

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

February 2011

Free Public lecture by Bob Armstrong
Thursday, February 10, 2011 at 7pm UAS Egan Room 221

Bob's Bugs



I will share some of the really exciting experiences I have recently had with insects. This will include the connections with Red-breasted Sapsuckers, rescuing hornworms at the airport, getting yelled at for chasing a Painted Lady, looking for Bruce Spanworm's girl friends and bonding with a mosquito.

Also Kathy Hocker, John Hudson and I have been working on a book about Aquatic Insects in Alaska. I will talk about some of the experiences I've had looking for and photographing aquatic insects. This will include searching for Rat-tailed Maggots,

Phantom Crane Flies, Mountain Midges and the techniques for taking underwater photos of creatures only a few millimeters long.

Great Backyard Bird Count February 18-21, 2011

It's fun, easy, family-friendly, free and open to all ages. This February marks the 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Its really easy to participate.

1. Count the birds alone or with friends
2. After at least 15 minutes of watching in one place, report your results online (you can watch longer if you want).
3. Send in your observation to www.birdcount.org
4. You can repeat your count at the same place on each day of the Great Backyard Bird Count, or you can visit other locations. Submit a new checklist for each day that you count.

Go on line and view the Top 10 most commonly reported birds in the Great Backyard Bird Count, the number of reports sent in for your city or state, or even for the whole country! The maps update even as you watch! This event is sponsored by the National Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

So go out and count birds to help understand trends in populations in North America. Don't forget to have fun!

A CELEBRATION OF SWANS April 16 to April 24, 2011 WHITEHORSE, CANADA

Yukon's premiere bird festival, A Celebration of Swans, brings residents and visitors alike out to great swan viewing areas to welcome spring to the north, arriving on the wings of the several thousand Trumpeter Swans. Also more than a thousand Tundra Swans have been seen at one time in M'Clintock Bay.

January Birding Notes for Juneau By Mark Schwan

As we began the new year, a small cadre of dedicated birders immediately hit the "field" working on their annual lists for 2011. First and foremost for these listers was tracking down birds that had been located at the end of 2010, even prior to the Christmas Bird Count, birds that are rare and might not remain in the area much longer. Fortunately, many of these birds seemed to be staying put, often remaining loyal to an individual feeder. With this as a lead in, here are some of the highlights for January.



Slaty-backed Gull

Nick Hajdukovich

One **Cackling Goose** was seen on 1/12 at the Wetlands (NH). The **Eurasian Wigeon** found several times at the mouth of Fish Creek and the airport dike was likely the same bird found at the end of last year (PS, PR, NH). **Hooded Mergansers** are always a treat to see and they were present at several channel locations through the month (many obs.). The only **Wilson's Snipe** reported was from the usual overwintering location of

Switzer-Lemon Creek (1/23, NH). The most exciting new find was the **Slaty-backed Gull** found by Gus van Vliet on 1/17 at the mouth of Gold Creek. It had been a couple of years since this species has been found in Juneau.



Black-billed Magpie and Northern Hawk Owl

Mark Schwan

The **Northern Hawk Owl** near Brotherhood Park continued to be locatable through much of the month (many obs.) and up to three **Short-eared Owls** were seen around mid month near the golf course (NH, GV, GB). A lone **American Pipit** was spotted on the Wetlands on 1/8 (GV). One of the rarest birds in town, the **Spotted Towhee**, continued to make it's home in the brush pile adjacent to Paul Suchanek's feeding station on Douglas Island.

In addition to the towhee, a wide variety of rare to vary rare species were relocated at various feeders around town, although a couple of these species were not associated with feeders. These species included: **American Tree Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Golden-crowned sparrow**. Two observations of **Lapland Longspurs** were nice for January, with one found on the Wetlands on 1/16 (PR) and two located on 1/22 (NH), also on the Wetlands. A flock of 20 **Red-winged Blackbirds** was found near Switzer Creek on 1/17 (NH). This flock is most certainly the same group of birds that was reported near Lemon Creek in mid December.



Harris's Sparrow

Nick Hajdukovich

Contributors: Gwen Baluss, GB; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV). Prepared by Mark Schwan

Haines Report By Georgia Giacobbe

Although conducted on time, the results of the Christmas Bird Count were compiled after the first of the year. Twenty-five residents braved some very cold and windy conditions to conduct the count close to the town center and in the Bald Eagle Preserve. In the Haines Circle, 27 species were found. Highlights included high numbers of the three common gulls—**Herring** (630), **Glaucous-winged** (565), and **Mew** (230) counted that day. Also counted in large numbers were **Bohemian Waxwings** with a count of 132, an all-time high for Haines. Nineteen **Bald Eagles** were spotted outside of the eagle preserve. Other bird species at the top of the list were **Barrow's Goldeneye**, 444; **Pine Siskin**, 340; **Goldeneye**, 96; **Bufflehead**, 61; **Mallard**, 89; **Chestnut-backed Chickadee**, 40; and **Common Raven**, 18;

In the Chilkat Circle (Bald Eagle Preserve), thirteen birders counted 16 species with 173 **Bald Eagles**, 4 **Hooded Mergansers**, and 77 **Trumpeter Swans**, an all-time high. More species included **Pine Siskin**, 300; **Chestnut-backed Chickadee**, 29; **Black-billed Magpie**, 13; **Common Merganser**, 10; and **White-winged Crossbill**, 11. For the complete count, see www.Taskshanuk.org.

The Pileated Woodpecker By Prill (Isleib) Mollick, Smoky Mountains, N.C.

The Pileated Woodpecker is a 16 to 19 inch long, large crow-sized black woodpecker with a bright red crest and white wing linings.

According to one source, the Pileateds declined when pioneers cleared off mature hardwood forests and sometimes shot the birds for sport and food. In the 19th century these birds were commonly offered for sale in city markets, but Audubon considered them tough and extremely unpalatable. By the mid 20th century they gradually increased in numbers again.

The first time I saw a Pileated Woodpecker was several years ago when we were still living in South Eastern Pennsylvania. I heard something that sounded like a Flicker but not anything like what I had heard before. It has such a loud and raucous series in its call. With binoculars I located it, there it was on the top of an old dead poplar tree. I was surprised and delighted. What a majestic sight. Although I had never seen one before I knew instantly what it was.

Here in the Smoky Mountains they are a common sight. They often come through our wooded lot in pairs, chasing each other as though they were “playing tag”, sometimes on a tree trunk they will rapidly sway from side to side. They are a bit of a show off with their amusing antics. They flit from tree to tree and drill into the bark. The loud drilling drumming sounds echo about the neighborhood. They seem to like pecking into old tree stumps looking for food. (Some local folks consider them a nuisance especially when they drill holes on the side of their house or into their roof.)

Last winter we had the rare treat of a pileated that came to the peanut butter-suet log by the front window. His huge body was clinging to the short hanging log as he took large clumps of the peanut butter mixture to eat.

Nature often surprises us with rare visual treats. It teaches us and keeps us wanting to learn more.

BIRDERS' EXCHANGE By Gwen Baluss

Mid-winter is not the best time to go out birding here in Southeast Alaska. But it's a good time to clean house, and maybe shop for some new optics before spring comes. And, in doing so, you can also help bird researchers in Latin America by donating your less-used items. American Birding Association has a program to transfer gently used and good quality equipment -- such as binoculars, tripods, spotting scopes, field guides and backpacks -- into the hands of birders who would not otherwise be able to afford them. Many such donations are already going to birders helping to gather vital information in the winter ranges of migratory birds. For a complete list of desired gifts and more information on making a donation see the website: <http://www.aba.org/bex/>. Or, contact Gwen Baluss at 907- 523- 2895

A banded Red Warbler pauses on his captor's new binoculars before taking off into the forests of Oaxaca State, Mexico.



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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 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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