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Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Celebrating our 50th Anniversary

South Georgia Island and the Falklands A presentation by Jeffery Reynolds and Kathy Ireland

**Tuesday, April 28th
7 pm**

**Kennewick First Lutheran Church
Corner of Hwy. 395 and Yelm**

During 4 trips in 9 years (2003-2012) we have spent a total of 7 weeks at South Georgia Island and 4 weeks in the Falklands. While the breadth of bird life is not as extensive as in some locales, the sheer numbers of some (300,000 King penguins at St. Andrews Bay) more than makes up for it. We would like to share some representative photos of the bird and animal life at both places as

well as a brief bit about Sir Ernest Shackleton, famed Antarctic explorer, whose story is so intimately associated with South Georgia Island. Jeffrey Reynolds, M.D., is currently in his 3rd and 4th occupations as a forensic pathologist and photographer, having previously been an aeronautical engineer and urgency care physician. Karen Ireland, M.D., is almost retired, having been a surgical pathologist for 31 years, and now employed as Jeff's overworked (and underpaid) assistant. We both love to travel and have been to all 7 continents.



Bateman Island Bird Walk: April 4, 2015

It was another beautiful day in the Bateman Island neighborhood. Several new birders joined in and long-absent friends returned. It is so rewarding for experienced birders in the group to see the wonder and excitement on the faces of new birders when they see and learn about a new bird.

The swallows have arrived in abundance. Five of our six breeding species were swirling over the waters of the delta: BARN, CLIFF, TREE, VIOLET-GREEN & NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED. Only the Bank Swallow was missing. Occasionally, a loudly-squawking CASPIAN TERN

flew among the swallows, and two pair of AMERICAN AVOCETS made a fly-over appearance.

SONG SPARROWS and BEWICK'S WRENS sang heartily, but the sweetest trill belonged to the brilliant yellow AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES. Many YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, headed to their nesting grounds, were singing snippets of their breeding songs. These birds winter in our area, but we only get to hear their distinctive chip call.

We often see grebes at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers. A small group of three WESTERN GREBES and two CLARK'S GREBES

were just close enough to make out their subtle differences. The most glorious sight of the day was the tiny, but regal HORNED GREBE in full breeding plumage. These birds are rather easy to find in their winter plumage from October to March, but we very rarely have the opportunity to see their unique breeding plumage.

The next Bateman Island Bird Walk is Saturday, May 2 from 8-10am. Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park above the causeway to the island. The May walk is in conjunction with the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon's Day at the Reach. Visit www.LCBAS.org for more information about this day full of activities celebrating spring migration.

Looking for ways to get involved?

We are looking for you! Please consider helping LCBAS through...

- Hospitality – We need someone to coordinate refreshments at our monthly membership meetings and the occasional LCBAS-sponsored events. And remember – the person who arranges for the food is always the most popular person in the room!
- Nominating Committee – It's almost time to elect new officers! The nominating committee chair is responsible for recruiting people for

positions in LCBAS, from President to Historian. This is a one-time job that ends with elections in May.

- Audubon Adventures – Every fall, LCBAS provides "Audubon Adventures" packets to local teachers. These packets help the teachers incorporate bird-related content in their curriculum. We need someone to take over this job with guidance from our current chair, Eileen Kennedy.

These positions are open to individuals or teams of people who wish to share the responsibilities. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Lori Nelson (wollerman.nelson@gmail.com).

Thank you!

President's Column with Lori Nelson

“Elbow room! Elbow room! Gotta, gotta get me some elbow room!”

Hearing the chorus from this song that takes me back to Saturday mornings, watching cartoons in my pajamas. It's from an episode of Schoolhouse Rock, a series of short musical cartoons that taught children about science, American history, math, and English. This particular number is about Americans' drive to explore – the North American continent, the world, and space.

Like humans, some birds prefer to have elbow room – and most have much less of it than they used to, even here in the open spaces of eastern Washington.

Sage-steppe habitat is quickly disappearing. People's appetites for energy, new houses, wine, and beer have fueled habitat conversion throughout our part of the state. Arid lands, home to birds, jack rabbits, and elk, are bulldozed, irrigated, and planted with grapes, hops, and houses.

Some birds are content to live in small patches of habitat or are so adaptable that they can adjust as their native habitat is converted to housing subdivisions, neighborhood playgrounds, or vineyards.

But there are birds that can't make their home in these altered environments. These birds are sensitive to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation. Examples include birds that LCBAS is censusing as part of our Sagebrush Songbird Survey.

Habitat loss is a key issue for some of these songbirds. For example, Sagebrush sparrows are most likely to be found in large tracts of sage-steppe habitat – on the order of 2000 acres. Other sage-steppe species are not so sensitive to habitat loss – they will breed in smaller patches of native habitat. But they are still affected by habitat fragmentation. As sage-steppe environments are carved up into smaller and smaller chunks of habitat, Brown-headed cowbirds thrive. These brood parasites reduce breeding success in Sage thrashers, Brewer's sparrows, and Vesper sparrows. Other issues, like invasive species and climate change, also make life hazardous for our

native birds.

But there is hope.

We have been presented with a once in a lifetime opportunity to expand sage-steppe habitat for local plants and animals – including sage-steppe songbirds. The Department of Energy is considering what to do with two hundred square miles – that's about 128,000 acres – of remediated Hanford lands adjacent to the Hanford Reach National Monument. If these lands were included in the National Monument, they would provide a safety buffer around sensitive areas at Hanford and conserve much-needed sage-steppe habitat for the birds we love.

LCBAS, led by Dana Ward, has been working hard to promote the transfer of these lands into the National Monument. However, we face strong opposition from competing interests. Involvement by private citizens who are concerned about conservation is critical to these efforts.

We need your help – and all you need is a pen and paper or an email account! Please consider writing letters or sending emails to your elected representatives, the newspaper, and to federal agencies expressing your support for inclusion of the central Hanford lands into the Hanford Reach National Monument.

If you'd like more information, please contact me or Dana. Your voice can make a difference!

Sincerely,
Lori

Junior Audubon News

By Cherie Baudrand

We have 16 enthusiastic Junior Audubon Members this school year. Our last two meetings were at The Reach Interpretive Center. Ten children attended “Going Ducky” in January. A Bald Eagle joined us for just long enough for everyone to get a good look. The members enjoyed watching ducks and pelicans in the scopes, and then visiting The Reach for a cup of hot chocolate and a visit to the wildlife displays. Our next meeting will be after school Thursday, April 23, at Hawthorne Elementary School in room 5.

Climate Change, Birds and the Citizens Climate Lobby

Audubon has documented how climate change is affecting hundreds of US bird species and urged us to do something about it. One approach is being taken by the Citizens Climate Lobby (<http://citizensclimatelobby.org>).

The Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL) seeks to have our government put a price on carbon emissions with a revenue-neutral "carbon fee with dividend" legislative proposal. This plan would put a gradually increasing price on fossil fuel carbon at the source (mine, oil/gas well, or import), and return all of the revenue as a uniform monthly dividend to every US household.

Our local CCL group is holding an Applebee's Flapjack Fundraiser, the Saturday after Earth Day, to support their Education Committee's efforts to inform the public about the carbon fee with dividend proposal. If you would like to support this work, breakfast awaits.

Saturday April 25, 2015 8-10 am
At Applebee's Restaurant
43 Columbia Point Drive, Richland, near WinCo.
Tickets \$10 - Walk-ins are welcome

Contact persons for tickets: Ed Rykiel, 509-627-1113, ecodoc59@yahoo.com or Charles LoPresti, 509-460-3312, lopresti@owt.com.

Upcoming events:

April 28th: Membership meeting
May 2nd: Bateman Island Walk, REACH event
May 4th: Board Meeting

Don't forget to check our website www.lcbas.org for up to date information. And remember we have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lcbas> - you do not have to have a Facebook account to read our page, just put in the address above!
Note that prospective members get three complimentary issues of the Curlew. In order to receive more issue, you must become an LCBAS member.

Officers

President – Lori Nelson (president@lcbas.org)
Vice President – Vacant
Treasurer – Madeleine Brown (treasurer@lcbas.org)
Secretary – Debbie Berkowitz (secretary@lcbas.org)

Standing Committees

Birding Events - Barb Clarke (birdingevents@lcbas.org)
Communications - Joe Lelli (Curlew) (curlew@lcbas.org)
Conservation – Marcie Daines (conservation@lcbas.org)
Education - Cherie Baudrand (education@lcbas.org)
Finance –
Fundraising – Charlotte Reep
Membership – Kevin Black, Rich Barchet (membership@lcbas.org)
Program – Ivar Husa (programs@lcbas.org)

Special Committees

Audubon Adventures - Eileen Kennedy
Book Sales - Kathy Criddle
Christmas Bird Count - Dana Ward (christmasbirdcount@lcbas.org)
Friends of McNary Liaison -
Hospitality – Carolyn Jones
Publicity –Charlotte Reep
Website - Ed Rykiel (webmaster@lcbas.org)

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NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS: In order to make you aware of our local chapter, we have been sending you complimentary issues of The Curlew newsletter. After three issues, the complimentary mailings end. To continue to receive The Curlew newsletter without interruption, please become a paid subscriber. Doing so is fast, easy, and secure at our website <http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html>

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Bird Sightings for March 2015

By Lannie Smith

North Richland and Richland Columbia River Parks

On the 5th Laurie Ness spotted a Townsend's Solitaire at the LDS church in Richland. On the 6th several flocks of Sandhill Cranes passed over her north Richland yard.

The largest flock was about 70 birds. Two singing Pine Grosbeaks continued to be present in the neighborhood.

A female Western Screech Owl had begun hanging out in Laurie's new nest box (and laid an egg on the 24th)!

Throughout the month she had 3 sightings of a Lincoln's Sparrow at the Logston Wetland Area and saw an Orange-crowned Warbler there on the 28th.

Jane and Keith Abel reported a pair of Long-billed Curlew at the Battelle field off Steven's Drive on March 15th. In their yard, large flocks of Cedar Waxwings were enjoying their birdbaths—sometimes up to 100 were present in the neighbor's tree. Other yard birds included: Downy Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wrens, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Varied Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warblers, American Goldfinch, and, at sunset, Western Screech Owls. They are also seeing (and hearing) some very vocal Cooper's Hawks. (Perhaps seeking mates?)

The yard of Bob and Pat Woodley had a Downy Woodpecker on the 25th and a female Purple Finch (rare, winter) on the 28th. Noteworthy in Leslie Groves Park, the Abels reported 3 Common Loons near the end of the month, and on the last day of March a female Red-breasted Merganser (rare, winter).

West Richland, Horn Rapids Area and Rattlesnake Mountain

Chad Merkley reported a Peregrine Falcon (uncommon, winter) near the intersection of Bombing Range Road and Paradise Road in West Richland. It flew to the top of a power pole to eat the bird it had in its talons. At Horn Rapids County Park, Jane and Keith Abel have spotted Virginia Rail (uncommon resident), Say's Phoebe, Pacific Wren (uncommon, winter), Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Spotted Towhee, and Lincoln Sparrow (uncommon migrant). Laurie Ness saw a Brown-headed Cowbird there on the 9th. She spotted a Prairie Falcon in West Richland on the 26th. Bob and Charlie Woodley found numerous Sandhill Cranes and a few Tree Swallows along Snively Road in West Richland.



Yellow-rumped Warbler
Photo credit: Ivar Husa

Rancho Reata and Amon Creek Natural Preserve

Sharon and Neil Ofsthun's yard list included Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning and Eurasian Collared-Doves, a Western Screech Owl (who appears to be on eggs in a nest box), Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Pacific Wren (uncommon, winter), Red-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing, Spotted Towhee and Red-winged Blackbird.

