

# WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

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Winter 2021



Western Tanager -- Image courtesy of Louis LaPierre

## Free Tree Seedlings from the Carbon Capture Foundation

By Norman Dick, Carbon Capture Foundation

To promote tree planting in areas that would otherwise not be planted, The Carbon Capture Foundation (TCCF), a local 501(c)(3) charitable organization based in Longview/Kelso, is now providing free tree seedlings to WHAS members, their families, neighbors and friends. TCCF is also currently providing seedlings to the Skagit Audubon Society in a similar program for their area. By adding some smaller trees to the mix TCCF has modified its ordinary seedling program with Audubon members in mind, to both attract more bird species and capture carbon.

Some years ago National Audubon scientists correlated millions of bird sightings from decades of community science projects with weather data and climate predictions to produce the "Survival by Degrees" report (<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>). The report predicts that 389 bird species in North America are seriously threatened by the changing climate whose other effects are increasingly evident and dramatic. Large scale action by governments around the

world is urgently needed to address this crisis. It is equally urgent for each of us to do what we can. (Thanks to Tim Mann, the Skagit Audubon Conservation Chair who provided the above research information and the thoughtful planting process notes below).

One thing we can do and have known all along is, simply, plant trees and leave them to grow and sequester carbon. Many birders volunteer with organizations planting trees for restoration projects particularly in riparian areas adjacent to salmon habitat. But maybe you also have room to plant more trees on your own property.

TCCF has approached WHAS with an offer to provide free trees to anyone willing to plant them on their property to lock up carbon. The selection of trees is limited by what's available and can be bought in quantities. This year quantities are particularly limited due to high demand. The list below includes both trees with the potential to grow very large and lock up lots of carbon and smaller species more suitable for property with less space. All provide habitat for birds, and some support pollinators as well.

...continued on page 4

## Christmas Bird Counts

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 122th 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 18, 2021

**Wahkiakum:** December 28, 2021

**Cowlitz Columbia:** January 1, 2022

...more info on page 3

## 2022 is a WHAS Election Year

Willapa Hills Audubon Society's elections are coming up. See page four in this issue for a call for nominations of officers. If you have any interest in serving on the board or otherwise helping to pursue our goals, contact President Steve Puddicombe at [president@willapahillsaudubon.org](mailto:president@willapahillsaudubon.org) or use the form on page 4

## In this issue of the Whistler:

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**Support our mission, join WHAS today!**

**Membership renewals are due March 1** of each year. If you prefer to pay by credit or debit card use our online form on our website at <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/join-us-donate>.

Membership includes 4 issues of our newsletter *WILLAPA WHISTLER* annually. Gift Memberships are available online.

**Check type of Membership:**

- Individual Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$25 check for annual membership)
- Family Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$35 check for annual membership)
- Lifetime Chapter Membership **WHAS** (\$750 check for lifetime membership)

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

Please make your check payable to:  
 WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:  
**WHAS-Membership, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for supporting your local Audubon chapter -- Willapa Hills Audubon Society!**

We will not share your contact information with anyone. For membership in National Audubon Society visit <https://www.audubon.org/> Chapter# Y14

\*) 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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	for questions contact President Steve Puddicombe	
	<b>Field Trip:</b>	<b>Charlotte Persons</b>
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	<b>Education:</b>	<b>Chelsea Chandler</b>
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<b>Website:</b>	<b>Ludger Wöhrmann</b>	
360-423-7004	webmaster@willapahillsaudubon.org	

Please indicate any **new** information:

I prefer you contact me by:

- Phone
- Email
- Mail

**Other options:**(Add your email below)

- I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email
- Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- Add me to your announcement email list\*
- I would like to support the work of Willapa Hills Audubon Society. Enclosed is my additional donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Donate to WHAS when you shop!**



Shop at Amazon through <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/91-0951287>. Choose "Willapa Hills Audubon Society" as your charity and we'll receive 0.5% of your purchase total.

**Winter Wings Festival 2022**

**Klamath Basin Winter Wings Festival** takes place February 18-20, 2022. Winter Wings brings together birders and photographers of all stripes to learn and explore. The Klamath Basin is renowned for its winter raptors and its stunning abundance and diversity of waterfowl. It features **Richard Crossley**, author of the Crossley ID Guides and co-author of Ornithery: For Your Mind, Body, and Soul. For our photography keynote we are excited to have **Jennifer Leigh Warner**, conservation wildlife photographer. Join them for an extensive array of field trips, workshops, and presentations. To learn more visit [www.WinterWingsFest.org](http://www.WinterWingsFest.org).

