

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021

Wild Arts Festival

November 20 & 21
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Merlin, photo by Eric Ellingson.

FROM OUR INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My Experience as a Leadership Partner

by Paul Lipscomb

Portland Audubon is my 25th interim executive director position. I've had the honor of working with incredible organizations, from Sisters of the Road to Oregon SOLV, and while I'm seasoned at entering an organization during times of transition, I'm pretty new to Portland Audubon's complex mission and work. With each organization, including Portland Audubon, I have the privilege of accompanying passionate staff, board, and volunteers as they carry forward the mission. I get to both witness their work and join together to celebrate their successes. My time with Portland Audubon is adding rich texture to my experience being a partner in leading.

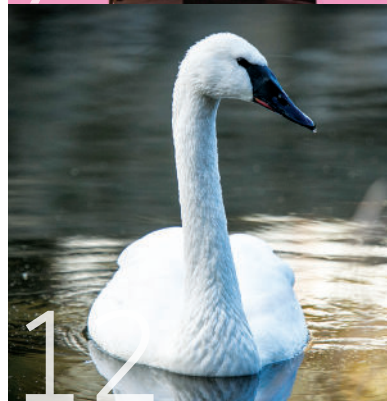
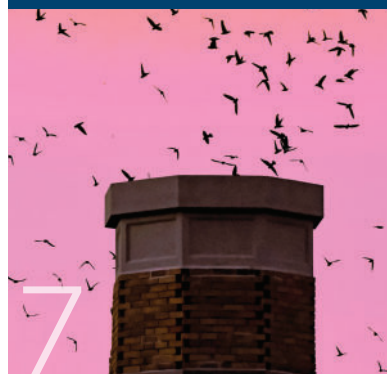
What is rarer is partnering with an organization with such a robust forward-focused mission and staff. Portland Audubon has built solid, intelligent, and mature structures and policies, has shown resiliency in response to COVID, is financially healthy, and offers dynamic programs and skilled staff. Even more rare, the organization has journeyed for several years to reflect on and reimagine its structures and relationships to enhance equity, inclusion, and diversity in living the mission.

So, I get to experience the most satisfying part of an interim. I am excited that the next executive director will be accompanied by this full-hearted, healthy, and future-focused team and mission as they add their unique experience, skills, and passion to the mission.

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2019 Wild Arts Festival at Pure Space.

PORTLAND AUDUBON'S WILD ARTS FESTIVAL

presented by BACKYARD BIRD SHOP

WWW.WILDARTSFESTIVAL.ORG

NOVEMBER 20 & 21

NEW LOCATION!

Portland State University's
VIKING PAVILION

in the Peter W. Stott Center
930 SW Hall St, Portland

HOURS

Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sunday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

TICKETS

www.wildartsfestival.org
\$10 adults; 14 and under are free

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Contact Kate Foulke at
wafvolunteers@audubonportland.org

We are so excited to bring the 41st annual Wild Arts Festival back in person at Portland State Viking Pavilion on November 20 and 21. This last year and a half has shown us the importance of people's connection with each other and with nature. Art has a unique way of highlighting those connections. It reminds us of the wild places we have visited, the wildlife we have seen, the things we cherish and want to defend. We hope when you join us for the Wild Arts Festival, presented by Backyard Bird Shop, you will find that piece of art that you truly connect with as a gift for yourself or a loved one.

This year, you can explore beautiful artwork, nature-inspired books, an array of silent auction items, and much more. And, when you make a purchase at the Wild Arts Festival, you will be supporting Portland Audubon's mission to inspire all people to love and protect birds, wildlife, and the natural environment upon which life depends.

GETTING TO PORTLAND STATE VIKING PAVILION

The Wild Arts Festival's new home offers incredible access via public transit and multiple nearby parking structures.

Drop-Off

We will have a curbside drop-off/pick-up spot on SW College St. just past SW Jackson St. and SW Park Ave.

Parking

Portland State has three paid parking structures. We recommend Parking Structure 1, at 1872 SW Broadway, Portland, OR 97201, just a couple blocks from the pavilion entrance.

An additional two blocks away is Parking Structure 2, at 1724 SW Broadway, Portland, OR 97201

Public Transit

Portland Streetcar: Viking Pavilion is located a few blocks from the Portland Streetcar's South line (SW 6th & College MAX Stn).

Tri-Met Bus

The nearest bus line is the #68 between SW Hall and SW College Street.



