Our Last Spring Monthly JAS Virtual Program will be April 8th at 7pm:

A service the Juneau Audubon Society provides is helping our members learn about and enjoy the natural ecosystems of Southeast Alaska. JAS monthly programs run October through April (Bird Walks begin in May—details towards the end of the newsletter) and are aired via Zoom on the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.; and, when possible, added to our Facebook page afterwards. Keep a lookout on our website page for information on upcoming presentations and links to the Zoom meeting.

April 8, 2021: **Two Ways to Enjoy Birds: Citizen Science and Music**—This program will have an Introduction to eBird Cornell University Citizen. Also, JAS will share a classical music concert by the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra: "Bird Flight Patterns and Music Concert video Program." We will watch the Introduction to the Concert and Children’s Learning opportunities. All Audubon members will get a free link to enjoy the entire concert. Join us to learn how to report your bird sightings and learn more about Birds!

Look for login information and recordings on our [Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/Juneau-Audubon-Society-138280412980789) and [Website](http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org).

If you missed our February presentation: **Birds from Wood—Decoy Carving in a New Direction** by Matt Robus—you can find a recording here: [Decoy Carving Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Juneau-Audubon-Society-138280412980789).
Seraph — “winged, angelic being”

With a Little Help from My Friends—Story, photos and captions by Kerry Howard

As autumn arrives in Juneau, we are occasionally lucky to hear the sonorous honk or catch a glimpse of a bevy of trumpeter swans (Cygnus buccinator) migrating to their winter grounds. Last November, such a sight was visible when a small group of swans landed on Auke Lake. After several days of resting and feeding, they took to the air to continue their migration—that is, except for one—a cygnet. For some reason, the juvenile swan couldn’t get airborne. The best he could muster was a short flight a couple of feet off the ground. After living in a family for his entire short life, he was suddenly left all alone.

Allegedly, there had been an encounter between the swans and several river otters on the lake. And, for a while, the juvenile swan exhibited a small injury on its neck. More worrisome, however, was the condition of the primary feathers on its left wing— they were tattered and ragged. Could the river otters have caused this damage? Over the next several weeks, the cygnet would be seen moving around Auke Lake feeding, grooming, and resting. A number of people noticed and watched him. As the lake began to freeze, the bird’s inability to fly was concerning.

The Juneau Raptor Center (JRC) was made aware of the swan and attempted a couple of rescues during this time. Unfortunately, they were not successful—the bird was simply too mobile and had too much maneuvering room.

In situations like this, it is hard to know what to do. Let nature take its course? Actively intervene? Watch and monitor? On a cold morning in mid-December, I sat quietly at Auke Lake observing the swan. He slowly walked towards me and then stood at the water’s edge, shivering. The swan looked so dejected and alone. At that moment, my heart told me this bird needed some kindness and support, so the next day I started feeding it.

It took a little time to figure out what the swan liked to eat. I first tried regular bird seed, which he’d pick at but largely ignore. Then I bought a high protein “flock raiser” food that is fed to domestic geese and ducks. The swan seemed to relish it! As I began to bring him food daily, he’d see me coming, wait till I put food down and left, and then come in to eat. A routine was established. As fall officially became winter and the weeks rolled by, everything seemed temporarily ok, but the open water and natural food sources in Auke Lake continued to diminish as the lake froze.

With February’s cold snap, the swan was left with only a small passage of open water. The JRC decided to mount another rescue attempt. That day, I went to the lake early to check on the swan. I located him in an open channel adjacent to the highway, and our chances seemed good. However, when we returned a couple hours later, the swan had disappeared—no trace. We weren’t sure what happened, but guessed he may have gone down Auke Creek to Auke Bay. I looked all over for him that afternoon and, amazingly, just as I was about to give up, spotted him about sunset all the way over by Auke Nu Cove! How were we going to keep an eye on him in this much larger area?

Luckily by the next day, the swan was back at the mouth of Auke Creek and, for the next two weeks, pretty much stayed along the shoreline between there and the Cannery Cove condos. Occasionally, he would swim over by the docks to the delight of many people who observed him there.

Life in Auke Bay was different but still challenging. Since he stayed in a small area, he was fairly easy to monitor. A couple of friends who live in that area, Linda Blefgen and Denice McPherson, agreed...
Wouldn’t you know, a half-hour before the rescue attempt Seraph disappeared! He wasn’t at any of his usual spots in Auke Bay. Fortunately, just shortly before the appointed rescue time, he showed up at Cannery Cove. We had intentionally not fed him that morning and he was very hungry. I went to the beach to monitor him while waiting for the others to arrive. The minute Seraph saw me he started walking towards me, actively vocalizing he was hungry! I was trying to avoid feeding him until the others arrived so we’d be able to distract him with food. I sat on the ground and Seraph practically sat down in my lap. Moments later, Matthew and Kathleen arrived, we put our plan into effect and, much to our delight, we were successful! We expected this spirited bird to put up some resistance, but the minute Matthew grabbed him, he went limp and relaxed.

After a night at the JRC clinic in Juneau, Seraph was flown to the Alaska Raptor Center in Sitka. After a thorough evaluation, they let us know his left primary wing feathers were broken by unknown means, but they should grow back in. Seraph also had bumblefoot. “Bumblefoot” is an oddly playful-sounding name given to a serious condition that strikes the feet, joints and bones of primarily captive birds worldwide. It is an inflammatory condition of the soles of the feet that, if treated quickly and aggressively, can be resolved without long-term or significant damage.

The damaged primary feathers on the swan’s left wing are easily seen in this photo taken during early January at frozen Auke Lake.
With a Little Help from My Friends continued....

Seraph likely developed this condition after several months of walking on rough ground after his flying was impaired. Otherwise he was in good health--no broken bones and his weight was normal. So, as of this writing, we have high hopes he can be rehabilitated and released back to the wild!

Seraph has proven himself to be a very smart, tenacious, and adaptable bird. We’ll never know for certain what caused his feather damage but are grateful that his injuries are not insurmountable. Since trumpeter swans can live up to 20 or more years in the wild, Seraph still has many years to thrive. Once an endangered species, active management and restoration efforts have allowed this species to regain abundance and distribution. Trumpeter swans are now considered “not listed” under the Endangered Species Act.

I personally can’t wait for the day when Seraph is released and one more trumpeter swan takes to the sky again. I know the song he’ll be singing-- “I can fly with a little help from my friends!”

Author’s Postscript: It is with great sadness that I learned the Alaska Raptor Center euthanized Seraph on March 3rd. Their vet made the decision that Seraph’s bumblefoot had reached a painful and unmanageable level. I’m grateful for their care and to all of those in Juneau who helped make his final months easier. I will always remember this very special bird.

JAS Presidents afternote:

If you find an injured bird in the Juneau area please contact JRC, a licensed wildlife rehabilitation group (907) 790-5424; check out their website on how you can support their rescue and educational work. Juneau Raptor Center. We share this story because we value the connections that people have to birds. We do not necessarily condone the feeding-and naming-of wildlife. We recognize that there are a range of perspectives on these topics; and that in most cases “keeping wildlife wild” is the best choice for all involved.
National Eagle Repository

By Brenda Wright

In spring of 2010, Juneau Audubon Society was invited to a seminar being held by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. There was a representative from the National Eagle Repository (https://www.fws.gov/eaglerepository/) asking for volunteers to collect shed bald eagle feathers.

The National Eagle Repository is in charge of distributing bald eagle feathers to native Americans who request them for traditional uses. They are allowed six feathers per request and USFWS had a three year backlog on requests. We were told that although Alaska has the majority of bald eagles in the US, we were almost last in collecting feathers and shipping to the repository. So Juneau Audubon Society purchased a collection permit and started to contribute.

Over the last ten years we have always sent at least 600 feathers and once or twice, nearly 2000! The feathers don’t have to be in excellent condition. However, although we still have a valid feather collection permit, we need a few new volunteers. Please let Brenda know if you can help by picking up bald eagle feathers and letting Juneau Audubon send them to the repository (programs@juneau-audubon-society.org).

PFD Time, Don’t forget to Pick, Click, Give

We want to thank the incredible generosity of those who thought of us when they participated in the PCG. This has turned out to be a major source of funding for Juneau Audubon Society.

Heres’ Another Way to Help: Fred Meyer Will Donate to Non-profits

Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to the Juneau Audubon Society at www.fredmeyer.com/community-rewards. Search for us by name or by our non-profit number: 90656.

Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping the JAS earn a donation! You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk.

JAS Board of Directors

Gwen Baluss President
Marsha Squires Vice President
Patty Rose Treasurer
Amy Sherwin Secretary
Kim Ramos Education
Lizzie Solger Membership
Brenda Wright Programs
Debbie Hart Newsletter
Winston Smith At-Large

JOIN THE BOARD What a great opportunity!

We have 3 vacancies at this time: Field Trips Coordinator, Conservation Chair, and At-large. We really need help! Please contact Gwen by email: president@juneau-audubon-society.org
Global Big Day (GBD) and Juneau Audubon Society’s
2021 Birdathon: Birding for a Cause!

Last May, we had a great time with our first annual JAS Birdathon! Over 50 birders around Southeast Alaska participated, tallying at least 130 species!

We plan to have this event again, coinciding with eBird’s Global Big Day. While we are not back to our normal spring bird walks, we do want everyone to go out birding for some socially distanced fun this spring. This will be a great opportunity to both enjoy the outdoors and help our organization.

It will also a fundraising opportunity and decided to share proceeds again with Southeast Alaska Food Bank.

What:
- Go birding anywhere in Southeast Alaska on Global Big Day and report your sightings via eBird
- Birders at all skill levels are invited to participate. There is no sign up sheet for birders, just make sure you have an ebird account and practice using it beforehand.
- AND/OR pledge to contribute either an amount per species seen in Southeast Alaska, or a set total amount.
- Any donation is appreciated! We will be posting a pledge sheet and accepting donations via Pay Pal. Log in and request funds to be sent to: president@juneau-audubon-society.org
- Have fun birding and/or checking out our local results.

Why: To offer hope and enjoyment through bird watching while supporting JAS and the local community members in need.

When: May 8, 2021

More about the Global Big Day:
eBird’s GBD is a worldwide event that includes bird watching and data collection. Although this is a 24-hour event, you may bird watch for as little as 10 minutes in your backyard or for up to 24 hours afield!

Check out last year’s results here: Global Big Day - eBird (https://ebird.org/globalbigday)

Safety Reminders for Birders:
Remember to keep the six-foot social distancing space, don’t share binoculars or scopes, and minimize the group size to your “bubble”.

To Find out More:
Keep checking JAS website, Facebook page and emailed updates. Further questions, please email: info@juneau-audubon-society.org
“No Action” Alert

By Gwen Baluss

This month I share a topic that continues to resurface in our board meetings, and in discussions with members. As we all know there are always processes going on for decisions that will affect the places and things we care about. JAS is considered an environmental organization, but we differ from other groups, even other Audubon groups, in some important ways. As an apolitical group with rules against lobbying, we don’t send out “action alerts” to our members or urge them to do things like contact their representatives. It’s not that we don’t care about what’s going on—quite the contrary—it’s just that there are limits to what we can do, both for legal reasons, and, for some of us, a feeling that we can be more effective avoiding contentiousness on some issues.

In brief, here’s what we do:

Let residents know if we know of planning actions in Southeast Alaska that will affect wildlife habitat, and how they can submit their own comments.

Encourage all of our community to engage with and care about nature with positive activities: monthly programs, bird walks, publications, Facebook postings, youth activities, etc.

Participate in land planning processes when invited as stakeholders or sources of expertise.

We do not:

Comment on legislation, or anything political, or tell our members to.

Taking the long view, I feel that nature education and bolstering the appreciation for our wildlife locally will form a citizenry that makes good choices for the environment. I feel that our intelligent members do not need to be told how to react.

Here’s how YOU can help:

We need help keeping abreast of things going on and making sure that our busy members are aware. There are often projects that fly under our radar, especially Alaska State and Army Corp of Engineers permits. If you have a few hours a month to research such things, and write short communications, please get in touch with us! This is especially important at this time as we do not have a dedicated Conservation Chair on the board currently.

Eurasian Wigeon, a beautiful target species for walks or the birdathon/GBD. A "regular rarity", usually a few can be found around Juneau in the spring. Photo by Ekaterina Chernetsova (Flikr Creative Commons).
Due to Covid-19, JAS annual field trips will not be in-person but instead modified to offer the weekend birder a location option and a listing of possible birds in the area (see partial details below; full spring and summer list will be posted to the JAS website). To assist you, the JAS Facebook page will be updated on Fridays to indicate what has recently been seen on the indicated site. You are encouraged to check on eBird to discover birds in other areas of Juneau as well as to post your own sightings.

**Happy birding!!!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time:</th>
<th>Activity/Location:</th>
<th>Tide Info:</th>
<th>Bird Possibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 10 and 11</td>
<td>Fish Creek Delta</td>
<td>Lo .29 @ 0712 Hi 16.03</td>
<td>American and Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, American Dipper, Yellowlegs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17 and 18</td>
<td>Airport Dike Trail and Mendenhall Wet-</td>
<td>Lo 1.10 @ 1059 Hi 12.3 @ 1722</td>
<td>Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, scaups, Bufflehead, golden-eyes, mergansers, Killdeer, Bonaparte’s Gull, Kingfisher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24 and 25</td>
<td>Outer Point Trail</td>
<td>Lo 1.27 @ 0553 Hi 15.7</td>
<td>Harlequin Duck, scoters, loons, Horned Grebe, Black Oystercatcher, Pigeon Guillemot, Marbled Murrelet, Red-breasted Sapsucker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time:</th>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Tide Info:</th>
<th>Bird Possibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 1 and 2</td>
<td>Eagle Beach State Recreation Area</td>
<td>Lo -1.85 @ 1109 Hi 14.16 @ 1750</td>
<td>Brant, Blue-winged teal, Red-necked Grebe, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Whimbrel, Dunlin, sandpipers, dowitchers, Black-legged Kittiwake, Northern Harrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8 and 9</td>
<td>Mendenhall Glacier State Recreation Area</td>
<td></td>
<td>Varied Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Wilson’s Warbler, Barn Swallow, Yellow-rumped Warbler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>JAS Bird-a-thon Day and eBirds Global Big Day</td>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in both events by posting all the birds you see on this day to ebird. For participant details, review the JAS March/April newsletter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15 and 16</td>
<td>Mouth of Mendenhall East of River</td>
<td>Lo -.5 @ 1001 Hi 13.31 @ 1631</td>
<td>Pacific-golden Plover, Red Knot, Godwits, sandpipers, Horned Lark, Violet-green Swallow, American Pipit, Lapland Longspur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>