

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 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2003

Monthly Membership Meeting

Thursday, January 9, 7:30 p.m.

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

The late great Rampart Dam project

Jim King

When the huge Rampart Dam project loomed in the early 1960's, it threatened to eliminate habitat for millions of waterfowl. Retired USFWS waterfowl biologist Jim King led a crew that banded 18,000 ducks during the summers of 1960 and 1961. By 1963 when a report on the Rampart project was due, hunters had returned bands taken in 48 U.S. states, eight Canadian Provinces and 10 Hispanic countries. This generated National interest by sportsmen, game departments and conservationists. Later, when ANILCA was being debated, this data helped generate the political support to create seven waterfowl refuges, including the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Come see Jim's slide show of this biological work, and hear stories about how protection of this key waterfowl area came to pass.

January Almanac

Porcupines, voles, mice, squirrels will spend the winter chewing on shed moose antlers to acquire the calcium.

Halibut spawn off edge of continental shelf

Brown bear cubs are born

Beaver mate

Common Raven display courtship behavior

103rd Christmas Bird Count

Deanna MacPhail

Highlights of count: Although we had new high counts for some species, notably 11 Gadwall, 264 American Wigeon, 60 Green-winged Teal, 19 Killdeer, 2 Hermit Thrush, 6 Savannah Sparrow and 359 Red Crossbills, and several species unusual for this time of year, particularly an Anna's Hummingbird, a Spotted Towhee, the Savannah Sparrows and the Hermit Thrushes, our overall number count was down slightly from last year, and the species count was less by one. Still, the 23 birders who turned out to count birds during our first snow fall of the year combined to produce a good representation of birds to be seen from Douglas through downtown out to Pt. Louisa. And for some, the highlight of the day may well have been the potluck gathering afterwards, to compile our numbers. In all, it was a good

effort and those who participated contributed valuable information about our local bird population. Thanks to all.

Details for the Juneau count, and all others will be available online at: <http://audubon.birdsource.org/CBCOutput/> once the data is entered. The count period runs from December 14 to January 5, with each group choosing a single day as the official count day, with the preceding three and subsequent three days designated at the count week. Some groups will not submit their data until after January 5, 2003.

Skagway 1st Annual Bird Count Summary December 14th, 2002

Conditions were good for birding this year. There was some wind in town, but in the woods, all was calm. Skies were cloudy. Nineteen people turned out for this count, plus one feeder watcher. Four of these counters were from Whitehorse. Since no owls have been heard lately, no one volunteered to sit all night in a cold automobile.

Approximately 39.5 miles were covered on foot by groups up to four in number, with another 28 miles driven. Noticeably absent were redpolls. Grosbeaks and waxwings were here in limited numbers, but larger flocks have since begun arriving.

Thirty-one species were recorded, including bufflehead, snow bunting, black-capped and chestnut-backed chickadees, brown creeper, northwest crow, white-winged crossbill, American dipper, bald eagle, barrow's and common goldeneye, pine grosbeak, glaucous and glaucous-winged gulls, mew gull, thayer's gull, stellar's jay, dark-eyed junco, belted kingfisher, golden crowned kinglet, black-billed magpie, mallard, common and red-breasted mergansers, marbled murrelet, common raven, American robin, pine siskin, fox sparrow, European starling, and bohemian waxwing.

For the count week, we also noted a white-tailed ptarmigan, northern hawk owl, hairy woodpecker, and northern goshawk.

For more detail log on at <http://audubon.birdsource.org/CBCOutput/> and check the Skagway count information.

Notes from the board

Board members are planning a retreat January 25 to review the chapter's strategic plan and develop a budget to implement the plan. As always, participation and input from members is invited and encouraged. For details on the time and location, contact Brenda Wright, president, at 789-4656 or jnoel@gci.net.

Board profile

DeAnna MacPhail, Secretary

With any luck, a secretary can maintain a fairly low profile indefinitely. This will be a singular departure. My earliest bird memories are anticipation of the arrival of crates of baby chickens to be raised on our small farm; birds ultimately destined for the cooking pot.

