

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 32 No. 1

JANUARY 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, JANUARY 5 Padilla Bay Christmas Count Hot Spots

9:00 a.m. to noon

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center parking lot. We will go into the field revisiting a few sites where some of our more interesting birds were found during the Dec. 29 Christmas Bird Count. While mobile birds can't be promised in any given spot,

Field Trips continued on page 5

JANUARY MEETING AND PROGRAM

*Back Again by Popular Demand
"Picture Potpourri and Potluck"
by Skagit Audubon Society Members*

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

6:45 Potluck; 7:30 Program

Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10433 Bayview-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, Washington

Spotted Sandpiper and Its Reflection

*Photo by Joe Halton
Skagit Audubon Member*



Please bring potluck food to share.

After the meal we will be sharing our favorite nature photos to give a collective view of how the Skagit Audubon Society members have viewed nature, both here and abroad.

Libby Mills is gathering the submitted digital photos and making a "slide show" of them for projection. Pictures were needed to be submitted by December 30th. This show is open to EVERYBODY. We look forward to an evening of sharing. It's not a contest, just a show! Thanks to those participating!

Great Washington State Birding Trail

The now-completed Great Washington State Birding Trail consists of 7 maps describing and locating good birding spots across Washington State. This 10-year effort, from the first map, the Cascade Loop including numerous sites in Skagit County, to the Puget Loop completed this year, this has been the project of many volunteers ably organized by Christi Norman. In appreciation for her great contributions to Audubon in Washington, Tahoma Audubon is honoring Christi with its Distinguished Service Award – Community. All the maps are at <http://wa.audubon.org/great-washington-state-birding-trail>. At this website you can also buy paper copies of each map or an app with them all.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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Anna's Hummingbird
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



I'll begin this month's message with a special **Thank You to Julie Bishop**, Skagit Audubon's volunteer webmaster. The vitality and, simply put, the survival of an all-volunteer organization depends completely on individuals' readiness to generously donate time and talent. There are many people associated with Skagit Audubon to thank, but right here I'd like to particularly express our whole chapter's gratitude to Julie. For ten years now she has designed and maintained the Skagit Audubon website. Her work is key to keeping you informed about activities, events, and issues. The website is also the first place many people look who are coming to Skagit County for birding or who have questions about birds they're seeing. We appreciate all Julie has done and is doing to make Skagit Audubon the lively chapter it is. Thank you very, very much, Julie!

On a quite different note, I hardly need mention that Skagit County is besieged these days by proposed mega-development projects, from a gigantic bottling plant to a procession of mile-long, trains carrying coal bound for Asia, to a mega-resort and race track outside Sedro-Woolley. As I heard last night at the County Commissioners' public meeting about the resort proposed for Northern State Recreation Area and adjacent state-owned land, supporters of these projects see themselves as visionaries. They maybe inadvertently contrast themselves to those with interests in areas of life from which they appear completely divorced; which is to say, the natural world and its (and our) health and future. Economic weakness and the challenges governments at every level face maintaining vital and valued services give project proponents a handy wedge. Shout or whisper "Jobs!" and "Tax Revenues!" and objections and hesitations melt away, or at least are supposed to. We who care about the natural world and the health of the environment are not uncaring or unconcerned about those needing jobs or about public revenues. I believe we have a deeper and better informed concern than project proponents standing to make huge profits too rarely shared in a reasonable way with employees or with the public whose resources and infrastructure they use. It's too early to know if Northern State Recreation Area, by far our largest county park, will be converted to private profit, but Skagit Audubon will continue to speak out on behalf of the public interest in preserving our parks for low key recreation and for wildlife habitat too.

I also want to mention that again this year, Audubon across Washington State is joining 24 other conservation organizations in the Environmental Priorities Coalition. Together these groups choose a few priorities to bring to our legislators in Olympia rather than diluting our efforts by each going it alone. At this writing, the 3 priorities for the coming legislative session have just been announced. Their quick titles are "Clean Energy Solutions," "Toxic-Free Kids and Families," and "Conservation Works." You can read a little about them and find more details in the weeks ahead at the coalition's website: environmentalpriorities.org/. You can also register there for January legislative workshops and for the grand event called Lobby Day on February 19th. That's when 500 or more members of the 25 conservation groups including many Audubon members will converge on Olympia and visit their legislators to advance the 3 priorities. Lobby Day is always an interesting and energizing exercise in participatory democracy. Skagit Audubon people participate each year. Please join them!



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

Cackling Goose 6 at Sauk Prairie on 12-14 (RM)
Wood Duck 1 at SR 20 Milepost 76 fields on 11-22 (GB)
Canvasback 1 at Big Lake on 12-2 (GB)
Greater Scaup 1,300 at Bay View on 11-18 (GB)
Common Merganser 108 on Lake Erie on 12-1 (GB)

SHEARWATERS, PETRALS

Northern Fulmar 11 seen off Rosario Head on 12-7 (RM)

LOONS

Red-throated Loon 1050 off Rosario Head on 12-10 (RM)

CORMORANTS

Brandt's Cormorant 1 seen at WA Park in Anacortes on 12-12 (JP)

RAPTORS

Red-tailed Hawk "Harlans Hawk", oddly marked on Samish Flats on 12-5 (AW); "Harlans Hawk", 1 light morph at the Skagit Game Range on 12-8 (RM)
Merlin 1 seen in Edison on 11-25 (PY)
Gyr Falcon 1 juvenile seen near Sullivan Rd., Samish Flats on 12-5 (AW); 1 white immature seen near Sullivan Rd., Samish Flats on 12-5 (NB)

SHOREBIRDS

Least Sandpiper 1 in flock of Dunlin and Black-bellied Plovers on Samish Flats on 12-5 (AW)
Surfbird 1 off Williamson Rocks on 12-10 (RM)

GULLS

Bonaparte's Gull 200 off Samish Island on 11-18 (GB)
Herring Gull 1 on Samish Flats on 11-18 (GB)
Thayer's Gull 1 at Lions Park in Mt. Vernon on 11-17 (GB)

OWLS

Short-eared Owl 1 at Hayton Preserve on 12-15 (K&JW)
Snowy Owl 1 at Hayton Preserve on 11-18 (GB); 1 at Pine Lake, Whatcom County on 11-25 (TM); 1 at The Skagit Game Range on 12-8 (RM) 2 at Hayton Preserve and 1 at Jensen Access on 12-15 (K&JW);
Barred Owl 1 at Hillcrest Park on 11-22 (TM)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Anna's Hummingbird nectaring on winter blooming plants in Burlington yard throughout count period (JW); 1 at Beaver Lake on 12-2 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Northern Flicker 1 "yellow-shafted" on Samish Flats on 12-5 (AW); 1 hybrid yellow-shafted/red-shafted at Anacortes home on 12-6 (JB)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Lake McMurray on 12-2 (GB)

SWALLOWS

Barn Swallow 3 at the Skagit Game Range on 12-2 (GB)

CREEPER

Brown Creeper regularly seen during count period at Camano Island home (SP)

WAXWINGS

Bohemian Waxwing 8 at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center on 12-2 (SAS)

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 at Anacortes home on 12-10 (JB)
Northern Waterthrush 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 12-1 (RM); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 12-2 (GB)

SPARROWS

American Tree Sparrow 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 12-8 (RM)
Swamp Sparrow 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 12-1 (RM); 1 at Clear Lake boat launch on 12-2 (GB)
White-throated Sparrow 1 at Camano Island home on 11-20 and 11-25 (PP)
White-crowned Sparrow regularly seen during count period at Camano Island home (SP)
Dark-eyed Junco 1 "slate-colored" spending 6th winter in Anacortes yard (JH)

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

Brown-headed Cowbird 3 on Minkler Flats on 11-17 (GB)

FINCHES

Red Crossbill 110 at Marblemount on 12-14 (RM)
White-winged Crossbill 8 at Marblemount on 12-14 (RM)
Common Redpoll 6 at Sauk Prairie, 1 at Rockport, 2 at Diablo on 12-14 (RM)
Evening Grosbeak 50+ at home near Big Lake on 2-2 (CF)

(GB) Gary Bletsch; (JB) Jackie Boss; (NB) Nelson Briefer; (CF) Christine Farrow; (JH) Joe Halton; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (TM) Tim Manns; (JP) Joshua Parrott; (SP) Sheila Pera; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (AW) Andrea Warner; (JW) Jan Wilson; (K&JW) Keith & Jan Wiggers; (PY) Pat Young.



Field Trips continued from page 1

this should be an interesting pursuit and good way to start out a new birding year with Audubon. Bring snacks and a thermos of hot drinks. We'll wrap it up around noon or so.

Leader Irene Perry: irene.perry@yahoo.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12 **Bald Eagles & Salmon on Skagit River** **8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

Spawning salmon on the Skagit River above the town of Concrete attract one of the largest wintering populations of Bald Eagles in the U.S. We'll see lots of eagles along the North Cascades Highway but visit other good upriver birding spots too.

Binoculars and spotting scopes will be helpful. Bring your lunch and rain gear. Wear good walking shoes and warm layers. Meet in front of the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20 just before Highway 9 North) at 8:30 a.m. to arrange carpools. Bring a lunch and birding gear, and dress for the weather, remembering it is often wetter upriver.

Leader: Tim Manns, bctm@fidalgo.net or
360-336-8753

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19 **Skagit / Samish Flats**

8:00 a.m. to early afternoon

Meet at the Padilla Bay Interpretive center at 8:00 a.m. for a mid-winter tour of our favorite raptor, water bird and songbird spots around the delta. Wrap up in a warm thermos and bring your scope. There are always plenty of interesting finds in the most famous winter birding center of the Skagit Valley. We plan to stay out until early afternoon.

Leader: Bob Kuntz, robert_kuntz@nps.gov

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Port Susan Bay with Nature Conservancy **8:00 a.m. to early 9:30 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.**

We meet at the Port Susan Bay Preserve at 8 a.m. To find it drive just south of Stanwood and Highway 532 on Marine Drive NW about 3.8 miles to Boe Road and take a west turn driving all the way out to the end of the road.

The Nature Conservancy recently completed an estuary project at the Port Susan Bay Preserve to restore natural processes to 150 plus acres of tidal marshes in the Stillaguamish Estuary. Staff will be on-hand to describe the restoration actions and lead

birding at the restored project area. Our timing for this trip is scheduled to optimize the effect of high tide on birding opportunities.

Leaders: Staff from the Skagit office of the Nature Conservancy.

Presenting the first of the 2013 Beach Watcher Lecture Series: From Satellite to Salish Sea: The National Wildlife Refuge System, A Network for Wildlife

Please join us to discover the hidden treasures of America's National Wildlife Refuge System. We'll explore the immense network, 150 million acres of lands dedicated to the conservation of wildlife and their habitats, then take a closer look at local refuges in and near the Salish Sea. Our lecture expedition will be led by Mr. Lorenz Sollman, Deputy Refuge Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Maritime Refuge Complex, Sequim, Washington. He will share his experiences and knowledge from distant refuges to those in our own back yard.

Friday, January 11, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. **Please note our new lecture location: Northwest Educational Service District Building, 1601 R Ave., Anacortes: (from Q St., turn on Seafarer's Way, turn right onto R St. at the stop sign and go to the Northwest Educational Service District's parking lot. There will be signs pointing the way – and Beach Watchers, too!)**

Lectures are free and open to the public. Sponsored by Friends of Skagit Beaches. For more information contact Matt Kerschbaum, cherrytree2@comcast.net.



Five hikes are scheduled for the first month of the New Year. Unexpected circumstances such as weather, wash-outs, closed trails, logging, construction, or road conditions may cause cancellations or changes in the hikes. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, predictions of heavy rain, or snowy or icy road conditions. Call **JOAN MELCHER** if you have questions: **360-424-0407**, or e-mail at jdmelcher@comcast.net anytime up until 7:45 the morning of the hike. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

WEDNESDAY – JAN. 2, 2013 INTERURBAN TRAIL

Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail. There are several options available. They add up to 14 or more miles; with a slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Clayton Beach Parking lot at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. Return time depends on the hike option you select.

NOTE: A WASHINGTON STATE DISCOVER PASS IS REQUIRED FOR YOUR VEHICLE

WEDNESDAY – JAN. 9 FRAGRANCE LAKE

Hike to a lovely mirror lake above Larrabee State Park. It is a 7.3 mile loop with a 1,000 ft. elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Clayton Beach Parking lot at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. You may leave when your carload has safely returned to the trailhead.

NOTE: A WASHINGTON STATE DISCOVER PASS IS REQUIRED FOR YOUR VEHICLE

WEDNESDAY – JAN. 16 WHATCOM FALLS & CREEK, BIG ROCK LOOP, AND THE STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE RESERVE

I. Whatcom Falls & Creek: Hike along Whatcom Creek from Whatcom Falls Park to the I-5 Freeway bridge and back. The round trip is 4 miles with a slight elevation gain.

II. Big Rock Loop: Instead of or in addition to the Whatcom Falls & Creek hike, you can do this hike, which is a 6 mile loop that begins and ends at Whatcom Falls Park. This loop takes the hiker north. There are some ups and downs; a few short, steep sections; but mostly a trail with some sidewalk/road walking.

III. Stimpson Family Nature Preserve: If you wish to do this hike after **I, II, or both**, then drive to the Stimpson Family Nature Preserve and hike up to 4 miles there with about a 400 ft. elevation gain. For all of the above, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the I-5

Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride near I-5 exit 231 **OR** meet at 9 a.m. at the Whatcom Falls Park parking lot on Arbor Street off of Electric Avenue. Ride with those who plan to do the hike(s) you wish to do. When all return to your car, you may leave.

WEDNESDAY – JAN. 23 SUGAR LOAF AND MT. ERIE

Hike in the popular Anacortes Forest Lands with Terry Slotemaker, (360-293-6514), or his designee, who will lead us on a 5 mile hike with a 1,400 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Mt. Erie parking lot off the Heart Lake Road south of Anacortes. Most are back to the trailhead by 1 p.m. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

WEDNESDAY – JAN. 30 NORTH CHUCKANUT MOUNTAIN

Hike trails on the northwest side of Chuckanut Mountain. The main hike is a loop hike of 8.7 miles with options for shorter hikes as well as side trips. The outbound loop consists of parts of the Interurban Trail, the Hemlock Trail, The Lost Lake Trail, the Lower Salal Trail (Hush-Hush), and all of the Raptor Ridge Trail. Return consists of the Hemlock and Interurban Trails. There is up to a 1,700 ft. elevation gain. Meet at 9 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. You may leave when your car-load has returned.

WEDNESDAY – FEB. 6 LUMMI ISLAND

Walk a 7 mile loop on the north end of Lummi Island. Enjoy island, sea, and mountain views. A \$7 foot-passenger ferry fare is required. It is mostly level. Walking shoes are recommended. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the I-5/Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride. There is no specified return time, although most will take the 1 p.m. ferry back.



~ ~ 2 0 1 2 I N R E V I E W ~ ~
Historic Victory for the Gulf Coast

Audubon Advisory
December 13, 2012



The RESTORE Act ensures that money BP and other responsible parties will pay in fines for the damages caused by the oil spill will be used to restore the Gulf Coast.

In a matter of weeks and more than five million barrels of oil, the Deep Horizon oil spill laid waste to the fragile Gulf coast. Thousands upon thousands of birds and sea creatures died from the toxic spill and it will be years before scientists can tally the full toll of the disaster. Eleven people lost their lives in the explosion and communities along the coast lost their livelihoods.

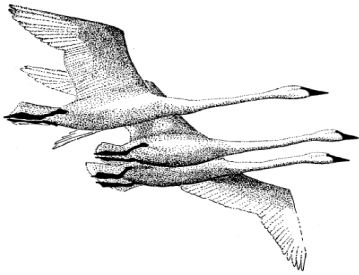
Now, more than two years in the making, final passage of the RESTORE Act to direct BP penalty money to Gulf habitat and communities devastated by the 2010 spill means billions of dollars for restoration and some hope for healing.

Most recently, criminal penalties against BP have been levied in the amount of \$4.5 billion. Audubon and others continue to call for billions more to be levied in civil penalties. All in all, these monies will mean the biggest paycheck ever for the environment, and a strong downpayment to correct the damage of not only the BP spill, but decades of mismanagement and neglect. Marshlands, Cypress swamps, sugar sand beaches and barrier islands -- and the myriad birds and wildlife these habitats support -- will be the beneficiaries.

Audubon played a key role in getting the RESTORE Act passed, which rerouted penalty money away from the general treasury and dedicated it to the states affected by the spill. From the Audubon president's office to activists throughout the Audubon network, it was all hands on deck to secure this historic legislation. Gulf champions from both parties were crucial to getting this big piece of legislation passed while NOTHING else moved in the gridlocked Congress. In the end, it was the perseverance of the Audubon policy office, our never-say-die grassroots and a total Audubon commitment that made it happen. Now our focus turns on Audubon-sponsored restoration work that will bring back habitat critical to bird survival.

"[Passage of this legislation] is an act of hope and faith in America that has been generations in coming, and it's the biggest conservation funding victory Congress has ever delivered," noted Audubon President David Yarnold when RESTORE was signed into law. While much remains to be done to turn the hope of restoration for the Gulf into reality, the means are at hand to bring back a robust and thriving Gulf region.





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check your
address label
for membership
expiration date!

January 2013 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Dec. 30	Dec. 31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day	2 Hiking: Interurban Trail	3	4	5 Field Trip: Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count Hot Spots
6	7	8 General Meeting: Potluck 6:45 PM/ Program 7:30 PM	9 Hiking: Fragrance Lake	10	11	12 Field Trip: Bald Eagles & Salmon on the Skagit River
13	14	15	16 Hiking: Whatcom Falls & Creek, Big Rock Loop & Stimpson Family Nature Reserve	17	18	19 Deadline: SAS <u>February Flyer</u> Field Trip: Skagit / Samish Flats
20	21	22	23 Hiking: Sugar Loaf & Mt. Erie	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 Hiking: North Chuckanut Mtn. Feb. 6 Hiking: Lummi Island	31	Feb. 1 Field Trip: Port Susan with the Nature Conservancy	Feb. 2

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

