

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.

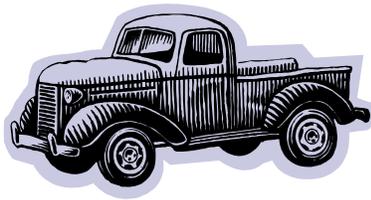


<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

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Juneau Audubon Society November 2012

Juneau Audubon Society November Meeting



Sorry! There will be no program meeting for November. But the board should be firing on all cylinders by December.

Juneau Audubon Society's Annual Meeting Held on October 11, 2012

Forty six people were in attendance and the following officers were elected by 35 members:

Brenda Wright, president
Bev Agler, secretary

Joshua Peters, vice president
Patty Rose, treasurer

Following the election of officers, Flip Nicklin enthusiastically presented a program on how to take photos that tell a story. He talked about the value of what you can see and photograph in your own back yard. His photos illustrated the fine possibilities close to home. Thank you Flip.

A big welcome to Joshua and Bev. Thanks to both of you for stepping up. Also, welcome Doug Jones as Program Chairperson.

After a short break, Mary Lou King will continue as our tireless Raven Editor; Mark Schwan as Field Trips Coordinator; Gwen Baluss as Conservation Chair, and Jeff Sauer and Linda Nicklin as At-large Members.

We will miss our outgoing members, Julie Koehler, Merrill Jensen and Kevin O'Malley, and past President, Julie Coghill. Thanks for all your hard work.

There is now a vacancy for Membership and Education Chair. Please contact a board member if you have an interest in serving.

JUNEAU BIRD REPORT FOR OCTOBER

Article and photos by Mark Schwan

There was a nice mix of birds moving through the Juneau area this past month. If you stayed out of the wind, birding was quite pleasant, but the clear cold nights have rapidly sealed off some of our best freshwater birding sites. One of the best things to happen was the return of Nick Hajdukovich, a terrific young birder. As you read through the notes below, it will be obvious who found most of the best birds over the past month. Again, what follows below was gleaned from eBird and Eaglechat. Readers with internet capabilities should become familiar with the eBird data available for review. It is very extensive for Juneau.



There was a nice opportunity to view and photograph, at close range, the smallest form (*minima*) of **Cackling Goose** at Rotary Pond in the Mendenhall Valley. The bird was present at least during 10/16 through 10/21 (many obs.). A lone **Snow Goose** was hanging with Canada Geese at Eagle Beach from 10/10 at least through 10/18 (many obs.) and other single bird sightings included one on the Wetlands on 10/2 (NH) and another on

Auke Lake on 10/20 (NH). Tundra Swans, though not rare, are often missed and always a treat to see and they showed up pretty much right on schedule with many reports beginning in mid month from a variety of locations.

A **Pied-billed Grebe** was found on Moose Lake (10/23-24, MS, NH) but the open water and bird soon disappeared with the colder weather.

A **Golden Eagle** was spotted along Grandchild Ridge on 10/2 (GB), and Rough-legged Hawks were reported from Eagle Beach on 10/14 (GV) and the Wetlands on 10/20 (LL). Certainly a highlight was the **Gyrfalcon** on the Wetlands on 10/18, swooping down to investigate some duck decoys (NH). The only **Peregrine Falcon** report came from the airport dike trail on 10/3 (AC, NH).

One **American Coot** was found on Moose Lake on 10/12 (NH) and two coots were first reported on the Rotary Pond on 10/13 (GB) and subsequently seen through the month during open water

(many obs.) Another bird was seen on Twin Lakes from 10/17 through at least 10/23 (NH, GV, MS). Patty Rose, on one of her first birding outings after returning from travel, found a **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** along the airport dike on 10/27. This species breeds in the Russian Far East but migrants show up in the fall along the Pacific coast.



Another very nice find was the **Marbled Godwit** at the mouth of Eagle River, first reported on 10/8 (DS). This represents the latest and first fall record for Juneau. The bird was subsequently seen and photographed on 10/10 and 10/11 (MS, NH, GV).

An adult **Ring-billed Gull** was seen at the mouth of Gold Creek on 10/4 (NH) and again on 10/6 (MS).

