

The Birds of Drift Creek Camp

The birds pictured in this card set were sighted and identified by birding experts at Drift Creek Camp during our biodiversity survey.



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This set of Bird Cards is the result of a collaborative effort of many friends of Drift Creek Camp. On May 24, 2008, Drift Creek Nature Center hosted a BioBlitz which has continued as an ongoing biodiversity survey resulting in the identification of nearly 600 species including 57 birds. Bruce Eder, Roy Gerig, Rich Swartzentruber and Jon Yoder were the enthusiasts who identified the initial 32 species during the bioblitz event.

We appreciate the permission from these avid bird photographers to use their beautiful photographs: Bruce Eder, Stephanie Hazen, Allen Norby and George Vlahakis. The descriptions were written by Dave Nafziger and reviewed and edited by Jim Anderson, Mitch Ratzlaff, and Floyd Schrock. This group also selected the photos to use from a pool of nearly 500.

The primary sources used in the descriptions are:

- Birds of Oregon, Roger Burrows & Jeff Gilligan
- Birds of the Pacific Northwest coast, Nancy Brown & John Acorn
- Birds of North America; Chandler Robbins, Bertel Bruun, Herbert Zim & Arthur Singer
- A Field Guide to Western Birds; Roger Tory Peterson
- Bird Songs: 250 North American Birds in Song; Les Beletsky & Jon Dunn



Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*

Ardeidae (Hérons, Bitterns and Egrets)

This is a common bird of watery habitats. It is more gray than blue, and stands nearly 4 feet tall. It has a white head with a black cap, with a few very long feathers behind its head, and a clump below the neck. A unique feature of this family is the 6th neck bone which is much longer than the others. This gives it the ability to fold its long neck close to its body, or to stab at prey like a jack-in-the-box, or to use its head for balance when it spreads its over-sized wings and slowly flaps and glides along. Strongly territorial of feeding areas, but nests communally in trees. Voice is a loud guttural kawock!

Length: 46"

Wingspan: 72"

Season: W, Sp, Sm, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 62

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*
Cathartidae (Vultures)

With a featherless red head on a black torso, it is not very attractive. Expect to see it overhead at DCC February to October. This seemingly large bird has a small body for its overall feather size, giving it an exceptional ability to soar very beautifully. It finds rising air currents that lift it up with oversized wings held in a slight V, tilting side to side or following the currents along a ridge, scanning for its preferred food, dead animals. We need this service. From its roosting to finding food this is a social creature.

Length: 26" Wingspan: 72" Season: Sp, S, F
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 74
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis*
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, Swans)

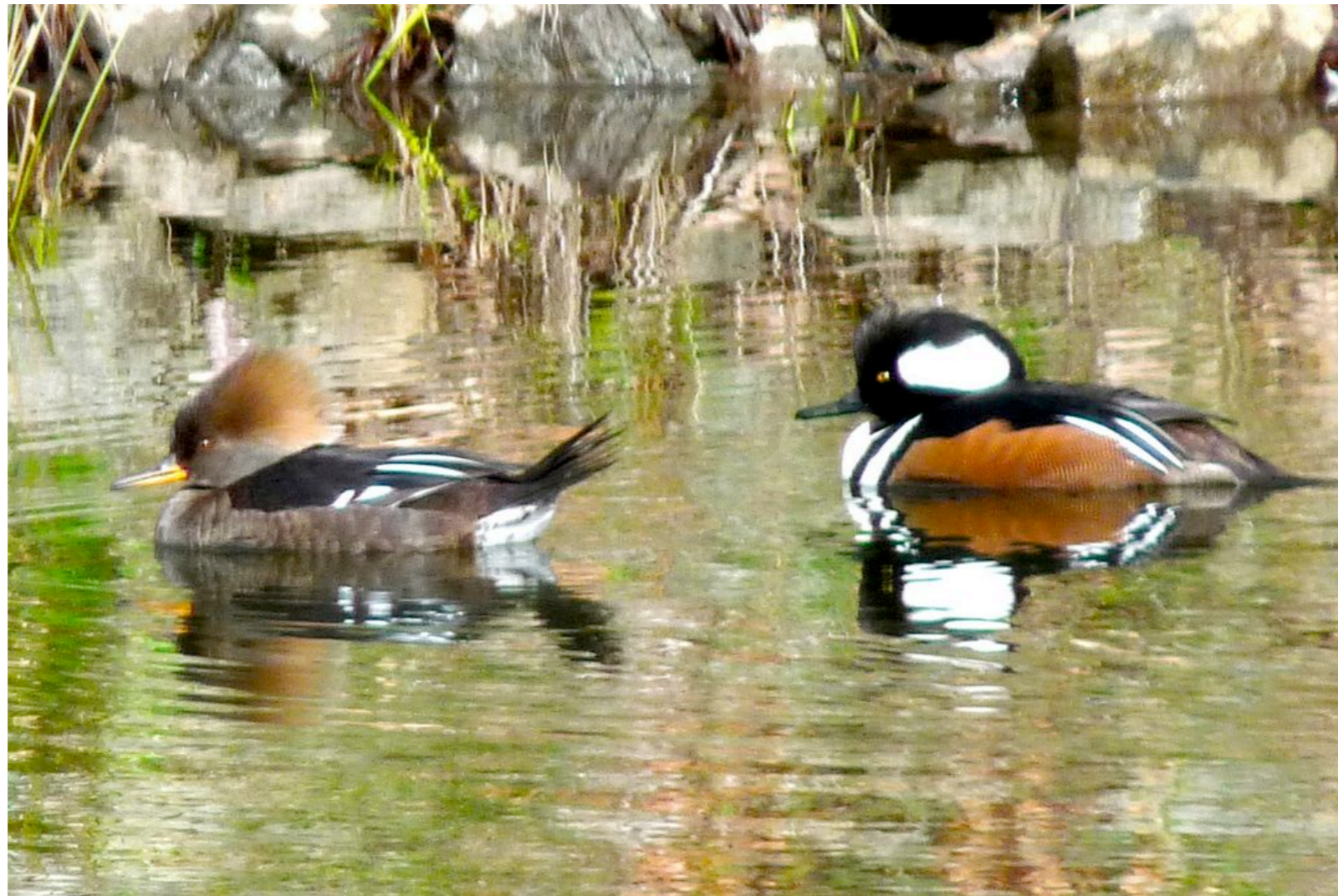
Although the Canada Goose is a very familiar bird, there are several subspecies across the continent, some of which are flourishing, and at least one on an endangered list. Size, color, habitat for nesting and wintering are very different. 8 subspecies occur in Oregon. Warm winters, with grass all year, raising corn, as well as the introduction of one subspecies has brought about a large non-migratory population, which has brought down airliners. Mate for life. At DCC, only passing overhead.

Length: 25-45" Wingspan: 43-60"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 82

Photograph by Stephanie Hazen



Hooded Merganser, *Lophodytes cucullatus*
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, Swans)

This small fish eating duck is uncommon at DCC. Like other mergansers, it has a hooked tip on its bill with serrated edges to facilitate fishing, and is heavy to dive well. The most unforgettable feature is the raised crest of the male showing the two large white patches on the black head, neck, and upper part of the body, with a white chest and streaks on the rump, as well. Female has a reddish head and muted tones. Another black and white small duck, the Bufflehead, has one white patch around the back of the head. Makes low grunts and croaks.

Length: 18"

Wingspan: 24"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon , by David Marshall: p. 129

Photograph by Bruce Eder



Common Merganser, *Mergus merganser*
Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, Swans)

This fish-eating diving duck is a common resident at DCC. Male has a mostly white body and first part of wing, with dark upper back, tail, wing tips, and a green head. Female has less white and a reddish head. Beak has a hooked tip and the edges are toothed. Relatively tame; if you are along the creek bank they will often float by instead of flying. Mergansers are heavy and paddle to get into the air, and usually fly low over the stream. Voice is a quiet quacking.

Length: 25"

Wingspan: 34"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 131

Photograph by Allen J Norby



Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus*

Accipitridae (Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Allies)

The osprey is smaller than an eagle, and can be safely separated by its narrower wings, a dark back to the top of the neck and a tail that is black above, but banded below. There is a broad dark band just before the tip. A heavy line through the eye to black feathers on the neck can be seen from some distance, as well as black elbow patches on the underside of the wing. The breast is white. A distinct upward bow in the first part of the wing separate it when soaring from the Vulture or Bald Eagle. The Osprey eats only fish. Uncommon at DCC; overhead, or in trees along the stream.

Length: 23"

Wingspan: 63"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 136

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Accipitridae (Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Allies)

With its dipped in paint white head and tail on an all black body, it is easy to identify the adult bald eagle. Also, it can be identified soaring at extreme heights in a blue sky because the lighter head and tail visually fade first. Sexes are similar. The Osprey has black patterns on the face and neck. Call is a repeated scream. Common year round resident at DCC, quietly glides over regularly, or may be found on a branch above the stream. May also kill ducks and other game, and eats dead animals of many kinds.

Length: 31"

Wingspan: 80"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 140

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Northern Harrier, *Circus cyaneus*

Accipitridae (Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Allies)

This raven size hawk has long, slender wings and a long tail. The male is silver gray with black wing tips, and the female brown, and both prominently show a large white rump patch. Hunts by gliding a few feet above the ground, with wings slightly raised and tilting side-to-side like a Turkey Vulture. Prey is located by hearing as well as seeing, similar to an owl. One male will start nest building and mate with several females, and provide food for all. Prefers marsh or open grass land near woods. Uncommon at DCC.

Length: 18"

Wingspan: 43"

Season: W, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 144

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo jamaicensis*
Accipitridae (Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Allies)

The buteos are a large subfamily, and of these, this is the most common. It has a heavy body and shorter, fan shaped tail which is brick red to salmon colored. The immature bird does not have a red tail. The best field mark to look for is the belly band, a wide darker band below a lighter breast. Call is a long kreeee-eeeeeee scream, especially when flying. Likes an exposed perch over open areas, such as grassland or marsh. Will often return to a favorite spot on a power line, tree or fence. Excellent soaring ability. Not common at DCC; regular along Hwy. 101 and the Siletz Bay marshland. We are likely in the large territory of a resident pair.

Length: 19" Wingspan: 49" Season: Sp, S, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 156
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*
Scolopacidae (Sandpipers)

This small bird flits along streams from one rock to another and wades for its food. It is brown above, white below with brown spots. Notice the long eye line. This is a wide spread species and can be easily identified from other similar birds by its habit of leaning forward and almost constantly bobbing its tail. Flight is by rapid short strokes with its wings bent down. The females compete for males, build a nest and lay eggs, which they then leave to the males to hatch and raise. They repeat this as often as they can during the breeding season. Call is a high peet-weet. It is not unusual to see this bird at DCC, especially where the stream is slow and rocky.

Length: 7.5"

Wingspan: 15"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 220

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Marbled Murrelet, *Brachyramphus marmoratus*
Alcidae, (Alcids Murres & Puffins)

This is an oceanic bird that normally lives near coast lines, fishing for small fish in schools. It is black above and white below in the winter, but its breeding plumage is a mottled uniform brown. It resembles a very small duck with a very short neck. Their nests were not found until the 1970's, located in old growth trees in the coastal range, with one large egg laid in a safe mossy spot very high up. They alternate days at sea, and bring the brooding one a fish. There are several records at DCC, early in the morning, coming in from the ocean. Voice is a shrieking keer.

Length: 9.75"

Wingspan: 17"

Season: Sp. Su

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 290

Photograph from Google Images



Band-tailed Pigeon, *Columba fasciata*
Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

This large pigeon may be mistaken for the Rock Dove (commonly called a pigeon) that is abundant in cities. It has several differences: It is substantially larger and has a broad gray band on the tail feathers, and does not have the white rump that Rock Doves have. In general, it is gray above and light below. Voice is an Owl-like coo—coo. Although it apparently winters and nests nearby, it does not show at DCC in large numbers until the cascara berries are ripe in late summer, when it is common wherever these grow.

Length: 14.5"

Wingspan: 26"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 301

Photograph by Allen J Norby



Barn Owl, *Tyto alba*
Tytonidae (Barn Owls)

This medium sized light colored resident owl has a nearly white, heart shaped face, underparts and wings. It is light brown above, and has dark eyes and long legs. Has a peculiar habit of looking down and twisting its head around. Mostly nocturnal. Prefers barns and old buildings to roost and feeds on small animals over large fields and marshes. Does not hoot, but has a raspy cry. Uncommon at DCC. Barn Owls are in a different family from all others.

