

The Raven



Volume 28, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2001

November Meeting

Thursday, November 8, 7:30 p.m.

Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School Library (2nd floor)

Photographing Nature with a Digital Camera

About a year ago Bob Armstrong put aside his heavy Nikon camera equipment, purchased a tiny (9 oz) digital camera and proceeded to push it "to its limit" – from extreme macro (mosquito size) to extreme telephoto (1,500 mm) and points in-between. He will describe what he has learned, demonstrate the equipment and show slides of the results.

Sarah Keeney, Water Quality/Mining Organizer for Southeast Alaska Conservation Council will also present an update on the potential re-opening of the Tulsequah Chief mine and upcoming hearings (see page 3).

Audubon at the Juneau Public Market November 23-25



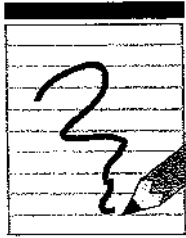
Do you have two hours to spend in Audubon's booth at the Juneau Public Market on Friday, Saturday or Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend?

It's fun, interesting and a good way to be an active Auduboner.

Audubon's booth at Juneau Public Market is our major fund-raising event and a chance for us to be visible in our community.

Please call Kathy at 789-0288 to choose a shift.

Juneau Audubon Society will receive 100% of membership dues for all new members the chapter recruits throughout the coming year. It's an especially good time to invite new people to join.



Notes from the board

Newsletter

Judy Shuler

It is with more than a little trepidation that I have agreed to take over as Raven editor from long-time editor Mary Lou King. Mary Lou plans to spend more time in other chapter projects, including education where she has already contributed so much. Please thank her for the many years she has spent packing the Raven with information, and insuring that it came out on schedule month after month.

Please forward your suggestions and articles for the Raven to upclose@alaska.net. Together we can make it a vehicle for tying together the interests and concerns of our 350+ members in 16 communities from Ketchikan to Skagway.

New officers

The following officers were elected at the October 11 membership meeting.

President: Steve Zimmerman

Secretary: Deanna MacPhail

Treasurer: George Utermohl

You can make a real difference

Do you have an idea for a monthly program? Concern for a particular species or habitat? A field trip you'd like to participate in or lead? A computer skill to share? Contact any of the people listed on the back page to fill a vacant chair, join a committee or take an active role in your local chapter in some other way.



Steven D'Amato

Is this your last Raven?

Please check the date your membership expires in the top right corner of your mailing label (The first two digits identify the year, the second two, the month. Example: 0201 means January of 2002). **If your membership has expired, this will be your last issue of The Raven.** We encourage you to renew your National membership on the forms National sends to you. Use the form on the back of this newsletter for new members and support for just the Juneau Chapter.

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 your monthly mail? Send an e-mail to kingfarm@ptialaska.net if you'd like to receive The Raven in MS Word or rich text (read by most word processing programs).

December Raven Deadline

Please submit articles for the December issue no later than November 26 to upclose@alaska.net

The Taku Needs You

Sarah Keeney, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

The British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office will hold a series of three important public hearings in Juneau, Whitehorse, and Atlin on the potential re-opening of the Tulsequah Chief mine in northern BC. The Juneau hearing will likely be the first week of December.

Just 40 miles northeast of Juneau, a junior Canadian mining company known as Redcorp Ventures, plans to reopen the Tulsequah Chief Mine and to construct a nearly 100-mile access road straight through the heart of the Taku River watershed. The road would increase access for new industrial-scale logging and make development of 5 other mines along the road corridor economically viable. Prospectors have already staked massive claims along the road corridor because of this road proposal. The mine and access road will likely damage Alaska water quality and harm the five species of wild salmon traversing Alaskan waters to spawn in Canada.

The world-class Taku River watershed contains some of the richest wildlife habitat in North America, supporting large populations of wild salmon, grizzly and black bears, wolves, stone sheep, moose, caribou, mountain goat, and migratory birds. The Taku also has one of the largest salmon runs in both Southeast Alaska and British Columbia; usually, it's among the top five salmon producers in Alaska. These salmon sustain thousands of commercial, sport and tribal fishing families. Annually, Alaskan fishermen catch more than 2 million fish from the Taku River, with a value of more than \$10 million. The Taku is also home to healthy populations of steelhead trout, cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden, and eulachon.

