

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 7

Juneau Audubon Society

March 2015

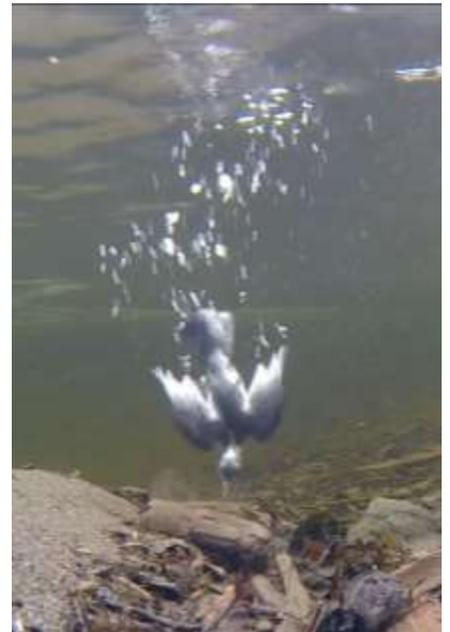
GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, March 12, 7:00 p.m.

University of Alaska Southeast Recreation Center (Go around the circle at Auke Bay, go north on the Back Loop Road turn left directly across from the entrance to the main campus)

Nature Clips - Using video to show some of nature's complexities

If a picture is worth a 1,000 words, what is a video worth? Hopefully we will answer that in the presentation.

Bob Armstrong and Doug Jones explore using video to show just some of nature's rich diversity. Watch video clips for everything from insects to bears and diving songbirds to harbor seals chasing salmon. For example, click this link to see a Nature Clip: **The Pagophilic Rock Sandpiper** <https://vimeo.com/117079243>
What do you think Pagophilic means?



Bob Armstrong

"Announcing the first monthly JAS Bird ID Quiz!
Beginning this month we will be including a bird identification quiz photo in every Raven newsletter. If you know the answer, please email Amy at field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org and we will include the names of those who guessed correctly (along with the answer) in the next newsletter. For more frequent bird quizzes, visit our Juneau Audubon Society Facebook page!"

April 16 – 7:00 p.m. General Meeting, Southeast Bird Festivals, Centennial Hall

2015 GREAT AMERICAN ARCTIC BIRDING CHALLENGE

Starts March 1 through June 1

Many birds are starting to move north from their wintering grounds. It's time for the [Great American Arctic Birding Challenge](#)! Birds from six continents rely on America's Arctic in Alaska for nesting, breeding, staging, and molting; their ranges reach across the Lower 48 states and beyond. Birdwatchers from around the United States can test their skills in the Great American Arctic Birding Challenge March 1 through June 1 to find the most birds in their state from the contest checklist of Arctic birds found in: <http://ak.audubon.org/2015-great-american-arctic-birding-challenge> along with all the instructions and information needed to participate in this birding challenge.

Preliminary Spring Schedule

Date/Time	Activity/Location
Sat. April 11 8am- 10am	Fish Creek Bird Walk
Sat. April 18 8am-10am	Auke Rec / Pt. Louisa Bird Walk
Sat. April 25 8:30am-12:30pm	Berners Bay Cruise
Sat. May 2 Cruise 1) 8:30am-12:30pm Cruise 2) 1:30pm-5:30pm	Berners Bay Cruises
Sat. May 9 8am-10am	Airport Dike Trail Bird Walk
Sat. May 16 8am-11am	Bird Banding @ Community Gardens
Sat. May 23 8am-10am	Eagle Beach Bird Walk
Sat. May 30 8am-10am	Dredge Lakes Bird Walk
Sat. June 6 8am-10am	Sandy Beach/Treadwell Trails Bird Walk

"Beginning Birder" course: 5 one and a half hour classes to begin in valley at Mendenhall River Elementary (back of valley). Dates Thursday evenings 7-8:30pm starts March 26. Material is geared for novice and beginner adults and teens. Covers the amazing body of birds and identification tools to begin to recognize birds in Juneau, residents and migrants to the area. Class maximum 12. Register at Juneau Community Schools. Cost of course \$37.50. Information contact: Patricia Wherry 209-3374

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



The Great Birdseed Brigade of 2015 Gwen Baluss, President

I received an unusual message at work last week from Brenda Wright, explaining that Home Depot was excessing and willing to donate pallets of bird seed to JAS. A few days later she had hustled up a work party and found a truck, thanks to Amy Courtney's dad, Bob Clark, being in town. Half the board and a couple volunteers found ourselves at Mary Lou King's house passing about 68 -- 20 lb. bags of wild bird seed mix into the barn. So now we are sitting on a giant stack of seeds mix which we will gladly distribute FREE to our members! If you are in Juneau, stop by and pick up yours today! It's a standard mix of sunflower, millet, milo, wheat and calcium, which should be acceptable to a number of local species. **To claim your bags of seeds, call Mary Lou at 789-7540 for instructions on where and when to get them.**

The irony was not lost on us that this is about the time we usually remind Alaskans that it's a good time to *take bird feeders down* as the BEARS become more active. That should not deter you from claiming some seed, however. With apologies to ADF&G and all the entities who educate us so well on bear etiquette, I'm going to say that in a very limited way, for a few conscientious fanatics, it can be OK to feed birds in the summer. Common sense applies. For instance, I have an upstairs balcony where I will place an untreated board and sprinkle a few seeds – no more at a time than the birds will likely eat within a day. Or, some birders will widely sprinkle it in a fenced or excessively bushy yard. This method is more sanitary than a feeder, and a bear would have to be pretty naughty and desperate to go to the trouble of climbing up a house or straddling a bush to lick the ground for say, half an hour to get half a cup of bird seed. Well... if you think my last few statements are all BS, that's fine too. You can still take some seed. Just leave it sealed and dry inside, and it should be still good for next winter.

We can compost what doesn't get used, so it doesn't go to the land fill. Thanks again to Home Depot for keeping organics out of the waste stream, and, hopefully, putting a smile on the face of a few bird watchers.

Juneau Audubon In Your Community

Birdhouses: Juneau Audubon received a \$458 grant to build birdhouses for swallow habitat here in the City and Borough of Juneau. Chris S'Gro's students at Mendenhall River in coordination with JAS will be assembling the boxes with the materials being purchased from a local lumber supply store. Currently with the amount of the grant, and the quotes received from lumber stores we should be able to construct 23 bird boxes. The original boxes that are still standing have become dilapidated and are most are not functional. Plans are underway to make this both a functional, educational and social experience. The opportunities for learning will be extensive, with being able to count, and monitor the young with viewing windows built into the boxes. Field trips for data collection will be in the works. We are open to lumber donations! Please let us know if you are willing to help. Monthly updates on the project and pictures will be featured in upcoming newsletters. Thank you to all those involved for all of your help!

Bird, Bird Related Report Writing Contest: Juneau Audubon has decided to hold a monthly contest for elementary through high school students. We are interested in hearing about what you learn in your community! Reports should be 1000 words or less and about birds in your area. We encourage you to get your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbor children or whomever outside and seeing what is in their own backyard. We are open to any topics about birds, avian environment, effects on their habitat, biology, anatomy, observations, or anything bird related! Winners will be chosen by the Juneau Audubon Board and at least one submission will be printed in The Raven each month. This is a great opportunity for home schooled children also. Winners each month will also be sent an awesome science geared project to build at home! Submissions or questions should be emailed to vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org Please include name and address along with your submission.

Great Backyard Bird Count Wrap up by Brenda Wright

Thanks to everyone who went out into our neighborhoods to count birds February 13-16. You did a great job!

We found 61 species and submitted over 74 checklists! Of the 61 species counted the Barred owl and King Eider really stood out for me. I'm still looking for them and also any shorebirds. There were black turnstones on our Juneau data so they are out there. If you want to explore our local reports or check out any other location, just go to <http://ebird.org/ebird/gbbc/subnational2/US-AK-110?yr=all>

on the Great Backyard Bird Count "Explore Data" page. Remember, you can be a citizen scientist year round by entering your bird information on ebird: <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

Have fun and enjoy the birds

Southeast Bird Festivals in Wrangell and Yakutat by Steve James.

Photos by Steve James

Thanks to everyone who said they were interested in the Spring birding trips to Wrangell and to Yakutat with the Juneau Audubon Society – we’ve had enough positive feedback that it looks like both trips are a “Go”!

We have a couple of places still available for the Wrangell trip, but the boat we’ll be using to go up the Stikine is nearly full – if you’re still interested and have not yet replied, please do so soon. The best tides for the trip will be April 17-19 and the next best tides will be May 1-3, and then it is up to the birds and when they arrive. We are going to shoot for 2 trips



of 3-4 hours on the last few hours of the incoming big tide, one trip on Friday and one on Saturday, leaving Wrangell around 11AM. We’re now to the point of working the numbers for the boat and getting group rates for accommodation. The Stikine River Birding Festival has been given an Alaska Airlines discount code that we are going to try to use, and the overnight ferry remains a good alternative. The Alaska Airlines discount code for

Wrangell will be on the festival web page

shortly: <http://www.wrangell.com/birdingfestival/stikine-river-birding-festival-april-30-may-3-2015>



We also had good interest for a JAS group to Yakutat for their TernFest at the end of May. We have enough people to share a rental van to travel to and from the accommodations (Yakutat is fairly spread out), and we’re close to having the numbers to get some group rates – but we’re still looking for more people to join us so we can negotiate even better rates. The TernFest has not yet heard whether or not they will have an Alaska Airlines discount code this year.

If you were waiting to see if the JAS groups were going to happen – they are, it's not too late to tell us that you want to come too. If so, please email at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org to let us know so we can keep you in the loop as our plans firm up.

Juneau Bird Report By Amy Courtney

The harbingers of spring have arrived here in Juneau! A group of six unidentified swans were spotted flying over the airport area back on 1/31 (AC), and many people reported a large influx of Varied Thrushes around the beginning of February, including a whopping 61 at the Auke Rec Campground on 1/31 (BW)! In recent weeks, Red-breasted Sapsuckers have been drumming out their arrival announcement, and the laconic phrases of the Varied Thrushes' "telephone song" have sparked hopes of an early spring.



Doug Jones

Few rare birds were spotted this past month, but perhaps the most frequently visited and photographed was the continuing female **King Eider** near the Douglas boat harbor. On 2/18, a **Black Scoter** was seen from Picnic Cove in North Douglas (MS), and three days later, three were reported from across the channel in Auke Bay (GV). The **Glaucous Gull** continuing from last fall at the Taku Smokeries Dock was last spotted on 2/15 (AC).

Numerous owls have been heard and occasionally seen this month. A **Great Horned Owl** was heard on Back Loop on 2/03 (DR), and again on 2/17 in the same general area (GB). On 2/16, a **Barred Owl** was calling near the head of the Boy Scout Camp Trail (KA). Up to four **Short-eared Owls** have been seen patrolling the wetlands on both sides of the Mendenhall River (m. obs.). In a neighborhood near Lena Cove, a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** has been heard calling on a few different days over the last week (MM). On 2/9, a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was calling near the Montana Creek bridge on Back Loop (GV), and the next day one was perched on a tree near Auke Rec (JS). On 2/23 one was calling on Wren Drive (GB), possibly the same one heard earlier from the nearby Montana Creek Bridge.

An **American Kestrel** that overwintered is continuing on the Mendenhall Wetlands near the golf course; and the **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** successfully overwintered, but has not been reported in its usual haunt near the Miller-Honsinger Pond since 2/19.

The *celata* **Orange-crowned Warbler** first reported back in December on the Airport Dike Trail was spotted again on 2/1 (BA, PR), and on 2/10 (GV). That it has managed to stay this long is amazing given the single digit temperatures we had early this month! An immature female **Anna's Hummingbird** has been continuing at a heated Tee Harbor feeder since

December 20th (DW). On 2/11 an adult male appeared in an Auke Bay yard (GV), and on 2/16 an adult male was seen on Wren Drive (GB).

Thanks to the following people who submitted their sightings to eBird and Eaglechat: Kristi Allen (KA), Gwen Baluss (GB), Amy Courtney (AC), Mary McCafferty (MM), Deb Rudis (DR), Jeff Sauer (JS), Gus van Vliet (GV), Dick Wood (DW), and Brenda Wright (BW).

Whitehorse Christmas Bird Count 2014 held on Boxing Day.

The 2014 Whitehorse Christmas Bird Count set some new records. The fall of 2014 was very warm and there was little snow on the ground by count day. There was an unusually large amount of open water on the Yukon River as well as in various streams within the count circle. It seems both the birds and the observers like warm weather, as we had record numbers of species (33) and participants (48)! We had our first **Common Loon** and **Fox Sparrow** ever for the count, as well as record numbers of **Mallards, American Dippers, Bald Eagles, House Sparrows, and Rusty Blackbirds**. There were **Bald Eagles** everywhere, whereas in most years they are rarely seen anywhere but the Whitehorse landfill. The **Common Raven** count was high as well, but this may reflect the record number of participants afield. Not only were a lot of people out this year, many of them stayed out from dawn till dusk to take full advantage of the perfect weather conditions. Yukon Bird Club yukonbirdclub@gmail.com

Peanut Butter/Suet By Prill (Isleib) Mollick Smoky Mountains, N.C.

For years my winter bird menu has included the Peanut Butter/Suet treats. It has been a family tradition to put out peanut butter for birds during the winter months since my brother Pete started it when he was in his teens. He would hang up a short log with drilled holes filled with plain peanut butter.

