

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

May 2004

LISTENING TO ALASKA'S LAND AND PEOPLE: A PERSONAL JOURNEY

Over the past forty years, anthropologist and nature writer Richard Nelson has lived in the villages, towns, and back country of Alaska. Join him for an evening of slides and stories about the importance of native traditions, the beauty and wildness of our northern land, and the ways that humans have woven themselves deeply into Alaska's environment. Richard Nelson will explore the intricate connections between Alaska's native cultures and wild lands, and he will remind us that both are among our most vital and vulnerable treasures.

Please plan to join us on May 1st, in the large lecture hall at UAS campus for what promises to be an inspiring presentation by Alaska's Writer Laureate (1999-2001), and one of Alaska's best known authors and conservationists.

The lecture hall is located on the ground floor of the new classroom wing, immediately adjacent to the library. The doors will open at 6:30, and the talk will be 7-8 pm. Tickets can be picked up at Hearthside Books the week before the talk (free, but 2 per customer, please). We expect demand for seats to exceed availability, so if you have tickets, please plan to be seated by 6:50 PM. After then, empty seats will be given to those waiting without tickets.

Following the talk, a reception with complimentary refreshments will be held in rooms 221-222, upstairs from the lecture hall, from 8-9:30. You are invited to stop in and meet Richard Nelson, mingle with other Audubon supporters, and meet members of the boards of the local Chapter and State Office.

Richard Nelson's Talk is being generously hosted by the Juneau Audubon Chapter and the Audubon Alaska State Office.

The Birds of Berners Bay program by Brian Marston on April 30, 2004 7:00 p.m
@ Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center

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 or any other Board member.

1. Spuhn Island Development. A reminder that comments are due **April 23, 2004** regarding the permit application to the Army Corps of Engineers, and by **May 14, 2004** to the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

Spuhn Island is the small island that sits directly off the end of Fritz Cove Road. About 2/3 of the island was privately owned, and was recently sold to a developer who plans to develop a residential subdivision with 63 residential lots on the island. Work will include discharge of approximately 3,472 cubic yards (cy) of fill materials onto a 1.11-acre area (48,608 square feet) that could include both uplands and waters, including wetlands, of the United States. The fill will be used for trail construction with embedded electrical conduits. Approximately 2,420 cy of fill materials will be discharged into 0.77 acres of wetlands. Two 18-inch diameter culverts will be placed across the trail.

Issues to consider should this island become a densely-populated, residential development: (1) movement of all materials to and people to and from the island; (2) density of residents' boats (and cars?) around the island; (3) removal and treatment of sewage and garbage produced on the island; (4) transport of fuel (and contingencies for chronic oil spills); (5) effects of the development on waterbirds and land birds, including nesting eagles, that use the area.

The application to the Corps can be viewed at http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PN_Scanned/March/POA-2003-1473-4.pdf

For more information, contact John C. Leeds at 907-790-4490, or by E-Mail at john.c.leeds@poa02.usace.army.mil. Comments are due April 23rd.

This project is also being reviewed for consistency with the **Alaska Coastal Management Program** (see <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/pic/pubnotfrm.htm>). Comments in this context are due at the Office of Project Management and Permitting (OPMP) by **5:00 PM on May 14, 2004**:

Sandy Harbanuk, ACMP Project Specialist
Alaska Coastal Management Program, OPMP
302 Gold Street, Suite 202, Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-8791 Fax: 907-465-3075
Email: sandy_harbanuk@dnr.state.ak.us

2. Glacier Highway & Trailhead Improvements. Opportunity to comment through Alaska Coastal Management Plan

This project involves:

- Highway reconstruction and one trailhead improvement at Breadline Bluff, and 2. Trailhead improvements at Peterson Creek, Windfall Lake Rd, Herbert River, and a Kayak Launch Site north of Eagle Beach. DOTPF will construct shoulders on the highway and a drainage ditch on the eastern side. The highway will be widened to 34 feet from the beginning of the project to the Amalg Rd intersection. The remaining length will be widened to 30 feet.

The work will include:

- Placing approx 2,830 cubic yards (cy) of fill material into approx. 0.5 acres of waters of the U.S. below the high tide line, including wetlands.
- Placing approx. 8,600 cy of fill into approximately 5 acres of waters of the U.S., including wetlands.

- Replacing 144 culverts in waters of the U.S.

For the public notice, see: <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/pic/pubnotfrm.htm>. The project is being reviewed for consistency with the Alaska Coastal Management Program. Written comments should go to the OPMP (see address above) by **5:00 PM on May 11, 2004**.

3. Things to watch for over the summer. Although we will not be able to send out reminders over the summer months, I encourage everyone to watch for news from the following groups or on the following issues.

- a. Planning for the development of the new high school (should it occur) in the valley – Be aware of impacts on wetlands and riparian zones associated with the Mendenhall R.
- b. Waterfront development – Watch for more news on the proposed development near the ADFG on the downtown side of the bridge.
- c. Dogs and wildlife/integrated trail use – We can expect more comprehensive proposals and opportunities for comments on these from the CBJ Dog Task Force (watch their website at <http://www.juneau.org/parkrec/dfp.php>). Particularly as the spring migration season is upon us and more user groups are hitting the trail system, integration of all types of recreational use (not just dog activity) is worthy of attention.
- d. Juneau International Airport Expansion Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – Watch for further news on when the Draft EIS will actually be released (was expected April 2004). Some useful information is available at <http://www.jnu-eis.org/>. Note that a more comprehensive version of the bird report is also available (contact JAS or one of the authors).

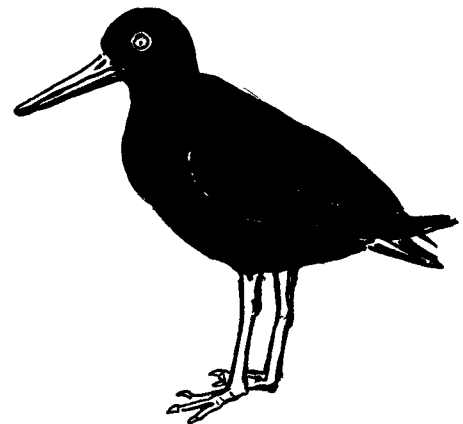
REPORT ON THE APRIL 17 BERNERS BAY CRUISE By Deanna MacPhail

The first of three planned cruises to Berners Bay took place Saturday morning, April 17. It was a sold out trip. Every year we make our best guess as to when we might experience the eulachon run. We weren't the only ones hoping to encounter the spring phenomenon. As we headed to the bay, we met with two Humpback Whales that lolled about on the surface and gave us an unusually close-up view of the wonderful creatures. Closer to the bay we were surrounded by a large group of playful Dall's Porpoise that entertained us for some time.

In the bay, Steller's Sea Lions were gathered in small numbers. We were clearly on the early edge of the eulachon run. We tallied a moderate number of bird species, perhaps the favorite being a pair of Black Oyster Catchers.

Mary Willson, Steve Zimmerman and Laurie Craig provided natural history insight as we moved through the various areas.

The next two cruises will be on Sat. May 1. Ticket sales are brisk and we anticipate another sold out day.



Spring Migration Bird Trips & Nature Walks 2004

Walks last about two to four hours. If you have them, bring binoculars and/or spotting scope, bird guide, rubber boots recommended for most walks and dress for weather. Beginning birders are welcome. For further information contact Steve Zimmerman 586-2597, field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org

- May 1** **Berners Bay Cruises**
8:30 a.m. Note: The Berners Bay cruises will be leaving from the Don Statter Harbor in Auke Bay
1:30 p.m. (located below DeHarts Store). Look for the Allen Marine vessel. Boarding 15 minutes
 before departure
- May 8** **Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge**
9 a.m. Meet at parking lot end of Radcliffe Rd
 Leader: Bob Armstrong
- May 15** **Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge**
7:00 a.m. Meet at parking lot end of Radcliffe Rd
 Leader: Steve Zimmerman
- May 22** **Native Plants and Birds—South Bridget Cove**
10:00 Meet at turnout Mile 37.4 South Bridget Cove
 Leaders: Mary Lou King and Pat Harris
- May 29** **Norton Lake**
7:00 a.m. Meet at second parking lot Mendenhall Glacier (Moraine Trailhead)
 Leader: Deanna MacPhail (Rubber boots recommended)
- June 5** **Dredge Lakes**
7:00 a.m. Meet at parking lot at Back Loop Bridge
 Leader: Mark Schwan
- June 12** **Amalga Marsh on the Amalga Trail (Eagle River)**
8:00 a.m. Meet at parking lot just across the Eagle River Bridge Mile 27.9 Glacier Hwy.
 Leader: Gus VanVliet

From Eaglechat Digest Number 744

Date: Sat, 17 Apr 2004 20:13:29 -0000

Subject: Jackpot in Cowee Meadows

Good morning everyone! I spent a great few hours out at Cowee Meadows this AM

- 26 Mountain Bluebirds (1 in the meadow with the cabin, 25 in the main meadow - even got pictures!)
 - 12 Horned Larks
 - 8 Lapland Longspurs
 - 4 Townsend's Solitaires
 - 1 Golden-crowned Sparrow
 - 3 Northern Harriers
 - 1 Merlin
 - 1 Yellow-shafted Flicker (probably the same one Paul Suchanek saw yesterday)
- Matt

Subject: Fish Creek field trip results - Saturday AM, April 10 – Leader Paul Suchanek

There was a good turnout this AM for the Audubon field trip to Fish Creek with about 20 participants. It was somewhat foggy and drizzly early on with slowly improving conditions. A nice list of about 35 species was sighted including a male Eurasian wigeon which was not very cooperative in showing itself, although most eventually got pretty good scope views. Excellent views were had of the "eurasian" or "common" teal which shows little of the horizontal white bar along its side. This bird has been overwintering in the area but is often hard to find.

Great blue heron, Canada goose (heard only), Eurasian wigeon (1 male), American wigeon, Gadwall, Green-winged teal (1 male "Eurasian" subspecies), Mallard, Northern pintail, Surf scoter, White-winged scoter, Common goldeneye, Barrow's goldeneye, Bufflehead, Red-breasted merganser, Common merganser, Bald eagle, Sharp-shinned hawk, Merlin (heard only), Wilson's snipe, Greater yellowlegs, Mew gull, Glaucous-winged gull, American herring gull (1 probable Thayer's also), Belted kingfisher, Red-breasted sapsucker, Golden-crowned kinglet, Ruby-crowned kinglet, American robin, Varied thrush (heard only), Chestnut-backed chickadee, Steller's jay, Northwestern crow, Common raven, Fox sparrow, Song sparrow

My Favorite Bird – Queen Charlotte Goshawk – Steve Lewis, Juneau

from an interview with Marge Hermans

There are a lot of different birds I enjoy, but if I had to choose a favorite it would be goshawks. I've been working on them for about 10 years, in Utah, Idaho, and Southeast Alaska, so I spend a lot of time thinking about them.

I find goshawks especially interesting partly because they're a predator, so they're out there hunting. My fascination is their whole interaction with smaller birds—how they hunt, and how they catch things to eat.

In Southeast Alaska goshawks live in the big forest, among beautiful old trees, where they can usually find birds and small mammals such as squirrels to eat. But they're so secretive I never even saw one before I started working on them. I wonder how often they see you when you're walking in the woods, but you don't even know they're there. Often they're just sitting and scanning the area. That's how they hunt.

The thing I like most about goshawks is seeing them fly in the forest. Imagine a raven-sized bird flying through the woods, tucking its wings in and turning sideways to go between branches and tree trunks. Their wingspan is about two feet across, but it's like they fly down into a little valley, swoop up, and tuck their wings in. The momentum carries them over the branches and they go sailing through, then as they come down they flare their wings and swoop. It's like aerial acrobatics.

I've always wanted to watch one make a kill. I've never seen it, but from stories I hear, they're pretty tenacious. Once they lock onto something, they seldom give up. I sometimes feel bad for little squirrels and birds. They don't really stand a chance against a goshawk.

Goshawks are not hard to identify. Most people can tell they're a raptor because of their shape. Their wings are short and rounded, which gives them maneuverability in the forest, and they have a long tail typical of accipiters that acts as a rudder to drive and steer in the woods. The subspecies we have here is the Queen Charlotte Goshawk, found from Southeast Alaska south to the Olympic Peninsula.

Adults are dark blue, almost black on the back. Their chest looks light gray, and they have a distinct white eye stripe. If you get a really good look, they have bright red eyes. The color can vary, but in adults it can be a deep blood-red. Juveniles have a brown back, dark but not black. Their front is a white background with many dark brown teardrop-shaped marks. The only other accipiter you might confuse them with in Southeast Alaska is a Sharp-Shinned Hawk, but the sharp-shin would be much smaller than a goshawk.

For the most part, if you approach a goshawk near its nest you will hear the goshawk alarm call. That's a *kak-kak-kak-kak-kak*. It definitely sounds like a large

bird pretty insistently telling you to *Get out!* The next thing that is coming is a swoop at your head.

Juveniles also make a wail call, a kind of high-pitched incessant whistling. They are begging for food, and sometimes the female will make the same call to encourage the male to come and bring food.

The best way to see a goshawk is to keep your eyes and ears open as you walk through the forest. We've found a number of nests because people spotted them or heard birds along trails and told us about them—at Point Bridget, Eagle River, and the Treadwell Ditch Trail. People also see goshawks on the Mendenhall Wetlands, especially in the winter in trees around the ponds. They typically hang out around edges, where there's a concentration of food. You might see juveniles in the fall when they've just left the nest and are sort of independent but haven't quite figured out the whole hunting thing yet.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was petitioned about 10 years ago to list Queen Charlotte Goshawks as endangered, but a decision has not yet been made about that. We are waiting on the judge's ruling as whether or not more information is needed. We do know that goshawks nest in large forests in big trees with open canopy and that they hunt in the same type of areas. They can't hunt in new growth after clearcutting for maybe 80 or 90 years. Listing them as endangered would have pretty far-reaching implications on timber harvest. They're definitely a bird you can learn about in the news.

Southeast Alaska Regional Science Fair - Audubon Award Winner
Andrea Doerflinger was the winner of this year's Audubon award, for her study examining the relationship between prey density and abundance of Steller sea lions. Andrea received a \$100 cash award and 1-year membership to the Juneau Audubon Society. **CONGRATULATIONS ANDREA!**

******* JUNEAU AUDUBON TAKES A SUMMER BREAK WITH NO MEETINGS AND THERE WILL BE NO JUNE, JULY OR AUGUST NEWSLETTERS. THE NEXT MEETING AND NEWSLETTER WILL BE IN SEPTEMBER.**

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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