting student salmon fry releases this winter has been featured in a National Wildlife Federation publication.

June 7 – Caspian Tern & Double-crested Cormorants in the Columbia River Estuary

Dan Roby, Professor of Wildlife Ecology at Oregon State University and Unit Leader-Wildlife for the U.S. Geological Survey-Oregon Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, will talk about Caspian Terns and Double-crested Cormorants, with a focus on the status of the two species in the Columbia River estuary and throughout the Pacific Flyway in the aftermath of management to reduce their impact on salmonid smolt survival in the estuary.

July & August—Program summer hiatus. Happy summer!

Previous program recordings can be found on our Vancouver Audubon Society Facebook page. Our program recordings can also be found on YouTube. Search YouTube for "Vancouver Audubon Society".

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

(Field trips, continued from page 3)

Monday, May 23 Klickitat R./Old Hwy 8

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Meeting time: 5:30am

Meeting location: [Port of Camas-Washougal](#)

Register: email vas@vancouveraudubon.org

We will plan on visiting areas along Old Hwy 8, Klickitat River, and a stop at the Little White Salmon on the return to check for Harlequin Ducks and American Dipper. Target species will be dry-land and oak species including Acorn Woodpecker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Golden Eagle.

Meet at the Port of Camas-Washougal parking lot at 5:30am, just east of the boat launch. From there we will

arrange carpools and head out for a fabulous day of birding! This will be a full day, dress for the weather, bring a lunch and plenty of water. Discover Pass recommended.

Travel expectations: Driving with several stops and some short hikes. Pace: 0-2 Terrain: A-C; 1-3 miles walking.

August 30-September 1 Grays Harbor County & Pelagic

Three-day trip to Grays Harbor County. You can choose to join for one, two, or all three days. **The pelagic portion of this trip requires reservations well ahead of time because the trips fill quickly.** If you are interested in the pelagic trip, please contact Randy right away by text at 360-975-2573. The slots on the boat that are being held for us will be released back to general reservations by mid-May.

City of Vancouver works to complete its Climate Action Plan

by Susan Saul

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) addresses how to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing emissions and slowing the rate of global temperature rise. The report from the IPCC – the United Nations organization responsible for monitoring and responding to climate change -- was preceded by two additional reports that established the scope of climate change and offered suggestions on how to adapt to a changing climate, respectively. The IPCC report makes clear that

we have the technology and the know-how to potentially halve emissions by 2030, but despite recent progress, we are running out of time to make meaningful change.

We have the opportunity to address climate change at the local level. The City of Vancouver is moving through a process to complete an aggressive Climate Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. The plan address transportation and land use, buildings and energy, and preserving natural resources. Key strategies would reduce building energy demands and switch to low-carbon power resources, revise land use to provide affordable and sustainable housing, increase pedestrian transit, decrease the need for driving and improve green spaces for carbon sequestration.

Many of the proposed ideas require efforts to be enforced on a municipal level. Suggested policy tools would require the city to create mandates for new construction and energy conversion in existing buildings, invest in renewable fuel infrastructure and increase city density through up-zoning.

Currently, the City Council is planning to hold a public hearing and final adoption of the Climate Action Plan on August 15, 2022. You are urged to speak in support of strong climate action.



City of Vancouver seeks permanent prohibition on large fossil fuel projects

by Susan Saul

The City of Vancouver is working to adopt a permanent prohibition on new and expanded, large-scale bulk fossil fuel projects, a policy defined carefully to protect the health and safety of Vancouver residents. Washington's [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) shows that much of Vancouver is at higher risk of health impacts from air pollution from diesel emissions and ozone. The map shows that many Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color (BIPOC) communities within Vancouver face an Environmental Health Disparities ranking at the very top of the Washington Department of Health's index. These areas at higher risk show that the City can buffer environmental health impacts on our community through the large-scale fossil fuel projects prohibition.

The City likely will re-issue the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) analysis and determination for land use codes in May 2022. When the City schedules a public hearing, you are urged to testify in support of this permanent prohibition.

Washington Adopts Nation's Strongest Energy Code

by Susan Saul

Coinciding with Earth Day on April 22, the Washington State Building Code Council voted to adopt a new statewide commercial and multifamily building energy code that will be the strongest, most climate-friendly in the country by driving the transition to clean electricity for space and water heating.

Under Washington's updated energy code that will take effect in July 2023, new commercial buildings – including multifamily residential buildings four stories and taller – will be built with high-efficiency electric heat pumps for water and space heating. Washington's electricity mix is among the cleanest and most affordable in the country, and the new building code is projected to cut more than 8 million tons of carbon dioxide by 2050, equivalent to the annual emissions of 1.8 million cars.

