

# Columbia Flyway

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



Volume 49 Number 8

November 2024

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



## World Migratory Bird Day Event Takes Flight

by Don Rose and Becky Boley

Vancouver Audubon hosted a celebration of World Migratory Bird Day on October 12 at McConnell Park in Battle Ground. We are happy to have hosted the event in an area of Clark County where we have less presence and to share the message about the beauty of birds and the challenges they face. The Suksdorfia Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society also participated with us. We had over 125 people in attendance over the 5-hour event. Some were families from the immediate area, some from



Steve Bredthauer helps with bird boxes

Ridgefield, and one person came to specifically see us from Milwaukie, Oregon! They had a diverse array of

activities they could choose to do. There was a coloring/bookmark making station, instruction on how to use binoculars, birdhouse building (from materials donated by local businesses), a nature bingo game where participants had to find natural objects on their card, and a display of bird books and artifacts. 34 people attended one of the four bird walks that went to the ponds at Marshall Community Park. Bird highlights from Marshall include a Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher, and a Red-breasted Sapsucker. Bird highlights at McConnell Park were a Cooper's Hawk in the morning and a flock of Band-tailed Pigeons sitting and enjoying the sunshine.



Jackson Wolfe (with scope) leading a bird walk to Marshall Park



**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](http://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.

The biggest hit was probably the Migration Game, developed by Ken (continued) Pitts and populated completely with his top-notch bird photos. It was remarkable to see both kids and adults migrating between stations flapping their arms imitating the bird they represented. There were a number of times when one could hear the imitated bird call from over 100 feet away as the migrating bird impersonators followed game directions with enthusiasm. Some migrants just did not have any luck during their flight with one getting poisoned by pesticides, flying weakly to the



Belted Kingfisher in Marshall Park

next station and hitting a powerline, and finally crashing into a building and dying. But we also had many successful migrants like those to the right demonstrating their flying technique.

We were so very fortunate to have 9 enthusiastic volunteers, including three volunteers from WSU Vancouver (see other article in this issue) and six VAS members.

Feedback tells us the event was fun and informative for those that attended and we plan to do more of these types of events in the future.



A family demonstrates their flying technique for The Migration Game

## Migration Numbers are Down

by Don Rose

Bad news about birds seems to be prevalent in news articles I have been reading recently. A quick glance at the [Bird-cast](#) summary for this fall season of migration through Clark County shows numbers to be down significantly this year when compared to average historic numbers. A recent article in The Washington Post described how the strong rebound of bald eagles in North America is now threatened by high mortality due to avian flu. [An article in Autumn 2024 Living Bird](#) documents up to a 50% decline in a wide range of species at remote science stations across Central and South America. Nobody knows whether it is climate change, pesticides, increased intensity of storm events, decline in insect numbers and diversity, or some or all of these and other factors. Another article from June 27, 2024 on the [American Bird Conservancy website](#) summarized a study that found the use of neonicotinoids in the midwestern United States were driving butterfly declines more than any other environmental variable over the past 17 years. Butterflies are, of course, an important food source for many species of birds and insects are declining in general.

These examples point out that it is more important now than ever to pour resources into protecting habitat, slowing climate change, and affecting government policy. There are solutions for every problem. First, we have to identify the problem. So pick up your binoculars and get out there and document birds. Volunteer at events that educate and raise awareness in the local community. Share information with friends and family about [what individuals can do to improve habitat in their backyard for birds](#).

Have you renewed your membership? Are you interested in joining our group? Help protect birds and their habitat in southwest Washington by donating to our cause. Visit our [website](#) to complete a secure transaction using your credit/debit card or PayPal account. Annual dues are \$30 for local membership. You can donate an additional amount as well.

### Birds Can't Vote, But You Can.

Join bird lovers across the country and **VOTE** in the 2024 election. Take time to learn candidate positions at the county and state level on conservation and climate change, and the impacts of ballot initiatives on the future of our communities, habitats, and the birds we love. The decision makers that will take office do have an important influence on the ways that laws are written and enacted at every single level of government.

