



The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 38, No. 2 www.skagitaudubon.org Feb. 2019

February Meeting and Program *Threatened and Endangered Wildlife in Washington* *Robert Waddell, District Wildlife Biologist*

Tuesday, Feb. 12th

7:00 Social; 7:30 Program

Padilla Bay Interpretive Center

10441 Bayview Edison Road

Mt. Vernon, Washington



As the State's human population continues to grow, more fish and wildlife species have been put at risk by loss and fragmentation of critical habitat, disturbance, and introduction of non-native species. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) oversees the listing and recovery of those species in danger of being lost in the State.

WDFW biologist Robert Waddell will give an overview of the State Wildlife Action Plan which lays out the primary threats and priorities for conservation of species and habitats throughout Washington. Discussion will include the effects of species listing and recovery plans, the threats affecting recovery, and accounts of local species with greatest conservation needs.

Robert Waddell has worked as a biologist for WDFW since January 2016, most recently as the Wildlife Biologist for Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Robert works with and manages a variety of species, from mountain goats to Oregon spotted frogs. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Wildlife Ecology and Management from the University of Georgia. Robert spent two years in Mongolia as a Peace Corps Volunteer assisting a secondary school with their environmental education curriculum, performing surveys for argali and snow leopard, and capturing and radio-tracking Mongolian gazelle. He then worked as a researcher with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and studied urban mountain lions, coyotes, desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, and the ecological impacts to wildlife from desert water developments.

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SWAN HOTLINE

If you see a dead,
sick, or injured
swan, call the
Washington

Department of Fish
and Wildlife 24-
hour hotline: (360)
466-4345, ext. 266.

FEBRUARY FIELDTRIPS, by Libby Mills

Beginning birders and 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 (if you have them). 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. **NOTE:** If you plan to join a field trip some place other than the described starting point, call or email the trip leader the day before to ensure a successful rendezvous. Trip plans may change.



Arlington Eagle Festival

Port Susan Bay Preserve

Sat. Feb 2, 2019 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Leader: Libby Mills, libbymills@gmail.com

This weekend we have a special opportunity to go out on the dike at Port Susan Bay on the Nature Conservancy property at the end of Boe Rd. just south of Stanwood and west of Marine Dr. The site is closed except with special permission, which can be obtained at the Mt. Vernon office of the Nature Conservancy (410 N. 4th St., Mt. Vernon, 360-419-0817). Saturday is the Arlington Eagle Festival, and with it Skagit Audubon has offered to put a few volunteers out on the dike to help non-birders find eagles and other birds. It's always a fun place to visit, and the odds are that's where our snow geese are!

Please join us for a walk on the dike at 9:00 am, before the public arrives about 10 am. At 10 am, plan to turn your hat around and be a volunteer for a couple hours helping newcomers to birding or to the area see and enjoy the birds. Dress for coastal winter birding. If you can make it, even for just the 10-12 volunteering, bring a scope if you have one, and PLEASE CONTACT Libby Mills, our trip coordinator and leader, to let her know she will have a few supporters to help out.

North Camano Island Birding

Sunday, February 10, 2019, 8 am to 2 pm., Leaders Alice Turner and Pam Pritzl

Join us and meet at the Stanwood Starbucks parking lot near QFC. We will tour areas such as English Boom, Utsalady boat launch, Maple Grove County Park, Iverson Spit and Eide Road, depending on time and energy. Arrive early enough to organize car pools as parking is limited in several locations. Lunches or snacks advised. Scopes would be helpful. Reply to: alicet2@msn.com (Alice Turner) to confirm.

Thursday, February 21, 2019

Reifel Bird Sanctuary, British Columbia

7:30 am to Late Afternoon

Ron Holmes will be our guide for a trip to the ever-popular birding sights in southern BC borderlands around 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 am across from the Cook Road exit/Highway 99 Starbucks. This is just south of Cook Road on Highway 99. Come early enough to buy your coffee and use the restroom and leave by 8 am. 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 at Reifel. There may be additional stops for any special birds reported in nearby areas. Here's the link to the bird sanctuary to check out the information they provide (rules, bird checklist, etc.): <http://www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/index.html>. Please confirm your plans with contact leader: Ron Holmes, ronaldeholmes@gmail.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Feb. 2 – Skagit Audubon Birding Field Trip & Volunteer Opportunity – Arlington Eagle Festival

Feb. 5 – Skagit Audubon Board Meeting

Feb. 6 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Lummi Island

Feb. 10 – Skagit Audubon Birding Field Trip – North Camano Island

Feb. 12 – Skagit Audubon General Meeting and Program

Feb. 13 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Camano Island

Feb. 20 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Conway Area Dike Walk

Feb. 21 – Skagit Audubon Birding Field Trip – Reifel Bird Sanctuary

Feb. 23-24 – Skagit Audubon Volunteer Opportunity – Port Susan Snow Goose Festival

Feb. 27 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Sugar Cube & Whistle Lake



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/7:00 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 7:00 pm.

Skagit Audubon membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, *The Flyer*, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. *The Flyer* is produced monthly from September through June. Printed copies are black-and-white and electronic copies are full color. *The Flyer* is available online at www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter.

Board of Directors

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Committee Chairs and Representatives

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FEBRUARY HIKES by Joan Melcher

Safety comes first so hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. All the hikes are on a Wednesday and for questions or additional information contact Joan Melcher at

jdmelcher@comcast.net or 360.424.0407. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes and if dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

General safety note: upon arrival at the destination, if cancellation of the hike is determined at the discretion of the Audubon trip leader, any individual who elects to proceed is no longer considered to be a member of an Audubon-sponsored activity. Carpools are arranged at the discretion of the drivers.



FEB. 6 LUMMI ISLAND THIS HIKE IS DEPENDENT ON THE ROADS BEING DRIVABLE TO THE FERRY TO LUMMI ISLAND. Walk a 7 mile loop on the north end of Lummi Island. Island; sea and mountain views. \$7 foot-passenger ferry fare required. Mostly level, walking shoes recommended. Meet at **8:15 a.m.** at the Chuckanut Drive park-n-ride, exit 231 from I-5 on the east side of I-5. No specified return time although most will take the 1 pm ferry back.

FEB. 13 CAMANO ISLAND Friends of Camano Island Parks, FOCIP, will lead us on hikes on Camano Island; up to 11.9 miles with shorter options available. Lunch provided; suggested donation of \$3. Meet at **7:45 a.m.** in the S.E. corner of the Mount Vernon Safeway parking lot or at **8:30 am** at the Blue Camano Center Building on East Camano Drive. There will be a brief orientation there; hike options will be discussed; maps will be given out; restrooms will be available. Discover Pass required if you park in either Cama State Park or Camano Island State Park.

FEB. 20 CONWAY-AREA DIKE WALK Hike up to 3.3 miles one way on the Conway area dike, north towards Mount Vernon or drive over to Wylie Slough and hike the trails there. For all of the hikes, meet at 9 am to sign in at the parking area described below. You may leave when you return to your vehicle. Lunch at the Conway Pub & Eatery? If the weather is clear there will be great views. Birds should be plentiful. From I-5 take exit 221 which is signposted Conway and Lake McMurray. This is also the Pioneer Hwy (SR 534) which leads to Stanwood. Turn west toward Conway/Stanwood and very shortly (100 yds.) turn right on Fir Island Rd into Conway. Go over the RR tracks and in 100 yds. turn right on Dike Rd just before the bridge. Do not go over the South Fork of the Skagit River Bridge onto Fir Island! Parking is available on the left in 200 yds. north of the unsigned dike district building. If you go to Wylie Slough, WA Discover Pass required in parking lot.

FEB. 27 SUGAR CUBE AND WHISTLE LAKE Terry Slotemaker or his designee will lead us on a hike in the Anacortes Forest Lands. 6.8 miles with 1600 ft. elevation gain. A 3.41 mile self-guided option around Whistle Lake only is also available. Meet at 9 am at the Heart Lake parking lot off the Heart Lake Road south of Anacortes. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

MAR. 6 GOOSE ROCK PERIMETER Hike a loop that includes Cranberry Lake, beaches, the south side of Deception Pass, Cornet Bay and a 450 foot climb up Goose Rock. Total el. gain for the day is about 1150 feet. Meet at 9 a.m. in the east side parking lot at Cranberry Lake near the main entrance to Deception Pass State Park 6.2 miles for the basic loop hike; add 4.0 miles if you hike on beach south to the naval station border (10.2 miles); You may leave when your car or people has returned to the trailhead. Discover pass required to park in the park. **NOTE: HAVE EAR PROTECTION WITH YOU IN CASE THE WHIDBEY JETS ARE FLYING LOW AND LOUD.**

February 23-24, 2019 - Stanwood Snow Goose Festival

At the end of the month the Snow Goose Festival in Stanwood is looking for helpers. Please visit www.skagitaudubon.org, click Activities, Area Festivals, Snow Goose & Birding Festival for details on festival activities and how to volunteer. Contact Pam Pritzl, ppritzl@frontier.com to volunteer.

Conservation by Tim Manns

For new members or other readers just wondering what Audubon is about, let me say a little concerning the role conservation advocacy plays in Audubon. This is a national organization with almost 500 chapters, each an independent non-profit. The mission of our chapter, Skagit Audubon, appears in every newsletter issue. It's very similar to the mission of every other Audubon chapter. National Audubon says that chapters "... enable Audubon members and others to meet and share an appreciation of their common interests. They create a culture of conservation in local communities through education and advocacy, focusing on the conservation of birds, other wildlife and conservation of important habitats." Birding field trips and recreational hikes are ways we engage members' interest in birds (and other wildlife) and in the public lands that are both wildlife habitat and places for recreation and appreciation of the natural world. These activities and monthly program meetings are open to members and non-members alike.

Advocacy on conservation issues is another way Audubon advances its mission. Over a century ago National Audubon was a major force behind passing the International Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the most important law protecting birds in the U.S. Because different bird species are adapted to almost every habitat, because they travel far and wide in migration, are highly visible, and are sensitive to environmental conditions, birds are good indicators of environmental change. Consequently, a very wide range of conservation issues affects birds and their habitat. National



American Dipper, by Mary Sinker

Audubon headquarters' staff address issues impacting birds nationally and regionally. For example, their research has identified climate change as the greatest threat to birds. For that reason, Audubon works for climate change legislation in Washington, D.C., and assists at the state level. The Audubon Washington staff, based in Seattle, work on complex issues often crossing chapter geographic boundaries. Locally, Skagit Audubon participates, for example, in environmental review of projects at the March Point refineries with potential effects on the birds and other wildlife of Padilla and Fidalgo Bays and because transition away from fossil fuels must happen if the planet is to remain livable for birds and people.

With so many issues relevant to Skagit Audubon's mission, we depend on mutual support with other organizations whose interests and expertise complement ours. As one example, recently Washington Wild, which focuses on protecting wild lands and waters in our state, brought to the attention of Audubon and other conservation groups an ongoing serious threat to the Skagit River's water quality from potential mining development just north of the international border. Skagit Audubon was able to add its voice to the many groups signing a letter of concern. There are many other examples of how Audubon at the national, state, and local levels acts to support what we value in preserving other species and their habitat. As the only conservation group in Washington with a state-wide network of chapters, Audubon is in a strong position to mobilize members' support for policies and laws protecting birds, other wildlife, and habitat. *Conservation Notes* on the Skagit Audubon website and *Conservation Reports* from past newsletters give a more detailed picture of the issues on which our chapter has focused and how you can get involved.

Skagit Audubon Field Notes by Pam Pritzl

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 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

Cackling Goose 4 on Thunder Arm, Ross Lake Recreation Area on 12-15 (SA, TM North Cascades CBC)

Eurasian Wigeon 1 at March Point on 1-15 (JH)

Eurasian x American Wigeon (hybrid) 1 at Ship Harbor Interp. Pres. on 1-1 (NOH)

Lesser Scaup 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-4 (NOH)

Black Scoter 1 at Samish Island Public Beach on 1-13 (GB)

Common Goldeneye 2 in Burrows Bay on, Anacortes 1-13 (NOH)

Barrow's Goldeneye 3 in Burrows Bay, Anacortes on 1-12 (NOH)

Common x Barrow's Goldeneye (hybrid) 1 male at Samish Island on 12-29 (RM)

Hooded Merganser 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

GREBES

Pied-billed Grebe 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-24 (NOH); 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-4 (NOH); 3 at SWA Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

Eared Grebe 1 at Samish Island on 12-25 (GB)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Anna's Hummingbird 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-24 (NOH); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

RAILS

Virginia Rail 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-4 (NOH); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Hayton Reserve on 1-13 (MS)

PLOVERS

Black-bellied Plover 23 on Samish Flats on 1-7 (NOH)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Least Sandpiper 5 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Hayton Reserve on 1-13 (MS)

ALCIDS

Marbled Murrelet 16 in Guemes Channel from Kelly's Point, Guemes Island (PSSS) (SP, BC, TM)

Ancient Murrelet 1 at Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes on 12-16 (GB); **104** off Young's Park, Guemes Island on 1-5 (PSSS) (SP, BC, TM)

GULLS and TERNs

Western Gull 2 in Burlington on 1-3 (GB)

Herring Gull 1 on Samish Flats on 1-13 (GB)

Iceland "Thayer's" Gull 1 on Skagit Flats on 1-13 (GB)

LOONS

Yellow-billed Loon 1 at Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes on 12-23 (GB)

HERONS and ALLIES

American Bittern 1 in Hamilton on 1-6 (GB)

Great Egret 1 on Skagit Flats on 1-2 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Rough-legged Hawk 4 in Samish Flats on 12-15 (NOH); 3 in Samish Flats on 12-31 (NOH); 3 in Samish Flats on 1-7 (NOH)

OWLS

Western Screech-Owl 1 heard at east Fidalgo home on 12-22 (RW)

Great Horned Owl 1 at Burrow Bay home on 1-12 (NOH); 3 at Ship Harbor Interp. Ctr. on 1-12 (NOH)

Short-eared Owl 6 at Skagit Wildlife Area, North Fork Access on 1-1 (MS); 4 in Samish Flats on 1-7 (NOH); 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, North Fork Access on 1-13 (MS)

Field sightings continued on pg. 7

Field sightings continued from pg. 6

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker 1 at east Fidalgo home on 12-31 and 1-12 to 1-14 (RW)

Northern Flicker 1 “red-shafted” on suet feeder in Burlington yard on 12-17 (LE)

Pileated Woodpecker 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 2 in Samish Flats on 12-15 (NOH); 2 in Samish Flats on 12-31 (NOH); 1 in Samish Flats on 1-7 (NOH)

Gyr Falcon 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Hayton Reserve on 12-31 (GB); 1 (same bird) on Skagit Flats on 1-2 (GB)

Peregrine Falcon 1 in Samish Flats on 12-31 (NOH); 2 in Samish Flats on 1-7 (NOH); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Hayton Reserve on 1-13 (MS)

FLYCATCHERS

Black Phoebe 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-13 (VBK)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-14 (AT); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-24 (NOH); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Hillcrest Park, Mount Vernon on 1-14 (TM)

CORVIDS

California Scrub-Jay 1 regularly seen in Burlington yard during sighting period (LE)

SWALLOWS

Barn Swallow 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-1 (RM); 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-2 (GB)

BUSHTITS

Bushtit 12 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-24 (NOH); 12 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

KINGLETS

Golden-crowned Kinglet 1 in Bow yard on 12-29 (KR)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 6 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

THRUSHES

Varied Thrush 6-east Fidalgo home; 1-12 RW

FINCHES and ALLIES

Purple Finch 6 at east Fidalgo home; 1-5 (RW)

Common Redpoll 1 pair at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-14 (AT)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

Fox Sparrow 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

Swamp Sparrow 1 at Barnaby Slough on 12-24 (GB); 1 at Samish Island on 12-29 (RM)

White-throated Sparrow 2 throughout sighting period at Camano Island home (PP)

Dark-eyed Junco 1 “slate-colored” at east Fidalgo home on 12-31 to present (RW)

BLACKBIRDS and ORIOLES

Western Meadowlark 1 in Samish Flats on 12-15 (NOH); 1 in Samish Flats on 12-31 (NOH); 1 in Samish Flats on 1-7 (NOH)

WARBLERS

Northern Waterthrush 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-1 (RM); 1 or more at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough throughout sighting period (GB)

Yellow-rumped Warbler 2 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 12-24 (NOH); 1 at Padilla Bay NERR on 1-5 (SAS); 5 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 1-11 (NOH)

Townsend's Warbler 1 at Hillcrest Park, Mount Vernon on 1-14 (TM)

MAMMALS

Black Bear 1 seen across Skagit River on North Cascades CBC on 12-15 (MSD)

River Otter 1 in Burrows Bay on 1-12 (NOH)

(SA) Steve Aslanian; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (CBC) Christmas Bird Count; (BC) Brenda Cunningham; (MSD) Mary Sue Dallas; (LE) Larry Edwards; (JH) Joe Halton; (VBK) Von & Betty Koehn; (TM) Tim Manns; (NOH) Neil O'Hara; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (SP) Sarah Peden; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (PSSS) Puget Sound Seabird Survey; (KR) Kerry Rye; (MS) Mary Sinker; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (AT) Alice Turner; (RW) Regan Weeks

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available in color at <http://www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter>. Membership includes all members of your household.

Check one: _____ \$20/one year _____ \$40/two years _____ New _____ Renewal
Additionally, I wish to donate to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in the amount of \$_____. Donations of **\$100 or more** receive a personal field trip by a Skagit Audubon field trip leader.

Mail form and payment to: Skagit Audubon Society
PO Box 1101
Mt. Vernon WA 98273-1101

Name: _____	Areas of Interest (check all that apply)
Address: _____	Birds_____ Gardening_____
City/State/: _____	Education_____ Conservation_____
ZIP: _____ Phone: _____	Field Trips _____ Hiking _____
Email: _____	Other: _____

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