

Columbia Flyway

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



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From the VAS Board

By Jackson Wolfe

Greetings! What a lovely time it is to get outside and feel the spring sun on your face, smell the spring blossoms, and, of course, listen to the melodies strung about by our feathered friends. As the saying goes, April showers bring May birds...or something like that! This month, I would like to bring special attention to our backyard wildlife. I, like many, find myself becoming caught up with travel plans and birding trips as the summer nears. In doing so, I am overlooking the most enticing part of birding—I can do it anywhere, and at any time. Just step outside and open my eyes and ears. Be it hawks downtown on powerlines, or Rufus Hummingbirds on my balcony, birding is accessible to everybody, everywhere. It is truly beautiful, is it not?

One way I like to support my backyard birds is by planting native plants! This week I will be releasing an article to our blog listing some native plants you can use in place of lawn to create a backyard habitat. If we all chip in, we can create a web of connections for birds to forage, find shelter, and raise their young in. If you haven't checked out our blog yet, be sure to do so. We post a plethora of informative materials there, including birding locations, habitat restoration tips, and more.

With May fast approaching, we also see an influx of migratory birds. The night of our very successful Earth Day event on Sunday, the 21st, over 42 million birds flew over the Vancouver area. Over the next several months, over a billion more will fly overhead at night, reaching numbers of nearly 200M per night. Curious? Visit the [Birdcast Dashboard](#) to see how many fly over your area each night! Recently, National Audubon has been pushing the "Lights Out" initiative. The goal is to encourage cities and private citizens to turn off their porch lights and place covers over their street lamps, decreasing the light pollution that blocks out the moonlight, which is vital for migratory navigation. We at the VAS invite you to join us and turn off your lights as early as you can. Together, we can help millions of our feathered friends navigate safely.

We have many more events coming up, and we need volunteers! If you are interested in sitting behind the table, leading walks, or being a part of event planning, reach out to Becky Boley @ CommunityOutreach@vancouveraudubon.org. We hope to have you at future meetings!

Happy May from the VAS board. Enjoy the spring weather, flowers, longer days and good vibes.



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!**

VAS Celebration of Earth Day



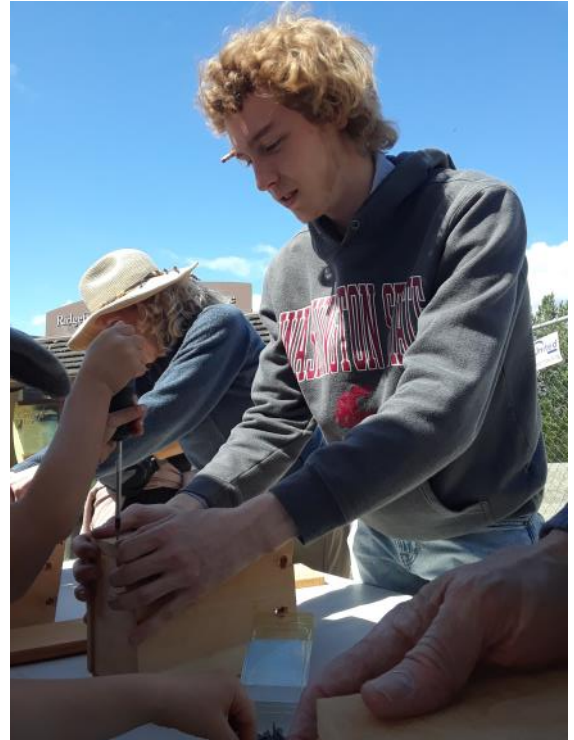
A young family enjoyed a bird walk Sunday morning

enthusiasm when they co-led a den of 15 jubilant Cub Scouts plus parents on a walk along the Oaks to Wetland trail! St Johns Pack 52 from Portland were thrilled at the unexpected offer of a guided walk. The VAS Young Birder binoculars came in handy and were appreciated.

It was wonderful to meet with visitors and discover they were a combination of regular visitors or first-time visitors as well as from nearby or from as far as Yakama, Seattle and Olympia. Everyone was interested in the activities of Vancouver Audubon and happy to see us. Kid activities included: building bird houses, learning about owl pellets and examining replica bird skulls, and using ink and bird stamps to create bookmarks.

Sunday, April 21 proved to be a beautiful day at Ridgefield NWR Carty Unit when VAS volunteers welcomed visitors and celebrated Earth Day. Bird walks were led by Cindy McCormack, Jackson Wolfe and Ken Pitts. A spotting scope station near the Plankhouse was set up and Becky Boley met with visitors who stopped to visit.

Jackson and Ken demonstrated commitment and great



Jackson Wolfe helped with birdhouse building



PO Box 1966 | Vancouver, WA 98668-1966

Website | vancouveraudubon.org

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

Chartered December 18, 1975

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

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.

New Officers Elected

At our April meeting, members unanimously voted in new officers for Vancouver Audubon Society. Susan Saul managed the election with grace, clarity, and brevity. New officers duties begin on May 1. New officers include:

Tom Tinsley—President

Don Rose—Vice President

Jean Avery—Secretary

Joan Durgin—Treasurer

Susan Saul will be continuing as Conservation Chair, Becky Boley as Outreach Coordinator, Randy Hill as Field Trip Coordinator, Katie Warner as Website Coordinator, Jackson Wolfe and Katie as Young Birders Club leaders, and Wilson Cady as lead for bird sightings.

In addition, Jackson Wolfe will be the new Program Chair. Karen Pickering is stepping down as Membership Chair due to increased commitments at work, so we are in search of a member to step up and fill that role for us. Contact vas@vancouveraudubon.org if you are interested in this or any other position.

May we all manage with the wisdom of the owl.



Short-eared Owl Photo by Steve Bredthauer, Fotofest 2024



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

VAS Programs



Prince Ruspoli's Turaco in Ethiopia
Photo by Sherry Arden

May 7, 2024— Birds and Stories of Ethiopia

Speakers: Sherry and Arden Hagen

World Birders Arden and Sherry Hagen will be presenting a program on their trip to Ethiopia during November of 2022. Even though the country was (and still is) having turmoil in the north and southeast, and after a hang-up at the airport over all the binoculars (could be spying equipment??), the trip went pretty well. Ethiopia is 1.6 times the size of Texas, and they covered much of it in search of special birds. Come listen to the stories they tell as they show photos Sherry took of the birds, animals and scenery.

Sherry and Arden have done many presentations for Vancouver Audubon and they are always entertaining. 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.

Beginning on May 1, 2024, Jackson Wolfe will be taking over as Program Chair for Vancouver Audubon Society. I look forward to seeing what new ideas Jackson brings to the group. Please send any program ideas to Jackson.

The location of all IN-PERSON meetings is:

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

Vancouver, WA

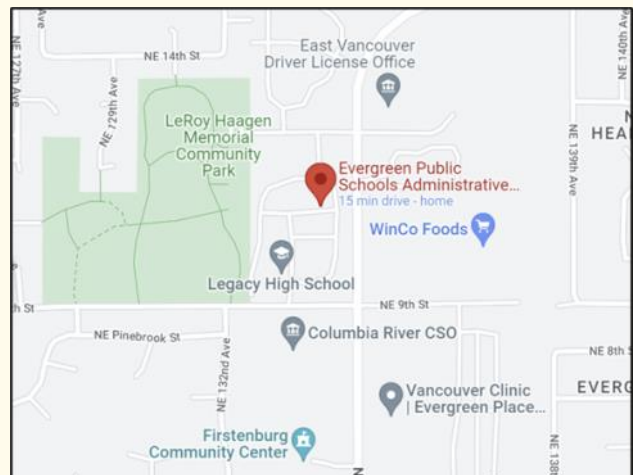
6:30 pm – 7:00 pm - Social time to share bird sightings, stories, and upcoming events

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 Jackson Wolfe for more information at
meetings@vancouveraudubon.org. Please send all topic, speaker, and program suggestions and requests to Jackson.

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).



