



January 2010  
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 Number 5

# the curlew

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

### Special Interest Articles:

- Don't Forget:  
Costa Rica Trip slide show
- Great Backyard Bird Count!  
February 12-15  
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## Birding in Paradise, Costa Rica!

**Membership Meeting  
 Tuesday, January 26,  
 2010, 7:00 p.m.  
 Kennewick First  
 Lutheran Church,  
 corner of Yelm and  
 Highway 395**

The program this month is a trip report by LCBAS Far Away Field Trip, Birding in Paradise in Costa Rica in March of 2009. We will have a few pictures from the Pre Trip to Florida. Then we will travel to beautiful Costa Rica, one of the most environmentally diverse countries in the world. The weather can be arid and hot to tropical rains that create lush green rain and cloud forests. Costa Rica is located on the Central American isthmus bordered by the Caribbean Sea on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The topography ranges from ocean beaches through low lands to towering mountains. This diversity contributes to 1,500 types of trees, 6,000 flowering

plants, almost 10% of the world's butterfly species and **best of all, 850 species of birds.** Costa Rica continues as one of the world's best birding hotspots and one of the most spectacular places in the Americas to visit.

Twenty years ago, our first Far Away Field Trip was to Costa Rica. We went to a few of the same paces and saw some of the same birds, but we also visited many other places and saw many other birds. Our trip bird list was over 300. We were fortunate to have two photographers with us, Tom Clarke and Greg Prelich. The photos are wonderful.

This trip included a visit to Carara National Park on the dry Pacific side of Costa Rica. We traveled over the Continental Divide to City of Fortuna and the Arenal Volcano area. We will show you

the Volcano and the view from the famous Arenal Hanging Bridges and of course the many birds and flowers we in countered along the way.

We revisited Salva Verde Lodge in mid Costa Rica after twenty years and it was even better this time. We walked the trails of La Selva Biological Station and saw the amazing Great Green Macaw, Great Curassow, White-collared Manikin and many more. A visit to an abandoned butterfly garden provided a most unusual hummingbird, the Snowcap. We will share about our impromptu stop at a shade grown coffee plantation that is small but supports two families. Our stay at Savegre Lodge in the Quetzal Valley was the most amazing of all. Did we see the Resplendent Quetzal we missed twenty years ago? Come and see.



Northern Flicker

## President's Message *with Ed Rykiel, President*

### Happy New Year 2010 !

Something in the back of my mind tells me it can't possibly be – 2010! But there it is, *tempus fugit*.

Anyway, we started 2010 the right way with a big pot of lentil soup, a Christmas Bird Count, and an all-you-can-eat pot luck while we tallied 103 or so species. Not bad for the mysterious weather. I thought I would lose some weight on count day spending a lot of time out doors and in Dana's transport vehicle. But the

pot luck more than compensated for any imagined weight loss. If you weren't there, you should have been. Make plans now for the next CBC – time waits for no birder.

While the new year is just getting off the ground, LCBAS is in the middle of its program. We have some exciting presentations and activities on our calendar. Stay tuned to The Curlew and [lcbas.org](http://lcbas.org) to keep up to date. Your participation makes it all worthwhile.

Ed Rykiel  
President

### FREE TO A GOOD HOME

13 years worth of "BIRDING" the semi-monthly publication of the American Birding Association - 1996 to the present.

Call 509-727-8740 or email

[dennisrockwell@dwirless.net](mailto:dennisrockwell@dwirless.net)



## Junior Audubon News

Junior Audubon will meet on January 16th at 2:00 PM for "Going Ducky." We'll meet in Columbia Park where the ducks are. We'll decide if it is at the Marina or the Family Fishing Pond as the event approaches. Teen Audubon members are invited to join us.

Audubon volunteers will share their spotting scopes to help Junior Audubon members get an up close look at the ducks that come to the Tri-Cities for the winter. Then, at 3:15, we will caravan to Sacajawea Park for an Eagle Walk. Over forty eagles have been spotted there in the late winter afternoons.

There will be an after school meeting on Thursday, January 28, 3:15, in room 10 at Hawthorne Elementary School. At this meeting we will take a look at duck photos and other birds in Columbia Park to help us get ready for

the Great Backyard Bird Count coming up on February 13th.

For more information, or to volunteer, contact Cherie [cbaudrand@charter.net](mailto:cbaudrand@charter.net)

*"Then, at 3:15, we will caravan to Sacajawea Park for an Eagle Walk. Over forty eagles have been spotted there in the late winter afternoons."*

### Help for Injured Raptors:

If you find an injured raptor in the Tri-Cities or surrounding area you can call a local volunteer for advice. Injured raptors are usually transported to **Blue Mountain Wildlife in Pendleton, Oregon** for treatment and rehabilitation.

#### Who to call:

Michelle Caron..(509) 366-0888  
Marilyn Hayes..(509) 521-4648  
Suzanne Baird...(509) 460-2434  
Blue Mountain Wildlife...(541) 278-0215 see **Lower Columbia Basin Audubon website** and click on the **Help for Injured Birds** link.

## Great Washington State Birding Trail! New Map!

On January 26, 2010 the newest addition to the Washington State Birding Trail will be unveiled in Olympia. The newest loop is the "Palouse to Pines" loop. This is the 6th map in the series that promotes rural communities by helping to identify and conserve areas for birds and other wildlife, while also promoting nature based tourism and helping to generate revenue for rural communities. The other birding trail maps that have been produced include; the Olympic Loop, the Cascades loop, the Southwest loop, the Coulee Corridor, and the Sun & Sage loop. The maps are available through Audubon Washington at their website location [http://wa.audubon.org/birds\\_GreatWABirdingTrail.html](http://wa.audubon.org/birds_GreatWABirdingTrail.html).

The birding trail helps fulfill Audubon's mission of inspiring a culture of conservation among our citizens while conserving and restoring essential wildlife habitat. Long-term protection for wildlife and our own quality of life depends on our using natural resources in sustainable ways and providing on-going economic incentives for local stewardship of birds and habitat. Birding trail maps are a great tool for developing this incentive!

### McNary Environmental Education Center Second Saturday Event!

Come out and help participate in citizen science and the Great Backyard Bird Count, anyone can help! (see page 6 for more details), Saturday February 13th. Meet in the McNary Education Center at 8 am to get data forms and location assignment. Dress for the weather. ID will be by two or more birders to verify the species and the numbers of each species. The data will be combined where appropriate and sent to Cornell Lab of Ornithology. **How to get there:** The Education Center is located off Highway 12 near Burbank. From Tri-Cities take Highway I-182 East/Highway 12 East to Burbank. Turn left onto Humorist Rd. at second stoplight after the Snake River Bridge. Turn left onto Lake Rd. Look for Education Center on the left.

### History of Fish and Fishing in the Columbia River Basin: A Presentation by scientist and local author Dennis Dauble

Dennis will explore how fish and fishing are intertwined with the lifestyle and culture of Pacific Northwest residents. This presentation will center on the historical fishing practices of American Indian tribes, the influence of white settlement on fish populations, and the modern-day water-use practices that often lead to conflicts between resource management policy and public values. Slides and journal entries from the Lewis and Clark Expedition and Railroad Surveys will illustrate this illuminating presentation.

This Community Lecture Series program is hosted by the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society. Join us for refreshments and a great presentation.

January 21, 2010  
7:00 PM  
Kennewick Library  
1620 S. Union St.  
Kennewick

For more information, contact:  
Kathy Criddle  
Mid-Columbia Libraries  
737-6325  
kcriddle@mcl-lib.org

*"fish and fishing are intertwined with the lifestyle and culture of all Pacific Northwest residents."*

### Birding tip of the Month

*Learn what habitat a bird uses: you are not likely to find a Sage Sparrow on a mudbar! Then look at where in that habitat the bird is likely to be: treetop, driest mud, tall grass, sagebrush, river shore, etc.*

## Bird Sightings – December 2009

Kevin Burke - ([wildburke@hotmail.com](mailto:wildburke@hotmail.com))

*“A Snowy Owl on a roof and a lingering Black-necked Stilt are some of the highlights”*

### **Bird Sightings Greetings**

Hello everyone! We had a great month of birding in December. I would like to thank all the folks that submitted sightings to me this month, this column would not be possible without all of your dedication. Some great birds were present this month. A Snowy Owl on a roof and a lingering Black-necked Stilt are some of the highlights.

### **December:**

1. Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>: A Black-necked Stilt was seen on the Yakima Delta by (NL). It was also seen on the Bateman Island bird walk on Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> by the Bateman crew.
2. Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>: A White-throated Sparrow and an Orange-crowned Warbler were seen in the yard of (LU&LH).
3. Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>: The Trumpeter Swan was seen on the Yakima River near Chamna.
4. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: A White American Crow was seen on the campus of WSU Tri-cities by (JL).
5. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: A Lincoln’s Sparrow was seen at the feeder of (LH).
6. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: A Merlin was seen near Status St. by (KC). Another was seen the following day next day in the same area by (AJ).
7. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: 7 Northern Flickers were in the yard of (JLu) at one time.
8. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: 3 Trumpeter Swans were seen across the road from the Education center at McNary in Burbank by (CS, MH, PC).
9. Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>: 28 Bald Eagles, 7 Redtail Hawks, 4 Kestrels, 6 Western Grebes, 5 Pied-billed Grebes were seen at Sacajawea Park by (LF&WH).
10. Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup>: A Snowy Owl was seen in Richland on a roof on Harris St by just about everyone.
11. Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>: A White-throated Sparrow and a Varied Thrush were seen at Two Rivers Park by (LU&LH).
12. Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>: A Eurasian Widgeon was seen on the Columbia near the family fishing pond (BD).
13. Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>: A Red-breasted Sapsucker was seen at Lyon’s Ferry by (BD).
14. Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>: A Peregrine Falcon was seen on a pier of the Blue bridge by (BD).
15. Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>: A Western Bluebird and a Lincoln’s Sparrow were seen near Rancho Reata and near the LDS temple by (TG).

### **Observers:**

(LH) Lisa Hill, (NL) Nancy LaFramboise, (KC) Kathy Criddle, (JLu) Jordene Lucas, (MH) Marilyn Hayes, (LF) Lucie Fritz, (WH) Wayne Heinz, (LU) Larry Umthun, (PC) Paula Clark, (CS) Chris Simmonen, (TG) Tony Greager, (BD) Bob Derting, (AJ) Austin Johnson, (JL) Jim Lehman

# Christmas Bird Count Results!!

## CBC Count Jan 2, 2010

*(Preliminary report with some outstanding tallies to be added.)*

The 2009 Christmas Bird Count was a success considering the weather the weeks before the count day. The day of the count was a nice winter day with some sun and light wind. The birds were fairly cooperative but some species were not seen again during the count day or the count week. We are especially haunted by the absence of our little friend the Burrowing owl. We counted 103 species during the official 24 hour count period on January 2, 2010. The most abundant native species being the Canada goose with nearly 20,000 individuals. All I can say is wow! The second most abundant bird was the American coot with over 6,000 individuals. Mallards were the 3<sup>rd</sup> most abundant with about 3,000 individuals and American widgeon were again 4<sup>th</sup> with 2,700 counted. For small birds, the White crowned sparrow took the lead with nearly 2,000 birds counted while American robins, Dark-eyed juncos and House finches were not far behind. Last year we had 1,945 Horned larks but this year we had only 51 which is not surprising since they can easily travel in large flocks in and out of the count circle.

Some special species considered rare for the CBC were sighted during the day.

***Continued on page 7***

**Check out our website: <http://lcbas.org>**

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*E-mail: [LucieF@aol.com](mailto:LucieF@aol.com)*

## Bateman Island Bird Walk:

*With Lisa Hill.*

We had a great crowd of 17 folks on the Bateman walk for the last hurrah of 2009! This report is from December 5, 2009. The weather was cool, but no wind or rain which was a great help in finding 47 species. Several HOODED MERGANSERS drifted around the east side of the causeway. Gotta love the females with their spiky princess hairdo. A few AMERICAN WIGEON and BUFFLEHEAD roamed the area, and the unmistakable silhouette of a COMMON LOON was spotted near the marina. A BELTED KINGFISHER has become a common sight near the causeway.

Along the walking path were at least two HERMIT THRUSH, a SPOTTED TOWHEE, and two DOWNY WOODPECKERS. In the Black Locust grove were three GREAT HORNED OWLS, all perched within a few feet of each other to make a majestic trio. Off the west shore of the island, we found the very late BLACK-NECKED STILT that has been working the delta long past a stilt's usual departure date. It didn't appear to be distressed or injured, but maybe a bit confused! At the north end, we had a great opportunity to observe HORNED GREBE and EARED GREBE and note the different characteristics of the two. There was also a PIED-BILLED GREBE in the area.

On our way to the back side of the island we found two NORTHERN HARRIERS. We rarely see harriers perched, but one of these perched briefly on a low shrub and gave us a great look at its beautiful facial pattern. A bright male AMERICAN KESTREL sat for a long time at the very top of a tree where we could easily see the falcon facial stripe and lovely blue/gray and rusty plumage. A few people got a quick look at a GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW mixed in with numerous WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS. One of the best sightings of the day was a low flyover MERLIN showing off its long pointed wings, streaked breast and falcon facial stripe. Too bad the Peregrine Falcon which is often seen in the area in winter didn't show itself. We could have had a three falcon day!

## **Bateman Island Bird Walk continued**

The next Bateman Island Bird Walk will be on **February 6 2010**. Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park near the causeway. Thanks to LCBAS for purchasing several "loaner" binoculars – they have already come in handy on the Bateman walks!

## **Take a Mid-Winter Nature Break With the Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15, 2010**

Bird watchers coast to coast are invited to take part in the 13th annual [Great Backyard Bird Count](#), Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2010. Participants in the free event will join tens of thousands of volunteers of all levels of birding experience to count birds in their own backyards, local parks or wildlife refuges.

Each checklist submitted by these "citizen scientists" helps researchers at the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) and the [National Audubon Society](#) learn more about how the birds are doing—and how to protect them. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

Taking part in the Great Backyard Bird Count is a great way to get outside with family and friends, have fun, and help birds—all at the same time. Anyone who can identify even a few species can provide important information that enables scientists to learn more about how the environment is changing and how that affects our conservation priorities," said Audubon Education Vice President, Judy Braus. "Everyone who participates in the GBBC—families, teachers, and young people—will get a chance to hone their observation skills, learn more about birds, and make a great contribution to the future!"

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

### **FUNDRAISING UPDATE!**

Don't forget we still have wonderful shadegrown fair trade coffees for sale! Light, medium, and dark roast, and decaf! \$9.50 per package, available at meetings or from Robin at information below!

Also don't forget to register for escarp at Yoke's Fresh Market! They donate a percentage of what you spend, the program costs you absolutely nothing and you can support Audubon! Yoke's has the best selection of wine in town, great sea foods, and many unique items.

Contact Robin Priddy at either phone 378-1694 or e-mail [grania0358@aol.com](mailto:grania0358@aol.com) for information about either fundraising item or if you have questions!

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2009 GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern United States. Participants counted 279,469 Pine Siskins on 18,528 checklists, as compared to the previous high of 38,977 birds on 4,069 checklists in 2005. Failure of seed crops farther north caused the siskins to move south to find their favorite food.

On the [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) website, participants can explore realtime maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website's [photo gallery](#). All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

For more information about the GBBC, visit the website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). Or contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473 or (outside the U.S., call (607) 254-2473) or [gbbc@cornell.edu](mailto:gbbc@cornell.edu), or Audubon at [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org) or (215) 355-9588, Ext 16.

