

## THE KING'S CORNER



I feel like we are officially birders now that we are making our vacation choices based on the birding opportunities. We just returned from a birding vacation in the Tucson area. Since Alaska Airlines now has a direct flight to Tucson, it's easy to get right to birding sites the same day you arrive.

Madera Canyon, known throughout the world for its variety of birds, is only an hour from the airport. Over 250 species, including 15 hummingbirds, have been seen and during the winter visitors should be able to see 100 species. Santa Rita Lodge on the only road into the Canyon has set up chairs on a patio above 10 to 15 bird feeders. It is easy and very pleasant to spend a few hours watching this wild bird dinner party. Mexican Jays, Wild Turkeys, White-breasted Nuthatches, Bridled Titmouse, Anna's Hummingbirds, Blue-throated Hummingbirds, Lesser Goldfinches, Acorn Woodpeckers, and House Finches were the most common when we stopped, but Arizona Woodpeckers, Hepatic Tanagers and Magnificent Hummingbirds also came by and other birders were talking about Elegant Trogon sightings.

San Pedro National Conservation Area is only 1 1/2 hours from Madera Canyon. Birding here is done on a level loop trail 2 miles long with about a mile along the river. Birders were searching for the elusive Green Kingfisher the day we were there since it had been seen the previous day and several times in the previous week, as well as the day after we left. The small

# The Kingfisher

Volume 12, Issue 2

Central Oregon Coast - Garibaldi to Yachats

Winter 2018

## Choosing a Birding Field Guide

by Laura Doyle

Choosing a birding field guide is really a tough task if you are going to limit yourself to just one guide. Many of us have accumulated a whole shelf full of bird guides because choosing just one requires too many trade-offs. The best choice for your new bird guide will depend on you, how you want to use the guide, and what guides you already have on your shelf. Below are some guides to check out and some questions to ask when making a choice. Prices are for new flex- or paperback version of the most recent edition from Amazon, but most are also available in other editions and used for less.

***Birds of Oregon***, Roger Burrows and Jeff Gilligan, Lone Pine. (\$22.93)

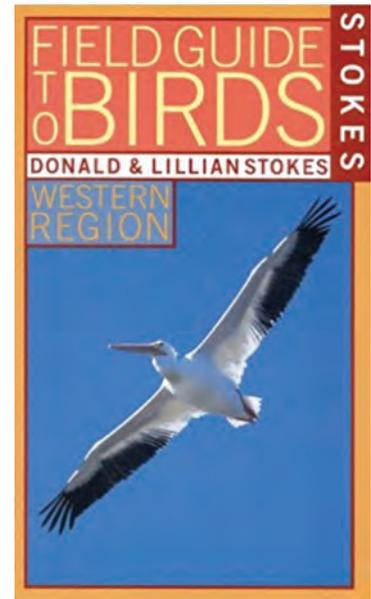
***Birds of the Pacific Northwest***, John Shewey and Tim Blount, Timber Press Field Guide. (\$18.14)

***Birds of Western North America: A Photographic Guide***, Paul Sterry and Brian E. Small, Princeton University Press. (\$15.48)

***The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America***, David Allen Sibley, Alfred A. Knopf. (\$13.56)

***Field Guide to Birds -Western Region*** (1996) Donald and Lillian Stokes, Little, Brown and Co.(\$7) (*The guide we use in ASLC birding classes*)

***The New Stokes Field Guide to Birds, Western Region***, Donald and Lillian Stokes, Little, Brown and Co.(\$13.29)



***Field Guide to the Birds of North America***, John L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer, National Geographic. (\$19.36)

1) **Where are you birding?** Oregon? The Pacific Northwest? Western US? The whole USA? More regional books like Burrows/Gilligan (Oregon) and Shewey/Blount (Pacific Northwest) may mean that your mystery bird is easier to find in the guide because only the most likely birds are included. A more focused guide can also mean that the guide is smaller and more portable or that there is more information about each bird.

