

# WILLAMETTE VALLEY BIRDING TRAIL



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the Willamette Valley Birding Trail



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*HAIRY  
WOODPECKER*  
PHOTO BY:  
JIM LEONARD

*Welcome to ....*

## WILLAMETTE VALLEY BIRDING TRAIL

The broad valley at the end of the Oregon Trail still beckons visitors with its lush green landscape, more than 200 years after the Lewis & Clark Expedition commented on its beauty and abundance. With this guide to the Willamette Valley Birding Trail, you can experience birds that these explorers wrote about in their journals, from tiny wrens that scolded them from ferns around their camps, to tremendous goose flocks that still winter in the valley. The Birding Trail is a self-guided driving itinerary that highlights 138 birding hotspots, including many sites that you can access by bicycle or public transit. Expert insights from local birders, wildlife professionals and tourism specialists will help you to make the most of your birdwatching adventure. For help in finding lodging, dining, or additional activities to enjoy during your visit, go online to [www.traveloregon.com](http://www.traveloregon.com). For more information on this and other Oregon Birding Trails, visit [www.oregonbirdingtrails.org](http://www.oregonbirdingtrails.org).

Renowned for its fertile land with orchards, vineyards, and rolling grass fields nestled between the snow-capped volcanic peaks of the Cascade Mountains and the forests of the Coast Range, the Willamette Valley offers you an abundance of birds in every season. The mild winters bring flocks of swans, geese, ducks and sparrows to green fields and hedgerows, as well as egrets, hawks, eagles, and falcons. In spring, blossoming trees swarm with brightly colored warblers and tanagers, while migrant sandpipers scurry around wetlands. In the pleasantly warm, dry summers, you'll watch songbirds with young broods while you sit in the shade and sample award-winning wines, or fragrant berries straight off the vine. As red and yellow leaves of autumn begin to dapple green forests, you'll find southbound shorebirds as advance heralds of wintering waterfowl and sparrow flocks. So grab your binoculars and a favorite field guide, and sample what the Willamette Valley Birding Trail has to offer!

*Baskett Slough Sunset*  
PHOTO BY: PAT TILLEY

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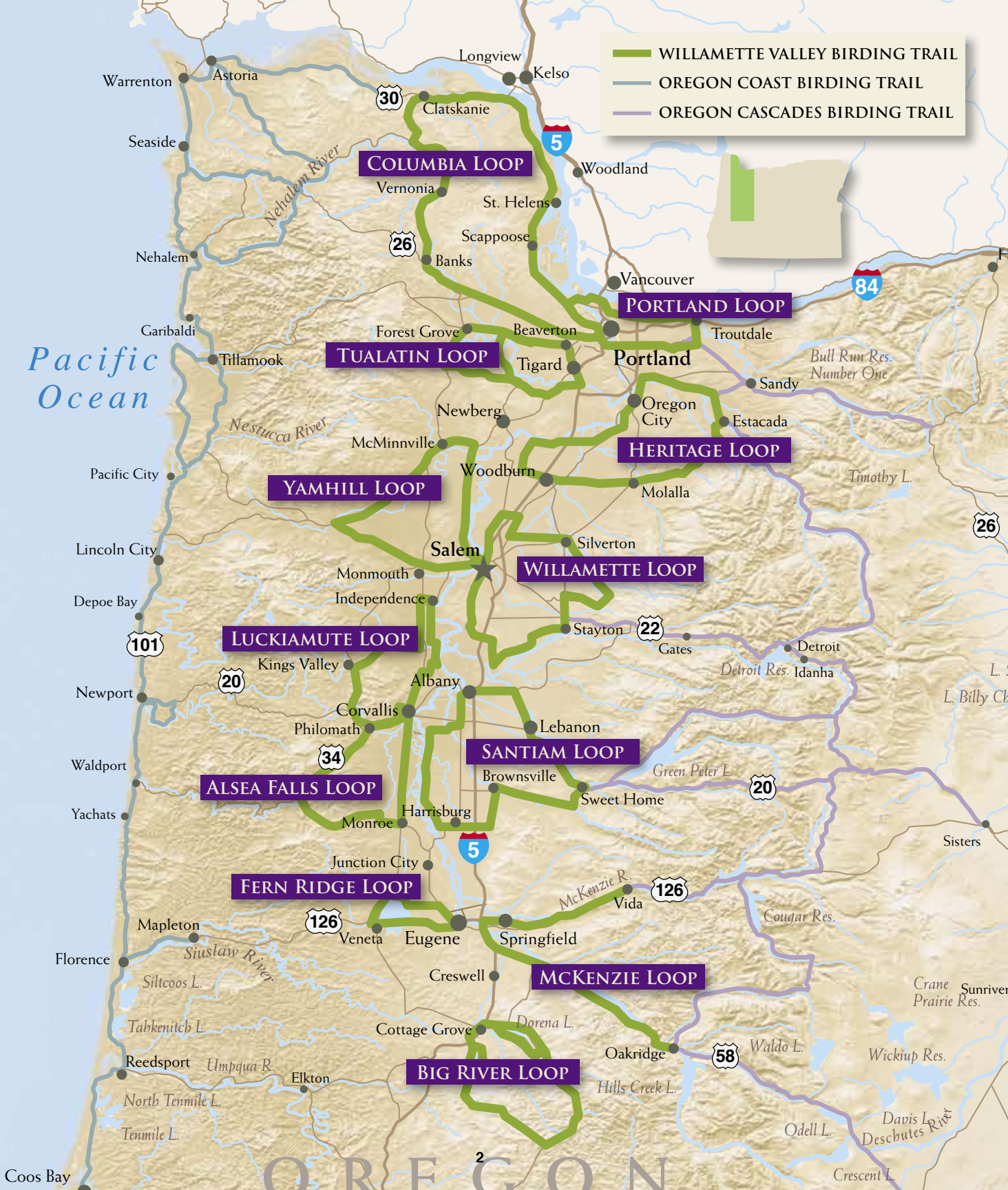
### ON THE COVER:




Oregon white oaks at William L. Finley  
National Wildlife Refuge (PHOTO BY BILL PROEBSTING)  
(Birds, top to bottom)  
Western Bluebird (PHOTO BY JIM LEONARD)  
Northern Pygmy-Owl (PHOTO BY STEVE DOWLAN)  
Lesser Yellowlegs (PHOTO BY KEVIN SMITH)



*Black-headed Grosbeak*  
PHOTO BY:  
STEVE DOWLAN





-  WILLAMETTE VALLEY BIRDING TRAIL
-  OREGON COAST BIRDING TRAIL
-  OREGON CASCADES BIRDING TRAIL

**COLUMBIA LOOP**

**PORTLAND LOOP**

**TUALATIN LOOP**

**HERITAGE LOOP**

**YAMHILL LOOP**

**WILLAMETTE LOOP**

**LUCKIAMUTE LOOP**

**SANTIAM LOOP**

**ALSEA FALLS LOOP**

**FERN RIDGE LOOP**

**MCKENZIE LOOP**

**BIG RIVER LOOP**

Pacific Ocean

OREGON

## THE STATE OF OUTDOORSINESS

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LEGEND HAS IT THAT ONE MAN SPOTTED NO fewer than 12 species of woodpecker in Oregon on a single day. Given our 10 major ecosystems, from high desert to snowy peaks to wild Pacific coastline, it's not only believable, but downright do-able. You are officially challenged to try. Get out the laptop and the binoculars, and start planning your Oregon outdoor getaway at [traveloregon.com](http://traveloregon.com)



## STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

This is your guide to the birds and habitat of the Willamette Valley Birding Trail. The Trail is divided into twelve sections, each of which is laid out as a loop route that highlights a distinctive part of the region. For each section, a master map shows the main roads to follow between sites. We recommend that you use a detailed road map or street guide to assist you in easily locating sites that are off the main highways. Visit the Oregon Birding Trail website at [www.oregonbirdingtrails.org](http://www.oregonbirdingtrails.org) for updates and additional maps.

### Site Descriptions

Each site contains directions on how to get to the site, a description of the most distinctive habitats, and some of the birds that you can expect to see depending on the season. Refer to the checklist on p. 44 to see which seasons are best for finding a particular species. The following abbreviations are used in the directions and site descriptions.

Hwy = highway  
Rd = road  
St = street  
Dr = drive  
Lp = loop  
Alt = alternate  
mi = mile(s)  
ac = acre  
MP = milepost

N, S, E, W = north, south, east, west  
L, R = left, right

### Site Sponsors





















Many sites have a sponsor listed below the description. This recognizes the private businesses, government agencies, conservation organizations, chambers of commerce, and visitor and convention bureaus that provided financial and/or technical support to the Willamette Valley Birding Trail. We encourage

you to patronize the businesses and visitor centers that contributed to this guide, as they are working together to make tourism sustainable throughout the valley region. Please note that site sponsorship does not imply responsibility for a site's cleanliness or safety; rather it recognizes the significant contributions of these entities to the trail.


### Services and Facilities

Icons following each site description indicate the presence of services and facilities at or near the site.

#### Key:

-  Trails available at this site
-  Wheelchair-accessible trail available at this site
-  Camping available at this site
-  Canoe/kayak access
-  Restrooms available at this site
-  ADA-accessible restrooms available at this site
-  Portable toilet(s) available at this site
-  ADA-accessible portable toilet(s) available at this site
-  Fees required for day-use or parking
-  Lodging within 5 miles
-  Food within 5 miles
-  Gas/fuel available within 5 miles
-  Important Bird Area
-  Access by appointment only
-  Accessed and birded by car
-  Restrictions
-  Accessible by bicycle
-  Public transportation stop within 0.5 mile
-  Spotting scope recommended for best viewing
-  Log trucks ; be cautious on curves
-  Hunting is permitted in area; wear blaze orange in season

## FEES AND PASSES

Some birding trail sites require possession of an annual or daily pass that can be purchased for a fee. Site descriptions with a  icon require either a pass or fee payment. The type of pass or amount of fee will depend on your length of stay. Passes for state and federal sites can be purchased at most State Park Visitor Centers, Forest Service Offices, and at the individual sites. Some county parks also require fees or permits that are not covered by the state/federal passes. If you live in the region or plan an extended visit, consider the following passes:

**Oregon State Park Pass** – a 12 or 24 month pass that provides access to all fee-based Oregon State Park facilities.

**Northwest Forest Pass** – an annual pass honored at all National Forest sites and trailheads in Oregon and Washington.

**Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access Passports** – annual and life-long passports honored at all Federal recreation areas. Please display your pass on the dashboard of your vehicle.

## SAFETY TIPS

The Willamette Valley Birding Trail includes sites located in diverse settings, from urban centers to rural communities and remote forest lands. Although this is generally a safe area for birding, it is wise to keep potential hazards in mind:

**Traffic hazards:** When birding along roadsides, even in rural areas, be sure to pull safely out of the way of possible traffic if you stop to look at a bird. Especially during late-summer harvest season, be alert for slow-moving equipment in farming areas.

**Human hazards:** At all sites, it is wise to follow normal precautions for personal safety, and to avoid leaving valuable items in vehicles that you leave unattended.

**Wildlife hazards:** Risks from wildlife are considerably lower than from traffic or other human hazards, and can be minimized with appropriate caution. One native amphibian, the Pacific rough-skinned newt (recognized by its pebbly, brown back) can, if handled roughly, secrete a toxin through its skin that could be fatal if ingested. The risk can easily be avoided by not handling them. If a child happens to handle one, handwashing is advised. Cougars are seldom seen but do frequent the Coast Range and Cascade foothills. Follow precautions posted at forest trailheads where there have been recent sightings, and avoid letting pets or small children run ahead of you on forest trails.

*Baskett Slough* PHOTO BY: PAT TILLEY

### Disclaimer

The sponsors and organizers of the Willamette Valley Birding Trail do not guarantee the safety or conditions at or getting to any of the sites listed in this guide. They do not assume any responsibility or liabilities for injuries, etc., suffered as a result of activities associated with the use of this guide.

Evening Grosbeak  
PHOTO BY:  
BILL PROEBSTING



## BIRDING ETHICS

The Oregon Birding Trails Working Group endorses the American Birding Association's Principles of Birding Ethics (excerpted and summarized below from ABA web page <http://americanbirding.org>). Everyone who enjoys birds and birding must also respect wildlife, its environment, and the rights of others. In any conflict of interest between birds and birders, the welfare of the birds and their environment must come first.

- Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas and important feeding sites.
- Use a blind or hide, and take advantage of natural cover when observing birds.

## BIRD INFORMATION SOURCES

### Birding

For more detailed information on birding the Willamette Valley, please contact the following:

- Oregon Field Ornithologists – [www.oregonbirds.org](http://www.oregonbirds.org)
- Audubon Society of Portland – [www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org) or 503-292-6855
- Salem Audubon Society – [www.audubons.qwestoffice.net](http://www.audubons.qwestoffice.net) or 503-588-7340
- Audubon Society of Corvallis – [www.audubon.corvallis.or.us](http://www.audubon.corvallis.or.us)
- Lane County Audubon Society – [www.laneaudubon.org](http://www.laneaudubon.org) or 541-485-BIRD
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Willamette Valley refuge complex – [www.fws.gov/WillametteValley/complex/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/WillametteValley/complex/index.html) or 541-757-7236
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Tualatin River NWR – [www.fws.gov/tualatinriver](http://www.fws.gov/tualatinriver) or 503-625-5944
- Oregon Birding Trails – [www.oregonbirdingtrails.org](http://www.oregonbirdingtrails.org)

### Injured Wildlife

If you find abandoned or injured wildlife please report it to one of the following licensed wildlife rehabilitators.

- Wildlife Care Center (Portland) – 503-292-0304
- Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (Corvallis) – 541-745-5324
- Cascade Raptor Center (Eugene) – 541-485-1320

## VISITOR INFORMATION

Oregon is well-known around the world for its magnificent outdoor recreation, which includes hiking, biking, golf, angling, river rafting, and the fastest-growing leisure activity, wildlife viewing. Birdwatching particularly draws visitors to all regions of Oregon, benefiting small communities and urban areas, and promoting conservation awareness.

For visitor information contact Travel Oregon: 800-547-7842, [www.TravelOregon.com](http://www.TravelOregon.com)

## GLOSSARY

**Brushland** – habitat dominated by woody shrubs and trees that are typically less than 30 feet high, not forming a closed canopy over most of the area; usually includes non-native blackberry tangles in western Oregon.

**Clear-cut** – area where the entire stand of trees was removed in one cutting.

**Conifer forest** – forest dominated by Douglas-fir, fir, cedar, pine, hemlock, and/or spruce.

**Forest** – habitat with large trees spaced closely enough to form a closed canopy.

**Grassland** – open habitat with grasses as the dominant vegetation; may include sparse woody shrubs and isolated trees.

**Marsh** – ecosystem of more or less continuously waterlogged soil dominated by rushes, reeds, cattails, and sedges, but without peat accumulation as its base.

**Mature forest** – usually defined in economic terms as a forest that has reached harvest age; may be suitable for woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds.

**Migrant** – species that occurs primarily during spring and/or fall migration.

**Migration** – seasonal passage of animals from one region or climate zone to another for breeding or feeding, including annual north-to-south as well as high-to-low elevation movements, and annual movements in the opposite direction.

**Mixed forest** – forest with a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees.

**Nesting** – species occurs during the spring and summer.

**Old-growth** – forest that has not experienced intense or widespread human disturbance for many years relative to the life spans of the dominant species.

**Prairie** – native plant community dominated by grass, generally with less than one tree per acre, now restricted to a small number of sites in the Willamette Valley; includes “wet prairie” which is seasonally inundated as well as “upland prairie.”

**Resident** – species occurs year-round.

**Riparian** – habitat associated with the bank of a watercourse, lake or other wetland; riparian forest typically includes ash, cottonwood, alder, and/or big-leaf maple as canopy-forming trees in the Willamette Valley.

**Savanna** – native grassland with widely separated trees, usually Oregon white oak in the Willamette Valley.

**Second-growth** – trees that occupy a land area after the first cycle of logging of a natural forest.

**Wetland** – seasonally or permanently waterlogged habitat, including lakes, streams, marshes, and wet prairie.

**Wintering** – species occurs during late fall, winter, and/or early spring.

**Woodland** – habitat with large trees spaced widely enough that their crowns do not form a closed canopy; often separated by grass or shrubs.

*Adapted in part from Johnson and O'Neil, Wildlife-Habitat Relationships in Oregon and Washington, Oregon State University Press, 2001.*

Cedar Waxwing  
PHOTO BY:  
RIE LUFT

