

The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia
Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see
www.lcbas.org

Jan. 15-Feb. 15: Climate Watch Nuthatch Count.

Jan. 25: January LCBAS membership meeting.

Feb. 7: Board meeting. Contact any board member for information on attending.

Feb. 18-21: 25th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. For information on how to participate, see www.birdcount.org/

Feb. 22: February LCBAS membership meeting.

Other Events: See pg 4

Membership Notes: As 2021 came to a close, Rich Barchet, LCBAS membership database administrator, was sending out reminders to LCBAS subscribing members to renew expired memberships and jokingly wondered in his email messages who would be the last to renew in 2021 and who would be the first in 2022. LCBAS Treasurer Dan Hanson had the answers: the last renewal of 2021 came in 10:08 PM on 12/31! The first renewal for 2022 arrived via a check dated 1/1/2022. Thanks to everyone who renewed their subscribing memberships in 2021 and keep up the good work in 2022.

Yellow Stars in a River of Green: How Plants are Changing the Yakima River Ecosystem

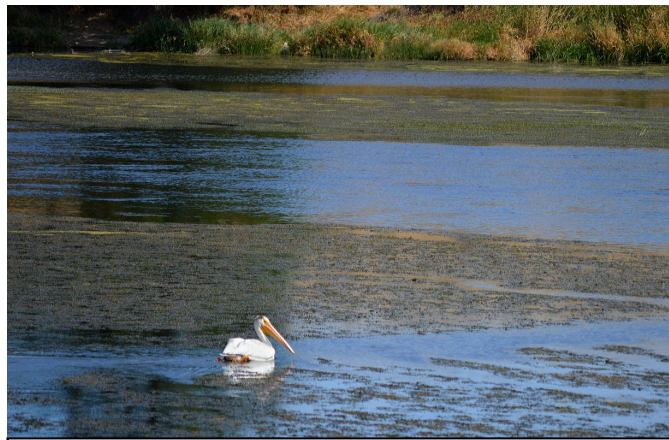
Tuesday, January 25, 2022 at 6:30 PM via Zoom

Rachel Little, Biologist, Benton Conservation District

An aquatic plant that now dominates the lower Yakima River is moving into the Delta, one of Washington's Important Bird Areas. From underwater, these green plants push their bright yellow, star-shaped flowers just above the surface. Learn how these plants are influencing public health, water quality, recreation, and the aquatic ecosystem.

Rachel Little is the biologist at Benton Conservation District. Originally from Michigan, she has lived in Kennewick for over 20 years. Rachel's conservation district responsibilities include encouraging wise use of aquatic

resources through water quality and habitat projects, interagency partnerships, voluntary incentives to private landowners, and education programs such as Salmon in the Classroom. Rachel is a proud Husky living in Cougar country. She enjoys camping and exploring national parks with husband Robert.



American White Pelican swims among aquatic plants.
Photo by Rachel Little

Join Zoom Meeting (or go to www.lcbas.org for a clickable link).

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83267178562?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83267178562?pwd=MjE1L2p6ZUEzZnRnYnN2anRTcG9hZz09)
[pwd=MjE1L2p6ZUEzZnRnYnN2anRTcG9hZz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83267178562?pwd=MjE1L2p6ZUEzZnRnYnN2anRTcG9hZz09)

Program starts at 7:00 PM; you can sign in at any time

Meeting ID: 832 6717 8562
Passcode: 453102

Dial in for sound only:

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

December 18, 2021 Christmas Bird Count Highlights

By Dana C. Ward
Christmas Bird Count Coordinator

The Christmas Bird Count was a wonderful success with great results compiled by all participants from the three cities. We had 63 total participants which includes both field team members and feeder watchers. We had an unofficial 114 species with some unusual sightings. Congratulations to all participants for such a fine effort, and as a Tri-Cities team, we again did an impressive job!



Harris's Sparrow
Photo by Larry Umthun

The weather was nearly perfect for a late fall day. Temperatures were in the low to mid 30s with calm to breezy conditions. Still and flowing water was generally free of ice which allowed good observation of water birds.

Under these conditions the participants were able to count their respective areas in relative winter comfort. To conduct a proper count, much walking is required and the teams put in nearly 100 miles of walking and over 400 miles of slow deliberate driving within the count circle.

Under Covid restrictions we again were not able to have the traditional potluck and the presentation of results. This is an event that all of us miss. We hope that next year we can resume this wonderful tradition.

The count has to be performed between December 15th and January 5th each year. We usually count on a Saturday; unfortunately two of the three Saturdays fell on Christmas Day and New Year's Day this year. For 2022, two of the Saturdays are Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The team leads will determine a date for 2022's count day, and input from members would be appreciated.

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LCBAS Past President Jim Castle counts waterbirds in the distance around Indian Island in the Columbia River, near Sacajawea State Park.
Photo by Charlene Burge



Spotted Sandpiper
Photo by Larry Umthun

Take Yourself on a Field Trip McNary Wildlife Nature Area at McNary Lock and Dam

By Charlene Burge, Communications Chair and Curlew Editor

As LCBAS is not conducting in-person field trips or meetings, I want to encourage you to take yourself on a field trip! If you haven't been to the McNary Wildlife Nature Area (aka McNary ponds), consider checking it out this year. This is not part of McNary National Wildlife Refuge. Rather, it's found near the McNary Lock and Dam at Umatilla, OR., and is administered by the Army Corps of Engineers.

This wildlife area is a series of constructed ponds near the Columbia River in Oregon. The area is 318 acres with three constructed trails which wind around the pond and habitat areas: Nature Trail @ 0.75 mile in length, Wildlife Management Technique Trail @ 1.0 mile, and Pond Trail @ 1.25 miles. The trails are flat and easy to walk, and are generally well maintained. Expect areas of snow, ice, or mud, depending on the current weather conditions. Boots are always a great idea for birding this time of year, and wearing a pair of boot cleats (one brand is YakTrax) is always a great idea to improve safety during snowy/icy conditions. My husband, Jim, and I personally like to bird by snowshoe when the conditions are right!

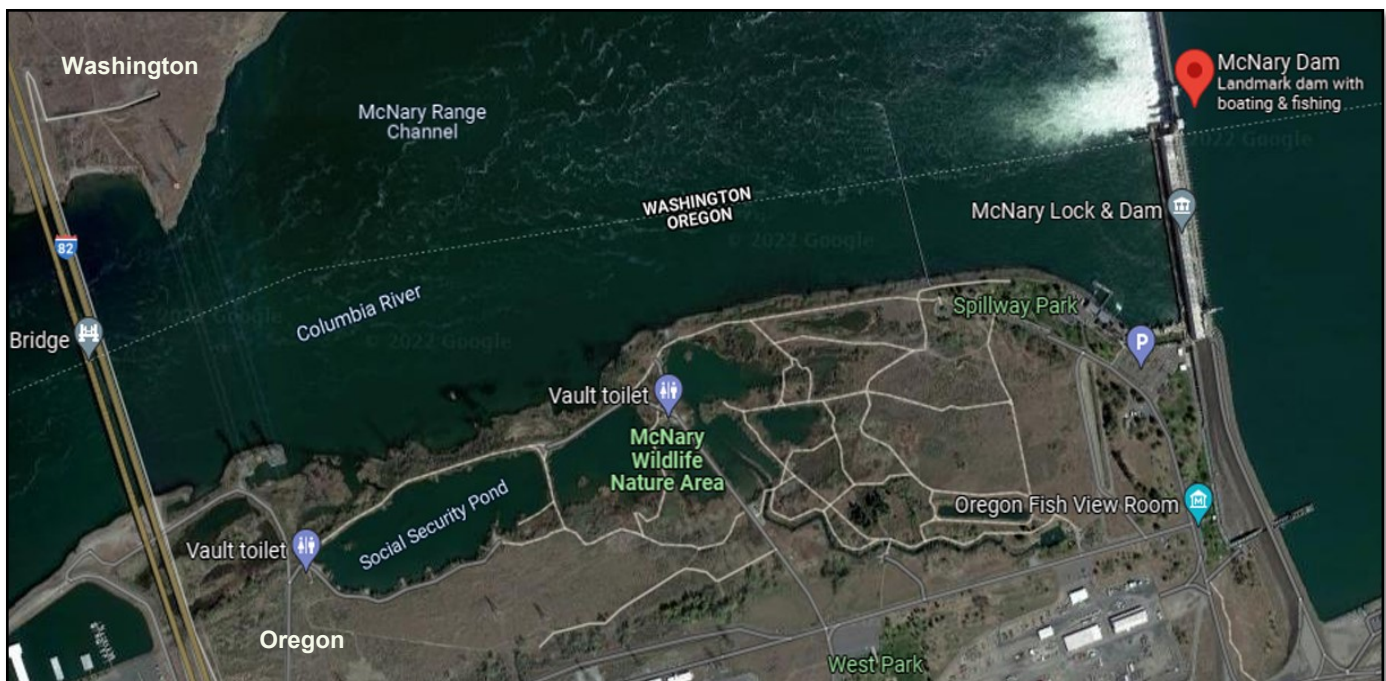
According to eBird.org, more than 200 species have been observed at McNary Wildlife Nature Area. While this is a great birding area for waterbirds, there's enough constructed habitat and trees/shrubs to support upland species, too. Just like other birding areas, all months of the year have great birding opportunities!

