

# Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON *A chapter of the National Audubon Society*



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## Vancouver Audubon Joins Green River Valley Alliance

by Susan Saul

Vancouver Audubon recently joined the Green River Valley Alliance, formed by the Cascade Forest Conservancy (CFC) to seek permanent protection of the Green River valley north of Mount St. Helens from an open-pit mine.

In February 2022, the U.S. District Court reversed decisions by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service to permit a Canadian mining company to drill 63 exploratory holes on and around Goat Mountain on the north side of the valley.

In 1982, Congress left this area out of the Mount St. Helens National Monument to forestall the threat of a veto by President Reagan, who wanted to use the mineral rights as an excuse not to protect public lands. The Trust for Public Land purchased an undivided half interest in the mineral rights (the seller refused to sell full rights) and sold or donated those rights to the federal government thinking that would protect the land from mining. In 2008, public opposition pressured the BLM to deny a hard rock mining permit for the undivided half interest. In 2010, the private mineral rights were sold to a Canadian company, Ascot Resources, Ltd. The Forest Service approved Ascot's drilling plan without an environmental assessment and Ascot began limited prospecting. In 2011, a federal judge dismissed Ascot's attempt to restart prospecting. A month later, Ascot filed new permit applications that were quickly approved. This led to another lawsuit and another victory against the BLM and Forest Service in

2014. Once again, Ascot filed new permit applications that were approved by the BLM and Forest Service in 2018. These permits were challenged in court in 2019 and led to this year's decision.

An open-pit mine would devastate an area important to many Tribes, local communities, and people who value outdoor recreation. The Green River valley is loved by hunters, anglers, hikers, mountain bikers, backcountry horse riders, backpackers and others. A mine would threaten forest health, local biodiversity, wild fish populations, water quality and downstream communities.

CFC won't be able to hold the mining company off in court forever, so CFC founded the Green River Valley Alliance campaign—a new coalition working towards a solution that can end the threat of a mine for good.

CFC is seeking a legislative mineral

withdrawal, which is a federal land management tool that bans mining activities within a defined boundary. A mineral withdrawal would not impact other permitted activities within its boundaries. Getting this done through Congress rather than through administrative channels will ensure that these protections for the Green River Valley can't easily be undone by the whims of a future administration.

Go to the [www.GreenRiverValleyAlliance.org](http://www.GreenRiverValleyAlliance.org) to add your name to CFC's petition, check-out upcoming events, and help spread the word.



Western Tanager  
Photo: Greg Johnson

### Summer Break

It's that time of year! We take a bit of a summer hiatus, with no planned newsletters or programs for July and August. This will be the last newsletter until the September issue, which should arrive at the end of August. **Field trips and other events will be announced via the website, blog, and the VAS Facebook page.** If you haven't already, subscribe to the [VAS blog](http://VAS blog)—an easy way to get notified of any announcements via email from the blog feed.



## From the VAS Board

I hope everyone has been enjoying the spring migration as much as I have. It has been an unusual spring with many birds backed up in the lowlands because of weather conditions in the higher elevations. Hundreds of Yellow-rumped Warblers and a multitude of Yellow, Wilson's, and Orange-crowned Warblers have crossed my path as well as many others. My backyard has been unusually alive with these birds as well as Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks. There is still time to get out and experience all of these wonderful birds and more at the many great birding spots of Clark County.

Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge, one of Clark County's best birding spots, reopened after being closed for more than two years on May 1st. Vancouver Audubon hosted a bird walk early on opening day, and Cindy McCormack and company spotted or heard 83 bird species on a very pleasant morning. It was great to see the creek reconnected to the floodplain and a variety of shorebirds utilizing this new resource. 139 species of birds have been recorded at Steigerwald since May 1.

As Program chair, I have enjoyed trying to bring our members a variety of educational and interesting programs. If

you missed one

**By Don Rose, Program Chair**

of these programs, they can all now be found on Vancouver Audubon Society YouTube page. Just search for Vancouver Audubon Society and enjoy learning about condors, the reopening of Steigerwald, shorebird identification, our Young Birders Group, the Lights Out program, birding in central Florida, photography tips from Ken Pitts, or the Clark County Backyard Habitat certification program. If you have ideas for new programs you want, please email me at [meetings@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org).



Evening Grosbeak  
Photo by Greg Johnson

There are a couple of community opportunities I would like to highlight this month. The Columbian newspaper has started a community-funded journalism initiative as a means to raise money to fund local reporting in our community newspaper. Vancouver Audubon will be providing funding in hopes of funding an environmental reporter for Clark County and southwest Washington. If you are interested in seeing more of

this type of reporting, please consider donating to this valuable educational resource.