This is a major win for clean energy, healthier homes and less pollution. The Department of Energy has made heat pumps and energy efficiency measures a key part of its efforts to reduce emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. In Washington, homes and buildings have been the fastest growing source of carbon pollution.

President Biden's Budget Proposal Advances Clean Energy, Climate Resilience and Equity Goals

by Susan Saul

Congress now begins its own process to review spending priorities for the coming fiscal year.

President Biden recently released his proposed budget for fiscal year 2023. While the president's budget is only a request to Congress, it informs Congress in the drafting of annual spending bills.

This year's proposed budget includes investments for clean energy research, a civilian conservation corps, and equity initiatives to help disadvantaged communities. It would increase budgets across major environmental agencies, including the Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"Federal conservation investments are critical to bringing birds back and building resilient communities," said Justin Stokes, deputy chief conservation officer, National Audubon Society. "Birds are telling us that their survival—and ours—depends on investments in healthy natural spaces and clean energy to curb the effects of climate change and address the biodiversity crisis."

Among the programs in the President's proposed budget are:

- \$3.3 billion for clean energy projects
- \$1.8 billion to help the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior strengthen federal firefighting services
- \$1.45 billion toward Justice initiatives to advance racial equity, clean up pollution, and create good-paying jobs for front line communities.

As Congress considers the FY23 budget proposal from

President Biden, Audubon urges increased investment for federal agencies and programs that will reduce carbon emissions, conserve our lands and waters, and restore bird populations.

Last month, Audubon's Justin Stokes had the opportunity to submit testimony as a part of the Congressional appropriations process for fiscal year 2023. In his testimony he said: "More than ever before, Americans across the country and members of Congress across both aisles agree that climate change poses a serious threat to our health and safety. But recognizing the threat is not enough. Congress must take immediate and concrete steps to address the causes and impacts of climate change, which are being felt across the country, including disastrous wildfire and drought seasons in the West, increasing numbers and severity of storm events, and relentless sea-level rise affecting coastal communities. These climate threats are disproportionately impacting marginalized and historically underserved areas and communities of color, which further exacerbates economic inequalities."

Since 1970, we have lost 3 billion of America's birds and two-thirds of our remaining birds are now at risk of extinction due to climate change. Audubon's 2019 Survival by Degrees report found that if we take action now, we can help improve the chances for 76% of species at risk.

Audubon policy staff is continuing to analyze the President's proposed budget and is actively working with Congress as it begins to hold hearings on FY23 appropriations. In the coming weeks, Audubon will share its annual list of budget priorities aimed at helping birds, people, and the places we need.

VAS Joins Letter Requesting Funding for Legacy Roads and Trails

Vancouver Audubon Society joined 183 conservation, recreation and wildlife organizations, elected officials and local businesses on a letter to Senator Patty Murray requesting additional funding be allocated to recently reinstated. On

March 16, Washington Wild sent a letter to Senator Patty Murray requesting additional funding be allocated to the recently reinstated Legacy Roads and Trails program to jump-start the backlog of repairs and improvements



needed for watershed protection.

The letter, sent on March 16, 2022, expressed gratitude for the recent reinstatement of the U.S. Forest Service's Legacy Roads and Trails Program authorized in the Infrastructure and Jobs Act. While the rein-

stated program includes a small amount of seed funding, more is needed to address the backlog of infrastructure projects on national forests that were neglected for three years due to defunding by the Trump Administration.

VAS Field Trip Report Yacolt Burn State Forest—April 6, 2022

By Randy Hill

After the early March trip was diverted to areas that were not fogged out, an entering-spring trip was rescheduled with slightly different expectation. Eight of us headed out of Hockinson at 7:10 a.m. “up the mountain” to search for winter leftovers and spring arrivals at the DNR-managed Yacolt Burn State Forest. A short scout the day before indicated no snow, variable road conditions, side gates closed but restrooms open. The expected chill was more than just refreshing as a breeze kept us looking for sheltered hideouts as soon as we got out of vehicles. The Larch Mountain trailhead (L-1510 gate) hike took us to a few groups of siskins, and the flatter road below provided our first vista point, looking west across the Larch Corrections facility where we could barely ID some Mallards on their pond. The drive further up the L-1500 road to the L-1520 gate had a couple of surprises. First was a newly graded road (in progress with grader) that filled many of the potholes revealed during scouting. Second was a very accommodating pair of WESTERN BLUEBIRDS that provided everyone great looks. Our destination at the saddle, AKA “road to the rock”, migration corner”, and now maybe “the mountain beaver spot”, was less than pleasant with shifting winds providing a chill. Down the



