

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

Volume 51 // Issue 2

Summer 2025



Washington State Bird: American Goldfinch, male on left, female on right

President Notes

By Steve Puddicombe

WHAS 50th Anniversary Celebration This Fall

2025 marks the 50th year since the founding of Willapa Hills Audubon in 1975. So, mark your calendars, as we have set aside **Saturday, September 13, 2025** as a day of celebration.

We'll have an afternoon and evening of birding at nearby Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for Columbian White-tailed Deer, a program or two, entertainment from local bird enthusiasts; food, drink and palaver, all at the Skamokawa Paddle Center in downtown Skamokawa.

Stay tuned for more details in the Autumn edition of the Whistler, but in the meantime alert all our old WHAS friends near and far about this event. For more information check out our website at www.willapahillsaudubon.org or call 360-465-2205.

Board Meeting

Our next board meeting is set for **Saturday, June 28, 2025, 2 PM**, at the home of Cathy Kendall in Longview. Contact any board member on page 2 for details.

Membership Renewal

It's not too late to renew your membership in WHAS or to join. A glitch in our Winter Whistler meant that we forgot to include the self-addressed envelopes for renewal by mail. We apologize for that. But you can still renew: see page two in this issue or join online with a credit card on our website. Be sure to sign on to our alert list for announcements of birding field trips, conservation events and programs.

WHAS Summer Picnic Invitation

By Larry Turner

Our WHAS picnic is coming up this Saturday, Aug 16, from 2-5 PM at the Turner residence in Rose Valley. Attendees are asked to bring one covered dish (a salad, entree, dessert or snack) to feed 4 to 6 people. Each person should bring their own plates, cups and tableware. Ice, water, iced tea, napkins, paper towels, tables and chairs will be provided. We will have tables, chairs and sun protection.

...continued on page three

WHAS Completes Vote on Chapter Name

By Robert Sudar

Early in 2024, the Willapa Hills Audubon board began a discussion about continuing to include the name of John James Audubon in our chapter name. This issue has been a topic of discussion for Audubon chapters throughout the country for several years. In looking into Mr. Audubon's life history over the last decade, his ownership of slaves, his approach to obtaining specimens for his art, his involvement with some researchers in the study of Eugenics, and his self-promoting personality have led some to question whether he should continue to be honored in the name of society chapters.

Our board chose a sub-committee to look into this issue by investigating what we could learn about JJ Audubon and then presenting our results to the members for a vote on maintaining or changing the chapter name. Last year we included articles discussing books and videos available to our members at the Longview library or online if they wanted to learn more themselves.

...continued on page three

Also in this issue of the Whistler:

- Membership Form
- NW Birding Events
- Earth Day recap
- Feathered Einsteins: Corvids
- Field trip of St. Rose School to the Children's Museum
- Swift Camera Drama at Rainier
- Earth day at Children's Museum
- Reflections on How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature

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://www.willapahillsaudubon.org/join-renew-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 _____ Phone _____

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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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 \$ _____**

Rainier Audubon Nature Festival

June 7, 2025, at Flaming Geyer State Park, Auburn - free Pass Day

More info here <https://rainieraudubon.org/event/rainier-audubon-nature-festival-2025/>

WCNC Jr. Naturalists Summer Camp

The Wildlife Center of the North Coast (WCNC) is a wildlife rehabilitation and conservation education center based in Astoria, Oregon. They organize summer camps in July for grades 1-3, 3-5, and 6-8. More info at: <https://coastwildlife.org/summer-camp/>

Friends of Willapa Refuge Fall Migration

September 19-20, 2025

This birding and nature event is a celebration of Willapa National Wildlife Refuge's many species and diverse habitats.

More info at <https://friendsofwillaparefuge.org/Events>

BirdFest & Bluegrass Festival

October 4, 2025

BirdFest and Bluegrass is the main event every year that the Friends & the City of Ridgefield put on to bring awareness to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, and all that it has to offer. We celebrate the Sandhill Crane returning to the Refuge, a huge stately bird that is endangered in Washington State, and we celebrate everything the Refuge is and what it brings to the community.

More info at <https://ridgefieldfriends.org/birdfest-bluegrass/>

Field trip of St. Rose School to the Children's Museum

By Ann
Cordero



This girl's imagination and a knot of wood from the Nature Niche turned her into the Statue of Liberty.

"I light my lamp beside the golden door."

...continued from page 1 – WHAS Summer Picnic

The Turner residence is about 8 miles up into Rose Valley, elevation 500 feet. To get to the Turner house from Longview take Tennant Way east towards I-5. Stay in the left lane to head towards Seattle & Kelso Drive. Then continue in the left lane (towards Kelso Drive) to the roundabout. Take the first "exit" South (not counting the freeway entrance into the roundabout) on to Highway 99 south. In one mile take a left on Rose Valley

Rd. After 5.1 miles on winding Rose Valley Road, turn right [slight uphill right] on South Goble Creek Road and wind your way about a mile until you pass a large white barn on the right; then turn right on very steep Zillig Rd. After 0.4 miles, turn left on Jensen Rd - we'll have a yellow "TURNER" sign on the mailbox. We are the second driveway on the right. There should be quite adequate room to park on the pavement.

...continued from page 1 – WHAS Completes Vote on Chapter Name

This year, pro and con articles were submitted by members of the sub-committee for the spring Whistler to discuss more about Audubon and to inform members a little more about this debate before asking for a vote on a name change in March.

There has been a variety of responses to this issue in chapters near and far. National Audubon went through a lengthy process and decided to leave the name as is. Seattle, Portland and Vancouver chapters determined to change their names but took different approaches. For our own chapter, 37 out of 59 eligible members voted – 62%. A total of 23 voted to remain Willapa Hills Audubon Society – 61% of those who voted. The remaining 39% were interested in a name change but were

divided on the three alternatives submitted. The scoring of the votes was done via "ranked choice" but retaining our current name was a clear winner.

Whether or not you agree with this decision, we hope that you will acknowledge that the sub-committee looked into this issue carefully, did their best to inform the membership about the background of this controversy and the challenges presented in taking the measure of someone who died almost 200 years ago, and that the voting process was done fairly. We also hope that all members will continue to support Willapa Hills Audubon in the future.

Feathered Einsteins: Corvids

By David Slater

Corvids, such as crows, magpies and ravens are some of the most intelligent animals on the planet. Patiently observing a Corvid, there is a good chance that you will discover a diamond in the rough when you least expect it.

For example, an aware observer posted a YouTube video of a crow repeatedly sliding down a snow-covered roof on a plastic lid. He tries the side portion of the roof, but too much of the snow has melted to get the lid started sliding, so he gives up there and goes back to his 'successful' side. Young ravens often drop sticks, dive to catch them in midair, then repeat the process.

One raven was seen flying upside down for ½ mile. Are these birds just having fun?

In an experiment published in PLOS One, scientists showed that New Caledonian crows demonstrated an understanding of water displacement and were as successful as seven-year-old children in solving a problem. Crows were presented with tubes that were partially filled with water and a treat floating on top, out of reach. The crows filled the tubes with enough rocks, to bring the food within reach. When the crows were presented with tubes containing different water levels, they consistently showed a preference for the tube that would get them the food with the least amount of work.

Another impressive experiment was conducted as part of a British Broadcasting Program called "Inside the Animal Mind." They evaluated whether crows could solve multi-step, complex problems. These were not lab crows, trained to solve problems. The crows were captured from the wild one at a time and each was kept for three months. The puzzle could only be solved by accomplishing eight individual steps that had to be solved in a very specific order to release the food reward. The crow was familiar with the individual tools but had not had to combine their use before to solve a problem. The crow successfully collected the tools, then used them to complete each next step of the puzzle.

Naturalist Bernd Heinrich studied Common Raven behavior intensively in North America. He reports that ravens eat berries and insects but can also kill relatively large animals. They drag trout out of the water by the tail, kill seal pups, wait in nearby trees as ewes give birth, then attack the newborn lambs, dig ground-squirrels out of their burrows and force flying kittiwakes to the ground where they are more easily pecked to death. They sometimes work in pairs to raid seabird colonies.

One bird will distract the incubating adult, while the other waits to grab an egg or chick as soon as its hatched.

Ravens lack the tools of raptors to kill hide-bound animals, and they are unable to open carcasses, so they need the help of predators to do that, especially in winter, when carcasses freeze solid. To get the help of predators in opening carcasses, ravens sometimes lead wolves to dead animals by behavioral signals such as postures and vocalizations.

When there is a bountiful meat food resource that they are forced to share with other carnivores, ravens cache excess

food. Ravens have been shown to have memorization skills that enable them to recover caches many weeks later. But secretly caching meat is challenging since other smart raven observers, inclined to steal another individual's cache, are observing. Individual ravens have been observed to remember other individual's cache sites. To ensure their caches are protected, ravens will pretend-cache and will also re-cache when other ravens are not watching.

Crows can use tools to obtain food. In 2015, researchers

announced they had video evidence of crows fashioning tools in the wild. They observed crows snapping twigs from trees, then stripping them of bark and leaves. They then used these tools to probe into small spaces for food. "The behavior is easy to miss – the first time I watched the footage, I didn't see anything particularly interesting. Only when I went through it again frame-by-frame, I discovered this fascinating behaviour. Not once, but twice!" reported researcher Jolyon Troscianko.

Ravens have been observed to punish selfish peers. Researchers from the University of Vienna gave ravens a task wherein they would only receive the reward if they cooperated, pulling on ropes to raise a platform which had two pieces of cheese, one for each raven.

If one raven stole their companion's cheese, as well as their own, the other raven would refuse to cooperate with them during future experiments - but they would cooperate with other ravens who played fair. "Such a sophisticated way of keeping your partner in check has previously only been shown in humans and chimpanzees, and is a complete novelty among birds," lead researcher Jorg Massen said.

Crows are not driven purely by instinct. They can experience anticipation, and exercise self-control if the end result is a greater reward. To test this in ravens in 2014, scientists leveraged an experimental design from Stanford in the 1960s to



Photo: Christopher Lindsey / Macaulay Library

study delayed gratification in children. In the famous 1960s experiment, children were given a choice between one marshmallow immediately or two marshmallows if they could wait for a brief period. The study aimed to investigate delayed gratification and its effects on future success. Results showed that children who were able to wait tended to have better life outcomes, including higher academic achievement and better coping skills.

The first step in testing crows in the same way as the children, was to determine which snacks the crows liked the most. The researchers fed them grapes, bread, sausage, fried fat, and other treats. Next, they were given a choice, eat a snack now, or wait to trade their snack for a better-quality snack (meat) in exchange for a grape, for instance - or a higher quantity of the same snack. The birds preferred to wait until a better snack was

offered. If simply more of the same snack was offered if they waited, they did not wait. In some cases, though, they waited up to 10 minutes for the better snack. Researchers concluded that the fact that they waited for better quality, not quantity, showed that they were waiting because they wanted to - not because they were actually hungry.

Another YouTube video shows a raven sliding down the roof of the West Yellowstone Public Library. Are they copying what they have seen humans do?

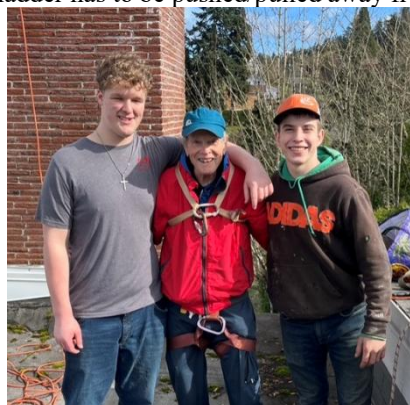
Next time you see one of these feathered brainiacs in the field, resist the urge to simply murmur, "raven," or "crow," while focusing your bins on the next bird. Have a second look, then a third. Ask yourself, "what are they doing" ...and "why"?

Swift Camera Drama at Rainier

By Larry Schwitters

Following my list of 30 plus stuff to bring, including our shiny 12 foot foldable ladder, the Tesla was fully loaded and charged. Rev Paul was waiting for us 150 miles south in Rainier. It looks like we might be having the best weather so far this year. The very experienced and capable Rev, his son and their young large friend give us a ground crew of 3. They all seem eager to do the heavy lifting for Grand Pa. They have two well-used extension ladders. The fiberglass one with its 2 sets of 16 rungs might be just what it takes.

The roof complex of Rainier Riverside Church, Daycare is mostly flat and in good shape. Grand Pa puts on his home-made harness. The Rev quickly walks up the 16 feet of unextended fiberglass and hits the bricks dead center. Now to pull down on the ladders rope to extend it to its full 32 feet. Say what!. It's got no rope or top pulley. No problem, just dead lift rather than pull down. That takes care of six feet until the bottom rung is out of reach. Someone has to climb up and bench press the next 10. Gramps got it. For sure the top of the extending ladder has to be pushed/pulled away from the bricks for that to



work. Just a little unnerving. Ground crew (Jonny Rice, Ivan Vosika and Paul Rice) is exceptional. Ladder makes it to the top.

Not good to swear on the church top. Drop a rope, pull up the outside half of the cam mount. Next the 1/2 inch driver/drill. Ground crew is able to find an

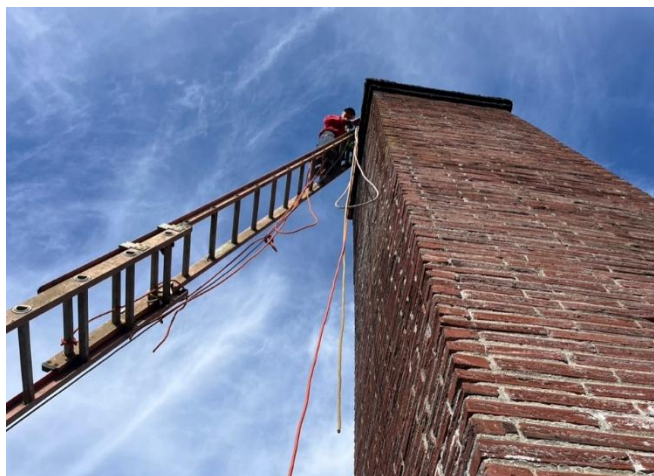
outlet and long cord plugs us in. Have a new 3/8 concrete drill bit we really don't want to drop down that brick hole. Ryobi roars. Dust flies. Pins are hammered in. Nuts are tightened. The inside mount holding Vivotek and dragging 150 foot of direct burial cat 6 cable is pulled up next. That one's heavy. After two hours dancing at the top Grand Pa is back on the roof. No thud. No blood.

Hope it works. Will bring wise son Chad back next week to find out. It can't be that easy. We left the ladder on the roof. Two weeks later.

Today wise Son Chad and I rumbled down I-5 to Rainier Riverside Church to see if we could get our in-chimney video camera working. Would need to

go up the ladder one more time but the main event was Chads attempt at connecting the cable that goes from the camera to bottom of the brick hole to the internet. This building is a massive 3 story maze. Things got off to bad start when we found the door to the room we had to get in locked with no one having a key. Now what? The Rev is his own custodian and a super competent one. For some reason this locked door opens to the outside. That puts its 3 hinge pins exposed. The Rev punched them out and followed with some serious crow baring. We're in. Go get em Chad.

Time for Daddy to get on the roof. Last time the weather was perfect. That means today will be cool rain. Worm drive hose clamped a new pulley with rope to the ladder. That 32 foot fiberglass extension feels like 70 pounds. Rev arrives with his son John. Rev's got lots of ladder raising experience and a ton of muscle. Ladder goes up quickly and clean. Extension pulley and rope make a big difference. Grand Pa creaks up, ties in, and retrieves the cable that got away two weeks ago.



John drags the cable through a very icky crawl space and the Rev pulls it into his doorless classroom through a hole he just drilled in the floor. Chad was left to work his magic.

The word soon comes up that we have sound but no picture. Tie to check the cable for damage. Our cable checker is packing a new 9-volt battery and Chad

good. Whew. Connect the cable back to the camera without dropping it. Chad is back on the roof checking for the video on his phone. Nothing.....then.....We have video! Well focused and sharp. Sure are pretty bricks. Will be up on our Vaux's Happening site at <https://www.vauxhappening.org> and at <https://willapahillsaudubon.org>

The Vivotek has been working strong and steady and the Rainier Riverside Swift Ladies use and love it.

Images provided by Paul Rice.



returns to the classroom with cable checkers far end plug end part. Grand Pa starts unscrewing the super waterproof connector from the camera. Sure, would be easy to drop that 150 foot long cable down the brick hole. Don't do it. Don't do it. Connect the checker. Turn on. Press the little check test button. Don't flash red, please don't flash red. It flashes blue. All the wires are



Earth day at the Children's Museum

By Carolyn Norred, Sherry Hawkins, Gloria Nichols and Ann Cordero

The young boy concentrated on the bird's skull in his left hand as he slowly rubbed the top back of his own with his right hand, I wondered if I was observing a budding ornithologist, a brain surgeon, or maybe a really good barber. In recognition of Earth Day, 2025, Sherry, Gloria, Ann, and I were enjoying our time at the Nature Niche in the Children's Discovery Museum at the old Catlin Grammar School in Kelso, WA.

Gloria and I tended the counter filled with bones and



bird parts while in another room, Ann and Sherry presented a Native American story of the origin of Mt. St. Helens. Here the children donned costumes and acted out the characters in the story as Ann read. This story was taken from Keepers of the Earth, by Caduto and Bruchac.

Sherry reports it was a fun day: the reenactment of the volcanoes was cool and informative. The children were



interested and asked questions and seemed to enjoy touching the materials and being part of the activities.

Ann says that it was fun for her to have company since she has worked in the Nature Niche previously measuring wings and sharing the specimens on display. Our own love of nature, she reports, was our best tool.

Gloria hopes some families will have been inspired or informed enough to join the Audubon organization and/or enjoy the museum's Nature Niche as it offers so much for children, free of charge.

For my part, Carolyn, I so much enjoyed the time with the young ones and their responses to the idea that our natural world is so complex and exciting, not to say the children's adults and my cohorts were not just as interesting. Some of our adult visitors provided wonderful ideas and new information as well.

We invite you to consider becoming a Nature Niche mentor at the Children's Discovery Museum. Volunteers fill out an application form and have a background check. But if you would like to try it first, email Ann Cordero at thenatureniche@gmail.com and make a date.

Reflections on How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature

A book review by Ann Cordero

Scott D. Sampson, the dinosaur paleontologist who provided science for PBS KID's Dinosaur Train, has written a provocative and practical book on *How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature*. He defines a wild child as one "sharing deep connections with nature and people." I've been listening to the audiobook (available at Longview Public Library) and sampling the book in print. Just reading the Table of Contents evokes the major principles of becoming a nature mentor, which are elaborated and reinforced by repetition. Sampson defines a nature mentor as a combination of Teacher, Questioner, and Trickster, performed by someone engaged in nature, attentive to a child's learning, and receptive to the child's natural experiences.

If you are looking for a place to start mentoring, Sampson positively recommends the outdoors as the optimum environment to foster the love of nature. But the Willapa Hills Audubon Society also uses one of his techniques effectively in our Nature Niche exhibit at the Children's Discovery Museum. Sampson writes:

"Here is a sample activity to get nature connection started. Take one or more kids outdoors into the backyard, schoolyard, or park, and guide them to find some bit of nature they're interested in. It could be a flower, leaf, tree, rock, cloud, or whatever. (Birds and bugs are great too, but sometimes don't stick around long enough.) Once they've selected their subject of interest, invite them to observe it very, very closely for just a couple of minutes—looking at details, touching, smelling, and (if appropriate) listening and tasting." (p. 67)

The Nature Niche consists of display cases filled with natural objects—and a mentor. It is indoors and is often bypassed by children eager to explore many exciting exhibits. But when a child and a mentor connect there by observing specimens together, allowing the child to take the lead, it sparks their sense of wonder. Gentle playfulness with a human skull can overcome a fear of skeletons. Touching a sea star brings a tidepool closer to home. And even babies can wave a feather through the air or turn a maple key into a helicopter.

Sampson discusses in depth the nuances of nature mentoring such as child development, technology, and ways to participate in environmental education in the home, the school,

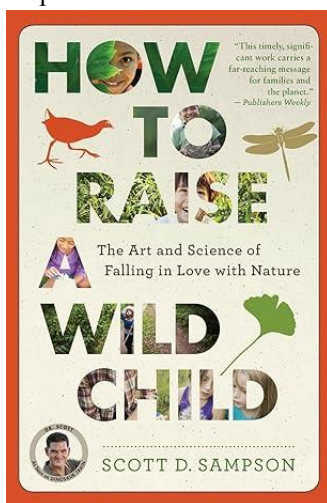
and the community. Listening to the book was like hearing a litany with the strong theme of engaging yourself with nature, sharing it thoughtfully with your child, and doing it over and over, in as many ways as you and he can imagine.

There is an urgency to this teaching, as Audubon members understand. Children grow up fast, teachable moments flee, and distractions abound. But Sampson is careful to emphasize that children need to learn the love and beauty of nature first, before being burdened with environmental crises. He echoes the words of Freeman Tilden in describing the appropriate order:

"Through interpretation, understanding;
Through understanding, appreciation
Through appreciation, protection."

My own parents raised three wild children without the aid of a manual (though books were significant). Living in the woods, family fishing and camping trips, fondling natural objects in the china cabinet or on a riverbank, and explanations of nature, lovingly, gently, and respectfully said, were given to us throughout our childhoods. One of us became a park ranger. Another revels daily in surroundings of trees and wildlife. The other is a photographer and filmmaker, with a keen eye for nature and excellent timing. My husband, an Earth scientist, grew up in a large city and fed his curiosity with turtles, snakes, fossils, fishing and going to camp. He has done all these things. All of us, parents included, have experienced thousands of joyous moments in nature throughout our lives as a result.

Many of you can tell similar stories. Your own love of nature is reflected in your membership in Willapa Hills Audubon Society. Obviously, I am preaching to the choir. But that is the point—people like you who already love nature make the best nature mentors. And there are many people, children and adults, who lack and would benefit from exposure to and revelations of the wonder of the natural world. Some of you might enjoy mentoring at the Nature Niche and we would welcome your participation. And there you will find a copy of *How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature*, which is so full of suggestions, inspirations, and techniques that even parents watching their children play at the museum will get some meaningful ideas glancing through it. Let's get started—and continue—nature mentoring.



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.

Saturday, August 16, 2025, at 2pm

Annual Summer Picnic, find all the details on page one

Saturday, September 13th, 2025

WHAS 50th Anniversary Celebration, more info on page one

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 whistler.willapahillsaudubon.org for this and past issues.

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: <https://willapahillsaudubon.org/get-involved/member-services>

Find us on Facebook at:
<https://www.facebook.com/willapahillsaudubon/>

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



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.

Most WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.
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.

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