

Columbia Flyway

VANCOUVER AUDUBON *A chapter of the National Audubon Society*



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VANCOUVER LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN UNDERWAY

by Susan Saul

In 2021, due to the advocacy of Senator Annette Cleveland, the Washington Legislature awarded \$150,000 to Clark County “for the purpose of designing the process for developing a long-term plan to restore and maintain the health of Vancouver Lake... as well as designing an institutional structure to take responsibility for the plan’s implementation in a financially sustainable manner.”

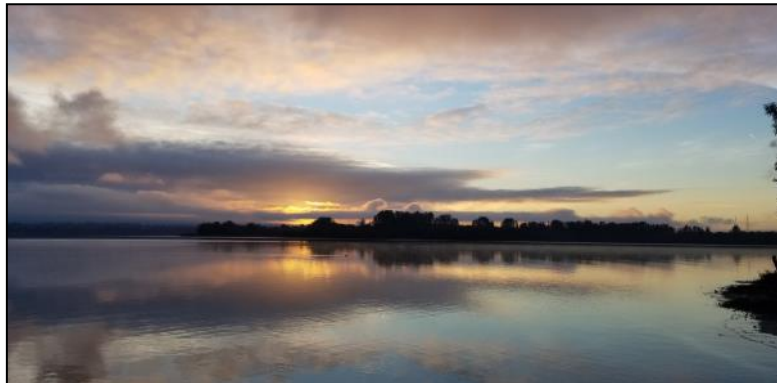
Clark County has contracted with Herrera Environmental Consultants to develop a Vancouver Lake Management Plan (LMP) for immediate action to manage harmful algal blooms and aquatic invasive plants. The LMP will build on existing work done on Vancouver Lake.

The Legislature specified that local governments, property owners around the lake, tribes, the state departments of Natural Resources, Ecology and Fish and Wildlife, as well non-profit organizations advocating for the lake, be included in the planning process. The contractor conducted a public survey for 3 weeks in August that was distributed through the boating clubs that use Vancouver Lake but no outreach was done to Vancouver Audubon, so the survey results are skewed toward boaters’ interests.

Clark County held a public webinar about the plan on August 30 with several Vancouver Audubon members in attendance. The webinar provided a high-level overview of the LMP proposed approach, an opportunity for input and feedback on the work plan, and discussed next steps for staying engaged. The webinar recording can be found on the Clark County website [here](#).

A draft Stakeholder Involvement Plan is to be completed in September 2022. The LMP is to be completed by June 30, 2023 and is to have a 10-year life.

Vancouver Audubon supports reducing harmful algal blooms and reducing the impacts of aquatic invasive plants on Vancouver Lake, but we are urging that the plan consider the impacts of any proposed actions on birds, including timing of implementation, particularly for in-water management actions such as dredging or building a dam on Lake River.



Sunrise at Vancouver Lake from the east end of the flushing channel
Photo by C. McCormack

Vancouver Lake and Lowlands were identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Audubon Washington in 2001 as a cooperative project with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Washington joined a worldwide effort to identify key places with significant bird populations. The

IBA directory provides a tool for citizen activists, local governments, state and federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations to develop effective conservation strategies. It provides a framework for making decisions today that will protect areas that birds rely on for their well-being now and in the future. Vancouver Audubon is the steward for the Vancouver Lake and Lowlands IBA.

Friends of Vancouver Lake and other lake user groups are strongly advocating for widening of the flushing channel. The flushing channel, which is owned by the Port of Vancouver, was completed in 1983 to increase water flow to improve water quality in Vancouver Lake. That project included dredging to deepen the lake, with dredge spoils used to create an island in the lake. Flow was only increased about two percent so several methods of modifying the flushing channel have been proposed which could affect bird habitat, but no funding currently is available to modify the flushing channel.



From the VAS Board

First of all, we want to say a big thank you to everyone who donated to Vancouver Audubon during GiveMore24. We raised \$1,160 to support the development of our Young Birders Program! There is still time to donate on the [GiveMore24 website here](#) or consider becoming/renewing your membership directly on our [website here](#).

As we continue developing and implementing new and engaging programs like the Young Birders Program, Audubon Adventures, and tackling threats of overdevelopment and other climate related challenges, we are looking for enthusiastic new board and committee members to support our growth. We have an incredible group of motivated conservationist on our board and we would be thrilled if you would join us for a board meeting on the last Tuesday of the month on Zoom to get a feel for the behind the scenes work of our organization. Learn more about us and our [contact info here](#).

If you're not quite ready for that type of commitment, join us for our monthly member meeting on

October 4th to see some awesome photos

from our members, take part in our guided walks to learn more about the birds around us, or join us at community events like Ridgefield's Birdfest and Bluegrass on October 1st. There are also lots of opportunities in our community to connect with nature. Not only is Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge hosting several activities on October 1st, but Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge is reopening to the public after the last long-term closure to finish up the incredible Steigerwald Reconnection Project. The Gorge Refuge Stewards will be hosting bi-weekly bird walks at Steigerwald which you can [sign up for here](#).

