

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

March 2006

Juneau Audubon's Celebrate Nature Lecture Series 2006



Thursday, March 9

Theresa Svancara - The History of Whaling in the Seas around South Georgia Island.

UAS Egan Auditorium, 7:30-8:30 PM

Join Theresa Svancara as she retraces the history of whaling in the waters surrounding, the Falkland Islands, the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia Island, and its whaling center, Grytviken. Today, some species of whales are still hunted under

the auspices of "research" by Japanese whaling ships. You'll be fascinated by the early history and the present-day images of the old buildings, vessels and processing facilities that were abandoned by the whalers of yesteryear. Theresa will mix natural and human history in one of the most remote places on earth.

**Glacial Footprints – Program sponsored by University of Alaska Southeast -- Egan Lecture Hall, Auke Lake Campus, University of Alaska Southeast
Thursday, March 16th, 7:30PM**

"Glaciers leave footprints with the ends of their tongues".. John Palmes will share his observations, and a new way of looking at Southeast Alaska's "glacial" landscape.

Textbooks say that glaciers make U shaped valleys, but are they? Why do mountains and ridges have similar shapes? And why do adjacent drainages, like Herbert River and Eagle River, show drainage patterns that are mirror images?

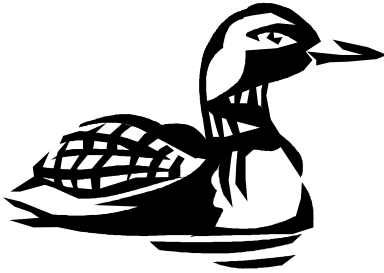
With mentoring by University staff, John has recently completed a GIS based study of nearby mainland valleys showing that most of them are not U-shaped. This is part of a larger study which proposes that symmetrical drainage networks in Southeast Alaska record periods of prolonged glacial erosion. For example, Prince of Wales Island (193km x 65km) is organized into four symmetrical basins, and shows that the phenomenon applies to the entire landscape.

A uniformly symmetrical erosion pattern indicates that one erosional "incident" is responsible for forming all of the drainages involved, and that symmetrical valleys and drainage patterns were formed two and four at a time by sub glacial erosion.

Wednesday Bird Walks Take Wing Again

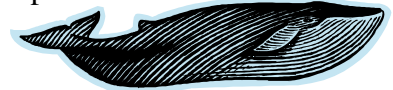
The Wednesday Downtown Bird Walks will resume on March 22. Meet at Rainbow Foods by the coffee stand at noon. Walks last for an hour. Bring binoculars if you have them, and dress for our moody spring weather!

Contact: Beth Peluso, 957-1050, education@juneau-audubon-society.org



Berners Bay Cruises

Mark your calendar now for the Juneau Audubon Society sponsored cruises to Berners Bay. This year we are having three cruises again. One is scheduled for April 15th in the morning (we hope that is good timing for the eulachon run) and two cruises are planned for May 6th. It's always fun to be out on the water and with any luck



we can see lots of birds and marine mammals. We hope you can all join us. **Tickets will go on sale after March 15th**

BOARD NOTES FOR MARCH By Jeff Sauer, Vice President

Rails in Juneau

Sora Rail Spring migration is now only weeks away. With that migration the Sora Rail will hopefully be returning to Juneau. The Sora is one of two rails in Alaska and the only one to reach the state with any frequency at all. The Virginia Rail is the other one but is extremely rare and has not been seen here for years. For years it seemed the Sora, also, was quite scarce. Last summer, however, seemed to mark a change. It may be that the birding community in Juneau just has more eyes and ears out there now. That is, more effort is producing more sightings. Or it may be that the Sora is just more prevalent now. Global warming? Or perhaps it's a combination of both. Whatever the reason or reasons, the Sora, which used to be listed as rare in Juneau, is now routinely heard and even seen. What is also interesting about the story is that it is occurring at the Juneau Pioneer Home Marsh. For instance, my visits to the marsh in late April, 05, were routinely rewarded with hearing and even seeing this secretive bird. And my experience was the same as many others who were visiting the marsh. It remains to be seen what the Pioneer Home Marsh will deliver this spring. In a few weeks we will know. Have a look for yourself.

