

Birding: The Great Backyard Bird Count is both global and local

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opens my eyes and my ears to the birds around us and it's a kickoff for spring, when the birds are more active, singing and calling more."

It also provides an excellent worldwide snapshot of where the birds are as people report their sightings, she said.

Anyone can participate and join in on any of the days, and longer than just 15 minutes. Register and add sightings at gbbc.birdcount.org.

The information gathered by individuals worldwide helps track changes in bird populations on a massive scale.

Freeman has participated nearly every year and it has made her notice small changes.

For instance, this year she hasn't noticed the varied thrushes around Fort Clatsop's parking lot, which have been abundant in previous years.

To get a real understanding of birds, their sounds and movements as well as how to spot them, Freeman recommends visitors join Mike Patterson on his Saturday birding walk.

Here are activities at Fort Clatsop this weekend:

- A "Birds of Fort Clatsop" display is in the visitor cen-



ter along with a 1,000-piece puzzle of state birds and state flowers.

- Birding crafts, puzzles and bird face-painting at various times throughout the three-day weekend.

- A great pink heron scavenger hunt is ongoing using the Netul Trail along the Lewis and Clark River.

For kids - and those who are really bad at spotting birds - this ensures participants will all have at least one sighting.

Since great blue herons are prevalent, the park encourages folks to imagine the plastic pink flamingos are a version of the large species that has eaten a special color-altering fish or perhaps "overindulged in Swedish fish that have



Left: A pink flamingo hides in brush along Youngs Bay.

Courtesy Fort Clatsop

Above: A group in West Bengal, India, spot and photograph birds.

Courtesy Great Backyard Bird Count

turned them into great pink herons for a while," Freeman said.

Those who participate get a small prize.

- Mike Patterson will lead a birding walk at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 17, from the Fort Clatsop Visitor Center lobby.

Although leashed dogs are welcome at most of the park's outdoor programs, dogs are not allowed at this morning walk.

Participants should dress for the weather. The walk is wheelchair accessible, although nonmotorized users might need assistance for about 200 yards.

- A talk about California condors' return to their his-

toric range along the Columbia River. The program is at 1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 18 in the Netul River Room at Fort Clatsop's Visitor Center.

- A birding walk in Spanish will be at 10 a.m. Monday, Feb. 19,

starting in the Visitor Center lobby.

No dogs will be allowed, and participants should dress for the weather. This walk is wheelchair accessible.

Park hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission is \$5 per adult and free for those 15 and younger.

Passes to National Park Service sites are accepted.

A variety of bird field guides are available for purchase at the bookstore in the Fort Clatsop Visitor Center.

For more information on the worldwide bird count, or to submit bird counts from your home, go to gbbc.birdcount.org.

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Condor: Making a comeback in Oregon

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began as a rehab/release intern at the South Plains Wildlife Rehab Center in Lubbock, Texas. Then, at the Dallas World Aquarium he worked with South American raptor species including the harpy, ornate hawk and black-hawk eagles.

He was named bird supervisor in 2014 at the San Antonio Zoo, where he managed bald and bateleur eagles, as well as

If you go

- **What:** "California Condors: An Oregon Treasure"
- **When:** 1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 18
- **Where:** Netul River Room in the Fort Clatsop Visitors Center
- **Admission:** Free

a pair of king vultures. Koons moved to the Oregon Zoo position in May and manages

the zoo's bird collection and butterfly programs.

Oregon Zoo has a remote condor propagation facility that houses 34 birds, including 11 breeding pairs. Offspring are released to native home-range environments, he said.

Koons' talk is part of the monthly "In Their Footsteps" free speaker series sponsored by the Lewis and Clark National Park Association.