

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 36 No. 5

MAY 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.

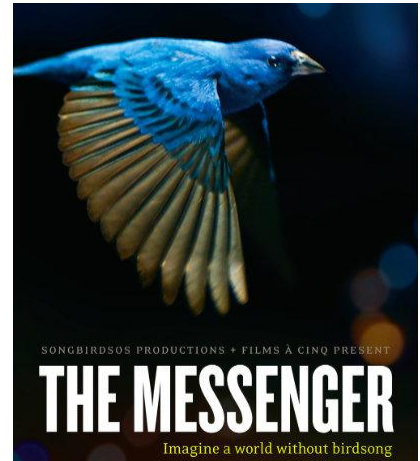
Tuesday, May 9, 2017
Purple Martin "Work" Trip
Ship Harbor, Anacortes
11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

This is not your typical field trip. Come join other volunteers at the Ship Harbor Purple Martin colony site in Anacortes
Field Trips continue on page 7

MAY MEETING AND PROGRAM

"The Messenger:
the Plight of the Songbird"
by Filmmaker Su Rynard

Tuesday, May 9, 2017
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Ctr.
10441 Bayview-Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



For our May meeting, we will be viewing an important documentary: The Messenger, a haunting tribute to the plight of the songbird.

Their song and movement patterns have waned over the years, and their peril has detrimental implications for the Earth and humanity. Largely unnoticed, they have helped predict coming storms and the rise of toxins in the food chain. The Messenger takes a visually thrilling journey into the world of the songbird and deciphers their dire message.

Canadian filmmaker Su Rynard says, "Within the story of songbird's decline is the greater story of our environment's decline. What if their fate is inextricably linked to our own?"



SKAGIT AUDUBON

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

President: Irene Perry
irene@skagitaudubon.org

Vice President: VACANT

Secretary: Mark Perry

Treasurer: Hella Lee
hhlee@frontier.com
360-848-5937

Immediate Past President: Phil Wright
phil@skagitaudubon.org
360-299-8212

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation: Tim Manns
conservation@skagitaudubon.org
360-336-8753

Education: Sheila Pera
skagiteducation2@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
birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org
360-387-7024

Membership: Pam Pritzl
membership@skagitaudubon.org

Programs: Catherine Carter
programs@skagitaudubon.org

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

Newsletter Distributor: Barbara Craner
craner2@frontier.com
360-770-3898

REPRESENTATIVES

Jean Ashby
jeanash66@gmail.com
Jane Brandt
janeb@skagitaudubon.org
Ivar Dolph
pidolph@frontier.com
Stephanie Fernandez
ferstephanie07@yahoo.com

Ron Holmes
ronh@skagitaudubon.org
Alice Turner
alicet2@msn.com

Hospitality: Stephanie Fernandez
ferstephanie07@yahoo.com

Webmaster: Ron Pera
skagitaudubon@gmail.com



Osprey Returns
Skagit Wildlife Area
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 <http://wa.audubon.org/audubon-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 includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available at: <http://www.skagitaudubon.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 Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in the amount of \$ _____
Donations of \$100.00 or more receive a personal field trip by a Skagit Audubon field trip leader.

Check one: New Membership Renewing Membership

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

SAS does not share your contact information.

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 **National Audubon Society**.

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 _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Please mail chapter-created new membership forms to address below: (Payable to same)

National Audubon Society Y21
P.O. Box 97194
Washington, DC 20090-7194
Attn: Chance Mueleck

For membership related questions and address:
Email: customerservice@audubon.org
Phone: (844) 428-3826

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:

Pam Pritzl membership@skagitaudubon.org



Featured Bird Fun Facts!

Your Skagit Audubon education committee sponsors the Featured Bird information on our website for members and site visitors to learn more and perhaps develop a passion for the birds of Skagit County.

At www.skagitaudubon.org, the Featured Bird has information about birds and locations to view those birds in our area each month. Some of the birds are year-round residents while others may be migrating or irruptive species. Helpful hints on identification are given along with breeding, nesting and other bird specific behaviors to look for when these birds are viewed on field trips and during your own outdoor adventures. The Featured Bird can be a bird to look for each month.

