

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society A Chapter of National Audubon Society

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MAY MEETING – PRESENTED ON ZOOM

"Forage Fish Research and Management"

Presented by: Phillip Dionne, Research Scientist, WDFW
Tuesday, May 10, 7:00 PM

Forage fish are critical to the marine food web and support populations of many of the Salish Sea's most important and iconic species. Learn about the different forage fish in Washington, why they are so important, the research being done, and how we manage them in the face of a rapidly changing ecosystem.

Phillip Dionne is the forage fish research and management lead for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and has been with WDFW since 2011. During this time, he has worked on tagging and telemetry studies of ESA listed green sturgeon, developed spawning biomass estimates for Pacific herring and ESA listed Eulachon



Smelt. Phillip has also developed new methods to improve detection of Surf Smelt and Pacific Sand Lance habitat, monitored the effects of shoreline modifications on nearshore habitat, and assisted with surveys of coastal pelagic species. He has also had the privilege to work with and train over 200 hundred volunteers, professional biologists, and AmeriCorps interns in the US and Canada to document forage fish habitat. Photo: Horned Grebe by Christopher Ciccone.

Register for this Zoom event at: https://bit.ly/May2022SAS. Pre-registration 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 carlaihelm@comcast.net.

PREVIOUS MONTH'S PROGRAM: If you missed the excellent April 12th Zoom presentation, "Birds of the Olympic Coast" by Chris Williams, you can view the recording at: https://youtu.be/unaeeebFEf8.

In response to the COVID-19 virus, our member meetings continue to be held via Zoom. Hikes and birding field trips are being organized for vaccinated individuals. Participants need to comply with the activity leader's guidelines. Please visit our website for updates.

The Flyer 1 May 2022

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

Yay – to quote our treasurer, Neil O'Hara, "We have now entered the 21st century!"

Thanks to Neil and a small cadre of dedicated board members, we now have two ways to avoid writing a check when making a payment or donation to Skagit Audubon. On the home page of our website (www.skagitaudubon.org) there is now a DONATE button with access to credit cards and PayPal. Also, on the Membership page you will find a BuyNow button that can be used to pay your annual dues. Neil reminds us that there are a couple of limitations. We can only pay for one year at a time and you may have to agree to renew online. Please be patient with our new process and let us know if it works, or maybe if there is a glitch.

I'm also pleased to share with you that another SAS member has agreed to lead a field trip. Allison Warner has offered to lead a field trip to the upper Skagit later this year. Please thank Allison if you get a chance. Look for field trip details in the coming newsletter. There are more opportunities to help Skagit Audubon with field trips and we can always use more leaders.

I'm going to keep it short this month as I prepare for my first travel in two years. I'm also looking forward to being back for spring migration. We all hope to reconnect again soon at meetings and field trips this upcoming year. Until then...

Thanks, and happy birding and hiking.

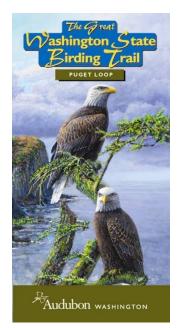
Jeff Osmundson, President

FROM YOUR EDITOR - by Mary Sinker

Imagine an entire series of maps designed for birders to find the best birding areas in all parts of Washington State – could something like this exist – yes, it does! Known as the Great Washington State Birding Trail, a project from Washington State Audubon and numerous agencies, communities, and Audubon chapters, seven distinctive routes have been developed covering the entire state.

Produced in full color, maps covering the routes are: Cascade Loop, Coulee Corridor, Olympic Loop, Palouse to Pines Loop, Puget Loop, Southwest Loop, and Sun and Sage Loop. On the front side of each map is a full color map and each birding area has a number showing its location on the route. Turn the map over and you will find the birding areas listed in numerical order.

Detailed information including birds commonly seen, directions, site information, and other tidbits are included for each location. Depending on where you live, some of these sites may be right in your backyard or an easy day trip. Planning a longer trip to string together numerous sites, or even connecting loops together, is another way to use these maps. Numerous rural communities are located along the routes, so if you plan to stay overnight or grab a coffee or a meal from a local business, you



are helping to support their economy and to protect the surrounding natural area that birds depend on.

More information and how to order maps available at: https://wa.audubon.org/birds/great-washington-state-birding-trail.

Happy Birding!

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 idmelcher@comcast.net or 360.424.0407.



May 7: Hoypus Point, Hoypus Hill and Ala Spit

May 11: Whitehorse Trail

May 18: Ebey's Landing, Cemetery & Pratt Loop

May 25: Lily Lizard Lakes Loop (The LLL) or Trailhead to Samish Overlook

June 1: San Juan Island

CONSERVATION REPORT - by Tim Manns

Audubon's core goal of protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitat is never finished, but it's important to pause and note successes. At April's start, Thurston Superior Court Judge James Dixon affirmed that state parks are not appropriate places for training the Navy's special forces. The training is vitally important; there are many other places to do it. Audubon's interest is in protecting the wildlife habitat state parks and adjacent marine waters provide.

Also in April, the company proposing a large quarry at the Cascade Big Bear Mine near Marblemount declined to continue pursuing a mining permit. Changing an earlier decision, the Department of Natural Resources determined an environmental impact statement was needed given the likelihood of significant impacts from this long-term project. The quarry stone, Shuksan greenschist, contains asbestos. Mining it safely requires very rigorous procedures - just one of a litany of problems. This was the second mining attempt Skagit Audubon opposed at this location, both times on the grounds that there would be significant negative impacts to wildlife. The face of the quarry cliff, for example, hosts an active peregrine falcon nest.

Other efforts to protect birds, wildlife, and habitat continue. Skagit County's draft Shoreline Master Program still ignores effects of climate change on flooding and sea level rise with myriad implications for wildlife, people, and the environment on which both depend. On the bright side, it's spring, and May's a terrific time for birding as neotropical migrants return from their wintering grounds and sing to start the breeding season.

Audubon members can advocate for regional and national protection of birds and other wildlife and their habitat through action alerts from National and Washington Audubon. Sign up for Audubon Washington's Action Network at Join Our Action Network | Audubon Washington (replace my name and address with yours). The National Audubon website (Advocacy & Action | Audubon) describes numerous current conservation campaigns. Sign up there to receive national alerts. Also see the Audubon Washington blog for information about many interesting and important issues: AuduBlog | Audubon Washington

For other issues Skagit Audubon tracked during the past year, some ongoing, see earlier issues of Conservation Notes on the chapter's website: Skagit Audubon Society - Home under the Conservation tab at the top of the page.

UPCOMING BOARD ELECTIONS ON JUNE 14th

Board elections will be held at our annual meeting on Tuesday, June 14th. The voting process and final slate of candidates will be communicated in a separate email in mid-May. The format of the annual meeting is yet to be determined. The meeting may be held on Zoom only or there is the possibility we will be able to hold a hybrid Zoom/in-person meeting at Padilla Bay. Please save the date and plan to join your fellow chapter members in our annual meeting on June 14th.

WELCOME BACK FIELD TRIPS!

Beginning birders and friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Participants must be fully vaccinated against COVID. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes (if you have them). Carpool whenever possible, contributing to the driver's expense and wearing a mask when riding with anyone not a member of your household. 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 or 360.757.4139.



Saturday May 7, 2022, Birding Camano Island, 8:00 a.m. to noon

Spring on Camano offers a variety of habitats and birds to explore. We'll start at English Boom, where we may see seabirds, swallows, eagles, passerines, and if we're lucky, Purple Martins. In the farm fields we'll drive past, Whimbrels can at times be plentiful during mowing time. Then on to Iverson Spit, with mud flats, shrubs, and woodlands full of spring arrivals. The trip will end at Leque Island, a new restoration site that showcases fertile mud flats and possible shorebirds on one side and the Stillaguamish River on the other (Discover Pass needed for parking). Meet in Stanwood at the QFC shopping center on the north side of 532. We'll be near the stand-alone Starbucks store. Those wishing to carpool can do so from there. Participants are required to be fully vaccinated for Covid 19. Contact Alice Turner, alicet2@msn.com, to let her know you plan to come, and in case plans change.

Saturday May 14, 2022, WSU Display Gardens, 16650 SR 536, Mount Vernon, 10:00 a.m. to noon

The display gardens are great for wandering about at any season. Brenda will introduce you to the three gardens of the site – Native Plant, Master Gardener, and Northwest Fruit Foundation. We'll take a look at what plants produce fruit and shelter for birds and watch for the bird species we regularly see in the gardens: Anna's Hummingbirds, White-crowned Sparrows, Cedar Waxwings, and more. We'll also look for Long-toed Salamanders and Western Toads. Beginning birders are encouraged to come! Bring binoculars. Meet in the parking lot at 16650 SR 536, in front of the Display Garden entrance. We request that participants be fully vaccinated for Covid 19. Trip Leader Brenda Cunningham, 360.333.8321; SalalGarden@wnps.org

Saturday May 21, 2022, Barnaby Slough near Rockport, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Barnaby Slough is a complex of oxbow wetlands on the south side of the Skagit River east of Rockport. It's a great place to see neotropical migrants such as warblers, flycatchers, tanagers, and vireos. Wetland birds such as grebes, herons, and rails are possible. The site of a former fish hatchery, it's currently the focus of a significant salmon habitat restoration project, so our observations will help document change at the site over time. Meet at 9:00 am at the turnoff to the old fish hatchery on Martin Ranch Road: Take SR20 east to Rockport. At Rockport, turn right on SR530. About 1.6 miles south of SR20, turn left on Rockport-Cascade Road. In about 1.5 miles, turn left on Martin Ranch Road. In about 1.25 miles, you'll reach the turnoff to the old fish hatchery. Two or three vehicles can park at the gate on the old hatchery access road. Others can park to the side of the turnoff or along the shoulder of Martin Ranch Road. (N48.479906 W121.536426). NOTE: limited to 15 participants, and we ask that everyone be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, sturdy shoes, snack, and dress for the weather. Recommend checking forecast that morning and bring raingear if needed. Sign up using this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44A8A729AAFEC16-barnaby. If you have questions, email Trip Leader John Day at jday0730@gmail.com.

Saturday May 28, 2022, Northern State Recreation Area(NSRA)/Rasar State Park, (with an option to include Howard Miller Steelhead Park), 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

This trip will focus on birds to be found in two different sites as we move up elevation in the Skagit watershed with habitats including riparian, old growth, and scrub-shrub, as well as seeing the swallows nesting at Northern State. We'll look for passerines, woodpeckers, flycatchers, hummingbirds, hawks, and Vaux's swifts and mergansers at the Skagit River. We'll spend about 3 hours at NSRA, visit the wetlands at the intersection of Helmick Rd and Highway 20, then head east to Rasar State Park to eat lunch and walk a loop through old growth forest and riparian areas with a view of the Skagit. Dress for variable weather, bring lunch, binoculars, spotting scope (if available), and Discover Pass. Carpooling encouraged. Meet 8AM at NSRA parking area on Helmick Road. Please contact Trip Leader Allison Warner, 425-344-7829, allisivy@gmail.com for more information.

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 <u>birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org</u>. 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 1 "blue morph" at Bayview Edison Rd on 3-18 (YH); 10,000 flying over Bay View property on 4-11 (LM); 100's seen from the West 90, Samish Island on 4-14 (AW) Tundra Swan 16 at FIFR on 3-31 (NOH); 29 at Jensen Access on 4-13 (GB)

Wood Duck 9 at Cranberry Lake, ACFL on 3-27 (NOH); 6 at SWAWS on 3-31 (YH) Cinnamon Teal 2 at NSRA on

4-7 (GB); 3 at Green Road Marsh, Burlington on 4-13 (TRM)

Eurasian Wigeon 1 at FIFR on 3-31 (NOH); 1 at FIFR on 4-13 (GB)

Green-winged Teal

1"Eurasian" at Padilla Bay on 3-18 (YH)

Greater Scaup 37 at Padilla Bay on 4-2 (YH)

Barrow's Goldeneye 1 at Barnaby Slough on 3-29 (GB); 2 at Guemes Channel on 4-2 (NOH)

Common Merganser 24 in Swinomish Channel on 3-18 (YH)

GREBES

Red-necked Grebe 1 at SHIP on 3-22 (NOH)

PIGEONS and DOVES Band-tailed Pigeon 4 in Mount Vernon yard on 3-22 (DH)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Rufous Hummingbird 1 on 3-25 & 2 on 3-29 at SHIP (NOH); 1 on 3-31 & 1 on 4-7 at SWAWS (NOH); 1 at CAMA

Beach State Park on 4-14 (AlW)

RAILS and COOTS

Virginia Rail 1 on Bay View property on 4-11 (LM) Sora 1 at NSRA on 4-7 (GB)

CRANES

Sandhill Crane 2 over Lincoln Hill, Mt. Vernon on 3-27 (TRM)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Sanderling 10 at March Point on 4-5 (GB); 6 at March Point on 4-6 (YH)

Dunlin 1000's at FIFR on 3-27 (AT)

Long-billed Dowitcher 4 at SWAWS on 4-5 (GB)

Wilson's Snipe 11 at Guemes Valley on 4-2 (TRM)

Lesser Yellowlegs 1 at SWAWS on 4-13 (GB)

ALCIDS

Rhinoceros Auklet 10 off Guemes Island, Eden's Rd on 4-2 (TRM)

GULLS and TERNS

California Gull 1 at Minkler Flats on 3-15 (GB) Caspian Tern 2 at Bay View State Park on 4-2 (PP); 1 at SWANFA on 4-13 (GB)

LOONS

Common Loon 1 at SHIP on 3-22 & 3-25 (NOH)

HERONS and ALLIES American Bittern 1 in

Hamilton on 3-29 (GB)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 1 flew over east Fidalgo property on 4-6 (RW)

OSPREYS

Osprey 1 east of Rockport on 3-29 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Cooper's Hawk 1 at Hillcrest Park. Mt. Vernon throughout sighting period (TRM); 1 male at east Fidalgo property on 4-10 (RW)

Red-tailed Hawk 1 "wing-tagged E-3" near Padilla Center on 4-11 (AW)

Rough-legged Hawk 1 light morph at Farm to Market/D'arcy & 1 light morph & 1 dark morph on Bayview Edison Rd near T, Samish Flats on 3-29 (AW); 1 light morph & 1 dark morph soaring near the Skagit Airport & 1 dark morph at Farm to Market/D'arcy, Samish Flats on 4-7 (AW); 1 on Peterson Rd (near Skagit Airport) 4-14 (AW)

OWLS

Great Horned Owl 1 at Hillcrest Park, Mt. Vernon on 3-29 (TRM) Short-eared Owl 1 FIFR 3-22 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker 1 east Fidalgo property on 3-15 (RW) Pileated Woodpecker 2 at Cranberry Lake, ACFL 3-27 (NOH); 1 male daily at east Fidalgo property 3-18 to present (RW) Continued on pg. 6 Continued from pg. 5

FALCONS

American Kestrel 1 male on LaConner/Whitney Rd on 4-11 (AW); nesting pair on Peterson Rd near Skagit Airport on 4-14 (AW)

Peregrine Falcon 1 adult on Sullivan Rd, Samish Flats on 4-7 (AW); 1 juvenile at Field/Farm to Market Rd, Samish Flats on 4-14 (AW)

FLYCATCHERS

Black Phoebe 1 at SWAWS on 3-18 (NOH); 1 at SWAWS on 3-31 (YH)

Say's Phoebe 1 at Bryson Rd on 4-9 (GB)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Hillcrest Park, Mt. Vernon throughout sighting period (TRM); 1 at east Fidalgo property on 3-26 (RW) Horned Lark

SWALLOWS Northern Rough-winged Swallow 2 in Hamilton on 3-30 (GB)

THRUSHES

Western Bluebird 2 at Bryson Rd on 4-9 (GB)

Mountain Bluebird 2 at Bryson Rd on 4-9 (GB)

Townsend's Solitaire 8 at Kinley Lane, Concrete on 4-9 (GB); 1 on Bayview Edison Rd near Padilla Center on 4-11 (AW); 1 on Bay View property on 4-10 4-11 (LM); 1 at Secret Harbor, Cypress Island on 4-13 (TRM)

