



The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia
Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see
www.lcbas.org

April 25: 7:00 PM Monthly Membership Meeting; please note that it is in person; address to the right!

May 2: Monthly Board Meeting at 6:30 PM via Zoom

May 6: Bateman Island Birdwalk at 8:00 AM (see page 2)

May 13 & June 10: Tapteal Greenway / LCBAS jointly hosted birdwalks at 8:00 AM. See page 6

May 23: 7:00 PM Monthly Membership Meeting via Zoom

Elections for the LCBAS Board are happening soon! Watch for more information in the May Curlew.

Other Events:

Washington Audubon page for WA bird festivals:
<https://wa.audubon.org/bird-festivals-0>

Columbia Basin Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society

Wildflower season has begun! For upcoming meetings and walks:
www.cbwnps.org/

Celebrate Earth Day, April 22!

LCBAS will have an educational and outreach booth for Earth Day at the Reach from 10-2 PM.
visitthereach.us/

Bountiful Pollinators in Your Yard

***Plants and Practical Tips to Lure Them In**

**Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 7:00 PM, in person meeting
First Lutheran Church, 418 N. Yelm, Kennewick, WA**

Presenter Lisa Hill

The plight of native pollinators including bees, wasps, flies, butterflies and beetles, is a serious issue affecting entire ecosystems. On a global scale, the loss of habitat for nesting and food, and the use of agricultural and landscape chemicals, particularly neonicotinoids, have had a devastating impact on pollinator populations.

Why are pollinators so important? Fully one third of all food crops rely on insect pollination to produce fruit or seeds. In addition to this immediate concern, about half of the world's oils, fibers and raw materials come directly from plants. The very existence and reproduction of these plants is heavily dependent upon pollinators.



Native long-horned bee (*Mellisodes* sp.)

Even a small postage-stamp sized flower garden can help sustain the life cycle of a wide array of insects.

Join LCBAS and Lisa, and learn to recognize some common pollinators and the best plants to lure them into your yard.

Lisa Hill is a Richland resident who loves birds, gardening, and more recently, pollinators! She has a degree in horticulture and was a Master Gardener for many years. Over time, Lisa has added many native and nectar-producing plants in her own landscape. She recently became interested in photographing insects. While scouting for insects with her camera, Lisa realized that an astounding variety of bugs are busy gathering pollen and feeding on the nectar of hundreds of flowering plants.

Bateman Island Bird Walk April 1, 2023

By Lisa Hill

Sometimes it's hard to find a good number of bird species during the April walk, and one gets the feeling that it's an "in-between" time. The number of winter resident species is diminishing to a trickle and spring migrants have not yet arrived. Cool, gusty winds didn't help either as we scrounged up 40 species. It was great to have several enthusiastic young people on the walk, well, far younger than me anyway!

About 150 CALIFORNIA GULLS nearly out-numbered the waterfowl on the Yakima delta. Most species were represented even though overall there were few birds: NORTHERN PINTAIL, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, RUDDY DUCK, CANVASBACK, BUFFLEHEAD and AMERICAN WIGEON, and HORNED GREBES still in non-breeding plumage. It was a real treat to see two COMMON LOONS in full breeding plumage.



Osprey
Photo by Larry Umthun

OSPREY have returned! Two gorgeous birds put on a flight show near the causeway. Osprey are still considered genetically unique enough to be in their very own family, Pandionidae, but are very closely related to Accipitridae, which includes hawks, kites, eagles, vultures, and harriers from all over the world. (Falcons are also in their own family.) The name Osprey is probably derived from the Latin avis prede, or bird of prey. They can be found on every continent except Antarctica, having made a strong comeback from serious decline in the DDT years prior to 1972.

These birds eat only fish and have a unique method among hawks of extracting fish from saltwater and freshwater of all types. Unlike Bald Eagles that fly low over the water and grab a fish near the surface and continue on their way, Osprey "dive" in feet-first, often becoming completely submerged. If the fish is particularly large, the bird might struggle to heave itself and the fish out of the water and then take flight.

It's interesting to watch an Osprey in flight manipulating its prey by rotating one front toe backwards, grasping the body of the fish, and orienting it head-first in line with the Osprey's own body to reduce wind resistance.

Osprey are also known as sea hawks given their expertise in hunting fish in open ocean. For football fans, the Seattle Seahawks were so named in 1975 after the franchise held a naming contest. The team does have a live mascot, an Augur Hawk, which is a buteo hawk native to Africa.

The next Bateman Island bird walk will be Saturday, May 6, beginning promptly at 8:00 AM. Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park above the causeway to the island.

Volunteer -- It's for the Birds!

LCBAS has many volunteer opportunities available for those who would like to become involved. You can help by serving on the board to help LCBAS function, or attend a weeding or watering party at Leslie Groves native plant garden, or help with outreach opportunities at local events and area farmers markets this summer. We would also welcome ideas or assistance with local field trips and articles for the LCBAS newsletter. Please contact Debbie Berkowitz at secretary@lcbas.org for more information on Leslie Groves volunteer opportunities, and / or send a request for more information on helping out LCBAS using the contact form at lcbas.org



If you would like to consider filling a place on the board, elections are coming up soon, and we'd love to hear from you. You can also nominate someone to help out!

Welcome Back to In-Person Membership Meetings!

By Robin Priddy, LCBAS Director at Large

LCBAS had our first in-person Membership Meeting in three years on March 28th. What a long road it has been. It was great to be back together!

Ivar Husa did a wonderful job putting together and making the audio visual equipment work. Just as we were getting ready, we realized that there was no laptop, and then Charlene Burge came to the rescue with the LCBAS laptop, and all was well. Marcie Daines had hot water, tea and a nice selection of cookies out so we could have our traditional cookie break. After all this time, we still remembered how to put it all together.

It was great to see all the familiar faces, and there were a few new ones. Ivar got us caught up on events and announcements, introductions, and let people know about some of the online resources available. After our break, Ivar introduced our speaker, and we were off!

Daniel Biggs, a Production Manager at Blue Mountain TV, worked together with Mike Denny to develop the video series "Life of the Desert: Deserts of the Pacific Northwest". He shared a video of desert wildlife and landscapes; mostly in Eastern Oregon. It was both fascinating and beautiful. Narrator Mike Denny covered many desert species that were beautifully filmed by Daniel Biggs. Besides information about the species covered, it was lovely to learn about the relationships, dependencies and arrangements while living in the most arid places here in the spectacular Pacific Northwest.

Two series, "Secret Life of the Forest", and "Secret Life of the Desert" developed by Daniel and Mike are available to purchase at: <https://www.secretlifetv.com/>

Many thanks to everyone who played a part in getting our in-person membership meetings going again.

Banded Owl from Hanford Reach Observed in Northern California

Important Re-sighting of a Wintering Burrowing Owl from Eastern WA



Hanford National Monument Burrowing Owl overwintering in snowy conditions in McKinleyville, CA
Photo by Sadie Hine

From Jason Fidorra and David Johnson

A wintering Burrowing Owl was observed and photographed near McKinleyville, in Northern California on February 23, 2023.

Why is this of interest to LCBAS? This BUOW was banded here last year! Great photos of the owl's metal leg band were taken by the photographer, and while not all of the band was viewable, there was enough to confirm that the owl was banded in Eastern Washington, on Hanford National Monument. The owl was banded by Jason Fidorra and crew on June 25, 2022.

There were three adult owls on ALE that were banded with that sequence, two males and a female, and it was confirmed as one of the two males. This is a quite significant re-observation of an owl with only a metal band.

The straight-line distance from ALE to the wintering site is 717 km, at a compass direction of 213 degrees. This is not a particularly significant distance for a migratory owl to travel. But every such observation helps build a better understanding about the wintering areas, and the migratory capacities of our owls.



Jason Fidorra (WDFW), Alex Lauber, Elin Pierce (USFWS) and Jeff Mach working on BUOW banding on Hanford NM, May 22, 2022

Birding in Northern Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

By Diana McPherson

In January, I joined a tour leader scouting trip, hosted by Holbrook Travel, with other tour leaders and invited my friend Kathy Criddle to join us. Our journey began and ended in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Quito was built in a valley along the base of the Pichincha volcano (elevation 15,413 feet/4,698m) in the northern Andes Mountain. The journey starts at the high altitude of 9,000 feet/2,800m .

The high elevation of these mountains and the regular amount of precipitation provides varied vegetation zones supporting over 1,650 species of birds. We explored the cloud forests, or subtropical rainforests, along the slopes of the Andes Mountains between 3,000 feet to 8,200 feet (900 - 2500m). We encountered numerous hummingbird species, tanagers, toucans, finches, flycatchers, sparrows, warblers, toucans, and wrens, just to name a few.



