

# 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

February 2009

## **Juneau Audubon Public Meeting – February 12, 2009 7:00 PM, UAS Egan Room 221/222**

**The Tools of the Trade Presented by Mark Schwan and Jeff Sauer**  
Have you been thinking about buying a binocular or spotting scope but are confused as to what to buy? Do you know how an 8x32 binocular differs from a 10x40 binocular? What should you look for in a binocular or scope if you wear eye glasses? Why is the diopter adjustment an important feature? Come to this month's meeting and learn how to demystify what the technical specifications really mean and talk one-on-one with local birders who will show you their equipment and share their knowledge with you.



### **SAVE A TREE!**

Hello Audubon newsletter reader.

Please consider getting the newsletter by e-mail. You get to see the color photos

And we don't have to use as much paper.

It's simple: Send your e-mail address to [membership@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org)

## **Tongass Science Conference**

Taldi Walter, Communications & Education Specialist, Audubon Alaska

I'm writing to invite the Juneau Audubon Society to our upcoming Tongass Science Conference. The public events include two evening lectures and an all day Science Symposium. **All events at Centennial Hall, Juneau**

### **February 17, 7:30 pm**

*Culture and Place: A Native Perspective on the Tongass Forest*

Byron Mallott

### **February 18, 7:30 pm**

*Climate Change & Potential Impacts to Coastal Rainforests*

Terry Chapin

### **February 19, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm**

*Public Science Symposium*

Topics include: Island Biogeography, Watershed Conservation, and Tongass Market Economy

8:30 am: *Conservation & Management of Old Growth Forests*

Jerry Franklin

**Please see full agenda at: [www.AudubonAlaska](http://www.AudubonAlaska)**

## **12<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 13 – 16, 2009**

The twelfth annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is fast approaching—February 13 is less than a month away! Plan to join tens of thousands of other bird watchers across North America as we tally the birds over these four days. Count on your own or with family, friends, and neighbors to make this the biggest, best GBBC ever!

If you know someone who might be interested in joining the GBBC for the first time, please pass along our website: [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)!

### **New and Updated Features**

\* Think you've got "Eagle Eyes"? As you countdown to GBBC weekend, test your bird watching skills through our interactive game. [Click here](#) to play this year's Eagle Eyes. Be sure to forward the link to a friend!

\* Great prizes! Everyone who submits a bird checklist during the GBBC is automatically entered in our drawing for bird-related items donated by Wild Birds Unlimited, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Droll Yankees. Visit <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/2009prizes> to see the selection.

\* GBBC events are taking place around the continent. Discover what's going on in your area on the GBBC website's Local Events page: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/events>. If you're hosting an event, email Pat Leonard at [pel27@cornell.edu](mailto:pel27@cornell.edu) and we will post information.

**Why Your Participation Matters** We have the opportunity to gather real data from people like you to help us understand where the birds are and how their populations are changing over time. Last year, participants counted over nine million birds and reported 12 species never before reported during the GBBC! Let's see how many we can count this year, and find out together how bird populations may be changing.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [citizenscience@audubon.org](mailto:citizenscience@audubon.org) or [cornellbirds@cornell.edu](mailto:cornellbirds@cornell.edu). Remember, count for fun, count for the future! We can't wait to see what you discover this year.

## **CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD**

Congratulations to STAN SENNER and JOHN SCHOEN, Alaska Audubon, for being awarded the prestigious CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD from the Wilberforce Foundation. Award winners are selected from among the thousands of people working on environmental protection from New Mexico to Alaska and Canada and recognizes outstanding dedication and extraordinary efforts.

## **BIRDING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGION**

By Steve Heinl and Andy Piston

A summary of the fall 2008 birding highlights from the southeast Alaska region, with many wonderful bird photos, can be found on the Juneau Audubon Web Site: <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/Birds/Reports/2008%20Fall%20-%20SE%20Alaska%20NAB%20Summary1.pdf>.

