



October 2012  
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# the curlew

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

### "Trekking Patagonia to the End of the World *and things you have never seen before*"

**Membership Meeting  
October 23, 2012  
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 speakers are Scott and Pam Woodward: they will take us on an adventure to one of the

planet's most spectacular wonders. The Patagonia region of Argentina and Chile, South America! Hike the Rugged terrain and navigate the turbulent waters to share good tidings of this marvelous landscape. Scott Woodward is a local activist for conservation and long time president of the Taptal Greenway Association. Scott has worked tirelessly locally to preserve the beauty of the Tricities and to protect the

quality of life in our community. Scott and Pam have shared their travels with us before in their presentation on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that was stunning. Don't miss this presentation, it is sure to be educational and awe inspiring! The business meeting will begin at 7:00 followed by a short social time and refreshments. Our speaker usually begins around 7:45 p.m.



### Bateman Island Bird Walk *with Lisa Hill*

**October 6, 2012**

Pleasant early-morning weather greeted a group of about 35 birders for the Bateman Island Bird Walk. The sharp-eyed group counted 52 bird species as the day became quite warm. The causeway was rather quiet with an adult BLACK-

CROWNED NIGHT-HERON perched nearby. Small songbirds were seen, but the numbers seemed low: YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, BEWICK'S WRENS, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES, SONG SPARROWS, and a

single RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.

Several families with young children enjoyed the walk. They were especially excited to get great looks at a perched RED-TAILED HAWK and two GREAT HORNED OWLS. There were lots of oos and ahhs

#### Special Interest Articles:

- Patagonia!
- SEED SALE  
Don't forget  
October 20!

#### Individual Highlights:

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## Bateman Island Walk *Continued*



"Great Horned Owl"

Photo courtesy Keith Abel

## Don't Forget: Bird Seed Sale October 20 th!

Once again, in connection with Columbia Grain & Feed, we will be hosting our **Eleventh Annual Bird Seed Sale and Information Day**. Please tell your friends and mark your calendars for October 20.

- Saturday, October 20, 9 am until 2 pm
- Columbia Grain & Feed, 2001 West Lewis, (corner of 20th and Lewis), Pasco

This year due to the nationwide drought, prices for seed will be higher than normal – but be assured, these will be the best possible prices you will get for this winters bird feeding season. Based on your purchase amount, Columbia Grain & Feed will make a donation to LCBAS. Columbia Grain and Feed has been so generous for the past 10 years. Please support their generosity!

when the owls launched from their perches and glided through the trees. There was a lot of mud in the delta and the waterfowl numbers had greatly increased from last month. Hundreds of AMERICAN WIGEON circled over the water in large flocks. Most of the other ducks were GADWALL, RUDDY DUCK, GREEN-WINGED TEAL and NORTHERN PINTAIL. Four grebe species were seen including WESTERN GREBE, CLARK'S GREBE, HORNED GREBE and PIED-BILLED GREBE.

Perched at a distance and low to the

water on dead wood, was a PEREGRINE FALCON. Maybe it is the one seen regularly during the winter months over the last several years. Four GREAT EGRETS patrolled the shallow water together and made for an unusual sighting. Many LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER scavenged around in the mud.

The next Bateman Island Bird Walk will be Saturday, **November 3, 2012 at 8:00am**. We meet at Wye Park above the causeway to the island. All are welcome; beginning birders are particularly invited to join in. We do have several pair of binoculars available for loan.

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

Greetings: I just returned from the fall Audubon Council of Washington Meeting in Poulsbo. There were probably about 80 people there from all over Washington State. As I understand it, Washington State Audubon's Board is now combined with the Seward Park Board. Enough chapters agreed to support and fund a Chapter Coordinator as a half time position to pass that recommendation from the working group, so that process will begin shortly. The position description was adjusted so that the focus of the position during the legislative session will be on communicating so as to support grassroots response to issues of concern.

David Yarnold, the CEO of National Audubon was there and gave an address. He spoke to the Audubon Strategic Plan which is oriented around bird flyways. Many chapters wondered where they fit in this idea of flyways as an organizing principle. A journalist (among other things), he spoke to the central concepts around flyways being "connectivity", and "telling a story". In that context I found the model engaging - how flyways connect birds to places and thus people, and how they provide a basis for

the life story of the bird, and how birds engage their world. Several initiatives to connect Audubon to people through internet games and social networking were mentioned; initiatives that chapters can leverage on their own sites. He did speak to the chapters being at the heart of Audubon and how much he appreciated and continued to be amazed and deeply touched at the work he is discovering as he engages chapters.

One example was the Christmas Bird Count. (paraphrasing) - "Chapter just refer to it as the Christmas Bird Count, do it and go about their business. Do you realize it's the largest and longest running animal census on the planet?" Talk about rephrasing how we think about what we do!

At question time I did have one - I introduced myself as "from Lower Columbia Basin Audubon in the lovely shrub steppe of Eastern Washington :)" - and asked about adding focus to songbirds and species other than Sage Grouse to the Sagebrush initiative being proposed by Washington State (thank you Heidi and Ed!) -that these other species should be

part of the Sagebrush story, too - and that we needed a strong story, because our shrub steppe is under such threat. Audubon has had a Sagebrush Initiative in the Rockies for several years which has had some success modifying wind turbine proposals and moving them. He said that Sage Grouse is thought of as a "charismatic species" - meaning it's good for getting attention and communication, and so far has been highlighted as a species. They seemed open to our idea, and as it turns out his brother went to school at Central, so he knows our area!

So, an interesting trip. As I get the meeting materials and notes back, I'll pass them on. It's nice to be meeting with others in the state, and there does seem to be some energy special to the Eastern chapters which I'm enjoying and hoping we can work together on some projects that support conservation in our part of the state.

Thanks for the privilege of serving as President - Robin

## LCBAS September Program Review – Feathered Architects

The LCBAS fall speakers program began with Idie Ulish speaking on Feathered Architects. Bird nests come in an astounding range of size and shapes. Some birds use no nest at all, while others build elaborate structures. Hummingbirds build expandable nests that stretch to accommodate the growth of juveniles using spider and moth silk.

Bird nests can be classified in multiple ways. According to Cornell, one methodology is:

1. No nest or scrapes
2. Platform

3. Cup by how it is supported
4. Burrows and holes

Idie displayed examples of each category, and then finished with unusual nests and nests in unusual locations. Along the way, she talked about individual species.

Idie is a Master Birder and a nature photographer. She is past president of the Seattle Audubon Society. She fascinated the large crowd with photographs, both her own and those of others, to illustrate both the usual and the unusual nests of birds found in the Northwest.

If you have photographs of unusual nests, you can contact Idie at **idieu@earthlink.net**.

## SEEN ANY COLOR-BANDED BIRDS? *with Ed Rykiel*



*Colored leg bands can tell when and where a bird was banded!*

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

**President Robin Priddy..... E-mail:**  
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For the last 5 years, Nancy LaFramboise and Ed Rykiel have been color-banding Gambel's White-crowned Sparrows. Ed is now doing trials for a new study in Richland to color-band two migratory species, Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Juncos, and two resident species, House Finch and Song Sparrow, in or near city parks. The primary objective of the study is to estimate how far these species move from the place that they are banded, and in particular, if they go into the

urban areas of the city where people may be feeding them. The color of the band denotes the banding location.

If you happen to notice one of these birds wearing a color band in addition to a USGS metal band, please note the date, location, species, and band color. Any other comments you have about the siting are also welcome. Send the information to Ed at [ecodoc59@yahoo.com](mailto:ecodoc59@yahoo.com) and post to LCBirds2.

