

# 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 7**

**Juneau Audubon Society**

**March 2004**

## **Monthly Membership Meeting**

Thursday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School Library

**Carrie Bucki**, a researcher with the University of Alaska Reindeer Research Program, will present a slide show titled: **Alaska's Reindeer Industry: Round ups, Research and Rangifer**

Reindeer have played a strong role in shaping the history of Alaska, particularly along the western coast. Alaskan Natives and others have been raising reindeer for over one hundred years both behind fence and on large, remote grazing areas. Reindeer are well adapted to thrive in northern climates and have provided meat, hides, antlers, and many other useful products to the people of Alaska. The reindeer industry has enriched Alaska's history and is an economic source for rural Alaska that has largely been obscure, even to many Alaskan residents. Join Carrie for a discussion about man's interactions with reindeer in Alaska, including history, research, management, and their unique ecology.

## **ALASKA AUDUBON STAFF RECEIVES TEAM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Staff of the Alaska State Office in Anchorage was recently honored by National Audubon with an award recognizing their accomplishments for conservation, and the principles they demonstrate in working together effectively as a team. The Juneau Chapter joins with National Audubon in congratulating Stan Senner, John Schoen, Bucky Dennerlein, and Rebecca Downey for this well-deserved award. Here is some excerpts from various endorsers of their nomination for the award:

"I am pleased to nominate the Alaska State Office for an ACE Team Award this year. ....they represent an outstanding blend of efficiency, effectiveness and team spirit. They are a small work group that is producing some very impressive conservation results. From a conservation perspective they continue to be our local leader and voice in the drive to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, they are the clear leader in finding innovative solutions on the National Petroleum Reserve (NPRA) issue, which, while less well known than ANWR, is critically important to wildlife. Our Alaska team has clearly shaped the entire national debate on NPRA. They are poised this year to do the same for the Tongass Forest in Southeast Alaska, the largest temperate rainforest in the Western Hemisphere. Funding is already largely secured to mount this new and important conservation effort."

"The team works very well with our DC office, our Development Department, and the Science Department."

Ann Krumboltz, the Executive Director of the Seattle-based Brainerd Foundation said it best...."your Alaska office really kicks butt up there...they are one of our best grants. No they are our best grant."

"From a wildlife and habitat perspective, Alaska is the crucial arena on our national scene. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented team representing Audubon in that critical part of the natural world."

We at the Chapter level are indeed fortunate to have this kind of leadership working for us in Alaska. Good work team!

## Notes from the Board, March 2004

Brenda Wright, President Juneau Audubon

Juneau Audubon Society Board meet on February 3, 2004 to discuss conservation and education projects. Our conservation chair, Sari Saunders, is presently working hard to organize comments on the SE Alaska transportation plan, Kensington Gold mine Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and the proposed land exchange of Cape Fox lands near Ketchikan for Tongass National Forest land in Berner's Bay (next hearing scheduled for March 10). If any members have information or input or time to volunteer to help with an Audubon comment or letter please contact Sari or any board member at [juneau-audubon-society.org](http://juneau-audubon-society.org).

JAS is sponsoring a set of three natural history lectures this spring centered around the concentration of birds and wildlife in Berner's Bay. This extravaganza of wildlife is timed around the annual hooligan (eulachon) and herring spawn in early spring in Berner's Bay. The lectures will begin with the April 8<sup>th</sup> 7:30 public meeting at DZ. We will also have two lectures (free and open to the public) at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center on April 23 and April 30 (7pm).

Our fun, educational, and fund-raising cruises to Berner's Bay will occur on April 17 and May 1 this year. We hope you can join us for one of three cruises and enjoy the marvelous wildlife congregations at Berner's Bay. Tickets will be available at Hearthside Books.

Our local bird enthusiast and advocate, Steve Zimmerman, was elected as the Alaska/Hawaii/Guam representative to the National Audubon Society Board of Directors last fall. Steve attended a national board meeting in late January. JAS would also like to thank another long-time supporter and volunteer, Amy Skilbred. Amy agreed to represent JAS on the SEACC board..

We are still looking for more help and volunteer efforts for the JAS board and committees. If you have time and energy to spare, we could use help with membership, publicity, SE Wild newspaper column coordinator, and public market booth coordinator. Please contact any board member or our web page if you would like to volunteer or would like more information on your local Audubon Society.

### **Clips from the Conservation Committee:**

The Conservation Committee welcomes involvement from all members. Let us know what interests and concerns you in Juneau and around Southeast. Comments? Contact the chair, Sari Saunders, at [conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org).

**1. Kensington Mine Gold Project.** Evaluation of and commentary on the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the Kensington Mine Gold Project is currently a high priority for Juneau Audubon. The Berner's Bay area has always been a focus of conservation and education efforts of JAS. The Conservation Committee will focus its remarks on: (1) impacts on bird life that have not been adequately identified or assessed, particularly those species dependent on the eulachon run; (2) concerns regarding the construction of a tailings "storage" facility (TSF) in Lower Slate Lake (under the proposed action, Alternative B); (3)

limited examination of cumulative effects associated with other potential developments, such as the Juneau Access Project; (4) the importance of the area for natural history education and fundraising through Audubon's spring, public cruises. As a member of SEACC, JAS will also try to support and coordinate with the Council's efforts. JAS members who would like to contribute ideas or data (e.g, bird lists from the area) for the Society's comment on this document are encouraged to send material to any JAS Board member.

You can read, download, or request a paper copy of the DSEIS at [www.kensingtoneis.com](http://www.kensingtoneis.com). This website also has information on the history of the project and the EIS process. The Forest Service is responsible for the EIS review and a decision on a course of action (alternative). State agencies involved in permitting mine projects include the DNR (the lead agency for this purpose), DEC, DF&G, and D of Law. The DNR has a website with interesting information on the Kensington Gold Project at [www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/Kensington](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/Kensington).

A public, informational meeting was held in Centennial Hall on Feb 24. There was criticism of the meeting format. Many hoped to be able to air their concerns, hear the concerns of others, and have questions answered by the proponents, consultants, or forest service personnel in a venue like a public hearing (see also Juneau Empire, front page Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>). **If you have comments on the DSEIS (due Mar 8 2004) or the procedures for evaluation of the DSEIS, they should be sent to:**

Steve Hohensee  
Tongass Minerals Group  
8465 Old Dairy Rd  
Juneau, AK

**2. Waterfront development in downtown Juneau.** The proposed development of a set of private condominiums on the downtown waterfront, along with waterfront development issues in general, has caused a lot of furor recently. For a bit of background, see Juneau Empire front page, Feb. 22 "Waterfront condo concept under fire". There have also been Opinion pieces that voice concerns about and positive aspects of the development in the Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> and Feb 25<sup>th</sup> paper. The most intriguing piece on the general issue of waterfront development has been by Jan Van Dort (associated with condo development), on Feb 26<sup>th</sup>. I would characterize the letter as bizarre (at best). It appears to suggest that if variances had been granted to allow for previous architectural renderings of the hotels being built by the bridge, the owners would not have been forced to build the (perhaps less attractive) versions we are now getting. I'm not sure if this is due to lack of imagination on the part of the architects or if the owner is trying to make a, "If you don't let me do what I want, I'll show you and make something really ugly!" statement. Judge for yourself!

In any case, JAS did submit comments to the Corps of Engineers regarding the initial development application for the condos. The letter was also forwarded to members of the CBJ Assembly and the Planning Commission. Interested members can contact me for a copy. There was to be a public hearing on this development but it was cancelled. Keep your eyes peeled for further notices regarding this and for potential changes to the development application (e.g., building on fill rather than pilings).

**3. Draft Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan.** Although comments on this plan were due Feb 23 '04, it is still worth becoming aware of the plan and its particulars for future iterations of the development process. Photographs, maps of the proposed road and ferry linkages can be

seen at the website:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/projectinfo/ser/newwave/SATP/Update/index.htm>. Also, if you go to SEACC's website, [www.seacc.org](http://www.seacc.org), you can find suggestions for how to take action, express your opinion, and contact your political representatives. There are questionnaires available here which you can fill out and send to DOT or SEACC.

**4. Neighborhood Concerns re: Lemon Creek.** \*This is a synopsis of information that was provided to Mendenhall Refuge Citizens Advisory Group and is passed on for information only\*

In Jan., Daniel Collison, president of Lemon Creek Neighbors (LCN) presented concerns to the Mendenhall Refuge Citizens Advisory Group about possible development projects in Lemon Creek valley. These projects include a 50-unit apartment complex, 2 gravel quarries, and an ATV park. In the 1990's, Lemon Creek was designated an impaired water body under the federal Clean Water Act and a "Total Maximum Daily Load," (TMDL) recovery plan was drafted to guide city, state, and federal officials in cleaning up Lemon Creek. A TMDL identifies the maximum amount of pollutants that can be present in a water body without it being considered impaired. Sedimentation from gravel extraction is a primary concern and LCN feels the new projects could compound this. LCN is hoping that the city will purchase or trade for the private land adjacent to the Creek and then protect the existing vegetated buffer to mitigate erosion and decrease the sedimentation problem. Daniel Collison can be contacted at [lemoncreekneighbors@yahoo.com](mailto:lemoncreekneighbors@yahoo.com).

**5. Wolves of Douglas Island.** On **March 10** the local Fish and Game Advisory Committee will discuss (among other issues) the possible rescinding of protection for a small population of wolves on Douglas Island. **Voices for Douglas Island Wildlife** wants the Committee to take 'no action' on the issue (i.e., make no recommendation to the State Board of Game). **Voices** requests folks indicate support by attending the meeting, giving public testimony at the meeting, or sending an email or letter (to Kathy Hansen, Chair of the Committee, by March 5 [10<sup>th</sup> at latest] at [seafa@gci.net](mailto:seafa@gci.net)). For more info, contact Jenny Pursell and Tom Lee at [voices4DIW@planet-save.com](mailto:voices4DIW@planet-save.com). Meeting is March 10, 6:30 p.m. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room, Dept. of Fish and Game Headquarters Bldg., 1255 W 8th St. (near Juneau side of bridge).

**6. Marine Protected Areas.** There has been renewed vitality in efforts to establish a state administered Marine protected area encompassing north Shelter Island...

Some informational material that members might find interesting as this discussion develops, includes a background paper, called *Marine Protected Areas in North America*. This paper was produced by Dovetail Consulting out of Vancouver, B.C. for the Workshop on Marine Protected Area, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico, in Nov 1999. The material can be accessed through the marine protected area library of the NA Commission on Environmental Cooperation (CEC - essentially an environmental component of NAFTA), through a link on Dovetail's Projects page (<http://dovetailconsulting.com/>).

### **March Raven Deadline**

Please submit articles for the March Raven by February 20 to [raven@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto: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

## REPORT ON THE NATIONAL AUDUBON BOARD MEETING

By Steve Zimmerman

In December, 2003 I was elected to be the Regional Director for Alaska, Hawaii and Guam on the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society. During January 23 – 25, 2004 I attended my first Board meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Two concepts that were stressed at that meeting, and which may be of interest to members of Juneau Audubon, were Alignment and Development.

**Alignment.** Prior to attending the meeting, I had heard that the role of chapters is being diminished. This does not seem to be the case. Audubon President John Flicker and others at the meeting consistently stated that local chapters are the basis of Audubon, and they are the incubator for grass roots activism. Developing stronger chapters remains a very important goal for National Audubon. Chapters are, however, one part of a larger Audubon strategy to develop a culture of conservation in the western hemisphere. The intent is to connect people with nature and to awaken in them a desire to protect our natural heritage. The development of Audubon Centers, and programs like Important Bird Areas, Backyard Bird Counts, Audubon Adventures, Audubon at Home, and numerous science-based campaigns, is being done to create a grass roots that will advocate on behalf of the natural world.

Because it is impossible for a centralized National Audubon office to coordinate all of these activities for approximately 500 chapters, it was decided in 1994, that National Audubon should decentralize and build a network of state offices that will manage field operations in each state. Accordingly, state offices have been developed in 26 states (including Alaska) with others to come on line. National Audubon feels that the state offices will be the force that can align the many activities that are being carried out in each state and can maximize the impact that Audubon has in each state.

**Development.** In the past, the Audubon Magazine paid most of the operating costs for National Audubon. Because of higher publication, mailing and salary costs, and competition with other natural history publications, these days are gone. Like most other environmental non-profits, National Audubon has moved from being a subscription-funded organization to being a donor-funded organization. Philanthropy has been found to be a more effective way to raise money and to connect people with Audubon. Thus, fund raising (dubbed “development”) has become a major focus for Audubon. In this regard, chapters are being expected to raise more of their own funds, and state offices are expected to eventually raise all of their operating funds.

### REMI NDER - UPCOMI NG EVENTS:

**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.**

**10<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:ssenner@audubon.org) for information.

## **My Favorite Bird – Common Raven – Mark Schwan, Juneau from an interview with Marge Hermans**



Ravens are a fascinating species, very successful over a wide variety of habitats. They're found across the whole Northern Hemisphere—in deserts and forests, active at sea level and at 20,000 feet elevations. From a human standpoint, ravens crop up through a wide range of times and cultures. We find parallels including them in creation myths beginning with many ancient societies, and they've received special regard in stories and legends throughout history.

Ravens seem to be very intelligent, like corvids in general. They're very social during the non-nesting seasons, when they move into city centers and we see them stealing dogfood or scavenging from pickup trucks and dumpsters. Yet they're very wary. You can get only so close before they become really skittish, and they'll move away, for example, if you approach and point a camera at them.

