

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 35 No.1

JANUARY 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, January 7
Border Birding Sites
Reifel Bird Sanctuary, B.C.
7:30 a.m. to Late Afternoon**

Keith and Jan Wiggers will be our guides for a trip to the ever-popular birding sights in south-

Field Trips continue on page 7

JANUARY MEETING AND PROGRAM

Washington's Native Trumpeter & Tundra Swans by Martha Jordan

Tuesday, January 12, 2016
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10441 Bayview-Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



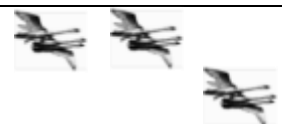
Trumpeter Swans
Photo by Gerald Plowman

MARTHA JORDAN, well-known swan biologist, will present a program on Washington's native Trumpeter and Tundra swans. You will learn about their life history, biology, and some swan identification tips. This year the program is updated with new information on migration patterns in Tundra Swans and how Washington's west and east sides are connected for swans in the North Cascades.

She will shed some light on the problems and controversies these birds face on their wintering grounds and what is needed to insure their future. Get updated on the swan lead poisoning die-off, habitat issues and more. Martha will share some excellent photos that help clarify the difficult identification of these swans.

Trumpeter Swans, the largest waterfowl in the world, have been brought back from the brink of extinction and once again grace our skies and waterways. They trumpet the success of our efforts and continue to call us to action for conservation of farmland and wetlands.

Come, share and learn the facts, myths and legends of the swans of Washington's winter. You will also discover ways in which you can contribute to our understanding of swans in Washington just by doing what you already do outdoors.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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irene@skagitaudubon.org

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Ruddy Ducks

Photo by Ron Holmes

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 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 844-428-3826. **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 New Member _____ Renewal Member _____

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.)

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 _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

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

National Audubon Society Y21
P.O. 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



Shelters for PUMA's in Skagit County

In the throes of winter, here is an opportunity to prepare for spring. With your help Skagit Audubon can prepare for the arrival of Purple Martins (PUMA) to their nesting boxes here in Skagit County. There is an established colony on Fidalgo Island where more nesting boxes are needed. We have two experts already recruited to assist, but we need support from our membership. The project will not move forward without volunteers. The goals of our project are to build, install and monitor boxes for this existing site and additional locations.

The design of the boxes is very simple with specifications ideal for Purple Martins to nest with minimal disruption from predators and weather. A volunteer is needed to manage building the boxes. Responsibilities include acquiring the necessary supplies, recruiting volunteers and scheduling a date and location in February or March for assembly. You do not need to be a carpenter, just an organizer. Others can help by donating wood, your time to build or by making a financial donation to this project. Our experts will help too.

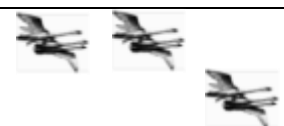


Erecting Purple Martin
Nesting Boxes
Ship Harbor, Anacortes, WA

The time to install the boxes is late March or early April before the return of the PUMA “scouts.” These early birds are returning nesting pairs from previous years. First time nesting birds arrive later in April. The hope of this project is to attract first time nesters to the new boxes. A volunteer is needed to organize the date and installation of the boxes at the existing site and possibly additional locations. Several volunteers will be needed to install at the Fidalgo site during low tide. You will need high rubber boots to assist.

The ongoing phase will be monitoring the PUMA boxes over the nesting season. A volunteer is needed to organize Citizen Science volunteers who will observe and record their results on provided tally sheets. This is an opportunity to support PUMA conservation efforts on the West Coast by becoming involved in Skagit County. The west coast populations of PUMAs are dependent on old woodpecker holes or man-made boxes for nesting. With habitat loss and competition from invasive species like European Starlings and House Sparrows, PUMAs struggle to find successful nesting sites.

You can make a difference by volunteering to build, install and/or monitor PUMA nesting boxes. The success of this project depends on your time and financial contribution. Please contact me at irene@skagitaudubon.org on how you will help provide shelters for PUMAs!



SKAGIT AUDUBON JANUARY CONSERVATION REPORT

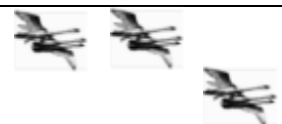
By **TIM MANNS, CONSERVATION CHAIR**

On January 11 the Washington State legislature convenes for a short, 60-day session. The state budget is written every other year during the longer session, and while this would not normally be budget-writing time, a major focus will be meeting the court mandate on funding education. There will be little time for policy bills, but Audubon Washington is working for at least some movement towards legislation preventing a recurrence of the type of wetland destruction and clearcutting that took place adjacent to Mt. Vernon's Little Mountain Park last summer. Skagit Audubon's resolution to Audubon's statewide conservation committee in parallel with the resolution of Mt. Vernon's City Council has started the ball rolling.

For most environmental and conservation matters of concern to Audubon, this state legislative session will be about holding the line against weakening laws and policies. When the 2015 session did not enact Governor Inslee's carbon cap-and-trade program, he directed the Department of Ecology to write a rule under the state's Clean Air Act capping and progressively reducing emissions from the state's largest producers of greenhouse gases. The organizations in the Environmental Priorities Coalition, including Audubon, expect a legislative attempt to handicap the rule. We have one of the most progressive governors in the US on addressing climate change, but some state legislators will try to block effective action. During the legislative session, Audubon Washington will alert us at key moments for contacting our legislators.

At the federal level, in mid-December the congressional omnibus appropriations agreement was a mixed bag for the environment. The Land and Water Conservation Fund was revived for 3 years after being allowed to expire a few months ago for the only time in its half-century of existence. In 1964 Washington Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson first introduced the act creating this fund which has been a major source for land conservation at every level ever since. Our own Senator Cantwell, ranking member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, played an important role in saving it. The omnibus bill importantly does not include permission to build a road through Alaska's Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. This would have overridden wilderness designation and degraded the largest eelgrass meadow on the West Coast (Padilla Bay is second) and essential habitat for brant and many thousands of other birds.

The congressional omnibus agreement extended tax incentives for solar and wind energy but lifted the 40-year old ban on exporting US crude oil. Creating incentives for pumping more US oil does not support the spirit of the Paris Agreement to reduce fossil fuel use worldwide as quickly as possible. Here in the Northwest, it means more pressure to build port facilities for transferring mid-continent crude from trains to ships for export overseas. The campaign to stop building these facilities just became even more important.



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

Greater White-fronted Goose 2 at Barnaby Slough on 11-29 (GB)

Tundra Swan 1 "Bewick's" in Dodge Valley on 11-27 (RM)

Canvasback 31 on Challenge Lake on 12-6 (GB)

Ruddy Duck 24 at pond on Kelleher Road Butler Flats on 12-16 (RH)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ring-necked Pheasant 1 female in Anacortes yard at B Ave. and 31st St. on 12-2 (KH)

OSPREY

Osprey 1 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 11-25 (RM)

LATE

HAWKS, EAGLES, and ALLIES

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 immature came to bird feeders at Burlington home on 11-23 (LE)

Golden Eagle 1 at Butler Flats on 12-10 (KJW)

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, and ALLIES

Spotted Sandpiper 1 at SR 20 Milepost 100 on 11-29 (GB); 1 at Clayton Beach, Larrabee State Park on 12-4 (TM)

Long-billed Curlew 1 at March Point on 11-27 (RM)

Wilson's Snipe 1 at Northern State Recreation Area, Sedro-Woolley on 12-2 (TM)

ALCIDS

Marbled Murrelet 1 at Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes on 12-6 (GB)

GULLS and TERNs

Black-legged Kittiwake 1 at Rosario Head on 12-5 (GB)

UNUSUAL

Franklin's Gull 1 on Minkler Flats on 11-25 (GB); 2 at Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes on 12-6 (GB)

UNUSUAL

Herring Gull 1 at Rosario Head on 12-5 (GB)

Thayer's Gull 1 in Burlington on 11-25 (GB)

OWLS

Northern Pygmy-Owl 1 at Martin Road on 11-29 (GB)

Great Horned Owl 1 on Butler Hill Sedro-Woolley in backyard on 12-11 (RH)

WOODPECKERS

Downy Woodpecker 1 on suet at Burlington home on 12-3 (LE); pair on suet feeder at Mount Vernon home throughout sighting period (JA)

Hairy Woodpecker pair on suet feeder at Mount Vernon home throughout sighting period (JA)

Pileated Woodpecker 2 near home in Mount Vernon on 12-18 (JA)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 at Northern State Recreation Area on 12-2 (TM)

BUSHTITS

Bushtit 1 at Burlington home from 12-9 to 12-12 (KJW)

KINGLETS

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1 flitting around the bushes at a Burlington home on 12-2 (LE)

THRUSHES

Hermit Thrush 1 at Bay View Cemetery on 11-21 (GB)

Varied Thrush "first of fall" arrived at Burlington home on 11-27 (LE)

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 on suet at Burlington home on 12-4 (LE)

Yellow-rumped Warbler 2 "Audubon's" at home in north Mount Vernon on 11-29 (DW); 1 at Burlington home from 12-9 to 12-13 (KJW)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

Vesper Sparrow 1 at Francis Rd/Thillberg Rd on 11-27 (RM)

Lincoln's Sparrow 1 at Burlington home from 12-9 to 12-14 (KJW)

White-throated Sparrow 1 at Burlington home from 12-2 to 12-17 (KJW)

Harris's Sparrow 1 at Butler Flats from 12-9 to 12-17 (KJW); 1 at Burlington home on 12-12 (GB)

FINCHES and ALLIES

Purple Finch 3 at home in Mount Vernon on 12-4 (JA)

Pine Siskin over 100 at thistle feeder at Camano Island home throughout count period (SRP)

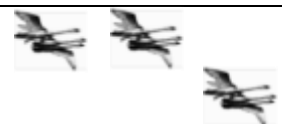
Evening Grosbeak 8 at Camano Island home throughout count period (SRP)

MAMMALS

Porcupine 1 road-kill at SR 20 by Similk Golf Course on 12-6 (GB)

Bobcat 1 in Mount Vernon on 12-1 (JA)

(JA) Jean Ashby; (GB) Gary Bletsch; ((LE) Larry Edwards; (KH) Kristi Hein; (RH) Ron Holmes; (TM) Tim Manns; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (SRP) Sheila and Ron Pera; (KJW) Keith & Jan Wiggers; (DW) Dee Ann Wolfe



Four 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 following hikes. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, snowy or icy road conditions, or forecasts of continued rain. 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. Questions? **Contact Joan Melcher: 360-424-0407** or jdmelcher@comcast.net

WED. DEC. 30 – DUGUALLA STATE PARK

Spend part of a short day-light day at Dugualla State Park, a little-known park north of Oak Harbor. The park's several miles of trails meander through an alder grove, a wetland area, and offer a more challenging, steeper trek to a secluded beach. Meet at Dugualla State Park at 9 a.m. To get there from the Deception Pass Bridge drive toward Oak Harbor. Before you get to Oak Harbor, turn left onto Sleeper Road. Continue on Sleeper Road approximately 2.6 miles until it dead-ends at a metal gate. The hike is a 3.67 mile perimeter loop including a side trip to the beach. There is additional mileage if one does the "interior trails" and a 500 ft. elevation gain.

WA State Discover Pass required for parking.

WED. JAN. 6 - INTERURBAN TRAIL

Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail. Several options are available. There are up to 14 or more miles with a slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Lost Lake Trailhead parking lot, formerly known as 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 and the group you are with.

A Washington State Discover Pass is Required!

WED. JAN. 13 – FRAGRANCE LAKE

Hike to a lovely mirror lake above Larrabee State Park. It is a 7 mile loop with a 1,400 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Lost Lake Trailhead parking lot, formerly known as the Clayton Beach Parking lot. It is at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. You may leave when your carload has safely returned to the trailhead.

A Washington State Discover Pass is Required!

WED. JAN. 20 – SUGAR LOAF & MT. ERIE

Hike in the popular Anacortes Forest Lands! Terry Slotemaker, 360-293-6514, or his designee, 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 usually back to the trailhead by 1 p.m. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

WED. JAN. 27 – THE TOMMY THOMPSON TRAIL. (TTT)

Walk on the Tommy Thompson Trail in Anacortes from the Cap Sante Marina to the far end of the trestle on March Point. It is a 7.2 miles round trip. If desired, walk around part of March Point and back to Anacortes. This is up to 13 or more miles. Meet at 9 a.m. at the north end of the Marina between the restroom and the Preston river boat. Walking shoes are recommended. You may leave when you return to the starting point.

WED. FEB. 3 – WHATCOM FALLS & CREEK, BIG ROCK LOOP, & THE STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE PRESERVE – a number of options

I. Whatcom Falls & Creek: Hike along Whatcom Creek from Whatcom Falls Park to the I-5 Freeway bridge and back. It is a 4.4 miles round trip with a slight elevation gain. Leave when you return to your car.

II. BIG ROCK LOOP: Instead of or in addition to the Whatcom Falls & Creek hike, do this hike. It is a 6 mile loop that begins and ends at Whatcom Falls Park. This loop takes the hiker north with some ups and downs, and a few short, steep sections. Mostly the trail, with some sidewalk, is road walking.

III. STIMPSON FAMILY NATURE PRESERVE: If you wish to do this hike after **I**, **II**, or **both of those above**, 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 exit 231 from I-5 **OR** meet at 9 a.m. at the Whatcom Falls Park parking lot on Arbor Street off 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.



ern BC borderlands including Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Feed chickadees from your hand, observe waterfowl and their iridescent plumage at close range, and look for Saw-Whet Owls. Meet to arrange car pools at 7:30 a.m. across from the Cook Road exit /Highway 99 **Starbucks**. This is just south of Cook Road on highway 99. Come early enough to buy your coffee and use the restroom and **leave by 8 a.m. Yes, it will barely be light when we leave, but will be morning when we get to our destinations.** Bring appropriate ID for the border crossing – either a passport, or an enhanced driver's license, – a crossing-friendly lunch, and a few dollars for the entry fee and bird feed. There will be additional stops for any special birds reported in nearby areas.

**If you plan to attend, please contact ~
Leaders: Keith & Jan Wiggers
360-757-0772 (h) or 360-540-3464 (c)**

**Saturday, January 23
Fidalgo Island Bird Tour
8:00 to 12:00**

Meet at The Store in Anacortes on the corner of 37th and Commercial for pastries and coffee before we begin this bird tour of Fidalgo. We will carpool to the hottest bird sites from the CBC results for the island. We're sure to see Grebes, Loons, Ducks and other waterfowl. We'll seek out winter residents and wonder why they're still here. If the winds are over 15 knots with horizontal rain, please assume this field trip is cancelled. If in doubt, contact me the morning of between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m. at (931) 623-2084.

Leaders: Mark and Irene Perry

**Saturday, January 30
Samish Flats & Beyond
8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

Join us as we explore birds of prey and waterfowl country at the peak of winter birding. We will meet at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center parking lot to carpool and then work our way around Samish flats seeking geese, swans, raptors, shorebirds and more.

Dress for the weather, and bring a lunch or snack, your binoculars and scope if you have one.

**If you plan to attend, please contact ~
Leader: Bob Kuntz, 360-424-9099 or
annebobkuntz@gmail.com
Don't forget your Discover Pass!**

**Saturday, January 2
Christmas Bird Count: Padilla Bay
All day, plus a potluck dinner**

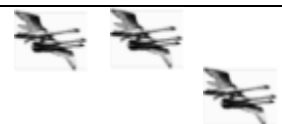
The annual Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count takes place this year on Sat., Jan. 2, 2016. Volunteers are needed to help with this valuable – and fun – endeavor.

Some teams start before dawn to count owls, while others brave the elements from first light to dusk.

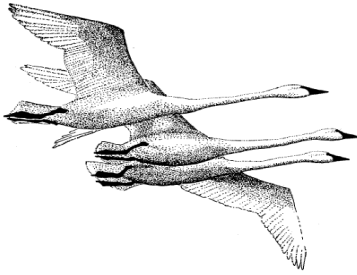
Christmas Count data collected by citizen scientists over more than a century document bird population trends over time.

Plan to spend the day birding, and then – as a bonus – enjoy a potluck dinner and good company at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center. After dinner we tally the day's observations, and swap fun stories (some of them true!).

To participate and for details regarding times, places, and area assignments.
**Leader: Tim Manns, 360-336-8753 or
conservation@skagitaudubon.org**



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PADILLA BAY
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016
More Info On Page 7

January 2016 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec. 27, 2015	Dec. 28, 2015	Dec. 29, 2015	Dec. 30, 2015 Hike: Dugualla State Park	Dec. 31, 2015 News Years Eve	1 New Years Day	2 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird CDC
3	4	5 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	6 Hike: Interurban Trail	7 Field Trip: Reifel Bird Sanctuary, B.C.	8	9
10	11	12 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	13 Hike: Fragrance Lake	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Hike: Sugar Loaf & Mt. Erie	21	22	23 Field Trip: Fidalgo Island Bird Tour
24 Jan. 31	25 Feb. 1	26 Feb. 2	27 Hike: Tommy Thompson Trail Feb.3 Hike: Whatcom Falls, etc. I., II., & III. Options	28	29	30 Field Trip: Samish Flats & Beyond

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