There are a couple of vault toilets in the habitat area, and a seasonal restroom at McNary Dam, ADA parking, and river access. Some pond / wildlife viewing areas can be seen from the dirt roadways, but parking is not always available near the ponds.

The McNary Wildlife Nature Area is open year-round, dawn to dusk.



California Scrub-Jay
Photo by Vic Hubbard



McNary Wildlife Nature Area is found south of the Tri-Cities, along the Columbia River near Umatilla, OR.
Image from Google Maps; 2022



The Klamath Basin's Winter Wings Festival brings together birders and photographers to learn and explore with top-notch professionals and enthusiastic local guides. The 2022 festival is scheduled for President's Day Weekend, Feb. 18-20. Click on the link for

Olympic Peninsula April 22-24, 2022
BirdFest
 Come bird with us!

- ▣ San Juan Island Cruise
- ▣ Guided Birding Trips
- ▣ Bird Art Classes
- ▣ Photography Workshop
- ▣ Auction & Raffle
- ▣ Gala Banquet with Speaker:
Deborah Jensen, PhD

Located in Sequim, WA
 For more information:
www.olympicbirdfest.org
info@olympicbirdfest.org
 or 360-681-4076

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www.olympicbirdfest.org

The canceled **Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival** went live recently with an online, free speaker series they titled "Flying By the Seat of Our Pants". To access the many interesting talks that took place, you can find the recordings at:

morrobaybirdfestival.org/flying-by-the-seat-of-our-pants-presentations/

2021 Christmas Bird Count

Continued from page 2

I want to thank the people who were able to participate in this year's count. Without you there would be no Christmas Bird Count! I particularly want to thank William Barchet and Lisa Hill, Team Leads for Kennewick and Richland respectively. Their hard work has paid off again with an exceptionally good count.



White-breasted Nuthatch
 Photo by Larry Umthun

Editor's Note: Thank you to Dana Ward for being the Christmas Bird Count Coordinator and Pasco Lead!

Some interesting sightings from 2021:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Red Crossbill	1	Pasco
Northern Saw-whet Owl	2	Richland
Spotted Sandpiper	1	Kennewick
Pacific Loon	1	Richland
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	Pasco
Trumpeter Swan	1	Richland
Peregrine Falcon	1	Pasco
Harris's Sparrow	2	Kenn/Rich
Brown Creeper	2	Kenn/Pasco
Burrowing Owl	1	Pasco

Count totals of more common species:

Canada Goose	6,879
European Starling	6,200
Mallard	4,117
American Wigeon	3,799
American Coot	3,402
White-crowned Sparrow	1,710
Snow Goose	1,582
American Robin	1,386
Dark-eyed Junco	1,124
Yellow-rumped Warbler	784
Northern Flicker	385
American Crow	380
American Goldfinch	364
Cedar Waxwing	322

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ADDRESS CHANGES: Please send address changes (postal address or email address) to Rich Barchet at 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 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	OPEN	—
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Education Chair	Cherie Baudrand	education@lcbas.org
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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