If you're in the mood for a nice, cozy mystery written especially for birders, then Digby Maclaughlin is your man (<http://www.digbymaclaughlin.com/>). *Waiting for Godwits, A Bird of a Different Color* and *A Bird to Die For* can be downloaded direct from Amazon to your Kindle, Ipad, I-phone, PC, and many other devices. They can be ordered from Amazon.com.

## Gear Up Citizen Scientists: “Project Feeder Watch” starts in November!

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America.

FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Anyone with an interest in birds can participate! FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

All you need to do is count birds that appear in your count site because of something that you have provided (plantings, food, or water). For each species, you will report only the highest number of individuals that you see in view at one time. By following this procedure, you are certain to avoid counting the same bird more than once. You will report your bird counts to scientists at the Lab of Ornithology either over our web site or on paper data forms. Learn more about how to count birds for FeederWatch in the instructions section of this website.

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/>

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](http://lcbas.org) or go to this link:

<http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html>.

## [NEW STUDY FINDS THAT BIRD INGESTION OF PLASTIC IN U.S./CANADIAN NORTH PACIFIC AMONG HIGHEST IN THE WORLD](#)

(American Bird Conservancy Washington, D.C., July 18, 2012) A new study by U.S. and Canadian scientists has found that seabirds may be eating much more plastic trash than they have in the past, and that seabirds studied off the coast of Washington State and British Columbia are ingesting plastic at rates that are “among the highest” in the world. The report, soon-to-be published in the Marine Pollution Bulletin, was authored by Stephanie Avery-Gomm of the University of British Columbia and five other researchers (see list at end of release). The study was carried out in 2009 – 2010 and involved the analysis of 67 Northern Fulmars that washed up dead on the shores between Long Beach, Washington, and Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Northern Fulmars, gull-like petrels related to albatrosses and shearwaters, are particularly suitable to study when considering trends in plastic pollution because they forage almost exclusively at sea, have vast ranges and because they will forage almost anything from the surface of the water. “The results are troubling. The large amount of plastic ingested by fulmars from the eastern North Pacific are approaching the high levels which have been documented previously in the historically polluted North Sea, where fulmars have been used as an indicator species of ocean health for decades. In addition, it is safe to say, based on earlier studies from the North Pacific, plastic ingestion in Northern Fulmars, and therefore plastic pollution, has increased in the North Pacific over the past forty years,” said Avery-Gomm.

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/120718.html>

## BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR SEPTEMBER 2012

September featured the return of winter birds: Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows and Yellow-rumped Warblers and the fall sounds and sights of Sandhill Cranes overhead.

### North Richland and Leslie Groves Park

An early flock of 50 Sandhill Cranes (2<sup>nd</sup>), Yellow-rumped Warblers American Pipits (4<sup>th</sup>), and Common Terns (16<sup>th</sup>) were seen by Jane Abel on the Columbia River from her kayak. In their yard Keith and Jane reported an Evening Grosbeak, a MacGillivray's Warbler and 40-50 Cedar Waxwings. From Leslie Groves they reported a Red-necked Grebe, a Merlin and an Orange-crowned Warbler. Margaret Ford reported returning White-crowned Sparrows on the 14<sup>th</sup> and Cathy Smith had a couple in her yard on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Mike and Mary Lilga had an active excavating Downy Woodpecker for most of the month. Phil Bartley spotted a juvenile Sabine's Gull on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Barely getting seen in time to count for September, on the 30<sup>th</sup> was at least one Pygmy Nuthatch, photographed and reported by Laurie Ness. It was hanging out with Red-breasted Nuthatches. Also present were Yellow-rumped Warblers and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

### West Richland and Horn Rapids Area

Ivar Husa photographed an American Pipit off Snively Road on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Lauri Roberts reported 2 Great Horned Owls calling most nights in the Willamette Heights area. Tom and Barb Clarke had White-crowned Sparrows back in their yard on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Mike and Mary Lilga saw about 150 Sandhill Cranes over the Paradise Way/Bombing Range Road area on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

### Yakima Delta and Bateman Island

Jim Cleaver birded Bateman Island on the 28<sup>th</sup> and reported these species: an immature White-throated Sparrow was hanging out with the White-crowned Sparrows, Ring-billed California and an adult Glaucous-winged Gull, a Killdeer among some distant

shorebirds, a Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker, a Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel and Yellow-rumped Warblers.

