

Columbia Flyway

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



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vancouveraudubon.org

VAS 50th Anniversary Series

The Beginning

By Wilson Cady

As one of the few remaining founding members of Vancouver Audubon I was asked to write something about the history of our chapter for our 50th anniversary in 2025. Wanting to learn how to identify birds, my wife, Susan and I joined the National Audubon Society in 1972 and had been assigned to the nearest chapter, Portland Audubon as until the early 1970's the only Washington chapters were in Seattle, Olympia and Spokane. Two remarkable members of the Seattle Audubon Society, Hazel Wolf and Helen Engel set out to change that and went around the state organizing most of the twenty-five chapters that we now have in Washington. In 1975, they worked to establish the chapters in Longview and Vancouver. Susan and I saw a notice in the *Columbian* of the Vancouver organizational meeting facilitated by Hazel Wolf that Susan attended to find out what was required to form a chapter. Besides the paperwork, we needed to sign up 35 new members and select chapter officers which they did that night, and that Don Cannard would serve as President, and she would be the Vice President.

Don was an excellent choice for that position as he had great organizational skills and a deep love for the outdoors as a mountain climber, backpacker and skier. Don had been the principal at the Peter S. Ogden elementary school in Vancouver when it was destroyed by a tornado in 1972. Don planned and worked on many of the walking trails in Vancouver including the Burnt Bridge Creek Trail and the Ellen Davis Trail, named after one of our first chapter members. Silver Star Mountain was one of Don and his hiking partner Ed Robertson's, another chapter member, favorite spots and they planned and built many of the trails up there including "Ed's Trail". There is also "Don's Cutoff Trail" at Beacon Rock State Park named after Don. They started the Chinook Trail Association to promote their concept of being able to hike a

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Christmas Bird Count

125 years of citizen science!

By Susan Setterberg

The 2024-25 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) for the Sauvie Island (ORSI) circle will be held Sunday, December 15, 2024. Our backup date is Sunday, December 29, 2024. This is the 125th year for this count! The circle encompasses Vancouver Lake Bottoms, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and north to the Lewis River. It also passes around just east of I-5 from Ridgefield to about Salmon Creek. The Washington side of the circle is bounded on the west by the Columbia River so there is plenty of Washington territory to cover. If you want to do your count on the Oregon side of the river, the circle covers most of Sauvie Island and some areas in Scapoose.

Everyone is welcome, beginner to expert. Just bring along a serviceable pair of binoculars. Everyone who participates is assigned a territory to cover. Some require extensive walking, some are mostly driving. We try to accommodate all needs. If you live within the circle and have a feeder, we like to include feeder watch observations in our count also. Although it is a 24 hour count, how much time you spend counting birds is entirely up to you. You can join a team if you would like.

For more information about the CBC here is the link to National Audubon's webpage: <https://www.audubon.org/community-science/christmas-bird-count>. You can find maps of the circle or other circles in the area that you might want to consider joining. Contact information is listed for each circle.

If you have questions or want to sign up for our circle just e-mail Susan Setterberg at smsetterberg@yahoo.com. Assignments and details of count areas and procedures will be sent out around the first week of December. Some of our teams fill up fast so if you want to participate, it is best to sign up early.

Environmental Reporter funding at The Columbian – an update

Back in 2022, the Vancouver Audubon Board of Directors made a forward-looking decision to support the hiring of a reporter specific to environmental issues at The Columbian newspaper. This was during a period of local newspapers disappearing, unable to compete with competition from “free internet,” gobbled up by big money and shuttered, and other factors. This is a portion of the email that I sent to co-owner Will Campbell after Susan Saul and I had met with him to consider options:

‘As a follow-up to our brief conversation yesterday, our Vancouver Audubon board decision was to move the hiring forward the first year with a \$10,000 contribution this month from our Community Foundation fund, and continue with \$5,000 each of the next four years for a total of \$30K. This uses our 2022 allocation from the Community Foundation and buys time to get pieces in place for following years, hoping to leverage matching contributions during GiveMore24 and/or other events. We want to see this happen.’

Are you up for the challenge?

The Vancouver Audubon Society is a proud supporter of The Columbian's Community Funded Journalism program. On Giving Tuesday, they will match every gift donated up to \$5,000.

Vancouver Audubon

Will you join the Vancouver Audubon Society in their commitment to ensuring SW Washington has access to professional journalism covering the local perspectives on the environment, housing and homelessness, transportation, non-profits and healthcare?

COMMUNITY FUNDED JOURNALISM

Give Today by scanning the QR Code or visit givebutter.com/Columbian

The Columbian

In partnership with **Local Media Foundation**

Thank you for supporting local journalism.

As it turns out, the match and fundraising for the position was a success. Lauren Ellenbecker was hired, Susan and I met with her a few times and had several conversations that resulted in follow-up investigation and published stories. Lauren eventually moved on, and Shari Phiel has now taken over the position with excellent reporting.

Our event also has changed to Giving Tuesday. It falls on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving which will be December 3. I'm optimistic we will have success again after last year our \$5,000 challenge match saw an additional \$8K+ after posting the matching announcement.



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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.

Tuesday, December 3, 2024—Fotofest 2024

Our next Chapter program will be our annual sharing of favorite member bird photos of the year! All members are encouraged to send up to 10 of their favorite bird photos taken this year to be a part of the program. Send your photos in jpg format to drose@vancouveraudubon.org by **November 30th** along with a brief description of the species and when and where the picture was taken. You will have the opportunity to present the photos at the meeting.

Let's have a holiday cookie party! If you can, bring your favorite holiday cookies (or other treat!) to share at the December meeting's social time!



No program in January. Have a wonderful and safe holiday season!

MEETING LOCATION:

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

Vancouver, WA

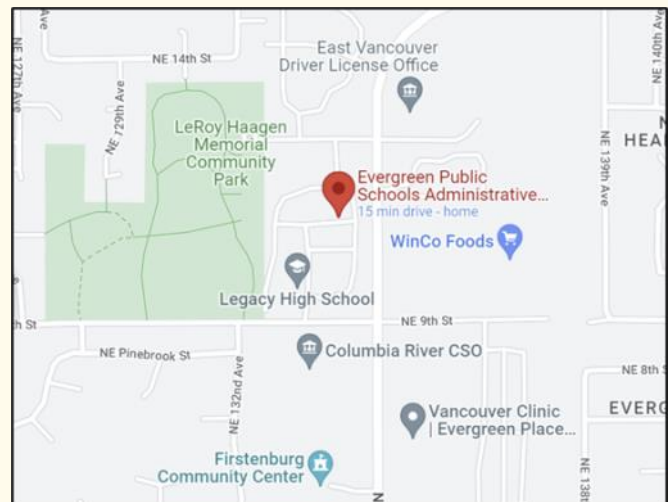
6:30 pm – 7:00 pm - Social time to share bird sightings, stories, and upcoming events

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. 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).



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 \(ridgefieldfriends.org\)](http://Naturalist-led Walks - Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (ridgefieldfriends.org))

VAS Bird Walks & Field Trips

Randy Hill
Re_hill@q.com

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 to be added to those lists. Please specify if you prefer email, text through GroupMe, or both.

Sunday, December 1

First-of-Month Bird Walk—Columbia River Waterfront

Meeting time: 8:00 am

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: Marine Park, north parking lot along SE Columbia Way (the parking lot closest to the playground).

We are going to repeat this walk since the Columbia finally seems to have some of the water birds we should have been seeing in November! We will check the river for loons, grebes, goldeneye, scoters, and other waterbirds. We will plan on walking to Tidewater Cove, then back through Marine Park towards the boat launch. **This walk will be weather-dependent!** Please contact me if you plan to join the walk and watch your email or check the website for a possible secondary location option if the waterfront winds or other extreme weather occurs on that day. We will meet at the parking lot on the north side of the park, near the playground equipment. Dress for the weather!



Horned Grebe Photo: Tom Tinsley, Fotofest 2023

Wednesday, January 1

First-of-Month and First-of-Year Bird Walk—Frenchmans' Bar

Meeting time: 8:00 am

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: Frenchmans' Bar Regional Park

It's tradition! Let's start the new year with the Sandhill Cranes! We will enjoy these magnificent birds as they fly in from their overnight roost into their very own fields to fuel up. We can learn about the cranes and the land put aside for their use before we check the river and walk the dike trail and the north trail. We will be looking for the assortment of wintering birds in the habitats available in this park. Dress for the weather!



Sandhill Cranes, Photo by Steve Bredthauer, Fotofest 2022

This walk will be weather-dependent! Please contact me if you plan to join the walk and watch your email or check the website if extreme weather is expected on that day. Meet at the south parking lot, near the picnic shelter.

(Frenchmans' Bar Regional Park does require a parking fee or county park parking pass).

200-mile loop from the west end of the Gorge, crossing the river at the Maryhill-Biggs Bridge and coming back down a trail on the other side of the river that has evolved into the “Gorge Towns to Trails” initiative being developed by the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge.



In September 1975 we held the first Vancouver Audubon public meeting where I was surprised to find that there weren't any birders in our early membership but that we had a strong group of conservationists. This group of outdoor enthusiasts with their varied interests shaped our early chapter as the strong and active conservation organization it has been for the last fifty years. It was at that first public meeting where we took on our chapter's first conservation project, the ten-year long effort to protect Steigerwald Lake which had been zoned heavy industrial and was slated to be drained and developed as the Port of Camas-Washougal Industrial Park.

Another long-term issue we have been working on since 1975 has been protecting the Vancouver Lake lowlands which at that time were being developed as an industrial park by the Port of Vancouver with a coal loading terminal proposed to be built on the Columbia River. We worked with many other groups to ensure that part of the lowlands was set aside for wildlife and got these wetlands designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area to protect the large variety and numbers of birds that use the area including several threatened or endangered species. Once again there is a new proposal to develop this unique area that we need to monitor and address.

In 1978 the Washington State Parks proposed to develop an air strip, golf course and a hotel on their property on Leadbetter Point at the tip of the Long Beach peninsula. Vancouver Audubon and Willapa Hills Audubon met for a weekend conference at the Shelburne Inn in Seaview with the State Parks planner to hear the conservationist's perspective. As a result of the conference, State Parks rescinded its development plans and made Leadbetter Point Washington's first natural area state park. Locally, State Parks had proposed building a bridge to Reed Island, offshore of Washougal, and to clear the trees to build an air strip, campground, marina and ballfields on that State Park property that we were also able to block to protect the

heron colony and Bald Eagle nests we had documented there.

In the mid 1980's when Silver Star Mountain was being damaged by careless off-road vehicles driving through the fields of wildflowers, Don involved our chapter into the Silver Star Study Group, a coalition with the Native Plant Society, the Mazamas and the American Alpine Club and we got it designated as a roadless area. Here is a link to the booklet on Silver Star Mountain we published to support that process. [silverstarmountainnicholasadodge.pdf](https://www.silverstarmountainnicholasadodge.pdf)

Our campaign to protect Steigerwald Lake was one of the threats that led to the formation of the Friends of the Columbia River Gorge and the passage of the Scenic Area Act. Our chapter was one of the Friends of the Gorge's earliest supporters and their first President was Dave Cannard, Don's brother and my wife was on their board of directors. During this same period, I represented Vancouver Audubon as Vice-president of Friends of Indian Heaven in the successful quest to create the Trapper Creek and Indian Heaven Wilderness Areas in Skamania County.

