

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 40, Number 5

Juneau Audubon Society

January 2014

Juneau Audubon Society

JANUARY MEETING: SCOT FOSTER'S

"Never test the depth of the water with both feet"

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9,

THUNDER MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY AT 7:00 p.m.

"Scott Foster has kayaked thousands of Southeast miles in the past 35 years and taken a few photos along the way. This program features some of his favorite paddles, portages and pictures (but only of a bird!)."



Snow Bunting

Doug Jones

BEGINNER BIRDING

Through the Juneau Community Schools, Juneau Audubon Society will offer a "Beginner Birding," evening course, this January/February and February/March. Adult classes meet once a week for a month. Class size is limited to a dozen for best learning and fun.

A course consists of four classes of 1.5 hours held on Thursday evenings, 6:30-8pm.

Harborview Elementary will host a downtown set to be repeated in the valley at Riverbend Elementary the following month.

We will do some mental transformation as we consider the business of being a bird. In addition, the class will use binoculars and birding field guides, employing a range of identification clues.

A variety of bird groups and habitats will be explored. The birds considered are current Juneau local residents/winter migrants and those birds first to return in the spring. We will do virtual birding indoors. It was fun last year as the birders could count upon the birds and the weather. At the end of the course, a real Saturday outing with members of Juneau Audubon will be arranged. The presenter is the educational chairperson for Juneau Audubon. I have revamped last year's course to include more hands on activities. We'll have some great loans from Alaska Fish & Game. The new Community Schools calendar will be available online about the end of the first full week in January. Online registration can be made then or call for information/register: [Suzanne Ainsworth](#), Scheduler, 523-1761.

Patricia Wherry

PICK CLICK & GIVE

It's PFD sign up time. I got the pamphlet in the mail this week. Whether you complete your PFD application online or in a paper format, here is something to consider.

The PFD system has an option called "Pick Click & Give." This is a charitable contribution program that enables an applicant to pledge a specific amount from ones PFD, to a particular state/local nonprofit organization or charity. The list of program options to consider is quite varied.

Juneau Audubon Society joined the Pick Click & Give program last season. We thank those past PFD receivers who made an anonymous/otherwise pledge to our nonprofit group. Pledges given add up and are appreciated. We apply the funds to a variety of Juneau Audubon Society activities.

Consider with your PFD application to PICK CLICK & GIVE to the Juneau Audubon Society. We thank you.

Patricia Wherry

2013 Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count Summary

Nat Drumheller

The 2013 Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count was held on 14 December. Participation was down from recent years with nineteen people venturing forth, to varying degrees, to look for birds. Four people watched feeders at two homes. **58** species were found on count day. Count week ran from 11 December through 17 December. Additional birds found during count week brought the total number of species to **68**. The list of birds and their numbers are at the end of this document.

Thank you to everyone who participated. Thanks to Kimber Owen for hosting a gathering after the count. Special thanks to the Glacier Bay National Park protection rangers for, once again,

providing a boat to safely survey the saltwater portion of the count and to James Latendresse for operating it. Without question, the saltwater is the most productive part of our count.

As with all Christmas bird counts, the weather tends to make or break it. This year, the weather came close to breaking it. November's weather was highly variable. During one cold snap in mid November, the temperature dropped below zero for two nights. Over two feet of snow fell in late November, much of which gradually melted. Temperatures from December 1-13 did not rise above freezing and were near zero for five consecutive nights. On December 11, a winter storm hit. This brought heavy snows for the first three days of count week, making it difficult to get anywhere to bird. On the evening before the count, the snow turned to heavy rain. Trees, loaded with snow, came crashing down. It was looking bad for our count.

On count day, the downed trees and wet snow had been cleared from the main roads before day break. The heavy rain turned to light rain. Winds were moderate from the south, even as the temperature rose to 40 degrees. Still, up to two feet of wet snow remained, making it difficult to get around and impossible for most people to cover their routes. Coverage was therefore greatly reduced from normal. Our boat did get out on the water, a bit late, and had good conditions. As darkness fell, winds picked up and developed into a storm that damaged the town dock and swamped skiffs.

