



May 2010  
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Number 9

# the curlew

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

### Special Interest Articles:

- Pick up your IMBD t-shirt!
- Conservation notes – Gulf oil spill!

### Individual Highlights:

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## Mammoth Finds and Furious Floods!

**Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, May 25, 7:00 p.m.**

**NEW LOCATION:  
Mid-Columbia Library,  
Kennewick Branch,  
1620 South Union  
Street, Kennewick**

Our May meeting features George Last, Senior Research Scientist with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and President of the Lake Lewis Chapter of the Ice Age Floods Institute.

George will present a lecture and slide show

explaining the presence of Columbian Mammoths in Eastern Washington. The Columbian Mammoth is the official Washington State fossil. Over the last several years, George and his student interns have been researching the location and geologic context of mammoth finds in southeastern Washington. This presentation will focus on the relationship between these mammoth finds and the history of Ice Age Flooding.

Our meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. with a brief business meeting and a bird identification segment featuring Nancy LaFramboise. Following the business meeting those in attendance enjoy a brief social time with cookies and coffee. The speaker usually begins around 7:45 p.m.

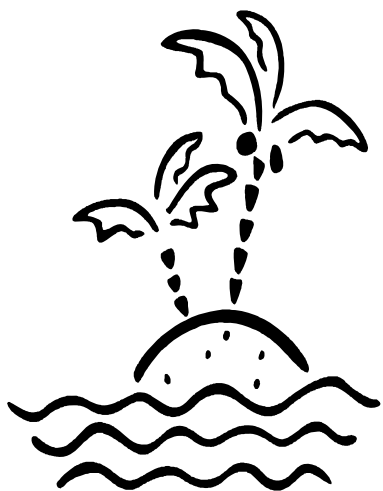
## Don't forget to pick up your IMBD T-shirt!

The May meeting will be the perfect chance to pick up your International migratory bird day t-shirt! If you have not already given Heidi Newsome your \$15 please remember to bring that too! Let's make this fundraiser a successful one!



BD 2010 Shirt, Short Sleeve

CLOSE X




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*"We will make 5 stops at exotic tropical counties: Aruba, Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica and Grand Cayman."*

## 5 STAR BIRDING AND CRUISE

Come and join LCBAS in a new and different **Far Away Field Trip** adventure. We are offering an 11 days birding cruise on March 7-18, 2011. LCBAS will cruise the Caribbean on the Royal Caribbean Cruise Ship, Jewel of Sea. We will make 5 stops at exotic tropical counties: Aruba, Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica and Grand Cayman.

At these stops we will go birding with local guides arranged by Carefree Birding. This is truly the best of all worlds – 5 star dining and entertainment and 5 star birding. Cruising cost depends on the type of cabin you choose and the 5 shore excursions are \$300 per person for all 5 including guides and transportation. We have to have a

minimum of 12 participants and a maximum of 18. \$500 will hold your spot with final payment due December 7, 2010. We are starting to make reservations so if you are interested contact Barbara Clarke (phone 509-588-3362 or [barbaraclarke@verizon.net](mailto:barbaraclarke@verizon.net)) for more information or pick up a brochure at the monthly meeting.

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

### Where do we go from here?

LCBAS is an all volunteer corporation. Without our dedicated volunteers, nothing happens! We can't achieve our conservation, education and fun goals without YOU!

You have heard me preach this sermon before. But now it's getting serious.

LCBAS is at a fork in the road, and we must decide if we are going to take it (apologies to Yogi). The issue is that we are now operating at the full capacity of our person power. Our fundraising has been successful and we have many faithful members, but we cannot add any more burdens to our dedicated volunteers, many

of whom have carried LCBAS on their shoulders for a number of years.

We can stand pat where we are with the volunteers we have and ask them to continue to serve us and the great Audubon mission.

