



The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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NOVEMBER MEETING – PRESENTED IN-PERSON AND ON ZOOM

"Using Birds as Indicators of Habitat Objectives"

Presented by: Phyllis Reed, U.S. Forest Service

Tuesday, November 8th at 7 pm

Please join Skagit Audubon Society for our hybrid member meeting at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, or attend virtually on Zoom (see below for Zoom registration details).



Birds are considered excellent indicators of ecosystem health. Join us for a presentation and discussion about how birds were used to inform USFS habitat conservation planning in the South Fork Stillaguamish drainage.

Phyllis Reed is the North Zone Wildlife Biologist for the USFS on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. She has spent most of her career on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest in various roles from seasonal wilderness ranger to wildlife biologist, environmental coordinator, ecosystem resource administrator, and acting District Ranger. One of her major roles is being a part of the interdisciplinary teams working on landscape vegetation management projects in which wildlife habitat enhancement is one of the objectives. Illustration of Pacific Wren by David Allen Sibley.

In-person attendees must be fully vaccinated and please do not attend if you have any symptoms of illness. Masks are optional. If you plan to attend the event virtually on Zoom, please register for this Zoom event at: <https://bit.ly/SASNov822>. Preregistration for the Zoom event is required. 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. Questions? Contact programs@skagitaudubon.org.

If you missed the excellent presentation on Sept. 13th, "The Swinomish Village Osprey Nest: Life on a Cell Tower" presented by John Farnsworth, or wish to view it again, please click on the YouTube video link: <https://youtu.be/MEQ8uRF1q8>.

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 at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. Social/7 pm and Program/7:30 pm. The board of directors meets at the same location 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. Unless noted, all images, drawings, clip art, etc. appearing in The Skagit Flyer are in the public domain. We reserve the right to edit.

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Other Volunteers

Hospitality: Pamela Maxwell
Newsletter Distribution: John Edison

In response to the COVID-19 virus, our member meetings are once again being held in person at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center; but those who would prefer the option of attending via Zoom will still be able to do so. Hikes and birding field trips are being organized for vaccinated individuals and participants need to comply with the activity leader's guidelines. Please visit our website: www.skagitaudubon.org for updates.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – by John Day

Dear Members and Friends of Skagit Audubon Society,

I'm sure that many of you have heard one way or another that Seattle Audubon Society recently decided to drop the Audubon name and is in the process of choosing a new one. You may be aware that the National Audubon Society (NAS) has also started the process of considering whether or not to change its name.

The issue here, as I understand it, is that despite what John James Audubon did to increase the public's awareness and knowledge of North American birds, he was himself a slaveholder and made his racist views of Black and Indigenous people well known. This is seen by many as a significant barrier for minority people to joining Audubon or participating in Audubon-sponsored activities.

As you can well imagine, the name change issue has not been without controversy. There are a number of important considerations in addition to trying to make Audubon more welcoming to minorities, including the strong positive "brand" association the name has historically had with bird protection and conservation in general. There are also very practical concerns about all the other changes that have to be made when an organization changes its name.

A number of us on the Skagit Audubon Board of Directors have felt the need to start our own discussion about re-naming, because we share concerns such as those outlined above on both sides of the issue and because we don't want SAS to be caught completely "flat-footed" by ongoing developments. We're not in a hurry, though. We will be learning much more about the national level process in the next few months, as NAS has announced that it has formed a Board Task Force to make a recommendation to the entire NAS Board in February of next year on whether or not to rename the Society. Our understanding from NAS is that even if they decide to change their name, local chapters will not be required to follow suit.

Going forward, it will be very important for us to hear from you all on this very important topic. One option would be to set up an online or mail-in poll to gauge membership concerns. The SAS Board will be looking at that and other possibilities in our upcoming meetings. In the meantime, here are a few links to online articles that you may find informative on the issue:

An essay in Audubon Magazine by Black American ornithologist J. Drew Lanham titled "What Do We Do About John James Audubon?": <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2021/what-do-we-do-about-john-james-audubon>.

A September 29, 2022 article from the Salish Current online news website titled "Audubon: Changing names to step out of a racist shadow": <https://salish-current.org/tag/audubon/>. Additional articles: Article by a former NAS CEO here: <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2020/revealing-past-create-future> and one that links this issue to the parallel one relating to the names of certain birds: <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/fall-2020/birding-and-conservation-groups-are-beginning> (see also <https://americanornithology.org/english-bird-names/whats-next-for-english-bird-names/> from the American Ornithological Society) or this detailed discussion of the history of Audubon, the man: <https://www.audubon.org/news/the-myth-john-james-audubon>.

Happy Autumn, Everyone!

HIKING – by Joan Melcher

Skagit Audubon is pleased to offer scheduled hikes. Please visit our website: 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. Questions? Contact Joan Melcher, jdmelcher@comcast.net or 360.424.0407. *Means US Forest Service parking permit required.



- Nov. 2:** Little Cranberry Lake
- Nov. 9:** The Tursi Trail
- Nov. 16:** Little Mountain
- Nov. 23:** Thanksgiving Week – no hike
- Nov. 30:** Squire's Lake & Alger Alp
- Dec. 7:** East Shore Lake Whatcom and/or The Chanterelle Trail

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.



Sunday, November 6th – 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Wylie Slough, Conway (Skagit Wildlife Area-Headquarters' Unit)

We will take advantage of a rising tide to meet at mid-day and watch for shorebirds and waterfowl to move in as the tide rises. This field trip will be geared toward the beginner or relatively new birder. Depending upon needs and skill levels we can work on finding birds in binoculars, field marks and habitats. Loaner binoculars will be available by request. Wylie is a wonderful place for all levels of birders. Waterfowl, perching birds and raptors of all types may be seen on any given day. The terrain is flat with good footing suitable for most abilities. There have been recent changes at Wylie, and we can talk about them during the field trip. Discover Pass required. Meet at the east parking lot near the boat launch for introductions. We will work on our birding skills and slowly walk up to about one-half mile. Reservations are not required and contact trip leader, Jeff Osmundson, jeffO4297@gmail.com to reserve binoculars or with questions.

Saturday, November 19th – 8:30 am - Noon

Wintering Birds are Returning to the Skagit Valley

Meet at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center parking lot. We will walk the upland trail and over to the shores of Padilla Bay. Afterwards, we will drive to various areas on the Samish Flats to seek raptors and waterfowl. Discover Pass required for some areas. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars and scopes if you have them. No pre-registration required and contact trip leader, Libby Mills, libbymills@gmail.com with any questions. We will respect the spreadability of COVID and other seasonal health hazards at the time of the trip.

THE BIG SIT – A Big Success! by Colleen Shannon

On October 8, 14 Skagit Audubon volunteers were joined by 7 birders from the community for our annual Big Sit event. We were blessed with perfect weather and a good variety of birds. It provided a wonderful opportunity for comradery and learning. Collectively we found 59 bird species. The Snow Geese are back! Three members also did a home sit on October 9th and added several more species. The donations are still coming in, but I can safely say we met our goal of adding another \$1,000.00 scholarship for a worthy Environmental Studies student at Skagit Valley Community College. I want to thank all the volunteers who made this year's Big Sit such a successful and fun event.

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|------------------------|------------------------|
| Snow Goose | Belted Kingfisher |
| Cackling Goose | Downy Woodpecker |
| Canada Goose | Pileated Woodpecker |
| Wood Duck | Northern Flicker |
| Northern Shoveler | Peregrine Falcon |
| Gadwall | Common Raven |
| American Wigeon | Black-capped Chickadee |
| Mallard | Bushtit |
| Northern Pintail | Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| Green-winged Teal | Marsh Wren |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Bewick's Wren |
| Eurasian Collared Dove | European Starling |
| Anna's Hummingbird | Hermit Thrush |
| Virginia Rail | American Robin |
| American Coot | Cedar Waxwing |
| Killdeer | House Finch |
| Least Sandpiper | Purple Finch |
| Pectoral Sandpiper | American Goldfinch |
| Short-billed Dowitcher | Fox Sparrow |
| Long-billed Dowitcher | White-crowned Sparrow |
| Wilson's Snipe | Savannah Sparrow |
| Greater Yellowlegs | Song Sparrow |
| Lesser Yellowlegs | Lincoln's Sparrow |
| Ring-billed Gull | Spotted Towhee |
| Glaucous-winged Gull | Western Meadowlark |
| Turkey Vulture | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Northern Harrier | Brewer's Blackbird |
| Cooper's Hawk | Common Yellowthroat |
| Bald Eagle | Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| Red-tailed Hawk | |

CONSERVATION – by Tim Manns For local and state conservation issues important to Skagit Audubon, see the Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website (www.skagitaudubon.org) under the Conservation tab.

MEET THE BUSHTIT – by Jeff Sinker

Tiny, social, twittering, nondescript in coloration and often going unnoticed, Bushtits are active foragers throughout a wide range of habitats (forest, forest edges, gardens and parks, wetland edges, etc.) and are often found in flocks ranging from 10 to 50 birds. Very acrobatic in their foraging methods, they often feed upside down while probing the undersides of leaves, twigs, and branches in search of insects, eggs, and pupae. A nesting pair weaves a long, hanging, sock-shaped tightly woven nest between 8-35' above the ground. The small entrance hole, located towards the top, leads into the inner nest chamber where the female lays 4-10 eggs. Both parents share incubation duties over approximately 12 days and then care for the nestlings for another 14-15 days when the young fledge. A successful pair may raise two broods per season and Bushtits are year-round residents in western Washington. Learn more at: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bushtit/overview>.



PADILLA BAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2022

This year is the 123rd for the Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the nation's longest-running community science bird project. Each year between December 14 and January 5, volunteers across the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands count bird species and individuals in almost 2,500 count areas. Each area is a 15-mile diameter circle. Skagit Audubon's role in this large effort is organizing the Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count, named for the location of the count circle's center on the March Point peninsula by Padilla Bay.

The 2022 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count will take place Friday, December 30th. The count usually happens the last Saturday of the year, but this year that day is New Year's Eve, and some long-time participants are not available. After polling the area leaders, we've chosen a date that appears at this point to work for the greatest number. We need additional experienced birders to fill a number of key vacancies this year. For information about participating in this all-day, rain or shine survey, birders should contact Tim Manns (conservation@skagitaudubon.org or 360.333.8985).

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING PHOTO PROGRAM

The ever-popular annual member photo program returns on Tuesday, December 13th. This is not a competition but a chance to share and enjoy nature photographs taken by our members. The particulars:

- **Number of photos:** 7 maximum per person; minimum size 500kb – 3mb with 1mb-2mb preferred. Sorry but we are unable to accept videos.
- **Description required:** please tell us about your subject – limit 60 words per photo
- **Deadline:** Friday, November 18th; emailed to Mary Sinker at programphotos2@gmail.com

Please note: we may not be able to use photos submitted after the deadline or do not meet the size or description requirements. Questions or need more info: Email Mary at programphotos2@gmail.com

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@skagitadubon.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).

PIGEONS and DOVES

Mourning Doves (10) EFBA, 9/16 (RW)

NIGHTWAWKS/SWIFTS

Common Nighthawk (1) EFBA, 9/26 (RW)

HERONS, EGRETS

Great Egret, (1) Alice Bay, 9/14 & 9/26 (HAT)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Cooper's Hawk, (1) EFBA 9/23 (RW); Stanwood home, 10/3 (JS)

OWLS

Barred Owls (2) Stanwood home 9/26 (MS/JS)

WOODPECKERS

Hairy Woodpecker (1) EFBA, 9/16 (RW)
Pileated Woodpecker (1) W Anacortes yard, 10/21 (JB)

KINGFISHERS

Belted Kingfisher (1) Stanwood home, 9/24 & 10/2 (MS)

CORVIDS

Western Scrub Jay (1) Samish Island home 9/10 (HAT), Anacortes Skyline area, 10/25 (JB)



BUSHTIT/KINGLETS

Ruby & Golden-crowned Kinglets, EFBA, 9/27 (RW)

NUTHATCHES/CREEPERS

Brown Creeper (2) Stanwood home 10/1 (MS)
Red Breasted Nuthatch (2) Stanwood home, 10/1 (MS/JS)

WRENS

Pacific Wren, (1) EFBA, 9/30 (RW)

THRUSHES

Townsend's Solitaire (2) EFBA, 9/23 (RW)
Townsend's Solitaire (2) W Anacortes yard 10/29 (JB)
Hermit Thrushes (3 together!), Cap Sante 9/16 (JH)
Varied Thrush (1) EFBA, 10/1 (RW)

FINCHES & SPARROWS

Fox Sparrow, EFBA, 9/13 (RW)
Golden crowned Sparrows, W Anacortes yard, 10/22 (JB)
Leucisic Song Sparrow, (1) WA Park, 10/3 (JH)

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler, EFBA, 9/26 (RW)

(EFBA) East Fidalgo Bay Area; **(FIFR)** Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve; **(LM)** Libby Mills; **(JS)** Jeff Sinker; **(MS)** Mary Sinker; **(SAS)** Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; **(RW)** Regan Weeks; **(RM)** Ryan Merrill **(JB)** Jane Brandt; **(HAT)** Howard & Thais Armstrong; **(JH)** Joe Halton

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join or renew online at: www.skagitaudubon.org/about-us/join-us

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

Mail form and payment 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)

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)