

The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see

www.lcbas.org

October 22: LCBAS Chapter Meeting at 7:00 PM

November 2: LCBAS First Saturday / Bateman Island Walk. See page 2

November 5: LCBAS Board Meeting

November 26: LCBAS Chapter Meeting at 7:00 PM

December 7: LCBAS First Saturday / Bateman Island Walk.

December 28: Christmas Bird Count

LCBAS events are always open to the public.

This is the Last Printed Curlew Issue

October is the last printed Curlew issue. After much debate within the LCBAS Board, and requests for feedback from LCBAS membership throughout the last year, the decision was made to discontinue printing the Curlew. You will still receive the Curlew via email, and can also access it via the LCBAS website at www.lcbas.org.

This decision saves LCBAS money, and is a sound environmental decision. Money saved on printing and postage will help LCBAS continue with conservation and educational projects. In other words, it will be for both the birds, and the people of our communities.

Please make sure we have your email address so you will be able to receive the e-Curlew. You can send it by using the contact form on the LCBAS website: www.lcbas.org/contact and by signing up at the next meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please use the contact form or mail us at: LCBAS, PO Box 1900, Richland, WA 99352. We will do everything we can to help make this transition easy. If you don't have internet access, we can help you find other alternatives. For example, the local libraries have computers available for public use.

Birding out of Tucson, Arizona, with Ivar Husa

**LCBAS Chapter Meeting:
Tuesday, October 22, 2024, 7:00 PM
First Lutheran Church, 418 N. Yelm,
Kennewick, WA**

Join LCBAS member Ivar Husa as he takes us on a birding adventure through the Tucson, Arizona area. Ivar is an avid photographer of life who approaches the natural world with a sense of wonder and curiosity.

**Right: Painted Redstart
Photo by Ivar Husa**



First Saturday / Bateman Island Bird Walk October 5, 2024

By Lisa Hill

It was another beautiful day in the Bateman Island neighborhood. Any time we have a bird walk with no wind, rain or sub-freezing temperatures, it's a win! The sun was shining and we found 46 species. We continue to welcome new birders to the walk who appreciate the camaraderie and excellent birding skills of many of the attendees. Birders are so generous with their knowledge and truly enjoy helping others learn to identify our local birds.



California Scrub-Jay
Photo by Larry Umthun

Waterfowl numbers are on the rise and winter resident birds are showing up. There were varying counts of NORTHERN SHOVELER, NORTHERN PINTAIL, AMERICAN WIGEON, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, WESTERN GREBE and GADWALL. There was a good deal of mud on the Yakima delta and LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS could be seen on even the smallest patches. We estimated 100 dowitchers, but that's probably a conservative number. KILLDEER were in abundance and a few WESTERN SAND-PIPERS were present. Several juvenile and one adult BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON were perched on rocks and the boat launch on the west side of the causeway. Fall is a great time to see GREAT EGRETS in this area and at least 10 were seen.

Some of our small winter-resident songbirds were flitting about. Many YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS

and a few DARK-EYED JUNCOS, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, GOLDEN-CROWNED and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS, HERMIT THRUSHES and SPOTTED TOWHEES were spotted. Ha!

Although we didn't lay eyes on it, we heard the best find of the day: a CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAY (CASJ)! This is only the 4th Bateman Island record on eBird, the first being in September 2020. When we moved to the Tri-Cities in October 2005 (yes, 19 years ago!), the only place CASJ could be found was in Prosser, and it required a diligent search to come up with one. Since about 1990 when there were virtually no CASJ in Eastern Washington, the population has expanded rapidly north and east of California with a few sightings in Canada. The first significant population of CASJ in the Tri-cities was noted in early 2019 in a residential neighborhood in north Richland. They now breed in the region and can be found in many places in Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties. In July 2016, the American Ornithologist's Union announced its recognition of the California Scrub-Jay and Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay which were the result of a species split of the Western Scrub-Jay. By the end of the year though, WOSJ will be given a new moniker, eliminating the reference to a person's name.

The next Bateman Island bird walk will be Saturday, November 2nd, beginning promptly at 8:00 AM.

Please come a few minutes early to sign in. Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park above the causeway to the island. Parking is limited, so you may need to park in one of the other lots.

Please join us! Both the public and LCBAS members are always welcome. Binoculars are available, first come, first served. No registration is required.

Christmas Bird Count – December 28, 2024

The annual Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 28, 2024. All are welcome to participate. The count has been conducted in the Tri-Cities in the same count circle since the 1960s and is a significant contributor to the local, regional, and national knowledge of winter bird populations.

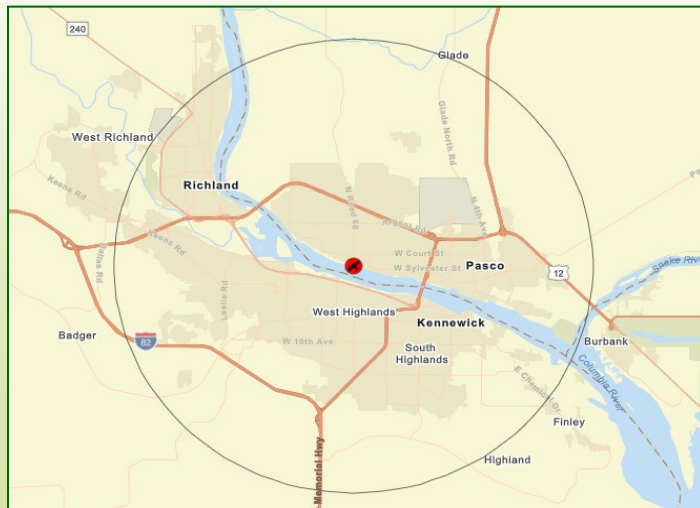
The count circle is divided into three sections, with three leads:

Richland: Lisa Hill (509-869-6715),
Kennewick: Rich Barchet (509-430-0053)
Pasco: Dana Ward (509-430-3363)

Bill LaFramboise (509-531-3768) is the overall coordinator and can be reached by phone or email. Please contact any lead if you have questions about the count.

Thank you for considering participating.

Bill LaFramboise, Christmas Bird Count Coordinator
 (email billnan321@gmail.com)



Right: The Tri-Cities Count Circle #58223

BirdCast Migration Forecast Site

A website called BirdCast, through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, uses radar-based data to develop and maintain tools that predict and monitor nocturnal bird migration in the contiguous United States. You can access the website here:

<https://birdcast.info/> to see what is forecast, as well as an estimate of what birds have already migrated through on the date you search.

For example, data for Franklin County on October 14th found approximately 6,700 birds had crossed through already on that day, and an estimated 10,500 were in flight over the county at the time searched.

The migrating species included Sandhill Crane, Cackling Goose, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, Lincoln's Sparrow, Least Sandpiper, Varied Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Greater Yellowlegs, and several others.

Check it out, and see if you can find your favorites!

Results: 5th Annual July Birding Challenge

By Jason Fidorra

The July Challenge is an annual birding "competition" between Franklin and Benton Counties. Birders can bird in either county, or both, as we see which county can rack up the most species for the month. Not only is this a fun event, but the data collected contributes information for a month when normally few people are birding.

July is historically the least birded month of the year. This means that not only are cool birds not being located, but also that science is least informed about this time of year – an important time with offspring being added to populations, and arctic breeding shorebirds already heading south for the winter.

Benton County came out ahead again in the 2024 July Birding Challenge, as it has in prior years. However, there are less birders participating from Franklin County. Can we change that in 2025?

Benton County: 138 species / 14 participating birders

Top three birders:

Jef Blake with 128 species

Elke Davis with 105 species

Rowan Young-McMurchie with 103 species

Franklin County: 130 species / 6 participating birders

Top three birders:

Dana Ward with 90 species

Mark Gerber with 68 species

Doug Gruba with 60 species

Owl-oween is Almost Here!

Here's some fun facts about owls to help you get ready for Owl-oween, from National Audubon and other sources.



- * While some species of owl are found in the same area year-round, like the Great Horned Owl, others migrate long distances. For a short synopsis, check out BirdNote: www.birdnote.org/podcasts/birdnote-daily/owls-migrate-too
- * Owls don't just hoot. They make all sorts of sounds, including the classic hoot of the Great Horned Owl, the screech of Barn Owls, the whiny or bouncing-ball call of the Western Screech Owl, the quail-like coo of the Burrowing Owl (and the rattlesnake mimicry of their young), etc.
- * Most owls have asymmetrical, or offset ears, the better to hear their prey and potential predators. While we may think we see ears on some owl species, like the Great Horned Owl, those are really plumicorns, or ear tufts, which do not correspond with the actual location of their ears.
- * Owls don't have true eyeballs, but rather completely immobile, tube-shaped eyes. This boosts their depth-perception and provides binocular vision, which fully focuses on their prey.
- * Owls can turn their heads 270 degrees, to help them focus their immobile eyes. A specialized blood-pooling system provides blood to their brains even when their head is turned so far that circulation is cut off.
- * Not all owls are nocturnal. Some are crepuscular, meaning they are active on the edges of the day. Others are mostly diurnal, or daytime active.
- * Owls hunt other owls. Great Horned Owls are the top predator of Barred Owls. Barred Owls in the Pacific Northwest prey on most other smaller species, including the Spotted Owl.
- * The Elf Owl is 5-6" tall and weighs about 1.5 ounces--making it the smallest owl in the world. The Great Gray Owl is North America's largest owl by appearance, at 32" plus.
- * Many owls can detect prey from a distance, but the Northern Hawk Owl may be the most talented. It can detect voles from up to half a mile away, mainly by sight!
- * Barn Owl eat their prey whole, and will cough up a pellet of the undigested bits about twice a day. A Barn Owl may eat up to 1,000 rodents per year!
- * Even small owls can travel long distances across large bodies of water. Northern Saw-whet Owls have shown up 70 miles offshore. Burrowing Owls have been found on larger offshore islands, and a few have taken Caribbean Owlidays -- on cruise ships!
- * While owls are zygodactyl, meaning they have two forward facing toes, and two backward facing toes, they can rotate one of their back toes forward to help them grip and walk.
- * While most owl species are arboreal, or tree dwelling, one local owl lives in the ground! The Burrowing Owl uses and improves burrows dug by other species like badger, marmot, and ground squirrel.

Citizen Science: Winter Raptor Surveys

If you can identify raptors in our area and enjoy having another reason to spend time out birding (but, seriously, who needs reasons?), you should consider joining the Winter Raptor Survey. The 21st season for the East Cascades Audubon Society's Winter Raptor Survey Project will get underway November 1st for optional surveys, and December 1st for the main survey season. For more information: <https://ecbirds.org/projects/winter-raptor-survey/>

All data collected is provided to The Peregrine Fund in Boise, ID, to include in their raptor database for research and population monitoring purposes. This data, as well as data from eBird and research projects, are painting a picture of raptor use and population trends in our western states. More than 450 people are involved each year, covering 551 routes in six states as of last winter, while surveying more than 32,000 miles of transects! Last year, as usual, RTHA, AMKE, NOHA, BAEA, and RLHA continued to be the main species observed, accounting for 91.8% of the total raptors observed.

Several great driving routes near our area are available for this year's survey. Contact Jeff Fleischer to get involved:

raptorrunner97321@yahoo.com

This survey is for you, if you know local raptors, love birding, pay close attention to detail, follow the simple directions provided for the surveys, and can accurately fill out simple survey forms. Easy peasy and lots of fun!

LCBAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: Postal Curlew subscribers can see the year/month their subscription expires by looking on their Curlew label. **eCurlew subscribers** are alerted to the impending expiration of their subscription by email. Please renew your subscription on or before the month your subscription expires to continue to receive the Curlew without interruption. Renewing online is easy, quick and safe: <https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate> or you can use the form included with this newsletter.

Consider receiving the eCurlew instead of a paper copy! See all the photos in color, receive your Curlew sooner, and be an environmental and fiscal champion. To switch to the eCurlew: www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact

ADDRESS CHANGES: Please send address changes (postal address or email address) to www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact so that your subscription is not interrupted. You can also mail address changes to LCBAS, PO Box 1900, Richland, WA 99352.

NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS: We hope you will support Lower Columbia Basin Audubon by joining the local chapter, which is locally funded. 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 or

LCBAS OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>
President	Dana Ward	president@lcbas.org
Vice President	Chuck Hedel	—
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com
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Birding Events	Jason Fidorra	—
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Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leaumont	conservation@lcbas.org
Education Chair	Kelly Doyle	—
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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	Lori Nelson	
Director at Large	Robin Priddy	https:// www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/ contact
OTHER CONTACTS:		
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 99352

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 (Individual or family at one address) (\$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 _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership in LCBAS is separate from membership in the National Audubon Society.
To join the National Audubon Society, please go to www.audubon.org