



February 2010
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the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Special Interest Articles:

- **MOVIE NIGHT!**
 Invite your friends and neighbors!
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Pelicans, Terns and Cormorants, Oh My! Fish Eating Birds and Impacts on Fish!

**Membership Meeting
 Tuesday, February 23,
 7:00 p.m.**

**Kennewick First
 Lutheran Church,
 corner of Yelm and
 Highway 395**

Our February program features Dennis Dauble, fisheries biologist and author. Dennis recently spoke at the Kennewick Library as part of the Community Lecture Series.

His talk to LCBAS will

provide a general background on fishes of the area, fish ecology and the relationships between fish and birds. Dennis plans to speak for about 40 minutes and provide time for the audience to ask questions regarding this interesting issue. The public is encouraged to attend our lectures.

The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. with a brief

business meeting designed to keep members informed regarding LCBAS activities and concerns. Around 7:30 those in attendance take a break and enjoy cookies and coffee/tea. Members are encouraged to bring cookies or other treats. Our program begins around 7:45.



Double Feature MOVIE NIGHT! March 6 – Fun for the whole Family!

Doors open at 7 pm at the Battelle Auditorium

Hummingbirds and warblers are among the most beautiful and charming of our birds. LCBAS is bringing their bright colors, beautiful songs, and unmatched flying to the big screen. Join us at Battelle Auditorium on March 6 for the fun.

First Flight – a hummingbird story
 7:30 – 8:00 pm

The amazing story of Honey, a Black-chinned Hummingbird, chronicling her nesting from eggs to the first flight of her young. An unforgettable story that you and your children will remember ever after.

Watching Warblers West – All the Western Warblers 8:30 pm
 You will get to see and hear all 24 of the warblers it is possible to see in the western US - both the ones we enjoy when they migrate through our area and the unique ones found in Texas and Arizona.

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MOVIE NIGHT - *continued*

Filled with songs, nests, and young, this film is something you will always remember. The filmmakers' credits include National Geographic, Nova, Planet Earth, and the PBS show on hummingbirds, so you know the quality is superb.

Join us March 6 at the Battelle Auditorium. Bring the neighbor who loves birds but has not yet discovered the benefits of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society.

There will be a short intermission between shows – from 8:00 – 8:30

At the break, chat about Honey and hummingbirds, have a snack in the lobby, and stretch before the next show. If you can, please consider donating a tray of goodies. **DVDs of both films will be available for purchase, and your purchase benefits LCBAS!**

Tickets – Available at the Door

\$3.00 - child (to 17 years old)

\$5.00 - adult (18 years old and up)

\$15.00 – family (maximum)



Hummingbird



“If the surface of the Earth gets warmer, the behavior of the atmosphere is affected, often in unexpected ways.”

Presidents Message *with President Ed Rykiel*

Early Birds and Global Warming

It's only February but now's the time to start brushing up on the species you didn't expect to see until April or May. Start looking for the early birds especially the ones that are changing their habits in response to global warming. They just might surprise you in the next month or two.

Global warming means that the average temperature of the whole Earth is increasing. That in turn means that the climate is changing because there is more energy being absorbed by the surface of the Earth. The atmosphere is driven from the bottom up, not the top down. If the surface of the Earth gets warmer, the behavior of the atmosphere is affected, often in unexpected ways.

The Enhanced Greenhouse Effect

You have probably heard of a phenomenon called the 'greenhouse effect'. We have known about this effect for hundreds of years. Put simply the Earth is about 33 degrees F warmer than would be expected if it didn't have an atmosphere. And that 33 degrees is a life and death difference!

What is it about the atmosphere that causes the greenhouse effect? The answer

is the ability of some atmospheric gases to absorb energy and re-radiate it back to the Earth's surface as heat. The primary greenhouse gas is water vapor – thank you, oceans!

So what is all this fuss about global warming? The issue is something called the '**enhanced greenhouse effect**' where the Earth's global average temperature is actually higher than expected from the well-known greenhouse effect by itself. The majority of atmospheric scientists attribute this 'enhanced' effect to increases in carbon dioxide and methane.

Are WE the Cause of Rising Global Temperature?

The rub is that it seems that the increases in these gases result from human activities. In other words, **we** are the 'enhanced greenhouse effect'. Yeah But – these gases are only a small portion of the atmosphere. True, and that's all it takes to increase global average temperature by 1 degree. Carbon dioxide is roughly 20 times better at trapping energy than water vapor is, and methane is about 200 times better than water vapor. Is global warming real?

The birds say Yes.

The 13 th Annual Othello Sandhill Crane Festival! March 26-28, 2010

The Festival has many tours for crane viewing along with specialty tours. Specialty tours have included Columbia National Wildlife Refuge/Potholes area wildlife tour, Missoula Floods and the Channeled Scablands geology tour, Lower Grand Coulee birding tour and Wahluke Slope/Shrub Steppe birding tour. Pre-registration is suggested to reserve your seat as some fill up quickly.

With admission price into the Festival on Saturday, you may attend free lectures which are repeated throughout the day. Lectures given in the past have included falconry, Missoula Floods and the Channeled Scablands, Woodland Park Zoo, Grouse of Washington, Othello History within the Drumhellar Channeled Scablands, Shrub-Steppe Flora and Fauna, Owls of Eastern Washington and Spring Migration in the Columbia Basin.

Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and children 12 and under are free with adult admission!

For more information please call 509-488-2802.

<http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>

McNary Environmental Education Center Second Saturday Event!

Come out and help participate in Hunter Clean Up day, anyone can help! Saturday March 13 th. Meet in the McNary Education Center at 9 am. Dress for the weather. Hunter Clean Up day is a chance to access areas of McNary Refuge that are generally closed to the public. Assist with trash pick up, meet some new folks that hunt the refuge and tell them why they should join LCBAS :->

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.

Junior Audubon Report

Thank you to Nancy, Marilyn, Jennie, Barb and Tom. They generously shared their scopes and knowledge, and gave close up views of ducks to 10 enthusiastic Junior Audubon members. Eight families attended Going Ducky on January 16. Blake reported learning four new birds. I think all the Junior Auduboners learned American Wigeon and American Coots! They received binocular lessons with the wooden

birds, and then gave our new binoculars a work out spotting ducks on the river.

Our Eagle Walk turned into an Eagle Drive. We paraded through Sacajawea in a very long string of cars to see the eagles come in to roost. It was exciting to see so many folks show an interest in seeing the eagles, but a little disappointing we weren't allowed to walk the park, although everyone seemed to enjoy

"all the Junior Auduboners learned American Wigeon which they call "American Wizard!."

the ride through the park. Nels counted 21 eagles!

Junior Audubon is looking forward to the Great Back yard Bird Count this month!

Birding tip of the Month

Compare birds to known birds or nearby birds. Size is hard to judge. This works very well with shorebirds, swallows, and other flocking birds. Least Sandpipers are smaller than Killdeer. Find a known bird and compare the odd one to it.

Bird Sightings – January 2010

Kevin Burke - (wildburke@hotmail.com)

“I am sadly writing from afar. I have moved to the other side of the country (Tennessee) and have started birding this area.”

January Bird Sightings:

Hello everyone! We had another exciting month of birding in the Lower Columbia Basin. I am sadly writing from afar. I have moved to the other side of the country (Tennessee) and have started birding this area. I will continue to write the bird sightings column until a permanent replacement is found. So continue to send me your sightings and if we find a new volunteer I will forward the sightings to the appropriate person. The snowy owls continued to show up in unexpected places and at least two lesser black-backed gulls were seen on the Yakima Delta. I do have to give credit to Jennie Bradbury for helping compile the sightings for this month. I have been busy with a new job and she was a great help! Have a great February of birding.

January:

Jan 1st: A Caspian tern was seen over Gage Blvd. across from Costco (RL and CL). KC's first bird of the New Year was a merlin perched on a light post at Canyon Rim Rd.

Jan 9th: A varied thrush and a few red-breasted nuthatches were in a Ponderosa Pine at the home of RB.

Jan 10th: Eleven dunlin were the highlight of the monthly Bateman Island walk (NL). Later in the day, NL and BL found an immature Thayer's gull and an adult glaucous gull at the Yakima delta. The glaucous gull was seen again on Jan 13th by KB.

Jan 12th: A snowy owl was seen in Kennewick perched on the roof of a manufactured home on Clearwater (BL0).

Jan 14th: There were 4,000 common goldeneye, 2,000 common mergansers, and 80 American

white pelicans at Ice Harbor Dam (KB).

There were 6 trumpeter swans, 14 canvasbacks, and 35-40 ring-necked ducks at McNary NWR on the Slough (HN).

Two flocks of sandhill cranes were seen flying north over West Richland (LHa). Another smaller flock was seen flying over Finley (KK).

Jan 15th: At least one lesser black-backed gull was seen at the Yakima delta as well as a Eurasian wigeon and two adult bald eagles in the cover next to Bateman Island (JL). The lesser black-backed gull was seen again on Jan 16th and 17th (NL, TM, LF, and WH).

Jan 17th: A Townsend's solitaire was seen flycatching on Sherman Street in Richland. A greater white-fronted goose was mixed in with a group of domestic geese at Leslie Groves Park. At W.E. Johnson Park there was 1 bohemian waxwing, 1 winter wren, and a few varied thrushes and hermit thrushes (NL and TM).

Jan 19th: At the Yakima Delta KB saw 5 dunlin, gobs of green-winged teal, and an immature glaucous gull.

Jan 20th: The glaucous gull was seen again by RB, along with herring gulls and glaucous-winged gulls.

Jan 22nd: Lauren Harter, a birder visiting from California saw 1 Townsend's solitaire, 1 hermit thrush, and 10 golden-crowned sparrows, all along the Yakima River at W.E. Johnson Park.

January Sightings Continued

Jan 27th: A snowy owl was reported twice in Pasco, both on Court Street and at McGee School (LH and MH).

Jan 31st: Six trumpeter swans and several tundra swans were seen at McNary NWR . Also, 2 peregrine falcons were seen at Sacajewea Park (BD).

Observers:

(BD) Bob Derting, (BL) Bill LaFramboise, (BLo) Bob Louie (CL) Carole Louderback, (HN) Heidi Newsome, (LH) Lisa Hill, (LHa) Leslie Hauer, (LF) Lucie Fritz, (JL) Jim Lehmann, (KB) Kevin Burke, (KC) Kathy Criddle, (KK) Kris Keating, (LF) Lucie Fritz, (MH) Marilyn Hayes, (NL) Nancy LaFramboise, (RB) Rich Barchet, (RL) Ron Louderback, (TM) Tom Mansfield, (WH) Wayne Heinz



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

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Bateman Island Bird Walk:

With *Lisa Hill*

Birds and birders were in low numbers for the January Bateman Island bird walk. Five people tramped around the island on January 9, including two newbies who recently joined LCBAS. It was a challenge, but 34 species were listed for a typically slow birding month in the Tri-Cities.

We always stop along the causeway to scan for birds in the water. A GREAT BLUE HERON was on the west side which was still iced over, and the east side had HORNED GREBE, RUDDY DUCK, AMERICAN WIGEON, BUFFLEHEAD, PIED-BILLED GREBE, and CACKLING GOOSE with a noticeable smaller body and bill than Canada Goose. BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH were the most plentiful small birds along the path. A very few BEWICK'S WREN, SONG SPARROW and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW were counted, and most were heard rather than seen. We observed only three AMERICAN ROBIN, although they currently number in the 100's in some areas of the Tri-Cities. One GREAT HORNED OWL was found in the locust grove. Two immature BALD EAGLES were perched on an island in the delta off the west bank. COMMON MERGANSER and NORTHERN PINTAIL were in the water around the island and numerous gulls loafed on the icy patches including HERRING GULL and GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL. The best find of the day was 11 DUNLIN.

March 6 is the date for the next walk. As the weather warms and the days lengthen, we should begin to find more species on the island. **We meet at 8:00am in the parking lot at Wye Park near the entrance to the island.** Birders of all experience levels are welcome. Binoculars are recommended and there will be several pair available to borrow.

Brown Pelicans Dying on the Oregon Coast

U.S. Fish and Wildlife service news release

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has been receiving calls about Brown Pelicans that are either washing up dead on the coast or are exhibiting behavior which is uncharacteristic for the species (ie. begging for food, no fear of humans, eating bread crumbs as handouts). Many of the birds are emaciated, or starving and this is the reason for their seemingly lack of fear of humans.

After the breeding season in California and Mexico, California Brown Pelicans migrate north throughout California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia in the summer months and usually begin to head back south in large numbers in October. This year, however, a large number of pelicans remained along the Oregon coast through the winter. Recent storms and high winds have limited the pelicans ability to hunt and dive for food. These and other unknown factors contribute to the pelicans' behavior of begging for food.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service discourages hand feeding pelicans as their diet is very particular. Good intentions of feeding pelicans the bones and heads of fish can cause damage to the pelicans' throat pouch. Also fish bait can be contaminated with harmful bacteria or may be treated with chemicals to promote better fishing or preserve the bait, but it can make a pelican very ill. Brown Pelicans were only recently delisted from a Threatened species, delisted in November of 2009. The species is still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act it is illegal to possess any part of a migratory bird, dead or alive.



New bird species found in rainforests of Borneo

By Doreen Walton

Science reporter, BBC News Jan. 14, 2010

A new species of bird has been spotted in the rainforests of Borneo. Leeds University biologist Richard Webster first glimpsed the bird from a canopy walkway 35m above ground. The spectacled flowerpecker, a small, wren-sized, grey bird, was feeding on some flowering mistletoe in a tree. On one sighting it was heard singing. The bird has white markings around its eyes, belly and breast. It has not yet been given a scientific name because so little is known about it. Dr David Edwards, a tropical ecologist at the University of Leeds, identified the bird as a new species from photographs. "It's like a dream come true," he said. "I've spent all these years, decades, watching birds and all you want to do really is discover a new species to science. "All that tropical field work has paid off, all the mosquitoes, the leeches, the rainstorms and the mud have been worthwhile." The team caught sight of the birds several times in the days following its first appearance. They were working in the Danum Valley Conservation Area in Sabah, Malaysia, last summer. "The discovery of a new bird species in the heart of Borneo underlines the incredible diversity of this remarkable area," said Adam Tomasek, leader of WWF's Heart of Borneo initiative. The findings are published in Oriental Bird Club's journal *BirdingASIA*.



A female of the new species was spotted snacking on

Conservation Notes – with Rick Leumont

River shore Development:

The newspaper, radio and television bring announcements, almost daily, of proposed projects to develop the river shores of the Tri-Cities. Lower Columbia Basin Audubon has been a guardian and steward of our shorelines for 45 years.

Our position has remained the same and can be summarized by the following points:

1. Public park lands should remain in public ownership – federal, state, county or city government.
2. Fish and wildlife habitat along the shoreline should be managed for fish and wildlife first. Preserve the habitat. Encourage public enjoyment of wildlife but optimize wildlife's ability to use it.
3. Activities in our shoreline parks should be limited to those which are related to the shoreline or require access to the shoreline or river. Open space and access for walking, birding, fishing, picnic, simply enjoying the view. Low impact recreation – leaving only footprints. We oppose using the shoreline parks for projects such as skateboard arenas or sports car racing, activities which have absolutely no relation to the shoreline and can be fully enjoyed elsewhere.
4. Our public parks should not be used for commercial developments such as restaurants, resorts, movie theaters, shopping boutiques etc. Existing private or port lands adjacent to the river can accommodate these commercial needs. Some may argue that private riverfront property is just too expensive for these projects. Our parks should not be used to subsidize private enterprise.
5. Columbia Point South, Bateman Island and the Yakima Delta are prime wildlife habitat and should never be developed. We strayed from this position slightly by advocating construction of the Hanford Reach National Monument Visitor Center on the point. Our primary objective in advocating placing the Visitor Center on the point was to bring all Richland City property on Columbia Point South under management of the Visitor Center as a means of keeping all of it, other than the small Visitor Center footprint, in open space and native habitat.

6. Vegetation along the shoreline should be managed to encourage and accommodate birds, wildlife and fish.
7. We have not opposed appropriate development of private or public commercial/industrial lands along the river, so long as those activities do no harm to fish, wildlife and water quality. Urban renewal in essence recycles urban lands and limits urban sprawl.

Hopefully these points, which have guided LCBAS for 45 years, will continue to aid us in evaluating new proposals for our shorelines.

Myths about Cats and Birds

From American Bird Conservancy, Cats Indoors! Program (www.abcbirds.org)

Myth #1: *I will put a bell on my cats collar and that will keep birds safe!* This is a myth because putting bells on a cat's collar does not prevent predation by cats on birds and other wildlife. A cat can learn to silently stalk its prey. Even if the bell does ring, birds would not necessarily associate the sound with danger, and a bell would do nothing to protect young animals with no experience with cats or bells.

Myth #2: *My cat is well fed and so will not hunt birds.* This is a myth because feeding a cat does not prevent predation. Scientific studies have proven that well-fed cats still kill wildlife because the urge to hunt and the urge to eat are controlled by different portions of a cat's brain.

Myth #3: *I declawed my cat so it can't kill birds.* This is a myth, declawing a cat does not prevent predation. A free-roaming declawed cat in a scientific study in Wichita, KS killed more birds than any other cat in the study.

Keeping cats indoors is the only sure way to protect birds and other wildlife! Learn more from *Cats Indoors!*

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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**.

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

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