Congress Passes Legislation Supporting Migratory Birds Across the Hemisphere

by Susan Saul and National Audubon

Congress has reauthorized and enhanced a successful program that provides funding throughout the Americas for partnerships funding migratory bird research and habitat restoration. At a time when migratory birds are facing population declines due to habitat loss and climate threats, the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act reauthorizes critical funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) program and increase its accessibility for partners

"We have lost three billion birds since 1970—a staggering number—and this legislation is critically important to help communities and partners meet the challenges of the moment so we can conserve migratory birds for years to come," said Marshall Johnson, chief conservation officer at the National Audubon Society. "96 million Americans engage in birdwatching, contributing \$100 billion to the U.S. economy each year. Investing in migratory bird conservation across the hemisphere is essential to reversing these troubling bird declines."

The reauthorization provides funding through Fiscal Year 2028 at \$6.5 million annually. This act also increases the federal cost share of the NMBCA program from 25% to 33% public-to-private, allowing for more partners to participate in the program, generating a wider variety of projects and reducing barriers to conservation action.

Since 2002, the NMBCA has awarded more than \$89 million in grants to over 700 migratory bird conservation projects in 35 countries throughout the Western Hemisphere. The program has protected more than 5 million acres of habitat across the nesting, stopover, and wintering grounds for more than 350 species that migrate each year between the U.S. and Canada, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Partner organizations have contributed an additional \$346 million to these projects, with 400 migratory bird species benefiting from the funding.

The NMBCA is a critical piece of National Audubon Society's hemispheric approach to bird conservation and bending the curve in the precipitous decline of birds across the Americas.



Black-throated Gray Warblers wintering mostly in Mexico will benefit from the NMBCA

Update on Vancouver Audubon's Lawsuit Against DNR

by Susan Saul

In February 2024, Vancouver Audubon, joined by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of the White Salmon River, WildEarth Guardians and The Center for Biological Diversity, filed suit 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. [See April 2024 newsletter for details.]

Since then, DNR has filed a motion to dismiss our case. Most of DNR's arguments attack our standing to bring the case. The DNR's motion to dismiss will be heard by Clark County Superior Court Judge Derek Vanderwood on May 3.

Anyone who is interested can attend in person at the Clark County Courthouse. Since our case will be one of the more complex motions that morning, we can expect it will go last or near the end of the morning. That could mean anywhere from 9:30 to 10:30 for an actual start time.

Vancouver Addresses Climate in Comprehensive Plan Update

by Susan Saul

Vancouver has started work on an update of its Comprehensive Plan, which is required by the state's Growth Management Act. Since the plan was last updated in 2011, Vancouver has experienced significant growth, as well as demographic, economic and social changes.

The plan will guide the city's growth and development for the next 20 years, with a target year of 2045 for achieving the overall vision that is established.

The plan will address housing, land use, transportation, parks, infrastructure, and climate and resilience. For climate and the environment, the plan must look at ways the city can mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change as well how to shape growth to support the city's climate goal of net zero emissions by 2040 and support state greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements.

The plan will include big changes, such as deciding where to locate an additional 38,000 housing units, and updates to roads, facilities, neighborhoods and parks.

The city intends to engage community members, with an emphasis on elevating the perspectives of communities that have been historically underrepresented, excluded, or negatively impacted from public decision-making processes. Community mapping processes were held in late April.

The comprehensive plan will take around 2 ½ years to prepare and adopt, and there will be a wide variety of opportunities and formats to inform policy, provide input and feedback, and weigh in on alternatives.

You can get involved at <https://www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045>.

Notes From Young Birders' Club

News & Updates

Happy Earth Day from the Young Birders' Club! We hope you had an incredible month of sunshine and birding. We, too, have had some fun events. From birding trips around Vancouver, to presentations at local schools and parks, the YBC has been gaining membership and momentum as spring birding picks up. Coming up this month, we have our usual bird walk and Zoom meeting, as well as an event at Columbia Springs that we would love to see you at! We are looking for youth volunteers to help with the planning and running of our events, too. This is a great experience that looks good on future resumes, and is simply fun! We will also be at the Wenas Campout, and we hope to see you there.

If you have any questions, comments, or ideas for our club, please feel free to share them with youngbirders@vancouveraudubon.org. As always, tell your friends about us, and happy birding!

Katie and Jackson, YBC Leads

Important Upcoming Events and Dates

Please [contact us](#) to sign up for any of these events!

05/04 Monthly Bird Walk

05/18 Columbia Springs Event

05/22 Monthly Zoom Meeting

05/31-06/02 Wenas Campout



*Burrowing Owl Chicks Photo: Stephen Kent
Audubon Photography Awards*

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

VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips

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

Monday, May 1

First-of-Month Bird Walk—Round Lake

Meeting time: 7:00am

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: Round Lake Parking lot— <https://maps.app.goo.gl/MZJudA7iB8LXckj49>



It's prime migration time! The Round Lake trail provides birding through a variety of habitats, including city park, open water, evergreen forest, wildflower meadow, and oak woodland. On the Round Lake trail, we'll enjoy the wonderful spring bird songs, look for Spring arrivals, and wildflowers. Light boots are recommended, as some of the trails can be a bit rocky.

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.

First of the Month Bird Walk at Steigerwald NWR

Photo: Tom Tinsley

Tuesday, May 7

Shillapoo Lake

Meeting time: 7:30am

Leaders: Tom Tinsley and Don Rose

Register: Don at vp@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: Entrance to Shillapoo across the road from the north bridge of the Vancouver Lake North Trail.

We will look for a variety of wetland and lake birds along the dike as well as any spring migrants arriving.

Saturday, May 11

West End of Salmon Creek Greenway

Meeting time: 7:30—10:30 am

Leaders: Ken Pitts, Beth Martin Lichter, and Stella Walk

Register: Ken at kenp@vancouveraudubon.org.

Meeting Location: [Salmon Creek Greenway Trail](#) (45.721883, -122.707630). Parking is along NW 36th Ave.

This date and location are prime for seeing a maximum number of bird species! Come help celebrate World Migratory Bird Day with this walk of about a 3 miles out and back hike at a 1 A classification for speed and slope (relatively slow and flat terrain.) It is geared for beginning to intermediate level birders.

Binoculars and spotting scopes are available for participants to use during the walk. Please indicate in your registration email if you need binoculars or would like a scope to use. If you include your smartphone #, then you can be contacted quickly if there are any changes of plans. When you register, I will send you a verification and my number. We hope to see you there!

VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips

Saturday, May 25

Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge

Meeting time: 7:00—11:00 am

Leaders: Ken Pitts, Beth Martin Lichter, and Stella Walk

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)

Target birds on this walk will include Lazuli Buntings and Yellow-breasted Chats who will have just arrived. The Mountain View Trail offers vistas over flooded areas being refreshed by The Columbia River with abundant waterfowl, raptors, and waders. A combined list will likely yield 70 plus species. The walk is about a 5 mile out and back hike at a 1 A classification for speed and slope (relatively slow and flat terrain.) It is geared for beginning to intermediate level birders, and all levels are welcome to join. 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. I'll include my number in my verification email. We will plan on walking from the parking lot, to the Seasonal Trail, make the loop, and will walk the 1.5 miles back to the parking lot. Bring plenty of water, calories, a hat, and sunscreen. I hope to see you there!



Lazuli Bunting Singing Photo: Beth Martin Lichter, Fotofest 2023

Tuesday, June 4

Salmon Creek Greenway

Meeting time: 7:30am

Leaders: Tom Tinsley and Don Rose

Register: Don at vp@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: Park in the softball fields parking lot and meet by the restrooms.



Common Yellowthroat Photo: Don Rose

The trail is approximately 3 miles one way and is paved, flat and wheelchair accessible. This trail has a variety of habitats to explore as it follows Salmon Creek through mature cottonwood and conifer forest, as well as riparian, wetland, lake, and open prairie habitats. Pretty much all the migrants will have arrived so we will have a large variety of songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl to look for. Expected species include a variety of ducks, particularly Ring-necked Duck and Wood Duck at Turtle Pond, Pied-billed Grebe, Barn, Tree, and Violet-green Swallow, Vaux's Swift, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Warbling Vireo, Swainson's Thrush, and Kinglets. We could also find Pileated Woodpecker, Bald Eagle, and Barred Owl.

