

# The Raven



*The mission of Juneau Audubon Society is to conserve the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.*

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org>

**Volume 31, Number 1**

**Juneau Audubon Society**

**September 2004**

**THERE WILL BE NO AUDUBON MEETING IN SEPTEMBER -- MEETINGS WILL START IN OCTOBER**

## **New Audubon Lecture Series**

The Audubon meetings will have a different look this coming year.

The revamped program will feature 6 lectures, or slide programs over the course of the fall and winter. The programs will start in October, end in April, and will skip the month of December.

We will also be meeting in a larger venue, tentatively Egan Auditorium at the UAS campus, to accommodate a larger group of people in a venue better suited to presentations.

Although the talks may be preceded by brief announcements or business, we will advertise these programs to the community as a free lecture series, open to all people regardless of whether they are Audubon members or not. Given the popularity of the Fireside talks (two shows, often filled to overflowing), we think there is high public demand for the kind of quality nature talks Juneau Audubon presents.

Due to last minute class shifts at the University, we currently don't know what evenings and rooms will be available there, but we should have that nailed down in the next few weeks (at least in time for the October newsletter). We also plan to print a schedule and program description for the entire series on cardstock, and include it in the October newsletter. We'll be posting it in all the usual bulletin boards and advertising in the newspaper to get a good turnout at these events.

We hope you'll appreciate the new format, and become regular attendees at the monthly Audubon Lecture Series. As always, your feedback is welcomed. Comments and suggestions on future program topics, scheduling, and/or venues should be directed to Matt Kirchhoff, Program Chair, at 907-586-5816 or [kirchhoff@gci.net](mailto:kirchhoff@gci.net).

## Notes from the Board

Brenda Wright, president

Hello and welcome back from an extraordinarily sunny summer!

With so much great weather, we hope you had time to enjoy all your favorite outside pursuits. Now that it is September, it is time to begin our schedule of presentations and meetings. The Juneau Audubon Board has decided to change our schedule of meetings and also where we will meet. We would like to expand the opportunity for the community to share our great slide shows and lectures. We want to provide quality enjoyment for more of Juneau's community,

So we are proposing to amend our by-laws and instead of monthly meetings from September through May, we will have fewer, but larger Audubon sponsored events. (Please see the proposed change to our by-laws following this article).

**There will be no public meeting in September 2004.** Our program chair, Matt Kirchoff, is lining up a group of very interesting programs. We will plan on having Audubon sponsored lectures October, November, January, February, March, and April. We will have all the details for the speakers and the locations in the October newsletter.

Our annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the October public meeting. We will vote on the proposed by-law amendment and elect Juneau Audubon officers. Election will include president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The current officers, Brenda Wright, Chris Kent, and Liz Blecker have agreed to another term. Deanna MacPhail, our secretary, will be doing some traveling and feels it would be good for another person to take on this job. Please call any board member if you are interested in being nominated for any of these positions.

In the meantime, if you would care to volunteer to make jam, help at the public market in November, write letters for conservation causes, or get involved with other Juneau Audubon volunteers, please contact any board member. Updates on schedules and bird news can be found on our web page: [www.juneau-audubon-society.org](http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org)

### **PROPOSED AMENDMENT** to Juneau Audubon Society By-laws

Juneau Audubon Society Board would like to propose the following amendment to the by-laws  
Change:

Article III-Meetings of Members

Section 1. Regular meetings of members shall be held monthly, September through May.

To

Article III-Meetings of Members

Section 1. Regular meetings of members shall be held *between* September *and* May.

## **Recent Rare Bird Sightings in Juneau** **By Steve Zimmerman**

On a recent birding trip to Hyder, a friend from Fairbanks told me that he wished he lived in Juneau because, "Juneau gets all the good birds every year." Although that is a bit of an exaggeration, birds that are very rare in Alaska do show up every year in Juneau. 2004 has been no exception. Starting with a Great Egret that was seen during the first week of January this year, Juneau has produced a steady list of birds that are only rarely seen in Alaska. Foremost among these include a Ross's Goose found by Paul Suchanek on May 10 which stayed around for several days in the company of a Snow Goose on the Mendenhall Wetlands; and a male, singing Dickcissel that was found at the beginning of the airport trail on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Dickcissel is not just rare in Alaska, it had never even been seen in the state before! Another very unusual sighting, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, was found by Rich Gordon near the 26-mile marker out the road on June 30. Although Yellow-bellied Flycatchers are very occasionally seen in eastern, interior Alaska, there had never a multiple-person sighting in Juneau. Amazingly, even though Rich was not able to actually see the bird, he made the identification based on the bird's call. Rich graciously alerted others so that many of Juneau's birders could get their first chance to see or hear this bird in Alaska. Other birds that the University of Alaska Museum lists as being rare in Alaska, that have been seen in Juneau so far in 2004 include, Cinnamon Teal, Ruddy Duck, Sora, Wilson's Phalarope, White-rumped Sandpiper, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Barred Owl, Western Screech-owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Common Nighthawk, Mourning Dove, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cassin's Vireo, Mountain Bluebird, Tennessee Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Leave it to Paul Suchanek to find animals that many of us would otherwise miss. Not only did he find many of the above listed birds, he also discovered a new dragonfly for the state! In mid-August he found a Spot-winged Glider in the Point Bridget area and he was able to photograph one on August 18. Until Paul found it, this species had never been seen north of Vancouver Island.

As I write this in late August there is still plenty of time for more rarities to be found. During our first meeting in October I hope to be able to be able to update you with a few new species that have been added to the 2004 list.

**Name That Bird** By Marge Hermans

- \* This shy, secretive bird, about 6 inches long, lives along streams, lakes, ponds, and bogs.
- \* It is classified as "uncommon" in Southeast Alaska.
- \* It occasionally wades in the water to capture insects, mollusks, crustaceans, or small fish.
- \* It often "teeters" when walking.
- \* It nests on the ground beneath logs, roots, or stumps, or in mossy banks.
- \* It is a member of the wood warbler family.

Can you name it?

## **Clips from the Conservation Committee:**

The Conservation Committee welcomes involvement from all members. Let us know what interests and concerns you in Juneau and around Southeast. Comments? Contact the chair, Sari Saunders, at [conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org) or any other committee or Board member.

**1. Kensington Gold Project (aka Kensington mine)** – Check the CBJ website ([http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/documets/STF\\_MIN04-03.pdf](http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/documets/STF_MIN04-03.pdf)) to read the application by Coeur Alaska, Inc. for an allowable-use permit for an underground mine (i.e. Alternative B of the supplemental Draft EIS presented to the Forest Service for the Kensington Gold Project). This CBJ permit addresses local interests as opposed to state or federal interests that are dealt with through other regulatory policies and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). Note that this application went before the CBJ Planning Commission Aug 31 and the **Commission approved the allowable-use permit** (see also Juneau Empire, Sept 1).

Alternative B is expected to produce gold over a 10 year period and have a construction schedule of approximately 16 mos. Should the life of the mine extend beyond this, some additional review processes will be undertaken. For example, the current proposal for tailings storage will accommodate 10-yrs worth of tailings; if greater storage capacity is required, the project will undergo further environmental review under NEPA. Also, reclamation procedures have not been detailed. This will take place after a record of decision (ROD) is issued by the Forest Service. Background, analysis, findings, and recommendations of the CBJ staff regarding various components of the development are given at the above site. Also see [www.kensingtoneis.com](http://www.kensingtoneis.com) to follow the permitting process.

Of particular interest in the report by the CBJ is the analysis of the applications of enforceable policies of the Juneau Coastal Management Program (JCMP). It is noted that the project is inconsistent with several of the Habitat policies of the JCMP, due primarily to projected loss of productivity of Lower Slate Lake and filling of wetlands. However, the “significant public need” for the development is also cited, as is the fact that no feasible and prudent alternative poses less impact.

JAS has previously submitted comments regarding this development during the review period of the DSEIS and the comment periods of the ACMP and other applicable, enforceable policies. Watch for the following: review of the project under NEPA (is the project compliant with various applicable state and federal environmental regulations), Final Supplemental EIS, and Forest Service ROD to be expected around November,

You can see the ordinance providing for the current approval process of mines located in the rural mining district and subject to federal and/or state environmental review, also on the CBJ website at [http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/documents/ATT\\_MIN04-03.PDF](http://www.juneau.lib.ak.us/plancomm/documents/ATT_MIN04-03.PDF)

**2. Spuhn Island Subdivision** - The State has determined that the project, as amended by a number of alternative measures proposed by the State, is now consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) and the affected coastal district’s enforceable policies. For background on the proposal for a subdivision on Spuhn Island, off the end of Fritz Cove Rd, see materials posted on the CBJ Planning Commission’s website (a quick search under Spuhn gives it all!). The work being reviewed under the ACMP included development of a trail to provide ATV access to support a residential subdivision on the Island. This involves discharge of some fill into uplands, waters, and wetlands:

There are some interesting notes here and things to watch for in the future as this development proceeds. During the approval process by the CBJ, the developers agreed to modify their original proposal to include some additional facilities. These include: (1) moorage (1 or 2 docks) for 30 vessels

on the Island. This will likely have to be reviewed through the Corps and/or ACMP; and (2) permanent parking to accommodate vehicles and boat trailers of lot owners. This also may involve ACMP review.

**3. CBJ Dog Task Force** – You can read the latest recommendations of the committee re: education, leash and off leash times/places, and other aspects of dog recreation in Juneau at:

<http://www.juneau.org/parksrec/DTF/pdfs/DTF-FInal-Recommendations-June-24.pdf>

There were a variety of issues associated with dog recreation that sparked this committee. Among them was concern of some community members that dogs were negatively impacting wildlife, particularly nesting and foraging birds in local wetlands. A public meeting is being held Sept 9, 7 p.m. at Centennial Hall.

**4. A-J Mine** – The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has tentatively determined to reissue a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to the CBJ A-J Mine in Juneau. Although the mine is inactive, effluent is discharged into Gold Creek. The draft permit places conditions on the discharge of pollutants from the mine, to ensure protection of water quality and human health. You can read the draft permit, fact sheet, and other information at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/WATER.NSF/NPDES+Permits/DraftPermitsAK>

**Comments are due** September 8 at:

United States Environmental Protection Agency, Attn: Director, Office of Water,  
Region 10, 1200 Sixth Avenue, OW-130,  
Seattle, Washington 98101

The State must also certify that the NPDES permit will comply with sections of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Comments regarding the draft permit can be sent to:

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Industrial Wastewater Section  
555 Cordova St  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**5. Identifying conservation priorities on the Tongass** – Here is a positive note about a State initiative in our own back yard. Audubon Alaska is working to coordinate a conservation strategy for the Tongass. The work is being done in coordination with scientists and planners from academia, the US Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, AK Dept of Fish and Game, and others. Individuals from many agencies are working to ensure that new data and mapping techniques are available and utilized in this initiative.

#### **WEB SIGHTS OF INTEREST**

Please join us for schedule updates and links to other bird organizations at our web page:

<http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org> and enjoy all the bird news in our neighborhood at [Eaglechat@yahogroups.com](mailto:Eaglechat@yahogroups.com)

Answer to **Name That Bird:** Northern Waterthrush