

Admiralty Audubon Pipings

AAS Programs

January & February 2013

The public is invited:

**Port Townsend Community Center
Lawrence and Tyler**

Thursday, 17 January, 7 pm: Where Have All the Fishers Gone, Five Years Passing?

It has now been 5 years since the first wild-born, Canadian fishers began their new lives on the Olympic Peninsula. A total of 90 animals were released in Olympic National Park at such sites as Staircase, Whiskey Bend, Graves Creek, and Sol Duc. What has happened to the fishers since then? Where have they gone? What are they doing? Many things, as it turns out. Olympic National Forest biologist Betsy Howell will show slides of the reintroduction project and discuss what has been



learned since the effort began. All Admiralty Audubon programs are free and open to the public. Photo from WDFW website.

Thursday, 21 February, 7 pm: Winter Bird Feeding

Christie Lassen from Wild Birds Unlimited of Gardiner will present a slide show on winter bird feeding at the February 21 meeting of Admiralty Audubon Society. Christie will also have products from Wild Birds Unlimited for sale.



Steller's Jay © David Gluckman

Rosemary Sikes

Programs Chair, Admiralty Audubon

Restoration at Irondale Beach

Monday, 21 January, 10am to 1pm: North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Jefferson County Parks and Recreation, and the YMCA are sponsoring a Martin Luther King Day of Service workparty to help restore Irondale Beach. Parking is limited; carpooling or taking the bus (route 6B) are encouraged. More information at <http://nosc.org/events/mlk-day-of-service/>.

Thursday, 24 January, 1:30 to 2:30 pm: Jefferson County and the Washington Department of Ecology will commemorate the completion of the project to remove contamination and restore natural beach conditions at the location of the historic iron smelter and steel mill in Irondale, Washington. The work is part of the Puget Sound Initiative by local, tribal, state, and federal governments; business, agricultural and environmental groups; scientists and the public to restore and protect the health of Puget Sound. Call Matt Tyler at 360-385-9129 for information.

Conflicting Interests at Dungeness

All National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) are undergoing federally mandated updating of Comprehensive Conservation Plans. The update under consideration for Dungeness NWR includes prohibition of jogging and of privately owned horses in the small part of the NWR where they are now allowed. Horse riders, once they reach the beach, are currently banned from going northeast out the spit, while jogging is not allowed past zone 2 about 0.5 mile out the spit.

NWRs are not managed like National Forests or National Parks where multi-use public recreation is promoted. NWRs exist foremost to protect wildlife. Note that the public isn't permitted at all on our own NWR, Protection Island, to protect unique nesting habitat.

For some background, a recent PDN article may help: <http://www.peninsuladailynews.com/article/20121225/news/312259992>. The full Comprehensive Conservation Plan draft is available at <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning/main/docs/wa/docsdungeness.htm>. Submit comments to FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov.

AAS Field Trips, January to March 2013

Saturday, 19 January - Kah Tai and Around

- Meet at the Park and Ride lot across from Safeway at 9 am. Plan on 2 to 3 hours. Bring binoculars and spotting scope if you have one. The field trip will be a winter bird walk and informal census all around Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park. Heavy rain cancels the trip. *David Beatty, Trip Leader: djb38@olympen.com.*

Saturday, 26 January - Irondale/Chimacum Creek Park

- Meet at 9 am to walk along the bay and creek scoping waterfowl. Take Irondale Road to 4th Street; at the bottom of the hill is a stop sign. Turn right following the street to the park entrance. If time permits, we may drive to lower Hadlock Bay near Ajax Restaurant to view waterfowl. *Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader: 360-379-8564 or pvanderheul@gmail.com.*

Saturday, 2 February - Dungeness Bay -

Meet at the Park and Ride across from Safeway at 8 am. We'll carpool to John Wayne Marina, Three Crabs and other sites along Dungeness Bay. Bring cameras with big lenses for those who want try their hand at bird photography. Others bring binoculars and spotting scope if you have one. We may split this trip into two if enough photographers show up. *David Gluckman, Trip Leader: 360-379-0360 or cgluckman@aol.com.*



Olympic Loop Birding Trail sign installed at North Beach Park by (l-r) AAS President Rick Jahnke, AAS Secretary Ron Sikes and Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Manager Matt Tyler.

Saturday, 23 February - Little Oak Bay Park to Indian Island and Marrowstone Island

- We'll start the field trip at Little Oak Bay Park, then travel to Indian Island and Marrowstone Island, stopping at the mudflats connecting the islands before going on to Fort Flagler campground road to the end for a walk along the marine spit. All should meet at 8 am at Little Oak Bay Park off Oak Bay Road, about two miles east from Port Hadlock's four-way stop signs. Anyone wanting to carpool from Port Townsend should meet at the Park and Ride near Safeway by 7:15 am. *Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader: 360-379-8564 or pvanderheul@gmail.com.*

Saturday, 2 March - Annual Skagit County Trip

- Limited to 12 participants. This will be an all-day trip leaving from the PT ferry dock to Coupeville at an early crossing. Expect to see a variety of raptors, lots of ducks plus swans and geese. *Dan Waggoner, Trip Leader: 360-301-1788 or danwags57@gmail.com.* Please phone or email for details and confirmations.

