



March 2011  
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Number 7

# the curlew

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

### Special Interest Articles:

- "Ghost Bird"  
April 2nd
- "Barn Owl  
Boot Camp"  
April 23
- Rattlesnake trip  
report

### Individual Highlights:

- President's message  
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## Management of Steelhead & Salmon Returning to the Columbia & Yakima Rivers

**Membership Meeting**  
**March 22, 2011**  
**7:00 p.m.**  
**Kennewick First**  
**Lutheran Church,**  
**corner of Yelm and**  
**Highway 395**

The March membership meeting of LCBAS will feature a presentation by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife District 4 Fish Biologist, Paul Hoffarth. Hoffarth is responsible for fish management in Benton and Franklin counties. Paul Hoffarth's area of

responsibility include salmon and steelhead sport fisheries in the mainstem Columbia River from John Day Dam to Priest Rapids Dam and the Yakima River below Prosser. Our speaker will be discussing how WDFW manage salmon and steelhead returns to the Columbia and Yakima Rivers. In addition Hoffarth will discuss hatchery supplementation, harvest management and estimating returns.

The business meeting will begin at 7:00 followed by a short social break and refreshments. Our speaker usually begins around 7:45 p.m. Members are encouraged to attend this interesting lecture. Anyone bringing cookies or other snacks will be rewarded with big smiles!



## Bateman Island Bird Walk *with Kathy Criddle*

The weatherman was wrong. It was not cold, cloudy and raining! Looking for birds on the first Saturday in March, the 5th, was a sunny, warm and friendly event. More than 30 people joined together to enjoy the monthly walk on Bateman Island. The causeway yielded the usual Pied-billed and

Horned Grebes, Wigeon, Double-crested Cormorant, Common Merganser and a few surprises including an Immature Bald Eagle and a small flotilla of Ruddy Ducks. Highlights along the trail included fantastic views of chattering Black-capped Chickadees and

Golden-crowned Kinglets flashing their golden and red tinged crests. One Great Horned Owl sat for inspection while many of the group including Junior Audubon member Sophia and her mom took turns looking through the spotting scope.



*"Ruby-crowned Kinglet flashing red tinged crest (I didn't find a photo of a Golden-crowned kinglet – so enjoy this one!). Photo courtesy Jordeen Lucas"*

## Bateman Island Walk *Continued*

Chad Merkley helped lead the group around the island stopping to point out the differences between a Cackling goose and a Canada goose and the subtle differences between the Western Grebe and the Clark's Grebe. While I had to leave for work, Chad helped the group spot numerous gull and duck species, a Common Loon and lots of little birds including Marsh Wren, Bewick's Wren, Song Sparrows,

Spotted Towhee and Yellow-rumped Warblers.

All in all we saw an amazing 52 species for the morning, exceeding last year's March sightings by just one. Come join us on the next Bateman Island walk which will be April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8 am starting at the Wye Park off Columbia Park Trail.

## ***"Ghost Bird" - a documentary film, special screening***

The Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society is bringing the documentary, *"Ghost Bird"*, to the Battelle Auditorium at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 2nd. The price of admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children to 17 years or \$15 for the entire family.

**Ghost Bird** is a documentary by Scott Crocker. It documents the search for the ivory billed woodpecker. Chosen by Critic's Pick in New York Magazine, "Spellbinding ... a cosmic lament for the forest primeval and man's search for environmental redemption".

Set in a murky swamp full of birders, scientists, and reporters, *Ghost Bird* explores the limits of certainty, the seductive power of hope and how one phantom woodpecker forever changed a Southern town.

This thrilling eco-noir investigates the strange but true story of a small town in Arkansas overrun by a nation of birders all searching for the "grail bird" – the Ivory-billed woodpecker.

Presumed extinct for over half a century, scientists announced the miraculous return of the Ivory-bill in 2005 after seeing it flying through the bayous of eastern Arkansas. Or was it?

Despite years of searching, the bird's fate remains a mystery. This witty, insightful documentary brings the Ivory-bill's blurry rediscovery into focus, reveewing our uneasy relations with nature and the increasing uncertainty of our place within it.

Join us April 2nd at the Battelle Auditorium. Bring your neighbor who loves birds.

Tickets - Available at the Door

\$3.00 - child (to 17 years old)  
 \$5.00 - adult (18 years old and up)  
 \$15.00 - family (maximum)

# McNary Environmental Education Center - Second Saturday Event- Earth Day - Let's Clean Up Our Refuge!

**When:** Saturday, April 9, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

**What:** Meet new friends & have a chance to access areas of the refuge that are generally closed to the public. Dress for the weather. Schedule--Promptly at 9 a.m.: Sign in & meet your group; 11:30: Meet on McNary deck to eat & visit. On Foot: Bring gloves, snacks/lunch & meet at 9 a.m. at McNary. 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 the second stoplight after the Snake River Bridge. Turn left onto Lake Rd. Look for Education Center on the left. On water: Bring kayak or canoe, PFD, & gloves. Meet Ranger Jaynee at Casey Pond at 9 A.M. Directions: From the Tri-Cities, go east on I-182 and US Highway 12. Go about 4 miles past Burbank, turn right at Hanson Loop Road. Left at the boat launch. PLEASE BRING SNACKS AND/OR LUNCH. Questions call the Friends of McNary Refuge at 509-546-8352 or the Refuge Office at 546-8300.

## Barn Owl Boot Camp



*Baby Barn Owls eat lots and lots of mice!*

Where baby owls learn to be all they can be:

**Help Blue Mountain Wildlife prepare for Baby Season**

**What: Barn Owl Boot Camp Fundraiser**

**Where: Richland Community Center, Howard Amon Park**

**When: Saturday, April 23, 2011, 1 - 3 p.m.**

Refreshments - Fun - Live Birds of Prey

For more information go to [bluemountainwildlife.org](http://bluemountainwildlife.org) or call Marilyn Hayes @ 509 521 4648

## Upcoming Programs 2011

Apr. 26 David Knibb, Author: Grizzly Wars: The Public Fight Over the Great Bear

May 24 Either wolves or wildflowers?? TBD

Jun. 28 Picnic in the Park

## Birding: The Basics

This workshop/field trip class covers bird identification by shape, flight, size, behavior and song. Learn to use a birding field guide (bring your own or use ones provided) and find out how to choose a field guide. Saturday morning a field trip will let you try out your skills as we join the local Audubon group at Bateman Island.

**Friday May 6, 6:30 to 9 pm workshop at Kamiakin High School library**

**Saturday May 7, 8 to 11 am** field trip to Bateman Island Course taught by Connie Estep, with instructor fees going to Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society. Sign up with Kennewick Community Education, phone 222-5080, or [www.ksd.org/communityed](http://www.ksd.org/communityed)

## RROSN Update

The Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network has completed its Vision Plan for a regional network of natural and developed open spaces and trails based in part on input from the public workshops and questionnaire from a couple of years ago. The plan is available on-line at <http://rrosn.org> along with information about the RROSN. The plan was rolled out on February 24<sup>th</sup> with a media event and hike up Badger Mountain. Representatives from Richland, Pasco, West Richland, and Benton City attended this event at which the three local TV stations and a Tri-City Herald photographer were also present. The TCH editorial board wrote a very supportive editorial following its meeting with the RROSN board earlier that week. The RROSN board is currently working on raising funds to bring noted landscape architect Randall Arendt (<http://greenerprospects.com>) to the Tri-Cities to present “Growing Greener” workshops that will help present the plan to our local jurisdictions.

For more information, contact Debbie Berkowitz (375-4740).

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

**President Robin Priddy..... E-mail:**  
[grania0358@aol.com](mailto:grania0358@aol.com)

**Secretary Debbie Berkowitz. E-mail:**  
[cdandrb@charter.net](mailto:cdandrb@charter.net)

**Treasurer Katie Harris.....E-mail:**  
[treasurer@lcbas.org](mailto:treasurer@lcbas.org)

### Bird Sightings Column Contributor needed!

I am seeking someone from LCBAS membership that would like to contribute to “The Curlew” by composing our bird sightings column each month! Please let me know if you are interested! Must have access to computer and email!

Thanks

Heidi Newsome – editor  
[heidi\\_newsome@yahoo.com](mailto:heidi_newsome@yahoo.com)

## LCBAS LOCAL BIRDING TRIPS – SOUTH SLOPE RATTLESNAKE TRIP REPORT

Nine people made the trip to the South Slope of Rattlesnake Mountain on a very cold Saturday morning (2/26). It was below freezing the whole time. Twenty-two species were seen in spite of the cold. One of four Sage Sparrows along Rotha Road sang for us. Hundreds of Horned Larks were all along the drive. A single Rough-legged Hawk was seen south of Case Road. Along the Old Inland Empire Highway, on the way back into Benton City, we viewed at an active Red-tailed Hawk nest. Two Prairie Falcons flew over while we were watching. Everyone had a good time, and some found year-birds or even a few lifers. - **Chad Merkley, trip leader**  
 Check <http://www.lcbas.org/fieldtrips.html> for a complete listing of proposed field trips for 2011. Trips are limited to 8-10 people (2 cars), so sign up early to reserve your spot!

# The Future of Astronomy in Eastern Washington

Have you been wondering what happened to that big telescope that was on the top of Rattlesnake Mountain? Well, now is your opportunity to find out. The Kennewick Library will host Mike Durst from Columbia Basin College on April 7th at 7pm. Mike will give an informative presentation on where the Rattlesnake Telescope is going, how soon it will be operational and what this all means for you and the future of Science education in the Columbia Basin.

Do you know anyone who would like to get a four year degree in Astronomy right here at home? Would you be interested in having a Planetarium on the Columbia Basin College campus? Did you know you and your family could observe the stars and planets at the Moore Observatory every Friday night? To find out the answers to these questions and more, join us Thursday night, April 7th at the Kennewick Library on Union Street. For more information go to [www.midcolumbialibraries.org](http://www.midcolumbialibraries.org) or call Kathy Criddle at 783-7878 or email [kcriddle@mcl-lib.orgkc](mailto:kcriddle@mcl-lib.orgkc)

## 2011 Oregon Field Ornithologists Annual Meeting

Oregon Field Ornithologists is pleased to announce that the 2011 annual meeting will be held in Pendleton, Oregon 17-19 June.

Come join us as our annual gathering makes its first visit to this bird-rich area. Expect to visit habitats that range from the lowland riparian corridors along the Umatilla River, to the dry uplands of the Columbia Plateau, to the montane habitats in the nearby Blue Mountains. And, the birding doesn't end at sundown, as this region is home to a diverse array of owls and other nocturnal species.

Owls will be prominently featured at this year's meeting. Dr. David H. Johnson, Director of the Global Owl Project in Alexandria, VA, is slated to keynote the meeting with his Saturday evening presentation of "Science of the Owls of the Pacific Northwest." In recent years, Dr. Johnson has been conducting a study of Burrowing Owls on the Umatilla Chemical Depot property. The always engaging Mike Denny will give the Friday evening program.

Field trip destinations include, the Umatilla Depot, Ukiah Burn, Umatilla River riparian areas, Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge, and other local hotspots. Dr. Johnson, Mike and Merry Lynn Denny, members of the Pendleton Bird Club, and OFO volunteers will lead these trips.

**Continued on Page 6**

## Western Field Ornithologists Conference: Sierra Vista, AZ August 17-21, 2011

If you've never been to southeast Arizona during the late summer season (or even if you have), this is an opportunity you won't want to miss. Besides a program of speakers and workshops, we will offer field trips to all the southeast Arizona hotspots looking for local specialties like Scaled and Montezuma quail, Gray, Short-tailed, and Zone-tailed hawks, a dazzling variety of hummingbirds and flycatchers, Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, Cassin's, Botteri's, Rufous-winged, and Five-striped sparrows and much more. To register and see full details go to [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org) and click on the 'Annual Conference' banner in the middle of the page. You will probably want to download the Conference Details document and review before you begin registration.

## President's Message *from* *Robin Priddy*

I love spring for all the activity it brings in the air, clouds, sky, and of course the birds.

Chad Merkely and Kathy Criddle led the Bateman walk where 52 species were seen on a beautiful spring morning - he also led the trip up Rattlesnake Mountain's south side at the end of February in Rich's absence. Thanks for stepping in and leading everyone in these excursions where we see and learn so much.

A huge thanks to Charlotte Reep and everyone who pitched in at Applebees on the 26th of February - it was a great success fundraising, and also just having some fun, seeing friends, serving coffee, and some fellowship. It went so well I'm sure it's an event we will repeat. The following Friday so many left to go on a birdwatching adventure in the Caribbean (I think); we're looking forward to a slideshow when they all return.

At the last membership meeting, we found out that Nancy and Bill LaFramboise will be leaving us for Florida. Our loss will be Florida's gain; our loss is certainly substantial. Their dedication to birds, passion for learning, education, taxidermy, and everything "bird" will be missed. Along with Bill and Nancy leaving, Rick Leaumont will be stepping down from conservation chair. These losses are actually hard to contemplate; we will all be called to fill the vacuum left. Our landscape and everything in it is certainly better for their work.

Please do take some time to pay attention to what is going on in the legislatures, state and federal. We are sending out Washington Policy updates we get from our liaison as they come in; and National is requesting our attention to matters at the federal level. It's hard to find the time to sit and read these details, then respond; please do take the time. Making our voices heard, individually and collectively, is important at this time.