Western Bluebird
Rick Lewis/Audubon Photography Awards

hill on more repaired road to pavement of the L-1000 road to the penitentiary. With some sun and protection from the wind it actually became pleasant. A couple of flyover Band-tailed Pigeons, an Osprey, and Turkey Vultures highlighted a mix of expected songbirds. The stop along Rock Creek from L-1200/1210 roads did not reveal an American Dipper seen the day before. The trip through Dole Valley was uneventful. When we reached the L-

1100 road it was nearing our noon cut-off time, and we decided to head toward Moulton Falls to try for a dipper there. When we reached the East Fork Lewis River a quick check revealed a dipper downstream. Over the next 10 minutes we enjoyed flights, floating, bobbing and diving of four different dippers up and down from the bridge. It was a fitting end to the trip. But there was one more surprise. With a corvette on my tail, I had to slow down to allow four Wild Turkeys to cross the road and reach safety. They were likely someone’s escaped or free-roaming birds showing plenty of nourishment by their body structure, but as turkeys in Skamania County have expanded, it was another reminder to expect the unexpected. No owls or grouse, but these surprises are part of what makes these outings enjoyable.

Save the Date!
June 9-12, 2022
WOS Annual Conference
Spokane Valley, WA

Bobolink
(*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)

Western Tanager
(*Piranga ludoviciana*)

Sage Thrasher
(*Oreoscoptes montanus*)

Washington Ornithological Society Annual Conference Spokane Valley, WA

June 9-12, 2022

Registration open April 24th

“Shrub-steppe to Meadows to Peaks”

The 2022 WOS Annual Conference represents a unique time in our history, both organizationally and nationally, as we emerge from a pandemic and a three-year hiatus from meeting together face to face at our annual conference. We are celebrating this opportunity and invite you to join us in sampling the avian diversity of arid shrub-steppe rangelands, mountain meadows, and forested peaks. And all of it in the company of fellow birders. Some you have known for years and some you hope to know for years to come. Sound intriguing?

Visit the [WOS website for details](https://www.wosociety.org/) and registration.

Good Birding, Everyone!

Jennifer Kauffman, WOS President



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.

A bird reported for the first time in a county in 2022 is marked FOY for first of the year.

March 26, Jared Strawderman and Ken Pitts birded the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, finding the long staying **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** and a newly arrived flock of 20 **CLIFF SWALLOWS**.

March 27, a hybrid **WHITE-CROWNED X GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW** was spotted by Ryan Abe in his Vancouver yard. He described it as having a golden crown with black eye line and a white eyebrow stripe. These two sparrows are closely related and they will occasionally interbreed where their ranges overlap, I have only seen a couple of these hybrids.

March 28, Pamela Gunn spotted a **RED-NECKED GREBE** (3) in the Columbia River at Ft. Vancouver.

March 28, 3 **RED-NECKED GREBES** in breeding plumage, were seen by Douglas McKay from the Vancouver-Columbia River Boardwalk, there must have been a number of them in the area at the time.

March 28, an early **PURPLE MARTIN** (FOY) was first heard by Cindy McCormack in the Vancouver Lake lowlands before she spotted an all-dark swallow, obviously much larger than the nearby **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS** with a notched tail.

March 29, Cindy McCormack was on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, near the Bachelor Slough bridge when she heard the creaky-door calls of 20 **CLIFF SWALLOWS** mixed in with **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS**.

March 29, Ken Vanderkamp and Robert Vanderkamp were exploring the end of Lower River Road in the Vancouver Lake lowlands when they had a rather nice surprise, a **BLACK-NECKED STILT** (4 & FOY). They found it in the first pond on the left as you go out on the dike on the WDF&W property towards Round Lake.

March 29, Ruth Meyer was able to pick out the **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit,

March 29, the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit **LESSER**

YELLOWLEGS was also reported by Cindy McCormack.

Mar 30, another **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** was found by Jim Danzenbaker at Shillapoo Lake.

March 30, Randy Hill spotted a continuing **RED-NECKED GREBE** from above the bridge on the Waterfront Renaissance Trail.

March 30, Jim Danzenbaker had a great day of birding, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands at the end of Lower River Road he picked out a **EURASIAN GREEN-WINGED TEAL**.

They used to be considered a separate species called a Common Teal, but are now lumped with our form of teal. The main difference is that the Eurasian has a lateral white stripe over the wing while the American Green-winged Teal has a vertical white stripe in front of the wing. At Tidewater Cove he found 3 **RED-NECKED GREBES**, two together and one lone bird. At Wintler Park on the Columbia River he spotted 2 **TUFTED DUCKS** (4) describing one as having about 50% of a normal length crest and the other with a nub of a crest. Both with solid black back.

March 30, the 2 **TUFTED DUCKS** at the Tidewater Cove Marina were also seen by Brian Pendleton and Darchelle Worley, Randy Hill. Mike Clarke and Gregory Johnson.

