

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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November 2006

SOUTHEAST WILD, Public Nature Series November 9, Egan Library Room 112, 7:00 p.m.

A Tale of Two Cedars: Life and Death of Cedar Trees in Southeast Alaska

Paul Hennon, Research Scientist, will talk about the research that they have done in Southeast on cedar decline and an important research plot near Sitka started by the Russians!

December 14, Saturday Wild, Egan Library Room 112, 7:00 p.m.

Mark Schwan will present a program on Juneau's Christmas Bird Count, (what is it and) what does it tell us about the abundance and diversity of birds during early winter in Juneau? We will learn about Christmas Bird count, history on the count, how we do the count, and available data. We will also learn what the collected data says about Juneau's late fall and early winter avian diversity as seen through 30 years of counts in Juneau.



**Juneau's Annual Christmas Bird Count Will Be on
December 16 – Details will be in the December issue**

Bald Eagle Festival November 8-12, 2006 in Haines, Alaska

The 12th annual festival takes place during the world's largest concentration gathering of bald eagles. This spectacular and unique natural event is not to be missed! See details in the HAINES BIRD REPORT ON PAGE 3.



Juneau Public Market -- Centennial Hall -- Visit the Audubon booth in the main ballroom; bring your children to the nature crafts workshop in one of the small rooms. *Public Market is open Nov. 24-26.*

Board Changes: by Jeff Sauer Juneau Audubon President

We have a talented and active Audubon chapter here in Juneau, and from that membership a consistently dedicated and interesting board. And, so with that background it is exciting to move into the position of president. The board welcomes two new members to it: Mark Schwan, as Vice President, and Patty Rose, as Secretary. Lastly, Brenda Wright, who has been our president for the past three years is staying on as chair of the Programs Committee.

The big event for this month is the Public Market at Centennial Hall. Juneau Audubon for years has had a booth at the market. The booth is peopled by our members for an hour or so at a time. Many Juneau Audubon members over the years have volunteered for this fun task. Since many of you will want to see the market anyway, please consider signing up to do a stint at our booth. It is not hard.

Of course the star attraction at our booth, as has been for many years, is Mary Lou King's homemade jellies and jams. Mary Lou is a remarkable person who has been on our board for something like 23 years and has been making jellies and jams for sale at the market for about the same amount of time. What a remarkable legacy! To say that she has been an Audubon volunteer extraordinaire is an understatement. She and her husband Jim's decades of conservation volunteer work has been acknowledged with not just local and state awards, but also national level awards.



To volunteer to help Audubon at the Public Market call Ellen Anderson at 789-1412 or email her. See last page of the Raven for Ellen's email.

New Board Member Profiles:

Mark Schwan, Vice President -- Mark is well known around Juneau Audubon for his work for the chapter. Every year he leads some of the spring bird walks for Audubon, and along with Gus Van Vliet, every year runs our Christmas Birdcount. Mark is one of the most knowledgeable birders in Juneau, and is also one of the authors of the Birds of Juneau Checklist. He is recently retired as a biologist from state fish and game. He brings to the board some 35 years of birding in Alaska.

Patty Rose, Secretary -- Patty got the bird watching bug three years ago, and since has made quite an impact in the local birding community. She is seen out birding the dike trail and other birding spots regularly, and as well as spotting birds, she also photographs everything she sees. Through her efforts in the field she has found (and told others about) some rare finds in Juneau. Two examples are Purple Finches she found in West Juneau and Blackpoll Warblers on the Airport Dike Trail. She is an accomplished manager working for the state, and brings that experience as well to her office of Secretary with JAS.

Juneau Audubon is soon to have a board opening in the membership area. As noted above we have a great group of people and besides contributing to the chapter, you would be gaining a lot from getting to know this fine and talented group of people. In particular we are looking for spreadsheet, data base skills.

Finally a big bon voyage to Matt Brooks, a great Alaskan birder, Eaglechat contributor, and all around good guy. This is a great loss for Alaska, but a plus to Arizona where he is headed.

HAINES REPORT/BALD EAGLE FESTIVAL By Georgia Giacobbe

The Eagles Have Come -- It didn't take long for the salmon to run and the eagles to follow. As of October 11, approximately 20 eagles were spiraling over the McClellan Flats before they moved upriver. But as of the 20th of October, approximately 100 were spotted in a large gathering, circling the sky at 20 mile on that sunny Friday. By the 21st of October, the eagles moved into the full length of the Bald Eagle Preserve. It was steadily raining that Saturday, and the eagles were all out on the flats of the Chilkat and Klehini Rivers. My husband and I observed very few eagles in the trees along the highway. But at least 75 were counted from 33 mile to north of the bridge that crosses Haines Highway at 26 mile. Another 285 were observed from the bridge south to approximately 18 mile. On the Chilkat, they shared the salmon with the gulls, of course. The numbers can only increase as the festival approaches.

If you wish to see the eagles during the Bald Eagle Festival, a catamaran will be running Saturday, November 11th departing from Statter Harbor in Auke Bay, boarding at 7:00 a.m. A bus will take you to the preserve to see the eagle release. Tickets are \$85, and \$55 for children under age 10. Any questions, contact Sandy Harbanuck, 586-2207 or purchase tickets at Hearthside Books or Wee Fishee Shop.

Wrangell Report By Bonnie Demerjian

Marsh hawks, great horned owls and even a rough-legged hawk are everywhere on the Stikine River flats this month, still feasting on this year's bumper crop of mice, reports Mary and Earl Benitz who live on one of the delta islands. Three or four of the great horned owls call behind their cabin each evening. Snow geese were also plentiful on the delta earlier in the month but have now moved south.

An unusual dark-eyed junco has been frequenting a Wrangell feeder this month, says Marlene Clarke. The bird has a large white ring of feathers around each eye, very like spectacles. She remembers that several years ago she had another junco with a white patch on one cheek and was told it might have been the result of an albino mating. Any others around like this? Rafts of surf scoters are reappearing near town, as are small flocks of western grebes.



Ketchikan October Report - By Teri Goucher

We have had some beautiful sunny and warmer than normal days in between the foggy days which limited birding opportunities and jet travel.

A few southbound shorebirds were here briefly including **Sanderling** and **Western Sandpiper** on 9/26. I had a very active **Spotted Sandpiper** in my yard amongst the fallen cottonwood leaves on Sept. 27th! An **Osprey** was seen migrating south over Tongass Narrows mid-month. A few lingering **Golden-Crowned Sparrows** and a **White-Crowned Sparrow** were spotted locally. Lots of **Song Sparrows** are around too. A **Swainson's Thrush** was seen by Steve Heintz, the latest sighting of this species by two weeks and the first record, here, for the month of October.

Late breaking news! This report comes from Andy Piston;

Hi Everyone,

Steve and I have been completely unable to find anything of interest this fall, but fortunately Ken Mix stepped in and called us to report he had a **Harris's Sparrow** at his house. We went to his house and the bird spent our entire lunch hour feeding just outside his window. The bird was an adult, which is somewhat unusual as all of our previous records from Ketchikan were immature. This is the first **Harris's Sparrow** for Ketchikan since 13 November 1997. The bird was still present today (Oct. 20).

Andy Piston

Make the most of every opportunity to get out and enjoy our beautiful Alaska wilderness!

Skagway Sept/Oct 2006 Birding Summary by C. E. Furbish, Skagway Bird Club

Mid September brought mixed flocks of migrating songbirds to Skagway, with attendant hawks and Kestrels. Magpies are back, crows are seldom seen. Winter water birds such as goldeneyes and scoters have been seen on the fjord. An unusual sighting of a Red-Throated Loon was reported from Upper Dewey Lake. Also, a new bird for our area, a Mourning Dove, was seen several days in a row in downtown Skagway.

Our friends in the Yukon Bird Club have recorded an invasion of Stellar's Jays, most likely from the Skagway area. Hundreds of these birds appear to have moved north through Skagway's White Pass and have been reported at 53 locations in the southern Yukon. The scale of this invasion is very unusual - a small movement of Stellar's Jays was noted in 1994 from 8 locations, and prior to that only 9 reports of individual jay sightings.

Gustavus Sightings
September 27-October 25, 2006

The last two weeks saw the arrival of **Trumpeter Swans**, **Tundra Swans**, **Snow Geese**, **Rock Sandpipers**, and **Snow buntings** to the Gustavus forelands, although only in small numbers to date.

Among the many ducks and geese that are now in the area, a **Redhead** was seen on 10/7 and 10/13 and two **Eurasian Wigeons** on 10/13.

Single **Ospreys** were in the area on five dates between late September and 10/1.

Two **Rough-legged Hawks** were observed on 9/30 and single birds were seen on 10/6, 10/21, and 10/22. **Harlan's Red-Tailed Hawks** were seen on 9/30 and on 10/5.

Peregrine Falcons remained common through the period, with one observed taking a dowitcher on 9/27.

It continued to be a good fall for **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers** with three on 9/27, two on 10/3, and single birds on 9/30, 10/1, and 10/4. **Black-bellied Plovers** were on the beaches west of town in small numbers through the period. The only **American Golden-Plovers** reported were two on 9/30. **Pacific Golden-Plovers** continued to be seen in small numbers through 10/21 with sixteen on 9/30. **Dunlin** numbers are slowly increasing on the beaches west of town, and **Sanderlings** are being seen in flocks of one to two hundred.

There were a few birds that made showings later than usual. A single **Spotted Sandpiper** was along the Salmon River on 9/29 and 10/11. **Western Sandpipers** were observed in small numbers through 10/13 with **fifty-five** on 9/30. Two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were with the Western Sandpipers on 10/4. (An unidentified peep that was with the Western Sandpipers on 10/13 may have been a Semipalmated Sandpiper.)

Dowitchers were around in good numbers through 10/14 with over one hundred and twenty on 9/27 (most were Long-billed Dowitchers, but perhaps not all....?) A very late **Bank Swallow** was observed catching bugs along the shore of Bartlett Cove on **10/22**. Eight **European Starlings** were with a small flock of American Robins on 10/6.

There is a mistake in the previous Gustavus report (October Newsletter). The "Boreal Owl" that was digitally recorded has since been determined to be a **Northern Pygmy-Owl**. I apologize for this error. Since the last report, Northern Pygmy-Owls have been heard or seen on fifteen dates in multiple locations with the latest being on 10/20. On numerous occasions, they gave a rapid series of hoots that better fit the description for Boreal Owl than for Northern Pygmy-Owl according to the written accounts and audio recordings that I have found. (Anyone wanting to receive a copy of the recording of the pygmy-owl doing rapid hoots can e-mail me at natdrumheller@hotmail.com.) Other owls seen or heard during the period were **Great Horned Owls** on two dates and **Short-eared Owls** on five dates.

Thanks to the following for sharing their observations: Bruce Paige, Phoebe Vanselow, Rusty Yerxa, Sean Neilson, Greg Streveler, and Paul Barnes. By Nat Drumheller natdrumheller@hotmail.com

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 _____

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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 _____

Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Jeff Sauer, president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Vice-President: Mark Schwan, vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Secretary: Patty Rose, secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

Treasurer: Liz Blecker, 586-4210, treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

Programs: Brenda Wright, 789-4656, programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

Membership: Donna Carroll, membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

Education: Beth Peluso, education@juneau-audubon-society.org

Publicity: Amy Skilbred, publicity@juneau-audubon-society.org

Conservation: Matt Kirchoff, conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org

Field Trips: Steve Zimmerman, 586-2597, field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org

Raven Editor: Mary Lou King, 789-7540, raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

Public Market Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

Web Master: George Utermohle, webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO BOX 021725
JUNEAU, AK 99802

Nonprofit Org.
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Juneau, AK 99802