

The Kingfisher

Volume 10, Issue 2 Central Oregon Coast - Garibaldi to Yachats Winter 2015

THE KING'S CORNER



ASLC's Tenth Anniversary year was great for education and field trip activities. With support from Lincoln City's Open Spaces program, ASLC was able to offer nine additional bird walks in Lincoln City in addition to our eleven regular monthly trips. We met lots of new and enthusiastic birders, both local and afar, and we all got a better appreciation of the natural areas within Lincoln City. We hope to continue this program in 2016.

ASLC welcomed Jack Seagrove as ASLC Board VP. Jack and his intrepid partner, Carol Bangs, are enthusiastic residents new to Lincoln City and bring their many talents and new community connections to the ASLC cause. Jack and Carol have brought ASLC outreach to the Lincoln City Farmers Market, and Jack has connected ASLC with Lincoln City area scouting, which has resulted in a great birding education and conservation opportunity for both scouts and birds that you can read about in this newsletter.

ASLC has a push this year to grow our local membership to 100 members, a 20% increase from our current membership. ASLC local members receive the newsletter, email updates on ASLC activities and field trips, and the satisfaction of knowing that almost all their contribution goes to support birding education, outreach, and conservation programs in Lincoln and Tillamook counties. If you know people who would like ASLC news and would want to support ASLC programs, let them know about ASLC. They can join through our website, by contacting me or if you send us contact information, we will reach out to them.

Nora Sherwood

by Caren Willoughby

Laura Doyle and I have been teaching birding classes at Oregon Coast Community College for several years. Imagine our surprise when we learned that a student in our class was an amazing illustrator of all things in nature. She was interested in what our class offered and we were delighted to get to know her. She has enthusiastically been a participant in our bird walks and has shown her work at the Cultural Center this past year. Check out her web page at: norasherwood.com.

Nora is a fresh face to natural science illustration, joining the field as a mid-life career changer. She graduated from the University of Washington's Natural Science Illustration program in Spring 2014, where she was voted the "most improved illustrator" by her classmates. She spent most of her career in the high-tech field of geographic information systems and is a Certified GIS Professional (GISP). She sees science illustration and GIS as different sides of the same coin: they both portray abstractions of reality, with the same end goal of better understanding our world.

Nora has shown her work in solo shows in Lincoln City and Salem, and in various group shows in Seattle and Newport. She has worked on pieces inspired by the Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge, just a few miles south from where she currently lives in Lincoln City and is also gathering inspiration from the Connie Hansen Garden. Her work has been published in the IUCN's "Suiform Soundings" and in the juried UW Stratus 2014 Journal of Arts & Writing. She is the incoming president



of the Oregon Chapter of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators, and is a member of the Oregon Botanical Artists and the GIS Certification Institute.

"My curiosity about the natural world, and my deep desire for us all to wake up and change our callous treatment of it fuels my inspiration. It is an amazing planet we live on with tremendous species diversity and so much yet to learn. Here on the coast of Oregon where I live, within a five minutes walk from my house I can see shorebirds and seabirds by the thousands, sea lions, grey whale spouts, tide pool inhabitants, any number of passerine birds, rough-skinned newts and black-tailed deer. I can access old growth forest and marine ecology steps from my front door. A few minutes further away brings me to a natural estuarine environment."

Nora also has been using local ASLC members' photos of birds as a reference for her art. Audubon Society of Lincoln City is indeed lucky to call her our friend.

Volunteering with ASLC is easy and a great way to meet new people and to learn about birds. ASLC's conservation projects have opportunities for volunteers who want to be out in the field, who want to work with their hands, who want to get involved with the conservation issues in our local environment, who want to bring their current birding knowledge to a new level, or who just want to work with others to do good

for birds and the environment. Tell us about your interests for the New Year, and we might be able to connect you with an ASLC conservation project that will help further these.

Cheers and Best Wishes for 2016! We look forward to seeing you at our Audubon field trips and events in the coming year.

