The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see www.lcbas.org

Nov 17: Monthly Chapter meeting at 7:00 PM

Dec 1: LCBAS Board Meeting

Dec 5: LCBAS First Saturday Bird Walk - see page 2

Dec 19: Tweet Tidings at the Richland Public Library – see below

Jan 2: Christmas Bird Count

Jan 9: LCBAS Second Saturday Bird Walk – see page 2

Tweet Tidings

Deck the Halls with Feathered Friends: A Merry crafting day for bird lovers and kids of all ages to make their own Birdie Ornaments.

Join Lower Columba Basin Audubon Society and other birding group members and library staff in an afternoon of fun and comradery making bird ornaments and answering questions about birds!

All are welcome.

Where: Richland Public Library, Children's Department, Collaboratory

When: December 19, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Badgers in Washington: What Is Known/Not Known, and Why Badgers Matter

LCBAS Chapter Meeting:
Tuesday, November 17, 2026 @ 7:00 PM
First Lutheran Church, 418 N. Yelm, Kennewick, WA

With Glen Mendel, retired Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Badgers are managed as a minor furbearer in Washington. However, they also benefit other wildlife (including Burrowing Owls), and they play an important role in maintaining the shrub-steppe. Glen has been collecting and compiling available reports, and other data, about badgers in Washington.

This effort regarding badgers partly stems from his compilation of information about Burrowing Owls that was then used as the basis for multiple conservation organizations to petition for listing of that owl species in WA. The resulting Burrowing Owl status report by WDFW is now out for public review.

Come learn about what is known, and what information is missing for this often ignored and underappreciated species; and why that matters for other wildlife and the environment.

Glen Retired after 30 years as a fish and wildlife biologist, mostly with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

American Badger Photo by WDFW



First Saturday Bird Walk: Two Rivers County Park
October 7, 2026 Trip Report

By Kathy Criddle

Two Rivers Park delivered some really nice birds for the November First Saturday Bird Walk – 46 species! We started the walk by carpooling a short jaunt to the Two Rivers Natural Area where the TROPICAL KINGBIRD was still hanging out. This rare bird should be in Texas or Mexico but it has been staying put at the park for close to three weeks. We found it high in a tree top in the parking lot and everyone got to watch it sashay, back and forth, among nearby tree tops while it caught insects to feed on.

Next, our group of 29 motivated folks moved back to the main park to scope out waterfowl and songbirds. The first part of the walk started slowly with just a few sightings. On the river a COMMON LOON was spotted and in the brush were dozens of DARK-EYED JUNCO. Raptors were patrolling the area with AMERICAN KESTREL, COOPER'S HAWK, and SHARP-SHINNED HAWK probably causing the little birds to hide.

As the morning warmed up and we moved over to the little "peninsula" the activity soared. Ducks were plentiful in the bays with great sightings of REDHEAD, LESSER SCAUP, HOODED MERGANSER, BUFFLEHEAD, and lots of AMERICAN WIGEON. The highlight of the morning was a mixed flock of winter songbirds. We had great views of BROWN CREEPERS, DOWNY WOODPECKER, RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH, a HERMIT THRUSH, CEDAR WAXWING, and YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER. The walk ended with a great sighting of three PURPLE FINCH, one of which froze on a branch because the Cooper's Hawk made another appearance. After getting good looks at her facial pattern we moved on and called it a day.





Tropical Kingbird

Photos by Larry Umthun (left) and Vic Hubbard (center)

The next First Saturday Bird Walk is December 5, 2026 at W.E. Johnson Park in Richland, WA. The park is located along the east shore of the Yakima River. It is a great location for winter songbirds and some waterfowl on the river. Meet at the south entrance near 619 Tanglewood Dr. Parking is anywhere along the street. https://ebird.org/hotspot/L835470

We will begin promptly at 8:00 AM. Please join us. Both the public and LCBAS members are always welcome. Binoculars are available, first come, first served. No registration is required.

Where do our Local White-crowned Sparrows Go?

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society (LCBAS) and the White-crowned Sparrow Project (WCSP) join forces to discover more about White-crowned Sparrows

You can be a part of this effort by adopting a White-crowned Sparrow (more below)

By Bill & Nancy LaFramboise

For the past nine years, The White-crowned Sparrow Project has been studying White-crowned Sparrows wintering in the Tri-Cities area of southeastern Washington. This long-term study has revealed a concerning trend. By placing individually identifiable colored leg bands on birds and monitoring their return each winter, their declining apparent survival, accompanied by declining winter abundance has been documented in the region. Data from the Christmas Bird Count and eBird also contribute to the survival and abundance documentation.

In early 2027, miniature radio transmitters will be attached to approximately 25 White-crowned Sparrows at the banding site. A Motus antenna receiver installed at the site will monitor the birds' local movements and detect their departures and returns up to approximately 1.5 miles away. Motus is an international collaborative research network that uses automated radio telemetry to track the movement and behavior of small wildlife species.

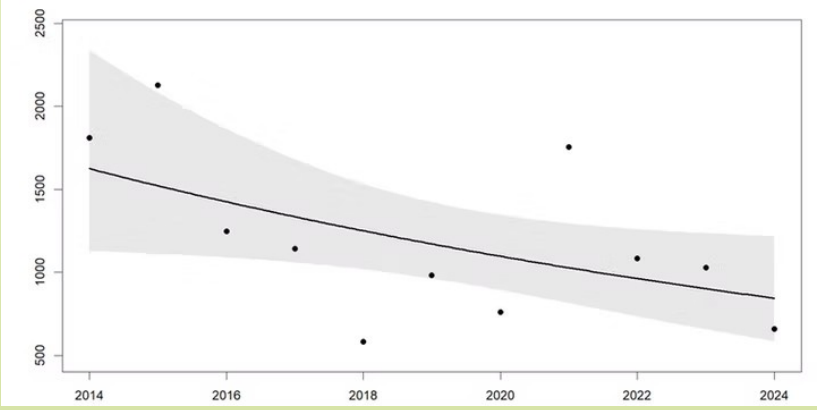
In spring, as they migrate toward their breeding grounds in northern Canada and Alaska, other stations in the Motus network may detect these birds. The antenna may also pick up other tagged species. LCBAS hopes this pilot project will encourage the establishment of one or two additional Motus antennas along the Columbia River at future locations.

ADOPT A SPARROW! Establishing a Motus Wildlife Tracking System is a costly effort and you can help with a donation. ANY amount helps, but with a $250.00 donation you will ADOPT A WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW unique to you, and you will receive a tag number to track this bird at **Motus.org**. Friends and family can pool their resources to adopt a bird together. Smaller donations will be merged so that everyone in the pool will receive a tag number.

At the end of the season, tracking information will be shared with everyone who makes a donation.

Donations can be made with the PayPal Donate button on the LCBAS website, which automatically designates funds to The Project and is indicated on your receipt. **www.lcbas.org/white-crowned-sparrow-project**

If paying by check, mail to LCBAS, PO Box 1900, Richland WA 99352. Make sure to note that the donation goes to the White-crowned Sparrow Project.



White-crowned Sparrow abundance in the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count circle 2014–2024

Note the general decline in numbers.

White-crowned Sparrow Project
email: wcspstudy@yahoo.com

Continued on page 4

Christmas Bird Count
January 2, 2027

By Bill LaFramboise

Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 2, 2027 for this year's Christmas Bird Count! Join our team's effort to track local bird populations and contribute to scientific discovery. Whether you are a seasoned birder or just curious, everyone can join the fun. Count birds at your feeder, stroll your neighborhood, or explore a wider area. You can also lend your skills as a data recorder. Reach out to our team leaders before the count (see below) and make your observations matter!

The count circle is divided into three sections: Lisa Hill (509-869-6715) leads the Richland Team, Rowan Young McMurchie (509-438-7239) leads the Kennewick Team, and Dana Ward (509-430-3363) leads the Pasco Team. Bill LaFramboise is the overall coordinator and can be reached at 509-531-3768 or billnan321@gmail.com. Please coordinate with a team lead to avoid overlapping areas and to obtain more detailed information. Help us make this year's effort our best yet. Please contact any of us if you have questions or would like to join.

The count circle provides excellent birdwatching opportunities. River systems attract a mix of waterbirds, while open parks support upland species. Since the mid-1960s, our Tri-Cities count has contributed valuable data to local, regional, and national studies of bird populations. Following the count, we will have a potluck dinner to review results and share stories about the day. Participants are encouraged to bring a dish to share, such as a salad, dessert, or main course. This is not only a time to eat, but also a time to celebrate our efforts and enjoy each other's company. We look forward to seeing you all there!



A Project That Reaches Beyond Washington

Migratory birds connect distant landscapes and communities. A White-crowned Sparrow spending its winter in southeastern Washington may breed far to the north, traveling through areas monitored by other researchers, conservation organizations, and Audubon chapters.



Understanding the challenges these birds face requires studying multiple locations and seasons. By following individual sparrows across parts of their annual journeys, we hope to provide information that supports conservation efforts throughout their migratory range.

This project also illustrates how long-term bird banding, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, and modern tracking technology can complement one another to improve our understanding of migratory bird populations.

Help Us Solve the Mystery: Whether you live in southeastern Washington or elsewhere along these birds' migration routes, you can help uncover their remarkable journeys. Your support will help us discover where these familiar winter visitors travel, better understand the challenges they face, and contribute to their long-term conservation.

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