

# 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  
GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY, November 10, 2016, 7:00 p.m.  
Juneau's University of Alaska Southeast Recreation Center Room 116**

“Wildlife of Twin Lakes” by Bob Armstrong



Bob will show pictures and talk about the Twin Lakes Area.

## **Twin Lakes and Pioneer Marsh**

**By Bob Armstrong**

**Twin Lakes and Pioneer Marsh** were created in about 1975 when Egan Expressway cut off a portion of the Mendenhall Wetlands. Since then aquatic vegetation adapted for freshwater/low salinity conditions has become established. This has created good habitat for aquatic insects and fish which in turn provide food for several species of birds and river otters.

As a result this has become one of the best places in Juneau to see certain species of birds. Even some species considered rare to very rare in the Juneau area, such as American Coot, Hooded Merganser, Sora, and Redwinged Blackbird can usually be seen in Twin Lakes or Pioneer Marsh on a regular basis.

**River Otters** are one mammal that you can often see at Twin Lakes. Here they look for Staghorn Sculpins which can be fairly abundant in the brackish water of the lakes. They also eat Three-spine Sticklebacks.

It is wonderful to see the excitement on people's faces when they see these otters playing and eating on the frozen lake surface. In my opinion, this area is one of the best places to watch otters in the Juneau area.

The recent sighting of a dozen Trumpeter Swans feeding has been a very exciting event. To view a video of this event look at

<http://www.naturebob.com/trumpeter-swans-feeding-twin-lakes>



To see photos and a discussion of the various birds, fish, and otters that feed in this area look at

<http://www.naturebob.com/sites/default/files/Twin%20Lakes%20and%20Pioneer%20Marsh%2032.pdf>

In my opinion two of the biggest threats to the value of Twin Lakes and Pioneer Marsh for wildlife are a proposed trail around the marsh and the draining of Twin Lakes to subdue the vegetation.

A trail around Pioneer Marsh would cause most of the nesting and feeding birds to vacate the area. At present the marsh is only easily accessible to humans on one short side. Opening up the rest to human access would disturb the birds too much.

The periodic draining of Twin Lakes and Pioneer Marsh no doubt destroys a large percentage of the resident sculpins and stickleback. Most of the aquatic insects would be eliminated and the time for them to return to normal abundance may be several years.

The most abundant vegetation in Twin Lakes may not be an invasive plant. It has been identified as Northern Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum exalbescens*). Leaves and fruit of northern milfoil are consumed by a variety of waterfowl. Beds of northern milfoil offer shade, shelter and foraging opportunities for fish and aquatic insects.

## **Juneau Public Market**

Juneau Audubon will host a booth at the Public Market again this year. The market will be at **Centennial Hall Friday, Nov. 25 noon-7pm - Saturday, Nov. 26 10am-5pm - Sunday, Nov. 27 10am-5pm.** Be sure to stop by booth C2 in the Sheffield Ballroom where we'll be selling delicious jams and jellies and other handmade items. We'll also be providing information on birding and conservation issues.

We're seeking **volunteers** to staff the booth. This is a fun way to enjoy the market while at the same time help Audubon with its mission. For volunteer information contact Mary McCafferty at 209-4842 or email [public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org)

The Public Market is a great place to see friends and enjoy local holiday shopping. For market information [www.juneaupublicmarket.com](http://www.juneaupublicmarket.com)

Plan to save your one cup jelly jars, Mary Lou King 789-7540, will refill them for the booth each year.



**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT --** Let your holiday spirit take flight on Sunday, December 18th, by flocking to the annual Juneau Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count and Potluck. All are welcome. Look out for a detailed announcement in our December newsletter!

### **Moose in Juneau: sometimes it's not so crazy to hope** By Gwen Baluss

I've hung my rain cap here in Juneau for most the time since 1998. Something I always pondered is, where are the moose? It didn't seem fair that Gustavus and Petersburg would have them, and Juneau didn't. They were up the Taku and Berners Rivers, but wouldn't venture in between? I made it a point to bring up my inquiry in conversations with biologists, naturalists, and hunters. Sometimes the answer was "lack of habitat". I never bought this one, as I looked around at plenty of the plants that the browsers enjoy in other parts of Southeast: willow, highbush cranberry, even blueberry.

A more persuasive answer was simply "dispersal rate." According to ADF&G reports, moose only started appearing in Southeast Alaska in general in the early twentieth century. The moose simply hadn't found this habitat that, on geologic terms, is new and still being uncovered as glaciers recede. And the fact that other communities were colonized first had to do with proximity to a direct river from interior Alaska-- and some luck.

There had been a few sightings over the years around Juneau though. I even saw the pellets of a cow that had been reported at, of all places, Moose Lake. I eagerly awaited the day when more moose would show up near the Juneau Road system.

Starting in fall 2013, I noticed tracks and browse around Point Bridget State Park, apparently of a cow and at least one calf. A Juneau Empire story reported sightings "out the road" as well that fall. The following year, I found more tracks and sign. But despite many hours



devoted to sneaking around in the rain, never saw even a glimpse. Finally, in fall 2015, I had the incredible luck to see a cow, a grown bull and small bull, all together near Cowee Creek.

And the excitement builds as recently there has been solid evidence of a cow and bull in Mendenhall Valley; also, a cow in the Thunder Mountain bowl and a young bull at Boy Scout Beach.

Where did these moose come from? Perhaps some DNA work will tell us in the years to come. It seems most likely that the animals traveled from Berners Bay. That population there was introduced in 1958 and 1960 with 17 and 11 animals respectively, stock from the Mat-su Valleys. But of course, wildlife dispersal is not always as one would assume.

Moose dispersed into Southeast Alaska from British Columbia. The Anderson subspecies (*Alces alces andersoni*) colonized different areas in a complex pattern, sometimes established by only a few “founders”, but with potential for mixing with subsequent incursions of the larger interior Alaska moose subspecies (*Alces alces gigas*), especially in the Haines and Yakutat areas. (An interesting write up about this can be found here: [http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view\\_article&articles\\_id=602](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view_article&articles_id=602)).

What’s going to happen next? A handful of animals is hardly a population yet, but at least we have the right elements to spur the imagination. Juneau will be different if moose become frequent denizens. I wonder about the human and wildlife interactions. Will drivers learn to slow down going out the road in the evenings? Will animals be shot by poachers? How many loose dogs will be stomped if there is a mom and calf roaming the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation area?

Nobody is more eager to see the moose than I, but cringe the community might love the animals to death: naming them, feeding them, approaching too close to get photos. (“Romeo” the wolf comes to mind here). Either way, it’s bound to make our fall walks around Juneau more exciting for a while.



Moose at Cowee Creek, September 22, 2015. Photo by G. Baluss (taken with a zoom lens while hiding, breathless, behind a log).

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What bird is this?

## Save the Date – Climate Watch 2017

The next count period for Climate Watch national Audubon’s newest citizen science project, will be January 15-30, 2017. The Climate Watch team is excited to expand the pilot project to include not only bluebirds (Eastern, Mountain, and Western), but also nuthatches—the Brown-headed, Pygmy, Red-breasted, and White-breasted. If your chapter would like to get involved, please contact [climatewatch@audubon.org](mailto:climatewatch@audubon.org). Thank you to all chapters who have participated so far and shared their feedback!

**If you are planning to attend the 17th Alaska Bird Conference in Cordova, Alaska, please register by November 18, 2016.**

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/registration/>

Although attendees will be able to register at the event (December 6-8, 2016), early registration will help the organizing committee better plan catering needs and other logistics. Looking forward to seeing you in Cordova!

**Olympic Birdfest**, April 7-9, 2017. Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction & raffle, gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker: noted nature photographer Bonnie Block. Join our festival pre-trip: a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 4-6, 2017. Register separately at [www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon](http://www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon). Extend your festival with our Neah Bay post-trip on April 9-11, 2017: two days exploring northwest coastal Washington. BirdFest registration at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org).



Yellow-rumped Warbler. Photo by [Kelly Colgan Azar](#) via [Birdshare](#)

## Familiar Songbird May Be At Least Three Different Species

Affectionately known to bird watchers as "butterbutts," Yellow-rumped Warblers are at the center of another discussion over what defines a species. In 1973, the Myrtle and Audubon's warbler species were lumped into one to create the yellow-rumped. But ornithologists may have had it right the first time. [Read about what the DNA evidence suggests](#), [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/goodbye-yellow-rump-will-we-see-a-return-to-myrtle-and-audubons-warblers/?utm\\_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm\\_campaign=370bc20706-Cornell%20Lab%20eNews%2009\\_12\\_2016&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_47588b5758-370bc20706-277564893](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/goodbye-yellow-rump-will-we-see-a-return-to-myrtle-and-audubons-warblers/?utm_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm_campaign=370bc20706-Cornell%20Lab%20eNews%2009_12_2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-370bc20706-277564893)

### WEB OPPORTUNITIES

**eBird** Global tools for birders, critical data for science Record the birds you see, Keep track of your bird lists, Explore dynamic maps and graphs, Share your sightings and join the eBird community, Contribute to science and conservation. <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>



\*\*\* **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 and Andrew W. Piston**

**This publication has wonderful bird photos and information. You can view it on our web page at** <http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/SE%20AK%20Birding.html>

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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> > .

**For discussions and postings on Juneau and Southeast Alaska Birds and events via email join the yahoo! group EagleChat. For an invite, please contact Gwen Baluss (gwenbaluss@yahoo.com)**

**For postings in Sitka see:** <http://www.sitkanature.org/sitka-birds/>  
**And Be sure to check out the Juneau Audubon Society Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/Juneau-Audubon-Society-138280412980789/>

## Audubon Membership Information

*Note there have been some changes in how to join or renew*

**National Audubon Society Membership** (includes automatic membership in your local chapter, which is JAS if your zip is anywhere in Southeast Alaska). Memberships begin at \$20/year.

Options:

- Use the online form to join at <https://www.audubon.org/membership>
- Current members can renew online at <http://www.audubon.org/renew> or by emailing [audubon@emailcustomerservice.com](mailto:audubon@emailcustomerservice.com)
- Call National Audubon to renew by phone at 1-844-428-3826
- Locate the latest renewal notice from Audubon in the mail, or the form in Audubon Magazine and return that using the envelope provided
- US Postal Service: Send your name, address, email and payment check made out to **National Audubon Society** to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725, Juneau, AK 99802. The Membership Chair after recording the information for our mailing list, will then send your check to the proper National Audubon Office.

### **If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only:**

Please send name, address, and email with a check for \$10 (1-year membership) made out to **Juneau Audubon Society** to the USPS address above.

More info:

- All memberships include the Juneau Chapter Newsletter *The Raven*
- Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time, and money and view photos in color. Send notification with renewal or email memo to: [membership@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:membership@juneau-audubon-society.org)
- Receive too much mail from the National Audubon Society? Ask to be taken off the mass mailing list by emailing Customer Service [audubon@emailcustomerservice.com](mailto:audubon@emailcustomerservice.com) (Opting out of extra mailings will not stop magazine subscription.)
- JAS does not send members any offers, action alerts or share our membership addresses with anyone
- Local or national membership *does not* include support for Audubon Alaska state group. We encourage members to support that group as well. See <http://ak.audubon.org/>

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