



# *The Skagit Flyer*

Skagit Audubon Society  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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## **DECEMBER MEETING – PRESENTED IN-PERSON AND ON ZOOM**

### ***"Annual Member Photo Show"***

**Presented by: YOU!**

**Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm)**

Please join Skagit Audubon Society for our hybrid member meeting at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, or attend virtually on Zoom (see below for Zoom registration details).

Our ever-popular annual member photo show will take place on Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>! This is not a competition but a chance to share and enjoy nature photographs taken by our members.



Meeting Logistics: The doors at the Padilla Bay Stevens Center will open at 6:30 pm and the show will start at 7 pm. This year's Master of Ceremonies for the evening (in-person) will be John Farnsworth. John will be doing all the narration; we will not be passing the microphone to the live audience.

Attendees may bring easily shareable holiday treats and napkins will be provided for serving. Coffee and tea will not be provided, but feel free to bring a personal (non-alcoholic) beverage.

**In-person attendees must be fully vaccinated and please do not attend if you have any symptoms of illness. Masks are optional.** If you plan to attend the event virtually on Zoom, please register for this Zoom event at: <https://bit.ly/DEC1322>. Preregistration for the Zoom event is required. Please only one Zoom registrant per household. After you register, you will receive an email with the link to sign in at the time of the event. Questions? Contact [programs@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:programs@skagitaudubon.org). Photo credit: Cackling Goose by Joe Halton

**ABOUT SKAGIT AUDUBON:** 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. General membership meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. Some meetings will be presented on Zoom only. Others will be hybrid meetings on Zoom and in-person at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon. Check the monthly Flyer for upcoming meeting details. The board of directors meets on the first Tuesday of each month, September through June, at 7 pm. Skagit Audubon membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, the Skagit Flyer, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. The Skagit Flyer is produced monthly from September through June and full color issues are available at: [www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter](http://www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter). Unless noted, all images, drawings, clip art, etc. appearing in The Skagit Flyer are in the public domain. We reserve the right to edit.

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Education:	Jeff Osmundson; <a href="mailto:education@skagitaudubon.org">education@skagitaudubon.org</a>
Field Trips:	Colleen Shannon; <a href="mailto:fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org">fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org</a>
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Libby Mills	<a href="mailto:libbymills@skagitaudubon.org">libbymills@skagitaudubon.org</a>

#### **Other Volunteers**

Hospitality:	Pamelia Maxwell
Newsletter Distribution:	John Edison

In response to the COVID-19 virus, our member meetings are once again being held in person at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center; but those who would prefer the option of attending via Zoom will still be able to do so. Hikes and birding field trips are being organized for vaccinated individuals and participants need to comply with the activity leader's guidelines. Please visit our website: [www.skagitaudubon.org](http://www.skagitaudubon.org) for updates.

## HIKING – by Joan Melcher

Skagit Audubon is pleased to offer scheduled hikes. Please visit our website: [www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hikes](http://www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hikes) for full details on the hikes. All hikers must have a current signed liability release form (available on the website) on file prior to participating in any Skagit Audubon hike. Please be prepared to follow current COVID pandemic safety protocols. Questions? Contact Joan Melcher, [jdmelcher@comcast.net](mailto:jdmelcher@comcast.net) or 360.424.0407. \*Means Wash. State Discover Pass required.



- Dec. 7:** East Shore Lake Whatcom and/or The Chanterelle Trail
- Dec. 14:** Deception Pass Area\*
- Dec. 21:** Padilla Bay Shore Trail
- Dec. 28:** Northern State Recreation Area (NSRA)
- Jan. 4:** Interurban Trail\*

## FIELD TRIPS – by Colleen Shannon

Beginning birders and friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes (if you have them). Please note specific COVID guidelines in each field trip description. Questions? Contact Colleen Shannon, [fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org).



December is usually a busy month with the holidays. As we are having the annual Christmas Bird Count on December 30<sup>th</sup> there will be only one official field trip this month. See the description for Tim Manns' field trip to Rosario December 10<sup>th</sup>. Happy Holidays! Get out there birding. Remember we have world class winter birding in Skagit County!

**Saturday, December 10, 2022**

**Rosario Area of Deception Pass State Park**

**9:00 a.m. to Noon**

The varied habitats near Deception Pass, from old growth forest to the rocky islands and open waters off Rosario Head, attract diverse birdlife. Expect to see winter songbirds, waterfowl, gulls, alcids. Past trips have yielded Red Crossbills, Brandt's, Pelagic, and Double-crested Cormorants, Belted Kingfishers, several duck, gull, loon, and grebe species and more. If time permits, we may then drive to Lake Erie below Mt. Erie to look for several species of ducks not seen at Rosario.