**Othello Sandhill Crane Festival 2022**

The 2022 Othello Sandhill Crane Festival is scheduled to be held either Virtual or In-Person for March 25-27, 2022. More info: <https://www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org/>

**Olympic BirdFest 2022**

Olympic Birdfest will take place April 22-24, 2022. The featured speaker is **Scott Pearson**, researcher in Ecology, Marine Biology and Zoology at the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. It is preceded by a San Juan Islands Cruise and followed by a two-day excursion to the Neah Bay area of coastal Washington. More info and BirdFest registration at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org).

## More than 350000 swifts roosted in Rainier!

Our intrepid volunteers who monitored the chimney at Riverside Community Church conducted 50 observations and counted 356,073 Vaux's Swifts roosting during the 2021 southbound migration, second only to McNear Brickyard's numbers in the Bay Area! Details below.

Roost Site S 2021	Total Swifts	Observations	Average	High #
McNear Brickyard	533,013	74	7,203	41,920
Rainier Riverside Church	356,073	50	7,121	25,620
Portland Chapman	205,660	45	4,570	9,170
Rio Lindo	109,030	22	4,956	22,000
Monroe Wagner	67,764	35	1,936	10,868
Roseburg Clay Place	65,504	51	1,284	3,155
Eugene Agate	37,779	12	3,148	8,731
Bend Boys & Girls Club	37,244	45	827	3,200

If you would like to see a video of the Vaux's Swift entering the chimney go to our website at:

<https://willapahillsaudubon.org/current-issue/other-issues/news/546-video-of-vaux-s-swift-in-rainier-ore>

### Cowlitz-Columbia CBC NEW YEARS DAY

**Friday, January 1, 2022**

Cowlitz -Columbia Christmas Bird Count (3CBC) is the first of the New Year. Our count will be a part of the Annual Christmas Bird Count. Our count circle covers a 15-mile diameter circle that is centered just south of Rainier, OR. This year we will continue with the COVID guidelines. We will have 9 regulars that will go out individually or with a family member. We will not have any groups traveling around together and restrictions don't allow for a compilation dinner.

Contact Bob Reistroffer 360-751-5595 or [breistrof@aol.com](mailto:breistrof@aol.com) for more info.

### Wahkiakum CBC

The Wahkiakum CBC is on, **December 28, 2021**. There are some national standards for the Christmas Bird Count this year due to Covid-19, which we will follow.

Participants should not carpool with people other than their own family group or social pod. There will be no gathering at the end of the day - participants should submit their data via email.

As the Wahkiakum count is generally birding outdoors in a sparsely populated area, the chance of transmitting the virus will be low as long as participants mask up and wash hands for purchasing fuel or food or are otherwise interacting with others. Those who wish to participate may contact Andrew Emlen at 360-795-8009.

### Cowlitz County Birdlist October Update

**By Russ Koppendrayer**

We've managed to add five species since the last update at the end of August. A **Semipalmated Plover** was actually seen in mid August, but not on the eBird accepted list until September. The rarest find was the county's fourth record of **Broad-winged Hawk** seen by a hawk watcher in the Woodland Bottoms where all previous records also occurred during fall migration. All these records have occurred in three of the last four years, which would seem to imply that they may have been passing through in small numbers for years since this hawk watch has only been happening for four years. The ridge just east of I-5 just north of Woodland may just be one of the primary migration corridors in western Washington for hawks and especially Turkey Vultures.

Also of interest was the number of reports of **Surf Scoter** in October. While we expect to see small numbers in the Columbia River as they migrate through in October through early November, we had a group of six at Willow Grove and a number of reports from the Woodland Bottoms area. Three were even in the ponds of the former Longview sewage treatment facility, which is not an annual place for them. Furthermore all these birds were either females or juvenile males with no adult males present. Who knows what is driving this phenomenon.

Download the Cowlitz County Bird list as pdf here:

<https://willapahillsaudubon.org/index.php/bird-lists/cowlitz-county-bird-list>

### 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

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

**Continued from page one: Free Tree Seedlings from the Carbon Capture Foundation**

All the trees made available will come from either the Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources Webster Forest Nursery in Olympia or the Washington Association of Conservation District’s Plant Materials Center in Bow, Washington, in Skagit County. All of the conifers will be from seed transfer zones in or adjacent to WHAS area and the deciduous trees are from Western Washington seed, not necessarily specific to WHAS area. All of the seedlings are “bare root;” i.e., not in pots. It will be important to not let the roots dry out and to plant the trees as soon as possible after receiving them.

The Carbon Capture Foundation hopes to have the trees available sometime this December and January, though the nurseries may extend the timing for delivery . Once order requests are received from WHAS members we will have to determine delivery details. It may be that we will ask everyone participating to come to a central location to pick up their order.

You’ve probably noticed that the trees planted in restoration projects often have protective tubes around them. These are to deter deer, elk, voles, mice, rabbits, , ... and other creatures who would like to eat your plants. Survival of planted trees is generally higher when protectors are used. Also, if you are planting in grassy or other high competition areas you may want to put a tree mat around the base of the seedling to control competition for sunlight and moisture. Please anticipate needing to spend roughly \$2 to \$4/tree for the protectors, tree mats, plus the bamboo stake to hold the protectors in place. You may have a site where protectors and mats are not needed, but they are generally a good investment in ensuring the success of your planting efforts. Once your order is confirmed as available from the nursery and before the delivery date, you will want to make arrangements for obtaining the protective materials needed in your area for the species you have ordered.

Here are the tree species available. The list includes both ones with the potential to grow very large and lock up lots of carbon and smaller species more suitable for property with less space. All provide habitat for birds, and some support pollinators as well. It is hoped that there will be more species and a greater number of trees available on the market next year.

**Conifers**

- Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
- Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*)

**Deciduous Trees**

- Pacific crabapple (*Malus fusca*)
- Cascara (*Rhamnus [Frangula] purshiana*)

Washington Native Plant Society has plant lists for different habitats and conditions which may help you select which trees on this list will work in the location you have in mind: <https://www.wnps.org/native-gardening/resources#habitat> . You will want to be sure that the characteristics of the ground/area where the seedlings are planned to be planted (characteristics as

to soil moisture, sunny vs. shady, overstory current and anticipated, etc) match up with the needs of the species you plan to plant.

Please also tell your friends and neighbors about this opportunity if you think they may have a suitable place on their property for planting trees. (PLEASE note that the intention here is not to provide trees to replant harvested areas where replanting is required under Washington’s Forest Practice Rules.) The Carbon Capture Foundation is a charitable organization and can accept donations if you are so inclined. (<https://www.thecarboncapturefoundation.org> )

**How get involved:**

Please send a message to [trees@willapahillsaudubon.org](mailto:trees@willapahillsaudubon.org) listing the species you would like and the number of each. There is a 10 tree limit per landowner for the cascara and crabapple. The trees will be bare root and should be planted as soon as possible after you receive them. We will be back in touch with you about the time and place to receive the trees.

Thank you for doing what you can to address the climate crisis and doing so in a way that supports birds too.

**WHAS Officer Nominations 2022**

Would you enjoy having a direct voice in running Willapa Hills Audubon Society? WHAS has begun the nominations process for the March 2022 election for members of its volunteer board of directors. The next two-year term for elected officers will begin after elections and the annual meeting, in late March. Besides their particular tasks and projects, board members attend four quarterly board meetings each year—other board business is conducted by email. We welcome members to run for any position or to nominate other members. Director-at-Large are particularly good positions for newcomers to the board. The board would benefit from any number of talents and interests, and we hope you will contribute yours.

Please make your nominations by January 10 to fulfill the requirements of the Constitution and Bylaws and to be included in the March 1 Whistler.

Clip out this form and mail to WHAS Election, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632 or send your nomination to [election@willapahillsaudubon.org](mailto:election@willapahillsaudubon.org)

President: \_\_\_\_\_

Vice-President: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Director-at-Large: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Grace of Trumpeter Swans

By Thomas Bancroft



The low-pitched trumpet came from behind us. Turning, I spotted two large white birds that then flew right over us. Their translucent flight feathers glowed in the early morning sun. Their wingspan, more than 6-foot, created a moving shadow across Fir Island. Long white necks extended in front of solid bodies, and elephantine black legs and feet were tucked tight against their underside. More than 25 pounds each, these Trumpeter Swans flew with grace, style, and dignity.