***"To conserve and restore ecosystems, focusing on birds and wildlife, for the benefit of humanity and Earth's biological diversity. Audubon educates adults and children about the environment, advocates responsible public policy and legislation for natural resources, and conducts science-based projects using birds as indicators of health of the natural world."*** *Continued on page 4*

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*"The issue is that we are now operating at the full capacity of our person power."*

# Bird Sightings – April 2010

Angela Harding - ([gela.harding43@gmail.com](mailto:gela.harding43@gmail.com))



*"It's April and spring migration is on!. We are saying good-bye to our winter birds and welcoming our summer breeders."*

Hello Curlew Readers,  
I hope you're having a wonderful Spring! Please enjoy this list of all the great sightings for April.  
Happy Birding,  
Angela

1. The cornfield on Snively Road. April 1<sup>st</sup>, Barb C. Hundreds of Sandhill Cranes. Also found White-fronted Geese and a lone Snow Goose.
  2. Bateman Island, April 1<sup>st</sup>, Nancy, Lisa & Ed. 2 Hermit Thrushes, 1 was singing its full song, not just doing call notes.
  3. Harrington Rd in West Richland, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Nancy, Kathy, Lisa. A Townsend's Solitaire.
  4. Pasco Kahlotus Highway. April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Bill & Nancy L. A Golden Eagle and a Northern Shrike.
  5. Kris Keating's home. April 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Say's Phoebe checking out nesting/perching sites.
  6. N Richland, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Chris B. Two Western Screech Owls having a conversation.
  7. Snivley Road. April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Cathy D. Sandhill cranes are still on Snively Rd., just past the ranch.
  8. Barker Ranch. April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jordene L. 20 Sandhill Cranes feeding in the field. While there, 7 flew over.
  9. Snively Rd. April 4<sup>th</sup>, Rich Barchet. 3 Sandhill cranes in the field. A pair of Green-winged Teal, some Red-winged Blackbirds, a few Magpies, and a Raven.
  10. Snively Rd. April 4<sup>th</sup>, Chad Merkley. Saw 35 Sandhill Cranes about a mile down the road in the field with the big irrigation pivot.
  11. Yakima Delta, Apr.5, Bob Woodley. The Yakima delta had two new visitors, one Black-necked stilt and two Forster's terns, both species new for the year. Others that have been around for a while included 8 American avocets, 12 Killdeer, 4 Greater yellowlegs, 2 Least sandpipers, 2 Dunlin, 5 Caspian terns, and a host of Cliff swallows.
  12. Columbia River Road north of Pasco, April 6<sup>th</sup>, Kathy, Jane & Nancy. 1 Osprey, 14 Dunlin, 1 Caspian Tern, and 31 additional species.
  13. Tip of Bateman Island, April 7<sup>th</sup>, Wayne Heinz. 2 Caspian Terns, 5 Western Grebes, 2 Osprey, a flock of Western Sandpipers, 100 Cliff Swallows, 200 Coots, 3 dozen Buffleheads.
  14. Snively Rd. April 9<sup>th</sup>, Bob Derting. At least 300 Sandhill Cranes, located an Eurasian widgeon. There are Curlews there and also a Snipe. April 10<sup>th</sup>, Stopped counting the Sandhill cranes at 350, estimates at least 500 were there. White-fronted geese and 1 Snow goose were in with the Sandhills. A flock of 95 White-fronted geese flew over head.
  15. Smith Canyon (near Eltopia). April 9<sup>th</sup>, Bonnie & Nancy. 3 Say's Phoebes, 1 Northern Rough-winged Swallow, a Rough-legged Hawk with a large prey item (rabbit?) and surprisingly a Long-billed Curlew.
  16. Near Prosser along I-82. April 10<sup>th</sup>, Bill & Nancy L. Swainson's Hawk.
  17. Paterson Slough (Curlew studies), April 12<sup>th</sup>, Kathy C, Bonnie D & Nancy L. Found a couple Curlew, a Great Horned Owl nest within a short distance of a Red-tailed Hawk nest. There were 2 young in the owl nest.
- Continued on page 6**
18. April 13<sup>th</sup>, Nancy L.'s home. Both Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets were moving through as were a lot of Cedar Waxwings. Heard a Black-capped Chickadee.
  19. Umatilla Refuge (Curlew studies), April 12<sup>th</sup>, Keith & Jane Abel. A Mountain Bluebird, approximately 15-20 Snow Geese in an alfalfa field and

## President's message *continued* from page 1

Or we can take the bull by the horns and grow the programs that support our special mission of connecting people with nature. You, our faithful members, will decide if we take that fork in the road by your choice to commit a little of your time, or not.