My first pet was an elderly black Bantam hen who enjoyed a sublime existence and was allowed the supreme privilege of roosting on the back porch. She was eventually given a proper burial, far from the kitchen.

Notwithstanding my utter lack of any formal training in the family of sciences, I've come to be especially concerned about the welfare of our natural habitat and its health for all life, admittedly with most interest directed towards birds. I would like to think that is not in direct conflict with my employment at the Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

What began as a harmless observation of birds has become, some might say, a grand passion.

My favorite bird will return in the February issue.

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.

You're invited to eBird!

Tired of keeping your bird records tucked away in old notebooks? Ever wish your observations could contribute to a permanent, long-term database on North American bird populations? Want to help increase our understanding of bird distributions?

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon announce eBird, the anytime, anywhere online checklist project and data management tool. Store your bird records at eBird as a way to manage your own bird sightings. Query the database with questions like, "What year did I see that Northern Lapwing in New Jersey?" and "How has the distribution of Carolina Wrens changed over the last few years?" Birding at South Padre Island? Select the checklist from the Texas "hotspots" menu. Keeping track of your yard or office birds? Add these locales to your "Favorites" list.

eBirding is fun, easy, practical, and when you store your records in eBird, these same records provide useful data to scientists, conservation biologists, educators, and birders just like you. Give eBird a try at the BirdSource web site, <http://www.birdsource.org/ebird>. It's entirely free.

Juneau Audubon Society is back on the web! Log on at our new address:

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org> and forward your ideas and contributions to the webmaster, George Utermohle.

Juneau Fall Migration Report

Aleutian Canada Goose. One seen November 23 on Auke Lake, perhaps only the 2nd record for SE Alaska (GVV).

Gadwall. Five were seen at the mouth of Fish Creek on November 8 (SZ).

Shoveller. Four late lingerers were on Auke Lake on November 24 (GVV).

Hooded Merganser. A female with three half-grown ducklings was seen on Norton Lake on August 2 (DM). Small numbers were seen on Twin Lakes starting on September 17 (2 females—SZ) and extending throughout the fall period. The largest number reported was five (3 females, 2 males) on October 28 (SZ).

Ruddy Duck. Two female/immature birds were seen on Auke bay on October 24 (GVV). A single female/immature was seen on Twin Lakes on October 27 (JS) and October 28 (SZ).

There was a good diversity of duck species seen on Twin Lakes this fall. In addition to several Mallards, Greater and Lesser Scaup, and Wigeon, small numbers of Ring-necked Ducks and Common Mergansers, at least five Canvasbacks, a Redhead, and the above mentioned HOME and RUDU were all seen there during the fall migration period.

Osprey. A single bird was seen at the end of the airport runway on September 11 (LC) and another single was seen at Auke Bay on September 21 (GVV).

Steller's Sea Eagle. Although not seen on a regular basis, Juneau's Steller's Sea Eagle was seen in the Taku River area on at least three occasions this summer/fall. The last report was from just below Canyon Island on September 21 (EK: fide LD).

Rough-legged Hawk. A dark phase bird was seen near Radcliffe Road parking area on September 21 (BA)

Peregrine Falcon. Two were seen near the Alaska State Museum on September 24 (GVV).

American Coot. Coots were seen continuously on Twin Lakes, and in the marsh by the Pioneers Home, from September 22 (MS, SZ), through the end of the fall reporting period. An immature bird was seen occasionally in the company of an adult bird during the mid-September period. The maximum number of coots reported was 8 on November 19 (GVV).

Sandhill Crane. Unusually high numbers of birds were seen in the Juneau area in mid-September. Sixteen birds were seen flying over Tee Harbor on September 17 (BA). On September 18 approximately 250 birds were seen standing along the Mendenhall River (m.obs.). On September 19, more than 700 were seen at about the 2,000 foot level, flying past the tramway at 11:25 in the morning (GVV).

Greater Yellowlegs. Two immatures were seen on November 3—a very late date for Alaska—on the Mendenhall Wetlands (GVV).

Lesser Yellowlegs. Following the high numbers of adults reported in early July, this species continued with very high numbers with 300+ on August 1 (GVV) and approximately 200 on August 5 (BA).

