

# BIRDS ROCK THE ROCK CREEK FLOODPLAIN

## Restoration and Community Science at PCC Rock Creek

Since 2015, organizational partners have been working to restore and enhance the ecological function of the PCC Rock Creek Floodplain, a previously degraded wetland that contains a diverse array of key riparian, aquatic and upland habitats. By restoring native plant communities, improving riparian cover and shade and increasing floodplain connectivity, the project will mitigate water storage and water quality impacts of urbanization; promote groundwater recharge and provide habitat diversity for birds, reptiles and various aquatic species. As well, the project provides a great opportunity to support PCC education programs and engage diverse community partners and volunteers through community science activities.

In 2019, Clean Water Services partnered with Portland Audubon to understand how birds are responding to the floodplain restoration, conducting multi-year formal bird surveys and engaging local birders in community science to monitor bird activity across all habitats. We are also providing engagement opportunities centered on natural history, STEM and community science for the local community, including PCC students and faculty, community partners and local residents. Here are some key preliminary highlights:



We recruited and trained a team of over 20 **volunteer community scientists** that performed more than 50 eBird surveys from April to July. Volunteers include experienced birders from Washington County and beyond, as well as newer birders, PCC students and faculty, and community partners.

Most common species documented at the site include song sparrow, common yellowthroat, mallard, American robin, and cedar waxwing. We even documented a few surprises including a **yellow-headed blackbird!**



Yellow-headed blackbird



Canada goose

As guest instructors in the environmental science program, we are orienting PCC environmental science students and faculty to the history of site enhancement, the **importance of community science** and the basics of bird identification and behavior at the site

Together, professional and community science surveys documented **98 bird species** using the site from January to July 2019. This includes a diversity of species from neotropical migratory songbirds (21 species), waterfowl (9 species), shorebirds (5 species) and raptors/owls (7).



Great blue heron



We conduct multiple **STEM outings** each year with Adelante Mujeres, introducing the Chicas program to the ecology of the Rock Creek floodplain and the importance and accessibility of community science for all.

If you would like to be a community scientist at PCC Rock Creek, please contact Joe Liebezeit at Portland Audubon: [jliebezeit@audubonportland.org](mailto:jliebezeit@audubonportland.org)

