

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

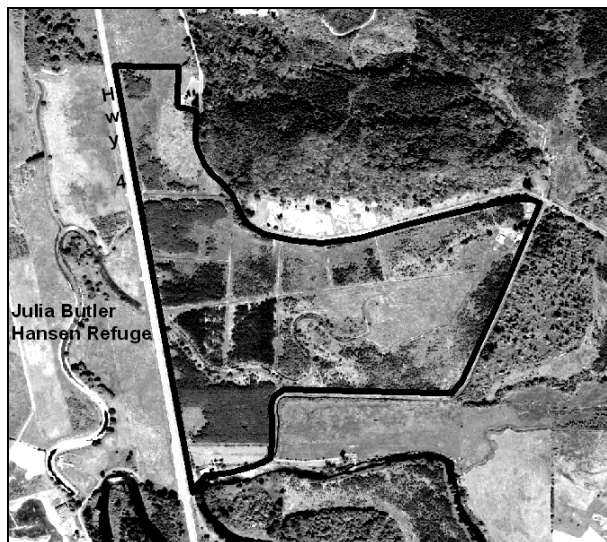
Volume 33, Issue 1

<http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org>

January/February 2007

WHAS Becomes Stewards of Columbia Land Trust Property near Cathlamet

At the September 23 board meeting, the WHAS Board of Directors voted to assume stewardship of a Columbia Land Trust property near Cathlamet. The property in question is a 180-acre parcel, formerly owned by a land development company, adjacent to the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge. It is bounded by Risk Road, Nelson Creek Road, and Highway 4. Currently, it is vegetated primarily with hybrid cottonwood trees, reed canary grass, Himalayan blackberry, and other non-native and invasive species. Nelson Creek, a salmon spawning stream, flowed through the property until it was redirected many years ago through a ditch around the edge. The Columbia Land Trust refers to the property as the Nelson Creek property.



The Nelson Creek property (outlined in black) is about 2 miles northwest of Cathlamet.

Becoming stewards of this property involves assisting the Columbia Land Trust with planning and actual land restoration, including such things as planting native vegetation, wildlife and vegetation surveys, monitoring the progress of restoration, education and outreach, researching resource information, assisting with grant proposals, simply keeping an eye on the property, and so on. Our level of participation depends on what WHAS members are willing and able to contribute.

The Columbia Land Trust will develop a stewardship and conservation plan for the property. We can provide input to the plan, as well as help implement it.

This is an exciting opportunity for WHAS to establish “roots” in a real, on the ground, wildlife and habitat restoration project. We can be major participants in converting a property with minimal wildlife values to a vibrant wildlife habitat. Restoration will undoubtedly include restoring native vegetation, enhancing wetlands, and possibly restoring Nelson Creek to its original bed. WHAS members can conduct bird surveys, amphibian surveys, and all sorts of fun stuff to monitor the progress of restoration. We can organize educational activities for school groups. We can engage other community groups such as the Wahkiakum Community Foundation.

So far, 11 WHAS members have expressed interest in joining a stewardship committee to plan and oversee WHAS’s involvement. The committee will be formed up in January. All members are welcome to join. If you are interested, contact Al Clark, 360.795.3905, alan_c_clark@hotmail.com.



Reed canarygrass and hybrid cottonwoods at the Nelson Creek property. Imagine what it could be!

Please Join Us!

Support Willapa Hills Audubon Society by paying annual dues directly to this chapter. People who join National Audubon Society automatically become members of WHAS, however, National Audubon Society shares only a very small amount of the total dues money with WHAS—*currently less than \$2.00*. So, consider joining the WHAS chapter to help provide programs, field trips, bird counts and education projects here in our four-county region.

Chapter Membership

_____ **\$20** for annual membership dues.

_____ **\$15** for full time students. *Make check payable to Willapa Hills Audubon Society.*

National Audubon Membership

_____ **\$20** for one year introductory membership in the National Audubon Society with Willapa Hills Audubon Society affiliation. *Make check payable to National Audubon Society*

Combination

_____ Yes, you can do both options above, if you like. *Please write a check for each (\$20 to National Audubon Society and \$20 to WHAS.).*

Willapa Whistler Only

_____ **\$5** for six issues (one year). *No membership is included with this option. Make check payable to WHAS.*

For any of the options above, clip this form and mail it with your check to:

Willapa Hills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 399
Longview, WA 98632

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

_____ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

_____ Please add me to your Discussion email list

_____ New **Y14**

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For more information about WHAS, You may call Wayne Nelson at 503-556-9379 or Betty Mayfield at 503-556-6841.