Given the scenario, it is impressive that 58 species were found on count day. Numbers of many species were low, not only because of the reduced coverage, but also because of the weather in the weeks and days leading up to the count. Forests and yards were quiet. A few species that were fairly common before the storm, mostly alluded our counters. For example, Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers were common in the days before the storm, but only a few kinglets and no creepers were found on count day. Common feeder birds flocked to feeders during the storm, but were much fewer on count day as the temperature rose. One pair of regular feeder watchers in town had *zero* birds on count day for the first time ever. Red-breasted Nuthatches and a White-crowned Sparrow that were coming to another feeder daily were not found. Very few siskins, redpolls, or crossbills have been around this winter, and only one finch, a Pine Siskin, was found on count day. Even on the saltwater, the one place where conditions were quite good on count day, there were no large concentrations of birds. Our three wintering shorebirds, Dunlin, Rock Sandpiper, and Sanderling, were found during the count, but in small numbers. The big flock of Dunlin was missed, probably because the beaches west of town were not covered, where there are also many scoters and ducks. Species seen shortly before and/or after count week that failed to make our list include Trumpeter Swan, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pine Grosbeak, and Wilson's Snipe. No Northern Shrikes have been seen recently, so it might be the second winter in a row with few observed.

There were some great finds on count day and during count week. Willow Ptarmigan, American Pipit, Red-Winged Blackbird, Peregrine Falcon, Double-crested Cormorant, Barred Owl, Western Grebe, and European Starling were some. We also ended a five year streak of missing Red-throated Loons.

The most unlikely bird this year was Virginia Rail, which turned up during count week in the Crane Flats. Not one, but two! On December 3, I found a single Virginia Rail in the ditch in the Crane Flats. In the following days, I looked for the rail again a handful of times without success and figured it had perished or gone south. Then, on December 15, Larry Platt, Eric Syrene, and Tania Lewis saw *two* Virginia Rails at the same location while skiing. I was thrilled, but was highly skeptical that there were really two Virginia Rails in Gustavus in mid December. I skied out there the next day and found two rails. Although a very rare bird for Alaska, especially in winter, this is the 4th record and 2nd winter record for Gustavus.



One Virginia Rail on 3 December in the Crane Flats. Photos Nat Drumheller

Total number of species on count day = 58.

(This includes unknown woodpecker.)

Count week species = 11.

Total number of species for the week = 68.

(Unknown woodpecker not counted with American Three-toed Woodpecker.)

2013 Ketchikan Christmas Bird Count Summary

Andrew Piston

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2013 Christmas Bird Count. Some people felt that this was one of the most pleasant Christmas Bird Counts they had ever experienced, but those were primarily people who didn't hear about the count and stayed home drinking cocoa and playing games with friends and family. For those who did participate it was one of the most miserable counts we have had in ages, with driving rain and wind through much of the day. One observer had this to say after the count: "I'm cold and I want to go home." Another had a slightly different take on the day: "I'm really wet and I want to go home." Despite the tough conditions we managed to put together a reasonably good species total. This season we found 65 species on count day (all-time high counts: 83 in 2010, 82 in 2009) and had three additional count week species, which gave us a total of 68 species for the week. We found a total of 4,032 individual birds during the count, which is the lowest number since the late 1980s when the Ketchikan CBC became an annual event. This was primarily

due to the brutally difficult viewing conditions, rather than a lack of birds. This year's highlights included a count week American Coot, two Glaucous Gulls, record numbers of Eurasian Collared-Doves, two Anna's Hummingbirds, a Swamp Sparrow, a White-throated Sparrow, and a Red-winged Blackbird. Below, I summarize how this year's counts compare to past years and provide additional information about interesting finds. The final totals for the 2013 Christmas Bird Count are provided at the end.



Figure 1. Green-winged Teal at Ketchikan Creek, December 2013 (Photo by Jim Lewis)

Ducks, Geese, and Swans: Waterfowl numbers were relatively poor this year and we missed out on a few species we often find in very small numbers (e.g., Trumpeter Swan, Northern Pintail, Gadwall). Highlights included a Ring-necked Duck and two Hooded Mergansers found in the Ward Lake area by Chuck Susie and a



Figure 2. Ring-necked Duck at Ward Lake, December 2013 (Photo by Jim Lewis)

Green-winged Teal at Ketchikan Creek located by Jim "Huey" Lewis (Figure 1). Seven American Wigeon in the Saxman area was also a good count for the Ketchikan CBC (Teri "Teradactyl" Hoyt).

Loons: Our loon counts were spectacular this year if you are someone who hates loons. Our count of 26 Pacific Loons was well below average, and two Red-throated Loons found by Heintl and Helmericks were the only other loons found.

Grebes: Our count of 31 Western Grebes was far below average, but 15 Red-necked Grebes was near the long-term average. The low count of Western Grebes was a reflection of the rough water rather than a lack of grebes.

Cormorants: Our count of 78 Pelagic Cormorants was near average for the count circle and 10 Double-crested cormorants were well below average. I managed to locate a single adult Brandt's Cormorant on the waterfront on count day, which is only the sixth time this species has appeared on an Alaskan CBC (all at Ketchikan). During the winter, the Brandt's Cormorant has only been found in the southernmost reaches of Southeast Alaska, and is typically difficult to find along the Ketchikan road system.

Hawks, Falcons, and Owls: The highlight for hawks was a Northern Goshawk that Ernie DeBoer saw launch an attack on his Eurasian Collared-Dove flock in the waning minutes of the count. This species is a rare resident in Southeast Alaska, but has only been recorded on our count a few times and is generally difficult to find at any time of the year. Over the last couple years it has become apparent that the taste of fresh collared-dove is irresistible to this species. Another good find this year was a Merlin that Heintl, Koerner, and Helmericks nailed on count day—this small falcon has only appeared on four prior counts. Finally, Teri Hoyt found the count's only Sharp-shinned Hawk frolicking about in the Saxman area. It is possible that this bird was actually cruising around—a behavior sometimes confused with frolicking.

Shorebirds: We had a low number and variety of shorebirds on this year's count. Counts of regularly occurring species included 18 Black Turnstones, a count week Surfbird, and one Killdeer. Typically rare or absent by late December, we had one Wilson's Snipe on count day—snipe are very well camouflaged and can be almost impossible to spot before spooking them. They are typically flushed from wet roadside ditches or other similar marshy habitats during the winter.

Figure 3. This 1st winter Glaucous Gull has been present on the Ketchikan waterfront since at least late November 2013 (Andy Piston, photo).

Gulls: Numbers of regularly occurring gulls were mixed this year. Our count of 425 Mew Gulls was well above average, but our counts of Glaucous-winged (560) and Thayer's Gull (13) were far below average. Two Glaucous Gulls were found by Steve Heinl and Isaac Helmericks on the waterfront on count day. This species is a rare visitant to Southeast Alaska during the winter. Another gull highlight was a late lingering Bonaparte's Gull I found feeding in Tongass Narrows with a large flock of Mew Gulls.



Alcids: Our counts of 88 Common Murres and 59 Marbled Murrelets were below average—it is hard to pick these birds out in very rough water.

Doves and Pigeons: Following our first CBC Eurasian Collared-doves in 2010, a total of 15 were found in 2011 and 12 on the 2012 count. This year we crushed previous records with an outstanding 78 birds. This is more remarkable because some of the largest flocks on the roads system are outside the count circle. I started the morning counting doves with Ernie DeBoer as they came in to land at his seed coated driveway. We hit 40 birds before they started flying in multiple directions making counting impossible. This introduced species expanded its range rapidly following release in the Bahamas in the 1970s. It has recently been found with increasing frequency in the Pacific Northwest and was first reported in Alaska in 2006 and 2007. During the last five years large numbers have shown up throughout Southeast Alaska during the summer and breeding has been documented. The species has been much less common in the winter, but clearly that is starting to change as the species continues to gain a foothold in the state.



Anna's Hummingbird at a residence near 4th and Adams; photographed by Steve Heinl

Hummingbirds: For the fifth consecutive year I had multiple Anna's Hummingbirds in town. This was a good fall for this species in Southeast Alaska, and small numbers were observed in a variety of locations at Ketchikan, with several still present. This species is rare but regular in the fall and early winter, and we have recorded single birds on at least eight other counts.

Woodpeckers: The only woodpeckers of the count were four Northern Flickers—a below average count for this species.

Jays: Our count of 1 Steller's Jay tied the lowest count ever for our count circle. This is a case where our low count reflected a general absence of a species, rather than a low count caused by driving rain and wind. Numbers of this species fluctuate dramatically from year-

to-year.

Chickadees to Kinglets: Our count of 17 Chestnut-backed Chickadees, 3 Pacific Wrens, 30 Golden-crowned Kinglets were all below average. These species are typically difficult to find during monsoons. Brown Creepers are often difficult to find, but one was found on count day this year (Heinl/Koerner and Helmericks). A highlight of the count was a late-lingering Ruby-crowned Kinglet found by Teri Hoyt in Saxman.

Thrushes: Our count of 22 Varied Thrush was below average for this species. We also had two count week American Robins.

Sparrows: Once again, we had a good variety of sparrows on this year's count—we found a total of 7 sparrow species along the roads system. This year's counts were near average for two of our most common species—19 Song Sparrows and 11 Fox Sparrows. Our Dark-eyed Junco count (604) was the second highest total ever for our count—this species is typically our most common feeder bird. A Swamp Sparrow that had been present since the fall was found on count day by Teri Hoyt at Saxman. Swamp Sparrows are very rare fall migrants in the Ketchikan area, but have been found nearly annually over the last decade. This species is found primarily east of the Rocky Mountains, but small numbers wander to the west coast in fall and small numbers winter along the coast south of Alaska and northern British Columbia. Other sparrows of interest were two Golden-crowned, two White-Crowned, and one White-throated.

Figure 6.—Swamp Sparrow at Saxman, December 2013 (Jim Lewis, photo).

Finches: Finches were almost completely absent this year and two Pine Siskins at Saxman were the only ones reported.

Blackbirds: A Red-winged Blackbird at Ernie DeBoer's feeders was an excellent find for our count. This is only the second time we have had this species on count day and we have had count week birds in two prior years. The bird has been present for at Ernie's feeders for approximately two weeks.

House Sparrow: Another great find for the Ketchikan CBC was 12 House Sparrows that were seen at Ernie DeBoer's feeders (Andy Piston, Ernie DeBoer), and near Alaska Marine Lines (Heinl and Helmericks). This is the sixth time we have had this species on the count. This Old World sparrow has spread pretty much everywhere humans live since being introduced to North America in 1851. This species associates with humans and thrives in cities and other areas that most birds would want no part of. This bird's taste for human-altered landscapes has made it one of the most widespread and abundant songbirds in the World. The last five summers we have found multiple nests in Ketchikan, which have provided the first Alaskan nest records for this introduced species.

Thanks again for participating in this year's Christmas Count. If you have any questions about birds, or have something interesting to report, feel free to call Andy Piston or Steve Heinl at the Fish and Game office any time of the year (225-9677; call me on my cell phone if you find something interesting and the office is closed, 254-1717, or Steve at 225-7628).

CBC 2013 Haines Circle Preliminary Report 1/2/14 – Pam Randles

The weather on Count Day was awful! There was a snowstorm that had the birds hunkering in the trees and visibility very limited. Of the 24 participants in the Haines Circle, many reported seeing many fewer birds than normal. Some participants had to cancel because they couldn't get to their count areas. Five to ten inches of new snow fell during the morning on top of 18-36 inches already on the ground. With most of the Haines Circle reports in, participants logged 19 hours on foot or by car and ten hours at feeders. Most of the birds counted were the usual suspects: mallards, goldeneyes, mergansers, buffleheads, eagles, gulls, crows, ravens, magpies, jays, chickadees, juncos and siskins. Two winter wrens and two snow buntings were seen along with one hairy woodpecker. A dozen dippers were counted in the lower Chilkoot River.

The Chilkat Circle reports are not in yet and some of the Haines Circle reports are still out, so these are preliminary results.

Snowy Owl Surprise

By Prill (Isleib) Mollick
Smoky Mountains, N.C.

In December 2013, a rare sighting occurred in Western North Carolina when a Snowy Owl was spotted. It was limping and appeared to be injured. It was taken to Carlton Burke, a licensed Bird Rehabilitator, at Carolina Mountain Naturalists Center in Mills River, N.C. (south of Asheville).

A veterinarian took x-rays and did blood work. The Snowy Owl was uninjured but had a high white blood cell count, perhaps indicating an infection which left her too weak to hunt. She was undernourished, dehydrated, and starving.

They named her "Tundra". She was given antibiotics and is being hand fed with frozen mice. She has been showing continued improvement, and is slowly gaining weight. When there is a full recovery, they hope to be able to release her back to the wild, somewhere further north.

From: Whats Up 3/4/14

March 28 Deadline for SUBMISSIONS to the 2014 ALASKA HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL JURIED ART SHOW that begins on April 4 at the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan. To be eligible for prizes, artwork must include birds, avian habitat and/or migratory bird patterns from the Spring Migratory Bird List. Artwork must be recent, original and not previously exhibited in Ketchikan. Open to all Alaskan artists working in all media with a maximum of two entries per artist. For more information, contact Kevin Fromherz at 907.228.4124 or go to http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5444769.pdf.

INTERNSHIPS

****AK DEPT. of NATURAL RESOURCES DEPT. INTERNSHIP PROGRAM** information is available at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/intern.htm>.

****AK DEPT. of FISH & GAME INTERNSHIP PROGRAM INFORMATION** is available at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=join.internships>.

WEB OPPORTUNITIES

*** 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/> >)

Juneau Audubon Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Events Coordinators

President: Brenda Wright 789-4656

president@juneau-audubon-society.org

Vice-President: Josh Peters

vice-president@juneau-audubon-ociety.org

Secretary: Bev Agler

secretary@juneau-audubon-society.org

Treasurer: Patty Rose

treasurer@juneau-audubon-society.org

Programs: Doug Jones

programs@juneau-audubon-society.org

Membership: Jane Ginter

membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

Education: Patricia Wherry

education@juneau-audubon-society.org

Conservation: Gwen Baluss

conservation@juneau-audubon-society.org

Field Trips: Amy Clark Courtney

field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org

Raven Editor: Mary Lou King, 789-7540

raven@juneau-audubon-society.org

At-large:

at-large_a@juneau-audubon-society.org

At-large:

at-large_b@juneau-audubon-society.org

Public Market:

public-market@juneau-audubon-society.org

Web Master: George Utermohle

webmaster@juneau-audubon-society.org

Too much paper mail from the National Audubon Society?

You can ask to be taken off the mass mailing list: Email Customer Service

audubon@emailcustomerservice.com or call 1-800-272-4201

Opting out of extra mailings will not stop magazine subscription.

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*. \$35 Basic renewal___

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip Code_____

Telephone number_____

___My check for \$_____ is enclosed___ Please bill me C3ZA510Z A51

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.

To request this option email: membership@juneau-audubon-society.org

