



The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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January Meeting and Program *Scotland - Highlands & Inner Hebrides* *Ron & Sheila Pera*

Tuesday, Jan. 8th
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10441 Bayview Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



Join Ron and Sheila Pera on their photographic journey through Alba (Gaelic name for Scotland). Scotland is part of the United Kingdom (UK) and occupies the northern third of Great Britain. It has 7,330 miles of coastline which provides homes for many seabirds including Atlantic Puffins and Northern Gannets. As they traveled through the Highlands and the Inner Hebrides Islands, mystical castles and the beautiful landscapes came into view around almost every turn. During the 14 day tour 120 species of birds were recorded. It did rain, which probably explains why the raincoat was invented in 1824 in Scotland by Charles Macintosh - garment is still called a "Mac".

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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. Do not handle the bird. Leave a short, detailed message with your name and phone number plus the location and condition of the swan(s). WDFW collects information to assess the impact of lead poisoning and power line collisions, the main causes of accidental swan deaths.

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

President:	Vacant
Vice President:	Vacant
Secretary:	Ron Holmes.....ronh@skagitaudubon.org
Treasurer:	Neil O'Hara....treasurer@skagitaudubon.org.....781-290-9083
Immediate Past President:	Vacant

Committee Chairs and Representatives

Conservation:	Tim Manns.....conservation@skagitaudubon.org.....360-333-8985
Education:	Sheila Pera.....skagiteducation2@gmail.com
Finance:	Phil Wright.....phil@skagitaudubon.org.....360-299-8212
Field Trips:	Libby Mills.....libbymills@gmail.com.....360-757-4139
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Webmaster:	Ron Pera.....skagitaudubon@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED The Education Committee needs volunteers to help with a number of adult presentations coming up in the next several months. These Power Point presentations are scheduled at libraries and private organizations/clubs in the area. If you can help give part of a presentation (already written), that would be great; or, you can assist with the computer and help answer questions from the audience. If you can lend a hand, please contact Sheila at skagiteducation2@gmail.com. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

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 Sept. through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's *Flyer* should be sent to the editor by the third Sat. of the current month. We reserve the right to edit. For questions or problems about your *Skagit Flyer* subscription, contact membership chair: Pam Pritzl membership@skagitaudubon.org

JANUARY 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.

Saturday, Jan. 5th – “eBird the Upland Trail”

Padilla Bay Interpretive Center

9 am to Noon (approx.)

What is eBird? It's a community for birders, scientists, conservation planning and ultimately for the birds we love. Join us for an introduction to eBird and a short walk around the Upland Trail to practice newly learned skills. We'll begin in the conference room for about an hour to watch a couple of videos and hear from experienced users. Topics will include accessing eBird from your computer or mobile phone. Birds noticed during the walk will be entered as an eBird checklist with individual help. Before you arrive, download the free eBird app to your mobile phone and set up your account profile at <https://ebird.org>. RSVP appreciated. Trip leader: Jeff Osmundson, jeffo4297@gmail.com.



Saturday, Jan. 19th – “Samish Flats, a Classic Winter Field Trip”

9 am to 1 pm

Join us as we drive to different sites around Samish Flats. Meet and carpool at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center and then work our way around Bay View and Samish Flats, seeking white birds, raptors, shorebirds and more. Dress for the weather and bring a lunch or snack, binoculars and scope, if you have one. Contact the leader to confirm the trip in the event of poor road or weather conditions. Leader: Neil O'Hara, Treasurer@skagitaudubon.org, mobile 781.290.9083. Discover Pass required for parking.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Jan. 2 – Skagit Audubon Board Meeting (note Wednesday due to Jan. 1st holiday)

Jan. 5 – Skagit Audubon Birding Field Trip – eBird the Upland Trail

Jan. 8 – Skagit Audubon General Meeting and Program

Jan. 9 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Sugar Loaf and Mt. Erie

Jan. 16 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Fragrance Lake

Jan. 19 – Skagit Audubon Birding Field Trip – Samish Flats

Jan. 23 – Skagit Audubon Hike – The Tommy Thompson Trail

Jan. 30 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Whatcom Falls Creek and Big Rock Loop

Feb. 6 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Camano Island

JANUARY 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.



JAN. 2, 2019 INTERURBAN TRAIL Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail, several options available. Up to 14 or more miles; slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 am at the Lost Lake Trailhead parking lot, formerly known as the Clayton Beach Parking lot, at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. Return time depends on hike option you select. WA State Discover Pass required to park.

JAN. 9 SUGAR LOAF and 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, 1400 ft. total el. 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 pm. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

JAN. 16 FRAGRANCE LAKE Hike to a lovely mirror lake above Larrabee State Park. 7 mile loop. 1400 ft. total el. gain. Meet at 9 am at the Lost Lake Trailhead parking lot, formerly known as 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. WA State Discover Pass required for your vehicle.

JAN. 23 THE TOMMY THOMPSON TRAIL (The TTT) Walk on the Tommy Thompson Trail in Anacortes from the Cap Sante Marina to the far end of the trestle on March's Point (7.2 miles round trip) and, if desired, walk around part of March's Point and back to Anacortes (up to 13 or more miles). Meet at 9 am at the north end of the Marina between the restroom and the Preston river boat. Walking shoes recommended. You may leave when you return to the starting point.

JAN. 30 WHATCOM FALLS & CREEK, BIG ROCK LOOP

I. Whatcom Falls & Creek: Hike along Whatcom Creek from Whatcom Falls Park to the I-5 Freeway bridge and back, 4.4 miles RT, slight elevation gain.

II. Big Rock Loop: Instead of or in addition to the Whatcom Falls & Creek hike, you can do this hike, 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; mostly trail with some sidewalk/road walking.

MEETING PLACES & TIMES: Meet at 8:30 am at the I-5 Chuckanut Park-n-Ride near exit 231 from I-5 **OR** meet at 9:15 am at the Whatcom Falls parking lot on Arbor Street off Electric Avenue. Ride with those who plan to do the hike you want to do. You may leave when all in your car are safely back.

FEB. 6 CAMANO ISLAND Friends of Camano Island Parks, will lead us on hikes on Camano Island; up to 11.9 miles with shorter options available. Lunch provided; suggested donation of \$3.00. Meet at **7:45 a.m.** in the S.E. corner of the Mt. Vernon Safeway parking lot or at **8:30 am** at the Blue Camano Center Bldg. on East Camano Dr. 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.

Conservation by Tim Manns Early December brought the good news that a long-absent species is returning to the North Cascades. The fisher, a relative of the pine marten and river otter, was long ago trapped out for its fur. Last month several agencies and non-profit partners working to restore this species to the Olympic Peninsula and the Cascades released 6 fishers near Newhalem.

We begin the new year with well-grounded hope for more good news. Governor Inslee's budget released last month proposes considerable investments that would, in the short and long terms, reverse the decline of the Southern Resident Killer Whales (orcas). Audubon's mission to protect wildlife habitat includes restoring degraded habitat and the wildlife it supports. Protecting and restoring the habitat chinook salmon need, in and along rivers and streams, tidal wetlands, and the Salish Sea support the orca's principal food while also helping many other species. Restoring populations of the small forage fish which chinook eat, for example, also benefits many species of fish-eating marine birds – loons, grebes, mergansers, the federally listed marbled murrelet. These birds will benefit from proposed measures to more quickly restore the water quality of Puget Sound which now adversely affects the health of orcas and other animals high on the food chain.

The Governor's proposals for the legislative session beginning January 14th also include measures to address climate change which are on Audubon Washington's priority list. One example is committing Washington State to a 100% clean electricity standard; that is, to using only electricity from renewable sources by a specific future date. We all have a role to play in seeing that practical measures pass that protect and restore the environment for the well-being of wildlife and for our own sakes. Here are some things we can all do:

- Register to participate in the January 29th Audubon Lobby Day in Olympia (<http://wa.audubon.org/conservation>). Chapter members from around the state will visit their legislators and urge support for Audubon's priorities. For Audubon's legislative priorities in Washington State: see Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website (<https://skagitaudubon.org/conservation/notes>) or the Nov. issue of the *Skagit Flyer* (<https://skagitaudubon.org/documents/SASNov18Flyer.pdf>) and read this Audubon Washington press release: <http://wa.audubon.org/press-release/audubon-washington-leads-advocacy-climate-action-2019-state-legislature>.
- During the state legislature's 105-day session, track the progress of environmental legislation on the websites of Audubon Washington (<http://wa.audubon.org/conservation/advocacy>) and the Environmental Priorities Coalition (<https://wecprotects.org/environmental-priorities-coalition/>) of which Audubon is a member. You can then contact your state legislators and also track the progress of legislation directly via this official site: <http://leg.wa.gov/>. The people we elect want to hear from us. If they don't our concerns are much less likely to get attention..
- Sign up for Action Alerts from Audubon Washington (<http://wa.audubon.org/>) and National Audubon (<https://www.audubon.org/>). On both websites, click the red button labelled "Take Action" at the top of the page and sign up to receive action alerts on issues important at the state and national level. One of the current national issues is preventing removal of protections from Teshekpuk Lake in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. The great majority of this publicly-owned reserve is open to fossil fuel extraction, but 5 years ago a management plan was completed that protected Teshekpuk Lake and surrounding wetlands extremely important for hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, nesting loons, and waterfowl. Many species that migrate through Washington State or winter here breed in the Arctic. Teshekpuk Lake, Izembek Lagoon, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, all now under threat from energy development and climate change, are vital to many thousands of birds we think of as "ours".

This year has real possibilities for being better for Audubon's goals and the environment generally than the one just past. Be part of the change you want to see. We can make a difference!

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

Snow Goose 2 “blue morph” in flock on Fir Island on 11-30 (JB); 4 “blue morph” on Polson Road on 12-5 (AW)

Brant 2 at Weaverling Spit on 12-8 (SAS)

Cackling Goose 10 on Fir Island on 11-30 (JB); 3 at Polson Road on 12-5 (AW)

White-winged Scoter 2 at Weaverling Spit on 12-8 (SAS)

Long-tailed Duck 3 at Samish Island Public Beach on 11-24 (NOH); 8 at Swantown on 11-29 (NOH); 6 at Weaverling Spit on 12-8 (SAS)

Barrow's Goldeneye 5 at Samish Island Public Beach on 11-24 (NOH)

Hooded Merganser 6 at Dugualla Bay on 11-29 (NOH)

Ruddy Duck 100 at Swantown on 11-29 (NOH)

GREBES

Western Grebe 2 at Samish Island Public Beach on 11-24 (NOH)

RAILS and COOTS

Virginia Rail 1 at Dugualla Bay on 11-29 (NOH)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Surfbird 5 at Rosario Head on 11-25 (GB)

Dowitcher sp. 8 at Hayton Reserve on 11-30 (JB)

Greater Yellowlegs 5 at Hayton Reserve on 11-30 (JB)

ALCIDS

Marbled Murrelet 2 at Samish Island Public Beach on 11-24 (NOH)

Ancient Murrelet 2 at Rosario Head on 11-25 (GB)

HERONS and ALLIES

Great Egret 1 at Rosario Head on 12-8 (JO)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Bald Eagle 1 dilute plumage on Fir Island on 11-23 (AW); 18 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 at Swantown on 11-29 (NOH); 12 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 17 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH)

Northern Harrier 12 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 12 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 8 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH)

Cooper's Hawk 1 seen regularly at east Fidalgo home (RW)

Northern Goshawk juvenile seen on 11/28 and 11/30 at east Stanwood property (MS) **UNUSUAL**

Red-tailed Hawk 8 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 “Harlan’s” on pole on Field Road and 1 “Harlan’s ” in tree line on Field Road (2 separate birds) on 11-29 (AW); 8 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 6 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH)

Rough-legged Hawk 4 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 light morph near Padilla Bay Interpretive Center on 11-28 (KR); 6 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 3 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH)

OWLS

Great Horned Owl pair dueting regularly and 1 seen on 12-10 at east Fidalgo home (RW); pair dueting regularly at Bow property (KR)

Short-eared Owl 1 at the East 90 on 11-20 (TM & JP); 4 at the East 90, Samish Flats on 11-24 (KR); 6 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 at the West 90, Samish Flats on 11-24 (KR); 6 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 7 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH)

KINGFISHER

Belted Kingfisher 2 at Dugualla Bay on 11-29 (NOH)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker 1 seen regularly at east Fidalgo home (RW)

Downy Woodpecker 1 at Burlington home on 12-9 (LE)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 2 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 1 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH); 1 at Persons Road, Samish Flats on 11-30 (JB); 4 at Sullivan Road and vicinity on 11-30 (JB)

Field sightings continued on pg. 7

Field sightings continued from pg. 6

Merlin 1 at the West 90 on 11-29 (AW); 1 at the West 90 on 11-30 (JB)

Peregrine Falcon 1 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 at Samish Island Public Beach on 11-24 (NOH); 1 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 1 perched at Hayton Reserve on 11-30 (JB); 1 near Sunset/Farm to Market intersection on 12-7 (AW)

FLYCATCHERS

Black Phoebe 1 at Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 11-30 (JB)

Vermilion Flycatcher 1 at Stanwood water treatment plant on 12-5 (JO)

CORVIDS

California Scrub-Jay 1 at Burlington home on 12-9 (LE)

WRENS

Bewick's Wren 1 at Burlington home on 12-9 (LE)

KINGLETS

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1 at Bow home on 12-2 (KR); 3 at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center on 12-3 (KR)

LONGSPURS and BUNTINGS

Lapland Longspur 9 at the West 90, Samish Flats on 11-20 (TM & JP)

Snow Bunting 2 flew up in front of car on the Samish Flats on 11-27 (KR)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

American Tree Sparrow 1 at Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 11-30 (JB)

Lincoln's Sparrow 1 at Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 11-30 (JB)

Swamp Sparrow 1 at Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 11-29 (JO); 1 at Thillberg Road on 12-9 (GB)

White-throated Sparrow 1 at Camano Island home since 11-25 (PP)

Dark-eyed Junco 1 "slate-colored" seen regularly at east Fidalgo home (RW)

BLACKBIRDS and ORIOLES

Western Meadowlark 4 on the Samish Flats on 11-24 (NOH); 1 at Dugualla Bay on 11-29 (NOH); 4 on the Samish Flats on 12-2 (NOH); 1 on the Samish Flats on 12-6 (NOH)

WARBLERS

Northern Waterthrush 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 11-17 and 12-2 (GB); 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 12-5 (AW); 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Refuge, Wylie Slough on 12-6 (AT)

MAMMALS

Coyote 1 in Samish Flats south of Sullivan Road on 12-6 (NOH)

River Otter 1 in Burrows Bay on 12-7 (NOH)

(**JB**) Joan Bird; (**GB**) Gary Bletsch; (**LE**) Larry Edwards; (**TM**) Tim Manns; (**NOH**) Neil O'Hara; (**JO**) Jeff Osmundson; (**JP**) Joshua Parrott; (**PP**) Pam Pritzl; (**KR**) Kerry Rye; (**MS**) Mary Sinker; (**SAS**) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (**AT**) Alice Turner; (**AW**) Andrea Warner; (**RW**) Regan Weeks

FROM YOUR EDITOR – What the well-dressed hummingbird feeder is

wearing this winter, and my resident hummers must have spread the word to every other hummer in the neighborhood that the food doesn't freeze at my house! I am still working full-time, so I jealously guard those mornings that I don't have to be up before the chickens (and hummers) so no worries when the nighttime temperatures dip below freezing and I don't need to bring the feeder inside. For the upcoming winter days when a bitter cold snap leaves temps below freezing during the day, the little birds will have a constant supply of warm food. I purchased this one online from Hummers Heated Delight

(<https://hummersheateddelight.com/xcart/heated-feeders/>) and am very happy with the feeder and the company's customer service. It performed perfectly during the cold spell a couple of weeks ago and I'll be plugging it in when the next cold spell arrives!



**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)