The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see www.lcbas.org

Oct 24: Planting Party at Leslie Groves North

Oct 27: Monthly Chapter meeting at 7:00 PM

Nov 3: LCBAS Board Meeting

Nov. 7: LCBAS First Saturday Bird Walk - see page 2

Nov. 8: Planting Party at Leslie Groves North

Jan. 2: Christmas Bird Count

More articles pertinent to LCBAS can be found on the website blog at:

www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/new-blog-page

If You've Found an Injured or Sick Bird:

Blue Mountain Wildlife can again rescue birds from Washington.
bluemountainwildlife.org/
541-278-0215

Additional rescue resources:

WSU Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Pullman, 509-335-0711, and

Central Washington Wildlife Hospital in Ephrata 509-450-7016

Hanford Reach of the Columbia River: Pre-development, Reactor Operations, and Today

LCBAS Chapter Meeting:
Tuesday, October 27, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
First Lutheran Church, 418 N. Yelm, Kennewick, WA

With Marie Cobb, Environmental Scientist

What was the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River like before the arrival of the Manhattan Project in 1943? What was the impact of reactor operations on the river? What is the Hanford Reach like today? Join us to learn more about this fascinating part of the Columbia River through one person's exploration of the vast data and information available.

Marie Cobb is a retired environmental scientist. She worked for a variety of organizations over her 40-year career, including public agencies, nonprofits, and consulting firms.

Photo: The Hanford Reach, courtesy of The B-Reactor Org.



First Saturday Bird Walk: Sacajawea State Park
October 3, 2026 Trip Report

By Lisa Hill

We have had such good luck with weather for so many of our bird walks, and this day was as beautiful as it gets for October! There was a nice crowd of about 15 birders who scouted the 3-mile loop trek and found 47 species. I had a very positive outlook when I said we could find 50 species and we were so close, despite a dearth of ducks. The Columbia River was placid, nearly undisturbed by waterfowl.

The resident flock of WILD TURKEYS numbering 17 strutted through the park. One enormous male stood out and caught everyone's eye. A female BELTED KINGFISHER posed nicely in the early morning light. Although it was a long way off on a power pole, we scoped a stately adult PEREGRINE FALCON.

Mixed flocks of WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS, SONG SPARROWS, DARK-EYED JUNCOS and YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS danced through the low trees and shrubs, dropping to the ground to feed and scurry back to safety. Also feeding on the ground was a lovely female VARIED THRUSH. One of the region's most striking winter residents, it was a life bird for several attendees. Experienced birders in the group are always happy to help someone to add a life bird to their list! A NORTHERN FLICKER sported solid black malar stripes. Aha! A black malar is a very strong field mark for the Yellow-shafted race of flicker. That race dominates east of the Rockies and the red-shafted race commonly seen here is found in the west – with bright scarlet malars. The two interbreed regularly and characteristics of both races can be seen in most flickers.

A small pond in the northwest corner of the park had a nice flock of WOOD DUCKS along with a few AMERICAN WIGEON and GADWALL. We disturbed five BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS that lifted off from the shoreline trees, circling around to the other side. On the last leg of the loop back to the gate, we added AMERICAN KESTREL, CALIFORNIA SCRUB-JAY, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET, NORTHERN PINTAIL and COMMON LOON.

California Scrub Jay (left) and Belted Kingfisher (right). Photos by Larry Umthun





The next First Saturday Bird Walk is November 7, 2026 at Two Rivers Park County Park in E. Kennewick / Finley, Benton Co.
We will begin promptly at 8:00 AM. Park in the lot on the west side of the lagoon.
It's another great opportunity to see a nice variety of wintering birds, including waterfowl.

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

Volunteer Community Science Opportunities: Native Plant Planting Days at Leslie Groves North

By Debbie Berkowitz

We need help planting the almost 500 native plants grown by Lindsay Gailey's 4th grade class at Wiley Elementary School (West Richland) from seeds they harvested at Leslie Groves North (LGN) last winter.

We'll be planting at Leslie Groves North on: Saturday, October 24, from 1 PM until about 3 or 4 PM, and Sunday, November 8, from 1 PM until about 3 or 4 PM

We anticipate that a number of the kids and their parents will be joining us, but with 500 plants, we'll need lots of help.

Meeting place: The east end of Snyder St., at the bike path (in Richland). Please sign in at the table (including liability waivers for the Native Plant Society and for the City of Richland).

Please RSVP (and specify day(s)) so we have an idea how many plants to bring for each day's planting – and also so we can let you know if there's a change in plans for a particular day. We'll be planting rain or shine as long as it's not pouring and the winds aren't blowing a gale.

Please bring a digging tool – a small trowel works best since the plants are in 5" deep containers. We'll have a few extra tools and will supply the water needed for planting.

Dress for the weather. Also recommended are: gloves (that can handle getting wet and muddy), drinking water, long pants, closed-toes shoes (boots are best), and knee pads can also be useful.

Thank you.

Debbie Berkowitz

secretary.lcbas@gmail.com



Even smaller patches of native plants provide important habitat for many bird species. Photos: above – Snow Buckwheat seeds, below – Purple Sage



Volunteer Community Science Opportunities: Winter Raptor Surveys

Conducting Winter Raptor Surveys with the East Cascades Bird Alliance is a great way to get out and look for birds during our seemingly-slower winter months and contribute to science. While your results can vary, imagine viewing hundreds of raptors in a day, a Burrowing Owl sheltering in a snow cave, a pair of Rough-legged Hawks chasing a Great Horned Owl, courting Northern Harriers, a distant spring kettle of mixed raptor species, or a raptor with an unusual meal. During irruption years, both Snowy Owl and Gyrfalcon have been observed in our area during these surveys.

If you can identify raptors in our area and enjoy having another reason to spend time out birding you should consider joining the Winter Raptor Survey. Optional surveys start November 1st, and the main survey season begins December 1st .

Several great driving routes in our area are available this year. Contact Jeff Fleischer for more information or to sign up for a route: **raptorruner97321@yahoo.com**

All data collected is provided to The Peregrine Fund (**peregrinefund.org/**) in Boise, ID to include in their raptor database for research and population monitoring purposes. This data, as well as data from eBird and other research projects, are painting a picture of raptor use and population trends in the western states.

More than 450 people are involved in the Winter Raptor Survey each year, covering 551 routes in six states, while surveying more than 32,000 miles of transects! Last year followed the normal trend, with Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestral, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, and Rough-legged Hawk continuing as the main species observed, accounting for 91.8% of the total raptors observed.

This survey is for you, if you know our common local raptors, enjoy birding, are somewhat detail oriented, can follow the simple directions provided for the surveys, and can accurately fill out simple survey forms. Easy peasy and lots of fun!

BirdCast Migration Forecast Site

A website called BirdCast, provided by 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 18th found approximately 167,700 birds had crossed overhead in the previous 24 hours, and an estimated 64,000 were overhead during the peak hour of 8-9:00 PM.

The migrating species included Sandhill Crane, Cackling Goose, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, Varied Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Greater Yellowlegs, Canvasback, and several others.

Check it out, and be sure to check out other areas too, just for fun or for planning birding trips.

I also checked my original home, Jefferson County on the Olympic Peninsula / Washington Coast, and found the numbers and species were quite different. For example, approximately 135,600 birds were in flight the night before. The peak hour was at 11-12:00 PM, and there were an estimated 91,500 birds crossing the county during that time frame! They included Lincoln's Sparrow, Dunlin, Eared Grebe, and White-throated Sparrow.

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 or you can use the form included with this newsletter.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Please send address changes (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. 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

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

Under Construction – My apologies for the noticeable problems with this issue of The Curlew. The retirement of Microsoft Publisher has caused some problems that I'm working on resolving, but I couldn't get everything rebuilt for this issue. If you need to contact any member of the LCBAS Board / Officers, please use the contact form on our webpage and it will be forwarded to the appropriate person:

www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact

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
-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 Adress_____
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