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the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Special Interest Articles:

- "GO WILD, GO BIRDING! *Pre-order for your IMBD t-shirt*"
- "Barn Owl Boot Camp" April 23
- Ghost Bird DVDs!

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GRIZZLY WARS!

**Membership Meeting
April 26, 2011
7:00 p.m.
Kennewick First
Lutheran Church,
corner of Yelm and
Highway 395**

The April membership meeting of LCBAS will feature a presentation by David Knibb, author of Grizzly Wars: The Public Fight over the Great Bear. Mr. Knibb will give an overview of the grizzly bear recovery program under the Endangered Species Act, and then discuss whether grizzlies are still in the North Cascades, how many, where they may be, and

what is their future. The results of a grizzly bear survey conducted last summer should be out in May and could heighten public interest in these questions.

David Knibb has had three careers. First as a forester (with a minor in wildlife management) for the US Forest Service, Okanogan National Forest, at Twisp and Tonasket. Second, as a lawyer in a Seattle law firm for twenty-three years. Third, as a freelance writer, full time for the the past eighteen years. Author of an environmental book about the Alpine Lakes area in the Cascades,

and most recently, Grizzly Wars, published by Eastern Washington University Press. Copies of the book will be available for purchase at the meeting.

The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. with a brief business meeting and a bird identification segment. Following the business meeting folks in attendance enjoy a 15 minute break and munch on cookies. The speaker usually begins the presentation around 7:45 p.m.



Bateman Island Bird Walk *with Lisa Hill*

Hampered by high winds and high water on the Yakima delta, birding on Bateman Island was a bit slower than usual. There were very low numbers of waterfowl, waders and shorebirds. Besides a handful of Coots, the Grebes and Scaup were the most plentiful with four WESTERN GREBE, two

CLARK'S GREBE, two HORNED GREBE and a dozen LESSER SCAUP. A small flock of NORTHERN PINTAIL flew over and we found a pair each of AMERICAN WIGEON, DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT and BUFFLEHEAD. YELLOW-RUMPED

WARBLER outnumbered all other species with an estimated 75 birds, but RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS were a close second. Singing BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, SONG SPARROW, AMERICAN GOLDFINCH and BEWICK'S WREN met



"Black-capped chickadee"

Photo courtesy L. Umthun"

Bateman Island Walk *Continued*

the group at every turn on the trail. We were momentarily stumped when a pair of WESTERN MEADOWLARKS flew in and perched in strong back-lighting to reveal only a silhouette. The overall body shape and stumpy tail were our clues for identification. BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS are back. We hoped to see several species of swallow, but the TREE SWALLOW was our only sighting. There was no evidence of Great Horned Owls in the locust grove. Two

RED-TAILED HAWKS and a SHARP-SHINNED HAWK were the only raptors for the day. The Bateman Island walk on May 7 at 8am will have plenty more birds since spring migration will have started. We should see the first wave of warblers, orioles and grosbeaks. Meet at Wye Park above the causeway to the island, and dress for the weather..

"Go wild, Go Birding" – Pre-order your International Migratory bird day t-shirt!

The Lower Columbia Basin Audubon is offering a fundraiser, beautiful natural cotton, short sleeved t-shirts featuring this years IMBD art featuring a Great Blue Heron with a hummingbird perched on it's bill. The t-shirt proclaims "Go Wild, Go Birding!" celebrating this years theme of connecting people with nature. **Pictured on this page!** We are offering these shirts for \$16 each. **YOU MUST PRE-ORDER** and specify your size in order to get a shirt. We are only ordering for those that commit in advance to purchase one. We will place the order after the April monthly meeting and hope that the shirts arrive for the May monthly meeting! Please bring your \$16 to the April meeting and contact

Heidi Newsome regarding what size you would like. If you can't make the April monthly meeting contact Heidi at heidi_newsome@yahoo.com with your size and she can arrange for payment at a later date. We need to have at least 24 shirts to place the order! Go to www.birdday.org to view tshirt.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY –

What is International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD)? IMBD celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas - bird migration. Bird Day is celebrated in Canada, the

United States, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Why Celebrate Migratory Birds?

Public awareness and concern are crucial components of migratory bird conservation. Citizens who are enthusiastic about birds, informed about threats, and empowered to become involved in addressing those threats, can make a tremendous contribution to maintaining healthy bird populations.



McNary NWR Environmental Education Center and Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge- Second Saturday Event- International Migratory Bird Day!

When: Saturday, May 14, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

What: Across the globe, people everywhere celebrate bird migrations. We will identify, count and observe bird species throughout the morning. McNary will host bird games and activities about the amazing effort and obstacles birds experience on their migrations. Toppenish will host a hayride through the refuge. For more information about International Migratory Bird Day, visit www.birdday.org/ McNary. 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 the second stoplight after the Snake River Bridge. Turn left onto Lake Rd. Look for Education Center on the left. Toppenish National Wildlife Refuge is south of Toppenish on Highway 97. Questions call the Friends of McNary Refuge at 509-546-8352 or the Refuge Office at 546-8300.

Barn Owl Boot Camp

Where baby owls learn to be all they can be:

When: Saturday, April 23, 2011, 1 - 3 p.m.

Refreshments - Fun - Live Birds of Prey

Help Blue Mountain Wildlife prepare for Baby Season

What: Barn Owl Boot Camp Fundraiser

For more information go to bluemountainwildlife.org or call Marilyn Hayes @ 509 521 4648

Where: Richland Community Center, Howard Amon Park

RAPTORS, THRASHERS, and FLYCATCHERS, OH MY! BIRDS OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN

In a combination workshop and field trip, local birder Connie Estep will introduce you to some of the variety of avian life in the Tri Cities area. Bring a field guide or use one that is provided to note distinctive markings, calls, and mannerisms that will help you identify birds you may see in your backyard as well as during outings. Bring binoculars for the field trip. No students under 16 without an enrolled adult. Dates: Friday, May 6 from 6:30 PM to 9 PM at the Kamiakin High School Library; Saturday May 7 8:00 to 11 AM Audubon Bateman Island Bird walk. Class fee is \$35.00 and registration is through Kennewick Community Education, 509-222-5080 or www.ksd.org/communityed



Baby Barn Owls eat lots and lots of mice!

Upcoming Programs 2011

*The May 24, 2011 meeting for LCBAS will be at the Kennewick Library on Union Street at 7:00 p.m. in the large meeting room just inside the entrance. The Lutheran Church on Yelm is not available to us on that date. **Please note the change of location***

Jun. 28 Picnic in the Park

LCBAS Judges Mid-Columbia Regional Science and Engineering Fair

The 56th annual Mid-Columbia Regional Science and Engineering Fair was held this past March 10th, 11th and 12th at the Columbia Center Mall. There were several hundred students presenting science projects and posters. LCBAS participated by sponsoring and judging two special awards in the area of ecological sciences. One award was presented for \$50.00 for grades 6th through 8th and one award for \$50.00 for grades 9th through 12th. It was a challenge to narrow the field to two winners from so many well done presentations. The 6th through 8th grade winner was a student that compared nest types with success of incubation. The 9th through 12th grade winner was a student that conducted experiments on river water chemistry and its potential impacts to wildlife. The two winners were given a certificate from LCBAS honoring their contributions to ecological sciences and a 50 dollar check. The students present their projects to anyone interested to listen. Please consider walking through the mall next year and support these enthusiastic young people.

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

President Robin Priddy..... E-mail:
grania0358@aol.com

Secretary Debbie Berkowitz. E-mail:
cdandrb@charter.net

Treasurer Katie Harris.....E-mail:
treasurer@lcbas.org

Don't Miss Rio!

Rio is the story of Blu, a blue macaw who was caged as a baby in the jungles of Brazil, sold on the black market, and becomes the pet of a kind Minnesota woman named Linda (Leslie Mann).

Blu and Linda are constant companions, but when Linda receives an urgent message from a Brazilian ornithologist about the rarity of her parrot, she's faced with an important decision: Should she take Blu back to Brazil to take part in a breeding program with the last female of his species, Jewel, or should she keep Blu close to home in the chilly climes of Minnesota? A wonderful adventure – not just for kids!

LCBAS LOCAL BIRDING TRIPS

Local Field Trip: April 30

Yes, April 30 is the 5th Saturday in April, not the 4th. Hopefully, the local field trip to the Walla Walla River Delta area will be better attended on the 5th Saturday than on Easter weekend. A volunteer for trip leader would be appreciated. Places to be visited include, but are not limited to, Madame Dorian Park, Sanctuary pond, and the Delta area via scope. As with many trips, plan on an 8 AM departure from a to-be-determined rendezvous point in Pasco and bring water and a snack. Details on the meeting spot for car pooling will be posted on the [LCBAS.ORG](http://www.lcbas.org) web site and broadcast via the LCBirds2 Yahoo group.

The popularity of the Othello Crane festival on 3/26 reduced participation in the local field trip to Levey Park and Big Flat HMA to ZERO! That trip will be rescheduled for next year.

Check <http://www.lcbas.org/fieldtrips.html> for a complete listing of proposed field trips for 2011. Trips are limited to 8-10 people (2 cars), so sign up early to reserve your spot!

"Ghost Bird Movie – DVD available! And special screening report" with Barbara Clarke

On Saturday, April 2, 2011, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon hosted the Scott Crocker production of the "Ghost Bird." This movie is a documentary about the search for the thought to be extinct Ivory Billed Woodpecker. Over 50 people attended the film at the Battelle Auditorium. This documentary was very thought provoking and provided a great deal of history about how the lack of conservation has effected nature and our lives today. The music was great too.

Following the movies there were lots of conversations circling around the movie. Small change productions the producers of the movie is offering Audubon Chapters across the nation the opportunity to purchase the DVD at a reduced cost of \$19.00 that includes postage and handling. The regular price will be \$23.75 that includes postage and handling. In addition, the producer will donate \$2.00 to our Audubon Chapter for each movie ordered. **You can sign up and pay for your DVD** at the April 25 membership meeting and we will have them available at the May meeting. We will also have a **raffle for the big Ghost Bird Movie Poster.**

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE WENAS CAMPOUT, May 27-30, 2011

For over four decades Audubon families have been camping over Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Campground.

Officially named the Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary, it's located SW of Ellensburg, in an "Important Bird Area" and has been assured of protective status by WA Dept. of Natural Resources. The "primitive" campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek has exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades.

There are wonderful field trips scheduled, and there will be an old-fashioned campfire in our "approved" firepit device each evening. We do singing, story telling and recapping the sightings of the day.

Please visit Webmaster Michael Hobbs' beautiful Wenas Website to see Hazel Wolf's familiar smiling face and get lots of downloadable information about our campout.

www.wenasaudubon.org

There's a bird checklist, wildflower checklist, outline of field trips and program, directions to the campground, and lots of photos.

For people who don't "do websites," contact me and I'll send you printed information.

There will be updated detailed information posted soon – keep an eye on our website.

Bring friends, family, and join us at Wenas Memorial Day Weekend for as many days as you want to stay - May 27-30, 2011!

See you there, Helen Engle, hengle@iinet.com, 253-564-3112.

Audubon Wenas Website: **www.wenasaudubon.org**.

Book Table Talk

by Kathy Criddle

Last chance to purchase items at the book table until next September!

There will be the usual array of birding and flower guides but I will also bring out all the used and donated books for the SALE Table. Bring your spare change and dollar bills!

All proceeds help fund LCBAS projects and activities.

Port of Pasco Osprey Pointe and Rivershore Birding Walk

Saturday April 30th with Kathy Criddle

We will start at 8 AM and be done by 10:30 AM.

The path is paved and an easy walk but wear appropriate shoes and bring some water. It will probably rain but you never know, it might be hot!!!

Meet in the parking on SE Road 20E off of Dock Street.

509-947-4074

**IMPACT OF TSUNAMI ON MIDWAY NWR
BY JOHN CECIL, NAS' IBA PROGRAM,
<jcecil@AUDUBON.ORG>**

For most of March, the world has been watching the results of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami. The consequences, especially at the nuclear plant at Fukushima, are still being measured, and the devastation and human suffering has been both frightening and heartbreaking.

The impact of the tsunami was felt across the Pacific, including at the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.

Midway Atoll is comprised of three islands within an outer reef of approximately 5 miles in diameter. The three islands - Sand (1,117 acres), Eastern (366 acres), and Spit (15 acres) - were hammered by four successive waves around midnight 10-11 March. The highest wave was almost 5 feet. The tsunami completely washed over little Spit Island, covered about 60 percent of Eastern Island, and about 20 percent of Sand Island.

Surveys of the NWR reveal that over 110,000 Laysan and Black-footed Albatross chicks – an estimated 22 percent of this year's albatross production – were lost as a result of the tsunami and two severe winter storms in January and February. At least 2,000 adults were also killed. Fortunately, Wisdom, the senior-aged Laysan Albatross that had recently hatched a chick, did not have her nest overwashed. For a time, Wisdom was not located, but her survival was later confirmed as was that of her chick.

The status of the other NWR superstars, a pair of Short-tailed Albatrosses also raising a chick, is unknown. The chick was washed approximately 100 feet away from its nest, later to be physically returned. But the chick's parents have not been relocated. Since the chick is incapable of fending for itself, the Service is carefully considering whether hand-rearing this bird is appropriate. It is believed that the parents are at sea, gathering food for their chick and will be returning. You can see our January story about the Short-tailed Albatross rarity here: www.refugenet.org/birding/JanSBC11.html#TOC02 <<http://www.refugenet.org/birding/JanSBC11.html#TOC02>>

Thousands of Bonin Petrels were also lost at Midway, but the locations and exact number are not known since these petrels nest in burrows underground.

