

# WILLAMETTE LOOP



## W1. Ankeny National Wildlife Refuge

**From I-5 between Salem and Albany:** take Exit 243 and drive W on Ankeny Hill Rd. **From downtown Salem:** go S on Liberty Rd about 9 mi to where it turns SE, becomes Buena Vista Rd and is intersected by Ankeny Hill Rd. Access and viewing points are along Ankeny Hill, Buena Vista, and Wintel Rds, which form a loop around the refuge. GPS 44° 46' N, 123° 5' W.

Specifically created for Dusky Canada Geese, this refuge has wetlands, fields, and Oregon ash mixed with cottonwood gallery forest. Dusky and other subspecies of Canada Goose, as

well as large flocks of Cackling Goose, graze the open fields in winter. Look for wintering waterfowl, swans, large flocks of Dunlin, Great Blue Heron, and Great Egret in the wetlands. The wetlands are reliable for Ruddy Duck, Lesser Scaup, Canvasback, and Black Phoebe. Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, and occasionally Red-shouldered Hawk hunt from the tree lines. Most interior trails are closed from October 1 through March 31, with two boardwalks and several viewing areas open year round. The refuge is open from sunrise to sunset. Restroom facilities are on Ankeny Hill Rd. To the west of the refuge on Buena Vista Rd, look for Acorn Woodpecker,

Starting from Ankeny Bottom in the heart of the Willamette Valley, one of the nation's most important sites for wintering Dunlin flocks, this loop in the heart of the Willamette Valley will lead you over the Salem Hills, through Oregon's state capital, and north to historic Willamette Mission. Turning east, you'll ascend into the Waldo Hills where the picturesque village of Mt. Angel holds a Bavarian-style Oktoberfest amid hops fields. The spectacular cataracts of Silver Falls State Park are your next stop, offering Oregon's best diversity of owls along with the scenery. Check the rapids of Fisherman's Bend for Harlequin Duck or consider a longer jaunt into the Cascades, before you finish the loop by heading west to the bottom lands.

**Loop sponsorship available**



Hutton's Vireo  
PHOTO BY:  
BRUCE CRAIG

### W3. Staats Lake

**From downtown Salem:** go N on Commercial St 1.5 mi to stoplight where main flow of traffic turns R onto Salem Parkway, with River Rd continuing straight ahead. Go N on River Rd 2.8 mi. Turn L on Promenade St (first L after stoplight at intersection with Lockhaven Rd). **From I-5:** if southbound take Exit 260 or if northbound take Exit 260B and head W on Chemawa Rd, which turns into Lockhaven Rd. At the stoplight intersection of Lockhaven and River Rd, turn N on River Rd and take the first L on Promenade St. The public access is on the W side of the Promenade St traffic circle (less than one block). GPS 44° 58' N, 123° 01' W.

This 50-ac private lake in the downtown Keizer area was formerly a gravel pit. It hosts large numbers of waterfowl from October to March. Commercial buildings are on the E end, and residences and apartments surround the rest of the lake. A paved walkway circles the lake, but the public is restricted to the promenade area at the E end, from which a small willow-ringed island is visible. Typical species are Cackling Goose (by the thousands at night), Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, and a good variety of gulls. With some luck, you might find more unusual diving ducks, scoters, loons, grebes, or terns as migrants. There is no public parking, but after-hours parking at local businesses has not been an issue. Unless you are a patron of one of the businesses at the end of the lake, or a guest of a resident, you should view the lake only from the east pedestrian viewpoint.



**Sponsorship available**



White-breasted Nuthatch

PHOTO BY: STEVE DOWLAN

White-breasted Nuthatch and the occasional Lewis's Woodpecker in groves of Oregon white oak. The Buena Vista ferry at the W end of Buena Vista Rd links to the Luckiamute Loop 3 mi N of Site L10; note that the ferry is closed during high water in winter, and Mondays & Tuesdays the rest of the year.



**Sponsor:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Willamette Valley Refuge Complex

### W2. Minto-Brown Island Park

**From junction of Liberty Rd and Commercial St S of downtown Salem:** proceed N on Commercial St 1 mi to Owens St. Turn L onto Owens, which becomes South River Rd, and continue 1.1 mi to park entrance on R. **From Mission St and Commercial St S of downtown Salem:** follow Commercial St S about 4 blocks. Turn R (W) on Owens, which changes to South River Rd, and continue 1.1 mi to park entrance on R. GPS 44° 55.40' N, 123° 4.40' W.

This 898-ac park contains a variety of habitats, including riverfront, oak woodland, riparian areas, ponds, backwater sloughs, and open fields. Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Great Blue Heron nest on site. The park is especially good for migrant songbirds in spring, nesting songbirds in summer, and sparrows and finches in winter. Park at parking area #1 or #3, check the trail map and follow the trails through the park. The most consistently good birding is usually near the Willamette River, is just beyond parking area #3.



**Sponsor:** Wild Birds Unlimited, Salem



Spotted Towhee

PHOTO BY: STEVE DOWLAN

### W4. Willamette Mission State Park

**From Keizer:** go N on River Rd to Wheatland Rd, then N another 5.2 mi to the park. **From I-5 N of Salem:** take Exit 263 and go W on Brooklake Rd and N on Wheatland Rd, following signs. The park is 4.1 mi from I-5. The park is just across the Willamette River from Maud Williamson Park (Yamhill Loop Site Y10) via the Wheatland ferry. GPS 45° 05' N, 123° 02' W.

Willamette Mission State Park is made up of open, grassy fields and wooded areas along the Willamette River. Trails totaling more than 8 mi wind through open meadows and riparian forests. The wooded areas attract the typical birds of the area, including warblers, vireos, bluebirds, woodpeckers, kinglets, and nuthatches. Waterfowl, raptors, Belted Kingfisher and others can be found along Mission Lake and the river. The park also contains the nation's largest Black Cottonwood tree. Day use permit fees apply.



**Sponsor:** Salem Audubon Society

### W5. The Oregon Garden

**From I-5 Exit 263 N of Salem:** go E on Brooklake Rd 1 mi into Brooks. Turn S on Hwy 99E and go 2.8 mi to Hazelgreen/Chemawa Rd (crossing Lake Labish Ditch, see note below). Turn E on Hazelgreen Rd and follow 10 mi into downtown Silverton. Turn R onto Main St/Cascade Hwy. The entrance to the Oregon Garden is about 0.2 mi on the L. GPS 45° 0.3' N, 122° 47.0' W.



Western Screech Owl

PHOTO BY: ANTHONY SHREMAN

The Oregon Garden grounds include white oak woodland/savanna, lake/reservoir, marsh, riparian woods, urban parks, young conifer forests, and perennial and flower beds. Virginia Rail, Sora and possibly Blue-winged Teal breed on-site. Vaux's Swift, Rufous and Anna's Hummingbirds, Western Scrub-Jay, and Bewick's Wren are common in summer. In winter, ducks abound on the ponds, and Lincoln's, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows are around the gardens. Pileated Woodpecker, Green Heron, and Cooper's Hawk are seen regularly. Entrance fees vary by season; see [www.oregongarden.org](http://www.oregongarden.org). Good birding is also found outside the gate, at ponds along Main St and Pettit Pond (just S of the main entrance). On your way to the Oregon Garden in the winter, be sure to scan the Lake Labish Ditch for shorebirds flocks, which can include Black-bellied Plover.



**Sponsor:** Salem Audubon Society





Lesser Yellowlegs  
PHOTO BY:  
KEVIN SMITH

retreat, check the Abbey website ([www.mountangelabbey.org](http://www.mountangelabbey.org)). Groups of 10 or more should please call 503.845.3030 to ensure compatibility with meditative use of the gardens.



