



The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Find us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/skagitaudubon
Volume 39, No. 9 www.skagitaudubon.org October 2020

NOVEMBER MEETING – PRESENTED ON ZOOM

How Photographing Raptors Changed My Life

Presented by Nancy Crowell

Tuesday, November 10, 7:00 PM

Our long-awaited presentation by Nancy Crowell is finally here! Nancy is a photographer based in Skagit County, whose beautiful images incorporate flora, fauna and landscapes. A resident of LaConner for 20 years, Nancy will share her photographic journey as inspired by the photogenic qualities of the “magic Skagit Valley”, and especially our migrating population of raptors. Nancy will also describe the current threat to raptors from rodenticides, including what is currently being done to reduce this threat, and what we can do as individuals and groups to help.



The November SAS member meeting will precede Nancy Crowell’s presentation.

Register for this Zoom event at the following link: <http://bit.ly/sasnov>

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 Zoom event. Questions? Contact carlajhelm@comcast.net.

A recording of Ron Force’s October 13th SAS virtual presentation on the Pribilofs is now available for viewing at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kXy5TRhIk4&t=3s>

DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING AND MEMBER PHOTO PROGRAM UPDATE

See Page 5 for information and details

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.

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

This week we found our 2021 Audubon calendar in the mail. It made me think how much we'd really like to close the books on 2020! But, unfortunately we have unfinished business this year. Many of us feel like doing something but are not sure what to get done first. Here is my idea for three things you can do this week that may make a difference.

First – VOTE! You may get this newsletter before Nov. 3 so please, if you have not already voted, do it right now. Some Washington Counties have estimated a return approaching 85%. Let's make that happen or exceed it.

Second – Get a flu shot! Medical experts strongly recommend flu vaccine each fall, usually in October. This year it may be all the more important with the risk of Covid. In most years there are 34,000-43,000 deaths in the US from influenza. In particularly bad years there could be as many as 60,000-80,000 like there were in 2017-2018. Please consider getting a flu shot this fall. It does not make you more susceptible to Covid. And, it cannot give you the flu.

Lastly – Buy a Duck Stamp! What's that?

It is part art, part valid license to harvest waterfowl and part program of conservation. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service: "Buying a Federal Duck Stamp is among the simplest ways that anyone can participate in wildlife and habitat conservation... Ninety-eight percent of your purchase goes directly to protecting wetlands and associated habitats to benefit birds and other wildlife (and people, too). For your investment, you receive the 'thank you gift' of a beautiful and collectible miniature work of wildlife art." Follow this link for information on where to purchase a Duck Stamp: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php>. Buying a Duck Stamp also shows a willingness to cooperate with other organizations and groups, including hunters, who share some of the same values as Audubon. Many of our Skagit Audubon members make it a yearly practice. Will you too? (Photo credit: 2020-21 Federal Duck Stamp USFWS)



If you get those three things done this week you will have done something for democracy, something for your health and something for the environment.

Who says we can't get anything done!

Jeff Osmundson, President

SAS BOARD UPDATES BYLAWS - MORE INFO COMING YOUR WAY!



Dear SAS Members,

It's been many years since we've undertaken a comprehensive review of SAS's Bylaws and other governance documents. The Board, however, recognized the Bylaws were outdated and no longer tracked how we operate or supported our growth. Over the past two years, the Board has performed a thorough review of the Bylaws and found a number of ways in which they could be amended to reflect our current operations and provide flexibility to meet today's challenges. The Board approved these new Bylaws in October, but they won't go into effect until approved by SAS's

members. We plan to send you in November more information about the new proposed Bylaws, followed by another electronic ballot similar to what we used for our Board election this past summer. Stay tuned for more information in November!

The Board of Directors of the Skagit Audubon Society

CONSERVATION, by Tim Manns

Each October, Audubon Washington convenes representatives from the state's 25 Audubon chapters for 2 meetings. October 2nd, the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC) met via Zoom with chapter presidents, conservation chairs, and other interested members. The next day the Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) took place with board and general members from across the state in attendance. Both meetings had some focus on conservation issues looking ahead to the Washington State Legislature's 2021 session, which opens for a 120-day regular session January 11th.

Because of the budget shortfall associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary public health measures, considerably fewer bills than usual will advance in the legislature. Those requiring funding will face severe obstacles. During the WSACC meeting Audubon's contract lobbyist, Brynn Brady, stated the overall key issues for the session: public health, housing, child-care, tax reform, the transportation budget, and climate change. While all these are important, climate change and transportation as it affects the environment are of particular relevance to Audubon's mission.

National Audubon has identified climate change as the greatest threat to birds (<https://www.audubon.org/news/new-audubon-science-two-thirds-north-american-birds-risk-extinction-due-climate>). Accordingly, in the 2021 state legislative session Audubon Washington will again advocate for measures addressing climate change. Adam Maxwell, Campaigns Manager for Audubon Washington, described Audubon's three-pronged agenda.

First is defending conservation funding. Conservation-related spending, such as the budget for the Department of Fish & Wildlife, tends to be cut disproportionately when revenue is scarce. As Representative Debra Lekanoff (40th District) described in her keynote address at ACOW on October 3rd, she is also working with an ad-hoc committee on a plan for green bonds to fund certain environmental priorities including ecosystem restoration.

The second prong Adam described is tackling greenhouse gas emissions by passing a low carbon fuel standard. Transportation accounts for over 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in Washington State, more than any other source. A Clean Fuel Standard policy, such as California, Oregon, and British Columbia already have, would require oil refiners and importers to reduce the carbon intensity of fuels and would support transportation electrification.

The third prong Adam described is climate resilience through updating the Growth Management Act (GMA) to require that counties and cities address climate change in local comprehensive planning. This effort is in partnership with organizations such as Futurewise, which is mounting a major campaign to update the GMA. Under this act passed in 1990, Skagit County, Mount Vernon, Anacortes, et al. are required to develop and periodically update a Comprehensive Plan governing land use and development. In her remarks, Representative Lekanoff described work on another change to the GMA and the Shoreline Management Act which would upgrade the current standard of "no net loss" of ecological function from development projects to one of "net ecological gain". This proposed change is driven by the failure of the current standard to contribute effectively to reversing the decline of salmon in Washington's waters. There are also implications for recovering the Southern Resident Killer Whale population.

For the first time, Audubon Washington will hold an advocacy day before the legislative session to communicate Audubon's priorities to state legislators. This virtual event will take place December 9, 2020. Watch for information on participating. Also, Audubon is part of the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC), whose over 20 organizational members advocate for several bills each legislative session. Those will be announced soon, and there will be a (probably virtual) EPC lobby day during the session.

For other issues on which Skagit Audubon is focusing, see "Conservation Notes" under the Conservation tab at www.skagitaudubon.org.

BIG SIT IS A BIG SUCCESS!

Thanks to the 14 Team Wiley members and 7 additional SAS members who conducted their own Big Sit counts. A total of 60 species, including Virginia Rail and Pectoral Sandpiper, were recorded at Wiley Slough. Two members recorded 20 species in their individual counts. The secret species, Fox Sparrow, was found at Wiley and by two members doing their own counts. All funds raised go to the SAS Environmental Conservation Scholarship.

Skagit Audubon Field Notes by Pam Pritzl This column reports submitted sightings. For help with rare sightings or locations, please contact birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org. For recent updates, check out **ABA Tweeters** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding Menu, Bird Sightings submenu). Please submit your sightings to birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org.

WATERFOWL

Snow Goose 2 at Eide Road on 9-21 (JE/PP); 3 at SWAWS on 9-25 (GB); 12 on Fir Island on 10-3 (JH); heard flying over east Fidalgo home on 10-7 (RW)
Cackling Goose 150 at FIFR on 10-4 & 190 on 9-30 (NOH)
Cinnamon Teal 1 at SWAWS on 9-17 (NOH)
Eurasian Wigeon 1 at FIFR on 9-30 (NOH)
Redhead 1 at Jensen Access, Fir Island on 10-12 (GB)
Surf Scoter 200 at Barnum Park, Camano Island on 10-13 (JE/PP)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

California Quail 8 at Anacortes home on 10-14 (TK)

PIGEONS and DOVES

Eurasian Collared-Dove 1 at Anacortes home on 9-20 (TK)

NIGHTHAWKS

Common Nighthawk 2 at Mount Vernon home on 9-4 (CH)

RAILS and COOTS

Virginia Rail 3 at SWAWS on 9-15 & 9-17, 6 on 9-27, 1 on 9-30 & 4 on 10-4 (NOH); 2 at McGinn Island, La Conner on 9-21 (CH); 1 at SWAWS on 10-10 and 10-15 (MS/JS)

CRANES

Sandhill Crane 3 at DeBay Slough on 10-3 (GB); 4 flying over Alice Bay home, Samish Island on 10-12 (HA/TA)

PLOVERS

Black-bellied Plover 8 at FIFR on 9-19 & 30 on 9-30 (NOH)
Pacific Golden-Plover 1 at FIFR on 9-22 (GB)

SANDPIPERS and ALLIES

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 1 at SWAWS on 9-29 (JB)
Least Sandpiper 2 at FIFR on 9-19, 20 on 9-30 & 75 on 10-4 (NOH)
Pectoral Sandpiper 1 at SWAWS on 9-17 & 1 on 9-27 (NOH)
Western Sandpiper 25 at FIFR on 9-19 & 1 on 9-30 & 1 on 10-4 (NOH)
Wilson's Snipe 1 at SWAWS on 9-15, 3 on 9-17 & 3 on 9-30 (NOH)
Spotted Sandpiper 1 at Nichols Bar on 10-9 (GB)
Solitary Sandpiper 1 at Channel Drive on 9-16 (GB)

JAEGERS

Parasitic Jaeger 1 at Washington Park on 10-1 and 10-8 (GB)

ALCIDS

Ancient Murrelet 9 at Washington Park on 10-8 (GB)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 3 at SWAWS on 9-15 (NOH)

OSPREYS

Osprey 3 at SHIP on 9-20 (NOH)

Continued on Pg. 5

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Bald Eagle 1 at SWAWS on 9-27 & 1 on 9-30; 1 at FIFR on 9-30 & 2 on 10-4 (NOH)
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1 juvenile at east Fidalgo home on 10-6 (RW)
Cooper's Hawk 1 juvenile at east Fidalgo home on 9-23 (RW)
Ferruginous Hawk 1 on Hidden Lake Trail on 9-28 (NOH) **RARE**

OWLS

Great Horned Owl 2 at SWAWS on 10-4 (NOH); 2 at east Stanwood home on 10-9 (MS/JS); 1 hooting at Camano Island home on 10-14 (JE)
Barred Owl 2 at Cranberry Lake, Anacortes on 9-18 (NOH); 1 near east Stanwood home on 10-9 (MS/JS)

WOODPECKERS

Northern Flicker 1 male at Anacortes home on 9-19 (TK)

FALCONS

Merlin 1 at SWAWS on 9-15 & 1 on 9-17; 1 at FIFR on 10-4 (NOH); 1 at Iverson Spit on 9-30 (PP)
Peregrine Falcon 1 at SWAWS on 9-17 & 1 on 9-30; 1 at FIFR on 9-30 & 1 on 10-4 (NOH)

FLYCATCHERS

Willow Flycatcher 1 at SHIP on 9-20 (NOH)
Grey Flycatcher 1 at Rasar State Park on 9-26 (GB)
Black Phoebe 1 at SWAWS on 9-15 & 1 on 9-30 (NOH)

Continued from Pg. 4

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Camano Island home on 10-1 (PP)

CORVIDS

California Scrub-Jay 3 in Lyman on 9-22 (MSW); 1 at Lyman home on 10-1 & 10-15 (GB)

Black-billed Magpie 1 in Skyline on 10-1 (GB)

CHICKADEES

Black-capped Chickadee 1 at Anacortes home on 10-9 (TK)

BUSHTITS

Bushtit 2 at SHIP on 10-7 (NOH)

NUTHATCHES

Red-breasted Nuthatch 2 at east Stanwood home on 10-10 (MS/JS)

CREEPERS

Brown Creeper 1 at east Stanwood home on 10-10 (MS/JS)

WRENS

Pacific Wren 2 at east Stanwood home on 10-11 (MS/JS)

KINGLETS

Ruby-crowned Kinglet 1 at SWAWS on 9-17 & 1 at SHIP on 10-7 (NOH)

THRUSHES

Hermit Thrush 1 at Cama Beach State Park on 10-4 (JE/PP); 2 at east Fidalgo home on 10-12 (RW)

