

# The Curlew

The newsletter of the  
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

## Upcoming Events

See **p. 2** for details about  
birding trips

**Jan 5** - First Saturday Bird Walk, 8:00 AM at Bateman Island. Arrive early at Wye Park (~7:50 AM).

**Jan 7** - Board Meeting, 6:15 PM at the Richland Public Library.

**Jan 19** - Nature Walk, 9:00 AM at Amon Natural Preserve with Tapteal Greenway.

**Jan 22** - Membership Meeting, 7:00 PM at First Lutheran Church, Kennewick.

**Feb 2** - First Saturday Bird Walk, 8:00 AM at Bateman Island. Arrive early at Wye Park (~7:50 AM).

**Feb 4** - Board Meeting, 6:15 PM at Richland Public Library, Richland.

**Feb 26** - Membership Meeting, 7:00 PM at First Lutheran Church, Kennewick

## A Cycling Pilgrimage - Vietnam and Cambodia

**Scott Woodward**

**January 22, 2019 at 7:00 PM**

**First Lutheran Church**

**US 395 and Yelm, Kennewick**

A pilgrimage can be defined as a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion. This trip was not an act of religious devotion but more an act of devotion to the historical mystic and cultural phenomenon of two countries devastated by centuries of warfare and genocide and their comeback story. We came as pilgrims to ground truth in search of the shadows of the "American War" as the Vietnamese call the Vietnam War.

On all counts, it was a "religious" experience and in some strange way an inspirational one. Please join us on the bikes and aboard the Reunification Express as we journey from the Mekong Delta and Saigon to Ha Long Bay and Hanoi, then onto Cambodia, Angkor Wat, The Killing Fields, and Phenom Penn.



## Upcoming LCBAS Field Trips.

The **Bateman Island bird walk** will be **Saturday, January 5** at **8:00 AM**. Meet at Wye Park (1600 Columbia Park Trail) in Richland. The walk takes about 2 hours for those who go to the end of Bateman Island and then return. If you do a circuit of the island, plan on another hour or so. We will have bird lists and binoculars to borrow. This is a great bird walk for beginning birders and families.

LCBAS will help **Tapteal Greenway** lead a nature walk at Amon Basin Natural Preserve on **Saturday, January 19** at **9:00 AM**. Meet at the south parking area for Amon Basin off of Leslie Road; a map is available at <http://www.tapteal.org/tapteal-trail/amon-basin/>.

The **February Bateman Island bird walk** will be on **Saturday, February 2** at **8:00 AM**. As with the January walk, we will congregate at Wye Park and then bird on Bateman Island.

## Remembering Bob Woodley (1922 - 2018)

by Nancy LaFramboise

Robert (Bob) Woodley may not have been at recent Audubon meetings but he is present in many things he did for this chapter that still persist today. Bob was third President of the chapter and one of its first members. His data provide the foundation for the checklist you hopefully use to further your birding knowledge. His interest in the shorebirds of the area contributed to the Yakima Delta being designated an Important Bird Area. You can go on the LCBAS webpage and read the Bird Sightings column he wrote for many years or scan the Christmas Bird Count results he compiled for 25 years in past Curlews to get a perspective of the birds of the TriCities. He found many of the rarities in our area. But most important is that Bob shared his expertise with many birders and that legacy will continue for years.



Bob and Pat Woodley

Do as Bob did. Make your birding something to be shared either with data collected or pass on what you know to others. By doing that, his contributions will live on.

## Upcoming Birding Festivals

**Wings over Water Northwest Birding Festival** is in Blaine WA from **March 15 - 17**. Their keynote speaker is Tim Boyer. More information is at [www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com](http://www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com).



The **Othello Sandhill Crane Festival** is **March 22 - 24**. The theme for this year is "Elegant Travelers on a Journey." Look for more information at their website, [www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org](http://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org)

The **Olympic BirdFest, April 11 - 16** will feature birding around the Olympic Peninsula in addition to boat trips and art/photography workshops. The keynote speaker is John Marzluff. Details at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org)

The **Harney County Migratory Bird Festival** is **April 11 - 14**. Most events begin in Burns, OR. It features a wide range of field trips and workshops for all ages and interests. See their website for details ([www.migratorybirdfestival.com](http://www.migratorybirdfestival.com)). Registration for festival members begins February 4; general registration begins February 11.

## Wiley Elementary Students Plant Sagebrush in Leslie Groves North

by Debbie Berkowitz

Photos by Ernie Crediford

LCBAS and the Columbia Basin Native Plant Society have worked to restore shrub-steppe habitat along the Columbia River in North Richland for a number of years. Since 2017, we have had help from Lindsay Gailey and her students at Wiley Elementary School in West Richland.



The collaboration came about when Lindsay decided to do a project on water quality with her 4<sup>th</sup> grade class. She also wanted her students to learn about native plants, so she talked to us about helping with our Leslie Groves North Native Plant Restoration project in Leslie Groves

park. Lindsay got a grant to do four field trips with her students to Leslie Groves North; our group worked with the kids to help them learn about the native plants and to contribute to the restoration project.

Lindsay's class collected sagebrush seeds in December 2017 with help from members of LCBAS and the Native Plant Society. In February 2018 in the classroom, the students put a soil/sand mixture in a tray and in planting tubes; they scattered some of the seeds in the tray and each student planted one tube with a few seeds. Lindsay later transferred the plants that germinated in the tray into 50 more tubes for a total of 71 sagebrush tubelings. The students also made ~600 sagebrush seedballs in their classroom. In March 2018, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders planted most of the 600 sagebrush seedballs in and just north of the current native plant restoration area at Leslie Groves North.

These students, now 5th graders, returned in November with their parents to transplant their sagebrush at the restoration site. About an acre of Leslie Groves North near Ferry St. had burned last June, so we took advantage of the fire-cleared soil to plant in that area and expand our native plant restoration project. We also spread the rest of the sagebrush seedballs and some grass seeds we collected from our original restoration area.

You can see a video about the project at the #exploreRichland YouTube video channel (<https://tinyurl.com/ybm3bgld>).



## Field Trip Report

*Thanksgiving Bird Walk: W. E. Johnson Park*  
*Saturday, November 24, 2018*

by Lisa Hill

A long birding hike in W.E. Johnson Park on the Saturday after Thanksgiving gave participants an opportunity to walk off some turkey and see some great birds. Nine people started out on the walk and most finished a 3-mile loop from the south gate to Hall Rd and back. We identified 33 species, although winter is a great time of year to successfully tally up 40+ species in Johnson Park. (My all-time high number is 50 species during a single walk.) Diverse habitats offer good opportunities to see birds in riparian areas along the canals, in dense stands of mixed deciduous trees including cottonwood, silver maple and American elm, among groves of fruit-laden Russian olive trees, on the banks and open water of the Yakima River, and within open sagebrush and nearly impenetrable wild roses.

The majority of species identified were our dependable winter residents. A couple of tiny, but sassy, birds scolded us with harsh chit calls: PACIFIC WREN and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. The wren, its plumage an even warm brown that suggests ground cinnamon, and its classic straight-up tail, shows up in small numbers in the park. The kinglets, including Golden-crowned Kinglets, are fairly easy to find in winter. Also in the small bird category, we found six PURPLE FINCH, two of which were adult males. Purple Finch were first noted in Johnson Park at a Christmas Bird Count about seven years ago. For several winters after, they stayed within a specific area of the park near the north end, but they can now be found further afield. They continue to spend the winter here from late October through mid-March eating green ash seeds almost exclusively.

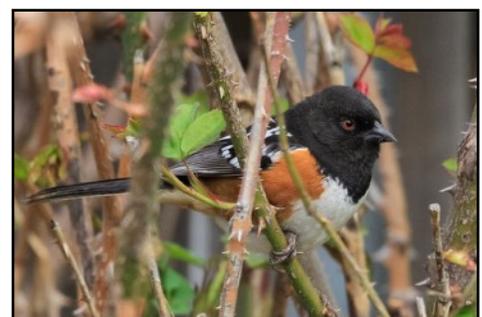
Some of our winter birds are very secretive and remain mostly quiet, skulking in dense shrubs and trees. HERMIT THRUSH and three VARIED THRUSH give a soft "chup" call making it difficult to distinguish between the two species. The Hermit Thrush has another call that mimics the throaty croak of SPOTTED TOWHEES. This thrush call is rarely heard and many birders are unaware of it. GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROWS are much quieter in voice and plumage than their close relatives, WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS. YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS were seen and heard in good numbers. Along with the White-crowned Sparrows and DARK-EYED JUNCOS, these warblers are iconic winter birds in the Mid-Columbia region.



**Black-capped Chickadee**  
 by Elke Davis



**Hermit Thrush**  
 by Ron Louderback



**Spotted Towhee**  
 by Michael Barrett

## Field Trip Report

### *First Saturday Bird Walk: Bateman Island Saturday, December 1, 2018*

by Lisa Hill

Late fall and early winter bird lists from Bateman Island are typically lengthy and wonderfully diverse. The year-around residents and numerous winter visitors can easily bring the total count to 45-55 species, and the December walk was no exception with 49 species. All the birds on the list were expected at this time of year, so we'll shine the spotlight on two of the winter residents.

We came upon a small court of GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS in the Black Locust grove. Their taxonomic name *Regulus* (petty king or little prince) *satrapa* (a Persian governor) suggests that they are sizable with a dominating presence. They are in fact, tiny, smaller than chickadees, with an exceptionally high-pitched "seep" call that is often inaudible to "seasoned" birders. They go about their business, not easily distracted by pishing. Both sexes bear a golden crown that earns them their lofty name. The female's head stripe is bright yellow and the male's is yellow with an orange central portion that can be raised into a brilliant crest. Golden-crowned Kinglets forage high in the trees, but a few of these birds came down to eye level providing some nice views of their attractive plumage.

A few birders caught a glimpse of a NORTHERN SHRIKE, one of which was also seen on the November walk. Shrikes are unique among songbirds in that they are hunters of live prey; small birds and rodents, and large insects. Their genus name *Lanius* meaning "butcher", refers to their habit of catching and killing prey with their stout hooked beak, then impaling the catch on a thorn, sharp twig or barbed wire. Although they behave like raptors, they do not have large talons and are incapable of holding prey with their feet for transport or to feed upon. With their prey immobilized on a thorn, they are able to use their beak to consume their meals. This practice allows the birds to cache food for later consumption. It is believed that during breeding season, males impress females with a display of kills, thus showing off their prowess as hunters.

The next Bateman Island bird walk is Saturday, January 5, 2019. Meet in the parking lot of Wye Park above the causeway to the island before 8am. Dress for the weather!

*"There is unreasonable joy to be had from the observation of small birds going about their bright, oblivious business."*

- Grant Hutchison, The Complete Lachlan



**Wood Duck**  
by Larry Umthun



**Golden-crowned Kinglet**  
by Nick Saunders  
Great Backyard Bird Count  
Courtesy of National Audubon



**Northern Shrike**  
by John Kay Alexander  
Audubon Photography Awards  
Courtesy of National Audubon

## The 119<sup>th</sup> Christmas Bird Count is in the books!

Thank you to everyone who helped with the 2018 Christmas Bird Count on December 29!

It was a warm and breezy day, with gusting winds that kept bird numbers low. We managed 94 species, one of the lowest totals over the years and we worked hard for each and every one of them!

Details about the LCBAS CBC will follow in the February Curlew.

The Christmas Bird Count was started by Frank Chapman, a curator at the American Museum of Natural History, in 1900 as an alternative to the tradition of "side hunts" - contests in which teams of hunters would see who could shoot the most game in a day. The first CBC was conducted by 27 birders who counted birds in 25 count circles.

Chapman probably could not have predicted that his idea to count birds instead of hunt them would grow into the modern-day CBC. Last year there were 2,585 Christmas Bird Counts completed by 76,987 volunteers in nearly 20 countries. Nearly 60 million individual birds were counted, representing 2,673 species. Diversity varied greatly across count circles. Birders surveying the Arctic Bay circle in Nunavut CBC counted two species on the day, whereas birders counting in the Yunayacu circle in Ecuador counted 502.

The information that all counts generate is reviewed and placed in a database that is available to everyone on the internet. The database is available at the Audubon website (<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>). The Tri-Cities count code is WATC.



The sun sets on the 2018 Christmas Bird Count  
by Elke Davis



The ear tufts on this Great Horned Owl at Amon Basin Natural Preserve blow in the wind.  
by Karen Sowers



Bill Nelson birds at the Yakima Delta HMU in Richland  
by Lori Wollerman Nelson

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**NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERS:** We have been sending you complimentary issues of The Curlew newsletter to keep you up to date on local happenings. 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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**Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society**  
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## **Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Membership Form**

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LCBAS membership benefits include a year's subscription (10 issues) to The Curlew and priority registration for space-limited field trips. LCBAS is a 501c(3) organization and dues are tax deductible.

- Regular membership (\$20)
- Full-time student membership (\$10)
- I would like to make an additional donation of \_\_\_\_\_.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to **LCBAS.**)

Mail your form and dues to:

**Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, PO Box 1900, Richland WA 99352**

- I want to *save resources and postage* and receive my newsletter by email
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*To join the National Audubon Society, please go to*

*<https://action.audubon.org/donate/chapter-membership?chapter=Y01>.*