March 31, Bob Flores reported a **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (FOY) at the Ridgefield NWR River S Unit.

March 31, Andreas Anderson saw the long-staying **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (3) at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, Skamania County.

March 31, we had a **CASPIAN TERN** (FOY) and **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD** at St. Cloud while birding Skamania County with Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson.

April 1, the **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** at Shillapoo Lake was seen on the VAS field trip led by Cindy McCormack and

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Yellow-headed Blackbird

Photo: Gene Putney / Audubon Photography Awards

(Afield, continued from page 8)

participants Don Rose, Jean Avery, Randy Hill and Brenda Dias. I highly recommend going on these outings as the quickest way to learn how to identify birds is birding with other people who can help with identification tips.

April 2, the **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit was seen and photographed by Maxine Reid, Conrad Dark and Ruth Dark.

April 2, the Tidewater Cove **TUFTED DUCK** was seen by Cindy McCormack, Mark Miller, Karen Pickering, Maxine Reid, and Liam Hutcheson. It used to take days for the information about a rare bird to get out to birders, now it is almost instant with cellphones and social media.

April 2, a female a **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (3 & FOY) at Tidewater Cove marina was seen by Maxine Reid and Liam Hutcheson.

April 3, Brent Angelo saw the Tidewater Cove Marina **TUFTED DUCK**.

April 3, Grant Wiest relocated the Wintler Park **TUFTED DUCK**

April 3, John Davis heard a **CANYON WREN** (3) singing its downward cascading song from the cliffs to the north of the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery, at Underwood in Skamania County.

April 3, Daniel Knapp and Alice Pence were at the Casee Center Botanical Gardens when they spotted 2 **CHIPPING SPARROWS** (FOY).

April 5, a leucistic **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE** was photographed by Brenna Egan at the Columbia Tech Center Park.

April 5, Bill Bradford photographed the two **TUFTED DUCKS** at Wintler Park, he said they were best seen from Tidewater Cove Marina jetty. These Eurasian birds brought many birders to Clark County for a chance to see these visitors before they head back to their nesting grounds.

April 5, Jim Danzenbaker got two photos of a **BRANT** (3) on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, these geese are usually found on saltwater where they feed on Eel Grass.

April 5, Gregory Johnson visited the



Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, and was able to relocate the **BRANT** first spotted by Jim Danzenbaker.

April 7, Cindy McCormack, Les Carlson and I decided to bird further up the Gorge starting in Klickitat County at Rowland Lake where we encountered the first of many **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** seen on this outing and 3 **WHITE-THROATED SWIFTS**. We then stopped at the

intersection of Old Highway 8 and Major Creek where we found 2 **ACORN WOODPECKERS** before continuing on to the Lyle-Balch Cemetery where we found 4 more **ACORN WOODPECKERS**, 14 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** and a pair of nesting **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS** and with some searching Cindy found a **SOUTHERN ALLIGATOR LIZARD**. Just east of the cemetery we spotted another 2 **ACORN WOODPECKERS**. A **CASPIAN TERN** and 8 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** were on the sandbar at the mouth of the Klickitat River and a mile upstream at the Lyle Campground Park, we heard another **ACORN WOODPECKER**. We then continued to Dallesport where we spotted a **GOLDEN EAGLE** and at nearby Spearfish Lake, we had an **EARED GREBE** and a pair of **LONG-BILLED CURLEWS**. On our way back home, we stopped at Skamania Landing and found 3 **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (4 & FOY)—any shorebird in that county is a good find.

April 8, Andrew S. Aldrich was birding the Vancouver Waterfront Renaissance Trail, and found a first year **GLAUCOUS GULL** (4) with bright white wingtips and a pink bill with a neat black tip. It was resting on rocks among several first and second year **GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULLS** for comparison.

April 8, a **RED-THROATED LOON** (3) at Tidewater Cove was reported by Jim Danzenbaker, usually scarce bird locally they were unusually numerous here this winter but this was a month later than the time period they are normally seen here.

April 8, the first of the year **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (FOY) for Skamania County was found and photographed by John Davis at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery along with the continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER**.

April 9, Dave Hayden was birding the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, when he spotted a **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (3 & FOY). These small

(Continued on page 10)



(Afield, continued from page 9)

shorebirds have a dark cap, black face except for a small upper white eye crescent, a white throat and red on the neck. These birds feed by spinning in circles while swimming in the water and are unusual, as the females are more colorful than the males, who are responsible for raising the chicks.



