



# The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

## Upcoming Events:

For more information see [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org)

**December 28:** Christmas Bird Count and potluck

**January 4:** LCBAS First Saturday / Bateman Island Walk. See page 2

**January 7:** LCBAS Board Meeting

**January 28:** Monthly LCBAS Chapter Meeting @ 7:00 PM

**Jan 15 - Feb 15:** National Audubon Climate Watch Study (Nuthatch Count) See pg 4

## Coming Soon!

**February 15:** Applebee's Breakfast Fundraiser--stay tuned for more info!

**LCBAS events are always open to the public. Please join us!**

## CBC Potluck

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

On December 28th at 6:00 PM, LCBAS will convene for the annual CBC potluck and CBC results. Doors open at 5:30 PM to start collecting results.

Please bring a food item to share. Plates, silverware and beverages are provided. Good company and conversation are guaranteed!

## Christmas Bird Count - December 28, 2024

**Audubon's longest running community science project, now in it's 125th year!**

**Have you signed up yet? Contact a team leader or Bill LaFramboise for more information on how to count birds for science during the holiday season.**

**Richland: Lisa Hill (509) 869-6715**

**Kennewick: Richard Barchet (509) 430-0053**

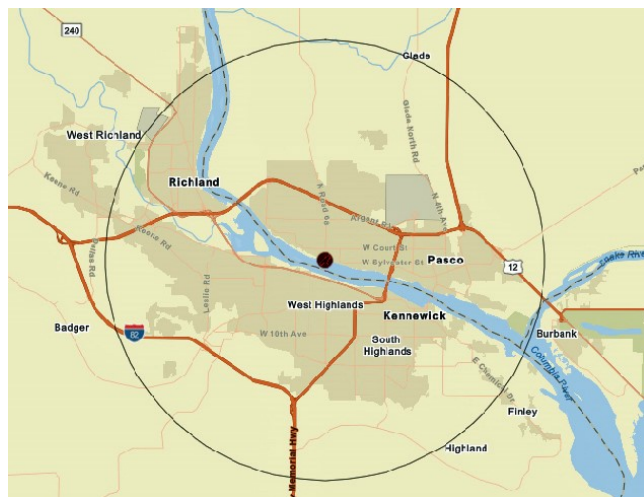
**Pasco: Dana Ward (509) 430-3363**

**For more information on the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count, please contact Bill LaFramboise:**

If you have been on the fence about participating, or perhaps not convinced that you have the skills to do so, you can conduct a feeder watch, or tag along on a route with a friend with more experience. Take a walk, or drive a designated route, and see what you might see. You too can count birds for science and see or hear birds both common and rare!

For example, last year we observed 109 different species. Some of the uncommon species observations included an Ross's Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Steller's Jay, five different owl species, Western Bluebird, Swamp Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, Red Crossbill, and a Townsend's Warbler.

We will have a potluck dinner after the count to go over the results. You are welcome at the potluck dinner even if you don't participate in the count. We have reserved the First Lutheran Church where we have our monthly meetings. See more information to the left!



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

**From Audubon at:**

[audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4](http://audubon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ac275eeb01434cedb1c5dcd0fd3fc7b4)

## First Saturday / Bateman Island Bird Walk December 7, 2024

By Lisa Hill

An early December bird walk is often frigid or very wet, but we lucked out with reasonable temps, no wind and only a light misty rain for a short while. Our small group included two new birders who were thrilled to add life birds to their list at every turn. Helping people to see new birds is so rewarding for experienced birders, especially since we have seen nearly all the possible species in the region and appreciate the opportunity to experience the thrill of finding a SPOTTED TOWHEE or BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON. As with the November walk, we found a great list of 57 species dominated by a variety of waterfowl. CACKLING GOOSE flyovers, TUNDRA SWAN, CANVASBACK, WOOD DUCK, HORNED and WESTERN GREBE and HOODED MERGANSER gave us a nice variety. DUNLIN and KILLDEER were the only small shorebirds present.

In the locust grove, we came upon a flock of GOLDEN-CROWNED and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS showing off at eye-level rather than high in the treetops. Plenty of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, BEWICK'S WRENS, SONG and WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS and DARK-EYED JUNCOS were seen all along the trail. We got a brief glimpse of a HERMIT THRUSH and heard a MARSH WREN. A few raptors made the list including AMERICAN KESTREL, BALD EAGLE, RED-TAILED HAWK and a slightly damp COOPER'S HAWK perched with tail and wings spread to dry the feathers.



American Avocet in breeding plumage  
Photo by Larry Umthun

The best find of the day was two AMERICAN AVOCETS foraging in very shallow water west of the island. These birds were migratory stragglers as they are relatively rare in this area in December. Their black and white non-breeding plumage made them look like floating gulls since their legs weren't visible. Their name, *Recurvirostra americana* comes from the Latin *recurvus* meaning recurved or curved back, and *rostrum* meaning bill and *americana*, of the Americas. The origin of the word avocet is unclear, but could come from an Italian word for graceful bird. There are only four avocet species worldwide and the American Avocet is the only one with distinct breeding and non-breeding plumage. Grouped in the same family, they are closely related to stilts, of which there are only five species.

**The next Bateman Island bird walk is Saturday, January 4th, beginning promptly at 8:00 AM.**

**Please come a few minutes early to sign in. The main parking lot for Wye Park has been closed, so give yourself a couple of extra minutes to arrive in case you need to park further away.**

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

## Accelerating Responsible Clean Energy Development: Audubon's Efforts in 2024

By Garry George

Senior Director, Climate Strategy, National Audubon Society

Published October 18, 2024, Reprinted with permission and abridged for this printing. The full article with clickable links is available here:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/accelerating-responsible-clean-energy-development-audubons-efforts-2024>

This year wind and solar generation in the U.S. surpassed coal for the first time, and solar is expected to supply most of the growth in electricity generation through 2025. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) continues to be a major catalyst for this momentum by providing substantial incentives that include tax credits for renewable energy and transmission projects. At the state and local level, clean energy goals and mandates, new jobs, and economic and community benefits are driving the growth of renewables.

Transitioning to clean energy is crucial for protecting hundreds of North American bird species from climate change, but infrastructure must be sited and operated with birds and people in mind. Audubon staff and chapters across the U.S. are working with planners, developers, and federal and state agencies to achieve this goal. Over the last 12 months, Audubon has been involved in the planning, permitting, siting, or operation of over 36 gigawatts of onshore and offshore wind and solar projects, as well as almost 45 gigawatts of transmission capacity. This conservation work includes providing recommendations on siting, permitting, monitoring, and research, grounded in Audubon's extensive science and policy advocacy for birds and their habitats.

### Getting Build Ready for Clean Energy in Washington

Audubon Washington is working with local chapters Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, Vancouver Audubon Society, and others to accelerate the state's transition to clean energy on several fronts. The Audubon Washington team is championing a new Build Ready Clean Energy Program and advocating for the creation of a Clean Energy Development Authority to help meet the state's clean electricity mandates. By joining forces with the NextGen Transmission coalition and actively participating in the Western Clean Energy Advocates (WCEA), Audubon is making its voice heard on key energy and transmission issues. They've also weighed in on the state's environmental impact assessments for major transmission projects, utility-scale solar, and onshore wind. Audubon has also conducted in-depth spatial analyses, pinpointing areas in Eastern Washington as candidate sites for low-conflict solar development.

**Information specific to LCBAS was included in the above text, but the full article from National Audubon was not included in The Curlew. Additional information on responsible clean energy development included sections on: Transmission Lines in Minnesota, Monument Planning in California, Warbler Research in Louisiana, Kansas, Arkansas, and Ohio, Solar Development in Western States, Improved Permitting for Wind Projects, and Offshore Wind Development. Please follow this link to access the full article, which includes links to other pages on clean energy. <https://www.audubon.org/news/accelerating-responsible-clean-energy-development-audubons-efforts-2024>**

## LCBAS Conservation Efforts & Clean Energy Development in WA

By Dana Ward

LCBAS President and Conservation Co-chair

The Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society has been very active in the planning process for proper siting of wind and solar projects in the state of Washington.

We actively champion proper siting of these small (several acres), to large scale (thousands of acres), energy facilities. New transmission lines are often necessary for a clean energy facility. These lines and the installation process also impact the habitat and the species the habitat supports. We push hard for preservation of native habitat and stress the importance of land connectivity, which helps ensure birds, animals, and insects move freely, uninhibited, from one parcel of land to another.

The Horse Heaven Wind Project, which includes both wind and solar arrays, is one of the largest proposed alternate energy facilities in the state. Stretching for more than 20 miles along the Horse Heaven Hills ridge, it could severely impact raptors, passerines and other resident wildlife if individual components are not sited properly. LCBAS is active in providing comments to those in charge to help steer this project to lessen environmental disturbance. No matter how much oversight and mitigation takes place, this large project will have impacts on the local and possibly regional ecological function.

The Wallula Gap Solar Array is another proposed project located in southern Benton County along State Route 14. This project is smaller in scale than the Horse Heaven Hills facility.

