

# 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

April 2008

## **Juneau Audubon Public Nature Series**

**Thursday, April 10, UAS Egan Room 221/222 7:00 p.m.**

### **Juneau's Underwater Neighborhood**

Join Annette Smith (diver and photographer) on a journey to some common locations in the Juneau area and see them from a different point of view.....underwater. Everyone has seen whales and sealions....but not many have seen smiling squat lobsters, stubby squid, colorful nudibranchs (slugs), and many other rarely seen creatures that live in the underwater realm. Free public presentation sponsored by Juneau Audubon Society. 321-4739



### **Berners Bay Cruises 2008**

Come see the drama at the end of the road

**Saturday, April 19, 8:30 a.m.**

**Saturday, May 3, 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.**



**Adults - \$40, Students - \$20, Children under 12 - \$5 (must be accompanied by adult) Tickets at Hearthside Books Vessels depart Don D. Statter Harbor below DeHarts. Boarding begins about 15 minutes before departure. Cruise lasts four hours. Juneau Audubon Society members will be on board as natural history interpreters.**

## **Bird Walks and Berners Bay Cruises Juneau Audubon, Spring 2008**

Spring is coming to Juneau and so too are the birds!! We encourage all to attend our walks. No experience is necessary. In fact, this year we will have two leaders on each walk, with one leader just for beginner birders. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a few on hand for those without binoculars. We also will have spotting scopes for use by all.

**Saturday, April 12. Location: Airport Dike trail.** The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. This first walk of the season will stay on the trail so rubber boots are not needed. However, some group of birders after the walk may venture out into the wetlands, so for those boots are needed. Steve Zimmerman and Mark Schwan will be the leaders.

**Saturday, April 19. Berners Bay Cruise.** Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. The vessel will leave promptly at 8:30 a.m. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. Tickets are available at Hearthside Books. Adult tickets \$40.00. Special student tickets \$20.00. Children under 12 may go for \$5.00. Tickets for sale now at Hearthside Books.

**Saturday, April 26. Location: Fish Creek on Douglas Island.** Assemble by the gate at 8:00 a.m. Park in the lot. Rubber boots are advisable as there are some wet spots. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk, with an assistant.

**Saturday, May 3. Berners Bay cruises:** One will leave at 8:30 a.m.; the other will leave at 1:30 p.m. Meet at Statter Harbor (Auke Bay) by the Harbormaster's Office. Ticket holders should be on the dock by 8:15 a.m. or by 1:15 p.m. Tickets are available at Hearthside Books.

**Saturday, May 10. Location: Airport Dike.** Walk to the mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots. Mark Schwan will lead the walk. Jeff Sauer will assist.

**Saturday, May 17. Location: To be announced.** Check the May issue of the Raven or the Juneau Audubon web site.

**Saturday, May 24. Location: Sheep Creek.** Meet at Sheep Creek trail head at 8:00 a.m. This will be a bird walk/ hike with a long uphill walk. Emphasis on learning basic bird songs, by listening to the birds, as well as to the birds on tape (CD player). Beth Peluso will lead the hike. Patty Rose will co-lead.

**Saturday, May 31. Location: Eagle River Trail.** Meet at Eagle River Trail Head at 8:00 a.m. This will be a bird walk/ hike to the marsh to listen for soras and rails, Common Yellowthroat should be seen also. Trail head is at the parking lot by the bridge over Eagle River. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk, with assistant. Hiking boots or walking shoes.

**Saturday, June 7. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes.** The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:30 a.m. Note earlier start time than other walks. Wear rubber boots. Bev Agler will lead the walk, with assistant.

## **TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE, AND THE SWAN FESTIVAL --WHITEHORSE, CANADA -- APRIL 17-19, 2008**

For information, check out Yukon Tourism at [www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com) or the City of Whitehorse visitor information at [www.visitwhitehorse.com](http://www.visitwhitehorse.com). For those interested in wildlife viewing, visit [www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/viewing](http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/viewing).

### **JUNEAU BIRD REPORT** by Patty Rose

During March, Juneau continued to enjoy the winter invasion of common redpolls and pine siskins. A few hoary redpolls were observed in the large flocks. Also this month, American robins, song sparrows, juncos, and varied thrushes started singing all around the Juneau area.

Early migrants or overwintering birds observed in March included a **Western Grebe** on March 4 near the North Douglas boat ramp (Paul Suchanek), two **redheads** in a large mixed flock of waterfowl on March 25 on the upper Mendenhall River (as reported to Rich Gordon), a pair of **Trumpeter Swans** on March 15 at Eagle Beach (Paul Suchanek), a **Lapland Longspur** on March 17 at Point Louisa (Brenda Wright), a **Black-legged Kittiwake** on March 15 at Eagle Beach (Paul Suchanek), and **Hooded Mergansers** on March 1 on the Mendenhall River (Patty Rose), on March 12 near Lakeside Condos (Rich Gordon), and on March 12 on Duck Creek (Mark Schwan).

Very early **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** were observed on March 8 at Point Louisa (Paul Suchanek) and on March 12 on Montana Creek Road (Mark Schwan). A **Hairy Woodpecker** was seen drumming on a pole in the downtown area on March 8 (Alan Munro), and a **Downy Woodpecker** was seen on March 10 at Mile 18, Glacier Highway (Mark Schwan).

March raptors included a male **Northern Goshawk** on March 24 in the Dredge Lakes area (Rich Gordon) and a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** on March 6 in the Auke Bay area (Mark Schwan).

Thanks to Juneau birders for sharing their observations.

### **KETCHIKAN BIRD NEWS FOR MARCH AND APRIL EVENTS**-by Teri Goucher

Although Spring arrived a bit earlier than usual this year on March 19th, winter continues to persist even for our part of Alaska! The woods are slowly coming alive with bird song and a few migrating species are passing through for the upcoming breeding season.

A **California Gull** was seen just off shore in town on March 24th.

**Surf Scoters** are already beginning to form large flocks along our waterfront as usual in the spring as they await the herring spawn and continue their breeding trek. Surf Scoter numbers peak here in late April to early May when as many as 30,000 individuals congregate in huge mega flocks!

Increasing numbers of **American Robins** are around gracing local lawns in flocks of well over 20 birds and even a few have been heard already singing!

Several **Tree Sparrows** remain, usually coming to feeder areas with groups of our ever present **Juncos**. More **Fox Sparrows** are arriving with their numbers peaking locally from late March until around mid April when well over a hundred birds can be found along certain brushy roads.

Large flocks of **Pine Siskins** are still very common seemingly everywhere!

Five **Trumpeter Swans** were at Ward Lake, and soon scores of waterfowl flocks will fly overhead which is always a thrilling experience!

April is Hummingbird Festival month here in Ketchikan as locals celebrate migrating birds and the arrival of Spring as the beloved Rufous Hummingbird returns to our island! The Southeast Alaska Discovery Center hosts many activities to entertain and educate adults and children alike.

There are several art events including a coloring contest, bird drawing lessons, an art show featuring migrating birds and even classes to make beaded hummingbirds and hummingbird feeders.

There will be two live bird presentations and slide shows at the center. Andy Piston will present slides and discuss the breeding birds of the Ketchikan area on April 11th. Steve Heinel will narrate a show about whales and birds seen while cruising from Anchorage to Attu Island on April 25th.

Several birds walks are planned as well covering almost all of our island!

**April 5th-Cheryl Fultz will lead a walk at Ward Lake at 8 am.**

**April 12th-Teri Goucher and Cheryl explore Refuge Cove for birds at 8 am.**

**April 13th-meet at Settler's Cove at 8 am to again join Cheryl and Teri.**

**April 20th-Steve Heinel will show folks good birding stops along the southern portion of our road from Bugge Beach to Herring Cove at 8 am.**

**April 26th-Wake up early to meet Andy Piston at 7 am for birding the scenic Brown Mountain road area.**

For more information about any of these fun birding events, please call the Southeast Discovery Center or Leslie Swada at 228-6220!

Do remember to put up your hummingbird feeders soon for one of our favorite mighty migrants is on the way, because Spring IS really here!

### **WRANGELL BIRD REPORT** by Bonnie Demerjian

**Robins**, those harbingers of spring, are popping up on lawns around Wrangell. A small number wintered surviving on mountain ash berries and other unknown foods but these spring arrivals are busy scouring the grass for edibles. A few appeared as early as

February 3. This seems to be a year for isolated early birds. The first **Fox Sparrow** was reported on 2/28 but none have been reported since that date. A small flock of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** was reported at a feeder on 3/15 but they also are not here in any numbers yet. A few **Common Redpolls**, large flocks of which had delighted local birders in February, remain in town. More early arrivals – two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were reported on 3/21.

Stephen Todd, while on a skiing expedition down the Stikine River from Telegraph Creek reported hearing a **Spruce Grouse** on 3/2 on Limb Island in the lower Stikine valley. Stephen, Bob Lippert and Scott Forbes made the grueling, 150-mile, 15-day trip pulling sleds. Todd reported seeing less wildlife than expected but did spot several wolves, 6 moose and wolverine tracks. The men will present a slide show of their trip in April.

**Trumpeter Swans** returned to Pat's Lake on March 23 after spending some days on the salt water south of town and a flock of about 30 was seen flying by on their way to the delta. A flock of about 70 **Surf Scoters**, missing this winter from their usual parade grounds in front of town, appeared once more on 3/19. **Red-breasted Sapsuckers** are showing up and sounding off more frequently, though one eager rapper made an appearance over a month ago.

The large number of **Bald Eagles** that had been around during the January and February cold spells has mostly dispersed, we hope to fatten on soon-to-arrive Stikine hooligan. There have been unconfirmed reports of eagles cannibalizing each other during the February weeks of heavy snow. One observer with a pond reported that an eagle attacked a duck decoy floating there, dragged it to the shore and then, we assume, noticed its error.

**The Stikine River Migratory Bird and Garnet Festival, which celebrates spring migrations on the Stikine Delta, will be held from April 23-27 this year.** The keynote speaker for the event is Dr. Richard Lanctot, Shorebird Coordinator for US Fish and Wildlife, Alaska Region. He will speak on Thursday, April 24 on "Migratory Flyways and River Deltas – Interstate Highways and Gas Stations for Shorebirds." On Friday, April 25 his talk is entitled "Avian Influenza: Will Migratory Birds Spread the H5N1 Virus to North America?" There will also be a bird walk on Saturday, April 26, at the Muskeg Meadows Golf Course. For more information on the Garnet Festival which is sponsored jointly by the USDA Forest Service and the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, go to the Wrangell Chamber's website at <http://wrangellchamber.org>.

## **GUSTAVUS SIGHTINGS**

**February 24 - March 26, 2008**

During the last week of this period, the first local spring reports came in for **Lapland Longspur**, **Varied Thrush**, hooting **Blue Grouse** (Sooty Grouse if you prefer), and **Wilson's Snipe** while **American Robin** numbers increased. **Common Redpolls** and **Pine Siskins** remained abundant through the period. The **Brambling** continues to frequent the same feeder in town. An amazingly early **Pacific Golden-Plover** was

photographed along the Salmon River on 3/8. Also very early was a hummingbird reported in town on 3/16. This was presumably a **Rufous Hummingbird**, but it was only heard and not seen. A **Dunlin** with colored leg bands was seen on 3/15. The band combination matched that of a bird seen in Gustavus this winter and last fall that was banded on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta. There were several reports of **Northern Pygmy-Owls** and **Great Horned Owls** during the month and one **Short-eared Owl**. **Northern Saw-whet Owls** have been heard regularly in at least two neighborhoods. Saw-whet owls are nesting in a nest box in town with a camera inside the box providing video images of the activities in the box. The owls were first noticed in the box on 2/23. They came and went from the box in the evenings after that. The female started spending some daylight hours in the box on 3/3. Since 3/8, she has been in the box around the clock leaving for short periods at night. The first egg was laid on or around 3/14, and a sixth egg was laid on 3/26 or late on 3/25. The male delivers rodents to the box at night. The floor of the box is littered with voles, and an occasional shrew, to be eaten later. It can be difficult to count the voles in the camera image, but there have been at least eight at one time. (References to male and female are assumptions.) This is the third year running that saw-whet owls have used nest boxes in Gustavus. The box being used this year was also nested in by saw-whets in 2006. Red Squirrels nested in this box in 2007.

Thanks to Dave Lesh and Phoebe Vanselow for sharing sightings and to all who reported owls and robins. By Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

#### **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

Thanks to you, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) broke yet another record this year! You and your fellow birders submitted more than 85,000 checklists during the four-day event, surpassing last year's all-time record by several thousand. Participants also identified a record 635 species and sent in thousands of stunning bird images from around the continent.

To view this year's top 10 most-reported birds, visit <http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/top10>.

Some species showed up in GBBC reports for the very first time, including a Masked Duck in Texas—a bird that is usually found in the tropics. An Arctic Loon, seldom seen outside Alaska, was spotted in California. An Ivory Gull wandered down from the high Arctic to show up on a checklist in South Dakota. For an even more detailed summary of this year's results, visit the GBBC web site at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). You can explore maps, see beautiful photos, prize-drawing winners, and the list of cities and towns that topped their state or province for the number of checklists submitted—our “checklist champs.”

### **Audubon Alaska Gives New Tongass Plan A Mixed Review** **By John Schoen, Senior Scientist, Audubon Alaska**

On January 23, 2008 the U.S. Forest Service released its amended Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) as ordered by the Ninth Circuit Court in 2005.

The Tongass has long been a conservation priority for Audubon Alaska, the state office of the National Audubon Society. In a preliminary review of the new TLMP, Audubon Alaska gives it a mixed review. On the plus side, Audubon Alaska recognizes the value in deferring new logging and road building in some of the most valuable fish and wildlife watersheds on the Tongass. This decision buys time and reflects a new, science-based study by Audubon Alaska and The Nature Conservancy that identified conservation priorities for both intact and previously logged watersheds throughout the Tongass.

Audubon Alaska acknowledges the opportunity the Forest Service provides in using an adaptive management approach that establishes three phases of timber harvest in the new forest management plan. The first phase defers new logging and road building in some of the most valuable fish and wildlife watersheds on the Tongass. For example, under TLMP Phase 1, only 400,000 acres (11% of 3.4 million acres) of our Conservation Priority Watersheds are scheduled for development.

On the minus side, the new plan fails to permanently protect many key fish and wildlife watersheds that the plan still targets for eventual logging. In addition, core areas of old-growth forest in some previously logged watersheds (identified for restoration priority) should be protected rather than targeted for further logging. In the long term, implementation of this plan will place at risk many of the most important fish and wildlife values that people care about.

Audubon Alaska seeks balanced forest management that recognizes all of the important values the Tongass provides to the people of southeast Alaska, including subsistence use of resources, hunting and fishing, recreation, and economic sustainability of local communities. Audubon Alaska hopes to continue working collaboratively with the Forest Service, other organizations, and local communities to develop a science-based conservation strategy that balances habitat protection with local community needs, and to find a practical way forward that delivers results for everyone who depends on the Tongass.

#### **Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators**

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**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\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Local Audubon Society Membership Application**

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send \$10 (*1-year membership*) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter news letter *The Raven*.

**\*\*\*Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, and money. To choose this option, write your email address here \_\_\_\_\_.**