Mountain Bluebird
digitized by Cindy McCormack

April 9, a **VAUX'S SWIFT** (FOY) was seen by April Brown at Shillapoo Lake in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

Apr 10, the continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery was reported by John Davis, who also heard the cascading song of a **CANYON WREN** from the cliffs above the hatchery. He managed to pick out a **NASHVILLE WARBLER** (FOY) foraging with **YELLOW-RUMPED** and **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** in the Big Leaf Maple and oak trees.

April 11, we had a **LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (FOY) make a quick stop at our feeders in Skamania County.

April 14, Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson found a **SWAMP SPARROW** (3) in alternate plumage (breeding plumage) foraging in very shallow water at the base of the cattails/rushes/reed canary grass at Shillapoo Lake, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands. This is late in the season for this bird that nests from the Dakotas eastward and north into Canada. They usually migrate out of our area before acquiring their breeding plumage with a full rusty cap (no central line), broad gray supercilium, dark eyeline, white chin/throat with faint dark lateral border, pale malar, gray lateral neck and upper breast, bright russet back and wings, a back with contrasting stripes and sides with a rusty wash. They had a total of 78 species there including

an amazing 12 **VIRGINIA RAILS**.

April 14, on Strawberry Island at Bonneville Dam, John Davis spotted a pair of **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS** (3) and a pair of **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** (4 & FOY) Despite the name of this area just below the dam it is not an island and is one of the few grassland habitats that are open to the public in Skamania County and has great walking trails.

April 15, while walking the Lake/Creek Loop Trail at Skamania Lodge, Jason Ransom saw a **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** (3 & FOY) and a **GOLDEN EAGLE** (4 & FOY).

April 16, 4 **WESTERN BLUEBIRDS** and 5 **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** and **CLIFF SWALLOWS** (FOY) were among the 56 species found on Strawberry Island on another visit by John Davis.

April 16, Cindy McCormack and Jared Strawderman were doing volunteer work at the Steigerwald Lake NWR when they spotted 3 **BLACK-NECKED STILTS**, these black-and-white wading birds with thin, straight black bills and long bubblegum-pink legs are more common on the east side of the Cascades and are a fairly recent addition to the Washington checklist, with the first one being found here in 1973.

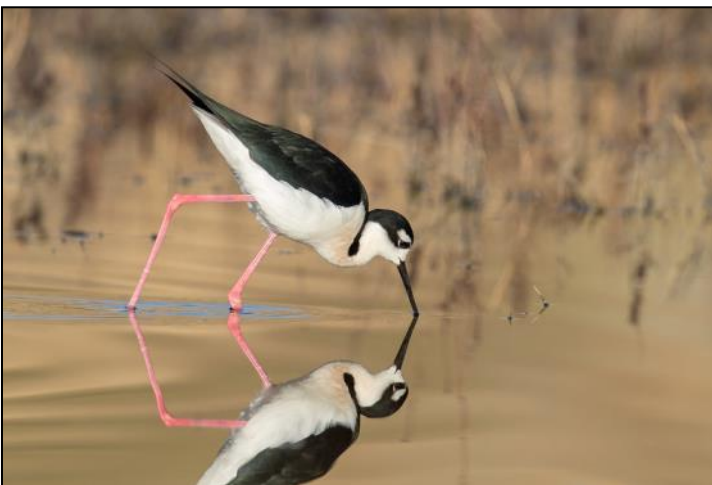
April 16, while birding the Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit, Jim Danzenbaker found a **HOUSE WREN** (FOY).

April 17, a **CANYON WREN** was heard by Ian Godwin and Emma Martin near Hardy Falls on the Hamilton Creek Trail at Beacon Rock State Park. While these birds are another supposedly east of the Cascades species, they are resident on Beacon Rock and the cliffs in the western Gorge.

April 17, a **HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** (FOY) seen by Jimmy Stewart at the Ft. Vancouver Historic Site was the first flycatcher reported this year in Clark County, although we have had both Black and Say's Phoebe, which are members of the flycatcher family, seen earlier.

April 18, most of the snow at our place had finally melted off and we had a movement of birds including 2 **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** and 5 **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS**.

April 19, Jim Danzenbaker reported a sighting of another **BLACK-NECKED STILT**, this one was with the flock of **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit. These are most likely birds that were displaced by



Black-necked Stilt
Photo: Mick Thompson

(Continued on page 11)

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the loss of their wetland habitat by the continuing drought in the interior of the western states.

April 19, Gregory Johnson and Byron Palmer also spotted the **BLACK-NECKED STILT** at the Ridgefield NWR-River S Unit.



*Black-headed Grosbeak
Photo by Wilson Cady*

April 19, while conducting a survey on Crane's Landing in the Vancouver Lake lowlands Cindy McCormack spotted 2 **WESTERN KINGBIRDS** (3 & FOY). These large gray-headed flycatchers with a bright yellow breast and a black tail with a white edge hunt over open fields and are more common east of the Cascades.

April 19, a **CHIPPING SPARROW**, **NASHVILLE WARBLER** (FOY) and a **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER**. was seen by John Bishop at his home west of Brush Prairie.

April 20, we had a female **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** (FOY) at our feeders in Skamania County, which is the earliest arrival date we have had at our place in 50 years by three days.

April 20, another visit to the Vancouver Lake lowlands by Cindy McCormack produced 163 **GREAT EGRETS**, 1 **WESTERN KINGBIRD** and a **WILSON'S WARBLER**.

April 20, the **BLACK-NECKED STILT** found earlier at the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit was seen again by Roger Windemuth.

April 20, Jim Danzenbaker found 2 **CLARK'S GREBE** in with 32 **WESTERN GREBES** in Vancouver Lake near the Flushing Channel. Both of these species breed east of the Cascades and are most likely refugees from drought affected lakes.

April 21, a day of Skamania County birding produced a number of good sightings by Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson. At the St. Cloud Wayside, they found 2 **CASSIN'S VIREOS**, a **WARBLING VIREO**. 1 **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE**, 12 **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS** and 1 **NASHVILLE WARBLER**. They spotted 69 species at Strawberry Island including 5 **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS**, another **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** a

CHIPPING SPARROW and 5 warbler species highlighted by 190 **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS**.

April 22, Bob Flores saw 2 **BULLOCK'S ORIOLES** (FOY) at Frenchman's Bar Park where they do build their pendulous nests in the cottonwood trees.

April 21, this must have been when **BANK SWALLOWS** (3 & FOY) passed through the county as Mike Clarke spotted one at Blurock Landing and Cindy McCormack reported one the next day from the Vancouver Lake lowlands. These

swallows only migrate through Clark County on their way to their nesting colonies most of which are east of the Cascades although since the eruption of Mt. Saint Helens they have established colonies in the volcanic ash deposits there and along the Cowlitz River.

The freak April snowstorm may have slowed the migration down and did a lot of damage to the native vegetation while some were blooming and others had tender new growth that was crushed by the weight of the snow. I worry that this late snowfall may reduce the production of fruit and berries as well as the insects our wildlife depends on during nesting season. Hopefully things fared better at higher elevations where the plants were not as far along in their spring growth. The migrant shorebird numbers peak about the third week of April, but other species will continue to arrive through the end of May. The average arrival dates for many of the migrant birds in the Portland/Vancouver area can be seen at: [Willamette Valley Spring Migration Phenology-birds over Portland](http://WillametteValleySpringMigrationPhenology-birds-over-Portland).

Please continue to send me your sighting reports or enter them into eBird for inclusion in this column and the 2022 County Lists. Since the last newsletter, 18 birds have been added to the Clark County list for the 2022 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project raising it to 178 for the year. In Skamania County, 19 birds were added to that

list bringing it to 138. These lists of all of the birds reported in each county are updated every two months and can be seen at [Washington Birder \(wabirder.com\)](http://WashingtonBirder(wabirder.com)).

I would like to invite more people to share their nature photos on the Vancouver Audubon Afield Facebook site and if you do manage to photograph any unusual species please send me a copy for use in this newsletter.

By Wilson Cady



*Chipping Sparrow near Casee Botanical Gardens
Photo by Greg Johnson*

Bird ID Challenge

By Cindy McCormack

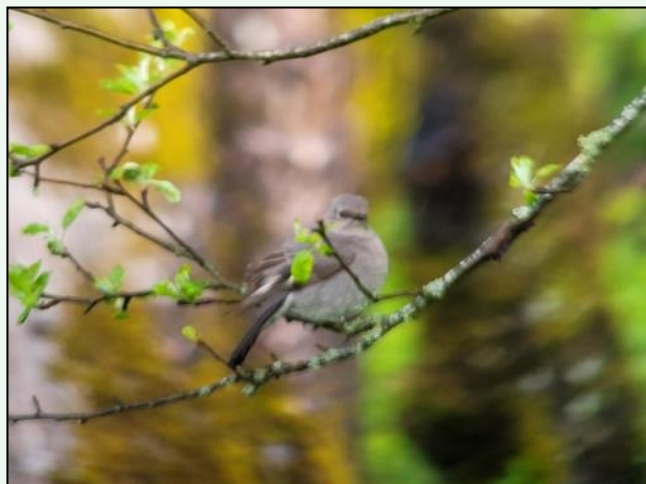
Let's make use of those partial or poor photos or just birds that can be a challenge to ID! If there are identifiable features in the photo, submit your photo for our next challenge.

Uncertain about identification or if photo has enough info?