Note reschedule for Sunday, 14 April - The December trip to Whidbey Island and Crockett Lake was postponed due to bad weather. It is rescheduled for 14 April. More info in the March newsletter or contact *Ron Sikes, Trip Leader: 360-387-0307 or sikes@olympus.net.*

Please note: Participants in all field trips accept all risks and Admiralty Audubon accepts none.

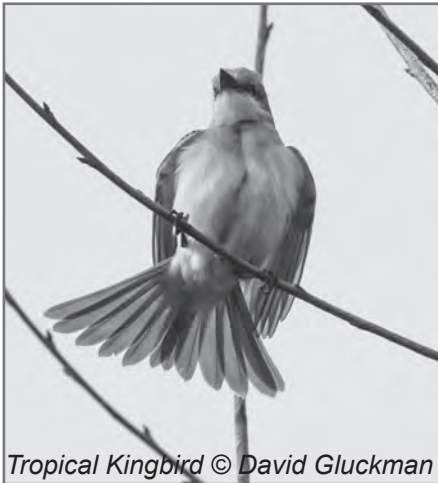
David Gluckman

Field Trips Chair, Admiralty Audubon

Olympic Loop Birding Trail Update

The Great Washington State Birding Trail signs are starting to appear in our chapter region of the Olympic Loop. We've documented their emplacement at Fort Flagler, North Beach and Kah Tai thus far. Other locations in our chapter region include Chimacum Creek Estuary, Oak Bay, Big Quilcene Estuary, Dosewallips and Mount Walker. And, of course, Protection Island. We won't be putting a sign up for Protection Island, since its National Wildlife Refuge status precludes public access to protect nesting habitat. But we can certainly appreciate the Refuge from a modest distance.

Tropical Kingbirds and Snowy Owls in Port Townsend



Tropical Kingbird © David Gluckman

Local birders have had some interesting sightings in November. Snowy Owls are making an appearance again this year and now we have had a Tropical Kingbird confirmed. And let's not forget the American Golden Plover confirmed (see p. 5) at Kilisut Harbor Spit.

According to veteran birder Dan Waggoner, *"The Tropical Kingbirds tend to show up in late October or November every year in very small numbers. For some reason, a few individuals tend to migrate north, instead of south from their breeding grounds. The normal northern portion of their breeding grounds is along the southern border of the United States. I don't believe that the reason for this migration is known. The common belief is they die off when the cold kills off the bugs they eat. The majority of sightings are seen in semi-open country very near salt water. I have seen them, over the years, in Tokeland,*

Ocean Shores, Neah Bay, Three Crabs, Stanwood and now North Beach." The Tropical Kingbird at left was observed perched on wires and branches at North Beach.



Snowy Owl © David Gluckman

Snowy Owl irruptions typically occur every few years, but this is our second consecutive year. The owl at left was photographed atop a house on Cook Avenue, resting behind a roof skylight. Snowy Owls are diurnal, unlike most owls. Since there are no trees in their normal tundra habitat, it takes awhile for new arrivals to work their way up to roosting in trees. This sleepy fellow seems to have found a happy-medium roost.

How Songbirds Learn to Sing

A research study recently cited at <http://www.sciencedaily.com> describes the process of language development.

Just like humans, baby birds learn to vocalize by listening to adults. Days after hatching, Bengalese finches start imitating the sounds of adults. *"At first, their song is extremely variable and disorganized,"* the study's lead author says. *"It's baby talk, basically."*

Young finches keep practicing, listening to their own sounds and fixing any mistakes that occur until eventually they can sing like their elders.

Young birds, and young humans, make a lot of big mistakes as they learn to vocalize. As birds and humans get older, the variability of mistakes shrinks. One theory contends that adult brains tend to screen out big mistakes and pay more attention to smaller ones.



No, it isn't a cross-species example of rebellious youth with earbuds. It's a Bengalese Finch outfitted with headphones in the cause of science. From: SJ Sober, MS Brainard. Vocal learning is constrained by the statistics of sensorimotor experience. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2012;109 (51): 21099 DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1213622109

Volunteer Jay Pine bags the oldest Scot's Broom at Kah Tai, 9 December 2012. The 'tree' was camouflaged among other small trees on a berm along Sims Way and had evaded prior attempts to capture it since it was almost invisible when not in bloom.



Great Backyard Bird Count 2013

The 2013 Great Backyard Bird Count is 15-18 February. For the first time it will be fully international and counts can be entered online from anywhere in the world. The GBBC will be integrated with eBird - a worldwide bird data collection program that allows users to keep track of their personal bird sightings and checklists. The change means participants will create a free account in order to enter bird checklists for the GBBC, starting in 2013.

The account creation may challenge a few of us who aren't so computer-savvy, but it will help solve the problem on under-reporting for our region as counts will be tabulated in both e-bird and GBBC records. We discovered at the recent Nisqually neotropical habitat meeting that the government types use e-bird to acquire the data for their modeling efforts, so we need to include our observations in that data stream. It will be fascinating to watch the worldwide participation for the first time. You can follow the process at <http://birdsource.org>.

Our chapter region participated very enthusiastically last year. Port Townsend, Port Ludlow, Brinnon and Nordland each ranked in the top ten nationally for a species (Black Turnstones, Pacific Loons, Brants and Black-bellied Plovers, respectively). So get out there and count, birders of East Jefferson County and beyond!

Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park Workparties Continue Monthly

20 January and 23 February 2013

Eighteen hardy volunteers braved the weather Sunday, 9 December 2012 at the Kah Tai Park. Homemade cookies and hot peppermint tea were enjoyed by all. We hope for such enthusiastic turnouts at our 2013 events.

Sunday, 20 January, 9am to noon: Our next work party at the Kah Tai Park will again focus on pulling Scot's Broom and picking up garbage. We are making a noticeable difference but there is more to do. Park at the parking lot near the bathrooms and walk east past the small pond. Look for Ron's white chevy pickup and the green volunteer sign SE of the small pond. Wear layered work clothes and bring work gloves. Homemade cookies, hot tea, water, weed pullers, and garbage bags will be provided.

Saturday, 23 February, 9am to noon: Volunteers are needed to plant 40 trees and 100 native shrubs at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park. The trees will help buffer the park from the traffic noise along Sims Way and the shrubs will replace the ivy that was pulled in the woodland previously by volunteers. Look for Ron's white chevy pickup near the woodland between the bridge and the Kearney Street entrance. Park near the bathrooms and walk east on the main trail to the work site. Bring a shovel and work gloves. Plants, homemade cookies, hot tea, and water will be provided. The planting is sponsored by Admiralty Audubon and the City Parks, Recreation and Tree Board as a Tree City USA event. Email rosemarysikes@olympus.net or call 385-0307 for more information.

Rosemary Sikes

Programs Chair, Admiralty Audubon

Thank you, Sandra Stowell

Her presence on the AAS website has been invisible but as our gracious webhost, Sandra has been instrumental in the existence of a web presence for AAS. AAS bandwidth needs have necessitated a move to a commercial webhost, but we are grateful for her support over the years. Our Sightings link continues to be hosted by Sandra's <http://www.firstraven.com>.

New Northwest Region Chapters Representative

At the recent Audubon Council of Washington meeting (see November 2012 Pipings), Northwest Region Audubon chapter attendees (Admiralty, Kitsap and OPAS) asked Judy Willott to be our new regional representative. Ken Wiersema has stepped down from that position after an extended effort that led to the successful completion of the Washington Audubon Working Group's report and recommendations.

Judy is currently an at-large member of the Kitsap Audubon (KAS) Board and has served as their President for two terms. Through KAS, she became involved in the Kitsap Forest & Bay Project, a community-wide effort to conserve nearly 7,000 acres of forest and 1.8 miles of shoreline on the Kitsap Peninsula.



Judy can be reached at jdwillott@mac.com or 206-842-6939.

Next AAS Board Meeting

The next Admiralty Audubon Board meeting will be held on 15 January at 7 pm. For more information about the meeting and location, contact the chapter President (rjahnke@att.net).

AAS Field Trip Report

10 November 2012: Kilisut Harbor Marine Spit: Thirteen birders joined the AAS field trip to the Fort Flagler spit. It was cool and sunny at mid-tide as we scoped the Port Townsend Bay side viewing Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Pacific Loon, Common Goldeneye, Pelagic and Double-crested Cormorant, Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead and Red-breasted Merganser. Two Bald Eagles were fishing. Out at the end of the spit area we located shorebirds including a Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling and Dunlin. On our return along the Kilisut Bay we saw a Common Loon, Glaucous-winged Gull, and Savannah Sparrow.

The group studied an unusual plover on the beach near the east end of the spit. We all agreed that it was either a Pacific Golden Plover or American Golden Plover. The Seattle Audubon Society confirmed that they saw the same plover at Fort Flagler the following day and took photos, stating that they located and later identified it as the American Golden Plover at the Marine Spit. The American Golden Plover was seen at the spit many days after our field trip visit. There was much discussion about its identification on tweeters and the photos helped greatly. I want to thank everyone for coming out on this field trip. It was an interesting birding walk.

Paula Vanderheul
Trip Leader, Admiralty Audubon

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!



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Christmas Bird Count: Dick Johnson	360-385-5418	--
	Dan Waggoner	danwags57@gmail.com
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Webmaster: Andrew Reding	--	
Website:	http://admiraltyaudubon.org	

Eleanor Stopps Memorial Efforts

Plans are underway to have a public celebration of Eleanor's life and work in March 2013, most likely in the time slot for our monthly AAS meeting. More information about the celebration and updates on memorial sculpture progress will be posted as they are available at <http://eleanorstopps.blogspot.com>.

Dues News

Paper newsletter recipients: Your address label shows the date (month-yr) your membership expires. If you are over six months late, this will be your final newsletter. If the date disagrees with your records, let us know. **Electronic newsletter recipients** will receive an email reminder. Dues are the chapter's source of operating funds.