



## Same Mission, Now Searching for a New Name





Yellow-rumped Warbler, photo by Mick Thompson.

## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### What's in a Name?

by Stuart Wells, Executive Director

For 50 years, folks have known us as Portland Audubon or Audubon Society of Portland. However, throughout our 121-year history, we have had other names. William Finley, our founder, and his friend Arthur Pope wanted to form a birding club and created the North-Western Ornithological Association (NOA) in 1894. Pope served as the first president of NOA, and Finley was elected president in 1896 at age 19. The NOA served as a foundation for our bird conservation focus. NOA ceased to exist in 1897, shortly after Pope's untimely passing, but the work they did provided the foundation of ornithological advancements in Oregon, including advocating against the collection and sale of bird eggs and feathers. Although Finley had spent much of his childhood collecting bird eggs, he recognized that this practice could lead to decreased populations and even extinctions and began to advocate for and practice photographing birds and their habitats instead. In 1898, the John Burroughs Club was created by bird enthusiasts in Portland, then in 1901, Astoria bird enthusiasts formed the Oregon Audubon Society. In 1902, led by Finley, these groups merged to become the Oregon Audubon Society, and in 1968, we became the Audubon Society of Portland.

Through all the name changes, the constant has been our commitment to conserving important habitats for birds and wildlife. As we begin this journey of deciding on a new name, our promise is to continue building on our legacy of conservation and providing opportunities for all communities to work together for nature.

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Western Tanager, photo by Scott Carpenter.

## Same Mission, Now Searching for a New Name

by Ali Berman, Communications and Marketing Director

As we hope all of you saw in our last Warbler, after much deliberation, Portland Audubon has announced its decision to drop the name “Audubon” and find a new name that better reflects our mission and values. We’re thankful to be in good company: Seattle, Madison, New York City, Chicago, and Washington D.C. chapters have decided to change their names as well. Now we start the process of seeking input from the community, hiring a firm to help us select a name, and then finally debuting our new name to the world. If you missed our original announcement, you can view it here:

**[audubonportland.org/blog/portland-audubon-commits-to-dropping-the-name-audubon/](https://audubonportland.org/blog/portland-audubon-commits-to-dropping-the-name-audubon/)**

While our name will change, our mission remains the same: to inspire people to love and protect birds, wildlife, and the natural environment upon which life depends. With a new name we have the opportunity to better tell our story and communicate our pivotal role within Oregon advancing conservation, education, and land restoration, and creating more equitable access to nature. We also get to help make that mission more easily understood for the public, including the significant number of people who don’t know the name Audubon or associate it with birds, conservation, or nature education. And we get to move away from a name that communities of color have expressed is harmful and a barrier to participating in our work and programs.

### Take Our Survey to Help Us Find a New Name

In order to ensure we get the best possible name, we’re asking for your feedback, name suggestions, and what drives you to care about birds, habitat, and the natural world. We launched a survey for members, donors, volunteers, partners, and the larger community to share their thoughts on what we should consider when choosing a new name. We hope you’ll take a few minutes to fill it out, and share your insights with us. Many of you have been involved with Portland Audubon for years, decades, or even a half century. We know that in order to find a name that represents our past, present, and future, your voice is absolutely essential.



**Take the survey:**  
**[bit.ly/AudubonNameSurvey](https://bit.ly/AudubonNameSurvey)**



In addition to the survey, we plan on soliciting feedback from many members of the community, ranging from our own staff members to volunteers to community partners, to people we haven't yet been able to reach. We're in the early stages of designing that process but will be excited to share more information with you in the July/August Warbler.

We'll then work to understand the feedback and find a name that reflects our deep history of conservation, mission to inspire people to love and protect wildlife, and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We're putting together a team of staff, board members, volunteers, and partners who will be charged with overseeing this process. In the coming weeks, look on our website to see who will serve on the renaming committee. When bringing together this committee, we wanted to ensure we had individuals who each held a different expertise or perspective and all who care deeply about our mission.

We had hoped that National Audubon would also decide to change their name, allowing all 450 chapters to adopt the same name and maintain the continuity of the shared brand. In March National Audubon announced that they plan to keep the name Audubon, a move that has been controversial and has sparked backlash from their own staff members, other chapters, and the public. While in the future we will no longer share a name with National Audubon, we plan on continuing to be a part of the network of chapters around the country. We know that some of our most important work is done alongside our 10 sister chapters across the state.

After we announced our own decision to drop Audubon, hundreds of people wrote to us, from members to volunteers to partners to complete strangers. The majority of the people who reached out expressed excitement and gratitude for the decision. Many noted that it made them proud to be a member here. A number of people also expressed concerns, and at times significant disagreement with the decision. What we know for sure is that everyone who took the time to write or call us cares deeply about the organization and the work we do.

As we noted in our announcement, while John James Audubon is best known for his drawings of birds and contributions to ornithology, he also enslaved and sold Black people, was anti-abolitionist, and robbed the graves of Native Americans and Mexican soldiers to secure human remains. Those human remains were then used in phrenology, a study of human skulls that was used to argue that people of color were inferior

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to white people. To those who were excited by our decision to move away from Audubon, this change signifies an effort to make the environmental movement and our own organization a more inclusive place for all people. To those who expressed concern or disagreement, they feared we were judging a historical figure by today's standards and giving up a name that to many is synonymous with bird conservation.

We recognize John James Audubon's contributions to ornithology. His work was too influential to ever disregard. However, we do know that many of his actions go against the values we hold today, and because of that, his name is a barrier to participation for many people. We recognize that this change has trade-offs, like giving up a brand name that we've helped build for 121 years. While that brand has undeniable value, we firmly believe that its negative impacts will inhibit our growth, our effectiveness, and ultimately our mission. Nature needs everyone, and a name that stops people from joining the movement is a name that does a disservice to the movement.

We want to create an organization that everyone can believe in. By finding a new name and continuing our work to improve equitable access to nature for all people, we can build a more inclusive movement and make an even bigger difference for native birds, their habitat, and people all across Oregon.

We hope you'll help us find a name that truly brings us together for nature. Stay tuned as we move through this process with you.

# LightsOut, Oregon!

by Mary Coolidge, BirdSafe & Lights Out Campaign Coordinator

Peak Spring Migration (April 15-May 15) is upon us, and there is lots of news, both promising and challenging, about the state of the skies that host millions of night-migrating birds during this enchanting season.

A recent study on the change in visibility of stars from 2011 to 2022 shows that sky brightness is increasing globally by nearly 10% per year, effectively doubling sky brightness every eight years. Light pollution not only robs us of our own view of the heavens, it also has serious ecological consequences, with demonstrated impacts on over 200 species of birds, fish, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, and plants.

## Oregon Sky Quality Meter (SQM) Network

With support from 30 volunteers, the Oregon chapter of DarkSky Oregon is measuring skyglow at 44 sites around Oregon and tracking trends in light pollution over time.

No surprise—the two SQMs in Portland show the highest levels of light pollution in the state, while fast-growing areas in central Oregon are also showing substantial increases. In better news, the sites with the starriest skies show little increase in light pollution and still provide world-class dark skies.

Portland's meters have not been running long enough to establish trends in light pollution, but most anyone in Portland can tell you anecdotally that light pollution is on the rise. There is no better time to join the effort to protect our night skies than right now!

## HB 3202

Representative Zach Hudson has introduced a bill to curb light pollution on Oregon state lands, a strategic step toward bringing the state into a leadership role by addressing light pollution on its own lands. Existing lighting policies are not enough to curtail the growth of light pollution. We need our policy makers to take sensible action to ensure that we are strategically and comprehensively addressing this critical environmental issue, and this is a solid first step. Thanks to the over 400 of you who submitted letters in support of this bill!

Many cities and counties in Oregon have already enacted policies to address light pollution locally (including Port Orford, Yachats, Wilsonville, Sun River, Tualatin, Multnomah County, and soon Portland). Oregon Parks and Recreation is doing great work on this issue—they know that one of the most valuable

resources they provide to park visitors is the night sky! Prineville Reservoir State Park is the first state park in Oregon to achieve International Dark-Sky Park Certification, with Cottonwood Canyon close on its heels and Wallowa Lake on the way. Join our activist list to stay up to date on this bill!

## Portland Dark Skies Effort

Portland Audubon regularly gets calls from the public asking for help in addressing light pollution issues, everything from light trespass from city streetlights to excessive and poorly designed lighting on public or commercial buildings. This year, Portland City Council awarded funding to develop a long overdue local lighting ordinance. The City is in the process of hiring a consultant to help guide the development of code, and we will need your help advocating at the Planning Commission and at City Council to ensure that we are making meaningful progress to save what is left of our night skies. Stay tuned for action alerts, coming up soon!

## Go Lights Out!

Every migration season we share LightsOut Red Alerts from Colorado University's AeroEco Lab, highlighting the nights when the most birds are moving across our dark skies. Keep an eye out for Red Alert nights this April and May, and turn off any unnecessary overnight lighting to help keep birds safe and aloft on their way to their nesting grounds.



# Portland Audubon 2023 Legislative

by Joe Liebezeit, Interim Statewide Conservation Director, and Micah Meskel, Interim Urban Conservation Director

We are two-thirds of the way through the 2023 legislative “long session” and are happy to report that many of the priority bills and budget requests we are advocating for are still alive. This is a miraculous accomplishment given where we are in the session.

Thanks to your public comments, the bills we highlight below have made it through to a Joint Legislative Committee where there will be consideration of amendments, budgetary impact, and an eventual up or down vote. This next step may be the biggest challenge, as we are in an austerity budget and there are many competing interests vying for a slice of the state budget pie.

Please stay tuned on how you can continue to advocate in the final months of session to support legislation that helps wildlife and the habitats they rely on.

## Priority Bills

- **House Bill 2903 (Marine Reserves)**

Oregon’s marine reserves are coastal treasures. These living laboratories protect habitat, strengthen resilience to climate change, and contribute important science-based management to communities dependent on ocean resources. This bill would bolster the current marine reserves program by enabling more robust ecological and socioeconomic monitoring and ensuring that communities are engaged in future marine reserve planning.

- **SB 530 (Natural Climate Solutions)**

This bill would set Oregon on a course to help achieve its long-term climate change goals by directing state agencies to develop tangible carbon sequestration objectives, leverage federal funds, and provide incentives to landowners to adopt management practices that lock carbon in the ecosystem with the co-benefit of enhancing wildlife habitat.

- **HB 3016 (Community Green Infrastructure Grant Program)**

Creates a new statewide green infrastructure program to plant and protect tree canopy in heat-vulnerable areas across the state. It would include a grant program to fund community-led projects, native-plant nursery support, tree-canopy threat mitigation and assistance, and related workforce development.

- **HB 3222 (High Desert Partnership Funding) & HB 3099 (Chewaucan Basin/Lake Abert Collaborative)**

These two bills would bolster efforts we are engaged in to protect some of the most important migratory bird staging grounds in the Pacific Flyway. If passed, HB 3222 would secure \$2 million to continue collaborative work in Harney County, including at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and the Silvies floodplain—places that support half the world’s population of Ross’s Geese and 20% of the White-faced Ibis population. Flood irrigation enhancement that is part of this work also benefits the local economy and ranchers. HB 3099 sets up a new collaborative process aimed to balance water needs for agricultural operations, communities, and the ecological health of Lake Abert, which annually hosts tens of thousands of migrating phalaropes and American Avocets.

- **HB 3202 (Night Sky Protection Act)**

Our night sky is an invaluable resource worth protecting! Thoughtful lighting design is critical for wildlife and human health, minimizing energy waste, managing climate change, and preserving our view of the stars. Many local jurisdictions have taken steps to protect their skies, and this bill would show the state’s leadership by requiring lighting on state property to follow best practices, including: being fully shielded, 3000K or below color temperature and no brighter than necessary.

# Conservation Priorities

## Agency Budget Funding Requests

- Outreach and Community Engagement Project Leader for ODFW's Marine Reserve Program. This key position is a critical connection point between coastal communities, Oregonians that visit the coast, and marine reserves—and instrumental to the successful implementation of the Marine Reserve Program
- ODFW staff for establishment of a Wildlife Coexistence Program. This package requests five biologist positions to expand education and outreach efforts focused on the urban/suburban environments on how to interact with wildlife and avoid conflicts, work with local governments, community groups, schools, etc., and provide training sessions for those groups, law enforcement, animal control, and others. They would also assist local rehabbers with understanding rules for holding and proper treatment of wildlife, conduct facility inspections, and assist with permitting.

## Bills We're Opposing

Unfortunately, some really terrible bills have been put forward this session, but we are doing our best to stop them. Here are a few that are perhaps the most concerning:

- **HB 3382 (Bad Ports Land Use Bill)**  
This bill would eliminate land use review of dredging and development proposals in the state's five deepwater ports. This sets a dangerous precedent, with a full range of local and state regulations that could be waived should the bill pass, from public involvement requirements to protections for floodplains and wetlands. The bill's passage would pose a serious threat to Oregon's largest estuaries, ecologically vital habitat where careful land use review is especially important. Current proposed amendments do nothing to ameliorate these concerns.
- **SB 795, HB 3283, and HB 3585 (Timber industry attack on the HCP process)**  
A series of bills are attempting to undermine the multiyear process that public and federal partners have worked on to develop a balanced Habitat Conservation Plan protecting fish and wildlife habitat on state forests while ensuring timber harvest and funding for rural services. The timber industry is trying to derail the HCP, which would interfere in a public process to update forest management plans and would increase clear-cutting in critical fish and wildlife habitat.

We are working with other partners to fight these bad bills and hopefully kill them. We will need the power of our supporters and members to help. Stay tuned for opportunities to help move the needle to better protect our wildlife and habitats across the state.



Black Oystercatcher, photo by Mick Thompson.



# Wildlife Coexistence 101: How to Avoid Bird-Napping

by Graham Williamson & Ashley Lema, Wildlife Rehabilitators

The plants are blooming, the sun is emerging from a cloudy winter, the temperature is getting warmer every day, and the animals are “twitterpated,” as the classic animated film *Bambi* remarked. As a result, we are starting to see baby animals through and around our urban and suburban landscape. One of the first babies the Wildlife Care Center receives every year are Anna’s Hummingbirds—they are one of our earliest nesting local bird species, and many are already fledging in Portland right now!

These two hummingbird nestlings were brought to our Wildlife Care Center last year out of fear they had been orphaned. Fortunately that was not the case. Many wild animals feed their young quickly so as to not draw attention from predators, but to people this can look like the babies have no one caring for them. Once the nestlings got to our facility, it was clear they had not been abandoned. They were healthy kiddos in perfect condition, with full crops, and sitting quietly in their spiderweb-lichen nest. (Mom was creative and made use of old string lights instead of a branch. How neat!) Thankfully, we were able to reverse the accidental kidnapping by simply putting the babies and their nest back as close as possible to where they were found and reunite them with their mother. The finder confirmed that Mom had found them and that she jumped right back into the job that is raising babies. It was a very happy ending to what could have been a sad story.

Our first young of this season was also an Anna’s Hummingbird that was accidentally kidnapped. This is actually more common than you might think. Although many of our patients have a real reason to be admitted to our hospital, every spring we meet compassionate people who go out of their way to (unknowingly) drive a healthy animal to us. Don’t feel bad if you have done this—you are not alone—but it’s always better to avoid disturbing healthy wildlife. Although we do our best, wild animals have a higher chance of survival when raised by their wild parents, so it is important that we intervene only when absolutely necessary.

