

# The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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April 2023

## **APRIL MEETING – PRESENTED ON ZOOM (no in-person attendance)**

**"Who're You Calling a Bird Brain"**

**Presented by: Kim Adelson**

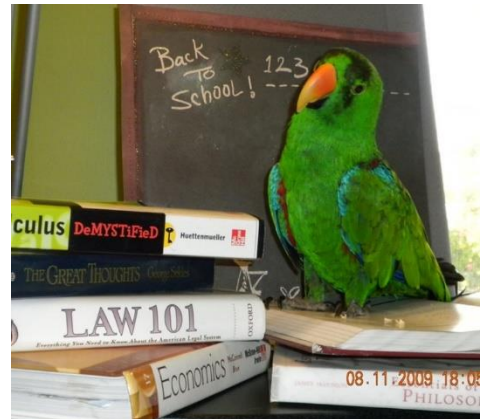
**Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**

Please join us for this month's meeting which will be held on Zoom only (no in-person attendance). To attend the Zoom event, please register at: <https://bit.ly/SASApr1123>. Preregistration for Zoom is required and please only one Zoom registrant per household. After you register, you will receive an email with the link to sign in at the time of the event. If you register and are unable to attend the Zoom event, please cancel your registration. Thank you. Questions? Contact [programs@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:programs@skagitaudubon.org).

For hundreds of years, birds have been considered stupid and incapable of advanced thought or learning; thus the derogatory phrase "bird brain". Do birds deserve this bad rap? Are they truly less intelligent than mammals? Recent research has demonstrated that some birds have remarkably strong cognitive skills, comparable to monkeys and apes. Some can form abstract concepts; some display prodigious memories; some make and use tools; and some can make complex inferences. Please join us to discover surprising mental abilities exhibited by a wide variety of birds!

Kim Adelson is the Vice President of both Black Hills Audubon and the Friends of Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, and frequently gives presentations on birds, their evolution, effects of climate change, and other topics. She was a college professor for 30 years, and has a master's degree in Evolutionary Biology and a doctorate in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. She is passionate about preserving our beautiful habitat and the wildlife it contains.

Note: If you missed the excellent March 14<sup>th</sup> presentation on Rough Legged Hawks by Jeff Kidd and Neil Paprocki, a link to the YouTube recording follows: <https://youtu.be/o-u0dZPQmWY>.



**ABOUT SKAGIT AUDUBON:** 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. General membership meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. Some meetings will be presented on Zoom only. Others will be hybrid meetings on Zoom and in-person at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon. Check the monthly Flyer for upcoming meeting details. The board of directors meets on the first Tuesday of each month, September through June, at 7 pm. Skagit Audubon membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, the Skagit Flyer, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. The Skagit Flyer is produced monthly from September through June and full color issues are available at: [www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter](http://www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter). Unless noted, all images, drawings, clip art, etc. appearing in The Skagit Flyer are in the public domain. We reserve the right to edit.

#### **Board of Directors-Officers**

President: John Day; [president@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:president@skagitaudubon.org)  
Vice President: John Farnsworth; [vicepresident@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:vicepresident@skagitaudubon.org)  
Secretary: Don Jonasson; [donjonasson@hotmail.com](mailto:donjonasson@hotmail.com)  
Treasurer: Neil O'Hara; [treasurer@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:treasurer@skagitaudubon.org)

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Conservation: Tim Manns; [conservation@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:conservation@skagitaudubon.org)  
Education: Jeff Osmundson; [education@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:education@skagitaudubon.org)  
Field Trips: Colleen Shannon; [fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org)  
Finance: Lisa Hopkins; [finance@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:finance@skagitaudubon.org)  
Hikes: To be Determined (see hiking section for temporary contact)  
Membership: Pam Pritzl; [membership@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:membership@skagitaudubon.org)  
Nomination & Governance: Lisa Hopkins; [finance@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:finance@skagitaudubon.org)  
Programs: Carla Helm; [programs@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:programs@skagitaudubon.org)  
Technology: Ann Skinner; [anns@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:anns@skagitaudubon.org)

#### **Board of Directors-At-Large Directors**

Jeff Sinker [jmsinspect999@aol.com](mailto:jmsinspect999@aol.com)  
Katherine O'Hara [katherineoh@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:katherineoh@skagitaudubon.org)  
Libby Mills [libbymills@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:libbymills@skagitaudubon.org)

