

Columbia Flyway

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



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Vancouver Audubon Society Origin Stories

By Susan Saul

Wilson and Susan Cady are among the last surviving founding members of Vancouver Audubon Society (VAS). The others, like Don and Sue Cannard, have passed away.

I did not live in Vancouver until 1991. However, I lived in Longview from 1974-1990 and Willapa Hills Audubon was started at the same time as Vancouver Audubon. I read about the new Audubon chapter being formed in the newspaper, attended the first meeting and joined. I was not a founding member of WHAS but darn close.

The story is told in Hazel Wolf's biography, "Hazel Wolf: Fighting the Establishment" by Susan Starbuck, University of Washington, 2002, pps. 183-188. According to Hazel, Seattle Audubon hosted the 65th annual National Audubon Society convention in 1970 only a few weeks after the first Earth Day. After the convention, Seattle's membership jumped to 1,800



Wilson Cady at home in Washougal summer 2024
Photo by Beth Marlin Lichter

Note: In December 2024, Wilson Cady suffered a trauma to his head from a fall. He spent some time at PeaceHealth Southwest and is now recovering in a care facility in Camas, WA.

From everyone on the Board, we all wish him a full recovery and miss his keen insights to bird life in Southwest Washington.



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

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

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and they earned \$13,000 on post-convention field trips to Alaska and Canada. At that time, Seattle Audubon's territory was the entire state except for Spokane and Olympia, which already had Audubon chapters. Hazel decided it was time to start organizing.

Hazel started with Tacoma, sending out a mimeographed letter to the members that asked three questions: Would they like a chapter of their own? If so, would they like to become involved in forming one? And did they know anyone in the area who would like to be a member of an Audubon chapter? One of the responses she received was from Helen Engle. Hazel called Helen and asked if she would host a meeting at her house. Helen agreed. About 10 people showed up. After a bit of socializing to get acquainted, Hazel started "twisting arms." Tahoma Audubon was born, with Helen Engle as the first president.

Next, Hazel turned her sights on Olympia, where the chapter had never affiliated with National Audubon. When the chapter refused to affiliate, Hazel started a new chapter, Black Hills Audubon Society. Within a year, all the members of the unaffiliated group joined Black Hills. Next up was founding Grays Harbor Audubon to save the bird habitat at Bowerman Basin. Hazel continued working her way around the state, including Willapa Hills Audubon in Longview and Vancouver Audubon in 1975. Hazel said she helped start 21 Audubon chapters in the state. As fast as Seattle Audubon spun off new chapters, its membership still continued to grow. Hazel said, "it's not a matter of subtracting, it's multiplying." Hazel's mantra was "Organize, organize, organize." She even convinced a group of scientists visiting from the Soviet Union in 1989 to start the Leningrad Audubon Society.

In 1975, Hazel also started the Audubon Council of Washington's annual meeting. As she says, "We turned a bunch of bird watchers into an effective environmental lobby."

Once she got chapters started, Hazel also got them engaged in environmental issues. Washington State Parks owned undeveloped property on the tip of the Long Beach peninsula, Leadbetter Point. State Parks proposed to develop a golf course, hotel and air strip as part of the recreational features. Willapa Hills Audubon and Vancouver Audubon jointly held a weekend Leadbetter Point Conference at the Shelburne Inn in Seaview and invited the State Parks planner to attend and hear the birders' perspective. I got to know Don and Sue Cannard during planning for the Leadbetter Point Conference because we held joint planning meetings at the Oak Tree Restaurant in Woodland. That would have been around 1978. As a result of the conference, State Parks rescinded its development plans and made Leadbetter Point State Park the first natural area state park in the system. Hazel was correct: she turned a bunch of birders into an effective environmental lobby.

Have you renewed your membership? Are you interested in joining our group? Help protect birds and their habitat in southwest Washington by donating or volunteering to help birds locally. 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.

Columbia Springs Nature Days

By Becky Boley



Young nature lovers making peanut butter bird feeders

VAS hosted an activity table at Columbia Springs Nature Day December 14. Everyone enjoyed a mostly dry day. We visited with families, talked about the birds around us, made conifer cone bird feeders, and created bird-themed bookmarks with stamps and stickers to take home! Visitors learned about Vancouver Audubon and Jackson Wolfe met several fledgling birders we hope to see at future Young Birders' Club meetings.

What is Nature Day at Columbia Springs? They are free monthly events for community members to be outside and inspire all of us to see ourselves as successful scientists, understand that we all have ideas that matter, and appreciate that everyone belongs in nature.

You can learn more about Nature Days [here](#).

Ken and Beth Community Outreach Efforts

During the first week of December 2024, Ken Pitts and I took our birding in the PNW presentation to senior residents at both The Park and The Inn at University Village, Vancouver, WA.

Following that, we took them out birding for 2 consecutive days to Ridgefield's "River S Unit" Auto Route in their facility bus. Ken brought binoculars for all and the eBird checklist for the December 6th outing is here: [Ridgefield NWR eBird List](#). Forty-one species from a bus that, because of its height, allowed for us to see out over the meadows and marshes a great distance.

Highlights from these bird outings include the discovery of a Wilson's Snipe in the mud flats, so well-camouflaged in their edge-of-pond habitat, and Great Blue Herons in flight, always so powerful and graceful at the same time.

We walked out to the bird blind, a short path to a viewing spot over some beautiful wetland habitat.

The raptors were out hunting, as voles seem to be plentiful this year and we were able to watch a female Northern Harrier as she dove and scooped up prey.

The challenge of the day was being able to spot the Great Horned Owl, hardly discernible, sitting on a high limb of a tree in the woods, appearing like a dark blob against a grey sky, until one got locked onto it with binoculars.

We will be back in the spring with another presentation for University Village residents, including more birding at Ridgefield. Both staff and residents really enjoyed the depth of Ken's knowledge, as I do, both at the lectern and in the field.



Photo right: Wilson's Snipe.

Photo Left: Ken, Beth, and University Village residents at bird blind/ Ridgefield NWR River S Unit

Photo below: Great Blue Heron in flight



Groups Sue to Stop Dabbler Timber Sale *Northern Spotted Owl Habitat at Risk*

The Friends of Clark County (FOCC) and the Legacy Forest Defense Coalition (LFDC) filed suit in Clark County Superior Court on December 23, 2024, to stop the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from selling the timber on 140 acres in northeastern Clark County.

The Dabbler Timber Sale is located within the historic Yacolt Burn of 1903 on a ridge between Siouxon and Canyon creeks. The forest is naturally regenerated with structurally complex elements including large snags, and large downed logs, and mature trees and is located within the Siouxon Northern Spotted Owl Habitat Management Unit (SOMU) under the Department of Natural Resources' Columbia Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

The five parcels within the Dabbler timber sale were scheduled for auction in January 2025.

The suit alleges multiple violations of by the DNR of the state Forest Practices Act, and its HCP and Policy for Sustainable Forests and seeks to prevent the destruction of rare forest ecosystems vital to the region's biodiversity and climate resilience. The suit further alleges that DNR has failed to meet its obligation to designate at least 10-15 percent of state lands as structurally complex, older forests – a requirement under DNR's Policy for Sustainable Forests.

When the DNR announced in August 2024 that it was putting the Dabbler timber up for sale, Vancouver Audubon submitted a comment letter regarding the impacts to northern spotted owl habitat, particularly DNR's decision to manage for the minimum amount of habitat required by the HCP. We wrote: "We support a holistic approach to protecting all remaining old-growth and mature closed canopy forests in large forest blocks, restoring late-seral stage habitats and establishing habitat connectivity across all land ownerships. Decades of protecting the absolute minimum habitat, as DNR proposes to do in the Siouxon SOMU, while allowing aggressive logging on federal, state and private lands has placed the northern spotted owl in this precarious position. Conserving and restoring older multi-layered forests across the range of the northern spotted owl will help the species to be resilient to future impacts of natural disturbances and climate change."

Vancouver Audubon's letter continued, "We believe that improving and expanding spotted owl habitat and habitat connectivity is essential to the species' long-term recovery. Spotted owls are in a desperate situation and the threat of species extinction is real. They cannot afford any more habitat loss."

FOCC and LFDC also argue that the timber sale also undermines local efforts to combat climate change. Mature forests like those in the Dabbler area play a critical role in carbon sequestration, watershed health and wildlife habitat preservation.

"This sale is a direct assault on the ecological heritage of Clark County," said Ann Foster of FOCC. "The importance of legacy trees for carbon sequestration can't be understated – we NEED legacy trees to meet our new climate goals."

FOCC and LFDC urge the public to join their efforts to protect Clark County's last remaining legacy forests.



The structurally complex forest in the Dabbler Timber Sale provides habitat for Northern Spotted Owls in the Siouxon Spotted Owl Management Unit Photo by Susan Saul

Audubon's Advocacy Update and How to Get Involved

By Jean Avery

"You are what hope looks like to a bird"

You may remember hearing this quotation and wondering, "I love birdwatching, but how can I – just one person – help birds?" Luckily, there are ways to get involved in protecting birds and the habitats they need to survive. The National Audubon Society and its many chapters, including our Washington state chapter, have plans in place to involve as many individuals as possible. These plans are described below, as well as 2024 accomplishments. Specific ways to take action are included in the sidebar, "How to Take Action."

Audubon's Hemispheric "Flight Plan"

The National Audubon Society has launched a five-year strategic plan for 2023-2028 called "Flight Plan." This comprehensive plan aims to protect birds, their habitats, and their migratory pathways across the Western hemisphere – literally "from boreal Canada to the Carolinas to Chile and beyond", according to Audubon's website.

"Flight Plan" focuses on habitat conservation, climate, policy, and community building. The goal is to "bend the bird curve and reverse the decline of birds across the Americas," while also "protecting people and the planet."

National Audubon's 2024 achievements are described here:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/top-stories-around-audubon-2024>



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

Yellow-headed Blackbird Beth Marlin Lichter, Fotofest 2024

How to Take Action

A good place to start advocating for birds is to sign up for "Action Alerts." When you sign up, you'll be kept informed about issues that matter to birds. By joining other like-minded folks, you will multiply the impact of your message.

To join the National Audubon action network, fill out the form at: [audubon.org > Take Action](https://audubon.org/TakeAction)

To join the Washington Audubon Action Network, go here: [wa.audubon.org>Take Action](https://wa.audubon.org/TakeAction)

To find out other ways you can get involved at the State level, go to:

[wa.audubon.org > Ways You Can Help](https://wa.audubon.org/WaysYouCanHelp)

If you wish to contact decision-makers directly, here is a suggested approach:

1. State your main concern, including the context (e.g., XYZ proposed legislation, as outlined in document ABC).
2. Share your reasons for why this matters.
3. Provide examples that support your argument (e.g., a personal connection, research data, factual citations, etc.).
4. Restate your concern and include your specific "ask": what do you want this decision-maker to do? Then conclude with a thank-you.

Audubon Washington's 2024 Impact Report

Our state chapter has been participating in Audubon's "Flight Plan" to protect birds and the places they need in Washington. The 2024 report summarizes accomplishments in these areas:

- Conserving climate-resilient bird habitats
- Accelerating renewable energy / restoring forests, grasslands, and wetlands
- Advancing "Healthy Birds, Healthy Planet" policies
- Working together across the hemisphere

The full 2024 impact report can be downloaded here:

["Audubon Onward!"](#)

VAS Program

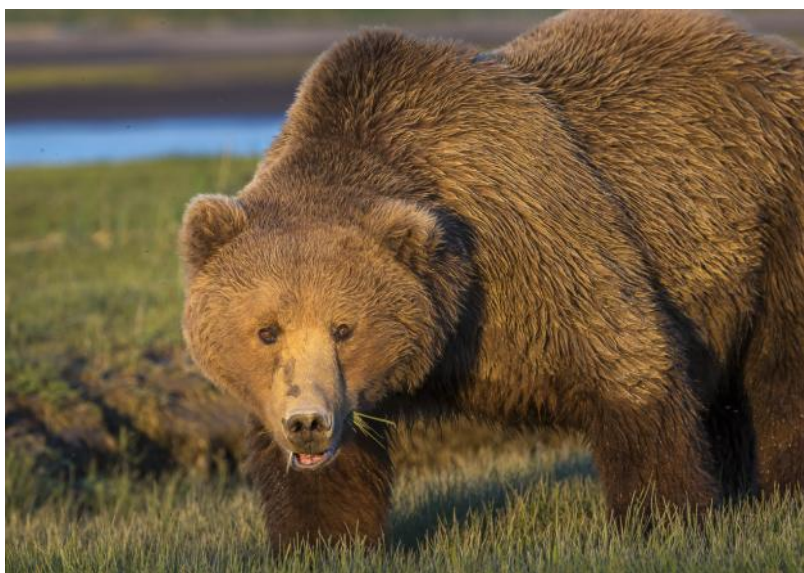
February 4, 2025

A Naturalist's View of the Katmai Peninsula with Thomas Bancroft, Ph. D.

Thomas Bancroft's earliest memories are of nature. After falling in love with birds, he earned a Ph.D. in Ornithology and has spent his career studying, protecting, and watching birds. After having spent years studying birds in the Florida Everglades, Washington D.C., and serving as Chief Scientist for National Audubon, Thomas is coming to Vancouver to share his perspective on the Katmai Peninsula in Alaska.

The Katmai lies west of Anchorage, across Cook Inlet. It is a rugged country with massive mountains, endless tundra plains, and numerous lakes, creeks, and rivers. The area is wild and still supports all the animals present when Europeans came to North America. The vastness, the bears, the salmon, and the glaciers will leave you in awe. Travel with me to this country and explore a few places in two national parks. We will look for bears, follow sockeye on their migration, and explore the geology of the mountains. I will share stories from my book, *Beyond the Wonder: An Ecologist's View of Wild Alaska*.

Although remote, this wild country faces many threats, and maintaining populations of birds, mammals, and fish isn't guaranteed. You will leave this talk with a better sense of the country, its treasures, and a new sense of wonder for the planet we call home.



Alaskan Brown Bear Male

Photo by Craig Wallace, Fotofest 2022

MEETING LOCATION:

[Evergreen Public Schools Administration](#)

[13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive](#)

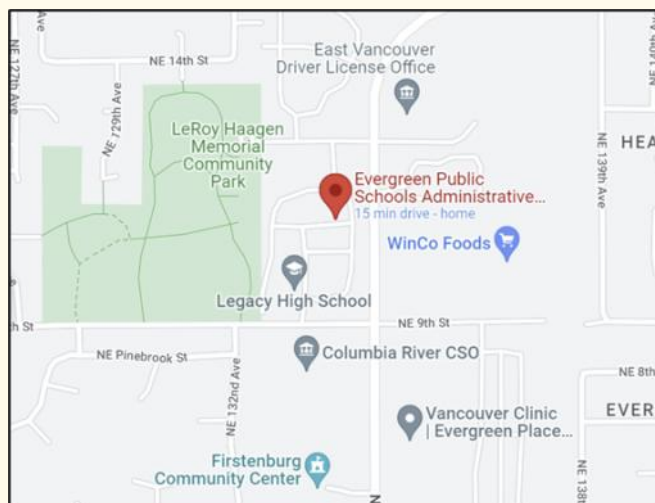
Vancouver, WA

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 Jackson@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).

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, February 2 (NOTE THE DATE!) First-of-Month Bird Walk Salmon Creek Greenway

Meeting time: 8:00 am

Leader: Cindy McCormack

Register: Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting Location: [Salmon Creek Greenway—softball fields parking](#)

Salmon Creek Greenway has some wonderful viewing opportunities, even in the midwinter doldrums! We can usually get very close views of a variety of waterfowl, a great time to study some of our duck species. We should have a great variety of birds from wet forest, open field, marsh, and pond habitats. Route will depend on trail conditions. We will likely have time to cover the east portion of the trail. If we are able to travel on the back trail, hiking boots are recommended. Dress for the weather. Restrooms are available at the parking lot.



Tundra Swans

Sandy Powell/Audubon Photography Awards

Field Trips—Saturday and Tuesday, February 8 and 18—Cowlitz County Gulls

Meeting time: 7:30 am

Leaders: Randy Hill

Register: Email Randy at randy.hill.98642@gmail.com, or text (360-975-2573)

Meeting Location: Junction Park and Ride in Ridgefield, corner of N. 65th Ave and N. 1st Circle.



Bonaparte's Gull

Peggy Scanlan/Audubon Photography Awards

From past experience, this is pretty much guesswork; but I do have a fallback plan. The winter smelt runs up the Columbia River and tributaries (among others the Cowlitz, Coweeman, Kalama, Lewis) attract their predators, and we can watch the action. Ten+ gull species have been seen over the last several years during peak runs, and other unusual species always turn up. Our dates are Saturday 2/8 and Tuesday 2/18. We will leave from the Ridgefield Park and Ride at 07:30. I hope to recruit co-leaders that are better at gull ID than I am. If the smelt and the gulls aren't cooperating our birding could include areas of Woodland, Kalama, Meeker Pond, Gerhart Garden Park, the Mint Farm, Willow Grove, and the Longview WTP.

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)

Bird Walk—Saturday, February 22, 2025

Canemah Bluffs Nature Park

Meeting time: 8:00 a.m.

Leaders: Ken Pitts, Beth Marlin Lichter, & Cheri Gavin

Register: Ken at kenp@vancouveraudubon.org

Meeting location: [Canemah Bluffs Nature Park parking lot](#) near the children's playground (45.344859, -122.625819).

Canemah Bluffs Nature Park is a very well managed Oregon Metro park with dramatic Willamette River views and a diverse habitat created by a mix of rare Oregon White Oaks and Pacific Madrones as well as Douglas Fir, maple, and alder. On a January 6th outing, our group was able to identify [40 species](#), including Townsend Warblers and a Hutton's Vireo. The walk is mostly level 1A-B, with a slow pace and constant stopping to observe. There is a small section of the trail that includes a bit of elevation gain, but it will be taken slowly.

Please register by emailing Ken Pitts and giving your name and smartphone number that would allow texting for cancellation or change of plans the morning of the walk. Let him know if you would wish to ride in a carpool and if you are willing to drive. You can also let Ken know if you have any questions.



Townsend's Warbler

Photo by Ken Pitts

Yacolt Burn State Forest - 1/29/2025 (subject to weather and road conditions)

Join Greg Johnson and Randy Hill upslope for winter birds at higher elevation. We will meet at the Hockinson Fire Station parking lot to leave at 07:15 up toward Larch Mountain, and continue north on the L-1000 Road toward Rock Creek and the Lewis River, until about noon. Finches, corvids, dipper, maybe grouse and owls. Discover Pass required for each vehicle.

Meeting time: Leave at 7:15 a.m. From Hockinson Fire Station parking lot

Register: fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org, or text 360-975-2573

SR14 to Skamania County – 2/24/2025 (2/25/2025 backup date)

Join Les Carlson and Randy Hill on a trip up the Columbia River Gorge. Meet at 06:45 to carpool at the Port of Camas/Washougal parking lot south of Westlie Ford. Several stops along the way to Beacon Rock SP, Bonneville Dam, Little White Salmon NFH and other viewpoints. Waterfowl and waterbirds, gulls, raptors, wintering and early spring migrants such as Say's Phoebe. Return in the afternoon, so bring a lunch. Discover Pass required for each vehicle.

Meeting time: 6:45 a.m. Port of Camas/Washougal parking lot south of Westlie Ford

Register: fieldtrips@vancouveraudubon.org, or text 360-975-2573

Telling the Tale of Steigerwald

Editor's note: In Wilson Cady's absence, I am reprinting an article done by Beth Marlin Lichter for the Gorge Refuge Stewards last fall about the Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge and Wilson's role in protecting this beautiful area.

Written by Beth Marlin Lichter

Work is nearing completion at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge. A recent announcement by the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership confirms the removal of the levee and that is huge news. We are witnessing the restoration of a supremely unique and significant habitat, involving multiple agencies, and for the first time since 1966, Gibbons Creek is now flowing freely into the Columbia River. Undoing a levee system is no small feat. By Spring of 2022 the refuge will reopen to the public with improved fish passage, restored wetlands habitat and new trails.

Curious to know how a project of this magnitude resounds in the community, I recently met with an individual whose lifelong quest has been to honor, protect and pass along values of stewardship in and around the Columbia Gorge, including Steigerwald Lake...Wilson Cady.

Descended from an Oregon Trail wagon master, Wilson was raised by a mother who was a "crack shot" and an excellent hunter. When his folks took the family camping,

they did not bring much, as they foraged for whatever they needed. At the age of eight Wilson acquired his first bird book from a neighbor with beautiful illustrations which inspired him, also that year, to paint his first picture of a Belted Kingfisher. He is still painting.

Wilson Cady's work life began in the Camas Paper Mill at age eighteen but his real work has always been about advocating for the preservation and appreciation of the local environment. He explains, "The Columbia River Gorge is more than just a passage through the Cascade Mountains. It's the only sea level migration route through the Cascades south of Canada and Steigerwald Lake is an important rest stop for migrating birds. It's a unique crossroads of East-West and North-South migration routes." In 1975 Cady helped form the Vancouver Audubon Society. At the very first meeting which he attended with his wife, Susan Cady, he was hoping to connect with other birders but there were none present.

Cady's words: "Plenty of wildflower people, hikers and conservation people but there were no birders. The speaker that night was the regional director of the Washington Game Department and he talked about what they were doing in the area. Then he asked what we intended to do about Steigerwald Lake. What? We had no idea what he was talking about. Did he mean Robert's Bean Farm? The regional director knew the value of habitat and the land around Steigerwald Lake was designated as Heavy Industrial. He wanted someone to start surveying the wildlife population there, to report on the importance of the area in question, so my wife and I volunteered since we lived close by. We did our census from the road, so as not to trespass on private property."

Cady and his wife's reports about the abundance of wildlife and the significance of the habitat, were instrumental in saving the area from development and in 1987 Steigerwald Lake officially became a National Wildlife Refuge.

Another triumph of local stewardship can also be attributed in great part to the efforts of Wilson and Susan Cady. "In the 80's there was talk about the only swimming beach in Washougal, Cottonwood Beach, being devel-



Wilson Cady in Washougal

Painting: Steigerwald Lake NWR Harvest Moon by Wilson Cady

Photo: Beth Marlin Lichter

(Continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

oped into a barge-turning basin. Everyone kept saying that somebody should do something about that. Well, we're all somebody. Let's do something." And they did. Cottonwood Beach is now Captain William Clark Park.



Steigerwald Family Photos

Deeply appreciated for his work preserving the local environment, lots of awards have come his way, including 2005's Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership's Outstanding Steward of the Columbia River, and in 2008 Wilson Cady was named Camas-Washougal Citizen of the Year. I asked him how he feels about the work that's nearly completed at Steigerwald.

"I love it, just love it. It's way more than I ever expected could happen. I was hoping to save a remnant of it, not restore it. The fish run. Giving Gibbons Creek back. It's one of the rare native fish runs left in the Columbia River system."

I asked Wilson what kind of advice he would give to young people who love to be outdoors and want to figure out how to start down a career path connected to the local environment. He replied, "Volunteer with any out-

door group, anything you're interested in...could be a native plant group, birding group, fishing group." He explained that when you do this, opportunities begin to arise. If you dive deep into something and apply yourself, good things happen.

According to Cady, "Anything worth doing is worth overdoing." Well, he certainly is an over-doer. His Linked-in profile proves that. Wilson Cady has so many protective environmental projects of great success under his belt. He's a writer, painter, mentor, field trip leader, and most importantly, a volunteer and steward of the land.

I had one final question for him. "Wilson, if we went up the hill a bit and looked down upon Steigerwald and all the work that's been done so far, and we see the creek flowing for the first time in fifty years, re-connected to the mighty Columbia, what would be the first words out of your mouth?"

No hesitation. "Wow! It's great to see that other people have recognized what a valuable and unique piece of habitat this is." He was quiet for a moment, contemplating the enormity of the project. "This is beyond my wildest hopes and dreams."

Let this be a lesson for us all. Dream big and overdo.



Reconnecting Gibbons Creek to the Columbia River/Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Photo: Jared Strawderman

Unusual Sightings

By Cindy McCormack

We are so sorry to report that Wilson is unable to continue his Afield column at this time. We do not have the compilation of reports he has been working on since the last newsletter but will include some recent unusual sightings for this edition. Please send your sightings to my email until further notice.

I will also be covering Wilson's County Yearlist Project compiler duties for now, so if you have county sightings to report for Clark or Skamania counties, please contact me with the information. Otherwise, county first-of-year birds dates and observer will be collected from eBird reports. Thanks!

Cindy at vas@vancouveraudubon.org

Some of the unusual sightings so far this year:

A **BRANDT'S CORMORANT** was first sighted from the Oregon side of the Columbia River on December 29th but has been viewed from BluRock Landing in the Vancouver Lowlands this month. This usually ocean-going cormorant is similar in size to our usual Double-crested Cormorant but has a blue (usually appears dark) gular pouch (chin and throat area) with a pale tan base rather than the large, obvious yellow gular of a Double-crested. Its head is also more rounded, rather than the more angular profile of a Double-crested.

On January 18, a male **BAIKAL TEAL** was spotted by Gerry Ellis in a large flock of dabbling ducks on Sauvie Island! As of the day this was written, this gorgeous duck has been a one-day wonder. It was hanging out mostly with Northern Pintails and Green-winged Teal. He does blend well, despite his flashy plumage—he could still be hidden amongst the duck flocks anywhere in the area, so check those flocks carefully!

A **PRAIRIE FALCON** was observed on December 30th in the Vancouver Lowlands. This is probably the same individual previously documented on November 5th and is also likely the same individual that has been hanging out this winter on Sauvie Island (it is a short flight for a large falcon!). Watch for a large, dull brown falcon with obvious black axillaries ("wingpits").

On January 9th, a single adult **ROSS'S GOOSE** was found in a flock of mostly

Cackling Geese. This small, white goose is similar in size to the small Cackling Geese, with a tiny, stubby, triangular pinkish-orange bill with a dusky triangular patch at the base of the bill. They lack the black "lipstick" of the Snow Geese.

A **LONG-TAILED DUCK** was seen on the Columbia River from BluRock Landing to Frenchman's Bar Park on January 3rd, hanging out with a large scaup flock.

A **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** was reported January 1 by Dalton Spencer.

The surprising wintering record of **VAUX'S SWIFTS** at Ridgefield's "S" Unit located during the Christmas Bird Count have been reported up until the most recent cold spell. I hope they make it through! They were often in the company of several Barn Swallows and a few Tree Swallows. Flying insects are hard to come by during these colder days—insect aerialists like swallows and swifts will usually stay close to large bodies of open, unfrozen water for better foraging opportunities.

A single winter **WILSON'S WARBLER** was foraging with sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers along some sun-warmed compost along the base of a blackberry tangle in the Vancouver Lowlands. Some of these tiny yellow warblers with a shiny black beret seem to be wintering in western Washington more frequently (but still rare). We usually don't expect to see them return from Mexico and Central America until mid-April.



Prairie Falcon, Marin Co, California

Marti Phillips/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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February 2025 Events Calendar						
		28	29 Field Trip — Larch Mountain area	30	31	1
2 Bird Walk— Salmon Creek Greenway	3	4 Program Mtg Katmai Peninsula, Thomas Bancroft	5	6	7	8 Field Trip — Cowlitz Co. Gulls
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Field Trip — Cowlitz Co. Gulls	19	20	21	22 Bird Walk— Canemah Bluffs Nature Park
23	24 Field Trip — Skamania County	25 VAS Board Meeting	26	27	28	



A Cooper's Hawk and a Say's Phoebe enjoying an evening together. Ignorance on the part of the Phoebe? Or was there something even more threatening to both of them that brought them together.

Submitted by Becky Boley, Fotofest 2024