

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society

A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Vol. 31 No. 4

APRIL FIELD TRIPS By Libby Mills

The Discover Pass

Field trip attendees and all other Washington recreationists need to inform themselves about the new **Discover Pass**, issued by the state for parking on State Lands including State Parks, (Deception Pass, Bay View, Larrabee, Birch Bay) Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife lands like the Skagit Wildlife Area and the West 90, as well as Dept. of Natural Resources lands. (Chuckanuts, Blanchard Mountain).

http://discoverpass.wa.gov/

The passes are issued specifically to a single car and can be purchased for a single day (\$10) or as an annual pass (\$30 -\$35) good for 365 days from day of issue. The new pass has become an essential fee in funding our State Parks for our day use, as well as other state lands. Please remember when you share a ride that sharing in the parking fee and gas costs are always welcome donations to the driver.

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 late changes and/or additions to the field

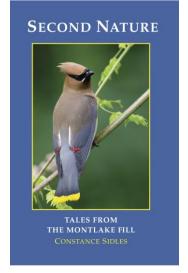
Field Trips continued on page 5

APRIL MEETING AND PROGRAM

Tales from the Montlake Fill!

(Book reading and signing)
By Constance Sídles

Tuesday, April 10, 2012 7:00 Social; 7:30 Program Padilla Bay Interpretive Center 10441 Bayview-Edison Road Mount Vernon, Washington



Cedar Waxwing Photo by Tim Kuhn

Constance Sidles reads from her new book,

Second Nature: Tales from the Montlake Fill.

The fill, as birders call it, is a premier birding spot yet lies in the heart of Seattle on the University of Washington campus. Formerly a landfill, now it is an oasis of nature, offering prairie, ponds, and woods for birds and other wild creatures.

Connie's book, however, is more than a series of essays about birds. She uses her experience as a master birder to make observations at the Fill giving ideas on how to live a simpler, happier life. Connie encourages all of us to build a stronger sense of community, find peace in urban nature, and develop a love of place that increases joy.

Her book is for everyone who loves nature but is also for those of us who seek peace of mind and inspiration. As Connie says, "We are becoming more and more aware that we must develop a sustainable way to live on Planet Earth. Finding fun, challenge, and meaning in the nature near at hand is one small step in that direction."

Connie Sidles is a master birder and board member of Seattle Audubon Society. She is also a nature writer and has authored a previous book about the Montlake Fill, *In My Nature*.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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American Coot Photo by Joe Halton

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.

Skaqit 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, <i>The Skagit Flyer</i> , available on our website . 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/StateZip						
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.)						

Using the form below to initially join the National Audubon Society will ensure that the

Skagit Addubon chapter	receives a cost share to support local pro	grams.
National Audubon Society	lembership Form	
Annual membership to the Na Membership includes all mem	ational Audubon Society includes a subscription abers of your household.	n to <i>Audubon</i> magazine.
\$20 for one-year introductory	membership with one chapter affiliation	
Name		
Address		
City/State	Zip	
Telephone No		
Clip form/Mail to/Payable to	:	
National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Data Ce	enter Y21	

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 Skaqit Flver is published monthly from September through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's Flyer should be sent to the editorby 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



Palm Coast, FL 32142 www.audubon.org

PRESIDENT'S APRIL MESSAGE:

By Tim Manns

I wasn't expecting the question asked on a tour I led this February across Fir Island. On that gray and rainy day, cheerful seniors from Merrill Gardens in Woodinville, all quite advanced in age, were audibly delighted to see Trumpeter Swans, Bald Eagles, and great hordes of Snow Geese. Just as we finished, a gentleman in the front row asked: "What is it that constitutes success for a bird watcher?" I think I said something about the variety of possible answers, but I've considered his question off and on again since. For me, what I've come to value most about birding, among the many things, is what it does for memory, and for me as a birder success is associated somehow with that.

I don't mean memory of names, field marks, and songs, the kinds of things essential to birding. I mean recollecting places, events, and people. The name or just the thought of many species summons up places, times, and friends as vividly as any photograph or journal entry. As if it were not near 40 years ago but today, I see 8 Lewis's Woodpeckers flying among ponderosa pines near Grandview on Grand Canyon's South Rim, a new bird for me that long ago day. Further past yet, a Worm-eating Warbler, also my first, scuffled among leaves by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Tomb in Mount Auburn Cemetery, famed birding hotspot in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I can see that warbler and conjure the moment. I remember a summer evening about 1980 looking down from a high bluff to the Yellowstone River in the great national park, catching first glimpses of magnificent Harlequin Ducks diving in rapids for their dinner.

Vividly remembered sightings needn't be firsts or particularly rare or old. The formula for such memories mysteriously combines bird, place, people, and other elements harder to name. Betsy and Jim Walker, Brenda and I, sat picnicking last April in Madera Canyon, Arizona, speculating about sighting the Hepatic Tanager rumored to be about (immediate picture in my mind's eye of the only one I'd ever seen and the 1970's day it happened in the San Francisco peaks en route to grocery buying in Flagstaff). And in a moment that day last April the Hepatic Tanager appeared in the tree immediately above us. Forevermore, whenever I think "Hepatic Tanager," the day will return.

For those who watch and listen, birds can indelibly connect places, events, and friends. I think the connection's strength derives from the way birds put us back in touch with the natural and wild world, a world actually ever present. Some of my most vivid and valued memories are of sightings in my successive backyards. Jonathan Rosen writes in *The Life of the Skies: Birding at the End of Nature*, "(Birding) isn't a hobby, any more than I would call raising my daughters a hobby ... It's a natural, inevitable part of my engagement with the world." What constitutes success for a birder can be quite a profound question. Thank-you to the gentleman from Woodinville for raising it.

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE WENAS CAMPOUT, May 25-28, 2012

For four decades Audubon families have spent Memorial Day weekend at the Wenas Creek Campground. Named the Hazel Wolf Wenas Creek Bird Sanctuary, it's located SW of Ellensburg, in an "Important Bird Area" and has been assured protective status by the Washington Dept. of Natural Resources. The "primitive" campground along the north fork of Wenas Creek has exceptional opportunities for birding, botanizing and enjoying spring in the eastern foothills of the Cascades. Wonderful field trips are scheduled, and there will be an old-fashioned campfire in our "approved" firepit device each evening. We do story telling and recapping the sightings of the day.

Visit WebmasterMichael Hobbs' beautiful **Wenas Website**, <u>www.wenasaudubon.org</u>, to see lots of downloadable information. There are bird & wildflower checklists, field trip & program descriptions, and more.

Every vehicle will be required to have a "Discover Pass."

Doris Johnson, dellenj@comcast.net; Helen Engle, hengle@iinet.com



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 for the April Flyer to: Pam Pritzl, ppritzl@frontier.com or 360-387-7024.

WATERFOWL

Tundra Swan 300 in Dodge Valley on 3-10-12 (GB) **Wood Duck** 1 pair each at Mud Lake and Clear Lake on 3-3-12 (GB)

Canvasback 12 on Beaver Lake on 3-3-12 (GB) Long-tailed Duck 1 near Seafarer's Park, Anacortes on 3-1-12 (TM)

Ruddy Duck 25 on Big Lake on 3-3-12 (GB)

GREBES

Western Grebe 75 seen from parking lot at Coronet Bay on 2-19-12 (P&ID)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 1 flying over Anacortes on 3-13-12 (BK)

RAPTORS

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 at Beaver Lake on 3-3-12 (GB) **Gyrfalcon** 1 at Samish Island on 2-19-12 (GB)

SHOREBIRDS

Greater Yellowlegs 10 at the Skagit Game Range on 3-10-12 (GB)

Black Turnstone 10 at Seafarer's Park, Anacortes on 3-1-12 (TM)

Wilson's Snipe 1 at Northern State Recreation Area on 2-6-12 (TM)

GULLS

California Gull 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 3-3-12 (GB)

American Herring Gull 1 on Fir Island on 3-10-12 (GB)

Western Gull 1 in Burlington on 3-10-12 (GB) Glaucous Gull 1 in Burlington on 2-18-12 and 3-10-12 (GB); 1 on Butler Flats on 3-10-12 (GB)

OWLS

Snowy Owl 1 seen from Thomle Rd, Stanwood on 3-13-12 (PP) Snowy Owl *Photo by Joe Halton*



HUMMINGBIRDS

Rufous Hummingbird 1 male at feeder on Camano Island on 3-9-12 (PP)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 adult on Martin Road on 3-4-12 (GB); 1 immature at Corkindale on 3-4-12 (GB)



Northern Shrike Photo by Joe Halton

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Hillcrest Park, Mount Vernon on 3-8-12 (TM)

SWALLOWS

Tree Swallow 4 at Big Ditch on 3-13-12 (PP)

THRUSHES

Western Bluebird 1 adult male at Corkindale on 3-10-12 (GB)

Mountain Bluebird 3 at Corkindale on 3-8-12 (RM) **Townsend's Solitaire** 1 T Iron Mountain Ranch on 2-27-12 (TM); 1 at Corkindale on 3-11-12 (GB)

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 at feeder in Anacortes throughout period (P&ID)

Yellow-rumped Warbler 1 "Audubon's" in Lyman on 3-10-12 (GB)

Townsend's Warbler 1 at feeder in Mount Vernon throughout period (JW)

SPARROWS

Lincoln's Sparrow 1 at Eide Rd (Leque Island) on 2-2-7-12 (PP)

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

Brown-headed Cowbird 25 on Butler Flats on 2-18-12 (GB)

FINCHES, WEAVER FINCH

Common Redpoll 2 on Samish Flats on 3-10-12 (SAS) **Hoary Redpoll** 3 (possible) at Anacortes feeder on 2-22-12 (JB)

Evening Grosbeak 6 at Camano Island feeder on 2-23-12 (R&SP); 13 at Camano Island feeder on 3-4-12 (PP)

(JB) Jackie Boss; (P&ID) Phyllis & Ivar Dolph; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (JH) Joe Halton; (BK) Barbara Kiver; (TM) Tim Manns; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (R&SP) Ron & Sheila Pera; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society field trip; (JW) Joanna Wilkens.

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, March 3
Deception Pass State Park and Nearby Areas
10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Parking permit needed: Discovery Pass

March is the last big month to see the diversity of Salish Sea wintering bird species. Red-throated Loons feed near West Beach while Pacific Wrens will sing from the forest sword ferns. There is a lot of great potential on this birding trip and you will learn some nice areas to further explore if you are new to the area. Beginners are always welcome.

Meet at the March Point Park and Ride near the refineries off S. March Point Rd.

Leader: Ivar Dolph, pidolph@frontier.com

Saturday, March 10 Skagit Flats 8:30 a.m. to Early Afternoon Parking permit needed: Discovery Pass

Rescheduled from the January snows, this is a mostly drive-and-bird field trip across the bird-rich Skagit Flats. Though justly famous for its raptors, the flats also provide numerous opportunities to spot shorebirds, ducks, and songbirds. Bring a lunch if you plan to continue birding into the afternoon. Meet in the parking lot of Snow Goose Produce (it's closed in winter) to arrange carpools. This is on Fir Island Road, just south of the North Fork bridge of the Skagit, also just south of where Rawlins Rd. meets Fir Island Rd.

libbymills@gmail.com

Leader: Libby Mills, cell 360-708-6975,

Friday, March 16 "Envisioning a Restored Estuary" Stanwood & Port Susan Bay Preserve 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Julie Morse, ecologist with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Mount Vernon, will present a program for Skagit and Pilchuck Audubon about TNC's plans for restoring the estuary at the preserve. Following the program and light refreshments we will carpool to the preserve for an 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. birding field trip on the dike. Dress warmly – it can be breezy there. Bring lunch if you like. Meet at the Stanwood-Camano School District, #401 Administration and Resources Center, 26290 Pioneer Highway, Stanwood, WA, 98292. Leader: Julie Morse (jmorse@TNC.org)

Sunday, March 25 Birding Aboard the *Lightkeeper*

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Expert Skagit Audubon birder, **Gary Bletsch**, will help us find and learn about seabirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and possibly other wildlife up close and personal in their natural habitat. The *Lightkeeper* will leave Skyline Marina in Anacortes bound for Williamson's Rocks and other points either side of Rosario Strait. We'll depart at 9:00 a.m. sharp. Please arrive by 8:45 a.m. We'll return between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. Dress warmly and bring a lunch or snack and something to drink. Cost is \$45.00 per person. Reservations are required.

Phone or email Tim Manns: 360-336-8753 or **bctm@fidalgo.net**

Confirm your place by sending a check to "Skagit Audubon" no later than March 13, the date of the Audubon monthly meeting. There is a limit of 33 participants.

This trip will serve as a small fundraiser for Skagit Audubon and for the Northwest Schooner Society's project of preserving Burrows Island Light Station. Learn more about the **Northwest Schooner Society** at:

www.nwschooner.org/lighthouse.htm

Native Plant Sale on April 28, 2012

The Washington Native Plant Society's Salal Chapter is holding its 13th annual spring sale
Saturday, April 28, 2012 from **10 a. m. to noon** at the Native Plant Garden area of the Skagit Display Gardens located at Washington State University-North West Research and Extension Center

(16650 State Highway 536) in Mount Vernon, WA.

Expect to find a good selection of native trees, shrubs, bulbs, perennials, ground covers and ferns. NO PRESALE. For more information on the sale, check the Plant Sale link on www.wnps.org or contact Pam Pritzl at (360) 387-7024.



SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING APRIL

By Joan Melcher

April's hikes will range from Puget Sound to the foothills of the Cascades. Unexpected circumstances such as unforeseen trail problems, weather, logging, construction or road conditions may cause cancellations or changes in the following hikes. If you have questions or want information on any of the hikes, call JOAN MELCHER, 360-424-0407, or email at jdmelcher@comcast.net. All the hikes are on a WEDNESDAY. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

APRIL 4 PINE AND CEDAR LAKES AND RAPTOR RIDGE

Hike to two very pleasant lakes in the Chuckanut Mountain area. There are up to 9.6 miles one way with shuttle cars to return on. 1,900 ft. is the total elevation gain. The 1.7 mile uphill route from the Pine/Cedar Trailhead is steep. The 4.0 mile down-hill route via the new Raptor Ridge Trail down to the Lost Lake Trail and then on down to the North Chuckanut parking lot is less steep and will lead to Arroyo Park, the Interurban Trail, and finally the North Chuckanut parking lot. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the North Chuckanut parking lot located off Chuckanut Drive just north of California Street at about milepost 18.5. The return time is 2:30 p.m. to the North Chuckanut lot if the weather is poor; 3:00 p.m. is the return if the weather is sunny. Drivers will be shuttled back to their cars.

APRIL 11 CHUCKANUT RIDGE

Hike the ridge of Chuckanut Mountain beginning at the upper end of Cleator Road. There are many ups and downs with a total gain of 800 feet and a total loss of 2,500 feet.

<u>OPTION1:</u> Hike the ridge, then down to and around Fragrance Lake, and then down to the Clayton Beach parking lot via the Fragrance Lake Trail. It is 9.6 miles one way. There are shuttle cars. **Meet at 8:30 a.m.** at the Clayton Beach Parking lot at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. A Washington state **Discover Pass** is required to park at Clayton Beach and at the end of Cleator Road. **Return time is 2:30 p.m.** Drivers will be needed to shuttle drivers back to the end of Cleator Road after the hike.

<u>OPTION 2:</u> Hike the ridge coming out at the North Chuckanut Parking lot. It is 6.0 miles with shuttle cars. **Meet at 9:00 a.m.** at the North Chuckanut Parking lot located on the east side of Chuckanut Drive between the Old Samish Highway and California Street. This is about milepost 18.5. **Return time is 1:30 p.m.**

A Washington state **Discover Pass** is required to park at the end of Cleator Road. Drivers will be needed to shuttle drivers back to the end of Cleator Road after the hike.

APRIL 18 WALLACE FALLS

This is a hike through forest and near spectacular waterfalls north of Gold Bar along the Stevens Pass Highway. A Washington state **Discover Pass** is required to park at Wallace Falls State Park. **Meet at 8 a.m.** in the southeast corner of the Mount Vernon Safeway parking lot. Seattle, Snohomish County, and Camano Island hikers can go directly to the trailhead. Car pool according to the option below, depending on which option you plan to do.

OPTION 1: This is an up to 7 mile loop with a 1,400 ft. elevation gain to the top falls. **Return time is 2 p.m.**

OPTION 2: This is a 9.8 mile to 14 mile loop with a 1,800 ft. elevation gain to Wallace Lake. **Return time is 3:30 p.m.**

APRIL 25 OYSTER DOME

Hike to the Oyster Dome on Blanchard Mountain.

<u>OPTION 1</u>: Begin and end at the Pacific Northwest Trail's trail head on Chuckanut Drive near mile post 10. This hike has 9.1 miles with a 2,000 ft elevation gain. **Meet at 9 a.m. at this location near mile post 10.** The hike organizer will email a map and instructions for beginning and ending the hike. **Return time is 2:30 p.m.** at the trail head.

OPTION 2: Begin and end the hike at the Samish Overlook. A Washington state **Discover Pass** is required at this location. The hike is 6.0 to 7.4 miles with a 900 ft. elevation gain. **Return time is 2:00 p.m.** at the trail head. There are opportunities for side trips to North Butte, Lily Lake, and Lizard Lake. **Meet at 8:30 a.m.** at the Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride, which is off of exit 231 from I-5. It is on the east side of I-5.

MAY 2 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's parking lot. **Return time is 3:30 p.m.**



Southern Cross Peregrine Project

Tracking a peregrine falcon between the Arctic and Chile: A project of the <u>Falcon Research Group</u>

Pictures & text from the Falcon Research Group Blog by Bud Anderson: http://frgroup.frg.org/

"Island Girl" Begins Her Third GPS Migration South

20 Sept. 2011 After spending her summer on Baffin Island, "Island Girl" has started her southbound migration towards Chile.

This will be her third trip south wearing a backpack GPS satellite transmitter. She was originally captured and tagged by Kathy Gunther and Bud Anderson at the Putu dune field of southern Chile on 15 March 2009. She also went through the 2010 earthquake with us in Chile.

She appears to have a really precise internal clock as she has departed Baffin on either the 20th or 21st of September each time, a rough departure period of about 24 hours, and very near the fall equinox (September 23).

01 Oct. 2011: So "Island Girl" is making her way out over the Gulf right now. Sounds like the weather could be much better. Headwinds that strong (15-20 knots) are very difficult to overcome.

03 Oct. 2011: Frankly, I am relieved to report that "Island Girl" is definitely heading for the Texas coast. She is very likely flying south towards Padre Island as I write this blog. "Island Girl" continued to follow the coast south to Brownsville and crossed into Mexico there. She looks to have flown over Matamoros, Mexico.

13 Oct. 2011: On her 24th day of migration this fall, "Island Girl" flew about 90 miles (145 km) across Honduras. An interesting aspect of her behavior is the variation in her route. It is different from her previous 2 fall migrations.

30 Oct. 2011: She roosted at 5,200 feet in elevation (1,505 meters) on the lower slopes of an active Andean stratovolcano, Volcan Galero (14,028 feet). This is the most active volcano in Colombia, having erupted just last year.

"Island Girl" Returns Home-Safely Completes her Third GPS Migration

12 Nov. 2011: So after 53 days of migration, crossing through twelve countries (Canada, US, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama,



April 2012 7

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



April 2012 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Board Meeting: 7:00	4 Hike: Pine & Cedar Lakes & Raptor Ridge	5	6	7
8	9	10 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	11 Hike: Chuckanut Ridge	12	13	14 Field Trip Montlake Fill
15	16	17	18 Hike: Wallace Falls	19	20 Field Trip:	21 Deadline SAS May Flyer
22	23	24	25 Hike: Oyster Dome	26	27	28 Field Trip Skagit Wildlife Management Area
29:	30	May 1 Board Meeting: 7:00	May 2 Hike: Thunder Creek	May 3	May 4	May 5

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org

The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper

