

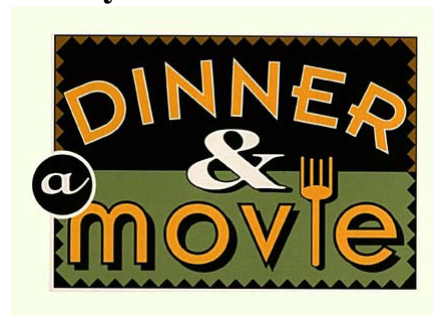
The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Volume 37, No. 10 www.skagitaudubon.org Dec. 2018

December Meeting and Program Potluck and Slide Show – Presented by You!

Tuesday, Dec. 11th
6:45 Potluck; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10441 Bayview Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



Our annual December potluck and slide show will once again feature photos and videos submitted by you! Please send your pictures and videos to ronaniellis@gmail.com. Pictures should be in .jpg format with a resolution of about 5 mb. Videos should be in Quicktime format or .mp4, and less than 1 minute (actually, any video format that works on Mac). Also, please include the who, what, where and when, so Ronan can introduce your presentation. Finally, please have your pictures and videos submitted to Ronan no later than Dec. 1st. Questions? Please contact Ronan directly.

Please bring potluck food to share. Plates, utensils and paper products will be supplied. After the meal we will view favorite nature photos ~ a collective view of how Skagit Audubon Society members see nature both here and abroad.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate. This is not a contest but an opportunity to share our favorite nature photos and videos.

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PADILLA BAY CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
This year's count will be Sat., Dec. 29, 2018.
For information about participating, contact Tim
Manns at conservation@skagitaudubon.org or
360.333.8985

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 at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June.

Social/7:00 pm and Program/7:30 pm. The board of directors meets at the same location the first Tuesday of each month, September through June, at 7:00 pm.

Skagit Audubon membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, *The Flyer*, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. *The Flyer* is produced monthly from September through June. Printed copies are black-and-white and electronic copies are full color. *The Flyer* is available online at www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter.

Board of Directors

President:	Vacant
Vice President:	Vacant
Interim Secretary:	Jane Brandt..... janeb@skagitaudubon.org
Treasurer:	Neil O'Hara..... treasurer@skagitaudubon.org781-290-9083
Immediate Past President:	Vacant

Committee Chairs and Representatives

Conservation:	Tim Manns..... conservation@skagitaudubon.org360-333-8985
Education:	Sheila Pera..... skagiteducation2@gmail.com
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Webmaster:	Ron Pera..... skagitaudubon@gmail.com

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED The Education Committee needs volunteers to help with a number of adult presentations coming up in the next several months. These Power Point presentations are scheduled at libraries and private organizations/clubs in the area. If you can help give part of a presentation (already written), that would be great; or, you can assist with the computer and help answer questions from the audience. If you can lend a hand, please contact Sheila at skagiteducation2@gmail.com. Thank you!

DECEMBER FIELDTRIPS, by Libby Mills

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 (if you have them). 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.

NOTE: If you plan to join a field trip some place other than the described starting point, call or email the trip leader the day before to ensure a successful rendezvous. Trip plans may change.

Saturday, Dec. 8th

Weaverling Spit, Fidalgo Bay

8:30 am to 11:30 am

Here's to birding the shortest days of winter. Weaverling Spit is a walk and a scoping field trip on the western edge of Fidalgo Bay, land owned by the Samish Indian Nation. We have permission to go out and inspect the neighborhood for avifauna, a chance to seek both songbirds in the vegetation and water birds on the bay. To find the area, drive parallel to Hwy. 20 on Fidalgo Bay Rd., just south of Anacortes and turn off it onto Weaverling Rd. Meet at the parking lot at the RV Park which is across the Tommy Thompson Trail and to the right. Dress warmly and seasonally (it's Dec. after all). Trip will end before noon. Scopes will help with the water birds. Some minimal walking on the Spit and Tommy Thompson Trail. Leaders: Von and Betty Kuehn, cellphone 360.770.5905.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Dec. 4 – Skagit Audubon Board Meeting

