



March 2012  
Volume XLVII  
Number 07

# the curlew

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## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

# Heritage Gardens: Growing and Enjoying

**Membership Meeting  
Tuesday,  
March 27<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. Kennewick  
First Lutheran Church, corner of  
Yelm and Highway 395**

LCBAS members will be listening to a program this month presented by Mark Nielson and Heather Wendt, District Manager and Assistant Manager for the Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts.



Together Mark and Heather have over 36 years of experience working in the field of resource conservation in Eastern Washington. Over the past 18 months the Benton Conservation District has worked in partnership with the Columbia Basin Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society in developing the Heritage Garden Program. Heritage Gardens promote the use of native

plants, especially those of cultural significance; promote low-water use landscaping and efficient irrigation methods, and educate our community about the history and biodiversity of the Columbia River Basin. In addition to discussing the creation and implementation of the Heritage Garden Program Heather and Mark will also highlight other conservation district projects and programs.

Members are encouraged to bring cookies or other healthy snacks to share during the social portion of our meeting. The speakers will begin their presentation about 7:45 p.m.





"Black-billed magpie "courtesy  
www.birdinginformaton.com"

### **E-alerts: In Operation!**

The new LCBAS e-alert list is in operation! If haven't received e-alerts and would like to be included on our list, please contact [membership@lcbas.org](mailto:membership@lcbas.org). To opt out, either contact this address or reply to an e-alert requesting to be removed from the list. If you have any comments or suggestions about our e-alerts, please contact Debbie Berkowitz at 375-4740 ([secretary@lcbas.org](mailto:secretary@lcbas.org)). There was a typo in the email address last month. It is corrected here.

## **Bateman Island Walk *with Rich Barchett***

Bird activity around Wye Park was lively even before the arrival of about 20 intrepid birders on a cool but promising Saturday morning on March 4. During the course of the walk 50 species were identified by sight or sound. About 3/4 of the land birds seen that morning were present right at Wye Park: Am. Robin, Hermit Thrush, Northern Flicker, E. Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Cedar Waxwing, Song, White-crowned, and House Sparrows, Am. Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Yellow-rumped Warbler. Even though the waters of the Yakima delta were nearly devoid of waterfowl, we had good views of Western, Clark's, Horned, Eared, and Pied-billed Grebes, Common Loon, Canada Goose, Am. Wigeon, Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Common Merganser, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Am. Coot and Double-crested Cormorant. The usual gulls made their appearance: Ringed-billed, California, and Glaucous-winged on a sandbar or as fly-overs. Raptors included Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawks, and Cooper's perched and flying. A female Belted Kingfisher was at her usual perch. A huddle of 5 Great-blue Herons was spied under a clump of Russian Olives hiding from the stiff cool breeze. Fly over birds included Am. Crow, Sandhill Crane, Rock Pigeon, Black-billed Magpie. A Bewick's Wren gave a melodious performance perched in full view. Downy Woodpecker, CA Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Dove and Black-capped Chickadee were seen or heard.

Many more spring migrants and perhaps even some summer residents should be seen on the next Bateman Island walk on April 7. Come join us and see for yourself! Meet at Wye Park at 8 am. Bring binoculars and good walking shoes.

## ***Greetings from the President!* With Robin Priddy**

Thanks so much to everyone who participated in the Applebees fundraiser! We raised over \$1,000 in one morning's work. Plus, it was fun. Thanks to Char for leading us in this event for another year; it looks like we have established an annual event for us.

Our Education program continues to reach

students; Cherie Beaudrand and Jr. Audubon had an event last month and are planning another later this month on bats. Marilyn Hayes, Murrel and Jack Dawson took our information to a Science Fair at Jason Lee. Barb Clarke has been asked to present a class on birding through Kennewick Parks and Recreation. LCBAS's education program is outstanding among

Washington Audubon chapters thanks to the dedication of all who participate - Cherie, Marilyn, Murrell, Jack, Barb and Tom Clarke, Chris Simonen, and Lucie Fritz support this program month after month. This outreach is our path to the future.

Debbie Berkowitz and Ed Rykiel have been very active following West Richland and continued on next page...

## Presidents Message Continued

Richland Parks planning which is very active at this time. W. E. Johnson and Lawless Parks are receiving a lot of attention just now. Up to date information on these developments and on how we can participate is being distributed through our e-alerts. If you'd like to get these alerts let Debbie Berkowitz know (see article on previous page).

Spring seems to be here along with bird migration. The upcoming April walk at Batemen Island should be interesting with the returnees; and Rich Barchet has begun to organize local field trips this spring. Thanks so much to Lannie Smith for keeping us up to date on bird sighting! Thanks as always for the privilege of serving as President.

Robin

## Check out our website:

<http://www.lcbas.org>

### International Migratory Bird Day T-shirts

See page 7 for additional information!

Each year for the past 3 years we have ordered IMBD t-shirts. You must **pre-order!** We will order next month and the shirts will be available in May right around the time of IMBD. Send your name and t-shirt size desired to

[heidi\\_newsome@yahoo.com](mailto:heidi_newsome@yahoo.com).

T-shirts are \$15 each, which also helps raise funds for LCBAS.

## The Shorebird Guide

by *Michael O'Brien, Richard Crossley, and Kevin Karlson,*  
**reviewed by Lannie Smith**

For beginning birders like me, shorebirds constitute a whole different set of challenges. The positive: they hold more still than warblers. The negatives: scopes are usually necessary, the birds' plumage varies throughout the year, and (I'm sorry) they really seem to resemble one another.

O'Brien and his 2 co-authors put together a guide that I find helpful. First, he grouped the North American shorebirds into 4 families (plus 3 more which contain vagrants or accidentals). Divide and conquer. Then he presents a "simplified approach" to identification: relative size, structure, behavior, basic color patterns, voice, plus a few more qualities.

Next is a meaty section he calls "Species Photos". Even the Killdeer has four pages including a distribution map, size measurements, behaviors, structure and status and 11 photos: juveniles, first winter, breeding male and female, a Killdeer on a beach with a Semipalmated Plover, and two flight pictures. This format is normal for all the species.

There are lots of close-up photos, birds of different ages, photos featuring many other species of shorebirds as well as the topic bird. He poses questions ("Are all of the oystercatchers adults?" "Can you find a Dowitcher with its bill hidden?" "Can you identify the other species?" "Focus especially on size, bill shape and head/breast/flank patterns.") Answers appear in the back.

The Species Photos devote almost 200 pages to domestic species. About 100 pages show rarities and regional possibilities. The Species Accounts take up 130 pages, listing a species status, taxonomy, behavior, migration and molt info and vocalizations.

In the final pages you'll find the usual credits, glossary, etc., along with the answers to his quizzes. And he doesn't just say, "It's a Black-bellied Plover." He gives an incredible amount of helpful information for sorting out who all is in the picture, what to look for in the way of bills, feet and cheeks.

Michael O'Brien not only really knows his stuff; he knows how to teach it. The strength of the book is the number of photos, the quizzes and explanations. It's a learning tool. And, it's in time for spring migration!

## Barn Owl Boot Camp!



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 21, 2012.**

Refreshments - Fun - Live Birds of Prey

## April is Mid-Columbia Earth Month!

National "Earth Day" is April 22nd, but in the Mid-Columbia we celebrate it for an entire month with educational activities, tours, talks, crafts, projects, and special events. Because caring for the Earth doesn't happen in one day, it should happen every day!

### What will you do this Earth Month?

Here are some ideas to get you started:

**Recycle.** Check out the **Community Guide**

([http://www.earthmonthmc.org/community\\_guide#recycle](http://www.earthmonthmc.org/community_guide#recycle)) to get the facts and visit <http://earth911.com> to find out where you can recycle various items. You can also look in your phone book for the closest recycling center or call your garbage provider for information.

**Attend an Earth Month activity.** Check out the **Earth Month**

**Calendar** (<http://www.earthmonthmc.org/event>) (for tons of great activities going on throughout the month of April (and the entire year!).

**Reduce the amount of garbage you put out this month.** Can you get by for four weeks on one week's worth of garbage? **Take the One Can A Month Challenge!**

<http://www.enviromom.com/join-enviromoms-one-can-a.html>

**Organize or participate in a community clean-up or neighborhood beautification project.** You can **find an existing project** on the calendar, **contact your city** to find projects, or **organize your own!**

**Participate in Earth Hour.** Earth Hour is a unique opportunity for you to become more sustainable and do something positive for the environment. Join the world's largest grassroots environmental movement by switching off your lights for 1 hour on March 31st! For more information visit [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org).

## **BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR FEBRUARY 2012**

On February 2, following a post on LCBirds2 from Heidi Newsome, Snowy Owl fascination began south of Finley. Many of us made repeated trips, seeing at least three, four, five, and up to six owls present in the same area. Soon the questions started: What is keeping them in that particular spot? What are they finding to eat? Gophers? Voles? Horned larks? Or are these young owls perhaps starving from lack of food? Tony Greager witnessed one of them eating something late in the month, so hopefully they are staying in the area because food is present.

### **North Richland**

Bob Woodley had the following backyard visitors during the month: a Varied Thrush, 2 Eurasian Collared-Doves, a female Downy Woodpecker, Song Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows and American Goldfinches. Mary Lilga reported a new yard bird: an immature Bald Eagle did a fly-over above their home early in the month. Keith and Jane Abel had a Western Screech-Owl, an Orange-crowned Warbler, and Pine Siskins visit their yard. On the 24th they reported Sandhill Cranes flying over north Richland.

### **Leslie Groves Park**

On Valentines' Day an extensive mud bar between Snyder and Saint hosted about 1200 gulls. Most were Ring-billed and California, but there were many Glaucous-winged and Herring (both uncommon), as well as an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull (accidental), an immature Thayer's, and an immature Glaucous (both rare) for a total of 7 species of gulls. Jane and Keith Abel reported a Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Glaucous Gull north of Nelson Island.

Phil Bullard visited the park on the 24th reporting a Great Horned Owl, Spotted Towhee, 4 Common Loons, and a raft of 500-1000 Scaup. Oh, yeah, and a porcupine.

### **Yakima Delta Bateman Island**

On the 19th, Bob Woodley and his son observed a Clark's Grebe with a Western Grebe (rare, uncommon respectively), a drake Eurasian Wigeon (rare), 2 Greater Yellowlegs (rare in winter), 8 Ruddy Ducks, two adult Bald Eagles and one or two Herring and Glaucous-winged Gulls (both uncommon).

### **Badger Mountain**

Phil Bullard witnessed a Merlin pluck and consume a smaller bird at the foot of Badger Mountain's north face on the 7th.

### **Rancho Reata Area**

Tony Greager reported 2 or 3 Long-eared Owls calling on the evening of the 9th. A Barn Owl was also present. On the 24th his female Red-tailed Hawk began sitting on her nest...4 days earlier than previous years. Sharon and Neil Ofsthun reported a yard list of 8 species including: Varied Thrush, juvenile Swainson's Hawk (an unusual February sighting), Great-horned Owl, Pine Siskins and masses of American Goldfinches.

### **Finley Area**

Finley saw a lot of activity this month, probably because so many of us checked out the Snowy Owls. On the 3rd, the Woodleys marveled at seeing Snowy Owls and Great Egrets (the latter in a drainage ditch along Chemical Drive) on the same day. Tony Greager spotted 2 adult Bald Eagles and a roost of 75 Eurasian Collared-doves. Finley resident Kris Keating reported 34 species from Finley with possible highlights: Rough-legged Hawk (uncommon in

winter), Western Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes. Joel Tinsley also reported a Rough-legged Hawk in the Finley area.

### Walla Walla County

Sue Painter was the first to post the thousands of Snow Geese she saw at McNary Headquarters on the 24th. Chris and Fred Simonen saw thousands of the Snow Geese on the fields off Humorist Road the next day. They were also visible to Kris Keating across the river in Finley.

### North Franklin and Pasco Area

Rick and Trelice Leaumont's daughter called her dad on February first to have him come see a Bald Eagle perched in a tree across from McLoughlin Middle School where she teaches. Kevin Black birded various areas of Franklin county, picking up a Mew Gull (uncommon) at the Pasco Humane Society pond, 2 Eared Grebes (uncommon) at Osprey Point, and elsewhere in the county adding Greater Scaup, Lincoln's Sparrow (both uncommon), and a Merlin. On the 23rd he birded eastern and northern Franklin County: Prairie Falcon near on Blackman Ridge Road near Juniper Dunes, Golden Eagle, Canyon Wren (all three uncommon), Gray-crowned Rosy Finches (rare) and 2 Northern Shrikes (uncommon) all in the Devil's Canyon Road area, a Varied Thrush at Lyon's Ferry and 36 Dunlin (uncommon in winter) at the north end of Scooteny Reservoir.

Thanks for posting your sightings on LCBirds2, e-mailing them to me (lanirock@charter.net) or calling them in (545-4898). Comments, suggestions, and corrections are always welcome. –Lannie Smith

## LCBAS Local Field Trips

**March 31** (5th Saturday): **Barker Ranch** (Snively Rd)

**April 28** (4th Saturday): **Levy Landing and Big Flats Game Management Areas.**

**May 19** (3rd Saturday): **Ringold River Rd and walk to overlook.**

**June 9** (2nd Saturday): **Bennington Lake (Walla Walla) & Biscuit Ridge.**

Trip leaders are needed for all of the trips. If you have birded any of these areas and would like to lead others there, please contact, Rich Barchet, LCBAS Local Field Trips coordinator, at [localfieldtrips@lcbas.org](mailto:localfieldtrips@lcbas.org) for details on leading trips. Trip details will be posted to the LCBIRDS2 group site on [Yahoo.com](http://Yahoo.com) when details (leader, start time and place) are known! Most trips will likely take the entire morning, except for the Bennington Lake/Biscuit Ridge trip, which is an all day trip. Carpooling is encouraged and trips are limited to 3 cars. See the local field trip webpage on [LCBAS.org](http://LCBAS.org) for details.

## Choosing Insurance Coverage – Help Requested

LCBAS took out General Liability insurance and Directors and Officers insurance a couple of years ago partly because we were ineligible to apply for grants without it. At the time, National Audubon recommended one particular insurer through whom they had insurance. Since that time, they have identified several other companies that can provide policies for chapters at various levels of cost and coverage. The LCBAS Board is looking for somebody who might be willing to take on the project of looking into and comparing these various insurance possibilities. Experience with insurance companies is useful but not required. If you are willing to do this, please contact Debbie Berkowitz ([cdandrb@charter.net](mailto:cdandrb@charter.net) or 375-4740).

## Pre-view International Migratory Bird Day coming in May!

This year will mark the 20 th anniversary of the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day! IMBD is a celebration of bird migration and is usually celebrated the second Saturday of May each year. Each year has a theme and the 2012 the theme is "Connecting people to Bird Conservation".

Because it is the 20 th anniversary, here are 20 ways to help with bird conservation every day! (from [www.birdday.org](http://www.birdday.org)) Imagine how many birds you can help finish their migratory journey, have a successful nesting season, raise young, survive the winter, if you just....

### 1. Prevent Bird Collisions with Your Windows

*Collisions are one of the most frequent causes of bird deaths. Birds see nature reflected in the window or mistake houseplants inside the building for outdoor plants and fly into the glass. Putting up curtains or window decals helps make the window visible to birds.*

**2. Protect Birds From Pets** *Unleashed dogs and outdoor cats can harm birds by disturbing, chasing, and even killing them. Keeping your cat indoors and your dog from straying saves millions of birds each year.*

**3. Clean Your Bird Feeders** *Dirty feeders can spread disease. Disinfect and clean out old seed from feeders frequently and put fresh water in your bird bath every day.*

**4. Don't Buy Illegally-Caged Birds** *Selling wild-caught birds as pets is illegal. Buy only captive-bred birds. Make certain that the breeder or pet store is reputable.*

**5. Use Cloth Grocery Bags and Reusable Bottles** *Birds that mistakenly eat plastic trash can become ill or even die. Avoiding plastic bags and bottles reduces plastic pollution and conserves resources.*

**6. Recycle** *Anything you recycle reduces litter and saves resources. Get creative!*

**7. Restore Natural Habitat in Your Community** *Birds need a place to live and many bird habitats are disappearing. City parks and open spaces are natural places for birds. Work with your community to recreate the habitat that once existed in your area.*

**8. Keep Your Distance** *Birds need space for feeding, nesting, and other daily activities. Approaching too closely may cause them to become nervous and deplete much-needed energy reserves. During the nesting season, it may even result in loss of eggs or young to predators.*

**9. Leave Fledglings Where You Find Them** *Fledglings may spend several days on the ground after they leave*

*the nest before they are able to fly. You can help by keeping people and pets away, so their parents can continue to care for them. If you think a bird is truly an orphan, call a rehabilitator for instructions.*

**10. Slow Down When Driving** *Cars kill millions of birds each year. Driving slowly gives you more time to respond if there is an animal in the road and gives the animal plenty of time to get out of the way.*

**11. Buy Bird Friendly Products** *You can help preserve bird habitat in Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean by buying shade-grown coffee and chocolate. Shade coffee farms, which imitate native forests, have many more bird species than sun coffee farms.*

**12. Plant Native** *Native plants provide food, nest sites, and cover for birds.*

**13. Teach Others About Birds** *Talk to your friends about birds and start a club in your community to teach people about the challenges birds face. The more people know, the more they can do to help.*

**14. Get Outdoors and Enjoy Nature** *You can appreciate the bird habitat near your home. Find a local park and go for a walk or just stroll around your neighborhood.*

**15. Take a Friend Bird Watching** *Invite a buddy and see if you can spot more birds together.*

**16. Support Conservation.** *Join a bird club or other conservation organization to learn more and contribute to protecting birds. Volunteer with organizations that preserve habitat and help birds.*

**17. Be a Citizen Scientist** *Many projects need helpers to gather data on birds and their habitat. Contact your local Nature Center, library or conservation organization to volunteer.*

**18. Reduce Energy Use** *Riding your bike or walking reduces your carbon footprint and prevents pollution of bird habitats. Switching off the lights in your house not only shrinks your energy bill, but can also help prevent birds from colliding with your windows.*

**19. Avoid Chemicals** *Birds may accidentally eat pesticide and herbicide pellets or prey that have been poisoned. This can kill a bird or have toxic effects on their own health and that of their growing embryos, including deformation or suppressed immune systems.*

**20. Learn the Hunting Laws** *Federal and local laws protect sensitive areas and manage the harvest of birds to ensure healthy populations. Purchase a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. It contributes to habitat which benefits all birds.*

**The Curlew**  
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon  
Society  
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Richland WA 99352  
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**Lower Columbia Basin 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 membership 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**

\_\_\_\_\_ Send the Curlew by mail to my street address below, OR

\_\_\_\_\_ Send the eCurlew to my email - List **Email** here \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 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:*

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

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