### Birding tip of the Month

*Learn the groups of birds: duck and hawk are easy. Learn warbler, thrush, vireo, etc characteristics too.*

### **McNary Environmental Education Center Second Saturday Event!**

Bugs Galore! Explore the wonderful world of small critters in the shrub steppe and along the wetlands. Nets and jars will be provided. Special guest, James Dillman, will assist us in butterfly identification. Who knows what you will find when you shake a shrub, part a flower or turn over a rock. Come to McNary National Wildlife Refuge, 311 Lake Road in Burbank, WA from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. It's free!

**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.

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

*With Phil Bartley*

Report from May 1, 2010

On a cool and blustery May 1, six of us enjoyed the monthly Bateman Island walk. Before even getting to the causeway, we enjoyed Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Cliff Swallows. Along the walk, we collectively saw and/or heard 48 species. The winds and the high water level made identification of some of these species more difficult. One highlight was the nice comparison we had between Clark's and Western Grebe. Signs of continued spring migration included singing Orange-crowned Warbler, one unidentified flycatcher, Western Kingbird, and a Nashville Warbler seen by some.

The Bateman Island Walk on **Saturday, June 5** will be the **last** before the summer break. All the nesting species should be settled in such as Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Gray Catbird and possibly Lazuli Bunting. **Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park above the causeway** to the island. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Binoculars are recommended and there will be several pair available to borrow.

***Nashville Warbler pictured below***



## Conservation Notes *with Rick Leumont*

### BLOWOUT IN THE GULF – DEJA VU:

A 1969 oil spill near Santa Barbara, California made headlines across the nation. The spill was caused by a blowout on a Union Oil Company offshore drilling rig. The spill lasted eleven days and released 200,000 gallons of crude oil. Ironically blowout valves, which could have prevented the spill were available but had not been installed. The evening news carried horrific pictures of oil soaked birds and marine mammals killed by the spill.

I joined Audubon in January 1970 hoping to do my part to Save the Earth.

A few years later scandals erupted over the Interior Department's issuances of vast oil and gas leases at garage sales prices – defrauding the taxpayers out of billions.

The 1973 Oil Embargo came and went and we did nothing to address our energy problems.

Reagan's campaign to deregulate business has continued unabated for decades enabling business to put profits first and the environment, public health and our economy at risk.

Court ordered damages from Exxon's enormous oil spill in Alaska were appealed in the courts for years and whittled away to a mere shadow as oil companies engorged themselves on obscene profits.

The ENRON collapse and recent mass failure of big banks and the finance industry demonstrate how the fat cats get fatter leaving the public and taxpayers to pick up the tab.

After years of denial, the government has finally recognized global warming as a looming environmental crisis. It's clear; burning fossil

fuels has been a major contributor to this warming trend. Sadly, the Obama Administration has taken a step backwards opening the Atlantic and eastern Gulf coastal areas to oil and gas leasing.

Now, 40 years after the Santa Barbara spill, the British Petroleum blowout valve failure is flooding the gulf with up to 500,000 gallons of crude oil per day. The oil spill is fouling huge sections of the Gulf of Mexico and our coastal wetlands and may soon move into the Atlantic. The spill will likely go on for weeks and possibly months as quick fix technologies fail to cap the well.

We have learned nothing in the past forty years. It's like we are back to the 70's watching the oil killing birds near Santa Barbara; only much, much worse. Will British Petroleum actually pay for the damages? Probably not. Will Congress or the government provide the regulation, inspection and oversight needed to protect the environment? I doubt it. We are hearing and will continue to hear all sorts of promises which will fail to materialize as the spill slips from the front page.

Is there hope? Yes, there is always hope. It's clear, we have got to go back to the drawing board and develop new strategies and work harder than ever to Save Mother Earth.

### Check out our website:

<http://lcbas.org>

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### ***Continued from page 3***

- many Greater White-Fronted Geese. A Prairie Falcon was spotted in the air near the cliffs in the Wallula Gap on the way back to McNary.
20. Snively Rd. April 13<sup>th</sup>, Rich Barchet. Great Horned Owls, N. Pintails, Mallards, A. Wigeons in approximate 500:10:1 proportion; one Wood duck, 2 Canada Geese; fly-bys of N. Harrier & 3 Great Blue Herons; Then 570 Sandhill Cranes.
  21. North Richland. April 14<sup>th</sup>, Guy McWethy. A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches excavating a nest hole in a Birch tree. It was about 3 inches deep when he took a peek while the birds were away. Will keep us all posted about their progress and if they succeed or not.
  22. Curlew surveys with USFWS, April 14<sup>th</sup>, Kathy, Jane, Keith & Nancy L., 1 American Avocet and 11 Black-necked Stilts. 1 American Pipit (flyover) and an immature Bald Eagle.
  23. Two Rivers Park. April 15<sup>th</sup>, Jordene L. & family. Saw quite a few Marsh Wrens. Were very surprised and pleased to see a Red-naped Sapsucker.
  24. Howard Amon Park. April 17<sup>th</sup>, Bob Derting. 3 White-fronted geese. Also, there are still White-fronted geese and about 25 Snow geese at the south end of McNary NWR, towards Wallula.
  25. Backside of Rattlesnake Mtn. At the junction of Hanks and Case Roads, April 17<sup>th</sup>, Bob & Pat Woodley. A pair of Eurasian collared doves. Sage, Brewer's, Vesper, and Savannah Sparrows. A singing Sage Thrasher.
  26. Bill and Nancy's home. April 18<sup>th</sup>. A Rufous Hummingbird at feeder.
  27. Barker Ranch on Snively Road. April 19<sup>th</sup>, Kathy & Nancy. A lone Barn Swallow, a Great Horned Owl, and a Great Egret close to Horn Rapids Dam. There were still 40 or more Sandhill Cranes there. Horn Rapids Park, Yellow-rumped Warblers in their breeding colors. An Osprey. A Cooper's Hawk & crows mobbing another Great Horned Owl. There were quite a few ducks in the river- N. Shoveler, A. Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, and Bufflehead, with 2 male Redhead and a male Ruddy Duck as bonuses.
  28. Yakima River Delta, April 19<sup>th</sup>, Nancy, Kathy & Bob. Found about 38 species. A male Blue-winged Teal near the west end near the mud bar. 9 Wood Ducks along the mud bars farther out in the delta.
  - Shorebirds included 10 Black-necked Stilts, 45 Dunlin (some in breeding finery), 21 American Avocets, 2 Greater and 1 Lesser Yellowlegs, and 10 Killdeer. A Golden-crowned Sparrow. There were 12 Forster's Terns way out in the delta on the dead branches in the mud. Swallows were virtually absent.
  29. Finley near Hover Rd, April 20<sup>th</sup>, Kris Keating. Has been watching a killdeer nest alongside the road with two eggs.
  30. April 24<sup>th</sup>, Regan. Male Calliope in yard. Only Audubon's Warblers have been seen, though heard Orange-crowned Warblers.
  31. W.E. Johnson Park, April 25<sup>th</sup>, Lisa Hill. A singing male Yellow Warbler and 9 Orange-crowned Warblers. Hundreds of White-crowned Sparrows making so much noise they sounded like starlings. Found one Golden-crowned Sparrow and one Lincoln's Sparrow among them. A Red-tailed Hawk nest, with a total of 28 bird species.
  32. Rancho Reata (Greager yard), April 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>, Tony Greager. Golden & Ruby-crowned Kinglets, singing Cassin's Vireo- earliest ever spotted, Nashville Warbler- passing through, Sooty Fox Sparrow-all weekend, frequently bathing Cassin's Finch- 1 female. Orange-crowned Warbler-occasionally singing, Red-breasted Nuthatch- at suet, Downy Woodpecker-at suet, Lincoln's Sparrow- at pond, Golden-crowned Sparrow- bathing adult. The Red-tails have clearly hatched as evidenced by their busy parents.
  33. Richland, April 27<sup>th</sup>, Lisa Hill & Larry Umthun. Had a Calliope Hummingbird of undetermined gender at their feeder. Believes it was most likely female. Also saw two W. Kingbirds roaming the empty lots behind home.
  34. Horn Rapids Park, April 28<sup>th</sup>, Kathy C. & Heidi N. A Nashville Warbler and an Orange-crowned Warbler staying low in a tangle of Sagebrush. A Turkey Vulture over Hwy 240 near Park.
  35. By the Yakima near milepost 6 on SR225, April 30<sup>th</sup>, Joel Tinsley. A pair of Osprey perched together.
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## Lisa Hill Watercolorist - Bird Art – Don't forget to order to support LCBAS and receive your discount during May!



LCBAS members will be able to pre-order matted prints and boxes of notecards featuring 4 original watercolor paintings of **Burrowing Owl, Bullock's Oriole, Lazuli Bunting, and of course, Long-billed Curlew**. View the artwork and print your order form at our website – click the tab at the top of the page – [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org). These prints are available through LCBAS during the month of May, and will be mailed to purchasers upon order if required. Prices during the May promotion include a 15% discount from Lisa's regular prices. Prints are available in 3 sizes, 5"x7" (matted 8"x10") - \$17.00 + \$3.00 shipping, 8"x10" (matted 11"x14") - \$29.00 + \$4.00 shipping, and 11"x14" (matted 16"x20") - \$42.00 + \$8.00 shipping, and will be signed by the artist. Boxes of 8 3.5"x5" notecards at \$10.00 + \$3.00 shipping are also available. Lisa's original paintings will sell for \$550.00 and will be available during May to the LCBAS members who want to own the original art.



May 10, 2010

By ANTONIO GONZALEZ, The Associated Press

PELICAN ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, Fla. — The first two oiled birds found after a massive oil spill on the Gulf Coast have been cleaned and released in what could be the start of several relocations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the birds Monday at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge northeast of Vero Beach.

The birds are a Northern Gannet found in the Gulf and a Brown Pelican discovered on Stone Island on the Louisiana coast. Both were treated at the bird rehabilitation facility at Fort Jackson, La.

The primary recovery facility has treated only a few birds so far, and trying to quantify how many could be affected is difficult. Rescuers say it depends on where the oil travels in the Gulf, but that most oiled birds will be relocated out of the spill's trajectory.

### A note on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

Feeling helpless? There are things we can do to assist in the crisis! Please take the time to follow what National Audubon, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy and many other groups have done and are doing to respond to the oil spill crisis created by the explosion and eruption of BP's Deepwater Horizon oil well. The National Audubon website <http://www.audubon.org/> has stories regarding response and impacts to the fragile wetlands and birds along the gulf coast. You can donate to relief efforts through their website.

The National Wildlife Federation <http://www.nwf.org/> also provides information an opportunity to donate to help wildlife. The Nature Conservancy also offers 3 ways to help in the crisis at their website. <http://www.nature.org/> We do not have to feel helpless in this time of need! Please take action somehow to support the wildlife that is now impacted by this tragedy.

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Lower Columbia Basin Audubon  
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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** and send to LCBAS (new members only).

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.....

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**COZY010Z**