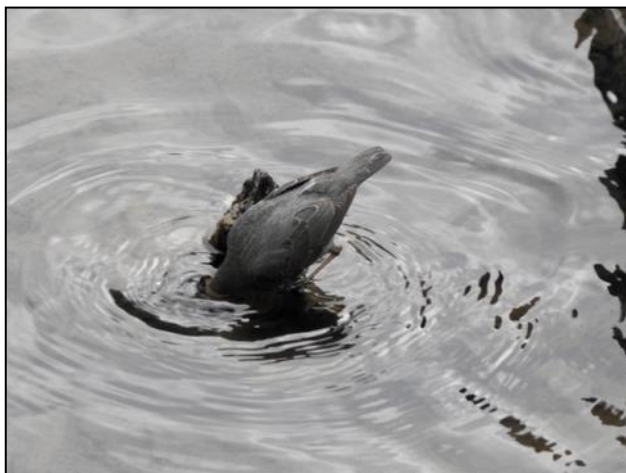
Don't hesitate to send it in for discussion and review.

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

Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.



April's Bird ID Challenge Discussion



Quiz photo by
Karen
Pickering



Enlarged view

That's a lot of gray! Gray background, gray bird, gray substrate...and no visible head. How are we supposed to ID this one?

This is actually going to be a fairly easy and fun one! Let's start with habitat. Water, possibly shallow water since the bird is standing at the surface, but it's difficult to say with certainty, since there is a rock or other debris just behind the bird on which it could be standing.

No head, so we can't evaluate based on the head shape, bill length or shape, or the eye. Hmmm...

So, what DO we have? A bird in the water, with its head submerged. It appears fairly uniformly gray with brownish tinge in places. It appears to be rather stout, not slender or delicate in build like a warbler. The legs seem to be a dusky-pink in coloration. The tail is short and square. The wings are relatively short, the primaries barely reaching

the base of the tail.

Look closely at the feathers—the back feathers appear very smooth and dense. Even the fluffed-up portion on the rump shows very dense feathering. Dense feathering like this is something we would usually see in a water bird of some sort.

So, what is this bird doing? It seems to be deliberately submerging its head into the water. This does not appear to be the beginning of a bird bath caught in the moment by a camera—typically the abdomen is submerged before the head dunk and wing flutter/splash. But this bird is perched on the rock, leaning forward to just submerge the head. So, this bird appears to be looking for something underwater! With the position and angle of the legs, this bird is ready to push off of the rock quickly! Those dusky

(Continued on page 13)

pink legs are thin, more like a perching bird than a typical water bird.

We don't need much more than small, stout gray bird with a stubby tail in the water to point us to **AMERICAN DIPPER**! These fantastic little birds specialize in hunting aquatic invertebrates and small fish in fast-moving, clear, unpolluted streams and rivers with cascades and riffles.

Dippers (Cinclidae) are the only truly aquatic songbirds, spending their entire lives along fast-flowing streams, although they occasionally forage along lake and pond edges in the winter. They are most closely related to the thrushes, but are unique among songbirds since they dive underwater and walk along the submerged streambed, searching for aquatic invertebrates that cling to rocks.

"[H]is music is that of the streams refined and spiritualized. The deep booming notes of the falls are in it, the trills of the rapids, the gurgling of margin eddies, the low whispering of level reaches, and the sweet tinkle of separate drops oozing from the ends of mosses and falling into tranquil ponds." —John Muir, 1894

Some of their interesting adaptations include the thick, uniform feathering we observed. They do not have naked skin between feather tracts as found in

other passerines, making their feathers more similar to a duck's than a robin's! They also have flaps over their nostrils and a large oil gland for waterproofing those feathers.

They have a beautiful, complex, loud song often pitched higher than the roar of the rushing water. A song can last as long as ten minutes! Their song is reminiscent of the song of mockingbird or thrasher, maybe with a little wren thrown in for fun. Their most common call note is similar to call of a Canyon Wren.

American Dippers are easily recognizable by habit and habitat alone. They routinely "dip" while perched, which is how they earned their name. (Well, it's more like squats than dips, but no one wants to be called an American Squatter). They actively dive and swim from their streamside or center-stream perches. Their favored exposed perches (often rocks) often have tell-tale whitewash (aka: Dipper-doo). Simply waiting quietly near that marked rock will usually reward you with a dipper before too long!



American Dipper collecting nesting material. The thin white arc over the eye is the exposed edge of the eyelid feathers.
Photo: Teri Franzen/Audubon Photography Awards

Quiz bird, shortly after diving and eating an aquatic insect. Notice he appears completely dry.

Photo: Karen Pickering



Blinking American Dipper showing its bright white eyelid feathers. When freshly molted many feathers will also have a crisp white edging.
Photo: Evan Barrientos/Audubon



American Dippers like to nest in vertical rock walls along their stream or river (which can include bridge supports!), lined and disguised with plenty of moss.

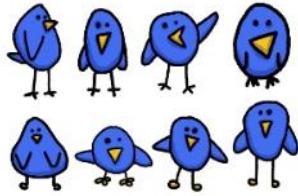
Photo: Ben Knoot/Audubon Photography Awards

VAS Community

Young Birders Program

Tripods needed

We want to thank a company called Binocularlink for their generous donation of refurbished Leupold Optics for our young birder program!



Access to quality optics is certainly a barrier for a beginning bird watcher, so we are excited to now be able to offer binoculars and spotting scopes for participants in our future programs. One challenge is the optics did not come with accessories like neck straps and tripods. Happily, the Fish and Wildlife Service was able to purchase neck straps for us through the Backyard Bird Shop. However, we have 5 spotting scopes without tripods. If anyone has a tripod that is not being used, please consider donating it to our program!

—Jared Strawderman



Who's up for some owls? Thanks to artist **Jana Peterson** for sharing her wonderful work! Find more of her work at Backyard Bird Shop.

Citizen Science Monitoring Opportunities!



Spotted Towhee
Photo: Mick Thompson

National Audubon Society has a program to monitor the predicted impacts of climate change on the bird species of North America. Their landmark study, *389 species on the Brink*, identified species that are not predicted to fare as well as the climate

changes. I am looking for volunteers interested in conducting field surveys of Spotted Towhees and Red-breasted Nuthatch between May 15 and June 15 in the Clark County area. Contact Don Rose at 360-910-8492 or email at meetings@vancouveraudubon.org if you are interested. —Don Rose

Banded Purple Martin Sightings Needed!

The Western Purple Martin monitoring project is continuing in our area and we need help relocating banded birds! If you happen to see a Purple Martin with leg bands, **please send the location and any additional information you may have noted to Cindy at nwbirder@gmail.com.**

Banded martins will have a silver band on one leg and a numbered color band on the opposite leg. If you spot one of these birds (bands are visible when perched), please try to note which leg had the color band, the band color, the sex of the bird, and any numbers or letters you can read on the band (not necessary) and send them to me with the location. Photographs are also very welcome.



Purple Martin nestling with a newly applied green identification band on the left leg

Thank you for helping our monitoring efforts!

—Cindy McCormack

Wenas Audubon CampOut



White-headed Woodpecker
art by Carleen Zimmerman

You are invited to attend a celebration of birds, bats, butterflies, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern Washington!

Every Memorial Day Weekend, members of Washington State's Audubon Chapters and their friends gather in the Wenas Valley, located on the east slope of the Cascade Mountains be-

tween Ellensburg and Yakima. With a variety of natural history and recreation opportunities, the Wenas Valley is a beautiful area that supports a fascinating assortment of spring flora and fauna, and offers the spiritual fulfillment of simply being outdoors in the spring. Everyone, whether members of Audubon chapters or not, is welcome to join us for this outing.

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 due to Sandhill Crane nesting

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: Seasonal trail opens May 1st, but port entrance lookout open year-round.

Steigerwald Lake NWR

Reopening May 1st! Reopening event May 7th, 12-4pm. Shuttle access only: To accommodate a larger than usual crowd, the Refuge parking lot will be closed, and access will be by a shuttle leaving regularly from the Pendleton Mill Store at 2 Pendleton Way in Washougal.

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
May 2022						
1 Bird Walk	2	3 7pm Program	4	5	6	7 Field Trip WSU-V & Steigerwald Grand Opening
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Klickitat Spring Count Migratory Bird Day
15	16	17 Field Trip Van Lowlands	18	19	20	21
22	23 Field Trip Klickitat Co.	24	25	26	27	28 Wenas Audubon Campout
29 Wenas Audubon Campout	30 Wenas Audubon Campout	31 Board Mtg				

May 1 (SUN): Bird Walk: Steigerwald NWR opening day. 6am

May 3 (TUE): Zoom Program, Nature Photography/Ken Pitts, 6:30pm social/program 7pm

May 7 (SAT): Field Trip, WSU-Vancouver Campus trails

May 7 (SAT): Steigerwald Lake NWR Reopening Celebration

May 14 (SAT): World Migratory Bird Day & Klickitat Co. Spring Migration Count

May 17 (TUE): Field Trip, Vancouver Lowlands

May 23 (MON): Field Trip, Klickitat River/Old Hwy 8

May 28-30 (Memorial Weekend): Wenas Audubon Campout

May 31 (TUE): Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm

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backyardbirdshop.com



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