



TOGETHER FOR NATURE

Dammed Columbia
November 9-12, 2023
Tentative Trip Itinerary

Thursday, November 9

Meet at our departure location in Portland, Oregon. Group introductions and load vans. We'll visit Bonneville Dam where we'll orient ourselves to the epic journey of our cherished Pacific salmon, and we'll bird at nearby Eagle Creek, hoping to see American Dippers among other winter specialties. We'll continue to Hood River for birds on the shore and enjoy lunch in town. In The Dalles, we'll be watching for Red-breasted Mergansers and Red-necked Grebes, and we'll hope to see good numbers of wintering Bald Eagles as they gather at the dam and start to form their winter roost. We'll ground ourselves in Indigenous history at Celilo. The Dalles Dam flooded the famous native fishing grounds at Celilo Falls, and the Yakima Nation is still calling for restoration of this sacred site.

Lodging: The Dalles, Oregon

Friday, November 10

Birds, wildlife and geology will all be on our radar today. The morning, we'll explore John Day Dam, which once boasted the highest lock lift in the world, and Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge—a little known gem in Northeast Oregon and one of the first refuges established in the state. After lunch in Umatilla, we'll venture onto the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge which was created as mitigation for the John Day Dam downriver, and we'll wrap up the day birding at Boardman Marina where wintering waterbirds are often seen in good numbers.

Lodging: Boardman, Oregon

Saturday, November 11

Our focus today will be McNary Dam and multiple units at McNary National Wildlife Refuge, which was created as the dam's mitigation site. Rare gulls are often found here in fall migration, and wintering raptors and songbirds will add to our growing bird list. After lunch, we'll explore Sacajawea State Park at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers, then head upstream to Ice Harbor Lock and Dam, one of the dams on the lower Snake River currently being considered for removal in order to boost the recovery of endangered salmon and steelhead in the region. This Dam impounds Lake Sacajawea, where winter waterfowl numbers should be enjoyable.

Lodging: Richland, Washington

Sunday, November 12

Our final day will be a full one. We'll continue upstream on the Columbia to Priest Rapids dam and a visit to the Wanapum Heritage Center. This dam is located upriver from Hanford Reach, the only free-flowing, non-tidal stretch of the Columbia River in the US. We'll enjoy a variety of birds here, but will especially keep our eyes open for winter loons and grebes. We'll then make our way back home via Toppenish and Maryhill, looking for more raptors and open country species along the journey.

Trip Leaders

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