

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 38 // Issue 3

May / June 2012



Chipping Sparrows are annual in spring migration in small numbers, but not a usual resident of our area. This image was taken in a backyard in Kelso.-- *Image Royce Craig*

2013 Bird Calendar

By Carlo Abbruzzese

After another successful printing and selling of our bird calendar WHAS has decided to continue the effort in 2013.

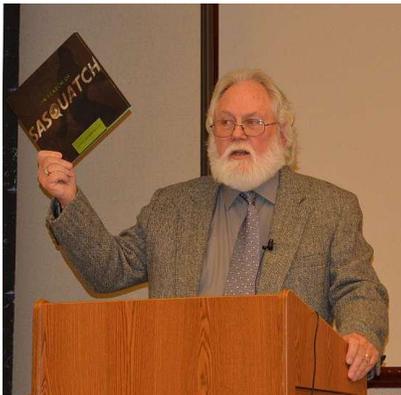
Last year we sold over 450 calendars and made a profit of around \$2,300 for WHAS. Many people helped make this project successful. The calendar committee consisted of Carlo Abbruzzese, Darrel Whipple, Ann and Russ Kastberg, John and Margaret Green, Charlotte Persons and Pam Wright.

Vendors who carried the calendar include the Britts, Zojos coffee, Portland Backyard Bird Shops and a special thanks to Paperbacks Galore who went above and beyond the call of duty to help sell the calendars. Special thanks also go to Ann and Russ for selling a whopping 114 calendars and Darrel Whipple who alone sold 78! I think Darrel must have asked just about everyone he knows and lots he didn't know! Margaret Green took the lead in selling them at meetings and Margaret and Pam kept track of handing out calendars and the bookkeeping.

Thanks to everyone!

If you would like to contribute photos to the 2013 calendar or would like to help in any way please contact me at puffbird@juno.com or 360-425-6133. We especially need help in marketing and distributing them in late summer early fall.

Impressions from the Annual WHAS Meeting and Banquet with Program: "Still Walking: Bigfoot in the Dark Divide and Beyond."



Images by Larry Brandt

This year's annual member meeting was a great success. Our members had good food and shared some great conversation. We said good-bye to 3 people leaving the WHAS board of directors—Pam Wright, Russ Kastberg and Alan Richards and welcomed the new directors at large Carol Carver, George Exum, John Gross and our new treasurer Linda Jennings.

A big crowd enjoyed the Bigfoot talk by Dr. Robert Michael Pyle. For anyone who missed the talk, KLTV recorded the program and will carry it locally.



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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:
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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.

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Please indicate any **new** information:

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(Add your email address below)
- Contact me about volunteer opportunities
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New WA Audubon Chapter Coordinator

Shala Racicky is Washington Audubon's new chapter coordinator. She will be working with Audubon chapters across the state, as well as coordinating statewide efforts to address environmental issues.

Her top priorities are:

- Meet with each regional chapter group,
- Review the Audubon Strategic Plan,
- Discuss chapter related activities and provide a legislative update.

Contact her at 206-652-2444 x106; sracicky@audubon.org

Excerpts from the last Board Meeting on February 26

Calendar 2013 – Several members of the Calendar Committee reported that the committee was willing to move forward on next year's Calendar only if there was general agreement from the Board that they would support the effort to market and sell the calendars. (See page one for more information)

Birdathon 2012 – It was decided to skip the Birdathon for 2012, and to table planning discussion until 3rd Quarter Board Meeting.

Donation Policy – The Board discussed the WHAS donation policy to support like-minded organizations. A task force was created to develop a uniform policy."

Public Board and Membership Meetings – This idea was presented as a way to involve more members in the activities of our organization. The values and difficulties of having monthly meetings/programs was discussed. Even though Board meetings are currently open to all members, it was decided to more aggressively pursue their involvement.

Birding Ecuador's Andes

By Russ Koppendrayer

On February 10th Jeff Jendro and I left Portland Airport on a flight to Quito, Ecuador to start a nineteen day birding trip to the Andes in Ecuador. We'd gave ourselves a day in Quito to recover from jet lag and check out the city before we met our guides and the rest of our party for sixteen days of intense birding. The tour we had selected was operated by Field Guides with the title being "Jewels of Ecuador: Hummers, Tanagers & Antpittas" and we were in for some fine jewels. **During our stay I would see 68 species of hummingbirds, 76 species of tanagers and 8 species of the ever elusive Antpittas out of the total of 530 species for the trip.**

The habitats in the Ecuadorian Andes vary dramatically as you go up and over the two parallel north-south ranges as well as going north and south in the country. This gives rise to over 1600 bird species recorded in this country. Our first day was a visit to a forest preserve known as Yanacocha which protects the water supply of Quito. As we got off the tourist bus that would be our primary type of transportation for the trip we witnessed a group of hummingbird feeders at the headquarters area to the trail system. The hummers here included the *Sword-billed Hummingbird* which has the longest bill of any hummer. Since it's not the largest hummer the bill is very dramatic and fun to see.

Among the tanagers we saw on our morning hike was the *Superciliaried Hemispingus* which became my favorite species name for the trip. Say it fast three times! As we returned to the trailhead we were treated to an up close visit by a *Tawny Antpitta*, a representative of my favorite bird family and the main reason I chose this particular trip. These birds have short tails and very long legs compared to their body size and either walk or stay low in the foliage of the forests where they can be very secretive. This bird came to worms fed by a ranger in a recently discovered feeding system I'll discuss more in a bit.

The next morning we flew to Loja and our six day visit to the southern part of the country. While we visited a number of places here, a lot of our time was spent on the fringes of Povocarpos National Park. This huge park is what we would consider a wilderness area with roads to some of the access points but no motorized vehicles in the parts we visited, so we birded from the roads on the perimeter and did a couple day hikes into the park.

Two of my favorite bird encounters of the trip occurred here. First was a *Rufous Antpitta* that held our group of 14 spellbound as it called and walked within a few feet of nearly each of us as we stood frozen along a fork in a forest trail and it went from in front of us to the rear. A few days later at an eco-lodge, our home for a few nights, we witnessed a tiny hummingbird called a *Spangled Coquette* do a magnificent job of defending itself in the hummer wars at a huge flowering bush that was attracting all the neighborhood hummers. He would face off with all the bigger bullies who tried to drive him away until they went back to feeding and he would too. Made my day!

After a flight back to Quito we headed east to Cabanas San Isidro an eco-lodge set in a private family forest reserve. On the drive over we saw the aptly named *Giant Hummingbird*, the world's largest. Highlights here included what is being called the *San Isidro Owl*, a stunningly beautiful bird that may be a

species of its own, but hasn't been described to science as of yet. It does appear to be related to the Black-banded Owl, but more study needs to be done on this new find. Besides another array of hummers coming to feeders we had daily looks at *Golden-headed and Crested Quetzals* as well as *Masked Trogon*. But again for me the stars were the Antpittas especially the rare and seldom seen *Peruvian Antpitta* which was another of the stars from the new worm feeding program. I find it to be a special feeling to see a species that has been seen by a very limited number of people due to its limited range, numbers and skulking habits.

On the day of our return to Quito we spent some time over 14000 feet in elevation in Coca National Park. You don't feel as if you're near the equator bundled against temperatures near freezing and the wind biting. But here above timber line in the grasses and shrubs is one of the most intricately beautiful birds I've ever seen in the *Rufous-Bellied Seedsnipe*. The pair we saw was so exquisitely feathered and stunning, yet if you looked away and back they were nearly impossible to see unless they moved, their camouflage was so excellent.

After an overnight in Quito we headed off to the west and our last leg in the Mindo area. As always on this trip another set of hummingbirds and tanagers to learn. We also got stunning views of the bright orange and black balls going through the forest, the *Andean Cock-of-the-Rock*. Wonderful!

On this tour the best was saved for last as that was the day of our visit to Paz de las Aves. This is the farm of a man named Angel Paz, who originated the feeding of worms to the Antpittas and has taught this technique to others. By leaving some of his land forested and charging folks to see its wonders he makes twice as much as he could farming it.

A few years ago while leading a group of birders out from seeing the Andean Cock-of-the Rock they happened to see an Antpitta on the trail and a birder jokingly said, "Get that bird to come to a feeder and you can really make some money". Being a farmer and not an ornithologist Angel was unaware this couldn't be done, so he dug some worms and set about imitating the whistles of the Antpitta calls he'd heard in various places on his property and if the birds approached threw them a few worms. He did this at the same time of day and every day and in a few weeks had Antpittas reliably coming to his whistles. He now has paying visiting birders nearly daily and has charged to teach others his techniques so they can do the same for other Antpitta species around Ecuador as well as in Peru and Columbia. I'd read about Angel in the last couple years and it was an honor to meet him and have him show us the *Yellow-Breasted Antpitta* on his property.

Nearly as impressive for me and probably more so for a number of our group were the fruit feeders at Angel's farm. Coming to these makeshift banana feeders were a number of hard to see species. Tops for me were the *Dark-Backed Wood-Quail* that came walking in as we sat like silent statues a few feet away. Having heard a number of species of wood-quail in tropical America, but never even catching a glimpse, this was astounding. Also coming in were *Toucan Barbet* in its seven colors as well as *Crimson-Rumped Toucanet* and *Plate-Billed Mountain-Toucan*

as well as a parade of colorful *Tanagers* when the big boys were taking a break.

As we're about to return to Quito and a return flight to Portland I took a look back at what I've written and realize I nearly completely ignored one of the gems of the Ecuadorian Andes, the tanagers. They were constant throughout the trip in their stunningly bright colors, especially the genus *Tangara* of which we saw 22 species.

With 530 species of birds seen in 17 days of birding with many of them new to me it was a bit overwhelming at times, but incredibly exciting and fun. I'm already checking out possibilities for my 2013 trip. Could it be northern Peru or will it be my first foray into the old world? Or someplace I haven't thought of yet? Time will tell.

In Memory of Gerald Henry (April 21, 1930 -- March 18, 2012)

By Darrel Whipple

Longtime WHAS members mourn the passing of Jerry Henry, who was an active member and leader of the chapter in the 1970s, '80s and '90s.

Jerry served on the WHAS board for many years, wrote occasional articles for the Whistler, and was a fixture at WHAS programs and Christmas Bird Counts. As a board member Jerry served a number of terms as director-at-large, as well as stints as treasurer and co-chair of the field trips committee.

Jerry came from a family of teachers. The Walt Henry School, an innovative public elementary school near Forest Grove, Oregon, was named for Jerry's father, who was a distinguished educator in Washington County. Jerry had his own teaching career of many years in Rainier School District, after which he managed an apartment building in Longview. As health problems began to plague Jerry in recent years he nevertheless

made time for hiking and birdwatching outings and Scottish country dancing sessions with local friends.

I will remember Jerry's contributions not only to WHAS but also to environmental education, as he was a co-founder of Rainier District's outdoor school for sixth graders in 1974. He also was first to grasp the potential benefit of developing the Fox Creek Trail in the woods behind Rainier Elementary School and urged me to pursue that dream when I came to teach at the school in 1989.

Jerry will be fondly remembered by many local birdwatchers who had occasion to share with him special encounters with our avian neighbors. He will be missed not only by his WHAS friends but also by many who knew him in the Mount St. Helens Hiking Club, of which he was an active and loyal member.

Lake Sacajawea Native Plant Garden

By Pam Wright

On March 17 volunteers suited up in waders and boots to tackle invasive plants and fill in the native plant garden with understory natives. We are happy to report no major capsizing occurred amongst the waders digging out invasive yellow-flag iris growing along the shoreline, and the pile of plant material for discard was impressive after their efforts. We will monitor re-sprouting of the iris and determine our next step accordingly. Additional headway was also made in clearing out the ivy from the rocks along the bank. Finally, we planted understory natives to add diversity, color and pizzazz. Walk by the site on the Nichols Blvd side of the Lake just south of Washington Way to follow our progress.



Image by Pam Wright

Recent question to WHAS:

We have a woodpecker that comes each morning and pecks on the side of our house - it's wallboard.

Answer from John Green: It is a mating ritual and should dissipate when he finds a honey. In the mean time here are some suggestions from WDF&W: Flickers that have been crowded out of their wooded territories will readily use alternative structures for drumming, seeking food, or excavating a cavity. The flicker that awakens you in the spring is making good use of the habitat you are providing. So don't remove dead or decaying trees in the hope of driving flickers away. That makes it more likely they may investigate your house for food or a nest site. More: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/woodpeckers.html>

Backyard Birding Notes

Article compiled by Larry Turner with information from the Washington Fish and Wildlife

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has a "Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program." Most readers of the Whistler understand what it takes to attract wildlife, but it does not hurt to repeat what DFW has to say:

Want to make your property better for wildlife?

Consider these suggestions:

- Plant more trees and shrubs. Remember, vegetation is the key to attracting a variety of wildlife. Dead trees (snags) are especially valuable to wildlife; try to keep them on your property if they pose no safety hazard.
- Add a birdbath, garden pond, or other source of water. A safe place to bathe and drink will act as a magnet to many animals.
- Add bird houses, or better yet, try to leave snags on your property. Cavity-nesting birds have been especially impacted by urban development. A bird house of the proper dimensions can substitute for snags where these birds used to nest.
- Cover any openings under the eaves or other places around your house where house sparrows and starlings may nest. These non-native birds are undesirable competitors for food and nesting cavities and many native birds have suffered because of their presence. Bird houses and feeders should be designed and managed to reduce use by sparrows and starlings.
- Control cats that may be prowling around your sanctuary; they can be especially harmful to birds that feed or nest on the ground. Visit the [American Bird Conservancy Website](http://www.abcbirds.org/) (<http://www.abcbirds.org/>) for information on their "Cats Indoors!" program for ideas on how to keep your cats indoors.



Image by Robert P. VanNatta – He was using a motor drive camera turned on a Steller's Jay. The stump was empty in the next frame. This photo suggests to him that the Jay accomplishes its quick take-off by squatting as shown here and then jumping, effectively catapulting itself into the air. It provides an explanation of the usefulness of fairly long legs on this bird.

- Get your neighbors interested in backyard wildlife. Several adjacent yards with good wildlife resources are even more effective. Most wildlife species need areas larger than a single lot can provide. Remember, every homeowner is a habitat manager, and the collective actions of conscientious homeowners will benefit the wildlife that shares your living space.
- Keep bird feeders clean and safe, if you choose to feed for your own viewing pleasure.

Visit the DFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/> to see additional suggestions on landscape design, attracting hummingbirds (one of my favorites), ponds and birdbaths, feeding and other backyard activities. If you want to be acknowledged for your efforts to provide habitat, you can even fill out an application to be designated as a "Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary" with a certificate and a yard sign (cost \$5). If the sign looks like what is on their website, it is quite attractive, and in any case would be educational and could promote efforts by others who see it. I think I will be doing that very soon. [Thanks to Russ Kastberg for recommending this website.]

You are invited to the Wenas Campout

May 25-28, 2012

For over four decades Audubon families have been camping over Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Campground.

Officially named the Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary, it's located SW of Ellensburg, in an "Important Bird Area" and has been assured of protective status by WA Dept. of Natural Resources. The "primitive" campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek has exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades.

There are wonderful field trips scheduled, and there will be an old-fashioned campfire in our "approved" fire pit device each evening. We do storytelling and recapping the sightings of the day.

Please visit Wenas Website to see Hazel Wolf's familiar smiling face and get lots of downloadable information about our campout: www.wenasaudubon.org.

There's a bird checklist, wildflower checklist, outline of field trips and program, directions to the campground, and lots of photos.

Every vehicle will be required to have a "Discover Pass."

The easiest way to get the pass online is at:

<http://www.discoverpass.wa.gov> The cost for the yearly pass is \$30. Bring friends, family, and join us at Wenas Memorial Day Weekend for as many days as you want to stay.

See you there: Doris Johnson and Helen Engle

2012 Great Backyard Bird Count Results

For more information please contact Larry Tuner

The results of the 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count are in. Here are some highlights:

The most frequently reported birds (based on numbers of checklists) were:

National		Washington	
Northern cardinal	48,802	Dark-eyed junco	1956
Mourning dove	47,925	Black-capped chickadee	1548
Dark-eyed junco	43,792	Spotted towhee	1189
Downy woodpecker	38,264	Northern flicker	1089
American crow	36,060	American Robin	1086
House finch	35,853	American crow	1049
American goldfinch	34,781	House finch	1041
Blue jay	33,931	Song sparrow	986
Black-capped chickadee	33,226	Chestnut-backed chickadee	952
Tufted titmouse	32,182	Pine siskin	923

The most numerous birds were

Nationally		Washington	
Snow goose	3,259,469	Snow goose	67,291
Tree swallow	3,060,169	American robin	41,672
Red-winged blackbird	1,719,373	Dark-eyed junco	17,789
Canada goose	932,013	Canada goose	17,232
Common grackle	578,625	Mallard	15,364
European starling	513,382	American crow	14,060
American robin	345,211	European starling	13,528
American goldfinch	320,997	Pine siskin	13,305
Mallard	311,938	American widgeo	12,304
American coot	308,310	American coot	11,704

The most checklists came from California and east coast states, although Ontario, Canada was 6th. California had the most species with 332, but Oregon was fifth with 205 and Washington 6th with 203 species; British Columbia was 9th with 190 species. Florida had the largest numbers of birds with 3,677,000 birds (over 3,000,000 in Ruskin, FL - on Tampa Bay - alone). Missouri had over 2,000,000 birds, mostly on Squaw Creek NWR, and Delaware had over 1,000,000 mostly in Newark. California was 4th with 750,000 birds and Washington was 10th with 365,000. Among zip codes, Corvallis was 3rd in submitting

370 checklists.

Not surprisingly, most participation in Washington was in Seattle (221 checklists), Olympia (206) and Vancouver (111). Olympia with 116 different species edged out Sequim (113) and Seattle (102). Closer to home, Longview had 13 checklists with 27 species; Kelso had 11 checklists with 40 species; Cathlamet had 3 checklists and 40 species; Woodland had 3 checklists and 26 species. Communities in Pacific and Lewis County also participated proportionately, but I limited these results to Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. In both Longview and Kelso, Pine siskins were the most numerous followed by Dark-eyed juncos. In Cathlamet, Canada goose was most numerous followed by Lesser scaup; Robins and Dark-eyed juncos were most common in Woodland. The complete results are at <http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/results>.



Royce Craig has seen the fluffy breeding plumage of this Bittern before, but the pink-tinged beak puzzled him.

Question of the Month? "Stump the Birder"

By Russ Kastberg

What is a male swan or a seagull?

Source: Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1947.

Book Review

Collected Stories of Wallace Stegner; Wallace Stegner; Penguin; 1995

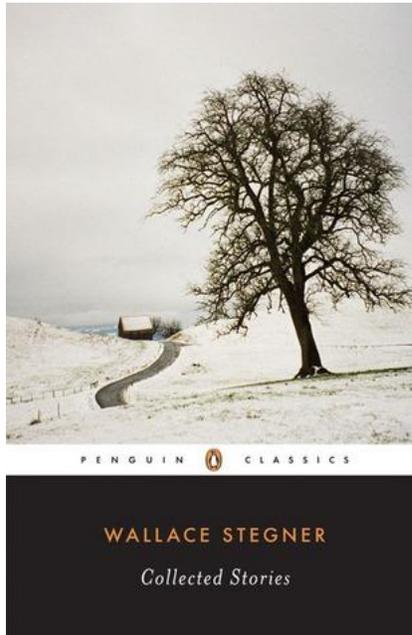
It is not uncommon for people (read: siblings and grown children) to refer to me as a "birdwatcher" in a tone that implies something other than full compliment - almost as though I'm not securely rooted in this world. From my readings, I don't feel alone in the reference. I have long since chosen to understand this teasing as a kind of common question, "Why would you spend your time bird watching?"

Recently, on a trip to Boise, Idaho, my husband and I were birding along a dirt road above the Lucky Peak Dam and happened onto a small park, Foote Park. As I learned, the park was developed in honor of Footes, a couple significant in the development of the west in the 1800s. Mrs. Foote's collected letters were the basis of Wallace Stegner's Pulitzer prize-winning novel, *Angle of Repose*.

Since this has for some years been one of my personal favorites, the unexpected reference sent me back to Stegner's work.

During this review, in *Collected Stories of Wallace Stegner*, I happened on his short story, *A Field Guide To The Western Birds*. The narrator is a New York literary agent, Joe Alliston, who has retired to the hills of Northern California to write his memoirs. In his beautiful setting he enjoys feeding and

By Carolyn Norred



watching the birds. "The terrace is a good place just to lie and listen. Lots of bird business."

Joe confesses to having previously held somewhat the same attitude toward birding as my family sometimes expresses to me when he relates that before retiring,

"I never got into my gaiters and slung my binoculars and put a peanut butter sandwich and an apple in my pocket and set off lightheartedly through the woods. I have seen them come straggling by on a Sunday afternoon, looking like a cross between the end of a Y.W.C.A picnic and Hare and Hounds at Rugby, but it was always a little too tweedy and muscular to stir me... until we came here..."

In summary, Stegner's story develops as Joe's experience attending an elaborate and expensive dinner party at his neighbors home. Though it is lengthy for a

short story, 48 pages, and drags a bit in the middle, Stegner, in his usual provocative and insightful style, manages to parallel human lives and bird lives. The story's conclusion returns to the earlier question of why we watch the birds. And Joe Alliston, like this writer, watches birds for much the same reason we watch other people - the miracle and the mystery.'s.

"Feathers: the Evolution of a Natural Miracle"

Thor Hanson

Basic Books 2011

Thor Hanson's book "Feathers: the Evolution of a Natural Miracle" is not for everyone, but this rather lengthy book (336 pages) is filled with fascinating facts and detail about the uniquely avian biology, the feather. The first few chapters deal with the historical evolutionary debates and fossil discoveries which lead to the current and largely accepted theory of the origination of birds from dinosaurs. Hanson references research and supportive discussions that are both informative and interesting. The two theories "ground up" and "tree down" to resolve the evolution of flight, are carefully constructed, as well including the possible development of feathers emerging from reptilian skins.

Hanson also explores the many functions feathers perform for birds and how man has adapted the amazing characteristics to his own needs. The author describes the insulating properties which protect the tiny Golden-crowned Kinglet in the frigid northern winters as well as the back country packer, the wing shape that has allowed man to take to the skies, to the water repellent properties that man has yet to replicate.

By Margaret Green



The many tropical Birds of Paradise species have evolved elaborate feather color, structure, and manipulations for mating displays, while the Ecuadorian Club-Feathered Manekin plays his feathers like a bow on a fiddle string as part of its rituals.

The human desire to be similarly adorned and the explosion of the millinery trade in the late 19th and early 20th century was nearly the demise for many species worldwide. A positive outcome of this excess was the spawning of the National Audubon Society. Women were the most vocal advocates for conservation during that time. The author skillfully moves from the evolutionary story to the human

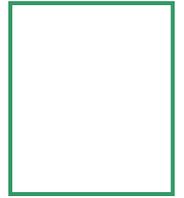
connection and provides continuously enlightening tidbits to full course ideas about the subject.

Even though the text was a bit cumbersome at times, I was enriched by its reading. The book can be found both at the Longview Public and Timberland Libraries.



**Willapa Hills
Audubon Society**

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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.

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.

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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.

Saturday, June 2: Kid's Day from 9 to 3:

Willapa Hills Audubon will have a table at Bob's Merchandise Kids' Day on Saturday June 2nd from 9 to 3 with bird related educational activities aimed at the many children attending the event. Stop by to join in the fun for the kids dissecting owl pellets, assembling pre-cut wood duck boxes and making feather bookmarks.

Friday, May 18 - 6:30pm: Wollenberg Auditorium at Lower Columbia College

Please join the Willapa Hills Audubon Society and the Lower Columbia College Biological Society in viewing a free screening of the documentary movie "Bag It". This film explores our plastic world and the environmental implications of the 12,000 plastic bags Americans throw away every minute. Anyone interested in this important issue is welcome to attend.

Check the website for other Programs and Field Trips in May and June.

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