

# The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 33 No. 1

#### JANUARY 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.

Saturday, January 4
Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Area
9:30 a.m. to Early Afternoon
We'll be searching for cool
birds from Christmas Bird
Count hot spots. Meet at
Breazeale/Padilla Bay Interpretive Center. Our Christmas
Bird Count always turns up a

Field Trips continue on page 6

#### JANUARY MEETING AND PROGRAM

Eruptive History and Hazards of Mount Baker: The Active Volcano in our Backyard

By Dave Tucker

Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10433 Bayview-Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



Collecting Fumarole Gases: Sherman Crater Photo by John Scurlock

This talk presents the volcanic history of Mount Baker. Little was known of its volcanic history until research by USGS geologists began in the mid 1990s. Mount Baker is the youngest in a series of volcanoes extending back over 1,000,000 years. Older volcanoes in the Baker area include two Crater Lake-sized calderas and a number of once-sizable stratovolcanoes. A large flow of rocks and mud, or lahar, descended the Middle Fork Nooksack River into the lowlands of Whatcom County 6,800 years ago. The state of volcano monitoring at the volcano will be discussed. The likely volcanic future and the potential for impacts on lowland communities close out the presentation.

Dave Tucker (MS Geology) is a research associate at Western Washington University. Tucker has been mapping Baker's geology since the mid-1990's. He is a director of the Mount Baker Volcano Research Center, an all-volunteer nonprofit that raises funds to support research and to educate residents in the hazard zones of Mount Baker. http://mbvrc.wordpress.com



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Mt. Baker Our Local Picturesque Volcano

Photo by Gene Kiver

#### 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 Mer	mbership Form
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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 <u>form below</u> 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

520 for one-year introductory membership	with one chapter amiliation
Name	
Address	
City/State	_ Zip
Гelephone No	

#### Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Data Center P.O. Box 422246-2246

Y21

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, <a href="mailto:skagitmembers@gmail.com">skagitmembers@gmail.com</a>



My short message this month is about our Skagit Audubon website. Without a paid staff our chapter depends entirely on the willingness of volunteers to devote time and talent to our organization. One such volunteer has been Julie Bishop who designed our website and has maintained it for more than ten years. She has done a wonderful job keeping our website up to date with the current *Skagit Flyer* and other timely information but she is now moving on. We all thank Julie and deeply appreciate her long and dedicated service to our chapter.

With Julie's planned departure, this is a good time to update the Skagit Audubon website using newer and user-friendly software. Our website not only conveys important information to our members but should also provide an appealing introduction to people from out of our area of the chapter's activities such as meetings, field trips, hikes, and so forth.

The Board is now in the process of planning the development of a new website and we need a volunteer or two to help us make this transition. Our aim is to update our website so that it's attractive and easy to use.

We are looking for someone who could assist us with this transition or at least would be willing to maintain the monthly content when the new website has been implemented. The person does not need to be a hotshot computer whiz or have extensive web experience but should at least have a reasonable level of computer proficiency and have the ability and interest to learn new software. If you are interested, please contact me at plwright@comcast.net, or call me at 360/299-8212.

## SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY JANUARY CONSERVATION MESSAGE By TIM MANNS, CONSERVATION CHAIR

Since the realignment of Francis Road between Mount Vernon and Clear Lake, swans by the hundreds are visible on Johnson DeBay slough as you drive past early or late in the day. In mid-December we began swan surveys at the big field in Johnson DeBay Swan Reserve and have been seeing many groups of trumpeters coming off the slough, flying over the field en route to other feeding areas or landing in the field. It appears the reserve is serving its function better than some would have us believe. Apparently, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, manager of the reserve, is intent on rescinding the reserve status and within the next few years opening the area to hunting. Our goal is to keep it a non-hunting reserve particularly to benefit Trumpeter Swans, the largest waterfowl and once near extinction, by better documenting how they and other birds use the area. To help with the surveys and possibly future volunteer projects at the reserve, please contact me: Tim Manns, bctm@fidalgo.net or 360/336-8753.

A number of issues pertinent to Audubon will be coming up during the 2-month legislative session beginning January in Olympia. Audubon Washington Chapter Associate Jennifer Syrowitz does a great job sending email alerts and updates to interested Audubon members. We want to provide her a list of Skagit Audubon members willing, on short notice, if necessary, to call a legislator, send an email, or write a letter on fast-developing issues in the legislature. If that sounds like you (and I hope it does), please contact me. Also let me know if you would prefer to only be on Jen's regular distribution list.



