

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

December 2003

Monthly Membership Meeting
Thursday, December 11 7:30 p.m.
Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School Library

“Chasing chucaos in Chiloe’, Chile”
Mary Willson

Mary is an active ornithologist and ecologist who splits her research between SE Alaska and Chile.

Part tourist fare, part natural history, part conservation biology, this talk features the south-temperate rainforest of Isla Grande de Chiloe’, in south-central Chile, and Darwin’s “odd little bird”, one of the tapaculos endemic to Latin America. Based at the biological station of Senda Darwin, Mary Willson (a migratory “bird”) will talk about her home away from home and what she and her research team have learned about protecting endangered forest birds on Chiloe’. The boot-sucking mud and rain there would be familiar to Southeasters, but the plants are Gondwanan (with relatives across the southern hemisphere) while the birds are Latino (except for shorebirds from breeding grounds in North America)- an engaging mix of features. And the chucao is one of the cutest birds in the world- ya gotta love ‘em!

Audubon’s 104th Annual Christmas Bird Count

The **Juneau** CBC will be held this year on Sunday, December 14, the first day in this year’s count period. This is perhaps the first time our local count has been on a Sunday, so take note. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the two McDonalds 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. Veteran leaders will direct the day’s effort in the count area. Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to participate. Even if you are unable to commit the entire day to the count, you are encouraged to turn out for a few hours. Certainly the more eyes is always better, and novice birders always have the chance of pointing the more experienced birders toward something unusual that otherwise would have been missed. People who have feeders at home are encouraged to keep count there and turn in their numbers at the end of the day. There will be a potluck in the evening to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. The potluck will again be at the home of Mark Schwan and Debi Ballam; information regarding the potluck will be available on count day. Previous count data are now available on the Audubon website at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc>. For information on this year’s count, contact either Mark Schwan at 789-9841 or Gus van Vliet at 789-5624.

Gustavus/Glacier Bay: Sunday, December 14, contact Bruce Page 697-2262 for the time and the place to meet. Bruce says they had a record high bird count last year however the conditions were more favorable than it looks like they might be this year.

Craig: Saturday, December 20, contact Marla Dillman 826-1617 for the time, place to meet and which area of the circle to look for birds. This year the Boy Scout Troop has volunteered to help with the count. Marla reports that the Trumpeter Swans are back in the Big Salt Estuary. There have been 16 adults and 4 juveniles around for several days.

(Continued)

Ketchikan: Saturday, December 20. There will be a short program related to this event at the Discovery Center at 7pm on Friday December 12th. This program will talk about the count, local birds, and have registration for the various coverage areas. Interested parties can contact Cathy Tighe at 228-4134 for more information or to register early.

Haines: The count will be coordinated by Tim Shields and Dan Egolf, call 766-2876 or come by the Alaska Back Country Outfitter on Main Street for details on when and where the count will take place.

Sitka: Saturday, December 14, contact Alice Johnstone 747-3931 for details.

Notes from the Board

Juneau Audubon Society Board Meeting Notes

Brenda Wright, President

The Juneau Audubon Society (JAS) Board met in October to discuss current projects and work on our fiscal budget for 2003 and 2004.

JAS has three major sources of income. We receive money from the National Audubon Society for new members, have fund raising events (specifically: The Public Market booth in November and the Berner's Bay cruise in spring), and grants and contracts. In the 2002, we applied for grants from the Alaska Conservation Fund to support our advocacy on issues associated with the Environmental Impact Statement and Wildlife Management plan for the Juneau airport and issues with pesticide management on the proposed North Douglas golf course.

Our major expenses in each fiscal year are administration, primarily the newsletter, and to accomplish our goals for education and advocacy. We have a yearly net budget of around \$3000. The JAS board agreed to a 50-50 split for funding between education and advocacy for this year. We will support education by buying environmental education supplies for the elementary and middle school libraries in Juneau, present an award at the high school science fair, provide funding for a designing a display at the Glacier Visitor Center bus waiting area, and submit a grant for watchable wildlife/nongame animals for a project on northern dippers. Our advocacy dollars are not yet allocated, but several projects may be arising in the near future including effects of our incinerator, mining in Berner's Bay, urban bears, wetland fill, a road out of Juneau and others. If you have suggestions or would like to help with any of these projects please contact any of the JAS board members.

