



The Curlew

The newsletter of the Lower Columbia
Basin Audubon Society

Upcoming Events:

For more information see
www.lcbas.org

June 21 @ 5:30 PM: End-of-the-year membership meeting and potluck at Leslie Groves Park, Shelter #2.

Bateman Island First Saturday Birdwalk is on summer hiatus and will resume in September

Other Events:

For upcoming meetings and walks with the Columbia Basin Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society:
<https://www.cbwnps.org/>

Thank you to everyone who voted for the slate of officers / committee chairs!

Congratulations to the new 2022/2023 board (see page 5).

If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer to help with LCBAS, we have open slots still for Education / Jr Audubon, Programs, Membership, and Publicity. Please contact continuing President Sheri Whitfield for more information!
President@LCBAS.org or (435) 817-2750

LCBAS is on summer hiatus until September, 2022. Have a great summer!

LCBAS Annual Potluck Picnic

**Tuesday, June 21st, 2022, 5:30 PM.
Leslie Groves North Park, Picnic Shelter #2,
Park Street Entrance, Richland**

Come and renew old acquaintances and meet new friends. Please note that this is the third Tuesday of June, and not the fourth.

People will start gathering around 5:30 PM, and the potluck picnic will start at 6:00 PM. We invite all to participate in the potluck if you're comfortable with sharing food. Or please bring your own meal and skip potluck, but enjoy the company!

Please bring a main dish, dessert or side to share, if you're participating in the potluck, and your own utensils and plates. Drinking water will be provided. Don't forget a lawn chair. We'd love to enjoy your company!

This is a great way to usher in the summer break in LCBAS activities, see old friends, say goodbye to last year's board members, and welcome next year's board members.

Directions: In Richland, take George Washington Way to Newcomer Ave., and turn right, toward the river. Then turn north onto Harris Ave., and then east on Park St. towards the river. This is the Park St. entrance. Picnic Shelter #2 is on the left side of the parking area, beyond the playground.

Avian Influenza in Washington State:

As many have already heard, there is an outbreak of Avian Influenza, and ducks/geese sick and dying in Columbia Park (and other areas). Raptors are also effected. Please avoid coming in contact with these birds, and do not take them to rescue or a veterinary hospital.

State officials are asking people who encounter sick or dead wild birds to alert WDFW using the agency's reporting tool:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/a384e90f69744f2e846135a9ce80027f>

Read the most recent press release for more information on both wild and domestic birds which may be infected:

<https://doh.wa.gov/newsroom/state-officials-caution-against-touching-sick-or-dead-wild-birds>

Bateman Island Bird Walk June 4, 2022

By Sheri Whitfield



Eastern Kingbird
Photo by Philip Bartley

The Bateman Island Bird Walk was on June 4 and about 10 birders were in attendance. Together, 33 species were identified despite the wet and windy conditions. A few new birders joined the walk and mentioned they had an amazing time looking at the different birds.

Hundreds of swallows, TREE, VIOLET-GREEN, BANK, BARN, CLIFF and NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED, were present throughout the walk, continually capturing flying insects. By the water's edge we watched CASPIAN and FORSTER'S terns, AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS, CANADA geese, and several CLARK'S AND WESTERN grebes.

YELLOW warblers, BULLOCK'S orioles, BLACK-HEADED Grosbeaks, a WARBLING vireo, and even a RING-NECKED pheasant were found during the walk. A few of us were lucky enough to see a pair of KILLDEER. One sat on the nest while the other attempted to distract us with a broken wing display.

Additionally, EASTERN kingbirds were hunting, while SONG sparrows, GRAY catbirds, and YELLOW-BREASTED chats entertained us with their amazing songs.

The Bateman Island Bird Walk is now on summer hiatus. Organized bird walks will resume on September 3 at 8:00 AM. Meet at Wye Park at 7:45 to sign in. See you then!

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, the complimentary issues end.

