

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 38, Number 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2012

JANUARY JUNEAU AUDUBON PROGRAM

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, at UAS Egan Building, Lecture Hall, Room 112, 7:00 p.m.
Naturalist Guiding in Southeast AK on the cruise ship Disney Wonder**

Doug Jones, Naturalist and accomplished wildlife photographer, will present a program describing his summer experiences on the Disney Wonder cruise ship.

During the summer of 2011 a group of ten Juneau naturalists and biologists were offered the opportunity to travel on the cruise ship Disney Wonder and give presentations on our home here in Southeast Alaska. The US Forest Service agreed to supply a person for any weeks not committed by other local naturalists. Doug Jones ended up being the US Forest Service employee doing presentations to passengers onboard the Disney Wonder for seven weeks last summer. Doug will describe his experiences on the cruise ship last summer including birds he saw and observations on how the experience worked from his perspective.



MESSAGE FROM OUR JUNEAU AUDUBON PRESIDENT JULIE COGHILL

Birding came of age in 2011 by making it to the big screen with "The Big Year."

I'm not a lister, so I will never have my own big year. Instead, I note encounters and experiences. My highlights of this past year both involved black oystercatchers.

Paddling out of Amalga Harbor, I noticed my companion quietly looking off to the right. I glided up and saw what was captivating her: a black oystercatcher and a harlequin on the same rock. We were close and the four of us--two kayakers, one shorebird and one duck--shared time and space. My other memorable black oystercatcher encounter was in the Beardslee Islands in Glacier Bay. Paddling along a shoreline we passed almost 200 oystercatchers. Considering that my husband and I once made a detour from Glennallen to Valdez--an extra 250 miles--when we heard two oystercatchers were there, finding hundreds of oystercatchers is a treat.

For 2012, I would like to wish you all a good year of birding, in whatever ways matter to you.



Eagle Feather Collection Permits

Did you know you can collect eagle feathers for Juneau Audubon? Actually, we have a permit from US Fish & Wildlife Service to pick up naturally shed eagle feathers. The feathers are sent to the National Eagle Repository in Colorado and distributed from there. Anyone may request eagle feathers, but there is a law stating that native Americans get priority in their requests. Next in priority is education and research, and then the general public. Each request is allotted 6 feathers. The program is designed to reduce poaching of eagles.

Alaska is the home for the majority of bald eagles in the US, but we are not number one in donations to the National Repository. Eagles are protected under several different laws and so you may not keep eagle feathers for yourself but you could help us send more to people who would like to have them. The repository usually has a three year waiting list for feathers.

In 2011 members of Juneau Audubon Society collected 1,111 bald eagle feathers and shipped them to the National Eagle Repository in Colorado. Thanks for your help! Please contact Brenda if you like to have a copy of the collection permit.

So if you would like to help out by collecting eagle feathers, please contact Brenda Wright at 321-4739 or membership@juneau-audubon-society.org for a permit.

Juneau's 2011 Christmas Bird Count By Mark Schwan

The Juneau Christmas Bird Count for 2010 was held on December 17. We lucked out on the weather, but birding was rather quiet, with a paucity of passerines making for a rather uneventful count.

Thirty field observers found 66 species and 10,973 individual birds on count day, plus an additional five species were located during the other days of our count week. All the common species that have been seen on the previous 38 counts were found once again. Highlights included a Rock Ptarmigan and Rough-legged Hawk during count week; a record count for Pacific Loons, as many birds continued to linger around the Auke Bay harbor facilities; and a new high count for Mew Gull. We also nabbed the Black-capped Chickadee that had been regularly visiting Patty Rose's feeder, and had six Lapland Longspurs on the wetlands. This species had never been found on count day before and had only been found during one prior count week, in 1997. Finally, Gus van Vliet, Molly McCafferty, and Mary McCafferty located a



Hoary Redpoll on count day. This was a new species for our cumulative count list. See the table for all the results. Species in bold face are unusual or rare; numbers in bold face but not the species indicate new high counts.

As usual, the tally of birds was led by Gus after the potluck at Mark and Debi's home. The food contributions were again terrific and it was a fun way to end the day. Thanks to all who participated. The results of our count will be entered online to National Audubon in early January.

Juneau Christmas Bird Count Results
December 17, 2011

| <u>Species</u> | <u>2011 Count</u> | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Canada Goose | 665 | Mew Gull | 399 |
| Gadwall | 29 | Herring Gull | 4 |
| American Wigeon | 68 | Glaucous-winged Gull | 2,309 |
| Mallard | 1,860 | Unidentified Gulls | 37 |
| Northern Pintail | 2 | Common Murre | 78 |
| Green-winged Teal | 40 | Marbled Murrelet | 104 |
| Greater Scaup | 272 | Eurasian Collared-Dove | 1 |
| Lesser Scaup | 1 | Rock Pigeon | 134 |
| Unidentified Scaup | 52 | Northern Pygmy-owl | 3 |
| Harlequin Duck | 46 | Belted Kingfisher | 2 |
| Surf Scoter | 1,624 | Downy Woodpecker | cw |
| White-winged Scoter | 97 | Hairy Woodpecker | 1 |
| Black Scoter | 8 | Am. Three-toed Woodpecker | 1 |
| Unidentified Scoters | 243 | Unidentified Woodpeckers | 1 |
| Long-tailed Duck | 142 | Northern Shrike | 4 |
| Bufflehead | 136 | Steller's Jay | 38 |
| Common Goldeneye | 212 | Black-billed Magpie | 34 |
| Barrow's Goldeneye | 239 | Northwestern Crow | 263 |
| Unidentified Goldeneyes | 132 | Common Raven | 308 |
| Hooded Merganser | 6 | Black-capped Chickadee | 1 |
| Common Merganser | 67 | Chestnut-backed Chickadee | 95 |
| Red-breasted Merganser | 71 | Brown Creeper | 2 |
| Unidentified Mergansers | 2 | Pacific Wren | 1 |
| Rock Ptarmigan | cw | American Dipper | 7 |
| Red-throated Loon | 4 | Golden-crowned Kinglet | 39 |
| Pacific Loon | 218 | Unidentified Kinglets | 2 |
| Common Loon | 2 | European Starling | cw |
| Yellow-billed Loon | 1 | American Tree Sparrow | 18 |
| Unidentified Loons | 8 | Fox Sparrow | cw |
| Horned Grebe | 45 | Song Sparrow | 21 |
| Red-necked Grebe | 17 | White-crowned Sparrow | 1 |
| Unidentified Grebes | 1 | Dark-eyed Junco | 150 |
| Pelagic Cormorant | 23 | Lapland Longspur | 6 |
| Great Blue Heron | 5 | Snow Bunting | 94 |
| Bald Eagle | 152 | Red-winged Blackbird | 24 |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | 1 | Pine Grosbeak | 11 |
| Northern Goshawk | 1 | Common Redpoll | 14 |
| Rough-legged Hawk | cw | Hoary Redpoll | 1 |
| Black Turnstone | 8 | Pine Siskin | 43 |
| Dunlin | 62 | Count Day Species | 66 |
| Unidentified Sandpipers | 158 | Total Individuals | 10,973 |
| Wilson's Snipe | 2 | Additional CW Species | 5 |

RESULTS OF THE KETCHIKAN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT-By Teri Hoyt



15 Lesser Canada Geese Counted

Photo by Jim Lewis

Ketchikan's CBC was on December 17th amidst the halcyon days of winter, it was a beautiful sunny day with calm winds! This year marked interesting variations in the number of individuals for each species recorded compared to our past CBC data.

A total of 6538 birds were seen, representing 76 species with additional 7 species found during count week.

Count week species include: **Pied-billed Grebe, Peregrine Falcon, American Pipit, Northern Pygmy-Owl, Bonaparte's Gull, Red-breasted Sapsucker, and Wilson's Snipe.**

We had very high numbers of **Pacific Loon (530), 402 Western Grebes,** and 10 **American**

Wigeon, the most ever for a count day. There was a lone **Yellow-billed Loon** seen and a single **Brandt's Cormorant.** **Pelagic Cormorant** numbers were about double our usual number while **Double-crested Cormorant** numbers were quite low this year.

Although no **Sharp-shinned Hawks** were recorded on a Ketchikan CBC count until 2001, they have been tallied every year since as they are somewhat regularly found here during winter hunting near feeding stations. Surprisingly 2 **Northern Goshawks** were seen as well!

Gull rarities include a **Glaucous Gull** and a **Slaty-backed Gull.**

For the second year in a row, my daughter and I found a **Greater Yellowlegs** at the same beach as last year, which is only the second local winter record ever!

Only four **Great Blue Herons** were seen. Nine **Northern Flickers,** a single **Hairy Woodpecker,** two **Downy Woodpeckers,** and a sapsucker was seen only during the count week.



2nd Winter Slaty-backed Gull Photo by Jim Lewis

We recorded above average numbers of **Steller's Jays (37),** and **Chestnut-backed Chickadees (68),** and four well camouflaged **Brown Creepers** were spotted! Ketchikan tallied only 12 **Varied Thrushes,** five **American Robins** and we had the lowest number of **Dark-eyed Juncos** in ten years, additionally a all time low number of 9 **Pine Siskins!** A single immature female **Purple Finch** was discovered, a rarity for our state!

For the third year in a row a **Anna's Hummingbird** was documented on count day and in fact several have been seen near heated feeder areas this winter.

A wide variety of sparrow species were found including: **Lincoln's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow** and even a **Savannah Sparrow!** We recorded 46 **Song Sparrows,** an all time high number for our CBC!

Five **House Sparrows** were added to our tally as they were the past four years, and as nests have been found the past few summers, this species seems firmly established in our town.

Looks like the **Eurasian Collared-Dove** will continue to thrive in Ketchikan as well with two active nests observed this past summer, 15 were found on count day. Amazing that this invasive species was never recorded in Alaska prior to 2006!

Ketchikan has gathered our best CBC data ever these past five years thanks to our experienced birders....keep up the good work gang!! Thanks again to our CBC organizer Andy Piston and along with Steve Heintl, their expertise ignites the passion for all birdwatchers in Ketchikan. I wish everyone the best in 2012!!!

MISTERY TRACKS

This is one of the largest members of its family its larger cousin lives in the sea.

It would I am sure eat a marmot November's answer to the Mystery Track.

Who's skull is this?



MICE By Jim King

Do Bald Eagles prey on mice? This year they do.

In November I watched from my window, that faces the tideflats at Sunny Point, as an eagle glided down and picked up a mouse skittering across the dried vegetation. The mouse had been headed for higher ground as the tide came in. The eagle caught it with its right hand talon and transferred it to its beak without landing. I think the mouse was swallowed as the eagle flew on but could not see that for sure.

On Christmas Eve there was about 2 inches of snow on the tideflats as a large tide moved in. I watched as an eagle landed at the edge of the snow about 100 feet from my window. As the eagles usually perch on logs or stumps I wondered if this bird was anticipating that mice would have to run across the snow to escape the rising water. Its timing was perfect and within 2 or 3 minutes it was able to take 2 or 3 steps and catch a mouse with its beak. It put one foot on the animal, pulled off and swallowed the head then immediately picked up and swallowed the body. I assumed it did not want to have a struggling mouse in its gullet. The eagle did not move on but within 5 minutes repeated this action from the same spot. It then flew off.

I have seen eagles catch mice opportunistically a few times in the past, but never before in what appeared to be such a planned hunt. Is this a big year for mice on the tideflats?

Whooping Crane Sightings in Western N. C. By Prill (Isleib) Mollick

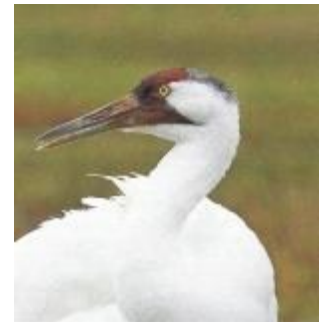
Some local birders have had an exciting few days here in western N.C. They've seen a pair of Whooping Cranes in the next county. Whooping Cranes are some of the world's rarest birds. Upon reporting them, a local birder received information from the International Crane Foundation about the identity of the birds.



The International Crane Foundation is part of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership's Monitoring and Management Team and responsible for monitoring the Whooping Cranes in the Eastern Migratory Population. The Whooping Cranes have been seen in Clay County, North Carolina, since mid December.

A tracker was sent and identified the cranes as being 3.5-year-old male, #28-08, and 1.5-year-old female, #5-10. She is the fifth chick hatched in 2010. They've been together all summer and fall and spent most of their time at Marathon County, Wisconsin.

No. 28-08 has wintered in eastern Tennessee for the past couple of years and he was expected to turn up there with his new female friend. It would be unexpected if they decided to continue south, so they may winter at the Clay County, N.C. location or perhaps they will head back towards the eastern Tennessee area. Aside from ecological factors it may depend on the behavior of the people who observe them.



When young eastern whooping cranes make their first southward migration, they follow closely related sandhill cranes, older whooping cranes, or an ultralight aircraft which leads the birds south from Wisconsin, across Tennessee and Alabama into Florida. After that first guided migration, they are on their own to select a route and a wintering area.

These birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Endangered Species Act. It is recommended that when folks are observing whooping cranes in the wild to give them respect and distance. Either on foot or in a vehicle do not approach within 600 feet. Remain concealed and do not speak loudly enough for the birds to hear you. Also do not report cranes to the media as attention focused on them can potentially be negative.

Added note: In Georgia one whooping crane was shot out of the air by vandals, and that neighboring Alabama had not one but two whoopers downed by gunfire. This simply reiterates how much care needs to be taken in public discussions regarding this magnificent bird.

Note from Leslie Slater, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

<http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov>

Always a pleasure to read your newsletter. If you think it's appropriate (as I was prompted by the wild turkey photo in the December newsletter), I'd recommend telling your readership to watch, "**My Life as a Turkey**". It's part of the PBS series, "**Nature**". Fascinating.

OTHER WEB OPPORTUNITIES

**** **New Bob Armstrong's wonderful bird and other wildlife photographs that are free to use for educational and conservation purposes – www.naturebob.com**

SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS SEASONALLY

Sub-regional Compilers: Steven C. Heinl, 2603 4th Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901

Andrew W. Piston, P. O. Box 1116, Ward Cove, AK 99928

This publication has wonderful bird photos and information. If you want to be put on Steve Heinl's mailing list to receive this summary and to contribute observations, you can contact him at: steve.heinl@alaska.gov

If you are interested in additional information, subscribe to North American Birds, here is a link to see more information: <http://www.aba.org/nab> < <http://www.aba.org/nab> > . The seasonal reports cover all of North America and give excellent overviews of unusual numbers of particular species (high or low), early or late dates of occurrence, changes in status, and rare finds for each region.

There is also an extensive list of all bird sightings entered in eBird (www.ebird.org < <http://www.ebird.org/> >)

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Public Market:

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president@juneau-audubon-society.org

vice-president@juneau-audubon-ociety.org

secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

education@juneau-audubon-society.org

conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org

field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org

raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org

at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org

public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

National Audubon Society Membership Application

For first time members or renewals to the National Audubon Society, please mail this form to:
National Audubon Society, PO Box 422246, Palm Coast, FL 32142-6714

You will receive the National Audubon Magazine plus Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.
\$20 (1-year introductory rate) ___ \$15 (1-year student/senior rate) ___ \$30 Basic renewal ___

Name _____
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___ My check for \$ ___ is enclosed ___ Please bill me A51 7XCH

Local Audubon Society Membership Application

If you prefer to support Juneau Audubon Society only, please complete the form above and send
\$10 (1-year membership) to: Juneau Audubon Society, Membership Chair, PO Box 21725,
Juneau, AK 99802. You will receive the Juneau Chapter newsletter *The Raven*.

*****Please consider getting *The Raven* by e-mail instead of snail mail to save paper, time,
money and view photos in color.**

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