It's time for the annual Featured Bird contest sponsored by the education committee during the social half-hour at our May meeting. The contest will have questions about Featured Birds and more. One attendee's name from all correct entries will be drawn to win a prize. If you want to brush up and revisit some of the past Featured Birds, you can find these articles under the heading Education on our website.

All are welcome to attend our monthly meeting and participate in the Featured Bird Contest. Good Luck!

**SKAGIT AUDUBON MAY CONSERVATION REPORT
BY TIM MANNIS**



Migrating Trumpeter Swan

Photo by Joe Halton

May 13th is **International Migratory Bird Day**, bringing to mind how Skagit winter birds connect this place to others in the far north. The many Red-throated Loons wintering near Deception Pass have left. Tundra Swans that joined the Trumpeters in Skagit Valley farm fields are gone too. Rough-legged Hawks hunting voles on Samish Flats have returned to the Arctic with the loons, swans and many other species to take advantage of long summer days and abundant insects and rodents as they raise their young. Some of the birds we watched this winter will nest on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of the wildest places and largest protected areas in the U.S. Some years ago it was the focus of a legislative battle over whether to drill for oil. Those who wanted the oil more than the birds and more than the 200,000 caribou of the Porcupine herd, lost. Now, with a different balance of power in Washington, D.C., the would-be drillers are back and could prevail. Rather than reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, these elected officials are making it a priority to extract oil in a place where millions of birds nest and caribou make their epic migration to calving grounds. National Audubon is committed to protecting this refuge so important to birds that winter in many parts of the U.S.

Conservation Report continues on page 4



and places as distant from the Arctic as South America. As a centrist environmental group, Audubon gathers support from both sides of the aisle. Birds and their habitats can be common ground, and it doesn't hurt politically that Audubon's million plus members are spread across the U.S. in over 450 chapters. Please let your representatives in Washington, D.C. know that this place in the far north so important to birds is important to us too:

<http://www.audubon.org/conservation/arctic-national-wildlife-refuge>

Here in Washington State, at this mid-April writing it appears likely the state legislature will not pass a budget before the session's scheduled April 23rd finish. House and Senate each write operating and capital budgets. The latter is where the funding needs to be to protect Blanchard Mountain's core 1600 acres from logging. The House capital budget has the funds; the Senate has none for Blanchard. For the details and advice on what we can do, see Skagit Land Trust's webpage: **<http://www.skagitlandtrust.org/pages/takeaction.aspx>** Among the legislators involved in reconciling the different budget versions are ones representing Skagit Audubon members.

At our chapter's April meeting, Paul Bannick gave a great presentation on owls and made a plea for opposing transfer of nationally owned public lands to the states and then their likely privatization. Most of the owls he showed were photographed on public lands, which comprise much of the most important habitat for wildlife. Earlier this year, there was strong push-back by environmentalists and hunting and fishing groups to an attempt in Congress to advance the land transfer agenda. Here in Skagit County, public outcry caused our county commissioners to end membership in the American Lands Council, an advocacy group for transferring federal lands and a supporter of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge occupation. The latest strategy to be aware of is the attempt in Congress to weaken the Antiquities Act of 1906. Under this act's authority many iconic places in America received their first protection: Grand Canyon, Zion, Olympic, and many more. Let your federal elected officials know that we value the effectiveness of the Antiquities Act in protecting wildlife habitat and places of great cultural and scenic value while keeping them in public ownership and open to all.

SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING ~ MAY

BY JOAN MELCHER

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

WED. – MAY 3 – BAKER RIVER

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. Meet at 8:30 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. 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) or Senior Pass is required.**

WED. – MAY 10 – LOST LAKE TRAIL

Hike to a mirror lake in a rock trench on Chuckanut Mountain! Both options below will utilize a new trail. The Rock Trail, completed in 2014, connects the Cyrus Gates Overlook with the Lost Lake Trail in the trench below.

Hiking continues on page 5



Option I: This is a **STRENUOUS** 10 mile hike with an elevation gain of 2,400 feet. For Option I, meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Lost Lake parking lot (formerly known as the Clayton Beach lot) at the south end of Larrabee State Park off Chuckanut Drive. Return time for this hike will be 3 p.m.

Option II: This is a **MUCH LESS STRENUOUS** 7.2 mile hike with several hundred feet of elevation gain. For Option II 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 at about milepost 18.5. Option II hikers will pool rides and drive to the Cyrus Gates Overlook where the hike will begin.

Return time for this hike is to the North Chuckanut parking lot at 2 p.m. Drivers will need to be shuttled back to the Cyrus Gates Overlook. **A Discover Pass is required for those parking in Larrabee State Park. It is not required for those parking in the North Chuckanut parking lot.**

WED. – MAY 17 – EBEBY’S LANDING, CEMETERY, & PRATT LOOP

This hike will begin at Ebey's Landing parking area and it will include a side trip to the cemetery, the Pratt Loop, the Bluff Trail and a return to the cars by way of the beach. It is up to 7.6 miles. Meet at 9 a.m. at the March Point Park-n-Ride. (At the stop light at the intersection of HWY 20 and the Christianson and March Point Roads, turn **RIGHT** and then an immediate **RIGHT** turn onto the frontage road and soon turn in to the **LEFT** Park-n-Ride.) **OR** meet at Ebey’s Landing at 9:45 a.m. **A Discover Pass is required to park at Ebey’s Landing, though it is not required on the side of the road along the beach.**

WED. – MAY 24 – FORT EBEBY STATE PARK & THE KETTLES

This hike will be a self-guided hike at Fort Ebey State Park and/or on the Kettles trails near Fort Ebey State Park. The number of miles hiked here depends on the individual. There should be wild rhododendrons in bloom. Meet at 9 a.m. at the March Point Park-n-Ride. (At the stop light at the intersection of HWY 20 and the Christianson and March Point Roads, turn **RIGHT** and then an immediate **RIGHT** turn onto the frontage road and soon turn **LEFT** into the Park-n-Ride.) **A Discover Pass is required to park at Fort Ebey State Park.**

WED. – MAY 31 – SAN JUAN ISLAND

Hike on trails at American Camp, Whale Watch Park/Lime Kiln State Park, and English Camp. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at March Point Park-n-Ride to pool rides **UNLESS** you have a full vehicle, in which

case you may go directly to the ferry terminal. No ferry walk-ons as we will need cars on the island. We will take the 9:30 a.m. ferry from Anacortes, arriving in Friday Harbor at 10:35 a.m. Return ferry sailings are 4:15 p.m., 6:25 p.m. and 7:45 p.m.

NOTE: Drivers must make a reservation for both the outbound and return ferry trips.

Therefore, each person who plans to drive should know who plans to ride with them. Drivers can notify me, if they have room for riders (Joan Melcher, see contact info above). People who wish to ride can notify me and I will put you on a waiting list. Carpool according to your return times. People staying on the island for dinner will take the 6:25 p.m. or 7:45 p.m. sailing back. **The cost of the vehicle ferry fare will be split among the riders; each person will pay their own individual ferry fare.**

WED. – JUNE 7 – OYSTER DOME

Hike to the Oyster Dome on Blanchard Mountain. In both options below, the hiker can hike on the completed Blanchard Connector Trail with its switchbacks replacing the steep section to the main trail that leads to the Dome.

OPTION 1: Begin and end at the Pacific Northwest Trail T.H. on Chuckanut Drive near mile post 10. The hike is 9 miles, with a 2,000 ft. elevation gain. **Meet at 9 a.m. at this location.**

Hikers need to download the map and instructions from the SWITMO web site, **SWITMO.org**. Go to the “Great Hikes” page and under “Skagit County hikes” click on “Blanchard, Oyster Dome from Chuckanut Drive and back.” If you wish, you may meet Joan Melcher at the Chuckanut Park-n-Ride by 8:30 a.m. to get a map and instructions. **At 2:30 p.m. return** to the Pacific Northwest Trail T.H.

OPTION 2: Begin and end 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 at 2:00 p.m.** to the Pacific Northwest Trail T.H. 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, exit 231 from I-5 on the east side of I-5.



**SKAGIT AUDUBON FIELD NOTES:
MARCH 16 to APRIL 18, 2017**

by **PAM PRITZL**

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 Tweepers** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding menu, Bird Sightings submenu)*

WATERFOWL

Canvasback 2 on Lake Erie on 4-1 (GB); 1 on Lake Erie on 4-18 (PP)

Barrow's Goldeneye 2, a pair, on Minkler Flats on 4-9 and 4-11 (GB)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 1 at Diosbud Creek Road on 3-25 (GB)

OSPREYS

Osprey 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area on 4-9 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Rough-legged Hawk 7 at Samish Flats on 3-25 (NOH)

RAILS

Sora 1 on Minkler Flats on 4-17 (GB)

PLOVERS

Black-bellied Plover 15 at Samish Flats on 3-25 (NOH)

SANDPIPERS. PHALAROPES and ALLIES

Lesser Yellowlegs 2 at Skagit wildlife Area on 4-6 (GB)

Long-billed Curlew 1 at Butler Flats on 4-9 (NOH); 2 at the West 90, Samish Island, on 4-16 (GB)

Least Sandpiper 30 at Bingo Hall Lagoon on 4-18 (PP)

Western Sandpiper 2 at Samish Flats on 3-25 (NOH); 2 at Bingo Hall Lagoon on 4-18 (PP)

GULLS and TERNS

Bonaparte's Gull 17 at Jensen Access on 3-16 (GB)

Glaucous Gull 1 on Samish Flats on 4-1 (GB)

Caspian Tern 1 at March Point on 4-9 (GB)

OWLS

Great Horned Owl 1 heard near the SHIP trail by the Anacortes ferry terminal on 4-12 (NOH)

Barred Owl 1 heard near the SHIP trail by the Anacortes ferry terminal on 4-12 (NOH)

Short-eared Owl 4 at Samish Flats on 3-25 (NOH)

Northern Saw-whet Owl 1 at Harry Osborne State Forest on 3-18 (GB)

SWIFTS

Vaux's Swift 10 at Campbell Lake on 4-18 (PP)

FLYCATCHERS

Say's Phoebe 10 in Marblemount on 4-1 (RM); 1 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 4-15 (GB)

SWALLOWS

Northern Rough-winged Swallow 1 on Minkler Flats on 3-27 (GB)

Cliff Swallow 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Area on 4-6 (GB)

WRENS

Marsh Wren 1 at Samish Flats on 3-25 (NOH)

THRUSHES

Western Bluebird 2 in Marblemount on 4-1 (RM)

Mountain Bluebird 2 on Minkler Flats on 3-27 (GB); 19 in Rockport on 4-1 (RM); 11 in the Sauk Valley on 4-1 (RM)

Townsend's Solitaire 1 at corner of 9th and G in Anacortes on 4-5 (JOC); 1 in Alice Bay yard, Samish Island 4-9 to 4-14 (THA); 1 in Concrete on 4-15 (GB)

WARBLERS

Common Yellowthroat 1 in Lyman on 4-6 (GB); 1 at mile 2 Centennial Trail on 4-9 (PP)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

Chipping Sparrow 1 in Burlington on 4-17 (GB)

Dark-eyed Junco 1 slate-colored in Camano Island yard on 4-2 (PP)

FINCHES and ALLIES

Evening Grosbeak 2 at Bryson Road on 3-25 (GB)

MAMMALS

River Otter 2 off the Guemes Channel Trail on 4-12 (NOH)

Beaver 2 at Lake Erie on 4-12 (NOH)

Mink 4 at Lake Erie on 4-12 (NOH)

Coyote heard in Anacortes neighborhood and another on the SHIP trail on 4-12 (NOH)

(THA) Thais & Howard Armstrong; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (JOC) John O'Connell; (NOH) Neil O'Hara; (PP) Pam Pritzl





2016 Purple Martin Work Party Ship Harbor at Anacortes, Washington

to help do some spring cleaning, labeling and general housekeeping. The 36 nesting boxes that our Chapter monitors need to be checked for winter storm damage, relabeled and fresh nesting material added before the colony returns.

We will be walking out at very low tide across mud, climbing ladders and getting our hands dirty! Of course there's some opportunity to do a little birding along the Ship Harbor nature trail but our focus will be on sprucing up the colony site. Be sure to wear appropriate boots, jackets and work gloves.

If you want to come observe or simply learn about

Purple Martins and our citizen science monitoring project, please come too. We are always looking for folks interested in monitoring the nesting colony. The time commitment is minimal and the rewards are amazing. Purple Martins are very social birds and well adapted to being around human activity. The easiest access to the colony site is via the Ship Harbor nature trail. Coming from Anacortes, head west on 12th Street/Hwy 20/Oakes Ave. Turn right into the San Juan Passage housing development. Turn left on Edwards Way and follow the street until reaching the cul de sac parking area down the hill at the water's edge. We will meet in the parking area at 11:00, walk the short trail to the colony site doing some birding along the way, have a short orientation talk and begin work by 11:30 (peak low tide). Hope to see you there.

If Mother Nature decides to send sideways blowing rain on Tuesday, May 9th, please check in with us to see if we are rescheduling.

**Leaders: Mark and Irene Perry,
Irene@skagitaudubon.org**

Saturday, May 20 Upper Skagit River Birding 7:00 a.m. to Mid-day

Come bird the peak of spring activity for upriver birds, with Jan and Keith Wiggers. Meet in Sedro-Woolley along the Food Pavilion parking lot's east side to carpool at 7:00 a.m. (remember birds don't sleep in May!). This will be a good opportunity to see some of the nesting birds as well as observing interesting behaviors in our colorful, migratory species. Bring a lunch and drinks. Plan to be out until mid-afternoon seeking birds in some of the best birders' haunts of the lovely upper Skagit Valley.

**Leaders: Keith and Jan Wiggers
jkwiggers@gmail.com.
Cell phone: 360-540-3464**

Skagit Audubon "Publications Chair" Needed

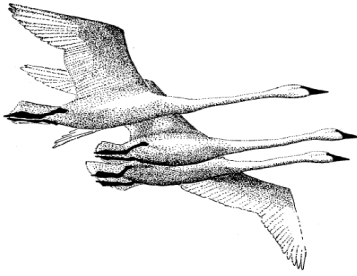
A volunteer is needed to take on putting together *The Skagit Flyer*, the newsletter, which is the main means our chapter has of communicating with members, whether via the web or paper copy.

After doing a wonderful job for 8 years as Publications Chair, Jackie Boss is stepping down.

The job involves receiving monthly information on field trips, hikes, and bird sightings plus other regular monthly items from the committee chairs. There is also the opportunity to select & include other relevant items.

For more information, please contact Jackie directly at 360-299-8067 or jackieboss@yahoo.com.





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Purple Martin "Work" Trip
Tuesday, May 9, 2017
Ship Harbor, Anacortes
11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
See pages 1 & 7

May 2017 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 30	1	2 Skagit Audubon Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	3 Hike: Baker River	4	5	6
7	8	9 Skagit Audubon General Meeting: Social: 7:00 PM Meeting: 7:30 PM Purple Martin "Work" Trip 11:00 am-1:30 pm	10 Hike: Lost Lake Trail	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Hike: Ebey's Landing, Cemetery & Pratt Loop	18	19	20 Field Trip: Upper Skagit River Birding
21	22	23	24 Hike: Fort Ebey State Park & The Kettles	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 Hike: San Juan Island June 7 Hike: Oyster Dome	June 1	June 2	June 3

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

