

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON *A chapter of the National Audubon Society*



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Summer Camp, Birder-Style

This year I participated in the American Birding Association's (ABA) first session of Camp Delaware Bay (previously called Camp Avocet) after its 3-year long hiatus. It ran from August 4-11th. There were 15 campers from 13 to 18 years old, and 6 staff members: George Armistead, Christian Baal, Glen Davis, Dr. David La Puma, intern Robert Buckert, and our camp director, Holly Merker. Over the course of the week, we would visit many amazing birding hotspots, including Prime and Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuges, Chincoteague NWR, and various places in Cape May, NJ. After orientation, we all went birding together for the first time at Cape Henlopen State Park where we saw Piping Plovers and an Osprey catch a spiny dogfish. That was just the beginning of a fantastic week of birding!

On the second day we saw some Seaside and Saltmarsh

Sparrows, and we were rewarded with decent looks at both species, but the real highlight was a Peregrine Falcon chase. We were scanning shorebirds at Dupont Nature Center when a young Peregrine flushed a flock of shorebirds. We watched as it chased a Ruddy Turnstone, and flew right past us several times as

by Katie Warner



Peregrine Falcon
Photo by Katie Warner

everyone's camera shutters clicked frantically. Ultimately, the turnstone escaped and we watched as the falcon flew off, leaving us with an incredible experience and photos. We ended the day with a surprise Chucks-Will's-Widow while owling, which was the first for camp!

We took a ferry from Delaware to Cape May, NJ on the sixth day of camp, and headed to Stone Harbor Point to learn about shorebird conservation with Christina Davis. We learned about the issues these nesting birds face as we encroach in their habitat. There

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Save the Date - Give More 24 September 22, 2022

Give More 24! brings together our entire region for 24 hours of generosity. By giving at the same time, and boosting donations through match dollars and nonprofit prizes, your giving is amplified to your chosen non-profits.

This year, we are fundraising to support the creation of a Young Birders Club for youth between the ages 10-18 who are interested in birding and conservation. We feel experiencing the outdoors by viewing and listening to birds, learning about their habitat, and gaining naturalist skills builds confidence and a conservation ethic to care for the natural world. Seattle Audubon has had great success with their program and we want to offer similar opportu-

nities here in Southwest Washington. Participants in Young Birder's Clubs have gone on to pursue careers in the environmental field and typically continue birding and appreciating time out in nature.

Your generosity will help the youths' experience in our program by providing tripods for spotting scopes, educational materials, and other supplies needed to ensure positive learning experiences. Our goal is to raise \$2000 to support the growth of this impactful program.

[Give to Vancouver Audubon Society](#) | [Give More 24!](#)



From the VAS Board

By Sam Neuffer, VAS President

Hello Vancouver Audubon Members, and welcome back after our summer break!

Over the summer, members of our board and community continued to provide opportunities to enjoy nature together. In addition to scheduled field trips, Vancouver Audubon partnered with the Gorge Refuge Stewards to run a Let's Go Birding Together walk for Pride Month in June! These walks provide members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies with a welcoming community to enjoy nature. We enjoyed a variety of birds while exploring the new trails at the using the newly reopened refuge. It was the first time birding for several people in the group and we hope they will catch the birding bug!

September and October will be full of more opportunities. The Audubon Council of Washington meeting will be October 1-2 in Sequim. This meeting allows Audubon chapter leaders a chance to collaborate on new projects.

Ridgefield's BirdFest and Bluegrass will be held in per-

son this year, another excellent time to share your enthusiasm for birds and nature by volunteering at the festival—or just a great time to get out and join in on the fun!



Additionally, we are excited to offer you lots of exciting programs this upcoming year. We will be trying out a new hybrid format of in-person and online meetings. We understand that socializing is an important part of our membership meetings and that people would like to do that in-person. We will also take safety precautions because, while we would love for COVID to be gone, it is still circulating in our communities. With the hybrid format, we hope to reach out to as many people as possible and give everyone the opportunity to safely enjoy our programs.

We look forward to seeing you this year, and happy birding!



