

Killdeer, a very common bird along the Willamette, near Salem



While less common than the osprey, bald eagles maintain a healthy presence along the Willamette, often perching high in the cottonwoods along the river's edge. These great birds often sit near their large nests, which are most commonly located where a cottonwood tree trunk branches in a Y shape, usually in the upper third of the tree.

Another frequently sighted bird is the belted kingfisher—a small, blue-crested bird that zips along the river's edge from snag to snag. Water birds, including mergansers, pintails, mallards, and wood ducks, frequent the riverbank and backwater areas. Double-crested cormorants, which often are associated with tidal areas, are found throughout the river system, as are Canada geese.

A variety of shorebirds also are present, depending on the season.

Everything from killdeer and spotted sandpipers to the occasional

willet and least sandpiper can be seen whisking along the rock, mud, and sand of the shoreline.

Other birds use the Willamette, too, so keep an eye out and your bird guide handy!

As you will find, the Willamette River has a lot to offer, from tremendous beauty and abundant wildlife to quiet camp spots where you can reflect on what you've seen. More is happening every day to improve habitat and water quality. Get out there and take the time to learn about—and enjoy—this Oregon wonder.

Canada geese at Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge

