

The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 32, Number 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2006

Juneau Audubon's **Celebrate Nature** Lecture Series 2006



Thursday, January 12th

Mark Hickey - Journey to the White Continent
UAS Egan Auditorium*, 7:30-8:30 PM

Spend an evening in the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica. King penguins, black-browed albatrosses, southern right whales, elephant seals and lots of ice – all up close and personal. Mark Hickey will present his beautiful digital

images, and describe his 18-day expedition cruise to the white continent at the height of the Antarctic summer. Photographers and naturalists alike will not want to miss this show.

THE FOLLOWING TWO PROGRAMS WILL REPLACE THE REGULAR SECOND THURSDAY MEETING IN FEBRUARY:



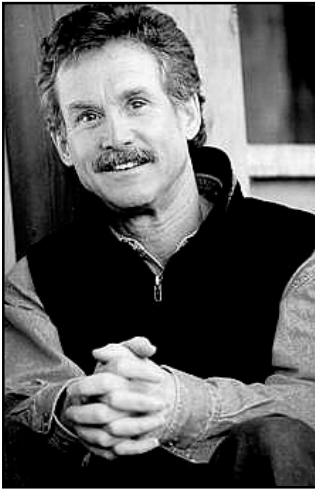
Tuesday, February 7th

Bob Armstrong - Photographing Alaska's Birds: 45 years worth

Centennial Hall, 7:30-9:00 PM. Sponsored by the Alaska Bird Conference. Note date and place!

Bob Armstrong came to Alaska in 1960, purchased the biggest telephoto lens he could find, and began a lifelong hobby of photographing birds. His books include *Guide to the Birds of Alaska*, *Alaska's Birds* and *Alaska's Fish*. In addition, he has coauthored *The Nature of Southeast Alaska*, *Southeast Alaska's*

Natural World, *Along the Mt. Roberts Trail* and *Alaska's Natural Wonders*. He has also authored and coauthored numerous scientific and popular articles on fish, birds, mammals, plants, and insects in Alaska. He has worked as a fishery biologist and research supervisor for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and as an Associate Professor for the University of Alaska where he taught courses in fisheries and ornithology. Join Bob as he shares his best images acquired over a lifetime in Juneau.



Friday, February 9th

(Title to be announced) - David Quammen

UAS Egan Library, 7:30-9:00 PM Note new day and place!

This public lecture is co-sponsored by UAS and The Alaska Bird Conference--Juneau Audubon. David Quammen is a celebrated science and nature writer. He is a three-time recipient of the National Magazine Award for his science essays in *Outside* magazine and his recent feature article "Was Darwin Wrong?" in *National Geographic*. Mr. Quammen has also received an Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, John Burroughs Medal for nature writing, and the Lannan Literary Award for nonfiction. His award-winning nonfiction book, *Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions* (1996) is a readable and scholarly account of the history of evolutionary theory, biodiversity,

population dynamics, and extinction. Mr. Quammen's insightful and well-researched thoughts about biogeography, evolution, and culture are highly relevant to the Alaskan landscape and the fish, wildlife, and people that depend on it.

11TH ALASKA BIRD CONFERENCE By Michelle Kissling

The 11th Alaska Bird Conference will be held February 7-9th in Juneau! The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum to share information on results, methods, and insights pertaining to research, education, management, and conservation of Alaska's birds. The conference will include presentations and posters summarizing current topics in ornithology and avian management and conservation, an evening program, a banquet and keynote address, and special awards. Several associated meetings and events will take place in conjunction with the Alaska Bird Conference. Everyone is welcome to attend the conference. You can register online and view the preliminary conference program at www.abc2006.juneau-audubon-society.org or by contacting Debbie Groves at 780-1174.

BOARD NOTES FOR JANUARY by Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon Society president

Healthy and busy New Year to you all! We have a couple of very fun and interesting events coming up in February this year. The Juneau Audubon board is happy to be a sponsor of the **11th Alaska Bird Conference** and Workshops to be held in Juneau February 7-9, 2006. The conference offers contributed papers and also special lectures. .

After the excitement of the bird conference we can all contribute to citizen science by participating in the **Great Backyard Bird count** jointly sponsored by National Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. This year the count will be on February 17-20. You can join with thousand of others to find out how many birds are being seen in your area and across the continent this winter. This huge project allows you to participate in documenting where birds are, and track changes in their numbers compared to previous years, helping scientists paint a picture of the state of birds this winter. For more information, or to get started, go to <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

The Juneau Audubon board has recently been in contact with the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve and Lynn Canal Conservation group about concerns with plans for the preserve. Please read the information included in this newsletter for more information.

As always the Juneau Audubon board appreciates suggestions for improvements or changes. Please contact any of us through addresses on our web page. Your local Juneau Audubon web page also includes a local bird checklist, lecture schedules, and past newsletters (www.juneau-audubon-society.org).

BALD EAGLE/COASTAL RAINFOREST ECOLOGY FUND

By Deana Hale

The University of Alaska Southeast has an Endowed Fund designed to aid bald eagles, their habitat in Southeast Alaska and students. The Bald Eagle / Coastal Rainforest Ecology Fund's ultimate goal is to raise \$2.5 million to provide an endowed chair at UAS related to bald eagle ecology. However, in the meantime, the fund can provide for small research grants and education about bald eagles and their importance in Southeast Alaska.

Short term possible uses for the fund's earnings include using it as a source to hire students doing bald eagle and coastal rainforest ecology related research and provide student scholarships for biology or environmental science majors studying bald eagles and their relationships to the coastal rainforest. Additionally, the fund's resources could be used to offer fellowships related to bald eagles and coastal rainforest ecology, support visiting professors in this area and provide for publications, conferences and workshops related to bald eagle ecology.

Jim King, retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist/pilot, credits many others with the forward thinking involved with the endowment's establishment. "This Fund gives the University financial resources for bald eagle and coastal rainforest ecology projects that are not dependent on politics or other outside influences and cannot be taken from Juneau and Southeast," says King. Instrumental in the fund's creation were King, members of the Bald Eagle Research Institute (BERI), its former treasurer, Myra Howe, and former UAS Chancellor Marshal Lind, all of whom were committed to local control of funding for bald eagles and their habitat.

Those who established the Fund were looking to the future. The initial principal is invested with the University of Alaska Foundation where the earnings, but not the principal, can be used at the discretion of the UAS Chancellor for projects related to rainforest ecology and the eagles. The Fund has unlimited potential to contribute to the Juneau economy.

"An endowment like the UAS Bald Eagle / Coastal Rainforest Ecology Fund that supports research is important for our understanding of and the protection of eagle habitat in Southeast," says UAS Chancellor John Pugh.

Those who wish to contribute to the UAS Bald Eagle / Coastal Rainforest Ecology Fund may do so with MasterCard or Visa by going to the UA Foundation's secure website at <https://ssl.uaf.edu/ua/uafound/forms/securegift.html>. When asked what fund you would like your gift directed to, please indicate "UAS Bald Eagle / Coastal Rainforest Ecology". Gifts also may be made by check payable to UAS with Bald Eagle Fund in the memo line and by mailing to UAS Development Office, 11120 Glacier Hwy., Juneau, AK 99801. For more information contact the UAS Development Office at 796-6566.

Alison Browne, left, a member of the UA Foundation Board of Trustees, is pictured with a rescued bald eagle at a reception to raise awareness of the UAS Bald Eagle / Coastal Rainforest Ecology Fund. The reception was held prior to "Bald Eagles of the Pacific Northwest," an Evening at Egan educational lecture featuring noted biologist David Hancock. Also present the eagle's handler, Jamie Sorg.



2005 JUNEAU CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

by Mark Schwan

Juneau's Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 17. Thirty-seven volunteers enjoyed an unusually mild and dry day for birding. Seventy-two species and just under 20,000 (a record high) birds were seen during the day. The day's list was marked by a number of missed birds but then record high counts for many species, along with a nice mix of unusual species and several new to our local count all made for an interesting day (See table below).

New high counts were obtained for several species of waterfowl (American Wigeon record was impressive, especially for a species only becoming a count "regular" about ten years ago), Marbled Murrelet, Black-billed Magpie, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. However, Pacific Loon and European Starling, both seen on all but two previous counts, were missed on count day. Moreover, our irruptive species such as crossbills and siskins barely made a showing.

The potluck after the day's birding activities was great; thanks to everyone for their generous contributions. Also, thanks to Paul Suchanek for developing and sharing a new field data recording form and for coordinating the downtown and Douglas efforts, and to Gus van Vliet for tracking count week species, and conducting the evening tally. Finally, thanks to all those who participated on the count; it was a fine day.

Highlights of Juneau's Count:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Snow Goose	1	First Time Seen
Cackling Goose	cw	First Time; species split and unusual
Eurasian Wigeon	1	First Time Seen (cw only before)
American Wigeon	638	High Count
Mallard	3,988	High Count
Green-winged Teal	169	High Count
Lesser Scaup	24	High Count
Bonaparte's Gull	1	Unusual Species
Marbled Murrelet	257	High Count
Black-billed Magpie	94	High Count
Golden-crowned Kinglet	93	High Count
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	US, HC
American Pipit	6	US, HC
Orange-crowned Warbler	1	First Time Seen
Swamp Sparrow	1	First Time Seen
White-throated Sparrow	1	Unusual Species
Purple Finch	1	Unusual Species

The complete Juneau count is posted on the web: <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

SKAGWAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PRELIMINARY RESULTS

By Meg Hahr

On Saturday December 17th, twenty-one Skagwegians and 4 visitors from Whitehorse turned out for the third official Skagway Christmas Bird Count. Not bad for a town of less than 800 year-round residents! It was an ideal day for birding – clear skies, 42 degrees F, and remarkably calm – very atypical weather for Skagway this time of year. Lingering patches of valley fog were the only hindrance count participants faced when scanning Taiya Inlet and Naku Bay. Thirty-three species were observed on count day (consistent with previous years), the most abundant of which were marbled murrelet, chestnut-backed chickadee, and common merganser. For the first time, pacific loon and northern bobwhite were seen during the count. Nine bobwhite escaped from a local breeder last spring and appear to have increased considerably in numbers over the summer. A flock of 40 birds were observed recently near the north end of town. This is the first time this non-native species has been encountered during the Skagway CBC. Conspicuously absent from this year's count were mallard, pine siskin, northern goshawk and white-winged crossbill. The perfect weather and great turnout made this year's count one of the most enjoyable yet. Special thanks go to Elaine "Bird Lady" Furbish for organizing the count, Sandy "Tooth Fairy" Snell-Dobert for compiling the results, John and Lorna McDermott for once again hosting the post-count potluck dinner, our Canadian friends who traveled all the way from Whitehorse, and all the other Skagway birders who helped make this year's CBC a success!

Chestnut-backed Chickadee (72)	Dark-eyed Junco - Slate (12)
White-winged Crossbill (4)	Dark-eyed Junco - Oregon (16)
Barrow's Goldeneye (7)	American Robin (6)
Glaucous-winged Gull (45)	Fox Sparrow (1)
Mew Gull (19)	Snow Bunting (2)
Steller's Jay (26)	Spruce Grouse (2)
Golden-crowned Kinglet (22)	Hairy Woodpecker (2)
Black-billed Magpie (34)	Downy Woodpecker (1)
Common Merganser (60)	3-toed Woodpecker (1)
Common Raven (21)	Winter Wren (1)
Bohemian Waxwing (23)	Brown Creeper (7)
Bufflehead (19)	Thayer's Gull (8)
Black-capped Chickadee (19)	Belted Kingfisher (4)
Northwestern Crow (2)	Marbled Murrelet (89)
American Dipper (14)	Gull spp. (1)
Bald Eagle - adult (2)	Red-breasted Merganser (3)
Common Goldeneye (27)	Pacific Loon (1) CW
Herring Gull (11)	Boreal Owl – dead (1)

- Birds seen during Skagway's CBC. Total number in () does not include feeder counts. CW means species observed during count week but not on day of count.

KETCHIKAN'S CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS -Teri Goucher

December 17th was an exceptionally beautiful, sunny day here in Ketchikan. The winds were calm and the temperature ranged from 30 to 37 degrees.

There were 43 people in 21 parties participating this year, finding **68 species**, the most ever for our area!

In addition to the more commonly found species for Southeast Alaska we managed to tally some very interesting birds and numbers!

An unusually high number of 26 **Northern Flickers** were found, this compares to a previous high count of 6 seen in 2001.

American Robin numbers were also very high with 115 seen that day; which is considerably higher than 30 being spotted in 1993.

A brand new species for our count was **American Pipit**; amazingly 9 were seen together in Saxman!

A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was found, marking another new count day species, although one had been spotted during count week in 2000!

Single individuals of rarer species were found including a **Pied-billed Grebe**, **Brewer's Blackbird**, **White-throated Sparrow**, and **Bonaparte's Gull**.

There were up to 11 **Trumpeter Swans** on Ward Lake during count week, with a few being recorded for the count day.

There were five more species added to Ketchikan's data during count week; these included **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, **Common Grackle**, **Glaucous Gull**, **Pine Grosbeak** and **Swamp Sparrow**!

Thanks to everyone who birded on land and sea on a lovely day to make Ketchikan's best ever Christmas Bird Count results possible!

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

GLACIER BAY/GUSTAVUS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2005

By Bruce Paige

The 2005 Christmas Bird Count is history, and it was a smashing success! If you could conjure up the recipe for a great bird count, the ingredients would look something like this. Start with a day that is clear and calm so the birds can be seen at long distances. Keep the snow off the ground so that observers can walk easily about, and to allow birds a large foraging area. Keep the temperature mild, so that the freshwater is unfrozen to attract water birds (ok, so the lakes were partly frozen!). Finally, have a large number of willing observers participate in the count so that the area can be well covered. Saturday, December 17 had all of these ingredients in spades! A record 24 Gustavus residents hiked, drove, and even three boats were used to cruise the waters of Icy Strait, Lower Glacier Bay, and the Beardslee Islands this year. The results tied the record for largest number of species in over three decades of counts, 73, and the 14, 625 individual birds counted were the second highest number ever.

Three species were seen for the first time during this mid-winter count, black turnstone, hermit thrush, and fox sparrow. So many previously unrecorded species in one year is

noteworthy. Three additional species, greater yellowlegs, short-eared owl, bohemian waxwing were found during the count week. The most remarkable aspect of the count was that nearly every bird species was found in higher than average numbers, and a truly amazing 22 species, almost a third of the of the total, were recorded in all-time high numbers. Among these were (their average numbers are in parenthesis) 51 pacific loons (7), 93 common loons (22), 76 horned grebes (19), 195 pelagic cormorants (69), 1335 mallards (508), 395 black scoters (37), 1992 surf scoters (408), 412 red-breasted mergansers (104), 12 belted kingfishers (2), 26 Steller's jays (5), 103 common raven (35), 151 chestnut-backed chickadees (51), 101 golden-crowned kinglets (14), and 17 song sparrows (4),

Some of these exceptional concentrations may be easy to explain. Steller's jay populations exploded around Gustavus during the past summer and have stayed high (one feeding station observer reported 18 jays on the day of the count!!). It is also hard to get away from the sounds and sights of common ravens this winter. The recently-ended moose hunting season left at least 100 huge carcasses scattered around the countryside. Mild weather with the resulting open fresh water and bare ground probably accounts for the record numbers of belted kingfishers and song sparrows. Increasing numbers of bird-feeding stations helped certain species like chickadees and juncos. Generally, numbers of fish-eaters like loons, grebes, and mergansers were up, as were bottom-feeding waterfowl such as scoters. The black scoter has been noticeably more abundant the last couple of years. Is the increase the result of a natural ocean cycle or something else? It will be interesting to compare the species data from Glacier Bay/ Gustavus with other Alaska and North American counts to see if the numbers are a purely local phenomena, or have a more regional or national application.

HAINES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT By Georgia Giacobbe

Birding enthusiasts of Haines conducted the first of two Christmas Bird Counts on December 18. The radius began from the Haines Post Office. In a preliminary reporting, the 22 participants all agreed it was a beautiful day for birding (which has been rare in Haines this fall), but they counted a lower number of birds than in the past. Not all results have been compiled as of the date going to press. The expected species were there but no great surprises. Tim Shields noted a larger number of Golden-crowned Kinglets but a lower number of gulls. A second Christmas Bird Count will be conducted December 31 in the Eagle Preserve with the Chilkat River Bridge as the focus. Long-time Haines resident Kaitlin Strain will be returning to provide methodology for that bird count. On the day after Christmas, this writer toured the Lutak Inlet to determine what waterfowl were spending the holidays. On that date, a raft of about 150 male and female Barrow's Goldeneyes were noted off of Picture Point. Farther up the inlet a scattering of waterfowl were noted with about 10 Red-breasted Mergansers mixed with a few goldeneyes being the largest group. A half dozen of scaups (not sure if they were greater or lesser because of the lighting) along with a pair of Buffleheads. A half dozen Black Scoters were also seen in the inlet. At 2.5 mile on Haines Highway a pair of Northern Harriers were spotted hunting across the flats this month.

PLEASE KEEP AN EAGLE EYE OUT FOR THE BALD EAGLE PRESERVE

By Caroln Weishahn

Twenty-three years ago, the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve was established by the State Legislature to protect and perpetuate the Chilkat bald eagle, its habitat, and the salmon on which it depends. The annual gathering of thousands of eagles during winter months on the 'Council Grounds' of the Chilkat River thrills birders, photographers, artists, and tourists who travel from near and far to witness this spectacular natural phenomenon.

Just days before locals and visitors would gather in the Preserve to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Alaska Bald Eagle Festival, State House Representative Bill Thomas announced at the annual Haines Chamber of Commerce banquet that he is considering introducing legislation that would shrink the Preserve by 40%. This would remove the controversial jet boat tour route from the higher management standard required in the Preserve.

"I haven't drafted it, but I'm looking at it," Thomas said. "The bill can shrink the bald eagle preserve to the Wells Bridge (on the Haines Highway)." --from the Chilkat Valley News, November 3, 2005.

All areas of the Preserve are used by eagles at some time of the year and are essential to their survival and reproductive success. Please help by opposing any efforts to shrink the Preserve in the 2006 legislature.

(Additional information from Sari Saunders: The preserve protects river bottom lands of the Chilkat, Kleheni, and Tsirku Rivers as critical habitat for bald eagles and salmon populations. The wakes from commercial jet boats are much larger than those of traditional crafts in the area and can contribute to increased rates of bank erosion. This damages fish habitat and can cause mortality of salmon eggs and alevin by destroying streamside vegetation and overhanging banks, increasing stream turbidity, and altering the stream substrate (e.g., increasing sedimentation). For up-to-date information on this (potential) legislation and the concerns for the Chilkat reserve, watch the JAS website at: www.juneau-audubon-society.org and also see the website for Lynn Canal Conservation at: www.aptalaska.net/~lcc11/.)

DNR weakens habitat protection in the Preserve

In order to protect the purposes set out in the enabling legislation, commercial tours operating in the Preserve must receive permits from the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. In June 2005, DNR removed restrictions for commercial jet boat tours, which had been recommended by ADFG biologists to protect high-value salmon spawning and rearing areas. By allowing the jet boat tours into sensitive salmon spawning and rearing areas during May and September, it appears that DNR has abandoned the precautionary management approach that has prevailed in previous administrations. In July, Lynn Canal Conservation (LCC), Audubon Alaska and others appealed that decision to the DNR Commissioner. The appeal is still awaiting a decision.

CLIPS FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE By Sari Saunders

1. Proposed changes to regulations on Mixing Zones – Mixing zones are areas where treated wastewater (e.g., discharges from sewage treatment or industrial facilities) mix with other bodies of water, e.g., the ocean, rivers. These effluents generally still have some levels of pollutants and the discharge into surface waters is permitted through the Department of Environmental Conservation. This year, the DEC proposed a number of changes to the mixing zone regulations. The Department held workshops on the proposed changes in late Nov/early Dec. and public comment period ended on Dec. 19, so stay tuned for the response to those comments. One can read about the 2005 proposal for changes to the regulations, and get other information on mixing zones, applicable law and policy, and previous workshops at: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/trireview/mixingzones.htm>
The SEACC website also has links to useful information on this topic (www.seacc.org).

2. Birds and wetlands - Issues of bird and habitat management on the Mendenhall wetlands are of primary interest to JAS members. In the spring the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Juneau airport expansion was released. Steve Zimmerman has been following this process for a number of years and submitted comments on the document on behalf of Juneau Audubon. The issue of increased bird use of the lands adjacent to the airport, and the safety concerns that presents, are now in the news (see Juneau Empire Dec. 26 2005). Watch for information about options for bird and risk management that are expected as outcomes from pending meetings on this topic. (**A detailed study of the behavior of birds near the Juneau Airport, as has been recommended off and on in the past, has yet to be conducted.** JK)

BOARD OF GAME TO RULE ON BALD EAGLE FEEDING By Ed Bailey

Your support is needed for four proposals to amend regulations to add the Bald Eagle to the existing list of wildlife, such as wolves and coyotes, which are prohibited to be intentionally fed. The Board of Game will consider this issue at their Anchorage meeting beginning January 26, 2006.

Feeding apex predators like eagles alters their natural distribution, abundance, and behavior. Eagle feeding by misguided people is a significant problem in Homer, Eagle River, Haines, Sitka, Juneau, and other coastal communities in southern Alaska. Many eagles lured into residential or commercial areas for food are electrocuted or fly into power lines. A major winter eagle feeding operation (500 lbs/day) on the Homer Spit has existed for 26 years and is causing increasingly serious problems. The local eagle population has risen sharply with counts as high as 650! The burgeoning eagle population is probably taking an escalating toll on prey species, such as sea ducks and other waterfowl, seabirds, sandhill cranes, grebes and loons, and sea otter pups. Large artificial concentrations of fed eagles and other commensal species also increase the likelihood of disease transmission and collisions with aircraft, which has already occurred at the Homer airport. **WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Please mail or fax comments on 8.5x 11-inch paper supporting adoption of Proposals 38, 39, 40, and 43, which all request making the intentional feeding of wild bald eagles unlawful. Please send comments **by January 13** to: ADF&G P.O. Box 25526 Juneau, AK 99802 Or Fax: 907-465-6094. Also email a copy of your letter to the Alaska Eagle Watch Network at alaskaeaglewatch@hotmail.com or mail them a copy at P.O. Box 2387, Homer, AK 96603. Oral testimony can be presented at the Board of Game meeting on January 28. To read the proposals go to: <http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/gameinfo/meetinfo/2005-2006/gprop0106propsonly.pdf>.

For more information call 235-6262.

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30 Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed

_____ Please bill me

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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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Volume 32 , Number 6

Juneau Audubon Society

February 2006

Dates to Remember

February 7th

Tuesday
Centennial Hall
7:30-9:00 PM

Photographing Alaska's Birds: 45 years worth

... Bob Armstrong

Sponsored by the Alaska Bird Conference.

February 7th - 9th

Tuesday - Thursday
See Program

11th Alaska Bird Conference & Workshops

www.abc2006.juneau-audubon-society.org/program.html

February 10th

Friday
UAS Eagan Library
7:30-9:00 PM

World in Pieces:

the Wondrous and Dire Implications of Biogeography

...David Quammen

co-sponsored by UAS & The Alaska Bird Conference--JAS

February 18th

Saturday
Salmon Creek
Wayside Parking Lot
10 A.M. ~ NOON

Saturday Wild - Bird Count

Meet at Wayside Park parking lot on Channel Drive, next to Glacier Marine barge dock. Bring binoculars, bird guides, and dress for the weather.

February 17th - 20th

Great Backyard Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a joint project of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, returns for its ninth season. For more information go to: www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

February 24th

Friday
Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center
6:30 PM - 1st Show
8:00 PM - 2nd Show

Bald Eagles

...Mike Jacobson

The status and trends of bald eagles in Southeast Alaska and the positive and different interaction of eagles and people

. . .a Winter Fireside Series offering.


JAS Board Introduction

.....a New Feature

Wednesday Walks and Bird Song Jeopardy.....Beth Peluso

I joined the Audubon Board as the Education Chair this fall. One of my main goals is to introduce new people to birding and to offer opportunities for those who want to learn more. Some of you may know me from the Wednesday noon walks or virtually on **Eaglechat**.

WEDNESDAY WALKS

Last spring, Virginia Harris and I decided to experiment with the Wednesday walks. Both of us wanted to schedule some birding during the work week. So why not invite others? Some of the highlights included seeing the swallows return to downtown, close-up looks at redpolls in late winter, discovering a "warbler alley" (with a couple fox sparrows thrown in) just above downtown, and a wandering osprey. People from Juneau and all over the world joined us, including a Juneau grandmother 

wanting an activity to do with her grandkids and a couple from New Zealand traveling through Southeast Alaska on the ferries. It's amazing how many birds you can find downtown when you look. We're taking a break for the winter, but I'll be starting up again in the spring (Virginia took a job in Seattle--she'll be missed!), so stay tuned! If anyone would like to help lead trips, please contact me through the Juneau Audubon website.

BIRD SONG JEOPARDY AND MORE

Many people on the Wednesday walks wanted to know "What bird is that singing?" This spring I'll be organizing a Bird Song Jeopardy session or two, a fun way to start learning how to identify birds by sound. This is an invaluable skill in our dense rainforests.

Whether you're an expert or a complete beginner, it's good to go over songs before the spring concert starts.

The Saturday Wild walks will continue, and don't forget to check out the schedule of speakers coming up. Check out our website for more detailed information.



Saturday

W I L D

Join us for a Saturday Wild walk to count birds together at low tide for the 9th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Everyone is invited, whether beginning birder or seasoned expert.

During the count, which takes place February 17-20 across North America, bird watchers tally up birds for as little as

15 minutes, or for as long as they like, keeping track of the highest number of each bird species seen together at one time.



Birds can be counted and reported from public lands and local parks as well as from backyards. Numbers are entered online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. Everyone can watch sightings maps, lists, and charts update as the count progresses. There is no fee or advance registration.

Last February, participants sent in more than 52,000 checklists, with a record-breaking 613 species and more than 6 million birds counted. These millions of sightings generate what would otherwise be impossible—information about where the birds are located across North America and how their numbers compare with previous years.

The GBBC is a joint project of National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. For further information see <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>

Saturday Wild is coordinated by Juneau Audubon Society



Join us as we explore the wild side of Southeast Alaska. For more information on these free community walks, see

www.juneau-audubon-society.org or e-mail saturdaywild@juneau-audubon-society.org.

WEEKLY WALKS WILL RESUME WITH SPRING MIGRATION.

Haines Report

As reported in the *Chilkat Valley News*, the data for the two Haines Christmas Bird Counts have now been consolidated and reported.

A total of 37 species were tallied this year. The rare sightings included a Northern Three-toed Woodpecker, a Snow Bunting, and a Harlan's Hawk.

Six birders participated in the Christmas Bird Count on New Year's Eve in the Bald Eagle Preserve. Tim Shields reported that 735 Bald Eagles were counted that day broken down to 591 mature adults, 142

immature, and 2 unknown. These are about average numbers. Forty-five seed-eating songbirds were observed, including grosbeaks, siskins, redpolls, and crossbills.

As of the week of January 15, the eagles are still noticeable in the trees at 19-mile driving along the Haines Highway. Also noticeable are about 20 swans still lingering in the Chilkat River in the same general area.

KETCHIKAN REPORT For JANUARY by Teri Goucher

January didn't surprise area birders with any new unusual sightings, but several lingering rarities continue to attract bird enthusiasts.

Western Meadowlark has remained north of town at the school which provides the largest expanse of open grassy area found on our island.

The Brewer's Blackbird frequents the high school neighborhood as do the relatively large numbers of wintering American Robins.

The airport area on Gravina Island produced 8 American Pipits and 7 Wilson's Snipe, which are rather high winter numbers for those species.

In Clover pass up to 32 Cassin's Auklets were seen by boat and 12 were seen from shore for several days mid-month. This small sooty gray alcid is usually found feeding in groups well offshore and occasionally is spotted during summer months around the inshore waterways.

The White Wagtail still makes weekly appearances around the mid-town waterfront. This is an extremely rare bird for our part of the world and continues to thrill those who can find it!

As our days lengthen, the patterns of upcoming seasonal migrations begin to stir the souls of feathered friends and those who seek them!!

Gustavus Report

November 21, 2005 - January 13, 2006

The spruce trees in Gustavus are alive with **White-winged Crossbills**. Their calling and singing (chattering) fills the air. Crossbill numbers increased sharply through December. **Red Crossbills** and **Pine Siskins** are around, but in much smaller numbers. No **Common Redpolls** have been reported to date.

We had an exceptional Christmas Bird Count in mid-December. See last month's Raven for a report or to view the full list visit: www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/.

Snowy Owls continued to be seen into December, and a juvenile was observed several times in early January. Of the more than a dozen Snowy Owl sightings this fall and winter, it is known there were at least five individual owls. Of these, three are known to have died. One from an eagle attack and two apparently from hunger. Short-eared Owls were seen regularly into early December. One **Great Horned Owl** was reported calling on 11/28. **Northern Hawk Owls** were seen on 12/28 and 1/7. **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were observed throughout the period.

Dunlins, Rock Sandpipers, and Sanderlings remained through the period with high counts of each species being nearly eighteen hundred Dunlins, three hundred Sanderlings, and five hundred Rock Sandpipers. Two Dunlins with colored leg bands were observed in December and were found to have been banded as juveniles this summer on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. One of the banded birds was re-sighted in early January. A juvenile **Black-bellied Plover** was seen in late November and on 12/2. A **Long-billed Dowitcher** was seen on 12/7. At least one **Greater Yellowlegs** has remained through the period.

Other observations of late birds included two **Savannah Sparrows** on 11/28, **American Robins** in December, a **Hermit Thrush** on 12/21, **Varied Thrushes** into January, and a **Lesser Scaup** on 1/8.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Larry Platt, and Kevin White for sharing observations. By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Clips from the Conservation Committee

The Conservation Committee welcomes involvement from all members. We are always keen to have new members who would like to follow an issue in the community and help keep other JAS members informed. If you have comments or would like to become involved, please contact the chair, Sari Saunders, at: conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org, or any other committee or Board member.

1. Juneau Access Project – Watch for the pending release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. There will not be public hearings at this stage of project analysis, so if you would like to submit comments, these must be in written form. You can keep an eye on the website through AK DOT http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/projectinfo/ser/juneau_access/index.shtml or check SEACC's website at www.seacc.org for announcement of the release.

2. Dog sledding in Sheep Creek Juneau – The Thane Neighborhood Association would like JAS members to be aware of a proposal put forward by Alaska Icefield Expeditions, Inc. (who do the glacier-based sledding trips) to develop a land-based operation in the Sheep Creek Valley. The public would meet sled dogs, ride in a wheeled rig, and learn about the history of dog sledding as it relates to the history of mining in Alaska. The company proposes to set up a facility in the Sheep Creek area at the end of the Sheep Creek Mine Road, and the tour

would operate during summer months beginning this season. There are potential issues of traffic on Thane Road, noise, waste (human and dog), and disruption to wildlife. Initial discussions with ornithologists familiar with this area indicate that disruption to the warbler population should be minimal, if dogs are kept to the existing road (as proposed). For example, see the following articles: Willson and Comet. 1996. Bird communities of northern forests. (Parts I and II). Condor 98: 337-349, Condor 98: 350-362. The Neighborhood Association indicates that it expects this application to go before the CBJ Planning Commission for review in Feb. JAS members can check when this comes up on the Commission's agenda through the "Agendas and Meeting Results" link on the Commission's website at: www.juneau.org/clerk/boards/default.htm.

3. Progress of the Juneau Coastal Management Plan (JCMP) and Juneau Wetland Management Plan (JWMP) – The CBJ Planning Commission approved at its meeting on Jan. 24 the Draft Plan amendments for the JCMP and the JWMP as prepared by the consultant on this project (associated with requirements due to amendments to the Alaska Coastal Management Plan). Materials associated with the latest versions of these policies and their interpretation or and revision can be found within the minutes of the planning commission at: www.juneau.org/clerk/boards/default.htm.

Environment Windows: A Clear Danger to Birds

by John Nielsen

Morning Edition, January 3, 2006.

No one knows what birds see when they look out at the world, says ornithologist Daniel Klem, but he's sure they don't see glass. He estimates that at least 1 billion

birds are killed by flying into windows every year in the United States.

"It's a very common phenomenon," said Klem. "Birds are deceived. They just don't see glass as a barrier and this is a problem for them." Klem, a professor at Mulhenberg college in Allentown, Pa., first learned about the "window hit" problem 30 years ago from a teacher.

Klem responded by marching into a forest and hanging a bunch of windows from the branches of the trees. Then he sat down and watched what he calls an "appalling" number of collisions. Some birds lived. Many did not. "I've learned very early on that a really short flight from an 8-foot perch can result in death," he said.

Later, Klem watched more than 100 birds hit the windows of a "typical" suburban home in the course of a single year. Then he studied shiny glass office towers, which can kill tens of thousands of birds in a year. It all adds up a yearly death toll of at least 1 billion, he argues, or roughly five percent of all the birds found in the United States each fall. Hardly anybody appreciates the size of the problem, he says.

"Nobody intentionally wants to see these birds harmed, and it's just so tragic to see this unintentional source of mortality being ignored," Klem said.

Attempts to find solutions to the window hit problem have been few and relatively modest, according to Klem. A major exception can be found on the campus of Swarthmore College. It recently agreed to turn a \$71 million science center into an experiment, by using it to test a new kind of glass designed to ward off oncoming birds.

Julie Hagelin, an ornithologist at Swarthmore, says the college has known for years that it has a bird-hit problem.

Hagelin is the unofficial keeper of bird carcasses found on campus.

"Typically they find them in the morning when they come to campus," she said. "They find a dead specimen, they wrap it up in whatever they happen to have, a napkin or a plastic bag, and they bring it to me and they say, 'We hear that you're supposed to do something with these.' " Inside her lab, a big metal cabinet holds a long line of bird corpses, ranging from migratory birds like the northern parula to local birds such as woodpeckers.

Many birds killed by windows get eaten by cats and other scavengers, she says. But even when there isn't any carcass it's possible to tell when there's been a collision. Most birds leave a distinctive smudge mark on the window.

In the mid-'90s, when Swarthmore decided to build a new science center on campus, it briefly seemed like those window marks were about to get a lot more common. The center featured a three-story meeting room made out of clear glass -- an "avian slaughterhouse," says Klem.

Alarmed ornithologists invited Klem to speak to the building committee. Carr Everbach, a member of Swarthmore's engineering faculty, says that speech and an unfortunate encounter with a bird helped change the building plan.

"We were about to have a meeting to talk about the problems of birds striking the windows," said Everbach, "and we heard a loud thump and we turned around and there was a bird flopping around on the pavement just outside the window."

The building committee agreed to pay for bird-friendly glass, if Klem and Everbach could come up with a design. The challenge was to find a kind of glass that birds could see and people could see through.

Everbach and Klem recommended using so-called "fritted" glass. It's etched with closely spaced rows of small circles. When standing right in front of it, the glass is hard to see through, but Everbach says from a slight distance, the dots don't obscure vision that much.

To find out whether the fritted glass is really bird friendly, Everbach outfitted some of the windows with video sensors, called "thumpers."

The thumpers have recorded just two bird hits since the center was finished five years ago, which doesn't prove anything conclusively, since the sensors aren't attached to every window. But Everbach says it's a pretty good hint that the fritted glass is working.

Everbach's dream is that one day a glass manufacturer will start selling bird-friendly glass, just as the fishing industry now sells cans of so-called "dolphin-safe" tuna.

Klem shares Everbach's dream, but after spending 30 years fighting this problem he's learned one crucial thing: "If you are going to come up with a solution to this problem, you are going to have to come up with one that doesn't muck up the way people look out their windows," Klem said. "You start doing that and people are going to be unsympathetic."

If nothing changes, Klem says it's certain that the problem of window hits will escalate. He notes that in the next few decades, millions of new homes and offices will be built in the United States alone.

www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5076012

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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Juneau Audubon Society

March 2006

Juneau Audubon's Celebrate Nature Lecture Series 2006



Thursday, March 9

Theresa Svancara - The History of Whaling in the Seas around South Georgia Island.

UAS Egan Auditorium, 7:30-8:30 PM

Join Theresa Svancara as she retraces the history of whaling in the waters surrounding, the Falkland Islands, the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia Island, and its whaling center, Grytviken. Today, some species of whales are still hunted under

the auspices of "research" by Japanese whaling ships. You'll be fascinated by the early history and the present-day images of the old buildings, vessels and processing facilities that were abandoned by the whalers of yesteryear. Theresa will mix natural and human history in one of the most remote places on earth.

**Glacial Footprints – Program sponsored by University of Alaska Southeast -- Egan Lecture Hall, Auke Lake Campus, University of Alaska Southeast
Thursday, March 16th, 7:30PM**

"Glaciers leave footprints with the ends of their tongues".. John Palmes will share his observations, and a new way of looking at Southeast Alaska's "glacial" landscape.

Textbooks say that glaciers make U shaped valleys, but are they? Why do mountains and ridges have similar shapes? And why do adjacent drainages, like Herbert River and Eagle River, show drainage patterns that are mirror images?

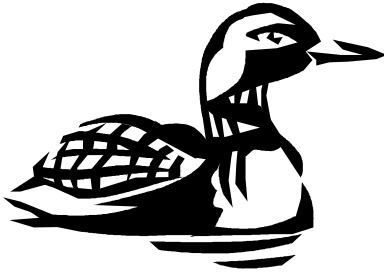
With mentoring by University staff, John has recently completed a GIS based study of nearby mainland valleys showing that most of them are not U-shaped. This is part of a larger study which proposes that symmetrical drainage networks in Southeast Alaska record periods of prolonged glacial erosion. For example, Prince of Wales Island (193km x 65km) is organized into four symmetrical basins, and shows that the phenomenon applies to the entire landscape.

A uniformly symmetrical erosion pattern indicates that one erosional "incident" is responsible for forming all of the drainages involved, and that symmetrical valleys and drainage patterns were formed two and four at a time by sub glacial erosion.

Wednesday Bird Walks Take Wing Again

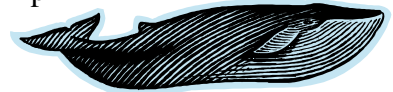
The Wednesday Downtown Bird Walks will resume on March 22. Meet at Rainbow Foods by the coffee stand at noon. Walks last for an hour. Bring binoculars if you have them, and dress for our moody spring weather!

Contact: Beth Peluso, 957-1050, education@juneau-audubon-society.org



Berners Bay Cruises

Mark your calendar now for the Juneau Audubon Society sponsored cruises to Berners Bay. This year we are having three cruises again. One is scheduled for April 15th in the morning (we hope that is good timing for the eulachon run) and two cruises are planned for May 6th. It's always fun to be out on the water and with any luck



we can see lots of birds and marine mammals. We hope you can all join us. **Tickets will go on sale after March 15th**

BOARD NOTES FOR MARCH By Jeff Sauer, Vice President

Rails in Juneau

Sora Rail Spring migration is now only weeks away. With that migration the Sora Rail will hopefully be returning to Juneau. The Sora is one of two rails in Alaska and the only one to reach the state with any frequency at all. The Virginia Rail is the other one but is extremely rare and has not been seen here for years. For years it seemed the Sora, also, was quite scarce. Last summer, however, seemed to mark a change. It may be that the birding community in Juneau just has more eyes and ears out there now. That is, more effort is producing more sightings. Or it may be that the Sora is just more prevalent now. Global warming? Or perhaps it's a combination of both. Whatever the reason or reasons, the Sora, which used to be listed as rare in Juneau, is now routinely heard and even seen. What is also interesting about the story is that it is occurring at the Juneau Pioneer Home Marsh. For instance, my visits to the marsh in late April, 05, were routinely rewarded with hearing and even seeing this secretive bird. And my experience was the same as many others who were visiting the marsh. It remains to be seen what the Pioneer Home Marsh will deliver this spring. In a few weeks we will know. Have a look for yourself.

The Juneau Pioneer Home Marsh is, because of the Sora and other species, becoming a birding hot spot in Juneau. It is one of the few fresh water marshes in Juneau, and the only one that is readily accessible. Just drive into the pioneer home entrance and down to the lower parking lot, which abuts the marsh. Besides the Sora the other marsh bird of note is the Red-winged Blackbird. This bird likewise was seen and heard a lot last spring and summer. Juneauites brought up in the lower 48 can go to the marsh and with hearing several blackbirds vocalizing, be transported by memory to the much warmer places where we grew up with these sounds in

our ears. Finally, besides these marsh species, there are American Coots, several species of ducks and song birds in this relatively small area.

Virginia Rail The other rail to be on the lookout for (or more likely hear) is the Virginia Rail. This rail is quite rare and has not been seen or heard for a few years. It has been absent from the pioneer home marsh as well as the large Eagle River Trail Marsh (Amalga Trail). Several attempts by birders to find the Virginia Rail at the Eagle River Marsh in the last couple of years have come up empty. It will be interesting to see if the bird is found in 2006 out there. By the way one of the Juneau Audubon bird walks each year is a hike out to the Eagle River Marsh. The two rails are the target species for that bird walk/ hike. Other species of course are seen in the forest on the way but the marsh is the goal. Hopefully there will be another such walk/ hike this year. It is a fun hike. Actually it is an unusual bird walk as it is good hike, because of the distance that needs to be covered to make it to the marsh.

One last note is the use of tape recordings of rail vocalizations to call in these rails. At the Pioneer Home Marsh this could become a problem as the marsh becomes more popular with birders. The use of recorded vocalizations to call in the birds is done for rails in particular, since they are so secretive and hard to locate. If, however, the birds are indeed there and are constantly being bombarded with recordings of their calls, then they will become stressed, and the repetition of calls will amount to harassment. Use restraint when using the recordings.

New Regional Alignment for National Audubon by: Steve Zimmerman

The National Audubon Society has approximately 400,000 members in its 500 local chapters. The chapters extend from Maine to Guam. Because the chapters are located in such geographically diverse regions across such a huge area, there is no way that a centralized National Audubon Society Office in New York can coordinate all of the activities of all of its chapters. Thus, in 1987, it was decided that the chapters would be divided into nine regions. Each region would then elect a representative to sit on the National Audubon Society's Board of Directors. Accordingly, there are now nine regionally-elected members on the Society's 36-member Board of Directors. In 1994, it was decided that NAS should further decentralize and build a network of state offices that will manage field operations in each state. Since then, offices have been developed in 26 states with others to eventually come on line.

There were still rumblings, however, that the leaders of the National Audubon Society were not paying proper attention to how the decisions they were making were affecting chapters. Out of this dissatisfaction grew the Take Back Audubon Movement (TBA) which sought to create a closer partnership between Audubon chapters and the National Audubon Society leadership. One of the resolutions put forth by TBA was to readjust the boundaries of the nine regions so that there would be a similar number of chapters in each region. Because the original nine regions had been created based on political considerations, there was a wide disparity between the number of chapters in each region. In our case, Alaska has been part of a region that includes Hawaii and Guam, but our region only has 8 chapters. By contrast, the present Western Region (California, Nevada, Washington and Oregon) has 89 chapters.

In order to provide a more equitable distribution of chapters and members within regions, new regions have been created. Starting in 2007, Alaska will be in the Northwest Region along with Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Nevada and Utah. There will be 70 chapters in this region which will include over 43,000 members. Hawaii and Guam will be in the Western Region along with California which will have 53 chapters and over 58,000 members. From a democratic point of view, these changes are probably long overdue. Unfortunately, Alaska will likely have a less influential role on the National Board of Directors because it will be harder to elect an Alaskan to represent the Northwest Region since our state has such a small number of chapters and campaigning across such a large area will be very difficult for an Alaskan resident.

Early Birds in Juneau as reported in Eaglechat by Paul Suchanek

I observed an adult peregrine falcon (light gray in color) today harassing the ducks at Salmon Creek. Since it couldn't get any mallards to flush, it finally flew off and landed on a snag on Douglas Island. This is the only peregrine I've ever seen here in Juneau in February (or January or March for that matter). There also were 11 killdeer roosting at the mouth of Salmon Creek during high tide. Since I recently counted 29 near Fish Creek, there are very likely at least 40 killdeer wintering in the immediate Juneau area (there's probably at least one other group of birds that roosts at high tide near Lawson Creek).

Just as another note of spring, a red-breasted sapsucker was observed today near Auke Bay. I've never seen one prior to March 11 so this bird is very early.

Gustavus Report January 14 -February 25, 2006 By Nat Drumheller

January and February were filled with the singing of **White-winged Crossbills**. These birds made it difficult to believe we were in the middle of winter. They could be heard almost everywhere on most days. They could be seen flying, feeding on cones, on the ground eating snow, and singing from tree tops. Two pairs of White-winged Crossbills were observed constructing or adding material to nests on 2/17. Several days later, one of these nests had one egg visible in it, and the other had a female crossbill sitting on it with a male crossbill scolding intruders. On 2/25, after several nights of temperatures below ten degrees and a low of three degrees, at least one of these nests was still active and other White-winged Crossbills were observed building nests. Crossbills were out singing in the morning while the temperature was still only three degrees.

Pine Siskins greatly increased in number during this period. No **Common Redpolls** have been reported this winter. Small numbers of **Red Crossbills** were singing around town and were easier to find in the older forests around Bartlett Cove.

A great effort was made to find all the bird species around Gustavus during the Great Backyard Bird Count from 2/17-2/20. We had good weather for two days and not-so-good weather for two days. The current tally is 73 species, beating last year's record of 69. Some of the highlights were: **Brewer's Blackbird** (first seen on 2/11 and on several dates since; this is the second record for Gustavus), **Long-billed Dowitcher** (seen sporadically through this winter; this is the first record for a wintering dowitcher in Gustavus), **Boreal Owl** (also seen on 2/9 and 2/14), **Horned Lark** (also seen on 1/27), **Northern Flicker** (red-shafted; seen throughout

this winter), **American Robin** (also seen on 2/3), 4 **Ring-necked Ducks** (two birds seen since 2/6), **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel**, **Wilson's Snipe** (seen occasionally this winter), and 3 **European Starlings** (seen through this winter).

In addition to the Boreal Owl, five other species of owls were detected during the count- **Great Horned Owl**, **Northern Pygmy-Owl**, **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, **Western Screech-Owl**, and **Short-eared Owl**. **Varied Thrushes** were numerous during the count and have been singing more and more through the winter. Shorebirds made a strong showing with high counts of 3000(!) **Dunlins**, 500 **Rock Sandpipers**, and 500(!) **Sanderlings**. High count for **Pacific Loons** was 46 and for **Northern Pintails** was 71.

Birds seen earlier in the period that were not seen during the count include: **Greater Yellowlegs** (2/3, 2/5), **Peregrine Falcon** (2/5), **White-crowned Sparrow** (1/24-1/27), **Sharp-shinned Hawk** (seen regularly into early February), and **Rusty Blackbird** (1/30). No hawks or falcons of any kind were found during the count and no sparrows other than **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Song Sparrows** were seen.

Thanks to all the Great Backyard Bird Count participants for their remarkable effort and to Bruce Paige and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing observations. By Nat Drumheller
natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Haines Report By Georgia Giacobbe

Increasing sunny weather has contributed to birding this month in Haines. At least that was the case on the first day of the Great Backyard Bird Count held President's Day Weekend. Up to 22 checklists were submitted from our community. Some of the more common sightings (20 birds or more) were Mallards, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Glaucous-winged Gull, Rock Pigeon, Steller's Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Northwestern Crow, and Common Raven. The Common Mergansers topped the list at 330 birds spotted. Rounding out the list with 12 or fewer birds were Trumpeter Swan, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Glaucous Gull, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, American Dipper, Dark-eyed Junco, Red Crossbill, and one Great Horned Owl. Many of these birds have been viewed throughout February, not just this particular weekend, especially the Bald Eagles, Steller's Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Northwestern Crow, and Common Raven. On the Great Backyard Bird Count, only 2 Trumpeter Swans are listed, however, at least 20 were sighted flying across Clear Creek in the upper valley and 6 were spotted at the usual hangout at 19 mile Haines Highway early in February.

Sitka Christmas Bird Count By Alice Johnstone

Sightings of 68 species on count day and 4 additional during count week was about average for Sitka. Unusual sightings included 4 Western Grebes, a Northern Goshawk, one Horned Puffin, the first ever seen inside the count circle, a Western Screech Owl and a Snowy Owl. There are only a few nesting Horned Puffins at St. Lasaria Island, about seven miles west of Sitka, so seeing one so close to shore is extremely rare. With the exception of Mallards and Ring-necked Ducks all water birds, ducks grebes, loons, cormorants, gulls, and alcids, showed up in low numbers. The number of Northwestern Crows was low but 574 Ravens was 200 more than the previous high count. Numbers of European Starlings are rapidly increasing.

The 441 starlings seen were far above the high of 299 seen the previous year. There was considerable concern by several long time birders over a decline in the numbers of scoters found in the area in recent years.

Of passing interest was the experience of one boating party who reported only 425 birds seen during the day, but found at the head of a bay outside the count circle more than 600 birds, and one whale, gathered to feed on a large number of small fish schooled there.

Canada Goose	98	Western Grebe	4	Northern Shrike	1
Trumpeter Swan	5	grebe sp.	10	Steller's Jay	12
American Wigeon	8	Double-crested Cormorant	74	Northwestern Crow	563
Mallard	455	Pelagic Cormorant	176	Common Raven	574
Northern Pintail	1	cormorant sp.	41	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	104
Am Green-winged Teal	2	Great Blue Heron	19	Brown Creeper	cw
duck sp.	35	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Winter Wren	10
Ring-necked Duck	34	Northern Goshawk	1	American Dipper	13
Greater Scaup	110	hawk sp.	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	158
Lesser Scaup	4	Black Oystercatcher	12	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	cw
scaup sp.	43	Black Turnstone	56	kinglet sp.	50
Surf Scoter	32	Surfbird	1	American Robin	1
White-winged Scoter	37	Mew Gull	9	Varied Thrush	82
Black Scoter	42	Herring Gull	122	European Starling	441
scoter sp.	6	Thayer's Gull	49	American Pipit	cw
Long-tailed Duck	186	Glaucous-winged Gull	328	Bohemian Waxwing	1
Bufflehead	142	Glaucous Gull	1	Song Sparrow	25
Common Goldeneye	20	gull sp.	610	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Barrow's Goldeneye	213	Common Murre	36	sparrow sp.	3
goldeneye sp.	87	Marbled Murrelet	35	Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	458
Hooded Merganser	10	Horned Puffin	1	Dark-eyed (Slate- colored) Junco	73
Common Merganser	327	Rock Pigeon	174	junco sp.	84
Red-breasted Merganser	15	Western Screech Owl	cw	Red Crossbill	1
merganser sp.	6	Snowy Owl	1	White-winged Crossbill	3
Pacific Loon	12	Belted Kingfisher	26	Pine Siskin	21
Common Loon	19	Red-breasted Sapsucker	4		
Yellow-billed Loon	1	Downy Woodpecker	1		
loon sp.	5	Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	9		
Horned Grebe	92				
Red-necked Grebe	20				

KETCHIKAN REPORT- BY Teri Goucher

February in Ketchikan really didn't produce any new exciting bird sightings, although the rarities from earlier this Winter remain. The Western Meadowlark, Brewers Blackbird, Common Grackle, and White Wagtail continue to make weekly appearances.

We are still enjoying high numbers of Northern Pygmy-Owls, some of which are quite approachable, thus allowing great pictures for lucky photographers!

Two Red-tailed Hawks were seen north of town flying above the Whipple Creek area. Usually a very few individuals of this species are seen annually in late February, a sure sign of the upcoming Spring season!

The songs of Winter Wrens, Varied Thrushes, and Song Sparrows are being heard now on occasion.

A group of birders spent a day on nearby Annette Island, locally renowned for having a wonderfully diverse bird habitat. In addition to the usual wintering species, more early Spring arrivals were found, including: 5 White-crowned Sparrows, 8 American Pipits, a couple Pigeon Guillemots, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler!

Two Barred Owls were heard responding to an imitation of their unique call.

We will perhaps endure a few more snow storms in the next few weeks before Winter gives way to Spring and the miracle of migration!!

WRANGELL REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

As with our migrant birds, I too flew south this winter and am back to report that they know what they are about. I headed to San Blas, Mexico, an area noted for its wide array of habitat—quiet Pacific beaches, mangrove thickets, slow winding rivers and upland cloud forest. I was led by a most knowledgeable guide and overwhelmed with over one hundred new species in a single day. Among the few familiar faces, however, were several of our summer breeders including Wilson's and Yellow warblers and Warbling vireos, all looking very much at home. The trip made clear that they really are brief visitors to Southeast Alaska while their long-term residence is Mexico and points south.

I left Wrangell the day after our Christmas Bird Count so our report, like the Christmas card I received just last week, is delayed but not forgotten. We had a good effort, particularly on the waters around Wrangell Island. Common loons, Pelagic cormorants, Mallards, American widgeons, Greater scaups as well as three species of grebes made the list. Included in the grebes was a flock of over 150 Western grebes that unfailingly spends its winters in Zimovia Straits. Sea ducks were a common sight but only small numbers of scoters this year. That was compensated for by a large number of Common mergansers.

Numerous Black turnstones were reported as well as small numbers of Surfbirds and Killdeer. Marbled Murrelets, as usual, were abundant. Five trumpeter swans, part of a much larger flock that spent part of the fall in the area, were included in the count.

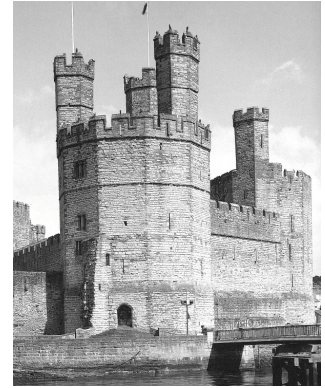
Raptors included over 60 Bald eagles and single Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned hawks. Passerines included Gold-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglets, Red crossbills and what appears to be a fairly constant number of European starlings. In all 21 participants reported 47 species.

A few weeks after the count, two Western meadowlarks appeared in Wrangell and have remained over a month, puzzling and exciting viewers all over town. This bird is considered a casual fall and winter visitor to Southeast Alaska but appears to be calling Wrangell its winter residence. We're glad it stayed around to be counted in the Great Backyard Bird Count since it missed Christmas roll call.

BIRDING IN WALES AND ENGLAND IN JANUARY

By Mary Lou King

Jim and I spent the better part of three weeks in January visiting and touring in Wales and England with Mike Potts, BBC photographer, and his wife Elaine. What a grand scene for wintering birds where the warm Gulf Stream from the Gulf of Mexico crosses the Atlantic, washes against England and southern Ireland, keeping the pastures and grain fields green and growing. Birds that nest from as far away as northeastern Canada, Iceland, Siberia, northern Europe and Asia, come here to spend part of the winter.



In Wales we visited Wildlife and Wetland Trust Reserves. Not far from Caernarfon Castle (and we did look at this 700 year old castle) and other places, we saw several Brent Geese (nest in Eastern Arctic Canada) and new to me European Oystercatchers, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Turnstones, Great Crested Grebe, Shelduck, Red Shank, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Grey Wagtail, Rock Dove, Collared Dove, thousands of Lapwings, Jackdaws, Buzzard, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Hedge Sparrow, Green Finch, Gold Finch, Meadow Pipit. In the whole trip I had 64 different birds on my list.

Slimbridge in England is a wonderful wildlife reserve designed and built by Sir Peter Scott, son of Robert Falcon Scott of Antarctic fame. The grounds here have the largest known collection of captive waterfowl and we enjoyed just walking around and looking with awe at some of the weird and wonderful birds from all over the world. I really liked seeing a few Emperor Geese as this brought back memories of the ones we had raised in Juneau many years ago. However, the most exciting thing was to watch the gathering of wild birds from the surrounding farm lands for the 4:30 p.m. feeding. The 600 Bewick's Swans (nest in Northern Russia and Siberia) coming in to land in the water was amazing and the tightly packed mass of Mute Swans, Pochards, Mallards, Coots, Moore Hens, Greylag Geese, Canada Geese and who knows what else all pushing and shoving to get to the wheat. It was a mob scene.

Welney is also a great Wildlife and Wetland Trust Reserve that is located between two rivers, an area called the Ouse Washes, that was diked 300 years ago to protect miles and miles of farm land from flooding. One evening we were privileged to watch the most fantastic sight of some of the 1400 Whooper Swans (nest in Iceland and across northern Scandinavia eastward to Kamchatka) silhouetted by a beautiful pink sunset, come in to land for the night near the heated hide. There were thousands of Lapwings circling in the sky as they were coming in for the night. Here too they do some feeding of the wild birds in the evening. The birds gather in a great mass of swans, geese, ducks and various other birds to fight for the food.

One evening as we walked on a Holkham trail on the edge of a marsh, we watched 70,000 Pink-footed Geese (nest in Iceland and Greenland) in strings stretching to the horizon, arriving to spend the night. They were so tightly packed on the ground it was hard to see where the next bunch might land, but they did manage. They feed during the day in the farm fields and are particularly fond of the tops of the sugar beets left in the field after the harvest.

What a grand time to visit England despite the short damp days.

Alaska Conservation Alliance
Legislative Fly-In 2006!
April 2nd - 4th, Juneau

The Legislative Fly-In is sponsored by the Alaska Conservation Alliance, a statewide coalition of conservation groups and businesses. It is an opportunity to hone your skills as an activist, study the workings of the Alaska Legislature, network with fellow advocates, meet with your elected officials, gain knowledge applicable to any campaign.

This year with Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve issues, bridges to nowhere, transportation funding, etc., it would be an excellent opportunity for SE Alaska activists to have a face-to-face talk with their legislators Thomas, Elkins, Wilson, Stedman etc. in their offices talking about these issues. In past years Southeast has been under-represented at the Fly-In, which is unfortunate because it's a great 3 days of training & lobbying. Here's an opportunity to check in with your legislators AND take in the Folk Festival.

ACA offers Fly-In participants reimbursement for most travel expenses*, lodging while in Juneau*, and two meals a day.

To register, request an application form from Suzanne at suzanne@akvoice.org. Or call 907-463-3366 for more information. Space is limited, so interested parties are strongly encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible.

*Alaska Airlines offers a "constituent fare" discount to people traveling to Juneau on certain days during the legislative session. ACA will reimburse participants for the **constituent fare price only** from your community. In order to be eligible for this discount you must fly into Juneau on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Saturday, and leave on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, or Sunday. The Fly-In is scheduled to take advantage of this fare. You can book your tickets to arrive in Juneau anytime on Saturday and leave Tuesday evening or later in the week. Lodging will consist of three nights stay at the Juneau hostel, which is reserved by ACA. Reimbursements will not be made for alternate accommodations.

Clips from the Conservation Committee:

As always, the conservation committee looks to JAS members to keep us informed of happenings in our area that may affect wildlife, habitat, and our experiences recreating outdoors. If there is an issue within our community that you feel JAS should be following, please contact us and help keep other JAS members informed and interested in the management and conservation of our natural resources. Contact Sari Saunders at conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org or any other JAS board member.

1. Juneau Access Project - The Final Environmental Impact Assessment for the Juneau Access Project (a.k.a. the Road) has been released and is available for public comments. The entire document can be viewed at or downloaded from:

http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/projectinfo/ser/juneau_access/documents.shtml

Responses to comments on the SDEIS are presented on this page (Appendix Y) as are a number of addenda for the different technical reports associated with the overall publication – the list of pages within Appendix W that covers the different technical reports is listed in [FEIS Appendix W - Technical Report Addenda \(Intro only\) \(271 KB\)](#)

The Federal Highway Administration will issue a Record of Decision based on this new Statement on or after March 14, 2006. The ROD presents the Administration's decision regarding the project and basis thereof. It will also outline any mitigation measures that must be incorporated into the project.

There will be no public hearing on this Statement; however, comments can be submitted. JAS will be reviewing the Bald Eagle Technical Report, Wildlife Technical Report, Wetlands Technical Report, among others, and considering the responses given to the society's initial comments on the DSEIS. Please feel free to send thoughts or comments to a JAS board member for inclusion in any submission we make.

2. Summer Dog-Sledding Venture in Sheep Creek Valley – CBJ is reviewing a Conditional Use Permit application for a dog sled “tour” at the Sheep Creek Mine area. (150 dogs kept on site) Guests would learn about dog-sledding, learn about the mining history of the area, and take a half-mile, wheeled ride pulled by the sled dogs. Some issues that were identified in the application and by planning staff include: increased bus traffic on Thane Road, input of dog urine (N) to the creek, noise disturbance to hikers from the dogs, and bear/dog/human interactions. JAS is concerned about disturbance to wildlife and habitat, particularly impacts on the migrant warbler population in this valley. Other issues include the potential for increased growth of weedy plants and introduction of exotics to the valley.

JAS submitted comments to the CBJ on this project. Among other things, the Society suggested that the permittee be asked to monitor presence and activity of wildlife in the surroundings and effects on vegetation, perhaps through coordination with local naturalists' groups. Data on the birds and wildlife of the area prior to inception of the project could be compiled for comparison. Though not overly scientifically rigorous, it's a starting point for evaluation of these types of tourism ventures. At a minimum we requested a trail log be placed with informational signage at the Sheep Creek trail head. Please let me know if you'd like to see a copy of the comments submitted to CBJ.

3. Alaska Zipline Adventures – The CBJ Planning Commission did approve an 18 month conditional permit for the development of an aerial cable zipline tour, assuming a commercial use agreement with Eaglecrest Ski Area is in hand. This will involve the construction of a network of cables (the ziplines) and platforms within the Eaglecrest Ski area, primarily for use in April-Sept, to allow visitors (and locals) to experience a birds-eye view of the landscape. This approval follows the approval for a conditional use permit to develop a similar operation by Alaska Canopy Adventures at the old Treadwell Mine site on South Douglas. This latter operation will involve boat transport to the site from downtown Juneau, and ATV transport of participants within the site. This is an interesting recreational trend to watch for as it gets started in Juneau. The staff reports for these and other projects evaluated by the CBJ planning commission can be viewed at:

<http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/staffreport.php> and decisions are listed under the date of the project's hearing at: <http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/nod.php>.

The following quotes are taken from the *American Hiker* Winter 2005, Forest Service Recreation Is a Top Contributor to the National Economy By Celina Montorfano.

“Under previous estimates from 1995, the Forest Service projected that by 2000, recreation in U.S. forests would contribute nearly \$111 Billion to the nation’s annual GDP. Economic analyses for the agency for Fiscal Years 2004-2008 revised the estimate to \$11.2 billion from the recreation program in 2002.

...According to Ross Arnold, with the Forest Service’s Strategic Planning and Resource Assessment office, the lower economic activity figures are based primarily on a new estimate of forest recreation activity and improved methodology that produced significantly lower visitation figures as well as somewhat lower visitor spending figures...Dr. Donald English, who manages the new monitoring program, says the new figures are far more statistically defensible than previous estimates of visitation.”

“Even under the new numbers, recreation is still the most significant economic driver related to national forest, contributing 60 percent of the National Forest System’s contribution to the GDP; this is almost four times more than energy extraction and mining and 2.5 times as much as timber harvests. Unfortunately, staffing and funding for recreation in the agency do not match up to this reality and have never received the prominence they warrant. Only about 10 percent of the F.S. budget is spent on direct recreation management and trails.”

ED Notes: It is amazing what the company economists can come up with –Juneau alone, between the Visitor’s Center, the glacier and trails, must contribute more than a million visitors and dollars to this pot.

Federal Biologists Kill 50 Gulls At The Juneau Dump & Seek Permit to Kill 100 More

Bill Wilmoth who works for the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in the Department of Agriculture has said: “that there was a perceived flight-path danger in the Lemon Creek area”. Killing gulls does not seem to be any answer—we need to get the food source under control. Our community needs to look at other options for garbage disposal.

TONGASS LANDS PROPOSED FOR SALE BY THE US FOREST SERVICE

Lime Point, Tip of Hetta peninsula, which extends between Nutkwa Inlet and Hetta Inlet. Cordova Bay. SW of POW. 32 acres

NW of Kensington Mine. Triangular plot of land wedged between USFS land and Ivanhoe Mine property. 10 acres

Herbert River/Boy Scout Camp Trailhead. 6 acre plot lies within a 147 acre parcel, owned by CBJ

Tip of Point Macartney on NW Kupreanof Island + two little islands. 34 acres

East of Hamilton Island in Shakan Strait. NW Kosciusco Island; between Mt. Calder and Mt. Holbrook. North of the Nipples, near Shakan Creek. 15 acres

Lynn Canal, east shore of Funter Bay 1 acre

Ed Note: It seems to me this land belongs to all of the people of America and should the government be selling it? If you would like to comment on the sale of public lands, send email to:

SRS_Land_Sales@fs.fed.us and /or District Forester: Denny Bschor [dbschor@fs.fed.us]

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30 Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed
A51

____ Please bill me
7XCH

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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The Raven



Juneau Audubon's Celebrate Nature Lecture Series 2006

**This Will Be the Last Scheduled Evening Meeting Until Next September
Saturday Bird Walks (Schedule Below), Saturday Wild Walks, Wednesday
Downtown Noon Walks Will Continue During Spring, Summer and Fall**

Mike Blackwell - Bicycle Touring in Indonesia Thursday, April 13

UAS Egan Auditorium, 7:30-8:30 P M



Mike Blackwell and his bicycling friends continue to search for the end of the road. This time, their travels take them to the mountains and valleys of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Mike will show slides and maps of their ride, describing 1200 km of good food, good beer, friendly folks, decent roads, interesting terrain, and astounding geology (occasionally cloud-shrouded).

BERNERS BAY CRUISES – 2006

Saturdays, April 15, 8:30 a.m., May 6, 8:30 a.m. and second cruise 1:30 p.m.

Adults \$40, Children under 12 \$5.00 Tickets at Hearthside Books

Vessels departs Don D. Statter Harbor below DeHarts. Boarding begins about 15 minutes before departure. Cruise lasts four hours. Juneau Audubon Society members will be on board as natural history interpreters.

BIRDWALKS ARE COMING Jeff Sauer, Vice President

How exciting it is that spring has arrived. With the arrival of spring, the song birds are singing and the sapsuckers are hammering. And, Juneau Audubon is once again leading bird walks for all to enjoy. These walks begin April 8th and run into early June. Whether you know a little or a lot, it is a fun way to get out and enjoy the spring weather and increase your knowledge of the birds around us. The leaders will certainly be identifying the birds by sight and hopefully also by their song. The walks, however, are much more than that. They are a way to experience nature, and the spring renewal and rebirth. And, in getting out and experiencing nature, some pretty extraordinary things are sometimes seen.

I am reminded of one Audubon bird walk that I missed. The birdwalk group was on the dike trail and was observing some recently arrived small song birds. While the group was watching the tiny Ruby-crowned Kinglets the big birds were being ignored. What happened next was that the eagles preempted the song bird show. Two Bald Eagles up in the air drew everyone's attention. The eagles were locked together, their talons entwined. They were quickly tumbling, spiraling down out the sky. To the amazement of all the two continued their decent, locked together, spiraling, autorotating towards the earth. And they did not separate. They continued down, and at what appeared to be an unsafe speed, crashed into the ground. The group approached. The birds were alive. In fact they were conscious and did not appear to be frantic. Someone in the group came up with a pair of leather work gloves. The leader Mark Schwan approached the still entwined birds and pulled the one bird's talons out of the abdomen of the other bird. The talons it turned out had not been locked together, but rather one bird had dug its talons into the abdomen of the other bird. Mark pulled the talons out of the abdomen, and the birds separated. They then got up and flew away. An extraordinary scene witnessed by all who went on the walk that day.

Another Audubon bird walk on the dike also produced some more extraordinary wildlife watching. With several spotting scopes set up and lots of binoculars, the group was looking at ducks in one of the ponds. As the group watched, a hawk came screaming out of the sky nailing one of the ducks near the shore. After striking the duck with its talons, the hawk ended up standing on top of the duck, holding it under water. The hawk was completely above the water except for its legs. The duck was underwater. The birds stayed in this position for a while as everyone watched. Then, all of a sudden the hawk lifted off and flew away. Up popped the duck. In nearly the same instant a bald eagle, flashed across the field of view in the binoculars and scopes, striking the duck with its talons. Eagle is bigger than hawk. Eagle takes hawk's duck. As in the first story, everyone was left with a big "Wow, that was amazing!"

Finally once on the bird walk/ hike out the Amalga trail to the marsh, the group was taking a break sitting and resting. As we sat there from the top of the trees above us we heard a Red-tailed Hawk. It was loud, and the call unmistakable. We all looked at each other with a look of (but not spoken), "What in the world, a Red-tailed Hawk?" Gus Van Vliet, the leader, without missing a beat said, "No, not a Red-tailed Hawk, Steller's Jay." And so the amazement of a Red-tailed Hawk overhead, was replaced with the amazement of hearing a perfect imitation of the hawk by the jay, and the lingering question of why this jay did what it just did?

Not all birdwalks produce amazing wildlife spectacles. But when these things occur there is only one way to see them. You have to be out there to see it. But don't come out to see the extraordinary. That just sorta happens sometimes. Come out and see the ordinary, the new spring, rebirth, the warm air, and the birds singing. Come see for yourself.

Many thanks to Steve Zimmerman for organizing the bird walks, and to the Audubon birdwalk leaders, for leading the walks.

"If you listen to the thrush and hear a thrush, you've not really heard the thrush. But if you listen to a thrush and hear a miracle, then you've heard the thrush. Zen parable

**JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY
SPRING 2006 WILDLIFE WALKS**

- April 8. Airport Dike Trail. Meet at 9:00 am at the end of Radcliffe Road. Steve Zimmerman will lead the walk.
- April 15. Berners Bay Boat Trip. 8:30 am Don D. Statter Harbor below DeHarts
- April 22. Point Bridget Trail. Meet at 7:15 am for car pooling at DeHarts, or at 8:00 am at the trailhead. Gwen Baluss will lead the walk.
- April 29. Fish Creek Trail. Meet at 7:30 am by the bridge over Fish Creek (Douglas Island). Paul Suchanek will lead the walk.
- May 6. Berners Bay Boat Trip. 8:30 am and 1:30 pm Don D. Statter Harbor below DeHarts
- May 13. Perseverance Trail. Meet at 9:00 am the trailhead (end of Basin Road). Beth Peluso will lead the walk.
- May 20. Mendenhall Wetlands. Meet at 8:00 am at the end of Radcliffe Road. Marck Schwan will lead the walk.
- May 27. Outer Point Low Tide. Meet at 7:30 am at the old Outer Point Trail (Douglas Island). Carol Thelenius and Mary Lou King will be the leaders
- June 3. Dredge Lakes. Meet at 8:00 am in the parking area by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road. Matt Brooks will lead the walk.
- June 10. Amalga Trail. Meet at 8:00 am at the Amalga Trailhead. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk to the marsh where rails have been seen.

Skagway Bird Report – March 2006

By Meg Hahr

Signs of spring are slowly appearing this month. Flocks of crows had returned to town by the beginning of March – earlier than normal it seemed to many. Most of March was characterized by colder than normal conditions with gale force winds, choppy seas and freezing spray keeping many people indoors or in vehicles. A few hundred hearty mallards, Barrow's goldeneyes, and common mergansers were seen at the mouths of the Skagway and Taiya Rivers and head of Nakhu Bay during the worst of the cold weather, probably drawn to these refuges by the relative calm conditions found there. The usual cast of characters have been frequenting feeders in Skagway and Dyea this month – Steller's jays, magpies, and chestnut-backed chickadees. A northern goshawk hunting songbirds was seen along the road at Dyea Point and observed for several minutes. White-winged

crossbills have been active along the trail to Upper Dewey Lake, and flocks of pine grosbeaks are seen regularly along the AB Mountain Trail. Hairy woodpeckers, ravens, dippers, and bald eagles are some of the other birds that have been with us all winter. A flock of snow buntings was seen foraging along the beach at the mouth of the Skagway River. Although it has been a frigid month in Skagway, we know spring is on the way by the longer days, muddy roads, the sound of blue grouse hooting in Dyea, and varied thrushes singing their familiar song at Smuggler's Cove. *Thanks to John McDermott, Barb and Betsy Kalen, Joanne Beierly, Mike Conseller, Debbie Sanders, and Jeremy Simmons for sharing their bird sightings this month.*

Gustavus Report

February 26-March 29, 2006

By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

White-winged Crossbills and **Pine Siskins** continue to be abundant around Gustavus with lots of vocalizing from both species. Six active White-winged Crossbill nests have been observed since mid-February. As of this writing, two of these nests were abandoned with un-hatched eggs, one has a female sitting on eggs or nestlings, and two have nestlings being fed by adults. It is not clear if the sixth nest is still active. Through a week of bitter cold temperatures and high winds in the middle of March, during which the temperature dropped below zero degrees Fahrenheit, female crossbills could be seen on their nests, swaying as the trees moved with the wind. At one of these nests, a crossbill was first observed feeding nestlings on 3/18. The next day, about five inches of snow fell. The nest looked to be buried under snow, and it was thought to be abandoned. Then, a bill was seen moving at the edge of the nest, and it was evident that the female was sitting on the nestlings with snow piled high around her.

A **Boreal Owl** was again seen in the woods between The Salmon River and the Good River on 3/3. A **Western Screech-Owl** was heard on 3/25. There were several reports of **Great Horned Owls** hooting in three different areas. There was only one report of a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** during this period. A **Short-eared Owl** was observed for over a week. There were numerous reports of **Northern Saw-whet owls** during the period. They were heard hooting on multiple dates in at least five neighborhoods. One was seen hunting along the edge of the beach and woods during daylight on three dates. Two were seen perched in the sun on a cold morning. And, a pair of saw-whet owls is nesting in a nest box in town.



Northern Saw-whet Owl on the morning of 3/16/06 in Gustavus. It was cold.

The only report of **Common Redpolls** to date is of two on 3/1. Single **Lapland Longspurs** were seen in the beach grasses on 3/18 and 3/25, and eight were seen on 3/29. Two **Horned Larks** were seen along the beach on 3/22. The first flocks of **American Robins** were seen on 3/25 (there were single robins observed on a handful of dates through the winter). A **Killdeer** was reported on 3/26. The first **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was heard on 3/29. And, four **Yellow-billed Loons** were seen off the town dock on 3/29.

Thanks to the following for sharing observations: Paul Barnes, Abigail Calkin, Tania Lewis, Sean Neilson, Bruce Paige, Lewis Sharman, Chad Soiseth, Phoebe Vanselow, and Rusty Yerxa.

**UPDATE ON SAINT LAZARIA ISLAND: SEABIRD MONITORING WORK
CONTINUES! –By Leslie Slater, Wildlife Biologist
Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge**

In 1993 we began a seabird monitoring program at Saint Lazaria that has continued every summer since. The purposes of the work are to detect long-term trends in nine species of seabird populations, and to evaluate on an annual basis, productivity, chick growth rates, and diets of a subset of these species. We also record all wildlife seen incidentally; we now have a total of 91 bird and 10 mammal species observed from the island.



Glaucous-winged Chicks

A few tidbits: Generally, we've not seen drastic changes in seabird populations. However, murre counts conducted from land, though inclusive of a just a portion of the colony, show a decline between 1994 and 2004. Counts conducted from the water, however, show a slight increase. Those counts include the entire colony, so we could be documenting a shift in different cliff portions being used.

We counted an average of 76 pigeon guillemot in the mid-1990's (1994-1997), and since then, the average of counts between 1998-2005 was 110. Thus, it appears that the guillemot population increased during the latter time period.

Yearly counts of pelagic cormorants have fluctuated widely, from a low of eight nests in 1994 to a high of 297 nests in 2002. The nature of cormorant breeding habits (i.e., their unpredictable changes in breeding locations used between years) makes it difficult to evaluate population trends.

We found an apparent advance in egg hatching dates in fork-tailed storm-petrels in 5 of the 11 years we've monitored them. Those early hatch dates occurred in 1996, 2000, 2002-2004 when the average was 29 June. A significant difference in timing was found compared to the other group of years (1995, 1997-99, 2001, and 2005) when the average hatch was about one month later, 27 July. Leach's storm-petrels showed no significant change in the timing of egg hatch over the 11-year period.

Sitka spruce loom over the island puts on its tawny cloak in the fall as salmonberry stands lose their leaves and rye grass become dormant. Storm-petrels are the last to fledge their young, and once they depart, there are just a handful of birds that stay through winter -- mainly hardy winter wrens and song sparrows.

Wind and waves pummel the island sending foamy spray 200 feet into the air. It's a harsh place in the winter for wimpy humans!

VIDEO CAMERA FOCUSES ON ST. LAZARIA MURRES

A significant enhancement came to the St. Lazaria seabird monitoring work when a video camera was installed near the murre colony. In summer, live images are transmitted to

the Harrigan Centennial Hall in Sitka where the public can view them. People can also control camera movements and zoom options by using a touch screen. In the past, the live-feed was also transmitted on the local cable channel. Rumor has it that charter operators sometimes used it to learn about current sea conditions as well.

Southeast Alaska Regional Science Fair (High School)

Juneau Audubon, as in past years, was at the SE Alaska Regional Science Fair. Two "local" awards were given by Audubon relating to the conservation or restoration of natural ecosystems. They went to:

Paige Pahlke-- The Effects of Gold Mine Tailings on Marine Amphipods

David McCasland and Colin Flynn-- The Ability of Beach Wild Rye, Compared to Nugget Bluegrass, to Take Lead Ions Out of the Environment

Many of these high school science projects dealt with environmental issues. In addition to the ones we awarded for, there were other good projects dealing with local sewage contamination affecting Blue Mussels, local lands and isostatic rebound, and studies dealing with environmental issues concerning fish and shellfish.

CONSERVATION NOTES

PEBBLE MINE: We hear a lot about the possibility of the enormous Pebble Mine that would occupy a range of hills that drain directly into Lake Iliamna. We have been hearing concerns about possible affects on Bristol Bay salmon but not much about what it would do to Lake Iliamna, largest lake in Alaska and is by all odds the grandest salmon lake in the world now or ever.

In 2005, the commercial harvest of sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay was 39.3 million (39,300,000) fish. This huge number of fish was the 14th largest for the period 1950-2000. The fish had a value of \$93 million to the fishers who caught them (this does not include the value to processors). In addition to the commercial catch of sockeye salmon, there were 14.8 million allowed through the fishery to spawn in the pristine (currently) rivers and lakes feeding Bristol Bay. Lake Iliamna and its rivers supports over half of these numbers. An estimated 22 trillion eggs are laid each year in the gravel of lakes and streams.. Of those about 15-20% would go out to the ocean after a year living in lakes. So over 400 million rear in the Bristol Bay lakes and rivers and go to saltwater every year. Any detriment to such waters should be unthinkable.

JUNEAU ACCESS ROAD: According to DOT's website, the State is scheduled to advertise this May for \$100 million worth of paving projects in Berners Bay. Fortunately, the Juneau road extension is not yet a done deal. The legislature is starting to put together the State's capital budget. The Governor wants the legislature to approve \$45 million from the state's general fund this year to go towards road construction. With so many other pressing needs, it's unclear how high a priority constructing half a road is on their list. There

are many other pressing needs that we should be spending our general fund dollars on right now.

Call, Write or E-mail: Representative Bruce Weyhrauch (the only legislator actively supporting the dead end extension) Rep_Bruce_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us, 465-2273.

Senate Finance Committee Members: Co-Chair Senator Gary Wilken
Senator_Gary_Wilken@legis.state.ak.us, 465-3709 Co-Chair Senator Lyda Green
Senator_Lyda_Green@legis.state.ak.us, 465-6600 Senator Con Bunde
Senator_Con_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us, 465-484 Senator Fred Dyson
Senator_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us, 465-2199 Senator Bert Stedman
Senator_Bert_Stedman@legis.state.ak.us, 465-3873 Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator_Lyman_Hoffman@legis.state.ak.us, 465-4453 Senator Donny Olson
Senator_Donny_Olson@legis.state.ak.us, 465-3707

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_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30 Basic renewal

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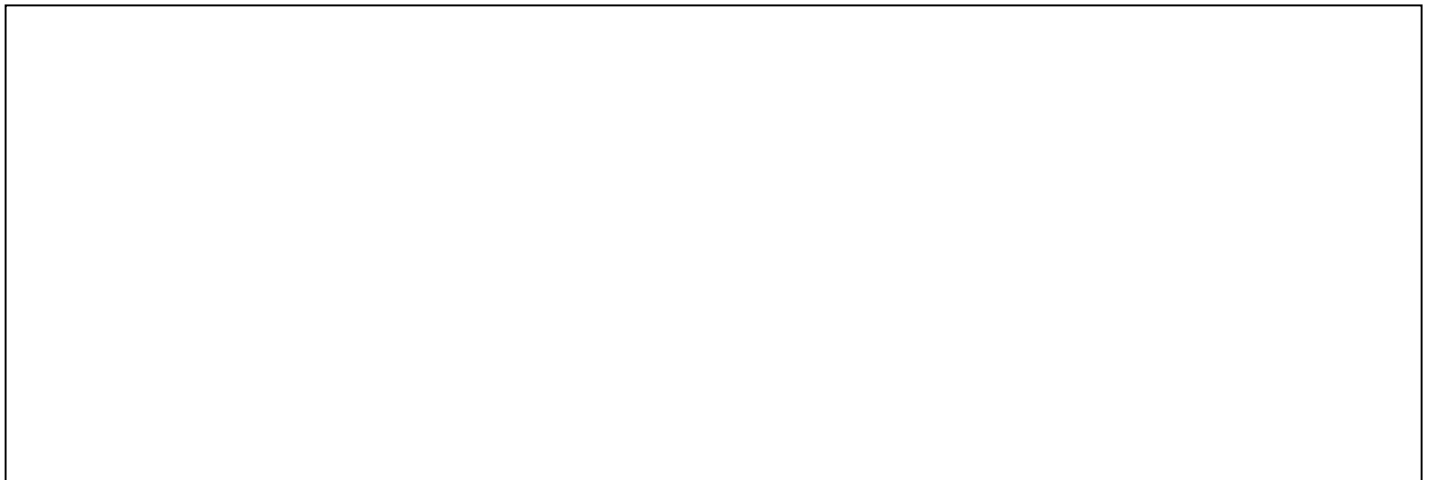
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Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 32, Number 9

Juneau Audubon Society

May 2006

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY SPRING 2006 WILDLIFE WALKS

- May 13. Perseverance Trail. Meet at 9:00 am at the trailhead (end of Basin Road). Beth Peluso will lead the walk.
- May 20. Mendenhall Wetlands. Meet at 8:00 am at the end of Radcliffe Road. Marck Schwan will lead the walk.
- May 27. Outer Point Low Tide. Meet at 7:30 am at the old Outer Point Trail (Douglas Island). Carol Thelenius and Mary Lou King will be the leaders
- June 3. Dredge Lakes. Meet at 8:00 am in the parking area by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road. Matt Brooks will lead the walk.
- June 10. Amalga Trail. Meet at 8:00 am at the Amalga Trailhead. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk to the marsh where rails have been seen plus some mining history with Jim Geraghty.

Saturday Wild 2006

2nd Saturday's June through October

June 10th Amalga Trail 27.9 Mile Glacier Highway – Final bird walk of the season and mining history in the area – Leaders: Jeff Sauer and Jim Geraghty

July 8th Alpine Birds and Flowers 8:00 a.m. - noon, Mount Roberts Tramway downtown. Purchase special reduced price Tramway ticket at the Tramway office that morning.

August 12 Mushrooms in our home town 9 a.m., end of the road, North Douglas – Leader Dave Gregovich

September 9th Hard rock Mines-Perseverance Mine Museum Mining and the environment. 8:30 a.m. at the Perseverance trailhead

October 14th To be Announced

Saturday Wild is coordinated by Juneau Audubon Society

Join us any 2nd Saturday, weather or not, as we explore the wild side of Southeast Alaska. For more information on these free community walks, see [http:// www.juneau-audubon-society.org](http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org) or e-mail saturdaywild@juneau-audubon-society.org. Programs will also be announced through local news media.

BOARD NEWS by Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon Society president

Hello and Happy Birding,

Thanks to all of you who were able to join us for our 11th Annual Berners Bay cruises. Who knows what the crystal ball will decide for the cruise on May 6th but we certainly had a great day on April 15th. We saw oyster catchers, sea lions and harbor seals around Aaron Island, lots of sea lions on Benjamin Island and Dall porpoise played with our boat twice! Although the timing for congregation of sealife and birds in Berners Bay was off, we had a special visit of a pod of six Orcas that swam right up next to the boat. As the eulachon (hooligan) have not yet entered the bay as of now (5/1), perhaps the sailing on May 6th will get to see the large congregations of birds and sea mammals. In any case, hopefully everyone had a good time and the weather was cooperative.

We hope you can join us for the rest of the spring migration bird walks. This is such an interesting time of year to see many species of birds and 15 types of weather-all in the same day! We are also scheduling our Saturday Wild events for walks every 2nd Saturday from June through October. Please join us for trips into the alpine, history, and fungus.

Please keep an eye on the weekly schedule and the web page for updates on activities and meeting places (www.juneau-audubon-society.org). You can also get your local bird checklist and past newsletters on the web page. If you are interested in helping with responding to any conservation issue, please contact Sari Saunders, conservation chair (conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org).

Eaglechat news: Nina Mollett died early Saturday morning, April 29th, in Tucson, Arizona. She created "Eaglechat" that has provided what now could be considered an "essential" service to the birding community of Southeast Alaska and also to birders in other parts of the country. She was very active as a conservationist and will be missed. Bev. Agler bev_agler@fishgame.state.ak.us will continue to be the moderator for Eaglechat. Anyone wishing to join this great group should contact Bev.

BAD MOUSE YEAR—We must be having a bad mouse year on the Mendenhall Refuge. Northern Harriers are spending more of their time perusing the marginal bushes than the open flats-- look out little birds.

Band-tailed Pigeons in Wrangell By Bonnie Demerjian

Band-tailed pigeons are an uncommon sight in Alaska, even in most of Southeast Alaska, but they make an appearance in the southern part of our region and even breed here.

This large pigeon (13-16 inches long) resembles the introduced Rock Dove but is a native of the Western states, Central and South America. There are two populations in North America, both favoring woodlands. The Pacific coast population winters in central California and breeds as far north as the Stikine River, though it has been reported as a casual visitor as far north as Nome, says the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The interior population winters along the southern US border and Mexico, breeding in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and western Texas.



*Photo By Sue St. Clair
Wrangell*

Sue St. Clair has documented these pigeons in Wrangell where they frequented her feeder throughout the summer last year, beginning in April. By the end of the summer she reported 23 birds, the result of summer nesting in the nearby forest.

Band-tailed pigeons are dark overall with a distinctive white collar on the nape, lacking in juveniles, and bright yellow feet. The race likely to be seen in Southeast Alaska is dark and more richly colored, with a dark purple-gray head and dark reddish or pink/gray breast, than more southerly races. Their bill is yellow as well with a black tip. Band-tailed pigeons can be distinguished from the Rock Dove at a distance by their longer tail and more uniform gray color. Their call is said to resemble an owl's with repeated deep hooting coos. As they take flight, their wings will at times meet over the back and "clap", similar to Rock Doves.

The National Audubon Society says that band-tailed pigeon numbers have shown a steady decline of about 2½% a year since the 1960s though the reasons are not well understood.

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

Spring is begrudgingly slipping into the Chilkat Valley as many signs of the season slowly appear. One sign, of course, is the reappearance of the seasonal birds and the behavior of the "locals." Haines is still eagerly awaiting the arrival of hummingbirds, which according to local reports are late this year (as of April 25). At least two or three Marsh Hawks have been seen flying around on the McClellan Flats, and the local eagles are busily gathering nesting material and fending off new intruders to their territory. Many species of gulls have followed the herring run up Mud Bay the week of April 17. Can the hooligans be far behind next month? Tim Shields has commented that he has

read reports of Surf Scoters declining in the lower 48 and is paying careful attention to the Surf Scoter count here in Haines. He has also reported an unusual killing of a snow goose by a bald eagle, with the head and neck left behind. Birders have also been monitoring the build up of dabbling ducks beginning at 20, to 80, and now approximately 350 at the bottom of Cemetery Hill. The usual spring suspects of small birds, including the robins, have arrived, but no unusual sightings yet.

Skagway Bird Report - April 2006 By C. E. Furbish

In the first week of April, a long-time Skagway birder reported seeing red-winged blackbirds and robins fully one month earlier than he had previously recorded them. Our first big wave of avian visitors from the south came right around April 15th (tax-evaders?) Familiar birds who stay for the summer included landbirds: varied thrushes, ruby-crowned kinglets, northern shrikes, pine siskins, and rufous hummingbirds; and waterbirds: mergansers, greater scaup, great blue heron, mallards, American widgeons and goldeneyes. Raptors included: kestrel, merlin, red-tail hawk, Harlan's hawk, northern harrier and golden eagle. Also seen were birds which usually stop briefly in Skagway before continuing north: swans, Canada geese, and a real treat, ~25 mountain bluebirds. Rare sightings included ring-necked ducks, northern shoveller, brown-headed cowbird, greater white-fronted geese, and sandhill cranes. The cranes delighted all by landing in Dyea to give everybody a good look.



ring-neck duck, photo by Andrew Beierly

Thanks to John McDermott, Joanne and Andrew Beierly, Mike Konsler, Cameron Eckert, Debbie Sanders, Jeremy Simmons, Kevin Payne and Gary Hansen for sharing their bird sightings this month.

Clips from the Conservation Committee: By Sari Saunders, Chair, Conservation Committee

Dear Members,

The Conservation Committee kept its collective eye on a number of topics this past year. Below is a short list of events members of JAS have followed and about which comments have been submitted. Many thanks to all the members who provided thoughtful input regarding these issues. Our JAS president, Brenda Wright, took a particularly strong role in conservation issues this year and initiated most of our comment letters. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to receive copies of submissions that Juneau Audubon has made.

The Conservation Committee is always keen to have new members who would like to follow events in the community and help keep other JAS members informed. If you have comments or would like to become involved, please contact me, at conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org, or talk with any other committee or Board member.

A recap of events:

1. Call for ban on jet skis on Auke Lake – JAS will be submitting a request that the CBJ consider a ban on jet ski use on Auke Lake. Research has indicated this type of recreation emits hydrocarbons that have been damaging fish habitat in the lake. Wakes erode nearshore habitat important for shorebirds and juvenile fish. Noise and physical presence of motorized boats and jet skis drive aggregations of birds off the lake. A number of species have apparently deserted the lake as motorized recreation has increased. Note that the trail alongside Auke Lake is one of the few that has been designated a “no dog” trail for purposes of protecting habitat and wildlife in the area, yet motorboats and jet skis remain unregulated on the open water. Steve Zimmerman has been following research and activities on the lake over the past number of years and is spearheading this effort.

2. Support for development of a greenway along Duck Creek in East Mendenhall Valley. This is a project that was proposed by a graduate student who then sought support from JAS when applying for funding. She proposed restoration of the Duck Creek watershed adjacent to Thunder Mtn. to connect open stream, wetland, riparian, and adjacent upland habitats, thus increasing the value of wildlife habitat and providing opportunities for wildlife viewing. Interpretive signage would be installed along a pathway. Initial funding has since been approved. The proponents are working on an environmental checklist, appropriate permitting, and the revegetation effort. SAGA work crews will be there in June and Trail Mix will be helping in July and August.

3. Dog sledding venture in Sheep Creek – JAS was encouraged by the response of the CBJ Planning Commission to its staff’s report on this venture, and the incorporation of concerns and suggestions from a number of local groups (including JAS) into the reports. JAS expressed concern regarding the effects of this initiative on the enjoyment of the trail and wildlife by hikers, and also impacts on the wildlife itself. We preferred to support a permit for a single year, initially. We further recommended that the companies involved support monitoring efforts to assist in determining whether this project deters or increases wildlife presence, or alters activity of wildlife traditionally using the area. You can take a look at the staff reports and final decision at http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/documents/NOD_USE06-05_2.PDF. A conditional permit was granted with the stipulation that the company pay for relocation of part of Sheep Creek Trail, a yearly maintenance cost for the trail, and for noise monitoring, among other conditions. So, hike up the Sheep Creek Trail this summer and see what you think!

4. Release of Juneau Access FEIS - JAS reiterated its concerns regarding habitat loss associated with roaded Alternatives presented in the SEIS. We believe the cumulative and indirect effects of the road were not adequately addressed. We were especially concerned about edge effects, connectivity between summer and winter ranges, and loss

of estuary wetlands, and corridors for dispersal of small mammals and corridors for exotic plant species. We are also concerned about long term effects to wildlife populations from increased human interaction. Compensatory mitigation for impacts to wetlands is not a resolved issue; JAS encouraged AK DOT&PW to consider establishing a mitigation bank to mitigate the loss of wetlands any approved road may destroy or compromise.

5. Sale of federal lands for secure rural schools funding - JAS opposed reducing public acreage to provide relatively short term funding for schools. We need more public land not less. We noted, specifically, the proposed sale of 6 acres of Forest Service land in the vicinity of the Eagle and Herbert River confluences, near the trailhead of Boy Scout Beach Trail. The property is contiguous with recreational lands of the City and Borough of Juneau and development of the land presents a threat to recreational and ecological values of the area.

6. Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve, Haines – Legislation presented by State House Representative Bill Thomas (HB 378) now reads, “An Act providing for selection of a member of the Haines Borough Assembly to serve as an ex officio member of the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council and removing the mayor of the City of Haines as an ex officio member of the council”, distinctly different from, “An Act designating a representative of Chilkat Snowburners, Inc. as an ex officio member of the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council and removing the mayor of the City of Haines as an ex officio member of the council”, and some subsequent derivations thereof. Concern was that a seat formerly held by a public representative would be replaced specifically with one held by a special-interest group, not serving the best interests of conservation of the eagles and their habitat. JAS submitted a letter indicating it did not support HB 378, or any decreases in the size of the preserve boundary (also being considered by Thomas in order to remove tour areas from protection). You can follow this legislation’s status at:
http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill.asp?session=24&bill=HB378

7. Amendments to the Alaska Coastal Management Plan - JAS supported Alternative 3 (not accepting the amendments) regarding the program amendments submitted by the State of Alaska to the OCRM. We indicated that the changes to the ACMP did not meet the requirements of the Coastal Management Zone Act and other federal statutes and that the proposed amendment to the ACMP should be sent back to the State of Alaska for further consideration. We felt the amendments (which were ultimately accepted) would limit local involvement; the ACMP will be primarily state implemented now, using state standards and state laws. JAS was concerned that the restriction on local community involvement would mean that subsistence and other uses may not get adequate prioritization in project planning.

Stuff to follow over the summer:

1. Juneau Access – Keep your eyes and ears open as the initial phases of preparatory work for the road get under way. Just this week, the Juneau Empire had a front page article on work beginning in Berner's Bay (Wed. April 26).

2. Gastineau Channel 2nd Crossing – Watch for progress on the discussion of the best access points for the second crossing. This was also in the news recently (Juneau Empire, April 4 2006) and further opportunities for public comment may be forthcoming.

3. Check out other groups in our area and their activities:

a. (Re) establishment of the Juneau chapter of **Trout Unlimited** – TU has reappeared in Juneau and is proposing some interesting projects already, e.g., within the Montana Creek Watershed. We hope that partnering with this organizing will be an opportunity for JAS in the future. Check out the TU website at www.tu.org and the Juneau chapter's information by choosing the Alaska button.

b. **Sitka Conservation Society** – has recently released their groundtruthing report on past and proposed timber sales in SEAK

(http://www.sitkawild.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=58&Itemid=245). This involved momentous field and analytical effort. There are some interesting analyses and conclusions and good food for thought. Check out all the USDA Forest Service info on these sites too!

c. **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)** – check out TNC's southeast AK involvement at their website,

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/alaska/preserves/art14794.html>.

Also worth noting is TNC and TNC Canada's involvement in the establishment of the Great Bear Rainforest conservancy along the north and central coast of British Columbia (announced by the government of BC on Feb 7 2006). The announcement of this land use decision provides a terrific model for dialogue among conservation groups, industry, First Nations, governments, and other publics. The Great Bear will protect approximately 5 million acres, and establish ecosystem-based management as the basis for logging and other industrial activities across another 10 million over the next few years. TNC has supported the partners in this agreement and is targeting fundraising efforts towards a conservation endowment that will support science and stewardship jobs and activities in First Nation communities within the Great Bear. Check out the backgrounder from the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands at: http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2006AL0002-000066-Attachment1.htm.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF "THE RAVEN" WILL NOT BE UNTIL SEPTEMBER. WE TAKE THE SUMMER OFF.

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Volume 33, Number 1

Juneau Audubon Society

September 2006

FIRST OF THE FALL JUNEAU AUDUBON EVENING MEETINGS: OCTOBER 12 AT DIPAC, 7:00 P.M.

Election of Officers/Board news

by Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon Society President

Come join us at our annual meeting October 12 to elect the Juneau Audubon chapter officers and enjoy the aquarium at DIPAC. We will be meeting at DIPAC for this one occasion and will provide refreshments. We are electing president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. This year we have Jeff Sauer as candidate for president, Mark Schwan for vice-president and Liz Blecker for treasurer. As of the deadline for the Raven, we were still seeking candidates for secretary. If you are interested in being an officer or helping with any of our standing committees: conservation, membership, newsletter, or public market just call or e-mail any of the officers listed in the newsletter.

SATURDAY WILD 2006

Saturday Wild is a history/nature walk sponsored by Juneau Audubon on the 2nd Saturday each month from June through October. We had a low tide walk in June, an alpine flower and bird walk in July, mushrooms in August and **September 9 meet at the Perseverance Trailhead, 9:30 a.m. to visit the Last Chance Mining Museum and geology of Basin Road with Cathy Connor and Renee Hughes.**



Photo by Sheila Bateman

“Mushrooms in our home town” was a great success in August. Over 50 people showed up at the end of River Road to hunt for mushrooms and hear the leader, Dave Gregovich, talk about their natural history and edibility. The area around the Mendenhall River proved to be saturated with many types of mushrooms, even a few that stumped the expert! To maximize the number of mushrooms to discuss, Dave sent every one out to collect a few and then bring them back. The small table used to display the “catch” was over loaded and mushrooms were falling off as every one returned with one or more interesting finds. We are really lucky to have such

knowledgeable volunteers to share their favorite hobbies with us. **We hope you can join us for the next walk on September 9th.**

WEDNESDAY BIRD WALKS—DOWNTOWN By Beth Peluso

The Wednesday bird walks survived a soggy summer, and we even saw some birds! People who attended were a good mix of local regulars and out-of town visitors, from places as far away as New Zealand and South Africa. Early in the spring we watched the birds arrive: violet-green and barn swallows, ruby-crowned kinglets, Bonaparte's gulls, fox sparrows, and Townsend's warblers to name a few. Especially for the visiting folks, fairly common water birds such as harlequin ducks, pigeon guillemots, and marbled murrelets were a treat. Later in the summer we had some great looks at warbler families flitting around.

Some good pockets of birds, especially warblers, are up Gastineau Avenue behind downtown, by the governor's mansion, and along the waterfront by Gold Creek. The walks will continue until the end of September. **We meet at Rainbow Foods by the coffee stand to head out from noon to 1:00. Come join us!**

(Continued from: Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon President)

The new Summer 2006 Chapter Networker publication is now available online! Full of news, best practices, photos, tools and tips, the Networker is designed specifically for all Chapter leaders. The newsletter can be found at <http://www.audubon.org/local/cn/networker.html> -- readers can scroll through the text directly online, or download a pdf file to print it out in its traditional format.

It has been a learning experience to be president of the Juneau Audubon Chapter. Thanks and I will be seeing all of you at the public meetings.

Keep in touch with your local Juneau Audubon events and meetings on the web page www.juneau-audubon-society.org It has a local bird checklist, lecture schedules, guided bird walk schedules, and past newsletters. (Thanks to our webmaster, George Utermohle).

Conservation Notes:

Our conservation chair, Sari Saunders, has moved on, so I'd like to just mention a few conservation items that have deadlines in the coming months: Juneau Access Road, pesticide use, and favorite beaches. If you have any desire to help write letters for Juneau Audubon conservation concerns, please contact any board member.

DEC announced a public comment period for pesticide applications in public places. The information can be found online at http://www.dec.state.ak.us/public_notices.htm and the deadline is September 15, 2006 at 5:00 pm.

