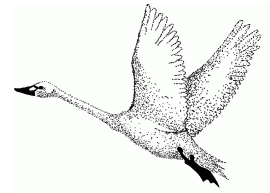


WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society



Volume 35, Issue 5

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September/October 2009



Photo: Rich MacIntosh, USGS

Marbled Murrelet

Radar Ridge Wind Energy Project in Pacific County Endangers the Marbled Murrelet

By Charlotte Persons, *President*

Your letter can help!

Marbled Murrelets are robin-sized birds that spend their lives on the open ocean and only come to land to breed. They usually dive 10 to 17 feet to catch their prey. Unlike other alcids, they do not breed in colonies, but instead fly inland to coastal forests to lay an egg on a moss platform on a broad branch in the high part of old-growth canopy. To escape predators, they fly 50 to 70 mph at dusk and dawn to their nesting sites. They range from California to Alaska along the Pacific Coast.

The California, Oregon, and Washington population was listed as Threatened in 1992 under the Endangered Species Act. Because of destruction of their breeding habitat, ocean pollution, and other factors, they have continued to decline, especially recently. Between 2000 and 2008 the listed population declined 19 to 38 percent.

Studies estimate that now only 900 to 1,200 of these birds are off the coast of southwest WA during breeding season. Part of their scarcity here may be due to climate change since the National Audubon Society's 2009 State of the Birds Report concluded that the center of their population has moved 400 miles north from Washington to British Columbia. However, their continued presence in southwest Washington/northern Oregon is especially crucial to the existence of the species because a large gap between the southern Oregon/California and northern populations could genetically isolate these two populations, leading to increased risk of extinction. (If you would like to read more about Marbled Murrelets, a list of references is on the WHAS website.)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service states that recovering the species will require creating and maintaining large blocks of contiguous forest cover, and maintaining and enhancing buffer habitat. California, Oregon, and Alaska are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to finalize a plan to preserve the species by preserving and improving habitat

Continued on page 4

Primal Warblings

"...we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down..." (from Ralph Waldo Emerson's *The Poet*)

If you readers have a favorite poem on this topic, we would appreciate your contributions. The poem can be your original work or a poem you like. Don't forget to include your name, phone or e-mail, and a note describing your connection to birds.

Send your contributions or suggestions to

WHAS – *Poems*, PO Box 399, Longview WA 98632
or email newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org

Salmon River Estuary

Drifting close to shore, we enter the shadow of Cascade Head. Our kayak jitters in an eddy as we dip and lift the double-bladed paddles to keep ourselves steady. Lit by morning sun, current and rising tide collide before our eyes in swirls of foam where the river becomes the sea. Surf seethes across a crescent of sand. Gone now the bald eagle's scream as it leaves a treetop aerie, the kingfisher's woody rattle, gulls' cackle, wind's hiss through mossy brush. Light flashing through sea mist forges a shaft of color that arcs a moment toward the horizon and is gone. Without speaking, moving together, we power ourselves out of the calmer dark and stroke hard for the water's bright center where the spring tide will carry us back upriver.

-- Floyd Skloot

This poem appears in Selected Poems: 1970-2005 (Tupelo Press, 2008) and is reprinted here by permission of the author.

Portland poet Floyd Skloot will offer a workshop and reading on Monday, January 25th in Longview.

In this issue of the Whistler:

- 2 Member Form and WHAS News
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- 8 WHAS Programs and Field Trips

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.

If you are also interested in the membership in the National Audubon Society, please visit <http://www.audubon.org/>.

Please make your check payable to: WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY and mail to:

WHAS, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632

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

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Address _____ Email _____

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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 allow members to announce and discuss items of general interest.

* To announce **occasional** reminders and to communicate last minute schedule changes due to weather or other issues for WHAS programs and field trips.

Clip- _____ -Clip

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WHAS Board News and Announcements

The next WHAS Board meeting will be October 18 at the Julia Butler Hanson NWR headquarters. Please check the WHAS website calendar for the time and location if you would like to attend.

