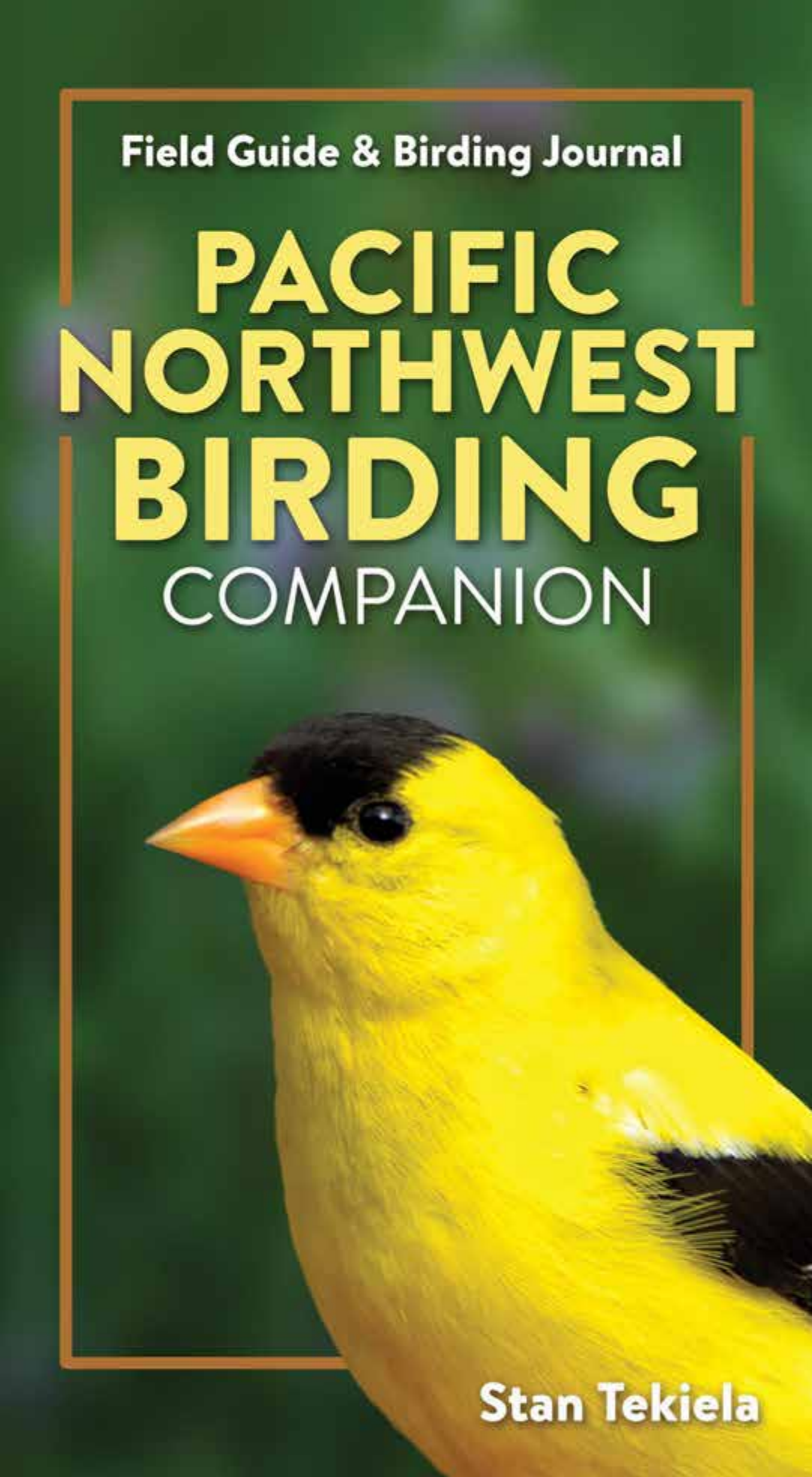
Field Guide & Birding Journal

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRDING COMPANION



Stan Tekiela

Field Guide & Birding Journal

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRDING COMPANION

by Stan Tekiela

Adventure Publications
Cambridge, Minnesota

To Agnieszka Bacal

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Book and cover design and illustrations by Jonathan Norberg

Range maps produced by Anthony Hertzel

Photo credits by photographer and page number:

Cover photo: American Goldfinch by Stan Tekiela

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To the best of the publisher's knowledge, all photos were of live birds.

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Pacific Northwest Birding Companion

Published by Adventure Publications, an imprint of AdventureKEEN
310 Garfield Street South
Cambridge, Minnesota 55008
(800) 678-7006
www.adventurepublications.net

Printed in China
ISBN 978-1-64755-042-4 (pbk.); ISBN 978-1-64755-043-1 (ebook)

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WHY WATCH BIRDS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST?

Millions of people have discovered bird feeding. It's a simple and enjoyable way to bring the beauty of birds closer to your home. Watching birds at your feeder often leads to a lifetime pursuit of bird identification. This Birding Companion to Washington, Oregon, Idaho and the southern portion of British Columbia is a new approach to bird watching.

With a large size and beautiful full-color photographs that make identifications even easier, this contains 145 species of birds in the Pacific Northwest, from common backyard and shoreside visitors to birds only seen during migration and rarer visitors that are only seen on occasion.

But this book is more than just an identification guide. Each page also includes space for keeping track of where and when you spotted each species, and there's also a life list in the back to keep track of all of your observations.

The book also includes:

- Birding hotspots across the region
- Details about birding festivals and events
- Information about citizen science and bird counts, how to report a rare bird and the basics of what to do if you suspect you find an injured bird.

There are over 1,100 species of birds found in North America. In Washington State alone more than 518 different kinds of birds have been recorded throughout the years. These bird sightings were diligently recorded by hundreds of bird watchers and became part of the official state record. The story is much the same in Oregon, where 543 have been recorded; Idaho, where 432 are recorded; and British Columbia, where an amazing 522 species have been recorded throughout the province.

Bird watching, often called birding, is one of the most popular activities in America. Its outstanding appeal in the Pacific Northwest is due, in part, to an unusually rich and abundant birdlife. Why are there so many birds? One reason is open space: Oregon covers more than 98,000 square miles; Idaho spans more than 83,000 square miles; and Washington State spans more than 70,000 square miles. British Columbia dwarfs them all at over 300,000 square miles.

Open space is not the only reason there is such an abundance of birds. It's also the diversity of habitat. From the temperate rainforests and tidepool-covered beaches of the Pacific Coast to the towering peaks and to the craggy scablands of Eastern Washington, the Pacific Northwest covers a wide range of habitats, elevations and environments.

No matter if you are in the cool, dry scablands or the moist forest of the Hoh Rain Forest, there are birds to watch in each season. Whether witnessing hawks migrating in autumn or welcoming back hummingbirds in spring, there is variety and excitement in birding as each season turns to the next.

OBSERVE WITH A STRATEGY; TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING BIRDS

Identifying birds isn't as difficult as you might think. By simply following a few basic strategies, you can increase your chances of successfully identifying most birds you see! One of the first and easiest things to do when you see a new bird is to note its color. (Also, since this book is organized by color, you will go right to that color section to find it.)

Next, note the size of the bird. A strategy to quickly estimate size is to select a small-, medium- and large-sized bird to use for reference. For example, most people are familiar with robins. A robin, measured from tip of the bill to tip of the tail, is 10 inches (25 cm) long. Using the robin as an example of a medium-

sized bird, select two other birds, one smaller and one larger. Many people use a House Sparrow, at about 6 inches (15 cm), and an American Crow, about 18 inches (45 cm). When you see a bird that you don't know, you can quickly ask yourself, "Is it smaller than a robin, but larger than a sparrow?" When you look in your field guide to help identify your bird, you'll know it's roughly between 6 and 10 inches (15 to 25 cm) long. This will help to narrow your choices.

Next, note the size, shape and color of the bill. Is it long, short, thick, thin, pointed, blunt, curved or straight? Seed-eating birds, such as Evening Grosbeaks, have bills that are thick and strong enough to crack even the toughest seeds. Birds that sip nectar, such as Black-chinned Hummingbirds, need long, thin bills to reach deep into flowers. Hawks and owls tear their prey with very sharp, curving bills. Sometimes, just noting the bill shape can help you decide if the bird is a woodpecker, finch, grosbeak, blackbird or bird of prey.

Next, take a look around and note the habitat in which you see the bird. Is it wading in a marsh? Walking along a riverbank? Soaring in the sky? Is it perched high in the trees or hopping along the forest floor? Because of their preferences in diet and habitat, you'll usually see robins hopping on the ground, but not often eating the seeds at your feeder. Or you'll see a Black-headed Grosbeak sitting on a branch of a tree, but not climbing down the tree trunk headfirst the way a nuthatch does.

Noticing what a bird is eating will give you another clue to help you identify that bird. Feeding is a big part of any bird's life. Fully one-third of all bird activity revolves around searching for and catching food, or actually eating. While birds don't always follow all the rules of what we think they eat, you can make some general assumptions. Northern Flickers, for instance, feed upon ants and other insects, so you wouldn't expect to see them visiting a backyard feeder. Some birds, such as Barn Swallows and Cliff Swallows, feed upon flying insects and spend hours swooping and diving to catch a meal.

Sometimes you can identify a bird by the way it perches. Body posture can help you differentiate between an American Crow and a Red-tailed Hawk. American Crows lean forward over their feet on a branch, while hawks perch in a vertical position. Look for this the next time you see a large unidentified bird in a tree.

Birds in flight are often difficult to identify, but noting the size and shape of the wing will help. A bird's wing size is in direct proportion to its body size, weight and type of flying. The shape of the wing determines if the bird flies fast and with precision, or slowly and less precisely. Birds such as House Finches, which flit around in thick tangles of branches, have short, round wings. Birds that soar on warm updrafts of air, such as Turkey Vultures, have long, broad wings. Barn Swallows have short, pointed wings that slice through air, propelling their swift and accurate flight.

Turkey Vulture in flight

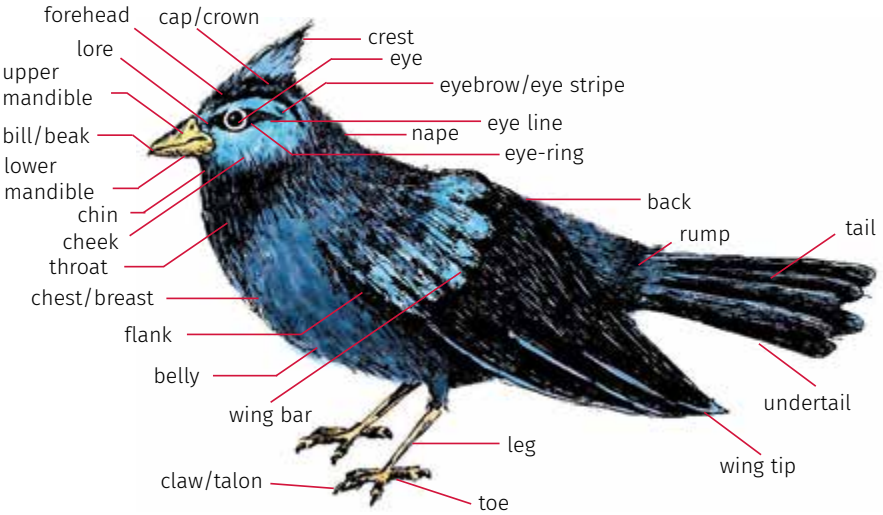
Some birds have unique flight patterns that aid in identification. American Goldfinches fly in a distinctive up-and-down pattern that makes it look as if they are riding a roller coaster.

While it's not easy to make these observations in the short time you often have to watch a "mystery bird," practicing these methods of identification will greatly expand your skills in birding. Also, seek the guidance of a more experienced birder who will help you improve your skills and answer questions on the spot.

BIRD BASICS

It's easier to identify birds and communicate about them if you know the names of the different parts of a bird. For instance, it's more effective to use the word "crest" to indicate the set of extra long feathers on top of the head of a Steller's Jay than to try to describe it.

The following illustration points out the basic parts of a bird. Because it is a composite of many birds, it shouldn't be confused with any actual bird.



Bird Color Variables

No other animal has a color palette like a bird's. Brilliant blues, lemon yellows, showy reds and iridescent greens are commonplace within the bird world. In general, the male birds are more colorful than their female counterparts. This is probably to help the male attract a mate, essentially saying, "Hey, look at me!" It also calls attention to the male's overall health. The better the condition of his feathers, the better his food source and territory, and therefore the better his potential for a mate.

Female birds that don't look like their male counterparts (such species are called sexually dimorphic, meaning "two forms") are often a nondescript color, as seen with the Lazuli Bunting. These muted tones help hide the females during weeks of motionless incubation, and draw less attention to them when they are out feeding or taking a break from the rigors of raising their young.

In some species, such as the Bald Eagle, Steller's Jay and Hairy Woodpecker, the male birds look nearly identical to the females. In the case of the woodpeckers, the sexes are only differentiated by a single red or sometimes yellow mark. Depending on the species, the mark may be on top of the head, face, nape of the neck or just behind the bill.

During the first year, juvenile birds often look like the mothers. Since brightly colored feathers are used mainly for attracting a mate, young non-breeding males don't have a need for colorful plumage. It is not until the first spring molt (or several years later, depending on the species) that young males obtain their breeding colors.

Both breeding and winter plumages are the result of molting. Molting is the process of dropping old worn feathers and replacing them with new ones. All birds molt, typically twice a year, with the spring molt usually occurring in late winter. During this time, most birds produce their breeding plumage (brighter colors for attracting mates), which lasts throughout the summer.

Winter plumage is the result of the late summer molt, which serves a couple of important functions. First, it adds feathers for warmth in the coming winter. Second, in some species it produces feathers that tend to be drab in color, which helps to camouflage the birds and hide them from predators. The winter plumage of the male American Goldfinch, for example, is an olive brown, unlike its obvious canary yellow color in summer. Luckily for us, some birds, such as Lewis's Woodpeckers, retain their bright summer colors all year long.

Bird Nests

Bird nests are truly an amazing feat of engineering. Imagine building your home strong enough to weather a storm, large enough to hold your entire family, insulated enough to shelter them from cold and heat, and waterproof enough to keep out rain. Now, build it without any blueprints or directions, and without the use of your hands or feet! Birds do!