Hummingbirds were the main attraction at several of the lodges we explored. The feeders and the surrounding neotropical flowers attracted many species, including the Brown Violetear, Long-tailed Sylph, White-booted Racket-tail, and Purple-bibbed Whitetip. At Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve, we were able to hold feeder cups so the hummers could feed out of our hands. As a couple of hummers approached and hovered over my hand-held cup, I could feel the force of the air movement from their wings. Unlike all other birds, hummingbirds rotate their shoulders so their wings move in a figure-8, creating strong air movement in two directions, allowing them to move quickly and to hover easily.



Another lodge we stayed at was the Sachatamia Lodge. The patio cover protected us from the rains so we could still watch and photograph the many hummingbirds visiting their feeders. We could also watch the blue-grey and Palm Tanagers coming to the feeders on the tiny open grass area and even had a visit from an agouti, a native rodent, collecting bananas and corn from the ground feeders.

When the rains had finally stopped that evening during dinner, we had a local guide from the lodge lead us on a night walk to look for tree frogs. Flashlights in hand and wellies to keep our feet dry and mud-free, we searched the grounds and found a cute tree frog resting on a fern blade. Sachatamia Lodge also has a live video link to watch the hummingbirds anytime. Check it out on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZUHqXEGqic>

A much sought after bird for the entire group was to find the Andean Cock-of-the-rock. It's the national bird of Perú but its range is throughout the cloud forest in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Perú and Bolivia. We did find the bird at the Refugio Paz de las Aves in Mindo, but it was very obstructed by the dense tree foliage. We visited a few other eco-lodges and bird watching sites and found several species of tanagers enjoying the feeders, including palm, blue-grey, blue-winged, and flame-rumped. We also found a male and female pair of Masked Trogon high in the rainforest canopy, and two species of toucans, the yellow-throated and plate-billed.

We moved from the lush, wet, cloud forest to the dry volcanic lowlands of the Galapagos Islands. While we explored several islands of the eastern island chain, the Galapagos Mockingbirds quickly became a nuisance as they were very curious about our bags, especially water bottles. Since the entirety of the islands are within the Galapagos National Park, no food is allowed to be brought on the islands when you're touring. Even gum is not allowed. This is to protect the wildlife from food that will make them ill, and to keep the islands clean.



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Upper left: Long-tailed Sylph hummingbird
 Upper right: Feeding hummingbirds at Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve
 Lower right: Blue-winged Tanager
 All photos by Diana McPherson

Birding in Northern Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands

Continued from page 4

Photos and text by Diana McPherson

A few species of Darwin's finches were seen, such as the Small and Medium Ground Finches, the Small Tree Finch, and the Española Ground Finch. American Flamingos fed in the ponds on Española Island while several species of shorebirds fed the shorelines as we came and went on our Zodiacs. While watching nesting sea turtles, we came across a Yellow Warbler which we thought was off-course but is actually part of a resident subspecies. Magnificent Frigate birds often cruised the air currents above our big boat.

Blue-footed Booby is another species well known to the islands. Several pairs were seen along the way but it appeared that they were still courting and hadn't begun nesting. However we did visit another species of booby, the Nazca



Nazca Booby adult and young

Booby, who were in all stages of raising their young in their spacious nesting rookery. There were nests with eggs, some with newly hatched naked chicks, and others with larger down-covered chicks. One mama bird decided to make her nest on the edge of the trail but did not seem to have a care in the world about us as we slowly passed on the other side of the narrow trail.

When we weren't on land looking for birds, we explored the ocean and the beaches for marine wildlife. Marine iguanas, white tip reef sharks, and young sea lions were just a few of the marine species we got to see. And I could never forget our chance encounter and brief time swimming with a pod of bottlenose dolphins. I still pinch myself - did that really happen?

Overall our group logged just over 150 bird species. This was an amazing adventure and I can't wait to go back.

National Audubon Society Subscribers

New members of the National Audubon Society receive a complimentary three-month subscription to the Curlew, the newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society (LCBAS). After the first three months, that ends.

We would like to encourage National Audubon members to consider joining LCBAS and get involved in all we have to offer in your local area: ten months per year of meetings, Curlew newsletters, outreach and education, and bird walks and field trips! Don't miss out! Joining LCBAS does so much good, and is fast, easy, and secure at our website:

[https://
www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon
.org/join-renew-donate](https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate)

Have you found an injured bird, or a baby bird?