**Leslie Groves North Native
Plant Restoration Project**

The native plant restoration project at Leslie Groves North has been ongoing since 2006. If you haven't recently been to the northeast corner of Harris and Snyder, please come out and see the progress we've made from a field that was almost all cheat grass five years ago. We could use some help to continue this project. We have work parties on many weekends from March through October, raking leaves in the spring, weeding all season, gathering seeds, and planting in the late fall. Our next work parties will be on Sunday, April 17, and Saturday, April 23, from 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM. Please bring a rake, hoe, and large pail/container (all labeled with your name) for carrying leaves/weeds to the dumpster. Also, please let me know if you plan to come by the night before (so I can inform you of any changes). You'll want to wear gloves, long pants, and possibly a long sleeve shirt; and bring drinking water. I send out notices of work parties by e-mail – if you'd like to be on this e-mail list (and come whenever it works out for you), please let me know.

Contact: Debbie Berkowitz 375-4740,
cdandrb@charter.net

Refuge biologists are confident that the albatross populations can rebound from this natural event, but Barry Stieglitz, project leader for the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex said, "We remain concerned about the compounding effect of this tsunami on the existing stresses of invasive species, global climate change, incidental mortality from longline fishing, and other threats to albatross and other wildlife populations."

If there is any good news to report, it is that only four species of seabirds were nesting at the time of the tsunami: Bonin Petrel, Laysan Albatross (482,909 pair), Black-footed Albatross (28,581 pair), and the single pair of Short-tailed Albatross.

Great Backyard Bird Count Produced a “Gold Mine” of Information

Annual event collected massive amounts of data about birds



Dark-eyed Junco by GBBC participant Jerry Acton, New York

April 4, 2011—When tens of thousands of people watch birds and report what they see online, they create a snapshot showing the whereabouts of many hundreds of bird species across the United States and Canada. This annual gold mine of information about birds comes from participants in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a joint project of the [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) with Canadian partner [Bird Studies Canada](#).

This year, an estimated 60,000 bird watchers of all ages took part in the free, four-day event held February 18-21. Participants identified 596 species and filed 11.4 million individual bird observations. Their reports provide useful information to scientists tracking changes in the numbers and movements of birds from year to year, just as winter is about to melt into spring.

Two new species never reported to the count before included a Brown Shrike in McKinleyville, California, and a Common Chaffinch recorded in Placentia, Newfoundland and Labrador—both species well out of their normal ranges. In Alaska, a GBBC participant observed a Brambling visiting her feeder—the only one reported for all of North America.



Female Evening Grosbeak by GBBC participant Carrie, Maine.

GBBC participants also reported a surprising increase in the number of Evening Grosbeaks this year—the highest number of observations ever for this species during the count and an increase that isn't simply attributable to greater GBBC participation. A closer look finds this upturn especially marked in the northwestern U.S. and in Canada. This uptick is also supported by data entered so far this season from [Project FeederWatch](#), a winter-long citizen-science project from the Cornell Lab and Bird Studies Canada. FeederWatch data have shown sharp declines in Evening Grosbeaks over the past two decades for unknown reasons. Future counts may reveal if this year's increase in GBBC grosbeak reports is a one-time fluctuation or part of a long-term trend.

For the third year in a row, checklists submitted to the Great Backyard Bird Count topped 92,000. Participants set new bird checklist records in 11 states and in 7 out of 13 Canadian provinces and territories, resulting in a new overall checklist record for Canada.

To find out more about these and other trends from the 2011 count, visit www.birdcount.org and click on “Highlights of 2011 GBBC.”

The Great Backyard Bird Count is sponsored in part by [Wild Birds Unlimited](#).

The next GBBC is February 17-20, 2012.

The Curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon
Society
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Audubon Membership Information

Please Note: LCBAS Chapter Benefits (includes a year's subscription [10 issues] to *The Curlew*) this is an additional cost to membership in National Audubon Society.

\$20. for annual membership benefits 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. This payment includes membership in the local chapter (LCBAS) but does not include a subscription to *The Curlew*

Please make check payable to **National Audubon Society**. Please do not send renewals for NAS to LCBAS.

For any of the 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

Name.....

Address.....

City, State, Zip.....

Phone.....

Email.....

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