City and Borough of Juneau has a public comment period on the proposed uses of funds from the Federal Secure Rural Schools and Community self-determination act of 2000. The city may receive up to o \$865,000 in title III funds. Juneau Audubon urges you to consider the options proposed by the state and encourage CBJ to use a portion of the money to buy the last 6 acre inholding in the Eagle Beach/Boy Scout camp for the public.

Comment period ends September 27, 2006. Mail or deliver comments to: CBJ clerk's office, 155 S. Seward St. Juneau, AK 99801. (If you have questions about this or would like to see the CBJ proposed uses, call the city clerk at 568-5278)

CALL TO ACTION: Nominate an “Endangered Beach” Today

Does your beach face an uncertain future? Has its long-term health been jeopardized? If so, nominate your beach for the America’s Most Endangered Beaches report to be released in the summer of 2007. This ground breaking report will shine a national spotlight on local beaches that face environmental peril and put human health at risk. Juneau Audubon is considering nominating the Berners Bay estuary. If you have a beach you would like to nominate please contact Brenda for the nomination form.

The deadline for nomination is December 15, 2006.

REPORT ON THE JUNEAU BIRDATHON By Steve Zimmerman

The Audubon Alaska Office in Anchorage is the National Audubon Society’s state office in Alaska. Matt Kirchhoff and I are on the Board of Directors for Audubon Alaska and for the second year in a row we decided to do a birdathon to raise money for that office. After quite a bit of planning we chose Saturday May 28th to do the birdathon.

Like almost every other day this summer, when we got up at about 4:45 a.m. it was pouring out. After several calls to our birdathon team members it was obvious that rain or no rain, there was no other day for the next couple of weeks when we could get the team back together again. So, off we went into the silence of an early morning, rainy day in Juneau. Our first bird, at about 6:15 a.m., was an American Dipper on a nest up Fish Creek that Mary Willson had told us about. After that we headed down Fish Creek where very few birds were singing. Fortunately, there were several species of waterbirds visible from the mouth of Fish Creek where we huddled under a large spruce tree trying to keep our spotting scope dry. And then, very slowly, the rain started to let up and birds started singing. By the time we left Fish Creek about 8:45 a.m. we had heard or seen 42 species. A light rain continued for another hour or two, but by late morning it had pretty well diminished to occasional showers.

In order to better canvass Juneau we had divided our birdathon team into two groups. Paul Suchanek, Rich Gordon and I covered the area from Douglas Island to the Mendenhall River system. Mark Schwan, Gus Van Vliet, Jeff Sauer and Matt covered the area from the southern Dredge Lakes and Community Garden areas on out the road. When we finished the birdathon and all got back together again at about 5:15 p.m. we discovered that the two groups had found an amazing total of 107 birds! Highlights included several Blue-winged Teal, a Redhead, a Red Knot, a Lesser Black-backed Gull, four Blackpoll Warblers and a Brown-headed Cowbird. Send me an e-mail request (stevezimmerman@gci.net) if you would like a copy of the entire list of birds we recorded.

Our birdathon raised over \$4,600 for the Audubon Alaska Office. Many, many thanks to all the people who so generously contributed their time or money to our efforts.

**JUNEAU AUDUBON AND EAGLE OPTICS DONATE BINOCULARS TO
PIONEERS' HOME** By Mark Schwann

Earlier this year one of our local members visited the Juneau Pioneers' Home and presented an overview on the birds of Juneau. A second visit focused on a discussion of binoculars along with a "hands-on" session where residents could get a feel for how to use different styles of binoculars and to determine which kinds of binoculars would be easiest to use by Home residents. Audubon then worked with Eagle Optics, a major optical supply retailer in Wisconsin, and purchased three binoculars to donate to the Pioneers' Home. Eagle Optics very generously matched the purchase, giving Audubon six binoculars for the price of three! Audubon has since presented these binoculars, along with two birding field guides, to the staff and residents at the Home. They have a great opportunity to view birds, as the main day-use room directly overlooks the marsh on the northwest side, and it is clear that some of the residents are very interested in birds. Audubon hopes to arrange for local birders to visit the home and watch birds with the people there.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR TESHEKPUK LAKE By Stan Senner,
Executive Director, Audubon Alaska

For the last several years, one of the top priorities in Audubon's Alaska State Office has been protection of critical wildlife habitats around Teshekpuk Lake in the northeast part of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). Unfortunately, time is running out. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has tentatively scheduled an oil and gas lease sale for the end of September, after having signed a Record of Decision last January opening 100 percent of the area to leasing.

Teshekpuk Lake is the second largest lake in Alaska, and the wetlands around it are of national and international importance for wildlife. In fact, up to 37,000 Brant—30 percent of all Brant in the Pacific Flyway—gather there to molt, along with tens of thousands of Greater White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, and Canada Geese. Uncounted numbers of migratory birds also nest or stop over in the area, including other waterfowl, shorebirds, loons, terns, and songbirds. The 45,000-animal Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd also uses the area, which is of great importance as a subsistence resource for North Slope residents.

The waterfowl experts in the Pacific Flyway Council and at such organizations as Ducks Unlimited have counseled against fragmenting what should be an unbroken block of habitat north and east of Teshekpuk Lake, the heart of the goose molting habitat. Yet, if BLM proceeds with plans for a lease sale in this small area—less than 400,000 acres—fragmentation is exactly what will happen because of the roads, pipelines, drill pads, power lines, air strips, gravel mines and other infrastructure required in an industrial oilfield. The molting, flightless geese are easily stressed when disturbed by aircraft or people on the ground, which may reduce the birds' fitness and subsequent survival.

Audubon Alaska does not oppose expanded oil and gas activity in NPR-A, but the area around Teshekpuk Lake is one specific place that should be off limits. There is legal

action pending in federal district court, but if BLM moves ahead with a lease sale, the picture gets much more complicated. We are urging Alaskans to write the Secretary of the Interior asking that the lease sale be cancelled. Please send your letter to: Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240. For more information, go the web at www.savetlake.org or www.audubon.org/campaign/teshekpuk. Thank you.

RECENT MESSAGES ON EAGLECHAT Eaglechat@yahoo.com

From Steve Zimmerman: On a Sunday (8/20) trip to Bartlett Cove we stopped to watch whales at Point Adolphus around 11:00 a.m. There were large flocks of Red-necked Phalaropes there and across Icy Strait into Glacier Bay. I would estimate several hundred birds. When we came out of Glacier Bay headed back to Juneau three hours or so later I saw only a few phalaropes but there was an incredible aggregation of Fork-tailed Storm Petrels that I tried to count but ended up conservatively estimating at a thousand birds. The birds were strung out in varying concentrations and the ship sailed through them for several minutes.

From Nat Drumheller: Several Gustavus residents who have boated in the area for years have remarked on the high numbers of seabirds in Icy Strait and Cross Sound this July and August. Northern Fulmars, Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters, and Parasitic Jaegers are birds they have seen in unusually high numbers. A whale biologist who has seen many Red-necked Phalaropes over the years said she saw more phalaropes in Icy Strait this week than ever before.

From Bruce Paige: These are truly phenomenal numbers of both fulmars (Mark and Debi) and petrels in Icy Strait. Since 1968, I've never seen or heard of anything like this. During storms, petrels can be seen by the dozen, but a thousand!!!! Really amazing. Fulmars rarely poke in away from the open ocean. Something seems to be going on, possibly a) a disruption of food supplies in normal summering areas, or, b) a comparable upswing in food around Icy Strait-which is an unusually rich niche. Based on what I've seen this summer around the Gustavus Foreland, I doubt the latter. Of course, there could be many other factors, as well.

BIRDS OF SUMMER IN THE KETCHIKAN AREA-by Teri Goucher

Hopefully everyone has been enjoying the nice days this summer doing lots of outdoor activities! Summer is a busy time and a few great birds were seen in our area!

The small flock of **Band-tailed Pigeons** returned to nest at their usual location south of town.

There were also many sightings of **Caspian Terns** throughout Southeast Alaska this season; on the mid-town breakwater 6 individuals were seen, which is the largest flock ever reported for our area!

Cedar waxwings are numerous lately; their high-pitched, buzzy whistles often announce their presence.

Steve Heinl and Andy Piston, who have thankfully and consistently provided me with birding data, made a trip to Hyder during the first part of June. Hyder is a tiny community on the mainland 90 miles NE of Ketchikan. The huge glacial-fed Salmon River courses through a wide valley which is bordered by rugged, 4000 foot mountains and extensive mudflats, making a beautiful landscape and excellent birding! A couple of **Least Flycatchers** were heard singing persistently along the river, and a **Sora** made an appearance after responding to an imitation of its call. Among a mixed flock of swallows, 5 **Bank Swallows** were found soaring over the flats and a flock of 15 **Black Swifts** were seen on June 6.

A couple of **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were seen near Hyder and 2 more were seen in Ketchikan on July 31. There was also a single, much smaller **Cackling Goose** with a small flock of **Canada Geese** on the Hyder tidal flats. Finally, quite a few **Black-headed Grosbeaks** were seen, with 3 males together; this perhaps indicates another strong fall showing of the species!

Another interesting story from our area was reported by the Ketchikan Daily News. A pair of **Barn Swallows** have built a nest and are raising 3 chicks on the Alaska Marine Highway ferry Lituya! This ship travels 15 miles from Metlakatla to Ketchikan twice a day! The parents feed the chicks until the ferry sails a few miles out, and then they return to Annette Island to patiently await the return voyage. As the ship nears Annette once again, they fly out to meet the Lituya and to continue their parental duties! Amazingly, this is the second clutch of eggs for the pair--the first attempt failed to hatch!

The birds of Alaska continue to fascinate us, and how fortunate we are to not have to travel from far away to enjoy our wonderful natural wilderness!!

Last spring I chaperoned 14 Ketchikan High School students to Costa Rica for a week! We were all amazed by the wildness of the jungle on the Caribbean coast and were thrilled to see many sloths, 3 species of monkeys, iguanas, crocodiles, and of course awesome birds!!

Highlights include Slaty-tailed Trogons, Red-legged Honeycreeper, Blue-hooded and Olive-backed Euphonias, Oropendolas, Golden-hooded and Scarlet-rumped Tanagers and Keel-billed Toucans!

I'm sure a few kids learned to love birding on this trip!

WRANGELL REPORT – AUGUST 2006 By Bonnie Demerjian

Maybe it can be attributed to our 'summer that wasn't' but Wrangell has seen the early appearance of cedar waxwings, the steady presence of white-winged crossbills and more frequent sightings and soundings of pine grosbeaks these past few months. Like the weather, the birds have left us wondering what the season really is. Usually late summer visitors, the cedar waxwings' high-pitched calls have been heard since early July, long before their favored mountain ash berries ripen.

Band-tailed pigeons were reported in July engaging in bobbing, courting behavior at a local feeder. Wrangell's proximity to the transboundary Stikine River permitted birders to

some other unusual sightings - a single Townsend's solitaire during late spring and a gray-cheeked thrush during a breeding bird survey.

Several active northern goshawk nests are being monitored in the Wrangell area including one newly discovered this summer. Identification of a nest on federal land mandates a 600 square foot buffer zone as well as 100 acres of protected land surrounding the nest. Juvenile northern goshawks are dispersing now, increasing the opportunity for fortunate birders to view them.

Soon, with trees nearly silent and skies a uniform gray, we'll be on the alert for southbound migrants to lighten our autumn days.

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

This summer, the weather in Haines has been cooler and wetter than usual, typical for the rest of Southeast Alaska but not Haines. From my personal observations, it did not deter the birds--the regular bird populations arrived and thrived. We had a large share of Robins, with Wilson's Warblers, and Yellow Warblers, and Varied Thrushes abounding. Several Belted Kingfishers were seen flying about along Haines Highway about two mile and additionally at Clear Creek. The falcons also were abundant. Several Kestrels were observed in a variety of places and a Peregrine Falcon was spotted near the airport in early July. Farther up Haines Highway and out at Chilkat Lake, the Arctic Tern population returned, two Common Loons had one baby, and the Rufous Hummingbirds, Pine Siskins, and Chestnut-backed Chikadees all returned to the feeders. We also spotted a family of five new Red-breasted Mergansers on the lake, too.

On a trip to Flower Mountain, we chased a Spruce Grouse meandering along the road that eventually hid in the bushes. Unfortunately in the spring, you may have heard of the report of the male Trumpeter Swan that was killed in the valley. However, the female was able to go on and successfully rear a chick.

Earlier in the spring, as part of the Takshanuk Watershed Council observations, diverse spring migrations were noted coming up the river and Pyramid Harbor delta. Of special note—about a dozen Ross Geese were spotted.

Overall for sea birds, the Haines observers noted a general decline in sea ducks, especially low numbers of surf scoters. This may be a trend that needs careful monitoring.

And of human interest, an avid Haines birder, Pam Randles, returned to Haines on a month's leave from Qatar. She will be back to birding again in Haines next May.

2006 GUSTAVUS SUMMER REPORT and PHOTO By Nat Drumheller,
natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Cool and damp sums it up in my mind. (I spent the summer working for the U.S. Forest Service out of Juneau and got snowed on in mid-June while doing bird surveys in the

alpine above Lemon Creek.) Late spring and early fall migrations appeared to merge for some birds, such as Lesser Yellowlegs, making it difficult to determine if the birds were on their way north or south.

It was a big year for **California Gulls**. Previously, California Gulls had been seen on occasion in Gustavus during the summer months. This year, small numbers were seen regularly throughout the summer. A record number of twenty-eight was observed on June 26.

Caspian Terns were present on the Gustavus beaches through the summer with a high count of twenty-eight on August 12 including two juveniles. There were unusual mid-summer sightings of **Hudsonian Godwits** with four reported on 6/26 and five on 7/28.

The hooting of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** was heard by many Gustavus residents this spring. A pair of saw-whet owls occupied a nest box in town for over two months and successfully raised young. It is believed that six young owls fledged from the box over a number of days beginning June 4. The presence of a good number of saw-whet owls in the area did not prevent a bumper crop of voles from laying waste to Gustavus gardens this summer.



On 5/28, a **Virginia Rail** was heard calling from rushes in a pond near the airport. This was the exact location of a Virginia Rail that called for several weeks last summer.

Several boaters remarked on seeing exceptionally high numbers of seabirds over the inland waters of Icy Strait and Cross Sound during late July and early August including **Northern Fulmars, Fork-tailed Storm Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters, and Parasitic Jaegers**. High numbers of **Red-necked Phalaropes** have been reported in this area recently (mid-August).

Thanks to the Gustavus residents who shared their observations, especially Bruce Paige.



PETERSBURG BIRD REPORT By Don Cornelius

I can report the appearance of three Eurasian Collared Doves in Petersburg. From all indications they seem to have arrived here on their own. Eurasian collared doves were accidentally introduced to the Bahamas in 1975 and have been spreading westward ever since. Until these birds reached our feeder they had been seen on Vancouver Island and in the Yukon, but never in Alaska. From feathers by our feeder we thought we had lost one to a cat, but several days later I saw all three doves again so presume it escaped.

JUNEAU'S SUNNY POINT REPORT

Last week we had a Juvenile American Kestrel hanging around, maybe keeping dragonflies under control. The bird darted out caught a large dragonfly in the air, landed on a post where it pulled the wings off and then ate it piece by piece. This morning in the wind and the rain there are two peewees trying to catch breakfast and several warblers working over the vegetation looking for something to eat. Life can't be easy for these migrating birds in this weather.

IRIS COLORS IN ANIMALS

I do not know if you have any interest in this, but at irispigmentation.com there is a free list of published iris colors for 5,600 species of animals. More than 4,900 are of birds, but amphibian, reptile, and mammal species are also included. The list was collected for research purposes from field guides at the Library of Congress, the Wildlife Library of the Department of Interior and the various libraries at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Morgan Worthy, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Ga. State University
morganworthy@mac.com
www.irispigmentation.com

New Report Documents First Ever Multi-State Review of Feral Cat Impacts on Birds

By Linda Winter, Director, Cats Indoors! Campaign, American Bird Conservancy

ABC has published a new report, *Impacts of Feral and Free-ranging Cats on Bird Species of Conservation Concern: A Five-State Review of New York, New Jersey, Florida, California, and Hawaii*, which, for the first time, analyzes the effects that cats are having on some of America's most at-risk bird species at cat predation hotspots. The five-state review at www.abcbirds.org/cats/NFWF.pdf

illuminates troubling threats to endangered species such as Piping Plover, California Clapper Rail, and Hawaiian Petrel, highlights the growing trend of managed cat colonies, and reviews applicable wildlife protection laws. The report was made possible through a generous grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Revised and Updated *Cats Indoors!* Web Page: The *Cats Indoors!* Campaign web page has a new look with revised and updated fact sheets and a host of new information including the position statements on free-roaming cats of 16 organizations, and links to state wildlife agency and Audubon Society *Cats Indoors!* web pages. This information can be used by Campaign supporters to educate neighbors, friends, clients, local officials and others that cats and wildlife are safer when cats are kept indoors, and that humane, permanent removal of cats is needed to protect our native wildlife. One Campaign supporter, Bruce Vaughn from Boulder, CO, has shared with us his own innovative “**Cat Trails**” that he built to keep his cats safe from coyotes and other outdoor hazards. For information on how Mr. Vaughn built his cat run, www.abcbirds.org/cats/CatTrails.pdf

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**TO RECEIVE “THE RAVEN” BY EMAIL RATHER THAN A PAPER COPY,
EMAIL Mary Lou King kingfarm@ptialaska.net**

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30 Basic renewal

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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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October 2006

FIRST OF THE FALL JUNEAU AUDUBON EVENING MEETINGS: OCTOBER 12 AT DIPAC, 7:00 P.M. DIPAC Personnel will be available to show folks around their facility, followed by a short Juneau Audubon annual meeting.

Election of Officers: by Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon Society president

Come join us at our annual meeting to elect the Juneau Audubon chapter officers and enjoy DIPAC's aquarium. We are electing president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. Our candidates for office include Jeff Sauer for president, Mark Schwan for vice-president, Liz Blecker for treasurer, and Patty Rose for secretary. I hope you can all come and enjoy the presentation and vote for the new officers. If you are interested in helping with any of our standing committees--conservation, membership, newsletter, or public market just call or e-mail any of the officers listed in the newsletter

I hope many of you are already subscribers to the Yahoo chat group Eaglechat. It is a way to share your birding experiences and questions with other birders. It is easy to join. Just Google eaglechat and follow the instructions for joining a Yahoo group. As it is now officially fall, we all have the opportunity to participate in studies to increase our knowledge about birds. The Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology (<http://birds.cornell.edu/>) has Project Feeder Watch and The Great Backyard Bird Count (in February). In November, I like to participate in the Thanksgiving Day bird count. There are other projects for you to explore. Look at American Birding conservation programs/volunteer opportunities (<http://americanbirding.org/>). And do not forget to check out our parent organization, National Audubon Society www.audubon.org/. Your local Juneau Audubon web page has a local bird checklist, lecture schedules, and past newsletters (www.juneau-audubon-society.org/).

PUBLIC MARKET IN NOVEMBER Juneau Audubon will have a booth in the Public Market at Centennial Hall November 24-26. We are looking for ideas for merchandise in addition to our jelly and jams. Mary Lou has been able to find some nagoonberries this year even in the midst of a poor berry crop and record-breaking rainfall! Please bring your empty half pint canning jars to the public meeting to be reused. Juneau Audubon will also continue to sponsor the Nature Crafts for kids. If you have ideas for crafts, natural materials to donate, or would like to help please let us know. Also please get ready to volunteer a few hours of your time in the regular booth and send ideas/suggestions to our coordinator-Ellen Anderson public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

TREE SWALLOW NESTING IN JUNEAU, INITIAL YEAR REPORT

Deborah Rudis, USFWS, 3000 Vintage Blvd # 201, Juneau, AK 99801
907.780.1183, deborah_rudis@fws.gov



Tree swallows are commonly used as indicators of environmental change in wildlife. Tree swallows readily use nest boxes and can be attracted to specific areas by nest boxes, making them an ideal species for field studies. Adult tree swallows primarily forage within a 400 - 500m radius of the nest, and in doing so accumulate contaminants from these localized environments. Because the Juneau landfill and former waste incinerator are located in an area used by feeding swallows, this was the focus area of this study. Four other areas were selected for nest boxes in suitable tree swallow habitat.

Tree swallow nest boxes were constructed by residents of Gastineau Human Services, volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 11 worked on box placement. Standard size tree swallow boxes were used and were attached to cedar posts at about 5' above ground surface. Boxes were located at least 30 m apart to minimize swallow territorial behavior.

A total of 50 nest boxes were erected, 10 in each of five areas, the Mendenhall State Game Refuge, the beaver pond complex behind the Juneau Community Garden, the pond adjacent to the Pioneer's Home property, along the Mendenhall River behind Vintage Park office complex, and the Lemon Creek / landfill wetlands. Boxes were checked on a regular schedule, about every 3 days, to document nest construction, egg-laying and fledging dates.

Nesting was initiated from mid to late May with the exception of one nest that was initiated in mid-June. All boxes that were occupied had 4 to 6 eggs. A total of 13 broods were successfully fledged (26% success rate). Fledging occurred from mid to late July. A total of 46 fledglings were banded, and 13 fledglings presumably fledged before banding. There were 3 broods that failed, most likely due to parents spending much time foraging and not brooding the young. With cool wet weather, adults need to keep nestlings warm, as the young are unable to thermoregulate before their feathers develop. One box had all chicks missing a few days after hatching; it was unknown if predation had occurred. Another nest and chicks were totally missing from the box; this box, located at the Police Station pond, was most likely vandalized. Unfortunately, both of these boxes were from the focus area, and no other boxes were occupied in the landfill wetlands. The most successful boxes were those located in the Mendenhall Wetlands with 5 boxes occupied and 5 successful broods. The Pioneer Home pond site had 4 successful broods, 4 broods at the Mendenhall River site and failure of both nests at the Community Garden.

Tree swallows have a high nest site fidelity and box use should increase next year. This first year pilot study will be continued for at least the next two years.

SKAGWAY SUMMER 2006 BIRDING SUMMARY by C. E. Furbish

Quite a few unusual observations were noted by Skagway birders this summer. In town, many people have remarked on the increase in Northwestern Crows, often displacing Robins, Jays and other birds normally seen at backyard feeders. Large flocks of Pipits and Cedar Waxwings were also seen in town. Many birders have had close encounters with Spruce Grouse - in town, in Dyea, and on the hillsides - including one persistent bird that seemed to have amorous intentions toward a Dyea resident.

New sightings since May include Northern Mockingbird, Hooded Merganser, Black Oystercatcher, Hudsonian Godwit and Purple Finch. Birds we will be adding to our checklist from sightings this past spring and summer also include - Greater White-fronted Goose, Ring-billed Gull and Cassin's Vireo.

Contributors: John McDermott, Kevin Payne, Gary Brummett, JoAnn and Andrew Beierly,

WRANGELL REPORT by Bonnie Demerjian

Lazuli bunting on the Stikine River

The Stikine River slices through the Coast Range, rising in northern British Columbia and traveling over 350 miles to saltwater near Wrangell. This transboundary river carries more than just water - it frequently serves as a transportation



corridor for wildlife. Sometimes, particularly during migration, bird species appear here that are more common to the interior than the coast. When Mary and Earl Benitz, who make their home year-round on Farm Island on the delta of the river, saw a brilliant blue bird at their feeder last week, they knew they were seeing something out of the ordinary. Pulling out their bird guides, they tentatively identified the bird as a Lazuli bunting. Their photographs proved it.

While not unknown in Alaska, the Lazuli bunting is a truly uncommon visitor and almost certainly not a breeder. The USGS checklist for Alaska states that the chance of viewing one here is "minute" while the Wings Over Alaska list calls any sighting accidental.

Most maps show southwest British Columbia as the Lazuli bunting's northern breeding limit. It favors riparian areas with nearby thickets and weedy open areas, all abundant on the lower Stikine. They may descend on feeders in the fall and that's where the Benitz's bird has spent the past week or so.

Northern harriers are "as thick as ducks" on the Stikine flats right now, feasting on a bumper crop of mice. The rodents are also bringing out great horned owls.

Back in town the sight of a Common nighthawk, also a probable river traveler, soared above the post office delighting another Wrangell birder.

A few straggling warblers are hanging around, the usual Cedar waxwings have gone to places unknown and the robins are stripping gardens of late raspberries and currents, perhaps because of a shortage of wild berries this long, strange "summer".

BIRDING NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN by Teri Goucher

As Autumn arrives there is a deliberate urgency for all life to complete the seasonal cycle, especially in Alaska! The crispy breeze blows colorful leaves as nature grasps the last golden warmth of summer, preparing for the winter months.

Migrating through are waves of warblers and robins and the remaining female **Rufous Hummingbirds** make their last appearance as they journey south.

A **Western Tanager** was seen north of town on August 29th.

Several people were lucky to enjoy a great look at a **Barred Owl** just off the road south of town the last days of August.

A couple groups of **Sandhill Cranes** flew low along the coast and rafts of **Western Grebes** are beginning to form in the channel.

Sharp-shinned Hawks have been regularly successful hunting **Steller's Jays** at north end neighborhoods which must be quite a sight to see! Larger flocks of jays are returning to area feeders lately, seemingly just as the seed is scattered!

Several **Mourning Doves** were spotted area wide and there was a single **Glaucous Gull** at Ward Lake during the middle of September.

An uncommon **Northern Waterthrush** was found at Lake McDonald which is on the mainland about 40 miles north of Ketchikan on September 20. Waterthrushes are a type of warbler that frequent damp areas, feed and nest on the ground, and rhythmically pump their tails as they walk.

Let's enjoy the remaining nice weather and go birding because Autumn often brings brief visits of more unusual species as they migrate south through Alaska once more.

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe [dngeorgia@hughes.net]

Most Hainesites are in denial about winter coming but the signs are there. First, once the skies cleared from a major rainstorm on Sunday the 24th, you could clearly see quite a bit of termination snow. As far as the bird signs, the Magpies started to move in about 10 days ago, mid September. The Bald Eagle population hasn't started growing significantly yet on the Chilkat River, however, we know when those salmon really run they will be there. The Bald Eagle Festival scheduled for November 8-12, 2006, is counting on it. In September, there continued to be a few species still hanging around. A regular flock of Trumpeter Swan were in residence at Chilkat Lake numbering anywhere from 6 to 20. On a trip to Skagway on the 17th, this writer and everyone else on the Chilkat Cruises ferry noted a large raft of Surf Scoters (150?) hanging out in Taiya Inlet.

SITKA REPORT by Matt Goff

There is a birding seminar being offered at Sheldon Jackson College this fall. Sessions are open to the public. The schedule is not yet finalized, but the following are planned so far:

- 5 October: Kitty Labounty talks about Backyard Birds, how to attract them, observe them, and contribute to science with your observations.
- 12 October: Dr. Victoria Vosburg, veterinarian at the Alaska Raptor Center will talk about bird physiology
- 26 October: A talk about Song Bird Banding and/or Bird Flu Monitoring is tentatively planned but not yet confirmed
- 2 November: Matt Kirchoff of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, topic unconfirmed
- 16 November: Michelle Kissling of the USFWS will make a presentation on monitoring nocturnal owls in southeast
- 30 November: Andrew Thoms, director of the Sitka Conservation Society will present on Warblers in Winter

The talks are planned to take place in the Rasmusson Student Center on Sheldon Jackson College Campus. Date, location, and topic of the talks are subject to correction or change, so please contact Matt Goff (e-mail: goff@nawwal.org, phone: 747-5233) for the latest information, or visit <http://www.sitkanature.org/birdseminar.html>

Sitka now has its own birding e-mail list. Visit <http://www.sitkanature.org/> and follow the link for subscribing to the SitkaBirds List. Alternatively, you can e-mail Matt Goff (goff@nawwal.org) and request to be added to the list. Recent highlights from the list have included reports of Hooded Mergansers, Fork-tailed Storm-petrels close enough to be viewed from shore, Merlins in a backyard, Sharp-shinned Hawks at Starrigavan, an American Coot at Swan Lake, several sightings of Mourning Doves around town, a probable Lapland Longspur (unusual for Sitka) visiting a local feeder, and an unusual fall sighting of a Marbled Godwit at Totem Park.

GUSTAVUS SIGHTING—LATE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

It was a great month to be out birding with lots of regular migrants passing through, a few rare birds including a couple of first sightings for the area, and some nice weather.

Sandhill Cranes began moving through in late August and are still being seen. Their numbers peaked in mid-September with one observer estimating that over 5000 took to the air from west of town on the morning of 9/13. Juvenile and adult **Peregrine Falcons**, as well as other hawks and falcons, were common on the beaches through the month. Both **Pacific** and **American Golden-Plovers** were seen regularly in small numbers through the period with high counts of eleven for American and over twenty for Pacific. **Baird's Sandpipers** were observed in higher numbers than usual with **sixty-two** counted on 9/5 near the town dock. An amazing **three-hundred Wilson's Snipes** were estimated on a short stretch of beach upland on 8/14. The month saw a spike in owl detections with several **Western Screech-Owls**, a **Great Horned Owl**, a **Northern Saw-whet Owl**,

several **Northern Pygmy-Owls**, a **Short-eared Owl**, and a **Boreal Owl** being heard or seen. The Boreal Owl's hooting was recorded digitally.

A **Northern Mockingbird** showed up at a residence in town on 9/8 and stayed for three days providing a first record for the area. Another first for the area was a juvenile **Ruff** (or **Reeve** since it was likely a female) that was at the mouth of the Salmon River on 8/31. A **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was on the beach near the Good River on 9/12. **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were seen on three dates with at least three observed on 9/23. **California Gulls** continue to be seen with the latest report being of a second-year bird on 9/22. A **Brown-headed Cowbird** was seen near a horse in town on two dates in late August. **MacGillivray's Warblers** were seen on two dates in August adding to just a handful of records for the area. A **White-throated Sparrow** was among a flock of mixed birds on 9/25.

Thanks to Bruce Paige for records information and to the following for sharing observations: Bruce Paige, Fawn Bauer, Hank Lentfer, Sean Neilson, Lewis Sharman, Greg Streveler, Julie Vathke, Phoebe Vanselow, Kiana Young. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Conservation Notes:

“Judge Halts U.S. Sale of Alaska Oil Drilling Leases” from (Mike Daulton, director of conservation policy for National Audubon Society, quoted in an article about the decision to temporarily prevent the U.S. Interior Department from going forward with plans to expand oil drilling in the Teshekpuk Lake area of Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve) <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601103&sid=aXd.zYn.diE&refer=us>

Court Orders a Time-Out to Protect Clean Water at Kensington Mine

On August 24, 2006, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an injunction halting the Kensington Gold Mine's destructive dam construction activities at Lower Slate Lake. If allowed to proceed as planned, the Kensington Mine would be the first mine in a generation to dispose of its chemically-treated mine tailings in a lake or stream. This decision protects Lower Slate Lake while the Court examines the legality of the Kensington Mine's plan to use the lake as a tailings dump. For more information and pictures of the construction go to www.seacc.org

Conservationists Sue to Protect Tongass Roadless Areas

Conservation groups sued the U.S. Forest Service because, in developing the new plan for Alaska's Tongass National Forest, the agency failed to consider permanent wilderness area protection for any portion of the millions of acres of undeveloped wild lands on the Tongass. More information at www.earthjustice.org

Juneau Access Road

“Currently, the only surface transportation to and from Juneau is provided by ferry and barge service. Demand on the state ferry system exceeds capacity during the summer months and costs for ferry users are high. Access to government, medical services,

employment, education, economic opportunity, and resource development for remote communities is limited by the lack of adequate transportation in the area.” Forest Service fact sheet: http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest_facts/faqs/jnuroad.shtml
SEACC legal claims: <http://www.seacc.org/index.php?section=93>

Alaska Fish and Game Advisory Committee--Proposed rule changes for 2006

There are five regulation proposals submitted to the Board of Game: Proposal 13 and 15 would open Swan Cove/Swan Island to bear hunting. Proposal 16 would open bear hunting within the city limits of Angoon; which is currently closed. Proposal 39 would extend the wolf hunting season for one month and would allow 5 wolves to be shot during that timeframe; from April 30 to May 30. This proposal pertains to the entire Game Management Unit 1. Proposal 40 would allow for aerial wolf killing and one day land and shoot to occur in Unit 1D, which approximately begins at Sullivan Island and includes the Chilkat Valley. These proposals will be deliberated upon at the SE Board Of Game meeting in Wrangell, Nov.10-15. There will be a pre hearing in Juneau on Oct.19 at 6p.m. at Centennial Hall. This pre hearing will allow for public testimony, letters, etc. related to all SE proposals. Following is the address in which to look these proposals up on the internet at: <http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/gameinfo/meetinfo/gprop.php>

From American Bird Conservancy’s email: U.S. Senate Passes Crucial Legislation to Protect Migratory Birds -- *Bill now winging its way to the President to be signed into law* -- Washington, D.C. – (30 September, 2006) Late yesterday evening, the United States Senate unanimously passed a revised Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act of 2006 (NMBCIA, H.R. 518). The legislation, originally authored by Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) and Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R-RI), was added to H.R. 4957, the Tylersville Fish Hatchery Conveyance Act. The NMBCIA authorizes matching grants to support conservation programs for migratory birds, and when fully implemented, will authorize \$6.5 million per year for projects. For more information, see: <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NMBCIA/index.shtm>.

“Today’s passage of the NMBCIA will help a broad range of migratory birds, from the Cerulean Warbler to the Baltimore Oriole, by ensuring they will have the healthy habitat they need on both ends of their annual migration,” said George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy. “Migratory birds are not only beautiful and interesting creatures eagerly welcomed by millions of Americans into their backyards every year, they play vital biological, recreational, and economic roles. For example, migratory birds help generate \$2.7 billion annually* to the U.S. economy through wildlife watching activities, and they help our farmers by consuming billions of harmful insect pests from many important commercial food crop and forest species.”

Each year, an estimated 10 billion birds of some 800 species breed in North America. Only a small percentage are protected under the Endangered Species Act, yet more than one-third have declining populations, are restricted to small ranges, or face serious threats. NMBCIA is the only federal funding program designed specifically for migratory bird species throughout North America, and it also provides the only dedicated source of funds for migratory birds on their wintering grounds in Latin America and the Caribbean.

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30 Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed

_____ Please bill me

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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy_____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 33, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2006

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series November 9, Egan Library Room 112, 7:00 p.m.

A Tale of Two Cedars: Life and Death of Cedar Trees in Southeast Alaska

Paul Hennon, Research Scientist, will talk about the research that they have done in Southeast on cedar decline and an important research plot near Sitka started by the Russians!

December 14, Saturday Wild, Egan Library Room 112, 7:00 p.m.

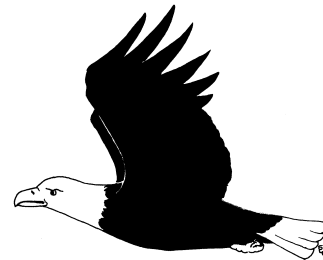
Mark Schwan will present a program on Juneau's Christmas Bird Count, (what is it and what does it tell us about the abundance and diversity of birds during early winter in Juneau? We will learn about Christmas Bird count, history on the count, how we do the count, and available data. We will also learn what the collected data says about Juneau's late fall and early winter avian diversity as seen through 30 years of counts in Juneau.



**Juneau's Annual Christmas Bird Count Will Be on
December 16 – Details will be in the December issue**

Bald Eagle Festival November 8-12, 2006 in Haines, Alaska

The 12th annual festival takes place during the world's largest concentration gathering of bald eagles. This spectacular and unique natural event is not to be missed! See details in the HAINES BIRD REPORT ON PAGE 3.



Juneau Public Market -- Centennial Hall -- Visit the Audubon booth in the main ballroom; bring your children to the nature crafts workshop in one of the small rooms. *Public Market is open Nov. 24-26.*

Board Changes: by Jeff Sauer Juneau Audubon President

We have a talented and active Audubon chapter here in Juneau, and from that membership a consistently dedicated and interesting board. And, so with that background it is exciting to move into the position of president. The board welcomes two new members to it: Mark Schwan, as Vice President, and Patty Rose, as Secretary. Lastly, Brenda Wright, who has been our president for the past three years is staying on as chair of the Programs Committee.

The big event for this month is the Public Market at Centennial Hall. Juneau Audubon for years has had a booth at the market. The booth is peopled by our members for an hour or so at a time. Many Juneau Audubon members over the years have volunteered for this fun task. Since many of you will want to see the market anyway, please consider signing up to do a stint at our booth. It is not hard.

Of course the star attraction at our booth, as has been for many years, is Mary Lou King's homemade jellies and jams. Mary Lou is a remarkable person who has been on our board for something like 23 years and has been making jellies and jams for sale at the market for about the same amount of time. What a remarkable legacy! To say that she has been an Audubon volunteer extraordinaire is an understatement. She and her husband Jim's decades of conservation volunteer work has been acknowledged with not just local and state awards, but also national level awards.



To volunteer to help Audubon at the Public Market call Ellen Anderson at 789-1412 or email her. See last page of the Raven for Ellen's email.

New Board Member Profiles:

Mark Schwan, Vice President -- Mark is well known around Juneau Audubon for his work for the chapter. Every year he leads some of the spring bird walks for Audubon, and along with Gus Van Vliet, every year runs our Christmas Birdcount. Mark is one of the most knowledgeable birders in Juneau, and is also one of the authors of the Birds of Juneau Checklist. He is recently retired as a biologist from state fish and game. He brings to the board some 35 years of birding in Alaska.

Patty Rose, Secretary -- Patty got the bird watching bug three years ago, and since has made quite an impact in the local birding community. She is seen out birding the dike trail and other birding spots regularly, and as well as spotting birds, she also photographs everything she sees. Through her efforts in the field she has found (and told others about) some rare finds in Juneau. Two examples are Purple Finches she found in West Juneau and Blackpoll Warblers on the Airport Dike Trail. She is an accomplished manager working for the state, and brings that experience as well to her office of Secretary with JAS.

Juneau Audubon is soon to have a board opening in the membership area. As noted above we have a great group of people and besides contributing to the chapter, you would be gaining a lot from getting to know this fine and talented group of people. In particular we are looking for spreadsheet, data base skills.

Finally a big bon voyage to Matt Brooks, a great Alaskan birder, Eaglechat contributor, and all around good guy. This is a great loss for Alaska, but a plus to Arizona where he is headed.

HAINES REPORT/BALD EAGLE FESTIVAL By Georgia Giacobbe

The Eagles Have Come -- It didn't take long for the salmon to run and the eagles to follow. As of October 11, approximately 20 eagles were spiraling over the McClellan Flats before they moved upriver. But as of the 20th of October, approximately 100 were spotted in a large gathering, circling the sky at 20 mile on that sunny Friday. By the 21st of October, the eagles moved into the full length of the Bald Eagle Preserve. It was steadily raining that Saturday, and the eagles were all out on the flats of the Chilkat and Klehini Rivers. My husband and I observed very few eagles in the trees along the highway. But at least 75 were counted from 33 mile to north of the bridge that crosses Haines Highway at 26 mile. Another 285 were observed from the bridge south to approximately 18 mile. On the Chilkat, they shared the salmon with the gulls, of course. The numbers can only increase as the festival approaches.

If you wish to see the eagles during the Bald Eagle Festival, a catamaran will be running Saturday, November 11th departing from Statter Harbor in Auke Bay, boarding at 7:00 a.m. A bus will take you to the preserve to see the eagle release. Tickets are \$85, and \$55 for children under age 10. Any questions, contact Sandy Harbanuck, 586-2207 or purchase tickets at Hearthside Books or Wee Fishee Shop.

Wrangell Report By Bonnie Demerjian

Marsh hawks, great horned owls and even a rough-legged hawk are everywhere on the Stikine River flats this month, still feasting on this year's bumper crop of mice, reports Mary and Earl Benitz who live on one of the delta islands. Three or four of the great horned owls call behind their cabin each evening. Snow geese were also plentiful on the delta earlier in the month but have now moved south.

An unusual dark-eyed junco has been frequenting a Wrangell feeder this month, says Marlene Clarke. The bird has a large white ring of feathers around each eye, very like spectacles. She remembers that several years ago she had another junco with a white patch on one cheek and was told it might have been the result of an albino mating. Any others around like this? Rafts of surf scoters are reappearing near town, as are small flocks of western grebes.



Ketchikan October Report - By Teri Goucher

We have had some beautiful sunny and warmer than normal days in between the foggy days which limited birding opportunities and jet travel.

A few southbound shorebirds were here briefly including **Sanderling** and **Western Sandpiper** on 9/26. I had a very active **Spotted Sandpiper** in my yard amongst the fallen cottonwood leaves on Sept. 27th! An **Osprey** was seen migrating south over Tongass Narrows mid-month. A few lingering **Golden-Crowned Sparrows** and a **White-Crowned Sparrow** were spotted locally. Lots of **Song Sparrows** are around too. A **Swainson's Thrush** was seen by Steve Heintz, the latest sighting of this species by two weeks and the first record, here, for the month of October.

Late breaking news! This report comes from Andy Piston;

Hi Everyone,

Steve and I have been completely unable to find anything of interest this fall, but fortunately Ken Mix stepped in and called us to report he had a **Harris's Sparrow** at his house. We went to his house and the bird spent our entire lunch hour feeding just outside his window. The bird was an adult, which is somewhat unusual as all of our previous records from Ketchikan were immature. This is the first **Harris's Sparrow** for Ketchikan since 13 November 1997. The bird was still present today (Oct. 20).

Andy Piston

Make the most of every opportunity to get out and enjoy our beautiful Alaska wilderness!

Skagway Sept/Oct 2006 Birding Summary by C. E. Furbish, Skagway Bird Club

Mid September brought mixed flocks of migrating songbirds to Skagway, with attendant hawks and Kestrels. Magpies are back, crows are seldom seen. Winter water birds such as goldeneyes and scoters have been seen on the fjord. An unusual sighting of a Red-Throated Loon was reported from Upper Dewey Lake. Also, a new bird for our area, a Mourning Dove, was seen several days in a row in downtown Skagway.

Our friends in the Yukon Bird Club have recorded an invasion of Stellar's Jays, most likely from the Skagway area. Hundreds of these birds appear to have moved north through Skagway's White Pass and have been reported at 53 locations in the southern Yukon. The scale of this invasion is very unusual - a small movement of Stellar's Jays was noted in 1994 from 8 locations, and prior to that only 9 reports of individual jay sightings.

Gustavus Sightings
September 27-October 25, 2006

The last two weeks saw the arrival of **Trumpeter Swans**, **Tundra Swans**, **Snow Geese**, **Rock Sandpipers**, and **Snow buntings** to the Gustavus forelands, although only in small numbers to date.

Among the many ducks and geese that are now in the area, a **Redhead** was seen on 10/7 and 10/13 and two **Eurasian Wigeons** on 10/13.

Single **Ospreys** were in the area on five dates between late September and 10/1.

Two **Rough-legged Hawks** were observed on 9/30 and single birds were seen on 10/6, 10/21, and 10/22. **Harlan's Red-Tailed Hawks** were seen on 9/30 and on 10/5.

Peregrine Falcons remained common through the period, with one observed taking a dowitcher on 9/27.

It continued to be a good fall for **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** with three on 9/27, two on 10/3, and single birds on 9/30, 10/1, and 10/4. **Black-bellied Plovers** were on the beaches west of town in small numbers through the period. The only **American Golden-Plovers** reported were two on 9/30. **Pacific Golden-Plovers** continued to be seen in small numbers through 10/21 with sixteen on 9/30. **Dunlin** numbers are slowly increasing on the beaches west of town, and **Sanderlings** are being seen in flocks of one to two hundred.

There were a few birds that made showings later than usual. A single **Spotted Sandpiper** was along the Salmon River on 9/29 and 10/11. **Western Sandpipers** were observed in small numbers through 10/13 with **fifty-five** on 9/30. Two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were with the Western Sandpipers on 10/4. (An unidentified peep that was with the Western Sandpipers on 10/13 may have been a Semipalmated Sandpiper.)

Dowitchers were around in good numbers through 10/14 with over one hundred and twenty on 9/27 (most were Long-billed Dowitchers, but perhaps not all....?) A very late **Bank Swallow** was observed catching bugs along the shore of Bartlett Cove on **10/22**. Eight **European Starlings** were with a small flock of American Robins on 10/6.

There is a mistake in the previous Gustavus report (October Newsletter). The "Boreal Owl" that was digitally recorded has since been determined to be a **Northern Pygmy-Owl**. I apologize for this error. Since the last report, Northern Pygmy-Owls have been heard or seen on fifteen dates in multiple locations with the latest being on 10/20. On numerous occasions, they gave a rapid series of hoots that better fit the description for Boreal Owl than for Northern Pygmy-Owl according to the written accounts and audio recordings that I have found. (Anyone wanting to receive a copy of the recording of the pygmy-owl doing rapid hoots can e-mail me at natdrumheller@hotmail.com.) Other owls seen or heard during the period were **Great Horned Owls** on two dates and **Short-eared Owls** on five dates.

Thanks to the following for sharing their observations: Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Rusty Yerxa, Sean Neilson, Greg Streveler, and Paul Barnes. By Nat Drumheller
natdrumheller@hotmail.com

National Audubon Society Membership Application

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Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone number _____

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Volume 33, Number 4

Juneau Audubon Society

December 2006

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series December 14, Egan Library Room 112, 7:00 p.m.

JUNEAU'S LATE FALL AND EARLY WINTER BIRDS AS SEEN THROUGH 30 YEARS OF CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Mark Schwan, local birder and CBC compiler will provide a brief history into the origins of the Christmas Bird Count, describe how the Juneau Christmas Bird Count is conducted, and characterize local avian abundance and diversity through a review of the count data. Along the way, Mark will show examples of how accessible count data are via the National Audubon website and what this means for analysis and interpretation, plus give his thoughts about what it is that makes this annual event so intriguing to birders. It should be informative, fun, and timely, as our program takes place just two days prior to this year's count in Juneau.

JANUARY 11, 2007 PROGRAM: Tour and Explore the Juneau Ice field with Dr. Eran Hood. Dr. Hood has been a professor at UAS with special studies on the Juneau ice field and hydrology of southeast wetlands. Join us in the New Year for an exciting program on Juneau's "back yard".

Juneau Audubon Society Public Market Booth By Brenda Wright

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped to sell our community famous home made jams, jellies, and relish! Mary Lou King and volunteers provided the expertise for our best sellers at the Public Market. Special thanks also to Ellen Anderson, our public market coordinator, for providing her beautiful and colorful bird ornaments, dealing with setting up and taking down of the booth, and time spent organizing. The nagoonberry jam lasted a whole hour this year, but all the other jams and relish were gone by Saturday afternoon. This is one of Juneau Audubon's two fundraisers a year, so thanks again to all who helped to make it a success!

Nature Craft Booth For Kids: Thanks to the 6 High School Students, Amy Skilbred and all the others who helped to give the kids attending the market with their parents, a fun activity while their parents shopped.

The 2006 Juneau Christmas Bird Count By Mark Schwan

The Juneau CBC will be held this year on Saturday, December 16, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. The count period is the time during which the individual bird counts can take place. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the two McDonalds Restaurants no later than 8am on count day, with appropriate attire and binoculars. People interested in counting in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas should meet at the downtown restaurant; birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the valley restaurant. As always, there will be a potluck after the count to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. The time and location for the potluck will be announced at the McDonald gathering in the morning of the count.

Last year there were 38 Christmas Bird Counts conducted in Alaska and 13 in the Southeastern region. Kodiak led all Alaskan counts with 78 species on count day, with Glacier Bay leading Southeast counts with 73 species. Juneau tallied 72 species on Count day.

Count data are now accessible as never before and compilers are entering results directly into the database via the internet. Go to <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html> and explore.

For more information on this year's Juneau Christmas Bird Count, you can call Mark Schwan, at 789-9841.

Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska for the upcoming Count period:

Count Location	Date of Count	Compiler/Contact	Phone Number
Chilkat	To be announced	Dan Egolf Tim Shield	766-2876
Craig-Klawock	December 16	Larry Dickerson Marla Dillman	826-1619 826-1617
Glacier Bay	December 16	Bruce Paige	697-2262
Haines	December 23	Dan Egolf Tim Shield	766-2876 Alaska Back Country Outfitter Store
Juneau	December 16	Mark Schwan Gus van Vliet	789-9841
Ketchikan	December 16	Andrew Piston	hm: 247-6553 wk: 225-9677
Mitkof Island	?	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Port Alexander	December 16	Anissa Berry-Frick	568-3985
Sitka	December 16	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 16	Elaine Furbish Sandy Snell-Dobert	983-2049
Tenakee Springs	To be announced	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Thorne Bay	December 16	Susan Howell	828-3263
Wrangell	December 16	Bonnie Demerjian	874-3665
Yakutat	?	Susan Oehlers	474-7882

NOVEMBER NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

Between early season snowstorms and chilly nights, a few interesting birds were seen here in November.

The seasonal flocks of **Common Merganser** and various bay ducks such as **Barrow's Goldeneye** and **Harlequin Duck** have returned all along our shoreline once again.

Numerous **Song Sparrows** are around and there were a few sightings of **Golden-crowned Sparrow** and **Tree Sparrow** in our area. Ketchikan usually hosts several **White-throated Sparrows** each fall and a third individual was spotted 14 miles north of town at Jerry Koerner's garden. He has consistently had this species visit annually, possibly the best regular occurrence of this species in the state! Jerry also had a **Nashville Warbler** there the first weekend of November.



Ward Lake never fails to have a good variety of species and is an easy 1.3 mile hike around this scenic refuge. This area has become a more inviting habitat since the road to through traffic was closed years ago. A **Pied-billed Grebe** was seen on 11-5 and a **Virginia Rail** was there briefly on 11-6. There are about 10 records for this rail species in the state, mostly from Southeast.

In town, a colorful male **Purple Finch** made an appearance and an **Anna's Hummingbird** was seen at a feeder. There are about 15 records for the Anna's which is a casual species in our area.

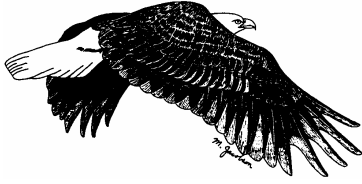
A rather late **American Pipit** was in a yard near the shore a few miles south of town on 11-20.

Ketchikan will hold the annual **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** on December 16th. Contact Andy Piston at 225-5195 for more information. It's always fun to see the results of this count which has provided valuable bird data for 106 years, and is nicely compiled in the American Birds publication.

Hopefully everyone will keep warm and keep on birding through these winter months!

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

This month's report includes some scattered sightings from Haines Highway, the Bald Eagle Preserve, and Chilkat Lake. Closer to the beginning of the month, before the bitter cold weather set in, a report from Chilkat Lake included on November 5 four Black Scoters. Several nights previously, a Screech Owl was heard on the south shore of the lake, and six Trumpeter Swan—two adults and four juveniles—came ashore on one of the islands to feed.



In the Bald Eagle preserve, Alaska Parks and Recreation counted 1,421 Bald Eagles on November 6. Because the rivers were so high this year, the eagles were scattered and difficult to count. By the week of November 20, however, the numbers were declining already. At 20 mile on Haines Highway, at least a dozen Trumpeter Swans were seen feeding with Bald Eagles and Ravens.

The owls in the Chilkat Valley are now being tracked closely. As reported in the *Chilkat Valley News*, Carrie Kinison and her husband Mike are volunteers for the Southeast Alaska Owl Network. They survey the valley once a month between 34 and 40 Mile Haines Highway and listen for the calls at night. They usually can identify some type of owl during their survey time, although they came up empty in October. They usually survey at the end of the month, so perhaps we will have November's report next month. In the past they have actually seen and heard a palm-sized Western Screech Owl and a Barred Owl.

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS October 26-November 27, 2006

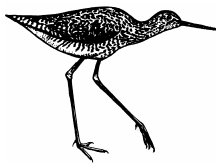
The Gustavus/Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, December 16. For information contact Bruce Paige, count compiler, at 907-697-2262.

A **Western Grebe** was in Bartlett Cove 10/31 through at least 11/2 adding to only a few records for the area. Two **American Coots** were observed in late October with one on Bartlett Lake and another on a pond near the airport.

Northern Goshawks were present in good numbers through the month. Adult goshawks were observed targeting **Wilson's Snipes** on two different dates with success on one of the attempts. An immature goshawk was seen attacking Short-eared Owls on two dates. In the first observation, the goshawk killed the owl and carried it away. In the second observation, the goshawk successfully pinned the owl to the ground, but dropped it while trying to fly off with it, perhaps as a result of haste due to the presence of the observer. The owl recovered and, after the goshawk landed, flew around the goshawk in circles barking.

Single **Rough-legged Hawks** continued to be seen through the end of October.

Fourteen hundred **Dunlin** and three hundred **Rock Sandpipers** are the largest numbers reported for those species so far this fall/winter, but birding the beaches has been difficult due to the weather. Some late shorebird observations include four **Long-billed**



Dowitchers on 11/5, single **Black-bellied Plovers** on 10/28 and 11/1, a **Pacific Golden-Plover** on 11/7 and 11/8, a lone **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** on 11/8, and a **Greater Yellowlegs** through the middle of November.

Owls... **Northern Pygmy-Owls** continued in abundance through the period. On a recent afternoon as a snow storm subsided, a pygmy-owl was seen looking out of an owl nest box. **Short-eared Owls** were common over the beach grasslands until

the end of the period when they became scarce. Apart from the two goshawk attacks mentioned above, one Short-eared Owl was found dead. Two **Snowy Owls** were observed, an immature on 11/8 and an adult on 11/15. A **Barred Owl** was seen on 11/2. There were multiple reports of strange sounds in the night that may have been Barred Owls communicating. Barred Owls are still rare in Gustavus. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found dead on 11/23. Single **Northern Hawk Owls** were observed on 10/29 and 11/24.

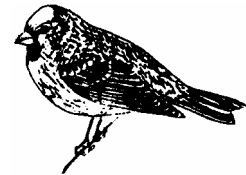
A **Northern Flicker** frequenting backyard suet-feeders was a hybrid of the red and yellow-shafted subspecies. Four **Horned Larks** were seen on 11/14, with three continuing to be seen through 11/23. There were several sightings of small flocks of **Bohemian Waxwings**. Four **European Starlings** were with small numbers of robins on 10/29 and 10/30. **Snow Buntings** have been eating the beach rye exposed above the snow with as many as five hundred in a single flock, and a few **Lapland Longspurs** are still around. **Pine Grosbeaks** were common during the period, and **Common Redpolls** arrived with the cold weather in the later half of the period.

Thanks to the following for sharing their observations: Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Tania Lewis, Sean Neilson, Greg Streveler, Julie Vathke, and Sally McLaughlin. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

SITKA REPORT By Matt Goff

The Sitka Bird Count is planned for Saturday, December 16. A pre-count Meeting will take place 7pm Thursday, December 14 at the Raptor Center. The post-count wrap-up is planned for 4:30pm Saturday at the Raptor Center.

Recent sightings of interest in Sitka (that are relatively unusual for the area) have included a Nashville Warbler, a pair of American Coots, a Lapland Longspur, a Snow Bunting, a Snowy Owl, and a flock of Common Redpolls. Someone also reported a Magpie not too far out of town.



The series of talks for the Sheldon Jackson College birding seminar were well attended. Thanks to the following people for their contributions. Marge and Tedin told us about where to go birding in Sitka. Kitty LaBounty spoke about gardening and landscaping with our avian friends in mind (she also helped organize the seminar). Dr. Victoria Vosburg of the Alaska Raptor Center gave an informative presentation on avian anatomy and physiology. Carrie Hisaoka spoke of her experiences working on the Yukon Flats studying the nesting ecology of the Lesser Scaup. Matt Kirchhoff of the ADF&G traveled from Juneau to share what has been learned about Marbled Murrelets in Southeast Alaska. Michelle Kissling of USFWS and Steve Lewis of ADF&G also traveled from Juneau to present the research they've been doing on owls in Southeast Alaska. From them we learned that Sitka seems to have lots of Western Screech Owls, relative to the rest of the region. Finally, Andrew Thoms spoke about warblers, where they come from, and how they spend their winters. The seminar will continue in the new year. Check <http://www.sitkanature.org/birdseminar.html> in the coming weeks to see the schedule.

From: Eaglechat@yahoo.com

Sandpipers still at Eagle Beach

Posted by: "Paul Suchanek" Tue Nov 28, 2006 5:46 pm (PST)

Since the wind in Lynn Canal finally calmed down, I went out to Eagle Beach today and found about 80 dunlin and 250 rock sandpipers. The tide was still relatively high so more shorebirds might have showed up later. Not that many gulls around but I did see a few Thayer's gulls. It was pretty icy out on the flats so watch out if you go out there – I managed to take a fall.

The other day, I also located a pair of black scoters in with the surf scoter flocks between North Douglas boat launch and False Outer Point. Scoters seem to have been much more abundant than normal in this area.

Re: Thayer's vs Herring gulls

Posted by: "Paul Suchanek" Tue Nov 28, 2006 10:52 pm (PST)

Winter is a pretty tough time to tackle gull identification here. There are hundreds of glaucous-winged gulls for every herring or Thayer's gull out there (there are also hybrid Glaucous-Winged X Herring gulls which are a serious identification problem). If you can find a single large gull with black wingtips, it is often very difficult to identify with any certainty. Thayer's gulls are generally smaller and have thinner bills than the hybrids and herring gulls, making them more like a mew gull in appearance. The wing-tips are also grayish on the underside unlike herring gulls which are blackish underneath. Eagle Beach is about the only place in the Juneau area where I have seen definite Thayer's gulls in the winter – they often occur in small flocks so it's a bit easier to identify them. I rarely find herring gulls out there in the winter. If you want to dive off the deep end on gull identification, I do have the newest 600 page book on it.

NORTH DOUGLAS CROSSING OF THE GASTINEAU CHANNEL

The City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) is continuing its efforts to work toward development of a North Douglas Crossing of the Gastineau Channel. The CBJ Assembly is focusing its consideration on the three alternative crossing locations that best meet the community's need for the crossing:

1. Vanderbilt Hill Road area
2. Sunny Drive area
3. Yandukin Drive area

The Assembly is inviting the Juneau public to share their ideas, concerns and preferences with the CBJ. The results of this public involvement program will assist the Assembly in determining a Juneau community-preferred alternative for the North Douglas crossing. It will also inform the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities about this community preference, when it proceeds in the future with environmental analysis, route selection and conceptual design for the crossing.

The CBJ has contracted with Sheinberg Associates, a local community planning firm, to conduct the public involvement project. **Contact Jan Caulfield, Sheinberg Associates, 204 N. Franklin St., Ste. 1, Juneau, AK 99801, and (907)586-3141 janc@gci.net for more information and time and location to planned meetings.**

NORTH DOUGLAS CROSSING OF THE GASTINEAU CHANNEL

By Jim King

The most reasonable, perhaps the only viable alternative for a second road to Douglas Island, is a crossing at Salmon Creek. This would be clear of Mendenhall State Game Refuge and airport safety areas, where a bridge sufficient to pass commercial fishing boats could be built.

The Mendenhall State Game Refuge is a jewel in the City of Juneau. Most of the big coastal cities of America have sacrificed their tidelands to superficial commercial interests. Settlers were attracted to Boston, New York, San Francisco Bay and other coastal areas for the great wealth of sea mammals, fish, shellfish, water birds and other edible creatures. Unrestrained development destroyed that wealth. Those communities now struggle to save or restore snippets of that former wealth.

After World War II, enormous highway building funds were authorized. Highway engineers planned routes avoiding private land and utilizing public open space including parks and refuges. The overwhelming public rejection of that concept resulted in the prohibition of using federal highway funds to build in parks and refuges. Inconvenient sometimes, but is essential to preserving the heritage of the American people.

Trying to evade the national concern for protecting tidelands by spending local dollars is not in the best interest of Juneau's future, a town oriented to the natural environment, outdoor activities and the world wide tourist industry.

Juneauites need to speak out strongly against the effort to sacrifice any of our wetland refuge for a superficial automotive benefit.

CHANGING LIGHTS TO MAKE COMMUNICATION TOWERS SAFER FOR MIGRATING BIRDS From: ABC Conservation Innovations

One of the greatest perils to migrating birds is the more than 80,000 lighted communication towers that span the nation. Tower lights confuse night-flying birds and actually attract them, resulting in collisions that kill as many as 50 million birds each year. Research indicates that simply switching from solid state to strobe lights can significantly reduce avian mortality. Pressure from ABC and its partners resulted in the FAA issuing a memo recommending the use of white strobe lights as the preferred lighting system on towers, reducing the threat to migrating species such as Scarlet Tanager and Golden-winged Warbler. However, the FCC, which regulates all communication towers, still refuses to adopt reasonable US Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines that will make the towers safer for birds. We need your help to persuade the FCC to enact simple measures that will save the lives of millions of birds annually.

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30 Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed
A51

_____ Please bill me
7XCH

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

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Juneau Audubon Society

January 2007

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series January 11, Egan Lecture Hall (EG 112) 7:00 p.m.

JUNEAU'S ICE FIELDS: RESEARCH AND ADVENTURE

TOUR AND EXPLORE THE JUNEAU ICEFIELD WITH DR. ERAN HOOD -- Join us for a trip to Juneau's big icy back yard and learn about the ongoing research by UAS. Dr. Hood also enjoys alpine climbing in and around SE Alaska.

February 8 Program: "Underwater Coral videos" by Bob Stone National Marine Fisheries scientist Bob Stone shows off some of the beautiful coral species from our watery "front" yard.

BIRDER PROFILES: by Jeff Sauer Juneau Audubon President

This month we profile two serious birders in Gustavus, Bruce Paige and Nat Drumheller. Their names appear regularly in this publication as well as on Eaglechat. Associated with their names are always interesting reports of the birds seen in Gustavus.

Bruce Paige

Bruce has been birding in Gustavus since 1968. That was the year he arrived in Gustavus, and also the year that he started the Christmas Bird Count in Gustavus. He has been the compiler for the bird count in Gustavus ever since. In his work-life he was the Chief Naturalist for Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. He did that job for 26 years and retired in 1994. Prior to Glacier Bay, Bruce worked for the park service in Everglades National Park (1964 to 68), and Death Valley National, Monument (1962-64), among other places. His strong interest in birds developed in college in California, at Humboldt State, and has been going on now for decades. These days, as for years, Bruce can be found out birding, and in the process walking several miles, every single day. Besides the Christmas Bird Count compiler for Gustavus, Bruce is also the author of the local bird checklist: Glacier Bay National Park Bird Checklist.

Nat Drumheller

If Bruce Paige is the senior bird expert in Gustavus, then Nat Drumheller is the junior expert. Nat is a frequent contributor to Eaglechat, as well as the compiler of the Gustavus quarterly bird reports, going to the state compilers (Thede Tobish), and then on to the American Birding Association. Nat became a very serious birder upon his arrival in Gustavus in 1999. He moved to Gustavus from Washington State, where he spent a lot of time backpacking, identifying plants, and some birding. But it was in Gustavus where he really got serious about birds. Nat works seasonally for the Glacier Bay

National Park doing jobs such as a bio tech on bear habitat work. He also works odd labor jobs here and there in Gustavus. Last summer he also came to Juneau to work for Gwen Bayliss on her Alaska Land Bird Monitoring Survey. Nat is out birding a lot in Gustavus, and in particular out walking those Gustavus beaches, that seem to produce such good finds. With a partner named Phoebe (Vanselow - also a serious birder) he must be a serious birder.

34th GLACIER BAY/GUSTAVUS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SUMMARY

By Bruce Page

On December 16, 16 observers walked, skied, boated, and drove around the Gustavus Foreland and Lower Glacier Bay, recording 62 bird species and 10,747 individuals (with an additional 5 species seen during count week). This was the lowest species total in a decade, but was the fourth highest number of individuals. The weather on the count was favorable, with the moderate wind making it a bit difficult to count and identify water birds at any distance. However, a very cold and snowy November affected the count in several ways. The deep snow cover on count day created a much harsher environment for birds than has been the case during recent mild winters. Land birds particularly seemed reduced in variety and numbers. The snow also made it difficult for parties to get around and fully work their areas. Lastly, there were fewer observers, since many local residents headed outside to warmer climes this winter.

No species new to the count were added this year, though a barred owl was heard during the count week. Highlights included 116 pacific loons (all time count high), 2 sharp-shinned hawks, 2 peregrine falcons, 22 black oystercatchers (all time count high), 1400 dunlin, and a snowy owl. Notable by their absence this year were northern pintail, Wilson's snipe, belted kingfisher (though seen on count week), winter wren, and pine siskin.



KETCHIKAN DECEMBER REPORT

By Teri Goucher

Our Christmas bird count was completed this year by 25 participants in 16 groups and one feeder watcher. December 16th was a pleasant partly cloudy day, although a snow shower moved through just before nightfall.

Ketchikan's area produced 65 species on count day and a total of 71 species were tallied during count week.

Interesting birds seen during count week include **Purple Finch**, **Northern Shrike**, **White-throated Sparrow**, and **Common Redpoll**. The **Anna's Hummingbird** is still staying close to a feeder with a nearby heat lamp at a home by the high school. The beautiful male **Wood Duck** still frequents a quiet eddy on Ketchikan Creek.

Our rarest count day bird was a **Northern Mockingbird** found at a hillside neighborhood by a visiting birder with Andy Piston. This is only the second sighting of this species in Ketchikan; the first record was in April 1998 south of town! Statewide, mockingbirds are considered accidental where they have occurred in Fairbanks, the south coastal region, and in several towns in the southeast panhandle.

Early in December we enjoyed many flocks of over fifty **Bohemian Waxwings** feasting on berries, several **Downy Woodpeckers**, **Bonaparte's Gulls** and a **Black-Billed Magpie** north of town. Three **Trumpeter Swans** are wintering at Ward Lake with their resonate calls echoing in the valley.

A big thanks to Andy Piston for organizing the entire event, compiling data, and adding to our species total for our very successful Christmas Bird Count! Thankfully daylight is increasing now and so do our chances for more birding opportunities as the year 2007 begins!!!

2006 JUNEAU CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Juneau's Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 16. Volunteers endured challenging conditions throughout most of the day, and the previous six weeks of winter resulted in below average totals for both the species and individual bird counts. Fifty-nine species and just 8,439 birds were seen during the day. Highlights included the two Wood Ducks, and a new high count for Gadwall.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count or CW only</u>		
Canada Goose	814	Rock Pigeon	62
Wood Duck	2	Northern Pygmy-owl	cw
Gadwall	31	Short-eared Owl	1
Eurasian Wigeon	cw	Belted Kingfisher	1
American Wigeon	81	Downy Woodpecker	cw
Mallard	2,934	Hairy Woodpecker	3
Northern Pintail	5	Northern Flicker	cw
Green-winged Teal	47	Northern Shrike	cw
Greater Scaup	259	Steller's Jay	47
Lesser Scaup	3	Black-billed Magpie	39
Unidentified Scaup	4	Northwestern Crow	660
Harlequin Duck	67	Common Raven	518
Surf Scoter	179	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	116
White-winged Scoter	249	Red-breasted Nuthatch	2
Black Scoter	1	Brown Creeper	10
Unidentified Scoters	23	Winter Wren	2
Long-tailed Duck	8	American Dipper	7
Bufflehead	81	Golden-crowned Kinglet	28
Common Goldeneye	123	Unidentified Kinglets	6
Barrow's Goldeneye	182	American Robin	1
Unidentified Goldeneyes	24	Varied Thrush	cw
Hooded Merganser	8	European Starling	cw
Common Merganser	37	Bohemian Waxwing	3
Red-breasted Merganser	54	Song Sparrow	13
Common Loon	4	Dark-eyed Junco	88
Yellow-billed Loon	2	Snow Bunting	60
Horned Grebe	46	Pine Grosbeak	6
Red-necked Grebe	14	White-winged Crossbill	cw
Pelagic Cormorant	19	Unidentified Crossbills	2
Unidentified Cormorants	1	Common Redpoll	66
Great Blue Heron	5	Pine Siskin	1
Bald Eagle	131	TOTAL SPECIES ON COUNT	
Northern Goshawk	1	DAY	59
Killdeer	1	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	8,439
Black Turnstone	2	Count Week Species	9
Rock Sandpiper	cw	Total Species for week	68
Dunlin	306		
Mew Gull	46		
Herring Gull	7		
Glauous-winged Gull	864		
Unidentified Gulls	1		
Common Murre	2		
Pigeon Guillemot	2		
Marbled Murrelet	27		



SEABIRDS HITTING THE SLOPES AT EAGLECREST By Matt Kirchhoff

When most people are just waking up for work, Kristen Romanoff is already out skiing. Two or 3 times a week, she and several friends hike up the mountain at Eaglecrest ski area for some telemarking in trackless powder -- their way illuminated by moonlight, and the narrow beam of their headlamps. This winter, they've had company. In the hour before sunrise, like clockwork, they've been hearing the keer call of Marbled Murrelets -- scores of them -- flying up Fish Creek Valley and Eaglecrest ski area, headed for ... well ... WHAT? The Ptarmigan Chair lift?

These are *SEA*-birds. Seabirds are supposed to spend their lives on the water, coming ashore only to nest ... in *summer*. Whereas other seabirds nest on cliffs or in burrows, Marbled Murrelets typically fly miles inland, looking for a suitable moss platform in the bough of an old-growth tree. The location of this bird's nest was one of the longest-running questions in the bird world. The first unquestioned nest was found in a tree in California, in 1974. Now, it appears, we're on the cusp of describing their après-ski habits as well.

Gus van Vliet, a local Juneau birder who has long been monitoring Marbled Murrelets, says this odd winter behavior has been known for awhile. And it's pretty common in Southeast Alaska. Anyone with the perseverance to get up before dawn, in winter, and position themselves in the right place is likely to hear them. Appropriately enough, another dependable location to hear these birds is on Perseverance trail, behind town.

Gus introduced me to someone who, quite possibly, has heard more Marbled Murrelets in winter than anyone else. That person is Jim Fowler, a local artist, a busy family man, and a guy with a serious murrelet habit. By serious, I mean he drove to Eaglecrest to listen for Marbled Murrelets before work (3 or 4 AM in the summer), one day a week, 40 weeks a year, for 3 YEARS! When asked why, Jim, in typical low-key style, says "I just enjoyed starting my day early". The unique data Jim voluntarily gathered over those 3 years contributed to a scientific publication on the unusual behavior of these birds.

During the recent cold snap, with temperatures hovering around zero, Jim was back at it again. Halfway up Eaglecrest Road, his truck pulled tight against a snow bank, Jim held a penlight with his mouth and scribbled rapidly as Julie Koehler (a new recruit to winter murrelet watching) called out the birds. It was exhilarating. In 30 minutes they tallied 119 Marbled Murrelets, each heading somewhere up this wintry, snowbound valley. Questions about where they end up, what they do when they get there, and why, are complete unknowns.

In the last decade, millions of dollars have been spent studying Marbled Murrelets in the Lower 48 and Canada. In those places it is a threatened species, declining in number as the old trees it depends on disappear. In Alaska, and particularly near Juneau, this species is unusually abundant, and scientists would like to know exactly why. It's nice that while most of Juneau sleeps, a few hardy volunteers are working to answer that question ... one cold morning at a time.

Matt Kirchhoff, a member of Juneau Audubon and a biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, invites anyone interested in experiencing early-morning murrelet "watching" to give him a call at 465-4328.

Conservation Issues in 2007 - How will we decide? Matt Kirchhoff - Conservation Chair

As the incoming conservation chair of Juneau Audubon, I'd like to offer a few comments on how this organization chooses the issues it works on, and how you, as members, can help direct the board in this work in 2007.

As a regional Audubon Chapter, there are literally hundreds of issues from Haines to Ketchikan that our organization may choose to get involved in. The range of issues is very wide. Below are some of the issues begging conservation advocacy work in the past year:

- Tongass Land Management Plan by USFSI
- Kensington mine and Tulsequah Chief mine.
- Proposed second channel crossing.
- Juneau Airport runway expansion.
- Proposed tree removal between dike trail and expanded float plane pond.
- Solid waste management at Juneau landfill.
- Development of the North Douglas golf course - (chemicals and wetlands fill).
- Effects of motorized craft on wildlife and water quality of Auke Lake.
- Recycling in Juneau.
- Effects of commercial jet boat tours on salmon spawning habitat in the Chilkat River.
- Proposal to run sled-dog tours on private land in Sheep Creek Valley.
- Proposals to transfer lands important to public recreation into private ownership.
- Proposals to restrict dogs on selected hiking trails in Juneau.
- Proposals to place fill on wetlands.
- Proposals for all manner of eco-tourism ideas, from zip lines, to wildlife viewing.
- Hardening and widening trails, and whether commercial interests can or can't use them.
- Proposals to open areas currently closed to hunting, at the expense of wildlife viewing.

This isn't an exhaustive list, but I'm sure it touches on issues that are near and dear to one or more of our members hearts and we encourage you to work on your issues individually. However, we as a board cannot do everything, nor should we try. The board tries to make decisions strategically. And you, as members, should be able to weigh in on how the board chooses. To that end, I'll try to capture the board's general train of thinking as we evaluate the smorgasbord of conservation issues presented each year.

If it's an issue involving National Interest Lands, we tend to defer to our State Audubon office in Anchorage, and to other statewide and National environmental groups to lead the effort. So you won't see Juneau Audubon putting a lot of resources into The Arctic Refuge, or Northeast NPRA (National petroleum reserve). Certainly these are critically important issues, but we let others carry the water on these.

In the case of large Southeast-wide issues within the northern panhandle, like the Juneau Access road, fast ferries, and the Kensington mine, the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC) takes the lead. Juneau Audubon is a member of SEACC, and we almost always support SEACC's position on these issues, but typically not with active, independent work by our own board.

We tend to favor issues where our membership has expertise or logical interest. Protection of birds and critical wetland habitats are good examples of where we do want to be involved. So issues like the second channel crossing, airport expansion into the Mendenhall Wetlands are likely to rise nearer the top. We're less likely to get involved in allocation issues between wildlife hunters and viewers, or effects of very rapid tourism growth on downtown traffic and congestion.

We tend to favor bigger local issues, including those in all Southeast communities, where a high percentage of our membership has a stake. For that reason, we're more likely to address a large golf course proposal, rather than a fill permit associate with an individual homeowner's remodel project. The small projects are important in total, but they could overwhelm our capacity to respond effectively.

As we roll into 2007, I'd like to invite you to weigh in on the issues you think Juneau Audubon should be involved in. I'd also like to invite any members from all over Southeast, with an interest in helping with conservation work, to contact me conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org or 586-5816. We'd love to have you involved.

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National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You
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AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic
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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 33, Number 6

Juneau Audubon Society

February 2007

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series

February 8, Egan Room 222/221, the Glacier View room, immediately above the Egan lecture hall. 7:00 p.m.

Cold-water Corals of Alaska

Bob Stone, NOAA Fisheries scientist, will share some spectacular videos of cold-water corals and other deep-sea life from around the State of Alaska including some from our own watery "front" yard. Come learn more about these fascinating marine creatures that until recently have been hidden beneath the surface of the North Pacific Ocean and whose discovery has captivated marine scientists from around the world.

March 8th presentation: "Birding and Turtling in Trinidad and Tobago" with Linda Shaw and Beverly Agler

Birder Profiles - Sitka: by Jeff Sauer Juneau Audubon President

This month we profile three big birders in Sitka. The situation in Sitka parallels that of Gustavus, reported last month in the Raven. There is the older retired expert(s), who are out every day, and have birded for decades. (Bruce Paige in Gustavus). Then there is the junior, with just a few years of serious birding experience, but coming on like gang busters. (Matt Drumheller in Gustavus). The senior bird experts in Sitka are Marge Ward and Marlys Tedin (known as Tedin). The junior is Matt Goff.

Marge Ward and Marlys Tedin

Marge and Tedin have been a birding institution in Sitka for decades. Marge came to Sitka in 1949 as a nurse with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help build the Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital. Tedin moved to Anchorage around 1953 to help build the BIA hospital there. Both hospitals were built in large part due to a Tuberculosis epidemic in Alaska. Marge came from upstate New York and had never been farther west than New York State. Tedin came from South Dakota. In 1955 Tedin moved from Anchorage to Barrow, which she loved, and eventually to Sitka a couple years later. In 1958 the two nurses bought some land together and put a trailer on it (and eventually a house). In the

winter, with heavy snow back then, they felt bad for the birds in their yard, so they started feeding them. There was no birdseed back then so breadcrumbs were tried. That evolved into oats. They bought so many oats one winter that the boy at the grocery commented, "Wow you must really like oatmeal!" Thus, in the late 50s and early 60s they became backyard birders. They sent for a bird book by mail, expanded beyond their yard, and kept a list in the back of the book. In 1980 a guy at the forest service taught a natural history/ bird class and they both took it. The teacher asked them to keep detailed bird observation records once a week. They started that, but then soon started doing it every day. It was done on 5x8cards. They have been doing it ever since. Tedin retired as a nurse in 1982 and Marge in 88. They are out birding every day as they have done for decades. Besides their daily records, they compile the rare-bird quarterly reports from Sitka for the state tally.

Matt Goff

Marge and Tedin were starting to wonder what would become of their decades of bird observations after they were gone. They thought they had something that might be of some value. But the records are all on index cards. Then came along a young mathematician/ statistician who had gotten the birdwatching bug. Matt Goff grew up in Sitka and graduated from high school there in 1993. He went off to college and came back with a masters degree in Statistics and a PhD in Mathematics. (Washington State University). He returned to live in Sitka in 2002 and became a math professor at Sheldon Jackson College. He had been interested in plants for some time, but in 2003 got seriously into birding. In the fall of 2003 he got a decent telephoto camera lens that allowed him to shoot pictures of birds. That was it. He has been birding seriously ever since. He is out birding three or four times a week (by bicycle and on foot - he has no car). He is a frequent contributor to Eaglechat and has come upon some excellent rarities in Sitka. He is taking pictures of birds and has his own website, Sitka Nature. He will soon be taking over the quarterly rarity reports for Sitka. And, he is beginning to work on compiling and digitizing the tremendously valuable data that Marge and Tedin have gathered. After all he has a masters in statistics and doctorate in math. Matt's internet site is at Sitkanature.org. It has lots of bird pictures and his Sitka bird observations.

In future issues we will profile other birders including Alice Johnstone, in Sitka, as well as the extraordinary birders of Ketchikan.

NOTES FROM SITKA By Matt Goff

The Common Redpolls have invaded Sitka in numbers that are apparently unusually high for the area. Sizable flocks of Common Redpolls (sometimes mixed in with Pine Siskins) have been seen regularly around since the first snows in November. There have also been a couple of Hoary Redpolls reported in the mix.

Trumpeter Swans seem to have decided Starrigavan Estuary is the place for them to be this winter. There have been two adults for about 2 months and earlier this month they were joined by 6 additional birds, 3 adults and 3 juveniles. More recently, two more adults have joined the party.

Starrigavan has also seen up to 20 Black Oystercatchers feeding on the tideflats at low tide. A lone Dunlin was also spotted. Dunlin are casual along the Sitka road system outside of migration periods.

A mostly frozen Swan Lake has provided excellent viewing opportunities of several Ring-necked Ducks, a female Northern Pintail, and a Glaucous Gull. A couple of male Hooded Mergansers also visited one day (they may be the same ones that have also been seen at Starrigavan this month).

The first seminar in the Natural History series at Sheldon Jackson College is 25 January. It will be a talk on the Birds of the Sitka Area. Along with photos of many species taken around Sitka, the talk will feature information from an unpublished manuscript written by J. Daniel Webster (now available on-line at

http://www.sitkanature.org/life/animals/aves/Webster_Birds_of_Sitka.html

). This manuscript was written in 2005, and does a pretty thorough job of covering the published records of birds in the Sitka Area. Also featured will be some initial findings of interest taken from the observation data collected by Marge Ward and Marlys Tedin. They have been recording daily observations of birds in Sitka since 1980. The amount of information they have amassed is inspiring. For more information about this data and what is being done with it, see visit <http://www.sitkanature.org/wordpress/2007/01/04/a-preliminary-look-at-marge-and-tedins-data/>

Other bird related topics tentatively planned for the seminar series include Antarctic Birds, American Dippers, Avian Internal Anatomy, Chilean Birds, and Learning to Understand Bird Language. As plans solidify, the updated schedule will be kept at <http://www.sitkanature.org/seminar.html>

MEG CARTWRIGHT, MEMBERSHIP JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY

In the January board meeting, Meg Cartwright agreed to fill the vacant board position. She will be primarily responsible for membership organization and recruitment of new members. Meg recently retired as a fisheries biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Although she considers herself an intermediate birder, her one claim-to-fame was the result of being in the right place at the right time. Meg and Andy McGregor recorded the first sighting of the Steller's Sea Eagle on the Juneau area in the mid-1980s while hauling camp equipment up the Taku River in early summer. It would be several more years before the bird was sighted again and documented with a photo by Skip Wallen. She is looking forward to getting more involved with the Juneau Audubon Society. "It has always been one of my favorite organizations because of its commitment to conservation issues as well as recreational birding." she said. Meg can be reached by e-mail at membership@juneau-audubon-society.org and welcomes any suggestions on how to get more people involved in the Audubon Society.

SKAGWAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT By Elaine Furbish

Skagway's 5th Christmas Bird Count fell on a quiet, snowy day; visibility was difficult with flat light conditions. Despite the poor conditions, the number of species seen on count day was 33, with 3 additional species recorded during count week - about average for our circle. New species for us were Snowy Owl, Merlin, and Hoary Redpoll. Our record of Hoary Redpolls this year may indicate that we're getting better at distinguishing them from Common Redpolls. The Snowy Owl and Merlin aren't considered to be out of range or that unusual, but this is the first time we've seen them during the CBC. We did note that Stellar's Jays were about twice the number we've seen in the past, and birders in the Yukon have reported unusual numbers of Stellar's Jays in the southern Yukon this autumn/winter. We are happy to report that no beak deformities were seen among any of our birds.

WRANGELL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT by Bonnie Demerjian

Thirteen participants scanned water and shore for Wrangell's 2006 Christmas Bird Count. Clear, calm weather made birding by boat easier and a number of the usual species showed up for the count. Among the most numerous were Harlequin Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and Common Mergansers. Smaller numbers of Greater Scaups, Common Goldeneyes, Red-breasted Mergansers, Pacific, Common and Yellow-billed Loons were reported as well as Horned, Red-necked and Western Grebes. No scoters were observed.

One Northern Goshawk showed up near the airport and the beaches produced Black Turnstones and Rock sandpipers. Magpies have been around town all winter and 8 were spotted on count day. European Starlings also seem to be increasing in Wrangell, doubling their numbers from 2005. Songbird numbers were low, perhaps due in part to fewer participants this year. Particularly noticeable was the lack of Golden-crowned Kinglets. One White-crowned Sparrow and small numbers of juncos, Pine and White-winged Grosbeaks, Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins were reported. Total individual birds numbered 2585, total species reported was 49.

BIRDING NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

January's blustery weather has made birding rather challenging, so only a few noteworthy species were seen.

Another vividly plumed male **Purple Finch** visited a feeder on January 12.

A flock of 8 **Ringed-necked Ducks** were seen at Ward Lake on the 15th.

The enduringly resilient **Anna's Hummingbird** has remained at the same heated feeder through late January!

On the 13th, a 1st winter **Glaucous Gull** was found at our landfill. This species is a very uncommon migrant and winter visitant through late March.

The overall numbers of gulls and frequency of uncommon gull species has declined dramatically area wide since Ketchikan began incinerating garbage in 1995.

Progress for people is sometimes detrimental for wildlife!

A few **Common Redpolls** have been here this winter. This species is irregular on our island but is much more commonly seen on the mainland areas of S.E. Alaska.

I know it's a bit early to think about spring migration, but several species may start arriving in just a few weeks!

The American Robin has been seen here as early as February 22 with the majority of the big flocks moving through around mid-March.

Both American Wigeon and Eurasian Wigeon have been very rarely spotted here in late February.

Bonaparte's Gulls will start migrating up the channel by late March and a few Ruby-crowned Kinglets begin to appear in the woods by mid-March.

I'm always excited to see the small flocks of Trumpeter Swans making their way north as early as mid-March; a sure sign that spring is on the way!

Thanks again to Steve Heinl and Andy Piston for their great information that helps add so much to our birding news each month!

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS -- December 2006 - January 23, 2007

Common Redpoll numbers continued to increase through December, and flocks of redpolls could be seen at most feeders and in most habitats through January. Interestingly, there have been few, if any, **Pine Siskins** around Gustavus during this time. **White-winged Crossbills** are seen regularly in small numbers, but nothing like the large numbers of last winter, and they are not singing like they did last winter.

A **Western Grebe**, reported late October to early November, was seen once in December and once in January. A **Ring-necked Duck** was seen on 1/17. After a brief absence, a **Greater Yellowlegs** made an appearance on 1/11. **Dunlin, Rock Sandpipers, and Sanderlings** have been along the beaches through the winter. Their numbers have been difficult to estimate due to movement of the birds along beaches accessible only on foot and due to weather conditions. On 1/11, a flock containing 3,000 to 5,000 shorebirds was spread out along the eastern end of the Gustavus beach. Of these, it was roughly estimated that 85% were Dunlin, 10% were Rock Sandpipers, and 5% were Sanderlings.

There were two sightings of **Snowy Owls** during the period and one report of a **Short-eared Owl**. There were many reports of **Northern Pygmy-Owls**. A pygmy-owl was recently observed taking a redpoll at a feeder. A **Barred Owl** was heard on several nights through the period, making this the first winter this bird has been detected in Gustavus. Vole numbers continue to be high, so owls should have no trouble finding prey.

The hybrid **Northern Flicker** reported in the last newsletter continues to make the rounds to local suet feeders. Five **Horned Larks** were seen on 12/31. An **American Pipit** was seen on 12/19 and 12/31. Six **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** were observed near the town dock on 1/8, a first winter record for the area.

Thanks to Bruce Paige for records information. Thanks to Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Sally McLaughlin, and Kathy Lochman for sharing observations. By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com

HAINES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT By Georgia Giacobbe

The birders in Haines braved lousy weather two days before Christmas to count birds in town and in the Bald Eagle Preserve. Many of the forest birds were hunkered down, so the largest counts were sea ducks. Thirty species of all birds were identified with Barrow's Goldeneyes leading the list at 567. Gulls counted included 198 Glaucous-winged Gulls and 148 Mew Gulls. The next most numerous were 101 Northwestern Crows. Only one sighting of note was 7 Surf Scoters. They are not always spotted here in the winter.

Out at the eagle preserve, 10 species were counted, with the eagles toping the list, naturally. This year 1,193 bald eagles were counted, up from last year. Of these, 1094 were adults and 99 were immatures. Eighty-four Ravens were out in the blustery weather. The next most common birds were Common Merganzers at 75, then 67 Glaucous-winged gulls, 13 Trumpeter Swans, 8 Red-breasted Mergansers, and 2 Common Redpolls.

This January, continuing snow storms have kept both the birds and people hunkered down. However, there has been one possible identification of a crow with a deformed beak. Verification is being pursued.

REPORTS TAKEN FROM EAGLECHAT

Posted by: "Paul Suchanek"
Mon Jan 22, 2007 2:44 pm (PST)

Up until this week, I was having intermittent feeder visits of a flock of about 75 to 100 redpolls but I haven't seen them during the last few days. This is the first year that I have ever seen redpolls consistently in January here in Juneau, in a few other years I have seen them consistently sometimes in February but more often in March. There have been good numbers of redpolls since late October - estimated there were perhaps 500 on the rocky peninsula in front of the glacier on November 5. The "fall" redpolls were mostly feeding in the alders and I didn't see any come to my feeder until early January. The movements of this species seem mysteriously unpredictable.

At Fish Creek this AM, there was a flock of 25 green-winged teal containing a male which was a hybrid with Eurasian (common) teal (illustrated in Sibley guide).

Posted by: "Beth Peluso"
Sun Jan 14, 2007 1:51 pm (PST)

I've had the pleasure of watching a very large flock of redpolls at my apartment in Douglas (by Lawson Creek for the Juneau-ites). At times there have been almost 60 birds! I've been trying to find a hoary redpoll among them, but so far no luck. I did get to watch one take a snow bath--he'd

carve a little off the side of the hollow he was in and then roll in it, flicking it over his back with his wings. Looked cold to me, but he seemed to enjoy it. The whole flock has been here all day for the past two days.

Posted by: "Michael Goldstein"

Wed Jan 17, 2007 3:41 pm (PST)

I'm hoping you can help me compile any black oystercatcher observations in the Juneau area. Actually I will take any locations out to Hoonah and Pt Adolphus, but not in GBNP (places I can get to in a day from Juneau docks). I'm actually trying to map out locations for some survey and capture effort we will complete this May. But any locations you can offer (during any season) will be helpful for our efforts at determining interseasonal movements and wintering areas.

If you would like to help or have questions, contact Michael at Email: mgoldstein@fs.fed.us Office: 907.586.7905. Cell: 907.350.3087

The Yukon Bird Club posted the following information and Web sight in their email:

"The latest updated Alaska Bird Checklist"

<http://www.uaf.edu/museum/bird/products/checklist.pdf>

DEFORMED BIRD ALERT Over the past several years, Alaskans have witnessed a startling increase of beak deformities among local birds. Large numbers of Black-capped Chickadees and smaller numbers of many other species of birds have appeared with grossly overgrown and crossed beaks. We began research in 1999, and have since identified nearly 1,500 deformed Black-capped Chickadees in south-central Alaska—the highest concentration of such abnormalities ever recorded in a wild bird population anywhere! More recently, rapidly increasing numbers of other species, including Downy Woodpeckers, Northwestern Crows, Steller's Jays, and Black-billed Magpies, have also been reported with beak deformities by biologists and local residents throughout the state.



Although we do not yet know the source of this widespread problem, we continue to investigate potential causes, including environmental contaminants, nutritional deficiencies, and disease. Nearly all of the species affected are year-round residents, and factors responsible for this cluster of deformities appear to be unique to Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. In addition to a multi-year study of chickadees in south-central Alaska, we are beginning the next phase of research. We need additional information about the distribution and prevalence of beak deformities among Northwestern Crows and other affected species. Reports from the public will help us to determine where and how many birds are affected. If you see a bird with a deformed beak, please note the following information.

- Species and number of deformed individuals
- Date of observation
- Location of observation
- Description of deformity
- Habitat where bird was observed
- Behavior
- Flock composition
- PHOTOS are especially helpful!

Submit this information via our online form:

http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/landbirds/beak_deformity/observerreport.html

Or contact Caroline Van Hemert at the Alaska Science Center: 1011 E Tudor Rd, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907) 786-3981 caroline_vanhemert@usgs.gov



Save these birding dates!

As the seasons change, we hope you'll join in with some of the winter birding activities that Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology will be hosting over the next few months throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Mark your calendars for the tenth annual Great Backyard Bird Count, 16-19 February 2007. We'd like to make this the best GBBC ever, and could use your help in spreading word about this event. It's fun and helps everyone learn more about birds. If you represent an Audubon chapter and want to promote GBBC, send an email to aenglish@audubon.org. If you'd like to spread the word about the Great Backyard Bird Count more generally, consider joining us as a Great Backyard Bird Count Ambassador.

Project Feeder Watch

Project FeederWatch needs your help to keep track of the birds at your feeders this winter. Count birds as often as two days each week from November 11 to April 6. Your counts will help scientists monitor changes in feeder bird populations over the entire winter. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird-identification poster, calendar, and instruction booklet. For more information or to sign up in the U.S., please visit <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/> or call (800) 843-2473; if in Canada, please visit

<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/national/pfw.html> or call (888) 448-2473.

As an ambassador, you can choose your level of involvement—from putting up posters in your neighborhood to contacting newspapers or leading workshops. For more information, visit www.birdsource.org/gbbc or sign up to receive an ambassador packet by mail. Write to Jennifer Smith at jls39@cornell.edu. Type GBBC in the subject line. Include your name, address, phone number, and email address in the message. Write "Media OK" if it would be all right for us to give your contact information to reporters who would like to speak with a GBBC participant from their area.

Paul Green Janis Dickinson
Director of Citizen Science
National Audubon Society /Cornell Lab of Ornithology

JUNEAU AUDUBON WEIGHS IN ON SECOND CROSSING By Matt Kirchhoff, Conservation Chair

Members of the Juneau Audubon board met recently with Jan Caulfield, of Shineberg and Associates, to get an update on planning efforts for the second channel crossing. This crossing has been talked about for many years, primarily as a means of encouraging further development on north Douglas Island, easing traffic congestion at the current bridge, and improving access to Eaglecrest for residents of the Mendenhall Valley. A total of 15 different crossing routes have been under consideration at one time or another, ranging all the way from relatively short crossings near salmon creek, to a tunnel under the airport runway. The costs, both fiscal and environmental, of these alternatives vary widely. The City Assembly has passed a resolution narrowing the scope of potential crossing routes to 4. All four are on the Mendenhall Refuge.

The Juneau Audubon Society is recommending to the Assembly that they reconsider the underlying need for a second channel crossing. If the community supports making the second channel crossing a high priority, the Assembly should consider a wider range of Alternatives.

This project is a long way from final planning stages, and it is far down on DOT's list of transportation priorities (meaning funding is scarce). Nonetheless, on an issue of this potential impact, it's important for the Juneau Audubon Society to weigh in early.

Ed. Note: Federal funds are not available for crossing the refuge and a high bridge over the boat channel is not allowed near the airport. A crossing at Salmon Creek directly accessing the hospital would be shorter and might avoid these problems with the Assembly's four choices. Juneau Audubon recommends a Salmon Creek crossing as the only practical route.

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Volume 33, Number 7

Juneau Audubon Society

March 2007

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series
March 8, Egan Lecture Hall (221/222) (Glacier View Room)
7:00 p.m.

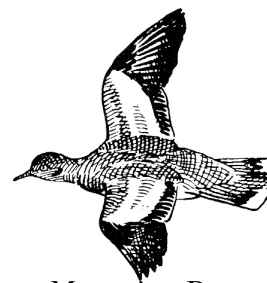
"Birding and turtling in Trinidad and Tobago" presented by
Linda Shaw and Beverly Agler

Come join us for a trip to the tropical islands off the NE coast of South America. Enjoy the exotic species like the cave dwelling oil birds. See the beaches where turtles congregate to lay their eggs in the sand after traveling thousands of miles through the vastness of the oceans. Sip tea on the Asa Wright Nature Center's veranda whilst observing hummingbirds and parrots, and join us for a leisurely stroll to the manakin lek and bellbird forest".

April 12 at 7 p.m. UAS "Exploring the Shorezone web page" with Mandy Lindeberg, April 12 at 7pm UAS Egan room 221/222. Come fly the coast of SE Alaska and zoom down into Berners Bay for a close up look at flora and fauna of the near shore waters.

Birder Profiles: by Jeff Sauer, Juneau Audubon President
Ketchikan: Steve Heint and Andy Piston

This month we profile two top-notch birders in Ketchikan. They are Steve Heint and Andy Piston. These two very serious birders have put Ketchikan on the bird map of Alaska. Information coming from them has caused Alaska birders to sit up and take notice, but also contributed greatly to new or little known scientific knowledge of Ketchikan birds such as: Mourning Doves and Band-tailed Pigeons in Ketchikan, seen every year for weeks, and now known as to when and where; Anna's Hummingbird documented in Ketchikan for months at a time; California Gulls now documented as a fairly common gull species in the Ketchikan area.



Mourning Dove

And then there are the rarities of just the past few years: a Northern Mockingbird on the Christmas Bird Count this past December; Little Gull; Common Grackle; Brewer's Blackbird; Western Meadowlark; Tropical Kingbird; Orchard Oriole; Black-headed Grosbeak; Rose-breasted Grosbeak; White Wagtail; Nashville Warbler; and on and on. Through dedicated daily birding, and with meticulous record keeping, the information has been coming out. And, of course, what is really interesting is this picture of a unique bird place in the state. No where else does the local bird list look quite like this southern southeast town.

Steve and Andy have been at it for over twelve years. They both work together in fisheries at the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, and both get to work out in the field a lot in the summer. Steve Heint has been a birder since high school in Oregon and a very serious birder since around the time of his 1990 arrival to Ketchikan.

Andy Piston moved to Ketchikan in 1993. He grew up in Bellevue Washington. He took a job with the Fish & Game and started to work with Steve Heint. Andy had an interest in the natural world but was not a birder. He quickly saw in Steve a very avid birder. Thinking perhaps that Steve's interest in birds was a bit over the top, a few wise cracks were made now and then. But one day, way back then, the two were in a field camp out on Prince of Wales Island, when a Northern Pygmy-Owl called. Steve knew what it was. Not only that but Steve knew how to imitate it with his own voice/ whistle. Steve did that and the little owl flew right to them, very close. Some days later in the same place a similar occurrence happened but this time with a Barred Owl. Andy was rather blown away by these events, and they proved to be defining moments for him. He started birding, and very seriously at that. And, of course he had a great teacher in the cubicle next to him. The rest is history. Steve and Andy do bird alone, but also spend a lot of time birding together. The results have been amazing. Lucky for us. Steve Heint is on the Alaska Checklist Committee, which puts him in the realm of the very top birders in Alaska. Steve also wrote the Ketchikan chapter (as well as the Hyder chapter) of the American Birding Association, *Birder's Guide to Alaska*. Andy is the Christmas Bird count Compiler for Ketchikan. Steve lives in Ketchikan with his wife Brooke Hunt and two daughters. Brooke is a local gal and the reason Steve ended up in Ketchikan. Steve has a BS in Biology. Andy is married to Ardy Piston and is soon to finish up his bachelors degree.

[KETCHIKAN REPORT FOR FEBRUARY-by Teri Goucher](#) (Ed. Note: Teri says she gets quite a bit of her information about birds from Steve and Andy)

[Winter has released it's grip slightly in our area this month as spring bulbs begin to emerge and rain showers outnumber the snow squalls.](#)

[On January 28 three **Brandt's Cormorants** were seen on the mountain point boat ramp breakwater south of town.](#)

[Two **White-throated Sparrows** continue to winter at a home on the north end and two **Black-billed Magpies** remain in the Ward Cove area.](#)

- Clover Pass, about 13 miles north of town, is an excellent area to view various sea bird species. On February 25 there were approximately 2000 **Marbled Murrelets** off shore along with a very early alternate plumage **Pigeon Guillemot** and a **Rhinoceros Auklet** which represented one of the few records of this species for this month.

- There were two **Glaucous Gulls** found in the huge mass of feeding birds that frequent the waters near a fish processing plant in town. This spot attracts hundreds of Long-tailed Ducks, several scoter species, mergansers, goldeneye, the occasional Black-legged Kittiwake, and thousands of gulls. In this congregation of birds, two **Kumlien's Gulls** were present the 6th through the 19th. Kumlien's Gulls are a race of Iceland Gull which is closely related to our Thayer's Gull. This gull resembles a small Glaucous Gull in coloring with a small slender bill with a pale base. The plumage is very light gray with pale buffy-brown barring overall including a barred tail. The debate continues as to whether Kumlien's Gulls are members of either Thayer's or Iceland gull species and the wide variation in plumage coloring throughout their ranges makes identification very difficult!

- Just a few weeks of winter remain before Spring birding begins, so get out there to find more unusual winter visitors!!

WRANGELL REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

Birding has been fairly dull around Wrangell this past month. Even the juncos have made themselves scarce. Bald eagles are showing up and a few are perching in companionable pairs as well as competing with gulls as they follow the shrimp boats into town.

The Great Backyard Bird Count produced mainly waterbirds. American widgeon, mallards, harlequin ducks, Barrow's goldeneyes, buffleheads, and common and red-breasted mergansers were the most common. Glaucous-winged gulls, of course, and mew gulls, a few marbled murrelets and common, Pacific and one yellow-billed loon were counted.

Earl and Mary Benitz who live all winter on Farm Island in the Stikine River delta report that one Lincoln's sparrow and a single fox sparrow have visited their feeder all winter. They report that a flock of a dozen or more pine grosbeaks, rare in Wrangell, feed nearby. A northern pygmy owl has also hung around and entertained them with its calls for months. A few weeks ago they spotted it in a nearby tree with a large mouse but only days ago found it dead from unknown causes. The Benitz' have a great horned owl nest within view of their cabin and have been hearing calls already this month. They say the owls nested last year on March 10 and will be watching for the event this year.

eBird Alaska By Rich Capitan, Education Specialist, Audubon Alaska

It's winter in Alaska, and I'm looking for things to do at home - tasks that have fallen by the wayside – cleaning the garage, organizing our bookshelves, trying to write that children's book I've been meaning to do, and cleaning up my bird Lifelist. It is more challenging than it sounds; gathering hastily written field notes scribbled onto AC grocery receipts with the Bean Goose, Smew, Bramblings, and Common Greenshank that I recorded while working as a naturalist on St. Paul Island a decade ago- all stuck in my National Geographic Bird Guide (first edition). If you are like me, luckily there is now a place to record bird sightings, in an organized fashion, that is detailed, easy to use and more importantly, your sightings can be shared with birders and researchers around the country. It also gives insight into the lives of our summer birds – where do Varied Thrushes migrate to?

In early 2007, Audubon Alaska will announce the launch of eBird Alaska, a portal to the greater eBird online database developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society.

eBird provides a simple mechanism for people to record birds observations made anywhere in North America. Once entered, you can retrieve information on your sightings, from the backyard, to the neighborhood, to your favorite bird-watching locations, at any time for personal use. eBird also allows you to explore your observations in more ways than just printing out your lists. For instance, you can create and manage maps and graphs or create tables, using your own or all eBird observations, summarized by week, month or year. Access to the entire historical database allows you to find out what other eBird participants are reporting from across North America. In addition, you have the satisfaction of contributing to the cumulative eBird database, which may be used by birdwatchers, scientists, and conservationists to learn more about the distributions, movements, and numbers of birds across the entire continent.

More information can be found at the eBird website: www.ebird.org. You can also contact Audubon Alaska's education specialist, Rich Capitan at: rcapitan@audubon.org or 907-276-7034 for more information. See you on eBird Alaska!

SKAGWAY BIRD CLUB WELCOMES VISITORS

The Skagway Bird Club would like to invite any Southeast Birders who come to Skagway in the next few months to spend an hour or two with us during your visit. We would be interested in hearing an informal talk/discussion about any birding subject of your interest, or perhaps simply accompany you for a brief bird walk so we can learn from your expertise. If you're going to be in Skagway and would like to participate with us, just give us a call:

Elaine Furbish (907) 983-2049 or

Sandy Snell-Dobert (907) 983-3510

Elaine or Sandy will arrange a meeting time and place with you, and then get the word out to the Skagway Birders.

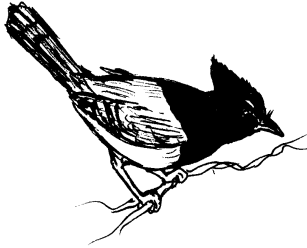
JUNEAU'S GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT By Brenda Wright

Juneau ranked second in number of counts with 43 but 4th in number of species with 40. Gustavus, Kodiak, and Sitka tallied more species than Juneau. Gustavus tallied 61 and the entire state had a count of 96 species. Juneau's most numerous species was mallard followed by mew gulls. To see results for other locations in Alaska or North America just go to www.gbhc.birdsource.org and click on "Explore the results" Please note that the number of herring gulls might be an accident of typing and that we all need to do our best to ensure the best possible data. Thanks to everyone who participated!

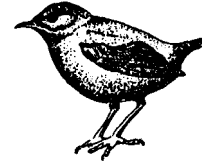
<u>Species [taxonomic]</u> <u>[alphabetic]</u>	<u>Number of Birds</u>	<u>Number of Checklists</u> <u>Reporting the Species</u>
<u>Canada Goose</u>	199	3
<u>Gadwall</u>	3	1
<u>Mallard</u>	1,013	21
<u>Greater Scaup</u>	72	2
<u>Harlequin Duck</u>	46	4
<u>Surf Scoter</u>	47	7
<u>White-winged Scoter</u>	2	1
<u>Black Scoter</u>	4	1
<u>Long-tailed Duck</u>	1	1
<u>Bufflehead</u>	34	8
<u>Common Goldeneye</u>	30	4
<u>Barrow's Goldeneye</u>	85	5
<u>Hooded Merganser</u>	1	1
<u>Common Merganser</u>	13	3
<u>Red-breasted Merganser</u>	14	6
<u>Pacific Loon</u>	4	1
<u>Common Loon</u>	1	1
<u>Horned Grebe</u>	20	4
<u>Bald Eagle</u>	63	22
<u>Dunlin</u>	40	1
<u>Mew Gull</u>	646	4
<u>Herring Gull</u>	186	9
<u>Glaucous-winged Gull</u>	345	12
<u>Common Murre</u>	2	2
<u>Pigeon Guillemot</u>	1	1
<u>Marbled Murrelet</u>	9	3
<u>Northern Pygmy-Owl</u>	1	1
<u>Steller's Jay</u>	14	9
<u>Black-billed Magpie</u>	3	3
<u>Northwestern Crow</u>	626	19
<u>Common Raven</u>	103	25
<u>Black-capped Chickadee</u>	6	1
<u>Chestnut-backed Chickadee</u>	61	15
<u>Brown Creeper</u>	1	1
<u>Varied Thrush</u>	1	1
<u>Song Sparrow</u>	3	3
<u>Dark-eyed Junco</u>	78	13
<u>Common Redpoll</u>	277	13
<u>Hoary Redpoll</u>	7	4
<u>Pine Siskin</u>	2	2
Total	4,064	

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

With 22 checklists, and 20 species Haines made the top 10 of communities in Alaska reporting in the Great Backyard Bird Count. This time the most commonly spotted bird



was not the Bald Eagle but the Common Raven at 169. The Common Redpoll was second at 79, the Bald Eagle came in third at 72. Rounding out the top ten species in Haines were Black Scoter at 37, Black-billed Magpie 25, Common Goldeneye 22, Rock Pigeon 19, Boreal Chickadee 19, Common Merganser 17, and Steller's Jay 14. The other ten



species spotted that weekend were Trumpeter Swan, Buffleheads, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Glaucous Gull, Gray Jay, Northwestern Crow, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, American Dipper, and one Great Horned Owl. The diversity of birds seems to be a mirror of the diversity of backyards in Haines.

SITKA REPORT By Matt Goff

At least 50 different species were reported in the Great Backyard Bird Count, up from a previous high of 47 in 2000 (45 are currently showing on the website and at least 5 more were reported and will be included, pending review). Unusual sightings included up to 4 Horned Puffins visible from town and at least two different Rhinoceros Auklets, also close to town.

The Common Redpolls that were so abundant earlier in the winter seem to have dispersed when temperatures were warmer in February. It will be interesting to see if they return if current colder temperatures and snow persist.

As we look forward to the influx of birds with the coming Spring, perhaps it's time to reflect on some of the birds that have spent this winter in our area. In addition to the birds that winter most years in some abundance, there have been one or two American Wigeons, a Northern Pintail, and several Ring-necked Ducks at Swan Lake. Starrigavan has consistently had Trumpeter Swans, a Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and up to 20 Black Oystercatchers. Also reported throughout the winter were a Western Screech Owl and a two Sharp-shinned Hawks. Birds notable by their relative scarcity this year have included Golden-crowned Kinglets and Varied Thrushes.

Mary Willson was the speaker for the 22 February Natural History Seminar at Sheldon Jackson College. She gave a very interesting talk about her work studying the American Dipper in the Juneau area. We enjoyed having the opportunity to listen to her talk and visit with her while she was here. Seminars planned for March include a March 8th talk in how distances to far away stars and galaxies are determined, and a March 29th talk on the birds of Chile. More information can be found at

<http://www.sitkanature.org/seminar.html>

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com
January 24-February 27, 2007

This year's Great Backyard Bird Count occurred during four days of mild temperatures with rain, snow, fog, and wind. There were a few breaks in the weather during which conditions were good. The number of participants in Gustavus was down from last year, but coverage of the area was probably better than last year. A total of 65 species were found. The only new bird to the count was a **Western Grebe** which has been seen sporadically this winter in Bartlett Cove. A **Boreal Owl** was seen for the third GBBC in the last four years. This was the second sighting of a Boreal Owl this month. The hybrid **Northern Flicker** made the count. This bird shows traits of both red-shafted and yellow-shafted flickers and has been visiting suet feeders around town through the winter. The high counts for shorebirds were 3000 **Dunlin**, 720 **Rock Sandpipers**, and 280 **Sanderlings**. **Northern Shrikes** and **Merlins** were more numerous than usual, and **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were seen by two people. Other highlights were 3 **Ring-necked Ducks**, a high count of 51 **Pacific Loons**, a **Peregrine Falcon**, a **Short-eared Owl**, and several **Northern Pygmy-Owls**. A single **Pine Siskin** that has been frequenting a local feeder with a flock of redpolls was the only siskin in the count. (Results on the GBBC website continue to be updated. Currently, Black-capped Chickadees are shown in the Gustavus results. These will be changed to Chestnut-backed Chickadees.) This was the second GBBC in which I had the pleasure of watching and listening as a **Northern Shrike** sang. This year, the shrike was singing a duet with a **Black-billed Magpie** that was in the adjacent tree out in open grasslands along the beach.

During the month, **Common Redpoll** numbers declined, although small flocks are still being seen. **Northern Pygmy-owls** were seen and heard regularly. One **Great Horned Owl** and multiple **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were reported during the period. There has been a drop in owl reports during the current cold spell. A **Greater Yellowlegs** was seen



American Three-toed Woodpecker
Photo by Nat Drumheller

twice in late January, and a **Lapland Longspur** was with a flock of **Snow Buntings** on 2/23. An **American Three-toed Woodpecker** has been a regular on a stack of firewood in town since 2/10, but it decided to not show itself for the GBBC. On 2/4, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** were observed "smoke bathing" on a chimney cap from a woodstove as well as taking soot from the cap in their bills and rubbing it in their feathers.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Julie Vathke, Larry Platt, and Tania Lewis for sharing observations.

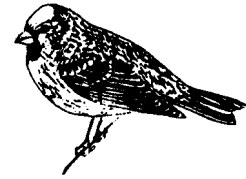
Talk about a close encounter!!!!

Posted in Eaglechat by: Bruce Page Fri Jan 26, 2007 10:14 am

Yesterday morning, in the uplands east of the Gustavus dock, I spotted a lone bird a few hundred yards distant flying in my direction. Putting the binocs on it, I ided it as a juv. common redpoll, and continued to keep the glasses on it as it flew onward.

After a short while, the focus maxed out and the bird blurred. Looking over the binocs, the redpoll approached, before finally spreading it's wings, rising a bit, and lit neatly on my hat. Though the redpoll call is usually too high for me to pick up, this one gave a clear series of notes when landing. With my green wardrobe, I do resemble a shrub,

admittedly. Over the years, this is the fourth species of wild bird to alight on my person. The others were a mountain chickadee, chestnut-backed chickadee (numerous times), and a red-breasted nuthatch. How's that for a personal checklist?



PROPOSED GOLF COURSE IN NORTH DOUGLAS IS LINKED TO HOUSING

Conservation Chair, Matt Kirchhoff

I had a conversation recently with Peter Metcalfe about Totem Creek's plans for developing the proposed golf course on North Douglas Island in Juneau. We covered far more ground than can be relayed in this short article, but I think it is useful to report to our members on where the project stands, where it is headed, and to promote ongoing dialogue on this issue. Articles in future newsletters will cover specific aspects of this project in more detail.

The golf course has a conditional use permit from the city, and Totem Creek is now working with two developers to develop a comprehensive development plan. The golf course will cost an estimated \$10 million to build and \$500,000 a year to operate. The proponents of the course intend to develop it with private funds, alleviating the concern that this project would consume precious city revenues or increase our tax burden. The plan, in concept, is to combine the golf course with residential development. In this way, the developers would effectively turn a finished golf course over to Totem Creek debt-free. The annual operating costs would be user-funded, with much-reduced greens fees for locals.

Peter Metcalfe was clear: if this project does not pencil out financially, it won't be built. And for it to pencil out financially, housing must be a part of the package.

Do we want to try and stop the golf course by opposing the housing?

I offer that most of us are willing to allow growth in Juneau—it's just a matter of how and where that growth occurs. Development of this Golf Course project, with CBJ oversight, may actually present us with some leverage to push for progressive housing options, including cottage-complex housing (small foot print), 4-star energy ratings, middle-income price ranges, and a "green" building code that incorporates eco-friendly

design, systems, and materials. If the city must subsidize development in any way, it should do so by providing financial incentives for what is environmentally “right”. Perhaps green houses blended with natural space, walking trails, and a golf course that provides recreational opportunity (golf, x-country skiing, hiking) is a good thing for Juneau. We should be willing, at least, to talk about these things.

The board will be discussing the Juneau Golf Course in more detail as plans unfold and become public. We have not taken a position, other than a promise to represent the concerns and wants of our members, and to work with the community, the city, and the developers for the most desirable conservation outcome possible. As the Juneau Board works on these and other conservation issues in Southeast Alaska, your feedback is always welcome. Comments can be sent to conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org.

CHANNEL ISLANDS STATE MARINE PARK



HB 94 and SB 57 -- Naming the 14 small islands and areas of the large Shelter Island, in the Juneau area, to the Marine Park System brings a positive recognition to their highest and best use for recreation. These two bills will likely come up for hearings in the Legislature in the near future. If you support these bills, it would be a good idea to express your support to our legislators.

2007 CBJ Comprehensive Plan—Draft for Citizen Review & Comment

The City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Community Development Department has published a 2007 Comprehensive Plan—Draft for Citizen Review and Comment, dated February 20, 2007. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) is a long-range blueprint designed to guide the growth, development and conservation of valued resources within our community, to the year 2020. The Plan is used to measure permit applications, capital improvement projects and CBJ budget allocations.

We expect that public comment and Planning Commission guidance and refinement of the draft Plan will take about four months; this includes a three month public outreach process of meeting with neighborhood and stakeholder groups from February through April.

The Comp Plan policies, schedule and results of meetings are posted on the CBJ website at www.juneau.org/ComprehensivePlanUpdate link. For further information and to submit your comments and suggestions, please contact planner Susana Montana at 586-0753 or Susana_montana@ci.juneau.ak.us

Ed. Note: We attended the meeting in the Auke Bay School and found the presentation very informative and well worth attending. Ms Montana listened and took notes and I feel the community ideas, that are reasonable, will be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan if it is possible to include them. The plan seems to be focused more on infill rather than more sprawl. If you are interested, the dates and locations for further meetings are listed in the website above.

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30
Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed
A51

_____ Please bill me
7XCH

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 33, Number 8

Juneau Audubon Society

April 2007

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series
Thursday, April 12, UAS Egan Room (221/222) (Glacier View)
7:00 p.m.

"The Shorezone" and exciting look at the NOAA web page on the coastline of Alaska with Mandy Lindeberg. Come along on a low level flight along SE Alaska's rugged coastline and explore Berner's Bay flora and fauna.

Berners Bay Cruises

Juneau Audubon Spring Wildlife Extravaganza
Come join us for a trip past the end of the road!

April 14, 2007 8:30 am

May 6, 2007 @ 8:30 am and 1:30 pm

\$40/adult; \$5/children under 12 (must be accompanied by adult)

cruises depart from Don D. Statter Harbor

Tickets may be purchased at Hearthside Books

Naturalists will be on board

Sponsored by Juneau Audubon Society

CELEBRATION OF SWANS – APRIL 14-22 WHITEHORSE CANADA

The Celebration was initiated to raise awareness of the 5 important spring staging areas in southern Yukon. M'Clintock Bay, Teslin River, Tagish River, Klane River and Shallow Bay (Lake Laberge).

If you go to our website and click on Swan Haven and Celebration of Swans in the right hand column it will take you to the best information that we have at the moment. Swans have returned to Morley River and the Teslin River in central Yukon in mid March.

Bruce Bennett, Wildlife Viewing Biologist, Yukon Department of Environment Wildlife Viewing Program V5A, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada Y1A 2C6

tel: (867) 667-5331, fax: (867) 393-6263

<http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/viewing/index.html>

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY SPRING MIGRATION BIRD WALKS

Saturday, April 14. Berners Bay Cruise. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. The vessel will leave promptly at 8:30 a.m. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. Tickets are available at Hearthsides Books.

Saturday, April 21. Location: Mendenhall Dike trail and nearby wetlands. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Steve Zimmerman will lead the walk.

Saturday, April 28. Location: Boy Scout Camp area. The walk will begin at the Eagle Beach trailhead at 8:00 a.m. To get there drive out the road, take the first left after mile 27 (just before Herbert River) then turn right at the "T" to the gate at the end of the dirt road). People needing rides can be picked up at DeHarts at 7:30 a.m. Gwen Baluss will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 5. Location: Mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Bob Armstrong will lead the walk

Sunday, May 6. Berners Bay cruises: One will leave at 8:30 a.m.; the other will leave at 1:30 p.m. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. or by 1:15 p.m. Tickets are available at Hearthsides Books.

Saturday, May 12. Location: Mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Mark Schwan will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 19. Location: Sandy Beach (Douglas). The walk will begin at the picnic area by Sandy Beach at 7:30 a.m. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 26. Location: Perseverance Trail. The walk will begin at the end of Basin Road at 8:00 a.m. Beth Peluso will lead the walk.

Saturday, June 2. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:30 a.m. Bev Agler will lead the walk

Saturday, June 9. Location: Amalga Trail. The walk to the marsh where the rails have been found will begin at the Amalga Trail parking by the bridge over Eagle River at 8:00 a.m. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk.

TONGASS LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

****Comments Due April 30**

The Tongass Land Management Plan is being amended to address inadequacies in the 1997 Forest Plan. This amendment is required by a 9th circuit court that ruled against the Forest Service. To access the plan and related documents on line, go to <http://tongass-fpadjust.net/index.htm>

Our preliminary review indicates the Forest Service has misrepresented facts, omitted important information, and made some serious errors in their analysis and recommendations. While it's unlikely the Forest Service will fix these mistakes based on public input, it is important to comment for the record if for no other reason than to provide a basis for litigation.

For those that wish to review our detailed comments, they will be posted on our website at www.juneau-audubon-society.org by April 15th. If you have questions about our comments, please e-mail the conservation chair at conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org.

The Tongass is our home. We encourage all members to provide input to the Forest Service on how they'd like to see the Forest Managed!

SKAGWAY BIRD CHECKLIST ON JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY WEB SITE

The 2007 Skagway Bird Checklist has been loaded on the Juneau Audubon Society web site at <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/Birds/Check%20Lists/SkagwayChecklist2007.pdf> I have inserted links to the Skagway checklist on the JAS home page and the JAS Juneau Birding page. **George Utermohle, JAS Web Master**

REQUEST FOR BLUE GROUSE PHOTOS AND/OR INFORMATION By Fred Zwickel

Blue grouse have long been recognized as divided into two main groups, coastal and interior. These groups were recently diagnosed (2006) by the American Ornithologists' Union as separate species, Sooty Grouse (coastal) and Dusky Grouse (interior). One distinctive characteristic for separating the groups has been a difference in color of the bare neck patches (cervical apteria) of males when in display – yellow in coastal birds, red, or redish, in interior birds. This is noted in virtually all identification literature, including my own. Most of the popular field guides to birds (Peterson, National Geographic, and Sibley, among others) follow this tradition. SE Alaskan birds, are of course, 'coastal' and should have yellow apteria, but in at least some, do not. In other characters that tend to separate the two groups (kind of tail band, number of tail feathers, loudness of song, and number of syllables in the song, Alaskan birds conform to coastal birds to the south. Males on Queen Charlotte Islands have yellow apteria.

During a visit to Ketchikan last spring, it was brought to my attention that at least some males in SE Alaska have red apteria; confirmed by photos or other evidence from Gravina, Revillagigedo, Mitkof, and Admiralty Islands, and from Bartlett Cove. I am seeking copies of color pictures or other evidence of the color of cervical apteria of males from anywhere in Alaska. Locations are important and dates would be helpful (approximate dates ok). Note that red apteria result from flushing with blood, which tends to rapidly dissipate in dead birds, so that the skin becomes more flesh colored (pinkish yellow) when in the hand. Yellow apteria of coastal birds to the south reflect fat deposits, which do not tend to immediately dissipate in birds in the hand – apteria remain bright yellow.

I will reimburse anyone for duplication costs, phone calls, and postage for items received if you let me know what they are. All help will be greatly appreciated, and acknowledged, should this information be published.

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(250-935-6478)



Southeast Alaska Regional Science Fair By Mark Schwann

The 2007 Southeast Alaska Regional Science Fair was held in Juneau on Friday and Saturday, March 16 and 17, at the Marie Drake Gym. One hundred and fifty-three students presented 133 projects, covering many scientific disciplines. The students are to be congratulated for their scientific curiosity, dedication, and hard work. Literally hundreds of volunteers from Juneau and elsewhere helped by mentoring students through their projects and judging the results at the fair. Many corporate sponsors made donations supporting the fair and additional corporations, organizations, locals businesses, clubs, and non-profit groups handed out prizes to students at the awards ceremony at the UAS Egan Library on Saturday evening.

Juneau Audubon supports the fair by way of awarding one or two prizes each year to students that present worthy projects that focus on animals and/or their habitats. Two Audubon board members initially screened the list of project titles and then reviewed the projects during the open house on Friday evening. On Saturday, our Audubon judges talked with and heard presentations by the students whose projects were of most interest, and then the winners were selected. This year we awarded two prizes; one went to Nick Parker for his study of the health and condition of mussels at local boat harbors, and the other to Jaspri Sylvan for her investigation of zooplankton near the Auke Bay Harbor. Both students gave excellent presentations, had a good grasp of their study, were

enthusiastic about their work, and completed projects representing good science. Each student received a 50 dollar cash prize and a certificate, which were presented by an Audubon board member at the awards ceremony.

WRANGELL REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

Though daily snowfall has been making us despair of spring ever arriving, the calendar says it has. Soon to follow is Wrangell's Garnet Festival. The Festival celebrates the return of hooligan to the Stikine River and the eagles, seal, sea lions and gulls that flock to feed on them. The Stikine Delta is also a staging ground for thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl during this time and, in fact, the birds have just begun to arrive. Each year Wrangell's charter boat operators take schoolchildren to the delta to observe the birds, attempt to net hooligan and scour the sandy islands for signs of moose, wolves and other wildlife that use the habitat year round. The Forest Service is also offering activities for kids on archeology and building a birdhouse during the festival.

Featured speakers at the Garnet Festival this year are Juneau author and photographer Robert Armstrong and Karla Hart of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Watchable Wildlife Program. Karla will present a tracks and sign workshop and another on bears. A bird hike, "Breakfast with the Birds" is scheduled for Saturday, April 28 on the grounds of Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. Despite common assumptions about golf courses, this one is more than greens and sand traps. Ponds, beach, muskeg, old and second growth forest and wetlands provide habitat for a variety of birds. The Juneau Raptor Center will bring a couple of their birds to the festival and will be speaking with a number of school classes and community groups. Charter boat operators will be offering special tours of the delta.

Garnet Festival, earlier held during the third week of the month, has been moved to the last week in April and we hope the extra days will bring more birds our way. The Festival runs from April 25-April 29.

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS-- February 28 - March 26, 2007-- By Nat Drumheller

With all the snow and cold temperatures, birding was pretty slow this month. The exception was with owls. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** and **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were seen during daylight hours by many people through the period. There were eleven sightings of saw-whet owls and twenty one sightings of pygmy-owls. **Short-eared Owls** were seen regularly with most reports being of one or two owls hunting over the open areas south of town. Also reported were one **Snowy Owl**, one **Boreal Owl**, one **Barred Owl**, and several unidentified owls. Surprisingly, the only reports of owls hooting during this time period were of pygmy-owls on 3/14 and 3/18.

A few personal owl observations: On 3/8, I watched a raven pursuing a Short-eared Owl that was carrying a vole. The owl circled higher as the raven did aerial acrobatics below the owl and croaked. The owl dropped the vole and the raven caught it in flight. While moving firewood on 3/11, a fat vole scurried out from under the pile. A pygmy-owl snatched the vole from the snow three feet away from me. I am sad to say the vole screamed. The pygmy-owl landed in a nearby tree allowing me to be impressed by the large size of the prey compared to the tiny size of the owl.

On 3/13, I followed the sound of a scolding Steller's Jay and found several jays and magpies intent upon a saw-whet owl on the ground under a small tree. It was sitting on a vole that appeared to be frozen. I have read that saw-whets thaw frozen prey they've cached by sitting on it.

A few observations suggesting that we are on the edge of spring migration: **Common Redpolls** recently returned in small numbers after being absent for several weeks. **Trumpeter Swans** are being seen and heard more. A **Blue Grouse** was heard hooting on 3/20. Two **Lapland Longspurs** were along the beach on 3/26. **Black-billed Magpies** are flocking up in preparation for heading north. Also, the hybrid **Northern Flicker** survived the winter and continues to be seen around town.

Thanks to the many people who shared their observations.

SITKA REPORT By Matt Goff

Snow has continuously covered the ground in town this month, making it difficult for some birds to find food. Still, there are signs of spring. Some of the Song Sparrows and Varied Thrushes have begun to tentatively work on their songs, and the movement of birds has begun.

Two male Northern Pintails were briefly seen at Swan Lake in mid-March. Though one of the swans that have been wintering at Starrigavan died, more have shown up. There have been as many as 13, with reports of other swans in Jamestown Bay and Herring Cove. Well over 100 mostly Common Mergansers, with a fair number of Red-breasted Mergansers mixed in, were also seen at Starrigavan in late March.

Two big March events for birds in the Sitka area are the opening of the Long-line fishery and the start of the herring spawn. Both bring dramatic changes to the birds around town. With the long-line fishery opening in mid-March, the fish processors once again pump out an effluent rich in ground up fish carcasses. The gulls love this and are now in the channel in large numbers. These gulls have pushed out the Long-tailed Ducks that spent the winter in the middle of the channel. Mixed in with the more commonly seen gulls have been several Black-legged Kittiwakes, perhaps the first seen from town since last Fall.

The expectation of herring brings both gulls and eagles to town. It's not too hard to find trees near the shore with a dozen or more eagles perched in them. The late winter and continued snow has made things hard on these birds as well. There have been reports of an adult Bald Eagle that has turned to preying on other eagles. Many other eagles, weakened by lack of food, have been taken in by the Raptor Center for rehabilitation.

It's been an interesting year so far for Alcids. As late as the fourth week in March, there were two Horned Puffins at the north end of the channel. These are presumably same ones that have been seen since early February. Several Rhinoceros Auklets have also been seen in the waters close to town.

Other unusual sightings in March included an albatross reported from Thompson Harbor on the 13th and Snow Buntings along the shore north of Sandy Beach on the 22nd.

From Eaglechat: Beth Peluso, Juneau

I went to Tenakee two weekends ago and on the ferry ride over saw a number of murrelets, one of which already looked like it was in summer colors!

From my place on Douglas I saw a mix of birds on the water this weekend: common mergansers, goldeneyes, a few buffleheads, and a small flock of 5 or so surf scoters. The scoters seemed unusually active the males chasing each other around and a few looked like they were bobbing their heads up and down, I'm guessing showing off for the ladies.

And to top it off this morning I heard a junco trilling over by the pool parking lot. Maybe we'll have spring despite the snow!



Spring Birding Events in Ketchikan-by Teri Goucher

Spring has arrived in spite of numerous snow showers that gave Ketchikan several more days of wintry conditions.

A very early male **Red-winged Blackbird** was seen in town on March 17th!

A few **American Robins** have been here since mid-month and a flock of 20 was spotted on March 26th. Soon many large flocks will move northward all through Southeast Alaska.

Males are usually the first to arrive to begin setting up their territories for the breeding season and a few have already been heard singing here!

Gulls are migrating north now and a **Bonaparte's Gull** was seen in Cover Pass March 24th. There are quite a few more **Herring Gulls** around and even a **California Gull** was seen recently.

Seven **Trumpeter Swans** were seen flying north along the channel on March 25th.

Ketchikan will host the 12th annual Hummingbird Festival which celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to our area.

There will be fun activities all during April including workshops for kids and parents to create bird feeders and bird houses and a migratory themed art show.

Birding walks will be held April 13 & 14 at Ward Lake and Refuge Cove Beach guided by Cheryl Fultz and Teri Goucher.

Steve Heintz will lead a bird walk on April 29th around the Mountain Point boat launch area.

For more information about these events call the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center at 228-6220.

Although no Rufous Hummingbirds have been reported here yet surely they will show up soon along with many other migrating visitors as much awaited Spring warms Alaska after winter!!

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30
Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed
A51

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7XCH

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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Juneau Audubon Society

May 2007

REGULAR AUDUBON EVENING MEETINGS WILL BEGIN AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY SPRING MIGRATION BIRD WALKS

Saturday, May 12. Location: Mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Mark Schwan will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 19. Location: Sandy Beach (Douglas). The walk will begin at the picnic area by Sandy Beach at 7:30 a.m. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 26. Location: Fish Creek. The walk will begin from the parking lot on the Town side of Fish Creek at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, June 2. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:30 a.m. Bev Agler will lead the walk.

Saturday, June 9. Location: Amalga Trail. The walk to the marsh where the rails have been found will begin at the Amalga Trail parking by the bridge over Eagle River at 8:00 a.m. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk.

WEDNESDAY DOWNTOWN BIRD WALKS

“Want to take a lunchtime break? Come join us at noon on Wednesdays for a 1-hour bird walk downtown. We’ll meet at Rainbow Foods for a walk around downtown. Bring binoculars if you have them and dress for the weather. Contact Beth Peluso for more details 957-1050.”

Saturday Wild 2007

**Juneau Audubon sponsored natural history walks.
Free and open to the public:**

June 16 – Low tide walk 8:00 a.m. Indian Cove with Carol Thilenius.
Park on Indian Cove Road. Go around house number 3186 to the left
and WEAR BOOTS!

July 21 – Alpine flowers and birds with Bob Armstrong. Meet at the tram
at 8:00 am (special local rate)

August 25 – Wild berries with Mary Lou King and Brenda Wright. Meet at
the Eaglecrest parking lot 10:00 a.m.

Join us- weather or not- as we explore the wild side of Southeast Alaska.
For more information on these free community walks, see
<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org> or e-mail saturdaywild@juneau-audubon-society.org.

Please dress for the weather.

April 28 Audubon Bird Walk-- Cranes and bluebirds!

Posted by: "Gwen Baluss" in Eaglechat

Things didn't look particularly encouraging as our group of 14 brave birders slushed along the still snowy trail in the chill drizzle of morning towards the boy scout camp. But it turned out to be a prime spring migration day!

Highlights:

6 Sandhill cranes flying over... followed by over 60 more who landed in the salt meadow for great views.

22 Mountain bluebirds, who milled around near us for over 30 minutes and were actually still there when we finally left. One actually landed on Jeff's tripod! (I figure this was my compensation for the many, many mad dashes I have made unsuccessfully seeking this "jinx" bird for me in AK)

Over 20 White-fronted geese, 6? Snow geese, 1 Cackling goose, 4 Golden-plover sp. (probably Pacific) Close views of Merlin, American kestrel and both male and female Northern Harrier and 4 Gadwall.

Also on the list: Ruby-crowned kinglet, Winter wren, Chestnut-backed chickadee, Savannah sparrow, Oregon junco, American pipit, Pine siskin, Lapland longspur, Red-winged blackbird, American robin, Varied thrush, Red-breasted sapsucker, Northwestern crow, Common raven, Horned grebe, Red-necked grebe, Pigeon guillemot, Bufflehead, Green-winged teal, Surf scoter, Barrow's goldeneye, Mallard, Red-breasted merganser, Canada goose, Bonaparte's gull, Herring gull, Glaucous-winged gull, Greater yellowlegs, Least sandpiper

Posted by: "Paul Suchanek"

It rained all day but a few photos were taken including an aerial of the cranes flying by, Juneau Audubon president Jeff Sauer ogling a couple of perched bluebirds lured in by his gloves, and another lured in by his tripod perch.

A few additional species seen: yellow-rumped warbler, northern pintail, American wigeon, mew gull, & common goldeneye.

Posted by: "Beth Peluso" in Eaglechat-- Berners Bay Cruise

I went out on the Audubon Berners Bay cruise April 14. Although it wasn't sunny, the water was calm and it didn't rain much, so we had some great wildlife viewing. Not much going on yet hooligan-wise in the bay itself, but in Lynn Canal we saw 4 or 5 humpbacks feeding, several fairly close. One was coming up on its back, so we could see its white belly as it rolled onto its side at the surface. There was a good crowd of Steller sea lions at the haulout on Benjamin Island, some HUGE bulls!

On the bird end of things, a first of season bird for me were the Bonaparte's gulls, some just changing into summer black head finery and some already fully there. Saw 2 or 3 oystercatchers, a large mixed flock of surf and white-winged scoters, a couple goldeneyes, some unidentified shorebirds that were either surfbirds or black turnstones (we couldn't get close enough to see), pigeon guillemots, and marbled murrelets still in winter colors. Gwen Baluss spotted a common loon and a Pacific loon. There were a couple high school soccer teams from Wyoming and Colorado on board, and they loved the half dozen or so bald eagles we saw. All in all a grand day!

BERNERS BAY CRUISES MAY 6 By Brenda Wright

On our 12th annual trip to Berners Bay, Juneau Audubon came close to arriving on the big day for sea mammals and birds. With our long cold winter, the hooligan have not yet started up the river. So both trips to Berners Bay on 5/6 were treated to large rafts of sea lions, humpback whales and even a glimpse of sunshine. The wind was picking up, but Allen Marine supplied their biggest boat to take the bounce out of the waves. As usual, the trips sold out early and everyone enjoyed the volunteers from Audubon supplying information on birds, fish, and mammals. We hope you can come with us next year!

Book Review: *Life Around Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska* By Robert H. Armstrong and Marge Hermans

Juneau Audubon Society members, Bob and Marge's new book is about the mammals, birds, and plants that you can see on the lands and waters close to Mendenhall Glacier. The more than a hundred wonderful colored photos and informative write-ups, make one want to go right out there and start looking more closely at this world around us.

Dragons in the Ponds By Robert H. Armstrong, John Hudson and Marge Hermans
This is a wonderful new book, for young people, about dragonflies. There are many large beautiful colored photos showing adult dragonflies and larvae as well as easy to understand scientific information.

***Northwestern Naturalist, A Journal of Vertebrate Biology, Spring 2007*
Burr J Betts, Editor**

EDITOR'S COMMENT ON WHETHER OR NOT TO USE CAPITAL LETTERS ON BIRD NAMES

Anyone who paid even minor attention to the format and style of *Northwestern Naturalist* will note a change in this issue that is major enough to deserve some explanation. We are now capitalizing the English common names (vernacular names) of all species, but only when the complete name is used. For example, you will find in the 1st article in this issue references to both Common Ravens and just ravens.

Steve Herman, a current SNVB Trustee, broached the idea of capitalizing English common names with me last spring, and the SNVB Board and I discussed this issue twice before deciding to change our style. Although I was against the change initially, I investigated the style used by several other journals and tried to get information on why various journals follow their particular style. Bird journals like *The Auk* capitalize English common names, but oddly they don't capitalize the names of mammals, plants, and other taxa. Some herp journals capitalize and some don't. Mammal and fish journals as well as some broad-based natural history, ecology, and behavior journals generally don't capitalize any common names; however, some natural history journals follow the lead of the taxon in question by capitalizing herp and bird names but not those of other taxa.

Interestingly, most current editors do not know why their journals have the policy they have, but some past editors were helpful in this regard. Basically, ornithologists consider English common names as proper nouns. Also, they argue that capitalization helps avoid confusion, such as between 'Solitary Sandpiper' and 'a solitary sandpiper'. In the process of investigating this issue, I came to the conclusion that there were several good reasons to capitalize common names and no good reasons to continue not capitalizing.

So, the SNVB Board and I agreed that *Northwestern Naturalist* would capitalize all English common names., with at least three 3 reasons for doing so. 1) many common names already have a component that is a proper noun that refers to a person or place and is already capitalized (for example, Townsend's whatever, Columbian whatever, etc.), 2) the potential for confusion is eliminated, and 3) it makes it easier for a reader to find common names on a page.

APRIL REPORT FROM KETCHIKAN by Teri Goucher

The Spring days are longer and finally warmer as increased numbers of migrating birds continue to move northward again for the summer breeding season.

During the first week of April many waterfowl flocks flew by, sometimes their spring calling alerting anyone outdoors to look up to enjoy this inspiring seasonal spectacle! Hundreds of **Canada Geese**, **Greater White-fronted Geese** and good numbers of **Snow Geese** graced our skies!

Locally we have had the usual waves of dozens of **Fox Sparrows** and very high numbers of **Varied Thrushes** this spring. **Golden-Crowned Sparrows** appeared around mid-month along with a few **Savannah Sparrows**. Two **Band-tailed Pigeons** were seen at a residence at Herring Cove south of town on 4-13.

Shorebirds continue to migrate past including **Western Sandpiper**, **Least Sandpiper**, **Dunlin** and **Black-bellied Plovers**.

Greater Yellowlegs and **Killdeer** have been regularly seen and heard all along the road system. There have been several Killdeer nests found at various locations on our island the past few years and a Greater Yellowlegs nest was discovered not far from the airport on Gravina island last year.

Wishing you all a glorious summer enjoying our amazing gifts of nature here in Alaska or anywhere you may venture!

WRANGELL REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

Black and white isn't just for formal wear. Quite a few of our most handsome birds sport those colors as well and, though there aren't a large number of species around just yet, some of our most well-turned-out birds are flaunting their contrasty plumage. The Bonaparte's gulls returned to the Wrangell area earlier this month. Their trim black-hooded bodies and querulous voices are a welcome harbinger of summer. Black turnstones with their vivid black and white wings are again scouring the beaches. A few of us were treated to a brief sight of snowy buntings grubbing on an ocean-side lawn one afternoon this month. "Bunt" means mottled in German but sporting their striking breeding plumage, these birds are natty at this time of year. After less than an hour these circumpolar breeders were on their way north. On the water, a large flock of cleanly patterned western grebes has been feeding in front of town, as have surf scoters, which have been missing in the past few years, and pigeon guillemots.

Color, however, is always welcome and so is the small flock of enthusiastically vocal red-winged blackbirds that always shows up in early spring. They don't remain long around Wrangell but do breed on ponds of the Stikine River delta. Another colorful and uncommon bird spotted this month was a mountain bluebird. It, too, only stayed around for a day but a flock of fifteen made a weeklong appearance near the open woodlands of the lower Stikine River this month before moving on. Another observer reported that Bohemian waxwings, in a reckless search for fruit, came to her front door and devoured the red berries trimming a wreath hanging there. The hungry bald eagles lurking in the trees during March left early this month for the Stikine hooligan.

It's good to hear the songs of fox, golden-crowned, white-crowned and song sparrows in the yard once again, but perhaps the most memorable sound in April was the massed calling of sandhill cranes as they navigated under a full moon toward their evening rest on the river flats. Hearing them, we understood that spring had arrived for certain.

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS March 27 - April 30, 2007 By Nat Drumheller

It was a magical month. Around town, the deep snow has been reduced to patches. The first **American Robins** were seen on 3/27. A month later, birdsong greets the mornings and the beaches are crawling with shorebirds. New species for the season are being seen almost daily. Backyard feeders are alive with **Fox Sparrows** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows**.

Gustavus saw its first **Rufous Hummingbird** on 4/14. Some other first sightings were: **Black-bellied Plovers**(5) 4/4; **Eurasian Wigeons**(6) 4/6; **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** 4/13; **Yellow-rumped Warbler** 4/19; **Least Sandpiper**, **Western Sandpiper**, and **Pacific Golden-Plover** 4/23; **Short-billed Dowitcher** 4/25; **Long-Billed Dowitcher** and **American Golden-Plover** 4/27; and **Townsend's Warbler** 4/28.



Brewer's Blackbird



Leucistic Fox Sparrow

A **California Gull** and a **Brewer's Blackbird** were seen on 4/18. A **Mountain Bluebird** and a **Golden Eagle** were seen on 4/25. **Cackling Geese** were seen on two dates in mid-April. Two color-banded **Dunlin** were seen in early April. Both were banded as juveniles in 2005 on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. A **Leucistic Fox Sparrow** was at a feeder for about a week. It was mostly white with brown splotches, primaries, and tail.

It was a hard winter for owls, judging by the number of dead owls found. This included several **Northern Saw-whet Owls**, a **Barred Owl**, a **Northern Pygmy-Owl**, and a **Short-eared Owl**. Somehow, others survived. Seen or heard this month were **Snowy Owl**, **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, **Western Screech-Owl**, **Great Horned Owl**, **Short-eared Owl**, and **Northern Pygmy-Owl**. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** are nesting in a nest box at a residence in town. This is a different box and location from that used by nesting owls last spring.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, and John Olivit, for sharing observations and to all who reported owls. Thanks to Gus van Vliet and Cameron Eckert for confirming the Brewer's Blackbird. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

We kept searching for signs of spring and, after April 15, many of us found them in the welcome return of many birds to the Chilkat Valley. The snow is rapidly melting but many deep spots remain throughout the valley. Fortunately, it did not deter several Mountain Blue Birds from returning to the Lutak Inlet area known as the “tank farm.” Last month a flock of Snow Buntings swept through the valley. In the last 10 days, we have had a couple of Rufous Humming Birds come to our feeder and at least two dozen Gold-crowned Kinglets have ravenously been feeding around our defrosted garden area. Several Northern Harriers have been competing with the Bald Eagles over the McClellan Flats area. And of course, Robins have moved back into the valley as well.

Elsewhere in Haines in the town area a Merlin was spotted flying overhead. Also spotted were two Vaux Swifts. In the Lutak Inlet abundant sea birds have gathered, namely a flock of Pintails and Barrow's Goldeneyes, lots of Common Scoters, about a dozen Widgeons, half dozen Green-winged Teal. Several hundred gulls—namely Mew, and Glaucous-winged, among others are awaiting the new fish run--king salmon or later hooligan. As recently as April 29, some Harlequin Ducks and a Killdeer joined the birds in the inlet. Up the highway in the Klukwan area, Greg Higgins heard a few Great Horned Owls and Northern Saw-whet Owls. In the Chilkoot Lake and River area Belted Kingfishers were spotted, along with American pipits, and a Snipe. The Blue Grouse could be heard drumming their song. The sights and sounds of spring are here. Now if only all the snow would go away.

THIRD ANNUAL JUNEAU AUDUBON BIRDATHON SATURDAY APRIL 15

The Birdathon is an activity to help raise money for the Audubon Alaska Office by identifying birds for a designated amount of money for each bird found. The Juneau team this year was comprised of two groups who covered the area from Outer Point on Douglas Island to Eagle Beach and beyond. Team members were Paul Suchanek, Rich Gordon, Liz Blecker, Steve Zimmerman, Gus van Vleit, Matt Kirchhoff, and Ken Leghorn. The weather conditions were not wonderful but 103 species were counted.

BACKYARD BIRD COUNT REPORT *Janis Dickinson* | Director of Citizen Science | Cornell Lab of Ornithology, *Rob Fergus* | Senior Scientist: Urban Bird Conservation | National Audubon Soc.

This year, you helped create the most detailed snapshot of a continental bird-distribution profile in history. Your sightings are included among the record-breaking 11,082,048 birds reported during the four-day count. Participants from around the United States and Canada sent in 81,193 checklists, by far surpassing the previous record of 61,049!

Please visit the GBBC web site at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> to read a press release and summary about this record-breaking year, see a list of checklist champ and prize drawing winners, view results, and visit the photo gallery. We received nearly 5,000 photos and will continue posting them in the coming months. The photo contest winners will be announced after our panel has reviewed all the images.

This year's count was also the focus of numerous articles and broadcasts from media across North America! To see a USA Today article which talks about global climate change and highlights some of the results and photos from this year's count, visit http://www.usatoday.com/weather/climate/globalwarming/2007-03-18-birds-winter_N.htm.

Thank you for your participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count. We hope you'll join us again next year, February 15-18, 2008.

GEAR UP FOR CITIZEN SCIENCE THIS SPRING AND SUMMER

Celebrate Urban Birds! <http://www.urbanbirds.org/celebration>

Help scientists learn how birds use urban habitats by conducting a 10-minute bird watch for 15 focal bird species. Find out more at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Celebrate Urban Birds!" web site. People of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can participate in a bird watch on their own or with local organizations. Other "celebration" activities include gardening, bird watching, art, and science. Learn more and request a free kit, while supplies last, at <http://www.urbanbirds.org/celebration>.

eBird <http://www.ebird.org>

If you enjoyed the Great Backyard Bird Count, we hope you'll continue entering your bird sightings in eBird, any day of the year. A joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird is fun, easy to use, and provides a year-round record of bird distribution for science.

The Birdhouse Network <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse>

Help cavity-nesting birds by putting up a nest box and sending your observations to The Birdhouse Network. Your data will help scientists learn more about breeding birds. For a live, virtual peek into birds' activities in nest boxes, visit Nest Box Cam at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/nestboxcam>.

CONSERVATION

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Section 4(f) evaluation for improvements to the Juneau Airport was mailed out in late April. Numbering over 1,500 pages, the FEIS is a huge document. Because changes in public law have precluded the consideration of several runway safety area alternatives, many of Juneau Audubon's comments on that issue have been rendered moot. Potentially serious issues still remain, however, regarding the float plane woodlands and the wetlands.

To view the full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Juneau Airport go to <http://www.jnu-eis.org/frames/FEIS.html> or if this doesn't work go to the airport web page www.juneau.org/airport then to Ongoing projects on the left, then to second dot down to EIS, then to Documents, then to Final EIS (1st item), then for the short version, Executive Summary 3rd item down. The Summary has a little over 100 pages so takes time to download. On pages 52-54 is the preferred alternative for wildlife control as approved by the FAA.

A public information meeting will be held on May 14, 2007, between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. (ADT) at Centennial Hall, 101 Egan Drive, Juneau, AK 99801. A presentation on the FAA's preferred alternatives and key changes between the Draft EIS and the Final EIS will be provided at 6:30 p.m. (ADT).

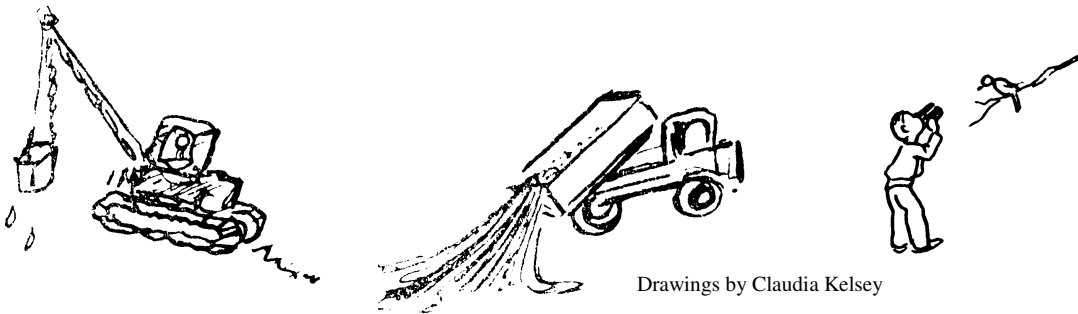
The FAA is seeking comments on the Final EIS, with specific attention to those sections that have been substantively updated since publication of the Draft EIS. Comments on the Written comments should be sent to:

SWCA Environmental Consultants
ATTN: Juneau Airport EIS
257 East 200 South, Ste. 200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

Electronic comments may be submitted via the EIS website at www.jnu-eis.org.
All comments must be received no later than 5p.m. (ADT) on June 11, 2007.

In addition to the preferred alternative wildlife control, 21.4 acres of Airport owned wetlands would be filled and 4.1 acres of the State Refuge would be filled to extend the runway.

Call Steve Zimmerman (586-2597) if you have questions.



Drawings by Claudia Kelsey

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

_____ \$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____ \$30
Basic renewal

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed
A51

_____ Please bill me
7XCH

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 1

Juneau Audubon Society

September 2007

The first regular Juneau Audubon evening meeting will be held October 11.

International Coastal Clean-up Day

September 15, 2007- 9:00 am – 12:00 pm – Sunshine Cove Beach Cleanup
12:00 pm - Potluck celebration at Sandy Beach Picnic Shelter

On Saturday, September 15th thousands of people all over the world will pick up garbage and debris from beaches and oceans as a part of the Ocean Conservancy's 21st annual "International Coastal Clean-up Day".

Juneau Audubon has adopted Sunshine Cove beach for the event. Please come and join us as we work to cleanup this beautiful beach area. After you pick up your section of beach, then join us at 12:00 pm at the Sandy Beach picnic shelter for a potluck lunch and free Alaskan Brewing Co. beer. Soft drinks will also be provided. Please bring a dish or food to share.

This event is a partnership between the JWP, Turning the Tides, the Marine Conservation Alliance and the Alaskan Brewing Co. For more information, please call the JWP office at 586-6853.

Saturday Wild Walks Summer 2007-Brenda Wright

First of all, I would like to thank our invaluable volunteers who lead our walks this summer. Thanks so much to Carol Thilenius, Bob Armstrong, and Mary Lou King. The information and experience they share make all our walks enjoyable for everyone.

This year we had a similar schedule as last summer with one walk each month. We were able to enjoy a minus tide walk with Carol in June, alpine flowers and birds with Bob in July, and corralled the elusive wild berries with Brenda and Mary Lou in August. We were very lucky with the weather for the alpine walk up Mt. Roberts. We plan to continue having Saturday Wild walks again next summer, so if you have a special interest or know an expert who could share with a group, please contact Brenda Wright at programs@juneau-audubon-society.org. Hope to see you next year!

Kids Explore What Fits the Bill

On August 6 Beth Peluso from the Juneau Audubon Board flitted into the City Museum's Juneau Explorers Week children's program for the afternoon. First on the menu for the dozen or so explorers was a set of experiments called "Fill the Bill." At each station was a type of food—water representing nectar or grains of rice on bark representing insects, for example. Kids had to decide which of 3 "bills" worked best to gather the food. Tongs? Tweezers? A straw? Then they decided which bird's bill on their worksheet best matched each tool. After lots of lively discussion we braved the elements for a quick bird walk, learning the difference between crows and ravens, spotting eagles, and figuring out why pigeons fly in flocks.



(The Fill the Bill activity is courtesy of the Flying Wild national education and bird conservation program. If you're interested in leaning more about the activity, contact Beth Peluso through the Juneau Audubon web site www.juneau-audubon-society.org.)

Wednesday Walks

Thanks to all the people who joined the Wednesday noon walks. Participants included a dedicated group of regulars and some out-of-town visitors. From Wilson's warblers to harlequin ducks, we enjoyed the wide variety of birds living around downtown.

The migratory birds are heading south, so the last two Wednesday walks we practiced our gull identification skills at Gold Creek, where birds feast on salmon only a few blocks from the Federal Building. We also had appearances by a kingfisher, mallards, harlequins and crows. It's quite the hoppin' place!

September 12 will be the last Wednesday walk of the season.

Message from the President – Jeff Sauer

Election of Officers

The October Juneau Audubon meeting is among other things our time to elect the officers of Juneau Audubon. All Juneau Audubon members are welcome to come and vote. The officers of Juneau Audubon are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Under the bylaws of Juneau Audubon the four officers are elected, and then the other board members are appointed to the board. The total number of board members is 10.

We have an active Audubon chapter, and a great bunch of people on the board. We are always, however, looking for one or two more people to become active and join the board. This fall is no exception as Liz Blecker, our trusted Treasurer for the past five years, is getting off the board. We thank her for her great service to Juneau Audubon. In addition Steve Zimmerman is leaving the board after many years of service. Anyone interested in joining the board in whatever capacity please email me at my email address on the last page of the Raven.

Birder/ Board Member Profile - Steve Zimmerman

Our relatively small Audubon chapter has made some rather large marks in the Audubon world. We have two Juneau Audubon members on the state-wide, Audubon Alaska, board of directors. In addition one of those Juneau members is also on the National Audubon Society board of directors. Matt Kirchoff, (who was just in National Geographic regarding the Tongass) is on the Juneau Audubon board as well as the Audubon Alaska board. Steve Zimmerman has also been on the Juneau Audubon board and on the Audubon Alaska board (he is Chair). But in addition Steve is also on the National Audubon Society board. He is the only person to have been on our Juneau Audubon board, the Audubon Alaska board, and the National Audubon Society board. Steve is a dedicated and incredibly active Audubon volunteer. As for Juneau he has been on the Juneau Audubon board for eight years, and was president two of those years. He is in his second three year term on the National Audubon board.

And that is not the end of Steve's community work. For instance, He has also been on the Juneau Wetlands Review board for 15 years. And as for birding he recently finished years of work as the compiler for Juneau, along with Gus VanVliet, for seasonal bird sightings lists that go to *North American Birds*. Now he is, along with Mark Schwan, the administrator of the Alaska Two Hundred Club. (Google "Alaska Two Hundred Club). The Two Hundred club is a group of birders who compile personal lists of birds seen in Alaska. Steve has a state list of 359 species seen in Alaska. Needless to say he is a very accomplished birder.

Steve got serious about birding in 1984 when he was working in the Pribilof Islands. With a PhD in Oceanography Steve worked for over 20 years for National Marine Fisheries. He finished his tenure there as Assistant Regional Administrator. But in 1984 he was, for a while, a Manager of the Fur Seal Program in the Pribilof Islands. And it was there that he seriously got into birding. From there and for over two decades he has seriously birded the state. He is now one of the top birders in the state and his Alaska Bird numbers put him in the top ten of any birders ever in Alaska. Steve is contemplating taking a well deserved year off of the Juneau Audubon board. We thank him for all of his Audubon work and look forward to his return to the Juneau Audubon board.

News from Audubon Alaska – Anchorage Office By Lorelei Costa

In 1977 the National Audubon Society established its first office in Alaska to participate in the then-incipient Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Thirty years later, the Alaska state office of the Audubon Society — aka, Audubon Alaska — is still thriving and working assiduously to protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats across the Great Land.

In Southeast, Audubon Alaska has been particularly involved in the Tongass campaign. In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, and with the input from dozens of scientists, local residents, and resource managers, we have studied, analyzed, mapped, and described the coastal forests and mountains of Southeast Alaska to identify areas of highest ecological value. With these maps and data we are devising a place-based campaign to protect and/or restore the most significant watersheds within the Tongass.

For example, if we are to ensure the integrity of the Tongass ecosystem — and the fish, wildlife, and people that depend on it — we must protect places like the Cleveland Peninsula, Honker Divide, Port Houghton, and the west side of Tenakee Inlet on Chichagof Island, to name a few. Our assessment also identifies some places where both careful timber management and conservation could occur, i.e., places where selective cutting would increase wildlife values by creating gaps and age variances in the forest canopy of second-growth stands. This assessment and all of its accompanying maps are available online. Go to our website, www.audubonalaska.org, for more information, or call our office at 907-276-7034.

Elsewhere in the state, Audubon Alaska continues its education, policy, and science programs. This spring we launched Alaska eBird, a website for citizen scientists to record their bird observations for the benefit of conservation and science. It's an easy-to-use but powerful online tool, allowing you to find birding hot spots, manage your life list, map or graph your sightings, and much more. Check it out at www.ebird.org/ak.

Another focus area for Audubon Alaska has been the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska in the Western Arctic. The Bureau of Land Management has renewed its efforts to open Teshekpuk Lake to oil and gas drilling with the recent release of a draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Teshekpuk Lake is one of the most important wetlands in the Arctic, providing molting habitat for tens of thousands of geese and calving habitat for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. As a co-owner and stakeholder of Teshekpuk Lake, YOUR comments are urgently needed to protect wildlife habitat around this most important wetland. Please go to our website, www.audubonalaska.org, to read more and submit comments to the Bureau of Land Management.

Audubon Alaska is a close sister organization to the Juneau Audubon Society, and one of JAS's board members, Matt Kirchhoff, serves on the Audubon Alaska board, too. We invite your participation and are keen to work together to conserve the birds, wildlife, and ecosystems of Alaska.

Juneau Bird Observations -- April through August 2007

By Mark Schwan

The spring migration appeared to start slowly due to protracted cold temperatures and lingering snow, and once birds appeared, they seemed to hold and stack up, waiting for warmer weather to spur them along. As we entered into May, Juneau was awash with waterfowl, shorebirds, thrushes, pipits, warblers and sparrows. Moreover, by the end of the spring season, most species on the Juneau checklist with a status of rare or greater (save the alpine species) had been seen by one or more birders. May vagrants (species not occurring every year) included 3 **Pacific Golden-Plovers** on May 12 (Saturday bird walk), 1 **Wilson's Phalarope** at the Mendenhall wetlands on May 15 (BP), 1 male **Ruddy Duck** on May 17th at Moose Lake (RM), and at least 2 **Soras** at Pioneer Marsh were heard and seen through the second half of the month (many obs.).

As we entered into June and the heart of the nesting season, an unprecedented number of casual and accidental species were documented. It started with an adult **Franklin's Gull** on June 8th

(PS), then a **Brewer's Sparrow** near the mouth of Duck Creek on June 10 (PS, AD, PR photo, many obs). This was only the second record for Juneau and the first to be documented by multiple observer and photograph. A **Willow Flycatcher** was located near Pioneer Marsh on June 11 (MS, PS, PR photo, many obs). This was perhaps the 5th and earliest record for Juneau since the first was recorded in the mid 80s; the species has been found in Juneau more than any other Alaskan locality. The next day, June 12, an adult **Black-headed Gull** was seen near the mouth of the Mendenhall River (AD). This species has never been documented in Juneau. A singing male **Magnolia Warbler** was found above Sandy Beach on Douglas Island on June 17 (PS, BA, FG, LB, many obs). On June 19, a **Least Flycatcher** was seen, heard, and photographed near Cowee Creek at Point Bridget State Park (PS). This was only the second record for Juneau. On June 20, a singing but elusive **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was heard near mile 26 of Glacier Highway. This was perhaps the third or fourth record of this species in Juneau, all from the same general location. Over subsequent days many birders located the bird, some getting reasonable views and photographs (MS, PS, GV, BA). A pair of **Wilson's Phalaropes** was found on the Mendenhall wetlands on June 23 (GV). To cap off the month, a squad of local birders tracked down an enigmatic singing warbler at Eagle Beach on June 24 and identified it to be a **Mourning Warbler**, a first for Juneau and possibly only the third record for Alaska (GV, PS, BA, MS, SZ, PR, BP).

During July, highlights included two more **Franklin's Gulls**, one on July 2 at the Mendenhall wetlands (PR) and one at Eagle Beach on July 19 (PS). On July 21, one **Upland Sandpiper** was heard on the Mendenhall wetlands (RG). Rare in spring, but only casual in summer, two eclipsed plumaged male **Cinnamon Teal** in the Mendenhall River on July 23 were a surprise (PS, MS). Juvenile Stilt Sandpipers are annual locally in small numbers but adult birds are hardly ever seen, so one on the Mendenhall wetlands on July 29 was enjoyed by many birders (GV). However, nobody was ready for the subsequent, unprecedented showing of juvenile **Stilt Sandpipers** during August. With high counts of 37 and 45 at Eagle Beach, on August 8 and 9 (PS, MS), and 50 to 54 counted on the Mendenhall Wetlands on August 9 and 10 (MS, GV), nothing like this had ever been documented for Juneau. By the end of the month, single birds were still being found at Eagle Beach and the Mendenhall wetlands. Also noteworthy in early August, 2 **Sora chicks** were observed at Pioneer Marsh on August 5th (MCH, PS, BA, DM).

Considered a casual spring and fall migrant, the one bird heard in July could easily have been the only report for the year, but **Upland Sandpipers** were found in a variety of locations through the middle of August. The first report came August 10 from the edge of the lower Mendenhall River (RG), then either one or two birds were located above the tram terminal and atop Gold Ridge (GV, MM, RG) on August 12. The following day, August 13, there were at least seven Upland Sandpipers located in Juneau, with two at the mouth of Cowee Creek (PS) and five on the Mendenhall wetlands (PS, BA, MS, PR, BP, GV). Three more were reported on August 16 from the west side of the lower Mendenhall River (MS). The only passerine highlight during August commenced on August 13, when a mystery bird on the wetlands was photographed and quickly identified as a **Smith's Longspur**. Later in the day, many birders went searching for, and found one to possibly four birds (DM, PS, BA, PR, MS, LB, GV, MM). Records indicate it has been 30 years since this species has been seen in Juneau. One to two birds were seen in subsequent days, and as August came to an end, another Smith's Longspur was found on the wetlands (8/31, RG).

As September began, migratory activity had slowed dramatically, with some birders wondering where the songbirds were. But, the spring and summer in Juneau were extremely memorable, with many species of birds being observed compared to most years, and more vagrant species found than ever before in a comparable period of time. Thanks to all the local birders for providing details on observations.

Contributors: Bev Agler = BA, Liz Blecker = LB, Al DeMartini = AD, Frank Glass = FG, Rich Gordon = RG, Mary Claire Harris = MCH, Molly McCafferty = MM, Rob MacDonald = RM, Deanna MacPhail = DM, Beth Peluso = BP, Patty Rose = PR, Mark Schwan = MS, Paul Suchanek = PS, Gus van Vliet = GV, Steve Zimmerman = SZ. Report prepared by Mark Schwan

Summer birding news from Ketchikan

By Teri Goucher

It has been a delightful summer here in our part of southeast Alaska! We have enjoyed lots of sunny days with unusually calm winds; only a few passing rainy fronts and even a couple thunderstorms. Even during this busy season some interesting birds were found in our area.

Seems like a high number of **Cedar Waxwings** are around as their distinctive calls are heard almost daily in the neighborhoods around town. On May 10th a beautiful male **Cinnamon Teal** was discovered south of the city at Herring Cove where it remained for several days.

There was a rare sighting here of a **Eurasian Collared-Dove** for a week around the middle of June. This large pale gray dove with a black half collar is rapidly expanding its range. This species is thought to have originated in India and was introduced to the Bahamas in 1975. It has been recorded throughout the United States primarily in urban areas but has established populations in the south east part of our country and in southern California. These doves have even been found in Iceland and north of the arctic circle in Norway! The expanding range of the Eurasian Collared dove is still evolving and the final impact on other species remains to be seen.

Many shorebirds are making their way south already after their breeding season. Many **Red-necked Phalaropes** have been seen locally enroute from the interior parts of Alaska to their wintering areas south of the equator. Quite a few **Rhinoceros Auklets** and **Surfbirds** have been seen around as well!

This is the best time of year to perhaps find some unusual birds as many species are migrating south at this time; so get out there and enjoy the last of our nice summer days birding as Autumn approaches!!

Gustavus Sightings -- May 1 - August 29, 2007

By Nat Drumheller natdrumheller@hotmail.com

The Gustavus area had a handful of first records this summer: A pair of **Eurasian Collared-Doves** was at Bartlett Cove on 6/4 closely followed by a single collared-dove at a feeder in town

for over a week, with later sightings of single collared-doves in town on 7/19 and 8/2. A **Black-headed Grosbeak** and an **Evening Grosbeak** were seen at a feeder in town for a few days in early June. A **Franklin's Gull** was in Tarr Inlet at the northern end of Glacier Bay on 7/4. **Stilt Sandpipers** made a grand first local record with twenty-six on 8/8. Eleven Stilt Sandpipers were seen on 8/11 as well as several others on other dates.

Birds rarely seen in Gustavus included a **Wilson's Phalarope** on 5/16, a **Say's Phoebe** on 5/19, a **Western Tanager** on 5/27, **Sabine's Gulls** on three dates in June and July, and a **Mourning Dove** on 8/15.

Flocks of **Brant** stopped along Gustavus beaches on their way north with high counts of 500 on 5/12 and 300 on 6/7.

Olive-sided Flycatchers came through in mid-May with an unusually high count of eleven on 5/17.

Shorebird numbers peaked from late April through early May. On 5/2, Bruce Paige estimated over 40,000 shorebirds on the beach east of town near Rink Creek including about 400 **Black-bellied Plovers**, 2000 **Short-billed Dowitchers**, 17,000 **Dunlin**, and 17,000 **Western Sandpipers**. The high count for **Red Knots** was seventeen on 5/17. The high count for **Hudsonian Godwits** was thirty-six southbound birds on 7/17.

Northern Saw-whet Owls nested in a nest box at the Sharman's home, fledging four young. This was the second year in a row that saw-whet owls raised young in a nest box in town. It was a big summer for **Great Horned Owls**. Reports of Great Horned Owls increased through the summer with reports coming from all over town in August. A handful of **Barred Owls** were also heard through the summer.

A **Thayer's Gull** with leg bands seen on 6/2 was banded on August 2, 2006 on St. Helena Island, Nunavut Territory, Canada (just off the coast of Devon Island). It was the first egg/chick of a 3-egg clutch. The chick hatched on July 17, 2006. (Information from Cindy Gilbert.)

Thanks to Bruce Paige for sightings and records information and to Sylvia Pedersen, Sally McLaughlin, Julie Vathke, Phoebe Vanselow, Lewis Sharman, and Ellie Sharman for sightings and to all who reported owls.

Haines Report Spring/Summer 2007

By Georgia Giacobbe

Haines was fortunate to benefit from a late spring and summer after the difficult winter, and thankfully, many birds arrived throughout the valley. One of the most unusual birds seen was a Pileated Woodpecker first seen in the Kicking Horse valley in early June. During the summer, there were about half a dozen of widespread sightings of the Woodpecker at Mosquito Lake and Chilkoot Lake. It may have been several of these unusual birds took up residence here. In May, Greg Higgins saw Hudsonian Godwits by the small boat harbor, and Black Bellied Plovers, American Golden Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers, Least and Western Sandpipers, Say's Phoebe, and multitudes of Common Scooters elsewhere.

This summer at the Little Salmon—Pam Randalls noted a dark-phased Red-tailed Hawk first week of August and a pair of Trumpeter Swans with two cygnets.

The cruise ship dock was a roost for Pigeon Guillemots and a pair of Belted Kingfishers hatched out young nearby. Surf Scooter males hung out at Portage Cove all summer long—they are usually gone in summer.

Northern Rough-winged swallows were spotted during May at the Chilkoot River. Common Merganser ducklings were late this year and lower in numbers. Pam also watched Bald Eagles nests – two nests fledged two juveniles each. The Marble Murrelet population was strong this summer. Pam was also fortunate to see a juvenile Harlequin duck. She noted it was basically a good breeding season for all, but the pink salmon were late on Chilkoot for eaglets.

Two other observations this summer--lots of baby robins—will they winter over this year? And the Barn Swallow population was up this year.

Wrangell Report By Bonnie Demerjian



Photo by Carol Ross

A birders motto might justly be "you never know". Just when we think we've spotted every likely bird in the neighborhood, an oddity shows up, sometimes for only a few short minutes. This happened to Wrangell birders several times over the summer beginning with the appearance of a small flock of snow buntings that foraged on a shore side lawn for less than an hour before departing for parts north. During the course of the season we also briefly spotted and heard a Townsend's solitaire, a Red-eyed and a warbling vireo. In midsummer we got the blues -- a Western bluebird and a most

unexpected Indigo bunting. A Black-headed grosbeak grabbed the attention of several feeder watchers in one day in July. One of Wrangell's birding hot spots, the Muskeg Meadows golf course pond, hosted a nesting pair of Rusty blackbirds.

Cedar waxwings usually turn up here at summer's end, but this year appeared in early July and have remained around town in force. Band-tailed pigeons continue to visit some feeders all season and their numbers may be growing.

Several of us participated in a survey of Marbled murrelets during June and July. They were numerous off the airport until the start of the survey when they scattered, resulting in only a handful seen each count day. A couple of us cruised up to Holkham Bay, however, in late July and saw hundreds, perhaps several thousand, of the birds as well as multitudes of Black-legged kittiwakes, Common murrelets and Bonaparte's gulls.

We already miss the birdsong of spring but are now on the alert for migrants, including the calls of Sandhill cranes as they pass over town. These birds are not a rarity and we confidently expect their over flight each fall, which doesn't diminish the thrill of hearing their voices one more year.

BOOK REVIEW By Jim King

Ken Ross, [Pioneering Conservation in Alaska](#), 2006. University Press of Colorado, 540 pp.

Ken Ross had done it again. His new, professionally documented history covers the period from the Bering Expedition to ANILCA and compliments his 2000 account entitled [Environmental Conflict in Alaska](#). Most Alaskans are aware that sea otters, fur seals, reindeer and whales were important elements in Alaska's early history but here the details are laid out in proper order. The impetus for Forest Preserves, Wildlife Reserves and National Parks/Monuments, in the early part of the 20th century is covered. The role of significant naturalists and administrators including John Muir, Teddy Roosevelt, Charles Sheldon, William Cooper, Edward Nelson, Bob Marshal, Edward R. Harriman and others is all there. The book is well indexed and includes 33 pages of references, 109 photos and 9 maps. This is historically significant, an important reference and a good read.

For information on current Alaska District Corps of Engineer permits check out this web page: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Reg/PNNNew.htm>

Below are the most recent Corp permit applications in Southeast. To see the full permit open the internet POA in the center column.

Mr. Richard Smith	20 September 2007	<u>POA-2007-1293-1</u> (278KB)	6 September 2007	Herring Bay, Ketchikan
Mr. Ron Palmer	12 September 2007	<u>POA-2007-952-4</u> (363KB)	14 August 2007	Tongass Narrows, Ketchikan
Survey Point Properties	12 September 2007	<u>POA-2007-950-1</u> (330KB)	14 August 2007	Tongass Narrows, Ketchikan
Mr. Russell Cockrum	12 September 2007	<u>POA-2005-549-M</u> (463KB)	14 August 2007	Ward Cove, Ketchikan
Mr. Brendan Kelly	4 September 2007	<u>POA-2007-1025-4</u> (490KB)	2 August 2007	Gastineau Channel, Douglas

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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Jeff Sauer, president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Vice-President: Mark Schwan, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Secretary: Patty Rose, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

Treasurer: Matt Kirchhoff, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

Programs: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

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Education: Beth Peluso, education@juneau-audubon-society.org

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 2

Juneau Audubon Society

October 2007

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – October 11, 2007 7 PM UAS Egan Room 221/222

The first regular Juneau Audubon evening meeting will be a dessert/healthy snack potluck. Please bring 10 slides to share with everyone. All bird, wildlife, and travel photographs are encouraged. Local birding or exotic locations are especially requested. Come and enjoy the food and your talented neighbors stories and photos!

Rats! In the Maritime Refuge of Alaska

**Join Poppy Benson for a presentation on October 25, 2007 7pm
UAS Egan Room 221/22**

Poppy Benson is Public Programs Supervisor at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Homer, AK. The topic of her presentation will be Birds and rats don't mix. "On ships, boats, planes, barges and trucks, rats have spread over much of the world. With them come disease, economic harm and wildlife destruction. Much of Alaska remains rat free, one of the last such places on earth. Our climate and remoteness won't keep Alaska and its wildlife safe forever. As travel, development and shipping increase, so too does the risk of spreading rats." Find out more at <http://www.stoprats.org> <http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov> for more about the refuge <http://www.islandsandoccean.org> for a look the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge visitor center

Tongass National Forest Birthday Party- Saturday, October 13th, 8pm

In 1907, President Teddy Roosevelt created the Tongass National Forest. Please join us for the 100th Birthday of the Tongass National Forest at The Hangar Ballroom, in the Merchant's Wharf. \$5 cover charge includes live music, door prizes and a pint of beer. 21+ only please.

For more information contact: SEACC at 586-6942, Emily@seacc.org
Sponsored by the Juneau Audubon Society, the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, The Tongass National Forest Juneau Ranger District, The Juneau Watershed Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, and Trail Mix.

Juneau Public Market – November 23-25, 2008

Its that time of year again. Juneau Audubon will be making our famous jams and jellies. Please bring any jelly jars in good condition to MaryLou King or to the public meeting. If you can volunteer to make jelly, or have ideas for other items to sell at the booth, or are able to volunteer your time for the Public Market, please contact Brenda at 789-4656.

Message from the President – Jeff Sauer,
president
Election of Officers October 11, 2007

The October Juneau Audubon meeting is among other things our time to elect the officers of Juneau Audubon. All Juneau Audubon members are welcome to come and vote. The officers of Juneau Audubon are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Under the

bylaws of Juneau Audubon the four officers are elected, and then the other board members are appointed to the board. The total number of board members is 10.

We have an active Audubon chapter, and a great bunch of people on the board. We are always, however, looking for one or two more people to become active and join the board. This fall is no exception as Liz Blecker, our trusted Treasurer for the past five years, is getting off the board. We thank her for her great service to Juneau Audubon. In addition Steve Zimmerman is leaving the board after many years of service. Anyone interested in joining the board in whatever capacity please email me at president@juneau-audubon-society.org.

Board member profile: Beth Peluso by Jeff Sauer

Juneau Audubon board member and Education Chair Beth Peluso has recently been in the news with the publication of her children's book *The Charcoal Forest: How Fire Helps Animals and Plants*. From her past work in western Montana on national forest issues, Beth wrote the story of what happens after forest fire, and life in the new habitat created by fire. Of the twenty species of plants and animals in the book the Black-backed Woodpecker is of special note to us. This particular woodpecker, relatively rare in Alaska, occurs primarily in burned areas.

This attractive and charming book was written and illustrated by Beth. Beth has a BA in English, with a minor in art, as well as a MS in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana, with an emphasis on natural history writing and illustration. The *Charcoal Forest* is at Hearthside Books as well as at Internet stores. Beth recently did a book signing

and reading at Hearthside and likely will do another in the near future.

Birding Reports from Southeast

As our editor, MaryLou King, is on vacation, we have fewer southeast bird reports this month. Remember, anyone can contribute to our knowledge about birds, their migrations, and trends in population by adding your information to the e-bird web page

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

It is simple to add your observations to this North American database. You also can read stories about your favorite birds, look at trends, and see all the latest vagrants to our continent!

Juneau September Bird Observations Report prepared by Mark Schwan

September birding started out very exciting with what turned out to be the highlight of the month, when Patty Rose discovered a juvenile **Ruff** accompanying a lingering **Stilt Sandpiper** at Eagle Beach on September 2. The bird was subsequently seen by many birders and was present through September 8. Here are the observations of interest during the month.

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was located on one of the airport finger ponds next to the dike on September 20 (PR) and seen the following day (GV, MS). **Ospreys** were spotted on several occasions, with one on September 7 at Point Bridget (PS, MS); 2 up Mount Roberts, with the first one on September 11 (PS, DM) and the second on September 18 (JS); and 2 birds over the airport dike trail on September 23 (PR). There were several reports of **Peregrine Falcons** during the

month, with single birds seen on the Mendenhall wetlands on September 4 (MS), September 10, and 23 (PR) and a single bird also spotted at Point Bridget on September 7 (PS, MS). Rich Gordon also had one Peregrine swooping on an immature **Gyrfalcon** at the wetlands on the 23rd!

Shorebirds of interest included one or possibly two juvenile **Sanderlings** on September 1 at Eagle Beach and the Scout Camp side of Eagle River (PS, MS). A **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was seen adjacent to the airport dike on September 3 and 4 (GV, RG) and again on September 7 on the tidal flats of north Douglas Island (SZ). A mysterious looking bird that challenged local birders turned out to be a Dunlin. The bird, seen at Phalarope Slough on the wetlands (September 5) was still in mostly juvenile plumage, which is normally lost through molt before the birds leave the breeding grounds (PS, PR, MS). In addition to the Stilt Sandpiper seen with the Ruff, mentioned above, three **Stilt Sandpipers** were located on the previous day (September 1) on the scout camp side of Eagle River (PS).

Two **Ring-billed Gulls** were seen near the gazebo on the wetlands on September 3 and 4 (PS, GB), and our rather famous **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was once again seen in the lower Mendenhall River on September 11 (DM). A **Mourning Dove** was reported from the Sunny Point area on September 22 (fide LE), and a **Northern Flicker** was present at Mile 33 Glacier Highway on September 3 (GV).

Passerines of interest included 21 **Horned Larks**, and six **Townsend's Solitaires** on Mount Roberts on September 11 (PS,DM,RA,RG). A

female **Western Tanager** at Brotherhood Park on September 18 seemed surprisingly late (MS). Finally, one adult **Chipping Sparrow** was observed on Mount Roberts on September 11 (PS, DM). Thanks to those that provided observations.

Robert Armstrong = RA; Gwen Baluss = GB; Larry Edfelt = LE; Rich Gordon = RG; Deanna MacPhail = DM; Patty Rose = PR; Jeff Sauer = JS; Mark Schwan = MS; Paul Suchanek = PS; Gus van Vliet = GV; Steve Zimmerman = SZ

Wrangell Bird Observations Submitted by Bonnie Demerjian



Photo credit-Carol Ross

Fall migrations can bring surprise visitors and this month was no exception in Wrangell. A white-winged dove was seen for several days, as was a male American goldfinch, feeding with a flock of juncos. Though common along the coast, a Black-legged kittiwake at the ferry terminal provided excitement for local birders. A lone Opsrey was spotted flying amidst several Bald eagles.

Flocks of Sandhill cranes have been appearing overhead in town for the past few weeks. They stop to rest and feed by

the thousands on the Stikine River delta until a clear day sends them on their way. One moose hunter was sitting in his tree when two thousand of the cranes landed beside him. They fed until dusk, then, along with several thousand more already there, took off in a honking flurry while Canada geese answered from a nearby slough. Harriers were numerous on the Stikine flats this month. Earl and Mary Benitz who live year round on an island in the delta report seeing a Band-tailed pigeon recently while in town a flock of about fifty of the birds that frequented a local feeder much of the summer has left for warmer places – smart birds.

A weekend cruise brought some treats including large flocks of Western grebes, Pacific loons and a lone Fork-tailed storm petrel. We watched a Northern goshawk unsuccessfully dive bomb a considerable flock of Surfbirds. Surf scoters, White-winged scoters, single Marbled murrelets and a Pomarine jaeger were also spotted.

The Wrangell City Council this past week whether to back a proposal that the Stikine River Delta be named an International site (100,000 plus annually) within the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve System. Local birders and hunters appeared before the council to express their support and emphasize the economic impact of attracting birding visitors to the community. Council responded by voting to send a letter of support for inclusion in the Reserve System.

**SEPTEMBER SIGHTINGS IN
KETCHIKAN
by Teri Goucher**

As summer came to an end; some interesting birds were seen in the Ketchikan area this past month.

Several Morning Doves were seen around open areas on our island and numerous Sandhill Cranes were spotted noisily flying overhead. A cowbird was seen in town around the middle part of the month. A sighting of a Rufous Hummingbird on September 9th was one of the latest ever for Ketchikan! A Hammond's Flycatcher was seen in town on the 19th and is only the 3rd record for that species here. A few juvenile and adult Western Screech Owls were north of town on the 15th of September! Perhaps the first White-throated Sparrow of the season was seen about 14 miles north of town just a few days ago!

Many birds are still migrating to their southern wintering areas so keep on birding because you never know what exciting birds you may be lucky enough to briefly enjoy!!

Enjoy your wildlife!

Alaska Wildlife Viewing Locations is a service of ADF&G Wildlife Conservation. Visit the web page for trails and information on your local area http://www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=trails.locale&locale_id=1

Another great web site is <http://wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=birding.main> "Wings Over Alaska" is an Alaska Department of Fish and Game program that encourages more people to enjoy Alaska's birds and to take their birding skills to a higher level. Alaska is home to a huge variety of birds – 471 species have been positively identified to date – and makes the 49th state a paradise for birders and a destination for many who hope to see rarities like the Bluethroat, Whiskered Auklet, and Bristle-Thighed Curlew.

Wings Over Alaska participants are awarded free certificates for bird species they have seen in Alaska. There are four levels of certification for birders based on identifying 50, 125, 200 and 275 species in the state.

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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2007

Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series

Thursday, November 8, UAS Egan Room (221) (Glacier View) 7:00 p.m.

"Rowing, Sailing, & Hitchhiking in Cross Sound & Icy Strait" by Bridget Milligan. How I spent most of the summer on my old pine 20' rowing dory.

December 13, -- "Unraveling the Elusive Kittlitz's Murrelet" by Michelle Kissling; UAS Egan 221, 7pm

January 10, 2008 "Birding on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Wildlife Refuge" by Karla Hart; Place TBA, 7pm

OTHER HAPPENINGS IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

HAINES - ALASKA BALD EAGLE FESTIVAL -- November 7 -11

Over 3,000 eagles gather along a four-mile stretch of the Chilkat River north of Haines, Alaska each fall to feed on a late run of salmon. This wildlife spectacle is the largest gathering of eagles in the world. The peak of the gathering usually occurs in mid-November. The festival is crammed with a full schedule of events catering to birdwatchers, photographers, and nature lovers. For more information, go to. <http://baldeaglefestival.org/> for call (907) 766-3094.

THANKSGIVING DAY BIRD COUNTS – 2007 The annual Thanksgiving Bird Count is rapidly approaching and will take place November 22nd. Thanksgiving Bird Counts are to take place on Thanksgiving Day, and to last for only one hour! The counter chooses the time that best fits his/her schedule. The count is to be made in a 15-foot diameter circle, the location of which also is determined by the participant. Such count circles are usually located around whatever attracts birds...feeders, bird baths, cover, etc. Most participants select a count area visible from a comfortable spot near a window. This is one winter count that can be made in comfort regardless of the weather. However, some counters do go outdoors and make their counts in favorite bird areas or on water areas. The same count circles should be used each year. The official data sheet is available on our web page at www.juneau-audubon-society.org or <http://iweb.tntech.edu/sstedman/ThanksgivingBirdCountForm.htm>

PUBLIC MARKET IN JUNEAU NOVEMBER 23-25, 2007 Juneau Audubon Society's annual fund raiser is our booth at the Juneau Public Market. Our biggest seller every year is our wonderful jelly/jams orchestrated by Mary Lou King. She not only picks the majority of the berries, but she also makes almost all the jam! Even if some of us had trouble finding berries this year, she has plenty of berries for jam!

We need volunteers for the booth. We like 2 people /2 hour shifts. Since the booth is open 12-8 on Friday and 10-6 on Saturday and Sunday, that means we need 24 volunteers to help us sell our wares during the weekend. If you are available to help, please call Liz at 586-2597 or send a message to public-market@ juneau-audubon-society.org

NEW BOARD MEMBER: My name is Brien Daugherty and I would like to introduce myself as a new Juneau Audubon Board Member in charge of Membership. I was born and raised here in Juneau and think Juneau is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. Regarding membership, I especially want to focus on introducing the Audubon Society as a valuable education resource to teachers and our student population. I look forward to my duties on the Audubon Board as a way to broaden my commitment to our community.

REPORT ON OUR REGULAR OCTOBER 11 AND OUR SPECIAL OCT. 25 MEETINGS

During the **October 11** meeting, Mike Jacobson showed several slides, he had taken several years ago when he was a government observer on a tuna fishing boat. His slides showed how they were beginning to save porpoises by manipulating the net as they were bringing it to the boat. Before this effort by the government the porpoise were killed and thrown overboard. Jim King showed a few old slides of the King Bird Farm and talked about the valuable things learned and birds sent to zoos and other places. Patty Rose showed some wonderful slides of the unusual birds seen around Juneau during this last year and several other folks showed slides of interesting trips. It was a great meeting.

JUNEAU - RATS! in the MARITIME REFUGE of ALASKA was the topic for the presentation by POPPY BENSON, Public Programs Supervisor at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge in Homer, on **October 25**. The meeting was well attended and it was especially good to have a number of the members of Juneau High School's science class in attendance. She talked about how rats and birds do not mix, that Rat Island in the Aleutians Islands and in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, has been infested with rats since 1780s when a ship wrecked there disgorging its rats on the Island where they have been multiplying ever since. Other Refuge islands also have rats that have decimated the nesting bird populations. Find out more, go to <http://www.stoprats.org/> and <http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov>

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY SUPPORTS THE INSTITUTE FOR BIRD POPULATIONS Audubon Society's board has generously donated \$300 to the Institute for Bird Populations MoSI program (Monitoring Overwinter Survival). MoSI is a cooperative effort among organizations, researchers, and bird banders across the northern neotropics aimed at evaluating the quality of winter habitat for migratory landbirds. Since its initiation in 2002, data have been contributed from 153 stations operated in 15 neotropical countries. MoSI is designed to address monitoring, research, and management goals. The data will help provide estimates of annual survival rates, links between winter populations and breeding season vital rates, and evaluate management actions. For more information: <http://www.birdpop/MoSI/MoSI.htm>

JUNEAU BIRD OBSERVATIONS By Mark Schwan October 2007

The birding highlight in Juneau during the month was certainly the abundant and diverse showing of birds of prey, or raptors. At times there seemed to be Northern Harriers everywhere, and Short-eared Owls were seen with above average regularity. Birders enjoyed the repeated observations of Merlins, Northern Goshawks, and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and rarer species were also documented, as will be noted below. What follows is a listing of the more noteworthy sightings reported during the month.

Eight Canvasbacks at Auke Lake on 10/21 (GV) was perhaps a record high number for this species locally in the fall. A **Ruddy Duck** was located on a finger to the floatplane pond on 10/9 (MS,GV,MA,RG), and another, seemingly different bird was seen at Twin Lakes from 10/17 through at least 10/24 (LL,MS).

There must have been one or two **Ospreys** hanging around the wetlands for a while, as a pair was seen near the wetland dike on 10/4 or 10/5 (MA), and single birds were seen near the Bayview Subdivision on 10/8 and 10/9 (SZ); and two other reports came from the airport side of the wetlands on 10/9 (RG), and on 10/21 (GV). Two **Rough-legged Hawks** seen on 10/8 near entrance to the Mendenhall Valley (GV) and two juveniles seen later the same day on the wetlands (MA,PR) were perhaps the same birds; another was found at Cowee Meadows on 10/10 (GB). An immature **Golden Eagle** was circling low over the mouth of Eagle River on 10/2 (MS), one was seen at the Herbert Glacier on 10/4 (RG), and another was found scavenging salmon carcasses below the Eagle River bridge on 10/8 (MS). **Peregrine Falcons** continued to be found on the wetlands early in the month, with sightings on 10/1 and 10/6 (PR).

American Coots made a good showing at the usual locations, Pioneer Marsh, Twin Lakes and edges of the floatplane pond, during the month (many obs.) with up to 8 birds on 10/21 (GV). The only rare owl report came at the end of the previous month, when a **Barred Owl**, was seen and photographed on 9/30 at the Community Garden (DR,KT). While listening for owls at the Community Garden several days later, on 10/4, a **Common Nighthawk**, was heard repeatedly (MS).

A male, interior form, **Downy Woodpecker**, was spotted on 10/21 at the wetlands (GV), and another like individual was seen near the wetlands on 10/27 (RG). Although not considered a rare species for Juneau, an unusual Hairy Woodpecker, with a long, deformed crossed bill was observed at Eagle Beach on 10/16 (GB). Any **swallow** seen in October is worth noting, so though not identified to species, one seen near the scout camp on 10/20 was interesting (GB). **Mountain Bluebirds** made an appearance on several occasions during the first half of the month, with one female at the mouth of Eagle River on 10/2 (MS), another female on the wetlands on 10/7 (MS), and 6 on the wetlands on 10/9 (GV). Warbler sightings during the month included a single Orange-crowned Warbler at Eagle Beach on 10/8 (MS), and another near the wetlands on 10/27 (RG), and a single Yellow-rumped Warbler along the airport dike on 10/8 (RG), and one at mile 33 Glacier Highway on 10/21 (GV). Finally, there was a juvenile **Chipping Sparrow** at the wetlands on 10/21 (GV) and a reddish, interior form Fox Sparrow near the wetlands on 10/27 (RG). Thanks to those that provided information.

WRANGELL OBSERVATIONS By Bonnie Demerjian



We've been battered by weekly storms this past month, not ideal birding weather, but it's likely that those winds blew an unexpected visitor to Wrangell's shores. An aptly named Fork-tailed Storm Petrel, exhausted but otherwise uninjured, was brought in a box to the Forest Service office this past week. Biologist Melissa Cady accepted what she expected was yet another injured robin but was surprised and delighted to see that it was a petrel. Though common along outer coast waters, it usually takes a storm to bring one of these birds ashore this far inland and it may be the fact that they are poor walkers that necessitates human hands to launch them again once they've made landfall.

The bird was allowed to rest all day, and then taken to the beach for release. When box was opened the petrel posed for a few brief photos, then, to the cheers of onlookers, lifted up and sturdily flew away over the water and out of sight.

A small flock of Eurasian Wigeons was spotted on the Stikine River delta, as were Greater White-fronted geese (the speckled taiga form) and Snow Geese. Observers continue to report a larger number than usual of Harriers on the delta. A Black-billed magpie and a Great-horned owl are keeping the Benitzes company at their homestead on Farm Island on the delta. American wigeons, Ring-necked ducks, Mallards and Harlequin Ducks are now scouting the beaches and local ponds. Blue herons have also returned to Wrangell's beaches from wherever they go in spring and Pelagic Cormorants are still perched on pilings in front of town. Other returnees that haven't been seen until recently include Pine Siskins, Killdeer, Common Snipe and Varied Thrush. The latter have the concert stage nearly to themselves this time of year but are more tentative or perhaps unpracticed than spring singers. Are these first year males warming up for next spring or the past year's weary birds? Small numbers of Savannah sparrows and Golden-crowned sparrows are passing though. Some of us are warming up our feeders for the FeederWatch program. Wrangell's Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for December 15.

HAINES OBSERVATIONS By Georgia Giacobbe

If you are a raptor lover, then the Chilkat Valley has been the place for you this fall. Earlier in September, Tim Shields reported many raptors migrating through the Yukon in the Chilkat Pass area. Overall he has noted a wide variety, but specifically he spotted a gyrfalcon, juvenile Golden Eagle, a Merlin, Northern Harrier, and four or five Rough-legged Hawks. The last week of September in the lower valley, many Northern Harriers were migrating through. And one notable sighting was a Turkey Vulture at Mosquito Lake.

Throughout October, the rafts, and rafts of scoters continue to hang out in Portage Cove. Usually you will see them between the small boat harbor and the large cruise ship dock. With November approaching, we can't forget the bald eagles. Because the snow has not arrived (yet), they aren't as easily seen, but juvenile and mature eagles were hanging out in the trees and mostly scattered along the gravel bars from the fish camp at 4-mile through the fan at Klukwan and on at least to 33-mile on the Klehini River as of October 21. This last week of October, many from the lower valley have moved closer to the viewing spot at 19 mile Haines Highway. By Bald Eagle Festival time, their numbers should be peaking. The Bald Eagle Festival is scheduled for November 7 through 11 this year. Arthur Morris is the featured photographer and the Bald Eagle release is set for 1:30 p.m. on November 10. If you like entertainment, Al Batt will once again return and the band for Saturday night is the Alaska String Band. For more information on the festival, see www.baldeaglefestival.org.

NOTES ON SITKA BIRDS By Matt Goff

October saw the return of wintering waterfowl and the departure of the bulk of the remaining summer birds. Early in the month we were still seeing American Pipits and Savannah Sparrows plus a couple of non-wintering shorebirds, Spotted Sandpiper, and one Ruddy Turnstone that spent at least a couple of weeks at Totem Park. The first part of the month saw the return of Ring-necked Ducks, and Lesser and Greater Scaups to Swan Lake. An American Coot was seen on the lake by 9 October, and a second showed up a couple of weeks later. In addition, two American Coots were observed later in the month on Salmon Lake, not far from town. A Hooded Merganser was on Swan Lake early in the month, and one has been reported at Starrigavan more recently. 10 Common Loons and 50 Cormorants (mostly Pelagic) were observed just past the Rockwell Lighthouse on 9 October. Fork-tailed Storm-petrels have

been regularly seen in Crescent Bay, with some also reported from the mouth of Silver Bay. Red-necked and Horned Grebes have returned to the waters near the road system in small numbers. Several Wilson's Snipe have been popping up at Moller Field and around Swan Lake. Long-tailed Ducks have begun to return to the channel, though they are not yet there in the numbers usually seen in mid winter.

In addition to the return of our wintering birds, many others moved through on their way to regions further south. Of particular note were Yellow-rumped Warblers reported at Starrigavan, 70 American Wigeons at Totem Park on 18 October, several Northern Shovelers over several days on Swan Lake, many Green-winged Teal at Totem Park and Swan Lake, and lots of migrating geese, with both Canada Geese and Snow Geese specifically noted. On the morning of 22 October, over 1000 geese were seen flying south in several large flocks through the morning. Trumpeter Swans were first reported flying over on 25 October. Less common birds that have been reported this month include a Lapland Longspur, a probable Short-eared Owl, and two Merlins all on Alice Island. An immature Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen taking a Varied Thrush at Totem Park. An American Tree Sparrow at Moller Park track and another at Medvejie Fish Hatchery later the same day. 5 Brambling were reported with some Golden-crowned Sparrows at Moller Park. A Pied-billed Grebe on Swan Lake (for several days so far), and a 5 minute look at a Black-headed Grosbeak behind the Sheldon Jackson Museum.

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS August 30 - October 28, 2007 By Nat Drumheller

On 8/30, there were forty-two **Caspian Terns*** on the beach in town. Ten of the terns were juveniles. Also sighted on 8/30 was a juvenile **Brown-headed Cowbird**, adding to a couple of other sightings of juvenile cowbirds around that time. Five **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were seen on 8/31 followed by **fourteen** on 9/1. **Stilt Sandpipers** continued to be seen in small numbers through 9/11 with five on 9/1 and 9/2. A **Red Knot** was with a few other shorebirds on 9/1. A dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** was over town on 9/1. Twenty **Baird's Sandpipers** were seen on 9/4. A juvenile **Chipping Sparrow** was along a trail in town on 9/4 and 9/11. Migrating **Sandhill Crane** numbers peaked in mid-September. Single **Ospreys** were observed over town and in Glacier Bay's west arm on 9/16. Four **Cedar Waxwings** were in town on 9/18. **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were seen on 9/23 and 10/4. A **Mourning Dove** was at the airport on 9/25. More than twenty **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were west of town on 9/28. An eastern Red **Fox Sparrow** was at a feeder in town on 10/23. A first winter **Harris's Sparrow** was at a feeder in town on 10/24 and 10/25.

Thanks to Bruce Paige for sharing observations. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

*In an eaglechat post, I mis-read my field notes and put the total number of Caspian Terns at thirty-two by mistake. –ND

BOOK REVIEW By Jim King

Jim Rearden, Sam O. White, Alaskan – Tales of a Legendary Wildlife Agent and Bush Pilot, 2006. Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Inc. 410 pp. More than 70 photos.

Sam White had an inclination to tell stories and write them down even though the 7th grade was as far as his formal education went. He also had a compulsion toward public service. He was already a legend in the woods of western Maine as a logger, trapper and World War I hero when he came to Alaska at the age of 31 in 1922.

Sam served with distinction as a guide and packer and surveyor for the Coast and Geodetic Survey as they struggled with making the first contour maps of wild Alaska. In 1927 he became the first Agent in Northern Alaska under the Alaska Game Law of 1925, a formidable task in the essentially lawless wild lands where fortunes had been made by poisoning furbearers, selling wild meat and other practices that were destroying wildlife. He soon learned the futility of patrolling his vast district by dog team and polling boat and bought a little airplane. Sam White starting in 1930 was the first wildlife pilot in America and in fact the world, setting a standard still emulated by wildlife pilots everywhere.

Sam left government service in 1941 but continued to fly small planes commercially until past age 70. He kept diaries during these years and wrote letters and news stories now collected in the Historical Society Museum in Stratton Maine. He also wrote a number of accounts, often humorous, about people, events and places in Alaska that he had hoped to publish as a book.

Jim Rearden has done a masterful job of welding all this material into an account of the joy of participating in the life of Interior Alaska during the mid 20th century. It is a wonderful story, often in Sam's own colorful words, about physical efforts no longer required in modern Alaska.

Anyone captivated by the thrill of being an Alaskan will love this book about one who relished it to the hilt.

FROM NATIONAL AUDUBON'S TAKE ACTION CENTER

The Bureau of Land Management has renewed its attempt to drill for oil in one of the most sensitive and important wildlife habitats in the Arctic. We need your help to protect Teshekpuk Lake.

TAKE ACTION Contact the BLM today, and tell them to keep Teshekpuk wild and pristine:
<http://audubonaction.org/campaign/tlakecomments/8w6kdd74v6bww53?>

Teshekpuk Lake is on the Coastal Plain of northern Alaska in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (or NPR-A for short), west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The wetlands around Teshekpuk are a wildlife hotspot of global importance, providing habitat for:

- Tens of thousands of molting geese, including 30% of all Pacific Flyway Brant
- Threatened species like the Spectacled Eider and more than a dozen Alaska WatchList species, including the Yellow-billed Loon
- The Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd, an estimated 45,000 animals (Teshekpuk Lake is the herd's primary calving ground)
- Polar bears, especially on the Arctic Ocean shore

The NPR-A has been explored and developed for oil and gas for decades, but every U.S. President in NPR-A history, including Ronald Reagan, has protected Teshekpuk Lake because of its extraordinary importance to wildlife. But in January 2006, under President Bush, the BLM reversed this legacy of protection, opening every single acre of the Teshekpuk area to petroleum leasing. Only an 11th hour court ruling--the result of a suit brought by Audubon and other conservation groups--halted the lease sale in September 2006, days before the scheduled sale. Now BLM is at it again, with a new Environmental Impact Statement intending to pave the way for oil and gas leasing near Teshekpuk. Teshekpuk Lake is too precious to sacrifice when 87% of the Northeast NPR-A is open for leasing and nearly 1.5 million acres are already leased and actively explored for oil and gas. Drilling near Teshekpuk will not solve America's energy problems and will only contribute to greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming.

*****TAKE ACTION***** Speak up for Teshekpuk! The BLM is inviting public comment on oil and gas leasing in Northeast NPR-A, including the area around Teshekpuk Lake. Please contact BLM by November 6 and express your support for protecting Teshekpuk!

<http://audubonaction.org/campaign/tlakecomments/8w6kdd74v6bww53?>

The following three items came from What's UP. Peg Tileston, conservation person in Anchorage sends an extensive summary of environmental things of interest from all over the State. If you would like to receive this weekly What's Up, or to ADD meetings, events, publications, deadlines, websites, or CHANGE EMAIL ADDRESS OR UNSUBSCRIBE, contact Peg Tileston at 907-561-0540, FAX 907-563-2747 or pegt@gci.net.

ARCTIC OCEAN AND NORTH SLOPE MAP ATLAS 3RD EDITION is available at <http://www.northern.org/artman/uploads/arcticatlasoct.pdf>. The Map Atlas shows the sprawl of oil and gas leasing, exploration and development across the North Slope of Alaska and massive expansion of federal leasing by the Bush Administration across the Arctic Ocean including proposed Chukchi Sea Lease Sale 193, planned Shell oil drilling locations in the Beaufort Sea off the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coast, and photos about failed spill drills and risks to polar bears.

What to **GET RID OF UNWANTED CATALOGS** in your mailbox? A new service set up by the Natural Resources Defense Council, National Wildlife Federation, and the Ecology Center called Catalog Choice can stop to all those unwanted catalogs. Since its debut last week, some 20,000 people have signed up for the service, already halting over 50,000 unwanted catalogs. That's a small fraction of the 19 billion catalogs mailed in the U.S. each year (made out of 53 million trees), but it's a start. Did we mention it's free? For more information or to sign up, go to <http://www.catalogchoice.org/>

****November 6 JUNEAU** - Deadline for comments on an application for an Alaska SHORT-TERM VARIANCE from WATER QUALITY STANDARDS for gravel mining in LEMON CREEK, Juneau, Alaska. The short-term variance would allow for operations resulting in temporary turbidity and sedimentation in excess of that allowed by the water quality standards for an annual total of 18 days during a 105 day operational period each year for possibly the next five years. The proposed short-term variance is associated with a request for a Clean Water Act 401 certification for a 404 dredge and fill permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. PERMIT NUMBER: POA-1983-20-N. For more information or to submit comments, contact Brenda Krauss at 907-465-5321, Fax: 907-465-5274 or Email: brenda.krauss@alaska.gov.

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National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001.
You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1st-year introductory rate) _____; **\$15 (1-year student/senior rate)** _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me
A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10
(1-year membership) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK
99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, and money.
To choose this option, write your email address here _____.

