

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.



Volume 29, Number 3

Juneau Audubon Society

November 2002

November ALMANAC



**Bull moose shed antlers
November through January,
following rut.**

*Look for moose around Berners
Bay, Gustavus, along the Stikine
& Taku River valleys and the
Chilkat Valley.*

**Breeding season for Sitka
black tail deer peaks in late
November.**

Porcupine breed.

**Mountain goats mate in
November and December.**

*Alaska's rainforest is home to
at least 40 species of land
mammals, more than 200
species of birds, 5 amphibians
and a lone reptile, the garter
snake.*

Monthly Meeting

Thursday, November 14, 7:30 p.m.
Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School, Room 207*

Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary Matt Kirchhoff

Managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the sanctuary is world renown for the thousands of walrus that crowd its shores, and the tens of thousands of seabirds that nest on its cliffs in summer. Matt's slide presentation will focus on the natural history of the island and its notable wildlife.

**Please note the change of room for this meeting only.*

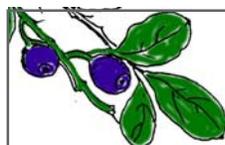
Juneau Public Market

Kathy Weltzin

One of our major fund-raisers is just a few weekends away. We welcome items that we can sell. Things that are made of natural materials or have a nature focus are especially welcome. Here is a chance to turn your creativity into dollars for our organization. Many people look especially for the Audubon booth. We also need people to staff the booth on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

This year the booth will feature natural decorative items, bird feeders, note cards and the ever-popular home-made jellies. Because of the high demand, Nagoonberry jelly will be limited to two jars per person.

Please contact me at 789-0288 to find out how you can be a part of this popular community activity. And plan to come for your own holiday shopping. Public Market opens the Friday after Thanksgiving, November 28, and continues through Saturday and Sunday.



If you buy Audubon jelly this year or have glass jars left from prior years, please recycle jars so they can be used for next year's berry crop. Contact Mary Lou King at kingfarm@ptialaska.net



Notes from the board

Brenda Wright, President

Hello members,

As newly elected president of JAS, I attended a meeting of all Alaska chapter presidents at the state Audubon office in Anchorage on October 20. This is an exciting time, as two new chapters are being formed. One is being re-activated in Cordova, the Prince William Sound Audubon Society, and a brand new chapter is organizing in Bethel. It was very informative to hear what activities are being held in all the different chapters and get fresh ideas on how to keep people active and interested in Audubon.

We shared ideas on activities, problems, and opportunities. One of the best suggestions I heard was to be sure and match volunteer tasks with what the volunteer most wants to do! Since we are lucky enough to have great birding experts in our neighborhood, we can offer guided walks all through the spring migration. We also have the marvelous opportunity to visit Berners Bay in the spring to enjoy the concentration of wildlife attracted by the eulachon run there. However, there are lots of other opportunities to spread our enjoyment of birding, wildlife viewing, and natural history throughout the year. If you have any suggestions for new activities, we would love to hear about it. We'd especially enjoy learning of any new activities where you would like to participate as a leader or organizer. How about guided walks in the summer or fall? Please let us know your ideas.

One of the activities sponsored by the state Audubon office is an educational tool called the Audubon Bird Academy. This is a project to give teachers a curriculum that will help encourage lifetime interest in birds and a healthy environment. It follows 4th and 5th grade science, math, and reading standards. It comes with a workbook for teachers and activity books for students. Free workshops to train presenters are offered by Bucky Dennerlein of the Audubon Alaska office. Teachers can contact Bucky to reserve a 2-3 day session of the Audubon Bird Academy September through June. Bucky can be reached by e-mail at bdennerlein@audubon.org. If you would like the Juneau Audubon to help sponsor a program, let us know (\$20/student). Best of all it sounds like a lot of fun!

In local news, the JAS board, especially Kathy Weltzin, are organizing for our big fund raiser of the year, the Public Market. We will have a booth to sell our amazing jams and lots of other goodies. This year the market is November 29-30 and December 1. Please contact Kathy or any board member if you can volunteer to help at the booth. Other activities by the JAS board include advocacy for birds and other wildlife. Mary Lou King wrote comments for JAS on the proposed new dock facility in Auke Bay (near the ferry terminal) and Steve Zimmerman sent comments in for the proposed Cape Fox land exchange (Berners Bay) and the new regulation to limit taking wolves on Douglas Island to the state game board. Our ongoing concerns with the airport environmental statement and wildlife plan and also the golf course on North Douglas are being monitored.

If you have ideas or suggestions, or better yet, want to contribute to JAS activities or committees, please give me or any of the board members a call or e-mail.

Get out there and enjoy!

Board profile



Brenda Wright
president

I am a lifetime member of Audubon and have always attended the Juneau programs whenever I could. After volunteering for the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society as treasurer for two years, I was interested in volunteering for a local group. I like working with a group that has conservation advocacy as its goal, so when asked to serve as vice-president of JAS, I said yes. Birding is a special treat for me and the mission and vision of Audubon fills a niche for me of a group that is concerned about education and caring for our environment. So since my first gasp of delight at a rose breasted grosbeak in Ohio, to my local delight of the harlequin ducks, I enjoy birding and want to help keep them viable and visible in our community. Since I am a fish biologist and get to work outside frequently, I am lucky to get to do my work and enjoy birding at the same time.



My favorite bird

Snowy Owl

Mary Lou King, Juneau

This article is based on an interview with one of the many experienced birders in Juneau Audubon Society. If you'd like to be interviewed about one of your favorite birds, please contact Marge Hermans at marjorie.hermans@acsalaska.net

Our family has had a permit to take care of injured birds for many years because my husband Jim worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We've taken care of eagles, arctic terns, lots of swans, eiders, emperor geese, mallards, herons—one of my favorites—and a crow that I really enjoyed. We had a kingfisher that would come and land on your shoulder and yak in your ear wanting to have some fish.

Probably my favorite bird would be whichever one I happened to be associated with at the moment! But many years ago we had a snowy owl in captivity while Dad was out of town. When we talked to Dad on the phone I said, "We have a snowy owl, and it's the prettiest bird I've ever seen." Snowy owls are not seen very often around Southeast, but this bird had been found out by the glacier in a weakened state.

It was a big bird, with a lot of white on it. It looked nice and puffy like a pillow, but it was really tough. We kept it in an old mink pen that came with the house.

Wild birds tend not to eat at first, and feeding that owl was quite a challenge. Whenever I came close, the bird would go *click-click-click* with its beak. Finally I got leather gloves and needle-nosed pliers, then I used the pliers to hold out pieces of meat to it. After a day or so it decided I was OK.

Snowy owls nest on the tundra, and they fiercely protect their nests. Other birds build nests near them because the owls keep the foxes away. The owls don't bother the other birds; their favorite food is lemmings. When the lemmings are thick, the owls tend to stay put. But if food is scarce, they spread out. They might migrate clear to California. Jim said sometimes they even end up out on the pack ice and eat birds out there.

The bird we took care of was probably a younger bird that had come a long ways out of its way.

That owl became quite famous. A picture K.J. Metcalf took of it was published, and Bob Armstrong also took one that was used in his *Guide to Birds of Alaska*.

Last year on October 29 (2001) Laurie Craig spotted a snowy owl on the airport dike trail. Thanks to "EagleChat" a lot of eager birders got to see it and take pictures. It sat docilely, but it only stayed for a day. The appearance of a snowy owl in Southeast Alaska is really erratic. Though one year you might see one, it may be years till you'll see one again.

Proposed by-law changes published in the September issue of the Raven were all approved by the membership at the annual meeting in October.



Immature snowy owl/ Bob Armstrong

December Raven Deadline

Please submit articles for the December issue no later than November 22 to upclose@alaska.net

Watchlist 2002 announced

National Audubon Society

National Audubon's recently announced "WatchList 2002" names 201 species that show either significantly decreasing numbers or restricted range, or are under other threats. They represent more than one-quarter of North American species

"Audubon WatchList 2002 is a warning system that shows us where to focus our attention and resources if we want to help the survival of a vast number of bird species," according to Frank Gill, Audubon's chief ornithologist and senior vice president for science, and author of the comprehensive reference, *Birds of North America*. "It is also a powerful tool that policy-makers, businesses, and the general public can use now to take positive conservation action."

"WatchList is preventative medicine," says Gill. "It will be used first and foremost to enlist federal, state, and local governments to focus their resources towards protecting these birds before they become endangered or threatened - when they would demand more serious action and major taxpayer support to recover."

Based on a stoplight model, WatchList places selected bird species in green, yellow, or red categories, depending on the danger they face. A centerpiece of conservation efforts at Audubon, the WatchList aims to halt the declines of America's birds and to rebuild their populations to healthy, green-light status. Declines come at a time when bird watching is hitting an all-time high in popularity; the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment tallies 71 million Americans participating in 2001, up 250 percent from 1982, making birding the fastest-growing outdoor activity in the U.S.

Even more important, birds are primary indicators of environmental health, and what hurts birds also hurts the people who share the same space. Their declines are telling us about the ecosystems we both inhabit.

WatchList was developed in conjunction with Partners in Flight, a coalition of North American ornithological groups. Audubon is a leading member. For more information see <http://www.audubon.org/bird/watchlist/index.html>



EAGLECHAT

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

Date: October 26

Subject: Junco Strange Behavior

There's been quite a number of Oregon Juncos and Slate-colored Juncos in our backyard (Haines) lately. In a corner section of the garden, there is some decaying wood around a flower bed. There's some moss on the wood. I've observed the juncos doing a strange thing. It looks like they get something off the wood or moss with their bill and then put it or rub it on their tail feathers. The birds are very protective of their spot where they do this and when other juncos come near, they chase them away. The juncos do this for at least five minutes at a time, and have been doing this for the last 3 to 4 days. At times it looks like they're sitting on their tail and they practically fall over putting or rubbing whatever they get off the wood/moss onto their tails.

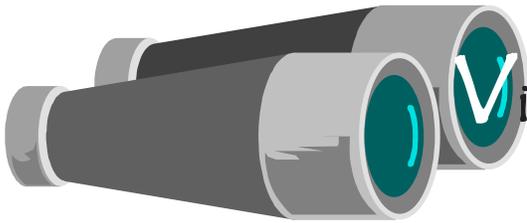
Can anyone tell me what it is that these juncos are doing?

Date: October 3

Subject: Re: odd crows

there are a flock of chickadees on Thane road that will take sunflower seeds from your hand. They've had this confidence for several years and were initially gentled by some very patient local humans. When they first started this behavior it was common to get mugged for seeds on the way from the door to the car by half a dozen or more landing on your head, hanging from my beard and shoulders, even sitting on the steering wheel as I tried to make an escape after leaving some seeds on the porch rail. Now days they're not quite so gregarious. I've noticed that a few have malformed feet where one claw might be laid across the top of the adjoining toe. I've noticed no bill deformities.

more EagleChat on page 7



Viewing Opportunities & Field Trips

Alaska Bald Eagle Festival, Haines

November 7-10

Keynote Speaker: Perry Conway

For over 20 years, Perry Conway has created images which make a visual statement about the value of wildlife and wild places. As creator and producer of the Aerie Nature Series, his educational messages about the natural world and our human relationship with it have reached millions. He has personally given wildlife programs to over a million students, educators and the general public as director of the series.

His photographs and articles have been published in every major wildlife and natural history magazine in North America, including Audubon, National Geographic and National and International Wildlife. He has also won four national awards for his wildlife filmstrips.

Other Special Events:

Photo workshops
Guided eagle viewing
Release of wild rehabilitated bald eagles
Speakers and slide presentations

Further Details:

<http://www.baldeaglefest.org/>

Up to 3,000 eagles gather along a four mile stretch of the Chilkat River each fall to feed on a late run of salmon. Warm water upwellings in the river keep this stretch ice-free, providing access to the fish when food supplies are exhausted elsewhere. The concentration of eagles typically peaks in mid-November but lasts through February.



The 48,000 acre Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve was created by the State of Alaska in 1982 to protect and perpetuate the world's largest concentration of Bald Eagles and their critical habitat. Eagles use virtually every portion of the Preserve at some time during the year.



Whale numbers are highest in Sitka Sound between September and January. Humpback whales come to the sound to feed on huge schools of herring which move into deep fjords during fall and winter. Researchers have documented transit times of just over a month between Sitka Sound and Hawaii, thus many of these whales present in January and early February will still migrate to Hawaii in time for the peak of the mating and calving activities.

Sitka WhaleFest

November 1-3

Keynote Speaker: Shane Moore

Shane Moore has been making wildlife films worldwide for twenty years since graduating from the University of Montana with a degree in wildlife biology. His work has appeared on PBS, National Geographic, Discovery Channel, BBC and in IMAX theaters. For the last fifteen years he has specialized in filming marine life.

Other Special Events:

Seminars featuring a lineup of world- renowned biologists and researchers
Art shows
Market
Gordon Bok concert
Sea Chantey concert featuring Don Sineti
5&10k fun walk/run

Further details:

<http://www.sitkawhalefest.org>

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Permits

The Juneau Chapter of the Audubon Society publishes these permit notices as a service to its members and encourages participation in the public review process. For more information on individual permits or comments call 1-800-478-2712 (Anchorage permits office). For possible permit violations in Southeast Alaska, call the Juneau office at 790-4490. Send your comments to: Regulatory Branch (1145b), P.O. Box 898, Anchorage, AK 99506-0898.

Even if the comment date has passed, you can still send your comments to the Division of Governmental Coordination. The State review period on 404 permits usually ends after the COE comment period closes (as a general rule you can add four days to the comment period). It is important that your concerns reference the Coastal Zone Management program (Section 307 (c)(3) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972) and the State Coastal management program (Alaska Statute Title 46). You may also comment on the State's Water Quality Certification (Section 401 of the Clean Water Act). Consistency guidelines for the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) on natural resources and habitats can be found in 6 AAC 80.040 to 6 AAC 80.120 and Water Quality standards can be found in 18 AAC 70. Please contact the Division of Governmental Coordination or the Department of Environmental Conservation for more information about applicable laws and project comment deadlines.

Division of Governmental Coordination
P.O. Box 110030
Juneau, AK 99811-0300
(907) 465-3562

Department of Environmental Conservation
410 Willoughby Ave.
Juneau, AK 99801-1795
(907) 465-5260

For additional information on regulations and guidelines for fill and dredge activity in marine waters and wetlands see the following: Section 10 of Rivers and Harbors Act 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403) - Placement of structures in waters of the United States; Section 404 and 404 (b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230) - Discharge of fill or dredged material into the waters of the United States; Section 103 Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1413) - Transport of dredge material for the purpose of dumping in marine waters. If you need help on commenting or technical assistance, you can call Chris Kent at 463-3494.

Valdez — Port Valdez 80, (Reference Number 0-1977-0133) Applicant: City of Valdez. Location: At the eastern end of the Valdez harbor. Proposal: The applicant proposes to construct a third boat ramp. The applicant will dredge approximately 1760 cubic yards of material from in 0.228 acres of intertidal habitat. A ramp would be constructed by placing two timber stringers with pre-cast concrete slabs and gravel to create a 220-foot by 12-foot wide ramp. The applicant will also discharge 675 cubic yards of riprap material to stabilize and re-establish the east harbor sidewall adjacent to the ramp. Purpose: Provide a third boat ramp. No mitigation is planned. Comments due: **November 8, 2002**.

Tatitlek — Tatitlek Narrows, (Reference Number 4-2001-0626) Applicant: Bureau of Indian Affairs. Location: Tatitlek town site. Proposal: The applicant proposes to rehabilitate existing roads and construct new roads filling 2.94 acres of wetlands with 9,950 cubic yards of material. Work would include widening roadways, installing culverts, clearing vegetation, and roadside ditch work. The Copper Mountain Road would be extended south and intersect with the new dock road. A new parking lot will be constructed along School Access Road. Purpose: To create new roads and improve drainage. No mitigation is planned. Comments due: **November 8, 2002**.

Skagway — West Creek 1, (Reference Number 4-2002-0824) Applicant: City of Skagway. Location: Near Dyea. Proposal: The applicant proposes to construct 2,500 linear feet of bank stabilization, bridge abutment protection and or a new dike system along the West Creek. Work will excavate 70,000 cubic yards of fill from West Creek and discharge 30,000 cubic feet of fill into five acres. Of the 5 acres, .7 acres are considered wetlands. Purpose: To create a new stream bed for West Creek. Mitigation: The applicant proposes to leave some of the bank in a natural condition to reduce impacts. Comments due: **October 22, 2002**.

Skagway — Skagway River 5, (Reference Number 4-1988-0093) Applicant: David Hunz. Location: Just north of the Skagway River Bridge. Proposal: The applicant proposes to excavate 50,000 cubic yards of gravel riverbed material over a five-year period from 4.44 acres area on the Skagway River. Up to 10,000 cubic yards would be excavated each year. The applicant will also construct a dike, and temporary placement before truck loading. Approximately 1,025 cubic yards of material would be discharged to construct two haul roads and another 100 cubic feet of yards of material would be used in construction of the dike. On completion of seasonal work, the access roads and dike will be removed and the area contoured and sloped to not leave open pits in the riverbed. As mitigation, the applicant will operate during low flow, excavate in 10,000 cubic yards increments and stockpile material in an upland location for further processing. Comments due: **November 1, 2002**.

****Juneau — Switzer Creek 08**, (Reference Number 2-2002-0842) Applicant: S&S Development. Location: Approximately 6 mile old Glacier Hwy, just east of the K-Mart building. Proposal: The applicant proposes place 210,000 cubic yards fill into 15 acres of tidal marsh and wetlands. The site will serve as commercial subdivision. The fill will be on either side of Switzer Creek, leaving a 50 foot buffer between the stream and the upland fill. The fill would extend to Lemon Creek Manor and to the Juneau Police station. Purpose: commercial subdivision. No mitigation is planned. Comments due: **November 12, 2002**.

This application proposes to fill the area between Kmart, Lemon Creek Manor and the Police Station (15 acres). This would affect upland wetlands because of changes in hydrology and would add to the cumulative effects caused by the fills at Kmart, Lemon Creek Manor and the area around the police station.

Sitka — Sitka Sound 173, (Reference Number O-1980-0314) Applicant: Cove Marina Inc. Location: 4701 Halibut Point Road. Proposal: The applicant requests that the existing marina configuration be authorized, and installation of a new 9-foot by 76-foot pier and replacement of piling within the marina as necessary. Purpose: Increase use of existing marina. No mitigation is planned. Comments due: **October 25, 2002**.

Ketchikan — Ketchikan Creek 5, (Reference Number 4-1998-0886) Applicant: Otto Roppel, Deer Mount Inc. Location: Ketchikan Lake Sub-Division / Nordstrom. Proposal: The applicant proposes to discharge 55,020 cubic yards of fill including 30,000 cubic yards of rock, 20 cubic yards of rip rap and 25,000 cubic yards of site generated overburden into 16.5 acres of forested and scrub/shrub wetlands and 1 small stream. This project has previous notifications of fill, including a 10-acre fill (5/28/92) under a Nationwide permit, and a 3-acre fill (9/18/98) in the Nordstrom Sub-division. Purpose: to create additional subdivision lands The applicant proposes to set aside 2.9 acres of emergent fen and scrub shrub as green areas. Comments due: **October 24, 2002**.

Ketchikan — Nichols Passage 14, (Reference Number 2-2002-0995) Applicant: Gregory Bolshakoff. Location: Nichols View subdivision on South Tongass Hwy. Proposal: The applicant proposes to extend an existing fill area by discharging 275 cubic yards of armor rock and 2,700 cubic yards of fill into 0.25 acres of intertidal habitat. Purpose to construct a house and to extend usable property. No mitigation is planned. Comments due: **November 18, 2002**.

****** These projects, in our opinion, have the potential to impact areas of public interest. If you have site specific information that would help agencies in determining impacts and what if any mitigation is needed, please contact the agencies listed above.



EAGLECHAT

Date: October 2

From: gwen baluss <gwenbaluss@yahoo.com>

Subject: odd crows

An alert UAS ornithology student informed me that there were three crows with malformed bills at the Auke Bay harbor. Yesterday I saw one of them visiting the open dumpster there. The upper mandible was exceptionally long, and curved, as in a creeper or curlew. The lower looked OK, but looked like it perhaps had been chipped or broken. Deformed bills can result from natural genetic mutations, mutations from contaminants or radiation, disease, physical injury and certain vitamin deficiencies. Given the dumpster/harbor situation, high contaminant load is a definite possibility.

Has anyone else seen birds like this around here?

Meanwhile, a mystery continues in the Anchorage area where many chickadees and a few other species have shown up with bill deformities. More info on this can be found at <http://www.absc.usgs.gov> (then click on "Chickadee Alert") For those interested in malformed crows: Colleen Handel, USGS researcher in Anchorage says that : "This is a new location but not a new species. To date we've received 17 reports of one or more northwestern crows with deformed bills from various locations in Alaska, including Douglas, Ketchikan, Cordova, Valdez, Homer, Nikiski, and Anchorage. Also, yesterday a pilot told me that he saw a crow with a crossed bill at the power annex, on the Taku.

To help save paper and chapter money, send an e-mail to kingfarm@ptialaska.net to request the Raven in either rich text (read by most word processing programs) or Adobe Acrobat. If you have Acrobat Reader, you can receive the Raven in a format that looks just like the print version but with occasional touches of color. Rich text versions will not contain graphics. To change your newsletter from rich text to Adobe Acrobat, contact upclose@alaska.net.

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

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:
Juneau Audubon Society, P.O. Box 021725, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn.: membership*

Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

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