Ravens are songbirds. They don't have a pretty song like, say, warblers, but I enjoy listening to all the different sounds they make. A friend of mine studied that aspect of ravens in Fairbanks, recording as many different raven sounds as he could. He found in excess of 30 distinct, recognizable vocalizations, some of several syllables. We think some can be linked to behavior, such as alarm calls, courtship sounds, appeasement sounds, etc.

Ravens also are quite the acrobats in the air. You'll see them dive, and tumble, fold their wings up and do somersaults, or rotate their bodies in free fall, then break out of it like sky divers. Sometimes two birds will fly side by side, perhaps as part of courting. They'll dip and close their wings, turn upside down, and make a *cloak-cloak* sound. Ravens are often very aggressive, yet you'll also see them being very gentle with one another, as when two birds might sit side by side and one will clean the feathers on the back of the other's neck.

Ravens can be confused with Northwestern Crows, but there are several ways to tell these species apart. Ravens are considerably larger than crows, and their bills are larger in relation to the head. In profile, the upper bill is a lot more down-curved to the tip of the beak, while crows' bills are straighter. Ravens have shaggy throat feathers, and sometimes, depending on the posture, you can see individual feathers sticking out on a raven's throat.

You'll seldom see more than 10 ravens flying around together, whereas crows often travel 30 or 40 together in a tight flock. In flight, ravens have a "wedge-shaped" tail, shorter on the sides and longer at the center. A crow's tail looks longer, and it is more rectangular, and squared off at the end. Ravens have a slower wing beat than crows, and their vocalizations are more guttural, while crows sound more nasally and higher in pitch. (The exception would be raven young-of-the-year, which often sound like crows!)

You can't really distinguish male and female ravens by appearance, but older birds have glossier body feathers that are often iridescent purple and dark green. Young birds have body feathers that are duller black. Their first couple of years if you get close to one feeding you'll also see they have a red mouth lining. As the birds get older and approach maturity at 3 or 4 years old, the lining gradually turns paler and eventually becomes black.

Ravens molt gradually over the whole summer, so they always retain their ability to fly. In mid-summer they can look pretty scraggly as you see birds with missing tail or primary wing feathers. But by fall each bird will have a complete replacement of feathers.

Ravens are predators as well as scavengers. Besides scavenging on urban garbage and carcasses at salmon streams, they eat such other things as bugs or berries, and they prey on other birds' eggs and young. We've even seen some hawking for small mammals almost like Northern Harriers on the Mendenhall Wetlands. Like owls and some hawks, ravens cough up pellets of indigestible material, so in one instance in northern Alaska, researchers who found a communal roosting site were able to study what the birds were eating by analyzing the pellets.

In spring and summer, mature ravens become secretive and move away from town to nest, so the birds you see around town then are juveniles and non-breeders. By mid-summer, when the young of the year have fledged, the mature birds move back into urban areas, and you'll see them there throughout the fall and winter.

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

## **FREE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

Juneau Audubon Society, US Forestry Sciences Laboratory, and with cooperation from the State Department of Education, have offered the following free materials to school libraries in Southeast. So far 11 schools have requested and received these materials. If you know of a school in your town that has not received copies and would like to have these materials in their library, let me know. Send request to: Mary Lou King, 1700 Branta Road, Juneau, AK 99801 or [kingfarm@ptialaska.net](mailto:kingfarm@ptialaska.net)

**Video “Coho Monitoring in the Tongass” (6:30) and “Riffles and Pools – Studying Juvenile Salmonids in Alaska” (13:54) both on the same video.** Produced by folks at the Juneau Forestry Services Laboratory. Very good video shots of the small fish and shows what the scientists are doing to learn more about salmonids.

**Video (approx. 15 min.) “Learning More About Birds”** By Mary Lou and Christine King. This video was produced to be viewed by 4<sup>th</sup> graders as a part of their bird study during Seaweed in Juneau. It starts by learning how to identify birds with good shots of many of the birds common to Southeast Alaska. The last part of the video talks about taking a field trip and how to treat birds.

**Soft cover 8 ½ x 11 inch workbook “Birds in Alaska’s South Coastal Environment”**

This 35 page workbook is supplied to all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in the Juneau public schools as a part of the spring Seaweed program. It is designed with 11 different activities so that teachers in Southeast Alaska can reproduce any one or all to be used by their students.

<p>To get all your chapter news on line, send an e-mail to <a href="mailto:education@juneau-audubon-society.org">education@juneau-audubon-society.org</a> to request the Raven in rich text (read by most word processing programs) 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.</p>
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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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