

# 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 8

Juneau Audubon Society

April 2015

**Flight to Adventure  
Free Public Presentation  
April 16, 2015, 7:00 p.m.  
Egan Room Centennial Hall**

## **Southeast Alaska Birding Festivals**

Audubon's final evening program of the season will discuss Southeast Alaska's birding events: Ketchikan's Rufous Hummingbird Festival, Wrangell's Stikine River Birding Festival and the Yakutat Tern Festival. Learn more about how you can take advantage of the world class birding opportunities close to home, from the folks who have organized and attended the festivals; and enjoy Bob Armstrong's nature photos from these communities.



### **President's Message(s) By Gwen Baluss**

This month I just have an assortment of items to pass on to our members. I've been too busy preparing for the arrival of the migratory birds to think about much else.

Fabulous Finches We are still enjoying the "irruptive" influx of Red Crossbills, White-winged Crossbills, and Pine Siskins. All are singing like crazy, and starting to spread out into pairs and small groups. Birders have observed the latter two

species picking at nesting material. We can look forward to even more finches soon! A lot of our “red” crossbill males are more orange. Diet, as well as age and sex, affect color. Generally, the adult females like the local beauty above are olive with a hint of yellow.

#### Birdseed

There is still FREE bird seed available! Please get it before a critter breaks into Mary Lou Kings shed. Note that her phone was unfortunately out for a while last month so if you tried to call during this time, please try again 789-7540

If we don't move enough of it to local bird watchers, we're going to have to partner with Alaska Brewing Company this fall to distill the grain into a special “songbird brew”. (Yes this is the April 1 edition of the JAS newsletter!)

#### Visitor Information

Ever feel overwhelmed when friends, family-- or random strangers-- hound you for advice for bird watching information for Juneau? Now you don't have to spend too long vexing over your answers. I've created a quick page of general information and “expert advice” complete with links to other resources. It will soon be posted on the JAS webpage. Simply copy the text and send it off. Easy.

#### May 9 Bird Walk – and Litter Free Day combined!

Please bring a small trash bag and gloves to carry out a few pieces of litter on the walk back from the bird walk through the Mendenhall Wetlands. Let's help clean up our local Important Bird Area, and keep that plastic from drifting back out to sea.

#### Rufous Hummingbirds smash all early Juneau arrival records.

Call it race to the flowers, to mates, or against the perils of el nino and global warming.. Either way you have to call it amazing. The earliest local well-confirmed record through 2014 was March 30.

This year the reports started much earlier. At first, there were the lingering Anna's, which is interesting enough. But then, observers were certain they had seen the vanguard of Rufous.

3/22/15 Fabienne P reported two males, the same day the first blueberries opened near Auke Rec (Clever birds!)

3/27/15 Sandi S on Douglas recorded a male, 11 days earlier than last year, and beating a decade of records there.

3/28/15 Gus V saw a male in Auke Bay, earliest in 24 years of records!  
This bird and/or a possible second male visited again on 3/29

Sources: Journey North website, Yahoo! Group Eaglechat and eBird. Also, I spoke or emailed with all observers of these birds, and to those who have had Anna's lately, to make sure I got the story straight. Thanks to all who reported!

## Spring Bird Walks & Berners Bay Cruises

Date/Time	Activity/Location	Tide Info	Leader/s
Sat. April 11 8am- 10am	Fish Creek- Meet 83.3 North Douglas Hwy parking lot before creek	<b>Hi 14.5 @ 6:02a</b> Lo 1.6 @12:44p	Laurie Lamm, Owen Squires
Sat. April 18 8am-10am	Auke Rec/ Pt. Louisa Meet at Shelter closest to Pt. Louisa Trail	<b>Lo -3.4 @ 7:32a</b> Hi 18.0 @ 1:48p	Mark Schwan
Sat. April 25 8:30am	<b>Berners Bay Cruise</b> Public Boat Harbor Auke Bay	Main Leaders: Laurie Craig, Mary Willson Assistants: Gus V., Amy C.	
Sat. May 2 Cruise 1) 8:30am Cruise 2) 1:30pm	<b>Berners Bay Cruises</b> Public Boat Harbor Auke Bay	AM Main Leaders: Mary Willson, Laurie C. AM Assistants: Brenda W., Gus V., Amy C. PM Main Leader: Laurie Craig PM Assistants: Brenda W., Gus V., Amy C.	
Sat. May 9 8am-10am	Airport Dike Trail Meet Radcliffe Road entrance to wetlands	Hi 15.7 @ 4:53a <b>Lo -0.3 @ 11:27a</b>	Amy Courtney
Sat. May 16 8am-11am	<b>Bird Banding @</b> Community Gardens – Montana Creek Road		Gwen Baluss
Sat. May 23 8am-10am	Eagle Beach Mile 28 Glacier Highway	Hi 14.9 @ 5:06a <b>Lo 0.4 @ 11:35a</b>	TBA
Sat. May 30 8am-10am	Dredge Lakes Meet Back Loop Road parking lot by bridge over the Mendenhall River	Lo 1.0 @ 5:57a Hi 13.3 @ 12:12p	Gus van Vliet
Sat. June 6 8am-10am	Treadwell Trails	Hi 17.1 @ 3:56 Lo -2.1 @ 10:26	Patty Rose

## Juneau's Spring Bird Observations

Spring migration is underway in Juneau. Larger numbers of dabbling ducks are showing and there have been one or two reports of **Trumpeter Swans** flying overhead. A few **Lesser Canada Geese** have been found on the wetlands mixed in with the **Vancouver Canada Geese**. The female **King Eider** at Douglas continued to be found through much of the month of



Snow Bunting by Mark Schwan

**Hummingbird** appear at his feeder on March 28, which is the earliest arrival date in 24 years of record keeping at his home. Then too, there were at least three reports of **Anna's Hummingbirds** visiting local feeders during March. Within the last week of the month, people have reported hearing **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, and larger flocks of robins are making a show. In recent days there have been several reports of small numbers of **Lapland**

**Longspurs** out on the wetlands and a few **Snow Buntings** are still present. **Pine Siskins** continue to be everywhere along our road system. You can't be outside without hearing their calls and chatter. **Red and White-winged Crossbills** are also still widespread from Douglas to the end of the road. Finally, the gulls at Mendenhall lake have been checking out the nesting cliffs for the last couple of weeks, and began touching down there on 3/30.

March. There has been at least one report for each of our local owl species calling over the last few weeks (**Great Horned, Pygmy and Barred**) and **Sooty Grouse** have been booming since at least March 8. Early **Black Oystercatchers** appeared at Outer Point on March 19 and Point Louisa on March 22. Gus van Vliet had a male **Rufous**



Pine Siskin by Mark Schwan

## Birdhouse Construction Project Update by Brenda Wright

On a chilly Saturday in March, six volunteers converged at my house. Our goal was to cut our wood into the correct sizes for the tree swallow nest box project. With the help of a table and circular saw we got all the wood cut for 32 complete bird houses. Then came the construction of the first birdhouse. After a bit of discussion and a false start, a birdhouse was completed. Then the volunteers marked and drilled holes for



the screws. The students who will be assembling the bird houses do not have any power tools. A class at Miller House and another at Montana Creek will put the boxes together in the next two weeks. After that, we will be placing the birdhouses out on the wetlands, near the community garden and hopefully a few other locations. If your property has a large open area, more than 100 feet from trees, we will be happy to bring a nest box or two for you to observe. The project will document all the birdhouses that are occupied and hopefully we'll be able to see them used by tree swallows! Just call Brenda at 789-4656, if you have a space available for a nest box. Photo by Gwen Baluss.

## **NestWatch Needs Volunteers!**

**NestWatch** is a nationwide monitoring program designed to track status and trends in the reproductive biology of birds, including when nesting occurs, number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive. Our database is intended to be used to study the current condition of breeding bird populations and how they may be changing over time as a result of climate change, habitat degradation and loss, expansion of urban areas, and the introduction of non-native plants and animals.

The species of most interest in SE Alaska are barn, tree, and violet-green swallows, and robins.

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

Participating in NestWatch is easy and just about anyone can do it, although children should always be accompanied by an adult when observing bird nests. Simply follow the directions on our website to **become a certified NestWatcher**, (<http://nestwatch.org/learn/how-to-nestwatch/code-of-conduct/>) find a bird nest using **our helpful tips**, (<http://nestwatch.org/learn/how-to-nestwatch/how-to-find-nests/>) visit the nest every 3-4 days and record what you see, and then **report this information** (<http://nestwatch.org/nw/data#/>) on our website. Your observations will be added to those of thousands of other NestWatchers in a continually growing database used by researchers to understand and study birds. Simply put, without your help it would be impossible to gather enough information to accurately monitor nesting birds across the country. And while you are contributing extremely valuable information to science, you will learn firsthand about birds and create a lifelong bond with the natural world. Sponsored by National Audubon Society and Cornell University.

### **Invite Your Volunteers to Track Hummingbirds this Spring**

Spring is in the air - what better time to take action for hummingbirds? Throughout April, Audubon is promoting the citizen science program, [Hummingbirds at Home](http://www.hummingbirdsathome.org) (<http://www.hummingbirdsathome.org>)- please join us! Watch for an early April update announcing a new toolkit of resources on [Audubon Works\\*](#)(, including a newsletter/web article, presentation slides, social media posts and posters to help you demonstrate how the [Hummingbirds at Home](#) app is a fun and easy way for everyone to get involved.

## BIRD QUIZ

This month's bird quiz photo is of a species that is rare in Southeast Alaska, but has distinctive features. If you don't know what it is, try looking it up in a field guide and shoot Amy an email at [field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org) with your answer! Photo courtesy of Nick Hajdukovich. Last month's quiz bird was a COMMON MURRE in non-breeding plumage.



### Get to Know Your Birds

- Birds are fascinating and inspiring. They enhance our communities and our lives.
- Birds can be found everywhere, from shorelines, forests, mountains, and marshes to our most urban landscapes.
- Learning to identify birds is one of the best ways to connect with the natural world, and is the first step toward taking conservation action.
- Where do I start?
- Borrow a bird guide from the library
  - Join an outing with your local naturalists club
  - Put up bird feeders
  - Become a Citizen Scientist for an entry-level program such as the Great Backyard Bird Count or Project FeederWatch. Participating is easy, and fun!
  - Check out free online resources such as [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org) or the Merlin Bird ID app

**From: "Peg Tileston" "What's Up" <whatsup@npogroups.org>**

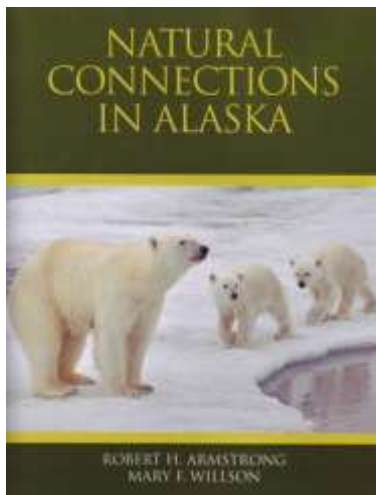
**JUNEAU - April 10** Deadline for applications for the Div. of Parks and Outdoor 2015 **ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PILOT PROGRAM** at **ERNEST GRUENING STATE HISTORICAL PARK** in Juneau. This new program will offer artists an opportunity to pursue their artistic discipline while being immersed in the captivating landscape of Ernest Gruening State Historical Park. Selected artists stay in the Ernest Gruening Cabin for up to two weeks from June through September. The program is intended to highlight Alaska State Parks for present and future generations while offering park visitors and the general public an opportunity to see our parks through the eyes of contributing artists. **The Selection Process:** The Artists-In-Residence pilot program will have a maximum of four artists chosen for the 2015 summer season. A panel of professionals established by Alaska State Parks will choose four finalists with two alternates. Selection will be based on artistic merit, the Statement of Purpose, and an artist's project proposal. Final selection will be determined by the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. **Application Process:** The application requires the artist to submit the following items: Statement of purpose for Residency that includes the specific focus of project, relevance of this project to the park, and potential for personal growth during the residency; and a story about an experience staying or living in a rustic setting; Resume; Sample of artwork; \$25 application fee (paid by contacting the DNR Public Information Center at 907-269-8400). Application form is available at

<https://webmail.gci.net/mail/index.php/mail/viewmessage/getattachment/folder/INBOX/uniqueId/49014/mimeType/YXBwbGljYXRpb24vcGRm/fileOriginal/AK%2BState%2BParks%2BGruening%2BCabin%2BArtist.in.Residence%2BApplication%2B2015.pdf>.

**April 3 KETCHIKAN - 2015 ALASKA HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL JURIED ART SHOW OPENING RECEPTION** will be held from 5 to 7pm in the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center Free and open to the public. Besides the art show, the **festival celebration continues through May 2**. Scheduled activities include guided bird hikes, the Friday Night Insights lecture series, and films. The festival schedule will be posted at <http://www.alaskacenters.gov/ketchikan.cfm>. All programs and activities are free to the public. The Discovery Center lobby is open Fridays from noon to 8pm. Movies start at 12:15pm. For more information, contact Leslie Swada at 907-228-6220 or email [lswada@fs.fed.us](mailto:lswada@fs.fed.us).

**ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC POLICIES THAT UNINTENTIONALLY ENCOURAGE AND SUBSIDIZE SPRAWL** (<http://bit.ly/1EvGtIN>) reports that urban sprawl costs the American economy more than US\$1 trillion annually, according to a new study by the New Climate Economy. It estimates that Americans living in sprawled communities bear at least \$625 billion in direct incremental costs and impose an extra \$400 billion in external costs on governments, businesses and other households. It identifies planning and market distortions that foster sprawl, and describes policy reforms that can help correct these distortions. These smart growth policies can lead to healthier, safer and wealthier communities in both developed and developing countries.

## Great Nature Books are now free!

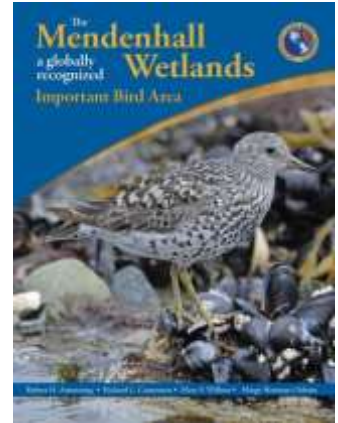


Understanding how various creatures and their habitats are connected can help promote protection of relatively small areas. Gathering information and writing a book about the area can also help. Three books that help illustrate this are now available for free downloading over the internet.

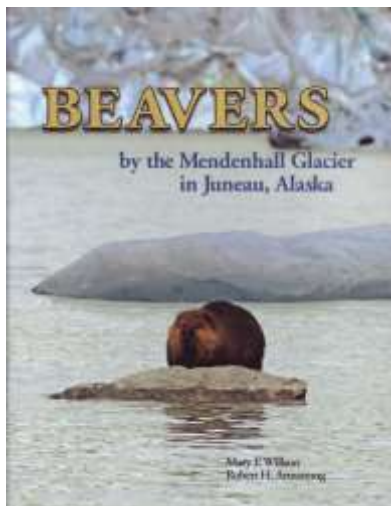
The book **Natural Connections in Alaska** discusses and illustrates the importance of understanding the various connections in nature. It also lists over 80 websites in Alaska that provide free information on connections in Alaska's nature. This book is available at:

<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>

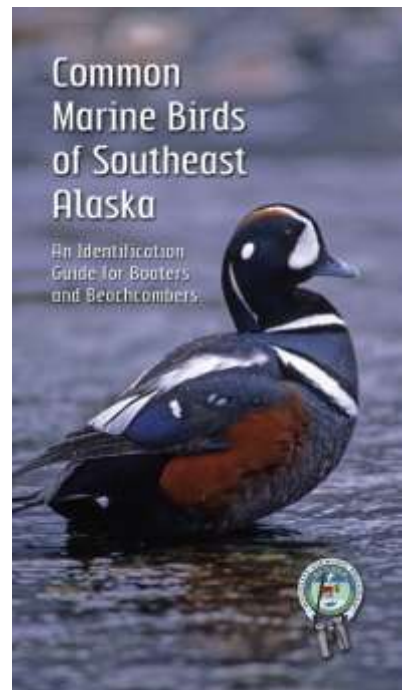


Sometimes protecting only one species can help numerous other creatures. Beavers are often called 'ecosystem engineers' because of their ability to alter the landscape. Their ability to provide and improve habitat for many other creatures is truly remarkable. Their benefits for salmon, trout and charr 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](http://www.naturebob.com)



### *SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS SEASONALLY*

Sub-regional Compilers: Steven C. Heintz, 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 Heintz's mailing list to receive this summary and to contribute observations, you can contact him at: [steve.heintz@alaska.gov](mailto:steve.heintz@alaska.gov)

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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](http://www.ebird.org)

### **Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators**

President: Gwen Baluss	<a href="mailto:president@juneau-audubon-society.org">president@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Vice-President: Josh Peters	<a href="mailto:vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org">vice-president@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Secretary: Amy Sherwin	<a href="mailto:secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org">secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Treasurer: Patty Rose	<a href="mailto:treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org">treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Programs: Doug Jones	<a href="mailto:programs@juneau-audubon-society.org">programs@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Membership: Jane Ginter	<a href="mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org">membership@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Education: Patricia Wherry	<a href="mailto:education@juneau-audubon-society.org">education@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Conservation:	<a href="mailto:conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org">conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Field Trips: Amy Clark Courtney	<a href="mailto:field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org">field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Raven Editor: Mary Lou King, 789-7540	<a href="mailto:raven@juneau-audubon-society.org">raven@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
At-large:	<a href="mailto:at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org">at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
At-large: Brenda Wright 789-4656	<a href="mailto:at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org">at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Public Market:	<a href="mailto:public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org">public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>
Web Master: George Utermohle	<a href="mailto:webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org">webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org</a>

**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. 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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Local Audubon Society Membership Application

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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](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org)

Juneau Audubon Society PO Box 021725 Juneau, AK 99802	Address Service Requested	Nonprofit Org. US Postage Paid Juneau, AK 99802 Permit No. 153
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