The pair circled the field a quarter-mile east of our location, then set their wings, dropped their black feet, and landed without a stumble among several hundred swans. A few trumpets and calls drifted toward me from the crowd. Most of these largest of North America's waterfowl seemed to be resting on the green grass. The trachea in these birds is more than three-feet long, about a half-inch in diameter, and has a volume three to four times what one might expect for a bird this size. The trachea folds back and forth in the chest and creates the resonating chamber for the beautiful call that caught my attention.

In the summer of 1968, I flew with my sister from Pennsylvania to Yellowstone National Park. Finding a Trumpeter Swan was a priority, I wanted to be able to brag to my high school birding buddies about the western birds we discovered, including this rare swan. Populations of Trumpeter Swans were decimated in the 1800s and early 1900s. They were shot for their skins, flight feathers, and undoubtedly meat. In 1935, only 69 birds were known to exist, although probably some undiscovered flocks occurred in remote parts of Canada and Alaska. In 2005, a continent-wide survey estimated that the population had grown to more than 34,000 individuals, a conservation success. Stopping the hunt and protecting habitat were critical, but also the birds

adapted to wintering on agricultural lands, accessing novel food items. In winter, lead poisoning and collisions with power lines are now the major mortality issue. These birds looked stunning through my spotting scope. Dirty-gray, full-grown cygnets accompanied many pairs. We had seen half a dozen flocks of similar size already that morning. In 1968, my sister and I searched Yellowstone for several days and found only two individuals. They swam on the far side of a small river, and our view was through thick vegetation.

Managers have introduced the species into several eastern states where they now breed. A few even winter in birding spots that I visited in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio as a high school student. Scientists at Cornell Laboratory of

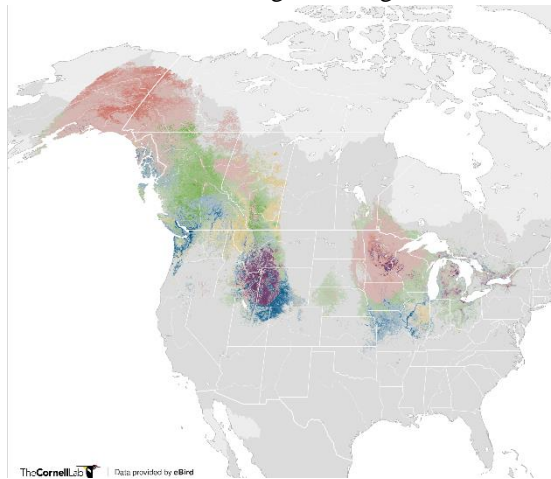
Ornithology have analyzed eBird data to provide a much more refined abundance map than are currently available in birding guides or on other websites.

<https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends/truswa/abundance-map>

It shows that the Salish Sea and south into Oregon are important wintering areas for our west coast population. These birds then migrate through British Columbia to breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. The Central Rockies population had expanded substantially from the range in 1968, and birds are found in a band from the northern prairies across the Great Lakes.

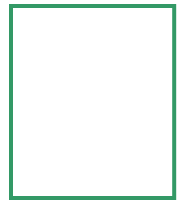
A pair and two full-grown gray cygnets began running, head and neck extended while flapping their wings. They quickly became airborne, banking to the left while climbing up over the flock, before turning to fly north away from us.

See: Fink, D., T. Auer, A. Johnston, M. Strimas-Mackey, M. Iliff, and S. Kelling. *Ebird Status and Trends*. Version: November 2018. <https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends>. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.





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 15<sup>th</sup> of February, May, August and November. Send your contributions to:

WHAS Whistler, PO Box 399, Longview WA 98632  
or email them to [newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org](mailto:newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org).



Please recycle your *Whistler*  
or pass it on to a friend.

Find 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 for the latest information and updates.

Fieldtrips and in person programs are postponed due to the Covid-19 restrictions and will resume once gatherings are allowed again.  
Please check our website for updates!

#### The Whistler Online

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

**WHAS made changes to membership by switching to a yearly renewal date.  
All membership renewals are due in March.**

**Other programs and field trips will appear on our website and will be announced through our email alert system.  
More information about the alert system here: <http://willapahillsaudubon.org/member-services>**