Solitary Sandpiper. Two were seen in the Dredge Lakes area on August 2 (DM), and two were seen at Fish Creek on August 11 (PS).

Baird's Sandpiper. Two birds were seen on August 10 and 3 (BA).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. A juvenile was seen at Salmon Creek on September 5 (PS). Another bird, possibly the same one, was also seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands on the same day (BA).

Upland Sandpiper. A single bird was seen on August 15 - 25 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (PS, GVV, BA), and two were seen there on August 31 (GVV).

Long-billed Dowitcher. An unusually large number (90) were seen during September 16 – 28 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (GVV).

Stilt Sandpiper. The first sighting was of a single bird on the Mendenhall Wetlands on August 13 (PS), and small numbers were observed for several days thereafter, through September 5 (BA). The maximum number seen was 10 on August 19 (GVV) and 22 (PS).

Wilson's Phalarope. A juvenile was seen at Eagle Beach on August 2 (PS, SZ; pictures by PS).

Bonaparte's Gull. 600 were seen on November 11 at mile 33—this is a late date for this species—tight flocks were fluttering over a large surface prey patch in humpback whale waters (GVV).

Ring-billed Gull. Single birds were seen in Bayview Subdivision (Douglas Island) on August 13 (SZ), and near the Juneau-Douglas Bridge on August 25 (PS). Two birds were seen near the mouth of Fish Creek on September 7 (PS).

California Gull. A very late, second year winter bird was seen on November 11 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (GVV).

Glaucous Gull. An immature bird was seen at Salmon Creek on August 6 (PS; photo), and at Eagle Beach on November 9 (GVV).

Slaty-backed Gull. One was found at the mouth of Salmon Creek on August 8 (IM), August 10 (GVV), and again on August 15 (PS).

Lesser Black-backed Gull. An adult bird was seen on August 18 (IM), and on August 22 and 29 (PS) on the Mendenhall Wetlands.

Barred Owl. First identified by GVV on August 19, a single bird was seen hunting in the early evenings through August 24, between mile 15.2 and 16.0 along Glacier Highway. On August 25 it appeared to be acting oddly, and was seen sitting on the ground for a long period of time (BA). Photos were taken by PS.

Northern Pygmy Owl. One was seen and heard at Point Bridget on September 29 (GVV). Another single bird was heard on October 3 and seen on November 12 and 29 at Auke Bay (GVV).

Common Nighthawk. A single bird was seen on August 29 on the Mendenhall Wetlands (GVV).

Anna's Hummingbird. A single male was seen at a feeder in Auke Bay from October 10 through the end of the count period (GVV).

Three-toed Woodpecker. A single bird was seen near the Herbert Glacier Trailhead on September 29 (LL).

Bank Swallow. One bird was seen on September 15 in the company of two Barn Swallows at Mile 25 (GVV). This is a late date for both of these species.

Pacific-slope Flycatcher. Three recent fledglings were seen on September 14 at Point Bridget. They were giving incessant begging/contact calls –an example of late-breeding activity by this species in the Juneau area (GVV).

Red-breasted Nuthatch. A small and quick, but widespread movement occurred during September 28 – 29, with single birds seen in the Mendenhall Valley and at Auke Bay, Eagle Beach and Point Bridget (GVV).

Cedar Waxwing. Five were seen in a flock over downtown Juneau on August 23, and one was seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands on August 25 (GVV).

Bohemian Waxwing. A single bird was seen on November 19 in downtown Juneau (GVV).

Yellow-rumped Warbler. A late “Myrtle-type” bird was seen on November 18 in downtown Juneau (GVV).

American Redstart. A late adult male was seen at Dredge Lakes on September 3 (PS).

Spotted Towhee. A single bird was seen at a feeder in Bonnie Brae Subdivision (Douglas Island) from November 11 (BD) through the end of the count period (BA, m.obs.). This is likely the 5th sighting of this bird in Alaska (records compiled by GVV).

Chipping Sparrow. A juvenile was seen at Point Bridget on September 2 (PS), and another was seen at Dredge Lakes on September 3 (PS).

