

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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January 2015

GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY JANUARY 8, 7:00 p.m., EGAN ROOM, CENTENNIAL HALL

BIRDING AT GAMBELL (Sivuqaq), ALASKA with Mark Schwan

For our January program, Mark Schwan will show some pictures and talk about why birding at Gambell (Sivuqaq), Alaska is so fascinating. Birders have been going there for decades to see unusual species and to witness amazing numbers of seabirds, as well as having an opportunity to visit a Siberian Yupik village in one of the most remote parts of North America.



PROGRAMS FOR 2015

February 12: Dr. Sanjay Pyare – Aleutian Tern Tracking

March 12: Nature Clips – Bob Armstrong and Doug Jones

April: Overview of festivals around SE and AK presented by people who attended in the past.

June: Saturday Wild trips to be announced

Huge New Year's Pine Siskin Party

Wed Dec 31, 2014 12:16 pm (PST) . Posted in Eaglechat by: "Gwen Baluss"

I happened to go down Riverside road this morning and ran into, literally, a giant siskin group. They were congregating in the road, probably licking salt, near the big bend/ speed bumps/ school zone towards Loop Rd. Estimated flock of about 500 individuals just in that vicinity, with what looked like more over towards the river and behind the new church. This is interesting since this last spring/summer/fall siskins seemed relatively sparse compared to the crossbill influxes. Did not see any injured birds.. yet.. thanks to those who drive SLOW!

Our Favorite (Birding) Things By (John) Alan and Ann Doty As we participated in the 2014 Christmas Bird Count in Juneau, we realized how much we have learned this year and in the past 5 years of birding. Much of what we use and do now has been passed along to us through friends, birding festivals, and magazine articles. We want to share our favorite things which make our birding experiences even better. We hope you will share yours too!

Birding Websites:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology: www.ebird.org - www.allaboutbirds.org - www.birds.cornell.edu/courses

Sharon Stiteler: (Author of *1001 SECRETS EVERY BIRDER SHOULD KNOW*)
www.birdchick.com

Birdsong Mnemonics: www.1000plus.com/BirdSong/birdsong

Birding apps for smartphones:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Birdlog World (mobile ebird)

BirdsEye (comprehensive birding resource)

Hotspots (locate nearby birding sites nationwide)

Daily Bird (new bird picture and info FREE)

Merlin (excellent for ID for our beginning birding friends)

Weatherbug (all you want to know about weather)

Masterbirder/ Larkwire (bird song game)

BEGINNING BIRDERS - A Community School Course

Adults and teens can soon sign up for a birding course that starts February 5th at Harborview Elementary (town). Time 7:00-8:30 on Thursdays. The course is designed for beginners and covers in four meetings these topics: the interesting business of being a bird; ID tools; and specific identification of common birds in our area, winter and breeding seasons. Examples: Juneau is the Hawaii winter vacation spot for crossbills. This winter more Red Crossbills than White-winged Crossbills have been seen; The Golden-crowned Kinglet is a permanent resident with a call that registers so very thin and high; and Warblers travel here in the spring, many in spanking yellow outfits.

Plenty of hands-on material. The instructor is Patricia Wherry, Education Chair: I have fun teaching the class which probably means participants learn and have a good time.

The course will be repeated in the valley at Riverbend starting March 12th. You are welcome to contact me education@juneau-audubon-society.org for more information.

http://www.edlinesites.net/pages/Juneau_School_District/District/Community_Schools/COMMUNITY_SCHOOL_CLASSES

16TH ALASKA BIRD CONFERENCE

16th Alaska Bird Conference by Brenda Wright -- The 16th Alaska Bird Conference was held in Juneau, December 9-11, 2014. There were over 40 scientific papers and 20 posters presented at the conference. The conference drew more than 100 students, scientists, educators, and researchers from across the state and the Pacific coast. Included in the conference sessions were climate change, breeding ecology, disease/contaminants, foraging ecology, movement ecology, and populations and distributions. If you go to the web page http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/Alaska_Bird_Conference/Home.html, you can see the full program and also get the abstracts. A special fund raising event by Juneau Audubon, Audubon Anchorage, and ADF&G enabled us to film the keynote speaker, Gerrit Vyn, for 360 North. If you would like to see this presentation you can enjoy it online at <http://www.360north.org/events/alaska-bird-conference-2014-keynote-address-gerrit-vyn/> (You may have to wait for an update on the site, the presentation would not open for me).

A special thanks to the local organizing committee: Anne Sutton, Kelly Nesvacil, Mike Goldstein, and Brenda Wright. The scientific committee reviewed all the abstract submissions and made the schedule of talks, ring leaders were John Pearce, Julie Hagelin, Abby Powell, Debbi Nigro, and Steve Lewis. And also a special thank you to the sponsors for the donations of time, money, and effort: US Forest Service, ADF&G, Audubon Alaska, North Pacific Research Board, Pacific Coast Joint Venture, Ducks Unlimited, ABR, Inc., Juneau Audubon Society, and St. Hubert Research Group.

What's new in Alaska bird studies: highlights from December's conference by Gwen Baluss -- The talks were too numerous to describe, but I'll share a few themes that I found to be particularly interesting.

We bird banders used to say there are no little devices to put on small birds to track them, but that has changed. Geolocators fit on a bird's leg or back and simply log when it is light and dark. If that tag can be retrieved (usually by going back to a nesting area and re-trapping an individual) a world map of where the bird went can be drawn with the help of computer software.

After a few years this technology has shed amazing insight into migratory pathways. We watched how Olive-sided flycatchers from Alaska zipped down to Northwestern South America, using different routes, including one that was down the spine of Mexico's Sierra Madre; and that, like our Rufous hummingbirds they follow a looped migration, using a more eastern path going south and a west coast path back north.

Light was shed on a long-standing mystery: the winter zones for Aleutian terns. Tagged birds from Yakutat revealed one-way distances of over 10,000 mi to and from a wide area between Southeast Asia and Austral-Asia with primary destinations of Indonesia, Philippines, and Papua New Guinea.

Shorebirds, especially those who leave the Americas in winter, revealed important stopover sites. One, the Yellow Sea, is in imminent danger. Wetlands filling there, in addition to threats like hunting and contaminants make many species' migration even more difficult for species like the Bar-tailed Godwit.

Larger tags have eagles emailing their data to researchers, who then mapped golden eagles funneling down a newly discovered migratory path down the remote Mentasta mountains, and Bald eagles dispersing all over the place looking for fish and other food sources.

Another hot topic has been the use of isotope analysis to study food webs as they change in the arctic. Shifts and crashes are occurring in the Northern Seas, perhaps because of climate change.

Students studying seabird diet the old fashioned way via dissection made a gruesome discovery: some birds' stomachs were full of plastic, a state that can make the bird starve or leach disruptive chemicals into its system as the plastic passes.

Meanwhile, there is an amazing body of data thanks to rank and file agency biologists, contractors and students from grade school up to PhD candidates, and ordinary birders busily counting all kinds of birds, recording data, and working together to elucidate some of the mystery surrounding bird populations and habitat needs.

And finally, there was the great keynote talk by Gerrit Vyn. What a privilege to see footage of Spoon-billed Sandpiper chicks!

An Exciting Bird Conference by Jim King – When I congratulated Brenda Wright for organizing a particularly exciting bird conference, she asked if I could say why I thought that at the banquet. It turned out there was no time at the banquet but here is what I would have said.

During 1961 to 1964, when I was the first refuge manager for the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge in Western Alaska, I found several huge seabird nesting colonies that were not recorded in the bird literature. There was no seabird program even though commercial activity and shipping were increasing in seabird habitat. Good seabird information is available today.

When I was in charge of the first year of studies of waterfowl in North America's grandest Arctic sun bowl that would be flooded out if the proposed Rampart Dam was built, I sensed that nesting passerine birds were more varied and dense than elsewhere in Alaska. No studies of passerine birds on those Yukon Flats were done or included in the Rampart Report.

During my career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1951 to 1985), no girls were ornithologists in Alaska except Professor Brina Kessel at the University. Otherwise the girls were secretaries who typed our reports and publications, correcting spelling and grammar, managed oral communication on the telephone and the statewide radio system that connected planes in the air, boats at sea, cars on the road all from the statewide offices. They were immensely important though their names were not included on nationally important documents they perfected for the guys.

So I thought it was exciting to see the range of papers in Brenda's conference – shorebirds 11, raptors 7, passerines 8, seabirds 6 and waterfowl 5 plus some habitat papers.

And it was particularly exciting to see the number of young ladies presenting the results of their scientific studies of so many Alaska birds. Good job everyone.



Deanna MacPhail

Juneau's 2014 Christmas Bird Count by Mark Schwan

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count for 2014 was held on December 14. We had mild weather with virtually no snow cover but standing fresh waters were mostly frozen. Thirty field observers and several feeder watchers found 71 species and 7,199 individual birds on count day, plus an additional eight species were located during the other days of our count week (see attached table). Our total count of individual birds was the lowest in nearly 30 years, which included an all-time low count for Surf Scoter. Other water species were in low numbers and the



Nick Hajdukovich

Glaucaus-winged Gull count was likely affected by the fact that the count was held on a Sunday, and the landfill was not operating. Gull, eagle and raven numbers in the immediate Lemon Creek area were lower than usual.

The biggest highlight of the count day was the Long-eared Owl found by Deanna and Brian MacPhail on the west side of the Mendenhall River near the end of Industrial Blvd. This species had never been seen on a Christmas Bird Count anywhere in Alaska. Other highlights included a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk and American Kestrel, both birds that have continued to linger in our area. Several Anna's



Nick Hajdukovich

Hummingbirds have been frequenting local feeders this fall but only one was seen on count day. A very late Orange-crowned Warbler seen several times along the airport dike trail prior to the count day, ended up being a count week species.

Again, the bird tally and potluck were held after the count at the home of Debi Ballam and Mark Schwan. As always, it was a great way to end the day. Thanks to all who participated.

Juneau Christmas Bird Count Results on next page

Species	2014 Count		
Canada Goose	562	Common Murre	22
Gadwall	19	Pigeon Guillemot	1
American Wigeon	10	Marbled Murrelet	58
Mallard	2,057	Eurasian Collared-Dove	cw
Northern Shoveler	4	Rock Pigeon	72
Northern Pintail	12	Long-eared Owl	1
Green-winged Teal	20	Short-eared Owl	2
Greater Scaup	180	Great Horned Owl	cw
Lesser Scaup	5	Anna's Hummingbird	1
Unidentified Scaup	104	Belted Kingfisher	1
Harlequin Duck	135	Downy Woodpecker	1
Surf Scoter	149	Hairy Woodpecker	cw
White-winged Scoter	74	Northern Shrike	3
Black Scoter	4	Steller's Jay	27
Unidentified Scoters	3	Black-billed Magpie	20
Long-tailed Duck	2	Northwestern Crow	344
Bufflehead	99	Common Raven	195
Common Goldeneye	83	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	148
Barrow's Goldeneye	94	Unidentified Chickadees	1
Unidentified Goldeneyes	22	Red-breasted Nuthatch	3
Hooded Merganser	6	Brown Creeper	1
Common Merganser	48	Pacific Wren	7
Red-breasted Merganser	83	American Dipper	3
Unidentified Mergansers	23	Golden-crowned Kinglet	25
Pacific Loon	4	American Robin	1
Common Loon	10	Varied Thrush	3
Yellow-billed Loon	cw	European Starling	61
Unidentified Loons	4	Bohemian Waxwing	2
Horned Grebe	12	Orange-crowned Warbler	cw
Red-necked Grebe	5	American Tree Sparrow	cw
Pelagic Cormorant	11	Fox Sparrow	2
Great Blue Heron	3	Song Sparrow	9
Bald Eagle	98	White-crowned Sparrow	2
Northern Goshawk	cw	Golden-crowned Sparrow	1
Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk	1	Dark-eyed Junco	240
American Kestrel	1	Snow Bunting	2
Killdeer	1	Red-winged Blackbird	12
Dunlin	200	Pine Grosbeak	12
Wilson's Snipe	1	Red Crossbill	238
Mew Gull	55	White-winged Crossbill	29
Herring Gull	cw	Unidentified Crossbills	40
Glaucous-winged Gull	726	Common Redpoll	12
GW x Herring Gull hybrid	1	Pine Siskin	553
Glaucous Gull	1	Count Day Species	71
Unidentified Gulls	112	Total Individuals	7,199
		Additional CW Species	8