Another great opportunity to have an impact here locally

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

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Chartered December 18, 1975

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

*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** 110 Esther St. (just across the street from the north end of Esther Short Park, 1/2 mile 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**

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

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

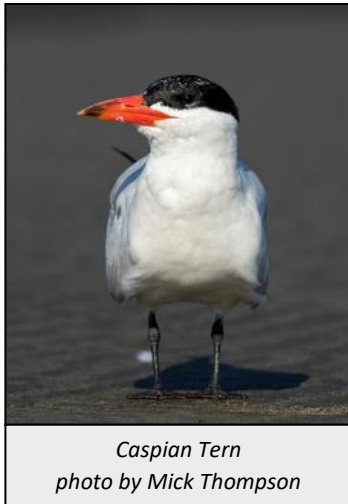
## **Upcoming Program:**

### **June 7 – Terns, Cormorants, and Salmon**

#### ***Managing Caspian Terns and Double-crested Cormorants to Help Restore Threatened Salmon and Steelhead in the Columbia River Basin***

**Dan Roby**, recently retired as Unit Leader–Wildlife for the U.S. Geological Survey–Oregon Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and as Professor of Wildlife Ecology in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Sciences at Oregon State University.

The largest breeding colonies of Caspian Terns and Double-crested Cormorants anywhere in the world were on East Sand Island just inside the mouth of the Columbia River during the first decade of this century. This would have been nothing more than a conservation success story, but it was discovered that birds from these two colonies were consuming millions of young salmon and steelhead annually and thereby limiting the recovery of several threatened fish populations. Fisheries managers successfully pushed for management of both terns and cormorants in the Columbia River estuary to reduce losses of salmon and steelhead to bird predation as they entered the ocean. In this presentation we will learn what management was implemented and the outcomes



*Caspian Tern  
photo by Mick Thompson*

from that management, both for the birds and for their salmon prey.

Dan received graduate degrees from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (M.Sc. in Wildlife Management) and the University of Pennsylvania (Ph.D. in Biology). His primary area of research interest is the physiological ecology, foraging ecology, and conservation biology of birds, with an emphasis on seabirds. During his career, Dan served as major advisor for 40 graduate students, which he rates as his most significant professional accomplishment.

**July & August**—Program summer hiatus. Happy summer!

Hopefully, this will be our last meeting via Zoom and we can return to some form of in-person gatherings when we start up in September. We do not have any programs during July and August and will return in September. Previous program recordings can be found on our Vancouver Audubon Society Facebook page and edited versions are now on our YouTube page. 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***

*(From the Board, continued from page 2)*

is to provide public letters and comments in support of the Vancouver Climate Action Plan. Susan Saul, our Conservation Committee chair, has been actively interacting with city staff and providing important input to consider in the protection and climate and birds. You can add your support as well.

Lastly, I recently learned about how National Audubon is conducting monitoring of impacts on birds predicted by Audubon's 2019 climate change report, [\*'Survival By De-\*](#)

[\*grees,\*](#). This report predicts that up to two-thirds of North American birds are vulnerable to extinction due to climate change. Climate Watch was born in 2016 to harness the power of volunteers to collect data which Audubon scientists will use to document, in peer-reviewed research, that birds are responding to climate change and shifting their ranges. You can join in this effort by observing birds in our area, using Audubon's specific protocol, and helping them learn about how birds are responding to the changing climate. Contact Don Rose ([meetings@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org)) for more information.



## Wednesday, June 1 First-of-Month Bird Walk

**Leader:** Cindy McCormack

**Meeting time:** 7:30am

**Meeting location:** [Ridgefield NWR--Carty Unit](#)

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

### June's bird walk: Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit

We will walk the Oak-to-Wetlands loop to enjoy the birds using the recovering habitat, with an option for to continue along the Carty Lake trail.

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.

## Thursday, June 2 Yacolt Burn State Forest

**Leader:** Randy Hill/co-leaders expected

**Meeting time:** 6:00am

**Meeting location:** [Hockinson at the Fire District 3](#) eastside parking lot (17718 NE 159th St.)

**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 and migrant songbirds, grouse, woodpeckers, owls and other raptors. Some nice landscape views are expected.

After meeting, we will head up to the Yacolt Burn State Forest to the L-1410 turnoff; a Discover Pass is required in this area. If the gate is open we will drive up to 2.5 miles, stopping at several areas along the way for warblers, flycatchers and other breeding birds to a rock quarry where Rock Wren was found in the past. If the gate is closed (or after birding this area) we will go directly to the L-1510 road and the Larch Mountain Trailhead to hike up the road to the communications towers. We will take our time going up, but this climb requires some stamina. Sooty and possibly Ruffed Grouse, raptors including Northern Pygmy-Owl, possibly Canada Jay, woodpeckers, several

finches, flycatchers and warblers including Hermit are targets. Return likely during the noon hour or later depending on one or both sites visited. Carpooling as much as possible; Spotting scopes are optional, but helpful.

