



November 2012
Volume XLVIII
Number 03

the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Blue Mountain Wildlife: Past, Present and Future, Come See Live Birds!!!

**Membership Meeting
November 27, 2012
7:00 p.m.
Kennewick First
Lutheran Church,
corner of Yelm and
Highway 395**

Fortunately the fourth Tuesday of the month is not during Thanksgiving week this year! And our monthly program offers a spectacular program featuring longtime LCBAS friends, Bob and Lynn Tompkins, directors of Blue Mountain Wildlife (BMW) in Pendleton, OR.

Live raptors will be on display including Patriot, a magnificent Bald Eagle, and Angus, an imprinted American Kestrel.

The Tompkins have been wildlife rehabilitators for 25 years. BMW includes two locations, the primary center of BMW is located in Pendleton and the satellite facility near Benton City, WA. Both centers serve a large geographic area that includes southeastern Washington and eastern Oregon. Lynn's presentation will include a brief history of Blue Mountain Wildlife, current programs and a look at what the future holds.

The business meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. and is followed by a short social break with refreshments. Members bringing yummy

snacks will be rewarded with big smiles! Our speaker usually begins around 7:45 p.m.



Special Interest Articles:

- Live Eagle and Kestrel at our monthly meeting!
- Christmas bird Count December 29!

Individual Highlights:

- President's message 7
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Bateman Island Bird Walk *with Ed Rykiel*

November 3, 2012

Twenty-five big and little birders counted 53 species on a calm damp morning with overcast skies. The causeway area yielded geese, ducks, mergansers, grebes, cormorants, and a loon right off the bat. We had the benefit of the LCBAS spotting scope to spy an immature BLACK-

CROWNED NIGHT-HERON in the reeds at the far end of the causeway and get a pretty good close-up of its eye. Along the path, small birds were staying hidden! In addition to the night-heron, our list for the causeway area included; COMMON LOON, WESTERN GREBE, PIED-BILLED GREBE, CANADA GOOSE,

COOT, NORTHERN SHOVELER, BUFFLEHEAD, AMERICAN WIDGEON, MALLARD, GADWALL, COMMON GOLDENEYE, BARROW'S GOLDENEYE, COMMON MERGANSER,
Continued pg 2

Bateman Island Walk *Continued*



“Great Horned Owl”
Photo courtesy Ivar Husa”

NATIONAL PRESIDENT MARKS COMPLETION OF WASHINGTON BIRDING TRAIL

“The Great Washington State Birding Trail is officially open and ready for birders!” proclaimed National Audubon President David Yarnold to 90 chapter members from around the state during the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) in Poulsbo Oct. 4.

Yarnold saluted the 600 volunteers who worked with Director Christi Norman to create the seven loops that cover 3,000 miles within two million acres of protected habitat, supporting nearly 350 species. The decade-long achievement was funded by \$1.5 million from private and public grants, and individual and chapter donations.

Along with full-color paper maps, birders can now access each route via the new “app” for iPhone and

HOODED MERGANSER, RING-BILLED GULL, BELTED KINGFISHER, GREAT BLUE HERON, GREAT EGRET, NORTHERN FLICKER, MAGPIE, STARLING, CEDAR WAXWING, HOUSE FINCH, DARK-EYED JUNCO, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, and SONG SPARROW.

We added a few species along the path including BEWICK'S WREN, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, AMERICAN ROBIN, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, SPOTTED TOWHEE, RED-TAILED HAWK, and CALIFORNIA QUAIL. As we started down the trail into the Black locust trees, we were greeted by a GREAT HORNED OWL, who sat quietly observing us observing him before gliding off soundlessly ahead of us.

Approaching our usual beach stop, we chased off a small flock of Buffleheads near the shore. We found the water in the Yakima delta was high with very little mud showing. Since most of the birds were 600 yards or more away, the spotting scopes became a virtual necessity. From the beach, we added one WHITE PELICAN, 3 TUNDRA SWANS, NORTHERN PINTAIL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, CALIFORNIA GULL, HERRING GULL, LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER, WESTERN SANDPIPER, CLARK'S GREBE, HORNED GREBE, AMERICAN CROW and

KILLDEER. When we got to the Columbia river, we found it swiftly flowing and the kayakers driving the birds down river before we could see much of them.

And then things got interesting. We had great fun discussing the shape, size, colors, and any other noticeable features of an accipiter in a far off tree top, which we all agreed with some certainty was a Shoopers hawk. (The trip leader takes full responsibility for calling it a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK.) Then the next identification challenge sat in the top of much nearer tree and sparked discussion of the subtleties of NORTHERN SHRIKE vs Loggerhead Shrike heads, beaks, wings and tails. As we were nearing the causeway again, nature threw us a soft ball, 2 VARIED THRUSHEs. Then immediately upped the ante as we were crossing the causeway. Back to the bird books for another in-depth discussion about mergansers before calling the rare bird of the morning, a RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.

Thanks to Cheri Baudrand for bringing the LCBAS spotting scope, to James Cleaver who brought his spotting scope, and to Ivar Husa, Bird Walk Photographer.

The lesson of this particular bird walk seems to be, if you only have time to visit the Bateman Island causeway area, it's likely to be worth your effort. The next Bateman Island bird walk is December 1, 2012 and who knows what will turn up then! Meet at 8 am at Wye Park.

iPad, and an e-book. Signs are being installed to mark the 375 local sites.

Birds' flyways are the glue that unites the Audubon Society today, President Yarnold emphasized during his ACOW keynote talk. Washington's lands and waters lie squarely on the Pacific Flyway from Alaska to Patagonia, with many Important Bird Areas included on the Great Washington State Birding Trail.

Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson cut the ribbon for the last trail route, the Puget Loop; similar ceremonies are planned around the state.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2012/oct/06/kitsap-is-link-in-birds-skyways-says-audubon/>

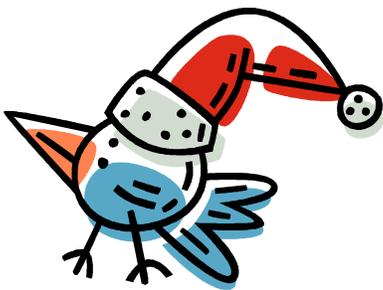


GROUP PHOTO caption: Audubon members celebrated the official completion of the Great Washington State Birding Trail during the fall ACOW Oct. 4 hosted by Kitsap Audubon. Photo by David Gluckman.

Annual Christmas Bird Count on

December 29, 2012

This year's count will be held Saturday, December 29th. This count, which has occurred nationally for 113 years, and locally for nearly 40 years, is done in over 1,900 locations around the United States and nearby countries and involves over 60,000 volunteers. The data that all these counts produce becomes part of the largest wildlife database in the world and is vital for determining the status of expanding and declining bird numbers. **Anyone that enjoys looking at birds can help.**



*Christmas Bird Count!
Everyone welcome!*

Ray Johnson (509-521-5971) will lead the Richland team this year, while **Tom and Barb Clarke (509-554-7936)** will lead the Pasco team. The team lead for the Kennewick area will be **Rich Barchet (509-430-0053)**. Please call the team leads to participate in their cities. **For more information on the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count, please contact Dana Ward at (509) 545-0627.**

All Christmas Bird Counts are standardized to a 7.5 mile radius circle (about 177 square miles). The LCBAS count circle is registered as the Washington Tri-Cities Circle and centers on the Columbia River just off shore near the end of Road 68 in Pasco. This is a very large area that includes Selph landing Road in Pasco, most of Two Rivers Park east of Kennewick and Badger Mountain in Richland.

The Tri-Cities count starts in three locations at 7:30am, December 29th. Some hardy souls may choose to do some owling after the official start time of 12:00am midnight. The three start locations where volunteers can start are:

Richland – The “Fingernail” in Howard Amon Park

Kennewick – Audubon Nature Trail in Columbia Park

Pasco – Chiawana Park Boat Ramp

From these locations we split into smaller teams led by more experienced birders. Some birding skills are nice but not required. If you cannot make the 7:30am start please coordinate with your count leader prior to Saturday December 29th to arrange an appropriate time and location. The team leader also needs to know what you have counted, species and number of species, before the potluck at 6:30.

The Tri-Cities count is also one of the best supported counts in the state, and regularly has the highest number of species seen inland. All of this is due to strong community support. Our goal

is to count as many birds within the circle during the day (24 hrs). To do this, we need as many teams as possible. If individuals can only participate for part of the day, it will still help. There can be a fair amount of walking involved, so keep this in mind when making plans. But much counting will be done from car windows for those that prefer that form of participation. Birds seen at bird feeders within the count circle are just as important to the count.

At the end of count day, the LCBAS has their annual Christmas Potluck. The dinner is now held at the Columbia Grange #938, 6300 Court Street, Pasco. Please bring a main dish and dessert to share. You will need your own tableware. Start assembling at 5:30PM and we will eat and later present the day's highlights. Also the Grange will be open all day for those that would like to stop by for warm drinks and discuss what they have seen.

You do not need to be a member of the Audubon Society to help and there is no fee as in years past. We do need all participants to sign in so that team leaders can maintain appropriate records for the Christmas Bird Count data management.

The information that all counts generate is reviewed and placed in a database that is available to everyone on the Internet. The database can be accessed through www.birdsource.org, then selecting the Christmas Bird Count icon. The Tri-Cities Count code is WATC.

The Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau 43rd Annual Meeting and Tourism Showcase

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society was represented at the **The Tri-Cities Visitor & Convention Bureau 43rd Annual Meeting and Tourism Showcase** event on Thursday, November 1 at the Three Rivers Convention Center. The Annual Meeting highlighted tourism programs to businesses, stakeholders and supporters. LCBAS's tabletop display was featured in the tradeshow reception to demonstrate the tourism industry's growth and its economic importance to the entire region. During the tradeshow, guests enjoyed light appetizers, local wines, and door prizes. This is one of the most popular business networking events in the Tri-Cities. LCBAS took the opportunity to showcase its conservation and education activities during the tradeshow. Hopefully local area businesses and leaders are seeing and learning about the real connections between healthy habitats, open space, quality of life, tourism and economics!

Leslie Groves North – 2012 Richland Green Award Winner

Leslie Groves North was the winner of the City of Richland's Green Project of the Year Award. In recognizing the project the City wrote – "The Native Plant Restoration Project, just north of Snyder Street, between the multi-use path and Harris Avenue, is still going strong after 6 years, 90 volunteers and over 1,500 man hours. This 1.5 acre parcel was adopted by members of the Native Plant Society and the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society when it was just a field of non-native plants, including cheat grass, tumbleweed and tack weed. This group tirelessly mowed, pulled, raked, and replanted more than 30 native plant species. They have raised funds and received grants to keep this project going. Today, they continue their restoration project while educating the public on the benefits and beauty of native plants."



Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook! Enjoy up to the minute posts on all things Audubon in the Columbia Basin Region! Anyone can view our page "news feed" at

<https://www.facebook.com/lcbas>



Is it Time to **Renew your Membership** to Lower Columbia Basin Audubon?

Many people renew in the fall.

You can pay your dues and make donations to LCBAS using a credit card and PayPal. See our website at lcbas.org or go to this link: <http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html>.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR- DECEMBER 1, 2012

This year Lower Columbia Basin Audubon is participating in the Annual Alternative Gift Fair!

Do you want gifts that reflect the true spirit of the holiday season? At the Alternative Gift Fair, you can donate to participating local, national, and international non-profit organizations, including LCBAS! You may choose hand-lettered holiday cards featuring local artists describing the gifts you have made in the names of your friends and family.

Saturday, December 1, 2012

Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Community Unitarian Universalist Church

2819 West Sylvester St., Pasco



The Alternative Gift Fair is a charity fundraising event sponsored by Community Unitarian Universalist Church and is based on a model by the Center for a New American Dream. All the gifts go to the charity of choice and are tax deductible.

BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR OCTOBER 2012

Even though it signifies colder weather, it's nice to have some of our winter buddies back. I like hearing the Northern Flickers and seeing the variety of ducks on the rivers. And thank goodness for bird feeders. We can sit in a warm spot and watch for an unexpected diner.

North Richland and Leslie Groves Park

September ended with Laurie Ness and Patrick Paulson sharing their Pygmy Nuthatches with interested birders. The Pygmies were back on October 5th along with Red-breasted Nuthatches, Yellow-rumped Warblers, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Varied Thrush. Pygmy Nuthatches are classified as "accidental visitors" so this was a significant occurrence. In addition Chad Merkley reported a White-breasted Nuthatch (a rare sighting) on the 15th. Later in the month, Laurie discovered a rare (but unfortunately deceased) adult female Red Crossbill in her yard.

Jane and Keith Abel recorded over 26 species (of which many are rare or uncommon sightings) in their yard, Leslie Groves Park, or on the river during the month: Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, Tundra Swans, 5 species of ducks including 6 (rare) White-winged Scoters, 9 Common Loons, a Red-necked Grebe (rare), Spotted Sandpipers, 2 Wilson's Snipe, Bonaparte's Gulls, Vaux's Swifts, Pacific Wren, Hermit Thrush, Orange-crowned and MacGillivray's Warblers and Fox and White-throated Sparrows.

On the last day of the month Mark Gerber spotted two Cackling Geese at WSU Tri-Cities.

Yakima Delta and Bateman Island

Pat and Bob Woodley followed up on a Tweet that reported a White-faced Ibis at the Yakima Delta. They spotted it on October 3rd feeding amongst several Killdeer and Long-billed Dowitchers.

Rancho Reata Area and Amon Creek

Tony Greager reported on uncommon sparrows in his yard early in the month: Chipping, Fox, Golden-crowned, White-throated and Lincoln's. Later in the month some of these sparrows were joined by Spotted Towhee, Hermit and Varied Thrush, Pacific Wren and Cooper's Hawk.

Sharon and Neil Ofsthun recorded 13 species including Cedar Waxwings, Varied Thrush, Winter Wren, Pine Siskin and Downy Woodpecker. Laurie Ness reported an American Pipit on Reata Road near the cell tower.

W.E. Johnson Park, South and Central Richland and Badger Mountain

Laurie Ness also reported a Townsend's Solitaire in Hill's West near the Gazebo. Lauren Hirsch had a female Anna's Hummingbird for at least a week late in the month eating mostly insects. An immature Cooper's Hawk loosened some feathers of several small birds and about 20-25 doves but came up empty-taloned.

Larry Umthum walked through W.E. Johnson Park on Halloween and tallied up 11 species, including 5 (rare) Purple Finches where he and Lisa have seen them the last 3 years. His list included Black-capped Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Wood Ducks, Spotted Towhees, Northern Flickers and Bewick's Wrens. In their yard they had 2 young male Anna's Hummingbirds.

Kennewick and South Benton County

Ron and Carole Louderback found their second ever Varied Thrush in the Mountain Ash in their yard. Rocky Ross stopped to take pictures of an entire corn stubble field full of snow geese just north of Paterson along Highway 221.

Finley Area

Kris Keating's yard list included over 50 Sandhill Cranes flying above it, White-crowned Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers as well as other normal visitors. Dennis Rockwell recorded his 67th yard species, White-throated Sparrows. He also

reported a late male Rufous Hummingbird on October 19th.

McNary NWR and West Walla Walla County

Bob Derting reported at least a dozen Bonaparte's Gulls at the McNary NWR Headquarters on the 28th and about 130 Tundra Swans on Quarry Pond on the 31st.

North Franklin and Pasco Area

In our Pasco yard, Rocky and I had our first ever Hermit Thrush and Brown Creeper, several sightings of Varied Thrush and a Spotted Towhee and 3 female Ring-necked Pheasant sharing Bayberries and Snowberries. Kevin Black spotted 2 Wilson's Snipe in the reeds of Chiawana Park and one at Sacajawea Park. On Highway 260 east of Connell he reported two separate sightings of Mountain Bluebirds. At Lyon's Ferry Park he saw a Wilson's Warbler and a Red-breasted Nuthatch and on Nunamaker Road a Great Horned Owl and 4 more Great Horned Owls east of Kahlotus.

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

Trekking Patagonia to the End of the World

The speakers for the October meeting were Scott and Pam Woodward. In February 2012, they spent 3 weeks traveling in the Patagonia region of Argentina and Chile, South America. There they stood at Tierra del Fuego, the end of the world. Patagonia shares many similarities with the Lower Columbia basin: volcanic history, shrub step, and water. They traveled around Mt. Fitzroy. In Los Galaciares National Park, there are 3 growing glaciers. One, the Perito Moreno Glacier, forms an ice dam closing off the Argentine Lake. We were treated to a video of the dam breaking.

Spring Sage Grouse LEK Tour

A field trip to the Yakima Training Center (YTC) is being planned to observe the grouse displaying on a lek. The trip will be scheduled some time in during the end of March through mid-April of 2013. The date will be finalized closer to the season and is dependent on the military training schedule. The tour will be limited to 15 people. Details to follow.

Birding the Yakima Area Arboretum.

The Yakima Valley Audubon Society recently produced an excellent bird viewing guide and checklist called "Birding the Yakima Area Arboretum." The checklist identifies 36 of the most common birds found at the Arboretum and along the 10 mile long Yakima Greenway pathway, including brief descriptions. Have fun seeing how many birds you can check off the list. No doubt you will need more than one visit to see them all.

You can download the birding checklist at <http://www.ahtrees.org/PDFgallery.htm>, under the PDF Download section of the Arboretum's [website](#), or pick up a copy in the Jewett Interpretive Center during business hours. A limited number of loaner binoculars are also available for checkout. The Yakima Area Arboretum is an excellent, easily accessible location to introduce the whole family to bird watching.

So grab your binoculars and camera, kids, friends and family members, for a fun afternoon of looking for birds and other wildlife at your Yakima Area Arboretum.

Neck banded Swans seen at McNary National Wildlife Refuge!

Two Tundra Swans seen at McNary NWR were sporting neck collars. The bands have alpha-numeric codes, meaning letters and numbers, and were photographed by our own Jane and Keith Abel. These two swans were banded on the Alaska Peninsula near King Salmon Alaska on their breeding grounds. One is male and the other female and both were adults when banded in 2010. Lots of other waterfowl and winter birds have been arriving in the past two weeks at the Refuge! Come out and enjoy the birding.!

Greetings from the President! *With Robin Priddy*

A great big shout out to Char Reep and Heidi Newsome for their great work on the seed sale! We made about \$2,200 for education and conservation efforts! To Char and everyone who helped - thanks for such a great effort. And a great thank you to Columbia Grain and Feed for their continuing partnership in this annual effort - please consider taking your business there all year round!

Another shout out to Debbie Berkowitz and other Auduboners, along with the Washington Native Plant Society and everyone else who has helped with the Leslie Groves North Native Plant Restoration Project (see page 4) - LCBAS and WNPS received the Richland Green Award for the best green project of the year.

Cathy Smith has been in touch with Department of Defense about a tour on the Yakima Firing Range next spring - look for more details soon; we hope to make this happen. Many thanks to Cathy for her steadiness and persistence in pursuing presentations for our Membership meetings. These presentations are such an important offering we make to our membership.

Ed Rykiel has gotten a Banding in the Parks going with the City of Richland. On November 17th there will be a banding event at Claybell Park and Junior Audubon will be there, along with the Richland Parks Ranger. What a great addition to our local programs - Urban Citizen Science! And many thanks to Cherie Beadrand who puts together the Junior Audubon program - second to none in Washington - and to Barb Clarke and Lucie Fritz for their work with the local schools; and to Marilyn Hayes for getting Audubon Adventures into 15 classrooms.

While Cathy Smith and I were at the TriCity Convention and Visitor's Bureau trade show

(see page 4) we talked about some recent sightings - a white-breasted nuthatch in North Richland, a red-breasted merganser at Bateman - both of these are listed in the annotated bird list as rare. A red crossbill was found after a window strike. There have been several reports of pine siskins and cross bills - neither of those are exactly rare, but they may be in showing up earlier, and perhaps in higher numbers. Since the wildfires were so extensive and late in the season, we wondered what the impact for sightings would be here. It might be useful to keep these fires in mind with unusual sightings. If we see enough we can share what we're seeing with the other eastern Washington chapters; so keep an eye out and perhaps we'll have some interesting information and analysis.

Thanks as always for the privilege of serving you as president.

Robin Priddy

Cleaning Feeders Keeps Birds Safe!

Cleaning your bird feeder may not be the most enjoyable part of feeding and watching your backyard birds, but **it is very important**. It provides clean, fresh bird seed, free from mold, bacteria and disease.

Cleaning Process

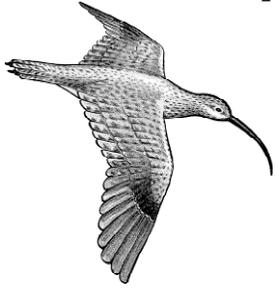
Use the nozzle on your hose to spray clean off most of the dirt. It works well on tube and cage feeders. It easily takes care of all the hard to reach areas. A collection of long, narrow brushes with angled tips is a big help. Choose those that fit your feeders need.

Mix a solution of nine parts water and one part bleach in a plastic bucket, wearing rubber gloves. Scrub all the surfaces inside and out using your brushes. When you are satisfied that the feeder is clean, rinse it completely, dry with a towel and leave in the sun to dry. Each feeder should only take about five minutes.

The Curlew

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Society
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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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