#### **Other Volunteers**

Hospitality: Pamela Maxwell  
Newsletter Distribution: John Edison

In response to the COVID-19 virus, some of our general meetings are being held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center with an option to attend via Zoom, while others will be available on Zoom only. Please check the monthly program description for meeting details. As with our hikes and field trips, only vaccinated, symptom-free individuals should attend meetings in person. Please visit our website: [www.skagitaudubon.org](http://www.skagitaudubon.org) for updates.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - by John Day**

Dear Members and Friends of Skagit Audubon Society,

In my President's Message for the September 2022 *Flyer*, I noted that the National Audubon Society (NAS) had begun considering whether to drop the Audubon name. Last Wednesday, March 15, NAS announced its Board of Directors' decision to keep the name. You can find more information on the decision in a press release at <https://www.audubon.org/news/national-audubon-society-announces-decision-retain-current-name> and in an open letter from NAS CEO Dr. Elizabeth Gray at <https://www.audubon.org/news/open-letter-ceo-audubons-name>. Now that NAS has announced its decision, our Board of Directors will discuss the implications of this for our chapter.

Our chapter Vice President, John Farnsworth, adds his personal commentary on John James Audubon the man and on the NAS decision in a separate column in this issue.

On a different note, I want to welcome spring! As proof of its arrival, the Pacific chorus frogs began calling in our pond earlier this week. A couple of days ago, I spotted a female wood duck fly up from the pond to check out one of our two nest boxes, both of which I recently cleaned out, and from the broken eggshells both of them contained, appear to have hosted successful broods last year. We watch pairs of wood ducks on the pond early in the season (as well as hooded mergansers), but once the females start nesting, we don't see them much. Occasionally I'll catch a glimpse of one rapidly winging away, presumably for some more favored foraging spot, or bombing straight into the entrance hole of one of the boxes from elsewhere. I have never been lucky enough to see a brood after they leave the nest. Where their mother takes them and how they manage to get through all the perils of roads, dogs, cats, coyotes, hawks, etc., is a complete mystery to me. Here's to mystery!

## **VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - by John S. Farnsworth, PhD.**

I have two full-size quarto Audubon prints under glass in my cabin. The first, Plate XI from *The Birds of America*, depicts *Falco Washingtonii*, a non-extant species of eagle that Audubon claimed to have drawn from nature. When ornithologists insisted that Audubon show them the specimen from which he had sketched, Audubon was unable to do so simply because such a specimen never existed. It was a fake bird. The second print, Plate IXXVII, is of Belted Kingfishers, also labelled "drawn from nature." The print depicts three birds, two males and one female, but the female's two belts were colored the same hue, which those of you who have seen female kingfishers in nature will recognize is incorrect.

John James Audubon was a flawed man, and not a particularly honest or accurate ornithologist. The National Audubon Society, after a year of consultation, study and deliberation, has decided not to abandon the Audubon name despite the fact that he enslaved persons of African descent. I was one of many chapter leaders with whom NAS consulted, and I recommended that the name be dropped. Regardless, the decision has been made that the name has transcended its namesake, and has come to stand for more than a century of conservation on behalf of birds. While this decision troubles me, I honor the deliberative process that led to it, and I hope we can move forward united behind our conservation legacy.

As part of this decision, NAS has committed \$25 million toward its efforts in diversity and inclusion. It is my hope that Skagit Audubon, similarly, will increase its outreach efforts to be a more diverse, inclusive community where birders of color feel they can belong.

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL ELECTION - SAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The annual process to elect Skagit Audubon Society's board of directors has begun. Our chapter has four elected officers and up to seventeen At-Large Directors. Our President, John Day, is midway through his two-year term. Nominations are now open for all other Board positions, each of which has a one-year term.

Nominations of Chapter Members in good standing will be accepted from now through our April member meeting and will close at the end of that meeting. The final slate of candidates proposed for election by the Board will be presented at the members' meeting in May. Elections will be held at the annual meeting of members on Tuesday, June 13, 2023. Please save the date and participate in our annual elections.

Your nominations and governance committee is seeking additional board candidates. You don't need to have a lot of birding experience to serve on the board. Enthusiasm and a willingness to serve are what counts. Board members are expected to regularly attend monthly board meetings (first Tuesday evenings, Sep-Jun) and may serve on one or more board committees. Most board meetings are held via zoom. Our board is a fun and congenial group of people with a mixture of newer members and those who have served for many years. Please consider joining us.

We are looking for someone with good organizational skills to serve as **Board Secretary** and for someone who would be willing to serve as **Program Chair** or Co-Chair. The program chair(s) coordinate the speakers for our monthly general meetings (ten per year.) Please see Article VII in our bylaws for a description of board member duties and officer roles.

[https://www.skagitaudubon.org/~dphwzgi/documents/SAS\\_Bylaws\\_adopted\\_11-24-2020.pdf](https://www.skagitaudubon.org/~dphwzgi/documents/SAS_Bylaws_adopted_11-24-2020.pdf)

### Contact the Nominations and Governance Committee

If you would like to nominate yourself or another SAS member to a board position, please contact any of the following board members: Lisa Hopkins ([finance@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:finance@skagitaudubon.org)), John Day ([president@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:president@skagitaudubon.org)), Ann Skinner ([anns@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:anns@skagitaudubon.org)), Tim Manns ([conservation@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:conservation@skagitaudubon.org)), Jeff Osmundson ([education@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:education@skagitaudubon.org)), Don Jonasson ([donjonasson@hotmail.com](mailto:donjonasson@hotmail.com)) or Katherine O'Hara ([katherineoh@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:katherineoh@skagitaudubon.org)).

## 2023 Great Backyard Bird Count Final Results

Half a Million Birdwatchers from around the world came together from February 17-20, 2023 and the 2023 Great Backyard Bird Count was another resounding success. Results as of March 6, 2023 from [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) are shown below:

**7,538** species of birds—2/3 of the known **10,960** species on the planet. More than **200 countries** came together to share bird sightings, making this year's global submission map light up for four consecutive days. Everyone at [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) extends congratulations to each and every contributor around the world who shared **Merlin Bird ID(s)**, **eBird checklist(s)**, or **photos, sounds, or videos** during the count period. For more details, visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)

## HIKING

Skagit Audubon is pleased to offer scheduled hikes. Please visit our website: [www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hikes](http://www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hikes) for full details on the hikes. All hikers must have a current signed liability release form (available on the website) on file prior to participating in any Skagit Audubon hike. Please be prepared to follow current COVID pandemic safety protocols and all hikers must be fully vaccinated. Questions? Contact Tom Ozretich, [tom.ozretich@gmail.com](mailto:tom.ozretich@gmail.com); 360.424.8466 \*Means Wash. State Discover Pass or Northwest Forest Pass required.



- Apr. 5:** Pine & Cedar Lakes and Raptor Ridge or Lake Padden
- Apr. 12:** Hoypus Point, Hoypus Hill & Ala Spit\* (Wash. State Discover Pass)
- Apr. 19:** Wallace Falls\* (Wash. State Discover Pass)
- Apr. 26:** Baker River (\*Northwest Forest Service Pass)
- May 3:** Thunder Creek

## FIELD TRIPS – by Colleen Shannon

Beginning birders and friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes (if you have them). Please note specific COVID guidelines in each field trip description. Questions? Contact Colleen Shannon, [fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org).



### Saturday, April 8 – Northern State Recreation Area

**Time: 8 am until 12 noon; Trip Leader: Libby Mills, [libbymills@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:libbymills@skagitaudubon.org), 360.708.6975**

Meet Libby at the main parking lot off Helmick Road just east of Sedro-Woolley at 8 am for some cool spring bird listening-at Northern State Recreation Area. The day is chosen for early spring birds before the May migrants arrive to enrich the chorus. I honor my birding mentor every April 8, Dad's birthday. Arrive ready to listen quietly and leave with at least three bird songs in your quiver out of dozens to hear. Libby Mills specializes in listening and welcomes everyone of all abilities. Scopes and binoculars are welcome too and dress for the weather. Pre-registration is not required.

### Saturday, April 29 – Birding Camano Island

**Time: 8 am until 12 noon; Trip Leader: Alice Turner, [alicet2@msn.com](mailto:alicet2@msn.com)**

Spring on Camano Island offers a variety of habitats and birds to explore. We'll start by driving along farm fields, where Whimbrels can be plentiful at mowing time. Then on to English Boom, where we may see sea birds, swallows, eagles, passerines, and if we're lucky, Purple Martins. Then on to Iverson Spit, with mud flats, shrubs, and woodlands full of spring arrivals. The trip will end at Leque Island, a new restoration site that showcases fertile mud flats and possible shorebirds.

Meet in Stanwood at the QFC shopping center on the north side of 532. We'll be near the stand-alone Starbucks store. Those wishing to carpool can do so from there. Dress for the weather and scopes or binoculars are welcome. Pre-registration is required by going to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4CA5AE29A7FFC25-birding>. This trip is mostly accessible and all participants are required to be fully vaccinated for Covid 19.

## CONSERVATION – by Tim Manns

### Audubon Legislative Priorities

At this writing in the third week of March, Audubon Washington's two priority bills are still in play in the state legislature. SB 5104 (Surveying Puget Sound marine shoreline habitat - [Washington State Legislature](#)) passed the Senate with just one dissenting vote and is now working its way through the House. E2SHB 1181, to require addressing climate change under the Growth and Shoreline Management Acts, passed the House and is making good progress in the Senate ([Washington State Legislature](#)). Other Audubon priorities concern allocations in the biennial state budget, which the legislature is to write and pass by the session's end on April 23rd. For more information, see the Conservation Reports in earlier issues of the *Skagit Flyer* and the Conservation Notes on the chapter website ([Skagit Audubon Society - Conservation Notes](#).)

### North Fork Stillaguamish Landscape Analysis project

On March 15th, Skagit Audubon submitted comments to the U.S. Forest Service on the draft *Environmental Assessment (EA) for the North Fork Stillaguamish Landscape Analysis*. The EA describes plans for managing about 62,000 acres of this part of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest over the next several decades. Almost all the project area is in Skagit County. The plan focuses mostly on areas where old-growth forest was clear cut years ago and replanted in Douglas-fir and Western Red-Cedar. Those trees now comprise dense, even-aged stands with little or no understory. A significant aspect of the plan is applying "variable density thinning" to many of these stands in hopes of accelerating development of old growth forest characteristics (large trees; large snags (standing dead trees); large fallen trees; multi-level closed canopy). Old-growth forest of this type is the necessary habitat for many species, especially the Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet, both designated "Threatened" on the federal list of endangered species and also protected under state law. To read about the many other aspects of this complex project, visit the project website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61659>.

### Carbon Capture Foundation

In mid-March Skagit Audubon completed the second year of participation in the Carbon Capture Foundation's project to encourage tree planting to lock up carbon ([Programs | THE CARBON CAPTURE FOUNDATION](#)). Ten individuals and land-owning organizations requested 1,211 tree seedlings through Skagit Audubon. The Foundation provided these at no cost. Skagit Audubon also connected the Foundation with organizations that received and planted hundreds more trees. Watch for an email announcement this summer about requesting trees for planting in early 2024.

### Agriculture and Snow Geese in the Skagit

Skagit Audubon member Nancy Crowell's excellent photographs illustrate *Washington's Runaway Snow Geese* by Rebecca Dzombek, published this winter in the online magazine *bioGraphic* (California Academy of Sciences) (<https://www.biographic.com/washingtons-runaway-snow-geese/>). Dzombek describes the changes that have so increased Skagit's population of overwintering snow geese and what this means for farming.

### 66 Birds/3 degrees - - The Threat Climate Change Poses to Birds

Skagit artist Natalie Niblack's project *66 Birds/3 degrees*, inspired by National Audubon's report *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink* ([Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink | Audubon](#)), is showing at Everett's Schack Art Center from March 25 to June 3. In Natalie's words, "The *66 Birds/3 degrees* project is a visual and sound installation consisting of sixty-six oil paintings of birds with motion-sensor players playing their songs. It focuses on the birds of Western Washington considered at risk for significant population loss or even extinction at up to 3° Celsius warming, as well as birds already on the watch list for extinction in Washington." You can get an idea of how evocative Natalie's paintings are of these species at her website: [Paintings: 66 Birds/ Three Degrees | natalie-niblack \(natalieniblack.com\)](#). Her work will be at the Museum of Northwest Art in La Conner this fall.

For more information about conservation issues Skagit Audubon is following, see Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website ([Skagit Audubon Society - Home](#)) under the Conservation tab.