Bring binoculars and spotting scope (optional). Dress for the weather. Anticipate wind on Rosario Head. Meet at the parking area for Rosario Beach, Deception Pass State Park. Discover Pass required.

Accessibility: From the parking to the base of Rosario Head a smooth, hard-surfaced path crosses gently sloped terrain. The trail to the top of Rosario Head rises about 200 feet in elevation. Total walking distance for this field trip will be about a half mile. To indicate you plan to attend and to provide contact information in case trip plans change, please sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094EA9AD2FA5F5C34-rosario>

Trip leader: Tim Manns (360-333-8985 or [conservation@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:conservation@skagitaudubon.org)).

## NOT YOUR USUAL BACKYARD BIRD – by Joe Halton

On September 16, 2022, shortly after 7:30pm, I was in the kitchen and glanced outside. In the rapidly fading light, I saw a bird crossing the ground between some bushes and our watercourse. My sense of curiosity was piqued because it seemed too late (in terms of darkness) for any of our local birds to be active and approaching the watercourse.

I was unable to see any distinguishing markings on the bird due to the darkness so I picked up my binoculars knowing they would give me better vision. There, at the bottom of the watercourse was a **Hermit Thrush**!

The Hermit Thrush is a fall migrant to our area and will spend the winter in the greater area, but not in our yard. Interestingly, we have a bird very similar in appearance (the Swainson's Thrush) which is on an opposite schedule... it arrives in the spring, spends the summers here and departs by the fall.



As I excitedly watched the thrush it was soon joined by yet another! I believe this is the first time I have ever seen two at the same time, perhaps a reference to its name (see below). In a moment the two thrushes were joined by yet another! We now had three thrushes in or around our watercourse, and there wasn't nearly enough light for photos!

Since I had seen the thrushes so late in the day I thought there was a chance they might spend the night in the immediate area and return to the yard or watercourse in the morning. I wasn't able to go outside and monitor the watercourse the next morning, but periodic checking revealed no thrushes.

That afternoon (September 17, 2022), shortly after 3:30pm, I had a brief opportunity to monitor the yard before meeting friends for an early dinner. I glanced out the kitchen window and saw a single American Goldfinch in the watercourse and a few chickadees around the yard. I took my camera outside and noted the goldfinch had flown, but there, sitting on one of our staging sticks at the head of the watercourse, was a **Hermit Thrush**!

I quickly positioned my chair for photos but when I looked back at the watercourse the thrush had gone. I sat quietly and a moment or two later the thrush reappeared, and I was able to get several good photos, two of which are displayed here.

In processing the photos, I realized the bird I photographed was a juvenile born this season and was probably on its first migration. I have no way of knowing if it was part of what was probably a family group I had observed the previous evening.



*Aptly named **for its retiring ways**, the Hermit Thrush is a bird of dense forest understory and thicket that is often heard before it's seen. (The Cornell Lab)*

## CONSERVATION – by Tim Manns

**Washington State Legislature.** The State Legislature’s 2023 session runs from January 9th to April 23rd. In odd years, our legislators write the two-year state budget. Thus, there will be both policy and funding bills with implications for Audubon’s priorities. At this writing in mid-November, we do not yet know Audubon Washington’s specific legislative priorities, but they should be available soon at [Advocacy | Audubon Washington](#). The state staff is again organizing a virtual Advocacy Day, which will happen via Zoom on December 5th and 6th. Act quickly and you may still be able to get involved in directly urging your state legislators to support conservation priorities. [Sign up here, filling in your information!](#) Our elected officials need to hear from us about the importance of protecting and restoring shorelines, taking a well-considered, balanced approach to siting wind and solar farms, and more. Your voice can make a difference.

**Grizzly Bear Restoration.** The on-again, off-again, multi-decade effort to restore the federal and state-listed grizzly bear to the North Cascades in accordance with the Endangered Species Act is on again after a halt by the previous federal administration. The North Cascades Ecosystem is one of six recovery zones long ago designated for this species. Years have passed since Skagit Audubon joined the Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear coalition. On November 10th the National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced a new start to preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) needed before restoration can proceed. For current information and background see the Friends website: [Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear | Restoring a healthy population of grizzly bears to the North Cascades](#). Through December 14<sup>th</sup> you can submit scoping comments; that is, your opinions on what issues should be considered in the EIS. See [Parkplanning - 2022 North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan/Environmental Impact Statement \(nps.gov\)](#). Click on “Open for Comment.” When the draft EIS is issued, we can comment on what the agencies propose to do. Why should Audubon care about grizzly bears? Our organization’s mission is to protect and restore wildlife habitat with a particular, but not exclusive, emphasis on birds. Grizzly bears are the single most significant species missing in the North Cascades ecosystem.

**DNR’s Carbon Project.** Implementing provisions in a bill passed several years ago, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is preparing to sell carbon credits on 10,000 acres of forest land that otherwise would be logged ([Carbon Project | WA - DNR](#)). DNR’s website states, “This initiative (the Carbon Project) represents the first-in-the-nation use of carbon markets by a state agency to protect critical forest areas by immediately removing stands from the planned harvest schedule, many of which were slated for imminent harvest.” DNR manages lands held in trust for beneficiaries that include county governments and junior taxing districts (hospitals, schools, etc.), and thus the agency is obligated to produce revenue. The courts have now established that producing revenue does not have to mean cutting trees. Selling carbon credits protects habitat and produces revenue while also locking up carbon to mitigate climate change, which National Audubon research tags as the number one threat to birds. Consistent with this, the Skagit Audubon board voted unanimously in support of DNR’s Carbon Project. In contrast, Skagit County’s three Commissioners were not pleased when DNR proposed that 1,691 of the 10,000 acres be on state trust lands in Skagit County. On October 25, 2022, the *Skagit Valley Herald* reported the Commissioners’ reaction ([Skagit County sites considered for state Carbon Project | Ecology | goskagit.com](#)) quoting their letter to DNR: “The project would probably have ‘significant adverse impact on Skagit County, its junior taxing districts, the forest industry we have worked to protect, and our Comprehensive Plan.’” Addressing the climate crisis requires fresh thinking and action by all of us, including government at every level. The future will not and cannot be the same as the past. We urge our local elected officials to engage county government in actively addressing climate change. As a start, this includes supporting the Carbon Project and building adaptation to climate change and sea level rise into the Shoreline Master Program, which ignores these realities.

For other issues Skagit Audubon is tracking, see the Conservation Notes on the chapter’s website at <https://skagitaudubon.org/conservation/notes>.



**2022 PADILLA BAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT** will take place on Friday, December 30<sup>th</sup>. To ensure obtaining the most accurate and complete data in this community science project, we are recruiting experienced birders. Contact Tim Manns at [conservation@skagitadubon.org](mailto:conservation@skagitadubon.org) or 360.333.8985.

For an opportunity to get your first taste of birding, please participate in the field trip Libby Mills will lead, also on Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>. For this field trip, meet at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center at 8:30 a.m. Please contact Libby Mills at 360.708.6975 or [libbymills@gmail.com](mailto:libbymills@gmail.com).

## **HAVE YOU SEEN A BANDED BIRD OR FOUND A SICK OR INJURED BIRD?**

To report a bird with a federal band or color marker, please visit the [USGS' Bird Banding Laboratory website](#).

In addition to reporting collars to the USGS Bird Banding Lab, please report swan collars to [Northwest Swan Conservation Association](#).

To report other bands or tags for local projects, please visit the [Washington Ornithological Society's Research page](#) to view current projects, the types of markers they use, and how to report them.

### **SWANS**

All swans that are dead, sick, or injured need to be reported to the WDFW hotline by calling (360) 466-4345, ext. 266. Swans should be taken to the [Whatcom Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center](#). Their phone number is (360) 966-8845. Please let them know if you need assistance with transporting a swan.

### **SICK OR INJURED BIRDS**

Contact one of these organizations if you are sure the bird requires rescuing:

- **Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center**; <https://wolfhollowwildlife.org> (San Juan, Island, and Skagit Counties)
- **Survey Wildlife Care Center** in Arlington, WA (Snohomish County)
- **PAWS Wildlife Center** in Lynnwood, WA (Snohomish County)

## **HAVE YOU SEEN ANY SWANS WEARING NECK COLLARS?**

If you have, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) is interested in knowing where and when the swans were seen. They are tracking swans that were captured, rehabbed, and then released to determine if these birds have been able to make the annual migration to and from the breeding grounds.

Please report the collar ID information (all numbers and/or letters), the date of observation, and the location to Daniel Zimmerman, WDFW Noxious Weed & Swan Mortality Biologist at: [danielzimmerman2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:danielzimmerman2@dfw.wa.gov) or 360.941.2520.

For more information about Trumpeter and Tundra swans, visit:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/species> and enter "Trumpeter" or "Tundra" Swan into the box labeled for common or scientific name.

## FIELD SIGHTINGS – by Ann Skinner

This column reports a summary of selected sightings. Rare sightings should be submitted with detailed written documentation and if possible, a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is encouraged. Do not hesitate to contact any observer to help document unusual sightings.

**Please submit** your sightings to [birdsightings@skagitadubon.org](mailto:birdsightings@skagitadubon.org). For recent updates on bird sightings, check out **ABA Tweeters** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding menu, Bird Sightings, Skagit County Arrivals) found here: <https://ebird.org/region/US-WA-057?yr=all>

### WATERFOWL

Cackling Goose (100's) W of McCorquedale Rd.  
10/25, 11-5 (JH), FIFR & Wylie, 10/7, 10/8, 10/23 (NOH)  
Harlequin duck (5) Rosario, 10/22 (NOH), (1) Cap Sante, 11/2 (JH)  
Cinnamon Teal (2+) Wylie 10/12, 10/18, 10/20, FIFR, 10/20 (NOH)  
Northern Shoveler (up to 8) Wylie, 10/7, 10/8, 10/12, 10/18 (NOH)  
Snow Geese – (First of Season) E. Fid. Isl. 10/25 (RW)

### SHOREBIRDS

American Avocet (2) FIFR, 10/7 (NOH)  
Black-bellied Plover (9), FIFR, 10/18 (NOH)  
Semipalmated Plover (4) FIFR, 10/14 (NOH)  
Pectoral Sandpiper (7) Wylie 10/12 (NOH)  
Wilson's Snipe (up to 7) Wylie, 10/8, 10/20, 10/23 (NOH)

### HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Cooper's Hawk (1) Wylie, 10/8, 10/12 (NOH)  
Turkey Vulture (1) Wylie, 10/12 (NOH)  
Rough-legged Hawk (1) Wylie, 10/14, (RW)

### WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker (1) W Anacortes, 10/25, (JB)  
Hairy Woodpecker (1) Cranb. Lk, 10/29 (NOH)  
Pileated Woodpecker (1) Stanwd., 10/30, (MS)

### VIREOS, SHRIKES

Northern Shrike (1) Stanwd., 10/25, (MS/JS)

### CORVIDS

Western Scrub Jay (1) Anacortes, 10/25 (JB), (2) Linc. Hill, MV, daily (TM)

### BUSHTIT/KINGLETS

Ruby-crowned Kinglets SHIP, 10/15, Rosario, 10/22 (NOH)

Bushtit (10) Stanwd., 11/2 (MS), (2) Wylie, 10/8 (NOH)

### NUTHATCHES/CREEPERS

Brown Creeper (1) Stanwd., 10/31, (MS)  
Red-breasted Nuthatch (1) Stanwd., (daily) (MS/JS)

### WRENS

Pacific Wren, (3) Stanwd., (daily), (MS/JS)  
Bewick's Wren (1) 10/7, 10/20 Wylie, 10/22 FIFR (NOH)

### THRUSHES

Townsend's Solitaire (2), W Anacortes, 10/29, (JB)  
Varied Thrush (1) Cranb. Lk., 10/29 (NOH)

### BUNTINGS

Snow Bunting (1) Rosario Head, 10/28 (JAHA) (photo verified)

### FINCHES & SPARROWS

Golden-crowned Sparrows W. Anacortes, 10/22 (JB)  
White-throated Sparrow (1) SHIP, 10/15 (NOH), 10/19 Mt. Vern. (LH)  
Red Crossbills (2+) E. Fid. Isl., 10/26 (RW)

### WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warblers (2+) Wylie 10/7, 10/8, 10/12, 10/20 (NOH)  
Northern Waterthrush (1) Wylie 10/7, 10/20 (NOH)  
Townsend's Warbler (1) Linc. Hill MV, 11/11 (TM)

**(FIFR)** Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve;  
**(LH)** Lisa Hopkins; **(JS)** Jeff Sinker; **(MS)** Mary Sinker;  
**(NOH)** Neil O'Hara; **(JAHA)** Jack Hartt; **(JB)** Jane Brandt; **(JH)** Joe Halton **(TM)** Tim Manns **(RW)** Regan Weeks

**SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY  
PO BOX 1101  
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form**

Membership: \_\_\_\_ \$20/one year **OR** \_\_\_\_ \$40/two years • \_\_\_\_ New **OR** \_\_\_\_ Renewal

Additionally, I wish to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_ to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Please designate my donation to: \_\_\_\_ General \_\_\_\_ Education \_\_\_\_ Scholarship Fund.

Payment: (1) Pay online with a credit card or PayPal (see [skagitaudubon.org](http://skagitaudubon.org) for details) **OR** (2) Mail this form & your check to: Skagit Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1101, Mt. Vernon WA 98273-1101

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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*By providing your email address and those of any household members, you/they consent to SAS's use of electronic transmission, such as email and website postings, for notices about SAS business. You may revoke this consent at any time on written request to the Secretary of SAS.*

Membership includes those members of your household whose names & emails you provide to us:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you have more than one additional member of your household who wishes to become a member of SAS, please provide their name(s) and email address(es) to [membership@skagitaudubon.org](mailto:membership@skagitaudubon.org))*

I want to be involved in (check all that apply): Education \_\_\_\_ Conservation \_\_\_\_ Field Trips \_\_\_\_ Hiking \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

(To join National Audubon Society, a separate membership, please visit: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org))