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 47, Number 9       Juneau Audubon Society       May 2015

THE NEXT REGULAR JUNEAU AUDUBON MEETING WILL BE ON SEPTEMBER 10. THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE.

Juneau Audubon Bird Walks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Activity/Location</th>
<th>Leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat. May 9</td>
<td>8am-10am Airport Dike Trail Bird Walk</td>
<td>Amy Courtney</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boots recommended. Meet at trailhead at the end of Radcliffe Rd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. May 16</td>
<td>8am-11am Bird Banding Demonstration @ Juneau Community Gardens on Montana Creek Rd.</td>
<td>Gwen Baluss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. May 23</td>
<td>8am-10am Eagle Beach Bird Walk</td>
<td>Amy Courtney</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boots recommended. Mile 28 Glacier Hwy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. May 30</td>
<td>8am-10am Dredge Lakes Bird Walk</td>
<td>Gus van Vliet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meet at parking lot next to Mendenhall River bridge on Back Loop Rd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat. June 6</td>
<td>8am-10am Sandy Beach/Treadwell Trails Bird Walk</td>
<td>Patty Rose</td>
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Saturday Wild Walks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity/Location</th>
<th>Leader</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>9:30am-11:30am</td>
<td>Minus Tide Walk Location TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>8am-12pm</td>
<td>Mt. Roberts Tram Nature Walk Meet at the base of the tram at 8am. Bring $7 per person to cover non-profit tram fare, and pay to Juneau Audubon.</td>
<td>Linda Nicklin</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>10am-12pm</td>
<td>Eaglecrest Berry Walk</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Mushroom Walk 1 Location TBA</td>
<td>Dave Gregovich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>Mushroom Walk 2 Location TBA</td>
<td>Dave Gregovich</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Due to the overwhelming popularity of this walk in past years, Dave is offering two walks this year, so that attendees can enjoy a smaller group.

Check juneau-audubon-society.org later in the month for details and unforeseen schedule changes.
Local Youth Takes on Big Day Challenge

Owen Squires, 14, of Juneau, has decided to take the BIGGEST DAY challenge this May 9. His target is to find 50 species. He’s collecting pledges of support and the proceeds will be split as donations to Juneau Audubon Society and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Owen has impressed many of our local birders with his keen interest and impressive birding skills. He started keeping track of species seen at age six. (For the record, chickadee and pine siskin were the first to be marked in his field guide). “After that”, he says, “I decided I wanted to see all the birds in the world. Right now, I think maybe seeing the birds of the US are more realistic. Whenever I go on vacation I bring my binoculars with me, and we always take time to go bird watching in new areas. .. I remember visiting Hawk Mt and it was all foggy and I was sick but I was determined to go even though my mom didn't want me to. I didn't see anything on the mountain, but on the drive home I saw my first flock of snow geese.”

Owen has been a volunteer for local citizen science projects like bird banding, and recently, a JAS trip co-leader. He hopes to find a career working with birds.

Please join us in supporting his BIG DAY! Help two worthy organizations too!

For more info email: squiresfamilyATgci.net
or simply send checks to Owen at 4525 N Douglas, Juneau, AK 99801
And don’t forget to report your own bird sightings May 9 for the global BIGGEST DAY using eBird. http://www.birds.cornell.edu/wsb/

We in the North have an especially important role to play in this effort to record at least 4000 species, as many of our local species are migrants who may get missed down south. If you’ve never used eBird this is perfect time to check it out.

Juneau Bird Report By Amy Courtney

April brought many “First of Year” sightings and a couple rare birds to Juneau. High numbers of Greater White-fronted Geese have been observed migrating north, and up to 135 have been seen on the Mendenhall Wetlands over the last week. A few Cackling Geese have been reported on the wetlands as well, 3 on 4/20 by Mark Schwan and 30 on 4/21 by David Schmerge. Multiple observers have seen small numbers of Snow Geese on the Mendenhall Wetlands and Eagle Beach in the past two weeks-- the highest count was 6. Two American X Eurasian Wigeon hybrid drakes were spotted at Eagle Beach on 4/22 (MS), and then on 4/29 a pure Eurasian Wigeon drake was seen at the same location (MS). A lone Marbled Godwit, observed taking a rest stop at Eagle Beach on 4/21 by Amy Courtney, was a day earlier than the previous early arrival record for Juneau. Mark Schwan photographed an immature Red-tailed Hawk at the muskeg next to the Montana Creek rifle range on 4/23. Up to 2 Mountain Bluebirds were reported by multiple individuals near the golf course, and also one at Eagle Beach. On 4/12, Gwen Baluss observed a flock of 75-100 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches on the peninsula right in front of the Mendenhall Glacier.