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## Successful Planting Work Parties at Leslie Groves North

By Debbie Berkowitz, LCBAS Secretary & Leslie Groves North Native Plant/  
Habitat Restoration Project Manager

Thirty-three volunteers planted 412 sagebrush in November and another 15 volunteers planted 107 (mainly) grasses and forbs in December at Leslie Groves North (LGN). The plants were grown by Lindsay Gailey's fourth grade class at Wiley Elementary School from seeds they harvested at LGN last winter. A few of the kids (who are now 5<sup>th</sup> graders) were able to come with their parents to help with the planting and see the culmination of their project. The planting was monitored by a volunteer archeologist, Tom Marceau, who has been a friend to the LGN group since the project started in 2006. Tom checked each hole after it was dug and before a plant was put in to make sure we weren't unearthing any cultural resources. None were found.

We will be watering a portion of these plants periodically during the next year to get them off to a good start. The schedule will depend on the frequency and amount of rain/snow this winter/spring. Fortunately, we've had some good rainfalls in the days after each planting.

If you're interested in helping with the watering, please contact Debbie Berkowitz at [secretary.lcbas@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.lcbas@gmail.com); to receive email announcements for watering work parties. If you can save some gallon jugs (milk/water jugs) to fill with water and bring along, that would be helpful.

We'll have other work parties as well during the next several months – including raking leaves along the fences at LGN this winter and early spring and then starting to weed in mid-March. If you're interested in participating in any of these work parties please contact Debbie so she can add you to her LGN email list.

## National Audubon Climate Watch Study (Red-breasted Nuthatch Count)

The Nuthatch Count begins on January 15 and ends February 15. While all the count squares are covered, if you are interested in participating in this important climate watch project, you can join with a team member to learn the ropes! Please send a request to our website at:

<https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact>

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## LCBAS Conservation Efforts & Clean Energy Development in WA

This array will be situated on previously disturbed agricultural land and should have minimal impact on the environment. A site visit by LCBAS members to this area confirmed that impacts should be low. The builder has developed a suitable mitigation plan which will avoid or lessen environmental disturbance.

Many factors come into play when properly siting a new facility. The developer needs to balance a multitude of potentially conflicting needs.

- Is the land high quality agricultural land and will its loss exceed the ultimate value of the clean energy produced?
- Is the land primarily or mostly native vegetation, which is quickly disappearing in eastern Washington, and should be left intact?
- Does the land have sensitive species which require mitigation and/or avoidance?
- Is the land near existing transmission lines that will connect to the facility or will new lines have to be erected?
- What impact will new lines have?

This is just a sample of what a developer has to consider when selecting a site: economics, community support, cost of property, and state and local government approvals.

## National Audubon Society Subscribers:

We would like to encourage National Audubon members to consider joining LCBAS and get involved in all we have to offer in the local area—ten months per year of meetings, The Curlew digital newsletters, and bird walks and field trips! Joining LCBAS is fast, easy, and secure at our website:

<https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/join-renew-donate>

We hope you will support Lower Columbia Basin Audubon by joining the local chapter, which is locally funded.

**LCBAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL: eCurlw 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 Curlw 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.

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Please send address changes (email address) to [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact](http://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. If you have provided your email address, you receive complimentary issues of The Curlw newsletter to keep you up to date on local happenings. After three issues, the complimentary emails end. To continue to receive The Curlw 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](http://www.lcbas.org) or

### LCBAS OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>
President	Dana Ward	<a href="mailto:president@lcbas.org">president@lcbas.org</a>
Vice President	Chuck Hedel	—
Treasurer	Dan Hansen	<a href="mailto:treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com">treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Debbie Berkowitz	<a href="mailto:secretary.lcbas@gmail.com">secretary.lcbas@gmail.com</a>
Birding Events	Jason Fidorra	—
Communications Chair	Charlene Burge	—
Conservation Co-Chair	Dana Ward and Rick Leaumont	<a href="mailto:conservation@lcbas.org">conservation@lcbas.org</a>
Education Chair	Kelly Doyle	—
Finance Chair	Dan Hansen	<a href="mailto:treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com">treasurer.lcbas@gmail.com</a>
Fundraising Chair	Marcie Daines	
Membership Chair	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>To contact anyone without a dedicated email address, please use the contact form on our website:</b>
Program Chair	Lori Nelson	
Director at Large	Robin Priddy	<a href="https://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/contact">https:// www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org/ contact</a>
<b>OTHER CONTACTS:</b>		
Curlew Editor	Charlene Burge	
Membership Database	Rich Barchet	
LCBAS Website	Lori Nelson and Lisa Hill	
Publicity Chair	<b>OPEN</b>	

**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 <https://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 \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://www.audubon.org)