The fall period covered August through November. This report is intended to provide interesting observations for inclusion in an Alaska-wide column written by Thede Tobish for the journal North American Birds. We have also sent Thede all of the notes and photographs that we received as well. Although not everything that people reported made it into this summary, we encourage you to submit information for any species that you feel like reporting, not just unusual species, because this will help us determine if any interesting patterns occurred, or might bring out information that we were not familiar with: Heinl, Steve (DFG) [[steve.heinl@alaska.gov](mailto:steve.heinl@alaska.gov)]. If you don't already subscribe to North American Birds, here is a link to see more information: <http://www.americanbirding.org/pubs/nab/index.html>. The seasonal reports cover all of North America and give excellent overviews of unusual numbers of particular species (high or low), early or late dates

## January Birding Notes for Juneau By Mark Schwan

It was a pretty quiet month for rare bird reports, and for those that ventured forth and braved the elements, results indicated that a majority of the rare land birds that were seen, were actually at the residences of birders, hanging in at established bird feeders. Birding away from the water and into the woods was reported to be eerily quiet. Here is a brief summary.

Waterfowl highlights included a **Eurasian Wigeon** at Fish Creek on January 21 (PS) and a **Northern Pintail** adjacent to the trailer park on North Douglas on January 25 (PR). The **hybrid goldeneye** was seen along North Douglas shorelines several times during the month (PS). There was a **Hooded Merganser** downtown near the yacht club on January 24 (PR). Lone **Killdeers** were seen on January 1, 20, and 24, all at the airport dike trail (RG, PR). Also found along the airport trail was a **Wilson's Snipe** on New Year's Day (PR). Raptor reports to note were three sightings of lone **Sharp-shinned Hawks**, one on January 3 and January 24 near a feeder on Douglas Island (PR) and the other also zeroing in on siskins near a feeder at Auke Bay on January 29 (MS). A **Merlin** was seen chasing crossbills near the North Douglas boat launch on January 10 (PS).

The remaining birds herein were all sparrows visiting feeders. These included an **American Tree Sparrow** near the airport on January 1 (PR), a **Lincoln Sparrow**, very rare in Juneau during the winter months, present the entire month at Fritz Cove (GV); a **White-throated Sparrow** remained loyal to its North Douglas feeding station all month (PS), and four **Golden-crowned Sparrows** and a single **White-crowned Sparrow** were seen at a feeder near the airport on January 24 (PR).

*Post Script:* Although Northern Shrikes are not considered rare in Juneau during the winter, they are uncommon and always a treat to see. Rich Gordon saw an adult bird along the dike trail on January 20, and says it is his only shrike sighting here during January. On January 22, an immature looking shrike (see photograph) was frequenting one of the "dredge" islands along Gastineau Channel (MS). What was interesting was that this bird was almost continuously singing, moving from perch to perch along the perimeter of the spruce at the center of the island, but then disappearing into the woods, only to continue singing from a concealed location. This lasted for perhaps fifteen



minutes and was continuing when the observer left the scene. Research on the internet subsequently found that the winter singing of shrikes has intrigued ornithologists and birders for some time, and recent studies support a very old notion that shrikes sing during the winter to attract songbirds on which they can prey. This is fascinating; they may truly be singing for their supper.

Contributors: Rich Gordon (RG), Patty Rose (PR), Mark Schwan (MS), Paul Suchanek (PS), Gus van Vliet (GV).

## **SKAGWAY REPORT** By Elaine Furbish

The Skagway Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 14, 2008. We had 28 participants doing 13 routes and watching 4 feeders. 38 species of birds were seen on count day, with an additional 5 species seen during count week.

December 14 was a clear but very windy day. No large flocks of waxwings, crossbills, redpolls or siskins were seen this year. Some Skagway birders noted that the mountain ash berries were not as abundant this year, and that crows had consumed most of them prior to our count date. This is in stark contrast to last year, when the mountain ash berries were very abundant on count day, and we had the unusually high count of waxwings. New for our circle this year: **Red-necked Grebe, Common Murre, Ptarmigan-sp., and Northern Shrike**. The **Common Murres** are not typically seen in our area, although we are not far from areas where they are common.

## **JANUARY REPORT FROM KETCHIKAN**-By Teri Goucher

It's been quite a winter so far all over Southeast Alaska with lots of snow storms leaving a blanket of white almost constantly since 2009 began! This makes driving to birding spots more challenging but I was well rewarded when I saw 6 **Trumpeter Swans** and a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** at very close range at Ward Lake!

Ketchikan did have an exciting addition to our 2008 Christmas Bird Count results. A **Fork-tailed Storm-petrel** was seen on count day in Nichols Passage just south of town! These birds normally live well offshore but are observed here nearly every fall, usually after a storm which brings them closer to town. This species is very rarely seen here during winter. **This sighting increases our total to 76 species on count day!**

I have just recently learned of another interesting bird brought in by autumn storms last October. A **Northern Fulmar** was seen in Clarence Straight, which is only the second record of this species in our area!

Seems to be a good number of sparrows lingering through our snowy winter including a **White-throated Sparrow**, a few **American Tree Sparrows** and two **House Sparrows** were seen in town recently! The brighter rusty '**Red' Fox Sparrow** has been seen locally numerous times the past two years, perhaps becoming a more common sight around our coastal areas as it possibly expands it's range. There were a couple of **Purple Finches** seen at a feeder north of town about mid-month. A few flocks of **Bohemian Waxwings** and **Pine Siskins** are around and the occasional **Sharp-shinned Hawk** is spotted locally! Two **Northern Shrikes** were discovered toward the end of January. I find the scientific name of this species interesting as it means something like the "sentinel butcher that impales it's prey". One of my favorite birding books is the Dictionary of American Bird Names by Earnest Choate. Do check it out sometime for fascinating reading!

I want to thank both Steve Heinl and Andy Piston for the majority of local birding information that I then share with the Raven readers! We are so lucky to have these passionate birders who continually add very important data to the state bird records and who consistently discover some of the more interesting birds in the Ketchikan area! Good luck birding to everyone, as we all, and the birds, must endure another six weeks or so of winter!



## **HAINES REPORT** By Georgia Giacobbe

**Haines Christmas Bird counters** focused on two areas again this year—one in the main part of Haines, and another in the area of the Bald Eagle preserve. Naturally, the Bald Eagle Preserve would have a higher concentration of eagles. The count was conducted early this year, December 14. Some unusual species seen during count week in Haines were **American Robin** and **Bohemian Waxwing**.

The Haines count results from least to most were the following: **Winter Wren, Northern Shrike, Red-breasted Sapsucker** at 1 each; **Common and Pacific Loon, Sharp-shinned Hawk** at 2; **Black Scoter** 3; **Bonaparte's Gull** 6; **White-winged Crossbill** 7; **Horned Grebe, Red-breasted Nuthatch**, and **American Dipper** at 8; **Black-capped Chickadee** 9; **Surf Scoter** 12; **Red-breasted Merganser** 14; **Pine Siskin** 20; **Steller's Jay** 21; **Marbled Murrelet** 25; **Bald Eagles** adult 34, immature 4; **Common Merganser** 37; **Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)** 39; chickadee species 42; **Thayer's Gull** 44; **Golden-crowned Kinglet** 45; **Pine Grosbeak** 64; **Dark-eyed Junco (Slate Gray)** 71; **Northwestern Crow** 85; **Common Raven** 86; **Glaucous-winged Gull** 89; **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** 99; **Herring Gull** 99; **Black-billed Magpie** 104; **Common Goldeneye** 149; **Bufflehead** 152; gull species 156; **Mallard** 164; **Mew Gull** 204; and **Barrow's Goldeneye** 391.

The results from Chilkat (Bald Eagle Preserve) area were: **Bufflehead, Northern Hawk-owl, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Dipper** at 1 each; **Common Goldeneye, Mew Gull, Great Horned Owl**, and **Belted Kingfisher** 2; **Glaucous-winged Gull** 3; **Common Merganser, Steller's Jay**, duck species 4; **Common Raven** 9; **Black-billed Magpie** 16, **Trumpeter Swan** 23; **Chesnut-backed Chickadee** 27, **White-winged Crossbill** 35; **adult Bald Eagle** 247, **immature Bald Eagle** 23.

As of January 24, only the local hearty bald eagles remained as Haines encountered wind chills of 30 below for about 10 days in January. About 10 **Trumpeter Swan** were spotted on the Chilkat River the same day.

## **INFORMATION FROM WHAT'S UP**

**January 30 (Extended to March 2)** Deadline for comments on the Draft Project Scoring Criteria & Project Nomination Request for the **2010-2013 STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (STIP)**. View the criteria and submit project nominations at [http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdping/cip\\_stip/stip10\\_13.shtml](http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdping/cip_stip/stip10_13.shtml) or email them to [DOTSTIP@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:DOTSTIP@dot.state.ak.us). Nominations are due by February 20.

**February 13** Deadline for applications for the **ALASKA COASTWALK MARINE DEBRIS REMOVAL and PREVENTION CHALLENGE GRANTS** for the purpose of organizing a CoastWalk beach clean-up event, implementing a clean-up of an existing accumulation of marine debris in coastal Alaska, or developing and implementing a marine debris prevention program. Eligible applicants would include: non-profit organizations, municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, tribal governments, schools, and other types of community organizations that can demonstrate fiscal responsibility for administering grant funds. Applicants may apply up to \$2,000 with a \$1 non-federal:\$2 federal match requirement (e.g. \$1000 match is needed for a \$2,000 grant). Match can be non-federal grants, cash, or in-kind services (volunteer time is valued at \$18/hr). Applications can be downloaded from [www.akcoastalstudies.org](http://www.akcoastalstudies.org). For more information and application contact: Katie Villano, Center for Alaska Coastal Studies PO Box 2225, Homer, AK 99603, Phone: (907) 235-6667 or email [katie@akcoastalstudies.org](mailto:katie@akcoastalstudies.org).

**\*\*February 9**

Deadline to apply for **ALASKA YOUTH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION's CIVICS & CONSERVATION SUMMIT**. Calling all Alaska Teens! Do you care about the environment? Want to be a leader in your community? Come to AYEAs Civics Summit and Take Action on issues that you care about! During the training, 25 teens from all over Alaska will come together in Juneau to learn how to impact decisions affecting our communities and environment. It's a high-impact, fun, inspiring training that has been called a "life-changing experience" by past participants. Teens from anywhere in Alaska are welcome to apply. Experience in politics and environmental issues not necessary. **Summit dates: March 15-19**. For more information, contact Maeve Taylor at (907) 339-3907 or email [taylorm@nwf.org](mailto:taylorm@nwf.org) or go to [www.ayea.org](http://www.ayea.org).

**CORPS OF ENGINEERS PERMIT APPLICATIONS**

To see the full permit go to: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg/PNnew.htm>

**Juneau**

**Gastineau Channel POA-1985-59-M3** – Channel Drive -- Douglas Island Pink and Chum

**Purpose:** To make new usable land

**Proposed Work:** Discharge approximately 29,000 cubic yards of fill into Gastineau Channel in .52 acres of tidal waters

**For more information:** John C. Leeds, III 790-4490

**Gastineau Channel** – Channel Drive -- Channel Construction

**Purpose:** A stable surface for industrial port operations

**Proposed Work:** Discharge approximately 29,000 cubic yards of fill in .5 acres of tidal waters in Gastineau Channel

**For more information:** John C. Leeds, III 790-4490

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

**President:** Mark Schwan, [president@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:president@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Vice-President:** Jeff Sauer, [vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
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**Membership:** Brenda Wright, 789-4656, [membership@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Education:** VACANT [education@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:education@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Conservation:** Meg Cartwright, 364-2258 [conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Field Trips:** Beth Peluso [field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Raven Editor:** Mary Lou King, 789-7540, [raven@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:raven@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**At-large:** Mark Anderson, [at-large\\_a@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**At-large:** Merrill Jensen, [at-large\\_b@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Public Market:** Ellen Anderson, 789-1412, [public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org)  
**Web Master:** George Utermohle, [webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org)

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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, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

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, money and view photos in color. To choose this option, write your email address here \_\_\_\_\_.**

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