

The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see
www.lcbas.org

November 28: LCBAS Monthly Membership Meeting at 7:00 PM

December 2: First Saturday Bird Walk at 8:00 AM at Two Rivers Park. See page 2.

December 5: Monthly Board Meeting at 6:30 PM.

December 30: Christmas Bird Count

In November--a silent fundraising auction to benefit LCBAS! See page 3

USFWS Hanford Reach NM Sagebrush Planting Project seeks volunteers for planting See page 6

National Audubon Society members:

Joining LCBAS supports local conservation efforts, meetings, bird walks, and other events! Please consider joining. **See page 7**

Columbia Basin Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society

The local native plant society is a great resource to learn more about our native plants, and they can help you choose native plants to support birds, pollinators and other wildlife in your garden. For upcoming meetings and walks, and other information:
www.cbwnps.org/

Burrowing Owls of Eastern Washington

**November Membership Meeting:
 Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 7:00 PM.**

In person at:

First Lutheran Church, 418 N. Yelm, Kennewick, WA

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and partners, including LCBAS, have worked around the Tri-Cities to install and maintain artificial nesting burrows for Burrowing Owls. This species has declined due to conversion of nesting habitat and the persecution of burrowing mammals. The project includes nest monitoring, banding, and tracking owls over their migration with GPS backpacks. Jason will share some of the results, stories, and photos from working with this species in our area.



Jason Fidorra & Burrowing Owl

Jason Fidorra is a Wildlife Biologist for the WDFW in Tri-Cities. Jason is working on the front lines of shrub-steppe conservation, which is critical habitat for many of Washington's species of greatest concern. He conducts surveys for a variety of wildlife from elk to monarchs and contributes to research on burrowing owls, raptors, and game birds in his position over the past eight years.



Young Burrowing Owl being assessed and banded.

First Saturday / W.E. Johnson Park Bird Walk November 4, 2023

By Kathy Criddle

W. E. Johnson Park (WEJP) was again the site of the First Saturday Bird Walk due to the recent closure to the public of Bateman Island. After battling two fires in recent months, authorities are uncertain when Bateman Island will reopen.

The First Saturday Bird walk for October started out in a deluge! We needed goggles and a snorkel, or at least an umbrella, but the thirteen hardy participants were not deterred! Fortunately, the rain quit after about 20 minutes.

We enjoyed great looks at two Accipiter species, a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Cooper's Hawk. This was appreciated by several new participants. Accipiter species appear similar at first and are hard to identify. There are many great lessons on how to ID Accipiter species. Lisa Hill provides a great comparison in on page four of this issue, and I also recommend the discussion in Sibley's Guide to Birds, and the Cornell Lab All About Birds website.

It is always such a joy when kids and teens join us and this walk included four young teens. Their enthusiasm as well as their very sharp eyes and great hearing were well received by all. It was also great fun to meet some new participants and to have at least one participant show up who hasn't attended these walks for several years! Welcome all, old and new! Species seen topped 33 and included great looks at a large group of rare Purple Finches eating seeds in one of the ash trees. There were the usual species including Black-capped Chickadee, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrow, Red-tailed Hawk, Bewick's Wren, lots of American Robin as well as waterfowl on the Yakima River, including Canada Goose, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, American Wigeon, Wood Duck and Bufflehead. It turned out to be a lovely morning with some nice sightings and the trails were in good shape for walking. Check the species list for W. E. Johnson park "Hotspot" on eBird.

The next First Saturday Bird Walk is on December 2, 2023, at Two Rivers Park in Finley. It starts promptly at 8 AM; meet in the parking lot of the west side of Two Rivers Park.



Everyone had good views of the Purple Finches
Photo by Kathy Criddle

Hummingbird Garden at Hansen Park – UPDATE

By Lisa Hill

The Hummingbird Garden at Hansen Park in Kennewick was a resounding success in its first growing season. All the plants installed on June 1st flourished beautifully and were loaded with blossoms by late summer.

Most of the plants should survive the winter, but any that fail to grow next spring can be easily replaced. The LCBAS sponsorship of the garden provided enough funds to replace plants for several years if necessary. We know that hummingbirds visited the plants over the summer. Hopefully, the garden will become known to hummers in the area and be a nectar oasis for them.

The hummingbird garden was an addition to the larger native plant garden in Hansen Park. Among the native plants in the larger garden are several Penstemons that also attract hummingbirds.

To visit the Hummingbird Garden, travel south on Columbia Center Blvd. from Clearwater Ave. Turn right (west) on 4th Ave. Turn left (south) on Georgia St. and continue to the parking lot on the left. The fenced garden is due south of the parking lot.



The Hansen Park Hummingbird Garden
September 26, 2023
Photo by Lisa Hill

Christmas Bird Count, December 30, 2023

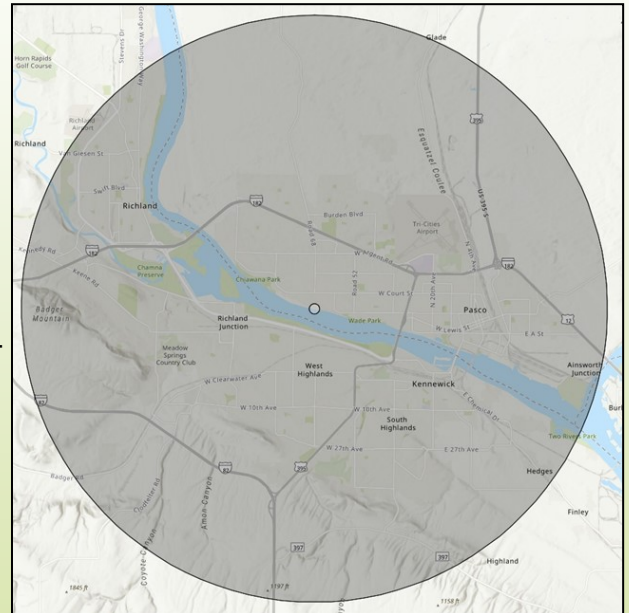
By Bill LaFramboise

This year's annual Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 30th. The goal is to establish bird population trends within the attached count circle. Count teams are being formed and anyone can help. So, join in on the fun and contribute to science. You can simply count birds coming to your feeders, walk around your block, or survey an entire area within the count circle.

Although we have lost a lot of open land to housing developments, roads, and industry, our count circle has abundant water where a variety of water birds and shorebirds can be found. We also have many open park areas that support a good population of upland birds. 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 population data base.

We have divided the count circle into three sections. Lisa Hill (509-869-6715) is leading the Richland Team, Rich Barchet (509-430-0053) is leading the Kennewick Team, and Dana Ward (509-545-0627) is leading the Pasco Team.

Starting this year, I, Bill LaFramboise (509-531-3768), will be the overall compiler. Please coordinate your efforts with one of the team leads to prevent overlap within the area or any one of us if you have questions about participating.



The Tri-Cities (WATC) count circle, #58223

We plan to have a meeting and potluck after the CBC. The grange was not available, so we have reserved a meeting space at the LDS Church in Richland, at 1321 Jadwin. Enter from the back parking lot. We will have music from the Dulcimer Players from 2-4 PM, and provide hot cocoa and cookies. During that time we will also collect data from teams. The potluck dinner will start at 6 PM, with dinnerware and beverages provided.

Coming Soon! LCBAS Fundraiser Silent Auction

LCBAS will hold a fundraising silent auction at the LCBAS November Membership Meeting.

There will be several framed bird pictures and other items available for you to bid on. We have received some great donations, including beautiful work from local artist and LCBAS member Kathy Criddle, large framed and unframed Audubon prints, other art, figurines, photographs, and more!

