



December 2009  
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Number 4

# the curlew

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

### Special Interest Articles:

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- Potluck tool
- Give the gift of Membership! Page 3

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## Christmas Bird Count and Potluck!

This year's count will be held Saturday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. This count has been done locally for nearly 40 years, and is done in over 1,900 locations around the United States and nearby countries. The data that all these counts produce becomes part of the largest wildlife database in the world and is vital for determining the status of expanding and declining bird numbers. **Anyone that enjoys looking at birds can help.**

**Ray Johnson (509-521-5971)** will lead the Richland team this year, while **Tom and Barb Clarke (509-539-0857)** will lead the Pasco team and **Kevin Burke (240-422-9483)** will lead the Kennewick team. Please call them to participate in their area. All Christmas Bird Counts are standardized to a 7.5 mile radius circle (about 177 square miles). The LCBAS count circle is registered as the Washington Tri-Cities Circle and centers on the Columbia River just off shore near the end of Road 68 in Pasco. This is a very large area that includes Selph landing Road in

Pasco, most of Two Rivers Park east of Kennewick and Badger Mountain in Richland. The Tri-Cities count starts in three locations at 7:30am, January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Although some hardy souls may do some owling at the official start time of 12:00am midnight. The three start locations where volunteers can start are:

**Richland** – The "Fingernail" in Howard Amon Park

**Kennewick** – Audubon Nature Trail in Columbia Park

**Pasco** – Chiawana Park Boat Ramp  
From these locations we split into smaller teams led by more experienced birders. Some birding skills are nice but not required. If you can not make the 7:30am start please coordinate with your count leader prior to Saturday January 2<sup>nd</sup> to arrange an appropriate time and location. The team leader also needs to know your tallies before the potluck.

**The Tri-Cities count also one of the best supported counts in the state, and regularly has**

**the highest number of species seen inland. All of this is due to strong community support. Our goal is to count as many birds within the circle during the day (24 hrs). To do this, we need as many teams as possible. If individuals can only participate for part of the day, it will still help.**

There can be a fair amount of walking involved, so keep this in mind when making plans. Birds seen at bird feeders within the count circle are just as important to the count.

At the end of count day, the LCBAS has their annual Christmas Potluck (See page 2). The dinner is now held at the Columbia Grange #938, 6300 Court Street, Pasco. **Also the Grange will be open all day for those that would like to stop by for warm drinks and discuss what they have seen.**

You do not need to be a member of the Audubon Society to help, but a \$5.00 donation is expected of each participant age 19 and above to help defray the cost of maintaining the database. It would be appreciated if those participating would make the



## Bird Count and potluck *Continued*

\$5.00 donation at the 7:30am start.

The information that all counts generate is reviewed and placed in a database that is available to everyone on the Internet. The database can be accessed through [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org), then selecting the Christmas Bird Count icon. The Tri-Cities Count code is WATC.

For more information on the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count, please contact Dana Ward at (509) 545-0627.

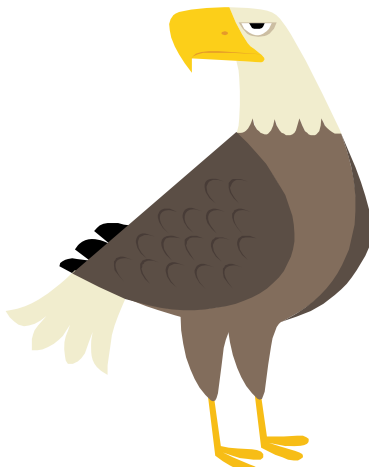
### Christmas Bird Count Potluck:

The Christmas Bird Count Potluck will be held at 6 PM on Saturday, January 2, 2010 at the Columbia Grange, 6300 Court Street, Pasco.

Everyone please bring a main dish plus a salad or desert to

share and your own table service. LCBAS will furnish coffee and soft drinks. Whether you spent the day stomping through the fields, watching your feeders or you just want to hear the official results from the day's count, come and share a meal and holiday cheer with a friendly bunch of birders and their families and friends.

*Anyone that enjoys looking at birds can help.*



*"As I slogged through Okefenokee Swamp working on my Ph.D. and up to my ... in alligators, I was doing the real hard work of science"*

## President's Message *with Ed Rykiel, President*

### Be a Scientist ... 's Aide – Christmas Bird Count

When I was growing up, I wanted to become a Scientist. That's right – with a capital 'S'. A real scientist. Well, I got my wish, more or less. I was a fairly well-known scientist for 15 minutes or so.

As I slogged through Okefenokee Swamp working on my Ph.D. and up to my ... in alligators, I was doing the real hard work of science, collecting field samples, data. And every once in a while I would spot a Blackburnian Warbler singing in the top of a cypress tree trimmed with Spanish moss, or catch a glimpse for a Swallow-tailed Kite wafting by overhead, and I would forget how hard the work was. Remind me to tell you about it some time.

If you ever wanted to be a scientist, or just have the urge to be

a contributor to a science database, the Christmas Bird Count is your chance to enjoy the real hard work of science, collecting the data. Luckily, you won't have alligators to contend with, and even better you can spend all your time looking for birds. The birds you count are part of the largest scientific database in the world - over a hundred years of Christmas Bird Counts that scientists use to estimate trends in bird populations.

Your observations on January 2<sup>nd</sup> will become a part of the mix of data that ultimately forms the basis for policy decisions that affect the wildlife management of North American birds. What could be better than that for us amateur ornithologists. Oh, and there's a really wonderful potluck supper too!

May your holidays be full of joy, the new year be a happy one for you, and you get to see all the birds you hoped for!

## A Wonderful Holiday Surprise! Give the Gift of Membership!



### End of the year offer!!

Give a membership to LCBAS to a friend, co-worker, neighbor, or family member! Until December 31, any current member can give a new LCBAS membership for only \$15 (no renewals please). Subscriptions will start with the January Curlew.

Here's what to do: Fill out the form on your Curlew with the new person's information. Write "Gift from" and your name somewhere on the form. We will leave notification of this gift to you to do – be creative!

### McNary Environmental Education Center Second Saturday Event!

Open to the Public! On January 9, 2010, join the Friends of Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuges for Owls: Who-o-o lives in your backyard and why?! **How to get there:** The Education Center is located off Highway 12 near Burbank. From Tri-Cities take Highway I-182 East/Highway 12 East to Burbank. Turn left onto Humorist Rd. at second stoplight after the Snake River Bridge. Turn left onto Lake Rd. Look for Education Center on the left.

### Native Plant Workshop/Panel Discussion!

The Columbia Basin Chapter of the Native Plant Society is planning a Workshop/Panel Discussion the first week of January on Gardening/Landscaping with Native Plants. January 6th 2010 at 7pm in Room 120 of the CIC Building (library) at WSU Tri-Cities!

*Have you wondered*

1. What you could do with a dry corner of your yard?
2. How to xeriscape your garden using plants native to our area or the region?
3. Whether plants you see blooming in the desert would live in your yard?
4. If you could dig up plants in the desert and transplant them in your yard?
5. How to attract native birds?

Or have you actually landscaped your garden or yard with natives and have some lessons to share with others?

We've asked long-time members with experience in planting natives in natural and garden settings to participate in a panel to answer questions and discuss methods that do and don't work. Please come and join us – we'd love to "cross pollinate" with your organization :>

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*"Please come and join us– we'd love to "cross pollinate" with your organization."*

### Birding tip of the Month

*Use a local checklist to give you an idea of what is possible. You might actually find something not on that list but then you know you need to fully document your find! Some lists suggest the best time of year to find a bird – know the seasons when they occur.*

## Bird Sightings – November 2009

Kevin Burke - ([wildburke@hotmail.com](mailto:wildburke@hotmail.com))

*"I encourage everyone to put on some long johns and get out there and bird."*

### **Bird Sightings Greetings**

Hello Everyone! I would like to thank everyone for submitting sightings this month. This column would not be possible without the motivation and passion of all of you. We had another great month of bird sightings. The ducks have come back in huge numbers and we have some other birds that are sticking around so we can get some late looks at them. I encourage everyone to put on some long johns and get out there and bird.

### **November:**

1. Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>: A MacGillivray's Warbler was seen at Chamna by (JL). This is a very late sighting for this bird in our area.
2. Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>: A Brown Creeper and a Clark's Grebe were seen at Windust Park by (NL, BL).
3. Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>: A Western Screech Owl was heard at the home of (JB and KB).
4. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>: A Yellow-shafted Flicker was seen at W.E. Johnson Park by (LH).
5. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>: 61 Tundra Swans were seen at Casey Pond and a Merlin was seen on Dodd road by (NL and KC).
6. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>: 3 Barrow's Goldeneye's and 2 Eared Grebe's were seen near Columbia Park by (NL).
7. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>: A Hermit Thrush was seen in the yard of (R).
8. Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>: A Red-necked Grebe was seen near Columbia Park by (NL).
9. Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>: A Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Shrike was seen in Western Benton County by (CL, RL).
10. Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>: A Townsend's Solitaire was seen near Riverside Drive in West Richland by (KC).
11. Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>: A Merlin and a Hermit Thrush were seen on Bateman Island by (R).
12. Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>: A Black-necked Stilt was seen at the Yakima Delta by (BW). This bird has been hanging around the delta for a while now and has been seen by a lot of folks even as recently as Dec.1<sup>st</sup>.
13. Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>: A pair of White-winged Scoters, An Eurasian Widgeon from the Two Rivers Unit of McNary Wildlife Refuge. A Tricolored Blackbird and 2 Rusty Blackbirds were seen on Dodd Road, all seen by (MWO). Rusty Blackbirds are a really rare find for our area. Great Sighting!
14. Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>: A Tricolored Blackbird was seen on Dodd road by (NL, MH, AH).
15. Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>: 100 Tundra Swans and 1 Greater White-fronted Goose were seen at Casey Pond by (NL, LF, WH, MH, AH).
16. Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>: A large flock of Snow Geese were seen on highway 221 between Paterson and Prosser by (LN).
17. Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>: A Say's Phoebe and a Harris's Sparrow were seen on Red

## November Bird Sightings *continued*

mountain at the home of (HB).

18. Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>: A Purple Finch and a Winter Wren were spotted at W.E. Johnson Park by (LU, LH).
19. Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>: A Clark's Grebe was seen at Bateman Island by (GM).
20. Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>: a Thayer's Gull and 2 Barrow's Goldeneye's were seen at Leslie Groves Park by (BL, NL).
21. Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>: A Harris's Sparrow was seen at the feeder of (LH).
22. Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>: A Turkey Vulture was seen west of Prosser on North River Road by (JM).

### **Observers:**

(LH) Lisa Hill, (JB) Jennie Bradbury, (KB) Kevin Burke, (NL) Nancy LaFramboise, (BL) Bill LaFramboise, (RL) Ron Louderback, (CL) Carol Louderback, (MWO) Michael Woodruff, (KC) Kathy Criddle, (GM) Guy McWethy, (LF) Lucie Fritz, (JL) Jordene Lucas, (BW) Bob Woodley, (JM) Jim Mackey, (R) Reagan, (MH) Marilyn Hayes, (AH) Angela Harding, (LF) Lucie Fritz, (WH) Wayne Heinz, (LN) Laurie Ness, (LU) Larry Umthun, (HB) Howard Browers

**Check out our website: <http://lcbas.org>**

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### **Bateman Island Bird Walk:**

*With Kevin Burke filling in for Lisa Hill.*

We had a great time on the November walk! The morning brought a lot of wind, but as the walk progressed the wind died down and the weather cooperated with us. We had about 15 people throughout the walk and it was great to see two Junior Audubon members come out to see what we could see. We started out on the causeway with the wind blowing in all the usual bird suspects. We started out by getting a great look at WESTERN GREBES through the scope. A HORNED GREBE was diving off the Eastern side of the causeway. They always seem to dive just when you get a good look at them. Female HOODED MERGANSERS were swimming off the Western edge mingling with a few MALLARDS. The lone YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER flew in and landed on a bare branch so everyone got a great look. Also on the causeway we had GADWALL, PIED-BILLED GREBE, and DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT.

A stroll through the middle of the island produced some of the more noisy species. We had a few BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE's talk to us. The BEWICKS WREN only gave us a little glimpse but we sure heard it. A GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW was in amongst the WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, a good find for the Bateman island walk. We had a bunch of GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS in the locust grove near the end of the island. The GREAT HORNED OWLS were found in the grove and we all got glimpses as they flew around trying to get out of our way.

The water at the end of the island was full of the usual ducks. NORTHERN PINTAIL were out in low numbers. A few GADWALL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, and BUFFLEHEAD showed themselves for the crowd to see. A PEREGRINE FALCON was sitting out on its usual log in the middle of the delta. Four small shorebirds flew across our line of sight with a flock of GREEN-WINGED TEAL. We tried to make an identification but they flew by so fast we just couldn't tell what they were. On the back side of the island we peered out on the river and saw a male REDHEAD with two females. Two COMMON LOONS were further out in the river. GREATER SCAUP were also present.

The rest of the walk didn't produce anything new, but a few of us lingered on the causeway chatting and we had the best look of a soaring COOPER'S HAWK. We also had a good find of a secretive BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON. It was lurking around near the bank and was very hard to see. ROCK DOVE and MOURNING DOVE flew over to

## Bateman Island Bird Walk *continued*

finish out the walk, but we added five species in the last five minutes to get the walk total up to 39 species on the day.

It was a great walk with a good group of folks. We invite everyone to come on our Bateman Island bird walks which usually take place on the first Saturday of every month. January is the exception with the walk on the second Saturday so we can all participate in the Christmas Bird Count. So the Next Bateman Island Bird Walk will be on February 6, 2010! We now have binoculars to loan if you forget yours, or just don't have any to bring. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. The walks start at 8:00 A.M. I hope to see you all there in the New Year! Good Birding!

## Olympic BirdFest 2010

*Come Bird With Us.*

Sequim, Washington, April 9-11, 2010

Grab your binoculars and join the Olympic BirdFest 2010 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 9-11, 2010.

The stage is set...quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, and Pygmy owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours; and a traditional salmon bake at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center. Come bird with us and experience with others the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula ...you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by going online

(<http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>), or calling for a brochure.

**Also this year!** Follow your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular San Juan Islands on April 11-13, 2010. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands, and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get program information and registration forms online at: <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>. Or contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076, E-mail us at [info@olympicbirdfest.org](mailto:info@olympicbirdfest.org) Or write to us at:

Dungeness River Audubon Center  
P.O. Box 2450  
Sequim, WA 98382

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon is now part of the Escript program at Yoke's Fresh Markets!!

Now all of your regular purchases at Yoke's can help raise funds for LCBAS! Plus they have a great selection of wines :> Just register and give your card when you make a purchase and Yoke's will donate to LCBAS a percentage of your purchase. Here is how to register!

### Escript Registration

1. Go to Yokes, get a card, and register yourself online (Computer Registration)
2. Robin Priddy will get a card, register it for you and send it to you. (Robin Registration)

### Computer Registration

1. Go to the customer service counter at Yokes, and get an escript card.
2. Go to the web page: [www.escrip.com/yokes.jsp](http://www.escrip.com/yokes.jsp)
3. click on link at bottom that says "Sign up today".
4. Follow registration instructions. To locate LCBAS, use the "city where group is located" radio button, and put in Richland. The website will return a list of organizations, scroll down to Lower Columbia Basin Audubon and click on it
5. Once you've clicked on LCBAS, click "next" to register your information. (Step 2 on the website)
6. Select escript- Yokes on the drop down list of cards (Step 3 on the website)
7. In the space for card number, enter the number on the back of your card under the UPC bars. Use the whole number, including the leading and following single digits. Do not put in spaces.
8. Keep clicking through the "nexts" until the registration finishes.
9. At the end you'll get a user number to confirm your registration. A copy of that number and a password will be sent to the email address you submitted. That user number and password can be used to check your personal part of the account (how much you have purchased and how much has gone to LCBAS).

### Robin Registration

Contact me at [grania0358@aol.com](mailto:grania0358@aol.com) I will ask for your name, address, phone number and e-mail address, I'll get a card, register it for you and send it to you.

## Coffee Sale!

What could be more wonderful than a cup of warm coffee during the cold days of winter?

We are having a Coffee Sale for a winter fundraiser. This coffee is shade grown which helps protect our local songbirds while they are on their wintering grounds, because shade grown coffee is grown underneath a canopy of native trees. Most coffee is grown on plantations where native trees are cleared and deforested to make room for the coffee bushes. Please help support bird habitat by purchasing our shade grown coffees! They come in Decaf too!

(You know you spend way more than this per pound when you buy a regular size cup of coffee at Starbuck's ! So, support Audubon and the birds and buy from us!)

### Grounds for Change – Fair Trade, Shade Grown Organic Coffee

The blends we have are:

Bolivia – medium

Agate Pass – Med-dark

Cafe Feminine – Dark

Decaf Blend

Whole bean or ground

9.50 per bag.

Please contact Robin Priddy at 378-1694,  
[grania0358@aol.com](mailto:grania0358@aol.com).

## Book Table Talk December 2009

By Kathy Criddle

Looking for a **last minute gift** for your birding friends? Although we don't meet for the regular meeting in December, you can email ([kcriddlebirds@yahoo.com](mailto:kcriddlebirds@yahoo.com)) or call me (628-9869) to purchase a book or DVD for gifts. Recommended choices for this month include a couple of gently used books at seriously discounted prices.

For those who really want to learn about birds The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds by John K. Terres, is a great bargain. There are 875 full-color photos and 800 black-and-white drawings illustrating 6,000 alphabetical entries and the life histories of 847 birds. Price is \$35.00

Learn about the history of birding and the amazing life of one of the founding members of the American Birding Association while reading the fun and interesting story titled Bird-Witched! How Birds Can Change a Life by Marjorie Valentine Adams. A newspaper columnist on birding, and a teacher and producer of educational wild-life films, Marjorie and her husband "Red" Adams had many a fantastic birding adventure during their long lives. Price is \$5.00

For those who prefer learning by viewing the TV screen, we have new copies of Watching Warblers – West. This video guide to the warblers of Western North America is so fun to watch, *you* will want to "study" it over and over! Price is \$35.00

## App in the hand finds birds in bushes as you roam

By MARY ESCH (AP)

ALBANY, N.Y. — When Jory Langner finds time for a field trip during an upcoming visit to Washington, he won't have to ask local birders where to find candidates to add to his life list of birds sighted.

All he'll have to do to is pull out his iPhone and fire up BirdsEye, a new bird-finding application that gives users instant access to recent reports of birds spotted near their location, tells them where to look for specific birds, and keeps track of their lists of all the birds they've ever seen. BirdsEye, recently released for iPhone and iPod Touch at a cost of \$19.99, was developed through a collaboration of some of the top ornithologists in the country, using content from the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology, the Academy of Natural Sciences and field guide author Kenn Kaufman.

It's not an electronic field guide to help identify birds. There are plenty of those around. This is new: a bird finder. It taps into eBird, the massive, constantly updated database of bird sightings maintained by the Cornell lab and the National Audubon Society.

Here's how it works. Suppose you're a bird watcher on a business trip or visiting relatives across the country and you have some spare time to take in the local fauna. Where's a good place to go? You start BirdsEye and poke "Find Nearby Birds." Using the iPhone's built-in GPS, it calculates your location and gives you a list of all the birds ever recorded in the area or just the ones reported recently. More information at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu>

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### Audubon Membership Information

**Please Note:** Membership in National Audubon Society (NAS) and the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society (LCBAS) are **separate memberships**.

**LCBAS Chapter Membership** (includes a year's subscription [10 issues] to *The Curlew*)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20. for annual membership dues or

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10. for full time students.

Please make check payable to **LCBAS**. I can help with an additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Send *The Curlew* to my email address listed below. All my dues will go towards supporting LCBAS in local education and conservation efforts.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to be on your Environmental Alert e-mail list to receive timely notices about issues/work parties. (Your e-mail address will not be shared.)

**National Audubon Society Membership** (includes annual subscription to *Audubon Magazine*)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20. for one year new membership in the NAS. (Renewal of NAS membership is currently \$35.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15. for one year new senior or full time student membership in NAS.

Please make check payable to **National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250**

Please do not send renewals for NAS to LCBAS.

*For any of the local options above check the appropriate boxes, clip the form and mail it with your check(s) to:*

**Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1900, Richland, WA 99352**

Name.....

Address.....

City, State, Zip.....

Phone.....

Email.....

**C9ZY010Z**