2019 Wild Arts Festival at Pure Space.

ART FAIR

The Wild Arts Festival is a great way to support Oregon's wildlife and wild places, as well as local artists. After a challenging 2020, we invited back every artist from last year's virtual Wild Arts Festival. With nearly 50 artists on hand, you will undoubtedly find the painting, sculpture, jewelry, photograph, woodwork, textile, ceramics, or glass art that speaks to you. This year, you'll find Erin Linton's wild-animal-inspired paintings, Elizabeth Van Duine's meticulously crafted paper-cut designs, Jeffrey Fuch's abstract paintings and wooden pieces, and Shino Mikami's eco-friendly clothing inspired by the Pacific Northwest. As we celebrate a new partnership with Portland State University, we will also be hosting a booth for the Portland State School of Design students to launch their burgeoning careers.

BOOK FAIR

Come meet the authors of some of the most relevant books on conservation, the Pacific Northwest, and birding. You can chat with your favorite authors and buy a signed copy of their books. This year's author panel includes award-winning science journalist and author Michelle Nijhuis, author of *Beloved Beasts*; Thor Hanson, author of *Hurricane Lizards and Plastic Squid: The Fraught and Fascinating Biology of Climate Change*; and beloved children's author Eric Kimmel with his new book, *The Three Latkes*.



RAFFLE: IN-PERSON & ONLINE

For just \$25, you can enter to win a pair of Swarovski EL 8.5 x 42 WB Swarobright binoculars, equipped with a carrying case, harness, and rainguard lens cover. You can purchase your tickets online or at the event, but act quickly because only 400 tickets will be sold.

SILENT AUCTION: IN-PERSON & ONLINE

Throughout the pavilion's concourse, you will find an incredible selection of art, experiences, and outdoor gear donated to support Portland Audubon's mission. A few of the tempting items are a pair of the excellent Vortex Viper binoculars, a great selection of Brome bird feeders, four days at the ever-popular Arch Cape beach home, a case of 2015 Evesham Wood Le Puits Sec Pinot Noir (!), and wonderful photos and paintings, certificates, and experiences too varied and numerous to list.

This year, you'll have the benefit of in-person viewing with the convenience of online bidding. Register and make your first bids at the event, then track the bidding on your computer or phone at home and bid a lot higher if you need to. If you can't attend the Wild Arts Festival in person, you can still peruse the online catalog and register and bid from home.

NATURE STORE

A perennial favorite, our Nature Store will have birdhouses, birdfeeders, branded clothing and merch, holiday ornaments and gifts, and more. You'll find all of your Nature Store favorites as well as items specially curated for the Wild Arts Festival.

SAFETY MEASURES

The health and safety of our attendees, artists, volunteers, staff, and community remain our highest priority. We have monitored the safety protocols of other events, implemented recommendations by the CDC and Oregon Health Authority, and sought input from artists, volunteers, and you around hosting this event.

Our safety measures include the following:

- Mandatory masks that cover your nose and mouth at all times.
- Proof of vaccination, or a CDC-approved COVID negative test result within the previous 48 hours.
- Hosting the event at a large, open facility with a brand-new HVAC system ensuring adequate airflow.
- Implementing registration time slots to manage the flow of attendees within the facility.
- A physical distancing and crowd management plan that provides ample space for attendees.
- We will not be hosting concessions. There are great food and drink options around the pavilion, but we want to minimize situations for removing masks. You are welcome to bring in water or other non-alcoholic beverages in a reusable container.

Can't attend the Wild Arts Festival? You can purchase raffle tickets and silent auction items online! When you visit the Wild Arts Festival website (wildartsfestival.org), you will be able to find the artist's websites and make purchases directly through them.



Leah Nobilette



Shino Mikami



Marty Hogan



Erin Linton

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! We could not run the Wild Arts Festival without the incredible support of nearly 200 volunteers, assisting with every aspect of the event. We have active and seated activities (16 yrs or older) and you'll receive free admission. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Kate Foulke at wafvolunteers@audubonportland.org.



Clare Carpenter

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!

Help us spread the word and tell your family, friends, and coworkers to join you at the Wild Arts Festival 2021.

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING SPONSORS!

Presenting Sponsor:



William and Irene Finley Charitable Fund
Portland Audubon Board of Directors



American Mink's Homecoming

by Ashley Lema, Wildlife Rehabilitator

This piece is part of the “Patient of the Week” series. Check our blog every Thursday to get an inside look at one of our Wildlife Care Center patients.

In early June, a Good Samaritan showed up at our Wildlife Care Center with an orphaned baby American Mink. They had found the kit because they could hear her crying, and when they finally located her, she was all alone, tangled up in some brush near the Tualatin River in King City, Oregon.

Upon arrival at our Wildlife Care Center, she did not stop crying out for her mother until she was warmed up in a soft faux den and drinking our specialized formula for mustelids. Her eyes were still closed and she required feedings every few hours. Luckily she hadn't been injured during the time she was outside of the den. Within weeks, her eyes opened and she began figuring out solid food. She quickly weaned from her specialized formula, and her interest shifted to the pieces of meat and fish we were leaving in her enclosure—a great sign for this species!



