

# 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

January 2010

## Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, January 14, 7:00 p.m.

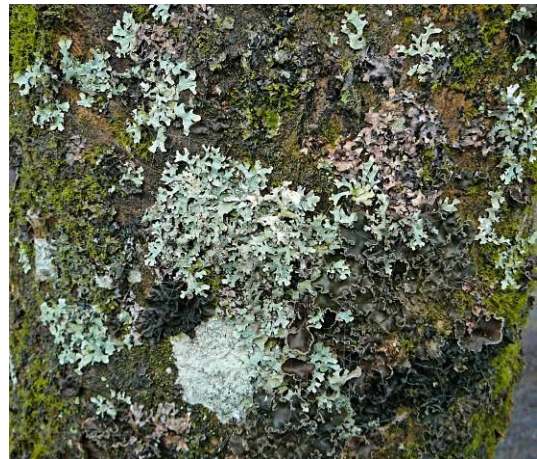
UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

### Common Lichens of Southeast Alaska

Chiska Derr will give a slide presentation on lichens, their habitat, and some of the important ecological roles they play. She'll show pictures of the more conspicuous lichens of Southeast Alaska, and describe differences between some of the genera. Chiska will also bring in lichen samples and reference books for people to browse.

Chiska's MS from Oregon State University focused on lichen community gradients and elemental tissue

content of muskeg lichens in Southeast, and lichen transplantation and growth rates. She spent several years looking for, identifying, writing about, and teaching seminars on old-growth associated lichens managed under the Northwest Forest Plan (the "Spotted Owl" plan). She is coauthor of *The Lichens and Allied Fungi of Southeastern Alaska* (1998).



### Saturday Wild -- Tracks and Signs 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**Jan. 9** Meet at West Glacier Trailhead (Beyond skater's cabin)

**Jan 23** Meet at Airport Dike Trail parking lot to walk on Mendenhall Wetlands

**Feb 13** Dredge Lakes Trails (meet at parking lot across the Back Loop Road from Mendenhall Elementary School)



Naturalist Kevin O'Malley and the Juneau Audubon Society are continuing Saturday Wild a Tracking & Signs Program. Our goal is to connect people with community by spending time exploring together in our backyard. We will study local mammal and bird populations and their relationships to their environment. **Families are welcome. Elders come share your stories. Be prepared to hike off trail. Dress for the weather. Children must be accompanied by an adult. No Dogs. Free to public.**

## Save the Date: 2010 Great Backyard Bird Count February 12 - 15, 2010

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is led by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and provides an opportunity for people of all ages to learn about birds and the environment we share. Chapters are encouraged to make the most of the thirteenth annual GBBC by including it in creative ways through field trips, birding ID courses, bird-watching competitions, photo contests and more. The GBBC website includes information and inspiration at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org), along with photos from last year's count, a game, and other materials, including a downloadable PowerPoint presentation, a voice narrated tutorial, and regional bird lists.

**FOR MORE INFO: CONTACT [MELISSA HOPKINS](mailto:melissa.hopkins@cornell.edu) AT (202) 861-2242 x3050.**

**U.S. Forest Service Winter Fireside lectures. The full schedule is posted soon on our web site at [www.mendenhallglacier.net](http://www.mendenhallglacier.net).**

### Juneau's Christmas Bird Count Overview By Mark Schwan

Thirty-six birders participated in this year's count, and birders were spread pretty thin in order to cover all areas. Given the cold weather leading up to the count, we had a respectable 72 species of birds during the day and counted more than 10,000 birds (see table for specifics). Several common species were relatively scarce, such as Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, and Steller's Jay. We had a new high count for one species, Ring-necked Duck.



Two new species were added to our cumulative count-day list, Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk and Willow Ptarmigan, and another species, the Eurasian Collared-Dove, was new, but found only during the count week. This species is another story all unto itself this year. Other unusual species present included Gyrfalcon, American Kestrel, Eurasian Wigeon (cw), Long-billed Dowitcher (cw), Northern Flicker, American Pipit (cw), and Lincoln's Sparrow (cw). Moreover, a male Barrow's X Common Goldeneye hybrid was located on count day. This bird (presumed to be the same)

was first seen by Paul Suchanek in February 2007 and has been seen each winter since.

Juneau birders found an additional eleven species during the official count week but which were not seen on our count day. The inclusion of these species with count day information certainly helps round out the description of our local avian diversity in early winter. These species are identified in the table with a "cw" in the count column. Thanks to all the volunteers for donating their day to the count effort and to those who birded during the count week. Thanks to Paul Suchanek for organizing the in-town groups, and to Gus van Vliet for tracking count-week birds and overseeing the evening tally (with help from Molly McCafferty). Finally, thanks to everyone for contributing all the absolutely tremendous food for the potluck.

**Juneau CBC Results, 12/19/2009**

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>
Canada Goose	649
Gadwall	30
Eurasian Wigeon	cw
American Wigeon	311
Mallard	2,413
Northern Pintail	cw
Green-winged Teal	30
Ring-necked Duck	<b>10</b>
Greater Scaup	76
Unidentified Scaup	55
Harlequin Duck	116
Surf Scoter	209
White-winged Scoter	36
Black Scoter	1
Unidentified Scoters	1
Long-tailed Duck	9
Bufflehead	121
Common Goldeneye	227
Barrow's Goldeneye	311
<b>Common X Barrow's Hybrid</b>	1
Unidentified Goldeneyes	9
Hooded Merganser	3
Common Merganser	204
Red-breasted Merganser	145
Unidentified Mergansers	9
<b>Willow Ptarmigan</b>	1
Red-throated Loon	1
Pacific Loon	4
Common Loon	8
Yellow-billed Loon	1
Horned Grebe	33
Red-necked Grebe	26
Pelagic Cormorant	34
Great Blue Heron	5
Bald Eagle	156
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3
Northern Goshawk	2
<b>Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk</b>	1
American Kestrel	1
Gyr Falcon	1
Killdeer	cw
Black Turnstone	77
Dunlin	150
Unidentified Sandpipers	17
Long-billed Dowitcher	cw
Wilson's Snipe	cw
Mew Gull	65
Glaucous-winged Gull	1,416

Gl.-winged x Herring Gull hyb.	3
Glaucous Gull	2
Unidentified Gulls	521
Common Murre	14
Pigeon Guillemot	3
Marbled Murrelet	138
<b>Eurasian Collared Dove</b>	cw
Rock Pigeon	85
Great Horned Owl	1
Northern Pygmy-owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	4
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	cw
Northern Flicker	1
Unidentified Woodpeckers	1
Northern Shrike	1
Steller's Jay	20
Black-billed Magpie	29
Northwestern Crow	749
Common Raven	561
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	100
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4
Brown Creeper	4
Winter Wren	6
American Dipper	11
Golden-crowned Kinglet	13
Unidentified Kinglets	15
American Robin	6
Varied Thrush	6
European Starling	cw
American Pipit	cw
Bohemian Waxwing	1
American Tree Sparrow	7
Fox Sparrow	2
Song Sparrow	14
Lincoln's Sparrow	cw
White-crowned Sparrow	1
Golden-crowned Sparrow	2
Unidentified Sparrows	1
Dark-eyed Junco	328
Snow Bunting	70
Rusty Blackbird	cw
Pine Grosbeak	20
White-winged Crossbill	37
Common Redpoll	93
Pine Siskin	304
<b>COUNT DAY SPECIES</b>	72
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	10,156
<b>ADDITIONAL CW SPECIES</b>	11

## **KETCHIKAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS-by Teri Goucher**

Saturday December 19th was a beautiful sunny day without a breeze. It reminded me of the legend about the kingfisher's nest and the halcyon days near the solstice!

Nearly 30 participants scouted our count circle by taking boats around area waterways, to hikers in snow packed alpine, to those who searched neighborhoods, and folks who just watched feeders. Everyone's efforts paid off as Ketchikan again shattered the record of the most species in the state for the second year in a row!

A total of **82 species** were tallied on count day and another was added when a **Red-winged Blackbird** made an appearance only during count week...for a grand total of 83 species for our area!

A male **Rock Ptarmigan** was photographed by Alan Murray high a top 3000 foot Deer Mountain which was our first record of that species of ptarmigan for the count!

A **Rusty Blackbird** also made it for the first time on Ketchikan's CBC list!

Even a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was heard south of town in the early morning hours.

We had an all time high number of **Varied Thrushes**, and again our Sparrow numbers were strong this year. High numbers of **Song Sparrow** and **Fox Sparrow** were reported along with sightings of **American Tree Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow,**

**Golden-crowned, White-crowned Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow,** a record 4 **White-Throated Sparrows,** and even **House Sparrow** made the list!

A single **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **Hermit Thrush** were tallied as were 4 **Purple Finches.**

Hawk sightings were up as two **Red-tailed Hawks** and two **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were found!

Nearly frozen Ward Lake provided our tally with a family of **Trumpeter Swans, Hooded Merganser,** and **Ringed-necked Duck** amongst other species.

Sea bird numbers were low again this year, especially loons but a **Brandt's Cormorant** was seen which is the 2nd time this species made it to the state CBC list!

No Bonaparte's Gulls were seen this year.

Just barely out of our count circle, by a mere half mile, north of town, a few other interesting species are around still, such as **Rustic Bunting, Eurasian Collared-Dove** and a **Anna's Hummingbird** have lingered through the winter.

Thanks to Andy Piston for all his hard work compiling Ketchikan's CBC data once again! Andy and Steve Heintz are greatly appreciated for keeping local birders updated with bird sightings and info, which I can then pass on to Raven readers.

Good job to the dedicated and lucky birders in Ketchikan who again managed to set new records for the 110th Christmas Bird Count!

Happy New Year to all as we finish up the first decade of the new millennium already!! Remember to keep on enjoying the challenges and rewards of birding in our beautiful and amazing state of Alaska!

## **Birding at Forty Below In Fairbanks** By Nick Hajdukovich

On December 19, 2009, I garbed up in warm clothing and heading out at the break of dawn at 9:30AM. I was doing the Christmas Bird Count in Fairbanks and my count area was located in the Chena Ridge region near the Tanana River. The air was clean and crisp and the skies were clear. I drove to one end of my count area and saw my first of many redpolls. I continued up the road and tallied many common ravens that were cruising the hillside. I drove down every single side road located in my area and stopped frequently to stick my head out of the window. I stepped out of the car only five times in the four hours that I counted, and I was very hesitant to leave my warm car and heated seats.

Every time I stopped, I would roll the window down and turn the car off to listen for birds. The cold air would roll down through the window and I could feel my legs get cold within minutes of rolling down the window. Seldom did it actually pay off, but I would occasionally hear either a **Boreal** or **Black-capped Chickadee** that could be attracted to my car by “pishing.” I continued to drive around for the rest of the day, and I tallied hundreds of **redpolls**, a **Hairy** and **Downy Woodpecker**, **Pine Grosbeaks**, **Gray Jays**, **Black-capped** and **Boreal Chickadees**, **Common Ravens**, and a **Northern Shrike**. The thermometer on my car would not go below 22 below but I was told that there was a low of 38 below for the day. It was a cold, and somewhat rewarding day of birding in one of the farthest north Christmas Bird Counts.

## **Book Review By Jeff Sauer, Vice President Juneau Audubon**

### ***RETURN TO WILD AMERICA, A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Sole* author: Scott Weidensaul**

A couple of years ago I read Scott Weidensaul's *Living on the Wind, Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, and thought it was superb. Scott is quickly becoming regarded as one of the best natural history writers in the US, and indeed, *Living on the Wind* was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize. I obtained *Return to Wild America* at the Juneau library to read on the plane while traveling for the holidays. It too is a very fine book. Both books take the reader to many natural locations in the US (and some in Mexico) and in particular to the hot bird spots in Florida, Texas, Arizona, and Alaska. The premise of *Wild America* is to retrace Roger Tory Peterson's 1953 driving tour of the US in search of birds and wildness. Some fifty years later Scott does it again and compares what Peterson encountered then with what is there now. In many cases it is a sad story, as we all know. Huge human population increases, with such population pressure leading to tremendous loss of habitat. Still there is a lot positive in the book, what with the people and efforts to save what is left. And, some of the places are still pretty much the same, or even improved. Scott's stories of these places, the birds and natural history, the conservation efforts, and just the location of these places, some well known and some not, will cause many of us to use these books as references as we travel to these great places in *Wild America*.



## Airport Dike Trail on New Years Day By Mary Lou King

Laurie Craig sent an email describing the fun and excitement of watching a 19.9 foot high tide coming into the Mendenhall River and the Wetlands. The tide was high at 1:30 p.m. and the river was flooded all the way to the bottom of the Trail, with this whirl hole where the water was being sucked into the float pond.



Some of the folks and dogs we saw walking along the trail at noon.



The two eagles sitting in the tree above the trail didn't seem to mind the traffic below. We did see about 200 Canada Geese way out in the flood water on the flats.

This photo shows the construction work being done at the airport. The work includes cutting the trees by the parking lot and rerouting Duck Creek.



## Alaska eBird

Alaska eBird is a great way to record your observations, manage your life list, and help contribute to avian monitoring and conservation in Alaska.

Visit the Alaska eBird website, which includes photos, interesting birding news and features, as well as observation records:

<http://ebird.org/content/ak/>

**SAVE A TREE! Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. Send your request and email to :  
**Membership:**, [membership@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org)**

**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!

\*\* If you receive a paper copy this month and prefer electronic, please resend your e-mail address to [membership@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org). The addresses went away when a hard drive died and the latest backup was in November.

Happy New Year and remember to back up your hard drive frequently! Brenda

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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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\_\_\_\_\_ My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Please bill me  
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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 \_\_\_\_\_.**