### Rancho Reata Area and Amon Creek

Tony and Kaye Greager and Sharon and Neil Ofsthun have amazing yards in Rancho Reata. Tony reported these birds on the 16<sup>th</sup>: 8 Warbling Vireos, 4 Orange-crowned Warblers, dozens of Yellow-rumped Warblers, lots of White-crowned Sparrows, some Dark-eyed Juncos, a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches, and, his prize, a Black-throated Gray Warbler. He spotted this rare migrant species in his yard one other time—early June, 2006. He had a Townsend's Solitaire on the 19-20<sup>th</sup> and a Western Screech Owl calling near his house since the 12<sup>th</sup>. Near a stream in Central Reata he spotted 10 Golden-crowned Sparrows and a Fox Sparrow later in the month.

The Ofsthun's yard list: Pine Siskin, Lazuli Bunting (they raised two clutches of babies), Black-chinned and Calliope Hummingbirds, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, and Wilson's Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher, White-crowned Sparrow (11<sup>th</sup>) and Dark-eyed Junco (10<sup>th</sup>), Fox Sparrow, a Varied Thrush, Northern Flicker, an unidentified kinglet and Cooper's Hawk.

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

Lauren Hirsh was surprised to see a lone Vaux's Swift (uncommon summer visitor) fly over her house on the 4<sup>th</sup>. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, Ivar Husa photographed a juvenile Chestnut-sided Warbler (accidental migrant) in Johnson Park. Lisa Hill saw her first Dark-eyed Junco of the season in her yard on the 24<sup>th</sup>, as well as a young male Anna's Hummingbird. On that same day Jordene Lucas had a Pine Siskin and her first Junco of the season in her yard.

### Kennewick

On the 17<sup>th</sup> Kevin Black, who was in Chiawana Park in Pasco, reported a Red-necked Grebe in Columbia Park. He helped Ivar Husa, who was across the river in Columbia Park, locate (and probably photograph) the grebe.

### Finley Area

In Dennis Rockwell's yard on the 11<sup>th</sup>: immature Black-chinned Hummingbirds were continuing to visit his feeders and House Finches and American Goldfinches were enjoying his sunflowers. At Two Rivers Park on that same day he saw 7 Common Terns on the Columbia. Young Osprey were still present, as were some of the Western Wood-Pewees. Kris Keating was hearing and seeing Sandhill Cranes headed southeast mid-month.

### McNary NWR and West Walla Walla County

On the 8<sup>th</sup> Ivar Husa photographed a Wild Turkey at MEECE and on the 12<sup>th</sup> Heidi Newsome reported 2 Red-necked Phalaropes at White-tail Bay on the Wallula Unit of the McNary NWR.

### North Franklin and Pasco Area

Kevin Black reported on birds spotted in Chiawana Park mid-month: Rufous Hummingbird, Fox Sparrow, Cassin's Vireo, Nashville, Wilson's, and Orange-crowned Warblers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Siskins, Hammond's Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and a Solitary Sandpiper. At Ringold he saw 8 Pectoral Sandpipers and Least Sandpipers and south of Ringold he photographed a Merlin. At Scooteny he saw Long-billed Dowitchers in juvenile plumage and over a hundred Barn Swallows in the fields near Highway 17. Joel Mundall from Honduras (and 3 others in his car) reported a fleeting look at what appeared to be a Yellow-billed Magpie on Highway 17 one-quarter mile northwest of the intersection of Scooteny Park Road and Paradise Road. If you are in the area you might want to be taking a closer look at the magpies!

