

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

December 2009



Mark Schwan

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, December 10, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

We will set the stage for this year's Christmas Bird Count at our December meeting. Come and hear some of Juneau's veteran birders provide an overview of how the Juneau count is conducted, strategies on how to estimate numbers of birds, and tips on how to resolve some of our more difficult bird identification challenges. And, we should have a short presentation on winter owls in Juneau as well. Our presenters include Beth Peluso, Patty Rose, Paul Suchanek, and Mark Schwan. So, even if you don't plan to participate in the count, or don't know much about our local birds, here is a great opportunity to learn about our late fall and early winter birds in Juneau. Everyone is welcome. It will be a nice evening.

Juneau Audubon Public Meeting for January will be Thursday January 14, with Chiska Derr who will introduce the common and conspicuous lichens found around Southeast Alaska and the role they play in the ecosystem.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The longest running Citizen Science event in the world, Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) now has counts in all 50 states, every Canadian province, parts of Central and South America, Bermuda, the West Indies, and Pacific Islands. The designated count period is December 14 through January 5. Dates, locations and times for Southeast Alaska's CBCs are written below.

Given habitat and wild areas disappearing at an alarming rate, and global warming affecting some ranges, scientists will rely on CBC data to identify birds in most urgent need of conservation action. For this reason, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Birds Count plays a critical role in helping focus attention and conservation where it is most needed.

The 2009 Juneau Christmas Bird Count

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Saturday, December 19, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. As usual, volunteers should meet at either of the two McDonald's Restaurants at 8 a.m. on count day, with appropriate attire and binoculars. People wanting to count in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas should meet at the downtown restaurant; birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the valley restaurant. As usual, there will be a potluck after the count at the home of Mark Schwan and Debi Ballam to share in the events of the day and to conduct the tally of birds and species seen. Let's have a great turnout and a terrific count! For more information on this year's Count, you can call Mark Schwan, at 789-9841.

Known Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska

Chilkat	December	Dan Egolf*	766-2876
		Tim Shields	766-2354
Haines	December 20	Dan Egolf	766-2876
		Tim Shields	766-2354
Juneau	December 19	Mark Schwan Gus van Vliet	789-9841
Ketchikan	December 19	Andrew Piston	247-6553
Mitkof Island	December 19	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Sitka	January 3	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 19	Elaine Furbish	983-2049
		Dawn Adams	983-3302
Tenakee Springs	Date not set yet**	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Wrangell	December 19	Bonnie Demerjian	874-3665

*Forms, date, and information available at the Back Country Ski Shop

** Date dependent upon optimum tide schedule

SKAGWAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT INFORMATION By Elaine Furbish

The Skagway Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, 19 December 2009. We welcome any out-of-town folks to our count. You can get the latest information on our count through our group web site at "<http://groups.google.com/group/skagway-bird-club>". Contact me by phone (Elaine Furbish 907-983-2049) or by email through the web site, or simply come to the SweetTooth Cafe between 8 and 9 am on Saturday, 19 December.

Juneau November Birding Notes By Mark Schwan

Some exciting birds were found around Juneau during November, and as you read below, you will see that Nick Hajdukovich had another great month of birding. Nick's enthusiasm and expertise are terrific; he has already added so much to the local birding community. It is great to have him here! Here are a few highlights for the month.

A **Rough-legged Hawk** was spotted flying over Egan Drive near Lemon Creek on November 23 (NH). A **Red Knot** continued to be sporadically located at Eagle Beach (last know date November 12 (JL, EC). Seen previously by Paul Suchanek, this may represent the latest record for this species anywhere in Alaska. A lone **Sanderling** was also spotted on November 12 with the shorebird mix at Eagle Beach (JL, EC).



Doug Jones

An excited duck hunter along the Point Bridget Park trail on November 6 told Paul Suchanek of a **Snowy Owl** near the mouth of Cowee Creek, and the bird was relocated and photographed (PS). Certainly the most exciting bird find of the month was the **Long-eared Owl** found by Gus van Vliet on November 10, near the entrance to the golf course. Many birders observed and photographed the bird through the rest of the day, and during the search and stakeout, it became apparent that there was a second Long-eared present, although the second bird was not documented with certainty. There was only one previous record for this species from the Juneau roadside and very few prior records from the region.

An **Anna's Hummingbird** appeared briefly at Patty Rose's Douglas Island feeder on November 10. A female **Mountain Bluebird** was found near the Temsco facility on November 14 (NH), and a similar individual was found near the golf course on November 24 (PS). Jeff Sauer had a rather tame **Townsend's Solitaire** hanging near his house near Lena Point through the morning of November 21.

While checking his seed station near Switzer Creek on November 19, Nick Hajdukovich found a **Swamp Sparrow**. Then while checking his feed at Auke Bay on November 21, he spotted a **White-throated Sparrow**. This bird was seen and photographed by many birders the next day.

Contributors: Ed Clark, EC; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; James Levinson, JL; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek; Gus van 'Vliet. Compiled by Mark Schwan

Eagle feather collectors: Please bring all your feathers to any public meeting or call Brenda for pickup- cell phone-321-4739. Mark Schwan or Brenda Wright will collect them for shipping to Colorado! Thank you!

‘Tis the Season to Give ... To the Birds By: Nick Hajdukovich

I recently returned from a birding trip to Ketchikan and was astonished at the ease of birding. My friend Luke and I would drive around to specific locations where local birders had spread birdseed out. Large flocks of juncos and other sparrows were flocked up and we were able to sit in our warm cars and thoroughly enjoy the birds. It was raining sideways one of the days and we kept warm and were able to see many birds that continued to flock to the birdseed. After seeing this, I decided to try to the same thing in the Juneau area.

With hopes of attracting a rare species of bird or to make finding birds a little easier, I have spread birdseed out in several different locations around Juneau. At first I was only able to attract a couple dark-eyed juncos; however, there are currently at least 15 juncos and several other species of sparrows at each location. Here are some locations of the bird feeding stations:

Industrial Boulevard; located at the end of Industrial Blvd. off of the Glacier Highway; the bird seed is in the trees near the gate that blocks off the road to the Juneau Golf Course. Birds seen here have included: Dark-eyed Junco, Lincoln’s sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Golden-crowned Sparrow.

Police Station Area; located on Alaway Road. If you turn down Alaway Rd. you will see an abandoned lot on your right side about 75 yards down the road. The birdseed is located in the back right hand corner of the lot at the entrance to a trail that crosses Switzer Creek. Birds seen around this area have included: Dark-eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, “Red” Fox Sparrow, Varied Thrush, Rusty Blackbird, and **Swamp Sparrow (found on 19 November and has not been relocated since)**. The Swamp Sparrow was never seen feeding at the birdseed but was most likely loosely associated with the large flock of juncos that has congregated that the birdseed. **NOTE:** This area is all private property; however, I have talked with the owners before and they are fine with people being there if they stay at the entrance to the trail and stick to watching birds. There are also several presumed homeless people who are regularly seen near the bridge across Switzer Creek.

Auke Village; located off of the Glacier Highway on Pt. Louisa Road. There is a large totem pole on the right side of Pt. Louisa Road about 1 mile down the road. Just past the totem pole there is a large spruce tree on the left side or ocean side of the road and the birdseed is spread under the tree. Birds seen here have included: Dark-eyed Junco, “Red” Fox Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Varied Thrush, and **“Tan morph” White-throated Sparrow (first seen on 21 November)**.

There is only one thing that I ask of birders who check these bird-feeding stations regularly: send me an email (jbslugger@mac.com) if you find an unusual bird at any of the locations and I will be there as soon as possible!

WRANGELL DECEMBER REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

A large flock of **Western Grebes** usually can be found south of Wrangell each winter. So far, only one has been reported, along with a small number of **Red-necked Grebes**.

An amazing 105 **Trumpeter Swans** showed up for just a day at Pat's Lake south of Wrangell. Observers reported the lake covered with the birds, a far cry from the single swan that has occupied the lake most of the month. A small flock (8) of **Black Brant** was spotted on Zimovia Strait south of town. A single **American Coot** reported last month continued to feed on the golf course pond until freezeup. Mid-month, a flock of 12 **Sandhill Cranes** were spotted overhead ten miles south of town.



A duck hunter on the Stikine River flats reported seeing a single **Western Meadowlark** early in the month. **Short-eared Owls** are common on the flats but one was reported flying over Zimovia Straits south of Wrangell as it trailed a flock of Buffleheads. Also seen on the river flats this past month were a **Rough-legged Hawk** and a **Peregrine Falcon**. As the falcon dived on a flock of **Sandhill Cranes**, the observer reported hearing a whistling overhead and mist trailing off the bird's leading wing edge, "just like you see when a jet takes off and lands." Seven cranes had landed but the observer only saw six take off. An ambitious meal for a Peregrine!

Northwestern Crows with possible avian pox lesions noted back in September are continuing to turn up occasionally. Most recently, one at a feeder exhibited a large lesion under its eye and another on the wing. The primary feathers on one wing were also in deteriorated condition. An immature **White-throated Sparrow** and scattered **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were reported this month.

Wrangell's Christmas Bird Count will be December 19.

HAINES REPORT By Georgia Giacobbe

The annual Bald Eagle Festival featured a new interest in this yearly gathering of the birds of prey. A new class at Haines High School called Citizen Scientists presented their eagle count results to date. They have been undertaking the count for the Bald Eagle Foundation. The Eagle Foundation had collected data on and off for about 30 years but stopped a couple of years ago. The class has

been conducting counts since September 1 at various stops along Haines Highway from Hooligan Point near the airport to 30 mile. The first count resulted in 56 eagles combining all stops. Then it rose to 150 for a couple of weeks. The peak was October 13 at the Council Grounds with 1157 counted. First migration was near the Klehini end of the preserve, then it dropped. It peaked again at the Council Grounds, then dropped again—they believe it is weather. The counters in the Bald Eagle Preserve also showed a high ratio of adult to juvenile eagles. The class will finish counts in December and hopefully return in spring to count nests. The overall eagle population in the valley is 400 in the summer.

Pam Randles started quite a discussion on Eaglechat when she reported other fall birds in Haines. She reported several Mourning Doves who spent the late summer and fall in town and up the Highway as far as Klukwan. We also had some hummingbirds (Rufous and Anna's) arrive (possibly on a storm) in mid-September. All the others had left by the end of August. The last of these late comers left November 12 (on another storm?) Parasitic Jaegers have also been sighted on the Chilkat River.

For future bird counts, the Christmas Bird Count is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 20, 2009 in Haines.

BIRDING NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN-by Teri Goucher

This year's **Christmas Bird Count** will be held in **Ketchikan on the 19th of December**. Local birding enthusiasts hope to increase last years record breaking total number of 75 species observed on on count day and 79 species for the entire count week! **Contact Andy Piston at 225-5195 for more information.**

Autumn temperatures have been mild with only a couple snow flurries at sea level so far. Several interesting birds have visited our area. In late September an immature **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found south of town. There are only about ten accounts of this species in Alaska, although 3 individuals occurred here in October 2005! The latest ever **Warbling Vireo** was seen on September 25th. A colorful male **Black-headed Grosbeak** was in town in late October. A very rare visitor from Siberia, the first ever **Rustic Bunting** for our area was spotted north of town on 10-23. Amazingly another

Rustic Bunting found the same fantastic garden mid November and were feeding together. A couple small groups of **Aleutian Cackling Geese** were present the first week of November, possibly the first island record of this subspecies! Their smaller size and obvious white collar at the base of the neck is distinctive. There are various sparrows remaining including a very few **Savannah Sparrows** and up to 5 **White-throated Sparrows** were present around the area this month.

As Winter approaches good luck to birders who enjoy this year round challenging passion!

MARBLED MURRELET NEST By Mary Willson



On June 30, 2009, Kathy Hocker and I were hiking up along Eagle Creek on Douglas, looking for American Dippers, which often nest there. We were startled by a small, dark bird bursting at high speed from a cliff below our route. Peering over the edge, we looked down and saw a large, speckled egg resting on a mossy ledge. Only one thing it could be—a **Marbled Murrelet nest!**

On a subsequent visit to the site, we found the unattended egg and worried that it was abandoned. But two weeks later, we discovered a downy chick about six days old. With the photographic assistance of Bob Armstrong, digiscoping from a distance

of 25 m (just over 80 feet), we followed that chick's development right up to the day before it fledged. We even saw an adult deliver a fish in the middle of the day. What fun!

I later learned (from Gwen Baluss and Gus van Vliet) of two previous Marbled Murrelet nests in the Juneau area, one on Shelter Island and one in the Nugget valley. Both of these nests were on the ground also. Ground-nesting by marbled murrelets is apparently very uncommon south of Alaska.



TOAD REPORT By Mary Lou King

Mary Irvine took this photo of a big fat toad in early September in the Amalga Meadows. This is the first adult toad we have seen in years. There were a number of tiny toads in the Meadows this summer also, one of which is in the bottom center of this photo.

Public Market Success! By Brenda Wright

Thanks to all the hard work of the many volunteers, the Juneau Audubon public market booth was a success again this year. We don't have a final tally on the profits, but we sold all our jelly as usual. This year we had 28 dozen jars!

We can't be a success without all of Mary Lou King's contributions from picking the berries, to making the jelly, to pressing the wild flower cards, and weaving the cedar bark animal ornaments. Thanks Mary Lou (and your kind elves)!! Also I'd like to personally thank all the anonymous berry pickers plus Mark Schwan, Brien Daugherty, and myself. We sure appreciate our volunteers at the booth and this year that included Paul Suchanek, Monica O'Keefe, Mary Willson, Meg Cartwright, Bev Agler, Patty Rose, Deb Rudis, Beth Peluso, Judy Shuler, Pat Watt, Kathy Hays, Kevin O'Malley and friend, Mark Anderson, Nora Lauglin, MaryAnn Brant, Jeanne Josephson, Aurora Hauke, Jeff Sauer, and Theresa Svencara. A special thank you to Ellen Anderson our booth planner and Patty Rose our treasurer. After we go home, Patty still has lots of work to do. Hope every body had a good time because we couldn't do it without you.



Getting ready for the Public Market with Mary Lou and Brenda.

NOTES ON CONSERVATION ISSUES By Meg Cartwright

Hoonah Indian Association Proposal to Harvest Glaucous-winged Gull Eggs in Glacier Bay

After the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was signed in the 1918, the National Park Service prohibited the Huna Tlingits from collecting glaucous-winged gull eggs in Glacier Bay National Park. More recent legislation (2000) directed the National Park Service to revisit this issue and reconsider allowing Hoonah residents to harvest gull eggs in the Park again. A Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), released last year, outlined three alternatives. Two of the alternatives consider glaucous-winged gull egg harvest at two different levels and the third choice is the No Action Alternative. About 30 comments were submitted during the public comment period. Both Audubon Alaska and Juneau Audubon Society wrote comments in support of allowing members of the Hoonah Indian Association to harvest glaucous-winged gull eggs in Glacier Bay. Interestingly, the receding glaciers have opened up more habitat for the gulls who nest on bare rock. Although the population of glaucous-winged gulls appears to be healthy, both Audubon groups proposed additional research questions and safeguards.

This proposal continues to weave its way through the federal regulatory process. The final draft LEIS is currently in the Park's Regional Office in Anchorage. The Glacier Bay staff expects that the final draft will be completed sometime in late December or early January. The Superintendent of the Park will then make a final decision which becomes the Record of Decision. The NEPA process will be closed once the Record of Decision is in place. The final step is to write legislation and regulations. For more information please go to the Glacier Bay National Park home page, click on Management, then Park Planning, and then Current Issues.

Angoon Airport Proposal

As part of the airport Master Plan, the Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) wants to put a land-based airport near Angoon to enhance the emergency services for residents of this village. A land-based airport would increase the opportunity to fly patients to Juneau in bad weather and at night, especially in the winter. It most likely would also increase flight service to Angoon in general. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is assisting with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and has identified three possible locations for the runway that meet minimum requirements for flying. Two of the alternatives are in the wilderness area on the other side of Favorite Bay from Angoon (Alt. 3a and 4) and one alternative is a few miles from town on land owned by several entities (Alt. 12a).

Scoping comments suggest that residents of Angoon have mixed feelings about an addition of land-based airport and presented many views on the best location. The environmental community is supportive of increasing the emergency and safety services to residents of Angoon. Juneau Audubon Society will continue to monitor the progress of this project. We are looking for a solution that balances the needs of the community at the same time as minimizing the impacts to the Admiralty Island National Monument and Kootznoowoo Wilderness Area.

FAA consultants conducted research studies in 2009 focusing on wildlife inventories, road option impacts, subsistence use patterns and other impacts of an airport. In a recent meeting with FAA staff, consultants highlighted some of the bird activity they observed. A total of 4 goshawks were sighted during the survey—one close to each runway option and one near the road. Bald eagles were also seen at each airport site. Over 27 bird species were present, 25 species of breeding birds were counted including 7 bald eagle nest (2 were not active).

The consulting firm will present results of their field studies on Dec. 18th in Juneau. FAA will then look at all the alternatives including a No Action Alternative and may make a recommendation. DOT will also identify a preferred alternative and start the Title 11 ANILCA application process to address wilderness impacts before completing a Draft EIS for public review and comment. Once the Title 11 ANILCA application is submitted, the Forest Service has 60 days to review and ask for additional information if needed. Within a year, the Forest Service will make a recommendation to the President and Congress who will ultimately decide the outcome of putting an airport in a wilderness area if one of those alternative sites is selected. For more information, please go to <http://www.angoonairporteis.com/index.html>.

Channel Island State Marine Park

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is developing the Channel Island State Marine Park in the Juneau area. The Park was established in

2008 and includes 14 islands in Favorite Channel just north of town. The islands are Aaron, Battleship, Benjamin, Bird, Coghlan, Cohen, Gull, Indian, Lincoln, North, Portland, Ralston, Suedla, and a portion of Shelter. The main focus of the park will be recreation activities and protection of the resources values. Staff presented a draft plan in September and will publish the final one this winter. If you are interested in learning more, please go to <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/channelisland/mgtplanfinaldraft102709.pdf>

Auke Lake Management Plan

This plan was recently published by the Juneau Watershed Partnership (JWP). For more information on the plan please to http://www.juneauwatersheds.org/Auke%20Action%20Plan_DRAFT.pdf

Audubon Alaska Chapter Council Meeting

By Mark Anderson, board member JAS

On November 7, 2009, I attended the yearly meeting of Alaska Audubon Chapters in Anchorage representing the Juneau Audubon Society. The meeting was hosted by Audubon Alaska and representatives of the other local chapters were in attendance. I met Kenna Sue Trickey of the Anchorage Audubon chapter, River Gates of Arctic Audubon, Cindy Trussel of Kodiak Audubon and Milo Burcham of Prince William Sound Audubon.

Audubon Alaska is the chapter that's most closely involved with the National Audubon Society and major research, policy, and conservation issues in Alaska. Check out their web site at ak.audubon.org for information on murrelets research, GIS mapping, Important Bird Areas (IBA's) in AK and much more. We met with Audubon Alaska Staff: John Schoen, Lorelei Costa, Gretchen Hazen, Matt Kirchhoff, Eric Meyers and Taldi Walter.

We started the meeting with the Transition Plan for Audubon Alaska. They are now hiring an Executive Director and a Policy Director. Stan Senner has left to take a position with the Ocean Conservancy. Taldi Walter is also leaving to work with National Audubon in Washington D.C. So if you are an experienced conservation leader looking for a rewarding job in Alaska, check out their website. The Audubon collaborative funding grant is going to Kodiak this year. Last year we used it to update our website. There are also competitive grants available from Toyota (togethergreen.org) that can be used to fund larger innovative conservation projects. Then each representative gave a brief report on their activities for the year and explained a bit about their chapter. We discussed recruiting and membership events and building a strong board.

The afternoon was spent on global warming and its effect on Alaska. Taldi gave a presentation on A Warming Frontier and we had a great discussion on climate change and Audubon's role.

Alaska is "ground zero" for the impacts of global warming. The impact of global warming is disproportionately greater at higher latitudes. Alaskans are already seeing the impacts of a changing climate including increased forest fires, loss of Arctic sea ice, invasive species outbreaks, coastal erosion, melting permafrost, and the need for entire village relocations. In Southeast all you need to do is look up at the shrinking snowfields and glaciers to see the impacts.

Audubon’s report “ Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion” underscores the need for action to address global warming. Audubon’s analysis of four decades of scientific data revealed that the birds of North America are moving dramatically northward. The center of abundance for many species of birds as tabulated in the Christmas Bird Count is moving. Some examples common to Southeast are:

Red-breasted Merganser	317 miles	Black-bellied Plover	114 miles
Green-winged Teal	157 miles	Black Turnstone	178 miles
Pine Siskin	288 miles	Spruce Grouse	316 miles

So, please join Audubon in supporting global warming legislation in Congress to reduce emissions and provide for renewable clean energy. Audubon’s role in climate change may need to expand to provide for species adaptation to new habitat. What are we going to do for the Pikas in the Rockies that are working their way up to the top of the mountains and extinction? What about the declining Dusky Canada Goose with a summer range limited to the Copper River Delta? These are going to be difficult wildlife questions that we will need to figure out. Even now we are creating habitat for Kirtland’s Warblers that require extensive stands of young Jack Pine and clearing land back East for Bobwhites. If it takes about a million years for a new species to develop, I don’t think we want to wait too long before we act.

KEVIN O'MALLEY new Education Chair

I grew up exploring the Cleveland Metro parks and started my naturalist training there. A degree from the University of Toledo in Cultural Anthropology...I advocate human relationships to the natural world. My mission is to connect people with "place" by facilitating walks on this land.

As a Juneau Audubon Society board member in Education. I would like to fulfill a childhood passion of sharing nature with my community.

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:
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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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_____ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed _____ Please bill me
A51 7XCH

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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