Limit of 5 cars, 10 total participants.

Trip travel type expectations: mostly driving and stopping at key locations, as well as an uphill hike. Pace: 1-2 Terrain: some B-C, 2 miles walking.

## Thursday, June 9 Columbia River Gorge Tag-along

**Leader:** Randy Hill

**Meeting time:** 6:30am

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

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

This is a tag-along opportunity to join the WOS Conference "going to" field trip to Spokane. Participants can join and to any point before returning if not planning on continuing to Spokane. Target species are open riverine, wetland and bottomland forest songbirds and cliff-associated species including Peregrine Falcon and Canyon Wren.

We will head east at a fast pace with stops that could include St. Cloud Recreation Area, Skamania Landing, Beacon Rock State Park, Bonneville Dam, Lyle cemetery, and Maryhill State Park. The route will continue up US-97 to Brooks Memorial State Park and Toppenish NWR. Spotting scopes encouraged, and bring Discover Pass and Federal Access pass if you have one.

Limit of 3 additional cars, 6 participants. Pace: rapid; Terrain: A-B; <.5 miles walking.

## Tuesday, June 21 Summer Solstice Twilight Picnic

**Leader:** Randy Hill

**Meeting location:** [The L-1300 Road junction with the L-1000 Road.](#)

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

Target: Common Nighthawk. Other species occur, with several breeding songbirds still singing and/or feeding young.

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

Approaching dusk or darkness owls are possible.

Meet at dinner time or after, but by 8:30pm, turning left (west) [at the L-1300 Road junction with the L-1000 Road](#). This is the Cold Creek campground turnoff approximately 2 miles north of the Larch Mountain Correctional Facility where pavement turns to gravel. Stay as long as you want to enjoy constellations, planets and more satellites than you'd think in an area where city light effects are diminished.

There might not be phone or internet communication at the meeting site.

Itinerary: No limit of participants, although roadside pullouts are limited. Rocky road conditions vary but accessible to most low clearance vehicles along a dusty road.

Trip travel type expectations: generally stationary from the meeting point, Pace: 1; hiking around the area at your discretion for local nesting species.

## Friday, July 1

### First-of-Month Bird Walk

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Meeting time: N/A

*Due to scheduling conflict, July's Bird Walk **will not take place on the 1st**. Check the website, blog, or Facebook for possible date later in the month for a replacement bird walk.*

## 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 boat gets booked quickly. VAS has released the spaces we had on hold with [Westport Seabirds](#), but you may check their website for availability.** If you are interested in the trip, please contact Randy by text at 360-975-2573.

**July and August: check the website, subscribe to the [VAS blog](#), or VAS's Facebook page for announcements.**

## Hurry, registration closes Wednesday, June 1st!

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](#) and registration.



## Speak in Support of Fossil Fuel Facility Moratorium Extension

The Vancouver Fossil Fuel Facilities Moratorium currently protects us from new or expanded large scale fossil fuel facilities being proposed or permitted in Vancouver. It has been in effect since June 2020 and will expire on June 8, 2022.



The moratorium is based on concerns about potential impacts to local public and environmental health and safety and to climate change. It has been enacted to allow time to

update the land use code standards for such uses and to align them with other planning efforts currently underway, such as the Vancouver Strategic Plan update, Climate Action Plan, and other code amendments.

Facilities producing energy from landfill gas, fossil fuel by-products such as asphalt or others, or direct consumer sales such as gas stations are all explicitly exempted from the moratorium.

Please support a 6-month extension of the moratorium by testifying at the City Council's public hearing scheduled for Monday, June 6.

The purpose of the extension is to give the city staff time to complete the necessary analysis, conduct further stakeholder engagement and propose code amendments

### June 6 Public Hearing

by Susan Saul

to the Planning Commission and City Council within the requested extension period.

It is important to demonstrate widespread community support for the health and safety protection this moratorium extension provides all of us.

Testimony does not have to be technical or in-depth. Simply tell the City Council that you support the moratorium extension and appreciate the Council's work to continue protecting our health and safety and environment from large-scale fossil fuel facilities in Vancouver.

All City Council workshops and meetings are broadcast on [www.cvtv.org](http://www.cvtv.org), CVTV cable channels 23 / HD 323, and on the City's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/VancouverUS](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverUS)

- **Written comments submitted in advance.** Comments may be sent to [council@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:council@cityofvancouver.us) until noon on June 6. Comments will be compiled and sent to the City Council and entered into the record.

