

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 31 No. 10

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills

About the field trips

Beginning birders and their friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Membership in Skagit Audubon is encouraged but not required for participation. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing, and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpool whenever possible and contribute to the driver's expense. Watch the email reminders for the latest information, including any changes and/or additions to the field trip schedule. To be added to the email distribution list contact Libby Mills: libbymills@gmail.com

If you plan to join a field trip some place other than the described starting point, call the trip leader the day before to ensure a successful rendezvous. Trip plans may change.

Sunday, December 2 Breazeale/Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, Bay View Sparrows & other Winter Songbirds

9:00 a.m. to noon

Libby Mills will lead this field trip/workshop to help you learn to identify the winter songbirds of the Salish Sea lowlands. This time of year is often challenging for weather, especially for birds. We'll meet in the parking lot at Padilla Bay's center, then search the

Field Trips continued on page 5

DECEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

Gifts of the Crow by John Marzluff

Tuesday, December 11, 2012

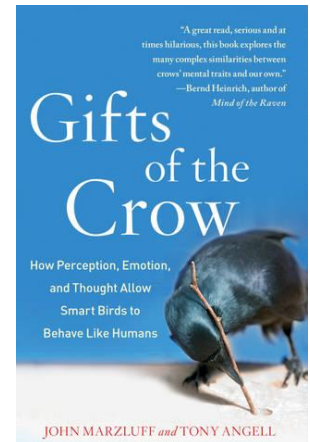
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program

Burlington Public Library

820 East Washington Ave.

Burlington, Washington 98233

Phone: (360) 755-0760



Professor John Marzluff's presentation will be based on his latest book, *Gifts of the Crow*. Crows are mischievous, playful, social, and passionate. With extraordinary scientific research on the intelligence and startling abilities of corvids—crows, ravens, and jays—Marzluff tells amazing stories of these brilliant birds, shining a light on their fascinating characteristics and behaviors. His book offers an in-depth look at these complex creatures and our shared behaviors, illustrated with gorgeous line drawings by Tony Angell. Crows gather around their dead, warn of impending doom, recognize people, commit murder of other crows, turn on lights to stay warm, design and use tools, use cars as nutcrackers, windsurf and sled to play, and more. Their marvelous brains allow them to think, plan, and reconsider their actions.

With its abundance of funny, awe-inspiring, and poignant stories, *Gifts of the Crow* portrays creatures who are nothing short of amazing.

John Marzluff, Ph.D., is Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington. His research has been the focus of articles in the *New York Times*, *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *National Wildlife*, and more. PBS's *NATURE* featured his raven research in its production, "Ravens," and his crow research in the documentary, "A Murder of Crows."



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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Pileated Woodpecker

Photo by Joe Halton

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 1043 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA—7:00 PM Social/ 7:30 PM Program—on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. The board of directors meets at the same location at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month.

Skagit Audubon Society (SAS) membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, **The Flyer**, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. Newsletters from additional chapters can be sought by contacting their websites and membership chairs from links at www.audubon.org/states/wa/. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** please use the form below.

National Audubon Society (NAS) membership is separate from SAS membership and includes Audubon magazine. National Audubon membership does not provide Skagit Audubon membership; however, NAS will assign you an affiliation with a local chapter. To change your chapter assignment call 800-274-4201. **To join National Audubon Society** use the form below.

Skagit Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available on our website. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years

I wish to donate \$ _____ to Skagit Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____ Email _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

Skagit Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1101
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101

Please do not share my personal information with National Audubon Society. (It is the policy of SAS not to share information with any other groups.)

Using the form below to initially join the **National Audubon Society** will ensure that the **Skagit Audubon** chapter receives a cost share to support local programs.

National Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership to the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one chapter affiliation

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center Y21
P.O. Box 422246-2246
Palm Coast, FL 32142

www.audubon.org

For members receiving a paper copy of The Skagit Flyer, the mailing label includes your membership expiration date in the upper right corner. If that date is highlighted in orange it is a reminder that your membership is about to or has expired. All other members will receive an email notice when their membership is about to expire. The Skagit Flyer is published monthly from September through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's Flyer should be sent to the editor by the third Saturday of the current month. For questions or problems about your Skagit Flyer subscription, contact membership chair: Sheila Pera, skagitmembers@gmail.com



Though no great scholar in college, Henry David Thoreau was asked to give an address at his 1837 graduation. New England was then a place already much given to commerce, and one of Thoreau's remarks may have irked his audience. "This curious world which we inhabit," he said, "is more wonderful than it is convenient, more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired and enjoyed than used." Whether or not each of us living in western Washington in 2012 would agree with Thoreau's grand generalization, it's safe to say that as Audubon members we share a curiosity about the natural world and would agree that the world we inhabit right here is in many ways both wonderful and beautiful. Watching birds is a great avenue to experiencing the wonder and beauty of this place in a deeper way. Participating in the Christmas Bird Counts of December and January is the kind of more intensive birding experience that can reawaken appreciation of the rich birdlife all around us. The terrific program Craig and Joy Johnson presented at Skagit Audubon's November meeting was a compelling reminder of the wonder and beauty of birdlife right in our backyards. Traveling far from home to see new species in unfamiliar habitats is always a great thrill but no substitute for the enjoyment of observing natural history day-to-day and close at hand. Birds are everywhere and bear noticing wherever and whenever we see them.

Personal enjoyment will always be an important reason for observing birds, but now there are lots of ways for this enjoyment to contribute to larger ends. Data amassed from over a century of Christmas Counts are revealing environmental trends in a dramatic way. Just this fall the Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey is expanding to our area. Many shorebird species are in decline, and this very long-term survey will help document the areas most important to protect for these long-distance migrants. Go to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's website to see how you can participate in citizen science projects such as Feeder Watch and the Great Backyard Bird Count. Contribute your bird sightings to Cornell Lab's eBird, an ever-growing, ever more gigantic trove of avian information which ornithologists are using for studies across the U.S. and many other countries. There are local opportunities too with Skagit Audubon to survey birds for other organizations needing bird information that we have the skills to collect. While data collection is the explicit goal of all these citizen science projects, enlivened senses of wonder and curiosity are the inevitable benefit for those doing the collecting.

The more we know about birds and the places on which they depend, the better able we are to protect those places. Keeping this curious world both wonderful and beautiful, as Thoreau described it, is Audubon's goal, and you can play a part.



Snow Goose at Skagit's Fir Island

Photo by Joe Halton



This column reports submitted sightings. Any rare sightings should be accompanied by detailed written documentation and if possible a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is extremely helpful. Do not hesitate to call any observer to help document unusual sightings. Also do not hesitate to call if you need clarification on locations.

Please submit your sightings to **Pam Pritzl**
ppritzl@frontier.com or 360-387-7024.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Goose 5 at Hayton Preserve on 10-21 (GB)

Brant 7 off Bayview on 11-10 (GB)

Cackling Goose 250 in Burlington on 11-2 (GB)

Surf Scoter 1 at Iverson Spit on Camano Island on 11-15 (SP)

Long-tailed Duck 3 off Samish Island Public Beach on 10-26 (GB)

Common Goldeneye 2 off March Point on 11-3 (GB)

Ruddy Duck 1 on Beaver Lake on 11-3 (GB); 1 female at Colonial Creek Campground on 11-10 (RM)

LOONS, GREBES

Horned Grebe 2 at Ross Lake overlook on 11-10 (RM)

Western Grebe at Diablo Lake overlook on 11-10 (RM); 20 at Iverson Spit, Camano Island on 11-15 (SP)

Clark's Grebe 1 off Green Point on 10-26 (GB)

RAPTORS

Osprey 1 at Clear Lake on 11-3 (GB)

Golden Eagle Corkindale on 11-10 (RM)

SHOREBIRDS

Black Oystercatcher 83 on breakwater by Goat Island on 10-27 (GB)

Surfbird 5 on Viti Rocks on 10-27 (GB)

Dunlin small flock at Iverson Spit on 11-15 (SP)

JAEGERS, GULLS

Black-headed Gull (RARE) 1 off Cypress Island on 10-27 (GB)

Western Gull 1 on Samish Flats on 11-10 (GB)

Thayer's Gull 1 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 11-10 (RM)

ALCIDS

Ancient Murrelet 2 off Williamson's Rocks on 10-27 (GB); also seen at Green Point on 11-3 (SAS) and on Whidbey Island on 11-10 (SAS)

Rhinoceros Auklet 1 in Saratoga Passage off Camano Island on 11-13 (PP)

OWLS

Great Horned Owl 1 at Sauk valley on 11-10 (RM)

Snowy Owl 1 on Thomle Rd on 11-13 (TWEE); 2 on Fir Island on 11-13 (TWEE); 1 seen from Eide Rd on 11-15 (TWEE) **LOOKS TO BE ANOTHER INVASION**

YEAR

Short-eared Owl several reported at the West 90 in November (TWEE)

HUMMINGBIRDS

December 2012

Anna's Hummingbird 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 11-11 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Yellow-shafted Flicker a male and female (pure birds) at Gorge Lake Campground on 11-10 (RM)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike several reports on Fir Island and Samish Flats during report period (TWEE); 1 at Iverson Spit on Camano Island during report period (PP)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 2 at Judy Reservoir on 11-3 (GB)

DIPPER

American Dipper 2 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 11-12 (GB)

KINGLETS

Golden-crowned Kinglet 2 in West Mt. Vernon on 10-23 (JA)

THRUSHES

Swainson's Thrush 1 in West Mt. Vernon on 10-23 (JA)

Varied Thrush 1 in West Mt. Vernon 10-23 (JA)



Varied Thrush 1 leucistic at Washington Park, Anacortes week of Nov. 11 (JH)

Leucistic Varied Thrush

Photo by Joe Halton

WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing 10 at the Skagit Game Range on 11-10 (GB)

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler 3 at home in Anacortes during report period (AD); 1 at West Edison on 10-26 (GB)

Palm Warbler 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 11-11 (found on 11-10 by M. Schrimpf) (GB)

SPARROWS

American Tree Sparrow 1 at Iverson Spit on Camano Island on 11-9 (MW); 1 with juncos at Sauk Prairie on 11-10 (RM); 1 at Sauk Prairie on 11-11 (GB)

Clay-colored Sparrow 1 near Skagit Game Range on 11-2 (JP)

Savannah Sparrow 1 at Sauk Prairie on 11-10 (RM); 1 on Fir Island on 11-10 (GB)

Swamp Sparrow 1 at Gorge Lake Campground on 11-10 (RM)

Field Notes continued on page 5



Field Notes continued from page 4

White-throated Sparrow 1 at Anacortes home Nov 2-6 (JB)

FINCHES

Common Redpoll 1 with siskins along Martin Rd in Rockport on 11-10 (RM)

Evening Grosbeak 6 at home near Big Lake (CF)

(JA) Jean Ashby; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (JB) Jackie Boss; (AD) Ann Dursch; (CF) Christine Farrow; (JH) Joe Halton; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (JP) Joshua Parrott; (SP) Sheila Pera; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (TWEE) Tweepers; (MW) Michael Willison

Field Trips continued from page 1

neighborhood's hedgerows and forest edges for sparrows and mixed flocks of winter songbirds. If the weather is favorable we'll conduct the whole class/field trip outdoors. If it's stormy and cold we'll spend part of our field time looking at images of the birds indoors. Learn to accurately ID the little birds, in time for the Christmas Bird Count Season. Leader: Libby Mills, 360-708-6975, libbymills@gmail.com

Thursday, December 13

**Reifel Bird Sanctuary, British Columbia
8:00 a.m. to late afternoon**

Keith and Jan Wiggers will be our guides for a trip to the ever-popular Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Feed chickadees from your hand, observe waterfowl and their iridescent plumage at close range, and look for Saw-Whet Owls. **There are at least 13 Snowy Owls at Boundary Bay again this year, so hopefully it will be another good year for us to see them on the field trip. Last year we had several closer than a stones throw away!!**

NOTE that we are not meeting at the old "traditional" park and ride by the Cook Road. Instead, meet to arrange car pools at 8:00 AM at the almost-new "Chuckanut Park-and-Ride" at north end of Burlington Blvd and Chuckanut Drive, I-5 Exit 231, this is about one mile south of Cook Road. The lot is just north of the Burlington high school and roundabout there, just south of the roundabout at the 231 Exit from I-5. Park anywhere and meet at the shelter. Bring appropriate ID for the border crossing – such as a **passport, or an enhanced driver's license, – a crossing-friendly lunch, and a few dollars for the entry fee and bird feed. There will be additional stops for any special birds reported in nearby areas. Leaders: Keith and Jan Wiggers ([360-757-0772](tel:360-757-0772)) Cell [360-540-3464](tel:360-540-3464)**

**Saturday, December 15, 2012
North Cascades National Park
Christmas Bird Count
6:30 am to 4:30 pm**

Each year the National Park Service does a Christmas Bird Count centered on Newhalem along the North Cascades Highway. The species count is low but often includes surprises and species not seen in the downriver world. When the weather is good, the scenery makes this about the most beautiful Christmas Count you could hope to attend close to home. It may also still be the only Christmas Count taking place in Washington's Cascade Mountains, giving even greater importance to the data gathered. Participants meet at National Park Service headquarters, 810 State Route 20, Sedro-Woolley, at 6:30 am. If you would like to participate or have questions about the count, **Please Contact: Bob Kuntz 360-854-7320, or Robert_Kuntz@nps.gov**

**Saturday, December 29, 2012
Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count
All day, followed by a potluck dinner**

The annual Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count takes place this year on Saturday, December 29. Volunteers are needed to help with this valuable – and fun – endeavor, so plan ahead.

Some teams start before dawn to count owls, while others brave the elements from first light to dusk. The data collected by our "citizen scientists" is used to document bird population trends over time. Plan to spend the day birding, and then – as a bonus – enjoy a potluck dinner and good company at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center. After dinner the day's observations are tallied, and fun stories (some of which are true!) are swapped. To Participate and for details regarding times, places, and area assignments. **Please Contact:**

**Leader/Coordinator: Bob Barry 360-299-8443
NO LATER THAN DEC. 22, if possible PLEASE.**



Hikes continue in December with 4 hikes scheduled. Hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather conditions, logging, construction or other unforeseen circumstances. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, or snowy or icy road conditions. All hikes are on a Wednesday. Questions? **Contact Joan Melcher, 360-424-0407 or email jdmelcher@comcast.net.** Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

WEDNESDAY – NOV. 28 LITTLE

MOUNTAIN Explore the trails on Little Mountain southeast of Mount Vernon, WA, which is part of the Mount Vernon City Park System. A number of options are available. There will be elevation gains. Meet at 9 a.m. on the Little Mountain Park access road. Park on the side of the road before the gate. (The gate opens at 10 a.m.) The Little Mountain Park access road is off the Little Mountain Road, which is off the Blackburn Road. You may leave when you return from the hike

WEDNESDAY – DEC. 5 EAST SHORE LAKE WHATCOM or STEWART MOUNTAIN

1. The **East Shore of Lake Whatcom** hike is a fairly level hike among trees beside the east shore of Lake Whatcom. It is 6.25 miles round trip, with little elevation gain.

2.

Stewart Mountain This hike begins in the same area as the East Shore of Lake Whatcom hike but it goes up hill on the new Beke Trails and on the power line road. Most of this hike is on trail. It is 5 miles round trip.

For both hikes, meet at 9 a.m. at the new Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride lot. This lot is on the east side of I-5, off Exit 231 of I-5. Car pool according to which of the two hikes you plan to do. You may leave when all in your car are safely back to the trailhead.

WEDNESDAY – DEC. 12 DECEPTION PASS

AREA Hike on trails at Sharpe Park, Pass Lake, Rosario, and Bowman's Bay. The hikes are up to 10.7 miles, with a 1,000 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at Sharpe's Park trailhead off of Rosario Road south of Anacortes. Parking is limited at Sharpe's Park so please car-pool if possible. Joan will shuttle anyone who wants to walk between Sharpe Park and the park access off the Ginnett Road and, at the end of the hike, from Rosario up to Sharpe Park. Contact Joan Melcher (see above) if you need driving directions to Sharpe's Park. Joan's last shuttle will leave Rosario at 2:30 p.m. WA State Discover Pass required for your vehicle if you park in Deception Pass State Park.

NOTE: A WASHINGTON STATE DISCOVER PASS IS REQUIRED TO PARK IN DECEPTION STATE PARK



WEDNESDAY – DEC. 19 WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCULPTURES/ TREE TOUR & THE BELLINGHAM

WATERFRONT During this week before Christmas, take some time off to walk on the Western Washington University campus to view sculptures and trees and to enjoy the Bellingham waterfront. The tour will be led by Sal Russo. Meet at the Village Green in old Fairhaven at 9 a.m. The Village Green is at the corner of Mill Ave and 10th Street. Find parking on the street. After visiting the Western campus, walk north on High Street and then turn left when you reach E. Holly. This will take you to downtown Bellingham where there are many restaurants available for lunch. To return, go south on Railroad Avenue. Take South Bay Trail, which follows the shoreline and enters Boulevard Park. Be sure to take the popular walkway over the bay that leads to Taylor Dock. Continue back to your car in Fairhaven.

WEDNESDAY – DEC. 26 DUGUALLA STATE

PARK Spend part of a short day-light day at Dugualla State Park, a little-known park north of Oak Harbor. The park's several miles of trails meander through an alder grove, a wetland area, and offer a more challenging, steep trek to a secluded beach. Meet at Dugualla State Park at 9 am. From SR20 traveling from the north, turn left onto Sleeper Road. Continue on Sleeper Road approximately 2.6 miles until it dead-ends at a metal gate. 6 miles of trail if you do all the loops; 500 ft elevation gain. WA State Discover Pass required for your vehicle.

WEDNESDAY – Jan. 2, 2013 INTERURBAN

TRAIL Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail. There are several options available. They are up to 14 or more miles; with a slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Clayton Beach Parking lot at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. Return time depends on the hike option you select.

NOTE:

A WASHINGTON STATE DISCOVER PASS IS REQUIRED FOR YOUR VEHICLE

Mt. Baker from Fir Island

Photo by J.B. Smith



In Appreciation of Tim Manns – Beach Watcher
by Ivar Dolph, Skagit Audubon Board Member & Past President



Tim Manns (Center) on Beach Watcher Project

Those of us who have been in Skagit Audubon know how lucky we are to have Tim Manns as our president. He seems to be everywhere conducting board and monthly meetings, going on and leading field trips, writing letters on conservation issues, and attending state meetings to represent us. You may know also of his work with the Skagit Land Trust and the Padilla Bay Foundation board.

But probably only a few of you know of his some 1,227 volunteer hours he contributed to Skagit Beach Watchers since he joined in 2006. Beach Watchers is a Washington State University Extension program to train volunteers to participate in conservation and restoration in the Skagit River watershed, mostly in marine waters. If Beach Watchers are there, Tim is often one of them. I won't bore you with the number of hours in each category but you would find him on the Advisory Board, participating in Beach Watcher training, and doing continuing education. You would find him on the beach as a Beach Naturalist or on the docks doing Crab Escape Cord Education. He writes about marine organisms for the Creature Feature radio program and stalks his assigned beach for the COASST program looking for dead birds. And he monitors, monitors, monitors. He's in the intertidal at a Samish Island beach, Sunset Beach at Washington Park, and Cypress Island.

Retirement means a withdrawal from meaningful activities for many, but for Tim, it has meant a head on rush into activities to help make the world a better place. He couldn't go on an Audubon field trip on Nov. 10th. Why? He had two other meetings the same day.

Thanks Tim! We are proud to have you in our lives!



Tim Manns (right), "Another Project"

WASHINGTON DEPT. OF FISH & WILDLIFE NEWS RELEASE

600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091, <http://wdfw.wa.gov/>

November 9, 2012

Contact: Chris Danilson: (360) 466-4345 ext. 280

Hotline to report dead, sick or injured swans available

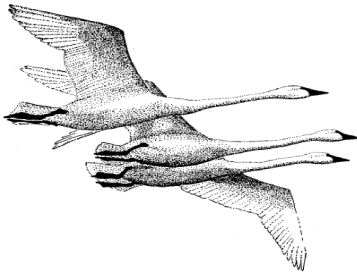
OLYMPIA - People can call (360) 466-4345, ext. 266, to report dead, sick or injured swans. Callers should be prepared to leave a message including their name and phone number, and the location and condition of the swans. The hotline is available 24 hours a day through the end of March.

Lead shot has been banned for waterfowl hunting in Washington and British Columbia for more than a decade. But swans can still pick up and ingest lead shot while foraging in shallow underwater areas in fields and roosts where lead shot is still present.

People who observe dead, sick or injured swans are advised not to handle or collect the birds, said Chris Danilson, WDFW wildlife biologist for Skagit and Whatcom counties. Instead, people should call the hotline, he said. WDFW and Puget Sound Energy employees, as well as volunteers from the Washington Waterfowl Association and the Trumpeter Swan Society, will pick up the birds.



SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1101
MOUNT VERNON WA 98273



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

December Meeting:
Burlington Public Library
820 East Washington Ave.
Burlington, WA
Phone: 360-755-0760

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS:
DECEMBER 15, 2012
NORTH CASCADES NAT'L PARK

DECEMBER 29, 2012
PADILLA BAY

December 2012 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Nov. 25	Nov. 26	Nov. 27	Nov. 28 Hiking: Little Mountain	Nov. 29	Nov. 30	1
2 Field Trip/ Workshop Padilla Bay Interpretive Center	3	4 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	5 Hiking: East Shore Lake Whatcom or Stewart Mountain	6	7	8
9	10	11 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	12 Hiking: Deception Pass Area	13 Field Trip: Reifel Bird Sanctuary	14	15 Deadline: SAS January Flyer North Cascades Christmas Bird Count
16	17	18	19 Hiking: WWU Sculptures/ Tree Tour & Bellingham Waterfront	20	21	22
23 <hr/> Dec. 30	24 <hr/> Dec. 31 New Year's Eve	25 Christmas <hr/> Jan. 1 New Year's Day	26 Hiking: Dugualla State Park Jan. 2 Hiking: Interurban Trail	27	28	29 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper