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! Joining LCBAS is fast, easy, and secure at our website:

<http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html>



Two young Great-horned owlets observed during an LCBAS bird walk this year.
Photo by Charlene Burge

Local Event at McNary NWR!

Friends of the Mid-Columbia River Wildlife Refuges Want You to:

Celebrate Invertebrates!

Talk by The Bug Guru!
Hands-On Nature
Activities!
Mud Critters!
Insect Galls!
Pollinators!
Free for the whole family!

Find links and details at:
friendsofmcrwr.org/events

**Saturday, June 25 9am - 1pm
at McNary Refuge**



<https://www.friendsofmcrwr.org/events.html>

for more information.

Black-backed Woodpecker Makes a Surprise Visit to Pasco What a Thrill—a Rarity in Dana's Backyard!

By Dana Ward

June 3rd and 4th 2022

I was doing a little garden work along the edge of my string of large ponderosa pines that border my meadow. I kept hearing a woodpecker tapping on my recently dead pine tree. This tree was one of my favorites due to its size and overall bearing. The tree is much larger than the neighboring trees near it. The kid in me would say, "That pine would make a great tree for a treehouse" and I could just imagine the fun one could have building it and spending time up there. Unfortunately, the tree died this last winter for reasons I do not know. Sadly, I decided it must be taken down but

that could wait for a while. With these images in my mind, I thought, well it is time to see what this bird is; most likely a Downy Woodpecker visiting my tree. At least the tree, in death, can provide a service to woodpeckers, nuthatches and other creatures.



Black-backed Woodpecker

Photo by Vic Hubbard

I walk over to get a good look at where the tapping sound is coming from. I scan up and down the trunk of the tree and some of the larger limbs. I spot a few flakes of bark drifting down and follow the airborne trail up the tree to a black bird. That does not seem to be a downy I think, much too large. This is something in the woodpecker family but not a downy and not a hairy. Knowing this bird is unusual, I run to the house, and grab my binoculars and National Geographic guide. As I am getting my stuff, I am thinking, dark woodpecker, dark woodpecker, maybe a sapsucker. No can't be a sapsucker, they are not that black! What can it be? Well, maybe it is a Williamson's, it does have some black, that would be a first for my yard.

I get back to the tree, and thank goodness the bird is still there and very actively stripping patches of bark. I focus in on the bird and I see its back is all black. No red coloration anywhere to indicate a male bird. I look closer and see a bright yellow crown. That crown color is interesting. Definitely not a sapsucker that I am familiar with, this is an "exotic" woodpecker. Let's see what the book says. I note two possibilities; a Black-backed Woodpecker, or an American Three-toed Woodpecker. I noted that both male species have a yellow crown or cap, but the three-toed has a considerable number of black and white bars on the back. Eureka! I think I got it, a Black-backed Woodpecker, which should not be here. It's range is in the mountains to our east and west, and even there it is hard to find.

I immediately contact two people. Jason Fidorra, who works in Pasco and could possibly get here while the bird is still in the tree, and Elke Davis who has a good camera and might be able to document the bird in photos if she can make it. I am still a little suspicious that I have labeled this bird correctly. I need confirmation!

Jason shows up and we walk down to the tree. The bird is gone of course. Jason checks all the meadow trees just in case the bird moved to a nearby location. We talk a bit and decide to give it up. Then, as fate would have it, we hear some tapping! Looking up we see the bird has returned, and Jason confirms that it is a Black-backed Woodpecker! He gets some good phone pictures. Smiles all around! Jason asks if it's OK with me to post the bird for others to come see it in my backyard. Yes, please do. Later Elke arrives but again the bird is not present and it does not show itself while she is here. Darn, I hoped she would get some good pictures, but she does the next day. Carole Byrd shows up with her camera and the bird is back! Great, she takes a few pictures so that we have more documentation.

All is now quiet in the yard. The word goes out that a Black-backed Woodpecker has been spotted in the Tri-Cities. A bird, to the best of my knowledge, which has never been seen in either Benton or Franklin Counties.

The next day a small parade of people visit the host tree and to my knowledge, all of the participants got to see the bird at close range. I visit the birders from time to time in my meadow and they are very cordial and respectful of my property. I appreciate that, and happy they find this amazing rarity. The woodpecker sticks around all day and was there at 6:30 PM the second day, but I have not seen it since.

I want to thank Vic Hubbard for his photos, and Jason Fidorra for his initial confirmation.

When the Earth Started to Sing – David George Haskell

Podcast review by Robin Priddy

I particularly like this author and was drawn to his podcasts. Follow this link: <https://emergencemagazine.org/podcast/> and then scroll down to March 1, 2022, to “When the Earth Started to Sing”.

This is an exploration of the deep history of sound – from the very beginning - a little different as it's not entirely about birds. I found it fascinating and moving to think about how sound connects us to the very beginning, to each other and to all life. (Birds appear at 22/41 minutes) I've excerpted bits from the podcast to include after the introduction.

“This sonic journey written and narrated by David G. Haskell brings us to the beginning of sound and song on planet Earth. The experience is made entirely of tiny trembling waves in air, the fugitive, ephemeral energy that we call sound. Spoken words combined with terrestrial sounds invite our senses and imaginations to go outward into an experience of the living Earth and its history. How did the vast and varied chorus of modern sounds—from forest to oceans to human music—emerge from life’s community? When did the living Earth first start to sing? We invite you on a journey into deep time and deep sound that will open your ears and your imagination.”

Sound is more ancient than earth – the first sound waves pulsed through the plasma of the early cosmos – a blazing mire of protons and electrons. High- and low-pressure waves - the first sounds in the cosmos – seeded the stars. The peaks of these waves became clusters of atoms which eventually formed stars and galaxies.

Invisible radiation that to this day is throughout the universe. The patterns of the stars and galaxies are made from this pattern. Sound from it's origins was a creative force with lasting effect. All the way through today, sound connects, catalyzes, unifies and provokes.

Early sounds were made of air, water and stone. An early earth would have been just these sounds.

When life appeared, it brought with it sound. Bacteria make tiny sounds – detectable with lab equipment. Single celled animals don't, to the best of our knowledge, use sound to communicate.

The sounds we are surrounded with today are a relatively recent emergence. Flying insects could make sound and escape from predators – so they had safety to develop new spaces for sound. An ancient cricket species is the first known singer – using nubs that protrude from wing veins. Perhaps creating Earth's first song.

Many new singing creatures appeared – mostly insects; using wings and skeletons to make sound. Eventually frogs joined the chorus. All land vertebrates have a larynx; the top end of the windpipe. Frogs turned this into a singing reed. They, like crickets, could make sound and still escape predators.

Reptiles modified the larynx into a sound maker. So many different kinds of reptile sounds! Many dinosaurs made sounds; some of them very big!

The development of flowers and fruits - rich in sugar and protein – made new connections between plants and the animals that spread pollen and seeds. Diversity grew rapidly in response.

At 22:30 we arrive at birdsong! Birds had diversified into forest and water dwelling species. Likely these did not sing as modern birds do. The syrinx – the song making organ - appears only about 68 million years ago. Fortunately for birds and song – some of the birds with a syrinx made it through the asteroid catastrophe about 66 million years ago, which wiped out so much terrestrial life. Lucky for birdsong, the few birds that made it through this contraction brought with them the song-making syrinx.

In modern birdsong is the escape from catastrophe followed by innovation and renewal. Eventually there were lush forests everywhere, and so much sound – Earth was wrapped in song.

The podcast goes on to explore the development of sound and communication in humans.

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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

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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).

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Membership in LCBAS is separate from membership in the National Audubon Society.
To join the National Audubon Society, please go to www.audubon.org