Hermit Thrush 1 at Marblemount Boat Launch on 4-6 (GB); 1 at east Fidalgo property on 4-13 (RW) Varied Thrush 1 at Cranberry Lake, ACFL on 3-27 (NOH)

SPARROWS and ALLIES American Tree Sparrow 1 at FIFR on 3-22 (GB) Chipping Sparrow 1 at Ovenell's Heritage Inn on 4-9 (GB) Savannah Sparrow 6 at Samish Flats on 4-2 (YH)

WARBLERS

Common Yellowthroat 1 at Guemes Valley on 4-2 (TRM); 1 at Hunn Field on 4-6 (GB); 2 on Bay View property on 4-11 (LM) Yellow-rumped Warbler 2 at SHIP on 3-16 & 1 at SHIP on 3-25 (NOH); 2 at Camano Island yard week of 3-27 (PP); 1 at SWAWS on 4-7 (NOH); 2 "Audubon's" at CAMA Beach State Park 4-14 (AIW)

Townsend's Warbler heard at east Fidalgo property on 3-25 (RW)

MAMMALS

Northern Elephant Seal 1 at Padilla Bay on 3-25 (YH)

(ACFL) Anacortes Community Forest Lands; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (**FIFR**) Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve; (DH) Di Hoffman; (YH) Yvonne Houppermans; (NSRA) Northern State Recreation Area); (TRM) Tim Manns; (LM) Libby Mills; (NOH); Neil O'Hara; (PP) Pam Pritzl;; (**SHIP**) Ship Harbor Interpretive Preserve: (SWANFA) Skagit Wildlife Area North Fork Access; (SWAWS) Skagit Wildlife Area Wylie Slough; (AT) Alice Turner; (AlW) Allison Warner; (AW) Andrea Warner; (RW) Regan Weeks

Meet the Great Blue Heron (Ardea herodias) - by Jeff Sinker



The largest heron in North America, the Great Blue Heron is widespread and found in both fresh and saltwater habitats, including shorelines, ponds, marshes, estuaries, creeks, and tideflats. Great Blue Herons also feed in fields where they capture gophers and voles, which may be an important food source for young herons over their first winter. Although these herons are often observed catching fish, they also eat salamanders, frogs, turtles, snakes, insects, rodents, and birds, including small waterbirds like rails.

Great Blue Herons nest in "rookeries" and nests are typically located in trees or atop pilings at marinas. Females build the large platform-style nest using materials gathered and brought to the site by the male. Three

to five eggs are laid and incubated for 25-30 days by both parents. Upon hatching, both parents feed the young by regurgitating food they have eaten. The youngsters do not depart the nest until around 65-90 days of age and are capable of taking their first flights when they are about two months old. Because of this lengthy time in the nest, the pair will raise only one brood. Great Blue Herons are easily flushed, and entire colonies might abandon nesting sites if too much disturbance occurs, especially early in the season. Photo: Great Blue Heron by Jeff Sinker

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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FROM eBIRD.org and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology - Be a part of birding's biggest team! Global Big Day is an annual celebration of the birds around you. No matter where you are, join us virtually on May 14, help celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, and share the birds you find with eBird. Participating is easy you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations to eBird online or with our free eBird

Mobile app. If you have more time, submit several checklists of birds throughout the day. You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations through products like these animated abundance maps brought to you by eBird Science.

SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY PO BOX 1101 MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273

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Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form	
Membership: \$20/one year O	R \$40/two years *** New OR Renewal
	to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit nation to: General Education Scholarship Fund
Mail form and payment to: Skagit A	udubon Society, P.O. Box 1101, Mt. Vernon WA 98273-1101
Name:	
Address:	By providing your email address and those of any household members, you/they consent to SAS's use of
City/State/:	electronic transmission, such as amail and website
ZIP: Phone:	postings, for notices about SAS business. You may
Email:	the Corretain of CAC
Membership includes those members	of your household whose names & emails you provide to us:
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(If you have more than one additional mem their name(s) and email address(es) to <u>mem</u>	ber of your household who wishes to become a member of SAS, please provide abership@skagitaudubon.org)
I want to be involved in (check all that appl	y): Education Conservation Field Trips Hiking Other
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