



The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

Find us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/skagitaudubon
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SEPTEMBER MEETING – PRESENTED IN PERSON ONLY

"The Birds of Malheur"

Presented by: John S. Farnsworth, PhD.

Tuesday, Sept. 12th at 7:00 pm

7:00 Meeting Begins

6:00 Social Hour Begins

Please join us at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon for a photo program on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. This meeting will be in-person only (no ZOOM attendance). The meeting begins at 7:00 pm and will be preceded by a social hour starting at 6:00 pm.

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY – SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY!

Please join us on Sept. 12th to
celebrate 40 years for Skagit
Audubon Society - see above for
meeting location details and we hope
to see you there.



In response to the COVID-19 virus, some of our general meetings are being held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center with an option to attend via Zoom, while others will be available on Zoom only. Please check the monthly program description for meeting details. As with our hikes and field trips, only vaccinated, symptom-free individuals should attend meetings in person. Please visit our website: www.skagitaudubon.org for updates.

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 on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. Some meetings will be presented on Zoom only. Others will be hybrid meetings on Zoom and in-person at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon. Check the monthly Flyer for upcoming meeting details. The board of directors meets on the first Tuesday of each month, September through June, at 7 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 YOUR Vice President and Program Chair, John S. Farnsworth, PhD.

On September 12th, we will be meeting **in person** at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center at 7:00. There are three things on our program agenda for that meeting:

- 1) You will get a **preview of coming attractions** of the forthcoming year's programs, which I'm happy to announce are amazingly birdy.
- 2) There will be a phantasmal photo presentation on **"The Birds of Malheur"**, a photo log of our epic field trip last May to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.
- 3) We will be celebrating **Skagit Audubon's 40th Birthday!** I'm told that a **birthday cake** will be included. We're also hoping to have a few members there from the days when SAS was a mere fledgeling.

I still have a few **openings** on the Program Committee for volunteers who want to help make our general meetings spectacular. We would especially love to have a few folks volunteer to organize hospitality for the in-person meetings, just like in the good ol' days. If you've been looking for a way to **give something back** to Skagit Audubon, this could be the ticket. Please contact me at:

vicepresident@skagitaudubon.org

MEET THE WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*Contopus sordidulus*) by Jeff Sinker

Many of our summer visitors arrive sporting bold colors but the Western Wood-Pewee is not one of



them. This long, thin, medium-sized flycatcher with long wings is grayish brown with pale wingbars, smudgy gray on the breast and sides, little to no eye ring, and a triangular shaped head. Perched upright on a prominent branch and without flicking their tails (as some flycatchers do), Pewees constantly turn their heads in search of flying insects and when one is spotted, will fly out to catch their meal and return to the same perch or one that is nearby.

Pewees are common but, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, experienced a 1% decline from 1966-2015 for an overall decline of 48% during that period. They appear to be sensitive to logging after forest fires and habitat loss of tropical forest on their wintering grounds in northern South America. Pewees are difficult to survey on their wintering grounds because they are mostly silent, and their winter range overlaps with the Eastern Wood-Pewee. Pewees rarely use dense forests but instead depend on large trees in open woodlands, forest edges, streamside habitats, and standing dead trees. Recently burned areas can benefit Pewees because the number of dead standing trees is increased.

Pewees are monogamous during the breeding season and both the male and female will follow each other around to select a nest site. The female builds a dense, compact nest usually in the fork of a horizontal tree branch away from the trunk anywhere from ground level to more than 80 feet above ground. She uses plant material and binds everything together with spider web before disguising the nest with mosses. She will lay 2-4 eggs and incubation takes 14-15 days and nestlings fledge 14-18 days after hatching. Global population est. 9.2 million (breeding 59% USA; 29% Canada; 12% Mexico).

Learn more at: www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Western_Wood-Pewee

Photo by Matt Davis/Macaulay Library

FIELD SIGHTINGS – by Ann Skinner

This column reports a summary of selected sightings. Rare sightings should be submitted with detailed written documentation and if possible, a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is encouraged. Do not hesitate to contact any observer to help document unusual sightings.

Please submit your sightings to birdsightings@skagitadubon.org. For recent updates on bird sightings, check out **ABA Tweeters** and **Skagit County Ebird List** on the SAS website (Birding menu, Bird Sightings submenu).

WATERFOWL

Common goldeneye (1) FIFR, 8/4 (NOH)
Hooded merganser (1-3) CL, 7/23-9/1 (NOH)

GREBES

Pied-billed grebe (1) FIFR, 8/4 (NOH)

PIGEONS, DOVES

Mourning dove (2) EFI, 8/9 (RW)

CRANES & RAILS

Virginia rail (3) GV, 6/30 (TM)
Sora (4) GV, 7/20 (TM)

SHOREBIRDS

Black oystercatcher (5) SHIP, 7/10 (NOH)
Black-bellied plover (14) FIFR, 8/3 (NOH)
Semipalmated plover (12) FIFR, 8/31 (NOH)
Spotted sandpiper (1) SF, 7/26 (TM)
Juv. Baird's Sandpiper (photo verified) (1) PB, 8/6 (PA)

RAPTORS/VULTURES

Osprey (2) SHIP, 7/3 (NOH)
Red-tailed hawk, FIFR, 8/3 (NOH)
Turkey vulture (2) SHIP, 7/3 (NOH)
Cooper's hawk (1), EFI, 8/7 (RW)

OWLS

Great-horned owl (2) SA, 8/5 (MS)
Barred owl, (1) CL, 6/30 (NOH)

FALCONS

Merlin (1), SF, 7/26 (TM)

NUTHATCHES & CREEPERS

Brown creeper (2) SA, 8/5 (MS)
Red-breasted nuthatch (3) SA, 8/5 (MS)

WOODPECKERS

Hairy woodpecker (4) SA, 8/5 (MS)
Pileated woodpecker (1) EFI, 8/12 (AS)

FLYCATCHERS

Western wood-pewee (2), SA, 8/7 (MS)
Pacific-slope flycatcher (1) CL, 6/30 (NOH)
Olive-sided flycatcher (1) CL, 6/30 (NOH)
Willow flycatcher (1) 7/3, SHIP (NOH)

VIREOS, SHRIKES

Warbling vireo (1) CL, 6/30 (NOH)

CORVIDS

California scrub-jay (1) Ongoing, MVLH (TM)

CHICKADEES

Chestnut-backed chickadee (8) SA, 8/5 (MS)
Black-capped chickadee (10) SA, 8/5 (MS)

LARKS, SWALLOWS

Cliff swallow (1) FIFR, 8/4 (NOH)
Purple martins (multiple) EFI, 7/5 (RW)

BUSHTITS/KINGLETS

Bushtit (7) SA, 8/5 (MS)

NUTHATCHES

Red-breasted nuthatch (2) EFI, daily (AS)

WRENS

Bewick's wren (5) SA, 8/5 (MS)

THRUSHES

Swainson's thrush (2) CL, 6/30 (NOH)

FINCHES, SPARROWS

Song sparrow (5) SA, 8/5 (MS)
Black-headed grosbeak (6) SA, 8/5 (MS)
American goldfinch (23) SA, 8/5 (MS)
House finch (4) SA, 8/5 (MS)

Field sightings continued on Pg. 5

Field sightings continued from Pg. 4

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned warbler (2) CL, 7/28 (NOH),
EFI, 8/9 (RW)

Wilson's warbler (3) SA, 8/5 (MS), EFI, 8/9 (RW)

Black-throated grey warbler (1) EFI, 8/9 (RW)

TANAGERS/GROSBEAKS/BUNTINGS

Western Tanager (1-2) CL, 7/23-30 (NOH)

(SHIP) Ship Harbor; (SF) Samish Flats; (CL) Cranberry Lake; (EFI) East Fidalgo Island; (CISP) Camano Island State Park; (CS) Cap Sante; (PB) Padilla Bay (SP) Sauk Prairie; (SBL) Sauk boat launch (MVLH) Mount Vernon Lincoln Hill; (DS) Debay Slough; (GV); Guemes Valley; (BUR) Burlington; (BLCA) Barney Lake Conservation Area (LM) Little Mountain; (SA) Stanwood Area; (JS) Jeff Sinker; (MS) Mary Sinker; (JOS) Jeff Osmundson; (AS) Ann Skinner; (TM) Tim Manns; (AW) Andrea Warner; (PA) Paul Anderson; (JH) Joe Halton; (RW) Regan Weeks

FUN FACTS – Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) by Mary Sinker

- Long, tapering wings are especially adapted to the very long migration these sandpipers undertake each year. They travel back and forth between the southern tip of South America and the Arctic. The journey is 9,300 miles and can be completed in five weeks.
- Named by naturalist Elliott Coues in 1861 in honor of his mentor, the second secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, Spencer Fullerton Baird.
- Who weighs more – the female or her eggs? Answer – the eggs! Shortly after arriving on her Arctic breeding grounds and finding her mate, she lays a clutch of eggs over four days that weigh more than her own body weight.



Learn more at www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Baird's_Sandpiper Photo taken at Padilla Bay, Skagit County, by Paul Anderson

PUGET SOUND BIRD FEST – Sept. 9th and 10th

The Puget Sound Bird Fest will be held Sept. 9th and 10th. The full schedule and registration information is available at www.pilchuckaudubon.org/puget-sound-bird-fest. This event is not affiliated with or sponsored by Skagit Audubon Society.

PUGET SOUND SEABIRD SURVEY-COMMUNITY SCIENCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Puget Sound Bird Observatory is looking for community science volunteers for the upcoming Puget Sound Seabird Survey. This is an opportunity to put your birding skills to good use while taking part in important seabird monitoring research. More info: www.pugetsoundbirds.org/about-psss. This survey is not affiliated with or sponsored by Skagit Audubon Society.

HIKING

Skagit Audubon is pleased to offer scheduled hikes. Please visit our website: www.skagitaudubon.org/activities/hikes 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 and all hikers must be fully vaccinated. Questions? Contact Tom Ozretich, tom.ozretich@gmail.com; 360.424.8466



Sept. 6: Schreiber's Meadow Hikes
Sept. 13: Cutthroat Pass
Sept. 20: Yellow Aster Butte
Sept. 27: North Baker Lake
Oct. 4: Ruby Arm

FIELD TRIPS – by Colleen Shannon

Beginning birders and friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes (if you have them). Please note specific COVID guidelines in each field trip description. Questions? Contact Colleen Shannon, fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org.



Thursday, Sept. 7 and Saturday, Sept. 23: Leque Island (Stanwood); 11 am – 2 pm.

Leaders: Pam Pritzl and Jeff Osmundson. Meet at 11 am near the Stanwood Starbucks near QFC to carpool (parking is limited at Leque Island). We will be concentrating on shorebirds but will look at everything. Plan to walk on a flat path for 1.5 miles. Scopes helpful. A Discover Pass is required. This trip is universally accessible. Bring snacks or lunch. These trips will be limited to 16 participants. The link to sign up is below: Questions: Contact Pam at membership@skagitaudubon.org or 360.387.7024.

September 7: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094BA4AF28A4F4C16-leque>

September 23: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094BA4AF28A4F4C16-leque1>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR - THE BIG SIT – October 7, 2023

The Big Sit, a free community birding event open to individuals and teams all over the world, returns on Saturday, October 7th. Due to the closure at Wiley Slough for dike restoration work, the **Skagit Audubon Big Sit will be held from 8 am-4 pm at Rosario Head in Deception Pass State Park.**

Rotating cadres of observers in two-hour shifts will seek to identify as many species as possible from a single location at Rosario Head over the eight-hour period. In previous years, generous SAS members have taken the initiative to pledge \$1 or more per species seen by the team in support of the Skagit Audubon Society Environmental Conservation Scholarships awarded through Skagit Valley College.

Also, you are encouraged to conduct your own Big Sit and participate from wherever you want (backyard, park, public wildlife area, etc.). Visit www.thebigsit.org to learn more about the event. To volunteer for two-hour shifts at Rosario, to bird your own backyard, or donate to the SAS Big Sit, contact Colleen Shannon at fieldtrips@skagitaudubon.org. Colleen will sign up the teams prior to Oct. 7th and she will be at Rosario from 8 am-4 pm on Big Sit Day. Visitors are welcome to stop by.

CONSERVATION – by Tim Manns

This month's report gives brief updates on some on-going issues. For more, see Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website <https://skagitaudubon.org/~dphwzgi/conservation/notes>).

Skagit Wildlife Area Management Plan: Skagit Audubon sits on the Advisory Committee for Skagit Wildlife Area, which includes almost 18,000 acres, mostly in Skagit and Snohomish Counties. Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) has completed a draft 10-year update of this plan. At a public workshop September 5th (6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center) you can learn about the plan and comment. Besides laying out goals for the next decade, the plan succinctly describes the many places comprising Skagit Wildlife Area, from ones well-known to birders such as Fir Island Farms (Hayton) to Killibrew Lake on Orcas Island. It's informative about the challenges WDFW faces protecting and managing this wildlife habitat. ([Wildlife Areas | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#))

Designating the Cascade River an Outstanding Resource Water: As stated on Washington Wild's website, "A component of the federal Clean Water Act (1972), Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) designation allows states to identify pristine waterways that constitute an outstanding state resource due to their exceptional water quality, statewide ecological importance, and/or unique recreational value. Once a waterway is designated as such, it protects that river, stream, or lake from any future activities or development that would degrade water quality." ([Washington Wild Outstanding Resource Waters - Washington Wild \(wawild.org\)](#)) The Cascade is a major tributary of the Skagit River important for salmon, Harlequin Ducks, and other wildlife. The Cascade's upper watershed proposed for ORW designation is entirely in national public ownership (North Cascades National Park and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest). Skagit Audubon supports this designation. Our County Commissioners are opposed. ([Ecology considers putting outstanding waters in a class of their own - Washington State Department of Ecology](#)) To comment (deadline September 27, 2023), go to [WAC 173-201A-Outstanding Resource Waters - Washington State Department of Ecology](#).

Safety Standards for Management of Highly Hazardous Chemicals: March Point refinery accidents in 1998 and 2010 killed 13 workers. After years of deliberation by agencies and non-governmental organizations and individuals, the Department of Labor and Industries has proposed changes to improve safety and reduce toxic pollutant emissions. Skagit Audubon commented supporting the new standards for improved human safety and protection of the important habitats adjacent to the refineries: March Point heronry, Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve.

Grip Road Gravel Mine: Many months after the public hearing on this proposed large gravel mine along the Samish River, the Skagit County Hearing Examiner has yet to issue a decision.

Restoring grizzlies to the North Cascades: The draft Environmental Impact Statement and public review of this long-delayed project should come by year's end. As an organization dedicated to protecting wildlife and habitat, Skagit Audubon has long been a member of the Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear, a coalition for restoring this keystone species in compliance with the Endangered Species Act ([Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear - Restoring a healthy population of grizzly bears to the North Cascades.](#))

For more information about conservation issues, see Conservation Notes on the Skagit Audubon website ([Skagit Audubon Society - Home](#)) under the Conservation tab.

**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.

Payment: (1) Pay online with a credit card or PayPal (see skagitaudubon.org for details) **OR** (2) Mail this form & your check 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)