

## **Admiralty Audubon Pipings**

### **AAS Field Trips March & April 2012**

**Saturday, 3 March 2012 - Skagit Trip Rescheduled.** Meet at the ferry terminal for the 8am ferry (make reservations and get there ½ hour early) and return on the 6pm ferry. This trip will be limited to 4 cars and 12 people for the birding portion and a similar amount for the photographic group. Contact Dan Waggoner to check on available space and carpooling (360-301-1788 or [danwags57@gmail.com](mailto:danwags57@gmail.com)).

**Saturday, 17 March 2012 - Nisqually** - We should see a large variety of birds. Be prepared for weather, as always, and walking 3 to 4 miles round trip along flat trails and boardwalks. The trip is limited to 12 people and 3-4 cars unless another leader joins with Dan. Meet at the PT Park n' Ride at 7am across from Safeway. We should arrive at Nisqually around 9am. Pack a lunch to eat out on the boardwalk; we leave Nisqually around 2pm to arrive back in PT by 4pm in time to get ready for St. Patty's parties that evening. Dan Waggoner, Leader; reserve space at 360-301-1788 or [danwags57@gmail.com](mailto:danwags57@gmail.com).

**Wednesday, 4 April 2012 1:00 pm** - Walk the Marine Spit at the northwest corner of Ft Flagler at the end of Flagler Campground Road / Greenway area, 1.2 miles from entrance. Those interested in carpooling can meet at the Kively Center 100 block on Oak Bay Rd, Hwy 116, Port Hadlock at 12:15 pm. Eat early or bring your lunch. Discover Pass for your car required. Paula Vanderheul, Leader (360-379-8564 or [pvanderheul@gmail.com](mailto:pvanderheul@gmail.com)).

*Note: All trips are weather permitting. Heavy rain will cancel but light rain will not. Call the leader if you have any questions or concerns. Bring binoculars and spotting scope if you have one. Wear appropriate clothes and footwear for the conditions. It has been suggested that you not wear light colored headgear since you might look like an eagle, our top order predator. No one seems to know if there is any data to support this assumption. All participants are responsible for their own actions and AAS accepts no liability. Please leave your pets at home.*

### **AAS Programs March & April 2012**

*The public is invited  
Port Townsend Community Center  
Lawrence and Tyler*

**Thursday, 15 March 2012, 7pm.** - Jill Silver will give an update on her work on the Hoh River drainage and the status of the Olympic Mountains habitat. Jill is a native of western Washington and executive director of the nonprofit 10,000 Years Institute. Her work supports local environmental and economic sustainability through targeted science and policies to protect watersheds and ecosystems. Her passion is bringing nature and people closer together so both can thrive. Jill holds a BAS in Environmental Studies and Sciences from Evergreen State College.

**Thursday, 19 April 2012, 7 pm.** - Seattle author Connie Sidles writes about birds and nature. She loves the birds of the Montlake Fill, a natural area of 75 acres on the UW campus in Seattle. The Fill is a study site for restoration ecology and is also a microcosm of interactions between wild nature and humans, where many of the issues facing all of us on the planet can be seen close up. Birding records of the Fill go back to 1895 and document 245 different species of birds. Join us as Connie reads from her essays about the birds that she loves and the natural world that she treasures in the Montlake Fill. Ms. Sidles was scheduled for our January program but our big snow event changed those plans.

*Clara Mason*  
Programs, Admiralty Audubon

### **New Program Chair Needed**

Our current Program Chair has announced her intent to resign her position at the end of the season. The public programs go dormant for the months of July-September. We are looking for someone willing to step forward and take up this important task this fall. The Chair lines up one speaker per month for 8 or 9 programs per year. Clara says that she and other former Program Chairs would be happy to provide guidance.

## AAS Field Trips & Public Programs on County Website and <http://www.ptguide.com>

Last newsletter we reported that thanks to County Parks and Recreation Manager Matt Tyler, our birding field trips are now listed under 'Activities' at <http://www.countyrec.com>. Now our public programs at the Community Center will also be included on the County website.

At Matt's suggestion, we now list our events at <http://www.ptguide.com>, where a broad variety of opportunities for recreation and education are posted. Of course, all our events are also posted on our excellent AAS website (<http://admiraltyaudubon.org>), but visitors and nonmembers have to know to go to the website to find the information.

Something is working. We've had great turnout at our recent field trips and we anticipate increasing turnouts for our public programs.

## Native Species 'Introduced' at Kah Tai

As a part of Admiralty Audubon's habitat protection efforts, untold numbers of invasive Scot's Broom, English Holly, English Ivy, Poison Hemlock and other invasives have been removed. More important are the number of northwest native plant species provided by Admiralty Audubon and planted in the KTLNP by workparties sponsored by Admiralty Audubon:

*Conifer species - 5*

*Deciduous tree species - 10, plus one eastern oak*

*Deciduous shrub species - 12, plus Rosa rugosa (non native)*

*Evergreen shrubs species - 3*

*Perennial herb species - 10*

*Ron Sikes*  
Secretary, Admiralty Audubon

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*Image to the right is a Black Turnstone, but not one of the multitude counted here that earned us a preliminary first place count in this species for GBBC 2012. Image from <http://morro-bay.com>. Thanks for the efforts of our knowledgeable and diligent regional birders!*

## Preliminarily, We're Number One!

...and #3. And #7, 8, and 14, in counts of certain species for the Great Backyard Bird Count! Port Townsend was #1 **in the US** for Black Turnstones. Brinnon was #8 for Brants, one of only two west coast locations in the top 10. Port Ludlow was #3 for Pacific Loons. Nordland was #7 for Black-bellied Plovers and #14 for Dunlin. Port Townsend ranked #25 for Common Goldeneye, the only west coast location in the top 30, and #29 in Ruddy Ducks as one of only two Pacific Northwest locations in the top 30. Chima cum had an especially fine showing of Evening Grosbeaks (74 individuals) for the region (#8 in the state), as only a single bird appeared in another count for our region.

Our AAS region added 13 species not observed in the Port Townsend counts. These included California Gull (Port Hadlock), Common Loon (Nordland), Harlequin Duck (Port Hadlock, Nordland and Gardiner), Peregrine Falcon (Port Hadlock), Dunlin (Brinnon, Port Ludlow, Nordland), Gray Jay and Northern Pygmy Owl (Brinnon), Brown Creeper, Pacific Loon and Red-necked Grebe (Brinnon), Long-tailed Duck (Nordland, Gardiner), and Western Sandpiper (Nordland).

Combining our regional species counts at 99 total puts our AAS region in a solid 4th place in the state, behind Olympia, Sequim and Seattle. Combining our checklists for a total of 95 also puts us in fourth place behind Seattle, Olympia and Vancouver. Our birders have made an excellent showing for our largely rural region of small communities. We will await the final tally after GBBC closes reporting on March 5.



© Mike Baird

## AAS Field Trip Report February 2012

### **Chimacum Creek and Irondale Beach**

– **February 4** (continued from the January heavy rain). *Paula Vanderheul, Leader*: It was a beautiful sunny morning for 18 folks that joined the field trip. On the bay we viewed large numbers of Western Grebe, Horned Grebe and one Red-necked Grebe. The ducks flew in and the group admired American Wigeon, one Eurasian Wigeon, Gadwall, Northern Pintail, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, a possible White-winged Scoter, Surf Scoter, Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorant, 3 Bald Eagles, 2 Great Blue Heron, one male Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Pigeon Guillemot, Mew Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Greater Yellowlegs. Up Chimacum Creek we saw Belted Kingfisher, American Crow, Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow, and House Finch. One Auklet-shaped bird was a long ways out to ID, maybe a Rhinoceros? For me it was a pleasant birding experience getting acquainted with everyone.

**PT Beach Walk – February 15** – *Ron Sikes, Leader*: About 30 Brant showed up for the Wednesday afternoon field trip. Either that or they were taking advantage of the low tide. Thirteen of us walked the beach looking out in Admiralty Inlet at Red breasted Mergansers, Surf Scoters, Buffleheads, grebes, and cormorants. Parts of eight legs of a beached octopus were becoming the day's sustenance for gulls. The Mew Gull adults are turning up the yellow color in their legs and bills for the coming Big Pair-Up. Fred and Ann showed us the male Hooker's Willow that was softly bursting into yellow bloom. They said willows shrubs/trees are like us. They are male or female. Paula made a good vocal imitation of a Ruby-crowned Kinglet after we saw one searching for insects high in a large alder tree. Our smallest bird was an Anna's Hummingbird at a feeder and the largest was an adult Bald Eagle riding the thermals on the bluff behind the Marine Science Center Pier.

*Note: The annual Skagit County trip was postponed because of high winds causing the ferry to stop operation. It is rescheduled for 3 March, which is not information that will reach our print-newsletter members in sufficient time to participate. Sorry.*

## Protect Birds Where You Live

Some advice from the National Audubon Society (<http://www.audubon.org>) about how you can make your own habitat more welcoming to our feathered community:

1. Reduce or eliminate pesticide and herbicide use and look for milder alternatives when you do use them. You will help keep wild birds, domestic pets and your family healthy. Remember that run-off of these products (and from overuse of fertilizers) ends up in our surface waters.
2. Plant native plants. Native flora provides birds with food in the form of fruit and seeds, and is home to tasty invertebrates like bugs and spiders.
3. Identify the non-native invasive plants in our region, and work to remove them from your yard. Invasives don't provide as much good food and habitat as natives do, and can threaten healthy ecosystems.
4. Attract hummingbirds with sugar water (1 part white sugar to 4 parts hot water, boiled for 1-2 minutes). Never use honey, artificial sweeteners or food color. Clean feeders once a week with 1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water.
5. Put up screens, close blinds when you leave the house, or add decals to your windows to make them visible to birds and prevent collisions.
6. Let your yard get a little 'messy'. Leave non-dangerous tree snags for nesting places and stack downed limbs for a brush pile to provide cover for birds during bad weather.
7. Close your blinds at night. Some birds use constellations to guide them for their annual migrations and lights can interfere with their navigation.
8. Create or protect water sources in your garden for birds to drink and bathe.



## Bird Survey Complete, Analysis Underway

Admiralty Audubon received a Collaborative Funding Grant from the National Audubon Society in FY2010 to partially fund a field study that collected two years of data on bird populations at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park, with the remainder of funding required for the study coming from our local chapter resources. Our chapter recently received a second grant to partially support printing costs for the report of our Kah Tai bird survey.

One real advantage of two full years of data is that we can begin to discern seasonal variations in species distribution and counts. We have just begun to analyse the results. As an example of what we are observing in the data, a draft graph of total bird (upper) and species (lower) counts on the lagoon is shown at lower right. Open symbols are fall 2009 to fall 2010 and closed symbols are fall 2010 to fall 2011. Although the end of September may seem an odd place to start a graph of an annual cycle, that is when the survey began and ended.

Note the similar distributions; fall shows a peak in numbers of birds and in numbers of species, with a large drop in early winter. Species numbers are fairly constant thereafter through winter and spring, then a drop in both bird counts and species at the beginning of summer is followed by significant increases in both. A late summer dip also is evident in both years.

The data shown are only for birds observed on the lagoon itself. Survey participants also collected data at six point stations to include land-based bird populations.

In the first year, 90 species were documented in the park. In the second year, an additional eight species were documented. Approximately two-thirds of the birds using Kah Tai habitat are land-based species.

Stay tuned!

## Spring Cleanup at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park March & April 2012

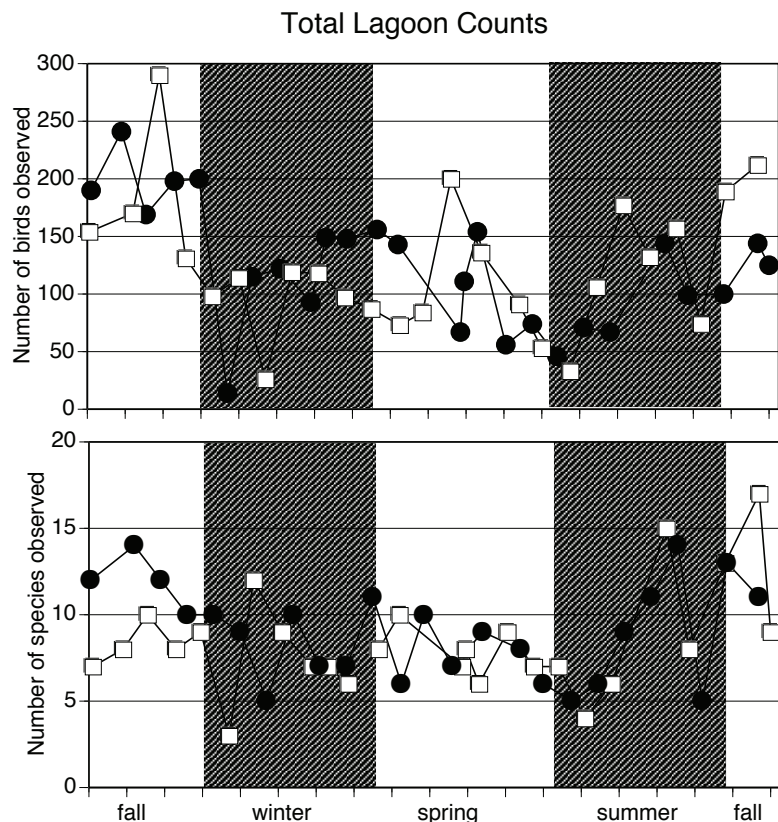
It is time again for spring cleanup at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park. Please join us for a Scot's Broom pull and garbage pickup on our March and/or April dates.

**Saturday, 24 March from 9:30am to 12:30pm** we'll concentrate on the berm between the Park & Ride and the mowed play meadow. Park at the Kah Tai parking lot near the bathrooms.

**Sunday, 22 April from 9:30am to 12:30pm** we will concentrate our efforts west and north of the bank. Park in the bank parking lot as it is not open on Sunday.

For both workparties, bring work gloves and hand pruners if you have them. We will provide weed pullers, garbage bags, drinking water and homemade cookies for volunteers. Hope to see you there! [rosemarysikes@olympus.net](mailto:rosemarysikes@olympus.net) or 385-0307.

*Rosemary Sikes*  
President, Admiralty Audubon





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### Thanks to the PT Leader

Admiralty Audubon got some generous exposure in the Port Townsend Leader for our recent press release announcing a tree planting our chapter co-sponsored with the City Park, Tree and Recreation Board. Our information had a page A3 placement in the print version and then the Leader posted it at the top of their public website on the Friday before the event.

We had more than the usual stalwarts show up with gloves and shovels for planting work, including one dedicated birder who drove in from Chimacum to help when he saw it advertised in the paper and another who was visiting from Belgium. We planted Western Red Cedar, Western Hemlock, Sitka Spruce and Madrone trees as well as Red-twig Dogwood, Blue Elderberry and Salal shrubs (10 of each species) that came from Jefferson County Conservation District's plant sale. These trees and shrubs provide food and nesting cover for a variety of wildlife. The spruce, hemlock, cedar and dogwood species, all with high water tolerance, were planted where the winter water table is shallow. The elderberry, salal and madrone species are well suited for the upland area.

At press time for this newsletter, the press release has stimulated a useful public online dialogue about how our parks are planned and managed as well as an opportunity to dispel a few urban myths about Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park that are perpetuated by misinformation. Thank you to the Port Townsend Leader.

### Challenge Matches Offered

Admiralty Audubon has recently been offered \$500 in challenge matches to encourage others to donate to our habitat protection fund. Our habitat protection efforts currently underway could use your support. If you are considering charitable donations, please consider this opportunity to double your support for this important effort. AAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and your donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS code.

AAS Membership Form  
[\[http://admiraltyaudubon.org\]](http://admiraltyaudubon.org)

name \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

email address \_\_\_\_\_ phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Would you prefer your newsletter by email?  paper copy?  amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

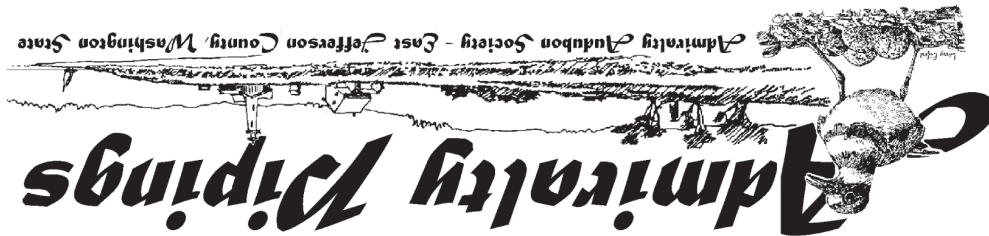
Send \$20 annual membership to: **Admiralty Audubon, PO Box 666, Port Townsend WA 98368**  
 Membership includes 5 issues of our newsletter per year and the right to vote in chapter elections.  
 Chapter programs and field trips are free to the public. We always welcome donations!

This Black Oyster-catcher would have a bright-red beak if we printed our newsletters in color.

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Admiralty Audubon Society PO Box 666 Port Townsend WA 98368



Banner Design and Art by Larry Effen©

## Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

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### Program Chair Needed

AAS needs a new Program Chair in the fall (see page 1). Please consider applying for this position that makes possible our monthly public programs by locating interesting speakers. Contact the chapter president (contact info above) for more information.

### Barney Is Back (soon)!

Barney McClure performs at the Upstage with Greta Matassa on 30 March 2012 at 7:30 pm. Barney is a renowned jazz pianist who got himself elected as Mayor of Port Townsend in 1980 on a platform that included saving Kah Tai from development. Call the Upstage for reservations. [advertisement]