

COLUMBIA FLYWAY

Vancouver Audubon Society

September 2026

vancouveraudubon.org

VAS Hosting 3rd Annual Migratory Bird Celebration at Water Resources Education Center September 19!

by Becky Boley, Community Outreach Chair

Vancouver Audubon Society is celebrating the spectacular feat of bird migration. We are excited that the Water Resources Education Center is hosting our event on September 19 from 10 am to 1 pm!

This day is an opportunity to learn about the conservation needs that support bird migration: clean and available water sources, plants, insects and habitats. Other partners joining us are the WSU Vancouver Master Gardener of Clark County program, Columbia Springs, Friends of Ridgefield, Center for Ecodynamic Restoration and Wild Birds Unlimited.

Our day will include bird walks, Nature Bingo, and our own Migration Game where you are the bird facing obstacles trying to reach your destination. Learn about Vancouver Audubon's youth programs. Take part in some of our hands on activities which include binocular use, making pine/fir cone feeders, and some activities for younger children.

We have created a BirdBlitz on iNaturalist that will run for the week leading up to the Migratory Bird Celebration, where we will have a monitor displaying the results! See the companion article for more information.

There's no cost to attend and no registration necessary. All ages are welcome. We hope to see you there!

BirdBlitz 2026 on iNaturalist September 12-19

by Sam Cable, Program Chair

Team up with us as we seek to find and document all birds across Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties in the week leading up to the Migratory Bird Celebration! Participate in community science by uploading your photos and recordings of birds to iNaturalist. Follow these steps to participate:

1. **Log into iNaturalist** or create an account if you don't already have one*.
2. **Join the Project.** Click on the link or search for "Vancouver Audubon BirdBlitz" (make sure to hit "join" on the project page).
3. **Add Observations.** Using either the iNaturalist app or your desktop browser, upload your observations.

Using either the iNaturalist app or your desktop browser, upload your observations.

BirdBlitz observations need to be:

- 1) of birds,
- 2) located in Clark, Klickitat, or Skamania Counties
- 3) made during the week of September 12-19.

Observations submitted by project members will be automatically included in the BirdBlitz as long as they meet those three criteria! Don't have time to find and upload observations? You can still participate by contributing identifications on observations from others!

**New to iNaturalist? Here's a [handy guide in how to get started!](#)*



Free; All are welcome

Bird Outings, Games, Crafts, and more!

September 19th - 10am to 1pm



4600 S.E. Columbia Way, Vancouver, WA

**Vancouver Audubon Society is a non-profit organization under US IRS Code Section 501(c)(3)
Chartered December 18, 1975**

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[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)



Recent Board Actions

VAS sets a goal for “GiveMore24!” of \$5000

VAS is participating in “GiveMore24” September 24. Our goal is to raise \$5000 for the Wings of Change initiative: connecting youth with nature and conservation by getting bird kits with binoculars and field guides into the hands of kids. Just this summer we have helped more than 250 kids and teens connect to nature through guided nature walks, photography workshops, and habitat restoration events. Your support empowers the next generation of environmental stewards to discover the natural world around them! Early donations start September 9 and end on September 24. Please consider a donation to [Wings of Change](#).

Working With the City of Vancouver

Our Conservation Chair, Susan Saul, has been actively involved in the City of Vancouver Advisory group for the Climate Action Plan. She also drafted a letter to the city requesting more tree retention during development and creating incentives for developers to protect trees.

Other Planning Processes

Becky Boley is participating in the Washington Department of Ecology’s Washington Water Future planning process.

Steve Bredthauer will be participating in a Focus Group discussion for the 2028 - 2035 Clark County Park System Plan. This plan will guide the acquisition of land, development, management and enhancement of Clark County’s parks and natural area system over the next twenty (20) years.

Washington Audubon is hosting the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) regional meeting October 9-11 in Bellingham. VAS plans to have representation there.

American Pelicans photo by Beth Martin-Lichter, Fotofest 2025

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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.

