

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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NOW IS THE TIME TO GET INVOLVED!!

JAS is facing a chronic shortage of officers and board committee chairs. We continue to function with vacancies. This makes it difficult for the organization to carry on with the activities our communities expect: bird walks, other natural history walks, boat trips, educational programs, advocacy for conservation of local bird habitat and the environment in general.

The level of commitment to serve your organization need not be arduous. Board meetings are monthly, except in the summers, and usually take a few hours. The atmosphere is easy-going. Other duties depend on the position, and the time you have to put in. If you would like to know more, including a more in-depth description of what is expected from the various positions, please contact any of the board members. And please do it soon! Elections are Oct. 14 and the fall and winter activities will soon begin.

JUNEAU AUDUBON SOCIETY WILL HOLD THE FIRST FALL SEASON GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14

Election! Juneau Audubon Society will elect officers in conjunction with the public meeting in October. Our four officers serve a term of one year; so all officers need to be elected each year.



Lincoln Sparrow by Mark Schwan

Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting are accepted for all positions. At this writing, the candidates for 2010-2011 are Mark Schwan for president, Jeff Sauer for vice-president, Patty Rose for treasurer, and we do not have a candidate for secretary. Please contact any of the officers or board members if you would like to be on the ballot as a candidate for any of the officer positions. We really do need to have someone willing to serve as secretary, as it is an important position. Anyone wanting to know more about this position please call Mark Schwan at 789-9841. Also, if anyone is interested in

joining our board in one of our non-officer positions, we need help, as we currently have vacant committee chairs for conservation and programs. The conservation chair position is especially crucial and needs someone to help the chapter focus and respond to important environmental issues as they arise.

Program in October: There will be another announcement in the October issue of the Raven prior to our business and public meeting in October, but we plan to do our a, group slide show for the public program. This is where we ask everyone to bring about 10 images to share with the group. These can center on something special you did during this past summer, or something you did some time ago, or share whatever you might think the audience would find interesting or fun. There is no theme, just bring some images to share with the group.

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP DAY 2010 **Saturday, September 25th 9:00 to 12:00 pm**

International Coastal Clean-Up Day is on September 25th and thousands of volunteers all over the world will be collecting garbage off beaches and shorelines that Saturday.

Volunteer your office or organization or individuals to help clean-up garbage and debris from 16 public beach areas in Juneau and Douglas. Call 586-6853 to volunteer your office, organization or group for a clean-up area or go to Sandy Beach or at Auke Recreation Area on event day. All volunteers are welcome to join in for a free BBQ at noon that Saturday at the Main Picnic Shelter at Auke Rec.

This event is sponsored by the JWP, Alaska Brewing Company, Turning the Tides, the Marine Conservation Alliance, the Coastal CODE Foundation, and the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.

SECOND CROSSING TO BE ON JUNEAU'S OCTOBER BALLOT

The Juneau Assembly recently passed ordinance 2010-27 which puts a funding initiative and proposed route for construction of a second crossing from the Juneau mainland over to Douglas Island on the October ballot. Specifically, the initiative will ask for an extension of a 1 percent sales tax for ten years, beginning in 2013, to pay for a causeway and bridge from Sunny Point to Hendrickson Point. This ordinance was developed and promoted by a group of people calling themselves the S.A.F.E Committee, the acronym standing for the words safe, affordable, future, and efficient. After much public testimony at the August 23 meeting, the assembly quickly approved the ordinance 7 to 2, with only Bob Doll and Mayor Bruce Botelho voting in opposition.

The Juneau Audubon board believes the ballot initiative to fund the construction of a causeway through the heart of the Mendenhall Wetlands is a terrible idea. We believe the environmental costs are too great to allow this project to go forward as currently proposed. The resultant fill, changes in tidal flow and function, and increased access all put the wetlands resources at risk.

The Mendenhall Wetlands support a variety of fish and wildlife resources that either directly, or indirectly, benefits local residents and visitors alike. Fifteen salmon streams drain into the Mendenhall Wetlands and these wetlands have been deemed critical habitat for salmonid fishes. Capelin and sand lance use the waters of the wetlands. The salmon that spawn in Montana Creek, Steep Creek, Fish Creek, just to name several streams, all spend crucial portions of their early lives in the wetlands. Many thousands of migratory birds use the wetlands each year for resting and refueling, and the area supports many species year round. The area has been designated an Important Bird Area, or IBA, which means it is regionally, nationally, and even globally significant for supporting large numbers of a variety of bird species. The resources that draw so many people to our home, are in part, produced or supported by the environmental capabilities of a functioning, intact, Mendenhall Wetlands system.

Moreover, the ballot initiative says the project will cost approximately 70 million dollars, but this is based on a design that very likely won't be permitted given the inherent environmental risks. It would have made more sense to ask the people of Juneau to fund the examination of all the crossing options and to determine what can be permitted, and proceed from there. Then, the voting public would have a more realistic idea of what is buildable and what the dollar costs will be.

THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL DONATION

Karen Olson of Juneau donated a spotting scope, tripod, and binoculars to Juneau Audubon this summer. These items belonged to her late husband, Craig Olson, and she wanted our chapter to have them. We were thrilled and will use these on our various field trips and other educational activities. Thank you very much Karen!!

DAVID YARNOLD NEW NATIONAL AUDUBON'S PRESIDENT

I am pleased to announce that our search committee has identified and our Board of Directors has appointed a highly experienced, accomplished and committed conservation leader to serve as Audubon's new President and CEO.



Merlin by Mark Schwan

David Yarnold is currently the Executive Director of the Environmental Defense Fund and President of its Environmental Defense Action Fund. Prior to that, he was a Pulitzer Prize-winning editor at the San Jose Mercury News. David possesses an extraordinary array of skills and expertise that, with your ongoing assistance, will enable him to lead the Audubon network to new levels of conservation success.

This is an exciting moment for Audubon and for our cause. We have found the right person to build Audubon's legacy of conservation results

well into the future and to educate and empower the next generation of conservationists who will protect and restore the health of birds, other wildlife and the resources on which we all depend.

I look forward to opportunities for you to meet and work with David and, especially, to the great conservation results we will achieve together.

Best Regards, Holt Thrasher, Audubon Board Chair

A HELLO FROM NILS WARNOCK, THE NEW DIRECTOR OF AUDUBON ALASKA

My first glimpse of Juneau occurred in early August of this year at 0445 in the morning from the deck of the Alaska ferry coming up from Bellingham, WA. Three Sitka Black-tailed Deer were feeding at the edge of a small island as we slipped in towards the ferry landing, while a Bald Eagle circled above. Although I had started as the new executive director of Audubon Alaska in June in Anchorage, I was moving my family (my wife Sarah, my son Noah, and my daughter Anna) up from California on this trip, and what better way to begin our Alaska adventure than with a ferry ride through large tracts of the beautiful Tongass National Forest. Birding was good from the ferry with flocks of Rhinoceros Auklets, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, and Red-necked Phalaropes feeding on the passage waters, small Marbled Murrelets exploding occasionally out from the path of the boat, and the ever-present Bald Eagles perched on the hanging conifers. At one point, we had a large school of a few hundred Pacific White-sided Dolphins surfing next to the ferry with sporadic Humpback Whales in the distance. The scenery was spectacular: the dark, moody forests; brilliant glaciers; and looming snow-capped mountain peaks.

This wasn't California! This was also a very different Alaska from the one I have intermittently worked in over the past 20 plus years – the treeless (although technically there are lots of trees, they are just tiny), often windy tundra of the North Slope and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta with their vast vistas and abundance of shorebirds and waterfowl. However, many of the conservation issues are the same, whether you are in Juneau or Chevak or Nuiqsut. How do we humans extract the resources we need to survive and live comfortably without destroying our landscapes, fish, wildlife, and in the long run, the very earth that we live on? Audubon Alaska is in the midst of many of these conservation battles in places like the Tongass and the Western Arctic and I am excited to be part of it. Our success lies in part with our partnerships with local Audubon chapters including Juneau Audubon. I look forward to coming and visiting with you in Juneau, hopefully this fall, to do some birding and to discuss issues like how we can better preserve and protect some of the key ecological hotspots within the Tongass. In the meantime, please feel free to get in touch with me, or if you are in Anchorage, come by and say hello.

JUNEAU BIRDING REPORT—THINK eBird By Mark Schwan

This summer was rather quiet with regards to interesting birds, but many species were seen by a small cadre of dedicated birders. Fortunately, Juneau birders continue to be very active in

submitting observations to eBird, and anyone with access to the internet can view the online submissions and get an excellent grasp of what has been seen in the Juneau area to date. Therefore, rather than summarize the observations herein, readers should visit the eBird site and look over the results. It is impressive!

Go to the home page for Alaska eBird at: <http://ebird.org/content/ak/> and click on the “View and Explore Data” tab near the top of the page. Next click on “Bar Charts” on left side of the page and you will see a “Locations” page. Now, choose Alaska on the left and click the “Counties” button on the right; then hit “continue” at the bottom. Now you will see the “Counties” page; select Juneau and hit the “continue” button again. You will see a cumulative, multi-year bar chart for all species submitted for the Juneau area. Here, you can select the “change date” button where you can select seasons and/or years for the bar chart display. For example, if you want to view the records just for 2010 from January 1 to the most recent date, you would select the entire year, and in the lower box for the range in years, just select 2010 in the start year and then hit “continue” once again. Now, you will see a bar chart for all species reported thus far for the year. And, even more fun, now, click on a species of interest and you will see a map appear along with the graphic calendar for the species. On the map, you will see red and yellow pointers, like thumbtacks. If you click on one of those, you will now see a list of where that species has been seen at that named location, with dates, observer name, and the number of individual birds observed.

As an example, one of the most exciting birds seen in the Juneau area this past spring and summer was the Purple Martin in late May. If you go to the bar chart and click on Purple Martin, several red pointers appear. If you click on those, you will see that the Purple Martin was seen by Patty Rose and Gus van Vliet on May 21 and 22, on the Mendenhall Wetlands. For possibly suspect entries, there are automatic filters in place to keep highly unusual or hard-to-believe entries from “instantaneously” being accepted and becoming part of the viewable database. Paul Suchanek is the eBird regional editor for the local eBird submissions and edits the filters along with editing “hotspots” for the Juneau area. He also leads all birders in the state in the number of checklists he posts to eBird. If you are interested in putting your own observations into eBird, it is easy to set up an account and begin entering observations (including old sightings). Recently eBird went worldwide so you can now look at bird sightings from Chile to China. In summary, it is a tremendous observational record, and Juneau is very active, so have fun.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, *Gustavus* – By Bruce Page from Eaglechat

Sun Sep 5, 2010 4:24 pm (PDT)

In the steady rain and SE wind this morning foraging along high tide drift along the beach near the Gustavus Dock, there was a juvenile **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** with 8 **Pectoral Sandpipers**. The plain buffy breast and superciliary line of this individual made it stand out from the others, as well as the more rufous tint of the plumage. This secretive species seems to regularly occur in the late summer/fall along Gustavus beaches in very small numbers.

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT By Bonnie Demerjian

We had quite a few **Eurasian Collared-doves** in Wrangell this summer. One observer reported several at her feeder in mid July and by early August there were 16. We had had several for the first time in 2009.

There was also a report from Forest Service observers who discovered tags from a dead **Golden Eagle** in LeConte Bay this summer. The tags turned out to be from a bird, one of 12, banded and released in Montana by the Wilderness Research Institute as part of a study of migratory patterns of Golden eagles. This is the fourth confirmed dead birds of the group. The remaining living birds are somewhere in Alaska.

SUMMARY OF BIOBLITZ BIRD SURVEY RESULTS By Paul Suchanek

A “bioblitz” was held in the Fish Creek drainage on Douglas Island from noon on June 26th to noon on June 27th. The purpose of a bioblitz is to attempt to document all the biodiversity within a given study area in a 24 hour period. During the 24 hour period, teams of scientists and members of the public spread out to try to document all species in the Fish Creek area. At least 797 species of organisms were documented (some of which have yet to be identified!). Most diverse groups included Plants (266 species), Marine Invertebrates (190 sp.), and Terrestrial Invertebrates (125 sp.). I coordinated the bird surveys which resulted in 57 species being documented.

Bird survey effort was distributed between three habitat types: Estuary & Marine (<50 feet above sea level including adjacent forests), Forest & Muskeg (uplands above N. Douglas highway to elevation of Eaglecrest Lodge), and Alpine & Subalpine (elevations above Eaglecrest Lodge). At least two surveys in each habitat type were conducted along with a nocturnal owl survey (which was combined with a bat survey). A bird banding demonstration was also conducted on the morning of 6/27 which resulted in the catch of one bird species not otherwise identified.

The number of species by habitat type was: Estuary & Marine (43), Forest & Muskeg (28), and Alpine & Subalpine (24). Twenty species were unique to the Estuary & Marine habitat which included the estuaries at Fish Creek and Outer Point Creek. The owl survey failed to detect any species, probably because it was so late in the breeding season. The 57 species found included a few unusual species. The 11 Hudsonian Godwits at Fish Creek estuary were rare migrants which were already on their southward migration. Caspian Terns seen at both Outer Point and Fish Creek are rare recent invaders of Alaska. A Warbling Vireo seen near Ninemile Creek road is a scarce species usually found on the mainland. The most exciting find was a nest of Northern (yellow-shafted) Flickers in a snag near Eaglecrest Road, perhaps the first of this species ever found on the Juneau road system. Breeding of Northern Flickers on the road system has been inferred from a few sightings of birds during the summer but this is the first confirmation of breeding. Breeding was also confirmed for some other species from sightings of chicks, fledglings and nests.

The number of bird species identified exceeded expectations even though it was so late in the

breeding season making detection of some species difficult. For example, Yellow-rumped Warblers were missed although this is not a particular uncommon breeding bird (and one was seen two hours after the event). Another bioblitz is planned in the Juneau area in 2011 as the 2010 event was so successful and I encourage all interested members of the public to participate. If an early Sunday morning bird survey isn't your cup of tea, maybe a Saturday afternoon dragonfly hunt or plant walk is!

For a complete list of species found, go to:
www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=education.blitz

RAT ISLAND IS OFFICIALLY RAT-FREE

Biologists confirmed Saturday that Rat Island, a remote island in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, is now rat-free. The report comes after two years of careful field monitoring at Rat Island, where the invasive predator decimated native bird populations by preying on eggs and chicks and altered the native ecosystem in numerous ways.

Biologists have confirmed increased numbers of at least one native bird after just two rat-free nesting seasons on the island. The giant song sparrow, found only in the central and western Aleutian Islands, is now commonly occurring on Rat Island. Song sparrows were only rarely seen on the island prior to the restoration. "The presence of nesting birds is deeply gratifying," says Bill Waldman, executive director of the nonprofit Island Conservation. "

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been at work in the Aleutian Islands, most of which lies within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, restoring seabird habitat by eradicating non-native species for more than four decades. Non-native foxes have been taken off over 40 islands in the refuge including Rat Island but this was the first rat eradication for the refuge.



ANWR's Fledging Gray-headed Chickadee
By Mark Schwan

With the rats gone, restoration partners and the Aleutian Pribilof Island Association agree that an Aleut (Unangan), name would be a fitting tribute to the restored island. APIA is now taking steps to enact a name change. Once a name is selected, it will await approval from the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

For more information:
http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov/rat_island.htm
<http://seabirdrestoration.org>

HELP PROTECT SPECIAL AREAS IN THE NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE ALASKA

The maze of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams on the coastal plain of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska is a globally recognized ecological resource that supports caribou, millions of breeding and migrating birds, beluga whales, polar bears, wolves, wolverines, and other wildlife.

In 1976, Congress charged the Department of the Interior (DOI) with managing these lands to provide “maximum protection” for special areas with important biological values. The special areas include Teshekpuk Lake, Kasegaluk Lagoon, the Colville River, and the Utukok River Uplands.

Take Action!

In July 2010, the DOI’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM) started to prepare the first-ever management plan covering the *entire* Reserve. The new Reserve-wide plan will supersede all prior plans and guide future land management and development. Ask BLM to provide balance in the new Reserve-wide plan by:

1. Designating “No Lease Areas” to protect outstanding wildlife, wilderness, subsistence, and recreation values; and
2. Recommending that Congress take action to permanently protect special areas in the Reserve.

Comments DUE by **4:00pm Alaska time on October 1, 2010.** For more information, or to submit your comments online, go to www.AudubonAlaska.org.

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge!

Birds that breed in the Arctic Refuge have ranges that reach all 50 states and 6 continents! How many can you find in ***your*** state?

You’ve heard about the *World Series of Birding*. The *Texas Birding Classic*. Now Audubon Alaska brings you ...

The Arctic Refuge Fall Migration Birding Challenge!

More than 190 bird species nest, raise chicks, molt, or re-fuel for long migrations in the wilds of the Arctic Refuge. What better way than a birding challenge to honor the fantastic resource the Arctic Refuge provides for birds that spread across the globe—and may wind up in your backyard?



Male Smith's Longspur By Mark Schwan

1. **Recruit your team (up to six people).** Find the best shorebirder around, your friend with the killer scope, or someone with supersonic hearing to catch those fall migration calls... or head out with your regular birding buddies.
2. **Record your birds.** If a team member identifies a bird by sight or sound, mark it on the Arctic Refuge Fall Birding Challenge checklist.
3. **Take your time and enjoy.** This is a fall migration challenge—you have the entire autumn to scour the countryside.
4. **Submit your checklist.** Submit your list before midnight (Alaska time!) December 1, 2010. Checklists are available at www.AudubonAlaska.org.

THE PRIZES!

Each winning team member will receive:

- 1st Place:** The book *Arctic Wings: Birds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*, edited by Stephen C. Brown and Jimmy Carter
- 2nd Place:** *Bird Songs of Alaska* 2-CD set; birding maps for Anchorage, Kodiak, and Fairbanks
- 3rd Place:** Arctic National Wildlife Refuge T-shirt

THE WINNERS! We will announce the winning teams on December 6, the day of the 50th Anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Please submit your registration form and final checklist to: Beth Peluso Audubon Alaska:

Mailing Address: 441 West Fifth Street, Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99501

Fax: 907-276-5069

Email: bpeluso@audubon.org

For checklists or more information, go to www.AudubonAlaska.org or call Beth Peluso at 907-276-7034.

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Nick Hajdukovich
Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler

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 _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____

_____ 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*.

*****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 _____.**

