

The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see
www.lcbas.org

Feb. 22: February LCBAS membership meeting.

Mar. 7: March LCBAS board meeting.

Mar. 22: March LCBAS membership meeting.

Other Events:

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

Mar. 2: Columbia Basin Native Plant Society meeting Sage Grouse and Beyond: Saving the Shrub-Steppe. For more information:
<https://www.cbwnps.org/calendar/2022/3/2/sage-grouse-and-beyond-saving-the-shrub-steppe>

Mar. 29: Ebird training with Jason Fidorra and Scott Downes. See page 4 for details.

Winter Raptor Survey Opportunity

A few routes south of Kennewick are now available for March. This is a great opportunity learn more about the Winter Raptor Survey Project. You can take on a route to see how you like it without committing for a whole winter. If interested, please contact the project lead, Jeff, at:

raptorrunner97321@yahoo.com

Birding Off the Beaten Path

Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 7:00 PM via Zoom

Diana McPherson



Get off the beaten path by birdwatching from a boat. Whether it's a kayak, skiff, or sailboat, unique bird and wildlife sightings await.

Diana McPherson is a local wildlife and conservation photographer, videographer, educator, writer, and naturalist. Her work has been published in magazines, books, and calendars, including her self-published ebook, *Winter Bird Photography*. She teaches local workshops and leads photography tours that

incorporate citizen science. Diana's online fine art gallery includes work designated to *Art Giving Back*, which supports organizations that work in conservation and education. When Diana is not photographing, she enjoys skiing, hiking, cooking, and reading mysteries.

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86394394749?pwd=NG42Z0lZOEdSdGdEaW44R0U4NTBuZz09>

Program starts at 7:00 PM

Meeting ID: 863 9439 4749
Passcode: 064150

Dial in for sound only:

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



Take Yourself on a Field Trip: Winter Birding in W. E. Johnson Park

By Lisa Hill

Hugging the west shore of the Yakima River south of Van Giesen Street, W. E. Johnson Park is a 225-acre undeveloped natural space used primarily for horseback riding and archery. Wetland, shrub-steppe and riparian habitats offer good birding in all seasons, particularly in winter. The park is crisscrossed with good walking trails that allow one to explore all of these habitats. Two entrances to the park, one at the north end accessed from Hall Road, and one at the south end accessed from Tanglewood Drive, let birders divide their efforts into easy walks.



Varied Thrush
Photo by Larry Umthun

After more than 15 years living next to the park, we have built an impressive list of 165 species seen or heard from within the park boundaries, with least 75 of those species observed from October through March. To enter from the south, park near the paved access road (no motorized vehicles) on the west side of the 600 block of Tanglewood Drive. Walk down the road at white "A" which curves to the right. After leaving the road, the trail splits at yellow "C". At this intersection, NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL and WESTERN SCREECH-OWL can be heard before dawn.

Take the right fork following a down-and-back path along a canal to find WOOD DUCK, VARIED THRUSH, HERMIT THRUSH and PACIFIC WREN. Flanked on both sides by dense vegetation and riparian habitat, the trail winds north, ending at a marsh at pink "B" with year-around VIRGINIA RAIL and the occasional MARSH WREN. Other birds often seen on the path include WHITE-THROATED SPARROW, GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW, FOX SPARROW, SPOTTED TOWHEE and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET.

Retrace your steps back to the fork and turn right (west). Follow to blue "D" and turn toward the Yakima River. You can find GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET along the narrow trail that ends at the river bank where COMMON MERGANSER, PIED-BILLED GREBE, COMMON GOLDENEYE, BUFFLEHEAD, GREEN-WINGED TEAL and BELTED KINGFISHER can be seen. Back on the trail head north to the triple fork at green "E". NORTHERN SHRIKE, PURPLE FINCH and LINCOLN'S SPARROW are found along the east fork.

Continue along the path to complete the loop back to the south entrance. Occasional rarities have been observed near purple "F": NORTHERN GOSHAWK, BLUE JAY and the less-rare TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE.

W. E. Johnson Park is a low-elevation floodplain for the Yakima River. Every winter, there are some weeks when areas of the park are flooded. During those times, using the north entrance at the archery range parking lot is the better choice for birding.

Link to highlighted Google map: <https://www.google.com/maps/W. E. Johnson Park>

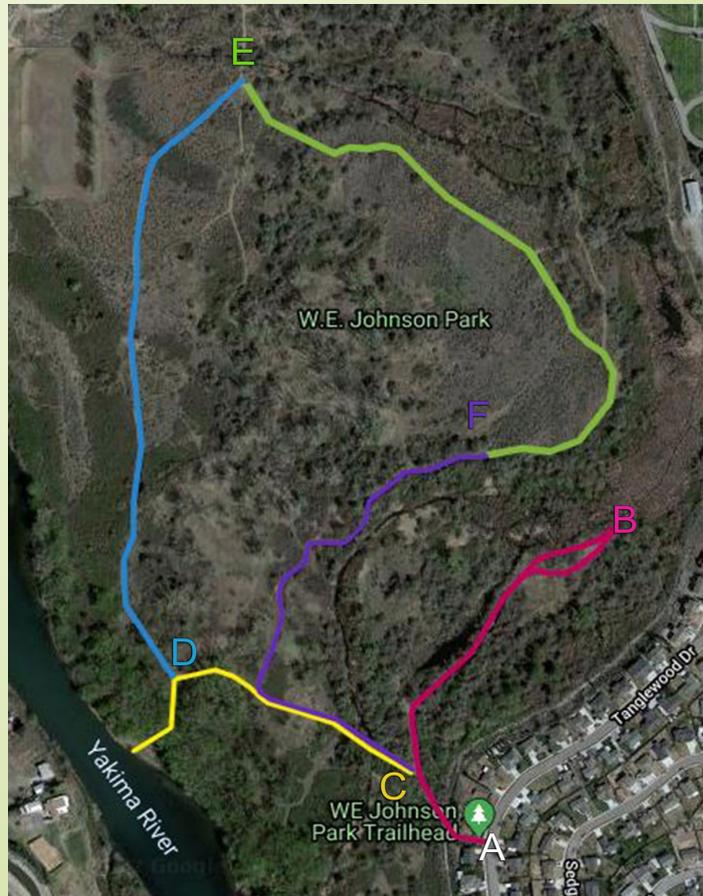


Image from Google Maps: 2022

Western Bluebird Nest Box Project with WDFW and LCBAS

By Jason Fidorra



On Feb 2, volunteers, including several LCBAS members, assisted the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife install 20 bluebird nest Boxes along N. Case Rd. on the south side of Rattlesnake Mountain. The boxes were made by a group of Cub Scouts over a decade ago and needed some modifications and repairs.

Volunteer Vic Hubbard got them in shape and they are now ready for nesting season. Mountain Bluebirds are not known to breed currently in Benton County, but they can be seen during migration in the area. Whether they find and choose to use the nest boxes will be interesting to see in the coming years. Male bluebirds begin to arrive in their breeding areas in mid-February. Tree swallows and wrens might also use the boxes. LCBAS volunteers will monitor the boxes. The boxes are viewable from public roads, but are on private land and should not be approached from outside your car to protect both the nesting birds and the landowners interests.

The project site (top to bottom, L-R) Jason and Joni pose with a newly installed nest box, the N. Case Rd. landscape, and volunteers prepping the boxes for hanging. Photos by Jason Fidorra, Joni Martin, and Kathy Criddle



Have you found a sick or injured bird? Contact Blue Mountain Wildlife:



<http://bluemountainwildlife.org/>
(541)278-0215

Olympic Peninsula April 22-24, 2022
BirdFest
(Come Bird with us!)

- ▣ San Juan Island Cruise
- ▣ Great Birding Trips
- ▣ Bird Photography Workshops
- ▣ Auction & Raffle
- ▣ Gala Banquet with Speaker: Deborah Jensen, PhD

CANCELED

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

AMSTOWN SHALLOW TREE
DUNGENESS RIVER NATURE CENTER
First Federal FUNDRAISER

The WA Department of Fish and Wildlife invites public feedback on draft recreation strategy.

This is your opportunity as a birder and outdoor land user to comment. For more information:

[https://wdfw.wa.gov/news/wdfw-seeks-public-feedback-draft-recreation-strategy?](https://wdfw.wa.gov/news/wdfw-seeks-public-feedback-draft-recreation-strategy?fbclid=IwAR22KYBdnVHOO6dRb8Ih3K_IjmLM2fBl089wE4qJKPBRBJhKWd01H1HcvT4)
[fbclid=IwAR22KYBdnVHOO6dRb8Ih3K_IjmLM2fBl089wE4qJKPBRBJhKWd01H1HcvT4](https://wdfw.wa.gov/news/wdfw-seeks-public-feedback-draft-recreation-strategy?fbclid=IwAR22KYBdnVHOO6dRb8Ih3K_IjmLM2fBl089wE4qJKPBRBJhKWd01H1HcvT4)

Citizen Science: eBird Training Opportunity

eBird—What is it and how can it improve my birding experience?

eBird, which was developed through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, has revolutionized how people contribute their bird sightings to citizen science. Whether you are a casual birder who enjoys keeping track of birds in your yard or at your favorite park, or a traveler who travels to many exciting places to observe birds, you can contribute to eBird. As a benefit it keeps a personal list for you so you can help keep track of your birding memories. You can also use it to access sightings that others have contributed in an area you might plan to go birding in. The website, ebird.org, is free, but to submit sightings you do need to sign up for a user name and password. eBird can be used on your smartphone or computer and there are no age restrictions. You just need to have an email account and know how to submit sightings in a manner consistent with eBird, which this class will teach you.

Recent developments have allowed users to add pictures, recordings and other media to their checklists. Thus the range of what you can do with sightings in eBird is close to limitless. For those interested in data, you can create bar charts and other data for your personal lists or local data.

Join Jason Fidorra and Scott Downes during a Zoom meeting on Tuesday, March 29 from 6:30-8:30 PM, to learn both the basics of what is eBird, how to enter and search for sightings but also to learn some of the more complex elements referenced above. There will be plenty of time for questions.

Whether you are brand new to eBird but interested in learning more, or have used eBird but would like to use more features, please join us to explore the world of eBird. Jason and Scott have combined over 20 years of using eBird and we are interested in exploring that world with others. If you want to join the class, use the Zoom link below on Tuesday March 29 at 6:30 PM. No registration is required. To make the most of the class, some preliminary browsing at eBird.org beforehand is encouraged, but not required.

Join Zoom Meeting on March 29 @ 6:30 PM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87365770838?pwd=MzRDSk50WHZIRXZuVct2dEdiNjF1dz09>

Goodbye Chemical Weapons, Hello Burrowing Owls

By Robin Priddy

I regularly listen to this podcast, “The Wild with Chris Morgan” – it’s sponsored by KUOW in Seattle and is focused on stories about the natural world in the Pacific Northwest.

This is the most recent episode – I was surprised and pleased to have it so close to home!

<https://www.kuow.org/stories/goodbye-chemical-weapons-hello-burrowing-owls> - it can also be found in any podcast app by searching for “The Wild”.

The podcast recounts the story of the Umatilla Military Base and how it now provides a sanctuary for owls. David Johnson, the Burrowing Owl expert in this piece, has presented to LCBAS in the recent past.

“There are two important days in your life: the day that you’re born, and the day you find out why,” explained David Johnson, founder of the [Global Owl Project](http://GlobalOwlProject.org). “I know why I was born — for the owls. So I’m going to work with owls until my very last breath.”



Young Burrowing Owls
Photo by Charlene Burge

The Global Owl Project aims to protect endangered owl species all over the world. One lucky owl species, which has been Johnson’s main focus for the past 12 years, is the little Burrowing Owl.

A Burrowing Owl reaches only six inches in height and weighs less than half a pound. And as you might guess, these tiny owls live underground. But a curious domino effect has caused a worrying and widespread loss of their subterranean homes. Johnson is on a rescue mission to save the Burrowing Owl.

“When we first started, there were three or four pairs,” Johnson said. That was back in 2007. “We figured, if we don’t do something, we’ll lose them. And we certainly would have by 2010 — there wouldn’t have been any.”

I learned quite a bit about the owls, and now it will be even more interesting to help with burrow maintenance!

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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	---
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	treasurer@lcbas.org
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz	secretary@lcbas.org
Birding Events	Jason Fidorra	fieldtrips@lcbas.org
Communications Chair	Charlene Burge	communications@lcbas.org
Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leumont	conservation@lcbas.org
Education Chair	Cherie Baudrand	education@lcbas.org
Finance Chair	Dan Hansen	treasurer@lcbas.org
Fundraising Chair	Marcie Daines	fundraising@lcbas.org
Membership Chair	OPEN	---
Program Chair	Kathy Criddle	programs@lcbas.org
Director at Large	Robin Priddy	
OTHER CONTACTS:		
Curlew Editor	Charlene Burge	communications@lcbas.org
Membership Database	Rich Barchet	subscriptions@lcbas.org
LCBAS Website	Ed Rykiel	webmaster@lcbas.org
Publicity Chair	Charlotte Reep	

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