

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 36 // Issue 6

November / December 2010

Backyard Birds

of Western Washington



2011 Calendar

Image: Carlo Abbruzzese

2011 Backyard Bird Calendar for Sale

By Carlo Abbruzzese

Willapa Hills Audubon Society is offering a full color calendar featuring birds found in backyards or at birdfeeders. This 9-inch by 12-inch, 13-month calendar provides dates of Christmas Bird Counts and some area birding festivals as well as information on how to attract more birds to your yard.

The cost is \$10 with all proceeds supporting the WHAS mission. Please consider purchasing a calendar as a Christmas present for someone who would like to learn more about the birds they see at their birdfeeder or just for anyone who like birds.

To purchase a calendar (or calendars) contact Carlo Abbruzzese at puffbird@juno.com or 360-425-6133 or any of the board members listed on page 2 of the Whistler. We only printed a limited edition, so don't wait too long.

Check out our Exciting Program for November

By Bob Arnsdorf

On Saturday, November 6, at 2:00 pm at the Longview Library we will show the first movie in our *Birds of Hollywood* series, Alfred Hitchcock's "*The Birds*", in the Halloween spirit. And we will have popcorn and drinks.

On Friday night, November 19, **Sharnelle Fee, Executive Director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast**, a bird and animal rehabilitation center in Astoria, will be joining us at 7:00 pm at LCC in the student center cafeteria (<http://lcc.ctc.edu/maps/campus/stc.htm>). She'll be discussing her efforts at wildlife rehabilitation and will be bringing several **live birds** including a brown pelican, spotted owl and some sea birds depending on availability.

Amphibian Egg Mass Survey Training

The Second Annual Amphibian Egg Mass Survey Training will be held at LCC (room PSC 104) on Saturday, January 15, 2011. Marc Hayes, amphibian expert extraordinaire, has agreed to train us on identification again this season. We'll also break into teams and plan for the 2011 survey season.

For more information and to RSVP contact Ann Kastberg at 360-274-7091 or acwikman@cni.net.

Tidbits

By John Green

Birds are truly remarkable creatures and can be enjoyed beyond their beauty of feather and song. A few tidbits:

- Lyanda Haupt, in her book, "Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds", relates a story of two American Crows near a garbage can in a McDonald's parking lot. The birds were observed dipping French fries into honey mustard sauce before eating them.
- According to "The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior", a White-crowned Sparrow must find and eat a seed every four to five seconds during the winter to survive.
- Sibley also tells us migrating birds sometimes fly two to six days without rest, a feat of physical endurance that could be similar to a human running 4-minute miles for 80 hours straight.
- To conserve energy on cold winter nights, chickadees can lower their body temperature from 107.6° F to 86° F.

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.

- ☐ I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email (Add your email address below)

If you are also interested in membership in the National Audubon Society, please visit <http://www.audubon.org/>.

Please make your check payable to: WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:

WHAS, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632

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

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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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.

**To allow members to announce and discuss items of general interest.



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WHAS Board Meeting

The next WHAS board meeting will be February 5, Julia Butler Hanson Wildlife Refuge, headquarters building, from 10:00--1:00. Snacks and coffee will be provided.

Receive the *Whistler* by email

Willapa Hills Audubon Society now 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. Please consider signing up for electronic delivery to reduce paper waste, mail box clutter and expenses associated with printing and mailing of the *Whistler*.

Send your full name and e-mail address to our Membership Chair, Gloria Nichols at membership@willapahillsaudubon.org.

WHAS Develops Five-Year Plan

By Larry Brandt

When a business develops its five-year plan it addresses growth, cost of operation, employment and the like. When the Willapa Hills Chapter of the Audubon Society considers the next five years, the subject matter is quite different.

On October 3rd eighteen dedicated members of WHAS gathered to develop a game plan of conservation-related activities to be accomplished within the next five years. The question: How do we grow to better serve the ever-increasing conservation needs in southwest Washington? Lofty goals were set related to conservation, nature education, membership and voluntary participation for on-going and new projects. And, of course, bird watching!

One member of the retreat group set the tone for our all-day planning session: "My personal goal would be to make sure we come up with concrete plans that can be implemented by the

various committee chairs and that will engage an expanding number of people in our activities."

So now it is the job of the WHAS Board of Directors and committee chairs to implement the five-year goals. Perhaps the initial and most onerous tasks are to grow membership and recruit volunteers to our various projects. Current projects include regularly scheduled field trips, restoration of 180-acres along Nelson Creek adjacent to the Julia Butler Hanson Refuge, a yearly amphibian census, back yard birding, addressing Willapa Bay issues and, of course, the Christmas bird count.

Volunteers are needed for all these tasks—and soon the laundry list will expand. Do you have some time and the need to get out of the house?

Please contact us and let us know your area of interests. No experience required.

The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can read the *Willapa Whistler* online on our website? To see the **pictures in color** or in case you missed a previous issue go to <http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org> and just click on the *Whistler* in the top menu.

Christmas Bird Counts Overview

By Alan Richards

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is citizen-science at its best. You can help with this effort, whether you have ever gone bird watching or not. You will have the opportunity to meet new people with interests in birds, or spend time with friends from previous years. Observant eyes are needed for that day: the more the better. You can point out where you see birds and experts in your group can do the identifying. If you do know some of the birds in your area, so much the better. This is your chance to help collect the information which will direct decisions in future, decisions which will affect how much natural beauty, including birds, remains for future generations.

In the field you have chances to socialize with your fellow counters, and when the counting is through, all counters (feeder watchers included) are invited to the Count-In-Supper, a no-host dinner and compilation of everyone's results. This joyous event begins at 5 p.m. at the Hunters' Inn, Highway 4 at the east end of Naselle, on the evening of the Leadbetter Count. (For details on Count-In dinners after Other WHAS counts, please refer to the sidebar.)

Bring your binoculars if you have, some, boots, warm clothes and a lunch, and join us for a day outside, looking closely at some of Nature's most interesting creatures, sharing the day with people who have similar interests.

If you happen to live within the Count circle you can count birds at your feeder that day. For the Leadbetter Point CBC, on the east side of the Long Beach peninsula that includes the area north of about 195th Street, as well as the communities of Oysterville and Nahcotta, among others; on the west side of the peninsula, the towns of Klipsan Beach, Ocean Park, and others; the CBC circle also includes the Nemah and Palix River areas along the bay.

For the Wahkiakum CBC, the area includes portions of the Skamokawa, Puget Island, Cathlamet, and Brownsmead areas. For the Cowlitz-Coweeman-Columbia CBC, the area includes portions of Kelso-Longview and the surrounding area. Contact the Count leader to sign up and for more exact boundary descriptions.

See box on right for details about all Willapa Hills Audubon Society sponsored Christmas Bird Counts.

CBC Where and When?

Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count:

Saturday, December 18th, 2010

To be placed in a group for the day, or to volunteer to count at your feeder, contact Alan Richards, 360-484-7119 or email birdcounts@willapahillsaudubon.org

Wahkiakum Christmas Bird Count

Thursday, December 30 2010,

To sign up contact Andrew Emlen (360-795-8009) or email aemlen@centurytel.net

Cowlitz -Columbia Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, January 1, 2011

This will be our 27th official year and we hope it will be good weather. Our count will be part of the 2010 International Christmas Bird Count. We will be out for an 8 hour period covering a 15 mile diameter area looking for any birds that will let us see them. We hope to have very cooperative birds this year.

Please plan to join us this year. Pass on a good day by inviting someone along with you.

To sign up, contact Bob Reistroffer, 360-636-5125 or email breistrof@aol.com. He'll form teams in mid-December and get contact information to all participants then. We plan to have a compilation potluck at his house on Scenic View Dr., Longview. He will get a map and driving directions to all participants.

Hope to see you 1-1-11 !

Washington State-Wide Audubon Effort

By Charlotte Persons, President

Many of us have been concerned about the dissolution of the state Audubon Washington office last fall, and how essential state services would continue. We were fortunate to have grants to pay for a part-time lobbyist during part of the last legislative session and a part-time science consultant until this fall.

But these were stop-gap measures. On October 18, at Audubon Council of Washington meeting in Mt. Vernon, the state chapters created a new plan to continue the state-wide effort. Chapter delegates re-affirmed that the most important goal was to maintain an Audubon voice in Olympia, and the second priority was to maintain a system of communication among our state chapters.

