



March 2010
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the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Special Interest Articles:

- Earth Month!
Lots of activities
- Sign up for our upcoming Bird Cruise!
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Banding Birds in Peru: A colorful tropical bird in the hand is worth 2 in the rainforest!

**Membership Meeting
Tuesday, March 23, 7:00 p.m.
Kennewick First Lutheran Church,
corner of Yelm and Highway 395**

Our March meeting features LCBAS member and friend, Howard Browsers, USF&W biologist. In the fall of 2009, Howard spent 10 days as a volunteer with an environmental education and research center located adjacent to the Tambopata River in southeast Peru.

He and the group spent most of their time capturing and color banding birds. His presentation will describe the Peuvian rain forest and the wildlife present in the area. In addition he will explain the banding process and show photographs of the local birdlife.

Howard Browsers has been employed as a Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for 21 years. He has worked for the past 11 years at the Mid-Columbia

River National Wildlife Refuge Complex headquartered in Burbank, WA. Before coming to the mid Columbia Howard worked in Portland, OR and Spokane, WA.

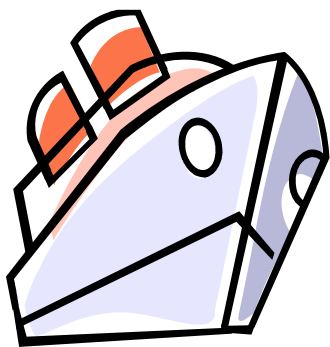
Our meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. with a brief business meeting and a bird identification segment featuring Nancy LaFramboise. Following the business meeting those in attendance enjoy a brief social time with cookies and coffee. The speaker usually begins around 7:45 p.m.

Sacagawea Heritage Trail Bird Walk: Celebrate Earth Month! April 10 Th with Kathy Criddle

For Earth Month we will do a special bird walk along the Sacagawea Heritage Trail in the Port of Pasco Industrial Park, east of the Cable Bridge, to introduce birding opportunities in Pasco. We will park in the Osprey Point parking lot on SE Road 20 E, just off Dock St in the Port of Pasco area. The walk will start at 8:00 am.

This easy one mile walk will be great for beginning birders and those who need handicap access. The pathway is paved and follows a grove of trees along the Columbia River Shore. For those wanting a more rugged walk following the bird walk, you can head east on the paved trail from Osprey

Point and walk all the way to the Sacagawea State Park. Information on that part of the trail and bird sighting possibilities will be available after the initial bird walk.



5 Star Birding and Cruise!!



LCBAS is offering a new and different **Far Away Field Trip** for next year. For 11 days, March 7-18, 2011, LCBAS will cruise the Caribbean on the Jewel of Sea, with Royal Caribbean Cruise lines. We will make 5 stops at exotic tropical countries: Aruba, Columbia, Panama, Costa Rica and Grand Cayman. At these stops we will go birding

with local guides arranged by Carefree Birding. This is truly the best of all worlds – 5 star dining and entertainment and 5 star birding. Cruising cost depends on the type of cabin you choose and the 5 shore excursions are \$300 per person for all 5 including guides and transportation. We

have to have a minimum of 12 participants and a maximum of 18. \$500 will hold your spot with final payment due December 7, 2010. Contact Barbara Clarke (phone 509-588-3362 or barbaraclarke@verizon.net) for more information or pick up a brochure at the monthly meeting.

“This is truly the best of all worlds – 5 star dining and entertainment and 5 star birding.”

Presidents Message with President Ed Rykiel

Weather, Climate and Birds, Oh My!

What's the difference between weather and climate and why do I care? Because ... a fundamental constituent of a species' environment is the climate it lives in. Different species are physiologically adapted to live under different climatic conditions. Climate is one of the reasons that birds migrate.

Weather is what happens day to day. Climate is what happens from year to year and decade to decade. Our local climate is defined by a temperature range of 135° degrees (-22 – 113 °F) and a precipitation range of nearly 11 inches (2.98” – 13.66”) measured over at least the last 60 years.

Climate is measured by the long-term averages of temperature and precipitation, and the extremes that define the ranges of temperature and precipitation. Two sets of numbers: averages and extremes. Just by chance the day's weather occasionally matches the averages. But you have to look at a whole year's worth of weather to see how that year fits into the climate picture.

Shrub-Steppe Climate

According to Wikipedia, shrub steppe, where we live, is distinguishable from deserts, because they are too dry to support

a noticeable cover of perennial grasses or other shrubs, while the shrub steppe has sufficient moisture levels to support a cover of perennial grasses and shrubs. Rainfall is generally less than 7” per year. The annual average for Kennewick is over 9”. Left to itself without irrigation, lower Columbia basin shrub steppe is a diverse mix of over 500 plant species adapted to our climate and its monthly, seasonal, and annual variations.

A Bird's Life – Climate and You

As for the birds, there's far more to climate than just temperature and precipitation in so far as climate's effect on species distribution. A number of other relevant variables go into defining a particular climate. Some examples include: amount of precipitation that is snow versus rain, number of consecutive months with no precipitation, length of the growing season, number of fog days, and more.

A bird species, that's the entire population, is adapted by virtue of its genetic variability to survive climatic extremes, while individual birds like the ones in your backyard may not survive the extremes of a given year if they are not in good physiological condition for one reason or another. **Continued on Page 5**



“Weather is what happens day to day. Climate is what happens from year to year and decade to decade.”

Don't forget ! The 13 th Annual Othello Sandhill Crane Festival! March 26-28!

The Festival has many tours for crane viewing along with specialty tours. Specialty tours have included Columbia National Wildlife Refuge/Potholes area wildlife tour, Missoula Floods and the Channeled Scablands geology tour, Lower Grand Coulee birding tour and Wahluke Slope/Shrub Steppe birding tour. **Pre-registration is suggested** to reserve your seat as some fill up quickly.

With admission price into the Festival on Saturday, you may attend free lectures which are repeated throughout the day. Lectures given in the past have included falconry, Missoula Floods and the Channeled Scablands, Woodland Park Zoo, Grouse of Washington, Othello History within the Drumhellar Channeled Scablands, Shrub-Steppe Flora and Fauna, Owls of Eastern Washington and Spring Migration in the Columbia Basin.

Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and children 12 and under are free with adult admission!

For more information please call 509-488-2802.

<http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>

McNary Environmental Education Center Second Saturday Event!

Celebrate Earth Month! The birds will be singing as we raise a teepee, sew a tule mat, play nature games, tell a story and make a kite with Greg Greger. Come join us at McNary National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, April 10th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. It's Free! Questions? Call the Friends office (509) 546-8352

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.

Junior Audubon Report *with Cherie Baudrand*

Thank you to our LCBAS volunteers, Barb and Tom Clarke, Marilyn Hayes, and Cathy Smith, and thank you to you great parents and grandfather for bringing your young scientists outside for the Great Backyard Bird Count. We all got to see a Cooper's Hawk in the scope, thanks to Tom fixing his scope at kids' height. We saw three chickadees like the one we colored at our first after school meeting, and 1,500 coots! We had our heart-shaped pizza and tallied 26 species. Plus we had lots of fun together.

Saturday, March 20, at 10:00, we will visit McNary Environmental Education Center in Burbank. We're excited to announce that Lynn and Bob Tompkins from Blue Mountain Wildlife are bringing some of their live birds of prey to show us. We will play the Taxidermy Hunt in the education center, take a short bird walk, and start our Jr. Birder activity booklet.

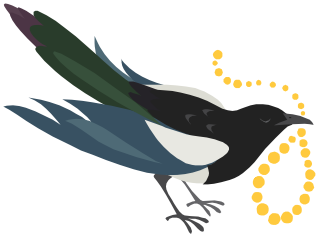
Junior Audubon members are encouraged to attend the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival on Saturday, March 27. LCBAS will have a display there, and there are activities and workshops for children.

"Blue Mountain Wildlife will bring live birds of prey to show junior Auduboners on March 20!"



Birding tip of the Month

Don't identify using only one field mark. Get in the habit of checking out the entire bird. One way to get in this habit is to look for molt or odd colored feathers.



Bird Sightings – February 2010

Angela Harding - (gela.harding43@gmail.com)

February Bird Sightings:

(only from LCBirds):

“Please e-mail me your Uncommon or Rare sightings each month so we can make this list as good as it should be.”

Hello Curlew readers,
My name is Angela Harding. I have been given the opportunity to write the sightings column since Kevin Burke has moved to Tennessee. I found out about LCBAS back in October and have been pretty active ever since. I am somewhat new to birding and I am really enjoying being part of this great community of birders! I look forward to getting to know you all more. **Please e-mail me your Uncommon or Rare sightings each month so we can make this list as good as it should be.** For the month of February the sightings listed are only from LCBirds. E-mail address is: gela.harding43@gmail.com. Thank you and happy birding!

1. Flock of Gadwalls in an empty lot behind Ron & Carole Louderback’s home in Kennewick. Tuesday, Feb 4th
2. Bateman Island, Kathy Criddle, Belted Kingfisher, (2) mature Bald Eagles, Common Loon, Western Grebes ~ 18, Canvasback duck (4), Ring-neck duck pair, Dunlin (10), Green-wing Teal (6), Northern Pintail, Killdeer (3), Spotted Towhee, female Northern Harrier, a pair of Horned Grebe and Ring-neck Pheasant and a Glaucous Winged Gull. Tuesday, Feb 9th
3. Yakima Delta, Bob Woodley, 3 Killdeer, 3 G. yellowlegs, 10 Dunlin, and one Least sandpiper. An immature Black-crowned night heron, one N. harrier and one Red-tailed hawk. one Belted kingfisher. Tuesday, Feb 9th
4. McNary, Ron & Carole Louderback, 5 Trumpeter Swans on Tuesday, Feb 9th & 6 Trumpeters on Thursday, Feb 11th
5. McNary, Bob Derting, Swan, Canada Geese, Red-tailed Hawk nesting, Great Horned Owl nesting, Northern Pintails (1000+), Mallards, Am. Widgeons, Eurasian Widgeon, Red-breasted Merganser, Snow Geese (200- off Ivarson Rd), White-fronted geese (7 – off Ivarson Rd), Bald Eagles, Northern Harrier, Herring Gull, Bufflehead, Western grebe, Horned grebe. Sunday, Feb 14th
6. Wallula Jct/Delta and area, Bob Derting, Pintails, Green-winged Teals, Am Widgeons (1000), Eu. Widgeon (Millet Ponds), Red-winged blackbirds, Ca. Gull, White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, Kestrels, Meadowlarks, Dark-eyed Juncos, White-crowned Sparrows, Belted Kingfisher, Redhead, Less Scaup, Ring-necked, Wood Ducks (grain elevator), Canvasback, Western Grebe, Common Goldeneye, Bald Eagles, Barn Owl (Dodd Rd). Sunday, Feb 14th
7. W.E. Johnson Park, Larry Umthun, Fox Sparrow. Tuesday, Feb 16th
8. Whitcomb Island, Nancy L (reporting), Bonnie D., Jordene L. & Angela H., Snow Geese (2000+), N. Shrike, 2 Savannah Sparrows, 10 Golden-crowned Sparrows & 24 other more common species. Thursday, Feb 18th
9. Driving through Horse Heaven Hills area, Nancy L (reporting), Rough-legged Hawk, Rock Wren, mature Golden Eagle (being pursued by 10 Common Ravens). Tuesday, Feb 18th
10. Ivarson Rd area off Hwy 12, Cherie Baudrand, Meadowlark, Killdeer, 4 N Harriers, 11 Bald Eagles, 2 Red-tailed

February Sightings Continued

Hawks (a pair), Am. Kestrels. Snow Geese (1000+).
Saturday, Feb 20th

Presidents Message Continued

with President Ed Rykiel

The fluctuations of weather and climate interact with a bird's physiological condition to affect it's survival. The well-fed birds at your feeder keep coming back because you are keeping them in good shape to deal with the vicissitudes of climate.

It's spring – don't forget to check the local burrowing owl webcam

http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/owlcam/b_owl.html

Beginning Birding Class

LCBAS is offering a beginning birding class in partnership with the Kennewick Parks & recreation on April 30 from 6:30 to 9 PM at the Kamiakin High School Library. Field trip will joining the Saturday May 1 st Bateman Island Bird Walk. More information will be in the April Curlew but mark your calendars now!

Tri-cities Earth Month Calendar - Lots

of Activities for All to Enjoy – Check it out at:

<http://www.earthmonthmc.org/>

and

<http://www.earthmonthmc.org/event>

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

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Treasurer Lucie Fritz.....(509)946-9134

E-mail: LucieF@aol.com

Bateman Island Bird Walk:

With Lisa Hill

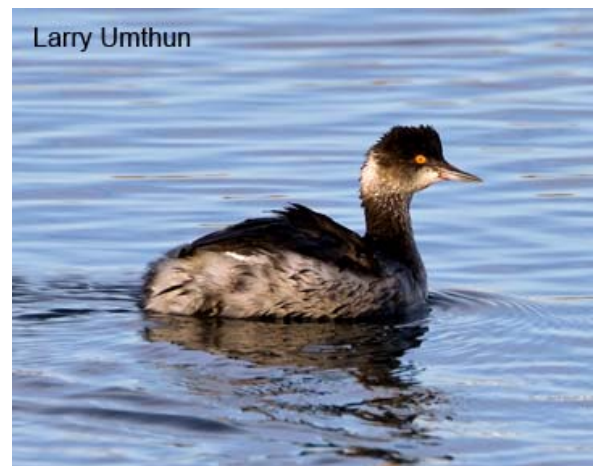
Report from February 6, 2010

The number of birders at the February Bateman walk increased six-fold over last month, with over 30 people attending! Several new folks and a few Girl Scouts, too. Maybe we are all longing for some spring migrants to ease the winter doldrums. We tallied up 44 species – next month we could reach 50.

SONG SPARROWS and BEWICK'S WRENS were singing in every direction, which was a joy to hear. One HERMIT THRUSH was found, probably near the end of its winter vacation in the Tri-Cities. Plenty of waterfowl could be found off the causeway and out on the Yakima delta. Beautiful female COMMON MERGANSERS kept company with a CLARK'S GREBE. A WESTERN GREBE was nearby for a comparison. With its brighter yellowish-orange bill and white plumage up over the eye, the Clark's Grebe gave the illusion of being larger and longer-necked. EARED GREBE, HORNED GREBE, and PIED-BILLED GREBE made up five of the six grebes which it is possible to see in winter in this area. Only the rather rare Red-necked Grebe was missing.

MERLINS are uncommon in this area, but one was spotted on the January walk and again this month. Maybe one bird took up winter residence in the neighborhood.

April 3 is the date for the next walk. As the weather warms and the days lengthen, we should begin to find more species on the island. **We meet at 8:00am in the parking lot at Wye Park near the entrance to the island.** Birders of all experience levels are welcome. Binoculars are recommended and there will be several pair available to borrow.



Book Table Talk March, 2010

With Kathy Criddle

We have DVDs! If you missed the movie night where we showed the wonderful story of Honey the Black-chinned Hummingbird, you will still be able to enjoy this family friendly film by purchasing the DVD of First Flight: A Mother Hummingbird's Story. This fascinating documentary film by Noriko and Don Carroll, shows the detailed efforts of a mother hummingbird as she works from building the nest, to egg laying, to feeding the nestlings, to fledging the young. My favorite part is watching the little hatchlings as they struggle so hard to emerge from the egg shell. Go little raisin size babies! This DVD is available for \$20 each.

Birders wishing to improve their skills at identifying North American birds will surely enjoy having some of the beautiful and meticulously filmed motion picture guides by award winning filmmakers Michael Male and Judy Firth. We have Watching Warblers: a video guide to the warblers of Eastern North America, Watching Waders: a video guide to long-legged wading birds of the United States and Canada and my favorite, Watching Warblers West: a video guide to the warblers of Western North America. This last video guide is packed full of information, sounds and maps to help you learn the warblers in parts of the west that many of us tend to visit. All of the videos include range maps and "Fun with Songs" as well as many other extra features. These DVDs are available for \$35 each.

As spring birding gets under way and migration ramps up I recommend the annotated bird list, Birds of the Tri-Cities and Vicinity. This useful list was originally compiled by R.E. Woodley, Elizabeth Moore and numerous other observers and subsequently revised by Bill and Nancy LaFramboise from updated records and input of local birders in Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla counties. The list includes 317 species and tells you what you may find and the status and observation dates of each bird. As I become a better birder, this information is fantastic. This must have list sells for \$2.00.

Save Amon Basin Information!

438 living units, two roads and two bridges are planned for the only remaining critical habitat buffer surviving in Amon Basin. Without this 125 acre buffer for Amon Creek Natural Preserve one of the most unique natural areas in our urban area will be severely impacted forever.

Your generosity completed the first two Amon Basin Community Projects. You set aside the West Fork of Amon Creek as a Natural Preserve, establishing a natural wildlife corridor sharing trails and open space with beaver, river otter, 100 bird species, jackrabbits, badger and coyotes. This will be our last chance to ensure this legacy survives. Amon Basin Central Park and Preserve is at great risk: please come to its rescue! Consider a tax deductible donation!

<http://tapteal.org/pages/centralpark.html>

In case anyone is traveling to the East Coast!

PIPING PLOVERS COLOR-MARKED IN THE

BAHAMAS – In an effort to determine where Piping Plovers wintering in The Bahamas are staging during migration, and breeding, 57 birds were uniquely color-marked this winter in The Bahamas for Environment Canada by Sidney Maddock and Peter Doherty, with help from The Bahamas National Trust. Each bird has a black flag (band with a tab sticking out slightly) on the upper left leg, nothing on the upper right, a single color band on one lower leg, and two color bands (which can be the same color on top of each other) on the other lower leg. Colors used included: red, orange, yellow, white, light green, dark green, dark blue, and black. Please report all sightings to CHERI GRATTO-TREVOR, Prairie and Northern Wildlife Research Centre, Environment Canada, 115 Perimeter Road, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X4 Canada (EM: cheri.gratto-trevor@ec.gc.ca), noting the color and location of each band on the bird, and location and behaviour of the bird (on nest or brood, foraging at migratory stop-over, etc.), as well as presumed sex of the bird, if possible. Thanks for any assistance!

Conservation Notes: Tribute to Donna Paglieri – with Rick Leaumont

Audubon has lost a dedicated supporter and a grand lady. Donna Paglieri passed away on February 21 at the age of 97.

Donna worked behind the scenes during years of many conservation efforts led by her late husband Nick. Nick was the first to sound the alarm on the Corps of Engineers proposal to dredge the Hanford Reach for barge traffic. This proposal, the Mid-Columbia Navigation Project, would have destroyed the Reach's fish and wildlife habitat. Our campaign to stop the dredging ultimately led to designation of the Hanford Reach National Monument 15 years later. While the fight was being waged to save the Hanford Reach, Donna answered the numerous phone calls taking messages with the patience and friendly voice we all got to know and appreciate. She was always there to give Nick and the rest of us the encouragement we needed to press on just a little longer.

Nick was involved with the Mid Columbia Archaeological Society for many years and as a result volunteered their home as a storage unit for collections that were created from the fieldwork. Donna good-naturedly accepted this invasion of her space, continuing answering the many phone calls from archaeologists around the state. It was joked that they should put her on the payroll as Nick's secretary.

Nick and Donna were always a personal inspiration to me and I know to others, in our personal lives as well as in our environmental projects. One little item, during World War II, Nick and Donna operated a small advertising agency in Seattle. As all small business owners know, operating your own business is never an eight hour job. Nick put in a hard day at his own business and then worked a shift at the ship yards. Donna picked up the slack at the agency, so they could do their part to win the war. Yes that truly was the greatest generation

Nick passed away unexpectedly in 1988. He was typing his newsletter for the Mid Columbia Archaeological Society when he was suddenly

taken ill and passed away within a few short hours. Donna lost the love of her life but her support for the Hanford Reach and other projects never slackened.

Her family and all who knew her will miss Donna. Donna and Nick are together again and forever.

In Memoriam

Past LCBAS president Barbara Gocus Sebree passed away February 28, 2010. She had served in this capacity from 1973 to 1975. Not too many members are such long term supporters. We are saddened to learn of this loss.

"I knew Barbara Sebree through her husband. In the past they attended meetings and Saturday bird walks on Bateman Island. They supported LCBAS with dues for many years. Barbara has been ill for several years and unable to be active in Audubon." -- Tom Clarke, past president

"Barbara's name is present on membership lists in the mid-1960s. Larry Sebree is still on our membership list. Several years ago Larry had emailed me to say that Barbara was ill. Some of us met them when they attended the 40th anniversary meeting. It was interesting to meet people who had such a commitment to LCBAS." -- Nancy LaFramboise, membership coordinator



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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**.

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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