

# The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society  
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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**JUNE MEETING – PRESENTED ON ZOOM**  
***“The Migratory Shorebird Project: Connecting Communities  
of the Americas Through Research for Conservation”***  
**Presented by: Matthew Reiter, PhD.**  
**Tuesday, June 8, 7:00 PM**

Dr. Matthew Reiter is Research Director and quantitative ecologist with Point Blue Conservation Science. Dr. Reiter’s work is focused on the ecology and conservation of migratory waterbirds and their wetland habitats, to understand the impacts of threats such as habitat loss and climate change across broad migratory landscapes. He leads projects from studying beneficial agriculture practices for birds to using satellites to track distribution of water in the Central Valley, to developing and implementing a coordinated research and monitoring network for migratory shorebirds from Canada to Chile to identify conservation priorities. Dr. Reiter received an M.S. and Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Minnesota and has been at Point Blue since 2009. Photo credit: Corey Gregory



Please register for this Zoom event at: <http://bit.ly/junesas>

Preregistration is required and is 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? Please contact [carlajhelm@comcast.net](mailto:carlajhelm@comcast.net).

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If you missed the excellent May 11<sup>th</sup> presentation about avian ecological research and conservation in the SE Peruvian Amazon by Dr. Ursula Valdez, the recording can be viewed here:  
<https://youtu.be/fua5ake9B1o>

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**Due to the continuing emergency response to the COVID-19 virus, our in-person member meetings, field trips and hikes, and most other activities have been cancelled until further notice. This includes the offer of personal field trips for future donations to Skagit Audubon Society of \$100 or more. Please visit our website for updates.**

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## ANNUAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON JUNE 8th

The election of Officers and At-Large Directors for the Skagit Audubon Society fiscal year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 will be held during the annual meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 7 p.m. The meeting will be conducted on the Zoom platform.

### Skagit Audubon Society Candidates for Board July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

#### Officers

President	Jeff Osmundson (one year)
Vice President	Vacant
Treasurer	Neil O'Hara
Secretary	Don Jonasson

#### At-large Directors

Tim Manns	Conservation Chair
Sheila Pera	Education, Adult Chair
Kim Nelson	Education, Youth Chair
Libby Mills	Field Trip Chair
Lisa Hopkins	Finance Chair
Joan Melcher	Hikes Chair
Pam Pritzl	Membership Chair
Carla Helm	Program Chair
Mary Sinker	Publications Chair
John Day	
Diana Hoffman	
Katherine O'Hara	
Jeff Sinker	
Ann Skinner	
Alice Turner	



**NESTING SEASON** is underway, and you can help scientists gather data about nesting birds in your area. **NestWatch**, a nationwide nest monitoring program through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is designed to track the status and trends of breeding birds. Participation is free, easy to do, and anyone can do it. To learn more and sign up, visit: [www.nestwatch.org](http://www.nestwatch.org).

### BIRD N' CRUISE TO VENDOVI ISLAND PRESERVE (owned by the San Juan Preservation Trust)

Explore Vendovi on its easy, well-maintained 3-mile trail system and enjoy stunning views from lookouts and beaches for about 3.5 hrs. **Please plan to take COVID precautions consistent with current guidelines. This trip is not affiliated with or sponsored by Skagit Audubon Society.**

**Dates:** Saturdays June 5, 19; July 10

**Time:** 9 am to 4 pm

**Departs:** Skyline Marina, Anacortes

**Cost:** \$168 p/p; **plus** \$5 donation for San Juan Island Preservation Trust

**Group Size:** 4-14 Adventurers

**Leaders:** Ivar Dolph and Stephanie Fernandez

**What to bring:** binoculars, camera, lunch, dress appropriately; toilet paper/bag (no bathroom on island)

**Reservations:** <https://skagitguidedadventures.com/adventure/vendovi-island-birding-cruise/>

**Contact:** Stephanie Fernandez at [steph@skagitguidedadventures.com](mailto:steph@skagitguidedadventures.com) or 360.474.7479

## CONSERVATION REPORT – by Tim Manns

Happily, I can lighten the gloom of May’s Conservation Report. Just when it seemed the state legislature would not pass any major bills addressing climate change, several made it - - with conditions. The two which would most reduce greenhouse gas emissions are the Clean Fuel Standard (HB 1091) and the Climate Commitment Act ([SB](#)



[5126](#), “Cap & Invest”). With transportation accounting for 44% of Washington’s carbon emissions, really addressing the climate crisis requires transitioning away from fossil fuels. The Clean Fuel Standard does this. The Climate Commitment Act will reduce emissions from the largest single sources and also invest in the transition. The compromise in passing these bills tied their implementation to passing a transportation package before January 2023. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Governor Inslee signed the bills but vetoed the delay provisions, likely prompting a legal challenge. The Governor stated, “Our climate commitment, made by our legislature in 2020, is to cut climate pollution by over 50% in the next nine years, on our pathway to net-zero climate pollution by 2050. It won’t be easy, but these bills go a long ways to getting us there.

Another happy outcome of the session was passing operating and capital budgets that did not cut funding for conservation and land-managing agencies, such as the Department of Fish & Wildlife, and amply funded grant programs for acquiring and restoring habitat. This was another of Audubon Washington’s priorities for the legislative session. Examples of what this means in Skagit County include funding to add the last large undeveloped South Fidalgo Island tract to Deception Pass State Park and a grant to Skagit Land Trust through the Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program, which paired with a federal grant and many generous private donations has bought and will clean up 50 acres of Samish Flats at the entrance to Samish Island.

Audubon and its partner organizations in the Environmental Priorities Coalition also prioritized passage of the HEAL Act (SB 5141, Healthy Environment for All). This bill codifies the definition of environmental justice across state agencies and requires considering environmental justice in their decisions. Unfortunately, adding climate change adaptation to the Growth Management Act (HB 1099) requirements did not succeed. However, the operating budget includes funds to create guidance for counties and cities to reduce carbon pollution and adapt to the impacts of climate change by directing growth away from rising seas, wildfire risk, flooding, and drought. This sets the stage to pass HB 1099 next year. In the meanwhile, we can work to convince our county and cities to voluntarily address climate impacts in updating comprehensive plans and shoreline master programs. Much more could be said about the pluses and minuses of the 2021 legislative session, but it’s safe to say that more was accomplished than expected in an unprecedented session conducted for the most part virtually because of the pandemic. Let’s be sure to thank our legislators who made good things happen despite the challenges.

As always, you can read about other issues Skagit Audubon is tracking in the Conservation Notes on the chapter website ([www.skagitaudubon.org](http://www.skagitaudubon.org)), but I would mention one more here. In mid-May the Skagit County Commissioners did something they had declined to do the last several years: despite 700 letters in opposition, they docketed a petition to amend the Skagit County Planning Policies to allow Fully Contained Communities (FCC’s). Docketing opens the path for further study of a planning proposal and the very real possibility of its approval by the commissioners. Counties closer to Seattle which have allowed FCC’s have come to regret these large housing developments which plunk urban density into rural areas leaving the county responsible for services that cities provide in incorporated areas. Under the Growth Management Act, Skagit County and the incorporated towns and cities here agreed years ago that 80% of the new growth our county is required to accept would take place in the Urban Growth Areas (UGA’s) established around the towns and cities. These UGA’s have enough capacity for this growth, yet the County Commissioners approved the first step in the process towards allowing (misnamed) FCC’s in Skagit County, meaning huge housing developments in unincorporated, rural areas. The more accurate term for FCC’s is sprawl and opening the door to them would significantly threaten agricultural and forested lands in Skagit County. The lack of sufficient housing and its skyrocketing cost are a serious problem, but opening the door to multi-thousand home developments outside incorporated areas is not the solution and could well mean the end of much that we value here, including habitat for swans, snow geese, bald eagles, ... This is an issue for us all to watch and speak out about.

## FROM YOUR EDITOR - by Mary Sinker

Having written about nesting last month, and with fledglings making themselves seen and heard, it seemed logical to pay some attention to the youngsters who are beginning to learn about their world outside the nest. Many of our resident songbirds raise more than one brood, so early nesters like American Robins and Black-capped Chickadees are caring for fledglings before they start new families.

Fledglings are comical to watch and shouldn't be mistaken for orphans if they are observed without a parent nearby. Parents often have multiple youngsters to care for and the fledglings don't always leave the nest at the same time. The robins nesting in our Golden-chain tree fledged two young. One left the nest about 8:30 in the morning and the other one not until early afternoon. Neither one strayed far from the nest tree area, which happened to be located around the corner from our back patio. This fledgling ended up spending some time on the barbeque before being collected by a parent and whisked off to a less conspicuous location!



With the summer migrants arriving and starting their families shortly, in the coming weeks there will be fledglings all over the place. Hopefully, you too will be able to enjoy watching this stage of their lives before they become fully independent. Have a great summer and see you in September!

**SKAGIT AUDUBON** hosted an educational event for the public at Wylie Slough on Sat., May 8<sup>th</sup> and although it was scaled back due to ongoing COVID requirements, it sure felt good to be able to engage with people and share the joy of spring birding. Wiley Slough offers remarkably diverse and yet inter-connected habitats that continually draw a wide variety of bird species throughout the year. Spring birding is no exception and the interdependence between birds and the estuary/wetland habitat at Wiley is a great educational opportunity.

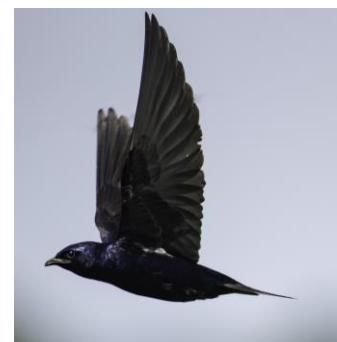


Members of the public were able to see some of the SAS mounted birds, ask questions and look through scopes for close-up views of some of the more distant shorebirds (Dowitchers and Yellowlegs). The nesting Great-blue Heron was in full view and the male Great-horned Owl was napping in a tree just off the main trail, not surrounded by branches and leaves!

Thank you Kim Nelson, Jane Brandt, Sheila and Ron Pera, Alan Brewer, Di Hoffman, Jeff Osmundson, Tim Manns, John Day, and Neil O'Hara for all the work before, during and after the event.

## Purple Martins Return to Ship Harbor!

North America's largest swallow has returned once again to the Ship Harbor Interpretive Preserve in Anacortes, and they probably won't waste any time selecting nest boxes to raise their families. Purple Martins are declining in parts of the West and although the reasons for their decline are not well known, the importance of quality nesting habitat cannot be understated. Purple Martins feed almost entirely on the wing and nest in colonies. Females incubate a clutch of 4-5 eggs, both parents feed the nestlings, and 26-31 days after hatching, fledglings will leave the nest. SAS Board member and Acting Secretary, Don Jonasson, cleaned and repaired the boxes which are located near the ferry terminal holding area. The Purple Martins say THANK YOU!



## 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](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 submenu).

### WATERFOWL

**Snow Goose** 500 in field next to Big Ditch on 5-1 (PP) **late**  
**Wood Duck** 2 at ACFL on 4-16 & 2 at SWAWS on 4-21 (YH)  
**Cinnamon Teal** 4 at SWAWS on 4-20 (YH)  
**Harlequin Duck** 4 at WA Park, Anacortes on 4-23 & 2 on 5-3; 2 at Rosario Beach on 5-4 (YH)

### GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

**California Quail** 1 at SHIP on 4-17, 4-20, 4-27 & 5-8; 1 at Rosario on 4-29 (NOH)  
**Sooty Grouse** 1 on Sourdough Mtn on 4-21 (NOH)  
**Wild Turkey** 4 on Samish Flats on 4-30 (YH)

### PIGEONS and DOVES

**Band-tailed Pigeon** 12 daily (average #) at east Stanwood home since 4-20 (MS/JS)  
**Eurasian Collared-Dove** 4 at east Stanwood home 5-8 to present (MS/JS)  
**Mourning Dove** 8 daily (average #) at east Stanwood home (year-round) (MS/JS)

### RAILS and COOTS

**Virginia Rail** 2 at FIFR on 5-10 (MS/JS)

### CRANES

**Common Crane** 1 on Samish Flats on 4-27 & 4-28 (YH); 1 on Samish Flats on 4-28 (RW) **RARE**

### OYSTERCATCHERS

**Black Oystercatcher** 2 at WA Park on 4-23 & 6 at Rosario Beach on 5-4 (YH)

### PLOVERS

**Semipalmated Plover** 1 at SWAWS on 4-19 & 1 at FIFR on 5-7 (NOH); 8 at FIFR on 5-4 (GB)

### SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

**Whimbrel** 2-300 in Camano Island farm field (Rekdal Rd) 4-23 to 5-14 (PP); 7 at Jensen Access, Fir Island on 5-7 (GB)  
**Black Turnstone** 3 at Rosario on 4-29 (NOH)  
**Ruff** 1 at SWAWS on 4-20 & 4-22 (YH) **RARE**  
**Least Sandpiper** 10 at SHIP on 4-27 & 20 at SHIP on 4-30 (NOH)

**Pectoral Sandpiper** 3 on Samish Flats on 5-9 (GB) **rare in spring**

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** 1 on Samish Flats on 5-9 (GB) **rare in spring**

**Western Sandpiper** 20 at SWAWS on 4-19, 3 at SHIP on 4-30 & 200 at FIFR on 5-7 (NOH)

**Wilson's Phalarope** 1 at Leque Island/Eide Rd on 5-10 (PP)

### ALCIDS

**Common Murre** 1 at Rosario on 4-14 (NOH)  
**Marbled Murrelet** 2 at WA Park, Anacortes on 4-17 & 4-23 (YH)  
**Rhinoceros Auklet** 1 at Rosario on 4-14 (NOH); 2 at WA Park, Anacortes on 4-17 & 4-23 (YH)

### GULLS and TERNS

**Bonaparte's Gull** 1 at SHIP on 4-12 & 4-30 (NOH)  
**Franklin's Gull** 2 on Fir Island on 5-7 (GB)  
**California Gull** 1 at SHIP on 5-8 (NOH)

### HERONS & ALLIES

**American Bittern** 5 at Hansen Creek on 4-19 (PP)

### VULTURES

**Turkey Vulture** 2 at Rosario on 4-14, 1 at Cranberry Lake, ACFL on 4-25, 1 at SHIP on 4-27 & 1 at Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH)

### OSPREYS

**Osprey** 1 at SHIP on 4-23 (YH)

### OWLS

**Great Horned Owl** 3 at SWAWS on 4-19 & 2 at WA Park, Anacortes on 4-26 (NOH); 4 (2 adults, 2 young at nest site) at SWAWS on 5-1 & 2 adults at SWAWS on 5-8 (MS/JS).  
**Barred Owl** 1 at Cranberry Lake, ACFL on 4-25 & 1 on Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH); 1 at Camano Island State Park, Emerson Nature Trail on 5-11 (JS)  
**Short-eared Owl** 1 at FIFR on 5-7 (NOH) **late**

### WOODPECKERS

**Acorn Woodpecker** 1 at feeder near Concrete 5-7 to 5-9 (GB) **RARE**

*Field sightings continued on Pg. 6*

*Field sightings continued from Pg. 5*

#### **FALCONS**

**Peregrine Falcon** 1 at FIFR on 5-11 (YH)

#### **FLYCATCHERS**

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 5-6 (RW); 1 at Camano Island yard on 5-14 (PP)

**Pacific-slope Flycatcher** 4 on Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH)

**Eastern Kingbird** 3 on Martin Rd on 5-8 (GB)

#### **VIREOS**

**Cassin's Vireo** 2 at Barnaby Slough on 5-6 (GB)

**Warbling Vireo** 1 at Camano Island yard on 5-15 (PP)

#### **SWALLOWS**

**Purple Martin** 20 at SHIP on 5-8 (NOH)

#### **WRENS**

**Bewick's Wren** 2 at east Stanwood home daily throughout sighting period (MS/JS)

#### **THRUSHES**

**Mountain Bluebird** 1 on Martin Rd on 5-8 (GB) **late**

**Swainson's Thrush** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 4-26 (RW); 1 on Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH)

#### **FINCHES and ALLIES**

**Evening Grosbeak** 8 at east Stanwood yard throughout sighting period (MS/JS)

**Cassin's Finch** 1 at feeder near Concrete on 5-8 (GB)

**Red Crossbill** 2 at Camano Island yard week of 4-26 (PP); 1 at Rosario on 4-29 (NOH)

#### **LONGSPURS and BUNTINGS**

**Lapland Longspur** 1 at March Point on 5-4 (GB) **rare in spring**

#### **SPARROWS and ALLIES**

**Chipping Sparrow** 1 at Cap Sante yard on 5-13 (JH)

**Vesper Sparrow** 1 at Corkindale on 5-8 (GB)

**White-throated Sparrow** 1 at Camano Island yard on 5-4 (SRP); 1 at Everett Lake on 5-8 (GB) **late**

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** 6 at Camano Island yard on 5-5 (SRP)

#### **WARBLERS**

**Orange-crowned Warbler** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 4-21 (RW)

**Nashville Warbler** 1 at Marblemount ranger station on 5-6 (GB)

**Common Yellowthroat** 1 at SWAWS on 4-19 & 5-7 & 1 at SHIP on 5-8 (NOH)

**Yellow Warbler** 1 at SHIP on 5-6 & 5-8, 2 at SWAWS on 5-7 & 1 on Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH); 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 5-11 (RW); 3 at SWAWS on 5-11 (YH)

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 4-21 (RW)

**Black-throated Gray Warbler** 1 at Thunder Creek on 4-28 & 1 on Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH)

**Townsend's Warbler** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 4-21 (RW)

**Wilson's Warbler** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 4-21 (RW); 1 at Cranberry Lake ACFL on 5-2, 1 at SHIP on 5-8 & 1 on Tursi Trail DPSP on 5-9 (NOH)

#### **TANAGERS and ALLIES**

**Western Tanager** 1 at east Stanwood yard on 5-11 (MS/JS); 1 male at Camano Island yard on 5-12 (SRP)

**Black-headed Grosbeak** 1 at east Fidalgo yard on 5-3 (RW); 1 male at Camano Island yard on 5-12 (SRP); 7 (first arrival 5-8) daily at east Stanwood yard (MS/JS)



#### **MAMMALS**

**Long-tailed Weasel** 1 at SWAWS on 5-8 & 2 at FIFR on 5-10 (MS/JS)

**Muskrat** 1 at SWAWS on 4-20 (YH)

(**ACFL**) Anacortes Community Forest Lands; (**GB**) Gary Bletsch; (**DPSP**) Deception Pass State Park; (**FIFR**) Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve; (**JH**) Joe Halton; (**NOH**); Neil O'Hara; (**YH**) Yvonne Houppermans; ; (**SHIP**) Ship Harbor Interpretive Preserve; (**SRP**) Sheila and Ron Pera; (**PP**) Pam Pritzl; (**JS**) Jeff Sinker; (**MS**) Mary Sinker; (**SWAWS**) Skagit Wildlife Area Wylie Slough; (**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](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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 Vice President: Denny Quirk.....denny@skagitaudubon.org  
 Secretary: Don Jonasson  
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 Immediate Past President: Vacant

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 Representative: Jane Brandt.....janeb@skagitaudubon.org  
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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

**WHO TO CALL FOR SICK OR INJURED BIRDS OR WILDLIFE?**

**San Juan, Skagit, and Northern Whidbey Island:** Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, located on San Juan Island, serves these areas, and can be reached 24/7 by phone at 360.378.5000. Visit their website at [www.wolfhollowwildlife.org](http://www.wolfhollowwildlife.org) for more info.

**Snohomish County:** Sarvey Wildlife Care Center, located in Arlington, serves Snohomish County, and can be reached by phone at 360.435.4817. Visit their website at [www.sarveywildlife.org](http://www.sarveywildlife.org) for more info.

**Snohomish County:** PAWS, located in Lynnwood, serves Snohomish County and for wildlife concerns can be reached by phone at 425.412.4040 or 425.787.2500 ext. 817. Visit their website at [www.paws.org](http://www.paws.org) for more info.

**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](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))