Before building a nest, an appropriate site must be selected. In some species, such as House Wrens, the male picks out several potential sites and assembles several small twigs in each. This discourages other birds from using nearby nest cavities. These "extra" nests are occasionally called dummy nests. The female is then taken around and shown all the choices. She chooses her favorite and finishes constructing the nest. In some other species of birds–the Bullock's Oriole, for example–it is the female who chooses the site and builds the nest with the male offering only an occasional suggestion. Each species has its own nest-building routine, which is strictly followed.

Nesting material usually consists of natural elements found in the immediate area. Most nests consist of plant fibers (such as bark peeled from grapevines), sticks, mud, dried grass, feathers, fur or soft, fuzzy tufts from thistle. Some birds, including Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, use spiderwebs to glue nesting materials together. Nesting material is limited to what a bird can hold or carry. Because of this, a bird must make many trips afield to gather enough materials to complete its nest. Most nests take at least four days or more, and hundreds, if not thousands, of trips to build.

As you'll see in the following illustrations, birds construct a wide variety of different nest types.

ground nest

platform nest

cup nest

pendulous nest

cavity nest

The simple **ground nest** is scraped out of the earth. A shallow depression that usually contains no nesting material, it is made by birds such as the Killdeer and Horned Lark.

Another kind of nest, the **platform nest**, represents a more complex type of nest building. Constructed of small twigs and branches, the platform nest is a simple arrangement of sticks which forms a platform and features a small depression to nestle the eggs.

Mountain Bluebird at cavity nest

Some platform nests, such as those of the Canada Goose, are constructed on the ground and are made with mud and grass. Platform nests can also be on cliffs, bridges, balconies or even in flowerpots. This kind of nest gives space to adventurous youngsters and functions as a landing platform for the parents. Many waterfowl construct platform nests on the ground, usually near water or actually in the water. These **floating platform nests** vary with the water level, thus preventing nests with eggs from being flooded. Platform nests, constructed by such birds as Mourning Doves and herons, are not anchored to the tree and may tumble from the branches during high winds and storms.

The **cup nest** is a modified platform nest, used by three-quarters of all songbirds. Constructed from the outside in, a supporting platform is constructed first. This platform is attached firmly to a tree, shrub, rock ledge or the ground. Next, the sides are constructed of grasses, small twigs, bark or leaves, which are woven together and often glued with mud for additional strength. The inner cup, lined with feathers, animal fur, soft plant material or animal hair, is constructed last. The mother bird uses her chest to cast the final contours of the inner nest.

The **pendulous nest** is an unusual nest, looking more like a sock hanging from a branch than a nest. Inaccessible to most predators, these nests are attached to the ends of the smallest branches of a tree, and often wave wildly in the breeze. Woven very tightly of plant fibers, they are strong and watertight, taking up to a week to build. More commonly used by tropical birds, this complicated nest type has also been mastered by orioles and kinglets. A small opening on the top or side allows the parents access to the grass-lined interior. (It must be one heck of a ride to be inside one of these nests during a windy spring thunderstorm!)

Another type of nest, the **cavity nest**, is used by many birds, including woodpeckers and Western Bluebirds. The cavity nest is usually excavated in a tree branch or trunk and offers shelter from storms, sun, predators and cold. A relatively small entrance hole in a tree leads to an inner chamber up to 10 inches (25 cm) below. Usually constructed by woodpeckers, the cavity nest is typically used only once by its builder, but subsequently can be used for many years by birds such as bluebirds, which do not have the capability of excavating one for themselves. Kingfishers, on the other hand, excavate a tunnel up to 4 feet (1 m)

long, which connects the entrance in a riverbank to the nest chamber. These cavity nests are often sparsely lined because they're already well insulated.

One of the most clever of all nest types is known as the **no nest** or daycare nest. Parasitic birds, such as Brown-headed Cowbirds, build no nests at all! The egg-laden female expertly searches out other birds' nests and sneaks in to lay one of her own eggs while the host mother is not looking, thereby leaving the host mother to raise an adopted youngster. The mother cowbird wastes no energy building a nest only to have it raided by a predator. By using several nests of other birds, she spreads out her progeny so at least one of her offspring will live to maturity.

Some birds, including some swallows, take nest building one step further. They use a collection of small balls of mud to construct an adobe-style home. Constructed beneath the eaves of houses, under bridges or inside chimneys, some of these nests look like simple cup nests. Others are completely enclosed, with small tunnel-like openings that lead into a safe nesting chamber for the baby birds.

Who Builds the Nest?

In general, the female bird builds the nest. She gathers nesting materials and constructs a nest, with an occasional visit from her mate to check on the progress. In some species, both parents contribute equally to the construction of a nest. A male bird might forage for precisely the right sticks, grass or mud, but it's often the female that forms or puts together the nest. She uses her body to form the egg chamber. Rarely does the male build a nest by himself.

Fledging

Fledging is the interval between hatching and flight or leaving the nest. Some birds leave the nest within hours of hatching (precocial), but it might be weeks before they are able to fly. This is common with waterfowl and shorebirds. Until they start to fly, they are called fledglings. Birds that are still in the nest are called nestlings. Other baby birds are born naked and blind, and remain in the nest for several weeks (altricial).

Why Birds Migrate

Why do birds migrate? The short answer is simple–food. Birds migrate to areas with high concentrations of food, as it is easier to breed where food is than where it is not. A typical migrating bird–the Western Tanager, for instance–will migrate from the tropics of Central America and Mexico to nest in forests of North America, taking advantage of billions of newly hatched insects to feed its young. This trip is called **complete migration**.

Snow Geese migrating

Complete migrators have a set time and pattern of migration. Each year at nearly the same time, they take off and head for a specific wintering ground. Complete migrators may travel great distances, sometimes as much as 15,000 miles (24,150 km) or more in a year. But complete migration doesn't necessarily imply flying from the cold, frozen northland to a tropical destination. The Swainson's Hawk, for example, is a complete migrator that flies from Arizona to Central and South America. This is still called complete migration.

There are many interesting aspects to complete migrators. In the spring, males usually migrate several weeks before the females, arriving early to scope out possibilities for nesting sites and food sources, and to begin to defend territories. The females arrive several weeks later. In the autumn, in many species, the females and their young leave early, often up to four weeks before the adult males.

All migrators are not the same type. There are **partial migrators**, such as American Goldfinches, that usually wait until the food supply dwindles before flying south. Unlike complete migrators, the partial migrators move only far enough south, or sometimes east and west, to find abundant food. In some years it might be only a few hundred miles, while in other years it might be nearly a thousand. This kind of migration, dependent on the weather and available food, is sometimes called seasonal movement.

Unlike the predictable ebbing and flowing behavior of complete migrators or partial migrators, **irruptive migrators** can move every third to fifth year or, in some cases, in consecutive years. These migrations are triggered when times are really tough and food is scarce. Red-breasted Nuthatches are a good example of irruptive migrators, because they leave their normal northern range in search of food or in response to overpopulation.

How Do Birds Migrate?

One of the many secrets of migration is fat. While we humans are fighting the battle of the bulge, birds intentionally gorge themselves to put on as much fat as possible while still being able to fly. Fat provides the greatest amount of energy per unit of weight, and in the same way that your car needs gas, birds are propelled by fat and stalled without it.

During long migratory flights, fat deposits are used up quickly, and birds need to stop to "refuel." This is when backyard bird feeding stations and undeveloped, natural spaces around our towns and cities are especially important. Some birds require up to two to three days of constant feeding to build up their fat reserves before continuing their seasonal trip.

Some birds, such as most eagles, hawks, falcons and vultures, migrate during the day. Larger birds can hold more body fat, go longer without eating and take longer to migrate. These birds glide on rising columns of warm air, called thermals, which hold them aloft while they slowly make their way north or south. They generally rest during nights and hunt early in the morning before the sun has a chance to warm up the land and create good soaring conditions. Birds migrating during the day use a combination of landforms, rivers and the rising and setting sun to guide them in the right direction.

Most other birds migrate during the night. Studies show that some birds that migrate at night use the stars to navigate. Others use the setting sun, while still others, such as doves, use the planet's magnetic field to guide them north or south. While flying at night might seem like a crazy idea, nocturnal migration is safer for several reasons. First, there are fewer nighttime predators for migrating birds. Second, traveling at night allows time during the day to find food in unfamiliar surroundings. Finally, nighttime wind patterns tend to be flat, or laminar. These flat winds don't have the turbulence associated with the daytime winds and can actually help carry smaller birds by pushing them along.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

To help you quickly and easily identify birds, this book is organized by color. Simply note the color of the bird and turn to that section. Refer to the first page for the color key. The Red-naped Sapsucker, for example, is black and white with red on its head. Because the bird is mostly black and white, it will be found in the black and white section. Each color section is also arranged by size, generally with smaller birds first. Sections may also incorporate the average size in a range, which, in some cases, reflects size differences between male and female birds. Flip through the pages in that color section to find the bird. If you already know the name of the bird, check the index for the page number. In some species, the male and female are remarkably different in color. In these cases, the opposite sex is shown in a smaller inset photograph with a page reference. These birds, therefore, will be found in two different color sections.

In the description section you will find a variety of information about the bird. On pages 18–19 is a sample of the information included in the book.

Range Maps

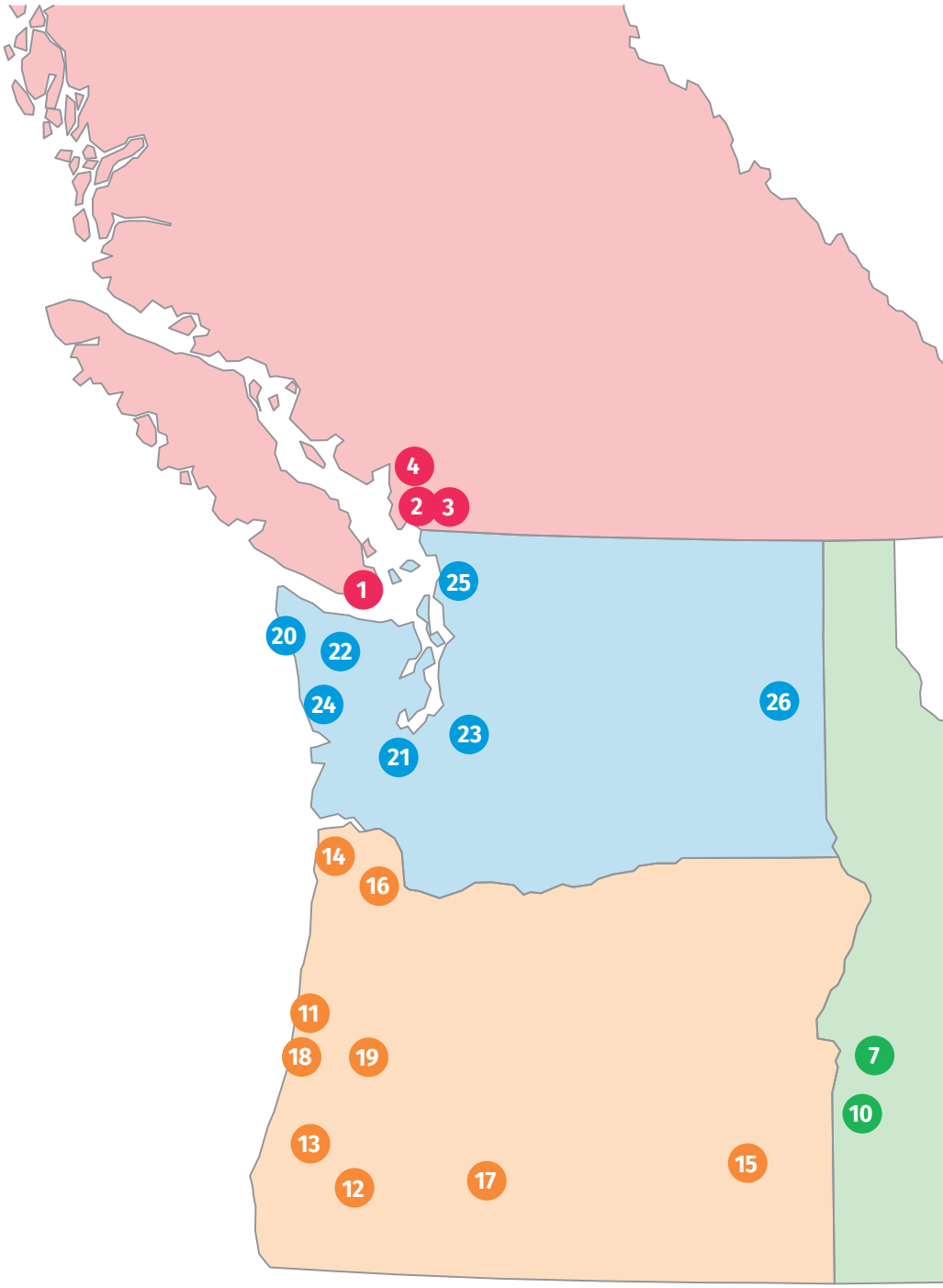
Range maps are included for each bird. Colored areas indicate where in Arizona a particular bird is most likely to be found. The colors represent the presence of a species during a specific season, not the density or amount of birds in the area. Green is used for summer, blue for winter, red for year-round and yellow for areas where the bird is seen during migration. While every effort has been made to accurately depict these ranges, they are only general guidelines. Ranges actually change on an ongoing basis due to a variety of factors. Changes in weather, species abundance, landscape and vital resources such as the availability of food and water can affect local populations, migration and movements, causing birds to be found in areas that are atypical for the species.

Colored areas simply mean bird sightings for that species have been frequent in those areas and less frequent in the others. Please use the maps as intended–as general guides only.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRDING HOTSPOTS

British Columbia

1. Esquimalt Lagoon National Migratory Bird Sanctuary (waterfowl, songbirds)
2. Iona Beach Regional Park (shorebirds; waterfowl, songbirds)
3. Reifel Bird Sanctuary (waterfowl, shorebirds)
4. Stanley Park (waterfowl, shorebirds)



Idaho

5 American Falls (shorebirds, songbirds, raptors)

6 Camas National Wildlife Refuge (swans, raptors)

7 Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

8 Hagerman Wildlife Management Area

9 Market Lake Wildlife Management Area (waterfowl, raptors, songbirds)

10 Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (raptors, owls)

Oregon

11 Boiler Bay State Scenic Viewpoint (ocean-going birds)

12 Crater Lake National Park (songbirds, raptors, waterfowl)

13 Fern Ridge Wildlife Management Area (purple martin, western meadowlark, waterfowl)

14 Fort Stevens State Park (songbirds)

15 Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (cranes, shorebirds)

16 Sauvie Island (waterfowl)

17 Summer Lake Wildlife Area (waterfowl, shorebirds)

18 Tillamook Bay (waterfowl)

19 William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge (raptors, waterfowl, songbirds)

Washington

20 Grays Harbor National Wildlife Refuge (migrating shorebirds)

21 North Cascades National Park (migratory songbirds)

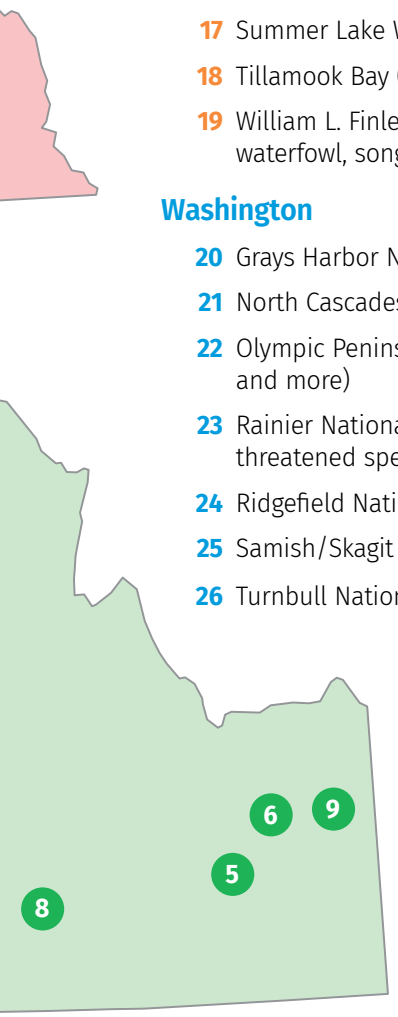
22 Olympic Peninsula and National Park (shorebirds, raptors and more)

23 Rainier National Park (songbirds, raptors, some threatened species)

24 Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (cranes, waterfowl, songbirds)

25 Samish/Skagit Flats (winter raptors)

26 Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (waterfowl)



PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRDING AT A GLANCE

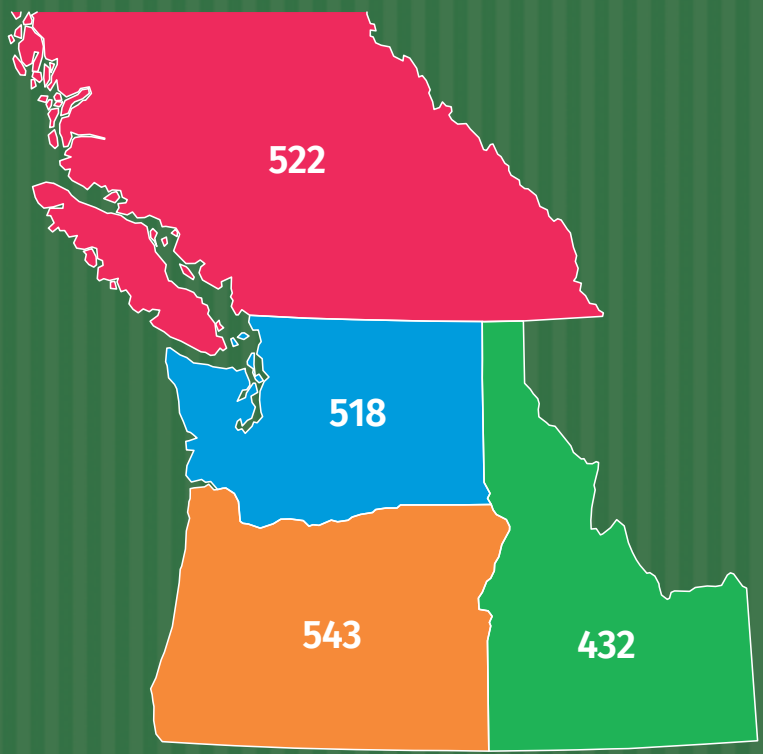
Idaho State Bird
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD

Oregon State Bird
WESTERN MEADOWLARK

Washington State Bird
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

British Columbia Official Bird
STELLER'S JAY

Number of Species Reported in the State or Province



PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRDING CALENDAR

From songbirds that return to nest each summer to the ocean-going birds that gather just off the coasts, the Northwest is blessed with great birding any time of year, and the region's birders like to celebrate that fact. The region hosts a variety of bird-centric events, with festivals and celebrations honoring eagles, migratory birds, shorebirds and more. The list below only includes a sampling!

January

Bald Eagle Days–Boise, ID

February

Winter Wings Festival–Klamath Falls, OR
Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival–Concrete, WA

March

Sandhill Crane Festival–Othello, WA

April

Dubois Grouse Days–Dubois, ID
Harney County Migratory Bird Festival–Burns, OR
Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival–Hoquiam, WA

May

Leavenworth Spring Bird Fest–Leavenworth, WA

September

Chelan Ridge Hawk Migration Festival–Chelan, WA
Puget Sound Bird Fest–Edmonds, WA

October

Vancouver Birding Week–Greater Vancouver, B.C.

December

Coeur d'Alene Eagle Watch–Coeur d'Alene, ID

The Great Washington Birding Trail

wa.audubon.org/birds/great-washington-state-birding-trail

Overseen by the Washington State offshoot of the Audubon Society, the Great Washington Birding Trail consists of seven separate driving routes that offer the best of birding in Washington. The route maps, which are available for a small fee on the Audubon's site, are a great way to get to experience the Evergreen State's diversity of habitats, and the birds that live in them.

Oregon Birding Trails

www.oregonbirdingtrails.org

Encompassing four completed birding trails (most in the southern or western part of the state), and with five others in the planning or concept stages, Oregon's birding trails introduce birders to the host of habitats found in Oregon, from the coast and its shorebirds to the Klamath basin and Oregon's state bird, the Western Meadowlark.

Idaho Birding Trail

fishandgame.idaho.gov/ifwis/ibt

Idaho's birding trails are organized into four geographical regions with dozens of notable birding sites called out for each area. This makes a driving tour an incredibly productive way to spot the Gem State's birds.

Nature Vancouver

naturevancouver.ca

This B.C.-based group offers birding tours, events and many expert birders.

COLOR INDICATOR

FIELD REPORT

Date/Time _____ Season _____

Location _____

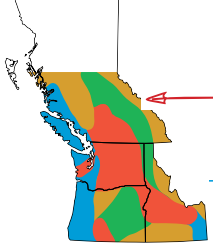
GPS _____

Weather _____

Notes _____

_____

◯ MALE ◯ FEMALE ◯ JUVENILE ◯ NEST



RANGE MAP

YEAR-ROUND
MIGRATION
SUMMER
WINTER

Common Name

Scientific name

COLOR INDICATOR

Size: measures head to tail, may include wingspan

Male: a brief description of the male bird, and may include breeding, winter or other plumages

Female: a brief description of the female bird, which is sometimes not the same as the male

Juvenile: a brief description of the juvenile bird, which often looks like the female

Nest: the kind of nest this bird builds to raise its young; who builds the nest; how many broods per year

Eggs: how many eggs you might expect to see in a nest; color and marking

Incubation: the average time parents spend incubating the eggs; who does the incubation

Fledging: the average time young spend in the nest after hatching but before they leave the nest; who does the most "childcare" and feeding

Migration: complete (consistent, seasonal), partial migrator (seasonal, destination varies), irruptive (unpredictable, depends on the food supply), non-migrator; additional comments

Food: what the bird eats most of the time (e.g., seeds, insects, fruit, nectar, small mammals, fish); if it typically comes to a bird feeding station

Feeder Tips: some tips, when applicable, to attract the bird

Compare: notes about other birds that look similar, and the pages on which they can be found

Stan's Notes: Interesting gee-whiz natural history information. This could be something to look or listen for, or something to help positively identify the bird. Also includes remarkable features.

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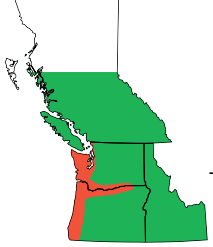

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

Brown-headed Cowbird

Molothrus ater

Size: 7½" (19 cm)

Male: Glossy black with a chocolate-brown head. Dark eyes. Pointed, sharp, gray bill.

Female: dull brown with a pointed, sharp, gray bill

Juvenile: similar to female but with dull-gray plumage and a streaked chest

Nest: no nest; lays eggs in nests of other birds

Eggs: 5–7; white with brown markings

Incubation: 10–13 days; host bird incubates eggs

Fledging: 10–11 days; host birds feed the young

Migration: partial to non-migrator, to California and Mexico; year-round along the coast

Food: insects, seeds; will come to seed feeders

Compare: The male Red-winged Blackbird (p. 25) is slightly larger with red-and-yellow patches on upper wings. European Starling (p. 23) has a shorter tail.

Stan's Notes: Cowbirds are members of the blackbird family. Of approximately 750 species of parasitic birds worldwide, this is the only parasitic bird in the region. Brood parasites lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, leaving the host birds to raise their young. Cowbirds are known to have laid their eggs in the nests of over 200 species of birds. While some birds reject cowbird eggs, most incubate them and raise the young, even to the exclusion of their own. Look for warblers and other birds feeding young birds twice their own size. Named "Cowbird" for its habit of following bison and cattle herds to feed on insects flushed up by the animals.

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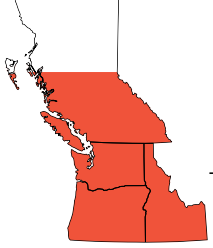

YEAR-ROUND

European Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Size: 7½" (19 cm)

Male: Glittering, iridescent purplish black in spring and summer; duller and speckled with white in fall and winter. Long, pointed, yellow bill in spring; gray in fall. Pointed wings. Short tail.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: similar to adults, with grayish-brown plumage and a streaked chest

Nest: cavity; male and female line cavity; 2 broods per year

Eggs: 4–6; bluish with brown markings

Incubation: 12–14 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 18–20 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator to partial migrator, moves around to find food

Food: insects, seeds, fruit; visits seed or suet feeders

Compare: The male Brown-headed Cowbird (p. 21) has a brown head. Look for the shiny, dark feathers to help identify the European Starling.

Stan's Notes: A great songster, it mimics the songs of up to 20 bird species and imitates sounds, including the human voice. Jaws are more powerful when opening than when closing, enabling the bird to pry open crevices to find insects. Often displaces woodpeckers, chickadees and other cavity-nesting birds. Large families gather with blackbirds in the fall. Not a native bird; 100 starlings were introduced to New York City in 1890–91 from Europe. Bill changes color in spring and fall.

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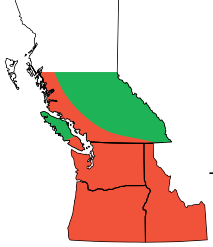

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

Red-winged Blackbird

Agelaius phoeniceus

Size: 8½" (22 cm)

Male: Jet black with red-and-yellow patches (epaulets) on upper wings. Pointed black bill.

Female: heavily streaked brown with a pointed brown bill and white eyebrows

Juvenile: same as female

Nest: cup; female builds; 2–3 broods per year

Eggs: 3–4; bluish green with brown markings

Incubation: 10–12 days; female incubates

Fledging: 11–14 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: partial migrator to non-migrator; will move around the region to find food in winter

Food: seeds, insects; visits seed and suet feeders

Compare: The male Brown-headed Cowbird (p. 21) is smaller and glossier and has a brown head. The bold red-and-yellow epaulets distinguish the male Red-winged from other blackbirds.

Stan's Notes: One of the most widespread and numerous birds in the Pacific Northwest. Found around marshes, wetlands, lakes and rivers. It is a sure sign of spring when these birds return home. Flocks with as many as 10,000 birds have been reported. Males defend their territory by singing from the tops of surrounding vegetation. The male repeats his call from the top of a cattail while showing off his red-and-yellow shoulder patches. The female chooses a mate and often builds her nest over shallow water in a thick stand of cattails. The male can be aggressive when defending the nest. Red-winged Blackbirds feed mostly on seeds in spring and fall, and insects throughout the summer.

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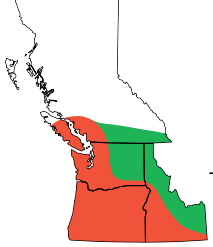

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

Spotted Towhee

Pipilo maculatus

Size: 8½" (22 cm)

Male: Mostly black with dirty red-brown sides and a white belly. Multiple white spots on wings and sides. Long black tail with a white tip. Rich-red eyes.

Female: very similar to male but with a brown head

Juvenile: brown with a heavily streaked chest

Nest: cup; female builds; 1–2 broods per year

Eggs: 3–5; white with brown markings

Incubation: 12–14 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 10–12 days; female and male feed young

Migration: partial migrator to non-migrator; moves around to find food in winter

Food: seeds, fruit, insects

Compare: Fox Sparrow (p. 131) is found in similar habitat, but it is brown and lacks the Spotted Towhee's white belly. American Robin (p. 245) is larger.

Stan's Notes: Found in a variety of habitats, from thick brush and chaparral to suburban backyards. Usually heard noisily scratching through dead leaves on the ground for food. Over 70 percent of its diet is plant material. Eats more insects during spring and summer. Well known to retreat from danger by walking away rather than taking to flight. Nest is nearly always on the ground under bushes but away from where the male perches to sing. Begins breeding in April. Lays eggs in May. After the breeding season, moves to higher elevations. Song and plumage vary geographically and aren't well studied or understood.

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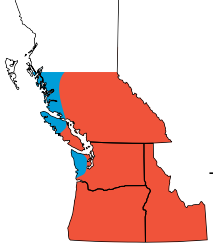

YEAR-ROUND
WINTER

Brewer's Blackbird

Euphagus cyanocephalus

Size: 9" (22.5 cm)

Male: Overall glossy black, shining green in direct light. Head more purple than green. Bright-white or pale-yellow eyes. Winter plumage can be dull gray to black.

Female: similar to male, only overall grayish brown, most have dark eyes

Juvenile: similar to female

Nest: cup; female builds; 1–2 broods per year

Eggs: 4–6; gray with brown markings

Incubation: 12–14 days; female incubates

Fledging: 13–14 days; female and male feed young

Migration: non-migrator to partial migrator; moves around to find food in winter

Food: insects, seeds, fruit

Compare: The male Brown-headed Cowbird (p. 21) is smaller and has a brown head. The male Red-winged Blackbird (p. 25) has red-and-yellow shoulder marks.

Stan's Notes: Common blackbird of open areas such as farms, wet pastures, mountain meadows and even desert scrub. Male and some females are easily identified by their bright, nearly white eyes. It is a common cowbird host, usually nesting in a shrub, small tree or directly on the ground. Prefers to nest in small colonies of up to 20 pairs. Gathers in large flocks with cowbirds, Red-wingeds and other blackbirds to migrate. It is expanding its range in North America.

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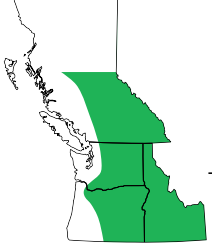

SUMMER

Yellow-headed Blackbird

Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus

Size: 9–11" (23–28 cm)

Male: Large black bird with a lemon-yellow head, breast and nape of neck. Black mask and gray bill. White wing patches.

Female: similar to male but slightly smaller with a brown body and dull-yellow head and chest

Juvenile: similar to female

Nest: cup; female builds; 2 broods per year

Eggs: 3–5; greenish white with brown markings

Incubation: 11–13 days; female incubates

Fledging: 9–12 days; female feeds the young

Migration: complete to California and Mexico

Food: insects, seeds; will come to ground feeders

Compare: The male Red-winged Blackbird (p. 25) is smaller and has red-and-yellow patches on its wings. Look for the bright-yellow head to identify the male Yellow-headed.

Stan's Notes: Found around marshes, wetlands and lakes. Nests in deep water, unlike its cousin, the Red-winged Blackbird, which prefers shallow water. Usually heard before seen. Gives a raspy, low, metallic-sounding call. The male is the only large black bird with a bright-yellow head. He gives an impressive mating display, flying with his head drooped and feet and tail pointing down while steadily beating his wings. Young keep low and out of sight for up to three weeks before they start to fly. Migrates in large flocks of as many as 200 birds, often with Red-winged Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds. Flocks of mainly males return in late March and early April; females return later. Most colonies consist of 20–100 nests.

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American Coot

Fulica americana

Size: 13–16" (33–40 cm)

Male: Gray-to-black waterbird. Duck-like white bill with a dark band near the tip and a small red patch near the eyes. Small white patch near base of tail. Green legs and feet. Red eyes.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: much paler than adults, with a gray bill

Nest: floating platform; female and male construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 9–12; pinkish buff with brown markings

Incubation: 21–25 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 49–52 days; female and male feed young

Migration: partial migrator to complete, to western coastal U.S. and Mexico, Central America

Food: insects, aquatic plants

Compare: Smaller than most waterfowl, it is the only black, duck-like bird with a white bill.

Stan's Notes: Usually seen in large flocks on open water. Not a duck, as it has large lobed toes instead of webbed feet. An excellent diver and swimmer, bobbing its head as it swims. A favorite food of Bald Eagles. It is not often seen in flight, unless it's trying to escape from an eagle. To take off, it scrambles across the surface of the water, flapping its wings. Gives a unique series of creaks, groans and clicks. Anchors its floating platform nest to vegetation. Huge flocks with as many as 1,000 birds gather for migration. Migrates at night. The common name "Coot" comes from the Middle English word *coote*, which was used to describe various waterfowl. Also called Mud Hen.

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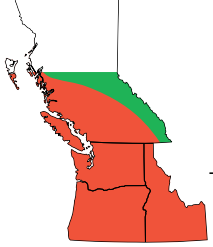

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

American Crow

Corvus brachyrhynchos

Size: 18" (45 cm)

Male: All-black bird with black bill, legs and feet. Can have a purple sheen in direct sunlight.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: same as adult

Nest: platform; female builds; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 4–6; bluish to olive-green with brown marks

Incubation: 18 days; female incubates

Fledging: 28–35 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator to partial migrator; gathers in groups in winter to find food

Food: fruit, insects, mammals, fish, carrion; will come to seed and suet feeders

Compare: Common Raven (p. 37) is similar, but has a larger bill and shaggy throat feathers. Crow's call is higher than the raven's raspy, low call. Crow has a squared tail. Ravens have wedge-shaped tails, apparent in flight. Black-billed Magpie (p. 65) has a long tail and white belly.

Stan's Notes: One of the most recognizable birds in the Pacific Northwest, found in most habitats. Imitates other birds and human voices. One of the smartest of all birds and very social, often entertaining itself by provoking chases with other birds. Eats roadkill but is rarely hit by vehicles. Can live as long as 20 years. Often reuses its nest every year if it's not taken over by a Great Horned Owl. Unmated birds, known as helpers, help to raise the young. Extended families roost together at night, dispersing daily to hunt. Cannot soar on thermals; flaps constantly and glides downward. Gathers in huge communal flocks of up to 10,000 birds in winter.

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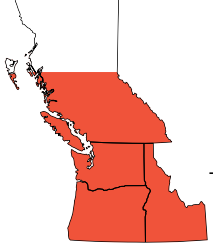

YEAR-ROUND

Common Raven

Corvus corax

Size: 22–27" (56–69 cm)

Male: Large all-black bird with a shaggy beard of feathers on throat and chin. Large black bill. Large wedge-shaped tail, best seen in flight.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: same as adult

Nest: platform; female and male construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 4–6; pale green with brown markings

Incubation: 18–21 days; female incubates

Fledging: 38–44 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator to partial migrator; moves around to find food in winter

Food: insects, fruit, small animals, carrion

Compare: American Crow (p. 35) is smaller and lacks the shaggy throat feathers. Glides on flat outstretched wings, compared to the slightly V-shaped pattern of the American Crow. Low raspy call, compared with the higher-pitched call of the American Crow.

Stan's Notes: Considered by some people to be the smartest of all birds. Known for its aerial acrobatics and long swooping dives. Soars on wind without flapping, like a raptor. Sometimes scavenges with crows and gulls. A cooperative hunter that often communicates the location of a good source of food to other ravens. Most start to breed at 3–4 years. Complex courtship includes grabbing bills, preening each other and cooing. Long-term pair bond. Uses the same nest site for many years. Has huge vocal range, making all sorts of popping and gargling sounds.

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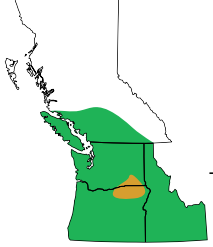

MIGRATION
SUMMER

Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura

Size: 26–32" (66–80 cm); up to 6' wingspan

Male: Large and black with a naked red head and legs. In flight, wings are two-toned with a black leading edge and a gray trailing edge. Wing tips end in finger-like projections. Tail is long and squared. Ivory bill.

Female: same as male but slightly smaller

Juvenile: similar to adults, with a gray-to-blackish head and bill

Nest: no nest or minimal nest, on a cliff or in a cave, sometimes in a hollow tree; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 1–3; white with brown markings

Incubation: 38–41 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 66–88 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: complete, to southern states, Mexico and Central and South America

Food: carrion; parents regurgitate to feed the young

Compare: Bald Eagle (p. 73) is larger and lacks two-toned wings. Look for the obvious naked red head to identify the Turkey Vulture.

Stan's Notes: The naked head reduces the risk of feather fouling (picking up diseases) from contact with carcasses. It has a strong bill for tearing apart flesh. Unlike hawks and eagles, it has weak feet more suited for walking than grasping. One of the few birds with a developed sense of smell. Mostly mute, making only grunts and groans. Holds its wings in an upright V shape in flight. Teeters from wing tip to wing tip as it soars and hovers. Seen in trees with wings outstretched, sunning itself and drying after a rain.

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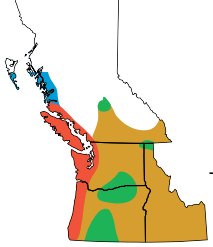

Double-crested Cormorant

Phalacrocorax auritus

Size: 31–35" (79–89 cm); up to 4⅓' wingspan

Male: Large black waterbird with unusual blue eyes and a long, snake-like neck. Large gray bill, with yellow at the base and a hooked tip.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: lighter brown with a grayish chest and neck

Nest: platform; male and female construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–4; bluish white without markings

Incubation: 25–29 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 37–42 days; male and female feed the young

Migration: partial migrator to non-migrator, to western coastal U.S.

Food: small fish, aquatic insects

Compare: The Turkey Vulture (p. 39) is similar in size and also perches on branches with wings open to dry in sun, but it has a naked red head. American Coot (p. 33) is half the size and lacks the Cormorant's long neck and long pointed bill.

Stan's Notes: Flocks fly in a large V or a line. Swims underwater to catch fish, holding its wings at its sides. This bird's outer feathers soak up water, but its body feathers don't. To dry off, it strikes an upright pose with wings outstretched, facing the sun. Gives grunts, pops and groans. Named "Double-crested" for the crests on its head, which are not often seen. "Cormorant" is a contraction from *corvus marinus*, meaning "crow" or "raven," and "of the sea." They propel themselves underwater mainly with just their feet. There are 42 species of cormorant in the world; 6 are found in North America.

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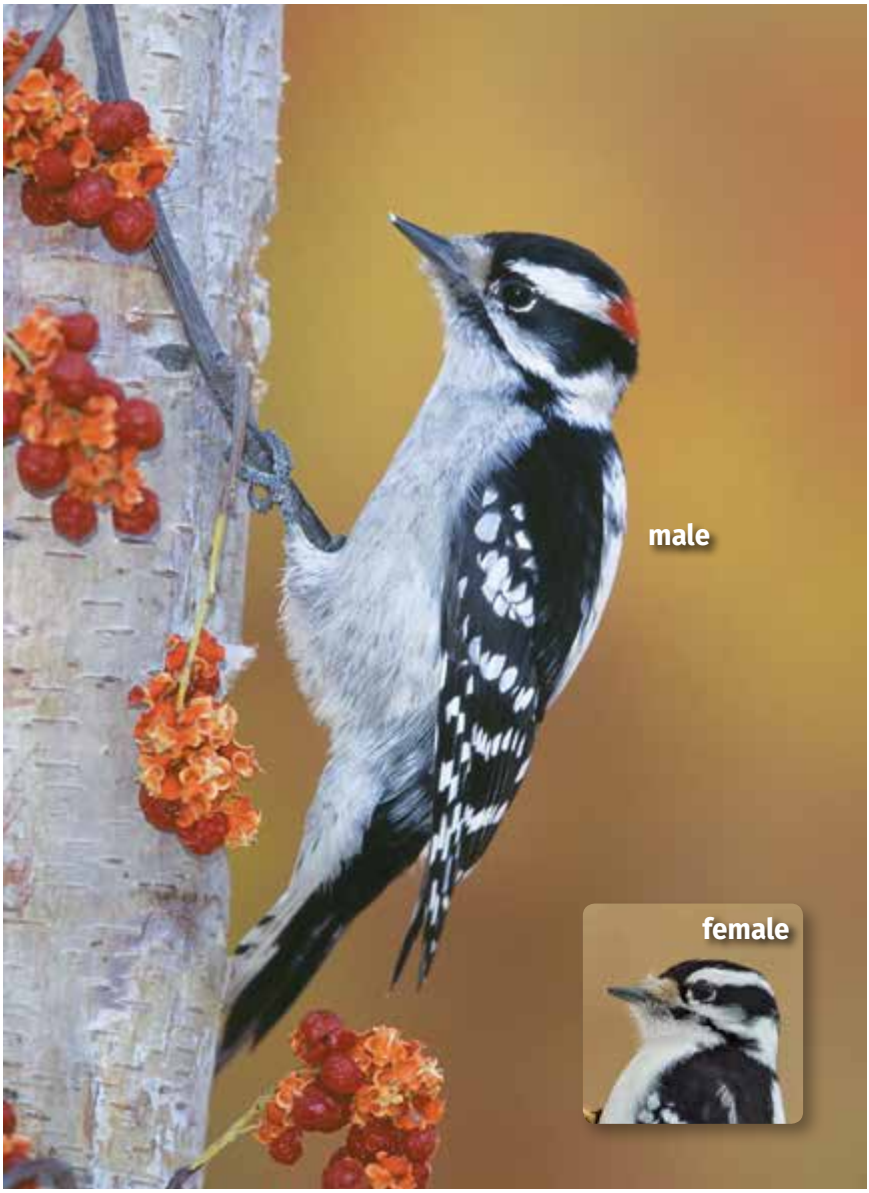

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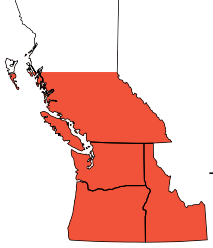

YEAR-ROUND

Downy Woodpecker

Dryobates pubescens

Size: 6½" (15 cm)

Male: Small woodpecker with a white belly and black-and-white spotted wings. Red mark on the back of the head and a white stripe down the back. Short black bill.

Female: same as male but lacks the red mark

Juvenile: same as female, some with a red mark near the forehead

Nest: cavity with a round entrance hole; male and female excavate; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–5; white without markings

Incubation: 11–12 days; female incubates during the day, male incubates at night

Fledging: 20–25 days; male and female feed the young

Migration: non-migrator

Food: insects, seeds; visits seed and suet feeders

Compare: The Hairy Woodpecker (p. 51) is larger. Look for the Downy's shorter, thinner bill.

Stan's Notes: Abundant and widespread where trees are present. This is perhaps the most common woodpecker in the U.S. Stiff tail feathers help to brace it like a tripod as it clings to a tree. Like other woodpeckers, it has a long, barbed tongue to pull insects from tiny places. Mates drum on branches or hollow logs to announce territory, which is rarely larger than 5 acres (2 ha). Repeats a high-pitched "peek-peek" call. Nest cavity is wider at the bottom than at the top and is lined with fallen wood chips. Male performs most of the brooding. During winter, it will roost in a cavity. Doesn't breed in high elevations but often moves there in winter for food. Undulates in flight.

