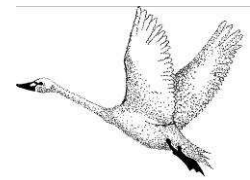


WILLAPA WHISTLER



A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon

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<http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org>

July/Aug 2008

Islands and Passages

By: President Charlotte Persons

Saturday, May 31, was Al Clark's last day as biology director for the Julia Butler Hansen White-tailed Deer Refuge. It was also the day he led eight WHAS members and his daughter Abbie on a very special field trip. We put on our life jackets, piled into two motorboats at Willow Grove Boat Launch, and headed to Crim's Island.

Before we left, Al told us a little about the island's history. It is a natural island, not man-made. Parts were farmed, and there are remains of piers for fishing operations. Restoration of the island to natural habitat is a cooperative venture of the Columbia Land Trust, Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Now the biggest impediment for wildlife use, especially for the endangered white-tailed deer, is the reed canary grass which had taken over most of the slightly marshy parts of the island. The plan to get rid of the grass was to dredge part of the island to make the water too deep and the ground too wet for the grass and then to spread the dredgings over another part of the island to raise the water table and to re-plant it with native species.

We landed at the newly elevated part of the island and hiked to an area with old native cottonwoods. As we walked, we were able to examine a number of the one-year-old native seedlings—a majority looked like they would take root and slowly crowd out the now less vigorous reed canary grass. Birders were also delighted to see and hear a variety of birds in the open and wooded areas, including rarely seen red-breasted sapsuckers, bullock's orioles, and cedar waxwings.

We returned to the boats for a picnic lunch, and then motored to and through the newly dredged part of the island, which was allowed to naturally re-seed with what was brought in by the river currents. We were glad to see the reed canary grass in this area was being replaced by native plants even after only one year. Over the next years the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife will keep monitoring to see if this improved habitat means more salmon will use the island.

It was a privilege to see firsthand the progress made in restoring this island, with its mixed history and impressive acreage. The lessons were many—the need for cooperation from many organizations, the careful planning to combine human intervention and natural forces, and the patient shepherding that will be necessary for years to come as native plants and animals begin to flourish. In the past the endangered deer have swum across to Crim's Island from other parts of the refuge, and the hope is that they will come to stay as the habitat improves.

Over the twenty years Al and Diane Clark lived and worked at the refuge, they were part of improving and expanding it. They have also been active in WHAS in many capacities, most recently as newsletter editors. In the last two years Al's expertise and leadership has been invaluable in the WHAS/Columbia Land Trust project to restore the Nelson Creek area. Now Diane and Al are beginning their retirement with a different kind of adventure—one or two years' travel through the United States before choosing a spot to settle down.

The best teachers find a way to "show, not tell." Quiet Al said good-bye by showing us a living demonstration of how our dreams for better wildlife habitat for Nelson Creek, and other parts of our region, can be brought to fruition. We are grateful for this final gift, just one part of his inspiration to us, and wish the Clarks happiness in the next passage in their lives.



WHAT: The WHAS Annual Summer Picnic Potluck
WHEN: Sunday, July 13, 2008, 3:00 – 6:00 PM
WHERE: The Green's home in Longview – 1318 25th Avenue

Come join us for some fun in the sun (? indoors if weather is foul), good eats and conversation with your friends from WHAS. Bring a main dish, salad, side, OR dessert to serve 8, your plate and flat wear. We will provide cups, iced tea and water or bring a beverage of your choice.

Questions or directions, call John or Margaret at 360-575-9238, or email at jgreen2317@aol.com

SUPPORT OUR MISSION, JOIN WHAS TODAY

- ☐ CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP (WHAS) \$20 check for annual membership dues in WHAS **OR . . .**
☐ COMBINATION: WHAS and NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS
 \$40 check includes both annual membership dues in WHAS and an introductory membership to National Audubon
☐ SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION of your choice to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Make your check to: WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY THANK YOU!!

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

Name _____ Telephone _____
 Address _____ Email _____
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I prefer you contact me by phone _____ email _____ mail _____

_____ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities _____ Please add me to your general discussion email list.

