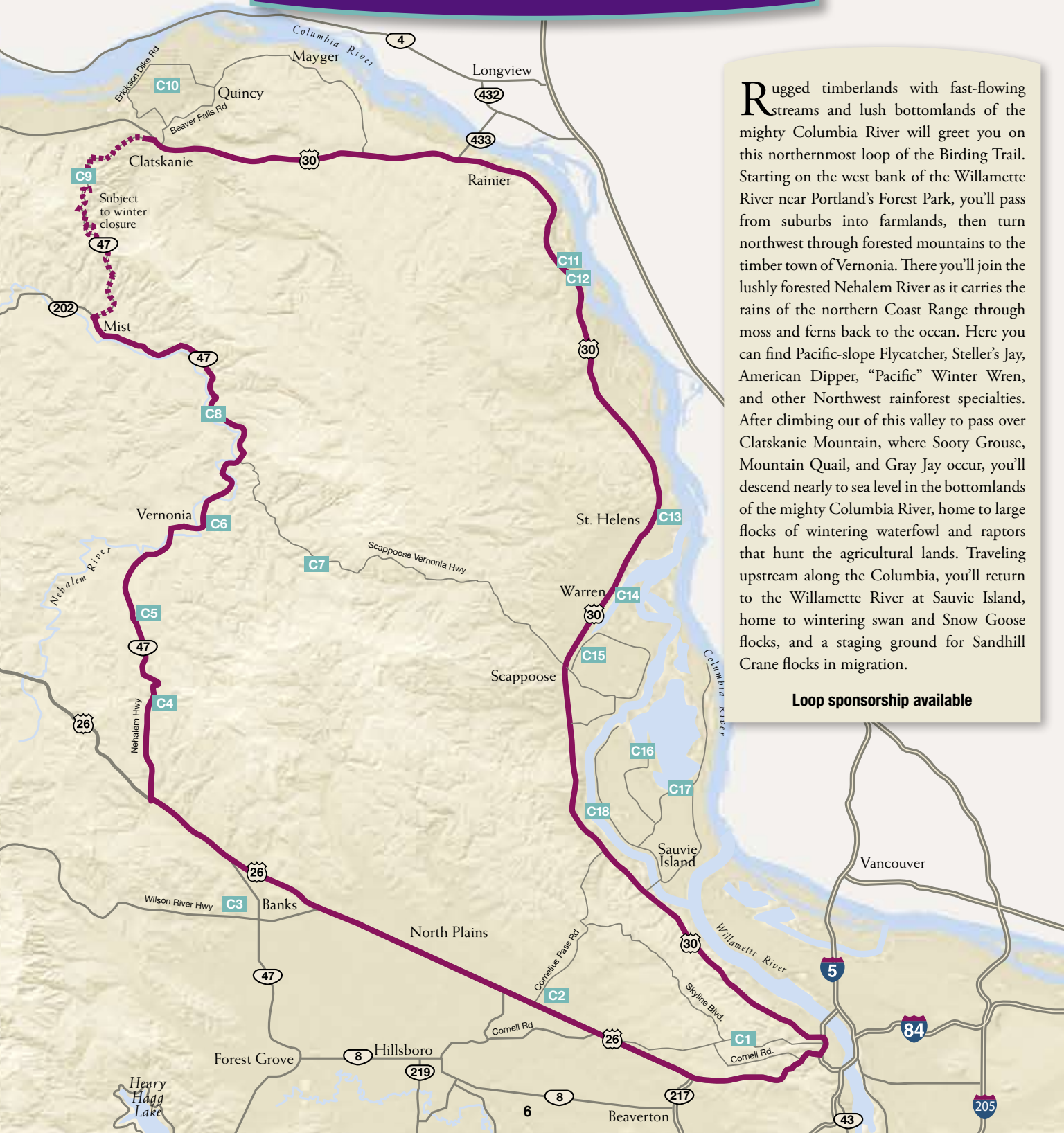


# COLUMBIA LOOP



Rugged timberlands with fast-flowing streams and lush bottomlands of the mighty Columbia River will greet you on this northernmost loop of the Birding Trail. Starting on the west bank of the Willamette River near Portland's Forest Park, you'll pass from suburbs into farmlands, then turn northwest through forested mountains to the timber town of Vernonia. There you'll join the lushly forested Nehalem River as it carries the rains of the northern Coast Range through moss and ferns back to the ocean. Here you can find Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Steller's Jay, American Dipper, "Pacific" Winter Wren, and other Northwest rainforest specialties. After climbing out of this valley to pass over Clatskanie Mountain, where Sooty Grouse, Mountain Quail, and Gray Jay occur, you'll descend nearly to sea level in the bottomlands of the mighty Columbia River, home to large flocks of wintering waterfowl and raptors that hunt the agricultural lands. Traveling upstream along the Columbia, you'll return to the Willamette River at Sauvie Island, home to wintering swan and Snow Goose flocks, and a staging ground for Sandhill Crane flocks in migration.

**Loop sponsorship available**

## C1. Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary and Forest Park

From I-5 in Portland, exit onto Fremont Bridge and stay in far R lane as you pass over the bridge, then take Vaughn St exit. Continue on Vaughn St to the second stop light (NW 25th). Turn L onto 25th and follow to 4-way stop at NW Lovejoy. Turn R on Lovejoy (which turns into Cornell Rd) and follow up hill for 1.5 mi to reach the Sanctuary. Park at the Audubon Nature Store on R, 0.25 mi past the second tunnel on Cornell Rd. **Transit:** Take TriMet Bus 15 to 23rd/Lovejoy and walk (or bike with caution) 1.5 mi W on Lovejoy, which turns into Cornell. Or, take TriMet Bus 15 to Thurman and 29th, walk down steps of Thurman St Bridge, and walk 1 mi up the trail from Lower Macleay Park through Balch Creek Canyon to Upper Macleay Park, which borders the Audubon Sanctuary. GPS 45° 31.60' N, 122° 43.82' W.

The headquarters of Audubon Society of Portland (503-292-6855) stocks many resources for your birding adventure. A foot trail leads through the Sanctuary where a creek flows through second-growth mixed forest, with a small stand of old-growth. Feeders provide close-up views of Rufous Hummingbird, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Band-tailed Pigeon, with Varied Thrush in winter. Pileated Woodpecker often nests in the area. The Sanctuary adjoins Forest Park, a wooded park that extends for more than 6 mi from downtown Portland, in the Tualatin Mountains. Access the park from multiple points off of Skyline Blvd, to the NW of the Audubon Sanctuary.



**Sponsor:** Audubon Society of Portland

Pileated Woodpecker

PHOTO BY: STEVE DOWLAN



## C2. Rock Creek Greenway

From Hwy 26 W of Beaverton, exit on 185th Ave. Turn N on 185th; take first L onto Rock Creek Blvd. Go W 1 mi and park on street; trailhead is to L.

This greenway, along with the Emma Jones Nature Preserve one block E, hosts diverse wildlife for an urban site. A regional trail (paved with boardwalk in places) leads S along a creek with restored wetlands. Great Blue Heron nests along the greenway just S of US Hwy 26. Farther S is good for songbirds. Restrooms are along the trail at Orchard Park.



**Sponsorship available**

## C3. Killin Wetland

From Hwy 26, turn off on Hwy 6 toward Banks / Tillamook. Drive 5.8 mi to Cedar Canyon Rd and turn R. After 1.3 mi, park at the intersection with Killin Rd; wetlands on both sides of Cedar Canyon Rd.

Also known as Cedar Canyon Marsh, this is a peat soil marsh bordered by willows, deciduous woods, conifers, brushrows, and farmland. American Bitterns are the star of the show. A spring visit will almost surely reward you with several “ga-lunk”ing to each other across the marsh. Virginia Rail, Sora, Cinnamon Teal, Hooded Merganser, Gadwall, Wilson's Snipe, Marsh Wren, and Common Yellowthroat can also be found. Check the trees for Red-breasted Sapsucker, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Western Wood-Pewee. Overhead, watch for Vaux's Swift and five species of swallows. Mudflats 0.5 mi up Killin Rd



Sandhill Crane

PHOTO BY: STEPHANIE HAZEN

(gravel) may have Greater Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, and Pectoral Sandpiper in migration.



**Sponsor:** Oregon Field Ornithologists

## C4. L.L. “Stub” Stewart State Park

From MP 46.5 of US Hwy 26, W of Banks, go N 4 mi on Hwy 47. GPS 45° 44.200' N, 123° 11.541' W. Bicycle access via Banks-Vernonia State Trail.

Oregon's newest state park as of 2009, this former logging site is being restored to a more diverse forest setting. More than 17 mi of trail traverse the park, including a 3.5 mi section of the Banks-Vernonia State Trail. Douglas-fir forest and undergrowth host Rufous Hummingbird, Steller's Jay, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, and Varied Thrush. State-of-the-art campgrounds include RV sites and horse facilities, as well as hike-in tent sites, making this a good base for wider explorations.



**Sponsor:** Washington County Visitors Association

## C5. Beaver Creek Trailhead, Banks-Vernonia State Trail

MP 62.8 on Hwy 47, 10 mi N of Hwy 26. Park in gravel pullout on E side of highway.

This day-use site access the central part of the paved Banks-Vernonia State Trail, via a wooden footbridge that's wide enough for a wheelchair but steep on one end. Once across the bridge, explore the riparian mixed forest, with an understory of salal and

Oregon grape, and willows in the side sloughs. In spring, listen for Pacific-slope Flycatcher and look for Wilson's and MacGillivray's Warbler in the understory. Red-breasted Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker also occur. A vault toilet is 0.1 mi S of the trailhead along the trail.



**Sponsorship available**

## C6. Vernonia Lake

On E side of Vernonia along Hwy 47, 0.1 mi W of the Nehalem River bridge. Bicycle access via the Vernonia Linear Trail Extension, which connects to the Banks-Vernonia State Trail. GPS 45° 51.421' N, 123° 10.471' W.

This former log pond is now a popular local fishing spot. The lake provides a rest stop for migrant waterbirds, and breeding habitat for Pied-billed Grebe. Bird deciduous woods along the walking trail that encircles the lake to find nesting Rufous Hummingbird, Warbling Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, and Black-headed Grosbeak. A day-use fee is required for visits of 20 min or more.



**Sponsorship available**

## C7. Scapponia County Park

From Vernonia, go N on Hwy 47 for 5 mi and turn R 0.5 mi past the hamlet of Pittsburg. Go SE on Scappoose-Vernonia Rd and turn R into park entrance at MP 5.4.

From Scappoose, go W on Scappoose-Vernonia Rd for 14.5 mi and turn L into park entrance at MP 5.4.

**Bicycle access** along Scappoose-Vernonia road is not advised due to many curves with narrow shoulders. A former logging road (gravel), shown as Columbia Forest Rd on some maps, parallels this road and links from Scappoose to the Banks-Vernonia State Trail in Vernonia. GPS: 45° 50.614' N, 123° 05.637' W.

This small campground is along the East Fork of the Nehalem River. Here the river is a meandering stream, shaded by mature Douglas-fir, western red-cedar, and big-leaf maple. Watch for American Dipper and Common Merganser along the creek. In spring listen for Northern Pygmy-Owl in



Gray Jay  
PHOTO BY:  
KEVIN SMITH

may find Ruffed and Sooty Grouse, Gray Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Varied Thrush, and Red Crossbill in the older stands. Recent clearcuts may have Mountain Quail, Western Bluebird and White-crowned Sparrow. Ravens patrol the skies. Note that access may be closed due to active logging or fire danger. Gates can be locked without notice, so do not drive in. Take care not to block access when you park outside a gate.