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

## Volunteer Opportunity

LCBAS has initiated formation of a committee to develop a scholarship program to enable a student to attend a birding-oriented camp or to assist with educational expenses. If you have an interest in environmental education and a little time to devote or an idea or two to contribute, please contact Ed Rykiel ([ecodoc59@yahoo.com](mailto:ecodoc59@yahoo.com)).

## Junior Audubon News *with* *Cherie Baudrand*

Junior Audubon volunteers welcomed new members to the club on Monday, October 8 at Hawthorne Elementary School. New members were excited to receive their very own bird book: *Birds of the Inland Northwest*. Members learned about different bird feet and made foot prints in clay with plastic models. They also received a bird journal and started with two activities: "What is a bird?" and "Bird Topography." Welcome back to Junior Audubon!

Junior Audubon is a club for elementary school age children to learn about birds, wildlife, and the environment. The year's plan will be on the website soon. For more information contact [cheriebaudrand@yahoo.com](mailto:cheriebaudrand@yahoo.com)

## Mark your Calendar for Upcoming Audubon Events!

Annual Christmas Bird Count  
December 29<sup>th</sup> Saturday! Now the CBC is Free – Former fee is gone and donations are now optional. We need anyone and everyone for CBC!

Applebee's breakfast fundraiser  
February 23, 2013!

## Wilderness Warrior in Washington State: Theodore Roosevelt

**Date:** November 15, 2012  
**Location:** Kennewick Branch Mid-Columbia Library, 1620 S. Union Street  
**Time:** 7:00pm - 8:30pm  
**Audience:** Teens, Adults  
**Type:** Special Event Sponsored by Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

Presented by Scott Woodward



What is it about a place that draws us to it? What was it about Washington State that drew Theodore Roosevelt and what legacies did he leave behind to ensure a sense of place for generations to come?

President Theodore made a 17 stop tour of Washington State, in 1903, inspiring thousands of Washington "pioneers" on both sides of the Cascades. This program historically tracks that tour and documents the legacies that T. R. left behind to guarantee our sense of place including our National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests and National Parks. Come and enjoy this informative perspective on our state.

## Wrens may have salmon to thank for breeding boost

04 October 2012 by Jude Isabella "New Scientist"



**The reasons for its success are fishy (Image: Glenn Bartley/All Canada Photos/Getty)**

On Canada's west coast, the most common year-round resident bird in the forest, the Pacific wren, might owe salmon a thank you for its ecological success.

Earlier this year, Marlene Wagner at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, launched a three-year study in the coastal forest to track songbird pairs and record their reproductive success near 14 different streams. She chose streams known to differ in the level of spawning biomass they carry.

The Pacific wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*) often nests near such streams. Wagner tracked the male wrens as they built nests to attract a female. She then monitored breeding pairs over months, monitoring each nest every three to five days to record the number of eggs, chicks and, eventually fledglings. "I could get a measure of the daily survival rate of the nests," Wagner said. "[The birds] nest more densely on streams with more salmon, which could be a fitness benefit."

While the wrens do not feed directly on salmon, the spawning fish may indirectly increase numbers of the insects and spiders that the birds consume.

The study is the latest to suggest that the salmon have an influence on forest life. Last year, Rachel Field and John Reynolds, both also at Simon Fraser University, found that the size of the salmon run in the autumn months correlated with the diversity and density of bird life in the forest the following summer.

The salmon, they point out, spend several years at sea, and it is the marine ecosystem that provides them with the energy to grow. When they return to freshwater rivers, they transport these nutrients with them. Any salmon that die or are eaten by predators add extra nutrients to the forests (Proceedings of the Royal Society B, DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2010.2731).

"This research explores the potentially wide-reaching impacts of salmon on ecosystems," says Reynolds. "They even impact the soundscape – thanks to their high-pitched roller coaster songs, Pacific wrens embody the sounds of temperate rainforests."

Wagner will present the latest results from the study – Fishes in the forest: Impacts of salmon on songbirds – at the Wildlife Society Conference on 15 October in Portland, Oregon.

**The Curlew**

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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:*

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