Dec. 5 – Skagit Audubon Hike – East Shore Lake Whatcom or Chanterelle Trail

Dec. 8 – Skagit Audubon Birding Field Trip – Weaverling Spit

Dec. 11 – Skagit Audubon General Meeting and Program

Dec. 12 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Deception Pass Area

Dec. 19 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Padilla Bay Shore Trail

Dec. 26 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Dugualla State Park

Dec. 29 – Christmas Bird Count

Jan. 2 – Skagit Audubon Hike – Interurban Trail

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

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 Sept. through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's *Flyer* should be sent to the editor by the third Sat. of the current month. We reserve the right to edit. For questions or problems about your *Skagit Flyer* subscription, contact membership chair:

Pam Pritzl membership@skagitaudubon.org

DECEMBER HIKES by Joan Melcher

Cold season hikes begin this month. We move from the high country to lowland hikes near the water and on the foothills. Safety comes first so hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather conditions, forest fires and/or smoke, logging, construction or other unforeseen circumstances. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, snowy or icy road conditions, or forecasts of continued heavy rain. All the hikes are on a Wednesday and for questions or additional information contact Joan Melcher at jdmelcher@comcast.net or 360.424.0407. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes and if dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times. General safety note: upon arrival at the destination, if cancellation of the hike is determined at the discretion of the Audubon trip leader, any individual who elects to proceed is no longer considered to be a member of an Audubon-sponsored activity. Additionally, carpools are arranged at the discretion of the drivers.



DEC. 5 EAST SHORE LAKE WHATCOM or CHANTERELLE TRAIL: For both hikes, meet at 9 a.m. at the Chuckanut Drive park-n-ride lot. This lot is in Burlington on the east side of I-5, off Exit 231 of I-5. Car pool according to which of the two hikes you plan to do. You may leave when all in your car are safely back to the trailhead.

1. The **East Shore of Lake Whatcom** hike is a fairly level hike among trees beside the east shore of Lake Whatcom. 6.25 miles round trip, 270 ft total elevation gain.

2. **Chanterelle Trail** This hike begins in the same area as the East Shore of Lake Whatcom hike but it goes up hill on trails to the Chanterelle Trail. 4.8 miles round trip with 1000 foot elevation gain.

DEC. 12 DECEPTION PASS AREA Hike on trails at Sharpe Park, Rosario and Bowman's Bay. Up to 8.7 or more miles, up to 700 or 800 ft total el gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at Sharpe Park trailhead off of Rosario Road south of Anacortes. Parking is limited at Sharpe Park so please carpool if possible. Contact Joan Melcher (see above) if you need driving directions to Sharpe Park. WA State Discover Pass required for your vehicle if you park in Deception Pass State Park.

DEC. 19 PADILLA BAY SHORE TRAIL Take some time out from a busy pre-Christmas week and spend the morning walking from the Breazeale Nature Center south along the Padilla Bay dike and back, an easy 6.7 miles. Meet at 9 am at the Breazeale Nature Center in Bayview. Leave when you return to your car.

DEC. 26 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 am. 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. 3.67 mile distance of perimeter loop, including side trip to beach; additional mileage if one does "interior trails"; 500 ft elevation gain. WA State Discover Pass required for your vehicle.

JAN. 2, 2019 INTERURBAN TRAIL Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail, several options available. Up to 14 or more miles; slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 am 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 hike option you select. WA State Discover Pass required for your vehicle.

Skagit Audubon Field Notes 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 birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org.

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

Snow Goose 58 foraging in a field on Cockreham Island on 11-9 (GB)

Greater White-fronted Goose 55 flying over Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 11-8 (RH)

Cackling Goose 200 in Burlington farm field on 11-13 (JH)

Trumpeter Swan 1 on Little Cranberry Lake, Anacortes Community Forest Lands on 11-7 (RH); 3 (first of season) on Livingston Bay on 11-10 (SRP)

Canvasback 6 at Similk Bay on 11-10 (GB)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ruffed Grouse 1 in Bow on 11-4 (KR)

GREBES

Eared Grebe 2 at Samish Island Public Park on 10-27 (GB); 2 on Dugualla Bay on 11-10 (SAS)

CRANES

Sandhill Crane 29 flying over Mount Vernon on 11-5 (TM)

OYSTERCATCHERS

Black Oystercatcher 40 at West Beach, Deception Pass State Park on 11-10 (SAS)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Long-billed Curlew 1 at Hayton Reserve on 11-4 (GB)

ALCIDS

Common Murre 3 at Rosario Head, Deception Pass State Park on 10-27 (SAS)

Marbled Murrelet 5 at Rosario Head, Deception Pass State Park on 10-27 (SAS)

Ancient Murrelet 1 off March Point on 11-12 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Northern Harrier 4 males at the West 90, Samish Flats on 11-12 (KR)

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 at east Stanwood home on 11-13 (MS)

Rough-legged Hawk 1 at Hayton Reserve on 11-12 (MS); 1 at the East 90, Samish Flats on 11-12 (MS)

OWLS

Short-eared Owl 3 at the West 90, Samish Flats on 11-12 (KR)

Northern Saw-whet Owl 2 at Lake Shannon Boat Launch on 11-11 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Pileated Woodpecker 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 11-12 (MS)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 1 on the Padilla Bay Shore Trail on 11-6 (KR); 1 at the East 90, Samish Flats on 11-12 (MS)

FLYCATCHERS

Black Phoebe 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 11-12 (MS)

Tropical Kingbird 1 (found by Mike Nelson) at Hayton Reserve on 11-4 (GB)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 on Thomas Road, Samish Flats on 11-13 (JH)

CORVIDS

California Scrub-Jay 1 on Samish Island on 11-8 (HA)

NUTHATCHES

Red-breasted Nuthatch 1 at east Stanwood home on 11-11 (MS)

Field sightings continued on Page 6

Field sightings continued from Page 5

WRENS

Pacific Wren daily at east Stanwood home (MS)

Bewick's Wren 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 11-12 (MS)

THRUSHES

Varied Thrush first of season at east Stanwood home on 11-10 (MS)

STARLINGS

European Starling a roosting murmuration of 14,000 at Big Indian Slough at dusk on 11-4 (GB)

FINCHES and ALLIES

American Goldfinch 200 on Minkler Flats on 11-3 (GB)

LONGSPURS and BUNTINGS

Snow Bunting 3 (found by Mike Nelson) at Hayton Reserve on 11-2 and 2 birds still there on 11-4 (GB)



Supplies and assembly: 1 grapevine wreath, peanut butter, assorted seeds, nuts and fruits. Wire for hanging. Assemble everything on the ground beneath where you plan to hang the wreath. The birds and squirrels will quickly clean up any spillage on the ground. Cover the wreath with peanut butter. Add seeds, nuts, and fruits (mix and match to suit the preference of your local birds). Hang up! This wreath contains peanut butter, black oil sunflower, and fresh cranberries.

SWAN HOTLINE

If you see a dead, sick, or injured swan, call the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 24-hour hotline: (360) 466-4345, ext. 266. Do not handle the bird. Leave a short, detailed message with your name and phone number plus the location and condition of the swan(s). WDFW collects information to assess the impact of lead poisoning and power line collisions, the main causes of accidental swan deaths.



Trumpeter Swan, Joe Halton

SPARROWS and ALLIES

American Tree Sparrow 1 at Sauk Prairie on 11-11 (GB)

Savannah Sparrow flock at the West 90, Samish Flats on 11-12 (KR)

Swamp Sparrow 1 each at Clear Lake Boat Launch, Thillburg Road, and Lindgren Road on 11-9 (GB)

Harris's Sparrow 1 near Cockreham Island on 10-29 (GB)

BLACKBIRDS and ORIOLES

Western Meadowlark flock on the Samish Flats on 11-8 (KR)

Rusty Blackbird 1 at the West 90, Samish Flats on 10-27 (GB)

WARBLERS

Northern Waterthrush 1 at Skagit Wildlife Area, Wylie Slough on 11-12 (JS)

(**THA**) Thais & Howard Armstrong; (**GB**) Gary Bletsch; (**JH**) Joe Halton; (**RH**) Ramona Hammerly; (**TM**) Tim Manns; (**SRP**) Sheila & Ron Pera; (**KR**) Kerry Rye; (**JS**) Jeff Sinker (**MS**) Mary Sinker; (**SAS**) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip

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FROM YOUR EDITOR, a winter feast that's fit for the birds. Simple and fun to make! Enjoy watching many birds (and of course the squirrels) feast on this festive homemade wreath.

Conservation Report by Tim Manns

With Election Day past, it's tempting to think we've done what needs to be done for conservation politics and can now turn entirely to other things. Recent years have shown how important it is to stay engaged and be an active citizen year-round. Make sure your Member of Congress knows the importance of protecting the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (see the November *Skagit Flyer*), of renewing the Land & Water Conservation Fund, of keeping a strong Endangered Species Act (<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/endangered-species-act>). In the state legislature a less evenly divided House and Senate open the possibility of passing environmentally important bills difficult or impossible to move in recent years. On the Skagit Audubon website, see the last *Skagit Flyer*'s Conservation Report for Audubon's legislative priorities for the 2019 session (January 14 – April 28). Audubon Washington will be asking chapter members to contact our state legislators to support these priorities. (Most Skagit members live in the 40th, 10th, or 39th Districts.) Letters, phone-calls, and emails from constituents really matter. What matters even more, is showing up in Olympia. On January 29th Audubon Washington will hold a Lobby Day for members from around the state. When you register to participate in this easy, interesting, and worthwhile exercise in citizenship, Audubon Washington staff will make appointments for you to meet with your district legislators and will provide training and printed information on the key bills supporting the Audubon mission. Watch the Audubon Washington website for registration details: <http://wa.audubon.org/conservation/advocacy>.

In the November Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website you can read about conservation issues in more detail. I'll highlight just two on which it would be helpful for as many people as possible to take action. **The Department of Natural Resources extended its deadline to December 6th for comments on the draft plan for managing marbled murrelet habitat on state trust lands.** The second item is the planned continuation of the Guemes Channel Trail in Anacortes. The city's Parks Department has been planning to build this 12-foot wide, paved bicycle trail through the wetland buffer of the Ship Harbor Interpretive Preserve (SHIP). A careful approach would call for consideration of alternative routes and a thorough study of the potential environmental impacts of each. Would the planned route adversely affect the function of the buffer in protecting the SHIP wetland with its diverse birds, mammals, and plants? If you live in Anacortes, please contact your city council member and the mayor requesting careful environmental review and consideration of alternate routes. The mayor has shown herself open to the concerns of conservation groups and individual citizens.

Swans, snow geese, other waterfowl and seabirds have returned to winter in Skagit County's fields, wetlands, and bays. Visiting birders and non-birders in great numbers will be coming again to see them. Local Audubon members have the knowledge and motivation to model good behavior and encourage it in others: Stop and park safely. Don't block driveways or farm roads. Don't trespass. Keep your distance from the birds. Have a look at this interesting and relevant website for the Mindful Birding project: <http://www.mindfulbirding.org/>.



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available in color at <http://www.skagitaudubon.org/newsletter>. Membership includes all members of your household.

Check one: _____ \$20/one year _____ \$40/two years _____ New _____ Renewal
Additionally, I wish to donate to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in the amount of \$_____. Donations of **\$100 or more** receive a personal field trip by a Skagit Audubon field trip leader.

Mail form and payment to: Skagit Audubon Society
PO Box 1101
Mt. Vernon WA 98273-1101

Name: _____	Areas of Interest (check all that apply)
Address: _____	Birds_____ Gardening_____
City/State/: _____	Education_____ Conservation_____
ZIP: _____ Phone: _____	Field Trips _____ Hiking _____
Email: _____	Other: _____

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