

# 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 2010

## Juneau Audubon Public Meeting

Thursday, April 8, 7:00 p.m.

UAS Egan Bldg, Glacier View Room 221/222

### **Birds and Bears – A season at the Mendenhall Glacier** By Doug Jones

Doug Jones is a retired fisheries biologist who has worked as a ranger/naturalist at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitors Center for the past three seasons. He is also an avid photographer and has taken thousands of photos of the Mendenhall Glacier area birds, bears and other wildlife during those years. This program will feature stories of some of his experiences including photos of the rich diversity found in the Mendenhall Glacier area.



### **CELEBRATION OF SWANS – WHITEHORSE, CANADA**

**April 17<sup>th</sup> to April 25<sup>th</sup> – Yukon's premiere bird festival with its great swan viewing areas to welcome spring to the north. Enjoy swan viewing walks with interpreters, workshops and presentations about swans and more.** This is a really fun time for Southeast people to visit Whitehorse.

### **TRACKS AND SIGNS SATURDAY WILD** By Kevin O'Malley

**West Glacier Trail Tracks & Signs** Saturday Wild will meet at the parking lot past Skater's Cabin on **April 10<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Naturalist Kevin O'Malley will be looking at the fresh buds and flowers on plants, shrubs and trees and doing basic identification of lichens as well as observing any wildlife activity.

**False Outer Point Tracks & Signs** Saturday Wild will be meet at the parking lot along the shoreline and trail head at 11.5 North Douglas Highway on **April 24<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00 a.m. to noon. Kevin O'Malley will explore the forest, shoreline and beach of Northwest Douglas Island. This walk is for folks not planning to go on the Berners Bay Cruise.

## Audubon spring bird walks 2010

Date	Location	Leader(s)	Time
April 11 (1)	Airport Dike trail	Mark Schwan	8am to 10am
April 17	Fish Creek	Paul Suchanek ,Merrill Jensen	8am to 10am
	Earth Day at the Glacier	Kevin O'Malley	Noon to 2:30pm
April 24	Berners Bay Cruise; no walk	Various birders onboard	8:30am – 4 hours
May 1	Berners Bay Cruises	Various birders onboard	8:30am and
	Beginners' bird walk at Auke Recreation Area	Kevin O'Malley	1:30pm 10am to noon
May 8	Mouth of Mendenhall River	Paul Suchanek	8am to 11am
May 15	Mendenhall Wetlands	Kevin O'Malley	8am to 10am
May 22	TBD; in May newsletter	Gwen Baluss	8am to 10am
May 29	Pioneer Marsh Beginning Birding	Laurie Lamm, Kevin O'Malley	10am to noon
June 5	Moose Lake	Deanna MacPhail	8am to 10am

(1) Note that is walk is on Sunday due to the trail closure on April 10.

**April 11, Sunday, Airport Dike Trail, 8am.** Mark Schwan will lead a two-hour walk along the dike trail looking for early migrants. This is a good time to view waterfowl and search for our early migrant shorebirds and songbirds, such as yellowlegs, kinglets, and robins. Please note this walk is on a Sunday, as the trail will be closed through the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month due to the construction of the west-end runway safety area. Through the closure period, access has still been allowed on Sundays, so even if the closure is extended further, a Sunday walk should still be possible. Meet at the parking area near the end of Radcliffe Road.

**April 17, Saturday, Fish Creek on north Douglas Is., 8am.** Paul Suchanek and Merrill Jensen will lead this walk along lower Fish Creek out to the channel. Again, this is a good time for waterfowl but the mix of habitats always makes this a productive area to bird. It is a good place for sapsuckers and early swallows and warblers might be possible, depending on how spring is progressing.

**This is also Earth Day.** Kevin O'Malley will provide a table of Audubon materials at the Glacier Visitor Center as part of the activities, and Kevin will also lead two "Tracks and Signs" nature walks in the adjacent area. Walks will be from noon to 1pm, and from 2:30 to 3:30pm.

**April 24, Berners Bay Cruise, 8:30am to 12:30pm,** departing from Statter Harbor in Auke Bay. No scheduled birdwalk for this day.

**May 1, Berners Bay Cruises, departing 8:30am and 1:30pm,** departing from Statter Harbor in Auke Bay. There will also be a **Beginners Birdwalk at Auke Recreation Area, from 10am to noon.** This outing will be structured for people with little or no birding skill but who have an interest in learning basics in bird identification and natural history of birds. This trip will be led by our education specialist and naturalist Kevin O'Malley. People should meet on Point Louisa Road above the most westerly covered pavilion.

**May 8, Mouth of the Mendenhall River, 8am to 10am or ?** Paul Suchanek will take people out on the wetland flats to the water's edge at the mouth of the Mendenhall. This should be a perfect time to catch the shorebird migration in full swing. There will be a relatively small high tide at about 10am, so there will not be any marathon walk to the channel and the water will hopefully push birds our way. There should be several spotting scopes available for close up views. Proper footwear is essential. We say this walk is scheduled for two hours, but if the birds are near peak abundance, many stay longer to enjoy the spectacle. Meet at the parking area near the end of Radcliffe Road.

**May 15, Mendenhall Wetlands again, 8am to 10am.** Kevin O'Malley will lead this walk along the dike trail, and perhaps out into the flats as well. Novice and veteran birders should enjoy this outing as it is a great time to be out on the wetlands. Wear appropriate footwear and meet at the end of Radcliffe Road.

**May 22, time and location yet to be determined.** Gwen Baluss will lead this walk; we will put the exact place and time in the May newsletter and post in on the chapter website.

**May 29, Pioneers' Marsh, 10am to noon.** Kevin O'Malley and Laurie Lamm will lead this outing and is aimed for young birders and families with an interest in learning about birds but who have little or no prior experience. The marsh is a perfect place to hold such an event as the access is very easy, requires no hiking to get to the site, and generally has a very nice mix of birds in easy view. Kevin and Laurie will provide binoculars and a scope will also be available. This viewing area is directly behind the Pioneers' Home and parking is limited, so please meet at the Western Auto parking lot and then the group can car pool over to the marsh.

**June 5, Moose Lake, 8am to 10am.** Deanna MacPhail will lead this walk into one of our most interesting birding areas in Juneau. The dense deciduous vegetation and abundant water provides habitat for species hard to find elsewhere in our local rainforest. Target birds for this outing include Warbling Vireo, American Redstart, and Northern Waterthrush, but the area sometimes offers up other surprises, such as Tennessee Warbler and Cassin's Vireo. This is a wonderful place to finish off our spring bird walks. Meet at the parking area, next to the Mendenhall River bridge on the Back Loop Road.

## Juneau Birding Notes for March, 2010



The male **Canvasback** found the previous month continued to be seen near the gazebo pond along the airport dike through mid-month (3/14-3/21, GV). A nice surprise and exciting find was an immature male **King Eider** gleaned from a large flock of scoters near Outer Point on 3/8 (PS). This bird was seen by many observers through 3/19. Paul Suchanek continued to track the presence of the **hybrid Barrow's Goldeneye X Hooded Merganser**, which he found at least through 3/18 in vicinity of Sandy Beach and Douglas Harbor. Pure-strain **Hooded Mergansers** were rather persistent all month at Twin Lakes and Pioneer Marsh with up to 5 birds seen by various observers through 3/22.

**Sharp-shinned Hawks** were seen throughout the month, with five known reports. Three of the five accounts were of birds staging near active feeders. There was one **Merlin** report, a bird found at Brotherhood Park on 3/20 (GV). The **American Coot** located near the Macaulay Hatchery in Gastineau Channel last month, was again seen on 3/3 and 3/18 (PS, GV). The only shorebird of note

was the single **Killdeer** seen along lower Lemon Creek on 3/12 (GV). A **Bonaparte's Gull** was reported from south Douglas Island on 3/20 (JR, BUK). Early for a typical spring migrant, this bird more likely over-wintered in our area.

The **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continued to make their presence known, with three birds seen on 3/7 (NH) and two seen later in the month on 3/21 (GV). The birds continue to be seen in the same area, i.e. near the intersection of Berners and Radcliffe or on nearby streets. Certainly, a very unexpected visitor was the male **Anna's Hummingbird** at a Douglas Island residence (PR). This bird, first seen on 3/21 and again on 3/26, was quite exceptional, as reports of this species in Juneau almost always come in late fall and early winter. Passerine observations of note were few, but include one **Red-breasted Nuthatch** on 3/20 in the Mendenhall Valley near the USFS bunkhouse (JR, BUK), a lone **American Tree Sparrow** near the golf course on 3/21 (PS), and **40 Snow Buntings** along the airport dike trail on 3/14 (GV).



Contributors: Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Julie Reynolds, JR; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek, PS; Brian Uher-Koch, BUK; Gus van Vliet, GV. Compiled by Mark Schwan

### **Haines Bird Report** By Georgia Giacobbe

Pam Randles of the Takshanuk Watershed Council is asking for Haines residents to be citizen scientists to collect observations of animal populations. This is to collect information and forward to organizations like the Audubon Society about changes in populations such as declines or new territories, or to just understand the regular population patterns. Specifically, gathering arrival and departure dates helps scientists who look at this data to understand seasonal changes in temperature and weather patterns. She has posted specific watch lists which include the following: Rufous Hummingbird, Surf Scoter rafts less than 500, Rusty Blackbirds, Pileated Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Loon, Mountain Bluebird, Mourning Dove, Western Tanager, and Eurasian Collared Dove. Also as we look forward to (hope for!!) spring, the first appearance, song, and waves of American Robins are of interest.

Up the road at Mosquito Lake, a recent conversation with Mario Benassi yielded a study of his that he has been pursuing. For three consecutive years he has been tracking five pairs of Pygmy Owls in the vicinity. However, this year he has heard no mating calls and fears they have disappeared. He hasn't heard the Saw-wet Owl call yet either, and has concerns that the food population for these owls has been decimated in that area. The sightings he has reported, however, are typical numbers of immature **Goshawks** migrating through in February. Just after the Christmas bird count he spotted a pair of **Wood Ducks** in the Chilkat River. He has observed a few **Pygmy Owls** near the Haines Airport. Two weeks ago the first **Red-breasted Sapsucker** appeared and an **American Robin** on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March.

### **Migration Season is Here!**

This is a really exciting time of year as we all look forward to the arrival of the flocks of birds migrating through our area. It is an excellent time to explore the Mendenhall Wetlands and the Eagle River Flats and enjoy guided walks with the Juneau Audubon Society. One of the best places to hear and see a lot of the migrants in Juneau is the Mendenhall Wetlands and the Airport dike trail. The dike

trail is a great way to see many of the birds visiting Juneau because it is conveniently close, flat and offers different habitats that increases the number of species you might see.

**Of course the dike trail is also possibly the most popular place in Juneau to bring your dog for a great chance of exercise.** Who doesn't like to see a healthy animal obviously having a wonderful time chasing a Frisbee or ball? I know I love to see that expression of such joy that a dog shows with its whole body.

**Unfortunately,** some dogs will also love to chase and harass birds in the wetlands. Many of these migrants are stopping to refuel after traveling 100's and in some cases over 1000 miles to arrive in our neighborhood. Many are going to travel at least that far again before they reach their nesting area. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone who appreciates the dike trail, dogs, and birds to show a little kindness and courtesy to these migrating birds. **Please make sure your animals do not harass the birds. Let the birds enjoy this opportunity to rest and feed enabling them to successfully complete their journey to the north.**

E-Raven?

The chapter's major expense is printing and mailing the newsletter. Would you like to help save paper and chapter money and reduce the volume of monthly mail? Send an e-mail to [membership@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org) if you'd like to receive The Raven with great color photos. Save A Tree!

## **Juneau Audubon Board Needs You! Get Engaged!**

It is well known that personal involvement increases one's enjoyment of a particular happening or event. Consider this an invitation to become more involved in your Audubon Chapter. We're a small group and we depend upon your ideas and efforts to keep the group vital.

We're currently seeking folks interested in contributing their time and talents, especially with regard to Programs and Field Trips. You needn't make a life-long commitment, or even an annual promise. But perhaps you might offer to lead a hike, work at the Audubon booth during Public Market, or make a presentation at one of the monthly meetings. Your ideas and suggestions will be rewarded by appreciation and gratitude.

We have enjoyed some great presentations this past year at our meetings. And if you stop to think about it, they were generally given by members of the community who had been out doing something which interested them, and by no small coincidence interested us as well. The subject matter need not be exotic or distant, and you certainly aren't required to be an expert in the field. A closer look at some of our local specialties is just as riveting as an escape to the tropics.

Come on and volunteer—It'll be a blast!

## **Yo! Southeast! Got Any Birds?**

All of you folks outside of Juneau: We want to hear from You! Let us know if you have birds, when the migrants arrive, special visits by rare birds or any other thing happening in your neighborhood.

It's a real treat to get to hear what is going on in other places in SE Alaska. We also would love to hear your concerns or suggestions on how to improve or change our newsletter or how we might help publicize your projects.

Come on Kake, Kasaan, Wrangell, Craig, Ketchikan, Yakutat, Pelican, Sitka, Petersburg, Skagway and any other points in between- let us hear from You!

### **Play and Nature** By Kevin O'Malley

Reminisce to when you were playing with other childhood friends looking for turtles, fishing or just exploring in an open field. How creative did you get with your neighborhood group of kids in nature? What kinds of information were you taking in (observation skills) while you all sat quietly under a tree or building a fort in nearby woodland? If you are a biologist, botanist, laborer, hunter, fisherman or just love to take walks in nature you probably understand what I am talking about.

The connection and relationship with the outdoors has shaped who we are today. On a hike with 2<sup>nd</sup> graders from Glacier Valley Elementary School I discovered something extremely interesting as I struggled to get the kids to quiet their minds of all the chatter from the day. Youngsters' lives are filled with the stresses from our fast paced lives and the social pressures in school. I stumbled upon an opportunity that astonished the whole group. As we slowed down and actually stopped moving, our feet flexible but motionless, a chestnut-backed chickadee came within six feet (I measured it) from a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade girl and hung upside-down on a western hemlock branch about two feet above the kids' heads. The chestnut backed bird with a black chin patch and head was in a calm unthreatened behavior known as "baseline" and so were the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. There is no test score in the world that will take away the next moment...the child who was having the hardest time quieting down on their particular hike said to the group in a quiet voice "this is so amazing" and for the next 10 minutes we crept gently through the woods. The second graders were now part of nature.

I must be careful not to over analyze the social and natural relationships here. Richard Nelson writes in *The Island Within* "Intriguing as they are, the questions, theories, studies, analysis, and explanations can obscure as much as they reveal, like scores of tails pinned all over the donkey until its shape and wholeness disappear." The second graders story continues... to support nature-based education programs in the community of Juneau and Southeast Alaska. Living in such a pristine place we are not immune to nature deficit disorder, a term coined by Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods." These kids will become important contributors to this community by their ability to pay attention/observe and use choice words and common sense when that present moment comes.

Nature is not a test but, as we track animals in our local environment we come up with theories that build cases for the mysteries that we wonder upon. It hones our senses to pay attention and observe plants, animals and landforms. Engaging these senses gives young people the capability to change their perspective: a different point of view gives them the aptitude to come up with new creative ideas about a given nature-based discovery. In his book, Louv refers to the 8<sup>th</sup> intelligence, nature smart, introduced by Howard Gardner Professor of Education at Harvard University. When explaining Ben Franklin's experiment with a kite powered by wind, pulling the young Ben across the pond, he states "He applied a scientist's mind to the lessons of the senses, and used his direct experience with nature to solve a problem."



The tree we sat quietly under and the forts we build in our local woodland may be gone but our childhood friends' names and the smell of the place remain in us. Hopefully the next generation children will have a similar relationship with the forest and kid communities as we did when we were their age. Can we as parents and community members lead the way?

### **SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS** By Brenda Wright

With the help of Pauline Strong we previewed 19 science fair projects and narrowed our field of judging down to 8 for interviews. There were many excellent projects as usual.

**The winners of \$50:** Were Colin Zheng for "The effects of sea water pH on kelp egg development" and Gelsey Carmichael for "Archaea in Sphagnum and *Pleurozium schreberi* dominated areas of the Southeast Alaskan muskeg ecosystem

**Winners of Berners Bay tickets:** Brian Kenyon "How pH level affects the growth and mortality of green sea urchins & Asia Moreno-Goodwin & Marlina Sloss "How does temperature increases affect the growth, and food consumption of the six-armed sea star"

One theme was very dominant this year- effect of climate change on our environment. Thanks so much to Pauline for volunteering her time to help judge.

**What is NestWatch?** NestWatch is a nest-monitoring project developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in collaboration with the **Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center**, and funded by the **National Science Foundation**. **Who can participate?**

We invite people of all ages who are interested in the natural world to help monitor the success of nesting birds and better understand the threats they face. Your valuable nest observations will be permanently stored as legacy data along with hundreds of thousands of other nesting records. When combined, these data will provide a wealth of information about breeding birds and the factors that influence their success across different landscapes. Go to <http://www.nestwatch.org> for more information and to register.

#### **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, 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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\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_.**