**In-person or remote testimony during the meeting.** Advance registration is required to testify. Registration is open until noon on June 6. Visit [this website](#) to register or call the City Manager's office at (360) 487-8600. Each speaker will be asked to limit testimony to three minutes.

## Testify for healthy homes and less emissions on June 17

by Susan Saul

Homes and buildings are one of the largest and fastest-growing sources of climate pollution in Washington — and we're consuming more and more energy as our state's population increases. Adopting clean building codes is necessary to reduce emissions from the buildings sector and reduce the harmful outdoor and indoor air pollution associated with the use of gas appliances in buildings.

We have a critical opportunity to follow up on the State Building Code Council's (SBCC) historic decision this spring to pass clean codes for commercial buildings. The SBCC is considering code changes to require complete electrification in new residential construction and will be making a decision by December 2022. If successful, Washington will

have the strongest climate codes in the country, and will require almost all new construction to be fossil fuel free.

If we want to get another huge win for our climate, we need to make sure the SBCC is hearing loud and clear that Washington residents support these changes. With your help we can set an example for the rest of the country to follow.

The virtual hearing will be held at 10 a.m. on Friday, June 17, 2022.

Sign up to testify [here](#) and find [talking points to use in your testimony here](#).



*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.

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

**April 21**, a **BANK SWALLOW** (3 & FOY) was picked out of the swallows at Blurock Landing Mike Clarke. He described it as a dark brown, "thin" looking swallow with sharply contrasting white underparts and a dark brown lateral chest band that was seen well. The nearest nesting colonies to us are in the volcanic ash banks along the Cowlitz River and Mt. Saint Helens.

**April 22**, Robert Vanderkamp and Ken Vanderkamp reported that the **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** (hybrid) found earlier in the month continued at Shillapoo Lake. It is a dark cinnamon colored male Teal with a white crescent on its face and a white hip patch.

**April 22**, Mike Clarke also reported the **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** (hybrid) that he first found on April 17<sup>th</sup> remained at Shillapoo Lake.

**April 22**, a **BLACK-NECKED STILT** (4) at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit had Jason Crotty and Byron Palmer wondering if it might be the same one that they had seen earlier this month in the same location.

**April 22**, at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park, Ginger Kafel spotted a male **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** (FOY) in the trees around the first parking lot as you drive into park.

**April 23**, a late migrant **RED-NECKED GREBE** (3) was seen in the Columbia River along the Vancouver waterfront on Southeast Columbia Way by Sam Neuffer.

**April 23**, the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, **BLACK-NECKED STILT** was found and photographed by Ken Pitts in shallow water just before getting to restroom and bird blind trail.

**April 23**, Randy Hill, Gregory Johnson and Tina Johnson also checked out the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, **BLACK-NECKED STILT**.

**April 24**, from the east end of the Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel, Randy Hill counted 66 **WESTERN GREBES** and 3 **CLARK'S GREBES** (3) all with plenty of white above the eye, bright orange bills, and pale flanks. One pair of **Western x**

**Clark's Grebe** (hybrid) together that had orange bills and pale flanks but their black caps went below their eyes. Another 25 grebes were there but not able to be identified and were entered into eBird as Western/Clark's Grebe, undetermined. These birds are probably refugees from the drought east of the mountains as there are no local breeding populations.

**April 24**, Les Carlson and Keith Brady also spotted the continuing Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, **BLACK-NECKED STILT**.



*Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal  
digitized by Cindy McCormack*

**April 24**, 3 **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLERS** were found by John Bishop on the L1500 Road in the Larch Mountain area.

**April 24**, John Davis found a **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER** singing and foraging in low branches and shrubs on the Whistle Punk Trail, Skamania County.

**April 24**, a **BLACK-HEADED GROS-BEAK** was heard singing with its signature slurred notes and hard chip by Ann Nightingale and Jim

Danzenbaker on the Ridgefield NWR.

**April 25**, the continuing Shillapoo Lake **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** (hybrid) was seen by Ann Nightingale, Jim Danzenbaker and Ken Vanderkamp

**April 25**, Jan Pleskovitch, Laura Kellenbarger and Scott Schroeder all reported seeing the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit **BLACK-NECKED STILT**.

**April 25**, a **CANYON WREN's** (3) descending song was heard by John Davis from the cliffs above the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery in Skamania County.

**April 26**, the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit, **BLACK-NECKED STILT** continued according to Nicholas Morell and Jim Danzenbaker.

**April 27**, at the Frenchman's Bar Regional Park Bob Flores heard and observed a **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** which was also

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seen by Ryan Abe.

**April 27**, Ryan Abe heard the water drop-like “wip” call note of a **SWAINSON'S THRUSH** many times coming from thick underbrush in two different locations on opposite ends of Frenchman's Bar Regional Park.

**April 27**, Roger Windemuth was birding the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, and saw a **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** (FOY) and 2 **BLACK-NECKED STILTS** where there had been only one being seen previously. Also seen later by Mattie Xoxo, Dave Baker and Greg Johnson.

**April 27**, Tina Johnson saw the continuing **BLACK-NECKED STILT** near the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit bathroom and then found three more in the right pond between markers 12 and 13.

**April 28**, Jim Danzenbaker, Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson found another **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** (hybrid) at the end of Lower River Road in the Vancouver Lowlands.

**April 29**, at Shillapoo Lake Cindy McCormack viewed the **Blue-winged x Cinnamon Teal** (hybrid) and said that it appears to be different individual than the one seen at End of Lower River Rd. She also saw a surprisingly pale **MERLIN** with pale blue back/rump/wing coverts, white breast and abdomen with rust-colored markings, a distinct pale supercilium, crown gray and a faint malar mustache that she thought might be of the “Prairie” subspecies.

**April 29**, Janet Phillips spotted a **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit. It was foraging with 3 **WESTERN SANDPIPERS** and a **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** which made size comparisons easier, this bird was larger than the Westerns and longer-bodied; the legs were yellow-green unlike the black legs on a Western.

**May 2**, Jim Danzenbaker had a **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (4 & FOY) in his Battle Ground yard, luckily it sang twice as they are very similar to a Hammond's Flycatcher song but with a final fairly high clear note. He listened to recordings again for confirmation, something I have to do every year

with several different species I haven't heard since last spring.

**May 4**, Katie Warner photographed 2 **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS** at the Steigerwald Lake NWR that were Myrtle x Audubon's intergrades with yellow throats that had a white edging and a more mask-like appearance.

**May 4**, in Skamania County around the old Northwestern Lake bottom along a tributary stream flowing into the White Salmon River, Samuel Holman found a **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (3) and heard the buzzy and sharp “pik” calls of a **LAZULI BUNTING**.



*Black-necked Stilt  
Photo: Mick Thompson*

**May 5**, in Skamania County, the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery's long continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** was seen by John Davis.

**May 5**, Brian Pendleton Darchelle Worley visited the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, spotting the **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** which they described as larger than Least Sandpiper with a bib of dark streaks, a prominent white supercilium, a relatively stout bill and a scaly dark brown and tan back.

**May 6**, Robert Flores found a **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** and a single **SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** (3) that was found earlier by Ken Pitts at stop 6 on the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit.

**May 6**, the **SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** at the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit was also reported by Randy Hill, Jim Danzenbaker, Ken Pitts and John Bishop.

**May 6**, a **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** was seen in his Vancouver yard by Ryan Abe.

**May 7**, a **BLACK-NECKED STILT** was seen at the Steigerwald Lake NWR by Aytch Roberts, Samantha DeJarnett, and Tara Lemezis.

**May 9**, Jim Danzenbaker was at the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit, where he spotted a **WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (FOY) a large *Empidonax* with no eye ring and fairly long tail and a distinctive “fitz-bew” call.

**May 9**, Mattie Xoxo was happy to find a **GRAY FLYCATCH-**

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**ER** (4 & FOY) at the Steigerwald Lake NWR, it was seen flying low from shrub to shrub in an open area on north side of the Dike Trail. She even mentioned the classic tail dip while perched that helps identify this small and drab bird.

**May 9**, Jim Danzenbaker was at the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit when he was able to identify 2 **DUSKY FLYCATCHERS** feeding and sallying from a bush in a clearing. Gregory Johnson also reported them from the same location.

**May 9**, Ryan Abe spotted another **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** at his Vancouver home identifying it by the shorter primary projection, primaries blunt-tipped and the wide, longish tail and “whit” call.

**May 9**, in the woods at Parkview Trails, Robert Vanderkamp saw a silent **RED-EYED VIREO**, (3 & FOY) identifying it by the white front, dull green back. black line through the eye, strong white supercilium and dark grey cap. This is early for this species which does nest locally.

**May 11**, John Davis photographed 3 **FRANKLIN'S GULLS** (5 & FOY) flying over the Steigerwald Lake NWR after he heard different-sounding calls from gulls flying high overhead. He was able to get a few images that show the Franklin's Gull plumage of a black hood, white eye ring and black wing tips bordered by white, a different pattern than other black headed gulls.

**May 12**, At the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, Jim Danzenbaker spotted an **EARED GREBE** (4 & FOY) a small grebe that rides very high in the water with a peaked head, thin bill, yellowish on ear and cheek, dark neck. This bird was also seen and reported by Gregory Johnson and Tina Johnson.

