



June 2012
Volume XLVII
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the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

LCBAS Annual Picnic Potluck!

**Tuesday, June 26th
6 - 9 pm
South Leslie Groves
Park, Richland**

The Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society Annual Potluck Picnic will be held in Leslie Groves Park, Shelter 2, Tuesday, June 26th from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

Directions: Turn East off George Washington Way on Newcomer Ave, then North on Harris Ave., then East again on Park St. There we are!

People are asked to bring a

main dish and either a dessert or salad. As in past years no liquor permit was obtained, so non alcoholic beverages only, please. LCBAS will provide lemonade. Bring your own plates, silverware, etc.

The public is invited to attend. Come and bring a friend to share the good time and learn what LCBAS has accomplished this past year. Those attending do not have to be Audubon members to join the fun.

Remember that the annual potluck is also the time when we recognize

significant contributions to the chapter. So come also to say thanks to our Board Officers and Board members and all of those that make this organization run!

Plus there are always good birds to see in Leslie Groves Park – perhaps a loon on the water or something like that!



Special Interest Articles:

- *Don't forget to join Larkwire to practice bird song recognition!*
- *Remember bird walks take a break in summer – next bird walk Sept 1!*

Individual Highlights:

President's message

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Bird Sightings 5

Bateman Island bird walk – June 2, 2012 *with Dana Ward*

After a nice early morning rain shower, twelve participants joined the monthly Bateman Island Bird Walk at 8:00 AM. The weather cleared off and it was a spectacular spring morning for a bird walk. The birds were active with 44 species noted. Some species infrequently seen on the island were observed during the morning as well as some old standbys. The big treat for the day was the **Yellow-breasted Chats**. Several were seen during the course of the morning on prominent exposed limbs chatting for all they were worth. At times they were joined on the same branch by one or two **Gray Catbirds** which were in full "drab" color. It was fun listening to the two different species sing, talk, chatter and squawk. The Yellow-breasted Chat is our largest warbler at 7 ½ inches and the Catbird at 8 ½ inches is slightly larger.

The group was treated by our old friends the **Great Horned Owls**. Adults and young were spotted in the mature trees in the usual area not far from the gravelly beach delta observation point. It is truly amazing how such a large bird cannot be seen for the longest time until your companion birder points

out the exact limb that they are setting on. The owl then flies to a new perch in a neighboring tree and you start the process all over again. Possibly seeing another owl that you did not know was in that tree too.

Waterfowl species were low during this walk. I suspect that waterfowl were setting tight on nests or have left the area. The Canada Goose and Mallard were seen but no American Coots, Gadwalls, or Buffleheads were spotted. The Yakama delta that was the host of thousands of ducks just weeks earlier was quiet and calm except for one lone Egret and a few scattered American White Pelican and some others to be mentioned later. We were treated to some fly-overs by White Pelicans. It is always fun to watch the flight of the giant American White Pelican as it cruises overhead. Flap, flap, flap...glide, flap, flap...glide all in perfect synchronization. One thing unique about the pelican is its ability to disappear in the blue sky when it circles some distance away. Now you see them, now you don't.

We did see 3 pairs of Western Grebes on the Yakima River delta but no water dancing. A few

Forster's Terns dove into the water and once or twice came up with fish. We watched a lone California Gull working on a large dead carp just below the water surface. Earlier a Pelican had tried to swallow the fish but gave up; it was too large and would not go down.

Do you know the difference between the call of the American Robin and the Black-headed Grosbeak? They are somewhat similar. The grosbeaks were very active on the island this walk and we saw and heard many of them during the morning. We had some individuals set on bare limbs and sing. In this way we were able to watch the bird's mouth movements and listen to the song at the same time. What a great learning tool. *Continued pg*

We were treated to Downy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Black-capped Chickadees, and Song Sparrows. We saw many Red-winged Black Birds and some Brown Headed Cowbirds. We saw a lone Yellow Warbler, heard some too, and briefly saw a Nashville Warbler, but no Yellow Rumps were present. We spotted some new Oriole nest and both female and male birds were sighted. We also located two House Finch nests that were very active with adults coming and going. *Continued pg 3*

Greetings from the President! With Robin Priddy

Our Chapter year finishes up this month with our annual potluck picnic - please join us - details are in this issue of the Curlew. Last month we had a very nice compliment on our "Curlew" from Helen Engle, Director Emerita, National Audubon. Thanks to Heidi Newsome and all those who contribute regularly and make such a quality newsletter. It certainly reflects and active and engaged chapter. This past month I especially appreciated Lannie Smith's book review.

The trip to Malheur was a

wonderful success (so I hear, not lucky enough to be there!); 90-some species of birds were seen in one day! Thanks to Barb Clarke for her hard work putting the trip together with so many memories and stories created! Cherie Beaudrand's work with Jr. Audubon resulted in seven classes of children going to the Audubon Trail last month. They loved it! Thanks to Marilyn Hayes for helping out. Barb Clarke also helped at the last Junior Audubon meeting of the year giving bird quizzes, so members could earn a cap, or pin.

Our last membership meeting in May included an interesting presentation on White Crowned Sparrow banding project by Ed Rykiel. Kathy Criddle stepped up and did a great job with Bird ID on sparrows; she was helped along with bird humor provided by Madeline Brown and Keith Abel. Many thanks to Cathy Smith for putting together such a nice year in programs, and to Jack and Murrel Dawson, Carole Byrd and Dana Ward, and everyone who takes care of cookies, setup and takedown for our membership meetings.

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**BLUE MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE
TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE
NEEDED!**

If anyone can help Michele and Laurel with transporting injured and orphaned wildlife to Blue Mountain Wildlife in Pendelton Oregon. This is currently the only certified Wildlife Rehabilitation center for this region. please contact Michele: michelle <michelec@tccancer.org> or 509 366 0888 and/or Laurel: laurel <laurelm@tccancer.org> 509 366 57777 to let them know you would like to help. The duties may include meeting people who have injured birds and transporting those critters to the TriCity Cancer Center to be boxed up to be put on the Confederated Umatilla Tribal Bus.

**LCBAS Supports the acquisition of
the McWhorter Ranch on
Rattlesnake Mountain for
Conservation**

During the June Board Meeting, the Board of LCBAS heard from Mike Livingston, Regional Biologist for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding their agencies efforts to purchase the McWhorter Ranch property on the south slope of Rattlesnake Mountain. The Board unanimously approved a letter of support for WDFW to purchase the property for conservation and recreation and to be maintained as a state managed wildlife area. The area would then be open for recreational activity such as bird watching and hiking!

LCBAS also shared the support letter with other Eastern Washington Chapters and requested that they also send support letters. This would amount to additional support for the protection of shrub-steppe in the area and the preservation of this fast disappearing habitat type.

The state currently only has a portion of the funds that they need to complete the project and the property is up for sale on the open market. It is unknown what the outcome will be, but LCBAS is proactively trying to assist in the conservation of this special and important piece of land.

**Columbia Point Golf Course Certification is
NOT associated with National Audubon
Society or Lower Columbia Basin Audubon!**

You may have seen in the paper that the Columbia Point Golf Course in Richland has received a certification in environmental planning from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for Golf Courses.

As a result, Columbia Point will be involved in projects that enhance habitat for wildlife and preserve natural resources. These projects may include installing nesting boxes, using integrated pest management techniques, conserving water, and maintaining food and cover for wildlife.

The ACSP is an advisory service to help existing golf courses develop effective conservation and wildlife enhancement programs. The ACSP is an international program designed to help landowners preserve and enhance the environmental quality of their property. This effort is also sponsored, in part, by the United States Golf Association and aligns with Richland's strategic leadership plan for managing its natural resources.

HOWEVER, this program is **not** a part of National Audubon Society or affiliated with our local chapter and in fact, information from their website states the following

<http://www.usga.org/Content.aspx?id=26126>

"No restrictions are placed on the property as a condition of participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. All decisions concerning the implementation of program suggestions remain with the golf course superintendent and course officials."

Each course pays a \$200 (U.S.)/\$250 (International) annual registration fee to participate in the program. Among the benefits that clubs receive are a Guide to Environmental Stewardship on the Golf Course, 2nd edition, a Certification Handbook that helps to plan, organize, and document environmental efforts, and a subscription to Stewardship News, Audubon International's newsletter.

Audubon International is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society. Audubon International is completely independent, separately incorporated, and is guided by its own Board of Directors. In addition to golf courses, Audubon International also provides programs for businesses, schools, communities, and new developments."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates MAPS station with help from LCBAS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex has established a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) station at the Wallula Unit of the McNary National Wildlife Refuge. This station has been operated for over a decade, this will be the 12 th annual season of operation.

The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program was created by The Institute for Bird Populations in 1989 to assess and monitor the vital rates and population dynamics of over 150 species of North American landbirds in order to provide critical conservation and management information on their populations. The MAPS Program utilizes standardized constant-effort mist netting and banding at a continent-wide network of monitoring stations staffed by both professional biologists and highly trained volunteers.

The McNary MAPS station consists of a constant effort mist netting procedure. This includes 12 mist nets for capturing song birds. Birds are removed from the nets, and banded with individually numbered bands. Data is collected on age, molt, weight and condition. The mist nets are operated once within specific 10 day long periods during the breeding season. Our station operates for 7 sessions between mid-June and early August.

Several skilled volunteers from our own LCBAS have been critical in the operation and data collection from this MAPS station. This year Chad Merkely, Keith Abel, Rich Barchett and Jordeen Lucas have all volunteered to help! This involves training on bird handling, several very early mornings, lots of walking, and ticks!

The USFWS is grateful for the assistance of LCBAS, without the help the MAPS station could not be operated and we would not be contributing to the larger effort of bird conservation throughout North America. Way to go LCBAS! More information at <http://www.birdpop.org/>

May Bird Sightings

This month our regular contributor was not able to compile the column. So here is my very short version!

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LCBirds2/>

Get on the Internet and explore our local bird watching list! Visit the address above to see what local birders are seeing in the area – LCBirds2 was created to facilitate communication among birders in the area. Anyone can view all of the posts just by visiting the link above. If you'd like to post sightings you need to become a member of the list serve, to join click the button that says "Join this group".

Highlights from May include the arrival of hummingbirds both Rufus and Black-chinned, Wilson's and Nashville warblers, Yellow-breasted chat, Western and Eastern kingbirds, Say's phoebe and other flycatchers, Bullock's orioles, Lazuli buntings, Black-headed grosbeaks and Common nighthawk.

Really unusual were Evening Grosbeak in North Richland and White-faced Ibis on the islands in the River just north of Richland. A group of bobolinks was spotted up the valley near Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge. In early June, several singing Black-throated sparrows were spotted on Badger Mountain.

There was much discussion on the list serve regarding Ferruginous hawk identification.

The trip report from Malheur refuge was that the group found 125 species in one day during their trip!

The next bird sightings column will represent all of the summer. So don't forget to post or to send your sightings from the summer months to (lanirock@charter.net) or call them in to (545-4898).

The summer months can be quiet and not super birdy, but be on the lookout for shorebird southward migration which happens starting in July and August!

The Curlew
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon
Society
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Lower Columbia Baisin Audubon Curlew Subscription and Membership Information

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

_____ \$20 annual LCBAS subscription (includes 1-year / 10 issues of the Curlew or eCurlew newsletter). (One subscription per address receiving the Curlew)

_____ \$10. for full time students. (same benefits as above)

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

Communication Preferences

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_____ I also want to be on your e-mail Alert list to receive timely notices about issues or work parties. (Your email address will not be shared), OR

_____ I do not want to be on the LCBAS email alert list.

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

_____ \$20 **Introductory** National Audubon Society (NAS) Membership; includes annual subscription to Audubon Magazine. This is **NOT** the same as LCBAS Curlew subscription above.

Checks for **NEW** NAS memberships should be made out to National Audubon Society and can be mailed to P.O. Box 1900 , Richland , WA with your LCBAS check. Do not combine LCBAS subscription and NAS membership in one check.

RENEWALS: We **cannot** process National Audubon Society Renewals which must be sent directly to NAS

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

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