



October 2011
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the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Special Interest Articles:

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Wolf Recovery in Washington and Oregon

**Membership Meeting
October 25, 2011
7:00 p.m.
Kennewick First
Lutheran Church,
corner of Yelm and
Highway 395**

Come one, come all to the regular, October membership meeting of LCBAS. This month's guest speaker is John Stephenson, Fish and Wildlife Biologist for the La Grande Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. John is the Wolf Coordinator for the USFW in Oregon. The presentation will be a status report on wolf recovery in Oregon and Washington, providing an update on the

current population. John will touch on the various issues surrounding wolf recovery, such as: the complicated history of federal ESA listings and de-listings, livestock depredation problems, and the Fish and Wildlife Service's current effort to determine what type of recovery approach to take in central and western Oregon and Washington. Invite your friends to this interesting, controversial program.

Our meeting begins at 7:00 with a short business meeting, followed by bird i.d. tips. Next we enjoy goodies and beverages and great conversations.

The speaker begins his presentation around 7:45. Anyone inclined to bring goodies and snacks is encouraged to do so.



Photo by Gary Kramer, USFWS

Spring Chicken Trek, April 13-19, 2012

LCBAS Far Away Field Trips is offering a 7 day Field Trip to Nebraska, April 13 to April 19, 2012. We will be visiting the heart of the famous "Central Fly Way." We will start the trip at the Denver, CO airport where we will

rent a van to take us to our first stop, Kearney, Nebraska. We will spend 3 nights in Kearney and visit the Platte River and the Rowe Audubon Sanctuary. We anticipate seeing thousands of **Sandhill Cranes** standing in the

Platte River. This is a rest stop for the cranes as they make their way north. We also will have a local guide to help us find the "other" birds of the area.

On the 4th day we will



"Prairie chicken"

depart for Burwell, and the working cattle Switzer Ranch in the sand hills of Nebraska. Calamus Outfitters will be out host for 3 days. The Ranch has both **Greater Prairie Chicken** and **Sharp-tail Grouse** Leks or booming grounds. We be able to watch the dancing, drumming, jumping and sparring of these beautiful birds. The ranch will also take us on a jeep safari ride to find the other birds that inhabit this area.

The cost of the trip is \$950 and includes all overnight accommodations based on double occupancy, van transportation, Jeep Safari, Crane Watching, 7 meals, (7 meals on your own) and water and sacks on the van. The trip is limited to 8 participants. If you are interested in joining this Far Away Field Trip, please, let me know and I can send you a more detailed itinerary. I have to finalize reservations just after the first of the year. Give me a call at (509) 588-3362 or email- barbaraclarke@frontier.com.

Greetings from the President! *With Robin Priddy*

I recently had the opportunity to visit the James Audubon Center in Audubon Pennsylvania. It was a bright fall morning, and as I arrived two school buses pulled up, complete with happy noisy children. I went off into the woods, happy to be away from the chaos. When I came back, though, I realized I needed to rethink my attitude. The children were listening to the guides with quiet, rapt attention. I passed a group as the binoculars were handed out. They were SO excited.

Acquainting children with birds is, indeed, our future.

It's the birds' future, too. Cherie Beadrand and those who help with education - Cathy Smith, Marilyn Hayes, Barb and Tom Clarke, Chad Merkley, Lucie Fritz (I apologize to those I've missed) - do such a service in their work with children to move our mission into the future. The experience at the Audubon Center brought it home to me; what a wonderful education program we do have. Thanks to everyone who contributes.

Our own Debbie Berkowitz has received Conservationist of the Year from the Tapteal Greenway

association. Her quiet and diligent service supports LCBAS in so many ways; not the least is the connectedness she provides with other environmentally minded local organizations. Contratulations Debbie!

And Ed Rykiel (last year's Conservationist of the Year) and Chad Merkely have met with Richland about the idea of developing banding sites in Leslie Groves, Howard Amon, and Amon Basin. Those locations would give a north-south transect through Richland. This project is exciting and has a lot of possibilities.

Please be sure to look for Kathy Criddle's update on the work she has spearheaded with Port of Pasco. Her work is a great example of "citizen conservation" - one of us jumping in and really making a difference. There are many ways to support this work - I'm out of town for the work day, but will be sending a contribution.

These education and conservation activities are such a fundamental part of our mission; they are in fact our future. Please consider joining in, as well as simply appreciating the wonderful work being done.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as President this year.

Robin



"Like" Us on Facebook!

A new new place to share! LCBAS now has their own Facebook page. Keep up on important happenings and fun activities. Come contribute and help us make this a fun and educational page.

McNary National Wildlife Refuge

Second Saturday: Owls & Owl Pellets

November 12

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Why are owls so mysterious? Learn the secrets of their eyes, feathers, neck vertebrae, and hunting skills. Then, examine and dissect owl pellets to figure out what they eat and what they can't digest.

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.

Osprey Pointe Songbird Habitat Improvement Project *with Kathy Criddle*



House finch

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

President Robin Priddy..... E-mail:
grania0358@aol.com

Secretary Debbie Berkowitz.E-mail:
cdandrb@charter.net

Treasurer Katie Harris.....E-mail:
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October Update:

- The trail looks amazing! I am so impressed with what the Port of Pasco and Wildlands have accomplished. Pasco residents should be really proud of this unique little nature trail linking the Sacagawea State Park to Chiawana Park and the Hanford Reach. Corridors like this are great for both wildlife and people!
- I met with a Wildlands Nursery representative at the Osprey Pointe site to determine the best

planting locations. We confirmed plant choices and determined that late November, when the winter rains are settling in, would be the best time to plant.

- Plants including Red Osier Dogwood, Gold Current, Service Berry, Smooth Sumac and Chokecherry have been ordered from Wildlands. We purchased 23 one and two gallon plants.
- The plant list and the location plan have been approved by the Port of Pasco staff .
- A flat of 30 *Hetrotheca villosa* and *Penstomen* has been donated. *Continued on page 7*

Conservation

The Conservation Committee met to discuss possible goals for the current LCBAS year. We need the help of our members to make the Committee effective. Here are some thoughts we came up with:

1. Hanford Lands - Continue to support the concepts described in the letter sent to DOE by Rick Leaumont and Mike Lilga. We think they are in fact valuable and should be appraised at or near fair market value and not be given away.
2. Columbia Point South - We need to familiarize people with this resource possibly by conducting birding and nature walks in this area.

3. WSACC Resolutions - Prepare resolutions on our local conservation issues and submit to WSACC. A resolution relating to how conservation projects are scored at the state level may be appropriate.

4. Critical Areas Ordinances - We will encourage the jurisdictions to update their critical areas ordinances where needed and to follow the guidelines of the Growth Management Act.

5. Bird Surveys - We need surveys that add Audubon support for local environmental initiatives such as the Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network. What is the avifauna one could observe whilst hiking these areas? One idea is to have some

knowledgeable members review Howard Ennor's book on birds of the Tri-Cities comparing it to current conditions.

6. LCBAS Expertise for Local Governmental Bodies - Collaboration between the Port of Pasco and LCBAS for ecological restoration and native plant landscaping at Osprey Point may serve as a model for positive collaboration between the cities and ports.

Contact any member of the Conservation Committee if you have an interest in these issues. Without your help we can do very little.

Ed Rykiel
Chair

LCBAS LOCAL BIRDING TRIPS

Local Field Trip: Hanford Reach Wahluke Slope

The next LCBAS local field trip is scheduled for Saturday, October 22 to the Wahluke slope area of the Hanford Reach National Monument. The intent is to visit some of the small ponds surrounded by shrub-steppe habitat on the north side of the Columbia River. Time permitting; a drive up Saddle Mountain could be included. The leader will decide when and where to meet. Because of the distance involved, I'd expect this to be an all day outing, so plan on bringing water, lunch, snack, etc. and be prepared for any kind of weather. As much as I'd like to lead this trip, family commitments prevent me from doing so. Therefore, I am looking for a volunteer to lead this outing. And because the outing will take place before the monthly LCBAS membership meeting, this may be the only means for recruiting a leader. I'm looking forward to hear from someone out there!

