



THE KESTREL

Salem Audubon Society

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Statement

The Salem Audubon Society will foster a workplace and community that values and celebrates diversity in all its forms. We believe embracing diversity, promoting equity, ensuring inclusion, and creating a sense of belonging are fundamental to our success and integral to improving society.

Wildlife Emergencies

Contact: Chintimini Wildlife Center
(541) 745-5324 chintiminiwildlife.org

Poaching Law Enforcement Upped To Aid Habitat Conservation Gains

By Michael Babbitt

During our last Birder's Night meeting, our guest presenter, Chuck Gates, noted that North American waterfowl and wetland birds tend to maintain their populations better than birds of other habitat types. Chuck attributed this to the habitat conservation efforts of Ducks Unlimited and other hunting groups, which he rightfully credited with saving and restoring many wetland habitats. This is not to say that wetlands are not under any threat, but apparently, as a whole, they are better protected in North America than are some habitats. Regardless, this was not the first time these efforts have been brought to our attention. For myself, I have long appreciated the knowledge and solicitousness of wildlife demonstrated by many of the hunters whom I have known.



Babbitt

President's Message

One problem with hunter-supported conservation, however, could be the declining numbers of hunters in the United States, at least on a per-capita basis (Mohr, Henry, Wojcik, Anhalt-Depies, and Storm, Wildlife Society Bulletin, <https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/wsb.1578>). At the same time, sadly, poaching remains a significant problem. Just how big and how it is trending is challenging to say for an illegal activity, little of which is prosecuted. And with fewer hunters among us, perhaps we have fewer people aware of the ethic of hunting lawfully.

There is some good news in that several states are stepping up to do what they can to combat poaching. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has a website on poaching and what you can do to help fight against it: [https://www.protectoregonswildlife.com/overview/](http://www.protectoregonswildlife.com/overview/)

As you may know, ODFW does not do its own law enforcement; it contracts with the Oregon State Police (OSP) for that work. According to the ODFW website, Oregon and Alaska are the only two states with that practice. Perhaps you are

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wondering how dedicated police officers are to protecting wildlife. In that case, I can say that in my own experience dealing with them (whilst working in pesticide law enforcement), I was pretty impressed with the OSP officers I met who worked with wildlife. They are primarily within the Fish and Wildlife Division of the OSP. <https://www.oregon.gov/osp/programs/fw/Pages/default.aspx>

Additionally, the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) now has an anti-poaching special prosecutor.

Of course, much of the state-level activity against poachers is funded by hunters through their license fees. As hunter numbers decline, funding sources for wildlife management and protection will need to be reconsidered. Personally, I would be happy to pay an appropriately dedicated tax on items like wild bird seed and binoculars. Most birders would likely agree, and as hunting license fee revenue declines, states may become more willing to consider a seed tax.

As for the causes of the decline in hunters, several reasons are given. The Wildlife Society article cites loss of access to land due to development, changes in available recreation options, and the ageing out of baby boomers. You can probably think of others. Writers and analysts have

noted several downsides to the decline in hunting, from declining wildlife management funds to overpopulation of some game species and impacts on local economies. One positive trend in hunting demographics is that more women are hunting now than in the past. (I still think diversity is a good thing, whether it be biodiversity in the wild or in agriculture, or philosophical diversity among people.)

It seems to me unlikely that the number of hunters in the US will increase. Our lands and waters can only support so many, and we will need to explore alternative funding sources for habitat protection and restoration. But it would be a sad state of affairs, I think, if hunting and fishing opportunities were not available for those who want to responsibly and lawfully harvest healthy meat from the wild. Fortunately, there are other ways to be active in Nature and support habitat. Many of us and our associates do some of these things every day at Ankeny Hill Nature Center and other locales. At such places, you can meet with and exchange ideas with some of our partners in conservation, such as hunters.

I can be reached at babbitt.michael@salemaudubon.org Or write to me at Salem Audubon Society, POB 2084, Salem, OR 97308. **Meanwhile, thrive in Nature.**

Heed the Call: Join the Salem Christmas Bird Count

By Mike Unger

Salem Audubon Society Member

Once a year, the skill of local birders combine in a massive community effort: the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), the longest-running citizen science project of its kind. For more than a century, bird lovers across the Americas have devoted a single day between December 14 and January 5 to record every species—and sometimes, every bird—they can find within a designated 15-mile circle. Oregon hosts around 50 CBC circles each year, and the Salem Area Count will take place on Saturday, December 20, 2025. This will be the 63rd Annual Salem CBC, a proud tradition that connects local volunteers with a network of counters across the continent.

The CBC is like a census for birds, producing data that researchers, wildlife managers, and conservationists use to track population health, shifts in migration, and changes brought on by climate and habitat pressures. Now in its 126th year, the national Audubon Christmas Bird Count has revealed both urgent concerns and hopeful discoveries: while some waterfowl

populations are thriving, more than half of U.S. bird species show alarming declines. At the same time, counts have documented many species wintering farther north than ever before, thanks to milder winters and the popularity of backyard feeding.

How You Can Help

You need not trek through the woods to make a difference. If you live within the Salem CBC circle, you can participate simply by counting birds at your own feeders. Whether you watch for just 15 minutes or spend several hours, your observations add valuable data to the count.

So, grab your binoculars, pour a cup of coffee, and join us in this meaningful tradition. Together, we can help keep watch over the feathered life that connects us all.

For more information:

- Call Tim Johnson: (503) 507-8552 (general information and feeder counts)
- New field participants, please contact Gretchen at gahjohn27@icloud.com

Salem Audubon Society Field Trips

Compiled by Cynthia Donald

Salem Audubon Society (SAS) field trips are open to the public, and we have a mix of experienced and new birders. Our field trips are an excellent way to become familiar with Oregon birds, experience new places, and meet new friends. We don't charge for our trips, but there may be a small fee involved, such as a parking pass, depending on our destination. We encourage participants to be vaccinated. Some leaders request that participants carpool to reduce our carbon footprint; please consider contributing to your driver's costs. Masking when inside the vehicle is up to individual drivers.

SAS field trips vary in both driving distance and walking length. Specific field trip descriptions will note trail conditions (uneven, paved, etc), meeting places and times, and often include anticipated species to be encountered and directions for carpooling (if applicable). If you need to leave the trip earlier than the scheduled time, please let your leader know!

SAS OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS

Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 9:00 – Minto-Brown Island Park

(Upcoming – Sunday, November 9 at 9:00 AM and Wednesday, December 17 at 8:00 AM. Please note time change!)

Leaders: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998, Tim Johnson (503) 507-8552, Paul Evans (317) 922-7908

In the fall and winter months, Minto-Brown Island Park provides rich areas of deciduous and evergreen woodlands, brushy understory, hedgerow areas with fall-drying berries, and water for arriving ducks, geese, cormorants, and grebes. Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, and Barred Owl are hunting in the grassland areas with surrounding tall trees. The park had fledgling Osprey and Bald Eagle that are vocal and hunting along the river. The extensive trail system in this park includes a north Conservation Area and a trail to Riverfront Park.

A variety of species nest in the wet season, including sparrows, wrens, ducks, geese, Bald Eagle, and other raptors. Now resident sparrows, towhees, creepers, robins, chickadees, and nuthatches will be joined by migrant Pacific Wren, Golden and Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warbler, and Golden-

Calendar At-a-Glance

The events scheduled for this month are shown below.

For complete interactive access visit our new website

calendar – <https://salemaudubon.org/calendar>



SAS Field Trip - Minto Brown Island Park

Tue Oct 7th 9:00am - 11:30am

Minto-Brown Island Park, 2200 Minto Island Rd SW, Salem, OR 97302, USA



SAS Event - Brown's Ferry Park

Sat Oct 18th 9:00am - 12:00pm

Brown's Ferry Park, Tualatin, OR, 5855 SW Nyberg Ln, Tualatin, OR 97062, USA



SAS Field Trip - Illahe Hills Country Club

Mon Oct 20th 8:00am - 11:00am

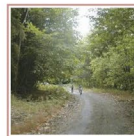
Illahe Hills Country Club, 3376 Country Club Rd S, Salem, OR 97302, USA



SAS Field Trip – Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge

Wed Oct 22nd 9:00am - 11:00am

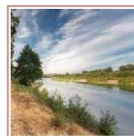
Ankeny Hill Nature Center, 130 Ankeny Hill Rd SE, Jefferson, OR 97352, USA



SAS Field Trip Keizer Rapids Park

Thu Oct 30th 9:00am - 11:00am

Keizer Rapids Park, 1900 Chemawa Rd N, Keizer, OR 97303, USA



SAS Field Trip - Minto Brown Island Park

Sun Nov 9th 9:00am - 12:00pm

Minto-Brown Island Park, 2200 Minto Island Rd SW, Salem, OR 97302, USA



SAS Special Event - SAS Christmas Bird Count

Sat Dec 20th

crowned, Fox, and Lincoln's Sparrow. We will keep an eye out for the unusual, including warbler species and White-throated, Swamp, and Chipping Sparrow.

Meet at 9:00 AM at Parking Lot #3 (the last parking lot in the park). You will need to park in the Overflow Area due to construction activities. Dress for the weather, bring water, snacks, and binoculars! Trails may be

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uneven, so wear appropriate footwear and plan for considerable walking. We plan to finish between 11:30 and noon. Loaner binoculars are available.

Directions: From River Road South, turn west at the signal at Minto Island Road and proceed to the last parking lot. Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and confirm that anything inside is out of sight.

Saturday, October 18, 2025, at 9:15 AM – Brown's Ferry Park

Leader: Barbara Dolan (971) 772-4589

This fall bird walk is at Brown's Ferry Park in Tualatin, approximately 37 miles north of Salem. The park is 28 acres, historically known as a riverside wetland with trees and foliage that have adapted to the terrain and flooding. Its first highlight is that the trail follows the Tualatin River, with Nyberg Creek entering at one point. Secondly, a pond on this suburban park property allows close observation of water birds, including occasional Green Heron, Wilson's Snipe, ducks (some years a good number of Gadwall and rarely Eurasian Wigeon), and Osprey. Passerines can be found in the riparian habitat and close to the trail.

This is approximately a 2-mile walk. Plan for weather changes this time of year and wear shoes for a dirt trail that could be wet. Bring snacks, and feel free to bring lunch if you need it. We plan to finish by noon. There are restroom facilities at the park. Join us if you can.

Meet at Brown's Ferry Park in Tualatin at 9:15 AM. Park address is 5855 SW Nyberg Lane, Tualatin, OR.

Directions: From Salem, drive I-5 North to exit 289, Nyberg St off ramp, north of highway 205. The Nyberg off-ramp has become very busy with vehicles merging on your right, so be patient and give good signals for this exit. Proceed to the Right side of the off-ramp and plan to TURN Right. Then, proceed to turn left at the second signal after turning. The 2nd signal name is Nyberg LANE. TURN left, proceed past the condos on the left, and look for a SMALL white sign with a Tree symbol on your right. The Park Drive entrance is on your left after this sign. Restrooms are available. Drive time is approximately 45 minutes from Salem.

Monday, October 20, 2025, at 8:00 AM – Illahe Hills Country Club

Leaders: Paul Evans, Roxy Evans

Please contact the leader at paulevansdo@gmail.com to confirm your registration for this trip.

Illahe Hills Country Club has been graciously hosting limited guided bird walks. These enjoyable walks work jointly to see the birds, animals, and plants, as well as to collect data. Illahe Hills CC is now certified by the International Audubon Society. This designation credentials the golf course's good stewardship for wildlife, plants, and ecosystems on the course and the surrounding grounds. Walks are open to Illahe members and limited Salem Audubon Society guests through sign-up (see below).

The course is close to Minto Brown Island Park and abuts local farms. To date, 109 bird species have been recorded! Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Great Horned Owls nest here and are regularly seen. New birders are welcome! This will be our final bird walk here in 2025. Join us in 2026!

Registered participants should meet in front of the Country Club entrance at 8:00 AM. Please park in the main parking area, not in front of the clubhouse! Dress for the weather and bring water, sun block, a hat, and binoculars. Restroom facilities are available. We will be finished before 11:00 AM. Please contact the leader at paulevansdo@gmail.com to confirm your registration for this trip.

Directions: From Salem, proceed south on River Road to Country Club Road South and turn right (west) on Country Club Road South. Proceed a short distance, and the country club with an ample parking area will be straight ahead.

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Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at 9:00 AM – Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge

(Upcoming – Wednesday, November 19 at 9:00 AM, no field trip in December)

Leaders: Mike Unger (503) 930-8998, Tim Johnson (503) 507-8552, Paul Evans (317) 922-7908

October 1 marks the closure of the interior berms and ponds of this National Wildlife Refuge due to its mission to protect wintering ducks, geese, and swans. We begin our fall and winter routes by carpooling, including pull-outs in the 10-mile journey around the refuge to observe visiting shorebirds in wet grassy areas and fields. These species include Long-billed Dowitchers, yellowlegs species, peeps, and Dunlin. A variety of geese, ducks, and gulls are drawn to the marshes. Future arrivals include swans, shorebirds, waterbirds, and possible American Pipit flocks. Tall snags at Pintail and Eagle marshes provide excellent opportunities to watch Rough-legged Hawk and resident young or adult raptors. Pull-out areas with hedgerows, shrubs, and ditches provide collections of sparrows, migrant and winter warblers, woodpeckers, and visiting shrike species. Wilson's Snipe, Horned Lark, and Western Meadowlark also frequent these stops. If time is available, we can include one of the boardwalks.

Meet at Ankeny Hill Nature Center (AHNC) Parking Lot at 9:00 AM. There are facilities at this location, and the trails are now open! We will start here before visiting Pintail Marsh and other places. Bring water, binoculars, and a snack. Trails can be uneven, so please wear appropriate footwear. We plan to finish between 11:30 and noon. Loaner binoculars are available.

Directions: From Salem, take I-5 south to the Ankeny Hill Road exit (Exit 243) and turn right (west). At the Ankeny Hill Road/Wintel Road intersection, bear right and continue on Ankeny Hill Road straight (west) approximately 2.2 miles to the AHNC Visitor Center entrance, which will be on your left. An alternate route from Salem is to take Liberty Road south to Ankeny Hill Road, then turn left and continue about 0.4 miles to the AHNC Visitor Center entrance, which will be on your right. Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and confirm that anything inside is out of sight.

Thursday, October 30 at 9:00 AM – Keizer Rapids Park

Leader: Dominic Valenti (503) 507-7008

This short walk on both paved trails and dirt paths will cover about 1.5 miles and should take us between 1.5 and 2 hours to complete. This park is situated along the Willamette River and includes both shaded woods and open fields, making for a nice variety of bird species year-round. Bald Eagle, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, and White-crowned Sparrow are just a few of the many resident species. We will also be on the lookout for the various sparrows, thrushes, kinglets, ducks, and raptors that spend their winters here in the Willamette Valley. Hope to see you there!

Meet in the public parking lot near the boat launch area.

Directions: From Salem, take River Road N, turn left onto Chemawa Road N, turn left onto Walsh Way N, and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road near the boat ramp.

UPCOMING SAS TRIPS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2025 – SAS Christmas Bird Count! Please volunteer to help in any of the 10 Sectors in the Salem area. You are welcome to participate for any amount of time, from an hour to all day.

Swifts Attending Church at Night

By Harry Fuller

Salem Audubon Society Member and Author

Vaux's swifts are fast-flying insect eaters. This time of year, they migrate to warmer places in the Western Hemisphere, where insects are flying in January. They catch all their food on the wing. Swifts will cruise over a lake for insects or slurp up a drink; but they also may fly relatively high

Vaux's swifts nest along the Pacific Coast up to the northern edge of British Columbia. That's at latitude 60 degrees north. Salem is at a latitude of 45. They nest as far south as the San Francisco Bay Area and Lake Tahoe. This species nests in the right habitat over much of Oregon. A crowded roost is presumed to be a way of conserving body heat and energy for the migrating swifts. That usually means large conifers, and they will also use chimneys.

Marion County has nesting swifts and has always been on the Vaux's swifts' migration route. In recent history, numerous places in Salem have been used as night roosts. This month, a favored place has been the lowest chimney on First United Methodist Church's sanctuary building. Best visibility is from the parking lot south of the church at 600 State Street.

On Sept. 12 I was with about 16 people as we watched an estimated 4,000 Vaux's Swifts swirl down into their chosen chimney for the night. I saw no predators going after the swifts.

For nearly three decades, Chapman Elementary School in Portland was well-known for its large, swift gatherings during migration. That school has a vast, century-old brick chimney. Last September, the swifts stopped using the chimney, and have not returned. Biologists have no apparent reason why. Speculation has included human noise, or drones, or other birds preying on the swifts.

With their tiny hooked toes on slender feet, swifts can't perch or walk. They cling to crevices and ledges like bats do. An old brick chimney is ideal if it is not lined with metal and not capped. The Vaux's swift is America's smallest swift species, with a body length under 5 inches, yet with a wingspan of a foot. A swift's life is based on flying, and flying fast. This bird's daytime hunting flight speed has been measured at 35MPH; in panic, they can go 70 MPH. Larger swifts have been clocked at 100MPH. Makes the peregrine jealous.



Photo by Tim Johnson

Vaux's Swifts at the First United Methodist Church in Salem.

They stop only for sleeping and nesting. And we now know that at least one large species of swift can fly for months without ever landing or hanging on—half the brain sleeps while the other half sleeps.

The bird began to gather over the chosen church chimney at least 40 minutes before sunset. Most members of the flock will not swirl down into the roost until it starts getting dark, at least 15 minutes after sunset. Without disturbance the next morning, these swifts leave their chimney roosts in a single event, at a rate of 5–15 swifts per second.

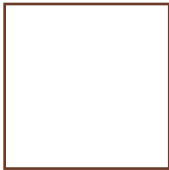
Website compiling Vaux's swift data. Maintained by Larry Schwitters, a biologist in Washington State. <https://www.vauxhappening.org/>

Data recorded for Friday, September 12th is shown on the next page.

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 PO Box 2084
 Salem, OR 97308



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Birder's Night Harry Fuller	Birding Workshops Mike Unger
SAS Woodshop John Jorgenson	SAS Nature Reserve Lee Slattum
Kestrel Editor/Web Admin Mike Williams	Conservation David Harison

Christmas Bird Count
 Tim Johnson, Mike Unger, Gretchen Johnson

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging
 Mike Williams

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 PO Box 2084 Salem, Oregon 97308
 408 N 3rd Ave, Stayton, OR 97383
 (503) 588-7340 Email: laurie@salemaudubon.org
 Website: www.salemaudubon.org

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NEW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

**Salem Audubon Nature Reserve
 Weekly Work Parties**

Every Wednesday 9:00 - 11:00 AM Rain or Shine

Help keep our Nature Reserve looking great!
 BYO work gloves - Tools are provided or bring your favorites.

Salem Audubon Nature Reserve

Eola Dr. NW north of Edgewater St. NW in West Salem
 Call Lee Slattum, (503) 364-9325, with questions.

<https://www.salemaudubon.org/nature-reserve>



Membership Form

Name* _____
 Address* _____
 City* _____ State* _____
 Phone* _____ ZIP* _____
 Email* _____ *Required Information

To pay by check, complete this form and mail with payment to:
 Salem Audubon Society PO Box 2084 Salem, OR 97308
 To pay with credit card, please use online form at:
<http://salem.audubon.org/join-now>

**Salem Audubon Society
 Membership Options**

Membership valid Feb. 1, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026

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- Individual Digital \$45**
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- Family Digital \$60**
Includes all digital content access

Optional - Also receive the Print Kestrel

- Add Print Kestrel + \$15**
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 NEW MEMBERSHIP

This will create a
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