

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

ww.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 36 No. 4

APRIL FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills About the field trips

Beginning birders and 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, April 22, 2017 Wiley Slough and Fir Island, Skagit Wildlife Area 8:00 a.m. to afternoon Meet at Skagit Wildlife area on Fir Island, Wylie Road, the boat launch parking lot, at 8 a.m. to catch the morning birds.

Field Trips continue on page 7

APRIL MEETING AND PROGRAM

"A Year in the Lives of North American Owls "
by Paul Bannick

Tuesday, April 11, 2017
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Burlington Public Library
820 Washington Avenue
Burlington, Washington



Paul Bannick is an award-winning wildlife photographer specializing in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat. He will be presenting his new book, *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls*.

All 19 species found in Canada and the United States are featured in the photos and narrative throughout the book, with a special focus on the Northern Pygmy-Owl, Great Gray Owl, Burrowing Owl and Snowy Owl.

The book integrates more than 200 new intimate and dramatic images, up-to-date science about owls and first-hand experience based upon tens of thousands of hours spent with owls on their territories in the wild. Do not miss this!

"DO NOT PARK IN THE SPOTS IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY"

<u>Please park</u> on the east side of the building or across the intersection in the lot to the northeast of the Burlington Library.

"The use of the Burlington Public Library facilities or meeting rooms by any group or organization in no way constitutes endorsement of the policies or beliefs of that organization by the library or the City of Burlington."



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Leucistic Black-capped Chickadee

Photo by Joe Halton (Note: the leucistic white tail)

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 http://wa.audubon.orgaudubon-locations/. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** use the **1st** 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 2nd 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 ir	actudes 10 issues of our newsletter						
The Skagit Flyer, available at: http://www.skagitaudul	bon.org/newsletter.						
Membership includes all members of your household							
Check one: \$20.00 one (1) year	\$40.00 two (2) years						
Additionally, I wish to donate to Skagit Audubon Soci in the amount of \$	ety, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.						
in the amount of \$	ld trip by a Skagit Audubon field trip leader.						
Check one: New Membership	Renewing Membership						
Name							
Address							
City/StateZip							
Email	mailPhone						
SAS does not share your co							
Clip form/Mail to/Payable to: Skagit Audubon Society P.O. Box 1101							
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101							
Use the form below to initially join the	e National Audubon Society.						
National Audubon Society Membership Form							
Annual membership to the National Audubon Society Membership includes all members of your household							
\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one c	hapter affiliation						
Name	Phone						
Address							
City/State	Zip						
Please mail chapter-created new membership for	ms to address below: (Payable to same)						
National Audubon Society 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 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:

Phone: (844) 428-3826

For membership related questions and address:

Email: customerservice@audubon.org

Pam Pritzl membership@skagitaudubon.org



P.O. Box 97194

Washington, DC 20090-7194

Attn: Chance Mueleck

Finally Spring!

After such a cold, wet winter, signs of spring are welcome in Skagit County. It's time to listen for resident and migrant birds tuning up for courtship. Grab your binoculars and zoom in on the changes in plumage. Scientist believe longer daylight hours trigger bird songs, plumage change and migration. I agree. I'm ready to sing in the sun, shed a coat and migrate to longer days outdoors. Two signs of spring welcomed by local birders are the return of hummingbirds and swallows.



Rufous Hummingbird Photo by Joe Halton "Careful examination shows a flinging

Although many Anna's Hummingbirds are becoming year-round residents, the return of the feisty Rufous Hummingbirds brings increased excitement to our feeders. Consider adding a second feeder during migration since this is the time hummers fuel up for flight. My experience with hummingbird feeders is to keep it simple. I've tried some of the fancier and more expensive (yes, gifts!) feeders with poor results. The basic glass jar with red top and bottom including perches and plastic yellow flowers is my best feeder. They're inexpensive, around \$20.00, and relatively easy to keep clean. You can even buy replacement parts for them at local bird supply stores. The keeping clean part can be challenging. I try to stay on a "clean every five days" schedule and keep a toothbrush nearby. Hot water and a little diluted white vinegar helps hummingbird tongue" to take the gunk off too. No expensive special red dye nectar is needed for your feeders. Just a four to one, warm water to sugar ratio is best. No

need to boil the sugar water mixture either. Just be sure the water is warm enough for the sugar to dissolve, stir, and wait for it to cool before filling your feeder. Using the "store brand" sugar cane granulated sugar is fine. I tried going cheap once and tried beet sugar. My husband determined after citizen science observations, hummers don't like beets either!

Onto one of my favorite signs of spring, the return of the swallows. I always get excited to see the first Violet-greens showing up swooping over the water near our local marinas. I know my favorite swallow, the Purple Martin, will return late May to early June. Skagit Audubon provides nesting boxes and monitors sites for Purple Martins in Skagit County and beyond. We have a kickoff day scheduled for Sunday, May 7 at Ship Harbor in Anacortes. The purpose of this event is part work, information and recruitment. We will be preparing the boxes for this season's birds, answering questions about our program, encouraging people to become citizen science volunteers. Bring rubber boots if you would like to help with the boxes. We also need assistance from the shoreline. This event will run from 8:30 until noon, weather permitting. For more information about this kickoff and our Purple Martin program please contact me at irene@skagitaudubon.org.



Purple Martin Project Ship Harbor, Anacortes



SKAGIT AUDUBON APRIL CONSERVATION REPORT BY TIM MANNS

At this writing in mid-March, the general air of uncertainty is growing, rather than diminishing. The president's budget has surprised only the wishful thinkers with its deep cuts to social and environmental programs. Many of the latter lie close to Audubon's mission and have implications for human health too. Combined with wholesale elimination of regulations that implement core environmental laws, the effects of some budget cuts will be particularly evident right here if they come to pass. Examples include cleaning up Puget Sound, restoring salmon, preserving wilderness areas and national parks, protecting Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, ... Some of the deepest cuts are aimed at the Environmental Protection Agency, which administers the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts and addresses global warming. For those living near industrial plants such as oil refineries, the ideology being played out in Washington, D.C. that would erase environmental regulations has very real implications for the kind of world we prefer to have.

Audubon's mission focuses on protecting and restoring wildlife habitat for birds and other animals, recognizing that people benefit thereby too. Cuts in funding for oversight by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, for example, would keep it from stemming the decline of species, even in the uncertain event the Endangered Species Act and related regulations remain intact. What becomes then of our ethical and moral obligation to not speed the extinction of other species?

Here and across the U.S. we see many people devoting time as never before to speaking out against rollbacks that degrade the world we want. We need to keep it up. Emailing and phoning legislators is easy. Sending postcards and letters is too. Show up at a legislator's town meeting and ask a question on something that concerns you and should concern your representatives. It's easy to sign up for alerts from National Audubon and Audubon Washington and other groups whose ideals you share and to then follow through: (https://action.audubon.org/signup/join-our-action-network-10).

While we hope you as an individual will contact your elected officials, Skagit Audubon as a chapter also submits board-approved comments on a variety of issues. For example, the Skagit Board recently approved a letter on the long-delayed National Park Service/US Fish & Wildlife Service plan to restore the grizzly to the North Cascades Ecosystem in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. There are likely no grizzlies left in the U.S. Cascades. Only a few are known to still roam the smaller part of the range in Canada. Skagit Audubon joined other conservation groups in supporting Alternative C. This slow, phased approach would bring about 25 bears to the Vermont-sized, mostly federally-owned ecosystem. With luck, the population of this slowest reproducing of all North American mammals will reach 200 in 60 to 100 years. The comment period for the draft plan and EIS has been extended to April 28th. Go to http://www.northcascadesgrizzly.org/. Scroll down to the video "Time for the grizzly?" in which bear biologist and Bellingham resident Chris Morgan talks about grizzlies and their successful restoration to western Montana's Cabinet Mountains.



SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING ~ APRIL

BY JOAN MELCHER

Five hikes are scheduled for March. 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 e-mail at **idmelcher@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.

WED. – APRIL 5 – WAHINGTON PARK, HEART and ERIE LAKES, and GUEMES

CHANNEL Meet at 9 a.m. in <u>LOT A</u> at Washington Park in Anacortes. To get to <u>Lot A</u>, 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 Guemes Channel and/or the Heart Lake hike. Instructions to Guemes Channel will be given out at the meeting place. To get to Heart Lake, drive toward Anacortes from Washington Park. Turn right on D Avenue. Then turn left onto 32nd Street. Again turn right on H Avenue, which will lead you to the Heart Lake Road and the parking lot.

WED. – APRIL 12 – HOYPUS POINT, HOYPUS HILL, and ALA SPIT

There are many hike opportunities on Hoypus Point. To hike to Ala Spit via the most direct trail route and back is 6.5 miles. Other trails can be added to increase the mileage for the day. This hike is selected on this day because there will be a low tide at noon and hikers should be able to access the 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: THE WASHINGTON STATE DISCOVER PASS IS REQUIRED TO PARK ON THIS PARK PROPERTY. You may leave when your carload is back to the trailhead. Most people return between 12:30 and 1 p.m. NOTE: HAVE EAR PROTECTION WITH YOU IN CASE THE WHIDBEY JETS ARE

WED. - APRIL 19 - WHITE HORSE TRAIL

FLYING LOW AND LOUD!

The White Horse Trail runs between Arlington and Darrington on an old railroad bed that follows the North Fork of the Stillaquamish River. As of 2017 the eastern 6 to 7 miles are open to hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Eventually 28 miles will be accessible between the two communities. Meet at the Mount Vernon Safeway parking lot at 8:30 a.m. to arrange carpool

rides. Audubon South hikers can pool rides and drive directly to the trailhead. Drive time is a little over one hour from Mount Vernon. Drive I-5 to the Arlington exit and continue east on SR 530 to Darrington. Turn left on Railroad Avenue just past the Darrington IGA. After Darrington Municipal Airport on your left, the trailhead is at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Price Street. You may leave when all in your car are safely back.

WED. - APRIL 26 - PINE and CEDAR LAKES and RAPTOR RIDGE Hike to two very pleasant lakes in the Chuckanut Mountain area. It is up to 9.4 miles one way with shuttle cars. The elevation gain is 1,900 ft. The 1.7 mile uphill route from the Pine/Cedar Trailhead is steep. The 5.4 mile downhill 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. At that time we will pool rides to the Pine/Cedar Lakes trailhead based on what time one wishes to arrive at the North Chuckanut parking lot at the end of the day. Then someone will need to shuttle drivers back to the Pine/Cedar Lakes trailhead. The first return to the North Chuckanut Trail head will be 2:30 p.m.; the second return will be 3:00 p.m. Hikers may leave when they return to the cars except for those who will be involved in shuttling drivers back to the Pine/Cedar Lakes trailhead.

wed. – May 3 – Baker River Meet at 8:30 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. Hike along the Baker River to Sulfide Creek, entering the North Cascades National Park along the way. Dogs are not permitted on the National Park section of the trail. The hike is 5 miles round trip, with a 300 ft. elevation gain. If you do just the river hike, return to the trailhead at 1:30 p.m.; if you also walk south to Hidden Creek on the north Baker Lake Trail, return at 2:30 p.m. A Federal Northwest Forest Pass (parking permit) is required.



SKAGIT AUDUBON FIELD NOTES: FEBRUARY 17 to MARCH 17, 2017

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 birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org or 360-387-7024.

For recent updates on bird sightings, check out **ABA Tweeters** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding menu, Bird Sightings submenu)

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Goose 3 at Beaver Lake on 2-19 (GB)

Brant more than 1,000 seen from sailboat in Fidalgo Bay on 3-16 (RW)

Wood Duck 2 in Hamilton on 3-12 (GB)

Eurasian Wigeon 16 on Samish Flats on 3-5 (NOH); 9 on Samish Flats on 3-10 (NOH)

Canvasback 2 on Lake Erie on 3-11 (GB)

Long-tailed Duck 24 seen from sailboat in Fidalgo Bay on 3-16 (RW)

LOONS

Pacific Loon 2 at Samish Island Public Park on 2-25 (GB)

HERONS and ALLIES

Great Blue Heron 15 seen from sailboat in Fidalgo Bay on 3-16 (RW)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 1 in Lyman on 3-14 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES, and ALLIES

Bald Eagle 20 seen from sailboat in Fidalgo Bay on 3-16 (RW)

Northern Harrier 6 on Samish Flats on 3-5 (NOH); 9 on Samish Flats on 3-10 (NOH)

Cooper's Hawk adult in Anacortes (corner of

Jackson St. and Oakes View Ln) on 2-24 (NOH)

Rough-legged Hawk 4 on Samish Flats on 3-5 (NOH); 3 on Samish Flats on 3-10 (NOH)

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, and ALLIES

Surfbird 3 at Rosario Head on 2-25 (GB)

Rock Sandpiper 1 at Rosario Head on 2-25 (GB)

ALCIDS

Rhinoceros Auklet 2 seen from sailboat in Fidalgo Bay on 3-16 (RW)

OWLS

Short-eared Owl 1 on Samish Flats on 3-5 (NOH); 7 on Samish Flats on 3-10 (NOH)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker 1 in Anacortes yard on 3-17 (JB)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Rufous Hummingbird 1 at east Fidalgo home on 3-2 (RW); 1 at Camano Island home on 3-6 (CC); 1 male and 1 female at Cap Sante home, Anacortes on 3-7 (JH); 1 near Bay View on 3-11 (CS)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 1 on Samish Flats on 3-5 (NOH)

Gyrfalcon 1 at Big Island Slough on 2-17 (GB)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 singing throughout sighting period at Camano Island home (PP)

CORVIDS

California Scrub-Jay 3 in Mount Vernon on 2-27; 2 in Mount Vernon on 3-10 (GB)

SWALLOWS

Tree Swallow 28 at Lake McMurray on 2-19 (GB); first of year at Port Susan TNC property and Boe Rd. on 3-12 (JO)

Violet-green Swallow 1 at Beaver Lake on 3-10 (GB)

