

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 35, Number 8

Juneau Audubon Society

April 2009

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday April 9, 7:00 p.m, UAS Egan, Room 221/222

Kim Rivera, NOAA Fisheries, National Seabird Coordinator

Three species of albatross (Phoebastria genus) regularly visit pelagic waters off Alaska. The rare and endangered Short-tailed Albatross visits from its volcanic home in Japan. Black-footed and Laysan Albatross nest primarily in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and travel northward to feed in the rich waters around the Aleutian Islands and the Bering



Sea. NOAA Fisheries has long worked with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and an array of seabird biologists and fishing gear experts to address potential impacts of commercial fisheries on these magnificent species. Learn more about how threats are being averted----from fishermen keeping albatross off their hooks to concerned experts transplanting chicks to non-volcanic islands.

Berners Bay Cruises

Juneau Audubon Spring Wildlife Extravaganza

Come join us for a trip past the end of the road!

April 18, 2009 8:30 am

May 2, 2009 @ 8:30 am and 1:30 pm

\$40 adult \$20 student (includes UAS)

\$5/children under 12 (must be accompanied by adult)

4 Hour cruises depart from Don D. Statter Harbor

Tickets may be purchased at Hearthside Books

Naturalists will be on board

Sponsored by Juneau Audubon Society

Info 321-4739



Please join Audubon Alaska and the Juneau Audubon Society For a lecture and reception on Saturday, April 25, 2009, 7:30 to 9:30 PM, Centennial Hall, Downtown Juneau

**Landscape Aesthetics... Beauty is in the Adapted Mind of the Beholder
By Gordon Orians, PhD**

Humans have immediate and powerful emotional responses, both positive and negative, to landscapes, tree shapes, flowers, animals, and sunsets. Why do we have those responses? How might they have helped our ancestors survive and reproduce in a complex and dangerous environment that seemed mysterious to them? Join Audubon and Professor Gordon Orians to explore how evolutionary biologists, evolutionary psychologists, and neurobiologists are providing at least partial answers to these important and intriguing questions.

Gordon Orians, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Biology at the University of Washington and past president of both the Ecological Society of America and the Organization for Tropical Studies. His research and publications span five decades and range from behavioral ecology of blackbirds to analyses of shearwater populations to human habitat selection. Dr. Orians has served on National Research Council committees to evaluate wolf and bear management in Alaska and cumulative effects of oil and gas exploration on Alaska's North Slope, and he presently serves on the board of Audubon Alaska.

Reception at 8:30 PM: Share delicious desserts and libations with Dr. Orians and the board and staff of Audubon.

Please *RSVP* by April 20 to (907) 276-7034 or Lcosta@audubon.org.

ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY -- On Friday, May 15th and throughout the month of May, millions of Americans across the country will celebrate Endangered Species Day and learn about the everyday actions that people can take to help protect our nation's disappearing wildlife and last remaining wild lands.

Also, if you haven't checked out our Birds and Climate Change website yet, please visit www.birdsandclimate.org. I'm especially proud of the quiz (<http://www.birdsandclimate.org/quiz.php>), which features illustrations by Audubon Adventures' own Sherrie York!

Check out Alaska eBird www.ebird.org/ak

A real-time, online checklist program, eBird has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.

Bird Walks and Berners Bay Cruises

Juneau Audubon, Spring 2009

Spring is coming to Juneau and so too are the birds!! We encourage all to attend our walks. No experience is necessary, beginners are welcome. 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 11. 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 groups of birders may venture out into the wetlands after the walk, so for those boots are needed. Steve Zimmerman and Merrill Jensen will lead the walk.

Saturday, April 18. 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 (includes UAS). Children under 12 may go for \$5.00. Tickets for sale now at Hearthside Books.

Saturday, April 25. Location: Boy Scout Camp Trail. If you want to carpool, meet at 7:30 a.m. at Deharts. If driving yourself, meet at 8:00 a.m. At the Boy Scout Trailhead – turn right at Glacier Highway mile 26.7 and follow gravel road to Trailhead. Gwen Baluss will lead this walk.

Saturday, May 2. 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.

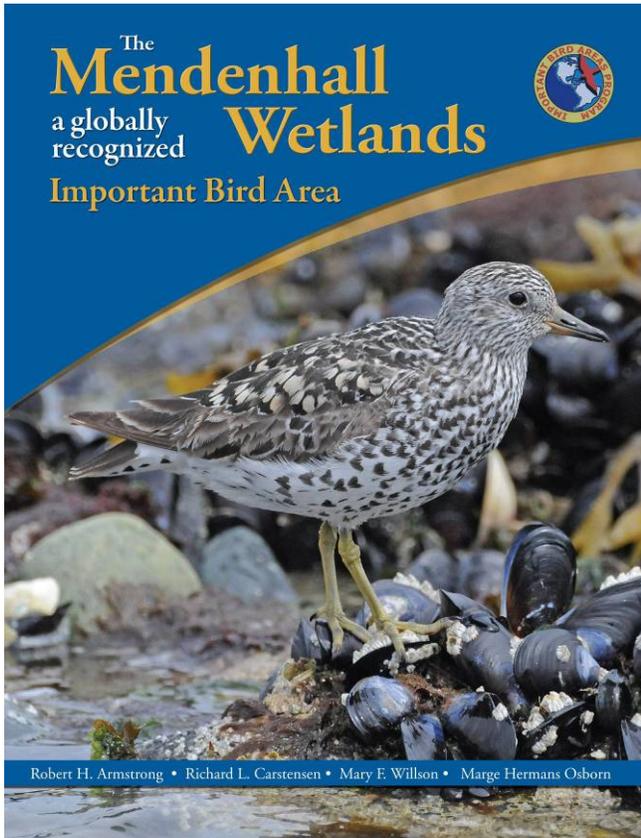
Saturday, May 9. Location: Airport Dike Trail. Walk to the mouth of the Mendenhall River. The walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots. Bev Agler will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 16. Location: Airport Dike Trail. Walk will begin at the Radcliffe Road entrance to the wetlands at 8:00 a.m. Jeff Sauer will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 23. Location: Sandy Beach (Douglas). The walk will begin at the picnic area by Sandy Beach at 8:00 a.m. Paul Suchanek will lead the walk.

Saturday, May 30. Location: Perseverance Trail. The walk will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the trailhead at the end of Basin Road. Beth Peluso will lead the walk.

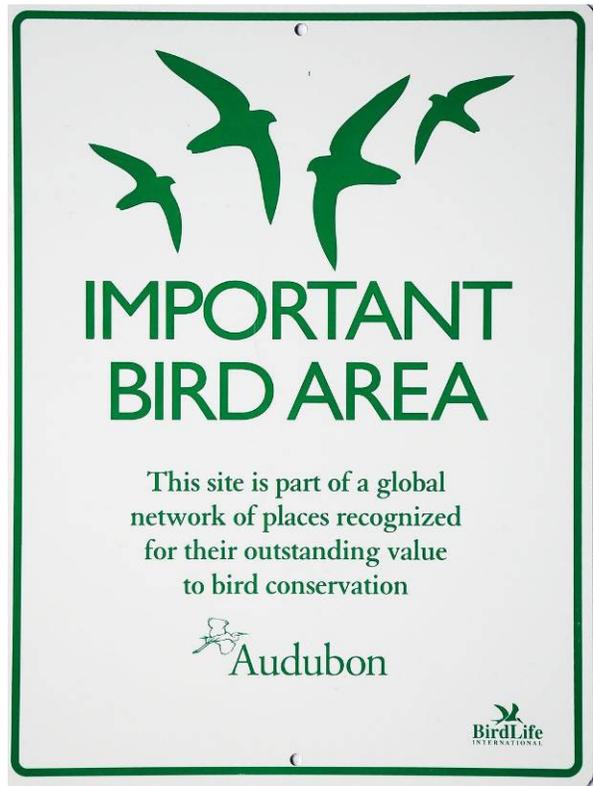
Saturday, June 6. Location: Moose Lake/Dredge Lakes. The walk will begin at the parking lot by the bridge over the Mendenhall River along the Back Loop Road at 7:00 a.m. Note earlier start time than other walks. Wear rubber boots. Mark Schwan will lead the walk.



BOOK REVIEW: Bob Armstrong, Richard Carstensen, Mary Willson, and Marge Hermans Osborn's new book will be in print sometime during the next month. This book includes excellent bird photos, description of the most valuable habitat areas, issues of concern and possible mitigation for airport expansion.

As soon as the books arrive in Juneau, a book signing and celebration of the Mendenhall Wetlands Important Bird Area, will be scheduled. Watch for an announcement of this celebration.

Mark Schwan, Juneau Audubon President, has been working with Ryan Scott at Fish and Game and received approval to put these IBA signs on the refuge sign posts at the Juneau Airport Dike Trailhead where Mark has installed one sign. Another will be installed over at Fish Creek. Ryan has one sign and will put in the kiosk at the Rotary platform near Lemon Creek. Another sign might go at Sunny Point.



Tongass Attracts Nationally Recognized Scientists

By Matt Kirchhoff, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Alaska

In February, Audubon Alaska in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy cosponsored a multi-day conference in Juneau. The conference, attended by leading ecologists from Alaska, British Columbia, and the Pacific Northwest, was aimed at building a scientific consensus for a conservation strategy for the Tongass National Forest.

The Tongass Science Conference was unconventional in that the first two days were conducted without a single PowerPoint presentation! The authors wrote papers, circulated them among the group in advance, and the group discussed each paper in detail.

On the final day, the scientists presented their papers to the public at Centennial Hall. Dr. Jerry Franklin, the grandfather of old growth ecology, kicked off the meeting with a keynote address on the conservation and management of old growth forests from a global perspective. This was followed by papers on island biogeography, concepts of conservation biology, riparian ecology, natural disturbance patterns, and conservation at the watershed scale.

Two evening presentations, open to the public, included *Native Perspectives on the Tongass* by Byron Mallott from the First Alaskans Institute and *Climate Change and the Tongass* by Terry Chapin from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Both evening keynotes were well attended by the Juneau community.

The conference was moderated by professor Emeritus Gordon Orians from the University of Washington, a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the Audubon Alaska Board. The conference was a great success, stimulating lively discussions and new ideas for conservation on the Tongass.

Audubon Alaska intends to publish the papers, incorporating the workshop discussions, in a book or online journal in the near future. A list of the paper titles, abstracts, and presenters is available at www.audubonalaska.org.

Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion

Audubon recently released a new study using Christmas Bird Count Data. These analyses would not have been possible without the hard work of CBC participants and the many chapters that organize and lead counts. We thank all that have participated over the years for their effort. The study explored if birds had shown significant shifts in their winter distribution over the last 40 years. As we all know, birds are good indicators of the environment. We think birds provide important information to people on changes in the environment and human quality of life. Audubon has a goal of working bird indicators into regular reviews of how the environment in the US is doing and hopefully helping drive policy and funding that benefits the environment and birds. The report, [*Birds and Climate Change*](#), is available on Audubon's web site and provides more details on the analyses and results. To download the report from this [web site](#), click on the "Download Report" link on the left side of the page or on the image of the report cover. <http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/cbcanalysis.html>

Juneau Bird Observations for March 2009 by Patty Rose

Although the snow stayed through the end of the month, migratory birds began to return to Juneau in March. Juncos and **Varied Thrushes** started singing in mid-March. Large flocks of common redpolls were present in the area throughout the month.

Eurasian Wigeons were seen from the Airport Dike Trail on the Mendenhall Wetlands on March 14 (PR) and March 23 (PS). A male **hybrid Barrow x Common Goldeneye** was at Outer Point on Douglas Island in the company of a female Common Goldeneye on March 23 and 24 (PS). On March 22, two juvenile **Trumpeter Swans** landed briefly on a pond on the Mendenhall Wetlands (PR). Also on March 22, two **Trumpeter Swans** flew over a Mendenhall Valley residence (DR).



Two juvenile Trumpeter Swans on the Otter Pond on the Juneau Airport Dike Trail on March 22. They flew in, honked, bobbed their heads, and moved in unison for several minutes before apparently deciding they didn't like the accommodations and flying off. P Rose Photo

Observations of accipiters included two **Sharp-shinned Hawks** near Auke Bay in mid-March (GV) and a **Northern Goshawk** at Outer Point on Douglas Island on March 20 (PS). The only report of a falcon was a merlin near Auke Bay on March 15 (GV).

A **Glaucous Gull** at Eagle Beach on March 21 (PS) was the only unusual gull reported.



Partially Albino Common Redpoll By Patty Rose

Very rare in Juneau, a **Boreal Owl** was seen and photographed at a Juneau residence on March 16 (MHB). A photo of the owl is posted on the Juneau Empire website

(http://www.juneauempire.com/stories/031809/loc_411317829.shtml). A **Boreal Owl**, perhaps the same bird, was seen at the Eaglecrest Ski Area in early March (SG). Two **Northern Pygmy-owls** were reported during March, one was heard calling on Douglas Island near the Outer Point trailhead on March 14 (PS), and one was calling out the road near Peterson Creek on March 15 (GV).

The earliest March report of a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** was of an individual seen at Outer Point on March 20 (PS). This species was regularly seen after that date. Two **Hairy Woodpeckers** were seen at a Juneau residence on March 18 (LFC). A red-shafted **Northern Flicker** was seen near Auke Bay on March 25 (GV).

An overwintering **Lincoln's Sparrow** was still present on March 7 at a feeder near Auke Bay (GV). A **White-throated Sparrow** overwintered at a North Douglas feeder and was seen on March 27. Reports of **Lapland Longspurs** included one near Auke Bay on March 22 (GV) and two on the Mendenhall

Wetlands on March 23 (PS). **Pine Grosbeaks** were seen from the Airport Dike Trail on the Mendenhall Wetlands on March 14 (PR) and March 23 (PS).

Thanks to those who contributed observations. Contributors included Mona Haffner Bibb (MHB), Laurie Ferguson Craig (LFC), Steve Gilbertson (SG), Patty Rose (PR), Deb Rudis (DR), Paul Suchanek (PS), and Gus van Vliet (GV).

An interesting activity during migration is to look for birds migrating at night by watching the moon with binoculars or a spotting scope. Birds can sometimes be seen silhouetted against the face of the moon. By applying certain complex mathematical computations, an estimate of the number of birds aloft on a given night can even be determined. The moon will be full during the second week of April. Another reason to go out after dark is that the migration flight calls of birds can be heard at night during migration.

Sunny Point Bird Report By Mary Lou King – 120 or more Vancouver Canada Geese are now feeding on the snow free part of the tideflats. There are lots of Mallards and Crows feeding all over the place out there on the flats. Plus there are between 30 or 40 Pine Siskins and about that many Common Redpolls frequenting the feeders along with two Steller's Jays, half a dozen Chestnut-backed Chickadees and eight or ten Juncos. The feeder birds are hungry with all the snow covering a lot of their natural food. The Bald Eagles are hungry too. One flew in through the trees right by the window, grabbed one of our big fat male Mallards that was right by the front doorstep and tried to fly off with it. After we chased it up the road, it finally gave up and dropped duck. The duck was pretty upset but it lived.

MARCH BIRDS AND APRIL EVENTS IN KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

The Spring equinox arrived recently, although winter seems to be lingering with numerous snow showers still passing through our area. At least the days seem much longer with the very early daylight savings time change this year!

There are signs of spring and even a few **American Robins** have been seen on local lawns. Quite a few gulls and sea ducks are congregating along our waterfront and there are reports that Fox Sparrows are beginning to sing. Soon the hardy Rufous Hummingbird will arrive in Alaska so make sure to get your feeders up!

A few interesting birds have been spotted north of town along the road system where the relatively more open country side consistently attracts birds year around.

Several **Red-tailed Hawk** sightings have occurred and some of these individuals may have wintered in our area. A few **Common Redpolls** were also visiting a feeder area in a north end neighborhood!

April is the month of Ketchikan's Hummingbird Festival!! This annual event celebrates Spring and migratory birds. There are lots of fun activities for nature lovers of all ages! The South East Alaska Discovery Center has planned a series of Birding Insight Programs to educate folks more about birds or even inspire some to become birders with informative talks and field trips to get out and find birds around the Ketchikan area!

There will be another juried art show this year on April 3rd and several programs for kids including interactive lessons with birds and a coloring contest.

Other events planned are:

April 2-Birding for beginners and binocular basics-Melissa Cady

April 11-Birding Ward Lake- Cheryl Fultz and Teri Goucher

April 18-Finding birds from Rotary Beach to the Herring Cove area-Steve Heinl

April 25-Birds of Gravina Island-Andy Piston

Also Dr. Scott Ford will do a presentation about tracking Eiders in the field.

There is so much more to see and do during this month long celebration so if you want more information please contact S.E. Discovery Center or Leslie Swada at 228-6427.

Thanks again to Leslie for this information and her help making the Hummingbird Festival possible!!!

This is an exciting time of year to enjoy birding with all the seasonal migrants heading our way as we all look forward to the weather warming.

Wrangell Raven Report, April, 2009 by Bonnie Demerjian, Wrangell



*Common Redpoll by
Mark Schwan*

The primary bird of interest in Wrangell for the past several weeks has been the **Common Redpoll**. These birds are seldom seen here but early this month have irrupted and been reported at many bird feeders. Their numbers are continuing to grow with flocks of 25-40 reported by observers. Since there have been few other birds to report, I looked for more information from the Boreal Songbird Initiative on these birds and learned:

- that they commonly, as reported on Christmas Bird Counts across the US, show a consistent biennial pattern of irruption (though not in Wrangell);
- that these irruptions are presumably triggered by shortages of seeds, particularly their staple birch seeds, in northern trees, causing the birds to move southward. Seed failures and irruptions occur simultaneously in North

America and Europe;

- that Common redpolls have several adaptations to survive harsh winters including throat pouches for temporarily storing seeds which they regurgitate in sheltered locations. They can survive temperatures as low as minus 67 degrees and may burrow into the snow to escape especially cold weather;
- that Common redpolls, along with other irruptive species such as Bohemian waxwings, White-winged and Red crossbills and Pine grosbeaks will benefit from the Canadian government's announcements in 2007 that it will protect 25.5 million acres of boreal forest, with further protections announced in 2008.

In the "Better Late Than Never" department, 14 participants gathered results for Wrangell's 2008 Christmas Bird Count. Seabird count numbers were drastically reduced because rough seas kept boats at the dock. **Mallards, Harlequin ducks, Barrow's Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers** were the most common ducks. Four **Trumpeters** swans appeared for count week though larger numbers had been around a few weeks earlier. A small number of **Horned and Western Grebes, Common Murres and Marbled Murrelets** made the day's list. **Black Turnstones** and a single **Surfbird** were reported, as were three **Black-legged Kittiwakes**. Songbirds included **Golden-crowned Kinglets, Song Sparrows,** and single **Fox and White-crowned Sparrows**. In all, 2221 individual birds from forty-six species were reported.

Answers to last month's quiz: Here are the current names of the birds in last month's newsletter by an old, obsolete name.

<i>Obsolete Name</i>	<i>Current Name</i>
Bartramian Tattler	Upland Sandpiper
black warrier	Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk
black hagdon	Sooty Shearwater
brownback	Short-billed Dowitcher
bullhead	Black-bellied Plover
cobhead	Common Goldeneye
hell-diver	Horned Grebe
horn-billed puffin	Rhinoceros Auklet
Kamchatka nightingale	Siberian Rubythroat
marlin	Marbled Godwit
purre	Dunlin
specklebelly	Greater White-fronted Goose
tell-tale	Greater Yellowlegs
violet-green Cormorant	Pelagic Cormorant
whale bird	Short-tailed Shearwater

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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 _____

Name _____
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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*.

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