



# The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

## Upcoming Events:

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

**April 18: CANCELED** 3rd Saturday Bird Trip

**April 25:** Volunteer work party with Rowan, Birding Events, on the Bank Swallow Conservation Project in Badger Canyon. More details will be posted before the event on [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org) and on social media.

**April 28:** Monthly Chapter meeting at 7:00 PM

**May 2:** LCBAS First Saturday Bird Walk - see page 2

**May 5:** LCBAS Board Meeting

### Save the Date!

**April 18:** Earth Day at The Reach - see page 4

## In this Issue of the Curlew:

- Details on upcoming walks, events, and meetings
- Results from the April First Saturday walk
- Earth Day at The Reach Museum
- Information on our upcoming LCBAS elections

**AND MORE**

## White-crowned Sparrow Project

**LCBAS Chapter Meeting:  
Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 7:00 PM  
First Lutheran Church, 418 N. Yelm, Kennewick, WA**

**With Bill LaFramboise, Nancy LaFramboise, and Ben Vernasco**



Our chapter is excited to share a presentation on the White-crowned Sparrow Project by Nancy LaFramboise, Bill LaFramboise, and Ben Vernasco. This local study looks at population trends, survival, and longevity of one of the Lower Columbia Basin's most familiar winter birds. By combining bird banding, resighting, and regional population data, the project helps show how even common species can change over time and why long-term monitoring matters. The presentation also highlights the many volunteers whose efforts make this work possible.

**Leucistic White-crowned Sparrow, above  
Members of the banding team, below.**



## First Saturday Bird Walk Trip Report Sacajawea State Park, Pasco - April 4, 2026

By Lisa Hill

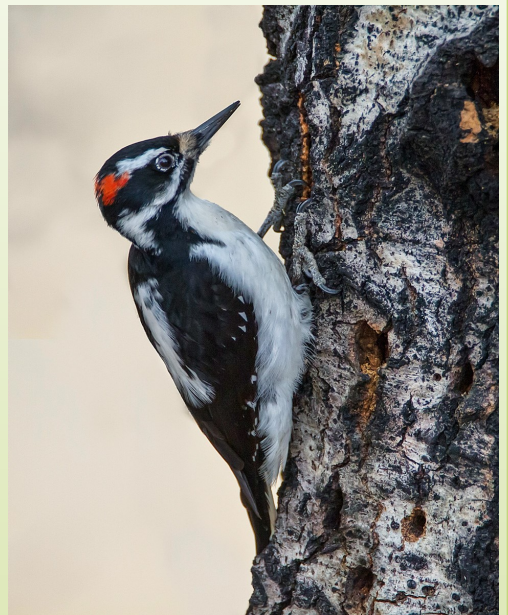
We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day for a bird walk! It was brisk starting out, but the sky was clear, the sun was out and it was calm. There was a great crowd of about 20 birders who found a very impressive list of 49 species. It was the first time a First Saturday bird walk was held at Sacajawea State Park and our 2.25 mile route was exactly the same distance as our old Bateman Island loop.

While waiting for the gates to open at 8:00AM, we were excited to see a pair of COOPER'S HAWKS coming and going from an enormous nest in plain view. Later, as we circled back on the road to the gate, the female was settling into the nest. Very close by, an OSPREY was sitting on her nest, both species being very tolerant of the other's close proximity.

In the parking lot we saw the first of many TREE SWALLOWS swooping about, chattering and staking claims on the various cavities in the Sycamore trees. Within minutes, we heard a loud, chattering call that sounded a bit like a kingfisher, but we determined it was a HAIRY WOODPECKER chasing a DOWNY WOODPECKER. Not many years ago, Hairy Woodpeckers were never seen in the Mid-Columbia region, but now it is not uncommon to find them in Franklin County. There were at least two in the park and it was the first time I had one listed on any first Saturday bird walk.

The next great find was a male EURASIAN WIGEON on the river with LESSER SCAUP, AMERICAN WIGEON, BUFFLEHEAD, WOOD DUCK, HORNED GREBE and COMMON GOLDENEYE. COMMON LOONS are easy to find here on the Columbia River in winter, but it was a real treat to see one actually *flying*, coming in for a water landing on large feet like water skis. It was in breeding plumage to boot!

It was a great day for raptors with SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, AMERICAN KESTREL, BALD EAGLE, NORTHERN HARRIER, OSPREY and RED-TAILED HAWK in addition to the Cooper's Hawk. We wrapped up a great list of birds with BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, SONG SPARROW, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW and a singing WESTERN MEADOWLARK.



Downy Woodpecker above,  
Hairy Woodpecker below.  
Photos by Larry Umthun

**The next First Saturday Bird Walk is May 2 at W.E. Johnson Park in Richland. We plan to meet at the south entrance near 619 Tanglewood Dr, Richland, (46.272339, -119.311018 ) and begin promptly at 8:00AM. Please come a few minutes early to sign in.**

**Check the LCBAS website for any updates or changes to the schedule.**

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L835470>

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

## **Conservation News - Update on Scout Energy's Horse Heaven Hills Wind and Solar Development Project**

**From Dana Ward, LCBAS President & Conservation Co-chair**

Here is a summary of information received from Scout Clean Energy concerning the Horse Heaven Hills Wind and Solar Development Project:

The Horse Heaven Wind Farm One (1) (Project), an 1,150-megawatt (MW) combined wind and solar energy generation facility located in Benton County, Washington. Horse Heaven Wind Farm, LLC (Certificate Holder) holds the site certificate for the Project. This PCFMP describes the fatality monitoring program that the Certificate Holder will conduct during operation of the Project under ARTICLE VI-Section F and Appendix 2 Wild-1 of the Site Certification Agreement (SCA) in order to assess potential impact of the Project on avian and bat species.

The Project is anticipated to include up to 118 (model with MBTH to be added) wind turbines, up to 5,447 acres of solar arrays over two distinct areas east and west of Interstate 82, inclusive of fencing, and up to three single-circuit overhead transmission lines. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2029 and the Project is anticipated to begin commercial operation the same year.

If you have been following the news associated with the Project, you are aware that following Governor Inslee's final approval of our Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) Site Certification Agreement (SCA) on October 18, 2024, several parties filed appeals during the statutory permit appeal period: Benton County, Tri-Cities CARES, and the Yakama Nation. These appeals have been combined into one petition certified to file with the Washington Supreme Court, pending supplementation. Defending the SCA resides with EFSEC and the Governor's office, but the Project has petitioned for and is allowed to join the defense.

The Thurston County Superior Court has certified the record and passed it on to the WA Supreme Court. The filing of briefs and responses to them is in-progress and the oral arguments are scheduled to be heard on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Our current estimate is that the appeal process will be completed by as early as Aug 2026.

Concurrently, our agreements with the grid operator, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), will also be negotiated, paving the way for electrical interconnection to the grid and commercial operation. BPA continues with their development and construction of the new Webber Canyon substation on state land just south of County Well Road and west of the steel tower transmission line, with the planned start of construction by April end. This substation is progressing regardless of our Project permit as it is part of BPA's Tri-cities Reinforcement Project. Construction of infrastructure associated with the Project scope, including the eastern grid interconnection is pending the unappealable permit milestone.

The Pre-operational Technical Advisory Group (PTAG) has been busy and are working on reviews of the final few mitigation plans. Progress on wildlife and habit issues can be summarized as follows:

- Mitigation for the ferruginous hawk has been approved by EFSEC, which establishes setbacks for historic nest sites. The Project is in the process of redesigning the wind turbine placement to comport with these exclusion areas and plan to update the PTAG on March 27th.
- The pronghorn study plan has been approved and several collared animals are transmitting data to WDFW.
- The seasonal wildlife study plans are approved and field surveys are commencing March/April.

Other activity on the site consists of geotechnical drilling of wind turbine foundation and solar piling sites.

I'm sure many of you are wondering how the construction will be sequenced, as we have two different grid interconnections involved, with different BPA construction schedules. We are still unable to provide a definitive milestone plan as it largely depends on the eventual offtaker of the Project's generation. The completion milestones for the Project's construction have been floating during these permitting delays, but we are planning to start as early as possible, once the Supreme Court decision is rendered. We expect initial Project operations by Q1/Q2 of 2029.

We sincerely appreciate the support we have received from our local Audubon group throughout the PTAG process.

## Tri-Cities Earth Day 2026

Join LCBAS and other educational and environmental organizations on Saturday, April 18th for this family friendly, free event at The Reach Museum.

