



The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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FEBRUARY MEETING – PRESENTED ON ZOOM

“Estuary Restoration in the Greater Skagit Delta, What is Monitoring Telling Us?”

Presented by: Callie Moore and Jenny Baker

Tuesday, February 8, 7:00 PM

Estuaries form where rivers meet the sea. This mixing zone teems with life. Estuaries provide rich feeding grounds for juvenile salmon to grow and transition to life in the waters of Puget Sound and beyond. Several estuary restoration projects in the Skagit delta have been completed over the last 2 decades to help with Chinook recovery. Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) and our partners monitor restoration sites to understand channel development, establishment of plant communities, and the fauna that inhabit the restored marshes. We will discuss lessons learned from monitoring these sites.



Callie Moore’s education and career began in riparian restoration and fisheries work in freshwater lakes and streams in Ontario. Her interest in birds has taken her to work on wildlife projects in the US and Canada. She has been a Wildlife Biologist with WDFW for three years in Whatcom and Skagit counties.

Jenny Baker has worked on stream, wetland, and estuary restoration for over 20 years. After surveying streams in Oregon, she engaged with private landowners on farms as a restoration planner for the Snohomish Conservation District. She has worked on estuary restoration projects in the greater Skagit delta for the last 13 years with The Nature Conservancy and now WDFW. Photo credit: Marlin Greene/One Earth Images.

Register for this Zoom event at: <https://bit.ly/feb2022SAS> Preregistration is required and limited to 100 attendees. Please only one 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 carlajhelm@comcast.net.

Due to the continuing emergency response to the COVID-19 virus, our in-person member meetings and many other activities have been cancelled until further notice. Hikes and field trips are being organized for vaccinated members who must comply with the activity leader’s guidelines. Personal field trips for donations of \$100 or more are not now being offered. Please visit our website for updates.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – Greetings friends and members of Skagit Audubon:

Well, here we are in January 2022 and for some reason it doesn't seem like a fresh start to a new year. Jack Frost was nipping at our noses and seems to have left a few scars. The COVID thing will not go away easily, and we are still taking extraordinary precautions and having meetings by Zoom. Even as the days are starting to slowly get a little longer, progress seems slow. As we, the Board, are working on the Annual Report to Audubon, let's pull a few of the accomplishments out of the paperwork and see if we can lighten the mood.

- This year your Skagit Audubon contacted over 718 people and 41 children and benefitted from the generosity of 78 volunteers who put in over 3600 hours!
- Pam Pritzl, our Membership Chair, has announced that she recently logged our 400th active Skagit Audubon Membership. A new high.
- Mary Sinker, our newsletter editor, reports that some of our Flyer articles are being reprinted by local media publications. Jeff Sinker has recently had an article about Harlequin ducks reprinted.
- You, the membership, and our Big Sit Coordinator, Denny Quirk, safely conducted the Big Sit and raised over \$952 for scholarships. Total donations for scholarships this year have been \$1,235.
- And, speaking of scholarships, we awarded two scholarships to very worthy recipients attending Skagit Valley College and pursuing conservation-related careers.
- Joan Melcher heads up the hiking group. They have been having about 15 people *a week* show up for the always popular hikes.
- Youth Education chair, Kim Nelson, continues to provide basic birding kits to local libraries so the public, families, adults, and children can check out and try binoculars and field guides.
- Adult Education Chair Sheila Pera presented 11 Kiosk programs at Cama Beach State Park for 190 adults and 250 children.
- Program Chair, Carla Helm, continues to find wonderful speakers that are interesting and informative. The Zoom Team keeps those presentations coming at us almost seamlessly.
- Skagit Audubon also supported Skagit Land Trust in successful campaigns to buy and protect important habitat on Samish Flats and at the March Point heronry
- Treasurer Neil O'Hara and Finance Chair Lisa Hopkins have noted that this has been our best fundraising year – EVER! These important contributions help fund our education programs, our outreach and other important conservation work.