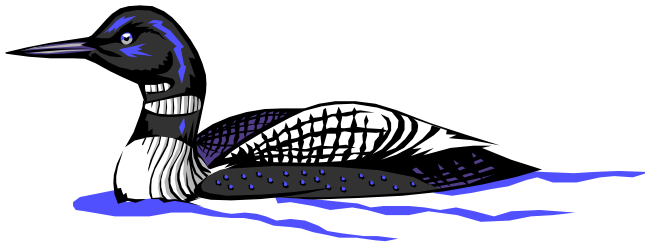
## **Christmas bird count results continued from page 5**

They were Tundra swans and a single Trumpeter swan. Other uncommon birds for the Christmas Count were a Water pipit, Caspian tern, Red-breasted merganser, Western gull, and a Purple finch. Rare bird forms will have to be filled out and accepted by Audubon before these species become official. I hope to have a full account of the birds for next months Curlew.

There were over 50 participants that signed in for the count this year which is an excellent turnout. Some avid counters did some owling, but most were daylight observers. We had several good out-of town birders help us in the count which we greatly appreciate. The weather cooperated fairly well for a winter day in January with temperatures between 40 degrees and 47 degrees for most of the day. Winds were elevated in the morning but light to fairly calm in the afternoon and evening.

**I want to thank all those people that counted, great job!** I want to especially thank the team leaders, Barb and Tom Clarke (Pasco), Ken Burke (Kennewick) and Ray Johnson (Richland) who helped to organize the count areas. I also want to specifically thank Ed the Master of Ceremony for leading the bird tally. Also thanks to Charlotte Reep and Marilyn Hayes for their efforts in getting the Grange and helping to set up. And finally a big thanks to Jack and Murrell Dawson for "hosting" the dinner and all the little things that made the event a success. I am looking forward to next year's count which should again be held at the Grange in Pasco. I hope we can continue to make the Grange bird count central with snacks, warm drinks and warm conversation. See you next year.

**Dana Ward**



## **Book Table Talk – January 2010**

*By Kathy Criddle*

We don't just study birds, we like plants and animals too! Here are some great plant books available at the book table during the next meeting!

Plants of the Lewis & Clark Expedition by H. Wayne Phillips. For those who love our connection to the Lewis and Clark Expedition, this is a delightful book featuring plants found on that amazing journey. Beautiful photographs, descriptions and a Lewis and Clark Journal entry accompany each of the wonderful plants highlighted in this book. Price: \$20.00

Edible and Medicinal Plants of the West by Gregory L. Tilford. This easy to carry, compact book is great for hikers or for using in the field. Information includes range, bloom times, habitat description and dangerous look-a-like plants to stay away from. The color photos are very useful. Price: \$14.00

Venomous Animals & Poisonous Plants by Steven Foster and Roger Caras. One of the Peterson Field Guides this book covers all manner of poisonous creatures and plants from mushrooms to snakes. Another 250 plants and 90 animals located in the lower 48 states are included. Line drawings and color photographs help make identification fast and simple. Price: \$15.95

News from Badger Mountain Centennial Preserve!

Another 25 acres have been added to the preserve! This is great news as this local open space is a wonderful place to hike a view birds locally! More to come on this in the near future!

**The Curlew**

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1900  
Richland WA 99352

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**Audubon Membership Information**

**Please Note:** Membership in National Audubon Society (NAS) and the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society (LCBAS) are **separate memberships.**

**LCBAS Chapter Membership** (includes a year's subscription [10 issues] to *The Curlew*)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20. for annual membership dues or

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10. for full time students.

Please make check payable to **LCBAS**. I can help with an additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Send *The Curlew* to my email address listed below. All my dues will go towards supporting LCBAS in local education and conservation efforts.

\_\_\_\_\_ I want to be on your Environmental Alert e-mail list to receive timely notices about issues/work parties. (Your e-mail address will not be shared.)

**National Audubon Society Membership** (includes annual subscription to *Audubon Magazine*)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20. for one year new membership in the NAS. (Renewal of NAS membership is currently \$35.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$15. for one year new senior or full time student membership in NAS.

Please make check payable to **National Audubon Society, PO Box 422250 Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250**

Please do not send renewals for NAS to LCBAS.

*For any of the local options above check the appropriate boxes, clip the form and mail it with your check(s) to:*

**Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, P. O. Box 1900, Richland, WA 99352**

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**COZY010Z**