Finally, migration is in full swing now. Millions of birds are passing over Washington at night, so keep an eye on [BirdCast the migration tracker](#) or our [Facebook page](#) to see when you should go "lights out" for birds. Also, be sure to celebrate [October Big Day](#) on October 8th by submitting an eBird checklist or talking and connecting with one non-birder about how cool and important birds are!

**By Jared Strawderman,
VAS Vice President**



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

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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 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

Our September meeting was the first LIVE MEETING in over two years! We have a great new modern meeting room 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:

October 4th—FotoFest!



Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

We will have a Show & Tell with the wonderful photos that you as members have taken this past year. If you want to highlight 3-5 (or more) of your photos from 2022 to share with Vancouver Audubon members, this is your chance. Please send electronic copies of your photos in small format with your full name in the email and a little

description of each picture to meetings@vancouveraudubon.org. 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.



*Northern Pygmy-Owl
Photo by Greg Johnson*

November 1st – Birds and Beasts of South Africa

Local member Steve Bredthauer has recently taken three separate trips to South Africa to photograph birds and other wildlife. Steve has put together a show highlighting the species that he discovered there.

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.

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

Saturday, Oct 1

First-of-Month Bird Walk

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Meeting time: 7:30am

Meeting location: [Frenchman's Bar Regional Park](#)

Register: vas@vancouveraudubon.org

October's bird walk: Frenchman's Bar Park

We will walk the north trail to look for resident and migrating birds and early winter arrivals. Meet at the [north parking lot](#) (near the park host) at 7:30am. Parking fee or County Parks pass required.

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.

Saturday, Oct 8

Woodland Bottoms

Leader: Randy Hill/co-leaders expected

Departure time: 7:15 am

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

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

Target species include migrating/wintering cranes, raptors, waterfowl and a wide variety of marsh, riverine, riparian, and cropland species.

Meet to leave at 07:15 at the Salmon Creek Park and Ride to carpool. We will head north and regroup with northern participants in Woodland and do a circuit around Dike Road and many crossroads in open crop/agriculture areas. The trip will likely end around noon, although there could be an optional extension for late season raptor migration viewing. Spotting scopes encouraged, and bring radios if you have them.

Limit of 4 cars, 10 total participants.

Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2; Terrain: A-B; 1 mile 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 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.)



Turkey Vulture
photo by Mick Thompson

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 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.

Sunday-Monday, Nov 13-14, 2022

Wahkiakum County w/optional extension to Pacific County

Leader: Randy Hill/co-leaders expected

Departure time: 7:00 am

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

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

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Those continuing the second day in Pacific County need to sign up by 10/9 for additional arrangements and instruction since lodging will be involved.

Target species include resident and migrating species in a wide variety of marsh, riparian, ag/pasture, mixed forest, open river, and (in Pacific County) estuary, coastal bay, sandy beach, open ocean. The 2-day trip has nearly the diversity of the August Grays Harbor trip but reflects late fall/wintering species.

Itinerary: Meet to leave at 07:00 at the Salmon Creek Park and Ride to carpool within current Covid guidelines. We will head north to Longview and travel west on SR-4 with

stops at Puget Island, Julia Butler Hansen NWR, and Grays Bay around to Altoona. Those continuing the next day in Pacific County then will continue west on SR-4 toward Long Beach with some additional birding before lodging. Monday birding will include a variety of stops that could include Nahcotta, Oysterville, Leadbetter Point SP, Cape Disappointment SP, Ilwaco Marina and Chinook Valley. Trip will likely go to at least mid-afternoon before a return home. Spotting scopes encouraged and radios if you have them.

Limit of 5 cars but TBD with one or two day option, 10 total participants. Trip travel type expectations: Pace: 1-2; Terrain: A; generally <1 mile walking. Mostly driving to viewing spots or along routes.

BirdFest & Bluegrass 2022

In 2022 BirdFest & Bluegrass will be entirely in person! The City of Ridgefield will be hosting in-person in-town events, including vendors and music in Downtown Ridgefield, plus we will have a self-guided Carty Unit Refuge hike, wandering trail stewards to answer questions, Sandhill Crane Tours, tours of the new Refuge office building, and a bus tour of the River 'S' Unit! The Refuge will be fee-free, and seasonal trails will be open for an extra weekend!

Carty Unit Activities – 10am-4pm

10am– Event Opening Blessing with Sam Robinson, Vice-Chairman of the Chinook Indian Nation

10:30am- Guided Geology Tour Montana Comes to Ridgefield. Join local geologist Jim Maul for an interpretive walk around the Carty Unit. Jim will share with you the story of the landscape of the Refuge and Ridgefield area and its connection to the Missoula Floods that inundated our area at the end of the last ice age. Meet at the Oaks-to-Wetlands Trailhead by the fee station.

Spotting Scopes with Vancouver Audubon While you check out the new administration building on the Carty Unit, stop by the Administrative Office overlook deck to visit with Vancouver Audubon Society birders staffing a scoping station overlooking Carty Lake and more.

Community Partners booths

Self-Guided Wander Walk Wander the Oaks-to-Wetlands Trail and find out how your senses can enhance your appreciation of the outdoors. Signs will lead you down the paved quarter-mile portion of the entire 1.39-mile trail.

Family Activities Join Fish & Wildlife staff and volunteers for family-friendly wildlife related crafts and activities focused on Killdeer, Lamprey, and more.

Hourly Administrative Office Tours Starting at 10am, find out more about that new building you have seen growing on the

Carty Unit for so long now!

Photo Contest
Reveal Pro Photo
Supply and the

Friends of the Refuge will display the winners of the 2022 Photo Contest at the entrance to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Administration Building, on the Carty Unit.

River 'S' Unit Auto Tour

10:00am: Visita Familiar Hispana (Tour en Español)

11:30am-4:00pm: Auto Tour Bus Journey. Join the Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, and expert guides and assistants, on a free ride around the auto tour route of the Ridgefield Refuge, during BirdFest & Bluegrass 2022. Bring the family and possibly see everything from bald eagles to beavers. Each tour has a limited capacity of 30 people. Tours every 1.5 hours.

Sandhill Crane Tours – Reservation Only

Saturday 10/1 & Sunday 10/2—6am & 5pm

The most unique viewing experience BirdFest has to offer! This is a once in a lifetime chance to hear and see the magnificent flight of hundreds of Sandhill Cranes as they visit their night roost. Join expert staff to learn about cranes and wildlife. Meet at the River 'S' Unit entrance by the kiosk 15 minutes before the tour time. Wear weather appropriate footwear and clothing in muted colors. Participants will be required to walk approximately 500 yards over rough, uneven terrain to get to a viewing blind. Bring your own water. Space limited, \$30.00 per person. RSVP early at <http://FRNWR.eventbrite.com>.

Non-Refundable: If you need to cancel or change your reservation, please do so before 6pm Tuesday, September 27th. No refunds will be offered but we can release your spot for someone on the waitlist. More information at FRNWR.eventbrite.com



Vancouver Moves Forward with Climate Action Framework

The Vancouver City Council held a workshop on September 19 to establish clear direction for staff on how to finalize the Climate Action Framework (CAF), previously known as the Climate Action Plan.

The CAF actions are expected to meet the city's goal to reach carbon neutrality by 2040. The framework will spell out policy measures and incentives related to buildings and energy, transportation and land use, solid waste, equity and governance. It's final form will serve as guidance for the city's transportation, land use and strategic plans to ensure they align with the climate goals.

Building energy accounts for 20 percent of Vancouver's greenhouse gas emissions, according to the city's 2019 inventory, with most coming from residential and commercial buildings. A foundational component in reaching Vancouver's carbon neutrality goal is reducing the amount of energy consumed. It will require collaboration with local utilities to weatherize buildings, switch to low carbon power sources and create incentives for electrification.

Council members were hesitant to broaden the framework's reach beyond existing electrification requirements and favored a hybrid approach, which will include natural gas. They suggested upholding state standards while advocating for the State Building Codes Council's residential building energy code updates for electric heat pumps for space and water heating in new single family and lower height multifamily buildings, and advocating for and implementing incentive programs to transition to electric energy.

Addressing energy supply in new construction alone will not be sufficient to reach the carbon neutrality goal. Several council members said requiring a transition to electric heat pumps in existing single-family and low multifamily buildings isn't reasonable so they must rely on incentives to encourage owners to make the switch.

In the transportation sector, council members didn't commit to whether they would actively support the distribution of "clean fuels," such as renewable diesel, compressed natural gas, propane or ethanol, while the transition to electric vehicles unfolds. Although Washington has a statewide mandate for all-electric vehicle sales by 2030, vehicles that consume gasoline and diesel will remain, so council members recommended pursuing educational outreach to the community about the benefits of using clean fuels.

Previous public engagement showed concerns about the impacts of gasoline-powered two-cycle engine lawn equipment, such as leaf blowers, that are proven heavy polluters. Using a leaf blower for one hour produces the same number of carbon emissions as driving 1,100 miles from Vancouver to San Diego. More than 170 jurisdictions nationwide have banned and limited the use of this equipment, including Multnomah County. The council unanimously advocated for cutting the use of these tools with some members emphasizing they need to be phased out intentionally, so it doesn't upend small landscaping businesses.

Once staff incorporates the council's direction into the CAF, it will be presented as a council meeting for a vote.

by Susan Saul



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 Community Rewards Program](#) and selecting 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**.