What you see above is just a measure of what your dues and donations support. All of our Board members and everyone who helps us is a volunteer. It keeps your dollar going just that much further!

And, finally, Tim Manns made us all proud by accepting the Helen Engle Award from Audubon Washington as the Conservationist of the year for 2020. This was a well-deserved award to an incredible volunteer that heads our Conservation Committee.

Field trips are starting again, we hope to see you with your binoculars out in the field very soon. Until then..... Thanks, and happy birding. Be safe, wear your mask, get fully vaccinated.

Jeff Osmundson
President

Skagit Audubon Society is thrilled to partner with North Cascades Institute once again to welcome award-winning author and photographer, **Paul Bannick**, for his online presentation, **"Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls"**.

When: Feb. 16th at 7 pm on Zoom

Cost & Registration: \$10; <https://ncascades.org/signup/programs/classes>.

FROM YOUR EDITOR – by Mary Sinker

Well, 2021 certainly went out like a lion didn't it with a White Christmas that extended into a White New Year's and beyond. Frigid temperatures and a foot of snow on the ground in some spots meant I was diligently keeping feeders filled. It was interesting to note the preferences of different birds during this time that I affectionately referred to as "Snowmageddon". Northern Flickers chose suet first and peanut butter second; chickadees selected peanut butter first, black-oil sunflower seed second, and suet third. The little, Red-breasted Nuthatch practically lived at the black-oil sunflower feeder and our resident Anna's hummingbirds appreciated the heated feeder during the coldest weather. It still amazes me how tough these tiny birds are. Once the snow finally receded, the first daffodils were already poking up through the ground and some of them are now almost two inches high. Soon our early nesters will begin singing their spring courting songs, selecting nest sites, and gathering nesting materials. We can help them by omitting pesticides and leaving our yards and gardens in as natural a state as our sense of neatness allows. Welcome 2022!

WELCOME BACK HIKING – by Joan Melcher

After more than a year, Skagit Audubon is pleased to announce the return of scheduled hikes. Please visit our website www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hiking-info 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 at jdmelcher@comcast.net or 360.424.0407.



Feb. 2: Whatcom Falls & Creek; Big Rock Loop

Feb. 9: Conway-Area Dike Walk

Feb. 16: East Shore Lake Whatcom or Chanterelle Trail on Stewart Mtn.

Feb. 23: Northern State Recreation Area (NSRA)

Mar. 2: Goose Rock Perimeter Hike

WELCOME BACK FIELD TRIPS!

Skagit Audubon is once again offering field trips to current members who are fully vaccinated against COVID. Masks must be worn within six feet of each other and the number of participants per field trip is limited to 12. Plan to dress for the weather, bring binoculars, a spotting scope (optional), and contact the field trip leader listed below for full details. If you wish to be added to the field trip email list please contact Libby Mills, libbymills@gmail.com or 360.757.4139.



Wiley Slough; Feb. 12; 1-3 pm: Geared Toward the Beginning or Relatively New Birder

Up to 12 fully vaccinated Skagit Audubon members may reserve a spot for this field trip. If additional openings become available, fully vaccinated non-members may sign up after Feb. 6th. Topics are flexible depending upon the needs and skill levels of participants. Loaner binoculars available by request. For full details on this trip and to reserve your spot, **email trip leader, Jeff Osmundson**, at: Jeffo4297@gmail.com and add Wiley in the email subject header. For information on Wiley Slough, visit: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/skagit-headquarters-wildlife-area-unit>. Wiley is known for its wide variety of birds, flat terrain, and good footing. We will meet at the boat launch parking lot area and slowly walk about one-half mile during this trip.

Feb. 26th; Samish Flats and Samish Island

Up to 12 fully vaccinated (two shots plus booster) people may join this group to look for raptors, waterfowl, western meadowlarks, and perhaps shorebirds on the Samish Flats. We'll visit West 90 (hunting season will be over), check the parcel just acquired by the Skagit Land Trust, stop by the church to look for passerines, and then head to the Samish Island Day Use Access to look for sea ducks, brant, cormorants, loons, grebes, and gulls. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars, spotting scope (if available) and Discover Pass. No carpooling except for the same household or private arrangement in advance. **Contact trip leader Neil O'Hara** treasurer@skagitaudubon.org for full details and **sign up** at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c44a4ab23a1f9c07-samish>. The time and meeting place for this field trip will be available when you register.

Meet the American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – by Jeff Sinker

This chunky, medium-sized songbird is the only North American songbird who is truly aquatic. Locally resident along swiftly moving streams and rivers in the western US, this little dynamo gives the phrase “waterfront property for raising a family” a whole new perspective.



Prime real estate means a crevice behind a waterfall where both parents build the nest, often doing the work in freezing temperatures, but when the two-layer nest is complete, it will be snugly warm and dry. The outer layer will be 8-10 inches in diameter and woven from moss. Materials for the inner layer include grasses, bark, and leaves which keep this chamber dry. The female lays a clutch of 4-5 eggs that will be incubated for 14-17 days, followed by a nestling period of 24-26 days. Both parents care for the young and the pair may raise two broods.

American Dippers obtain nearly all their food underwater and they display a distinctive “bobbing” behavior before submerging their head underwater to search for food. They can also swim, dive, and walk underwater and are capable of moving small stones to probe underneath for larvae, fish eggs, worms, and snails. Mosquitoes, caddisflies, beetles, bugs, and mayflies are favorite food items.

These energetic birds are also an indicator species for the quality of the habitat they occupy. They require unpolluted waters, and their reproductive success seems to be tied to the availability of this high-quality habitat. They are not migratory but may move locally to unfrozen waters during winter months.

Learn more about these fascinating birds at: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American Dipper](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Dipper). Photo by Mary Sinker

CONSERVATION REPORT – by Tim Manns

The many conservation issues important to Skagit Audubon exceed the space available in the *Skagit Flyer*. For these additional issues and more on those mentioned below, please refer to the Conservation Notes on the chapter’s website: www.skagitaudubon.org. Click on the conservation tab at the top of the page.

Fully Contained Communities (FCCs) in Skagit County

The effort to stop these very large residential developments from being built in rural Skagit County is making progress. LaConner, Sedro-Woolley, and Mount Vernon City Councils have each passed a resolution opposing FCCs and urging Skagit County to end its attempt to circumvent the process long in place for changing countywide planning policies. At this writing (Jan. 15), the County Commissioners have just announced they will consider a resolution deferring further action on allowing FCCs until the matter is brought before the Growth Management Act Steering Committee, which is to say, they will now follow the long-agreed process. In recent years, the Steering Committee, comprised of Skagit’s towns, cities, and the county, has repeatedly rejected allowing FCCs. For more information: <https://www.rightgrowthrightplace.org> and past issues of the Conservation Notes.

Washington State Legislature

The sixty-day legislative session began January 10th. Audubon’s 25 Washington chapters and thousands of members across the state are well positioned in every legislative district to advocate for important conservation measures. Read about Audubon Washington’s priorities related to bird habitat and climate change at <https://wa.audubon.org/conservation/advocacy>. Scroll down to “Top Policy Priorities in 2022.” On the same page, “Bill Tracker: 2022 Legislative Session” gives weekly updates and actions to take. Clicking on bill numbers takes you to the Legislature’s website to find bill text, staff reports, and a “comment on this bill” button where you can do just that. Sign up for Audubon Washington’s Action Alerts at “Take Action ...” on the same page mentioned above. Audubon Washington joins over 20 groups in the Environmental Priorities Coalition. Learn about the coalition’s priorities for this year at [Environmental Priorities Coalition - Washington Environmental Council \(wecprotects.org\)](http://Environmental Priorities Coalition - Washington Environmental Council (wecprotects.org)). Scroll down to “Bills to Watch” for weekly updates.

FIELD SIGHTINGS - 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@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 submenu).

WATERFOWL

EMPEROR GOOSE 1 on dredge-spoil islets, Padilla Bay from 12-14 throughout sighting period (GB); 1 in Padilla Bay on 1-9 (YH); 1 at Bingo Hall Lagoon, Padilla Bay on 1-13 (RW) **RARE** (found by GB)
Greater White-fronted Goose 1 in Lyman on 12-29 (GB)
Cackling Goose 12 at Similk Beach on 1-1 (GB)
Green-winged Teal x Eurasian intergrade 1 on Kiket Lagoon on 1-5 (GB)
Canvasback 1 at Bingo Hall Lagoon on 1-3 (GB)
Redhead 2 on Minkler Flats on 12-20, 22 & 23 (GB)
Barrow's Goldeneye 2 on Minkler Flats on 1-7 (GB)
Ruddy Duck 1 on Samish Flats on 1-13 (YH)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Wilson's Snipe 1 at Port Susan Nature Conservancy property on 1-15 (SAS)
Spotted Sandpiper 1 at Nichols Bar on 12-22 (GB)

ALCIDS

Ancient Murrelet 15 at Samish Island Public Beach on 1-7 (GB)

GULLS and TERNS

Bonaparte's Gull 5 off Kiket Island on 1-5 (GB)

LOONS

Pacific Loon 15 at Samish Island Public Beach on 1-1 (GB)

HERONS and ALLIES

American Bittern 1 at Port Susan Nature Conservancy property on 1-15 (SAS)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 on Colony Rd, Samish Flats on 1-5 (AW)
Cooper's Hawk 2 on Skagit flats on 1-5 (YH)
Red-tailed Hawk 1 "Harlan's" on Sullivan Rd, Samish Flats on 1-5 (AW)
Rough-legged Hawk 1 on Samish Flats on 1-13 (YH); 1 at Port Susan Nature Conservancy property on 1-15 (SAS)

OWLS

Great Horned Owl pair dueting in east Fidalgo yard on 1-1 (RW); 2 at east Stanwood yard on 1-2 (MS/JS)
Northern Saw-whet Owl 1 on Swinomish Reservation on 1-5 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker 1 in east Fidalgo yard on 12-22 (RW); 1 in Anacortes yard on 1-11 & 12 (YH)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 2 on Samish Flats on 1-13 (YH); 1 at Port Susan Nature Conservancy property on 1-15 (SAS)
Merlin 1 at corner Chuckanut & Bow Hill Rd, Samish Flats & 1 in Bayview on 1-5 (AW); 1 at

Port Susan Nature Conservancy property on 1-15 (SAS)
Gyrfalcon 1 on dredge-spoil islets, Padilla Bay on 12-23 (GB)

Peregrine Falcon 1 on T-Loop Rd, Samish Flats on 1-5 (AW)
Prairie Falcon 1 on T-Loop Rd, Samish Flats on 1-5 (AW)

CORVIDS

California Scrub-Jay 1 in Burlington on 12-31 (GB)

NUTHATCHES

Red-breasted Nuthatch 1 at east Stanwood yard on 1-8 (MS)

CREEPERS

Brown Creeper 1 at east Stanwood home on 1-7 (MS)

WRENS

Marsh Wren 2 at SWAWS on 1-9 (JS)

THRUSHES

Hermit Thrush 1 in east Fidalgo yard on 12-22 (RW)
Varied Thrush 1 in Anacortes yard from 12-25 to 1-13 (YH); 3 at east Stanwood yard from 12-26-1-3 (MS/JS)

WAXWINGS

Bohemian Waxwing 1 at SWAWS on 1-8 & 9 (GB); 1 at SWAWS on 1-9 (MS/JS)

FINCHES and ALLIES

Common Redpoll 1 at Padilla Bay Trail on 12-29 (GB)

Field sightings cont'd on pg. 6

Field sightings cont'd from pg. 5
SPARROWS and ALLIES
American Tree Sparrow 1 at
the West 90, Samish Flats on
12-16 (GB)

BLACKBIRDS and
ORIOLES
Rusty Blackbird 1 in Conway
on 1-9 (GB)

(GB) Gary Bletsch; (YH)
Yvonne Houppermans; (JS) Jeff
Sinker; (MS) Mary Sinker;
(SAS) Skagit Audubon Society
Field Trip; (SWAWS) Skagit
Wildlife Area Wylie Slough;
(AW) Andrea Warner; (RW)
Regan Weeks

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- 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 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. 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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Treasurer: Neil O'Hara....treasurer@skagitaudubon.org...781-290-9083
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Other Volunteers

Bird Sightings: Pam Pritzl.....birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org.....360-387-7024
Hospitality: Pamela Maxwell
Newsletter Distribution: John Edison
Webmaster: Ron Pera.....skagitaudubon@gmail.com

2021 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count

January 5, 2022

(Revised 1/15/22)

The list below shows the results of Skagit Audubon Society's 2021 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count, which was rescheduled from December 26, 2021 to January 5, 2022 due to snow and ice. Thank you very much to all 72 participants!

Red-throated Loon	Bald Eagle	American Crow
Pacific Loon	Northern Harrier	Common Raven
Common Loon	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee
Pied-billed Grebe	Cooper's Hawk	Chestnut-bkcd Chickadee
Horned Grebe	Red-tailed Hawk	Bushtit
Red-necked Grebe	Rough-legged Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Eared Grebe	American Kestrel	Brown Creeper
Western Grebe	Merlin	Bewick's Wren
Double-crested Cormorant	Peregrine Falcon	Pacific Wren
Brandt's Cormorant	Prairie Falcon	Marsh Wren
Pelagic Cormorant	Ring-necked Pheasant	G-crowned Kinglet
Great Blue Heron	California Quail	R-crowned Kinglet
Tundra Swan	Virginia Rail	Hermit Thrush
Trumpeter Swan	American Coot	American Robin
Gr. White-fronted Goose	Killdeer	Varied Thrush
Cackling Goose	Black Oystercatcher	Northern Shrike
Canada Goose	Spotted Sandpiper	European Starling
Brant	Black Turnstone	American Pipit
Emperor Goose	Dunlin	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Snow Goose	Wilson's Snipe	Spotted Towhee
Green-winged Teal	Bonaparte's Gull	Savannah Sparrow
Mallard	Short-billed (Mew) Gull	Fox Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Ring-billed Gull	Song Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Thayer's Gull	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Gadwall	Western Gull	White-crowned Sparrow
Eurasian Wigeon	Glaucous-winged Gull	Dark-eyed Junco
American Wigeon	Pigeon Guillemot	Red-winged Blackbird
Canvasback	Marbled Murrelet	Brewer's Blackbird
Ringed-necked Duck	Ancient Murrelet	Purple Finch
Greater Scaup	Rock Pigeon	House Finch
Lesser Scaup	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Red Crossbill
Harlequin Duck	Mourning Dove	Pine Siskin
Long-tailed Duck	Great Horned Owl	House Sparrow
Black Scoter	Short-eared Owl	
Surf Scoter	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Total species observed 119
White-winged Scoter	Anna's Hummingbird	Total # of individual birds 58,059
Common Goldeneye	Belted Kingfisher	
Barrow's Goldeneye	Red-breasted Sapsucker	# of observers 72
Bufflehead	Downy Woodpecker	
Hooded Merganser	Hairy Woodpecker	
Common Merganser	Northern Flicker	
Red-breasted Merganser	Pileated Woodpecker	
Ruddy Duck	Steller's Jay	

**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

Mail form and payment to: **Skagit Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1101, Mt. Vernon WA 98273-1101**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/: _____

ZIP: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

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)

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)