The Year of Action
by Nick Hardigg

Toward the end of 2019, two major studies about alarming declines in North American bird populations were released. “Three Billion Birds Gone,” reported Cornell Lab of Ornithology, while National Audubon recorded “More Than 1-in-4 Birds Gone” since 1970.

As birders and conservationists, you probably noticed changes in our wildlife for years, trends that we have been working to reverse for over a century. These studies brought that reality to the greater public, resulting in a rallying cry to work even harder to protect our natural world. Our goal to bring more people together for nature couldn’t be better timed.

While daunting in scale, the successes we share in The Warbler show that our collective actions clearly make a difference. I invite you to make 2020 a year of action: to show up, speak up, and advocate for the things you care about. Here are a few ways that you can make a difference with Portland Audubon:

• Sign up for the Backyard Habitat Certification Program and contribute to habitat connectivity
• Join our activist list to stay up to date on conservation issues and get involved
• Participate in a community science project to contribute to ongoing research
• Reduce wildlife hazards at home
• Sign up for our upcoming Birdathon to raise funds for birds while watching birds
• Volunteer with us
• Take a class, go on a trip, or sign up for camp
• Make a gift and consider including us in your estate
• Inspire yourself and others by getting outside more and bringing a friend with you!

However you choose to act, you have the power to make a difference. Thank you for taking action for nature.
Enrollment is a flat fee of $35, and it comes with the unique benefit of having a trained technician come to your home to provide guidance as you build your plan for restoration. Participants also get exclusive discounts to local nurseries, gardening resources, and other support services.

“Renters, homeowners, schools, religious institutions, businesses, retirement communities—there’s a place for everyone,” says Columbia Land Trust Backyard Program Co-Manager Susie Peterson. “You don’t have to know anything about gardening when you sign up, and your garden doesn’t have to be in any kind of shape. We’re here to offer support and resources so that you can get started on whatever habitat projects you’re interested in.”

Partnerships are also critical to the success of the program.

“We couldn’t do this work on our own. We work with more than 70 funding partners, nonprofits, businesses, and municipalities as well as nearly 100 volunteers who make this program successful,” says Susie.

This past year was a time of growth and change for Backyard Habitat. They reached a major milestone, completing the program’s expansion to include Multnomah, Clark, Clackamas, and Washington Counties, and also experienced a leadership change when Nikkie West, Portland Audubon’s program co-manager for eight years, moved on to spend more time with her young daughter and start her own business. Megan Van de Mark came on board as the new co-manager in early autumn from Friends of Trees and has hit the ground running.

Now that the program has finished expanding geographically, Backyard Habitat is looking to cultivate meaningful ways to bring in more people and grow into new communities.

“We are looking forward to deepening the relationships that we have with frontline communities,” says Backyard Habitat Coordinator JP Marchetti-Mendez. “We are brainstorming how we can strengthen the program and make it even more relevant for more folks, such as incorporating food production, climate resiliency strategies and beyond.”

Stories of Backyard Habitat Builders

Sparking Passion, Creating Connectivity
Robin Jensen, who has been involved with Backyard Habitat every step of the way since 2006, has been astounded to see its growth.

“The way that it has exploded is amazing. And the fact that there’s been continuous momentum and we’ve been able to reach surrounding counties,” said Robin.

Robin’s roots in the Backyard Habitat program ran deep. Not only did she design the ubiquitous certification sign and logo, but her platinum yard in SW Portland was one of the first to get certified. She was also hired as one of the first Backyard Habitat technicians and has visited more than 770 yards, helping others on their path to certification.

She is a passionate advocate for the program and an integral part of the community.

“I really believe in what we’re doing,” she said. “Having watched the bird population in my yard over the last 27 years, I know that the number of birds has increased threefold.”

A Native Oak Savanna in the City
Like many people when they first enroll in the Backyard Habitat program, Tricia McFadden didn’t know much about plants when she started restoration on her oversized yard in Milwaukie. But as she began reimagining her low-maintenance, inviting backyard, she was intrigued by the idea of planting native plants.

Her yard is now a platinum-certified oak savanna demonstration site in Milwaukie and important habitat in the Willamette Valley, and she is a newly minted Backyard Habitat technician. For Tricia, landscaping with native plants was important but equally important was her ability to grow her own food, so she cultivated a flourishing vegetable garden and keeps chickens.

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Adventure for the Good of the Birds
by Candace Larson, Field Biologist and Trip Leader

If you’ve ever joined a Portland Audubon excursion, you know we strive to create a positive, non-competitive group dynamic that helps everyone feel welcome, comfortable, and engaged as we explore the wonderful world around us. As a field biologist and a trip leader for Portland Audubon, I am particularly proud of our efforts to build strong conservation connections into our ecotour program—from Malheur to Madagascar.

Interested in how Portland Audubon’s efforts to protect Oregon’s wetlands affect the entire Pacific Flyway? Join one of our Pacific Northwest offerings and experience these connections firsthand. There is nothing like watching the jaunty mating dance of nesting Sandhill Cranes to help us understand why protecting the rich, wet meadows of Malheur is a critical part of our statewide habitat conservation work. Witnessing thousands of Snow and Ross’s Geese thunder into the morning air brings our investment in smart water allocation in the Klamath Basin into new and beautiful focus!

In addition to our work to protect the Oregon landscape, we highlight and invest in conservation initiatives in all the places we visit. Seeing a Resplendent Quetzal display its spectacular twin tail streamers as it forages in an aguatecalo tree is a heart lifting highlight of any birders’ trip to Costa Rica knowing that Portland Audubon makes a direct contribution to the local farmers who protect this critical habitat adds real reward to the moment. In similar ways, we contribute to condor recovery in California, hummingbird habitat in Peru, protection of highly endangered Malo in Sulawesi, and so much more.

These efforts provide real, solid support for bird conservation around the world. But they go further. By working closely with local guides in the places we visit, we build deep connections in these communities, and that trust creates opportunities to visit some truly unique and off-the-tourist-grid areas—from private forest reserves to traditional natural sites—and builds empathy and relationships with new places and the people who invest their lives and livelihoods in preserving them.

Your ecotour fee also contributes directly to our mission. From our community science studies to protect Oregon’s fragile marine reserves, to our advocacy for imperiled species and a bird-safe built environment, to helping our region’s kids become the next generation of the earth’s stewards, you can feel good that your dream adventure is also providing a tax-deductible contribution to support this important work.

Check out our current offerings and discover your next adventure! From Oregon to Ethiopia, the pace of our trips is suitable for avid birders and novices alike. You will find many more details on the website, including a comprehensive listing of our upcoming trips, day-by-day itineraries, and profiles of our talented trip leaders. Feel free to contact any one of us with your questions. Come experience the joy of discovery and make a difference for birds, wildlife, and the natural environment on which we all depend.

Photo by Mary Coolidge.

Highlight on Hawaii
by Pam Meyers, Portland Audubon Member

Traveling with Portland Audubon is a revelation! Their ecotours are noted for being well planned and professionally guided, always resulting in new adventures, increased observation skills, and satisfying additions to our bird lists.

We just returned from a week of birding and hiking on the Big Island. Our past trips to Hawaii have been beautiful and fun but were resort-focused and very much a tourist experience. We expected Portland Audubon’s usual awesome job of providing great birding but were deeply impressed by the bonus of special cultural and ecological experiences.

One day provided a peek into the culture of Native Hawaiians through a local Kumu, or Teacher. She graciously welcomed us to her homestead, sharing her family’s history, their connection with this amazing place, and letting us see firsthand the impact of living in a land of active volcanoes. (We also got to see up-close Hawaiian Noddies, or nio, roosting in the seawall behind their home.) Another glorious day was spent with a local bird guide, naturalist, and passionate conservationist exploring the Kipuka forest islands, learning about honeycreepers, habitat, and the efforts to conserve both. Portland Audubon provided us with an experience we’d be unlikely to have on our own. The leaders’ connections in the local community and relationships with native teachers and conservationists opened doors rarely experienced by mainlanders.

This trip had it all: learning every day, birding and hiking, snorkeling and playing in the waves, excellent food and lodging."

“View all ecotours at audubonportland.org

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A Surprise Visitor in East Portland

On November 19, Barb Idinger looked out onto her east Portland yard and saw chips fly as a Pileated Woodpecker attacked one of her trees. A totally unexpected and spectacular sighting.

This crow-sized bird is a resident of forests that contain many live and dead large old trees. They come out occasionally to visit nearby open areas and city neighborhoods. They are often seen attached to the side of a roadside telephone pole. Occasionally one may visit bird feeders.

A pair requires a large section of forest for a nesting territory so are well scattered and are usually considered uncommon. Portland’s Forest Park contain many pairs as does the lower Cascade woodlands east of Portland. Several also can be found on Sauvie Island in the coniferous woodlands around the Wapato Greenway Access State Park on the west side of the island and in the north unit deciduous woodlands.

This species regularly tear apart snags and dead trees searching for ants, beetles, and other insects. The nest hole is distinctive, a full oval.

Pileated Woodpeckers are rather secretive in the forest and often hide from visitors. They are masters of sliding around the back of a tree as a person passes. The presence of birds are most often indicated by the damaged snags and distinctive nest hole. Their calls are similar to the flicker but louder and deeper.

SIGHTINGS

by Brodie Cass Talbott

In winter, our rare birds often change from being the one-day wonders or week-long stragglers we expect in fall to possibly spending weeks or months in a certain locale. The only mission for a wintering bird is to survive, so if the eating is good enough, what’s to compel it to move elsewhere?

That appears to be the strategy for the Emperor Goose that continues to be seen at Sauvie Island. The Brant and Ross’s Geese found nearby have been less reliable. A very different type of rarity showed up just down Reeder Road in the form of a Black-and-white Warbler, found by Aaron Deerman. A Black-and-white has wintered outside of Newport for the last two winters, so time will tell with this bird.

A Canyon Wren was found by John Bishop on the Multnomah Falls trail. They are known to breed across the river at Beacon Rock but are sporadic at best on the south side of the Gorge, with this being the farthest west record. A single Red-breasted Merganser was also reported at the falls.

A Tufted Duck is making the Philemoni Sewage Ponds home for the time being, one of several rarities for the Corvallis area, including Tri-colored Blackbird and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Not too far, outside of Albany, Joel Geer reports a Great Black-backed Gull, the largest gull in the world, and a very rare visitor to Oregon. If confirmed, it would be a first Oregon record.

The Mandarin Duck continues at Crystal Springs. This bird is not “countable” according to birding rules; on account of its provenance as a pet, but that hasn’t stopped a great many birders from appreciating its superlative plumage in person.

Those are only a few of the birds reported across the region. For corrections, tips, and reports, email Brodie Cass Talbott at bctalbott@portlandaudubon.org.
SPECIAL EVENTS

Visit audubonportland.org/events for a full list of all upcoming events.

NATURE NIGHT

Stanley Gehrt: Exploring the Mysteries of Coyotes in the City

January 14 | 7 p.m.

Stanley Gehrt, PhD, will be joining us all the way from the Midwest to share his nearly 20-year study of how coyotes in Chicago have adapted to the city as their natural environment and share previously unknown details of how they live in harmony with the bustling concrete jungle.

Where: Oregon Zoo - Vista Room

MLK Weekend of Service

January 20 | 1–4 p.m.

Help spruce up our wildlife sanctuary and be a part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend of Service! Volunteers will help with indoor projects, trail maintenance, removing invasive species, and native plantings.

Where: Meet in Portland Audubon’s Heron Hall
Must be 12 years of age or older to participate

Hawks & Hot Chocolate at Sauvie Island

February 1 | 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

Join Portland Audubon and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on a spectacular day of birdwatching on Sauvie Island. We will provide coffee, hot chocolate, donuts, and great naturalists with spotting scopes located at sites on the island.

Learn more at audubonportland.org

AUDUBON BIRDING DAYS

Join Portland Audubon on affordable, full-day or multi-day bird trips to a wide variety of natural areas within a day’s drive of Portland. Expert guiding and camaraderie provided.

Okanogan and the Waterville Plateau

January 15–19

Experience five days of exciting birding in the unique habitats of the high plateau between the Columbia Gorge, the Grand Coulee, and Badger Mountain. We will search for stunning winter specialties such as Bohemian Waxwing, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Golden Eagle, Northern Goshawk, and Cytacorn. On past trips, we have seen rarities such as Northern Hawk-Owl and Great Gray Owl. Join us for fantastic birding in a winter wonderland.

Fee: $350 | Transportation NOT provided
Leader: Stefan Schnick | Limited to 12 participants

Ankeny & Baskett Slough

March 1 | 6 a.m.–6:30 p.m.

Join Stefan on a day trip to Ankeny & Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge. We will be looking for wintering waterfowl, hoping for Northern Shrike, and ending the day at a spot where Short-eared Owl is possible.

Fee: $65
Leader: Stefan Schnick | Limited to 10 participants

ADULT EDUCATION

CLASSES

Bird Journals

January 18: Birds in Winter | 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
February 22: Bird Scapes | 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Explore ways to create a charming, personal, and colorful visual record. Practice seeing in a new way, drawing what is essential, and using watercolor to add zest!

Fee: $55 members / $75 non-members per session
Instructor: Jude Siegel | Limited to 16 participants

Beginning Field Birding and Sauvie Island Exploration

Three-part series: February 1, March 7, April 4
8 a.m.–12 p.m. | Sauvie Island Field Trip

Join this excellent 3-part field class to develop and sharpen your birding skills at this premier birding spot. Sauvie Island is spectacular for wintering raptors, with possible sightings of Red-shouldered and Rough-legged Hawks and hundreds of Bald Eagles. You will also have plenty of opportunities to practice identifying many species of wintering waterfowl and foraging flocks of sparrows.

Fee: $85 members / $105 non-members
Instructors: Greg Baker and Ricky Allen | Limited to 15 participants

Little Brown Birds

February 27 | 6:30–8:30 p.m. | Class in Heron Hall
February 29 | 8 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | Local Field Trip

At first glance those little brown birds fitting through the brush look alike, but with a little practice you’ll learn to recognize the great variety of birds found in the area.

Fee: $55 members / $70 non-members | Class only option: $20
Instructor: John Bakken | Limited to 14 participants

See more offerings at audubonportland.org

FREE BIRD WALKS

Portland Audubon offers free, volunteer-led outings across the Portland Metro Area. We strive to create a vibrant space for everyone to enjoy birds and wildlife while exploring our natural areas.

All skill levels are welcome! You can find the full list of outings and sign up on meetup.com/portland-audubon-outings.

Register for outings at meetup.com

NEW CLASS SERIES!

Coastal Birding Through the Seasons

Spring
Class: April 22
Outing: April 24–26

Summer
Class: June 24
Outing: June 26–28

Fall
Class: August 19
Outing: August 21–23

Winter (2021)
Class: January 13
Outing: January 15–17

Join Dan van den Broek and Candace Larson on this exciting new series of classes and outings to some of our favorite locations on the Pacific Coast. Each season, we’ll explore a new destination, with peak birds and natural history phenomena in mind. We’ll hold an evening class session, covering seasonal topics from bird song and breeding to migration and survival, then head out into the field for a three-day, two-night expedition to the Oregon or Washington coast.

Fee: $595 each session / $1,995 for all sessions
Instructor: Dan van den Broek and Candace Larson

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Get Involved in Portland Audubon’s Work in Eastern Oregon!
by Teresa Wicks, Eastern Oregon Field Coordinator

Eastern Oregon is home to some of the most spectacular landscapes and important bird habitats in Oregon. Portland Audubon has been working in this area for more than a century to protect places such as Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Steens Mountain and to recover imperiled species like the Greater Sage-Grouse. Since hiring a full-time, year-round Eastern Oregon Field Coordinator in 2018, we have been able to significantly increase opportunities to get involved in this work.

Our programs give participants the opportunity to see and learn about the region’s natural history from outstanding naturalists, learn about important conservation issues, build understanding across the urban-rural divide, and have fun.

In 2020, we have a full calendar of trips, events, stewardship parties, and other ways to get involved. See the full list at bit.ly/harneycountybirds

**EVENTS**
We both lead and partner on a variety of natural history related events throughout the year. Plan your trip to Harney County to take advantage of these opportunities:
- January 11: Burns/Hines Christmas Bird Count for Kids
- April 16-19: Harney County Migratory Bird Festival
- June 27: Let’s Pull Together
- July 17-19: Harney County After Dark

**FORAYS**
Multi-day natural history trips originating in Portland led by outstanding Audubon naturalists:
- May 30-June 3: Malheur Foray
- September 17-20: Dark Skies Foray
- September 30-October 4: Steens Foray

**STEWARDSHIP PARTIES**
These multi-day events are for folks who want to get their hands dirty. Join Portland Audubon and local partners in restoring wildlife habitat in Harney County (and of course doing some great bird watching!)
- April 3-6: Benson Pond Stewardship
- July 31-Aug 3: Soda House Ranch Stewardship
- September 24-27: Semaphore Grass Planting

**COMMUNITY SCIENCE**
We offer a variety of opportunities to work with Portland Audubon staff to collect data on bird populations at Malheur and in the Harney Basin.
- Project IBIS: April 11, May 9, June 6, July 3, August 15, September 5, October 3
- Shorebirds on the Plains: June 19-21, August 28-31

**BIRD WALKS**
Throughout spring and summer, Portland Audubon offers a variety of free bird walks at a variety of locations on and around Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.
- April 13: Harney County Wildlife Parkway (Burns/Hines)
- April 25: Malheur NWR headquarters
- May 2: Crystal Crane Hot Springs
- May 16: Radar Hill OHV trail
- May 23: Malheur NWR boat launch
- June 13: Diamond Craters
- July 11: Malheur NWR Headquarters
- July 18: Harney County Wildlife Parkway (Burns/Hines)
- July 25: Crystal Crane Hot Springs

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**NEW! Texas: Tropical Birding Along the Rio Grande**
March 8-13, 2020
The Rio Grande Valley is known as one of the top birding destinations in the country and is the perfect introduction to tropical birding. Join us as we search for Chachalacas, Caciques, and Kingfishers across hotspots in the region like Bentsen-Rio Grande and Santa Ana NWR.

Early Bird Rate until Jan. 15: $1795 member / $2095 non-member
Leaders: Dan van den Broek and Brodie Cass Tabott

**Machu Picchu & the Sacred Valley**
May 9-15, 2020
From the cloud forest and valleys to the high Andes we will tally an impressive list of birds and wildlife that makes this area a must-see destination for birders, while also appreciating the rich cultural history of the area. Explore the cobblestone streets of Cusco, admire the mysterious citadel of Machu Picchu, and enjoy a dazzling assortment of birds, such as the Peruvian endemic Ica Wren.

Fee: $3,195 members / $3,495 non-members
Leaders: Dan van den Broek and local guides

**Malheur Foray**
May 30-June 3, 2020
Head on a five-day tour to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, located in remote and beautiful southeastern Oregon. Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is a world-class birder’s paradise. A variety of habitats, including extensive marshes, sedgebrush flats, riparian thickets, and rimecork support a diversity of wildlife. Field birding and natural history are the focus of this exciting trip.

Fee: $995 members / $1,195 non-members
Leaders: Candice Larson and Tara Lemieux

Fee includes: Ground transportation, double-occupancy lodging, meals except dinners, entrance fees for planned activities and the services of your leaders. Airfare not included.

**Klamath Basin**
March 26-29, 2020
Explore the Klamath Basin with us, home to six National Wildlife Refuges and one of the most important wetland ecosystems in Western North America.

Fee: $895 members / $995 non-members
Leaders: Candace Larson and Mary Coodeige

**Trinidad & Tobago**
April 7-17, 2020
Come bird, watch nesting sea turtles, snorkel, and simply savor the tropical paradise and cultural vibrancy of Trinidad and Tobago. We will split our time between two ecodelves (including the world-famous Asa Wright Nature Center), providing a unique opportunity to slow down and be intentional about learning neotropical birds in one of the richest birding countries per square mile.

Fee: $4,995 members / $5,495 non-members
Leaders: Erin Law, Greg Smith, and local guides

**Mongolia**
June 14-29, 2020
Mongolia is a place of staggering beauty. Enjoy traditional Mongolian food in a communal setting and experience the unique Mongolian life by staying in ger camps. We will explore varied habitats which include Siberian Taiga, the Mongolian Steppe, and the Gobi Desert.

Fee: $5,295 members / $5,595 non-members
Leader: Stefan Schüll
Growing Our Urban Tree Canopy: A Task for the Entire Community

by Micah Meskel, Activist Program Manager

Protecting and expanding our urban tree canopy is foundational to creating a healthy, resilient, and equitable urban landscape. The many benefits that our urban tree canopy bring to the communities situated below them include cleaning our air, reducing temperatures, creating wildlife habitat, reducing stormwater runoff, sequestering carbon, improving human health and well-being, not to mention the trees’ intrinsic natural beauty.

Portland Audubon is actively growing our own tree canopy in our 172-acre sanctuary, helping over 6,000 individual Backyard Habitat Certification Program participants grow their own native tree canopy, as well as continuously advocating for local jurisdictions to improve tree codes and integrate trees and other green infrastructure into every land-use plan. These measures are more important than ever to mitigate the negative effects of climate change and ensure our human and wildlife communities are more resilient as we trend toward more extreme summer heat waves and winter storm events.

In December we worked with partners, including the Portland Youth Climate Council, to extend soon-to-expire protections for big trees in private residential development situations for an additional five years. While these protections do not prevent big trees from being removed, they do ensure that when they are removed, substantial mitigation will be required. In the future, we need to increase protections for smaller trees so that neighborhoods with smaller and fewer trees, which tend to be lower income and more diverse, are able to develop healthy canopy coverage. We believe all communities can and should benefit from the improved livability measures that a greater tree canopy coverage can bring and we will continue to work to improve policies to ensure this is shared by everyone.

In the new year, we will be working to protect trees on industrial and commercial-zoned properties. Currently, these properties (often adjacent to natural areas and low-income communities) have no requirements to protect or plant trees. Portland City Council exempted them when the tree code was adopted in 2011 due to concerns about potential legal challenges by industry, related to an out-of-date industrial land inventory. Although Council assured the community that it would return to address these exemptions as soon as the inventory was updated, which occurred in 2019. Council has failed to make good on this promise. Industry has gotten a free ride for nearly a decade when it comes to protecting trees, and it is time for Council to remove the exemptions and hold industry accountable.

Help us advocate to Portland City Council in the new year to remove these exemptions and look to other Title 11 improvements to ensure that the entire city is held to the same standards and is playing a role to grow our urban tree canopy and build community resilience.

Learn more at audubonportland.org/take-action
Art and Nature Come Together at Antler Gallery

by Ali Berman, Communications Manager

When you walk into Antler Gallery and Talon Gallery on NE Alberta, you’ll see wildlife abound, from Oregon favorites like Belted Kingfishers to faraway species like polar bears, rhinos, and flamingos. Owners Susannah Kelly and Neil M. Perry are passionate about telling the stories of the natural world and connecting those stories to the conservation of wildlife and their habitat. That passion has led to Antler Gallery being a long-time supporter of Portland Audubon.

For the eighth year in a row, Neil and Susannah will be supporting Portland Audubon by donating 20% of proceeds from the upcoming shows BRINK and Ascent, showing simultaneously at their adjoining galleries starting on January 30.

Both exhibits focus on extinct and endangered species, with Ascent at Talon featuring birds exclusively, and BRINK featuring mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and other members of the non-avian animal kingdom.

Why extinct and endangered species? Neil and Susannah explained: “Extinction is a difficult concept for people to grapple with. Art provides a beautiful way to begin that conversation. Most of the artists that we work with are young people that have grown up in the shadow of the reality of climate change, which is why it is such a significant theme in their works. We have been watching firsthand the decimation of wildlife and their habitat through human action since we were children, while wrestling with the knowledge that once a species is gone, it is gone forever.”

The artists who have contributed their work to the show over the years have explored themes of extinction, prompting people to consider issues surrounding endangered species and further connecting them to nature. Each artist has a different perspective but, from California Condors to the Dodo, always stay centered on the natural world.

We are deeply grateful to Neil, Susannah, and the 19 artists who are contributing their work to the two shows. It’s always a spectacular event, with art that truly captures the diversity, beauty, and complexity of the natural world.

We hope you’ll join us on Thursday, January 30, 2020, at 7 p.m. for the opening at 2728 NE Alberta St., Portland, OR 97211.

Birdathon 2020: Celebrating 40 Years of Birding, Fundraising, and Building Community

by Sarah Swanson, Birdathon Coordinator

Spring birding may seem far away as we watch waterfowl and raptors under gray skies, but it’s already time to start planning for Birdathon. Portland Audubon’s biggest fundraiser, Birdathon allows you to support a mission that you care about while experiencing the fun and camaraderie of birding. Birdathon best succeeds at raising critical funds for conservation when the whole Portland Audubon community supports it, so we hope that folks will join us for the first time and that experienced Birdathoners will find someone new to invite. Mark your calendars for Birdathon opening on March 16. We’ll have more information about teams in the March-April Warbler and on our website.

Birdathon is for everyone! Beginning birders, experts, groups of friends, and coworkers can all find or create their ideal team and Birdathon experience. Trips can be anything from a morning birding excursion to a two-day cross-state trip. Some teams do all their birding by bike, while others take a van to a local wildlife refuge or to the coast for the day.

- Join an Organized Team. Teams for 2020 will be posted in early March, and last year’s teams can be viewed at birdathon.audubonportland.org. Each team is led by an experienced birder who has planned out a birdy and fun itinerary.
- Create a Team. Have a new idea for a team? Talk to Sarah Swanson, Birdathon Coordinator, about creating your own team that can be open to all participants or just for your group of friends, family, or coworkers. I can help you plan an itinerary and write a compelling team description.
- Participate as an Individual. Hatch your own personal Birdathon plan, whether it’s a relaxing day in your backyard or a birding trip.

Birdathon participants receive advice and sample fundraising letters to make it easy and fun. If you have Birdathon questions, contact Birdathon Coordinator Sarah Swanson at birdathon@audubonportland.org for help with planning, organizing, fundraising, and signing up team members to raise as much money as possible!

Register online at audubonportland.org

WISH LISTS

Education
- Bushnell Trophy Cam Aggressor HD camera (2)
- Camp Chef Everest Stoves
- UV flashlight

Wildlife Care Center
- All In and Clear laundry detergent pods
- Dawn Original dishwashing liquid
- Dish brushes
- Nitro, powder-free, non-sterile exam gloves
- Rubber or vinyl dish gloves
- Wet-erase Expo pens in black, brown or blue
- Kitchen shears
- Hose spray nozzles
- Red-tailed Hawk flight cage funding ($30,000)
- Great Horned Owl flight cage funding ($30,000)
- Intensive care incubator funding ($2,500)
- Mammal cage funding ($10,000)
- Wellness Core Natural Grain Free Dry Cat Food Kitchen (Turkey & Chicken)
- Multicolored zip ties (total of 4 each and all sizes)
- Elitefield 3-door bending soft dog crates
- Portable oxygen generator

Sanctuary
- Auditory assistance devices
- Small folding table (card table or smaller)
- Toll bookcase (roughly 8’x 4’ x 32’ high)
- Battery-powered wall mount light
- Portable car battery charger
- Jiffy-approved hard hat (6)
- Well-running pickup truck
- Portable car battery charger
- Laptops (2016 or newer) and monitors
- Electric leaf blower

Conservation
- Recreational vehicle or trailer for field work
- Standing coat rack
- Unihedron Dark Sky Quality Meter (LU-DL)
- Used iPads and/or Chromebooks
- Rebranded tabling cloth funding ($300)

If you can donate these items, please first contact Portland Audubon at 971-222-6129, Mon.-Fri., to arrange a time for delivery/pick up. Check our website for the most updated wish list.
BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Through their business practices and financial contributions, the following businesses are helping advance our mission and protect Oregon’s birds, natural resources, and livability. If you would like to become a member of the Portland Audubon Business Alliance, please contact Charles Milne, Director of Development at 971-222-6117.

A Beginner’s Guide to Binoculars

by Caitlin Wisbelski, Nature Store Manager

What do the numbers mean?

Binoculars are sized with two numbers. The first is magnification, or how “zoomed in” the image appears. Typically, birders use either an 8 or 10 magnification. While a 10 magnification binocular will yield a closer, more detailed image, an 8 magnification binocular yields a steadier, brighter image that is easier to keep trained on a target. For this reason, most beginner birders gravitate toward 8 magnification. The second number is the objective lens size, or the diameter in millimeters of the light-gathering lens. The larger the objective lens, the bigger the binoculars and the brighter the image. Objective lens diameter ranges from 25mm for a pair of compact binoculars, all the way to 42mm for a full-sized pair.

How will I most likely use my binoculars?

When choosing a size, it’s important to consider how you will use your binoculars. Compacts can be great for travel. Full-sized optics give you the most viewing power. And mid-sized models have the advantage of being more portable than full-sized and more powerful than compacts. Above all, your binoculars should be comfortable in your hands and easy to adjust. Weight, balance, and “hand feel” matter. At the Nature Store, we have over 50 different binoculars to choose from. Trying binoculars firsthand is the best way to figure out what you like.

Can I wear my glasses?

Binoculars can be used with or without prescription glasses. If not wearing glasses, twist the eyecups up to keep your pupil the correct distance from the lens. This will help you focus and should reduce black or blurry distortion in your periphery. If wearing glasses, your pupil is already correctly distanced from the lens, so the eyecups can remain down.

How much does a “good” pair of binoculars cost?

Here at the Nature Store, we carry binoculars suitable to a wide range of budgets. We have full-sized binoculars starting at under $120, all the way up to $2,800 for our top-end European models. Why the large price difference? When comparing two binoculars of the same size, differences in price can mostly be attributed to the quality of glass. Higher-end glass yields more light transmission (brighter images), less distortion (a flatter image), and true color fidelity. Entry-level binoculars are typically priced under $300. Mid-level binoculars fall right around $500. And high-end models start at around $1,000. Determining whether a more expensive model is “worth” the improved picture quality depends on the individual and how they perceive light.
Portland Audubon inspires all people to love and protect birds, wildlife, and the natural environment upon which life depends.

Hawks & Hot Chocolate

February 1 | 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Sauvie Island

Early February is a great time to see wintering raptors and other birds such as Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes on Sauvie Island. Join Portland Audubon and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for a spectacular day of birdwatching. We will provide coffee, hot chocolate, donuts, and great naturalists with spotting scopes located at sites on the island.

Participants travel at their leisure in their own vehicles from site to site to see and learn about the amazing birds that winter on our local Wildlife Refuge. This will be a great event for the whole family!

Learn more at audubonportland.org

Birdy Brain Buster!

Which bird has the largest wingspan in Oregon?

A. Bald Eagle
B. Sandhill Crane
C. American White Pelican
D. Great Grey Owl