Do you have time to help?

We need **new** folks to support with different WHAS activities.

The **Conservation Committee** needs members to attend state and local meetings, work on conservation legislation, or write letters to the editor.

The **Education Committee** can use people to give presentations and offer classes or just to act as an extra pair of hands at an outreach booth.

Do you like to attend WHAS programs? You could help organizing these programs as a member of the **Program Committee**.

The **Snowy Plover / Horned Lark** project needs a coordinator. See page 3 for more information.

If you would like to help, **contact** a committee chair, or call Charlotte Persons at 360-578-3949, or email president@willapahillsaudubon.org.

Pay Now or Pay Later

By Gene Bullock

Those who make public policy often defend their bias toward development by insisting that "growth is inevitable and we have to prepare for it." Typically, however, the tail wags the dog. Developers plot thousands of "spec" homes and then spend huge amounts on advertising to lure buyers from other areas. With short-term profits at stake, they are strongly motivated to push accelerated growth.

It's also tempting for cities and counties. Revenues depend on property and sales tax, so a sure way to grow revenues is through annexation and development. As a result, the math is often weighted to favor near-term gains over long-term costs.

Hidden Costs

It's not just about protecting wildlife or preserving pristine wilderness. And it's not just about residents who see their quality of life steadily eroded by increased traffic, longer commutes and the rising cost of water, sewers, schools and other services. There are hidden costs too routinely ignored.

One of the hidden costs of new construction is the accepted practice of removing all trees, vegetation and topsoil to "optimize" buildable area. For our forests, it's "death by a thousand permits." Yet our forests and forest beds are efficient stormwater buffers and have a huge impact on the cost of stormwater management. They are natural "time-release"

components of our hydrologic system. They release water gradually into streams, filter out pollutants and recharge our aquifers.

Cost of Managing Stormwater

Stormwater runoff is now recognized as the number one source of pollution in Puget Sound. It washes pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer and petrochemical residues from roads and driveways into our lakes, streams and waterways. Erratic stream flows cause costly, devastating flash floods. They scour stream beds, flushing away salmon eggs and burying estuaries with silt so they can't function as hatcheries for a rich variety of marine life. Stormwater runs off too quickly to recharge our aquifers. That's an ominous threat to future water supplies. Some think the scarcity of fresh water could replace oil as our most serious problem.

The fiscal value of our forests is huge; but it seldom figures into the math for new construction. Stripping away our forests to make way for more roads, sidewalks, shopping malls and parking lots is an unsustainable "path to prosperity."

Low-impact development is an encouraging trend, but low impact does not mean "no impact." It doesn't make up for an unsustainable rate of growth.

Did you know ...the Washington State Bird?



Photo: Terry L. Spivey, Terry Spivey Photography, Bugwood.org

The American Goldfinch was designated as the Washington State Bird in 1951. This beautiful golden bird is found throughout our state and is commonly seen in flocks in fields, bushes and trees often coming to bird feeders.

The male in breeding plumage is bright yellow with a black forehead, wings, and tail. He has one white wing-bar on each wing and white on his tail. Outside of the breeding season, the male is drab brown with hints of yellow and white wing-bars. In both breeding and non-breeding plumage, he has white undertail coverts contrasting with the yellow undertail coverts of the Lesser Goldfinch.

The female in breeding plumage is yellowish-gray-brown on top and varies in color from bright yellow to dull yellow underneath. She has two light wing-bars on each wing and a light-colored bill. Her tail is black with white outer tips. Outside of the breeding season, she is gray above and below, and has less distinct wing-bars and a darker bill.

The song is long, high and sweet. Keep your eye out for our state bird!

For more information about the American Goldfinch, check www.birdweb.org.