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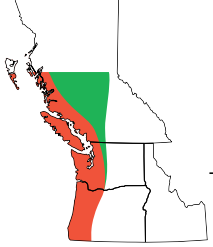

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

Red-breasted Sapsucker

Sphyrapicus ruber

Size: 8½" (22 cm)

Male: Black and white body, wings and tail. Belly is white to pale yellow. Red head, chest and nape. White mark over bill.

Female: similar to male

Juvenile: similar to adult, lacking any red

Nest: cavity; female and male build; 1–2 broods per year

Eggs: 3–7; white without markings

Incubation: 12–14 days; male and female incubate

Fledging: 25–29 days; male and female feed the young

Migration: partial to non-migrator, moves around to find food in winter

Food: insects, tree sap, berries

Compare: Similar to the Red-naped Sapsucker (p. 47), which has a black chest, and black and white on the head.

Stan's Notes: A common sapsucker in the western Pacific Northwest. Most common in higher elevations, it is rare in residential areas or city parks. Will hybridize with Red-naped Sapsuckers in the central part of the region. An important species because their cavity nests are subsequently used by many cavity-nesting birds that don't excavate their own. Excavates nest cavities in dead or dying deciduous trees such as cottonwood, aspen, birch or willow. Drills a horizontal grid pattern of holes in deciduous trees, from which it drinks sap and eats the insects that are attracted to sap. Will also eat berries.

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○ MALE ○ FEMALE ○ JUVENILE ○ NEST

male

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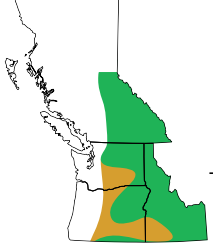

Red-naped Sapsucker

Sphyrapicus nuchalis

Size: 8½" (22 cm)

Male: Black-and-white pattern on the back in two rows. Red forehead, chin and nape of neck.

Female: same as male, but has a white chin and more white on the back

Juvenile: brown version of adults, lacking any of the red markings

Nest: cavity; female and male excavate; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–7; pale white without markings

Incubation: 12–13 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 25–29 days; female and male feed young

Migration: complete, to Mexico and Central America

Food: insects, tree sap; will visit feeders

Compare: Red-breasted Sapsucker (p. 45) is similar but has a red breast. The male Williamson's Sapsucker (p. 49) has a bright-yellow belly.

Stan's Notes: Hybridizes with Red-breasted Sapsuckers. Closely related to the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker of the eastern U.S. Often associated with aspen, cottonwood and willow trees, nearly always nesting in aspen trees where they are present. Creates several horizontal rows of holes in a tree from which sap oozes. A wide variety of birds and animals use the sap wells that sapsuckers drill. Sapsuckers lap the sap and eat the insects that are also attracted to sap. Cannot suck sap as the name implies; instead, they lap it with their tongues. Some females lack the white chin that helps to differentiate the sexes.

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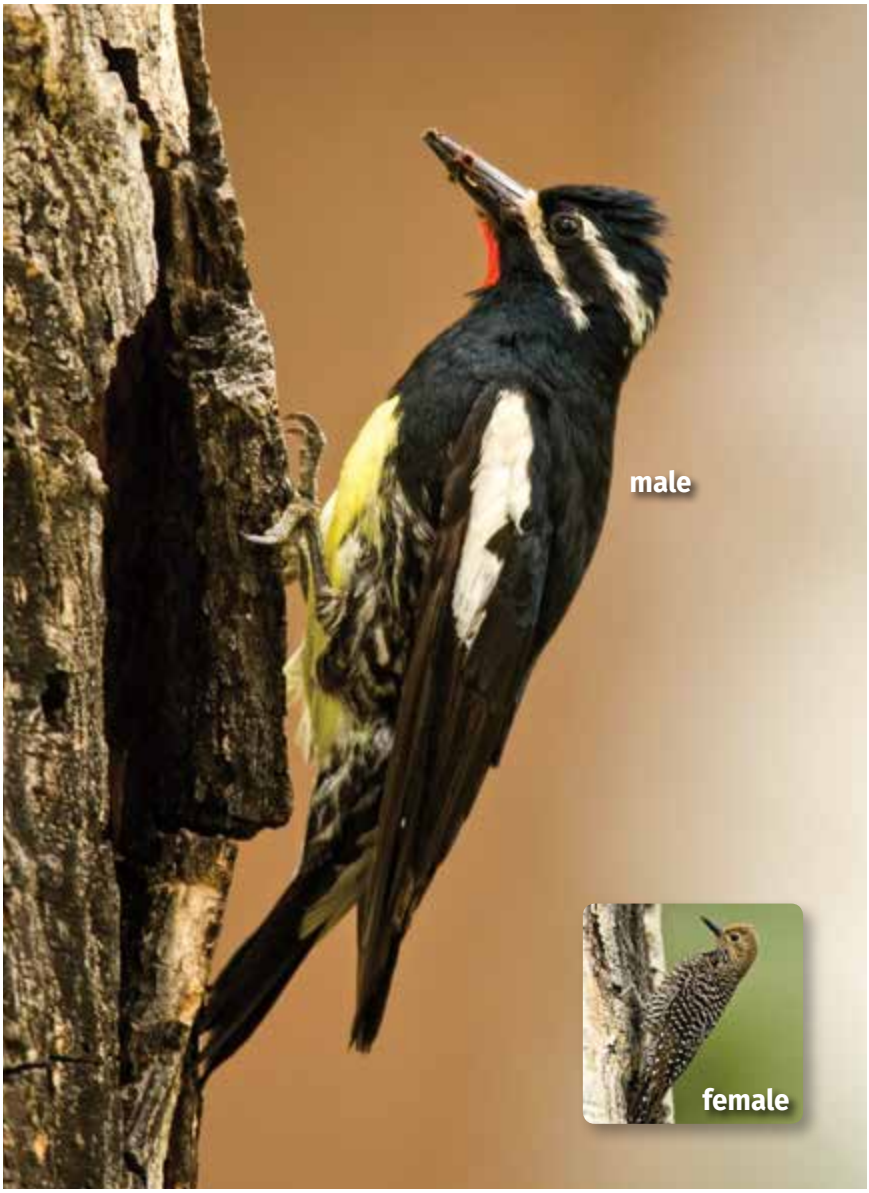

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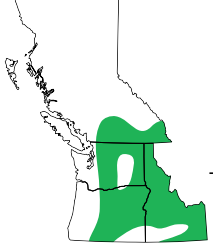

SUMMER

Williamson's Sapsucker

Sphyrapicus thyroideus

Size: 9" (22.5 cm)

Male: More black than white with a red chin and bright-yellow belly. Bold white stripes just above and below the eyes. White rump and wing patches flash during flight.

Female: finely barred black-and-white back, a brown head, yellow belly and no wing patches

Juvenile: similar to female

Nest: cavity; male excavates; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–7; pale white without markings

Incubation: 12–14 days; male and female incubate

Fledging: 21–28 days; female and male feed young

Migration: complete, to Mexico and Central America

Food: insects, tree sap; will visit feeders

Compare: Male Williamson's is similar to Red-naped (p. 47) and Red-breasted (p. 45) Sapsuckers, both of which have white on the back and red on the head. Female Williamson's is similar to the Northern Flicker (p. 157), but Flicker has a gray head and brown-and-black back.

Stan's Notes: Largest sapsucker species with a striking difference between the male and female. Male drums early in spring to attract a mate and claim territory. Like the drumming of other sapsuckers, Williamson's drumming has an irregular cadence. Male excavates a new cavity each year, frequently in the same tree. Male does more incubating than the female. Occupies coniferous forests, foraging for insects and drilling uniform rows of holes from which tree sap oozes. Sap wells are nearly exclusively in conifers.

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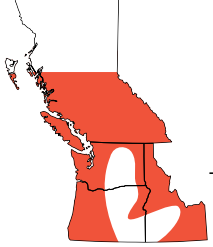

YEAR-ROUND

Hairy Woodpecker

Dryobates villosus

Size: 9" (23 cm)

Male: Black-and-white woodpecker with a white belly. Black wings with rows of white spots. White stripe down the back. Long black bill. Red mark on the back of the head.

Female: same as male but lacks the red mark

Juvenile: grayer version of the female

Nest: cavity with an oval entrance hole; female and male excavate; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–6; white without markings

Incubation: 11–15 days; female incubates during the day, male incubates at night

Fledging: 28–30 days; male and female feed the young

Migration: non-migrator

Food: insects, nuts, seeds; comes to seed and suet feeders

Compare: Downy Woodpecker (p. 43) is much smaller and has a much shorter bill. Look for Hairy Woodpecker's long bill.

Stan's Notes: A common bird in wooded backyards. Announces its arrival with a sharp chirp before landing on feeders. Responsible for eating many destructive forest insects. Uses its barbed tongue to extract insects from trees. Tiny, bristle-like feathers at the base of the bill protect the nostrils from wood dust. Drums on hollow logs, branches or stovepipes in spring to announce territory. Prefers to excavate nest cavities in live trees. Excavates a larger, more-oval-shaped entrance than the round entrance hole of the Downy Woodpecker. Makes short flights from tree to tree.

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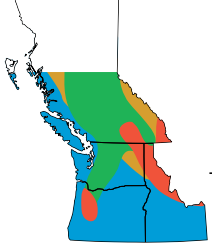

Bufflehead

Bucephala albeola

Size: 13–15" (33–38 cm)

Male: A small, striking duck with white sides and a black back. Greenish-purple head, iridescent in bright sun, with a large white head patch.

Female: brownish-gray with a dark-brown head and white cheek patch behind the eyes

Juvenile: similar to female

Nest: cavity; female lines an old woodpecker cavity; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 8–10; ivory-to-olive without markings

Incubation: 29–31 days; female incubates

Fledging: 50–55 days; female leads the young to food

Migration: partial to non-migrator, moves around to find open water and food in winter

Food: aquatic insects, crustaceans, mollusks

Compare: Male Hooded Merganser (p. 59) is larger and has rust-brown sides. Look for the large white bonnet-like patch on a greenish-purple head to help identify the male Bufflehead.

Stan's Notes: A small, common diving duck, almost always seen in small groups or with other duck species on rivers, ponds and lakes. Usually seen during migrations and winter, arriving in August and remaining in parts of the region the entire winter. Most commonly found in sheltered bays and coastal harbors, it is also found inland on rivers and lakes. Nests in vacant woodpecker holes. Lines the cavity with fluffy down feathers. Unlike other ducks, the young stay in the nest for up to two days before they venture out with their mothers. The female is very territorial and remains with the same mate for many years.

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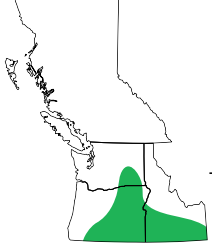

SUMMER

Black-necked Stilt

Himantopus mexicanus

Size: 14" (36 cm)

Male: Black and white with ridiculously long red-to-pink legs. Upper parts of the head, neck and back are black. Lower parts are white. Long black bill.

Female: similar to male but browner on back

Juvenile: similar to female but brown instead of black

Nest: ground; female and male construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–5; off-white with dark markings

Incubation: 22–26 days; male incubates during the day, female incubates at night

Fledging: 28–32 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: complete, to California, Mexico, South America

Food: aquatic insects

Compare: Outrageous length of the red-to-pink legs makes this shorebird hard to confuse with any other.

Stan's Notes: A summer resident in shallow freshwater ponds and wetlands. Nests solitarily or in small colonies in open areas. This very vocal bird of shallow marshes gives a "kek-kek-kek" call. Its legs are up to 10 inches (25 cm) long and may be the longest legs in the bird world in proportion to the body. Known to transport water with water-soaked belly feathers (belly-soaking) to cool eggs in hot weather. Aggressively defends its nest, eggs and young. Young leave the nest shortly after hatching.

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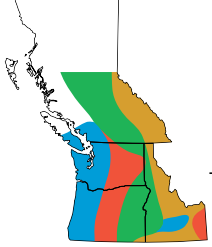

Lesser Scaup

Aythya affinis

Size: 16–17" (40–43 cm)

Male: Appears mostly black with bold white sides and a gray back. Chest and head look nearly black, but head appears purple with green highlights in direct sun. Bright-yellow eyes.

Female: overall brown with a dull-white patch at the base of a light-gray bill; yellow eyes

Juvenile: same as female

Nest: ground; female builds; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 8–14; olive-buff without markings

Incubation: 22–28 days; female incubates

Fledging: 45–50 days; female teaches the young to feed

Migration: complete, to western coastal U.S., southern states, Mexico, Central American, northern South America

Food: aquatic plants and insects

Compare: American Coot (p. 33) is smaller and lacks male Scaup's white sides. The white sides and gray back help identify the male Lesser Scaup.

Stan's Notes: A common diving duck. Often seen in large flocks on lakes and ponds. Submerges completely to feed on the bottom (unlike dabbling ducks, which tip forward to reach the bottom). Frequently seen in large flocks numbering in the thousands on area lakes and ponds, and along the coast in winter. When seen in flight, note the bold white stripe under the wings. Interesting baby-sitting arrangement in which the young form groups tended by one to three adult females.

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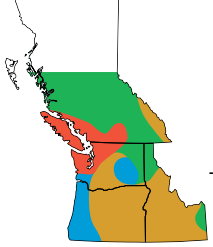

Hooded Merganser

Lophodytes cucullatus

Size: 16–19" (40–48 cm)

Male: Black and white with rust-brown sides. Crest "hood" raises to show a large white patch on each side of the head. Long, thin, black bill.

Female: brown and rust with ragged, rust-red "hair" and a long, thin, brown bill

Juvenile: similar to female

Nest: cavity; female lines an old woodpecker cavity or a nest box near water; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 10–12; white without markings

Incubation: 32–33 days; female incubates

Fledging: 71 days; female feeds the young

Migration: partial to non-migrator; moves to open water along coast in winter

Food: small fish, aquatic insects, crustaceans (especially crayfish)

Compare: Male Bufflehead (p. 53) is smaller than Hooded Merganser and has white sides. The male Wood Duck (p. 287) is similar in size, but it has a green head. The white patch on the head and rust-brown sides distinguish the male Hoodie.

Stan's Notes: A small diving bird of shallow ponds, sloughs, lakes and rivers, usually in small groups. Quick, low flight across the water, with fast wingbeats. Male has a deep, rolling call. Female gives a hoarse quack. Nests in wooded areas. Female will lay some eggs in the nests of other Hooded Mergansers or Wood Ducks, resulting in 20–25 eggs in some nests. Rarely, she shares a nest, sitting with a Wood Duck.

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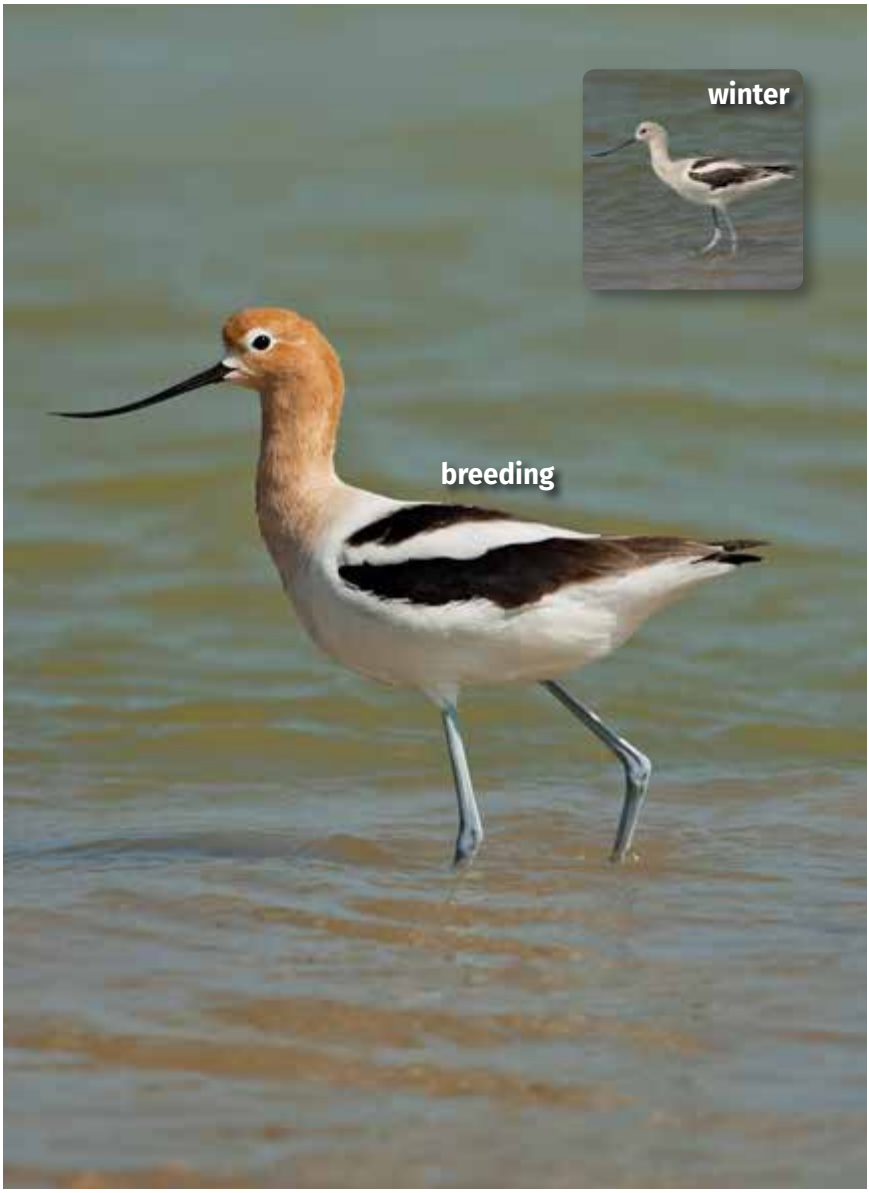

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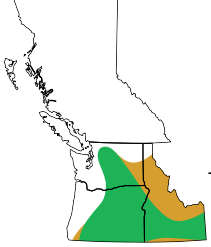

American Avocet

Recurvirostra americana

Size: 18" (45 cm)

Male: Black-and-white back, with a white belly. A long thin upturned bill and long gray legs. Rusty-red head and neck during breeding season, gray in winter.

Female: similar to male, more strongly upturned bill

Juvenile: similar to adults, slight wash of rusty red on the neck and head

Nest: ground; female and male construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–5; light olive with brown markings

Incubation: 22–29 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 28–35 days; female and male feed young

Migration: complete, to southwestern states, Mexico

Food: insects, crustaceans, aquatic vegetation, fruit

Compare: Look for the rusty-red head of breeding Avocet and the long upturned bill.

Stan's Notes: A handsome, long-legged bird that prefers shallow alkaline, saline or brackish water. Uses its upturned bill to sweep from side to side across mud bottoms in search of insects. Both the male and female have a brood patch to incubate eggs and brood their young. Nests in loose colonies of up to 20 pairs; all members defend against intruders together. Nests along shallow ponds.

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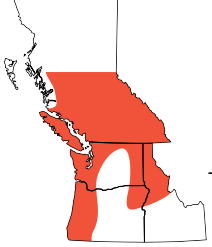

YEAR-ROUND

Pileated Woodpecker

Dryocopus pileatus

Size: 19" (48 cm)

Male: Crow-size woodpecker with a black back and bright-red forehead, crest and mustache. Long gray bill. White leading edge of wings flashes brightly during flight.

Female: same as male but with a black forehead; lacks a red mustache

Juvenile: similar to adults but duller and browner

Nest: cavity; male and female excavate; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–5; white without markings

Incubation: 15–18 days; female incubates during the day, male incubates at night

Fledging: 26–28 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator, moves around to find food in winter

Food: insects; will come to suet and peanut feeders

Compare: This bird is quite distinctive and unlikely to be confused with any others. Look for the bright-red crest and exceptionally large size to identify the Pileated Woodpecker.

Stan's Notes: Our largest woodpecker. The common name comes from the Latin *pileatus*, which means "wearing a cap." A relatively shy bird that prefers large tracts of woodland. Drums on hollow branches, chimneys and so forth to announce its territory. Excavates oval holes up to several feet long in tree trunks, looking for insects to eat. Large wood chips lie on the ground by excavated trees. Favorite food is carpenter ants. Feeds regurgitated insects to its young. Young emerge from the nest looking just like the adults.

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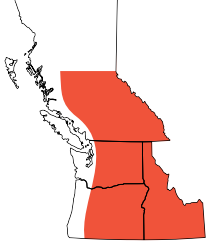

YEAR-ROUND

Black-billed Magpie

Pica hudsonia

Size: 20" (50 cm)

Male: Large black-and-white bird with a very long tail and white belly. Iridescent green wings and tail in direct sunlight. Large black bill and legs. White wing patches flash in flight.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: same as adult, but has a shorter tail

Nest: modified pendulous; male and female build; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 5–8; green with brown markings

Incubation: 16–21 days; female incubates

Fledging: 25–29 days; female and male feed young

Migration: non-migrator, moves around in winter to find food

Food: insects, carrion, fruit, seeds

Compare: The contrasting black-and-white colors and the very long tail of the Black-billed Magpie distinguish it from the all-black American Crow (p. 35).

Stan's Notes: A wonderfully intelligent bird that is able to mimic dogs, cats and even people. Will often raid a barnyard dog dish for food. Feeds on a variety of food from roadkill to insects and seeds it collects from the ground. Easily identified by its bold black-and-white colors and long streaming tail. Travels in small flocks, usually family members, and tends to be very gregarious. Breeds in small colonies. Unusual dome nest (dome-shaped roof) deep within thick shrubs. Mates with same mate for several years. Prefers open fields with cattle or sheep, where it feeds on insects attracted to livestock.

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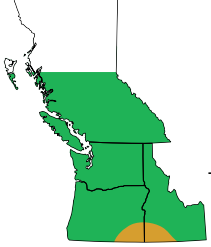

MIGRATION
SUMMER

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Size: 21–24" (53–61 cm); up to 5½' wingspan

Male: Large eagle-like bird with a white chest, belly and head. Dark eye line. Nearly black back. Black "wrist" marks on the wings. Dark bill.

Female: same as male but slightly larger and with a necklace of brown streaks

Juvenile: similar to adults, with a light-tan breast

Nest: platform on a raised wooden platform, man-made tower or tall dead tree; female and male build; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 2–4; white with brown markings

Incubation: 32–42 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 48–58 days; male and female feed the young

Migration: complete, to southern states, Mexico and Central and South America

Food: fish

Compare: The juvenile Bald Eagle (p. 73) is brown with white speckles. The adult Bald Eagle has an all-white head and tail. Look for the white belly and dark eye line to identify the Osprey.

Stan's Notes: The only species in its family, and the only raptor that plunges into water feetfirst to catch fish. Always near water. Can hover for a few seconds before diving. Carries fish in a head-first position for better aerodynamics. Wings angle back in flight. Often harassed by Bald Eagles for its catch. Gives a high-pitched, whistle-like call, often calling in flight as a warning. Mates have a long-term pair bond. May not migrate to the same wintering grounds. Was nearly extinct by mid-1900s but is now doing well.

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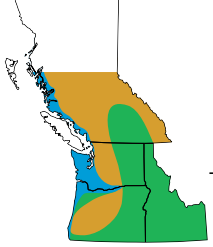

Western Grebe

Aechmophorus occidentalis

Size: 24" (60 cm)

Male: Long-necked, nearly all-black water bird. White chin, neck, chest and belly. Long greenish-yellow bill. Bright-red eyes. Dark crown extends around eyes to base of bill. In winter, becomes light gray around eyes.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: similar to adult

Nest: platform; female and male construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–4; bluish white with brown markings

Incubation: 20–23 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 65–75 days; female and male feed young

Migration: complete, to western coastal U.S., California and Mexico

Food: fish, aquatic insects

Compare: A familiar long-necked water bird. Striking black-and-white plumage makes it hard to confuse with any other bird.

Stan's Notes: Well known for its unusual breeding dance, called rushing. Side by side with necks outstretched, mates spring to their webbed feet and dance across the water's surface (see inset). Often holds long stalks of water plants in bill when courting (weed dance, see inset). Its legs are positioned far back on the body, making it difficult to walk on ground. Shortly after choosing a large lake for breeding, it rarely flies until late in summer. Young ride on backs of adults, climbing on minutes after hatching. Nests in large colonies of up to 100 pairs on lakes with tall vegetation.

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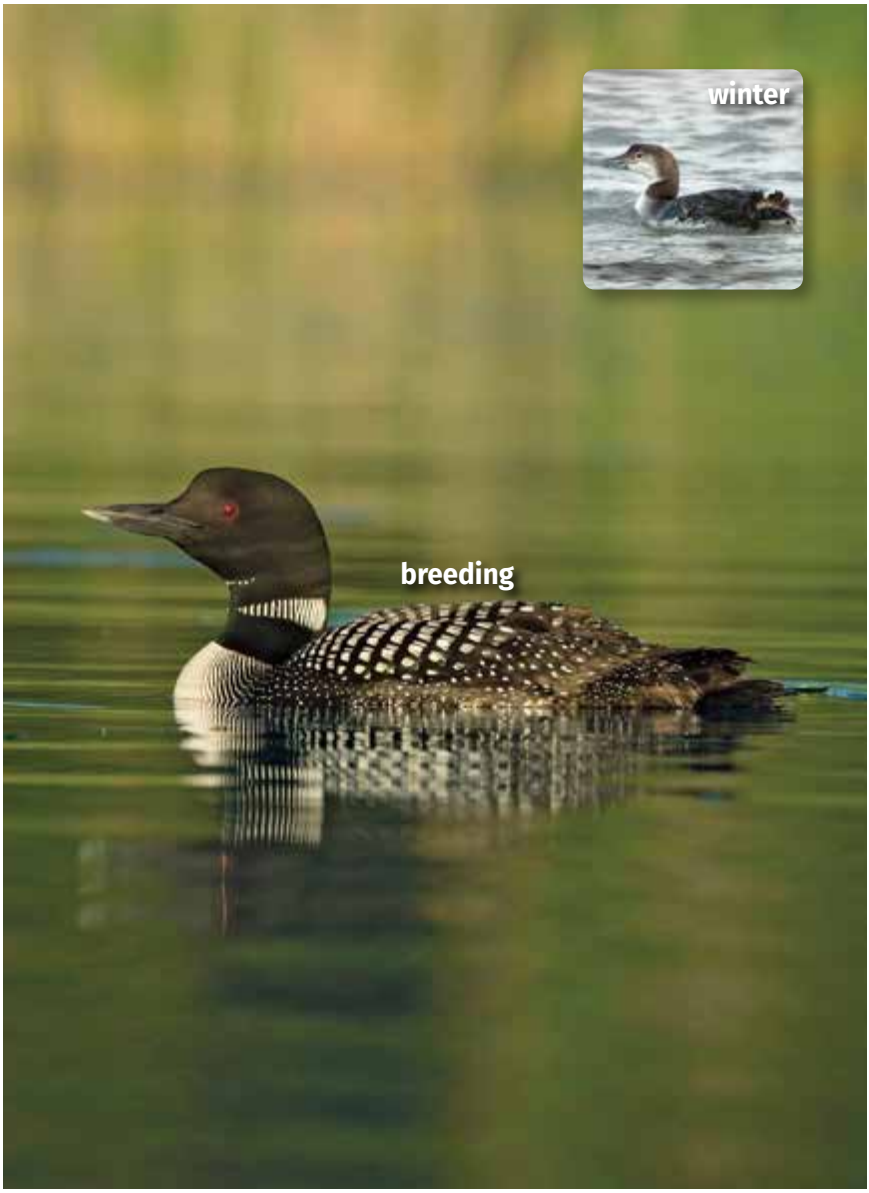

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○ MALE ○ FEMALE ○ JUVENILE ○ NEST

Common Loon

Gavia immer

Size: 28–36" (71–91 cm)

Male: Checkerboard back, black head, white necklace. Deep-red eyes. Long, pointed black bill. Winter plumage has a gray body and bill.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: similar to winter plumage, but lacks red eyes

Nest: ground, usually at the shoreline; female and male build; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 2; olive-brown, occasionally brown markings

Incubation: 26–31 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 75–80 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: complete, to western and southern coastal U.S. and Mexico

Food: fish, aquatic insects, crayfish, salamanders

Compare: The Double-crested Cormorant (p. 41) has a black chest and gray bill with a hooked tip and yellow at the base. Look for a checker-board back to identify the Common Loon.

Stan's Notes: A winter resident on the coast beginning in October, lasting until March. Some non-breeding adults stay all summer. Hunts for fish by eyesight and prefers clear, clean lakes. A great swimmer, but its legs are set so far back that it has a hard time walking. "Loon" comes from the Scandinavian term *lom*, meaning "lame," for the awkward way it walks on land. Its wailing call suggests wild laughter, which led to the phrase "crazy as a loon." Also gives soft hoots. In the water, young ride on the backs of their parents for about 10 days. Adults perform distraction displays to protect the young. Very sensitive to disturbance during nesting and will abandon the nest.

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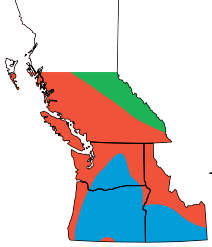

Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Size: 31–37" (79–94 cm); up to 7½' wingspan

Male: White head and tail contrast sharply with the dark-brown-to-black body and wings. Large, curved yellow bill and yellow feet.

Female: same as male but larger

Juvenile: dark brown with white speckles and spots on the body and wings; gray bill

Nest: massive platform, usually in a tree; female and male build; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 2–3; off-white without markings

Incubation: 34–36 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 75–90 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator to partial, to southern states

Food: fish, carrion, birds (mainly ducks)

Compare: The Golden Eagle (p. 209) and Turkey Vulture (p. 39) lack the white head and white tail of adult Bald Eagle. The juvenile Golden Eagle, with its white wrist marks and white base of tail, is similar to the juvenile Bald Eagle.

Stan's Notes: Nearly became extinct due to DDT poisoning and illegal killing. Returns to the same nest each year, adding more sticks and enlarging it to huge proportions, at times up to 1,000 pounds (450 kg). In their midair mating ritual, one eagle flips upside down and locks talons with another. Both tumble, then break apart to continue flight. Not uncommon for juveniles to perform this mating ritual even though they have not reached breeding age. Long-term pair bond but will switch mates when not successful at reproducing. Juveniles attain the white head and tail at 4–5 years of age.

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SUMMER

Tree Swallow

Tachycineta bicolor

Size: 5–6" (13–15 cm)

Male: Blue-green in spring, greener in fall. Changes color in direct sunlight. White from chin to belly. Long, pointed wing tips. Notched tail.

Female: similar to male but duller

Juvenile: gray brown with a white belly and a grayish breast band

Nest: cavity; female and male line a vacant woodpecker cavity or nest box; 2 broods per year

Eggs: 4–6; white without markings

Incubation: 13–16 days; female incubates

Fledging: 20–24 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: complete, to Mexico and Central America

Food: insects

Compare: The Barn Swallow (p. 79) has a rusty belly and a long, deeply forked tail. Similar size as the Cliff Swallow (p. 105) and Violet-green Swallow (p. 279), but it lacks any tan-to-rust color of the Cliff Swallow and any emerald green of the Violet-green Swallow.

Stan's Notes: The first swallow species to return each spring. Most common along ponds, lakes and agricultural fields. Can be attracted to your yard with a nest box. Competes with Western and Mountain Bluebirds for cavities and nest boxes. Builds a grass nest within and will travel long distances, looking for dropped feathers for the lining. Watch for it playing and chasing after feathers. Flies with rapid wingbeats, then glides. Gives a series of gurgles and chirps. Chatters when upset or threatened. Eats many nuisance bugs. Gathers in large flocks to migrate.

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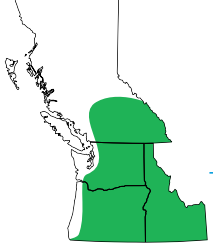

SUMMER

Lazuli Bunting

Passerina amoena

Size: 5½" (14 cm)

Male: A turquoise-blue head, neck, back and tail. Cinnamon chest with cinnamon extending down flanks slightly. White belly. Two bold white wing bars. Non-breeding male has a spotty blue head and back.

Female: overall grayish brown, warm-brown breast, a light wash of blue on wings and tail, gray throat, light-gray belly and 2 narrow white wing bars

Juvenile: similar to adult of the same sex

Nest: cup; female builds; 2–3 broods per year

Eggs: 3–5; pale blue without markings

Incubation: 11–13 days; female incubates

Fledging: 10–12 days; female and male feed young

Migration: complete, to Mexico

Food: insects, seeds

Compare: The Western Bluebird (p. 83) is larger, darker blue, has a darker-brown breast and lacks white wing bars.

Stan's Notes: More common in shrublands throughout the region. Doesn't like dense forests. Strong association with water such as rivers and streams. Gathers in small flocks and tends to move up in elevations after breeding to hunt for insects and look for seeds. Has increased in population and expanded its range over the last century. Males sing from short shrubs and scrubby areas to attract females. Each male has his own unique combination of notes to produce his "own" song. Young males often copy songs of older males in the area.

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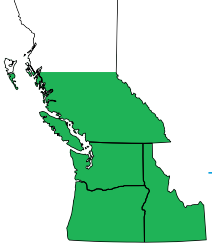

SUMMER

Barn Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Size: 7" (18 cm)

Male: Sleek swallow. Blue-black back, cinnamon belly and reddish-brown chin. White spots on a long, deeply forked tail.

Female: same as male but with a whitish belly

Juvenile: similar to adults, with a tan belly and chin, and shorter tail

Nest: cup; female and male build; 2 broods per year

Eggs: 4–5; white with brown markings

Incubation: 13–17 days; female incubates

Fledging: 18–23 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: complete, to South America

Food: insects (prefers beetles, wasps, flies)

Compare: Tree Swallow (p. 75) has a white belly and chin and a notched tail. Cliff Swallow (p. 105) and Violet-green Swallow (p. 279) are smaller and lack a distinctive, deeply forked tail. Violet-green Swallow is green with a white face. Look for Barn Swallow's deeply forked tail.

Stan's Notes: Seen in wetlands, farms, suburban yards and parks. Of the seven swallow species regularly found in the Pacific Northwest, this is the only one with a deeply forked tail. Unlike other swallows, it rarely glides in flight. Usually flies low over land or water. Drinks as it flies, skimming water, or will sip water droplets on wet leaves. Bathes while flying through rain or sprinklers. Gives a twittering warble, followed by a mechanical sound. Builds a mud nest with up to 1,000 beak-loads of mud. Nests on barns and houses, under bridges and in other sheltered places. Often nests in colonies of 4–6 birds; sometimes nests alone.

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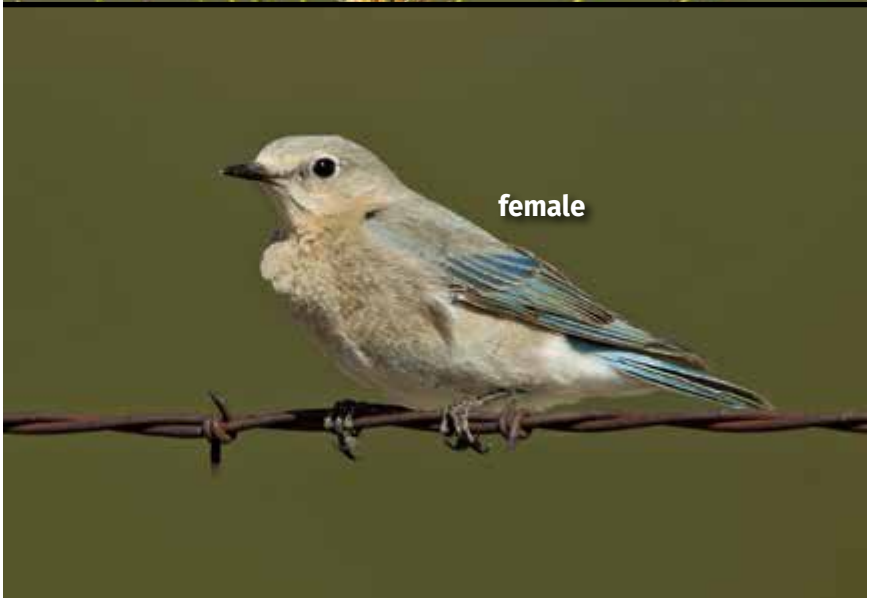

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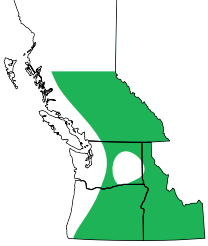

SUMMER

Mountain Bluebird

Sialia currucoides

Size: 7" (18 cm)

Male: Overall sky-blue bird with a darker blue head, back, wings and tail. White lower belly. Thin black bill.

Female: similar to male, but paler with a nearly gray head and chest and a whitish belly

Juvenile: similar to adult of the same sex

Nest: cavity, old woodpecker cavity, wooden nest box; female builds; 1–2 broods per year

Eggs: 4–6; pale blue without markings

Incubation: 13–14 days; female incubates

Fledging: 22–23 days; female and male feed young

Migration: complete, to Arizona, California and Mexico

Food: insects, fruit

Compare: Western Bluebird (p. 83) is similar, but it is darker blue with a rusty-red chest.

Stan's Notes: Common in open mountainous country, nesting in the eastern two-thirds of the region. Main diet is insects. Often hovers just before diving to the ground to grab an insect. Due to conservation of suitable nesting sites (dead trees with cavities and man-made nest boxes), populations have increased over the past 30 years. Like other bluebirds, Mountain Bluebirds take well to nest boxes and tolerate close contact with people. Female sits on baby birds (brood) for up to six days after the eggs hatch. Young imprint on their first nest box or cavity and then choose a similar type of box or cavity throughout their life. Any open field is a good place to look for Mountain Bluebirds.

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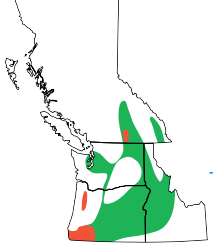

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

Western Bluebird

Sialia mexicana

Size: 7" (18 cm)

Male: Deep-blue head, neck, throat, back, wings and tail. Rusty-red chest and flanks.

Female: similar to male, only duller with a gray head

Juvenile: similar to female, with a speckled chest

Nest: cavity, old woodpecker cavity, wooden nest box; female builds; 1–2 broods per year

Eggs: 4–6; pale blue without markings

Incubation: 13–14 days; female incubates

Fledging: 22–23 days; female and male feed young

Migration: non-migrator to partial migrator, to California and Mexico; moves around to find food

Food: insects, fruit

Compare: The Mountain Bluebird (p. 81) is similar but lacks the rusty-red breast. Male Lazuli Bunting (p. 77) is smaller and has white wing bars.

Stan's Notes: Found in a variety of habitats, from agricultural land to clear-cuts. Requires a cavity for nesting. Competes with starlings for nest cavities. Like the Mountain Bluebird, it uses nest boxes, which are responsible for the stable populations. Populations dropped during the mid-1900s but recovered due to the efforts of concerned people who put up nest boxes, providing much-needed habitats for nesting. A courting male will fly in front of the female, spread his wings and tail, and perch next to her. Often goes in and out of its nest box or cavity as if to say, "Look inside." Male may offer food to the female to establish a pair bond.

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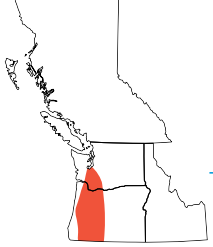

YEAR-ROUND

California Scrub-Jay

Aphelocoma californica

Size: 11" (28 cm)

Male: Head, wings, tail and breast band are deep blue. Brownish patch on back. Chin, breast and belly are dull white. Very long tail.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: similar to adult, overall gray with light-blue wings and tail

Nest: cup; female and male build; 1 brood a year

Eggs: 3–6; pale green with red-brown markings

Incubation: 15–17 days; female incubates

Fledging: 18–20 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator, moves around in winter to find food

Food: insects, seeds, fruit; comes to seed feeders

Compare: Same size as Steller's Jay (p. 87), but it lacks the all-black head and pointed crest. Canada Jay (p. 249) is gray and white, lacking any of the Scrub-Jay's blue color.

Stan's Notes: A tame bird of urban areas that visits feeders. Forms a long-term pair bond. The male feeds the female before and during incubation. Young of a pair remain close by for up to a couple years, helping parents raise subsequent siblings. Caches food by burying it for later consumption. Likely serves as a major distributor of oaks and pines by not returning to eat the seeds it buried. Was once called the Western Scrub Jay. Now broken into two separates species, the California Scrub-Jay and the Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. The California Scrub-Jay occurs in California, Oregon and Washington while Woodhouse's is found in Idaho and other Rocky Mountain states.

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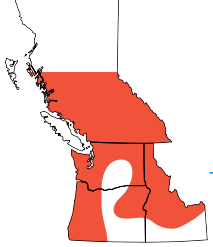

YEAR-ROUND

Steller's Jay

Cyanocitta stelleri

Size: 11" (28 cm)

Male: Dark-blue wings, tail and belly. Black head, nape and chest. Large, pointed black crest on head that can be lifted at will.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: similar to adult

Nest: cup; female and male construct; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 3–5; pale green with brown markings

Incubation: 14–16 days; female incubates

Fledging: 16–18 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator; moves around in winter to find food

Food: insects, berries, seeds; will visit seed feeders

Compare: The California Scrub-Jay (p. 85) lacks Steller's all-black head and black crest. Canada Jay (p. 249) lacks any blue coloring or a crest.

Stan's Notes: Common resident of coniferous forests from sea level to timberline. Often found in suburban yards. Thought to mate for life, rarely dispersing far, usually breeding within 10 miles (16 km) of birthplace. Several subspecies found throughout the West. Pacific form has a black crest with blue streaks, while the Interior variety (see inset) has a black crest with distinct white streaks. Usually very bold where it comes in contact with people on a regular basis, such as a campground. Often seen in small flocks consisting mainly of family members. Feeds on a wide variety of food, but seeds make up 70 percent of the diet. Will cache seeds and acorns for later consumption. Named after Arctic explorer Georg W. Steller, who reportedly first recorded the bird on the Alaskan coast in 1741

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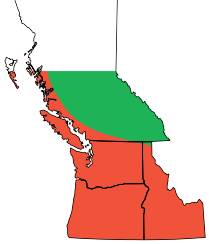

YEAR-ROUND
SUMMER

Belted Kingfisher

Megaceryle alcyon

Size: 12–14" (30–36 cm)

Male: Blue with white belly, blue-gray chest band and black wing tips. Ragged crest moves up and down at will. Large head. Long, thick, black bill. White spot by eyes. Red-brown eyes.

Female: same as male but with rusty flanks and a rusty chest band below the blue-gray band

Juvenile: similar to female

Nest: cavity; female and male excavate in a bank of a river, lake or cliff; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 6–7; white without markings

Incubation: 23–24 days; female and male incubate

Fledging: 23–24 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator, moves around in winter to find food and open water

Food: small fish

Compare: Larger than the California Scrub-Jay (p. 85), which lacks Kingfisher's obvious large crest. The Belted Kingfisher is rarely found away from water.

Stan's Notes: Usually found at the bank of a river, lake or large stream. Perches on a branch near water, dives in headfirst to catch a small fish, then returns to the branch to feed. Parents drop dead fish into the water to teach their young to dive. Can't pass bones through its digestive tract; regurgitates bone pellets after meals. Gives a loud call that sounds like a machine gun. Mates know each other by their calls. Digs a tunnel up to 4 feet (1 m) long to a nest chamber. Small white patches on dark wing tips flash during flight.

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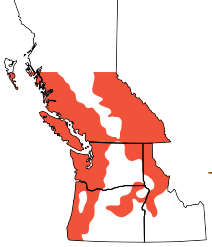

YEAR-ROUND

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Poecile rufescens

Size: 4¾" (12 cm)

Male: Rich, warm-chestnut back and sides. Black crown and chin. White cheeks and sides of head. Gray wings and tail.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: same as adult

Nest: cavity; female and male build; 1–2 broods per year

Eggs: 5–7; white without markings

Incubation: 10–12 days; female incubates

Fledging: 13–16 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: non-migrator

When Seen: year-round

Food: insects, seeds, fruit; comes to seed and suet feeders

Compare: Black-capped Chickadee (p. 223) and Mountain Chickadee (p. 225) lack Chestnut-backed's distinctive chestnut back.

Stan's Notes: The most colorful of all chickadees. Like the other chickadee species, the Chestnut-backed clings to branches upside down, looking for insects. During breeding, it is quiet and secretive. In winter it joins other birds such as kinglets, woodpeckers and other chickadees. Prefers humid coastal coniferous forests with hemlock and Tamarack. Builds a cavity nest 2–20 feet (up to 6 m) above the ground. Will use the same nest year after year. In late summer, some move to higher elevations and back down just before winter starts. Can be attracted to your yard with nest boxes. Comes to seed and suet feeders.

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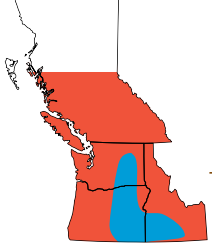

YEAR-ROUND
WINTER

Brown Creeper

Certhia americana

Size: 5" (13 cm)

Male: Small, thin, nearly camouflaged brown bird. White from chin to belly. White eyebrows. Dark eyes and a thin curved bill. Tail is long and stiff.

Female: same as male

Juvenile: same as adults

Nest: cup; female constructs; 1 brood per year

Eggs: 5–6; white with tiny brown markings

Incubation: 14–17 days; female incubates; male feeds the female during incubation

Fledging: 13–16 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: partial migrator to non-migrator, moves around in winter to find food

Food: insects, nuts, seeds

Compare: The Red-breasted Nuthatch (p. 219) and White-breasted Nuthatch (p. 229) climb down tree trunks, not up. To spot a Brown Creeper, look for a small brown bird with a white belly creeping up trees.

Stan's Notes: A forest bird, commonly found in wooded habitats. Will fly from the top of one tree trunk to the bottom of another, then work its way to the top, looking for caterpillars, spider eggs and more. Its long tail has tiny spines underneath, which help it cling to trees. Uses its camouflage coloring to hide in plain sight: it spreads out flat on a branch or trunk and won't move. Often builds its nest behind the loose bark of a dead or dying tree. Young follow their parents around, creeping up trees soon after fledging. Often more visible during winter.

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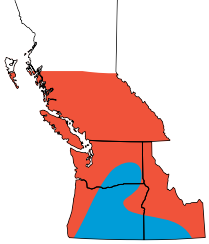

YEAR-ROUND
WINTER

Pine Siskin

Spinus pinus

Size: 5" (13 cm)

Male: Small brown finch with heavy streaking on the back, breast and belly. Yellow wing bars. Yellow at the base of tail. Thin bill.

Female: similar to male, with less yellow

Juvenile: similar to adult, with a light-yellow tinge over the breast and chin

Nest: cup; female builds; 2 broods

Eggs: 3–4; greenish blue with brown markings

Incubation: 12–13 days; female incubates

Fledging: 14–15 days; female and male feed the young

Migration: irruptive; moves around the United States during winter in search of food

Food: seeds, insects; will come to seed feeders

Compare: Female House Finch (p. 101) lacks any yellow. The female American Goldfinch (p. 337) has white wing bars. Female Purple Finch (p. 113) has bold white eyebrows. Look for the yellow wing bars to identify the Pine Siskin.

Stan's Notes: A nesting resident in coniferous forests. Nests in small colonies, with nests only a few feet apart. Builds nest toward the end of coniferous branches, where needles are dense, helping to conceal. Will come to thistle feeders. Gives a series of high-pitched, wheezy calls. Also gives a wheezing twitter. Breeds in small groups. Male feeds the female during incubation. Juveniles lose the yellow tint by late summer of their first year. Gathers in flocks in autumn, moving around the region, and visits bird feeders. More common in some years than others.

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BIRDING JOURNAL: THROUGH THE SEASONS

by Vanessa Sorensen

Enjoy a variety of options for recording your favorite moments.

- Note which birds you see, and when and where you see them
- Sketch unknown species to look up later
- Document the birds eating at your feeder
- Compare first arrivals from year to year
- Keep track of your life list and other checklists

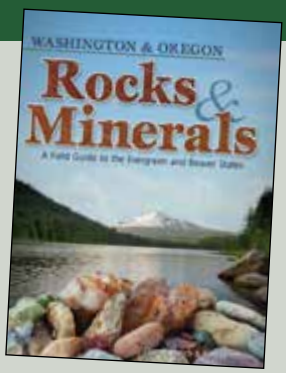
The *Birding Journal* by birder and graphic artist Vanessa Sorensen also includes information about attracting birds to your yard, tips to maintain a bluebird box and lists of national birding hotspots.

Whether you're a beginning bird watcher or a seasoned birder, this beautiful journal—with its sophisticated art and elegant style—is a book you'll use again and again.

144 pg • 5.25" x 8.25" • $12.95 • 978-1-59193-331-82

ROCKS & MINERALS OF WASHINGTON AND OREGON

by Dan R. Lynch, Bob Lynch



Your Must-Have Guide to the Rocks and Minerals of Washington and Oregon

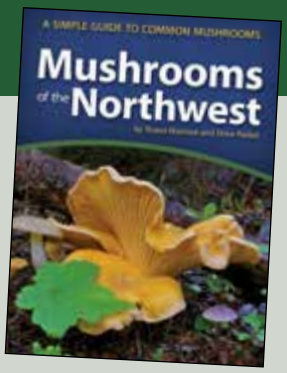
Get the perfect guide to rocks and minerals in the Evergreen and Beaver States! This book by Dan R. Lynch and Bob Lynch features comprehensive entries for 124 Washington and Oregon rocks and minerals, from common rocks to rare finds. Learn from the fascinating information about everything from jasper and thunder eggs to gold and petrified wood. The easy-to-use format means you'll quickly find what you need to know and where to look. The authors' incredible, sharp, full-color photographs depict the detail needed for identification–no need to guess from line drawings.

With this field guide in hand, identifying and collecting is fun and informative.

320 pg • 4.375" x 6" • $14.95 • 978-1-59193-293-2

MUSHROOMS OF THE NORTHWEST

by Teresa Marrone, Drew Parker



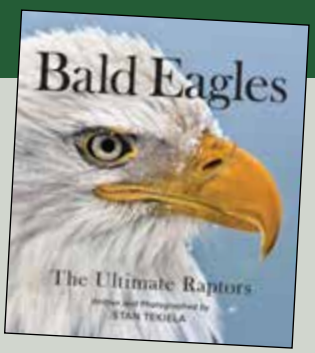
Get This Great Visual Guide to Mushrooms in Idaho, Oregon and Washington!

Hundreds of full-color photographs with easy-to-understand text make this a perfect visual guide. Learn about more than 400 species of common wild mushrooms found in the Northwest states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The species (from Morel Mushrooms to Shelf Mushrooms) are organized by shape, then by color, so you can identify them by their visual characteristics. Plus, with the Top Edibles and Top Toxics sections, you'll begin to learn which are the edible wild mushrooms. The information in the book, written by Teresa Marrone and Drew Parker, is accessible to beginners but useful for even experienced mushroom seekers.

296 pg • 4.375" x 6" • $16.95 • 978-1-59193-792-0

BALD EAGLES: THE ULTIMATE RAPTORS

by Stan Tekiela



Enter the World of the Eagle with Stan's Amazing Photography.

If you've ever seen an eagle fly gracefully over an unbroken forest or watched it snatch a fish from the surface of a crystal-clear lake, you probably experienced a feeling of inspiration. Award-winning author, naturalist and wildlife photographer Stan Tekiela believes that eagles are the most majestic of birds. He spent years studying bald eagles, noting their behaviors and capturing them in photographs.

The result is a striking portrayal of these amazing raptors in *Bald Eagles*. Stan's extraordinary photographs depict the birds of prey in a new, unique fashion. His fascinating text, drawn from detailed research and personal observations, provides information about every aspect of the eagles' lives.

160 pg • 9" x 8" • $19.95 • 978-1-64755-145-2

REPORT A RARE BIRD

To report unusual bird sightings or possibly hear recordings of where birds have been seen, you can often call pre-recorded hotlines detailing such information. Since these hotlines are usually staffed by volunteers, and phone numbers and even the organizations that host them often change, the phone numbers are not listed here. To obtain the numbers, go to your favorite internet search engine, type in something like "rare bird alert hotline Arizona" and follow the links provided.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Bird watching isn't just a fun pastime; your observations can actually help science. With habitat fragmentation and climate change harming bird populations, it's essential for biologists to have accurate, up-to-date population totals for birds, especially those that are potentially threatened or endangered.

But tracking birds is tricky; that's where two long-running bird-tracking programs—and you—come in. Think of each as a census for the birds. One is **The Christmas Bird Count**, which has been around for 120 years. Held from mid-December to early January, volunteers spread out to count birds in specific areas around each state and the country, with counts occurring in a local area for only one day. (So if you want to join in on the fun, prepare ahead of time!)

The **Great Backyard Bird Count** is similar, but it takes place everywhere, and you can participate if you bird for as little as 15 minutes, making it easy to join. It takes place in February.

BIRDING RESOURCES

Audubon Society of Idaho

Audubon Society of Washington

Idaho Fish and Game (idfg.idaho.gov)

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (dfw.state.or.us)

Ornithological Societies

Vancouver Audubon (vancouveraudubon.org)

Washington Department of Natural Resources (www.dnr.wa.gov)

Web Pages

The internet is a valuable place to learn more about birds. You may find birding on the net a fun way to discover additional information or to spend a long winter night. These websites will assist you in your pursuit of birds. If a web address doesn't work (they often change a bit), just enter the name of the group into a search engine to track down the new address.

SITE	ADDRESS
American Birding Association	www.aba.org
Cornell Lab of Ornithology	www.birds.cornell.edu
Author Stan Tekiela's home page	www.naturesmart.com

IF YOU FIND AN INJURED BIRD

Pacific Northwest Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers

British Columbia

Wildlife Rehabilitators' Network of British Columbia
www.wrnbc.org/contact/find-a-local-rehabilitator/

Wildlife Rescue Association of British Columbia
www.wildliferescue.ca/animal/

Idaho

American Heritage Wildlife Foundation
ahwf.org

Animals in Distress Association
idahowildliferescue.org

Snowdon Wildlife Sanctuary
www.snowdonwildlife.org

Oregon

Chintimini Wildlife Center, Corvallis
www.chintiminiwildlife.org

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/rehabilitation/index.asp

Wildlife Center of the North Coast, Astoria
www.coastwildlife.org

Washington

Sarvey Wildlife Care Center
www.sarveywildlife.org/

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
wdfw.wa.gov

WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
www.whatcomhumane.org/wildlife

Injured Dark-eyed Junco

CHECKLIST/INDEX

Use the boxes to check the birds you've seen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Naturalist, wildlife photographer and writer Stan Tekiela is the originator of the popular state-specific field guide series that includes titles for Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Stan has authored more than 190 educational books, including field guides, quick guides, nature books, children's books, playing cards and more, presenting many species of animals and plants.

With a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural History from the University of Minnesota and as an active professional naturalist for more than 30 years, Stan studies and photographs wildlife throughout the United States and Canada. He has received various national and regional awards for his books and photographs. Also a well-known columnist and radio personality, his syndicated column appears in more than 25 newspapers, and his wildlife programs are broadcast on a number of Midwest radio stations. Stan can be followed on Facebook and Twitter. He can be contacted via www.naturesmart.com.

LIFE LIST

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THREE BOOKS IN ONE FOR ALL OF YOUR BIRD-WATCHING NEEDS

Peaceful, relaxing, and inspiring—birding yields a lifetime of enjoyment. Written by award-winning author, naturalist, and wildlife photographer Stan Tekiela, the *Pacific Northwest Birding Companion* is part field guide, part how-to guide, and part journal.

Covering southern British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho

1 FIELD GUIDE

This section organizes 145 species by color. When you see a yellow bird, go to the yellow section to identify it. You'll also find range maps, nest descriptions, migration habits, and more.

2 HOW-TO GUIDE

Read Stan's tips for identifying birds and attracting them to your feeder. Learn about everything from birding hot spots to reporting a rare bird to dealing with injured birds.

3 BIRDING JOURNAL

Log when and where you saw each species, and keep track of your birding life list. This beautiful book doubles as a lifelong keepsake.

NATURE / BIRDS / NORTHWEST
ISBN 978-1-64755-042-4
$24.95 U.S.
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