



Photos by Andy Cameron

**ABOVE: A heron on the Lewis and Clark River. TOP: Trails on the Columbia-Pacific offer scenic winter hikes.**

*Continued from Page 8*

herds; take caution around these majestic and large denizens of the peninsula.

#### **COFFENBURY LAKE LOOP TRAIL**

Surrounding one of Fort Stevens' largest interdune lakes, this 2.5-mile trail is well-suited for hikers with small children, dogs (allowed on leash) or family members wishing to avoid significant elevation gain. Accessed from a day use area near the Fort Stevens ranger station, the trail features stunning forests, grassy fields, deciduous wooded areas and small ponds. Oregon State Parks' parking fees apply.

#### **PIPELINE ROAD**

Often used by those seeking a quick dog walk or a weekday jog, Pipeline Road is

increasing in popularity among those seeking an alternative to the area's more popular urban hikes. Departing from the eastern end of James Street in Astoria, the 2.5-mile out-and-back path traverses a ridge line while gently gaining elevation. While its views are mostly comprised of urban forest, several manmade features including reservoir infrastructure make for unique sightseeing.

#### **AIRPORT DIKE TRAIL**

Accessed from the western end of the Lewis and Clark River Bridge, this relatively flat trail allows for unique vantages of Astoria and its surrounding natural areas. True to its name, the trail skirts the periphery of the airport, giving hikers a chance to view a variety of aircraft, including U.S. Coast Guard and bar pilot helicopters. Though occasionally buzzing

with airborne activity, the 4-mile round trip often treats hikers to secluded encounters with elk, ducks and vast flocks of geese.

#### **FORT TO SEA TRAIL**

Perhaps featuring the most varying terrain of the hikes listed, this 6.5-mile one way, 13 mile down and back trail connects Fort Clatsop to Sunset Beach. The leg nearest the fort is best suited for drier days and hikers hungry for elevation gain, but the western portion is a great year-round destination. After parking at Sunset Beach, hikers wind their way through the Clatsop Plains and soon enter an agricultural zone. There, under the watchful eyes of curious cows, hikers crisscross maintained fields and navigate several cattle gates. The Pioneer Presbyterian Church, which dates from 1929, makes a fine turnaround point.