A few Arctic Terns have returned so far, but it remains to be seen if they will attempt to nest in front of the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center again this year. Small numbers of Tree
and *Violet-green Swallows, Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned*, and *Townsend’s Warblers; and Lincoln’s, White-crowned, and Golden-crowned Sparrows* have all been reported around town. Spring is here!!

Thanks to everyone who posted their sightings on eBird and Eaglechat.

**SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS**

In February, the Juneau Audubon Society awarded a $100 prize to Sam Nolan and Chase Saviers for their science fair project entitled "Blue Mussel Tissue Mass by Location." Nolan and Saviers took samples of blue mussels from four different locations in Juneau-- the Shrine of St. Therese, the Auke Bay boat harbor, Sandy Beach, and False Outer Point in North Douglas. While three of the locations yielded mussels with very similar tissue mass, samples from the Auke Bay harbor had lower mass on average. They inferred that "the mussels have a lesser tissue mass due to pollutants that these mussels are constantly exposed to in a harbor compared to near open water like the rest of our test areas." Blue mussels are an important food for many birds, especially Surf Scoters-- the entire West-coast population of which migrates through the Inside Passage every year on the way to interior breeding grounds.

**This month's bird quiz** is a bird that is fairly uncommon in southeast Alaska, but regularly breeds here. Do you know what it is? Email Amy at field-trips@juneau-audubon-society.org with your guess! Answer will be posted on the Juneau Audubon Society Facebook page soon. Photo courtesy of Bob Armstrong.

For more quizzes during the summer, check out our weekly Bird Quiz on our Facebook page! The quiz bird in last month's newsletter was an adult *HARRIS'S SPARROW* in non-breeding plumage, and the photo was taken in Ketchikan.

**Birdhouse Construction Project Update** by Brenda Wright

Juneau Audubon Society has successfully erected 33 tree swallow nest boxes. We could not have done it without the help of two classes of students from the Johnson Youth Center. They not only put all the bird houses together, but also came on a field trip to put them up.
We erected 14 at Sunny Point near the King’s home. With good light, you might notice the boxes gleaming a little out on the wetlands as you drive by. We also got permission from CBJ parks and recreation department to erect bird houses at Lemon Creek and also in the second meadow near the Mendenhall River trail. The students were enthusiastic and really enjoyed the surveying for sites and pounding the rebar to mount the conduits and bird houses! Thanks vey much to them for their help.

The Mendenhall state game refuge manager also gave us permission to erect some bird houses near the Fish Creek meadows. With those sites and a couple of private homes on North Douglas we got all 33 houses in place. As we were putting up one batch with the students, a tree swallow actually flew over! So of course we immediately put up the Vacancy signs so the swallows would know they could move in.

We have also had a donation from the Schempf family of a few more bird houses that will go up next week. If any one is interested in helping us monitor the bird houses, not only for occupancy, but also to observe young and maybe successful fledging, please contact Brenda Wright. We’d love to have your help.

Also a big thanks to Mary Mary McCafferty, Deb Rudis, Patricia Wherry, Shirley Carlson, and teacher Chris S’Gro! It could not have happened with out you!

Photo by Mary McCafferty

**Death Traps for Birds** Gwen Baluss, President

All this beautiful spring warm, flowers and bird migration has me thinking about… death. Nobody likes to kill animals. Sometimes however rodents invade our home, gardens or businesses and we’re left with few options. If that happens, it’s good to think about potential bycatch. Wild birds, predators and pets can also be killed.

**Bait and Poisons**

While the EPA has recently limited some products because they were killing or sickening so many non-target species, you still may encounter products containing the chemicals Brodifacoum, Bromadiolone, Difenacoum, or Difethialone in common household bait such as older D-Con brand products.

The active ingredient will kill a mouse, but slowly. Meanwhile, anything that eats the mouse, still running around, including hawks, will be poisoned. Accidental ingestion by other animals including wild carnivores, dogs and even children has been documented.
If you need an idea for today’s good deed, encourage your favorite store to pull any remaining products with the above chemicals from the shelves. The bait should be disposed of as hazardous waste.

**Snap traps:** The old fashioned mouse trap is generally a good alternative, but should only be used indoors where small birds will not have access. Birds can and do visit baited snap traps to be maimed or killed. Birds who nest in cavities or hide in thick vegetation will investigate fairly deep holes, so even putting traps inside other containers will not solve the problem.

**Live traps:** Checked frequently, live trapping is the most humane. While handy, avoid the multi-catch types; animals may fight or eat each other within.

Small animals have high metabolic needs so traps should contain plenty of moist nontoxic bait (like apple) and be checked a few times a day so non target species can be safely released. Rats and the house mouse are non-native and could pose a threat to wildlife if deported instead of dispatched. Others can be safely transported to a natural habitat.

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**Beware the Bear** By Prill (Isleib) Mollick, Smoky Mountains, N.C.

This spring an article appeared in our local newspaper with a warm weather advisory about the black bear. It read like it might have appeared in the Juneau newspaper.

The article cautioned folks to avoid problems by using “bear proof” garbage cans. Take down birdfeeders, even if they are supposed to be bear proof. (Is there really such a thing as a bear proof birdfeeder?) It also suggested to be sure all pet food is consumed and empty food bowls brought inside, and to clean any food and grease from the barbecue grills. The same type of article also appears in the fall.

Back east I usually filled and hung up my birdfeeders in October. During my first October in Juneau I prepared to get the birdfeeders ready for winter. I had a large tin of Sunflower seeds and another one of mixed seed on the back deck. I filled and hung the bird feeders out on the back deck, anticipating an amazing variety of all the new birds I would see that winter. I also hung up a square wire block with the suet mixture in it.

Around 5 o’clock in the afternoon I heard a CLINK or a CLANK sound coming from the back deck. I looked out and there was a big black bear just a few inches away from me on the other side of the glass window. I watched as the bear reached up and pulled down the wire block, and ran off with it. The nail that the wire block had been hanging on was bent downward. (The suet must have smelled really good.) I felt rather shaken.

After it left the deck, I waited until it was no where in sight. Still shaking I went out and took down all the bird feeders, and the tins of seed, and brought them inside. Although the tins had teeth marks on them, they had not yet been opened. I decided that in Juneau, I needed to wait until November to put the birdfeeders back up.

The following spring I found that square wire block on the ground, out back, in the bushes. It was a little bent. It was empty.
EARLY SPRING WILDFLOWERS IN OUR YARD FOR THE BIRDS AND THE BEES
AND WE LIKE THEM TOO By Mary Lou King


To see the list of extraordinary FIELD COURSES OFFERED by ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC this summer, go to:
http://www.alaskageographic.org/static/148/learn?utm_source=Break+up+Bonfire+in+the+backyard++Local+conservation+events&utm_campaign=april9+2015&utm_medium=email. Explore Alaska’s parks, forests, and refuges with expert instructors, and immerse yourself in the solitude of Alaska’s wilderness. Our small-group courses are led by some of Alaska’s best wildlife biologists, wildflower experts, published authors, and renowned artists.

May 7 – 10 HOMER - KACHEMAK BAY SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL activities continue to expand: this year features more Family Bird Walks, new field excursions, and additional science talks, all led by expert guides, naturalists, and speakers. Keynote Speaker Dr. DAVID BIRD (McGill University) and Featured Speaker NEIL HAYWARD are joining in the celebration and offering a handful of entertaining talks. KIM MCNETT, our Featured Artist, used her naturalist background to create a stunning exclusive design for 2015 T-shirt and poster. To register of for more

May 7 – 10 CORDOVA - COPPER RIVER DELTA SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL will show off the millions of shorebirds passing through the Copper River Delta this spring. The Cordova Festival is always a stunning experience. Highlights of this 25th anniversary of the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival will be learning about rehabilitated birds with Bird TLC (Bird Treatment and Learning Center), guided field trips and Birding 101 classes, as well as classes, workshops and talks with illustrator, author and naturalist MARYJO KOCH. To celebrate such a milestone as our 25th year, the organizers of the festival are excited to present to you THE WETLAND BALLET: THROUGH THE SEASONS. For full details, go to http://www.cordovachamber.com/events/copper-river-delta-shorebird-festival

May 28 – 31 YAKUTAT – 5th ANNUAL YAKUTAT TERN FESTIVAL is a celebration of the natural and cultural resources of Yakutat. The festival is family friendly and offers activities for birders as well as non-birders, including field trips, seminars, kid’s activities, evening banquets and other programs, bird banding demonstration, and an art exhibit. This year's keynote speaker is JOHN MARZLUFF, Professor of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington, and author of five books including: In the Company of Crows and Ravens, Dog Days, Raven Nights, and most recently Welcome to Subirdia. Our featured artist, ALISON BREMNER, uses a variety of mediums and traditional techniques with contemporary Alaskan Native Tlingit design. She will be leading both youth and adult workshops and exhibiting her art during the festival. Following our keynote presentation, the MT. ST. ELIAS DANCERS will perform traditional native dance at the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall. Alaska-based performing artist ELIZABETH WARE will conduct youth and adult workshops and perform in a production of Macbeth on Saturday. Other area activities include sight-seeing, hiking, fishing, surfing, canoeing and kayaking, wildlife viewing, and beach-combing. Please see www.yakutattternfestival.org, visit us on Facebook, or call (907) 784-3359 for more information.

Great Nature Books are now free! Understanding how various creatures and their habitats are connected can help promote protection of relatively small areas. Gathering information and writing a book about the area can also help. Three books that help illustrate this are now available for free downloading over the internet.

The book Natural Connections in Alaska discusses and illustrates the importance of understanding the various connections in nature. It also lists over 80 websites in Alaska that provide free information on connections in Alaska’s nature. This book is available at:

One of the really special areas in Juneau is the Mendenhall Wetlands. The book *Mendenhall Wetlands a globally recognized Important Bird Area* discusses and illustrates the value of this area for Alaska’s birds and shows how the area is important for birds on a world-wide basis. The value of Audubon Alaska’s Important Bird Area program is quite evident here. This book is available at:


Sometimes protecting only one species can help numerous other creatures. Beavers are often called ‘ecosystem engineers’ because of their ability to alter the landscape. Their ability to provide and improve habitat for many other creatures is truly remarkable. Their benefits for salmon, trout and char populations are well known and studied. The book *Beavers by the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska* discusses and illustrates these connections. This book is available at:


Boaters and beach walkers take note! A beginners’ guide to identifying some of the most commonly sighted birds on inside waters is now available from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Paid for through a Scenic Byways grant, this compact booklet features illustrations from George C. West (author of *A Birder’s Guide to Alaska*) and birding tips for 21 marine birds. Contact the Division of Wildlife Conservation at 465-4190 for a free copy.

Anne Sutton (DFG)
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
*****************************************************************************
For more bird information, subscribe to North American Birds, here is a link to see more information: http://www.aba.org/nab< http://www.aba.org/nab> .

New: Merlin Bird Photo ID
You asked for it! The Merlin Bird ID team has been hard at work with colleagues from Caltech and Cornell Tech to develop computer vision capabilities enabling Merlin to identify birds in digital photos. We’d like you and other Lab members to be among the first to help us test this online tool using your own bird photos or screenshots of birds that you pull from the web. Using a desktop computer or laptop, we invite you to check out Merlin Bird Photo ID. http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/photo-id-help/

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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 US mail to save paper, time, money and view photos in color. To request this option email: membership@juneau-audubon-society.org