

# Washington Winter Birding | Species List

## February 5 – 11, 2022 with Naturalist Journeys



**With guides Steve Shunk and Michael Good, and participants:  
Marie, Mary, Sylvia, Terry, Glynnis, Marcy, Louisa, Carol, and Steve**

Compiled by Steve Shunk

(HO) = Distinctive enough to be IDed by guide and clients as heard only

(GO) = IDed by sight or sound only by one or both guides

(#) = Number of days tallied

SP = Washington State Park

FHP = Forest Heritage Park

**Summary:** We got lucky on the weather and lucky on the wildlife in the northwestern corner of Washington, from the Canada border south to the Skagit Valley and west to the Sequim Peninsula on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. We just about nailed my 10-year average for bird species, with a few misses and some nice surprises. We found several species that have only been seen on two or fewer trips out of 10, with a first-ever Turkey Vulture; others included California Quail, Marbled Godwit, Prairie Falcon, American Dipper, and a nice flock of Common Redpolls. The only really big misses for the trip were Steller's Jay and Fox Sparrow. Mammals were a bit sparse, but those we did see were trip highlights, including a gray whale, several harbor porpoises, and many harbor seals. We also enjoyed specialty northwestern beers and cuisine, with lots of fresh seafood. Thanks to my co-leader Michael Good and to our crew of nine fun birders for making this a memorable trip. We look forward to 2023!

**BIRDS (106 species recorded, only one of which was GO, and one HO):**

### **DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae**

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens*—(3) Thousands of Snow Geese seen on the Samish and Skagit flats, with the largest flock on Fir Island. We enjoyed spectacular experiences of these swirling flocks as major highlights of our first three days and of the tour overall. At least nine “blue” geese seen among the various flocks.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*—(1) Large group of 65 seen along Anderson Rd. on the Sequim Peninsula, among a large group of American Wigeon. Third time in 10 years of tours to the region.

**Brant** *Branta bernicla*—(4) Mostly small and some large flocks of “Gray-bellied” Brant scattered throughout shoreline areas. Hundreds at Drayton Harbor/Semiahmoo Bay and four dozen on the spit at Fort Flagler SP; birds there eating eel grass on shore. A few dozen also at 3 Crabs and at Marrowstone Point.

**Cackling Goose** *Branta hutchinsii*—(2) Two small groups: six birds seen among Snow Geese on Fir Island, and 11 among Canada Geese on Schmuck Rd., north of Sequim. Third time in 10 years.

**Canada Goose** *Branta Canadensis*—(3) Not common and only in small numbers, with the largest flock along Schmuck Rd. near Sequim.

**Trumpeter Swan** *Cygnus buccinator*—(5) Good numbers—sometimes hundreds—seen almost daily in the Samish and Skagit flats, with smaller numbers on Whidbey Island and in the Sequim area.

**Wood Duck** *Aix sponsa*—(1) One female flushed and seen poorly from the backwater at Wylie Slough, Fir Island.

**Northern Shoveler** *Spatula clypeata*—(3) Small numbers seen among other dabbling ducks.

**Gadwall** *Mareca strepera*—(3) Small numbers seen among other dabbling ducks.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Mareca penelope*—(3) Total of 13 individuals counted among three large American Wigeon flocks on the Samish and Skagit flats.

**American Wigeon** *Mareca americana*—(7) Thousands seen—some in large flocks—with over a thousand in one flock on Fir Island; 175 on Anderson Rd. north of Sequim, with White-fronted Geese.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*—(6) More widespread than Am. Wigeon; a few flocks in the hundreds.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*—(6) Fairly common, typically among other dabbling ducks; 35 at Drayton Harbor, hundreds on the Samish Flats.

**Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*—(5) Fairly common, typically among other dabbling ducks; best looks along the roadside at Nordland, near Mystery Bay SP.

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*—(1) A handful seen at Wylie Slough on Fir Island.

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*—(5) Fairly common on saltwater bays; dozens at Drayton Harbor/Semiahmoo Bay, and many mixed with Lesser Scaup at Crockett Lake.

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*—(2) Uncommon, seen only twice; flock of 25 on Crockett Lake.

**Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*—(4) Uncommon but fairly widespread on Olympic Peninsula shores; great looks at over a dozen at Fort Flagler and several pairs seen from 3 Crabs.

**Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata*—(5) Fairly common on saltwater bays and open water.

**White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*—(2) Over 100 on both sides of Semiahmoo Spit, with a few seen from Port Gamble.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*—(2) Lower numbers than previous tours; one pair seen poorly by few from 3 Crabs, one pair seen very well by all at Mystery Bay SP.

**Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola*—(7) Most abundant and most widespread diving duck, seen on nearly all water bodies, freshwater and saltwater.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*—(7) Fairly common in small numbers on most open waters.

**Hooded Merganser** *Lophodytes cucullatus*—(3) First seen on Wylie Slough, then from John Wayne Marina and Mystery Bay SP.

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*—(2) Small groups on Drayton Harbor and Crockett Lake, and at Fir Island along the Skagit River.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*—(6) Common and widespread on saltwater bays and open waters; 14 counted at 3 Crabs, over 20 at Marrowstone Island.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis*—(4) A few scattered around mostly freshwater ponds, including Crockett Lake and Kah Tai Lagoon.

#### **NEW WORLD QUAIL: Odontophoridae**

**California Quail** *Callipepla californica*—Two birds seen by one of the vans on 3 Crabs Rd. Only the second time in 10 years.

#### **GREBES: Podicipedidae**

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*—(3) Small numbers at Wylie Slough, Kah Tai Lagoon, and Port Gamble.

**Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*—(4) Fairly common on open waters throughout.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps griseigena*—(4) Small numbers widespread on exposed open waters, including Drayton Harbor, Keystone ferry route, 3 Crabs, and Sequim Bay.

#### **PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*—(5) Urban and rural areas, especially near barns; also seen from Keystone ferry.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*—(5) Small numbers scattered throughout urban and rural areas.

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura*—(2) Only seen twice, West 90s on Samish flats and on Fir Island.

### **RAILS AND COOTS: Rallidae**

**Virginia Rail** *Rallus limicola*—(1) Three birds HO at Kah Tai Lagoon.

**American Coot** *Fulica Americana*—(3) Small numbers at Wiley Slough, Crockett Lake, and Kah Tai Lagoon.

### **HUMMINGBIRDS: Trochilidae**

**Anna's Hummingbird** *Calypte anna*—(6) Seen at nearly all birding spots, some actively displaying; at least five at Rosario Head.

### **OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae**

**Black Oystercatcher** *Haematopus bachmani*—(4) One pair on the long dock at Drayton Harbor; a few at Rosario Head; one pair flying over Sequim Bay from John Wayne Marina; a pair at Fort Flagler.

### **PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: Charadriidae**

**Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*—(2) 80+ birds on Schmuck Rd. and over 300 on the 3 Crabs shoreline; small flock at Fort Flagler.

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferous*—(2) Two seen at Keystone ferry terminal, two on Marrowstone Island.

### **SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae**

**Marbled Godwit** *Limosa fedoa*—(1) Three birds seen along 3 Crabs shoreline; only the second time in 10 years.

**Black Turnstone** *Arenaria melanocephala*—(1) Flock of 25 loafing on the dock in Drayton Harbor.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*—(4) Small flocks seen—usually mixed with Dunlin—on open shorelines; one on the dock at Drayton Harbor and a few on the shore at March Point.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*—(5) Dozens widespread on shorelines throughout but no really large flocks, as in past years; concentrations of 300+ on 3 Crabs shoreline and Fort Flagler SP, dozens on Schmuck Rd.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*—(1) Two birds seen in Nordland, on Marrowstone Island.

### **AUKS, MURRES, AND PUFFINS: Alcidae**

**Common Murre** *Uria aalge*—(3) Fairly common on open waters; dozens from Keystone ferry and Diamond Point.

**Pigeon Guillemot** *Cephus Columba*—(4) Common on open waters; 65 counted at Rosario Head.

**Marbled Murrelet** *Brachyramphus marmoratus*—(3) Hundreds seen from Keystone ferry; a few seen from Point Wilson; one pair at Port Gamble.

**Ancient Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*—(2) Best looks were of flying birds from the Keystone ferry; seen poorly from shore at Diamond Point and from Fort Flagler beach.

**Rhinoceros Auklet** *Cerorhinca monocerata*—(2) Small numbers seen from the Keystone ferry and Diamond Point.

### **GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae**

**Short-billed Gull** *Larus brachyrhynchus*—(4) Formerly Mew Gull; small numbers seen mostly on open waters, over a dozen at Rosario Head and from Keystone ferry.

**Western Gull** *Larus occidentalis*—(1) Two seen among Glaucous-winged at 3 Crabs.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*—(1) Two individuals at Fort Casey SP beach parking lot, by ferry landing.

**Glaucous-winged Gull** *Larus glaucescens*—(7) Common and conspicuous throughout the trip in many locations.

### **LOONS: Gaviidae**

**Red-throated Loon** *Gavia stellate*—(4) Hundreds seen from Rosario Head, singles elsewhere.

**Pacific Loon** *Gavia pacifica*—(4) A few on Semiahmoo Bay, 16 at Marrowstone Point

**Common Loon** *Gavia immer*—(4) Most widespread loon, seen on most saltwater bays and shores.

### **CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae**

**Brandt's Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax penicillatus*—(2) First seen on pilings from Fort Casey SP beach parking lot, then also from ferry and offshore at Fort Flagler SP.

**Pelagic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*—(4) Fairly common on most open waters; best looks from Fort Casey SP beach parking lot.

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*—(6) Fairly common on the coast but also a few inland. Over 50 at Drayton Harbor.

#### **HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae**

**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea Herodias*—(5) 28 counted at March Point, widely scattered elsewhere.

#### **NEW WORLD VULTURES: Cathartidae**

**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura*—(1) One seen from Rosario Beach; first time in 10 years!

#### **HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae**

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*—(5) Common at Samish and Skagit flats; also around Crockett Lake and 3 Crabs.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus*—(1) One bird seen at Fir Island, Wylie Slough parking lot.

**Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii*—(2) Flyover at Drayton Harbor; excellent looks at a perched bird at Wylie Slough; another seen on Fir Island chasing Brewer's Blackbirds.

**Bald Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*—(7) Common and locally abundant, with 100+ seen on the Samish flats.

**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*—(6) Small numbers but fairly widespread; one very close bird in the parking lot at West 90s on Samish flats.

**Rough-legged Hawk** *Buteo lagopus*—(3) Great looks at a three birds on the Samish Flats; also at Crockett Lake.

#### **OWLS: Strigidae**

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*—(1) We had a great experience with a Short-eared Owl that was cruising the marshlands along the shore of Crockett Lake. We followed the bird half the length of the lake, with memorable looks by all of us.

#### **KINGFISHERS: Alcedinidae**

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*—(6) Found at most harbors, including John Wayne and Semiahmoo Spit; also Mystery Bay SP.

#### **WOODPECKERS: Picidae**

**Red-breasted Sapsucker** *Sphyrapicus ruber*—(1) One bird seen poorly by two of our group at Port Gamble.

**Downy Woodpecker** *Dryobates pubescens*—(3) First seen at Wylie Slough, then a female watched at close range at Rosario Head and another at Railroad Bridge Park.

**Hairy Woodpecker** *Dryobates villosus*—(1) One bird seen well on the last morning, at Port Gamble FHP.

**Pileated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus pileatus*—(2) Excellent looks twice; first at Wylie Slough, and then Rosario Head.

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*—(5) Mostly HO, otherwise seen flying along or across the roads; one seen and photographed on Fir Island.

#### **FALCONS AND CARACRAS: Falconidae**

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius*—(3) A handful seen on utility lines, mostly in Samish and Skagit flats.

**Prairie Falcon** *Falco mexicanus*—(1) One bird seen perched and then taking and eating prey at West 90s in Samish Flats; only the second time in 10 years.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*—(2) One seen on the first day on the Skagit flats and another the next day on the Samish flats.

#### **SHRIKES: Laniidae**

**Northern Shrike** *Lanius borealis*—(1) One active bird seen well by all at 3 Crabs shoreline.

### **CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae**

**American Crow** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*—(7) Common and widespread throughout; some birds were heard at Semiahmoo Spit that would be IDed as 'Northwestern type'.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—(6) Small numbers seen in mostly remote or rural areas, including beaches.

### **TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae**

**Black-capped Chickadee** *Poecile atricapillus*—(4) Small numbers seen here and there, including a few at Wylie Slough.

**Chestnut-backed Chickadee** *Poecile rufescens*—(2) Best looks at the feeders at Railroad Bridge Park, then also at Port Gamble FHP; HO at Miller Peninsula SP.

### **KINGLETS: Regulidae**

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Corthylio calendula*—(3) Singles seen in three locations: Starbuck's parking lot at north Burlington; ???; and Port Gamble FHP.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus satrapa*—(4) Heard in a few locations and seen at Rosario Head and Port Gamble FHP.

### **NUTHATCHES: Sittidae**

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta Canadensis*—(2) HO at Wylie Slough, then a few seen at Miller Pen. SP parking lot.

### **TREECREEPERS: Certhiidae**

**Brown Creeper** *Certhia Americana*—(2) GO at Rosario Head, then seen at Port Gamble FHP.

### **WRENS: Troglodytidae**

**Pacific Wren** *Troglodytes pacificus*—(5) HO in several locations; good looks at Rosario Head and Port Gamble FHP.

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris*—(2) First, a dead bird found in a bush at Kah Tai Lagoon, then a live individual at the same spot.

**Bewick's Wren** *Thryomanes bewickii*—(2) Seen by few in the parking lot at Semiahmoo Spit County Park; also HO at Schmuck Road.

### **DIPPERS: Cinclidae**

**American Dipper** *Cinclus mexicanus*—(1) Distant but satisfying looks at a single bird upstream on the Dungeness River from Railroad Bridge Park. Only the second time in 10 years, though we have only been birding at the Railroad Bridge park for the last two years.

### **STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae**

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*—(7) Common and widespread in both urban and rural areas.

### **THRUSHES: Turdidae**

**Varied Thrush** *Ixoreus naevius*—(2) Seen well twice; first at Rosario Head and then at Fort Gamble FHP.

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*—(6) Fairly common and widespread throughout, though no large flocks seen.

### **OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*—(6) Common only in urban areas.

### **FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae**

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus*—(3) First seen and heard at Diamond Point, then Schmuck Rd, Port Ludlow, and Port Gamble.

**Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea*—(1) Major highlight of the trip! A flock of 27 was found feeding on alder catkins along the dike at Skagit City Rd., Fir Island. We first stopped because we thought they were Pine

Siskins, “just to check and see if any redpolls were mixed in.” We then found the whole flock to be redpolls! Only the second time found in 10 years of tours.

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*—(1) First HO at Port Gamble FHP and then a flock of 50 seen in the parking lot.

#### **NEW WORLD SPARROWS: Passerellidae**

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*—(4) Fairly common in small flocks but not widespread.

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*—(1) One bird seen by GO at Starbuck’s in Burlington.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia atricapilla*—(2) Over a dozen seen at Wylie Slough; a few at Kah Tai Lagoon.

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*—(6) Most common sparrow, seen in several locations.

**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus*—(5) Seen in similar habitats as Song Sparrow, but less often.

#### **NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS: Icteridae**

**Western Meadowlark** *Sturnella neglecta*—(3) First seen on Fir Island, then again in the Sequim area.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*—(5) Fairly common in small numbers in marshes and wet fields; about 65 seen at Wylie Slough.

**Brewer’s Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus*—(5) Small flocks in a few locations, one large flock on Fir Island.

#### **MAMMALS (7 species recorded):**

**Douglas’ Squirrel** *Tamiasciurus douglasii*—One seen well at Railroad Bridge Park.

**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus*—“Black-tailed” Deer seen twice, up close at Fort Worden SP.

**Common Raccoon** *Procyon lotor*—One seen by one of the vehicles along the road at Marrowstone Isl.

**California Sea Lion** *Zalophus californicus*—Ones seen from Marrowstone Point, very close to the beach.

**Harbor Seal** *Phoca vitulina*—Several seen on open waters throughout.

**Gray Whale** *Eschrichtius robustus*—One adult seen feeding off Rosario Head; a first in 10 years for the tour, and a big highlight for all!

**Harbor Porpoise** *Phocoena phocoena*—Small pods of 2-4 seen offshore, including from Keystone ferry.