(continues on back page)

Sand Pedro gift shop also keeps their feeders filled for crowds of White-crowned Sparrows and Lesser Goldfinch. We also saw a Green-tailed Towhee hanging out with the sparrows.

The Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, about 10 miles outside Tucson, is a great place to watch birds. The museum has two walk-in aviaries: one aviary houses a variety of the region's birds and the other is devoted to hummingbirds. During the winter months, the Desert Museum offers a spectacular outdoor raptor free-flight demonstration at

10am and 2pm. The birds fly low over the spectators' heads as their handlers guide them from distant cactus tops to nearby snags. People always ask why these birds don't just fly away, and the handlers' answers are that they can and sometimes do for a while, but that they always return because they've got such great food and shelter at home. It is a great chance to get an up-close look at birds including Crested Caracara, Gray Hawk and Harris's Hawk as they fly, hunt and eat.

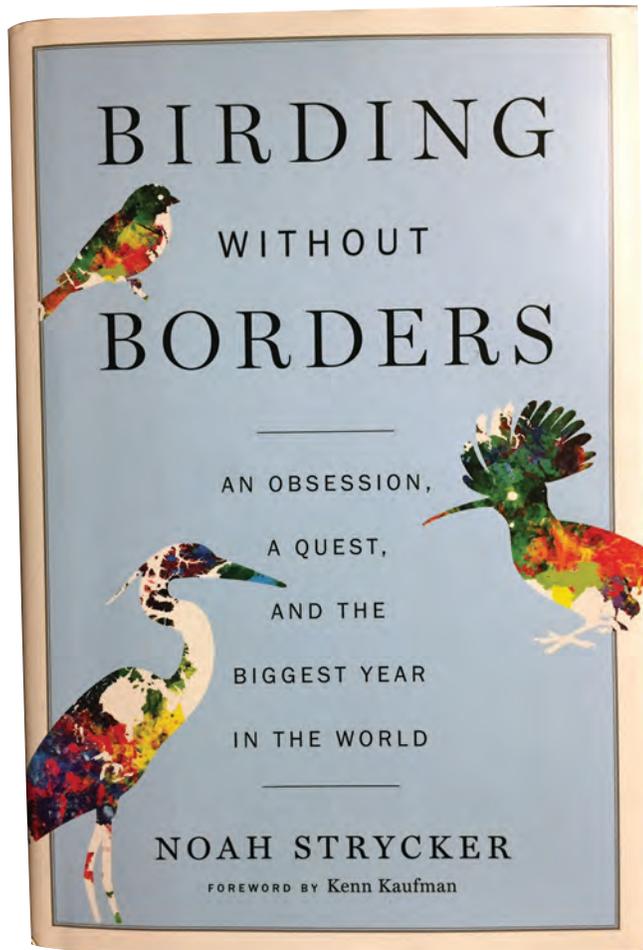
- Jack Doyle, ASLC President

# Birding Basics

Instructors: Laura Doyle and Caren Willoughby, with Mark Elliott

Do you find yourself listening to an odd chirp while walking or gardening? Are you fascinated by the random rustlings in the bushes? Do you notice and enjoy the birds in your world, but wish you knew more about these clever and busy neighbors? This is just the class for you! Participants will learn how birds behave so it will be easier to find, watch, and identify the type you are seeing. Bird identification, adaptations, and habitat will be introduced. Birds of the Oregon Coast will be our focus during this 4-session class. Participants will have access to bird guides and binoculars and will learn how to use them. The final day of class will be a field trip to identify birds in the area.

**Next Class at Oregon Coast Community College - Lincoln City**  
**Four sessions Tue & Thu, Jan 23,25,30, Feb 1**  
**1:30-3pm**  
**\$40 Lincoln City Campus, Room 208**  
**Materials Fee: \$10 paid to instructor at first class**



## Book Review

by Jack Doyle

On January 1, 2015, Noah Stryker, Eugene based birding prodigy, set off on the adventure of a lifetime, a worldwide big year. His goal was to see 5000 species or about half the worlds birds. He began in Antarctica and after visiting all continents ended on Dec 31 in India with 6042. *Birding Without Borders* is the story of his worldwide big year.

