

# The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

## May: The Biggest Month in Birding!

By Jason Fidorra

May is a wonderful time to bird and you never know what you'll find! **WHITE-FACED IBIS** showed up at McNary National Wildlife Refuge, and stayed through the month with up to 69 individuals being reported there with a few flyover records for Benton and Franklin Counties too. Mid-May saw an invasion of **EVENING GROSBEAK** at feeders with many folks adding this striking finch to their yard lists! A **BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** was a half - day wonder at Chiawana Park in Pasco on 5/14. A **BLACK-THROATED SPARROW** was found off Webber Canyon Rd. on 5/25 and remained tricky to see through the month. This seems to be an irruptive breeder in Washington showing up in the Basin some years but absent for many. Then to top it all off a **NORTHERN PARULA** (20<sup>th</sup> WA State record) was found in Horn Rapids County Park the next day! Rounding out the month, a **SNOWY EGRET** was reported from the McNary NWR Millet Ponds on 5/28 and a **CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** was found at Scooteneey Reservoir on 5/30. To get all the rarity reports, check out Tri-Cities Birders group on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/151054868748760/>, or sign up for alerts from [eBird.org](http://eBird.org).



Northern Parula  
Photo by Larry Umthun

## Upcoming Events

There are no in-person LCBAS events planned at this time.

### Canceled:

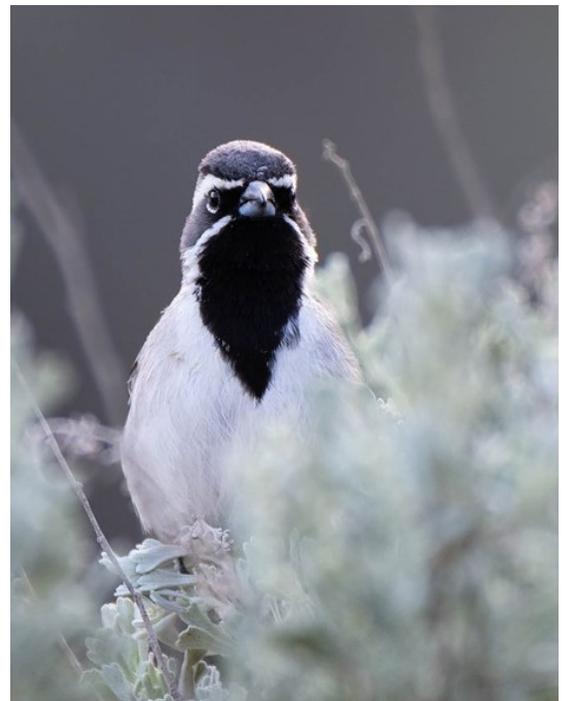
June Picnic, July Presentation

**Now:** Vote for Board of Directors!  
More information on pg 2. Ballot on pg 5.

### Upcoming:

Inaugural July Birding Challenge  
(see pg 2)

Please check for updates on our webpage, [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org), Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/lcbas/> and/or upcoming Curlews.



Black-throated Sparrow  
Photo by Dennis Werlau

## July Birding Challenge!

By Jason Fidorra

**JULY BIRDING CHALLENGE !!** July is the least birded month for both Benton and Franklin Counties. This means that not only are cool birds not being located, but that science is least informed about this time of year—an important time with offspring added to populations and arctic breeding shorebirds head south for the winter! Many discoveries await!!

Let's make a fun effort to document as many species as we can during July! To be added to the fun, send an email to [fieldtrips@lcbas.org](mailto:fieldtrips@lcbas.org). I will add you to the list for rules, regular emails about sightings and standings through the month. If you can't go bird you can still sign up to follow along. This is a friendly event. Benton and Frankly County lists will compete to see which county can rack up the most species in July, but you can still bird in both counties.



### Board of Directors Election

By Debbie Berkowitz

LCBAS usually holds elections for the Board of Directors at our May membership meeting. Because of Covid-19 and the Governor's stay at home order, we did not have our May meeting, nor the June picnic. Therefore, as mentioned in the May Curlew, the current LCBAS board has decided to include a ballot in this June issue of the Curlew. All current dues-paying members of LCBAS are encouraged to vote.

Please see Page 5 for the ballot and Slate of Nominees.

\*Please vote by July 10.

**LCBAS Elections**      **Vote!**  
**Vote!**



### Audubon:

### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are a Strategic Imperative

The birds Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon will bring new creativity, effectiveness and leadership to our work throughout the hemisphere.

For more information :

<https://www.audubon.org/about/edi>

## Wallula Unit and Millet Pond

By Ivar Husa

Visiting Millet Pond is a wonderful way to 'social distance', get exercise, and perhaps see some amazing animals. The pond is part of the McNary National Wildlife Refuge, in the Wallula Unit, near the mouth of the Walla Walla River. Two hundred and six species have been reported for this area on eBird. On a recent visit, Mike and Merrylyn Denney recorded 53 species.

**Advisory:** This unit is used for waterfowl hunting from sun-up until 1pm during the waterfowl season that nominally runs from mid-October to the end of January. There are a few youth hunting days set aside, in advance of the main season. Be sure to check the hunting regulations for more information.

That does not mean you shouldn't visit during hunting season. Just show up after 1pm and don't expect to see any ducks. There are other birds! The hunter's I have crossed paths with, after 1pm of course, have been most congenial.

This year there have been reports of Swamp Sparrow, American Bittern, White-faced Ibis, Great Egret, and Franklin's Gull, along with many other, more common, species. My most exciting find at this unit, in 2017, was a Long-tailed Weasel in winter colors.

From the parking areas, pass the gates and wander at will. The largest loop runs just under 4 miles long, but all of it is flat and much is well graveled. The side trails that aren't graveled can be slippery when wet. I view it as my McElligot's Pond, where any fish, or fowl, might be found.

The ponds are in varying stages of flooding in the winter, and the water is dropped for the rest of the year. For more information, contact McNary <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/McNary/>

**From Hwy 12, traveling from the Tri-Cities towards Wallula Gap, turn east on North Shore Rd, at Madame Dorian Park. Access points are marked with a blue star. Most will drive to the parking area at the yellow marker with blue star. The alternative has one parking almost directly under the power lines.**



Long-tailed Weasel  
Photo by Ivar Husa



## Climate Change is Pushing Bird Boundaries, Community Scientists Confirm

**In the first peer-reviewed study of its kind, participants in Audubon's Climate Watch program helped determine the ongoing impact of climate change to bluebirds and nuthatches.**

The journal *Ecological Applications* just published a final version of a study from National Audubon Society scientists demonstrating that climate change is causing a measurable shift of birds' ranges during winter and breeding seasons. Years of bird observations gathered by hundreds of volunteer participants in Audubon's Climate Watch community science program confirm projections made earlier by Audubon that rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns will likely result in the colonization of new territories by North American birds.

**"Climate change is disrupting hundreds of bird species, and thanks to community scientists all across the country, we can visualize these disruptions in real time and plan conservation efforts accordingly,"** said Sarah Saunders, PhD, quantitative ecologist at Audubon and lead author of the study.

The study concludes that climate-vulnerable birds are indeed shifting their distributions at pace with changes in climate suitability due to rising global temperatures. The most outstanding examples take place during the birds' wintering season, which is not unexpected given the more pronounced changes in temperature attributable to climate change taking place in winter months.

Climate Watch, an Audubon community science program that invites volunteers to count and identify select species of birds deemed climate vulnerable by Audubon climate science, provides the observation data used in the analysis. Each year, from January 15 to February 15 and May 15 to June 15, community scientists all across the country look for 12 species: White-breasted Nuthatch, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, Brown-headed Nuthatch, Pygmy Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, Eastern Bluebird, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Spotted Towhee and Painted Buntings. The dual two-week windows represent wintering and breeding seasons for the chosen species. The climate-suitable ranges for each of these species are projected to change as their habitats shift, shrink, or expand due to rising global temperatures. Regularly gathered observations allow researchers to track any shifts in species distributions.

**"Climate Watch volunteers have confirmed the accuracy of Audubon's climate projections, which show that two-thirds of North American birds are at risk of extinction by the end of this century,"** said Brooke Bateman, PhD, Audubon's senior climate scientist and lead author of *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink*, a report published in October 2019.

**"Luckily, Audubon science also shows that we can protect three-quarters of these vulnerable bird species by keeping global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius,"** said Bateman.

Audubon's climate suitability projections for each of these climate-vulnerable bird species allows conservationists to protect not only the places birds need today, but also the places birds will need in a climate-altered future.

For more information on birds, climate change, and Climate Watch, visit: <https://www.audubon.org/climate-watch-results>

For further study, five new species have been added to the list of Climate Watch birds—the towhees, goldfinches and bunting listed above—representing birds found across a broader geographic area and in urban areas, which will allow a more in-depth look at the validity of climate suitability projections and invite even more community scientists to participate in the effort.

## Audubon Adventures

**In many ways every child is born a scientist**—exploring their world, leading small experiments, asking questions, searching for answers. That innate curiosity and drive to inquiry is what Rachel Carson, the groundbreaking conservationist and author, called a sense of wonder.

The current Audubon learning module is on Climate Change, and what both children and adults can do to make a difference. The topic is more important than ever, as the Arctic Circle experiences ever higher temperatures. The Arctic is warming at more than two times the rate of the rest of the globe!

The current module includes:

- Scientists Study Birds to Learn About Climate Change,
- Kids are Telling Leaders It's Time to Take Action,
- What's Your Climate Action Score?

<https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/>

**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: <http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html> or you can use the form included with your newsletter.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Please send address changes (postal address or email address) to Rich Barchet at [subscriptions@lcbas.org](mailto:subscriptions@lcbas.org) so that your subscription is not interrupted. You can mail address changes to LCBAS, PO Box 1900, Richland, WA 99354.

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

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 Ballot for Officers and Standing Committee Chairs

There are two options for voting:

1. Send an email to Debbie Berkowitz at [secretary@lcbas.org](mailto:secretary@lcbas.org). State if you vote for or against the slate of officers/standing committee chairs.
2. Return the ballot, or a copy, by mail to Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1900, Richland, WA 99352. Please check one of the boxes below.

**Please return your ballot by July 10, 2020.**

### Slate of Nominees:

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	
President	Jim Castle
Vice President	Sheri Whitfield
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz
Treasurer	Lori Nelson
<b>STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:</b>	
Birding Events	Jason Fidorra
Communications	Charlene Burge
Conservation	Dana Ward and Rick Leumont
Education	Cherie Baudrand
Finance	Lori Nelson
Fundraising	Marcie Daines
Membership	OPEN
Programs	Kathy Criddle
Delegate-at-Large	Robin Priddy

I vote for the slate of officers / standing committee chairs.

I vote against the slate of officers / standing committee chairs.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.audubon.org)