Clip and mail to PO Box 399 Longview, WA 98632

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Birding Bits

By Russ Koppendrayer

This seems like a good time for updates to previous columns. First of all, I made a couple checks of the heronry south of the grain terminal at the Port of Kalama. On April 4th, I found six Great Egrets in the neighborhood of the heronry, including one on what appeared to be a nest in progress. Later, on April 30th, I could see four Great Egrets sitting on nests apparently incubating eggs. There may have been even more birds farther back in the colony out of my sight. Another check, in mid-May, found two egrets on nest still visible in spite of total leaf-out. This seems to confirm breeding expansion of this striking species, farther north, into our area.

Secondly, my monitoring of the Longview Mint Farm mitigation area and environs was far more rewarding than my wildest dreams. Alan Richards and myself had the most exciting single day on May 11. We found seven species of shorebirds at this site; the most dramatic was 30 red-necked phalaropes. This was the first record of the species in Cowlitz County. The other finds for

the day were Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, and Long-billed Dowitcher. Normally, I would consider seven shorebirds a pretty good year for Cowlitz County. To find them at one site on one day was phenomenal. Other shorebirds I've found

at the Mint Farm on other visits include Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe, and what I believe is the county's second record of Wilson's Phalarope. Other interesting sightings at the Mint Farm by myself, or others,

are Greater White-fronted Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Yellow-headed Blackbird, numerous singing Savannah Sparrows, and a flock of 200 American Pipits. I'm already chomping at the bit, looking forward to the July through October fall migration at this Mint Farm site, which can be reached from the end of Crocker Street in the Longview Mint Farm Industrial Area.

Good birding.



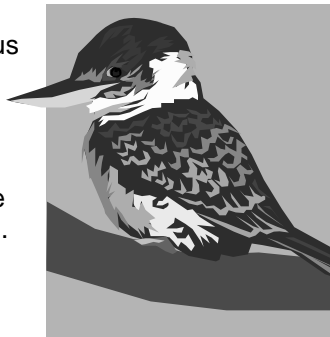
BOOK REVIEW

By Ann Musché

**The Big Twitch, One Man, One Continent, A Race Against Time—A True Story About Birdwatching,
Sean Dooley Allen & Unwin Pty. Ltd., 2005**

From Sooty Owl and Laughing Kookaburra seen January 1st in Victoria to Masked Owl and Little Bittern seen December 26th and 30th in Queensland, the list of birds seen is extensive! *The Big Twitch* relates, in his own words, the sometimes grueling, sometimes enchanting, sometimes hilarious quest of Sean Dooley to see 700+ bird species during one year in his native Australia.

A bird-obsessed sometimes comedy writer, Sean writes in a loose style full of youthful and especially Aussie slang. Using a great deal of his inheritance money, the help of many birdwatching friends, and more than a year of his life to pursue his dream, he travels 48K miles by car, 36K by plane and 12K by boat, as he crisscrosses his native land and some of its waters.



While he moves along very quickly in order to spot and check off this many birds in a year, Sean

clearly appreciates the many lovely places he visits, as he also appreciates eccentricities in the lives of specific birds. He notes and mentions the plight of numerous birds and other animals as drought deepens and habitat is continually 'developed'.

While I am sure this book would be even more interesting to someone more knowledgeable about Australian birds and less picky about grammar, I found it presented an engrossing picture of an individual whose compulsive listing of birds drove him to this magnificent extreme. (And I definitely want to look up what is a Red-eared Firetail, a Hall's Babbler and a Silver-crowned Friarbird!)

WHAS Conservation Action

GAS AND THEIR PROPONENTS STINK

LNG update by Gloria G. MacKenzie

I believe we can safely say there is no need to ask if FERC will approve the LNG project at Bradwood, OR, now that they have completed the Final Environmental Impact Statement. In spite of the rubber stamp approval, NorthernStar is still a long way from breaking ground. They must still obtain permits from Oregon state agencies for Clean Water, Coastal Zone Consistency, Clean Air, and the November elections are only 5 months away.

Meanwhile, many legal challenges are being prepared. A referendum in Clatsop County will be added to the ballot that would prevent pipelines through parks and open spaces.

Recent comments made by Joseph Kelliher, (currently head of FERC) like this one he made to a gas lobbyist in an email, "If you were King, or Il Duce, what would you include in a national energy policy, especially with

respect to natural gas issues?", should make us even more committed to insuring that our elected and appointed officials are held accountable for their actions.

www.nrdc.org/bushrecord

Each of us can help by supporting and encouraging Oregon and Washington representatives, and Columbia Riverkeeper. We do not have the deep pockets of these speculators, who wish to usurp our river and misuse eminent domain for their private gain. However, we can make our many voices heard loud and clear.

Additional info:

<http://www.lnqlawblog.com>

<http://www.landownersandcitizensforasafecommunity.com>

<http://www.dailyastorian.com>

Nelson Creek Restoration Project

The Nelson Creek committee is making progress on a number of fronts. We have most of our goals done by the various subcommittees. With our grant money, Columbia Land Trust, CLT, has purchased "Sherman" traps for trapping small mammals for our survey work. CLT is preparing to release some contracts on survey work from the LIP grant they received.

One exciting event, led by Lower Columbia College biology instructor, Louis LaPierre, had students participating in a workshop to help interest students in science by playing off the popularity of the popular CBS crime investigation drama, CSI.

For the assignment, a pig carcass was left to decompose at Nelson Creek. Students were then able to use insects such as maggots to determine how long the pig had been dead. Sixteen students took part in this unusual, but fun class.

Andrea Berkley of CLT, has set up an internet message board which will be the repository for the various data we are collecting on the project. It is still our goal to

have our survey work done by this fall and begin planning the land restoration. .



The Nelson Creek Restoration project hopes to restore this highly modified landscape back to a more natural state. Biological surveys and workdays have been taking place there over the last year. The next meeting is scheduled to be held Friday July 18th. For more information contact Jim Harrison at 830-719-1765.

WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY -- MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SUMMARY

SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH, 2008

Fundraising: The board discussed what fundraising the group has done in the past, such as silent auctions, birding classes, programs and rummage sales. The treasurer's report demonstrated that we are generally staying, with regular yearly expenditures, within our income. The board decided to encourage our committee chairs, within their accustomed WHAS activities, to routinely give the public or our members a chance to make donations to defray costs. Board also desires, if or when we decide to undertake additional fundraising, to have it be something specifically related to nature such as selling bat or bird boxes and feeders, cleaning feeders, etc.

Audits and alternatives: On advice of a local CPA and recommendation from WHAS Finance Committee, board moved to rescind a motion made at an earlier meeting. The result is that we will NOT have a (very costly) full outside audit, but be content with the internal audit which was carried out very effectively this spring.

Ad Hoc Committee on WHAS Communications: On the web site, the consensus was that we want more links to other bird organizations and bird information, also to have our programs and field trips listed under specific links and not just in the online Whistler, and that we would continue to want ongoing, regular maintenance.

Shade Coffee Program: We decided to take part for one year in the shade coffee sales program of Seattle Audubon, which will require our chapter to sell 50 pounds of coffee.

'One Audubon' Resolution re Northern Spotted Owl in Washington: The board voted to endorse this resolution, which supports further research about Spotted and Barred Owls and their habitat in our state, and which expresses the view that we currently have inadequate data to justify killing Barred Owls for purposes of allegedly assisting Spotted Owls in their survival.

Sierra Club/Columbia RiverKeeper Agreement re LNG Activist/Contractor The board voted to sign a to-be-newly-developed contract with Columbia River Keeper and the Sierra Club, which supports the anti-LNG work relating to the proposed Bradwood Landing facility (not to all proposed LNG facilities on the river.)

CPEEP/Environmental Ed on Long Beach Peninsula The board agreed that we strongly support the concept of expanded environmental education in our region. Issues covered included ongoing shortage of active membership to carry out all the existing WHAS projects in Wahkiakum and Cowlitz Counties, increased cost for potential volunteers to drive to the coast, and the fact that this project is officially outside the territory of WHAS and within the territory of Discovery Coast Audubon. A letter of support will be drafted and sent.

Donations:

WHAS will make donations this year to Friends of Willapa Refuge, Friends of Fox Creek, Columbia Land Trust, Federation of Outdoor Clubs, North Coast Rehab Center, Hudson Park Elementary School (Rainier Outdoor School), Columbia River Keeper, and Audubon Washington. Pam announced that about \$1500.00 has been donated to the Ruth Deery Memorial Fund. The Board set the next meeting date for October 4th. Subsequent meetings will be in December and March.

WHAS Education Committee Darrel Whipple, Chair **Recent activities of the committee:**



Forestry Days for Longview fifth graders at Wake-robin Learning Center, May 8-9: WHAS displayed a table of mounted birds and mammals typical of local wetlands and a table of mounts typical of forest and riparian habitats, all from WHAS's Lower Columbia River Wildlife Collection.

Volunteers on Thursday were Bruce Fischer, Darrel Whipple and Carolyn Norred. On Friday the volunteers were John and Margaret Green, Darrel Whipple and John Byrd. Susan Gregg and Darrel hauled the mounts from the LCC biology lab to the Wake-robin office the day before the event.

Half the fifth graders attended Thursday and the other half Friday. Altogether, 478 fifth graders were reached with this display during their lunch hour, viewing the displays and asking questions in an informal conversation with the volunteers.

Camp Learned-a-lot for Rainier second graders was held at Hudson Park Elementary on Briarcliff Campus, Friday, June 6, 2008:. WHAS provided owl mounts and volunteers to introduce four second grade classes (about 80 students) to local owl species and their features.

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Advisory Group

By Russell Kastberg

On April 22, 2008, I attended the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Advisory Group meeting, representing Willapa Hills Audubon Society, to review the 2007-08 accomplishments and offer input for the upcoming year.

The Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Advisory Group includes a cross-section of interest-groups, such as, The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Weyerhaeuser Co., Toutle School District, and local citizens. This groups mission is to provide public review, comment, and prioritize proposed performance measures in the plan. Brian Calkins, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, WDFW, is the project manager.



The Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Management Plan provides management direction for the Mt. St. Helens State Wildlife Area Complex, which includes the 2,744- acre St. Helens Wildlife Area in Cowlitz County (upper Toutle River drainage) and numerous "satellite" wildlife areas totaling 1198-acres in Skamania, Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis and Wahkiakum Counties. Emphasis, and funding, has been concentrated on the St. Helens wildlife area so far, although, issues have been identified on the smaller satellite areas.

Primary concerns lie with the elk winterkill in the St. Helens, upper Toutle valley area the last few years. Following the Mt. St. Helens volcano eruption, elk forage became plentiful, followed by rapid growth of a healthy St. Helens elk herd. That began 28 years ago, and the area is now a thrifty conifer stand, which has resulted in reduced forage in the last 10 years. The expanded elk herd over-grazes their habitat resulting in a reduced health status. That, coupled with limited winter forage, has resulted in a high incidence of winterkill to the herd.

In response, the new direction of the Elk Herd plan is to reduce the herd's size from approximately 12,500 to 10,000 animals. This has led to increased hunting on the wildlife area. In addition, the last two winters, there has been a feeding program on the upper Toutle valley to help carry the herd through.

Several things are being worked on to provide better elk winter habitat in the upper Toutle valley:

- Identify "Intensive forage management areas" and improved prescriptions for forage enhancement based on soil tests and other monitoring. Treatments include mowing, harrowing, liming, over-seeding and fertilization.
- Stream bank stabilization. Experiments to control stream bank erosion including engineered structures to further stabilize the remaining mudflow and Toutle River floodplain.
- Control of Scotch Broom and other noxious weeds.
- Implement strategies to control public use on the winter wildlife area, while increasing hunting opportunities. This is a balancing act, but is critical to the overall health of the herd.
- Provide better information materials, signing, etc. about the wildlife area at various locations around the site. Post pertinent information and advisory of wildlife area rules so that users will be aware of rules before they arrive on the site.
- Progress between WDFW and WA DOT Real Estate divisions will eventually result in adding 4000-acres from the existing Wildlife Area down to the Sediment Retention dam. The anticipated addition of this property to the wildlife area provides a number of new opportunities in term of wildlife enhancements and public recreation opportunities.

Additional discussion involving other "satellite" units:

- Hall Road, Toutle. WDFW has been working with local constituents to resolve future use of the surplus portion of the Hall Road property.
- Attempt to rehabilitate the mineral spring for band-tailed pigeons on the Jenny Creek Wildlife Area near LaCenter. This would be a good opportunity for an Audubon volunteer effort.
- Pursue funding to restore the public access site at Abernathy Creek Wildlife Area.

Potentially, there are many volunteer projects available with WDFW on these Wildlife Areas in our counties. More detailed information is available in the 2006-2008 Management Plans if you are interested. I have a copy and Brian Calkins is available through the WDFW Vancouver office.

Long-Billed Hawk Syndrome

From Falcon Research Group Website



This photo shows the beaks of a red-tailed hawk - normal on left, long-billed deformity in the photo on the right.

The long-bill syndrome causes accelerated and often grotesque growth in the beaks of birds, eventually resulting in starvation. There are hundreds of records of long-billed raptors including Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcons, Crested Caracaras, and Sharp-shinned Hawks. Many records involve Red-tails in western Washington.

The syndrome also appears to be spreading to other bird species in our state and elsewhere. There are reports of long-billed American Crows, Glaucous-winged Gulls, European Starlings, Northern Flickers, a Steller's Jay, a Bewick's Wren, and a Common Murre, all from Washington.

Working in association with USGS biologist Colleen Handel and Michigan passerine bander, Julie Craves, the long-billed syndrome has been documented in over 110 North American species of birds, primarily passerines. Records range from Florida to Baja California, Alaska to Maine and several provinces in Canada. There are also records from Europe, South Africa and Argentina. Of course, it is not known if all of these examples are caused by the same phenomenon.

This condition limits the birds' ability to preen and to gather food.

Reports from the public will help to determine where and how many birds are affected. If you see a bird with a deformed beak, please report your sighting. For more information and contact information, see The Falcon Research Group site http://www.frg.org/LB_synd.htm, the USGS Alaska Science Center site http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/landbirds/beak_deformity/

And this recent Seattle PI site:

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/357096_beaks31.html

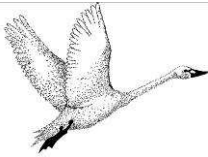
Sibley's bird facts:

Ecologists calculate that a white-crowned sparrow must find a seed every 4 to 5 seconds during the winter if it is to survive. No wonder these guys are up at the crack of dawn and are scratching like crazy all day.

Migration. Some birds may fly two to six days without rest during migration. An equivalent feat of human endurance would be to run a four minute mile for 80 hours straight! Let's see Sebastian Coe do that.



Several members of WHAS, including Ann Musche' and John and Margaret Green have been volunteering in a habitat restoration project at Leadbetter Point this summer. Kathy Gunther, Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife Biologist shown at left places an exclosure around a snowy plover nest. Kathy has been working with WHAS on this project.



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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. Articles, information, wildlife sightings and black-and-white artwork are welcomed. The deadline for inclusion of material in the *Whistler* is the 15th of each even-numbered month. Complimentary copies are sent to organizations and prospective members. All WHAS activities and programs are open to the public. The *Willapa Whistler* is printed on recycled paper using soy based ink.

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.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RUTH DEERY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2008

3 PM

LOWER COLUMBIA COLLEGE

STUDENT CENTER CONFERENCE ROOMS

LONGVIEW, WASHINGTON

**Please join us to share memories and celebrate the life of Ruth Deery,
educator, community activist, environmental steward, friend.**

After the more structured part of the hour concludes and weather permitting, we will move to Ruth's bench at the park west of the Longview Library. We will be delighted for you to bring a special memory or story to share with others as we gather informally.

For more information contact:

Linda Deery Nelson

503-227-1859

lupine@teleport.com

Programs & Outings

**Tradition dictates that summer is reserved for WHAS members to get out and explore nature
on their own. Have fun!**

**October Program: Speaker - Rod Crawford of Seattle's Burke Museum
Spider Expert**