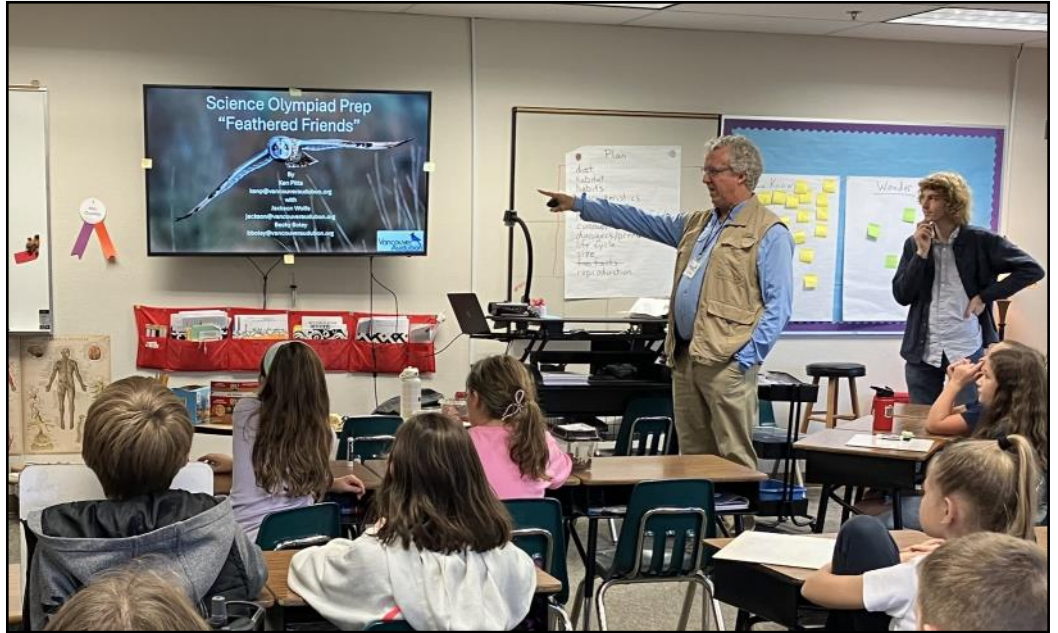
VAS has been active on many other major regional issues such as the Growth Management Act, zoning and now with promoting bird friendly building codes to reduce bird window strikes and migration problems created by unshielded lighting. We have always had capable and dedicated people leading our conservation committee, but our real strength comes from our general membership and their willingness to speak up on these issues as well as represent VAS and the conservation community on the smaller projects occurring in their neighborhoods that don't get media coverage.

While we had a small group with varied interests, they were willing to lead field trips and share their knowledge with others. We had a whitewater raft trip down the Owyhee River as our first out of southwest Washington trip, spent a weekend in the Caretaker's House at the Heceta Head Lighthouse in Oregon, had a star-watching party at the Goldendale Observatory, visited Sage Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse breeding leks in eastern Washington, explored the amazing sand dunes north of the Tri-cities in what is now the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area and had chapter-led birding trips to the Malheur NWR in Oregon. But the real joy of being a chapter member has always been meeting and learning from all of the wonderful and interesting outdoor enthusiasts that have participated in VAS over the years. Oh, and somehow, I did learn how to identify birds.

Community Engagement

VAS Volunteers Assist in Science Olympiad Preparation

Ken Pitts and Jackson Wolfe were invited to help the Cape Horn-Skye Elementary Science Olympiad team prepare for their November competition which had four events, one of which was “Feathered Friends.” This Science Olympiad team is a group of 5th graders (age 9-11) and one of the goals of an elementary level of Science Olympiads is to get students interested in STEM fields. For the Feathered Friends event, students were training to identify local birds using a variety of characteristics (habitat, nesting location/type, recorded bird calls, egg color, etc.).



Ken and Jackson were perfectly fit for this invitation! Ken was a science teacher for 33 years, a youth engagement specialist for Oregon Metro for 7 years, and a Science Olympiad coach for about a decade. Jackson works at Heritage High School and volunteers with the school districts regarding wildlife and ecology lessons; in addition to co-leading the VAS Young Birders Program.

The competition occurred Saturday, November 9 at Clarke College with a total of 14 teams representing eight different Washington school districts. Cape Horn–Skye Elementary’s Science Olympiad Team is coached by Darcy Hickey and Hana Gustely. Darcy sent an update to Ken and Jackson the week after the competition occurred:



“I know 100% that the kids wouldn’t have done as well if it weren’t for you!... The kids loved the Feathered Friends event and our school’s chant as we were walking to the event was ‘Cheese-burger! Cheese-burger!’ It was quite cute (even if the people walking in front of us didn’t think so)! The very first bird call was ‘Chicka-dee-dee-dee’ so the kids were thrilled.”

Their team placed in the top half of the teams present, and Darcy commented in her update “we were only one point from the sixth place team.” Congratulations to the Cape Horn-Skye Science Olympiad students! It is exciting to see these young scientists beginning their journeys!

by Ken Pitts

Draft Northwest Forest Plan Amendment Available for Public Comment

The U.S. Forest Service is seeking public input on a proposed amendment to the land management plans guiding 24.5 million acres of federally managed forest lands within the Northwest Forest Plan area, which span Northern California, Oregon, and Washington. These national forests, including the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, are within the range of the federally-listed Northern Spotted Owl.

The Northwest Forest Plan was adopted in 1994 to address threats to threatened and endangered species while also contributing to social and economic sustainability in the region. After 30 years, the plan needs to be updated to accommodate changed ecological and social conditions.

The proposed amendment is intended to address changed conditions with a focus on five areas: (1) wildfire resilience, (2) climate change adaptation, (3) tribal inclusion, (4) sustainable communities, and (5) conservation of old growth ecosystems and related biodiversity. The Forest Service says it is committed to preserving the elements of the current plan that are working well while incorporating the latest science to help the national forests adapt to social, economic, cultural and ecological changes.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement for this amendment was released on November 15, 2024, initiating a 120-day comment period that will end on March 17, 2025.

The draft documents and the web portal for comments are available at www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=64745

**Deadline to
comment is
March 17, 2025**

Port of Vancouver's Terminal 1 Project Demonstrates Bird-Safe Design

by Susan Saul

Vancouver has its first bird-safe commercial building.

At the request of Vancouver Audubon, the Port of Vancouver included bird-safe design criteria in the contract for its newest building at Terminal 1, the corporate center set to be the global headquarters for Vancouver software company ZoomInfo.

The building was unveiled in September 2024. Located on West Columbia Way, the corporate complex features 10- and nine-story buildings, a rooftop deck, and 10,000 square feet of green spaces and outdoor seating that will be open to the public.

The buildings incorporate bird-safe windows with a dot-grid pattern. Bird-safe lighting practices also are included in the design; the port requires lower lumens, warm tones and downward directional lighting that is dark sky compliant. The port also installed bird-safe lighting at Vancouver Landing, another outdoor space at Terminal 1.

Elsewhere at the port, efforts to reduce the potential for bird building strikes at select port buildings include installation of non-reflective coverings on the exterior of high-risk windows. The coverings allow staff working inside the building to see out but present a visible and physical barrier to prevent birds colliding with the windows.

The port has a flyer about its bird-safe program on its website: www.portvanusa.com/assets/bird-safe-flyer_2024_Final.pdf

You also can read about the port's commitment to bird-safe design in its Fall 2024 newsletter, *Community Report*, which is mailed to every address within the port's tax district, and is available on the port's website: www.portvanusa.com/resources/community-report-fall-2024/

While looking at the *Community Report*, also check out the story about the success of the port's conservation of Purple Martins at its wetland mitigation bank.

VAS is now Hosting the Steigerwald Youth Photo Contest

Vancouver Audubon is now the nonprofit organization hosting the Steigerwald Youth Photo Contest previously hosted by The Gorge Refuge Stewards. They are teaming with two corporate sponsors, HD Aluminum Prints and Columbia Credit Union, to incentivize youth of ages 8 to 18 years of age to visit Steigerwald Lake NWR and try their hand at photography. Up to five photos taken from June 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025 by eligible youth can be submitted online in four categories:

[SmartPhone/Mobile Device Camera](#)

[Plants, Animals, and Fungi](#)

[Landscape](#)

[People in Nature](#)

If you know an eligible youth who is interested in exploring nature photography, passing this information on to them could bring some very rewarding times at the wildlife refuge. Adults with some photography experience mentoring the next generation of photographers has been a way to inspire them to



"Happy Hoverfly"

Photo: Emmett Caine

2024 1st Place in the category of Plants, Animals, & Fungi



"Objects in the image are farther than they appear"

Photo: Shalaka Deshpande

2024 2nd Place in the category People in Nature

be out there, get to know nature and its tendencies, while potentially getting some great shots to submit.

VAS has continued to encourage inclusiveness regardless of financial resources, so there is a smartphone category that broadens participation with the world's most popular cameras. Smartphone photos can be submitted into any of the categories. We encourage you to download and print this Steigerwald Youth Photo Contest poster to share where you can. Scanning the QR code on the poster will take you to the VAS webpage giving details and rules of the contest.

Long story short, youth get out there and start taking photos at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge! It is a wonderful place to experience nature and photo opportunities abound. VAS hopes to see you out there and see your best shots! **Submission deadline is midnight of May 31, 2025.**

Any questions, suggestions, and/or concerns: email Ken Pitts at kenp@vancouveraudubon.org

Columbia Springs Nature Days

VAS attended Columbia Springs Nature Days, October 26! It was a drippy day, but we had a great time visiting with many families and talking with them about the birds around us while building bird houses, making conifer cone bird feeders to take home and creating book-marks or coloring avian masterpieces with stamps, crayons and stickers!



What are Nature Days? They are free events to get community members outside into nature.

Our goal is to inspire all people to see themselves as successful scientists, understand that they have ideas that matter, and appreciate that everyone belongs in nature. You can learn more about this at <https://www.columbiasprings.org/events/nature-days/>.

VAS plans to be at upcoming Nature Days.

Bird Walk Summary – Fernhill Wetlands 11/09/24

It was a dark and moody morning at Fernhill. With Ken Pitts as our guide, we submitted a list to eBird totaling 57 species: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S201958125>

Highlight of the walk was observing the commotion around a particular conifer, as Black-capped Chickadees sounded predator alarms along with Golden-crowned Kinglets. Meika Pope was the one who discovered the reason for concern, a Western Screech-Owl securely hidden amongst the branches. Ken set his spotting scope up and was finally able to focus on one of the owl's

eyes. Sometimes a glimpse of an eye is all you get!

We also spotted Bald Eagles, a Merlin, 4 Black-crowned Night Herons and a



Western Screech-Owl

not-so-hidden American Bittern working its way along a reedy pond edge. Waterfowl is plentiful this time of year, a testament to the success of this former sewage treatment plant's transition into a healthy vibrant wetlands environment.

Bring binoculars and observe the many species of ducks on all the ponds, including beautiful Northern Pintails, Cinnamon Teals and Hooded Mergansers. It's easy to become a fan of Fernhill Wetlands with so much activity as fall migrants populate this watery habitat. It's a local restoration project we can all be proud of.

[Fernhill Wetlands](#)

Photos and Text by Beth Marlin Lichter



Chickadee sounding the alarm



Green-winged Teal

Dec 14th– Jan. 5th is the Christmas Bird Count season!

Participate in the nation's longest running community science programs! The annual Christmas Bird Count is celebrating it's 125th year! Join one of our local Christmas Bird Counts—there are several ways to participate, all ages, all skill levels welcome. Bring a friend, get out and enjoy birds with others! Contact the circle leader for more information and to sign up.

Ridgefield/Sauvie Island

Sunday, December 15th

(Back-up date of Sunday, Dec 29)

Contact: Susan Setterberg
smsetterberg@yahoo.com

Portland

Saturday, January 4th

Contact: Brodie Cass Talbott
bcasstalbott@birdallianceoregon.org

Lyle

Saturday, December 21st

Contact: John Bishop
bishopjg@icloud.com

Wahkiakum

Monday, December 30th

Contact: Andrew Emlen
emlenandrew@gmail.com

Cowlitz/Columbia

Saturday, December 28th

Contact: Becky Kent
beckykt@comcast.net

Camas Prairie-Trout Lake

Saturday, December 14th

Contact: Jim White
jwhite.mars@gmail.com

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

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

Oct. 15, Robert Vanderkamp and Ken Vanderkamp confirmed that the 3 **EARED GREBES** (4) were still at Shillapoo Lake in the Vancouver Lake lowlands.

Oct. 22, while birding on NW Lower River Rd, Annie Burks spotted a late migrant **TURKEY VULTURE** (1) that spooked a flock of geese as it flew over.

Oct. 26, In Klickitat County, Samuel Holman found two female type **SURF SCOTERS** close to shore above John Day Dam. "Female type" means that they could also have been juveniles that haven't yet molted to an adult plumage.

Nov. 2, Dave Hayden spotted a lingering **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (1) at the Ridgefield NWR-River 'S'

Unit, picking it out from the larger **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (1) it was with and by noting the shorter straight bill, compared to the longer slightly upcurved bill of the Greater Yellowlegs. Last year there a Lesser Yellowlegs that was seen there the entire winter which is unusual for this species.

Nov. 3, 4 TURKEY VULTURES (1) were seen soaring together over the area near the softball fields along the Salmon Creek Greenway Trail by Cindy McCormack. This is a very late date for this species to still be here although there have been a few recent records of these scavengers wintering here in the Pacific Northwest.

Nov. 5, a **SURF SCOTER** (3), 1 **WHITE-WINGED SCOTER** (4) and 2 **PACIFIC LOONS** (4) were seen from the Vancouver-Columbia River Boardwalk by Ken Vanderkamp. All three of these species are more commonly found wintering on salt-water although I think that some of these birds might be ones that nested above the Arctic Circle and flew south

overland east of the Cascade Mountains to get here. Every winter there are reports of these species from the larger lakes and reservoirs in eastern Washington and on the high mountain lakes in the Cascades.

Nov. 5, a **PRAIRIE FALCON** (4) was spotted in a powered flight low over an open field in the Vancouver Lake lowlands by Cindy McCormack.

These large, slender and sleek looking falcons have black axillary patches extending into their underwing coverts that contrast with the cream/whitish underwings giving them these distinctive black "wing-pits" that make them easier to separate from the other falcons.

Nov. 6, Randy Hill found 2 female plumaged **RED-BREASTED MERGANSERS**

(3) in the Columbia River diving less than 50 yards from shore from Tomahawk Bar across the river from Hayden Island.

Nov. 6, another **LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (1) was spotted by Sam Cable and Miss Kiwi, this one was seen from the Ridgefield NWR-Carty Lake overlook off Division Street in Ridgefield. They mentioned that the bill looked to be only slightly longer than the width of the head and it was a smaller size compared to the noticeably larger **GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (1) that was feeding next to it.

Nov. 7, Cindy McCormack and Les Carlson were birding in Skamania County and located 3 **ACORN WOODPECKERS** (5) on Orchard Lane in Underwood where there are some large oak trees and a grove of Quaking Aspen trees. They also found a **MARSH WREN** (3) at the small pond next to the juvenile fish bypass facility on Strawberry Island, both of these birds were the first reports of those species in

(Continued on page 12)



Matthew O'Connor/Audubon Photography Awards

that county this year. The fairly common and widespread Marsh Wren is hard to find in Skamania County where there is very little suitable habitat for them in that mountainous county.

Nov. 8, Ken Pitts, Lynne Heidsiek and Karen York were at Catherine Creek in Klickitat County and found and photographed a male **RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER** (3). They described as having “a solid red throat, red crown, red nape, and a small red area behind the eyes. A unbroken white line went from the upper mandible down to the throat, separating the red throat patch from the continuous black line to the wing.

The red crown was separated from the red nape by a thin black line. A thin white line extended forward from the red nape to the eyes.” Apparently, this was the first eBird report of this species from Catherine Creek. Red-napped Sapsuckers are fairly common east of the Cascades and closely related to both the west of the Cascades Red-breasted Sapsucker and the east of the Rocky Mountains Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and all three do interbreed where their ranges overlap. They all were considered to be subspecies of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers until 1983 when they were split into three separate species. The Columbia River Gorge is one of the places where the ranges of the Red-napped and Red-breasted Sapsuckers overlap and where hybrids are possible.

Nov. 12, A **YELLOW-BILLED LOON** (5) was spotted from Marine Park by Les Carlson. This large loon is very rare here and although on the Clark County checklist, this is the first report that I have seen of one in the county during the fifty years that I have been compiling sightings for this column. This bird stuck around giving many observers an opportunity to see it and add it to their checklists.

Nov. 14, while birding the Stevenson Waterfront, Josh Barstow spotted a **RED-NECKED GREBE** (3). This is a spot where you can search the Columbia River for grebes, loons and waterfowl from the comfort of your vehicle or from the shelter of the waterfront café. You can also walk out on the Steamboat Dock for better views downstream.

Nov.17, a **SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** () was picked out by Les Carlson and Jim Danzenbaker along the Ridgefield NWR River S Auto Tour Route. This bird is hard to separate from the numerous **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** that commonly winter there but luckily they heard the bird call which is one of the best ways to identify these species.



Linda MacMillan/Audubon Photography Awards

Nov. 19, Dale Nelson found a **BLACK-NECKED STILT** while birding the Ridgefield River S Unit, this bird was also seen by multiple observers.

Most of the waterfowl have arrived in good numbers despite the low water conditions in many of the wetlands. With some heavy rains here and cooler temperatures to our north there will be more birds arriving and better viewing opportunities

as the birds start using the small ponds and flooded fields closer to roads as feeding areas. You can find some unusual species by carefully checking any large flocks of birds you find doing what I call playing “Where’s Waldo,” looking for a out of place spot of color like an orange bill or legs in a flock of Canada Geese or something like a different colored back on a bird in a raft of diving ducks. According to the Finch Network’s winter forecast there has been a good seed crop in most of the western conifers which means that most of the winter finches such as Purple Finch, crossbills, Redpoll and Pine Siskin will be less likely to come south this winter. Here is a link to that forecast, [WINTER FINCH FORECAST 2024-25 - FINCH RE-SEARCH NETWORK](#)

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 compiled on October 15th, 4 bird species have been added to the Clark County list for the 2024 Washington County Cumulative Year List Project raising it to 230 for the year and in Skamania County 2 birds were added to that list bringing it to 196. These lists of all of the birds reported in each county are updated every two months and can be seen at [Washington Birder \(wabirder.com\)](#)

By Wilson Cady

Proposed 2024/2025 Budget

	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2025 Budget
Revenue			
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
Total Revenue	\$22,180	\$19,825	\$23,961
Expenses			
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
Total Expenses	\$19,434	\$19,825	\$21,605
Net income (loss)	\$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.

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 2024—January 2025 Events Calendar						
1 Bird Walk— Marine Park	2	3 Program Mtg Fotofest	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 CBC Camas Prairie- Trout Lake
15 CBC Ridgefield/ Sauvie	16	17	18	19	20	21 CBC Lyle
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 CBC Cowlitz- Columbia
29	30 CBC Wahkiakum	31	Jan 1 Bird Walk— Frenchman's Bar	2	3	4 CBC Portland
5	6	7	8	9	10	11



Craig Wallace Photography

American Barn Owl

Photo by Craig Wallace

Notice the name change? For the most recent taxonomic updates, here is a great synopsis of the significant changes:

<https://www.aba.org/aos-supplement-2024/>

backyardbirdshop.com



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