Yakima Delta, Bateman Island and Columbia Park

On the 16th, on the Delta from the Kayak, Jane Abel reported Green-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Pintail, Common Merganser, Mallard, Wood Ducks, American Wigeon and Gadwall, 2 Bald Eagles, 3 Greater Yellowlegs, 30-40 Dunlin, 1 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1 Caspian Tern, and many Tree Swallows and Yellow-rumped Warblers darting around the trees. On the 17th Bob and Pat Woodley saw a Common Loon off Bateman Island. It appeared to be molting into its alternate plumage. At the Delta on the 19th they saw 3 Killdeer, about 12 Least Sandpipers and a Caspian Tern. Many Cliff Swallows were refurbishing their mud nests under the I-182 Bridge. On the 21st Bob and his son Charlie saw 2 Greater Yellowlegs up to their bellies in the water. A Common Loon was swimming under the I-182 bridge. Bob and his wife saw a pair of Clark's Grebes off Columbia Park on the 24th and many Tree and Violet-Green Swallows flying low over the water on the Delta.

South Richland, Johnson Park and Badger Mountain

Lisa Hill reported a Northern Saw-whet Owl calling

every night from W. E. Johnson Park during the first week of March. They are uncommon in the winter and have not previously been seen (or heard) after March 6th.

Kathy Criddle's South Richland feeders were being used by California Quail, Mourning Doves, European Starlings, White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-winged Blackbirds, American Goldfinches, and House Finches in mid-March. She had several Northern Flickers, including an adult male intergrade with the black malar and yellow underwing, but no red crescent on the nape.



Tree Swallow
Photo credit: Ivar Husa

Kennewick and Benton County including Rattlesnake Slope

Laurie Ness birded Horse Heaven Hills between Kennewick and Patterson mid-month. She reported Chukar (uncommon resident), Common Raven, Rock Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and White-crowned Sparrow as well as Western Meadowlark and Horned Lark which were pretty much everywhere. Kathy and Jim Criddle drove the south slope of Rattlesnake Slope on the 22nd. Besides lots of Red-tailed Hawks and Western Meadowlarks, they found Sagebrush Sparrows at the Rothrock WDFW parking area and on Rotha Road near Crook Road they saw Gray Partridge (uncommon resident).

Finley Area

Kris Keating spotted her first Say's Phoebe this year on the 21st in her Finley yard.

McNary National Wildlife Refuge and Walla Walla River Delta

Bob and Pat Woodley found a handsome Yellow-headed Blackbird at the McNary NWR on the 27th.

Pasco and Franklin County

Ivar Husa photographed a Northern Saw-whet Owl (uncommon, winter) at Sacajawea Park on the 4th. Dana Ward and Kathy Criddle saw 2 Golden Eagles (uncommon, winter) on the 5th on Dodd Road. Charlotte Reep counted about 100 Sandhill Cranes flying over her west Pasco home. Laurie Ness saw and heard 5 male Purple Finches (accompanied by many more females) just west of the Pasco City limits along the Columbia River at the misleadingly named Richland Bend HMU.

Also in the first week of March, Rocky Ross reported a Greater Yellowlegs at Chiawana Park and 18 Burrowing Owls throughout Franklin County in the vicinity of various artificial nest boxes.

Jumping to the end of the month, on the 29th Kevin Black recorded 21 species at Ironwood Pond near Eltopia including 35 Greater White-fronted Geese (uncommon, winter). At Smith Canyon he recorded 17 species, including a Loggerhead Shrike. On Selph Landing Road a Yellow-headed Blackbird was in a mixed flock of Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds.

Rocky and I had a new yard bird on the last day of the month—a Fox Sparrow scratched for seed with the Spotted Towhee and White-crowned Sparrows below our feeder.



Loggerhead Shrike
Photo credit: Ivar Husa

Clarifications and corrections are always appreciated.

Please contribute *your* sightings to our newsletter! Call them in to 545-4898, post them online at LCBirds2, or email to lanirock@charter.net.

Conservation Report for April 2015

By Marcie Daines

Do you know~~

*Americans waste 3.8million gals of fuel DAILY idling their vehicles, aprx. \$14million wasted.

*Vehicles get ZERO (0) miles per gallon when idling.

*Idling reduces life of vehicle and produces huge amounts of pollution.

*Twenty-two states have Anti-Idling laws—Washington is not one of them!

Reasons to reduce idling—need we say! Waste of gas, money and poor air quality causes health problems which cost the U.S. an estimated \$5.2billion annually as well as millions of tons of air pollutants.

Myths and Realities of Idling:

Myth #1 Engine should be warmed up before driving.

Reality—Driving your vehicle slowly at first is best way to warm it up, and on a cold day, 30 seconds is enough. Below 32F use a block heater to warm your engine.

Myth #2 Idling good for engine.

Reality—Excessive idling can damage engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and the exhaust system.

Myth #3 Shutting off and restarting vehicle is hard on engine and uses more gas.

Reality—Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components, and more than 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting the engine.

Maximize fuel mileage and SAVE:

*Better engine performance with regular maintenance schedules —4% increase.

*Replace filters often—10% increase.

*Check and maintain proper tire pressure—3% increase.

*Use cruise control—10-50% increase.

*No “Jack Rabbit” starts or aggressive driving—5-33% increase.

*Observe speed limit—each 5mph over 60 is extra \$.20 per gallon—7-23% increase.

* Use overdrive gears—10—20% increase.

*Remove excess weight stored in trunk or on roof rack—1-2% increase.

How can you help?

*Better engine performance.

*Choose vehicles with better fuel mileage

*Minimize fuel consumption—plan your trips, carpool, walk, bike, use the bus.

*Support anti-idling legislation.

*Encourage and support alternative fuels.

*Stopped more than 10 seconds idling, turn off engine.

Oh, and REMEMBER you are not the only one breathing the air~~the birds are too!

Source: US Department of Energy

Spring Migration at the REACH

Birds are on the wing heading north

As part of its 50th anniversary year, the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society will host a day at The REACH! Celebrating Spring Migrating Birds. Get your bird ID questions answered. Families are especially encouraged to attend.

May 2, 2015: 8am-3:30pm

Schedule

8:00-10:00 Bateman Island bird walk

10:00-11:30 Make a nest wreath (take home)

10:30 Spring migration bird ID questions

11:00 How to be a bird watcher

11:30 Celebrating urban birds

12:00-1:00 Bring your own lunch & watch a movie

Film: *A Mother Hummingbird Story*

1:00 Bird watching for kids

1:30 Celebrating urban birds (Spanish)

2:00-3:00 Birding: Australia

Admission:

Adults \$8

Students, Seniors & Military \$6

Kids 5 and under are FREE

REACH members Free

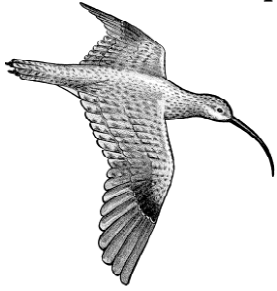
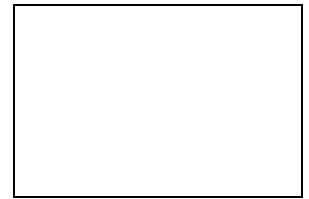
Door Prizes

**First 100 people to mention The Lower
Columbia Audubon Get in FREE**

For more info about any of the scheduled programs Please call Kris Cargile 509-943-4100
x108 krisc@visitthereach.org

The Curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon
Society
P.O. Box 1900
Richland WA 99352
Return Service Requested



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. _____

- LCBAS has an e-alert list (for last minute activity changes, important issues, volunteer opportunities). If you want to opt out, check here. If you opt out, you will not receive e-alert emails (Your e-mail address will not be shared in any case).

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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