Baby bird season is starting! Do you know what to do if you find a baby bird?

It's natural for us to want to help, but it's also natural for baby birds to take a leap out of a nest before they're quite ready to fly. Often these birds have outgrown the nest, and their parents are still caring for them, even if they're on the ground. If it is a fledgling bird, it may not need our help.

Sometimes, though, they're too young, have fallen out of the nest due to our activities (such as pruning trees or moving hay stacks), or have been found by a predator. If a baby bird is featherless, or has its eyes closed, look for its nest—maybe you can return it safely. If you took it away from your pet or a feral cat, or it has injuries, it will need assistance and veterinary care.

More information from Washington Department of Wildlife:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/injured-wildlife>

Information on our local wildlife rescue: bluemountainwildlife.org/

**If you think a bird needs help, you can
call Blue Mountain Wildlife at (541)278-0215**

“The Science of Birds” podcast with Ivan Phillipson

<https://www.scienceofbirds.com/podcast/cranes-family-gruidae>

Podcast review / discussion by Robin Priddy, Director at Large

This episode is all about birds in the avian family Gruidae; the cranes. These tall birds are charismatic and super interesting. Humans around the world have celebrated cranes for thousands of years, for their graceful beauty and their exuberant courtship dances.

It's spring in the Northern Hemisphere right now, and that means that in many parts of the world, cranes are on the move. They're migrating north. Along the way, they stop to rest and refuel at certain staging areas. Hundreds and even thousands of cranes can end up at a single staging area or stopover and this can be a wonderful sight to see for birders and other nature lovers.

Cranes get a lot of attention and festivals – he even mentions the Othello Crane Festival!

Distinguishing features of cranes are long necks and legs, broad and rounded wings. They are strong fliers. The Demoiselle Crane flies over the Himalayas at 26,000 feet between India and Central Asia.

Cranes keep their necks stretched out while flying, unlike herons. Storks have their necks out too, though they are shorter and chunkier birds.

Crane bills are long, straight and stout. Cranes are omnivores, and eat both plants and animals. They are generally large, and the tallest, largest, flying bird in the world is a crane – the Sarus Crane – up to 6 feet tall, 5.3 feet long, with a wingspan of 8 feet! The smallest is the Demoiselle crane, at 3.3 feet long.

Cranes call with a sound often described as haunting. Their trachea is very long, and curled up inside, and it's fused to the sternum. This enables them to make long calls that travel a great distance. Vocal sounds transmit to the sternum and then through the air sacs; many parts of the body resonate and project the sounds. I recently watched some Sandhill Cranes flying overhead, and heard them before I saw them. I marveled at how far their distinctive call traveled to get to me. Now I understand a bit better how they do it!

Scientists think that cranes evolved in the northern parts of the “Old World”. Earlier cranes had stubbier beaks and legs – though as they evolved into grasslands, they developed longer legs.

The Whooping Crane is one of the rarest, and most endangered birds in North America. In 1941 there were less than 50 birds left. Intense conservation efforts have improved their numbers, but the entire population is still less than 1,000.

I hope you get to enjoy this interesting podcast on some of our local favorites!

Birding the Tapteal Greenway with LCBAS and Tapteal Greenway

Join LCBAS and the Tapteal Greenway in a series of joint bird walks in 2023. The walks will be once per month through June, in five of the pearls along the Tapteal Greenway necklace. The first walk in the joint venture was February's LCBAS Bateman Island walk. March was at Amon Basin. April was at Chamna. There's still two more!

See www.tapteal.org, the LCBAS Calendar at www.lcbas.org, or email mike.lilga@gmail.com for more information about the start locations.

W.E. Johnson Park
2nd Sat., May 13, 8:00 AM
S. Entrance on
Tanglewood

Horn Rapids Park
2nd Sat., June 10, 8:00 AM
kiosk parking lot

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 save paper and other resources. To switch to the eCurlew: <https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact>

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	Sheri Whitfield	president@lcbas.org
Vice President	Michael Henao	—
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	treasurer@lcbas.org
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz	secretary@lcbas.org
Birding Events	Jason Fidorra	—
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Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leaumont	conservation@lcbas.org
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Finance Chair	Dan Hansen	treasurer@lcbas.org
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Membership Chair	OPEN	To contact anyone without a dedicated email address, please use the contact form on our website:
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Director at Large	Robin Priddy	
	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 (\$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