**May 13**, at his Vancouver home, Ryan Abe got photos of a **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** that appear to suggest this is the same bird that has been around for a while. Identified by the short primary projection, primaries blunt-tipped and wide, longish tail, eye-ring present, straight-sided bill with bottom pale and becoming dusky towards tip and occasional



Wilson's Phalarope  
Photo: Mick Thompson

“whit” call.

**May 14**, a **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** (3 & FOY) was spotted by Jennifer Brown at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit.

**May 14**, Alex Myrum was at the Salmon Morgan Creek Natural Area when he found a **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** (3 & FOY) which he described as an absolutely stunning male with a shorter tail than he is used to seeing on any hummingbirds he has encountered in our area and it appeared

smaller with a streaky magenta/purple throat.

**May 15**, Jennifer Standish found a **WILLOW FLYCATCHER** giving its fitz-bew call at the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

**May 15**, at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit Mattie Xoxo continuing female **COMMON GOLDENEYE** and **TRUMPETER SWAN**.

**May 17**, the VAS field trip to the Vancouver Lake lowlands organized and led by Randy Hill found 2 **HORNED GREBES** in alternate plumage at the east end of the Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel. These small grebes have a orange-yellow stripe with well-defined borders extending horizontally from eye to the back of the head a sloping forehead and relatively symmetric upper/lower mandible and a deep rust-red neck. At the Shillapoo Lake, they found 3 **EARED GREBES** in alternate plumage, all seen at same time. These small grebes have a steep forehead and peaked head, thin black bill with upward angle along distal end of lower mandible, giving the bill a sharper appearance than that of a Horned Grebe. They also have a black neck and a fan of yellow-orange feathers radiating from eye across entire cheek. Here they also had 1 **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** and 27 **RED-NECKED PHALAROPES** (3).

**May 17**, CJ FLICK located a **RED-EYED VIREO** (FOY) at the St. Cloud Wayside on Highway 14 in Skamania County. It was giving a light, soft and not full-throttle but preacher-like pattern of phrases, definitely another early-bird this year.

**May 18**, Jim Danzenbaker and Gregory Johnson reported that the 3 **EARED GREBES** continued at Shillapoo Lake.

(Continued on page 10)



Red-necked Phalarope  
Photo: Mick Thompson

**May 19**, Daren Hauswald found 4 **WHITE-FACED IBIS** (4 &FOY) at the Shillapoo Wildlife Area in Hart Lake, feeding and resting in a wetland. All four birds had the white border on the front of the face, reddish brown upper body with green iridescence on wings. This observation was made by the Wildlife Area Manager and Assistant Manager.

**May 19**, a visit to Greenleaf Slough at North Bonneville was very productive for John Davis. Among the forty species he saw there he had **WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, **WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (FOY), **PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER** and **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT**.

**May 20**, a walk on the Whistle Punk Trail near Hemlock on the Wind River by John Davis turned up forty-one types of birds. Along this easy trail he had a calling **BARRED OWL**, **OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER**, **WILLOW FLYCATCHER** and **PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER**.

**May 20**, Nick Mrvelj was hiking the Dog Mountain Trail in Skamania County and from that viewpoint he spotted an **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (4) but the real show was with the warblers he saw, 1 **YELLOW WARBLER**, 10 **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS**, 8 **TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS**, 40 **HERMIT WARBLERS** and 1 **WILSON'S WARBLER**.

**May 20**, we had a pair of **BARRED OWLS** that moved through our woods calling to each other until they were noisily chased off by a **GREAT HORNED OWL**.

**May 20**, an example of how late of a Spring we have had this year were the number of reports of lingering **GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS**. These bird nest in the Yukon and Alaska and this is past their normal migration date. A local example was one found at Steigerwald Lake by Evan Watson.

The cool Spring has held migrants including Western Tanagers and Yellow-rumped Warblers in the lower elevations where it has been warmer, and the plants have more growth on them than in the mountains. It takes time for the insects to hatch out and begin feeding on

this new growth and until there are insects to feed on, those cooler areas will not attract many birds. We live at the 1,000' elevation and have only had a handful of migrant species here and in very low numbers while I read reports of the number of Yellow-rumped Warblers and Western Tanagers being seen in the lower elevations. Now that it is starting to warm up the birds will follow the insect hatch into the mountains as the snow melts. And plants leaf out. Among the last migrant species to arrive here are Red-eyed Vireo and Common Nighthawks and the vireo has already been reported in both Clark and Skamania County.

