

# The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

[www.skagitaudubon.org](http://www.skagitaudubon.org)

Vol. 35 No.2

## FEBRUARY 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 field trip list contact Libby Mills:

[libbymills@gmail.com](mailto:libbymills@gmail.com)

**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, February 6  
Arlington Eagle Festival  
Port Susan Bay  
8:30 a.m. to 12 noon**

Meet at 8:30 at Nature Conservancy's Port Susan Bay reserve to bird watch along the dike. At 9:45 switch hats to

Field Trips continue on page 7

## FEBRUARY MEETING AND PROGRAM

### Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet by Maria Mudd Ruth

Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program  
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center  
10441 Bayview-Edison Road  
Mt. Vernon, Washington



**Marbled Murrelet**

Maria Mudd Ruth calls herself an accidental naturalist. She is the author of more than a dozen books on natural history topics for both young readers and general audiences. Her published work includes books about ecosystems of North America: *The Pacific Coast*, *The Tundra*, *The Southwest Deserts*, *The Mississippi River*. Maria's range of subjects reflects her interest in restoring our awe in the natural world. She is an active citizen scientist and has been surveying Oregon Spotted Frogs and Pigeon Guillemots.

Maria will present her work on Marbled Murrelets: *Rare Bird: Pursuing the Mystery of the Marbled Murrelet*. Alcid nests are typically found on ledges and in burrows on rocky outcrops and coastal bluffs near the water's edge. The Marbled Murrelet is not your typical alcid. It is unique in its choice of nesting sites. During the summer breeding season, the Marbled Murrelet flies well inland to nest in trees. And not just any trees, but the large-limbed ancient conifers of the mature and old-growth coastal forests. In these trees, the Murrelet finds high, wide, mossy platforms where it can make its web-footed landing, lay and incubate its one egg, and feed its chick until it fledges. During its time in the forests, this Murrelet is camouflaged, silent, and secretive; its nest, egg, and chick are well hidden. They are central to the controversy regarding logging old growth.

Join us as we learn from Maria the secrets of the Marbled Murrelet.



## SKAGIT AUDUBON

Board of Directors

### OFFICERS

President: Irene Perry

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Vice President: VACANT

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### Song Sparrow

Photo by Ron Holmes

Possible GBBC Bird

See Information on page 3

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

**General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society** are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 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.org/audubon-locations/>. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** use the 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 844-428-3826. **To join National Audubon Society** use the 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.

### Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available on our web site. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 one (1) year    \$40 two (2) years    New Member \_\_\_\_\_    Renewal Member \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.  
Tax #91-1207770

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

Skagit Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 1101  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101

It is the policy of SAS not to share information with any other groups.

Use the form below to initially join the **National Audubon Society**.

### National Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership to the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one chapter affiliation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail chapter-created new membership forms to address below: (Payable to same)**

National Audubon Society Y21  
P.O. 97194  
Washington, DC 20090-7194  
Attn: Chance Mueleck

For membership related questions and address:  
Email: [customerservice@audubon.org](mailto:customerservice@audubon.org)  
Phone: (844)428-3826

*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: Pam Pritzl, [membership@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:membership@skagitaudubon.org)*



## For the Love of Birds

Your Skagit Audubon education committee sponsors the Featured Bird information on our website for members and site visitors to learn more and perhaps develop a passion for the birds of Skagit County.

At [skagitaudubon.org](http://skagitaudubon.org) the Featured Bird has information about birds and locations to view those birds in our area each month. Some of the birds are year-round residents while others may be migrating or irruptive species. Helpful hints on identification are given along with breeding, nesting and other bird specific behaviors to look for when these birds are viewed on field trips and during your own outdoor adventures. The Featured Bird can be a bird to look for each month.



**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**

*Photo by Joe Halton*

The Education Committee is having a contest during the social half-hour at our February monthly meeting. The contest will have five questions about Featured Birds. One name from all correct entries will be drawn to win a prize sponsored by the Skagit Wild Bird Supply store. If you want to brush up and revisit some of the past Featured Birds, you can find these articles under the heading Education on our website.

All are welcome to attend our monthly meeting and participate in the Featured Bird Contest. Good Luck!

## **The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15, 2016**

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a free, fun, and easy event for all ages. Everyone can help give a snapshot of bird populations. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes, or as long as they wish, on one or more days of the four-day event. Their sightings are then reported online at **birdcount.org**.

For more participation information go to: [\*\*http://gbbc.birdcount.org/\*\*](http://gbbc.birdcount.org/)



## SKAGIT AUDUBON FEBRUARY CONSERVATION REPORT

By TIM MANNS, CONSERVATION CHAIR

At this writing in mid-January, the Washington Legislature is just 4 days into its 60-day session. The focus is on meeting the constitutional and court mandate for funding education and a number of other pressing issues. Audubon Washington continues to participate with over 20 other organizations in the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC). This year EPC has chosen one environmental priority – *Safeguard Our Environment* – and is focused on protecting our natural resources including clean air, clean energy, clean and abundant water, and healthy public lands against any roll back of environmental protections. To receive updates during the session, go to <http://wecprotects.org/environmental-priorities-coalition/>. Jen Syrowitz, ([jsyrowitz@audubon.org](mailto:jsyrowitz@audubon.org)), Washington's Audubon Chapter Conservation Manager, can also add you to her list for legislative updates and action alerts.

As mentioned in the January *Skagit Flyer*, Audubon Washington is also trying to initiate movement towards implementing the resolution Skagit Audubon submitted last fall to reform how the Forest Practices Act addresses logging in urban areas. Audubon's advocate, Neil Beaver, has been active in meeting with legislators and with relevant organizations such as the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington Forest Protection Association. We hope the work being done during this short legislative session will lay the groundwork for decisive movement in 2017.

The Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) recently issued its draft Clean Air Rule prepared at Governor Inslee's direction under the state's Clean Air Act. This rule will cap and gradually reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by the companies and institutions emitting over 60% of these emissions in Washington. Read DOE's clear explanation of the rule and submit comments at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/carbonlimit.htm>. This is Washington's first-ever rule capping carbon pollution and seeking to slow climate change effects. Recall that National Audubon's science staff has done large scale studies of what climate change means for North American birds. If you haven't already done so, have a look at <http://climate.audubon.org/>.

Last year the Anacortes City Council revised the city's animal ordinance without addressing the issue of free-roaming cats. Reiterating a statement from the November 2015 *Skagit Flyer*: Studies by the Smithsonian Institution and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service show that free-roaming cats in the U.S. kill approximately 2.4 billion birds every year (<http://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/cats-and-birds/>). Anacortes has not yet done as many other municipalities in the U.S. and moved towards regulating cats just as dogs are restricted in their wandering. Residents who would like to see further amendments to the animal ordinance should contact city council members and the mayor, keep an eye on council meeting agendas on-line, and attend council meetings.







### Adult and Immature Eagles

*Photo by Ron Holmes*

## STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT EAGLES AND DDT

Jean Ashby, of the Audubon Skagit Education Committee, and Ron Holmes, a Skagit Audubon member - photographer, did a great job of keeping the Kulshan Creek kids, both elementary and junior-high school, engaged and interested in the lesson about Bald Eagles and their role in the food chain. They explained how DDT entered the food chain and nearly wiped out Eagles, Brown Pelicans, and Osprey in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. Ancient history for these kids! They learned how the Bald Eagles shift from salmon carcasses to live ducks and other prey like small mammals, when the salmon carcasses are no longer available. It was a fine day of learning in the great out of doors!

## 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Port Susan Snow Goose & Birding Festival

### Festival Dates

Sat., February 27

Sun., February 28

### Festival Headquarters

27130 102nd Ave NW

Stanwood, WA 98292

### Speakers, Field Trips, Classes

More information at:

[www.snowgoosefest.org](http://www.snowgoosefest.org)



To Volunteer contact Pam Pritzl: [birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org)

Birds you could see in your backyard. Join The GBBC. Info on p. 3



Black-capped Chickadee



Anna's Hummingbird



Red-breasted Nuthatch



Spotted Towhee

*Photos by Joe Halton*



Winter hiking will continue with four hikes. Unexpected circumstances such as weather, wash-outs, closed trails, logging, construction, or road conditions may cause cancellations or changes in the following hikes. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, snowy or icy road conditions, or forecasts of continued rain. 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. Questions? **Contact Joan Melcher: 360-424-0407 or [jdmelcher@comcast.net](mailto:jdmelcher@comcast.net)**

## **WED. FEB. 3 – WHATCOM FALLS & CREEK, BIG ROCK LOOP, & THE STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE PRESERVE – a number of options**

**I. Whatcom Falls & Creek:** Hike along Whatcom Creek from Whatcom Falls Park to the I-5 Freeway bridge and back. It is a 4.4 miles round trip with a slight elevation gain. Leave when you return to your car.

**II. BIG ROCK LOOP:** Instead of or in addition to the Whatcom Falls & Creek hike, do this hike. It is a 6 mile loop that begins and ends at Whatcom Falls Park. This loop takes the hiker north with some ups and downs, and a few short, steep sections. The hike is mostly road walking, with some sidewalk.

## **III. STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE PRESERVE:**

If you wish to do this hike after **I, II, or both of those above**, then drive to the Stimpson Family Nature Preserve and hike up to 4 miles there with about a 400 ft. elevation gain.

For all of the above, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the I-5/Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride near exit 231 from I-5 **OR** meet at 9 a.m. at the Whatcom Falls Park parking lot on Arbor Street off Electric Avenue. Ride with those who plan to do the hike(s) you wish to do. When all return to your car, you may leave.

## **WED. FEB. 10 – LUMMI ISLAND**

Walk a 7 mile loop on the north end of Lummi Island and enjoy island, sea, and mountain views. A \$7 foot-passenger ferry fare is required. The hike is mostly level. Walking shoes are recommended. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride, exit 231 from I-5 on the east side of I-5. There is no specified return time, although most will take the 1 p.m. ferry back.

## **WED. FEB. 17 – CAMANO ISLAND**

Friends of Camano Island Parks, FOCIP, will lead us on hikes on Camano Island. These hikes are up to 11.9 miles with shorter options available. Lunch is provided with a suggested donation of \$2. Meet at **7:45 a.m.** in the S.E. corner of the Mount Vernon

Safeway parking lot or at **8:30 a.m.** 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.

**A Discover Pass is required in either Cama State Park or Camano Island State Park.**

## **WED. FEB. 24 – CONWAY-AREA DIKE**

**WALK** The dike, on the east side of the Skagit River north of Conway, is now open for public use. The hike is 3.3 miles one-way and then back. Meet at 9 a.m. in the parking area described below. You may leave when you return to your vehicle. Lunch, if you like, 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/Stamwood and very shortly (100 yards) turn right on Fir Island Road into Conway. Go over the rail road tracks and in 100 yards turn right on Dike Road 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 yards, north of the unsigned dike district building.

## **WED. MARCH 2 – LILY LIZARD LAKES LOOP (THE LLLL)**

This Loop will be done in a clock-wise order. On Blanchard Mountain hike the Lily Lake, Larry Reed, and Max's Shortcut Trails to Lily Lake and then on to Lizard Lake by way of a connector trail from the North Butte Trail. Return to trail head via the Lizard and Lily Lake Trails. The loop is 8.6 miles with a 1,600 ft. total elevation gain. There is an opportunity to go to the Oyster Dome and the North Butte as well. We will divide into a faster and slower group. Car pool accordingly. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride, exit 231 from I-5 on the east side of I-5. A 2:00 p.m. return to the trailhead for the faster group; 3 p.m. for the slower group. **Discover Pass is required to park!**



lead the public in finding birds during the 2 hour window the dike trail is open to the Arlington Eagle Festival public. Meet at the end of Boe Road, west off Marine Drive just south of Stanwood.

Please let our leader know if you plan to join us. Bring your scope and field guide, if you have them, to help others see and learn.

**Leader: Irene Perry**

**Irene@skagitaudubon.org**

**Friday & Saturday, February 5 & 6  
Eagle Festival**

**Arlington, WA**

**Stillaguamish River**

The **Arlington : Stillaguamish Eagle Festival** is offering numerous activities, many of them directed toward children. Included are a "Bird Identification Walk at Country Charm Park," "Open House with Sarvey Wildlife Care Center," "Nature Conservancy Port Susan Preserve Guided Tour," "Hands on Arts & Crafts Activities," "Eagle Photo Contest," "Nature Art Contest," "Country Carvers Chainsaw Carving Show," "Stillaguamish Salmon Stop," "Climate Change in the Stillaguamish," and evening live entertainment. For more information on activity dates (Friday or Saturday) and times consult: **arlingtonwa.gov/eaglefest**

or call **Arlington Parks & Recreation** at **360-403-3448**

If you are interested in a Friday 4 hour rafting float trip with eagle experts on the Stillaguamish River, call "North Cascades River Expeditions" at: **800-634-8433** to make reservation or go to website **www.riverexpeditions.com** (\$60 @ person) Or for Friday & Saturday 1 ½ hour float trips, call Adventure Cascades at: **360-393-6815** for questions or to reserve your spot. **www.adventurecascades.com** (\$30 @ person)

**Saturday, February 13**

**Johnson DeBay Swan Reserve**

**and other Clear Lake & Burlington sites**

**3:00 p.m.to 6:00p.m.**

The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife's Johnson DeBay Swan Reserve is the only place in the U.S. specifically set aside for swans. In winter, our home area hosts Tundra Swans and the largest concentration of Trumpeter Swans in the world. Seeing hundreds of this largest North America waterfowl in one place is among the Skagit's greatest avian wonders. On this field trip we'll visit the reserve and some other sites near Clear Lake and Burlington, looking for waterfowl, raptors, and upland species too. Swans mostly use the reserve as a night roost, so we'll be there at dusk in hopes of seeing and/or hearing the great white birds fly in for the night. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars and, if you have one, a spotting scope. A WA State Discover Pass is required for parking at the reserve. Meet in the PETCO parking lot in Mount Vernon off College Way just east of I-5 Exit 227. We'll form carpools there. (For information about swans in Washington, go to **http://nswswans.org/**

**Leader: Tim Manns, 360-336-8753 or  
conservation@skagitaudubon.org**

**Saturday, February 20**

**South Fidalgo Island**

**and Deception Pass State Park**

**8:30 a.m. to 12 noon**

Explore fresh and saltwater birds on south Fidalgo Island lakes, Cornet Bay and West Beach in Deception Pass State Park. Look for Loons, Grebes, Oystercatchers and much more. Dress for wind and rain! Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the March Point Park 'n Ride.

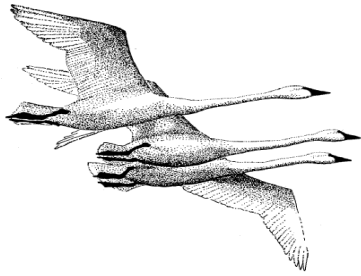
**Leader: Ivar Dolph,**

**pidolph@frontier.com**

**To park, a Discover Pass is required!**



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Arlington : Stillaguamish  
Eagle Festival  
Friday, February 5  
Saturday, February 6  
*More Info On Pages 1 & 7*

11<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Port Susan Snow Goose  
& Birding Festival  
Saturday, Feb. 27, 2016  
Sunday, Feb. 28, 2016  
*More Info On Page 5*

## February 2016 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan. 31, 2016	1	2 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	3 Hike: Whatcom Falls & Creek, Big Rock Loop, Stimpson Fam. Nature Preserve	4	<b>Feb. 5 &amp; 6</b>	6 Field Trip:
					Eagle Festival Arlington, WA	Arlington Eagle Festival Port Susan Bay
7	8	9 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	10 Hike: Lummi Island	11	12	13 Field Trip: Johnson DeBay Swan Reserve
					Great Backyard Bird Count	<b>GBBC</b>
14	15	16	17 Hike: Camano Island	18	19	20 Field Trip: South Fidalgo Island & Deception Pass State Park
Great Backyard Bird Count	Great Backyard Bird Count					
21	22	23	24 Hike: Conway-Area Dike Walk	25	26	27 11 <sup>th</sup> Annual Port Susan Snow Goose & Birding Festival
28 11 <sup>th</sup> Annual Port Susan Snow Goose & Birding Festival	29	March 1	March 2 Hike: Lily Lizard Lakes Loop (The LLLL)	March 3	March 4	March 5

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at [www.skagitaudubon.org](http://www.skagitaudubon.org)

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