Anna's Hummingbirds continued to frequent local feeders with one bird still present at a north Douglas feeder through 10/5 (SS) and one to two birds continued almost daily through 10/21 at Gus van Vliet's feeders in Auke Bay. Then, a female appeared at their feeder on 10/27! A **Northern Flicker** was found at Eagle Beach on 10/10 (NH).

Rare "thrushes" included two reports of **Mountain Bluebird**. One near Lawson Creek on Douglas Island on 10/22 (MF), and then two birds spotted near the golf course on 10/24 (MS). Even nicer, a **Townsend's Solitaire**, a very hard bird to find in Juneau, was found on 10/24 at the downtown Evergreen Cemetery (AC). There were several lingering warblers found and one vagrant species. There were at least four reports of **Orange-crowned Warblers** around town during the month (NH, PR). Nick Hajdukovich also found a **Townsend's Warbler** near Lena Point on 10/22 and Gus van Vliet had a **Wilson's Warbler** at his residence in Auke Bay on 10/16-17. The best warbler of the month was certainly the **Palm Warbler** found near Lena Point on 10/22 (NH). This is a very rare fall migrant in Southeast Alaska.

Sparrows worth mentioning include two reports of **Chipping Sparrow**: one at the Shrine of St. Therese on 10/2 (AC) and another that continued into the month at a valley feeding station (GB). A **White-throated Sparrow** was heard near Moose Lake on 10/23 (NH), and a **Harris's Sparrow** was found near Spruce point on 10/5 (NH; photos NH, MS). This appeared to be an adult bird in winter or basic plumage. Most individuals we see here are immature birds.

Finally, given their increasing scarcity, it is worth noting the observations of **Rusty Blackbird** during the month, as there were four reports, with the maximum count of 16 birds at Pioneer Marsh on 10/5 (PR).

Contributors: Gwen Baluss, GB; Amy Courtney, AC; Michael Fleischhauer, MF; Nick Hajdukovich, NH; Patty Rose, PR; David Schmerge, DS; Mark Schwan, MS; Gus van Vliet, GV.

WRANGELL BIRD REPORT by Bonnie Demerjian

Your reporter was out of town most of the past month so has little news except for the unusual sighting of a Spotted Towhee. John Morse spied it in his yard on October 6. While he didn't get a photograph, he was only a few feet from the bird and was able to accurately report its distinctive markings. The Spotted Towhee is a casual visitor to Alaska in spring and fall and very rare in winter. According to Steve Heintz, there are about thirteen previous records for the state including ten in Juneau and one in Ketchikan.

The Spotted Towhee breeds in brushy areas from southern British Columbia and Alberta through California and as far east as west Texas and the mountains of Mexico. Those living west of the Cascades and Sierra Nevadas are resident or weakly migratory, but those from northern interior British Columbia are migratory to either local valleys or long distances, which may explain this bird's appearance in Wrangell.

The birds were combined with the Eastern Towhee into the Rufous-sided Towhee, but are now once again considered a separate species although they interbreed in the Great Plains.

The first Black-billed Magpie of the season turned up at a feeder on Zimovia Highway last week. Generally Wrangell hosts a handful of these birds along the shoreline each winter. A few Eurasian Collared-Doves are sticking around and will probably overwinter as happened last year. Black Turnstones were reported at the Institute Beach.

Just above the U.S. border on the Stikine River, Bill Sampson reported a Marsh Wren near his cabin. He also noted 14 Tundra and 4 Trumpeter Swans. Fourteen Trumpeter Swans were also observed near Wrangell's ferry dock.

From Out of Town TURKEY & BLACK VULTURES

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

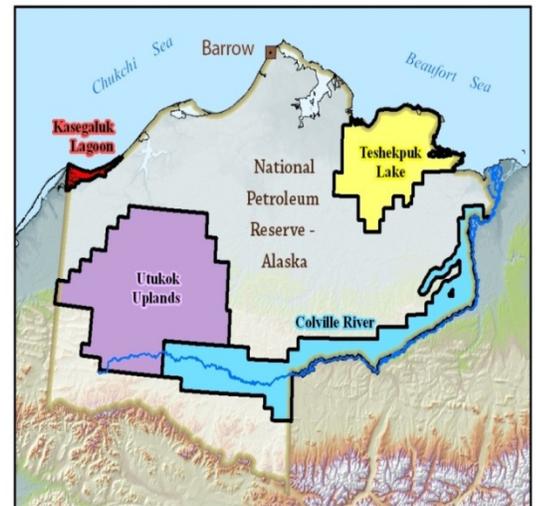
Both Turkey Vultures and Black Vultures are in this area. We see them year round, usually soaring quite high. They like to ride the thermal air currents. We sometimes see them on the roads where they feed on small animals that were hit by vehicles. Turkey Vultures appear two-toned, dark brown/black with a featherless red head and pale bill. The undersides of the flight feathers are paler, giving that two-toned silvery appearance. They usually soar with wings held up in a V, and flap very infrequently. Black Vultures have a dark gray/black featherless head. They have shorter wider tails than the Turkey Vultures. They hold their wings nearly flat, not

like the Turkey Vulture's V-shaped posture. It is more southern and the Black Vulture flaps its wings rather frequently as it soars. Black Vultures have white outer feathers on their wing tips and the rest of the wing is jet black.

Final Push for Teshekpuk Lake: the Crown Jewel of the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska

Rumor has it there will be big news for the Arctic this November as the Bureau of Land Management will release its final management plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

On August 13, 2012, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar announced the proposed “preferred alternative” for managing the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska as part of creating the first-ever area-wide management plan. This alternative, called “B2”, would make several Special Areas, including the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area (a globally-significant Important Bird Area), off-limits for oil and gas leasing. Overall, the B2 alternative provides a responsible balance that would protect about half of the nearly 23-million acre Reserve while still allowing for the vast majority of the area's oil to be accessed.



The Reserve encompasses an immense and spectacular Arctic ecosystem that provides critical habitat for many species of fish and wildlife. This vast landscape has remained largely unchanged in character over millennia with globally significant wildlife and wilderness values. Four “Special Areas” have been designated in the Reserve by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in recognition of their wildlife and natural values: Teshekpuk Lake, Colville River, Kasegaluk Lagoon, and the Utukok River Uplands. None of them, however, has permanent protection (See Map).

The wetlands along the northern edge of the Reserve teem with life during the summer. An epicenter of this activity is the wetland maze surrounding Teshekpuk Lake. This biological hotspot provides essential habitat for the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Herd and hundreds of thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds. Bird species that breed here migrate to places across the Lower 48 and to six continents—some of the birds you see in your backyard may have been fledged in the Reserve!

This fall, we have an unprecedented opportunity to help protect these extraordinary areas. The BLM is working on a Reserve-wide source management plan that could help protect the area surrounding Teshekpuk Lake, by designating it as not available for oil and gas leasing under the B2 alternative. **Your voice will be critical** in one last comment period! Visit www.AudubonAlaska.org for more information on sending in your comments.

State Stalls Resolving Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Jet Boat Complaint

Nancy Berland nancy@riverswithoutborders.org

A lack of state agency monitoring and enforcement of a commercial jet boat tour with a history of violating permit stipulations led Haines conservationists to document that a no-wake provision instituted to protect a high-value salmon rearing habitat inside the Eagle Preserve was repeatedly violated in July and August of this year. Lynn Canal Conservation (LCC) filed a formal complaint on September 7th that was supported by Alaska Audubon, Trout Unlimited, the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, and Rivers Without Borders. The state has yet to act on that complaint.

Both state administrative code and the tour operator's permit have serious penalties for violations, including fines, and permits suspension or revocation. Past violations in this same Chilkat channel were documented by the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and LCC. Instead of imposing penalties on the operator, the state instead installed a No Wake Zone sign in the channel, claiming that would prevent further violations from occurring.

Prior to instituting the No Wake Zone, ADF&G funded field studies that showed that large wakes created by twin 150 horsepower outboards were eroding critical habitat.

Conservation groups hope the state will enforce its management plan, statutes, and permit stipulations in the exceptional habitat inside the Eagle Preserve.



COMING

Juneau Public Market November 23, Friday through November 25, Sunday. Visit the Juneau Audubon booth. We will be selling our own home made berry jelly, jams, and syrups. Hand crafted ornaments will also be on sale. Want to help taking a turn for a couple of hours at our booth? Leave information at education@juneau-aububon-society.org.

WEB OPPORTUNITIES

*** 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/>>)

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You will receive the National Audubon Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

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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 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