Chapters organized themselves into six regions. Willapa Hills Audubon Society will be in the Southwest Washington region, along with Black Hills, Vancouver, Grays Harbor, Discovery Coast and possibly Tahoma. Each region nominated a representative for an Executive Council—our representative is Helen Engle, with back-up/help from Kris Schoyen and Bryan Flint.

After discussion of six different models for hiring a staff person, the chapters came up with both a short- and long-term plan. The Executive Council was empowered to hire someone to be our voice in Olympia, and will report to the chapters on that task by December 1. Washington State Audubon Conservation

Committee (WSACC) will provide guidance on our priorities for lobbying/legislation.

Thanks to pledges of \$24,000 from the state's chapters, there is enough funding to hire a part-time lobbyist who will also alert chapters about conservation issues. If the Executive Council cannot hire a qualified lobbyist in time for the 2011 legislative session, instead it will hire someone to organize chapter participation in one or two Audubon lobby days, probably with the Environmental Priorities Coalition.

Because there are so many questions about long-term solvency and governance for our state-wide effort, the Executive Council will explore these issues and present a proposal for a long-term plan no later than summer 2011 for chapter boards to consider.

Chapter delegates voted to have a single, one-day, state-wide meeting in 2011-2012, which will continue to be called Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW), and it will be in the fall. The Eastern Washington region volunteered to organize it.

In terms of chapter communications, the email listservs for ACOW and WSACC will continue, and the regional Audubon office will maintain the Audubon WA website.

Special thanks for organizing this effort go to Bryan Flint, Shawn Cantrell, and all the many others who helped over the last year.

Woodland Bottom Field Trip Report

By John Green

On October 17, Russ Koppendrayner led the trip into the



Woodland bottoms with eight other avid bird watchers. The group had a successful day including lots of sunshine with the nip of fall in the air. 38 species were seen with highlights of the day including large numbers of Eurasian-collared Doves, Bald Eagles and other raptors, a flock of American Pipits, soaring and foraging Sandhill Cranes, and two Greater White-fronted Geese found in a flock of Cackling Geese estimated at over 5000 individuals.



Book Review

By Carolyn Norred

***The Owl Papers*, Jonathon Maslow,
Vintage Books Ed.; Random House, Inc. 1988.**

On a recent camp-out near Bend, OR, we discovered just a short jaunt up a dirt road from our camp was a tree that seemed to be the perch for a family of Great Horned owls, mama, papa, and junior. Thrilled as I was, I would head out first thing every morning to check, and sure enough, there they perched, looking down on me as if I were something much less appealing than a nice juicy rodent.



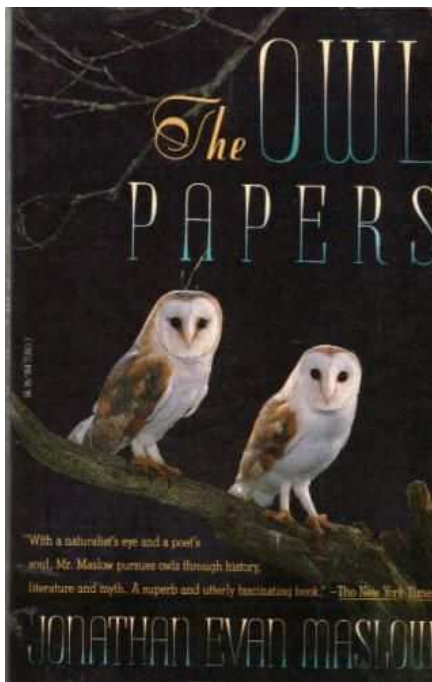
Image courtesy of Art Norred

So, of course, my next stop was the bookstore and Jonathan Maslow's *The Owl Papers*. In this short text, 177 pages, Maslow manages to give his reader a broad range of owl form and function.

For example, he addresses the science of these birds: "...a sound scanner is exactly what the owl's face is...

The rounded facial disks, which give the grand old Great Horned its appealing, semi human appearance, are actually composed of short, stiff layers of feathers. These feathers, controlled by the facial muscles, are oriented to oncoming sound waves. The facial disks are bordered by a narrow trough, where the sound waves are caught, concentrated, and funneled to the ears, hidden behind disks (the owl's horns are actually false ears, having nothing to do with hearing)" (40).

Although owl science is embedded throughout the book, Maslow also explores the mythology and the history of this night bird. He explains that because the owl is a creature mainly active after dark, it was often portrayed as a frightening symbol, "As a Manichaeian symbol of evil, the owl was persecuted into the Dark Ages.



...when the ghastly flames of the Inquisition burned hottest in Spain, the story was current that Satan himself kept an owl for a pet. What heretic, wizard, sorcerer, or witch was not consort and colleague of the gruesome owl?" (22).

Maslow is careful to counter this myth with mention of the Greek tradition portraying the owl as the bird of wisdom.

Even as Maslow packs this little book with "owl wisdom" he includes his personal

experiences in a delightfully descriptive style. As he sets out on a birding trip one fine July day, "The drooping saw grasses twirled lazy rings in the sand, first clockwise, then counterclockwise, like sundials that couldn't make up their minds...It was the kind of day that inspires a birder to greater and greater effort, because even if you don't find what you set out after, the season is so ripe and the weather is so fine that you inevitably get into all sorts of delightful situations." (129).

The book is organized by the seasons of the year and examines everything from the little Saw-whet to the Great Horned. I found it fun, informative, and a fine addition to our campout with the Great Horned family in Bend.

Backyard Birding wants Your Bird List

By Larry Turner

Do you keep a list of birds that you see in your yard? The WHAS Backyard Birding Committee would like to post your list, along with others, on a soon-to-come part of the WHAS website. Several newer members have asked what kinds of birds they might see in their yard. There are bird lists for the area - see the Cowlitz and Wahkiakum County list on the website (http://willapahillsaudubon.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=43&Itemid=53), but we think that more specific lists of what people are actually seeing in their yards would be very helpful. Eventually, it would be nice to distinguish the seasons that different birds are seen, but for now, we would be pleased to simply have a few lists for people to refer to. One or several pictures would be nice.

Two families have already provided lists with pictures. These were very popular at the Wahkiakum county fair. If you would like to participate, please submit your list, with or without pictures, to Larry Turner (LTurner2@aol.com), chairman, Backyard Birding Committee. We would like to know what kind of environment you live in (in town, country, near aquatic habitats, in forest, etc). But we recognize that privacy can be a concern and will not post information that would compromise privacy. Please feel free to contact Larry Turner if you have any questions.



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Longview, WA 98632

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The *Willapa Whistler* is the bi-monthly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society, 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

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



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

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WHAS Programs and Field Trips

For more information and further details check the WHAS web site: www.willapahillsaudubon.org

Saturday, December 4 – Annual Lake Sacajawea Walk/Social

Join us for this annual event. We will meet at the Green's house at 8:30 AM, the morning of the walk. We will spend a couple hours walking the lake observing winter waterfowl and other local birds. The group will then retreat to the warmth of the Greens' home for hot beverages and treats and some backyard birding. To sign up, call or email John Green at 360-575-9238 or jgreen2317@aol.com.

Upcoming Field Trips:

Coming soon after the first of the year, we will have a local trip and also one a little farther afield to the Portland area. As the weather warms, Ann Kastberg has volunteered to lead a trip designed around finding amphibians and exploring their habitat. Watch for details in the next issue of "The Whistler" and on the WHAS web site

Saturday, November 6 at 2:00pm -- Longview Library

We will show the first movie in our *Birds of Hollywood* series, Alfred Hitchcock's "*The Birds*", in the Halloween spirit. And we plan on having popcorn and drinks.

Friday, November 19 at 7:00pm – Bird Rehabilitation

Sharnelle Fee, Executive Director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, a bird and animal rehabilitation center in Astoria, will be joining us at LCC in the student center cafeteria (<http://lcc.etc.edu/maps/campus/stc.htm>). She'll be discussing her efforts at wildlife rehabilitation and will be bringing several **live birds** including a brown pelican, spotted owl and some sea birds depending on availability.

Saturday, January 15, 2011

Second Annual Amphibian Egg Mass Survey Training will be held at LCC (Room PSC 104). See page one for more information. Free **taxidermy workshop** planned for next spring at Lower Columbia College. (Date to be determined).

Bob Stone, retired taxidermist, has graciously offered to lead a taxidermy workshop. Participants will learn how to prepare study skins and parts of birds and mammals. Bob will also share the finer points of taxidermy as it applies to more technical mounts.

Contact Louis LaPierre (llapierre@lowercolumbia.edu; 360.442.2884) for more info and to be added to the contact list.

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