Key to his success in exceeding this goal was Stryker's strategy of connecting with and birding with great local birders from locations and cultures all over the world. Getting to meet these birders and their diverse birding communities as Stryker shares the quest makes for a really fun read that even non-birders will enjoy. Of course, we get to meet some great birds, and Stryker is an insightful and appreciative nature author as many of you know from his previous book, *The Thing with Feathers*. Stryker brings great energy, curiosity, good humor, humanity, humility and a sense of wonder to his story of the worldwide big year. We know the outcome, but the daily drama pitting the new and unknown in conditions, circumstances, people, and birds against the mind-boggling complexity of the planning and logistics required to reach the big year goal make for a suspenseful as well as exciting tale. Highly recommended!

OUR MISSION: ENCOURAGING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO PROTECT AND ENJOY THE BIRDS, WILDLIFE AND HABITATS FOUND ALONG THE CENTRAL OREGON COAST

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Winter and Spring Events



## JAN 2018

**Tuesday, Jan 9, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting** in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

**Saturday, January 13th, 9-11am - OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center Nature Trail and South Jetty.** There will be an abundance of waterfowl, birds of prey, and 3 species of loons. Birds in the bush are always a surprise, like Western Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows. From Newport take the first exit south after crossing the Yaquina Bay Bridge and drive on SE OSU Drive following signs for the Center. Park at the east side of the Visitors Center.

**Tues & Thurs, Jan 23-Feb 1, 1:30-3pm ~ "Basic Birding"** is again taught by ASLC Volunteers at Lincoln City's Oregon Coast Community College (OCCC) campus. To sign-up visit [www.oregoncoastcc.org](http://www.oregoncoastcc.org).



## FEB

**Saturday, February 10, 9-11am - Siletz Bay, Cutler City Wetlands and Salishan Nature Trails.** Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser and Surf Scoter are usually seen with the possibility of an Eurasian Wigeon. Bald Eagles always put on a show. Meet at the dock beside Mo's Restaurant (860 SE 51st St.) in the Taft District of Lincoln City.

**Tuesday, Feb 13, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting** in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

**Friday, Feb 16 - Monday, Feb 19 ~ The 2018 GBBC (Great Backyard Bird Count)** will take place. Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. For more info, go to: [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html).

Most field trips are with Audubon trip leader Mark Elliott. No prior birding experience is required. Binoculars and guidebooks will be provided. Bring weather appropriate clothing and footwear.

## MAR

**Saturday, March 10, 9-11am - Nestucca National Wildlife Refuge bird walk is led by Mark Elliott.** The refuge supports 10% of the world population of dusky Canada geese. A multitude of habitat including pastures, grasslands, woodlands, tidal marsh and mudflats, as well as freshwater bogs and forest are found in this beautiful refuge. Turn left at the refuge entrance on Christensen Road and meet in the lower parking.

**Tuesday, March 13, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting** in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

## APR

**Tuesday, April 10, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting** in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

**Saturday, April 14, 9-11am - Alder Island Loop Trail at Siletz National Wildlife Refuge.** This is a brand new one mile trail that loops through riparian and wetland habitat along the Siletz River. Will look for birds of prey, a variety of ducks, warblers and early migrants. Will meet in the parking lot on the east side of Hwy 101 at the south end of the Siletz River Bridge. Call 541-992-9720 or visit our website for more information.

## MAY

**Tuesday, May 8, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting** in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

**Saturday, May 12, 9-11am, - The Villages at Cascade Head.** View Anna's Hummingbirds, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Wilson's Warblers, sandpipers, gulls and Surf Scoters as we walk through mixed woodlands, forest, marsh and coastline. We will meet at the west end of West Devil's Lake Road (just past the golf course).

