

Columbia Flyway

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



Volume 49 Number 3

April 2024

vancouveraudubon.org



From the VAS Board

By Don Rose

I was struck recently by a graph that was presented at a Washington Audubon Board meeting describing the national strategic plan for the National Audubon Society. The graph below really summed up for me the importance of what we are doing. Bird populations have been falling dramatically around the world, and it is documented that 3 billion birds were lost since 1970 in North America. Without intervention, without making change, without raising awareness, without the support of members, we all will be without birds, without bird song, and without bird antics. I believe that all members can support the idea of "Bending the Curve", and not only stop the loss of more birds, but create conditions for them to thrive and expand. Through our bird walks, conservation efforts, interactions with city and county government, outreach and education, eBird documentation of populations and sightings, review of proposed projects, and legal actions, we are making a difference.



Through our bird walks, conservation efforts, interactions with city and county government, outreach and education, eBird documentation of populations and sightings, review of proposed projects, and legal actions, we are making a difference.

April is a very busy month ahead with election of officers at our April 2 monthly meeting. We have 3 bird walks planned for the month and 2 Field Trips, one of which is on Earth Day April 22. We are also hosting an event on Sunday, April 21 to celebrate Earth Day at the Carty Unit at Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. This is a family-friendly event and includes guided bird walks at 8 am, 9 am and 10 am. We need VAS volunteers to help at this event - at the VAS table or leading or co-leading a bird walk. Please email Becky Boley at CommunityOutreach@vancouveraudubon.org or text Becky at 503.860.9566 to volunteer and tell us what times you can be there – or with any questions you have.

Have you been on a pelagic birding trip out of Westport, WA yet? We have slots open for a pelagic trip on September 18, 2024. If you are interested, contact Randy Hill. This would be part of a potential 3 day field trip to the Gray's Harbor area.

Get out there and enjoy the Springtime migration!

A Great Opportunity!

If you have always had a desire to be a CBC compiler, now is your chance. After eight years, Susan Setterberg is retiring from the position. It is very interesting and you meet a lot of great birders. And you are the first to know the results! Please let the Vancouver Audubon President at vas@vancouveraudubon.org or Susan smsetterberg@yahoo.com know of your interest. If you have a friend that is thinking about it, twist their arm a bit. Susan is available to answer any questions about what the compiler does, call at 856-701-2542. A replacement should be in place this summer, so there is time to transfer all Susan's information. **Don't delay!**

Election of Club Officers in April

Biographies and photos of candidates running for office in Vancouver Audubon Society this spring. We will hold the election at the April monthly meeting.

President—Tom Tinsley. Greetings. I have been the acting Vice President of the Vancouver Audubon Society for approximately 8 months now. My wife, Suzanne, and I both retired in November 2021 and moved to the Pacific Northwest to be closer to our two married adult children. We have lived in Ridgefield a little over two years now and with any luck will never move again. I have been a birder all of my adult life, birding in the time my life allowed, which I never thought was enough. Now my life allows a lot more time for me to pursue my passion, sometimes obsession, for birding, nature, and the outdoors in general. One of the first things I did upon moving to Washington was join the Vancouver Audubon Society. My first field trip was the “First of the Month” January 1, 2022 to Frenchman’s Bar. It was 24 degrees!! Aside from the frigid temperature, there were 15 or 16 people in the parking lot—all very welcoming and friendly, and many were knowledgeable birders. I lasted about 3 hours before the cold had cut through my four layers of clothing. Regardless, it was then that I told myself given the opportunity to become more involved with the Vancouver chapter I would do so. Since that first field trip I’ve been on many with Vancouver Audubon and other day trips with local birders. I have met many more welcoming, knowledgeable avid birders who I have learned a lot from. My hope is, given the opportunity, to continue my involvement with the Vancouver Audubon Society and convey to others the same welcoming, friendly attitude and a little bit about birds.



Vice President—Don Rose I first discovered Vancouver Audubon in late 2019 after being a National Audubon member since the 1980s. I became Program Chair just before the Pandemic and quickly learned the world of Zoom programming. For the past year, I have been the Newsletter editor and Program Chair while also serving as a southwest Washington representative on Washington Audubon board. I was a hobby birder until the Pandemic, and then truly have focused on improving my birding skills for the past 3 years. I have a son attending Western Washington University and a daughter attending Washington State University here in Vancouver. Both are strongly interested in Science and Biology. As Vice President, I want to focus to educate more people about birds, recruit new members, and support the rest of the board in conserving birds and the habitat they need to survive.