We will be set up from 12 - 4:00 PM, and the event includes free admission to the museum exhibits, and activities for the whole family. For more information:

[visitthereach.us/tri-cities-earth-day-2026/](http://visitthereach.us/tri-cities-earth-day-2026/)

### If you've Found a Baby Bird, Injured or Sick Bird:

Please see the articles in the March 2026 Curlew!

[www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/lcbas-curlew-newsletters](http://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/lcbas-curlew-newsletters)

## Save the Date to celebrate "The Reconnection of Chamna: Restoring the Yakima River Delta"

On behalf of Yakama Nation Fisheries, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District, and Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, we would like to invite you to save the date, Friday, April 24, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. to celebrate. Location: Columbia Park, across from The Reach.

This historic Bateman Island causeway transformation is a key project of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan. The goal of the causeway removal is to restore ecosystem function and aquatic habitat for salmon and steelhead, lamprey, and other wildlife, and bring the lower Yakima River and confluence closer to its natural state.

We hope you can join us to celebrate and enjoy a salmon bake luncheon, hosted by the Yakama Nation Fisheries.

## LCBAS 2026-2027 Board of Directors Elections

LCBAS is holding elections for the Board of Directors at our May 2026 membership meeting. All current, dues-paying members of LCBAS may vote. Any LCBAS member who is interested in a position may volunteer or be nominated from the floor at the meeting.



Tree Swallow

If you are interested in an open position, please contact Debbie Berkowitz at [secretary.lcbas@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.lcbas@gmail.com) before the May meeting, or volunteer during the meeting.

We have open positions, AND would love help in other areas as well. Please nominate yourself or a friend, and / or volunteer to help out in other capacities. For example, we could use assistance with education, outreach, field trips, communications, and many other areas.

We strongly encourage both new and long-term members to consider volunteering to assist with running LCBAS. New ideas help our group shine!

## Trails for Tomorrow

This April, 3 Rivers Community Foundation is launching Trails for Tomorrow, a community-wide effort to support local trail stewardship and land conservation across Benton and Franklin counties. During April, your donation to the Richard Smith & Elaine Chapman Conservation Fund will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to \$50,000, creating ongoing funding in the form of grants for local conservation efforts, including trail maintenance and land stewardship.

To further extend the impact, your gift will be matched again, dollar-for-dollar, towards 3 Rivers Community Foundation's annual grantmaking. Each contribution strengthens both local trail stewardship efforts and the long-term sustainability of charitable giving in our community. We invite you to be part of this effort. Your support—at any level—helps ensure these spaces remain accessible and cared for, for generations to come.

Donate here: [threeriverscf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit\\_id=2057](https://threeriverscf.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/create/fund?funit_id=2057)

**LCBAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:** The Curlew digital newsletter 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 newsletter without interruption. Renewing online is easy, quick and safe: [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate](http://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate) or you can use the form included with this newsletter.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Please send address changes (email address) to [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact](http://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. Please become a paid subscriber and add your voice to our bird protection, conservation, and education efforts. Doing so is fast, easy, and secure at our website: [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate](http://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	Dana Ward	<a href="mailto:president.lcbas@gmail.com">president.lcbas@gmail.com</a>
Vice President	OPEN	---
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	<a href="mailto:treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com">treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz	<a href="mailto:secretary.lcbas@gmail.com">secretary.lcbas@gmail.com</a>
Birding Events	Rowan Young-McMurchie	<a href="mailto:lcbasbirdingevents@outlook.com">lcbasbirdingevents@outlook.com</a>
Communications Chair	Charlene Burge	---
Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leumont	---
Education Chair	OPEN	---
Finance Chair	Dan Hansen	<a href="mailto:treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com">treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com</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	Lori Nelson	
Director at Large	Robin Priddy	<a href="http://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact">www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact</a>
Director at Large	Kelly Doyle	
<b>OTHER CONTACTS:</b>		
Curlew Editor	Charlene Burge	
Membership Database	Rich Barchet	
LCBAS Website	Lisa Hill & Lori Nelson	
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 our digital newsletter “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 the same permanent address) (\$20)

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

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

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ (If paying with a check, please make check payable to **LCBAS**)

Register and pay online via PayPal at [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate](http://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate)

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required to receive newsletter) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**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)**