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Grays Harbor—Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2022

By Randy Hill

Pelagic birding is not for everyone, but coastal birding has plenty of followers. In what I expect to be an annual trek to the coast after last year's successful 3-day trip, nine of us participated in a similar flexible-scheduled adventure at the end of August. Westport Seabirds held six, then eight spaces for us for several months before they asked for a final call on 5/15. In the end, seven went on the pelagic trip and two late sign-ups wound up on a fishing charter. Eight of us left from three starting points in three vehicles, gathering at a rest area along I-5 where the first group eBird checklist recorded 23 species.

Onward to Aberdeen and the Hoquiam water treatment plant, where we realized that the on-line tides chart for Westport was incorrect; later we realized the times were IST=India! Hmm, it obviously was not locally generated, and we were at low tide. The trip to Damon Point area of Ocean Shores left us with distant views of the bay birds, but a large mink was a pleasant surprise. It also was really warming up! We zipped around the bay back through Aberdeen toward Bottle Beach and found very high water. So on to Westport to visit the marina. There we quickly found "the godwit flock" from Float 21. Bingo! Nearly 1000 Marbled Godwits, four Whimbrels, a Willet, and the continuing Bar-tailed Godwit plus some Black Turnstones were located. Lots of pelicans, gulls, cormorants; and interesting gold jellyfish (Pacific Sea Nettles) while walking back to our vehicles.

After check-in, we headed for Bottle Beach where the tide was just starting to recede. Five species each of shorebirds and waterfowl, plus a young Peregrine Falcon that was quite cooperative for views. Four Great Egrets were found on the way back. Back at Westport, our last group member joined after a full day of work in Vancouver.

The next morning we all left before first light to arrive at our boats (04:30 for the fishing charter, 05:40 for pelagic birding.) Fog limited visibility, but the inner bay had a few

species we would not see further off-shore. Sometimes getting across the bar to the open ocean determines how effective the motion sickness medication will be; there are always casualties that can be brief or lasting. (I am a lucky one with only two episodes approaching queasy in more than 50 trips out; one was an overnight ferry from the mainland of Australia to Tasmania, the other out of North Carolina when the fishing boats headed in by 10am and we were still "roughing it" at noon.) We didn't slow down much as we went through the near-shore belt approaching the first Sooty Shearwaters. Over the next 3+ hours getting to shrimp boats and the outer shelf we encountered Red and Red-necked Phalaropes, the "skua slam" including several adult Pomarine Jaegers with "full spoon" tails, four shearwaters including several Buller's and scores if not hundreds of Short-tailed, many flocks of showy Sabine's Gulls (but hardly any of the expected California Gulls), four alcids including a pair of

Tufted Puffins, several Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, and several Black-footed Albatross. The fish oil slick was relatively unproductive, but while heading back toward Grays Harbor there were loads of birds around other shrimp boats. Chumming was productive here, where a banded Laysan Albatross joined the swirling mix of hungry birds!

The trip heading back to Westport was an effort, with a strong headwind that



Laysan Albatross
Photo: Kevin Black

sprayed any of us crazy enough sit outside rather than under cover. The strong wind continued into the harbor and we did not cruise in close to the jetty where "rockpipers" can be present. Once inside the protection of the marina, we did a close cruise by the godwit flock, but without scopes we were unable to pin down the Bar-tailed Godwit. After the trip summary and leaving the boat, two left for home after a ground check of the godwit flock, the rest of us headed back to lodging (for dry clothes) and three of us headed out again, this time to check Westhaven State Park where Wandering Tattler and Semipalmated Plover were

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(Trip Report, continued from page 7)

new for the trip.

On day 3 we “slept in” before departing for home, with all three vehicles leaving at different times, and only my vehicle of three following the planned route south. After checking the Midway Beach access we crossed into Pacific County at Grayland Beach State Park. Heading out from beach entry 5 we walked along the Snowy Plover closure area to the beach to watch loads of gull, Sanderlings running in and out along the tide, watched a adult Parasitic Jaeger zip along the wet beach, stirring up gulls and peeps alike, and eventually found Snowy Plovers working a wrack line.

We had plenty of songbirds getting there and back as well. Little was showing at North Cove on the way to Tokeland, and among 20 species seen at Graveyard Spit were a Whimbrel and five Greater Yellowlegs. The Tokeland Marina was a nice viewpoint of the bay and the mudflats surrounding. The resident flock of Willets and



dozens of Marbled Godwits among 8 species of shorebirds, a Red-necked Grebe, Purple Martins ready to head south, and American White Pelicans a short distance from the ocean were notable.

We continued the long drive home through Raymond and down US101

to Bay Center. A low tide limited shorebird species to four, but among 30 species was a single Bonaparte's Gull. From there, we headed to SR-4 and east to Julia Butler Hansen NWR. Among 32 species along Brooks Slough were two Chipping Sparrows, while Steamboat Slough Road beyond the office had 29 species. With a self-imposed deadline of a 6pm return to base, that was it for birding, ending with a total of 128 species.

There was lots of adventure, lots of diversity, lots of birds, and lots of fun. We'll do it again.

Mark your calendars for [October Big Day](#)—**October 8, 2022!** Big Days are a 24-hour opportunity to celebrate birds near and far. Last October, more than 32,000 people from 195 countries submitted 78,000 checklists with eBird, demonstrating the power of birds to bring people together.

Wherever you are on October 8th, take a few minutes to join the world of birding on October Big Day. Participate from anywhere—even home! By taking part in October Big Day you're also celebrating [Global Bird Weekend](#) and [World Migratory Bird Day](#). Be a part of the global team and help set a new record for October birding.



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.

Most of the sightings in this report are only the highlights gleaned from the eBird reports, to see the complete list for any outing go to eBird.org and enter the county name into Explore and then scroll to that date.

Aug. 22, while at Beacon Rock State Park in Skamania County, Claire Weiser and Diane Burgess spotted a flock of 20 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** (4) flying upriver.

Aug. 22, Paul Slichter, Susan Saul, Lu-an Pinson and Carolyn Wright were hiking on the Divide Camp Trail in Skamania County when they found a group of 41 **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** (4). This area at timberline above the Pacific Crest Trail has large meadows of grasses and sedges with abundant insect prey.

Aug. 23, Les Carlson was birding on Strawberry Island, below Bonneville Dam and saw the 2 **EASTERN KING-BIRDS** (5) that had been found there earlier by John Davis.

Aug. 24, 5 early returning **NORTHERN SHOVELERS** were seen by John Davis on the Juvenile Fish Passage Facilities wetland ponds, on Strawberry Island. There is bench overlooking this small pond up the gravel road east of the boat launch and it is always worth checking as is the area around the giant sprinkler that deters birds from feeding on fingerlings. These and most other ducks are now in eclipse plumage with both the males and females looking about the same until about October when they molt into their more colorful feathers. Identification at this time means paying attention to the bill size, shape and color as well as the bird's body shape.

Aug. 25, A **SORA** (4) and a **VIRGINIA RAIL** were heard calling by John Davis from the wetland by the sailboard beach at Home Valley Park but the best bird here was a **GRAY CATBIRD** (5) meowing from the bushes.

Aug. 27, the first of the **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** returning from their arctic breeding grounds were reported by Jim Danzenbaker who heard them calling over his Battle Ground home. They are one of our earliest migrant waterfowl, the majority of them spend the winter further south in southern Oregon and California.

Aug. 27, at the Home Valley Park in Skamania County, an early returning **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** was picked out by John Davis through his spotting scope hanging out with an



Mountain Bluebird
Photo by Mick Thompson

AMERICAN COOT, a **GREAT EGRET** and geese. But his best find for the day was the second **BLACK PHOEBE** (5) ever reported from this county flycatching near the small stream at the sailboard beach.

Aug. 29, John Davis found 2 male **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKERS** (4) and 12 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** (3) in the vicinity of the Wicky Shelter on the FR8040 Road in Skamania County north of Trout Lake.

Aug. 29, Jim Danzenbaker found a **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** on Lower Larch Mountain, these small flycatchers with an even sized eyering have been found nesting in the clearcuts between Larch and Silver Star Mountains although they are considered to be an east of the Cascades species.

Sept. 1, Brent Angelo reported a single breeding-plumaged **HORNED GREBE** relaxing by the water at the Vancouver Lake Regional Park. There are a few nesting pair in Okanogan County and the northeast corner of the state, but their main breeding area is in Canada north and east of us.

Sept. 1, Jim Danzenbaker and Les Carlson found a single **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (4) and heard a **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** (4) on Lower Larch Mountain.

Sept. 2, a **NORTHERN GOSHAWK** (3) was spotted by John Bishop east of Spirit Lake at Mt. Saint Helens near an area where he has seen them previously in late summer.

Sept. 2, Alan Knue and Charles Enlow spotted a large pale striped sparrow at the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit. They said that it was streaked both above and across chest and flanks and had a rather bland face with a dark malar (moustache like mark near the bill) and dark-edged pale

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auriculars. In flight white outer tail feathers were evident making this a **VESPER SPARROW** (4), a rare migrant through the county.

Sept. 2, Les Carlson came up to our place east of Washougal to bird and while we were watching for migrants from the front deck, a **BLACK SWIFT** (3) and 7 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** flew over.

Sept. 4, an adult **SABINE'S GULL** (5) in breeding plumage, was seen and photographed by John Davis along the Columbia River near a navigation structure on the west end of Strawberry Island. These arctic nesting birds spend most of their lives over the open ocean far from shore and this bird may have come overland flying south from the Arctic Ocean.

Sept. 5, Joe Stojak reported a flock of 5 **CINNAMON TEAL** (4) flying over river at the St. Cloud Wayside, while a fairly common bird in Clark County, they are hard to find in Skamania County.

Sept. 6, another **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** was seen in Skamania County, this one was at the home of Josh Barstow in Stevenson.

Sept. 6, Bonnie Bingle had about 75 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** circling close to her yard on N.E 51st. This was a new addition to their yard list after 28 years living there. It is only in the last decade that they have become a regular species seen in Clark County.

Sept. 7, Cindy McCormack, Randy Hill and Les Carlson visited the FR 8040 Road north of Trout Lake, finding a continuing juvenile female **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER**, 5 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** and 2 **NASHVILLE WARBLERS** and a **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (4).

Sept. 7, Josh Barstow found and photographed a **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (5) at Home Valley Park, Skamania County. He spotted it along the shoreline about 25 yards to the right of the windsurfing beach. There have only been a couple of records of this warbler from Skamania County and this was the first one entered into eBird.

Sept. 8, John Davis went to the Home Valley Park in a suc-

cessful search for the **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** and spotted a loose group of 16 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** flying over going west and a **NASHVILLE WARBLER** that seemed to be chasing the waterthrush. In less than a month John has seen five code (5) birds in the county, four of these rarities were first found by him.

Sept. 11, Les Carlson and I made a trip to the Home Valley Park finding 3 **BLACK SWIFTS**, 18 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** and the continuing **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH**, a new county bird for both of us. In the three hours that we birded there we saw a total of 45 species.

Sept. 12, 11 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** were spotted at one time at the St. Cloud Wayside by Cindy McCormack. This has been an excellent place to see them in the fall for several years now, often in large numbers. At Home Valley Park she met up with Russ Koppendrayer and John Bishop where they heard a few repeated mew calls and found a **GRAY CAT-BIRD** perched atop a blackberry bush just east of picnic table at the wind surfer beach. It was most likely the same individual first reported by John Davis on 8/25/22.

Sept. 14, Luke Hanes was on the Burnt Bridge Creek-Steward Glen Trail when he heard the "peent" call of a **COMMON NIGHTHAWK** (3) above an open field near the 1-mile marker. These birds were once common locally but are now very hard to find.

Sept. 14, Jim Danzenbaker and Gregory Johnson heard another **DUSKY FLYCATCHER** on Lower Larch Mountain, Jim finds that the window of Dusky Flycatcher migration through this area is roughly August 25 through about September 10 so this is a bit late.

Sept. 16, Samuel Holman found an **AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** (3) on the NF 091 Road, which is east of the Indian Heaven Wilderness Area in Skamania County.

Sept. 17, At the Beacon Rock State Park, Garrett Haynes and Paul Baerny found 2 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** perched at top of large bare tree and hawking insects.

Sept. 17, Susan and I watched 5 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** fly over our house heading south towards the Columbia River.



Common Nighthawk
Photo by Greg Johnson

(Continued on page 11)

Sept. 19, Les Carlson came up to our place to watch for migrants while having coffee and we had good numbers of **RUBY-CROWNED** and **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS**, **WARBLING VIREOS**, **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS**, **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS**, **TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS** and **HERMIT WARBLERS** among the 33 species we saw. The surprise came while Les was using his Merlin bird song identification app when he said that it was indicating a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** while I was puzzling over a bird deep in a bush that soon popped up higher letting us see that the app was right. Merlin isn't perfect and I won't count a bird it identifies unless I actually see or hear it, so we ignored its report of a Great Egret and a Dipper in our woods. At dusk, there were 3 Sooty **FOX SPARROWS** and 9 **GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS** under our feeders.

Sept. 20, another 14 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** were seen by John Davis at Home Valley Park, in Skamania County. I have only visited this gem of a park three times this fall and saw these woodpeckers on each visit. John makes regular visits there and his and other's finds have produced a list of 122 species from there in 2022.

Sept. 20, John Bishop found a **SAY'S PHOEBE** in Brush Prairie, they are much more uncommon here as a fall migrant than a Spring migrant.

Sept. 20, on a powerline at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park, a lingering **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** from this year's hatch was picked out of a swarm of **BARN SWALLOWS** by Cindy McCormack.

Sept. 20, a late **BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** was heard by Cindy McCormack in the Vancouver Lake lowlands, the majority of them were gone by the first week of the month.

Sept. 20, Dana DeFarcy found and photographed an **ACORN WOODPECKER** (5) at Fort Vancouver, a spot where these rare for Washington woodpeckers have been seen before. Their only known nesting colonies in the state are in Klickitat County.

Sept. 21, 6 more **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** were found by John Davis, these were on Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam in Skamania County.



Lewis's Woodpecker
Photo by Mick Thompson

Sept. 22, another group of 3 **LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS** were seen at the Red Bluff Road ponds in Stevenson by Josh Barstow.

The number of Lewis's Woodpeckers seen this fall has been amazing and made me wonder where they are coming from until Susan Saul messaged me that she, Paul Slichter, Luan Pinson and Carolyn Wright participated in the Klickitat County Fall Migration Bird Count. They had the Klickitat Wildlife Area as their assignment and went out Grayback Road but could not find any Acorn Woodpeckers and only saw 4 Lewis's Woodpeckers. They looked under the oak trees and reported that they did not see any current year acorns. Susan said that she has heard that acorn production is cyclic in response to filbertworm infestations: when the filbertworm population gets too

large, the oaks don't produce acorns for a year or two to starve out the worms that eat them, and then have a great acorn year so there would be too many acorns for the reduced population of worms to eat. This seems like a likely explanation for the Lewis's and Acorn Woodpeckers dispersing from the oak forests in the Gorge, there was even a report of an Acorn Woodpecker in Seattle this month.

So far this has been a pretty slow fall migration, while we have had a good variety of species reported the number of individual birds seems low. The birds of summer are quickly being replaced by the waterfowl, hawks and finches from

the north that will winter here. Every year among the flocks of geese and ducks that arrive here there are a few Asiatic species that can be found by scanning the flocks looking for anything different, a process I call playing Where's Waldo?

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 end of July, 3 birds have been added to the Clark County list for the 2022 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project raising it to 221 for the year and in Skamania County 5 birds were added to that list bringing it to 192. I expect that with the fall migration the lists will grow. 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

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.



Can you identify the warbler in this photo? Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.

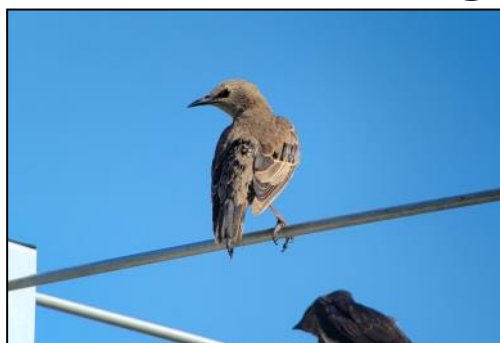
September's Bird ID Challenge Discussion

I started the season with a very common bird to give everyone an easy ID, but sometimes the birds that should be an easy identification can be tricky when they don't appear as you usually see them!

Viewing photos can be difficult alone—you don't have vocalizations, behaviors, or other typical cues to help. If you didn't recognize this bird immediately from the photo last month, don't feel bad, you are not alone!

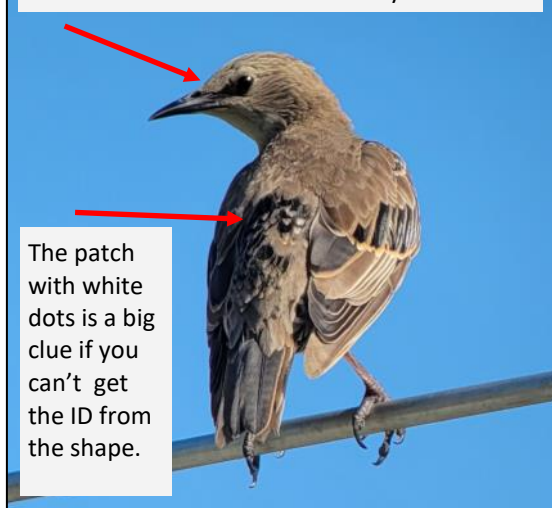
Let's start with the habitat. Not much to go on here! It's clearly perched on a man-made object, but that in itself isn't terribly helpful. Unless you recognize the other bird or the object on which it is perched, there isn't a lot to go on.

So we will move on to looking at the shape of the bird. It seems to be rather stocky. The head is relatively flat-topped. The bill merges into the head with very little slope change at the forehead. The wings are not very long, and held slightly apart from the sides. The tail appears to be relatively short, especially in comparison to the length of the entire bird. The legs are thin, not terribly



September's Photo Challenge
Photo: C. McCormack

Long, pointed bill with just a slight curve and a flat forehead and black lores is key here.



The patch with white dots is a big clue if you can't get the ID from the shape.

long or short; the feet have the opposing toe of the "perching" birds. The longish bill seems stout at the base, tapering to a point with a very slight downcurve. What birds might fit the description of a flat-sloped forehead with a relatively long and oh-so-slightly curved bill? Some Icterids (the blackbird family) might fit that portion of the description.

Grackles can have a very flat-looking crown, but their tails are much longer, the bill stouter with a thicker base and the culmen (top midline) is significantly more curved. Western Meadowlark can also fit the flat crown description and it has a relatively short tail, but they have very straight, very pointed bills. Other Icterids (blackbirds and orioles) tend to have rounder heads, thicker-based bills and/or straighter bills. So, not an Icterid.

You can actually identify this bird by shape and stance alone, but let's continue on with the coloration and that odd feather pattern. The bird has a dark eye with black lores. (Lores are the area between

the eye and the base of the bill). Otherwise, the bird ap-

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

appears a plain, dull brown with some darker feathers in the wing (in the primaries, secondaries, tertials, and the secondary coverts), in the tail, and in the middle of the back. In fact, the feathers in the middle of the back have white tips on them! So, why do we have these blocks of dark feathers here? The bird is molting! It is molting from brown juvenile plumage (this bird was completely feathered in dull brown except for the black lores before it started to molt). A typical complete molt will start at certain areas of feather tracts and proceed sequentially. The advantage to this is that more resources can be put into fewer feathers at any one time, making the feathers stronger and more resistant to wear while allowing the bird to retain insulation and the ability to fly during molt (important when there are so many predators about!).



Quiz bird, different position.
Note shape and stance.
Photo by C. McCormack

with some visible iridescence and some rich brown edging. That makes the identity of this bird pretty straightforward!

Stout bird with flatish head, black lores, long, relatively stout and slightly curved bill, short tail, and short wings often held out to the side, that will have dark, iridescent feathers with white tips. We have the very common EUROPEAN STARLING!

The European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) is very successful introduced species in North America, with the continent's entire population (in excess of 200 million!) derived from the release of birds in Central Park (NYC) in the early 1890's. Unfortunately, they are significant competitor for cavity nests, aggressively evicting birds such as Wood Ducks, Buffleheads, woodpeckers, bluebirds, Purple Martins, and Tree Swallows to name a few.

Starlings make up one of the most impressive aerial displays in nature. Thousands fly together in mesmerizing shape-shifting flock called a murmuration. When you see a dark cloud of birds moving in coordinated waves, be sure to check for an aerial predator.

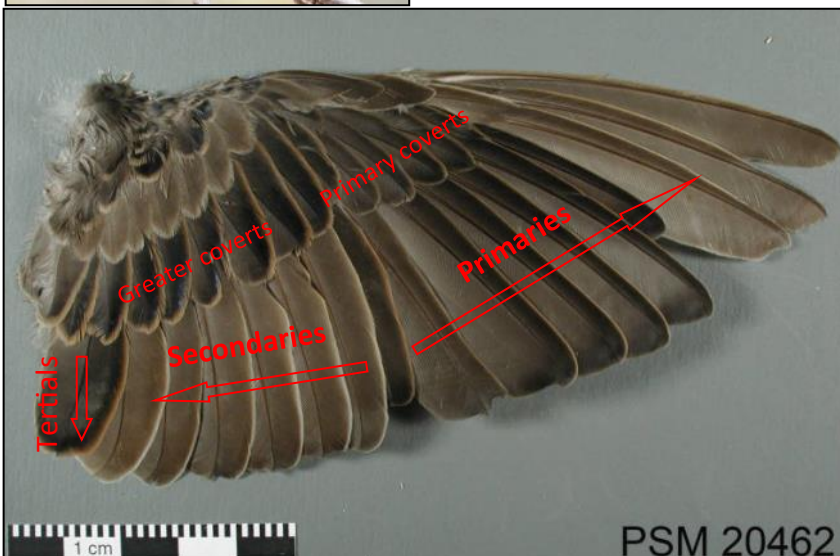
You will notice that European Starlings are very spotted in fall and winter, but mostly dark oily green/purple iridescent in spring and summer. They don't actually molt to have this appearance change, it is just the loss of the white spots at the ends of those feathers from wear! Remember, white feathering wears much faster than dark feathers due to the feather-strengthening qualities of melanin. Also note the unique, narrow, pointed shape of the body feathers!

We can recognize a starling in breeding condition by the change in bill color—it turns bright yellow!

Quiz bird (adult)
Photo: Mick Thompson



So, keeping the in-progress molt in mind, we can start to picture how new plumage will appear. The fresh feathers are much darker. The body plumage (at least on the back from the photo) will be dark with small white tips. The new flight feathers and coverts are much darker



European Starling wing in molt. Photo: Slater Museum of Natural History



European Starling showing white feather tips worn away.
David Seidensticker/
Audubon Photography Awards

An example of molt in progress. European Starlings have a complete molt once a year, starting with the inner primary, moving outwards. Once the 5th primary starts replacing, the secondaries start, replacing sequentially inwards. The greater coverts grow all together, while the primary coverts replace sequentially with their corresponding primary feather.

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 BirdFest, then closed for season.

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

Re-opening October 1st!

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
October 2022						
Sep 25	Sep 26	Sep 27 Board Mtg	Sep 28	Sep 29	Sept 30	Oct 1 Bird Walk BirdFest
2 BirdFest	3	4 Program	5	6	7	8 Field Trip October Big Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21 Field Trip possible	22
23/30	24/31	25 Board Mtg	26	27	28	29

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

Oct 1 (SAT): Bird Walk: Kiwa Trail at Ridgefield NWR, 7:30am

Oct 1-2 (SAT, SUN): Ridgefield BirdFest & Bluegrass 2022

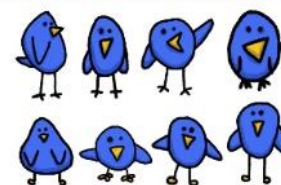
Oct 4 (TUE): Monthly Program: FotoFest!, 6:30pm social/program 7pm (in-person & on-line)

Oct 8 (SAT): Field Trip, Woodland Bottoms

Oct 8 (SAT): October Big Day

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

Nov 13-14 (SUN-MON): Field Trip to Wahkiakum Co. w/optional ext. to Pacific Co.



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