

# COLUMBIA FLYWAY

Vancouver Audubon Society

October 2026

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

## Citizen Scientists Discover Emerald Ash Borer in Washington

*by Washington Recreation and Conservation Office*

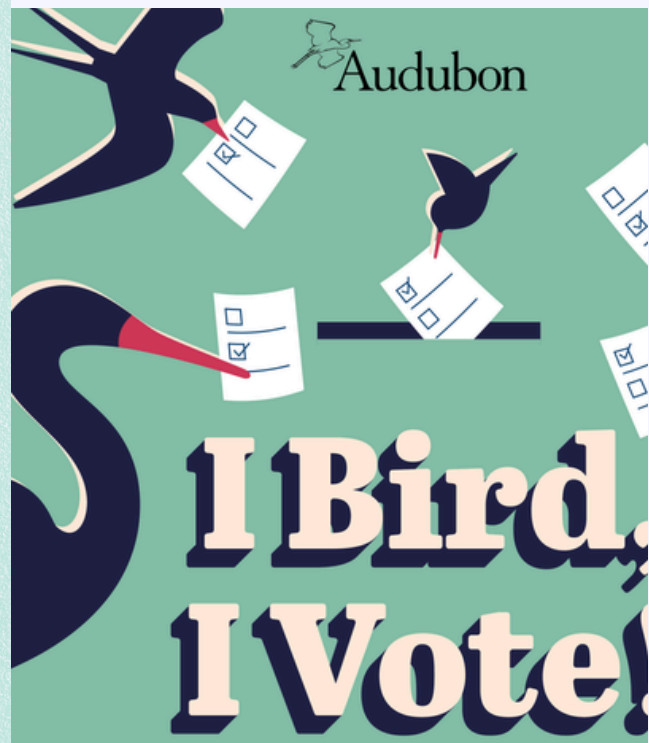
In early August, two people spotted an unknown insect on their car windshield near Vancouver, Washington. Curious, they researched the bug online and discovered that it may be an invasive species never before seen in Washington—the emerald ash borer. This now has been confirmed.

This first detection is significant for two reasons. First, the presence of Emerald Ash Borer could mean the destruction of every ash tree in the state. Second, this detection was not made by scientists conducting a field survey, but by regular people, aka citizen scientists. The two people who found the bug had no formal training. They thought it looked unusual and decided to take photos and submit their sighting using the WA Invasives App. They then collected the live specimen in a plastic bag and handed it over to Washington State Parks after filing their report. That's the power of the citizen scientist! These actions helped officials quickly confirm what this pest was and enabled the State to quickly coordinate a response to the threat.

What does this mean for Washington? It's complicated. Our state has only one native ash species; however, many species of ash are commonly planted in urban areas as a popular ornamental and shade tree. The first step is to prevent any more introductions and reduce the spread of insects already established. This can be done through education and outreach with social media, the Washington Invasive Species Council's website, webinars, and other messaging campaigns like Buy it Where You Burn it—a campaign that informs people about the hazards of moving firewood because invasive pests, like the emerald ash borer, like to hide within it. (cont. page 5)

## Election Day November 3 Take the Pledge to Vote

Take the pledge to vote in November at National Audubon's *I Bird I Vote* campaign. And then think like a bird about the habitat and protections you need, and vote like your life depends on it - because it does!



**Vancouver Audubon Society is a non-profit organization under US IRS Code Section 501(c)(3)  
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## Recent Board Actions

### **"GiveMore24!" goal of \$5000**

As of 9/25, VAS had received \$2900 from 50 donors for the Wings of Change initiative. Thank you to all who donated!

### **\$5,000 Grant Awarded**

A \$5,000 grant was awarded to Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement for the Seeds to Salmon initiative, which works with high school youth to collect and pot native seedlings, harvest willow cuttings, and learn about the connection of plants to salmon. These plants are used in restoration projects.

### **Board of Directors**

A complete list of our Board of Directors is found on our [webpage](#).

*Marsh Wren photo by Carolyn Hopper, Fotofest 2024*

### **Preliminary BirdBlitz Results**

Vancouver Audubon recently hosted a community science project on iNaturalist in the week leading up to our Migratory Bird Celebration. We asked the photographers and field recorders of Southwest Washington to share their observations of birds in Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties between September 12<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>. Hundreds of these contributions are now available for conservation researchers studying the distribution and status of bird populations. The observation window has since closed, but a few late submissions may still trickle in over the coming week. Here is a look at the preliminary results of this project.

You can still share your observations! If you have photos or audio recordings of birds in Clark, Klickitat or Skamania counties that were taken between September 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, you can add them by joining the project and uploading your observations on iNaturalist. You can also still contribute identifications. At least 31 observations are still in need of supporting identifications to achieve "research grade" status. Find a complete list of observations and species on the [Vancouver Audubon BirdBlitz 2026](#) project page.

### **Most Interesting Observations:**

Coco's Booby  
Sabine's Gull  
Clark's Nutcracker  
Mountain Bluebird  
Brewer's Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Pectoral Sandpiper  
Pygmy Nuthatch  
American Dipper  
Short-billed Gull

### **Quick Facts:**

354 Observations  
132 Species of birds  
20 Project Members  
86 Users contributing identifications

### **Most Frequently Observed:**

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Wood Duck (9)             | Wilson's Snipe (7)     |
| Great Egret (8)           | Cedar Waxwing (7)      |
| Long-billed Dowitcher (7) | American Goldfinch (7) |
| Pied-billed Grebe (7)     | Mallard (6)            |

## Take Action Now!



To find out what you can do within the State of Washington, visit [Audubon Washington Advocacy page](#).

Join the [National Audubon Action Network](#) to be notified when your input is needed on a critical bill or issue at the National level.

Urge Congress to [Support the Migratory Bird Protection Act](#) - The Migratory Bird Protection Act will reinforce and strengthen protections for our nation's birds at a time when their populations are in crisis.

Urge Congress to [Advance a Conservation Forward Farm Bill](#) - The Farm Bill represents our country's single largest investment in conservation on private lands and can help reverse the alarming decline of grassland and forest birds.

[Support Restoration of the Great Lakes](#) - For over a decade, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has funded more than 8,000 restoration projects to help keep water clean and restore the habitat that vulnerable birds need across the Great Lakes region. Without Congressional action this vital program will expire this year. Ask your U.S. Senators to reauthorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Support grassland bird species by urging Congress to pass the [RANCH Act](#).

### Take Action for Seabirds and Shorebirds.

Estuaries, the coastal areas where rivers meet the ocean, are critically important for shorebirds and seabirds. Many of these special places along America's coasts are supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, which strengthens local community-led restoration of vital coastal habitat. This successful bipartisan program is nearing its expiration date. Steps are being taken by Congress to reauthorize and expand it with the ESTUARIES (Enhancing Science, Treatment, and Upkeep of America's Resilient and Important Estuarine Systems) Act. Urge your U.S. Senators to support the National Estuary Program.

Urge your members of Congress to support the [Cooperative Watershed Management Program Reauthorization Act](#). The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Cooperative Watershed Management Program, which benefits birds by restoring watersheds, is up for reauthorization in Congress and needs support.

Comments Due on Roadless Rule Rescission by October 6! Comment period for this proposal has been extended. See article in this issue and refer to the May 2026 Columbia Flyway for a template for writing comments.

[Restore Habitat on Public Lands](#) - Public lands and waters are vital to birds and communities. More than 300 bird species in the U.S. spend at least half their lives on our public lands. The America the Beautiful Act invests in urgent maintenance projects that can benefit habitat in our national parks, monuments, forests, and wildlife refuges. Ask your members of Congress to support the America the Beautiful Act.

**SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN!** - The Local Communities and Bird Habitat Stewardship Act was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives September 16.

*Australasian Gannet  
Photo by Susan Saul  
Fotofest 2025*

# Conservation News

By Susan Saul

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

## Speak Up by October 6 to Protect National Forest Roadless Areas

The U.S. Forest Service has announced its intention to repeal the Roadless Rule, undermining 25 years of protection for more than 2 million acres of our wildest national forest lands across the Cascades, Olympics, Selkirks, and Kettles. With a short public comment period ending October 6, this is our last chance to speak up for cold, clean waters, critical wildlife habitat, hiking trails and connected corridors that keep these landscapes thriving.

Roadless areas represent some of the most intact public lands and wildlife habitats left in the country, home to more than 77 bird species of conservation concern. These lands contribute to local and rural economies through hiking, birdwatching, camping, hunting, and fishing, while also ensuring that downstream communities have safe drinking water. Because many roadless areas abut designated wildernesses, they also protect and enhance the value of those wildernesses by keeping road-building and other industrial development farther away.

Roadless areas provide crucial ecological functions: landscape habitat connectivity for wide-ranging species like wolverine, mountain goat and Canada lynx, and clean, cold water for fish. Roadless areas also support cultural and subsistence practices such as berry-picking and offer some of the best backcountry recreation in the state.

You may have hiked in roadless areas without being aware since they are not marked by signs. On our nearby Gifford Pinchot National Forest, roadless areas include Silter Star Mountain, Bourbon Roadless Area adjacent to Trapper Creek Wilderness, Grassy Knoll and Big Huckleberry in the Big Lava Bed Roadless Area, the Pacific Crest Trail on the Red Mountain and Red Lake Roadless Areas, the Round the Mountain Trail along the edge of the Gotchen Creek Roadless Area, and the many miles of ridge-top trails in the Dark Divide Roadless Area.

The proposal makes little sense ecologically or economically. There are already more roads on national forests than can be affordably maintained. The Forest Service manages a 380,000-mile road system with a growing \$10.8 billion maintenance backlog that has persisted for decades, and it receives funding to maintain only a fraction of that system.

The proposal also misstates what the rule already allows. Restoration thinning and prescribed burning are both permitted in roadless areas. The rule limits commercial timber harvest, but hauling logs out of steep backcountry terrain was never going to pencil out for mills in the first place. The constraint here is economics and topography, not regulation.

Roads are expensive to build and maintain. They fragment and degrade wildlife habitat, act as vectors for human fire ignitions, and dump many tons of sediment into fish habitat and spawning beds each year. In Washington, about 85% of fires are caused by people each year. We need our wild country more than we need new forest roads.

### Take Action to Protect Our National Forests

[https://act.audubon.org/a/save-roadless-areas-2026?ms=nas-adv-partner-chapter-roadless\\_rule\\_2026&utm\\_campaign=roadless\\_rule\\_2026&utm\\_medium=partner&utm\\_source=chapter](https://act.audubon.org/a/save-roadless-areas-2026?ms=nas-adv-partner-chapter-roadless_rule_2026&utm_campaign=roadless_rule_2026&utm_medium=partner&utm_source=chapter)

# Conservation News

By Susan Saul

conservation@vancouveraudubon.org

## Citizen Scientists Discover Emerald Ash Borer in Washington

*Continued from Page 1*

The next step is managing the resources we have and sharing best practices. Last year, Washington Invasive Species Council staff facilitated a multi-agency workgroup to author a [statewide guide on emerald ash borer management](#), which was completed just a few months before this detection and has resources for identifying and reporting on the beetle, including suggestions for inventory and removal of trees.

Emerald ash borer was always a possibility in Washington, especially after detections in Oregon and British Columbia. For now, the State is focused on preventing the spread, reducing and containing the population, and limiting the damage caused—but we need your help!

Non-experts like the two who identified the emerald ash borer are key to limiting the spread of invasive species. A report from citizen scientists can mean the difference between losing a dozen trees or losing an entire species. [Download the WA Invasive App](#) or submit your sightings using our [online form](#).

You can also visit the [City of Vancouver Urban Forestry](#) website for local information.



**LIGHTS OUT, WASHINGTON!**

Spring: Apr 1 - May 31  
Peak: Apr 18 - May 21

Fall: Sep 1 - Oct 31  
Peak: Sep 3 - Oct 11

**PROTECT BIRDS BY TURNING OFF LIGHTS**

You can help millions of birds journey safely through Washington at night each year by following the steps below to reduce building collisions during migration season.

- USEFUL** - Use light only if it is necessary  
All light should have a clear purpose. Consider how the use of light will impact the area, including wildlife and their habitats.
- TARGETED** - Direct light so it falls only where it is needed  
Use shielding to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.
- LOW** - Light should be no brighter than necessary  
Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful, as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than others.
- CONTROLLED** - Use light only during times when needed  
Use timers or motion sensors to ensure that light is available when needed, dimmed when possible, and turned off when not needed.
- WARM** - Use warmer-colored lights where possible  
Choose warm bulbs (3,000 Kelvins or under) when converting outdoor lights to LED.

Take the Pledge to go Lights Out! Share with neighbors and friends by spreading the word and posting online.  
**#LightsOutWashington**

wa.audubon.org/lights-out-wa

LIGHTS OUT WASHINGTON  
TAKE THE PLEDGE



## Fall Migration

It's still fall migration and time to protect birds by turning off lights. Some species, like shorebirds, have been heading south since July but peak fall migration here in Washington occurs between September 3 and October 11. The fall Lights Out time period is September 1 – October 31.

You can help birds journey safely across our skies at night and reduce building collisions during migration by following the steps to the left.

# Monthly Meetings & Programs

## **“Amazing Adaptations: How Birds Survive Stormy Weather”**

with Dr. Jamie Cornelius

Jamie is an associate professor at Oregon State University in the integrative biology department. Her research includes investigation of the behavioral and physiological strategies that birds use to cope with unpredictable change in their environments such as storms, fire, drought, urbanization, and unpredictable food resources. The goal is to inform conservation efforts, resource management, and policies that can more efficiently and effectively protect our wild birds.

Jamie is a National Geographic Society Explorer, Fulbright Fellow and National Science Foundation CAREER fellow. She also grew up in Vancouver and attended Columbia River High School (Class of '97).

**When: Tuesday, September 1st at 6:30pm**

**Where: Evergreen Public Schools District Office at  
13413 NE LeRoy Haagen Memorial Drive, Vancouver,  
WA**

**All are welcome at our in-person programs held the first Tuesday of the month (except January, July, and August). We hope to see you there!**



*American Dipper*

*Teri Franzen/Audubon Photography Awards*

## Upcoming Programs

### **“Conserving the California Condor”**

with speaker **Dr. Hayley Brazier**, Wildlife Conservation Specialist at the Oregon Zoo

**Tuesday, November 3**

### **“5th Annual Fotofest”**

A celebration of member’s photography, featuring Young Birders Group and Cameraderie

**Tuesday, December 1**

## Young Birder Activities

By Shaunak Deshpande  
[shaunakd@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:shaunakd@vancouveraudubon.org)

### September Highlights:

Cameraderie completed our second habitat restoration day at Sams Walker Day Use Area in the Columbia River Gorge on September 5th. Working alongside Sandy Haigh of the Center for Ecodynamic Restoration, our group spent the morning removing invasive blackberry bushes and planting native species to restore critical habitat for local birds and pollinators. The session contributed a total of 39 hours of volunteering.

Cameraderie also hosted a nature photography workshop at Wild Birds Unlimited in Vancouver on September 13th, covering bird photography fundamentals including composition, lighting, and bird behavior strategies for getting into position for the perfect shot. The workshop was led by experienced wildlife photographers Ken Pitts and John Pugmire alongside Cameraderie youth members Shaunak Deshpande and Isaac Lang, and was open to all ages and experience levels.



*Shaunak planting native species*

### Looking Ahead in October:

Join us for a **Cameraderie and Young Birders morning bird walk at Salmon Creek Greenway on Saturday September 26th** starting at 8am. All ages and experience levels are welcome, no prior birding experience needed. Experienced birders will be on hand to help identify species along the trail. This is a great opportunity to connect with other nature enthusiasts and experience some of the best birding in the Vancouver area as fall migration gets underway.

Join us for our monthly **Cameraderie Photography Zoom Session on Saturday October 4th at 6:45pm**. Members share photos taken during recent walks and outings and receive feedback from experienced wildlife photographers including Jon Pugmire. Whether you are a beginner just starting out or a seasoned photographer looking to refine your skills, these sessions are a welcoming and supportive space to grow. If you have already signed up for Cameraderie you do not need to register again, just show up with your best shots.

Cameraderie is partnering with ESD 112 Regional Science Coordinator Stacy Meyer to host a birding and nature education workshop for local teachers on **Thursday October 8th from 4:30-6:30pm** at Discovery High School in Camas. Teachers will get hands-on experience using binoculars and field guides in the field while building bird identification skills and learning how bird studies can support NGSS-aligned science instruction. Participating teachers will be able to borrow free birding kits, including binoculars and field guides, for use in their classrooms, made possible through Cameraderie's Wings of Change fundraiser. Clock hours are available for attending teachers. Registration is open and free at [pdEnroller.org](https://pdEnroller.org), event #219317.



*Shaunak at Wild Birds Unlimited for Cameraderie Presentation*

## Community Outreach



### Upcoming Vancouver Audubon Events

#### Ridgefield Birdfest and Bluegrass Festival

**Saturday, October 3**

**Event Time:** Throughout the day

**Event Location:** Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

We will be leading bird walks and sharing spotting scopes at various locations within the refuge.

#### VAS Hosted Third Annual Migratory Bird Celebration

Vancouver Audubon hosted our third annual Migratory Bird Celebration Saturday, September 19 at the Water Resources Education Center. The event celebrates the tremendous journey many of the bird species we enjoy locally undertake two times each year! This event strives to showcase the conservations needs that support bird migration: clean and available water sources, native plants, insects and habitats. Every year tens of millions of birds migrate through Southwest Washington. Our event had a growth spurt this year with 7 partners.

In addition to the partner tables, the Vancouver Audubon Youth Programs hosted a table to share the activities they're doing and supporting – to include their Wings of Change project.

The 3-hour event was attended by approximately 75 people. And 47 of them attended one of our seven bird walks! In all, we recorded 33 species across all bird walks.

The biggest hit for the second year in a row was the Migration Game, developed by VAS board member Ken Pitts. Participants, kids and adults, “migrate” between stations by flapping their arms imitating the bird they represent. Some migrants just did not have much luck: they might get poisoned by pesticides, or hit a powerline, or crash into large, reflective windows of a building. But we also had many successful migrants. At completion, participants are invited to provide their comments about what new information and understanding they got from the game.

Another hit this year: the Water Resources Education Center lent us use of a button machine. Attendees could create a 3” button for themselves and we saw many creative drawing and sticker combination buttons.

We were very appreciative to have 15 enthusiastic volunteers give their time for this event. THANK YOU EVERYONE!

#### Thanks to our event participants

- Water Resources Education Center
- Columbia Springs
- Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
- Center for Ecodynamic Restoration
- Columbia Land Trust
- Master Gardeners of Clark County
- Wild Birds Unlimited



Successful participants of bird migration game Photo by Ken Pitts

# Field Trips & Bird Outings

By Randy Hill  
[randy.hill.98642@gmail.com](mailto:randy.hill.98642@gmail.com)

## First-of-Month Bird Walk Shillapoo Lake

**Thursday, October 1**

**Meeting time: 7:30 am**

**Meeting Location:** Shillapoo Lake NE access (across from Van Lake north bridge trail) on NW Erwin O Reiger Memorial Hwy (near the north end of the road, past the rumble strips).

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

We will plan on walking the dike trail to look for migrating shorebirds, Sandhill Cranes, and other wetland and open country species in the area. If lake levels allow, we will return and cross over to view the north end of Vancouver Lake from the North Bridge Trail.

Dress for the weather. Sunscreen and a hat may be a good idea if the warm, sunny weather continues. Waterproof boots are recommended if the grass on the dike trail is wet.

## Field Trip to JBLM and Nisqually

**Thursday, October 15**

**Meeting time:** 6:00 am (2-hour carpool to Pierce County)

**Meeting Location:** Salmon Creek Park and Ride

**Registration:** Contact Randy Hill at 360-975-2573 or ([randy.hill.98642@gmail.com](mailto:randy.hill.98642@gmail.com))

**Targets:** Fall migrant and some wintering songbirds, raptors, waterfowl and waterbirds across a diverse landscape of salt and freshwater habitats, forests, and mixed openings.

We will drive directly to the Joint Base Lewis McCord Eagle's Pride Golf Course and join the host group on their monthly walk that begins at 08:00. Then a 10 minute drive back to Nisqually NWR for an afternoon of trails and boardwalks at the refuge. This is an all-day trip of 12 hours, likely returning around 6pm. Spotting scopes will be handy, especially at Nisqually. Limit of four vehicles.

## Field Trip to Wahkiakum County

**Thursday, October 29**

**Meeting time:** 6:30 am

**Meeting Location:** Salmon Creek Park and Ride

**Registration:** Email Randy Hill  
[randy.hill.98642@gmail.com](mailto:randy.hill.98642@gmail.com)

We will drive up I-5 to Longview, then west on SR-4 to Cathlamet. Primary areas will include Puget Island, Julia Butler Hansen NWR, and far west to Altoona, looking across the bay toward Astoria. Expect migrants and wintering birds across mostly floodplain, fresh and brackish waters, and some mixed forested landscapes. Spotting scopes will be handy for distant waterbirds and raptors. Limit of four vehicles.

## Field Trip to Woodland Bottoms

**Wednesday, November 11**

**Meeting time:** 6:45 am (or Ridgefield P&R 07:00 or Woodland P&R 07:15 if desired)

**Meeting Location:** Salmon Creek Park and Ride

**Registration:** Contact Randy Hill at 360-975-2573 or ([randy.hill.98642@gmail.com](mailto:randy.hill.98642@gmail.com))

Woodland Bottoms for waterfowl, raptors, cranes, gulls, songbirds and whatever. This will be mostly driving and stopping on dike roads or pullouts, or walking very short distances along the Lewis and Columbia Rivers. Possible addition of Kalama River. Expected return time early afternoon, or later if additions. Bring a spotting scope (radios if you have them), and snacks or lunch.

## Birding in Place - Location TBD

**Sunday, October 18**

**Meeting time:** 8:00 - 10:00 am

**Leaders:** Sam Cable and Kiara Way

We're birding in place! We'll stay in one spot to observe the local birdlife, focusing on unique behaviors and vocalizations. This event is open to everyone but geared specifically to accommodating folks with lower mobility. Check our webpage for updates! Questions? - contact Sam at [scable@vancouveraudubon.org](mailto:scable@vancouveraudubon.org)

# OCTOBER 2026

## Calendar of Events

| SUN                                    | MON | TUE                                                          | WED | THU                                                          | FRI | SAT                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 27                                     | 28  | 29                                                           | 30  | 01<br>First of Month<br>Bird Walk<br>Shillapoo Lake          | 02  | 03<br>Ridgefield Bird and<br>Bluegrass Festival<br>9am - 2pm |
| 04                                     | 05  | 06<br>Program<br>Meeting 6:30-<br>8:30 Dr Jamie<br>Cornelius | 07  | 08                                                           | 09  | 10<br>Young Birders field<br>trip - WSU<br>Vancouver         |
| 11                                     | 12  | 13                                                           | 14  | 15<br>Field Trip<br>JBLM Golf<br>Course and<br>Nisqually NWR | 16  | 17                                                           |
| 18<br>Birding In Place<br>Location TBD | 19  | 20                                                           | 21  | 22                                                           | 23  | 24                                                           |
| 25<br>Cameraderie Zoom<br>Meeting      | 26  | 27                                                           | 28  | 29<br>Field Trip -<br>Woodland<br>Bottoms                    | 30  | 31                                                           |

[vancouveraudubon.org/calendar](https://vancouveraudubon.org/calendar)

Check out other articles posted  
in our [blog](#)

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