

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 35 No. 10

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills About the field trips

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. 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:

<u>libbymills@gmail.com</u> 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, Dec. 3 Samish Flats & Beyond 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Join us as we explore the
Samish Flats and surrounding
area for the return of winter
migrants. We will search for
birds of prey and waterfowl.
Plan to meet at the Padilla Bay
Field Trips continue on page 7

DECEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

Potluck and Membership Slide Show Program Organizer: Ronan Ellis

Tuesday, December 13, 2016 6:45 Pot Luck; 7:30 Program Padilla Bay Interpretive Center 10441 Bayview-Edison Road Mt. Vernon, Washington



Red-breasted Sapsucker Photo by Ron Holmes

Please bring potluck food to share. After the meal we will view favorite nature photos ~ a collective view of how Skagit Audubon Society members see nature both here and abroad.

Send **no more** than 8 pictures in **.jpeg** format
Pictures should be sufficient resolution to project well:
The photo size should be at least 3 megabytes
Include **Name of Photographer, Description of Subject,** and **Location**

Topics include Wild Nature, Flowers, Birds & other
Animals, Landscapes, Trips, Backyard Habitat, & Hikes
Videos can be no longer than 1 minute and in .mov, .mp4 or .avi format

Pictures must be received no later than December 1

Send to: ronaniellis@gmail.com
This show is open to EVERYBODY.
We look forward to an evening of sharing. It's not a contest, just a show!

Thanks to those participating!



SKAGIT AUDUBON

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

President: Irene Perry

irene@skagitaudubon.org

Vice President: VACANT Secretary: Mark Perry Treasurer: Hella Lee

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360-299-8212

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Webmaster: Ron Pera

skagitaudubon@gmail.com



Snow Bunting

Nonbreeding Photo by Joe Halton

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skaqit 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 http://wa.audubon.orgaudubon-locations/To join Skagit Audubon Society use the 1st 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 2nd 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.

City/State			7in		
Address					
Name		Phone			
\$20 for one-year introductory members	ership with one cha	apter affiliation	ı		
Annual membership to the National A Membership includes all members of		ncludes a subs	scription to <i>Audubon</i> magazine		
National Audubon Society Membe		National At	dudbon oociety.		
Use the form below to					
SAS does not share your contact information. Clip form/Mail to/Payable to: Skagit Audubon Society P.O. Box 1101 Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101					
Email	Phone				
City/State	Zip				
Address					
Name					
Check one: New N	lembership		Renewing Membership		
Additionally, I wish to donate to Skag in the amount of \$	it Audubon Societ ve a personal field	y, a 501(c)(3) trip by a Skag	nonprofit organization. git Audubon field trip leader.		
	0 one (1) year		\$40.00 two (2) years		
The Skagit Flyer, available at: http://w Membership includes all members of		n.org/newslet	ter.		

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:

Phone: (844) 428-3826

For membership related questions and address:

Email: customerservice@audubon.org

Pam Pritzl membership@skagitaudubon.org



National Audubon Society Y21

Washington, DC 20090-7194

Attn: Chance Mueleck

P.O. Box 97194

Annual Report Highlights

At the end of each calendar year our chapter submits an annual report to National Audubon. This is an opportunity to reflect on our goals and accomplishments. Our chapter continues to reach our goals and accomplish more each year with the support of our membership.

This year our chapter took on a special project. The success of the Purple Martin Project is a chapter highlight for 2016. Volunteers built and installed 56 new nesting boxes. We now monitor 76 boxes in four different locations. Nearly all new boxes were used during the nesting season. This project was accomplished with the donation of supplies, talent and time. We had members with carpentry skills and tools volunteer to build the boxes. A local hardware supplier donated materials at cost along with many members donating supplies. Volunteers came out to install posts and the boxes on existing pilings. This project also included those dedicated to citizen science, monitoring Purple Martin activity at each site. There is more to do and fine-tune as this project continues into 2017.



Purple Martin Project

Another highlight of 2016 is our education programs and outreach activities. We continue to grow and reach more people throughout our communities. We have taken programs to schools, after school programs, community clubs, community organizations, and local parks. Our education volunteers reached 1,922 people participating in 33 programs. Of those programs 1,169 participants were children. We continue to receive requests for our education and outreach activities. Consider volunteering as our education committee develops plans for 2017. Please contact Sheila Pera for more information at **skagiteducation2@gmail.com**.

The last highlight to mention is our strong membership. We have 226 member families. There are members who attend just programs, field trips or hikes. And some members who participate in all three activities. We have members who are strongly interested and support our conservation efforts. Most of all, we welcome anyone who shares our mission 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. On a recent field trip, a birder from Edmonds said, "I heard Skagit Audubon was friendly and welcoming. You really are doing a good job."

Finally, I would like to thank you for your continued support in our growing chapter. We had 91 volunteers contribute 4,196 hours in all chapter activities including conservation, education, publications, programs, citizen science, hospitality, and board meetings. Also included are those who organize field trips and hikes. This data is collected annually by yet another dedicated volunteer, Phil Wright, who is a past President and currently our Finance Committee chair.

As you consider your New Year's resolutions and plans for 2017, include Skagit Audubon. Plan to attend programs, field trips, and hikes. Consider volunteering for a board position or as a committee member helping with publications, conservation, or field trips. Resolve to assist in our education outreach efforts. Better yet, extend a welcoming invitation to a neighbor or friend to join us. Together we can make a difference in the New Year connecting people to nature.



SKAGIT AUDUBON DECEMBER CONSERVATION REPORT BY TIM MANNS

In this first Conservation Report since the election I can do no better than quote National Audubon President David Yarnold to give an idea where your organization stands:

"Some things didn't change last Wednesday morning (Nov. 9). An overwhelming majority of Americans still believe climate change threatens their future and the lives of birds and they want real solutions. ... Many business leaders believe in a predictable set of environmental regulations. Americans didn't vote against clean air or clean water. Most people still believe in science... It's clear that the incoming administration will have new conservation priorities and that most of the opportunity to make progress on climate change will shift to the states. ... We're a durable, respected, trusted conservation network and we're local everywhere. With 463 chapters and 22 state offices and a membership of one million that's almost evenly divided between D's and R's — we're authentic messengers for birds in every state in the U.S. — and that sets us apart from every other conservation non-profit. You are the lifeblood of Audubon, part of a community of caring people, from Sacramento to Helena to Lincoln to New York. That's who we are. And that's not going to change."

Yarnold goes on to express Audubon's strong belief in the principles of fairness, tolerance, and inclusion. It's a time to reflect on what America is about in every phase of our lives, from how we treat the environment to how we treat each other.

For a half century we've depended on the Clean Air Act (1963), the Wilderness Act (1964), the Endangered Species Act (1973), the Clean Water Act (1972), the National Environmental Policy Act (1970), the Environmental Protection Agency (1970), and many more to guard what we value and to ensure its perpetuation. Where some see excessive regulation, we see necessary protection and restoration of environmental conditions damaged or put at risk by past practices. The election campaign and outcome alert us all to the fragility of this system of environmental protections so painstakingly built over many years and so vulnerable to rapid unraveling.

In the area of environmental concerns, particularly global warming and issues of wildlife conservation, particularly for birds, you can rest assured of National Audubon's very active and outspoken involvement and expertise. More voices for environmental protection, restoration, and conservation are always needed at every level, including locally here in Northwest Washington. We're fortunate to live in a state with a higher level of interest in and concern about environmental matters but that is by no means universal in Skagit and adjacent counties where Skagit Audubon's members live or probably anywhere else in Washington State. More and more we're learning the importance of showing up, standing up, speaking out.

If you haven't already, please look at National Audubon's website about its conservation advocacy work and sign up for action alerts: **http://www.audubon.org/takeaction**. In addition to the national issues described there, many local and regional issues relevant to Skagit Audubon's mission continue to arise. November's outcome should only increase our determination to do whatever we can to protect and restore the place we live and care about so much.



by JOAN MELCHER

Hikes continue in December with 4 hikes scheduled. Hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather, logging, construction or unforeseen circumstances. High wind warnings, predictions of very heavy rain, flooding, snowy or icy road conditions may be other reasons for hike cancelations. Because this is hunting season, wear a bright-colored item of clothing. For information on or questions about the hikes, call **JOAN**MELCHER, 360-424-0407 or e-mail at jdmelcher@comcast.net. All the hikes are on a Wednesday.

Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

WED. – DEC. 7 – EAST SHORE LAKE WHATCOM or STEWART MOUNTAIN

- 1. The **East Shore of Lake Whatcom** hike is a fairly level hike among trees beside the east shore of Lake Whatcom. It is 6.25 miles round trip with a 270 ft. total elevation gain.
- 2. **Stewart Mountain** This hike begins in the same area as the East Shore of Lake Whatcom hike, but it goes up hill on the new Beke Trails and on the power line road. Most of the hike is on trail, rather than road. It is a 5 mile round trip.

For both hikes, meet at 9 a.m. at the Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride lot. This lot is in Burlington on the east side of I-5, off of Exit 231. Car pool according to which of the two hikes you plan to do. You may leave when all in your car are safely back to the trailhead.

WED. – DEC. 14 – DECEPTION PASS AREA

Hike on trails at Sharpe Park, Rosario and Bowman Bay. They add up to 8.7 or more miles, and up to 700 or 800 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at Sharpe Park trailhead off of Rosario Road south of Anacortes. Parking is limited at Sharpe Park so please car-pool if possible. Contact Joan Melcher (see above), if you need driving directions to Sharpe Park. A Washington State Discover Pass is required for those parking in Deception Pass State Park.

WED. – DEC. 21 – PADILLA BAY SHORE TRAIL

Take some time out from a busy pre-Christmas

week and spend the morning walking from the Breazeale Nature Center south along the Padilla Bay dike and back for an easy 6.7 mile hike. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Breazeale Nature Center in Bayview. Leave when you return to your car.

WED. – DEC. 28 – 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, steeper trek to a secluded beach. Meet at Dugualla State Park at 9 a.m. To get there from the Deception Pass Bridge, drive toward Oak Harbor. Before you get to Oak Harbor, turn left onto Sleeper Road. Continue on Sleeper Road approximately 2.6 miles until it dead-ends at a metal gate. The hike is a 3.67 mile distance of perimeter loop including a side trip to the beach. There is additional mileage if one does "interior trails," gaining 500 ft. in elevation. A Washington State Discover Pass is required for your vehicle.

WED. - JAN. 4, 2017 - INTERURBAN TRAIL

Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail. There are several options available adding up to 14 or more miles with a slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Lost Lake Trailhead Parking Lot, formerly known as the Clayton Beach Parking Lot, on Chuckanut Drive at the south end of Larrabee State Park. Return time depends on hike options you select. A Washington State Discover Pass is required for your vehicle.

SKAGIT AUDUBON FIELD NOTES: SEPTEMBER 17 TO NOVEMBER 19, 2016

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 Pam Pritzl birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org or 360-387-7024.

Field Notes continue on page 6



Field Notes continued from page 5

WATERFOWL

Ross's Goose 2 in Sedro-Woolley corn stubble field on 11-6 (GB)

Trumpeter Swan 6 on Livingston Bay, Camano Island on 11-16 (SRP)

Tundra Swan 9 above Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 11-2 (TM)

Mute Swan 1 in Sedro-Woolley corn stubble field on 11-6 (GB)

Wood Duck 1 at Skagit Airport Ponds 10-16 to 28 (GB)

Red-breasted Merganser 4 at Baker Lake on 11-4 (RM)

LOONS

Pacific Loon 1 at Rosario Head on 10-29 (SAS)

GREBES

Western Grebe 20 at Iverson Spit, Camano Island on 11-16 (SRP)

Clark's Grebe 1 off Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes on 11-6 (GB)

CORMORANTS

Brandt's Cormorant 1,600 at March Point on 11-10 (RM)

PELICANS

Brown Pelican 1at March Point on 11-10 (RM)

HERONS and ALLIES

Great Egret 1 at March Point on 9-29 (NO); 1 at March Point on 10-1 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES, and ALLIES

Cooper's Hawk 1 immature in Burlington yard on 11-5 (LE)

Rough-legged Hawk 1 in the Samish Flats on 10-5 (RM); 4 in the Samish Flats on 11-14 (AW)

CRANES

Sandhill Crane 3 at Jensen Access, Fir Island on 10-1 (GB); 1 juvenile at March Point, Anacortes on 11-17 (TM)

PLOVERS

American Golden-Plover 1 at Jensen Access, Fir Island on 9-17 (GB)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Black Oystercatcher 105 at West Beach, Deception Pass State Park 11-19(SAS)

Parasitic Jaeger 1 off Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes on 11-12 (GB)

GULLS and TERNS

Franklin's Gull 1 in Sedro-Woolley on 11-6 (GB)

Caspian Tern 1 at Hayton Reserve, Fir Island on 11-8 (JO)

Thayer's Gull 1 at West Beach, Deception Pass State Park on 11-19 (SAS)

PIGEONS and DOVES

Band-tailed Pigeon 1 at Cascade Pass on 9-25 (RM)

OWLS

Northern Pygmy-Owl 1 at Grandy Lake on 10-12 and 10-29 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Lewis's Woodpecker 1 in Sauk Valley on 9-23 (RM)

Red-naped Sapsucker 1 at Cascade Pass on 9-25 (RM)

Red-breasted Sapsucker 1 on Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 11-17 (BC)

Northern Flicker 3 "yellow-shafted" at east Fidalgo home on 10-27 (RW)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 1 on Sullivan Road, Samish Flats on 11-14 (AW)

Merlin 1 on Colony Road, Samish Flats on 11-14 (AW)

FLYCATCHERS

Tropical Kingbird 1 at Leque Island (Eide Road) on 11-8 (JO)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Area (Wylie Slough) on 10-9 (GB); 1 on Leque Island (Eide Road) on 11-9 (JH); 1 on the Padilla Bay Trail on 11-15 (PP)

VIREOS

Warbling Vireo 1 at Burlington home on 11-4 (LE)

SWALLOWS

Violet-green Swallow 3 at DeBay's Slough on 10-8 (GB)

Barn Swallow 2 on Skagit Flats on 11-5 (GB)

THRUSHES

Hermit Thrush 1 at Cap Sante on 11-3 (JH)

CATBIRDS

Gray Catbird 1 at Howard Miller Steelhead Park on 9-23 (RM)

PIPITS

American Pipit 1 at Port Susan The Nature Conservancy property on 10-28 (JO)

Field Notes continue on page 7



Field Notes continued from page 6

LONGSPURS and SNOW BUNTINGS

Lapland Longspur 1 at Jensen Access, Fir Island on 10-17 (RM)

Snow Bunting 1 on rocks along the Tommy Thompson causeway, Anacortes on 11-1 (KC); 2 on Samish Flats on 11-6 (GB)

WARBLERS

Palm Warbler 1 at Corkindale Creek on 10-4 (RM) **Townsend's Warbler** 1 on Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 11-5 (TM)

Field Trips continue from page 1

Interpretive Center where we will carpool to stops along Bayview Edison and Samish Island Roads. Highlights include the West 90 and Samish Public Beach Access. Please bring binoculars and a spotting scope, if available. Beginning birders and friends are always welcome. This field trip has limited walking, but there may be some uneven surfaces near inclines.

Leader: Irene Perry, contact at 931-623-2084 or irene@skagitaudubon.org

Saturday, Dec. 17
Weaverling Spit, Fidalgo Bay
8:30 a.m. to before noon
Here's to birding just before winter is upon us.

SPARROWS and ALLIES

Clay-colored Sparrow 1 at Corkindale Creek on 9-23 (RM)

(GB) Gary Bletsch; (KC) Kathryn Cavil; (BC) Brenda Cunningham; (LE) Larry Edwards; (JH) Joe Halton; (TM) Tim Manns; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (NO) Neil O'Hara; (JO) Jeff Osmundson; (SRP) Sheila & Ron Pera; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (AW) Andrea Warner; (RW) Regan Weeks

Weaverling Spit is a walk and scoping field trip on the western edge of Fidalgo Bay, land owned by the Samish Indian nation. We have permission to go out and inspect the neighborhood for avifauna, a chance to seek both songbirds in the vegetation and waterbirds on the bay. To find the area drive parallel to Highway 20 on Fidalgo Bay road, just south of Anacortes and turn off it onto Weaverling Road. Meet at the parking lot at the RV Park which is across the Tommy Thompson Trail and to the right. Dress warmly and seasonally (it's December, after all). Trip will end before noon. Scopes will help with the water birds. Some minimal walking on the Spit and Tommy Thompson Trail.

Leaders: Von & Betty Kuehn, contact at 360-293-6006, cell 360-770-5905 or vonbetty@comcast.net

Volunteer at the Bald Eagle Interpretive Center Celebrate 20 Years of Eagle Stewardship

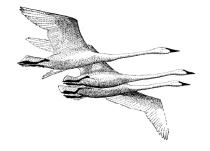
The winter gathering of Bald Eagles converging on the Skagit River for a salmon feast is one of Skagit County's great avian phenomena. For 20 years the Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive Center at Rockport has helped visitors from near and far see and appreciate these birds (http://skagiteagle.org/). Located in Howard Miller Steelhead Park (a Skagit County park) along the Skagit River and operated by the Skagit River Bald Eagle Awareness Team, the center is open weekends December through January and during Christmas week. The nonprofit Awareness Team is dedicated to providing education about bald eagles during the peak of eagle migration and salmon spawning on the Skagit River through a variety of programs and visitor information. The organization depends almost entirely on volunteers and could use your help. Volunteers at the Bald Eagle Interpretive Center welcome guests from across the region, provide information about prime eagle watching spots, assist with guided nature walks, and support general facility operations. Training for volunteers will take place Saturday December 3 from 10am to 1pm, co-hosted by the US Forest Service Skagit Eagle Watchers Program. For more information and to sign up, write to srbeatic@frontier.com or call 360-853-7626.

Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count ~ Saturday, December 31 Sponsored by Skagit Audubon Society

More information about this event and Christmas Counts on page 7 of the November Skagit Flyer To participate, contact Tim Manns at conservation@skagitaudubon.org or 360/336-8753



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

December Potluck & Membership Show December 13 See page 1

&

Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count
December 31
See page 7

December 2016 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Nov. 31	Fri	Sat
Nov. 27	Nov. 28	Nov. 29	Nov. 30 Hike: Tursi Trail	1	2	3 Field Trip: Samish Flats & Beyond
4	5	6 Skagit Audubon Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	7 Hike: East Shore Lake Whatcom or Stewart Mountain	8	9	10
11	12	13 Skagit Audubon General Meeting: Social 6:45 PM Meeting 7:30 PM	14 Hike: Deception Pass Area	15	16	17 Field Trip: Weaverling Spit, Fidalgo Bay
18	19	20	21 Hike: Padilla Bay Shore Trail	22	23	24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28 Hike: Dugualla State Park Jan. 4 Hike: Interurban Trail	29	30	Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org

The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper