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

PO Box 1966 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

Website | vancouveraudubon.org

Facebook | [@VancouverAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverAudubon)

Chartered December 18, 1975

Officers, Board Members, & Chairs

President | Sam Neuffer | 206-930-1032 | president@vancouveraudubon.org

Vice President | Jared Strawderman | vp@vancouveraudubon.org

Secretary | Craig Wallace | craig@wallfam.net

Treasurer | Joan Durgin | 360-834-5621 | treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org

Conservation | Susan Saul | conservation@vancouveraudubon.org

Editor | Cindy McCormack | vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Education | Sam Neuffer | president@vancouveraudubon.org

Field Trips | Randy Hill | 360-975-2573 | fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org

Membership | Karen Pickering | membership@vancouveraudubon.org

Programs | Don Rose | meetings@vancouveraudubon.org

Refreshments | open |

Sightings | Wilson Cady | 360-835-5947 | gorgebirds@juno.com

Website | Lissa Gienty | website@vancouveraudubon.org

Young Birders Program | youngbirders@vancouveraudubon.org

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 will be held in rooms #2 and #3 at [Evergreen Public Schools District Office at 13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive, Vancouver, WA](#)

VAS Programs

It's a new year of programs and I hope we can provide something interesting for our members. Our September meeting will be the first LIVE MEETING in over two years! We also have a new meeting location! We will be meeting in rooms #2 and #3 at **Evergreen Public Schools District Office at 13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive, Vancouver, WA.** It is almost directly across NE 136th Avenue from the Washington Dept. of Licensing office. We will also be continuing to broadcast the meeting via Zoom for those that are unable or prefer not

to meet in person. All Vancouver Audubon members will receive a Zoom invitation via email. If you intend to attend via Zoom, you must register in advance to receive the link to the meeting. Zoom will also allow us to continue live streaming on Facebook.

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".

Upcoming Programs:

September 6th – Snowy Plovers



Allison Anholt, Coastal Community Science Biologist, and lead for the Snowy Plover program for Portland Audubon Society, will present a talk on the Snowy Plover. Before coming to Portland Audubon, she worked at the intersection of coastal wildlife conservation and community science in the

Aleutian Islands, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Florida Everglades, and some of the busiest beaches in the country in Cape May, New Jersey. She holds an M.S. in Ecology and Evolution from Rutgers University, a B.S. in Law and Policy from The College of New Jersey and is currently finishing her Ph.D. working with First Nations fisheries on issues of seabird bycatch in arctic Canada.



Snowy Plovers
Photo: Mick Thompson

October 4th—It's Your Show!



Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

We will have a Show & Tell with all of the wonderful photos that you have taken this year. If you want to highlight 3-5 (or more) of your photos from 2022 to share, this is your chance. Please send electronic copies of your photos in small format with your full name in the email and a little story about each picture. I will assemble a slide show with everyone's photos, and those who provide photos will be a speaker presenting their photos. Be warned - If I don't get enough photos for a program, you'll have to watch a slideshow of my family pictures. Send to: meetings@vancouveraudubon.org

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.

Monday, Sept 5 First-of-Month Bird Walk

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Meeting time: 7:30am

Meeting location: [Ridgefield NWR--Kiwa Trail](#)

Register: vas@vancouveraudubon.org

September's bird walk: Ridgefield NWR-Kiwa Trail

We will walk the Kiwa Trail to look for resident and migrating birds and early winter arrivals. Meet at the trailhead at 7:30am. Entry fee into Ridgefield of \$3/car (or refuge pass, interagency pass, duck stamp).

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, Sept 15 Eagle's Pride & Nisqually NWR

Leader: Randy Hill/co-leaders expected

Departure time: 5:50 am

Meeting location: [Salmon Creek Park & Ride](#)

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

Target species include resident and migrating species in a wide variety of marsh, riparian, and mostly lowland and wet forest species.

Meet to leave at 05:50 at the Salmon Creek Park and Ride to carpool within current COVID guidelines (likely masking in vehicles.) We will head north to southern Pierce County (and hopefully beat the Olympia traffic) to join the Eagles Pride Golf Course monthly bird walk at JBLM starting at 08:00 for about 3 hours through mixed forest and openings. Sometime before noon we will head to Nisqually NWR and walk trails through forest and wetlands that can extend out to the boardwalk and reach the edges of

southern Puget Sound. Trip will likely go to at least mid-afternoon before a return home, so bring a lunch. Spotting scopes encouraged for Nisqually; radios not needed.

A Federal access pass or fee is required at Nisqually.

Limit of 4 cars, 10 total participants.

Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2; Terrain: A; 2-3 miles walking

Fall Migration Opportunities

Jim Danzenbaker, a migration enthusiast, has agreed to open his "migration monitoring" days to those that wish to join in on witnessing the incredible spectacle of bird migration. Weather and wind are key factors for scheduling these events, so dates can't be scheduled far in advance.