Rich Barchet, LCBAS Local Trips Coordinator

Check <http://www.lcbas.org/fieldtrips.html> for information about future planned field trips. Trips are limited to 8-10 people (2 cars), so sign up early to reserve your spot!

Is it Time to **Renew** your Membership to Lower Columbia Basin Audubon? Many people renew in the fall.

Don't forget: **Washington Under Ice: Investigating the Wenas Creek Mammoth**



This **Humanities Washington Program** will be hosted by Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society!

When: Thursday, **October 20th**, 7 pm **Where:** Kennewick Public Library, 1620 South Union Street

BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 2011

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

September 1-4: Four White-crowned sparrows and 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches showed up in the Rancho Reata yard of Tony Greager. Jane Abel saw about 40 Western Sandpipers on Wooded Island. Kayaking around Bateman Island, Margaret Ford noted 3 or 4 Great Blue Herons, 2 Great Egrets, Western Sandpipers, Killdeer, 7 Double-crested Cormorants and 1 Yellow Warbler. Lisa Hill and Larry Umthun reported on W.E. Johnson Park. They saw 12 Western Tanagers, and several species of warblers: 14 Orange-crowned Warblers, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Nashville Warbler and a Common Yellowthroat. Also present: more than 50 Song Sparrows, 30 Bewick's Wrens, 25 Black-capped Chickadees, 7 Warbling Vireos, a few Yellow-breasted Chats, lots of Gray Catbirds, 2 Townsend's Solitaires, an Olive-sided Flycatcher and 4 Western Wood-Pewees. In their backyard they had 3 Black-chinned Hummingbirds, 2 Calliope Hummingbirds and 1 Rufous Hummingbird. Lannie Smith and Rocky Ross had several Wilson's Warblers, a House Wren and a Spotted Towhee in the trees surrounding their pasture.

September 5-11: Susan Wierenga spotted a single Marbled Godwit among the more usual shorebirds, gulls and ducks at the Walla Walla River delta. Jane Abel had a very unusual kayaking encounter along the Columbia River shoreline west of Johnson Island—a Lapland Longspur! On Wooded Island she reported American Pipits, Spotted Sandpipers, Killdeer, Western Sandpipers, Baird's Sandpipers, a Sanderling, Greater Yellowlegs, Great Egrets, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows and Eastern and Western Kingbirds. Mary L reported an American Kestrel sparring with a Cooper's Hawk in her North Richland yard. Tony Greager reported Rancho Reata sightings: 2 Olive-sided Flycatchers, 1 Hammond's Flycatcher, 1 Pacific-slope Flycatcher, 1 House Wren and a Townsend's Solitaire.

September 12-18 Tom and Barb Clarke reported

from the base of Red Mountain: two flocks of 40-50 Western Meadowlarks and a flock of 30 Killdeer. Lauren Hirsh reported on early-arriving first-year and mature White-crowned Sparrows returning to her yard near Amon wasteway. While they signal fall, she still has a Rufous and Anna's Hummingbird taking nectar from her flowers. Cathy Smith reported White-crowned Sparrows in her yard in North Richland as well. About 40 of them reached the Clarke's near Red Mountain. Chad Merkley reported ducks, Killdeer, Dowitchers, and a Western Sandpiper chased off by a Merlin at the Yakima Delta. The next day along Snively Road he heard a Sandhill Crane calling overhead. At Horn Rapids Park he saw 2 Spotted Towhees, 3 White-crowned Sparrows, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Willow Flycatcher.

September 19-25 Mike Livingston and two Ducks Unlimited Biologists saw several Lesser Sandhill Cranes east of SR 17 and Scootney Reservoir in north Franklin County. They reported about 20 in three different cornfields. Lisa Hill reported a Yellow-breasted Chat in W. E. Johnson Park. The latest reported date for this species is September 6. They still have an Anna's Hummingbird in their backyard (up through the 30th). They also had 2 White-crowned Sparrows sporting bands that she and Nancy put on them last year! Jane Abel found a juvenile and an adult Sabine's Gull in the middle of the Columbia River about ½ mile north of the Selph Landing boat launch. She also reported a sighting of a Franklin's Gull on the north end of Island 19 on the 23rd, 26th and 30th. Jane Abel and Chad Merkley were kayaking near the Port of Benton when they spotted a Red-necked Phalarope, Sabine's Gull and a Parasitic Jaeger. The next day Jane saw the Jaeger again and a Bonaparte's Gull in the same area. Rich Barchet and Keith Abel reported a Bufflehead at the Walla Walla Delta, a Ruddy Duck at the McNary Slough, a Say's Phoebe on Humorist Road, and a Sage Thrasher on Casey Pond Road. They also saw over 800 Greater White-fronted Geese at McNary NWR. Chad Merkley reported a Sanderling in juvenile plumage in the Yakima Delta, as well as over 20 Western Sandpipers, Killdeer, a few Least Sandpipers, 2 Baird's Sandpipers, a Greater Yellowlegs, and a Merlin. Moving on to Bateman Island he saw many White-crowned Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers and one Lincoln's Sparrow. Tony Greager reported a late-night Western Screech-

Owl in his Rancho Reata yard. Daytime visitors included a Townsend's Warbler and a Golden-crowned Sparrow.

September 26-30 Kathy Criddle reported a Rock Wren, Western Meadowlarks, Horned Larks, House Finches, American Goldfinches and Black-billed Magpies on Badger Mountain. In her yard near Leslie and Columbia Park Trail she had an Anna's Hummingbird, American Goldfinches, White-crowned Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Tony Greager had at least 5 Barn Owls in his yard on the evening of the 26th. Spotted Towhees started showing up in his yard this week. Cooper's Hawks (immature and adults) were present in his yard during all of September. On a scouting trip to Amon Creek a day prior to the LCBAS field trip, Ed Rykiel and Rich Barchet saw over 20 species, including Wood Duck, Cedar Waxwing, McGillivray's Warbler, and Savannah Sparrow. Kathy Criddle saw and heard 33 Sandhill Cranes flying over her house. She also birded Osprey Pointe on the Columbia River in Pasco. Species reported: a pair of Common Loons, 3 Horned Grebes, a Pied-billed Grebe, several Canadian Geese and a Double-crested Cormorant. In the trees and bushes were Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Flicker, House Finch, Song Sparrow, Bewick's Wren, Black-capped Chickadee, White-crowned Sparrow, California Quail and unidentified swallows

Seattle Bird Banding Camp II

Learned a lot at banding camp this year. I had fun of course but the things I learned about birds was the best part. Let's start with what I learned about processing.

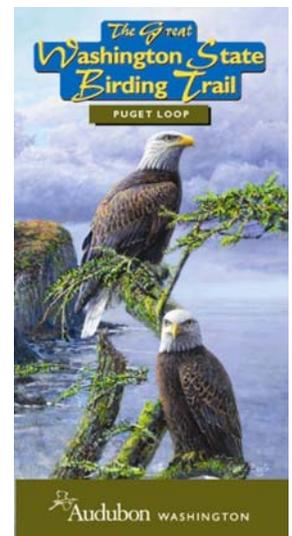
Now, before the camp I knew a little bit about molt from last year and reading a bit of my Pyle guide when I got bored. But I really learned some neat stuff. Like how to age hatch year birds by molt. In their hatch year the birds go through what is called a pre-basic molt. They molt all of their body feathers but they don't molt their flight feathers. This type of molt is a very useful way to age birds when they do not have distinctive coloring. I also learned about molt limits. Which is when for example a cover feather might be new but the primary might be old. That means that the bird stopped the molt for something, most likely breeding. I also learned that sapsuckers don't like hands and re-learned that tanagers think it is really funny to bite and not let go.....like ever. I banded several birds and extracted many more from the nets. My favorite bird to band this year was the male Cedar Waxwing we caught. He had just gone through a molt so all of his feathers were new. The yellow band on his tail was almost eye watering, and he had around 6 waxy tips. It was amazing, I had never actually seen the waxy tips on a waxwing, it was AWESOME.

I had an amazing time learning more about birds, getting more experience handling birds and meeting people my age that share my passion. I hope to use the skills I learned to help with banding in the community. I thank LCBAS for helping me get there. I really appreciate it. Thank you! Blythe Clarke

Birding Trail's Puget Loop Debuts for Holidays

Delight your favorite birders this holiday season with the newest – the seventh and final – map of the Great Washington State Birding Trail: the Puget Loop. Hot off the press Thanksgiving weekend, this signature route features 220 of our 346 annually recorded bird species around Puget Sound from Seattle to Mt. Rainier, plus Lake Washington, Kitsap Peninsula; and Vashon, Bainbridge, Whidbey and San Juan islands. Travel by car, bus or ferry, or bike or paddle to the Puget Loop's 42 main sites and 18 "more birding" locations for avian highlights: Bald Eagles, Pileated Woodpeckers, Pacific Wrens, Anna's Hummingbirds, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Pigeon Guillemots – and more.

Pre-order the Puget Loop, plus all six other routes of the statewide Birding Trail: http://wa.audubon.org/birds_GreatWABirdingTrail.html. Stay tuned for more Puget Loop details in next month's newsletter.



Continued from page 3

- These wildflowers will be a beautiful addition to the trail. Thank you, Jane Abel!
- We need donations. Any \$ amount will be greatly appreciated.
- Volunteers have signed up to help with planting including Port of Pasco staff and a cub scout troop. Please consider volunteering even if it is just to show your support for wildlife!
- Working volunteers will need to sign a Liability Release form.

OSPREY POINTE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORK PARTY

November, 26th

1110 Osprey Pointe Blvd., Pasco WA

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Wear sturdy shoes, bring gloves, a shovel & drinking water. Dress for the weather.

Join the fun!

Hot chocolate will be provided.

Please contact me if you have questions or want to volunteer.

Amon Preserve Local Field Trip Report

A full complement of 12 intrepid souls ventured into the wilds of the Amon Creek Nature Preserve on September 24 th. For a change of pace we started at the southern end with a short side trip to the kiosk that describes the geologic history of the Amon Basin and clearly demonstrates that it has a long history as a significant natural feature of our regional landscape.

The trip featured 23 avian species along with natural history, beaver dams, and black-tailed jackrabbits. The highlights for me were the Marsh Wrens chattering away, birds singing and the flickers frolicking as if it was springtime and their fancies had changed to thoughts of ..., and the Virginia Rails calling out loud and clear.

It is sad to think about how the Amon Preserve will suffer from the impending encroachments of "development". The entire Amon Basin system will suffer irreparable damage from the proposed roads, bridges, and 435 homes of the Springwater village proposed for the wildlands.

Ed Rykiel

The Big Year!

Birdwatching, America's favorite outdoor activity, is already in full flight, in the midst of one of its most important times of the year. And, with the upcoming release of "[The Big Year](#)," moviegoers may be flocking to theaters to see Steve Martin, Jack Black and Owen Wilson lampoon the popular pastime's competitive side.

Now, the National Audubon Society has launched an Internet campaign in tandem with the feature film, which is based on a novel about three men who travel the country on a yearlong birdwatching adventure. Birding enthusiasts hope they can draw in new avian fans and perhaps alter the stodgy reputation of their sport.

Audubon is offering an online game in which bird watchers take expeditions and visit more than 100 websites to spot animated birds, which they add to their virtual life-lists. Players compete to win prizes.

The birds fly across homepages, perching on unexpected places, and by clicking on them the players will be directed to [the Audubon Facebook page](#) where they may collect and trade "bird cards."

"This is about fun — but it's also about getting more people involved in taking action to protect birds and the planet we share with them. And with this unprecedented use of social media and the web, We're also making it clear that this is not your grandmother's Audubon," said the society's chief executive, David Yarnold.

The Curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society
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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 included 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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