

# The Curlew

The newsletter of the  
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society

## Upcoming Events

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

**March 16** - Bird Walk, 8:00 AM  
at Bateman Island. Arrive early  
at Wye Park (~7:45 AM). This  
walk was postponed from our  
regular First Saturday (March  
2).

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

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

**April 1** - We're not fooling  
you! Board Meeting, 6:15 PM  
at Richland Public Library,  
Richland.

**April 6** - First Saturday Bird  
Walk, 8:00 AM at Bateman  
Island. Arrive early at Wye Park  
(~7:45 AM).

**For more information, see  
the LCBAS website  
[www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org)**

## March Membership Meeting

### Finding Your Patch

**March 26, 2019 at 7:00 PM**  
**First Lutheran Church**  
**US 395 and Yelm, Kennewick**

Many birders have a favorite birding "patch" – a site that they bird often and know well. In this month's membership meeting, LCBAS members will share with you their favorite birding patches – the birds they find, their favorite times to visit, and what makes their patch special to them. We will also invite the audience to share their favorite spots and hope that everyone will be willing to share their patch!

If you have been looking for new places to bird or just want to look at a familiar place through new eyes, we hope you will join us!



Canvasback on the Walla Walla River  
by Dennis Werlau

## Upcoming LCBAS Field Trips.

### *Go birding with LCBAS*

The **Bateman Island Bird Walk in March was postponed!** The new date is **Saturday, March 16**. We'll meet in the usual place (Wye Park, 1600 Columbia Park Trail, Richland) at 8 AM. The walk takes between two and three hours and is a great option for families and beginners. We'll have binoculars for newcomers to borrow and bird lists for you to take home.

The **April Bateman Island Bird Walk** will be on **Saturday, April 6** - same time and meeting place as the March walk. Mark your calendars!

Watch Facebook (Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society page and Tri-Cities Birders page) and our website ([lcbas.org](http://lcbas.org)) for any additional field trips planned for this summer!

Have a trip suggestion or want to lead a LCBAS trip? Email [fieldtrips@lcbas.org](mailto:fieldtrips@lcbas.org) and share your passion!

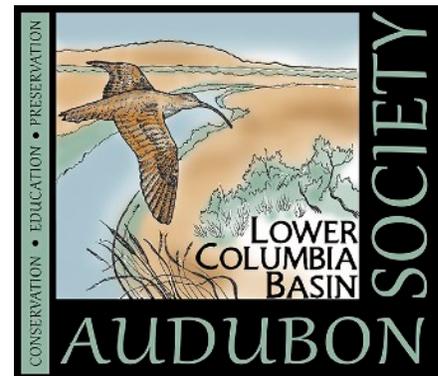
### *What we're reading*

by Lori Wollerman Nelson

**Bird and Moon Comics** ([birdandmoon.com](http://birdandmoon.com)) is the brainchild of Rosemary Mosco, a naturalist and science writer. She combines natural history and comedy to make cartoons that entertain and reflect the joys and frustrations of birders. How would different birds excavate a Halloween pumpkin? What might Empidonax flycatchers get up to while we puzzle over them? If bird could talk about climate change, what would they say? Bird and Moon imagines clever, funny, or poignant answers to all of these questions.



**Eurasian Wigeon**  
by Elke Davis



## *We Want YOU!*

*Do you have ideas for programs, fundraisers, or field trips?*

*Do you want to help LCBAS preserve bird habitat in and around the TriCities?*

*Do you want to spread the word about birds?*

*Do you want to contribute something to the Curlew?*

## **Get involved in LCBAS!**

We are looking for new faces to help us with everything we do, from field trips to conservation efforts, communications to education programs. Volunteer to be an officer or committee chair or learn the ropes as a committee member – no contribution is too small!

If you are interested or just want to find out more about helping with LCBAS activities, contact Jim Castle [president@lcbas.org](mailto:president@lcbas.org) or Debbie Berkowitz at [secretary@lcbas.org](mailto:secretary@lcbas.org).



Follow LCBAS on Twitter  
or Like LCBAS on  
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Find out about chapter  
events, bird sightings,  
conservation issues, and  
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birds!

Our Twitter handle is  
LCBAS Audubon,  
@LcbY01, and our  
Facebook page is Lower  
Columbia Basin Audubon



## Refresher Training for Sagebrush Songbird Survey

by Robin Priddy

[grania0358@aol.com](mailto:grania0358@aol.com), 509-378-1694

The Sagebrush Songbird Survey will take place this year, our last year, and we'd welcome your help!

Our training is on March 23, unfortunately the same weekend as the festival in Othello. I had trouble getting a room - if you are interested, and cannot make the training, we would still be grateful for your participation.

I'll be sending an agenda and some early information on the sites to the volunteer mailing list soon - email me if you'd like to be included.

There are some changes to the survey protocol this year. The survey timing is expanded from previous years, so they can be done any time in April, May, and then June as long as each site is surveyed two weeks apart.

I'm planning to be at the Membership meeting on the 26th of March, I'll have training material and site sign up information with me there.

Please let me know if you plan to come to the training, or if you want to participate and can't make it to the training. Email me ([grania0358@aol.com](mailto:grania0358@aol.com)) or call (509-378-1694) - leave a message.

Thanks, see you soon, and good birding!

*Read a good book about birding or birds lately?  
Had an interesting encounter with a bird or birder?*

by Lori Wollerman Nelson (Curlew Editor)

Contribute a story (300 - 400 words is all you need) to the Curlew and share your adventures with other members of LCBAS!

Filling the Curlew every month is tough – and I would love to include more about what our members are doing, seeing, or reading!

I'm looking for book recommendations, accounts of your birding adventures, descriptions of your favorite birding spots, or recollections of your favorite birding memories. If you want to know more about this, get in touch ([curlew@lcbas.org](mailto:curlew@lcbas.org)) or just email your story to me. The deadline for the April Curlew is March 27.



## Field Trip Reports

### *First Saturday Bird Walk: Bateman Island* *Saturday, June 2, 2018*

by Lisa Hill

The group was fortunate to have a pleasant walk around the island during the calm before the snowstorm(s) that arrived two days later bringing high winds and frigid temperatures. Birds were active during the walk and we recorded 48 species. No unusual sightings for this time of year – just our year-around residents and winter visitors.

Among the winter birds seen here between Oct-April are the grebes.

These fascinating fresh-water diving birds are so unique that no other birds have been taxonomically categorized into their Podicipedidae family, or even into the order to which this family belongs. There are 20-22 species, depending on the source of information. These are distributed throughout the world on every continent except Antarctica. We regularly see Pied-billed, Horned and Western, and less often Clark's, Eared and Red-necked Grebes.



**Pied-billed Grebe**  
by Dori (CC 3.0)



**Western Grebes rushing during courtship**  
by Wayne Watson, USFWS

As their family name describes, (podex = buttocks or vent and pedi = foot) a grebe's legs are positioned at the back end of the body making them very awkward on land. They do occasionally stumble around on land in a somewhat upright position. A floating platform nest of pond debris provides protection from predators, but also allows the bird to approach its nest from the water and eliminate the need to walk on land. Most grebes display elaborate, synchronized movements as mating and pair-bonding rituals, and short bursts of "running" on water called rushing.

Their strange feet have three large lobed toes that serve as propeller and rudder, making them excellent swimmers. Grebes have an odd behavior called "foot-shipping". A

foot and leg are extended behind the bird above the water, then pulled over the body and tucked under a wing, essentially stowing the foot. It is believed that the bird regulates body temperature by reducing heat loss from legs and feet.

Grebes cough up pellets of undigested bones and shells. They also eat feathers and even feed them to their chicks. The remains of prey are thought to be strained out by the feathers in the stomach, then coughed up to prevent them from entering the intestines.

Have you ever observed a Pied-billed Grebe slowly sink into the water with only its head showing like a periscope? Grebes are able to control their buoyancy by shifting the angle of their belly feathers which usually stick out of the body at 90 degrees. In this position they trap air, but pulled in tight to the body, the air is released and the bird sinks.



**Diving Horned Grebe showing its lobed feet**  
by Larry Umthun

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**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Please send address changes (postal address or email address) to Rich Barchet at [subscriptions@lcbas.org](mailto:subscriptions@lcbas.org) so that your subscription is not interrupted. You can mail address changes to LCBAS, PO Box 1900, Richland, WA 99354.

**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>

The **LCBAS Privacy Policy** is available at our website.

**Find out more at [www.lcbas.org](http://www.lcbas.org) or [www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org](http://www.lowercolumbiabasinaudubon.org)**

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**Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society**  
**PO Box 1900**  
**Richland, WA 99354**

## **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
- I do not want to receive e-alerts for last minute activity changes, important issues, and volunteer opportunities (Check here to opt-out)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Membership in LCBAS is separate from membership in the National Audubon Society.*

*To join the National Audubon Society, please go to*

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