

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 41, Number 6

Juneau Audubon Society

February 2015

Flight to Adventure Free Public Presentation

February 12, 2015

7 p.m. at Centennial Hall - Egan Room



Global Surf Addicts: A Journey from Yakutat to Sumatra and Papua New Guinea with Aleutian Terns - Dr. Sanjay Pyare

Our multi-agency program includes ongoing research on the distribution, abundance, and migration of this enigmatic and charismatic species,

with a future emphasis on increasing our basic understanding of its relationship to marine food resources and productivity.

PROGRAMS FOR 2015

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



President's Message: More Is Merrier by Gwen Baluss

JAS has a small volunteer board and a great group of folks who help out every year with events like the public market and field trips. We do our best to keep up with our normal activities: monthly programs, field trips, newsletter, education and outreach, tracking local conservation issues, etc. But sometimes it's a stretch when we have board vacancies and people out of town, not to mention the challenges of jobs, families and health issues and the like. But there is no reason we can't do better, and accomplish more. And that's where you come in. Ever thought about volunteering? Maybe know a student who needs some resume-building skills? Here are some examples of things that we'd love to have volunteers to assist with. Note that you don't need to be an accomplished birder to be helpful to Audubon; also that some tasks can be done in a virtual environment having a vehicle or even living in Juneau is no longer a requisite.

- Facebook page and outreach to youth and young adults
- Writing articles for the newsletter
- Formatting educational materials
- Help with booths at local events
- Help with school programs and beginning birding classes
- Checking public notices for local land use proposals that might affect birds and bird habitat

We're open to other creative ideas too! Contact Gwen at president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Tracks and Signs Walk

Want to learn how to identify the tracks and signs of our local fauna? Join us on a walk of discovery led by local naturalists Mary Willson and Kathy Hocker. Snowshoes or skis are recommended depending on the depth of the snow. The walk will be snow dependent, so if there's no snow by then, the event will be cancelled. Please check our website at juneau-audubon-society.org the day before for the final word.

Saturday, February 28th,
from 10am-1pm at the old
SAGA lodge. Directions
will be on our website later.
(Deer tracks in the snow).



New Window into Birds

Explore the world of birds with Audubon's completely re-imagined website: www.audubon.org.

You'll find the stunning photographs that you've come to expect from Audubon magazine along with a wealth of web-exclusive material.

http://www.audubonaction.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=51561.0=

NOVICE BIRDERS SPOTTED AT COMMUNITY SCHOOL by Patricia Wherry

Juneau Audubon is offering a course on beginner birding through Community Schools. A course of 5 classes will start Thursday evenings in town on February 5 from 7-8:30pm. Preregistration online at Juneau Community Schools is preferred as the class size is limited.

The course will be repeated in the valley beginning March 26.

Beginning Birders is open to teens and adult novice birders. There will be a lot of hands on activities. We have fun!

For additional specifics contact education@juneau-audubon-society.org.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT 2015

By Brenda Wright, Juneau Audubon

Great Backyard Bird Count February 13-16, 2015: The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a great way for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with nature and make a difference for birds. It's free and easy. To learn more about how to join the count visit <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>. The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

Have you ever heard of Citizen Science? All it takes is a person with an interest in birds. Do you have a bird feeder? Then you can be a citizen scientist and add to the information on our winter bird populations. With input from more people, a really large data set teaches us more about how birds survive our winter weather. Great Backyard Bird Counts occur all over North America. You can compare what you see in your yard or neighborhood with other parts of the city, state, or continent! GBBC checklists can be accepted from anywhere in the world! Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.



Photo by Doug Jones

Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website, at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/>. The fun really begins when you explore the web site and learn more about individual species or what bird populations are doing all over the country. The interactive maps are updated constantly. They even have helpful identification tips. So if you enjoy birds, join the count. You can participate from your home or anywhere outside. Hope to see your count for Juneau.

Southeast Alaska Bird Festivals for Spring 2015-

Come travel with us! by Steve James

The Juneau Audubon Society is trying to gauge interest in a couple of possible group trips to Wrangell for the Stikine River birds at the end of April and to Yakutat for the TernFest at the end of May.

This year's Stikine River Birding Festival will be held 04/30-05/03. However, one of the Wrangell guiding companies (Alaska Charters And Adventures) has offered to let the JAS know when the cranes have arrived and when the shorebirds have arrived, and to arrange a special trip for the JAS



up the Stikine to view them. They would let us know when the birds have arrived, and we could take the Thursday night ferry or fly to Wrangell to go viewing when we know the birds are there. Alaska Charters just needs to know how many people would be interested in a short-notice trip like this, to see if they can arrange something suitable and affordable. Photo of arctic terns by Merrill Jensen

The Yakutat TernFest will be held 05/28-31 this year, and we're interested in seeing how many JAS members and friends would be interested in attending that birding and wildlife festival. If enough people indicate their interest, we will try to get a group rate with Alaska Airlines (we can probably get a group rate with them with 10 or more people), and also get a shared van and maybe some group-rate accommodations.

At this early stage, we're not looking for firm commitments from anyone; we would just like to know how many people would be interested in either or both birding trips so we can see what sort of group rates we can leverage. If you are interested, please send an email to at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org and let us know which group trip (Wrangell or Yakutat or both) you are interested in and how many people would be participating.

Juneau Bird Report By Amy Courtney

January in Juneau looked pretty much the same as it did the few months prior— dark, brown, and mostly snowless. Luckily for us, a few more species than normal seem to be trying to winter here because of it. A local favorite is a **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** that has been overwintering since October, and can regularly be seen perched near Egan Drive between Temsco and Sunny Point. Getting a glimpse of it as one puttters by on the highway is a quick way to brighten a dreary day.