If you're interested in experiencing migration at any of these destinations, register with Randy (360-975-2573) and expect short notification when the forecast looks favorable.

Turkey Vulture Migration @ Woodland Bottoms

Season starts on September 23rd and goes through about October 12.

The Woodland Bottoms area has a good viewing area at the far north area along Dike Road Extension, but parking is limited to ~3 vehicles (the rest would require a walk from parking.)

Any of those days except Sundays possible with potentially multiple days beginning late morning or early afternoons.

Larch Mountain Migration

Migration Corner or Lower Larch Lookout on Yacolt Burn State Forest (mostly passerine species) have potential from about August 20 through mid-October, so this extended period has the potential for several visits. Expect a start before sunrise and through the morning at the specified location.



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

VAS Seeks to Protect Habitat from Mining

by Susan Saul

Vancouver Audubon has joined the Green River Valley Alliance, a coalition of individuals, businesses, organizations and policymakers who seek to protect the Green River valley north of Mount St. Helens from the threat of an open pit mine.

The Goat Mountain area, in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest on the north side of the Green River, has been the object of modern hard rock mineral prospecting since 1970. The eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980 quieted activity for a while, but interest in a copper, gold and molybdenum mine has resumed.

For the past 15 years, the non-profit Cascade Forest Conservancy has successfully used legal action to prevent mineral prospecting from moving forward. Ascot Resources, the Canadian company seeking to conduct mineral prospecting, keeps submitting new applications to the federal government after each court defeat. Given the type of mineralization known to occur under Goat Mountain, any mine developed there would have to be an open pit to extract mineral ore.

Vancouver Audubon has become a Green River Valley Alliance partner working to preserve the native forest ecosystems, wildlife, water quality and recreation opportunities in this area just outside the Mount St. Helens National Monument.

The Green River valley is beloved for its scenery, remote and peaceful location, and boundless outdoor recreation. Fifty-two bird species have been identified in the area, according to eBird. The Green River, a candidate for Wild and Scenic River designation, provides gene bank habitat for endangered steelhead, supports a wide range of wildlife, and supplies fresh drinking water to downstream

communities. It contains the last remnant of ancient Douglas-fir and western red-cedar forest that escaped the blast of the Mount St. Helens eruption. The area has important historical and

cultural significance to the local tribes and supports the local economy through the outdoor recreation and tourism industries.

An open pit mine in the Green River valley would threaten fish, wildlife, native plants and people with polluted groundwater, and potential tailing pond breaches of toxic mining waste would threaten the Green River. This area remains seismically active, increasing the chances for



disaster.

A mine would have dramatic impacts on outdoor recreation. Noise and light pollution 24 hours a day would disrupt any sense of quiet and solitude, and the mine itself would cut off access to several trails used for hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, foraging, birding, botanizing, photography, hunting, angling and more.

The proposed prospecting area is on land purchased by the U.S. Forest Service using money from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the explicit purposes of conservation and outdoor recreation.

The Green River Valley Alliance is working to secure a legislative permanent mineral withdrawal to prevent prospecting and mining operations in this corner of Washington's South Cascades. The proposed mineral withdrawal boundary is just over 46,000 acres. It was developed by assessing mining impacts to the watershed as a whole and was guided by the original proposed boundary for

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the Mount St. Helens National Monument.

A permanent mineral withdrawal will require an act of Congress. Other local groups have successfully secured mineral withdrawals through Congress. The most recent

example is the 2019 law withdrawing 340,079 acres of Washington's Methow River headwaters on the east side of the North Cascades.

For more information, or to join the Green River Valley Alliance as an individual, visit www.greenrivervalleyalliance.org

Vancouver's Fossil Fuel Ordinance and Climate Action Plan Move Forward

by Susan Saul

The City of Vancouver has taken the lead on efforts to ensure healthier neighborhoods and a livable climate. Two upcoming decisions by the city could keep dirty fossil fuels out of Vancouver and reduce the city's carbon footprint. But neither decision is final, and the City Council needs your continued support to help it enact strong and equitable rules.

Fossil Fuel Ordinance

This fall, the City Council will vote on a permanent ordinance to prohibit new or expanded large-scale fossil fuel terminals, such as rail terminals that bring in unit trains of coal, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and liquefied petroleum or propane gas (LPG). This policy is a critical health and safety protection for Vancouver communities often disproportionately impacted by the climate-changing pollution and health-harming smog, water pollution, and safety hazards that go with major fossil fuel facilities.

For the past two years, the City Council has repeatedly extended a temporary ban on large-scale fossil fuel facilities to allow time for a careful analysis of the impacts of a permanent ban. Vancouver Audubon has testified in support of the temporary ban.

The Vancouver Planning Commission will accept public comments and make a recommendation about the ordinance during a public hearing on Tuesday, September 13, 2022. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. You can find more information on how to testify to the Planning Commission [here](#).

The City Council will likely hold a public hearing and make a decision about the fossil fuel ordinance on October 4, 2022. You can sign a simple comment letter [here](#).

Climate Action Plan

The city is also proposing an ambitious Climate Action Plan to reduce emissions and build a more livable, equitable, and resilient Vancouver. The plan offers specific actions the city will take to meet ambitious emission reductions

targets. Vancouver would work towards these goals: 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) from the city's own public operations (such as vehicles used by the city) by 2025; 80% reduction of GHG emissions city-wide by 2030; and city-wide carbon-neutrality by 2040.

The details and process for implementing the goals are important, and the city is largely pursuing actions that transition Vancouver equitably towards a more resilient and sustainable community. However, the city is also considering working with the fracked gas company NW Natural to promote renewable natural gas (RNG) and hydrogen from undetermined sources. The city should avoid propping up the fracked gas industry. Fracked gas will remain the vast majority of gas in Vancouver's pipelines. Most of NW Natural's RNG identified supplies (which are less than 2% of its purchased gas) are located far away from Washington. Purchasing credits for methane captured in out-of-state industrial agribusiness (gas that will not be physically used in Vancouver) should not be a priority for the Climate Action Plan.

Support the development of an equitable, effective Climate Action Plan. You can sign a short comment to the City Council [here](#).

The Vancouver City Council will likely hold a workshop about the Climate Action Plan on September 19, 2022. The recently passed federal Inflation Reduction Act contains many incentives that need to be incorporated into the final plan. A public hearing and City Council adoption vote will be scheduled soon after. A date was not available by this newsletter deadline.

Vancouver Climate Action Toolkit

Check out and share this comprehensive [website](#) containing an overview of the Climate Action Plan, Fossil Fuel Ordinance, and ways to take action from the Vancouver-based coalition Alliance for Community Engagement (VAS is a member). It's another great resource for engaging decision-makers on these policies.

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have been a lot of problems with people who don't like the restrictions on their dogs or the roped off areas, and there have been many instances of vandalism where they tear down the fences. These shorebirds need our help to recover, and they haven't been doing so well in recent years. None of the nests they monitored were successful this year due to human disturbance, flooding, and predation. We saw several Common Terns hunting, and there were some very cooperative Sanderlings. Neither are uncommon birds, but it was fun to watch them, and by the time we left I had almost filled my camera's SD card.



Sanderling
Photo by Katie Warner

Later we went to the heron rookery by the Ocean City Welcome Center. If you ever visit Cape May, I highly recommend going. From the sidewalk, you can look down at the trees and see into the nests of the many wading birds, which offers a unique perspective. There, we had a photography workshop with the co-author of the Warbler Guide, Scott Whittle. We had great light in the evening, and photographed the birds in the rookery until it got dark. Just 10 years ago, a White Ibis was a rarity that birders would flock to see, but now we counted around 600 flying into the rookery. It's incredible how this species has expanded like this in so little time.



White Ibis rookery
Photo by Katie Warner

Perhaps one of the best days of birding throughout camp was when we went to Higbee Beach for the morning flight. We spent 2 ½ hours watching the passerines fly by. Our best bird at the dike was a completely unexpected Cerulean Warbler. After leaving the dike, we found a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Bobolinks, Northern Bobwhite, and a Worm-eating Warblers. Then we headed to the Cape May Bird Observatory where the birds continued to surprise us with a Black-billed Cuckoo and Canada Warbler. We went to Cape May SP for lunch where the warbler show continued.



Northern Bobwhite
Photo by Katie Warner

A few of us had hung back for the Prairie and Pine Warblers. When we rejoined everyone else they had found a Blue-winged Warbler... and a Lawrence's Warbler!

Unfortunately we never relocated it, but an Ovenbird made up for it.

We also visited Cellular Tracking Technologies (CTT) where we saw tags that would track a bird's location. We even got to hold a GPS tag that had been worn by a California Condor! They told us about how they are making the tracking devices smaller to fit on smaller birds and passerines. We also listened to a presentation on Eastern Golden Eagles and the impacts of windmill farms. Back at Belleplain, we concluded our last night with a campfire and s'mores, before rushing inside to escape the rain and a lightning storm.