**Sponsorship available**



American Dipper

PHOTO BY: KEVIN SMITH

## W6. Mount Angel Abbey

From downtown Silverton go N on Hwy 214 (Hillsboro-Silverton Hwy) 4.3 mi to Mt. Angel. Watch for a fountain in the middle of town and a green street sign for the Abbey. Turn R onto Church St over the railroad tracks (this becomes College St) and follow E past St. Mary's Church. 0.5 mi further, on the E edge of town, watch for the Abbey drive on the R. Follow the wooded drive to the top of the hill. Signs will direct you to the guest parking area just past the Seminary Theological Center of the Annunciation. GPS 44° 3.5' N, 123° 46' W.

This Benedictine Abbey, founded by Swiss monks in 1882, is on a wooded hilltop that overlooks the town of Mt. Angel. On a summer hike along the paved Abbey walk you are likely to be greeted by Western Wood-Pewee, Swainson's Thrush, and Bullock's Oriole, with a good variety of warblers in migration. Open oak woodland habitats preserve native wildflowers along with Chipping Sparrow, Lazuli Bunting, and Western Bluebird. White-breasted Nuthatch, Downy Woodpecker and Brown Creeper are here year-round. For information on visiting for a day, or a longer spiritual

## W7. Silver Falls State Park

From Silverton go SE on Hwy 214 (Silver Falls Hwy) approx 12 mi to park. GPS 44° 52.55' N, 122° 39.25' W.

Oregon's largest state park features full-service facilities with hiking trails and spectacular views of waterfalls. Some of Oregon's best remaining, low-elevation old-growth conifer forest is found here. Spotted, Barred, Great Gray Owls all occur in the park, along with Northern Pygmy-Owl, Western Screech-Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Other specialties include Sooty and Ruffed Grouse, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, American Dipper, Hermit Warbler, Western Tanager, and Band-tailed Pigeon. The Park is also featured as a site on the Oregon Cascades Birding Trail.



**Sponsor:** Wild Birds Unlimited, Salem

Bushtit  
PHOTO BY:  
GLEN LINDEMAN.



## W8. Fisherman's Bend Recreation Site

From Stayton, go 15 mi E on Hwy 22. The well-signed park entrance is on the R.

Along a bend of the North Santiam River, this site offers comfortable camping at the edge of the Cascades, with many level paths and river access under a soaring forest canopy. The campground is open from mid-May to mid-October. In other seasons the gate is closed, but the site is accessible by foot. The river can also be scanned from a pullout on the S side of Hwy 22, 0.5 mi W of the entrance. Harlequin Duck, Wood Duck, Common and Hooded Mergansers, American Dipper, and five woodpecker species have been noted here. In spring, watch for Oregon Junco, Chipping Sparrow and Orange-crowned Warbler. In summer, look and listen for Hermit Warbler or Swainson's Thrush.



**Sponsorship available**

## W9. Hunsaker Road Pond

From I-5, take Exit 243, and turn E on Ankeny Hill Rd to Jefferson Hwy. Turn R(S) on Jefferson Hwy (Hwy 99 SE) and in 0.5 mi turn L on Wintercreek Rd. Cross Parrish Gap Rd at 2.9 mi and continue onto Valley View Rd for 1.1 mi. Go L on Duckflat Rd and proceed 1.8 mi to the intersection with Hunsaker Rd. The pond is at this intersection.



NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE

PHOTO BY: STEVE DOWLAN

American Kestrel

Hunsaker Road Pond is privately owned pond, which is best viewed from the ample road shoulder. Black-necked Stilt have nested here in recent years. Other shorebirds occur during spring migration. Great Egret is a regular visitor whenever water is present. By late summer, the pond is usually dry, so this site is of seasonal interest only. The fields around Hunsaker Rd are also worth a scan; in winter look for Northern Shrike and Short-eared Owl.



**Sponsor:** Salem Audubon Society



Green Heron

PHOTO BY: RIE LUFT