



# WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 41 // Issue 2

Summer 2014



Bullock's Oriole as seen this early spring in Kelso Image by Royce Craig

## Annual Picnic for Members and Friends on July 26

**When:** Sunday, July 26, 1:00 PM

**Where:** The Brandt Family Home, Cathlamet

Please, please, please, join us for the annual summer picnic for a fun, fun, fun time. This casual get together is a great opportunity to be outdoors and chat with our Board, other members, meet their families, join old friends and make new ones over a potluck lunch. It is always a really wonderful time.

This year we will gather at Board member Larry Brandt's lovely home on a beautiful property **overlooking the Columbia River** in Cathlamet. The gardens attract many species of birds for relaxed observation or there will be horseshoes for more lively activity.

Each person or family should bring a dish (entree', salad, dessert, appetizer or. . . your choice) to serve 6 to 8 and your own plates, utensils and any additional beverages. WHAS will provide napkins, cups, ice, and water. Bring a lawn chair if you can. We will chat, eat, play, and enjoy the beautiful setting.

**Directions:**

Address: 18 Island View Lane, Cathlamet, WA 98612

**From the Longview Area** – Drive west on SR4 (Ocean Beach Hwy) toward Cathlamet. As you are nearing Cathlamet, there will be a 50 mph road sign. Take the next left onto Island View Lane. (If you reach gas stations on SR4 in Cathlamet, you have gone too far.) Drive straight back to the house.

**From the West** – On SR4 heading east toward Cathlamet, drive past the turnoff for Main Street and the Chevron station on the right. At the 55 mph sign, turn right onto Island View Drive. Drive all the way back to the house on the river. There will be plenty of parking.

If you have trouble, give Larry a call at 360-200-4580.

## Become the Leader for the Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count

**By Suzy Whitley**

*Continue the tradition!* Sit at your computer send emails and keep some records, it is simple and organized...*you can do it!*

The Leadbetter count circle includes the interior of the north half of the Long Beach Peninsula, the Pacific beach, the east and west sides of Willapa Bay north to the village of Bay Center, WA. Some birders come from over 100 miles to bird this amazing location. Birders will encounter thousands of shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. The count is on the third Saturday each December.

Over the last few years, I have made maps and route directions for the eight sectors of the Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count. Each sector has a leader and a group of birders who do that section. There are 17 home owners on Willapa Bay who give the birders access to their properties. There is a person who will compile the numbers and send the information in to Audubon. ***It just that simple.***

I have it all ready for you to do. And I will work with you this year so that next year you can do it all by yourself. I can email you all the info and forms.

This is such an important citizen science project. Please step up and take on the leadership role for this project. My health is failing and I need a dedicated birder to keep the Leadbetter CBC alive. Please contact me for more information at [suzy@reachone.com](mailto:suzy@reachone.com).

**Looking forward to working with you.**

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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 4 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

-Clip

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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**Lake Sacajawea - Family Friendly in a BIG Way**

**By John Green**

Lake Sacajawea in Longview has been bustling with activity over the last several weeks. The first successful brood of Canada Geese in the last 14 years (my length of time in Longview) has been hatched and are doing well at the lake. I have also seen several Mallard Duck families and one Wood Duck brood of 12 so far.

For the human families, there are tons of other interesting things to see as well. Large flocks of Red Crossbills, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskens, Western Tanagers, and Cedar Waxwings have been spotted in the trees around the Lake, particularly the southeastern end. In addition, Bullock's Orioles have returned and Wilson's, Yellow, MacGillivray's, and Yellow-rumped Warblers have been seen. Red-winged Blackbirds, Flycatchers, Vaux's Swifts, Barn Swallows and Violet-green Swallows have all migrated back from their winter homes. While walking below the tree canopy, you not only see lots of birds in flight but will hear the wonderful sound of song and twittering. You owe it to yourself to get outside to listen for and observe this annual ritual of our breeding birds returning to raise their young in the lovely Pacific Northwest.



Western Tanager – Image by Royce Craig

## Book Review

By Carolyn Norred

### *The Thing with Feathers*

Noah Striker

Riverhead Books

April is National Poetry Month, and though you will be reading this review on another month, I am writing in April. The point being, it's a perfect time to review scientist, birder, Noah Strycker's new book, the Strycker divides his work into three categories: Body, Mind, and Spirit, and then develops the categories with examples, anecdotes, and explanations of the latest science on the matter.