Juneau Audubon Joins Community Tide Gauge Project

On October 30 the Juneau Audubon Society joined the Community Tide Gauge project on Merchant's Wharf downtown. Deanna MacPhail and Brenda Wright painted our number (22) and a lovely silhouette of the raven logo on the sidewalk.

January Raven Deadline

Please submit articles for the January Raven by November 21 to raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

For more news about our local chapter check our web site at <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

The web site for National Audubon Society has a wealth of information at <http://www.audubon.org/>

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

My favorite bird

Dark-eyed Juncos – Marlys Tedin, Sitka

from an interview with Marge Hermans

I like all birds, but I really like the juncos because they hang around most of the year. They're easy to identify, and it's really fun to watch their antics.

When they first come to the feeder in the fall, they want plenty of space between one another, but later on in the winter, they're not so fussy about running someone else off. They might get as close as 3 inches while they're feeding. In the spring they are more aggressive again, and they'll chase one another off, but when the weather is cold they seem to be more tolerant.

I think you get them coming back year after year. They come down off the mountains and come looking in the same place—kind of like, “Bring the family. Here's lunch!”

It's always interesting to see how many slate-backed juncos come to our feeders as opposed to Oregons. It seems as though about one out of eight or nine will be slate-backed.

The Oregon juncos have a black mantle, and the males are darker. The slate-backed are more gray all over, with no definite mantle on their heads. I think they nest farther north, and some seem to migrate vertically, moving up the mountain in spring and summer.

We've had some come that had more white feathers. Some even look like a different bird.

We enjoy watching juncos in our back yard. Besides the usual feeders, I make feeders out of gallon milk jugs. I make a good-sized hole in the side then use a heated nail to make holes in the corners.

It seems as though juncos will eat most anything. We put out the standard bird seed mix, including sunflower seeds and millet, though they don't seem to like the bigger red millet, or milo, until later in the year. They'll eat peanut butter, too, even without suet and seed mixed in. It doesn't seem to bother them. You can see them cleaning their bill on a branch afterward.

Juncos will also feed on alder cones. They don't hang upside down on the branch like siskins. They perch on a branch and walk, sometimes clear out to the end, to a cluster of cones. Then they'll reach out and take the seeds. But most of the time you'll see them feeding down low or on the ground. It's really fun to watch them. The more you watch the more things you see.

(Ed's note: For an interesting study on what kinds of seed different kinds of birds come to at feeders., see an article in the 1994 Birdscope from Cornell University – available at <http://birds.cornell.edu/publications/birdscope/Autumn1994/spt94084.htm>)

If you'd like us to feature one of your favorite birds, please contact Marge Hermans at marjorie.hermans@acsalaska.net to set up an interview.

To get all your chapter news on line, send an e-mail to education@juneau-audubon-society.org 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 raven@juneau-audubon-society.org. NOTE: if you are using an e-mail address at your workplace, please insure you are able to receive mail that is not work-related or send us a home e-mail address.

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife and natural habitats. As a national member, you will become an important part of our chapter and receive the Audubon magazine and our Raven newsletter.

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**

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

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zipcode _____
Telephone number _____

 My check for \$ is enclosed Please bill me

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, send the completed form and \$10 to Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802

 \$10 (1 year Juneau Audubon Society Chapter dues) You will receive 9 months of the Juneau Audubon Society newsletter the Raven.

Please let us know if you prefer electronic _____ e-mail
or paper copy _____

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Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, president@juneau-audubon-society.org
Vice-President: Chris Kent, 463-3494, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org
Secretary: Deanna MacPhail, 789-0651, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org
Treasurer: Liz Blecker, 586-4210, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org
Programs: Matt Kirchhoff, 586-5816, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org
Membership: Amy Skilbred, 780-4649, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org
Education: Mary Lou King, 789-7540, education@juneau-audubon-society.org
Publicity: Deborah Rudis, 789-4260, publicity@juneau-audubon-society.org
Conservation: Matt Kirchhoff, 586-5816, conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org
Field Trips: Steve Zimmerman, 586-2597, field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org
Raven Editor: Melanie Lombardo, 586-0166, raven@juneau-audubon-society.org
Public Market
Coordinator: Kathleen Weltzin, 789-0288, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org
Web Master: George Utermohl, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

**JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO BOX 021725
JUNEAU, AK 99802**

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage Paid
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Juneau, AK 99802