

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 31 No. 9

NOVEMBER 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, November 3
Washington Park, Anacortes
8:30 a.m. to noon**

Here's a good place to see Harlequin Ducks, Black Oystercatchers, Red-necked Grebes, Surf Scoters, Pacific Wrens, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and many other birds both on the water and in the trees. The scenery's great too, with forest cover as well as big water and coastal views. Beginning birders are encouraged to come! We'll walk the loop road (2.2 miles) and perhaps a short trail or two, stopping often for birding. Please bring binoculars (and a spotting scope if you have one and don't mind carrying it.) Meet at the parking lot at the beginning of the loop drive, on your right by the speed bump, in

Field Trips continued on page 5

NOVEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

Birds, Yard Habitat, & Beyond

By Craig Johnson & Joy Johnson

Tuesday, November 13, 2012
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10433 Bayview-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, Washing



Craig Johnson & Joy Johnson

Take a virtual tour of Craig and Joy Johnson's yard and beyond. Using Craig's photographs and videos, this visually packed presentation will illustrate the importance of wildlife habitat—even that of one small yard in a developed neighborhood. The Johnsons will also offer some simple suggestions to increase bird activity in your yard.

Local watercolor artist and photographer, Craig Johnson, and Joy Johnson, writer, have created and published four books containing colorful, close-up photographs of birds (most found in the Puget Sound area). Their latest book is titled *Our Pacific Northwest Birds & Habitat*, 2011. In 2010 they published a children's book, *The Amazing Hummingbird Story of Red Rufous*, based on a Rufous hummingbird nest they monitored for 31 days. Craig illustrated this book in watercolor.

Together, the Johnsons study ornithology and have spent countless hours observing and photographing birds in the field. They put together presentations using Craig's photos, graphics and video to share their passion for birds and inspire others to protect birds and wildlife habitat.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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bctm@fidalgo.net
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Conservation: Tim Manns
bctm@fidalgo.net
360-336-8753

Education: Jean Ashby & Sheila Pera
jeanash66@gmail.com

Field Trips: Libby Mills
libbymills@gmail.com
360-757-4139

Hikes: Joan Melcher
jdmelcher@comcast.net
360-424-0407

Bird Sightings: Pam Pritzl
ppritzl@frontier.com
360-387-7024

Membership: Sheila Pera
skagitmembers@gmail.com

Program Chair: Alice Turner
alacet2@msn.com

Publications: Jackie Boss
jackieaboss@yahoo.com
360-299-8067

Newsletter Distributor: Barbara Craner
craner2@frontier.com
360-445-3118

REPRESENTATIVES

Bob Barry
dabarrybest@frontier.com

Ivar Dolph
pidolph@frontier.com

Jack Middleton
herongate@frontier.com

Irene Perry
irene.perry@yahoo.com

Hospitality: VACANT

Webmaster: Julie Bishop
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Common Loon "Winter Fishing"

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.

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*, 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/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.)

Using the form below to initially join the **National Audubon Society** will ensure that the **Skagit Audubon** chapter receives a cost share to support local programs.

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center Y21
P.O. Box 422246-2246
Palm Coast, FL 32142

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



In last December's *Flyer* I described the strategic plan which National Audubon was writing to give a common sense of purpose and direction to the state offices, education centers, and chapters all across the U.S. The plan was finished some months ago and makes quite interesting reading. You can find it at www.audubon.org/audubons-strategic-plan. On October 6th, Poulsbo was the site for ACOW, or Audubon Council of Washington, the annual meeting of Audubon chapters, Washington Audubon board members, and the few National Audubon employees in the state. We heard David Yarnold, National Audubon's President, talk about the new plan and how it's working to both attract financial support and to focus Audubon's conservation efforts. If you've signed up for National Audubon's e-mail action alerts, you know that Yarnold takes quite a straightforward approach to leveraging the Audubon Society's grassroots strength. With almost 500 chapters, a quarter of a million members plus 2 million readers of *Audubon* magazine, National Audubon is in a position to make a real difference on big issues. Yarnold highlighted 3 recent wins in which Audubon played or is playing a key role:

- New wind energy siting guidelines adopted by the Interior Department to provide protection for birds and bats.
- The management plan proposed by the Interior Department for National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska (NPPRA) which adopts 96% of Audubon's recommendations for protecting important habitat for birds and other wildlife.
- The effective policy and grassroots campaign that is ensuring 80% of BP's fines for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will fund habitat restoration in the 5 states most affected.