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

**Cackling Goose** 1,000-2,000 daily near Cockreham Island 11-23 to 11-28 (GB)

Wood Duck 1 near Cockreham Island on 11-13 (GB) Gadwall 1 on Van Horn Ponds on 11-17 (GB) Cinnamon Teal 4 at the Skagit Game Range on 11-27 (GB)

Ruddy Duck 120 on Similk Bay on 11-17 (GB)

#### **GALLINACEOUS BIRDS**

Ruffed Grouse 1 on Butler Flats on 11-17 (GB)

#### **HERONS**

**American Bittern** 1 at North Fork Access on 11-17 (GB)

#### **RAPTORS**

Osprey 1 at Marblemount Fish Hatchery on 12-5 (TM) Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 at Rasar State Park on 11-24 (GB)

#### RAILS

Sora 1 heard in Hamilton on 6-16 (GB)

#### **SHOREBIRDS**

Black Turnstone 4 at Wildcat Cove on 11-23 (GB) Western Sandpiper 1 at March Point on 12-7 (DA, JP) Least Sandpiper 30 at the Padilla Bay dike trail on 12-4 (PP); 40+ at March Point on 12-7 (DA, JP) Dunlin 7,000 near English Boom, Skagit Bay on 12-1 (PP, Ecostudies survey); 1,000 at March Point on 12-7 (DA, JP)

#### **GULLS**

**American Herring Gull** 1 at mouth of Oyster Creek on 11-23 (GB)

#### WOODPECKERS

**Red-breasted Sapsucker** 1 near Cockreham Island on 12-9 (GB)

Northern Flicker pair "yellow-shafted" regularly visiting suet feeder in west Mount Vernon (JA)

#### **CHICKADEES**

Chestnut-backed Chickadee 4 at Butler Hill on 12-7 (RH)

Chestnut-backed Chickadee Photo by Ron Holmes



#### **NUTHATCHES**

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** 4 at Easy Pass trailhead on 11-30 (GB)

#### **DIPPER**

American Dipper 1 at Rasar State Park on 11-24 (GB)

#### THRUSHES

**Hermit Thrush** 1 at Wildcat Cove on 11-23 (GB)

#### **PIPITS**

**American Pipit** 12 in west Mount Vernon on 12-4 (JA); 5 at Eide Road on 12-5 (DA, JP)

#### WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 regularly seen at Anacortes home throughout period (JOC) Northern Waterthrush 1 at the Skagit game Range on 12-7 (GB)

#### **TANAGERS**

Western Tanager 1 female at Samish Island Public Beach on 12-1 (RARE in winter here)

#### **SPARROWS**

**Spotted Towhee** 3 at Butler Hill on 12-8 (RH) **Savannah Sparrow** 30 at the West 90 on 12-5 (DA, JP)

Fox Sparrow 4 at Butler Hill on 12-8 (RH)

Fox Sparrow Photo by Ron Holmes



Song Sparrow 2 at Butler Hill on 12-8 (RH) Golden-crowned Sparrow 2 in Grassmere on 11-17 (GB)

**Dark-eyed Junco** 5 at Butler Hill on 12-8 (RH) **Lapland Longspur** 1 at the West 90 on 12-5 (DA, JP)

#### BLACKBIRDS

Yellow-headed Blackbird 2 on Samish Flats on 11-16 (GB)

#### **FINCHES**

**American Goldfinch** 1 in Grassmere on 11-17 (GB)

(**DA**) Dick Abbott; (**JA**) Jean Ashby; (**GB**) Gary Bletsch; (**RH**) Ron Holmes; (**TM**) Tim Manns; (**JOH**) John O'Connell; (**JP**) Joshua Parrot; (**PP**) Pam Pritzl



Five hikes are scheduled for the first month of the New Year. Unexpected circumstances such as weather, wash-outs, closed trails, logging, construction, or road conditions may cause cancellations or changes in the following hikes. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, predictions of heavy rain, or snowy or icy road conditions. Call if you have questions on any of the following: **JOAN MELCHER**, **360-424-0407**, or e-mail at **idmelcher@comcast.net** anytime up until 7:45 the morning of the hike. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

All the hikes are on a Wednesday except for the first hike, which is on Thursday, Jan, 2. \*Starred hikes require a Washington State Discover Pass for parking your vehicle.

#### THURS. – JAN.2 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 a.m. 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. If you do all the loops, there are 6 miles of trail with a 500 ft. elevation gain.

#### WED. - JAN. 8 INTERURBAN TRAIL\*

Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail ~ several options are available. There 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.

#### WED. - JAN. 15 FRAGRANCE LAKE

Hike to a lovely mirror lake above Larrabee State Park. It is a 7.3 mile loop with a 1,000 ft. elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Clayton Beach Parking lot at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. You may leave when your carload has safely returned to the trailhead.

# WED. – JAN. 22 WHATCOM FALLS & CREEK, BIG ROCK LOOP, AND THE STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE PRESERVE – Several Options!

**I.** bridge and back, 4 miles round trip with a slight elevation gain.

**II. Big Rock Loop:** Instead of or in addition to the Whatcom Falls & Creek hike, you can do this hike,

which is a 6 mile loop that begins and ends at Whatcom Falls Park. This loop takes the hiker north; some ups and downs; a few short, steep sections; and mostly trail with some sidewalk/road walking.

III. Stimpson Family Nature Preserve: If you wish to do this hike after I, II, or both above, then drive to the Stimpson Family Nature Preserve and hike up to 4 miles there with about a 400 ft. elevation gain.

For all of the above, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the I-5 /Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride near exit 231 from I-5 <u>OR</u> meet at 9 a.m. at the Whatcom Falls Park parking lot on Arbor Street off of Electric Avenue. Ride with those who plan to do the hike(s) you wish to do. When all return to your car, you may leave. Whatcom Falls & Creek: Hike along Whatcom Creek from Whatcom Falls Park to the I-5 Freeway

WED. – JAN. 29 SUGAR LOAF & MT. ERIE Hike in the popular Anacortes Forest Lands. Terry Slotemaker, 360-293-6514, or his designee, will lead us on a 5 mile hike with a 1,400 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m.at the Mt. Erie parking lot off the Heart Lake Road south of Anacortes. Most are back to the trailhead by 1 p.m. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

#### WED. – FEB. 5 - LUMMI ISLAND

Walk a 7 mile loop on the north end of Lummi Island for island, sea, and mountain views. A \$7 foot-passenger ferry fare required. The hike is mostly level. Walking shoes recommended. Meet at 8:30 a.m. the I-5 /Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride. No specified return time although most will take the 1 p.m. ferry back



#### Field Trips continued from page 1

few special birding rarities and Gary will lead us on a "chase" to try and find them again, a week later. If you were not on the team that found the special birds, join us as we try and get a look for everyone who is interested. Our leisurely start gives time for the winter sun to arc over the horizon and for you to make it to join us in a good way to begin a new year. **Leader: Gary Bletsch,** 

garybletsch@yahoo.com

#### Thursday, January 9 Reifel Bird Sanctuary, B.C. 7:30 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. Meet to arrange car pools at 7:30 a.m. at the "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. Bring appropriate ID for the border crossing – either 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 or cell 360-540-3464

#### Saturday, January 18 Shoreline, Birds and "Brew" in Anacortes 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Here's a great field trip to keep your New Year's resolution to "heat up" your birding skills. On this trip we will visit Anacortes shoreline "hotspots" for birding, including Washington Park, Ship's Harbor, Skyline, Guemes Channel and Cap Sante. Birds to see at these sites include loons, grebes, gulls, ducks, murrelets and many more sea and shoreline species! A "brew" break for hot coffee and tea is planned during the morning. Dress warmly for windy conditions. Plan to meet at the first parking lot on the right after entering Washington Park. We will walk to Green Point and then plan carpooling to the additional sites. Minimal walking at each location.

Leaders: Mark and Irene Perry, 931 623 2084 or irene.perry@yahoo.com

#### Sunday, January 26 Camano Island / Stanwood 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We'll check out English Boom and Utsalady Boat ramp located on Skagit Bay, visit Maple Grove located on Sarratoga Passage, Iverson Spit located on Port Susan Bay, Eide Road on Leque Island and the Stanwood Water Treatment Plant. Expect to see a variety of waterfowl, seabirds, raptors and passerines. Plan to walk up to 2 miles on easy terrain. Meet at the Stanwood QFC parking lot near Starbucks at 8:30 a.m. to arrange carpools. Bring a lunch, birding gear, and dress for the weather. Bring a scope (if you have one) and lunch.

Leader: Pam Pritzl, 360-387-7024 or ppritzl@frontier.com



Bald Eagle *Photo by J. B. Smith* 

Saturday, February 1 **Arlington Eagle Festival Port Susan Bay** 8:30 a.m. to Noon Libby Mills, field trip leader, plans to meet field trip participants at Port Susan Bay at 8:30. Before the public arrives we will bird around the dike trail. At 10 a.m. we will switch hats and those who care to volunteer will take stations along the dike trail and with their scopes or their knowledge and field guides lead the public and show birds to the Eagle Festival public on site.

We will break up about noon. If you are an eagle enthusiast, you'll get your fill of the bald beauties during this Arlington-Stillaguamish Fourth Annual Eagle Festival. In the city of Arlington visitors can immerse themselves in the world of bald eagles with a series of activities.

See website:

http://www.arlingtonwa.gov/index.aspx?page=428

Leader: Libby Mills, 360-757-4139 or <a href="mailto:libbymills@gmail.com">libbymills@gmail.com</a>



## From Dec. 2013: National Audubon ADVISORY: Your Actions at Work 2013 in Review

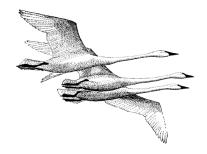
Looking back over the year 2013, we note with pride a number of accomplishments. As with all our policy success stories, you are at center stage. It's your emails, your phone calls, your support at public meetings, your ever vigilant eye on matters close to home that make the difference. It's a nice list, so feel good about your accomplishments!

- Beaches for Birds and People. Until recently, the Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina was not a good place for shorebirds. But a National Park rule restricting off-road vehicle use in some areas during nesting season has allowed the birds and sea turtles to make a remarkable comeback. A recent legislative attack to turn back that rule was unhinged when Audubon North Carolina and the 10 Audubon chapters put pressure on their legislators to leave the rule in place. Now, Cape Hatteras National Seashore will continue to be a place for both birds and people.
- Audubon Fights for Water for Wildlife. This year Audubon launched the Western Rivers Action Network in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico to build an engaged network of people in the west to advocate on behalf of rivers and riparian habitats. The Western Rivers Action Network in its first year has grown to over 20,000 members, has participated in thousands of actions to protect rivers and the birds that depend on them, and includes over 30 Audubon chapters, over 50 other partner organizations and agencies.
- Bucks for Birds in the Gulf. The first installment in a multi-year \$2.6 billion Gulf restoration fund kicks off with \$5 million to Audubon for coastal bird conservation and stewardship in Florida and Mississippi. Another \$40.4 million goes to a diversion project on the Mississippi River in Louisiana, a longstanding goal for Audubon. More to come!
- We Got the Lead Out! Audubon California scored a major victory for birds and people when it succeeded in banning lead ammunition. Condors and other birds that feed on lead-infested carcasses are the big winners.
- **Big Win for Panama Bay.** Nearly 200,000 acres of wetlands outside of Panama City lost key protections—but won them back after Audubon, the Panama Audubon Society and others pressed to have them reinstated. Recognized by the Ramsar convention as Wetland of International Significance, this Globally Important Bird Area is used by millions of migratory birds every season.
- Climate Crackdown. President Obama laid out a major policy initiative to combat climate change that includes reducing carbon pollution through increased renewable energy and new rules for existing and new power plants—which contribute 40% of the carbon pollution in the U.S.
- Hands Off Alaska! Starting off the year with a bang, Shell's drill-rig Kulluk ran aground on New Year's Eve, capping off a series of mishaps that ultimately led to Shell canceling its 2013 Arctic Ocean drilling season. That's good news, though expectations are that Shell will be back. While the Arctic Ocean remains up for grabs, the 3.1 million-acre wetlands wilderness around Teshekpuk Lake was designated off-limits for oil drilling when Secretary of Interior Salazar signed a management plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska—designating a total of 11 million acres as unavailable for oil and gas leasing

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



#### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## January 2014 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
Dec. 29	Dec. 30	Dec. 31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day	2 Hiking: Dugualla State Park	3	4 Field Trip: Skagit Rarities with Gary Bletsch		
5	6	7 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	8 Hiking: Interurban Trail	9 Field Trip: Reifel Bird Sanctuary, BC	10	11		
12	13	14 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	15 Hiking: Fragrance Lake	16	17	18 Deadline SAS February Flyer Field Trip: Washington Park		
19	20	21	22 Hiking: Whatcom Falls & Creek, Big Rock Loop, Stimpson Nature Preserve	23	24	25		
26 Field Trip: Camano / Stanwood Best Birding Sites	27	28	29 Hiking: Sugar Loaf & Mt. Erie Feb. 5 Hiking: Lummi Island	30	31	Feb. 1 Arlington Eagle Festival: Port Susan Bay		

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at <a href="https://www.skagitaudubon.org">www.skagitaudubon.org</a> The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper