

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 38, Number 4

Juneau Audubon Society

December 2011

DECEMBER JUNEAU AUDUBON PROGRAM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, at UAS Egan Building, Lecture Hall, Room 112, 7:00 p.m.

Bob Armstrong will present a program on wildlife photography and how to get good photos without disturbing the wildlife. His program will include many wildlife photos including birds that might be seen during the Christmas bird count.

The 2011 Juneau Christmas Bird Count By Mark Schwan

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count will be held this year on Saturday, December 17, the first Saturday during the designated count period, of December 14 through January 5th. This marks 112th year of the CBC, with counts planned across the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Count statistics from last year are pretty amazing. More than 62,000 people participated, with approximately 52,000 in the field and 10,000 watching feeders. There were 2,215 counts completed and more than 61 million birds counted. Given the amount of long term data accumulated, and the efforts of researchers to computerize the information, the Christmas Bird Count data represent a truly incredible resource. The term “citizen science” which is used now for a variety of projects where volunteers help gather scientific information likely owes its origin to the long-running Christmas Bird Count.

Here in Juneau, this will be our 39th count. For those that don't know, the Christmas Bird Counts take place in a designated area comprised of a circle with a 15 mile diameter. Here in Juneau, the center of our count falls over north Douglas Island. The circle area takes in much terrain that we are never able to cover, but we rather consistently count in the same areas within the circle each year.

As usual, we will have two meeting places to stage on the morning of the count. Volunteers should arrive at 8 a.m. on count day. People wanting to count in the downtown, Douglas, and north Douglas Island areas

should meet at the A&P (Foodland) coffee/eating area at the front of the store. Birders wishing to work the Lemon Creek, airport, Mendenhall Valley and Auke Bay areas should meet at the McDonald's restaurant across from the Nugget Mall. Again, please arrive at 8 a.m. and be prepared for the weather and bring your binoculars. We will have our area leaders arranged ahead of time, but we will allocate birders to the different areas at our staging location on count day. Therefore, it is important for all leaders and birders to be there in a timely manner, so we can hit the road when it gets light.

There will be a potluck after the count at the home of Mark Schwan and Debi Ballam. This is always a great way to end the day, as we share in the events of the day, eat some wonderful food, and conduct the tally of birds and species seen. For those needing directions to Mark and Debi's house, we will provide a handout on count day. Let's have a great turnout and a terrific count! For more information on this year's count, you can call Mark Schwan, at 789-9841.

Christmas Bird Counts planned in Southeast Alaska

December 14, 2011 – January 5, 2012

Count name	Date	Contact person(s)	Phone number
Chilkat	December 17	Dan Egolf*	766-2876
		Tim Shields	766-2354
Craig-Klawock	December 17	Victoria Houser	826-1614
Haines	December 17	Dan Egolf	766-2876
		Tim Shields	766-2354
Glacier Bay	December 17	Nat Drumheller	697-2166
Juneau	December 17	Mark Schwan	789-9841
		Gus van Vliet	789-5624
Ketchikan	December 17	Andrew Piston	225-9677
Mitkof Island	December 17	Bill Pawuk	772-3985
Sitka	January 1	Victoria Vosburg	747-7821
Skagway	December 17 **	Elaine Furbish	983-2049
		Dawn Adams	983-3302
Tenakee Springs	December 30	Beret Barnes	736-2226
Wrangell	To be announced	Joe Delabrue	874-7523
		Carol Ross	874-2156

* Forms and information available at the Back Country Ski Shop

** Website for more information: sites.google.com/site/skagwaybirdclub

January's Tracks and Signs Program will be for advanced and novice wildlife trackers (birders this includes birds).

Naturalist Kevin O'Malley will point out tracks and sign made by mammals and birds in the Mendenhall lake area. **The walk will begin at 10 a.m. at the West Glacier Trailhead** (past skater's cabin). **Everyone is invited.** The program is free. Be sure to dress for the weather.No dogs please.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS By Julie Coghill, Juneau Audubon President

December brings the Christmas Bird Count. It's tradition at its finest: If you're away from home, you can probably find one; if you're home you're probably familiar with the drill. Even in remotest North Dakota, my mother organized and executed a count each Christmas, sometimes as sole participant. Most of mine have been in Fairbanks. A few comparisons:

- Juneau has more daylight.
- Fairbanks has more moon- and starlight.
- Both can be extremely cold.
- Juneau has kayaking options.
- Fairbanks has driving options.
- Both have excellent skiing/snowshoeing options.

Overall, the outstanding difference is that Juneau has salt water, high mountains, providing more species and more individuals. Once in Fairbanks we spent an agonizingly slow day, eventually coming up with 7 species: common raven, black-billed magpie, black-capped chickadee, common redpoll, pine grosbeak, hairy woodpecker, and a dark-eyed (slate colored) junco. Three were lone individuals: the magpie, woodpecker, and junco.

Arriving at the tallying potluck, we felt skunked. But everyone had a slow day that year and we were on the high end for number of species. Whatever your level of participation, enjoy the tradition.

NEW BIRD FOR ALASKA BIRD LISTS

Can getting a new bird for your Alaska List be any easier than this????

This is the Evening Grosbeak birdwatchers observed while looking out Jim and Mary Lou King's front door in Juneau on November 26.



Evening Grosbeak by Molly McCafferty

PUBLIC MARKET THANK YOU!



Juneau Audubon had another successful Public Market. This is one of our two big fund raisers. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped to set up, sell our wares, and clean up after. A really big **Thank You** to Patty Rose, our treasurer, for all the work involved in dealing with the money.

Thanks also to these volunteers: Patty Rose, Kevin O'Malley, Stephanie Mosher, Mary Willson, Bev Agler, Gretchen Bishop, Paul Suchanek, Steve and Helena Zimmerman, Ellen Anderson, Carol, Nancy Waterman, Doris Kirchofer, Jeff Sauer, Linda Nicklin, and Brenda Wright who not only took charge of the

booth this year but also helped make a lot of the jelly and many other things.

We would also like to thank Mary Lou King, the chief jelly maker plus all those who helped her make the jelly. She would also like to thank all those friends who helped weave frogs and deer, make pressed flower note cards, and bird ornaments from beach shells.



Eagle Feather Collection Permits

Did you know you can collect eagle feathers for Juneau Audubon? Actually, we have a permit from US Fish & Wildlife Service to pick up naturally shed eagle feathers. The feathers are sent to the National Eagle Repository in Colorado and distributed from there. Anyone may request eagle feathers, but there is a law stating that native Americans get priority in their requests. Next in priority is education and research, and then the general public. Each request is allotted 6 feathers. The program is designed to reduce poaching of eagles.

Alaska is the home for the majority of bald eagles in the US, but we are not number one in donations to the National Repository. Eagles are protected under several different laws and so you may not keep eagle feathers for yourself but you could help us send more to people who would like to have them. The repository usually has a three year waiting list for feathers.

So if you would like to help out by collecting eagle feathers, please contact Brenda Wright at 321-4739 or membership@juneau-audubon-society.org for a permit.

Juneau Bird Report for November by Patty Rose



Long-Eared Owl by Patty Rose

November produced some interesting rare bird observations. Highlights included a **Long-Eared Owl**, Juneau's second record, located by Bev Agler and Laurie Lamm near the gazebo on the Airport Dike Trail on November 19 (BA, LL, GV, JS, TS, PR, SZ, HZ, MH). Another highlight for November was an **Eastern Yellow Wagtail** seen on the Scout Camp Trail on November 9 (MA, AS). A beautiful adult **Evening Grosbeak** was identified by Mary Lou King at her Sunny Point feeding place November 24 - 27 (MLK, JK, m. obs.).

On November 2, a **Double-Crested Cormorant** was observed on Auke Bay (GV), and two were on Auke Lake on November 13 (GV). Observations of **Yellow-billed Loons** included one from

the Outer Point Trail on November 10 (PS), and one on Auke Bay on November 12 (GV). Gus van Vliet observed a **Western Grebe** on Auke Bay on November 2 (GV), and Paul Suchanek saw one near the mouth of Fish Creek on November 10 (PS). A **Redhead** at the Gold Creek delta on November 26 was the month's only rare duck observation (PS, PR).

Rough-legged Hawk observations included one at Brotherhood Park on November 11 (PR, PS, BA) and one on the Airport Dike Trail on November 19 (HZ, SZ, JS, TS, PR). A juvenile **Golden Eagle** was spotted. A **Western Screech-Owl** November 24 perched for about an hour on a house in the Tee Harbor area and was observed being mobbed by a flock of Steller's Jays (BW, JS).

A **Black-capped Chickadee** first located in September at Sandy Beach was heard November 2 (PS). Another individual started visiting a West Juneau feeder on November 6 and is still present (PR, GV).

A **Mountain Bluebird** visited Sandy Beach on November 12 and was observed feeding on the beach and perching on pilings and brush (fide GV). A **Townsend's Solitaire** was seen on Douglas Island in the Bayview Subdivision on October 28 (SZ), and the observation was not noted in last month's report.

The first **Palm Warbler** of 2011 was seen on the Airport Dike Trail on November 13 (BA, PR). Late observations of common warblers included an **Orange-crowned Warbler** on November 5



*Western Screech-Owl by
Brenda Wright*

at Sandy Beach (PR) and a **Wilson's Warbler** last seen November 13 on the Airport Dike Trail (GV, PR, BA).

A single **Snow Bunting** was reported November 5 on the Airport Dike Trail, and eight were seen at that location on November 20 (PR, BA, LL, MH). A flock of 50 **Snow Buntings** was at Point Bridget State Park on the sand dunes at the mouth of the river on November 9 (PS).

This information was compiled from observations submitted to eBird and Eaglechat. Thanks to those who contributed. Contributors included Bev Agler (BA), Mark Anderson (MA), Mary-Claire Harris (MH), James King (JK), Mary Lou King (MK), Laurie Lamm (LL), Patty Rose (PR), Jeff Sauer (JS), Mark Schwan (MS), Andy Smoker (AS), Paul Suchanek (PS), Theresa Svancara (TS), Gus van Vliet (GV), Brenda Wright (BW), Helena Zimmerman (HZ), and Steve Zimmerman (SZ).

Wrangell Report by Bonnie Demerjian

A flock of 16 Trumpeter swans made their usual autumn appearance at Pat's Lake on November 17 though the lake was nearly frozen. A few days later when it solidly froze they had departed, perhaps for warm springs on the Stikine or Iskut rivers.



Evening Grosbeak – Bonnie Demerjian

Wrangell birders were treated to the sight of an **Evening Grosbeak** on October 21. The bird, which appears to be a juvenile, was voraciously feeding on berries, continuing to feed while being photographed at close distance. This was the second Evening grosbeak seen here this year, the first showing up on September 25. (BD, CR)

Western Grebes usually show up in waters near town this time of year. A flock of around 40 was reported from the north end of Zarembo Island while small numbers have been sighted at Petroglyph Beach and the ferry terminal this month. A single **Red-necked Grebe** was spotted at the beach on November 9. (BD) **Pacific and Common Loons, Marbled Murrelets, Common Murres and Pelagic Cormorants** are also around. (CR, BD)

The number of **Eurasian Collared-doves** continues to grow from last year. A flock of fourteen frequents several feeders on the north end of town. A **Northern Goshawk** lurked near feeders in town attempting to snag one of the doves on November 10, but apparently had no success. A long-dead juvenile was found on the ground in the same area. A third, at Nine-Mile, was spotted last week. (BD, JM)

A few **Black-billed Magpies** generally show up in winter here and this month four were reported scavenging the beach around 2-Mile. (WM, DO)

Observers at a local feeder were amazed to see a **Northern Shrike** land and begin to feed, all the while sharing the feeder with several other small birds, its usual fare. The bird grazed a window, thus accounting for it allowing itself to be held by Dan Churchill. (JC, EC)



Northern Shrike – Jan Churchill

A **Western Meadowlark** made a surprise visit to a feeder on Case Avenue on October 30. (MC)

The recent high winds may have been the reason why observers have found dead birds lying in the street and sidewalks. A Pine siskin, several Dark-eyed juncos and a Varied thrush were all found this way. (GG, BD)



Barred owl – Mark Robinson

A small flock of **Bohemian waxwings** found welcome crab apples still on trees at the post office in mid November. (CR)

Mark Robinson captured a photograph of a **Barred owl** resting in daylight at 8-Mile. A **Northern pygmy owl** has appeared at a feeder in town to check out the foraging Dark-eyed juncos. (CR)

JC=Jan Churchill, EC=Emil Churchill, MC=Marlene Clarke, BD=Bonnie Demerjian, GG=Gail Gross, WM=Walter Moorhead, DO-Diane O'Brian, MR=Mark Robinson, CR=Carol Ross

Haines Report By Pam Randles (Welcome Pam, our new reporter from Haines)

November has seen record breaking snows this year. As of Nov. 28, we have had 130" fall and 70" on the ground. But that has not stopped the eagles from gathering.

Many hundreds of **Bald Eagles** are gathered along the Chilkat River to feed on the late salmon run. The Takshanuk Watershed Council does a weekly count of eagles, but has not been able to do it for three weeks due to snowstorms. Two banded eagles from a study by Steve Lewis, USFWS, have been seen here by several observers. They are eagle 88 and 24, both banded at the Juneau airport. Feeding alongside the eagles are ravens, swans, gulls and mergansers.

Black billed Magpies have moved into town for the winter. Feeders are hosting the usual suspects – **Steller's Jays, Chestnut-Backed Chickadees, Red-Breasted Nuthatches** and

juncos. The Juncos are **Dark-eyed Juncos** of both the Oregon and Slate Backed subspecies. **Barrow's Golden Eyes** are seen in rafts along the coastline.

Haines will be conducting its Christmas Bird Count on December 17. For more information, contact Tim Shields in Haines.

The Tufted Titmouse By Prill (Isleib) Mollick Smoky Mountains, N.C.

The Tufted Titmouse is a small bird with black eyes, round bill, gray crest, light orange or buffy sides, and gray face. They are a soft silvery gray above, white below, with a small black patch just above the bill. They quickly dart in and out of the bird feeders. Although they will eat insects and fruit, the sunflower seed seems to be their favorite. When a titmouse finds the seed it wants it takes it to a perch and cracks it with its bill. Titmice sometimes stash seeds under bark crevices. They often flock together with chickadees, and nuthatches. They are regular visitors to feeders. We see them in this area year round.

It's amusing to watch them at the birdbath. They wait and take turns with other birds. At first there is the approach by standing at the edge of the birdbath and visually checking it out. Then they step into the water. With wings slightly raised outward the head is plunged into the water and quickly brought up causing some water to roll over its back as it pops back up out of the water. It fluffs out the tiny side and abdomen feathers which causes it to look quite plump. It will dip and shake all the feathers and wings several times before flying away to dry off and preen.

A few years ago I fashioned a plastic one quart milk jug with a round port hole on opposite sides and hung it near the front entrance. I half filled it with sunflower seeds, especially for the acrobatic chickadees and tufted titmice to use. During the day they frequent that jug for those seeds. One winter evening upon entering the house after sundown, I discovered a tufted titmouse was roosting inside that jug. He had claimed it for his personal night roost, and used it quite often. (Nothing like "Breakfast in bed")

Ed note: Last month Prill's article was on wild turkeys. I think one of the most amazing and exciting success story is the return of the wild turkey after near extinction. These wild birds were photographed in her brother's yard in North Carolina.



MYSTERY TRACKS

Who do you think lives down this 6 x 6 ½ black hole? Can you see its tracks in the snow?

This mammal is one of our so called hibernators although it also lives at sea level.

Does anyone know of anywhere else in the country this critter lives at sea level?



Road kill Kevin O'Malley

Ten students stand over a dead porcupine but it is the blindfolded girl that everyone is watching. “What is your nose telling you,” I ask the fourth-grade student from Auke Bay elementary school. She responds, “It smells like something is dead.” The rest of the class is silent. The class’s body language shows me they are both grossed out and intrigued by the rotting carcass. One student’s stomach is uneasy and he walks away. It is a seminal moment for the whole group.

Taking away our vision is a way to develop and utilize our other senses. Humans rely on visual cues so much that using senses like touch, hearing and smell can help us make new connections with nature. When the blindfold comes off the student, the class expects an, “Oh that’s gross!” Instead, the girl is curious and examines our find as her eyes adjust to the afternoon light. Following her example, the other students forget their squeamishness and focus. The once uncomfortable fourth-graders are now a group of naturalists that want to know more about the mystery in front of them.

I am as excited as the kids about our find, but I have to remember to ask questions about our ecosystems lesson. Where will the porcupine’s nutrients go? What breaks this animal down? What will happen to the flesh of this animal when we come back here in the spring? A student whispers “bones”. For a second I day-dream about the perfect skeleton and the lessons it will provide. Then I realize the porcupine will not make it until then.

For years, Discovery naturalists have harvested road-killed critters and relocated them to our outdoor classrooms. A decomposing carcass exemplifies fourth-grade lesson objectives on the energy cycle and decomposers. It doesn’t take long before the F.B.I., or fungus, bacteria and invertebrates, move in and begin to redistribute the food energy the porcupine once gleaned from a spruce tree. Recently however, the students and naturalists aren’t the only ones benefiting from the practice. Over the past few years the coyotes behind Auke Bay have discovered my late-fall tactics and have made me rethink my approach to this lesson. In the fall of 2010, a different class headed out to look for the porcupine I placed the night before. As the class arrived at the fresh road kill we were amazed to see that the animal had been delicately chewed apart and its guts spread out in a 30-foot radius. What stood out on the porcupine carcass were the surgically precise cuts on



David

the hind leg. Even for a coyote dissecting a porcupine is tricky business. This surprise provides a new ecological mystery and is the lesson for our young naturalists. As we looked around for answers the student's senses heightened. I asked the students, "How did this porcupine die? Then what happened? Can you find any signs?" The kids scoured the site, weaving around the trunks of the even-aged spruce and hemlock forest.

The coyotes taught this fourth-grade class that there is another piece to this puzzle. Now in the body of the carnivorous scavengers, we wondered where the energy would go next. Referencing our pre-hike classroom session, the students realized some of the critter's nutrients will return to the soil and fertilize the spruce the porcupine thrives on. Will another carnivore hunt the coyote? Will this coyote be scavenged someday too? Hopefully we'll find more clues on our next hike.

It's a 5-minute walk back to the school. A student tells me, "This is the best field trip I have ever done." I am thrilled, and reassured that scooping up stinky dead stuff on the side of the road is worth it. Back in the classroom I always reveal the porcupine's road-side origin. They usually stare at me incredulously for a moment but then seem thankful for the learning the relocation provided. On our next hike, the first place they'll want to visit is the porcupine site. It will likely be covered with snow, but I bet we'll find some coyote tracks to follow.

Go SeaBC Birding with a Boater this December!

Have a friend with a seaworthy sailboat, sportfish or trawler? Convince them to take you out for a sail or motor for the inaugural "SeaBC" Sea Bird Count! It's like a Christmas Bird Count (CBC) or backyard bird count, but where you count birds at sea. Choose your weather day in December and count all the birds you see for a few hours or an entire day.

The SeaBC was created to raise awareness among boaters from around the world to record their seabird observations. The organizers are a group of long-distance sailors from around the world who are also birders. Several of the cruising rallies (such as the ARC, Caribbean 1500 and Baja Ha-Ha) are encouraging participation by their fleet boats.

The central clearinghouse for the data will be Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird website.

For additional information and tally sheets, go to [Facebook.com/Birding.Aboard](https://www.facebook.com/Birding.Aboard) and select "SeaBC/Resources", or email info <at> [birdingaboard.com](mailto:birding@birdingaboard.com).

You may be a landlubber, but if you know birds, team up with a boating friend to add to the count! Or count from this winter's yacht charter or cruise!

CORP PERMIT APPLICATION PETERSBURG Comments on the described work, with the reference number, should reach this office no later than the expiration date December 23 of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact **Ms. Serena Sweet** at (907) 753-2819, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at

APPLICANT: Ms. Mary Flor, Post Office Box 262, Petersburg, Alaska 99833

AGENT: Ms. Tracey Reid, Reid Brothers, Post Office Box 1187, Petersburg, Alaska 99833

LOCATION: The proposed project is located within Section 23, T. 60 S., R. 79 E., Copper River Meridian; USGS Quad Map Petersburg C-3; Latitude 56.6596° N., Longitude 132.9146° W.; Lot 15.5 W.; near Petersburg, Alaska.

PURPOSE: The applicant's stated purpose is to provide residential access.

PROPOSED WORK: Construct an access road measuring 1844-foot long by 17-foot wide toe-to-toe (14-foot wide driving surface) and an access driveway measuring 516-foot long by 14-foot wide toe-to-toe (12-foot wide driving surface). An additional 30-foot long by 12-foot wide parking pad would be constructed at the end of the access driveway adjacent to the last 30-feet of the proposed driveway. A total of 5,301 cubic yards of fill material would be discharge into 0.9 acres of palustrine wetlands habitat. All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-3), dated November 2011.

OTHER WEB OPPORTUNITIES

***New Bob Armstrong's wonderful bird and other wildlife photographs that are free to use for educational and conservation purposes – www.naturebob.com

SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS SEASONALLY

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 observations, 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 bird sightings entered in eBird (www.ebird.org < <http://www.ebird.org/> >)

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Julie Coghill

Vice-President: Jeff Sauer,

Secretary: Julie Koehler,

Treasurer: Patty Rose,

Programs: Jeff Sauer

Membership: Brenda Wright, 789-4656,

Education: Kevin O'Malley,

Conservation: Gwen Baluss

Field Trips: Mark Schwan

Raven Editor: Mary Lou King, 789-7540,

At-large: Linda Nicklin

At-large: Merrill Jensen,

Public Market:

Web Master: George Utermohle,

president@juneau-audubon-society.org

vice-president@juneau-audubon-ociety.org

secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

education@juneau-audubon-society.org

conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org

field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org

raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

at-large_c@juneau-audubon-society.org

at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org

public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

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 newsletter *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

Nonprofit Org. US Postage Paid Juneau, AK 99802 Permit No. 153	Address Service Requested	Juneau Audubon Society PO Box 21725 Juneau, AK 99802
---	---------------------------	--