The working part of the October 6th meeting focused on concluding the latest round of attempts to begin rebuilding a statewide organization for Audubon. The Skagit Audubon board had advanced an alternative approach to the one developed by the statewide working group. Though our proposal was not adopted, it did influence what eventually was approved by the great majority of those present. When sufficient funds have been gathered (half to be contributed by the chapters) a part-time Chapter Associate will be hired to provide a variety of types of assistance to chapters. The strongest focus is to be on conservation, both projects on-the-ground and mobilizing the members for issues advocacy at the state level. Other provisions of the new agreement include having a voting representative from each of the state's 5 regions serve on the Washington Audubon Board, which is an entity of National Audubon. Our region (NW1) is among several still needing to recruit a representative. I'm happy to speak with any Skagit member interested in serving in this capacity.

I'd like to note here that Kitsap Audubon did a very fine job hosting the October 6th meeting. We met in the new city council chambers and were warmly greeted by Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson. On Friday evening we learned more about the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project, which involves a long list of organizations working furiously to protect almost 7,000 acres of timberland otherwise destined for suburban sprawl. Your Skagit Chapter board has voted unanimously to add our group's name to those supporting this important conservation project.

The Salal Native Plant Garden

Maintaining native plants around your home is a great way to provide habitat for birds. Right here in Skagit County we have a great way to learn about using native plants in gardening and landscaping. Built by volunteers from the Salal Chapter of the WA Native Plant Society, the Salal Native Plant Garden is located behind the Master Gardener Display Garden at the NW Research Center on Memorial Drive, west of Mount Vernon. Right now, the native plant garden is being extensively renovated, which gives us all an opportunity to get involved and learn about native plants while donating a little time and labor. Volunteers take away a potted plant of their choice! **There are two volunteer opportunities scheduled for this month:**

Saturday, November 10 – planting sedges, irises, and more.

Tuesday, November 20 – more planting and preparing the nursery for winter.

For more information, contact Brenda Cunningham nativegarden@fidalgo.net



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 **Pam Pritzl**
ppritzl@frontier.com or **360-387-7024**.

WATERFOWL

Snow Goose flock in north Stanwood farm field on 10-15 (SP)
Cackling Goose 10 on Butler Flats on 10-14 (GB)
Lesser Scaup 11 on Lake Erie on 10-13 (GB)
Harlequin Duck 4 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (GB)
Surf Scoter dozens at March Point on 10-18 (JA)
Bufflehead 1 on Samish Flats on 9-22 (GB)
Common Merganser 7 at March Point on 10-18 (JA)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Sooty Grouse 2 at Cascade Pass trailhead and 2 higher on the trail on 9-20 (JB)

LOONS, GREBES

Common Loon 8 at March Point on 10-18 (JA)

RAPTORS



Osprey 1 near Swinomish casino on 10-18 (JA)

Osprey
Photo by Joe Halton

Northern Harrier 1 at Skyline Divide on 10-10 (RH)

BROAD-WINGED HAWK 1 dark morph at Corkindale on 9-26, light morph on 10-1 (RM)

SHOREBIRDS

Yellowlegs species 3 on KBRC radio station pond on 10-18 (JA)
Pectoral Sandpiper 77 at Jensen Access on 9-6 (RM)
Stilt Sandpiper 1 at Skagit Game Range on 9-14 (RM); 1 at Skagit Game Range on 9-16 (GB)
Ruff 1 on Samish Island on 9-20 (RM); 1 on Samish Flats on 9-22 (GB)
Wilson's Snipe 1 on KBRC radio station pond on 10-18 (JA)

JAEGERS, GULLS

Heermann's Gull 25 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (GB)

DOVES, PIGEONS

Eurasian Collared-Dove 6 regularly seen in Anacortes yard (RP)

OWLS

BOREAL OWL 1 north of Rainy Pass on 9-25 (RM); 1 below Cutthroat Pass on 9-29 (GB)
Barred Owl 1 at Skagit Game Range on 10-3 (MC & SC); 2 between Rainy and Cutthroat Passes on 10-6

(GB)

Long-eared Owl 1 below Cutthroat Pass on 9-29 (GB); 1 at Illabot Creek on 10-2 (RM)

Northern Saw-whet Owl 4 below Cutthroat Pass on 9-29 (GB)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Anna's Hummingbird 2 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Lewis's Woodpecker 1 just west of Marblemount on 9-15 (GB)

FLYCATCHERS

Olive-sided Flycatcher 1 at Marblemount on 9-21 (RM)

Dusky Flycatcher 2 at Marblemount on 9-11; 1 at Corkindale on 9-14 (RM)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 on Cockreham Island on 10-16 (GB)

CORVIDS

Western Scrub-Jay 1 in yard in Bayview on 9-15 (CS)

THRUSHES

Hermit Thrush 1 at Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 9-22 (TM)

CATBIRDS

Gray Catbird 1 at Marblemount on 9-14 (RM)

PIPITS

American Pipit 1 at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island on 9-24 (TM)

WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing more than 12 juveniles on Highway 20 near the Farmhouse Restaurant 10-18 (JA)

WARBLERS

Tennessee Warbler 1 at Marblemount on 9-11 (RM)



Orange-crowned Warbler 1 at Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 10-11 (TM)

Orange-crowned Warbler
Photo by Joe Halton

Pine Warbler 1 at Rockport on 9-14 (RM)

Townsend's Warbler 1 at Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 10-8 (TM)

Field Notes continued on page 5



Field Notes continued from page 4

SPARROWS

American Tree Sparrow 1 at Rockport 10-1 and 10-2 (RM)

Lincoln's Sparrow 94 at Corkindale on 9-10 (RM)

Swamp Sparrow 2 at Rockport on 10-1 (RM)

White-throated Sparrow 6 at Rockport on 9-25 (RM);
1 tan-striped bird at Marblemount Boat Launch on 9-29 (GB)

Dark-eyed Junco 1 leucistic at Anacortes home (JaB)

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

Rusty Blackbird 1 female at Skagit Game Range on 10-17 (MW)

(JA) Jean Ashby; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (JB) Jackie Boss; (JaB) Jane Brandt; (SC) Steve Chase; (MC) Marty Cohen; (RH) Ramona Halmmery; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (TM) Tim Manns; (SP) Sheila Pera; (RP) Robert Personius; (CS) Cathy Scott ; (MW) Michael Willison

Field Trips continued from page 1

Washington Park. **Leader: Irene Perry:**
irene.perry@yahoo.com or **Cell phone: (931)623 2084**

Saturday, November 10
North Whidbey Island Birding Route
8:30 a.m. to about 1:00 p.m.

Join us as we bird an auto route visiting Dugualla Bay, Cornet Bay, Swantown, Penn Cove, and more. Meet at the Shell or March Point Park 'n Ride at the next light east of Sharpe's Corner, north of Rt 20 at 8:30 a.m. We'll search North Whidbey Island hoping to find Canvasbacks, Long-tailed Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, Harlequin Ducks, and possibly 3 kinds of Scoters. We'll seek water birds both on fresh water and salt water and hopefully shorebirds, especially at Penn Cove. There will be minimal walking, mostly binocular and scope setting in coastal areas. The trip will end around 1:00. Dress for the weather and remember it can be cold in the wind this time of year. (hot thermos beverages are recommended.) Bring scopes, as many birds will be off

in the distance. Beginners are always welcome. **Discover Pass needed for parking at Deception Pass State Park. Leader: Ivar Dolph: pidolph@frontier.com or (360)293-5951**

Saturday, November 17
Padilla Bay and Samish Flats
8:30 a.m. to about noon

Our trip is mostly drive-and-bird field trip across the raptor-rich Samish Flats and surrounding area. Though justly famous for its raptors, the flats also provide numerous opportunities to spot shorebirds, ducks, and songbirds. Bring a snack if you plan to continue birding into the afternoon. Meet in the parking lot of the Breazeale Interpretive Center at Padilla Bay to arrange carpools. **Please bring your Discover Pass if you have one** for parking at the West-90. Bring a little bakery money too, in case we pass through Edison in a deluge. We'll go birding in any weather. **Leader: Libby Mills: libbymills@gmail.com or Cell phone: (360)708-6975**

No Field Trip Thanksgiving holiday weekend

Hearing on Coal Export in Washington
McIntyre Hall, Mount Vernon
November 5th ~ 4:00 to 7:00

In case you haven't already heard, one of a series of scoping hearings on coal export plans will take place at McIntyre Hall in Mount Vernon from 4:00 to 7:00 pm on November 5th. This is an important opportunity to express what we believe should be covered in the analysis of likely impacts of these plans and the associated terminals, trains, and cargo ships. With its multitude of aspects, from traffic congestion and air pollution to jobs and global warming, this is the largest environmental issue to come to our area in many years. McIntyre Hall seats 651 people - - let's fill it!

For more information: **www.PowerPastCoal.org**



Cold season hikes begin this month. We move from the high country to lowland hikes near the water and on the foothills. Hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather, logging, construction or unforeseen circumstances. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, or snowy or icy road conditions. Because this is hunting season, wear a bright-colored item of clothing. For information on or questions about the hikes, call JOAN MELCHER, 360-424-0407 or e-mail 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.

**WEDNESDAY – NOV. 7 HOYPUS POINT,
HOYPUS HILL, and ALA SPIT**

Hike the 3.5 mile loop trail on Hoypus Point, of moderate difficulty, with about a 300 foot elevation gain. One can add additional hikes in the adjoining Hoypus Hill area as well as hiking out to Ala Spit. The Hoypus areas are in Deception Pass State Park. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the trailhead at Cornet Bay in Deception Pass State Park. Cornet Bay has docking facilities and a rest room.

**NOTE: A WASHINGTON STATE
DISCOVER PASS IS REQUIRED
TO PARK ON PARK PROPERTY**

You may leave when your carload is back to the trailhead. Most people return between 12:30 and 1 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY – NOV. 14
LITTLE CRANBERRY LAKE**

Terry Slotemaker or his designee will lead the group around Little Cranberry Lake in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. 6.0 miles with a 670 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the trailhead located on "A" Ave. between 37th and 41st Streets in Anacortes. You may leave when all in your vehicle return to the

trailhead. Historically, all are back by 1 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY – NOV. 21
THANKSGIVING WEEK**

WEDNESDAY – NOV. 28 LITTLE MOUNTAIN Explore the trails on Little Mountain southeast of Mount Vernon, WA, which is part of the Mount Vernon City Park System. A number of options are available. There will be elevation gains. Meet at 9 a.m. on the Little Mountain Park access road. Park on the side of the road before the gate. (The gate opens at 10 a.m.) The Little Mountain Park access road is off the Little Mountain Road, which is off the Blackburn Road. You may leave when you return from the hike.

**WEDNESDAY – DEC. 5 EAST SHORE LAKE
WHATCOM**

The East Shore of Lake Whatcom hike is a fairly level hike among trees beside the east shore of Lake Whatcom. 6.25 miles round trip, little elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the new Chuckanut Drive park-n-ride lot. This lot is on the east side of I-5, off Exit 231 of I-5. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

NINETEEN YEAR OLD RED-TAIL

To Tweeters: Sun, 14 Oct 2012 From: Bud Anderson, Falcon Research Group

Thanks to the Bird Banding Lab (BBL), I just got a return from a juvenile Red-tail I banded at Snohomish, north of Seattle, WA, on 16 December 1993. It was found, again near Snohomish, last summer on 29 June 2012. It didn't go too far it seems. Most likely a local breeder because of the recovery date.

So all those Red-tails you see perching along the freeway could be quite old. The current BBL record for Red-tails is 30 years 8 months.

I am always amazed at how long birds can live in the wild. The Bird Banding Laboratory website www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl lists all of the records for longevity of banded birds under the "resources" section.

Great way to spend some time on a wet, stormy day!



Trumpeter Swans of the Skagit
Saturday, Dec. 1 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.
Christianson's Nursery, 15806 Best Road,
Mount Vernon.



The majestic beauty of trumpeter swans is a Skagit Valley highlight in December, January and February. Hear wildlife biologist **Martha Jordan** of **The Trumpeter Swan Society** describe these amazing birds – the largest waterfowl in the world – and Skagit Valley is the best place to view them. Get a free Swan Identification Pamphlet and see excellent slides to help you distinguish between trumpeter swans, and other birds of the Skagit.

Trumpeter Swans

Photo by Joe Halton

Our Swans of Winter

Each winter, the Skagit Valley is host to the largest concentration of Trumpeter Swans in the United States: an awesome sight to behold when you consider that these elegant birds were close to extinction in the 1960s. *Christianson's Nursery* wants to help celebrate this annual migration with a special free slideshow and talk by wildlife biologist **Martha Jordan**.

Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) are the largest waterfowl in the world. They have a wingspan of 8 to 9 feet, weigh between 25 and 30 pounds, and may stand 4 feet tall. They are long-lived, some more than 20 years, and they mate for life. (Martha will bring a life-size decoy of a Trumpeter Swan so you can experience their size; she needs a 6-foot-long table to hold it!) When you hear their deep, loud call, you will understand why they are called Trumpeters.

The Trumpeter Swan population is stable and increasing now, but Martha will shed light on some challenges the birds face in their wintering grounds, such as habitat loss and the ongoing problems of ingestion of lead shot pellets from years when lead shot was allowed for waterfowl hunting. She helps in the conservation of Trumpeter Swans by fostering cygnets (baby swans) in her backyard, in cooperation with Northwest Trek.

Martha is the coordinator for *Washington Swan Stewards*, which is the local branch of *The Trumpeter Swan Society*. She has a degree in Wildlife Science from Oregon State University, and will also be talking about the native Tundra Swans and the multitudes of Snow Geese that visit Skagit fields in the winter. For more information online, see:

www.trumpeterswansociety.org.

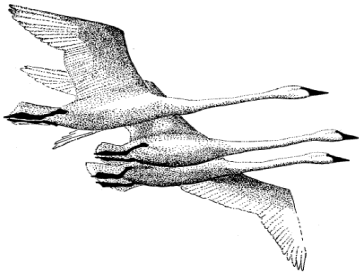
Christianson's Nursery is at 15806 Best Road, Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Complimentary reservations required:
360-466-3821, www.christiansonnursery.com

-- Christianson's Nursery



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check your
address label
for membership
expiration date!

November 2012 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Oct. 30	Oct. 31 Hiking: North Chuckanut Mountain	1	2	3 Field Trip: Washington Park, Anacortes
4	5	6 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	7 Hiking: Hoypus Point, Hoypus Hill, & Ala Spit	8	9	10 Field Trip: North Whidbey Island Birding Route
11	12	13 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	14 Hiking: Little Cranberry Lake	15	16	17 Deadline: SAS <u>December Flyer</u> Field Trip: Padilla Bay & Samish Flats
18	19	20	21 No Hike Thanksgiving Week	22 Thanksgiving	23	24 No Field Trip Thanksgiving Week
25	26	27	28 Hiking: Little Mountain Dec. 5 Hiking: East Shore Lake Whatcom	29	30	Dec. 1 Trumpeter Swans of Skagit: Christianson's Nursery

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper

