

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 34 No.7

SEPTEMBER 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 field trip 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!

**Thursday, September 3
Southbound**

**Shorebird Migration
British Columbia**

7:30 a.m. ~ 4:00 p.m., approx.

Some of the best shorelines for observing shorebirds are north of us. It's a fun challenge to sort out the different species, shapes

Field Trips continue on page 6

SEPTEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

MARINE SHORELINE RESTORATION

by Lisa Kaufman

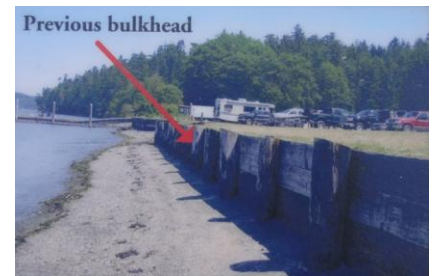
Tuesday, September 8, 2015

7:00 Social; 7:30 Program

Padilla Bay Interpretive Ctr.

10441 Bayview-Edison Road

Mt. Vernon, Washington



Cornet Bay: Before
Photo by Ivar Dolph

Seabirds rely on healthy habitats and the small fish that live in those habitats. When seawalls were built in the past, it caused the sand and gravel that is necessary for the spawning of forage fish to be washed away. Sand lance and Pacific smelt lay their eggs on these beaches and often when the sand and gravel is restored the fish return. Lisa Kaufman will talk to us about restoration efforts undertaken by the Skagit Marine Resources Committee and the Northwest Straits Foundation in Skagit County.

Lisa Kaufman is the Nearshore Program Manager with the Northwest Straits Foundation. She works with the local Marine Resources

Committees to identify and implement habitat restoration projects throughout the seven counties of the Northwest Straits region. Some current projects include removal of hard shoreline armoring at Bowman Bay and Fort Townsend, and the next phase of shoreline restoration at Cornet Bay. Previously, Lisa was the Aquatic Lands Restoration Manager at the Washington Department of Natural Resources for over 9 years. In that position, Lisa worked on a range of projects from creosote piling removal, marine debris removal, and near shore restoration including the restoration project at Secret Harbor on Cypress Island.



Cornet Bay: After
Photo by Ivar Dolph

Lisa holds a BA in environmental biology from the University of Colorado.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

President: Irene Perry
irene@skagitaudubon.org
Vice President: VACANT
Immediate Past President: Phil Wright
phil@skagitaudubon.org
Secretary: Mark Perry
Treasurer: Hella Lee
hlee@fidalgo.net
360-848-5937

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
skagitmembers@gmail.com

Programs: VACANT
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
Ron Holmes
ronh@skagitaudubon.org
Bob Kuntz
annebobkuntz@gmail.com
360-424-9099
Alice Turner
alicet2@msn.com

Hospitality: VACANT

Webmaster: Ron Pera
skagitaudubon@gmail.com



Male Wood Duck
Photo by Ron Holmes

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 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 web site. Membership includes all members of your household.
\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years

I wish to donate \$_____ to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Tax #91-1207770

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



Hi nature lovers!

Mark your calendar for this fall's line-up of great programs, field trips and hikes. Our programs are held each second Tuesday of the month at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center. Arrive at 7:00 p.m. for a fun social time before the program begins at 7:30. At least three field trips are offered each month throughout Skagit County and the surrounding area. All levels of birding experience are welcome on field trips. Hikes are planned on Wednesdays with various degrees of difficulty. Check our website often for calendar updates at skagitaudubon.org.

Skagit Audubon continues to have a strong voice in conservation issues affecting our county and surrounding areas. For updates read Tim Manns' monthly conservation report or hear his summary at each monthly program. Stay tuned for letter writing and comment opportunities where you can make a difference.

Many volunteer opportunities are available ranging from one time events to ongoing positions with different time commitments. Examples are assisting with education events at schools and festivals, help before and after monthly meetings, and filling open chair positions on our board. For more information on these opportunities, contact irene@skagitaudubon.org.

Thank you to Phil Wright for leading our chapter over the past two years as President and his willingness to continue to serve as an active board member. Many current board members are past presidents, chairpersons or representatives who volunteer their time and talent to keep our chapter strong, active and a recognized advocate for environmental causes in our communities. A special welcome to our two newest board representatives: Jane Brandt and Ron Holmes.

As President, I encourage you to attend at least one event or activity each month, inform others in your community on a conservation issue important to you and invite a friend, relative or new neighbor to a program, field trip or hike. Our mission is watching birds, protecting habitat and connecting with nature. Spread the word and share this mission with others. Stay involved and together we'll make a difference.

Take the Pledge to Keep Cats Indoors

Ever since the invention of kitty litter, cat owners have realized the many benefits of keeping their furry companions safely indoors. This transition has enabled cats to **live longer, healthier lives**, resulting in fewer trips to the veterinarian, and extending the years of mutual companionship. Keeping cats indoors also **protects birds and other wildlife** from a cat's instinctive predatory drive.

To stand up and be counted among the many cat owners doing their part to protect cats and birds, **PLEASE GOOGLE "Take the Pledge to Keep Cats Indoors"**.
By signing this pledge, you agree or reaffirm your commitment to keep cats safely indoors or on a leash.



SKAGIT AUDUBON SEPTEMBER CONSERVATION REPORT

By **TIM MANNS, CONSERVATION CHAIR**

Conservation issues don't take summer vacation, and at this early August writing, there are more than the *Flyer* can cover. Here are some highlights. Most recently, Skagit Audubon wrote the Army suggesting topics to address in the environmental assessment for very large helicopter training areas on and over public lands in Southwest Washington and the east side of the North Cascades. Potential impacts on spotted owls and marbled murrelets are among Audubon's concerns. Your chapter also commented to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council on Tesoro Savage's planned Columbia River terminal at Vancouver for transferring crude oil from trains to ships.

Earlier this year, Skagit Audubon joined others in trying to save privately-owned forest and wetlands adjacent to Mount Vernon's Little Mountain Park from clearcutting. The city made a concerted effort, and Skagit Land Trust spent many hours negotiating with Nielsen Brothers Logging about buying the most ecologically significant acres. When the company raised its asking price to five times what they had paid, talk ended, and clear-cutting is now underway. There are minimal buffers for a few of the property's many wetlands, including headwaters of salmon-bearing creeks, and no protection for most. A movement is rising to change the state law which permitted overruling Mount Vernon's critical areas ordinance.

In September the comment period should open for the scope of the hard-won environmental impact statement (EIS) on Shell Anacortes' proposed rail facility. This fall may also see the draft EIS for the proposed coal terminal at Cherry Point with an opportunity for public comment.

If you'd like to see the monthly summary of conservation issues prepared for the Skagit Audubon Board, contact me at conservation@skagitaudubon.org.

SKAGIT AUDUBON FIELD NOTES:

By **PAM PRITZL**

May 16 through August 6, 2015

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

WATERFOWL

Brant 1 at March Point on 8-1 (GB)
Blue-winged Teal 2 at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island on 5-21 (TM); 9 at the Skagit Wildlife Area on 5-25 (GB)
Greater Scaup 1 at March Point on 6-25 (GB)
Harlequin Duck 1 at Rosario Head on 6-17 (GB)
White-winged Scoter 2 off Clayton Beach, Larrabee State Park on 6-1 (TM)
Long-tailed Duck 2 at March Point on 5-28 (GB)
Bufflehead 1 at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island on 5-21 (TM)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

White-tailed Ptarmigan 2 at Skyline Divide, Mt.

