



December 2014
Volume L
Number 4

the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Christmas Bird Count

Special Interest Articles:

- Christmas Bird Count
- Changes to Curlew Mailing

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**Saturday, January 3rd
7:30 am (or earlier)
Throughout the Tri-cities**



*Rough-legged Hawk
Photo credit: Ivar Husa*

This year's count will be held Saturday, January 3rd.

- **Keith and Jane Abel (509-375-1343)** will lead the Richland team.
- **Kevin Black (360-560-8844)** will assist **Barb and Tom Clarke (509-554-7936)** with the Pasco team.
- **Richard Barchet (509-430-0053)** will lead the Kennewick team.
- For more information on the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count, please call **Dana Ward, Christmas Bird Count Coordinator at (509-545-0627)**

More information on the Christmas Bird Count, including the annual Christmas Potluck and count tally, can be found on Page 3 of this newsletter.

Note that there is no membership meeting in December

The Roots of Music: Exploring Earth's Soundscapes

Join the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society for an intriguing program at the **Kennewick Library on 1620 S Union Street, Kennewick**
Thursday, January 15 at 7:00pm.

George Halekas explores musical heritage, recordings of natural sounds, ancient sounds, and the compositions of contemporary composers who use nature's sounds in their music. He answers these questions: How has technology affected our appreciation of music? How does the environment shape sound and music? Why is Earth considered a 'sonic jewel'? Do bird song and natural soundscapes have musical qualities? Can we interact with animals musically? For more information about the program and George Halekas see: <http://www.humanities.org/programs/speakers/2015-16-speakers/george-halekas>



Bateman Island Bird Walk: December 6, 2014

Participants of the December Bateman Island bird walk enjoyed some sunny weather between an early morning rainstorm and some afternoon winds. We found 54 species which is typical for a December bird walk near the Yakima delta. We had a good variety of waterfowl species among thousands of CANADA GEESE and CACKLING GEESE. An immature BALD EAGLE spooked the resting geese and they made quite a racket when they lifted off the mud bar.

Most of the ducks were MALLARDS, but we also found NORTHERN PINTAIL, NORTHERN SHOVELER,

BUFFLEHEAD, and a few GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, COMMON GOLDENEYE, CANVASBACK and RUDDY DUCK. About 10 newcomers to the walk were thrilled to get good looks of several birds near the causeway: BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, GREAT EGRET, GREAT BLUE HERON, BELTED KINGFISHER, HOODED MERGANSER, and COMMON MERGANSER.

We didn't find a Great Horned Owl in the locust grove this time, but did get some nice views of a small flock of GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS flitting around making their high-pitched cheeps. These little birds seem

never to sit still! The east side of the island is usually quiet, but those who had the time to make the full loop around the island were treated to GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW, MARSH WREN, and a beautiful slate-colored FOX SPARROW that posed quietly at eye level allowing some leisurely study. A large flock of 50+ AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were eating knapweed seeds with a few WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS mixed in.

The next Bateman Island bird walk is scheduled for January 10, the **second** Saturday of the month. We meet in the parking lot of Wye Park. Dress warmly and bring binoculars! The Christmas Bird Count will be held on the first Saturday, January 3.

President's Message with Lori Nelson

Congratulations LCBAS on a fantastic 2014! We are fortunate to belong to an active chapter that is dedicated to bird conservation, education, and observation.

Our conservation efforts in 2014 were incredible. We started off the year with a successful Christmas Bird Count (my first!). We've continued long-standing conservation projects, including habitat restoration and bird-banding in local parks. Through donations, letter-writing, and lobbying we worked hard to preserve nearby natural areas for our children and grandchildren. These efforts make the Tri-Cities a better place for birds and bird-watchers.

The LCBAS/Yakima Valley Audubon Society Sagebrush Songbird Survey was certainly a high point in our conservation efforts this year. Forty volunteers jumped in to help – more than double what we expected – resulting in a fantastic field season. This project will serve as a model for four other eastern Washington chapters who will start their own surveys in 2015.

Congratulations go out to the survey committee: Kathy Criddle, Dana Ward, Robin Priddy, Ed Rykiel, Ivar Husa, and especially the chair, Kevin Black. Thanks also to Christi Norman from Audubon Washington and to our collaborators at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, particularly Matt Vander Haegen. We look forward to making our 2015 Sagebrush Songbird Survey season even better.

Our education teams have worked hard in 2014, spreading the word about bird behavior, ecology, and conservation. We sent Audubon Adventures education kits to nearly 20 local classrooms. Our volunteers have visited nearly 20 school groups and we have an active Junior Audubon group. Our First Saturday bird walks on Bateman Island, Christmas Bird Count, bird-banding demonstrations, and field trips have involved hundreds of people in bird identification and citizen science. Many thanks to the people involved in our education efforts, including Cherie Beaudrand, Barb Clarke, Tom Clarke, Lisa Hill, Ed Rykiel, and Eileen Kennedy.

Our chapter is such a wonderful group because of the commitment from all of us— both in front of and behind the scenes. I am sure that I've missed saying "thank you" to many people. The unsung volunteers who make sure we have cookies and tea at meetings. The folks who keep track of bird sightings in the area. The people who make sure the Curlew hits your mailbox or inbox every month. Thank you, every one.

Of course there is always more that could be done. The upcoming year is our 50th anniversary year, an especially exciting time to be involved in LCBAS. Look for more events, more fundraising opportunities, and more chances for you to be involved in the great work we do.

To all of you, I send the warmest holiday greetings and wish you a healthy and prosperous 2015.

-Lori

Annual Christmas Bird Count January 3, 2015

Anyone that enjoys bird watching can help.

The Tri-Cities count starts in three locations at 7:30am, Saturday, January 3th. Some hardy participants may choose to search for owls after the official start time of 12:00am. The three start locations where volunteers can join the count are:

Richland – The “Fingernail” in Howard Amon Park
Kennewick – Audubon Nature Trail in Columbia Park
Pasco – Chiawana Park Boat Ramp, end of Rd 88
Owling – Time and location to meet to be determined. Please contact Kevin Black at (360-560-8844) if interested.

From these locations we split into smaller teams led by more experienced birders. Some birding skills are helpful but not required. If you cannot make the 7:30am start please coordinate with your count leader prior to Saturday, January 3rd to arrange an appropriate time and location. The team leaders also need to know what you have counted (species and number of species) before the potluck at 6:30pm.

The Tri-Cities count is also one of the best supported counts in the state, and regularly has the highest number of species seen inland. All of this is due to strong community support. Our goal is to count as many birds within the circle during the day (24hr count period). To do this, we need as many teams as possible. If individuals can only participate for part of the day, it will still help our effort. There can be a reasonable amount of walking involved, so keep this in mind when making plans. But much counting will be done from car windows for those that prefer that form of participation. Birds seen at **bird feeders within the count circle are extremely important to the count**. So if you have a feeder please provide those numbers.

At the end of the count day, the LCBAS has their annual Christmas Potluck. The dinner is held at the

Columbia Grange #938 which is located at 6300 Court Street in Pasco. Please bring a main dish and dessert to share. Some standard drinks will be provided such as coffee and bottled water. You will need to provide your own tableware. Start assembling at 5:30pm and we will eat at approximately 6:00pm. The day’s bird count will be presented after we eat. Also the Grange will be open from 10:00am to closing for those that want to stop by for warm drinks and good conversation.

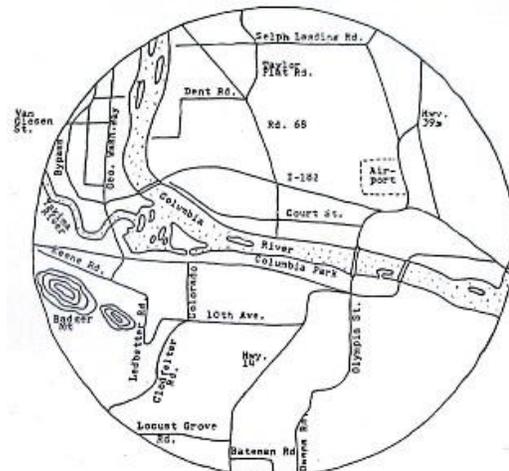
You do not need to be a member of the Audubon Society to help and there is **no fee**. We do need all participants to **sign a waiver** which is now standard procedure for all LCBAS field activities. The information is also necessary for count data management.

The information that all counts generate is reviewed and placed in a database that is available to everyone on the internet. The database can be accessed through www.birdsource.org then select the Christmas Bird Count icon. The Tri-Cities count code is WATC.

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- **Kevin Black (360-560-8844) will be assisted by Barb and Tom Clarke (509-554-7936) with the Pasco team.**
- **Richard Barchet (509-430-0053) will lead the Kennewick team.**
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For more information on the Tri-Cities Christmas Bird Count, please call Dana Ward, Christmas Bird Count Coordinator at (509-545-0627)

LCBAS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT AREA



Applebee's Fundraising Breakfast

LCBAS will be having a fundraising Breakfast at Applebee's on Rd 68 in Pasco on Saturday, January 31, 2015 from 8:00-10:00am. For a \$10.00 ticket you get sausage, eggs, beverage, and all the pancakes you can eat. We will have tickets available at our Nov. 25 meeting and at the Christmas Bird Count potluck. These tickets would make good "stocking stuffers" as gifts. For every \$10 ticket sold, we keep \$5.00. This money will support our environmental and education programs.

50th Anniversary Year 2015 - Ideas Wanted

The Board has set up a Special Committee to make plans for celebrating the LCBAS's 50th anniversary year. We welcome all our members to contribute ideas for good ways to celebrate and to let the community know about LCBAS, its accomplishments and mission. You can even join the Special Committee! Help us put together a really good plan. Please contact Ed Rykiel, Kathy Criddle, Madeleine Brown or Ivar Husa with your suggestions.

The Special Committee also welcomes any information you can contribute about the history of the club. The TriCity Bird Club was organized in 1965 and applied for National Audubon Society chapter status that same year. The club became an official chapter in 1967 named the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society.

Upcoming events:

January 3rd: Christmas Bird Count
 January 5th: Board meeting
 January 10th: Bird Walk
 January 15th: The Roots of Music: Exploring Earth's Soundscapes
 January 26th: Membership meeting

Don't forget to check our website www.lcbas.org for up to date information. And remember we have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lcbas> - you do not have to have a Facebook account to read our page, just put in the address above!

Note that prospective members get three complimentary issues of the Curlew. In order to receive more issue, you must become an LCBAS member.

Officers

President – Lori Nelson (president@lcbas.org)
 Vice President – Vacant
 Treasurer – Madeleine Brown (treasurer@lcbas.org)
 Secretary - Debbie Berkowitz (secretary@lcbas.org)

Standing Committees

Birding Events - Barb Clarke (birdingevents@lcbas.org)
 Communications - Joe Lelli (Curlew) (curlew@lcbas.org)
 Conservation – Marcie Daines (conservation@lcbas.org)
 Education - Cherie Baudrand (education@lcbas.org)
 Finance –
 Fundraising – Charlotte Reep
 Membership – Kevin Black, Rich Barchet (membership@lcbas.org)
 Program – Ivar Husa (programs@lcbas.org)

Special Committees

Audubon Adventures - Eileen Kennedy
 Book Sales - Kathy Criddle
 Christmas Bird Count - Dana Ward (christmasbirdcount@lcbas.org)
 Friends of McNary Liaison - Greg Greger
 Hospitality – Carolyn Jones
 Nature Trail -
 Publicity –Charlotte Reep
 Website - Ed Rykiel (webmaster@lcbas.org)

IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER INFO

CURLEW ADDRESS LABEL: The postal address label on your CURLEW newsletter shows the year/month your subscription expires. Please renew your subscription on or before the month your subscription expires to continue to receive the Curlew without interruption. Renewing online is easy, quick and safe: <http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html>

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IF YOU RECEIVE THE CURLEW BY MAIL: If your mailing address has changed or is going to change, please notify Rich Barchet at subscriptions@lcbas.org with any address changes. Or mail changes to PO Box 1900, Richland, WA 99352, Attention: Rich Barchet, LCBAS Subscriptions Administrator.

Bird Sightings for November 2014

By Lannie Smith

If you think you have only “ordinary” birds to report, please send them in any way! It’s nice to know what birds are visiting yards across the Lower Columbia. It would be great to hear more from Kennewick residents.

Bob Woodley thought readers would want to know what they might see in the Spokane area (it being nearby and all), and asked me to report the 30 Tundra Swans he saw in Reardan, the 3 Northern Shrikes and flock of American Tree Swallows he saw near Mondovi, and the Wild Turkeys he saw at Newman and Liberty Lakes. I, however, told him I couldn’t report on birds that weren’t in the LCBAS area.

North Richland and Richland Columbia River Parks

James Cleaver reported a first winter Lesser Black-backed Gull on the North end of Nelson Island on the 2nd and about 10 Bonaparte's Gulls on the river out from the main dock at Howard Amon Park. Mary Lilga reported their first-of-the-season male Varied Thrush in their back yard on the 2nd. On the 5th Bob and Pat Woodley also had 1 or 2 Varied Thrush. Ed Rykiel and Lori Nelson banded a White-throated Sparrow in Leslie Groves Park on the 5th. On the 21st the Woodley’s had 5 American Goldfinch and 2 Pine Siskin on their nyjer seed feeder. Seen throughout the month in the yard of Keith and Jane Abel: Townsend's Solitaire, Varied Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Purple Finch, Pine Grosbeak (these last two are both rare winter sightings), Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Goldfinch and Oregon Junco. In Leslie Groves Park they reported: Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese mixed with flocks of Canada Geese, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common and Barrow's Goldeneye, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon and Eurasian Wigeon, Hooded Merganser, Lesser Scaup, Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, Bald Eagle, Merlin, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Dunlin (uncommon, winter), Greater Yellowlegs (rare, winter), Killdeer, Least Sandpiper (rare, winter), Bonaparte's Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Hermit Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler and Pine Siskin.