Fox Sparrow. A late bird, with a very red tail, was seen at a residence from November 8 through the end of the count period (DM).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak. A young male /adult male in basic plumage, was seen feeding on bird seed at a home in the Juneau Highlands from October 5 – 9 (MM, m. obs, photos by MM). This is likely the 5th or 6th record for this species in Alaska (records compiled by GVV).

Black-headed Grosbeak. A female was observed coming to a feeder in Petersburg from September 28 – 30 (DC, KC, video by BH). This is likely the 14th sighting of this bird in Alaska (records compiled by GVV). Another female bird was later reported coming to a feeder in Sitka beginning about November 6. Marge Ward should be sending a report on this bird

Common Redpoll. Twenty were seen in a flock on November 10 at 33 mile (GVV).

Red Crossbill. Small flocks of Red Crossbills were seen regularly, with singing territorial males, at several locations in Juneau over virtually the entire fall reporting period. On September 29 recently fledged birds were seen at Point Bridget, and a family group with 3 juveniles was seen on October 26 at Auke Bay (GVV). Very few White-winged Crossbills were reported during this period.

Pine Siskin. This species became common and widespread during the last half of November with a flock of over 400 birds seen on November 28 at Mile 33 (GVV).

BA = Bev Agler; **DC** = Don Cornelius; **KC** = Karen Cornelius; **LC** = Laurie Craig; **BD** = Bruce Dinneford; **LD** = Larry DePute; **BH** = Brad Hunter; **EK** = Ed Kiessel; **LL** = Laurie Lamm; **IM** = Ian MacIntosh; **MM** = Mary McCafferty; **DM** = Deanna MacPhail; **JS** = Jeff Sauer; **MS** = Mark Schwan; **PS** = Paul Suchanek; **GVV** = Gus VanVliet; **SZ** = Steve Zimmerman

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February Raven Deadline

Please submit articles for the February issue no later than January 24 to upclose@alaska.net

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 September 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.

Orca Inlet 138, (Reference Number 4-2002-0873) Applicant: Elmer Gunnerson. Location: 0.5 miles north of Cordova, east of Cannery Row. Proposal: The applicant proposes to excavate 12,000 cubic yards (cy) of native rock adjacent to the project site, an additional 1,000 cy of 12" rock will be discharged in the project site (approximately 3 acres). A wetland area of approximately 22,000 square feet (.5 acre) will be filled in this process. The purpose of this project is to raise a 3-acre low area adjacent to the highway so that the applicant has a level staging area for his heavy-equipment construction vehicles. He also intends to build a new shop area at this site. Mitigation: None. Comments due: December 20, 2002.

Juneau - Gastineau Channel 489, (Reference Number 2-2002-1228) Applicant: Neil MacKinnon. Location: 5920 North Douglas Highway. Proposal: The applicant will perform the following work in Gastineau Channel below the plane of the high tide line (approximate elevation +20.8 feet from Mean

Lower Low Water (MLLW). Construct a boat rail system consisting of approximately 85 feet of steel rail and approximately 28 pre-cast concrete ties extending to approximately +8 feet from MLLW. Excavate and side-cast approximately 1.5-cubic yards of marine sediment associated with the proposed pre-cast concrete tie placement. Purpose: to construct a boat haul-out. Mitigation: None. Comments due: December 26, 2002.

Petersburg - Wrangell Narrows 176, (Reference Number Q-1983-0100) Applicant: Norquest Seafoods. Location: At the existing facility. Proposal: The applicant proposes to construct an 84' X 120' galvanized steel piling with an I-beam foundation upon which to construct a 30' X 100' steel seafood processing barge and 40' X 120' X approach dock. Purpose: To provide a facility to process seafood and freeze seafood products. The result would be production of value added salmon products. Mitigation: Designed the facility on piling rather than proposing to use fill material. Comments due: January 20, 2003.

Wrangell - Whaletail Cove 3, (Reference Number 1-2002-1048) Applicant: John W. Clark. Location: Whaletail Cove near Wrangell. Proposal: The applicant proposes to moor a 70' by 80' float house at two possible sites. The applicant prefers to have both options permitted but would like to use proposed Site #1 most of the time because the site provides more protected anchorage. The float house would ground for 4 to 6 hours per day if moored at Proposed Site 1. The bottom substrate is mud and silt. Purpose: To provide single-family housing. No mitigation is planned. Comments due: December 27, 2002.

Wrangell - Zimovia Strait 148, (Reference Number 1-2002-0784). Applicant: Lonnie DeLong. Location: South Wrangell Island, Whiskey Cove. Proposal: The applicant proposes to continue the moorage of a float house, which is 80 feet long and 14 feet wide. The float house drafts approximately 5 feet of water and is currently moored between the mean high water (MHW) of 14.8 feet and mean low water (MLW) at 0.0 feet. Attached to the float house are a 11 foot by 10.5 foot ramp; a 3 foot by 14.5 foot walkway; and a 27.5 foot by 2.5 foot walkway. There is an 11-foot by 10.6 greenhouse attached to the float house. Maximum length is 96 feet 4 inches and maximum width is 17 feet including the walkway. The houseboat grounds at tides below 5 feet. The substrate is cobbles covered with Fucus sp. The approximate distance to MHW is 35 feet on the north end and 70 feet on the south end. The float house is moored equal distance between MLW and high tide line (HTL), approximately 250 feet from each. Mitigation: None. Purpose: Moorage for applicant's float house. Comments due: January 8, 2003.

Ketchikan - Tongass Narrows 352, (Reference Number R-1980-0433) Applicant: Boyer Towing, Incorporated. Location: 3295 Tongass Avenue. Proposal: The applicant proposes to excavate a wedge-shaped trench from an area previously filled with shot rock, an area 30' wide by 55' long (approximately 600 cubic yards of clean shot rock material to be removed), to a sloping bottom elevation of +16' on the upper end and +6' on the most seaward end. The applicant will install concrete block walls on two sides of the trench area and install a fabricated steel abutment supported by steel piling on the landward end of the trench area.. Additionally the applicant will drive two X 3-pile support dolphins with steel caps; and install a lifting structure on the dolphins, and a 20' wide X 3' deep X 90' long fabricated steel transfer bridge between the shoreward trench abutment and the dolphins. Purpose: To provide facilities to accommodate side loading of freight barges. Current facilities only accommodate end loading of barges. Mitigation: None. Comments due: January 3, 2003.

Ketchikan - Tongass Narrows 550. (Reference Number R-2002-1058) AFTER-THE-FACT Applicant: Victor Forrester. Location: 2 miles north of the Ferry Terminal, 4831 North Tongass Highway. Proposal: The applicant would like authorization of an existing 48' x 18' x 28" concrete boathouse with an attached 21' wooden treated deck supported by four 4" x 6" x 10' galvanized steel posts. Discharge of poured concrete below the high tide line associated with the boathouse was approximately 52 cubic yards (cy); rock fill discharged below the high tide line was approximately 355 cy. Purpose: This unauthorized structure was present on the property when it was purchased by the applicant. The applicant will use the structure for boat storage. He wishes to receive a permit for the structure so that it is not out of compliance and so that he can get a transfer of the tidelands lease from the original owner. Mitigation: None. Comments due: January 3, 2003.

Craig - Port St. Nicholas 035, (Reference Number 1-2002-1068) Applicant: Mike Stidham. Location: Lot 17 Port St. Nicholas subdivision II. Proposal: The applicant proposes to construct a 100' x 8' walkway supported by twelve 12" pressure-treated piles; these piles will be driven to approximately 7'; the longest (at 100', approximate start of MLW) will be approximately 13' above the substrate. The walkway will connect with a 50' x 5' ramp leading to the 20' x 30' pile-held float. Three 10" x 50' galvanized square tubes will hold the float in place. The walkway is fixed to shore with a concrete footing which is above the high tide line (HTL). Purpose: To provide mooring for sport fishing boats. Mitigation: None. Comments due: January 3, 2003

***** 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.***

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P.O. Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001

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Raven Editor, P.O. Box 021725, Juneau, AK 99802*

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