Prairie Warbler
Photo by Katie Warner

We spent our last morning birding around Belleplain SP, in hopes of a couple warblers, and some other species we missed. We didn't find anything at our first spot, but when we stopped on a bridge, it wasn't long before we detected a chipping Hooded Warbler that almost seemed to glow yellow in the dark understorey! Our last location proved equally successful with an Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush, some of the last birds that we needed. It concluded

our last morning of birding nicely, and we started to head back to our cabin just as it began raining.

I had an incredible experience at Camp Delaware and learned about bird tracking and conservation, along with career opportunities in ornithology. We also had a fun drawing and illustration workshop with Christina Baal, ABA's Bird of the Year artist for 2022, and I made many new friends! At the end of the week, I saw 44 lifers, and collectively the camp saw 156 species, surpassing the previous record of 143 in 2018 (however we did spend more time in Cape May, and it was later in the year which gave us more fall migrants). My experiences were unforgettable, and I am so glad I had the opportunity to attend!



American Redstart
Photo by Katie Warner

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.

Many of the out of place birds reported this spring remained through the nesting season as the drought continued to dry up the marshes and wetlands throughout the west. The unexpected snowstorm in April also seemed to take a toll on the breeding birds at our place east of Washougal, three out of four swallow nest boxes were abandoned and we saw very few insect-eating birds all season. The flycatchers, vireos, swallows and warblers in our woods where they have nested for decades were missing this year. I am hoping that this population drop was localized to our area and not widespread and I will be interested in what the information from breeding bird surveys and migration counts reveals about this year's nesting season. On a brighter note the restoration work at the Steigerwald Lake NWR has created a near perfect habitat to attract birds and this summer about 100 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** have been there for the first time as well as the **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** having returned to the cattail patches where they had bred before the lake had been drained in the 1970's.

May 29, Liam Hutcheson was birding in the Vancouver Lake lowlands, when he found a **BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** (5) while he was walking up the small hill from the Shillapoo Lake dike and noticed a small to medium sized sparrow flush out of the brambles and onto the ground underneath a parked car. This is a sparrow of the desert southwest with a very small breeding population in Washington near the Gingko Petrified Forest near Vantage. Many other birders were able to see this rare visitor to Clark County.

May 30, at the Steigerwald Lake NWR, a male **WHITE-FACED IBIS** (4), in breeding plumage, was found and photographed by Ken Pitts on south shore of Redtail Lake. This is another species from east of the Cascades that nests in

wetlands and marshes that have been severely affected by the drought.

June 1, the first confirmed sighting of Clark **GREAT-TAILED GRACKLES** (5) in Clark County were the two found and photographed at Steigerwald Lake NWR by Jared Strawderman. Luckily, they stayed around long enough for

many birders to see these rare visitors. These large, long-tailed blackbirds are from the desert southwest and are common in southern California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and west Texas. This is only the seven-teenth record in Washington, the first one was found at a fast-food place in Union Gap by Susan and I on May 27, 1987.



Great-tailed Grackles
Photo by Jared Strawderman

Jun 11, Joshua Meyers found an **ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER** (5) at the Steigerwald Lake NWR, he said that they had good views through a scope of

this large flycatcher with a with peaked crown and rusty wing coverts, pale underparts and overall gray upper parts. This bird has a limited range in Washington nesting in the oak forests of eastern Skamania County and Klickitat and Yakima Counties.

June 16, Cindy McCormack, Les Carlson and I visited South Prairie, north of Willard in Skamania County and were surprised that the lake that famously disappears there every Spring with the snow melt was still full of water. The best sightings here were a female **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE**, **COMMON NIGHTHAWK** and a **BLACK-CHINNED HUMMINGBIRD** (3). We then checked the area around the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery at Underwood and were delighted to find an **ACORN WOODPECKER** (5) which is only the second one I have seen in the county.

June 17, an unusual daytime visitor to our bird feeder was

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a **BLACK BEAR** that I photographed from my easy chair. They are the reason we seldom put out any suet and why we bring our feeders inside at night.