And last, I won't mention any names for the sake of privacy, but it has struck me lately how many

## **THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR MAKING OUR APPLEBEE'S FUNDRAISER A BIG SUCCESS!**

**“Thanks to all who attended the Applebee's Fundraiser Breakfast. It was a great success and a lot of fun, both eating and serving. Best of all, we exceeded our financial goals for this event, which helps us fund important educational and environmental projects. Your support for this is appreciated.”**

***Charlotte Reep***

of us; either ourselves, or loved ones, are struggling with issues of health, of loss, of separation. I have always had a strong belief that we have families to whom we are born, and we have families to whom we are called. We all have been called, in one way or another, to serve the world and each other through Audubon. I hope you all will join me in holding all of us close as we move through this time together.

Spring and migrants are ahead of us - I look forward to enjoying it with all of you; please join us in meetings, walks, activities or committee work.

Thank you for the privilege of serving.

### ***Continued from page 5***

All meetings will be held at the Pendleton Center for the Arts. Evening activities include social hours each night followed by a banquet, etc. Participants are responsible for securing their own lodging. Registration information for this conference will be inside the spring edition of Oregon Birds and will soon be available online at the OFO website ([oregonbirds.org](http://oregonbirds.org)).

For further information, [please contact meeting coordinator David Smith](#) after March 18, 2011.

## Conservation Notes:

*with Kathy Criddle*

### Osprey Pointe Business Park, Port of Pasco

The Port of Pasco recently began implementing a Shoreline Improvement Project at the Osprey Pointe Business Park. Alarmed that large cottonwood trees and understory brush were being removed, several of us in the community including myself, members of the Friends of Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges and the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society went to the Port of Pasco with concerns and suggestions on how to manage the remaining habitat along the Osprey Pointe shoreline.

The Port of Pasco agreed to stop the work planned for the natural area portion of the project and consider ideas from the public. Initially the plan called for eliminating some of the trees that posed safety hazards and clearing all the downed wood and much of the understory. Some of the many suggestions from concerned citizens and organizations include leaving dead trees for birds and owls, leaving fallen logs and debris for wildlife habitat and restoring native riparian shrubs and bushes for songbird cover and habitat.

Last year I lead a birding walk along this portion of the Sacajawea Heritage Trail and thought at the time that the area had great potential as habitat for songbirds and migrants but it needed some improvement with more native riparian shrubs and bushes. The Shoreline Improvement Project has presented a great opportunity to share ideas on how improve the habitat for birds and wildlife with the Port of Pasco .

Meetings with Randy Hayden, Director of Planning & Engineering for the Port of Pasco have been quite positive. He was very

receptive to many of the ideas and suggestions presented by myself, and the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, the Native Plant Society and the Friends of Mid-Columbia Wildlife Refuges. The Port of Pasco Board of Commissioners has been very receptive to considering changes to the original plan. Mr. Hayden has been directed by the Commissioners to discuss the ideas with the contractor and to determine what the estimated costs might be. The Commissioners will consider whether to implement the changes after receiving the information at their next meetings.

Once the changes are approved, the plan calls for large islands of noxious knapweed to be removed by the contractor. Once the weeds are eradicated, hopefully by next autumn or next spring, we will organize volunteer work parties to help restore the native rivershore vegetation in the natural area.

To see this area and enjoy a morning of bird watching walk, join me on April 30<sup>th</sup> for the second annual Earth Month Bird Walk at Osprey Pointe at 8 AM. To get to Osprey Pointe in the Port of Pasco take East Ainsworth St to Dock St. Once on Dock St look for the tall pole along the water with the Osprey Nest Platform on it. Turn onto SE Road 20 E and park near the Osprey Nest Platform. SE Road 20 E is a tiny little street and it is easy to miss so watch for the street sign. If you end up in Sacajawea State Park, you have gone too far! For more information you can call me at 509-947-4074 or email me at [kcriddlebirds@yahoo.com](mailto:kcriddlebirds@yahoo.com).

**The Curlew**

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

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**Audubon Membership Information**

**Please Note: LCBAS Chapter Benefits** (includes a year's subscription [10 issues] to *The Curlew*) this is an additional cost to membership in National Audubon Society.

\$20. for annual membership benefits 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. This payment includes membership in the local chapter (LCBAS) but does not include a subscription to *The Curlew*

Please make check payable to **National Audubon Society**. Please do not send renewals for NAS to LCBAS.

*For any of the 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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**C1Z**

**Y010Z**