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ONE DOLLAR



Ken Chan/Wikimedia Commons

Mike Patterson, organizer of the Columbia Estuary Christmas Bird Count, said birders spotted an American white pelican (like the one pictured here) at the Port of Ilwaco, Wash.'s, boat basin.



Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren/Wikimedia Commons

Lee Cain and Nick Baisley, science teachers at Astoria High School taking part late last month in the Columbia Estuary Christmas Bird Count, spotted a Wilson's warbler (like the one pictured here), identified by its yellow underparts and black cap.



David Maloney/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wahkiakum Christmas Bird Count organizer Andrew Emlen said six of the endangered streaked horned larks (like the one pictured here) were found at their year-round colony site on White Island, off the eastern edge of Puget Island, Wash.

A BIG BIRD DAY FOR HOLIDAY COUNT

Locals find more avian species this time than ever before

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Birders with the 36th annual Columbia Estuary Christmas Bird Count had a big day.

The 22 volunteers who gathered around the mouth of the Columbia River to watch birds Dec. 22 spotted 134 species, one more than the previous all-time record of 133 set in 2000 and about 10 above the average number of species counted, according to organizer Mike Patterson.

The Columbia estuary event is part of the regional Christmas Bird Count, one of the longest-running resident surveys of bird species in the Western Hemisphere.

Volunteers at each event attempt to count all the birds in a 15-mile circle throughout a given day. The Columbia Estuary count, centered on a point in the Columbia River estuary halfway between Hammond and Chinook, Washington, started in 1979.

Good weather

According to Patterson, a central organizer and counter since 1987, the high numbers this year were more a factor of weather than any especially deep variety of birds.

"We had a good weather day," he said. "When the weather's bad, birders don't want to get out of the car. When the weather gets cold, some of the birds tend to move out."

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CREST fallen at the Port?

Commission looks at severing ties with estuary task force

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria Commission, following the lead of the Port of Ilwaco, Washington, is asking whether membership in the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce is worth the \$6,000 a year it pays in dues.

The item was brought up by Commissioner Bill Hunsinger at Tuesday's commission meeting.

"I see things starting to happen, where people no longer want to belong to CREST," Hunsinger said.

The task force was formed in 1974 by a council of governments in Washington and Oregon to gather background and develop a management plan for the entire Lower Columbia River estuary, in response to growing conflicts over the use of estuarine areas and amid dwindling natural resources.

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DHS turned a blind eye to trouble

No license, staff crime records went overlooked at foster care

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon child welfare officials knew in 2009 the Portland foster care program Give Us This Day was operating without a license and was staffed entirely by people with criminal records.

Still, the Oregon Department of Human Services allowed Give Us This Day to continue operating without the necessary residential care license. It was unclear from state records how long the situation persisted, and DHS was unable to provide an answer Wednesday afternoon.

Emails released by the Department of Human Services reveal top department officials knew of

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Finding happiness in the city of their dreams

A new move and a career transition

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — For Chris and Alexa Anderson, the chance to relocate to Seaside seemed like a dream come true. Chris was offered a chance to continue his 15-year career as an insurance adjuster in a city they both had fallen in love with.

They purchased a condo in Seaside, loaded up the truck and moved from Logan, Utah, in February 2014.



All ready to start his new job here, corporate headquarters threw him a curveball. "They said, 'Chris, we've just moved our field jobs in-house. You can either move to Des Moines or Columbus.'"

Today, he sees it as a blessing in disguise. "I wasn't shocked, but I was hurt," Chris said. "They could have handled it a whole lot better."

In love with the Oregon

Coast, Chris decided to stay. It was the right decision. He soon forged a new career as a property manager and real estate broker.

Alexa, who ran a salon in their former home, found a new role at Shear Pleasures in the Gilbert Building, where she is now cutting hair (full disclosure: including this reporter's).

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R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Alexa and Chris Anderson relocated to Seaside from Logan, Utah.