July 19, shorebirds begin heading south from their Arctic breeding grounds in early July as evidenced by a **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** and a **PECTORAL SANDPIPER** found by Rick Hurst at the Ridgefield NWR, River S Unit, mixed in with **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** and a **GREATER YELLOWLEGS**. He described the Pectoral Sandpiper as being similar in overall shape and with markings like a Lesser Yellowlegs. He said that it had a long thin bill approximately the length of the diameter of the head with a medium gray crown with gray stripe passing through the eye from back of head to the lore, the head was otherwise white with the appearance of wearing a mask. There was a faint rufous color on shoulder extending slightly up the neck.

Aug 4, while **RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS** are fairly common here in the fall and winter they disappear during the summer. This makes the one found by Randy Hill at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit notable. There has yet to be a verified nesting record of these hawks in Washington state.

Aug 6, April and Erik Brown found a **SHORT-EARED OWL** near Blurock Landing, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands. While we now think of these owls as winter visitors to our area they used to nest at Ridgefield, Vancouver Lake and Steigerwald Lake until the early 1980's.

Aug. 10, I did some Skamania County birding with Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson north of Trout Lake, on the FR 8040 road on the border with Yakima County. This road leads to the South Climb Trail on Mt. Adams and goes through some beautiful woods and a recently burnt area that has great birding. We found **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS** (4)



Black Bear
Photo: Wilson Cady

and **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS** (3) at several places and even a **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** at the 4,500' elevation after we had crossed into Yakima County. Other sightings included **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS**, **HERMIT**, **TOWNSEND'S**, **NASHVILLE** and **MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLERS** and even a **BLACK BEAR**.

Aug 12, John Davis visited the FR 8040 Road north of Trout Lake re-locating the **WILLIAMSON' SAP-**

SUCKER, **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** and adding an immature male **WHITE-HEADED WOODPECKER** (5) foraging on a tree trunk. This is only the second record of this species that I am aware of in Skamania County and a bird I have expected to see in this spot for several years.

Aug 13, Randy Hill and Gregory Johnson reported a **HORNED GREBE** in alternate plumage at the east end of the Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel between the flushing channel and the dock. This may have been one of the birds that spent the summer here instead of going to their nesting areas in the marshes east of the Cascades.

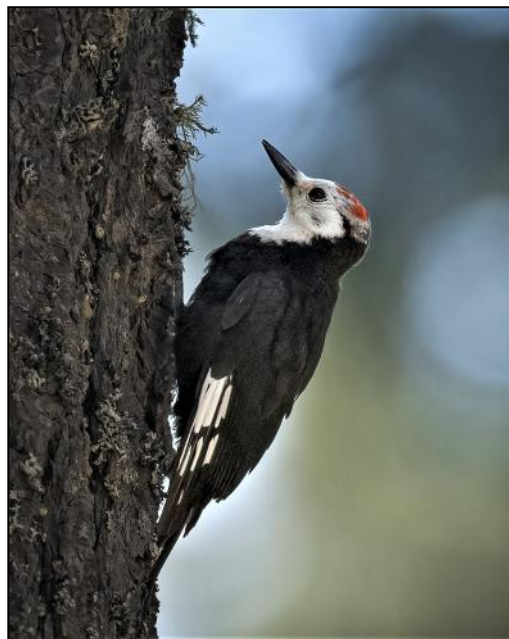
Aug 13, John Davis spotted 4 **EASTERN KINGBIRDS** (5) on Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam in Skamania County. He said that they very vocal and that he was able to see all at the same time. While rare in that county he

says that a few have been showing up in August and September for the past couple of years.

Aug. 12, we had our first good movement of migrant birds at our place with 2 **OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHERS**, a **WESTERN WOOD PEWEE** and small numbers of **ORANGE-CROWNED**, **HERMIT**, **BLACK-THROATED GRAY** and **WILSON'S WARBLERS**.

Aug 14, Robert Flores was birding at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit and saw a **SANDHILL CRANE** probably one of the pair that nested there this summer for the third year in a row. He first heard then spotted a **WESTERN KINGBIRD** flycatching in the big

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White-headed Woodpecker
Photo: John Davis

(Afield, continued from page 9)

trees east of Swartz Lake.

Aug 14, a female **SPRUCE GROUSE** (4) with two chicks were photographed in Skamania County by Linnaea Wright, Charlie Wright and Ryan Shaw at the Killen Creek Campground on the north side of Mt. Adams. At nearby Horseshoe Lake they spotted a **SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (5) and 2 **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS**.

Aug 14, John Davis returned to the FR 8040 road in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, where in the Wicky Shelter vicinity he spotted 2 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** and a **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER**.

Aug. 18, Peter Johnson observed a trio of **AMERICAN AVOCETS** (5) on the edge of the Columbia River near the Rock Creek railroad bridge in Stevenson WA feeding along a cobble bar. He said that he had great views from his kayak. This is the first record of this species in Skamania County and are most likely more birds displaced by the drought in the interior west.

Aug. 19, Jim Danzenbaker and Gregory Johnson birded the FR8040 Road in Skamania County where they were able to find an apparent family group of 4 **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS** near the intersection with the FR80 Road as well as another pair of these gorgeous woodpeckers near the Wicky Creek Shelter where they also located 2 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS**.

Aug. 20, a **RED-EYED VIREO** was heard singing along the Salmon Creek Greenway Trail by Luke Hanes. This bird has



Common Nighthawk, Yacolt Burn State Forest
Photo: Greg Johnson

a very distinctive song that they continue to give after the nesting season when most other birds have quit singing.

Aug. 21, a visit to Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam by John Davis produced 41 species for him including 11 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** (4) and 2 **EASTERN KINGBIRDS**.

Migrant shorebirds pass through our area from July through September, and waterfowl begin arriving here from their northern

breeding grounds in the end of August. By early September Rufous Hummingbirds will be gone along with many of the swallows and other insectivorous birds. This changing of our local bird population will continue through October and our focus will shift to wintering waterfowl and raptors along with any wandering species that show up. The loss of many wetlands and marshes will shift populations of wintering birds and may continue to bring more unusual species to our area.

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 was published in June, 8 birds have been added to the Clark County list for the 2022 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project raising it to 215 for the year and in Skamania County 21 birds were added to that list bringing it to 185. 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)

By Wilson Cady

Link with Rewards Programs to donate when you shop

You can make a difference for Vancouver Audubon while you shop. Through a one-time linking, you can trigger an automatic donation by participating in the [Fred Meyer Community Rewards Program](#) and [AmazonSmile](#). Thanks to all of you who've signed up for the Fred Meyer Community Rewards Program. Vancouver Audubon receives a check 4 times per year, based on how many people shop and how much they purchase at Fred Meyer stores. Please help us by signing up for the [Fred Meyer](#)



[er Community Rewards Program](#) and selecting the Vancouver Audubon Society as your charity of choice. The best part is that linking will not diminish any benefits or rewards you already receive.

Select the Vancouver Audubon Society as your [Amazon Smile](#) non-profit organization of choice and the VAS will automatically receive a donation from Amazon valued at 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases **at no cost to you**.



Bird ID Challenge

By Cindy McCormack

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



Uncertain about identification or if photo has enough info? Don't hesitate to send it in for discussion and review.

Of course, if you wish to share your good photos with your fellow VAS members, you are welcome to submit them for publishing. Send questions, comments, and submissions to [Cindy](mailto:Cindy@vancouveraudubon.org) at vas@vancouveraudubon.org.

Here's an easy one to start the season! Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

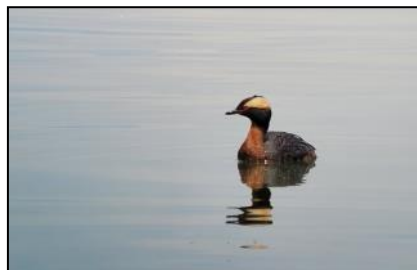
VANCOUVER LOWLANDS—August 14, 2022

After a wet spring and mostly mild temperatures the handwriting was on the wall. A scouting trip the day before demonstrated what I feared: no good shorebird habitat where a mid-August visit typically offers a lot of potential in several areas of the Vancouver lowlands. This was determined after working through a triathlon with bikers following my path out from one destination that proved unproductive. As I told our group of six "it is what it is, but at least we shouldn't have to dodge bikes." Well, after meeting at the flushing channel of Vancouver Lake with bright sun looking east and not a lot to view – besides a breeding plumage Horned Grebe and a Green Heron – we moved to Frenchman's Bar Park. And I was proven wrong. The triathlon was a 2-day event! So we only managed to get through a short segment north of the parking lot to study juvenile swallows, sparrows, finches (even an oriole) and lots of squeaky calls before departing by our 8:30 event deadline.

So, back to Vancouver Lake to view gulls, Cooper's Hawks, and only a little songbird activity while strolling among the trees. Well, north to the first hiking trail. The trek dissecting the mature canopy forest was rather quiet as the breeding season nears an end. Goldfinches on this-tles, a few frugivores using red elderberry, but no sign of fall migrants yet. Buckmire Slough had many waterfowl broods (mostly Wood Duck) and an attendant Belted Kingfisher and Great Blue Heron.

Without "dry access" to view Vancouver Lake from the north trail, our last stop was Shillapoo Lake where the landscape is "abnormal" this summer. Absent water pumping capability, by mid-August the declining water levels in the main

By Randy Hill



*Horned Grebe
Photo by C. McCormack*

wetland would normally expose an extended edge due to summer heat and evaporation. Instead, this year's spring rains left the water levels right up to the emergent bulrush and cattail edge, and no visible mud. The fields on the north side of the dike trail have a number of small grain plantings, essentially following the elevation/moisture gradient; there are unplanted fields that never dried enough to plant corn and are fall-

low where cranes and geese would expect to forage in the fall and winter. Hunting blinds are likely to remain unoccupied this winter. But Shillapoo Lake itself remains productive. Many late broods of Pied-billed Grebe and American Coot were evident, as were recently hatched Ruddy Duck and Gadwall. A single Redhead was found among teal and shovelers. A Virginia Rail wouldn't respond to its own call but had to say something after it heard a Sora whinny. A few Yellow-headed Blackbirds remained among Brown-headed Cowbirds and abundant Red-winged Blackbirds. Several species of swallows overhead with a few swifts mixed in. No gulls, terns, or shorebirds that we might expect. But maybe a visit next month with less water in the marsh will provide a return to what we expect from this diverse area.

VAS Community

Volunteer Opportunity for Ridgefield's Birdfest & Bluegrass

Do you like sharing your birding knowledge and expertise? Do you have a spotting scope? Have you ever attended BirdFest & Bluegrass in Ridgefield, or wanted to? If you answered yes to any of these questions, we invite you to volunteer at BirdFest & Bluegrass 2022! The event this year will be entirely in person, with a variety of activities happening on the River 'S' and Carty Units of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. In previous years before COVID, Vancouver Audubon supported Birdfest by hosting a wildlife viewing area on the River 'S' Unit. This year however, the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge have asked us to set up our wildlife viewing area on the second-floor balcony of the new Admin Office overlooking the Carty Unit. This new location is highly accessible for families to be able to walk up and learn about wildlife observation and birding.



The event will run from 10-4, Saturday, October 1st. The more people that sign up, the shorter the shifts can be! The Friends of Ridgefield NWR will be holding a training in September to give all volunteers a quick rundown of the event, as well as give you time to learn and practice any facts to help you make meaningful connections with visitors during the day.

Contact vp@vancouveraudubon.org for more information and to sign up!

Banded Purple Martins

The Western Purple Martin monitoring project has wrapped up for the season and the martins are leaving for their tropical winter homes. Keep a look out for any banded birds remaining or passing through! 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 may have 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 (if there was one), the band color, the sex of the bird, and any numbers or letters you can read on the band 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

Foot traffic okay through Sept 30, then auto traffic only (remaining in vehicle) October 1 to April 30.

Kiwa Trail: open through Sept 30

Carty Unit

Oak-to-Wetlands Trail: Open

Port entrance Lookout: Open year-round

Port entrance & Carty Trail: Seasonal trail open through Sept 30, then closed for season.

Steigerwald Lake NWR

Temporary Refuge Closure: Aug. 8 - Sept. 30, 2022

Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge will be closed to all public access from August 8 - September 30, 2022. During this short closure there will be heavy equipment on site to allow us to complete the trail system, finalize habitat improvements, and expand visitor amenities.

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
September 2022						
Aug 28	Aug 29	Aug 30	Aug 31	Sep 1	2	3
		Field Trip: Grays Harbor & Pelagic				
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Bird Walk	Program				
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				Field Trip Nisqually NWR		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	Oct 1
		Board Mtg				Ridgefield BirdFest



Aug 30– Sep 01 (TUE-THU): Field Trip to Grays Harbor Co, including optional Pelagic trip

Sep 5 (MON): Bird Walk: Kiwa Trail at Ridgefield NWR, 7:30am

Sep 6 (TUE): Monthly Program: Snowy Plovers, 6:30pm social/program 7pm (in-person & on-line)

Sep 15 (THU): Field Trip, Eagles' Pride Golf Course & Nisqually NWR

Sep 27 (TUE): Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm

Oct 1 (SAT): Ridgefield BirdFest & Bluegrass 2022

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backyardbirdshop.com

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

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