But knowing whether to intervene can be tricky, so make sure to contact your local wildlife rehabilitator for advice on your and the animal’s unique situation. Our website has lots of information on this, and you



Baby Anna’s Hummingbirds, photo by Ashley Lema.

can check out the handy flow chart there to help make the decision. And if you are unsure, you can call the Wildlife Care Center hotline, (503)-292-0304, or email [wildlife@audubonportland.org](mailto:wildlife@audubonportland.org) to connect with one of our experienced solutions counselor volunteers.

Portland is fortunate to have an abundance of greenspace and natural habitat. We also have the chance to cohabitate with amazing wildlife that we might not expect to live so close to people. Yet this fusion habitat of nature and development with dense human population is not a natural functioning ecosystem and comes with many sources of anthropogenic (human-caused) harm. These dangers are what bring the vast majority of patients into our Wildlife Care Center.

It is a great privilege to live in close proximity to wildlife, and we have a responsibility to learn how we can share the urban landscape with our wildlife neighbors. As we go into spring and summer, please be mindful of the lives near and around us, and the ways you can reduce negative impacts on them. Responsibly and safely manage your pets, keeping cats indoors, on leashes, or in catios, and keep dogs supervised and leashed. Save treescaping for the fall or winter, and do not take baby animals from their home unless you are certain the parents are no longer present. And as we head into our busiest season, remember that our Wildlife Hotline volunteers (503-292-0304 or [wildlife@audubonportland.org](mailto:wildlife@audubonportland.org)) are there for you if you have questions or run into a wildlife situation that you’re not sure how to humanely manage.



# Wildlife Care Center Scheduled to Reopen

by Stephanie Herman, Wildlife Care Center Manager

When four water pipes burst in the ceiling of the Wildlife Care Center on December 24, 2022, resulting in major water damage to our building's ceilings, floors, and walls, we were suddenly faced with a situation we've never faced: our care center could not continue to accept wildlife for care. Not only was it awfully wet in there, but the building would be under major construction during the repairs, which is a lot of noise, dust, and disturbance that would harm wild animals. But we couldn't reschedule injured wild animal appointments for a few months later. Injured and orphaned wildlife still needed help all over the Portland area, and we needed to do something. How could we make sure there was a resource for wildlife in need while our building was under repair?

Wildlife rehabilitation is a unique service that cannot function without a specialized facility. Our care center has a mix of features to support the complexities of wildlife care that can't be replicated easily—to take care of thousands of animals of more than 150 species, we need the medical equipment of an emergency veterinary hospital, the kitchen of a restaurant, the outdoor enclosures of a zoo, and the privacy and peace wild animals need to feel safe. This is why our search for the new site of our Wildlife Care Center is such a deliberative effort—not just any building or any land is suitable for wildlife rehabilitation.

So instead, with the help of our fantastic partners, including DoveLewis Emergency Animal Hospital, Cascades Raptor Center, Chintimini Wildlife Center, and the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, along with Oregon Humane Society, we came up with a plan. We accepted and stabilized patients in a temporary facility on Oregon Humane Society's campus before driving them to other wildlife hospitals for the long-term care they needed, and then drove them back up to their home territories for release. Unfortunately, this became more complicated in April when the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife instituted new requirements for the transport of wildlife between wildlife rehabilitation centers in response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. These new requirements ultimately forced Portland Audubon to step out from our facilitating role in this effort. But our partners continued to offer rehabilitation services and went above and beyond to help Portland's wildlife in addition to their own local patients.

It can't be overstated how much our partners stepped up! Portland Audubon accepts more than twice as many patients each year than any other center in the state, so helping to fill our shoes is a big ask for

these nonprofit centers, who are also still responsible for serving their local communities. And DoveLewis is a hugely important resource for domestic animal emergencies in Portland, and adding more wildlife patients to the docket (and finding physical space for them) was a big ask. Please share love and support for these dedicated organizations who opened their doors when Portland needed them.

And at last, it is with great joy that we share our expectation to be fully operational and back open for wildlife admissions in May. And because the old adage is often true, this particular cloud had a silver lining. We've tried to take full advantage of this unavoidable closure to address some real needs we have at the facility. Although we are still planning to build a new Wildlife Care Center at a second location in the Portland area, we'll be in this current building until that is done. So in addition to replacing everything damaged by the water, we are also updating our HVAC, electrical work, internet, and building layout. We should be more efficient, cleaner, and better able to do our work in our current building until we are able to move. When we do move out, and the current care center is converted to other uses, it will be much easier and in much better shape.

Thank you to everyone who has been supportive and patient during this chapter in the Wildlife Care Center's history. We are so thrilled to be back and fulfilling our mission of caring for injured and orphaned wildlife and the people who encounter them.



# A Big Sit Across the State: Nehalem, Hillsboro, and Malheur

by Allison Anholt, Coastal Community Science Biologist

Many birders are familiar with the concept of a Big Year, but in case you're not, it's when someone counts all the species of birds they can find within a specific geographic area in a single year. The subject was even brought to the big screen in the movie titled, you guessed it, *The Big Year*. Big Years require tons of effort: many Big Year birders spend hundreds or even thousands of hours (and dollars) over the 12 months driving, flying, and hiking in far-flung destinations. Clearly, this type of birding activity is not for everyone!

An abbreviated version of this birding bonanza is called a Big Day, which is exactly what it sounds like. In order to get the most species in a single day, you must target your efforts in the right place at the right time of year to maximize the available species. In the United States, Big Days typically happen in springtime and use lots of data to figure out when the neotropical migrants on their way to the boreal forests of Canada and the arctic tundra will be traveling through migration hotspots and when the local breeding birds will be in full swing. World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD), created by the Smithsonian Institution in 1993, celebrates this moment of bird convergence and is held annually on the second Saturdays of May (for northbound migrants) and October (for southbound migrants). Along with celebrating bird migration, WMBD also raises awareness of conservation issues and the challenges faced by migrating birds. Big Day birders across the Western Hemisphere will often schedule their count on this day and strive to identify as many birds as possible, whether through a 24-hour birding marathon in their

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Big Sits are accessible to more potential participants and provide migration snapshots that allow us to truly appreciate what our local birding hotspots mean to birds, whether it is a safe place to rest or a refueling stop on a long journey.

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local area, by hosting or attending festivals focused on migration, or by simply submitting eBird checklists.

Another way to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day is by place-based observation of birds as they migrate overhead or fuel up on plants and bugs below. This style of observation and counting is aptly called a Big Sit in birding vernacular. In addition to being much more relaxing than waking up at midnight to chase birds across hundreds of miles, Big Sits are accessible to more potential participants and provide migration snapshots that allow us to truly appreciate what our local birding hotspots mean to birds, whether it is a safe place to rest or a refueling stop on a long journey.

Portland Audubon is hosting three Big Sits on May 13, this year's World Migratory Bird Day, throughout important migratory habitats in Oregon: Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon, Jackson Bottom Wetlands in Hillsboro, and Nehalem on the northern Oregon coast.

The theme of this year's WMBD is the importance of water for migrating birds, and each Big Sit will take a snapshot of bird activity and illustrate the importance of diverse habitats. Come sit with us for as long as you'd like, whether that's 20 minutes, an hour, or four, as we celebrate and count the birds we can record right from our chairs! Bring your own chairs and binoculars, though each location will have a few to loan. We will provide beverages, snacks, and conversation!







## Oregon Big Sit Events on May 13

On Saturday, May 13, Portland Audubon is excited to welcome Oregonians for our first ever state-wide Big Sit!

Join us in Hillsboro, on the coast in Nehalem, or Malheur National Wildlife Refuge to enjoy World Migratory Bird Day from an accessible perch, and celebrate the sights and sounds of spring migration in community. We're hosting this inaugural year in three locations across the state!

### Hillsboro: Jackson Bottom Wetlands

**Saturday, May 13**  
8-10 a.m.

Join us for coffee and community as we listen to the sounds of spring migrant birds from the covered deck of Jackson Bottom's shelter. Drop in for 10 minutes, or stick around to explore the park. The North View parking lot has accessible parking, and the deck is reachable via a wheelchair-accessible ramp with wooden railings and compact gravel transitioning to wooden surface.

Contact: Camelia at  
[czollars@audubonportland.org](mailto:czollars@audubonportland.org)

### Nehalem: Alder Creek Farm

**Saturday, May 13**  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Explore the birding possibilities on the North Coast and the important efforts of local organizations to protect and help birds and the habitats they depend on, in partnership with Lower Nehalem Community Trust. RSVPs are welcomed but not mandatory.

For details, please visit:  
<https://www.nehalemtrust.org/birds/>

Contact: Allison at  
[aanholt@audubonportland.org](mailto:aanholt@audubonportland.org)

### Harney County: Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

**Saturday, May 13**  
8 a.m.-12 p.m.

Bring a blanket, bring a chair, borrow a chair, or park yourself on a bench. However you choose to count, you can join the fun. Stop by for 10 minutes, an hour, or the full four hours. The goal is to count as many species as possible in a morning at Malheur HQ, while enjoying coffee, doughnuts, and some fun family activities, including Bird Bingo. There is accessible parking and bathrooms at Headquarters, and most paths are paved.

Contact: Teresa at  
[twicks@audubonportland.org](mailto:twicks@audubonportland.org)

## FIELD NOTES

by Fern Wexler, Outings Leader  
& Environmental Educator

# It Takes a Village Flock

As breeding season begins, we have a chance to observe bird nesting behavior up close. Two seemingly very different backyard birds, Bushtits and American Crows, exhibit a surprising similarity this time of year—both of them practice “cooperative breeding,” where multiple birds work together to raise a common group of nestlings.

Although neither species is incapable of raising the next generation without assistance, both appreciate helping hands or beaks. Bushtits and crows are monogamous, staying together year after year instead of finding a new mate every spring, and both often reuse nests or nesting materials. This means they can fully devote their energy to raising nestlings and can fledge multiple broods in a year. How they select their helpers differs, however. While the assistants in crow nests skew male and are usually related to the offspring in some way (typically as older siblings or because they mated with the female in the pair), Bushtit helpers are often unrelated birds from the larger flock. Sometimes female Bushtit helpers will



Bushtit, photo by Mick Thompson.

take advantage of the situation and lay their eggs in the nest, but often they have no genetic stake in the babies they're raising. In both species, helpers will step up their duties if something happens to one half of the original pair even after the babies have fledged, helping to ensure the survival of their siblings or adoptees.

Next time you see an American Crow rooting through your garden or a Bushtit on your feeder, the hungry mouths they're rushing home to feed may not even be their own genetic offspring. It takes a flock to feed a hungry fledgling!

## SIGHTINGS

by Brodie Cass Talbott, Educator & Trips Specialist

A cold, wet winter seems to have delayed the blooming of many plants in our area, as well as the expected influx of spring migrants. Some birds, however, you can just about set a clock by, like the **Mountain Bluebirds** that once again arrived on Powell Butte mid-March. It has been a seemingly good year for these birds and **Say's Phoebe**s (which also migrate early, and share open breeding habitats east of the Cascades), with individuals being reported across the region.

Another “dryside” breeder has become quite the local celebrity, in the form of a **Loggerhead Shrike** found hunting insects near Company Lake in Troutdale, where the bird continued into April.

Gulls make many birders' heads spin, with their extremely similar plumage and penchant for hybridization, but the allure for many is that a very rare bird can be hiding in plain sight, as was the case with a **Slaty-backed Gull**, an East Asian species, found at Hayden Island in early March. And speaking of gulls, the annual smelt run was a bounty this year, with big runs in the Columbia near the mouth of the Cowlitz River, and another less-expected run at the mouth of the



Loggerhead Shrike, photo by Tara Lemezis.

Sandy River drawing thousands of gulls and hundreds of **Bald Eagles** even into April, when many of our wintering gulls have typically already moved on.

Statewide there have been a number of long-staying birds, including a **Pine Warbler** in Klamath Falls, a **Black-throated Blue Warbler** in Sutherlin, a **Common Eider** near Coquille, and an **Indigo Bunting** in Warrenton.

And for a welcome sign of spring, a **Whimbrel** was found in the Vancouver lowlands in early April. This species is always a rarity in the Portland area and represents our first notable migrant shorebird of the season.

Those are only a few of the rare birds reported across the region. **For corrections, tips, and reports, email Brodie Cass Talbott at [bcasstalbott@audubonportland.org](mailto:bcasstalbott@audubonportland.org), and for a more detailed weekly report, visit [audubonportland.org](http://audubonportland.org).**



# Audubon Birding Days and Field Classes

## Field Class: Forest Bathing for Birders

May 20 | 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

June 3 | 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

June 11 | 10 a.m.- 12 p.m.

Join Tia on a very slow-paced walk of two hours, exploring invitations and opening our senses to our place in nature alongside the birds. Please register separately for each session.

Fee: \$25 members / \$35 non-members

Guide: Dr. Tia Ho

## Field Class: Forest Therapy at Portland Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary

May 20 | 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Join Andrea Kreiner, a certified nature and forest therapy guide, for a slow and mindful sensory journey to connect with nature at the Portland Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary.

Fee: \$25 members / \$35 non-members

Instructor: Andrea Kreiner

## Audubon Birding Day: Oak Island Exploration

May 20 | 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Come bird with us as we explore the unique habitats of Sauvie Island's Oak Island Trail and adjacent Sturgeon Lake, hoping to encounter an abundance of migrating and breeding birds.

Fee: \$65 members / \$85 non-members

Leader: Ross Barnes-Rickett

## Audubon Birding Day: Willamette Birding—Baskett Slough NWR to Willamette Mission State Park

June 4 or June 18 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Spend a day at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge and Willamette Mission State Park searching for breeding birds in wetlands, floodplain forest, oak woodland, and Willamette Valley prairie. We'll also enjoy the wildflowers and butterflies we see along the way.

Fee: \$85 members / \$115 non-members

Leader: Dan van den Broek

## Field Trip: Virginia Lake

June 9 | 8-11 a.m.

We will bird together at Wapato Access Greenway State Park along Virginia Lake on the western edge of Sauvie Island. This park contains rare oak savannah and an extensive wetland around Virginia Lake. The riparian deciduous woods at Wapato Access often contain Osprey, Hutton's and Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and much more!

Fee: \$45 members / \$65 non-members

Leader: Erin Law

## Field Trip: Woodpeckers of Portland at Sandy River Delta

June 16 | 7-10 a.m.

Explore the unique open habitat of the Sandy River Delta, searching for woodpeckers!

Fee: \$45 members / \$65 non-members

Leader: Brodie Cass Talbott

Sign up for trips at  
[bit.ly/PA-Birding-Days](https://bit.ly/PA-Birding-Days)



Common Yellowthroat,  
photo by Mick Thompson.



## NATIVE PLANT SALE

### Native Plant Sale: In May, 25% of Proceeds Benefit Portland Audubon!

If you mention Portland Audubon when you check out at Sauvie Island Natives Nursery during May, 25% of your purchase will go to fund our programs. This is the fourth year Portland Audubon has benefited from this generous partnership—the nursery is owned by former board member Jane Hartline and her husband and current board member Mark Greenfield, so supporting our cause is a natural fit.

**Nursery visits are by appointment so that you get time to pick your plants and get advice if you want it.** Schedule online and see the plant selection at [www.sauvienatives.com/availability](http://www.sauvienatives.com/availability). Be sure to allow time for a spin around their pond and three-acre habitat-restoration area, which is filled with mature natives and alive with birds. Bring along binoculars if you have them, because the birding is excellent.

The nursery has a large selection of native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, ferns, and more. Trilliums raised by Portland Audubon volunteers are featured at the sale, and 100% of the proceeds from these go to Portland Audubon.

Directions to the nursery are on their website, on the same page where you book your visit. Weekend times fill up quickly, so book soon!

Learn more: [sauvienatives.com](http://sauvienatives.com)



Cost Involved



Public Transit Available

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Free



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Virtual Event or Program



Western Meadowlark, by Ronna Fujisawa.

## CLASSES FOR ADULTS

### Birds and Their Habitats Series

May 4, *Birds of the Coast*

May 16, *Birds of the Grasslands and Open Habitats*

May 23, *Birds of the Forest*

These classes will feature a variety of birds and where to find them in certain habitats, with tips for identifying them by sight and sound. Register separately for each class.

Fee: \$20 members / \$30 non-members

Class time: 6-7 p.m.

Instructor: John Rakestraw



### In-Person Watercolor Painting with Ronna

May 13, *Blackbirds* | 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Discover the beauty of several species of blackbirds by learning the art of bird watercolor painting. Ronna will dive into several techniques on how to create black and darks with watercolor. This class is appropriate for intermediate and ambitious beginners.

Fee: \$55 members / \$75 non-members

Instructor: Ronna Fujisawa



### Journaling Summer Series

May 20, *Capturing Bird Basics*

June 10, *Quick Studies of Birds*

July 22, *Get That Bird Pose!*

August 26, *Suggesting Birds and Their Habitats*

We will explore excellent tools for recording your bird experiences, both at home and in the field. Each in-person class focuses on a specific aspect of journaling and reviews the basics. No art or birding experience is needed! Register separately for each class.

Fee: \$55 members / \$75 non-members

Class time: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Instructor: Jude Siegel





Barn Swallow, photo by Mick Thompson.

## CLASSES FOR ADULTS

### Online Watercolor Painting with Ronna

May 25, *The Red-breasted Sapsucker*

June 13, *The Western Tanager*

Join these live, online classes to paint alongside Ronna Fujisawa, an experienced watercolor painter, art educator, and bird enthusiast. This class is appropriate for intermediate and ambitious beginners. Register separately for each class.

Fee: \$25 members / \$35 non-members

Class time: 6-7:30 p.m.

Instructor: Ronna Fujisawa



### The Wonderful World of Woodpeckers Series

June 7, *Understanding Woodpeckers*

June 14, *Portland Woodpeckers*

June 21, *Oregon Woodpeckers*

Learn the natural history of all woodpeckers through the lens of our local Oregon representatives of the family. You'll also learn helpful ID tips and where to find them. Please register separately for each class.

Fee: \$20 members / \$30 non-members

Class time: 6-7 p.m.

Instructor: Brodie Cass Talbott



### Swallows!

June 12 | 6-7 p.m.

Summer is here... and so are the swallows! Celebrate summer with this exploration of our favorite aerial insectivores.

Fee: \$20 members / \$30 non-members

Instructor: Brodie Cass Talbott



Sign up for classes and trips at  
[bit.ly/pdxaudubon-classes](https://bit.ly/pdxaudubon-classes)



## SUMMER CAMP



## SWIFTS Nature Camps with Space!

Our camps combine art, science experiments, and games with explorations of our beautiful 172-acre Nature Sanctuary neighboring Forest Park and adventures all over the Pacific Northwest. Whether your child is a budding artist, theater performer or interested in mastering archery, we've got something for every kid! Check out our camps with space below:

- **Grades 2-3:** AWE-some Artists campers will build on their powers of observation by exploring the Sanctuary, journaling and creating what they experience in nature along the way. (August 7-11)
- **Grades 3-5:** In Story + Theater + Nature Camp, an On-the-Go camp, youth will create their own short play with themes found around them in natural settings – and on the last day of camp, campers will perform what they've created for their families! (August 7-11)
- **Grades 6-8:** Master the art of archery and gain vital wilderness skills in Archery and Wilderness. Campers will learn to shoot a bow, gain skills that are based on the essential concepts of shelter, water, fire, and food, learn nature awareness techniques, debris hut construction, Leave No Trace principles, animal tracking, and staying found. Spend Wednesday-Friday at Marmot Cabin, a perfect setting to hone the skills you learn throughout the week. (June 26-30, July 24-28 or August 21-25)



[bit.ly/PA-SummerCamps](https://bit.ly/PA-SummerCamps)



Ash-throated Flycatcher, photo by Becky Matsubara.

## **Pacific Northwest Trip: From Cedars to Sage—Birding Along the Deschutes**

June 2-4, 2023

On this three-day tour, we'll explore the avifauna and natural history of the East Cascades, Columbia Plateau, and Blue Mountain ecoregions, searching for Williamson's Sapsucker in conifer-dominated forests, Ash-throated Flycatcher in open oak scrub, and Sage Thrasher and Vesper Sparrow in the sagebrush steppe.

Fee: \$745 members / \$945 non-members

Leaders: Brodie Cass Talbott and Erin Law

## **Coastal New England: Shorebirds, Seabirds, and Whales**

September 3-9, 2023

Bird the stunning coast of picturesque New England with author Cameron Cox and Portland Audubon staff member Erin Law. On this week-long adventure, we'll enjoy shorebirds, seabirds, and whales with a side of warblers and clam chowder! The trip is timed to overlap the end of peak shorebird season and the beginning of peak fall warbler migration.

Fee: \$3,395 members / \$3,895 non-members

Leaders: Cameron Cox and Erin Law

## **Pacific Northwest Trip: The Shorebird Splendor of Grays Harbor**

September 9-11, 2023

Explore West Coast birding hotspot Grays Harbor! From Marbled Godwit flocks in Westport to Sooty Shearwaters on the horizon, this trip will excite any birdwatcher and ocean lover.

Fee: \$595 members / \$695 non-members

Leader: Stefan Schlick



Saltmarsh Sparrow, photo by Frank Lehman.

## **Pacific Northwest Trip: Raptor Migration at Green Ridge**

September 23-24, 2023

Green Ridge is Oregon's unsung raptor migration hotspot, with comparable numbers of raptors to the more well-known Bonney Butte, but more accessible local birding. We will augment an afternoon of raptor counting with birding around the Sisters and Black Butte area.

Fee: \$215 members / \$265 non-members

Leader: Brodie Cass Talbott

## **The Best of Trinidad and Tobago: Birding and Wildlife**

April 1-15, 2024

From the unforgettable experience of watching thousands of Scarlet Ibis return to their roost to catching a glimpse of the critically endangered Trinidad Piping-Guan sipping water from a bromeliad, you are sure to have the trip of a lifetime with Faraaz and Erin on Trinidad and Tobago.

Fee: \$6,495 members / \$7,095 non-members

Leaders: Faraaz Abdool and Erin Law

## **Spain: Extremadura, Doñana, and Sierra de Gredos**

April 27-May 11, 2024

Join Stefan and Randy to explore Europe's birding hotspot: Spain! The timing is perfect to witness the trailing end of migration and Spain's birds in their breeding glory. Combine fabulous birding with excellent food, fantastic scenery, and ease of logistics, and you have an amazing trip that you won't want to miss!

Fee: \$4,495 members / \$4,995 non-members

Leaders: Stefan Schlick, Randy Hill, and local guides



## NEWS FROM THE COAST

## Spotlight on Black Oystercatchers

by Allison Anholt, Coastal Community Science Biologist

You generally hear Black Oystercatchers before you spot them. These visually striking birds have a long orange-red bill and bright yellow eyes but still blend in amazingly well with their habitat: the rocky intertidal zones of the coast. The brown-black rocks are the same color as the oystercatcher, and the orange bill looks a lot like the arm of a sea star. Oystercatchers spend most of their time on these intertidal rocks, prying off limpets or eating mussels (but rarely oysters). They even lay their speckled eggs directly on the rocks, adding bits of shell and gravel so their eggs blend in. This camouflage would make them hard to find if it weren't for their boisterous personalities. During the summertime breeding season, oystercatchers fight constantly with any other oystercatcher that tries to nest, forage, or even fly by too close. If you visit the Oregon Coast's rocky habitats, the shrill repeated call of an oystercatcher is sure to be your soundtrack.

Since 2015, community scientists for Portland Audubon have monitored nesting Black Oystercatchers along the length of the Oregon Coast to estimate their population size and monitor nesting success (the ability to fledge chicks). We also track the threats they face, including disturbance from people and dogs, climate-change effects on intertidal food sources, and predator impacts. Oystercatcher monitoring also creates stewardship opportunities for volunteers at some of Oregon's newly designated rocky habitat conservation sites that Portland Audubon had a hand in creating.

In 2022, community scientists documented the best breeding year for Oregon's oystercatchers: a whopping 80% of nesting oystercatchers hatched chicks, and 48% of nests recorded at least one fledgling. We hope to document another incredible year in 2023!

**Please join us for an upcoming training session to be a part of these efforts.**

- ▶ **Virtual Training**  
May 4, 6-8 p.m.
- ▶ **In-Person Training (Cannon Beach)**  
May 7, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

If you have questions or would like to RSVP, please contact Allison at [aanholt@audubonportland.org](mailto:aanholt@audubonportland.org).

## NEWS FROM EASTERN OREGON

## "Water Sustains Bird Life"

by Teresa Wicks, Eastern Oregon Biologist

I'm writing this as it is again snowing in Harney County.

This is, by my estimation, our fourth winter this year. We need the moisture, so we're thankful for that. But really, we need this moisture and then another two wet years to solidly pull us out of drought. The continued snowfall and the 12-30 inches lingering in meadows and yards in Harney County has us thinking about water. The irrigation season starts April 1.

Water allocations for irrigation are determined by the snow water equivalent (how much water is in the snow) on April 1. It's not clear that the Silvies River is actually thawed enough to move water, or that the water will even go anywhere with all the snow in the fields. It will be interesting to see how this year differs from previous seasons. It will also be interesting to see how bird use of wetlands in the Harney Basin varies, or not, this year compared to drier years. Thus far, the Sandhill Cranes and waterfowl don't seem to mind the snow or the likely chilly snow puddles.

The International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) theme for 2023 is "Water Sustains Bird Life," and because of the extended drought, the wet winter, and the potentially dire consequences of drought and climate change for birds of the Pacific Flyway, this year's Eastern Oregon bird outings are also themed around water. Many of the outings will travel along portions of the Blitzen River at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, and a handful are in the forests of the Silvies River Watershed. We're kicking off the outings with a Big Sit for IMBD at Malheur HQ and will wrap them up by celebrating the Global Bird Weekend in October. The full outings schedule is available on the Restore Malheur Facebook page.



White-faced Ibis, photo by Mick Thompson.

# Digging Deeper: Backyard Habitat Certification Program Update

by Katherine Noble, Backyard Habitat Certification Program Co-Manager

The Backyard Habitat Certification Program (BHCP) enters its 17th year of operation this year. This program, co-managed by Portland Audubon and Columbia Land Trust, now covers Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Clark Counties. BHCP focuses on five main elements: planting native plants, removing noxious weeds, reducing pesticide use, improving stormwater management, and increasing wildlife stewardship within participants' yards and at community sites within the urban areas. In 2022, BHCP hit a programmatic milestone of enrolling the 10,000th participant! Our enrolled participants' land now totals over 2,453 acres, which together is about four times the size of Powell Butte Nature Park in East Portland. These pockets of habitat form important corridors to support wildlife, manage stormwater, and increase access to greenspaces within urban spaces.

BHCP is composed of a small team of staff, contract technicians, and dedicated program volunteers. Recently our team has seen a few changes. Megan Van de Mark left her position of co-manager this past winter for her new role as deputy director of Friends of Trees. In February, I was hired as her replacement and I am quickly getting up to speed. I joined Columbia Land Trust Co-manager Susie Peterson, Program Coordinator JP Marchetti-Mendez, Community Coordinator Victor Vasquez-Ibarra, and Interim Contracts Coordinator Mariah Jaing.

Since our expansion to the four-county area in 2020, BHCP has focused on digging deeper into its work in these urban spaces. Foremost in our goal is centering equity within our work. We know that greenspaces aren't evenly distributed throughout the four-county area due to historic and systemic disparities in investment within different neighborhoods. Not only do these disparities affect whether or not you have access to greenspaces dependent, but research by Dr. Vivek Shandas of Portland State University shows that these same communities experience up to 13 degrees higher temperatures in peak summer weather than neighborhoods with more greenspace, creating what is known as the Urban Heat Island Effect. This



is only one of many ways that we see climate change disproportionately affecting marginalized communities. By intentionally focusing our outreach and resources with this in mind, BHCP can help mitigate these effects and build climate resiliency within our program area.

BHCP has been working to identify and mitigate the barriers that marginalized communities experience when accessing a program like ours. One way we are doing this is by partnering with Community Engagement Liaisons (CELs) to complete surveys with members of specific communities within our four-county service area that infrequently access our program. Over 240 surveys were completed through these liaisons, and we are beginning to compile the results and identify ways we can shift our program to become more accessible to these communities.

Additionally, BHCP hired a community coordinator to specifically focus on building partnerships with a focus on equity. Victor Ibarra recently celebrated his one-year anniversary with the team and has focused his work on building depth to existing community partnerships such as those with Verde in the Cully neighborhood of Portland.

BHCP encompasses more than just residential yards. Our program also works with community spaces such as schools, places of worship, and businesses. Utilizing specific funding Portland Audubon was awarded last





year, our program has been able to focus on supporting community sites that emphasize public equity and accessibility within a certain geographic area. Through this project, we are piloting a stipend program and working with the Connecting Canopies coalition to provide a workforce component to our partnerships and help with the installation of naturescapes and other on-site rehabilitation work. Connecting Canopies is a collaborative between the Blueprint Foundation, Urban Greenspaces Institute, Portland State University, and the Nature Conservancy to design a green sector career training program for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) youth and young adults and create a pathway for entering the environmental job sector. A naturescape at Buckman Elementary was recently installed within this model. The project was very successful in its naturescape installation while providing a workforce development opportunity to the current cohort of Connecting Canopies trainees. We are excited to continue expanding this and similar models that will mitigate financial, physical, and resource barriers for our participants.

BHCP would not be successful without our many community partners, funders, volunteers, and participants. To learn more about how you can enroll in the Backyard Habitat Program or what you can do in your outdoor space, visit our website at: [www.backyardhabitats.org](http://www.backyardhabitats.org)

## Partner Spotlight: Verde

BHCP's partnership with Verde has existed for many years. Verde has long offered free rain-garden installations to low-income homeowners. In recent years, Verde and BHCP joined forces to offer free native plants and free naturescaping so that participants can benefit from low-maintenance landscaping while increasing wildlife habitat.

Additionally, two Verde staff, Nestor Campos and Raina Brot-Goldberg, have been trained through BHCP as technicians to complete initial site visit reports with Urban Habitat Program participants who have also enrolled in BHCP. Over the past couple of years, Nestor, education coordinator with Verde, has identified over 30 low-income homeowners in the Cully neighborhood who have enrolled in BHCP and have received free installations with the help of students from the Multnomah Youth Cooperative through Reynolds Learning Academy.

These spring and fall events are led by Nestor and Raina, environmental education program coordinator with Verde, with support from Victor, with BHCP, and Columbia Slough Watershed Council. These are energy-filled events that incorporate education and skill-building for the students, provide community members with beautiful new yard spaces that support local wildlife, and expand urban greenspaces in historically less green neighborhoods. **Already in 2023, over 270 native plants have been installed over 1910 square feet, with more scheduled installations ahead.**

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“Working together provides a synergy to both programs. Through the partnership, Verde has access to educational resources and the structure of the BHCP program while BHCP has access to work closer with new audiences including people of color and low-income homeowners.”

- Nestor Campos

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# Register Now for Birdathon!

by Sarah Swanson, Event Manager

There's still time to take part in Birdathon, a fun spring tradition and our biggest fundraiser of the year. Birdathon runs from April 29 to June 4 and there are spaces on a variety of teams that you can join, including the four below.

Enjoy a Big Day tour of Multnomah County hotspots, relaxing board game and birding combo, learn about urban conservation as you bird, or combine birding and cycling. You can also start your own team or do a solo Birdathon.

## Can't participate this year?

Donate to your favorite team or participant or make a general Birdathon donation to support Portland Audubon. Visit [portlandaudubon.secsweet.com](http://portlandaudubon.secsweet.com) to register, donate, or read descriptions of all the Birdathon teams. Your support of Birdathon is vital to our conservation, education, wildlife rehabilitation, and land stewardship work across Oregon.

## Game Birds

May 13 (Saturday)

Join Assistant Director of Development Matthew Hushbeck for a relaxing time playing Wingspan and birding in Portland Audubon's Heron Hall. This is a "Big Sit"-style Birdathon and there is no walking necessary to participate. We'll watch the bird feeders and scan the treetops for Pileated Woodpeckers, Western Tanagers, and Pacific-slope Flycatchers. We'll also play some rounds of Wingspan, a beautifully illustrated board game featuring 170 North American birds. Don't know how to play Wingspan? We'll teach you! Beginning birders and board gamers are welcome!

## Green City Swallows

May 6 (Saturday)

Interim Urban Conservation Director Micah Meskel will guide this team through birding hotspots along the Willamette River in North Portland while tying in information about Portland Audubon's urban conservation agenda. Despite the urban setting,



## Register Today

[birdathon.audubonportland.org](http://birdathon.audubonportland.org)

we will likely find a wonderful variety of birds including migrant warblers, Rufous Hummingbirds, Warbling Vireos, Western Tanagers, and lots more! The trip will finish at a brewery in North Portland where we'll talk birds and future conservation work.

## Mültley Crüe

May 7 (Sunday)

Join Ross Barnes-Rickett and Elora Arding for a Multnomah County BIG DAY! We will meet up at the Delta Park/Vanport MAX Station overflow parking lot. From there, we will caravan to various local birding hotspots in search of a variety of waterfowl, songbirds, and shorebirds, which should be moving through during this peak spring migration window. This is an all-day event and we'll be birding hard!

## Torta-eating Towhees

May 6 (Saturday)

This team is for birders who also like to ride bikes and eat sandwiches. Meet leader Audrey Tawdry at Guero in the morning for cups of coffee/tea and breakfast snacks and stretches. Then we will hop on our bikes for a ride to Mount Tabor! We will spend a few hours catching our breath, listening to birdsong, looking at trees, listening to treesong, and looking at birds. Then we get to fly down Mount Tabor back to Guero for sandwiches (or other snacks) and souvenirs.



Thank You to Our Birdathon Sponsors!







## Visit Julio and Xena at Their New Enclosures

by Katie Newton, Ambassador Animal Care and Outreach Coordinator

The Ambassador Animal Program at Portland Audubon has been a key component for our conservation messaging and gives the public the opportunity to see wildlife up close and personal. While the Wildlife Care Center's ultimate goal is to release wildlife back into the wild after rehabilitation, there are occasionally unique cases where the Ambassador Animal Program can offer a safe and enriching environment to otherwise unreleasable wild animals, providing these animals a chance to thrive under our specialized care. Our ambassadors are important to the community and our organization for providing educational opportunities to tens of thousands of people.

After our tearful goodbyes to Aristophanes the Raven and Ruby the Turkey Vulture as they left for a new adventure at the Point Defiance Zoo in Tacoma, Washington, we prioritized moving our other resident ambassador birds to the spacious enclosures on our campus trails. This has been an exciting transition after rehoming our beloved Aristophanes and Ruby, who are doing well and adapting to their new home. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium will wait until the animals have gone through quarantine and are fully settled in before their public debut. The timeline is unknown, as Ari and Ruby will dictate their training process. Once they make their big premiere, we will share the news with you.

In the meantime, we are thrilled to announce that Julio, our Great Horned Owl, and Xena, our American Kestrel, have moved into their new homes after we adequately prepared these large enclosures for each of them. Both birds require perches of specific diameters and different textures to ensure foot health. Perches were placed in different locations and heights that allowed the birds to safely move around their enclosures, choose where they would like to perch, have the option to hide, and experience a variety of foliage, rocks, and stumps. Additionally, each bird was provided with two nest boxes for them to engage in natural nesting behaviors. We provided Julio with a ground nest scrape for further nesting opportunities, and Xena was outfitted with several high perches as American Kestrels naturally avoid ground predators by perching on taller structures. Many thanks to the staff and volunteers who helped to accomplish this large project!

We encourage you to stop by our trailside enclosures and welcome these two ambassadors with open hearts. Interpretive educational opportunities are in the works, and Portland Audubon is thrilled to teach wide audiences about these special birds and share their story.





Julio, photo by Tara Lemezis.

### About Julio ▲

Julio hatched in spring of 2000. She was found as a baby after the tree containing her nest was cut down. Unfortunately, the people who found her did not have the training, facilities, or permits to care for her, but did keep her for five years. Because of this, she never learned how to be an owl, and returning her to the wild would put Julio and any humans she might encounter in danger. She arrived at Portland Audubon in spring of 2005 and joined our Ambassador Animal team shortly thereafter.



Xena, photo by Tara Lemezis.

### About Xena ▲

Xena hatched in spring 2017 and was brought to the Wildlife Care Center in June of 2017. She had a broken wing and broken leg when she arrived, but we are unsure of the cause of her injuries. Her bones have healed nicely, and though she can fly well in her enclosure, she doesn't have the ability to fly adequately to survive in the wild, and therefore can't be released.

## EAGLE NEST RESERVE VINEYARD & WINERY GRAND OPENING





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# Interview: Laura Whittemore on Her Time at Portland Audubon and Her Migration East

Birder, educator, and editor extraordinaire, Laura Whittemore has been a part of the Portland Audubon community for more than 30 years. Whether leading bird song walks as a volunteer, teaching classes, leading a Birdathon team, or working closely with our staff to copyedit the Warbler, Laura has long been a member of the flock. It's with great sadness for us, but excitement for her, that Laura's time in Portland is coming to an end. In May, Laura will move to Madison, Wisconsin. If she misses us terribly we hope she can be comforted by the over 30(!) warbler species outside her door.

We wanted to catch up with Laura before she left to hear reflections about her time as a part of the community, and what's next. Although Laura is moving, we're thankful to say that she's staying on as our Warbler copyeditor, just from a different time zone. And surely she also leaves behind everything she's taught us about birds over the last three decades.

**You've been a part of the Portland Audubon community since the early 90s. How did you first get involved and what made you stay?**

I graduated from Lewis and Clark College in 1990 with a biology degree and wanted to put myself near birds, so I started volunteering in the store, in the Care Center, and at the front desk. Once I started working at Backyard Bird Shop in 1994 I did my first Gonzo Birdathon with a store team, led bird walks, and eventually started teaching beginning birding when Adult Education Coordinator Dave Helzer recruited me. I was terrified to teach, certain I couldn't do it, but I remember Dave saying, "You can and you will." So I did.

I stayed because I found I was pretty good at it, it was personally gratifying, and there was a big demand for beginner classes. Later, Steve Engel helped me diversify, and that's when the birding by ear classes were born.

**You've always had a focus on teaching beginner birders and birding by ear. What about those subjects keeps you interested?**

Teaching beginners keeps me fresh. They ask really good questions and make me think. I don't have to know everything about birds to teach new birders, but I'm patient and encouraging, and I'm enthusiastic, all of which have been essential to teaching beginners and building their confidence. Birding can be a little scary to delve into, so it's been my goal to make birding accessible, because birding is for everyone.

Once I realized I knew just enough about bird voices to teach other people, I was on it. Steve and I came up with a five-session workshop to allow for lots of repetition and reinforcement, the keys to learning bird songs. Those classes filled year after year with waiting lists. When you open your ears to birds, well, you're never the same. And beginners just need someone to say "That's a Song Sparrow" over and over until they can say it themselves with certainty. Apps are great, but nothing beats in-person learning outdoors.

**Where are you heading when you leave Portland?**

I am moving to Madison, Wisconsin, to give this West Coast girl a new experience. I have family and friends in the region and have spent much time there over the years. But the snow...we shall see how I fare!

**What will you miss the most about the Portland Audubon community?**

Leading the Cooper Mountain morning bird song walks. I am very sad that I only got to lead them one spring.

**What PNW species will you miss the most?**

Bushtits. Definitely Bushtits.

**What three birding spots in Oregon are your very favorite?**

Winter coastal birding at Barview Jetty and Three Graces north of Tillamook, spring or early summer at Malheur NWR, and anytime on Sauvie Island.

**You'll be in Madison for Birdathon this year but you're still raising funds for Portland Audubon. What's your Birdathon's new name?**

Cardinal Sins. Feel free to pledge me! I can't wait to rack up the species! Stay well, everyone, and keep on birding!



Keep in touch with Laura on Instagram (@kingbird68) or via her website at [laurawhittemore.com](http://laurawhittemore.com)

# Dippers Who Don't Dip

by Brodie Cass Talbott, Educator & Trips Specialist

On a recent trip out to The Dalles, we made a quick diversion to the cliff overlooking the tiny gorge at the mouth of Fifteenmile Creek, where it joins the Columbia River in the spillway of The Dalles Dam. Occasionally I've seen American Dippers in this creek, and, similar to owls, once you've seen a dipper in one spot, you will forever look for them in that spot.

After a brief scan of the little waterslide passing over the basalt creekbed into the pool below, I found my quarry: two little pink toothpicks topped by a slate-gray potato.

"Dipper!" I called to the group and set up the scope for looks. It seemed easier than usual to share views of this bird—it remained still, perched on the rocks rather than dunking its head, bobbing along the surface, and plunging headlong into the creek as they usually do. Instead, it stayed perfectly immobile. "The dipper isn't dipping," someone remarked. I had primed the group, some of whom had never seen a dipper, for its eponymous behavior: constant dipping up and down as it bent at the knees, seemingly for no reason.

Scientists have been pondering this dipping for some time. Some species will bob, like a Rock Wren, or teeter, like a Spotted Sandpiper, but nothing dips quite like a dipper—not even some dippers. There are five species of dipper in the world, and two, the South American species, don't dip. They are also the only ones that don't habitually forage underwater.

This coincidence, of these two being so different from their three cousins, hints strongly at what I have always thought to be the most convincing argument for why dippers dip—they're trying to see into the water, or at least gain some depth perception of the rapid waters they are about to enter.

Another reality of life for most dippers is that they often occupy noisy environments full of riffles and rapids. While their calls cut through the droning water, maybe the dipping is an easier way to advertise where you are if you're a dipper—after all, there's only so much good habitat for a dipper, and they're accordingly territorial.

The last argument I've heard for dipping is that it's somehow a predator deterrent, but I've never been quite sure how that would work.

As the group pondered these questions, a hand went up and pointed to an overhead raptor. We watched as it flew away from us and cruised into a stand of dense trees some 100 yards downstream. Following the bird the whole way, we could see the long tail, steady flight, and large size of a Cooper's Hawk.

As our attention turned back to the dipper, we noticed a little half dip. Then another. And another, as it gradually returned to its regular dipping routine, wandered to the water's edge, and poked its head in.

Slowly, recognition washed over us. Had the dipper seen the Cooper's Hawk before any of us had? Every birder has been humbled by how much better birds are at finding predators than we are (the survival imperative is a hell of a drug).

More intriguingly, had the bird frozen because it had seen the Cooper's Hawk? Had we just seen this bird disprove one of the theories on dipping, in real time?

We posed the question aloud, but before we were able to take ourselves too seriously—"Ooh, it dove in!"—we got back to the simple pleasure of watching a dipper dive and swim and hop and run.



American Dipper, photo by Larry Lamsa.





Osprey, photo by Mick Thompson.

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by Marcy Cottrell Houle

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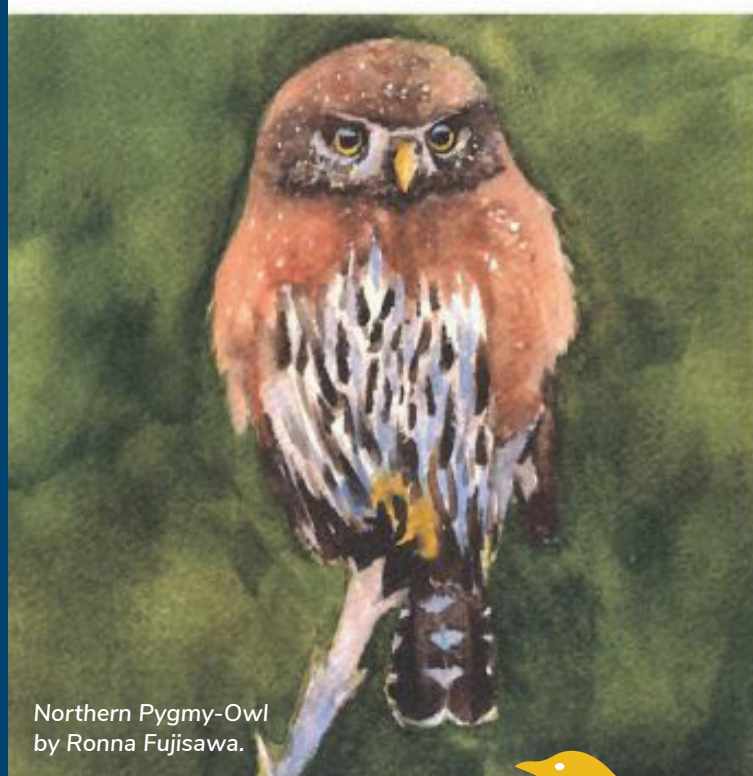
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Northern Pygmy-Owl  
by Ronna Fujisawa.

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Photo courtesy of Sauvie Island Natives.

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**On the Cover:** Great Blue Heron, photo by Mick Thompson.

**On the Inside Cover:** Black Oystercatcher, photo by Mick Thompson; Hummingbird nest, photo by Ashley Lema; Julio the Ambassador Owl, photo by Tara Lemezis; American Dipper, photo by Larry Lamsa.

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What is the smallest dabbling  
duck in North America?

- A. Blue-winged Teal
- B. Green-winged Teal
- C. Cinnamon Teal
- D. Northern Shoveler