The Juneau Pioneer Home Marsh is, because of the Sora and other species, becoming a birding hot spot in Juneau. It is one of the few fresh water marshes in Juneau, and the only one that is readily accessible. Just drive into the pioneer home entrance and down to the lower parking lot, which abuts the marsh. Besides the Sora the other marsh bird of note is the Red-winged Blackbird. This bird likewise was seen and heard a lot last spring and summer. Juneauites brought up in the lower 48 can go to the marsh and with hearing several blackbirds vocalizing, be transported by memory to the much warmer places where we grew up with these sounds in

our ears. Finally, besides these marsh species, there are American Coots, several species of ducks and song birds in this relatively small area.

Virginia Rail The other rail to be on the lookout for (or more likely hear) is the Virginia Rail. This rail is quite rare and has not been seen or heard for a few years. It has been absent from the pioneer home marsh as well as the large Eagle River Trail Marsh (Amalga Trail). Several attempts by birders to find the Virginia Rail at the Eagle River Marsh in the last couple of years have come up empty. It will be interesting to see if the bird is found in 2006 out there. By the way one of the Juneau Audubon bird walks each year is a hike out to the Eagle River Marsh. The two rails are the target species for that bird walk/ hike. Other species of course are seen in the forest on the way but the marsh is the goal. Hopefully there will be another such walk/ hike this year. It is a fun hike. Actually it is an unusual bird walk as it is good hike, because of the distance that needs to be covered to make it to the marsh.

One last note is the use of tape recordings of rail vocalizations to call in these rails. At the Pioneer Home Marsh this could become a problem as the marsh becomes more popular with birders. The use of recorded vocalizations to call in the birds is done for rails in particular, since they are so secretive and hard to locate. If, however, the birds are indeed there and are constantly being bombarded with recordings of their calls, then they will become stressed, and the repetition of calls will amount to harassment. Use restraint when using the recordings.

New Regional Alignment for National Audubon by: Steve Zimmerman

The National Audubon Society has approximately 400,000 members in its 500 local chapters. The chapters extend from Maine to Guam. Because the chapters are located in such geographically diverse regions across such a huge area, there is no way that a centralized National Audubon Society Office in New York can coordinate all of the activities of all of its chapters. Thus, in 1987, it was decided that the chapters would be divided into nine regions. Each region would then elect a representative to sit on the National Audubon Society's Board of Directors. Accordingly, there are now nine regionally-elected members on the Society's 36-member Board of Directors. In 1994, it was decided that NAS should further decentralize and build a network of state offices that will manage field operations in each state. Since then, offices have been developed in 26 states with others to eventually come on line.

There were still rumblings, however, that the leaders of the National Audubon Society were not paying proper attention to how the decisions they were making were affecting chapters. Out of this dissatisfaction grew the Take Back Audubon Movement (TBA) which sought to create a closer partnership between Audubon chapters and the National Audubon Society leadership. One of the resolutions put forth by TBA was to readjust the boundaries of the nine regions so that there would be a similar number of chapters in each region. Because the original nine regions had been created based on political considerations, there was a wide disparity between the number of chapters in each region. In our case, Alaska has been part of a region that includes Hawaii and Guam, but our region only has 8 chapters. By contrast, the present Western Region (California, Nevada, Washington and Oregon) has 89 chapters.

In order to provide a more equitable distribution of chapters and members within regions, new regions have been created. Starting in 2007, Alaska will be in the Northwest Region along with Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming, Nevada and Utah. There will be 70 chapters in this region which will include over 43,000 members. Hawaii and Guam will be in the Western Region along with California which will have 53 chapters and over 58,000 members. From a democratic point of view, these changes are probably long overdue. Unfortunately, Alaska will likely have a less influential role on the National Board of Directors because it will be harder to elect an Alaskan to represent the Northwest Region since our state has such a small number of chapters and campaigning across such a large area will be very difficult for an Alaskan resident.

Early Birds in Juneau as reported in Eaglechat by Paul Suchanek

I observed an adult peregrine falcon (light gray in color) today harassing the ducks at Salmon Creek. Since it couldn't get any mallards to flush, it finally flew off and landed on a snag on Douglas Island. This is the only peregrine I've ever seen here in Juneau in February (or January or March for that matter). There also were 11 killdeer roosting at the mouth of Salmon Creek during high tide. Since I recently counted 29 near Fish Creek, there are very likely at least 40 killdeer wintering in the immediate Juneau area (there's probably at least one other group of birds that roosts at high tide near Lawson Creek).

Just as another note of spring, a red-breasted sapsucker was observed today near Auke Bay. I've never seen one prior to March 11 so this bird is very early.

Gustavus Report January 14 -February 25, 2006 By Nat Drumheller

January and February were filled with the singing of **White-winged Crossbills**. These birds made it difficult to believe we were in the middle of winter. They could be heard almost everywhere on most days. They could be seen flying, feeding on cones, on the ground eating snow, and singing from tree tops. Two pairs of White-winged Crossbills were observed constructing or adding material to nests on 2/17. Several days later, one of these nests had one egg visible in it, and the other had a female crossbill sitting on it with a male crossbill scolding intruders. On 2/25, after several nights of temperatures below ten degrees and a low of three degrees, at least one of these nests was still active and other White-winged Crossbills were observed building nests. Crossbills were out singing in the morning while the temperature was still only three degrees.

Pine Siskins greatly increased in number during this period. No **Common Redpolls** have been reported this winter. Small numbers of **Red Crossbills** were singing around town and were easier to find in the older forests around Bartlett Cove.

A great effort was made to find all the bird species around Gustavus during the Great Backyard Bird Count from 2/17-2/20. We had good weather for two days and not-so-good weather for two days. The current tally is 73 species, beating last year's record of 69. Some of the highlights were: **Brewer's Blackbird** (first seen on 2/11 and on several dates since; this is the second record for Gustavus), **Long-billed Dowitcher** (seen sporadically through this winter; this is the first record for a wintering dowitcher in Gustavus), **Boreal Owl** (also seen on 2/9 and 2/14), **Horned Lark** (also seen on 1/27), **Northern Flicker** (red-shafted; seen throughout

this winter), **American Robin** (also seen on 2/3), 4 **Ring-necked Ducks** (two birds seen since 2/6), **Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel**, **Wilson's Snipe** (seen occasionally this winter), and 3 **European Starlings** (seen through this winter).

In addition to the Boreal Owl, five other species of owls were detected during the count- **Great Horned Owl**, **Northern Pygmy-Owl**, **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, **Western Screech-Owl**, and **Short-eared Owl**. **Varied Thrushes** were numerous during the count and have been singing more and more through the winter. Shorebirds made a strong showing with high counts of 3000(!) **Dunlins**, 500 **Rock Sandpipers**, and 500(!) **Sanderlings**. High count for **Pacific Loons** was 46 and for **Northern Pintails** was 71.

Birds seen earlier in the period that were not seen during the count include: **Greater Yellowlegs** (2/3, 2/5), **Peregrine Falcon** (2/5), **White-crowned Sparrow** (1/24-1/27), **Sharp-shinned Hawk** (seen regularly into early February), and **Rusty Blackbird** (1/30). No hawks or falcons of any kind were found during the count and no sparrows other than **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Song Sparrows** were seen.

Thanks to all the Great Backyard Bird Count participants for their remarkable effort and to Bruce Paige and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing observations. By Nat Drumheller
natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Haines Report By Georgia Giacobbe

Increasing sunny weather has contributed to birding this month in Haines. At least that was the case on the first day of the Great Backyard Bird Count held President's Day Weekend. Up to 22 checklists were submitted from our community. Some of the more common sightings (20 birds or more) were Mallards, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Glaucous-winged Gull, Rock Pigeon, Steller's Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Northwestern Crow, and Common Raven. The Common Mergansers topped the list at 330 birds spotted. Rounding out the list with 12 or fewer birds were Trumpeter Swan, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Glaucous Gull, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, American Dipper, Dark-eyed Junco, Red Crossbill, and one Great Horned Owl. Many of these birds have been viewed throughout February, not just this particular weekend, especially the Bald Eagles, Steller's Jay, Black-billed Magpie, Northwestern Crow, and Common Raven. On the Great Backyard Bird Count, only 2 Trumpeter Swans are listed, however, at least 20 were sighted flying across Clear Creek in the upper valley and 6 were spotted at the usual hangout at 19 mile Haines Highway early in February.

Sitka Christmas Bird Count By Alice Johnstone

Sightings of 68 species on count day and 4 additional during count week was about average for Sitka. Unusual sightings included 4 Western Grebes, a Northern Goshawk, one Horned Puffin, the first ever seen inside the count circle, a Western Screech Owl and a Snowy Owl. There are only a few nesting Horned Puffins at St. Lasaria Island, about seven miles west of Sitka, so seeing one so close to shore is extremely rare. With the exception of Mallards and Ring-necked Ducks all water birds, ducks grebes, loons, cormorants, gulls, and alcids, showed up in low numbers. The number of Northwestern Crows was low but 574 Ravens was 200 more than the previous high count. Numbers of European Starlings are rapidly increasing.

The 441 starlings seen were far above the high of 299 seen the previous year. There was considerable concern by several long time birders over a decline in the numbers of scoters found in the area in recent years.

Of passing interest was the experience of one boating party who reported only 425 birds seen during the day, but found at the head of a bay outside the count circle more than 600 birds, and one whale, gathered to feed on a large number of small fish schooled there.

Canada Goose	98	Western Grebe	4	Northern Shrike	1
Trumpeter Swan	5	grebe sp.	10	Steller's Jay	12
American Wigeon	8	Double-crested Cormorant	74	Northwestern Crow	563
Mallard	455	Pelagic Cormorant	176	Common Raven	574
Northern Pintail	1	cormorant sp.	41	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	104
Am Green-winged Teal	2	Great Blue Heron	19	Brown Creeper	cw
duck sp.	35	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Winter Wren	10
Ring-necked Duck	34	Northern Goshawk	1	American Dipper	13
Greater Scaup	110	hawk sp.	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	158
Lesser Scaup	4	Black Oystercatcher	12	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	cw
scaup sp.	43	Black Turnstone	56	kinglet sp.	50
Surf Scoter	32	Surfbird	1	American Robin	1
White-winged Scoter	37	Mew Gull	9	Varied Thrush	82
Black Scoter	42	Herring Gull	122	European Starling	441
scoter sp.	6	Thayer's Gull	49	American Pipit	cw
Long-tailed Duck	186	Glaucous-winged Gull	328	Bohemian Waxwing	1
Bufflehead	142	Glaucous Gull	1	Song Sparrow	25
Common Goldeneye	20	gull sp.	610	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Barrow's Goldeneye	213	Common Murre	36	sparrow sp.	3
goldeneye sp.	87	Marbled Murrelet	35	Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	458
Hooded Merganser	10	Horned Puffin	1	Dark-eyed (Slate- colored) Junco	73
Common Merganser	327	Rock Pigeon	174	junco sp.	84
Red-breasted Merganser	15	Western Screech Owl	cw	Red Crossbill	1
merganser sp.	6	Snowy Owl	1	White-winged Crossbill	3
Pacific Loon	12	Belted Kingfisher	26	Pine Siskin	21
Common Loon	19	Red-breasted Sapsucker	4		
Yellow-billed Loon	1	Downy Woodpecker	1		
loon sp.	5	Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker	9		
Horned Grebe	92				
Red-necked Grebe	20				

KETCHIKAN REPORT- BY Teri Goucher

February in Ketchikan really didn't produce any new exciting bird sightings, although the rarities from earlier this Winter remain. The Western Meadowlark, Brewers Blackbird, Common Grackle, and White Wagtail continue to make weekly appearances.

We are still enjoying high numbers of Northern Pygmy-Owls, some of which are quite approachable, thus allowing great pictures for lucky photographers!

Two Red-tailed Hawks were seen north of town flying above the Whipple Creek area. Usually a very few individuals of this species are seen annually in late February, a sure sign of the upcoming Spring season!

The songs of Winter Wrens, Varied Thrushes, and Song Sparrows are being heard now on occasion.

A group of birders spent a day on nearby Annette Island, locally renowned for having a wonderfully diverse bird habitat. In addition to the usual wintering species, more early Spring arrivals were found, including: 5 White-crowned Sparrows, 8 American Pipits, a couple Pigeon Guillemots, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler!

Two Barred Owls were heard responding to an imitation of their unique call.

We will perhaps endure a few more snow storms in the next few weeks before Winter gives way to Spring and the miracle of migration!!

WRANGELL REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

As with our migrant birds, I too flew south this winter and am back to report that they know what they are about. I headed to San Blas, Mexico, an area noted for its wide array of habitat—quiet Pacific beaches, mangrove thickets, slow winding rivers and upland cloud forest. I was led by a most knowledgeable guide and overwhelmed with over one hundred new species in a single day. Among the few familiar faces, however, were several of our summer breeders including Wilson's and Yellow warblers and Warbling vireos, all looking very much at home. The trip made clear that they really are brief visitors to Southeast Alaska while their long-term residence is Mexico and points south.

I left Wrangell the day after our Christmas Bird Count so our report, like the Christmas card I received just last week, is delayed but not forgotten. We had a good effort, particularly on the waters around Wrangell Island. Common loons, Pelagic cormorants, Mallards, American widgeons, Greater scaups as well as three species of grebes made the list. Included in the grebes was a flock of over 150 Western grebes that unfailingly spends its winters in Zimovia Straits. Sea ducks were a common sight but only small numbers of scoters this year. That was compensated for by a large number of Common mergansers.

Numerous Black turnstones were reported as well as small numbers of Surfbirds and Killdeer. Marbled Murrelets, as usual, were abundant. Five trumpeter swans, part of a much larger flock that spent part of the fall in the area, were included in the count.

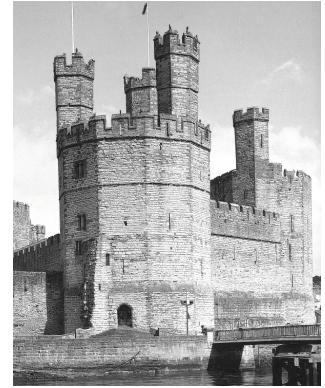
Raptors included over 60 Bald eagles and single Red-tailed and Sharp-shinned hawks. Passerines included Gold-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglets, Red crossbills and what appears to be a fairly constant number of European starlings. In all 21 participants reported 47 species.

A few weeks after the count, two Western meadowlarks appeared in Wrangell and have remained over a month, puzzling and exciting viewers all over town. This bird is considered a casual fall and winter visitor to Southeast Alaska but appears to be calling Wrangell its winter residence. We're glad it stayed around to be counted in the Great Backyard Bird Count since it missed Christmas roll call.

BIRDING IN WALES AND ENGLAND IN JANUARY

By Mary Lou King

Jim and I spent the better part of three weeks in January visiting and touring in Wales and England with Mike Potts, BBC photographer, and his wife Elaine. What a grand scene for wintering birds where the warm Gulf Stream from the Gulf of Mexico crosses the Atlantic, washes against England and southern Ireland, keeping the pastures and grain fields green and growing. Birds that nest from as far away as northeastern Canada, Iceland, Siberia, northern Europe and Asia, come here to spend part of the winter.



In Wales we visited Wildlife and Wetland Trust Reserves. Not far from Caernarfon Castle (and we did look at this 700 year old castle) and other places, we saw several Brent Geese (nest in Eastern Arctic Canada) and new to me European Oystercatchers, Great Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Turnstones, Great Crested Grebe, Shelduck, Red Shank, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Grey Wagtail, Rock Dove, Collared Dove, thousands of Lapwings, Jackdaws, Buzzard, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Hedge Sparrow, Green Finch, Gold Finch, Meadow Pipit. In the whole trip I had 64 different birds on my list.

Slimbridge in England is a wonderful wildlife reserve designed and built by Sir Peter Scott, son of Robert Falcon Scott of Antarctic fame. The grounds here have the largest known collection of captive waterfowl and we enjoyed just walking around and looking with awe at some of the weird and wonderful birds from all over the world. I really liked seeing a few Emperor Geese as this brought back memories of the ones we had raised in Juneau many years ago. However, the most exciting thing was to watch the gathering of wild birds from the surrounding farm lands for the 4:30 p.m. feeding. The 600 Bewick's Swans (nest in Northern Russia and Siberia) coming in to land in the water was amazing and the tightly packed mass of Mute Swans, Pochards, Mallards, Coots, Moore Hens, Greylag Geese, Canada Geese and who knows what else all pushing and shoving to get to the wheat. It was a mob scene.

Welney is also a great Wildlife and Wetland Trust Reserve that is located between two rivers, an area called the Ouse Washes, that was diked 300 years ago to protect miles and miles of farm land from flooding. One evening we were privileged to watch the most fantastic sight of some of the 1400 Whooper Swans (nest in Iceland and across northern Scandinavia eastward to Kamchatka) silhouetted by a beautiful pink sunset, come in to land for the night near the heated hide. There were thousands of Lapwings circling in the sky as they were coming in for the night. Here too they do some feeding of the wild birds in the evening. The birds gather in a great mass of swans, geese, ducks and various other birds to fight for the food.

One evening as we walked on a Holkham trail on the edge of a marsh, we watched 70,000 Pink-footed Geese (nest in Iceland and Greenland) in strings stretching to the horizon, arriving to spend the night. They were so tightly packed on the ground it was hard to see where the next bunch might land, but they did manage. They feed during the day in the farm fields and are particularly fond of the tops of the sugar beets left in the field after the harvest.

What a grand time to visit England despite the short damp days.

Alaska Conservation Alliance
Legislative Fly-In 2006!
April 2nd - 4th, Juneau

The Legislative Fly-In is sponsored by the Alaska Conservation Alliance, a statewide coalition of conservation groups and businesses. It is an opportunity to hone your skills as an activist, study the workings of the Alaska Legislature, network with fellow advocates, meet with your elected officials, gain knowledge applicable to any campaign.

This year with Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve issues, bridges to nowhere, transportation funding, etc., it would be an excellent opportunity for SE Alaska activists to have a face-to-face talk with their legislators Thomas, Elkins, Wilson, Stedman etc. in their offices talking about these issues. In past years Southeast has been under-represented at the Fly-In, which is unfortunate because it's a great 3 days of training & lobbying. Here's an opportunity to check in with your legislators AND take in the Folk Festival.

ACA offers Fly-In participants reimbursement for most travel expenses*, lodging while in Juneau*, and two meals a day.

To register, request an application form from Suzanne at suzanne@akvoice.org. Or call 907-463-3366 for more information. Space is limited, so interested parties are strongly encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible.

*Alaska Airlines offers a "constituent fare" discount to people traveling to Juneau on certain days during the legislative session. ACA will reimburse participants for the **constituent fare price only** from your community. In order to be eligible for this discount you must fly into Juneau on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Saturday, and leave on a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, or Sunday. The Fly-In is scheduled to take advantage of this fare. You can book your tickets to arrive in Juneau anytime on Saturday and leave Tuesday evening or later in the week. Lodging will consist of three nights stay at the Juneau hostel, which is reserved by ACA. Reimbursements will not be made for alternate accommodations.

Clips from the Conservation Committee:

As always, the conservation committee looks to JAS members to keep us informed of happenings in our area that may affect wildlife, habitat, and our experiences recreating outdoors. If there is an issue within our community that you feel JAS should be following, please contact us and help keep other JAS members informed and interested in the management and conservation of our natural resources. Contact Sari Saunders at conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org or any other JAS board member.

1. Juneau Access Project - The Final Environmental Impact Assessment for the Juneau Access Project (a.k.a. the Road) has been released and is available for public comments. The entire document can be viewed at or downloaded from:

http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/projectinfo/ser/juneau_access/documents.shtml

Responses to comments on the SDEIS are presented on this page (Appendix Y) as are a number of addenda for the different technical reports associated with the overall publication – the list of pages within Appendix W that covers the different technical reports is listed in [FEIS Appendix W - Technical Report Addenda \(Intro only\) \(271 KB\)](#)

The Federal Highway Administration will issue a Record of Decision based on this new Statement on or after March 14, 2006. The ROD presents the Administration's decision regarding the project and basis thereof. It will also outline any mitigation measures that must be incorporated into the project.

There will be no public hearing on this Statement; however, comments can be submitted. JAS will be reviewing the Bald Eagle Technical Report, Wildlife Technical Report, Wetlands Technical Report, among others, and considering the responses given to the society's initial comments on the DSEIS. Please feel free to send thoughts or comments to a JAS board member for inclusion in any submission we make.

2. Summer Dog-Sledding Venture in Sheep Creek Valley – CBJ is reviewing a Conditional Use Permit application for a dog sled “tour” at the Sheep Creek Mine area. (150 dogs kept on site) Guests would learn about dog-sledding, learn about the mining history of the area, and take a half-mile, wheeled ride pulled by the sled dogs. Some issues that were identified in the application and by planning staff include: increased bus traffic on Thane Road, input of dog urine (N) to the creek, noise disturbance to hikers from the dogs, and bear/dog/human interactions. JAS is concerned about disturbance to wildlife and habitat, particularly impacts on the migrant warbler population in this valley. Other issues include the potential for increased growth of weedy plants and introduction of exotics to the valley.

JAS submitted comments to the CBJ on this project. Among other things, the Society suggested that the permittee be asked to monitor presence and activity of wildlife in the surroundings and effects on vegetation, perhaps through coordination with local naturalists' groups. Data on the birds and wildlife of the area prior to inception of the project could be compiled for comparison. Though not overly scientifically rigorous, it's a starting point for evaluation of these types of tourism ventures. At a minimum we requested a trail log be placed with informational signage at the Sheep Creek trail head. Please let me know if you'd like to see a copy of the comments submitted to CBJ.

3. Alaska Zipline Adventures – The CBJ Planning Commission did approve an 18 month conditional permit for the development of an aerial cable zipline tour, assuming a commercial use agreement with Eaglecrest Ski Area is in hand. This will involve the construction of a network of cables (the ziplines) and platforms within the Eaglecrest Ski area, primarily for use in April-Sept, to allow visitors (and locals) to experience a birds-eye view of the landscape. This approval follows the approval for a conditional use permit to develop a similar operation by Alaska Canopy Adventures at the old Treadwell Mine site on South Douglas. This latter operation will involve boat transport to the site from downtown Juneau, and ATV transport of participants within the site. This is an interesting recreational trend to watch for as it gets started in Juneau. The staff reports for these and other projects evaluated by the CBJ planning commission can be viewed at:

<http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/staffreport.php> and decisions are listed under the date of the project's hearing at: <http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/nod.php>.

The following quotes are taken from the *American Hiker* Winter 2005, Forest Service Recreation Is a Top Contributor to the National Economy By Celina Montorfano.

“Under previous estimates from 1995, the Forest Service projected that by 2000, recreation in U.S. forests would contribute nearly \$111 Billion to the nation’s annual GDP. Economic analyses for the agency for Fiscal Years 2004-2008 revised the estimate to \$11.2 billion from the recreation program in 2002.

...According to Ross Arnold, with the Forest Service’s Strategic Planning and Resource Assessment office, the lower economic activity figures are based primarily on a new estimate of forest recreation activity and improved methodology that produced significantly lower visitation figures as well as somewhat lower visitor spending figures...Dr. Donald English, who manages the new monitoring program, says the new figures are far more statistically defensible than previous estimates of visitation.”

“Even under the new numbers, recreation is still the most significant economic driver related to national forest, contributing 60 percent of the National Forest System’s contribution to the GDP; this is almost four times more than energy extraction and mining and 2.5 times as much as timber harvests. Unfortunately, staffing and funding for recreation in the agency do not match up to this reality and have never received the prominence they warrant. Only about 10 percent of the F.S. budget is spent on direct recreation management and trails.”

ED Notes: It is amazing what the company economists can come up with –Juneau alone, between the Visitor’s Center, the glacier and trails, must contribute more than a million visitors and dollars to this pot.

Federal Biologists Kill 50 Gulls At The Juneau Dump & Seek Permit to Kill 100 More

Bill Wilmoth who works for the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in the Department of Agriculture has said: “that there was a perceived flight-path danger in the Lemon Creek area”. Killing gulls does not seem to be any answer—we need to get the food source under control. Our community needs to look at other options for garbage disposal.

TONGASS LANDS PROPOSED FOR SALE BY THE US FOREST SERVICE

Lime Point, Tip of Hetta peninsula, which extends between Nutkwa Inlet and Hetta Inlet. Cordova Bay. SW of POW. 32 acres

NW of Kensington Mine. Triangular plot of land wedged between USFS land and Ivanhoe Mine property. 10 acres

Herbert River/Boy Scout Camp Trailhead. 6 acre plot lies within a 147 acre parcel, owned by CBJ

Tip of Point Macartney on NW Kupreanof Island + two little islands. 34 acres

East of Hamilton Island in Shakan Strait. NW Kosciusco Island; between Mt. Calder and Mt. Holbrook. North of the Nipples, near Shakan Creek. 15 acres

Lynn Canal, east shore of Funter Bay 1 acre

Ed Note: It seems to me this land belongs to all of the people of America and should the government be selling it? If you would like to comment on the sale of public lands, send email to:

SRS_Land_Sales@fs.fed.us and /or District Forester: Denny Bschor [dbschor@fs.fed.us]

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. You will receive the National *Audubon* Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

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

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed
A51

_____ Please bill me
7XCH

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, and receive 9 months of *The Raven*, send the completed form above with \$10 to: Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. Please let us know if you prefer to have the newsletter sent by electronic _____ e-mail or paper copy _____

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