As the American Mink kit got older, we moved her to a large outdoor enclosure so she could practice climbing, hiding, swimming, hunting, and other normal behaviors. We provided both terrestrial and aquatic live prey so we could be sure she would know how and where to hunt in the wild. She proved to us fairly quickly that she was a ferocious and skilled predator, eventually catching mice within seconds of them

entering her enclosure, as well as catching live fish from her large pool. Throughout this process, we had to be very careful to limit her exposure to people's presence, sounds, and scents. Like all other wild animals, it is crucial that mink grow up without becoming used to people (or worse, seeking them out).

In early September, our Ambassador Animal Coordinator, Nikki Panos, was able to release her back to her original habitat!

After months in care, people often assume it would be hard to let our raised babies go—but for us, it's the exact opposite. We were happy to see her free, how she was meant to be. Good luck out there, little one!

Portland Audubon Counts the Swifts, 2021 Update

by Joe Liebezeit, Staff Scientist & Avian Conservation Program Manager, and Candace Larson, Field Biologist

In October, we wrapped up the thirteenth consecutive Vaux's Swift monitoring season at Chapman Elementary School and other chimney sites in the Portland metro area. Each fall, many thousands of these tiny flying acrobats roost in chimneys (as well as natural cavities) across the West as they make their journey from breeding areas in northwestern North America to wintering grounds in the neotropics (Central and South America and parts of Mexico). The roost at Chapman is considered one of the most important stopover points on the Pacific Flyway and can host up to 15,000 swifts in a single night!

In this second year of the global pandemic, we worked with Portland Public Schools (PPS) and Portland Parks to once again cancel our Swift Watch interpretive program. This was an unfortunate but necessary step to discourage crowds and respect state guidance on physical distancing in order to curb the spread of coronavirus. Instead of hosting Swift Watch, volunteers helped with morning cleanups at Chapman to maintain good relationships with the neighborhood and school. And we were still able to recruit a small crew of experienced volunteers to conduct swift counts (following COVID safety protocols, of course) as we've done for over a decade.

We started monitoring on August 24, and at that point there were already over 1,000 birds roosting in the chimney. From then on, it was "slow and steady" at Chapman, with numbers fluctuating between 2,000 and 7,000 birds on most nights between late August and early October. Typically we have one big peak—up to 15,000 birds in mid-September—but this year, the chimney hosted a few smaller peaks of 8,000 to 9,000 birds scattered throughout the season. This was the second year swifts have roosted in the Chapman chimney since a new chimney cap was installed following a much-needed renovation. Thankfully, the birds do not appear to be dissuaded by their newly renovated lodgings.

We also monitor other sites in the Portland metro area that host significant numbers of roosting swifts. We documented a new chimney roost at Jennings Lodge Elementary in Oregon City, which regularly hosted over 1,000 swifts this year, with a high of 2,445. It appears that the swifts that normally roost on Oregon City's



The Northwest Vaux's Swift population has been declining for several decades, and monitoring helps document the species' population trend and supports the preservation of important roost sites along the flyway.

Vaux's Swifts, photo by Tara Lemezis.

Main Street have moved to Jennings Lodge, at least for this season. We worked with the Oregon City School District to ensure that the boiler wasn't turned on too early this year—thank you to the staff and students for their support!

We plan to continue long-term Vaux's Swift monitoring at Chapman and other sites in the Portland area. This effort contributes to a larger Pacific Coast-wide tracking project as well. The Northwest Vaux's Swift population has been declining for several decades, and monitoring helps document the species' population trend and supports the preservation of important roost sites along the flyway. We thank PPS, Portland Parks, and the local community for their collaboration and communication. And of course, we thank the swift count volunteers for their brave efforts to document the swift migration.

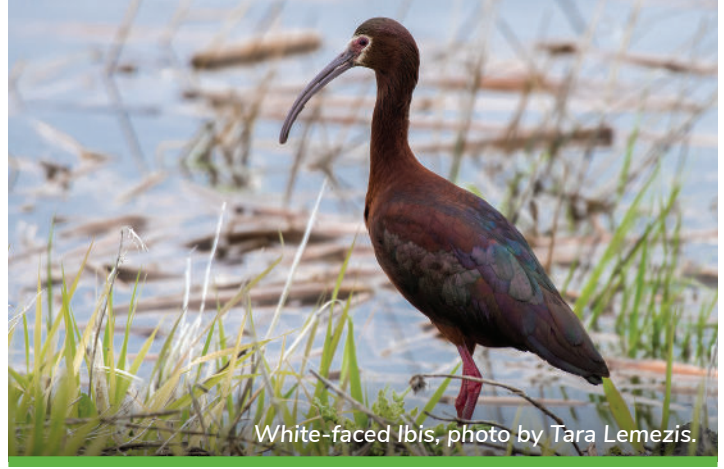
FIELD NOTES

by Teresa Wicks, Eastern Oregon Field Coordinator

White-faced Ibis: Jewels of the High Desert

The White-faced Ibis is an iconic bird of eastern Oregon, calling the marshes and wet meadows of the “dry side” home. In the 19th century, as settlers came to the Harney Basin, they encountered White-faced Ibis, though it wasn’t until 1908 that the first breeding colonies were documented by Finley and Bohlman on their trip to Malheur Lake. After this first colony was documented, and as settlers changed the landscape, White-faced Ibis expanded into the Klamath Basin, Summer Lake, and the Warner Basin.

These wetland birds often appear black in flight or when foraging in fields. However, during the breeding season, White-faced Ibis are in actuality maroon with ruby eyes and white feathers at the base of a long, decurved bill. Their iridescent wings light up metallic bronze and bright blue-green in the sun. Post-breeding season, the maroons fade to browns and chestnuts, and they lose the white on their face.



White-faced Ibis, photo by Tara Lemezis.

While in Oregon, White-faced Ibis live in diverse, ephemeral (seasonal, often short-lived) wetland habitats, primarily foraging in flood-irrigated wetlands and building large ground nests in emergent wetlands or on small islands. Colonies can be made up of hundreds of nesting birds and are often quite noisy affairs. Rather than demonstrating faithfulness to specific territories, White-faced Ibis are highly mobile, following the water from year to year. In 2021 there was a large colony of ibis and Franklin’s Gulls at Buena Vista, about halfway down the length of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, when heading south from headquarters. This colony was only visible and audible just after sunrise before the birds left to forage in nearby flood-irrigated wet meadows.

SIGHTINGS

by Brodie Cass Talbott

Southbound migration brings us not only the highest number of birds in real terms, as adults are joined by their offspring in their journeys south, but also the best chance for rare birds, as wayward juveniles attempt to navigate their migratory route for the first time.

Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area often leads early season shorebirding with receding waters. This year, the wetland complex hosted its annual **Snowy Egret** once again, as well as a **Stilt Sandpiper** and **Pacific Golden-Plover**, both for the second time in three years.

When the water gets too low at Smith and Bybee, it tends to get just right at Sturgeon Lake on Sauvie Island, and birds and birders follow. This was one of the better seasons in recent memory there, with reports of **Sabine’s** and **Franklin’s Gull**, **Parasitic Jaeger**, and **Common Tern**, as well as thousands of shorebirds, including another **Stilt Sandpiper** and **Pacific Golden-Plover**, **Whimbrel**, and **Black-necked Stilt**.

Common Poorwills continued to surprise this year. After a dog walker found one snoozing in someone’s landscaping on Mt. Tabor in the spring, a birder



Red-necked Stint, photo by Patrick Kavanaugh.

encountered one singing on Larch Mountain in August, and, in late September, another bird was found day-roosting in a yard in the Foster-Powell neighborhood.

A number of notables popped up across the state, including a **Canada Warbler** in early September at Malheur NWR headquarters. Just down the road at Page Springs, up to three **Lesser Nighthawks** were seen, inspiring many chasers and much deliberation on identification, as these birds are quite tough to separate from the more expected Common Nighthawk. Meanwhile, a **Brown Booby** seems to have taken up residence near Coos Bay, being seen on the same channel marker for over a month (and yes, occasionally moving). And top shorebird honors of the season go to the **Red-necked Stint** found at Sunset Beach in Clatsop County in the first week of August.

For corrections, tips, and reports, email Brodie Cass Talbott at bcasstalbott@audubonportland.org, and for a more detailed weekly report, visit audubonportland.org.



Photos by Tara Lemezis.



Winter Youth and Family Programs

NOVEMBER & WINTER BREAK DAY CAMPS

Harvest Art • Nov. 22 • Grades 1-6

8:45/9 a.m. drop-off | 3:15/3:30 p.m. pick-up

Explore the beautiful fall Sanctuary trails to gather inspiration for your Harvest Art projects! We'll create nature-based art with unique materials we discover in the forest.

\$95 members/\$110 non-members

Fall Flight • Nov. 23 • Grades 1-6

8:45/9 a.m. drop-off | 3:15/3:30 p.m. pick-up

Spend the day learning about the amazing adaptation of flight! We will look at specimens, create flight-themed art projects, look for these animals in the forest, and learn about the challenges that airborne creatures face in an urban setting.

\$95 members/\$110 non-members

Birds in the Winter • Dec. 20 • Grades 1-6

8:45/9 a.m. drop-off | 3:15/3:30 p.m. pick-up

Have you ever wondered how our feathered friends survive the harsh winter? We'll learn how and why birds migrate during winter and why our local residents stay! Through crafts, games, and exploration, we'll take a deep dive into the feat of bird survival in the winter.

\$95 members/\$110 non-members

Wild Wintercrafting • Dec. 21 • Grades 1-6

8:45/9 a.m. drop-off | 3:15/3:30 p.m. pick-up

There's no place more beautiful than the Sanctuary in winter! We'll create mixed media art and colorful drawings based on observation and found natural objects, learn the art of candle-making, and spend time roaming the forested trails and wildlife habitat.

\$95 members/\$110 non-members

➔ **REGISTER AT:** bit.ly/PA-Winter-Programs

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Jr. Birder Virtual Classes • Grades 3-6

SESSION ONE	November 30	December 7	December 14
	4 - 5 p.m.	4 - 5 p.m.	4 - 5 p.m.
SESSION TWO	January 11	January 18	January 24
	4 - 5 p.m.	4 - 5 p.m.	4 - 5 p.m.

Join Tim Donner on Tuesday evenings to discover the birds right outside your window and in your neighborhood! During a series of three weekly virtual lessons, students will learn how to identify the most common winter neighborhood birds, learn how to attract them to their yard, and create crafts to enhance learning! Share your observations with the group, ask questions, and engage in different activities that will deepen your appreciation of the birds nearby!

Fee for three class series: \$50 members/\$65 non-members

FAMILY DAYS

Marmot Cabin Family Days • Grades 2-6

December 19 & December 22
9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Spend the day with your family at Marmot Cabin and Portland Audubon's Miller Wildlife Sanctuary, outside of Sandy, Oregon! We'll practice fire building (weather dependent), journey through the forest, learn about local plants, play games, and search for evidence of the animals that call this place home.

\$80 (includes one child and one adult)
+Each additional child \$60
+Each additional adult \$10 (two adult maximum per group)





Sea otter, photo by Jerry Burke.

NATURE NIGHTS

Nature Night: Restoring Sea Otters to the Oregon Coast: An Ecological and Cultural Imperative with The Elakha Alliance

November 9 | 7-8:30 p.m.

Sea otters were once common along the Oregon coast, a protector of the rich biological productivity of ocean waters and a meaningful element in the culture of coastal Indian people. Their dense, lush fur made them the target of commercial hunting and by the late 1800s, they were mostly gone from their former range. The Elakha Alliance, an Oregon non-profit organization, seeks to return these essential keystone predators to their former homes and thereby restore the ecological productivity of the nearshore marine ecosystem and restore the ancient cultural connection between coastal Indian people and sea otters.

Cost: Free, donation suggested

FREE



Nature Night: Michelle Nijhuis - Finding Hope in Conservation History

December 14 | 7-8:30 p.m.

In the late 19th century, humans came at long last to a devastating realization: their rapidly industrializing and globalizing societies were driving scores of animal species to extinction. Over the decades since, the conservation movement has evolved from early campaigns to save charismatic species like the American Bison into an effort to defend life on a larger scale. Join journalist Michelle Nijhuis, the author of the book *Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in an Age of Extinction*, as she shares her research on the accomplishments, oversights, and outsized personalities of the conservation movement.

Cost: Free, donation suggested

FREE



Cost Involved



Public Transit Available

FREE

Free



Family Friendly



Wheelchair Accessible



Virtual Event or Program



Northern Saw-whet Owl, photo by Rhett Wilkins.

CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Sparrows in Winter

November 18 | 6-7 p.m.

Oregon hosts a great variety of sparrows in the winter. This class will show you what to look for to tell all those little brown birds apart.

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

Instructor: John Rakestraw



Understanding Owls

November 29 | 6-7 p.m.

Secretive, cryptic, and mysterious. Owls have a mystique like no other birds. In this introduction, we'll explore the biology, evolution, and adaptations of these fascinating creatures to learn why they're unique.

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

Instructor: Brodie Cass Talbott



Owls of Portland

December 6 | 6-7 p.m.

In this class, we'll introduce you to the owls found in the Portland area and share tips about how to find and enjoy owls where you live.

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

Instructor: Brodie Cass Talbott



Feeding Birds

December 7 | 6-7 p.m.

Feeding birds is a great way to enjoy a variety of species from the comfort of home. This class will show you how to feed effectively and safely.

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

Instructor: John Rakestraw



Sign up for classes and trips at
bit.ly/pdxaudubon-classes





Bohemian Waxwings, photo by Tara Lemezis.

FIELD TRIPS FOR ADULTS

Field Trip: Fernhill for Beginners

November 28 | 8-11 a.m.

Explore the birds of Fernhill Wetlands with Stefan in this beginner-focused field trip!

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

Instructor: Stefan Schlick



Audubon Birding Day: Upstream on the Columbia River

December 4 | 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Visit the far side of the Gorge in Wasco and Sherman Counties to search for loons, grebes, raptors, and whatever the wind blows in.

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

Instructor: Brodie Cass Talbott



Audubon Birding Day: Celebrate the Holidays in Washington County

December 28 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Join Stefan for an end-of-the-year celebration of birds that can be found in Washington County during this time of year. We'll stop at a few of the best birding sites, looking for Northern Shrike, Red-necked Grebe, and more along the way!

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

Instructor: Stefan Schlick



Pacific Northwest Trip: Wallowa Winter Wonderland

January 27-30, 2022 | 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Explore the winter wonderland of Wallowa County on this self-catering trip based out of Enterprise. Exciting bird-sighting aspirations are Bohemian Waxwing, Gray Partridge, Snow Bunting, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Gyrfalcon.

Fee: \$595 members / \$795 non-members

Instructor: Stefan Schlick



Gobi Desert, photo by Christopher Michel.

ECOTOUR

The Adventure of a Lifetime in Mongolia!

June 13-28, 2022

Mongolia is a place of staggering beauty with extraordinary birds and mammals. We'll enjoy traditional Mongolian food in a communal setting and experience first-hand the unique Mongolian life by staying in ger camps. We will explore its varied habitats, which includes Siberian Taiga in the north, the Mongolian Steppe and the Gobi Desert, and Gobi Altai Mountains in the south. Wildlife high points include White-naped Crane, Lammergeier, Wallcreeper, and Przewalski's Wild Horse.

Fee: \$5,395 member / \$5,695 non-members

Leader: Stefan Schlick



Demoiselle Crane, photo by Hari K. Patibanda.



Sandhill Cranes and Mount St. Helens, photo by Adam Stunkel.

Why We Love Winter Birding

by Brodie Cass Talbott, Educator & Trips Specialist

How do you define the seasons? While some of us use dates on the calendar, or think of the weather, birders often have a single-minded view of the seasons. For us, the four seasons most closely link to which birds we have in our area. Spring is the season of northward migration, bright plumages, and song. Summer is the season of secretive breeding birds and noisy nests. Fall comes early to birders, full-blown by August, with the explosion of southbound birds, eager juveniles, and near-daily new arrivals in our yards, parks, and skies overhead.

Winter, meanwhile, is the season between the migrations, when our area is full of birds escaping the ice and snow of the frigid north. With one of the milder northern climates, the Willamette Valley is home to large numbers of wintering birds, and birders in this area define the season in terms of waterfowl and sparrows, gulls and raptors.

And while it is hard to compete with the seasons of migration for sheer diversity and excitement, winter birding has a charm of its own, and, I would wager, may be the season many of us value the most. Perhaps not for what birds the winter brings, but for what birding brings to winter.

While all of us have plenty of reasons to be outside in the spring, summer, and fall, winter here is a harder sell, with dreadfully short days that are, more often than not, cold, gray, and wet. Before I started birding, I hated Portland winters. The lack of reasons to be outside meant I spent most of my time inside, sleeping in and missing precious hours of daylight.

But how different winter is for birders! The allure of Sandhill Cranes on misty mornings on Sauvie Island, and the thrill of vast rafts of scaup on the Columbia River are more than enough to impel us to put on our galoshes and head out at daybreak only to discover that the weather is never quite as bad as we expected it to be.

The birding is better than we may imagine as well. Winter is when the Willamette Valley sees the highest number of raptors, with some of our most intriguing species like Rough-legged Hawks and Merlins only found in the colder months. And while we can find kestrels and harriers and hawks year-round, winter is when it seems there are one or two in every field, as untold numbers escape the harsh winters of the northern latitudes.

Winter is also the best time to enjoy the wonders of waterfowl. Flocks of Cackling Geese and Snow Geese can number into the tens of thousands, especially at Sauvie Island, where, two years ago, an incredible seven species of goose were seen, including an Emperor Goose and a Brant. All across the valley, we're treated to Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, and lakes full of ducks already in their breeding best.

Birding, however, is not just about the birds, but also the people that we enjoy them with. Particularly in these times, birding gives us the ability to spend time with our friends and family outdoors, helping to keep our spirits high and our community safe.

At Portland Audubon we offer programming that is educational, fun, and COVID-safe. Our volunteer-led outings are back after an 18-month hiatus (thank you, outings leaders!), with free trips around the Portland area. We also have trips near and far, led by our expert naturalists. And, of course, our digital classes are in full swing, with offerings on waterfowl, owls, sparrows, and gulls to prime you for enjoying our incredible winter birdlife and natural areas.

So no matter how you choose to enjoy your winter, here's to a happy and healthy season!

Winter is when the Willamette Valley sees the highest number of raptors, with some of our most intriguing species like Rough-legged Hawks and Merlins only found in the colder months.



Snow Geese, photo by Mick Thompson.

JOIN US FOR A WINTER BIRDING CLASS OR FIELD TRIP!

Check out pages 10-11 for options or visit bit.ly/PAwinterbirding to see a complete listing of virtual classes, field trips and Audubon Birding Days.



Rough-legged Hawk, photo by Rick Leche.

The Why of Giving

by Donna Wiench, Leadership & Legacy Giving Manager

"I care deeply about our planet."

"It's important that children learn to love, respect, and protect our earth. Soon it will be in their hands."

"It's our responsibility to care for wild animals and their habitat."

"Life has been good to me. I'm grateful and I want to pitch in."

These are some of the many reasons donors tell me they give to Portland Audubon. The breadth of our organization's mission is important. Folks say they like that with one gift they can support many things they care about, including conservation, education, the protection of birds and their habitat statewide, and treatment for injured animals.

Favorable tax policies can be an added incentive. As in 2020, 2021 tax advantages for charitable contributions offer donors significant deductions.

Never in my fundraising career have tax advantages been the primary reason for a donor's giving, but they sure do add incentive, and for those who need one more practical reason to do what their heart is leading them to, tax deductions are important.

For taxpayers who don't itemize and instead file the simplified tax form, the maximum single person's deductible contribution is \$300 and a couple's is \$600 when filing jointly. But for folks who do itemize, the tax deduction can be 100%. In other words, if a motivated giver contributed all their taxable income to Portland Audubon, they'd owe zero dollars in federal taxes—and likely experience a unique state of joy and bliss, since giving is very satisfying.

Portland Audubon is especially fortunate this year because our generous donors, mindful of climate change, habitat degradation, the needs of wildlife, and the importance of environmental education, have stepped forward to help fund the capital campaign. But it's our regular annual giving, most of which comes at the end of the year, that allows us to provide educational programs, do advocacy, keep the lights on, and the buildings and grounds maintained. We are grateful as a staff for the generosity of our donors. Members can also be grateful for each other, because it takes a widely embraced commitment to keep Portland Audubon strong, vital, and able to make the impact our members and donors expect and our planet deserves.



Great Egret, photo by Hayley Crews.



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Botulism Calamity Avoided at Klamath, but Birds Still in Peril

by Bob Sallinger, Conservation Director

The news over the past several months was rife with predictions of an unprecedented outbreak of avian botulism that could kill tens of thousands of birds on the Klamath National Wildlife Refuges during the late summer and fall of 2021. Last issue we published an interview with the staff of Bird Ally X as they readied a field hospital to prepare for the outbreak.

Stagnant, warm water creates optimal conditions for botulism outbreaks. Unprecedented drought in 2021 appeared to further exacerbate conditions that have led to large outbreaks throughout the last decade on the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake Refuges. In the late summer and early fall of 2020, an estimated 60,000 wild birds perished during the worst botulism outbreak in documented history at the refuge.

The good news is that the expected 2021 outbreak never arrived. A few isolated cases have been documented in wild birds on the Klamath refuge as well as lands surrounding the refuges, but mass die-offs have not been observed. The first overnight frosts recently arrived in the Klamath and signal the end of what is considered the botulism season. January Bill, who runs the bird hospital at Klamath, anticipates that Bird Ally X will soon dismantle the hospital for the season.

The bad news is that the risk to birds on the Pacific Flyway due to drought in the Klamath remains as high as it has ever been. There is a danger that the avoidance of a botulism outbreak in 2021 will create, in the words of January Bill, “an out of sight, out of mind” scenario. But make no mistake, we dodged a bullet this year.

Biologists are still trying to understand the dynamics that drove bird activity on the refuge this year—an effort that has been hindered by the fact that aerial bird surveys were limited due to challenges related to COVID-19. However, a variety of factors may have played a role in limiting the 2021 outbreak. This includes a decision to concentrate water on a small portion of Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and small late-season water deliveries secured for both Tule Lake and Lower Klamath. The most significant factor may have been that many species on the Pacific Flyway appear to have bypassed the refuges altogether and proceeded to California’s Central Valley. For example, reports indicate very few White-fronted Geese on the Klamath Refuges, while the Central Valley is seeing huge numbers. This is far from an acceptable solution—the Central Valley is also severely limited on habitat both in the remaining wetlands and in the surrogate habitat created by winter-flooded rice fields. The additional energetic output required for these birds to fly farther to find suitable food and habitat could have long-term survival implications.



CAUTION
DEEP
WATER

Right now the Klamath NWRs are vacillating between two dire realities: (1) Wetlands are so limited that they present a high risk of botulism to migrating birds. (2) Wetlands go dry and birds bypass them altogether. Neither is an acceptable present or future for birds on the Pacific Flyway. **The Klamath provides critically important stopover habitat for 80% of waterfowl and 55-60% of waterbirds that migrate along the Pacific Flyway.** More than 260 species of birds have been observed on the refuges. More than 80% of the historic Klamath wetlands have been lost to commercial agribusiness since the turn of the last century.

The Klamath wetlands that remain must function at the most optimal level possible to protect migratory bird populations. A combination of long-term and short-term strategies will be necessary to move the refuges away from an annual cycle of death and depletion.

Short-Term Strategies

This year the California Waterfowl Association secured a water right that will provide the Lower Klamath Wildlife Refuge with 3,750 acre feet of water in future years. This is a very small fraction of the more than 100,000 acre feet the refuges need, but it is a start. Senator Jeff Merkley has included \$162 million in the current spending bills to address drought in the Klamath. If passed, this funding will support endangered fish recovery, farmers, and the refuges. In the case of the refuges, it could potentially be used to fund water-related infrastructure needs as well as the acquisition of additional water rights from willing sellers.

Long-Term Strategies

The Klamath NWRs possess a 1905 water right that could provide substantial water, but politics within the Department of the Interior has kept the refuge from exercising this right. Additionally, more water could be secured through acquisition of private water rights through voluntary and compensated agreements with willing sellers—this effort needs to be accelerated. Finally, the Bureau of Reclamation has failed to include the refuges in a biological opinion for the Klamath Project, which controls much of the water in the basin, arguing that it has a mandate only to provide water to agriculture and listed fish species. In fact, there is a strong case to be made that its legal mandates extend to the refuges as well, and their position needs to be challenged.

Portland Audubon has been working to protect the Klamath Refuges for more than a century. In fact, Portland Audubon was founded in 1902 in Oregon for the specific purpose of establishing a refuge at Lower Klamath Lake, an event that occurred in 1908. Subsequently, Portland Audubon advanced the first laws in Oregon to protect birds at Klamath from wanton killing, funded the first game officers at the Klamath, and bought the first patrol boat at the Klamath, appropriately named the “Grebe.” Today we work to raise awareness of the refuges’ critical role in supporting birds in the western United States and advocate for their protection. Overallocation of water in the Klamath Basin exacerbated by drought that will only get worse in the coming years places this work at the highest priority for bird conservation in North America.



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**. We encourage you to support the businesses that support us!



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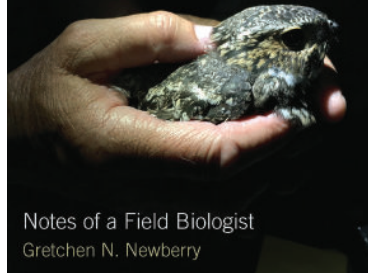
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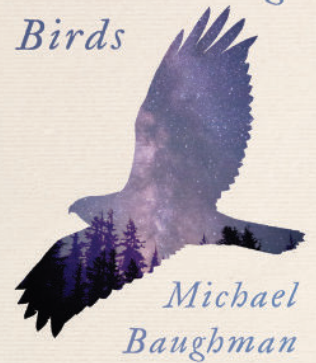
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Show your support for birds with one of our many products featuring Portland Audubon's logo. Iron-on patches can turn any article of clothing into one for the birds, and water bottles are available to stay hydrated while birding! With the holiday season around the corner, the store will be stocking up on even more Portland Audubon logo items, so be sure to swing by or keep an eye on our online shop.

Calendars Are Back!

It's that time of year when the Nature Store stocks up on a fantastic variety of calendars for the new year. Swing by to browse this year's display, including a selection by local artists and photographers. From full-size to mini, engagement planners and more, there is something for everyone on your holiday shopping list—including you!!





TOGETHER FOR NATURE

5151 NW Cornell Road
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Portland Audubon inspires all people to love and protect birds, wildlife,
and the natural environment upon which life depends.



Save the Date for this Year's Christmas Bird Count!

JANUARY 2, 2022

Portland's 96th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on Sunday, January 2, 2022. We hope you will join us, in the field or at your feeders, as we count every bird seen or heard inside the Portland count circle. The CBC encompasses over 2,500 count circles across North America and as far south as Brazil. This is the longest-running large-scale wildlife data set in existence and provides critical information on the status of and changes to bird populations over the past 122 years!

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Portland Audubon staff are
working remotely. All staff can
still be reached by phone or email.

On the Cover: Pondering Upon a Star, by Sachiko Quinn

On the Inside Cover: Swifts, photo by Tara Lemezis; Winter Camp,
photo by Tara Lemezis; Trumpeter Swan, photo by Robert Shea.



Birdy Brain Buster!

**What is the heaviest bird found
in Oregon?**

- A. Wild Turkey
- B. California Condor
- C. American White Pelican
- D. Trumpeter Swan



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Answer: D (30 pounds)