Gadwall are common here in very small numbers and in just a couple locations, so finding forty-six at Sheep Creek Delta on 1/9 was a surprise, and seems to be a new high count for the area

(GV). A female **Northern Shoveler** on the Mendenhall Wetlands on 1/11 was unusual for this time of year also (GV). On the 17th, Patty Rose photographed a female **King Eider** diving with a raft of Surf Scoters in Gastineau Channel near First Street in Douglas. Many others were able to spot and photograph this golden arctic vagrant through the 18th. Around here a person is lucky to see one **Black Scoter** among hundreds of Surf and White-winged Scoters, but Gus van Vliet saw five of them in Auke Bay on 1/15. Numerous **Pacific Loons** have been reported, but surprisingly only a couple of **Common Loons**. On 1/10, Laurie Lamm scoped a **Yellow-billed Loon** off Point Louisa, and the same day Gus van Vliet saw an immature **Red-throated Loon** in Auke Bay. A **Double-crested Cormorant** was seen in the Douglas boat harbor on 1/19 (DM), and again on 1/24 (PR). An immature **Glaucous Gull**, continuing since October, was reported again at the dock in front of Taku Smokeries on 1/9 (GV). **Herring Gulls** are unusual in the winter around here, so on 1/15 a second-cycle bird flying overhead near Auke Bay was a surprise (GV).

The “best” owl of the month by far was a **Long-eared Owl** seen out on the Mendenhall Wetlands near the golf course on 1/9 (GV, LL). This very rare bird was first spotted last November by Brad Benter, and subsequently found by Deanna MacPhail during our Christmas Bird Count, making it the first **Long-eared Owl** on any Alaska CBC! Up to four **Short-eared Owls** have been seen haunting the wetlands also, but the fact that they are diurnal raptors (hunting by day) means that they are much easier to see than the Long-eared. Two **Great Horned Owls** were heard this month; one on Back Loop on 1/1 (DR), and the other in a neighborhood near the Mendenhall Campground on 1/23 (AP). On 1/4 Gwen Baluss heard two **Northern Saw-whet Owls** conversing in a Wren Drive neighborhood, and on 1/9 Alexia Kiefer photographed a **Barred Owl** perched on a post on Bresee Street.

Very rare in winter, a **Peregrine Falcon** was spotted flying over the lower Mendenhall River on 1/3 by Patty Rose and Bev Agler. On 1/23, Laurie Lamm found a flock of eight **Rusty Blackbirds** in a tree near the Airport Dike Trail. Reports of **Eurasian Collared-doves** have been few and far between this winter, but John Doty saw one in an Auke Bay neighborhood on the 2nd. On 1/18, a **White-throated Sparrow** was spotted among a flock of juncos on Old Glacier Highway above Design North (PR, BA).

While quite common in the spring, summer, and fall, **Orange-crowned Warblers** are extremely rare here in the winter, since the farthest north that they regularly winter is northern California. A continuing bird of the *celata* subspecies, first discovered with a flock of juncos on the Airport Dike Trail in early December (NH, LD), was re-found on 1/3 (PR, BA); and a subspecies *lutescens* bird was seen in a yard on Julep St. many times between 12/28 and 1/6 (AC). Two **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were spotted on 1/18, but in very different places—one on the Kaxdigoowu Heen Dei (Brotherhood Bridge Trail) by Patty Rose and Bev Agler, and the other near the Douglas boat harbor by Laurie Lamm.

It is interesting that we have had fewer reports of overwintering **Anna’s Humingbirds** this year, even though the weather has been considerably warmer than the past few years. Only two have been reported this month—an adult and an immature male, both on River Road.

An unusual number of varied thrush=61! were seen at Auke Bay again on 1/3 (BW).

Thanks to the following people who shared their bird sightings on eBird and Facebook: Bev Agler (BA), Gwen Baluss (GB), Amy Courtney (AC), Luke DeCicco (LD), Nick Hajdukovich (NH), Alexia Kiefer, Laurie Lamm (LL), Deanna MacPhail (DM), Amy Pinney (AP), Patty Rose (PR), Deb Rudis (DR), Gus van Vliet (GV).

Photo of Varied Thrush by Merrill Jensen



Smoky Mountains, N.C. Christmas Bird Count By Prill (Isleib) Mollick

On January 3, a rainy Saturday, 30 volunteers participated in the Christmas Bird Count. This year's count resulted in 63 species being spotted. There was a total of 6,054 birds counted across a 15-mile area in our community. Birds seen this year of special interest were two **Green-Winged Teal**, two **Rusty Blackbirds**, four **Hooded Mergansers** and a **Snow Goose**. Last year's count was of 60 different species with a total of 4,270 birds.

In a neighboring community of bird watches they saw 41 species, 2 less than last year, and the total number of birds seen decreased by 99, to 977. Some of their delights were seeing a large flock of **Pine Siskins**, five species of woodpeckers which included the **Pileated** and two **Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers**. They also noted a **Hermit Thrush**, 25 **Hooded Mergansers** a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, and **Golden-crowned Kinglets** with males flashing their golden-edged, scarlet crowns.

This winter in my own back yard there has been a huge flock of **Pine Siskins** mixed with **Gold Finch** and **Purple Finch**. They have been emptying the bird feeders every day.

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 ____

Name _____

Address _____

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Telephone number _____

____ 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

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