## FIELD SIGHTINGS – by Ann Skinner

This column reports a summary of selected sightings. Rare sightings should be submitted with detailed written documentation and if possible, a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is encouraged. Do not hesitate to contact any observer to help document unusual sightings.

Please submit your sightings to [birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org)

For recent updates on bird sightings, check out **ABA Tweeters** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding menu, Bird Sightings submenu).

### WATERFOWL

Eurasian wigeon (2) Wylie, 2/11, (3) SF, 2/14, (2) Wylie, 3/7 (NOH)  
Trumpeter swan (52) Wylie, 2/11, (20) SF, 2/14, (2) Cranb. Lk., 2/23 (NOH),  
Ring-necked duck (7) Cranb. Lk., 2/23 (NOH)  
Northern shoveler (8) SF, 2/14, (2) 3/7 Wylie, (NOH)

### GREBES AND CORMORANTS

Pied-billed grebe (2) Wylie, 3/7 (NOH)

### SHOREBIRDS

Greater yellowlegs (12) Wylie, 3/7 (MS/JS)  
Black oystercatcher (2) WA Park 3/5 (MS/JS)  
Long-billed dowitcher (16) Wylie, 3/7 (MS/JS)

### HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Northern harrier (2) Wylie, 2/8, 2/11 & 3/7, (7) SF, 2/14 (NOH)  
Red-tailed hawk (1) SF, 2/14 (NOH)  
Rough-legged hawk (1) East 90 3/5 (MS/JS)  
Bald eagle (11) Wylie, 2/11, (10) SF, 2/14 (NOH),

### OWLS

Great Horned owl (2 hooting), EFI, 3/7 (RW)  
Barred owl (2) Cranb Lk., 2/23 (NOH)  
Short-eared owl (2) SF, 2/14 (NOH), (5) East 90, 3/5 (MS/JS)

### WOODPECKERS

Pileated Woodpecker (1) Cranb. Lk., 2/23 (NOH) (1) EFI, 3/3 & 3/7 (RW)

### KINGLETS

Golden-crowned kinglet (1) Wylie, 2/8 (NOH)  
Ruby-crowned kinglet (1) Wylie, 3/7 (NOH)

### NUTHATCHES

Brown creeper (1) Stanwood Hm., 3/5 (MS/JS)  
Red-breasted nuthatch (2) Stanwood Hm., daily (MS/JS)

### WRENS

Bewick's wren (1) Wylie, 2/8 (NOH)

### THRUSHES & PIPITS

Varied thrush (1) Wylie, 2/11 (NOH), (2) Stanwood Hm., 3/4 (MS/JS)

### FINCHES & SPARROWS

American goldfinch (2) Stanwood Hm., daily (MS/JS)  
Dark-eyed junco (slate-colored) (2) EFI, daily (RW)

### WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped warbler (1) 2/8, (4) 3/7, Wylie (NOH)

**(FIFR)** Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve;  
**(SF)** Samish Flats **(EFI)** East Fidalgo Island; **(JS)** Jeff Sinker; **(MS)** Mary Sinker; **(NOH)** Neil O'Hara; **(JH)** Joe Halton; **(RW)** Regan Weeks

**SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY  
PO BOX 1101  
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form**

Membership: \_\_\_\_ \$20/one year **OR** \_\_\_\_ \$40/two years ● \_\_\_\_ New **OR** \_\_\_\_ Renewal

Additionally, I wish to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please designate my donation to: \_\_\_\_ General \_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_ Scholarship Fund.

Payment: (1) Pay online with a credit card or PayPal (see [skagitaudubon.org](http://skagitaudubon.org) for details) **OR** (2) Mail this form & your check to: Skagit Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1101, Mt. Vernon WA 98273-1101

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*By providing your email address and those of any household members, you/they consent to SAS's use of electronic transmission, such as email and website postings, for notices about SAS business. You may revoke this consent at any time on written request to the Secretary of SAS.*

Membership includes those members of your household whose names & emails you provide to us:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you have more than one additional member of your household who wishes to become a member of SAS, please provide their name(s) and email address(es) to [membership@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:membership@skagitaudubon.org))*

I want to be involved in (check all that apply): Education \_\_\_\_ Conservation \_\_\_\_ Field Trips \_\_\_\_ Hiking \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

(To join National Audubon Society, a separate membership, please visit: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org))