West Richland, Horn Rapids Area and Rattlesnake Mountain

On 11/2 Ivar photographed a Northern Shrike at the

Barker Ranch. Mark Gerber reported 2 Anna's Hummingbirds in his back yard in West Richland on the 7th.

Rancho Reata and Amon Creek Natural Preserve

Neil and Sharon Ofsthun’s yard list included Ring-necked Pheasant, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Western Screech-Owl, Northern Flicker, Pacific Wren (formerly known as Winter Wren), Varied Thrush, Cedar Waxwing and Spotted Towhee.

Yakima Delta, Bateman Island and Columbia Park

Ivar Husa posted photos from Bateman Island on the 1st: Common Loon, Horned and Red-necked Grebe, Great Horned Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Golden-crowned Kinglet. The next day Bob and Pat saw 4 Great Egret, 6 Western Grebe, 1 or 2 Horned Grebe, 1 Belted Kingfisher and 1 very late Osprey.

Finley Area

A drive around the highlands above Finley produced 10 Savannah Sparrows (rare winter sighting), and five Rough-legged Hawks on the 13th for Kevin Black.

Dennis Rockwell noted lots of birds at his feeders on the last day of the month, among them 2 Pine Siskin and a few Slate-colored Dark-eyed Junco.

McNary National Wildlife Refuge and Walla Walla River Delta

Ivar reported from the McNary Environmental Education Center on the 2nd with photos of Snow Goose, Tundra Swan, Gadwall, Greater Scaup, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, Bonaparte's Gull, Marsh Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, Spotted Towhee and White-crowned Sparrow. Laurie Ness and a friend visited the MNWR headquarters and nearby areas on the 7th. They saw 4 Tundra Swans, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Hooded Merganser, Lincoln's Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird. (These last two are both rare winter sightings) But the highlight of their day occurred while driving east on Humorist Road and getting a look at about 800 Snow Geese floating quietly in the water. Their brightness was absolutely dazzling! There were some darker Snow Geese in the group along with a small number of Cackling Geese too.

Pasco and Franklin County

On the 8th Laurie Ness spotted 11 American Pipits off the Pasco-Kahlotus Highway on McClemmy Road.

Ivar shared photos from Sacajawea Park on the 11th:

Tundra Swan, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret, Red-tailed Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Spotted Towhee and Dark-eyed Junco. On the 13th Kevin was able to find a Pacific Loon (rare, winter) at Sacajawea Park as well as Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Common Goldeneye, Great Egret, some Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Orange-crowned Warbler. Later in the month he roamed all over Franklin County with the following results: Pine Siskin at Connell; at Lower Monumental Dam—Eared and Western Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, California and Ring-billed Gull; at Windust Park—Golden Eagle (flying over Devil's Canyon), Sharp-shinned Hawk, Downy Woodpecker and Hermit Thrush; at Kahlotus--Cooper's Hawk and Brewer's Blackbird; along Highway 261--Rough-legged Hawk and Northern Shrike; at Lyon's Ferry—Wild Turkey, Western and Pied-billed Grebe, Herring Gull, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and 2 female Pine Grosbeaks (rare winter sighting); and, along Nunamaker Road—Short-eared Owl. On Thanksgiving, Bob Derting submitted a species list from the Pasco Animal Shelter: Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Pied-billed Grebe, 8 Black-crowned Herons, American Kestrel, Ring-billed Gull, European Starling and Song Sparrow. Late in the month Charlotte Reep reported a Spotted Towhee and a Red-breasted Nuthatch at her feeder.

Lastly, here is an awesome sighting from Dana Ward in his own words. "On November 11th I saw an Osprey, in high winds, circle around a large Cottonwood tree next to the Columbia River near Road 100 and Court in Pasco. It landed for a short time in the tree then leaped into the air, assumed a diving form, plunged into the river and went completely under. One, two, three, four seconds passed.

Then the water erupted with the Osprey. It was carrying a rather large fish. The Osprey's powerful wings freed it from the water. The bird circled several times and flew up stream and out of sight."

Clarifications and corrections are always appreciated.

Please contribute *your* sightings to our newsletter! Call them in to 545-4898, post them online at LCBirds2, or email to lanirock@charter.net.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip 2015

By Kathy Criddle

Join LCBAS on a field trip to the spectacular Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in May 2015. Malheur NWR is located 30 miles south of Burns, Oregon in the high desert. Wetlands, marshes and the Malheur Lake are surrounded by sagebrush and high basalt cliffs making for a vast area of habitat diversity. Bird watching and wildlife viewing is supreme during the spring migration season, providing memorable experiences for all. Accommodations are near the Refuge Headquarters in the large Field Station dorm where you will be assigned to a comfortable bed in either the women's side or the men's side. LCBAS will provide all meals which will be served in the large kitchen/ dining area. Dates for the field trip are Mother's Day weekend, May 8 (Fri), 9 (Sat), 10 (Sun), & 11 (Mon). Cost is \$105 per person for the 8th thru the 10th (the 11th, for those who choose to stay, costs an additional \$30) which includes a bed in the field station and all meals. Space is limited to 36 people, half men and half women. Reserve your space at the next LCBAS membership meeting on January 26th or place your reservation by email to KCriddlebirds@yahoo.com.



Conservation Report for December 2014

By Marcie Daines

Western Environmental Law Center Case Highlights Across the West:

The Klamath National Forest holds a 751 mile watershed along the Salmon River in the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion of southern Oregon/Northern California. The fire there in 2013 burned 14,754 acres of forest. The U.S. Forest Service planned to log hundreds of these acres that have been set aside for salmon spawning and old-growth habitat reserves for the threatened northern spotted owls. WELC planned to litigate to protect the wildlife habitat. The USFS agreed to remove from the sale the old-growth trees and the spotted owl habitat if the lawsuit was dropped. Victory—maybe for the white headed woodpecker too!

Another victory occurred in the Santa Fe National Forest which includes four Wilderness Areas and three rivers which are home to the rare Mexican spotted owl, the southwestern willow flycatcher, Jemez Mountains salamander, Rio Grande cutthroat trout, and the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse. Decades of intense ORV traffic had caused damage to the wildlife habitat, hillside stabilization, stream banks and water quality. After 59 public hearings, workshops and field trips with 3,000 public comments, the routes and areas were reduced from 7,832 to 2,463 miles and 443,848 to 41 acres. The USFS was sued by the New Mexico Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance for doing so. The WELC supported the USFS' decision and in July 2014, the federal court ruled against the NMOFVA. Another Victory!

Three years ago, Kelsey Juliana, 15 years old, concerned about the atmosphere and natural resources filed a lawsuit against the state of Oregon claiming the state was not protecting them as is required under the public trust doctrine. The case was dismissed without a hearing. WELC became part of her legal team and the Oregon Court of Appeals reversed the dismissal and found that the courts, not the politicians, should decide if the government is obligated to protect the atmosphere. Watch Kelsey on the Bill Moyers news show explain how she got involved in litigation to protect our climate. vimeo.com/106561145.

Western Environmental Law Center publication fall 2014

Olympic BirdFest 2015

Dates: April 10-12, 2015

Location: Sequim, WA

Description: The festival with the most spectacular setting! Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker is Lynsy Smithson Stanley: “Climate change as a ‘Bird Issue’.” Join the Birdfest Pre-trip on April 8-9, 2015, two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders.

Immediately following BirdFest, join us for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 12-14, 2015. Cruise registration: separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Birdfest website address:

www.olympicbirdfest.org

E-mail address: info@olympicbirdfest.org

Contact name: Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, 360-681-4076

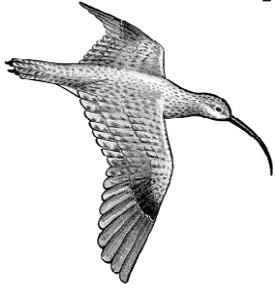
CHANGE TO CURLEW MAILING

The bulk mailing permit used by the LCBAS to mail The Curlew to subscribers expires at the end of December and will not be renewed. This means we'll be mailing issues at standard postal rates beginning in January 2015. To reduce the cost of providing The Curlew to our subscribers please consider receiving The Curlew by email instead of by US mail. By doing so, you will see all of the gorgeous pictures in the newsletter in living color and the eCurlew will arrive even earlier in the month. If you now receive The Curlew by US mail, either as a subscriber or as complimentary issues, and want to change to the eCurlew, please send an email to Subscriptions@LCBAS.org with your request.

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 member ship 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. _____

- LCBAS has an e-alert list (for last minute activity changes, important issues, volunteer opportunities). If you want to opt out, check here. If you opt out, you will not receive e-alert emails (Your e-mail address will not be shared in any case).

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 included 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

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