- Jack Doyle, ASLC President

ASLC Photography on Display at Blackfish Café

The Blackfish Café will be hosting a photography exhibition and sale by ASLC photographers Nagi Aboulenein and Jack Doyle during the winter months. The theme of the exhibition is "Birds in Flight", and all sales proceeds will benefit the Audubon Society of Lincoln City's "Wild About Birds" education programs for Lincoln and Tillamook County Elementary School students. Photographers Jack and Nagi are donating framing and printing costs as part of this fundraising effort, and the Blackfish Café is donating wall space and sales support. The Blackfish Café is at 2733 NW HWY 101, Lincoln City, OR.

Every year since 2009, ASLC's "Wild About Birds" program has reached over 300 fourth through sixth graders in their Lincoln and Tillamook county elementary school classrooms. Audubon volunteers provide hands-on experience to students which allows them to learn about bird anatomy, adaptation, habitat, and identification

as they also learn how to use field guides and binoculars. The "Wild About Birds" program has been designed to support state learning objectives for these grades.

Taking great pictures of birds in flight is often particularly challenging for photographers, but bird flight is one of birds' most unique and characteristic qualities and one of the reasons so many people are fascinated with birds. Jack and Nagi, as well as other ASLC bird photographers, have been pursuing that "awesome" BIF (bird in flight) photo for many years, and some of the results will be displayed for sale at the Blackfish Café in the upcoming months.

Watch for details in local papers and on the ASLC Facebook page and website for exhibit opening reception, and exhibit dates and times.



ASLC Volunteers Caren Willoughby, Laura Doyle, Mark Elliott and Patty Sorensen will be teaching "Basic Birding" course again in March 2016 at Oregon Coast Community College, Lincoln City Campus. ASLC has hosted up to sixteen students in this course, and this will be the ninth session of "Basic Birding" since we first started teaching in 2012. "This is a fun class to teach because everyone who signs up is curious about the many different birds you can find in our local area," said Caren Willoughby. Course information is published in the OCCC Winter catalog and on the OCCC website. Sign-up is through Oregon Coast Community College (www.oregoncoastcc.org). Below is the upcoming 'Basic Birding' class description:

Basic Birding **Instructors: Laura Doyle and Caren Willoughby, with Mark Elliott and Patty Sorensen**

Do you find yourself listening to an odd chirp while walking or gardening? Are you fascinated by the random rustlings in the bushes? Do you notice and enjoy the birds in your world, but wish you knew more about these clever and busy neighbors? This is just the class for you! Participants will learn how birds behave so it will be easier to find, watch, and identify the type you are seeing. Bird identification, adaptations, and habitat will be introduced. Birds of the Oregon Coast will be our focus during this 4-session class. Participants will have access to bird guides and binoculars and will learn how to use them. The final day of class will be a field trip to identify birds in the area.

Next Class to be held at Oregon Coast Community College - Lincoln City

**Four sessions Tue & Thu, March 1-10, 1:30-3pm
\$25 Lincoln City Campus, Room 208**

Materials Fee: \$10 paid to instructor at first class



October 2015 Basic Birding class field trip. Photo by Jack Seagrove.

**Join Audubon Society
of Lincoln City (ASLC),
and take part in the
education and
appreciation of the
birds, wildlife, and their
habitats along
mid-coastal Oregon**

As a Paid Member, your donation aids in supporting our environmental education in local schools and our citizen science programs. It enables us to participate in restoration and public advocacy projects along the central Oregon coast.

Be a Volunteer, and help implement the goals of our Society, including field trips, research, education and public events. To volunteer your time and service, call ASLC at 541-992-9720.

As a VIP Sponsor, you and your organization will be recognized as a tremendous help to Audubon Society of Lincoln City in presenting educational and rewarding Special Events to family members of all ages.