Current efforts include advocating for the [Local Communities and Bird Habitat Stewardship Act](#) still under consideration in the House of Representatives.

[Support climate action](#) - Support green energy projects that are good for birds and people.

[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. **Ask your members of Congress to pass a Farm Bill** that helps birds, people, and the places we share. [comment here now](#).

[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.**

[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 September 21!](#) The Trump Administration is proposing to repeal the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, putting more than 45 million acres of forests at risk of road building, logging, mining, and other industrial development. These areas host groves of old-growth, clean drinking water, critical fish and wildlife habitat, and thousands of miles of hiking trails. 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.



Red-tail Hawk
Photo by Ken Pitts
Fotofest 2024

Conservation News

By Susan Saul

conservation@vancouveraudubon.org

Love Cats, Love Wildlife is a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) campaign encouraging owners to care for their cats in ways that also protect Washington's wildlife and natural spaces. Keeping cats indoors is one of the most effective actions you can take to protect birds and biodiversity, reduce the spread of disease, and keep your pets safer and healthier.

Outdoor cats are one of the leading threats to birds.

In North America, cats kill more birds than wind turbines, vehicle collisions, and window strikes combined! They hunt mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and even insect pollinators. Many caring cat owners are surprised to learn about this impact, because most of a cat's hunting happens out of sight and their kills are rarely brought home. In addition to hunting wildlife, outdoor cats can spread parasites that threaten both wildlife and human health. By keeping your cat indoors, you can play an important role in protecting Washington's wildlife while also keeping your pet safer and healthier.

Domestic cats (*Felius catus*) are almost genetically identical to their wild ancestor, the African wildcat (*Felis lybica*). They may live in our homes, but when allowed outdoors, they still behave like wild predators. Even a single outdoor cat can affect local biodiversity. The sight or scent of a cat can increase stress in wildlife, disrupting normal behaviors like feeding, accessing safe spaces, and caring for young. Stressed animals are more vulnerable to predators and may struggle to find enough food or water. Cats also directly remove animals from the food web, which reduces prey for native species, creating a ripple effect throughout the ecosystem.

Wildlife disease, infection, and parasites

Cat saliva naturally contains bacteria that are often fatal to wildlife, even when the wild animal shows no obvious signs of injury. Tiny bite marks from a cat's teeth can allow bacteria to enter the wound, leading to serious infection that requires prompt treatment. In these cases, wildlife must be taken to a permitted wildlife rehabilitator to receive the specific antibiotics needed to survive.

In Washington, cat attacks are one of the top three reasons wildlife are brought into rehabilitation centers. Washington cats were responsible for 30% of all wildlife patient intakes by permitted Washington wildlife rehabilitators in 2024.

When cats defecate outdoors, they can also spread parasites such as *Toxoplasma gondii*. This parasite can move through soil and waterways, infecting wildlife far beyond where it originated. Outbreaks of toxoplasmosis have caused serious illness and death in aquatic mammals, including river otters, sea otters, and endangered seals. Garden beds, landscaping, and other outdoor spaces can be tempting litter boxes for outdoor cats, putting nearby humans at risk of contracting *Toxoplasmosis gondii*.

Parasites people can contract from cats include fleas, cat scratch disease, scabies, roundworms, hookworms, ringworm, and rabies. Outdoor cats are more likely to be exposed to and spread these infectious diseases compared to indoor-only cats.

Orphaned wildlife

Young wildlife depend on their parents for food, warmth, and protection. When a cat injures or kills an adult bird or animal with dependent young, those offspring are unlikely to survive, intensifying an outdoor cat's impact on local wildlife populations.



Keep your cats indoors – Tips for happy indoor cats

No matter the size of your living space, you can help keep your cat moving with daily play and simple enrichment like interactive toys, vertical spaces such as climbing structures or wall shelves, window perches, scratching posts, and rotating play activities, games and food puzzles.

My cat Phoebe loves the view from her window perch. Photo by Don Rose

Conservation News

By Susan Saul

conservation@vancouveraudubon.org

Many indoor cats enjoy watching wildlife from window perches. You can safely attract birds for your cat to watch by placing bird feeders within three feet of windows to prevent birds from hitting the window. When birds aren't active, "bird TV" or nature videos can offer engaging alternatives. Cats have higher body temperatures than humans, so when you may be comfortable, your cat may feel cold. When organizing your home, think about where your cat can access sunlight. Creating a sunny resting spot or adding an indoor window perch gives your cat a warm, comfortable place to relax during the day.

Add a "Catio"

Just because your cat is an "indoor cat" doesn't mean they have to be housebound! Secure enclosures keep both cats and wildlife safe while allowing cats access to fresh air. "Catos" and cat runs provide outdoor and exercise space for your cat. The Bird Alliance of Oregon offers an annual Catio Tour to see outdoor spaces people have created for their cats as part of its "Cats Safe at Home" campaign. The 2026 Catio Tour will be held on Saturday, September 12, 10am – 2pm – register here and peek into some of SE Portland's most creative outdoor cat spaces, from simple enclosures to standout backyard showpieces!

Transition your outdoor cat indoors

It is possible to transition an outdoor cat to an indoor lifestyle. While it's easier to help a younger cat transition, it's never too late to bring your older cat indoors – for their well-being, birds and the environment. Other options for taking your cat outdoors are leashes, strollers and backpacks.

Take the Pledge

When you take the **Love Cats, Love Wildlife** pledge to keep your cat indoors, you'll receive a welcome packet with a window decal and sticker. Displaying these on your door, car, water bottle, fence, or window is a simple, visible way to show your commitment to wildlife and pet stewardship and help normalize indoor cat care. Pledge



These examples of catio enclosures were designed and built locally for his own cats by Nik Kolb. Photos by Nik Kolb.

Myths About Outdoor Cats

A well-fed domestic cat will not need to hunt wildlife. Domestic cats retain their hunting instincts no matter how well fed or mid mannered they are. Even well-fed, "good" cats kill wildlife.

My cat doesn't hunt because I've never seen it with prey. Not seeing cat prey doesn't mean your cat isn't hunting. Research for the University of Georgia found that only 23% of cat prey was brought home, 49% was left at the prey site, and 28% was consumed.

Wearing a cat bell alerts prey before the cat can kill. While an anti-predator device like a bell on a collar may help reduce a cat's predation impact, it does not eliminate cat predation and will not protect all vulnerable wildlife, like chicks in a nest.

Conservation News

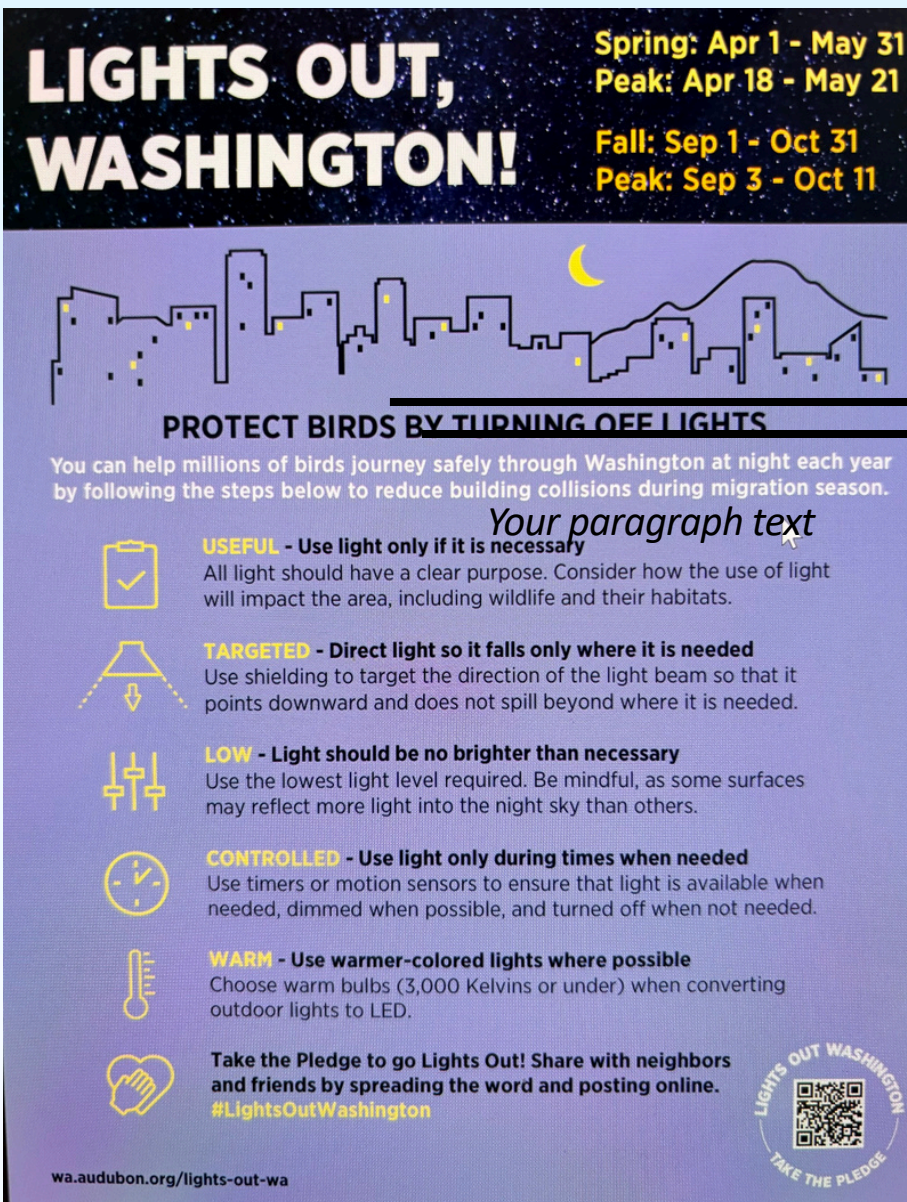
By Susan Saul and Becky Boley

conservation@vancouveraudubon.org

Fall Migration

It's 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 below.



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.

Your paragraph text

- 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

Washington's Water Future

This May, Washington Governor Ferguson announced an initiative to investigate water supply and quality solutions amid an anticipated future of more frequent drought years based on climate models. The initiative, called Washington's Water Future, "aims to improve sustainable and resilient water supplies" for generations to come. The Washington Department of Ecology is leading the initiative and spending this summer hosting in-person roundtables and virtual meetings to collect input from business, agriculture, environmental, tribal, other state and local agencies, utilities and interested general public. In addition to these sessions, a Public Survey is open until **September 18 2026**, where anyone can provide their input. The goal of these sessions is to collect information about local challenges, identify barriers, and identify both near- and long-term solution ideas from across Washington.

The initiative then transitions to creating a report for the Governor, due this fall, which will be a compilation and synthesis of the input collected throughout the summer. The expectation is that items from this report will be flagged as future projects.

[Initiative Announcement, released May, 2026](#)

[Public Comment/Survey - Open until August 31](#)

[Washington's Water Future](#)

Community Outreach



We need volunteers!

You do not need to be a bird expert!

Vancouver Audubon will be at these upcoming events, and we need volunteers to help us! We will host a table and visit with attendees to inform them about who Vancouver Audubon is, what we do, and share information about regional birding, bird habitat and conservation efforts. We also offer a few activities at these events, which may include building a birdhouse, coloring a bird picture, and making bookmarks with bird stamps and/or stickers.

We'd love to see you at any of these events! Volunteer commitments are generally 2 hours – and we're happy to accommodate your schedule for shorter or longer times! Event times are listed, but we also have set-up and take down, which is usually 30-45 minutes before and after the event.

If you are available to help us at any of these events or have any questions, please email Becky Boley at bboleyn@vancouveraudubon.org.

Upcoming Vancouver Audubon Events

Migratory Bird Celebration

Saturday, September 19

Event Time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Event Location: Vancouver Water Resources Education Center

We will be hosting a table during this time and leading bird walks every 30 minutes.

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.



*Red-winged
Blackbird Photo by
Steve Bredthauer,
Fotofest 2023*

VAS Summer Events

By Becky Boley, Community Outreach

Vancouver Audubon attended and hosted a table at the Vancouver Pollinator Festival in June and Battle Ground Pride Festival in August. Both events gave us beautiful summer days for fun and joyful events. The Pollinator Festival was even bigger this year than last year – more vendors/partners and more attendees! We had over 280 people stop by to visit and learn about what Vancouver Audubon does, where to bird in SW Washington, how to join us at our meetings and bird walks.

The Battle Ground Pride Festival is a great event. We more than doubled the number of attendees we spoke with last year, visiting with 160 people about what Vancouver Audubon organization does: bird walks, monthly meetings and conservation activities. Isaac Lang and Shaunak Deshpande were at the table all day and shared what the two youth programs are doing. They made an incredibly valuable contribution with their enthusiasm and engagement.



From left to right, Ken Pitts, Becky Boley, Shaunak Deshpande, Isaac Lang, Sam Cable and Kiara at Battle Ground Pride Festival



Becky Boley, Kiara, Steve Bredthauer, and Sam Cable at Vancouver Pollinator Festival

2026 Youth Photo Contest Winners Announced

On June 24, awards were handed out to the winners of the 2026 Youth Photo Contest. Read the entire story and view all the winning photos [here](#). Keep an eye out for the winning photos printed by HD Aluminum Prints that is now touring various libraries and locations in Vancouver throughout this year. Submissions for the 2027 Youth Photo Contest are now open. Visit [here](#) to find out more information.



Emmett Caine's "Serene Sunset" 1st place photo in SmartPhone Nature Category

Monthly Meetings & Programs

“The Wildlife Center of the North Coast” with Annie Cahill

Tuesday, September 01 at 6:30pm

Wildlife rehabilitation centers are not just a lifeline for injured or orphaned wildlife, they are in a crucial position to monitor disease outbreaks and other environmental events of concern while providing unique approaches to environmental education and science communication. This presentation will talk about the role of wildlife rehabilitation in the larger conservation landscape and provide an overview of the variety of programming offered by the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, programs that innovate on more traditional methods of environmental and science communication.

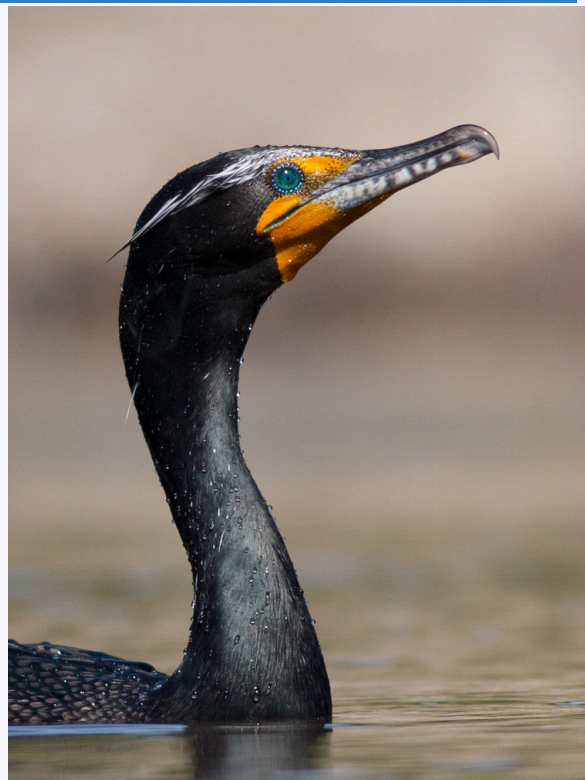
Annie Cahill is the Education and Volunteer Coordinator for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast. WCNC is a non-profit wildlife rehabilitation and conservation education center in Astoria. The center is the only wildlife rehabilitation center serving Oregon’s north coast and is the only dedicated conservation education center in the region.

This event is free and all are welcome!

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!**



Double-crested Cormorant Photo by Ben Koot,
Audubon Photography Awards

Upcoming Programs

“Amazing Adaptations: How Birds Survive Stormy Weather”

with speaker **Dr. Jamie Cornelius**, Associate
Professor of Biology at Oregon State University
Little Bird Lab

Tuesday, October 6

“Conserving the California Condor”

with speaker **Hayley Brazier**

Tuesday, November 3

“5th Annual Fotofest”

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

Tuesday, December 1

*Have questions about Vancouver Audubon programs?
Contact Sam at scable@vancouveraudubon.org*

Field Trips & Bird Outings

By Randy Hill
randy.hill.98642@gmail.com

Klickitat County Bird Count

Saturday, September 19

Meeting time: TBD

Meeting Location: Klickitat County as assigned

Registration: Contact Marc Harvey at oakharvest@gmail.com or Randy Hill if interested.

The annual Klickitat County bird count will take place on September 19. Different areas of the county can be assigned to groups or individuals.

Young Birders Habitat Restoration Day at Sams Walker

Saturday, September 5

Meeting time: 0800 - noon

Meeting Location: Sams Walker Day Use Picnic Area

Registration: Contact Isaac Lang at ilang@vancouveraudubon.org

This event is for Young Birders and others who wish to do some habitat restoration work at Sams Walker in the Columbia Gorge.

Grays Harbor Coastal Excursion

Tuesday - Thursday, September 15-17

Meeting time: 7:00 am

Meeting Location: Salmon Creek Park and Ride

Registration: Email Randy Hill
randy.hill.98642@gmail.com

This trip has 3 "independent" days with various options for group participation. The "group" will depart 9/15 at 7 am from the Salmon Creek Park and Ride with as much carpooling as will mesh, considering different one, two, or all three days options within the group.

First day we will drive to and bird Grays Harbor County, including Ocean Shores, and finish in Westport where there are various lodging options for one or two (or more) nights. In the past the Ocean Avenue Inn was our preferred lodging next to restaurants and the grocery store, but it has dropped in quality over time. The Westport Inn appears a better match, but there are only two going on the boat + Jim, so there can be individual preferences for those going.

Day 2 will have the pelagic trip for the two people signed up for this, with the rest of the group on shore birding as interested. There might be some participants heading home after the boat returns around 3:30, or more birding before dinner.

Day 3 we head south along the coastal beaches for Snowy Plover, etc., and access points toward Tokeland which will be the most important area before heading home.

Expect to be back in Clark County around mid- to late-afternoon. I will need to know who expects to be on day 1, 2, and/or 3 well before we get transportation figured out.



MONTH 2026

Calendar of Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	31	01 Program Meeting 6:30- 8:30 Annie Cahill North Coast Wildlife Center	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
			Give More 24 Fundraiser 9/9 - 24			
						BirdBlitz
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Migratory Bird Celebration Water Resources Education Center 10am - 1pm
		Give More 24 Fundraiser 9/9 - 24				
		BirdBlitz (all week long)				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Give More 24 Fundraiser 9/9 - 24					
27	28	29	30	01 First of Month Bird Walk	02	03 Ridgefield Birdfest and Bluegrass Festival

vancouveraudubon.org/calendar

Do you like the Columbia Flyway? Is there information missing or not clearly displayed? Write me an email at drose@vancouveraudubon.org if you have suggestions or comments about this newsletter, or even just to say you like it. Thanks.