

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

May 2011

The next regular Juneau Audubon meeting will be next October.

May and June 2011 JAS Field Trips

All programs are free and all ages welcome! End times are not listed for bird walks; this will be decided by leader and group. Most routes take about 1.5 to 2 hours. but its good to allow extra time in case there are lots of birds. Questions call Gwen at 523-2895

Date	Time Start	End	Leaders	Place and Activities
May 7	7:30 a.m.	11 a.m.	Gwen Baluss Tana Ellis	Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day Songbird banding demonstration, Juneau Community Garden. Stop by to see birds up close.
May 8	1 p.m.	4 p.m.	Gwen Baluss Özgür Didrickson	Welcome back the Arctic Terns, our champion long-distance migrants. Visit the breeding colony near photo point trail. View the birds through spotting scopes, ask questions of experts. Bird art and prizes.
May 14	8 a.m.		Bev Agler	Shorebirds and more at Mendenhall wetlands. Meet at the Airport Dike trail parking area. Wear boots suitable for mud flats.
May 21	7:30 a.m.		Gwen Baluss	Moraine Ecology Trail (from parking lot near Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center) Emphasis on bird song, especially warblers.
May 28	7:30 a.m.		Jeff Sauer	All the summer migratory songbirds should be back for this walk on the Mendenhall Wetlands airport dike trail. Meet at the parking area.
June 4	7:30 a.m.		Mark Schwan	Moose lake trail. Area hosts less-common local species like American Redstart and Warbling Vireo.
June 11	7:30 a.m.		Paul Suchanek	Sheep creek valley hike. This is a good area for deciduous-loving species such as MacGillivray's warbler.
June 18	2 p.m.	2 p.m. next day	Various	Bioblitz! This is a community citizen-science effort to count all species in a local area. Base will be UAS Auke Lake campus. For more info see http://acrc.alaska.edu/acrc_education/news_events/blitz_se_alaska.html

SUMMER SATURDAY WILD TRIPS

July 9, 8:00 a.m. Mt. Roberts Tram and hike up the trail

August – To be announced

September 3, 9:30 – Eaglecrest for berries

Go to Juneau Web for details <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

Juneau Audubon Society Needs You!

This is our last newsletter until September. The JAS board will publish its next newsletter in September and our next public meeting will be on the second Thursday in October. That is the meeting where we elect our officers for the year and then have a group slide show. As this newsletter is published, we just had our Berners Bay cruises and are beginning our spring Saturday morning birding field trips.

As the JAS board takes a bit of a summer break, there is the realization that we will have several vacancies on the board come fall. So, if you have enjoyed what JAS does for our community and the region, then please consider making a donation, of your time, to help maintain the chapter's goals and activities. To use a cliché, step up to the plate for a year or two, or three, and help maintain our chapter, which has a long and respected history in our state. Over the course of the summer, please feel free to contact any of the board members to find out more about serving on the JAS board. Thanks. Mark Schwan, JAS president.

Juneau Birding Notes for April By Mark Schwan

April is always an exciting time, as spring migration displays the wonder that it truly is. As the month progressed we witnessed the arrival of many old friends such as **Trumpeter Swans, Greater Yellowlegs, Black-bellied Plovers, Tree Swallows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Golden-crowned Sparrows**, just to name a few.



Hybrid White-crowned X Golden-crowned Sparrow by Nick Hajdukovich

This article will just include a few observations, and readers are encouraged to visit eBird.org to

view all the observations entered therein, as once again the most active birders in Juneau are putting their sightings in eBird. With that, here are a few highlights.



Sandhill Crane by Mark Schwan

One **Redhead** was spotted on the Wetlands east of the Mendenhall River on 4/16 (PS). Single **Peregrine Falcons** were reported from the Scout Camp trail on 4/17 (PS, BA), near Temsco on 4/19 (GV), and at Fish Creek on 4/20 (PS). One **Sandhill Crane** flew over the lower Mendenall River on 4/27 (MS, SZ, HZ). Two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were seen along the airport dike on 4/26 (PS) and also near the mouth

of the Mendenhall River on the same day (PS). Another golden-plover found on the wetlands on 4/28 (NH) also appeared to be a **Pacific**. One **Caspian Tern** was seen near the Scout Camp trail on 4/25 (PS).

Eurasian Collared-Doves continued to be found, with various reports from town to Auke Bay by several observers. Nick Hajdukovich kept up his productive owling when he found two **Western Screech-Owls** up Basin Road on 4/23. A single female **Mountain Bluebird** was found near the golf course west of the Mendenhall River on 4/26 (NH), and subsequently seen by several birders later that day, but the bird was not locatable the next day. Then, a male and female were found next to the golf course on 4/30 (PR). Finally, the **House Sparrow** seen previously in downtown was again seen late in the month (4/27, SZ).

Contributors: Bev Agler, BA; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Patty Rose, PR; Mark Schwan, MS; Paul Suchanek, PS; Gus van Vliet, GV; Steve Zimmerman, SZ; Helena Zimmerman, HZ.

BIRDING NEWS FROM KETCHIKAN-By Teri Hoyt

Our hummingbird festival was a huge success with great attendance at the various activities and a few notable birds sighted! The first reported **Rufous Hummingbird** was seen on March 28th.

Spring has been a bit slow warming up and many migrants have been arriving a couple weeks later than usual. In just the last couple of weeks **Townsend's Warbler**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and **Orange Crowned Warbler** have been singing in the woods.

Minus tides at mid-month didn't attract many shorebirds although I had some great close views



Banded Black-bellied Plover at the mouth of the Mendenhall River in Juneau April 28 by Nick Hajdukovich

of 11 **Black-bellied Plovers** at Herring Bay and quite a few **Greater Yellowlegs** are around the area.

April began with a beautiful **Spotted Towhee** at a feeder north of town! It's the first record for our island and has been seen roughly a dozen times on mainland areas of Alaska. I was excited to see this bird here as it reminded me of the many hikes I have enjoyed in the chaparral of the Santa Monica Mountains!

Tree Swallows and a few **Violet-green Swallows** arrived a little early this year at Ward Lake and along the Ketchikan Creek.

There was an **Aleutian Goose** spotted on the 8th on a grassy area in town. It's smaller size, wide white neckband with a dark lower border and browner breast sets this Canada Goose sub-species apart from its cousins also feeding nearby! The stormy squalls on April 21st brought the amazing spectacle of literally flock after flock of **Canada Geese** and other waterfowl noisily flying overhead migrating north for the season. Last night, on the 28th, I heard at least a dozen flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese** flying through the star studded sky. These sights and sounds are my favorite part of Spring!!!

Lots of **Fox Sparrows** are here and each day increasing numbers of **Golden-crowned Sparrows** arrive with a few **White-crowned Sparrows**, **Lincoln's Sparrows** and **Savannah Sparrows**.

Although there is evidence of **Eurasian-Collared Doves** breeding on our island, a very active nest was discovered here on the 27th, firmly establishing the breeding data for this relatively recent (2007) invasive species whose impact on local species remains to be seen!

I'll be spending my summer working my 5th season on a boat as a naturalist for AllenMarine Tours and tending to my vegetable and flower gardens, and of course, hiking and birding when I get a chance!! I wish all the Raven readers a fabulous summer enjoying the amazing nature we are so lucky to have surrounding us!!

BIRDING NEWS FROM WRANGELL by Bonnie Demerjian

The photo was taken by David Butler on Mallard Slough, Stikine River.

They are **Western sandpipers**.

As of this writing, Wrangell is gearing up for the Stikine River Birding Festival on the last weekend of April. Many thousands of **Snow Geese** and **Sandhill Cranes** have been passing over town and are now resting and feasting on the river



delta before continuing to their breeding grounds. The **Snow Geese** will be traveling north from Alaska's Wrangell Island to Russia's Wrangell Island.

An abundance of eulachon in the Stikine this year has kept masses of **Glaucous-winged, Herring, Mew** and **Bonaparte's** gulls busy for nearly a month. The eulachon run occurs in two phases with the larger, earlier episode occurring in late March. At that time 2,000 or more Bald eagles, the largest springtime concentration of these birds in the world, mass on the river islands. As of the last week in April, hundreds were still feeding, as were large numbers of Steller's sea lions, harbor seals and a few humpback whales in front of town.

Despite what seems like a late, cold spring, migrating songbirds are beginning to appear, only a few days later than last year. The first **Yellow-rumped Warblers, Savannah Sparrows,** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** arrived the last week of April and we're hoping to see a few more species for our annual bird walk on April 29. Maybe the presence of photographer Bob Armstrong, here for the birding fest, will lure them to be counted.

Haines Birding Notes By Georgia Geocobbe



The snow has been gone, the weather has warmed, but we still await most of the green spring. In the meantime, the birds have been bringing us the arrival of spring. Recently along River Road, 14 species appeared including **Black-Bellied Plovers, Golden Plovers, Western Sandpiper, Pintails, Mallards, American Wigeons, Shovelers, Green Wing Teals,** plus **Ravens, Gulls, and Eagles.** Singers included **Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, Varied Thrush, American Robins, Pine Siskins.** Just before Easter on the outskirts of town at 6th and Dalton Streets, a **Wilson's snipe** was seen. Earlier in the month, April 13 and 14 about 75 **Snow Geese** and 100 **Canada Geese** flew up the Chilkat River. In the beginning of the month, along the waterline in Lutak Inlet, some beautifully colored **Harlequin Ducks** arrived back

for the summer. And to signal the beginning of spring with song, **Fox Sparrows** and **Savannah Sparrows** came back to serenade.

Meanwhile, at 2.5 mile on Haines Highway, the birds have been telling us that spring is early. A Red-headed Flicker has been pecking at the corner of my house instead of the nearby telephone pole. A female Wilson's warbler has been flicking around the trees, and a Varied Thrush was pecking at the ground amidst a flock of Stellar's Jays. And speaking of arrivals, thousands of gulls followed the arrival of the eulachon up the Chilkat River. At this writing on the 29th of April, they have passed 2.5 mile and continue heading up the river.

As noted last month, a **Northwestern Crow** with a white tail spotted near the senior village. Confirmation photo by Ron Horn

Red-bellied Woodpecker By Prill Mollick
Smoky Mountains, N.C.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker back is narrowly barred with black and white and has a red crown and nape. The female has red on the nape only. It is named for the usually small patch of pale reddish-orange feathers on the abdomen. Despite the name, the red on the belly is not often visible. Its white rump is visible in flight. Their range is the eastern United States and parts of southern Canada.

From several trees away he noisily announces his coming to the peanut-butter suet log with a “chack” or shrill “Twank” also described as a high pitched coughing “cha” “cha” sound or “kwirr” “kwirr”. It is a frequent visitor to the peanut-butter suet log. It often takes large gulps before flying away. Its usual diet is insects, fruit, and seeds. Nuts and seeds taken in fall may be stored in bark crevices and eaten during the winter.

Nesting in cavities 5 -70 feet above ground, with 3-8 eggs which are incubated by both parents for about 14 days. Young leave the nest 24 to 26 days after hatching and remain with parents. Parents continue to help feed the young for up to 10 weeks. Red bellied Woodpecker nests in some areas are invaded by starlings.

For some reason, known only to him, he sometimes drills or taps on the rain gutter. (One source suggests that the drilling is to attract a mate or claim nesting territory.) The loud drilling sounds like a jack-hammer and can be heard throughout the house. I would think it would dull its beak.

Berners Bay Cruise, April 23, 2011 By Mark Schwan



We had a terrific morning out on the water for our first cruise. The Allen Marine staff worked closely with the Audubon volunteers to maximize our time in Berners Bay, as well as finding wildlife to see outside the bay. As it turned out, the bird activity in Berners Bay was very low. From surveys of the bay in prior days, it was known that the eulachon had not entered the rivers yet and herring had arrived but were not yet spawning. Given the marine mammal activity in the northern part of the bay, eulachon could have been starting to stage there. There were scattered humpback whales in the bay and south of the bay. There were several large groups of Steller sea lions swimming in the northern part of the bay and the Benjamin Island haul out site was busy. Harbor seals were frequenting Slate Point. Good numbers of gulls were seen on the distant northern shore near the mouth of the Berners River, and gulls were along the shore south of Cascade Point. Few loons were present and scoters were very scarce. Migrating Bonaparte's Gulls were common, but only outside the bay. We stopped at Aaron Island on the way home and located two Black Oystercatchers.

The highlight of the morning was the group of killer whales spotted just west of the northern boundary to Berners Bay. There were perhaps six to eight individuals. People on board got terrific views. Gus van Vliet forwarded pictures of two animals to Graeme Ellis, a long-time whale researcher in British Columbia, Canada. Graeme was able to identify both animals by comparing the individuals to photographs of orcas in their catalogue. These were transient killer whales, and one of them, known as T034, was first identified in 1980, 31 years ago! We had a similar situation last year on our first cruise, where photos of one of the transient orcas we encountered was identified from photographs by Graeme Ellis. Graeme said that his group now receives photographs from a variety of people in our region, however, it would be great to get more people contributing photographs to help them in their studies. They prefer to get photographs that show the left side of the dorsal fin and saddle patch, and if possible to photograph every animals present in an encounter. Here is the link to their website that describes their research and links to their photographic catalogues.