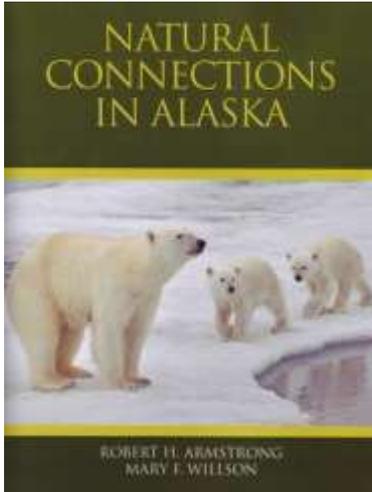
When I asked him about the plain peanut butter getting caught in the birds beak or throat he would chuckle and say, "Ahhh you're just humanizing the birds".

I prefer to use a mix. It includes one cup flour, four cups corn meal, one cup melted suet and one cup melted peanut butter. Blend it all together. It will firm up as it cools. Sometimes I fill the drilled holes of a small log, and sometimes I fill the plastic coated wire mesh square blocks. (They are available in the stores next to other bird feeders.)

The usual visitors that feed on the Peanut Butter/Suet are the Tufted Tit Mouse, Chickadee, Carolina Wren, White Breasted Nuthatch, Blue Jays, and Hermit Thrush. The woodpeckers that come are the Downy, Hairy, Red Bellied and occasionally the Pileated Woodpecker.

The delightful surprise of the winter, after an ice storm, was Mr. and Mrs. Eastern Blue Bird, especially the female. She came often during the day, sat on the block and ate and ate.

Great Nature Books are now free!



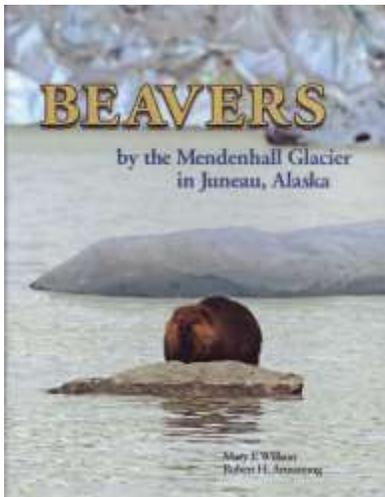
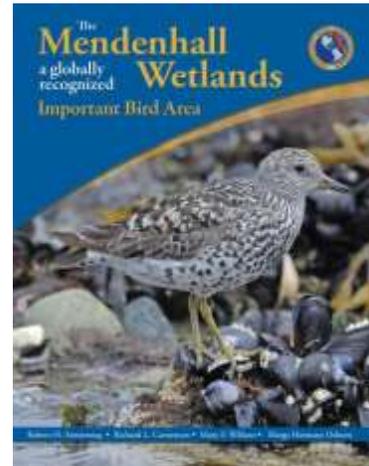
Understanding how various creatures and their habitats are connected can help promote protection of relatively small areas. Gathering information and writing a book about the area can also help. Three books that help illustrate this are now available for free downloading over the internet.

The book **Natural Connections in Alaska** discusses and illustrates the importance of understanding the various connections in nature. It also lists over 80 websites in Alaska that provide free information on connections in Alaska's nature. This book is available at:

<http://www.naturebob.com/sites/default/files/ConnectionsArmstrongWilson2.pdf>

One of the really special areas in Juneau is the Mendenhall Wetlands. The book **Mendenhall Wetlands a globally recognized Important Bird Area** discusses and illustrates the value of this area for Alaska's birds and shows how the area is important for birds on a world-wide basis. The value of Audubon Alaska's Important Bird Area program is quite evident here. This book is available at:

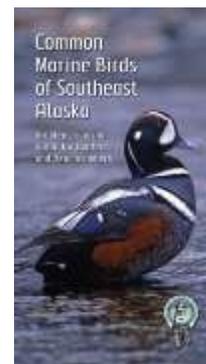
<http://naturebob.com/sites/default/files/Mendenhall%20Wetlands%20book.pdf>



Sometimes protecting only one species can help numerous other creatures. Beavers are often called 'ecosystem engineers' because of their ability to alter the landscape. Their ability to provide and improve habitat for many other creatures is truly remarkable. Their benefits for salmon, trout and charr populations are well known and studied. The book **Beavers by the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska** discusses and illustrates these connections. This book is available at:

<http://www.naturebob.com/sites/default/files/Willson%2C%20Armstrong%2C%20Beaver.pdf>

Boaters and beach walkers take note! A beginners' guide to identifying some of the most commonly sighted birds on inside waters is now available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Paid for through a Scenic Byways grant, this compact booklet features illustrations from George C. West (author of [A Birder's Guide to Alaska](#)) and birding tips for 21 marine birds. Contact the Division of Wildlife Conservation at 465-4190 for a **free** copy. Anne Sutton (DFG)



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. Heidl, 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 Heidl's mailing list to receive this summary and to contribute observations, you can contact him at: steve.heidl@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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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 _____
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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**

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