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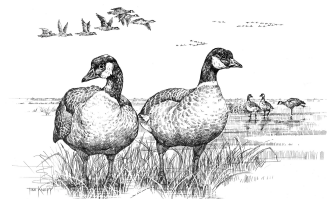
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Program Schedule

Margaret Green, Program Chair

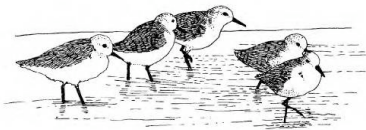
I Love Seabirds - Saturday, January 27, 2007, 3:00 PM, Lower Columbia Student Center Conference Room, Longview

Seabird specialist Mike Donahue will share his love and knowledge. The waters off the west coast of North America offer some of the best seabirding anywhere in the world. These rich waters support a multitude of species - albatrosses, storm-petrels, shearwaters, gulls, terns, and alcids. The program will focus on the diversity and natural history of these wondrous birds. A Seattle native who began birding at age 7, Mike has birded around the world. He also leads open ocean birding trips off our coast for Westport Seabird. This program will offer a great opportunity to learn about birds we rarely encounter, because their lives are spent at sea.



Birds of the Wind: the Lives of Shorebirds - Saturday, February 24, 2007, 3:00 PM, Lower Columbia Student Center Conference Room, Longview

We will again host Dennis Paulson, Director Emeritus of the Slater Museum of Natural History at the University of Puget Sound, and author of many books including



“Shorebirds of North America, The Photographic Guide”. This is a wonderful and rare opportunity to hear from one of the world’s most revered ornithologists and to see the view through the eyes of an expert naturalist.

The Highest Tide - Monday, February 26, 2007, 7:00 PM, The Longview Library, 1600 Louisiana, Longview

Jim Lynch of Olympia will read from and talk about his book, a 2006 Pacific Northwest Booksellers award winner, which has become a regional bestseller. WHAS will partner with The Longview Library and Lower Columbia College for this Northwest Voices program. Lynch’s own love of place and natural history shines through in this story of a young boy’s love of tidal flats and marine life near Olympia. This is a special opportunity to hear about this amazing aquatic world through the words of a very talented wordsmith and storyteller. An afternoon writing workshop will also be held at LCC, with details to be announced in the local newspapers.

Alaska - Saturday afternoon, March 17, 2007, exact time and venue to be announced

Taldi Walters, Alaska Field Coordinator of National Audubon, will share with us the beautiful birds and natural treasures of Alaska and the challenges facing these wild areas. Since this is St. Patrick’s Day, we hope to have our silent auction, some other surprises and lots of fun during this program.

Robert Michael Pyle - Tuesday, May 15, 2007, 7:00 PM, The Longview Library, 1600 Louisiana, Longview

Another Northwest Voices program collaboration will bring Dr. Robert Michael Pyle. Author of a multitude of books, expert lepidopterist, and naturalist extraordinaire, he will take a break from chasing butterflies to read and share thoughts from his new book “Sky Time in Gray’s River: Living for Keeps in a Forgotten Place.” It is always wonderful to hear a voice from our own Willapa Hills. This evening should be quite a treat.



Field Trip Report

By Margaret Green

To quote Ron Schauer, it was a balmy day in Longview and not even raining, as our group of 8 trooped around Lake Sacajawea on November 18 for some winter water fowl watching. We were pleasantly surprised by a fairly wide array of birds for this time of year, though not quite as many as would be expected a little later in the winter season. There were some very special treats, one being a green heron which sat for many minutes for all to see and study through binos and scopes. Two canvasback ducks were seen, which is a fairly uncommon site on the lake. Mr. and Mrs. bufflehead were there, as well as a male northern shoveler accompanied by 3 females, mallards displaying head-bobbing behavior, and a male and female scaup rounded out the duck brigade. A single horned grebe in winter plumage was a loner as compared to the large number of pied-billed grebes. A Cooper's hawk surveyed the scene but provided no action.



Field trip participants at Lake Sacajawea. *Photo by Ron Schauer*

After walking two hours, we retreated to the Greens for hot drinks, treats and more birding in their small city yard. The water feature definitely is a magnet, and highlights included two Townsend's warblers, male and female Anna's hummingbirds, and chestnut-backed and black-capped chickadees. Our total species count for the morning was 31. It was a good day with good companionship.

Field Trip Schedule

Pamela Wright, Field Trip Co-chair

The 29th annual WHAS Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey will take place on Saturday, January 13, 2007. The survey is a fixed vehicle route along the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers focused on Bald Eagles but with attention to whatever other birds appear as well. WHAS has conducted this survey each year since 1979. Confer with leader Darrel Whipple before the trip day (503-556-9838, dwhipple@opusnet.com) for details regarding carpools. Expect to meet in Longview at 7:30am and return about 3:30pm. Bring binocs and/or scopes, lunch, appropriate clothing and gas money for the driver. This field trip involves minimal walking.

Save the date:

Join Friends of Fox Creek for the annual Fox Creek Trail Project on Earth Day, Saturday, April 21, in Rainier, Oregon. We will have more details nearer to the event. Volunteer activities may include physical activity such as removal of invasive ivy and trail maintenance, or less physical activity such as volunteer registration and organization.

Return to the Fox Creek Trail Rainier, Oregon on Saturday, May 19, for a wildflower-oriented walk. We hope to catch the Inside-out Flower in bloom as well as other local beauties, and of course we'll watch for tweeters as well. Watch for more details in a future newsletter.

Impromptu Field Trips

Often field trip and stewardship opportunities arise with insufficient lead time to be announced in the Whistler. If you would like to be made aware of occasional impromptu opportunities, please contact Pam Wright at 360.560.3772 or audubon@zygops.com. Impromptu activities that took place this fall included scotch broom removal on Columbia Land Trust's Germany Creek property and native plant salvaging for landscaping the new Lower Columbia College Fine Arts Building.

BIRDING SOUTHERN ARGENTINA

By Russ Koppendrayner

On October 28, 2006, in Buenos Aires, I met 12 co-clients and 2 guides for 15 days of birding, south through the Pampas, Patagonia, and Tierra de Fuego regions of Argentina. These Southern Argentina destinations have a good tourist infrastructure and excellent food. While drinking bottled products in almost all locales, we did enjoy the fruits and salads with no ill effects. I'd been eagerly anticipating this trip since my visit to the high Andes in Northwest Argentina in 2005.

The first few days were spent in the Pampas, south of Buenos Aires. This flat landscape of wetlands and grasslands has mostly been converted to grazing, leaving little native vegetation, a fate similar to that of the North American grasslands. However, the birding was still excellent. A few highlights for me included the southern screamer, a huge waterfowl that, when vocal, lives up to its name. We saw these birds on the ground and also amazingly, soaring. Another favorite was the many-colored reed-tyrant, a small flycatcher found in some marsh grasses. Equally spectacular was the scarlet-headed blackbird, perched atop cattails, glowing in the sun.

Argentina's Patagonia is a vast arid area that would comprise the heart of our trip. We flew to different areas and explored by bus from each city. Buenos Aires to Tierra del Fuego was nearly 1500 miles. Patagonian habitats varied from a small tree, brush-land called "monte scrub" in the north to more arid grassland in the south. Again, the birds could be spectacular, beginning with the burrowing parrots of the las Grutas sea cliffs. Walking inside the Magellanic Penguin colony at Punta Tomba was a lifetime experience. Despite the fact that activity was minimal, due to it being egg incubation time, we came within a few feet of walking birds and nests. We also saw species rarely seen by birders. The yellow cardinal is rare because it is prized as a cage bird, and the hooded grebe experience was memorable, both for the beauty of the bird and the bus ride over gravel roads for most of 2 days to reach this inaccessible area. Mammal highlights of this region were a few huge bull elephant seals lounging on the beach, plus a zodiac trip for up close views of southern right whales in Golfo Nuevo. We also had numerous encounters with guanacos, a llama relative.

The last few days found us based in Ushuaia, the southernmost community in the world, on the island of Tierra del Fuego. We had striking dolphin gulls and powerful Chilean skuas on our hotel grounds right on the Beagle Channel. A boat trip on the channel found us black-browed albatross, flightless steamer ducks, and the unique snowy sheathbill, among others. November 12th found me heading for the Ushuaia airport filled with these and many other memories for the trip home.

Come Bird With Us

Olympic BirdFest 2007

Sequim, Washington, March 30 - April 1, 2007

Grab your binoculars and join the Olympic BirdFest 2007 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, March 30 - April 1, 2007.

The stage is set...quiet bays and estuaries, sandy beaches, a five-mile-long sand spit, and a protected island bird sanctuary on the Strait of Juan de Fuca; wetlands, tide pools, rainforests, and lush river valleys. The players are ready ... Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Peregrine Falcons, and Pygmy owls will be sporting their finest spring plumage for this celebration. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat and kayak tours, a traditional salmon bake at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center, and more.

Come bird with us and experience with others the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula...you just might go home with a new bird for your life list! Check out the offerings by going online or calling for a brochure.

Sequim is just a ferry ride and short drive from Seattle...in two hours you'll be in the rain shadow of the Olympics...it's worth the drive.

Program information and registration can be found online at: <http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>. To contact us by phone, call 360-681-4076, e-mail us at info@olympicbirdfest.org, or write to us at: Dungeness River Audubon Center, P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, WA 98382.

Conservation Update/Lobby Day

By Charlotte Persons

Our best news is that the changes in the state and federal legislatures may help to pass legislation that will offer us all better environmental protections. Please stay alert to updates through Audubon and the WHAS conservation committee so you can contact your elected representatives when these bills need support.

WHAS members are invited to attend Priorities for a Healthy Washington Lobby Day in Olympia, an all day event, Wednesday, February 14th, 2007.

From Lisa Remlinger's email: "Join the state's leading conservation groups and hundreds of citizen lobbyists to push for the passage of the Priorities for a Healthy Washington legislative package. These priorities include legislation for cleaning up Puget Sound, phasing out toxic chemicals that impact children's health, promoting renewable fuels and recycling e-waste. We are also united to defend against any attacks on our land protections in Washington State. During Lobby Day you will hear from legislators that are championing the Priorities for a Healthy Washington legislation, receive a training on how to lobby from top environmental lobbyists, and have a chance to meet face to face with your elected officials. And don't forget the party in the evening! Lobby Day is hosted by People for Puget Sound. To register go to www.pugetsound.org/lobbyday or contact Rein Attemann at rattemann@pugetsound.org or (206) 382-7007."

Liquid Natural Gas Terminal at Bradwood, OR

Many residents expressed amazement at the many glossy mailings they received recently from Northern Star, the company that wants to build the plant. These mailings prominently feature beautiful full-color renditions of salmon and promise \$40 million for salmon restoration. Of course these mailings do not tell the whole story. First the company will destroy salmon habitat by dredging estuary currently protected for fish spawning. Then it will pay for salmon restoration projects. It is also offering to protect an island that Columbia Land Trust is already in the process of negotiating to buy and protect. **To find out more about this project, come to a forum in February at Lower Columbia College at which both sides will be represented.**

Copper Mine at Mt. St. Helens

New court decisions may prevent development of the roadless area that is part of the mining company's holdings. This would mean that only part of the mine could be developed and might mean that it would not be developed at all. Public hearings are supposed to be scheduled early in 2007, so stay tuned.

Coal-Gasification Electric Plant in Kalama

Darrel Whipple testified for WHAS at a public hearing on November 6, stating that the coal gasification process is cleaner than normal coal-burning power plants, but still will emit equally large amounts of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas which contributes to ocean acidification and global warming. He said that most of the fifty attendees at the hearing were against the plant, because of the effect on residents of Kalama.

Ethanol Plant in Longview

See the summary of the December 3 WHAS Board meeting (*Page 7 in this issue*) for more on this topic.

SUPPORTING ECOLOGICALLY RESPONSIBLE WAYS OF LIFE

Guest article, by Margaret Green

President, Neighbors for Livability, a non-profit 501c4 organization

Help us protect Longview neighborhoods from inappropriate industrial development. The City of Longview is trying to allow an ethanol plant to be built in the Mint Farm Industrial Park within a few hundred feet of family homes. This plant will be a noisy, stinking neighbor in addition to storing nearly two million gallons of ethanol, gasoline, and anhydrous ammonia. We are fighting to move this plant away from neighborhoods. You can help by joining and/or by donating to Neighbors for Livability.

C/O Margaret Green

1318 25th Avenue

Longview, WA 98632

For more information call: 360-575-9238, or email: jgreen2317@aol.com

Board Meeting Summary

Astoria, OR, December 3, 2006

By Charlotte Persons

Here are highlights: (1) Ann Musche reported on a \$15,000 grant application to National Audubon Society written jointly by Grays Harbor Audubon Society, Willapa Hills Audubon Society, and the Washington State Departments of Parks and Recreation and Fish and Wildlife. The grant will be to improve habitat for streaked horned larks—habitat also used by snowy plovers. At the end of January we should find out if the application is successful. Volunteers will be needed to remove beachgrass and to mark, monitor, and protect nesting sites. (2) Now that Discovery Coast Audubon Society has been officially recognized, the WHAS Membership Committee will be sending a letter to all WHAS members in Pacific County to explain that they can elect to be members of Discovery Coast, WHAS, or both chapters. The Membership Committee will also use a \$782 grant from Audubon WA to develop flyers, book marks, and other outreach activities. (3) The WHAS board is considering changes to the bylaws. When finalized by the board, these will be sent to all members for a vote—they include a new date in March for the annual meeting. (4) A non-profit group, Neighbors for Livability (NFL), has formed to protect Cowlitz County neighborhoods from damaging commercial and industrial development. The WHAS board approved \$500 in matching funds to NFL to help retain a lawyer to fight against the ethanol plant proposed near homes in Longview. This was after the board decided that the WHAS mission statement does cover this kind of action. (5) A Brainstorming Group was formed to think of new ways to improve WHAS as an organization. Contact Margaret Green if you would like to be a member. The next board meeting will be before Jan. 15.

Proposed Wetlands Changes Put Habitat at Risk!

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has proposed reissuing and modifying 44 nationwide wetlands permits and adding six new nationwide permits. Additionally, the Corps has edited 27 general conditions. The cumulative effect is a weakening of existing regulations, which could lead to loss of important wetlands and bird habitat. Your comments on these proposed changes are needed today.

The Corps' existing 100-year floodplain general condition has been gutted, leaving only local and state requirements to restrict development in these sensitive areas. The Corps previously independently safeguarded these areas. Under the new condition, if there are no state or local requirements, development would be wholly unrestricted in these floodplains.

Additionally, a new permit would allow for discharges of dredged or fill material resulting from surface coal mining into waters of the United States. The cumulative effect of these permits could result in large-scale destruction of waters and streams in Appalachia.

Many birds on the Audubon Watchlist, such as the Swainson's Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler, depend on small streams in the Appalachians for food and nesting. Productive streams are the primary food source for these birds. Additionally, these birds nest within the low vegetation surrounding these streams. Eliminating this food source and habitat would jeopardize these already depleted species.

Please ask the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to protect wetlands and associated habitat. Ask them to reconsider re-issuing and modifying these permits and general conditions. Send in your comments today: http://www.audubonaction.org/campaign/corps_nwp . It's quick and easy and will help protect wetlands!

Crossing Paths With Wildlife in Washington Towns and Cities

Sent by Helen Engle

The fall 2006 edition of "Crossing Paths with Wildlife in Washington Towns and Cities" newsletter is now available for viewing and downloading at:
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/crospath>.

"Crossing Paths" is a quarterly newsletter for Washington residents enrolled in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary program and others interested in urban/suburban wildlife.

This edition features an update from WDFW Director Jeff Koenings on avian flu monitoring, coyotes as potentially dangerous wildlife, and other information.



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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.

Programs

See Page 3 for Details

January 27 - I Love Seabirds, by Mike Donahue
February 24 - Birds of the Wind: The Lives of Shorebirds, by Dennis Paulson
February 26 - The Highest Tide, by Jim Lynch
March 17 - Alaska, by Taldi Walters
May 15 - Robert Michael Pyle

Field Trips

See Page 4 for Details

January 13 - WHAS Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey
April 21 - Earth Day: Fox Creek Trail Project
May 19 - Wildflower and Birding Walk at Fox Creek