Treasurer—Joan Durgin. For 35 years my professional life was a CPA. I audited governmental organizations and non-profits for ten years then served as the Finance Director for the City of Camas for 20 years until retirement. During this time I volunteered as treasurer for the Vancouver Audubon for 10 years, until 2016 when I stepped aside for 2 years until I was re-elected in 2018 and have served ever since. I am willing to serve another term as treasurer because I feel it is an important function of our chapter. I will strive to retain our sound financial condition and continue good accounting practices. I’m not acting alone in this function, it benefits from a team, the Finance Committee. I appreciate their time to audit my accounting and all detailed transactions several times a year.



Secretary—Jean Avery, Greetings, fellow birders! I'm glad to be invited to serve on the VAS Board. Now I can give back to this wonderful organization, which has added so much joy, learning, and fellowship to my life. When I moved to the Pacific Northwest ten years ago, I had two goals: to enjoy the beautiful outdoors, and to actively advocate for

Election of Board Officer (cont.)

the environment. Hikes and bird walks are a reminder that the natural world is full of marvels -- and must be protected. The biggest accomplishment of my life was joining other citizen activists to defeat the proposed Vancouver oil terminal in 2019. As for the birds, they are my inspiration! I appreciate the other VAS members who share their knowledge on local bird walks and field trips. I've expanded my horizons by taking birding tours in the U.S. and internationally -- most recently in Thailand! As Emily Dickinson aptly wrote: *"Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all..."*



Jean just returned from a trip to Thailand, where she saw some amazingly colorful birds. Here are links to view a sampling she wanted to share: [Black and yellow broadbill](#), [White-throated kingfisher](#), [Black-naped monarch](#), [Black-headed bulbul](#), [Scarlet-backed flowerpecker](#), [Chestnut-headed bee-eater](#), and [Man-grove Pitta](#). Happy birding!

Members At Large—If, as a member, you are interested in finding out more what the Board does, or you have a specific task or activity you would be interested in taking the lead on and seek Board approval, perhaps you could seek to be a Member At Large and attend a Board meeting.

Another change taking place is that **Jackson Wolfe** will be taking over as Program Chair starting in May. Jackson has been very active in VAS leading the Young Birders Club with Katie Warner and contributing to public outreach opportunities such as Earth Day and World Water Day this past year.



Wenas Campout May 31 - June 2, 2024



Bullock's Oriole Photo by Carol Kohler

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. 2024 marks 61 years since Bea Buzzetti, Ruth Anderson, and Hazel Wolf wandered serendipitously into the Wenas Creek area on a camping trip, and Audubon chapters and other nature-loving groups have gathered (almost) annually ever since.

The casual and friendly gathering offers a variety of activities, including birding field trips, wildflower walks, field sketching, activities for the youngest explorers, 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 website, wenasaudubon.org, or [follow the group on Facebook](#) for current information.



White-headed Woodpecker Photo -Carol Kohler

Earth Day Events

Sunday, April 21—Bird Walks and Education at Carty Unit, Ridgefield NWR

Join us at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (Carty Unit) for tabling, guided bird walks, and family-friendly activities to celebrate Earth Day 2024! We will be set up from 8 am until 2 pm, and will lead bird walks at 8, 9, and 10 am (maybe more depending on turnout). Scope stations will be set up in the refuge with expert birders there to point out must-see species. Binoculars will be provided to those who do not have their own. There will be activities for the kids, too!

Games, fun tabling activities, and a build-your-own birdhouse station will all be present on April 21st. This event is free to attend—just pay the nominal \$3 parking fee, which may be waived if you cannot afford it. Everyone is welcome to this event, regardless of level of experience. No registration is required; just show up, and bring your friends!

The VAS looks forward to seeing you at our Earth Day celebration on April 21st, 2024, at Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit. If you have any questions about this event, or would like to volunteer with us, feel free to email Becky Boley @ communityoutreach@vancouveraudubon.org. We hope to see *you* there.



Monday, April 22— Earth Day Field Trip to the Columbia Gorge



Meeting time: TBD

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: [Check VAS website for details.](#)

This field trip will explore birding spots in the Columbia Gorge with location dependent on the forecasted wind and weather. Interested participants need to check details posted on the website as the date nears. If the weather cooperates and the River to Rock Trail opens, we will plan on birding Beacon Rock State Park.

Photo: Columbia Gorge and Beacon Rock at dawn

Photo by Don Rose



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

PO Box 1966 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

Website | vancouveraudubon.org

Facebook | [@Vancouver Audubon](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.

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).

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.

April 2, 2024—Coastal Western Screech-Owls in Western British Columbia

Speaker: Toby St. Clair



Western Screech-Owl
Ken Shults/Audubon Photography Awards

Coastal Western Screech-Owl (*Megascops kennicottii kennicottii* – WESOk) records have declined dramatically throughout the Pacific Northwest over the past 20 years. Toby was involved in conducting nocturnal surveys of WESOk and other owls on Vancouver Island and in the south coast region of British Columbia from 2021 through 2023. They found that few WESOk remain within the valley-bottom riparian habitats where the majority of historical WESOk records from BC have been documented. However, they regularly detected WESOk within old-growth (250+ year old) forests, including cedar dominated forests on Vancouver Island.

Speaker Toby St. Clair is a new transplant to Vancouver, WA. He is a wildlife biologist with over 15 years of experience in research and applied biology, including 3 years leading volunteer-driven conservation science as co-founder, along with Jeremiah Kennedy, of the Pacific Megascops Research Alliance.

May 7, 2024—Birds of Ethiopia

Speakers: Sherry and Arden Hagen

Sherry and Arden will share some of their stories and photos from travels to Ethiopia. Sherry and Arden are ardent travelers of the world in search of birds. Sherry is one of the top bird photographers in the world.

June 4, 2024—Hybridization between California and Gambel's Quail in California

Speaker: David Zonana

David worked in a hybrid zone between California and Gambel's quail in the deserts and mountains of southern CA for his dissertation. David is the new professor of Biology and Environmental Science at Clark College.

The location of all these IN-PERSON meetings is:

[Evergreen Public Schools Administration](#)
[13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive](#)

Vancouver, WA

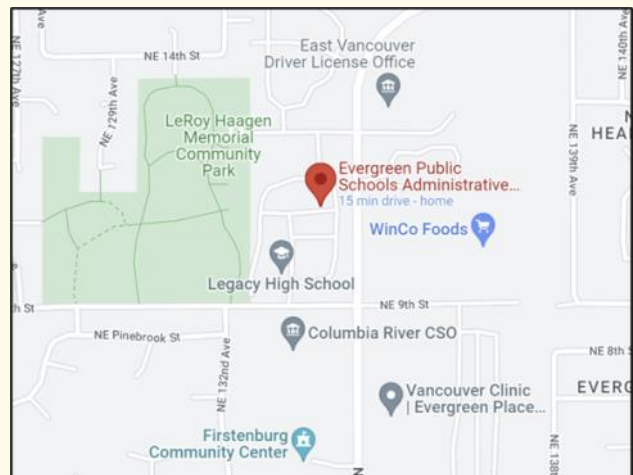
6:30 pm – 7:00 pm - Social time to share bird sightings, stories, and upcoming events

7:00 pm – 8:15 pm - Program

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 at
meetings@vancouveraudubon.org. Please send all topic, speaker, and program suggestions and requests to Don Rose. Enter the parking lot on the LeRoy Haagen

Memorial Drive side. (If you navigate to LeRoy Haagen Park, your Google Maps should take you to the correct road).



Vancouver Audubon Sues Washington Dept. of Natural Resources

by Susan Saul

Vancouver Audubon Society, joined by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of the White Salmon River, WildEarth Guardians and The Center for Biological Diversity, filed suit on February 23, 2024, in Clark County Superior Court against the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Public Lands Commissioner Hilary Franz for failing to fulfill their obligation to propose critical habitats for the state endangered western gray squirrel.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) listed the western gray squirrel as an endangered species on December 28, 2023. DNR's regulations require the agency to propose critical habitat within 30 days of the listing of an endangered species. DNR had until January 27, 2024, to do so, but it has not taken any action.

The western gray squirrel, not to be confused with the prolific eastern gray squirrel common in urban areas like Vancouver, is a crucial indicator of the health of rare Oregon white oak woodland habitat in Washington. It is the largest tree squirrel in the Pacific Northwest. Given the lack of protective regulations, the species' numbers have continued to decline statewide for decades. WDFW estimates that fewer than 1,500 western gray squirrels remain, putting the species on the brink of extinction in the state.

In Washington, WDFW listed the western gray squirrel as a threatened species in 1993 due to habitat loss. Despite the threatened listing 30 years ago, squirrel populations have continued to decline largely because of habitat loss caused by forest practices, land development and wildfires. The continued decline prompted the WDFW to protect remaining squirrel populations by uplisting them as an endangered species, but DNR failed to prepare and submit to the Washington Forest Practices Board a proposed list of critical habitats as required by state law.



Western Gray Squirrel

Photo by WDFW

Critical habitat does not mean a no-touch buffer but rather a "Class IV Special" classification for any forest practices applications proposed in critical habitat. This triggers a review under the State Environmental Protection Act and DNR provides notification to its forest practices foresters, WDFW biologists, and interested stakeholders of potential western gray squirrel presence within the proposed forest practices activity area. WDFW promotes conservation efforts by working with landowners to conduct western gray squirrel nest surveys and coordinate with them to implement voluntary conservation measures.

Unfortunately, voluntary conservation measures have not been successful in stopping the loss of western gray squirrel habitat and populations so the state needs to adopt regulations. Our lawsuit is not about long-term regulatory protections for the western gray squirrel. It is about DNR's obligation to propose critical habitat as an immediate, interim measure until the state can determine which long-term regulatory protections to adopt.

VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips

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

Monday, April 1

First-of-Month Bird Walk—Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge

Meeting time: 7:30am

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: [Steigerwald parking lot](#)

This walk will be dependent on weather conditions—if the weather forecast includes strong west gorge winds, we will switch to a back-up location (likely Ridgefield–Carty Unit). It's April! It's time for more of our early spring arrivals, including shorebirds. Just the first taste of the fabulous spring birding to come! We will plan to follow the Mountain View trail to view birds over the wetlands and continue over to the trail to view Redtail Lake. Please email if you intend to participate, so you can be notified of any potential changes. (Change of location will also be posted on the website).

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, 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.



Western Tanager Shelbe Hill —Fotofest 2023

Saturday, April 6

Skamania Landing & Doesch Day Use Trail

Meeting time: 7:30am

Leaders: Ken Pitts & Beth Marlin Lichter

Register: Ken at kenp@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: Gather at [parking lot](#) for Steigerwald Lake NWR off SR 14 east of Washougal (45.571534, -122.320238).



Craig Wallace Photography

Western Bluebird Craig Wallace Fotofest 2023

We will carpool to Skamania Landing (45.616205, -122.041716) from there to accommodate the limited parking places at our first stop. The second stop will be Doesch Day Use Trail (45.619207, -122.027413). We should be ready to leave by 11:00 AM for the return to Steigerwald Lake NWR parking lot.

The walk at Skamania Landing is about a 0.5 mile out and back hike at a 1 A classification for speed and slope (relatively slow and flat terrain.) The second destination will be Doesch Day Use Trail, a 1 mile loop trail that has virtually no slope or hills. Doesch will require participating vehicles to have Discover passes. If you don't have one, then you can plan to carpool with folks who do. It is geared for beginning to intermediate-level birders and/or photographers. Binoculars and spotting scopes are available for participants to use during the walk.

Please include your smartphone number in your registration email in case plans change. Skamania Landing is in The Gorge and is known for harsh and changing weather conditions, and the walk may need to be canceled or relocated. Cancellation or location changes will be determined the evening before. You will be notified both by email and your smartphone #.

Carty Unit trail bird walks take place at Ridgefield NWR (registration required): 4/6/2024 and 5/3/2024 (Ron Escano). Check out <https://ridgefieldfriends.org/news/naturalist-led-walks/>.

VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips

Saturday, April 13

Washington State University—Vancouver Trails

Meeting time: 7:00 am

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org.

Meeting Location: Meet at the first parking area on the right along WSU Entrance Road. (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/JGpxRCPzoG9DW2KBAM>).

The Cougar Trails and WSU campus provide a wonderful variety of habitats. We will plan on a half-day to explore some sections of the trail to look for resident birds, those passing through on their migratory route, and some early spring arrivals. Mixed trails (paved, wood chip, packed dirt, narrow boardwalk). Walking 3-5 miles on hilly terrain.

Thursday, April 18

Field Trip to Pierce and Thurston Counties including Nisqually NWR

Meeting time: 5:50am

Leaders: Randy Hill

Register: Email Randy at re_hill@q.com or call/text to 360-975-2573.

Meeting Location: Salmon Creek Park and Ride.

We will head north to southern Pierce County (and hopefully beat the Olympia traffic) to join the Eagles Pride Golf Course monthly bird walk at Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) starting at 08:00 for about 3 hours through mixed forest and openings. Sometime before noon we will head to Nisqually NWR and walk trails through forest and wetlands that can extend out to the boardwalk and reach the edges of southern Puget Sound. Trip will likely go to at least mid-afternoon before a return home, so bring a lunch. Spotting scopes encouraged for Nisqually; radios not needed. Limit of 4 cars, 10 total participants.

Field Trip Report—WOS Weekend 3/8-10

A late winter weekend of birding in Southwest Washington was again offered to the greater statewide birding community with another Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) Weekend. Considering last year's February trip with extensive snow through the Gorge and across the Portland area just before the planned event, and cancellations from Puget Sound all the way to Camas, we pushed the 2024 trip two weeks later into March. Well, we beat the snow down, but we still didn't beat the weather.

With WOS participants from as far north as Bellingham as well as local Vancouver Audubon members, we started at Kalama and at noon moved to a trek around the Woodland Bottoms. It was obvious that the extended smelt run on the Columbia and up the Lewis River was under the watchful eyes of pinnipeds and gulls, not to mention a horde of Bald Eagles. The lands inside of dike protection provided food for waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, and passerines working on crops, while herons, egrets and birds of prey feasted on rodents in grass and forage crops. The Lewis River delta hosted thousands of diving ducks and a gull roost in the thousands. Our trip list for the day approached 70 species.

Follow this link for more details: [WOS Weekend Cowlitz County 3/8/2024 - eBird Trip Report](#)

Saturday's start in Clark County began at Frenchman's Bar Park, where Jim Danzenbaker took us south to "the sparrow flock". Of course, we saw more than just sparrows. Throw in other passerines, more eagles and gulls along the river, large flocks of cranes, geese and ducks using the Columbia Land Trust croplands, and a little change in weather. We departed for Shillapoo Lake and found large flocks of coots and diving ducks huddled along the east shore as the wind and rain picked up. A similar brief stop on the north trail to Vancouver Lake as we abandoned the area to head north. We added a quick stop at Salmon Creek on the way to Ridgefield NWR, where birding from the protection of a vehicle is a requirement. Some breaks in the weather were helpful, but missing Great Horned Owl and Black Phoebe was somewhat shocking. We decided to head up toward Carty Lake for a last outing, and ultimately decided that Sunday's rain and wind forecast would cancel the last day of birding. Nonetheless, 78 species during a day of marginal weather was a positive. The link for Saturday's list follows: [WOS Weekend Clark County 3/9/2024 - eBird Trip Report](#)

Thanks to Tom T. and Jim D. for their leadership roles and keeping the eBird checklists!

Volunteering for Earthwatch in Costa Rica

By Karen Pickering

I traveled to Costa Rica (CR) in December to volunteer with *EarthWatch* for a week, participating in an expedition to help conserve wild bees and other pollinators. Costa Rica has more than 12,000 species of plants, 1,200 butterflies, 935 birds, and 650 mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Eco-tourism is an important part of the economy in this small country. Dr. Valerie Peters from Eastern Kentucky University led the expedition. She has been working in tropical forests and coastal communities in CR for about 10 years, studying pollinator populations and the services they provide. One of her missions is to help protect pollinators from the effects of climate change and habitat loss by planting “agroforests” or forests that grow in pastures around or among crops. By planting these agroforests, the affects of climate change can be mitigated and also benefit pollinator communities.

As part of the expedition, our small group of enthusiastic participants, which included my sister, spent several hours a day in the field helping the researchers in investigating and collecting data about the various bees that pollinated the flowers and plants in the tropical forests of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. We learned about how threats to bees and butterflies affect the critical pollination services they provide. We also had the opportunity to meet local farmers and learn about their farms and farming techniques. For example, we learned how some farmers grow coffee plants and process coffee beans, and then sell the delicious coffee to local stores and tourists. Dr. Peters has spent years cultivating relationships with the local farmers and shares her knowledge and exchanges ideas with the farmers about how additional plant species can protect biodiversity and ecosystem function. This also helps to provide livelihoods for families in the region.



Resplendent Quetzal

Photo by Sergio Vargas

According to the *Earthwatch* website, CR is home to over 400 species of native wild bees and about 50 species of hummingbirds. More than three-quarters of the world's crops depend on pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. These animals provide essential ecosystem services and play a crucial role in the production of many fruits and vegetables.

CR has done an amazing job at minimizing deforestation and bringing back the forests which had been in a dire situation with about 25% of the forests remaining in the 1970s. Since then, CR has made great strides in reforestation and the forests have been restored to about 52%. CR has also protected approximately 28% of its land in national parks, reserves, and wildlife refuges.

We spent an evening hearing from Dr. Fabricio Camacho Céspedes, Ph.D about the work of the Tropical Science Center (TSC) which he has lead since 2020. TSC is the first Costa Rican environmental organization that is non-governmental, and it has pioneered conservation and scientific research in tropical forests not only in CR, but 25 other countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. As a passionate environmental steward, Dr. Céspedes is working on an ambitious effort to recover forest connectivity between the Monteverde Cloud Forest and the Puntarenas Mangrove Forest on the Pacific coast of CR.

At the conclusion of the expedition, my sister and I hired a local naturalist and birder, Sergio Vargas. He has been working with Dr. Peters for several years and is an important member of the *Earthwatch* team. As a boy,

(Continued on page 10)

Sergio developed a passion for nature and conservation. He attended the local Quaker school which was founded 60 years ago by Quakers that left the United States during the Vietnam War in search of a country that valued principals such as peace, love and respect. Sergio lives in the Monteverde area with his wife and daughter

Sergio worked for a number of years at the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve before striking out on his own. He is a bird guide and naturalist, taking tourists and locals on tours in the Monteverde Cloud Forest and areas nearby, as well as other parts of CR. Sergio embodies what locals call “Pura Vida” or Pure Life . In CR, people think of Pura Vida not as just a slogan, but a culture and way of life. Sergio has a genuine love of all things in the natural world. He has a quick smile and kindness and readily shares his passion and knowledge about the flora and fauna found in CR. He is always generous and excited to share the birds that he spots and captures in his scope.

If you find yourself with travel plans to the beautiful, tropical country of CR, I would recommend including the Monteverde Cloud Forest in your plans. And, I would absolutely recommend hiring Sergio as a guide. You can reach him at svmmonteverde@gmail.com.

Steigerwald NWR Youth Photo Contest



*2023 1st place in Plants, Animals, & Fungi
by Katie Warner*

Do you know a youth between the ages of 10 and 18 years of age, who has access to a smartphone camera and might be interested in submitting a photo they took at Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge this year? The [Gorge Refuge Stewards](#), [Columbia Credit Union](#), and [HD Aluminum Prints](#) have teamed up to sponsor one of the most prize rich photo contests available to this age group, with \$1,800 in cash prizes and high quality aluminum prints of the 12 winning photos!

If interested, you can find out more details by visiting the [Youth Photo Contest](#) rules and description webpage. May 31, 2024 is the deadline for entering as many as 5 photos in 4 different categories, including, but not limited to smartphones.

Celebrating World Water Day

VAS joined Vancouver Water Resources Education Center for their World Water Day BioBlitz event, Saturday March 23. World Water Day is celebrated to highlight the importance of freshwater for humans and our vital ecosystems. Attendees registered in advance to join guided nature walks which focused on finding plants, animals, birds, insects, mushrooms, amphibians and more.

Tom Tinsley and Jackson Wolfe each led a bird walk through the woods to the Columbia River shore. Folks returned excited to have seen Downy Woodpeckers, both Common Goldeneye and Barrow’s Goldeneye, and delighted in watching Double-crested Cormorants diving. And, Jackson had the pleasure of a VAS Young Birder’s Club member join his bird walk!

Joan Durgin and Becky Boley visited with attendees at the VAS table, helping people young as well as not-as-young assemble bird houses from kits created by Jackson! These were a huge hit and appreciated by everyone who picked up a screwdriver.

We look forward to the Water Resources Education Center hosting this event again!



Jackson Wolfe observes a future Young Birders Club member and carpenter assemble a birdhouse.

Young Birder's Club



FREE for ages 10-18



2 to 3 meetings monthly,
in the field and online



Learn from bird experts



**Bird watching walks, art
programs, research, and
habitat restoration**



SCAN ME

Join us at our next meeting!

See our website for schedule

vancouveraudubon.org/young-birders-club

youngbirders@vancouveraudubon.org



American Bittern
Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge
Photo by Jackson Wolfe

For any unusual birds in this report, I use the following rarity codes which are used on the state checklist as well as on each of the 39 county checklists available at:

www.wabirder.com

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

FOY denotes the first of the year sighting for a species in that county.

Feb. 17, Colleen England saw two **OSPREYS** FOY for Clark County at the Steigerwald Lake NWR above Red-Tail Lake at the top of a Cottonwood tree.



Lesser Black-backed Gull

Melissa Rowell/Audubon Photography Awards

Feb. 19, in Skamania County, Les Bowen observed the FOY **CASPIAN TERN** over Drano Lake while birding near the Little White Salmon Fish Hatchery.

Feb. 22, Cindy McCormack heard **HORNED LARK** while in the Vancouver Lake lowlands, but was uncertain if individual or multiple birds were involved. We had several large flocks of them reported during the coldest period this winter but now only a few birds were being reported at a time.

Feb. 23, the Clark County FOY **TURKEY VULTURES** were the five seen by Casey Moore-Harris circling over an area for

20 solid minutes on South Hillhurst Road, in Ridgefield.

Feb. 24, Cindy McCormack and Karen Pickering were at Balch Lake, near Lyle in Klickitat County when they spotted a single FOY **TREE SWALLOW**.

Feb. 24, the Klickitat FOY **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** was reported by David Ness from the Columbia Hills State Park-Crawford Oaks Trail.

Feb. 24, 11 **SAGEBRUSH SPARROWS** were counted by Ryan Merrill at a small patch of old-growth sagebrush on Sand Ridge Rd, at the east end of Klickitat County. This spot is also used by Sage Thrashers and Loggerhead Shrikes.

Feb. 29, Jim Danzenbaker first detected the continuing **SWAMP SPARROW** at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit, by its distinctive sharp chip, it was in a small patch of cat-tails on the left side of the road after leaving the ash grove."

Feb. 29, Josh Barstow found a **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** he saw it from the bridge near the wetland on the east side of Skamania Landing, The FOY for a species that is rare in Skamania County.

Feb. 29, by Samuel Holman spotted the first **TURKEY VULTURE** of the season for Klickitat County flying along the cliff in the Lyle tunnels area on Highway 14,

March 1, Samuel Holman checked the large gull flock at the Klickitat River mouth in Klickitat, Washington finding a FOY adult **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** with a dark gray mantle several shades darker than adjacent California and Ring-billed Gulls, fairly large yellow bill with prominent red gonydeal spot, yellow eyes and yellow legs.

March 3, Another **SAY'S PHOEBE** was found by Les Carlson at the Shillapoo Wildlife Area on LaFrambois Road.

March 5, on Sand Ridge Rd in Klickitat County, CJ FLICK followed-up on Ryan Merrill's Feb 24, **SAGEBRUSH SPARROW** sightings and found five there.

March 5, Brent Angelo continued to host a **MERLIN** at his

(Continued on page 11)

Orchards Home, he must be feeding it well as it has been there all winter.

March 7, the first **RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** of the year in Clark County was spotted in Ridgefield by Tom Tinsley.

March 7, Casey Moore-Harris found a calling FOY **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** flying in and out of reeds near a marshy patch on South Hillhurst Road in Ridgefield. A few of these birds winter in the Northwest but they are one of the earliest returning warblers.

March 9, Josh Barstow saw the Skamania County FOY **SAY'S PHOEBE** on their annual migration through the county at Home Valley Park.

March 9, another **SAY'S PHOEBE** was found by Lauren Cooney at the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

March 9, Stella Walk saw the continuing **SAY'S PHOEBE** at the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

March 9, Robert Vanderkamp was leading a Friends of the Ridgefield Refuge walk for ten participants on the Ridgefield-Carty Unit and among the 51 birds found was a very cooperative **HORNED LARK** feeding on a gravel trail.

March 10, there were multiple reports of **SAY'S PHOEBES** in Skamania County, with one reported at Beacon Rock

State Park, one at Skamania Landing and three at the Wind River mouth.

March 11, a male **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** was located by Josh Barstow on Strawberry Island for a Skamania County FOY.

March 12, Jim Danzenbaker and Les Carlson spotted a **SLATY-BACKED GULL** (5) that had been reported from the Oregon side of the Columbia River from Marine Park as it crossed into Clark County waters. This large and dark backed gull is a rare visitor from Asia to the lower forty-eight states with only a very few records in this region.

March 15, Cindy McCormack, Les Carlson, Randy Hill and I spent the day birding in Skamania County. Our best birds were 8 **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** and a **SAY'S PHOEBE** and the FOY **SAVANNAH SPARROW** at Bonneville Dam,

Last year we had numerous reports of Mountain Bluebirds in our region. This year looks like it will be Say's Phoebes, the earliest returning member of the flycatcher family. From now through the end of May we will be getting newly returning migrants on a nearly daily basis, 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 the species seen in each county by anyone this year. As of March 15th, there have been 153 species reported from Clark County for the 2024 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project and in Skamania County the list is now at 117. These lists of all the birds reported in each county

are updated every two months and can be seen at [Washington Birder \(wabirder.com\)](http://WashingtonBirder.com)

You can also follow the migration on eBird.org where they display the sighting reports of each species on maps so that you can see the waves of birds moving north. I also like to check BirdCast each morning from March 1 to June 15 to see how many birds were detected by weather radars as they passed over the county. [BirdCast - Bird migration forecasts in real-time](http://BirdCast.com)



Rufous Hummingbird

Photo by Beth Marlin-Lichter

Fotofest 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

April 2024

	Apr 1 Bird Walk— Steigerwald NWR	2 Program— Western Screech-Owl	3	4	5	6 Bird Walk— Skamania Land- ing
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Bird Walk— WSU Vancouver
14	15	16	17	18 Field Trip to Nisqually and JBLM	19	20
21 Earth Day Celebration at Carty Unit	22 Earth Day Field Trip in Columbia Gorge	23	24 YBC Zoom Meeting—6 pm	25	26	27
28	29	30 Board Meeting				

Apr 1 (Mon): First-of-Month-Bird Walk—Steigerwald NWR

Apr 2 (Tue): Monthly Program—W. Screech-Owls

Apr 6 (Sat): Bird Walk at Skamania Landing

Apr 13 (Sat): Bird Walk at WSU Vancouver Campus Trails

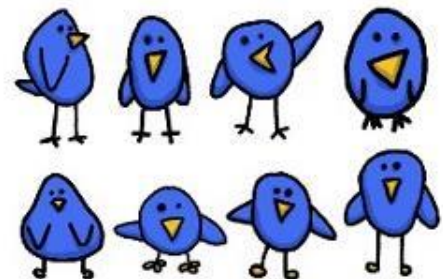
Apr 18 (Thur): Field Trip to Pierce and Thurston Counties

Apr 21 (Sun): Earth Day Celebration

Apr 22 (Mon): Earth Day Field Trip to Columbia Gorge

Apr 24 (Wed): Young Birders Meeting

Apr 30 (Tue): Board Meeting



backyardbirdshop.com



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