## JUN

**Saturday, June 9, 9-11am - Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (Yaquina Lighthouse).** Yaquina Head is known for its easy viewing of nesting seabird colonies of Common Murres, Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemots, Western Gulls and Black Oystercatchers. The highlight for some are the Peregrine Falcons which have nested on the cliff face beside the Interpretive Center for the last 4 years. Yaquina Head Lighthouse is located north of Newport off Hwy 101. Turn west at the traffic signal onto Lighthouse Drive. Follow road to toll booth (requires recreation pass or vehicle entrance fee of \$7.00) and continue on to Interpretive Center parking lot.

**Annual ASLC Meeting (date and time to be determined)** in the River House at Cascade Head Ranch in Otis. Election of officers, followed by a potluck dinner.

## JUL

**Tuesday, July 10, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting** in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

**Saturday, July 14, 9-11am - Buell County Park and Mill Creek Park in Polk County.** Enjoy a hot day along beautiful Mill Creek while looking for flycatchers, warblers, birds of prey and possibly a Western Tanager. Located 35 miles east of Lincoln City off Hwy 22, turn left at Mill Creek Road. In a half mile turn right into Buell County Park.



*Visit [www.lincolncityaudubon.org](http://www.lincolncityaudubon.org) for more calendar details and for ASLC news updates!*

# Patch Birding

Joseph Youren, ASLC Vice-president  
Nov. 17, 2017



Have you ever seen a couple dozen songbirds mobbing a Northern Pygmy Owl? It is quite a show and one I got to experience just this week. The owl dropped in among the Dark-eyed Juncos and Fox Sparrows that feed regularly just outside the window of my office. I was just as surprised as the little ground feeders. This was a life-bird for me and one not easily spotted. I watched as a mass of chickadees, towhees, sparrows, and juncos raised a truly holy ruckus protesting the presence of this little owl marauder. It looked a bit like someone had smacked a hornet's nest with a baseball bat. A hummingbird even decided to pitch in. Definitely not something to be seen every day and a moment I will treasure forever.

Circumstances have kept me from making any ASLC birding field trips this past year. A bitter pill to swallow. I still bird but have had to indulge my passion in a very restricted area – something I just learned is called, “patch birding.” My little “patch” of nature is a probably never-to-be-finished subdivision where we live across the street from Lincoln City's Factory Outlet stores. In this little patch I walk our dogs, fill my bird feeder, and try to keep my eyes open for whatever is going on in this little bit of the central Oregon coast where I live. And fortunately for me, so do a wide variety of birds and wildlife.

The number of species I have identified in the last year was quite a surprise. It is a bit surprising that I have identified 42 different species without leaving my street. As a beginning birder I think that is really something! Sure, my list includes Eurasian Collared Doves, Rock Pigeons, and European Starlings but I also got to lay eyes on: Bald eagles, Sharp-shinned and Coopers Hawks, Osprey, three kinds of woodpeckers and, believe it or not, two Wilson's Snipe. Spending time in this single spot has actually made me a much better birder. Living among a couple dozen species has taught me to rapidly and accurately identify the commons. Near instant recognition of the common means I am more apt to notice the unique. I am growing beyond the easy field marks described in guides and am beginning to bird by impression. Observing this restricted geography also gives me an opportunity to focus more intently on calls and songs. No, I'll never be anywhere close to identification by ear as the experienced birders I know, but I have had quite a few occasions where noticing a call or song that is not ordinary has led to seeing something new and exciting. For example, knowing very well the calls of Northern Flickers I am more likely to notice when a Hairy or Downy Woodpecker announces its presence.

Keeping my eyes open has led to a fascinating education on bird behavior as well. Did you know that European Starling adults actively teach their fledglings to forage and feed? I didn't until I watched an adult leading two young birds down my street flicking food out of cracks in the curb and onto the pavement. The youngsters followed along, eating what was pointed out, but also mimicking the adult's behavior and investigating other bits on their own. A very short time later I saw, what I assumed was the same adult, flicking seeds out of my feeder to the two youngsters on the ground. I know now that a single Steller's Jay's intruder call can within seconds summon 8-10 allies to assist in driving off a feral cat. Listening to Northern Flickers drum on chimney caps and metal downspouts is a pretty common occurrence.

I get to see quite a lot of male activity come to no good end. I know one Ruby-crowned Kinglet who tried mightily to drive away a perceived rival by displaying his brilliant flame-red crown and singing his heart out just outside my window. A Spotted

Towhee I got to know made similar attempts to drive off a rival with even more frenzied violence. In both cases these guys were fooled by their own reflections. It is one thing to read about the feeding habits of Fox Sparrows but quite another to actually watch these mighty garden tillers churning up the moss and turf just outside my office window. The Spotted Towhees, juncos, and jays certainly appreciate and benefit from their efforts. Watching these mundane activities let me see birds in a very up-close and personal way.

Besides my most recent observation of the Pygmy Owl, I am frequently privy to quite a bit of the avian drama and a fair bit of violence. Common Ravens occasionally make the mistake of getting too high in the canopy and becoming targets for watchful crows. Early one morning this summer, a mature Bald Eagle found itself isolated and exposed at the top of a towering Douglas fir at a time when a pair of Osprey were raising young across the way. Their stoops and dives on the eagle were awesome to behold. Less awesome and more grizzly was the sight of crows hunting fledging European Starlings, striking them repeatedly until they could pin one to the ground and kill it. The Osprey family I mentioned taught me that their diets are not strictly limited to fish, as one sat above me dismantling an adult crow. As if to put a point to the lesson it casually dropped a bloody wing onto my driveway. Stripped of all flesh it still retained its primary feathers. Gruesome. I think I prefer watching jays steal from one another's food caches.

I am a bit blessed that my home patch just happens to sit midway (as the crow flies) between Devil's Lake and Siletz Bay so I get to see a lot of flyovers. Both Cackling and Canada Geese appear regularly. Great Blue Herons are pretty common and of course gulls are ubiquitous. I've even had Red-winged Blackbird visit the feeder. Our location along the Pacific migratory flyway also makes it possible to learn the patterns of the season as our local populations shift. With more careful notations in my field notes I can learn a lot, for example: which comes first, Golden-crown or White-crown Sparrows? When do Varied Thrush give way to American Robins? When should I expect Pine Siskins? If I am honest with myself this patch still has a lot to teach me if I am patient and diligent. I hope all of you are lucky enough to find a patch of your own. Here's my patch species list so far:

1. Northern Flicker
2. Golden-crowned Sparrow
3. White-crowned Sparrow
4. Fox Sparrow
5. Varied Thrush
6. American Robin
7. Spotted Towhee
8. Brown Creeper
9. Downy Woodpecker
10. Hairy Woodpecker
11. Bald Eagle
12. Osprey
13. Brown-headed Cowbird
14. European Starling
15. Eurasian Collared-Dove
16. Song Sparrow
17. Band-tailed Pigeon
18. Wilson's Warbler
19. Yellow Warbler
20. Hutton's Vireo
21. Common Raven
22. American Crow
23. Ruby-crowned Kinglet
24. Anna's Hummingbird
25. Rufous Hummingbird
26. Turkey Vulture
27. Steller's Jay
28. Tree Swallow
29. Violet-green Swallow
30. Great Blue Heron
31. Cackling Goose
32. Cedar Waxwing
33. Swainson's Thrush
34. Red-winged Blackbird
35. Black-headed Grosbeak
36. Cooper's Hawk
37. Wilson's Snipe
38. Chestnut-backed Chickadee
39. Pine Siskin
40. Canada Goose
41. Northern Pygmy Owl
42. Lincoln's Sparrow

**Join Audubon Society  
of Lincoln City (ASLC),  
and take part in the  
education and  
appreciation of the  
birds, wildlife, and their  
habitats along  
mid-coastal Oregon**

**As a Paid Member**, your donation aids in supporting our environmental education in local schools and our citizen science programs. It enables us to participate in restoration and public advocacy projects along the central Oregon coast.

**Be a Volunteer**, and help implement the goals of our Society, including field trips, research, education and public events. To volunteer your time and service, call ASLC at 541-992-9720.

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Your membership  
makes the following  
ASLC efforts possible:**

- Monthly Guided Bird Walks
- Kayak/Canoe Field Trips
- Special Guest Presentations
- Kids' Classroom Presentations
- Free Field Guides/Binoculars (loaned during field trips/walks and classroom presentations)
- Monthly meetings open to Public
- Semi-Annual Newsletter - (Summer and Winter issues)
- Website: [lincolncityaudubon.org](http://lincolncityaudubon.org)
- Staff attendance to quarterly state meetings to help co-ordinate legislative efforts in the protection of Oregon's wildlife and habitat
- Phone service for bird and animal hotline connection and information

**Give us your support today.  
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## Winter Raptor Surveys

by Dawn Villaescusa



Raptors - hawks, eagles, osprey, falcons, and even owls - are some of my favorite birds. Often grouped together as "Birds of Prey," they have in common sharp talons and a powerful hooked bill, and the ability to hunt and kill living prey. Oregon has a variety of raptors. Many breed in Oregon, but most only winter here. On the coast, we enjoy Bald Eagles year-round, but Osprey are here only to breed and head south in the winter. Red-tailed Hawks are here year-round, but Red-shouldered Hawks are generally found only in the winter. The Winter Raptor Survey project was established to figure out which raptor species winter here in Oregon.

I first became involved with the project in 2012, when there were two Rough-legged Hawks wintering in the Salmon River estuary. Not sure of what I was seeing, I reported them to an expert and friend in Grand Ronde. She put me in touch with Jeff Fleischer, who suggested establishing a "Lincoln City" survey route. This route now runs from the mouth of the Salmon River to Rose Lodge and around Devil's Lake, about 25 miles. A year later, the person who ran the West Tillamook route retired and Jeff asked if I would take that one as well, which I did. That route runs along the Three Capes Scenic route, then east into Tillamook city, and north to Bay City, about 60 miles.

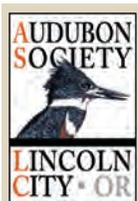
East Cascades Audubon Society (ECAS) established the project in the winter of 2004-05. The project has grown, and there are now surveys in parts of California, Washington, and Idaho. The method used is described on

the ECAS website as: "Through a collection of pre-approved survey routes, volunteers completing the once a month surveys from December through February will count the various species that they find and report their findings to the project coordinator."

Each of us is given a spreadsheet with a line for each predefined stop and a list of potential raptors. We tally the number seen by species, the total miles driven, and total time start to finish. Jeff Fleischer, the project coordinator since the beginning, compiles the data. In 2015, ECAS developed interactive maps on which the data results can be viewed. In addition, compilation of a number of the spreadsheets is available online at: <http://www.ecaudubon.org/winter-raptor-survey>

My experience with the project has been invaluable to me. I observe things differently while travelling in a car. I drive more slowly, and am known to turn around and go back to where I might have seen a raptor on a fence, or in a tree, or on the ground in a field. And I've had some amazing experiences. One day there were two Peregrines that appeared to be playing in an updraft along a ridge. They'd fly to the base and catch an updraft that carried them rapidly up along the ridge, only to fly down again and catch another one - over and over. Another time, a Northern Harrier was hunting in a pasture, flying just a couple of feet above the grass, occasionally flipping its wings to startle prey. At one point a startled Wilson's Snipe leaped into the air only to be snatched in mid-air by an opportunistic Peregrine Falcon. There is always something new, with an amazing diversity of habitat and wildlife along the way.

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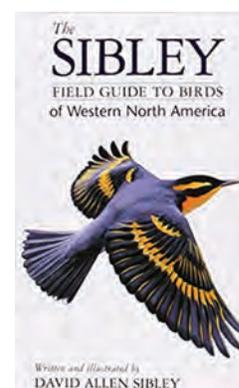
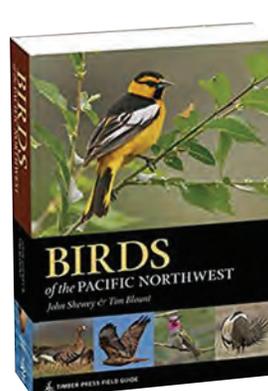
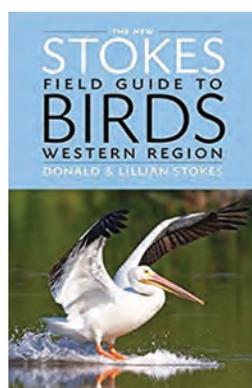
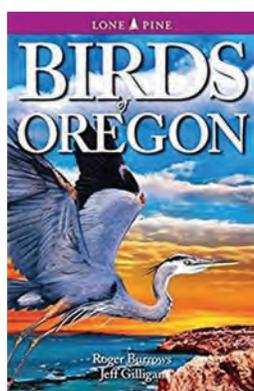
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Be sure to visit  
[www.lincolncityaudubon.org](http://www.lincolncityaudubon.org)  
for more news and activities of the  
Audubon Society of Lincoln City

Audubon Society of Lincoln City is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Tax-exempt #20-3795649



## Birding Field Guides *(continued from Page 1)*

**2) How easy is it to find the bird you are looking for?** Most guides are organized by bird family, but some books offer thumbtabs (Dunn/Alderfer), color-coded table of contents and pages (Burrows/Gilligan, Shewey/Blount or Stokes 1996) and/or multiple indices (Stokes, Stokes 1996). Some guides offer overview pages to help you find identify birds by habitat or family (Stokes 1996, Shewey/Blount), and Sibley begins each family section showing pictures of all the birds in that section on the same page. This makes it easier to compare appearance of your mystery bird with family members so you'll do less flipping through pages of similar birds.

**3) How does the guide show what the bird looks like?** Most guides, like birders with binoculars, focus on appearance (shape, size, color, field marks), so the guide's bird images are an important tool in bird identification. Making the choice between a guide with photographs vs. a guide with drawings involves trade-offs. Shewey/Blount, Sterry/Small, and Stokes provide photographs of birds in their natural habitat. This might mean that the bird guide image is more similar

to what you actually see than a drawing would be. However, color photographs might not match the light conditions of your bird observations (early morning vs. late afternoon, shadows, etc.). Burrows/Gilligan, Sibley, and Dunn/Alderfer Burrows/Gilligan provide drawings or paintings of birds. These allow the artists to emphasize key field marks which can help you focus on a bird's distinctive qualities as well as more easily compare differences among similar birds. However the bird you see in the field might not look as unique and distinct as the illustrated bird. If you are considering a second bird guide for your library, you might prioritize photos if your first guide has drawings, or vice versa.

**4) Does the guide convey the variability in bird appearance?** A guide that shows birds from different angles (perching vs. flying overhead), both male and female plumage for some species, breeding and non-breeding plumage for others, or multiple morphs or sub-species for those with geographic color variations can be more helpful than a guide that provides only one image for each bird. Stokes and

Sibley provide as many as seven or eight images in order to capture the appearance variability that you might find in the field.

**5) How much do you want to know about each bird?** Guides that allow one page for each bird can convey information not only about appearance, but also about family life, characteristic behaviors, range, and observation tips. These may be a little heftier, but this information can help verify the bird's identity, and many of us are interested in observing birds not just to name them but also to get to know them. Burrows/Gilligan and Stokes /1996 provide information that not only will help verify the identity of a new bird but will tell you interesting details about bird family life, range, and habitat. Sibley, Dunn/Alderfer and Sterry/Small show a number of birds on each page which allows for a more compact guide to more birds, but the trade-off is less information about each bird.

**6) How and where do you plan to use the guide?** Do you want a light-weight or especially sturdy guide for your backpack? Or do you want a more comprehensive guide that you can refer to when get home. Of the books above, all but Shewey/Blount have water resistant covers, and Sibley and Burrows/Gilligan are a slightly smaller.