

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 34 No.10

DECEMBER FIELD TRIPS By Libby Mills

About the field trips
Beginning birders and friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Membership in Skagit Audubon is encouraged, but not required for participation. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing, and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpool whenever possible and contribute to the driver's expense. Watch the email reminders for the latest information, including any changes and or additions to the field trip schedule. To be added to the email field trip list contact Libby Mills:

libbymills@gmail.com

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

Saturday, December 5 Birds & Salmon

Upper Skagit River Valley
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Spawning salmon on the Skagit River and its tributaries above the town of Concrete attract Bald Eagles and other birds to the shores of the Skagit River.

Field Trips continue on page 7

DECEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

Potluck and Membership Slide Show Program Organizer: Libby Mills

Tuesday, December 8, 2015
6:45 Pot Luck; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10441 Bayview-Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



Snow Goose
Dark Morph
Photo by Joe Halton

Please bring potluck food to share. After the meal we will view each other's favorite nature photos, a collective view of how Skagit Audubon Society members have seen nature both here and abroad.

Send **no more** than 5 pictures in .jpg format
Pictures should be sufficient resolution to project well:
between **300 KB & 1 MB**

Include **Name of Photographer, Description of Subject, and Location**

Topics include Wild Nature, Flowers, Birds & other Animals, Landscapes, Trips, Backyard Habitat, & Hikes

Pictures must be received no later than December 1

Send to: libbymills@gmail.com

This show is open to EVERYBODY.

We look forward to an evening of sharing. It's not a contest, just a show!

Thanks to those participating!



SKAGIT AUDUBON

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

President: Irene Perry
irene@skagitaudubon.org

Vice President: VACANT
360-299-8212

Secretary: Mark Perry

Treasurer: Hella Lee
hhlee@frontier.com
360-848-5937

Immediate Past President: Phil Wright
phil@skagitaudubon.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Conservation: Tim Manns
conservation@skagitaudubon.org
360-336-8753

Education: Sheila Pera
skagiteducation2@gmail.com

Field Trips: Libby Mills
libbymills@gmail.com
360-757-4139

Hikes: Joan Melcher
jdmelcher@comcast.net
360-424-0407

Bird Sightings: Pam Pritzl
birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org
360-387-7024

Membership: Pam Pritzl
membership@skagitaudubon.org

Programs: Catherine Carter
programs@skagitaudubon.org

Publications: Jackie Boss
jackieaboss@yahoo.com
360-299-8067

Newsletter Distributor: Barbara Craner
craner2@frontier.com
360-770-3898

REPRESENTATIVES

Jean Ashby
jeanash66@gmail.com
Jane Brandt
janeb@skagitaudubon.org
Ivar Dolph
pidolph@frontier.com
Ron Holmes
ronh@skagitaudubon.org
Bob Kuntz
annebobkuntz@gmail.com
360-424-9099
Alice Turner
alicet2@msn.com

Hospitality: VACANT

Webmaster: Ron Pera
skagitaudubon@gmail.com



Red Crossbill "Christmas Bird Count Possibility"

Photo by Joe Halton

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA—7:00 PM Social/ 7:30 PM Program—on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. The board of directors meets at the same location at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month.

Skagit Audubon Society (SAS) membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, **The Flyer**, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. Newsletters from additional chapters can be sought by contacting their websites and membership chairs from links at <http://wa.audubon.org/audubon-locations/>. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** use the form below.

National Audubon Society (NAS) membership is separate from SAS membership and includes Audubon magazine. National Audubon membership does not provide Skagit Audubon membership; however, NAS will assign you an affiliation with a local chapter. To change your chapter assignment call 844-428-3826. **To join National Audubon Society** use the form below.

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.

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available on our web site. Membership includes all members of your household.
\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years New Member _____ Renewal Member _____

I wish to donate \$ _____ to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Tax #91-1207770

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____ Email _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

Skagit Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1101
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101

Please do not share my personal information with National Audubon Society. (It is the policy of SAS not to share information with any other groups.)

Use the form below to initially join the **National Audubon Society**.

National Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership to the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one chapter affiliation

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Please mail chapter-created new membership forms to address below: (Payable to same)

National Audubon Society Y21
P.O. 97194 For membership related questions and address:
Washington, DC 20090-7194 Email: customerservice@audubon.org
Attn: Chance Mueleck Phone:(844)428-3826

For members receiving a paper copy of The Skagit Flyer, the mailing label includes your membership expiration date in the upper right corner. If that date is highlighted in orange it is a reminder that your membership is about to or has expired. All other members will receive an email notice when their membership is about to expire. The Skagit Flyer is published monthly from September through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's Flyer should be sent to the editor by the third Saturday of the current month. For questions or problems about your Skagit Flyer subscription, contact membership chair: Pam Pritzl, membership@skagitaudubon.org



Get Into Citizen Science

Don't let the winter blues get you down. Watch your feeder or backyard for science. The data collected from Citizen Science programs like Project Feederwatch, the Great Backyard Bird Count and the Christmas Bird Count are used by scientists to track winter bird populations. These programs offer opportunities for you to contribute to science from beginning birder to expert.

Project Feederwatch is a Cornell Lab program for the beginner to expert birder. This program just started its 29th year and runs from November to April. The Citizen Scientist, that's you, observes a bird feeder at the same time and duration for two consecutive days each week. If you need to miss a week that's okay. The two consecutive days is the important part. You count the species and numbers of individuals within a predetermined area around the feeder each time. You're not too late to join this program. Sign-up and data entries are good through April 28, 2016. To find out more go to feederwatch.org. There is a registration fee of \$18.00 to join but this includes bird identification information, a bird poster, tracking calendar, newsletter and year-end report.



Yellow-rumped Warbler

Audubon race

Photo by Joe Halton in his back yard

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is a joint program offered by Cornell Lab and National Audubon. Mark your calendars for February 12 -15, 2016 for this winter's count. Started in 1998, this is the largest four-day count of birds by Citizen Scientists. It's a great program for the beginning birder. You simply count the species and numbers of birds you observe for at least 15 minutes on one or more of the four count days. Then go online to register and enter your checklist of birds. Participation is free. Find out more at gbbc.birdcount.org.

The longest running Citizen Science bird program is the National Audubon sponsored Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The count began on Christmas Day 1900 and was organized by ornithologist Frank M. Chapman. Thanks to Chapman what was once a Christmas "Side Hunt" became the Christmas Bird Census. A one day count with 27 bird enthusiasts on Christmas Day has become a one day count coordinated by Audubon Chapters between December 14 and January 5 involving tens of thousands of volunteers. Skagit Audubon has participated in the Christmas Bird Count since 1986. We are fortunate to have 65 citizen scientists who are expert birders already assigned to designated count areas. The data collected by National Audubon over the years was recently used in Audubon's 2014 Climate Change Report.

You can make a difference in bird conservation by becoming a Citizen Scientist. Sign-up for Project Feederwatch or mark your calendar for GBBC today!



SKAGIT AUDUBON DECEMBER CONSERVATION REPORT

By TIM MANNIS, CONSERVATION CHAIR

This month's report touches on an assortment of topics:

- Before the annual legislative session in Olympia, Audubon Washington collaborates with over 20 other organizations in the Environmental Priorities Coalition to choose 2 or 3 goals. The approaching session faces very difficult funding issues related to education and revenues, and both chambers may be dominated by a party different from the Governor's. Consequently, the coalition has chosen to focus on maintaining funding levels for conservation agencies (e.g. WDFW, State Parks) and opposing weakening of environmental laws. There will be opportunities for us to help by contacting our elected representatives.
- In November the Puget Sound Partnership, the state agency coordinating restoration of the sound, issued its triennial *State of the Sound* report. The "Vital Signs" used to measure progress towards the goal of restoration by 2020 include some related to birds (marbled murrelets, scoters). Many aspects of restoration are not on target for 2020 completion. Read more at <http://www.psp.wa.gov/sos.php>
- As Puget Sound's largest watershed, the Skagit gets attention from people working on salmon restoration, glacial response to climate change, future flooding scenarios, etc. Geologists and climate scientists with a variety of affiliations collaborate in the Skagit Climate Science Consortium. There's much interesting information on the group's excellent website: <http://www.skagitclimatescience.org/>. It's a year now since National Audubon released its *Birds and Climate Change* report predicting that climate change will adversely affect many species of North American birds (<http://climate.audubon.org/>). The web page is well worth a periodic look.
- Jen Syrowitz, Audubon Washington's Chapter Conservation Manager, recently sent information about the "Boreal Birds Need Half" campaign. Those many buffleheads you see in winter on Skagit bays and lakes? Fully 87% nest in the boreal forest, the vast sea of trees stretching from Alaska across Canada and the breeding ground for billions of North American birds including many wintering in the tropics. Industrial development of the boreal forest by mining tar sands, for one example, destroys this habitat. Learn more at <http://borealbirdsneedhalf.org/en/>.
- WA Department of Natural Resources is progressing in writing a long-term management plan for marbled murrelets on state trust lands. In Skagit County, DNR-managed old growth forest has nesting murrelets and areas with the potential for them. This species, federally listed as threatened with extinction, is in precipitous decline in Washington. The Marbled Murrelet Survival Project, a coalition of conservation groups including Audubon, is working to ensure DNR creates a plan with a real chance of restoring the marbled murrelet. For information: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/forest-resources/habitat-conservation/marbled-murrelet>
- Lastly, the Audubon Washington website can help you keep up to date with the Northwest's many planned oil and coal transport projects: <http://wa.audubon.org/oil-transport>.



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 **Pam Pritzl: 360-387-7024** or **bird sightings@skagitaudubon.org**

WATERFOWL

Snow Goose 17 "blue morph" among the Snow Geese on Fir Island on 11-11 (RM)
Cackling Goose 80+ on Fir Island on 11-11 (RM)
Black Scoter 8 at Birch Bay State Park on 11-7 (SAS)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ruffed Grouse 1 near Sedro Woolley on 10-29 (DW)

GREBES

Western Grebe 2 on Skagit River by the playfields at Skagit River Park, Burlington on 11-1 (LE)

SHEARWATERS

Northern Fulmar 1 light morph off Rosario Head, Deception Pass State Park on 11-11 (RM) **RARE**
Pink-footed Shearwater 1 off Rosario Head, Deception Pass State Park on 11-11 (RM) **RARE**

HERONS and ALLIES

Great Egret 1 at Indian Slough off Bayview-Edison Road (RJ); 1 at southeast corner of March Point on 11-11 (RM); 1 at Whitmarsh Junction on 11-13 (TM); 1 at south end Padilla Bay on 11-14 (CS); 1 at Bingo Hall Lagoon on 11-14 (GB)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Red-tailed Hawk 1 light morph Harlan's Hawk on Josh Wilson Road on 11-14 (AW)
Rough-legged Hawk 1 near Padilla Bay on 10-24 (LM)

OYSTERCATCHERS

Black Oystercatcher 115 at West Beach, Deception Pass State Park on 11-14 (SAS)

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, and ALLIES

Long-billed Curlew 1 by Swinomish Casino on 10-31 (GB)
Black Turnstone 150 at Penn Cove, Whidbey Island on 11-14 (SAS)
Surfbird 6 at Penn Cove, Whidbey Island on 11-14 (SAS)
Long-billed Dowitcher 17 at Hayton Reserve on 11-14 (GB)
Red Phalarope 1 off Rosario Head, Deception Pass State Park on 11-11 (RM) **RARE**

ALCIDS

Cassin's Auklet 1 at Rosario Beach, Deception Pass State Park on 10-23 (RM) **RARE**

GULLS and TERNs

Herring Gull 1 at Rosario Head on 10-25 (GB)

PIGEONS and DOVES

Band-tailed Pigeon 1 in Sedro-Woolley on 11-15 (GB)

OWLS

Short-eared Owl 1 on Padilla Bay Dike at Little Indian Slough on 11-18 (RJ)

FALCONS

Merlin 1 at Skagit River Park in Burlington on 11-1 (LE)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 in Bayview on 10-24 (LM); 1 hovering over the fields near the Padilla Bay Shore Trail on 10-28 (LM)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Vogler Lake on 10-17 (GB)

WARBLERS

Northern Waterthrush 1 at Skagit Game Range on 10-23 (RM)
Common Yellowthroat 1 at the West 90 on 11-15 (GB)
Yellow Warbler 1 very late individual near Cochreham Island on 10-31(GB)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

White-throated Sparrow 3 at Burlington home on 10-28 (KJW); 1 at Burlington home on 11-20 (LE)

BLACKBIRDS and ORIOLES

Yellow-headed Blackbird 1 with a blackbird flock on Mann Rd. on 11-11 (RM)
Rusty Blackbird 1 female at Skagit Wild Bird Store on 10-14; 1 male at Kiwanis Waterfront Park, Anacortes on 10-23 (IP)
Brown-headed Cowbird 200 on Butler Flats on 11-17 (GB)

FINCHES and ALLIES

Pine Siskin 30+ on feeders in Burlington yard on 11-1 (LE)
American Goldfinch 1 leucistic at Skagit Wild Bird Store on 10-19 (JH)

(GB) Gary Bletsch; (LE) Larry Edwards; (JH) Joe Halton; (RJ) Rosie Jensen; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (LM) Libby Mills; (TM) Tim Manns; (IP) Irene Perry; (CS) Cathy Scott; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Field Trip; (AW) Andrea Warner; (DW) Daria Wheatley; (KJW) Keith & Jan Wiggers



Hikes continue in December with 5 hikes scheduled. Hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather conditions, logging, construction or other unforeseen circumstances. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, flooding conditions, snowy or icy road conditions, or forecasts of continued rain. All the hikes are on a Wednesday. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times. Questions? **Contact Joan Melcher: 360-424-0407** or jdmelcher@comcast.net

**WED. DEC. 2 – EAST SHORE LAKE
WHATCOM or STEWART MOUNTAIN**

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

2. **Stewart Mountain** This hike begins in the same area as the East Shore of Lake Whatcom hike, but it goes up hill on the new Beke Trails and the power line road. Most of this hike is on trail. It is 5 miles round trip.

For both hikes, meet at 9 a.m. at the Chuckanut Drive Park-n-Ride lot. This lot is in Burlington on the east side of I-5, off Exit 231 of I-5. Car pool according to which of the two hikes you plan to do. You may leave when all in your car are safely back to the trailhead.

WED. DEC. 9 – DECEPTION PASS

AREA

Hike on trails at Sharpe Park, Pass Lake, Rosario, and Bowman’s Bay. There are up to 10.7 miles with a 1,000 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at Sharpe’s Park trailhead off of Rosario Road south of Anacortes. Parking is limited at Sharpe’s Park so please car-pool if possible. Joan will shuttle anyone who wants to walk between Sharpe Park and the park access off the Ginnett Road and, at the end of the hike, from Rosario up to Sharpe Park. Contact Joan Melcher (see above) if you need driving directions to Sharpe’s Park. Joan’s last shuttle will leave Rosario at 2:30 p.m.

WA State Discover Pass required for parking in Deception State Park.

WED. DEC. 16 - CENTENNIAL TRAIL

Hike as many miles as you wish on the Centennial Trail in northern Snohomish County. We will begin at Bryant. Some may wish to walk south to Arlington and back. Others may wish to walk north to the Nakashima Barn and back. There are approximately 8 miles round trip for either walk.

From I-5 take Exit 212, the Stanwood-Bryant exit. Go EAST on State Route 532 to Bryant. Find a parking spot at Bryant. Meet there at 9 a.m. You are free to leave when you return to the trailhead.

**WED. DEC. 23 – PADILLA BAY
SHORE TRAIL**

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

**WED. DEC. 30 – DUGUALLA STATE
PARK**

Spend part of a short day-light day at Dugualla State Park, a little-known park north of Oak Harbor. The park’s several miles of trails meander through an alder grove, a wetland area, and offer a more challenging, steeper trek to a secluded beach. Meet at Dugualla State Park at 9 a.m. To get there from the Deception Pass Bridge drive toward Oak Harbor. Before you get to Oak Harbor, turn left onto Sleeper Road. Continue on Sleeper Road approximately 2.6 miles until it dead-ends at a metal gate. The hike is a 3.67 mile perimeter loop including a side trip to the beach. There is additional mileage if one does the “interior trails” and a 500 ft. elevation gain.

WA State Discover Pass required for parking.

WED. JAN. 6 - INTERURBAN TRAIL

Walk off some of those holiday pounds on the Interurban Trail. Several options are available. There are up to 14 or more miles with a slight elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Lost Lake Trailhead parking lot, formerly known as the Clayton Beach Parking lot, at the south end of Larrabee State Park on Chuckanut Drive. Return time depends on the hike option you select.

WA State Discover Pass required for parking.



Field Trips continued from page 1

We'll see eagles, mergansers, dippers, and more, and possibly salmon too, as we stop at a variety of places upriver between Concrete and Newhalem.

Binoculars and spotting scopes will be helpful. This is usually a cold time of the year. Come prepared! Waterproof shoes or boots are a plus. If you missed our September salmon trip, here's another chance to improve your eco-literacy of some Northwest icons.

Meet in front of the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20 just before Highway 9 North) at 8:30 a.m. to arrange carpools. Bring a lunch and birding gear, and dress for the weather, remembering it's often wetter upriver. If the weather is iffy (ice, snow) look for updates by email for any changes.

Leader: Libby Mills:
libbymills@gmail.com

Saturday, December 12
Tommy Thompson Trail &
Weaverling Spit

8:30 a.m. to about noon

This is a good trip for beginners. Weaverling Spit, at the south end of Fidalgo Bay is a good place to view winter water birds and explore the woodland on the spit. We will walk out along the trestle and explore the marsh at the RV park. If time allows we will visit the woods north of the nearby condominiums along the Tommy Thompson Trail ~ a good place to see some forest dwellers. Meet at the parking lot at the conference center at Fidalgo Bay RV resort. Coming from the east on Highway 20, turn off onto Fidalgo Bay Road (the first exit on the right after the Whidbey Island turnoff). From Anacortes, go east from R Ave. on 34th, turn right on V Ave. and that becomes
SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

Fidalgo Bay Road. From Fidalgo Bay Road turn into the RV park and continue past the Tommy Thompson trail and the RV area to the parking lot by the conference center building.

This is an easy walking trip and a good place to bring spotting scopes to view birds on the bay.

.Leaders: Cindy & Jack Ricardson
Cindy: 360-708-5617; Jack: 360-708-5661

Saturday, January 2

Christmas Bird Count: Padilla Bay

**All day, plus a
potluck dinner**

The annual Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count takes place this year on Sat., Jan. 2, 2016.

Volunteers are needed to help with this valuable – and fun – endeavor.

Some teams start before dawn to count owls, while others brave the elements from first light to dusk. Christmas Count data collected by citizen scientists over more than a century document bird population trends over time. Plan to spend the day birding, and then – as a bonus – enjoy a potluck dinner and good company at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center. After dinner we tally the day's observations, and swap fun stories (some of them true!). To participate and for details regarding times, places, and area assignments.

Leader: Tim Manns

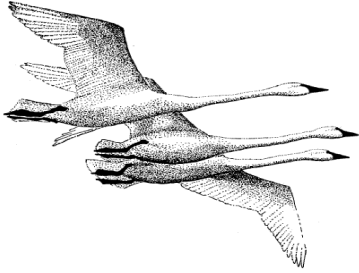
conservation@skagitaudubon.org
or 360-336-8753

Please contact before December 20



Rough-legged Hawk
Photo by Joe Halton





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DECEMBER ~ POTLUCK
PHOTOGRAPHY MEETING

Tuesday, Dec. 8

SEND YOUR PICTURES by Dec. 1

More Info On Page 1

PADILLA BAY
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016

More Info On Page 7

December 2015 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov. 29	Nov. 30	1 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	2 Hike: East Shore Lake Whatcom or Stewart Mountain	3	4	5 Field Trip: Birds & Salmon Upper Skagit River Valley
6	7	8 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	9 Hike: Deception Pass Area	10	11	12 Field Trip: Tommy Thompson Trail Weaverling Spit
13 Field Trip:	14	15	16 Hike: Centennial Trail	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 Hike: Padilla Bay Shore Trail	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26
27	28	29	30 Hike: Dugualla State Park Jan. 6 Hike: Interurban Trail	31 New Years Eve	Jan. 1 New Years Day	Jan. 2 Padilla Bay Christmas Bird Count

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper

