

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>

Volume 37, Number 8

Juneau Audubon Society

April 2011

Juneau Audubon Society Public Lecture By Nepal Hiking Group

**Thursday, April 14, 2011 at
7:00 p.m. UAS Lecture Hall**

A group of avid Juneau hikers traveled to Nepal to walk among the planet's highest mountains. The scenery was spectacular, but equally awesome were the glimpses of the cultural history and human and biological diversity of this small and fiercely independent country wedged between India and China. We will take a tag-team approach to tell the story of our trek, present some snapshots of the people and cultures we encountered, and talk a bit about the flora and fauna we were lucky enough to see. By Alex Wertheimer, Kim Smith



Juneau Audubon Society



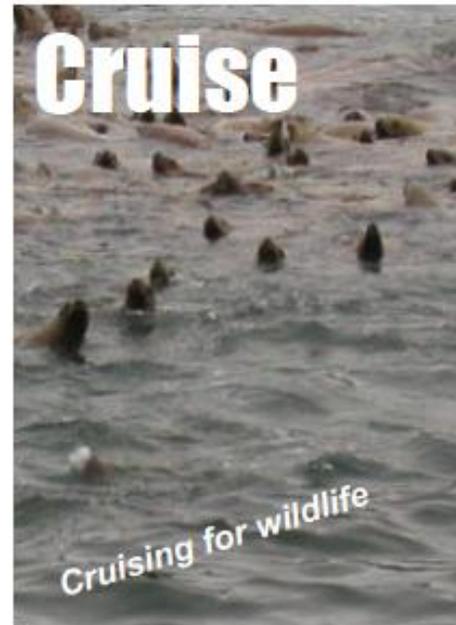
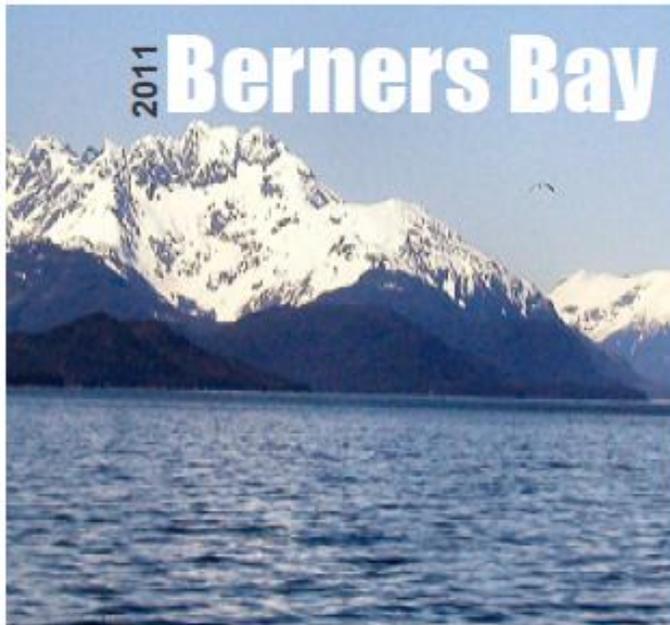
Saturday, April 23

8:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 30

8:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m.



Adults - \$45

Students - \$25

Children under 12 - \$10
(must be accompanied by adult)

Tickets at Hearthside Books

Vessels depart Don D. Statter Harbor below DeHarts. Boarding begins about 15 minutes before departure. Cruise lasts four hours. Juneau Audubon Society members will be on board as natural history interpreters.

TRACKS AND SIGNS By Kevin O'Malley

Tracks and Signs will meet at the Brotherhood Bridge Trail (parking lot across from Don Abel) at 10am on April 9th. This will be a good time to pay attention to any seasonal changes and to see how the Mendenhall River has shaped the valley landscape. The valley is a giant track and the rivers, trees and wildlife are evidence of that track. New birds are here and their tracks tell us a stories about migration and niches each bird has when feeding or resting in the Juneau area before their trip north.

Kevin is beginning a **Mystery Track** series in the newsletter.

What is this mystery track? This track was found on the tide flats and was in a walking gait. If you can identify this track, please respond to Kevin at education@juneau-audubon-society.org



SPRING FIELD TRIPS

Happy spring! It's time again for JAS field trips. As usual we have a number of experienced birders and naturalists leading walks and hosting Berners Bay boat tours. We are lucky to have some of our local expert birders willing to share their knowledge. And we are glad to feature again this spring beginners' walks aimed at those who are new to birding or looking to gain skills and tips to learning their birds. Kids and families are encouraged.

Below is the preliminary schedule. Visit our website for more details as the dates approach. We will do our best to get the word out in the newspaper and radio as well. All events are free, except for the Berners Cruises (tickets available at Hearthside Books). Additional questions, please call Gwen at 523-2895. See you in the field!

| Date | Leaders/ Naturalists | Place | Start | End | Activities/ Notes |
|---|--|------------------------------|--------------|------------|---|
| 4/9 | Kevin O'malley | Brotherhood Bridge Trail | 10 a.m.. | 12 p.m. | Tracks and signs |
| 4/16 | Paul Suchanek | Fish Creek, Douglas Island | 8 a.m. | 9:30 a.m. | Bird walk. Search for spring migrants and rare ducks |
| 4/16 | Kevin O'malley Deborah Kearns | Fish Creek, Douglas Island | 8 a.m. | 9:30 a.m. | Instructional walk for beginning birders (Groups will split, and possibly merge later in the morning) |
| 4/23 | Mary Willson, Bev Agler, Julie Koehler, Mark Schwan | BERNERS BAY cruise | 8:30 a.m. | 12:30 p.m. | Boat from Auke Bay. Arrive at Harbor below DeHarts store 15 minutes early. |
| 4/30 | Laurie Craig, Deborah Kearns Patty Rose | BERNERS BAY cruise | 8:30 a.m. | 12:30 p.m. | Boat from Auke Bay. Arrive at Harbor below DeHarts store 15 minutes early. |
| 4/30 | Gwen Baluss Laurie Craig (more leaders still needed) | BERNERS BAY cruise | 1:30 p.m. | 5 p.m. | Boat from Auke Bay. Arrive at Harbor below DeHarts store 15 minutes early. |
| 4/30 | Kevin O'malley | Auke Village Recreation Area | 8 a.m. | 9:30 | Skill-building birdwalk for those who are more new to birding. |
| 5/7 | Gwen Baluss | Juneau Community Garden | 7:30 a.m. | 11:00 a.m. | Songbird banding and observation. Drop in anytime during posted hours. International Migratory Bird Day |
| Other IMBD events to be announced | | | | | |
| 5/7 | Bev Agler | Mendenhall wetlands | 8 a.m. | TBA | Shorebird viewing towards mouth of river - bring rubber boots |
| 5/21 | (Still needed) | TBA | TBA | TBA | TBA |
| 5/28 | Jeff Sauer | TBA | TBA | TBA | Spring bird walk |
| 6/4 | Mark Schwan | Moose Lake | TBA | TBA | Moose lake bird walk-may see less common local species like American Redstart and Warbling Vireo |
| <i>Watch for Summer schedule in next newsletter</i> | | | | | |

Yakutat Tern Festival - June 2-5, 2011

Join us in celebrating terns!

The Aleutian Tern has a limited nesting range throughout Alaska and eastern Siberia and Russia, and very little is known about this species, including its wintering area and migration patterns. The Yakutat area is currently at the forefront of Aleutian Tern research, including studies on population trends, nesting ecology, and migration patterns. The colonies in the Yakutat area appear to be a stronghold for a suspected declining worldwide population. Seeing thousands of Aleutian and Arctic terns as they circle and float over a wild, sandy beach is something you will never forget!

The Yakutat Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Forest Service, and local community members and businesses are collaborating on planning the 1st Annual Yakutat Tern Festival for 2011.

Participants of the festival will enjoy:

- Bird walks and natural history field trips
- Art exhibits
- Scientific seminars
- Educational events for kids and adults
- Native cultural presentations

For more information see the website:

<http://yakutatternfestival.org>

or Call Yakutat Ranger District 907-784-3359



Aleutian tern on its nest under beach grass.

Juneau Birding Notes for March 2011

Along with the many nice days and increasing light as we passed through the spring equinox, the birds were providing obvious signals that migration time was upon us. Sapsuckers began drumming, Winter Wrens, Varied Thrushes, and Song Sparrows started to sing, and the more adventurous birders sought out, and found, a variety of calling owls. Here are a few more noteworthy observations for the month.

One to two **Eurasian Wigeon** were frequenting the Fish Creek Delta from 3/15 – 3/25 (PS) and three were found along the airport dike trail on 3/24 (GV). Two to three **Northern Shovelers** were found along the airport dike from 3/15 to 3/20 (PS, PR, GV). **Hooded Mergansers** were again widely observed through the month at various channel locations (many obs.). One **Sharp-shinned Hawk** was reported from Auke Bay on 3/7 (GV). Only one **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was reported during the month, a bird seen on Meadow Lane near the Mendenhall River on 3/3 (DJ).

Nick Hajdukovich put in some dedicated owling effort during the month and it paid off, with his highlight locating and observing two **Western Screech-Owls** up Basin Road on March 24. He returned on March 26th and three individuals were located (NH, GV) and one bird was very nicely photographed (NH).



Nick Hajdukovich

A single **American Pipit** was near the airport dike trail on 3/18 (NH). The **Lincoln Sparrow** frequenting a feeder on Meadow Lane through the winter was still present (DJ). A **White-throated Sparrow** appeared at the downtown cemetery/highlands area on 3/8 (GV). Last fall we had an unprecedented number of these birds in the Juneau area, so it wasn't totally unexpected that someone would find one that perhaps overwintered here. The **Harris's Sparrow** overwintering at Sandy Beach was again seen periodically through the month (PR, PS). Finally, the invading **House Sparrow** was again seen in downtown Juneau on 3/16 (GV, NH).

Contributors: Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Doug Jones, DJ; Patty Rose, PR; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet (GV). Compiled by Mark Schwan

BIRDING NEWS AND EVENTS FOR APRIL IN KETCHIKAN- By Teri Hoyt

Spring arrived here with crocuses already blooming and the moon being closest to Earth in years; it looked huge and extra bright! Scores of **American Robins** are moving through, and increasing numbers of **Fox Sparrows** are now seen scratching in the woods. Large flocks of **Surf Scoters** along the waterfront are a sure sign of Spring as are the rafts of hundreds of **Western Grebes**.

A few **Hermit Thrushes** have been here since last month. **Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers**, and **Red-Breasted Sapsuckers** are busy in the trees, and the **Northern Flickers** are calling! Two adult **California Gulls** were spotted on March 6th, a bit earlier than usual for our area. Most of the birds I reported in the last edition of the Raven have remained throughout March, officially surviving the winter season here!

Ketchikan celebrates spring migratory birds during the entire month of April with our annual **HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL!!**

The numerous activities and events are sponsored by the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center and the Ketchikan Visitor's Bureau.

There will be **three birding walks** at Ward Lake; April 2nd with Cheryl Fultz, April 9th with me, Teri Hoyt, and on the 30th with Andy Piston. Additional walks are planned in the downtown area with Jim Lewis on the 16th and an excursion along the south tongass shoreline on the 23rd with Steve Heintl.

Again, **lots of fun is planned for the kids**, including coloring contests, making art paper mosaics, several bird feeder projects, creating garden stones and even decorating and flying model airplanes! There will also be a couple **art shows** during the month and a live bird presentation with Tammy Sivertsen from the Ketchikan Community Tribal Center and Eagle Center on the 8th. The **Friday Night Insight** programs at the Discovery Center feature guest speakers covering a wide range of topics.

Evon Zerbetz will share her **Natural History of the Raven** on April 1st and Jim Lewis will share some tips for photographing wild birds on the 15th. Steve Heintl and Andy Piston will discuss **bird breeding** with their program; **Feathered Rearing: Nest and Egg**, April 29th. There is even a show on **gardening with wild plants** with Shawna Hee. **For more information** please contact the Discovery Center at 228-6220. Surely these fun events will be enjoyed by many residents and visitors alike!

Local birders are still awaiting the arrival of the first Rufous Hummingbird as spring progresses and the woods begin to fill with bird songs in our area!

HAINES BIRDING REPORT

By Georgia Giocobbe

As early as March 4, the first signs of migrations appeared in Haines. Both a **Varied Thrush** was heard singing in Haines, and a **Yellow-Shafted Flicker** was also sighted. Several days later, a large numbers of **gulls** as well as **seals, eagles and ducks** were been feeding on **Lanternfish** in Lutak Inlet. A pair of **Red-Breasted Margansers** were also seen in Lutak. Photo by Ann Puffer. By March 10, Lutak Inlet was alive with wildlife. In the morning at 10 am there were literally thousands of gulls **Mew Gulls** and **Herring/Thayer gulls** feeding on **Lanternfish** and possibly **squid**. There were also about 20 **Harbor Seals** and **Steller Sea Lions**, plus about 50 **Barrow's Goldeneyes** and 3 **eagles**. By the first day of spring **Snow Buntings** were seen flying up the Chilkat River. A few days prior, **Winter Wrens** arrived and started singing. Several days into spring, there were several sightings in Lutak Inlet: **Red-**



Breasted Mergansers, Common Mergansers, a small raft of Surf Scoters, Redpolls, White-Winged Crossbills, and Eagles. And by March 26 **Rufous Hummingbirds** started to arrive! They are a bit early, usually arriving anywhere between March 31 and May 2. And just yesterday, on March 30, an odd sighting was called into the radio station of a crow with a white tail feather near Haines Assisted Living. Will need to follow up and see if that bird stays around.

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT by Bonnie Demerjian

Melting snow and rising temperatures stir the spirits of not only humans, but birds, too. Song sparrows, Dark-eyed juncos and Varied thrushes are making the brush a lively place these days with their song. Small flocks of robins began to show up the third week of March though they are too busy scratching up a living to be singing yet. A few Eurasian collared-doves have overwintered in Wrangell and pairs now seem poised to breed. Their cooing adds a new sound to the usual Southeast Alaska mix. Bald eagles and sea lions are congregating around town in anticipation of the return of eulachon to the Stikine River. Wrangell birders are keeping a sharp eye for Golden eagles after two sightings in February.

Observers have noticed a number of crows with facial lesions that may indicate avian pox. Young birder Kaylauna Churchill took this photograph of an infected crow. Kaylauna is 12 years old and has been interested in birding for three years. She posts her observations to eBird nearly every day and lately has been hand feeding Steller's jays.



In celebration of spring and the massing of eagles on the river, the Stikine River Bird Festival will showcase Wrangell's birds during the last weekend of April. Beginning April 28, guest speakers will include Bob Armstrong on bird photography, John Hudson on dragonflies and Alaska artist Linda Infante Lyons. Lyons says one of her first memories is of an Audubon painting of a Roseate spoonbill. Today her love of birds is reflected in images of the natural world painted in magical realistic style reflecting her childhood home in Chile. The Sitka Raptor Center will also be part of the festival.

A bird walk, Breakfast with the Birds, on the Muskeg Meadows Golf Course is scheduled for Saturday, April 30. The golf course layout features a number of different habitats from beach to pond, wide-open greens, old growth and second growth forest, so participants may encounter a variety of species on this walk. Charter boat operators are offering special tours of the Stikine River, including a plein air art class, during the festival. A concert of American music by the Wrangell Community Chorale wraps up the festival on May 1. The schedule can be viewed at:

<http://www.stikinebirding.org> Photo credit – Kaylauna Churchill **Raven newsletter – April**

2011

YUKON BIRD CLUB

Field Trip Schedule and Yukon Birding Events - Spring, Summer & Fall 2011

All events free! Dress for the weather, wear appropriate footwear, and bring binoculars if you have them. Non-members, visiting birders and beginners welcome! For more information, contact Jenny Trapnell tel. 668-3918

NEW! Wednesday 13 April. Learn all about Yukon's migratory bird species at a bird identification workshop: "Birds of Spring or What is that LBJ??" with Ione Christensen and Lee Kubica, at the Whitehorse Public Library, 2071 Second Ave. 7:30 p.m.

April 16-April 24 : Celebration of Swans at Swan Haven Interpretation Centre. Biologist Interpreter on staff. For information contact Environment Yukon's Wildlife Viewing Program (667-8291)

<http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca/wildlifebiodiversity/CelebrationofSwans.php>

Tuesday 19 April: Explore spring at **Hidden Lakes** with Ione Christensen. Meet at 6:30 at the Whitehorse Fish Ladder, near the dam. (2 hrs)

Thursday 21 April: North Alaska Highway Shrike and Bluebird tour with Helmut Grünberg. Meet at the Porter Creek Super A at 6:30 pm. (~3 hours).

Spring Comes Early in the Smokies.

Prill (Isleib) Mollick, Smoky Mountains, N.C.

In late February, and first week of March the temperatures moderated a little and bright yellow Forsythia bushes and Daffodils were in bloom. Maple trees were budding with bright red leaf buds. Pussy Willows were early blooming. Plump gray squirrels with mouths stuffed with brown nest building leaves were climbing to the highest tree branches to fasten their nests.

Bluebirds were checking out the bluebird housing market. Flocks of migrating Robins were scrounging around for food across lawns and were flipping over dead leaves as they were looking for something to eat.

I remember in Juneau one of the early signs of spring was the sound of the Varied Thrush. It had an eerie long one-note to its call, and others answering it with the same kind of long one-note but in different musical tones. (It sort of reminded me of a child playing a flute as though he or she were trying to get that one note just right.)

An early sound of spring here is the Rufous Sided Towhee. Their call is a slurred "chewink" or "drink". Their song to any one listening is "drink your tea" sometimes it's "your tea" with the last note trilled. While feeding, towhees are often noticed by their noisy industrious scratching with both feet in a kind of backwards hop to expose seeds and insects hidden beneath leaf litter. Towhees were once wrongly blamed for pulling up new corn. In North

Carolina they were once denied protection and listed as game birds for 25 years. The breeding habitat is brushy areas across eastern North America. They nest in low bushes or on the ground under shrubs. Females build nests in an open cup of grass and twigs lined with finer materials. The eggs are creamy white and brown spotted. They are common victims of Brown Headed Cowbirds that will sometimes lay eggs in towhee nests. As many as eight cowbird eggs have been found in a towhee nest. Towhee parents often raise young cowbirds. Towhees seem unable to recognize impostor's eggs. The Eastern male is black on the head, back and breast. The sides are rusty with white belly and white patches on the wings and at the corners of the tail. The female has the same color pattern as the male, but where he is black she is a rich brown. In this area I usually see and hear them in late March or early April. But soon after a January snowstorm they were quite visible among other birds, getting bird seed on the ground where seeds had fallen from the hanging bird feeders. They were a lovely bright colorful contrast to the white snow background.

Science Fair 2011

Juneau Audubon Society sponsored four special awards at the science fair held on March 12. As usual the students did an excellent job and it was difficult to choose among the students who had chosen to be considered by Juneau Audubon.

Our winners this year of a \$50 check were Lia Domke for her project "The effects of Methyl Farnesoate on the Molting Biology of Juvenile Red King Crabs (*Paralithodes camtschaticus*)" and Amalia Tamone for her project "How Do Chemicals Leached from Plastics Affect mortality of Brine Shrimp (*Artemia salina*)". We also gave out two student tickets for our Berners Bay cruise to Kieran Poulson-Edwards "Observing Dippers and Comparing the Amount of Turbidity" and Kevin Sigler for his project "How Restoration affects the Abundance of Juvenile Coho Salmon in creeks in the Juneau Area".



Next year we encourage you to go to the Science Fair and encourage the students to keep up the great work. Thanks to Kevin O'Malley and Brenda Wright for judging the projects.

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

| | |
|--|--|
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BOB ARMSTRONG'S POWERPOINT DVD WITH BIRDS IN ACTION

Bob Armstrong author of *Guide to the Birds of Alaska*, has generously put together a collection of amazing photos of the most common birds in Southeast Alaska. He has given Juneau Audubon permission to give this DVD as a gift to school classrooms in Southeast Alaska. Students will be able to view birds they already know as well as learn to identify many more, see where they live by the habitat in the background of the photos, see how they use their talons, feed their young and many, many more things they can see, discuss and learn about in these photos. The photos only have the name of the bird, so a bird guide, Bob's particularly, will be needed for in-depth knowledge about each bird.

If any of you know teachers in your town who have access to computers with PowerPoint Programs, who would be excited to have and share this DVD with other teachers in their schools; send a request for the DVD to raven@juneau-audubon-society.org or mail to: **Juneau Audubon Society, P.O. Box 021725, Juneau, AK 99802.**

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 request this option email: membership@juneau-audubon-society.org**

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