We will have scopes and extra binoculars if you need them. Just let me know when you register if you need them.

Wilson Cady's Afield

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.

March 17, migrant **SAY'S PHOEBES** (3) continued to be seen in Clark County after the first sighting on Feb. 1st, with the last report being one seen by Andy Orenstein at the Steigerwald Lake NWR on this date. These members of the flycatcher family are among are earliest Spring migrants and are usually found in open areas that resemble their breeding grounds east of the Cascades often perching on weed stalks or fence lines¹ They must be very hardy birds with good insect hunting skills to migrate as early as they do when the numbers of insects are still low.

March 19, Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson observed a **GOLDEN EAGLE** (3) circling over Shillapoo Lake. As the bird circled, they could see the golden nape and pattern of golden on the upper wings with a spotting scope on about 40/50 power. The Golden seemed to have a somewhat smaller head and bill than the three mature **BALD EAGLES** circling in the area. The bird had an all-dark body and tail with no white anywhere on it.

March 19, while Susan and I were having our morning coffee on the front deck we were surprised by a **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (3) FOY that flew over, we have had them here multiple times and are most likely just crossing over the Cape Horn area.

March 21, the overwintering Taiga subspecies of **MERLIN** (3) continued to be reported by Brent Angelo at his home in Orchards.

March 22, Bill Tweit found 3 **BLACK-NECKED STILTS** (4) in Klickitat County at the Roosevelt-westside Sewage Treatment Plant. From there he traveled up Sand Ridge Road towards Bickleton where there is a remnant patch of old-growth sagebrush where he spotted 2 **SAGEBRUSH SPAR-**

ROWS (3). This patch of sagebrush also has nesting Sage Thrashers and Loggerhead Shrikes, if you visit here, please stay on the road and respect this private property.

March 23, Jim Danzenbaker and Les Carlson found another **GOLDEN EAGLE** (3), this one was on Larch Mountain at what is called the Spring Migration Viewpoint. It appeared to be another adult with narrower wings than a Bald Eagle, without much head extension, no white on the underparts and a dark terminal band on a brownish tail. In the early 1970's there used to be a nesting pair on Silver Star Mountain, but we have had very few confirmed sightings here lately.



Craig Wallace Photography

Canyon Wren

Photo by Craig Wallace, Fotofest 2023

March 23, Matt Pope was hiking on Beacon Rock State Park in Skamania County when he heard the distinctive call of a **CANYON WREN** (3) FOY. These wrens nest on the rock as well on other cliffs in the Gorge despite the rainfall being much heavier than their usual habitats east of the Cascade Mountains.

March 25, Gregory Johnson reported a lingering **SWAMP SPARROW** (3) at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit before it headed to their breeding grounds in the boreal forests east of the Rocky Mountains.

March 26, a hybrid **TUFTED DUCK X SCAUP** species was spotted by Jim Danzenbaker in a diffuse flock of scaup at Tidewater Cove on the Columbia River in Vancouver. He described it as having a uniform dark back and clean bright white sides with a little nub of a crest on a head that had a

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greenish-purple sheen. Tufted Ducks are another Eurasian species that can occur here in the winter but are a (3) sighting.

March 28, Bill Tweit and Lucy Winter were birding Swale Creek in Klickitat County when they saw 2 **CLIFF SWALLOWS** (1) FOY among the other swallows there, noting the buff-colored rumps, square tails and dark throats.

March 29, two bright male **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS** (4) were seen foraging along the road with **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS** (1) on Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam by John Davis.

March 29, Jim Danzenbaker was birding on Larch Mountain when an **AMERICAN GOSHAWK** (3) FOY flew by, he texted Les Carlson who had gone up to the Larch Mountain Trailhead to find a **SOOTY GROUSE** (3). Les hustled back down there and remarkably it showed up again and ended up circling higher and higher right overhead before gliding off to the northeast. Jim said that it was only the third one he had seen in Clark County in 25 years. They have also had **NORTHERN PYGMY OWLS** (2) there on three out of four visits.

March 30, Pablo Archila and Nick Popovich were hiking the Pacific Crest Trail east of Panther Creek in Skamania County when they found a male and female **HARLEQUIN DUCK** (3) FOY north of the bridge at the beginning of the trail.

April 1, Dave Baker reported a **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (1) in a group of **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (1) at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S' Unit. A Lesser Yellowlegs has been seen there most of this winter although with the shorebird migration picking up it may have been a new arrival.

April 2, John Willis had a **CANYON WREN** (3) calling from the cliffs at the Spring Creek Fish Hatchery Visitor Center near Underwood in Skamania County. This is another reliable spot for these birds.

April 3, at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park, Abby Haight had an **ACORN WOODPECKER** (5) FOY catch her attention while it was flying through the trees. This is just a bit south and across the Columbia River from where one was seen regularly this winter on Sauvie Island. Last Spring we had numerous reports of these denizens of the oak forests from around Fort Vancouver including at least one exca-

vating a nesting cavity, but they were not reported later in the season.

April 6, the Klickitat County FOY **PURPLE MARTIN** (3) was found at the Bingen Pond by CJ Flick. These large members of the swallow family are very rarely reported in Washington state any further east of there.

April 7, Thomas Tinsley had good looks at a **CASSIN'S VIREO** (2) FOY from the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Lake overlook off Division Street in Ridgefield. He noted the complete white eye ring, faint white wing bars, and yellowish tint on the flanks.

April 9, at Home Valley Park in Skamania County, Josh Barstow saw two adult **CHIPPING SPARROWS** (3) FOY. He described them as sparrows with a reddish-brown crown with plain gray breasts and a dark line extending from the beak through the eye to back of the head with a white line between the black line and reddish-brown crown which distinguishes them from juvenile White-crowned Sparrows that lack the black line extending from the eye to the beak.

April 10, overnight we had the first large movement of birds detected by weather radar this year with an estimated 1,259,000 passing over Clark County and 2,232,800 crossing over Skamania County. You can see these nightly results at: <https://dashboard.birdcast.info/>

April 11, Les Carlson joined Susan and I for our morning birding, and we had a calling **NORTHERN PYGMY OWL** (2) and our first **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (1) for our place this year. Later, Susan and I had a bright male **CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD** (3) FOY visit our feeder twice in the late afternoon six miles east of Washougal.

April 11, a **PINE GROSBEAK** (5) FOY was first detected by a call that Jim Danzenbaker didn't recognize while he was at the Larch Mountain-Spring Migration Viewpoint. After he realized that it was a weird song, he saw it on top of a far-off tree. The bird's profile cinched the identification immediately. They are a large finch with noticeable white wing bars, large-headed look and with a short thick bill. He thinks it was either a female or immature male as it didn't look red, and he could see the gray body and a darker color on the head. This is the first report that I am aware of for this species during Spring migration. He also had a female or sub adult **CASSIN'S FINCH** (4) FOY that was also first detected by its call, this finch nests in the

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Ponderosa Pine forests at the east end of the Gorge.

April 13, at his home in Camas, Dave Miller had a **HOUSE WREN** (1) FOY for Clark County.

April 13, Fred Howay had a **BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER** (1) FOY at his home in Vancouver.

April 13, the first report of a **NASHVILLE WARBLER** (2) FOY came from the John Bishop who first heard then saw one on the Dog Mountain Trail in Skamania County.

April 13, another male **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (4) was spotted at the Spring Migration Viewpoint on Larch Mountain by Jim Danzenbaker, Les Carlson and Gregory Johnson. There have been more Mountain Bluebird sightings locally in the last two years than in any of the fifty years that I have been compiling this column.

April 14, Randy Hill picked out 3 **CLARK'S GREBES** (3) FOY in Vancouver Lake at the east end of the Flushing Channel by their orange bill, isolated eye, narrow black band behind their necks, he said that the black cap above the eye was not as narrow as on some Clark's Grebes he has seen.

April 14, a **VESPER SPARROW** (4) FOY was found and photographed at the Ridgefield NWR-River S Unit by Katie Warner. There is a small population of these sparrows in the lowlands of the lower Puget Trough in western Washington mainly around Joint Base Lewis-McCord but the subspecies that breeds east of the Cascades is common in areas with native grasses often near sagebrush. This bird could be from either population due to the Columbia Gorge and its near-sea-level passage through the Cascade Mountains.

April 14, CJ Flick heard a **WILLOW FLYCATCHER** (2) FOY giving its Fitz-bew call at the Bingen Pond in Klickitat County.

April 15, while conducting a survey in the Vancouver Lake Lowlands, Cindy McCormack spotted a **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE** (4) FOY They have a darker blue-gray crown and back than a Northern Shrike, contrasting strikingly with the thin white line over the black mask. The black mask is thicker than seen on a Northern's and completely surrounds the eye; the black bill was short and stubby; the throat was white and the sides pale gray. This is another east of the Cascades nesting species that we get here occasionally as they do wander down the Gorge during migration.



Nashville Warbler Photo by Ken Pitts, Fotofest 2023

April 15, John Davis found 4 **VAUX'S SWIFTS** (1) FOY while birding on Strawberry Island below Bonneville Dam in Skamania County.

Both Western Tanagers and Black-headed Grosbeaks will be back by the end of April along with newly arriving migrants on a nearly daily basis through the end of May. If you go to [eBird Pacific Northwest - Discover a new world of birding...](#) and enter a county name in Explore and click on Bar Charts on that county site you can see a graph that shows when each species is there, you can also see bar charts and directions to individual sites like Steigerwald Lake NWR or Larch Mountain-Spring Migration Viewpoint by going to Hotspots and clicking on the sites name. 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 April 15th, there have been 173 species reported from Clark County for the 2024 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project and in Skamania County the list is now at 139. These lists of all the birds reported in each county are updated every two months and can be seen at [Washington Birder \(wabirder.com\)](#)

World Migratory Bird Day 2024

In 2024, [World Migratory Bird Day](#) will be celebrated on May 11 this spring. The conservation theme this year is *Protect Insects*, *Protect Birds*, and focuses on the importance of insects as essential food sources for migratory birds.

Insects, the most diverse group of organisms on the planet, are crucial to the food web. They are not only the primary food source for a large majority of bird species around the world, but they also support other species of plants and animals. For birds that depend primarily on insects as their main food source, the ebb and flow of insect populations can greatly affect the timing, duration, and success of their migration. In fact, the timing of migration is highly dependent on when food resources, like insects, will be abundant for birds to replenish their energy reserves at stopover locations in grasslands, forests, and wetlands, along their [migratory journeys](#).

All around the globe, insect populations appear to be declining at unprecedented rates, which can directly threaten birds and their ability to migrate, breed, and produce young. This World Migratory Bird Day, our goal is to increase awareness about the importance of insects as essential energy sources for birds, and support ways to conserve both insects and birds.

Each species of bird has evolved over millions of years to eat certain foods. While most migratory songbirds eat seeds, berries, fruits, insects, aquatic invertebrates, grains, larvae, and buds, each individual species has a unique diet. As seasons change, millions of birds migrate to warmer regions where these foods are emerging or still abundant, ensuring they have the energy to meet their needs throughout the year. One local example is the **Common Yellowthroat**.

The **Common Yellowthroat** is an insectivorous migratory bird species, meaning they eat mostly insects, including grasshoppers, dragonflies, beetles, moths, and caterpillars. That means it needs to follow the climate where these insect populations are booming to feed themselves and their young.

Wood ducks are dabbling ducks that forage in shallow waters, tipping their heads under water (while their bottoms are up!) to eat aquatic plants, algae, small fish, and insects. While the adults eat a mostly herbivorous diet, they rely on insects to feed their young and seek out wetlands with these food resources to successfully raise their young during the summer season before they migrate in the fall.

Aerial insectivores include species of swifts, swallows, martins, nightjars, and flycatchers, and play an important role in ecosystems to help reduce pest insect populations in agricultural and urban areas. Unfortunately, aerial insectivores have shown the highest percentage of species in population decline than any other bird group, with an estimated 73% of species in decline, representing a loss of 156.8 million birds.



How You Can Help

Insects live in natural habitats, such as wetlands, streams, meadows, and woodlands, where they fly or waft upward and are eaten by birds and bats. In addition, many insects go through a caterpillar stage when they forage on plant parts such as leaves, twigs, buds, or stems.

Insects serve so many important roles: pollinators give us food, beetles keep our soil healthy, praying mantises control pests, and butterflies and moths bring us exceptional beauty as well as being important pollinators.

(Continued on page 11)

- Consider providing or restoring bird-friendly habitat by planting or maintaining native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers that are native to your area.
- Consider mowing your lawn less in early spring to allow flowers to bloom and help early season pollinators.
- Leave your leaves alone as pollinators and other beneficial insects rely on the habitat fallen leaves provide, especially over the winter months.
- Discontinue using pesticides and herbicides, which kill or harm insects, birds and the plants that many insects and other wildlife rely on for food.
- Convert your lawn or part of your lawn (which has limited value for insect production) to a native plant garden.
- If you own a rural property, encourage fencerows, un-mowed ditches, and natural areas as insect nurseries both at your location and within your community.
- If you live in an apartment, set out a balcony pot of native plants to help feed insects that help feed birds.
- Protect and restore habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, and native meadows where insects live and breed.
- Turn your lights off! Make your home or other building safer for birds by taking steps to reduce or eliminate [building collisions](#) and keeping [artificial lights off](#) between dawn and dusk during fall and spring migration seasons. Artificial lighting can also [drastically affect the behavior of insects and pollinators](#), reducing the ability of plants to produce fruit and reproduce.
- Spread the word and help educate others on the importance of insects in our ecosystems and food webs.

Fellows, Valerie and Wetzel, Rosalie 2024, *Protect Insects, Protect Birds*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, accessed 25 April 2024, <https://www.fws.gov/story/2024-02/world-migratory-bird-day-2024#:~:text=In%202024%2C%20World%20Migratory%20Bird,food%20sources%20for%20migratory%20birds>.

Vancouver Audubon Society is hosting a Bird Walk at Salmon Creek Greenway on World Migratory Bird Day. I encourage you to attend and view the recent migration arrivals and watch the acrobatic aerial insectivores in action.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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May 2024

	A2		May 1 Bird Walk— Round Lake	2	3	4 YBC Bird Walk
5	6	7 Bird Walk— Shillapoo Program— Birds of Ethiopia	8	9	10	11 Bird Walk— Salmon Creek Greenway
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 Columbia Springs Event
19	20	21	22 YBC Zoom Meeting—6 pm	23	24	25 Bird Walk— Steigerwald NWR
26	27	28 Board Meeting	29	30	31	

May 1 (Wed): First-of-Month-Bird Walk—Round Lake

May 4 (Sat): Young Birders Club bird walk

May 7 (Tue): Bird Walk at Shillapoo

May 7 (Tue): Program—Birds of Ethiopia

May 11 (Sat): Bird Walk at Salmon Creek Greenway

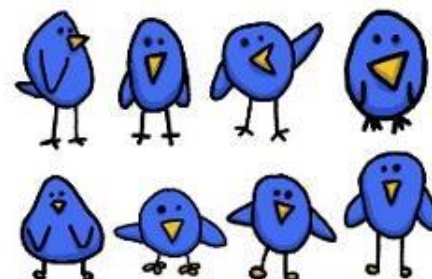
WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY!

May 18 (Sat): Columbia Springs Kid Fishing Day

May 22 (Wed): Young Birders Zoom Meeting

May 25 (Sat): Bird Walk at Steigerwald NWR

May 28 (Tue): Board Meeting



backyardbirdshop.com



8101 NE Parkway
Vancouver, WA 98662