**Come, join us
as we explore and discover
the many splendors of
the natural world around us.
Your membership
makes the following
ASLC efforts possible:**

- Monthly Guided Bird Walks
- Kayak/Canoe Field Trips
- Special Guest Presentations
- Kids' Classroom Presentations
- Free Field Guides/Binoculars
(loaned during field trips/walks
and classroom presentations)
- Monthly meetings open to Public
- Semi-Annual Newsletter -
(Summer and Winter issues)
- Website: lincolncityaudubon.org
- Staff attendance to quarterly state meetings to help co-ordinate legislative efforts in the protection of Oregon's wildlife and habitat
- Phone service for bird and animal hotline connection and information

**Give us your support today.
Visit
[lincolncityaudubon.org/
membership.html](http://lincolncityaudubon.org/membership.html).**

Barnacle Geese

by Jack Doyle



It all started on Tuesday, September 8. Jody Picconi (local ASLC member) was taking his dog for a walk at the Little Nestucca boat ramp. As he scanned the fields alongside the river, he saw three geese that looked a bit strange. At first, he thought they were a usual sighting of Canada geese but something seemed different about them. Taking a closer look with his binoculars, he thought they might be rare Barnacle geese. When he got home he sent pictures to some of our local birding experts who then verified that indeed they were Barnacle geese. When word got out the next day, many people showed up to see this rare bird which had never before been seen outside the northeast coast.

People sometimes raise Barnacle geese in captivity. In order to tell the difference between the domestic and wild geese, they are suppose to remove the halluxe or rear toe. It requires looking at pictures of the geese flying in order to determine if they have the toe clipped or if they are banded. All the pictures of these geese showed the rear toe intact which meant they could be wild.

The Oregon Birding Association (OBA) assigns members to particular territories to report rare bird sightings. Wink Gross is the member whose territory in which these birds landed. His initial report was that they were not wild birds because the timing was just wrong for them to be in this area.



The Oregon Bird Records Committee (OBRC) was organized in 1978 to collect, review and maintain records on rare birds found in Oregon. Even though Mr. Gross did not think these birds were wild, he submitted a report of the birds along with pictures to OBRC to let them determine if they were wild birds.

Last winter a single Tundra Bean Goose showed up in this area and was the first lower 48 state sighting ever. With this in mind many of us thought the Barnacle geese might also be a first.

Going online and searching for Barnacle Geese for sale, I came across a vendor from back East who ships a Barnacle Goose at the cost of \$350.

The general consensus was that our three Barnacle geese were probably not wild. Tillamook birder Jack Hurt confirmed it. While swapping fish stories with the farmer that works the field on the Little Nestucca, he said a friend of his up the river had 3 Barnacle geese that escaped a few weeks prior to Jody's sighting. He came over to see them and thinks those are the same birds. Wink has notified the records committee.

This was a real learning experience for me and hopefully for you as well. Who knows what will happen to these geese now. I'll be keeping my eye out for them.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

▼ Winter and Spring Events



Most field trips are with Audubon trip leader Mark Elliott. No prior birding experience is required. Binoculars and guidebooks will be provided. Bring weather appropriate clothing and footwear.

Visit www.lincolncityaudubon.org for more info or call 541-992-9720.

IAN 2016

Saturday, January 9th, 9-11am - OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center Nature Trail and South Jetty. This time of year there will be an abundance of waterfowl, birds of prey, and 3 species of loons. Birds in the bush are always a surprise, like Western Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows. From Newport take the first exit south after crossing the Yaquina Bay Bridge and drive on SE OSU Drive following signs for the Center. Park at the east side of the Visitors Center.

Tuesday, Jan 12, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

FEB

Tuesday, Feb 9, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

Friday, Feb 12 - Monday, Feb 16th ~ The 2016 GBBC (Great Backyard Bird Count) will take place. Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. For more info, go to: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html.

Saturday, February 13th, 9-11am - Siletz Bay, Cutler City Wetlands and Salishan Nature Trails. Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons are always a joy. Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser and Surf Scoter are usually seen with the possibility of an Eurasian Wigeon. Bald Eagles always put on a show. Meet at the dock beside Mo's Restaurant (860 SE 51st St.) in the Taft District of Lincoln City.

MAR

Tues & Thurs, March 1-10, 1-3pm ~ "Basic Birding" is again taught by ASLC Volunteers at Lincoln City's Oregon Coast Community College (OCCC) campus. To sign-up visit www.oregoncoastcc.org.

Tuesday, March 8, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

Saturday, March 12th, 9-11am - Seal Rock State Recreation Area. Excellent site for viewing offshore seabirds and Gray Whales. Expect to see Harlequin Ducks, Black Turnstones and Surfbirds with the possibility of a Rock Sandpiper. Loons, grebes and gulls as well. Meet in the parking lot of Seal Rock Recreation Area off Hwy 101, 8 miles south of Newport.

APR

Saturday, April 9th, 9-11am - Beaver Creek State Park. Walk a perimeter trail along freshwater sloughs and forested hill. Great area for songbirds like Golden-crowned Kinglets and Hermit and Varied Thrushes. Northern Pintail and Ring-neck Ducks and the possibility of a Green Heron. Take Hwy 101, 6.6 miles south of Yaquina Bay Bridge, turn left onto North Beaver Creek Road. Go 1 mile then turn right at Welcome (Visitor) Center.

Tuesday, April 12, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

MAY

Tuesday, May 10, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.

Saturday, May 14th, 9-11am, - Toledo and Thornton Creek. Spring is in the air and songbirds are everywhere. We will carpool to the best birding areas and look for Red-shouldered Hawk, Hooded Merganser, Wood Duck, Black-headed Grosbeak, Western Tanager, Wilson's Warbler, and 3 species of swallows. Meet at the Toledo Dairy Queen parking lot along Hwy 20, 6 miles east of Newport.

JUN

Saturday, June 11th, 9-11am - Salmon River Estuary: Tamara Quay and "Pixieland". We will walk the trails of this wonderful restoration project looking for Rufus Hummingbird, Osprey, Cedar Waxwing, Red-tailed Hawk, Bushtit, American Goldfinch, and Common Yellowthroat. Meet north of Lincoln City on Fraser Road on west side of Hwy 101 immediately north of Hwy 18 overpass.

Annual ASLC Meeting (date and time to be determined) in the River House at Cascade Head Ranch in Otis. Election of officers, followed by a potluck dinner.

JUL

Saturday, July 9th, 9-11am - Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (Yaquina Lighthouse). Yaquina Head is known for its easy viewing of nesting seabird colonies of Common Murres, Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants, Pigeon Guillemots, Western Gulls and Black Oystercatchers. The highlight for some are the Peregrine Falcons which have nested on the cliff face beside the Interpretive Center for the last 4 years. Yaquina Head Lighthouse is located north of Newport off Hwy 101. Turn west at the traffic signal onto Lighthouse Drive. Follow road to toll booth (requires recreation pass or vehicle entrance fee of \$7.00) and continue on to Interpretive Center parking lot.

Tuesday, July 12, 5:00pm ~ (ASLC) Board Meeting in Aces at Chinook Winds Golf Resort. Open to the public.



Visit www.lincolncityaudubon.org for more calendar details and for ASLC news updates!

Was That Quick, Little, Brown Bird in the Bushes a Song Sparrow or a Fox Sparrow?

By Patty Sorensen



I find it difficult to tell the difference between a song sparrow and a fox sparrow when birding. They have similar behaviors and live in similar habitats as well as both species being very quick. This often gives the viewer just a quick glance. So, here's my attempt to educate myself. Hopefully some of these tips may help you too! If you have other tips for me, I'd love to have you share them with me! pdsorensen@comcast.net

A song sparrow has a whitish breast with brown streaks and a central dark spot above the white chest. Song sparrows have a darker, smaller bill which stays uniformly grey throughout breeding and weather seasons. There are heavy brown stripes radiating down off the lower bill. They have gray eyebrows and a reddish brown crown with a gray central stripe.

A fox sparrow is about 1" bigger with whitish underparts that are boldly streaked with brown or rufous and an irregular central dot on the breast. Their bills vary in color from pinkish to grays but the lower mandible is yellow. They have dark brown backs and heads with less distinguishable color variations around their faces in the Northwest.

There are many subspecies of Fox Sparrows and Song Sparrows in various geographical locations. Good luck consistently identifying them in the United States! The depth of their colors is quite different and in the Northwest, the song sparrow is a bit larger making it even more difficult to use size as a comparison tool.

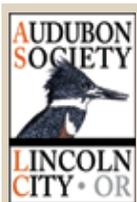
If you've read this far, you definitely can tell that the bird on the left above is a Song Sparrow and the one on the right is a Fox Sparrow. They seem quite easy to tell apart in the pictures above. Good luck in the field!!!

For a more comprehensive comparison, check out http://www.birdfellow.com/journal/2013/08/30/birding_101_song_sparrow_vs_fox_sparrow_made_easy

Sources:

Stokes, Donald, and Lillian Stokes. *Stokes Field Guide to Birds Western Region*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 1995. Print.
Rising, James D. *A Guide to the Identification and Natural History of the Sparrows of the United States and Canadas*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1996. Print.

Don't forget to check out You Tube videos for some incredible photos and footage into the lives of birds. Here's my favorite one lately: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CPHNXJWZfs&list=TL8don1JiIaK8zMDExMjAxNQ



P.O. Box 38
Lincoln City
Oregon 97367

541-992-9720



*Be sure to visit
www.lincolncityaudubon.org
for more news and activities of the
Audubon Society of Lincoln City*

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Scouts Join Audubon in Building Bird Houses

by Jack Seagrove

The Purple Martin, the largest swallow in North America, was once common in the Willamette Valley. Unfortunately, the martin population has dramatically declined in recent years. There are a number of reasons for this decline. Foremost among them is the loss of snags and the increased competition for nest cavities from European Starlings.

In a move designed to provide adequate and safe houses for the martins to build their nests in, the Audubon Society of Lincoln City is joining with the Boy Scouts of Troop 47 in Lincoln City to build and place martin houses in the Salmon River/Little Nestucca River area.

Boy Scouts of America
Bird Study Merit Badge



Beginning in March, 2016, ASLC members will join with the Scouts of Troop 47, Lincoln City, in creating houses for the martins. ASLC will provide the materials to the Scouts to build the houses. The Scouts will then work with the ASLC in placing the martin houses in appropriate areas to attract the martins.

This project will help keep the martin in our area plus it goes a long way in exposing the Scouts to both the Audubon Society and the importance of being involved in our community. Additionally, this project will help get the Scouts started on earning a Bird Study Merit Badge.

In order to get the Bird Study Merit Badge, Scouts must study Birds. They learn that birds are among the most fascinating creatures on Earth. Many of the most important discoveries about birds and how they live have been made by amateur birders. In pursuing this hobby, these



Photo of Purple Martin by Suzanne Britton (www.ironphoenix.org/gallery/)

Scouts might someday make a valuable contribution to the understanding of the natural world.

Fun Facts about the Purple Martin:

- As I've already mentioned, they're the largest swallow in North America and one of the largest in the world.
- And they're not actually purple. Their plumage is really a dark blue-black with an iridescent sheen. It really depends on the light, what color they are. They can look blue, purple or even green, depending.
- The male Purple Martin is the only North American swallow that has a dark belly. This makes it easier to identify them when they're flying.
- Here's where the Purple Martins earn their living . . . they eat flying insects, like

mosquitoes, catching the majority of their prey in midair. These guys are amazing, they even drink in midair, flying over a pond and scooping water into their bills.

- They're so helpful, in fact, Native Americans would deliberately hang gourds for the birds to nest in. They wanted them nearby to help keep insects away from crops.
- Purple Martins are complete neotropical migrants and travel from North America in the summer to South America as far as Brazil and Argentina in the winter. The full migration can take 2-3 months to complete.
- The Purple Martin's worst enemies are the European Starling and the House Sparrow. Both of these species are aggressive toward Purple Martins and may attack or kill birds in competition for nesting sites.