

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

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Fall 2015



Lower Columbia Interpretive Center Bird Exhibit

By Carol Carver

A new exhibit of Birds of the Lower Columbia is located in the second floor of the Lower Columbia Interpretive Center, Redmen Hall, Skamokawa WA, managed by the nonprofit organization Friends of Skamokawa.

Bird mounts on loan from Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS) and Lower Columbia College are in a lighted cabinet. Each bird is labeled with its common name. More will be added to the collection when another cabinet able to accommodate larger birds can be built. The cabinet being used was purchased from LCC surplus, rehabbed, lighted, and locked through a grant from Willapa Hills Audubon Society. Additional funding is needed to acquire the larger cabinet.

While the birds will be kept protected from being touched, programs on Birds of the Lower Columbia region are planned for early spring, 2016 and the bird mounts will be part of these programs. Many people don't realize how colorful and distinct the birds are that we see every day. From a distance most look dark. This exhibit is intended to increase awareness and appreciation of our local birds. All of the mounted birds in the exhibit had died in the wild of natural causes or from colliding with residential windows or vehicles.

FOS would like to receive dried bird wings during hunting season this year, to be used for "hands on" display. Please contact Carol Carver, WHAS Secretary (see contact information in this issue) if you can help.

More birds, especially owls, will be added to the collection when FOS is able to purchase or build another larger cabinet.

Okanogan Trip - Spring 2015

By Margaret Green

Those of us on the West (or dark) side of Washington state don't always realize the wonder that awaits on the other side of the Cascade crest. Wander northward past Wenatchee and Chelan through orchard country (which has its own beauty) and along the mighty Columbia to the north central reaches of the state and the spectacular beauty of the Okanogan Highlands and the eastern Cascades awaits.

We patterned our late June campout after a WOS (WA Ornithological Society) conference of 2 years back. Basing ourselves out of the small village of Conconully at the State Park seemed perfect for reaching the many special spots explored during the conference. As we drove the many back roads, we did find some lovely and much more private forest service campgrounds on Forest Road 38, many nestled on the shores of the small mountain lakes of the region.

Continued on page three

Christmas Bird Counts 2015

Leadbetter: December 19, 2015

Wahkiakum: December 29, 2015

Cowlitz Columbia: January 1, 2016

Please check the Winter Whistler in December for the details.

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Support our mission, join WHAS today!

Check type of Membership:

- ☐ New Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$20 check for annual membership)
- ☐ Renewal Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$20 check for annual membership)
- ☐ I would like to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society.

Enclosed is my additional donation of \$_____

Membership includes 4 issues of our newsletter *WILLAPA WHISTLER* annually.

We are a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation. All dues and donations are tax deductible

For membership in National Audubon Society visit <http://www.audubon.org/>.

Please make your check payable to:

WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:

WHAS-Membership, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Y14:7XCH rev. 2007

Thank you for supporting your local Audubon chapter -- Willapa Hills Audubon Society!

We will not share your contact information with anyone.

*) To announce **occasional** reminders and to communicate last minute changes due to weather or other issues for WHAS programs and field trips.

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Please indicate any **new** information:

I prefer you contact me by:

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Mail

Other options:

- ☐ I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email
(Add your email address below)
- ☐ Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Add me to your announcement email list*

BirdFest and Bluegrass in Ridgefield, Oct. 2-4

If you have ever been to BirdFest you know how much fun it can be; and if you haven't, it is time you found out. This is a great time to get the kids and grandkids involved in nature and the history of our area.

Start with a Friday night viewing of Alfred Hitchcock's *Birds* at the Liberty Theater. Then there will be bird and nature hikes, family activities, Sandhill Crane tours, Bluegrass concerts, kayak & big canoe paddle tours, demonstrations at the Plankhouse and a marketplace for arts and crafts, and a traditional salmon bake.

There will be a spotting scope access inside the hunter's gate to view some of the lakes usually not accessible on the auto tour. Instead of closing the auto tour for buses, River S will be open both days.

Sandhill Crane tours will be more limited, so get your reservation early if this is one activity you can't miss. For program details, go to: www.RidgefieldFriends.org

Audubon Council of Washington 2015

Register now for ACOW 2015!
Join us for a day of climate-carbon education and action – help decide how together will we make Washington's climate better for birds and people.



<http://wa.audubon.org/chapter-meetings>

Okanogan Trip – Spring 2015

... Continued from page 1 –

by Margaret Green, Images courtesy of Bea Harrison

Others may prefer the motels of Omak, which can also be a great starting point for exploration. We spent a day driving up the Sinlahekin Valley and found BLM and Okanogan National Forest lands available for dry or dispersed camping. We stopped at each of the many lakes along that valley for great birding.

Our 100 species list seemed pretty impressive, without even hitting some of the higher elevation areas for those specialized species. (Sounds like a reason for a return trip.) We may not have found Boreal Chickadees or Great Gray Owls, but we did catch sight of Mountain Chickadees, Clark's Nutcracker, Lewis's Woodpecker, Pygmy Nuthatches, Cassin's Finch and Williamson's and Red-naped Sapsuckers, most for leisurely observation. We did not enter any of the



Blue Lake, Sinlahekin Valley



Chuckers

The red-headed baby American Coots and baby Ruddy Duck's practicing diving skills were captivating – smiles never left our faces. Camp mates Jim and Bea Harrison found baby Spotted Sandpipers, while fishing from their canoe on Lake Conconully.

Bea's photos grace this issue and can also be found on the web site(link). It is always nice to take birding pals from the East side for positive birding ID's, especially as Jim humbly says "Often wrong but never in doubt." Seeing great birds with the companionship of friends was the purpose of the trip, but the fabulous scenery was the icing on the cake. This is an amazing landscape and one you should visit and explore.

Note: The Okanogan is ORV recreating country, which was mostly evident in the State Park campground and somewhat on the major roads, but somehow during our meandering, we avoided the major ORV areas. This might warrant more study, to make sure your birding is a quiet activity. Hiking opportunities abound with the Pasayten Wilderness and North Cascade National Park nearby.



Ruddy Duck's

burned areas from last year's fire, which could have yielded sightings of Greater Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers, but we were happy finding many woodpecker species including Downy, Hairy, and Northern Flickers.

Finding both Bald and Golden Eagles is always a treat and Gray Catbirds and Veery are wonderful additions to any trip list. Other species found which we never see on the west side are Bobolink, Redhead Duck, Rock Wren, and Chukar. But the most fun was hitting the mountain lakes and finding breeding Red-necked Grebes and Barrow's Goldeneye.

Unusual American Goldfinches

By Suzy Whitley

Not one but three unusual American Goldfinches visited my feeders in Long Beach, WA between July 18th and August 4th. When I saw and photographed the first one I was excited and sent the photos out to a few birders to see if they could help me determine why the goldfinch did not have the typical black and white color on its wings and tail. It turns out the condition is called leucism.

As I watched this bird more closely I determined there were two more. Each distinctive. One had a large bright yellow crown, one did not have the yellow crown and one appeared old and suffering. Was this a family, with two being offspring of the older one? Was this unusual genetic trait passed on? Leucism is an abnormal plumage condition caused by a genetic mutation that prevents pigment, particularly melanin, from being properly deposited on a bird's feathers.

As a result, the birds do not have the normal, classic plumage colors listed in [field guides](#), and instead the plumage have several color changes, including:

- White patches where the bird should not have any
- Paler overall plumage that looks faint, diluted or bleached
- Overall white plumage with little or no color discernable

The degree of leucism, including the brightness of the white and the extent of pigment loss, will vary depending on the bird's genetic makeup.



Support for the Endangered Species Act

By Margaret Green

Willapa Hills Audubon, as a chapter of National Audubon is a steward of the land and for the many species within each eco system. We proudly champion the Marbled Murrelet, the Spotted Owl, the many bird species in decline as well as and not exclusively, amphibians, insects, and plants. The following quote from Paul Ehrlich compares the importance of each species to the rivets on an airplane:

"The plane may keep flying if a single rivet goes, but what happens when another one pops and another and another? At some point you lose the rivet that causes the plane to crash. We simply don't know when any given species' extinction might cause an ecosystem to crash, so we are wise to protect them all."

Loss of Forest Snags in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

From Audubon Washington, images courtesy of Paul Bannick

Did you know that trees can be more important for wildlife dead than alive? When trees die, their wood softens and rots providing places for animals to create cavities that are used as nest and shelter sites. In the northwest, nearly 100 species of wildlife use snags including some of our favorite birds such as woodpeckers, bluebirds, owls, nuthatches, chickadees, wrens, ducks, swifts, swallows, and kestrels.

But did you also know that due to outdated policies, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest allows the public to cut down snags? The Okanogan Wenatchee manages nearly 1.5 million acres and some of the most beautiful pine forests of the eastern Cascade Range. This forest is home to five at-risk woodpecker species in Washington State, including the black-backed woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, Pileated woodpecker, Lewis' woodpecker, and American three-toed woodpecker. Other cavity-nesting birds threatened by snag-habitat loss include the flammulated owl, mountain bluebird, and pygmy nuthatch. Yet every year, hundreds to thousands of snags in these birds' home territories are cut down by woodcutters, hunters, and campers.

Join us in a campaign to educate land managers with the Okanogan-Wenatchee to let them know the value of snags in our forests. Let them know that snags are vital components of our forests and snag felling should not be permitted for healthy forest management.

- Nearly every other land management agency in Washington *prohibits* snag felling because of the value of snags for wildlife. Agencies that prohibit snag felling include Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympic National Forest, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Mount Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, Mount Saint Helens National Volcanic Monument, North Cascades National Park, Mount Rainier National Park, and Olympic National Park.
- The Okanogan-Wenatchee allows snag-felling under conditions of a [woodcutting permit](#). However, snag-felling is not regulated leading to overharvest of snags each year.
- Illegal woodcutting is common, includes other illegal activities such as off-road driving, cutting within streams and water, cutting in areas marked 'closed to woodcutting', and cutting of snags with white-headed and black-backed woodpecker nests.
- Woodcutting is allowed during the sensitive nesting season for birds and woodcutters are allowed to cut snags immediately adjacent to active nest trees. The noise and disturbance caused to nesting birds can be extreme and has led to nest abandonment in black-backed woodpecker, three-toed woodpecker, and bluebirds.

The collective power of the Audubon network in Washington can make a difference. Please consider contacting the local forest staff and let them know that the loss of snags means the loss of forest birds and the loss of overall forest biodiversity and resilience.

Mike Williams

Forest Supervisor

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
215 Melody Lane
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Mrwilliams01@fs.fed.us

509-664-9323

You can also sign the online petition at <http://ow.ly/QSNfq>

For more information please contact woodpecker biologist, Philip Fischer, at pcfischer@gmail.com.

Kelly Lawrence

District Ranger

Naches Ranger District
10237 US Highway 12
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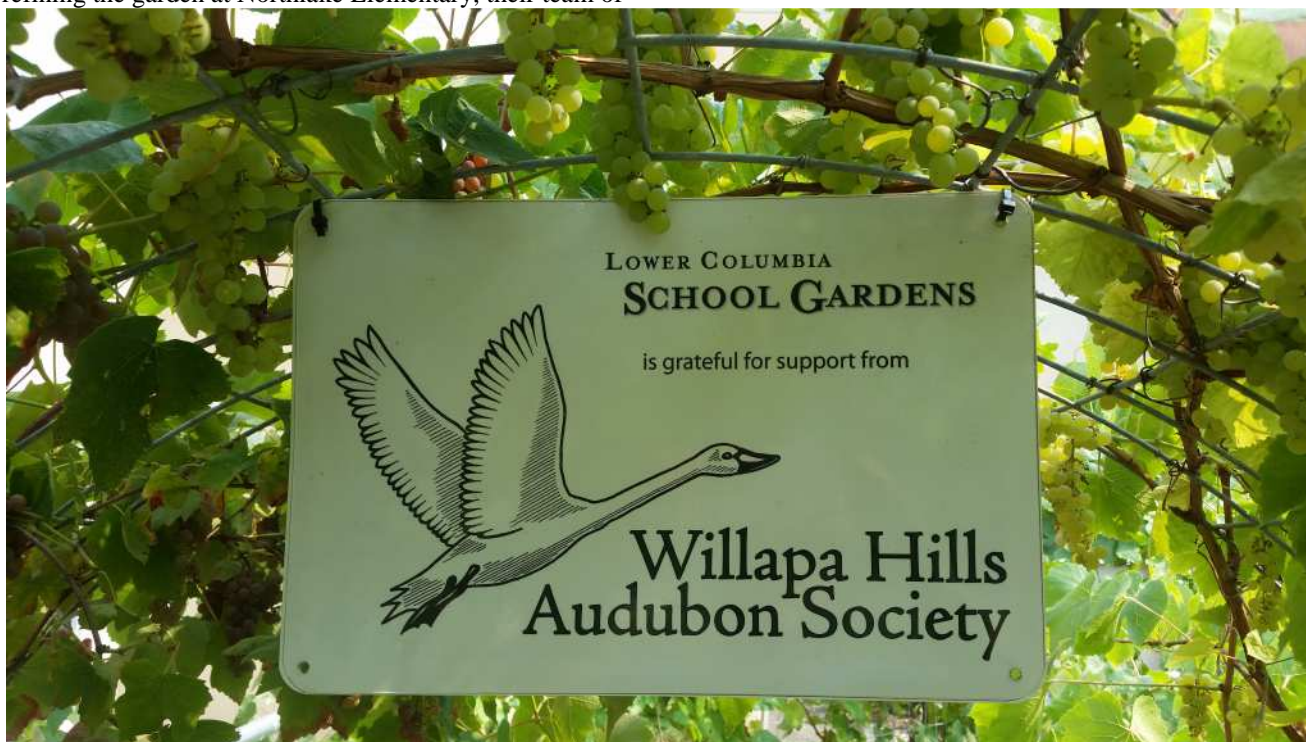
WHAS partners with Lower Columbia School Gardens

[Willapa Hills Audubon](#) supports Lower Columbia School Gardens in the 2014-2015 year – we sponsor a garden AmeriCorps position for \$5,000! This allows [LCSG](#) to increase their reach significantly, and connect hundreds more kids and families with real food and hands-on learning in school gardens.

Lower Columbia School Gardens help schools start and sustain dynamic, thriving garden programs. After expanding and refining the garden at Northlake Elementary, their team of

educators, students, parents and volunteers set out to establish gardens in other local schools.

Now, with a presence in several schools, their staff and volunteers garden and cook with hundreds of kids every week. LCSG has helped create and sustain thirteen school gardens (totalling over 100,000 square feet) in Cowlitz County, as well as smaller projects at 4 other schools.



Heads Up –Long-Awaited Long-Term Conservation Strategy for Marbled Murrelet

By Charlotte Persons

At its monthly meeting on October 6, the Board of the Department of Natural Resources will probably announce a plan to protect state lands for breeding areas for the Marbled Murrelet. This plan has been promised since 1997. The impetus to finally create a plan is the recent tie to setting sustainable harvest levels for timber in coastal Washington counties.

If you can, please attend the October 6 meeting in Olympia, but be sure to send comments on the Environmental

Impact Statement and its alternatives before the November meeting, when the board will choose the final version. There are two sides: timber interests want a plan with minimum acreage of protected lands, but bird conservationists prefer a strategy that follows scientists' recommendations for protecting the best breeding habitat. For more information, go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce/washington-state-chapter/Groups/NorthOlympic/MSPFAQBlogFBPost.pdf>

Panels on Washington State Funding for Marbled Murrelet Habitat

By Charlotte Persons

Pacific, Wahkiakum, Olympic, Skamania and other counties in Washington State have suffered from losing public funding generated by timber sales on state forests. These sales of state lumber for public schools and county general funds have been much reduced because of conservation of habitat for two birds which breed in old-growth forests, Northern Spotted Owls and Marbled Murrelets.

To compensate for this loss of public funds, the state legislature passed two programs, the trust land transfer and state

forest replacement funding. Unfortunately, neither program has been well-funded. Seattle Audubon and Sierra Club's Murrelet Survival Project are sponsoring two panels to discuss how to increase this kind of funding. Panelists will include state and county elected representatives, staff from the Department of Natural Resources, and bird specialists.

October 8 – Raymond High School (Pacific County) 6:30 p.m.
October 15 - Evergreen State College (Thurston Co.) 6:30 p.m.

Audubon Birds and Climate Change Report

From National Audubon

The Audubon Birds and Climate Change Report is a first-of-its-kind study that predicts how climate change could affect the ranges of 588 North American birds. A product of seven years of research, the report calls upon three decades of citizen-scientist observations from the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the North American Breeding Bird Survey to define the ideal "climatic range" for each bird species--the range of temperatures, precipitation, and seasonal changes each needs to survive. Then, Audubon scientists mapped where each bird's ideal climate range might be found in the future as the climate changes.

The results are shocking: Nearly half of the bird species in the continental U.S. and Canada are seriously threatened by 2080, and without action, many are at risk of extinction. To view interactive future range maps for the 314 most at-risk species, visit www.audubon.org/climate.

On a local level, the data pinpoints 113 "climate-endangered" bird species that occur in Washington state that may lose 50% or more of their habitat by 2050, according to the projections. Washington species such as the Rufous Hummingbird, Bald Eagle and even the currently abundant Mallard could lose as much as 75% of their existing habitat, threatening their long-term survival. See the table at <http://wa.audubon.org/climate-change-0>



for a complete list of Washington's 189 climate sensitive bird species.

Audubon's new science sends a clear message about the serious dangers birds face in a warming world. Protecting them will require both redoubling conservation efforts to safeguard critical habitat and curbing greenhouse gas emissions. To learn about ways you can help in your own community, take the Audubon pledge to help build a brighter future for the 314 birds at risk at

www.audubon.org/climate.

What You Can Do to Help Protect Birds

Create a Bird-Friendly Yard

Healthy birds will be better equipped to face the challenges of a warming world. Commit to creating safe spaces for birds in your home and community by using fewer pesticides, letting dead trees stand, installing bird baths, and converting lawns and gardens to native plants. School grounds, parks, vacant lots, and common areas can all be "bird-scaped," too. Learn more at www.athome.audubon.org.

Get Involved With Your Local Important Bird Area

Protect the places birds need most today and in the future by pitching in with Audubon's IBA program, which identifies and conserves areas that are vital to birds and biodiversity. You can help with IBA restoration, cleanup, citizen science, and field trips. Contact us to get started.

Put Birds on Your Community's Agenda

Begin a conversation with your neighbors, colleagues, and local leaders about why it's important to you to protect your community's birds, and share what you're doing on behalf of birds. Reach more people by writing a letter to your newspaper, speaking at a community event, or visiting a local school.

Meet With Local Decision Makers

Share this science with state wildlife agencies, city parks departments, extension services, and other groups that manage our natural resources to illustrate how global warming imperils birds, and ask decision makers how they are planning to address global warming. For more information on how to help decision makers use and integrate Audubon's science, email climatescience@audubon.org.

Support Policies That Lower Emissions

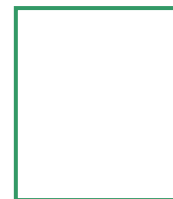
Urge leaders at the local, state, and national levels to enact policies that lower greenhouse gas emissions and support clean energy. Renewable portfolio standards, energy efficiency targets, and other proactive measures reduce emissions and will limit the effects of global warming on birds. Put these policies on your leaders' agendas, and publicly support efforts to make them stick.

Sign Up to Learn More about What You Can Do Year-Round

Receive the latest findings, explore climate-related volunteer opportunities in your state or local area, and enlist in Audubon's forthcoming citizen science project to help monitor birds and document how they respond to a changing climate by signing up at www.audubon.org/climate.



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The *Willapa Whistler* is the quarterly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Complimentary copies are available for free on our website.

TEMP -- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Most WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.

Send in your stories & photos

Articles, information, wildlife sightings and artwork are most welcomed. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of February, May, August and November. Send your contributions to:

WHAS Whistler, PO Box 399, Longview WA 98632

or email them to

newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org

The *Willapa Whistler* is printed on recycled paper using soy based ink.



Please recycle your *Whistler*
or pass it on to a friend.

WHAS Programs and Field Trips

WHAS events are free and open to the public (Unless otherwise noted). Check the website calendar for the latest information and updates.

September 12, 2015 Saturday – Vaux's Swift Migration Viewing

Darrel Whipple has kindly agreed to lead our first field trip of the fall. Darrel conducts yearly migration counts for Vaux's Swifts in Rainier. He will try again to catch the swifts entering the chimneys at Carpet One and Old Rainier Hall. (last year the birds did not cooperate and we missed their stop in Rainier) Trip participants will meet at Rainier, Oregon City Hall (106 W 8th) at 6:45 PM. To sign up, please email Darrel at dwhipple@opusnet.com or call 503-556-9838. If the swifts have already migrated, you will be given 24 hours notice of the cancellation.

October 10, 2015 Saturday – Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

Hopefully fall rains will visit us before this field trip to help out the migrating waterfowl. Those will be our target species. Call 360-575-9238 or email jgreen2317@aol.com John Green to sign up.

November 14, 2015 Saturday – Woodland Bottoms

This trip will also target migrating waterfowl, as well as hawks and other winter species. Call 360-575-9238 or email jgreen2317@aol.com John Green to sign up.

December 12, 2015 Saturday – Annual Lake Sacajawea Walk & Social

Practice waterfowl identification with the abundance of ducks, grebes & herons hanging out at the lake either over wintering or migrating through. After walking a portion of the lake, we will congregate for backyard birds at the Greens as well as socializing with a hot drink and snacks. Call 360-575-9238 or email jgreen2317@aol.com John Green to sign up. This is always an enjoyable time with WHAS friends, old and new.

The Mission of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society is to support ecologically responsible ways of life, to help maintain biologically diverse habitats, and to promote environmental understanding and enjoyment of nature.

Check out our website at www.willapahillsaudubon.org, or