We are seeing a variety of birds locally that were displaced by the continuing drought across the interior west. The American White Pelicans, Black-necked Stilts, White-faced Ibis, Western Grebes, Clark's Grebes, Horned Grebes, and Eared Grebes being seen here are all refugees from those drying lakes and marshes and we should expect to see more vagrants as the summer progresses. Please continue to send me your sightings or enter them into eBird for use in this column and the year list project of compiling all of the species seen in each county by anyone this year. Since the last newsletter, 29 birds have been added to

the Clark County list for the 2022 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project raising it to 207 for the year. In Skamania County 26 birds were added to that list, bringing it to 164. 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.com)

I had the opportunity to tour the Steigerwald Lake NWR and am delighted by the changes that I saw. What had become a nearly flat farming field with a marsh in the center of it after fifty years of being diked has been recontoured to what it looked like pre-1964 and planted with 500,000 trees and shrubs. As these plants leaf out and grow, it will transform the refuge into a riparian forest that should be even better for birds and wildlife. Here is a photo of the refuge from the Steigerwald family collection from about 100 years ago where you can see how it looked back then.



*Great Horned Owl  
Photo by Wilson Cady*



**By Wilson Cady**



## May's Bird ID Challenge Discussion

Yep, it's another blurry photo! But it's a relatively easy one for our last ID challenge of the season.

I don't have to tell you the season, since it's fairly easy to see we must be in spring—the tree is just starting to leaf out.

Hmm...that “leaves” things pretty open on our options. We could have a spring migrant, a lingering winter bird, or a resident bird.

So, we will just have to dive right in! Starting with overall impressions: we have a rather stout, full-chested bird with a relatively large head. Does the general shape remind you of a common species? It should! That shape should help you put this bird in the correct family, but it's not necessary, just makes it easier.

This bird is overall gray in color and has a relatively long tail. We can't see much about the bill, other than it's dark and rather flat. Not all that much to go on there.

So what stands out? There are two areas that should draw your attention. One is the eye. Even at this angle and lacking focus, you can clearly see a bright white margin around the eye. We can't see if it extends completely around the eye due to the position of the bird, but the white is obvious even with a poor quality photo—just think of how obvious it would be if seen straight-on!

The second area that is really noticeable are the pale areas on the wing. We have a block of contrasting light color below the level of the primary coverts and another in the flight feathers themselves. This bird is going to show a bold wing stripe when in flight!

Taking a closer look at that tail, we know it's long, even in this position, by how far it extends beyond the undertail coverts. From the top view, notice how the margins are very black, while the center is more gray. The topmost feathers of the tail are the center



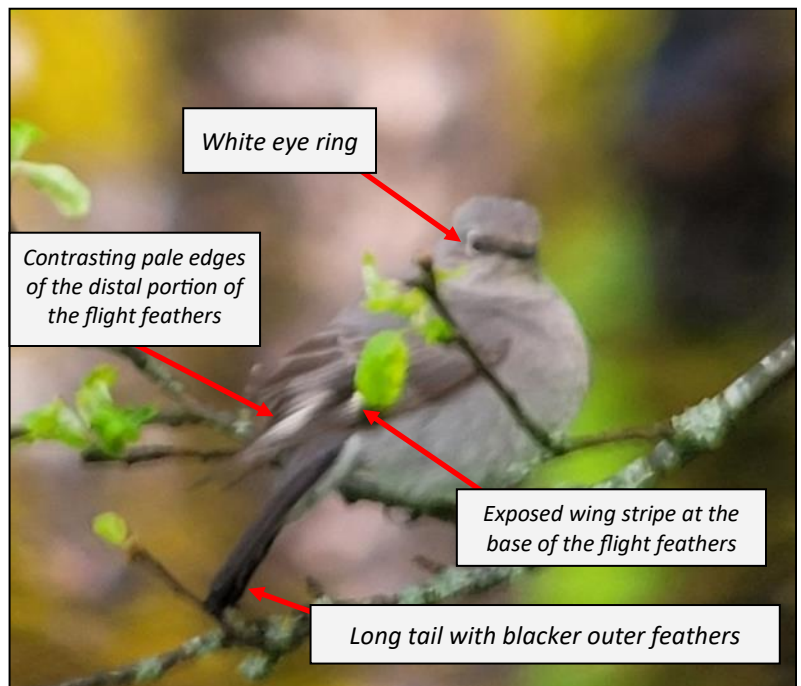
Quiz photo

feathers and each pair of feather (right and left) folds sequentially under its neighboring feathers, with the outermost feathers on the bottom layer. This means that those outermost feathers are likely hidden from view in this photo, but we can tell we will have some black in the outer borders of the tail.

To summarize, we have an overall uniform gray bird with a bold eye white eye ring, a long tail with a gray middle and blacker near the

margins, and a bold wing stripe that shows even on a folded wing.

If you could see that this bird somewhat resembles an American Robin in shape, this would help even further. If you didn't see that, try looking at the shape again now—it is a good silhouette to learn well. Getting a handle on the general shape of the American Robin with help you place the other similarly-shaped birds into the thrush family







American Robin silhouette.  
Even with no color or marking visible, most can learn to recognize this bird just by its shape.

(Turdinae). This will include our quiz bird, Mountain and Western Bluebird, Varied Thrush, and the *Catharus* thrushes: Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, and Veery. Of course, if you travel, there are many more species of thrush to add to this list!

So with the general shape, you would have had a great clue even without seeing the features we described. Now we

can say we have a uniformly gray **thrush** with white eye-ring, long tail (with black), and obvious wing stripe visible in the closed wing.

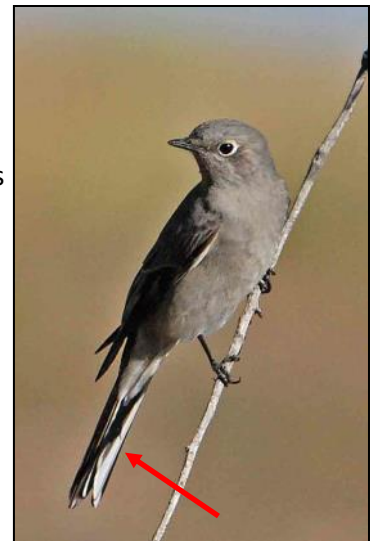
This information, even lacking one field mark not visible in this photo, will lead us to only one species: **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE**. This subtle, but beautiful, thrush is usually found during migration in the lowlands and on breeding territory in the higher elevations of our area.

The soft gray plumage of adult Solitaires does not change with the seasons and is identical in males and females, set off only by a white eye-ring and partially concealed markings of peach-buff on the wings and black and white on the outer tail feathers. In marked contrast to its

inconspicuous appearance, this species has an beautiful and elaborate song. During the breeding season, males sing prominently on treetops or even in flight displays. They also have a clear, loud, ringing "tew" note often given in an extended repeated series, somewhat reminiscent of the "toot" series of the Northern Pygmy-Owl.

They have the occasional habit of sallying out from perches for flying insects, which it captures with an audible snap of the bill, which is distinctive among thrushes and has been compared to the behavior of tyrant flycatchers.

Townsend's Solitaire nests on the ground beneath rocks, logs, or other objects that provide a sheltering overhang. Many breeding pairs are easily found along trails that follow old logging roads or other areas with road-cut banks, since they often choose to nest in those exposed dirt banks, under exposed tree roots, rocks, or other sheltering vegetation.



Note the white on the outer tail feathers, mostly hidden when perched under the tail, but often easy to see the white when in flight.



Townsend's Solitaire  
Photo: Ana Cole/Audubon Photography Awards



A wing specimen shows the peach wing stripe in the flight feathers, just below the wing coverts. This strip shows both above and below the wing, which is easily viewed in flight.

The pale peach edges on distal end of the outer edge of the flight feathers is only visible on the upper (dorsal) surface of the wing.

Photos: Slater Museum of Natural History, University of Puget Sound.

## Ridgefield NWR: Kiwa Trail temporary closure

*Ridgefield's Sandhill Cranes have successfully incubated and hatched a brand new chick! This little colt has to survive many dangers to reach fledging age, so needs its parents close by as much as possible. Having the trail closed should help keep human-caused disturbance at a minimum so the colt can be protected from predators, such as Bald Eagles and coyotes, by their watchful parents.*



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

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.

Thank you 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: [Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Species Profile](#)

## 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 [nwbird-er@gmail.com](mailto:nwbird-er@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

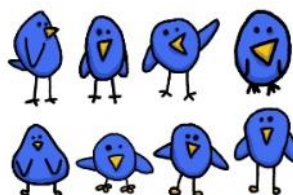
## Young Birders Program

### 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



## 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

Trail is back open to the public. Be sure to check the website for gate hours or before visiting for possible intermittent closures on the continued trail/habitat work.

## 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).*

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
<b>June 2022</b>						
May 29 Wenas Audubon Campout	May 30 Wenas Audubon Campout	May 31 Board Mtg	1 Bird Walk	2 Field Trip Yacolt Burn SF	3	4
5	6	7 Program	8	9 Field Trip Columbia Gorge	10 WOS Conference Spokane Valley	11 WOS Conference Spokane Valley
12 WOS Conference Spokane Valley	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Field Trip Solstice Picnic Nighthawks	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



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

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

June 1 (WED): Bird Walk: Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit, 7:30am

June 2 (THU): Field Trip, Yacolt Burn State Forest

June 7 (TUE): Zoom Program: Terns, Cormorants, & Salmon, 6:30pm social/program 7pm

June 9 (THU): Field Trip, Columbia Gorge Tag-a-long

June 9-12: WA Ornithological Society's Annual Conference, Spokane Valley

June 21 (TUE): Field Trip, Solstice evening picnic/Common Nighthawks

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

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