

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 39 // Issue 4

July // August 2013



Red Crossbill -- Image Royce Craig

Royce Craig captured this photo of a Red Crossbill in late May on his property.

Invitation to the WHAS Annual Picnic for Members and Friends

By Margaret Green

Where: Wake Robin – Longview school district's nature facility

When: Sunday, July 28th at 1pm

Please join us for the annual summer picnic. Once again, the picnic will be held at the Longview School District's Wake Robin Property in Longview. The yearly summer picnic is always a relaxed and fun way to meet and socialize with fellow WHAS members, our friends and interested acquaintances.

Each person or family should bring a dish (salad, dessert, appetizers, casseroles, or other side) to serve 6 – 8 and your own plates, utensils, and any additional beverages. WHAS will provide napkins, cups, and water.

We will chat, eat, and enjoy the beautiful forest setting with possibilities for walks or exploration.

Directions to the picnic:

- At the junction of SR4 (Ocean Beach Hwy) and Coal Creek Rd., turn north onto Coal Creek Rd. and travel approx. 2 ½ miles to Carlon Loop.
- Turn left onto Carlon Loop, cross bridge, driving straight ahead through the gate onto the Wake Robin compound.
- There will be abundant parking.

WHAS Board Updates

By Charlotte Persons

The WHAS Board met on June 6, 2013.

The report on the annual meeting on March 30 was quite positive. The food, a combination of pizza and potluck, was delicious; the Longview Park District's Women's Club was an excellent venue; and the presentation by Idie Ulsh on the construction of bird nests was outstanding. Over forty people attended.

The board decided that neither the WHAS Birdathon for Spring 2014 nor the WHAS 2014 calendar are feasible—we will have to find other ways of raising money next year.

The most important business was changes in the board itself. The board appointed **Charlotte Persons to be acting president** and **Carol Carver to be recording secretary** until the next election cycle. Betty Mayfield, who has served our chapter in so many capacities for over 30 years, can no longer attend meetings. **John Green will be chair of the Finance Committee** in her absence.

Bob Arnsdorf's energy and great ideas will be sorely missed in his capacity as Program Chair. A task force will be contacting members to find someone to take his place and to find a newsletter editor.

Correction: The cover photo of the 2013 May/June issue of the Whistler showed Hooded Mergansers.

In this issue of the Whistler:

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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 6 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 schedule changes due to weather or other issues for WHAS programs and field trips.

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*

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The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can see all the beautiful bird images in this *Willapa Whistler* in color online on our website? Go to <http://willapahillsaudubon.org> and just click on the *Whistler* in the top menu for this and past issues.

Receive the Whistler by email

Willapa Hills Audubon Society offers delivery of the *Willapa Whistler* newsletter by email. The "*eWhistler*" offers enhanced viewing with color photos and graphics as well as live links to referenced websites and emails. You will receive an email announcing the availability of the *Whistler* on the WHAS website with a link to the webpage that will open in your default web browser. You can read the *Whistler* online or save it to your computer for later browsing. Archived *Whistlers* are available on the WHAS website. Send your full name and e-mail address to our Membership Chair, Margaret Green at jgreen2317@aol.com

How to receive the WHAS Alert/Announcement e-mails

Willapa Hills Audubon has set up an email list to facilitate occasional communications with members. The purpose of this list is to announce or send reminders about programs, field trips and mission-related actions that may interest members. It is also used to help communicate last minute schedule changes for programs or activities due to weather closures or other issues.

This email list is designed to convey information only, and will not permit discussion, as the goal will be to keep communications brief and occasional.

If you are not receiving these occasional emails yet and would like to be included, please send an email to whasalert@gmail.com with "subscribe" in the subject line and we will add your email address. Of course, we will not share your contact information with anyone

Update on Local Conservation Issues

By Charlotte Persons

Coal terminals, Oregon LNG, Marbled Murrelet habitat, Reynolds Aluminum site clean-up—these are just some of the conservation issues that the Conservation Committee has worked on since the last conservation update. If you are interested in helping the Conservation Committee on any of these issues, contact Charlotte Persons, and she will connect you with the members directly involved.

Proposed Coal Terminals

Clatskanie, OR - WHAS members were active in opposing the Kinder Morgan plan for a coal terminal at Port Westward on the Columbia River in Columbia County. Over 100 people attended both port and city hearings, and shortly afterward Kinder Morgan announced it was dropping its proposal. However, county commissioners are still considering rezoning 957 acres of farmland to industrial use to allow port development. On June 17 Columbia County's Planning Commission recommended against that rezoning because it was not clear what the "intended use" would be. The county commissioners will make a decision in about three months.

Longview, WA --The proposal for the Millennium Bulk Terminals coal facility in Longview got a boost on June 18, when the U.S. Corps of Engineers spokesperson told a Congressional hearing that the corps will not consider broad environmental impacts of the terminals or rail transport on air and waterways. However, on June 5, 2013, Columbia Riverkeeper and other organizations filed a Clean Water Act lawsuit to stop toxic coal discharges from trains into Northwest waterways. The courts and local and state permitting processes may be the ultimate determining factors. At this time it looks like public meetings in Longview and a written comment period for permits will be in late 2013.

Proposed Oregon LNG and Williams Pipeline

The proposed liquid natural gas terminal proposed for Warrenton, near the mouth of the Columbia River, met substantial local opposition, and Clatsop County withdrew its

land-use permits. On June 11, the company announced it would apply for federal permits, which it claims will override local permitting. Originally the company applied to import natural gas, but with the increased natural gas available through fracking, the latest permit is to export it. At one point the Williams pipeline proposed for this project was to go through Oregon counties. Now, the plan is for a portion to go through Cowlitz County and other counties in SW Washington.

Habitat for Marbled Murrelet

Naselle, WA - The small but speedy Marbled Murrelet, which flies 50—80 miles per hour from coastal waters to nest in old growth forest, is still losing numbers at 3% per year. This is in spite of the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, which restricted logging on federal land. Breeding habitat loss is still the biggest factor in its decline, so preserving what is left on state and federal lands is a major goal for WHAS. Unfortunately, revenue from resource development of state trust lands is a major source of funding for rural counties.

That is why WHAS was happy to support a proposal this June to create a tiny Natural Conservation Area near Naselle from state lands that had been restricted from logging for over 30 years, and to buy other land suitable for logging in Pacific County. Though the new NCRA is only 28 acres, DNR plans to protect land around it if funds become available.

Washington State -- A long-awaited state-wide protection for Marbled Murrelet will be Washington's Long-Term Conservation Strategy, which will define habitat protections for many years. WHAS will join many other conservation organizations in commenting on the provisions of this plan by July 1.

Cleanup of Former Reynolds Aluminum Site

In the years before strict environmental regulation, workers at the Reynolds Aluminum plant dumped waste that seeped into the soil and will eventually contaminate ground water and the Columbia River. The most prevalent contaminants are arsenic and fluoride. Now, Alcoa, which still owns the site, and Millennium Bulk Terminals, which rents the use of the facilities, are responsible for cleaning it up. In a presentation at Lower Columbia College on June 13, James DeMay from Department of Natural Resources said that public meetings on the proposal to clean up this site would be in "early 2014".



Nashville Warbler – Image by Royce Craig

S.W.A.M.P. Picnic a Rousing Success

By Ann Kastberg



Dr. Peter Ritson, S.W.A.M.P. Sam Schongalla, CLT. Ann Kastberg, WHAS. Carlo Abbruzzese, DNR.

Saturday, June 15 WHAS, in partnership with the Columbia Land Trust (CLT), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Southwest Washington Amphibian Monitoring Project (S.W.A.M.P.), hosted a volunteer appreciation field day and picnic at DNR's Merrill Lake Natural Resources Conservation Area.

In 70 degree weather under Douglas fir and big leaf maple trees, **Eric Slind** found the first amphibian of the day, a Cope's Giant Salamander (*Dicamptodon copei*), swimming in a feeder stream at the south end of Merrill Lake. The biggest amphibian of the day, the largest red-legged frog any of us has ever seen, was found by **Phoebe Abbruzzese** as she explored a small tree-lined creek near the picnic area. **Russ Kastberg** found the rarest, when he turned over a rock during the afternoon field tour in the same stream Eric found the Cope's, to reveal what he first thought was a leach clinging to the underside of the rock. On closer examination, Carlo identified it as a coastal tailed frog tadpole (*Ascaphus truei*).

Other herps found over the course of the day include cascade torrent salamander larvae (*Rhyacotriton cascadae*),

possibly cascade frogs (*Rana cascadae*), garter snakes, a western red-backed salamander (*Plethodon vehiculum*) and ensatina (*Ensatina eschscholtzii*).

The perfect weather made for a perfect picnic. Savory salads, tasty burgers and delightful desserts treated the taste buds, as volunteers chatted, delighting in each others' tales of amphibian finds, as well as hopes and plans for environmental enhancements.

...continued on page 5 *S.W.A.M.P.*



Continued from Page 4 S.W.A.M.P.

Framed photos of a Pacific chorus frog, photographed by Dr. Peter Ritson, were given to volunteers for significant contributions to S.W.A.M.P.: **Dr. Louis LaPierre** for providing support through partnership with LCC; **Dave Newcomb** for continued survey participation and red-legged frog stewardship; **Russ Kastberg** for consistent behind-the-scenes making-things-happen as well as Indian Jack Slough and SLC survey leadership; **Luke Slind** for multiple surveys and dedicated interest in amphibians; **Jack Dojan** for longevity in the project, consistent support and countless survey of egg masses and tadpoles; **Sam Schongalla**, who is herself a gift to S.W.A.M.P. as CLT's volunteer coordinator, actively supporting amphibian surveys and strengthening relations with CLT, WHAS and S.W.A.M.P.; and, **Carlo Abbruzzese** for being involved since the beginning, providing additional training, survey sites, surveying, and partnering between DNR and S.W.A.M.P.

Dr. Peter Ritson received a framed photo, as well as a woven willow made by Ann Kastberg, because without his

efforts there would be no S.W.A.M.P., no amphibian surveys, no picnic. Peter started S.W.A.M.P., created and maintains the website and database, seeks grants and fosters volunteers.

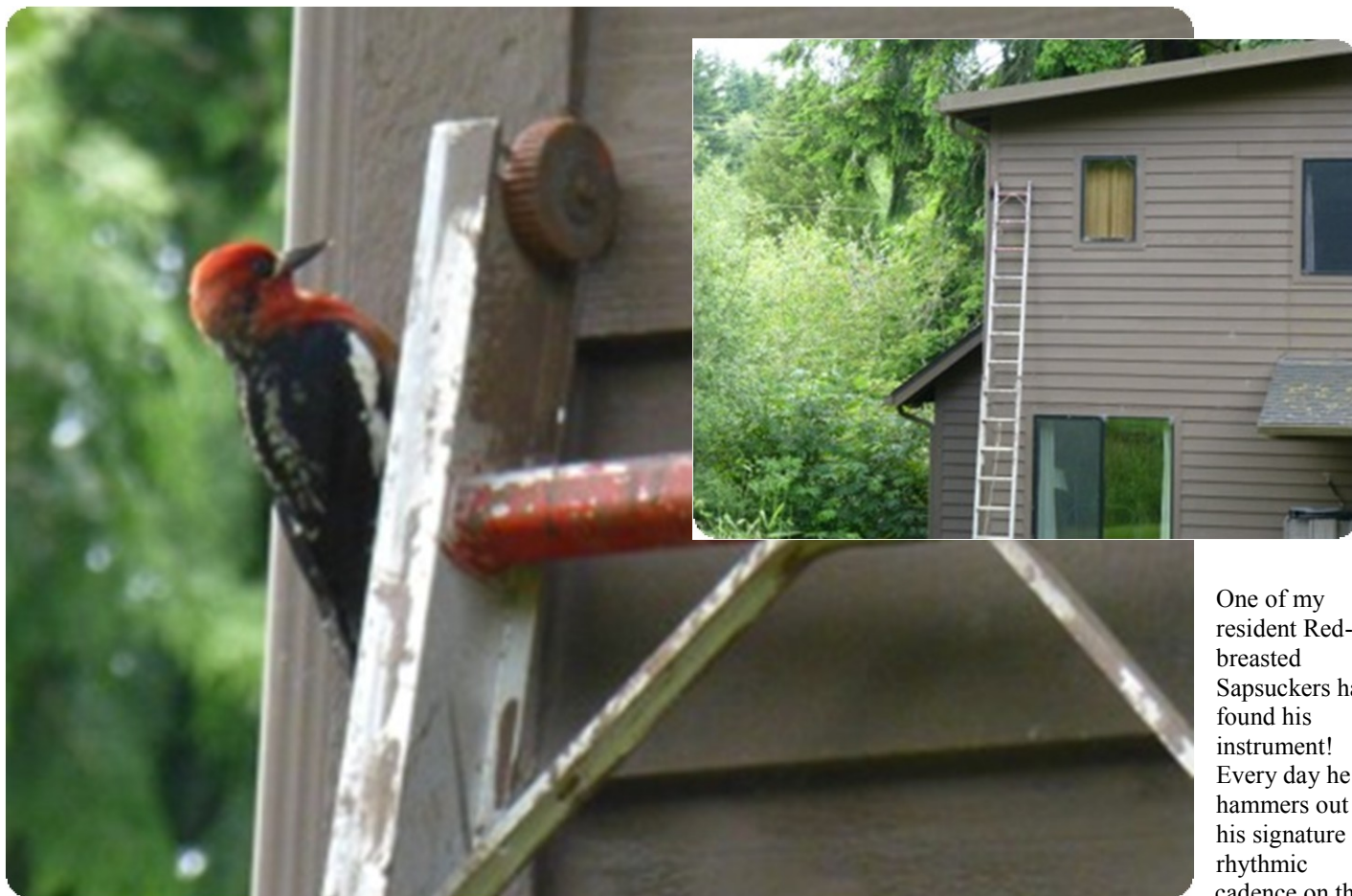
Packets of eight blank greeting cards, two cards each with photos of the four target survey species, were given with special thanks to **Ann Kastberg** for extending S.W.A.M.P. into Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties and for organizing the field day and picnic, to **Bruce and Teri Satterlund** for toad stewardship, to **Susan Tripp** for Watershed Stewards support, and to all the other volunteers and spouses who attended the picnic.

Carlo presented **Russ and Ann Kastberg** with an assortment of delicious chocolate truffles for their help throughout the years with various DNR projects and S.W.A.M.P. (Russ and Ann thought they made an exquisite dinner Saturday evening after a day in the field.)

Many thanks to WHAS for its continuing support of S.W.A.M.P.

Red-breasted Sapsuckers has found his instrument

By Darrel Whipple



One of my resident Red-breasted Sapsuckers has found his instrument! Every day he hammers out his signature rhythmic cadence on the

top end of my 16-foot aluminum ladder. The irony is I put the ladder up at the corner of the house to keep him from making more holes in the wood siding. The tactic saved the house, but now I am awakened every morning by the resonating ladder.

Washington States has two new Important Bird Areas (IBA)

Vaux's Swift Chimney Corridor IBA:

For the last six years Audubon's Vaux's Happening project (an effort sponsored jointly by Pilchuck Audubon Society, Eastside Audubon Society, and Seattle Audubon Society) has attempted to locate and monitor the Pacific Flyway's significant communal migratory Vaux's Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) roost sites. This has included a citizen science project, with data gathering from Southern California into British Columbia. Our recorded data of over four million roosting events suggests that the majority of the North American migratory Vaux's Swifts seek shelter in a small number of man-made masonry structures.

In Washington State there are only four such roost sites that have consistently documented evenings in excess of a thousand roosting swifts, with one-time highs of more than five thousand.

The four structures are:

- Building 2068 Joint Base Lewis McChord,
- Selleck Old Schoolhouse,
- Monroe's Frank Wagner Elementary School, and
- Old Northern State Hospital power plant.

All are decommissioned with ownership ranging from private individual to federal government.

These four structures were approved by the Washington State IBA Committee as a state-level IBA in March 2013: the "Vaux's Swift Chimney Corridor IBA." It is our hope that the official IBA designation for these structures will draw increased

From Washington State Audubon

attention to these roost sites and provide support for their preservation.

Skagit Bay IBA

Located in three Washington State counties (Skagit, Snohomish, Island), the Skagit Bay IBA comprises Skagit Bay, the Skagit river delta and surrounding farm fields. This area provides habitat for thousands of wintering waterfowl, including Trumpeter and Tundra Swans and Lesser Snow Geese.

The estuarine intertidal area consists of both deep and shallow water, with a shoreline characterized by tidally influenced mudflats and sloughs that provide habitat for migrating shorebirds, song birds, and raptors including nesting Ospreys, as well as resident raptors, such as Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and Northern Harriers. The adjoining farm fields are flat and diked. They are well known feeding areas for snow geese and swans. A forested hillside provides habitat for nesting Bald Eagles.

More information about IBA's in Washington State:

<http://iba.audubon.org/iba/stateIndex.do?state=US-WA>

More information about IBA's in Oregon:

<http://iba.audubon.org/iba/stateIndex.do?state=US-OR>

If you are interested in watching Vaux's Swifts locally visit downtown Rainier, OR or the Chapman School in Portland in September. (<http://audubonportland.org/local-birding/swiftwatch>)

Suzy Whitney spotted these birds, a **Spotted Sandpiper** (left) and a **Red-necked Phalarope**, in her pond in Long Beach, WA on their northern migration on the 21 & 22 of May.



Suzy Whitney 2013



Suzy Whitney 2013

Fundraising On-Line for Coal Dust Research

By Charlotte Persons

We know that exposure to coal dust can cause deadly disease in coal miners. However, one of the surprising facts about coal dust is that few studies have been done about the effects on the environment and people of coal dust from passing coal trains. This means that it is hard to know what safeguards should be used by the coal industry outside of their mines and loading facilities.

Dan Jaffe is a research scientist at the University of Washington with 20 years of experience and 100 publications on air pollutants. He became discouraged with writing grant proposals to investigate this research question. Instead, he is getting "crowd funding" through Microryza, a website where people can donate to scientific projects. Having raised the minimum \$20,000 needed to monitor pollution from coal trains

passing through the Seattle area, he is asking for \$7,000 more to set up a monitoring station along the Columbia Gorge. An article in the May 20 UW Daily quotes Jaffe as saying "Crowd funding will never replace funding that most scientists get from organizations like the National Science Foundation, but it may be able to augment projects from NSF or in cases where there are important issues but in areas where NSF or EPA doesn't want to investigate."

To find out more about Jaffe, his scientific credentials, and this particular project, go to <https://www.microryza.com/projects/do-coal-and-diesel-trains-make-for-unhealthy-air>

Barred Owls Camp Out in Longview Yard

By John Green, photos by Craig Gurnsey



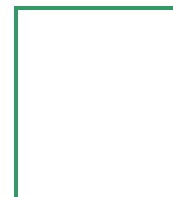
The Gurnsey family live just outside of Longview in a country setting with a tree-filled backyard. On May 30, Craig Gurnsey was sitting in his den when he heard a scratching noise coming from his deck. He went to the deck to investigate and was surprised to see a baby barred owl. He quickly grabbed his camera and caught some great shots. The photo session was interrupted by his son's holler, warning him of the mother swooping down for an attack on the "threat" to her



young one. Craig ducked inside in the nick of time to escape her sharp talons. The mother eventually came to trust the family and unfazed, brought rats and other rodents to the owlet which became known to the family as Furby. He remained on the Gurnsey's deck for several days before hopping off and into the woods. Except for the need to haul off remnants of carcasses, the family enjoyed their experience with the owl family and feel privileged to have them in their lives for a short time. Craig graciously provided the photos and story to WHAS for sharing.



PO Box 399
Longview, WA 98632



The *Willapa Whistler* is the bi-monthly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

TEMP -- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Complimentary copies are sent to organizations and prospective members. All WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.

Articles, information, wildlife sightings and artwork are welcomed. The deadline for inclusion of material in the *Whistler* is the 15th of each even-numbered month. 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.

WHAS Annual Picnic for Members and Friends

Where: Wake Robin – Longview school district's nature facility

When: Sunday, July 28th at 1pm

See page one for more details.

Keeping with tradition, our field trip chair is taking the summer off; we hope all our members and friends find ways to enjoy the outdoors this summer and join us in the fall when our activities resume. The Lake Sacajawea second Saturday bird walks will begin again on Saturday, September 14th at 8:00 AM. Other fall plans will appear in the September issue of the *Whistler*, on the web site and will be announced through our gmail alert system.

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