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 4

Juneau Audubon Society

December 2007

Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series
Thursday, December 13, UAS Egan Room (221) (Glacier View)
7:00 p.m.

"UNRAVELING THE ELUSIVE KITTLITZ'S MURRELET will be presented a by MICHELLE KISSLING. Public welcome. Come and learn more about this small "glacier bird." For more info call Brenda 321-4739

*Read more about Kittlitz's Murrelet on page 8.

The 2007 Juneau Christmas Bird Count By Mark Schwan

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Saturday, December 15, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the two McDonald's Restaurants no later than 8 a.m. on count day, with appropriate attire and binoculars. People interested in counting in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas should meet at the downtown restaurant; birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the valley restaurant.

There will be a potluck at Mark and Debi's home (time and directions to their home will be given on the day of the count) after the count to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. For more information on this year's Count, you can call Mark Schwan, at **789-9841**.

**Known Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska for the upcoming
Count period:**

Count Location	Date of Count	Compiler/Contact	Phone Number
Chilkat	To be announced	Dan Egolf Tim Shields	766-2876
Craig-Klawock	December 15	Larry Dickerson	826-1619
Glacier Bay	December 15	Bruce Paige	697-2262
Haines	To be announced	Dan Egolf Tim Shields	766-2876
Juneau	December 15	Mark Schwan Gus van Vliet	789-9841
Ketchikan	December 15	Andrew Piston	247-6553
Mitkof Island	December 15	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Sitka	December 16	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 15	Elaine Furbish Sandy Snell-Dobert	983-2049 983-3510
Tenakee Springs	December 29	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Wrangell	December 15	Bonnie Demerjian	874-3665

INFORMATION FROM NATIONAL AUDUBON

We hope you'll join us again this winter for some important bird monitoring activities, hosted by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Please help us spread the word, especially to those who have never participated before!

Christmas Bird Count!

People have been enthusiastically taking part in the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) every year since December 1900. It's a great way to expand your birding horizons beyond your backyard. The CBC is run on one calendar day between December 14th and January 5th each year. As a field observer, you will bird with a group of observers. The birds you count will be included with those of others out counting birds in a 15-mile diameter circle during census day.

If you live within a CBC circle, you can count birds at your feeder. CBC data are of growing importance to bird conservation efforts, and in 2007 the new Audubon WatchList of birds at risk was released including, for the first time, trend data from the CBC. For more information about fees and to find out more about the CBC please visit: www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/ or contact your local bird club or Audubon chapter.

Time to focus on feeders!

The 21st season of Project FeederWatch is underway, but you can **sign up at any time**. Your counts will help scientists monitor changes in feeder-bird populations over the winter from year to year. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird-identification poster, a calendar, and an instruction booklet.

Join the flock! For more information about Project FeederWatch or to sign up in the U.S., please visit www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/ or call (800) 843-2473. There is a \$15 fee to defray the cost of the materials (\$12 for Lab members). If you live in Canada, please visit our partner, Bird Studies Canada, at <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/national/pfw.html> or call (888) 448-2473.

You can learn more about the project and how to attract birds to your feeders by watching two segments devoted to these topics on the Martha Stewart Show. Follow the link on the All About Birds home page at www.allaboutbirds.org.

Count for Fun, Count for the Future!

That's our theme for the 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count coming up February 15-18, 2008. We're hoping you'll help top the record-breaking 2007 count, when participants submitted more than 80,000 checklists!

Consider becoming a **GBBC ambassador** to help us spread the word about this great event, whether it's by putting up posters in your neighborhood, contacting newspapers, or leading workshops. For more information, visit www.birdcount.org and click on the "Get

Involved” button. You’ll find a new online ambassador sign-up form where you can specify the kinds of activities you’d like to do.

The 2008 GBBC news release is now available on the web site at www.birdcount.org, along with an updated version of the PowerPoint presentation that can be used in GBBC workshops or by anyone else interested in the event. Winners and finalists in the **2007 photo contest** are also posted—the judges had a really tough job sifting through thousands of spectacular images. See what you think of their choices in five categories. The top winner shows a spectacular Hooded Merganser!
www.birdcount.org/2007photowinners

Catch the bird-counting bug!

Your participation in citizen-science programs is a vital part of bird conservation in North America. If you’ve caught the bird-counting bug, check out the other citizen science projects offered by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon year round no matter where you live! And let us know what you’re doing. You can send comments and ideas to citizenscience@audubon.org or cornellbirds@cornell.edu.

Juneau November Bird Observations By Mark Schwan

Birding slowed dramatically in Juneau during November, as the bulk of the fall migrants finished passing through the area and we approached the winter season. However, lingering seasonal residents and migrants could still be found. Rarities were scarce, but we did see several casual species show their faces; one probably a continuing visitor, one present ever so briefly, and the other, a newcomer that appeared to be settling in at a local feeder.

Waterfowl highlights included our first fall report of a Eurasian Wigeon from Fish Creek on November 29 (PS), one male Canvasback in the lower Mendenhall Valley on November 27, and another (most likely one of the same birds seen previously) **Ruddy Duck** report from Twin Lakes on November 3rd (GV). A lingering Northern Harrier was spotted on November 6 at the wetlands (MS), another on the wetlands on November 10 (GV), and two were seen on November 22 (RG). Given the open water at Twin Lakes, many observers continued to note at least 10 to 12 American Coots throughout the month. Short-eared Owls, which were quite common in October, were still being seen, with two at the Wetlands on November 6 (MS) and 3 in the same location on November 25 (RG). The only Northern Pygmy-Owl report was a bird seen at Mile 33 on November 12 (GV).

A male **Anna’s Hummingbird** began to grace Patty Rose’s Douglas Island feeder on November 18. This is where putting your hummingbird feeder back up after the Rufous Hummingbirds are long gone pays off, as this very rare species to Southeast Alaska is pretty much only seen at feeders in late fall. The bird was still present when last reported on November 26. As in the previous month, two interior-form Downy Woodpeckers were seen, with one male at the Wetlands on November 3 and a female at Auke Bay on November 11 (GV). Almost non-existent in Juneau since last winter, it was encouraging for someone to stumble on two Brown Creepers on November 27 at Point Bridget (PS).

The first fall Bohemian Waxwing reports came with 46 seen in town on November 5 (PR), and 15 found near the Wetlands on November 17 (RG).

There were a variety of single-bird reports of our more common warblers still present through the month, but highlights included an **Audubon's** (Yellow-rumped) Warbler on November 28 at Auke Bay (GV), and a brief appearance by a **Palm Warbler** at the Pioneers' Home on November 2 (GV). Our first fall reports of Snow Buntings came with 15 seen at the Wetlands on November 6 (MS) and 90 seen on the Wetlands November 25 through 28 (RG). Rare at this time of year, four Red-winged Blackbirds were located near Lemon Creek on November 2 (GV).

Contributors: Rich Gordon = RG; Patty Rose = PR; Mark Schwan = MS; Paul Suchanek = PS; Gus van Vliet = GV. Report prepared by Mark Schwan

Birding News From Ketchikan By Teri Goucher

Autumn has progressed with relatively mild conditions so far here in Ketchikan and many interesting birds have occurred the past couple months.

Seasonal storms have brought the normally pelagic species of **Brandt's Cormorant** and over 40 **Fork-tailed Storm-petrels** within sight around our inshore waters.

A **Peregrine Falcon** has been seen at our airport on Gravina Island which has increased open areas now due to recent construction around the runway.

A very rare **Yellow Wagtail** was here the end of September; only the second record of this species in all of Southeast Alaska!

October still had more unusual birds moving through. A **Slaty-backed Gull** feasted on late salmon at the creek at Herring Cove. A Female **Brewer's Blackbird** was recorded here for the seventh time on October 26. Two early **Swamp Sparrows** were seen at Lake McDonald north of town.

November has kept many sparrow species around even as winter approaches. There were two **Harris's Sparrows** in our area this past month, one 15 miles north of town and another in a garden at a hillside neighborhood home. Rather remarkable that Steve Heintz and Andy Piston found 9 species of sparrows during a single day birding trip around our road system! They observed high numbers of **Fox Sparrows**; including a single 'red' Fox Sparrow and **Song Sparrows**. A **Chipping Sparrow** was seen along with **American Tree Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow**, and Harris's Sparrow.

On November 12th 14 **Killdeer** were seen at one time on the grassy areas of the cemetery. A few Townsend's Warbler, Orange crowned Warbler and Yellow-rumped Warbler remain in the area.

The 7th area record of a **Western Meadowlark** was at the open area of North Point Higgins school where this species has occurred several times over the past several years.

Our Christmas Bird Count will be December 15th and anyone may contact Andy Piston at 225-5195 for more information.

Winter officially begins on December 21st at 9:08 pm, then our daylight hours will slowly and thankfully increase once again!!

Wrangell Sightings By Bonnie Demerjian

Wrangell birders were treated to a colorful family this month. Four Wood Ducks, an adult pair, first year male and female, spent three days at a home pond early in the month. A pair of American Coots has spent several weeks on the golf course pond along with a number of Ring-necked Ducks.

On the saltwater Trumpeter Swans, Pelagic Cormorants, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Barrow's Goldeneyes, Harlequin Ducks, Long-tailed Ducks, American Widgeons, Common Loons, Western grebes and Marbled Murrelets were reported. Black-billed Magpies, a White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Townsend's Solitaire and Northern Goshawk made an appearance in November. A flock of about thirty Cedar Waxwings was reported on the Stikine River delta. Flocks of Pine Siskins have shown up again.

Wrangell birders have been scratching their heads over a photo of a possible Brown Pelican seen November 18 on the rocks in front of town. The bird was seen by three people who were all convinced that it was a pelican but not aware that the birds are rare in Southeast Alaska. Here's the bird taken from the back along with a Blue Heron on the right. The Juneau Empire reported a Brown Pelican in Ketchikan in June, 2003, along with an excellent picture, so the birds are not entirely unknown here. An earlier bird had also visited Ketchikan in 1996. What's the consensus on this bird?



We hope all of these birds and more show up for the Christmas Bird Count on December 15.

Sitka Sightings By Matt Goff

November has seen the return of fair numbers of wintering waterfowl to the Sitka area. In addition there have been several sightings of unusual migrants or strays. The first week of a November was the last time a Pied-billed Grebe was seen on Swan Lake. Its departure seemed to coincide with a cold night when a thin layer of ice formed over much of the lake. Other birds seen at Swan Lake over the month include a couple of sightings of a Northern Goshawk, up to 5 American Coots, one to three American Widgeons, two Northern Shovelers, and a Cackling Goose that has been there all month. Many Lesser and Greater Scaups, and Ring-necked Ducks have been there daily. Other noteworthy birds reported have included a Mountain Bluebird seen for several days in early November at Bear Cove. Near the Path of Hope, two White-throated Sparrows, American Tree Sparrows, many Slate-colored Dark-eyed Juncos, Golden-crowned and

White-crowned Sparrows were seen visiting feeders. A Red-breasted Nuthatch (heard but not seen) was reported near Thimbleberry Lake trail.

Unusually late, Savannah Sparrows were seen near Moller field at least through the middle of the month. Other late birds included two Orange-crowned Warblers (one of them the interior subspecies) and a Wilson's Warbler seen on the 28th. Several Yellow-rumped Warblers have been seen this month as well. A small flock of White-winged Crossbills was reported in the top of Hemlock trees behind the Sheldon Jackson Museum, a Western Grebe was seen off of Galankin Island, and as many as 22 Black Oystercatchers showed up out at Starrigavan. Swans have been reported several times from several different locations, though it's not clear whether any of them have settled in to spend the winter.

Gustavus Sightings October 29 - November 29, 2007

The Gustavus/ Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, 12/15. Everyone is welcome to participate. For information call Bruce Paige, count coordinator, at 697-2262.

Two adult **Bar-tailed Godwits** were along the water's edge west of town on 10/29 and 10/31. Single **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen on 10/29 and 11/3. A **Glaucous Gull** was on the golf course on 11/2. A lone **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was in grasses west of the Salmon River on 11/3. Two **European Starlings** were in town on 11/6. Four **Mountain Bluebirds** were along the beach on 11/5. Three rare (for Gustavus) and late warblers were seen along the shore of Bartlett Cove: a **Blackpoll Warbler** on 11/11, a **Palm Warbler** on 11/13 and 11/14, and a **Tennessee Warbler** from 11/11 to 11/18. A **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was in the same area on 11/18. All four warblers were catching bugs on and near the ground among dead vegetation at the forest/beach edge. There was also a Yellow-rumped Warbler in town on 11/29. An **Osprey** was seen over the Salmon River through 11/16. A late **Greater White-fronted Goose** was with Canada Geese on 11/17. Single **Northern Flickers** (red-shafted) were seen on 11/1, 11/15, and 11/20. A **White-throated Sparrow** was at a feeder in town on 11/18 and another was with juncos west of town on 11/23.

Great Horned Owls, heard regularly this fall in several locations, continued through the period. Also reported during the period were several **Barred Owls**, a **Northern Hawk Owl**, several **Northern Pygmy-Owls**, and a **Northern Saw-whet Owl**. There were no reports of **Short-eared Owls**.

Numbers increased through the period for three shorebird species known to winter along Gustavus beaches. High counts for these were 1600 **Dunlin** on 11/9, 150 **Sanderlings** on 11/5, and 350 **Rock Sandpipers** on 11/5. A Dunlin with colored leg bands seen on 10/31 was banded in August of 2005 on the Tutakoke River in the Yukon Delta NWR. (Information from Robert E. Gill, USGS.) This adds to a handful of Dunlin banded on breeding grounds on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta and resighted in Gustavus in recent years.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Julie Vathke, and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing observations and to all who reported owls. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

PROFILE: Board Member Matt Kirchoff

In the *Raven* while recently profiling Steve Zimmerman we indicated that Juneau Audubon had two members on the state-wide Audubon Alaska board. Besides Steve Zimmerman the other Juneau Audubon board member on the Audubon Alaska board is Matt Kirchoff.

Matt is presently the Treasurer of Juneau Audubon and previously has filled other board seats such as Conservation Chair. But while sitting on the Juneau Audubon board he has for seven years or so also sat on the state Audubon Alaska board.

Matt is well known around the state and Juneau for his expertise in several areas. One is the Tongass National Forest. Matt has worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game since 1978 and for a couple of decades worked on studying deer. His work was directed at old growth ecology and from those decades of scientific work he gained a unique expertise regarding the forest ecology of the Tongass. Now not only does Fish and Game reap the benefits of Matt's experience and knowledge, but so does Audubon Alaska. Audubon Alaska along with The Nature Conservancy are becoming big players in the future management of the Tongass. And in fact many claim that they are out ahead of the USFS in computer modeling and analysis of ecological values of the forest. Matt along with John Schoen (Audubon Alaska senior scientist) are big contributors to this work. (See *National Geographic Magazine* July 2007, page 124; Matt is mentioned at page 125).

From deer Matt moved to Marbled Murrelets and is now conducting long term studies on this unique and possibly threatened seabird. Again the scientific work is closely linked to old growth forest ecology, because as we now know Marbled Murrelets nest on tree branches in our old growth forest. Matt has presented programs on his fascinating murrelet work at the forest service's fireside chat series as well as other places.

Besides science Matt is also known for his hobby of rowing and is the president of the Juneau Rowing Club. The club was instrumental in getting dock space and racks for the rowing shells located at Aurora Harbor. He can be seen on occasion out in Gastineau Channel rowing along in his thin rowing shell with long outstretched oars.

Matt holds a BS degree from the State University of New York, Syracuse, and a MS in Zoology from the University of Maine. Before coming to Juneau Matt worked out in the Bering Sea for the US Fish and Wildlife Service, doing seabird surveys, from 1976 to 1977. And, from 1980 to 81 Matt and his wife Patty, and with one daughter then, built a cabin and lived in Port Alexander. Matt's contribution to Alaska and Juneau is great. In particular he is much appreciated at Juneau Audubon and Audubon Alaska.

Proposed Bylaw Change by Jeff Sauer, President November 28, 2007

The bylaws of Juneau Audubon, like many non-profits, contain a term limit for board members appointed to the board by the officers. The limit is presently two consecutive two year terms. This term limit is a valuable thing and keeps a certain amount of new blood in an organization. On the other hand Juneau Audubon is a relatively small group of dedicated volunteers and more flexibility may be desirable regarding term limits. It also appears that we unwittingly have gone beyond the term limits in certain instances.

The term limit bylaw section is below:

The Board shall consist of the four elected officers plus the chairpersons of the standing committees. Standing Committee Chairpersons shall be selected by the full Board of Directors, initially half serving for one-year terms and half serving for terms of two years. ["initially" being the very start up of the organization, which has long since passed] All subsequent standing committee chairpersons and appointments shall be for two-year terms, and no member of the Board may be appointed for more than two consecutive terms.

The conservative way to read this bylaw section is that the non-officer members of the board (these are the appointed board members, versus the elected officers) have term limits of two consecutive two year terms. The Juneau Audubon board has voted to recommend to the Juneau Audubon membership to increase the term limit to three consecutive three year terms. This is a proposed change to our bylaws and as such must go to the vote of the members at a monthly meeting. This proposed by-law change, from two consecutive two year terms, to three consecutive three year terms, will be put to a yes or no vote at the January 10, 2008 Juneau Audubon meeting. If members have any questions feel free to address to the president, by email.

Small Alaska bird in big trouble: ENDANGERED: The Kittlitz's murrelet is on the Audubon list. By ERIKA BOLSTAD NATIONAL AUDUBON

WASHINGTON -- An Alaska seabird that nests and feeds where glaciers meet the sea is threatened with extinction by global warming, warned the National Audubon Society as it released its 2007 watch list of endangered birds.

The breeding and feeding habitat of the Kittlitz's murrelet is "linked to Alaska's tidewater glaciers, making the species very susceptible to climate change," Audubon officials said Wednesday. Oil spills and coastal pollution also threaten the murrelet.

"To save Kittlitz's murrelet, we need to halt global warming," said Greg Butcher, director of bird conservation for the National Audubon Society. "That's the only way we're going to have total success."

The Audubon watch list, last updated in 2002, is a compilation of the most imperiled bird species in the United States. Twelve Alaska birds make the most critical "red" list, compiled by Audubon and the American Bird Conservancy. Another 36 are on the yellow list, a category that designates them as needing what Audubon terms "urgent conservation action."

The national watch list includes well-known species on the endangered species list, such as the spotted owl, the California condor and the whooping crane. But it also includes lesser-known coastal birds that are threatened with extinction, such as the Kittlitz's

murrelet, which has seen its situation worsen since the 2002 list was released. The data are compiled from state, federal and academic studies as well as Audubon's annual Christmas bird count.

In Alaska, Audubon remains most concerned about the Kittlitz's murrelet, which has been considered for federal endangered species listing but hasn't made the cut because biologists simply don't know enough about the bird.

There are an estimated 24,000 in existence, but the bird's mysterious habits and unusual habitat make it difficult to determine its population. The bird, about 9.5 inches long, is mostly found in Prince William Sound and Glacier Bay. Only 30 nests have ever been seen, and biologists aren't sure where the birds spend the winter. But they do know that the loss of glaciers means a loss in habitat and food for the murrelet, said Iain Stenhouse, a biologist with Audubon Alaska.

"There are a couple of species like that, that have enough of a link with either pack ice or glacial ice that we're really concerned about them, and Kittlitz's murrelet is certainly one of them," Stenhouse said. "We don't fully understand the link between Kittlitz's murrelet and ice. But we know that where we see lots of glacial recession is where we also see the greatest decline of Kittlitz's murrelet."

Audubon also has concerns about two other Alaska sea birds: the buff-breasted sandpiper and the spectacled eider. The sandpiper spends the northern hemisphere summer nesting on the North Slope tundra, then flies to the southern hemisphere for its summer, feeding in the pampas of Argentina. Only about 15,000 sandpipers remain, Stenhouse said, in part because the wild South American grasslands have been planted with crops.

The eider, a sea duck, winters on the Bering Sea and breeds on the Arctic tundra. It makes a winter home in small holes in sea ice, and feeds on clams. As the polar sea ice shrinks, so does the eider's habitat.

Audubon officials said Wednesday that they are especially concerned about Alaska, because the state is seeing the effects of global warming before other regions of the U.S. Alaska's polar regions are a harbinger of the habitat loss that global warming threatens across the country, Butcher said.

They hope the list gets across to the public the message that what is good for birds is also good for humans -- bird populations with declining numbers reflect out-of-kilter environmental conditions that should raise concerns for people too.

"Birds are a very good indicator of the health of the natural world, and we share that world with them, whether we like it or not," Stenhouse said. "If something's happening to them, it's bound to have some impact on us. It's a very clear signal for us that we should be paying attention."

Audubon's lobbyists in Washington also argue that there are cooperative approaches that don't require an endangered species listing, such as proposed legislation offering federal tax breaks to private landowners who develop conservation plans that help restore endangered and threatened species.

"We can do this without spending millions and millions of dollars," said Mike Daulton, Audubon's director of conservation policy. "We just have to learn to work together better than we have in the past."

Find Erika Bolstad online at adn.com/contact/ebolstad or call her in Washington, D.C., at 1-202-383-6104.

Alaska birds on the National Audubon Society's watch list: Steller's eider, Spectacled eider, Sooty grouse. Laysan albatross, Black-footed albatross, Short-tailed albatross, Pink-footed shearwater, Eskimo curlew, Rock sandpiper, Buff-breasted sandpiper, Ivory gull, Kittlitz's murrelet

FROM PEG TILESTON'S WHAT'S UP

<http://lists.onenw.org/lists/info/whatsup>

Deadline for comments of petition to list the **LYNN CANAL** (Alaska) stock

of PACIFIC HERRING as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). NOAA is requesting information regarding population structure and stock delineations of Pacific herring in Southeast Alaska, the Gulf of Alaska, and the North Pacific Ocean; population trends and ecology of Pacific herring in Lynn Canal and Southeast Alaska waters; habitat requirements and current habitat conditions; known and anticipated threats to the viability of the population; and efforts being made to protect the species. For more information, go to

<http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/herring/petition0407.pdf> or <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/notice/72fr51619.pdf>. Submit comments to Attn:

Ellen Sebastian by Fax: (907) 586-7557 or email: LCHERRING@noaa.gov.

Include in the subject line of the e-mail

the following identifier: Lynn Canal Herring.

****DRAFT STATEWIDE LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN UPDATE "2030**

LET'S GET MOVING." The draft plan document is available at

<http://dot.alaska.gov/2030>. For more information or to submit comments, contact Eric Taylor, Transportation Planner (project manager) at (907) 465-4070, Fax: (907) 465-6984 or Email: eric.taylor@alaska.gov.

BOARD of GAME PROPOSALS for the JANUARY 2008 STATEWIDE MEETING are now posted online at

<http://www.boards.adfg.state.ak.us/gameinfo/meetinfo/gprop.php>.

Comments

are due January 11.

TONGASS National Forest 2006 ANNUAL MONITORING & EVALUATION REPORT is available at http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/tlmp/2006_monitoring_report/index.shtml

BOOK REVIEW

Anan, Stream of Living Water
by Bonnie Demerjian

Review by Alan Sorum in A View From the Waterfront at www.harboradvice.com

Anan Creek is internationally known as one of the most productive pink salmon streams in North America, making it by default an unmatched location for viewing both black and brown bears. Anan Creek is located on the north shore of the Cleveland Peninsula, just south of Wrangell Island and north of Ketchikan. Wrangell resident Bonnie Demerjian has authored *Anan, Stream of Living Water*, an exhaustive chronicle of the stream and its denizens. The account displays Bonnie's depth of local knowledge and understanding of the complex relationships that exist between human visitors, feeding bears and spawning salmon, meeting together at the creek.

Demerjian paints a descriptive view of the region's natural history and geology. Using photographs taken by Ivan Simonek, she describes the plant and animal species found in the Anan watershed. There is extensive discussion of the Pink salmon life cycle and development of commercial fishing in the area. Explorer George Vancouver noted Anan Bay in 1793, and there has been aboriginal use of the Creek's natural plenty since the beginning of human occupation in Southeast Alaska 10,000 years ago. A great sidebar and continued discussion in the text relates to the Tlingit Cycle of Food and the methods used to capture the salmon. Later industrial fishing endangered the resident Pink salmon population and would prove a driving issue is establishing Alaska Statehood.

The greatest strength of *Anan, Stream of Living Water* is its treatment of the legend, lore and life history of the region's prime attraction, the bears. Bonnie relates the Tlingit stories of the bears, describes their biology and history within of bear. The USDA – Forest Service operates a wildlife viewing facility at Anan Creek that takes great advantage of the bears feeding on Pink salmon migrating into the stream. The role of the Forest Service at Anan is explained and the author forwards really useful information on bear photography, viewing safety, rental cabins, suggested reading, and contacting local guides. The book enjoys extensive bibliography and subject index.

Anan, Stream of Living Water is available from *Hearthside Books* in Juneau and www.stikineriverbooks.com

CORPS PERMIT APPLICATIONS: The full permit application can be viewed at: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNNNew.htm>

Ketchikan applicant William Britton

LOCATION: Refuge View Place Subdivision; at Mile 8.1 of North Tongass Highway, Ketchikan

PURPOSE: Develop lots for William Britton Refuge View Place Subdivision.

PROPOSED WORK: Fill 2.43 acres of wetlands for development of 12 residential lots.

Ketchikan Gateway Borough Gravina Island Subdivision

PURPOSE; Road access to industrial waterfront properties to facilitate economic development for a 180 acre industrial park for open space, recreation, and residential development, including a quarry and regional waste area to facilitate property development of private and public lands.

PROPOSED WORK: Discharge 250,000 cy of overburden, 40,000 cy of shot rock into wetlands.

Petersburg Steve Lombard

LOCATION: Falls Creek Subdivision, Lot 3; along Wrangell Narrows, Mitkof Island, 9.9 miles south of Petersburg

PURPOSE: Construct permanent single family residence, offshore mooring buoy and pulley system, stabilize an eroding stream bank

JUNEAU AUDUBON OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

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National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

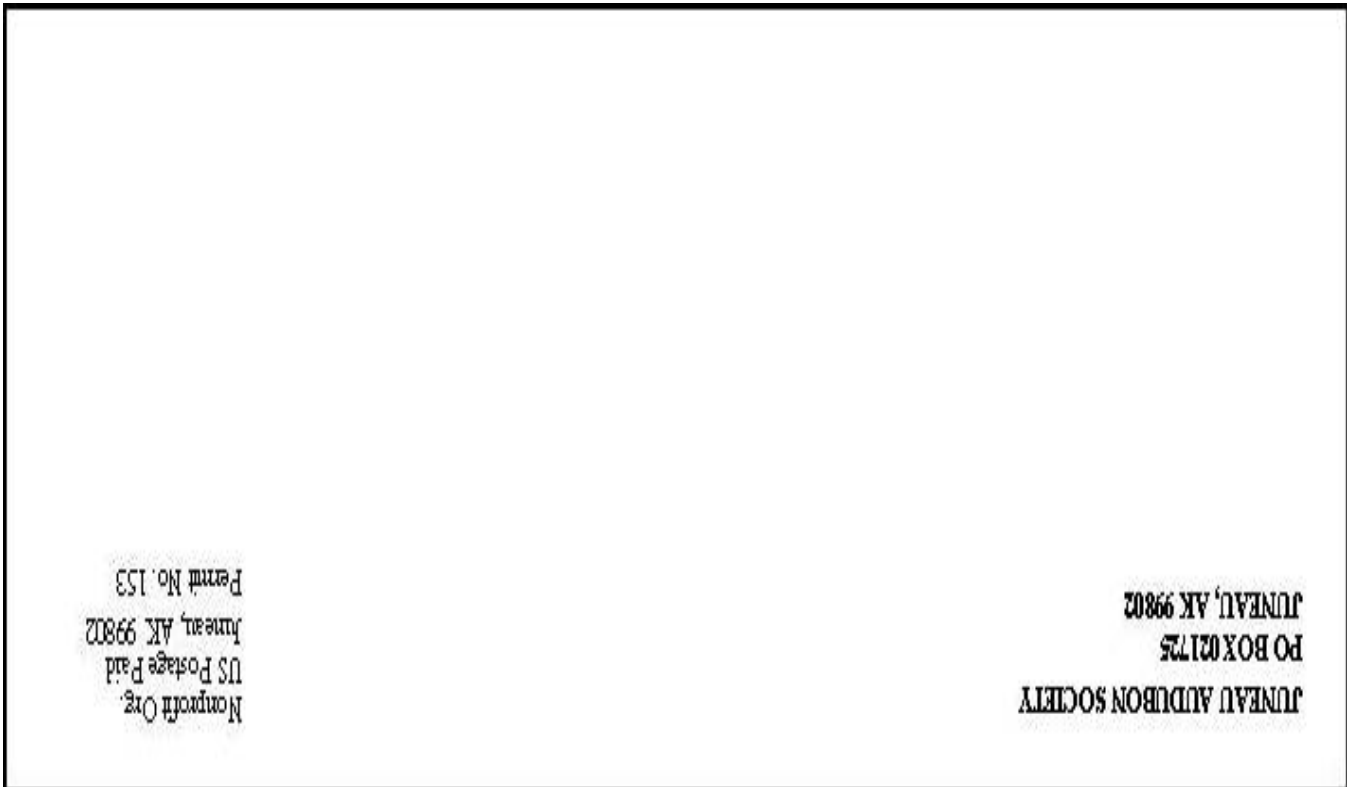
____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed ____ Please bill me
A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, and money. To choose this option, write your email address here

_____.



The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2008

**Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series
Thursday, January 10, UAS Egan Room (221) (Glacier View) 7:00 p.m.**

YUP'IK COUNTRY BIRDING

Discover Alaska's newest birding destination - the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Volunteers from Juneau and elsewhere have helped to pioneer birding tourism based in the villages of Chevak, St. Mary's, and Bethel and to explore other opportunities. Highlights include nesting Spectacled Eiders, Emperor Geese, Sabine's Gulls, and Yellow Wagtails - and the quest for Bristle-thighed Curlews. Karla Hart, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will share pictures and stories from assessment tours in 2006 and 2007, and future opportunities for birders to visit.

Great Backyard Bird Count February 15-18, 2008

- 1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes during February 15–18, 2008.** Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like—just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location.
- 2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, and write it down.** (You can get [regional bird checklists here http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist](http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist))
- 3. Enter your results** <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>



That's it! We'll look forward to receiving your counts.

If you are interested in more information about the count, visit the official website for the GBBC at www.birdcount.org. There's also a great intro PowerPoint presentation posted that can provide you with all the details of the programs.

Two Southeast Sites Get Global Recognition as Important Bird Areas

To some people, the Mendenhall Wetlands are just a marshy unusable area surrounding the airport and Port Snettisham is a place where Juneau gets hydro-electric power and produces hatchery fish.

Now these two areas will be known for something else... they were recently designated as Important Bird Areas (IBA) with global significance by BirdLife International in partnership with the National Audubon Society.

The IBA program is an international effort to identify, conserve, and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for bird populations. It is based on two founding principles: 1) habitats that are important to birds are also important to other wildlife and 2) people are an important part of conservation in that how we think and behave affects how we treat our environment. Because a wide spectrum of the human population is interested in birds, this program works to create local, continental, and global partnerships between conservation groups as a way of encouraging conservation, protecting biodiversity, and improving the quality of people's lives. IBA status does not necessarily preclude development in the area. It just provides a platform to include bird habitat protection in any future development plans and to identify and rank areas needing rehabilitation funds.

The IBA program began in Europe in the 1980s and has grown to include about 8,000 sites in 200 countries. In 1995, the National Audubon Society formed a partnership with BirdLife International to initiate the IBA program in the United States. Some special projects were started in Alaska in 2000, but the program did not expand to the rest of the state until 2004. Since then, 4 of the 126 identified Important Bird Areas in Alaska are in Southeast: Berners Bay, Blacksand Spit, Mendenhall Wetlands, and Port Snettisham. Berners Bay (just north of Juneau) and Blacksand Spit (near Yakutat) were the first areas in Southeast to be identified as IBAs. Berners Bay is known for its high concentration of gulls (up to 60,000), waterfowl, and shorebirds during the spring when large numbers of eulachon and herring spawn in the area. Blacksand Spit, 10-mile long narrow spit in Ahrnklin estuary is the breeding grounds for 2,000-3,000 Aleutian Terns and 200-2,600 Arctic Terns annually.

In 2006, the Mendenhall Wetlands and Port Snettisham areas were identified as IBAs on the state level. In November of 2007, these areas were also recognized as important bird habitats with global significance by the U.S. IBA Committee. Only 5% of the state IBAs are elevated to a globally significant status level. This additional recognition offers more attention from the international conservation community and the potential for more protection and funding.

The Mendenhall Wetlands, the third largest wetland in Southeast, is a major migratory stopover for waterfowl and shorebirds traveling the coast of Alaska. The wetlands are used by some 230 bird species—about 77% of all species seen in Juneau and 69% of all species seen in Southeast. This vegetated salt marsh is visited by 41 species of shorebirds and 36 species of waterfowl each year. Ensnconced in an urban setting, conservation concerns center around pollution from an international airport, a sewer treatment plant, a landfill, and an aquaculture facility. Two major development projects, slated for the near future, may also encroach on the Mendenhall Wetlands—the expansion of the airport and a second bridge crossing over Gastineau Channel.

Port Snettisham, a large fjord located southeast of Juneau, is home to a high concentration of Marbled Murrelets. Results from an Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) study in 2005 and 2006 estimated 6,000 to 10,000 Marbled Murrelets fly into Port Snettisham each day and fly out to Stephens Passage each night to forage during peak periods in late July and early August. This is

2-3 times greater than the number of Marbled Murrelets along the entire outer coast of Washington State. Given that Marbled Murrelet populations in the lower 48 have declined to low numbers, studying the Port Snettisham population to determine why this area is so heavily used by Murrelets becomes even more important. Most likely the high numbers of Marbled Murrelets in the area is due to the high concentrations of forage fish in the area and a relatively intact old growth forest surrounding the fjord. Several species of loons are also present in high numbers. ADF&G biologists counted over 500 loons per hour over a 2 day period—estimating more than 4,000 loons are present on any given day during peak spring migration.

The next step in the IBA process is to inform the public about the IBA areas by issuing a news release, posting signs in the area, or, if appropriate, working with private landowners. Juneau Audubon Society will publish a news release or write a feature article for the paper in the future. Upon completion of this phase, the status of these four IBAs will change from an Identified IBA to a Recognized IBA. A special thanks to Bob Armstrong and Rich Gordon for compiling and submitting the Mendenhall Wetlands for IBA consideration and to Matt Kirchoff for submitting the Port Snettisham proposal. The applications required a very detailed description of the bird species and their use of the areas. More detailed information about IBAs can be found at the following web site http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/iba_intro.html.

Overview of Juneau's Christmas Bird Count By Mark Schwan

We had about 40 volunteers working our count circle on our count day, Saturday, December 15.

The weather turned out to be agreeable and the tides were in our favor. There was a seemingly above average amount of waterfowl hunting activity on the wetlands, which likely negatively affected our count somewhat. There was also one very badly behaving hunter who actually shot at our airport wetlands group. I guess he felt they were encroaching on his territory? Fortunately no one was hurt. To my knowledge, this has never happened before.

We found 70 species of birds on count day, about average for over the last 20 years of counts. We counted 10,875 birds, just a little above our average, with our two most abundant species being Mallard and Glaucous-winged Gull. Although our Glaucous-winged Gull count was above average, we found the bulk of the birds outside of the airport and landfill areas (where we traditionally see many), which is likely due to the bird deterrent programs at the two sites, especially at the landfill. We had an all-time low count for Northwestern Crow, only 189 birds, but we had a new high count for Common Raven, at 575 birds. We were below average for Steller's Jay and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Brown Creeper was only a count week bird. Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers have been scarce this year after last winter. We had a number of rare birds for this time of year and several casual species for Juneau; highlights included three Wood Ducks in the Mendenhall Valley, one White-throated Sparrow downtown, and one Harris' Sparrow near the airport.

In addition to birds seen on the count day, local birders found an additional 15 species during our count week. This by far exceeded the number of additional count week species seen around any previous count day. However, our total for the week, 85, was not a record, as back in 1987 and 1988, we had record counts on our count days, and with additional species during those count weeks, we had a total of 88 species for the week in both of those years. Thanks to all who helped, and thanks to Gus van Vliet for maintaining the week's list and compiling the species and numbers at the

potluck. Thanks also to Steve Gilbertson for covering Auke Bay in his boat, and a special thanks to Gus, Paul Suchanek, and Patty Rose for locating so many count week birds!

2007 JUNEAU CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Juneau's Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 15. Forty volunteers located 70 species and counted 10,875 birds during the day. Highlights included three Wood Ducks, one White-throated Sparrow, and one Harris' Sparrow. Eighty-five species were seen during the entire count week. Unusual species and/or numbers are bolded.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count or CW</u>		
		Bald Eagle	132
	Only	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Cackling goose	1	Northern Goshawk	1
Canada Goose	947	Merlin	cw
Wood Duck	3	Unidentified Falcons	1
Gadwall	14	Black Turnstone	75
Eurasian Wigeon	cw	Rock Sandpiper	5
American Wigeon	169	Dunlin	23
Mallard	2340	Wilson's Snipe	2
Northern Pintail	cw	Bonaparte's Gull	4
Green-winged Teal	13	Mew Gull	248
Greater Scaup	148	Herring Gull	11
Lesser Scaup	cw	Thayer's Gull	4
Unidentified Scaup	177	Glaucous-winged Gull	2007
Harlequin Duck	114	Glaucous Gull	cw
Surf Scoter	551	Unidentified Gulls	80
White-winged Scoter	255	Common Murre	33
Black Scoter	cw	Pigeon Guillemot	3
Unidentified Scoters	100	Marbled Murrelet	193
Long-tailed Duck	65	Rock Pigeon	7
Bufflehead	175	Northern Pygmy-owl	cw
Common Goldeneye	191	Short-eared Owl	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	289	Belted Kingfisher	2
Unidentified Goldeneyes	82	Downy Woodpecker	cw
Hooded Merganser	1	Northern Shrike	1
Common Merganser	48	Steller's Jay	28
Red-breasted Merganser	140	Black-billed Magpie	37
Pacific Loon	43	Northwestern Crow	189
Common Loon	19	Common Raven	575
Yellow-billed Loon	cw	Chestnut-backed	
Unidentified Loons	10	Chickadee	104
Horned Grebe	77	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1
Red-necked Grebe	28	Brown Creeper	cw
Western Grebe	cw	Winter Wren	3
Pelagic Cormorant	26	American Dipper	6
Great Blue Heron	5	Golden-crowned Kinglet	6

Ruby-crowned Kinglet	cw	White-crowned Sparrow	4
Unidentified Kinglets	3	Golden-crowned Sparrow	1
American Robin	cw	Dark-eyed Junco	342
European Starling	1	Lapland Longspur	cw
American Pipit	1	Snow Bunting	25
Bohemian Waxwing	12	Red-winged Blackbird	cw
American Tree Sparrow	28	Rusty Blackbird	3
Savannah Sparrow	4	Pine Grosbeak	3
Fox Sparrow*	2	Red Crossbill	150
Song Sparrow	16	Common Redpoll	30
White-throated Sparrow	1	Pine Siskin	433
Harris' Sparrow	1		

* One Fox Sparrow reddish, interior form.

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

Undocumented rumors of the Brown Pelican that appeared in Wrangell last month are continuing to pop up. Birders are scanning the beaches close to town and hope to get another, better photo now that more eyes are alerted for the bird.

In the meantime observer Carol Ross found two White-crowned Sparrows, a White-throated Sparrow and a Harris's Sparrow all at her feeder. They stayed for several days before moving on. Several other out-of-season birds spotted this month include a Yellow-rumped Warbler, a Wilson's Warbler, three American Pipits and a female Red-winged Blackbird that was feeding with a flock of Starlings. A large mixed flock of Varied Thrush and Robins frequented one yard this month and was preyed on by an attentive Northern Goshawk.

The cold snap early in December brought a small flock of Great Blue Herons together to soak up the afternoon sun in protected trees above the ferry terminal. A flock of about 20 Bohemian Waxwings, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Pine Siskins, killdeer, and several Red-breasted Sapsuckers were also reported this month.

Wrangell's Christmas Bird Count was held December 15. The day was punctuated with heavily overcast skies, rain and wind. Nonetheless, several entertaining birds showed up for the count. These included a Double-crested Cormorant, two Brown-headed Cowbirds, a Tree Sparrow and several hundred Common Mergansers. More results after they are tabulated. Twenty-one birders participated this year.

GLACIER BAY/GUSTAVUS BIRD BITS By Bruce Paige

For the 35th time since 1968, I got up before light, cleaned the binocs and spotting scope, gathered them up, along with a digital camera, lunch, a thermos of hot chocolate, a few snacks and as soon as the trees surrounding the yard were faintly discernable, headed for the door. It was 8:15 AM, but still nearly dark so a brief stop on the deck was in order to listen for owls. It was eerily quiet. Come to think about it, the treetops were hidden, as the flashlight's beam struggled to pierce a thick mist; not good signs.

The Glacier Bay/Gustavus Christmas Bird Count had an inauspicious beginning. One learns over the years that weather plays a very major role in the day ahead. There was yet no snow on the ground, so it would be easy to get around, particularly compared to last year when one floundered through a 30 inch snow cover at the same time of year. It was calm; a very good thing indeed, since peering into the teeth of gale winds and trying to stay warm all day is no fun and not very successful! The zero degree temperatures of the week before had warmed to the 30's, a bonus for birds and birders alike.

I had taken long walks every day for two prior weeks trying to reconnoiter the Gustavus tidelands, uplands, forests, and waterways for birds. There had been some very unusual species around for the time of year, but birds are so mobile, the question was would they be seen and counted this day? Individuals can be hundreds of miles away overnight, if a lake starts to freeze, or if it is just a moonlit night right for flying. Here today, but gone tomorrow!

As I slogged the muck and slipped on the ice like a noisy, wraith through misty woods towards the Dude Creek beach, there was some comfort in knowing that 23 other observers were also out or beginning to stir. They would soon be walking, driving, boating, and intently watching bird feeders within the 15 mile diameter circle of Gustavus, nearby Icy Strait, Lower Glacier Bay, and the Beardslee Islands recording every individual bird they saw along the way. At the end of the day, the totals would add to a compelling database of wintering bird populations across Alaska and North America.

Emerging onto the open beach, a Northern Harrier glided by searching the uplands for voles or small birds- a good bird not seen often in December. A flock of 30 Snow Buntings undulated over me, then, came back for a second look, and a third. In the same area, a secretive bird flirted among the rye grass clumps: a Horned Lark, recorded only once before on a count day. Fog or not, perhaps this was going to be a productive day.

After dragging back to the house at dark with 10 miles afoot and 15 miles driven, the calls and e-mails began to come in to confirm that this was indeed an exceptional day. A new high of 74 species of birds were recorded during the day, topping the old record by one. 10,317 individual birds were counted, well above the average number. The most startling sighting was that of a Swamp Sparrow by Phoebe Vaneslow, a bird skulking near Bartlett Cove for over a month, and finally photographed the day before the count for the first ever sighting of this eastern species in our area. Other birds not previously seen on a Christmas Count were a Rough-legged Hawk, a Red-tailed Hawk, and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet: all are commonly wintering southward this time of year.

New high numbers were observed of Common loons (105), Northern Harrier (4), Thayer's Gull (31), Chestnut-backed Chickadee (171), White-crowned Sparrow (4), and Common Redpoll (132). Some of the absences were also notable. No Northern Pintails, Herring Gulls (only the fourth count missing them), owls of any kind, or Dippers were recorded. As good as the count was, there were several unusual species that were present during the count week that could not be found on count day, including White-fronted Goose, Barred Owl, American Pipit, and Savannah Sparrow. A complete list of Christmas Count results is posted at the Post Office.

A hearty thanks again to all of the observers who braved the elements on count day, Allison Banks, Paul Barnes, Abigail Calkin, Mary Cook, Nat Drumheller, Bobbi Foster, Mark Foster, George Jensen, Lynn Jensen, Ernie King, Barb Kruger, Sally Mclaughlin, Tom Mclaughlin, Sean Neilson, Sharon Paige, Laura Ross, Maya Seraphin, Bruce Smith, Chad Soiseth, Colleen Stansburry, Greg Streveler, Phoebe Vaneslow, and Julie Vathke. Special appreciation goes to the National Park Service for making a patrol boat and operator available to cover the Glacier Bay routes.

December Birding News From Ketchikan-by Teri Goucher

The dedicated birders in the Ketchikan area managed to find an all time record of 69 species during our Christmas Bird Count on December 15th. There were 22 people participating, comprising 13 groups that searched for birds, and one dedicated feeder watcher. The weather was decent here with temperatures hovering around 40 degrees, light winds and high overcast that was occasionally broken by brief peeks of sunshine. The weather the day before the count was terrible and the day after began four days of snow showers that left a foot of snow at sea level.

There were some exceptional sightings that were exciting for our area. A total of 6 **Brandt's Cormorants** were seen which is the first CBC record for the entire state of Alaska! Another new species for the state CBC list was an **Iceland Gull** that was confirmed by Steve Heintl on that Saturday! An elusive **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was feasting on a suet block and an **Anna's Hummingbird** remains close to a couple of feeders town.

There must be a lot of feed in our area waters attracting higher than usual numbers of **Pacific Loons** and even 6 **Red-throated Loons** were seen. Five **Bonaparte's Gulls** were spotted off the waterfront along with well over a thousand **Long-tailed Ducks**. Lots of **Mallards** are around as usual but 4 **American Wigeon** and some **Gadwall** also made it on our count list. Two **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and a **Goshawk** were seen as well.

Sparrows remain relatively numerous with lots of **Song Sparrows** and **Fox Sparrows** still here. Other sparrow species seen included two **White-throated Sparrows**, a **Lincoln Sparrow**, **American Tree Sparrow**, **Harris's Sparrow** and a **Golden-crowned Sparrow**.

No Crossbills were observed and only one flock of **Pine Siskins** were seen on count day. A dozen hardy **American Robins** were found still wintering in the Ketchikan area!

Thanks again to Andy Piston who took on the task of organizing our local birders and compiling all the data to be submitted for the 108th Christmas bird count!

Happy New Year and happy birding to all the Raven readers! Have a great 2008!!

Comment Period Opens on Environmental Assessment for Restoring Wildlife Habitat on Rat Island

Uninhabited Rat Island, located in the Aleutian Island chain about 1,300 miles west of Anchorage, is part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. This Refuge with 2400, islands extends

from Forester Island Southwest of Ketchikan, to the western end of the Aleutian Islands and north to Cape Lisburne in the Arctic Ocean. Some 15 to 30 million birds, 55 species nest on the Refuge Islands. Rats have decimated the population of nesting birds on Rat Island. Because a number of Juneau Audubon members were very knowledgeable and interested in this Refuge, about 20 years ago, when adoption of refuges was encouraged, our group adopted this refuge and has given support to the managers when appropriate.

Refuge managers are seeking public comments on the recently completed Environmental Assessment. Authors of the assessment evaluate two alternatives: a no action alternative and the proposed action to eradicate rats from the island in an effort to restore the native ecosystem. The Environmental Assessment and other informational materials can be viewed or downloaded at <http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov/news.htm>. Written comments will be accepted on the Environmental Assessment through January 11, 2008, and can be submitted by e-mail to rat_island@fws.gov, by fax to (907) 235-7783, or by mail to Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, 95 Sterling Hwy., Suite 1, Homer, AK 99603.

SOUTHEAST -- FIVE PUBLIC EASEMENTS OVER STATE TIDE LANDS

Comments are due on proposal to grant five public easement over State tide and submerged lands to the US Forest Service. Each easement would reauthorize an existing log transfer facility for a term of 55 years. Proposed easement locations are: 1) PAT CREEK located in Zimovia Strait adjacent to Wrangell Island. The facility is located north of the mouth of Pat Creek and about 8 miles south of the City of Wrangell. The easement area is about 14 acres in size and there has been a log transfer facility at this location since about 1957; 2) UPPER CARROLL INLET located on the east shore of upper Carroll Inlet adjacent to Revillagigedo Island, about one mile northwest of Swan Lake and about 24 miles northeast of Ketchikan. The easement area is about 13 acres in size and there has been a log transfer facility at this location since the 1960's; 3) TONKA MOUNTAIN located on the west shore of Wrangell Narrows, adjacent to Kupreanof Island and about 7 miles south of Petersburg. The easement area is about 11.5 acres in size and there has been a log transfer facility at this location since 1978; 4) HOMESHORE located in Icy Strait, adjacent to the Chilkat Peninsula about 15 miles southeast of Gustavus. The easement area is about 11 acres in size and there has been a log transfer facility at this location since 1975; and 5) NICHIN COVE located in Nichin Cove, adjacent to Tuxekan Island and about one mile southeast of Naukati. The easement area is about 12 acres in size and there has been a log transfer facility at this location since 1967. For more information or to submit comments, contact Jim Anderson at 907-465-3427, FAX 907-586-2954 or email jim.anderson@alaska.gov.

BOOK REVIEW – in the Journal of Alaska History, Spring/Fall 2007 issue written by Kaylene Wilson, Wasilla

Roll On! Discovering the Wild Stikine River, By Bonnie Demerjian

There is usually so much more to know about a topic that what can fit between the covers of a single book. This is especially true of the human and natural history in the vast landscapes of the North. In Roll On! Discovering the Wild Stikine River, however, Bonnie Demerjian gives the reader an amazingly comprehensive look at a river whose colorful history is as appealing as its

wilderness shores. Demerjian's use of language brings out her passion for the Stikine, and through words and images the reader comes to experience the rich and vivid tapestry of the place.

Demerjian's fluid and engaging writing keeps the pages turning as she details the river's history from its geologic formation to its present-day importance in our ecosystem. Laid out and organized in an appealing format, each chapter of the book begins with a quote about rivers from a famous author. Many pages have interesting sidebars about individuals, places, and historic features found along the banks of the Stikine.

The book has twelve chapters. The first chapters describe the geologic and human history of the river. Demerjian tells how the land was formed and she writes about the rich and complex history of the river's Native peoples. Contact, the region's gold rushes, riverboats, and the impact of the twentieth century are addressed in the early chapters. Subsequent chapters describe the river's natural history including mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and plant life. The chapter "Landmarks from the Mouth to Telegraph Creek" should be of interest to river travelers and historians. Finally, Demerjian thoughtfully considers the pressing issues of the river today, including the conflict between development and preservation.

The stunning photograph of Ivan Simonek illustrates the river's vast reaches from the waters of Southeast Alaska to the immense Stikine Plateau, the river's source in northern British Columbia. The book is punctuated with historical photographs and illustrations that give a taste of Native ways and frontier days. Because the river is so intricate and its shorelines so intriguing, I would have enjoyed more detailed, color maps throughout the book.

I began reading Roll On! Discovering the Wild Stikine River knowing very little about the place and turned the final page with enthusiasm to explore this wild and historic destination. In any future travels to the Stikine River, I will surely pack this book along.

****Book Reviews of other Southeast Alaska books or other books that would be of interest to Southeast readers are welcome.**

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National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; **\$15 (1-year student/senior rate)** _____
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Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, and money. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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Juneau Audubon Society

February 2008

**Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series
Thursday, February 14, UAS Egan Room 221/222 7:00 p.m.**

"Working and Traveling in Cambodia"

Join Clayton Hawkes for a description of his volunteer work in Cambodia from June 2004 to November 2006. Clayton worked as a VSO volunteer with the Cambodia Department of Fisheries, and later for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, on a large fisheries management project in the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve. The British non-government organization, Voluntary Services Overseas, is an international development charity that works through volunteers to fight global poverty and disadvantage.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**11th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 15 - 18, 2008
Count for Fun, Count for the Future!**

Dear Great Backyard Bird Count participant,
Your chance to take part in the eleventh Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) comes up in a few short weeks. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to have fun and help us find out where the birds are this winter. Read on for new and exciting features of this year's event.

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

Check out the GBBC website (www.birdcount.org) for improved features, including:

- Ability to submit YouTube bird videos. The best videos will be posted on the GBBC website
- Expanded sparrow identification page
- New bird call identification game for kids
- New FAQ section and narrated GBBC overview

SPREAD THE WORD

We hope you'll spread the word this year by encouraging your friends to participate. You can forward this email to them or direct them to visit the website at www.birdcount.org. Remember: the GBBC is fun, free, and helps birds!

WIN SOMETHING COOL

When you send in your checklist this year, you will automatically be entered in a prize drawing to win items like binoculars, bird feeders, and a variety of great books! Check out <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/press/news-stories/prize-list-for-2008> for a listing of prizes.

SUBMIT PHOTOS TO OUR ONLINE GALLERY AND PHOTO CONTEST

During the count, take digital photos of birds (and bird watchers!) and submit them to the GBBC website. All photos submitted will be entered in the photo contest, and some will be posted in an online gallery. Images will be accepted through **March 1**.

YOUR COUNTING COUNTS

In 2007, GBBC participants made history, breaking records for the number of birds reported and number of checklists submitted. Participants sent in more than 80,000 checklists tallying over 11 million birds of 613 species. Last year, as a result of your counts, we discovered that many bird species had already started their spring migrations in February earlier than in decades past. Your counts help us build a long-term record of where people are finding birds and how many birds there are. Although your bird counts need to take place from February 15-18, you can submit data as late as **March 1, 2008**. If you have any questions, please contact us at citizenscience@audubon.org or cornellbirds@cornell.edu.

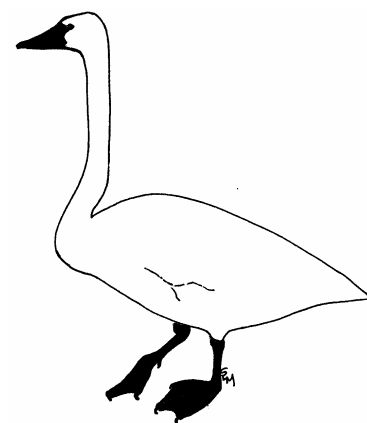
March 13: Next regular Juneau Audubon meeting

Birding South Africa -- South Africa is the most "developed" country in Africa but has managed to conserve well managed large national parks which provide outstanding birding and wildlife viewing opportunities. Some of the unique habitats found in South Africa support a variety of plant and wildlife species found nowhere else in the world. Bev Agler and Paul Suchanek recently spent a month touring South Africa and observed nearly 400 species of birds and over 50 species of mammals. Join them for an exploration of some of these habitats and the wildlife ranging from penguins to parrots and whales to wildebeests.

TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE, WHITEHORSE, CANADA

APRIL 17-19, 2008

The International Trumpeter Swan Society – dedicated to restoration of this rare but recovering species announces our 21st Conference in the Yukon will focus on swans in western Canada and Alaska. Presentations will be held on Thursday, April 17 and Saturday April 19, with an all-day field trip to view swans south of Whitehorse on Friday. The conference will end Saturday evening with our banquet keynoted by former director Dave Weaver, highlighting TTSS' 40 years of accomplishments. Join us to celebrate our history and to plan for the future while viewing thousands of Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. You will soon be able to register online with your credit card. Check our web site for news on availability.
www.trumpeterswansociety.org.



The conference will be held at the High Country Inn (1-800-554-4471; www.highcountryinn.yk.ca). Rooms are \$99 (Canadian) per night (single or double), plus a 6% tax. The block number is 24870 to reserve rooms at this rate.

Take some extra time and make your 21st Conference visit to Whitehorse truly memorable! – When landscape architect legend Ian McHarg viewed the interspersed Trumpeter Swan habitat and mountains while flying from Anchorage to Juneau, he commented how nice it was to see "a place where God is still in charge". TTSS members accustomed to the suburban/agricultural landscape where most trumpeters are getting established in the lower 48, may get the same impression when they visit Whitehorse for the 2008 conference.

Whitehorse in April is a great experience. Nice paths on the bank of the mighty Yukon River a few steps from hotels, with flocks of migrating trumpeters and tundras overhead during the rapidly-increasing hours of daylight, will provide an unforgettable experience.

Saving some time to drive or fly out for a closer view can greatly enhance your trip. Thousands of tourists visit this region each summer without the inducement of witnessing the swan migration and the good fellowship of a TTSS conference. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity. There are many possibilities for excursions both before and after the conference – including Skagway, Haines, Kluane National Park, dog-mushing, cross-country skiing and more! For information, check out Yukon Tourism at www.travel yukon.com or the City of Whitehorse visitor information at www.visitwhitehorse.com. For those interested in wildlife viewing, visit www.environment yukon.gov.yk.ca/viewing.

GETTING TO KNOW OUR JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD

Anastasia Parmann Lynch, Field Trips Chair: Anastasia is originally from Northern California. She and her spouse earned advanced degrees and birthed two children in New York State. Most recently they have come from Micronesia. They chose to settle in Juneau because of the unique natural features and wildlife. Her interest in the Audubon Society is a strong belief in the importance and interdependence of all living being.

JUNEAU BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS DECEMBER AND JANUARY

By Mark Schwan

As December was winding down and the Christmas Bird Count was history, some of Juneau's more avid birders were still working on annual lists and finding fascinating birds. Then, Gus van Vliet challenged local birders to best his January Juneau list of bird species of 79. Paul Suchanek took up the challenge in earnest, and by mid month had surpassed 80 species and by month's end had accumulated a list of 85 for the month; very impressive. Several other birders made an effort to bird more intensively during the month, as often people hang up their binoculars after the Christmas Bird Count and wait for spring to come. As it turned out, there were many interesting birds in Juneau. Here are some highlights. Moreover, given the only report in the Raven for December was the summary of the Christmas Bird Count, a few more noteworthy observations from the CBC and December are included herein as well.

Five **Brant** (“Black” Brant) were located with Canada Geese on the Mendenhall Wetlands near Sunny Point on January 17 (MS) and subsequently relocated on January 18 (GV) and January 22 (PS). These birds represented the first local winter record. However, since reported on Eaglechat, two local residents responded they have seen this species near Sunny Point in past winters. The three **Wood Ducks** located in the Mendenhall Valley prior to the bird count (December 12, MS) were seen repeatedly through the end of December and all through January (many obs.). In addition to their usual hangout near the Lakeside Condos, these birds were also seen in the lower Mendenhall River on January 21 and 24 (PS, BA). Three male **Eurasian Wigeon** were seen at the mouth of Fish Creek on December 17 (PS), and at least 2 to 3 males were there until January 30 (PS). One **Northern Shoveler** was reported from the Mendenhall Wetlands on January 14 and January 21 (PS). A male **Common Goldeneye X Barrow’s Goldeneye hybrid** was over-wintering along the North Douglas Highway about a mile past the North Douglas boat ramp (PS). This is probably the same bird that over-wintered in that location in 2006-2007. In addition to the one **Hooded Merganser** spotted in Gastineau Channel on the December 15 (CBC); one bird was seen in Stephen’s Passage near Outer Point on January 6 (PS), and three were seen in Switzer Creek on January 9 (PS). There was another sighting of a single bird at False Outer Point on January 1 (PR).

A search for our most elusive ptarmigan, the **White-tailed Ptarmigan**, ended in success, when two birds were found up on the peninsula in front of the Mendenhall Glacier (December 27, PS). First reported in Auke Bay prior to the bird count on December 13 (GV), a single **Western Grebe** was seen in the same area on January 13 (GV). Another bird (?) appeared to be frequenting the waters near Point Louisa for over a month, as reported on January 17 via Eaglechat (BS). There were just a couple of reports of **Sharp-shinned Hawk**, including a late January (27) report of a bird targeting feeder birds in the west side of Mendenhall Valley (KH). In addition to the sighting on the CBC, other **Northern Goshawk** reports included one on December 16, above Gastineau Ave. (MS), one on January 2 at the Lakeside Condos (PS,NH), and one bird seen flying over the lower Mendenhall River on January 15 (RG). A **Merlin** was stalking feeder birds downtown on January 29 (MA).

Three **Killdeer** were at Fish Creek on December 10, as were two birds on January 8 (PS). One bird was also located on south Douglas Island on January 1 (PR). Although now known to be present in the hundreds at Gustavus during the winter, **Sanderlings** are very rare in Juneau, so one bird found at Eagle Beach on January 10 and 17 was of interest (PS); don’t laugh Nat and Bruce! Outside of the CBC, the only reports of **Wilson’s Snipe** also came from Switzer Creek, with single birds being reported on January 2 (MS) and January 9 (PS). Five **Bonaparte’s Gulls** were seen at Fish Creek on December 13 (PS) and then four were found on the CBC. Two **Glaucous Gulls** were reported during the first day of count week (December 12), an adult at Fish Creek (PS), and a bird at the Costco parking lot (MS), which continued to frequent the area throughout most of January (MS,PS).

Locating owls takes a lot of dedication, preparation, and a bit of luck, hence, a **Northern Hawk Owl** seen and photographed along the wetland dike on December 19 (RA) was quite cool. **Northern Pygmy-Owl** reports included one bird seen preying on a junco at a Douglas Island feeder on January 1 (PR), and two other North Douglas sightings (December 19 and 29) (PS). Another New Year’s owl included a **Barred Owl** found adjacent to the airport dike trail at

sundown on January 1 (GV). A **Northern Flicker** (red-shafted female) frequenting a North Douglas feeder was presumably the same bird returning for a 4th winter (PS). There were multiple sightings of **Downy Woodpeckers** on or near the wetlands from mid December through January (PS,ND,PR).

In early December, five **Horned Larks** were located on the Mendenhall Wetlands and photographs were taken (12/6, PR). One of these birds appeared to be of the Asian subspecies (*flava*), which was very exciting. Four Horned Larks were again located on the wetlands on January 1 (PR). These birds represented the first local winter record. The only thrush species seen during the reporting period was **American Robin**, with scattered reports from various locations and observers. Four birds, perhaps a high count, were seen at Evergreen Cemetery on January 21 (MS). Subsequent to the CBC, small numbers of **American Pipits** were found at the Mendenhall wetlands through the end of December and well into January (many obs.). There are only one or two prior local winter records. The only known warbler sighting during the reporting period, was one **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, seen in town on December 6 (MM).

While watching a flock of juncos and tree sparrows at a roadside feeder near the airport on December 20 the appearance of a **Spotted Towhee** was quite a shock (PS). This bird turned out to be furtive and difficult to see during subsequent stakeouts by various birders, but some met with success, as the bird was seen on December 26 (GV), January 1 (MS), January 2 (PS, NH), and January 8 (PR). **American Tree Sparrows** continued to be present in above average numbers, with birds reported by many observers from a variety of locations. Three **Savannah Sparrows** were found at the Mendenhall Wetlands on January 5 (PS, BA). A reddish, interior form **Fox Sparrow** was found at a feeder near the airport on January 2 (NH, PS). This bird may be the same individual that was frequenting a feeder several blocks away through the month of December (RG) and which was seen on the CBC. There was a **Lincoln's Sparrow** mixed in with juncos near Switzer creek on January 29 (MS). A surprise find on the CBC was a **White-throated Sparrow** in downtown (AB,KL,AL), which was relocated the next day (GV) . Then single birds were reported from Evergreen Cemetery on January 5 (PS) and Behrends Avenue on January 18 (MA). Another surprise find on the CBC, a single immature **Harris's Sparrow** was found near a feeder close to the Mendenhall River (BA,PR). A single **Golden-crowned Sparrow** visited a feeder near the airport through most of December (RG,CBC) and another bird was located at a feeder near Switzer Creek on January 9 (PS).

Four **Lapland Longspurs** were found on the wetlands on December 16 (PR). These birds, located the day after the CBC, had never been seen during our local CBC count week and were likely only the second or third Juneau record for December. Longspurs were subsequently seen in a large Snow Bunting flock frequenting the wetlands into early January (GV,PS,BA). When a pale, unusually whitish individual bird was a standout amongst a large flock of Snow Buntings at the wetlands on December 21, a birder was intrigued (GV). Then, on December 24, the flock was relocated and the pale bird studied at close range and photographed (PS,MS). The tentative identification was **McKay's Bunting**. In the following days a second candidate bird was found and several birders studied and photographed both birds (PS,PR,GV). The final decision as to the identity of these birds was complicated when photographs of assumed hybrid forms were compared to our local birds. However, after examining photographs of museum specimens of both species, it seemed that McKay's Bunting was the logical identification for both birds.

Unless someone asserts the identification is equivocal, or incorrect, these birds represent the first record for the species in Southeast Alaska.

Always a treat to see at this time of year, Pine Grosbeaks were frequenting many parts of town, seeking out remnant mountain ash berries (as were waxwings). Reports of large flocks of Common Redpolls in January, included an estimated 100 birds on January 1 and 200+ birds on January 13 (RG), and a flock of perhaps up to 400 birds on January 30 (MS). More often, it seemed that redpolls were seen in small numbers mixed in with Pine Siskins, which arrived in force during the second half of the month (many obs.). As January came to a close and the cold weather set in, there were fewer observations from the field and more from folks watching their feeders, such that the influx of siskins and redpolls, though not rare species, was a bright spot at month's end. Thanks to all who contributed to this report.

Contributors: Bev Agler = BA, Mark Anderson = MA, Robert Armstong = RA, Anissa Berry-Frick = AB, Nat Drumheller = ND, Rich Gordon = RG, Nick Hajdukovich = NH, Karla Hart = KH, Ken Leghorn = KL, Anastasia Tarmann Lynch = AL, Mary McCafferty = MM, Mark Schwan = MS, Brita Shaw = BS, Paul Suchanek = PS, Gus van Vliet = GV. Report prepared by Mark Schwan.

HAINES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT By Georgia Giacobbe

Haines seems to honor the 12 days of Christmas with their Christmas Bird Count, which was conducted December 29 and January 5. Tim Shields arranges for the count in two areas in the Chilkat Valley—one centered downtown and the other at 20 mile Haines Highway (in the Bald Eagle Preserve). The following birds were counted:

Bald Eagles 318, Common Redpoll 230, Dark-eyed Junco 146, Chestnut-backed Chickadee 138, Pine Siskin 232, Common Goldeneye 132, Barrow's Goldeneye 125, Common Merganser 106, Mallard 194, Common Raven 93, Glaucous-winged Gull 75, Black-billed Magpie 64, Bufflehead 50, Other Goldeneyes 30, Steller's Jay 26, Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) 23, Trumpeter Swan 18, Marbled Murrelet 17, Northwestern Crow 17, Pine Grosbeak 16, Horned Grebe 14, Dipper 14, and Mew Gull 12.

A **Fox Sparrow** and **Song Sparrow** were a surprise, usually the birds are only summer residents. Two **Long-tail Ducks** (Oldsquaws), a rarity, were spotted. Another highlight was the sighting of a **Pacific Loon**. Total number of species was about 40, an average number of species, but numbers were low possibly due to the heavy snow in the morning of December 29.

As of the weekend of January 19, local eagles continue to winter over in the preserve, gathered in the trees around 19 to 20 mile Haines Highway. And at least half of the **Pine Grosbeaks** counted in the CBC are still in the area, feeding on the snow on my front deck. This last week in January has been below average cold with the wind nonstop down Lynn Canal for a week, severely limiting birding activity.

SKAGWAY BIRD REPORT by Elaine Furbish

The Skagway Christmas Bird Count was held on December 15, 2007. We had 28 participants, including 1 senior, 2 feeder watchers, 4 birders from Whitehorse and 1 birder from Juneau. The

weather was mild with temperatures hovering around the freezing point and generally calm, overcast conditions. 36 species of birds were recorded, with 5 additional species seen during the count week. 4843 individual birds were recorded, whereas in the past we've usually had between 500 and 1500 individuals recorded.

The high numbers of birds recorded this year are probably due to a combination of an increase in human effort - we had a very good turnout of participants, and the addition of a boat route covering an area we've been unable to reach in the past - and the extraordinary number of waxwings.

Bohemian Waxwings are regular winter visitors to Skagway, but the unusually high numbers seen this year (2447) were associated with an unusually heavy set of mountain ash berries, which seem to be the waxwing's favorite food. The waxwing count estimate was based on observations as well as two photographers who counted the birds in their images, making us confident that the number reported is realistic. The waxwing flocks brought in the raptors. Highlights on count day included a **Northern Goshawk**, and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** seen strafing a waxwing flock. One group witnessed a **Bald Eagle** stealing a large dungeness crab that a river otter had just brought out of the water onto the rocks to eat.

During count week, we had a **Northern Pygmy Owl** and a **Varied Thrush**. **American Robin**, **Brown Creeper**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch** and **Yellow-shafted Flicker** were seen a day or two too late to include as count-week birds.

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT by Bonnie Demerjian

During these frigid and gusty days our romantic notion of being a bird, free on the wing, turns to a shudder of empathy. We can only speculate how arduous it is for birds to keep body and soul together in winter. Nevertheless, despite their probable hardships, a flock of about 200 **Bohemian Waxwings** has kept Wrangell birders fascinated as the birds gorged on this summer's abundant Mountain ash berries. A brilliant albino waxwing stood out among the flock.

Our Stikine Delta reporter says they are seeing **Bohemian Waxwings** there as well as several **Black-billed Magpies** and a **Northern Shrike**. They report that a **Great Horned Owl** has been calling lately and may decide to nest again in their yard. A few Pine Grosbeaks are around town, the **Pine Siskins** are back and a couple of **American Robins** never left. Individual immature **White-crowned Sparrows** have turned up at feeders this month.

On the water, **Common mergansers**, **Red-breasted Mergansers**, **Pacific and Common Loons**, a few **Long-tailed Ducks**, **American Wigeon** as well as the usual **Harlequin Ducks**, **Barrow's Goldeneyes**, **Bufflehead**, **Pelagic Cormorants** and several **Double-crested Cormorants** were reported.

Bald eagles are beginning to turn up in the trees in larger numbers so we know that the hooligan run can't be too far away. In the mean time the birds are hungry and noisy. Occasionally they even turn up on our deck railings to check out the stale bread.

Twenty birders participated in this year's Christmas bird count on December 15. The top species in term of numbers was a flock of over 1000 **Western Grebes**, followed by **Northwestern Crows**. **Buffleheads** were the top duck species in number, nearly 400, followed by almost as many **Common Mergansers**. Over 500 **Glaucous-winged Gulls** made the list with **Mew** and **Herring Gulls** in much smaller numbers.

KETCHIKAN'S JANUARY BIRD REPORT- By Teri Goucher

I have additional information about our Christmas Bird Count results! The total number of species seen here on December 15th was actually our all time record of 71 species with 73 total for count week. Interesting birds added include **American Coot** and **Pied-billed Grebe**. The overall number of about 4600 birds was much lower than the usual total of approximately 6000 individuals for our area.

A **Peregrine Falcon** has been spotted in town and there are only a very few winter records for this species here. A lingering **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was seen north of town on the twentieth of January.

Along the road system many birds are continuing to enjoy the large amounts of feed in the water with higher than average numbers of **Long-tailed Ducks** and **Red-throated Loons**. Ten **Brandt's Cormorants** were seen in one day and a huge flock of about 800 **Pacific Loons** were visible from the docks in town!

Ketchikan's end of southeast Alaska has had quite a winter so far with lots of snow storms and several days of temperatures in the teens. While birders uncover and add to their snowy and frozen seed at feeders dreaming of warmer spring days ahead; it's interesting to think of our occasional vagrant visitors. One species very unaccustomed to our climate is the Tropical **Kingbird**. This flycatcher has a yellow belly, a heavy bill and notched tail, and ranges from southern Arizona in summer, south through Mexico and Argentina. Amazingly there are three records of the Tropical Kingbird here in Ketchikan, all in autumn. The latest sighting was the first week of November in 1998 which I was lucky to experience with my eight year old daughter. This Kingbird usually only appears as an uncommon local summer resident in Arizona but some individuals do a sort of reverse migration after the breeding season and fly northwestward occasionally much to the enjoyment of birders along the pacific coast! So keep on birding even during the heart of our Alaskan winter because you never know what fascinating birds may briefly appear!

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS -- November 30, 2007 - January 30, 2008

Small numbers of **Trumpeter Swans** were seen through the period with a high count of over fifty on 1/11 on the Bartlett River. A single **Greater White-fronted Goose** was seen with Canada Geese through the period, the first record for this species wintering here. A **Canvasback** was at Bartlett Cove on 1/11. **Northern Harriers** were seen on several dates in December with four on 12/15. Both a **Rough-legged Hawk** and a **Red-tailed Hawk** remained in the area through the first half of December. On 1/13, an **American Kestrel** was west of town at the same location where one was observed in November. **Merlins** were sighted on 1/1 and 1/23. No **Peregrine Falcons** have been reported this winter. On 1/14, one **Dunlin** in a flock of about 2000 had colored leg bands matching those on a Dunlin seen in Gustavus this fall that had been banded on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta. A **Snowy Owl** was reported on 12/4, but within an

hour of the report, the owl was dead and being fed on by eagles. The remains of a second Snowy Owl, also eaten by eagles, were found on 1/13. **Great Horned Owls** continued to be heard in several locations through the period, continuing a strong presence for this species since late summer. Single **Short-eared Owls** were reported on 12/1 and on six dates in January. **Barred Owls** were reported on three dates in December and on 1/4. **Northern Pygmy-Owls** were heard and seen regularly from late December through January. The only **Northern Saw-whet Owl** heard was on 12/11. **Northern Hawk Owls** were seen at opposite ends of town on 1/18 and 1/21. A **Northern Flicker** showing traits from both red-shafted and yellow-shafted varieties made the rounds of residential feeders through the period. This appears to be the same flicker that wintered here last year. The only reports of **Steller's Jays** during the period were single birds on 12/15 and 1/24. A few **American Robins** were seen through the period. Single **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were seen through 12/15, and a late **Yellow-rumped Warbler** was in town on 12/3. One **European Starling** was seen through mid-December. Three **Horned Larks** were along the beach on 12/10 and a single Horned Lark was seen through January. Three **Savannah Sparrows** remained in the area through 1/1, and two **White-crowned Sparrows** have stayed through January. The area's first **Swamp Sparrow** was along the shore of Bartlett Cove from mid-November through 12/15. **American Pipits** were here into early January with seven on 1/1. The first Gustavus **Brambling** frequented a feeder in town from 12/27 through the end of January, although it disappeared for two weeks in mid-January. After the first winter sighting in Gustavus of **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** last year, they were seen on multiple dates this year from late December through 1/20, with seven on 1/14. The 12/15 Gustavus Christmas Bird Count was covered in the last issue of the Raven.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Julie Vathke, Sylvia Pedersen, and Lois Nixon for sharing observations. Thanks to all who reported owls, to the CBC participants, and to Bruce Paige for records information. By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com

BOOK REVIEW by Jim King: One of the neat books of 2007 is Mark J. Kirchoff biography of Jack Dalton, Alaska Pathfinder. Dalton was not a showman or a writer so his exploits are not documented like those of explorers, posing a challenge to author Kirchoff. Dalton learned to manage horses and cows in the old west of the 1880s so when he came to Alaska in 1885 the concept of driving a herd of cows from Haines to the miners on the Yukon River (who later discovered the Klondike), appeared more of an opportunity than a challenge. He did it and improved his trail as a "toll road".

Wandering around wild Alaska without maps or other things we now take for granted seems to have posed no problem for Jack Dalton. As people who came later got interested in roads and railroads up the Copper River and from Seward and Valdez to Fairbanks they first looked to Jack Dalton.

The description of the Porcupine Mine (still active) above Haines is worth the price of the book. This is an important addition to the literature of Alaska. It is an exciting review for modern trekkers interested in the Alaska wild lands.

DUCK STAMP PURCHASE IMPORTANT FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT

The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or “Duck Stamp,” has been a very important tool for wildlife habitat conservation since the 1930s. Since 1934, revenue from stamp sales has totaled over \$700 million and has secured almost 6 million acres of high priority habitat.

Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by “Duck Stamps”, that are sold for \$15.00 in our US Post offices, goes directly to purchase or lease wetland and grassland habitat, including in-holdings, new land and new refuges in our National Wildlife Refuge System. Federal law requires duck hunters purchase a "Duck Stamp", however, the number of hunters is declining and it is becoming even more important for birdwatchers, refuge visitors and supporters and others to purchase duck stamps to insure that this very important conservation program continues to secure wildlife habitat for refuges.

US ARMY CORPS PERMIT APPLICATION – SOUTHEAST ALASKA

To see full permit applications -- <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNNew.htm>

Klawock – William Riley – Moorage of a 24' x 60' float for boat access to the site – 3 miles west of Klawock. For more information contact Allan G. Skinner 1-800-478-2712 or email allan.g.skinner@usace.army.mil

Ketchikan – E. C. Phillips – 1775 Tongass Ave., waterfront side – Expand the seafood processing plant by constructing a large pile supported dock of approximately 35,527 sq.ft. over navigable waters and include attendant floats and ramps for water access at two facilities. For more information Harry A. Baij, Jr. 1-800-478-2712 or email harry.a.baij@usace.army.mil

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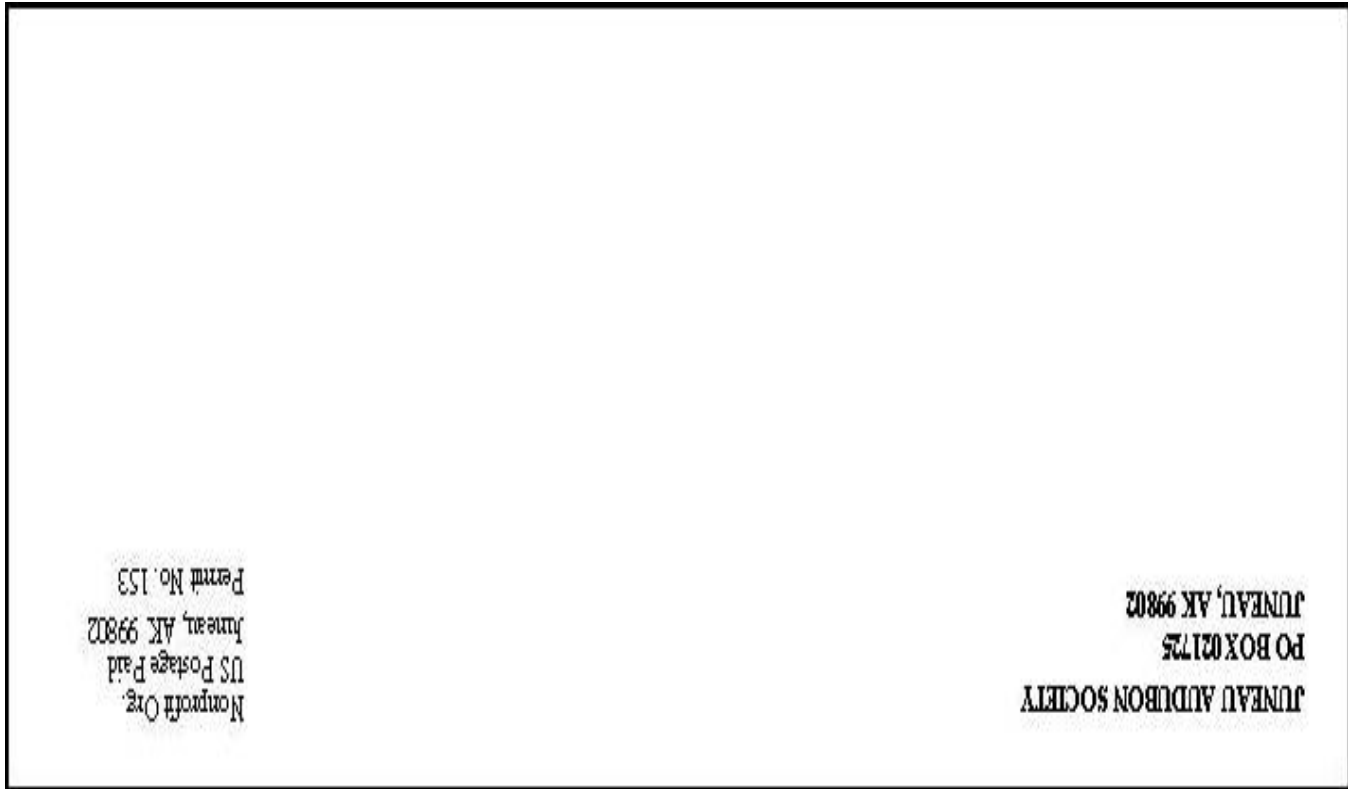
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The Raven



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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 7

Juneau Audubon Society

March 2008

**Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series
Thursday, March 13, UAS Egan Room 221/222 7:00 p.m.**

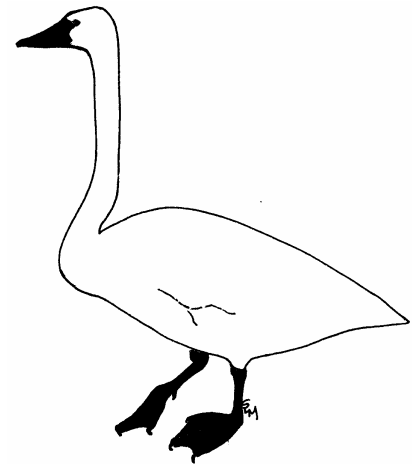
BIRDING SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is the most "developed" country in Africa but has managed to conserve well managed large national parks which provide outstanding birding and wildlife viewing opportunities. Some of the unique habitats found in South Africa support a variety of plant and wildlife species found nowhere else in the world. Bev Agler and Paul Suchanek recently spent a month touring South Africa and observed nearly 400 species of birds and over 50 species of mammals. Join them for an exploration of some of these habitats and the wildlife ranging from penguins to parrots and whales to wildebeests.

TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE AND THE SWAN FESTIVAL --WHITEHORSE, CANADA -- APRIL 17-19, 2008

Whitehorse in April is a great experience. Nice paths on the bank of the mighty Yukon River a few steps from hotels, with flocks of migrating trumpeters and tundras overhead during the rapidly-increasing hours of daylight, will provide an unforgettable experience.

There are many possibilities for excursions including Skagway, Haines, Kluane National Park, dog-mushing, cross-country skiing and more! For information, check out Yukon Tourism at www.travel yukon.com or the City of Whitehorse visitor information at www.visitwhitehorse.com. For those interested in wildlife viewing, visit www.environment yukon.gov.yk.ca/viewing.



KODIAK HUMMINGBIRDS

Below is an interesting article from Kodiak on hummingbirds that have reached Kodiak in the recent past. In southeast Alaska we have plenty of Rufous Hummingbirds from early spring through the summer. And they are coming! Gus Van Vliet suggested to check out the following web site on the timing of the migration north of some North American birds including our Rufous Hummingbird. www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/Maps.html and www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/current.html?layers=hbird_rufous for Rufous.

We also do occasionally get Anna's Hummingbird in the fall and we have had a single instance of a Costa's Hummingbird. (Information from Gus). A great example of this was this past fall when Patty Rose diligently kept a hummingbird feeder clean and filled right into November. One might first think that such behavior was bizarre, but in fact she was rewarded with a beautiful male Anna's Hummingbird in mid November! It stayed for several days. Its eventual probable fate can be gleaned from Rich MacIntosh's primer regarding hummers that reach Kodiak.

A Kodiak Hummingbird Primer (2006) -- by Rich MacIntosh, Kodiak Audubon - Bird Sightings Chair

Ah....where to begin? While we (Kodiak) are at the absolute fringes of hummingbird distribution in North America, hummingbirds are reported here almost every fall (and very rarely in spring/summer). The vast majority of these hummers are Rufous Hummingbirds that stray southwest from breeding populations as near to us as Prince William Sound and Girdwood. Rufous Hummingbird is the only hummer that breeds in Alaska. Just about all hummers seen in Kodiak are immature birds, with negligible migration experience under their belts. What this means is that the easier to identify adult male hummingbirds with the bright red or purple throats (gorgets) are seldom seen here. Rufous Hummingbirds in any plumage are relatively easy to distinguish from other species that might occur here, because they are the only ones with rich buffy-orange on the under parts and in the tail. These colors are fairly easy to see as a bird hovers or sits on a perch.

Hummingbirds that are *not* Rufous Hummingbirds are reported less than annually on Kodiak, and almost all of them go unidentified to species. For the purposes of this discussion, I will collectively call these birds green hummers, as they are green above and pale gray below, with very little or no buffy-orange on the under parts and tail. To get an idea of what these green hummers might be, I will list the green species that have been documented in the State of Alaska (although an entirely new species could occur):

Ruby-throated Hummingbird - There are two or three records of this eastern US hummer in the state.

Anna's Hummingbird - Although it breeds only as far north as southern British Columbia, a few wander north in the fall to southeastern Alaska, and it has even occurred as close to us as Homer. Virtually all hummingbirds at southeastern Alaska feeders in fall/winter are Anna's.

Costa's Hummingbird - Although it is a resident of the southwestern deserts of the US, Costa's has strayed to Alaska about eight times including two times to Kodiak! This, then, is the only hummer on the Kodiak bird list other than the Rufous Hummingbird. Both Kodiak occurrences were well documented by photographs. The first occurrence (an immature male with a partially purple gorget) was in Shari and Jack Doyles's yard in Bells Flats in September of 2003. The second is a bird that was in the Deedie and Jim Pearson yard since 26 August (this Kodiak primer was published in 2006)

and at the time of the newsletter was still coming to the feeder there.

The next green hummer in Kodiak will probably be one of these three species. Because they are difficult to identify, it is very important that any green hummingbird, or in fact any hummingbird, be videotaped or photographed. We are overdue for Anna's Hummingbird in Kodiak. Maybe you will photograph the first one!

Your best chance of luring hummingbirds to your Kodiak yard is to plant lots of nasturtiums and other flowers like petunias and fuschias that bloom into fall. The vast majority of Kodiak hummers are seen at nasturtiums. Few people go to the trouble of putting up hummingbird feeders here, but as the Pearson's case shows, a feeder placed next to blooming flowers can attract and hold a hummingbird in a yard after the flowers are gone. This brings up an interesting question about the fate of Kodiak hummingbirds and the advisability of feeding them. It is my opinion that any hummingbird that makes it to Kodiak is doomed. Most of them arrive here in very late August or September, when natural sources of nectar are scarce. This is why they are almost always seen in ornamental flower gardens. For a bird to reverse course, and fly back across the ocean in the direction from which it came, *and* find adequate food along the way, seems highly unlikely. So I say, if you manage to lure a hummingbird to your yard by whatever means, keep it there as long as you can, enjoy its beauty, and marvel at its ability to have gotten here in the first place!

Thanks to Rich MacIntosh of Kodiak for this article and to Gus VanVliet for his fact checking, and the Juneau hummer info. Jeff Sauer

WRANGELL BIRD WATCH By Bonnie Demerjian

Common redpolls irrupted in Wrangell in mid February. They were first reported on February 7 when an individual redpoll perched on the observer's young granddaughter. It appeared at a feeder along with a flock of **Chestnut-backed chickadees**. By the following week (2/11) several flocks of 40 or more were reported. It's always a treat to see a single Common redpoll here usually lurking among **Pine siskins**, so seeing this unusual irruption has been a welcome addition to our usual winter residents.

Also of interest and spotted during the Great Backyard Bird Count (2/15) were a small flock of 18 **Black turnstones**, along with 3 Killdeer.

Individual **White-crowned, Harris', White-throated and Golden-crowned sparrows** have continued to visit local feeders all month.

Red-breasted sapsuckers were reported by two observers in different locations on 2/6 and 2/8. It seems early for them but we aren't complaining.

Earl Benitz on the Stikine flats has been carrying on a conversation with two **Great Horned Owls** that are hooting around his cabin. He says they have not appeared to settle on a nest site yet though they have nested nearby several years in the past.

JUNEAU BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEBRUARY By Paul Suchanek

Cold weather limited birding effort in early February but much milder weather over the weekend of the 15th through 18th provided birders a great opportunity to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Although not all GBBC checklists may yet be in, birders in the Juneau (including Auke Bay) area turned in about 50 checklists and reported about 60 species. The checklists documented well an invasion of redpolls and siskins which has built up through the winter in Juneau. Common Redpoll was the most often reported species with a tally of over 1,800, while about 1,700 Pine Siskins were reported (by contrast, in 2007 only two siskins were reported in Juneau). You can look more closely at the results for Juneau, Alaska, or the entire nation at: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

Continued overwintering of a few American Robins, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Eurasian Wigeons, Rusty Blackbirds, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Western Grebe (Auke Bay GBBC), and a Varied Thrush were also reported on the GBBC or Eaglechat. A few **Hoary Redpolls** were also reported on the GBBC. In a large flock of Mallards near the mouth of Fish Creek on February 8, I managed to spot a hybrid Mallard X Northern Pintail male. A “new” extremely rare overwinterer (or early migrant?) reported during February was a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** at a feeder in Auke Bay from February 5-10 (Mark Schwan). This species is often one of the earliest migrants back to the Juneau area but normally first show up about mid-March. After an often cold and snowy winter, I’m sure Juneau birders will be looking forward to those first March migrants, a sure sign of spring.

HAINES REPORT – Georgia Giacobbe

According to the online reporting of February 23, there were fewer birders participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count than there were for the Christmas Bird Count. But some, like myself, were able to participate from the comfort of my own home by watching the birds in my yard that we feed. The results so far are Trumpeter Swan, 5; Common Goldeneye, 12; Bald Eagle, 19; Black-billed Magpie, 10; Northwestern Crow, 6; Common Raven, 32; American Dipper, 1; Pine Grosbeak, 35; Common Redpoll, 6; Stellar’s Jay, 5; Song Sparrow, 65; and Dark Eyed Junco, 1. Out of the 10 checklists reported, 8 of the 10 had crows and 7 of 10 had eagles, no surprise for here.

Although not reported in the GBBC, a Sharp-shinned Hawk was observed in the Muncaster Rd area of Haines. On the 22nd out at Lutak Inlet near the ferry terminal, the inlet was so flat and calm that half a dozen Red-breasted Mergansers, several Buffleheads and Goldeneyes were swimming through. Three Stellar Sea Lions also made an appearance. On a drive up the highway on February 23, however, I saw 6 Trumpeter Swan—a pair at 16 mile, pair at 17 mile, and a pair at 19 in the Chilkat River. There were a few ducks, and the solitary local eagles more like sentinels in the trees every few miles along the road. Haines has had a bit of a February thaw—most are looking forward to an early arrival of spring birds.

KETCHIKAN REPORT FOR FEBRUARY-By Teri Goucher

Our island enjoyed a few days this month that hinted of the arrival of Spring although several storms left between 3 and 10 inches of snow at sea level as winter persisted.

A pair of **Wood Ducks** showed up at a home north of town for a few days to snack on some bird seed and a lone female wood duck was seen pursuing a more natural diet at Knudson Cove. A couple of **American Tree Sparrows** were spotted on opposite ends of our road system! A **White-throated Sparrow** and a **Harris's Sparrow** have remained wintering here in the same areas all season. Normally the 'red' or 'taiga' **Fox Sparrow** is found in more inland areas than our common 'sooty' or Pacific race, but a few sightings have occurred here this winter.

Amazingly the female **Anna's Hummingbird** continues to endure our rather harsh winter with the help of a well supplied nectar feeder!

Quite a few large flocks of nomadic **Pine Siskins** have finally made their winter appearance here recently. Most people are familiar with these busy, delightfully noisy brown streaked birds that flash the yellow patches in their wings and tails as they quickly move about. Siskins have a much thinner bill than most finches and eat mostly seeds and are particularly attracted to thistle seed feeders. They seek their mates in the winter flocks of sometime hundreds of birds when courtship begins in January and February. So listen for the buzzy chatter of siskins the next time you're outside on a quiet winter day and know that indeed Spring is on the way!

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS January 31 - February 23, 2008

Gustavus came up with only 58 species during this year's Great Backyard Bird Count. Bad weather and low participation meant that some species were missed during the count. (The current online total for Gustavus shows 59 species tallied, but Black-capped Chickadee will be removed and added to the Chestnut-backed Chickadee number.) The only rarity seen during the count was the **Brambling**, which continues to come to a feeder in town.

Great Horned Owls continued to be heard in several areas through the month. Single **Short-eared Owls** were seen over beach grasslands on a handful of dates. One **Snowy Owl** was seen on 2/3 east of town along the base of Excursion Ridge. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was in town on 2/17.

Northern Saw-whet Owls began hooting on 2/18 and had been heard at three locations by 2/19. Two saw-whet owls were heard vocalizing near a residence in town on 2/22, and one owl was observed via a nest-cam inside a nest box at that location on 2/23. The **Northern Flicker** showing traits of red-shafted and yellow-shafted varieties continued to be seen at feeders through the period. Two **White-crowned Sparrows** continued to frequent a feeder in town. Two **American Robins**



Brambling – Photo by Nat Drumheller

were in town on 2/22. A **Horned Lark** seen regularly along the beach was last seen on 2/3. **Pine Siskin** and **Common Redpoll** numbers increased during the second half of February with flocks of each species being seen regularly. On the afternoon of 2/18, a **Northern Shrike** was singing along the beach east of town, making this the third GBBC during which I have witnessed a shrike singing.



Thanks to Nate Borson, Jim Martell, Phoebe Vanselow, and Julie Vathke for sharing observations. By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com

BOOK RIVIEW By Mary Lou King

GARDENING IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA By members and friends of the Juneau Garden Club This 230 page 3rd edition book (revised in 2008), is outstanding. New to this edition are 150 beautiful photos of flowers, vegetables and gardens of all varieties. Approximately 30 gardeners (many of them new in this edition) from northern to southern Southeast, contributed their knowledge of successful gardening.

Thanks to the hard work of many Garden Club Members and all the contributors, everything you could ever want to know about the what, why, where, when, and how to garden in Southeast Alaska can be found in this book. I am sure your favorite book store can get this book for you if they do not already have it in their store. Retail sales distributions are handled by Todd Communications in Juneau; contact James Brawley, 586-8633.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS – to see full permits go to:
<http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNNNew.htm>

JUNEAU

Gasineau Channel off Crazy Horse Drive – POA-2007-1705-4. John an Sharon Mallinger's purpose is to provide secure and convenient boat storage facilities (boat condominiums) for private ownership with 11 buildings with 10 units each. They propose to fill 3.92 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands and .59 acres below high tide line. **Juneau Audubon is concerned about this proposal in an area that drains into the Mendenhall Refuge – comments will be submitted to the Corps.**

Berners Bay – POA-2008-52. Expiration Date March 5. Channel Construction, Inc. proposes to construct a commercial barge ramp "to allow the export of construction materials from nearby sites to other locations in SE Alaska."

Update on Cascade Point in Berners Bay by Rob Cadmus, SEACC -- Located on the southern end of Berners Bay, Cascade Point is near an important spawning area for Lynn Canal Herring. Herring are a vital food source to salmon, whales, sea lions, birds, and more. Coeur Alaska has changed its plans for accessing the Kensington Mine and will be using an existing marine terminal near Yankee Cove rather than developing Cascade Point. This is good news for Berners Bay, but Goldbelt Corporation, the owners of Cascade Point, has new plans. Permit applications have been submitted for a barge loading ramp (placing 2,000 cubic yards of shot rock below the high tide line, on top of what is already there) at Cascade Point to transport rock, fill, and construction material for the proposed Juneau Road extension and other developments. With a mine, road, and marine terminals being proposed or built in Berners Bay concerns about the cumulative impacts these developments will have on the area's spectacular resources are growing. The Army Corps of Engineers will be taking comment on the proposed Cascade Point loading ramp until March 5th, 2008. Go to <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNNNew.htm> to see the full Corps Permit Application.

KETCHIKAN

George Inlet—POA-2007-1717-2. Expiration Date March 20. Oceans Alaska proposes to build a marine research facility and aquarium. They propose filling 1.36 acres of wetlands and .22 acres of intertidal lands.

Ward Cove – POA-2008-43-2. Expiration Date March 19. Power Systems and Supplies Alaska proposes to build a storage and transfer facility for shipping of materials to remote locations, utilizing landing craft. They propose to fill .22 acre below high tide with shot rock and riprap.

Tongass Narrows – POA-2008-103-1. Bertha Hussman proposes to build a private recreational dock.

Herring Bay – POA-2008-101-1. Andy Rauwolf proposes building a private dock at their residence.

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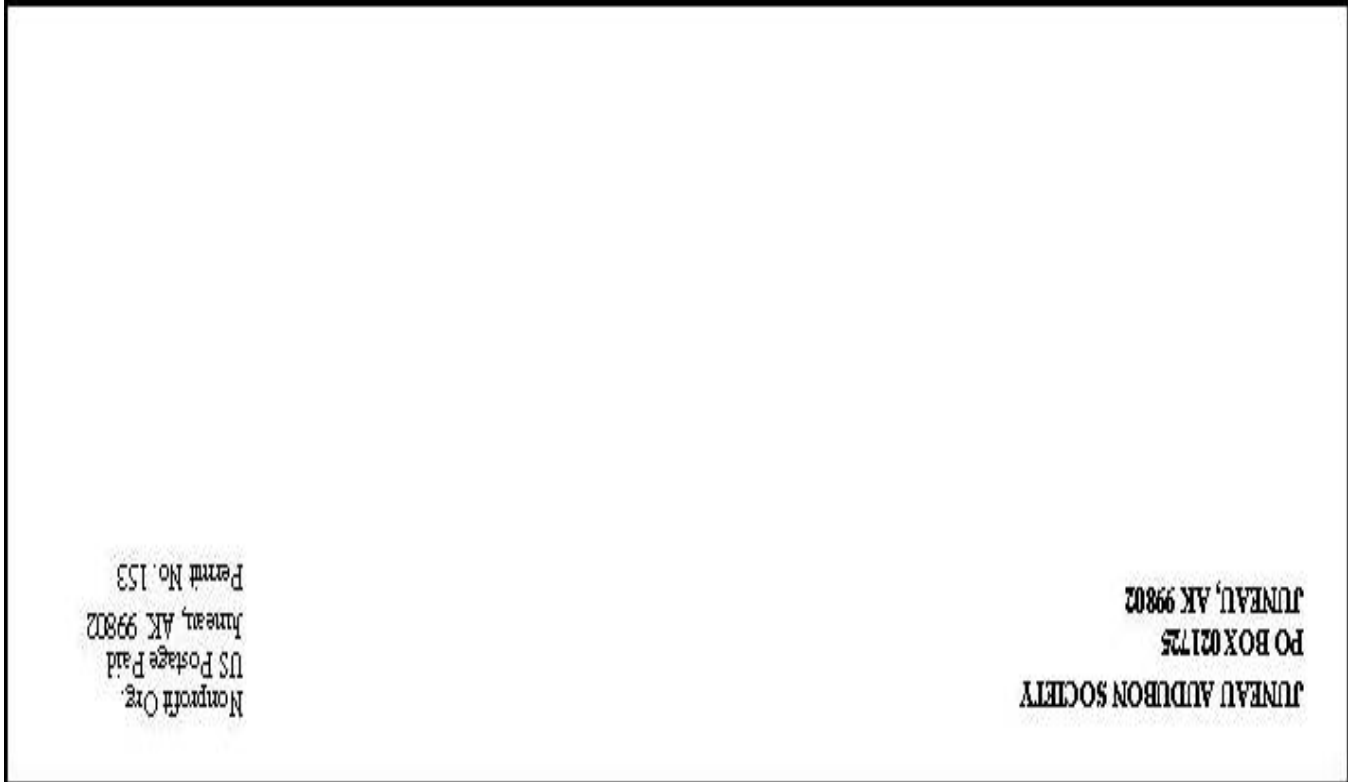
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April 2008

Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series

Thursday, April 10, UAS Egan Room 221/222 7:00 p.m.

Juneau's Underwater Neighborhood

Join Annette Smith (diver and photographer) on a journey to some common locations in the Juneau area and see them from a different point of view.....underwater. Everyone has seen whales and sealions....but not many have seen smiling squat lobsters, stubby squid, colorful nudibranchs (slugs), and many other rarely seen creatures that live in the underwater realm. Free public presentation sponsored by Juneau Audubon Society. 321-4739

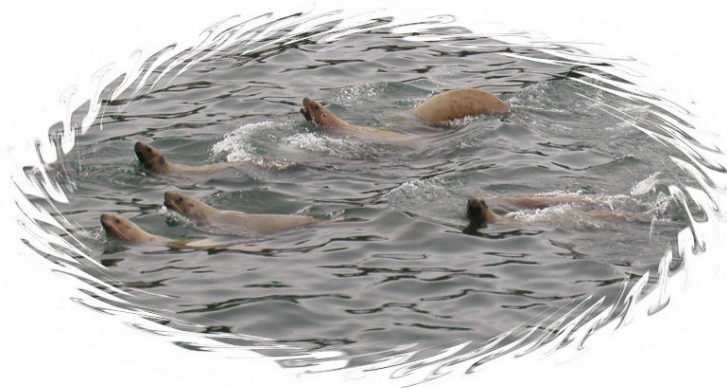


Berners Bay Cruises 2008

Come see the drama at the end of the road

Saturday, April 19, 8:30 a.m.

Saturday, May 3, 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.



Adults - \$40, Students - \$20, Children under 12 - \$5 (must be accompanied by adult) Tickets at Hearthside Books Vessels depart Don D. Statter Harbor below DeHarts. Boarding begins about 15 minutes before departure. Cruise lasts four hours. Juneau Audubon Society members will be on board as natural history interpreters.

Bird Walks and Berners Bay Cruises Juneau Audubon, Spring 2008

Spring is coming to Juneau and so too are the birds!! We encourage all to attend our walks. No experience is necessary. In fact, this year we will have two leaders on each walk, with one leader just for beginner birders. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a few on hand for those without binoculars. We also will have spotting scopes for use by all.

Saturday, April 12. Location: Airport Dike trail. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. This first walk of the season will stay on the trail so rubber boots are not needed. However, some group of birders after the walk may venture out into the wetlands, so for those boots are needed. Steve Zimmerman and Mark Schwan will be the leaders.

Saturday, April 19. Berners Bay Cruise. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. The vessel will leave promptly at 8:30 a.m. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. Tickets are available at Hearthside Books. Adult tickets \$40.00. Special student tickets \$20.00. Children under 12 may go for \$5.00. Tickets for sale now at Hearthside Books.

Saturday, April 26. Location: Fish Creek on Douglas Island. Assemble by the gate at 8:00 a.m. Park in the lot. Rubber boots are advisable as there are some wet spots. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk, with an assistant.

Saturday, May 3. Berners Bay cruises: One will leave at 8:30 a.m.; the other will leave at 1:30 p.m. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. or by 1:15 p.m. Tickets are available at Hearthside Books.

Saturday, May 10. Location: Airport Dike. Walk to the mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots. Mark Schwan will lead the walk. Jeff Sauer will assist.

Saturday, May 17. Location: To be announced. Check the May issue of the Raven or the Juneau Audubon web site.

Saturday, May 24. Location: Sheep Creek. Meet at Sheep Creek trail head at 8:00 a.m. This will be a bird walk/ hike with a long uphill walk. Emphasis on learning basic bird songs, by listening to the birds, as well as to the birds on tape (CD player). Beth Peluso will lead the hike. Patty Rose will co-lead.

Saturday, May 31. Location: Eagle River Trail. Meet at Eagle River Trail Head at 8:00 a.m. This will be a bird walk/ hike to the marsh to listen for soras and rails, Common Yellowthroat should be seen also. Trail head is at the parking lot by the bridge over Eagle River. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk, with assistant. Hiking boots or walking shoes.

Saturday, June 7. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:30 a.m. Note earlier start time than other walks. Wear rubber boots. Bev Agler will lead the walk, with assistant.

**TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE, AND THE
SWAN FESTIVAL --WHITEHORSE, CANADA -- APRIL 17-
19, 2008**

For information, check out Yukon Tourism at www.travelyukon.com or the City of Whitehorse visitor information at www.visitwhitehorse.com. For those interested in wildlife viewing, visit www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/viewing.

JUNEAU BIRD REPORT by Patty Rose

During March, Juneau continued to enjoy the winter invasion of common redpolls and pine siskins. A few hoary redpolls were observed in the large flocks. Also this month, American robins, song sparrows, juncos, and varied thrushes started singing all around the Juneau area.

Early migrants or overwintering birds observed in March included a **Western Grebe** on March 4 near the North Douglas boat ramp (Paul Suchanek), two **redheads** in a large mixed flock of waterfowl on March 25 on the upper Mendenhall River (as reported to Rich Gordon), a pair of **Trumpeter Swans** on March 15 at Eagle Beach (Paul Suchanek), a **Lapland Longspur** on March 17 at Point Louisa (Brenda Wright), a **Black-legged Kittiwake** on March 15 at Eagle Beach (Paul Suchanek), and **Hooded Mergansers** on March 1 on the Mendenhall River (Patty Rose), on March 12 near Lakeside Condos (Rich Gordon), and on March 12 on Duck Creek (Mark Schwan).

Very early **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** were observed on March 8 at Point Louisa (Paul Suchanek) and on March 12 on Montana Creek Road (Mark Schwan). A **Hairy Woodpecker** was seen drumming on a pole in the downtown area on March 8 (Alan Munro), and a **Downy Woodpecker** was seen on March 10 at Mile 18, Glacier Highway (Mark Schwan).

March raptors included a male **Northern Goshawk** on March 24 in the Dredge Lakes area (Rich Gordon) and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** on March 6 in the Auke Bay area (Mark Schwan).

Thanks to Juneau birders for sharing their observations.

**KETCHIKAN BIRD NEWS FOR MARCH AND
APRIL EVENTS**-by Teri Goucher

Although Spring arrived a bit earlier than usual this year on March 19th, winter continues to persist even for our part of Alaska! The woods are slowly coming alive with bird song and a few migrating species are passing through for the upcoming breeding season.

A **California Gull** was seen just off shore in town on March 24th.

Surf Scoters are already beginning to form large flocks along our waterfront as usual in the spring as they await the herring spawn and continue their breeding trek. Surf Scoter numbers peak here in late April to early May when as many as 30,000 individuals congregate in huge mega flocks!

Increasing numbers of **American Robins** are around gracing local lawns in flocks of well over 20 birds and even a few have been heard already singing!

Several **Tree Sparrows** remain, usually coming to feeder areas with groups of our ever present **Juncos**. More **Fox Sparrows** are arriving with their numbers peaking locally from late March until around mid April when well over a hundred birds can be found along certain brushy roads.

Large flocks of **Pine Siskins** are still very common seemingly everywhere!

Five **Trumpeter Swans** were at Ward Lake, and soon scores of waterfowl flocks will fly overhead which is always a thrilling experience!

April is Hummingbird Festival month here in Ketchikan as locals celebrate migrating birds and the arrival of Spring as the beloved Rufous Hummingbird returns to our island! The Southeast Alaska Discovery Center hosts many activities to entertain and educate adults and children alike.

There are several art events including a coloring contest, bird drawing lessons, an art show featuring migrating birds and even classes to make beaded hummingbirds and hummingbird feeders.

There will be two live bird presentations and slide shows at the center. Andy Piston will present slides and discuss the breeding birds of the Ketchikan area on April 11th. Steve Heinel will narrate a show about whales and birds seen while cruising from Anchorage to Attu Island on April 25th.

Several birds walks are planned as well covering almost all of our island!

April 5th-Cheryl Fultz will lead a walk at Ward Lake at 8 am.

April 12th-Teri Goucher and Cheryl explore Refuge Cove for birds at 8 am.

April 13th-meet at Settler's Cove at 8 am to again join Cheryl and Teri.

April 20th-Steve Heinel will show folks good birding stops along the southern portion of our road from Bugge Beach to Herring Cove at 8 am.

April 26th-Wake up early to meet Andy Piston at 7 am for birding the scenic Brown Mountain road area.

For more information about any of these fun birding events, please call the Southeast Discovery Center or Leslie Swada at 228-6220!

Do remember to put up your hummingbird feeders soon for one of our favorite mighty migrants is on the way, because Spring IS really here!

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT by Bonnie Demerjian

Robins, those harbingers of spring, are popping up on lawns around Wrangell. A small number wintered surviving on mountain ash berries and other unknown foods but these spring arrivals are busy scouring the grass for edibles. A few appeared as early as

February 3. This seems to be a year for isolated early birds. The first **Fox Sparrow** was reported on 2/28 but none have been reported since that date. A small flock of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** was reported at a feeder on 3/15 but they also are not here in any numbers yet. A few **Common Redpolls**, large flocks of which had delighted local birders in February, remain in town. More early arrivals – two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were reported on 3/21.

Stephen Todd, while on a skiing expedition down the Stikine River from Telegraph Creek reported hearing a **Spruce Grouse** on 3/2 on Limb Island in the lower Stikine valley. Stephen, Bob Lippert and Scott Forbes made the grueling, 150-mile, 15-day trip pulling sleds. Todd reported seeing less wildlife than expected but did spot several wolves, 6 moose and wolverine tracks. The men will present a slide show of their trip in April.

Trumpeter Swans returned to Pat's Lake on March 23 after spending some days on the salt water south of town and a flock of about 30 was seen flying by on their way to the delta. A flock of about 70 **Surf Scoters**, missing this winter from their usual parade grounds in front of town, appeared once more on 3/19. **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** are showing up and sounding off more frequently, though one eager rapper made an appearance over a month ago.

The large number of **Bald Eagles** that had been around during the January and February cold spells has mostly dispersed, we hope to fatten on soon-to-arrive Stikine hooligan. There have been unconfirmed reports of eagles cannibalizing each other during the February weeks of heavy snow. One observer with a pond reported that an eagle attacked a duck decoy floating there, dragged it to the shore and then, we assume, noticed its error.

The Stikine River Migratory Bird and Garnet Festival, which celebrates spring migrations on the Stikine Delta, will be held from April 23-27 this year. The keynote speaker for the event is Dr. Richard Lanctot, Shorebird Coordinator for US Fish and Wildlife, Alaska Region. He will speak on Thursday, April 24 on "Migratory Flyways and River Deltas – Interstate Highways and Gas Stations for Shorebirds." On Friday, April 25 his talk is entitled "Avian Influenza: Will Migratory Birds Spread the H5N1 Virus to North America?" There will also be a bird walk on Saturday, April 26, at the Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. For more information on the Garnet Festival which is sponsored jointly by the USDA Forest Service and the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, go to the Wrangell Chamber's website at <http://wrangellchamber.org>.

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS

February 24 - March 26, 2008

During the last week of this period, the first local spring reports came in for **Lapland Longspur**, **Varied Thrush**, hooting **Blue Grouse** (Sooty Grouse if you prefer), and **Wilson's Snipe** while **American Robin** numbers increased. **Common Redpolls** and **Pine Siskins** remained abundant through the period. The **Brambling** continues to frequent the same feeder in town. An amazingly early **Pacific Golden-Plover** was

photographed along the Salmon River on 3/8. Also very early was a hummingbird reported in town on 3/16. This was presumably a **Rufous Hummingbird**, but it was only heard and not seen. A **Dunlin** with colored leg bands was seen on 3/15. The band combination matched that of a bird seen in Gustavus this winter and last fall that was banded on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta. There were several reports of **Northern Pygmy-Owls** and **Great Horned Owls** during the month and one **Short-eared Owl**. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** have been heard regularly in at least two neighborhoods. Saw-whet owls are nesting in a nest box in town with a camera inside the box providing video images of the activities in the box. The owls were first noticed in the box on 2/23. They came and went from the box in the evenings after that. The female started spending some daylight hours in the box on 3/3. Since 3/8, she has been in the box around the clock leaving for short periods at night. The first egg was laid on or around 3/14, and a sixth egg was laid on 3/26 or late on 3/25. The male delivers rodents to the box at night. The floor of the box is littered with voles, and an occasional shrew, to be eaten later. It can be difficult to count the voles in the camera image, but there have been at least eight at one time. (References to male and female are assumptions.) This is the third year running that saw-whet owls have used nest boxes in Gustavus. The box being used this year was also nested in by saw-whets in 2006. Red Squirrels nested in this box in 2007.

Thanks to Dave Lesh and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing sightings and to all who reported owls and robins. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Thanks to you, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) broke yet another record this year! You and your fellow birders submitted more than 85,000 checklists during the four-day event, surpassing last year's all-time record by several thousand. Participants also identified a record 635 species and sent in thousands of stunning bird images from around the continent.

To view this year's top 10 most-reported birds, visit <http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/top10>.

Some species showed up in GBBC reports for the very first time, including a Masked Duck in Texas—a bird that is usually found in the tropics. An Arctic Loon, seldom seen outside Alaska, was spotted in California. An Ivory Gull wandered down from the high Arctic to show up on a checklist in South Dakota. For an even more detailed summary of this year's results, visit the GBBC web site at www.birdcount.org. You can explore maps, see beautiful photos, prize-drawing winners, and the list of cities and towns that topped their state or province for the number of checklists submitted—our “checklist champs.”

Audubon Alaska Gives New Tongass Plan A Mixed Review **By John Schoen, Senior Scientist, Audubon Alaska**

On January 23, 2008 the U.S. Forest Service released its amended Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) as ordered by the Ninth Circuit Court in 2005.

The Tongass has long been a conservation priority for Audubon Alaska, the state office of the National Audubon Society. In a preliminary review of the new TLMP, Audubon Alaska gives it a mixed review. On the plus side, Audubon Alaska recognizes the value in deferring new logging and road building in some of the most valuable fish and wildlife watersheds on the Tongass. This decision buys time and reflects a new, science-based study by Audubon Alaska and The Nature Conservancy that identified conservation priorities for both intact and previously logged watersheds throughout the Tongass.

Audubon Alaska acknowledges the opportunity the Forest Service provides in using an adaptive management approach that establishes three phases of timber harvest in the new forest management plan. The first phase defers new logging and road building in some of the most valuable fish and wildlife watersheds on the Tongass. For example, under TLMP Phase 1, only 400,000 acres (11% of 3.4 million acres) of our Conservation Priority Watersheds are scheduled for development.

On the minus side, the new plan fails to permanently protect many key fish and wildlife watersheds that the plan still targets for eventual logging. In addition, core areas of old-growth forest in some previously logged watersheds (identified for restoration priority) should be protected rather than targeted for further logging. In the long term, implementation of this plan will place at risk many of the most important fish and wildlife values that people care about.

Audubon Alaska seeks balanced forest management that recognizes all of the important values the Tongass provides to the people of southeast Alaska, including subsistence use of resources, hunting and fishing, recreation, and economic sustainability of local communities. Audubon Alaska hopes to continue working collaboratively with the Forest Service, other organizations, and local communities to develop a science-based conservation strategy that balances habitat protection with local community needs, and to find a practical way forward that delivers results for everyone who depends on the Tongass.

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Jeff Sauer, president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Vice-President: Mark Schwan, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Secretary: Patty Rose, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

Treasurer: Matt Kirchoff, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

Programs: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

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Education: Beth Peluso, education@juneau-audubon-society.org

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Public Market: Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

Web Master: George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____
\$30 Basic renewal_____

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip Code_____

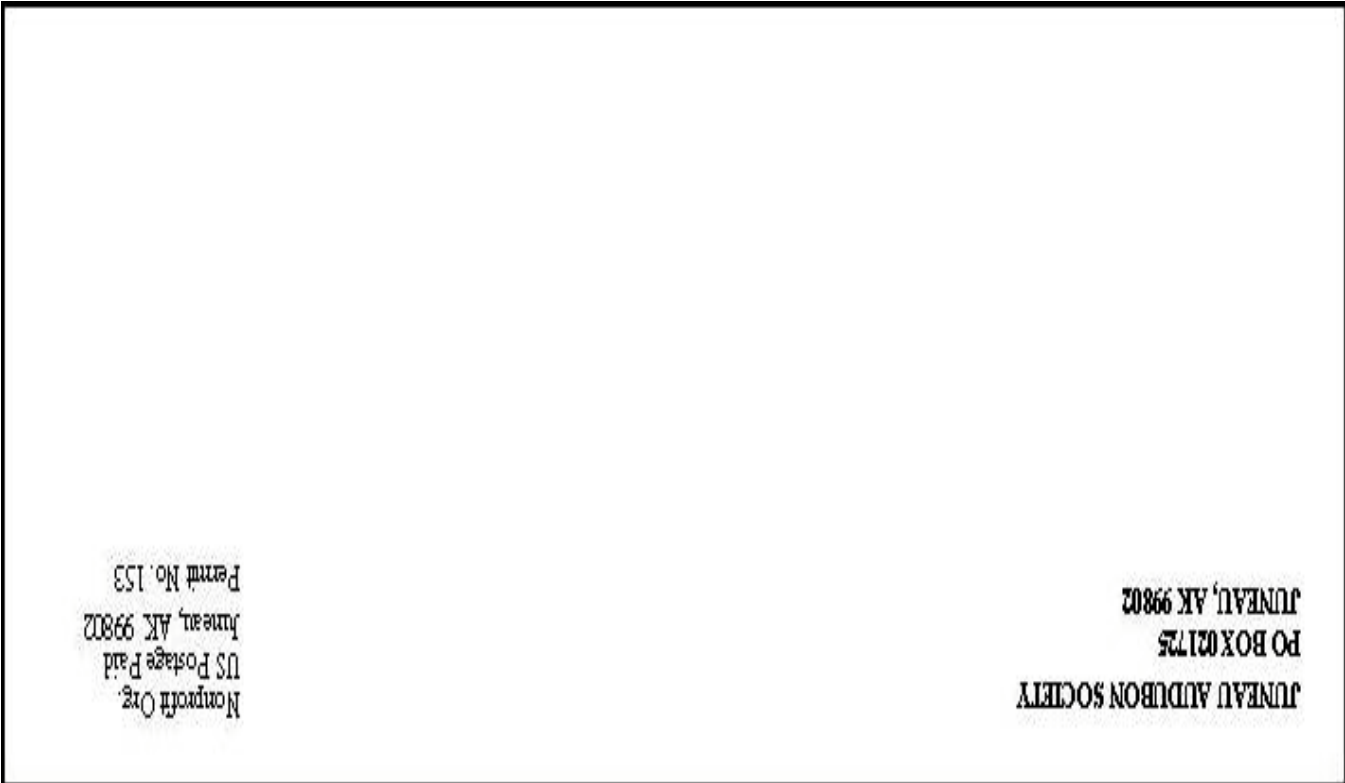
Telephone number_____

____My check for \$_____is enclosed____Please bill me
A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, and money. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**



The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 34, Number 9

Juneau Audubon Society

May 2008

WEDNESDAY NOON BIRD WALKS -- Need a break from the office? Join the Audubon Wednesday Bird Walks from noon to 1:00 starting May 21. Beginners and visitors are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them and dress appropriately for the weather. Meet outside the Hangar restaurant in the blue Wharf building downtown. Contact Beth Peluso for more information 957-1050.

SUNDAY, MAY 18 -- at the Community Garden on the Montana Creek Road, 8-12, bird-banding demo and various celebrations for International Migratory Bird Day. For more information: Gwen Baluss gwenbaluss@yahoo.com

THURSDAY, MAY 29 – SLIDE SHOW AND BOOK SIGNING -- Guide to the Birds of Alaska 5th edition by Bob Armstrong will be available this month. The features of this edition include hundreds of new photographs plus photos of all the casual and accidental birds. This 2008 edition also incorporates all the changes in names and systematics made by the American Ornithological Union since the last edition in 1995. With the help of Thede Tobish all of the status and distribution charts have been updated. Bob will present a slide show and book signing at Hearthside Books on May 29th at 7 p.m.

SATURDAY Bird Walks Juneau Audubon, Spring 2008

Spring is here and so too are the birds!! We encourage all to attend our walks. No experience is necessary. In fact, this year we will have two leaders on each walk, with one leader for less experienced birders. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a few on hand for those without binoculars. We also will have spotting scopes for use by all.

Saturday, May 10. Location: Airport Dike. Walk to the mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots. Mark Schwan will lead the walk. Jeff Sauer will assist.

Saturday, May 17. Location: Airport Dike. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 24. Location: Sheep Creek. Meet at Sheep Creek trail head at 8:00 a.m. This will be a bird walk/ hike with a long uphill walk. Emphasis on learning basic bird songs, by listening to the birds, as well as to the birds on tape (CD player). Beth Peluso will lead the hike. Patty Rose will co-lead.

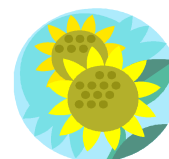
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also. Trail head is at the parking lot by the bridge over Eagle River. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk, with assistant. Hiking boots or walking shoes.

Saturday, June 7. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:30 a.m. Note earlier start time than other walks. Wear rubber boots. Bev Agler will lead the walk, with assistant.

Saturday Wild 2008 - Juneau Audubon sponsored natural history walks. Free and open to the public:

June 21 - Wildflower walk at Eagle Beach state park 9:00am



July 19 - Alpine flowers and birds with Bob Armstrong and other plant and bird experts. Meet at the tram at 8:00 am (special local rate)



August 23 - Edible wild berries
Location to be announced



Join us- weather or not- as we explore the wild side of Southeast Alaska. For more information on these free community walks, see <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org> or e-mail saturdaywild@juneau-audubon-society.org. Please dress for the weather.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 21 AT 3 P.M. – Ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the reopening of the Perseverance Trail at the Trailhead at the end of Basin Road. Trail Mix hopes you will join all those who made this project possible including U.S. Senator Ted Stevens and Alaska State Parks Director James King.

HOTSPOTS FOR SUMMER BIRDING By Beth Peluso

'Tis the season of travel, when Audubon starts receiving lots of requests from visitors. If you have birder friends visiting Juneau, or if you just want to go yourself, here are some of the "hot spots" people can visit if they have even just a few hours. Of course there are other spots if people have more time!

First, if your guests are planners, before they even arrive they can check out the local birding listserv "Eaglechat", which you can sign up for on Yahoo Groups. It's a good way to learn what birds are around and where people are seeing them.

From the docks downtown you can usually see several species of gulls and occasionally harlequin ducks (especially by the Gold Creek outlet into Gastineau Channel). Marbled murrelets are locally common but endangered in the Lower 48, so listen for their "clear, clear" calls in Gastineau Channel and you might even see them downtown.

The Mt. Roberts Tram (downtown by the cruise ship docks) is a great, quick way to get into the subalpine. The tram costs about \$25 roundtrip, but you can also do the moderate hike up from the trailhead on 6th street; if you buy \$5 of whatever at the restaurant or gift shop you can take the tram down for free. Lots of fox sparrows and Wilson's warblers flit through the shrubs. There's a short loop trail near the tram building, or a more strenuous hike takes you up to the top of the ridge. There are usually ptarmigan and sooty grouse (the recent new name for blue grouse) with chicks right near the trail up to the ridgeline by the beginning of July. If it's clear, there's a great eagle's-eye view of Juneau.

You can take the city bus to within a mile of the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, if you don't have a car. Arctic terns nest in the sand along the banks of the lake, and you really can't beat the view of the glacier. The Moraine Ecology trail is good for warblers and other small songbirds and sometimes Harlequin and merganser ducks in the beaver ponds. There are bears, especially in July when the salmon run starts. Tell your guests to be alert and make sure they know how to stay safe in bear country. Last summer a mother black bear and her two cubs fished near one of the viewing platforms most of the summer, which was fantastic! If that makes your guests nervous, stay out along the lake and the paved trails and you'll be fine.

Although the Airport Dike Trail requires a car, it's a great place to see grassland birds like Lincoln's and Savannah sparrows, as well as lots of warblers in the trees and shorebirds in the ponds by the gazebo. The wetlands are a state game refuge, so you can walk out on them, but waterproof shoes or boots are highly recommended. Make sure your guests know to pay attention to tides. There are great mud flats at low tide, but the water comes in faster than you might think if you aren't used to tides. Tide books are available from Western Auto and other places around town.

If folks in other Southeast Alaska communities have local hot spots visiting birders can get to quickly and easily, please send a short write-up to Beth Peluso through the board list on the Juneau Audubon website. Enjoy your summer visitors!

JUNEAU BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS DURING APRIL By Mark Swan

As the month was ending, spring migration appeared to be finally gaining momentum. Perhaps the cold weather through most of the month delayed the arrival dates of a variety of migrants, as the numbers and diversity of species seemed low compared to most years, especially for shorebirds and songbirds.

Here are a few highlights. No one will be surprised to note who spotted most of these birds. Three **Brant** at Point Bridget on April 25 were a surprise find, as they represented the first April record for the park area (PS). A "**Common**" **Teal**, the old-world subspecies of Green-winged Teal, was found at the mouth of Eagle River on April 27 (PS, BA). A single male **Canvasback** spotted on April 19 (PS) and again on April 21 (MS) was a nice addition to the mix of more common waterfowl at the "gazebo" pond adjacent to the airport dike. It

was highly unusual that two **Rough-legged Hawks** were found within two days, one light-phased bird on the wetlands on April 19 (GV) and a dark-phased individual at Point Bridget on April 21 (PS). This species is quite rare in Juneau during the spring. Rare along the Juneau mainland, an immature **Double-crested Cormorant** was a good find at Point Bridget on April 21 (PS). The only gull highlight of the month was the relocation of our local celebrity, the **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. The bird was first seen at the mouth of the Mendenhall River with the mix of common gulls on April 15 and seen subsequently in the same area, at Fish Creek, and then near month's end at the gull colony near the Mendenhall Glacier (PS, MS, BA, GV). This bird, if it is the same individual local birders have been seeing for years now, was first seen in 1992 as an adult bird; this would mean the bird is at least 20 years old.

Shorebirds were strangers to local habitats through most of the month, but two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were a good find on the wetlands on April 28 (PS) and an estimated **1,000** Surfbirds at Outer Point on April 29 was an impressive showing (PS). Migrant passerines also were slow to materialize. Two **Horned Larks**, a species that can easily be missed by birders, were found on the wetlands on April 20 (PR). Finally, two reports of **Mountain Bluebirds** came in during the month. Always a treat to see, five birds were found at Point Bridget on April 21 (PS) and a single male was seen at the Mendenhall wetlands on April 26 (LC).

Contributors: Bev Agler, Laurie Craig, Patty Rose, Paul Suchanek, Mark Schwan, Gus van Vliet.

**Report Posted on Eaglechat by: "Paul Suchanek"
Sat Apr 26, 2008 5:12 pm (PDT)**

The morning Audubon walk at Fish Creek was very productive as the weather and birds both cooperated well. Ruby-crowned kinglets were foraging everywhere in the alders with some singing. Less than 100 yards down the trail, a red-breasted sapsucker flew in and gave everyone outstanding looks. There were lots of waterfowl in lower Fish Creek and easily seen through the abundant shared scopes. On the way back, a black oystercatcher came across the bay and landed near the group for a rare look at this species on the Mendenhall Wetlands. Near the gate, a singing Townsend's warbler was seen by one or two and heard by others and everyone got to see at least one singing male yellow-rumped warbler. Following is a list of species:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Mallard | Red-breasted sapsucker | Golden-crowned sparrow |
| Green-winged teal | Hairy woodpecker (heard only) | Pine siskin |
| Gadwall | Northwestern crow | |
| American wigeon | Raven | |
| Northern shoveler | Steller's jay | |
| Northern pintail | American dipper (from
bridge after walk) | |
| Surf scoter | Winter wren (heard
only) | |
| White-winged scoter | American robin | |
| Barrow's goldeneye | Varied thrush | |
| Common goldeneye | Golden-crowned kinglet | |
| Red-breasted Merganser | Ruby-crowned kinglet | |
| Red-necked grebe | Chestnut-backed
chickadee | |
| Common loon (eating a fish) | Yellow-rumped warbler | |
| Bald eagle | Townsend's warbler | |
| Black oystercatcher | Song sparrow | |
| Glaucous-winged gull | Fox sparrow | |
| Herring gull | | |
| Bonaparte's gull | | |
| Mew gull | | |



*Coyote Photo taken by Paul Suchanek
at Pt. Bridget on April 25*

WRANGELL -- May 2008 Submitted by Bonnie Demerjian

Spring is arriving in fits and starts this year and this may be the reason that birds have been doing the same, at least here in Wrangell. Single singers appear one day, not to be seen or heard again for weeks. Normally accompanying the opening blueberry flowers, this year's first **Rufous hummingbird** was reported on April 5 but only around the 15th did a scattered number begin to appear. The first **Fox sparrow** was also reported that day but again they have not yet arrived in any number. A lone **Ruby-crowned kinglet** was heard on April 4, then not again until the 14th and still they are scarce. Feeder watchers are still reporting large numbers of **Pine siskins** with a few **Common redpolls** intermixed. A pair of **White-throated sparrows** appeared at one feeder in mid month. A single **Spruce grouse** hooted on April 4 and a single early **Tree sparrow** was spotted at the golf course on April 14. The welcome song of several **Red-winged blackbirds** was heard at feeders mid month and on April 20 two **Golden-crowned sparrows** heralded what we hope is greater numbers.

On the water, the first **Pigeon guillemots** arrived around the beginning of the month, as did **Mew gulls**. **Bonaparte's gulls** are also back. A flock of about 100 **Western grebes** plied the water in front of town for a few days in early April. Twenty-two **Trumpeter swans** spent about a week early in the month feeding at Pat's Lake along with several **Ring-necked ducks** and **Bufflehead**. Two **Snow geese** entertained Wrangell as they fed on new grass on the Post Office lawn for two days. Flocks of Snow geese overhead were spotted in late March and are still passing on their way to the Stikine River delta where several thousand were observed on April 19 along with a number of **Dunlin**. Melissa Cady reported a lone **Lesser Canada goose** browsing in her yard for one day. **Lesser scaup** were reported feeding with a large mixed flock of **Surf scoters** in Zimovia Strait and 100 **Black turnstones** were seen at Shoemaker Beach.

Northern harriers and **American kestrels** were reported by several observers, who noted that they appeared to be targeting American robins. Jim McComas says **Bald eagles** continue to attack the duck decoys on his pond. **Sandhill cranes** began passing overhead on April 17, an average date for these birds here.

Wrangell's Migratory Bird and Garnet Festival begins on April 23 and continues through April 27.

On an international note, I was visiting with Jim Bourquin of Iskut, in British Columbia's interior and he remarked, "You're liable to see anything these days." He had seen a Brown pelican there a few years ago. My story of a possible sighting of one in Wrangell last fall paled in comparison.

HAINES REPORT – SPRING ARRIVALS by Georgia Giacobbe

Yes, most of the snow is gone around town, and yes the skunk cabbage is starting to grow. However, many of us like the arrival of the spring birds to let us know it is really here. At the end of last month while hiking on Mt. Rapinski, Greg Higgins spotted a **Brown Creeper**. Prior to that on the Chilkoot River, he saw a male and 3 female **Hooded Mergansers**. For some in town, Earth Day was the official arrivals of the **Rufous Hummingbirds** and everyone is scrambling to put their feeders out. It appears that the **Mountain Bluebirds** that first made an appearance 3 to 4 years ago are again back in the Chilkat Valley. **Pileated Woodpeckers** are back and **Varied Thrushes**. **Robins** definitely are around and in breeding plumage and **Goldeneyes** are in breeding plumage in Portage Cove.

Golden-crowned Kinglets have been scratching around in the leaves and shrubs behind my house, and the **Spruce Grouse** drumming their tune. This past week more birds have returned to the Chilkoot River including **Shovelers**, **Green-winged Teals**, a **Long-billed Dowager**, **Widgeons**, **Mallards**, **Bonaparte Gulls**, **Mew Gulls** and of course the **Common Scoters**.

Pam Randles has once again organized the Haines Birdathon which began April 26 and will run for a week. The idea is to count the maximum number of species in a 24-hour period. She says in her family it was a wonderful excuse for a picnic.

APRIL BIRDS IN KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

Most residents in Southeast Alaska have finally felt the warmth of Spring and are appreciating the noticeably longer days this month! Alders are beginning to leaf out, salmonberries are beginning to bud, and lots of Spring bulbs are flowering in gardens around town!

Unfortunately birds often just fly past us when the weather is ideal for humans. Actually, inclement weather is better for birding because the migrants are forced down to wait out the storms which is a lucky thing for enthusiastic birders!

A true sign of spring is the arrival of the first **Rufous Hummingbird** which occurred here the first few days of April. There were several **Trumpeter Swans** at Ward Lake for a while and the earliest record of a **Violet-green Swallow** was recorded there on April 5th. Several **Band-tailed Pigeons** returned to re-establish their small breeding colonies on both ends of our island mid-month.

Along the waterfront in town, about 90 **California Gulls** were seen along with several **Black-legged Kittiwakes** on the 13th.

Quite a few **Wilson's Snipe** and some **Black-bellied Plovers** have been spotted.

Lots of waterfowl have been moving through, including dozens of flocks of **Canada Geese**, **Greater White-fronted Geese** and **Snow Geese**. Lots of **Mallards** and **Pintail** along with **American Wigeon** and even a couple **Eurasian Wigeon** have been found. It was an unusual sight to see 19 **Brant Geese** along the rocky shore near Saxman on April 18th!

There are still a lot of **American Robins** around and seemingly a higher number of **Varied Thrushes** are in our area. Only a couple of **Hermit Thrushes** have been spotted so far this season. Dozens of **Fox Sparrows** are still scratching away in area yards along with lots of **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, **Song Sparrows**, a few **White-crowned Sparrows** and **Lincoln's Sparrows** and a rather late **American Tree Sparrow**.

A variety of raptors have been spotted here, perhaps taking advantage of the uplifting fair weather thermal air currents which aids their migration north. These include: **Northern Harrier**, **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Sharp-shinned Hawks** and **Merlins**. Eagles too can be seen spiraling up in these thermals until they become tiny specks high in the sky!

Warblers are showing up the last week or so; mostly **Orange-crowned Warblers** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, but not a single **Townsend's Warbler** yet as of this writing!

Birding is exciting this time of year especially, and I heard a story of a hummingbird aggressively buzzing at the head of a sapsucker just the other day!!

Spring migration is in full swing now for the next month or so at least so take advantage of any time you can get out there birding this special time of year!

I hope everyone has a fantastic summer enjoying the beautiful natural splendor of our amazing corner of the world!

Gustavus Sightings March 27- April 29, 2008

The first **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was heard on 3/29 and the first report of **Sandhill Cranes** flying over was on 4/15. Small flocks of **Brant** started being seen along the beaches in mid April. Shorebirds started trickling in during the second half of April, but had yet to be seen in large numbers by 4/29. Sparrows, thrushes, and hummingbirds were beginning to show up in mid April, and there was an obvious spike in their numbers on 4/24 along with a spike in Ruby-crowned Kinglets and the arrival of the first **Yellow-rumped Warblers**.

Some other first sightings were **Tree Swallow**, **Savannah Sparrow**, and **Arctic Tern** on 4/26, **Townsend's Warbler** on 4/27, and **Lincoln's Sparrow** on 4/28. A **Gyr Falcon** was seen in town on 4/17. A **Horned Lark** was along the beach on 4/19. Two **Eurasian Wigeons** were along rivers in town on 4/26.

The Gustavus **Brambling** was last seen on 4/3 having frequented the same feeder for over three months. During the last week of its presence it was heard singing. Its song was similar to that of a Varied Thrush, but was hoarser.

The **Northern Saw-whet Owls** nesting in a nest box in town now have five nestlings. Each egg hatched almost exactly one month after being laid. The first egg hatched on approximately 4/14 and the fifth egg on approximately 4/23. A sixth egg did not hatch. The adult female owl continues to spend all hours in the box on the young, leaving for only a few minutes each night shortly after nightfall. The adult male owl continues to deliver rodents to the box. There are currently over a dozen rodents, mostly voles, piled inside the box against the walls. Some are beginning to rot and can be smelled when near the box. The young are growing increasingly active. The oldest nestlings are now flapping their tiny wings and preening their own feathers. Although the adult female owl is still sitting on them, they keep her in almost constant motion with their movements.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Hank Lentfer, Julie Vathke, and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing sightings. By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Volunteers Across Nation to Track Climate Clues in Spring Flowers

A nationwide initiative starting this week will enable volunteers to track climate change by observing the timing of flowers and foliage. Project BudBurst, operated by the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) and a team of partners, allows students, gardeners and other citizen scientists in every state to enter their observations into an online database at www.budburst.org that will give researchers a detailed picture of our warming climate.

University of Montana researchers Carol Brewer and Paul Alaback (former Juneau resident and Audubon Member) are collaborators on Project BudBurst with the Chicago Botanic Garden and UCAR, which was funded with a grant from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The project is also supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and Windows to the Universe, a UCAR-based Web site that will host the project online as part of its citizen science efforts.

"Project Budburst provides an exciting opportunity for the public, particularly children, to contribute to scientific research on the effects of global climate change on plants," adds Kayri Havens, a scientist at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

Each participant in Project BudBurst selects one or more plants to observe. The project Web site suggests more than 60 widely distributed trees and flowers, with information on each. Users can add their own choices.

Participants begin checking their plants at least a week prior to the average date of budburst--the point when the buds have opened and leaves are visible. After budburst, participants continue to observe the tree or flower for later events, such as the first leaf, first flower and, eventually, seed dispersal.

Brewer explains, "as we learn about all the different neighborhoods around the country, we start to get a picture of how environmental changes affect the species that live with us on this planet." When participants submit their records online, they can view maps of these phenological events across the United States.

Many species are being affected by climate change throughout the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that 20 to 30 percent of all plant and animal species that researchers study will likely be at increased risk of extinction should global temperatures rise by 2.7 to 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit this century.

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National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, PO Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001. You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

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The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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September 2008

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL HOLD THE FIRST FALL SEASON GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, send an email to: membership@juneau-audubon-society.org**

Election! Juneau Audubon Society will elect officers in conjunction with the public meeting in October. Our officers serve a term of one year; so all officers need to be elected each year. Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting are accepted for all positions.

The election slate for 2008 is Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Brien Daugherty for treasurer and Patty Rose for secretary. Please contact any of the officers or board members if you would like to be on the ballot as an officer, or are willing to volunteer for any of our standing committees. Our standing committees include membership, program, field trip, education, conservation, and newsletter.

SUMMER ADVENTURES AND ACTIVITIES

MARK SCHWAN AND PAUL SUCHANEK'S TRIP TO PELICAN ON THE FERRY By Paul-- 8/05/08. Mark and I saw lots of humpback whales, a Minke Whale **Parasitic** and **Pomarine Jaegers, Red-necked Phalaropes** (several thousand), some **Ancient Murrelets**, 2 orcas, and a **Parakeet Auklet**.

SATURDAY WILD ON GOLD RIDGE By Mary Willson

When I got up that morning, the rain was pelting down and the wind-whipped trees were losing leaves and twigs. The two-day storm had dumped so much rain that all the streams were 'on a tear.' Some trails had become temporary streams and the mountainsides were laced with waterfalls.

This was the day, however, on which the Juneau Audubon Society's 'Saturday Wild' hike was scheduled to go to Gold Ridge. The tram was running, although each car had

two heavy barrels of sand strapped in place to help reduce rocking and swaying in the gusting winds.

Despite the decidedly snarky weather, over 20 people eventually gathered at the top of the tram and set off up the trail. The group was led by naturalist/photographer Bob Armstrong, with four or five assistant naturalists along to help. So up we went. The top of the ridge was shrouded in cloud, so we stopped short of the last steep slopes.

We paused frequently to look at flowers. The miserable weather meant that birds were few and far between: I saw ONE robin and heard ONE fox sparrow. And sensible marmots stayed in their burrows. There were old deer tracks but no deer; winter ptarmigan beds but no ptarmigan. The flowers, however, put on a tremendous show.

Altogether, I counted 35 species of wildflower plus five flowering shrubs, and I probably missed a few! The prostrate willows were done flowering and were maturing seeds, so they didn't make the list (but they did often have lumpy, red galls on their leaves). This count doesn't include the wind-pollinated grasses, sedges, and rushes that are up there but don't make showy, insect-pollinated flowers. This was enough to cheer us all on a dismal day!

One of my favorites in this floral array is the very uncommon frog orchid. This diminutive plant bears several green flowers on its stem, and the flowers were just starting to open. Supposedly, the flower somewhat resembles a frog, but the alleged similarity eludes me. It is found in much of North America, but in Juneau has (so far) been reported only from the Gold Ridge area. I'd love to know what insect pollinates this flower; I'm guessing it is small flies.

My other favorite on this walk is the inky or glaucous gentian. Another small plant, it bears several unusual-colored flowers of a deep, intense greenish blue. It is found from northern Southeast to eastern Siberia in alpine areas. The flowers seemed to be firmly closed, perhaps waiting for a sunnier, warmer day when the bees would be flying.

About midday, we headed down, as the sky lightened up a bit and the wind abated. By the time I got home, the sun was shining through temporary gaps in the clouds. The storm was finally over, but the matted-down plants and raging torrents would take a while to recover. The people, on the other hand, recovered quickly with hot tea and crumpets.

JUNEAU SUMMER SEASON BIRD OBSERVATIONS By Mark Schwan June 1 through August 20,, 2008

Although this summer did not quite compare to last year for the number of rarities found, there were still many interesting bird observations over the course of the summer. So, here goes. There were a couple of very late local observations of **Snow Goose**, with at least 12 photographed at the Mendenhall Wetlands on June 6 (fide GV from BB) and 10 seen at the mouth of Eagle River on June 9 (PS, MS). Eight **Brant** were found at the mouth of Lawson Creek on Douglas Island on June 22

(PR). Although our most common species of goose seen in Juneau, a brood of five young Canada Geese on a beaver pond at Point Bridget State Park on June 16, was a rare breeding record for the Juneau road system (PS, MS). One, male **Cinnamon Teal** was present at the Mendenhall Wetlands on June 12 (PS, MS). An eclipsed male **Redhead** was seen at Pioneer Marsh on Jul 17, (PR) and again on July 24 (MS). This species is very rare in Juneau at this time.

A breeding plumaged **Yellow-billed Loon**, seen on July 8 near Lena Point was a surprise, as they are quite rare around Juneau at this time (JS). Always exciting to see, a **Peregrine Falcon** was spotted along the Airport Dike Trail on August 12 (PR). One or two **Soras** were heard or seen at Pioneer Marsh during June by various birders. This species seems to have become an annual bird now in Juneau. There were several reports of **Hudsonian Godwits** during late July, but 51 adults seen at the Mendenhall Wetlands on July 28 was impressive (PS). Birders have come to anticipate, and expect the appearance of **Stilt Sandpipers** around mid August, so two juveniles found at the wetlands on August 18 (GV, MM) was not too surprising, but still a treat for local birders. The next day, the number had increased to eight birds (PS,PR,RG). Rarer yet, however, were two other species of shorebirds found on the wetlands. A single **Upland Sandpiper** was also at the wetlands on August 18 (GV, MM), and the next day, August 19, a striking juvenile Ruff was located (PR).

Other noteworthy shorebirds during the summer period included two species of phalarope. There were several observations of the rarer species, **Wilson's Phalarope**, including three (two females and one male) found on June 16 at the Mendenhall Wetlands (GV, MM,) and one on August 11 and 12, also along the Airport Dike trail (PR). This last individual was in juvenal plumage, a life stage rarely ever noted in Juneau-occurring birds. **Red-necked Phalaropes** although somewhat common on local marine waters during migration, are rarely seen in roadside shoreline and intertidal areas, so one found on August 15 and 16 adjacent to the Airport Dike Trail was worth noting. This bird was in juvenal plumage and had one deformed leg (PR).

Perhaps the most intriguing gull observation in Juneau this summer was a probable 1st cycle "**Kamchatka**" gull observed on the Mendenhall Wetlands on July 22 and July 31 (and subsequently, August 2) (PS). This subspecies of Mew Gull occurs in Asia and is a casual to rare visitor to western Alaska. This is the first record for Juneau and probably all of Southeast Alaska. Paul wrote detailed notes and got several photographs for comparison to our locally common Mew Gull.

The only reports of **Ring-billed Gull** were a single, near adult bird observed on July 31 on Mendenhall Wetlands (PS). and two adults at Fish Creek on August 19 (PS). A very exciting find was a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** at Eagle Beach on August 10 Eagle Beach (PS,GB). This northern nesting species is highly pelagic in migration and rarely seen in Juneau. There were small numbers of **Caspian Terns** throughout the period at Eagle Beach and the Mendenhall Wetlands (various observers) with a peak of 14 at Mendenhall Wetlands on July 22 (PS). Two color-banded birds were observed. One bird observed at Eagle Beach on June 26 was banded as a chick at East Sand Island in the Columbia River estuary on July 6, 2004, and the other observed at Mendenhall Wetlands on July/22 was probably banded as a chick at East Sand Island in the Columbia River estuary on July 12, 2005 (PS).

Quite the find indeed, a juvenile **Common Nighthawk**, was flushed while roosting on a rock near the 3000-foot level of Gastineau Peak on August 20 (PS). A yellow-shafted form of **Northern**

Flicker was present on the Airport Dike Trail on August 13 (PR). There were multiple June sightings of **Cedar Waxwings**, with one in town on June 10 (PR), 17 at Brotherhood Park on June 18 (PR,MS), five at Pioneer Marsh on June 20 (PS), and eight at Bartlett Hospital on June 23 (DR). **European Starlings** have become very scarce in Juneau in recent years, which nobody is really crying over, but 17 birds, 13 of which were young, seen near the Juneau golf course on July 14 might be worth noting (MS). One singing male **Cassin's Vireo** was located at Moose Lake at the Mendenhall Forelands on June 14 (PS, BA, MA).

This was a banner year for **Tennessee Warbler**. The first report was of a singing male observed on June 12 in the Mendenhall Valley (PS). One was heard in the glacier forelands on June 16 (BP) and up to four birds were heard at various Mendenhall Glacier Forelands sites on June 17 (PS, MS). Two birds were heard again in this same area on June 25 (PS). Then in late July (20th), a single bird was seen and photographed on Douglas Island (PR). A singing male **Magnolia Warbler** was found on June 18 near Sandy Beach, at the same location as the bird found in 2007 (PS, PR). This species is quite rare in Juneau. Also quite rare, two **Blackpoll Warbler** observations in mid June were intriguing, and a nice surprise: One bird was heard in the glacier forelands area on June 16 (BP) and the other was heard and seen near Wren Drive in the Mendenhall Valley on June 17 (PS, MS).

One juvenile **Golden-crowned Sparrow** was seen at Point Bridget State Park on July 30, which was quite an early date (PS). A male **Black-headed Grosbeak** was discovered on June 1, when it briefly

visited a Thane Road feeder (RA, PS, BA). Only Juneau's second record, a female **Lazuli Bunting**: was photographed along the airport dike on June 21 (PR). There was a subsequent report of possibly the same bird in practically the same location, on July 17 (RG). Finally, a flock of **24 Red-winged Blackbirds** at the Mendenhall Wetlands on July 28 was noteworthy (PS). Thanks to those that contributed information.

Contributors: Photos by Patty Rose (PR); Bev Agler (BA); Mark Anderson (MA); Robert Armstrong (RA); Blake Barbaree (BB); Rich Gordon (RG); Molly McCafferty (MM); Beth Peluso (BP); Deborah Rudis (DR); Jeff Sauer (JS); Mark Schwan (MS); Paul Suchanek (PS); Gus van Vliet (GV). Compiled by Mark Schwan

WRANGELL SUMMER 2008 BIRD REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

This has been a most uneventful summer. Hope the fall improves.

Large numbers of cedar waxwings and pine siskins were around town all of June and July. We usually don't see these waxwings until summer's end.

Melissa Cady and Paula Rak reported seeing a three-toed woodpecker's nest with young in it near Frosty Bay on the Cleveland Peninsula on June 17. They were doing a breeding bird survey at the time. They also saw and photographed a sandhill crane chick on the nest that day.

A pair of Red-winged blackbirds nested again this year at Pat's Lake. Alder flycatchers were seen more frequently this summer than in past years.

On June 20 John Martin reported a black-headed grosbeak at his feeder at 10 Mile. He said while reporting that bird that he had seen 5 band-tailed pigeons at his feeder on May 25. On June 23 Susan Wise Eagle photographed a female black-headed grosbeak at their feeder at 10 Mile.

On July 3 Carol Ross reported seeing a Caspian's tern at Two-Tree Pass, about 5 miles west of Wrangell. She did not take a usable photo but says she saw the black tip on its beak.

The last major birding event for Haines finished just after the deadline for the final newsletter in

HAINES BIRD OBSERVATIONS By Georgia Giacobbe

May. The Haines Birdathon organized by Pam Randles was a success with 72 species counted. The following birds were noted as regular migrants that passed through: Snow Geese, Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-Winged Teal, Ring-Necked Duck, Redhead, and Hooded Merganser. Of special interest was a flock of 6 Great Blue Herons. Also, later in May of interest, about 2000 Surf Scoters rafted up and down Portage Cove and Lutak Inlet. Sometimes White Winged Scoters, Barrow's Goldeneyes or Harlequins fed with them. They were in rafts in the hundreds, sometimes a thousand.

More into mid summer around the fourth of July, 6 Pacific Loons calling and feeding in Lutak Inlet. Juvenile Rufous Hummingbirds and Chestnut Backed Chickadees at feeders. There seemed to be high numbers of juveniles for some species this year – Robins, Varied Thrushes, Steller's Jays, Pine Siskins, Red-Breasted Sapsuckers, Crows, Ravens, Wilson's Warblers, Orange-crowned Warblers, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrushes. Chickadee, Hummingbirds, and Bald Eagle juvenile numbers seem normal.

As late as July 31, along the Chilkoot River: Young eagles were getting flight feathers and practicing flying. Crows still had young. Cliff swallows, and Bonaparte's Gull juveniles spotted, Greater Yellowlegs, Wilson's Warblers with young, Orange-crowned Warblers. Merganser females mostly without young. Only one brood seen. Belted Kingfishers and Rufous Hummingbirds seen. And alas, we were still not able to confirm the Pileated Woodpeckers reported earlier. They still remain as elusive as always, mostly heard, but not seen.

Gulls & Shorebirds Posted in Eaglechat by: "Paul Suchanek"

Tue Aug 19, 2008 9:12 pm (PDT)

This PM, there were at least 2 **Ring-billed Gulls** and one immature **Glaucous Gull** in the gull hordes near the dock at Taku Fisheries downtown.

Also some great shorebirds have been showing up on the wetlands (not originally found by me) including up to 8 **Stilt Sandpipers**, a fly by **Upland Sandpiper**, and best of all, a juvenile **Ruff** found today by Patty Rose. The Ruff was in the slough outside the dike which eventually connects to the gazebo pond.

NEWS FROM AUDUBON ALASKA IN ANCHORAGE By Taldi Walter
Communications & Education Specialist

Is it any surprise that Alaska has more globally significant bird habitats than any other state in the union? Over the last seven years, Audubon Alaska has combed Alaska for areas essential to the survival of bird populations. There are currently 145 sites statewide that are officially identified as Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The majority of them are also recognized as globally or continentally significant. In fact, Alaska has almost half of all globally significant IBAs identified in the United States.

The number of globally significant IBAs identified in Alaska should come as no surprise when one considers the diversity and quality of habitat found in this 365 million acre state. Alaska has more than 47,000 miles of marine shoreline, 100,000 glaciers, more than 3 million lakes and rivers, and a diversity of habitats that range from temperate rainforest to Arctic tundra. Alaska's IBAs include coastal nesting grounds for about 90% of the world population of Emperor Geese, staging areas for tens of thousands of Bar-tailed Godwits, the ice-bound, at-sea wintering area for many of the world's Spectacled Eiders, and nesting sites for a variety of endemic species.

With hopes of increasing awareness and understanding of Alaska's IBAs, Audubon Alaska recently released a poster-sized map that highlights the 145 identified sites, plus a handful of potential sites that are likely to meet listing criteria in the near future. Not only is the IBA map informative, but original artwork by David Allen Sibley makes it a striking piece. Sibley's illustrations include the Spectacled Eider and Marbled Murrelet, both species of global conservation concern. Audubon Alaska hopes to continue to add new IBAs to the list, but focusing on protection and management of existing IBAs is a priority for Audubon Alaska.

To get a copy of Alaska's IBA map please visit the Audubon Alaska website:
http://www.audubonalaska.org/BirdSci_IBAs.html or call the office (907) 276-7034.

SURVEYING SEABIRDS IN THE BERING SEA By Paul Suchanek

Dave Porter from Trapper Creek and I spent about 2 weeks in July conducting seabird surveys in the eastern Bering Sea for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as a volunteer on the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker Healy. The primary mission of this cruise was a scientific study of summer conditions in the Bering Sea in relationship to the extent of ice in the winter. Understanding the productivity base of the food chain that supports the enormous fish, marine mammal, and seabird populations of the Bering Sea is the ultimate

goal of these studies. While scientists near the stern were using sophisticated sampling gear to study nearly every aspect of the water column, we counted seabirds from the bridge along a 300 meter wide transect using simply binoculars and a laptop connected to the ship's GPS (Global Positioning System) to record our sightings. Given that the Healy is a very stable 420 feet in length and the bridge is 66 feet about the sea, we had a grand perch from which to look down among the waves for birds and marine mammals.

After boarding the ship in Dutch Harbor, we cruised out on the afternoon of the next day and immediately encountered huge flocks of Northern Fulmars and Short-tailed Shearwaters. We saw more birds on our first transect this day than we would for the rest of the trip as the waters around Akutan and Unimak Pass are obviously extremely productive. We also saw our first Black-footed and Laysan Albatross; later we would see several Short-tailed Albatross, an endangered species with a total population of only about 2,000, and a life bird for both of us. After heading to the east side of Unimak Pass, we then headed northwest to deep water west of the Pribilof Islands where we sighted more albatross as well as lots of Fork-tailed Storm Petrels, Northern Fulmars, and Red-legged Kittiwakes.

Eventually we headed east and north to shallow waters in the area of St. Matthew and Nunivak Island where bird diversity and density were both quite low. We spent about 5 days primarily counting Common and Thick-billed Murres. After again heading south and west to deep water near the Pribilofs, we got some great views of a pod of fin whales. After our two weeks of surveys, we were then ferried by inflatable to the town of St. Paul in the Pribilofs and two seabird observers replaced us on the ship. As we had some time before our flight on the following day, we got to see one of the fur seal rookeries as well as a bit of the seabird colonies. Two weeks of staring into the waves and fog of the Bering Sea looking for seabirds is definitely not for everyone but it was certainly an interesting experience.

FROM AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

It has been estimated that 975 million migratory birds are killed every year in the United States by flying into plate glass windows. Birds cannot perceive transparent or reflective glass as a barrier to be avoided. The hazard to birds is greatly increased when habitat is reflected by large panes of glass, or when transparent glass allows views of habitat on the other side of a building or views of plants inside the building. Bird collision with glass is an issue that can be addressed at many buildings, especially buildings that serve as Nature Centers, Wildlife Refuge Visitor Centers, and at educational facilities. These facilities can help educate the public about the magnitude of unnecessary bird deaths due to collisions with windows through demonstrating ways to reduce this threat at their own buildings.

Please help American Bird Conservancy make windows and buildings more bird-friendly by doing the following:

- Use a technique of 1. Placing taut netting over exterior windows so that if birds hit, they bounce off like a trampoline. 2. Using window film on the outside of

windows that makes glass appear opaque from the exterior, but remains transparent from the interior. It can be left plain, cut into strips and installed as a striped pattern, or pre-printed to incorporate a pattern or logo. 3. Interrupting reflections with a dense pattern applied with paint or decals on the outside of the window.

- Pass out the window handout (created with a space for your organizations name and contact information)
- Involve the community in the solutions of the problem through a community day or other planned activity at your location.

Detailed information (a supply list, pictures of window applications and the window handout) have been placed in the BCA member website section in the Bird Conservation Issues and Resources section. Please let me know if you have trouble accessing the documents in the member section. For more information about the ABC Bird Collisions Campaign, please contact: Karen Imparato Cotton, Bird Collisions Campaign Manager American Bird Conservancy 1731 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009, Tel: 202-234-7181 X 202: www.abcbirds.org

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\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; *\$15 (1-year student/senior rate)* _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

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Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

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The Raven



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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 35, Number 2

Juneau Audubon Society

October 2008

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – October 9, 2008 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222

The first regular Juneau Audubon evening meeting will be a desert/healthy snack potluck. Please bring 10 slides (film or digital) to share with everyone. All bird, wildlife, and travel photographs are encouraged. Local birding or exotic locations are especially requested. Come and enjoy the food and your talented neighbor's stories and photos!



ELECTION -- Juneau Audubon Society will elect officers in conjunction with the public meeting in October. Our officers serve a term of one year; so all officers need to be elected each year. Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting are accepted for all positions.

The election slate for 2008 is Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Brien Daugherty for treasurer and Patty Rose for secretary. Please contact any of the officers or board members if you would like to be on the ballot as an officer, or are willing to volunteer for any of our standing committees. Our standing committees include membership, program, field trip, education, conservation, and newsletter.

November Audubon meeting: Latin American Eco-tourism Medley

Linda Shaw will show a medley of her best photos from several trips - Ecuador, the Galapagos and Costa Rica. She also has a few movie clips from the Galapagos.

NOVEMBER PUBLIC MARKET: Ideas and items to sell in the Juneau Audubon booth are needed. Contact: Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org. Call Mary Lou King, 789-7540 if you have recycled half pint canning jars for the jelly.

JUNEAU BIRD OBSERVATIONS by Patty Rose

Juneau's first **Turkey Vulture** was observed and photographed on the Mendenhall River on September 24 (JW as reported to GV). The bird was still around on September 27. Another exciting September highlight was the discovery of single **Red-throated Pipits** on September 16 (MS) and September 17 (RG) on the Mendenhall Wetlands.



Smith's Longspur

Photo by Patty Rose

chick of the **Bald Eagle** pair that nested near the airport dike trail left the nest and was later seen perched nearby (RG).

In addition to the Turkey Vulture, raptors moving through the area in September included **Osprey** on September 12 near the Juneau-Douglas Bridge (BP), on September 24 on Gold Ridge (MJ), at Brotherhood Park (PS), and on Mt. Juneau (BP), and on September 20 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (GV). **Peregrine Falcons** were observed on the Mendenhall Wetlands on August 31 (PS, BA, MS, RG, PR), September 20 (GV), and September 21 (MJ).



Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Photo by Patty Rose

A flock of about 150 **Snow Geese** was seen flying high over Gastineau Channel on September 23 (BP). Although this species is regularly seen in the spring, it is seldom seen in the fall in Juneau. On September 12, a **Pied-billed Grebe** was seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands (RG). A juvenile **Sora** was seen at the Pioneers' Home marsh on September 8 (PS). On September 6, a **Northern Hawk Owl** was observed on Blackerby Ridge (GB).

Shorebirds observed during September included a **Wandering Tattler** on September 6 at the Jensen-Olson Arboretum, and possibly the same bird at the Shrine of St. Therese later that day (MJ). On September 8, a single **Upland Sandpiper** was seen on the Mendenhall

Two noteworthy observations occurred in late August, just missing last month's report: A **Smith's Longspur** on August 24 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (LL, PS, BA, GV, PR), and a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** on August 29 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (RG, PS). On August 23, the

Wetlands (PS). A **Stilt Sandpiper** was present at Fish Creek on September 17 (PS), a late date for this species.

The "Kamchatka" subspecies of Mew Gull reported last month continued to be present during September near the mouth of the Mendenhall River (PS). Two adult **Ring-billed Gulls** were observed in downtown Juneau at the intermediate vessel dock through September 16 (PS). A **Glaucous Gull** was seen at Lawson Creek on September 16 (PR).

A **Common Nighthawk** was seen on September 3 in the Mendenhall Loop Road area (GB). A **Mourning Dove** visited the Capital School Playground in downtown Juneau on September 12 (PR, JS). On September 5, a **Chipping Sparrow** was seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands (RG).

Fall warblers included a **Magnolia Warbler** on the Mendenhall Wetlands on August 27 (RG), a **Blackpoll Warbler** at Sandy Beach on September 3 (PS), and a **Tennessee Warbler** on the Mendenhall Wetlands on September 5 (RG).

Thanks to those who contributed observations.

Contributors: Bev Agler (BA), Gwen Baluss (GB), Richard Gordon (RG), Merrill Jensen (MJ), Laurie Lamm (LL), Beth Peluso (BP), Patty Rose (PR), Jeff Sauer (JS), Mark Schwan (MS), Paul Suchanek (PS), Gus van Vliet (GV), Jodi Wise (JW).

WRANGELL REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

The fall migration hasn't brought the unusual birds we've seen in some years past. However, those heralds of spring and fall, the **Sandhill Cranes**, passed over Wrangell the evening of September 23, taking advantage of calm, clear skies and a sliver of moon. They had been resting and feeding on the Stikine River flats since September 17. Another flock, reportedly thousands, flew south over Petersburg on the morning of September 24. More passed over Wrangell that afternoon and we lucky ones who heard their throaty cries ran outside to wish them well along their way. Earl and Mary Benitz, who live year-round on the delta, report that the birds are later than usual this year. They have first arrived anywhere from September 7 – 12 in the previous few years. A couple of birders were treated to a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** training session on August 30. Two juveniles under adult supervision practiced swooping down on a couple of Steller Jays with enthusiasm but no luck.

Large numbers of **Cedar Waxwings** and juvenile **American Robins** are devouring the abundant mountain ash crop around town. **Pine Siskins** never left this summer and are back at local feeders. A single **White-crowned Sparrow** has also been seen at one feeder.

Wrangell Ranger District wildlife biologist Melissa Cady held a bird identification training course for outfitters and guides this past spring. The goal of her program was

to help local charter businesspeople sharpen their birding knowledge so that both their general-interest clients and avid birders have more rewarding experiences.

The course consisted of two evenings of classroom lecture and a half-day of field instruction. The first evening focused on bird identification, concentrating on those birds likely to be spotted on the waters around Wrangell and on the Stikine River. They met again to address marketing to birders, wildlife viewing etiquette, locations to target for particular species and general lists of birds expected in various habitats. Melissa scheduled the field portion of the course individually. The course was well attended.

Funding exists to offer the program in two other communities in the coming year. For more information, contact her at the Wrangell Ranger District Office 907-874-2323 or at mncady@fs.fed.us

SUMMER BIRD SIGHTINGS IN KETCHIKAN -by Teri Goucher

Autumn has arrived and finally some beautiful weather was enjoyed this September after a much wetter and cooler summer in Southeast Alaska! The more golden light from the now lower sun and clear crisp days this month relieved the somewhat summer starved residents in Ketchikan!

The usual species made their appearances in our area this past summer season along with some interesting visitors.

A very distinctive adult **Franklin's Gull** was seen along the downtown waterfront on the first of June.

A rather late **Pacific Golden-Plover** remained here until around mid-June.

Several **Caspian Terns** were found locally both in June and July.

A very active **Common Nighthawk** was observed feeding north of town on the evening of June 13th.

The small numbers of **Band-tailed Pigeons** returned as usual and an adult with seven juveniles at a feeder 16 miles north of Ketchikan provided strong breeding evidence in our area!

A **Cedar Waxwing** nest with five chicks was discovered on August 5th and the brood successfully fledged about two weeks later!

A single immature **Brown-headed Cowbird** was spotted on July 27th.

A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** remained in a neighborhood for several days around the middle part of June!

Surprising how some bird information is discovered at times! While chatting about birds with Captain Pat Bethel as we prepared for visitor boat tours, I realized he had seen a rather remarkable bird years before at his homestead on the Chickamin River 40 miles NE of Ketchikan! The next day I shared his excellent photograph with Steve Heinel who then passed this information on to other experts, and the story then became a part of unique bird data and history! That **Tricolored Heron** seen late May 23 years ago was the

first record of that species in Alaska, and in fact that species is only very rare along the west coast north of southern California!!

So keep on bird watching and sharing birding stories no matter how old because they may prove to be important and exciting new historical bird data!

GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS By Nat Drumheller. natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Caspian Terns were seen regularly through the summer along the town beaches. Juvenile terns, often being fed by adults, were seen through the month of August. The high count for Caspian Terns was sixteen adults and eight juveniles on 8/19. After no reports last winter nor spring of **Peregrine Falcons**, they were seen a few times this summer and regularly in August and September around Gustavus and in Glacier Bay. **Ancient Murrelets** were seen in higher than usual numbers during August in Glacier Bay. One **Stilt Sandpiper** was along the Salmon River in town on 8/25, and two were there on 8/26. Four **Red Knots** were west of town on 8/28. There were only a few sightings of **Cedar Waxwings** this summer with the last being four birds on 8/29. **Red-breasted Nuthatch** numbers increased sharply in late August. Migrating **Sandhill Cranes** were first reported on 9/5 and numbered in the thousands on 9/23 and 9/24. Sally McLaughlin reported an **Upland Sandpiper** in town on 9/4 and 9/5. **Black-billed Magpies** returned in mid September. A **Mourning Dove** was along the beach west of town on 9/18. An **Eastern Kingbird** was in Bartlett Cove on 9/21. This



Eastern Kingbird

By Emily Mount



Red-throated Pipits By Nat Drumheller



was the fourth local record for Eastern Kingbird, with the third coming from earlier this summer on 7/29. Single **Rusty Blackbirds** were seen on 9/24 and 9/25. Two **Red-throated Pipits** were along the beach west of town on 9/24, and at least one was still

there on 9/25. These are the first local records for Red-throated Pipit. Single **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were with Pectoral Sandpipers in beach grasses on 9/24 and 9/27. Last and least, a pink Pine Siskin was at a local feeder on 9/26 and 9/27. This bird showed no obvious non-siskin features, other than that many of its feathers were tinged pink. It has been suggested that it might be a siskin/redpoll hybrid.

Thanks to Bruce Paige for sharing observations and records information.

PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT FOR JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY

Juneau Audubon Society is considering a bylaw change that simply appoints non-officer members to our board, not to specific "positions." The responsibilities of individual board members can then be assigned, or shared, just like other boards that assign their members to committees that suit their interests and time.

If there were room for "unassigned" new board members, then new board members could learn the ropes and help with a variety of activities until they were familiar and established with the organization. It's unfair to expect a brand new board member to assume the full-time duties of membership, programs, newsletter, etc., having had zero experience.

The Juneau Audubon Society board brings this suggested change to the bylaws of Article VI, Section 1.

Current language: ARTICLE VI - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. The control and conduct of business of the Society shall be vested in its Board of Directors. The Board shall determine the policies of the Society. **The Board shall consist of the four elected officers plus the chairpersons of the standing committees.** Standing Committee Chairpersons shall be selected by the full Board of Directors, initially half serving for one-year terms and half serving for terms of two years. All subsequent standing committee chairpersons and appointments shall be for two-year terms, and no member of the Board may be appointed for more than three consecutive terms.

Proposed change:

The board will consist of four elected officers and up to eight appointed persons to fill the needs of the existing committees and to conduct all the business of the chapter. Board members will allocate and assign responsibilities among themselves as they consider appropriate.

Please contact any board member with suggestions and opinions.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option contact:**
Brien Daugherty, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

Helping birds avoid window collisions

Birds of many types have been killed by flying into glass windows and doors. In fact, according to the Audubon Society, recent evidence shows that collisions with glass may be a major source of avian mortality that's widely overlooked. Experts believe that over 100 million birds die each year in collisions with buildings and skyscrapers in the United States and Canada alone.

Although there are several variables which account for bird strikes, the primary cause is reflection. Birds become confused or startled and rush to cover or open sky; unfortunately they often mistake a reflection for the real thing. Here are some ways to reduce bird strike occurrences in homes and small buildings:

Reduce window reflection, Using window film on the outside of windows that makes glass appear opaque from the exterior, but remains transparent from the interior (this material and hawk silhouettes are being ordered and will be offered for sale in the November Public Market, Place a hawk silhouette in your window, Tack up a temporary cover, Place sun ornament, crystal or other objects in your window, Locate bird feeders either very close, or further away from windows, Block 'through-house' line of sight to the outdoors

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Address _____
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Telephone number _____

____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed ____ Please bill me
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Volume 35, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2008

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – November 13, 2008 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222

TEN MINUTE INTRODUCTION BY TALDI WALTER

Alaska eBird: Birding for Conservation – Audubon is drawing on citizen science to help document the importance of the Tongass for birds and their habitats. Taldi Walter, Audubon's Communications & Education Specialist, will provide an update on how to use Alaska eBird, an on-line database to maintain your bird observations and life list. Each observation submitted to Alaska eBird contributes to an international network, which is one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence. Learning how to use eBird is a great way to contribute to conservation in Alaska.

Taldi Walter joined the Audubon Alaska staff in June as the Communications & Education Specialist. Taldi was born in Alaska and raised in the Flathead Valley of Northwest Montana. Taldi joins us from the National Audubon Society's Public Policy Office in Washington, D.C., where she worked as the Alaska Outreach Coordinator. In this capacity, she delivered 110 lectures in 39 states throughout the U.S., highlighting priority Alaska lands issues. Taldi received her Master's in Biology from the University of Central Arkansas. Her thesis work took her to the Atlantic rainforest of Brazil, where she studied rainforest and invasive species ecology.

ECUADOR, GALAPAGOS AND NATIONAL PARKS OF COSTA RICA

"Join Linda Shaw for highlights from her tours of Latin American eco-tourism gems from the Amazon and cloud forests of Ecuador to the legendary Galapagos and the national parks of Costa Rica. Meet fascinating creatures like the only sea-swimming lizard in the world and a giant antpitta named Maria to inspire your next eco-tourism adventure!"



Masked Booby in the Galapagos



Maria the Antpitta of the Ecuador cloud forest

DECEMBER 11, JUNEAU AUDUBON PUBLIC MEETING

Garrett Savory will speak on "Avian Influenza sampling in Greenland"
Garret works for USDA.

JUNEAU PUBLIC MARKET NOVEMBER 28 - 30, 2008.

Juneau Audubon Society's annual fund raiser is our booth at the Juneau Public Market. Our biggest seller every year is our wonderful jellies and jams, organized by Mary Lou King. She not only picks many of the berries, but also with several volunteers, makes the jam! Even if some of us had trouble finding berries this year, she has plenty of berries for jam!

We need volunteers for the booth. We like to have two people for two hour shifts. Since the booth is open 12:00 - 8:00 p.m. on Friday and 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, we need 24 volunteers to help us sell our wares during the weekend. If you are available to help, please call Patty at 586-1334 or send a message to secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org.

Thanksgiving Day Bird Counts-2008

The annual Thanksgiving Bird Count is rapidly approaching and will take place November 27th. Thanksgiving Bird Counts are to take place on Thanksgiving Day, and to last for only one hour! The counter chooses the time that best fits his/her schedule. The count is to be made in a 15-foot diameter circle, the location of which also is determined by the participant. Such count circles are usually located around whatever attracts birds...feeders, bird baths, cover, etc. Most participants select a count area visible from a comfortable spot near a window. This is one winter count that can be made in comfort regardless of the weather. However, some counters do go outdoors and make their counts in favorite bird areas or on water areas. The same count circles should be used each year. The official data sheet is available on our web page at www.juneau-audubon-society.org or <http://www.utahbirds.org/cbc/ThanksgBCForm.htm>

Matt Kirchhoff Takes New Job with Audubon State Office

Matt Kirchhoff, a former Juneau Chapter board member, has accepted a new position as the Director of Bird Conservation with the state Audubon office in Anchorage. He and his wife, Patty, packed up their car and drove north at the end of September, leaving just in time to miss the October rains!

Matt's primary job duties will include building and monitoring the state's growing list of Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Currently, Alaska has 147 IBAs, and nearly half of those have been rated as "globally significant" (including Juneau's Mendenhall Wetlands). One of Matt's first priorities will be to nominate the Icy-Strait-Glacier Bay area as an IBA. This area, which is perhaps best known for its abundance of humpbacked whales, is also important to tens of thousands of Marbled and Kittlitz's Murrelets in the summertime, and may support the highest density of murrelets anywhere throughout their range.

In addition to IBAs, Matt will be in charge up updating and publishing the Alaska Watchlist. This effort uses objective criteria on population size, trend, and threats to identify declining and vulnerable bird populations in the state. The last list was published in 2005, and Matt hopes to have the next list drafted in early 2009. He will be sending it around to bird experts around the state for review prior to publication.

Matt will continue to be involved in research as well. He plans to continue his studies on Marbled and Kittlitz's Murrelets in Glacier Bay, and is hoping to be peripherally involved in research that other agency and University biologists are involved.

Being able to get out to some of the far corners of the state was a primary motivation for Matt's move. "I loved living and working in Southeast Alaska all these years, but the chance to see places like the Aleutians, the Coleville River, and Teshekpuk Lake is pretty appealing too".

Matt will be working from the new state office location in Anchorage at 441 West 5th, Avenue, Suite 300. Matt will continue to stay in touch with the Juneau Chapter and expects to be making work-related visits to Juneau. People wanting to contact Matt can reach him at 907-276-7034, or by email at mkirchhoff@audubon.org.

Juneau Bird Observations for October 2008 by Mark Schwan

Migration seemed slow early in the month but things picked up considerably at mid-month. Birders were treated with excellent diversity of waterfowl including uncommon and rare species, as well as a strong showing of swans, most of which appeared to be Tundra Swans. Through most of the month, there was a nice variety, albeit small numbers, of lingering shorebirds, and during the third week, a wave of late warblers was noteworthy. Here are some highlights.

A single **Blue-winged Teal** at the Mendenhall Wetlands on October 18 was a very late sighting (BA). There were from one to several **Redheads** seen through most of the month at the Wetlands, with four present on October 20 (many obs). Two **Ruddy Ducks** were in with the more common ducks on one of the finger basins of the floatplane pond on October 20 (GV,DM,PS,RG).

There were two **Yellow-billed Loons** at Point Bridget on October 18 and one near Outer Point on October 19 (PS). A **Double-crested Cormorant**: was at Outer Point on October 19 and then re-sighted on October 21 (PS).

The biggest surprise of last month, Juneau's first documented **Turkey Vulture**, was relocated along the lower Mendenhall River on October 3 (BW). There were two **Peregrine Falcon** reports, one at the Wetlands on October 18 (BA), and another also at the Wetlands on October 20 (GV); possibly the same bird was lingering in the area.

The more interesting shorebirds observations included a mix of rare species and more common species making late appearances. A single **Pacific Golden-Plover**, a very rare species, was at the Wetlands on October 20 (RG). A late (for Juneau but not Gustavus)

Sanderling was at Eagle Beach on October 6 and still present on October 12 (MS). Two **Western Sandpipers** were observed on October 6, and a single bird was observed on October 12 at Eagle Beach, late dates for this species (MS). Two **Baird's Sandpipers** at Eagle Beach on October 3 also was a bit unusual (MS). Always a treat for birders, but most often found a month earlier, the only local fall report of **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** came when a single bird was found at the Wetlands on October 20 (RG). Finally, although a common migrant in spring and fall, **Short-billed Dowitchers** are present in Juneau after the fall equinox in very small numbers, so one at Eagle Beach on October 6 and 12 was worth noting (MS).

Orange-crowned Warblers, are considered rare after late September, but are usually locatable with effort, sometimes well into November or later depending on the weather. Reports included two at Brotherhood Park on October 3, one at Eagle Beach on October 17 (MS), and two to four at the Wetlands on October 20 (GB, GV, RG). **Yellow Warbler** is rarely seen in October in Juneau, so it was quite the surprise when one was found at the Wetlands on October 20 (GV) and two were found at the Wetlands the next day, October 21 (MS). Also rare in October, four to eight **Wilson's Warblers** were observed at the Wetlands on October 20 (GB, GV, RG).



Rare sparrows seen during October included two **Harris's Sparrows** seen together along the bank of the lower Mendenhall River on October 7 (MS), a **White-throated Sparrow** at a feeder on Douglas Island on October 23 and 25 - 27 (PS), and a **Swamp Sparrow** observed at the Wetlands on October 28 (PS).

Contributors: Bev Agler (BA), Gwen Baluss (GB), Rich Gordon (RG), Deanna MacPhail (DM), Mark Schwan (MS), Paul Suchanek (PS), Gus van Vliet (GV), and Brenda Wright (BW). Thanks to all who contributed.

WRANGELL SIGHTINGS By Bonnie Demerjian

Pine Siskins, Dark-eyed Juncos and Steller's Jays are mobbing the feeders but several watchers have reported **Black-billed Magpies** as well these past few weeks. Several **White-crowned Sparrows** have also been around. Few winter ducks are have shown up in front of town yet excepting **Harlequins, Mallards** and a single **Ring-necked Duck** and pair of **Blue-winged Teal** at the golf course pond.

A small flock of **Band-tailed Pigeons** was reported as were two **Mourning Doves**, one of which was found dead by an elementary student.

Another observer recently noticed a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** tapping holes in a tree. Close behind it were two opportunistic **Red-breasted Nuthatches** exploring the same holes.

Sixteen **Trumpeters Swans**, annual fall and spring visitors were spotted this week on Pat's Lake. **Western Grebes**, **Common** and **Pacific Loons** and **Common Mergansers** are back as well.

Mice and voles are the big news on the Stikine Delta. Bumper crops are drawing hawks and owls to the feast. Besides numbers of **Northern Harriers**, observers have spotted **Red-tailed Hawks**, **Northern Pygmy Owls** and **Great Horned Owls**. Several cabin owners say Great-horned conversations are keeping them up at night. Duck hunters report mixed flocks of as many as fifty owls and hawks swarming above the flats when a rising tide brings voles swimming to higher ground.

Stikine River Delta named Important Bird Area

The Stikine River Delta in August joined the ranks of approximately 130 other Important Bird Areas in Alaska. The Audubon's Important Bird Area (IBA) program conveys recognition without regulation to areas important for maintaining bird populations and focuses efforts to conserve these sites. It seeks to protect sites that attract birds that may be vulnerable due to conservation concerns, limited range or congregatory behavior.

The Stikine River Delta is of international importance because its silt-laden waters cover one of the largest fresh and tidally submerged mudflats (over 11,000 hectares) between British Columbia and the Copper River Delta. The Delta was granted IBA Global status in particular because of its intense concentrations of Western Sandpipers and Snow Geese. From one to three million **Western Sandpipers** use the river flats as a staging area. The population of **Lesser Snow Geese** using the Stikine delta breed on Russia's Wrangel Island. Over 10,000 have been recorded on the delta in one day. This population is managed separately from other Lesser Snow Goose populations and faces greater pressures on its breeding grounds from weather and predation.

A further designation of the delta as part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN), which is supported by the Wrangell and Petersburg city councils, is pending. Yakutat's Black Sand Spit was also named an IBA in August, in part because its tern colony may be the largest breeding colony of **Aleutian Terns** in the world.

Haines Report By Georgia Giacobbe

As fall has come to a crashing close into winter in Haines, the birds have been accommodating their schedules as usual. As of September 19, migrant birds headed south and the winter birds appeared. Those headed south included **Common Loons**, **Western Grebes**, **Red-necked Grebes**, and **Harlequin Ducks**. Reappearing were **Nuthatches**, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, and definitely **Magpies**. **Steller Jays** started heading for feeders. At about the first frost, Pam Randles spotted a Juvenile **Goshawk** still hanging around. A day later a **Downy Woodpecker** was spied near Haines School.

After our first snow (October 24), we were visited by about a dozen Magpies all fighting at our feeding station. Pam spotted a swan swimming in Portage Cove, Several rafts of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** from Portage Cove to Lutak, ranging in size from 30 – 200 birds. **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, **Northwest Crows**, **Common Ravens** and **Bald**

Eagles were hanging around. Now, the eagles naturally are moving over to the Chikot River for the late salmon run. **Bonaparte's g\Gulls** and **Mallards** were spotted at Chilkoot Estuary. Chickadees, Juncos, Jays and Nuthatch have been coming to the feeders.

And speaking of Bald Eagles gathering, a reminder that the **14th Annual Bald Eagle Festival is scheduled for November 5-9, 2008**. Robert O'Toole a photographer/photoshop instructor from Clearwater, Florida, and John C. Pitcher, artist/naturalist from Dorset, Vermont are this year's presenters. For more info go to www.baldeaglefestival.org

Gustavus Sightings 9/28 to 10/29/2008

One **Osprey** was seen on 9/30 and two were over town on 10/30. **Peregrine Falcons** continued to be seen regularly through the period with four on 10/13. **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were along beaches west of town through the period with a high count of fifteen on 10/18. Single **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were in beach grasses on three dates in October and there were two on 10/27. A few **Western Sandpipers** lingered into October with two on 10/13 being the last.

Returning **Dunlin** and **Rock Sandpipers** were first seen in small numbers on 10/4 along with a couple hundred **Sanderlings**. On 10/25, there were about 900 Dunlin and 100 Rock Sandpipers. By 10/27, Dunlin numbers were closer to 3,000 with several hundred Rock Sandpipers. A Dunlin on 10/25 had leg bands indicating it had been banded on the



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta continuing a string of several years that birds banded there have been sighted in Gustavus. The **Mourning Dove** mentioned in the last report was at the same spot on 10/4. **Short-eared Owls, Great Horned Owls, and Northern Pygmy Owls** were all heard and/or seen in October. A **Barred Owl** was heard in town on 10/7. It was a good season for **Red-throated Pipits**. In addition to the Red-throated Pipits mentioned in the last report, single birds were on a beach near town on 9/30 and 10/20 and two were along the shore south of Bartlett Cove on 10/11. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** are still around in good numbers with as many as five at one time on my feeder. A late **Wilson's Warbler** was in town on 10/27. Several times this month, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** were observed on my chimney cap perched in the wood smoke and taking soot in their bills and rubbing it on their feathers. This "smoke bathing" has been observed in past years, as well. All sightings by Nat Drumheller natdrumheller@hotmail.com

BOOK REVIEW

Attending Alaska's Birds by Jim King

Hot off the presses and available at Hearthside Books and Amazon.com. Find out more about the life and history of Alaska's birds in the 2nd half of the 20th century as we are flown around Alaska by scientist and pilot Jim King.

Project FeederWatch Benefits Birds and People

Connection with nature promotes wellness

The 2008-09 season of **Project FeederWatch** gets underway **November 8** and runs through April 3. Participants count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders each week and send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Participants submitted more than 115,000 checklists during the 2007-08 FeederWatch season, documenting unusual bird sightings, winter movements, and shifting ranges—a treasure-trove of information that scientists use to monitor the health of the birds and of the environment.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels, from scout troops and retirees to classrooms and nature center visitors. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call the Lab toll-free at (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds in their area, a calendar, complete instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report, *Winter Bird Highlights*.

Note: Photos are available at www.feederwatch.org. To find local participants for stories, contact David Bonter at (607) 254-2457 or email dnb23@cornell.edu. Visit the “Explore Data” section of the web site to find the top 25 birds reported in your region, rare bird sightings, and bird summaries by state or province.

500 FOOT MONTANA CREEK GREENBELT PUT BACK IN JUNEAU COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Almost two years ago Trout Unlimited began working toward securing a 500' buffer along either side of Montana Creek on all City and Borough of Juneau lands. They put together a report and began interacting with the city to hopefully get this corridor established in the updated comprehensive plan. TU asked Audubon for a letter of support and we did that. Several weeks ago Brad Elfers contacted me and said they were running into some last minute opposition and the assembly had taken the language out of the plan, and/or significantly reduced the corridor width. **From Brad Elfers:** "Our 500 foot recreation and conservation corridor was put back into the comp plan (by a vote of 7-2) and the comp plan was approved unanimously by the assembly. This applies to all CBJ lands along Montana Creek. This is one of the largest protection corridors along an urban Alaskan stream that I know of. Your personal help along with that of Audubon was invaluable. It is very satisfying that after a two year public process, the value that the community of Juneau places on Montana Creek has been recognized."

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Mark Schwan, president@juneau-audubon-society.org
Vice-President: Jeff Sauer, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org
Secretary: Patty Rose, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org
Treasurer: Brien Daugherty, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org
Programs: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org
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Web Master: George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. Send your request and email to : Membership: membership@juneau-audubon-society.org**

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National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; **\$15 (1-year student/senior rate)** _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

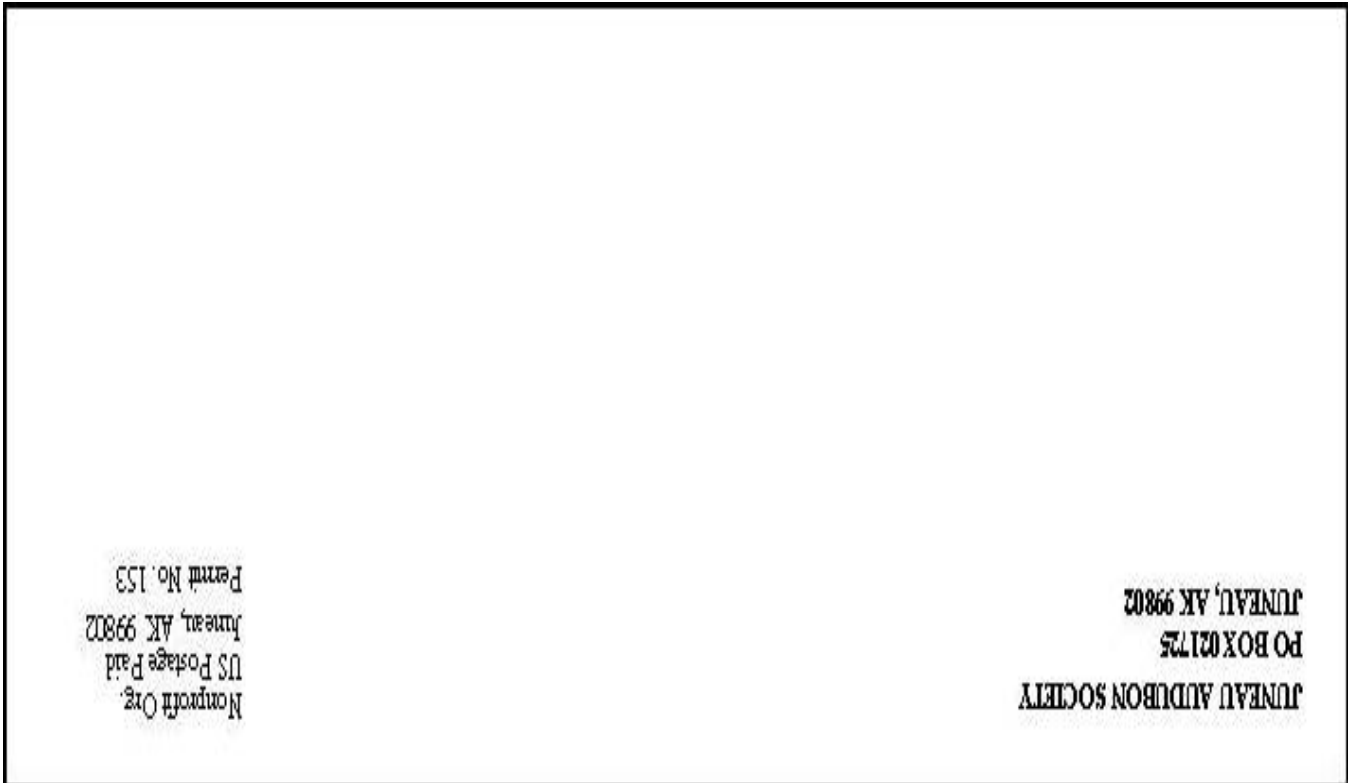
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Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me
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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 35, Number 4

Juneau Audubon Society

December 2008

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – December 11, 2008 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222

Capturing Experience for Avian Influenza Sampling in Greenland

Garrett Savory this past July went to Thule Air Base in northwestern Greenland for USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services. Our purpose was to determine if geese in the area had avian influenza. I will discuss how we captured the geese and my experience in



Greenland.

Also on the evening program will be a short presentation on the **Christmas Bird Count by Patty Rose and Paul Suchanek**. They will talk about techniques for counting and estimating birds and discuss identification of some of our local birds, especially in conditions that make getting good views of birds difficult. It should be fun and a nice orientation for people planning to go on the bird count.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN AUDUBON'S CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Holiday Tradition Yields Data Vital for Conservation

Bird watchers from Barrow, Alaska to Belize City, Belize will spend part of their holiday season far from shopping malls, looking for birds in the great outdoors. The longest running Citizen Science event in the world, Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will take place between December 14, 2008 and January 5, 2009. Information gathered will help scientists learn more about how birds are faring throughout North America, adding to over a century of data collected by previous generations of volunteers.

The Christmas Bird Count began over a century ago when the founder of *Audubon* magazine, Frank Chapman, changed the course of ornithological history. In 1900, Chapman led a small group on an alternative to the "side hunt," when teams competed to see who could shoot the most game. Instead, Chapman proposed they identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, founding what is now considered to be the world's most significant citizen-based conservation effort. During last year's count, nearly 70 million birds were counted in all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands.

"Everyone who takes part in the Christmas Birds Count plays a critical role in helping us focus attention and conservation where it is most needed," said Dr. Tom Bancroft, Chief Scientist for Audubon. "Their observations are the foundation for Audubon's State of the Birds Reports, like our Common Birds in Decline analysis, which attracted worldwide attention and concern when it revealed precipitous declines among many of our nation's most common and familiar birds."

Given habitat and wild areas disappearing at an alarming rate, and global warming affecting some ranges, scientists will rely on CBC data to identify birds in most urgent need of conservation action. The holiday bird count is also instrumental in developing Audubon's WatchList, which most recently identified species in the continental U.S. and 38 in Hawaii in dire need of conservation help. The counts also reveal good news, the return of the American bald eagle, for example.

"The Christmas Bird Count is all about the power of individual action – that's why our theme is 'I Count,'" says Geoff LeBaron, Audubon's Christmas Bird Count Director. "What we do truly counts when it comes to conservation. These birds are sending us a clear message that their fate is determined by human activity more than anything else. As we've seen with the bald eagle, when we help them through conservation, their chances improve. But when we damage their habitat, convert wetlands and forests, then they are more likely to become rare or extinct."

To explore the historical information and learn more about the locations of upcoming Christmas Bird Counts, visit the Society's website at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html. Anyone with an interest in birds and birding is encouraged to participate. New participants should contact compilers and sign up well in advance of count day. Below is a listing of the known counts, with contacts, taking place in Southeast Alaska this year.

Known Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska

Chilkat	December 14	Dan Egolf* Tim Shields	766-2876 766-2354
Haines	December 14	Dan Egolf Tim Shields	766-2876 766-2354
Juneau	December 20	Mark Schwan Gus van Vliet	789-9841
Ketchikan	December 20	Andrew Piston	247-6553
Mitkof Island	December 20	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Sitka	January 4	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 14	Elaine Furbish Dawn Adams	983-2049 983-3302
Tenakee Springs	Date not set yet**	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Wrangell	December 14	Bonnie Demerjian	874-3665

*Forms and information available at the Back Country Ski Shop

** Date dependent upon optimum tide schedule

The 2008 Juneau Christmas Bird Count

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on **Saturday, December 20**, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the **two McDonald's Restaurants no later than 8 a.m.** on count day, with appropriate attire and binoculars. People wanting to count in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas should meet at the downtown restaurant; birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the valley restaurant. As always, there will be a potluck after the count to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. Let's have a great turnout and a terrific count! For more information on this year's Count, you can call Mark Schwan, at 789-9841.

Alaska Audubon Creates Video on Teshekpuk Lake

You've read the news articles and action alerts. Northern Alaska National Petroleum Reserve: You've sent letters and emails to BLM and Congress. Now see this awesome, remote wetland for yourself: check out the online video at http://www.audubonalaska.org/IssuesAction_Teshekpukvideo.html

Our Adopted MoSI station

Last winter Juneau Audubon decided to sponsor a MoSI Station. MoSI (Monitoreo de Sobrevivencia Invernal - Monitoring Overwintering Survival) bird banding stations operates through a winter season. With our contribution of \$300, we supported a bird banding station in western Mexico near Culiacan called El Palmito. It is near the town of Loberas, Sinaloa in tropical and subtropical coniferous forest. We wanted to sponsor a station that would increase the information about the species that migrate to the Juneau area. When you sponsor a station you receive information including a list of species and the numbers of individual birds captured at the station. We first heard about this program in the Cornell University publication "Living Bird". You can read the article at http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Publications/LivingBird/Winter2007/monitoring_survival.html.

This is the fifth year of this program. It provides important insights into habitat needs of migratory birds during winter. The report we received included total number of species and birds banded for the years since 2003. For more information on this program check out their webpage: <http://birdpop.org/membership.htm>.

Calling All Alaska Bird Watchers

More eyes needed to tally state birds

Ithaca, NY-Bird watchers in Alaska are invited to **sign up now** for the 2008-09 season of **Project FeederWatch**. More participants are needed from the state to track the numbers and kinds of birds at feeders each week and then send the information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The information provided becomes part of the world's **largest database on feeder-bird populations**.

Project FeederWatch welcomes participants of all ages and skill levels. To learn more and to sign up, visit www.feederwatch.org or call (800) 843-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, a bird-identification poster, a calendar, instructions, and the FeederWatch annual report.

Bird Highlights, Reporting Results.
November Bird Observations in Juneau

By Mark Schwan

It was an excellent month to watch Short-eared Owls at the Wetlands, as many were seen early on, and one or two birds could sometimes be seen up to the end of the month. Unfortunately, one birder witnessed the apparent shooting of a Short-eared Owl on November 25 by airport personnel adjacent to the runway. We subsequently found out that the permit issued to the airport now gives them the authority to kill Short-eared Owls as well as Northern Harriers, and that the number of owls taken this year, and likely just this fall, is at least **fifteen**. Perhaps we will learn more as to why this has become a necessary part of the airport's bird deterrent program. On a more positive note, here are the highlights for the month.



Northern Hawk Owl By Pattv Rose

Although not rare in Juneau, two **Northern Goshawks**, one immature and one adult, frequenting the Wetlands from late the previous month through at least November 10, was a treat for many local birders (RG, many obs.). Very rare in Juneau, a **Northern Hawk Owl**, was found and photographed by Patty Rose on November 1 near the airport dike trail parking lot. The bird was seen later in the day by several other birders (GV,MM, RG,BA). A

Northern Flicker (yellow-shafted form) was seen on the Wetlands on November 13 (MA,GB,AS). Several birders and non-birders took notice of an immature **Townsend's Solitaire** along the Wetlands trail on November 9 and 10 (RG). An apparent **Eastern Yellow Wagtail** was seen on November 11 flying over the wetlands dike trail (RG,PR,MS). The identification was pieced together by the three birders collectively gathering enough characters to be comfortable with the identification. Rich Gordon was the only individual to have a good enough look at the bird to determine it was an adult, based on a good view of a pale but definite yellowish breast. Other birders have briefly relocated the bird, on November 23 (GV,MM) and November 24 (PS,DM). The flight call was heard on the 23rd, which was consistent for the species, but otherwise, confirmation has been difficult.

Very late and lingering single **Wilson's Warblers** were found at Auke Bay on November 15 (GV) and at the Wetlands on November 23 (GV,RG) and November 25 (PS). Most

exceptional was the **Tennessee Warbler** found downtown on November 15 (MA). This represents the latest and first fall record for this species in Juneau. A **Spotted Towhee** briefly visited Brenda Wright's feeder on November 11. This species is very rare in Alaska, and interestingly, the majority of records have come from Juneau. A **White-throated Sparrow** was located at a downtown residence on November 8, 10, and 27 (MA), and another bird that first appeared at a north Douglas Island feeder late last month remained loyal to the site through at least November 26 (PS).

Finally, recognition must be given to Gus van Vliet. Gus spotted an **American Three-toed Woodpecker** at his residence on November 11. This was the 200th species Gus has seen either in his yard or from his yard, i.e. his yard list. This is quite exceptional and represents 20 years of bird records from this location. This is without doubt the most extensive yard list for any Alaskan birder. It is quite an accomplishment.

Contributors: Bev Agler, BA; Mark Anderson, MA; Gwen Baluss, GB; Rich Gordon, RG; Molly MacCafferty, MM; Deanna MacPhail, DM; Patty Rose, PR; Mark Schwan, MS; Andy Smoker, AS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV; Brenda Wright, BW. Thanks to those that contributed.

Wrangell Bird Observations By Bonnie Demerjian

This summer's abundant mountain ash berry crop is continuing to attract and nourish birds in Wrangell. Both **Bohemian** and **Cedar** waxwings were reported feeding on the berries all month. So also were a flock of about 50 **European Starlings**.

A small number of **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** have turned up at feeders this month, as did an **Orange-crowned Warbler**. A **Wilson's Warbler** was reported early in November.

Black Turnstones were the only shorebird seen this month. A flock of around 1000 **Western Grebes** was reported. This group shows up each winter and we hope they turn up on the Christmas Bird Count. More **Bonaparte Gulls** than usual are staying around so far this winter.

A small flock of **Trumpeter Swans** has remained on Pat's Lake though a larger group has apparently moved on.

AUTUMN BIRDS IN KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

Many birds of interest have been seen in our area in spite of the typically stormy weather usual for this season. There were some very windy days but temperatures fell below freezing just a few times and the snow level made it to sea level only a couple times.

The first ever record of a **Cassin's Finch** was made a few hundred feet from my home south of town. Unfortunately I missed this rarity as I was vacationing and working on my

Hawaiian reef fish checklist...Darn! This species looks very similar to the Purple Finch, but the Cassin's Finch has a slightly longer conical bill and the raspberry-red coloring is brightest on the crown. These birds are usually found in the coniferous forest of western North America and breed as far north as the inland areas of southwestern Canada. A **Purple Finch** was also seen this past month in town.

There are still lots of sparrows and some feeders area wide have attracted up to 5 **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, several **White-crowned Sparrows** and a few **White-throated Sparrows** this month.

Quite a few **American Tree Sparrows** are here and many **Fox Sparrows** remain, including a 'red' Fox Sparrow. **Lincoln's Sparrows** and a **Chipping Sparrow** were found in the now bare branches of neighborhood shrubs.

A **Swamp Sparrow** has frequented a brushy area in Saxman where a old house was recently torn down. Sometimes urban renewal can be good as this created prime habitat for this species!

Many late warblers were seen here in November including **Orange-crowned Warblers** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. An almost latest record ever for a couple of **Wilson's Warblers** was made on the 16th of November.

A quick glimpse of an **Evening Grosbeak** was enjoyed briefly around mid-month.

A **Slaty-backed Gull** was seen along our waterfront; it's very dark colored back easy to spot amidst the paler gulls.

A **Boreal Owl** enjoyed a bit of fame as a photo of this elusive species was posted on SitNews. This is only the second Ketchikan record but this beautiful owl is surely more common in our forests than sightings indicate!

This year's Christmas Bird Count for the Ketchikan area will be held December 20th. For more information and to sign up please contact Andy Piston at 225-5195.

Good luck birding to all as we now settle into our winter months here in Alaska!

Skagway Christmas Bird Count

We are having our Xmas Bird Count on Sunday, **December 14th**. If you know of any Juneau-ites headed up this direction for that weekend that might want to participate, they can contact Elaine (snowshoes@aptalaska.net) or myself (dawna26@hotmail.com). There are a lot of Yuletide events that weekend that should be great fun as well.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS

To see the full permit go to: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNNew.htm> and then to **Public Notices on the left**

Petersburg

Activity: The placement of clean fill material in wetlands for the development of 24 housing driveways and house pads, for use as single-family homes, within the Tlingit/Haida Subdivision, Petersburg, Alaska.

Application Number: POA-2006-1546

Sitka

APPLICANT: Halibut Point Marina Services; POA-2005-1813

PROPOSED WORK: Reconstruct the boat lift area, reference sheet 6 of 9, "Travelift Dock Demo and Replacement Plans.

PROJECT MANAGER: John Klutz

Juneau

Applicant: Alaska Marine Lines

Activity: Applicant's stated purpose is "To change the existing configuration of a marine terminal cargo yard at the Juneau Rock Dump, to increase the volume, speed and efficiency of cargo handling and transfer."

Application No: POA-2006-1979-M2

PROPOSED WORK: Applicant proposes to discharge approximately 50,000 cubic yards of fill material into approximately 2.75 acres of waters and navigable waters of the U.S. The fill material, comprising sand, gravel and shot rock) would consist of approximately 10,000 cubic yards of material excavated on site (see Additional Information, below), plus approximately 40,000 cubic yards brought in from upland sources. All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plans (6 sheets), dated 10-29-08.

Project Manager: John C. Leeds, III - john.c.leeds@usace.army.mil

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Programs: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

Membership: Brenda Wright, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

Education: Beth Peluso, education@juneau-audubon-society.org

Conservation: Meg Cartwright, 364-2258 conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org

Field Trips:

Raven Editor: Mary Lou King, 789-7540, raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

Public Market: Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

Web Master: George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

New Board Members: Merrill Jensen and Mark Anderson

Merrill Jensen comes to the Juneau Audubon Society's Board with a lifelong passion for watching birds. He led his first birding field trip when he was in first grade. He took his fellow classmates out to the playground to observe the horned larks that frequented the weeds there. Originally from Wyoming, he has birded throughout the western U.S. (including Hawaii), northern Europe and Asia and continues to add to his life list. He is a professional Horticulturist and serves as the Arboretum Manager for the CBJ's Jensen-Olson Arboretum. This is his 4th public garden that he has had the privilege to work for. He is looking forward to being actively involved again with Audubon after a ten year absence.

Mark Anderson grew up in Juneau and graduated from J-D High School in 1970. I then did a lot of field work for ADF&G and got a B.S. in Fisheries Science from UAS. I also worked for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in the Administration and Water Quality Sections. I have worked for about 10 years as an Environmental Impact Analyst for the Alaska Dept. of Transportation and recently retired from the State. I am a local birdwatcher and now find that I am also interested in travel to see more exotic birding spots. Other interests of mine include skiing, fishing, family, guitar, and hiking (not necessarily in that order). I am excited to be a new board member of Juneau Audubon.

"Winter and the Nuthatch" by Mary Oliver, from Red Bird.

Once or twice and maybe again, who knows, the timid nuthatch will come to me if I stand still, with something good to eat in my hand.

The first time he did it he landed smack on his belly, as though the legs wouldn't cooperate.

The next time he was bolder. Then he became absolutely wild about those walnuts. But there was a morning I came late and, guess what, the nuthatch was flying into a stranger's hand.

To speak plainly, I felt betrayed.

I wanted to say: Mister, that nuthatch and I have a relationship.

It took hours of standing in the snow before he would drop from the tree and trust my fingers.

But I didn't say anything.

Nobody owns the sky or the trees.

Nobody owns the hearts of birds.

Still, being human and partial therefore to my own successes— though not resentful of others fashioning theirs—

I'll come tomorrow, I believe, quite early.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. Send your request by email to : Membership:, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org**

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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (1-year membership) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 35, Number 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2009

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – January 8, 2009 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222

GRAND CANYON ADVENTURE

Jeff Sauer, one of our chapter's past presidents and our current vice president, will present a program with images and stories from two recent rafting trips through the Grand Canyon. Jeff and Theresa Svancara were invited to join a group with a private permit on trips. This is one of those once-in-a-lifetime type experiences, but Jeff and Theresa have been fortunate enough to have now done it twice! Jeff will explain how private permits can now be obtained and how trips can be put together. It should be a terrific program.

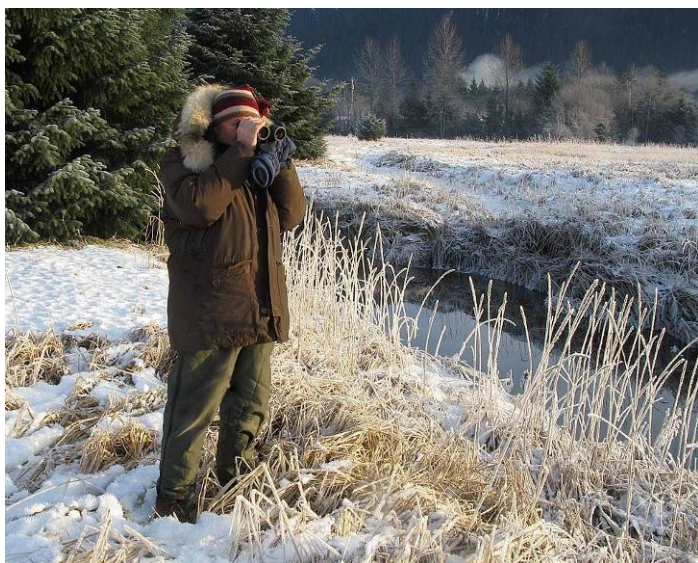


MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT MARK SCHWAN

I asked Mary Lou King, our long-time Raven editor, if I should write some type of “Happy New Year column from the president” for the January issue. She told me to make sure I just didn’t write one of those family Christmas letters or talk about the new birds I saw last year. I told her no worries there . . . but, not being one for profound reflection, what do I say to a general membership after the year we’ve just had; sometimes thinking globally gets so overwhelming that you begin to wonder how acting locally can make any difference, but you shake that feeling off and try in your own way to engage yourself in actions that have the potential to change local outcomes and beyond. Getting more active in the Juneau Audubon chapter is one of the ways I’ve tried to become more involved locally, and a way in which I hope others will do as well.

As we enter the new year, the JAS board is meeting on a regular basis to assure our core activities which we have become known for will continue, such as our monthly newsletter the Raven, monthly public meetings with interesting programs, weekly bird walks later this spring, the Berners Bay cruises in May, helping judge projects at the regional science fair, and more. We have helped fund the upcoming monograph on Ketchikan Birds by Steve Heintz and Andrew Piston and are providing funding to support a bird banding station in Mexico. We just held our Christmas bird count, which has been done every year in Juneau now for more than 32 years. We continue to monitor conservation issues that are of concern and provide comments to the appropriate authorities to help shape the decisions on actions that have the potential to degrade our natural resources. Our vice president is an active member of the SEACC board of directors.

If you are reading this newsletter you are most likely a member of Juneau Audubon and we appreciate your support. If you aren’t a member, please consider joining. Beyond your financial support through your membership dues, consider becoming more active. We are always in need of new energies, ideas, and just plain people power to help our chapter work in the community to carry out our mission and help, in our own small way, to maintain the natural values of our area and help people appreciate more what we have all around us. We really are blessed to live in such a beautiful part of the world. I’ll leave it at that. I sincerely hope that 2009 is a wonderful year for everyone out there, and I wish you the best of health and happiness in the year ahead.



Oh, and good birding too!

Juneau CBC Results, 12/20/2008

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>		
Canada Goose	679	Unidentified Gulls	408
Gadwall	45	Common Murre	6
Eurasian Wigeon	1	Pigeon Guillemot	2
American Wigeon	357	Marbled Murrelet	58
Mallard	2,869	Rock Pigeon	62
Northern Pintail	1	Northern Pygmy-Owl	cw
Green-winged Teal	37	Anna's Hummingbird	1
Canvasback	1	Belted Kingfisher	6
Greater Scaup	61	Downy Woodpecker	2
Lesser Scaup	cw	Hairy Woodpecker	3
Unidentified Scaup	11	American Three-toed Woodpecker	1
Harlequin Duck	87	Northern Flicker	1
Surf Scoter	1,352	Northern Shrike	4
White-winged Scoter	31	Steller's Jay	37
Black Scoter	2	Black-billed Magpie	51
Unidentified Scoters	29	Northwestern Crow	591
Long-tailed Duck	41	Common Raven	455
Bufflehead	120	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	114
Common Goldeneye	159	Red-breasted Nuthatch	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	149	Brown Creeper	2
Common X Barrow's hybrid	1	Winter Wren	6
Unidentified Goldeneyes	14	American Dipper	11
Hooded Merganser	4	Golden-crowned Kinglet	22
Common Merganser	19	Hermit Thrush	cw
Red-breasted Merganser	79	American Robin	2
Unidentified Mergansers	1	Varied Thrush	1
Red-throated Loon	1	European Starling	1
Pacific Loon	11	Bohemian Waxwing	cw
Common Loon	13	American Tree Sparrow	2
Unidentified Loons	5	Fox Sparrow	cw
Horned Grebe	31	Song Sparrow	18
Red-necked Grebe	5	Lincoln's Sparrow	2
Pelagic Cormorant	11	White-throated Sparrow	1
Unidentified Cormorants	1	White-crowned Sparrow	cw
Great Blue Heron	7	Golden-crowned Sparrow	3
Bald Eagle	185	Unidentified Sparrows	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	cw	Dark-eyed Junco	278
Northern Goshawk	1	Red Crossbill	9
Killdeer	3	White-winged Crossbill	95
Dunlin	8	Unidentified Crossbills	55
Unidentified Sandpipers	1	Common Redpoll	1
Wilson's Snipe	5	Pine Siskin	317
Mew Gull	32	TOTAL SPECIES; count day	70
Herring Gull	4	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	9,795
Thayer's Gull	2	7 cw species	
Glaucous-winged Gull	689		

Juneau's Christmas Bird Count Overview -- Prepared by Mark Schwan

Given the protracted cold spell leading up to our count and temperatures ranging anywhere from zero to 15 above on the day of the count, trying to get the count in as early as we could during count period made no difference in capturing protracted fall conditions and hopefully more lingering birds. It was winter, even if we were slightly ahead of the solstice. Nevertheless, our overall species total and individual bird count total were about average and therefore pretty respectable given the conditions handed to us.

Forty-one birders, a good turnout, participated, along with several feeder watchers, and we had a crowd and a fun evening at the potluck/bird tally at the end of the day. We found 70 species of birds during the day and counted slightly less than 10,000 birds (see table for specifics). Several common species were relatively scarce, such as Common Merganser, White-winged Scoter, and Mew Gull, and we were way below average for Glaucous-winged Gull. We had a new low count for Barrow's Goldeneye. Our only new record high count was for Gadwall. There were no shocker species found on count day, and no species new to our cumulative CBC list, however, there were a few unusual species present, such as Canvasback, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Flicker, Lincoln's Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow. Moreover, a Barrow's X Common Goldeneye hybrid was located on count day. This bird was first seen in our area last year, and had been found again earlier this fall. Although through the fall we had an almost unprecedented number of lingering warblers, they were long gone from Juneau for our count.

Juneau birders found an additional seven species during the official count week but which were not seen on our count day. These species are identified in the table with a "cw" in the count column. Thanks to all the volunteers for donating their day to the count effort and to those who birded during the count week. Finally, thanks to everyone for contributing all the great food for the potluck.

December Birds in Sitka by Matt Goff

There have been some late sightings of summer birds this December. On the first a **Hermit Thrush**, **Orange-crowned Warbler**, and **Yellow-rumped Warbler** seemed to be hanging together loosely. Another Hermit Thrush was spotted on the 26th. An unusual abundance of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** appeared this fall, and their distinctive calls can still be heard around town as winter sets in. Generally considered Rare in winter, **Fox Sparrows** seem to be present in higher numbers than is typical for this time of year. An all time high count of 7 **American Coots** was present on Swan Lake through late November and into December, but they have now left with the freezing of the lake. Cold weather also brought down the **Red-breasted Sapsuckers**, and several have been seen since the middle of the month. **Hairy Woodpeckers** have also been seen at Totem Park and up Indian River Valley. On the water, a juvenile **Yellow-billed Loon** has frequenting the channel, with several people reporting it during the month.

The Sitka CBC will be held on Sunday, 4 January this year, with a pre-count meeting at the Raptor Center on Friday, 2 January.

KETCHIKAN'S CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS-by Teri Goucher

December 20th was a beautiful clear sunny day here with the temperature ranging from about 18 to 24 degrees. The 24 participants of this years CBC were all somewhat acclimatized as our weather was clear and well below freezing for the previous two weeks! This weather provided us with a bit longer observing conditions and a mid-day low tide contributed to an excellent birding day!

Ketchikan birders had a grand total and new record of 75 species on count day and 79 species were found during the count week. Nearly 5300 individual birds were observed which about our average for the past ten years.

The count week species included were **Pigeon Guillemot, American Coot, Red Crossbill, and Purple Finch!**

Our numbers were low this year for loons, grebes and **Double-crested Cormorants** however.

The usual good numbers of waterfowl was enjoyed with many bay ducks around and lots of **Canada Geese** and **Mallards**. We also had **Green-winged Teal, Gadwall** and the most ever **American Wigeon**. An all time high record of twelve **Trumpeter Swans** were seen on nearby Gravina island.

There were 6 **Killdeer** discovered and a new high count for **Rock Sandpipers** and **Black Turnstones** was made. Seems to be alot of **Wilson's Snipe** around as well as I saw one today in a snowy ditch.

Nine species of sparrows are in our area with new high count numbers for **Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Golden-crowned Sparrow!** There were also **White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow** and even a **Swamp Sparrow** observed. Ketchikan recorded the first ever '**Red**' **Fox Sparrow** this year as well.

The cold weather definitely forced some species to lower elevations and we did have more than usual woodpeckers spotted. Several **Downy Woodpeckers** and **Hairy Woodpeckers** were found along with the **Northern Flickers** usually observed. Some years it's a struggle to tally even a single sapsucker for the entire count week, but this year there were 15 **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** found, doubling our previous record!

The quiet frozen forest was also haven to a record number of **Brown Creepers** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** seemed to be everywhere and even **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** made our list!

A very rare winter appearance by a **Merlin** was enjoyed by one group and that was only the second sighting of that species on count day ever in our area!

We had a final total of 469 **Dark-eyed Juncos** including 10 Slate-colored form...exactly the same numbers as last year's results. That's surely a funny fluke although area birders are consistent and dedicated to our favorite hobby.

Autumn ended on our count day and Winter has come on strong throughout most of Southeast Alaska and even here in Ketchikan we have about 2 feet of snow at sea level now and probably will until we ring in the new year, so make sure to keep your feeders full!!!!

Dear Great Backyard Bird Count Participant:

Save the Dates: GBBC is Coming!

The next [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) takes place **February 13-16, 2009**. The [National Audubon Society](#) and the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) are calling on everyone to “Count for Fun, Count for the Future!” Participants did just that in record numbers for the 2008 count, submitting more than 85,000 checklists and identifying 635 species. **Let’s break some more records this year!**

GBBC Ambassadors Needed

As always, we rely on volunteer ambassadors to help spread the word about the GBBC and engage more people in their communities. Your contribution could be as simple as hanging up a few flyers or as ambitious as pitching the event on local radio and TV stations. You can use the new [GBBC news release](#) posted on the web site. You’ll also find an updated version of the [slide show](#) for use in GBBC workshops and other events.

For more ideas on how to promote the GBBC, check out [Get Involved](#) on the GBBC website. You can fill out the online ambassador sign-up form and specify the kinds of activities you’d like to do.

Project FeederWatch Season Begins

The 2008-09 season of [Project FeederWatch](#) began **this Saturday, November 8**. You can sign up at any time. FeederWatchers keep track of their birds through the winter and report their tallies each week.

Watching birds benefits science, but it can also be a healthy part of your routine. Hundreds of studies have verified that time spent watching nature can reduce stress. So why not slow down and watch the birds?

Visit the [PFW web site](#) to learn more and to sign up. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird-identification poster, calendar, and instruction booklet. There is a \$15 fee (\$12 for Lab members.) If you live in Canada, please visit our partner, [Bird Studies Canada](#), or call (888) 448-2473.

Take the Healthy Yard Pledge!

While you’re getting ready to feed and count birds this winter, make sure you’re maintaining healthy bird habitat in your yard by taking the Audubon [Healthy Yard Pledge](#).

The Healthy Yard Pledge is part of [Audubon At Home](#), which focuses on managing backyards and other natural areas to help birds and other wildlife. Visit the website to learn about 16 key elements that make up a healthy backyard habitat—how many can be found in your yard?

To learn more about the Audubon at Home program and take the Healthy Yard Pledge, visit <http://audubonathome.org/pledge>.

Thank you for all you do to help the birds!

Janis Dickinson, Director of Citizen Science, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Rob Fergus, Senior Scientist, National Audubon Society

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

To see volunteer opportunities with the U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE IN ALASKA, go to <http://alaska.fws.gov/volunteer/needs.htm>. For additional information contact: Kevin Painter FWS Volunteer Coordinator, at (907) 786-3389, Fax (907) 786-3976, or email kevinPainter@fws.gov.

For other DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, go to <http://www.volunteer.gov/gov/resultsZ.cfm?states=AK>.

To see volunteer opportunities with the DIVISION of PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION, go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/vip/vvi.htm>.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS

To see the full permit go to: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNNew.htm> and then to Public Notices on the left

Juneau

Auke Lake POA-2006-181 M1

Applicant: City and Borough of Juneau

Location: Wayside just south of Fritz Cove Road

Purpose: Construct a boat launch ramp facility with staging, maneuvering and parking space.

Proposed Work: 1230 cubic yards shot rock and rip rap, concrete ramp planks.

For more information: View the full application on the web site above or call Dick Somerville 586-2093

Haines

Letnikof Cove POA-2008-1553

Applicant: Haines Borough

Purpose: Construct seasonal timber boarding float to improve access and public safety

Proposed Work: Install five 12" in diameter steel piles and 18 concrete planks with pressure treated timber for 8' x 231' boarding float.

Additional Information: View the full application on the web site above or call Dick Somerville 907-586-2093

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me
A51 7XCH

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*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**

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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 35, Number 6

Juneau Audubon Society

February 2009

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – February 12, 2009 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222

The Tools of the Trade Presented by Mark Schwan and Jeff Sauer
Have you been thinking about buying a binocular or spotting scope but are confused as to what to buy? Do you know how an 8x32 binocular differs from a 10x40 binocular? What should you look for in a binocular or scope if you wear eye glasses? Why is the diopter adjustment an important feature? Come to this month's meeting and learn how to demystify what the technical specifications really mean and talk one-on-one with local birders who will show you their equipment and share their knowledge with you.



SAVE A TREE!

Hello Audubon newsletter reader.

Please consider getting the newsletter by e-mail. You get to see the color photos

And we don't have to use as much paper.

It's simple: Send your e-mail address to membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

Tongass Science Conference

Taldi Walter, Communications & Education Specialist, Audubon Alaska

I'm writing to invite the Juneau Audubon Society to our upcoming Tongass Science Conference. The public events include two evening lectures and an all day Science Symposium. **All events at Centennial Hall, Juneau**

February 17, 7:30 pm

Culture and Place: A Native Perspective on the Tongass Forest

Byron Mallott

February 18, 7:30 pm

Climate Change & Potential Impacts to Coastal Rainforests

Terry Chapin

February 19, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

Public Science Symposium

Topics include: Island Biogeography, Watershed Conservation, and Tongass Market Economy

8:30 am: *Conservation & Management of Old Growth Forests*

Jerry Franklin

Please see full agenda at: www.AudubonAlaska

12th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 13 – 16, 2009

The twelfth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is fast approaching—February 13 is less than a month away! Plan to join tens of thousands of other bird watchers across North America as we tally the birds over these four days. Count on your own or with family, friends, and neighbors to make this the biggest, best GBBC ever!

If you know someone who might be interested in joining the GBBC for the first time, please pass along our website: www.birdcount.org!

New and Updated Features

* Think you've got "Eagle Eyes"? As you countdown to GBBC weekend, test your bird watching skills through our interactive game. [Click here](#) to play this year's Eagle Eyes. Be sure to forward the link to a friend!

* Great prizes! Everyone who submits a bird checklist during the GBBC is automatically entered in our drawing for bird-related items donated by Wild Birds Unlimited, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Droll Yankees. Visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/2009prizes> to see the selection.

* GBBC events are taking place around the continent. Discover what's going on in your area on the GBBC website's Local Events page: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/events>. If you're hosting an event, email Pat Leonard at pel27@cornell.edu and we will post information.

Why Your Participation Matters We have the opportunity to gather real data from people like you to help us understand where the birds are and how their populations are changing over time. Last year, participants counted over nine million birds and reported 12 species never before reported during the GBBC! Let's see how many we can count this year, and find out together how bird populations may be changing.

If you have any questions, please contact us at citizenscience@audubon.org or cornellbirds@cornell.edu. Remember, count for fun, count for the future! We can't wait to see what you discover this year.

CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD

Congratulations to STAN SENNER and JOHN SCHOEN, Alaska Audubon, for being awarded the prestigious CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD from the Wilberforce Foundation. Award winners are selected from among the thousands of people working on environmental protection from New Mexico to Alaska and Canada and recognizes outstanding dedication and extraordinary efforts.

BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGION

By Steve Heinl and Andy Piston

A summary of the fall 2008 birding highlights from the southeast Alaska region, with many wonderful bird photos, can be found on the Juneau Audubon Web Site: <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/Birds/Reports/2008%20Fall%20-%20SE%20Alaska%20NAB%20Summary1.pdf>.

The fall period covered August through November. This report is intended to provide interesting observations for inclusion in an Alaska-wide column written by Thede Tobish for the journal North American Birds. We have also sent Thede all of the notes and photographs that we received as well. Although not everything that people reported made it into this summary, we encourage you to submit information for any species that you feel like reporting, not just unusual species, because this will help us determine if any interesting patterns occurred, or might bring out information that we were not familiar with: Heinl, Steve (DFG) [steve.heinl@alaska.gov]. If you don't already subscribe to North American Birds, here is a link to see more information: <http://www.americanbirding.org/pubs/nab/index.html>. The seasonal reports cover all of North America and give excellent overviews of unusual numbers of particular species (high or low), early or late dates

January Birding Notes for Juneau By Mark Schwan

It was a pretty quiet month for rare bird reports, and for those that ventured forth and braved the elements, results indicated that a majority of the rare land birds that were seen, were actually at the residences of birders, hanging in at established bird feeders. Birding away from the water and into the woods was reported to be eerily quiet. Here is a brief summary.

Waterfowl highlights included a **Eurasian Wigeon** at Fish Creek on January 21 (PS) and a **Northern Pintail** adjacent to the trailer park on North Douglas on January 25 (PR). The **hybrid goldeneye** was seen along North Douglas shorelines several times during the month (PS). There was a **Hooded Merganser** downtown near the yacht club on January 24 (PR). Lone **Killdeers** were seen on January 1, 20, and 24, all at the airport dike trail (RG, PR). Also found along the airport trail was a **Wilson's Snipe** on New Year's Day (PR). Raptor reports to note were three sightings of lone **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, one on January 3 and January 24 near a feeder on Douglas Island (PR) and the other also zeroing in on siskins near a feeder at Auke Bay on January 29 (MS). A **Merlin** was seen chasing crossbills near the North Douglas boat launch on January 10 (PS).

The remaining birds herein were all sparrows visiting feeders. These included an **American Tree Sparrow** near the airport on January 1 (PR), a **Lincoln Sparrow**, very rare in Juneau during the winter months, present the entire month at Fritz Cove (GV); a **White-throated Sparrow** remained loyal to its North Douglas feeding station all month (PS), and four **Golden-crowned Sparrows** and a single **White-crowned Sparrow** were seen at a feeder near the airport on January 24 (PR).

Post Script: Although Northern Shrikes are not considered rare in Juneau during the winter, they are uncommon and always a treat to see. Rich Gordon saw an adult bird along the dike trail on January 20, and says it is his only shrike sighting here during January. On January 22, an immature looking shrike (see photograph) was frequenting one of the "dredge" islands along Gastineau Channel (MS). What was interesting was that this bird was almost continuously singing, moving from perch to perch along the perimeter of the spruce at the center of the island, but then disappearing into the woods, only to continue singing from a concealed location. This lasted for perhaps fifteen



minutes and was continuing when the observer left the scene. Research on the internet subsequently found that the winter singing of shrikes has intrigued ornithologists and birders for some time, and recent studies support a very old notion that shrikes sing during the winter to attract songbirds on which they can prey. This is fascinating; they may truly be singing for their supper.

Contributors: Rich Gordon (RG), Patty Rose (PR), Mark Schwan (MS), Paul Suchanek (PS), Gus van Vliet (GV).

SKAGWAY REPORT By Elaine Furbish

The Skagway Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 14, 2008. We had 28 participants doing 13 routes and watching 4 feeders. 38 species of birds were seen on count day, with an additional 5 species seen during count week.

December 14 was a clear but very windy day. No large flocks of waxwings, crossbills, redpolls or siskins were seen this year. Some Skagway birders noted that the mountain ash berries were not as abundant this year, and that crows had consumed most of them prior to our count date. This is in stark contrast to last year, when the mountain ash berries were very abundant on count day, and we had the unusually high count of waxwings. New for our circle this year: **Red-necked Grebe, Common Murre, Ptarmigan-sp., and Northern Shrike**. The **Common Murres** are not typically seen in our area, although we are not far from areas where they are common.

JANUARY REPORT FROM KETCHIKAN-By Teri Goucher

It's been quite a winter so far all over Southeast Alaska with lots of snow storms leaving a blanket of white almost constantly since 2009 began! This makes driving to birding spots more challenging but I was well rewarded when I saw 6 **Trumpeter Swans** and a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** at very close range at Ward Lake!

Ketchikan did have an exciting addition to our 2008 Christmas Bird Count results. A **Fork-tailed Storm-petrel** was seen on count day in Nichols Passage just south of town! These birds normally live well offshore but are observed here nearly every fall, usually after a storm which brings them closer to town. This species is very rarely seen here during winter. **This sighting increases our total to 76 species on count day!**

I have just recently learned of another interesting bird brought in by autumn storms last October. A **Northern Fulmar** was seen in Clarence Straight, which is only the second record of this species in our area!

Seems to be a good number of sparrows lingering through our snowy winter including a **White-throated Sparrow**, a few **American Tree Sparrows** and two **House Sparrows** were seen in town recently! The brighter rusty '**Red' Fox Sparrow** has been seen locally numerous times the past two years, perhaps becoming a more common sight around our coastal areas as it possibly expands it's range. There were a couple of **Purple Finches** seen at a feeder north of town about mid-month. A few flocks of **Bohemian Waxwings** and **Pine Siskins** are around and the occasional **Sharp-shinned Hawk** is spotted locally! Two **Northern Shrikes** were discovered toward the end of January. I find the scientific name of this species interesting as it means something like the "sentinel butcher that impales it's prey". One of my favorite birding books is the Dictionary of American Bird Names by Earnest Choate. Do check it out sometime for fascinating reading!

I want to thank both Steve Heinl and Andy Piston for the majority of local birding information that I then share with the Raven readers! We are so lucky to have these passionate birders who continually add very important data to the state bird records and who consistently discover some of the more interesting birds in the Ketchikan area! Good luck birding to everyone, as we all, and the birds, must endure another six weeks or so of winter!

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

Haines Christmas Bird counters focused on two areas again this year—one in the main part of Haines, and another in the area of the Bald Eagle preserve. Naturally, the Bald Eagle Preserve would have a higher concentration of eagles. The count was conducted early this year, December 14. Some unusual species seen during count week in Haines were **American Robin** and **Bohemian Waxwing**.

The Haines count results from least to most were the following: **Winter Wren, Northern Shrike, Red-breasted Sapsucker** at 1 each; **Common and Pacific Loon, Sharp-shinned Hawk** at 2; **Black Scoter** 3; **Bonaparte's Gull** 6; **White-winged Crossbill** 7; **Horned Grebe, Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and **American Dipper** at 8; **Black-capped Chickadee** 9; **Surf Scoter** 12; **Red-breasted Merganser** 14; **Pine Siskin** 20; **Steller's Jay** 21; **Marbled Murrelet** 25; **Bald Eagles** adult 34, immature 4; **Common Merganser** 37; **Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)** 39; chickadee species 42; **Thayer's Gull** 44; **Golden-crowned Kinglet** 45; **Pine Grosbeak** 64; **Dark-eyed Junco (Slate Gray)** 71; **Northwestern Crow** 85; **Common Raven** 86; **Glaucous-winged Gull** 89; **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** 99; **Herring Gull** 99; **Black-billed Magpie** 104; **Common Goldeneye** 149; **Bufflehead** 152; gull species 156; **Mallard** 164; **Mew Gull** 204; and **Barrow's Goldeneye** 391.

The results from Chilkat (Bald Eagle Preserve) area were: **Bufflehead, Northern Hawk-owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Dipper** at 1 each; **Common Goldeneye, Mew Gull, Great Horned Owl**, and **Belted Kingfisher** 2; **Glaucous-winged Gull** 3; **Common Merganser, Steller's Jay**, duck species 4; **Common Raven** 9; **Black-billed Magpie** 16, **Trumpeter Swan** 23; **Chesnut-backed Chickadee** 27, **White-winged Crossbill** 35; **adult Bald Eagle** 247, **immature Bald Eagle** 23.

As of January 24, only the local hearty bald eagles remained as Haines encountered wind chills of 30 below for about 10 days in January. About 10 **Trumpeter Swan** were spotted on the Chilkat River the same day.

INFORMATION FROM WHAT'S UP

January 30 (Extended to March 2) Deadline for comments on the Draft Project Scoring Criteria & Project Nomination Request for the **2010-2013 STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (STIP)**. View the criteria and submit project nominations at http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdping/cip_stip/stip10_13.shtml or email them to DOTSTIP@dot.state.ak.us. Nominations are due by February 20.

February 13 Deadline for applications for the **ALASKA COASTWALK MARINE DEBRIS REMOVAL and PREVENTION CHALLENGE GRANTS** for the purpose of organizing a CoastWalk beach clean-up event, implementing a clean-up of an existing accumulation of marine debris in coastal Alaska, or developing and implementing a marine debris prevention program. Eligible applicants would include: non-profit organizations, municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, tribal governments, schools, and other types of community organizations that can demonstrate fiscal responsibility for administering grant funds. Applicants may apply up to \$2,000 with a \$1 non-federal:\$2 federal match requirement (e.g. \$1000 match is needed for a \$2,000 grant). Match can be non-federal grants, cash, or in-kind services (volunteer time is valued at \$18/hr). Applications can be downloaded from www.akcoastalstudies.org. For more information and application contact: Katie Villano, Center for Alaska Coastal Studies PO Box 2225, Homer, AK 99603, Phone: (907) 235-6667 or email katie@akcoastalstudies.org.

****February 9**

Deadline to apply for **ALASKA YOUTH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION's CIVICS & CONSERVATION SUMMIT**. Calling all Alaska Teens! Do you care about the environment? Want to be a leader in your community? Come to AYEAs Civics Summit and Take Action on issues that you care about! During the training, 25 teens from all over Alaska will come together in Juneau to learn how to impact decisions affecting our communities and environment. It's a high-impact, fun, inspiring training that has been called a "life-changing experience" by past participants. Teens from anywhere in Alaska are welcome to apply. Experience in politics and environmental issues not necessary. **Summit dates: March 15-19**. For more information, contact Maeve Taylor at (907) 339-3907 or email taylorm@nwf.org or go to www.ayea.org.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS

To see the full permit go to: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNnew.htm>

Juneau

Gastineau Channel POA-1985-59-M3 – Channel Drive -- Douglas Island Pink and Chum

Purpose: To make new usable land

Proposed Work: Discharge approximately 29,000 cubic yards of fill into Gastineau Channel in .52 acres of tidal waters

For more information: John C. Leeds, III 790-4490

Gastineau Channel – Channel Drive -- Channel Construction

Purpose: A stable surface for industrial port operations

Proposed Work: Discharge approximately 29,000 cubic yards of fill in .5 acres of tidal waters in Gastineau Channel

For more information: John C. Leeds, III 790-4490

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Name _____
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City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 35, Number 7

Juneau Audubon Society

March 2009

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – March 12, 2009 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222

The Jensen-Olson Arboretum Caroline Jensen's gift to the people of Juneau

Merrill Jensen, an avid birder and one of our Chapter's current Board members will present this month's program on the Jensen-Olson Arboretum - Juneau's botanical gem. Merrill is a horticulturist and the manager of the Arboretum (no relation to Caroline). He will share photos, stories and history of the property since it was homesteaded by the Peterson family in 1902. He earned his degree in Ornamental Horticulture from Washington State University and has worked at public botanical gardens in Idaho, Oregon and California prior to moving to Juneau.



SAVE A TREE!

Hello Audubon newsletter reader. Please switch to newsletter by e-mail. You get to see the color photos And we don't have to use as much paper. It's simple: Send your e-mail address to membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

February 2009 Juneau Bird Report By Mark Schwan

There were few reports during the month, but here is a brief summary of the more interesting local bird sightings. There was a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** found near the airport dike on February 17 (LFC). Very interesting were the seven **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels** seen from the ferry near Point Couverden on February 17 (PS). Our only **Northern Goshawk** report was from the outlet of Mendenhall Lake on February 27 (RG). Very rare anywhere in Alaska during winter, a **Red-tailed Hawk** at Auke Bay on February 22 was an exciting find (GV). A **Peregrine Falcon** was seen at False Outer Point on February 19 (PS). A lone **Killdeer** was on the wetlands on February 20 (MS). Although not listed as rare on our local winter list, **Three-toed Woodpeckers** are hard to locate, so one found near 19 Mile Glacier Hwy, was worth reporting (BW). Passerines of note included a single **American Tree Sparrow** at a Mendenhall Valley feeder during the first three weeks of the month (MW), a reddish-form **Fox Sparrow** at the same feeder during the first week of the month (MW), and the continued stay by the **White-throated Sparrow** at Paul Suchanek's north Douglas feeder. A **Golden-crowned Sparrow** visited a feeder through most of month at mile 24 Glacier Hwy (MJ), and a **Hoary Redpoll** was seen on and off through the month at Paul Suchanek's feeder.

Contributors: Laurie Fergeson Craig (LFC); Rich Gordon (RG); Merrill Jensen (MJ); Mark Schwan (MS); Paul Suchanek (PS); Gus van Vliet (GV); Mary Willson (MW); Brenda Wright (BW).

Given the brevity of this month's report, here is a quiz for you to ponder. Can you come up with the current names of the 15 species of birds listed below by obsolete names? All are found in Southeast Alaska except for one Old World vagrant that occurs very rarely in the southwestern part of the state. Have fun.. Answers will be in next month's newsletter.

1) Bartramian tattler; 2) black warrier; 3) black hagdon; 4) brownback; 5) bullhead; 6) cobhead; 7) hell-diver; 8) horn-billed puffin; 9) Kamchatka nightingale; 10) marlin; 11) purre; 12) specklebelly; 13) tell-tale; 14) violet-green Cormorant; and 15) whale bird.

Sunny Point Bird Feeder Report

By Mary Lou King

On February 26, my first of the winter sighting of one **Hoary Redpoll** with the usual 40 or so **Pine Siskin**, 6 **Chestnut Backed Chickadees**, 1 **Song Sparrow**, 8 **Dark-eyed Juncos**. Three **Steller's Jays** came by a couple of days ago for the first time since early last fall. And there was one **Robin** on the upper Auke Bay Beach on February 26.



From Eaglechat: *Winter bird report*

Posted by: "Steve Heinel" scraigheinel@yahoo.com [scraigheinel](#)
Fri Feb 27, 2009 5:42 pm (PST)

It is time to summarize all the interesting winter bird sightings for winter 2008-2009 for the North American Birds report. I've noticed that it has been pretty quiet on Eaglechat this winter, but I know there were some interesting sightings out there. We would appreciate any bird sightings or bird reports that people would care to share - observations made during this past December, January, and February. You can email me directly.

Thank you very much.

We haven't seen an official spring migrant in Ketchikan yet, but the first robins will probably show up within the next week, followed by Fox Sparrows and Varied Thrushes, then hummingbirds and yellowlegs, waterfowl and gulls, then golden-crowned and savannah sparrows, then some warblers, then major movements of shorebirds and waterfowl and songbirds, and.....I sure wish spring was here.



Steve Heinel (scraigheinel@yahoo.com)

signs of spring?

Posted by: "Gwen Baluss" gwenbaluss@yahoo.com [gwenbaluss](#)
Sat Feb 28, 2009 6:31 pm (PST)

A golden-crowned kinglet singing in the sunshine in our yard in the valley, and crows acting possessive at a nesting area near Auke Rec Campground.



**Mark Schwan's Marbled Murrelet in
Auke Bay**

FEBRUARY BIRDS IN KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

Wow...what a winter! Here in Ketchikan we have enjoyed lots of invigorating chilly clear sunny days all February! This type of weather is great to combat the winter blues that may affect some, but local bird numbers and sightings were diminished somewhat.

The largest harbor in town was host to a couple **American Coots** for quite a while along with a **Brandt's Cormorant**. A female **Purple Finch** was seen mid-month in a hillside neighborhood. Quite a few sparrows remain, such as a **White-throated Sparrow** that continued to visit it's favorite garden throughout this winter. A **Harris's Sparrow** was seen several times, and this largest sparrow species has been recorded here frequently the past few years. A small group of two male and two female **House Sparrows** are still around indicating this species may become established here as it has done in many urban areas. Another **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was found at a feeder about 15 miles north of town and this species too is rapidly expanding it's range in North America.

While birding the Herring Bay area a melodious song pierced the sunny sub-freezing morning turning my thoughts to Spring. It was a pair of **American Dippers** commonly heard singing in winter as they mark their territory. Most folks in S.E. Alaska are familiar these amazing birds that thrive along streams year round. Their thick layer of feathers waterproofed by special oil glands, low metabolic rate, and blood that is capable of carrying extra oxygen allows our only aquatic songbird to be uniquely adapted. We are lucky to enjoy one of the five species of dippers found worldwide, most of which spend their entire lives along a single water drainage area. In late summer these birds are flightless as they molt all their wing and tail feathers at once. The Eskimo name is anaruk kiviruk, which means, "old woman sunk". Watching these active birds is always very interesting and entertaining! Hearing these birds singing in winter is a nice reminder that Spring really is on the way!

Haines Report by Georgia Giacobbe

Haines residents participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count with the following results as of February 28. Eleven lists were submitted with a total of 24 different species.

Trumpeter Swan	3	Glaucous-winged Gull	9
Mallard	24	Marbled Murrelet	4
Black Scoter	7	Northern Hawk Owl	1
Long-tailed Duck	6	Steller's Jay	13
Bufflehead	26	Black-billed Magpie	21
Common Goldeneye	3	Common Raven	52
Barrow's Goldeneye	44	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	9
Common Merganser	5	American Dipper	3
Red-breasted Merganser	41	Bohemian Waxwing	1
Pacific Loon	1	Red Crossbill	3
Bald Eagle	32	Hoary Redpoll	1
Herring Gull	8	Pine Siskin	13

Total 330

CORPS OF ENGINEERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS

To see the full permit go to: [tp://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNnew.htm](http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNnew.htm)

Juneau

Corps Permits: Applicant: JEREMY SIDNEY

Activity: Applicant's stated purpose is "is to construct a 24-stall horse stable, an indoor riding arena, an outdoor riding arena to Olympic standards, 50 foot workout round pens, a riding area, and a parking lot."

Proposed Work: 20,454 cubic yards of fill on approximately 3.11 acres of waters, including wetlands

Waterway: Mendenhall River 46

Application No: POA-1995-41-M3

Nearest Community: Juneau, Alaska

Public Notice Posted for: March 2, 2009 Public Notice Comment Period

Expires on: April 2, 2009



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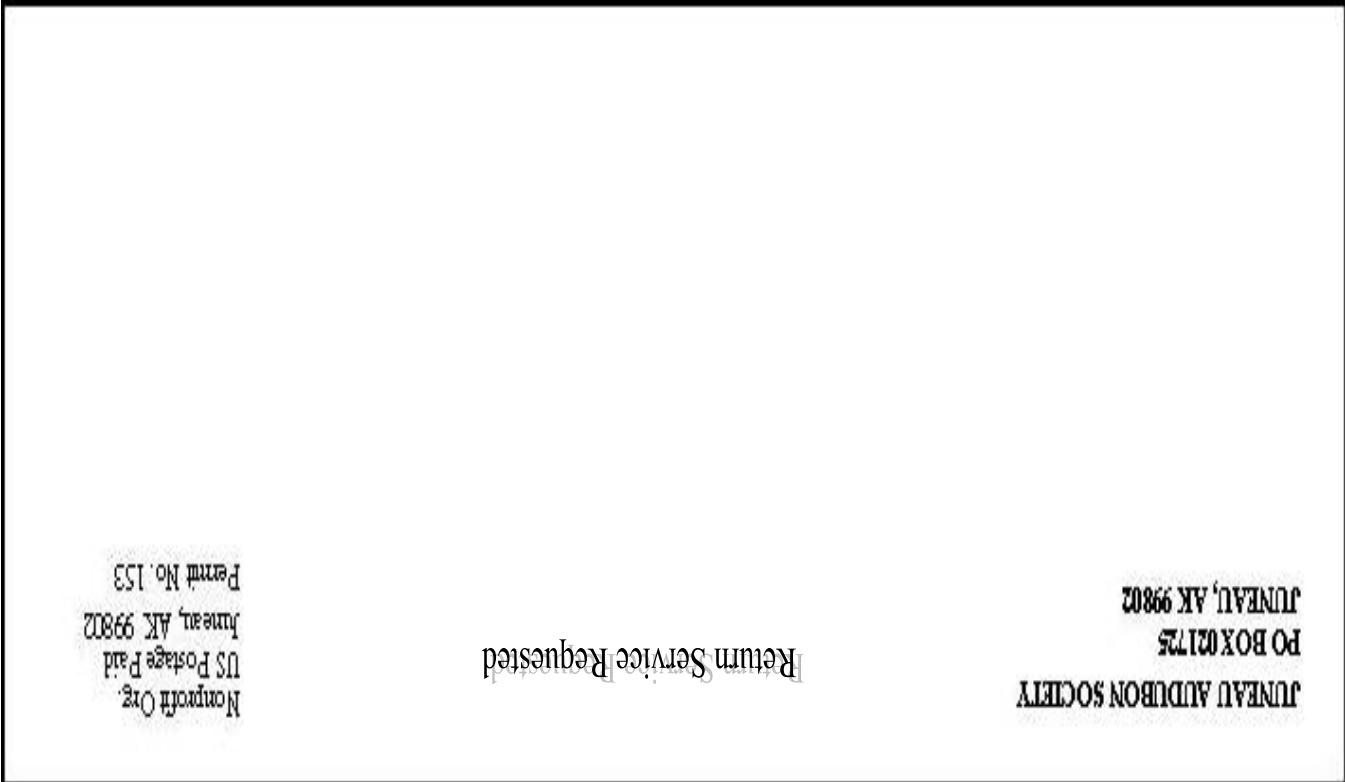
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Volume 35, Number 8

Juneau Audubon Society

April 2009

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday April 9, 7:00 p.m, UAS Egan, Room 221/222

Kim Rivera, NOAA Fisheries, National Seabird Coordinator

Three species of albatross (Phoebastria genus) regularly visit pelagic waters off Alaska. The rare and endangered Short-tailed Albatross visits from its volcanic home in Japan. Black-footed and Laysan Albatross nest primarily in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and travel northward to feed in the rich waters around the Aleutian Islands and the Bering



Sea. NOAA Fisheries has long worked with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and an array of seabird biologists and fishing gear experts to address potential impacts of commercial fisheries on these magnificent species. Learn more about how threats are being averted----from fishermen keeping albatross off their hooks to concerned experts transplanting chicks to non-volcanic islands.

Berners Bay Cruises

Juneau Audubon Spring Wildlife Extravaganza

Come join us for a trip past the end of the road!

April 18, 2009 8:30 am

May 2, 2009 @ 8:30 am and 1:30 pm

\$40 adult \$20 student (includes UAS)

\$5/children under 12 (must be accompanied by adult)

4 Hour cruises depart from Don D. Statter Harbor

Tickets may be purchased at Hearthside Books

Naturalists will be on board

Sponsored by Juneau Audubon Society

Info 321-4739



Please join Audubon Alaska and the Juneau Audubon Society For a lecture and reception on Saturday, April 25, 2009, 7:30 to 9:30 PM, Centennial Hall, Downtown Juneau

**Landscape Aesthetics... Beauty is in the Adapted Mind of the Beholder
By Gordon Orians, PhD**

Humans have immediate and powerful emotional responses, both positive and negative, to landscapes, tree shapes, flowers, animals, and sunsets. Why do we have those responses? How might they have helped our ancestors survive and reproduce in a complex and dangerous environment that seemed mysterious to them? Join Audubon and Professor Gordon Orians to explore how evolutionary biologists, evolutionary psychologists, and neurobiologists are providing at least partial answers to these important and intriguing questions.

Gordon Orians, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Washington and past president of both the Ecological Society of America and the Organization for Tropical Studies. His research and publications span five decades and range from behavioral ecology of blackbirds to analyses of shearwater populations to human habitat selection. Dr. Orians has served on National Research Council committees to evaluate wolf and bear management in Alaska and cumulative effects of oil and gas exploration on Alaska's North Slope, and he presently serves on the board of Audubon Alaska.

Reception at 8:30 PM: Share delicious desserts and libations with Dr. Orians and the board and staff of Audubon.

Please *RSVP* by April 20 to (907) 276-7034 or Lcosta@audubon.org.

ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY -- On Friday, May 15th and throughout the month of May, millions of Americans across the country will celebrate Endangered Species Day and learn about the everyday actions that people can take to help protect our nation's disappearing wildlife and last remaining wild lands.

Also, if you haven't checked out our Birds and Climate Change website yet, please visit www.birdsandclimate.org. I'm especially proud of the quiz (<http://www.birdsandclimate.org/quiz.php>), which features illustrations by Audubon Adventures' own Sherrie York!

Check out Alaska eBird www.ebird.org/ak

A real-time, online checklist program, eBird has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

Bird Walks and Berners Bay Cruises

Juneau Audubon, Spring 2009

Spring is coming to Juneau and so too are the birds!! We encourage all to attend our walks. No experience is necessary, beginners are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a few on hand for those without binoculars. We also will have spotting scopes for use by all.

Saturday, April 11. Location: Airport Dike trail. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. This first walk of the season will stay on the trail so rubber boots are not needed. However, some groups of birders may venture out into the wetlands after the walk, so for those boots are needed. Steve Zimmerman and Merrill Jensen will lead the walk.

Saturday, April 18. Berners Bay Cruise. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. The vessel will leave promptly at 8:30 a.m. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. Tickets are available at Hearthside Books. Adult tickets \$40.00. Special student tickets \$20.00 (includes UAS). Children under 12 may go for \$5.00. Tickets for sale now at Hearthside Books.

Saturday, April 25. Location: Boy Scout Camp Trail. If you want to carpool, meet at 7:30 a.m. at Deharts. If driving yourself, meet at 8:00 a.m. At the Boy Scout Trailhead – turn right at Glacier Highway mile 26.7 and follow gravel road to Trailhead. Gwen Baluss will lead this walk.

Saturday, May 2. Berners Bay cruises: One will leave at 8:30 a.m.; the other will leave at 1:30 p.m. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. or by 1:15 p.m. Tickets are available at Hearthside Books.

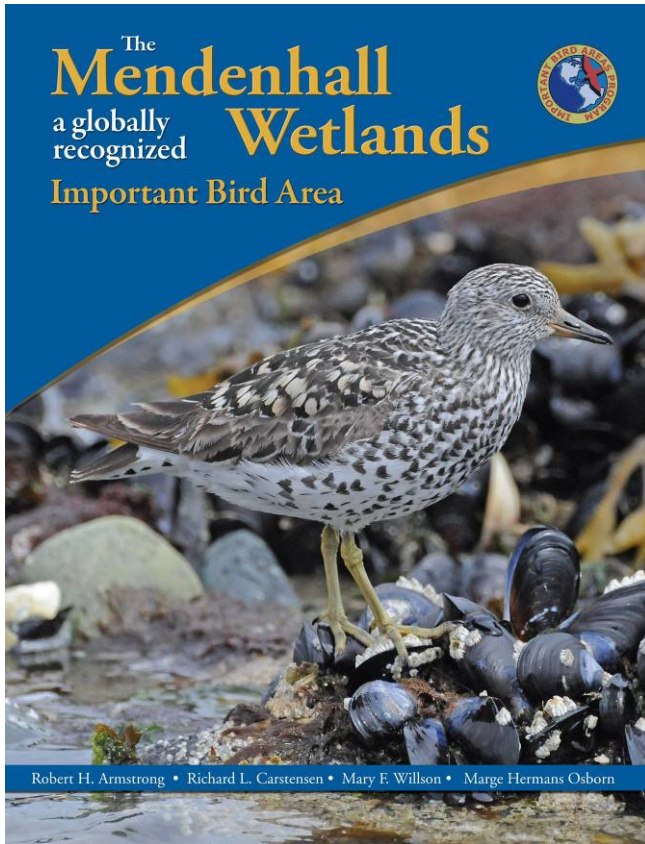
Saturday, May 9. Location: Airport Dike Trail. Walk to the mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots. Bev Agler will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 16. Location: Airport Dike Trail. Walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 23. Location: Sandy Beach (Douglas). The walk will begin at the picnic area by Sandy Beach at 8:00 a.m. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 30. Location: Perseverance Trail. The walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the trailhead at the end of Basin Road. Beth Peluso will lead the walk.

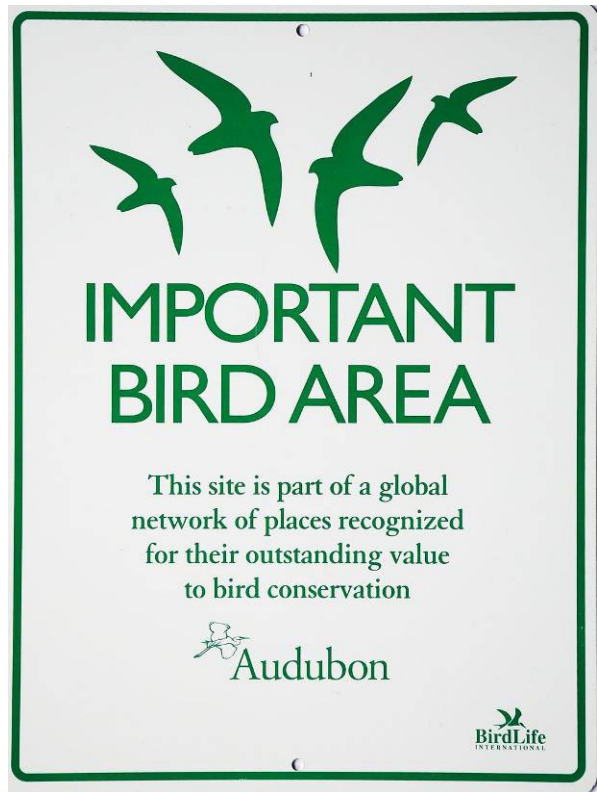
Saturday, June 6. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:00 a.m. Note earlier start time than other walks. Wear rubber boots. Mark Schwan will lead the walk.



BOOK REVIEW: Bob Armstrong, Richard Carstensen, Mary Willson, and Marge Hermans Osborn's new book will be in print sometime during the next month. This book includes excellent bird photos, description of the most valuable habitat areas, issues of concern and possible mitigation for airport expansion.

As soon as the books arrive in Juneau, a book signing and celebration of the Mendenhall Wetlands Important Bird Area, will be scheduled. Watch for an announcement of this celebration.

Mark Schwan, Juneau Audubon President, has been working with Ryan Scott at Fish and Game and received approval to put these IBA signs on the refuge sign posts at the Juneau Airport Dike Trailhead where Mark has installed one sign. Another will be installed over at Fish Creek. Ryan has one sign and will put in the kiosk at the Rotary platform near Lemon Creek. Another sign might go at Sunny Point.



Tongass Attracts Nationally Recognized Scientists

By Matt Kirchhoff, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Alaska

In February, Audubon Alaska in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy cosponsored a multi-day conference in Juneau. The conference, attended by leading ecologists from Alaska, British Columbia, and the Pacific Northwest, was aimed at building a scientific consensus for a conservation strategy for the Tongass National Forest.

The Tongass Science Conference was unconventional in that the first two days were conducted without a single PowerPoint presentation! The authors wrote papers, circulated them among the group in advance, and the group discussed each paper in detail.

On the final day, the scientists presented their papers to the public at Centennial Hall. Dr. Jerry Franklin, the grandfather of old growth ecology, kicked off the meeting with a keynote address on the conservation and management of old growth forests from a global perspective. This was followed by papers on island biogeography, concepts of conservation biology, riparian ecology, natural disturbance patterns, and conservation at the watershed scale.

Two evening presentations, open to the public, included *Native Perspectives on the Tongass* by Byron Mallott from the First Alaskans Institute and *Climate Change and the Tongass* by Terry Chapin from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Both evening keynotes were well attended by the Juneau community.

The conference was moderated by professor Emeritus Gordon Orians from the University of Washington, a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the Audubon Alaska Board. The conference was a great success, stimulating lively discussions and new ideas for conservation on the Tongass.

Audubon Alaska intends to publish the papers, incorporating the workshop discussions, in a book or online journal in the near future. A list of the paper titles, abstracts, and presenters is available at www.audubonalaska.org.

Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion

Audubon recently released a new study using Christmas Bird Count Data. These analyses would not have been possible without the hard work of CBC participants and the many chapters that organize and lead counts. We thank all that have participated over the years for their effort. The study explored if birds had shown significant shifts in their winter distribution over the last 40 years. As we all know, birds are good indicators of the environment. We think birds provide important information to people on changes in the environment and human quality of life. Audubon has a goal of working bird indicators into regular reviews of how the environment in the US is doing and hopefully helping drive policy and funding that benefits the environment and birds. The report, [*Birds and Climate Change*](#), is available on Audubon's web site and provides more details on the analyses and results. To download the report from this [web site](#), click on the "Download Report" link on the left side of the page or on the image of the report cover. <http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/cbcanalysis.html>

Juneau Bird Observations for March 2009 by Patty Rose

Although the snow stayed through the end of the month, migratory birds began to return to Juneau in March. Juncos and **Varied Thrushes** started singing in mid-March. Large flocks of common redpolls were present in the area throughout the month.

Eurasian Wigeons were seen from the Airport Dike Trail on the Mendenhall Wetlands on March 14 (PR) and March 23 (PS). A male **hybrid Barrow x Common Goldeneye** was at Outer Point on Douglas Island in the company of a female Common Goldeneye on March 23 and 24 (PS). On March 22, two juvenile **Trumpeter Swans** landed briefly on a pond on the Mendenhall Wetlands (PR). Also on March 22, two **Trumpeter Swans** flew over a Mendenhall Valley residence (DR).



Two juvenile Trumpeter Swans on the Otter Pond on the Juneau Airport Dike Trail on March 22. They flew in, honked, bobbed their heads, and moved in unison for several minutes before apparently deciding they didn't like the accommodations and flying off. P Rose Photo

Observations of accipiters included two **Sharp-shinned Hawks** near Auke Bay in mid-March (GV) and a **Northern Goshawk** at Outer Point on Douglas Island on March 20 (PS). The only report of a falcon was a merlin near Auke Bay on March 15 (GV).

A **Glaucous Gull** at Eagle Beach on March 21 (PS) was the only unusual gull reported.



Partially Albino Common Redpoll By Patty Rose

Very rare in Juneau, a **Boreal Owl** was seen and photographed at a Juneau residence on March 16 (MHB). A photo of the owl is posted on the Juneau Empire website

(http://www.juneauempire.com/stories/031809/loc_411317829.shtml). A **Boreal Owl**, perhaps the same bird, was seen at the Eaglecrest Ski Area in early March (SG). Two **Northern Pygmy-owls** were reported during March, one was heard calling on Douglas Island near the Outer Point trailhead on March 14 (PS), and one was calling out the road near Peterson Creek on March 15 (GV).

The earliest March report of a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was of an individual seen at Outer Point on March 20 (PS). This species was regularly seen after that date. Two **Hairy Woodpeckers** were seen at a Juneau residence on March 18 (LFC). A red-shafted **Northern Flicker** was seen near Auke Bay on March 25 (GV).

An overwintering **Lincoln's Sparrow** was still present on March 7 at a feeder near Auke Bay (GV). A **White-throated Sparrow** overwintered at a North Douglas feeder and was seen on March 27. Reports of **Lapland Longspurs** included one near Auke Bay on March 22 (GV) and two on the Mendenhall

Wetlands on March 23 (PS). **Pine Grosbeaks** were seen from the Airport Dike Trail on the Mendenhall Wetlands on March 14 (PR) and March 23 (PS).

Thanks to those who contributed observations. Contributors included Mona Haffner Bibb (MHB), Laurie Ferguson Craig (LFC), Steve Gilbertson (SG), Patty Rose (PR), Deb Rudis (DR), Paul Suchanek (PS), and Gus van Vliet (GV).

An interesting activity during migration is to look for birds migrating at night by watching the moon with binoculars or a spotting scope. Birds can sometimes be seen silhouetted against the face of the moon. By applying certain complex mathematical computations, an estimate of the number of birds aloft on a given night can even be determined. The moon will be full during the second week of April. Another reason to go out after dark is that the migration flight calls of birds can be heard at night during migration.

Sunny Point Bird Report By Mary Lou King – 120 or more Vancouver Canada Geese are now feeding on the snow free part of the tideflats. There are lots of Mallards and Crows feeding all over the place out there on the flats. Plus there are between 30 or 40 Pine Siskins and about that many Common Redpolls frequenting the feeders along with two Steller's Jays, half a dozen Chestnut-backed Chickadees and eight or ten Juncos. The feeder birds are hungry with all the snow covering a lot of their natural food. The Bald Eagles are hungry too. One flew in through the trees right by the window, grabbed one of our big fat male Mallards that was right by the front doorstep and tried to fly off with it. After we chased it up the road, it finally gave up and dropped duck. The duck was pretty upset but it lived.

MARCH BIRDS AND APRIL EVENTS IN KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

The Spring equinox arrived recently, although winter seems to be lingering with numerous snow showers still passing through our area. At least the days seem much longer with the very early daylight savings time change this year!

There are signs of spring and even a few **American Robins** have been seen on local lawns. Quite a few gulls and sea ducks are congregating along our waterfront and there are reports that Fox Sparrows are beginning to sing. Soon the hardy Rufous Hummingbird will arrive in Alaska so make sure to get your feeders up!

A few interesting birds have been spotted north of town along the road system where the relatively more open country side consistently attracts birds year around. Several **Red-tailed Hawk** sightings have occurred and some of these individuals may have wintered in our area. A few **Common Redpolls** were also visiting a feeder area in a north end neighborhood!

April is the month of Ketchikan's Hummingbird Festival!! This annual event celebrates Spring and migratory birds. There are lots of fun activities for nature lovers of all ages! The South East Alaska Discovery Center has planned a series of Birding Insight Programs to educate folks more about birds or even inspire some to become birders with informative talks and field trips to get out and find birds around the Ketchikan area!

There will be another juried art show this year on April 3rd and several programs for kids including interactive lessons with birds and a coloring contest.

Other events planned are:

April 2-Birding for beginners and binocular basics-Melissa Cady

April 11-Birding Ward Lake- Cheryl Fultz and Teri Goucher

April 18-Finding birds from Rotary Beach to the Herring Cove area-Steve Heinl

April 25-Birds of Gravina Island-Andy Piston

Also Dr. Scott Ford will do a presentation about tracking Eiders in the field.

There is so much more to see and do during this month long celebration so if you want more information please contact S.E. Discovery Center or Leslie Swada at 228-6427.

Thanks again to Leslie for this information and her help making the Hummingbird Festival possible!!!

This is an exciting time of year to enjoy birding with all the seasonal migrants heading our way as we all look forward to the weather warming.

Wrangell Raven Report, April, 2009 by Bonnie Demerjian, Wrangell



*Common Redpoll by
Mark Schwan*

The primary bird of interest in Wrangell for the past several weeks has been the **Common Redpoll**. These birds are seldom seen here but early this month have irrupted and been reported at many bird feeders. Their numbers are continuing to grow with flocks of 25-40 reported by observers. Since there have been few other birds to report, I looked for more information from the Boreal Songbird Initiative on these birds and learned:

- that they commonly, as reported on Christmas Bird Counts across the US, show a consistent biennial pattern of irruption (though not in Wrangell);
- that these irruptions are presumably triggered by shortages of seeds, particularly their staple birch seeds, in northern trees, causing the birds to move southward. Seed failures and irruptions occur simultaneously in North

America and Europe;

- that Common redpolls have several adaptations to survive harsh winters including throat pouches for temporarily storing seeds which they regurgitate in sheltered locations. They can survive temperatures as low as minus 67 degrees and may burrow into the snow to escape especially cold weather;
- that Common redpolls, along with other irruptive species such as Bohemian waxwings, White-winged and Red crossbills and Pine grosbeaks will benefit from the Canadian government's announcements in 2007 that it will protect 25.5 million acres of boreal forest, with further protections announced in 2008.

In the "Better Late Than Never" department, 14 participants gathered results for Wrangell's 2008 Christmas Bird Count. Seabird count numbers were drastically reduced because rough seas kept boats at the dock. **Mallards, Harlequin ducks, Barrow's Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers** were the most common ducks. Four **Trumpeters** swans appeared for count week though larger numbers had been around a few weeks earlier. A small number of **Horned and Western Grebes, Common Murres and Marbled Murrelets** made the day's list. **Black Turnstones** and a single **Surfbird** were reported, as were three **Black-legged Kittiwakes**. Songbirds included **Golden-crowned Kinglets, Song Sparrows,** and single **Fox and White-crowned Sparrows**. In all, 2221 individual birds from forty-six species were reported.

Answers to last month's quiz: Here are the current names of the birds in last month's newsletter by an old, obsolete name.

<i>Obsolete Name</i>	<i>Current Name</i>
Bartramian Tattler	Upland Sandpiper
black warrier	Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk
black hagdon	Sooty Shearwater
brownback	Short-billed Dowitcher
bullhead	Black-bellied Plover
cobhead	Common Goldeneye
hell-diver	Horned Grebe
horn-billed puffin	Rhinoceros Auklet
Kamchatka nightingale	Siberian Rubythroat
marlin	Marbled Godwit
purre	Dunlin
specklebelly	Greater White-fronted Goose
tell-tale	Greater Yellowlegs
violet-green Cormorant	Pelagic Cormorant
whale bird	Short-tailed Shearwater

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For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**

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The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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Juneau Audubon Society

May 2009

MENDENHALL WETLANDS CELEBRATION COMMEMORATES GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED IMPORTANT BIRD AREA DESIGNATION Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, Friday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m.

In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day and a recent award for the Mendenhall Wetlands, a slideshow and book signing by Robert Armstrong will be held at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center.

Juneau's Mendenhall Wetlands recently achieved a significant distinction as a globally recognized "Important Bird Area" or IBA. The designation is based on several requirements established by an international committee.



“In order to qualify for a globally or continentally significant IBA,” writes author/photographer Armstrong, “ a site must support a significant portion of the flyway population of a particular species.” Generally, the site must support over one percent of the North American population of a species at one time, or more than five percent of the population for the season. Fifteen species contributed to the Wetlands’ qualification.

The Wetlands provide a valuable resting and feeding area for 256 species of birds. Because of Southeast Alaska’s rugged mountain and ocean terrain, flat grassy zones like the Mendenhall Wetlands are rare and vital to the survival of migrating birds.

The May 8 event is sponsored by the Mendenhall Refuge Citizens Advisory Group of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Juneau Audubon Society, Southeast Alaska Land Trust and US Forest Service. Armstrong's new Mendenhall Wetlands book will be available at the visitor center's Alaska Geographic bookstore. The visitor center's fee will be suspended after 7pm on May 8.

For details, call Laurie at 789-0097.



Cackling Geese with White-fronted Geese on the Mendenhall Wetlands on May 2

Bird Walks

Juneau Audubon, Spring 2009

Spring is coming to Juneau and so too are the birds!! We encourage all to attend our walks. No experience is necessary, beginners are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a few on hand for those without binoculars. We also will have spotting scopes for use by all.

Saturday, May 9. Location: Airport Dike Trail. Walk to the mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots. Bev Agler will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 16. Location: Airport Dike Trail. Walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 23. Location: Sandy Beach (Douglas). The walk will begin at the picnic area by Sandy Beach at 8:00 a.m. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 30. Location: Perseverance Trail. The walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the trailhead at the end of Basin Road. Beth Peluso will lead the walk.

Saturday, June 6. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:00 a.m. Note earlier start time than other walks. Wear rubber boots. Mark Schwan will lead the walk.

Saturday Wild 2009 - Juneau Audubon sponsored natural history walks. Free and open to the public: Join us- weather or not- as we explore the wild side of Southeast Alaska. Some of these walk's dates, time and place may change, therefore it is important to check for more information on these free community walks, see <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org> or check the newspaper, look for posters, listen to the radio or call Mary Lou King 789-7540. Please dress for the weather

June 20 - Wildflower walk at Eagle Beach State Park 9:00am

Mid- July - Alpine flowers and birds with Bob Armstrong and other plant and bird experts. Date, time and place to be announced.

August 1—10:00 a.m. Jensen-Olson Arboretum: Driving Directions to the Jensen-Olson Arboretum that is located 23 miles north of downtown Juneau. In an area known locally as “Out the Road,” the Arboretum is just past Mile 23 on Glacier Highway. From downtown Juneau, take the Egan Expressway northwest toward the Juneau Airport. The divided four lane Expressway eventually becomes a two lane road at Brotherhood Bridge and changes name to Glacier Highway. Continue driving west past Auke Lake and Auke Bay on Glacier Highway which will bend to the north. Watch for the square green mile markers on the shoulder of the road. Just after Mile 22, you will pass the Shrine of St. Therese. Continue seven-tenths of a mile, passing Mile 23 and look for the Arboretum sign. Turn left and follow the short lane to the small parking area.

August 29 – Mushrooms -- Time and place to be announced

**Audubon Magazine Announces Call for Entries for the Audubon Magazine Photography Awards:
Birds in Focus**

In Association with Nature's Best Photography Magazine,
Awards Sponsored by Nikon

New York, NY-April 20, 2009--- *Audubon* magazine is launching the 2009 Audubon Magazine Photography Awards: Birds in Focus, created to celebrate the beauty and diversity of birdlife through the art of photography, and to honor the exceptional work of talented professional, amateur and youth photographers from all over the U.S.

Audubon will be accepting submissions online until July 15 in three categories: Professional, Amateur, and Youth. Photographers are encouraged to reveal a new angle or perspective in their work. "Think creatively," advises *Audubon's* design director Kevin Fisher, one of the judges. "Originality and drama rank high at *Audubon*. Include tight shots, such as close-ups of eyes, feathers. We welcome uncommon perspectives."

Other judges include renowned wildlife photographer Joel Sartore, a regular contributor to *Audubon* and *National Geographic*; Kim Hubbard, longtime *Audubon* photography editor and an accomplished photographer in her own right whose work featuring the birds of Bonaire is currently on exhibit at the Greenwich (CT) Audubon Center; and Steve Freligh, publisher of *Nature's Best Photography*.

The Award winners will be announced in December and will see their work showcased within the pages of both *Audubon* and *Nature's Best Photography* magazines, as well as on their respective websites. An impressive array of prizes will be awarded, including top-of-the-line photo and optic equipment from award sponsor, Nikon. **Prizes include:**

- Journey to Peru's Tambopata National Reserve (Inkaterra Amazonica Lodge)
- An ultimate birding safari to Australia's "Top End," the Northern Territory
- 14-day Tropical Rivers and Rainforest cruise through South America (Travel Dynamics International)
- Opportunity to travel to Honduras with *Audubon* wildlife photographer Roy Toft as your photographer/guide (Roy Toft Photo Safaris and Pico Bonito Lodge)
- A Nikon D80 digital SLR camera, 18-55mm NIKKOR VR lens, and a set of Nikon EDG 8x32 binoculars

Submissions: Accepted May 15 - July 15, 2009. Up to 10 images per entrant. For details, visit www.AudubonMagazinePhotoAwards.com

Audubon magazine, the flagship publication of the National Audubon Society, has been connecting people with nature for over 100 years, and has been recognized with an impressive number of photography, design and editorial awards, including:

CONTACT: Delta Willis dwillis@audubon.org, 212 979 3197

**SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS:
WINTER SEASON–December 2008 to February 2009**

For the full report including great photos contact: Sub-regional Compilers: Steven C. Heinl, P.O. Box 23101, Ketchikan, AK 99901, Andrew W. Piston, P. O. Box 1116, Ward Cove, AK 99928

The following report is a summary of the interesting bird sightings from Southeast Alaska for the winter period, which covered December 2008 to February 2009. A quick scan of this report will reveal that this winter was a slow one for interesting and unusual bird sightings, particularly when compared to the previous winter (2007–2008). Perhaps most interesting, and despite the abrupt cold-snap in mid-December, large numbers of sparrows lingered through the winter. New Christmas Bird Count (CBC) highs were recorded for Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned sparrows at Ketchikan, and all were found throughout the winter in larger numbers than previously reported. Purple Finches also made a good showing at Ketchikan, and it was a good winter throughout the region for the regularly occurring finches (crossbills, siskins, and redpolls). Sharp-shinned Hawks were also widely reported this winter, particularly at Ketchikan where they were almost exclusively associated with feeders.

APRIL BIRD REPORT FOR JUNEAU By Mark Schwan

It seemed as if spring would never come, and the migration has certainly been delayed. Our first hummingbirds were very late, as were swallows and warblers. Still, as the month came to an end, along with the nice weather came our returning avian friends. We heard of amazing numbers of geese moving through Ketchikan, and although we saw nothing comparable, we have had a much better than average showing of Greater White-fronted Geese. Given the protracted stranglehold of cold and snow in the area, and the relatively small number of birds overall to be seen, we still had a number of interesting observations. Here are some of the local highlights.

Two **Brant** were found at Eagle Beach on April 24 (PS,DS). More common slightly to the west of Juneau, they are a nice find locally. A single male **Eurasian Wigeon** was reported through most of the month at the Wetlands by various observers, but three at Fish Creek on April 8 (PS) was a peak count. One of our most striking ducks, a male **Cinnamon**

Teal was found at Eagle Beach on April 29 (MJ). **Canvasbacks** aren't considered rare in Juneau, but seven at the Wetlands on April 29 was interesting (MS). There was a lone male **Redhead** at the Wetlands on April 26 (DS). Two female **Hooded Mergansers** were at Pioneer Marsh on April 24 (MS) and another was found at the Wetlands on April 26 (DS).

Very rare in spring, an **American Coot** at south Twin Lake on April 24 was a treat for visiting birders here for the Audubon activities that weekend (SS,PP). **Sandhill Crane** observations included 53 seen flying over the Wetlands on April 19 (MS) and two circling over the mouth of Eagle River on April 24 (PS,MS,DS). A real ID challenge when in basic plumage, five golden-plovers were examined closely at the Wetlands on April 26 and finally deemed to all be **Pacific Golden-Plovers** (DS,SS,EM,MH). A **Marbled Godwit** was found at Eagle Beach on April 26 and subsequently seen over the next several days (PP,DS,MJ). Our old buddy, the **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found again seemingly alive and well near the mouth of Fish Creek on



Mark Schwan

Northern Shrike

April 13 (PS). This bird, assuming there has been no “replacement” and is the same individual, was first found here as an adult bird back in 1992!

The reports of a **Northern Hawk Owl** near the Eaglecrest Ski Area (April 4, TO; April 13, MA) was very exciting. They are exceedingly rare in the Juneau area. Another great find during the month was a **Black-backed Woodpecker** at the end of the North Douglas Highway on April 13 (PS). This species is very rarely found here, generally during the spring and fall. Two **Mountain Bluebirds** were found near Eagle Beach on April 18 (GP). The **White-throated Sparrow** that spent the winter near Paul Suchanek’s residence on Douglas Island continued to be found through April 23, but interestingly a second individual was found at another North Douglas location (April 14, JC). A **Hoary Redpoll** visited Paul Suchanek’s feeder on April 12 and 13.

Contributors: Mark Anderson, MA; Julie Coghill, JC; Mimi Hogan, MH; Merrill Jensen, MJ; Eric Meyers, EC; Tricia O’Connor, TO; Grey Pendleton, GP; Pat Pourchot, PP; Mark Schwan, MS; Stan Senner, SS; Dave Sonneborn, DS. Thanks to those that contributed.



Black-backed Woodpecker

WRANGELL REPORT Submitted by Bonnie Demerjian

The Stikine River Birding Festival was held on May 1 and 2. The keynote speaker was Matt Kirchhoff, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Alaska, discussing the importance of the Stikine River Delta to migrating birds. Another guest presenter was artist and naturalist Kathy Hocker who did several sketching classes including one on the river delta. The classes culminated with an art show at the Nolan Center. Lauri Jemison from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game discussed current Steller Sea Lion research. Large numbers of the lions haul out on Lesnoi Island at the mouth of the river each spring. Bonnie Demerjian led a bird walk on the Muskeg Meadows golf course with a continental breakfast provided by the Forest Service, sponsors of the festival. Listeners to KSTK public radio were invited to “Name that Tweet” and call in to identify local bird songs.

Despite the chill weather, or maybe because of it, it was especially rewarding to see (and hear) the firsts of the season this year. April 6 brought the first (and only, so far) **White-crowned Sparrow** song, as well as the first **Pigeon Guillemots** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**. The next day saw **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** and **Fox Sparrows** arrive. A small number of **Red-winged Blackbirds** are also reported around town and on the Stikine delta. **American Kestrels**, **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, **Northern Harriers** and a **Northern Goshawk** have been spotted targeting the large numbers of **Pine Siskins** and waning numbers of **Common Redpolls** at local feeders. Both **Red and White-winged Crossbills** were reported.



Lapland Longspur, American Tree Sparrow

Midmonth, the first **Bonaparte Gulls** arrived, as did **Rufous Hummingbirds**. **Snow Geese** began flooding the river flats on April 15 and are still coming, as are **Sandhill Cranes**, first reported on April 19. Greater white-fronted geese were reported as well.

Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows in small numbers are also just arriving as are **American Pipits, Savannah Sparrows, Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned Warblers**. A halibut fisherman fishing 25 miles offshore on April 4 reported that an **American Robin** landed on his

boat for a breather. Jim McComas reported a **Gray Jay** at his home at 12 Mile.

Earl and Mary Benitz report from Farm Island on the delta counting a flock of 70 **Trumpeter Swans**. Near their homestead are nearly a dozen **Red-winged Blackbirds**, a nesting **Great-horned Owl** pair and a **Saw-whet Owl**. A neighbor's nest boxes were already hosting swallows, species not known. The Benitzes were also surprised to see **Mallards** diving and feasting on eulachon. A small flock of **Mountain Bluebirds** was seen on the delta on April 23.

Also reported were **Surf Scoters, Western Grebes, Black Turnstones, Dunlin, Western Sandpipers and Greater Yellowlegs**.

HAINES SPRING BIRD REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

Spring has definitely sprung in Haines—the consistently warm and sunny weather (together with the massive snow melt) and the birds flying through are true signs. Bird migration is abounding. **Robins** have arrived and begun singing, along with **Varied Thrushes**. Snow Buntings passed through earlier in the month. A new addition was the sighting of **Mountain Bluebirds** along the Chilkat River, not far from the airport. They have always been on the Chilkoot side in the past 5 years. **Rufous Hummingbirds** have been seen, but my feeder still remains empty. **Northern Harriers** have been cruising over the beach and wetland areas including the McClellan Flats. **Loons**, both **Common** and **Yellow-billed** are back. **Surf Scoters** are rafting up and some of the rafts are unbelievably large, in the many hundreds. (This is definitely visible along the road to the ferry terminal.) **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** have been waking people up with their familiar pecking (or should I say pounding) on poles or trees. **Swans, ducks, and geese** have been making their way north. The night of the 28th of April, a large flock of geese were spotted swirling and flying about 2.5 miles outside of town over the wetlands along the Chilkat River. And happily Kingfishers are back as well.

APRIL BIRD REPORT FROM KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

Spring is in full swing now and arrived on the wings of many interesting migrating birds in our area this past month!

Our Hummingbird Festival was the best ever and the namesake of this celebration, the **Rufous Hummingbird**, made its first appearance here on April 5th! Since then it seems one can hear the buzz of the males zooming by frequently whenever outside.

Quite a few birds were found during the various bird walks including a male **Wood Duck** at Ward Lake on the 11th and that beautiful bird is still there.

Many Ketchikan birders were amazed to see perhaps the greatest numbers ever locally of waterfowl fly over on the 21st!!! Flock after flock of **Canada, Cackling, Greater white-fronted** and **Snow Geese** filled the sky with sound as they passed overhead almost continually, very exciting! A **Ross's Goose** was observed on the 25th in a mixed flock of geese flying by during the Gravina Island bird walk.

Other waterfowl that visited our shoreline recently include; **Gadwall, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal**, and dozens of **Mallards**, and **Surf Scoters**.

Shorebirds are seen coming and going with each low tide that offers a new opportunity to spot something different. A few **Black-bellied Plovers, Western and Least Sandpipers Dunlin, Killdeer**, and both **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs** have been seen.



Mark Schwan

A **Caspian Tern** were seen flying up the Tongass Narrows the last half of the month.

Robins and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** have brought the quiet woods alive with their songs, even if some warblers are a bit late returning to our area. The **Tree Swallows** that were at Ward Lake on the 11th were a bit earlier than usual. A few **American Pipits** are here on are lawns and **Sandhill Cranes** have noisily flown high overhead.

The **Band-tailed Pigeons** are back for the summer once again.

There are still scores of **Fox Sparrows** around and the **Harris's Sparrow** has managed to remain at its favorite area. There were two **White-throated Sparrows** in town on the 7th and our first **Golden-crowned Sparrow** arrived on the 16th with a few **White-crowned Sparrows** showing up about a week later. Numerous **Savannah Sparrows** came in just after that. A lone male **House Sparrow** was seen in town in the 28th.

The sightings of north bound raptors has increased lately with quite a few **Red-tailed Hawks** being seen along with **Merlins, Sharp-shinned Hawks** and **Northern Harriers!**

I enjoyed a wonderful weekend in Juneau mid-month birding and exploring the area's beautiful diverse habitat. Highlights included several **Trumpeter Swans**, Harriers, colorful **Horned Grebes** and a **Wilson's Snipe** on Douglas Island! I must say I was a bit dismayed by seeing so

many dogs running from their owners disturbing wildlife at the Mendenhall Wetlands and at Eagle Beach. I certainly won't fault folks for enjoying the great weather and the expansive beauty of the area. I can't wait for my next birding adventure to the "capital city"!!

This is my favorite time of year as each day brings new birds to admire with the warmer, longer days and watching the amazingly rapid plant growth; it's an exciting miracle!
I hope our entire summer is as sunny as our spring has been and that everyone gets out as much as possible to enjoy the magnificence of Alaska!!

SUNNY POINT BIRD REPORT by Mary Lou King



This morning May 4, as I sit here at my computer, about 15 **White-crowned** and half a dozen **Gold-crowned Sparrows** are frantically feeding in my window box and the yard on the leftover bird feed from the winter Siskins. A female **Rufous Hummingbird** just now flew up and took a look in the window and next a male landed on a branch by the window. And if that isn't enough I thought I heard something pounding on metal and got up to look and there is a **Red-Breasted Sapsucker**, with a very bright red head and breast, pounding on the metal fire escape ladder on the back of the house -- can't be good for it's bill. There was a **Fox Sparrow** and **Varied Thrush** earlier along with a pair of Mallards by the pond. Yesterday I saw one brightly speckled **Starling**, first one I have seen in the yard in years. A nicely plumaged light gray adult **Northern Harrier** has been carefully combing the tideflats for the last three or four weeks. Could an Audubon Newsletter Editor ask for anything better, on a spring morning, while working on the newsletter?



Merrill Jensen captured the passengers on one of Juneau Audubon's annual Berners Bay boat trips. There are always birds, whales, sea lions and other wildlife of interest to see.

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You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; **\$15 (1-year student/senior rate)** _____

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The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 1

Juneau Audubon Society

September 2009

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL HOLD THE FIRST FALL SEASON GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

Election of Officers: Juneau Audubon Society will elect officers in conjunction with the public meeting on October 8th (time and place to be announced in the October newsletter). Our officers serve a term of one year; so all officers must be elected each year. Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting are accepted for all positions. The election slate for 2009 at this time includes Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Patty Rose for treasurer, and we are still looking for someone willing to serve as secretary. Please contact any of the officers or board members if you would like to be on the ballot as an officer, especially if you are interested in serving as our secretary. Also, if anyone is willing to volunteer for any of our standing committees, that would be great too. Our standing committees include membership, program, field trip, education, conservation, and newsletter.



Juvenile Winter Wren by Mark Schwan

Program: We plan to do our fall, group “slide show” again for our public program next month. This is where we ask folks to bring about 10 images to share with the group. These can center on something special you did during this past summer, or something you did many years ago, or whatever you might think the audience would find interesting or fun. There is no theme, just bring some images to share with the group. We will have a traditional slide projector as well as a computer and LCD projector.

JUNEAU AUDUBON’S NEW WEB PAGES

Juneau Audubon received some funds from the state office, called collaborative funds, to pay for a new web page design. This project is just completing at this time. We hired a local student at UAS, Saffron Hayes, to do this work for the chapter, and we appreciate his efforts and work. You can expect the pages to look different but provide the same information as before. Our webmaster, George Utermohle will be adding some finishing touches and organization to the pages, so be a little patient, as we head into the fall.

Summer Bird Notes for Juneau June through August, 2009

This summer's birding around Juneau was nothing exceptional but there were enough unusual observations to keep things interesting. However, one event clearly stood out from all the rest. More on that below. In the past, this article has included all observations of birds that have a status on our local checklist of rare, or rarer. Now that some of Juneau's most active birders are routinely posting observations to eBird, along with the established Yahoo Group Eaglechat, it seems unnecessary to recreate herein a comprehensive list of all the less common and rare birds seen locally. Readers are encouraged to review the Eaglechat archives and to explore the informative databases at eBird.org.

Moreover, the Juneau Audubon website includes the regional quarterly summaries of the more notable bird observations from around all of Southeast Alaska. These compilations, prepared by Steve Heintz and Andy Piston, are outstanding, and should be considered standard reading for anyone in Southeast Alaska with an interest in the status and distribution of birds in our region. Given this preamble, here are a few selected highlights from Juneau this summer.

Without question, the story of the summer around Southeast Alaska was the invasion of **Eurasian Collared-Doves**. This species, native to the Old World and introduced to the Bahamas, became established in Florida in the 1980s and has been rapidly expanding across the continent ever since. The species had already arrived to our region before this year, but the birds made their first showing in Juneau this year, and they were found in many communities across Southeast. They seemed to be falling out of the air everywhere.

Other local birding reports in this newsletter will report on the dove elsewhere in the region. Here in Juneau, it all started when one bird was seen at the Fairweather horse stables on the morning of June 5, and the bird was nicely photographed (PR). Later in that day, two birds were seen at the same location (SZ, HZ, GV). On June 8th, a single collared-dove was found and photographed at Sandy Beach (GV, RM, PS, MS). After that, there was a flurry of reports of one or two birds being seen near the airport, and on June 20th birders found out that two birds were attempting to nest in a tree along Muir Ave (JJ). This nesting attempt appears to have failed but there were later reports of collared-doves attempting to nest adjacent to Radcliffe Road and road construction workers reported up to three birds present there. Periodic sighting occurred through the end of August. It will be fascinating to see how this story progresses over the next few years.

Vagrant hawk reports seem far and few between in our area, so a light-phased **Swainson's Hawk** up along Gold Ridge was a nice surprise. This bird, initially found on June 26 (DB, MS) was subsequently seen over the next week or so by other birders (GV, BA). Serendipity was at hand when an **Upland Sandpiper** flew up from the median strip on Egan drive near Twin lakes on August 24 (GV). A **Wilson's Phalarope** was on the wetlands at "Phalarope Slough" on July 19th (GV), and was subsequently viewed and photographed by many local birders. On the flip side to reporting just the rarest of the rare, here is a reminder of just how great the Juneau area is for birds, and birders. On August 28, Paul Suchanek and Nick Hajdukovich **tallied 16 species of shorebirds at Eagle Beach**. This may be a record, and it is a reminder of how lucky we are to have the extensive habitats that attract these birds. Gulls of interest were far and few between, but our locally famous **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was seen at various times throughout the summer by several observers, and we had one report of a single **Ring-billed Gull** from north Douglas on August 21

(SZ). Far and away, the best gull report came from Gus van Vliet, when he found an adult **Laughing Gull** at Auke Bay on May 30 (not June but close enough) . This is the first record of this species in Juneau, and in fact, the species is still only on the unsubstantiated list of birds for Alaska, meaning it hasn't been documented either by photograph or specimen.

There were several situations this summer where birders located possible vagrant Empidonax flycatchers, but most accounts left the observers guessing and scratching their heads. Rich Gordon was comfortable reporting a **Willow Flycatcher** from along the airport dike path on August 11. Earlier, on June 22, Paul Suchanek saw and heard a **Least Flycatcher** well up Perseverance Trail. It was an excellent year for **Cassin's Vireo** in Juneau. The first bird was reported through Eaglechat, with a bird found near the end of River Road in the Mendenhall Valley on May 16 (DR, DM). This bird remained extremely loyal to this area and was easily locatable due to constant singing to almost the end of June. Two other birds were found on May 30, one along Perseverance Trail just above the parking area (BP, MS, Saturday bird walk) and one at the beginning of the airport dike trail (PS). Yet another bird was found on June 30 at Moose Lake (MS, SZ).

It is rare that the bird which goes unidentified is of much interest to anyone, but in one instance, here in Juneau, a bird not readily identifiable has caused more interest than most would have imagined. An **unusually plumaged, swallow-like bird** was photographed flying with "other" swallows over Gold Creek at Cope Park (RA, MS photos) on July 14. Several pictures were subsequently emailed to local birders with nobody able to identify this bird. During the next week, images of this bird began circulating on the internet and



before long some of the best birders in the world were thinking the bird was an Ashy Wood Swallow, an Asian species never seen before in North America. Although the jury is still out and people are still struggling with this, the conclusion by many is that the bird was likely a melanistic, or aberrantly dark-plumaged locally occurring swallow. This is an instance where the pictures tell one story, and the other information outside of the photograph tells another. It will be fascinating to see where it finally rests with the experts.

A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** made a very brief appearance at a Mendenhall Valley residence on June 30th (KC). The bird was nicely photographed and there were hopes the bird would linger in the area, but that did not happen. An adult **Harris's Sparrow**, in breeding plumage, was seen and

photographed near Auke Bay on June 6th (MM, GV). Such an observation is very rare, as most sightings of this species are of immature birds during fall and winter.

Contributors: Bev Agler, BA; Bob Armstrong, RA; Debi Ballam, DB; Kathryn Crenshaw, KC; Rich Gordon, RG; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Jeanne Josephson, JJ; Rich MacIntosh, RM; Deanna MacPhail, DM; Beth Peluso, BP; Patty Rose, PR; Deborah Rudis, DR; Mark Schwan, MS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Helena Zimmerman, HZ; Steve Zimmerman, SZ Compiled by Mark Schwan.

Haines Bird Report By Georgia Giacobbe

Despite the extreme hot and dry weather in Haines this summer, the birds appeared to arrive and stay in the area. I observed the usual birds at my feeders, including a slightly early arrival of **Rufous Hummingbirds**. The Golden-crowned sparrows migrated through and were replaced by the summer **Steller Jays**. Now the **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** are having a feast.

Our resident birder, Pam Randles, observed some unusual birds in our valley this year, and many successful nestings of the normal bird population. Her feeder was the home of regular **Pine Siskins**. She watched four eagle nests on the Chilkoot, each have two eaglets. They are about to fledge (as of August 26). Two of them hatched eaglets on June 12. Some unusual sightings included in April a **Yellow-Billed Loon** at Letnikof Cove and early May a **Yellow-Rumped Warbler** feeding at a sapsucker tree. Pam has nesting **Goshawks** near her house. One juvenile sprained a wing, and a neighbor called Alaska Bald Eagle Foundation (ABEF) falconer Cary Siefert. The Goshawk now resides at ABEF. In late July, early August two families of **Great Blue Herons** (2 parents and 2 juveniles) were observed, one at Lutak Inlet and one at Portage Cove. Now that the normal rainy weather has set back in, we will wait and see what birds abound.

Wrangell Bird Report By Bonnie Demerjian – September 2009

Wrangell joined several other Southeast communities this summer in hosting **Eurasian Collared-doves**. Two birds were first spotted on June 4. Two days later, four birds appeared at the same location in town. The site is a house whose owner regularly feeds **Rock Doves** so perhaps the collared doves were attracted by those birds. A few days later an observer living on the Stikine River delta also reported a single collared-dove at his cabin.

Black-headed Grosbeaks also put in appearance several times during the summer beginning in early June. Two were spotted on the river that month and individuals were reported again in town early in September.



Photo by Steve Zimmerman, June 26

Another accidental visitor drew its own out-of-town observers. A **Gray Catbird** arrived in a local yard in mid June. It sang much of each afternoon, fruitlessly seeking a mate until June 30th when it no longer appeared. This bird normally ranges as far north as central British Columbia and may have taken a wrong turn downriver to end up in Wrangell.

Cedar Waxwings arrived around June 7 this year, increasing in early July and are still here. Red crossbills have also been around in larger than usual numbers all summer.

A birding trip on the Stikine in early June reported 80 species including **Ruffed Grouse**, **Black and Vaux's Swift**, **Western Wood-pewee**, **Least and Hammond's Flycatcher**, **Bank Swallow**, **Gray-cheeked Thrush**, **American Redstart**, and **MacGillivray's Warbler**. High water conditions flooding marshes hindered hoped-for sightings of targeted American Bittern, Virginia Rail, Sora and Cinnamon Teal.

Just as they herald spring, **Sandhill Cranes** remind us that fall is here. They were heard overhead from the Stikine flats on September 3rd. It must be almost time to clean out the feeders and settle down to counting juncos.

SUNNY POINT REPORT By Mary Lou King

These **Green-winged Teal** were taking a peaceful break on a drift log in our pond. The resident eagles must be off eating salmon and hunting season has not started yet. There were also 30 Canada Geese out on the flats taking advantage of the peace.



Bird Report by Bill Newman: Check this bird out. It is a perfect match for the **Eurasian Collared Dove**, pictured in the 3rd edition of the Nat. Geo. Birds of N. America page 237. The map shows it in the Florida area. This was photographed at my cabin on the Stikine River, Farm Island yesterday 6-8-09. I have many more photos. I can be reached on my cell 907-518-0737. Going back out to the river today.



From: Whats Up Compiled Weekly by Peg Tileston

On behalf of the Alaska Women's Environmental Network (AWEN), Alaska Center for the Environment (ACE), and Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACA)

“BLUE HIGHWAY” a new film by Costa Del Mar sunglasses, explores whether Alaska should build a ROAD from JUNEAU to the KATZEHIN RIVER DELTA. The film crew visited Haines, Juneau, and the Lynn Canal in the summer 2008 and debuted the film at the Teva Mountain festival in June 2009. To see the film, go to <http://www.bluehighway.org/>.

**ALASKA STATE PARKS is recruiting CAMPGROUND HOST and other volunteer positions for the coming summer. Campground hosts stay in a campground and assist the ranger with visitor contact and maintenance. Hosts live in their own RV or trailer and the campsite is provided for free. A small stipend is provided if the minimum time commitment is met. Other volunteer positions include ranger assistant, trail crew, park caretaker and natural history interpreter. Housing and a small stipend are available if the minimum time commitment is met. Click on <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/vip/> to visit the Park's Volunteer web site for more information on these full-time volunteer positions. Click dnr.pksvol@alaska.gov to send an e-mail to request information or to request a 2010 Volunteer Catalog.

NEW Cats Indoors Brochure Available - Order Yours Online Today



Join thousands of supporters and place your order of Cats Indoors brochures. Involve conservation groups, humane societies, veterinarians, and animal control agencies, county and state parks and wildlife organizations in the effort. The [Trap, Neuter, and Release: Bad for Cats, Disaster for Birds](#) DVD is also available online for purchase.

https://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/cats/cind_orderform.cfm

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President:

Mark Schwan, president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Vice-President: Jeff Sauer, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Secretary: Patty Rose, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

Treasurer: **Open** treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

Programs: **Open** programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

Membership: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

Education: **Open** education@juneau-audubon-society.org

Conservation: Meg Cartwright, 364-2258 conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org

Field Trips: Beth Peluso, field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org

Raven Editor: Mary Lou King, 789-7540, raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

At-large: Mark Anderson, at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org

At-large: Merrill Jensen, at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org

Public Market: Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

Web Master: George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org



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Membership: membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 2

Juneau Audubon Society

October 2009

ELECTIONS AND GROUP SLIDE SHOW, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, UAS Egan Room 108, 7:00 p.m.

The October meeting will be a combined short business meeting, election of officers, and group slide show- social event. All are welcome and encouraged to bring images to share with the group. You need not be a member of Audubon to attend; anyone can participate in the slide show, however, only members may vote in the election.

Election! Juneau Audubon Society will hold its annual election for the four officer positions. Our officers serve a term of one year; so all officers need to be elected each year. Nominations are also accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. The election slate for 2009 is Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Patty Rose for treasurer, and we are still looking for someone willing to run/serve as secretary. We established a nominating committee to search for a candidate but at this time no candidate(s) have been found. This is an important position for the Chapter, and we would appreciate someone interested in Audubon to come forward and join the board. You don't need to be experienced on the board to be a good secretary; the position mainly requires one to be good at taking notes and accurately recording the business of the chapter at our board meetings. Moreover, we are in need of finding an individual that would be willing to serve as president in the fall of 2010. This would require gaining some experience on the board prior to serving in this position. We currently have vacancies on the board for a couple of committee chairs. If anyone is interested in joining the board with the thought of running for president in 2010, please contact Mark Schwan or any of the other officers or board members for more information. The chapter does a lot for the community and the region, and it is a great forum in which to participate!

Program: Once we have completed the short business meeting and election of officers we will do our group slide show. This is always lots of fun. We ask everyone to bring about 10+ images to share with the group. These can center on something special you did during this past summer, or something you did many years ago, or whatever you might think the audience would find interesting or fun. There is no theme, just bring some images to share with the group. We will have a traditional slide projector (it wasn't used at all last year though) and a laptop computer and LCD

projector. People with digital images should bring them on a CD or small media storage device that can be connected to our laptop. Thanks and hope to see you there.

**Special Presentation on the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
Tuesday, October 13, UAS Egan Bldg. Room 221/222, 7pm.**

The Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge is celebrating 100 years of conserving Alaska's marine birds this year. In 1909 President Teddy Roosevelt set aside 50 "federal bird reservations" which were the beginning of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Five island groups within the Alaska Maritime NWR and part of the Yukon Delta NWR were some of these first refuges. How did President Roosevelt learn about these wild Alaska places and their native birds 100 years ago? The answer to this question parallels the historical beginnings of the Audubon Society itself. Please come and join Lisa Matlock, Education Specialist for the Alaska Maritime NWR, on Tuesday October 13 at 7pm in UAS Egan Room 221/222 to learn more.

Richard Gordon is Migrating to Florida

Rich Gordon, who has been exploring Alaska's natural history for nearly 50 years, and who has been a cornerstone in the Juneau birding community for decades, will soon be moving to Florida for the winter. Rich was one of Alaska's earliest resident birders, but even more significant, Rich's experiences over much of the state and his dedication to conservation led him to be a key player in helping get lands included into proposed conservation units ultimately established by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA.

In 2005, Rich received the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Celia Hunter Award. This award recognized his significant, long-term efforts as a leader in the grassroots, volunteer environmental movement in Alaska. In fact, Celia Hunter used to refer to Rich as the "d2 philosopher." Rich truly has made a difference. It will seem strange not to have Rich here for our Christmas Bird Count; he will most likely be counting some very different kinds of birds in Florida. We all wish him well and look forward to seeing him on the Juneau birding trails come next spring.



Rich Gordon and Romeo the Mendenhall Glacier Wolf

Murrelet Research in Glacier Bay – a Progress Report

Matt Kirchhoff
Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Alaska

In summer, 2009, members of the Juneau Chapter, along with other volunteers, converged on Glacier Bay to participate in a study of Marbled Murrelets and Kittlitz's Murrelets. They are species of high conservation concern, and Glacier Bay is an important population center for both, with an estimated 4,900 Kittlitz's Murrelets and 41,400 Marbled Murrelets occurring there.

The study was headed by Biologists with Audubon Alaska, and the Department of Fish and Game, with financial and logistical support provided by Audubon (both state office and Juneau Chapter), Alaska Fish and Game, the Park Service, and individuals and foundations in Juneau. It was an exciting partnership that had biologists working with skilled birders to accomplish some important research.

The study had 3 goals: (1) Gather information on population trends by repeating a survey that had been last conducted in 1993, (2) map the distribution of both species within the bay, and (3) measure activity budgets, dive attributes, and prey-capture success in different regions of the Bay.

The logistics and training schedules were complex, with 20 people and 4 large vessels involved in the research. We established 3 field camps, one in Wachusett Inlet (East Arm), one in Reid Inlet (West Arm), and one in Blue Mouse Cove (Mid-bay). These camps were responsible for monitoring the numbers and behaviors of birds in specific focal areas, hourly, throughout the day. Other people worked aboard vessels, replicating the original 1993 survey 3 times. Fortunately, the weather during the 10 days we were working in Glacier Bay was ideal, with mostly smooth seas and warm, sunny weather every day!

The survey data have been summarized and revealed interesting results. Marbled Murrelet numbers in Glacier Bay were about the same in 2009 as in 1993, but Kittlitz's Murrelet numbers were substantially higher! This was unexpected given the fact that Kittlitz's Murrelets are declining elsewhere in their range. Perhaps there were unusual conditions in Glacier Bay that attracted large numbers this summer, or maybe their populations are truly on the upswing. The answers to those questions will be gained through continued monitoring and research.

The Audubon state office is committed to supporting these efforts, and working with a broad coalition of agencies and individuals to ensure the welfare of these 2 species. We thank the Juneau Chapter and other volunteers from Juneau for your support, both financially and in the field, to make this a reality. Stay tuned for more information on this project, and the conservation status of these species, as it becomes available.

Editors Note: If you'd like to hear more about the natural history of these species, Matt Kirchhoff will be giving a talk on November 6 titled: "Where cold is hot— a Murrelet's-eye view of Glacier Bay". It starts at 7:00 PM in the Egan Auditorium on the UAS campus.



Melanie Smith, a biologist with Audubon Alaska, scans for murrelets as the *SV Sierra* approaches Marjorie Glacier in Tarr Inlet.

Funding for Wildlife Adaptation

Taldi Walter, Communications & Policy Associate, Alaska Audubon

Climate change poses an imminent danger to the survival of many species of birds and wildlife and the integrity of the ecosystems on which they depend. Recently over 100 of Audubon's state offices and local chapters endorsed a letter to the Senate requesting that they pass climate legislation that includes crucial funding to protect wildlife and natural resources from the ever-growing threat of climate change.

While the letter is a great step in the right direction, it is essential that we continue to let our senators know that we strongly support climate legislation that provides for 5% of total revenues generated through the cap and trade program to go toward natural resources adaptation. A legislative approach to conquering climate change is not complete without provisions that help our wildlife survive a warming planet.

These funds would increase the coffers of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the Endangered Species Act and other successful conservation programs. They would provide much needed resources to National Wildlife Refuge managers as they battle invasive species and other refuge threats that will only be exacerbated by climate change. Research, monitoring and education need to increase as well. A 5% dedication of funds to address the impacts of global warming will allow us to protect and expand crucial habitats and more thoroughly understand the effects that climate change has on wildlife.

This fall, the Senate will take up global warming legislation. Now is the time to voice your support for increased adaptation funding. A quick call or email to your senators will help us build public demand for strong climate legislation and increased funding – 5% -- for wildlife.

To reach your senator please call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121, or find your senator’s contact information online at www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm. If you prefer to send an email, you can do so through Audubon’s Action Center, www.audubonaction.org. Tell your senators that you want:

- Strong climate legislation *this year* to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Legislation that protects birds, wildlife, natural resources, and ecosystems by dedicating 5% of revenues for wildlife adaptation.

Audubon has always spoken for birds, wildlife and their habitats, no matter the threat. Now is the time to speak out for strong climate legislation and the resources we need to protect Alaska’s birds and wildlife.



Photo and information from Ron Gile

I found and photographed what I believe is a barred owl today at the north end of Douglas Highway on the trail that continues onto the beach. This shot is from the little bridge that goes over the little stream just as you enter the woods. The only reason I saw it is that I was shooting a landscape of the stream and this owl was chasing a little bird. It flew right by me then gave up the chase and landed. Poor photo as that it was pretty dim in there.

Juneau Birding Highlights, September 2009 By Mark Schwan

Birders had a few breaks from the blustery and wet weather over much of the month but those venturing out found their efforts rewarded, as fall migration was in full swing. Well knowing that the hurrah will be over soon, a number of active birders were compelled to give it a shot, with the Mendenhall Wetlands being their primary destination.

Peregrine Falcons, always a treat to find, seemed to be present over most of the month on the Wetlands. There clearly was a variety of birds, with individuals representing different age classes and subspecies (many obs.). Shorebird highlights included a juvenile **Pacific Golden-Plover** on the Wetlands on 9/12 (GV, MS), and another there on September 27 (MS), an **Upland Sandpiper** at Eagle River on 9/6 (PS, BA), and a great showing of **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers**, with four or possibly five different birds found on the Wetlands during the month. Two birds were found on 9/4 (RG, PR), one bird was found on 9/9 (PS), another bird was found on 9/15 (PR, MA), and yet another observation came on 9/18 (GV). A lone **Stilt Sandpiper** frequented the sloughs adjacent to the airport dike trail from 9/11 through 9/14 (many obs.).

A **Pomarine Jaeger** photographed (RGI) near Poundstone buoy on 9/4 represented the first documented individual for the Juneau area, although there have been several previous sight records. Our well-known **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was readily visible along the lower Mendenhall River and adjacent areas during mid month (many obs.). A brief visit by a **Mourning Dove** along the airport dike (MS, DM) on 9/21 was a nice break from all the **Eurasian Collared-Dove** excitement, as up to four birds kept being seen near and on the wetlands all month long (many obs.). Two **Common Nighthawks** were heard overhead at the Wetlands parking area at dusk on 9/26 (DM). A **Rufous Hummingbird** at an Auke Bay yard on 9/11 seemed unusually late (MS). A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was vocalizing enough for an identification at Brotherhood Park on 9/14 (MS). **Cassin's Vireos** have become almost annual in Juneau but the bird found at Sandy Beach on 9/4 and 9/8 may be the latest local record (PS). The **Warbling Vireo** on Douglas Island on 9/21 was also very late (PR).

Perhaps a record-early fall report for Juneau, a **Mountain Bluebird** was photographed above the Mount Roberts tram terminal on 9/7 (RA). **Townsend's Solitaires** are always far and few between around Juneau, but there were three reports during the month, with one bird found at Brotherhood Park on 9/12 (PS, BA), another found at Auke Bay on 9/14 (MS), and a third individual found at the airport dike trail parking area on 9/26 (PR). A very late **American Redstart** was a surprise find along the airport dike trail on 9/22 (PR, GB, MS). The best sparrow of the month was a **White-throated Sparrow** spotted amongst the Golden-crowns and White-crowns along the Wetland dike on 9/23 (GV). Finally, the only report of **Brown-headed Cowbird** during the month came from the Wetlands dike on 9/6, a single juvenile bird (GV, PR).

Contributors: Bev Agler, BA; Mark Anderson, MA; Robert Armstrong, RA; Gwen Baluss, GB; Ron Gile, RGI; Rich Gordon, RG; Deanna MacPhail, DM; Patty Rose, PR; Mark Schwan, MS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV. Compiled by Mark Schwan

Wrangell Birds -- October 2009 By Bonnie Demerjian

Birds are on the move this month. **Sandhill Cranes** have been reported from the Stikine flats from early in September and continuing as of this writing. Unlike spring migration when the birds speed north within a week, fall birds have been passing overhead in small flocks all month. This weekend, however, saw a surge of activity. Bill Neumann reports that a flock of nearly 1000 flew by at ground level on either side of his delta cabin just days ago. Thousands more were observed resting and feeding on the flats, then passing noisily over town during this week's calm, sunny days.

A larger than usual number of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** mixed with a small number of **White-crowned Sparrows** have been reported at local feeders. The full moon of September 25 and 26 probably sent these birds on their way since fewer are now around. The bushes around town are still full of **Savannah, Fox and Song Sparrows** and they might be the attraction for the **Merlins, Kestrels, Northern Harriers** and a **Red-tailed Hawk** seen riding the thermals above town. A number of **Northern Harriers** were also reported from the Stikine delta as were **Great-horned Owls**, three or four of which are resident at each of two delta cabins. [Two Ospreys were reported by an observer on Zimovia Strait.](#)

One cabin owner also reports a lingering hummingbird, **Anna's** he believes, but no photo available for this issue.

A few scattered shorebirds were also seen this month including **Spotted Sandpipers** and a single **Sanderling**.

Two **Band-tailed Pigeons** were reported as was a **Blue Grouse** that wandered into a local yard.

A **Northern Crow** afflicted with warty lesions around its eyes, bill, legs and feet was photographed at the Post Office on September. The same bird was brought to the Forest Service office dead on the 28th.



26.

Bruce Page [Bird Ruminations](#) from Eaglechat

It's raining and blowing today, I've gotten wet once already birding, so I thought I'd jot down a few Gustavus bird thoughts and see how they resonate on a more regional basis.

The status of certain bird species appear a bit off-center, based on this past month's observations.

Northwestern Crow- I can't remember ever going a full month around the Gustavus Foreland without seeing or hearing a crow in August. There are multiple colonies in the area, they are usually flocking up about now and are foraging around the golf course, beaches, and are being their obvious,

mischievous selves. What would explain their near total absence? There have been flocks noted in Glacier Bay and a huge one of about 500 crows on the Porpoise Islands recently, but none at Gustavus, where there are berries, fish carcasses, spawning salmon, beach goodies, refuse, bird feeders, and all kinds of food right now. Are the numbers indeed down, or have they moved elsewhere for the moment (and if so why this year and not any other)? Common ravens, on the other hand, seem distributed normally.

Some other species around Gustavus seem to be scarce, notably **Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Winter Wrens, and Song Sparrows**. Have the last three long, cold, wet winters taken a toll on them, is there some other reason, or are they in usual concentrations elsewhere in SE?

Lastly, **Steller's Jays, Red-breasted Nuthatches**, and the cyclical finches (like **Siskins** and **Crossbills**) seem at a very low ebb at Gustavus. Is this also true elsewhere in SE?

Posted by: "Paul Suchanek" Eaglechat

Just a couple of impressions for Juneau. **Crows** numbers seem about normal here (i.e. abundant) but I think that local populations of **Great Blue Herons, Kingfishers, and Winter Wrens** (and **Brown Creepers**) are down here - presumably due to the last couple of tough winters. Song sparrows seem to be doing OK. **Crossbills** and **Siskins** are very scarce, but these species often are boom or bust here. **Nuthatches** are typically scarce here also but I think jay numbers seem a bit off - perhaps again due to the recent snowy, cold winters.

A quick plug here: Although these mailing lists normally just discuss rarities, a great way to actually document changes in numbers of more common birds is for birders to enter their sightings into eBird from their daily walk in the park, on the beach, birding trip, or just looking out their window. For the Juneau area, there are now enough data in eBird for 2008 and 2009 for the interested observer to actually look at the differences between years in relative abundance for a number of species

Interesting bird observations in Canada

For more information contact: Cameron Eckert, Whitehorse, Yukon
yukon bird club [yukonbirdclub@gmail.com]

I compile a seasonal report summarizing bird observations and trends from Northern Canada which is published quarterly in the journal North American Birds (www.aba.org/nab/). I am thrilled to announce that the Region has now been expanded to include Greenland. I am hoping that you can help make the Northern Canada & Greenland report an exciting, accurate, and informed synopsis of our northern birdlife.

I would very much appreciate any bird observations you can provide from anywhere in the Region. I am also very keen to receive suggestions you have for other birders who might have observations from the Region. I would especially welcome new contacts in the remoter parts of the Yukon, NWT, Nunavut, and Greenland. This could include birdwatchers, researchers, professional biologists, people on the land, bird tour leaders & tourists - anyone who might have noteworthy observations.

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Public Market: Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org
Web Master: George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org



Juneau Audubon Board: Back row: Merrill Jensen, Patty Rose, Brien Daugherty, Brenda Wright, Mary Lou King. Front row: Jeff Sauer, Mark Schwan

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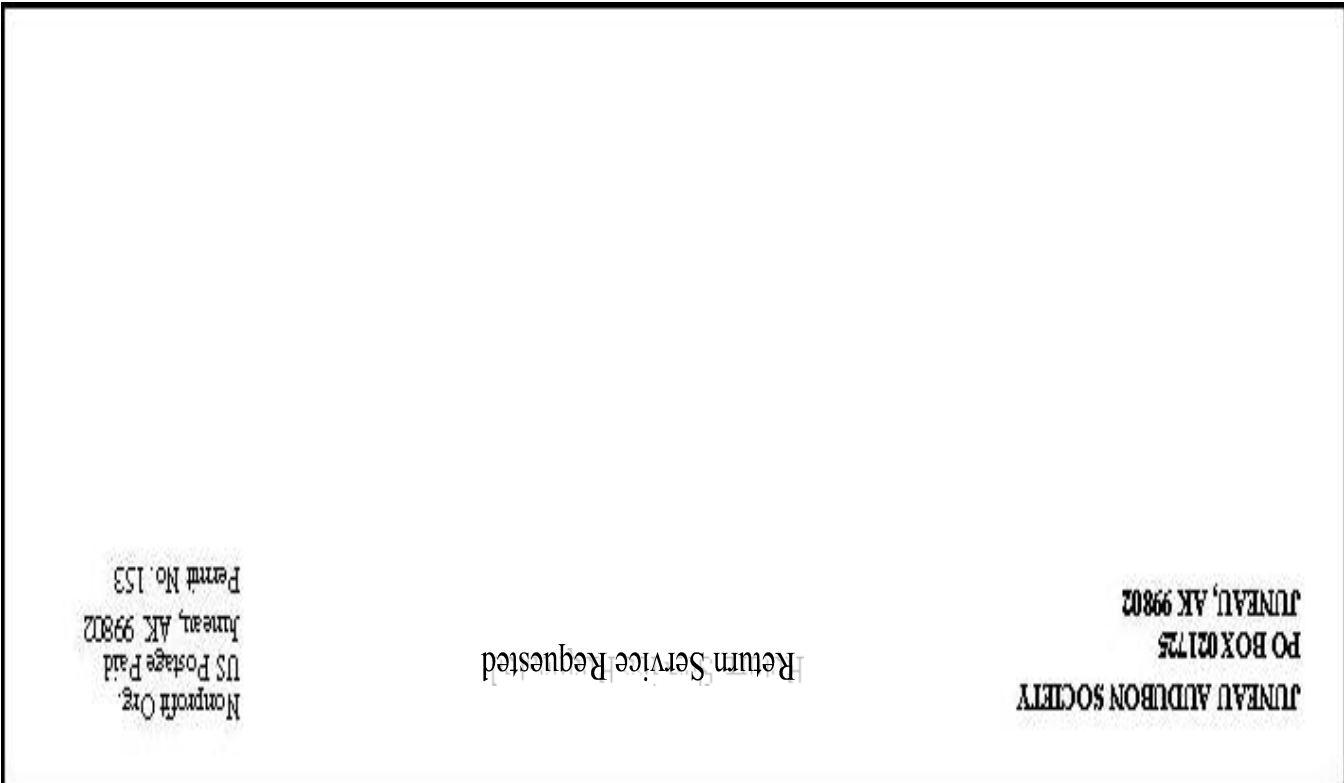
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The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2009

Please note: Instead of a regular Juneau Audubon meeting on the second Thursday of November, we are taking advantage of the opportunity to attend the following meeting:

“Where cold is hot— a Murrelets eye view of Glacier Bay”

Friday, November 6, 7:00 P.M., Egan Auditorium on the UAS Juneau campus

Matt Kirchhoff will talk about what they learned in the summer, 2009, when members of the Juneau Chapter, along with other volunteers, converged on Glacier Bay to participate in a study of Marbled Murrelets and Kittlitz’s Murrelets. They are species of high conservation concern, and Glacier Bay is an important population center for both, with an estimated 4,900 Kittlitz’s Murrelets and 41,400 Marbled Murrelets occurring there.

Juneau October 2009 Bird Highlights By Mark Schwan

This will be an abbreviated report, as many birders were traveling during the last portions of the month and the deadline for submission to the newsletter was quite early, in order to have the newsletter distributed in time to promote Matt Kirchhoff’s murrelet presentation at UAS on November 6. Still, it was a fascinating period, as birders took advantage of unseasonably nice weather during the first half of the month and found several exciting birds. Of course, the highlight of the “month” was a bird discovered at the end of September, but it was too late to get it into last month’s newsletter. Here are a few highlights.

A **Northern Hawk Owl** was reported along the airport dike in early October (JE), and then another bird (or same bird?) was found at the same location on October 11, (GV, PS, BA, MS). The fall arrival of **Anna’s Hummingbird** seemed early, and could almost be classified as an invasion, as perhaps 4 different birds were in Juneau during the first week of October. One bird was seen repeatedly at the Glacier Gardens in the Mendenhall Valley (BA, NH, photos) during the first week of October. Gus van Vliet saw one at his feeder at Auke Bay on October 1. Patty Rose had an individual visiting her feeder from October 8 through at least mid month, and a probable Anna’s made a brief visit at another Auke Bay residence on October 10 (DB). A female **Black-backed Woodpecker** was nicely photographed at Point Louisa on October 9 (DJ, photos). Another individual was found along the Outer Point Trail on North Douglas Island on October 15 (PS). This species is very scarce in Juneau, but most sightings seem to come in spring and fall times.

The local bird find of the year was certainly the **Great Crested Flycatcher** found on September 29 at the UAS student housing (NH, GV, photos). First detected by an unusual and loud call, the bird was seen taking red oshier dogwood berries from shrubs adjacent to one of the student residences. The bird remained quite loyal to this site over the next week and was subsequently seen by many birders. This represents only the second record for the state of Alaska; as the only other record is from Middleton Island, on September 29 (also), 1990, when a bird was collected by the late M. E. "Pete" Isleib.



Gray Catbird

Photo by Patty Rose

A big surprise was **the Gray Catbird** that made a brief visit to Paul Suchanek's home feeding station at North Douglas on October 13. Many birders saw and photographed the bird that afternoon. Paul said in Eaglechat that the catbird has not been seen since the first day of sightings - a classic one day wonder. This record was the first for Juneau and only the second for Southeast Alaska. A **Boreal Chickadee** was seen by Gus van Vliet on October 15. Any of the interior chickadee species are quite rare in Juneau. Single **White-throated Sparrows** were found along the airport dike early in the month (GV, PR) and a single bird was seen at a Mendenhall Valley

feeder the first week into the month

(DM).Contributors: Bev Agler, BA; Debi Ballam, DB; John Eiler, JE; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Doug Jones, DJ; Deanna MacPhail; Patty Rose, PR; Mark Schwan, MS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV. Compiled by Mark Schwan.

This very strange looking Varied Thrush was seen on Sunny Point on October 19 by Mary Lou King



It Wasn't an Ordinary Tuesday By Nick Hajdukovich

It had been a dramatic day already with an unexpected event where a very powerful weedwacker flung a rock towards the back of my car, shattering the back window. I decided to bring the car in and have the window removed and have the empty hole where the window should be covered. While walking in the parking lot to my car I heard a strange bird call that I almost disregarded as a weird Steller's Jay. I live on the UAS campus in student housing and there are many jays around that make plenty of strange noises. For some reason I decided to track down the bird, bringing no binoculars or camera and expecting to just find a jay. The bird was very loud and it sounded like it was calling from the windowsill of one of the student apartments. After about 5 minutes of searching I finally got within feet of where it sounded like the bird was calling from. All of a sudden a bird popped into view from a small Red Dogwood

Bush just outside one of the apartment windows. I was only feet away from the bird and I recognized it as being some species of large flycatcher. I first thought Western Kingbird, however the bird promptly flew away showing its brilliant rufous colored tail and I knew it was something good. I had recalled Gus Van Vliet telling me about an Ash-throated Flycatcher that he saw in his yard and I concluded that this bird was something along those lines and something that I would need help to identify. I quickly called Gus and within minutes he was on the scene. After about 5 minutes we concluded that the bird was a Great Crested Flycatcher!



Throughout the next week the bird stayed around and I think just about every birder in Juneau and even one birder from Fairbanks made it out to the campus to check this bird out. Great Crested Flycatchers breed up and down the east coast and regularly make it as far west as east-central Alberta. A handful of birds have been spotted in California with sporadic sightings occurring in other states east of California. There is one record of this species in British Columbia and only one other record for Alaska. The British Columbia record and now both Alaska records for this species have all occurred on September 29! I guess we know what day to get out and search for Great Crested Flycatchers! Maybe my broken back window isn't so bad after all. Now if I could just get it fixed.... Bird on,

Wrangell Bird Sightings – November 2009 By Bonnie Demerjian

October saw a few single birds on beaches and lakes around Wrangell including a **Black-bellied Plover**. An **American Coot** turned up at the golf course pond on the 19th along with 2 female **Ring-necked Ducks**. Six **Great-blue Herons** were also spotted fishing in the same pond. A **Wilson's Snipe** was seen several times, also at the golf course. A lone **Trumpeter Swan** was reported at Pat's Lake along with eight Ring-necked ducks. An observer on lower Etolin Island noted a flock of 200 **Pacific Loons** early in the month. Two male **Hooded Mergansers** were also spotted.

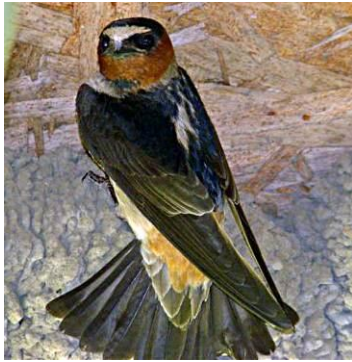
Sooty Grouse appeared at three different residential locations this past month.

Two observers reported **Anna's Hummingbirds** at feeders, one in town and another on Farm Island on the Stikine River delta along with a single **Red-winged Blackbird**. A number of **Northern Harriers**

were also reported feeding on delta rodents. Northern harriers, Merlins and Kestrels were reported on Wrangell Island and also Etolin.

The deceased **Northwest Crow** with warty growths that was described in last month's report was determined to possibly been infected with avian pox. Another crow with a similar growth on the cheek was spotted at a feeder in mid month. No other birds have yet been seen with this contagious disease. Wrangell birders were cautioned to clean their feeders and stop feeding for a time to allow birds to disperse. It's not easy, however, to discourage crows that have discovered a prime feeding spot.

A few **White-crowned Sparrows** are still around as well as a single **American Tree Sparrow**. **Pine Siskins**, which have been elsewhere for the past several months, have reappeared in their usual large numbers such as one flock of about 100 at the golf course. A number of **Red Crossbills** are still in town and **Pine Grosbeaks** were reported from Farm Island.



Bill Newman's photos of Cliff Swallows that nested on his cabin on Farm Island on the Stikine River Delta



Seward Peninsula Flora and Fauna By Merrill Jensen

This past June, my wife and I spent 4 days exploring the Seward Peninsula in search of native plants and migratory birds. This trip was originally planned as a plant collecting expedition for the Jensen-Olson Arboretum to look for endemic plant material for the Alpine Rock Garden. It quickly morphed into a study of the natural history of the area. Although we had planned the trip well in advance, the late spring weather was not conducive for finding some of the botanical gems I was looking for as they had not yet had enough snow-free time to awaken from their long arctic winter slumber. While driving the road system in search of plants, the dizzying array of migratory birds was astounding. Shorebirds impressed us with the distances they had traveled from the far reaches of the planet. Life-list birds were plentiful. And let's not forget the musk oxen. These primal animals were found (very easily I might add) all along the road system. Juveniles frolicked across the sun drenched tundra with the exuberance of youth. Then there was the scenery...vast expanses of tundra spread across the rolling foothills to the limestone spires of the Kigluaik Mountains. Everything had a manic feel to it with the unending light of the second week of June. I'll be doing an Audubon presentation later this winter with slides of these Seward Peninsula wonders.

JUNEAU PUBLIC MARKET NOVEMBER 27 - 29, 2009.

Juneau Audubon Society's annual fund raiser is our booth at the Juneau Public Market. Our biggest seller every year is our wonderful jellies and jams. If you have saved ½ pint canning jars that we can reuse call Mary Lou King 789-7540. Also call her if you would like to help make jelly.

We need volunteers for the booth. We like to have two people for two hour shifts. Since the booth is open 12:00 - 8:00 p.m. on Friday and 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, we need 24 volunteers to help us sell our wares during the weekend. If you are available to help, please call Patty at 586-1334 or Gwen at 523-2895

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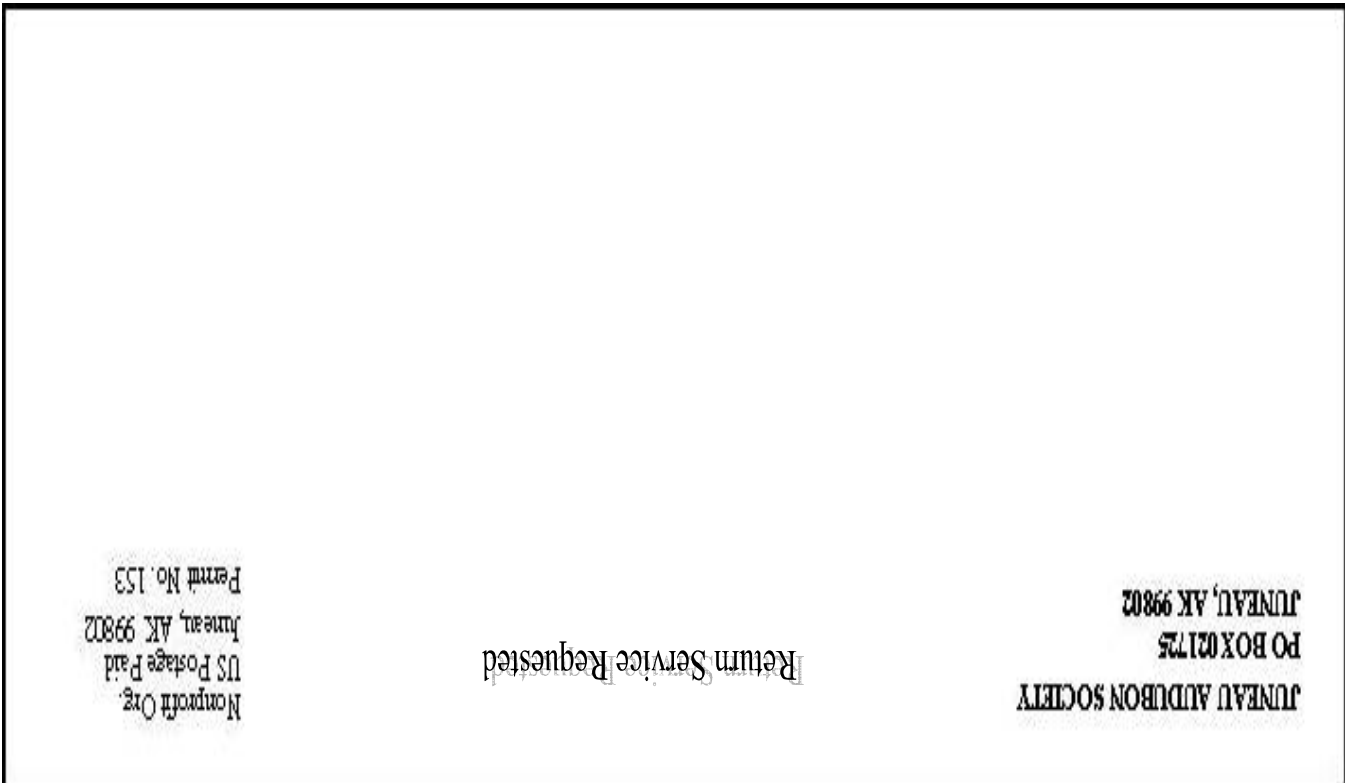
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Volume 36, Number 4

Juneau Audubon Society

December 2009



Mark Schwan

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, December 10, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

We will set the stage for this year's Christmas Bird Count at our December meeting. Come and hear some of Juneau's veteran birders provide an overview of how the Juneau count is conducted, strategies on how to estimate numbers of birds, and tips on how to resolve some of our more difficult bird identification challenges. And, we should have a short presentation on winter owls in Juneau as well. Our presenters include Beth Peluso, Patty Rose, Paul Suchanek, and Mark Schwan. So, even if you don't plan to participate in the count, or don't know much about our local birds, here is a great opportunity to learn about our late fall and early winter birds in Juneau. Everyone is welcome. It will be a nice evening.

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting for January will be Thursday January 14, with Chiska Derr who will introduce the common and conspicuous lichens found around Southeast Alaska and the role they play in the ecosystem.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The longest running Citizen Science event in the world, Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) now has counts in all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands. The designated count period is December 14 through January 5. Dates, locations and times for Southeast Alaska's CBCs are written below.

Given habitat and wild areas disappearing at an alarming rate, and global warming affecting some ranges, scientists will rely on CBC data to identify birds in most urgent need of conservation action. For this reason, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Birds Count plays a critical role in helping focus attention and conservation where it is most needed.

The 2009 Juneau Christmas Bird Count

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Saturday, December 19, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the two McDonald's Restaurants at 8 a.m. on count day, with appropriate attire and binoculars. People wanting to count in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas should meet at the downtown restaurant; birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the valley restaurant. As usual, there will be a potluck after the count at the home of Mark Schwan and Debi Ballam to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. Let's have a great turnout and a terrific count! For more information on this year's Count, you can call Mark Schwan, at 789-9841.

Known Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska

Chilkat	December	Dan Egolf*	766-2876
		Tim Shields	766-2354
Haines	December 20	Dan Egolf	766-2876
		Tim Shields	766-2354
Juneau	December 19	Mark Schwan Gus van Vliet	789-9841
Ketchikan	December 19	Andrew Piston	247-6553
Mitkof Island	December 19	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Sitka	January 3	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 19	Elaine Furbish	983-2049
		Dawn Adams	983-3302
Tenakee Springs	Date not set yet**	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Wrangell	December 19	Bonnie Demerjian	874-3665

*Forms, date, and information available at the Back Country Ski Shop

** Date dependent upon optimum tide schedule

SKAGWAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT INFORMATION By Elaine Furbish

The Skagway Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, 19 December 2009. We welcome any out-of-town folks to our count. You can get the latest information on our count through our group web site at "<http://groups.google.com/group/skagway-bird-club>". Contact me by phone (Elaine Furbish 907-983-2049) or by email through the web site, or simply come to the SweetTooth Cafe between 8 and 9 am on Saturday, 19 December.

Juneau November Birding Notes By Mark Schwan

Some exciting birds were found around Juneau during November, and as you read below, you will see that Nick Hajdukovich had another great month of birding. Nick's enthusiasm and expertise are terrific; he has already added so much to the local birding community. It is great to have him here! Here are a few highlights for the month.

A **Rough-legged Hawk** was spotted flying over Egan Drive near Lemon Creek on November 23 (NH). A **Red Knot** continued to be sporadically located at Eagle Beach (last know date November 12 (JL, EC). Seen previously by Paul Suchanek, this may represent the latest record for this species anywhere in Alaska. A lone **Sanderling** was also spotted on November 12 with the shorebird mix at Eagle Beach (JL, EC).



Doug Jones

An excited duck hunter along the Point Bridget Park trail on November 6 told Paul Suchanek of a **Snowy Owl** near the mouth of Cowee Creek, and the bird was relocated and photographed (PS). Certainly the most exciting bird find of the month was the **Long-eared Owl** found by Gus van Vliet on November 10, near the entrance to the golf course. Many birders observed and photographed the bird through the rest of the day, and during the search and stakeout, it became apparent that there was a second Long-eared present, although the second bird was not documented with certainty. There was only one previous record for this species from the Juneau roadside and very few prior records from the region.

An **Anna's Hummingbird** appeared briefly at Patty Rose's Douglas Island feeder on November 10. A female **Mountain Bluebird** was found near the Temsco facility on November 14 (NH), and a similar individual was found near the golf course on November 24 (PS). Jeff Sauer had a rather tame **Townsend's Solitaire** hanging near his house near Lena Point through the morning of November 21.

While checking his seed station near Switzer Creek on November 19, Nick Hajdukovich found a **Swamp Sparrow**. Then while checking his feed at Auke Bay on November 21, he spotted a **White-throated Sparrow**. This bird was seen and photographed by many birders the next day.

Contributors: Ed Clark, EC; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; James Levinson, JL; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek; Gus van 'Vliet. Compiled by Mark Schwan

Eagle feather collectors: Please bring all your feathers to any public meeting or call Brenda for pickup- cell phone-321-4739. Mark Schwan or Brenda Wright will collect them for shipping to Colorado! Thank you!

‘Tis the Season to Give ... To the Birds By: Nick Hajdukovich

I recently returned from a birding trip to Ketchikan and was astonished at the ease of birding. My friend Luke and I would drive around to specific locations where local birders had spread birdseed out. Large flocks of juncos and other sparrows were flocked up and we were able to sit in our warm cars and thoroughly enjoy the birds. It was raining sideways one of the days and we kept warm and were able to see many birds that continued to flock to the birdseed. After seeing this, I decided to try to the same thing in the Juneau area.

With hopes of attracting a rare species of bird or to make finding birds a little easier, I have spread birdseed out in several different locations around Juneau. At first I was only able to attract a couple dark-eyed juncos; however, there are currently at least 15 juncos and several other species of sparrows at each location. Here are some locations of the bird feeding stations:

Industrial Boulevard; located at the end of Industrial Blvd. off of the Glacier Highway; the bird seed is in the trees near the gate that blocks off the road to the Juneau Golf Course. Birds seen here have included: Dark-eyed Junco, Lincoln’s sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Golden-crowned Sparrow.

Police Station Area; located on Alaway Road. If you turn down Alaway Rd. you will see an abandoned lot on your right side about 75 yards down the road. The birdseed is located in the back right hand corner of the lot at the entrance to a trail that crosses Switzer Creek. Birds seen around this area have included: Dark-eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, “Red” Fox Sparrow, Varied Thrush, Rusty Blackbird, and **Swamp Sparrow (found on 19 November and has not been relocated since)**. The Swamp Sparrow was never seen feeding at the birdseed but was most likely loosely associated with the large flock of juncos that has congregated that the birdseed. **NOTE:** This area is all private property; however, I have talked with the owners before and they are fine with people being there if they stay at the entrance to the trail and stick to watching birds. There are also several presumed homeless people who are regularly seen near the bridge across Switzer Creek.

Auke Village; located off of the Glacier Highway on Pt. Louisa Road. There is a large totem pole on the right side of Pt. Louisa Road about 1 mile down the road. Just past the totem pole there is a large spruce tree on the left side or ocean side of the road and the birdseed is spread under the tree. Birds seen here have included: Dark-eyed Junco, “Red” Fox Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Varied Thrush, and **“Tan morph” White-throated Sparrow (first seen on 21 November)**.

There is only one thing that I ask of birders who check these bird-feeding stations regularly: send me an email (jbslugger@mac.com) if you find an unusual bird at any of the locations and I will be there as soon as possible!

WRANGELL DECEMBER REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

A large flock of **Western Grebes** usually can be found south of Wrangell each winter. So far, only one has been reported, along with a small number of **Red-necked Grebes**.

An amazing 105 **Trumpeter Swans** showed up for just a day at Pat's Lake south of Wrangell. Observers reported the lake covered with the birds, a far cry from the single swan that has occupied the lake most of the month. A small flock (8) of **Black Brant** was spotted on Zimovia Strait south of town. A single **American Coot** reported last month continued to feed on the golf course pond until freezeup. Mid-month, a flock of 12 **Sandhill Cranes** were spotted overhead ten miles south of town.



A duck hunter on the Stikine River flats reported seeing a single **Western Meadowlark** early in the month. **Short-eared Owls** are common on the flats but one was reported flying over Zimovia Straits south of Wrangell as it trailed a flock of Buffleheads. Also seen on the river flats this past month were a **Rough-legged Hawk** and a **Peregrine Falcon**. As the falcon dived on a flock of **Sandhill Cranes**, the observer reported hearing a whistling overhead and mist trailing off the bird's leading wing edge, "just like you see when a jet takes off and lands." Seven cranes had landed but the observer only saw six take off. An ambitious meal for a Peregrine!

Northwestern Crows with possible avian pox lesions noted back in September are continuing to turn up occasionally. Most recently, one at a feeder exhibited a large lesion under its eye and another on the wing. The primary feathers on one wing were also in deteriorated condition. An immature **White-throated Sparrow** and scattered **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were reported this month.

Wrangell's Christmas Bird Count will be December 19.

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

The annual Bald Eagle Festival featured a new interest in this yearly gathering of the birds of prey. A new class at Haines High School called Citizen Scientists presented their eagle count results to date. They have been undertaking the count for the Bald Eagle Foundation. The Eagle Foundation had collected data on and off for about 30 years but stopped a couple of years ago. The class has

been conducting counts since September 1 at various stops along Haines Highway from Hooligan Point near the airport to 30 mile. The first count resulted in 56 eagles combining all stops. Then it rose to 150 for a couple of weeks. The peak was October 13 at the Council Grounds with 1157 counted. First migration was near the Klehini end of the preserve, then it dropped. It peaked again at the Council Grounds, then dropped again—they believe it is weather. The counters in the Bald Eagle Preserve also showed a high ratio of adult to juvenile eagles. The class will finish counts in December and hopefully return in spring to count nests. The overall eagle population in the valley is 400 in the summer.

Pam Randles started quite a discussion on Eaglechat when she reported other fall birds in Haines. She reported several Mourning Doves who spent the late summer and fall in town and up the Highway as far as Klukwan. We also had some hummingbirds (Rufous and Anna's) arrive (possibly on a storm) in mid-September. All the others had left by the end of August. The last of these late comers left November 12 (on another storm?) Parasitic Jaegers have also been sighted on the Chilkat River.

For future bird counts, the Christmas Bird Count is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 20, 2009 in Haines.

BIRDING NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

This year's **Christmas Bird Count** will be held in **Ketchikan on the 19th of December**. Local birding enthusiasts hope to increase last years record breaking total number of 75 species observed on on count day and 79 species for the entire count week! **Contact Andy Piston at 225-5195 for more information.**

Autumn temperatures have been mild with only a couple snow flurries at sea level so far. Several interesting birds have visited our area. In late September an immature **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found south of town. There are only about ten accounts of this species in Alaska, although 3 individuals occurred here in October 2005! The latest ever **Warbling Vireo** was seen on September 25th. A colorful male **Black-headed Grosbeak** was in town in late October. A very rare visitor from Siberia, the first ever **Rustic Bunting** for our area was spotted north of town on 10-23. Amazingly another

Rustic Bunting found the same fantastic garden mid November and were feeding together. A couple small groups of **Aleutian Cackling Geese** were present the first week of November, possibly the first island record of this subspecies! Their smaller size and obvious white collar at the base of the neck is distinctive. There are various sparrows remaining including a very few **Savannah Sparrows** and up to 5 **White-throated Sparrows** were present around the area this month.

As Winter approaches good luck to birders who enjoy this year round challenging passion!

MARBLED MURRELET NEST By Mary Willson



On June 30, 2009, Kathy Hocker and I were hiking up along Eagle Creek on Douglas, looking for American Dippers, which often nest there. We were startled by a small, dark bird bursting at high speed from a cliff below our route. Peering over the edge, we looked down and saw a large, speckled egg resting on a mossy ledge. Only one thing it could be—a **Marbled Murrelet nest!**

On a subsequent visit to the site, we found the unattended egg and worried that it was abandoned. But two weeks later, we discovered a downy chick about six days old. With the photographic assistance of Bob Armstrong, digiscoping from a distance

of 25 m (just over 80 feet), we followed that chick's development right up to the day before it fledged. We even saw an adult deliver a fish in the middle of the day. What fun!

I later learned (from Gwen Baluss and Gus van Vliet) of two previous Marbled Murrelet nests in the Juneau area, one on Shelter Island and one in the Nugget valley. Both of these nests were on the ground also. Ground-nesting by marbled murrelets is apparently very uncommon south of Alaska.



TOAD REPORT By Mary Lou King

Mary Irvine took this photo of a big fat toad in early September in the Amalga Meadows. This is the first adult toad we have seen in years. There were a number of tiny toads in the Meadows this summer also, one of which is in the bottom center of this photo.

Public Market Success! By Brenda Wright

Thanks to all the hard work of the many volunteers, the Juneau Audubon public market booth was a success again this year. We don't have a final tally on the profits, but we sold all our jelly as usual. This year we had 28 dozen jars!

We can't be a success without all of Mary Lou King's contributions from picking the berries, to making the jelly, to pressing the wild flower cards, and weaving the cedar bark animal ornaments. Thanks Mary Lou (and your kind elves)!! Also I'd like to personally thank all the anonymous berry pickers plus Mark Schwan, Brien Daugherty, and myself. We sure appreciate our volunteers at the booth and this year that included Paul Suchanek, Monica O'Keefe, Mary Willson, Meg Cartwright, Bev Agler, Patty Rose, Deb Rudis, Beth Peluso, Judy Shuler, Pat Watt, Kathyee Hays, Kevin O'Malley and friend, Mark Anderson, Nora Lauglin, MaryAnn Brant, Jeanne Josephson, Aurora Hauke, Jeff Sauer, and Theresa Svencara. A special thank you to Ellen Anderson our booth planner and Patty Rose our treasurer. After we go home, Patty still has lots of work to do. Hope every body had a good time because we couldn't do it without you.



Getting ready for the Public Market with Mary Lou and Brenda.

NOTES ON CONSERVATION ISSUES By Meg Cartwright

Hoonah Indian Association Proposal to Harvest Glaucous-winged Gull Eggs in Glacier Bay

After the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was signed in the 1918, the National Park Service prohibited the Huna Tlingits from collecting glaucous-winged gull eggs in Glacier Bay National Park. More recent legislation (2000) directed the National Park Service to revisit this issue and reconsider allowing Hoonah residents to harvest gull eggs in the Park again. A Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), released last year, outlined three alternatives. Two of the alternatives consider glaucous-winged gull egg harvest at two different levels and the third choice is the No Action Alternative. About 30 comments were submitted during the public comment period. Both Audubon Alaska and Juneau Audubon Society wrote comments in support of allowing members of the Hoonah Indian Association to harvest glaucous-winged gull eggs in Glacier Bay. Interestingly, the receding glaciers have opened up more habitat for the gulls who nest on bare rock. Although the population of glaucous-winged gulls appears to be healthy, both Audubon groups proposed additional research questions and safeguards.

This proposal continues to weave its way through the federal regulatory process. The final draft LEIS is currently in the Park's Regional Office in Anchorage. The Glacier Bay staff expects that the final draft will be completed sometime in late December or early January. The Superintendent of the Park will then make a final decision which becomes the Record of Decision. The NEPA process will be closed once the Record of Decision is in place. The final step is to write legislation and regulations. For more information please go to the Glacier Bay National Park home page, click on Management, then Park Planning, and then Current Issues.

Angoon Airport Proposal

As part of the airport Master Plan, the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) wants to put a land-based airport near Angoon to enhance the emergency services for residents of this village. A land-based airport would increase the opportunity to fly patients to Juneau in bad weather and at night, especially in the winter. It most likely would also increase flight service to Angoon in general. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is assisting with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and has identified three possible locations for the runway that meet minimum requirements for flying. Two of the alternatives are in the wilderness area on the other side of Favorite Bay from Angoon (Alt. 3a and 4) and one alternative is a few miles from town on land owned by several entities (Alt. 12a).

Scoping comments suggest that residents of Angoon have mixed feelings about an addition of land-based airport and presented many views on the best location. The environmental community is supportive of increasing the emergency and safety services to residents of Angoon. Juneau Audubon Society will continue to monitor the progress of this project. We are looking for a solution that balances the needs of the community at the same time as minimizing the impacts to the Admiralty Island National Monument and Kootznoowoo Wilderness Area.

FAA consultants conducted research studies in 2009 focusing on wildlife inventories, road option impacts, subsistence use patterns and other impacts of an airport. In a recent meeting with FAA staff, consultants highlighted some of the bird activity they observed. A total of 4 goshawks were sighted during the survey—one close to each runway option and one near the road. Bald eagles were also seen at each airport site. Over 27 bird species were present, 25 species of breeding birds were counted including 7 bald eagle nest (2 were not active).

The consulting firm will present results of their field studies on Dec. 18th in Juneau. FAA will then look at all the alternatives including a No Action Alternative and may make a recommendation. DOT will also identify a preferred alternative and start the Title 11 ANILCA application process to address wilderness impacts before completing a Draft EIS for public review and comment. Once the Title 11 ANILCA application is submitted, the Forest Service has 60 days to review and ask for additional information if needed. Within a year, the Forest Service will make a recommendation to the President and Congress who will ultimately decide the outcome of putting an airport in a wilderness area if one of those alternative sites is selected. For more information, please go to <http://www.angoonairporteis.com/index.html>.

Channel Island State Marine Park

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is developing the Channel Island State Marine Park in the Juneau area. The Park was established in

2008 and includes 14 islands in Favorite Channel just north of town. The islands are Aaron, Battleship, Benjamin, Bird, Coghlan, Cohen, Gull, Indian, Lincoln, North, Portland, Ralston, Suedla, and a portion of Shelter. The main focus of the park will be recreation activities and protection of the resources values. Staff presented a draft plan in September and will publish the final one this winter. If you are interested in learning more, please go to <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/channelisland/mgtplanfinaldraft102709.pdf>

Auke Lake Management Plan

This plan was recently published by the Juneau Watershed Partnership (JWP). For more information on the plan please to http://www.juneauwatersheds.org/Auke%20Action%20Plan_DRAFT.pdf

Audubon Alaska Chapter Council Meeting

By Mark Anderson, board member JAS

On November 7, 2009, I attended the yearly meeting of Alaska Audubon Chapters in Anchorage representing the Juneau Audubon Society. The meeting was hosted by Audubon Alaska and representatives of the other local chapters were in attendance. I met Kenna Sue Trickey of the Anchorage Audubon chapter, River Gates of Arctic Audubon, Cindy Trussel of Kodiak Audubon and Milo Burcham of Prince William Sound Audubon.

Audubon Alaska is the chapter that's most closely involved with the National Audubon Society and major research, policy, and conservation issues in Alaska. Check out their web site at ak.audubon.org for information on murrelets research, GIS mapping, Important Bird Areas (IBA's) in AK and much more. We met with Audubon Alaska Staff: John Schoen, Lorelei Costa, Gretchen Hazen, Matt Kirchhoff, Eric Meyers and Taldi Walter.

We started the meeting with the Transition Plan for Audubon Alaska. They are now hiring an Executive Director and a Policy Director. Stan Senner has left to take a position with the Ocean Conservancy. Taldi Walter is also leaving to work with National Audubon in Washington D.C. So if you are an experienced conservation leader looking for a rewarding job in Alaska, check out their website. The Audubon collaborative funding grant is going to Kodiak this year. Last year we used it to update our website. There are also competitive grants available from Toyota (togethergreen.org) that can be used to fund larger innovative conservation projects. Then each representative gave a brief report on their activities for the year and explained a bit about their chapter. We discussed recruiting and membership events and building a strong board.

The afternoon was spent on global warming and its effect on Alaska. Taldi gave a presentation on A Warming Frontier and we had a great discussion on climate change and Audubon's role.

Alaska is "ground zero" for the impacts of global warming. The impact of global warming is disproportionately greater at higher latitudes. Alaskans are already seeing the impacts of a changing climate including increased forest fires, loss of Arctic sea ice, invasive species outbreaks, coastal erosion, melting permafrost, and the need for entire village relocations. In Southeast all you need to do is look up at the shrinking snowfields and glaciers to see the impacts.

Audubon’s report “ Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion” underscores the need for action to address global warming. Audubon’s analysis of four decades of scientific data revealed that the birds of North America are moving dramatically northward. The center of abundance for many species of birds as tabulated in the Christmas Bird Count is moving. Some examples common to Southeast are:

Red-breasted Merganser	317 miles	Black-bellied Plover	114 miles
Green-winged Teal	157 miles	Black Turnstone	178 miles
Pine Siskin	288 miles	Spruce Grouse	316 miles

So, please join Audubon in supporting global warming legislation in Congress to reduce emissions and provide for renewable clean energy. Audubon’s role in climate change may need to expand to provide for species adaptation to new habitat. What are we going to do for the Pikas in the Rockies that are working their way up to the top of the mountains and extinction? What about the declining Dusky Canada Goose with a summer range limited to the Copper River Delta? These are going to be difficult wildlife questions that we will need to figure out. Even now we are creating habitat for Kirtland’s Warblers that require extensive stands of young Jack Pine and clearing land back East for Bobwhites. If it takes about a million years for a new species to develop, I don’t think we want to wait too long before we act.

KEVIN O'MALLEY new Education Chair

I grew up exploring the Cleveland Metro parks and started my naturalist training there. A degree from the University of Toledo in Cultural Anthropology...I advocate human relationships to the natural world. My mission is to connect people with "place" by facilitating walks on this land.

As a Juneau Audubon Society board member in Education. I would like to fulfill a childhood passion of sharing nature with my community.

**Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs,
Events Coordinators**

- President:** Mark Schwan, president@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Vice-President:** Jeff Sauer, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Secretary:** Gwen Baluss, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Treasurer:** Patty Rose, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Programs:** Beth Peluso, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Membership:** Brenda Wright, 789-4656, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Education:** Kevin O'Malley, education@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Conservation:** Meg Cartwright, 364-2258 conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Field Trips:** Beth Peluso, field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Raven Editor:** Mary Lou King, 789-7540, raven@juneau-audubon-society.org
- At-large:** Mark Anderson, at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org
- At-large:** Merrill Jensen, at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Public Market:** Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Web Master:** George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org



National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

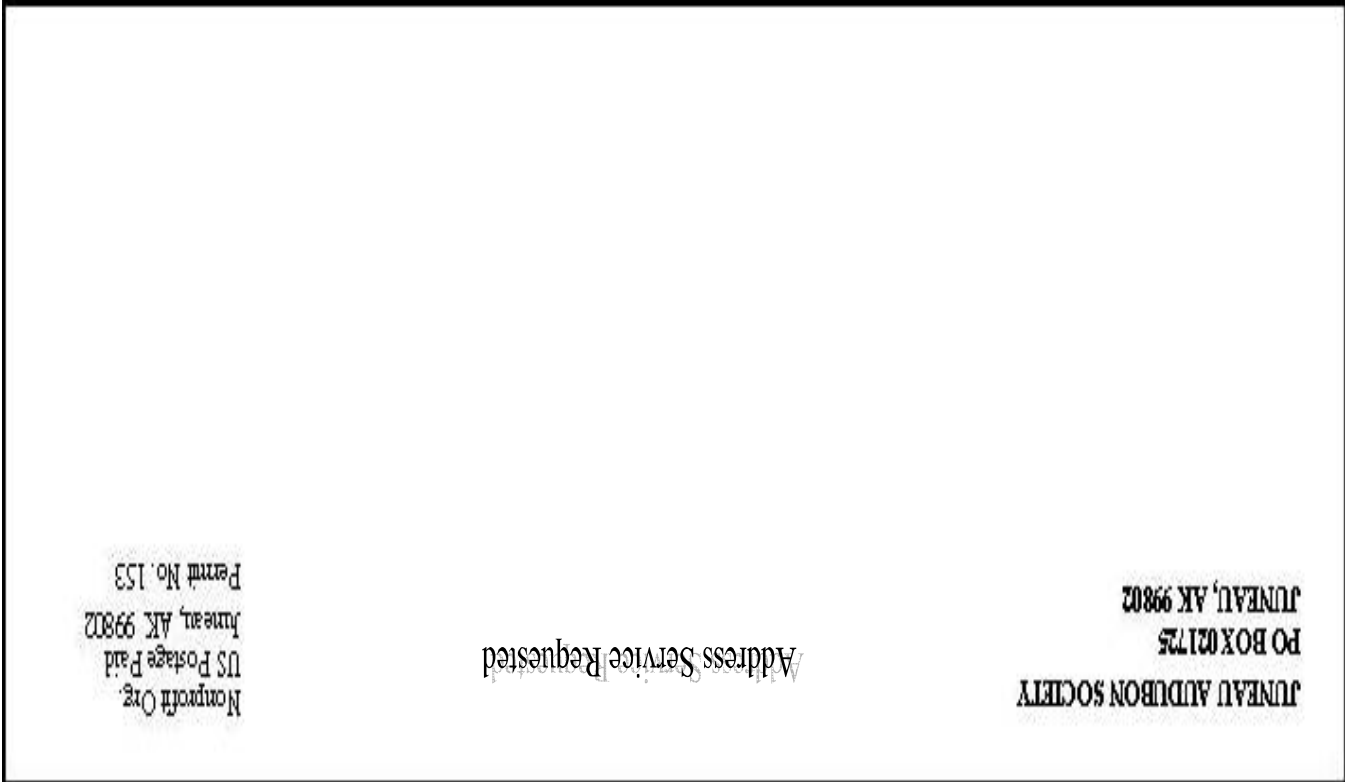
Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me
A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (1-year membership) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**



The Raven



The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2010

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, January 14, 7:00 p.m.

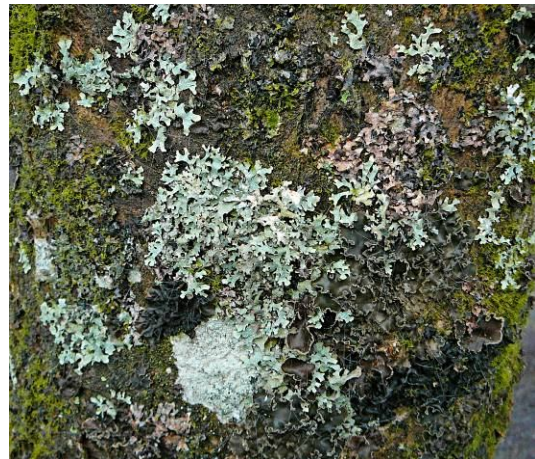
UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

Common Lichens of Southeast Alaska

Chiska Derr will give a slide presentation on lichens, their habitat, and some of the important ecological roles they play. She'll show pictures of the more conspicuous lichens of Southeast Alaska, and describe differences between some of the genera. Chiska will also bring in lichen samples and reference books for people to browse.

Chiska's MS from Oregon State University focused on lichen community gradients and elemental tissue

content of muskeg lichens in Southeast, and lichen transplantation and growth rates. She spent several years looking for, identifying, writing about, and teaching seminars on old-growth associated lichens managed under the Northwest Forest Plan (the "Spotted Owl" plan). She is coauthor of *The Lichens and Allied Fungi of Southeastern Alaska* (1998).



Saturday Wild -- Tracks and Signs 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Jan. 9 Meet at West Glacier Trailhead (Beyond skater's cabin)

Jan 23 Meet at Airport Dike Trail parking lot to walk on Mendenhall Wetlands

Feb 13 Dredge Lakes Trails (meet at parking lot across the Back Loop Road from Mendenhall Elementary School)



Naturalist Kevin O'Malley and the Juneau Audubon Society are continuing Saturday Wild a Tracking & Signs Program. Our goal is to connect people with community by spending time exploring together in our backyard. We will study local mammal and bird populations and their relationships to their environment. **Families are welcome. Elders come share your stories. Be prepared to hike off trail. Dress for the weather. Children must be accompanied by an adult. No Dogs. Free to public.**

Save the Date: 2010 Great Backyard Bird Count February 12 - 15, 2010

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is led by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and provides an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about birds and the environment we share. Chapters are encouraged to make the most of the thirteenth annual GBBC by including it in creative ways through field trips, birding ID courses, bird-watching competitions, photo contests and more. The GBBC website includes information and inspiration at www.birdcount.org, along with photos from last year's count, a game, and other materials, including a downloadable PowerPoint presentation, a voice narrated tutorial, and regional bird lists.

FOR MORE INFO: CONTACT MELISSA HOPKINS AT (202) 861-2242 x3050.

U.S. Forest Service Winter Fireside lectures. The full schedule is posted soon on our web site at www.mendenhallglacier.net.

Juneau's Christmas Bird Count Overview By Mark Schwan

Thirty-six birders participated in this year's count, and birders were spread pretty thin in order to cover all areas. Given the cold weather leading up to the count, we had a respectable 72 species of birds during the day and counted more than 10,000 birds (see table for specifics). Several common species were relatively scarce, such as Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, and Steller's Jay. We had a new high count for one species, Ring-necked Duck.



Two new species were added to our cumulative count-day list, Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk and Willow Ptarmigan, and another species, the Eurasian Collared-Dove, was new, but found only during the count week. This species is another story all unto itself this year. Other unusual species present included Gyrfalcon, American Kestrel, Eurasian Wigeon (cw), Long-billed Dowitcher (cw), Northern Flicker, American Pipit (cw), and Lincoln's Sparrow (cw). Moreover, a male Barrow's X Common Goldeneye hybrid was located on count day. This bird (presumed to be the same)

was first seen by Paul Suchanek in February 2007 and has been seen each winter since.

Juneau birders found an additional eleven species during the official count week but which were not seen on our count day. The inclusion of these species with count day information certainly helps round out the description of our local avian diversity in early winter. These species are identified in the table with a "cw" in the count column. Thanks to all the volunteers for donating their day to the count effort and to those who birded during the count week. Thanks to Paul Suchanek for organizing the in-town groups, and to Gus van Vliet for tracking count-week birds and overseeing the evening tally (with help from Molly McCafferty). Finally, thanks to everyone for contributing all the absolutely tremendous food for the potluck.

Juneau CBC Results, 12/19/2009

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>
Canada Goose	649
Gadwall	30
Eurasian Wigeon	cw
American Wigeon	311
Mallard	2,413
Northern Pintail	cw
Green-winged Teal	30
Ring-necked Duck	10
Greater Scaup	76
Unidentified Scaup	55
Harlequin Duck	116
Surf Scoter	209
White-winged Scoter	36
Black Scoter	1
Unidentified Scoters	1
Long-tailed Duck	9
Bufflehead	121
Common Goldeneye	227
Barrow's Goldeneye	311
Common X Barrow's Hybrid	1
Unidentified Goldeneyes	9
Hooded Merganser	3
Common Merganser	204
Red-breasted Merganser	145
Unidentified Mergansers	9
Willow Ptarmigan	1
Red-throated Loon	1
Pacific Loon	4
Common Loon	8
Yellow-billed Loon	1
Horned Grebe	33
Red-necked Grebe	26
Pelagic Cormorant	34
Great Blue Heron	5
Bald Eagle	156
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Northern Goshawk	2
Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk	1
American Kestrel	1
Gyr Falcon	1
Killdeer	cw
Black Turnstone	77
Dunlin	150
Unidentified Sandpipers	17
Long-billed Dowitcher	cw
Wilson's Snipe	cw
Mew Gull	65
Glaucous-winged Gull	1,416

Gl.-winged x Herring Gull hyb.	3
Glaucous Gull	2
Unidentified Gulls	521
Common Murre	14
Pigeon Guillemot	3
Marbled Murrelet	138
Eurasian Collared Dove	cw
Rock Pigeon	85
Great Horned Owl	1
Northern Pygmy-owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	4
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	cw
Northern Flicker	1
Unidentified Woodpeckers	1
Northern Shrike	1
Steller's Jay	20
Black-billed Magpie	29
Northwestern Crow	749
Common Raven	561
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	100
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
Brown Creeper	4
Winter Wren	6
American Dipper	11
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13
Unidentified Kinglets	15
American Robin	6
Varied Thrush	6
European Starling	cw
American Pipit	cw
Bohemian Waxwing	1
American Tree Sparrow	7
Fox Sparrow	2
Song Sparrow	14
Lincoln's Sparrow	cw
White-crowned Sparrow	1
Golden-crowned Sparrow	2
Unidentified Sparrows	1
Dark-eyed Junco	328
Snow Bunting	70
Rusty Blackbird	cw
Pine Grosbeak	20
White-winged Crossbill	37
Common Redpoll	93
Pine Siskin	304
COUNT DAY SPECIES	72
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	10,156
ADDITIONAL CW SPECIES	11

KETCHIKAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS-by Teri Goucher

Saturday December 19th was a beautiful sunny day without a breeze. It reminded me of the legend about the kingfisher's nest and the halcyon days near the solstice!

Nearly 30 participants scouted our count circle by taking boats around area waterways, to hikers in snow packed alpine, to those who searched neighborhoods, and folks who just watched feeders. Everyone's efforts paid off as Ketchikan again shattered the record of the most species in the state for the second year in a row!

A total of **82 species** were tallied on count day and another was added when a **Red-winged Blackbird** made an appearance only during count week...for a grand total of 83 species for our area!

A male **Rock Ptarmigan** was photographed by Alan Murray high a top 3000 foot Deer Mountain which was our first record of that species of ptarmigan for the count!

A **Rusty Blackbird** also made it for the first time on Ketchikan's CBC list!

Even a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard south of town in the early morning hours.

We had an all time high number of **Varied Thrushes**, and again our Sparrow numbers were strong this year. High numbers of **Song Sparrow** and **Fox Sparrow** were reported along with sightings of **American Tree Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow,**

Golden-crowned, White-crowned Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, a record 4 **White-Throated Sparrows,** and even **House Sparrow** made the list!

A single **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **Hermit Thrush** were tallied as were 4 **Purple Finches.**

Hawk sightings were up as two **Red-tailed Hawks** and two **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were found!

Nearly frozen Ward Lake provided our tally with a family of **Trumpeter Swans, Hooded Merganser,** and **Ringed-necked Duck** amongst other species.

Sea bird numbers were low again this year, especially loons but a **Brandt's Cormorant** was seen which is the 2nd time this species made it to the state CBC list!

No Bonaparte's Gulls were seen this year.

Just barely out of our count circle, by a mere half mile, north of town, a few other interesting species are around still, such as **Rustic Bunting, Eurasian Collared-Dove** and a **Anna's Hummingbird** have lingered through the winter.

Thanks to Andy Piston for all his hard work compiling Ketchikan's CBC data once again! Andy and Steve Heintz are greatly appreciated for keeping local birders updated with bird sightings and info, which I can then pass on to Raven readers.

Good job to the dedicated and lucky birders in Ketchikan who again managed to set new records for the 110th Christmas Bird Count!

Happy New Year to all as we finish up the first decade of the new millennium already!! Remember to keep on enjoying the challenges and rewards of birding in our beautiful and amazing state of Alaska!

Birding at Forty Below In Fairbanks By Nick Hajdukovich

On December 19, 2009, I garbed up in warm clothing and heading out at the break of dawn at 9:30AM. I was doing the Christmas Bird Count in Fairbanks and my count area was located in the Chena Ridge region near the Tanana River. The air was clean and crisp and the skies were clear. I drove to one end of my count area and saw my first of many redpolls. I continued up the road and tallied many common ravens that were cruising the hillside. I drove down every single side road located in my area and stopped frequently to stick my head out of the window. I stepped out of the car only five times in the four hours that I counted, and I was very hesitant to leave my warm car and heated seats.

Every time I stopped, I would roll the window down and turn the car off to listen for birds. The cold air would roll down through the window and I could feel my legs get cold within minutes of rolling down the window. Seldom did it actually pay off, but I would occasionally hear either a **Boreal** or **Black-capped Chickadee** that could be attracted to my car by “pishing.” I continued to drive around for the rest of the day, and I tallied hundreds of **redpolls**, a **Hairy** and **Downy Woodpecker**, **Pine Grosbeaks**, **Gray Jays**, **Black-capped** and **Boreal Chickadees**, **Common Ravens**, and a **Northern Shrike**. The thermometer on my car would not go below 22 below but I was told that there was a low of 38 below for the day. It was a cold, and somewhat rewarding day of birding in one of the farthest north Christmas Bird Counts.

Book Review By Jeff Sauer, Vice President Juneau Audubon

***RETURN TO WILD AMERICA, A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Sole* author: Scott Weidensaul**

A couple of years ago I read Scott Weidensaul's *Living on the Wind, Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, and thought it was superb. Scott is quickly becoming regarded as one of the best natural history writers in the US, and indeed, *Living on the Wind* was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize. I obtained *Return to Wild America* at the Juneau library to read on the plane while traveling for the holidays. It too is a very fine book. Both books take the reader to many natural locations in the US (and some in Mexico) and in particular to the hot bird spots in Florida, Texas, Arizona, and Alaska. The premise of *Wild America* is to retrace Roger Tory Peterson's 1953 driving tour of the US in search of birds and wildness. Some fifty years later Scott does it again and compares what Peterson encountered then with what is there now. In many cases it is a sad story, as we all know. Huge human population increases, with such population pressure leading to tremendous loss of habitat. Still there is a lot positive in the book, what with the people and efforts to save what is left. And, some of the places are still pretty much the same, or even improved. Scott's stories of these places, the birds and natural history, the conservation efforts, and just the location of these places, some well known and some not, will cause many of us to use these books as references as we travel to these great places in *Wild America*.

Airport Dike Trail on New Years Day By Mary Lou King

Laurie Craig sent an email describing the fun and excitement of watching a 19.9 foot high tide coming into the Mendenhall River and the Wetlands. The tide was high at 1:30 p.m. and the river was flooded all the way to the bottom of the Trail, with this whirl hole where the water was being sucked into the float pond.



Some of the folks and dogs we saw walking along the trail at noon.



The two eagles sitting in the tree above the trail didn't seem to mind the traffic below. We did see about 200 Canada Geese way out in the flood water on the flats.

This photo shows the construction work being done at the airport. The work includes cutting the trees by the parking lot and rerouting Duck Creek.



Alaska eBird

Alaska eBird is a great way to record your observations, manage your life list, and help contribute to avian monitoring and conservation in Alaska.

Visit the Alaska eBird website, which includes photos, interesting birding news and features, as well as observation records:

<http://ebird.org/content/ak/>

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Eagle feather collectors: Please bring all your feathers to any public meeting or call Brenda for pickup- cell phone- 321-4739. Mark Schwan or Brenda Wright will collect them for shipping to Colorado! Thank you!

** If you receive a paper copy this month and prefer electronic, please resend your e-mail address to membership@juneau-audubon-society.org. The addresses went away when a hard drive died and the latest backup was in November.

Happy New Year and remember to back up your hard drive frequently! Brenda

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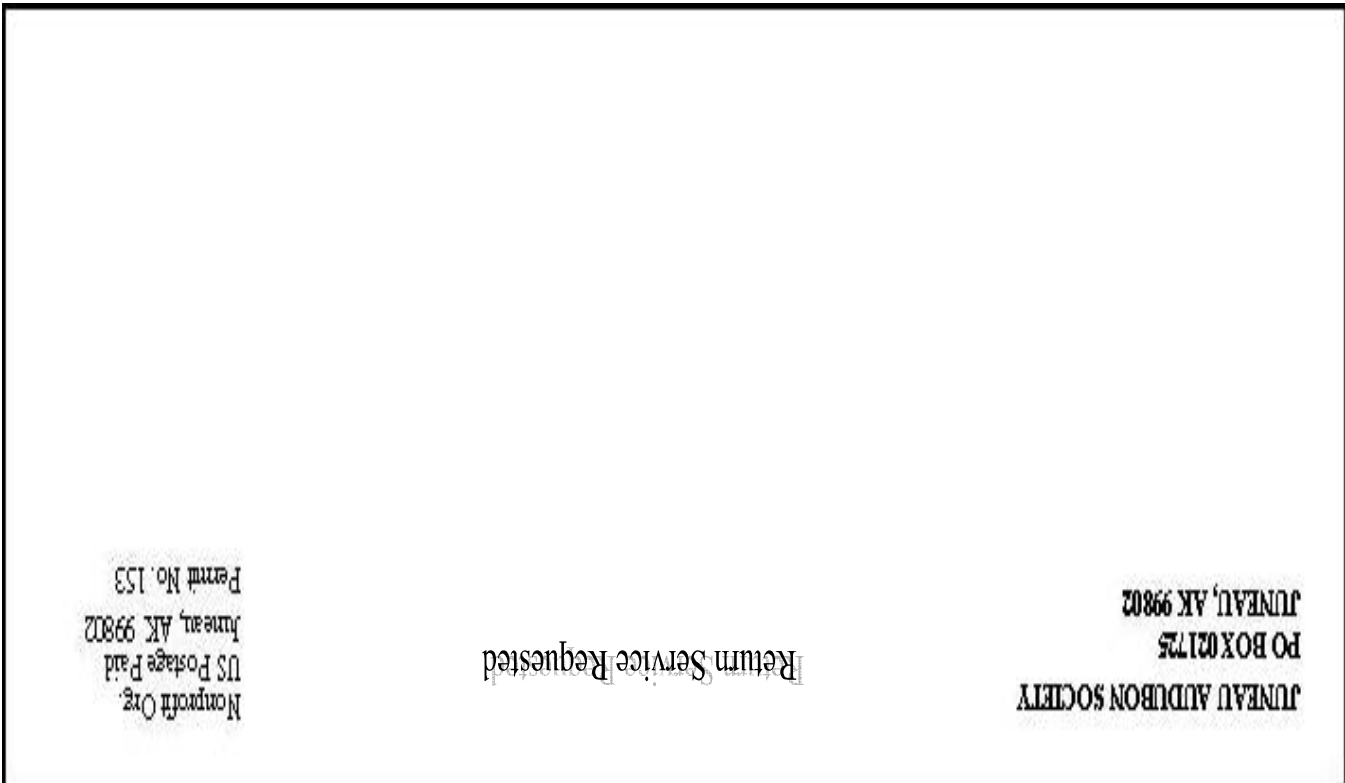
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The Raven



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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 6

Juneau Audubon Society

February 2010

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, February 11, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

Jeff Sauer presents photo images and stories on his Hut to Hut Mountain Bike Ride Telluride Colorado to Moab Utah, 200 miles, 6 huts, 7 days of bicycling

This is a fun one week moderate bike ride using 6 fully stocked San Juan Huts, to ride from the mountains of southern Colorado, through mesa country, to the slick rock country of Moab Utah. All food, water, place to sleep, and sleeping bags provided by the San Juan Hut System. Most riding is on backcountry dirt roads, with some mountain bike trail riding as an option close to Moab for the more adventurous. Huts sleep eight.



SATURDAY WILD--Come join me naturalist Kevin O'Malley on a walk in the woods.

February 27th at Fish Creek (Meet at bridge on Douglas Hwy.) 10 a.m. - noon
March 13th at the Boy Scout Trail (Meet at parking lot/trail head) 10 a.m. - noon

Pellets are a fascinating thing connecting the bird and the environment it frequents. On our Tracks and Signs hike we have investigated the relationships birds and mammals have with their specific habitat. Tracks have told us stories of critters that move around at night. Signs have explained birds foraging habits.

Questions still lurk, do Great Horned Owls take birds as prey? Are short tailed weasels diurnal, crepuscular and nocturnal? Juneau Audubon Societies next hikes we will continue to discover the relationships with Juneau's terrestrial and marine environments. This is an invitation to folks who want to share their knowledge about the local environment and learn more about the wildlife and Who they are...?

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 12-15, 2010

It's fun, easy, family-friendly, free and open to all ages. This February marks the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Its really easy to participate.

- 1) Count the birds alone or with friends
- 2) After at least 15 minutes of watching in one place, report your results online (you can watch longer if you want).
- 3) Send in your observation to www.birdcount.org

You can repeat your count at the same place on each day of the Great Backyard Bird Count, or you can visit other locations. Submit a new checklist for each day that you count.

Go on line and view the Top 10 most commonly reported birds in the Great Backyard Bird Count, the number of reports sent in for your city or state, or even for the whole country! The maps update even as you watch! This event is sponsored by the National Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

So go out and count birds to help understand trends in populations in North America. Don't forget to have fun!

Juneau Bird Report for January 2010 by Patty Rose

So far in 2010, Juneau weather has been milder and less snowy than in recent years. During January, Juneau birders found over 80 species of birds, including many rarities. Winter finches were present, but numbers seemed to be down. Shorebirds, including Dunlin, Rock Sandpiper, Black Turnstone, and Surfbird, were reported in the Eagle Beach area.

Rare ducks included single **Eurasian Wigeons** seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands from Fish Creek on Douglas Island on January 2 and 22 (PS) and from the Airport Dike Trail on January 22 (NH) and two **Eurasian Wigeons** seen at Fish Creek on January 28 (PS).

A very rare occurrence in the Juneau area, a **Western Grebe** was spotted from Point Louisa on January 4 (MS).

A **Harlan's Hawk**, a rare race of Red-tailed Hawk, was present throughout the period in the Vanderbilt Creek area near Western Auto and the Juneau Pioneers' Home (GV, NH, LE, PS, PR). A **Northern Goshawk** was seen near Swampy Acres on January 19 (NH). Two falcons were observed in January, an **American Kestrel**, last reported January 12,

in the Norway Point area near downtown Juneau (GV, MS) and a **Peregrine Falcon** on January 23 along the trail to the boy scout camp in the Eagle Beach area (NH, PS).

Two over-wintering **Long-billed Dowitchers** frequented lower Vanderbilt Creek during the period (NH, GV, LE). **Glaucous Gulls** were reported in the Mendenhall Valley on January 23 (PS, NH) and in Auke Bay on January 25 (GV). Four **Eurasian Collared-doves**, which were first observed in Juneau in Spring 2009, continued to stay in the airport area throughout January.

A **Short-eared Owl**, rare in winter, was seen near the Airport Dike Trail and in the golf course area on January 22 (GV, PS, NH). Although not rare in Juneau, a **Barred Owl** on the side of road along the Auke Recreation Area Bypass from December 28 through January 1 provided a rare opportunity to observe this species (GB, GV, MS, MM, PR).



A **Downy Woodpecker** was seen on the Airport Dike Trail on January 22 (GV). **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found in the Evergreen Cemetery on January 21 (NH) and on River Road on January 24 (GV). An **American Robin** was seen on the Airport Dike Trail on January 23 (GV). At the Evergreen Cemetery in downtown Juneau, one **American Robin** was seen on January 20 (PR), and 12 were seen on January 22 (GV). **American Pipit** is not often seen in Juneau in the winter, but one was found on the Mendenhall Wetlands near Lemon Creek area on January 26 (NH).

Sparrows spotted during the period included a **Golden-crowned Sparrow** and a reddish **Fox Sparrow** at an Auke Bay residence on January 3 (MS) and a Lincoln's Sparrow near the golf course and Industrial Blvd. throughout January (PR, GV, NH).

Thanks to those who contributed to this report. Contributors include Gwen Baluss (GB), Larry Edfelt (LE), Nick Hajdukovich (NH), Mary McCafferty (MM), Mark Schwan (MS), Paul Suchanek (PS), Gus van Vliet (GV), Patty Rose (PR).

Haines Report – Georgia Giacobbe

The Chilkat Valley Christmas Bird Count was conducted on the 20th of December 2009 with the results tabulated several weeks later. This year more people were involved with the count--40 people in the circle centered in Haines and 8 people in the Bald Eagle preserve area. A higher diversity of species was also counted this year, 47. One possible contribution was the good weather the day of the count. At the top of the list were **Barrow's Goldeneyes** at 500 and **Common Goldeneyes** at 259. Other sea birds include 193 **Mallards** and 114 **Buffleheads**. The gulls were the most numerous sea-associated birds but the most difficult to count because of their location off shore. Two hundred **Glaucous-winged Gulls**, 100 **Herring Gulls** and 25 **Mew Gulls** were counted. The groups counted a normal number of **Bald Eagles** and **Trumpeter Swans**. Of note were 2 **Plovers**, 2 **Northern shrikes** and 1 **Robin**. The forest bird count has not been submitted as of this writing.

Haines is home to some nonnative birds that were brought over 15 years ago, domestic pigeons. They went feral and now are concentrated downtown on Second Avenue where a few folks feed them, where more people have noticed them this winter. Of course they fall prey to the Eagles from time to time.

JUNEAU AUDUBON WEB SITE <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org> has recently been updated and is easier to read and has good information. The *Summary of the Fall 2009 Birding Highlights from the Southeast Alaska Region* by Steve Heintz and Andy Piston – found in Regional Birding Information – has really wonderful photos of Southeast birds.

Nick Hajdukovich's Report

It all started with the **Laughing Gull** that Rich MacIntosh found in Kodiak right around the first of January this year. I was in Fairbanks for Christmas Break and I decided to travel to Kodiak to try to see this gull that has only been seen a handful of times in Alaska. While searching for the bird in Kodiak I spent a few days with local birder, Rich MacIntosh and he told me about a competition that he usually participates in. Since January is typically a hard month to find birds in Alaska, it would only make sense to have a competition to see who can find the most species in January! That's exactly what Mr. MacIntosh and several other birders attempt to do every January. I decided to give it a shot since I would be spending time in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Kodiak, and then back in Juneau. This would give me the opportunity to see many species that I would not be able to find if I just stayed in one location.



Kodiak treated me well and I was able to find many species that I would not be able to see anywhere else including: **Emperor Goose, Black Oystercatcher, and Steller's Eider.** We were not able to relocate the Laughing Gull; however, I quickly found out that Kodiak is truly an amazing place to be if you are interested in birds. From Kodiak I was back up to



Fairbanks via Anchorage where I picked up a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk**. In Fairbanks I was able to find birds like **Common** and **Hoary Redpolls, Pine Grosbeaks, Black-capped Chickadees, Gray Jays** and a **Great Horned Owl**.

Juneau was my most productive location and I quickly added many species to my list. At first I would find up to 4 or 5 new birds a day but I quickly lost much of my momentum. Some of my highlights for Juneau were as follows: **Eurasian Wigeon** – Seen from the Dike Trail; I walked out to one of the spruce tree islands and I was able to look through the hundreds of waterfowl that were feeding on an incoming tide. **Ring-necked Duck** – Seen from the pullout along Egan Drive that overlooks the Lemon Creek wetlands (South of Sunny Point). **American Pipit** – Seen out on the Lemon Creek wetlands. **Long-billed Dowitcher** – I saw a pair of birds that has been regularly hanging out on the wetlands near the dump, across from the Pioneer Home Marsh. The **American Pipit** was the last new bird species that I was able to find in January and I ended with a grand total of 88 bird species, 68 of them being seen in Juneau. Rich MacIntosh ended up finding 92 bird species in Kodiak alone! A better strategy for next year might be to stay in Kodiak, but this competition was a lot of fun and my January went by in a flash!

NEWS FROM THE AUDUBON NETWORK

John Flicker Stepping Down after 15 Years Service as Audubon President

The transition comes after major advances during the past year, including the spread of an Audubon-championed approach to save imperiled Greater Sage-Grouse while allowing properly located domestic energy development, and the opening of three new Audubon Centers serving urban communities.

During Flicker's tenure, Audubon focused on keeping [common birds common](#), educating the public and decision makers about the important role of birds as indicators of environmental health, and connecting new and diverse audiences to nature and their power to protect it. Flicker envisioned a network of Audubon Centers nationwide to build that connection. Today, 43 [Audubon Centers](#) engage more than a million people each year in nature discovery and conservation action. Urban Centers in places such as Los Angeles, Baltimore, Phoenix and New York City are helping to revitalize abused landscapes and empower local communities. Flicker also led Audubon through dramatic growth in revenue and programs as the organization identified more than 2,400 [Important Bird Areas](#) across America.

As Audubon begins a nationwide search for a new leader, Dr. Frank Gill, well-known current national Board Member and former Audubon Chief Scientist, will be serving as interim President. Frank is the former Vice President of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and past President of the American Ornithologists' Union. He is also the author of the acclaimed textbook *Ornithology 3e*. Frank understands the unique strengths of the Audubon network and will seek to maximize their benefit as we pursue our shared conservation objectives.

John Flicker will take some well deserved time off (birding!) but will return to work with Audubon in a new capacity to advance our vital mission.

Carol Browner on John Flicker's Leadership and Vision <http://tinyurl.com/y9fjgoa>

Expert Birder Kenn Kaufman on John Flicker <http://tinyurl.com/ya2plsa>

Screech Owl from Eaglechat

Posted by: "linda.shaw@noaa.gov" linda.shaw@noaa.gov
Mon Jan 11, 2010 6:46 am (PST)

I heard a screech owl calling, actually I should say screeching, in my yard this morning about 5 AM as I headed out to walk my dogs. It scared me at first, but when the thinking part of my brain kicked in, I pulled up recorded screech owl screeches off the internet and sure enough that is definitely what it was! Pretty cool, I hope it sticks around for awhile, now that I know what it is!

STATE PARK'S PHOTO CONTEST

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation as well as four of our state parks: Chilkat, Kachemak Bay, Chugach and Denali. In honor of this milestone State Parks plans to produce and distribute six color posters illustrating not only the beauty and diversity of Alaska's state parks but the attachment many of us feel to these special places.

They have launched a photo contest, **open to all**, to find the right photographs to use for the 40th anniversary posters. Six photos will be selected and made into 24" x 18" color posters which will be distributed through the state. Entries should be high quality images taken of or within any state park managed area during any season and from any year.

For more details about the contest go to: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/photocontest.htm> or contact Claire Holland LeClair at 269-8696 or claire.leclair@alaska.gov



Pine Siskin

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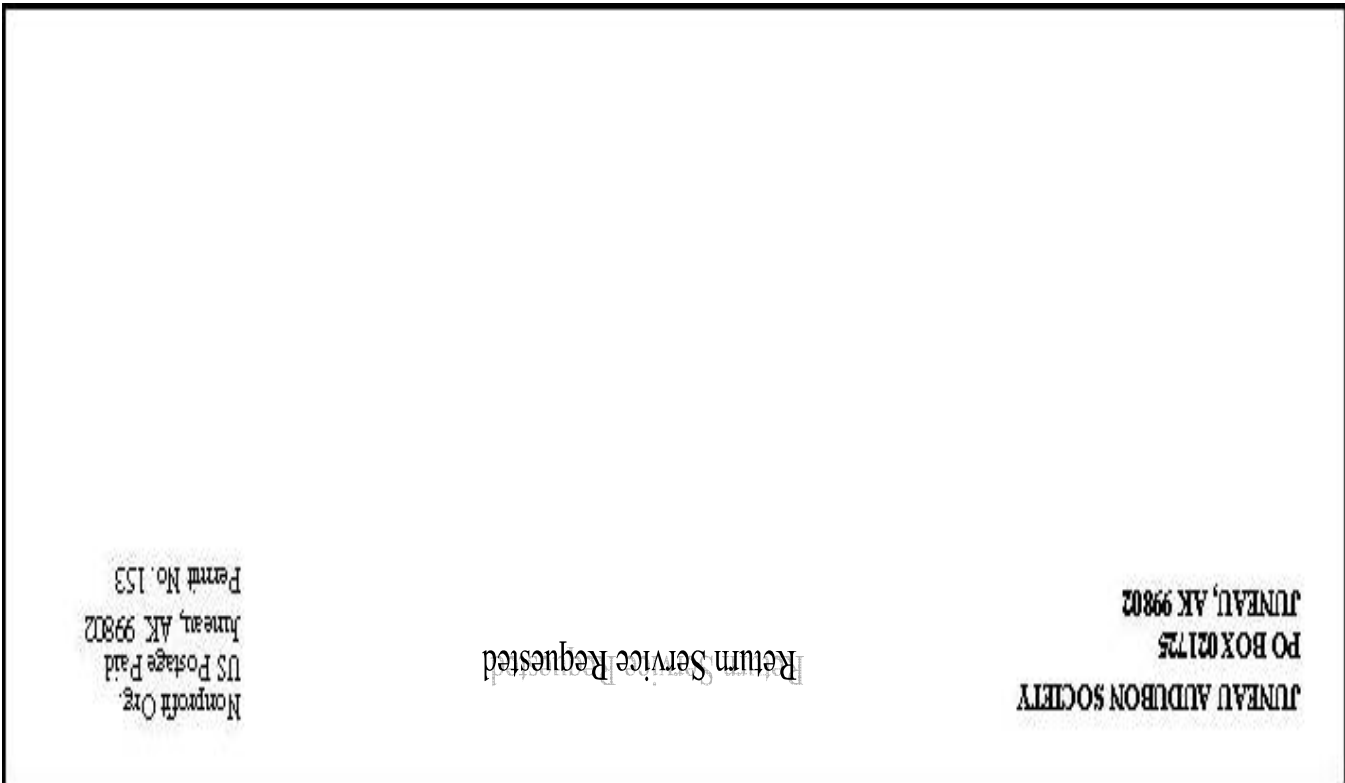
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Volume 36, Number 7

Juneau Audubon Society

March 2010

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

The Flora and Fauna of the Seward Peninsula By Merrill Jensen

Have you ever wondered what the other side of Alaska is like? How much different is the Seward Peninsula's plant and animal life compared to the rainforests of Southeast? Come to this month's Audubon presentation where Merrill Jensen will share his experiences from a trip to the tundra around Nome last June. See photos of a landscape completely without trees and with flowering plants and shrubs that are only inches tall. Hear about the wandering herds of musk oxen and reindeer (yes, reindeer!). Originally planned as a plant collecting trip for the Arboretum's alpine rock garden, this trip quickly evolved to include viewing the myriad birds that migrate there each spring to nest. Some of these travelers undertake epic, non-stop flights between their breeding and wintering grounds. We hope that you'll take advantage of this opportunity to see a different part of this amazing state...



BERNERS BAY BOAT TRIP – Get ready for a trip past the end of the road to Berners Bay. **This year's trips will be on April 24 at 8:30pm and May 1 at 8:30am and 1:30pm. The tickets will be on sale the end of March at Hearthsides books. Save the Date!**

BIRD WALKS WILL BEGIN: **April 10, 8:00a.m.** at the airport dike trailhead, where ever that will be then? leader Mark Schwan **April 17, 8a.m,** Fish Creek, north Douglas, Leaders Paul Suchanek & Merrill Jensen.

Tracks and Sign Saturday Wild Program Nature Deficit Disorder by Kevin O'Malley

The sign above Albert Einstein's office at Princeton University reads "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts." This statement may mean different things to different people. What it means to me is that our relationship and connection with nature most probably will never be able to be quantified or calculated and that scientific data will never be able to fully explain nature and the role it plays in our lives.

I was a proud young boy when I brought home a sack full of white bass from Lake Erie and the mouth of the Rocky River. My mom on the other hand was frankly, unsure. She probably had mixed emotions. Yeah! My son is a great fisherman, but if you know the silvery freshwater white bass, they are small and not easy to clean. Mom took action and we cleaned every last fish on Plain Dealer Newspaper in our backyard on the picnic table that my grandpa built.

I am not sure what I would have done without the Rocky River and the kid communities on the romps in the woods, the scouting missions to catch snakes, and Ronnie Kovach, "the Kovachky kid", my older neighborhood friend and teacher. It was freedom and safety all in one. Time spent in nature does something to us. It makes us pay attention and engages our senses, which to my knowledge not even the Wei can do. Via our senses children can create a connection with the world outside our heated boxes and most importantly disconnect from the analytical mind.

Howard Gardner, a professor of education at Harvard University, developed the theory of 8 types of intelligences. Nature Smart is the 8th intelligence. In Nature Smart, observation skills and categorizing things in nature are an important part of this intellect. The cleverness here is to slow down, giving us a chance to clear our mind, listen to our body and be in the present moment. This may be one of the most critical and important social abilities that has been lost due to the human addiction to television and the Internet.

Audubon has played an important role in educating children since it was founded 80 years ago. We have numerous nature centers throughout the country. Audubon is continuing its efforts here in Juneau with the Tracks and Signs Saturday Wild Program as a way for kids to connect to nature in a positive and playful way. Mentors, elders and families can help pave the way to a new hopeful future. Together, elders and teachers can learn from our kid communities and we in turn can model positive community members and watch our children grow.

Come join Audubon and community members (children are welcome and encouraged to come with a parent or older person) for the next Tracks and Sign Saturday Wild Program at the Boy Scout Camp on March 13th or March 27th at the Mt. Roberts Trail head on the Gold Creek side, both times from 10am to noon. We will explore what role the mouse (not the one in your hand) plays in predator prey relationships and look for bones as well as keep our eyes out for birds. Remember to dress for the weather and no dogs please. Call naturalist Kevin O'Malley at 321-7064 with any further questions.

**SAVE A TREE! Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. Send your request and email to :
Membership:, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org**

Eagle feather collectors: Please bring all your feathers to any public meeting or call Brenda for pickup- cell phone- 321-4739. Mark Schwan or Brenda Wright will collect them for shipping to Colorado! Thank you!

Managing Wildlife in Alaska: Predators, Prey & Politics
The Event and the Rally, Alaska Wildlife Alliance (www.akwildlife.org).

The Event - Friday, March 26, @ 7:00 pm @ the JAHc : Speakers will be: **Nick Jans**, wildlife photographer (My presentation will be a reading and slide show drawing on my 30 years of experience and many close encounters with Alaska wolves, from the Arctic to Southeast, both as a hunter and naturalist. I will of course offer my own perspective on predator control within this context. Title of my presentation is: Alaska's Wolves: The Essence of Wilderness.); **Victor Van Ballenberghe** (For my Friday evening talk I plan to speak about the changes I've seen over the past 36 years in how Alaska has managed wolves and bears as big game animals as well as predators on ungulates. In recent years as intensive management ("managing for abundance") has become the dominant theme, there have been large-scale programs to severely reduce wolves and bears in order to increase moose and caribou for hunters. I will examine the biological and public policy aspects of these control programs.); John **Toppenburg** (The Alaska Wildlife Alliance's position as well as the predator-prey relationship), Greg **Brown** (Will speak about the financial value of wildlife viewing, which includes how to create 2,000 new jobs and bring half a billion dollars into Alaska over the next four years), plus book signings by **Bob Armstrong, Nick Jans, and Mary Willson**.

The Rally - Saturday, March 27, @ Noon @ the Capitol: Speakers will be: Joel Bennett, Greg Brown, Alex Simon, Andrea Doll, Victor Van Ballenberghe, and John Toppenberg



Juneau Birding Notes for February, 2010 By Mark Schwan

Local birders let up somewhat during the month after attacking the new year with a vengeance, hoping to see their annual lists off to fast starts. The weather was unbelievably mild and lacking in precipitation. Perhaps the lack of snow and mild temperatures caused the paucity of birds visiting Juneau feeders. It seemed everyone was asking, "Where have all the birds gone?" Nevertheless, there were birds of interest located. Here are some highlights.

A lone **Eurasian Wigeon** was seen at the mouth of Fish Creek on 2/4 and 2/26 (PS). The **hybrid Common x Barrow's Goldeneye** continued to be seen, this time on 2/15 in Fritz Cove (PS). This unusual bird has over-wintered in Juneau for several years now. Another hybrid duck, certainly the highlight of the month, was an apparent **hybrid between a Hooded Merganser and a goldeneye**. This fascinating bird is covered in a separate article in this newsletter. Three **Hooded Mergansers** were seen in the Mendenhall River adjacent to Brotherhood Park on 2/22 (RF and class). Raptors of interest included at least 5 different observations of single **Sharp-shinned Hawks** (many obs). **Northern Goshawks** were seen in Auke Bay on 2/7 and 2/27 (GV) and at Brotherhood Park on 2/24 (PS). The **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk**, which has chosen to over-winter in Juneau, was spotted repeatedly throughout the month by many observers. The only **Merlin** report came from Thane Road on 2/4 (JR).

There are only one or two previous local winter records, so the **American Coot** hanging near DIPAC from 2/10-2/13 was quite a surprise (PS, BUK, PR). Very rare in Juneau, the **Iceland Gull** found at the Scout Camp on 2/5 (PS) was only the second local winter record. Two reports of **Glaucous Gull**, likely different birds, came from near the Scout Camp on 2/5 (PS) and Melvin Park on 2/19 (GV). The **Eurasian Collared-Doves** picked a good winter to try and establish themselves, as several continued to be seen during the month in the Meadow Lane-Radcliffe Road area (2 on 2/13 (JR), and 3 on 2/23 (GV)). A single **Downy Woodpecker** was spotted along the airport dike on 2/21 (GV), and an **American Three-toed Woodpecker** was found at Point Bridget on 2/19 (PS). Two **Red-breasted Nuthatches** visited a valley feeder throughout the month, and the birds appeared to be a male and female (DM). As ubiquitous as they are around here in spring, summer, and fall, **American Robins** are hard to find during winter, but there were reports of two at Brotherhood Park on 2/15 (GV), one at Melvin Park on 2/19 (GV), and four at Fish Creek on 2/26 (PS). Finally, **American Tree Sparrows** were still locatable, with one to three birds hanging near the end of Industrial Blvd. and near the golf course (2/10-2/12, PS).

Contributors: Robert Fagen, RF, and biology students; Deanna MacPhail, DM; Julie Reynolds, JR; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek, PS; Brian Uher-Koch, BUK; Gus van Vliet, GV.

Hooded Merganser X Goldeneye Hybrid at Douglas Boat Harbor

By Paul Suchanek

On February 2, I noted a duck diving in Douglas Harbor which I thought at first glance to be a female hooded merganser but which on further examination proved to be an “odd” duck (see photo). I first thought it a hybrid with a bufflehead but on subsequent days noted it was about the same size as a goldeneye. After a quick internet search, I did find some images of hybrids between Hooded Mergansers and goldeneyes which seemed to match the bird fairly well. I suspect this bird may be a hybrid with a Barrow's Goldeneye as the white in the wing seems limited and the front of the head is quite steep, although short of genetic testing, it is impossible to be sure. The bird continued to be seen throughout the month of February both inside and just outside the harbor. It often dove for 20 to 25 seconds and came up with shells containing hermit crabs which it shook out of the shell and then devoured.



Hybrids of this type are very rare in North America and Alaska in particular, although I did get a report that there was a similar hybrid reported from Wrangell about 30 years ago. Although bird watchers cannot “count” this bird on their life list, it is certainly a rare bird and interesting in its own right. I check up on “Hogo” every few days in part because I’m also interested whether the bird is perhaps an immature male which may molt into adult plumage. A similar hybrid returned to its wintering grounds in California for at least five years so maybe it will reappear next winter.

DOGS AND MIGRATING BIRDS By Jeff Sauer

Spring is on its way to Southeast Alaska. And, with spring comes migrating birds and our spring bird walks. In conjunction with this, Juneau Audubon is attempting to deal with an ongoing problem on the Mendenhall refuge and Eagle River tideflats, with dogs chasing birds. The problem is that the refuge and the Eagle River Flats are used by thousands of shore birds and waterfowl in migration and they are an extremely important stop over for many species of birds to feed and rest. Some species have already come hundreds or thousands of miles to get here. And, from here some species will travel hundreds of miles to the arctic to nest. While these birds are here they need to recover from their trip and recharge. They must be able to seriously feed and rest in order to continue on their migration. If they are forced to stop resting and feeding, and take to the air to avoid charging dogs, they will burn up critical reserves. These are reserves they cannot afford to lose. If harassed enough by dogs they could die. They will not die here, but they may die after leaving Juneau as they have not built up enough reserves to cope with other stressors on their trip, such as bad weather.

Many dogs are well managed and behaved and do not go charging after shorebirds and ducks, but some do, and their owners seem oblivious to the potential impacts. This should not happen. It is not responsible dog handling and it is against the law. It is against the law to allow one's dog to harass wildlife. Harassing wildlife includes dogs chasing after birds causing them to flush, and it simply is not acceptable. We will be working to educate the public and dog owners, and possibly take other steps to reduce this problem. Juneau Audubon members can also help by politely trying to educate the public on this issue. More in the next month's newsletter.

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

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Web Master:	George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org



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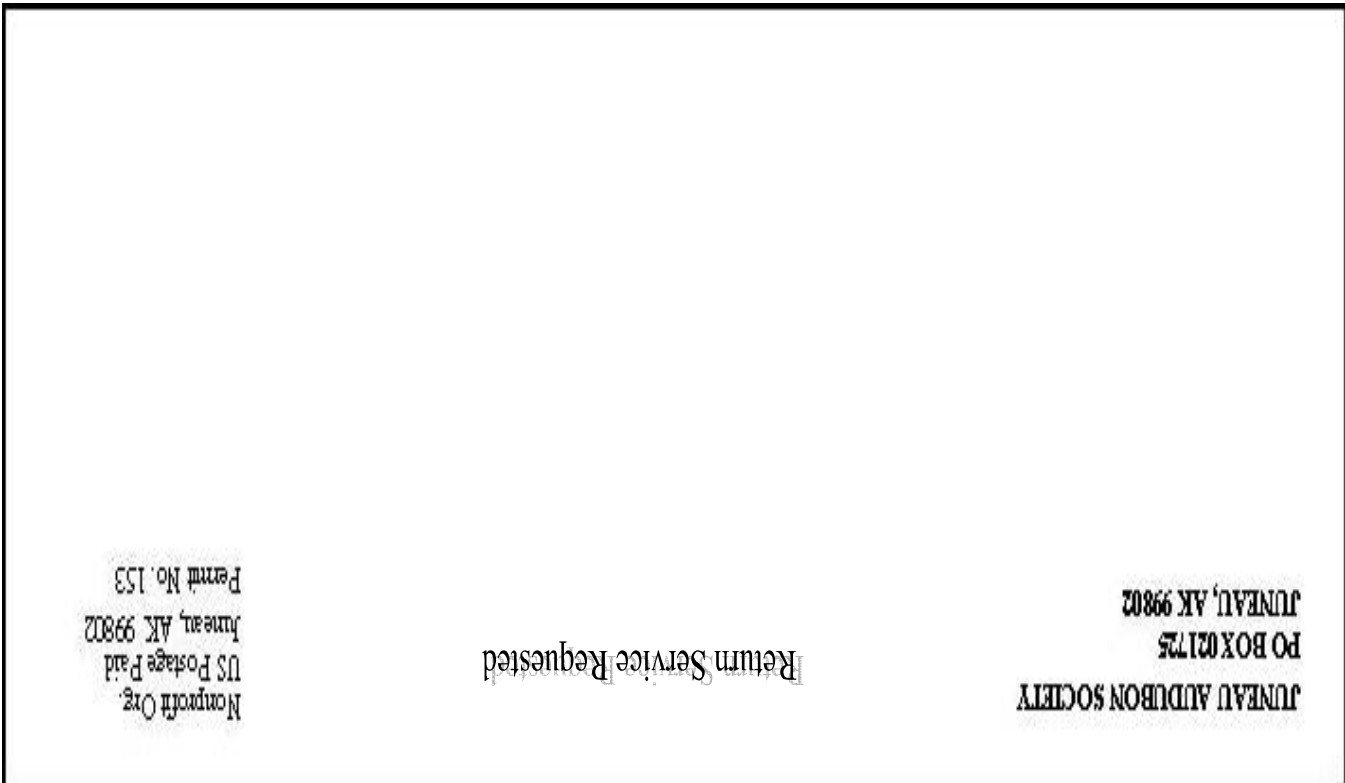
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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**



The Raven

The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.



<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 8

Juneau Audubon Society

April 2010

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

Birds and Bears – A season at the Mendenhall Glacier By Doug Jones

Doug Jones is a retired fisheries biologist who has worked as a ranger/naturalist at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitors Center for the past three seasons. He is also an avid photographer and has taken thousands of photos of the Mendenhall Glacier area birds, bears and other wildlife during those years. This program will feature stories of some of his experiences including photos of the rich diversity found in the Mendenhall Glacier area.



Doug Jones



CELEBRATION OF SWANS – WHITEHORSE, CANADA

April 17th to April 25th – Yukon's premiere bird festival with its great swan viewing areas to welcome spring to the north. Enjoy swan viewing walks with interpreters, workshops and presentations about swans and more. This is a really fun time for Southeast people to visit Whitehorse.

TRACKS AND SIGNS SATURDAY WILD By Kevin O'Malley

West Glacier Trail Tracks & Signs Saturday Wild will meet at the parking lot past Skater's Cabin on **April 10th**, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Naturalist Kevin O'Malley will be looking at the fresh buds and flowers on plants, shrubs and trees and doing basic identification of lichens as well as observing any wildlife activity.

False Outer Point Tracks & Signs Saturday Wild will be meet at the parking lot along the shoreline and trail head at 11.5 North Douglas Highway on **April 24th**, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Kevin O'Malley will explore the forest, shoreline and beach of Northwest Douglas Island. This walk is for folks not planning to go on the Berners Bay Cruise.

Audubon spring bird walks 2010

Date	Location	Leader(s)	Time
April 11 (1)	Airport Dike trail	Mark Schwan	8am to 10am
April 17	Fish Creek	Paul Suchanek ,Merrill Jensen	8am to 10am
	Earth Day at the Glacier	Kevin O'Malley	Noon to 2:30pm
April 24	Berners Bay Cruise; no walk	Various birders onboard	8:30am – 4 hours
May 1	Berners Bay Cruises Beginners' bird walk at Auke Recreation Area	Various birders onboard Kevin O'Malley	8:30am and 1:30pm 10am to noon
May 8	Mouth of Mendenhall River	Paul Suchanek	8am to 11am
May 15	Mendenhall Wetlands	Kevin O'Malley	8am to 10am
May 22	TBD; in May newsletter	Gwen Baluss	8am to 10am
May 29	Pioneer Marsh Beginning Birding	Laurie Lamm, Kevin O'Malley	10am to noon
June 5	Moose Lake	Deanna MacPhail	8am to 10am

(1) Note that is walk is on Sunday due to the trail closure on April 10.

April 11, Sunday, Airport Dike Trail, 8am. Mark Schwan will lead a two-hour walk along the dike trail looking for early migrants. This is a good time to view waterfowl and search for our early migrant shorebirds and songbirds, such as yellowlegs, kinglets, and robins. Please note this walk is on a Sunday, as the trail will be closed through the 10th of the month due to the construction of the west-end runway safety area. Through the closure period, access has still been allowed on Sundays, so even if the closure is extended further, a Sunday walk should still be possible. Meet at the parking area near the end of Radcliffe Road.

April 17, Saturday, Fish Creek on north Douglas Is., 8am. Paul Suchanek and Merrill Jensen will lead this walk along lower Fish Creek out to the channel. Again, this is a good time for waterfowl but the mix of habitats always makes this a productive area to bird. It is a good place for sapsuckers and early swallows and warblers might be possible, depending on how spring is progressing.

This is also Earth Day. Kevin O'Malley will provide a table of Audubon materials at the Glacier Visitor Center as part of the activities, and Kevin will also lead two "Tracks and Signs" nature walks in the adjacent area. Walks will be from noon to 1pm, and from 2:30 to 3:30pm.

April 24, Berners Bay Cruise, 8:30am to 12:30pm, departing from Statter Harbor in Auke Bay. No scheduled birdwalk for this day.

May 1, Berners Bay Cruises, departing 8:30am and 1:30pm, departing from Statter Harbor in Auke Bay. There will also be a **Beginners Birdwalk at Auke Recreation Area, from 10am to noon.** This outing will be structured for people with little or no birding skill but who have an interest in learning basics in bird identification and natural history of birds. This trip will be led by our education specialist and naturalist Kevin O'Malley. People should meet on Point Louisa Road above the most westerly covered pavilion.

May 8, Mouth of the Mendenhall River, 8am to 10am or ? Paul Suchanek will take people out on the wetland flats to the water's edge at the mouth of the Mendenhall. This should be a perfect time to catch the shorebird migration in full swing. There will be a relatively small high tide at about 10am, so there will not be any marathon walk to the channel and the water will hopefully push birds our way. There should be several spotting scopes available for close up views. Proper footwear is essential. We say this walk is scheduled for two hours, but if the birds are near peak abundance, many stay longer to enjoy the spectacle. Meet at the parking area near the end of Radcliffe Road.

May 15, Mendenhall Wetlands again, 8am to 10am. Kevin O'Malley will lead this walk along the dike trail, and perhaps out into the flats as well. Novice and veteran birders should enjoy this outing as it is a great time to be out on the wetlands. Wear appropriate footwear and meet at the end of Radcliffe Road.

May 22, time and location yet to be determined. Gwen Baluss will lead this walk; we will put the exact place and time in the May newsletter and post in on the chapter website.

May 29, Pioneers' Marsh, 10am to noon. Kevin O'Malley and Laurie Lamm will lead this outing and is aimed for young birders and families with an interest in learning about birds but who have little or no prior experience. The marsh is a perfect place to hold such an event as the access is very easy, requires no hiking to get to the site, and generally has a very nice mix of birds in easy view. Kevin and Laurie will provide binoculars and a scope will also be available. This viewing area is directly behind the Pioneers' Home and parking is limited, so please meet at the Western Auto parking lot and then the group can car pool over to the marsh.

June 5, Moose Lake, 8am to 10am. Deanna MacPhail will lead this walk into one of our most interesting birding areas in Juneau. The dense deciduous vegetation and abundant water provides habitat for species hard to find elsewhere in our local rainforest. Target birds for this outing include Warbling Vireo, American Redstart, and Northern Waterthrush, but the area sometimes offers up other surprises, such as Tennessee Warbler and Cassin's Vireo. This is a wonderful place to finish off our spring bird walks. Meet at the parking area, next to the Mendenhall River bridge on the Back Loop Road.

Juneau Birding Notes for March, 2010



The male **Canvasback** found the previous month continued to be seen near the gazebo pond along the airport dike through mid-month (3/14-3/21, GV). A nice surprise and exciting find was an immature male **King Eider** gleaned from a large flock of scoters near Outer Point on 3/8 (PS). This bird was seen by many observers through 3/19. Paul Suchanek continued to track the presence of the **hybrid Barrow's Goldeneye X Hooded Merganser**, which he found at least through 3/18 in vicinity of Sandy Beach and Douglas Harbor. Pure-strain **Hooded Mergansers** were rather persistent all month at Twin Lakes and Pioneer Marsh with up to 5 birds seen by various observers through 3/22.

Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen throughout the month, with five known reports. Three of the five accounts were of birds staging near active feeders. There was one **Merlin** report, a bird found at Brotherhood Park on 3/20 (GV). The **American Coot** located near the Macaulay Hatchery in Gastineau Channel last month, was again seen on 3/3 and 3/18 (PS, GV). The only shorebird of note

was the single **Killdeer** seen along lower Lemon Creek on 3/12 (GV). A **Bonaparte's Gull** was reported from south Douglas Island on 3/20 (JR, BUK). Early for a typical spring migrant, this bird more likely over-wintered in our area.

The **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continued to make their presence known, with three birds seen on 3/7 (NH) and two seen later in the month on 3/21 (GV). The birds continue to be seen in the same area, i.e. near the intersection of Berners and Radcliffe or on nearby streets. Certainly, a very unexpected visitor was the male **Anna's Hummingbird** at a Douglas Island residence (PR). This bird, first seen on 3/21 and again on 3/26, was quite exceptional, as reports of this species in Juneau almost always come in late fall and early winter. Passerine observations of note were few, but include one **Red-breasted Nuthatch** on 3/20 in the Mendenhall Valley near the USFS bunkhouse (JR, BUK), a lone **American Tree Sparrow** near the golf course on 3/21 (PS), and **40 Snow Buntings** along the airport dike trail on 3/14 (GV).



Contributors: Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Julie Reynolds, JR; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek, PS; Brian Uher-Koch, BUK; Gus van Vliet, GV. Compiled by Mark Schwan

Haines Bird Report By Georgia Giacobbe

Pam Randles of the Takshanuk Watershed Council is asking for Haines residents to be citizen scientists to collect observations of animal populations. This is to collect information and forward to organizations like the Audubon Society about changes in populations such as declines or new territories, or to just understand the regular population patterns. Specifically, gathering arrival and departure dates helps scientists who look at this data to understand seasonal changes in temperature and weather patterns. She has posted specific watch lists which include the following: Rufous Hummingbird, Surf Scoter rafts less than 500, Rusty Blackbirds, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Loon, Mountain Bluebird, Mourning Dove, Western Tanager, and Eurasian Collared Dove. Also as we look forward to (hope for!!) spring, the first appearance, song, and waves of American Robins are of interest.

Up the road at Mosquito Lake, a recent conversation with Mario Benassi yielded a study of his that he has been pursuing. For three consecutive years he has been tracking five pairs of Pygmy Owls in the vicinity. However, this year he has heard no mating calls and fears they have disappeared. He hasn't heard the Saw-wet Owl call yet either, and has concerns that the food population for these owls has been decimated in that area. The sightings he has reported, however, are typical numbers of immature **Goshawks** migrating through in February. Just after the Christmas bird count he spotted a pair of **Wood Ducks** in the Chilkat River. He has observed a few **Pygmy Owls** near the Haines Airport. Two weeks ago the first **Red-breasted Sapsucker** appeared and an **American Robin** on the 24th of March.

Migration Season is Here!

This is a really exciting time of year as we all look forward to the arrival of the flocks of birds migrating through our area. It is an excellent time to explore the Mendenhall Wetlands and the Eagle River Flats and enjoy guided walks with the Juneau Audubon Society. One of the best places to hear and see a lot of the migrants in Juneau is the Mendenhall Wetlands and the Airport dike trail. The dike

trail is a great way to see many of the birds visiting Juneau because it is conveniently close, flat and offers different habitats that increases the number of species you might see.

Of course the dike trail is also possibly the most popular place in Juneau to bring your dog for a great chance of exercise. Who doesn't like to see a healthy animal obviously having a wonderful time chasing a Frisbee or ball? I know I love to see that expression of such joy that a dog shows with its whole body.

Unfortunately, some dogs will also love to chase and harass birds in the wetlands. Many of these migrants are stopping to refuel after traveling 100's and in some cases over 1000 miles to arrive in our neighborhood. Many are going to travel at least that far again before they reach their nesting area. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone who appreciates the dike trail, dogs, and birds to show a little kindness and courtesy to these migrating birds. **Please make sure your animals do not harass the birds. Let the birds enjoy this opportunity to rest and feed enabling them to successfully complete their journey to the north.**

E-Raven?

The chapter's major expense is printing and mailing the newsletter. Would you like to help save paper and chapter money and reduce the volume of monthly mail? Send an e-mail to membership@juneau-audubon-society.org if you'd like to receive The Raven with great color photos. Save A Tree!

Juneau Audubon Board Needs You! Get Engaged!

It is well known that personal involvement increases one's enjoyment of a particular happening or event. Consider this an invitation to become more involved in your Audubon Chapter. We're a small group and we depend upon your ideas and efforts to keep the group vital.

We're currently seeking folks interested in contributing their time and talents, especially with regard to Programs and Field Trips. You needn't make a life-long commitment, or even an annual promise. But perhaps you might offer to lead a hike, work at the Audubon booth during Public Market, or make a presentation at one of the monthly meetings. Your ideas and suggestions will be rewarded by appreciation and gratitude.

We have enjoyed some great presentations this past year at our meetings. And if you stop to think about it, they were generally given by members of the community who had been out doing something which interested them, and by no small coincidence interested us as well. The subject matter need not be exotic or distant, and you certainly aren't required to be an expert in the field. A closer look at some of our local specialties is just as riveting as an escape to the tropics.

Come on and volunteer—It'll be a blast!

Yo! Southeast! Got Any Birds?

All of you folks outside of Juneau: We want to hear from You! Let us know if you have birds, when the migrants arrive, special visits by rare birds or any other thing happening in your neighborhood.

It's a real treat to get to hear what is going on in other places in SE Alaska. We also would love to hear your concerns or suggestions on how to improve or change our newsletter or how we might help publicize your projects.

Come on Kake, Kasaan, Wrangell, Craig, Ketchikan, Yakutat, Pelican, Sitka, Petersburg, Skagway and any other points in between- let us hear from You!

Play and Nature By Kevin O'Malley

Reminisce to when you were playing with other childhood friends looking for turtles, fishing or just exploring in an open field. How creative did you get with your neighborhood group of kids in nature? What kinds of information were you taking in (observation skills) while you all sat quietly under a tree or building a fort in nearby woodland? If you are a biologist, botanist, laborer, hunter, fisherman or just love to take walks in nature you probably understand what I am talking about.

The connection and relationship with the outdoors has shaped who we are today. On a hike with 2nd graders from Glacier Valley Elementary School I discovered something extremely interesting as I struggled to get the kids to quiet their minds of all the chatter from the day. Youngsters' lives are filled with the stresses from our fast paced lives and the social pressures in school. I stumbled upon an opportunity that astonished the whole group. As we slowed down and actually stopped moving, our feet flexible but motionless, a chestnut-backed chickadee came within six feet (I measured it) from a 2nd grade girl and hung upside-down on a western hemlock branch about two feet above the kids' heads. The chestnut backed bird with a black chin patch and head was in a calm unthreatened behavior known as "baseline" and so were the 2nd graders. There is no test score in the world that will take away the next moment...the child who was having the hardest time quieting down on their particular hike said to the group in a quiet voice "this is so amazing" and for the next 10 minutes we crept gently through the woods. The second graders were now part of nature.

I must be careful not to over analyze the social and natural relationships here. Richard Nelson writes in *The Island Within* "Intriguing as they are, the questions, theories, studies, analysis, and explanations can obscure as much as they reveal, like scores of tails pinned all over the donkey until its shape and wholeness disappear." The second graders story continues... to support nature-based education programs in the community of Juneau and Southeast Alaska. Living in such a pristine place we are not immune to nature deficit disorder, a term coined by Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods." These kids will become important contributors to this community by their ability to pay attention/observe and use choice words and common sense when that present moment comes.

Nature is not a test but, as we track animals in our local environment we come up with theories that build cases for the mysteries that we wonder upon. It hones our senses to pay attention and observe plants, animals and landforms. Engaging these senses gives young people the capability to change their perspective: a different point of view gives them the aptitude to come up with new creative ideas about a given nature-based discovery. In his book, Louv refers to the 8th intelligence, nature smart, introduced by Howard Gardner Professor of Education at Harvard University. When explaining Ben Franklin's experiment with a kite powered by wind, pulling the young Ben across the pond, he states "He applied a scientist's mind to the lessons of the senses, and used his direct experience with nature to solve a problem."

The tree we sat quietly under and the forts we build in our local woodland may be gone but our childhood friends' names and the smell of the place remain in us. Hopefully the next generation children will have a similar relationship with the forest and kid communities as we did when we were their age. Can we as parents and community members lead the way?

SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS By Brenda Wright

With the help of Pauline Strong we previewed 19 science fair projects and narrowed our field of judging down to 8 for interviews. There were many excellent projects as usual.

The winners of \$50: Were Colin Zheng for "The effects of sea water pH on kelp egg development" and Gelsey Carmichael for "Archaea in Sphagnum and *Pleurozium schreberi* dominated areas of the Southeast Alaskan muskeg ecosystem

Winners of Berners Bay tickets: Brian Kenyon "How pH level affects the growth and mortality of green sea urchins & Asia Moreno-Goodwin & Marlina Sloss "How does temperature increases affect the growth, and food consumption of the six-armed sea star"

One theme was very dominant this year- effect of climate change on our environment. Thanks so much to Pauline for volunteering her time to help judge.

What is NestWatch? NestWatch is a nest-monitoring project developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in collaboration with the **Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center**, and funded by the **National Science Foundation**. **Who can participate?**

We invite people of all ages who are interested in the natural world to help monitor the success of nesting birds and better understand the threats they face. Your valuable nest observations will be permanently stored as legacy data along with hundreds of thousands of other nesting records. When combined, these data will provide a wealth of information about breeding birds and the factors that influence their success across different landscapes. Go to <http://www.nestwatch.org> for more information and to register.

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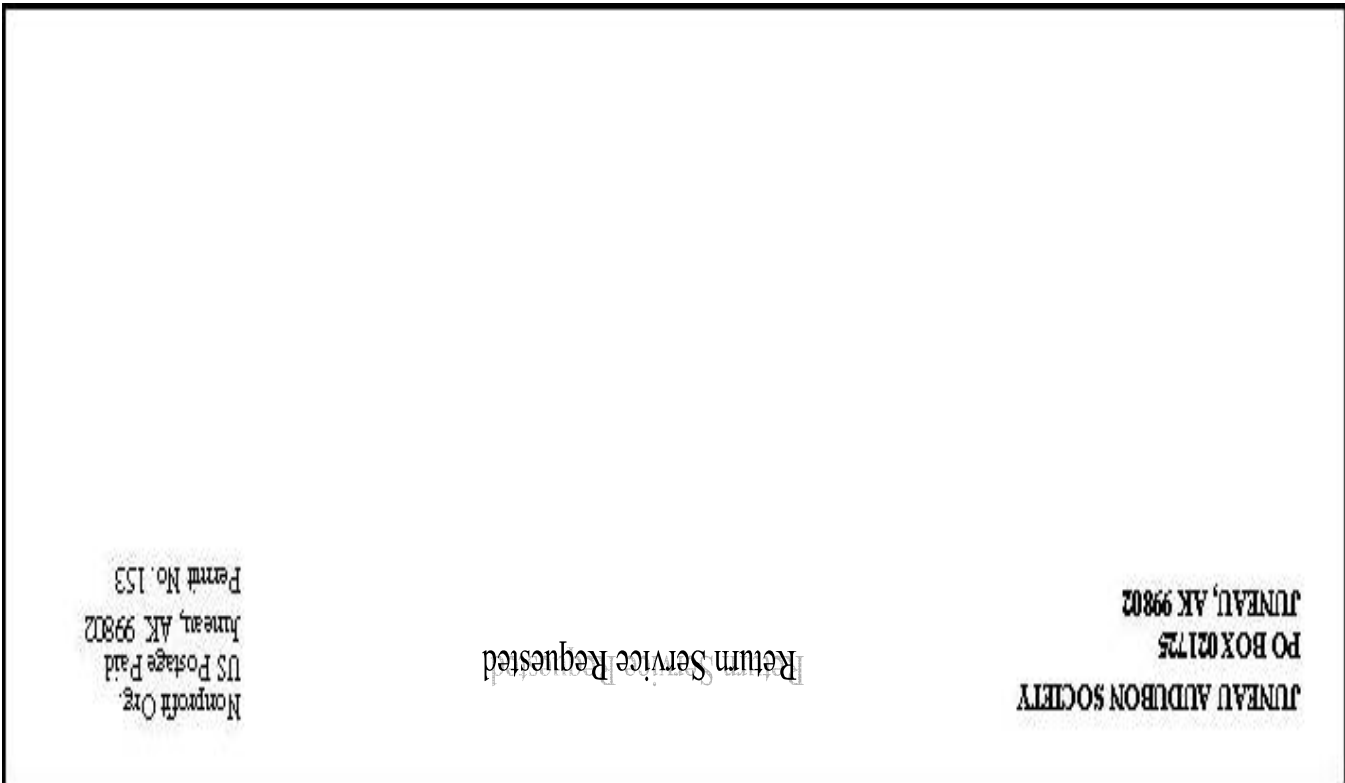
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If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (1-year membership) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**



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The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.



<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 36, Number 9

Juneau Audubon Society

May 2010

THE NEXT GENERAL AUDUBON MEETING WILL BE THE SECOND THURSDAY IN SEPTEMBER

Upcoming Audubon spring bird walks 2010

Date	Location	Leader(s)	Time
May 8	Mouth of Mendenhall River	Paul Suchanek	8am to 11am
May 15	Mendenhall Wetlands	Kevin O'Malley	8am to 10am
May 22	Sandy Beach	Gwen Baluss	7:30am to 9:30am
May 29	Pioneer Marsh	Laurie Lamm, Kevin O'Malley	10am to noon
June 5	Moose Lake	Deanna MacPhail	7:30am to 9:30am

May 8, Mouth of the Mendenhall River, 8am to 10am or ? Paul Suchanek will take people out on the wetland flats to the water's edge at the mouth of the Mendenhall. This should be a perfect time to catch the shorebird migration in full swing. There will be a relatively small high tide at about 10am, so there will not be any marathon walk to the channel and the water will hopefully push birds our way. There should be several spotting scopes available for close up views. Proper footwear is essential. We say this walk is scheduled for two hours, but if the birds are near peak abundance, many stay longer to enjoy the spectacle. Meet at the parking area near the end of Radcliffe Road.

May 15, Mendenhall Wetlands again, 8am to 10am. Kevin O'Malley will lead this walk along the dike trail, and perhaps out into the flats as well. Novice and veteran birders should enjoy this outing as it is a great time to be out on the wetlands. Wear appropriate footwear and meet at the end of Radcliffe Road.

May 22, Sandy Beach, Douglas, 7:30am to 9:30am. Gwen Baluss will lead an exploration of the lush deciduous stands bordering the Gastineau channel. These woods have traditionally been a good place to see migratory songbirds such as Pacific-slope flycatcher and Townsend's warbler as they first arrive in the Juneau area. It is also a ripe place to look for rarities. The wide trails offer fairly easy terrain for birders of all ages. Meet at the picnic area by the Sandy beach parking lot.

May 29, Pioneers' Marsh, 10am to noon. Kevin O'Malley and Laurie Lamm will lead this outing and is aimed for young birders and families with an interest in learning about birds but who have little or no prior experience. The marsh is a perfect place to hold such an event as the access is very easy, requires no hiking to get to the site, and generally has a very nice mix of birds in easy view. Kevin and Laurie will provide binoculars and a scope will also be available. This viewing area is directly behind the

Pioneers' Home and parking is limited, so please meet at the Western Auto parking lot and then the group can car pool over to the marsh.

June 5, Moose Lake, 7:30am to 9:30am. (please note time change from schedule in last month's newsletter). Deanna MacPhail will lead this walk into one of our most interesting birding areas in Juneau. The dense deciduous vegetation and abundant water provides habitat for species hard to find elsewhere in our local rainforest. Target birds for this outing include Warbling Vireo, American Redstart, and Northern Waterthrush, but the area sometimes offers up other surprises, such as Tennessee Warbler and Cassin's Vireo. This is a wonderful place to finish off our spring bird walks. Meet at the parking area, next to the Mendenhall River bridge on the Back Loop Road.

Forest Service to give public up-close look at songbirds

Juneau, AK— In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day, the Juneau Ranger District invites the public to a live bird banding demonstration **Saturday, May 8**, at the Juneau Community Garden large pavilion.

U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Technician Gwen Baluss will give attendees an up-close look at how scientists study migratory birds. Songbirds will be captured in nets, fitted with light-weight tags and safely released.

All ages are welcome. Activities will be on-going between 8 a.m and 12 p.m.

Bicycling and car-pooling are encouraged due to limited parking.

For more information or directions, contact Gwen Baluss at gbaluss@fs.fed.us or call 586-8800.



Yellow-rumped Warblers are a common Alaskan summer species that may be captured for the event. They winter in coastal areas of the contiguous US and as far south as Panama.

SATURDAY WILD SUMMER SCHEDULE

Saturday, June 19, 10:00 am Jensen Arboretum: Come to the Jensen-Olson Arboretum for Audubon's Saturday Wild. See the interface of the cultivated gardens with the natural forest and rocky beach of Pearl Harbor. Arboretum Manager will give a tour of the grounds as well as lead a short hike on the new Point Caroline trail to view native plants of the forest understory.

Driving Directions: The Jensen-Olson Arboretum is located 23 miles north of downtown Juneau. In an area known locally as “Out the Road,” the Arboretum is just past Mile 23 on Glacier Highway.

From downtown Juneau, take the Egan Expressway northwest toward the Juneau Airport. The divided four lane Expressway eventually becomes a two lane road at Brotherhood Bridge and changes name to Glacier Highway. Continue driving west past Auke Lake and Auke Bay on Glacier Highway which will bend to the north. Watch for the square green mile markers on the shoulder of the road. Just after Mile 22, you will pass the Shrine of St. Therese. Continue seven-tenths of a mile, passing Mile 23 and look for the Arboretum sign. Turn left and follow the short lane to the small parking area.

Saturday, July 10 – Mount Roberts – Details to be Announced

Saturday, August 7, 10 am – Outer Point Trail -- Chiska Derr will lead a Lichens walk

Saturday, Early September – Eaglecrest – Wild Berry walk with details to be announced

Southeast Alaska Bioblitz 2010 -- June 26 and 27, Douglas Island

Ever wondered what your list would look like if you were to find a local natural area and count every single species that you found living there?

That’s what the organizers of the Southeast Alaska Bioblitz are trying to find out. And they have assembled a team of scientists to help.

A “Bioblitz” is described by National Geographic as “a 24-hour event in which teams of volunteer scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members work together to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, microbes, fungi, and other organisms as possible”. The count occurs in a designated area and serves as an index of local biodiversity.

The clock starts ticking for Juneau at noon on Saturday June 26.

Eaglecrest ski area will serve as the headquarters. Naturalists are invited to lend their expertise.

Everyone is invited to participate.

Fun and food will accompany the data-taking and scientific exhibits.

A number of Audubon members plan to join the effort. Paul Suchanek will lead the bird counts. Gwen Baluss will demonstrate bird banding at Eaglecrest from 8-10 a.m on Sunday. For further information, and a schedule, see Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s website for the event:

<http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=education.blitz>

You may also call Kristen Romanoff at ADF&G 465-4292

Announcing Audubon Alaska's New Executive Director!

From Audubon Alaska's e-news: It's the news you've been waiting to hear! I am so excited to introduce you to Audubon Alaska's new Executive Director, **Dr. Nils Warnock**.



Nils has a PhD in Ecology from the University of California at Davis and San Diego State University. He is currently a Wildlife Specialist for the Oiled Wildlife Care Network at UC Davis, a Research Associate with Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Conservation Science, and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Wildlife at Humboldt State University. Prior to his work at UC Davis, Nils was the Co-Director of the Wetlands Ecology Division at PRBO for nine years, where he managed a staff and budget similar to Audubon Alaska's. He has published extensively on the ecology of shorebirds, including more than 50 scientific articles in peer-reviewed books and journals, as well as articles in popular magazines such as *Natural History* and *Birding*.

Nils has considerable experience in Alaska and has conducted research on shorebirds and other birds like the Spectacled Eider at various locations in the state, including the North Slope, Seward Peninsula, Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Delta, and Copper River Delta. Nils recently worked with colleagues from the US Geological Survey and US

Fish and Wildlife Service to use satellite telemetry tags to track migration of Bar-tailed Godwits and Bristle-thighed Curlews from breeding grounds in Alaska to sites as far away as New Zealand. These flights are non-stop for distances up to 6,000 miles! Nils says this research made him appreciate the importance of food-rich coastal habitats like the YK Delta. In his own words: "I see the Audubon Alaska job not only as an exciting opportunity for me, but also a tremendous opportunity to help guide and facilitate conservation action on issues that are dear to my heart, such as the protection of critical staging habitat for migrating birds."

Nils will officially start with Audubon on June 14. His wife, Sarah, a scientist and teacher, and his two children, Noah and Anna, will join Nils in Anchorage in July. **But you can meet him sooner than that! Nils is the keynote speaker for this year's Copper River Shorebird Festival in Cordova.** You can catch his talk on Friday, May 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Cordova High School Gym, where he'll be discussing *Wings over Borders—The Amazing Migration of Shorebirds*. And stay tuned for a welcome party for Nils in Anchorage in the coming months.

Results of Saturday (4/17) Audubon Bird Walk at Fish Creek

Posted on Eaglechat by: "Paul Suchanek" paulms@gci.net [paulms99824](https://www.facebook.com/paulms99824)

There was a good showing of birds and birders this morning at Fish Creek. As the birders gathered, at least 2 or 3 **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** entertained everyone as they landed on power poles and took turns pounding on the Fish Creek sign. Down the trail about 100 yards, numerous **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** flitted about and a small flock of **Golden-crowned and Fox Sparrows** moved through the brush. Lots of **American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, and Mallards** were then found on the edge of the bay. After viewing more waterfowl including some **Northern Pintails** at the mouth of Fish Creek, the biggest surprise of the morning was just around the corner



as Mark Schwan spotted a **Yellow-billed Loon** near a log high on the beach at the high tide line. Since it was obviously stranded and probably either sick or injured, the bird was later captured (very easily) and then picked up by the Juneau Raptor Center - probably for shipment to Sitka or Anchorage.

The rain began to fall as the group moved past the loon and scoped another group of waterfowl at the edge of the bay. A male **Eurasian (common) Green-winged Teal** and a male **Eurasian Wigeon** were found in this group, but unfortunately, distance and the rain didn't make for great views. The Eurasian teal is considered a

subspecies of green-winged teal by the American Ornithologist's Union but is split from American green-winged teal by European authorities. This subspecies is very rare in the Juneau area. An early pair of northern shovelers were also spotted in the mix of waterfowl. All in all, a very interesting morning.

Juneau Audubon's Berners Bay cruise April 24

Posted on Eaglechat by: "Mark Schwan" aukebay@gci.net [markamb2001](https://www.facebook.com/markamb2001)

The Juneau Audubon cruise with Allen Marine to Berners Bay was memorable to say the least. As we headed out of Auke Bay and up Favorite Channel, we had no idea we all would witness something most of us had never seen. The birding along the way toward the bay was uneventful, but, we did see perhaps three humpbacks and made a brief stop to view Steller sea lions at Benjamin Island. As we headed into Berners Bay, the area seemed quiet at the south end with no large scoter flocks present, although soon we could see there were considerable numbers of gulls over toward the mouth of Cowee Creek. We headed up into the bay and slowly moved through Slate Cove, with still an unimpressive number of birds to see, and no real showing yet of marine mammals. There were murrelets, mergansers, guillemots, a few loons, plus some harbor seals.

We swung right to enter the main part of the north bay. We could see large numbers of gulls on the north shore. It was at that point people started noticing considerable splashing off toward the inner, eastern shore. I assumed it was from humpbacks, but as we approached it became clear killer whales were causing all the ruckus. There were several humpbacks in the vicinity as well. There were a couple of private parties in boats watching and taking pictures. As the captain slowed and idled off at an appropriate distance, we watched. What unfolded was pretty amazing to see, but rather eerie as well. What we were witnessing was a pod of transient killer whales, doing what they do, i.e. killing a Steller sea lion, a very large Steller sea lion. Moreover, based on what the naturalist on board told Mary Willson, we were watching a training session, where the moms were teaching the young how to kill. There was a large male, or perhaps two large males (not sure about that) in the group, but the male, or males, were not involved in the kill and were cruising around in the periphery.

What we saw was a group of perhaps two females and three or four young ??? surrounding the sea lion, and continually "tail" slapping it, head butting it, leaping on it, from different sides. This went on for quite some time,

and I suppose had been going on for a much longer time if that is what was going on when we initially saw the distant spashing. Eventually, things at the surface quieted, and it appeared to be over, but what apparently was happening was the orcas were finally going in for the kill under water. After some time, a large number of gulls (glaucous-winged, mew, herring, Bonaparte's, some possible hybrid types) came to the site and began feeding at the surface, apparently to take remains of the sea lion that came to the surface.

Not long after the kill, the male orca breached near our boat, which it then did a couple of more times. At this point, several of the killer whales were in very close proximity to humpbacks, and there we also saw several common loons, and a yellow-billed loon, and the gull activity continued. It was quite the scene. The Allen Marine naturalist was extremely helpful and knowledgeable, and she let us all know how rare it was to see what we saw. She also said that transient male killer whales generally only breach after a kill.

I did a little research on the internet this morning, and found that what we saw was typical, that is, the orcas will generally harass, tire, and wound, and injure their prey in ways that minimize the risk of them being injured. So, they will do the head butting, "tail" slapping, and landing on top of their prey. Then, finally, they force it underwater where they finish the kill and begin to feed. Whew! To think we were watching the mothers teaching the young these techniques was incredible.

Juneau Birding Notes for April, 2010

April is one of those months local birders look to with great anticipation, for this is when spring migration goes into high gear and the numbers of species and birds explodes. Early on, waterfowl take center stage, and everyone wonders when the first male Rufous Hummingbirds will arrive, and we begin listening for our earliest songsters. A little after mid-month we get serious about looking for shorebirds, swallows, warblers and sparrows. Things, for the most part have been pretty much on schedule. Here are some of the highlights, and again, most of these sightings came from our most active, dedicated birders.

Two **Brant** were found at Point Bridget State Park (PBSP) on 4/14 (PS). Up to four **Eurasian Wigeon** were present during the month, with one or two birds seen at Fish Creek, Salmon Creek, and Eagle Beach on different occasions (many obs). A beautiful male **Cinnamon Teal** was early, and cooperative, as it lounged most of a day in a slough adjacent to the airport dike trail, attracting many photographers (GV). Six **Redheads** on Auke Lake (4/29, NH) was a very nice catch, for although it is an annual bird here it is very rare to see more than about three at one time. Probably the most unexpected report was the **White-tailed Ptarmigan** seen in the upper meadow reach of PBSP on 4/25 (PS).



Nick Hajdukovich

Even rarer in spring than fall, two **Rough-legged Hawks**, spotted on the wetlands near the golf course on 4/28 (MA, SZ) was a nice surprise. One of these birds, a striking light-phase bird, was seen through the day and on the morning (4/29, PR). The only **Peregrine Falcon** report came from Eagle Reef on 4/4 (MJ). The **American Coot** seen the previous month (assumed to be the same bird) was still present near

the Macaulay (DIPAC) Hatchery early in the month (4/6, NH; 4/7, NH, MS). An **Iceland Gull** was seen amongst the gull masses at PBSP on 4/25 (PS), Paul also located our old friend, the **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, off the mouth of Fish Creek on 4/19. This bird has been reappearing each spring since 1993. Our first **Caspian Terns** were found near the airport dike (1, PS) and off the mouth of the Mendenhall River (2, MS).



Mountain Bluebirds Mark Schwan

A **Northern Hawk Owl** was keeping the skiers company up at Eaglecrest on 4/25 (GB). **Northern Flicker** reports came from Montana Creek (4/22, LE), Auke Bay (4/26, MS) and PBSP on 4/27 (PS). A lone **Cliff Swallow** was tagging along with a nice flock of Tree and Violet-green Swallows near the golf course on 4/28 (PS, MS). Last year, hardly anyone had a look at a **Mountain Bluebird**, but this April, they made a very nice showing out near the Scout Camp (2 on 4/11, GV), and one .to two birds found near the golf course and along the airport dike trail on numerous dates (many obs.). The only

Townsend's Solitaire (a very tough bird to find here) came from the end of the road on North Douglas on 4/23 (PS). Three **Snow Buntings** were seen along the airport dike on 4/4 (NH, BUK). That's it for now. Let's hope the rest of spring and summer months bring many interesting birds. Have a safe and exciting summer everyone, and happy birding!

Contributors: Mark Anderson, Larry Edfelt, MA; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Merrill Jensen, MJ; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek, PS; Mark Schwan, MS; Brian Uher-Koch, BUK; Gus van Vliet, GV.
Compiled by Mark Schwan

SPRING BIRDING NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

Another Spring has arrived! We had a nearly snow-free winter here at sea level in Ketchikan, and indeed our mountain snow pack is very minimal. The temperature have been mild without freezing overnight for weeks in most areas. Salmonberries are blooming profusely and many flocks of waterfowl have already flown by! Unfortunately, without the usual squalls of spring storms driving birds down to wait out the weather, many migrants just continue to move north bypassing eager birders awaiting their arrival!

The first male **Rufous Hummingbird** was spotted here was on the 28th of March. The females arrived a week or so later to enjoy the vigorous 'mating sloop display' of the males who have set up their territories!

April's month long hummingbird festival was a huge success again this year with all sorts of fun for bird enthusiast of all ages. There were art shows, craft projects, informative slide show presentations, and of course, bird walks each weekend! Some **Western Sandpipers**, **Killdeer**, geese flying overhead, two **Hooded Mergansers**, and a very cooperative **American Kestrel** were some of the highlights found on the walks!

Herring spawn along area beaches attracted gulls, scaup and scoters the past month or so. A **Little Gull**

was seen flying up the Tongass Narrows along with many flocks of **Bonaparte's Gulls!** Scores of **Fox Sparrows** arrived weeks ago and are commonly seen busily scratching up moss as they prepare to move to breeding areas. Big numbers of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** showed up around mid-month along with a few **White-crowned Sparrows** which are more commonly found on the mainland areas of S.E. Alaska!

There have been small flocks of **American Pipits** and some **Savannah Sparrows** as well. Apparently the **Rustic Bunting** survived the winter at it's favorite garden north of town.

A few groups of **Band-tailed Pigeons** returned during the first part of April to re-establish the few breeding colonies they have maintained for years on our island!

Orange-crowned Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers and **Townsend's Warblers** are here and often seen in alders which are rapidly leafing out now.

My favorite part of spring is when the quiet woods of winter come alive with bird song.!!!Just step outside about anywhere and it's easy to hear robins, sparrows, warblers, kinglets, and recently, **Hermit Thrushes** singing away!

Perhaps our entire summer will be as lovely weather-wise as the spring has been allowing nature lovers to enjoy our amazingly unique rainforest paradise!

MAY BIRDING NOTES FROM WRANGELL By Bonnie Demerjian

The Stikine River Birding Festival took place April 27-May 2. Featured guest was Ketchikan artist Evon Zerbetz whose passion is ravens. Events included a display of her work at the Wrangell Museum and classes at the schools and with adults. Shorebirds were flooding the Stikine River delta during the festival, primarily **Western Sandpipers** and **Dunlin**.

Birding and art class were combined in an afternoon on the river with the artist. Other workshops included building birdhouses and a bird walk, Breakfast with the Birds. The Stikine River Birding Festival is sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service, Wrangell City and Borough and the Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative.

In keeping with the festival's raven theme, one Wrangell birder sent in this recent observation:



Western Sandpipers and a few Dunlin on the Stikine River delta

“A friend of mine who lives on the water was noticing that herring were spawning in front of his house. He saw a raven come and land on a rock that was right next to the water. This raven plucks a live herring from the water and puts his foot on it. The raven then grabs another herring and flies off with 2 live fish. According to George, this raven accomplished this feat 3 times in a row. Leave it to a raven to catch live food and be efficient in hauling cargo!”



Flock of Black turnstones and Dunlin south of Wrangell

The previous week saw flocks of **Snow Geese** resting on the flats. **Sandhill Cranes** began showing up on April 17, just about on schedule, and are continuing to pass in smaller numbers. The Forest Service has been active the past week flying surveys of shorebirds on the delta. An estimated 1 – 3 million **Western Sandpipers** rest on the flats during this period.

The first **Rufous Hummingbird** was reported on March 31 though an Anna’s showed up even earlier, on March 19. The

first **Band-tailed Pigeon** was sighted on March 18. April 3 saw the first **White-crowned Sparrow**. Red-winged blackbirds have been reported at a number of locations including Farm Island on the Stikine delta. Earl and Mary Benitz who live there year round report seeing nine this year and that they usually nest in a nearby pond. A pair of **Rusty Blackbirds** has been spotted at the Muskeg Meadows Golf Course pond for the third year in a row. They have nested here in previous years.



Northern harriers are reported from the delta and in town. A **Red-tailed Hawk** also put in an appearance on the delta. Southerly winds appear to have brought in waves of new birds during the past week. Both **Violet-green and Tree Sparrows** on April 27 and **Hermit Thrushes** the following day. This week also saw the first **Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers** arrive.

Raven print from Vickie Bunes-Taylor’s kindergarten class with Evon Zerbetz. Students stamped using found objects such as bottle tops and cork.

Haines Bird Report Georgia Giacobbe

Fortunately the birds have returned to Haines bringing spring sooner than color on the trees. Just outside of Haines on the Haines Highway, the **Black-billed Magpies** who were our winter companions have moved on but the **Steller's Jays** have remained. Migrating through are the unmistakable **Golden-crowned Sparrows** intermixed with White-crowned Sparrows. When not hogging the feeders they are seen scratching in the bushes behind the house. **Dark-eye Juncos** are scratching side-by-side on the ground. Two **Rufous Hummingbirds** showed up at my house two weeks ago, had me diving for the hummingbird feeder as soon as they were spotted. Takshanuk Watershed Council's Pam Randalls says the migratory birds were running early this year. The Eulachon ran early this year, also, on both the Chilkat and Chilkoot Rivers. Up the Chilkat, they were chased by **Herring, Glaucous-winged, Mew, and Bonaparte Gulls**. She received a report that several **Mountain Bluebirds** have been spotted this year. And back again this year is the mysterious **Pileated Woodpecker**. There have been four reports of this woodpecker, unfortunately no one has been able to document with pictures.

The American Bald Eagle Foundation in Haines has some new birds this spring, too. Zilla the falcon, previously trained before coming to Haines, is in her flight weight. She is a hybrid desert falcon from Texas. George the two-toed Bald Eagle has moved in to the foundation, too. A female Barred Owl from Juneau will be in Haines soon. They will continue to accept eagles as the mew continues to be finished.

Thanks to you, **the 2010 Great Backyard Bird Count made history**, breaking the record for the most checklists submitted. More than 63,000 of you submitted 97,209 checklists! Tallies came in from all 50 states in the U.S. and all 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada.

What Do Your Data Show?

When it comes to large-scale patterns, one of the more notable trends was the scarcity—and sometimes absence—of winter finches such as Pine Siskins and redpolls. That's in stark contrast to the massive invasion of siskins during last year's GBBC. Over time, the GBBC has captured dramatic swings in the numbers of these species reported from year to year. These fluctuations may be influenced by the birds' food supply and reproductive success far to the north. This year, they presumably didn't need to travel as far south to find enough food.

Birds at the Top of the Count

In terms of overall numbers of birds counted, the American Robin led the way by a huge margin with 1,850,082 individuals reported. (Of these, 1,450,058 were reported from Saint Petersburg, Florida, where robins roost in massive numbers!) Canada Goose was a distant second with reports of 748,356 birds. Snow Goose, American Crow, and European Starling all came in with about 500,000 individuals each.



Rare Sightings

Participants also reported some rare—and wonderful—sightings. In Lake Havasu City, Arizona, numerous birders reported a Black-legged Kittiwake. In McAllen, Texas, 16 GBBC participants reported a Crimson-collared Grosbeak—the first time the species has been reported during the count since 2005. Birders off the coast of San Diego added a new species to the GBBC species list this year when they sighted a Red-billed Tropicbird, the first verified sighting of this species for the GBBC.

Highlights from Canada

Highlights from Canada this year included a Rustic Bunting seen in Creighton, Saskatchewan. This bird had been delighting birders for much of the winter, so it was great that it hung around to be counted for the GBBC. In Marathon, Ontario, a Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was a spectacular sighting because it was far outside its normal range in the Rocky Mountains. Such outliers always provide a charge of excitement when they are discovered.

For a [more detailed summary](#) of this year's results and to view the count's [Top-10 lists](#), visit the GBBC website at www.birdcount.org. You can explore maps, view photos, and see who won our prize-drawings.

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

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Nick Hajdukovich
Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

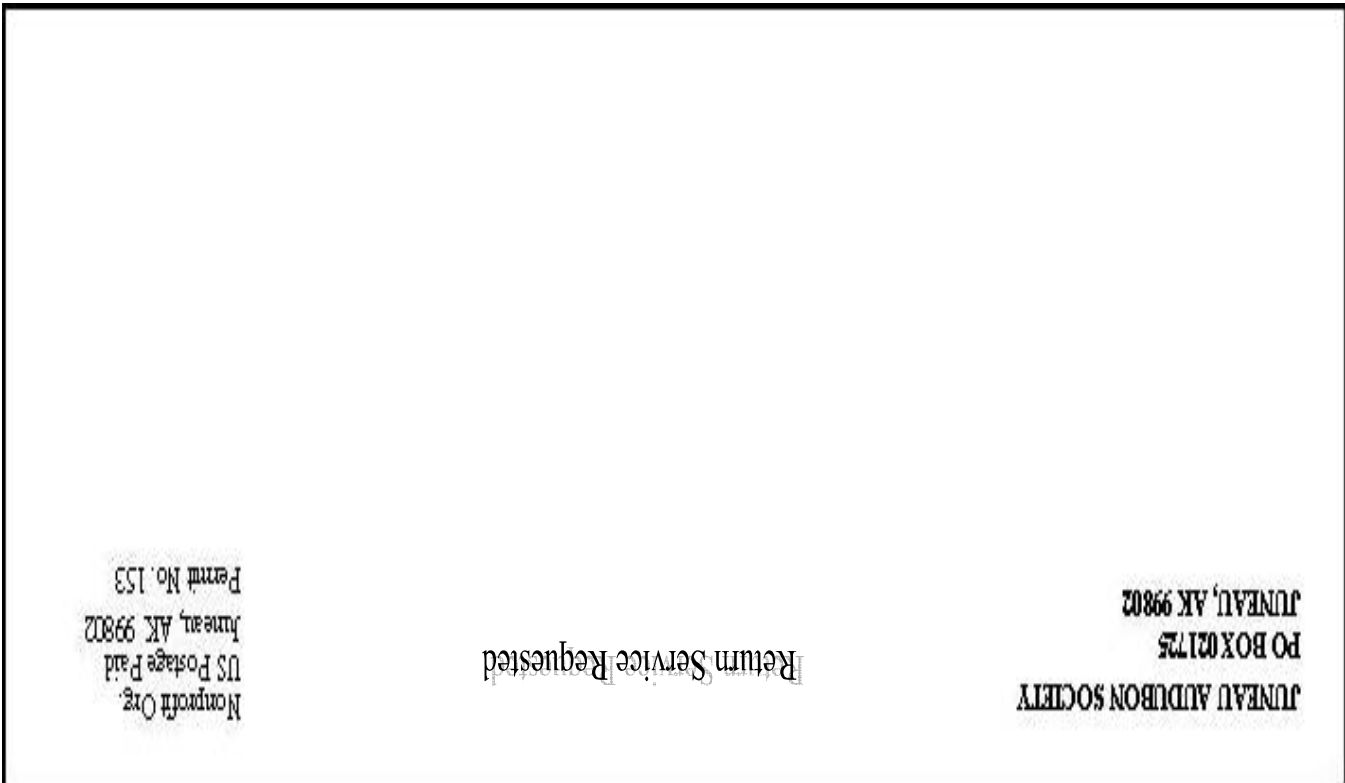
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Local Audubon Society Membership Application

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Juneau Audubon Society

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NOW IS THE TIME TO GET INVOLVED!!

JAS is facing a chronic shortage of officers and board committee chairs. We continue to function with vacancies. This makes it difficult for the organization to carry on with the activities our communities expect: bird walks, other natural history walks, boat trips, educational programs, advocacy for conservation of local bird habitat and the environment in general.

The level of commitment to serve your organization need not be arduous. Board meetings are monthly, except in the summers, and usually take a few hours. The atmosphere is easy-going. Other duties depend on the position, and the time you have to put in. If you would like to know more, including a more in-depth description of what is expected from the various positions, please contact any of the board members. And please do it soon! Elections are Oct. 14 and the fall and winter activities will soon begin.

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL HOLD THE FIRST FALL SEASON GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14

Election! Juneau Audubon Society will elect officers in conjunction with the public meeting in October. Our four officers serve a term of one year; so all officers need to be elected each year.



Lincoln Sparrow by Mark Schwan

Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting are accepted for all positions. At this writing, the candidates for 2010-2011 are Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Patty Rose for treasurer, and we do not have a candidate for secretary. Please contact any of the officers or board members if you would like to be on the ballot as a candidate for any of the officer positions. We really do need to have someone willing to serve as secretary, as it is an important position. Anyone wanting to know more about this position please call Mark Schwan at 789-9841. Also, if anyone is interested in

joining our board in one of our non-officer positions, we need help, as we currently have vacant committee chairs for conservation and programs. The conservation chair position is especially crucial and needs someone to help the chapter focus and respond to important environmental issues as they arise.

Program in October: There will be another announcement in the October issue of the Raven prior to our business and public meeting in October, but we plan to do our a, group slide show for the public program. This is where we ask everyone to bring about 10 images to share with the group. These can center on something special you did during this past summer, or something you did some time ago, or share whatever you might think the audience would find interesting or fun. There is no theme, just bring some images to share with the group.

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP DAY 2010 **Saturday, September 25th 9:00 to 12:00 pm**

International Coastal Clean-Up Day is on September 25th and thousands of volunteers all over the world will be collecting garbage off beaches and shorelines that Saturday.

Volunteer your office or organization or individuals to help clean-up garbage and debris from 16 public beach areas in Juneau and Douglas. Call 586-6853 to volunteer your office, organization or group for a clean-up area or go to Sandy Beach or at Auke Recreation Area on event day. All volunteers are welcome to join in for a free BBQ at noon that Saturday at the Main Picnic Shelter at Auke Rec.

This event is sponsored by the JWP, Alaska Brewing Company, Turning the Tides, the Marine Conservation Alliance, the Coastal CODE Foundation, and the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.

SECOND CROSSING TO BE ON JUNEAU'S OCTOBER BALLOT

The Juneau Assembly recently passed ordinance 2010-27 which puts a funding initiative and proposed route for construction of a second crossing from the Juneau mainland over to Douglas Island on the October ballot. Specifically, the initiative will ask for an extension of a 1 percent sales tax for ten years, beginning in 2013, to pay for a causeway and bridge from Sunny Point to Hendrickson Point. This ordinance was developed and promoted by a group of people calling themselves the S.A.F.E Committee, the acronym standing for the words safe, affordable, future, and efficient. After much public testimony at the August 23 meeting, the assembly quickly approved the ordinance 7 to 2, with only Bob Doll and Mayor Bruce Botelho voting in opposition.

The Juneau Audubon board believes the ballot initiative to fund the construction of a causeway through the heart of the Mendenhall Wetlands is a terrible idea. We believe the environmental costs are too great to allow this project to go forward as currently proposed. The resultant fill, changes in tidal flow and function, and increased access all put the wetlands resources at risk.

The Mendenhall Wetlands support a variety of fish and wildlife resources that either directly, or indirectly, benefits local residents and visitors alike. Fifteen salmon streams drain into the Mendenhall Wetlands and these wetlands have been deemed critical habitat for salmonid fishes. Capelin and sand lance use the waters of the wetlands. The salmon that spawn in Montana Creek, Steep Creek, Fish Creek, just to name several streams, all spend crucial portions of their early lives in the wetlands. Many thousands of migratory birds use the wetlands each year for resting and refueling, and the area supports many species year round. The area has been designated an Important Bird Area, or IBA, which means it is regionally, nationally, and even globally significant for supporting large numbers of a variety of bird species. The resources that draw so many people to our home, are in part, produced or supported by the environmental capabilities of a functioning, intact, Mendenhall Wetlands system.

Moreover, the ballot initiative says the project will cost approximately 70 million dollars, but this is based on a design that very likely won't be permitted given the inherent environmental risks. It would have made more sense to ask the people of Juneau to fund the examination of all the crossing options and to determine what can be permitted, and proceed from there. Then, the voting public would have a more realistic idea of what is buildable and what the dollar costs will be.

THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL DONATION

Karen Olson of Juneau donated a spotting scope, tripod, and binoculars to Juneau Audubon this summer. These items belonged to her late husband, Craig Olson, and she wanted our chapter to have them. We were thrilled and will use these on our various field trips and other educational activities. Thank you very much Karen!!

DAVID YARNOLD NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON'S PRESIDENT

I am pleased to announce that our search committee has identified and our Board of Directors has appointed a highly experienced, accomplished and committed conservation leader to serve as Audubon's new President and CEO.



Merlin by Mark Schwan

David Yarnold is currently the Executive Director of the Environmental Defense Fund and President of its Environmental Defense Action Fund. Prior to that, he was a Pulitzer Prize-winning editor at the San Jose Mercury News. David possesses an extraordinary array of skills and expertise that, with your ongoing assistance, will enable him to lead the Audubon network to new levels of conservation success.

This is an exciting moment for Audubon and for our cause. We have found the right person to build Audubon's legacy of conservation results

well into the future and to educate and empower the next generation of conservationists who will protect and restore the health of birds, other wildlife and the resources on which we all depend.

I look forward to opportunities for you to meet and work with David and, especially, to the great conservation results we will achieve together.

Best Regards, Holt Thrasher, Audubon Board Chair

A HELLO FROM NILS WARNOCK, THE NEW DIRECTOR OF AUDUBON ALASKA

My first glimpse of Juneau occurred in early August of this year at 0445 in the morning from the deck of the Alaska ferry coming up from Bellingham, WA. Three Sitka Black-tailed Deer were feeding at the edge of a small island as we slipped in towards the ferry landing, while a Bald Eagle circled above. Although I had started as the new executive director of Audubon Alaska in June in Anchorage, I was moving my family (my wife Sarah, my son Noah, and my daughter Anna) up from California on this trip, and what better way to begin our Alaska adventure than with a ferry ride through large tracts of the beautiful Tongass National Forest. Birding was good from the ferry with flocks of Rhinoceros Auklets, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and Red-necked Phalaropes feeding on the passage waters, small Marbled Murrelets exploding occasionally out from the path of the boat, and the ever-present Bald Eagles perched on the hanging conifers. At one point, we had a large school of a few hundred Pacific White-sided Dolphins surfing next to the ferry with sporadic Humpback Whales in the distance. The scenery was spectacular: the dark, moody forests; brilliant glaciers; and looming snow-capped mountain peaks.

This wasn't California! This was also a very different Alaska from the one I have intermittently worked in over the past 20 plus years – the treeless (although technically there are lots of trees, they are just tiny), often windy tundra of the North Slope and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta with their vast vistas and abundance of shorebirds and waterfowl. However, many of the conservation issues are the same, whether you are in Juneau or Chevak or Nuiqsut. How do we humans extract the resources we need to survive and live comfortably without destroying our landscapes, fish, wildlife, and in the long run, the very earth that we live on? Audubon Alaska is in the midst of many of these conservation battles in places like the Tongass and the Western Arctic and I am excited to be part of it. Our success lies in part with our partnerships with local Audubon chapters including Juneau Audubon. I look forward to coming and visiting with you in Juneau, hopefully this fall, to do some birding and to discuss issues like how we can better preserve and protect some of the key ecological hotspots within the Tongass. In the meantime, please feel free to get in touch with me, or if you are in Anchorage, come by and say hello.

JUNEAU BIRDING REPORT—THINK eBird By Mark Schwan

This summer was rather quiet with regards to interesting birds, but many species were seen by a small cadre of dedicated birders. Fortunately, Juneau birders continue to be very active in

submitting observations to eBird, and anyone with access to the internet can view the online submissions and get an excellent grasp of what has been seen in the Juneau area to date. Therefore, rather than summarize the observations herein, readers should visit the eBird site and look over the results. It is impressive!

Go to the home page for Alaska eBird at: <http://ebird.org/content/ak/> and click on the “View and Explore Data” tab near the top of the page. Next click on “Bar Charts” on left side of the page and you will see a “Locations” page. Now, choose Alaska on the left and click the “Counties” button on the right; then hit “continue” at the bottom. Now you will see the “Counties” page; select Juneau and hit the “continue” button again. You will see a cumulative, multi-year bar chart for all species submitted for the Juneau area. Here, you can select the “change date” button where you can select seasons and/or years for the bar chart display. For example, if you want to view the records just for 2010 from January 1 to the most recent date, you would select the entire year, and in the lower box for the range in years, just select 2010 in the start year and then hit “continue” once again. Now, you will see a bar chart for all species reported thus far for the year. And, even more fun, now, click on a species of interest and you will see a map appear along with the graphic calendar for the species. On the map, you will see red and yellow pointers, like thumbtacks. If you click on one of those, you will now see a list of where that species has been seen at that named location, with dates, observer name, and the number of individual birds observed.

As an example, one of the most exciting birds seen in the Juneau area this past spring and summer was the Purple Martin in late May. If you go to the bar chart and click on Purple Martin, several red pointers appear. If you click on those, you will see that the Purple Martin was seen by Patty Rose and Gus van Vliet on May 21 and 22, on the Mendenhall Wetlands. For possibly suspect entries, there are automatic filters in place to keep highly unusual or hard-to-believe entries from “instantaneously” being accepted and becoming part of the viewable database. Paul Suchanek is the eBird regional editor for the local eBird submissions and edits the filters along with editing “hotspots” for the Juneau area. He also leads all birders in the state in the number of checklists he posts to eBird. If you are interested in putting your own observations into eBird, it is easy to set up an account and begin entering observations (including old sightings). Recently eBird went worldwide so you can now look at bird sightings from Chile to China. In summary, it is a tremendous observational record, and Juneau is very active, so have fun.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, *Gustavus* – By Bruce Page from Eaglechat

Sun Sep 5, 2010 4:24 pm (PDT)

In the steady rain and SE wind this morning foraging along high tide drift along the beach near the Gustavus Dock, there was a juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** with 8 **Pectoral Sandpipers**. The plain buffy breast and superciliary line of this individual made it stand out from the others, as well as the more rufous tint of the plumage. This secretive species seems to regularly occur in the late summer/fall along Gustavus beaches in very small numbers.

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

We had quite a few **Eurasian Collared-doves** in Wrangell this summer. One observer reported several at her feeder in mid July and by early August there were 16. We had had several for the first time in 2009.

There was also a report from Forest Service observers who discovered tags from a dead **Golden Eagle** in LeConte Bay this summer. The tags turned out to be from a bird, one of 12, banded and released in Montana by the Wilderness Research Institute as part of a study of migratory patterns of Golden eagles. This is the fourth confirmed dead birds of the group. The remaining living birds are somewhere in Alaska.

SUMMARY OF BIOBLITZ BIRD SURVEY RESULTS By Paul Suchanek

A “bioblitz” was held in the Fish Creek drainage on Douglas Island from noon on June 26th to noon on June 27th. The purpose of a bioblitz is to attempt to document all the biodiversity within a given study area in a 24 hour period. During the 24 hour period, teams of scientists and members of the public spread out to try to document all species in the Fish Creek area. At least 797 species of organisms were documented (some of which have yet to be identified!). Most diverse groups included Plants (266 species), Marine Invertebrates (190 sp.), and Terrestrial Invertebrates (125 sp.). I coordinated the bird surveys which resulted in 57 species being documented.

Bird survey effort was distributed between three habitat types: Estuary & Marine (<50 feet above sea level including adjacent forests), Forest & Muskeg (uplands above N. Douglas highway to elevation of Eaglecrest Lodge), and Alpine & Subalpine (elevations above Eaglecrest Lodge). At least two surveys in each habitat type were conducted along with a nocturnal owl survey (which was combined with a bat survey). A bird banding demonstration was also conducted on the morning of 6/27 which resulted in the catch of one bird species not otherwise identified.

The number of species by habitat type was: Estuary & Marine (43), Forest & Muskeg (28), and Alpine & Subalpine (24). Twenty species were unique to the Estuary & Marine habitat which included the estuaries at Fish Creek and Outer Point Creek. The owl survey failed to detect any species, probably because it was so late in the breeding season. The 57 species found included a few unusual species. The 11 Hudsonian Godwits at Fish Creek estuary were rare migrants which were already on their southward migration. Caspian Terns seen at both Outer Point and Fish Creek are rare recent invaders of Alaska. A Warbling Vireo seen near Ninemile Creek road is a scarce species usually found on the mainland. The most exciting find was a nest of Northern (yellow-shafted) Flickers in a snag near Eaglecrest Road, perhaps the first of this species ever found on the Juneau road system. Breeding of Northern Flickers on the road system has been inferred from a few sightings of birds during the summer but this is the first confirmation of breeding. Breeding was also confirmed for some other species from sightings of chicks, fledglings and nests.

The number of bird species identified exceeded expectations even though it was so late in the

breeding season making detection of some species difficult. For example, Yellow-rumped Warblers were missed although this is not a particular uncommon breeding bird (and one was seen two hours after the event). Another bioblitz is planned in the Juneau area in 2011 as the 2010 event was so successful and I encourage all interested members of the public to participate. If an early Sunday morning bird survey isn't your cup of tea, maybe a Saturday afternoon dragonfly hunt or plant walk is!

For a complete list of species found, go to:
www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=education.blitz

RAT ISLAND IS OFFICIALLY RAT-FREE

Biologists confirmed Saturday that Rat Island, a remote island in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, is now rat-free. The report comes after two years of careful field monitoring at Rat Island, where the invasive predator decimated native bird populations by preying on eggs and chicks and altered the native ecosystem in numerous ways.

Biologists have confirmed increased numbers of at least one native bird after just two rat-free nesting seasons on the island. The giant song sparrow, found only in the central and western Aleutian Islands, is now commonly occurring on Rat Island. Song sparrows were only rarely seen on the island prior to the restoration. "The presence of nesting birds is deeply gratifying," says Bill Waldman, executive director of the nonprofit Island Conservation. "

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been at work in the Aleutian Islands, most of which lies within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, restoring seabird habitat by eradicating non-native species for more than four decades. Non-native foxes have been taken off over 40 islands in the refuge including Rat Island but this was the first rat eradication for the refuge.



ANWR's Fledging Gray-headed Chickadee
By Mark Schwan

With the rats gone, restoration partners and the Aleutian Pribilof Island Association agree that an Aleut (Unangan), name would be a fitting tribute to the restored island. APIA is now taking steps to enact a name change. Once a name is selected, it will await approval from the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

For more information:
http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov/rat_island.htm
<http://seabirdrestoration.org>

HELP PROTECT SPECIAL AREAS IN THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE ALASKA

The maze of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams on the coastal plain of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska is a globally recognized ecological resource that supports caribou, millions of breeding and migrating birds, beluga whales, polar bears, wolves, wolverines, and other wildlife.

In 1976, Congress charged the Department of the Interior (DOI) with managing these lands to provide “maximum protection” for special areas with important biological values. The special areas include Teshekpuk Lake, Kasegaluk Lagoon, the Colville River, and the Utukok River Uplands.

Take Action!

In July 2010, the DOI’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) started to prepare the first-ever management plan covering the *entire* Reserve. The new Reserve-wide plan will supersede all prior plans and guide future land management and development. Ask BLM to provide balance in the new Reserve-wide plan by:

1. Designating “No Lease Areas” to protect outstanding wildlife, wilderness, subsistence, and recreation values; and
2. Recommending that Congress take action to permanently protect special areas in the Reserve.

Comments DUE by **4:00pm Alaska time on October 1, 2010.** For more information, or to submit your comments online, go to www.AudubonAlaska.org.

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge!

Birds that breed in the Arctic Refuge have ranges that reach all 50 states and 6 continents! How many can you find in ***your*** state?

You’ve heard about the *World Series of Birding*. The *Texas Birding Classic*. Now Audubon Alaska brings you ...

The Arctic Refuge Fall Migration Birding Challenge!

More than 190 bird species nest, raise chicks, molt, or re-fuel for long migrations in the wilds of the Arctic Refuge. What better way than a birding challenge to honor the fantastic resource the Arctic Refuge provides for birds that spread across the globe—and may wind up in your backyard?



Male Smith's Longspur By Mark Schwan

1. **Recruit your team (up to six people).** Find the best shorebirder around, your friend with the killer scope, or someone with supersonic hearing to catch those fall migration calls... or head out with your regular birding buddies.
2. **Record your birds.** If a team member identifies a bird by sight or sound, mark it on the Arctic Refuge Fall Birding Challenge checklist.
3. **Take your time and enjoy.** This is a fall migration challenge—you have the entire autumn to scour the countryside.
4. **Submit your checklist.** Submit your list before midnight (Alaska time!) December 1, 2010. Checklists are available at www.AudubonAlaska.org.

THE PRIZES!

Each winning team member will receive:

- 1st Place:** The book *Arctic Wings: Birds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*, edited by Stephen C. Brown and Jimmy Carter
- 2nd Place:** *Bird Songs of Alaska* 2-CD set; birding maps for Anchorage, Kodiak, and Fairbanks
- 3rd Place:** Arctic National Wildlife Refuge T-shirt

THE WINNERS! We will announce the winning teams on December 6, the day of the 50th Anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Please submit your registration form and final checklist to: Beth Peluso Audubon Alaska:

Mailing Address: 441 West Fifth Street, Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99501

Fax: 907-276-5069

Email: bpeluso@audubon.org

For checklists or more information, go to www.AudubonAlaska.org or call Beth Peluso at 907-276-7034.

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

- President:** Mark Schwan, president@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Vice-President:** Jeff Sauer, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Secretary:** Gwen Baluss, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Treasurer:** Patty Rose, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Programs:** programs@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Membership:** Brenda Wright, 789-4656, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Education:** Kevin O'Malley, education@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Conservation:** conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Field Trips:** field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Raven Editor:** Mary Lou King, 789-7540, raven@juneau-audubon-society.org
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- At-large:** Merrill Jensen, at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Public Market:** Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Web Master:** George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org



Nick Hajdukovich
Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the *National Audubon Magazine* plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

\$20 (1-year introductory rate) _____; **\$15 (1-year student/senior rate)** _____
\$30 Basic renewal _____

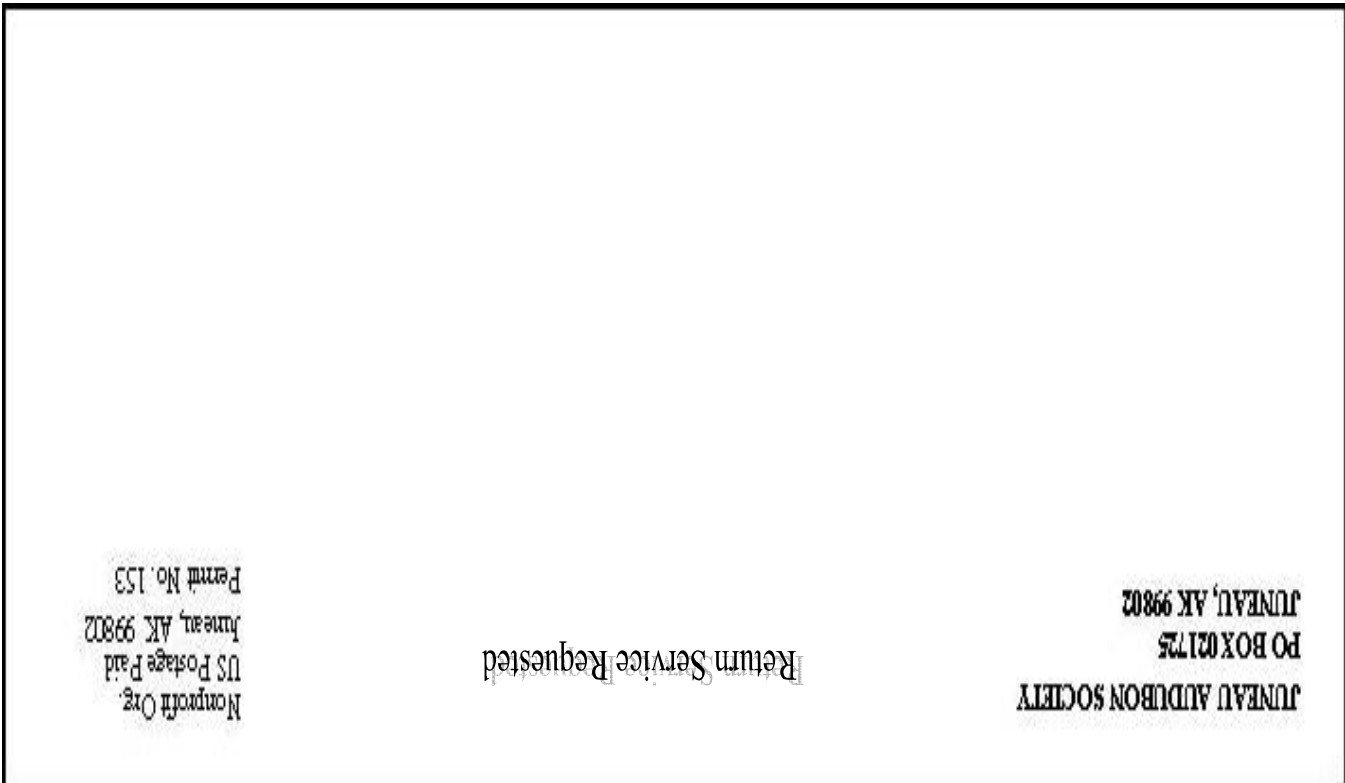
Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me
A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here _____.**



The Raven

The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.



<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 37, Number 2

Juneau Audubon Society

October 2010

ELECTIONS AND GROUP SLIDE SHOW, THURSDAY

OCTOBER 14, UAS Egan Bldg., Glacier View Room 221, 7:00 p.m.

The October meeting will be a combined short business meeting, election of officers, and group slide show- social event. All are welcome and encouraged to bring images to share with the group. You need not be a member of Audubon to attend; anyone can participate in the slide show, however, only members may vote in the election.

Election! Juneau Audubon Society will hold the annual election for the four officer positions. Our officers serve a term of one year; so all officers need to be elected each year. The candidates at the time of writing are Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Patty Rose for treasurer, and we are still looking for someone willing to run/serve as secretary. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. We are especially hoping to find a candidate for secretary, as this is an important position for the Chapter, and we would appreciate someone interested in Audubon to come forward and offer their candidacy for this position. You don't need to be experienced on the board to be a good secretary; the position mainly requires one to be good at taking notes and accurately recording the business of the chapter at our board meetings.

Moreover, we are in need of finding individuals that would be willing to serve as president and vice president starting in the fall of 2011. This would require gaining some experience on the board prior to serving in this position. We currently have vacancies on the board for two committees, programs and conservation. The conservation chair is a critical member of the board, as this person is key to helping track environmental issues of interest to the chapter and to help develop positions on such issues for the board. If anyone is interested in joining the board to serve in these vacant positions, or might be inclined toward running/serving as president or vice president in 2011, please contact Mark Schwan or any of the other officers or board members for more information. The chapter does a lot for the community and the region, and it is a great forum in which to participate, however the chapter is in need of new people willing to join and take the lead!

Program: Once we have completed the short business meeting and election of officers we will do our group slide show. This is always lots of fun. We ask everyone to bring about 10 to 15

images to share with the group. These can center on something special you did during this past summer, or something you did many years ago, or whatever you might think the audience would find interesting or fun. There is no theme, just bring some images to share with the group. We will have a traditional slide projector (it hasn't been used now for several years) and a laptop computer and LCD projector. People with digital images should bring them on a CD or small media storage device that can be connected to our laptop. We plan to have refreshments. Thanks and hope to see you there.



Blue Rock Thrush Japan
Mark Schwan

Eagle Feather Collectors

If you have been collecting eagle feathers under the Juneau Audubon Society USFWS permit, please bring them to the public meeting or call Brenda at 321-4739 so that they can be sent into the National Eagle Repository in Colorado. Our old permit expired in March, so you can get a copy of the new permit by calling Brenda or sending an e-mail to membership@juneau-audubon-society.org Thanks for your help.

Public Market in November

Do you have any books, videos, or items with a bird decoration you would like to donate to the Juneau Audubon booth for the Public Market in November? Do you have any ideas for members to create Christmas or holiday decorations out of natural materials? Do you have any ideas we could use for painting or making bird magnets. Would you like to help make jam or jelly? Volunteers are cheerfully put to work! Contact Mary Lou King or Brenda Wright by e-mail or phone. Thanks for sharing your ideas!

Juneau Bird Notes for September, 2010

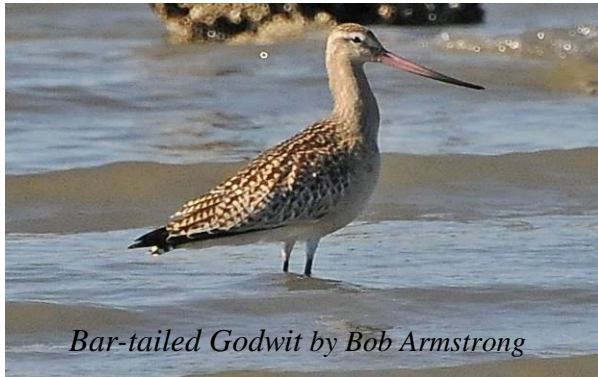
By Mark Schwan

The weather was terrific during much of the month but birding seemed relatively slow. Perhaps our migratory friends were on the fast track south? Remember to go to eBird.org for seeing how the local species' graphic calendars developed through the month of September, but here are a few highlights.

The **Osprey** seen near the gazebo on the airport dike trail on September 19 was the first known report in the Juneau area this year (PR, RG). Later on, Gus van Vliet reported single birds on back to back days, with one over Pioneer Marsh on September 29 and another on September 30 at mile 15 Glacier Highway. A **Gyr Falcon** flying over Crystal Lake on the glacier forelands on September 30 was a very nice find (RG). **Peregrine Falcons** were seen at various times through



the month by several observers, with the latest on September 26 at the beginning of the airport dike trail (GV, MM). A juvenile **Bar-tailed Godwit** was located near the mouth of Eagle River on September 15 (RA, MS). Interestingly, earlier this same day, a juvenile Bar-tailed was also seen in Gustavus by Bruce Paige.



Patty Rose found a **Ring-billed Gull** on September 15 amongst the hoards of gulls downtown near Taku Smokeries. Our “famous” **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was staying pretty loyal (along with lots of other gulls) early in the month to the new fill area between the end of the runway and the Mendenhall River, with a number of observations reported. Given the apparent new hangout of gulls in this area, it has fostered some concern that airport wildlife hazard personnel could literally target these

birds. By month’s end, gulls seemed to have pretty much forsaken the area. No one reported seeing airport personnel hazing these birds, and we hope “Lester” (Bob Armstrong’s name for our bird) is still alive and well. **Glaucous Gull** reports included one at Auke Bay on September 1 (GV) and one downtown on September 6 (DD).

A **Mourning Dove** showed up just at month’s end, September 28, near mile 15 Glacier Highway (JJ). The bird was relocated and photographed by Nick Hajdukovich on September 30 and subsequently seen by other birders the same day. One **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was seen along Radcliffe Road on September 11 (NH), and another single bird was seen in the same area on September 23 (MS). A male **Anna’s Hummingbird** made a brief appearance at a Douglas Island feeder on September 19 (PR). **Northern Flickers** were reported by various observers through the month. The only Passerines of note included a very late **Barn Swallow** seen near the Juneau airport on September 27 (NH), a **Townsend’s Solitaire** found up on Thunder Mountain on September 13 (PS), a **Blackpoll Warbler** seen and photographed on Douglas Island on the 12th of September (PR), and a tan-morph **White-throated Sparrow** at an Auke Bay feeder on September 27 (GV).



*Mourning Dove
by Nick Hajdukovich*

Contributors included: Robert Armstrong, RA; Doug Daniels, DD; Rich Gordon, RG; Jeanne Josephson, JJ; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Molly McCafferty, MM; Patty Rose, PR; Mark Schwan, MS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV.

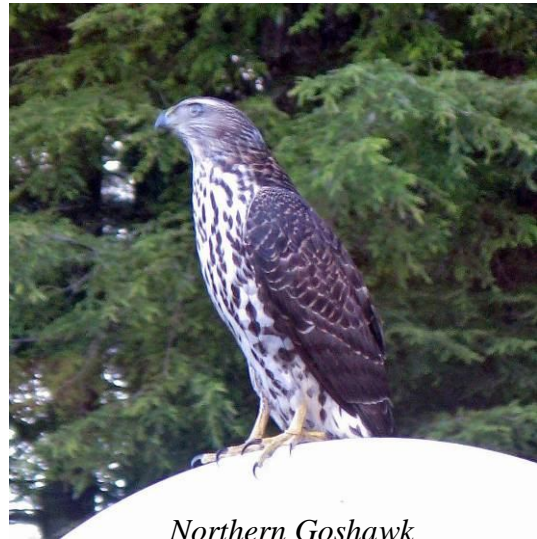
Wrangell Bird Report

by Bonnie Demerjian

American Robins, Varied Thrushes and **Cedar Waxwings** stoking up on Mountain Ash berries have provided the most activity for Wrangell birders this month. At the end of August an observer heard **Sandhill Cranes** on Zarembo Island. There has been speculation for a few years that a small number of the birds nest there. In mid-month flocks of cranes began to show up on their southward migration. These appear in smaller, more scattered flocks than in the spring.

Northern Shrikes aren't a common bird around Wrangell but three were spotted in Wrangell Island early in September.

Several chicken owners have had their flocks raided by a **Northern Goshawk** this month. The juvenile pictured was using a satellite dish as a perch while it waited for the chickens to reappear after its initial ambush.



*Northern Goshawk
By Jamie Reimer*

“Doc” Davenport, Wrangell fisherman and physician, was rescued from his sinking boat only weeks ago. Prior to that event he was fishing outside of Sitka and reports this encounter with what were probably **Fork-tailed Storm-petrels**: "I had an unusual situation while fishing this year. The weather was fine, and I was fishing offshore, so I drifted for the night instead of running in and anchoring..... During the night I kept hearing strange sounds from the aft end of the boat. I got up and shined a light out the back door toward the cockpit. I had left the cockpit computer on (which I often do) and I saw many birds fluttering around the greenish light and twittering.... there must have been a hundred of them, and they were attracted to it like "moths to a flame".... I couldn't identify them because of the light and the motion, so I gave up and went back to bed. The next morning, when I went to work, I found about 20 of them huddled in the cockpit, soaking wet from rain. I picked them up and set them on deck, and even took about 10 of them into the galley to get warmed up and dried out. I guess the therapy worked, because they eventually flew away one by one. They were a tube-nosed small dappled bird, and while I had no way of identifying them with certainty, I suspect they were petrels. Never had anything happen like that before."

A fall boat trip down Zimovia Strait netted sightings and soundings of **Western Grebes, Surf Scoters** and a **Barred Owl**. Its insistent call from a nearby island awoke me in my berth at 4 one tranquil morning and made me glad, once again, that I live in Southeast Alaska.

Archaeopteryx

by Kevin O'Malley

Archaeopteryx or “ancient wing” was a feather wearing reptile with claws on its wings. Some ornithologists believe it to be the evolutionary link between reptiles and modern day birds. What are the chances that birds evolved from Jurassic Period reptiles? What defines a bird? To classify birds you must think about what separates birds from other animals. An easy way to do that is to ask yourself what makes them light? A quick light list prioritizes feathers, hollow “strut supported” bones, beaks, and uniquely efficient digestive systems. These are all features that make a bird light and categorize birds together. Another feature that is often left out is that birds are nest builders and therefore egg layers. As a child I had a deep fascination and connection with bird nests and neighborhood songbirds. I climbed trees and looked in their nests for eggs and devised creative ways to catch a few local songbirds.

I would like to single out avian construction of nests as a critically important act birds perform to survive. Picture a bird’s nest in your “mind’s eye”. What does it symbolize? Artwork, necessity and perfectly engineered species specific construction are just a few things that come to mind when thinking about this stable piece in a bird’s life. I wonder what Archaeopteryx’s nest looked like.

A recent encounter with a very primitive style of nest building called a scrape has sparked my interest. This construction is so simple and basic that there must be multiple elements built in to make it work. Semipalmated Plovers build their scrape type nest out in open rocky areas with minimal organization and within the laws of gravity. Their eggs are laid in a slight depression so they do not roll away. The pyriform shaped eggs are actually designed to roll in a circle. Good engineering; there is nothing holding them in! The eggs are totally exposed to the elements and to terrestrial and avian predators.

Recently I unknowingly approached a Semipalmated Plover’s scrape nest. The plover’s behavior told my body to slow down and pay attention. By the time the plover dropped its wing presumably injured, it was alluring me in a choreographic hoax. It stopped me in my tracks. Two more steps and in the wrong direction and I would have ended life. At my feet were four oval greenish randomly and sparsely black spotted eggs intricately placed in a chafe on the rocky ground. Hidden in plain sight cannot come without a cost but seems to work well for the plovers. Here is where the relationship between the nest building behavior and the broken wing dance signify a successful evolutionary development.

Since “ancient wing” what display practices or physiological adaptations connected with nest building survived? The behavioral creativity of Belted Kingfishers play a part in the health and well being of its nest inhabitants. Kingfishers are burrow nesters and excavate earthen material from cut banks, such as found along the Mendenhall River. It starts in a hole in the cut bank and leads to a tunnel that opens to a dirt floor nursery room. In the subterranean condo the eggs and altricial young, naked at birth, are protected from the elements and their terrestrial predators. The choices the kingfisher makes in its avian nest construction make sense and the advantages obvious. Check out this seemingly unwise behavioral choice that involves bees and wasps. In *The Birder’s Handbook*, Ehrlich, Dobkin and Wheye write about birds choosing nesting sites

where other organisms protect their young. “Mississippi Kites, Aplomando Falcons and other raptors have been known to associate with bees and wasps which may ward off botflies on their chicks.” What’s in it for the bees and wasps? Is there some type of co-evolution going on here? Choose your neighbors carefully, there seems to be a fine line here.

The American Robin uses a different approach and it’s cup nest is both isolated, camouflaged, and also combined with some physiological housekeeping. Fecal matter smells...phew! And, it may attract predators. How can a robin avoid giving away the smell of the nest? In the early stages of feeding the adult robins will carry worms to the nest, feed the young, and on the roundtrip grab the fecal sacs and ingest them. The energy efficacy is unique and fecal sacs still have good nutrients that have not been digested by the chicks. How does this function relate to survival of the species?

As nest structure moved to the trees so did the specialized behavioral techniques and physiological functions that advance each species. The plover’s scrape nest would not have been as successful without the adult putting its own life on the line in the broken-wing display. As would the American robin’s offspring not thrive as well without the physiological adaptation of the fecal sacs. When reptiles such as Archaeopteryx evolved into birds they left some things behind such as clawed wings and teeth, then carried others forward such as feathers and ground nesting. Let’s see what happens in another 150 million years or so.

Diesel Clean-up Campaign

Juneau Audubon has recently been asked to endorse the Diesel Clean-up Campaign. This national effort was formed in 2005 to help raise awareness regarding practical principles that if implemented will significantly reduce diesel pollution nationwide. This is a very important environmental and health issue, and should be of interest to our members. The information that follows is taken from campaign narrative provided to us.

In the United States, more than 11 million engines use diesel fuel to build our nation’s buildings and roads and to transport our goods and citizens. However, particulate matter pollution from diesel emissions shortens the lives of an estimated 21,000 people nationwide every year. In addition, the cancer risk that diesel exhaust poses is 7 times greater than the cancer risk from all other 181 air toxics tracked by EPA combined.

The Diesel Clean-up Campaign, a collaboration of organizations throughout the country, is committed to the following goals: To reduce direct diesel fine particulate matter emissions 40 percent by the year 2012, 55 percent by 2015, and 70 percent by 2020. Achieving these goals would save tens of thousands of lives between now and 2030, improve health and well-being by reducing ailments such as heart and asthma attacks, and help mitigate global warming.

Although there are clean diesel regulations for new engines, there are millions of old, dirty diesels in the U.S. that may be in use for decades to come. The good news is that retrofits available today can nearly eliminate diesel particulate matter and black carbon emissions. Retrofitting diesel engines with filters is one of the few actions that will have immediate climate

benefits, complementing long-term efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions. Governments and industries must act now to implement federal, state and local pollution control initiatives to reduce diesel pollution. To learn more on this, go to the following web address:

www.catf.us/projects/diesel .

Register for Alaska Bird Conference by October 8 for Early-Bird Discount



Trumpeter Swans Haines Pass

The 14th Alaska Bird Conference will be held in Anchorage this year on November 16, 17, and 18 at the Hotel Captain Cook. Register by October 8 for early-bird discounts. Conference highlights include keynote speaker Theunis Piersma, the awards ceremony (who will win the Pete Isleib Award?), and, of course, all of the fascinating presentations about Alaska bird ecology. We are offering student rates, single-day registration, and single-session registration.

Go to www.AlaskaBirdConference.com to register and for more information about the conference program and accommodations.

By the way, it's not too late to sponsor the conference and/or purchase booth space in the tradeshow! This is a great opportunity to highlight your organization's product or service. Please email me (lcosta@audubon.org) for details, or go to www.AlaskaBirdConference.com.

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***Please consider getting The Raven by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money
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<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Volume 37, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2010

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, November 11, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

HIKING THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL and Lightweight Backpacking

Jeff Sauer will show pictures and share his stories of thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail, April to September 2010. Jeff will also explain and show the various items of lightweight gear that now enable nearly anyone to backpack.

The AT is one of three major national scenic trails in the US. The other two are the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) and the Continental Divide Trail (CDT). The AT is 2175 miles long stretching from Georgia to Maine. It travels through 14 states. Jeff did a classic AT thru-hike, hiking from south to north, Springer Mountain Georgia to Mt. Katahdin Maine, in one, five and a half month-long trek. At least four others from Juneau and Haines did sections of the AT this summer. Anne and Pat Murphy of Juneau hiked the AT Maine section (280 miles), which was their last section of the AT. After several years of section hiking, Pat and Anne's Maine hike marked the completion of the AT for them. Irene Alexakos and Ben Kirpatrick of Haines/ Juneau also hiked the Maine section of the AT this summer. Section hiking is popular on all three of the major US trails, as well as thru-hiking. Hikers encountered on the trail this year ranged in age from 10 to 70, with major groups of thru-hikers being the college-aged crowd, the 30 years olds, and the middle-aged crowd (a substantial and formidable presence on the AT). For Jeff this was his second major trail. He thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 1985. Thus, his presentation will also compare these two very different hikes, as well as what has changed in the last couple of decades in backpacking (new lightweight packs and sleeping bags; cell phones, cell phone apps such as birdwatching apps; and ultralight high powered head lamps - young dudes and dudettes hiking whenever they want, including through the night.)



Tracks and Signs --November 6th from 10-12
Meet at Brotherhood Bridge Parking Lot
(Across from Don Abel)

Juneau Audubon Society and Naturalist Kevin O'Malley are continuing their fall/winter Tracks and Signs Programs. This fall/winter animal tracking and natural history season will meet once per month (mostly the first Saturday of every month except January). Our goal is to study and discover the interesting relationship between mammals and birds to their environment.

Dress for the weather and be prepared to walk off trail. Elders come share your stories and families are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

2010 Thanksgiving Bird Count by Patty Rose

The 2010 Thanksgiving Bird Count takes place November 25. This count is a great opportunity for citizen scientists of all ages to contribute valuable data. It is easy and fun--It takes only one hour and can be performed in the comfort of your home. The participant counts all the birds that visit a count circle during one hour. The participant selects the time of the count and a 15-foot diameter count circle. For example, the count circle could be located around a bird feeder that is visible from a window. The count form and instructions are available on the Juneau Audubon Society website at www.juneau-audubon-society.org.

Editor's note: If you have been getting way more Audubon renewal notices than you like or need, you can request fewer mailings or a paperless renewal process by calling Membership Customer Service at 800-274-4201 or email Audubon@emailcustomerservice.com.

New Board Member -- Julie Koehler

Julie Koehler, looks forward to serving Audubon once again. In the early 1980's Julie lived in Anchorage where she worked two years as secretary in the Audubon Alaska office. After leaving that position to start her own typing business, Julie served one year each as the Anchorage Audubon chapter's conservation chair, vice president, and president. Upon moving to Juneau she spent the years 1985-1990 working as the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council's office manager. Now, after a long hiatus from paid or volunteer conservation work, she has decided it is time to once again become involved with protecting the wonderful ancient forests, waterways, birds, and other wildlife of Southeast Alaska that she holds so dear.

Juneau Bird Report for October by Patty Rose

A strong spike in the number of migrating birds in mid-October resulted in some interesting observations in Juneau. Waterfowl observations included a **Ruddy Duck** on Miller-Honsinger Pond near the Temsco facility by Nick Hajdukovich on October 20 (NH). Paul Suchanek found **Yellow-billed Loons** on October 19 at the end of the North Douglas Powerline Trail, October 26 at Point

Bridget State Park, and October 30 on Fritz Cove from the North Douglas Highway. A **Double-crested Cormorant** was found at the Fish Creek delta on October 14 (PS).

Rough-legged Hawks passed through Juneau over a one-week period beginning on October 13, when a dark-phase bird was seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands from the Airport Dike Trail (NH, PR). On October 15, one was seen at Point Bridget State Park (PS). On October 17, one was seen near the golf course (NH), and on October 18, two were seen at that location (MS). On October 19, a high count of three, including a dark-phase bird, were observed near the golf course (RA, MS, GV). Other raptors included a **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** at Brotherhood Park on October 21 (PS) and a **Peregrine Falcon** at the mouth of the Mendenhall River on October 17 (NH).



Rough-legged Hawk

By Mark Schwan



Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk

Paul Suchanek

October 26 was a late date to find two **Black Oystercatchers** at Point Bridget State Park (PS). A single **Baird's Sandpiper** was seen on October 13 - 14 on the Mendenhall Wetlands from the Airport Dike Trail (NH, MS). A **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** was found near the Airport Dike Trail on October 23 (PR, GV). On October 20, Gus van Vliet observed a large flock of 37 **Wilson's Snipe** from the Airport Dike Trail. Paul Suchanek reported seeing two interesting gulls on October 16, a **Ring-billed Gull** at the Gold Creek delta and a **Glaucous Gull** at the City Dock near Taku Fisheries.

Eurasian Collared-doves continued in Juneau in October. Up to four were observed in the Airport area

neighborhood from October 4 - 13, and two were observed near Auke Lake on October 20 (NH). An immature male **Anna's Hummingbird** visited a West Juneau feeder October 29 - 31 (PR, NH). On October 24, Gus van Vliet located a **Mountain Bluebird** on the Airport Dike Trail. Observations of **Cedar Waxwings** included five on October 5 and four on October 13 in the Airport area neighborhood (NH) and three downtown on October 26 (PR). Two **Palm Warblers** were seen in Juneau during October. The first was found by Paul Suchanek on the Airport Dike Trail on October 13 (PS, m.ob.). The second was found at the



Palm Warbler

By Nick Hajdukovich

Jensen-Olson Arboretum by Nick Hajdukovich and Merrill Jensen on October 21. This species is not seen every year in Juneau, so finding two in one year is exceptional.



White-throated Sparrow By Patty Rose

One or two White-throated Sparrows are usually seen annually in Juneau, so observations of five during October was unusual. The earliest **White-throated Sparrow** was at an Auke Bay residence September 27 - October 18 (GV). Single birds were also seen at the Airport Dike Trail on October 10 (PR, BA), at a North Douglas residence October 18 - 20 (PS), at a West Juneau residence October 18 - 20 (PR), and near the Airport Dike Trail parking lot on October 20 (PR). All were tan-striped morphs except for the October 10 bird.

Two additional songbird observations, one late and one early, wrap up songbird observations for October. A late **Western Tanager** was seen in the airport area neighborhood on October 5 (NH). Three early **Snow Buntings** were seen at Eagle Beach on October 30 (PS, BA, PR).

To find out more about the distribution of birds in Juneau, visit Alaska eBird at <http://ebird.org/content/ak>.

Thanks to those who contributed observations for this report. Contributors include Bev Agler (BA), Robert Armstrong (RA), Nick Hajdukovich (NH), Merrill Jensen (MJ), Patty Rose (PR), Mark Schwan (MS), Paul Suchanek (PS), and Gus van Vliet (GV).

Sitka Observations By Matt Goff

Although this October saw lower than average rainfall, it provided some excitement in the form of powerful storms with strong winds. Seas topped out over 30 feet at the Cape Edgecumbe buoy with a maximum gust of 74mph during the most severe of the storms. Termination dust graced the mountains around town, and although the official temperature (taken at the airport) never dropped below freezing, there were a few days with frost.

In addition to the typical fall flocks of geese migrating overhead, a mid-month influx of sparrows, and the return of **American Coots** to Swan Lake, several unusual birds were reported during the period. Of particular note were a **Golden Eagle** at Starrigavan, a **Black-headed Grosbeak** and **White-throated Sparrow** seen a couple weeks apart at the same feeder, a late **Flycatcher** species at Starrigavan, an early **Snowy Owl** on Harbor Mountain, a **Short-eared Owl** on Mt. Verstovia, an **Osprey** at Indian River, a **Canvasback** or two at Swan Lake, and multiple reports of **Eurasian Collared-Doves**. Other sightings of interest included over 30 **Ring-necked Ducks** on Swan Lake, a **Ptarmigan** in Totem Park (not

typically seen at low elevations), **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels** in the Channel, as well as at Bear Cove, **Western Screech Owls** calling more frequently, and a possible **Long-billed Murrelet**.

For a couple of other Sitka bird observations, visit:

<http://www.sitkanature.org/wordpress/2010/10/03/migrating-geese-4/>

<http://www.sitkanature.org/wordpress/2010/10/02/northwestern-crows-observing-death/>

Thanks to, Marge Ward, Lucy Pizzuto-Phillips, Carrie Hisaoka, Paul Norwood and several others on the SitkaBirds e-mail list for providing reports (sign up for the list at <http://www.sitkanature.org/>).

Haines Report – 16th Annual Bald Eagle Festival set for November 10-14

By Georgia Giacobbe

Since last spring, eagles were the focus of the Haines High School Citizen Science class. The class located 23 eagle nests to watch during the summer. Of those, ten nests had eagles sitting on them from early May to mid June. Four of the nests were in the Chilkoot River area and six were along the Haines Highway (Chilkat River). The weather during that time was hot and dry. By the third week of June, none of the ten nests were active. They don't know why the eagle nests failed, but suspect it may have been due to hot dry weather and lack of food for the eaglets.

Pam Randles noted additional bird differences at the same time. **Common Mergansers** usually have young at the same time as eaglet hatching, especially in the Chilkoot River area. This year the mergansers had ducklings three weeks before eagle hatching. At the same time, some new migratory birds appeared this year. There was a confirmed presence of **Eurasian Collared Doves**. They stayed in the neighborhood of 6th and Dalton Streets. Other doves were spotted around town and up the highway.

The annual fall migration of eagles to the Chilkat Valley has begun, and preparations are well underway for the **16th Annual Bald Eagle Festival set for November 10th through the 14th**. All things eagle and wildlife will be celebrated and presented over the four day festival. For eagle viewing, the peak area is between 19.5 to 23 mile on the Haines Highway, especially if the weather is freezing. Walden Lee is the 2010 photographer, conducting field workshops and a "Photography Concert" the evening of November 11th. Every day at the American Bald Eagle Foundation museum between 12:00 and 1:00 pm, a Live Bird Presentation is planned of the 8 resident birds at the foundation. The Live Eagle Release on Saturday will take place in Klukwan with songs and dances in regalia in Klukwan at the Long House and Camp. Other birds and wildlife are represented in the festival, also. Dr. Scott Ford will discuss sea duck research Thursday morning, and a Yukon's Wildlife Viewing program featuring the annual celebration of swans is scheduled Friday morning. For complete schedule, go to www.baldeaglefestival.org.

Wrangell Report – November 2010 by Bonnie Demerjian

A small number of **Eurasian Collared Doves** look as if they will be making Wrangell their winter home this year. They have been around all month and are visiting feeders at several locations. **Mourning Doves** were reported by several observers.

Flocks of **Sandhill** cranes began appearing around the second week of October, passing overhead in the evenings. Southbound **Snow Geese** were observed flying toward and feeding on the Stikine River flats beginning in mid-month.

Resident birders on Farm Island report 2 male **Red-winged Blackbirds** and a female at their feeder. They say they usually have one or more males winter over each year. They have also been hearing and observing the **Great Horned Owls** that live near their cabin. A **Great Gray Owl** was reported on Woronkofski Island at the end of the month.



A **Red-tailed Hawk**, which was reported last month from the Stikine delta islands, is still around and often spotted by residents there. At the Inner Harbor, an **Osprey** was seen early in the month. And, as is common in winter, a few **Black-billed Magpies** have been seen on both the lower Stikine and in town.

Wilson's Snipe are generally solitary and always elusive but a flock of seven startled one observer at the Wrangell running track early in the month. A lone **White-crowned Sparrow** was also observed near the ferry terminal.

We have asked Prill Mollick (former Juneau resident) and Mike Seifert (summer Forest Service employee) to send interesting reports from farther south.

The Carolina Wren By Prill (Isleib) Mollick
Smoky Mountains, N.C.

The Carolina Wren is a sparrow sized songbird with rusty tones above, buffy under parts, and white eyebrow stripes. Its perky tail is often held upright. The beak slightly curves downward. This little bird has a loud voice and a variety of songs. Their songs often consist of very loud triplets. Some birders claim one song says: “tea kettle, tea kettle tea kettle” Around here they must have a southern accent, because what I hear is: “hey mister, hey mister, hey mister!” and “deeper, deeper, deeper, deep!”(nothing like an oven birds “teacher- teach”.) To warn intruders too near the nesting site, they make loud harsh rasping, scolding sounds.

They nest in unusual places. One year I found their domed shaped nest with a small side entrance, atop a box of tools, on a shelf under our deck. It was made of dried grass, pine needles, and lined with soft material. There were 4 eggs in the nest. They often lay four to six white or pinkish eggs that are spotted with brown. One egg did not hatch. That fall I took both nest and egg to the school where I occasionally substitute teach. The fifth grade class decided they would help that egg to hatch. Taking turns they held the egg in their warm hands. Yes – one student held it too tight and it broke.

I once observed them building a nest on the ground under a pile of dried grasses. Another summer they built a nest inside the dome on top of the propane tank. The neighbors’ cat, which we “adopted” when

they moved out of state, soon noticed the wren activity at the nest on the tank. We kept that frustrated cat indoors until the young wrens left the nest. Egg incubation is 12 – 14 days and the young leave the nest in 12 – 14 days.

One year a wren started nest building in a neighbors' newspaper delivery tube next to their mailbox. When the neighbor discovered it he promptly removed the material. That wren had to find another odd spot to nest.

They build “decoy nests” as well. I had a cute bird house that a wren started filling with nest materials. I looked forward to the wren family activity. But it wasn't for a nest at all. He had stuffed it full of twigs, pine needles and leaves so that no bird could get in.

Both parents participate in nest building and feeding the young. They eat insects, spiders, moths, caterpillars and are known to eat small lizards, tree frogs, snails and even small snakes. They also eat seeds and berries. One day I watched a wren with a large mint green caterpillar in its beak. It whipped that caterpillar back and forth on the ground, “whip-whomp”, “whip-whomp” until it was lifeless and safe to feed the young.

During winter months I hang out a log of drilled holes filled with a bird pudding of suet, peanut butter, and cornmeal. (A family tradition started by my brother Pete when he was a teenager in Scouts.) The wrens come and feast on that peanut butter mixture. The Carolina Wren is such a delightful little bird to have year round in the neighborhood.

Mike Seifert, Missouri

The trees are turning to their fall colors and are at the peak right now. We had our first frost last night (10/31) and it is cooler tonight. I made it back alright here to the midwest but it seems a bit too tame after being in AK. No bears though a few are seen, but no salmon, but we do have a few eagles in the area.

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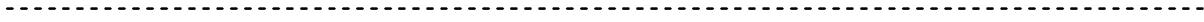
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Volume 37, Number 4

Juneau Audubon Society

December 2010

Free Public lecture
Thursday, December 9, 2010, at 7pm
UAS Egan Room 221



Bats of Southeast Alaska

Karen Blejwas of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will discuss her acoustic monitoring research on bats. Find out how fascinating these animals are, how little we know about them, and what Karen is learning from her investigations.

Tracks and Signs

December 4th at Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge -- Meet at 10am the parking lot at the end of Radcliff Rd.

Experience in the field and educating yourself with field guides can change your relationship with wildlife. Research and life experience will enhance your awareness. Reading the behavior of an animal through its tracks is as exciting and interesting as actually seeing the animal.



Come join Juneau Audubon Society and Naturalist Kevin O'Malley for a walk on the wetlands. Dress for the weather. Kids must be accompanied by adults.

The 2010 Juneau Christmas Bird Count

Hey Juneau birders, the **Juneau Christmas Bird Count** will be held this year on **Saturday, December 18**, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the two McDonald's Restaurants at 8am on count day, with appropriate attire and binoculars. People wanting to count in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas should meet at the downtown restaurant; birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the valley restaurant. As usual, there will be a potluck after the count at the home of Mark Schwan and Debi Ballam to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. Let's have a great turnout and a terrific count! For more information on this year's Count, you can call Mark Schwan, at 789-9841.



Spotted Towee Nick Hajdukovich

Known Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska

Chilkat	December 18	Dan Egolf* Tim Shields	766-2876 766-2354
Craig-Klawock (1)	No Info; TBA ?	Larry Dickerson	No number
Haines	December 18	Dan Egolf Tim Shields	766-2876 766-2354
Glacier Bay	December 18	Nat Drumheller	697-2166
Juneau	December 18	Mark Schwan Gus van Vliet	789-9841 789-5624
Ketchikan	December 18	Andrew Piston	225-9677
Mitkof Island	December 18	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Sitka	January 2	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 18 **	Elaine Furbish Dawn Adams	983-2049 983-3302
Tenakee Springs	December 27	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Thorne Bay (1)	No Info TBA ?	Brandy Prefontaine	No number
Wrangell	December 18	Bonnie Demerjian	874-3665

* Forms and information available at the Back Country Ski Shop

** Website for more information: sites.google.com/site/skagwaybirdclub

- (1) There was a Christmas Bird Count in this community last year with the compiler listed as above, but we have no information whether there will be a count there this year, nor a contact number for the listed compiler.

Juneau November 2010 Birding Notes By Mark Schwan



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Mark Schwan

A male **Redhead** was on Pioneer Marsh on 11/6 (PR). A well documented **Wandering Tattler** at Outer Point on 11/19 was totally unexpected and perhaps the latest record for anywhere in the state (PS). Single juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** were seen at Phalarope Slough on the Mendenhall Wetlands on 11/7 (PS, BA, AP) and on 11/13 at Eagle Beach (MS). These sightings perhaps represent the latest local records for this species. A **Ring-billed Gull** was spotted in the lower Mendenhall River on 11/7 (PS, BA, AP).

Eurasian Collared-Doves were seen regularly throughout the month along the lower Mendenhall River and the Back Loop Road (many obs.) Up to 8

birds were seen at a Muir Street residence early in the month (JJ) and 10 birds were seen near the mouth of Lake Creek on 11/27 (BB). A **Northern Hawk Owl** graced the treetops and meadow of Brotherhood Park on 11/18 (NH, many obs.) and, to the delight of local birders, continued to be present in the area through 11/27 (GV). An **Anna's Hummingbird** made repeated visits to a Douglas Island feeder during the afternoon of 11/6 (PR), and then two Anna's Hummingbirds appeared together at this same feeder on 11/20 (PR). One bird continued to visit in subsequent days.

Male **Wilson's Warblers** along the airport dike on 11/9 (GV) and near Lena Point on 11/16 (NH) were rather late, but there are a few local records going into early December. The best bird of the month was certainly the **Spotted Towhee** that began showing at a Paul Suchanek's Douglas Island residence on 11/8. This represents at least the seventh record for Juneau. This is even more fascinating when you consider there are no records for the Ketchikan area. This bird was still present as of 11/28.

A **Swamp Sparrow** was caught lurking near Phalarope Slough on the wetlands on 11/7 (GV, MM). Two sightings of a brightly striped **White-throated Sparrow** occurred near the gazebo on the airport dike trail on 11/10 (PS) and 11/15 (MS). This could have been the same bird lingering in the area. Then, Gus van Vliet found another individual along the Back Loop Road near Lake Creek, on 11/21. Finally, Patty Rose located yet another along the dike trail on 11/27. As mentioned before, perhaps this was the same individual bird seen the previous two times this month in the same area. Regardless, this was quite the month, and fall for this species in Juneau.



Northern Hawk Owl

Contributors: Bev Agler, BA; Beth Bellflower, BB; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Jeanne Josephson, JJ; Molly McCafferty, MM; Andy Piston, AP; Patty Rose, PR; Mark Schwan, MS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV. Compiled by Mark Schwan

Returning hybrid ducks

Posted by: "Paul Suchanek" in Eaglechat
Sun Nov 21, 2010 5:38 pm (PST)

A hybrid male Common X Barrow's Goldeneye was hanging out with a flock of Common Goldeneyes today near Picnic Cove (False Outer Point), Douglas Island. It is presumably the same bird returning for at least its 5th winter in that location.

Today, Patty Rose also relocated HOGO, the hybrid Hooded Merganser X Goldeneye which wintered near the Douglas Boat Harbor last year (and was relocated there). HOGO has changed quite a bit since last year but I'm pretty sure it is the same bird, now an adult plumaged male. I suspect the bird is a hybrid with Barrow's Goldeneye as some photos of similar hybrids on the web have a lot more white on their sides. Attached are links to a couple of photos of the bird taken today, a link to a HOGO photo from last year, and a link to a very similar bird from California

JUNEAU PUBLIC MARKET BOOTH A BIG SUCCESS



Jeff Sauer and Nancy Waterman "Jamin" in Mary Lou King's kitchen. Record number of Jelly's made this year.

Thank you to all those who helped in our fund raising effort in this year's booth.

Brenda Wright needs a huge thank you for not only helping make jelly, but produced many more items for the booth. She also helped set up the many items and then take it down and store all the items needed for next year.



Eagle Feather Collectors

If you have been collecting eagle feathers under the Juneau Audubon Society USFWS permit, please bring them to the public meeting or call Brenda at 321-4739 so that they can be sent into the National Eagle Repository in Colorado. Our old permit expired in March, so you can get a copy of the new permit by calling Brenda or sending an e-mail to membership@juneau-audubon-society.org Thanks for your help.

Protect Wildlife Habitat in Your Community!

*Submit Nominations for LWCF priorities
by January 14, 2011*

Your Audubon Public Policy Division is currently seeking nominations for the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) priorities for Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12). Land acquisition funding for federal lands is a critical component of preserving valuable bird and wildlife areas and protecting threatened and fragile ecosystems – so do not miss this opportunity to highlight a critical habitat area for birds and wildlife in your community!

[Learn more at http://chapterservices.audubon.org/news-announcements](http://chapterservices.audubon.org/news-announcements)

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National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the National Audubon Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.
\$20 (1-year introductory rate) ____ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) ____ \$30 Basic renewal ____

Name _____

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City/State/Zip Code _____

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____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed ____ Please bill me A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send
\$10 (1-year membership) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725,
Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

***Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money
and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here

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