Varied Thrush first of season singing at east Fidalgo home on 9-21 (RW)

PIPITS

American Pipit 1 at FIFR on 9-30 (NOH); 12 at Eide Road on 10-1 (JE/PP)

FINCHES and ALLIES

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch 12 at Sibley Pass on 10-5 (GB)

Red Crossbill 6 at Camano Island home on 9-27, 1 on 10-10 & 6 on 10-13 (PP)

Pine Siskin 1 at Anacortes home on 9-15 (TK)

LONGSPURS and BUNTINGS

Lapland Longspur 1 at the West 90, Samish Island on 10-1 (GB)

Lark Bunting 1 at SWAWS on 9-25 **RARE** (GB)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

Spotted Towhee 1 at Anacortes home on 10-1 (TK)

Fox Sparrow 2 at east Fidalgo home on 9-23 (RW); 2 at SHIP on 10-7 (NOH)

Song Sparrow 1 at Anacortes home on 9-4 (TK)

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler 2 at SHIP on 9-20 (NOH)

Yellow Warbler 1 at SHIP on 9-20 (NOH)

Yellow-rumped Warbler 7 at SWAWS on 9-17 (NOH)

Townsend's Warbler 1 at Cap Sante, Anacortes on 10-8 (JH)

TANAGERS and ALLIES

Lazuli Bunting 1 in Concrete on 9-26 (GB) late

MAMMALS

Beaver 1 at Barnum Park, Camano Island on 10-13 (JE/PP)

River Otter 4 on Guemes Channel on 10-11 & 2 on Tommy Thompson causeway on 10-12 (NOH)

(**HA/TA**) Howard & Thais Armstrong; (**GB**) Gary Bletsch; (**JB**) Joan Bird; (**JE**) John Edison; (**FIFR**) Fir Island Farm Reserve aka Hayton Reserve;; (**JH**) Joe Halton; (**CH**) Carla Helm; (**NOH**); Neil O'Hara; (**TK**) Trevor Kyle; (**PP**) Pam Pritzl; (**MS/JS**) Mary & Jeff Sinker; (**MSW**) M. Swanson; (**SHIP**) Ship Harbor Interpretive Preserve; (**SWAWS**) Skagit Wildlife Area Wylie Slough; (**RW**) Regan Weeks

December Member Photo Program is happening and everyone is encouraged to submit photos. This is not a competition but an opportunity for all of us to share and enjoy our images with each other. The December meeting and photo program will be presented on Zoom on Tuesday, Dec. 8th, beginning at 7 pm.

Number of images: 10 per person (maximum)

Description/caption for each image: 60 words maximum per image and include: who, what, where, when, etc.

Size of images: 1mb – 4mb

Email images with descriptions/captions to: projectphotos999@gmail.com; include your full name in subject line

Deadline for submission: Sunday, November 29th, at 7 pm and earlier is always appreciated

Questions: projectphotos999@gmail.com (Mary Sinker)

FROM YOUR EDITOR - The Care and Feeding of the Winter Bird Feeder, by Mary Sinker



With summer officially behind us and cooler, wetter days ahead, now is a good time to make sure our feathered friends will have plenty of nutritious food and clean feeders in the coming months. Here are some tips for success:

Select bird feeders that are easy to clean! Feeders should be cleaned weekly or more often if necessary. Hot water, followed by a thorough drying, will take care of routine maintenance. If debris or mold has accumulated, a solution of 10 parts water to 1 part bleach will remove and kill mold and bacteria. Rinse thoroughly with warm water and dry completely before refilling with fresh seed.

Birds burn more calories to stay warm in cold weather, so choose foods like black-oil sunflower, suet, peanuts and/or peanut butter for hanging feeders. Seed mixes containing millet, black-oil sunflower and other seeds are a favorite of ground feeding birds like juncos, sparrows, doves, towhees and the like. Shelled peanuts and hulled sunflower seeds will spoil quickly in wet weather because their protective shells have been removed. These foods are also more expensive so offering only what the birds will eat in 1-2 days keeps the food fresh and stretches your bird feeding dollar. It's also tempting to fill large feeders to their full capacity, but unless the birds are emptying the feeder every day or two, even black-oil sunflower seed will become moldy if it sits too long in a feeder.

Winter bird feeding can often bring birds into your yard that would normally remain elusive. When we have snow on the ground at our home, Varied Thrushes spend their days feeding on suet pieces knocked on the ground by flickers and woodpeckers. I hope winter bird feeding brings many visitors to your yard. Photo by Mary Sinker.

ACOW 2020 Meeting, by Carla Helm

Skagit Audubon was well represented at the annual ACOW (Audubon Council of Washington) meeting which was held via Zoom on October 3rd. Tim Manns, Kim Nelson, Jeff Osmundson, Jane Brandt and I were welcomed to the meeting by Deborah Jensen, the new VP and Executive Director of Audubon Washington. She spoke about the 25 state Audubon chapters that she "visited" virtually to learn about the many projects going on across the state in each chapter. She covered the development of the Puget Sound BluePrint which highlights areas where restoration projects would have the most impact. She also highlighted Audubon Washington's support for the Sustainable Farms & Fields bill and the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Limits bill.

The keynote speaker was Washington State Representative Debra Lekanoff, who represents the 40th legislative district (which includes parts of Whatcom, Skagit and San Juan counties). Representative Lekanoff is the first Native American woman elected as a Washington state representative. Representative Lekanoff spoke about the environmental challenges facing our state, and her leadership in that arena. She highlighted the importance of working across the aisle to build consensus on thorny issues, and truly trying to understand both sides. Her many legislative goals include educating the next generation, working with agriculture and industry to improve water quality, and reduce carbon emissions, and incentivizing energy companies to move toward green energy. She was an eloquent and charismatic speaker.

We ended with breakout sessions sharing how chapters have adapted to socially distant engagement. Most chapters are using Zoom as an effective engagement tool. There were many examples of the use of the virtual platform: presentations, a Birds & Beer happy hour, book clubs, virtual field trips and online courses. Concerns raised included how to engage with those who are not comfortable with the Christmas Bird Count this year – could we emphasize Feeder Watch? Also, could we provide practice sessions for those not comfortable with Zoom. It was announced that Audubon Washington is creating a state-wide Google calendar so chapters can share virtual events more widely.

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.

Board of Directors - Officers

President:	Jeff Osmundson..... president@skagitaudubon.org
Vice President:	Denny Quirk..... denny@skagitaudubon.org
Secretary:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Neil O'Hara..... treasurer@skagitaudubon.org ...781-290-9083
Immediate Past President:	Vacant

Board of Directors - Committee Chairs and Representatives

Conservation:	Tim Manns..... conservation@skagitaudubon.org360-333-8985
Education:	Sheila Pera..... skagiteducation2@gmail.com Kim Nelson..... kimn@skagitaudubon.org
Field Trips:	Libby Mills..... libbymills@gmail.com360-757-4139
Finance:	Phil Wright..... phil@skagitaudubon.org
Hikes:	Joan Melcher..... jdmelcher@comcast.net360-424-0407
Membership:	Pam Pritzl..... membership@skagitaudubon.org
Programs:	Carla Helm..... programs@skagitaudubon.org
Publications:	Mary Sinker..... publications@skagitaudubon.org
Representative:	Alan Brewer..... alanbre@live.com
Representative:	Alice Turner..... alicet2@msn.com
Representative:	Ann Skinner..... anns@skagitaudubon.org
Representative:	Don Jonasson..... donjonasson@hotmail.com360-299-1415
Representative:	Jane Brandt..... janeb@skagitaudubon.org
Representative:	Katherine O'Hara..... katherineoh@skagitaudubon.org
Representative:	Vacant

Other Volunteers

Bird Sightings:	Pam Pritzl..... birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org360-387-7024
Hospitality:	Pamelia Maxwell
Newsletter Distribution:	John Edison
Webmaster:	Ron Pera..... skagitaudubon@gmail.com

Open Board Position – Secretary

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Ernie Hayden will step away from his position as Skagit Audubon Secretary. We thank Ernie for his willingness to pitch in for the last two months. We are now recruiting for a new Secretary and if you could spare some volunteer time, Skagit Audubon would be grateful.

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in the Secretary position, please contact any Board member or President Jeff Osmundson at president@skagitaudubon.org.

**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)