



# The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia  
Basin Audubon Society

## Upcoming Events:

For more information see  
[www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org)

**October 25:** Membership meeting at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

**November 1:** Board meeting; please note the day change to Tuesday.

**November 5:** Bateman Island Bird Walk. See page 2.

**December 31:** Annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). See page 4.

## Other Events:

For upcoming meetings and walks with the Columbia Basin Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society:

<https://www.cbwnps.org/>

**Yakima Audubon:** Invites us to join their monthly membership meeting on Oct. 27. For information: <https://yakimaaudubon.org/events/>

**Winter Wings Festival in Klamath:**  
<https://winterwingsfest.org/>

## 21st Annual LCBAS Bird Seed Sale

Unfortunately Columbia Grain and Feed will not offer LCBAS a special bird seed sale this fall.

Due to a poor harvest last year, climate problems and supply availability, bird seeds have been difficult to find. Recently, the only available seeds were regional seeds and black oil sunflower.

However, please remember: ANY purchase during the year benefits LCBAS if you mention our name at checkout! So please keep checking back with Columbia Grain and Feed for more bird seed options.

## Youth Ecology Education Through Restoration (YEER)

**Tuesday, October 25, 2022, at 7:00 PM via Zoom (link below)**

### Gretchen Graber, Restoration Ecologist and Environmental Science Educator

Join Gretchen as she shares information about the Youth Ecology Education through Restoration (YEER) program. Gretchen is a project lead for this pilot program testing a new 7th-grade science curriculum which includes an actual restoration project done by the students.

Gretchen Graber is a restoration ecologist with degrees in Environmental Science and Biology with an emphasis on plant studies. In the past twelve years, she has been involved with many local unique habitat restoration and education projects. She led a project that taught incarcerated people to grow and outplant 80,000 sagebrush plants to support Greater Sage Grouse. Collaborative community events have been coordinated by Gretchen, including multiple trash cleanup events on Bateman Island and McBee Grade.



**Join Zoom Meeting** (or go to [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org) for a clickable link):

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89834768492?  
pwd=MHlzWTV6cUtSZzhTOEdgd1pGTzqyUT09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89834768492?pwd=MHlzWTV6cUtSZzhTOEdgd1pGTzqyUT09)

Meeting ID: 898 3476 8492, Passcode: 908142

Dial by your location: +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma), +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston), +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose).

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kdDu9Z2CbI>

## Bateman Island Bird Walk Oct 1, 2022

By Lisa Hill

On a beautiful fall day, a group of about 25 birders scoured Bateman Island and the surrounding waters of the Yakima River delta and Columbia River for winter avian residents and waterfowl. Many new birders and lots of long-time attendees found nearly 50 species. Songbirds seen throughout the winter and into early spring were vocalizing and flitting about in the typical fall sunshine of the Lower Columbia Basin. These little beauties included WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, DARK-EYED JUNCOS, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS, SPOTTED TOWHEES, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS and a LINCOLN'S SPARROW.



Above: Ruddy Duck, and below, Pied-billed Grebe  
Photos by Larry Umthun

Waterfowl and a few shorebirds are arriving and there was a good mix of species, many of which will also remain throughout the winter. Over 100 LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS canvassed the mudflats, poking about for anything edible. Many shorebirds and waterfowl have odd English names, some with obscure origins. For instance, dowitcher is believed to come from the language of the Native American Iroquois tribe for their word for the bird. Dunlin is the diminutive for the old English word “dunn”, meaning “little and dark brown”. Others are easy, such as Northern Pintail, referring to the long sharp tail of the adult male. Ruddy Duck is a modern term for reddish, referring to the male’s ruddy or reddish breeding plumage.

The word duck itself is from the old English “duce”, to duck or dive. Wood Duck refers to the bird’s habit of nesting in tree cavities. American Wigeon is from the old French “vigeon” meaning a small crane, or possibly from “vignier”, to whine or shout. Wigeons call loudly with a nasal, whining sound. Bufflehead is derived from “buffalo head” due to the shape of the bird’s head. Pied-billed Grebe is so called for its two-colored or “pied” bill, and from the French word for grebe. Green-winged Teals, abundant here in winter, are named for the bright green speculum on the wing and from the old English word “tele” or “teal” meaning to produce or have a brood. The origin of Gadwall is obscure, but has been in use since the late 17th century. Mallard is from the French “maslard”, a wild drake.

Cormorant is also French, “cormoran”, derived from Latin “coruus” for crow and “marinus”, of the sea, essentially a sea crow. American White Pelican comes straight from the Greek “pelekan”, the word for this type of bird.



**The next Bateman Island bird walk is Saturday, November 5, beginning promptly at 8AM. Meet in or near the parking lot of Wye Park above the causeway to the island.**



# Winter is Coming!

By Robin Priddy

From “*The Science of Birds*” podcast by Ivan Phillipsen. How Birds Survive in Winter, Episode 21, January 24, 2021.

<https://www.scienceofbirds.com/podcast/how-birds-survive-in-winter>

Winter is a tough time for birds that stay in cold places. Many species suffer their highest mortality in winter. Challenges include:

- Cold – as warm-blooded creatures, they must maintain temperatures in a narrow range.
- Food – they need to eat a lot to keep up their body temperature when it’s cold, and there’s much less food available.
- Short Days – combined with cold temperatures, are hard on diurnal animals – they need daylight to forage.

**It’s pretty amazing any birds make it through the winter! But life finds a way.**

Bird body temperatures are between 102 and 109 degrees F. It takes a lot of energy to maintain this temperature. Surface area to volume ratio makes a big difference – small birds have a high ratio so there’s a lot more surface to lose heat, compared to the volume of the bird to make heat. Bigger animals lose heat more slowly, because they have a more volume compared to surface area. Birds use a variety of behaviors, physical and physiological adaptations, and food finding strategies.

## Behavioral adaptations:

- Birds find and use small protected spaces, called microclimates, to protect themselves.
- The Verdin builds a special spherical roosting nest for the winter in the branches of desert shrubs.
- Grouse and ptarmigan burrow into snow for shelter.
- Tucking beaks and faces in their feathers prevents heat loss from less feathered part of their bodies. Some birds, like chickadees, nuthatches, and kinglets, cluster together at night. Emperor Penguins huddle, too.
- Migrating to places where food and temperature are easier to manage, which has its own risks and energy costs.
- Altitudinal migration is one way to change environments without going too far.

## How birds stay warm:

- Feathers! Especially the down feathers, which create air pockets that keep the warmth near the bird. Contoured feathers on the outside deflect wind, rain, and snow. Birds have muscles which allow them to fluff up their feathers to create more insulation. Some birds grow extra down in the fall and they can gain some weight to help over the winter.
- Birds acclimatize. After some time in cold weather, the metabolism of some bird species adapt to cold weather. Goldfinches can maintain their body temperature when it’s minus 70 degrees F! Birds can also shiver; acclimatized birds shiver more efficiently, too.
- Ducks and gulls stay warm and keep their legs and feet from frostbite by keeping their feet just warm enough not to freeze, but not the rest of their body. This is called regional heterothermy. Their blood vessels are arranged so that heat transfers out of blood on its way to their feet, into the blood vessels that are in the rest of the body, which is countercurrent heat exchange!
- Torpor is a short-term kind of hibernation. They let their body temperature drop below its normal level. This is a risky strategy because birds in torpor can’t protect themselves. Hummingbirds and nightjars use torpor, something we thought about quite a bit last winter!

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## Christmas Bird Count—December 31, 2022

### Time to dig out those binoculars and dust off the bird identification book!

The annual Christmas Bird Count will be held Saturday December 31<sup>st</sup>, and all are welcomed to participate. The count has been conducted in the Tri-Cities count circle since the 1960s and is a significant contributor to the local, regional and national bird data base.

Since Covid is still a factor in our communities, we still need to take precautions. Each individual will have to determine what their comfort level is, and what is safe for them. We usually have a potluck dinner at the end of the day but that decision has not yet been made. Stay tuned for updates on the website / future Curlews.

The count circle is divided into three sections with Lisa Hill (509-869-6715) leading the Richland Team, Rich Barchet (509-430-0053) leading the Kennewick Team and Dana Ward (509-545-0627) leading the Pasco Team as well as continuing as the overall coordinator. Please consider contacting them early to participate in one of those count areas.

For more information on the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count, please contact Dana Ward at (509-545-0627) or by email at [dcarlward@gmail.com](mailto:dcarlward@gmail.com).

Thank you for considering participating in this year's CBC!  
Dana Ward, Christmas Bird Count Coordinator

After many years of being the Christmas Bird Count Coordinator, I would like to hand this wonderful Audubon program off to another member starting next year. It does not take a lot of time to organize since most work is charted out and I would be happy to help the new coordinator. I can continue as the team lead for Pasco.

Continued from page 3:

### Winter is Coming podcast

Finding enough food is a big challenge in winter, especially for small birds.

- Some birds store and recover food, called "caching". Chickadees and nuthatches do this; they store seeds in nooks in tree bark and they can remember where they are!
- Shrikes cache food by storing it on thorns.
- Kinglets eat insects, which are scarcer in winter, but they generally find enough, since they eat insect eggs and dormant insects on branches. In very tough winters these insectivore birds can suffer heavy losses.
- Seed eaters can do well being fed by humans.
- Facultative migrants, such as European Goldfinches and Bohemian Waxwings, will migrate when conditions are tough enough to force them to leave.

And consider the Common Redpoll, near Fairbanks, Alaska, where there is an average daily high of 2° F during the winter. Common Redpolls are among the birds that live in this cold. They use several strategies, a shallow form of torpor, and facultative migration — sometimes into the cities where they find bird feeders. Adorably, they dig tiny tunnels into snow to find seeds and some shelter!



Birding until the sun went down on a past CBC  
Photo by Judy Gallagher, from flickr.com

### Audubon Launched it's New Bird Migration Explorer!

Last month National Audubon launched it's new Bird Migration Explorer. This is a great new tool which will help you follow your favorite bird species, or hundreds of them, on their migration! It's brand new, so we invite you to check it out at the link:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2022/the-bird-migration-explorer-lets-you-interact>

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**NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS:** We have been sending you complimentary issues of The Curlew newsletter to keep you up to date on local happenings. 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 <https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate>

The **LCBAS Privacy Policy** is available at our website.

Find out more at [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org) or [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org](http://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org)

### LCBAS OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>
President	Sheri Whitfield	<a href="mailto:president@lcbas.org">president@lcbas.org</a>
Vice President	Michael Henao	—
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	<a href="mailto:treasurer@lcbas.org">treasurer@lcbas.org</a>
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz	<a href="mailto:secretary@lcbas.org">secretary@lcbas.org</a>
Birding Events	Jason Fidorra	—
Communications Chair	Charlene Burge	—
Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leaumont	<a href="mailto:conservation@lcbas.org">conservation@lcbas.org</a>
Education Chair	OPEN	—
Finance Chair	Dan Hansen	<a href="mailto:treasurer@lcbas.org">treasurer@lcbas.org</a>
Fundraising Chair	Marcie Daines	
Membership Chair	OPEN	To contact anyone without a dedicated email address, please use the contact form on our website:
Program Chair	OPEN	
Director at Large	Robin Priddy	
	<b>OTHER CONTACTS:</b>	
Curlew Editor	Charlene Burge	
Membership Database	Rich Barchet	
LCBAS Website	Lori Nelson and Lisa Hill	
Publicity Chair	OPEN	

**Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society****PO Box 1900****Richland, WA 99354****Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Membership Form**

LCBAS membership benefits include a year's subscription (10 issues) to The Curlew and priority registration for space-limited field trips. LCBAS is a 501c(3) organization and dues are tax deductible.

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular membership (\$20)

\_\_\_\_\_ Full-time student membership (\$10)

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to make an additional donation of \_\_\_\_\_.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to **LCBAS**)

**Mail your form and dues to: Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, PO Box 1900, Richland, WA. 99352**

I want to save resources and postage and receive my newsletter by email

I do not want to receive e-alerts for last minute activity changes, important issues, and volunteer opportunities (check for opt-out).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Membership in LCBAS is separate from membership in the National Audubon Society.  
To join the National Audubon Society, please go to [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)