**Sponsorship available**

### C10. Erickson Dike Road

From US Hwy 30 in Clatskanie, go N 0.1 mi on Nehalem Ave, then L on 5th St, which becomes Beaver Falls Rd. After 0.5 mi turn L on Depot St, then L again within 0.1 mi on Clatskanie District Rd. After 0.3 mi this road forks; turn L onto Erickson Dike Rd. This road winds for 6 mi along side sloughs of the Columbia River (pavement ends after 2 mi). After birding the NE (dead-end) section of the road, return to Clatskanie by the same route. A loop by way of Collins Rd #1 and Hermo Rd back to Beaver Falls Rd at the Quincy Store is possible, but those roads are in very poor condition and offer little birding interest. GPS: 46° 08.789' N, 123° 13.414' W.

This road runs atop dikes along side sloughs of the Columbia River, with views of the main channel in places. Watch for wintering flocks of Lesser and Greater Scaup, gulls, and cormorants on the deeper water, and Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser in more marshy sections. Raptors hunt the open farmland. Migrant shorebirds such as Greater Yellowlegs use tidal mudflats and slough edges. Check tall cottonwoods along river for nesting Great Horned Owl. Red-eyed Vireo have occasionally been heard singing during June, from the hybrid poplar plantations in the dikelands.



**Sponsorship available**

### C11. Trojan Site and Prescott Beach County Park

The Trojan site is at MP 41.5 on US Hwy 30, which is 4.5 mi S of Rainier and 12 mi N of St. Helens. GPS 46° 02.161' N,

122° 53.618' W. Prescott Beach County Park is at the end of Graham Rd, which is 0.7 mi N of the Trojan site on US Hwy 30. Then follow signs 0.6 mi to park entrance.

This former nuclear power plant site still has a park with a pleasant lake, picnic shelters and restrooms maintained by Portland General Electric. Peregrine Falcons nested on the Trojan cooling tower, which used to loom 500 ft above the park before it was demolished in 2006; the falcons are still seen now and then. A flock of domestic geese will certainly greet you. However the best birding is to the N of the park at the Carr Slough wetlands. Either hike along the dike that starts from the NE corner of a large reservoir N of the entrance road, or drive N 0.7 mi on Hwy 30 to Graham Rd. This road is elevated with good views of the wetlands on either side of the road. Waterfowl are abundant in the winter. At the end of Graham Rd, check Prescott Beach County Park for wintering gulls and scaup flocks on the Columbia River, and Caspian Tern during spring and summer. This park charges a day-use fee of \$2 per vehicle; entrance to the Trojan site is free.



**Sponsorship available**

### C12. Goble Marina

E side of US Hwy 30 between MP 40 and MP 41, at Goble Landing.

The private marina at Goble Landing is worth a quick stop for snacks and to scan the river, and especially to check for Purple Martins during nesting season, June–Sept. The owners have put up houses on the dock pilings,



Greater Scaup

affording close-up views. Also look for Bald Eagle, Osprey, gulls, cormorants, and waterfowl. The nearby tavern serves meals. A \$3 parking fee applies for stops longer than 15 minutes.



**Sponsorship available**

### C13. Columbia Botanical Gardens and Dalton Lake, St. Helens

**Botanical Gardens:** In St. Helens from US Hwy 30 near MP 29, turn NE onto Liberty Rd. Go 0.4 mi to junction with West St. then 0.1 mi further. Turn L (NW) on 6th St. for 0.6 mi, and park on R side of road by sign for Columbia Nature Trail. **Dalton Lake:** Immediately after turning NE onto Liberty Rd from US Hwy 30, turn L on Oregon St and go 0.3 mi to Columbia Humane Society, from which a trail leads to overlook.

This small nature park is a delightful springtime stop, and a cool oasis in the summer. A narrow footpath lined with trillium, bleeding-heart, and other wildflowers descends into a ravine with fern-covered basalt outcrops, then winds up the opposite slope. Dense willows at the bottom are buzzing with Rufous Hummingbird by April. Orange-crowned Warbler and other riparian species can be expected later in the nesting season. Nearby Dalton Lake hosts waterfowl, plus woodpeckers and songbirds in the surrounding woods. Follow a paved trail from the Columbia Humane Society, and hike dirt path leading to a cliff overlook.



**Sponsorship available**

### C14. Scappoose Bay Marine Park Nature Trail

At MP 25.9 of US Hwy 30 S of Warren (a small town between Scappoose and St. Helens), turn SE onto Old Portland Rd, then go L after crossing the railroad tracks and continue 0.3 mi to parking area for Scappoose Bay Marine Park. Nature Trail is along the waterfront to the N side of the marina store. GPS 45° 49.724' N, 122° 50.293' W.

A paved nature trail with gentle grades winds through cottonwood and ash bottomland woods that host Hairy Woodpecker, Band-tailed Pigeon, Brown Creeper, and Black-capped

Chickadee. Where the trail meets the bay, look for Osprey, scaup, Bufflehead, and cormorants. Pacific Ocean tides affect Scappoose Bay via the Columbia River estuary; at low tide sandpipers and other shorebirds feed on exposed mudflats, especially in late summer. The marine park has covered picnic areas, and a canoe/kayak dock for further exploration of Scappoose Bay.



**Sponsorship available**

## C15. Scappoose Bottoms and Crown Zellerbach Trail

From US Hwy 30 at MP 20 in Scappoose, turn E on Crown Zellerbach Rd and go 0.4 mi, then N on West Lane Rd for 0.9 mi to fork with Honeyman Rd. Turn R on Honeyman Rd and follow for 7.5 mi loop route that returns to Scappoose via Columbia Ave (or continue S on Dike Rd for 3 mi to rejoin US Hwy 30 S of Scappoose).

The open farmland, pastures and wetlands along this loop route are known for wintering waterfowl, egrets and raptors, including Rough-legged Hawk. At the NE corner of the loop, scan fields in winter for Short-eared Owl and watch for Barn Owl at dusk. Bald Eagle nests here in spring. A small county park by Scappoose Airport at the start of Honeyman Rd has restrooms and picnic tables (\$2 day-use fee), as well as RV camping under oak woods that host White-breasted Nuthatch. Black-headed Grosbeak and Bullock's Oriole nest nearby. The Crown Zellerbach Trail can be hiked either S from the intersection of Crown Zellerbach Rd and West Lane Rd (1.9 mi to Multnomah Channel), or for a shorter walk, in either direction from the intersection of Dike Rd and Columbia Ave. Wetlands toward the S end of the trail host American Bittern. White-tailed Kite is sometimes seen.



**Sponsorship available**

## C16–18 Sauvie Island

**General directions for Sauvie Island sites:** At MP 10.9 on US Hwy 30 between Portland and Scappoose, turn NE onto Sauvie Island Bridge. From Sauvie Island park-and-ride lot at NE end of bridge (GPS 45° 37.752' N, 122° 48.875' W), follow directions

for specific sites. A good winter driving loop begins at the bridge, goes N 2.2 mi on Sauvie Island Rd to Reeder Rd, continues E 4.4 mi to Gillihan Rd, then loops back S, W and N 6.0 mi to the bridge.

**Public transit/bicycle access:** TriMet Bus Route 17 from Portland terminates at a park-and-ride lot just NE of the Sauvie Island bridge. The bus does not always run on weekends. Bicycling around the island from this point is possible with caution, as roads are narrow, may lack shoulders, and motorized traffic moves at 50 mph.

Sauvie Island marks the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. From the Willamette, Multnomah Channel continues northward to Scappoose, forming the western boundary of the island. Sauvie Island offers good birding year round, but is outstanding in winter, when the refuge teems with migratory ducks, geese, swans, and Sandhill Crane. The sounds can be as stimulating as the sights, as when thousands of geese rise into the air as a Bald eagle approaches.

The southern half of the island is mainly private farmland, while the northern half is mainly a state wildlife area. Many portions of the wildlife area are closed to the public Oct 1 – Apr 15. A daily or annual pass is required to park at designated sites within Sauvie Island Wildlife Area, including Oak Island (C16), Coon Point and Viewing Platform No. 1 (C17). Passes can be purchased at the store just E of the Sauvie Island bridge, at the two RV park stores (see below), or at the wildlife area headquarters on Sauvie Island Rd, 0.2 mi N of Reeder Rd. RV camping for a fee is possible both at Island Cove RV Park (on Reeder Road 8.5 mi from the turnoff from Sauvie Island Rd) and at the Reeder RV park (5.7 mi down Reeder Rd). Island Cove also offers tent sites. No gas or other lodging is available.

## C16. Oak Island, Sauvie Island Wildlife Management Area

From the Sauvie Island store, go N on Sauvie Island Rd 1.1 mi to Howell Territorial Park on the R. Continue N on Sauvie Island Rd another 1.1 mi and turn R onto Reeder Rd. Go E 1.2 mi

Winter Wren

PHOTO BY:  
GLEN LINDEMAN



on Reeder Rd to the Oak Island turnoff (L), then 3 mi to Oak Island, turning L at a T-intersection to a gravel parking lot. Oak Island Rd is paved until reaching the wildlife management area, where it becomes gravel.

Oak Island Rd passes through the Willamette Valley's main wintering area for Sandhill Crane flocks. In addition to huge flocks of Canada and Cackling Goose, flocks of Snow Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose can also be seen. Wintering raptors include Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon. After the Oak Island unit of the wildlife management area opens for the summer on April 15, look for nesting Western Wood-Pewee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing and Black-headed Grosbeak along the 2-mi Oak Island Loop Trail. On the way to Oak Island, birders are invited to visit and bird the grounds of Kruger's Farm Market on Sauvie Island Rd, 1.6 mi from the bridge.



**Sponsor:** Kruger's Farm

## C17. Coon Point and North Reeder Road, Sauvie Island Wildlife Area

From the Sauvie Island park-and-ride lot, go N on Sauvie Island Rd 1.1 mi to Howell Territorial Park on the R. Continue N on Sauvie Island Rd another 1.1 mi to a R turn onto Reeder Rd. On Reeder Rd go 3.2 mi (2.0 mi past the Oak Island turnoff) to a gravel parking lot on the L. To get to Viewing Platform No. 1, continue N on Reeder Rd another 4.0 mi beyond Coon Point; turn L into the parking lot. Rentenaar Rd is 3 mi further N on Reeder Rd, which turns to gravel farther N.

Coon Point and Viewing Platform No. 1 along Reeder Rd offer views of large wintering duck and goose flocks, with chance of rare Emperor or Ross's Goose along with Canada, Cackling, Snow and Greater White-fronted Goose. Rentenaar Rd at the N end of Reeder Rd is one of Oregon's best winter sparrow

patches, with Swamp and White-throated Sparrows found annually along with more common Song, Sooty Fox, Lincoln's, Golden-crowned, White-crowned, and Savannah Sparrows. Coon Point and beaches along Reeder Rd draw migrant shorebirds in late summer. The beaches along Reeder Rd are very popular summer destinations; birders will also enjoy nesting Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Bullock's Oriole.



**Sponsor:** Jane Hartline and Mark Greenfield on behalf of Audubon Society of Portland

## C18. Wapato Access Greenway State Park, Sauvie Island

From the Sauvie Island park-and-ride lot, go N on Sauvie Island Rd 2.2 mi to intersection with Reeder Rd. Continue 0.5 mi on Sauvie Island Rd and turn L into gravel parking area at trailhead. GPS 45° 39.596' N, 122° 50.328' W.

This popular trail provides an additional hiking destination on Sauvie Island, especially during the winter months when access elsewhere is limited. In winter look for Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Bewick's Wren and Black-capped Chickadee, with ducks and cormorants where the trail comes to the Multnomah Channel. The riparian deciduous woods host songbirds including Warbling Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Common Yellowthroat during spring migration, plus Black-headed Grosbeak and Swainson's Thrush in late spring and summer.



**Sponsorship available**