



September 2011  
 Volume XLVII  
 Number 01

# the curlew

## Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

### "Feathered Architects: The Fascinating World of Bird Nests"

**Membership Meeting  
 September 25, 2012  
 7:00 p.m.  
 Kennewick First  
 Lutheran Church,  
 corner of Yelm and  
 Highway 395**

From eagles to hummingbirds, Idie Ulsh will explore with us how and where birds make nests, and relate interesting facts about their construction. She has photographed the nests of more than 30 species and done an extensive perusal of bird nest literature. In addition

to her own photos she will include photos from many excellent local photographers and University of Puget Sound Slater Museum in this unique program.

Idie Ulsh is well known for her bird and butterfly programs. She is a WOS member, past president of Seattle Audubon, founder of the Washington Butterfly Association, Seattle Audubon Master Birder, nature photographer and an independent college counselor.

The business meeting will begin at 7:00 followed by a

short social time and refreshments. Our speaker usually begins around 7:45 p.m. Please bring a treat to help make this first meeting a fun time to visit with friends and enjoy a tasty snack.



#### Special Interest Articles:

- Come to our First Membership meeting of the year!
- SEED SALE ORDER FORM ENCLOSED !

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### Bateman Island Bird Walk *with Lisa Hill*

**September 1, 2012**

The weather was warm and sunny over the Labor Day weekend. About 15 people gathered on Saturday for the first Bateman Island walk after the summer hiatus. The water levels in the Yakima River and delta have not been low enough to expose any mud for shorebirds. No migrating waterfowl were seen, only

the common residents. Three GREAT EGRETS and one GREAT BLUE HERON waded on the far shore of the delta. By the time of the October walk, we should see an influx of shorebirds and ducks.

Swirls of chattering swallows seemed to follow us around the island: BANK, (many), BARN, CLIFF, and

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOWS. We got glimpses of a few migrating warblers: YELLOW, ORANGE-CROWNED, TOWNSEND'S and NASHVILLE. The winter-resident YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS have returned. There were several WESTERN

## Bateman Island Walk *Continued*



"Sora" Rail

Photo courtesy L. Umthun\*

### Learn Bird Sounds and Benefit Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society!

Ever wish you knew how to identify birds by ear? It's one of the most essential birding skills, but one of the hardest to learn. Some folks from Seattle's Audubon chapter set out to make learning bird sounds truly accessible to everyone.

The result is **Larkwire**: a game-based learning system that uses cognitive techniques to make it easier to learn and remember bird sounds. Combining quiz games, an extensive sound library, and tips from renowned birdsong expert Michael O'Brien, Larkwire makes the learning process not only much easier but fun.

Customizable levels from beginner to advanced invite both the backyard birder and the serious student to play and learn. The company behind Larkwire is a social venture whose mission is not only to teach birdsong; a minimum of ten percent of all proceeds go to support Conservation. Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society has joined their affiliate program; enter our code when you purchase and we'll receive 20% of the purchase price! Our code: LCBAS. For more info, visit: [www.larkwire.com](http://www.larkwire.com).

TANAGERS, one late BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK, and an uncommon RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH.

A trek through the locust grove flushed at least three GREAT HORNED OWLS. Other raptors seen were OSPREY, SWAINSON'S HAWK, COOPER'S HAWK, and AMERICAN KESTREL. The cattail marsh on the east side of

the island offered up the best birds of the day, the elusive SORA and VIRGINIA RAIL.

We could expect to see up to 60 species at the **October 6** Bateman Island walk. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. We meet in the parking lot of Wye Park by 8:00am. Binoculars are available to loan.

## *Greetings from the President!* With Robin Priddy

Autumn is rolling in and with it our 2012-2013 season. Welcome back, and we look forward to a new year of seeing, sharing and saving our birds!

This past summer brought some unusual visitors; a Northern Parula in Columbia Park attracted a lot of attention and we had visitors from all over; we also had a Black Throated Sparrow on Badger Mountain. Many thanks to Lisa Hill, Kathy Criddle, Larry Umthun, Keith Abel, Ivar Husa and many others who identified, documented, and photographed the birds so many could enjoy! As fall migrations have begun perhaps some unusual visitors will arrive on the wings of the big winds (from the w/sw) we're expecting this afternoon!

Cherie Beaudrand has planned a full year for Junior Audubon; let her know if you'd like to attend and support these events. Marilyn Hayes is sharing Audubon Adventures with many local classrooms. Ed Rykiel is

hoping to get the Urban Banding project started in Richland and Debbie Berkowitz is keeping us apprised of the many opportunities to add our voice to local planning efforts. LCBAS and other Eastern Washington Chapters provided letters of support to Washington Fish and Wildlife for their efforts with the McWhorter Ranch. The results of WDFW's efforts have secured money from the legislature and this purchase has ranked at the top of a preliminary list of purchases of critical habitat for the state of Washington. This is an unfinished story, but we are hoping for a good outcome for WDFW in this effort and will support it in any way we can.

Cathy Smith has put together a wonderful speaker program; our September Membership Meeting should be very interesting. Barb Clarke is working on trips,  
*Continued next page*

and Malheur is on our list for next spring; Rich Barchet is working on local opportunities - please take a look at these local trips. Our Columbia Basin landscape and the birds in it are second to none!

Speaking of shrub-steppe: "Saving Important Bird Areas: Washington's Sagebrush Ecosystem" and the potential for real conversations and analysis on siting wind power - both are on the State Board's initial list of potential conservation projects that align with National. We will be following up to support these efforts; it's great to see shrub-steppe in the statewide conservation dialog.

Again, welcome to the 2012-2013 season. I appreciate the privilege of serving as president.  
Robin

## Scotts Miracle Gro fined millions for adding pesticide to bird food

from "The Oregonian" Sept. 10 2012

As a [result of adding poison to bird food for more than two years, Scotts Miracle Gro was fined \\$12.5](#)

[million](#). The company pleaded guilty in February 2012 for illegally using pesticides to keep insects out of food during storage. The tainted bird food was recalled in March 2008, but by that time, Scotts had applied the pesticides Storcide II and Actellic 5E for two and half years and treated 70 million units of bird food. The Storcide labels warn it is "extremely toxic to fish and toxic to birds and other wildlife."

## Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week!

Open House at Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge

October 6

09:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Travel to Irrigon, Oregon and explore Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge along the Columbia River. Visit the Refuge and the wildlife through a variety of activities, from bird walks to refuge tours. This refuge is a must see! There will not be any event at McNary Refuge Headquarters on this day. The Refuge Week Celebration will annually be rotated among at the various Refuges of the Complex. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 509-546-8300

## "KittyCam" Reveals High Levels of Wildlife Being Killed by Outdoor Cats *American Bird Conservancy*



*Keep kitties indoors!!*

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

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### MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: American Bird Conservancy:  
Robert Johns (Washington, D.C.,  
August 6, 2012)

A new study of house cats allowed to roam outdoors finds that nearly one-third succeeded in capturing and killing animals. The cats, which wore special video cameras around their necks that recorded their outdoor activities, killed an average of 2.1 animals every week they were outside, but brought less than one of every four of their kills home. Of particular interest, bird kills constituted about 13 percent of the total wildlife kills. Based on these results, American Bird Conservancy and The Wildlife Society estimate that house cats kill far more than the previous estimate of a billion birds and other animals each year.

The study was carried out by scientists from the University of Georgia and the National

Geographic Society's Crittercam program.

Scientists attached small video cameras (dubbed Crittercams or KittyCams) to 60 outdoor house cats in the city of Athens Georgia, and recorded their outdoor activities during all four seasons. The cats were outside for an average of 5-6 hours every day.

"If we extrapolate the results of this study across the country and include feral cats, we find that cats are likely killing more than 4 billion animals per year, including at least 500 million birds. Cat predation is one of the reasons why one in three American bird species are in decline," said Dr. George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy.

The new study does not include the animals killed by feral cats that have no owners. A University of Nebraska study released last year found that feral cats were responsible for the extinction of 33 species of birds worldwide.

<http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/releases/120806.html>

## ATTENTION ALL BIRD FEEDING ENTHUSIASTS – VERY IMPORTANT DATE – OCTOBER 20!

### ELEVENTH ANNUAL BIRD SEED SALE AND INFORMATION DAY

Want good prices on the things you use to feed birds? Have questions about what or how to feed our feathered friends? Once again, in connection with Columbia Grain & Feed, we will be hosting our **Eleventh Annual** Bird Seed Sale and Information Day. Please tell your friends and mark your calendars for October 20. Place an order on the enclosed order form before October 10 and then pick it up on October 20. If you can't make it on the 20th, that's fine, just don't wait too long. Preordering insures you get the items you want at the best possible prices. This year due to the nationwide drought, prices for seed will be higher than normal – but be assured, these will be the best possible prices you will get for this winter's bird feeding season. Based on your purchase amount, Columbia Grain & Feed will make a donation to LCBAS.

Help us beat last year's record.

- LCBAS members will be present to answer questions
- Best prices possible for bird feeding supplies and answers to your bird questions
- Saturday, October 20, 9 am until 2 pm
- Columbia Grain & Feed, 2001 West Lewis, (corner of 20th and Lewis), Pasco
- It's fun, informative, and a win-win for all. Taxidermy will be on display.
- Questions? **Call Charlotte at 547-9087**

If you have any special requests for bird feeding supplies, note this on the order form. We will also have a handout on how to clean your bird feeder and keep it sanitary so the seed does not get contaminated with rain, mold, etc. and harm those we feed.

Columbia Grain and Feed has been so generous for the past 10 years. Please support their generosity. Our taxidermy collection has grown due to their commitment to our education program. The most recent pieces include an Barred owl, female Lazuli bunting, and House sparrow.

See **order form** in this issue for current pricing information.

Do you know that **anytime** of the year when you make a purchase of bird feeding supplies Columbia Grain & Feed will make a donation? Just tell the clerk you want your purchase to support LCBAS.

## LCBAS LOCAL BIRDING TRIPS

Last year many of the planned LCBAS local field trips were cancelled due to lack of participants. Was that because the locations were of little interest? If so, now is your chance to provide input as to where YOU would like to go birding. Please reply to [localfieldtrips@lcbas.org](mailto:localfieldtrips@lcbas.org) to provide your suggestions of places to visit and time of year for the visit. Also indicate whether you would lead a trip to that location.

Local field trips are usually scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the months from September through June, except when the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday conflicts with a major national holiday and then the trip is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday. Local trips can be a few hours or last all day. - Rich Barchet, LCBAS Local Trips Coordinator

Check <http://www.lcbas.org/fieldtrips.html> for information about future planned field trips. Trips are limited to 8-10 people (2 cars), so sign up early to reserve your spot!

## BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2011

In this summary of June, July and August sightings you'll find a couple of very special visitors who perked up our summer. Thanks for posting your sightings on LCBirds2, e-mailing them to me ([lanirock@charter.net](mailto:lanirock@charter.net)) or calling them in (545-4898). Comments, suggestions, and corrections are always welcome. –Lannie Smith

### North Richland and Leslie Groves Park

Jane Abel spent most of the summer in her kayak exploring the islands of the Columbia north of Richland. Her summer list contained over 40 birds, including: Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Wilson's Phalarope, Franklin's Gull, Caspian Tern, Black Tern and Forster's Tern. In the waterfowl category Jane reported Northern Shovelers, Mallards, a lone Ruddy Duck, and, on August 9, Hooded Mergansers were present.

Many of us who live or bird in Richland enjoyed the antics of two young, very vocal Cooper's Hawks in July and August. James Cleaver saw evidence of their hunting attempts (feather piles and a dead bird) under their favorite tree near his work site. Mary Lilga reported one of the Cooper's dropped down low from its perch in her maple tree and flew to the neighbors' yard, then spent about 5-10 minutes walking around the roof of their car in the driveway. Lisa Hill reported that during Art in the Park at Howard Amon Park there were two Cooper's Hawks squawking and flying around in the huge trees. They weren't the least concerned with the hundreds of people roaming the park beneath them.

### West Richland and Horn Rapids Area

Cherie Baudrand spent two days in June talking to 150 Boy Scouts about bluebirds, birds, and Audubon at Horn Rapids Park Campground. They came in groups of 20 to the LCBAS station. They built 100 birdhouses that will go to Lannie and

Rocky for the bluebird trails in the Blue Mountains near Dayton. Cheri saw her first ever Lark Sparrow between groups.

### Yakima Delta, Bateman Island and Columbia Park

Major excitement ensued when a West-side visitor reported a male Northern Parula in Columbia Park near the Kiwanis Camp on June 17<sup>th</sup>! Several local birders observed a female as well. Sightings continued through the end of June. Their behavior suggested the possibility of nesting! (They are considered an accidental migrant) On July 23<sup>rd</sup> there was a male Northern Parula reported in Chamna Natural Preserve. Was it possibly the one from Columbia Park? The only other recorded Tri Cities sighting of the Northern Parula was in the winter of 1975. It stayed 24 days before moving on.

### W.E. Johnson Park, South Richland and Badger Mountain

Kathy Criddle was the first to spot two pairs of Black-throated Sparrows who nested on the south-east side of Badger Mountain. (These are listed as accidental summer visitors, so this was a treat that many of us enjoyed checking on). Later in the summer her husband spotted a noisy gathering of about 8 Rock Wrens on the rocks at the edge of the Badger Mountain parking lot. They appeared to be juveniles moving through the area. A male Rufous Hummingbird tried out the Criddle's flowers on June 28<sup>th</sup> on its way south.

Lisa Hill posted a list of 21 birds she identified by song in W.E. Johnson Park in early June including: Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, Yellow Warbler, Common Nighthawk, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Gray Catbird, Lazuli Bunting, and Bewick's Wren.

Lisa and Larry also had male Rufous Hummingbirds and a few Black-capped Chickadees, Orange-crowned Warblers and Black-chinned Hummingbirds in their yard. In mid-July Common Nighthawks began circling over W. E. Johnson Park with up to 20 birds getting into the action on the 19<sup>th</sup>. In August their yard filled up with Hummingbirds: 6 Black-chinned, 2 Rufous and an Anna's. In late August a Calliope Hummingbird joined the others. In the park they were seeing Townsend, Orange-crowned, Nashville and Yellow Warblers, Western

Tanagers, Warbling Vireos and an Olive-sided Flycatcher.

#### Kennewick

Patti Ritchie enjoyed watching three American Kestrels hunting in the vicinity of Huntington and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenues in late June. (They must have read the sign and decided to check it out). They were in the area for several days.

Ron and Carole Louderback had a Western Screech Owl hunting in the field in back of their yard. Tony and Kaye Greager saw at least four Short-eared Owls south of Kennewick in mid July. One pair flew in circles around their stopped car!

#### Finley Area

Kris Keating keeps us apprised of the Finley area from her home SE of Finley. Her summer species count was over 40 birds! Her cherry trees and feeders attracted many birds, including Bullock's Orioles, Cedar Waxwings, American Robins and a Lazuli Bunting.

#### McNary NWR and West Walla Walla County

Heidi Newsome, Keith Abel, Rich Barchett, and Ed Rykiel reported on the Walla Walla River Delta in early July: Franklin's, California and Ring-billed Gulls, Caspian Tern and some banded juvenile terns, American White Pelican, Gadwall, and Osprey. On White-tail Bay, McNary Refuge Wallula Unit, they added American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer, and a lone coyote!

#### North Franklin and Pasco Area

In early June, Charlotte Reep and her husband spotted a Great Egret in Chiawana Park and heard an American Bittern in the reeds near the boat basin. Ivar Husa photographed a pair of Great-Horned Owlets in Hood Park. Kevin Black's night-time birding turned up a Short-eared Owl on a guard rail in Devil's Canyon near Windust. On July 29<sup>th</sup> at County Line Ponds he spotted 2 Wilson's Phalaropes, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Sandpipers and Solitary Sandpipers. At Mile Post 300 he added Western Sandpiper, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts and Long-billed Dowitchers. In early August at the Pasco-Kahlotus Rock pit ponds Kevin spotted Wilson's Phalarope and Solitary Sandpiper. In mid August Kevin birded

the Pasco-Kahlotus Rock pit Ponds again: Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sparrow, Greater Yellowlegs, Western Sandpiper, 2 Least Sandpipers, and one Semipalmated Sandpiper. Ron and Carole Louderback photographed a Peregrine Falcon on Blanton Road. Was it possibly the same bird they photographed last summer on Overturf Road. about 5 miles east?

### The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completes 12 th season of MAPS station operation with help from LCBAS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex operated a MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) station at the Wallula Unit of the McNary National Wildlife Refuge. The Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program was created by The Institute for Bird Populations in 1989 to assess and monitor the vital rates and population dynamics of over 150 species of North American landbirds in order to provide critical conservation and management information on their populations.

This season a total **322 birds** were captured at the MAPS station. This included 242 new bands, 63 recaptures and 17 unbanded birds (primarily because they were not songbirds, e.g. California quail). Our station operated for 7 sessions between mid-June and early August. Several skilled volunteers from LCBAS were critical in the operation and data collection from this MAPS station. This year Chad Merkely, Keith Abel, Rich Barchett and Jordeen Lucas all were present for at least 6 of the 7 sessions! The USFWS is grateful for the assistance of LCBAS, without the help the MAPS station could not be operated and we would not be contributing to the larger effort of bird conservation throughout North America. **Way to go LCBAS!** More information at <http://www.birdpop.org/>

# Register Now for Fall 2012 ACOW

Register now for the 2012 annual meeting of Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), hosted by Kitsap Audubon Society. This one-day meeting will be held on Saturday, October 6th, at the new Poulsbo City Hall. The keynote speaker is **David Yarnold**, President and CEO of National Audubon Society. The new Pacific Flyway director, **Michael Sutton**, will also speak.

Highlights of the day include a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new and final Puget Loop map of the Great Washington Birding Trail, with Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson and Birding Trail Director Christi Norman.

The annual ACOW brings together leaders from the 26 Washington State Audubon chapters and Audubon Washington staff for workshops and presentations on a host of topics of interest to Audubon members throughout the state.

Additional events are planned for those arriving on Friday or staying through Sunday, including field trips to local birding hotspots, an evening presentation on the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project, and a meeting of conservation chairs to discuss shared priorities for the upcoming legislative session.

A block of rooms with special rates from \$79-98 per night is being held at the Poulsbo Inn & Suites, conveniently located right on State Hwy 305 as you enter Poulsbo. Hotel reservations may be made by calling 360-779-3921 or email [manager@poulsboinn.com](mailto:manager@poulsboinn.com). Audubon ACOW is the group name.

To [register online](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/263251) for the ACOW meeting, go to <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/263251> - password is audubon. Registration cost is \$30 and includes morning and afternoon snacks, plus a boxed lunch. To register by check, please contact Joseph Manson at (206) 652-2444 x100 or [jmanson@audubon.org](mailto:jmanson@audubon.org).

## New Bird Species Discovered in Peru



*From Cornell Lab of Ornithology: For release: August 6, 2012*

A colorful, fruit-eating bird with a black mask, pale belly, and scarlet breast—never before described by science—has been discovered and named by Cornell University graduates following an expedition to the remote Peruvian Andes. The Sira Barbet (*Capito fitzpatricki*) is described in a paper published in the July 2012 issue of *The Auk*, the official publication of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The new species was discovered during a 2008 expedition led by Michael G. Harvey, Glenn Seeholzer, and Ben Winger, young ornithologists who had recently graduated from Cornell at the time. They were accompanied by co-author Daniel Cáceres, a graduate of the Universidad Nacional de San Agustín in Arequipa, Peru, and local Ashéninka guides.

The team discovered the barbet on a ridge of montane cloud forest in the Cerros del Sira range in the eastern Andes. Steep ridges and deep river gorges in the Andes produce many isolated habitats and microclimates that give rise to uniquely evolved species.

Mike Harvey was first to see the new species on October 8, 2008: "It was sitting about 60 feet up on a bare branch," says Harvey. "At first we thought it was the Scarlet-banded Barbet (*Capito wallacei*), but the more we looked at it, the more we saw obvious differences in its plumage." Though clearly a sister species of the Scarlet-banded Barbet, the Sira Barbet is readily distinguished by differences in color on the bird's flanks, lower back, and thighs and a wider, darker scarlet breast band. By comparing mitochondrial DNA sequences of the new barbet to DNA sequences of its close relatives in the genus *Capito*, the team secured genetic evidence that this is indeed a new species in the barbet family (*Capitonidae*). The genetic work was done by co-author Jason Weckstein at The Field Museum in Chicago. The team chose the scientific name of the new species, *Capito fitzpatricki*, in honor of Cornell Lab of Ornithology executive director Dr. John W. Fitzpatrick, who discovered and named 7 new bird species in Peru during the 1970s and '80s.

**The Curlew**

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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:*

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