

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 37 // Issue 1

January / February 2011



White-throated Sparrow

Image: Dr. Thomas G. Barnes / USFWS

Leadbetter Point CBC Results

By Alan Richards

For the Leadbetter Point Christmas Bird Count (CBC), on December 18, 2010, we noted **100 species**, plus three species for Count Week. Number of individuals: **36,784**. Temps: low 34F, high 44F. Winds: generally brisk (5 to 10 mph) and often to at least 20 mph. Cloud cover 90% to 100%, rain about 60% of the day; some periods without rain, but at times heavy gusts and rainfall, and a few blasts of sleet and hail; 0.9 inches total precipitation. Wind and rain hampered views of water birds, and significantly decreased our ability to detect passerines. At least it wasn't raining all the time!

Our number of participants, **40** (36 field observers, divided among 5 sectors; plus 4 at feeders), was the highest ever for our count (inching up from last year's 37, our previous all-time high). Our CBC circle is more than an hour's drive for many of our people, and for some it is three hours just to get to the edge of the circle. There are often overnight accommodations to consider, treacherous weather on local roads, and so forth. Congratulations and thanks to all who made the trip this year!

New for our CBC was one species, the Eurasian Collared-Dove, noted by the group in Ocean Park. This species has been present in Washington since 2000, and on the Long Beach Peninsula since 2005. This is the first record for our CBC. We should expect them to be more plentiful in future years, as they have become in the rest of Washington and the United States.

Notable species for our CBC were: (a) Spotted Sandpiper (1 noted by NE Bay Group, near Palix River, for only the fourth time since our Count began in 1974); (b) Palm Warbler (1 seen by three observers of the Point group, the second for our CBC, with the first in 2007); (c) Western Scrub-Jay (4 noted by portion of Oceanside group, in a residential area; 1 noted in the Bay Center area, and becoming gradually more common); (d) a very photogenic White-throated Sparrow, always a treat, seen in about half of our CBCs over the last twenty years.

Notable by their absence: Rock Pigeons, after a continuous run on our CBC since 1982. Three additional species for Count Week, not noted on Count Day: American Kestrel, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and Northern Shrike.

Thanks again to all; see you next year!

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.

Upcoming Programs

By Bob Arnsdorf

Kit McGurn from **Conservation Northwest** will be doing a presentation entitled "*Columbia Highlands: Washington's Last Wilderness Frontier*" on **Wednesday, January 26th** at 7:00 pm at the Cowlitz PUD Auditorium Longview. The Northeastern Washington area serves as a habitat bridge between the Cascades and the Rocky Mountains. It contains a healthy population of wildlife and pristine forests. Grizzly and black bears, wolves, caribou, lynx, moose, deer and elk still thrive here. Kit will be talking about this unique area and efforts to preserve it as a wilderness.

WHAS will have the pleasure of welcoming Longview's own Dr. Jim Hulbert on **Wednesday February 9** at 7:00 pm at the Cowlitz PUD Auditorium. Dr. Hulbert has been a 35 year volunteer working with **Ducks Unlimited** to preserve habitat throughout North America, serving recently as the national President of DU. He'll be talking on "*Wetland Conservation*" from his unique perspective.

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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.
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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.

-Clip

Please indicate any **new** information:

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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**
- Add me to your discussion email list**

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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.

New Bird Quiz

By Larry Brandt

This unusual bird is found in eastern Washington and Oregon. It is the only bird in North America to truly hibernate (70 to 100 days each year). It lays its eggs directly on the ground without building a nest. When it perches, it does so parallel to the branch (not perpendicular as most birds). It swallows stones--presumably to help digest beetles it eats.

What bird am I?

First correct answer will receive credit in the next Whistler. Send your answer to quiz@willapahillsaudubon.org. If you have a good bird or habitat question, you are invited to submit it to the email above. Questions used in this column will be given a by-line.

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.

Nelson Creek – 2010 Review

By Russ Kastberg

This has been a busy year at Nelson Creek with planting, surveys, public outreach and restoration.

- In April, 50 WHAS and Miller-Hull volunteers planted over 1800 species of native plants. WHAS volunteers worked hard the day before unloading native plantings into the area. A fun-time was had by all, including a pizza lunch provided by Columbia Land Trust. Totally, 9500 native species were planted primarily along the riparian zone on Indian Jack Slough. This is the first restoration activity that will change the landscape at Nelson Creek.
- In May, several volunteers spent the day mapping blackberry with GPS units. Thomas Burke, IT Specialist for CLT, then prepared a map showing the location of blackberry on the property. This will aid in setting priorities for future restoration projects.
- One of our priorities for 2010 was Public Outreach. We updated the WHAS display board and put together a Nelson Creek information display. This was presented at the Wahkiakum County fair in August by several WHAS members.



Planting

Image: Russ Kastberg

Restoration efforts began in earnest in October. Approximately 50 acres of the most productive hybrid poplar was logged and removed. Excavation began to fill in some of the old drainage ditches while forming future wetlands. The

excavation window was cut short by an early fall rains, so, completion of these wetlands will be resumed next year. Fencing to keep elk out of the plantings is being installed. A number of poplar “snags”, live trees cut off 15-20 feet high, are located throughout the cleared area. The cleared area will be planted with native species this winter.

Our efforts will now shift from baseline field surveys to restoration monitoring. Dan Friesz, Stewardship Lead for CLT, is interested in how the restoration effects local populations of birds, amphibians, and mammals on the site. We will keep an eye on the new plantings to identify survival problems and animal damage and make recommendations.

There is a need for more public outreach. So, our work is cut out. We continue to welcome new members to our committee and work activities. Contact Russ Kastberg at rkastberg@cni.net or by phone: 360-430-5541 to get involved.



Restoration

Image: Russ Kastberg

2011 Great Backyard Bird Count

February 18 – 21. The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. Everyone is encouraged to make the most of the 13th annual GBBC. The count is led by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The GBBC website includes more information at www.birdcount.org, along with photos from last year's count, a game, and other materials, including a printable tally sheet.



Amphibian Surveying – As Much Fun as You Can Have in Chest Waders

By Ann Kastberg

Fun with frogs, family and friends found in freshets, fens, ponds, puddles, swales and lots of water in 2010 as people paddled, puddle-jumped, waded and slogged through bogs. As early as January red-legged frog (RAAU) and long-toed salamander (AMMA) egg masses showed up in Jack's Slough and Germany Creek. In February copious quantities of the long-toed salamander egg masses were found at the Mint Farm, northwestern salamander (AMGR) egg masses appeared in Germany Creek and near Rainier, and Margaret Green found on lone AMGR mass at the Mint Farm.



Phoebe Abbruzzese was first to find chorus frogs eggs on an April survey! Both images: Carlo Abbruzzese



Ahhhh.... Isn't it cute!

The Gray's River toads took us on an emotional roller coaster ride. Excitement mounted when Steve Puddicombe and the Satterlunds invited folks to the Gray's River, where little toads were found in April. The excitement erupted in May when toads laid long, paired egg strings at the Gray's River. Dry weather drained and dried the little pools along with the eggs. Hope was renewed when more eggs were found later.

Carlo

Abbruzzese's high-elevation surveys at Merrill Lake in late March and April turned up red-legged, northwestern and a few chorus frog egg masses, as well as one little toad.

There may have been cascades frogs egg masses at Merrill as well. We're going to work hard at distinguishing cascade and red-legged egg masses in 2011.

Beside the thrill of finding egg masses, where they were and weren't was interesting. Tom Finn's group found 48 northwestern masses in side channel ponds Columbia Land Trust made along Germany Creek in 2008-09. Kalama 4H found lots of red-legged masses in a little pond in a cow pasture. The Mint Farm restoration is so new that few critters beside long-toed salamanders have located it. There were other interesting discoveries. The Edmonsons found sculpin inside egg masses. Louis LaPierre found a chorus frog male in amplexus with juvenile bullfrog. Newts were actively decimating the single red-legged egg mass found in a Fox Creek pond. And kids had a great time.

The Second Annual WHAS Citizen Science Amphibian Survey Season kicks off with training on January 15th at LCC. Join in the fun! See the front page for more information.

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* at the top menu.

Bird Collisions with Glass

From *BIRD CALLS*, June 2010, newsletter of *The American Bird Conservancy (ABC)*:

... "Scientists estimate that 300 million to one billion birds die each year from collisions with glass, the majority of which is on homes. ABC has made available online a new flyer that offers a variety of tips on how to reduce the chances of birds flying into home windows and glass doors. In addition to describing techniques homeowners can follow, the publication also recommends several different suppliers from whom materials can be purchased to make homes collision-resistant for birds ... ABC is scientifically testing different anti-collisions materials to determine which are most effective..."

http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/collisions/pdf/collisions_flyer.pdf

Volunteers Needed In Case of Oil Spill Emergency

By Steve Puddicombe

Last month's Bird Rehabilitation program featured Sharnelle Fee of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast and some of her collection of permanently disabled birds, including an elderly Northern Spotted Owl. The Wildlife Center primarily rehabilitates birds and would be the first place oiled or injured birds will go in case of an oil spill anywhere along the Columbia River west of Clatskanie and Longview.

Willapa Hills Audubon has offered to help compile a call list in case of the emergency need for volunteers. The list will be given to Sharnelle Fee, director of the center.

If you would like to have your name included on the list, send an email to pudfella@willapabay.org and provide your



Image: Louis LaPierre

name and telephone number. The list will also have your email address unless you specify not to, and will be kept confidential unless and until there is an emergency.

If you missed the program and would like to know more about the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, or to become a regular volunteer at the center, or to make a donation you can go to the website at www.coastwildlife.org. The center is located near Astoria and is the only wildlife care hospital in all of SW Washington and the Central and North Oregon coastal area. It is an all-volunteer organization that relies

almost entirely on donations and cares for over 2,000 birds and animals each year.

Coal Port in Longview

By Charlotte Persons, President

Millenium Bulk Logistics, a subsidiary of Australia-based coal giant Ambre Energy, has applied for a shoreline permit for port to export coal mined in Montana to Asian markets, primarily China. The site is the former Reynolds Metals Co. plant, now owned by the Canadian company Alcoa and leased to Chinook Ventures.

At a public meeting held by Cowlitz County Commissioners on November 16, Willapa Hills Audubon Society joined other groups in asking that there be a SEPA (State Environmental Protection Act) review because of potential environmental impacts to the river and community from river dredging, pollution from the coal trains and coal piles, and increased contributions to global warming.

About ninety citizens attended the meeting—they expressed other concerns, such as health hazards from blowing coal dust, traffic problems from the mile-long coal trains, and the

conversion of our river shoreline to this usage—some suggested that this site could be used by other, cleaner industries which would provide more jobs than the net 20 to 21 promised by Millenium. Representatives of Millenium Bulk Logistics and government agencies assured the public that these concerns will be addressed.

Earth Justice and four other environmental groups (Climate Solutions, Sierra Club, Washington Environmental Council, and Columbia Riverkeeper) have jointly appealed to the Shoreline Hearing Board to overturn the Cowlitz County Commissioners' decision to allow construction and operation of the coal export facility. On December 28, the Washington Department of Ecology petitioned to intervene in the Cowlitz County Commissioners' decision. The Ecology Department will be asked to issue environmental permits for the project and needs to be sure decisions made in the appeals process are legally sound..

Local Opposition to the Proposed Coal Port in Longview

WHAS has not yet taken a position on this coal port, except for asking that a more thorough environmental review be made before issuing construction permits.

Here is a summary of what Dan Serres of Columbia Riverkeeper presented at a recent meeting: Two arguments are being made in favor of this project. One is the old favorite—"if we don't do this, someone else will." While it is true that China can purchase coal from other countries, the U.S. needs to get serious about not contributing to greenhouse gases, 40% of which are estimated to be caused by burning coal. Adding American coal to the available stocks will lower the global price of coal and encourage Asian countries to continue to burn this fossil fuel.

And the "someone else" probably will not be another port in SW Washington. Almost all the other ports in SW WA that were considering having a coal port are either going to ship

small amounts or have nixed the idea because coal prices are volatile. The big public ports decided that this kind of huge "single commodity" export facility was too risky; if coal from Montana becomes too expensive relative to other sources, the ports will be left with huge "white elephants" that will be difficult to convert to other uses.

Surprisingly, according to Serres, blocking the coal port in Longview could prevent Montana coal from being shipped to China. Because of existing rail lines, shipping the coal through SW WA is the cheapest option, and forcing the companies to use other routes may make the profit margins so slim that it is not desirable to mine and ship the coal such long distances. Opposition to the Longview project, if successful, could make a real impact on the global problem of burning this fossil fuel.

Continued on page 6 Proposed Coal Port...

Lobby Day Feb 15, 2011

By Steve Puddicombe

Lobby day is the yearly gathering of people concerned with the plight of the environment organized by the major conservation groups in our state in an effort to influence our legislators in Olympia. Willapa Hills is a part of that coalition.

This event is a good chance to be a part of the legislative process and to meet your representatives and present directly to them your own local concerns. The coalition also chooses several specific initiatives on which to focus. Our conservation committee will be actively involved again this year but we are always looking for folks to get involved.

We offer carpooling and an inspiring day meeting other conservationists and confronting with our legislators the critical conservation issues of the day. Please consider joining this effort.

Contact Steve at pudfella@willapabay.org or at 360-465-2205.

2012 WHAS Backyard Bird Calendar

By Carlo Abbruzzese

Plans are already underway to put together a second WHAS Backyard Bird Calendar. This year we printed 200 calendars and it seems that all will be sold, raising around \$1,100 for WHAS. Many thanks to those of you who purchased the calendars and to Paperback's Galore, Zojo's Coffee, LCC bookstore and The Brit's who sold the calendar.

Next year we plan to print 1,000 calendars and hope to carry the calendar more widely. **We'd like to put together a committee of volunteers** that will help find high quality photographs, work on calendar layout, edit and compile written content, and market and sell the calendars. This fun committee would most likely meet once a month at a local restaurant or home and the time commitment could be largely up to your schedule.

If you are interested in working on the 2012 calendar **please contact** Carlo Abbruzzese at puffbird@juno.com.

Olympic Bird Fest 2011

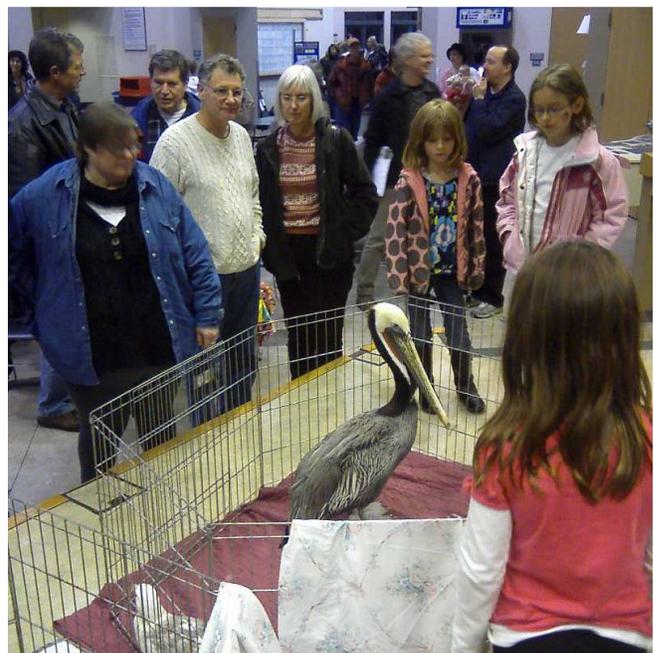
Visit the rain shadow of the *Olympic Peninsula* to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more in Sequim, WA from April 8-10, 2011. More information: 360.681.4076, or www.olympicbirdfest.org

Cruise the San Juan Islands

Immediately following BirdFest, join Olympic Peninsula Audubon for a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands from April 10-12, 2011. The MV Glacier Spirit, a 65-foot motor yacht, will cruise to San Juan Island for a birding and sightseeing tour, to Sucia Island Marine State Park for a walk-about and picnic lunch and will pass Padilla Bay, Swinomish Channel, Skagit Bay and spectacular Deception Pass, pausing for a close look at Smith Island for birds and sea mammals. More information: 360.681.4076 or opas.birdfest.info@gmail.com

Some Environmental Priorities are:

- Budget Solutions for Our Environment <http://environmentalpriorities.org/budget> A proactive approach that will protect our public health, economic future, and quality of life in Washington
- Coal Free Future for Washington <http://environmentalpriorities.org/coal-free> Protecting our families against poisons and supporting community economic development.
- Reducing Phosphorous Pollution <http://environmentalpriorities.org/phosphorous> A commonsense and cost effective approach to cleaning up our lakes and rivers.
- Working for Clean Water <http://environmentalpriorities.org/clean-water> The 2011 Clean Water Act will fund job-creating projects all over the state, by building clean water infrastructure that will restore our water ways.



Impressions from the Bird Rehabilitation presentation which included this live pelican. Image: Louis LaPierre

Proposed Coal PortContinued from page 5

Another argument is that the Montana coal is lower in mercury and sulfur than other coal that China could buy and burn. This is true, but the technology exists to remove most of these chemicals from coal-fired plants' emissions; Asian companies need to be forced to apply this technology for the health of their own communities—and the Pacific Coast of the U.S., which gets a small amount of these and other chemicals in dust blown here by prevailing winds from Asia.

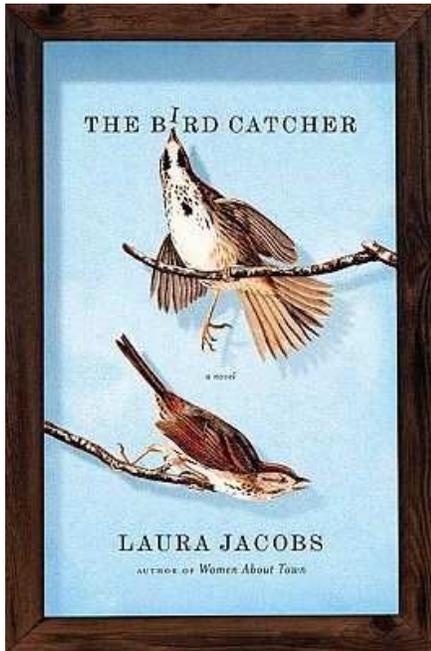
Dan Serres will be leading a monthly meeting in Longview of organizations and citizens who oppose the coal port. For more information contact Charlotte Persons at 360-431-1174.

Book Review

By Carolyn Norred

***The Bird Catcher*, Laura Jacobs
St Martins Press 2009.**

The Bird Catcher is the story of a New York City window dresser, Margaret Snow, who has shared a love of birds with both her Grandfather and her university professor husband. This common interest in the birds provides her with a deep and much-needed bond with her Grandfather during her adolescence and serves, also, as the channel through which her relationship with her graduate school advisor develops into love and eventually marriage. Although Laura Jacobs' storytelling style in *The Bird Catcher* is fast-paced and focuses on human relationships in Margaret's life, the story also successfully questions the role of art and nature in our often over-busy lives.



Jacobs sets her story in the depth of New York City, and central park provides the arena for a city-wise Margaret and her husband to watch a fascinating variety of birds in a relatively natural habitat. However, this setting also works as the antagonist in this bird-themed story.

When Margaret's husband dies in a tragic plane crash, she turns to the birds for a sort of solace, and eventually joins an Audubon group who gather from the streets, and freeze, the bodies of migrating birds that have died crashing into midtown's high-rise windows.

Using this gathering group as cover, Margaret keeps the birds for herself and develops skill as a taxidermist. Taxidermy, plus her artistic talents as a window dresser, develop into an artistic collection of birds in shadow boxes, shown in a noted downtown gallery owned by Margaret's close friend. Not surprisingly, the show is raided by agents from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who confiscate all the pieces. The notoriety resulting from this raid, leads to some unexpected events in the course of Margaret's work and life.

I will leave the ending for interested readers to discover for themselves, but I must say that the story is sweetly framed with the old poem, *The Death and Burial of Cock Robin*.

The following is the first four stanzas of the poem referenced in the novel, *The Bird Catcher*. These four stanzas often appear in children's poetry books; however, the complete poem can be found on the internet.

*Who killed Cock Robin?
I, said the Sparrow,
with my bow and arrow,
I killed Cock Robin.
Who saw him die?
I, said the Fly,
with my little eye,
I saw him die.
Who caught his blood?
I, said the Fish,
with my little dish,
I caught his blood.
Who'll make the shroud?
I, said the Beetle,
with my thread and needle,
I'll make the shroud*

This version of the poem first appeared in print in 1744 in Tommy Thumb's *Pretty Song Book*.

This poem, too long to be included in its entirety here, was a piece Margaret and her Grandfather often read together. For Margaret, the significant stanza is,

*Who'll sing a psalm?
I, said the thrush,
As she sat in a bush,
I'll sing a psalm.*

Although Laura Jacobs' storytelling style in *The Bird Catcher* is fast-paced and focuses on human relationships in Margaret's life, the story also successfully questions the role of art and nature in our often over-busy lives.



This western tanager puzzled us during the Lake Sacajawea bird walk. The bird is rather late heading south for the winter.
Image: Louis LaPierre



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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

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WHAS Programs and Field Trips

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

Saturday, January 15

Second Annual Amphibian Egg Mass Survey Training will be held at LCC (Room PSC 104). See page one for more information.

Saturday, January 22

WHAS will travel to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge for viewing of winter waterfowl and raptors. Swans are often present. We will travel the auto loop with minimal walking where allowed. Departure from Longview will be 8:00 AM with a planned return of noonish. To reserve your place, call (360-575-9238) or email (jgreen2317@aol.com) John Green.

Saturday, February 12

We will bird local hot spots, checking out the Mint Farm, Longview Sewage ponds, and possibly Kalama for late winter birds and waterfowl. Space will be relatively limited, so call (360-575-9238) or email (jgreen2317@aol.com) John Green to sign up. We will begin at 8:30 and continue until noon.

Wednesday, January 26, 7:00 pm Cowlitz PUD Auditorium, 961 12th Ave Longview

Kit McGurn from Conservation Northwest presents "*Columbia Highlands: Washington's Last Wilderness Frontier*". It contains a healthy population of wildlife and pristine forests. Grizzly and black bears, wolves, caribou, lynx, moose, deer and elk still thrive here. (See page one for more information).

Wednesday February 9, 7:00 pm Cowlitz PUD Auditorium, 961 12th Ave Longview

Dr. Jim Hulbert has been a 35 year volunteer working with Ducks Unlimited to preserve habitat throughout North America, serving recently as the national President of DU. He'll be talking on "*Wetland Conservation*" from his unique perspective

Wednesday May 11, Venue to be determined

Craig Romano will be talking on "*Hiking in the Columbia River Gorge*". He's recently published a book on the topic.

Free **taxidermy workshop** planned for April 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