

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 42 // Issue 4

Winter 2016



Dark-eyed Junco(Slate-colored) - Image courtesy of Beth and Royce Craig

Lake Sacajawea Bird Walk and Count

By Margaret Green

Sunday, January 1, 2017, 9:00 'til

Lead by John and Margaret Green

January 1st is the date of the Willapa Hills Audubon Cowlitz and Columbia County Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year, John and Margaret Green invite you to join them to walk the Lake Sacajawea section of the official count circle. This is a chance for serious and beginner bird watchers to engage in a little citizen science as well as viewing all the diverse waterfowl at the lake. We will count species and numbers of birds, but take time to look at their differences and habits.

We will meet at Hemlock square, near the bathrooms on the Kessler side of the Lake at 9:00 AM. The walk around the lake (which might include a short neighborhood foray) will last 2 to 3 hours, but anyone wishing to, is free to break out earlier in accordance with their level of interest and stamina. (The total walk will be about 4 miles.)

Additionally, the entire group of CBC participants from all over the county meet in the early evening for the compilation dinner, where stories and counts are shared. Everyone is invited to attend. Details will be available at the walk.

If you wish to join us for the morning walk, please contact John Green at jgreen2317@aol.com or call 360-430-8569 to sign up.

John and Margaret look forward to getting back to their old stomping grounds and hope to see old friends from past Lake walks and make some new ones.

WHAS sponsors Arizona field trip

A birding adventure at **Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge** south of Tucson, Arizona, is planned for the last week of **April 2017**.

Ten to fourteen participants will enjoy bird walks in Brown Canyon, spending three nights in the lodge there maintained by the refuge. WHAS has reserved the lodge for the nights of April 25, 26, and 27. Costs of transportation, lodging, food, etc., will be borne by the participants.

To sign up for this trip -- or for more information -- please contact Darrel Whipple at dwhipple@opusnet.com or 503-556-9838 by Sunday, January 15th.

Christmas Bird Counts 2016

Once again it is time to organize the annual Christmas Bird Count. This WHAS event gives all of us the opportunity to share birding with others.

If you are a novice, it provides a wonderful opportunity to learn from the more experienced birders. This citizen science program is in its 117th year and provides data used to understand and develop bird conservation programs.

Beginners provide extra eyes and experienced birders provide accuracy. If you are joining the group, come prepared for weather and an extended tour: raingear, field glasses, water, and lunch.

WHAS sponsors the following counts:

Leadbetter: December 17, 2016

Wahkiakum: December 29, 2016

Cowlitz Columbia: January 1, 2017

The Fall Whistler had the wrong date for the Wahkiakum CBC, please note the correct date in this issue of the Whistler

The Leadbetter CBC will take place this year, please disregard earlier messages. Sign up now!

Please see page three for details

In this issue of the Whistler:

- 2 Membership Form
NW Bird Events
- 3 2016 Christmas Bird Count Details
Ongoing Citizen Science at home
"Project Feeder Watch"
- 4 Bring more birds to your home
with native plants
Coffee 101
- 5 During this dark season,
remember that too much light
can be hard on wildlife
- 6 Programs and Fieldtrips

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 _____ Y14:7XCH rev. 2007

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.

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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*

Olympic BirdFest 2017

Come Bird in Sequim, Washington, April 7-9, 2017

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction & raffle, gala banquet, and more. The featured speaker this year is: Bonnie Block. Join the festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 4-6, 2017.

More info and BirdFest registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

Winter Wings Festival 2017

Klamath Falls Oregon, February 16-19, 2017

Enjoy winter birding and photography at its best in the scenic Klamath Basin located in Southern Oregon and Northern California. They are consistently rated as one of the best organized and friendliest festivals you will find. Come experience it for yourself at the 38th festival!

More at <http://winterwingsfest.org/>

Othello Sandhill Crane Festival 2017

For nearly two decades they have celebrated the annual return of nearly 35,000 sand hill cranes to Othello, Washington every March as they migrate north to their breeding grounds in Alaska. The Festival offers an incredible opportunity to view the cranes up-close, with tours led by local experts. The Festival also boasts other specialty tours of the flora, fauna and geology of the area, and many lectures, as well as children's activities.

The Festival has grown over the years with returning participants attending from across the country.

Pre-registration is suggested to reserve your seat as some tours fill up quickly.

The 20th Annual festival will be held March 24-26, 2017.

Christmas Bird Counts 2016



Leadbetter CBC

This is the 117th annual Christmas Bird Count. The Leadbetter Count Circle includes the Pacific Ocean beaches on the Long Beach Peninsula, Willapa Bay's east shore mid-point on the peninsula to the tip of Leadbetter point on the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and the west side of the bay from the Naselle River north to Bay Center, WA. (See map)

People with any level of birding experience can participate. It is a great opportunity to see shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. Novice birders will be accompanied by more experienced birders so that all data collected is accurate.

Citizen scientist's volunteers, who annually brave the wind and rain, to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use the data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action.

For the **Wahkiakum CBC**, the area includes portions of the Skamokawa, Puget Island, Cathlamet, and Brownsmead areas.

For the **Cowlitz-Columbia CBC**, count circle areas include East Oregon, West Oregon, South Washington, East Washington, West Washington, and North Washington. We will be out for an 8 hour period covering an area 15 mile diameter circle looking for any birds that will let us see them.

Please plan to join us this year. It is a great way to start out the New Year.



House Finches

Image courtesy of WDFW

Ongoing Citizen Science at home "Project Feeder Watch"

Here is a fun opportunity to participate in bird related research, from the comfort of your home.

The **Project Feeder Watch with Cornell Bird Laboratory** will go from November until April, but one can sign up until the end of February. It runs for 21 weeks and involves counting birds at one's feeders or just in a bird-friendly habitat that one has provided. This is usually done in backyards. Birds are counted for two days every week or two (at least 5 days between a pair of counting days), and the results are submitted to the Laboratory for research and analysis. There is a \$18 participation fee which covers some materials.

You do not have to spend a lot of time watching; some people do it before and after work, or 5 minutes each hour, or whatever structure works for you.

For more information and to sign up, visit

<http://feederwatch.org/about/project-overview/>

See the box below for details about all Willapa Hills Audubon Society sponsored Christmas Bird Counts.

CBC Where and When?

Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count:

Saturday, December 17, 2016

Because of the large area, and the fact that we access the west side of Willapa Bay on numerous pieces of private property, Participants will be organized into small groups.

If you want the challenge of counting shorebird, waterfowl, raptors and song birds this is your opportunity. Sometime we get some rare migrants like tropical kingbirds.

If you wish to participate in the Leadbetter CBC please contact Charlotte Persons at cpeople2u@gmail.com or call 360.431.1174

Wahkiakum Christmas Bird Count

Thursday, December 29th 2016

For more information and/or to sign up contact Andrew Emlen by phone 360-795-8009 or email: aemlen@centurytel.net

Cowlitz – Columbia Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, January 1st 2017

To sign up, call Bob Reistroffer 360-636-5125 or email breistrof@aol.com He'll form teams or **you can put together your own team for the area of your choice.** (Areas include Eastern Oregon, Western Oregon, Southern Washington, Eastern Washington, Western Washington, and Northern Washington.) Bob will get information to all participants by mid-December when teams are figured out. He has reserved space at Papa Pete's Pizza, 5614 Ocean Beach Hwy for the compilation meeting, arriving between 4:30 and 5pm and will get a map and driving directions to all participants. **HOPE TO SEE YOU 1-1-17 !**

Bring more birds to your home with native plants

By Larry Turner

National Audubon has a web site at <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants> that will provide a list of native plants that go well in our area - zip code specific - and the birds they might attract. It provides a "quick list" of plants easily found, and a full list on another tab. You do NOT have to enter your email address to get the results. Here is a short description from the website:

Enter your zip code to use Audubon's native plants database and view a list of the best plants for birds in your area, as well as local resources and links to more information. By entering your email address, you'll receive an emailed list of the native plants you've selected, get additional tips on creating your bird-friendly habitat, and help us keep track of your contributions to our efforts to get 1 million native plants for birds in the ground.

Coffee 101

By Kurt Leuschner through the Desert Cities Bird Club

The holidays are approaching and you might like to purchase coffee. The good news is there are so many choices in the "songbird" or "shade grown" area to choose from. But it can be confusing. A recent article in Living Bird outlines your choices:

- Bird Friendly is the best. Look for their circular logo with an outline of 4 birds in flight and "Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center" on it. It is triple certified: organic, fair trade, and very strict shade grown requirements...simply the best if you can find it!
- Rainforest Alliance – their logo is also circular with a frog in the middle. Their standards for shade grown are less strict than Bird Friendly, but they still are to be supported.
- Organic – a circular logo with USDA Organic printed in it. This coffee is grown without most synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. There are no shade grown requirements however.

"Shade Grown" labels appear on coffee, but this designation has no regulations or certification standards. If you buy "shade grown" without any of the logos above, you are trusting that the coffee company is telling the truth!!

"specialty" means the coffee scores 80 or higher on a tasting scale and has nothing to do with environmental conditions. Most specialty coffees however do come from small family farms that can nurture higher quality coffee.

Results of the 2015 Christmas Bird Count

Results of the 116th Christmas Bird Count are almost complete online. To get the full count summary, regional summaries, articles from participants, and more delivered right to your inbox, sign up for American Birds [online](http://bit.ly/1XCRCBv) (<http://bit.ly/1XCRCBv>).

American Birds is a FREE quarterly citizen science e-newsletter that contains news from all our citizen science programs: the Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, and Hummingbirds at Home. It also includes the types of CBC information and summaries previously distributed in the print edition of American Birds.

Features and summaries are also available here:

<http://www.audubon.org/summary-116th-christmas-bird-count-2015-2016>

The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can see the Willapa Whistler in color online on our website? All the links are easy to follow. Go to <http://whistler.willapahillsaudubon.org> for this and past issues.

During this dark season, remember that too much light can be hard on wildlife

From the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife website

Of all the things we humans do that create problems for wildlife, did you ever think our affinity for lighting the darkness around us would be one of them? Light pollution has long been recognized as a problem for stargazers, but research shows that too much artificial lighting affects wildlife, particularly migrating birds.

During migration, birds are believed to use the moon and stars for navigation. Studies have shown that millions of birds have become disoriented by the bright lights of buildings and crash into them.

Birds migrating at night are strongly attracted to and even trapped by sources of artificial light, particularly during periods of low cloud cover or inclement weather when stars are obstructed. When they approach lighthouses, floodlit obstacles, ceilometers (light beams generally used at airports to determine the altitude of cloud cover), communication towers, or lighted tall buildings, they become vulnerable to collisions with the structures themselves.

But even if collision is avoided, birds are still at risk of death or injury. Once inside a beam of light, birds are reluctant to fly out of the lighted area into the dark, and often continue to flap around in the beam of light until they drop to the ground with exhaustion. Secondary threats from their concentration at lighted structures are increased vulnerability to predation and difficulty finding food once trapped in an urban environment.

To appreciate the magnitude of modern light pollution, consider that when Galileo studied the Milky Way 400 years ago, it was so bright that it cast shadows on the ground. Today most Americans no longer live in a place where they can see it with the naked eye.

Light pollution is partly the result of bad lighting design, which allows artificial light to shine outward and upward into the sky, where it's not wanted, instead of focusing it downward, where it is. **So at least part of the solution is to design light fixtures that are hooded so they cast light downward instead of horizontally or upward, and to turn off unnecessary lights at night.** These measures, of course, have the added advantage of reducing energy consumption.

Large cities like New York, Chicago, and Toronto now have "Lights Out" programs that require dimming or turning off lights twice a year during bird migrations. Some municipalities realize that if some lights are unnecessary at those times, they're probably unnecessary altogether.

Here in Washington, many municipalities have ordinances restricting outdoor lighting, motivated initially by concerns about intrusive glare for humans, but a start toward light pollution control for wildlife, too.

Just this year the Washington State Department of



Flock of Starlings – Image from Wikipedia

Transportation (WSDOT) started to evaluate how light pollution from state highways and facilities can be minimized while still meeting safety standards. WSDOT is also looking at how budget savings can be achieved through different types of lighting.

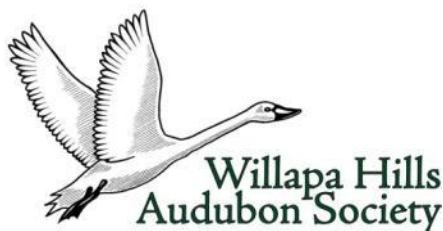
Recent unsuccessful proposals to have the Washington Department of Ecology assess the environmental, economic, and public health effects of light pollution and provide policy recommendations could be revisited in the State Legislature's next session.

Like so many problems we humans collectively create for wildlife, solutions start with individual actions. So consider:

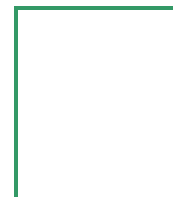
- Turning off unneeded lights around your home
- Investing in better designed lighting that is less likely to affect wildlife
- Keeping blinds/shades drawn from dusk through dawn to avoid spilling interior light to the outside
- Requesting that your place of business or school take these same steps
- Seeking adoption of "Lights Out" programs in your community

More information about light pollution and its effects on wildlife is available from:

International Dark-Sky Association at www.darksky.org
American Bird Conservancy at <http://www.abcbirds.org>



PO Box 399
Longview, WA 98632



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 15th 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.

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Like us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Willapa-Hills-Audubon/1386609461578276>

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.

Sunday, January 1, 2017, 9:00 'til

Lake Sacajawea Bird Walk and Count with John and Margaret Green

More info on page one.

Christmas Bird Counts 2016

Leadbetter: December 17, 2016

Wahkiakum: December 29, 2016 DATE CHANGED!

Cowlitz Columbia: January 1, 2017

More info on page three

April 25 - 27

Fieldtrip to **Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge in Arizona**

More info on page one

Other winter plans will appear on our website and will be announced through our gmail alert system. More information about the alert system here: <http://willapahillsaudubon.org/index.php/member-services>

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