

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.fidalgo.net/~audubon/

Vol. 29 No. 5

MAY FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills

About the field trips

Beginning birders and their friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Membership in Skagit Audubon is encouraged, but not required for participation. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing, and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpool whenever possible and contribute to the driver's expense. Watch the email reminders for the latest information, including any changes and/or additions to the field trip schedule. To be added to the email distribution list contact Libby Mills: libbymills@gmail.com

If you plan to join a field trip some place other than the described starting point, call the trip leader the day before to ensure a successful rendezvous. Trip plans may change.

Saturday, May 1

Resident & Migratory Birds at Skagit Valley Restoration Sites 8:00 a.m. to Early Afternoon

Skagit Audubon volunteers monitor birds at some riparian sites which Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and other organizations have been planting. We'll visit at least two of these sites in the Skagit Valley and do counts following the established protocol and document the resident and migratory birds. Bring a lunch or snack, binoculars, bird book, and a scope if you have one. This trip will give us good practice recognizing mostly common birds by sight and sound. Meet in the parking lot of the

Field Trips continued on page 4

MAY MEETING AND PROGRAM

Mt. Baker Birding:

Foothills to Summit

By J. B. Smith

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

7:00 Social; 7:30 Program

Padilla Bay Interpretive Ctr.

10433 Bayview-Edison Rd.

Mount Vernon, Washington



Great-horned Owl Fledging
Photo by J. B. Smith

After retiring as Fire Chief in Shoreline and moving to Anacortes, J. B. has pursued hiking and photography with a passion. His interest in Audubon grew out of his love of photography and, along with mountain scenery, birds soon became another favorite subject.

Seldom without a camera, he has hiked and photographed many of the high country trails on and around Mt. Baker including two attempts to the summit of which one was successful.

Come hear the tales and see the photos collected along the way as J. B. presents an eclectic mix of bird and hiking photos. Who knows, there may even be a few exotic birds in there from his travels outside the area.

Congratulations to Skagit Audubon Society member **Phyllis Dolph** for receiving the **Yeoman Environmental Stewardship** award from Evergreen Island, a local environmental organization. Phyllis was a moving force behind the adoption by Anacortes of the **Anacortes Tree Ordinance** and she certified **over 130 yards as Backyard Wildlife Habitat.**



**SKAGIT AUDUBON
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Greater Scaup

Photo by J. B. Smith

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 1043 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA—7:00 PM Social/ 7:30 PM Program—on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. The board of directors meets at the same location at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month.

Skagit Audubon Society (SAS) membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, **The Flyer**, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. Newsletters from additional chapters can be sought by contacting their websites and membership chairs from links at www.audubon.org/states/wa/. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** please use the form below.

National Audubon Society (NAS) membership is separate from SAS membership and includes Audubon magazine. National Audubon membership does not provide Skagit Audubon membership; however, NAS will assign you an affiliation with a local chapter. To change your chapter assignment call 800-274-4201. **To join National Audubon Society** use the form below.

Skagit Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years

I wish to donate \$_____ to Skagit Audubon Society.

Name_____

Address_____

City/State_____ Zip_____

Telephone No._____ Email_____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

Skagit Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1101
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101

Please do not share my personal information with National Audubon Society. (It is the policy of SAS not to share information with any other groups.)

National Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership to the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one chapter affiliation

\$35 for two (2) year introductory membership (normally \$70)

\$15 for student or senior 62 or older) membership

Name_____

Address_____

City/State_____ Zip_____

Telephone No._____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 422246-2246
Palm Coast, FL 32142

Y21
7XCH

www.audubon.org

For members receiving a paper copy of The Skagit Flyer, the mailing label includes your membership expiration date in the upper right corner. If that date is highlighted in orange it is a reminder that your membership is about to or has expired. All other members will receive an email notice when their membership is about to expire. The Skagit Flyer is published monthly from September through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's Flyer should be sent to the editor by the third Saturday of the current month. For questions or problems about your Skagit Flyer subscription, contact membership chair: Sheila Pera, skagitmembers@gmail.com



A poll of birders would surely identify May as our favorite month. Late March through April anticipation grows as a few species, not seen since last summer, reappear. May finally arrives and anticipation is no longer intermittent, but closer to a constant state of mind; and each day we don't just hope for surprises, we expect them. Which newly arrived bird will suddenly appear right there outside the window?

Here in western Washington the seasonal movement of birds weaves a complex pattern. From late winter into early spring, many of the ones we've been watching on the water and in the fields head north - Trumpeter Swans to Alaska and western Canada, Snow Geese to the Russian Arctic's Wrangel Island. Other species move inland and upslope - Fox Sparrows heading for the mountains, Harlequin Ducks leaving the Sound for the whitewater rivers where they breed. And at the same time the great wave of returnees from the south begins, connecting this place to far off exotic spots we might briefly visit in winter and feel surprise at seeing "our" birds eating tropical fruits among strange plants. Rufous Hummingbirds returning from Mexico, Tree Swallows and Yellowthroats from Mexico and Central America, Barn Swallows from South America - all come back before May. Shorebirds, many of them long distance champions, pass through in April and May, some dashing from the far reaches of South America, just pausing here to refuel en route to the Arctic, from which some will amazingly start south again before June is out. Then in our favorite month of May, the backyard suddenly one day sports a Townsend's Warbler, a Warbling Vireo, a gaudy Western Tanager, a Swainson's Thrush just in from Peru's Andean slopes, and we again feel a bit sorry for non-birders living their dreary lives unaware of the great annual wonder of migration.

Part of the intense enjoyment bird migration brings comes from the dramatic way it reminds us of Earth's diversity of life. That's part of the fun of participating in the annual bird count done on International Migratory Bird Day, <http://www.birdday.org/>, surveying the whole county to see and hear who's returned. In recognition of the diversity of life and our own species' dependence on it, the United Nations has designated 2010 the *International Year of Biodiversity*, <http://www.cbd.int/2010/about/>.

The joy of witnessing the annual migration is not unmixed because we all know the numbers of many migrants have declined as people preempt or otherwise affect their breeding and wintering habitats and their migratory stopping and feeding spots. Habitat preservation and restoration are goals of Audubon and of other organizations the Skagit chapter supports. Living here we have a great opportunity to notice and enjoy the earth's biodiversity and seasonal cycles, and with that opportunity comes the responsibility to perpetuate what we so much enjoy every May. You can learn about some ways to make a difference for migratory birds at <http://www.fws.gov/birds/documents/LR-WaysCitizens.pdf>. Participating in the Migratory Bird Count on May 8th is a great way to get in the spirit of this special month. Contact organizer Gary Bletsch at garybletsch@yahoo.com. They're coming our way!

SKAGIT AUDUBON FIELD NOTES**By Howard Armstrong**

This column reports submitted sightings. Any rare sightings should be accompanied by detailed written documentation and if possible a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is extremely helpful. Do not hesitate to call any observer to help document unusual sightings. Also do not hesitate to call if you need clarification on locations.

Please submit your sightings to **Howard Armstrong** godwits@wavecable.com or (360)766-6657.

Snow Goose 1 "Blue" at Rawlins road on 4/6 (RM)

Tundra Swan 187 near Big Indian slough on 3/21 (GB)

Cinnamon Teal 2 at Barney Lake on 4/8 & 2 at

DeBay's Slough on 4/14 (TM)

Turkey Vulture 1 near Mt. Eire on 3/22 (TM); 1 at Lyman on 4/5 (GB)

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 at Lyman on 4/5 (GB)

American Kestrel 1 or 2 present on Cockreham Island throughout the period (GB)

Merlin 1 pair near Mount Vernon Fairgrounds on 3/20 (GB)

Greater Yellowlegs 2 at SWA on 3/21 (GB)

Black Turnstone 4 at Rosario Head on 4/3 (SAS)

Field Notes continued on page 4



Field Notes continued from page 3

Wilson's Snipe 5 at Mitigation Pond at south end of Fidalgo Bay on 4/10 (K&KK); 15-20 at Tope Ryan Conservation Area on 4/11 (JD)

California Gull 1 at Lion's Park, Mt. Vernon on 3/21 (GB)

Caspian Tern 1 at Livingston Bay on 4/13 (TM)

Northern Shrike 1 at Cockreham Island on 3/26 (GB); 1 near Allen on 4/6 (RM)

Tree Swallow 100 at SWA on 3/21 (GB)

Violet-green Swallow 20 at SWA on 3/21 (GB)

Cliff Swallow 3+ at SWA on 4/8 (TM)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 10+ feeding in Samish Island yard on 4/9 (HA)

Mountain Bluebird 10 at Cockreham Island on 3/26 & 27 (GB)



Leucistic American Robin

Photo by Joe Halton

American Robin 1 leucistic in yard at corner of Tyece Road east of Conway on 4/5 (JL)

Orange-crowned Warbler 2 singing at Samish Island yard on 4/9 (HA)

Yellow-rumped Warbler 2 singing at Samish Island yard on 4/9 (HA); 1 at DeBay's Slough on 4/11 (GB)

Common Yellowthroat 3 at Green Road Marsh & 2 at Tope Ryan Conservation Area on 4/11 (TM)

Savannah Sparrow 1 west of Hamilton on 3/27 (GB)



Western Meadowlark

Photo compliments of Bing

Western Meadowlark 2 west of Hamilton on 3/27 (GB)

Evening Grosbeak a flock heard in Lyman on 4/5 (GB); 10 at Bay View home on 4/11 (K&KK)

SWA) Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough

(HA) Howard Armstrong **(GB)** Gary Bletsch **(JD)** John Day **(K&KK)** Kraig & Kathy Kemper **(JL)** Jim Lapp **(TM)** Tim Manns **(RM)** Ryan Merrill **(SAS)** Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip

Field Trips continued from page 1

National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20, just before Highway 9 North) at 8:00 a.m. to arrange carpools. The grass may be damp, so bring rain pants and boots you don't mind getting wet. Leaders: Tim Manns, 360-336-8753 or bctm@fidalgo.net & Alice Turner, alict2@msn.com

**Saturday, May 8
North American Migration Count**

The Migration Count is much like a Christmas Bird Count, only without the chilblains! Please contact Gary Bletsch, garybletsch@yahoo.com, if you would like to participate in this year's count, which covers all of Skagit County.

**Saturday or Sunday, May 15 or 16
To be announced**

We are trying to get a leader and trip arranged for this weekend. It will be announced in the Field Trip reminder mail to anyone on the list. Get on the list by sending your email to libbymills@gmail.com. If you haven't seen a reminder in

awhile, your email listed may be invalid. Please correct it by contacting Libby.

**Saturday, May 22
Wiley Slough
7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Join Howard Armstrong and other listeners to hone your skill at learning new bird songs. Meet at the headquarters parking lot at 7 a.m. and plan to bird up to about 4-5 hours. We'll be looking & listening for migrants, which will be singing and flashing their breeding plumage around the shrubs and trees, ponds, and puddles of the somewhat redesigned trails of Wiley Slough in the Skagit Wildlife Area. **Remember, you need a new parking permit.** If you had an old permit, it needs to be renewed as of April 1, 2010.

Leader: Howard Armstrong, godwits@wavecable.com

Samish Island Bird Walks with Howard Armstrong

As weather and time permit, Howard Armstrong leads bird walks on Samish Island for beginners and experts alike. To be contacted when these walks are scheduled, send a message to Howard, godwits@wavecable.com, asking to be added to his e-mail notification list.



Memorial Day Weekend: Wenas Creek Audubon Campout

For decades Audubon families have been camping over Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Campground. See www.wenasaudubon.org. This "Important Bird Area" (IBA), officially named the Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary, is located southwest of Ellensburg. It is a free, "primitive" campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek. It provides exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing, and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades. There are wonderful field trips scheduled, and there will be an old-fashioned campfire in our "approved" fire pit device each evening. There will be a program item or two, singing, story telling, and recapping the sightings of the day. On the website there are checklists of birds, and wildflowers. Bring friends and family for as many days and/or nights as you want to stay, May 28 - 31, 2010. See you there!

SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING MAY 2010

By Joan Melcher

Hikes in May will take us from the North Cascades National Park to the shores of Puget Sound. As usual, weather, logging, construction, or other unexpected conditions might cause changes or cancellations in the following hikes. Call JOAN MELCHER 360-424-0407 or email at jdmelcher@comcast.net for information on or questions about the following. All the hikes are on Wednesdays. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5 THUNDER CREEK

Hike up to 12 miles round trip and up to 1,000 ft. total elevation gain on one of the best forest hikes in the North Cascades. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. Return time is 3:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12 WASHINGTON PARK, HEART LAKE & LAKE ERIE

Terry Slotemaker, 360-293-6514, will lead us on these two hikes scheduled in the spring to take advantage of wild flowers in bloom. Meet at 9 a.m. in **LOT A** at Washington Park in Anacortes. To get to Lot A, turn right just at the park entrance. The sign says "Picnic Area" with an arrow pointing to the right. A child's play area is close to this large parking lot. When you return to your car, you may leave for the Heart Lake hike. To get to Heart Lake, drive toward Anacortes from Washington Park. Turn right on D Avenue. Then turn left onto 32nd Street. Then turn right on H Avenue which will lead you to the Heart Lake Road and the parking lot.

MONDAY, MAY 17 ADOPT-A-TRAIL

The trail work will be done with Dan Rogers (Ed Roger's son) in the Okanogan National Forest. We will do the annual maintenance on the Canyon and Ruby Creek trails south of Ross Dam. Wear old clothes, have gloves, a lunch, and fluids to drink. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19 EBEBY'S LANDING & THE KETTLES AT FORT EBEBY STATE PARK

Today's hike will be done in two sections. Each car of hikers will be its own group, so plan on riding with others who will do the same hikes you do. The first hike will be a 3.6 mile loop hike up the bluff, down to the beach, and back to the cars. Low tide of -1 feet about 2:30 p.m. The next hike will be a self-guided hike on the Kettles trails near Fort Ebey State Park. Miles hiked here depend on the individual. There should be wild rhododendrons in bloom. Meet at 9 a.m. at the March Point Park-n-Ride. (At the stop light at the intersection of HWY 20 and the Christianson and March Point Roads, turn RIGHT and then an immediate RIGHT turn onto the frontage road and soon turn LEFT into the Park-n-Ride.) **OR** meet at Ebey's Landing at 9:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26 ROSS DAM TO DIABLO DAM

Hike about 7 miles one way along the north side of Diablo Lake between Ross Dam and the community of Diablo. One can hike mostly downhill from Ross to Diablo, 900 ft. elevation gain; 2,200 ft. elevation loss or one can hike mostly uphill from Diablo to Ross, 2,200 ft. elevation gain; 900 ft. elevation loss. Drivers will exchange keys. There should be wild flowers. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. Return to Diablo trailhead by 2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2 ORCAS ISLAND

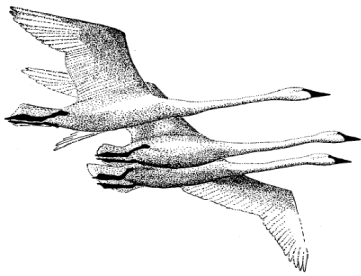
This hike is 8 or more miles and up to 1,600 ft. elevation gain. Several hike options will be available in Moran State Park. Return on the 5:10 p.m. ferry or the 7:30 p.m. ferry, if you wish to have dinner in Eastsound. Meet at 9 a.m. at the March Point Park-n-Ride. (At the stop light at the intersection of HWY 20 and the Christianson and March Point Roads, turn RIGHT and then an immediate RIGHT turn onto the frontage road and soon turn LEFT into the Park-n-Ride.) We will take the 10:35 a.m. sailing from Anacortes to Orcas Island. No ferry walk-ons as we will need cars on the island. Ferry fare is required.

Grays' Harbor Annual Shorebird Festival: Friday, April 30 to Sunday, May 2, 2010

Activities center around [Hoquiam](#) and Bowerman Basin for bird viewing on incoming tides. Field trips, family activities, and Friday a keynote talk by Craig Lee, who works on international projects for Audubon. See: http://www.shorebirdfestiva.com/fest_schedule10.htm



SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1101
MOUNT VERNON WA 98273



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check your
address label
for membership
expiration date!

May 2010 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
April 25	April 26	April 27	April 28 Hiking: North Chuckanut Mountain	April 29	April 30 Bird Festival: Gray's Harbor Shorebird Festival – May 2	1 Field Trip: Skagit Valley Restoration Sites
2 Bird Festival: Gray's Harbor Shorebird Festival – April 30-May 2	3	4 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	5 Hiking: Thunder Creek	6	7	8 Field Trip: North American Migration Count
9	10	11 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	12 Hiking: Washington Park, Heart Lake, & Lake Erie	13	14	15 Deadline SAS June Flyer
16	17 Trail Work: Adopt-A- Trail	18	19 Hiking: Ebey's Landing & the Kettles at Fort Ebey State Park	20	21	22 Field Trip: Wiley Slough
23	24	25	26 Hiking: Ross Dam to Diablo Dam	27	28 Wenas Creek Camp-Out	29 Wenas Creek Camp-Out
30 Wenas Creek Camp-Out	31 Wenas Creek Camp-Out	June 1 SAS Brd Meeting: 7:00 PM	June 2 Hiking: Orcas Island	June 3	June 4	June 5

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.fidalgo.net/~audubon/

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