



October 2015
 Volume LI
 Number 2

the curlew

Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Celebrating our 50th Anniversary

LOOK UP! Birds and other natural wonders just outside your window

Special Interest Articles:

- Olympic BirdFest
- Book Table Sale!

Individual Highlights:

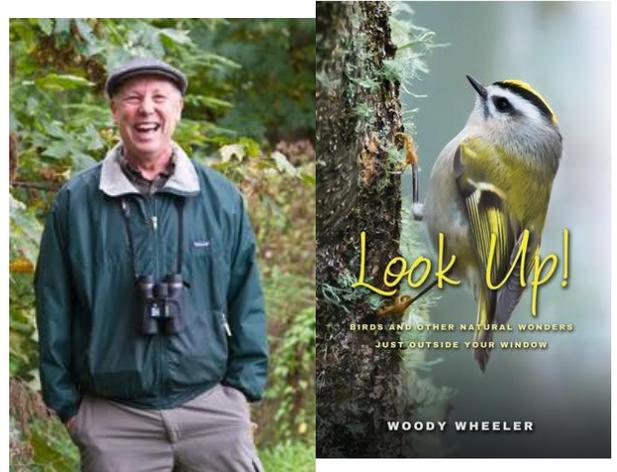
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**Tuesday, October 27, 7 pm
 First Lutheran Church
 Yelm and 395, Kennewick**

This month's presentation will feature Woody Wheeler, author, nature educator and tour guide. You don't have to travel around the world or spend a ton of money to enjoy the wonders of nature. In his well-researched book *Look Up!*, Woody's nature essays will inspire readers to experience the outdoors in an affordable, accessible, and joyful way. During this uplifting presentation Woody will share stories from his essays that encourage backyard and local bird watching, native plant landscaping and restoration, and conservation. He will explore how we can derive psychological benefits from these activities - how nature can help us live happier, more fulfilled and rewarding lives.

Woody Wheeler is a nature educator and tour guide for Conservation Catalyst, a business

he started to inspire people to appreciate birds and natural history. He also guides for Naturalist Journeys, an international birding and natural history tour company. Previously, Wheeler worked for environmental nonprofits including The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society and Seattle Parks Foundation. He helped these groups protect natural areas and establish nature centers, park lands and bicycle/pedestrian trails.



Bateman Island Bird Walk: October 10, 2015

Another fabulous October morning set the scene for the Bateman Island bird walk – calm, with blue skies, although within eight hours, winds rose to 30mph. The Bateman walk was the first event of a day of activities at the Reach museum in celebration of LCBAS's 50th anniversary. Many new birders were in awe of the amazing views of a GREAT EGRET and GREAT BLUE HERON perched together in a tree along the causeway. The wingspan of the egret was impressive as it stretched its wings in the bright sun. A juvenile BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON was

perched nearby.

Although there weren't large numbers of birds, we did find 56 species with the help of LCBAS member Jane A. who paddled the waters of the delta in a kayak. She confirmed the presence of a RED PHALAROPE which we could see from the west beach with a scope. The phalarope is quite rare in this area and was an excellent find. There were at least 100+ LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS working the mud bars along with AMERICAN AVOCETS,

WILSON'S SNIPE, DUNLIN and LEAST SANDPIPER. The resident PEREGRINE FALCON surveyed its domain from a low perch on driftwood in the mud. The other avian life nearby pretended to ignore the falcon

An ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER was sighted along with RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, SPOTTED TOWHEE, and lots of YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS. The next Bateman Island bird walk is Saturday, Nov 7. Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park at 8am.

President's Message with Lori Nelson

LCBAS held its final 50th anniversary celebration at the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center last Saturday, October 10. I hope that you had a chance to join us for at least part of the day!

We had a great day, starting with a Bateman Island bird walk that drew nearly 40 people. At the Reach, our guests drew pictures of birds, made natural history journals, listened to the Three Rivers Dulcimer Society, enjoyed Lisa Hill's painting, and watched a video from Katharine Hayhoe about how to engage skeptical audiences in discussions of climate change. The day was capped off with a wonderful talk by Jack Nisbet, who gave us insight into the life of Dr. C. B. R. Kennerly, a physician and ornithologist in 19th century Washington state.

So much has happened to the world and our corner of Washington since 1965. I'm a

newcomer to the area – I moved here in 2012 – but I love hearing stories about what the Tri-Cities and LCBAS used to be like. I'm looking forward to talking to original members of our chapter and hope that over the next few months, we can create opportunities for them to share their stories.

I enjoy living in the present, of course, but I also think that our collective past reveals a lot about who we are as a community. From what I've learned over the past year or so as your President, the history of LCBAS reveals a strong commitment to birds and their habitats, decisive action to safeguard our natural heritage, and exuberant enjoyment of the natural world.

I'm looking forward to our next 50 years – I can't wait to see what's next!

Best,
Lori

Olympic BirdFest 2016

Sequim, Washington, April 15-17, 2016

Grab your binoculars and join the 12th annual Olympic BirdFest 2016 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 15-17, 2016.

The stage is set...quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, Barred and Pygmy owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours; and a gala banquet. Our featured speaker this year is noted artist Tony Angell, "Revealing the Secret Lives of Owls".

Come bird with us and experience with others the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula... you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by going online (www.olympicbirdfest.org).

Precede your BirdFest weekend with a three-day, two night birding cruise of the spectacular **San Juan Islands** on April 12-14, 2016. Visit San Juan and Sucia Islands, and more. Stay at the historic Roche Harbor Resort. Get cruise information and register online at: www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

Extend your Birdfest weekend with the **Neah Bay post-trip**, April 17-19, 2016: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders.

Contact us by phone, at 360-681-4076,
E-mail us at info@olympicbirdfest.org ,
Or write to us at:

Dungeness River Audubon Center
P.O. Box 2450
Sequim, WA 98382

From the American Bird Conservancy

Good News! Sage Grouse Protection Moves Ahead; Harmful Rider Dropped from National Defense Bill

Some good news for sage grouse! New federal management plans to conserve 35 million acres of federal lands inhabited by the Greater Sage-Grouse will be going into effect. Some members of Congress had sought to halt grouse conservation by including an amendment (or rider) to the National Defense Authorization Act that would have prevented these crucially important plans from being implemented. It would also have prevented Endangered Species Act protection for the next 10 years no matter how grouse populations are faring.

Thanks to an overwhelming outpouring of citizen letters to Congress (over 10,000 from ABC supporters in the just the last month), this harmful rider has been dropped from the Defense Bill. Our thanks to all those who took action in support of sage grouse conservation.

News on Northern Spotted Owl & Marbled Murrelet

Building on Two Decades of Ecosystem Management and Biodiversity Conservation under the Northwest Forest Plan, USA: A new study published in *Forests* finds that the Northwest Forest Plan is on track to achieve long-range goals. Due to climate change and ongoing logging on non-federal lands, it now needs to be strengthened by adding to the reserve network and aquatic conservation strategy protections. <http://www.mdpi.com/1999-4907/6/9/3326>

Don't Be Hasty on Changing Northwest Forest Plan: The [Seattle Times editorial board](#) issued [this opinion](http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/dont-be-hasty-on-changing-northwest-forest-plan/) (http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/dont-be-hasty-on-changing-northwest-forest-plan/) in September, 2015: The U.S. Forest Service should not be too hasty to abandon a region-wide approach in the Northwest Forest Plan.

BLM Departure from Northwest Forest Plan Considered a Bad Idea: Comments on the Bureau of Land Management draft resource management plans for western Oregon from a coalition of national and regional conservation groups are available. [Find them here](http://kswild.org/blm-rmp-coalition-comments/) (http://kswild.org/blm-rmp-coalition-comments/).

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

October 2015

- 3 Bird Seed Sale, Columbia Feed and Grain, Pasco
- 5 Board Meeting, 6 PM, Richland Public Library, Richland
- 10 Bird Walk, 8 AM, Hanford Reach Interpretive Center
Audubon Day at the Reach, 10-3, Presentation by Washington author Jack Nisbet at 1pm
- 23-24 Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) Meeting, Mt. Vernon, WA
- 27 Membership Meeting, 7 PM, 1st Lutheran Church, Yelm and 395, Kennewick

November 2015

- 2 Board Meeting, 6 PM, Richland Public Library, Richland
- 7 First Saturday Bird Walk, 8 AM, Bateman Island
- 14 Bird Banding Demonstration, 9-11 AM, Leslie Groves North
- 17 Membership Meeting, 7 PM, 1st Lutheran Church, Yelm and 395, Kennewick

December 2015

- 5 First Saturday Bird Walk, 8 AM, Bateman Island
- 7 Board Meeting, 6 PM, Richland Public Library, Richland

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 – Joe Lelli
 Treasurer – Vacant
 Secretary – Debbie Berkowitz (secretary@lcbas.org)

Standing Committees

Birding Events – Kathy Criddle (birdingevents@lcbas.org)
 Communications - Joe Lelli (Curlew) (curlew@lcbas.org)
 Conservation – Dana Ward (conservation@lcbas.org)
 Education - Vacant
 Finance – Vacant
 Fundraising – Charlotte Reep
 Membership – Vacant
 Program – Ivar Husa (programs@lcbas.org)

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Audubon Adventures – Lannie Smith
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 (christmasbirdcount@lcbas.org)
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 50th Anniversary Year – Ed Rykiel

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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>

CHANGE TO CURLEW MAILING: The bulk mailing permit used by the LCBAS to mail The Curlew to subscribers will expire at the end of December and will not be renewed. This means we'll be mailing issues at standard postal rates. 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, not black and white, and eCurlew will arrive even earlier in the month. If you are now receiving 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.

NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS: In order to make you aware of our local chapter, we have been sending you complimentary issues of The Curlew newsletter. After three issues, the complimentary mailings end. To continue to receive The Curlew newsletter without interruption, please become a paid subscriber. Doing so is fast, easy, and secure at our website <http://lcbas.org/JoinLCBAS.html>

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Bird Sightings for September 2015

By Lannie Smith

North Richland and Richland Columbia River Parks

Mike and Mary Lilga spotted returning White-crowned Sparrows on the 4th. Dark-eyed Juncos and more White-crowned Sparrows joined them mid-month, as well as a Cooper's Hawk who thinned out the Eurasian this month: Townsend's Solitaire, a female Evening Grosbeak, and a Spotted Towhee. Laurie Ness heard a White-breasted Nuthatch (rare) calling in her neighborhood on the 12th and 14th. She also spotted a Golden-crowned Sparrow hanging out with White-crowned Sparrows. A Western Screech Owl began roosting in Laurie's nest box on the 16th. On the 18th, Laurie scoped Nelson Island from the shore turning up a Black-bellied Plover amongst the Killdeer, gulls and Mallards.

Sandhill Cranes: forty spotted by Mary on the 22nd flying over North Richland. On the 27th she saw about 40 flying over Badger Mountain in South Richland.

West Richland, Horn Rapids Area and Rattlesnake Mountain

Reported at Horn Rapids Park by Larry Umthun and Lisa Hill: on the 7th, Fox Sparrow and Gray Flycatcher (uncommon migrant), on the 14th, a pair of Common Yellowthroat (bird #190 on her yearly Benton County List) and a flock of over 300 Brewer's Blackbirds perched on power lines at the corner of Snively and Twin Bridges roads, and on the 22nd a Lincoln's Sparrow. On the 19th at the park, Laurie Ness spotted several Hermit Thrush and heard a Variied Thrush. Also seen were many Warbling Vireos, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. An Evening Grosbeak was heard overhead.

Mark Gerber had 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches in his Collared-Dove population. Also seen in their yard peach tree in the South Highlands area of West Richland on the 15th, along with a single Dark-eyed Junco and 6 White-crowned Sparrows. On the 23rd he had a Golden-crowned Sparrow in his yard, as well as an Anna's Hummingbird and the Nuthatches.

Sandhill Cranes: Mark saw his first flock on the 21st.

Barb Clarke reported 4 large flocks of 150-200 each flying over Red Mountain on the 28th.

Rancho Reata and Amon Creek Natural Preserve
Neil and Sharon Ofsthun submitted their September yard list: Ring-necked Pheasant, Cooper's Hawk, Western Screech-Owl, Long-eared Owl, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Western Wood-Pewee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hermit Thrush, Yellow, Wilson's, and Yellow-rumped Warbler, Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Lazuli Bunting.

Sandhill Cranes: The Ofsthuns saw a flock flying south on the 21st.



Black-crowned Night Heron
Photo credit: Ivar Husa

Yakima Delta, Bateman Island and Columbia Park

On the 12th Eric Heisey and Jason Fidorra recorded 1 Marbled Godwit (rare migrant) and 1 Stilt Sandpiper (uncommon migrant) in the Yakima Delta.

Jane Abel and her trusty kayak have been focused on the delta lately. It would be easier to report what she hasn't seen this month. Here are *some* of the birds she's seen and photographed: Greater White-fronted Geese, large flocks of Ruddy Ducks, Pied-billed, Horned, Red-necked (rare migrant), Western and Clark's Grebes, Osprey, Sharp-shinned and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon*, large flocks of Sandhill Cranes flying over the delta, Virginia Rail and Sora* are frequently seen along the edge of the cattails, Black-bellied Plover*, Semi-palmated Plover*, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet*, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper*, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated, Least, Western, Baird's*, Pectoral*, Sharp-tailed (rare migrant), and Stilt

Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers (large groups of 100-200), Wilson's Snipe, Red-necked Phalarope*, Franklin's, Mew, and Sabine's Gulls, Caspian Terns (one spotted on September 1st), Common Terns*, and Marsh Wrens. Regarding the Caspian Terns... in Jane's words: *I observed two Caspian terns this summer that had been fitted with transmitters by OSU. One was flying over the Columbia River in north Richland and the other was at the Yakima delta on Aug. 6 and 13. In early Sept. one was in Mexico and the other was about to go over the border.* (The birds followed by an asterisk were also reported by Lisa Hill, a sometimes-kayaking partner. She also included a Bonaparte's Gull.)

South Richland, Johnson Park and Badger Mountain

Larry Umthun and Lisa Hill reported an Anna's Hummingbird(s) present pretty much throughout the month. On the 6th they still had Black-chinned and Rufous Hummingbirds in their yard. A Cassin's Vireo was seen on the 4th, a Pine Siskin on the 9th, and a Golden-crowned Sparrow made several showings. On the 26th Lisa reported a 99% certainty of seeing a Red-breasted Sapsucker (accidental migrant) in Johnson Park. She also found White-throated, Golden-crowned, and 3 Lincoln's Sparrows and a Western Tanager.

Dean Edwards is new to the Tri-cities from Tennessee.

His observations come from an area where Gage Boulevard crosses Amon Creek. He describes it as "a few acres of undeveloped area mainly covered with Russian Olive with some sagebrush and rabbitbrush." It is north of Gage and east of Leslie Road. The following birds were seen by Dean in September: Northern Flicker, Western Wood-Pewee, Gray Flycatcher, probable Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Townsend's Solitaire, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, MacGillivray's, and Wilson's Warblers, Western Tanager, Spotted Towhee, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak and Western Meadowlark.

Kennewick

Ron & Carole Louderback of Kennewick reported the arrival of their first Dark-eyed Juncos on the 27th.

Finley Area

Sandhill Cranes: around 40 birds flew over Kris Keating's home headed toward the river on the 27th.

McNary National Wildlife Refuge and Walla Walla County

Between the two of them, Eric Heisey and Jason Fidorra

saw a Sanderling, a Semipalmated, 3 Baird's and 1 Pectoral Sandpiper (all uncommon migrants) and heard a Short-billed Dowitcher (rare migrant) on the 12th at the Tyson Ponds. James Cleaver had a productive day at the Ponds on the 19th: American Golden-Plover (rare migrant), Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Western, Least, Baird's, and Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, and Red-necked Phalarope. Apart from shorebirds he also reported Yellow-headed Blackbirds, American Pipits, and roosting in the cliff by the marsh area that is further east on Dodd Road, a Barn Owl.



Yellow-rumped Warbler
Photo credit: Ivar Husa

Pasco and Franklin County

Some of our Pasco yard birds for September included American Kestrel, Downy Woodpecker, a group of 3 Northern Flickers who are always together but spend a lot of time sparring among themselves, a Western Wood-Pewee, Warbling Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Townsend's Solitaire, tons of Cedar Waxwings (adults and juveniles), Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers.

Sandhill Cranes: Valerie Carson reported a group of around 12 over River Road on the 22nd. At least 50 flew over Charlotte Reep's west Pasco home on the 25th.

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.

Conservation Report October 2015

By Dana Ward

LCBAS has been working tirelessly to see that central Hanford's lands are moved into the Hanford Reach National Monument which includes a wealth of shrub-steppe obligate bird species that are being extirpated from much of our region. The conclusion below will give you a better understanding of why we must strive to protect these lands. The conclusions written in 1999, after 5 years of study, are still relevant, if not more so, do to loss of habitat that surrounds the Hanford Site. Please consider writing a letter to our Senators and Representatives as requested in the September *Curlew*.

From: Biodiversity Inventory and Analysis of the Hanford Site
Final Report: 1994 – 1999
Prepared by: The Nature Conservancy of Washington
October 15, 1999
Page 159

13 Conclusions: Significance of Findings to Date and Management Implications

13.1 Significance of Findings to Date

Simply put, the biodiversity inventory has amply demonstrated that the Hanford Site is home to an extraordinary and irreplaceable natural legacy. Within its mosaic of habitats, Hanford supports a wealth of relatively unaltered and increasingly uncommon native habitats; the variety, size, and quality of which are unmatched. Not surprisingly, such high quality and diverse habitats support an equally diverse array of plants, animals and insects. In every subject area that was addressed (plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals), species known to be rare and declining in Washington and the Columbia Basin were found throughout the Site. Equally

important as the spectacular number of rare and declining species, however, was the finding that more typical shrub-steppe species have been maintained at Hanford in appropriate abundance. This is in sharp contrast to findings from other, smaller locations that often show the absence of once common species.

In its present condition the Hanford Site is not only a refuge, but also a genetic bank for the common and rare plants and animals that are integral components of the shrub-steppe and Columbia River ecosystems. The Hanford Site is also a valuable reference point. As the wild habitats of the Columbia Basin continue to be fragmented and/or degraded by incompatible uses, large and relatively intact areas such as Hanford must serve as baselines to guide management of smaller areas. Clearly, from a conservation standpoint, the Hanford Site is a vital – and, perhaps the single most important – link in preserving and sustaining the diversity of plants and animals in the Columbia Basin Ecoregion.

BOOK TABLE SALE!!!

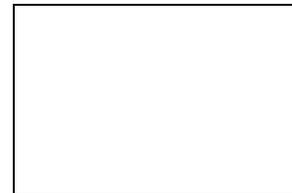
The book table will feature used and older items for sale at drastically low prices during the months of October and November. Help me clear out the inventory in our storage cupboard. Almost everything will be marked down so bring your change, dollar bills or your checkbook. All money goes to LCBAS to further our Education and Conservation efforts.

The Book Table will have a couple of new items including 3 copies of the beautiful *Sage Spirit: The American West at a Crossroads* by Dave Showalter. One copy is even signed by the author!

Woody Wheeler will also have copies for sale of his book, *Look Up!*

Thank you for supporting the Book Table and LCBAS.

The Curlew
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon
Society
P.O. Box 1900
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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. _____

_____ 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 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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