The Silhouette By Prill Isleib Mollick, Smoky Mountains, N.C.

Birds flying near homes with large picture windows can easily mistake the reflection of the trees on the window for the real forest. In their confusion they might fly against the window.

The silhouette of a hawk in flight, on a picture window really helps to make them change their flight path.

One afternoon, years ago in south eastern Pennsylvania, we heard a loud crash like the sound of an explosion and the sound of shattering glass, coming from a back bedroom. Upon entering the room I saw dime sized pieces of glass everywhere in the room. The closet door was open and there on the closet floor was a beautiful male ring-necked pheasant. It was motionless but alive and seemed quite stunned.

I put on a pair of heavy work gloves and picked up the pheasant. I took it outside and held it up looking out toward the back field. After a few minutes it became quite alert so I gently tossed it up into the air and it flew off toward the field. If I had the silhouette on the window in those days it might not have happened. It was a long time before I found all those tiny pieces of glass.

A couple years ago I traced a hawk silhouette from a field guide picture and enlarged the sketch to a size of a small hawk. I then backed it with black construction paper and attached it to the middle of a large picture window.

Several times I have observed birds flying toward that window and in midflight they “put on the breaks” and fly off in a different direction. The silhouette of a hawk on the window really helps.

Title: A Chin Scratcher By Patricia Wherry Something to scratch your chin about: This <http://www.livescience.com/49184-permafrost-disappears-from-alaska.html> is a link to an online article by "LiveScience" that concerns the melting of permafrost in northern Alaska. It's not new news.

What changes will the melting of permafrost bring to beasts and breeding birds! It's with a mixed feeling of sadness and curiosity to ponder. Changes may happen quickly; creatures live in the north already on the edge of extremes. Adaptation may be timely for some and not for others. Adaptation is already happening whether we humans can measure it or not.

Solid ground melts to swamps. Consider the increase of insects, high protein food, for birds. Plenty of ground nesters in that area - will they start to build floating platforms? Will courting displays change with all that water underfoot? How quickly might deciduous shrubs and trees appropriate an area more favorable to them? Will this be new housing for birds? Visualize caribou pushed by flooded ground to small high aeries. Will the changes be hardest on mammals? Are we moving into a beaver heyday?

There is no specific hour and minute for tipping point change. Lives will be lost, altered, and make gains, mourned and extremely interesting at once.

From “What’s Up 12/26/14

****January 9** Comments are due on the Div. of Forestry’s **PRELIMINARY DECISION** regarding the sale of the commercial **TIMBER COFFMAN COVE TIMBER SALE** located on Prince of Wales Island, approximately 1 mile south of the city of Coffman Cove. This decision will set out the facts and applicable policies upon which the Director bases his determination that the proposed timber sale will or will not best serve the interest of the State. Access to the sale area is provided by Alaska Route 7 and adjoining USFS roads. The units vary in size and encompass a total of 1,628 acres. This volume will be negotiated and sold in the form of one or multiple large sales. The sale(s) will require in-state manufacture and will be a negotiated contract. The State will utilize a request for proposal (RFP) process to determine the parties with whom to negotiate and sell the timber. Copies of the preliminary decision are available for review at the Division of Forestry at the above address and at the Ketchikan, Craig, Petersburg and Wrangell Public Libraries. For more information or to submit comments, contact Clarence Clark at 907-225-6619 or email clarence.clark@alaska.gov.

****January 5 JUNEAU- THE JUNEAU-DOUGLAS FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE** will hold a public meeting at the Egan Building at UAS Campus at 6pm. Agenda items will include: Finfish Proposals and Elections (possibly). For more information, contact Frances Leach at 907-465-4046 or email frances.leach@alaska.gov

****January 7 – JUNEAU** — Open House from 4:30 to 5:30pm; Presentation from 5:30 to 6pm; Testimony from 6 to 8pm in the Dept. of Environmental Conservation’s Large Conference Room.

DEC proposes to reissue two APDES general permits to Log Transfer Facilities (LTFs) in Alaska. The general permits authorize and set conditions on the discharge of pollutants from LTFs to waters of the United States located in the State of Alaska. The general permits area of coverage includes marine waters of the U.S. located in the State of Alaska extending west from the Alexander Archipelago through the central Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound to Kodiak Island. The LTF general permits authorize the discharge of bark and wood debris to marine waters of the U.S. located in the State of Alaska within site-specific project areas at each LTF. The LTF general permits propose to authorize discharges for each LTF within the area described in a Department of Natural Resources or other land management authority’s tidelands permit, lease or easement. Description of Discharge: The LTF general permits authorize the discharge of bark and wood debris to marine waters of the U.S. located in the State of Alaska within site-specific project areas at each LTF. The LTF general permits propose to authorize discharges for each LTF within the area described in a Department of Natural Resources or other land management authority’s tidelands permit, lease or easement. Zone of Deposit: The LTF general permits include a zone of deposit for underwater accumulation of bark and woody debris within the project area at LTFs. The APDES draft permit, fact sheet, and associated documents are available at <http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wwdp/PublicNotice.htm>. For more information or to submit comments, contact Chris Foley at 99501-2671 or email Chris.foley@alaska.gov.

PETERSBURG – The Petersburg **FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE** will hold a public meeting in the Assembly Chambers at 6pm. Agenda will include: Elections and discussion of Finfish Proposals before the Board of Fisheries. For more information, contact Nissa Pilcher at 907.459.7263 or email nissa.pilcher@alaska.gov.

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

For more bird information, subscribe to North American Birds, here is a link to see more information: <http://www.aba.org/nab> < <http://www.aba.org/nab> > .

Birds in a Digital World

APP: · **Merlin Bird ID:** An incredibly easy-to-use app designed for beginners. Takes you step-by-step through the process of identifying the bird you are looking at, and gives you results specific to your geographic location and time of year! Developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. **Available for:** iOS and Android

website: **eBird:** A trove of world-wide bird sightings mapped out using Google Earth, this expansive resource shows citizen science at its finest. Any person can access reports of virtually any species from an hour ago to fifty years ago. An easy way to peruse recent local sightings, it also shows bar charts of when you're likely to see a given species in your area. You can also use it to keep track of your own sightings! **Web address:** www.ebird.org

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PICK CLICK GIVE PROGRAM – PFD We will again participate in the Alaska Permanent Fund dividend *Pick Click Give* Program beginning in 2015. It provides an easy and secure way to support birding interests. When applying for your PFD at <http://pfd.alaska.gov/>, please consider joining me and just pick and click to give to Juneau Audubon Society. As a whole group, we appreciate and benefit from continued member support through: Pick Click & Give, membership dues, assistance with leading activities, and serving on the board. Thank you Patricia Wherry, Education Chair

Too much paper mail from the National Audubon Society? You can ask to be taken off the mass mailing list: Email Customer Service audubon@emailcustomerservice.com or call 1-800-272-4201 Opting out of extra mailings will not stop magazine subscription.

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*.

\$35 Basic renewal ___

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___ My check for \$ _____ is enclosed ___ Please bill me C3ZA510Z A51

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