CHICKADEES

Black-capped Chickadee 1 leucistic on Cap Sante -Anacortes on 3-13 (JH) (See photo on page 2)

THRUSHES

Mountain Bluebird 1 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 3-12 (GB)

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 at Anacortes home on 2-26 and 27, 3-6 and 7 (JOC)

Townsend's Warbler 1 male at Burlington home on 3-12 (LE)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

White-throated Sparrow 1 at Lake Erie on 3-11 (GB)1 at Burlington home 3-5 to 3-12 (LE)

(GB) Gary Bletsch; (JB) Jackie Boss; (LE) Larry Edwards; (JH) Joe Halton; (JOC) John O'Connell; (NOH) Neil O'Hara; (JO) Jeff Osmundson; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (CS) Cathy Scott; (RW) Regan Weeks



Field Trips continued from p.1

We hope to be seeing early warblers, shorebirds and some end of winter waterfowl too. Pack your April birding outfit: a scope and binocs, a thermos and lunch and join Bob Kuntz for a morning (and potentially longer) of birding in one of Skagit Valley's good areas for water and migratory birds. Plan to walk easy flat trails.

Don't forget your Discover Pass for Parking. Leader: Bob Kuntz, <u>annebobkuntz@gmail.com</u>, or 360-424-9099

Sunday, April 30, 2017 Northern State Recreation Area

8:00 a.m. to noon

We'll meet at the Northern State Recreation Area parking area on Helmick Road, just east of Sedro-Woolley on the north side of SR 20, at 8:00 a.m. and walk the trails along both sides of Hansen Creek until around noon. Possible sightings include American Bitterns, Sora and Virginia Rails, Wilson's Snipe, Marsh Wrens, Common Yellow-throats, Tree and Violet-green Swallows, and other early migrant songbirds. Please wear sturdy, waterproof walking shoes and be prepared for wet and cold.

Leader: John Day, 360-854-8415 (cell), 360-856-0644 (home) jday0730@gmail.com

BRIGHT WATER SCHOOL BIRD CLUB



BRIGHT WATER SCHOOL BIRDERS

In February Skagit Education Committee held a field trip at Wiley Slough for the Bright Water School 7th graders. Though the weather was windy and cold the students were very enthusiastic about the birds and wildlife around the slough. Binoculars, provided by the Skagit Community Foundation 2016 Grant, were put to good use by the students. The Bright Water Bird Club was created that day; the next field trip is being planned for this spring.

The Skagit Community Foundation has awarded the Skagit Audubon Education Committee a \$1,500 grant. This 2016 grant will support our various educational activities within the region.

NEEDED TOTE BOXES: The Education Committee is looking for donations of clean useable tote boxes. Boxes must be at least 24x16x8 inches with lids. The totes will be used to store all our teaching materials in one central location.

Please bring totes to the MAY meeting!

Questions contact Sheila at skagiteducation2@gmail.com

Buy a Duck Stamp

Looking for something you can do for conservation? Help preserve waterfowl habitat by buying the annual federal Duck Stamp. This US Fish & Wildlife Service program began in 1934. By law, 98% of the funds buy or lease waterfowl habitat. Since the start, \$800 million have protected 5.7 million acres. Each new stamp is issued July 1 and features a different duck, goose, or swan species. The current stamp shows the Trumpeter Swan, of which more winter in Skagit County than anywhere else in the lower 48 states. Every resident or frequent visitor to the Skagit should buy this one! \$25 may seem steep for a stamp, but you're buying waterfowl habitat!

\$25 U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR

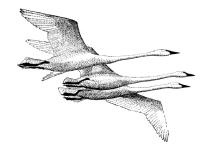
TRUMPETER SWANS

VOID AFTER
JUNE 30, 2017

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Do it today. (www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/get-involved//DSOfactsheet.pdf).

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



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SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY TUESDAY, APRIL 11

SPEAKER: PAUL BANNICK
"THE YEAR OF THE OWL"
BURLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Burlington, WA

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{ OF THE LIBRARY}

April 2017 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 26	March 27	March 28	March 29 Hike: Lookout Mt &/or Stimpson Family Preserves	March 30	March 31	1
2	3	4 Skagit Audubon Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	5 Hike: WA Park, Heart & Erie Lakes, Guemes Channel	6	7	8
9	10	11 Skagit Audubon General Meeting: BURLINGTON LIBRARY 7:00 PM	12 Hike: Hoypus Point, Hoypus Hill, & Ala Spit	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Hike: White Horse Trail	20	21	22 Field Trip: Wiley Slough, Fir Island, Skagit Wildlife Area
30 Field Trip: Northern State Recreation Area	24	25	26 Hike: Pine & Cedar Lakes & Raptor Ridge May 3 Hike: Baker River	27	28	29

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

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