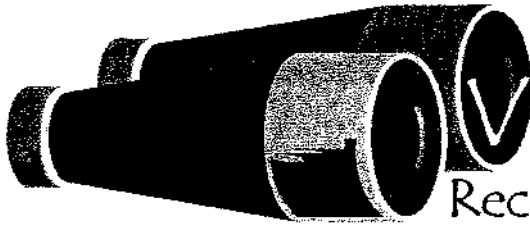
The Taku is the traditional homeland of indigenous people on both sides of the border. The Taku River watershed has supported the subsistence of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) for thousands of years. The TRTFN successfully challenged the province of British Columbia in the courts claiming the province's environmental review was seriously flawed. The BC government appealed this court ruling; we expect a decision by the end of the year. Last summer, after a court decision quashed RedCorps' mining permit, a BC Supreme Court judge ordered the original project review committee to reconvene and carefully consider the TRTFN's concerns. The TRTFN's outstanding concerns include impacts of the mine and road on water quality and sustainability of the livelihoods of TRTFN members. These issues will be the focus of the public hearings this winter.

For the past several years, U.S. federal agencies, the State of Alaska, Governor Tony Knowles, commercial and sport fishermen, Alaska natives, local Juneau residents with summer cabins up the river, and conservationists on both sides of the border have raised serious concerns about the impacts of the mine and road on the watershed and Alaska's fisheries. The Governor and former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt requested an impartial project review by the International Joint Commission, created by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty. Canada, however, continues to balk at a bi-national, impartial scientific review. Unfortunately, forces are also lining up in the new U.S. administration to undo the protective policies of the Clinton Administration, and the fate of the Taku hangs in the balance.

Please keep an eye out for details about the date, time, and location of the Taku hearing in the coming weeks, and plan to attend the public hearing. Speak out to safeguard the wild Taku, protect habitat for fish, wildlife, and birds, and to protect million-dollar fisheries and the families who depend on wild salmon.

For more information, call Sarah Keeney at the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council: 586-6942, or email: sarah@seacc.org

Please Testify at the December Public Hearing in Juneau



Viewing Opportunities & Field Trips Recent Sightings

Haines

Bald Eagle Gathering in Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve

The 7th Alaska Bald Eagle Festival November 8-11 will feature talks by wildlife experts from Alaska, Canada and the Lower 48; digital and film photo workshops; art exhibits; live eagle presentations; guided tours of the Council Grounds; the Gei Sun Dancers; and more.

Keynote speakers will include Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer; Brian Latta and Janet Lithicum of the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Center; and wildlife photographer and conservationist Gary Braasch.

If you're not able to make the festival, you have through January to witness this great gathering of eagles. But don't expect a quiet time of it. Eagles whistle, call, shriek, and flap from trees, river banks, sand bars, the very sky above.

Further information is available from the Haines Chamber of Commerce or <http://baldeaglefest.org/>

Sitka

The Whales of Sitka Sound

During the first weekend in November, Sitka celebrates the abundant marinelife in Sitka Sound with speakers, student art, sea chantey concert, market and whale-watching opportunities during the Sitka WhaleFest.

But you still have plenty of time to see the show along the outer coast of Baranof Island in Sitka Sound. Whale numbers are the highest between September and January, when whales come to Sitka Sound to feed on huge schools of herring which move into deep fjords to spend the fall and winter. Researchers have documented transit times between Sitka Sound and Hawaii as just over a month, so many of these whales present in January and early February still will migrate to Hawaii in time for the peak of the mating and calving activities. More information at <http://sitkawhalefest.org>

Gustavus

Bruce Paige

The big early bird migration has already passed however, some of the later migrants and wintering birds are beginning to arrive. Several flocks of Tundra Swans have passed overhead and Ring-neck Ducks and Canvasbacks have been observed. Northern Pygmy Owls have been seen in several locations around Gustavus.

Juneau Audubon Society has members in these communities:
Coffman Cove, Craig, Funter Bay, Gustavus, Haines, Hydaburg, Juneau, Ketchikan, Pelican,
Petersburg, Sitka, Skagway, Tenakee Springs, Thorne Bay, Ward Cove, Wrangell



Recent excerpts from Eaglechat

Tonight (Oct. 24) about 5 PM 18-20 Swans landed in the channel in front of Bayview on North Douglas. They spent time on the other side near the wetlands. They were magnificent. They departed just at dark and headed down the channel toward town. <jhauck@gci.net>

Today (Oct. 26) at about 2:45 PM there was a boreal chickadee foraging in the marsh grasses and low in spruce trees along the dike trail about 200 yards past the point where you come down off the dike (just before a slough located on your right). It was foraging by itself and was silent. <paulms@gci.net>

Just returned from my morning walk (Oct. 29) on the airport dike trail and I want to report a most excited sighting! A GORGEOUS SNOWY OWL!! I do not recall ever seeing a snowy owl in Juneau, but one of the long time dog walkers reported this morning that she had seen one fly overhead on the wetlands several years ago.

The owl is actually quite easy to view. Its stark white plumage is unmistakable. Huge yellow eyes with black centers, black spots on its wings and sides and on the crown of its large round head. This is a whoopee! sighting! lauriecraig@gci.net

Eaglechat was started in 1999 by Nina Mollett to share sightings and chat about all things bird-related. To join in with 60+ like-minded local members, log onto <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Eaglechat> or sent Nina an email at ninam@alaska.net to get signed up.

The Other Thanksgiving Birds

After the main attraction is consumed, you could take an hour break to join in the Thanksgiving Bird Count.

Thanksgiving Bird Counts were begun in 1966 in Virginia; last year 449 people in the western states, Alaska and Hawaii tallied 149 species of birds.

To participate, choose a circle 15 feet in diameter and carve out an hour-long (precisely one hour) block of time. The location and time are up to you. It's not out of line to pick an area clearly visible from a comfortable spot near a window so long as it's likely to attract birds. Think of your circle as a cylinder reaching from ground to sky, as you want to consider any bird who passes through the entire area above your circle.

Count individual birds only once during the hour, even if they pay repeated visits. Flocks should be counted only once, when you determine the largest number inside your area. If you participate over a period of years, use the same count circle every year.

Send results to the address below. Include your name, mailing address, location of count, temperature, time your count began and ended, weather, habitat type, details about any feeders or bird baths within the count area.

Dr. John G. Hewston
Natural Resources Building
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521



The Patience of Stones

Richard Nelson

Since the tragedies of September 11, the only way I have found release from the almost unbearable weight of grief and fear is to take myself out into the wild places, where I can find the embrace of peace, where I can see that the world goes on as always, where I can touch my own source and understand that my life depends not just on the good graces of humankind, but also - and ultimately - on my sustenance from the earth itself.

Once again, I ask wild nature to brace up my depleted soul. And in gratitude, I renew my pledge to give something back.

This is why I will continue working to protect the environment even in these dark days. Now, perhaps more than ever, many of us need unhewn, unfettered places to find solace and replenish our spirits, to imagine a sane and reasonable future, to weave our lives together with those of our fellow beings, to understand that we are beholden to - and responsible for - something incomparably larger and more important than ourselves.

I have heard that conservationists all around the country feel overpowered by the situation, as if it had become inappropriate or unpatriotic to speak for the environment; as if our concerns had become irrelevant, measured against the magnitude and urgency of the national crisis. And yet, in the spreading aftermath of terrorism, there are proposals to diminish environmental protections, increase and subsidize resource development, and make more of our national public wildlands available to industry. The most stunning example is an amendment to the Defense Authorization bill, filed by Senator James Inhofe of Oklahoma, that would mandate oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Is this a time to move quietly aside? I say, unequivocally, no. I trust we have the integrity and determination not to allow our environment, our natural preserves, and our wildlife to become additional victims of terror, magnifying the dimension and permanency of our loss.

Through many years of volunteer work in conservation, I have come to see that activism fully engages us in the democratic process, that the freedom to express our opinion is a precious gift, and that conservation is a way of speaking out for the American land, perhaps the ultimate form of patriotism.

While our flags are waving and patriotism is a constant subject in public discourse, those of us who care deeply about the environment can add our voices as true patriots - not only supporting our human community but also the earth on which our nation stands.

My commitment to conservation activism and my willingness to work for America's natural heritage has never been stronger than it is now. My love and concern for this country, for our democratic principles, and for people everywhere is equally strengthened.

And as each day's events unfold, confronted by my sadness and my fear, I will look for comfort and balance where I always have: in the beauty of seagull voices, in the shelter of forests, in the power of storms, in the companionship of otters, in the affirmation of moonlight, in the confidence of wrens, in the dignity of mountains, in the tenderness of deer, in the perseverance of tides, in the elusiveness of seals, in the ephemerality of leaves, in the stoicism of bears, in the self-containment of islands, in the willingness of salmon, in the strength of roots, in the jubilation of streams, in the wisdom of ravens, in the patience of stones, in the assurance of dawn.

With profound thanks for all these things, and for the blessed company of humankind, I will offer my hands and my heart in whatever small way they might be of use - and in this, too, I will find hope.

This article originally appeared on OrionOnline.org, the website of Orion and Orion Afield magazines. Requests to reprint this article may be directed to editor@orionsociety.org

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Lobbying

Sue Schrader

Alaska Conservation Voters (ACV), a statewide coalition of 35 Alaskan conservation organizations and businesses, will offer its Citizen Volunteer Lobbyist Program again during the State Legislative Session beginning January 14th.

ACV will bring 4 to 5 conservationists to Juneau during the course of the session to work side-by-side with ACV's Conservation Advocate and her staff as they advocate on behalf of our member groups in the state legislature.

The organization is looking for enthusiastic, hard-working conservationists who can spend 3 to 4 weeks in Juneau (4 weeks is preferable) during the session. Selected volunteers will receive airfare, per diem, housing and training in the ins and outs of state government. Join us for an eye-opening, challenging experience in Alaska's capital.

Learn about the inner workings of state government and hone your skills as an activist as you learn to work with, and influence, public officials and their staffs of our State Legislature and the Knowles Administration. You will learn to analyze and research bills, draft position papers, testify at committee hearings, effectively lobby legislators and their staffs and activate the grass-roots to take action.

Applications are due December 28th.

E-mail or call: Sue Schrader, Conservation Advocate

Alaska Conservation Voters, P.O. Box 22151, Juneau, AK 99802

phone: 907-463-3366 fax: 907-463-3312 email: sue@akvoice.org

Calendar of Events

Evening at Egan

University of Alaska Southeast

Free public lectures begin at 7 p.m. **Fridays** in the campus library

Nov. 2 - N. Scott Momaday, 1969 Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction; poet; scholar

Nov. 9 - "Brown Bears - Growing up at Pack Creek," Dr. Robert Fagen, UAF associate professor of biometrics; Johanna Fagen, UAS adjunct faculty in biology

Nov. 16 - "The Evolution of Tlingit and Haida Art," Steve Hendrikson, Alaska State Museum curator of collections

Nov. 23 - Thanksgiving weekend, no program

Nov. 30 - "This Note's for You: English Poetry and the Quest for Authenticity," Jim Hale, UAS assistant professor of English

Partners in Flight Conference

The 3rd Partners In Flight International Conference will be held March 20-24 at the Asilomar State Park Conference Center near Monterey, California. The focus will be on implementing all-bird conservation actions identified by Partners In Flight, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan and the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. Session chairs and presenters will come from the U. S., Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.

Further information is available at the conference web site (<http://www.prbo.org/PIF/NPIF2002.htm>)

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife and natural habitats. As a member, you will become an important part of our chapter and receive a host of benefits including:

- A one-year subscription (9 issues) of our chapter newsletter, *The Raven*
- Automatic membership in National Audubon Society and a one-year subscription to the award-winning Audubon magazine.

Audubon Society Membership Application

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zipcode _____

Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me

Mail to: National Audubon Society, Membership Data Center, P.O. Box 51001,
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

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*If you prefer to just support Juneau Audubon Society, fill out the form above and send with \$10 to:
Raven Editor, P.O. Box 021725, Juneau, AK 99802*

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Programs: Open
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