

# 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 32, Number 1**

**Juneau Audubon Society**

**September 2005**

## **The first Juneau Audubon evening meeting will be in October**

### **Board news** by Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon Society president

Have you experienced Saturday Wild yet? Juneau Audubon has been sponsoring guided walks this summer. We have lead bird walks for years in April through June. This year we expanded the idea to every Saturday. We've gone from low-tide beach walks to alpine flowers to chasing dragonflies and mushrooms. Come join us on a Saturday Wild walk and tell us what you think about this idea. The schedule for **Saturday Wild** and the **Wednesday at Noon Downtown Bird Walks** (another new opportunity offered this summer) are on the second page of this newsletter, on the web page and in the Around Town column of the Juneau Empire. We want to encourage more interest in nature of all types so come take a walk or lead one!

We hope you can join us at our annual meeting to elect the Juneau Audubon chapter officers in October. We are electing president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. If you are interested in being an officer or helping with any of our standing committees--conservation, membership, newsletter, web page, or public market (if you have half pint canning jars to recycle for Audubon jelly call 789-7540)-- just call or e-mail any of the officers listed in the newsletter.

Upcoming events include the Alaska Bird Conference here in Juneau in February 2006. Check out the link to the event on the Juneau Audubon Society website. Your local Juneau Audubon web page also has a local bird checklist, lecture schedules, guided bird walk schedules, and past newsletters ([www.juneau-audubon-society.org/](http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/)).

**Ed. Note: Each of the folks from Juneau, who signed with their address on the Berners Bay Boat Trips and at the beginning of the Saturday Wild Walks, will receive a complimentary copy of this issue of the newsletter. If you are interested in supporting or knowing about other events sponsored by Juneau Audubon or National Audubon, a membership form for joining our group, is on the back of this newsletter. If you join National Audubon you will receive our newsletter and the National Magazine. If you choose to join just Juneau Audubon you will only receive this newsletter.**

### **SATURDAY WILD By Carol Thilenius, Leader Minus Tide Walk, July 23**

What fun the Audubon walks have been! Thanks for getting me involved. Even though I am no expert, it is fun to share what I can. The low tides at South Bridget and Outer Point provided wonderfully rich habitats for invertebrates, algae, edible plants, etc. The participants were enthusiastic and many had special interests which they shared. Bob Armstrong's introduction to the dragon flies in the Eaglecrest bog was a special treat. It was nice to see people new to Juneau getting acquainted with the local folks as well as the special natural areas.

I had thought these walks were for members only and focused on birds. I am glad to find such a welcoming group taking such a diverse look at the local scene. There are so many interesting people here I hope they will share their expertise on future walks. Keep up the good work so we can all keep having fun.

# September 2005 **Saturday Wild**

**September 3**

## **Woodpecker watch**

9 a.m., Peterson Creek  
Meet at end of North Douglas highway  
Leader: Beth Peluso

**September 10**

## **Birds & views**

10 a.m., Boy Scout trail to Eagle Beach  
Meet at Boy Scout trailhead  
Leader: Virginia Harris

**September 17**

## **Habitat quality & wildlife diversity**

9 a.m., Mendenhall Glacier moraine ecology trail  
Meet at flagpole in parking lot by visitor center  
Leader: Gareth Hummel

**September 24**

## **Downtown Juneau geology**

9 a.m., downtown  
Meet at Heritage Coffee on S. Franklin St.  
Leader: Chris DeWitt

**Saturday Wild** is coordinated by Juneau Audubon Society

Join us any Saturday or every Saturday, weather or not, as we explore the wild side of Southeast Alaska. For more information on these free community walks, see [http:// www.juneau-audubon-society.org](http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org) or e-mail [saturdaywild@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:saturdaywild@juneau-audubon-society.org). Programs will also be announced through local news media. No dogs, please.

**Wednesday Noon Walks:** The Wednesday walks downtown continued through a rainy July and into August. We visited the heron rookery several times to watch the progress of the nestlings until they fledged. Most of the time they just hung around looking like soggy dinosaurs, but we did see parents feeding them several times. There were three nests with three to four young in each, an encouraging sight after Skip Gray's film of the eagle incident in which all of the young in one nest were taken by an eagle. We also visited Gold Street above downtown, a great place for warblers and fox sparrows, as well as the occasional hairy woodpecker. Another route took us up to Basin Road, which has some warblers, and lots of golden-crowned kinglets and chickadees. Many of the people attending the walks have been novice birders or have never birded at all, which is great fun. For most of July and August, many travelers stopped by for the walk, hailing from everywhere from Rhode Island to Australia. Some of the walks have turned into mini-tours of Juneau itself as well as the bird life.

I plan to continue the walks in the fall since the interest remains steady. We meet at Rainbow Foods at noon every Wednesday, and wrap things up by 1:00. Join us if you're downtown!  
Beth Peluso 957-1050

## **SATURDAY WILD, AUGUST 13, MINING MUSEUM REPORT By Nancy Waterman**

The Historic District at the end of Basin Road hosts the Last Chance Mining Museum, open from mid-May through mid-September for daily tours: 9:30AM-12:30PM and 3:30PM-6:30PM. The August 13 Audubon hiking group met at the museum and then visited the 1901 dam site at the base of Snowslide Gulch, the USGS sites where water quality/quantity have been measured for many years, and the CBJ well-head area. The creek dynamics and rich foliage were often the focus of conversation. Basin Road was the longest road in Alaska and now it is the backbone of a trail system that provides glimpses of history as well as access and protection for Juneau's primary drinking water system. The Basin is an important part of our 'backyard' and easy to visit.

## **STANLEY SENNER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AUDUBON ALASKA**

Published: Anchorage Daily News, August 14, 2005

Stanley Senner has enjoyed a fulfilling career advocating for public lands in Alaska and for the past six years has been in charge of Audubon Alaska, the state office for the National Audubon Society. In May, Senner was awarded the Charles H. Callison Award for outstanding achievement in conservation at Audubon's national board meeting in Park City, Utah. The Callison award is given annually by the national board and recognizes one volunteer and one professional who have made exceptional contributions to the organization and its mission.

Senner's professional work with the organization did not go unnoticed. He leads, manages and raises funds for the six-person Anchorage office and its education, science and policy programs. He developed Alaska's first "Watch List" of declining and vulnerable bird populations and has helped initiate such science-based conservation projects as the identification of "Important Bird Areas" in Alaska and the Bering Sea. He is an avid birder and ornithologist, and his is the voice you hear when calling the Anchorage Bird Hotline... (To see the total article go to: <http://www.adn.com/outdoors/story/6815559p-6707306c.html>)

## **ALASKA'S TRUMPETER SWANS**

In a Juneau Audubon Society meeting, Jim King suggested the need for an analysis of the years of Trumpeter Swan data. Matt Kirchhoff, board member and ADF&G Employee, mentioned that he was in the final process of putting together proposals for non game program grants and advised the following day was the last to submit any ideas. Matt and Jim worked out a proposal to fund the following study:

### **REPORT ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE LONG TERM SURVEY DATA FOR ALASKA TRUMPETER SWANS**

Mark Lindberg, Professor, Department of Biology and Wildlife, and Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks and the researchers at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, have initiated an analysis of the long term survey data for Alaska Trumpeter Swans, which was primarily collected by Jim King and Bruce Conant, US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists stationed in Juneau. Doctoral student Josh Schmidt and his advisor, Mark Lindberg, are examining state-wide swan counts dating back to 1968 and other survey data to determine trends in population size of trumpeters and factors that may affect how fast swans increase or possibly decrease in abundance. Trumpeter Swans have expanded their range in Alaska during the last several decades, which may be related to climatic change. Preliminary results indicate that rates of growth and expansion may be slowing in more recent years. This work is funded by the State Wildlife Grant program administered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The work will be completed in 2007.

## 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT (ANILCA)

A celebration took place July 6-7, 2005, in Anchorage to commemorate 25 years of ANILCA that created over 100 million acres of national parks, national wildlife refuges, and national forests in Alaska. Former President Jimmy Carter who signed ANILCA into law spoke to the conference attendees. Jim King of Juneau participated in the gathering and the following is an excerpt from his and co-author David Cline's presentation.

### *Winter Refuges for Wild Swans*

Half of North America's Tundra Swans and 80% of the world's Trumpeter Swans nest in Alaska. They are part of the avifauna of two national forests, 10 national parks, 10 state refuges/parks and 13 national wildlife refuges. Swans from these 35 protected areas can no longer winter in the temperate estuaries of the U.S. and Canada which historically was their first choice. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tundra Swans were grossly reduced and Trumpeters nearly exterminated. Their partial recovery during the 20<sup>th</sup> century depended on learning to feed on agricultural lands. In England and Japan, farmlands with visitor centers have been developed to attract wild wintering swans and people into a close, mutually beneficial association. The swans pay their own way by luring people to gift shops and teashops. This is an opportunity we have not tried in North America. To ensure the permanent presence of these most massive of the world's flying creatures in Alaska's protected wild lands, we must not leave them entirely at the mercy of agribusiness for their winter sustenance.

### **HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe**

Way back in the beginning of summer, just after the last issue of *The Raven* went to press, Pam Randles organized the first annual Birdathon in Haines. A total of 14 people comprised 3 teams, who ranged all over the valley from Mosquito Lake and Porcupine to Mud Bay and Lutak. Altogether 78 species were sighted, with the Alaska Nature Tours team winning with 64 species. Of special interest, the following species were sighted – Marbled Murrelet, Trumpeter Swan, Rusty Blackbird, Rufous Hummingbird, and Blue Grouse – all on the Audubon Watch List

Among other species sighted by the Birdathon participants were:

a loon, a grebe, and a heron	guillemots and murrelets
20 species of ducks, geese and swans	eagles, merlins, and red-tailed hawks
killdeer, yellowlegs, snipe and oystercatcher	4 gulls and a tern
rock doves and barred owls	hummingbirds and kingfishers
3 woodpeckers including a rare flicker	2 flycatchers
jays, magpies, crows, and ravens	2 swallows
pipits, dippers, chickadees, wrens	2 kinglets
3 thrushes	4 warblers
8 sparrows	2 blackbirds
siskins and crossbills	

The sightings continued into the summer by this writer, especially at Lutak and out at Chilkat Lake. A very large group of surf scoters made their home at Lutak. A Great Blue Heron, several Trumpeter Swan, and at least 5 Common Loons stayed at Chilkat Lake throughout the summer, but no young were seen. Several Sapsuckers were well known in June, and a Hairy Woodpecker made an appearance. Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches made their rounds of the birdfeeders at the cabins and Pine Siskins joined them. At least a dozen Arctic Terns plied the lake for bugs and fish. A Belted Kingfisher regularly made its rounds at Clear Creek at the entrance to the lake, and the hummingbirds lined up at the feeders and hanging flower baskets at the cabins, leaving approximately the first week in August.

## **Gustavus Bird Report May 1-August 28, 2005**

All in all, it was a fairly quiet spring and summer with few rarities. Cedar Waxwings failed to be observed this summer after last summer's influx and three observed nests. Red-breasted Nuthatches were around in small numbers, but nothing like the invasion of last fall. Still, there were some noteworthy birds:

A **Virginia Rail** was heard calling from tall rushes in a pond near the airport from 5/23 through 7/6. This is only the second Virginia Rail to be found in Gustavus, with the first being in February of 2003. This summer's rail always gave the same type of "ticket" calls with only the frequency of the calls altering. At night, the rail called at an almost frantic pace with three to four seconds between calls for extended periods of time. It was hard to not feel sorry for this lonely bird.

One day after the Virginia Rail was discovered, a **Sora** was heard calling from sedges in the same pond. The Sora was heard from 5/24 through 6/10. It called occasionally during the day and frequently at night when it would sometimes call repeatedly every one to two seconds for fifteen minutes at a time.

Higher than usual numbers of **Brants** continued to be seen on the Gustavus beaches through May with one flock of over two hundred on 5/4. In addition to the two **Emperor Geese** seen with Brants in late April, four more Emperor Geese were seen with Brants during May. That is more than all previous sightings for Gustavus.

A male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was reported on the beach east of town on 5/6.

**Golden-Plovers** almost went unobserved this spring with only one Pacific Golden-Plover and one unidentified Golden-Plover reported. In mid-August, small mixed flocks of up to twenty Golden-Plovers, mostly American with some Pacific, began showing up on the beaches and were seen into late August.

Two **Black-bellied Plovers** were on the beach west of the Salmon River on 7/7. Three were on the same beach on 7/9 and 7/10. Black-bellied Plovers are common here in the spring and fall, but are unexpected in July.



*Hudsonian Godwit Photo by Nat*

Godwits (Hudsonian and Marbled) were seen on at least seven dates through the summer with twenty-six **Hudsonian Godwits** seen on the beaches west of town on 5/4.

**Red Knots** were seen on the beaches east of town on several dates in May and one was observed on 8/19 providing the first fall record for Gustavus.

One **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** was observed on the upper beach east of town on 8/24.

**California Gulls** were seen with mixed gull flocks on several occasions in August. There were few records for this species in Gustavus previously.

On 6/9, two **Sabine's Gulls** were on the beach at the mouth of the Good River in a mixed gull flock that was mostly young kittiwakes.

In the week prior to 6/19, Yumi Arimitsu, working for USGS on a shore-nesting bird survey in Glacier Bay, counted thirty-seven **Aleutian Terns** in Adams Inlet in Glacier Bay's east arm. Four Aleutian Tern nests were observed. Two nests had two eggs, and two nests had one egg.

**Caspian Terns** were a regular sight on the beaches near Gustavus and in Glacier Bay this summer. They were often seen resting with Black-legged Kittiwakes and other gulls. Record numbers were observed with thirty-seven on 6/22, thirty-nine on 7/19, and thirty on 7/25. Juvenile Caspian Terns were observed on at least three dates in late August.

One **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was seen on the beach west of town on 8/15.

For the third straight summer, small numbers of **Black-capped Chickadees** were observed in Glacier Bay's west arm in July and August. Prior to 2003, there were only one or two sightings of Black-capped Chickadees in the Glacier Bay/Gustavus area.

A **Brown-headed Cowbird** male and female were seen through May and June near some farm animals in the middle of town. The female was seen riding on a horse's back on several occasions. On 7/25, a female cowbird was inside the Alaska Airlines building walking among a crowd of people. A man commented that earlier in the day, this very bird had been walking along with his backhoe while he was digging a ditch and that the bird would land on the machinery while it was operating.

Thanks to Bruce Paige, Jessica Tipkemper, Yumi Arimitsu, and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing their observations. By Nat Drumheller, [natdrumheller@hotmail.com](mailto:natdrumheller@hotmail.com)

### **SUMMER SIGHTINGS IN THE KETCHIKAN AREA by Teri Goucher**

Ketchikan enjoyed many beautiful warm days between the rainy spells. Making the most of every break in the weather is a year round endeavor for us here in the rainforest!!

The usual summer birds graced us with songs and sightings. Loons calling on lakes, warblers and thrushes singing, and swallows soaring are all seasonal pleasures!

A few records of Brown-headed Cowbird, Red-winged Blackbird and Least Flycatcher occurred near town. High on Mahoney mountain a Rock Ptarmigan with a brood of chicks and Gray-crowned Rosy-finches were found. Ring-billed, Franklin's and California Gulls were seen amidst the other gulls locally.

A juvenile Stilt Sandpiper on 8/23 at Traitors cove is a first record for the Ketchikan area.

Most male Rufous Hummingbirds departed by June with a few females and immatures remaining until mid-August.

Fall warblers are heading south now and a Tennessee Warbler was seen in Hyder the last week of August.

Often interesting birds move through our area this time of year, so keep looking on those nice days and even on not so nice days!

## **Message from the Conservation Committee**

Dear Members,

I hope everyone has had a terrific summer, and enjoyed the spectacular surroundings of Southeast AK (or further afield). One visitor we had laughingly said, "Did you know you had a glacier in your back yard?" Members of JAS do, of course, realize this. As a group, JAS strives to increase awareness of the outdoor environment, understanding of the ecosystems we inhabit, and the impacts that human (and non human) activities may have on our surroundings.

The conservation committee offers a great opportunity for individuals to learn a little more about development in our back yard, and the policies and legislation that direct these activities. One can participate in a number of ways, for example, by following a specific issue of interest and keeping other members informed, helping gather information on a variety of issues, researching or writing comment letters, or representing JAS at public meetings. Please contact me or any other JAS Board member if you have an interest in becoming more involved in this committee.

As a short update on summer activities and upcoming events:

### **Support for Acquisition of In-holding for Point Bridget State Park**

JAS submitted comments to the AK Department of Natural Resources in support of acquisition, for the Park, of the only privately-owned in-holding within the boundaries of Point Bridget State Park.

### **Airport DEIS**

The long-awaited Draft Environmental Impact Statement associated with the proposed expansion and improvements to the Juneau International Airport was released in the spring. Steve Zimmerman has been following this issue for the past few years and spearheaded the writing of comments regarding the DEIS. The document and some related information can be accessed through the website:

<http://www.jnu-eis.org/>

### **Amendments to the Alaska Coastal Management Plan and the associated DEIS**

The ACMP provides for stewardship of coastal resources in the state. It is linked to the federal coastal zone management program, which is overseen by NOAA and legislated through the Coastal Zone Management Act. The ACMP, through the Alaska Coastal Management Act, its subsequent standards, and also guidelines for district coastal management programs, e.g., CBJ program, provide enforceable policies associated with coastal development.

In June , 2005, the AK DNR submitted to the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) a request to amend the ACMP. This has received preliminary approval from NOAA. The amendment requires a NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) process EIS be completed to examine the issues associated with and implications of the alternatives. NOAA is expect to release the DEIS in about a month, and there will be public meetings in Sept. associated with that document, and the usual comment period (probably 45 days).

The implications of amendment of the ACMP and its governance of coastal development are potentially far-reaching. JAS hopes to focus concerted attention, along with assistance from the state office and other collaborating organizations, on understanding and evaluating these changes.

A comprehensive overview of the ACMP and the current state of affairs can be found at:

<http://www.alaskacoast.state.ak.us/OCRM/06-02-05/AKProgramAmendment-050602FINAL-lr.pdf>

Timelines and issues from the federal perspective are at:

<http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/czm/czmalaska.html>

## 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

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\_\_\_\_\_ 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  
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**Please let us know if you prefer electronic \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail  
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