

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 48 // Issue 4

Winter 2022



Long-billed Curlew - Image courtesy of [Wikimedia](#)

A Surfeit of the Fit

By Steve Puddicombe, President

As evolution explains, expansion of our range is a natural occurrence: all species push the boundaries as far as their survival allows, and with little concern for the excesses that rein them back in, such as starvation when a food source runs out. Thus we see wide fluctuations of numbers; on occasion mass starvation causing the deaths of millions of individuals. Many species even use the strategy of mass reproduction as a way to maintain the species' survival—individual flourishing or suffering be damned. That tiny fraction of genetic mishap that results in an advantage, perhaps giving a prey animal a leg up, is usually soon (well, relatively so) met by a rebuttal from the predator. And the process goes on.....

For most of the natural world there isn't a concern for the result of all this: some species settle in a small niche, and some on wide swaths of the earth. Though messy and wasteful, perhaps, the ebb and flow of life through climate change, natural disaster, cycles of the atmosphere, and so on, simply maps out a species' adaptability and so be it.

The recent news that humanity has now surpassed 8 billion in number is not surprising. We've reckoned ourselves as a great success for some hundreds of years now, increasing from about the first billion in roughly 1820. But it wasn't always that way. As recently as 10,000 years ago there were only a few hundred million of us, and for tens of thousands of years homo sapiens barely managed to clear 100,000 individuals. Now, our fitness has allowed us to survive and thrive in all climates and geographies worldwide, excepting Antarctica.

It's hard to underestimate our rapid rise to dominance and the extent of our control over the destiny of virtually all organic life. Along with domesticated animals we make up 96% of all mammals; of all avian life 70% is domesticated fowl. About half of the earth's animals have been displaced by humans in just the last 50 years according to the best estimates. So how far will our boundary extend?

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Christmas Bird Counts 2022

Save the dates:

This is a fun event for seasoned and new-be birders alike. All dates and events are preliminary as there might be changes and adjustments due to severe weather.

Leadbetter (Pacific County) –
December 17, 2022

Because of the large area, and the fact that we access the west side of Willapa Bay on numerous pieces of private property, Participants will be organized into small groups. If you wish to participate contact Alexander Birk at abirkpcd@gmail.com

Wahkiakum – December 29, 2022

Those who wish to participate may contact Andrew Emlen at 360-795-8009.

Cowlitz-Columbia – January 1, 2023

Our count will be a part of the Annual Christmas Bird Count. Our count circle covers a 15-mile diameter circle that is centered just south of Rainier, OR. This year we will continue with LOW LEVEL COVID guidelines. We will have 8 or 9 areas within the circle that will be counted. There will be no compilation meeting again this year. All results will be handled by mail or e-mail.

The contact is Bob Reistroffer 360-751-5595 or breistrof@aol.com.

PS – Bob is looking for someone to take over the compiler job.

In this issue of the Whistler:

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- NW Birding Events
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- Vaux Swift Migration Monitoring and so Much More
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Support our mission, join WHAS today!

Membership renewals are due March 1 of each year. If you prefer to pay by credit or debit card use our online form on our website at <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/join-us-donate>.

Membership includes 4 issues of our newsletter *WILLAPA WHISTLER* annually. Gift Memberships are available online.

Check type of Membership:

- Individual Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$25 check for annual membership)
- Family Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$35 check for annual membership)
- Lifetime Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$750 check for lifetime membership)

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

Please make your check payable to:
 WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:
WHAS-Membership, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632.

Name _____
 Address _____ Email _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____

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

We will not share your contact information with anyone. For membership in National Audubon Society visit <https://www.audubon.org/> Chapter# Y14
 *) 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:(Add your email below)

- I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email
- Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- Add me to your announcement email list*
- I would like to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$ _____**

Donate to WHAS when you shop!



Shop at Amazon through <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-0951287>. Choose "Willapa Hills Audubon Society" as your charity and we'll receive 0.5% of your purchase total.

Winter Wings Festival 2023

Klamath Basin Winter Wings Festival takes place February 17-20, 2023. Winter Wings brings together birders and photographers of all stripes to learn and explore. The Klamath Basin is renowned for its winter raptors and its stunning abundance and diversity of waterfowl. Join them for an extensive array of field trips, workshops, and presentations.

To learn more visit www.WinterWingsFest.org.

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival 2023

The 2023 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival is scheduled to be held for March 24-26, 2023. More info:

<https://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>

Olympic BirdFest 2023

Olympic Birdfest will take place April 13-16, 2023. This festival provides participants the opportunity to view a wide variety of birds normally seen on the Olympic Peninsula. Field trips are planned for Sequim Bay, Port Angeles Harbor, Ediz Hook, Dungeness Spit and the Elwha River, as well as trips through wooded areas to view songbirds and locate owls in the evening. Boat trips to Protection Island are also planned. More info and BirdFest registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

Children's Discovery Museum reopened

By Ann Cordero

A special place in Longview is the [Children's Discovery Museum](#). There children play with interactive exhibits that are designed for learning. Children of all ages can find something of interest there, from the area designed for babies to the large harmonograph. Kids can picture themselves boating, shopping at the farm to table market, or as doctors and dentists. Creativity flourishes with exhibits like the Wind Tunnel and with stories, arts, and crafts. Parents and museum volunteers help enrich the experience by interacting with kids in child-centered play. Staff are working on developing new experiences for the children to look forward to, which may soon include a stage and a puppet theater.



The museum has reopened at 1209 Commerce Avenue near the corner with Hemlock Street after having been closed for over two years during the covid pandemic. It is free to the public, and many children return to it time and again. Open hours are Wednesday and Saturday, 10-2. Its new Executive Director is Seth McNally, who is pleased with the support the museum receives from its board of directors. Seth has previously served the community as the House Manager of Lower Columbia College's Center Stage.

Two exhibits are sponsored by Willapa Hills Audubon Society: the Nature Niche and a nature book library. The Nature Niche is a series of display cases and exhibits in drawers featuring natural objects like rocks, minerals, pinecones, feathers, bird nests, insect collections, and bones. Many items are available for the children to touch, handle, and observe, exercising their sense of wonder. Volunteers who enjoy showing and discussing aspects of nature to others facilitate this process. Microscopes provide a close look at insects and other tiny things. Further information can be found in the library books, which can be checked out for a month.



Volunteers make it possible to keep the museum open. They are needed for the museum overall as well as the Nature Niche. In the past much of the volunteer staff consisted of AmeriCorps volunteers until the program was discontinued in Cowlitz County. Volunteer hours are flexible. Persons 14 years old and over can become volunteers by filling out an application form (available on the CDM website cowlitzcdm.com) and passing a background check. The museum is an excellent site for students to complete their community service requirements. More volunteers could also mean increased open hours.

Whether you are a child, parent, or volunteer, the Children's Discovery Museum is a lot of fun! Visit it and give it your support!



WDFW invites High school students to submit invasive species art to adorn new trailer

WDFW Press release

The Washington Invasive Species Council (WISC) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) invite high school-age digital artists to participate in an art contest that will help spread the word about not spreading invasive species.

Invasive species are plants, animals, and other organisms that don't naturally live in Washington and, when brought here, can cause economic and environmental harm. Invasive species can outcompete native species for food and habitat and may even eat native species. Once established, they can proliferate and cost a lot of money to control, as well as negatively impact utility, agriculture and tourism industries.

The winning art from this contest will adorn WDFW's new trailer that travels around Washington State and the Northwest to bring attention to invasive species and their spread. It will also include images of WDFW's invasive mussel-sniffing dogs Puddles and Fin (right).

"Staff from both WDFW and WISC travel to many communities to educate people about the dangers of spreading these species from one area to another," said Justin Bush, executive coordinator of WISC. "This trailer will allow them to do that more effectively and bring attention to the issue with its eye-catching art."

The art contest runs now through Dec. 30. Submissions are required to be in a digital art format, such as graphic designs,

photographs, illustrations, cartoons, digital paintings and more. Submissions must include pictures or information on one or more species that could be, or has been, introduced into our region, such as quagga and zebra mussels, European green crabs, Eurasian watermilfoil, northern pike, New Zealand Mudsnails and more.

"Those are some of the invasive species of most concern that can be introduced or spread, but there are many others," said Allen Pleus, WDFW's aquatic invasive species unit manager. "We have worked hard to prevent impacts from these species and are happy to have an additional tool, the trailer, to bring our message to the public."

In addition to having the design made into a trailer wrap, the winner will receive a \$500 Amazon gift card. A second-place winner will receive a \$300 Amazon gift card. Entries will be displayed on the WISC and WDFW websites. For full contest rules, design dimensions and inspiration, visit either the WISC (<https://invasivespecies.wa.gov/event/art-contest/>) or WDFW (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/get-involved/educational-resources/invasive-species/art-contest>) websites.

WDFW works to preserve, protect, and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.



House Finches

Image courtesy of WDFW

Ongoing Citizen Science at home "Project Feeder Watch"

Here is a fun opportunity to participate in bird related research, from the comfort of your home.

The **Project Feeder Watch with Cornell Bird Laboratory** will go from November until April, but one can sign up until the end of February. It runs for 21 weeks and involves counting birds at one's feeders or just in a bird-friendly habitat that one has provided. This is usually done in backyards. Birds are counted for two days every week or two (at least 5 days between a pair of counting days), and the results are submitted to the Laboratory for research and analysis. There is a \$18 participation fee which covers some materials.

You do not have to spend a lot of time watching; some people do it before and after work, or 5 minutes each hour, or whatever structure works for you.

For more information and to sign up, visit <https://feederwatch.org/about/project-overview/>

Vaux Swift Migration Monitoring and so Much More

By Terry Williams

Oh where to begin I ask. It's been a wonderful journey for myself as well as many others observing these wee little birds. A couple of years back I remember seeing a lady park her car and set up her chair overlooking the Riverside Community Church here in Rainier, Oregon. This happened during the Fall migration of 2020. I remember asking a neighbor what the lady was doing and found out she was there every night to watch and count Vaux Swifts entering the chimney to roost. One of those nights I moseyed over to talk to her. It happened to be Carolyn Norred who I soon became so intrigued by her enthusiasm, knowledge and fascination of the Vaux Swifts circling above the chimney. We soon became friends, and it wasn't long before I found myself going out to watch them with her and her husband, Art, every night I could. Not long after that, I decided to invest in my own clicker and with notebook in hand I was out the door every evening during the migration to watch and count the Vaux Swifts with my new friends.

Some that come on a regular basis, some that come occasionally, others only once. The regulars, being Carolyn Norred, Juni Roberts and myself. A bit more than occasional were Linda Jennings and Russ Koppendrayner whom I would like to thank for their insightful knowledge on all things 'Birds'.

On another note our observations have been unlike anything I have ever seen thus noting them in my reports under comments as we saw them. Such observations included a colony of Bats that we saw and had come to enjoy watching. They flew by at eye level in the evenings during the fall migration only, anywhere from 1 to 9 on any given night. We were going to name them but decided to go with more elementary terms and just call them 1,2,3, and so on but did refer to them as our 'Bat friends' in the comments. We quickly became enthralled to see them every night around dusk. Other observations included many other birds, predatory and non predatory, which included but not limited to Bald Eagles, Hawks of various sizes and types which



It's been so much more than just sitting there counting the Swifts night after night. We have developed close, personable and endearing friendships with many wonderful people along the

way. Some that come on a regular basis, some that come occasionally, others only once. The regulars, being Carolyn Norred, Juni Roberts and myself. A bit more than occasional were Linda Jennings and Russ Koppendrayner whom I would like to thank for their insightful knowledge on all things 'Birds'.

Hawk of a larger size seized a Dove who was in mid-flight and flew to a nearby tree to devour it with feathers flying everywhere. We had an American Kestrel that came around for a few nights sitting on top the chimney then taking off to return but we never actually observed him taking a Swift. We had Merlin Falcons that would actually circle, mixed in with the Swifts, and in due course grab one and fly off for a evening meal. Many times we would observe squadrons of Pelicans flying overhead, as well as kettels of Sandhill Cranes at times estimating well over 100 sounding their exclusive honking of a prehistoric nature. There were many Turkey Vultures soaring above and on a few occasions there would be as many as seven soaring in all directions but keeping in close vicinity to each other. Others included Ducks, Starlings, Hummingbirds, and many other commonly seen birds here in the northwest. We also have the pleasure of seeing many ships of various sizes, shapes, and features making their way up and down the mighty Columbia River.

On funnier and most unusual observations we spotted something which we thought was a bird of some sort high in the sky and far off in the distance. We weren't sure what we were seeing so we grabbed our binoculars to search the skies and much to our surprise it was a rather large Delta Kite with its tail whipping in the breeze up above Kelso. In my approximation I would say anywhere from 500 to 1000 feet up in the sky! There was a case also that consisted of one of our fellow observers (and I won't mention a name here to protect her identity) spotted a large Otter sitting in a neighbor's yard! It was truly unbelievable to the rest of us but we went along with it anyway. A Rainier Police Officer stopped by once in which we all claimed our innocence of whatever he had up his sleeve, also noted in comments for future use if needed in court. When we started getting such large drifts of

Swifts I just knew we had made our mark in the "Ripleys Believe it or Not" records and although I never heard from them I am quite certain we are in those pages somewhere and I added that in my comments as well. Everything noted here was included in my comments on the reports I filled out each evening which may or may not have been of interest to some, but others loved it.

A local Artist and neighbor Phil Fake painted a lovely Plein Air oil painting simply called "Swift Counters of Rainier". There are three of us pictured sitting and observing the Swifts. In the painting it features the surrounding area where we sit and of course the chimney at Riverside Community Church with the Swifts circling above the roost. The painting features Carolyn Norred, Juni Roberts, and myself. We were honored by such a



WHAS members gather to watch the Vaux Swifts at a church in Rainier, Oregon, during the September migration – Image by Steve Puddicombe

creative gesture and the three of us are now proud owners of the Giclee on canvas painting. So you see it isn't all about counting Vaux Swifts but so much more!

...continued from page one: A Surfeit of the Fit

Reeling in human excess in favor of all life, and diversity of life, has accompanied our rise and is in part simply a regard for self-preservation. But it is also a recognition that natural selection selects for survivability, not for truth. And the truth is that our numbers cannot increase forever and be sustained. And as we reach our boundary there will be the usual messy process that affects all other life forms.

Curbing our population growth has been relegated to the unspeakable in recent years due to a variety of factors, but this milestone ought to renew efforts in Audubon and other environmentally minded groups to speak up again. It won't be easy: it will mean challenging survival impulses that are deeply embedded and have long been held sacrosanct. Yet, despite all the optimistic banter to the contrary—don't be fooled. The truth

is that there is a boundary to our growth, and, that most of the life on earth we care about will be dependent on our decisions.

On a lighter note, a Bar-tailed Godwit fitted with a tracking transmitter set a new record for non-stop mileage of 13,500 kilometers over an 11-day journey from the Kuskokwim Delta of Alaska to Anson Bay in Tasmania. Godwits must migrate without rest because they lack the webbed feet needed to gain flight from water. Most Bar-tailed Godwits go to New Zealand but this one traveled 500 KM further west, eclipsing the previous record set by another Bar-tailed several years ago. The 5-month-old bird had never made the journey before.

Happy Birding!

Ann Dorothea Klug Musche'

By Steve Puddicombe

Our friend and birding comrade, Ann Musche', died at home on Earth Day, April 22, 2022, tended by Alan Richards, best friend, trusted caregiver, and life partner for more than 42 years, with her beloved Black Lab, Tintee.

Ann, known as "Annie" to her friends and cohorts, was born in Hales Corner, Wisconsin, in 1944. She migrated to the Northwest in 1966 after securing a degree in Biology from Carroll University, but retained her love of the mid-west and returned often to the family cabin on a lake in a rural part of the state.

In Seattle, she worked at a lab at the University of Washington until she became the first paid office manager with the Seattle Audubon Society in 1978, charged with encouraging more public participation and support of environmental action, over mere bird observation and meetings featuring slide shows of bird trips. She met future sweetheart and husband, Alan, on a birdwatching field trip, beginning their collaboration observing the natural world and becoming an expert at identifying bird, butterfly and plant species.

In 1981, with son Jay, and Alan, Ann relocated to Grays River and then to Naselle, Washington, near the rural lower-Columbia estuary where they purchased a home overlooking the river and created a haven of feeders and nesting boxes.

Ann had many interests and skills: She was a potter and eventually built a kiln and studio, Big Chin Pots. A love of books led her to become Chief Librarian of the newly-built library until retirement in 2000. And she was a substitute teacher in Seattle and Naselle for nearly 25 years.

In 2002, she began a two-year term as president of Willapa Hills Audubon Society. WHAS was faltering at that time, and almost dissolved. Ann's bright personality and astute leadership greatly aided the chapter in recruiting members and finding worthy projects for members to be engaged in.

Ann was a staunch defender of wildlife and the natural world. She worked to help the Snowy Plover survive along Washington's beaches, and to protect the newly-hatched sea turtles struggling to reach the ocean along the Mexican coast, among many other efforts.

Known for her good cheer, kindness, and loyalty to friends, Ann enjoyed fellowship with others. She was devoted to



community gatherings, potlucks, dances, songfests, and musical events, and always brought a special delight to any like occasion.

This is a favorite poem of Ann's, written by Wendell Berry and recited to her by Alan in her last days:

When I rise up
let me rise up joyful
like a bird.

When I fall
let me fall without regret
like a leaf.

Willapa Hills has lost a dear friend and supporter. Fare thee well, Ann.

National Audubon Naming Project

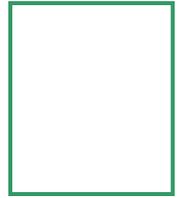
National Audubon is in a process with consultants to collect the opinions of chapter leaders, members, and the public on the Naming Project, determining how we relate to our organization's namesake. National understands that there are varying opinions regarding the actions of historical figures and that many feel passionate about their views. Before coming to any conclusion about the use of John James Audubon as our namesake, National Audubon is committed to listening to the input from our community, including chapter leaders, as well as

members, volunteers, donors, partners, and staff. Please share your input by emailing naming@audubon.org.

Responses will be monitored by staff on the EDIB, Communications, and Development teams and themes and messages will be relayed to the Board Task Force to ensure that individual identities remain anonymous. It would be helpful in the email if you indicate your chapter and location. Please share your thoughts and share that email address with your boards and members.



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Longview, WA 98632



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.



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Find us on Facebook at:
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WHAS Programs and Field Trips

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

The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can subscribe to the Willapa Whistler on our website? All the links are easy to follow.

Go to whistler.willapahillsaudubon.org for this and past issues.

Membership Renewals

WHAS made changes to membership by switching to a yearly renewal date.

All **membership** renewals are **due in March** of each year.

You can renew online by using a credit card or by mailing a check.

See page 2 for the details!

Other programs and field trips will appear on our website and will be announced through our email alert system.
More information about the alert system here: <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/member-services>