Baker on 7-27 (BC, TM)
Spruce Grouse 1 near Hart's Pass, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest on 6-25 (TM)

LOONS

Western Grebe 1 off Clayton Beach, Larrabee State Park on 6-1 (TM)

GREBES

Pacific Loon 1 at March Point on 5-28 (GB)
Common Loon 4 off Clayton Beach, Larrabee State Park on 8-2 (TM)

HERONS and ALLIES

Green Heron 1 in Burlington on 5-16 (GB)

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, and ALLIES

Wandering Tattler 1 at Rosario Head, Deception Pass State Park on 8-3 (RK, KK)
Dunlin 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Area on 5-25 (GB)

ALCIDS

Tufted Puffin 1 off Rosario Head at Deception Pass State Park on 8-4 (RM)

Field Notes continue on page 5



Field Notes continued from page 4

GULLS and TERNS

Franklin's Gull 1 on the Samish Flats on 5-16 (GB)

NIGHTHAWKS

Common Nighthawk 3 at Harry Osborne State Forest on 6-16 (GB); 1 east of Sedro-Woolley on 7-1 (DW)

SWIFTS

Black Swift 2 at South Cascade River Road on 6-14 (GB); several on 6-16 (SAS)

FLYCATHERS

Least Flycatcher 1 each at Cockreham Island and the Skagit Wildlife Area on 5-25 (GB)

Dusky Flycatcher 1 at Barnaby Slough on 5-31 (GB)

Eastern Kingbird 1 at Barnaby Slough pm 5-31 (GB)

VIREOS

Red-eyed Vireo 1 at NP 213 Road on 6-6 (GB)

CORVIDS

Gray Jay 1 at Austin Pass, Mt. Baker 8-6 (PP)

Western Scrub-Jay 1 in Anacortes yard on 7-12(JH); 1 in Burlington on 7-24 (HS); 1 in Burlington on 7-27 (GB)

SWALLOWS

Purple Martin 13 at Ship Harbor, Anacortes on 5-30 (GB)

WRENS

Rock Wren 1 on Sauk Mountain on 7-1 (GB)

House Wren 6 at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island on 5-21 (TM); 2 at Rosario Head on 6-17 (GB)

THRUSHES

Townsend's Solitaire 1 on Sauk Mountain on 7-1 (GB)

Hermit Thrush 1 on Diosbud Creek on 5-31 (GB); 1 on Table Mountain on 8-6 (PP)

WARBLERS

Nashville Warbler 1 near Rockport on 6-14 (GB)

American Redstart 1 each at NP 213 and County Line Ponds on 6-6 (GB)

Yellow-breasted Chat 1 at Martin Road on 6-21 (GB)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

Chipping Sparrow 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Area on 5-25 (GB)

Fox Sparrow 1 on Sauk Mountain on 5-23 and 7-1 (GB)

Golden-crowned Sparrow 1 at the Skagit Wildlife Area on 5-16 (GB)

BLACKBIRDS and ORILES

Yellow-headed Blackbird 1 on Minkler Flats on 5-16 (GB)

Bullock's Oriole 1 immature female in Anacortes on 7-27 (KH)

FINCHES and ALLIES

House Finch 1 albino in Mount Vernon yard on 7-11 (JV)

Evening Grosbeak 3 pair in Burlington yard on 6-8 (LE)

(GB) Gary Bletsch; (BC) Brenda Cunningham; (LE) Larry Edwards; (JH) Joe Halton; (KH) Kristi Hein; (KK) Kraig Kemper; (RK) Robert Kuntz; (TM) Tim Manns; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (HS) Herb Sargo; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Field Trip; (JV) Jon Vanderheyden; (DW) Daria Wheatley

SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING ~ SEPTEMBER

BY JOAN MELCHER

Keep in mind that weather conditions, forest fires and smoke, logging, construction, aggressive bears or other unexpected circumstances may cause changes in the following hikes. Call JOAN MELCHER, if you have questions ~ contact information is below. 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. Information on Wilderness Hikes is too lengthy to print here, contact Joan Melcher, below, for details.

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

** means that U.S. Forest Service parking permit is required.*

***WED. – SEPT. 2 – CUTTHROAT PASS**

Do this hike on a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail as either a round trip, 10.0 or 11.0 miles, or as a one way, 10.5 miles. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the east side

of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. At 4 p.m. return to the trailhead.

WED. – SEPT. 9 – WILDERNESS HIKES

Skagit Audubon Hiking continues on page 6



Skagit Audubon Hiking continued from page 5

WED. – SEPT. 16 – WILDERNESS HIKES

WED. – SEPT. 23 – WILDERNESS HIKES

***WED. – SEPT. 30 – SCHRIEBERS MEADOW**

Choose from three options—Railroad Grade, Park Butte, or the Scott Paul Trail. You'll see great views if the weather is good. There are significant streams to cross by rock hopping or wading. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. At 4 p.m. return to the trailhead..

WED. – OCT. 7 – IRON GOAT TRAIL

Field Trips continued from page 1

and sounds and our leaders are good at finding the rare birds in a flock. Join Jan and Keith Wiggers for this fair-season trip timed with the right tides and avoiding the crowds of Labor Day weekend. The sites we visit will be decided upon according to what shows up. We might go only as far north as Blackies Spit, or farther to Iona or Reifel or Boundary Bay. Meet at Cook Rd. Park and Ride (Exit 232) across from Starbucks/Subway so that people have access to toilets, food for breakfast and/or lunch, and coffee. We will leave by 8 a.m., so be there about 7:30 a.m. to make any pit stops or purchases. The tides are good all day on Sept. 3, so we will probably get back to the parking area late afternoon. Remember to bring a passport or enhanced drivers license and a crossing-friendly lunch. (no stone fruit that grows in BC). Bring scopes if you have them. Wear appropriate clothing. Please let the leaders know if you plan to join them. It's ok to show up if you decide to join us at the last minute too. **Leaders: Jan and Keith Wiggers, jkwiggers@gmail.com**

Saturday, September 19

Vaux's Swift Roost ~ Old N. State Hospital

Sedro-Woolley

5:45 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

Mid-September is a good time to catch the southward migration and nightly roosting of Vaux's Swifts at the former Northern State Hospital. The old powerhouse stack where the swifts roost for the night is a designated Important Bird Area (IBA) due to the thousands using it spring and fall en route to and from Latin America. As night falls, the fast-flying swifts converge above the towering stack in a

This trail, on the old Great Northern route, connects Wellington and Scenic. There are different starting and ending point options. Use shuttle cars if needed. There is a 1,000 foot elevation gain if you hike uphill between Scenic and Wellington. The hike is 5 to 10 miles depending on the route taken. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Mt. Vernon Safeway. A flashlight is recommended, if you wish to walk through the Windy Point tunnel. Seattle, Snohomish County, and Camano Island hikers can meet the group at the Skykomish Ranger Station, which is located a few miles east of Skykomish on Highway 2 at 9 a.m. At 3 p.m. return to Scenic.

A Northwest Forest Parking Permit is required.

great swirl before diving in. On prime rainless evenings, this is one of Skagit's great avian phenomena. Be forewarned: if it rains, we may see very few swifts. Bring binoculars, folding chair, spotting scope (optional). Dress for the weather. Meet at the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20, just west of here Highway 9 turns north) at 5:45 p.m. to arrange carpools. **Leader: Tim Manns, 360-336-8753 or conservation@skagitaudubon.org**

Saturday, September 26, 2015

Salmon & Birds in the Upper Skagit Valley

8:30 a.m. to Mid-afternoon

The Skagit River hosts more species and runs of salmonids than any other waterway entering the U.S. portion of the Salish Sea. Fisheries biologist Brady Green will lead us to locations up-valley where we can particularly see pink (humpback) salmon returning to spawn. This is an excellent opportunity to view examples of the aquatic habitat so important to wild salmonids. Along the way we'll spot birds too: eagles, mergansers, dippers, and more. Bring binoculars and lunch. Polaroid sunglasses will help reduce water surface glare when observing salmon and their redds. Meet in front of the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20 just before Highway 9 separates to turn north) at 8:30 a.m. to arrange carpools. Dress for the weather, remembering it's often wetter upriver.

Leaders: Brady Green & Tim Manns, 360-336-8753 or **conservation@skagitaudubon.org**

Field Trips continue on page 7



Field Trips continued from page 6

Saturday & Sunday, October 10 & 11
Grand Coulee Geologic Field Trip
Eastern Washington

Geologists Gene Kiver, a member of our Skagit Audubon Society, and Bruce Bjornstad will be leading hikes in the Grand Coulee. The Saturday hike is a climb to top of Steamboat Rock and the Sunday hike will be on the Wagon Road Trail in Northrup Canyon. Both hikes are in the Upper Grand Coulee and provide spectacular views of the Grand Coulee and other Missoula Floods features. State Park campgrounds and motels in the town of Grand Coulee are available.

Steamboat Rock (Saturday) is a 4-5 mile round trip hike that includes a challenging ascent and descent of 700 feet on a poorly maintained trail and an easy flat trail around the perimeter of the Steamboat mesa. People with vertigo problems and lack of good balance as well as young children are discouraged.

Wagon Road Trail (Sunday) is a relatively easy family-friendly 4-mile roundtrip trail that leads to the summit of the plateau scabland along the east wall of the Grand Coulee.

Leaders: Bruce Bjornstad & Gene Kiver,
360-299-2759 or **froghollow@sisna.com**



New Yard Species!

By Joe Halton

On the afternoon of 7/12/2015 my wife called to me from the kitchen and told me that there was a Western Scrub-Jay in the Yard! I thought it doubtful. I have never seen one in Western Washington, but I rushed to the window thinking that we might have a Steller's Jay, itself a very rare visitor on Fidalgo Island.

However my wife was right ... it was a Western Scrub-Jay!

I raced for my camera and sneaked out the door, trying to surreptitiously set up my camera before the bird left. Unfortunately I was in its full view. I managed one lousy photo before it briefly jumped to a staging stick in my inventory and then disappeared into a group of young madrones and fir trees. The photo was good enough for identification but not much else.

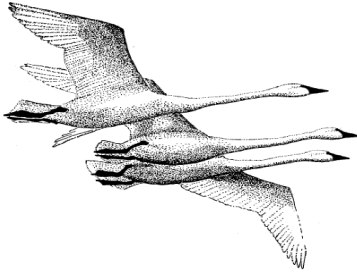
Thus began a wait to see if the bird would reappear. Fifty minutes later there was a variety of birds among some chickadees and nuthatches at the edge of one of the madrones, and a minute or so later the Scrub-Jay flew out of the trees and onto one of our static bird baths in the yard. I began taking photos and continued as it flew to a staging stick for our platform feeder and then back into the madrones. Fortunately when it entered the madrones, it passed on a perch that gave me a good visual corridor so I was able to obtain even more photos!



We've lived in the Cap Sante neighborhood for over 14 years and this is the first Scrub-Jay we've had in the neighborhood, to my knowledge. Indeed, it's the first I've seen in Western Washington... and it chose to show itself in our yard while I had my camera ready!

To visit Joe Halton's prior blog writings on birds at home & on his travels, go to wingsoverskagit.com





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

September 2015 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 30	Aug. 31	1 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	2 Hike: Cutthroat Pass	3 Field Trip: Southbound Shorebird Migration	4	5
6	7	8 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	9 Hike: Wilderness Hikes	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Hike: Wilderness Hikes	17	18	19 Field Trip: Vaux's Swift Roost Old State Northern Hospital
20	21	22	23 Hike: Wilderness Hikes	24	25	26 Field Trip: Salmon & Birds Upper Skagit Valley
27	28	29	30 Hike: Schriebers Meadow	Oct. 1	Oct. 2	Oct. 3
Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7 Hike: Iron Goat Trail	Oct. 8	Oct. 9	Oct. 10 - 11 Field Trip: Grand Coulee, E. WA

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