**The best way to protect birds and the places they need is to make sure that you vote this year on or before Election Day on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 for candidates and policies that support birds and bird habitat.**

## Washington State University (WSU) Program Helps Community and Students

Vancouver Audubon benefitted from a partnership with [WSU's Center for Civic Engagement](#), which empowers students to become active citizens in their communities. We posted our Migratory Bird Day event to their online community engagement management tool [GivePulse](#). Two of our three WSU volunteers came to us through this site. The third came to us through a notice we sent to WSU professor John Bishop to distribute within the WSU Biology department. All three were wonderful additions to the event and we want to showcase these local scientists to the VAS community.

Nate Neal is a graduate student in Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences and involved in research on freshwater mollusks in the Columbia River Basin. He is researching the ecological differences between native mussels and invasive clams in river systems across the PNW. He is fascinated by the complex innerworkings of aquatic systems and the effect of interspecies interactions and loves to be outdoors watching birds, fly fishing or searching streams for amphibians. Nate earned his Bachelor's degree at Oregon State University and after completing his Master's program at WSU he plans to enter a PhD program to continue his education in aquatic ecology.

Xiaoyu Bai is a postdoctoral research associate at WSU's School of the Environment and conducts her research with their Climate Extremes Lab. The [Climate Extremes Lab](#) aims to advance the scientific understanding of extreme weather events that affect communities around the world and how such extremes are affected by the warming our planet is experiencing. Xiaoyu is captivated by the idea that we can model the Earth's dynamic atmosphere with the goal of improving predictability of extreme events. Xiaoyu received a Bachelor's degree from Nanjing University of Information, Science and Technology in Jiangsu, China, a Master's from University of Hawaii at Manoa, and a PhD from University of North Carolina Charlotte.

Monica Draculan is a WSU graduate currently working at a lab studying RhCMV/HCMV (Rhesus cytomegalovirus/human cytomegalovirus) miRNAs and Rhesus based vaccine vectors. At WSU she studied Biology and contributed to work at an ecology lab at WSU which investigates amphibian diseases. Biology was always her favorite subject, and the combination of animals and science convinced her to pivot her focus from healthcare to research. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking and is an avid pickleball player and foodie.

We highly recommend using the WSU Center for Civic Engagement for quality help at public events.



*Doesn't this just get you ready for winter? A Red-winged Blackbird on a frosty morning.*

*Photo by Ken Pitts, Fotofest 2023*



## Why Birders Are Voting “No” on I-2117

This November, Washington voters will decide on Initiative 2117, which, if passed, would repeal the Climate Commitment Act (CCA).

Vancouver Audubon has joined a coalition of over 500 organizations coming together to defend climate progress and ask Washingtonians to vote “No” on I-2117.

Weather conditions caused by climate change disrupt bird migration patterns, threaten nesting and wintering grounds, and push species toward extinction. Their future is directly linked to a stable climate. The CCA offers a chance to do our part to reverse this trend and bend the bird curve towards survival and resilience.

The CCA is a foundational climate law that provides billions of dollars in resources for conservation and climate action. It caps and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from Washington’s largest emitting sources and industries, allowing businesses to find the most efficient path to lower carbon emissions. This powerful program works alongside other critical climate policies to help Washington achieve its commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 95% by 2050.

The CCA also centers environmental justice and equity, and supports new investments in climate-resiliency programs, clean transportation, and addressing health disparities across the state.

What’s at stake:

- One of the strongest emissions reduction programs in the US
- \$2 billion (and growing) in funding for clean energy, natural climate solutions, and environmental justice

Join Us in Voting “No” on I-2117 and protect climate progress.



## Wildlife Connectivity Crossings to Sustain Populations and Enhance Biodiversity

At the annual meeting of the Washington State Audubon Conservation Council (WaSACC) on October 4, 2024, the chapters adopted a resolution in support of wildlife connectivity crossings and advocacy to the Washington Legislature in the 2025 session in support of wildlife crossings bills.

Habitat corridors and wildlife-crossing infrastructure over or under major highways are needed to reestablish connectivity for wildlife, extend foraging areas, and maintain larger breeding populations with greater genetic diversity, particularly for large predators like cougars. Wildlife crossing also enhance landscape-scale biodiversity, such as between the Olympics and Cascades mountains.

Highways are serious barriers to wildlife adaptation to climate change and wildlife crossings also help protect indigenous food sources. Benefits to birds include decreased collisions when birds like ravens and turkey vultures are scavenging on roadkill.

Wildlife crossings also prevent injury and death to both wildlife and humans from collisions, and provide economic savings to drivers since the average cost of collision with a deer is just over \$14,000. Wildlife carcass removal by the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) suggests that a minimum of 5,000 collisions with deer and 200 collisions with elk happen each year. Simple arithmetic indicates that the cost of collisions with large animals is in the tens of millions of dollars each year. An average of two human fatalities also occur annually from wildlife collisions.

In our area, the WDOT is conducting a study using wildlife cameras to identify the best of several potential wildlife crossings of Interstate 5 between Olympia and Vancouver. A study report should be released this fall.

Legislation was proposed in the 2024 legislative session but it did not pass. WaSACC anticipates that the bills will be introduced again in 2025. The legislation would institutionalize collaborative connectivity work between *(continued)*

# Conservation News Continued

By Susan Saul

(continued from previous page) the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Washington Department of Transportation and their partners and would create separate funding accounts for each agency that will enable safe passage transportation projects in perpetuity. Watch for more information early in 2025.

## Spirit Lake Outflow Project Available for Public Comment

*Deadline to Comment is November 15, 2024*

Did you know that Mount St. Helens and Spirit Lake are in Vancouver Audubon's chapter territory? Yes, they are located in Skamania County which is part of the three-county area served by our chapter.

The U.S. Forest Service is requesting public comments on potential options for future Spirit Lake management under reliable scenarios that the reduce the risk of downstream flooding and mudflows from a failure of the Spirit Lake blockage that was created during the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens.

Shortly after the eruption, a tunnel was constructed from Spirit Lake to South Coldwater Creek to manage the water level in Spirit Lake. The tunnel has some level of risk of failure due to its location in an area of active geologic and seismic hazards.

The Forest Service has identified six potential engineering options for future long-term Spirit Lake management. These options may change based on public input and future analyses. The options range from severely impactful (constructing an open outlet channel or buried pipe through the debris blockage) to fairly benign (converting the existing tunnel into a pressure tunnel) to the current environment. The options can be viewed on the project website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=66482>.

Public comments are requested regarding what information, studies, or analyses concerning impacts of the options should be considered in a future environmental impact statement. If you have visited the area around Spirit Lake, including sightseeing from Windy Ridge or the Johnston Ridge Observatory, or hiked on trails around the Spirit Lake basin or birded or botanized in the area, tell the Forest Service what you valued about your experiences and how the various engineering options might impact your future enjoyment of the area.

Comments can be submitted electronically through the project website link above. Once on the website, under "Get Connected," click on the link for "Comment/Object on Project." The deadline for comments is November 15, 2024.

## Notes From Young Birders' Club

By Katie Warner and  
Jackson Wolfe

### News&Updates

Jackson and Katie recently had the opportunity to participate in a panel at the Audubon Council of Washington annual meeting to give their perspective on recruitment of young birders. Teresa Anderson wrote that "we had some remarkable guests like two young members from the Vancouver Audubon Young Birders Club, who are expanding their reach to the Vancouver School of the Blind and the local juvenile detention center. They inspired us in a panel session and in breakout groups to creatively expand our reach." Great job Katie and Jackson!

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

### Important Upcoming Events and Dates

Wednesday, November 20th—YBC Monthly Zoom Meeting, 6pm



*Jackson and Katie on the ACOW Panel to recruit young birders  
Photo by Susan Saul*

# Proposed 2024/2025 Budget

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Budget
<b>Revenue</b>			
Amazon Smile	43		
Bank interest	340	310	1,300
Memberships	1,848	2,200	2,400
Donations	3,835	1,700	2,300
Doris Troxel Trust	3,510	2,600	3,500
Backyard Bird Shop	200	200	200
Nat'l Audubon Society	1,786	1,785	1,786
Columbia CU Photo contest			1,400
Col Gorge Ref Stewards			1,000
Store	109		75
In memory of	485		
GiveMore24/Give Big	24	1,030	
Comm Foundation Drawdown	10,000	10,000	10,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$22,180	\$19,825	\$23,961
<b>Expenses</b>			
Supplies	298	1,350	500
Constant Cont. & Actg software	575	300	440
PO Box fee	210	225	225
Non-profit filing fee	20	30	20
Refreshments	30	50	50
Mtg. room rental	95	500	450
Audubon Washington	3,000	3,000	3,000
PDX Wildlife Care Center	1,000	1,000	1,000
Young Birders Club			500
Outreach - Migratory Bird event			500
Photo contest Steigerwald			1,700
Insurance	1,647	1,700	1,750
Community Journalism	10,000	5,000	10,000
Give More 24 fee		100	
Columbia Land Trust	200	200	200
WA Environmental Council			
Friends of Columbia Gorge	200	200	200
Nature Conservancy	200		
Columbia Springs	200	200	200
Postage	13	25	30
Grants		5,000	
Speaker travel		250	250
Volunteer travel	1479	400	300
Website annual fee	104	120	110
Zoom fee	163	175	180
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$19,434	\$19,825	\$21,605
<b>Net income (loss)</b>	\$2,746	\$0	\$2,356

This is Vancouver Audubon Society's proposed budget for the coming year, compared with this year and the previous year. We are required to share the annual budget with members. If you have questions, email:

[treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@vancouveraudubon.org).

Some new items this year include hosting a Youth Photo Contest with money from Columbia Credit Union and Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards, and increased spending for outreach events and the Young Birders Club.

We will ask for a vote to approve the budget at our December meeting.



Hyacinth Macaw in Brazil

Photo by Sherry Hagen, Fotofest 2023

# VAS Programs

## November 5, 2024 -- Join Us For Game Night!

November's monthly meeting will be a little different. The VAS will be hosting a game night! Join us from 6:30-8pm for social hour, with our first Bird Trivia Bingo starting at 7. We hope to see you there!

**December 3, 2024—Fotofest 2024.** December's monthly meeting will be our annual Fotofest. With so many great photographers in the VAS, we like to showcase their best works. This show will be member-only photographs from the current year, concentrating mostly on birds, but could be landscapes or other wildlife. I encourage members to submit up to 10 of your favorite pictures taken in 2024 (Jan. 1 to present) from anywhere you have been in the world (including your backyard). Please submit your photos to [drose@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:drose@vancouveraudubon.org) by November 30 to be included. We will collect the photos into a slideshow to be presented at this live meeting, and each photographer will present their pictures with a few words about the shot/story/location behind them. If you don't want to present your own photos, provide the information and we will gladly give the rundown. The number of photos displayed per person in the slideshow will depend on the total number submitted and the number of participants. Photos will be used in future newsletters.

**No Meeting in January. Have a great holiday season.**

### MEETING LOCATION:

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

Vancouver, WA

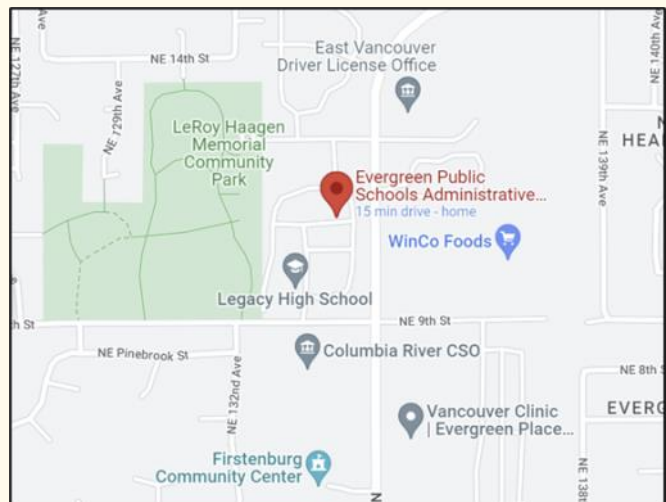
**6:30 pm – 7:00 pm** - Social time to share bird sightings, stories, and upcoming events

**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](mailto:meetings@vancouveraudubon.org). Have ideas for a speaker? 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).*



Sandhill Cranes

Photo by Steve Bredthauer,  
Fotofest 2022





# VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips

Please visit the [VAS website](#) for up-to-date field trip details and requirements. Interested in getting field trip announcements in your inbox or as a text? Send a message to [vas@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:vas@vancouveraudubon.org) to be added to those lists. Please specify if you prefer email, text through GroupMe, or both.

## Friday, November 1 First-of-Month Bird Walk Columbia River Waterfront

**Meeting time:** 8:00 am

**Leader:** Cindy McCormack

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

**Meeting Location:** [Parking lot west of Water Resources Center](#)

Let's check the Columbia River for loons, grebes, and other waterbirds! We will meet at the parking lot on the west of the Water Resources Education Center (located at 4600 SE Columbia Way, Vancouver, WA). We will visit the Water Resources Center property, Marine Park, and walk to Tidewater Cove Marina breakwater for an excellent view of the river. Dress for the weather!



Horned Grebe Photo: Tom Tinsley, Fotofest 2023

## Saturday, November 9—Bird Walk at Fernhill Wetlands

**Meeting time:** 8:00 am

**Leaders:** Ken Pitts, Beth Marlin Lichter

**Register:** Ken at [kenp@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:kenp@vancouveraudubon.org).

**Meeting Location:** [Fernhill Wetlands parking lot](#) (45°30'36"N 123°05'12"W)



Green Heron at Fernhill Wetlands in September 2022

Photo by Ken Pitts

Fernhill Wetlands is Forest Grove, Oregon's wastewater treatment facility that showcases what can be done if industry supplies abundant mitigation funds for habitat creation and restoration. This site has produced sightings of [246 species of birds](#). This walk is a level 1 A B walk with gravel pathways. A public restroom is available at the trailhead and will be open. There is ample parking in the lot next to the restroom. We plan on about three hours of observation time around the many ponds. If you would like to be included on text updates, be sure to give Ken your Smartphone number when you register by email at [kenp@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:kenp@vancouveraudubon.org). This will facilitate immediate updates for cancellations due to illness or stormy weather. Let Ken know if you are willing to car-pool when you send your registration email.



# *VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips*

## **Additional Field Trip Opportunities**

Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Carty Unit bird walk – Check the website and sign up at: [Naturalist-led Walks - Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge \(ridgefieldfriends.org\)](https://ridgefieldfriends.org)

## **A Summary of The Big Sit—October 13**

By Randy Hill

October 13 was the long-awaited day. The [Big Sit](#) is a semi-competitive event where you identify as many birds as you can in one day while sitting in a 17-foot diameter circle. It was my first Big Sit in more than 10 years, and far (but not that far) from my last one at the River S observation blind. The new location at Campbell Lake was less than two miles south at another blind, but in an area closed to access that required a Special Use Permit from Ridgefield NWR. The 17' diameter circle was placed at the crane viewing blind that was used a week before during Birdfest, so no improvements were needed. Additionally, that evening was the annual fall migration Sandhill Crane count, so the permit was easily justified since a crew would be there anyway. Bird diversity can be high because the lake is tidally influenced, with waterfowl, waders and shorebirds moving in and out during the day as water levels change.

Well, this year was different. The Columbia River was so low that there was no tidal water movement in and out, and the small pool of water was at the far south end of the lake; we saw no water level change in the channel close to the blind. You get what you get.

Our first crew had the 7-10 a.m. time slot, and we encountered 90% of the species during that period. We had a nice flyoff of 500 cranes, but the few shorebirds we saw were quite distant (as were most of the waterfowl and waders.) Instead, there were 200 pipits scattered across the exposed mudflats. Nonetheless, we wound up that period with nearly 60 species. The next two 3-hour segments were pretty representative of the mid-day lull, although soaring raptor activity picked up a little. During that period, I wound up checking another site further south as an alternative for the crane count; it was better for viewing cranes coming from the south, but difficult to access and count. I also encountered a few species we didn't detect from our count circle. The final 4-7 p.m. period didn't pick up much, but the goose and crane flocks were on the move. The cranes were still coming to roost at the south end when it got too dark to see, and our crane count ended with only 275.

Ebird link: [eBird Checklist - 13 Oct 2024 - Campbell Lake \(Restricted Access\) - 65 species \(+1 oth taxa\)](#)

I'm hoping this turns into an annual event, maybe as a project-specific fundraiser, with the expectation that we won't have another low water year.

## **A Summary of Birdfest 2024—October 5**

By Randy Hill

Our Vancouver Audubon team again led a "viewing party" for visitors to Ridgefield NWR during the annual Birdfest and Bluegrass celebration October 5. It gave participants an opportunity to see birds and other wildlife from a closed area of the refuge, with an open view of areas flooded during a period of extremely low water on the main River S tour route. About 40 participants stopped in to get close-up views of distant songbirds, raptors, waterfowl and waders. Half a dozen scopes with a variety of tripods gave attendees a chance to see "specks and blobs" that are typically ignored. There were several comments of "how did you find that?" From distant flying pelican and goose flocks to perched songbirds and raptors, there was plenty of discussion ranging from key features of bird shape, posture and habitat selection, optics resolution and field of view of individual scopes, and stability and "travelability" of different types of tripods.

During our 6-hours of viewing we did find 50 species including fly-by Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Merlin. The full list can be found at the following link:

[eBird Checklist - 5 Oct 2024 - Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit - 48 species \(+1 other taxa\)](#)

# *VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips*

## **Bird Walk Summary—Steigerwald NWR 9/28/2024**

*By Beth Marlin Lichter*

The turnout for this Vancouver Audubon sponsored walk was amazing and so was the walk. With Ken Pitts leading, me co-leading, and many participants helping to identify wildlife, we counted 59 species. That's a lot considering we only got as far as the seasonal gate and turned around. Here is Ken's [9/28/24 ebird checklist](#).



A happy group of birders enjoying a perfect morning at Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge



Two deer photobombed by an American Bittern  
Photo by Eric Peterson



A Peregrine Falcon greeted us at the parking lot  
Photo by Eric Peterson



Northern Harrier hunting in the meadows  
Photo by Jon Pugmire

We did not have to go very far for our first exciting observation as a Peregrine Falcon greeted us, sitting on top of a light pole to the west of the parking lot. The spotting of two Black-crowned Night Herons on the Mountain View Trail was also stupendous. Amazing how much you will see when 21 folks with binoculars are scouring the landscape!

Check the newsletter monthly for Ken's VAS guided bird walks...super fun and a great way to learn about the region's prolific wildlife. Cheers and hope to see you out there!



# 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](http://www.wabirder.com)

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

**Sept. 10**, a **COMMON NIGHTHAWK** (3) was observed perched on lamp post observed by Lin 'Caspian' Stern while driving I-5 N in slow traffic. These birds have become quite scarce in Clark County in the last fifty years.

**Sept. 15**, at Skamania Landing, 11 **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN** (4) were seen in one group slowly wandering east over the Columbia River. "Gas-less" Gilpin said that they had clear views of these large white birds with huge bills and dark wing markings, they are now annual in Skamania County.

**Sept. 15**, Jayden Forrest-Caldwell, Stella Walk and Andrea Clifford all reported spotting a **BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** (3) at the Steigerwald Lake NWR, where they had not been reported before the restoration of this wetland complex.

**Sept. 15**, Samuel Holman was birding the Klickitat County side of King Mountain when he spotted a group of **FOX SPARROWS** (1) that contained two of the four different subspecies. At least three (Slate-colored) (*Passerella iliaca* [schistacea Group]) birds calling and seen. They give a "Smack" call and have gray bodies with rich rufous-brown wings and tail around these birds he briefly saw and heard 2 (Thick-billed) (*Passerella iliaca* [megarhyncha Group]) Fox Sparrows that gave their distinct "Tink" call. This subspecies was unknown in Washington until the late Ken Knittle and I found them breeding on Monte Cristo mountain in Skamania County in 1998. The other two subspecies are the all-dark "Sooty" and the "Red" that nests in the forests east of the Rocky Mountains from the East Coast to Alaska. It has been proposed that they all become separate species as they do not interbreed, which would add three more birds to our state bird list.

**Sept. 16**, Les Carlson was birding the high elevation area in Skamania County on the northwest side of Mt. Adams when he found a migrant **RED-NECKED GREBE** (3) at Olallie Lake, and a **CLARK'S NUTCRACKER** (2) at nearby Horse-shoe Lake.

**Sept. 16**, Kristen Jackson had a **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (4)

land on tree top next to her car in the Frenchman's Bar Regional Park parking lot.

**Sept. 16**, Chase Birdsmore spotted a late **TREE SWALLOW** (1) at the Ridgefield NWR--River 'S' Unit, in flock of 50 or so **BARN SWALLOWS**.



*Common Nighthawk*

*Richard Stebbins/Audubon Photography Awards*

**Sept. 17**, Les Carlson hiked the Thomas Lake Trail into the Indian Heaven Wilderness Area where he saw 5 **COMMON GOLDENEYE** (1), these would have been migrant birds as the breeding species in Washington is the Barrow's Goldeneye.

**Sept. 17**, Cheryl Stewart found a **WHITE-THROATED SWIFT** (3) at Horseshoe Bend near Rorhbacher Ranch House in Klickitat County. She said that she has seen these small birds with long boomerang shaped wings, small head with longer wings and tails than Vaux's Swifts there before. She also reported seeing 2 **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS** (4) there too, these tiny, long tailed gray birds are now a nesting species in the area around Wahkiakus.

**Sept. 18**, Mike Clarke located 2 **SPRUCE GROUSE** (4) at Horseshoe Lake at the base of Mt. Adams in Skamania County.

**Sept. 19**, Marc Harvey saw a **OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (2) on Alder Springs Rd, Klickitat County. These medium sized flycatchers are dark gray with a well-defined white stenum and gray vest, no head crest and white on rump.

*(Continued on page 12)*



**Sept. 21**, Fred Howay spotted a **SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (3) at the NW Lower River Road pool, in the Vancouver Lake lowlands. It was among a group of **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** (1) very actively picking through the mud. He separated it from a Long-billed it by its smaller head-ed/shorter necked look in general, flatter backed. Bill with a slight droop and blunter appearing tip, arched supercilium and a slight but noticeable primary projection past the tail than the Long-billed Dowitchers.

**Sept. 21**, Nick Mrvelj was birding from the Oregon side of the Columbia River, when he saw a **SABINE'S GULL** (5) that was clearly in Washington near Marine Park while he was viewing it. These small Arctic nesting gulls are a scarce but expected migrant that pushes through the area each year along the Columbia River with only a few seen locally each year.

**Sept. 22**, Stefan Schlick also spotted 2 **SABINE'S GULLS** (5) while birding from the Oregon side of the river in Sherman County, these two juveniles were seen flying into Klickitat County airspace near Goldendale.

**Sept. 21**, An **OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (2) had been at Michael Mahaffa in Lyle, Klickitat County, for 3 weeks. Beside the typical behavior of feeding as flycatchers do, this bird respond to a "Quick, 3 beers" taped recording twice.

**Sept. 21**, Tim Whitehouse saw a late juvenile **LARK SPARROW** on Oak Flat Rd in Klickitat County.

**Sept. 22**, Mike Clarke found 2 **SABINE'S GULL** from the Vancouver-Columbia River Boardwalk. Both birds were spotted in the same scope field circling in the river on the Oregon side out from the Hayden Bay Marina. Both small gulls, apparent in their contrasting size compared to several nearby Western/Glaucous-winged Gulls. One bird was a summer adult with a complete black hood and upper wings in flight showed a white wedge on the upper middle wing with extensive black outer wing. The second bird was a presumed juvenile with a brownish nape extending a bit on the back of the otherwise white head, a brownish gray mantle and inner wing, and extensive black outer wing creating a whitish triangle in the mid-wing. Less contrasting wedge compared to the adult gull.

**Sept. 22**, Jim Danzenbaker went looking for the reported **SABINE'S GULLS** and found 2 juveniles feeding in mid-river offshore from Wintler Park.

**Sept. 22**, Randy Hill was able to locate one of the **SABINE'S GULLS** from the Vancouver-Columbia River Board-

walk.

**Sept. 22**, while birding Shillapoo Lake, Fred Howay found a juvenile **WHITE-FACED IBIS** (4) he notified other birders immediately and Jim Danzenbaker, Mike Clarke, Randy Hill and Les Carlson were all able to see thus rare visitor to our area. This bird remained in the area through the reporting period and was seen by many observers.

**Sept. 24**, Mark Lundgren photographed a male and female **SPRUCE GROUSE** (4) on Horseshoe Lake Road where he located a **AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** (3) and female **WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER** (4), the females of this species looks so different than the males that they once were thought to be different species.



*Sabine's Gulls in Yukon Delta, Alaska Photo by Tim Bowman*

**Sept. 24**, Samuel Holman reported a continuing **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** (4) flycatching from snags in clearcut along the Wind River Road near Carson.

**Sept. 24**, Jim Danzenbaker David Irons, Les Carlson, Mike Clarke, Robert Flores and Gregory Johnson were at the Mountain View 4x4 Trailhead (Migration Corner) on Larch Mountain and had an adult male **HERMIT WARBLER** (2) seen well as it crossed the migration line.

**Sept. 28**, Scott Carpenter also visited the high elevation forest around Horseshoe Lake in Skamania County, finding a **SPRUCE GROUSE** (4) and a **PINE GROSBEAK** (4) at nearby Muddy Meadows.

**Sept. 28**, John Bishop saw an **ARCTIC TERN** (5) perched on a log in the sand in the Columbia River at White Salmon, there are only a couple of prior records from Skamania County.

(Continued on page 13)



*American Three-toed Woodpecker Photo by Gene Putney/  
Audubon Photography Awards*

**Sept. 28,** A large group of birders including Jim Danzenbaker, Shawneen Finnegan, Cindy McCormack, Randy Hill, Nagi Aboulenein, Taghrid Elmeligui, Les Carlson, Karen Pickering, Thomas Tinsley, Mike Clarke, Cassidy Colem, and Gregory Johnson were at the Mountain View 4x4 Trailhead (Migration Corner), and had 4 **CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS** (5) a calling flyover **HORNED LARK** (4), 2 calling **CASSIN'S FINCH** (4) and a late **HERMIT WARBLER** (2).

**Sept. 29,** A late migrant female **WESTERN TANAGER** (1) was in John Davis's Stevenson yard.

**Sept. 29,** while birding the Burnt Bridge Creek-Steward Glen Trail, Ken Pitts and Chris Brewer had an **ACORN WOODPECKER** (5) fly over them.

**Sept. 30,** on another visit to Mountain View 4x4 Trailhead (Migration Corner), Jim Danzenbaker, Cindy McCormack David Irons had a **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (4) fly over them.

**Sept. 30,** while hiking the Dry Creek Trail #194 in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Skamania County, Susan Saul, Paul Slichter and Susan Seyer heard the distinct call of a very late **CASSIN'S VIREO** (2).

**Oct. 1,** an adult **PURPLE MARTIN** (2) flew over Randy Hill, April Brown, Susan Saul and Cindy McCormack along the dike trail at the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

**Oct. 1,** Jim Danzenbaker heard a **HORNED LARK** (4) and saw a **PURPLE MARTIN** (2) at the Steigerwald Lake NWR.

**Oct. 2,** in the Vancouver Lake lowlands, Cindy McCormack heard the "rattle" call of a **LAPLAND LONGSPUR** (5) coming from a mixed flock of **WESTERN MEADOWLARKS** (1), **AMERICAN PIPITS** (1) and **SAVANNAH SPARROWS** (1) after

they were flushed by a **NORTHERN HARRIER** (1).

**Oct. 3,** Jim Danzenbaker and David Irons watched an **AMERICAN GOSHAWK** (3) for 4 minutes flying over with no flapping or deviation from a straight line while they were on Lower Larch Mountain.

**Oct. 6.** A **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** (4) was at our feeding area in the evening but not seen again after that.

**Oct. 8,** a **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (3) was found at the Vancouver Lake Flushing Channel by Mike Clarke.

**Oct 10,** John Davis made the trip up to Horseshoe Lake in Skamania County and saw 2 **AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS** posturing and tapping on a tree there.

**Oct. 14,** we had a late female **WESTERN TANAGER** (1) feeding on hawthorn berries with a large flock of **AMERICAN ROBINS** at our home east of Washougal.

Please continue to send me your sightings or enter them into eBird for use in this column and the year list project of compiling all of the species seen in each county by anyone this year. Since the last newsletter was published in September 3 bird species have been added to the Clark County list for the 2024 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project raising it to 226 for the year and in Skamania County 4 birds were added to that list bringing it to 194. These lists of all of the birds reported in each county are updated every two months and can be seen at [Wash-ington Birder \(wabirder.com\)](http://Wash-ington Birder (wabirder.com)).

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November 2024 Events Calendar						
					1 Bird Walk— Water Resources Center	2
3	4	5 Program Mtg Game Night!	6	7	8	9 Bird Walk— Fernhill Wetlands
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 YBC Zoom Meeting	21	22	23
24	25	26 VAS Board Meeting	27	28		



Wild Turkey

Enjoy Thanksgiving!

October Greenfield/Audubon Photography Awards

[backyardbirdshop.com](http://backyardbirdshop.com)  
  
 8101 NE Parkway  
 Vancouver, WA