Length: 16"

Wingspan: 42"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 307

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Western Screech Owl, *Otus kennicottii*

Strigidae (Typical Owls)

This small owl is perhaps the most commonly heard and seen of the owls because it likes houses and yards with a few trees to hunt from, and will make itself known in the early evening. Makes an eerie quavering, accelerating cry for a hoot. It has large 'ears' or 'horns' which no other small owl has. It may be gray or strongly reddish, with small white and dark lengthwise stripes. Because it is a bird that feeds on grassy areas, it is uncommon at DCC.

Length: 8.5"

Wingspan: 20"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 310

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Northern Pygmy-Owl, *Glaucidium gnoma*
Strigidae (Typical Owls)

This tiny owl hunts largely by day, since it does not have the well developed echo location hearing of other owls. It is a fierce hunter, and will kill prey that outweighs itself. It has a long dark tail on a red or gray body, with small white spots. It has two black spots on the back of the head that look like eyes to prevent attack from behind. It has a monotonous who-who-who call that is repeated rapidly for minutes on end. Migrates to lower elevations in winter. Very uncommon at DCC.

Length: 6.75"

Wingspan: 12"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 314

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Spotted Owl, *Strix occidentalis*
Strigidae (Typical Owls)

This uncommon resident is about the size of a medium hawk, with small white spots on a brown back and head, and thin horizontal lines on its underparts, and dark eyes on an owl face. Hoots three or four times. This bird needs about 1500 acres of forest for each pair, some of which must be old growth conifers. It is struggling because this habitat is rare, and it does not nest every year, and when it does the nestlings may be eaten by other owls. Also, it is hybridizing with the Barred Owl where they co-exist. In some areas this has cut the population in half. At DCC it is heard in the deep forest near the Amphitheater.

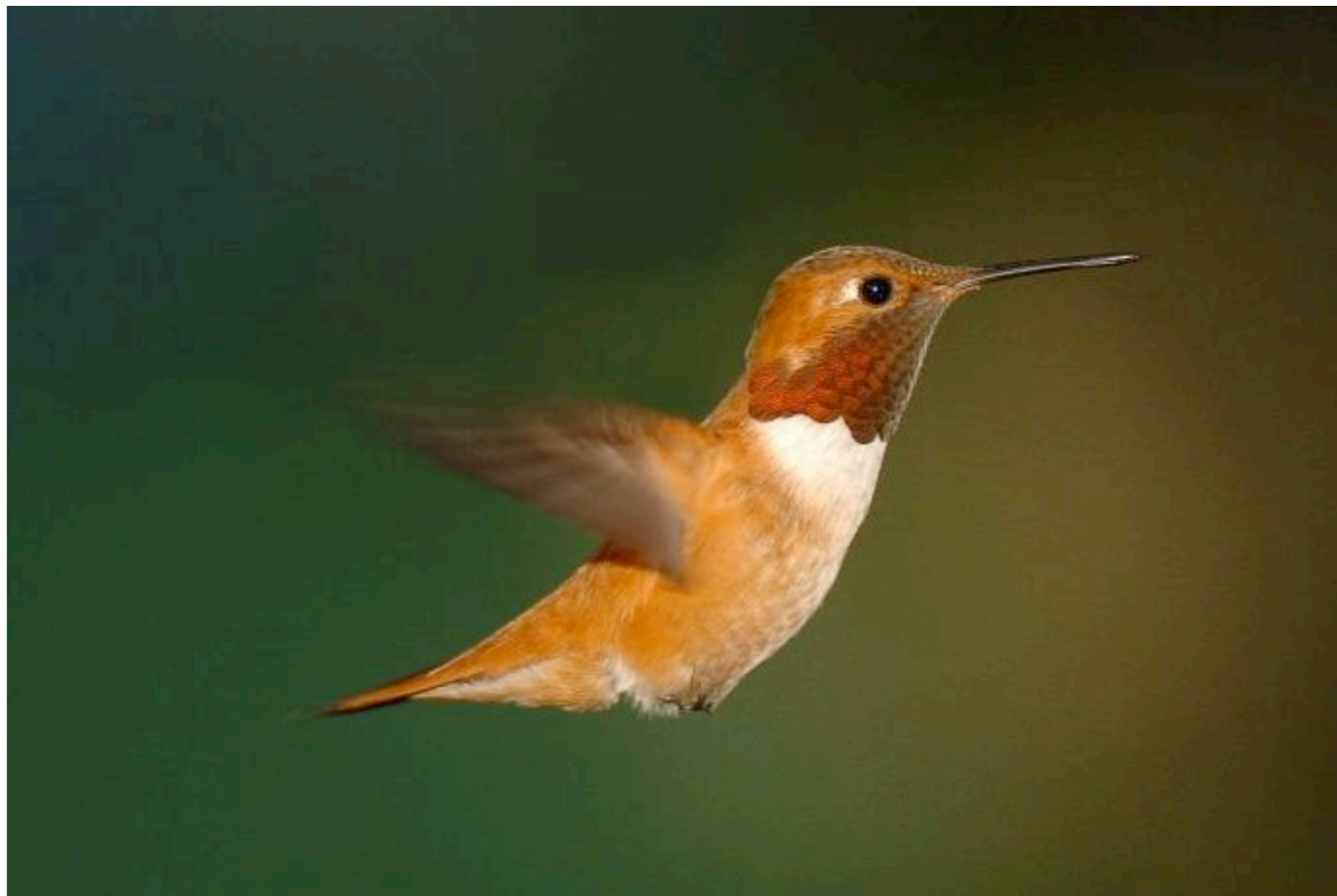
Length: 17.5" Wingspan: 40" Season: Sp, Su, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 319
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Vaux's Swift, *Chaetura vauxi*
Apodidae (Swifts)

This amazing little bird seems to have no tail; only a dusky gray cigar-shaped body. Its slender wings seem to never rest, and give an illusion of beating out of time. Not closely related to swallows, but hang out together higher in the air. Do not feed near water as much, and never sit on wires. Like its eastern counterpart, the Chimney Swift, it roosts by the hundreds in large chimneys. Glues stick nests together with a special sticky saliva. Voice is a distinctive series of chips. At DCC will occasionally be seen in the spring, circling over the buildings and grassy areas.

Length: 4.75" Wingspan: 12" Season: Sp, Su, F
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 336
Photograph from Google Images



Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus*
Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

It is easy to identify the adult male with its large blazing red throat patch and rufous colored rump and back. The females and immature males lack these colors. Other species have not been identified here. The most aggressive North American hummer, with the longest migration route—south of Mexico to the Alaskan panhandle. May be in Lincoln county by late February. Nest is the size of a half a walnut shell, from spider webs covered with lichens. Other than nectar, it feeds on insects, and tree sap. Often heard by loud buzzing of air passing through wings, and an emphatic chip! when chasing others off. At DCC found with flowers around buildings and in the brushy areas.

Length: 3.75"

Wingspan: 4.5"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 346

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Belted Kingfisher, *Ceryle alcyon*
Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

This common resident is never found far from water, and Drift Creek is a perfect stream with many over-hanging branches to perch on while fishing, and a great food supply. It will also hover and dive directly into the water, where it spears rather than catches its prey. It is about the size of a jay, but much stockier, with a very large head and beak compared to the rest of its body. It is blue-gray above, white below and with a white collar. There is a broad belt of blue across the chest, and the female has an additional lower brown one. Flight is an up and down weaving, and the call is a long, loud, rattle.

Length: 13" Wingspan: 20" Season: Sp, Su, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 349
Photograph by Allen J Norby



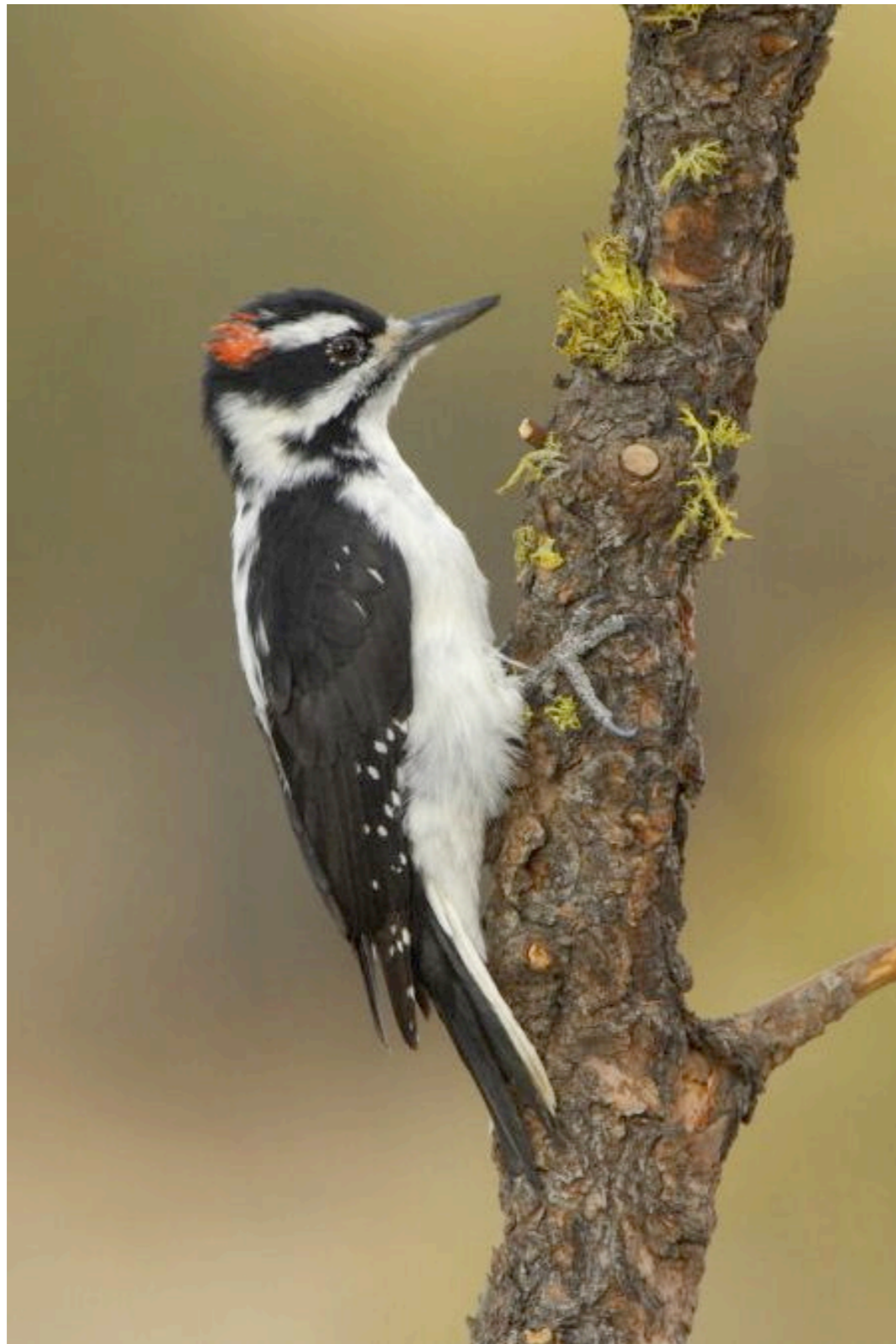
Red-breasted Sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus ruber*
Picidae (Woodpeckers)

Formerly called Yellow Bellied Sapsucker. Male has a bright 'dipped in juice' red head and breast over a yellow belly and a black back with white stripes. This family put a unique twist on 'woodpeckering.' A series of holes are drilled around the tree to drain sap, which attracts insects that get caught in the sap as it thickens from drying. The tongue is split into a brush on the end to lick- not suck- sap and insects. Quiet little taps or a wee-er call will locate this bird. At DCC, look for the ringed trees or scattered holes on very large trees, and pitch runs, as well as normal woodpecker behavior on dead snags.

Length: 8.5" Wingspan: 16" Season:

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 358

Photograph by Allen J Norby



Hairy Woodpecker, *Picoides villosus*
Picidae (Woodpeckers)

Look for a medium sized woodpecker that is mostly black above and white below, with a striped head and a white back patch. Males have red a spot behind the eye. Separated from the Downy Woodpecker by much longer bill. Like others of this family, the tongue is divided into two parts, which start in sheaths on the top of the skull on each side of the neck to permit maximum tongue extension. There are little hook-like barbs with sticky saliva to make it possible to extract insects easily. Call is a loud peek. At DCC it is not common, but is possible anywhere.