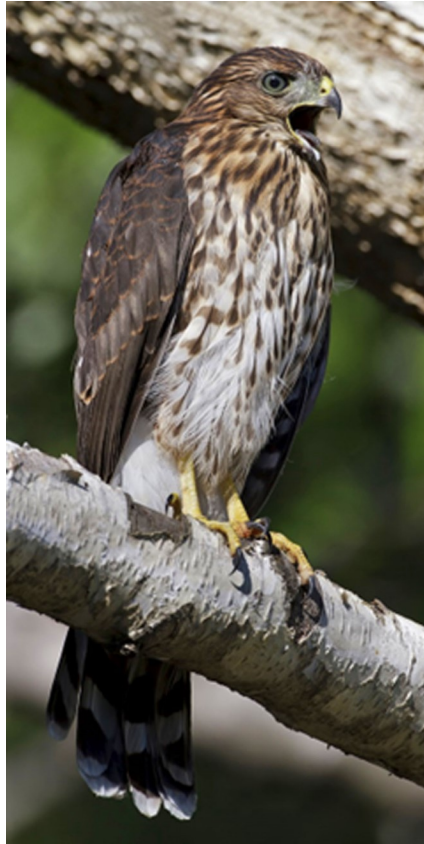
Anyone wishing to donate an item for this fundraising auction please contact Marcie Daines at 509-627-4854 or via email at mdthd@frontier.com

It's been a slow couple of years for fundraising, so we hope you'll all come out to help support LCBAS!



Coop or Sharpie?

By Lisa Hill, Photos by Larry Umthun



Cooper's Hawk (COHA)

- *Head looks flattened with a dark cap
- *Tail rounded, inner feathers longer than outer feathers
- * Visibly long tail, white tip of tail noticeable
- *Legs wide and sturdy
- *Head large and projects beyond the wing edge in flight
- *14"-20" - Small male can be same size as a large female SSHA
- *Year around resident in Tri-Cities
- *Very adapted to urban areas
- *Hunts birds and will eat rodents

Pictured is a juvenile COHA, which is very similar to a juvenile SSHA. Dark brown back, wings and head. Dark vertical streaks on the breast and belly.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (SSHA)

- *Head appears rounded with no distinct cap
- *Long tail squared, outer feathers longer than inner feathers
- *White tip of tail very narrow
- *Legs thin and spindly
- *Head proportionately smaller than COHA
- *Head does not project beyond the wing edge in flight
- *10"-14" - Large female can be same size as small male COHA
- *Winter resident only in Tri-Cities
- *Hunts birds almost exclusively
- *Name comes from narrow, sharp "shin" on the front of legs

Pictured is an adult SSHA, which is very similar to an adult COHA. Dark gray back, wings and head. Rusty, horizontally barred breast and belly.



The Wild Ravens

Podcast Review by Robin Priddy

The Wild is a production of KUOW in Seattle in partnership with Chris Morgan and Wildlife Media.

<https://www.kuow.org/podcasts/thewild>

The brain of the raven: <https://www.kuow.org/stories/inside-the-mind-of-a-raven>

“Being a “bird brain” is a complement if you’re talking about ravens. They are smart. Their intelligence allows them to empathize and read emotions, which helps them survive. But it’s their ability to manipulate others, and even plan for the future that allows them to really thrive in the wild.”

Ravens make so many sounds and they always seem to have something to say! Their wingspan is around four feet, and they can live over 20 years. They are well adapted to life across the Northern Hemisphere.

To Native Americans, ravens are the creators of the world. Scandinavian folklore has them as souls of murdered people without a Christian burial. The Norse God Odin had two ravens that flew the earth and gave him news every day.



Common Raven
Photo by Charlene Burge

They are revered, admired, and feared.

Ravens have quite advanced cognitive abilities. They are capable of love, deceit and even planning for the future – they have a highly evolved brain.

Chris Morgan spent a lot of time in Alaska studying grizzly bear kills; ravens like to feed at those kills, and so provide a reliable signpost for finding them.

Dr. Kaeli Swift at the University of Washington studies ravens. Their brain is both similar and different from mammalian brains – studying questions about how does this level of intelligence emerge? Ravens have a lot of brain dedicated to the function of the prefrontal cortex, which would be correlates to executive function

humans.

Through her studies, she has found evidence for something akin to empathy – emotion contagion. When they observe the emotions of other ravens, they will take on that emotion. In trials where the observing raven saw another react with excitement to the contents of a box, the observing raven would very much want to look in a box, too.

Early researchers didn’t think much of bird intelligence because they did not fit anthropocentric models of intelligence. Their brains are not layered like ours; it’s the size of a walnut. That said, it has the highest brain to body mass ratio of almost any bird.

Ravens are lifelong learners when it comes to communication. They can mimic dogs, people, flushing toilets.... they have dozens of vocalizations, and they use them to communicate with others in their social group.

Ravens have twice as many neurons as humans do, according to Dr. Mathias Osvath of Lunds University in Sweden. He started his work on cognitive evolution studying humans and great apes and their ability to plan for the future. They began to replicate planning studies done with great apes to ravens. The ravens were shown how to use a rock to get a food treat...a tool. Then, given a choice of an array of treats or the rock – the tool to procure food – they would choose the tool! Pretty amazing. Given the opportunity, they would use the rock to get food as they were shown initially.

Not many animals – let alone humans – will select something for future utility given a choice of that or a treat in the present. This ability to plan puts ravens in a very elite group of animals.

Continued on page 6

AOS Announces Bird Name Changes

From National Audubon:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/all-north-american-birds-named-after-people-will-soon-get-new-names>

“The American Ornithological Society (AOS), the organization of bird scientists that determines the official English and Latin names for North America’s bird species, Announced...that they are embarking on a process to change the English names of the approximately 152 North American birds and 111 South American birds named after people.”

Renaming will begin in 2024 with a set of eponymously named bird species found primarily in the US and Canada. The AOS is committed to engaging the public in the renaming process and establish a permanent, diverse, committee to oversee the English names of North American birds. This is not expected to effect scientific, or Latin, names.

For the complete article, see the link above.

The Wild Ravens

Continued from page 5

own interests within the structure of their own group. Bird politics of a sort.

As smart as they are, ravens are often shy of new objects – not something you’d associate with intelligence manifesting in an ever changing environment. As it turns out, they are keen observers – and are happy to watch another test out the new situation. Then they learn from that observation!

Among the aspects of raven study that Kaeli Swift mentions, is the bond with ravens – how they observe her as much as she observes them. She is sure we are going to find out more about how intelligent ravens are.

What fascinating birds! I’ll be thinking of them differently when I see them.

Additional information on ravens can be found many places, but these were recommended in the podcast: Mathias Osvath's TED talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM6V70Griuw&t=100s>
Kaeli Swift's TED talk : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcaDZK1Njb0>

Hanford Reach National Monument

Sagebrush Mitigation Planting Project

Please join the USFWS in a planting project to restore lost native habitat on the Hanford Reach. The birds will appreciate you!



What: Plant Sagebrush Seedlings

When: Nov 29 - Dec 1 and Dec 4 - 8

Where: Meet at Horn Rapids County Park, then travel to Hanford Reach National Monument ALE Unit for planting.

Meet time: 9 AM at Horn Rapids County Park

Contact: Please contact Sheri Whitfield if you are interested or have questions:

(435) 817-2750 or sheri_whitfield@fws.gov



USFWS photo

LCBAS Seeks Board Members!

Get involved in the good work we do and help us to be a vibrant and viable Audubon chapter! Please consider volunteering to bring your great ideas and help us continue into the future. We'll provide training, guidance, and moral support to new board members. The time commitment for the positions vary, but is flexible.

We have many critical board positions open:

* Vice President, Membership Chair, Education Chair / Junior Audubon, Programs Chair, Publicity

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ADDRESS CHANGES: Please send address changes (postal address or email address) to <https://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 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 www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org

LCBAS OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>
President	Dana Ward	president@lcbas.org
Vice President	OPEN	—
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	treasurer@lcbas.org
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz	secretary@lcbas.org
Birding Events	Jason Fidorra	—
Communications Chair	Charlene Burge	—
Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leumont	conservation@lcbas.org
Education Chair	OPEN	—
Finance Chair	Dan Hansen	treasurer@lcbas.org
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	
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Curlew Editor	Charlene Burge	
Membership Database	Rich Barchet	
LCBAS Website	Lori Nelson and Lisa Hill	
Publicity Chair	OPEN	

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

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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