One of my favorite classes as an undergrad at The Evergreen College, in Olympia, WA, was an integrated studies course titled, "Poetry and Science." So, I was excited to discover this bird book whose title is apparently taken from the first line of Emily Dickenson's poetry, # 254, "*Hope*" is *the thing with feathers- That perches in the soul- And sings the tune without the words- And never stops-at all-...*

As in my class, Strycker brings science to bear on the poetry and the poetry to bear on the science of the birds and their relationships to each other and we humans. Although we do historically like to separate human experience and animal lives, Strycker suggests that as we are able to know, scientifically,



more and more about the lives and function of birds, the differences in how they function and how humans function begins to shrink. He develops his thesis with authorities stretching across time all the way from Linnaeus' classifications to Craig Reynolds' Boids model for flocking behavior.

At the risk of being accused of anthropomorphism, Strycker applies language in a way that suggests relationships as often as he specifies them: Buzzard's nostril; Hummingbird Wars; Magpie in the mirror; Wandering Hearts, are just some of the chapter titles that carry with them a bit of the poetic suggestion. Although he addresses this concern directly and sticks pretty carefully to the known facts of birdlife, he does tell us, "I like to think that life defies physics and that the beauty of a cart wheeling flock of starlings originates with the birds themselves rather than in a universal law--

in the same way that a Renaissance masterpiece may follow specific rules but still takes a real master to produce."(48).

Strycker's tone throughout is an easy conversation style that is given authority with references to the science of ornithology. His humor and his heart feel ever-present however, and I will read this book again, and maybe even again after that.

## Black Phoebe's at Julia Butler-Hansen Refuge

By Jon Heale

Historically an occasional visitor, the Black Phoebe was a rare sight at the Julia Butler-Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer; there had been a few sightings each year, but no known nests. In 2014 refuge staff noticed a pair frequenting the covered corner of a tide gate and decided to check it out...a nest!

Staff thought there had been a successful first brood, as two to three more Phoebe's were hanging around throughout late

spring-early summer.

However, a second clutch of eggs was apparently unsuccessful as they remain in the unattended

nest throughout summer. As I write this (March 13), the Phoebe's are in the process of building a new nest in the opposite corner of the tide gate. The pair is hard at work gathering blades of grass, stems, and mud.

Make a stop into the refuge office and check them out! They can often be spotted from the Headquarters observation deck, near the tide gate under Steamboat Slough Road.

*Jon Heale is a Biological Science Technician at the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer and can be reached at [jonathon\\_heale@fws.gov](mailto:jonathon_heale@fws.gov)*





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The *Willapa Whistler* is the quarterly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Complimentary copies are available for free on our website.

**TEMP -- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Most WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.**

### **Send in your stories & photos**

Articles, information, wildlife sightings and artwork are most welcomed. The deadline for submissions is the 15<sup>th</sup> of February, May, August and November. Send your contributions to:

WHAS Whistler, PO Box 399, Longview WA 98632

or email them to

[newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org](mailto: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.

### **Annual Picnic for Members and Friends on Sunday, July 26**

Please join us for the annual summer picnic for a time. This casual get together is a great opportunity to be outdoors and chat with our Board, other members, meet their families, join old friends and make new ones over a potluck lunch. This year we will gather at Board member Larry Brandt's lovely home on a beautiful property **overlooking the Columbia River** in Cathlamet. See page one for all the details.

### **September**

Beginning in September, the WHAS Field Trip Schedule will resume. During September, the Vaux's Swifts will begin their southerly migration. We are hoping the birds return to their traditional roosting location in Rainier, Oregon. Near sunset it should be possible to observe their nightly ritual of swirling around and finally diving by the hundreds into chimneys to roost. For some reason, last year, the birds did not return and we missed this spectacle. But this spring the birds found the Carpet One chimney for the northerly migration, so we are in hopes things will be back to normal for the trip south. Darrel Whipple (a long-time Vaux's Swift survey participant) will lead this event. We will announce the specific date and time in the September Whistler and also via a gmail announcement to those on that list, once Darrel has verified that the birds have returned.

### **October**

In October, we make our annual trip to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. We will be traveling to Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge and Woodland Bottoms later in the year and will also have the annual Lake Sacajawea walk and social in early December.

All of these dates will be finalized for the September Whistler.

*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](http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org), or**