Length: 9.25" Wingspan: 15" Season: Sp, Su, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 362
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Northern Flicker, *Colaptes auratus*
Picidae (Woodpeckers)

This wood pecker is unique in that it spends more of its time on the ground or perching than others. About the size of a jay, It is brown with black polka dots below, and ladder striped above. There is a black bib, and the wing linings are red in both genders. The best field mark is the large white rump patch extending from the tail to between the wings. This especially shows when the bird flies away. No other bird eats so many ants. This is likely why it is often seen on road shoulders, about halfway up the mountain on the road to DCC. Not as common here, because it likes open deciduous woods, but it is a resident. Look for it on stumps and dead trees. Call is a loud keeyew, ip-ip-ip-ip.

Length: 12.5"

Wingspan: 20"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 370

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Pileated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus pileatus*
Picidae (Woodpeckers)

If you choose to say pill-ee-ated versus pile-ee-ated, be assured there are whole birding clubs that do it as well. But if you are talking about the pileum, the part of a bird's head from the bill to the nape of the neck, which is on this gaudy bird is an amazing red, say pile as if a heap of wood. About the size of a crow, black above, with white wing linings that often flash in flight, and a black and white striped face. Needs over 100 acres of mostly deciduous mature forest per pair. Holes are rectangular to make room for the pileum. Will also eat berries and sap. Call is a loud, crazy wock-wock-wock-wock. Not common at DCC, but we are likely included in the territory of a nesting pair.

Length: 16.5" Wingspan: 29" Season: Sp, S, F. W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 372
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Western Wood-Pewee, *Contopus sordidulus*
Tyrannidae (Flycatchers)

The flycatcher family feeds primarily on airborne insects. They have a set of short bristles around the mouth that are used for detecting missed 'snaps,' which are often clearly audible. It is common for them to feed from a branch overhanging a stream, to fly out and snatch an insect, and return to the same perch. Some are difficult to tell apart, and often the voice is the best clue. This member is larger than a sparrow, dirty gray above and light below with two wing bars. There is no eye-ring, which helps to separate it from the other local similar bird, the Pacific-Slope Flycatcher. Song is a whistled sidree-ur. Call notes are short whistles. Prefers open mixed woods.

Length: 6.25" Wingspan: 10.5" Season: Sp, S, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 376
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Pacific-slope Flycatcher, *Empidonax difficilis*
Tyrannidae (Flycatchers)

In 1989 the Western Flycatcher was split into two separate species. The name of the other group became the Cordilleran Flycatcher. It feeds on flying insects like others of its large family, of which only two have been found at DCC. Look for them where there is a mix of deciduous trees along the edges of the deeper forest. This bird is smaller than the Western Wood Peewee, which it resembles. Other differences are a large slightly oval eye-ring, a light yellowish wash underneath, and a soo-weet call. Lady-beetles, are a preference, which most birds will not eat.

Length: 5.5"

Wingspan: 8"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 386

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Gray Jay, *Perisoreus canadensis*
Corvidae (Crows and Jays)

One of a large subfamily of similar birds, two species which are at DCC. This one is not common and much plainer than most of its siblings. There is no crest, but attractive very light under parts, neck and forehead, with gray wings and tail, finished off with a dark hood. It prefers colder climates, so in Oregon it is found in the coast range, the Cascades, and the Blue Mountains, but not between, in open coniferous forests. At DCC it most likely will be seen on the north side of camp, or across the stream. Makes a variety of soft churring or whistled sounds. Not accusational like Stellar's jay, and given to eating a wide variety of foods like the others of its tribe.

Length: 11.5" Wingspan: 18" Season: Sp, Su, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 409
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Stellar's Jay, *Cyanocitta stelleri*

Corvidae (Crows and Jays)

This jay looks like a small crow with a fancy dark blue paint job and fins. The beak and feet show its family ties in spite of the tall dark crest. Perhaps the most common year-round resident at D.C.C. in all locations. It comes through the trees in small groups, seldom sitting still long, and usually hopping to a higher branch, and peering around. Frequently scolds with a shhick, shhick, shhick or a loud, grating Wrack! Also able to imitate other birds.

Length: 11.5"

Wingspan: 19"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 411

Photograph by George Vlahakis



American Crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
Corvidae (Crows and Jays)

This all black bird is smaller than a raven, but has a fan shaped tail and a smooth throat. Common along the shore, but not at D.C.C. Call is a strong caw, and a variety of other sounds. Very socially structured, such as the use of a sentinel to warn others. Studies have shown that it uses one call for "man" and another for "man with a gun" as well as many other crow-words.

Length: 17.5"

Wingspan: 39"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 421

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Raven, Common *Corvus corax*
Corvidae (Crows and Jays)

This all black bird is like a larger crow, but the tail is slightly pointed and it has a much larger bill that is feathered on part of the top. There are long feathers on the throat. Makes a variety of sounds, but is noted for a loud, croaky, car-ruck or ca-waw call, often repeated three times. At Drift Creek it is a common resident, and can be heard anywhere on campus. Likely nests in the tall trees away from the buildings. Will eat nearly anything, including dead animals. Considered the most intelligent American bird, both from behavior studies and brain size.

Length: 24" Wingspan: 53" Season: Sp, Su, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 423
Photograph by Stephanie Hazen



Violet-green Swallow, *Tachycineta thalassina*
Hirundinidae (Swallows)

Swallows are strong fliers, and the Violet-Green is the most common species at DCC. It is most likely seen as a visitor in the spring while collectively finding a nesting site, or in migration further north. Feeds on insects, especially over water, in small groups that may include other species of swallows. It is white below, deep blue green above and the white extends behind the eyes and nearly meets above. No other swallow has this. The beak is short, since it does not need to probe for its food, but very wide so that it can catch insects while flying. Voice is a busy, twittering, as if talking rapidly.

Length: 5.25" Wingspan: 13.5" Season: Sp, Su, F
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 432
Photograph by Allen J Norby



Northern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
Hirundinidae (Swallows)

The rough wings on this bird will not help you identify it unless you have it in your hand, since the rough edges are very tiny. It may be safely separated from all others by two other features: it is a buffy gray brown, fading gradually to white below, and it does not have a dark breast band like its cousin, the Bank Swallow. It flocks and feeds with other species, but it is unique in that it does not nest in colonies or groups. It finds or modifies holes along streams to nest. Less vocal than others- a simple bzzz or brrrt. As with others swallows, it is uncommon except passing through.

Length: 5.5"

Wingspan: 14"

Season:

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 433

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*
Hirundinidae (Swallows)

This swallow is most likely to be confused with the Barn Swallow, which is similar in size and color patterns. There are several features that distinguish them, even at high speed. The Cliff does not have a forked tail; in fact it is noticeably shorter than its wings when sitting on a wire; it is not as glossy blue, but it has a broad tan forehead and collar with a large beige rump patch. Calls are squeaky and varied. Nests are mud with a hole entrance, sometimes in colonies of hundreds. They prefer more open country, but migrate through in the spring.

Length: 5.5"

Wingspan: 13.5"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 435

Photograph from Google Images



Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*
Hirundinidae (Swallows)

Like other swallows; although common, this bird does not live here, but may occasionally be seen with other migrating swallows traveling to places more suitable for nest building, and flies for a food supply. Flight is a rapid fluttering of sweeping, swooping, banking turns as if angelic party. It may be quickly separated from other species of swallows by its deeply forked tail and rusty underparts, deep bluish upper parts, and reddish neck. Most similar is the Cliff Swallow, which has a broad tan forehead and does not have the forked tail. Song is long and twittering, as if talking in rapid sentences.

Length: 6.75"

Wingspan: 15"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 437

Photograph from Google Images



Black-capped Chickadee, *Poecile atricapillus*

Paridae (Chickadees and Titmice)

This wide spread and tough little bird is spread across the continent and to the Arctic. The back and sides are not colored like the more common Chestnut-backed Chickadee of the coastal areas; the back is gray, and the wings and tail are whiter. Chickadees store extra food in the summer for winter use, and migrate only slightly; instead piling up together for warmth in a tree cavity. Responds well to suet in feeders. It is likely this bird's chic-a-dee-dee-dee song that gave its American name to six species. Since it prefers deciduous or mixed trees, look and listen for it there, or in flocks with its cousin.

Length: 5.25"

Wingspan: 8"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 438

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Chestnut-backed Chickadee, *Poecile rufescens*
Paridae (Chickadees and Titmice)

Our common chickadee of the coastal range, and the only North American one to be decorated in three distinct colors. It is also the smallest. Like others in its family, it has a large black cap and bib, bullet-shaped head and body ending in a thin tail, and a short bill for gleaning insects at close range. Tends to travel with others, and will often attract other small birds to forage with them that may be interesting to bird watchers. Like other chickadees, it will loosen its grip on a twig to swing upside down to look for insects or pick a berry. Prefers conifers, and may found at DCC in most areas, usually first found by its dee, dee, dee call.

Length: 4.75"

Wingspan: 7.5"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 442

Photograph from Google Images



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Sitta canadensis

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

The only nuthatch expected near DCC. Black cap, with a dark line through the eye, and wide white line over it. Back and wings are dark blue-gray with a reddish tinge to the white undersides. Has the unique niche of traveling down a tree, upside down to find insects, but also aggressively taps like a small woodpecker and makes chips fly, even chipping their own nesting cavity. Call is a nasal nerker-nerker. May migrate every other year. Often travels in small flocks. Since it is able to open cones, it prefers coniferous or mixed forests. Probably much more common at DCC than supposed, since it may travel only through the crowns of tall trees.

Length: 4.5" Wingspan: 8.5" Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 444

Photograph by Allen J Norby



Brown Creeper
Certhia americana
Certhiidae (Creepers)

A sparrow sized brown bird, mottled above and white below, with a light eyebrow, and the curved bill of a wren for extracting insects. Its feet have a long opposite 'thumb,' to press away and grasp, and the tail is a prop like that of a woodpecker to spend all its time on vertical surfaces. Lands on the base of a tree and creeps up, often in a spiral, then flies down to the base of another tree and starts over. Solitary and quiet, often noticed by the faint ticking sound of bark scales pulling away, or the 'seep, seep, seep' call. Likes mature forests, so DCC is good habitat. Familiarity with call is helpful.

Length: 5.25" Wingspan: 7.75" Season: Sp, Su, F, W
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 453
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Pacific Wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes*
Troglodytidae (Wrens)

Formerly called the Winter Wren from coast to coast, those birds living in the coastal range have been recognized as unique enough to be considered a separate species. This little bird is the most likely to be seen any day, all day, at DCC. Look for a fluffy, roundish, brown bird, trimmed with mottled cross-barring and cream colored eye-brows and bib. Short tail often sticks straight up. Dense brush and upturned roots are its home. Breeding males sing an exceptionally loud, long and clear warbling song, as well as the all season, all adult cha-cha. Often pops up to an exposed perch to look around if you make a shhhhh sound. Territorial all year, but may huddle together with neighbors on cold nights. Very regular along Cabin Trail, but widespread at DCC.

Length: 4"

Wingspan: 5.5"

Season: Sp, Su, F W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 462

Photograph by George Vlahakis



American Dipper, *Cinclus mexicanus*
Cinclidae (Dippers)

This small, solid grey, sturdy little bird is uniquely made to walk in and under fast water and feed on water insect larvae. Although it is grouped with perching birds, those perches are in water, which cannot stick to its special feathers. In addition, it has flaps that close over its nostrils and eyes, and a very short tail. Often sits on rocks in or beside streams, where it makes a repetitive bobbing and sings a loud, clear wren-like song. A common, tame resident along the stream, but especially upstream from the bridge.

Length: 7.5"

Wingspan: 11"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 466

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Golden-Crowned Kinglet

Regulus satrapa

Regulidae (Kinglets)

This warbler-sized bird is easily set apart from others by the male's noticeable cap of red, yellow, and black crown with white eye stripes. The female lacks the red. The body is light gray, and the wings and tail are darker with two wing bars. Eats primarily insects, but also seeds and berries. Usually found in conifers in small groups and with others species that have similar diets. Flits about busily and constantly shakes its wings. Call is a long, chickadee type song.

Length: 4" Wingspan: 7" Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 468

Photograph by Allen J Norby



Swainson's Thrush

Catharus ustulatus

Turdidae (Thrushes)

This bird is smaller than the other thrushes, but similar in shape. Look for a summer time only gray bird, light below, with spots on the breast. Sexes similar. There is a small, complete eye-ring and a light cheek. This thrush does not feed in grassy areas as much as others; it is more common in woodlands that are partially open. At DCC it is often seen on the trails or driveway. It whistles a cheerful whhit note that is easy to imitate. It will watch and may repeat its call several times with humans. About sundown it may break into a heavenly flute-like song that goes higher and higher. The similar Hermit Thrush has a reddish tail and likely will not be at DCC until about a month after the Swainson's Thrushs have left for the winter.

Length: 7" Wingspan: 12" Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 481

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Hermit Thrush, *Catharus guttatus*
Turdidae (Thrushes)

Although technically a local resident, this bird has not been seen at DCC except in winter. The very similar Swainson's thrush leaves the country entirely by fall. It is smaller than a Robin or the Varied Thrush, but they are very similar in many ways. The Hermit Thrush will raise its tail several times a minute, and then slowly lower it.

It also nervously shakes its wings. The best field mark is a reddish tail that is not like the olive brown back and wings; this does not always show well in poor light. May be seen hopping around buildings or sitting on handrails. Does not sing in winter, but has a flute-quality summer song.

Length: 6.75"

Wingspan: 11.5"

Season: W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall, p. 483

Photograph by George Vlahakis



American Robin, *Turdus migratorius*
Turdidae (Thrushes)

This bird was named after the European Robin, which also has a reddish breast, but it is a thrush in every sense. The small outer white spots on the tail help separate it from the similar Varied Thrush. Also, it has a striped throat patch, but the dominant coloration is dark gray above with a large red-orange breast, and white from the base of the legs back. The juvenile has a white breast with brown stripes like many of its thrush relatives. Insectivorous, also berries and fruit. At DCC, a very common summer resident on the lawns and through the woods. Has a rapid warbling song, and a chwhip call.

Length: 10"

Wingspan: 17"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 485

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Varied Thrush, *Ixoreus naevius*
Turdidae (Thrushes)

This special bird is very similar to a robin in looks and behavior. A year-round resident, the local name is Rain Robin, and it seems that the harder it rains the more they sing. Look for a robin that has 'something not quite right'-slightly smaller, with a strong eye stripe and wing-bars. If the bird is facing you, the wide breast band will immediately identify it. If it flies directly away, look for the white corner tail spots of the robin. The song is a long, strong, off-key, but beautiful whistle. At DCC, you will find the varied thrush on the lawns in the winter, but when the robins return, it will more likely be in the wooded areas.

Length: 9.5"

Wingspan: 16"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 487

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Cedar Waxwing, *Bombycilla cedrorum*
Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

Quills of certain feathers on the wings of this family of birds resemble wax, but it is not helpful for the average bird watcher. Look instead for a glossy-feathered, crested bird that is smaller than a robin, light brown with a gray tail, yellow under parts and terminal band to the tail, and a black facial pattern. Tends to flock, and although it eats insects, it prefers berries. This is especially noticeable in the fall and winter when flocks eat berries from ornamental shrubs. Call is a soft seet, seet, seet that is more often heard than the bird is seen. Not common at DCC, it is most likely to be found along wood edges, deciduous or mixed.

Length: 7.25" Wingspan: 12"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 501

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Black-throated Gray Warbler, *Dendroica nigrescens*
Parulidae (Wood Warblers)

A small warbler with a black head and throat, with a strong white line above and below the eye. Females have a white throat. Both have a tiny yellow spot in front of the eye, which verifies the species. Back is gray, and underparts white with rows of gray spots below the wings. Two wing bars. Call is a rapid buzzy, weebee-chew-eer. Unlikely summer resident, since it prefers a less dense mixed forest, but likely to nest nearby in second growth and thinned areas. Insectivorous.

Length: 5"

Wingspan: 7.75"

Season: Sp. Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 512

Photograph from Google Images



Townsend's Warbler

Dendroica townsendi

Parulidae (Wood Warblers)

The striking facial pattern easily separate both the male and female from any other local species. The black cheek patch that include the eye. The male has a black bib, and both genders have yellow under parts that become lighter towards the tail, and dark uppers with bright wingbars, as well as dark streaks below the wings. Markings are very much like Black Throated Gray Warbler with yellow substituted for white background. Unfortunately for the bird watcher, this little gem spends most of its time in the tops of very tall conifers. To best see birds like this, go to steep ridges and look out over trees. Song is a long, buzzy combination of zees.

Length: 5"

Wingspan: 8" Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 514

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Hermit Warbler, *Dendroica occidentalis*
Parulidae (Wood Warblers)

This bird is another of the three similar wood warblers that can occasionally be seen at DCC. Note similar markings to Townsend's and Black Throated Gray Warblers, but that this one has no eye line on its brilliant gold face. The under parts are solid white below a black bib. Another coniferous tree top dweller, it has a buzzy zee zee zee song that is hard to separate from others. At DCC, most likely seen from places along the trail from the Narrows to Inspiration Point, and probably first located by its call. Insectivorous.

Length: 5"

Wingspan: 8"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 515

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Wilson's Warbler, *Wilsonia pusilla*
Parulidae (Wood Warblers)

A bright yellow face fading to less bright below, and to yellow-gray above; males with a glossy black skull cap, and the females without, describe this little eye-full. Like all warblers, this is an insectivorous bird, and like most, migrates. This bird really loves DCC for the short time it is here. It is abundant, nesting in the Vine Maple thickets along the stream from the Narrows to the bridge. It is easy to be found near the barbeque pit or the trail near Umpqua. The male can be located with a long, loud, emphatic chee-chee-chee-chee song from an exposed perch. The first notes rise, and the last drops abruptly.

Length: 4.75" Wingspan: 7" Season: Sp, Su, F
More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 526
Photograph by George Vlahakis



Western Tanager

Piranga ludoviciana

Thraupidae (Tanagers)

This summer visitor is larger than a sparrow, smaller than a robin. Note that the beak is strong enough for seeds, but not as thin as birds that eat only insects. Prefers coniferous or mixed forests. Summer male is a brilliant yellow with black wings, shoulders, and tail, and has gorgeous 'been eating strawberries' stain on the head. Female is paler, but also has the double wing bars of the male. Song is similar to a Robin's, but not as clear and ringing. Relatively tame. At DCC it is not very common, but may be occasionally observed along the edges of the forest.

Length: 7.25" Wingspan: 11.5" Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 531

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Chipping Sparrow, *Spizella passerina*
Emberizidae (New World Sparrows)

In breeding season, this is a clean-cut sparrow, with smooth gray under parts, a dark line through the eye, and a bright brick-red cap. The wings and tail are a streaked brown and gray, like other sparrows. The chipping sparrow feeds on the ground and often flocks with other sparrows, flying suddenly to trees to sing or for safety. Prefers light conifers and woods edges. Its song is a single pitch, sewing machine like series of very rapid chips; also a single chip.

Length: 5.5"

Wingspan: 8.5"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 556

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Song Sparrow, *Melospiza melodia*
Emberizidae (New World Sparrows)

With a brown-streaked breast and darker brown upper parts and dark lines through the face and 'average' size, this sparrow is easy to ignore-until the male sings from an exposed perch. More local variations of color than any other songbird. Ours is a darker bird with gray cheeks and crown with a light bib, and may not have a black spot in the center of the breast as in the books. Sexes similar. Note the seed-eater conical beak. The males tilt back their heads and sing a loud, long, warbling song that causes their throat feathers to flutter. At DCC, brush along Creekside trail downstream from the bridge, but above the rapids.

Length: 6.25"

Wingspan: 8.25"

Season: Sp, S, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 556

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Dark-Eyed Junco, *Junco hyemalis*
Emberizidae (New World Sparrows)

This common bird is a sparrow. It is slightly larger than the average sparrow, brown above, white below, separated by a broad pink band below the wings. Shoulders are reddish. The head and breast have a dipped-in-ink look, charcoal in the male, and grey in the female. The outer feathers on each side are white, which flash when it flies. Likes to flock in open areas near cover, and feed the ground. The 'splitters' and the 'lumpers' have both had a turn with this bird - formerly the Oregon Junco; now lumped with three others as a single species. Song is a gentle musical trill. In spring, it migrates over camp, and can be seen in flocks on the ridges where there has been timber thinning, and about a week later, the residents drop down to camp.

Length: 6.25"

Wingspan: 9.25"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 566

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Black-headed Grosbeak, *Pheucticus melanocephalus*
Cardinalidae (Grosbeaks, Buntings and Dickcissels)

The grosbeaks have the largest and strongest bills of their family. About the size of a starling, but stockier. In breeding season the male is a distinct yellow- orange with black head and black wings, with white bars and black tail. The female does not have a black head and is more grey- brown in general, with streaks of black on the breast and back, and a large white line over the eye. Both sexes are yellow on the bottom side of the wings. Song is similar to a robin.

Length: 8.25" Wingspan: 12.5"

Season: Sp, Su, F

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 570

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Red Crossbill, *Loxia curvirostra*

Fringillidae (finches, grosbeaks, crossbill, buntings)

As a finch, crossbills have a large beak for seed cracking. As its name tells, a unique feature of this bird is that the sharp ends of the bill cross at the tip, which it can slide between the scales of cones and extract seeds. It has the additional help of a special tongue and the ability to hang to the cone in any position. About the size of a sparrow. Both sexes have brown wings and tail; males are brick- red and females yellow. The crossed bill is not obvious unless close. Call is kip-kip-kip. Since the seed crop of cones varies a lot, this bird might be unusual one place, but common another, and even nest in the winter where food is abundant.

Length: 6.25"

Wingspan: 11"

Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 603

Photograph by George Vlahakis



American Goldfinch, *Spinus tristis*

Fringillidae (finches, grosbeaks, crossbills, buntings)

The male in breeding season is hard to confuse with other birds, with its bright, canary like body, and black forehead and wings. The females and winter birds are dull yellow gray, and dark wings with white bars. Smaller than a sparrow. Flight is a weaving pattern. Note the strong conical beak for cracking seeds. Has a high, sweet po-chee- o-ree, or po-ta-to-chip call. Prefers thistle seeds.

Length: 5" Wingspan: 9" Season: Sp, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 610

Photograph by George Vlahakis



Evening Grosbeak, *Coccothraustes vespertinus*

Fringillidae (finches, grosbeaks, crossbills, buntings)

Like its name suggests, this bird has an out of proportion beak for the purpose of cracking open seeds to digest the inner parts. About the size of a plump starling. Breeding male is bright yellow with starkly contrasting black wings and tail, with white wingbars. Head is dusky, but with black and yellow crown. Like a very large goldfinch. Females are similar, without the yellow, or black cap. Often flocks to feeders where it prefers sunflower seeds. Makes a loud, clear chee-eeep. Prefers deciduous trees.

Length: 8"

Wingspan: 14"

Season: S, Su, F, W

More info: Birds of Oregon, by David Marshall: p. 612

Photograph by George Vlahakis

Who are the birds of DCC?

Why are they here, and why are not others that are so common elsewhere in Oregon? Primarily, it is the food resources, because we are that ecosystem of rain forest known as the Pacific Slope. It is a bit of a wrinkle formed by the compression of the major North American plate sliding over the Pacific plate. At the edge of the off-shore overlap, here about fifty miles out, the ocean floor drops abruptly from some hundreds of feet to approximately three miles as it subducts underneath the continental shelf. The deep, cold water wells up along the coast to give us our unique cool in summer, warm in winter air as it moves to the summit of the coastal range, dropping 80-150" of rain before crossing the summit. This strongly influences our birds, to be here or not to be here. At DCC, the stream coming from the mountains was forced to turn when it hit the hard rock wall coming down from Skunk Ridge.

For miles upstream, Drift Creek winds back and forth around these resistant ridges that come from the larger mountains around, but it is only here at the confluence of North Creek that there is significant flat land in and around camp. The rich bottom land with its large timber attracts many species of birds, but in small numbers. For most oceanic species, we are too far inland to commute. Birds associated with farms are occasionally seen in migration, but unless they have other purposes, they do not linger. For some, we are only a migratory passing, and many fly overhead from ridge to ridge. The stream directly supports a few, and the light let in with deciduous trees and shrubs with berries and insects, a few more. Carnivores and scavengers have another niche. Thankfully, the introduced birds that seem to be everywhere have not been seen here, ever. Many more species might be here, but have not yet been seen, and for these the challenge of birding watching continues.