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/species-especes/cetacean-cetaces/projects-projets-eng.htm#HW>

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. A second DVD *Beavers in Alaska* by Bob with incredible photos of beavers in action, is also available.

Send request for DVDs to: raven@juneau-audubon-society.org or mail to: **Juneau Audubon Society, P.O. Box 021725, Juneau, AK 99802.**

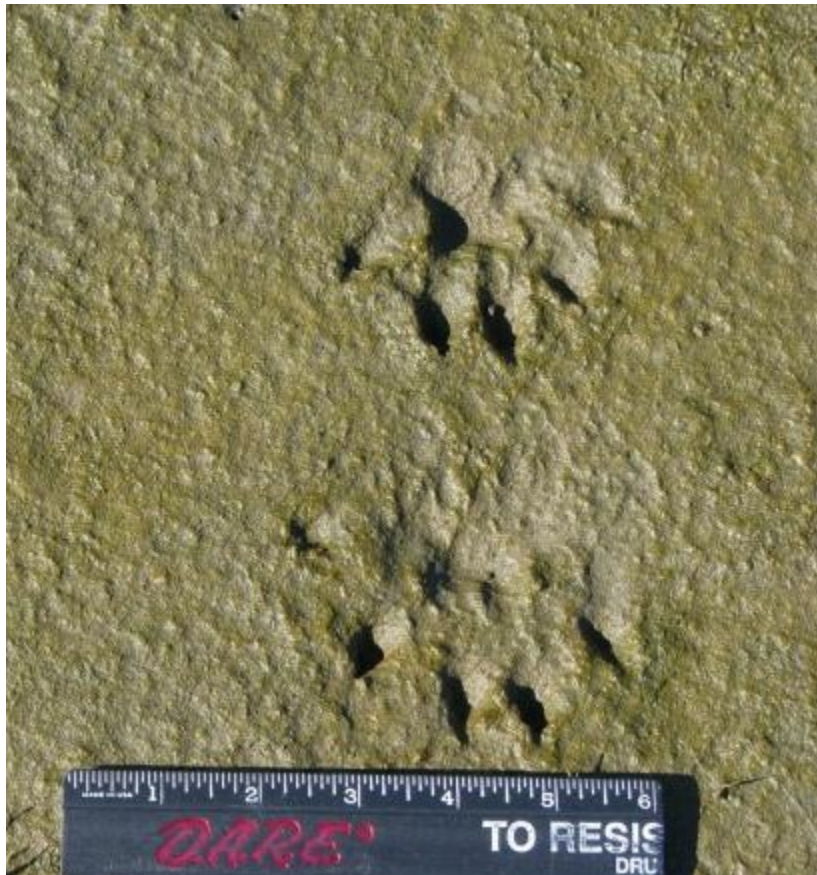
MYSTERY TRACKS



The answer to last month's Mystery Track question is Northwestern Crow. According to *Common Tracks of Southeast Alaska's Trails and Beaches* by Richard Carstensen, Northwestern Crow's tracks are 3" long and Raven is similar but track is 5" long. Also note the toes 2 and 3 are close together always on the inside of the NW Crow's foot. This will tell us if it is the right or left foot. Which foot of the Northwestern Crow would the track have been?

This month's Mystery Track is actually two tracks of an animal here in Juneau. How many toes does it have on each foot? This will classify the critter. The photo shows both a front and a rear foot. What kind of information can the substrate tell you?

E-mail answers to the monthly Mystery Question to Kevin at education@juneau-audubon-society.org.



SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS: WINTER SEASON—December 2010 to February 2011

Sub-regional Compilers:

Steven C. Heinl, 2603 4th Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901

Andrew W. Piston, P. O. Box 1116, Ward Cove, AK 99928

This publication has wonderful bird photos and information. If you want to be put on Steve Heinl's mailing list to receive this summary and to contribute, you can contact him at: steve.heinl@alaska.gov

If you are interested in additional information, subscribe to North American Birds, here is a link to see more information: <http://www.aba.org/nab> < <http://www.aba.org/nab> > . The seasonal reports cover all of North America and give excellent overviews of unusual numbers of particular species (high or low), early or late dates of occurrence, changes in status, and rare finds for each region.

There is also an extensive list of all the fall bird sightings entered in eBird (www.ebird.org < <http://www.ebird.org/> >)

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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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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@j**

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