

WILLAPA WHISTLER

A Publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society

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Black Phoebe -- Image Royce Craig

A Black Phoebe was seen during the WHAS field trip to Ridgefield on October 20th. It is an unusual bird for SW Washington.

Indian Jack Slough - September Field Tour

By Russ Kastberg

On September 15th, WHAS members and guests attended a field tour at Indian Jack Slough, IJS, led by Dan Friesz, Columbia Land Trust, CLT, steward. We looked over the restoration work completed to date on the property. In the afternoon, we checked Wood Duck boxes along the Slough installed in 2011 and installed five new boxes over along Risk Road in a newly restored wetland. The boxes had been constructed at the WHAS Kids Day on June 6th at Bob's in Longview. Kelso Boy Scout Troop 391 was on hand to help with the installation.

Columbia Land Trust has completed work under current grant funding at Indian Jack Slough. This fall they filled in 1500 feet of old drainage ditches and restored 10 acres of low wetland while creating associated higher ground suitable for upland wildlife habitat. This brings the last three years restoration work to a total of 50 acres Hybrid Poplar removed, replaced with 32,000 Sitka Spruce and native species suitable for Columbia White-tailed deer browse; 10,410 feet of old drainage ditches converted to upland swales; and 23 acres of restored wetlands.

Last year we observed how quickly these newly restored wetlands recover. The heavy mat of Reed Canary Grass has been peeled off leaving the soil and native seed bank. This seed bank, when exposed, is a lush community of native forbs and wetland species. The amphibian surveys taken the last two years show an explosive population of frogs and salamanders in these areas.

We look forward to future grant funding to continue restoration work on the remaining acres at Indian Jack Slough.

...continued on page 5: Indian Jack Slough

Christmas Bird Counts sponsored by WHAS

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is citizen-science at its best. You can help with this effort, whether you have ever gone bird watching or not. You will have the opportunity to meet new people with interests in birds, or spend time with friends from previous years.

Observant eyes are needed for that day: the more the better. You can point out where you see birds and experts in your group can do the identifying; if you do know some of the birds in your area, so much the better.

This is your chance to help collect the information which will direct decisions in the future, decisions which will affect how much natural beauty, including birds, remains for future generations

Bring your binoculars if you have some, boots, warm clothes and a lunch, and join us for a day outside, looking closely at some of Nature's most interesting creatures, sharing the day with people who have similar interests.

WHAS sponsors the following CBC's:

- **Leadbetter Point**
- **Wahkiakum**
- **Cowlitz**

If you happen to live within the Count circle you can count birds at your feeder that day.

...see page 3 for details

In this issue of the *Whistler*:

- 2 Membership Application Form
Amphibian Survey 2013
- 3 Backyard Birding
Christmas Bird Counts
- 4 White Pelican nest site bulldozed
Upcoming Program: Feathered Architects - The Fascinating World of Bird Nests
- 5 WHAS member reading lists
- 6 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.

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

For membership in National Audubon Society visit <http://www.audubon.org/>.

Please make your check payable to:

WILLAPA HILLS AUDUBON SOCIETY or WHAS and mail to:

WHAS-Membership, PO Box 399, Longview, WA 98632.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Y14:7XCH rev. 2007

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

We will not share your contact information with anyone.

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

Please indicate any **new** information:

I prefer you contact me by:

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Mail

Other options:

- ☐ I prefer to receive the *WHISTLER* by email
(Add your email address below)
- ☐ Contact me about volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Add me to your announcement email list*

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OTHER

Amphibian Surveys – 2013

By Ann Kastberg

It's time to start thinking about the 2013 survey season. Last year we had good weather and a bumper crop of red-legged frogs. What will we find in 2013? Will the good weather we had during the summer of 2012 make for more or less egg masses in 2013? How about the impact of changes at Indian Jack Slough (formerly Nelson Creek)? The new wetland verdant with native vegetation (where Ann took a plunge) had an abundance of red-leggeds in 2012. Will the additional modifications improve reproduction? And what about the Mint Farm? Have more red-leggeds and northwestern found this wetland gem? Don't forget about toads. The Satterlunds said they saw toad tadpoles swimming in schools! Do you have a new site you want to check out?

Start thinking now about frogs, salamanders and where they might breed and **mark your calendar for January 26 at LCC or February 2 at WSU** for the 2013 survey season kick-off. By the way, now is a good time to get those waders repaired or replaced.

The Whistler Online

Did you know that you can see the Willapa Whistler in color online on our website? Go to <http://willapahillsaudubon.org> and just click on the Whistler in the top menu for this and past issues.

-Clip

Backyard Birding: Delay pruning to help wildlife now

Excerpted from WDFW's *Crossing Path*

Fall yard and garden clean-up too often includes pruning trees, shrubs and other plants that wildlife may depend on for food and cover.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) staff recommend delaying that task to help wildlife during the more difficult fall and winter season. "If pruning is necessary, the most wildlife-friendly time to make those cuts is late winter," said WDFW biologist Russell Link. "Right now many birds and other wildlife species are using the seeds and fruits of hawthorn, maple, ninebark, mountain-ash, Oregon-grape, evergreen huckleberry and other species."

Link advises leaving dried foliage, seed heads and some grasses uncut, too, as many of these annuals and perennials keep their seeds well into winter, or harbor insects that many birds use throughout the winter. "If you clean and prune in fall," Link said, "try leaving cut vegetation around the plant as a mulch and to hold seeds and over-wintering invertebrate eggs and larvae. And consider adding cut branches and twigs to an out-of-the-way brush pile which creates its own habitat."

Controlling invasive non-native vegetation like Himalayan blackberry is another matter. Heavy pruning, outright removal, or removal and replacement with a locally-adapted native species, is recommended, and fall is a great time to plant. Link also notes that some homeowners don't get the gardening bug until spring is in full-bloom. Pruning trees and shrubs in spring is the least wildlife-friendly, as it can be disastrous for birds and other wildlife that are setting up territories, nesting, or rearing young.

"Timing is everything," he said. "Pruning trees and shrubs is best for the plant when it's shutting down for the season. Delaying that traditional fall chore until late winter is best for wildlife."

Link's book "Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest" has more information and is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/book>

Christmas Bird Counts 2012

The **Leadbetter Point CBC**, on the east side of the Long Beach peninsula, includes the area north of about 195th Street, as well as the communities of Oysterville and Nahcotta, among others; on the west side of the peninsula, the towns of Klipsan Beach, Ocean Park, and others; the CBC circle also includes the Nemah and Palix River areas along the bay. For the **Wahkiakum CBC**, the area includes portions of the Skamokawa, Puget Island, Cathlamet, and Brownsmead areas. For the **Cowlitz-Coweeman-Columbia CBC**, the area includes portions of Kelso-Longview and the surrounding area.

Contact the Count leader for more exact boundary descriptions, and to advise them that you wish to take part.

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

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 start the **second Saturday in November** (Nov 10 this year), 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 \$15 participation fee which provides you with a "research kit" which contains instructions, a bird identification poster, a wall calendar, a resource guide to bird feeding, and a tally sheet—everything you need to start counting your birds. U.S. participants receive a subscription to the Lab of Ornithology's newsletter, BirdScope. You do not have to spend a lot of time watching; some people do it before and after work, or 5 minutes each hour, or whatever structure works for you.

For more information and to sign up, visit

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/Overview/whatispaw.htm>

CBC Where and When?

Leadbetter Christmas Bird Count:

To be announced -- please check our website for more information

Wahkiakum Christmas Bird Count Friday, December 28th 2012

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

Cowlitz – Coweeman - Columbia Christmas Bird Count

Tuesday, January 1st 2013

To sign up, call Bob Reistroffer 360-636-5125 or email breistrof@aol.com who will form teams or you can put together your own team for the area of your choice. He will get information to all participants by mid-December when he has teams figured out. Sign up soon – Bob will be out of town Christmas week. He has reserved the back room at the Masthead Restaurant, 1210 Ocean Beach Hwy for the compilation meeting. We would arrive there between 4:30 and 5pm. Bob will get a map and driving directions to all participants

HOPE TO SEE YOU 1-1-13!

White Pelican Nest Site on the Columbia River Bulldozed

By Andrew Emlen



Image: Andrew Emlen

On September 14, I took a boat out to Miller Sands, across the channel from Altoona. This was the site of the only White Pelican nesting colony west of the Cascade Range. When I arrived the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were working at the site. They had bulldozed all the vegetation and were pumping dredge spoils on the nesting area. Now that the site is steep and free of cover, it will not be usable for the pelicans next year. I contacted Bird Research Northwest and a biologist from the Lewis & Clark National Wildlife Refuge, who had cooperated to band 71 chicks there last July. Neither had known that the Corps had buried the site.

I understand that the dredging is essential for maintaining the shipping channel, but it would have been easy for the Corps to deposit spoils nearby without disturbing the nesting area. The pelicans used only the last 30 yards or so of the Miller Sands north spit, and the island spoils area extends for over a mile up river. The nesting area had some features that made it a good site, including a shallow approach with a short walk to a relatively flat area with shrub cover for the chicks.

Most local islands are unsuitable either because they are tidal marsh, are diked, are too steep, lack cover, or have too much human disturbance. The pelicans may or may not be able to find another nesting site in the area next year.

Numerous studies have found that White Pelicans have very little impact on salmon smolts. They are a big bird, weighing up to 16 pounds with a 9-foot wingspan, and they specialize on shad and other similar-sized fish.

The Corps has the power to do good work on the Columbia, for wildlife as well as for shipping. Unfortunately, they have a history of doing what they want here without taking the concerns of other river users or the needs of wildlife into account, such as the damage they did to the Dungeness crab industry. Since they did their recent work at the pelican site without even contacting the researchers who worked there, I thought I could at least shine some light on their actions.

Anyone interested in giving their opinion may contact Matt Rabe of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Portland District Public Affairs Office at 503-808-4511.

Upcoming Program: Feathered Architects - The Fascinating World of Bird Nests

By Bob Arnsdorf

On Thursday March 7 at 7:00 pm WHAS and the Lower Columbia College Biology Society will host a special presentation by **Idie Ulsh** at Lower Columbia College, Room PSC 102 in the Physical Science building.

This program will explore how and where birds make nests and will examine interesting aspects of their construction. Ms. Ulsh has photographed the nests of many bird species and has done an extensive three-year review of bird nest literature. In addition to her own photos, she will present photos from many

excellent local photographers and from the University of Puget Sound Slater Museum. Idie Ulsh is well known for her bird and butterfly programs. She is a member of the Washington Ornithological Society, past president of Seattle Audubon, Founder of the Washington Butterfly Association, Seattle Audubon Master Birder, nature photographer and an independent college counselor.

Please join us for this unique program. The program is free and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

What are your Audubon friends reading?

By Darrel Whipple

A quick survey of a small slice of our membership yielded these recommended titles. Enjoy!

Shirley Lutz

- *The White Cascade: The Great Northern Railway Disaster and America's Deadliest Avalanche*, by Gary Krist;
- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, by William Kamkwamba.

Bob Arnsdorf

- *Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain;
- *The Hobbit*, by JRR Tolkien;
- *Where Bigfoot Walks: Crossing the Dark Divide*, by Robert Michael Pyle.

Robert Michael Pyle

- *Feathers*, by Thor Hansen;
- *Border Songs*, by Jim Lynch;
- *The Butterfly Isles*, by Patrick Barkham.

Susan Saul

- *Mapping Human History*, by Steve Olson;
- *The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations*, by Brian Fagan;
- *The Worst Hard Time*, by Timothy Egan.

Larry Turner

- lots of good periodicals, like *Smithsonian*, *Science* and *American Scientist*.

Shawn Schmelzer

- (says she is hoping to read this one soon) *Skulls: An Exploration of Alan Dudley's Curious Collection*, by Simon Winchester.

Darrel Whipple

- *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America*, by Douglas Brinkley;
- *Big Coal*, by Jeff Goodell;
- *Storms of my Grandchildren*, by James Hansen.

... continued from page 1: Indian Jack Slough September Field Tour



WHAS member, Darrel Whipple, explains a bird feather to our young guests at the September 15th IJS field tour.

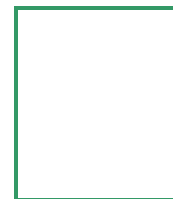
Image: Russ Kastberg



WHAS members and Boy Scouts from Troop 391 install Wood Duck boxes at IJS
Image: Russ Kastberg



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Longview, WA 98632



The *Willapa Whistler* is the bi-monthly publication of the Willapa Hills Audubon Society (WHAS), a chapter of the National Audubon Society.

TEMP -- RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Complimentary copies are sent to organizations and prospective members. All WHAS activities and programs are open to the public.

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 email them to

newsletter@willapahillsaudubon.org.

The *Willapa Whistler* is printed on recycled paper using soy based ink.



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

WHAS Programs and Field Trips

WHAS events are free and open to the public (Unless otherwise noted). Check the website calendar for the latest information and updates.

Second Saturday of each month at 8:00 AM at the Hemlock Square at Lake Sacajawea in Longview:

WHAS teams with Longview Parks and Recreation to conduct a **monthly bird walk** around the **lake in Longview**. (Dress for the weather, and bring your binoculars.) Next confirmed date for these 1 ½ hour tours is December 8. This time we will then convene at the Green's house for hot beverages and snacks. See below for more information.

Saturday, December 8

Join us for the **6th annual Lake Sacajawea Bird Walk and Social**. Participants will meet at Hemlock Square at 8:00 AM, the morning of the walk. We will spend a couple hours walking the Lake observing winter waterfowl and other local birds. The group will then retreat to the warmth of the Green's for some backyard birding, warm beverages, snacks, and cheery talk. To sign up, call or email John Green at 360-575-9238 or jgreen2317@aol.com

Saturday January, 19

Last year's trip to Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge near Olympia was canceled because of closures due to severe weather. We are planning a trip for January, which with travel time will be an all day adventure. Covering the refuge requires walking so the group will split into two, one covering a longer distance (3 plus miles) and the other, staying closer to refuge headquarters. If you are interested in this trip, please contact John Green at 360-575-9238 or jgreen2317@aol.com to be added to the list of participants. More details will follow in the next Whistler.

Thursday March 7 at 7:00 pm in Room PSC 102 in the Physical Science building at LCC

Please join the Willapa Hills Audubon Society and the Lower Columbia College Biology Society at a special program entitled **"Feathered Architects - The Fascinating World of Bird Nests"** by Master Birder and outdoor photographer **Idie Ulsh** on. This program will explore how and where birds make nests and will examine interesting aspects of their construction. This unique program is free and all are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

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