2022 JAS Spring/Summer Field Trips and Events

Face-to-face field trips and events are back! Registration is required (see bit.ly/JAS-Eventbrite) and limited to 10 participants per guide. All guided field trips and events are free and open to the public.

For guided bird walks, please bring binoculars, layer clothing, rain gear, water, rubber boots and a bird book or phone ID app for personal bird identification purposes. Please note that trip departure times do vary.

Also, please leave your four-legged (dog) friends at home.

May 7, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. — Berners Bay Cruise: Our annual JAS fundraising event via Allen Marine Tours. Tickets are on sale through the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council (JAHC).
Spring/Summer Field Trips and Events cont.

May 14, 7 to 10 a.m. — World Migratory Bird Day Celebration: Stop by the Juneau Community Garden and observe a bird banding demonstration by Gwen Baluss, U.S. Forest Service.

May 14, all day — Global Big Day: Bird on your own and see how many species you see and/or hear in 24 hours. Remember to post on eBird!

May 21, 7 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. — Guided Bird Walk at Mendenhall State Wildlife Refuge, the EVAR Dike Trail: The first two-hour hike will be led by Patty Rose. A second hike will begin at 7:30 a.m. with Marsha Squires.

May 28, 8 to 10 a.m. — Guided Bird Hike at Eagle Beach State Recreation Picnic Area: Rubber boots recommended (this is the beach turnoff, not the cabins) Leaders will be Mark Schwan and Rob McDonald.

June 4, 8 to 10 a.m. — Guided Bird Hike at Sunny Point: This walk will be led by Brenda Wright and Southeast Alaska Land Trust partners.

June 11, 8 to 10 a.m. — Guided Bird Hike at Dredge Lakes: Park near the Mendenhall River on Back Loop Road. Leaders will be Deb Rudis and Gus van Vliet.

June 15, 7:45 to 10:45 a.m. — Low Tide Walk on Bridget Cove: The walk will be led by Brenda Wright and JAS intern Mali Tamone. Check JAS website for meeting point.

July 15, 8 to 10 a.m. — Low Tide Walk on the Rainforest Trail: The walk will be led by Brenda Wright and JAS intern Mali Tamone. Check JAS website for meeting point.

Questions? Ask Doreen Prieto, Field Trip Chair, at field-trip-coordinator@juneauaudubonsociety.org. All our field trip leaders are volunteers. JAS thanks them for their time, enthusiasm, and expertise.

World Migratory Bird Day 2022 Celebration in Juneau — By Gwen Baluss

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) celebrates one of nature’s greatest wonders — bird migration. Most events in North America will be held May 14.

Returning to a long-standing tradition, Juneau Audubon Society and U.S. Forest Service plan to host a bird banding demonstration at the Juneau Community Garden (5669 Montana Creek Road). This will allow close-up views of songbirds, and the public can learn how this technique of scientific study increases our knowledge of migratory birds. The activity has been especially popular with families and youth. It serves as a gateway to conversations about bird conservation.

Every year, the organizers for WMBD focus on a conservation theme. This year will focus on the harmful impacts of light pollution. According to the WMBD website, “Most birds migrate at night. They have been
doing this for eons, as a night sky typically means calmer air space and fewer predators. Nocturnally migrating birds include ducks and geese, plovers and sandpipers, and songbirds of all kinds. These birds may travel thousands of miles between their breeding and non-breeding grounds.

However, the night sky is under threat. Artificial light is increasing globally by at least two percent a year, presenting a problem for birds. Light pollution from homes, businesses, and other infrastructure attracts and disorients migrating birds, making them more likely to land in dangerous areas where they are more vulnerable to collisions and predation. Artificial light also impacts birds in the breeding and winter seasons, disrupting feeding and other vital behaviors.

In 2022, the impact of light pollution is the focus of World Migratory Bird Day, an annual global campaign that celebrates the migration of birds across countries and continents. Throughout the year we will spread the message to “dim the lights for birds at night” and highlight the steps that individuals, communities, and governments can take to reduce the impact of light pollution on our shared birds.”

In Southeast Alaska, light pollution effects on birdlife are not well studied. The consistent cloud cover may change some aspects of migration in comparison to other zones. Perhaps a lot of birds migrate at once when it’s clear, making them more vulnerable as large numbers could be moving on the rare clear nights? Some likely head east first, perhaps using corridors such as mainland rivers, and use a more interior flyway.

Urban areas are classically hazardous to birds. There is little urbanization in the region which could be good news for flyers. However, the literature describes the “beacon effect” showing that birds can be particularly attracted to a single very bright light that appears in an otherwise darker area. Perhaps more investigation is due to isolated structures or towers that may be lighted. Research has shown that flashing red lights are safer than other types.

Check the community calendars, the Juneau Audubon Society website, or the JAS Facebook page for event details. Participants will be able to drop in throughout the morning of May 14 at the Juneau Community Garden. There may be requirements for masks and/or distancing according to city, JAS, or USFS COVID-19 guidelines.

JAS membership — need to join or renew?

Joining or renewing membership with the National Audubon Society using an address in Southeast Alaska will include automatic JAS membership. Visit action.audubon.org/renew/membership to do so.

Or for local-only JAS membership, print or copy and mail in this section of the page with a check for at least $10 made to Juneau Audubon Society for annual dues.

Name(s): __________________________________________________
Mailing address: ____________________________________________
Email: _____________________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________________________________
Date: _____________________________________________________
Amount enclosed: ___________________________________________

Notes:
• Members receive a one-year subscription to The Raven. Please note if you can receive it electronically — saves paper and funds!
• Receive too much mail from the National Audubon Society? Ask to be taken off the mass mailing list by emailing Customer Service at audubon@emailcustomerservice.com (Opting out of extra mailings will not stop Audubon Magazine subscription.)
• JAS does not send members any offers, junk mail, or share our membership addresses with anyone.

Thanks for joining our team!
Spring 2022’s Global Big Day Is May 14
By Marsha Squires

The annual celebration of spring migration is upon us. As in years past, JAS will be celebrating World Migratory Bird Day at the Juneau Community Garden early in the morning with a bird banding demonstration (see our events calendar above for more details). But, on this same day around the world, individuals, families, and teams will be logging their bird sightings in eBird as a part of a Global Big Day event.

A Global Big Day (GBD) has been defined as any effort to identify as many bird species as possible in a single day. It can take shape as a personal challenge, an informal fun activity with the family, or a competition among serious birders. A GBD can be as simple or demanding as you would like it to be. Just 15 minutes of viewing in your backyard is fine. Or, if you prefer the hardcore, the official count time is 24-hours, midnight to midnight. You may submit multiple eBird checklists from various locations throughout the day or just one from your favorite birding location.

There are actually two Global Big Day events per year — one occurring in the spring and the other during the fall migration in October. The observations and counts during these events assist researchers in better understanding bird populations and trends. Your participation supports the scientific community, offering information from the physical world to those who study and examine long-term changes or occurrences in ecological and life-history traits of individual bird species. The contributions to scientific evidence can and may be used to influence policy or actions on a local, state, or national scale.

GBD participation has been increasing each year all over the world. With more bird enthusiasts out there, more species have been observed and tallied each year during these annual events.

Last year, in Southeast Alaska, there were over 50 birders who participated in the spring GBD, tallying over 130 species. However you choose to participate, for 15 minutes or 15 hours, JAS encourages you to spend some time outdoors, listening and viewing the birds in our area. This is not only a great opportunity to run into fellow birder enthusiasts in our community but a chance to participate in a valuable and meaningful citizen-science activity here in town which may prove to have far-reaching effects in the future.

I hope to see you out there!

Thank you to Troop 6 Boy Scouts in Juneau
By Brenda Wright

JAS has had the good fortune for the past few years in getting help from Boy Scout Troop 6 of Juneau to put up Tree Swallow nest boxes. This year, the troop helped us put up 41 nest boxes in just a few hours.

We are very lucky to have permission from Southeast Alaska Land Trust to put up boxes on their protected properties around the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge. We have found the open grassy sites to be very popular with our summer visitors the tree swallows. Last year we had 41 boxes on those lands and had 41 nests!

We very much appreciate Troop 6 bringing so many willing hands to get
so many boxes up in a short time. Although the tree swallows have not quite arrived in Juneau when the boxes go up, I have been told it is important to the birds to see nest boxes when they arrive.

We hope to have another successful breeding season again in 2022 and it’s made so much easier by help from Troop 6!

Thanks again, Brenda

Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area; Comments Now Due May 9

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Facility Improvements Project provides updates to the Visitor Center — but also analyzes developments throughout the recreation area. Those include miles of new pathways (some of them hardened surfaces potentially up to 12 feet wide), commercial use in new areas, 50-foot boats and shoreline docks, and new buildings and bridges. Facilities are under consideration in areas that are now not developed for high-volume visitation.

The DEIS found at bit.ly/MGRA-DEIS. A video describing the project proposal is available at vimeo.com/689860131.

Comments submission options include:

- Online through the project public participation portal (preferred) at: cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=53780.
- Fax to 907-586-8808
- Mail or hand-deliver to 8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, Alaska, 99801. Hand delivery is by appointment only and can only be accepted during weekday business hours, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays.

JOIN THE BOARD! What a great opportunity!

We need help! If you would like to be nominated for a position on the JAS Board of Directors, please email your name and position of interest to president@juneau-audubon-society.org.

Troop 6 putting up bird boxes at Mendenhall Peninsula. Photo: Lauren Cusimano

American Redstart, found in the Dredge Lakes Unit of the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, a favorite place for bird-watchers.
The 2022 Alaska Botany Bioblitz

By Lauren Cusimano

Need a project this summer? Alaska Native Plant Society will be hosting a Botany Bioblitz — ”a citizen science project to document as many species as possible in a designated time period and location.”

The family-friendly virtual event will take place from July 1 to 15 and is available participants statewide. Join the project at inaturalist.org/projects/alaska-botany-bioblitz. Then, you’ll upload photos and notes to iNaturalist — the “social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe” — which has both a desktop and mobile version. Pro tip: Familiarize yourself with the app or website snow!

Prizes will go to participants with the most observations, identifications, and individual species, as well as the widest geographic extent of observations and, of course, the best photo!

Questions? Email ak-botany-bioblitz-2022@aknps.org.

Tales From the First Berners Bay Cruise

The Berners Bay boat cruises, Juneau Audubon Society’s major fundraiser, are back in person this year. First, thank you all for your support! Second, we had an incredible time on the first voyage. The Allen Marine Tours vessel departed from Statter Harbor on the misty morning of April 23, but we’ll let some of our board members tell the rest.

Debbie Hart, Vice President

What a great day on the water! On Saturday, April 23, nearly 90 people once again participated in the first of two of JAS’ annual spring fundraiser trips into the magical Berners Bay. Captain Dan and the expert crew of the Allen Marine Tours’ 78-foot catamaran charted a sightseeing voyage from Auke Bay along Shelter Island, by Aaron and Benjamin islands, and into Berners Bay.

Our very own Programs Director, Brenda Wright, helped to moderate our journey and was joined by two wonderful volunteers — Ernestine Hayes and Laurie Craig. Each shared their talents of storytelling, deep knowledge of the history and ecology of Lingit Aani, and the many birds and marine life that showed themselves along our journey.
Other volunteers included Doreen Prieto, JAS Field Trips Coordinator, Betsy Fischer, JAS Treasurer, Jessica Millsaps, and Cody Millsaps. We were also joined by many fisheries and ecology experts who shared their knowledge and passion for this place. It was especially heartwarming to see so many young people on the trip as well. We saw Pigeon Guillemot, Surf Scoters, Marbled Murrelet, Red Breasted Merganser, and Bald Eagles, as well as oyster-catchers, lots of gulls, and loons.

Marine animals included seals, sea lions, and whales. The highlight of the trip was when we entered the cove at Slate Creek. There were hundreds of sea lions in there herding what seemed to be hooligan. Even a whale joined the feeding frenzy. It was an absolutely amazing sight, helping to remind us all how important this cove and surrounding Berners Bay is to marine life in northern Southeast Alaska.

Brenda Wright, Programs Director
What a fun day! We were lucky to have low winds and hardly any rain! I had my fingers crossed last week hoping the high winds would die down. Yes, they did.

As usual, Allen Marine had a wonderful captain and crew to help us enjoy the

Black Oystercatchers on Aaron Island, the Steller sea lions on Benjamin Island, and a lovely tour around Berners Bay. The Surf Scoters were concentrated around Pt. Bridget, but a whale made an appearance near Echo Cove and also in Slate inlet.

There was some fun activity with a “boiling” pod of sea lions and a humpback whale in Slate Cove. What fish were they concentrating on?

Of course, our whole trip was much enhanced by our invited guests Laurie Craig and lots of shipwreck stories. It was extra special to have Ernestine Hays increase our knowledge of traditional uses of food and stories from her life. Other volunteers included our bird expert Jessica Millsaps and board members Betsy Fischer and Debbie Hart.

We invite you to join us on the next cruise on May 7 at 8:30 a.m. Tickets are available at the JAHC and online at jahc.org. The Allen Marine Tours vessel holds 112 people and departs from Statter Harbor below DeHart’s. Boarding begins 20 minutes prior to departure.

JAS board members and special guests will be on board as natural history interpreters and moderators.