

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 30, Number 6

Juneau Audubon Society

February 2004

Monthly Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 12, 7:30 p.m.

Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School Library

Bicycle Touring Around the North Atlantic

For the past 10 years, Jim Johnson, Mike Blackwell, and some others have been bicycling to the End of the Road. In this slide show, they describe their excursions in Labrador, Newfoundland, Iceland, Scotland, Finland, and Northern Norway.

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Audubon and Cornell Lab of Ornithology invite everyone to join the seventh annual Great Backyard Bird count. From February 13-16, 2004, bird enthusiasts are invited to take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a project developed and managed by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, with sponsorship from Wild Birds Unlimited storeowners and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the U.S. government, and with participation from Bird Studies Canada for the first time.

Instructions for participating can be found at www.birdsource.org <http://www.birdsource.org>. Whether you spend a few minutes or several hours counting birds, GBBC participants will help scientists determine the status of birds continent wide. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a terrific way for individuals, families, schools, and community groups to contribute to a better understanding of birds. At the same time, the project will teach participants how to turn their backyards into real, useful habitat for birds.

Libraries, businesses, nature clubs, Scout troops, and other community organizations interested in promoting the GBBC or getting involved can contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at 800/ 843-2473 (outside the U.S., call 607/254-2473), 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850, or Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org <<mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org>> or 215/355-9588, Ext 16, Audubon Science Office, 545 Almshouse Road, Ivyland, PA 18974.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (in cooperation with the Juneau Libraries) is presenting free evening workshops (plus a tracking session in partnership with Discovery Southeast):

March 3 - Interpreting Animal Tracks

March 10 - Landscaping for Wildlife

March 24 - Citizen Science (will feature eBird, Christmas bird counts, etc.)

March 31 - Alaska's Wildlife Watch - an introduction to viewing

April 7 - Birding for Beginners

For more information contact Karla Hart, Watchable Wildlife Program Coordinator, 465-5157.

10th Biennial Alaska Bird Conference March 16-18 in Anchorage: an excellent scientific program with workshops that include Shorebird and Loon & Grebe working groups, an "All-Bird, All-Habitat" workshop, Education and Outreach session, and Kittlitz's Murrelet workshop. Contact Stan Senner at ssenner@audubon.org for information.

Notes from the Board

February 2004 Juneau Audubon Society Board Meeting Notes

Brenda Wright, President

We are happy to announce, thanks to help from Jamie Womble- Audubon volunteer and sea lion researcher- we are supporting an educational series of lectures on Berner's Bay wildlife and birds this spring. We hope to have a series of lectures on this ecological treasure in our "backyard". The lectures will incorporate topics on predator aggregations in Berner's Bay as the eulachon congregate to go up river to spawn, information on eulachon biology, sea lions and other sea mammal concentrations in Berner's Bay, and importance of eulachon to natives. We hope you will be able to join us for this special series of lectures at UAS and our April public meeting. We are planning 2 cruises in April and 2 in May to enjoy the wildlife spectacle in Berner's Bay.

Please join us at our next public meeting.

From the Conservation Committee

The conservation committee seeks to inform members of and involve them in conservation and management issues within the Region and their local community. Below are some issues that have recently grabbed the attention of members of JAS. If you see an issue that interests you, please consider attending a meeting, following a topic, participating in advocacy activities, or just providing information to your fellow JAS members. Questions, comments or information to contribute? Contact the chair, Sari Saunders, at conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org.

1. Mendenhall Refuge Citizens Advisory Group (MRCAG) is currently seeking members. Here is a great opportunity to be involved in the management of this valuable resource and land base. The purpose of the group is to advise, from the publics' perspectives, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) on the management of the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge. The group focuses on the protection of habitat, primarily for birds and anadromous fish, and recreational opportunities provided by the wetlands. Ongoing issues include: airport expansion, possible second crossing, pollution run-off into the wetlands, and harassment of wildlife by dogs (see below too). The **public is encouraged to attend** meetings and present any issue regarding the wetlands about which they are concerned. Next meeting will be Fe 23 2004, 7-9 p.m., Mendenhall Mall library. **To become an official member**, one attends a meeting, asks to join, and fills out an application. Current members then vote on acceptance of the application.

2. Dogs – If you have been reading the Empire lately, you'll know that regulation of dog recreation in our area is a hot topic of concern for all users (dog people and non dog-people alike) of our trails and recreation areas. CBJ Parks and Recreation has a Dog Task Force with three subcommittees (wildlife, education, and parks/off leash) examining facets of this issue. You can see minutes of their meetings, meeting schedules, etc. online at: <http://www.juneau.org/parkrec/dfp.php>, and comments can be sent to Kim_Kiefer@ci.juneau.ak.us.

3. Waterfront development downtown – There is a public notice, on the Corps of engineers website (<http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/default.htm>, application [2-2003-1562.pdf](#) by Aniakchak, Inc.) for a permit application to put in fill for an access ramp and install 48 galvanized steel piles on the waterfront just south of the bridge, on Juneau side. You can see an existing berm there, near the ADFG buildings (look to your right as you cross the bridge from Douglas). The application is associated with a planned residential condo development.

JAS is likely to submit comment on this development (deadline is Feb. 5 2004). Concerns raised to date include: (1) impacts on fish habitat (2) bird use of this tidal area (3) future erosion of the infrastructure, which might require more fill and maintenance (3) oil and fuel runoff from the parking area (4) aesthetic quality of the downtown waterfront (5) apparent disregard for careful planning or judicious use of coastal development areas. Note that the latter 2 issues do fall within the mission and objectives of the Alaska Coastal Management Plan (see Sec. 46.40.020. Objectives of the plan at <http://www.alaskacoast.state.ak.us/Clawhome/statutes/46.40.doc>). Although the project is already flagged to be examined for effects on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), we have no specific information on bird use to provide in our commentary. **We need your input** – do you go birding downtown and have observations or counts from this area? If so, please contact a Board member!

4. Wetland alteration in Lemon Creek - Permit application posted to Corps website (<http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/default.htm>, document [4-2003-0778.pdf](#); applicant is CBJ). The request is to “excavate and side-cast...organic soil material from approximately 5.42 acres of wetlands...diverting the flow of two streams to a sediment-settling basin (pond).” This project will occur on Lemon Creek behind Costco and is associated with development of a source of sand and gravel. Deadline for public comments is Feb. 3 2004.

5. Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP) - The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is updating this plan. The draft update supports construction of the highway between Juneau and Skagway, a road connection via Bradfield Canal, a road across Baranof Island to reduce the length of the Sitka ferry links, and road shuttle ferry connections to the proposed Bradfield Road from both Ketchikan and Wrangell. Photographs, maps of the proposed road and ferry linkages, and the **Schedule of public meetings** between Jan 26 and Feb 6 can be seen at the website: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/projectinfo/ser/newwave/SATP/Update/index.htm>

Note that **public comments** are requested by Feb. 23, 2004 to be included in the record. Members of JAS have mentioned that the proposed system of connecting ferries and roads may increase the inconvenience and time involved in ferry travel in SEA, as one will take a ferry “hop”, then have to get off on a road, and then have to wait an indeterminate amount of time to catch another ferry to one’s final destination. There is also concern about the impacts on lands adjacent to new roads, including potential harvesting. For those interested in the ecological impacts of roads, I have a (somewhat up to date) reference list that, although not specific to this ecosystem, would provide a starting point for reading. Consider the potential for the following impacts, among others, of roads: loss of habitat, fragmentation of habitat, edge effects of all types that extend into the adjacent habitat, introduction of exotics, increased or decreased dispersal of various organisms, vehicle collisions with organisms, disturbance to organisms from traffic and human access, soil movement and erosion, changes to hydrological processes...

March Raven Deadline

Please submit articles for the March Raven by February 20 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

Southeast Alaska 2003 Christmas Bird Count Results

SITKA by Alice Johnstone

Sitka's Christmas Bird Count was held Sunday, December 14 with 20 people in 10 parties in the field. This included two boats on the water covering areas north and south of town. It was a mild, pleasant day with calm winds. We found 62 species and 5525 individual birds, about average for the Sitka count. We had high counts of Rock Pigeons with 116 birds, 17 Belted Kingfishers, 21 American Dippers, 33 Song Sparrows, 46 Pine Grosbeaks and 225 Pine Siskins. The population of European Starlings has tripled with 299 birds counted and a previous high count of 109.

The numbers of birds usually very common in the winter, Chestnut-backed Chickadees 25, Varied Thrush 9, both Oregon Juncos, Dark-eyed 50 and Slate-colored 18, were way down.

Only two species were added during count week, Trumpeter Swan and American Coot. The most unusual birds seen were three Black Oystercatchers, a Spotted Sandpiper and a Golden-crowned Sparrow. The Hummingbird and the Brown Pelican which had been seen in the area before the count were not spotted.

Alice Johnstone, compiler for many years, announced this will be the last year that she will compile the count and if no one steps forward to take over there will be no bird count in Sitka next year. Several people volunteered to fill the gap.

KLAWOCK by Marla Dillman

2 Artic Loon	166 Canada Geese	9 Barrows Goldeneye	7 Widgeon
1 Common Loon	75 Mallard	67 Bufflehead	21 White-winged scoter
1 Double-crested Cormorant	5 Harlequin Duck	7 Hooded Merganser	2 Scaup
1 Pelagic Cormorant	39 Common Goldeneye	304 Common Merganser	18 Duck species
28 Trumpeter Swans	9 Barrows Goldeneye	32 Red-Breasted Merganser	8 Domestic duck
100 Bald Eagle: 84 Adult, 16 Immature	27 Swans: 19 Adult, 9 Immature	135 Glaucous-winged Gull	1 Mew Gull
9 Herring Gull	88 Gull species	3 Great Blue Heron	11 Rock Dove
11 Belted Kingfisher	1 Red-breasted Sapsucker	2 Woodpecker sp	260 Northwestern Crow
79 Common Raven	,74 Dark-eyed Junco	28 Chickadee	2 American Robin
78 European Starling	7 Varied Thrush	25 Common Redpolls	39 Song Sparrow
108 Other Bird sp	Totals: 36 species, 1776 individual birds		
Total Hours: walking-5; driving 2 =7 hours			
Total Distance: walking-5.5 miles; driving- 26.5 miles =32 miles.			

Participants: Eli Atland, Ryan Baxter, Willie Brand, Holly Brand, Patrick Quigley, Jeff Whicker, Nicky Whicker, Dylan Castle, Tyler Thain, Tanner Thain, Austin Nickerson, Christian Vaughan, Francis McKinley, Jesse Taylor, Korovin Ellis, Erin Ellis, Jeremiah Jacobson, Louie Whicker, Kelly Nickerson, Kim and Brant Baxter, Kim and Garry Brand, Jen Whicker, Mary Castle, and

Di Thain. Other participants included Barb Stanley, John and Adell Bruns, Tim Paul and Wyeth Sheets.

Weather: Saturday December 20 was overcast and 33 degrees, there were light winds. There was very little snow on the ground.

KLAWOCK LAKE/RIVER by Adell Bruns

I have started on the Christmas Bird Count on Klawock Lake and my home bird feeder on the Klawock River. The lake is surveyed by kayak and I am out on it weekly (daily if possible). Due to lack of historical data, there is no way to make any guesses about trends, yet. Hopefully, this will be a regular thing barring weather conditions.

The lake is inland about 2 miles from the sea, so frequently we get an odd sea bird seeking fresh water. . .the Cormorant this year is an example. Here at the house, we have had a lone Varied Thrush that decided to stay the winter, and one was seen in an old growth spruce, in a side channel stream on the lake. In the town of Craig, their Christmas Bird Count showed 6 Varied Thrushes, so it must be the trend here. We have had six major floods this fall, over 3 feet rise in the river, so the dipper birds have moved out, I hope temporarily. In addition, Canada Geese and Trumpeter Swans don't mix well, so our usual pair of four to five has moved temporarily. I know with the cold snap that they will be back at the lake outlet, it is sometimes the only open water available and we get up to 20 swans there.

There were 208 individual birds counted with 23 species. A comparison of the only other count done in 1999, shows Goldeneyes down from a total of 102 Barrow's in 1999 to 8 Barrow's and 39 Common Goldeneyes seen in 2003. 45 Mallards, 25 Common Redpoles were new species this year along with 1 Great Blue Heron, 2 Buffleheads, 1 Double Crested Cormorant, 9 Canada Geese, 1 Varied Thrush.

If you have any questions, I can be emailed at artist@puddleart.com.

WRANGELL by Bonnie Demerjian count results tallied and reported by Tom Ward

Calm waters and dry skies made for ideal birding weather for Wrangell's Christmas Bird Count. Boaters were able to scan the shores and waters of Zimovia Strait while those on foot had a mild day during which to enumerate Wrangell Island's resident birds.

Fourteen observers counted a total of 4026 birds this year, up slightly from last year. As usual this time of year, waterbirds outranked land lubbers. Fourteen Common loons and thirteen loon species were recorded. Fewer grebes of any species were noted this year than last, only 12 in all as compared with 65 last year. The large rafts of Western grebes common in the Strait didn't show up for this year's count. As in the past, Barrow's goldeneyes led the ducks in terms of numbers, 518 this year, followed by Mallards at 364 and Buffleheads. Other ducks spotted were American widgeons, Greater scaups, Harlequins, Common goldeneyes, and surf scoters. 279 Common mergansers and 10 Hooded mergansers also made the list. Observers reported 61 Black turnstones, the largest number of any shorebird species. Other single-digit numbers were seen of Surfbirds and Common snipes. Unusual for this season were reports of one Spotted sandpiper and 5 Killdeer. 64 adult Bald eagles and 4 immatures were reported as well as an unusual recording of a Sharp-shinned hawk. Glaucous-winged gulls led the list of gulls, with 681 counted. Small numbers of Bonaparte's, Mew and Herring gulls were also seen.

761 Common Murres were sighted this year, up from just 5 last year but only 13 Marbled murrelets made an appearance, compared with 120 last year. The corvids were represented by 339 Northern crows, 139 Common ravens, one Black-billed magpie and 12 Steller's jays. Chestnut-backed chickadees, Golden-crowned kinglets, Brown creepers and Winter wrens were noted this year as were 3 American dippers, 14 European starlings and a single Varied thrush. 99 Dark-eyed Oregon juncos were counted but only one Slated-colored. A handful of song sparrows brightened the air with their occasional winter song, as well as a lone Fox sparrow. Pine siskins and Red crossbills rounded out the 2003-04 Christmas Bird Count.

Glacier Bay/Gustavus Christmas Bird Count By Bonnie Demerjian

Species	Total Species	Total	
Red-throated Loon	1	Short-eared Owl	1
Pacific Loon	4	Northern Pygmy-Owl	1
Common Loon	11	Belted Kingfisher	2
Horned Grebe	8	Three-toed Woodpecker	1
Red-necked Grebe	2	Hairy Woodpecker	2
Pelagic Cormorant	6	Red-breasted Sapsucker	1
Trumpeter Swan	19	Steller's Jay	5
Canada Goose	399	Black-billed Magpie	14
Green-winged Teal	4	Northwestern Crow	64
Mallard	336	Common Raven	50
Northern Pintail	5	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	98
Gadwall	28	Black-capped Chickadee	2
American Wigeon	25	Brown Creeper	5
Harlequin Duck	6	Winter Wren	3
Oldsquaw	9	American Dipper	2
Black Scoter	70	Golden-crowned Kinglet	44
Surf Scoter	67	Horned Lark	4
White-winged Scoter	146	Northern Shrike	1
Common Goldeneye	8	European Starling	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	136	American Tree Sparrow	1
Bufflehead	93	Song Sparrow	5
Hooded Merganser	2	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Common Merganser	16	Dark-eyed Junco	52
Red-breasted Merganser	188	Snow Bunting	20
Bald Eagle	24	Pine Grosbeak	25
Northern Harrier	1	Red Crossbill	7
Northern Goshawk	1	Pine Siskin	27
Blue Grouse	1	Other (sp.)	
Greater Yellowlegs	1	NUMBER OF SPECIES	68
Sanderling	80	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS	3571
Dunlin	820	DATE (DECEMBER)	14
Rock Sandpiper	200	TEMPERATURE (F)	30-34
Common Snipe	1	SNOW COVER (INCHES)	0-2"
Mew Gull	91	NUMBER OF OBSERVERS	20
Herring Gull	1	FRESHWATER	prtly frzn
Thayer's Gull	1	ESTUARINE SALTWATER	open
Glaucous-winged Gull	294	WEATHER	cldy/flurries
Black-legged Kittiwake	15	WIND DIRECTION	se
Common Murre	2	WIND VELOCITY (MPH)	5-35
Pigeon Guillemot	8		
Marbled Murrelet	1		

PARTICIPANTS: Carole Baker, Allison Banks, Jenni Burr, Andrea Byrnes, Abigail Calkin, George Jensen, Lynn Jensen, Mary Kralovec, Barb Mahoney, Mossy Mead, Jamie Ogilvy, Bruce Paige, Sharon Paige, Laura Ross, Rose Salazar, Jim Sarraco, Chad Soiseth, Julie Vathke, Shelly Webb, Rita Wilson.

My Favorite Bird

Chucao tapaculo – Mary Willson, Juneau

From an interview with Marge Hermans

About 12 years ago, I was working on a research project about seed dispersal in the rain forest in Chile. I was crawling around on the forest floor looking for seeds and seedlings. Here came this little bird. It was looking to see what I was doing, and it was very curious. It walked all around me, looked at me from one side, then looked at me from the other side. It was very tame—which was unusual because this was not an isolated place like an oceanic island. I'd been hearing this bird—it has a very loud call—but this was my first introduction to it.

The bird was brown on top with an orange breast and eyebrow. It had black and white bars on its belly, gray flanks, a brown back, and big feet. It had big, black eyes and carried its tail up over its back like a wren.

Then we found a fledgling that had just hopped out of its nest. It had adult plumage, but it also had an incredible “headdress”—very long down sticking out all around its head and hanging down over its eyes. It was utterly captivating, and I knew I had to work on this bird.

That turned out to be not so easy. Chucaos run very fast through the understory (which is very thick). It's almost impossible for a single person to follow one. So we have to work in small groups to find their nests. We were trying to determine the birds' nesting success in light of immense changes to its original habitat.

When Darwin visited this part of Chile (Isla Grande de Chiloé, about 1,000 km south of Santiago) in 1834-35, it was almost entirely forested. Since then, especially in the early 1900s, the forest has been disappearing very rapidly. People are farming, and raising cattle and sheep, so they make a lot of pasture. They're also cutting timber to be made into chips that are exported and turned into fiber. So the forest is seriously fragmented.

Chucao tapaculos have a very limited geographic range. They're found only in the southern temperate rain forest within a radius of a few hundred kilometers, on the Chilean mainland and the big island of Chiloé nearby. Our question was what it will take for populations of chucaos to survive in this very modified landscape.

As cavity nesters, chucaos do OK in fragmented forest. The problem is, they don't come out into the open at all, so they can't get out of a small patch. Where can young birds set up new territories? How can they find mates? We found the birds need corridors connecting the forest fragments with thick understory along streams or fencerows.

Chucaos are the most versatile nesting bird I've ever encountered. They usually nest in cavities—in the ground, or in a tree or stump or log; or behind a clump of bromeliads (epiphytes) on tree branches. Sometimes they make open nests like a robin's, or they build a nest with a complete roof and a pretty good-sized entrance hole in the side.

Chucaos eat all kinds of invertebrates in leaf litter—cricket things, worm things, and other things I can't identify. Sometimes they'll follow in your footsteps and pick up things you disturb. Occasionally they'll eat fallen fruit, or catch little fish or tiny frogs.

Chucao nestlings are preyed upon by rats and a small native wild cat called a guiña. Mink have been introduced in the area and could potentially be a big hazard. Adult birds and chicks large enough to run around are preyed on by owls and hawks.

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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