

# Columbia Flyway



**VANCOUVER AUDUBON** *A chapter of the National Audubon Society*

Volume 48, Number 1

February 2023

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

## GOODRICH GIFT SUPPORTS BIRD HABITAT CONSERVATION

Mary Anne Goodrich (1934-2021) left a monetary bequest to the Vancouver Audubon Society that will help conserve 2,666 acres of Oregon white oak habitat above the Klickitat River near the town of Klickitat, Washington.

In December 2022, the Vancouver Audubon Society donated \$87,000 to the Columbia Land Trust's Klickitat Oaks - Phase 1 project. This priority landscape, formerly owned by SDS Lumber, includes oak woodlands, oak savanna and mixed oak and conifer forest.

The Klickitat Oaks – Phase 1 project has the top score in the Critical Habitat category of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's 2023-2025 grants, which would fund half the \$8.6 million acquisition cost. Columbia Land Trust must contribute more than \$4.3 million in federal and private grants such as this VAS donation.

Conservation of this land will protect Oregon white oak woodlands and the birds and other wildlife that they support. Oregon white oak communities support more fish and wildlife than any other plant community but this critical habitat is rapidly being lost to roads, development, altered fire regimes, and timber management practices.

Supported bird species include Lewis's

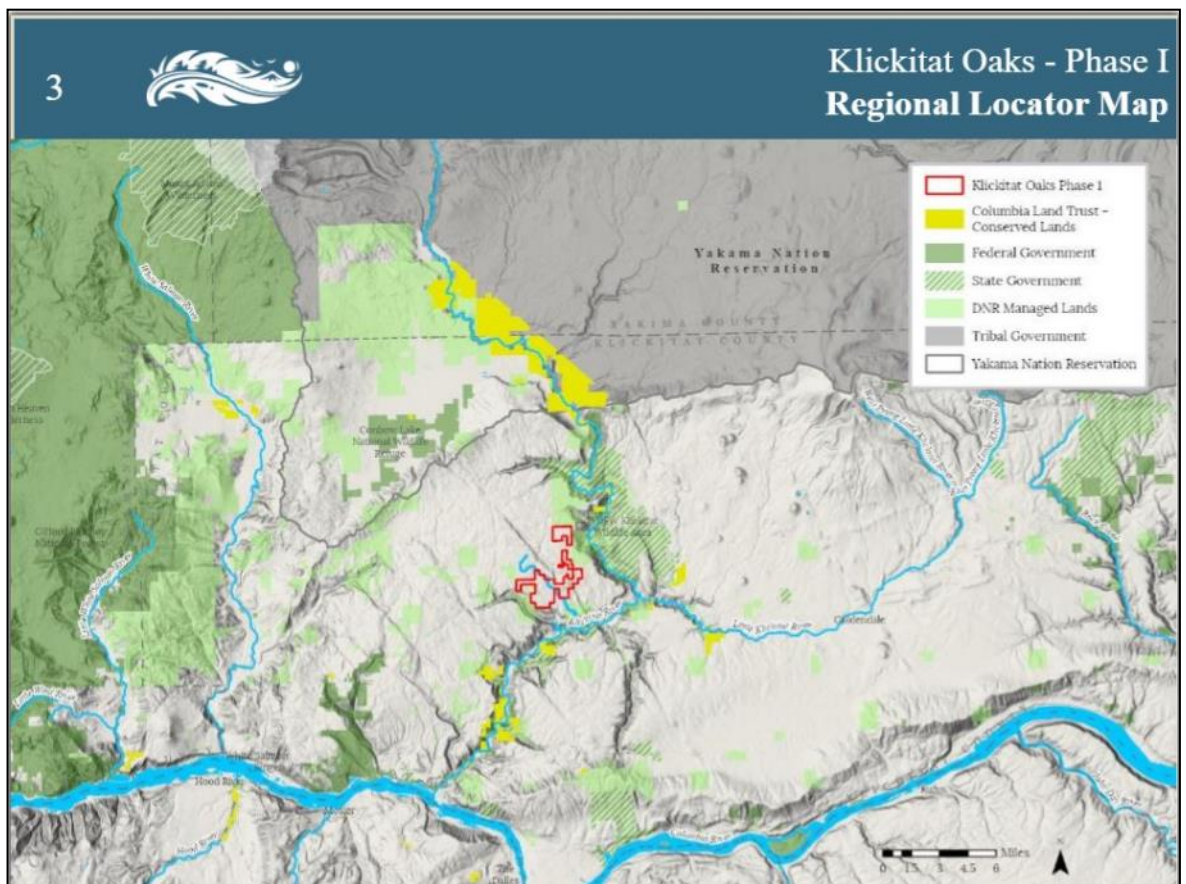
Woodpecker, Pygmy Nuthatch, White-headed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Flammulated Owl, Western Bluebird, Spotted Owl, and Western Tanager. This habitat is a critical link in the Pacific Flyway and source of food for neotropical migratory birds in decline.

Supported priority mammal species include western gray squirrel, gray wolf, fisher, mountain goat and wolverine.

Public benefits include restored public access for hiking and wildlife observation, restored access to members of the Yakama Nation for traditional uses, and environmental education.

This is the first phase of a project to conserve 8,000 acres.

*by Susan Saul*





## From the VAS Board

### The Future of the Name Audubon

The birding community has been rethinking its relationship with the John James Audubon name. Most know him as a wildlife artist whose illustrations helped shape the field of ornithology. Many associate the name with fond memories of birding trips and environmental advocacy from organizations like ours. What has been overlooked until the last few years by the Audubon community is the fact that John James Audubon both enslaved people and opposed the abolition of slavery.

It's not commonly known that John James Audubon had nothing to do with the founding of the first Audubon societies. In fact, he died decades before the first Audubon chapter emerged. The name was chosen because of his stature and noted contributions to birds and our understanding of natural history, most famously through his book *The Birds of America*, a collection of 435 life-size bird prints.

Now the choice to bear his name is being reevaluated across the country. That the name Audubon celebrates a slaveholder who held white supremacist views goes against the Audubon network's commitment to equity and racial justice.

In 2022, National Audubon announced a 12 to 18 month process to think through what John James Audubon's name and legacy means to the future of the organization. The Naming Task Force, composed of members of the National Audubon board, is reviewing and analyzing input from several important sources:

- Research from two historians on the history of John James Audubon
- Feedback from stakeholders both within and outside of Audubon, including members, staff, donors, chapter leaders, volunteers, partners and more. Feedback was collected through a survey, small group meetings, and individual meetings.
- An analysis of organizational considerations, financial costs, and donor projections for a potential name change.
- An analysis of legal considerations for a potential name change.

The recommendation will be presented to the full board in late February 2023. That will begin the board's deliberation and decision-making process regarding the name of the national organization.

The Audubon network is vast, with over 450 chapters, including Vancouver Audubon. As independently incorporated entities, each chapter has the autonomy and authority to make decisions in respect to their naming as best serves their needs.

Vancouver Audubon's board supports the nationwide investigation into the name and its impacts and awaits the decision of National Audubon's leadership on a name change. We advocate for a decision that would allow the Audubon network to stay intact while moving away from a racist history that does little justice to the work of our organization and our supporters and the communities impacted by our work.

by Susan Saul



PO Box 1966 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1966  
Website | [vancouveraudubon.org](http://vancouveraudubon.org)  
Facebook | [@VancouverAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/VancouverAudubon)  
Chartered December 18, 1975

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

### Officers, Board Members, & Chairs

President | Sam Neuffer | 206-930-1032 | [president@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:president@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Vice President | Jared Strawderman | [vp@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vp@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Secretary | Craig Wallace | [craig@wallfam.net](mailto:craig@wallfam.net)  
Treasurer | Joan Durgin | 360-834-5621 | [treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Conservation | Susan Saul | [conservation@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:conservation@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Editor | Cindy McCormack | [vas@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Education | Sam Neuffer | [president@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:president@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Field Trips | Randy Hill | 360-975-2573 | [fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Membership | Karen Pickering | [membership@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:membership@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Programs | Don Rose | [meetings@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Refreshments | open |  
Sightings | Wilson Cady | 360-835-5947 | [gorgebirds@juno.com](mailto:gorgebirds@juno.com)  
Website | Lissa Gienty | [website@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:website@vancouveraudubon.org)  
Young Birders Program | [youngbirders@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto: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

## Upcoming Programs:

**Our February meeting will be a hybrid meeting – in-person at the Evergreen Public Schools Administration building and a virtual ZOOM meeting.** All Vancouver Audubon members will receive a Zoom invitation via email. You must register in advance to receive the link

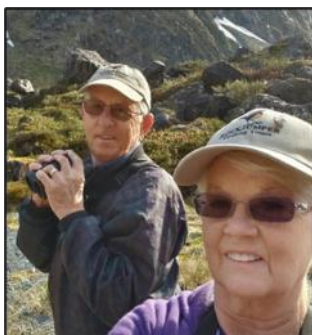
to the Zoom meeting. We will also be live streaming on Facebook and recording the meeting for viewing online. Previous program recordings can be found on our Vancouver Audubon Society Facebook page and edited versions are now on our YouTube page. Search YouTube for “Vancouver Audubon Society”.

### February 7, 2023—Birds of New Zealand

**Hybrid Meeting (In-person and via Zoom)**

**Social: 6:30 pm; Program: 7:00 pm**

Arden and Sherry Hagen will give a travelogue with pictures of their recent birding trip to New Zealand. Sherry Arden is 5th in the American Birding Association (ABA) world list of photographed species and the only woman in the top 15. Both Sherry and Arden are in the top 150 of species identified in the ABA world list. Arden Hagen is a former President of Vancouver Audubon Society.



### March 7, 2023—Bring Back the Pollinators

Zoom meeting – Dave Kollen of the Xerces Society will present *Bring Back the Pollinators*, a presentation and discussion about importance and conservation of our pollinators. Dave is a Xerces Society Ambassador and in that role is involved in educational and outreach work. Additionally, he is an Oregon Master Naturalist and Master Melittologist Apprentice. Dave lives in Brookings, Oregon.

### April 4, 2023 – Cranes’ Landing

Hybrid Meeting. Sanoé Keliinai, the new Natural Area Manager for the Cranes’ Landing property in the Vancouver lowlands, and Cindy McCormack, monitoring biologist, will give an overview of Columbia Land Trust’s habitat work and monitoring efforts for Sandhill Cranes and other birds/wildlife.

The location of the IN-PERSON meeting is:

**Evergreen Public Schools Administration  
13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive  
**Vancouver, WA****

**6:30 pm – 7:00 pm** - Social time to share bird sightings, stories, and upcoming events

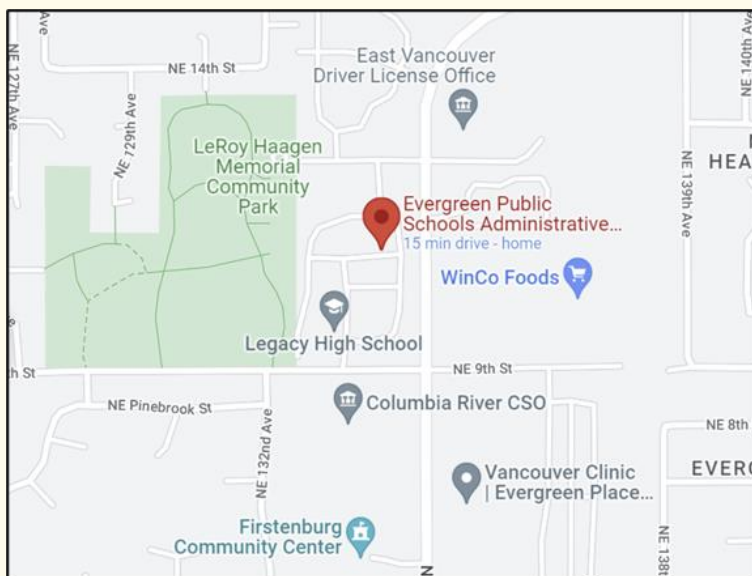
**7:00 pm – 8:15 pm** - Program

Refreshments will be available.

Programs are held the first Tuesday of the month except Jan, July, & August. All are welcome, we hope you will join us!

**Contact Don Rose for more information or to get a Zoom link: [meetings@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org)**

*Please send all topic, speaker, and program suggestions and requests to Don Rose at [meetings@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org)*





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

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

**Leader:** Cindy McCormack

**Meeting time:** 8:00am

**Meeting location:** [Salmon Cr Greenway \(softball field parking\)](#)

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

**February's bird walk:** Klineline Pond/east Salmon Cr. Greenway.

We will start at the softball field parking lot to head via the paved trail to Klineline pond, then circle around to the gravel/dirt trail along the north end of the greenway to loop back to the paved trail and check the other pond, birding along the way. The ponds usually offer great viewing of various waterfowl and we will walk through some great bird habitat along the way.

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, Feb 4 Young Birders' Club Bird Walk

**Leader:** Cindy McCormack

**Meeting time:** 8:00am

**Meeting location:** [Klineline Pond parking](#)

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

**Chickadees, Eagles, and Ducks, Oh My!**

The Vancouver Audubon Society's *Young Birder's Club* is hosting a [bird walk](#). Join us on to see some incredible birds! We'll walk around, learn about and see the local

avifauna, and meet with fellow birders. Open to anyone 10-18 years old plus parent/guardian. Feel free to reach out to Jared at [vp@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vp@vancouveraudubon.org) with any questions. We will have binoculars and spotting scopes to share.

## Tue, Feb. 7 and Thu, Feb. 16 Cowlitz County Gulls and more-2x

**Leader:** Randy Hill and others

**Meeting time:** 7:30am

**Meeting location:** [Ridgefield Park and Ride](#)

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

From past experience, this is pretty much guesswork; but I



*Bird Walk at Frenchman's Bar  
photo by Susan Saul*

do have a fallback plan! The winter smelt runs up the Columbia River and tributaries (among others the Cowlitz, Coweeman, Kalama, Lewis) attract their predators, and we can watch the action. Ten+ gull species have been seen over the last several years during peak runs, and other unusual species were seen during the last month including Brandt's Cormorant on the Portland and Cowlitz-Columbia CBCs. Our dates are Tuesday 2/7 and Thursday 2/16.

We will leave from the Ridgefield Park and Ride at 07:30. I hope to recruit co-leaders that are better at gull ID than I am. If the smelt and the gulls aren't cooperating our birding could include areas of Woodland, Kalama, Meeker Pond, Gerhart Garden Park, the Mint Farm, Willow Grove, and the Longview WTP.

## February 24-26, 2023

### Join the WOS Weekend Trip

**Leader:** Randy Hill, Russ Koppendrayar, and Cindy McCormack +

**Meeting time:** 7:30am

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

*(Continued on page 5)*

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

Washington Ornithological Society has a scheduled 3-day weekend of birding near the end of February, and VAS members will have an opportunity to participate by filling any remaining slots not filled by WOS members. The original posting in early November follows: Join Randy Hill and other co-leaders to explore the diversity of Clark County in the transition from late winter to early spring. This trip will concentrate on finding resident, wintering and maybe early-arriving Vancouver area specialties. Target species include Lesser Goldfinch, Red-shouldered Hawk, diving ducks and other waterfowl, loons, grebes and possibly owls.

We will meet at the I-5 Salmon Creek Park-and-Ride off NE 134th St at 7:30 AM and explore areas that could include Ridgefield NWR, Vancouver Lake and lowlands and portions of the Columbia River. Depending on conditions, a Sunday morning trip along the Vancouver waterfront that may reach as far upstream as Steigerwald Lake NWR or an upland forest trip might be added. A Friday afternoon exploration of the Woodland Bottoms also will be scheduled.

Russ Koppendrayer will co-lead the Friday trip to Woodland Bottoms. Cindy McCormack and possibly others will co-lead Saturday/Sunday. We will utilize a wait

-list and begin filling unused spaces beginning February 19. The Woodland Bottoms route on Friday 2/24 will begin at noon and go until 4-4:30 pm. The primary day is Saturday 2/25 and will concentrate on Ridgefield NWR south to the Vancouver Lowlands; that date likely will have the fewest available open spaces, and I will need to leave the group shortly after 4pm. Sunday morning 2/26 will meet at 7am (location to be determined) and finish areas west of I-5, look at Fort Vancouver, the Vancouver Waterfront to Marine Park and could possibly continue as far upstream as Steigerwald Lake, ending during the noon hour.

***We will likely repeat a few of these areas on February 28 for those that were unable to participate during the WOS weekend.***

## Wednesday, Mar 1

### First-of-Month Bird Walk

**Leader:** Cindy McCormack

**Meeting time:** 8:00am

**Meeting location:** Vancouver Lake Regional Park

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

**March's bird walk: Vancouver Lake Regional Park**

We will check the lake and flocks in the main park then head to do a portion of the north trail to enjoy the birds in the cottonwood forest. We will head back to check on the birds using Buckmire Slough and return along the road and/or the grass trail. There should be a good mix of passerines, waterbirds, and raptors!

### Vancouver Audubon Supports Community Funded Journalism with Challenge Grant

A strong local news media is essential to a healthy democracy but newspapers have been struggling financially with the shift to online advertising.

The Columbian newspaper's new project, Community Funded Journalism, opens the door for community members to support local news. The project is funding additional reporters to dig deeper and cover important stories about homelessness, housing, transportation and the environment.

Community Funded Journalism launched in April 2022 through fiscal sponsor Local Media Foundation, which can accept tax-deductible donations.

Since hiring an environmental reporter was last on The Columbian's priority list, Vancouver Audubon decided to give funding a jump start with a \$10,000 challenge grant.

With that generous support and gifts from others, The Columbian has raised 80 percent of its \$50,000 goal to fund

one full year of reporting on climate change, wildfires, storms, native fish, water quality, the Columbia River Gorge, emissions, farming, environmental nonprofits, energy, Vancouver Lake and much more. A number of donors mentioned support for the environmental reporter or matching Vancouver Audubon's donation as the reason for their gifts.

***by Susan Saul***

At the end of 2022, The Columbian hired Lauren Ellenbecker to fill the environment slot on its staff. She has been meeting with local environmental groups to learn about local environmental priorities and stories The Columbian has been missing.

If you would like to provide a match to the Vancouver Audubon challenge grant, donations to Local Media Foundation for this project are tax-deductible to the extent of the law. No goods or services are provided in exchange for contributions. Donate [here](#).

## Help Pass Bills for Birds this Legislative Session

The 2023 Washington State Legislative Session kicked off January 9. We need the voices of bird lovers around the state can help push key conservation and climate issues across the finish line.

Priority issues for Vancouver Audubon are:

- Climate and Growth Management (HB 1181/SB 5203) – require counties to plan for emission reductions, affordable housing, and climate resilience.
- Climate and Clean Energy (HB 1216) – improve the process for efficient and responsible siting of clean energy projects, including early and meaningful community and tribal engagement, and up-front identification of least-conflict sites.



*Environmental Lobby Day, 2019  
Photo: Luke Franke/Audubon*

*by Susan Saul*

Audubon Washington is a member of the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC), so it is asking supporters to join this year's Environmental Priorities (virtual) Lobby Days on February 14, 15, and 16. This year, two of Audubon's top priorities are also EPC priorities, so please [register for EPC Lobby Days](#) and ad-

vocate for birds by meeting with your legislator or taking action on social media.

This year's legislative session is a historic opportunity to wisely spend state climate funding while also ensuring local governments across the state plan for a changing climate. Join in calling on decision-makers in Olympia to protect birds and people from a changing climate.

## Vancouver's Climate Action Framework Contains Bird-Friendly Policies

The Vancouver City Council unanimously adopted the city's [Climate Action Framework](#) (CAF) on December 5, 2022. Vancouver Audubon's testimony received mention in The Columbian's [report](#) of the event.

Besides the overall positive effect for birds of reducing local greenhouse gas emissions, Vancouver Audubon also achieved a specific bird-friendly policy in the plan. On page 31, Action 7: Green building policy (public sector) and on page 32, Action 8: Green building policy (private sector) "Support smart



lighting strategies in accordance with Dark Sky and Bird Safe light pollution reduction principles."

Our next step will be pushing for the required use of bird-friendly glass in the revised building codes that will evolve from adoption of the CAF. The success of the CAF will depend on the hard follow-up work of implementation in both the Green Building policies and more bird-friendly landscapes in the Natural Systems and Water Resources section of the plan.

*Etched glass is one method used to break up reflection to prevent deadly bird window collisions. Photo: Luke Frank/Audubon*



Abundance Codes used in this column:

**(1) Common, (2) Uncommon, (3) Harder to find, usually seen annually, (4) Rare, 5+ records, (5) Fewer than 5 records**

These codes vary for each county, to see all 39 WA county checklists go to [wabirder.com](http://wabirder.com) and click on Checklists.

Birds not given a rarity code may be ones that are common but unusual at this time of the year. You can see the abundance of any bird through the seasons on the eBird bar charts and they are helpful for seeing when migrant birds are due to return or leave.

Here is the link to Clark County's bar chart. [Bar Charts - eBird Pacific Northwest](#)

**Nov. 20,** Alea Shurmantine spotted 25 **HORNED LARKS** (4) on the western side of the levy near the Steigerwald Lake NWR entrance parking lot. This year has been unusual in having these birds here this fall, they are not common in Clark County and most of the times they have been seen before were later in the season.

Other people who reported seeing them in the following week were Thomas Tinsley, Don Rose and Mat Millenbach.

**Nov. 25,** Les Carlson and I found 2 male **REDHEADS** (3) on the Rock Creek Mill Pond in Stevenson, Skamania County. This pond at the fairgrounds park is a good spot to see a wide variety of waterfowl, some which become used to people after hanging around the domestic geese there.

**Nov. 26,** the last report of Skamania Counties first **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (5) at Bonneville Dam in came from Lorin Wilkerson after she got photos showing the bird on the WA side of the channel.

**Nov. 26,** near Building 405 at the Fort Vancouver NHS, Cindy McCormack counted 8 **ACORN WOODPECKERS** (5) near a granary tree which is a spot where they store acorns by pounding them into holes they drill into a tree. This granary tree and the number of woodpeckers here makes me think that they may attempt to nest here this year, if they do it will be the first colony in Washington outside of Klickitat County where I documented their first nesting in the state in 1990.

**Nov. 26,** a female **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** was found by Kira Sabin on the Auto Tour at the National Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, very few of these warblers spend the winter in this state, the majority migrate to the area between the southern United States and Central America.

**Nov. 27,** in the Jorgenson Woods Neighborhood Park, Sarah Barsch and Owen Castagnoli spotted a **NORTHERN FLICKER** with conspicuous yellow shafts on underside of tail and wing feathers with a red marking on the back of the head. We get a few pure "Yellow-shafted" subspecies of these handsome woodpeckers each year that breed east of the Rocky Mountains but the majority of the ones seen here are intergrades between the two subspecies. These intergrades often show a mix of identification marks like the red on the back of the head but with the black instead of red moustache mark of the "Red-shafted" subspecies.



Acorn Woodpecker  
Photo by Greg Johnson

**Dec. 1,** while at the Stevenson Waterfront, Josh Barstow spotted two loons, one was noticeably smaller than the other with a bill that looked too small for a common loon. The back of head and neck appeared gray, transitioning to black along the neck with a distinct crisp straight line between the black and the white portion of the neck. In the photos he got one could see the diagnostic chin strap of a **PACIFIC LOON** (5).

**Dec. 1,** in Hazel Dell, Les Carlson had a "Red" subspecies of **FOX SPARROW** at his feeders where he has had them several times in the last few years. This is the only one of the four fox sparrow subspecies that doesn't nest in Washington. Their east of the Rocky Mountains nesting range goes from the Yukon across to the East Coast, these subspecies are being proposed to be split into four separate species.

**Dec. 2, 1 BAND-TAILED PIGEON** was seen by Katie Warner at the Casee Center Botanical Gardens, this is another migratory species where a few will remain in our area during the winter. They seem to be attracted to the berries of Madrona Trees but can show up anywhere.

(Continued on page 8)

**Dec. 5,** Les Carlson did some Vancouver area birding finding the continuing **PACIFIC LOON** (4) on the Vancouver-Waterfront Renaissance Trail, and a late staying **BARN SWALLOW** at the end of Lower River Road.

**Dec. 6,** John Bishop saw a medium sized woodpecker with clown like face with black plumage above when perched and a white rump and wing patches in flight, while he was driving on the WSU Road near the turn to the 50th Ave entrance. He stopped and backed up to confirm that it was an **ACORN WOODPECKER** perched in a small red oak. The WSU parking lots are mainly planted with (non-native) red oak and many now produce acorns, this was a new location for them to be reported from in Clark County.

**Dec. 7,** in the Vancouver Lowlands at the end of Lower River Road, Ken Vanderkamp spotted 5 **BARN SWALLOWS** and a **TREE SWALLOW**, an obvious standout from others with its blue back and bright underparts.

**Dec 11,** the continuing female **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER**

(4) along the Stevenson Waterfront in Skamania County was reported by Josh Barstow.

**Dec 12,** just before the freezing weather hit us, Ken Vanderkamp saw 2 **BARN SWALLOWS** feeding over Carty Lake on the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Unit.

**Dec. 15,** Bill Tweit checked some feeders in the town of Murdock on Highway 14 in Klickitat County where he found a female **TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD** (5) coming to a feeder with other blackbirds.

**Dec 16,** Abby Haight found 5 **BARN SWALLOWS** perched on the points of poles at the Vancouver Lake Regional Park swim beach.

**Dec. 18,** in Klickitat County, Samuel Holman checked the Murdock bird feeders, finding two immature male **TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS**, he described them as having dull black bodies with some gray flecks around the head and wings, thin but obvious narrow white margins to the lesser coverts. No females were seen on this visit.

**Dec. 19,** while conducting the Sauvie Island CBC, on private property south of the mouth of the Lewis River, Jim Danzenbaker picked out an adult **TUNDRA SWAN** of the European subspecies that was formerly called a Bewick's Swan before being lumped with the North American Whistling Swan. The Bewick's subspecies has a larger amount of yellow on the bill differing from Tundra Swan in several ways: the yellow is significantly larger than a quarter, broadest near the center, not closer to the base of the bill as with a Tundra, the tip of the yellow closest to the end of the bill is distinctly rounded, not pointed, and the entire edge of the yellow is clean cut and sharply defined, not jagged as on most Tundra subspecies.



White-crowned x Golden-crowned Sparrow  
Photo by Ryan Abe

**Dec 19,** Ken Pitts got a couple second view of a **LAPLAND LONGSPUR** (5) at the Steigerwald Lake NWR, as the **AMERICAN PIPIT** flock it was in bolted. The very bold supercilium and a dark frame on its auriculars along with a sparrow like beak distinguished it from the surrounding birds. Apparently, this bird had been found the day before but not entered into eBird.

**Dec. 20,** Josh Barstow found a female **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (5) at the Stevenson Waterfront.

The white secondaries that give this bird its name were not visible, but the facial features were consistent with a female White winged Scoter versus a female Surf Scoter. The front white patch was round instead of vertical. The bill shape appeared consistent with White-winged Scoter with the bill not having the squared off look at the rear terminus like a Surf Scoter, instead it had the smiling appearance due to the lower portion of the bill extending farther back.

**Dec 29,** Both Karen York and Les Carlson were lucky to have seen a **SORA** out in the open at the Ridgefield NWR River 'S' Unit, this is another species that has only recently begun wintering in our area.

A total of 236 birds were reported from Clark County to the 2022 Washington Cumulative County Year List Project, the average number of birds seen in a year over a fifteen-year period is 231.4. Skamania County had 207 species seen which is considerably higher than their average of

(Continued on page 9)



193.8 per year. In Clark County in 2022, Jim Danzenbaker found 213 species and nineteen people reported seeing over 150 different birds. John Davis saw the most birds in Skamania County last year with 173 species reported and four other people saw more than 150 species last year. New birds were added to each of the official county lists in 2022, which are maintained by the Washington Ornithological Society. In Clark County the new birds were Brown Booby and Tropical Kingbird and the second county sighting of a Great-tailed Grackle was the first one entered into the eBird county checklist. The addition to the Skamania County checklist was a Black-legged Kittiwake and new to the eBird county checklist were Sabine's Gull and Northern Waterthrush. An addition of a previously reported bird to the eBird list indicates that it hasn't been seen very often and probably not since the eBird program was started. The official Clark County checklist has 330 species on it while the eBird list has it at 310. Here is a link to all of the official Washington county checklists. [Washington Birder \(wabirder.com\)](http://Washington Birder (wabirder.com))

The difference in the birding coverage between Clark and Skamania Counties can be seen in the number of checklists submitted to eBird in the first two weeks of the new year, about 440 lists from Clark County, while only 56 were submitted from Skamania County. Most of this difference at this time of the year can be attributed to the colder temperatures and the high winds in the Gorge.

**Jan. 1**, an **AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** (4) was a great bird to find to start off a new year list for Bill Shelmerdine who found it in a large flock of juncos near the entrance to Shillapoo Lake. These small sized, pale colored sparrows have a bright rusty crown; gray breast with a black spot, un-streaked underparts with brown washed flanks, white wing bar, and a bi-colored bill with dark upper and yellow lower mandibles. They are a species that nests in Alaska and far northern Canada.

**Jan. 1**, the first **SORA** of 2023 was reported by Jaden Howlett from the Ridgefield NWR River 'S' Unit.

**Jan. 1**, according to Jared Strawderman the **LAPLAND LONGSPUR** previously seen on 12/17 and 12/19 continued at the Steigerwald Lake NWR, it was seen in the same area about a half mile down the trail from the main parking lot on the east side of the levee feeding with a flock of **AMERICAN PIPITS** (1).

**Jan. 1**, in Skamania County at the Wind River Mouth, an **EARED GREBE** (4) was seen by Josh Barstow.

**Jan. 1**, Cindy McCormack found a pale 1st winter female **WESTERN TANAGER** at Esther Short Park. This is the second winter in a row where a Western Tanager was reported near downtown Vancouver. Cindy described it as larger than nearby House Finches with no streaking on the undersides, bold white wing bars, stout pale pinkish-yellow bill but dark along culmen, yellow undertail coverts and a slight yellow wash to the face.

**Jan. 1**, Susan and I took advantage of being able to get out of our driveway as the snow began to melt and the east wind slowed down here in the Gorge. The best birds we found was a male **REDHEAD** at Skamania Landing, a juvenile **GREATER-WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (3) at Rock Creek Mill Pond in Stevenson that is hanging out with the domestic geese there allowing close observation of this



*Domestic ducks and goose with a single juvenile Greater White-fronted Goose at Rock Creek Mill Pond, Stevenson.  
Photo by Wilson Cady*

visitor from the Arctic.

**Jan. 2**, at Vancouver Lake Regional Park, Jessie Garza spotted an **OSPREY** perched in a tree next to lake about 75 feet away from her. A common species like this or the other overwintering birds in this column makes a joke out of the rarity codes used here as those ratings don't reflect their abundance by season.

**Jan. 3**, another **REDHEAD** was found in Skamania County by John Davis, this one was at the Wind River Mouth foraging with other ducks.

**Jan. 3**, the **WESTERN TANAGER** first seen at Esther Short Park by Cindy McCormack was seen there again by her

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

again visiting suet feeder at the adjacent condos.

**Jan. 4,** Robert Flores visited the Steigerwald Lake NWR and re-found the **LAPLAND LONGSPUR** during the extreme east wind event, his comment from his eBird report. "It did not take long to locate the pipit flock then the longspur at around 9:15. The wind grew in strength from my arrival and around 10:00 I left because the wind was pushing me all over the dike. The birds were along the shoreline at the same location reported before. It was difficult viewing but the longspur plumage and body shape was obvious from the adjacent pipits. If you plan on going out be prepared clothing wise and keep a good hand on your scope!" He then went to Shillapoo Lake and saw the continuing **AMERICAN TREE SPARROW**, hopefully in better viewing conditions.

**Jan. 6,** Nick Mrvelj reported a **RED-THROATED LOON** (3) from along the Vancouver Waterfront Renaissance Trail. They are now an annual wintering bird in small numbers along this stretch of the Columbia River.

**Jan. 10,** CJ FLICK heard a **BLACK PHOEBE** (5) calling at Bingen Pond in Klickitat County, there are only a handful of sightings of these birds from the Columbia River Gorge.

**Jan. 11,** Ryan Abe photographed the continuing **WHITE-CROWNED X GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW** (hybrid) at Shillapoo Lake. It has the head pattern of a White-crowned but with a crown color of a Golden-crowned Sparrow.

**Jan. 17,** we had a **RUFFED GROUSE** (1) wander through the edge of our woods near our bird feeders. We have seen them here for fifty years but they never seem to notice the grains we put out.

**Jan. 20,** on NW Lower River Rd, about a 1/2 mile south of the Frenchman's Bar Park entrance, Ryan Abe spotted a

**LONG-EARED OWL** (5) which he described as a thin, medium-sized owl, noticeably smaller than a Great-horned Owl with long ear-tufts held up, an orange face with black vertical eye-stripes perched on fence post, constantly turning head side to side. There was one of these owls spotted near this same location last year.

It may seem like winter but it is time to prepare for the Spring migration, Tree Swallows are due back the second week of February and Rufous



*Ruffed Grouse*  
Photo by Wilson Cady

Hummingbirds can be expected around the end of that month.

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. I would also appreciate any photos of any Code 3 and higher birds for use in this column. As of Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, the 2023 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project has tallied 131 species seen in Clark County for the year and the Skamania County list is now at 94. 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 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.**



# 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.**

Send questions, comments, and submissions to [Cindy](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org) at [vas@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org).

**Can you identify the bird in this rather harshly cropped photo? Don't worry, it's an easy one! Identification and discussion will be in the next newsletter.**



Quiz photo

## December's Bird ID Challenge Discussion

Well, this photo seems fairly straightforward! Why did I include it in the Bird ID Challenge? It is a bird we can see in our area in winter, but infrequently (there are usually only a few in Clark County during the winter). There are some features on this bird that I wanted to contrast with a much more common species to hopefully help identify both.

So, let's start with the basics. What type of bird do we have here? Just with a quick glance, we can see that it appears to be some type of raptor. It has a very large, broad wing, with the underside of the wing beautifully exposed for us to examine. Also note that the bird appears to be in direct flight (note the way the wing is pulled a bit forward with a bend at the "wrist" and semi-closed primaries). A soaring raptor usually has the wing more perpendicular, less or no bend at the "wrist" and open primaries, making them look like open fingers.

So what type of raptor? Since it does have a broad wing, we can rule out falcons, which have more narrow and very pointed wings. Our usual *Accipiters*, Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, have much shorter, more rounded wings. While our quiz bird does appear to have a longer tail, it is not as relatively long as an *Accipiter's*. It appears to be rather slender, has long wings and tail. Could it be a



December's Challenge  
Quiz photo by Greg Johnson

Northern Harrier? Nope. They can also be eliminated from consideration by the pattern alone—Northern Harriers do not show this obvious pattern in any plumage. They also do not have a wing this broad or broad-tipped, although it can be difficult to assess in this position.

It's definitely not bulky enough for either of the eagles, which also have a long, broad wing but it appears longer and broader overall. Also take a look at the head. Notice how tiny the bill appears in relation to the head. An eagle's big ol' schnozz would stick out like a sore thumb.

Definitely not an Osprey. They have long wings with a superficially similar pattern on the covert, but the wing appears even longer, more narrow with a more obvious bend (even in a soar).

That leaves us with the *Buteos* or the broad-winged hawks\*, which still gives us a lot of options if we were trying to figure out what species this was for the entire country (or even world!). But the first rule in bird identification—rule out the expected species first! What is our most common *Buteo*? If I asked what is our most common hawk or raptor, the answer should be the same. Red-tailed

(Continued on page 12)



Hawk. They are everywhere—on the light posts over the freeway, in our parks, in the farmlands...they are an excellent habitat generalist. Learning the identification characteristics of this hawk will be very helpful, but may not always as easy as it should be since they have quite the variation in plumage coloration!

So, starting from the first rule, how do we eliminate the expected Red-tailed Hawk here? There are actually several features of this bird that tell us we are not, in fact, looking at a Red-tailed Hawk.

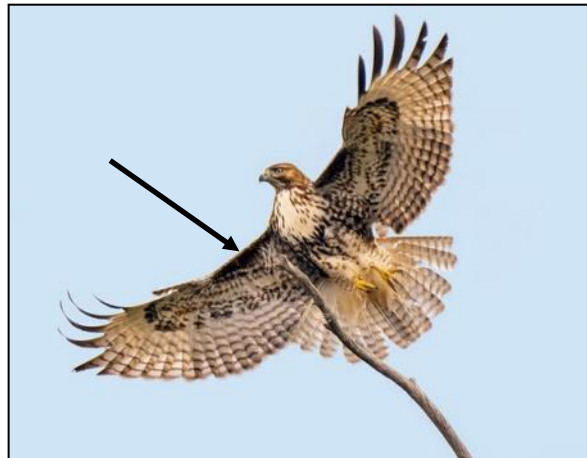
- The slender appearance. Red-tailed Hawks are rather bulky in the breast, giving them a bit of a weight-lifter look (big shoulders and chest, narrow waist).
- Red-tailed Hawks also have a distinct and reliable field mark unless the bird is a dark phase, then it may be obscured. The patagium (the leading edge of the wing from the body to the carpus or “wrist”) on the underside of the wing should have a dark strip of feathering, which is not present on our quiz bird.
- Although difficult to assess in flight, the bill seems to petite for a Red-tailed Hawk.
- Red-tails (other than dark phases again) have what we describe as the sun-burst chest. Most color phases have a bright, clear-centered chest with a contrasting head and a thin “belly-band” of streaking. This makes most Red-tails fairly easy to pick out as you drive down the road. Our bird does appear to have a pale breast, but also has a pale neck and head. The dark on the abdomen (belly) is much more solid and extensive than the typical “belly-band” of a Red-tail.

Since it's not a Red-tail, what other *Buteos* regularly occurring in our area should we consider? Red-shouldered Hawks are regularly seen (and heard) in winter. They have broad wings, but shorter than our quiz bird and with a relatively longer tail. They also have a much more homogeneous underwing pattern. What really sticks out on a Red-shouldered Hawk's wing is the whitish “window” at the base of the primaries—watch for it when it flies, it's a

great field mark. They also fly more like a Cooper's Hawk than a typical *Buteo*.

Another hawk to consider would be the Rough-legged

Hawk. Rough-legged Hawks have their name for a reason—their legs are feathered! They are slender with long, broad-tipped wings, long tail and do have an obvious squarish carpal (“wrist”) patch. They also have a very small bill and feet for a *Buteo*. Lighter phase birds often show a light head and upper breast but the breast is often sparsely streaked. They can have an all dark abdomen, which our quiz bird certainly shows. They also have a white-based tail with one or multiple dark terminal bands. Care must be taken to avoid mistaking the white tail base for the white rump of the Northern Harrier. Unfortunately, we cannot really make out



*A Red-tailed Hawk without a red tail (immatures have this finely barred tail). Note the dark patagial bar, indicated by the arrow, and the “sunburst” chest.*

*Photo by Mick Thompson*

much about the tail (and can't see the rump at all!) in our quiz photo, other than it might have a pale base and has a bland, rather dirty look. But the carpal patch, dark abdomen and shape characteristics are plenty to help us identify this as a **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK**.

This appears to be an immature bird, since it lacks the dark trailing border on the wing of an adult. It also has a pale yellow eye, which is typical of a younger Rough-legged. The adults usually have a dark eye.

Rough-legged Hawks are arctic nesters that migrate into Washington, especially eastern Washington, for the winter months. They are well-adapted for the far north, with fluffy feathering, small bill and feet, and feathered legs. They prefer open habitat that is somewhat similar to their home tundra, so can be found in open grassland, shrub-steppe, and marshes. The Woodland Bottoms are an excellent place to see them reliably near Vancouver, although they are occasionally found at Ridgefield's “S” unit and the Vancouver lowlands. They often use hovering as a hunting technique—it is fun watching them hunt! If you see a large hawk sitting on a thin, rather pathetic branch or on a utility wire rather than the pole, be sure to check it—Rough-legged Hawks are more likely to use those thin perches than Red-tailed Hawks.

Red-tailed Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks are called poly-

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

morphs for a reason! There is currently an immature light morph Red-tailed Hawk with considerable white on the head frequenting the auto tour route that has been identified several times as a Rough-legged Hawk—so be sure to check all your field marks!

\*Did you know that birds are the only taxonomic class with official common names? This is why we capitalize the common name of birds (but not plants, mammals, insects, etc.) This is a perfect example of how we can clarify if we are discussing a species or a group or just a descriptor. Many birds have descriptive names, so it can be confusing. For example, in discussion of a Yellow Warbler, you can immediately recognize that I'm referring to the species Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) rather than a yellow warbler—a warbler that has yellow plumage (there are a lot of them!). In the case of Buteos (broad-winged hawks) we are discussing an entire genus of hawks, rather than the species Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*).



*A perched Rough-legged Hawk. Note the tiny bill, solid dark lower breast and abdomen feathering, the fluffier neck, and small feet. The pale head and neck is a great clue in this plumage, but don't assume everything with a pale head is a Rough-legged! Photo by Mick Thompson*



*A perched immature Red-tailed Hawk. Note the bulky "shoulders" and small-appearing head, and streaked belly-band. The bill and feet are much more substantial. Photo by Mick Thompson*

**By Cindy McCormack**



## Wenas Campout June 2-5, 2023

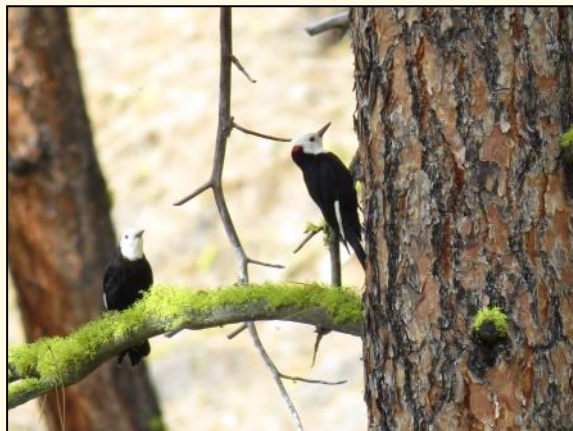
You are invited to a celebration of birds, bats, butterflies, botany, and the beauty of spring in eastern

Washington. Each year, Audubon chapters and their friends gather for a few days of camping, birding, and exploring the Wenas Wildlife Area near Ellensburg, WA. In 2023, the campout will be held the first weekend in June, avoiding the crowds of Memorial Day.

The casual and friendly gathering offers a variety of

activities, including birding field trips, wildflower walks, field sketching, and evening campfire presentations. Come for the weekend or a single day. There is no charge to attend and no registration is required. Donations are accepted for organizing costs, including sanitation service.

Information on dispersed camping, activities, and what to expect are on the [web-site](https://www.wenasaudubon.org), [wenasaudubon.org](https://www.wenasaudubon.org), or follow the [Wenas Campout group on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WenasCampoutGroup) for current information.



*The Wenas Campout has excellent opportunities to enjoy birds!*

*White-headed Woodpeckers (left) and Lazuli Bunting (right) are just a few of the wonderful species to enjoy!*

*Photos: Carol Kohler*



## 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**

Auto traffic only (must remain inside your vehicle except at entry kiosk and viewing blind trail)

October 1 to April 30.

**Kiwa Trail:** closed October 1 to April 30

#### Carty Unit

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

**Port entrance Lookout: Open year-round**

**Port entrance & Carty Trail: Seasonal trail closed Oct. 1-April 30.**

### Steigerwald Lake NWR

**Open Daily, check website for gate times.**

Be sure to check the website before a planned visit for changes in status, as some final portions of habitat work may call for temporary closures.

Wildlife Art Trail (between gates) is closed for the season, will reopen on May 1st.

## Vancouver Audubon Society Support & Donation Form

*Membership dues support education, speaker programs, newsletter, and conservation projects.*

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to become a supporter of Vancouver Audubon for \$20/year or \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Renewal date:  
September 1st**

**Please include this form** and make check payable to and send to: Vancouver Audubon, P.O. Box 1966, Vancouver, WA 98668-1966 **-OR- join/renew/donate online at [vancouveraudubon.org](http://vancouveraudubon.org)**

*VAS will not share your information with any other organization. VAS is a non-profit organization under US IRS Code Section 501(c)(3).*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ (req'd for newsletter)

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>February 2023</b>						
Jan 29	Jan 30	Jan 31 Board Mtg	Feb 1 Bird Walk	2	3	4 Young Birders' Bird Walk
5	6	7 Field Trip Program	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Field Trip	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Field Trip	25 Field Trip
26 Field Trip	27	28 Board Mtg	Mar 1 Bird Walk	Mar 2	Mar 3	Mar 4



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

**Feb 1 (WED):** Bird Walk: east Salmon Creek Greenway and Kline Pond, 8am

**Feb 4 (SAT):** Young Birders' Bird Walk

**Feb 7 (TUE):** Cowlitz Smelt Run birding, 7:30am

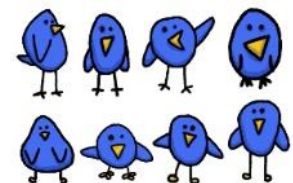
**Feb 7 (TUE):** Monthly Program: Birds of New Zealand, 6:30pm social/program 7pm (Hybrid)

**Feb 16 (THU):** Cowlitz Smelt Run birding, 7:30am

**Feb 24-26 (FRI-SUN):** Join WOS Weekend of Clark Co.+ birding, 7:30am

**Feb 28 (TUE):** Board Meeting via Zoom, 6:30pm

**Mar 1 (WED):** First-of-Month Bird Walk, TBA



## Contents

<a href="#">VAS Board &amp; Chairs</a> .....	2
<a href="#">From The Board</a> .....	2
<a href="#">Programs</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Field Trips</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Conservation</a> .....	6
<a href="#">Wilson Cady's Afield</a> .....	8-11
<a href="#">Bird ID Challenge</a> .....	12-14
<a href="#">NWR Updates</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Membership/Donation form</a> .....	15
<a href="#">Injured Wildlife</a> .....	15

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

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

**THE COLUMBIA FLYWAY** is the monthly newsletter of the Vancouver Audubon Society, a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Publication **deadline** is the 20th of the preceding month unless otherwise posted.