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Radar Ridge Wind Energy Project in Pacific County Endangers the Marbled Murrelet

(Continued from page 1)

New Threat to the Marbled Murrelet

The proposed Radar Ridge wind turbine project near Naselle will endanger the Marbled Murrelets that nest on land managed by Washington Department of Natural Resources, land that is designated as a Marbled Murrelet Management Area. This area is just north of Highway 4 and the town of Naselle and includes the Nemah Resource Conservation Area and the Naselle Uplands Important Bird Area, a large area of old-growth identified by the DNR as the Marbled Murrelet's best nesting habitat in southwest Washington. The Radar Ridge Wind Energy Project borders this old-growth forest on the east.

The project will create two dangers for these birds—injury and death from impacts with wind turbines, and habitat fragmentation and degradation.

Generating electricity from wind is a wonderful non-polluting technology which helps reduce greenhouse gases. But this wind turbine project should not be sited where it will damage the chances for survival of the Marbled Murrelet!

Based on concerns raised by the Willapa Hills Audubon Society, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, WDFW biologists, and DNR's own internal analysis, Audubon Washington and Willapa Hills Audubon have decided to oppose this project.

But official letters from organizations are not as effective as letters sent by many individuals, and we have begun a letter campaign across the state. As a resident of southwest Washington, you can have the most effect—your letter can prevent the completion of this project.

Please take the time to write to the Commissioner of Public Lands to ask for cancellation of the conditional permit for the Radar Ridge Project to Energy Northwest. To have the most impact, also send copies of your letter to your elected representatives and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 510 Desmond Dr. SW #102, Lacey, WA 98503-1263.

Peter Goldmark

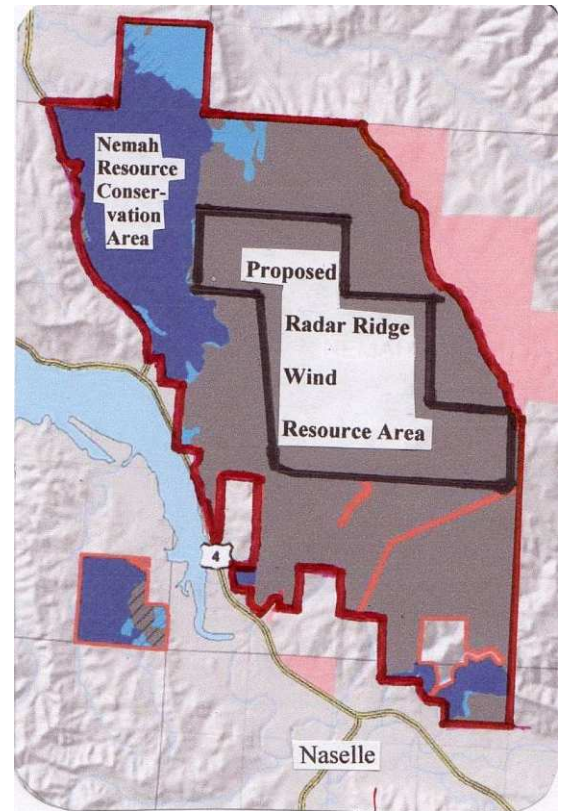
Commissioner of Public Lands

Washington Department of Natural Resources

1111 Washington St SE

Olympia WA 98504-7041

(see also *Talking Points you may ... on page 5*)



**Nemah Marbled Murrelet
Management Area**

More Project Background

Under Doug Sutherland, the previous Commissioner of Public Lands, the WA Department of Natural Resources issued a conditional permit to Energy Northwest, a consortium of utility districts, to investigate siting a wind energy facility on Radar Ridge, Pacific County, WA.

The project site was originally developed as a radar facility by the Air Force in 1952 during the Korean War, but now houses a transmission site for communications. The wind facility would extend to the north and south along Radar Ridge, beyond the communications center, and into DNR lands currently used for tree farms.

The project would include 27 to 32 wind turbines, placed in order to avoid the communications towers and the beams going out from them. The project would tie in to an existing BPA line feeding to the existing Naselle Substation, while a new substation on Radar Ridge would be required, along with an overhead line (1 mile) to connect to the BPA right-of-way.

The result would be a single line of turbines, so birds flying east – west would have to cross the line once, rather than through a maze of turbines. Proposed blade tip height: perhaps 125 to 130 meters from the ground.

Controversy on Collisions with Wind Turbine Rotors

West, Inc., Energy NW's consultant, has been collecting data, using Doppler radar, for almost 3 years on the movement of birds at the site. In presentations on June 9 and 10, Energy Northwest claimed that their proprietary "strike protocol" calculates that only 1 or 2 Marbled Murrelets might be injured or killed each year. However, as the formula is proprietary, it is impossible to determine, either through peer-review or the public process, whether Energy NW is using the "best available science."

In contrast to Energy NW's calculations, an independent review by DNR in July calculated that each year 87 Marbled Murrelets would be in the wind tower strike zone as they crossed the ridge. Their analysis shows the project would put 2,625 birds at risk over the 30-year life of the wind project, and concludes there would be "adverse effects to Marbled Murrelets."

Recent Activities

WHAS Annual Summer Picnic

By Gloria Nichols

Sunday, July 26th was the annual WHAS summer potluck picnic.

We would like to give a huge thanks to Linda and David Jennings for graciously hosting this event. Their lovely home and gardens in the hills above Rainier, Oregon.

Linda gave tours of the different areas of their property. We can understand why birds are drawn to their woods and gardens.

Good food, good conversation, and plenty of sunny warm weather made for a great picnic.

Again, thank you, Linda and David, for all your hospitality.



Photo: John Nichols

Radar Ridge Wind Energy Project...*(see page 4 for more information)***Talking Points You May Want to Include:**

- The Radar Ridge project site is located on Washington DNR lands at Radar Ridge, Pacific County within the Nemah Marbled Murrelet Management Area (MMMA).
- The Nemah MMMA is the highest quality habitat for murrelets in southwestern Washington, and a core habitat area and population center for the long-term recovery of this species. Most of the surrounding forest is identified as critical nesting habitat, and has been designated by the federal recovery plan and Washington DNR Marbled Murrelet Science Team to be important for long-term recovery of the Marbled Murrelet.
- Audubon recognizes the Nemah MMMA as part of the Naselle Uplands Important Bird Area, a site that qualifies as a Globally Important Bird Area based on its breeding Marbled Murrelets.
- Direct impacts of birds colliding with rotors are a serious concern, especially as injury or death of one parent bird would result in desertion of the nest.
- The project also poses threats to Marbled Murrelet breeding habitat. This species is declining because its habitat has become fragmented and scattered into increasingly isolated islands. Placing a wind energy facility in the center of this Marbled Murrelet Management Area will add to the problem of habitat fragmentation. It also would not be consistent with the DNR's own long-term conservation strategy, which identifies a goal of creating more and better breeding habitat over the next 70 years by encouraging tree growth around current old-growth breeding areas.
- We need better regulatory guidance for wind energy development in Washington. Developed with a focus on Eastern Washington, the Washington's Wind Energy Guidelines are inadequate for addressing wind energy development in Western Washington, and so provide poor guidance for this project. Likewise, DNR is signatory to a Habitat Conservation Plan that addresses management across forested state trust lands, but wind energy generation is not covered by this agreement. These regulatory guidelines need to be revised before more projects are permitted.

Upcoming....

Birding Bits

By Russ Koppendrayer

Russ is out birding...



... but will return with stories of Birding Bits next issue.

2009 WOS Conference in Kelso

The 2009 Washington Ornithological Society Conference will be held September 18-21 (Friday through Monday) and will be centered at the Red Lion Hotel & Conference Center in Kelso, Washington. The Red Lion will serve as the base for lodging, registration, receptions, and events, and as the starting point for all field trips.

For more info check their website at <http://www.wos.org>.

Fall ACOW



WHAS members are invited to attend the Audubon Council of Washington meeting for fall 2009 on October 9th, 10th and 11th. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn in Everett. For further information contact Pilchuck Audubon at www.pilchuckaudubon.org.

Learn more about Raptors

Doug Robberson will teach a multimedia (including photos, vocalizations, and even some video) class on raptors (hawks, eagle, falcons, owls) that you would expect to find in SW Washington. The class will be taught on Tuesday, October 6th, from 6-8 pm at the Longview Public with a field trip on October 10th. The field trip will take place at Bonnie Butte and participants will have a chance to visit a raptor banding station and see raptors up close. Doug has been teaching birding classes for Portland Audubon Society, Tualatin River keepers, and the Friends of the Tualatin National Wildlife Refuge for over 10 years and has been birding for 18 years. The cost for the class will be \$8 and space is limited so don't delay!

To register, or for more info, contact Carlo Abbruzzese at (puffbird@juno.com) or at (360) 425-6133.

Waterfowl Class in January

Doug Robberson will teach a multimedia class in January that covers the waterfowl of western Washington. Watch the Whistler or our website at www.willapahillsaudubon.org for more details.

To register, or for more info, contact Carlo Abbruzzese at (puffbird@juno.com) or at (360) 425-6133.

BirdFest & Bluegrass 2009, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

Saturday & Sunday -- October 10-11, 2009



Come to the Ridgefield National Wildlife refuge, just 25 minutes north of Portland. Park once and ride an eco-shuttle to see it all. Walk on Audubon led bird and plant tours. Learn about Bald Eagles from experts. Reserve a spot on a tour to view Sandhill Cranes flying. Kayak on a guided paddle tour. Shop at a birders marketplace. Visit an authentic replica of a plankhouse and see demonstrations on how Native Americans lived. Sample salmon at a traditional salmon bake. Listen to Bluegrass music all day Saturday, or come to jam in a workshop. Shop at the birders marketplace. Watch your children have fun for free while learning about nature at the craft stations, storytelling tent, raptor shows and Audubon children's bird walks. For more information, go to <http://www.ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest.html>.

The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can read the Whistler online at our website? To see the **pictures in color** or in case you missed a previous issue just go to

<http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org> and look for the *Whistler*.

Workshop with Nena Baker

Northwest Voices & the Willapa Bay Audubon Society will host investigative journalist, **Nena Baker**, to give a workshop on how to write persuasively and a public reading of her recently published book, **Body Toxic**, on **Tuesday, October 20**.

The workshop, "Writing to Change the World" happens on the LCC campus, room ADC 143 from 3-4:30pm, and the reading takes place at the Longview Public Library at 7pm. Both events are free and open to the public.

Book Review

By Carolyn Norred

***Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding,* Scott Weidensaul; Harcourt Inc. 2007.**

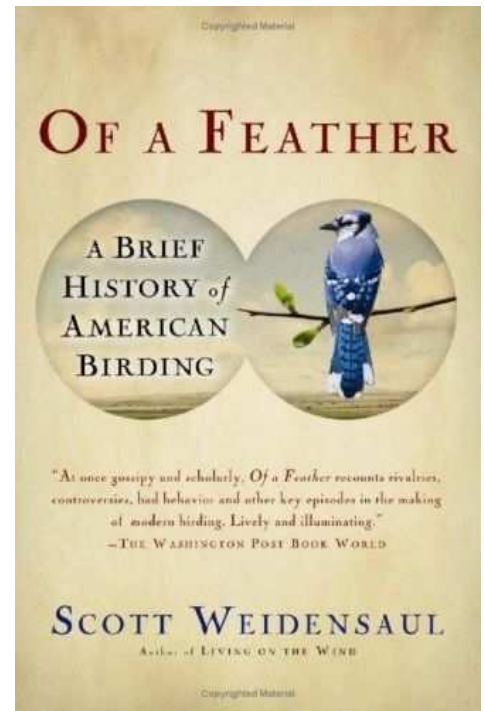
It may be possible to study birds without studying birders, but can't possibly be as interesting. Scott Weidensaul demonstrates this point in his review of birders of every sort, from academically trained ornithologists to park-bench pigeon feeders. Beginning with the Native American's field experience to the contemporary American Audubon members' passion for life lists, Weidensaul traces the development and enjoyment of American birding.

In a highly engaging manner, he explores such developments as the birders' transition from guns to field guides. Acknowledging that Roger Tory Peterson's may be the best known of modern field guides, Weidensaul is careful to clarify:

The basic concept of a field guide to birds was already more than a century old by the time the boy from Jamestown, New York, came along. What Peterson did was reinvent it, make it cheap, handy, and accessible to the general public.

Weidensaul acknowledges the role the continually improving field guides play in the modern growth of birding, "Surveys routinely show it (birding) as one of the fastest-growing outdoor activities," yet he is very clear that he considers a 21st century birder responsible for much more than a life list.

Carolyn Norred is a retired English instructor who lives in Longview, WA, and enjoys both birds and books.



Updates

LNG

Gloria G. MacKenzie



Rufus Humming Bird

Photo: Gloria MacKenzie

The current market for natural gas is at its lowest price in approximately seven years, and there is a current U.S. surplus.

At the local level in Clatsop County, County Commissioners are maintaining their stance against the Land Use Board of Appeals' decision. The Commissioners continue to assert that the proposed liquefied natural gas terminal at Bradwood Oregon meets the land use plans of: 1) 'small to medium' and 2) will 'protect salmon'. An appeal is planned.

Opponents are beginning the process of recalling additional commissioners.

At the state level, Willamette Riverkeepers won a suit requiring proper notification of property owners along the proposed Palomar pipeline route, through the Freedom of Information Act.

Other state and national lawsuits are currently in a holding pattern.

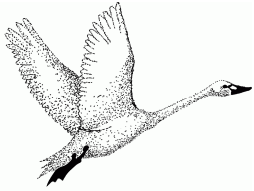
Events and fundraisers will be posted on the WHAS website in the current issues section.

<http://www.willapahillsaudubon.org/>

For further LNG updates:

<http://www.dailyastorian.com/>

<http://www.lnglawblog.com/>



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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 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 to newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org.

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.

WHAS Programs and Field Trips

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

Wasps

Date and venue to be announced. Join LCC faculty, Carl Roush and Louis LaPierre, as they discuss the complex and bizarre natural history of social and solitary wasps. The presentation will include an identification lab where attendees will have the opportunity to observe many unusual species. *Coming in late October / early November.*

Nena Baker reads from "Body Toxic"

Tuesday -- October 20, 7pm at the Longview Library Auditorium. WHAS will team up with LCC and the Longview Public Library to bring Portland author, Nena Baker for a Northwest Voices program. Baker will discuss her book "Body Toxic" which describes how the hazardous chemistry of everyday things threatens our health and well-being.

Mike Donahue talks about gulls

Date and venue to be announced. Mike Donahue, noted seabird expert and Pelagic guide, returns to Longview to talk about the ubiquitous gulls. The really AREN'T all the same. Mike loves gulls and has photos to show and stories to tell. He is willing to hold a separate two-hour **gull ID workshop and field study** (local) for \$20 person if enough interest is shown. Please contact Margaret Green at jgreen2317@aol.com or 360-575-9238, if you are interested. The earlier notice we have, the more feasible the workshop becomes. *Coming in late January, 2010.*

Field Trip to the Woodland Bottoms

Saturday -- October 24, 2009. Russ Koppendrayner will lead a field trip to the Woodland Bottoms area. We expect to see waterfowl, cranes, sparrows, raptors, and accipiters. It will be important to dress warmly and be flexible for changes in the weather. Take snacks and/or lunch. Longview departure will be approximately 8:30(TBD) with a return in early afternoon. To sign up, call John Green at 360-575-9238 or email at jgreen2317@aol.com.

Annual Lake Sacajawea Morning Bird Walk

Saturday -- December 5, 2009. The Greens will be hosting the annual Lake Sacajawea Morning Bird Walk. After a stroll along the lake shores, we will retire to the warmth of the Green house for backyard birding, snacks, warm beverages, and good cheer. It will be important to dress appropriately for inclement weather. To sign up, call John Green at 360-575-9238 or email jgreen2317@aol.com.

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