

## Admiralty Audubon Pippings

### AAS Program May 2013

*The public is invited:*

**Port Townsend Community Center  
Lawrence and Tyler**

**Thursday, 16 May, 7 pm**

#### **Live Raptors from West Sound Wildlife**

Mike Pratt is Director of Wildlife Services at West Sound Wildlife on Bainbridge Island. Mike has over twenty years experience in wildlife rehabilitation and working with raptors. He will share his insight on these amazing creatures with us.



West Sound Wildlife is a wildlife hospital and education center that serves the western Puget Sound. In 2011 they treated over 1,000 patients in their hospital and gave educational presentations to more than 5,000 kids and adults. Their mission is to provide injured, orphaned, and sick wild animals a second chance at life and to promote the well-being of wildlife through public outreach, education, and involvement. All Admiralty Audubon programs are free and open to the public.

### AAS Annual Potluck Picnic

**Sunday, 23 June, 1 pm**

**Pope Marine Park**

Pope Marine Park on Water Street (next to the new Northwest Maritime Center) will be the setting for our annual 'end of the year' potluck picnic. Come early to bird along the waterfront. Bring a dish to share and your table setting (plate, utensils, cup). Relax and enjoy visiting with other chapter members.

*Rosemary Sikes*

*Programs Chair, Admiralty Audubon*

Note that the May program and June potluck are our last public indoor events until autumn. Birders tend to migrate spontaneously during the summer and aren't receptive to indoor activities. Check the website (<http://admiraltyaudubon.org>) for more possible birding opportunities.

### AAS Field Trips May & June 2013

**Saturday, 11 May: Spring Migration at Fort Flagler.** We will meet at the sewage pond parking lot at 8:30 a.m. to walk around the forest trails listening and looking for spring warblers, and other passerines. Those interested in carpooling from Port Townsend should meet at the Park and Ride near Safeway by 7:45 a.m. I'll meet everyone at the sewage pond parking lot. Once entering Fort Flagler, drive to the four-way stop signs. Turn right following the short road to the parking lot. *Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader: 379-8564 or [pvanderheul@gmail.com](mailto:pvanderheul@gmail.com).*

**Friday, 17 May: Spring Migration and Bird Photo Session at Fort Worden.** Meet in the Commons parking lot at 7:30 a.m. for a trip through upper Fort Worden. Last year we found ourselves in the middle of an amazing raptor migration (Red-tailed, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks; Bald Eagles; Turkey Vultures) in our spring field trip at Fort Worden. There should be plenty of migratory species to observe, raptors or not. *David Beatty (360-774-1847) & Dan Waggoner, [danwags57@gmail.com](mailto:danwags57@gmail.com), Trip Leaders.* David Gluckman will be along to lead any folks interested in improving their bird photography. Bring your camera and biggest lens: 360-379-0360 or [cgluckman@aol.com](mailto:cgluckman@aol.com).

**Saturday, 15 June: Anderson Lake State Park, 1061 Anderson Lake Road, Chimacum.**

We will be walking a trail enjoying warblers and passerines. We will meet at the parking near the restrooms at 8:30 a.m. Anyone wanting to carpool from Port Townsend should meet at the Park and Ride near Safeway by 8:00 a.m. I'll meet everyone at the Anderson Lake parking lot. *Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader: 360-379-8564 or [pvanderheul@gmail.com](mailto:pvanderheul@gmail.com).*

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

*David Gluckman*

*Field Trips Chair,  
Admiralty Audubon*

## AAS Field Trip Reports, March and April 2013

### **Saturday, 2 March - Skagit Field Trip -**

Twelve of us braved the wind and rain to see a total of 58 species of birds on our annual field trip to the Samish/ Skagit Flats areas. The rain actually held off till the last hour and a half of the afternoon, but the winds seemed to keep a lot of the smaller birds down.

As usual, the highlights included the large flocks of Snow Geese and swans. The majority of swans were Trumpeters but there were a few Tundras seen on Fir Island. The biggest highlight of the day were the two Snowy Owls we saw on Thomle Road near Stanwood.

There is no doubt that the Samish Flats are a great area to see raptors. The one disappointment was striking out on any Short-eared Owls. As many as fifty had been seen in this area earlier this year. Little word of warning, we will be starting earlier next year with the hopes of seeing this beautiful bird. We were lucky enough to see plenty of Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks, one Peregrine Falcon and a quick sighting of an American Kestrel.

The biggest challenge of the day was the return ferry ride. It was an hour late due to the high winds and rough seas. As we were departing the announcement came over the loud speaker to sit down and hold on. We made it safely and WSF cancelled all the sailings for the balance of the day. *Dan Waggoner, Trip Leader*

**Saturday, 16 March - Little Oak Bay and Fort Flagler Marine Spit -** Six birders met at little Oak Bay Park where we had excellent views of breeding plumage of Common Loon, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Mallard, Killdeer, Horned and Red-necked Grebe, Canada Goose, Mew and Glaucous Gull, Hooded Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser, Double-crested Cormorants, and Pigeon Guillemot in breeding plumage. We stopped along the Indian Island-Marrowstone Island intersection to view three Greater Yellowlegs, Green-winged Teal, and Great Blue Heron.

At Fort Flagler marine spit we enjoyed watching a few hundred Brant, Bald Eagles, Black-bel-

lied Plovers, both Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants, Rhinoceros Auklet and Long-tailed Duck on Port Townsend Bay, Surf Scoter, and on Red Island we scoped a large flock of Black-bellied Plovers, Dunlin, Black Turnstones, Sanderling, Cackling Goose and a gull convention. We added along the trip Eurasian Collared Dove and Belted Kingfisher at Nordland, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Crow and Red-winged Blackbird. We counted 31 harbor seals just north on the spit. *Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader*

**Sunday, 14 April - Admiralty Inlet, Fort Casey, Port Townsend waterfront -** Seven of us made the ferry crossing to Whidbey and back. There were 53 total bird species seen including four species of birds and a river otter found along the waterfront on our return. Hundreds of Rhinoceros Auklets were feeding out in mid-channel. We saw porpoise, a sea lion and a seal from the ferry. At Crockett Lake we saw a few species of waterfowl including Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, and Hooded Mergansers.

The unexpected birds were a Greater Yellowlegs feeding in the marsh and three Wilson's Snipe that flew along the shoreline close to our location. The newly arrived Orange-crowned Warblers, White-crowned and Savannah Sparrows were singing. The Brandt's Cormorant was absent on the breakwater near the ferry. But the Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants were there with their breeding finery of plumes and colored throat patches. It was mostly sunny and calm and was very pleasant to be outside looking at the birds and the splendid scenery. *Ron Sikes, Trip Leader*

*David Gluckman*

*Field Trips Chair, Admiralty Audubon*

### **Our Chapter Associate**

We'd like to introduce Jen Syrowitz, our newly minted Chapter Associate for Audubon chapters in Washington. Jen represents the concerns of all our local chapters. Her position was created by a majority vote and financial commitments from local chapters at last year's ACOW meeting in Poulsbo. Jen can be reached at [jsyrowitz@audubon.org](mailto:jsyrowitz@audubon.org).

## Nest Boxes for Town Birds

Cavity-nesting birds usually do not have a suitable place to nest in residential area since old trees with cavities and dead snags are sparse. To make matters much worse, introduced House Sparrows and starlings have the beaks and temperament to drive most cavity-nesting songbirds away from a suitable site. Thus most native birds nesting in cavities do so in rural areas or areas left undeveloped as in our parks large enough for an abundance of nest sites. Nest boxes are thought the solution but it must exclude the pest species. If a nest box is used by House Sparrow or starlings, it is actually a detriment to native songbirds. A box with an opening small enough to exclude starlings and difficult for House Sparrows is barely adequate for chickadees, nuthatches, wrens, and Violet-green Swallows.

Although a standard 1-1/8 inch round opening is often recommended for chickadees, it allows House Sparrows to squeeze inside. You can make things really difficult for the House Sparrows by covering larger openings with a piece of solid wood with a smaller opening of no more than 7/8 inch at its widest point. Instead of a round hole make an oblong hole that tapers toward the sides. Chickadees, wrens, and Violet-green Swallows can manage entering this opening. The oblong opening allows the birds to flatten their profile which makes them wider horizontally but narrower vertically. For the swallows it is best to keep a closure over the opening until they return for the summer and right after they head south for the winter. This prevents a male House Sparrow from claiming the box in late winter/early spring. Even if it can't get in it will harass the swallows when they return.

To increase the natural cavities in your landscape leave old trees and snags that are not a falling hazard to buildings. Badly pruned old fruit trees frequently have rot in their centers and where a limb has rotted away cavities are left. Also if a woodpecker cuts a hole through the live wood then the chickadees will remove the soft rotten interior to make a place large enough for their nest. Not known for its ornamental value, the Scouler Willow is a local and native tree that soon in its life begins to develop cavities and is

a natural source of nest sites. If you have one in your landscape, tolerate it, or if you have space you could plant one but not near your house.

For more information about nest boxes visit <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/nestboxes/index.htm>

If House Sparrows are harassing chickadees or swallows nesting in your landscape and you are determined to intervene then you could trap the House Sparrows. A very effective trap that fits inside a standard bird box is the Van Ert Universal Sparrow Trap, 22684, U.S. Highway 69, Leon, Iowa 50144-1791. For information e-mail [fvanert@grm.net](mailto:fvanert@grm.net). Phone 641-446-6471.

*Ron Sikes*

Secretary, Admiralty Audubon

## Thanks to Our Chapter Donors

Thank you to all our anonymous donors; if you would like to not be anonymous when you contribute, please let us know and we'll thank you by name in the newsletters. We especially thank a recent donor who provided funds for new weed wrenches, irrigation supplies and wire to protect young trees and shrubs for the chapter's Kah Tai habitat effort. The same donor offered a challenge match for our planned Collaborative Funding grant proposal in the fall.

Admiralty Audubon is a small chapter. Donations go into our habitat protection fund and are used for solely for that purpose. Our operating funds come from chapter dues.

## Winona Basin Walk with the Land Trust Friday, 10 May, 3 pm

Sarah Spaeth, Executive Director of the Jefferson Land Trust, would like to lead a walk to the Winona Basin area and talk about the opportunity to protect nearly five acres of mature forest and wetland buffer habitat. Sarah would love to introduce Audubon members and others to this important effort. Meet at the bottom of Cook Avenue. For information or to confirm the date and your participation, contact Sarah at 360-379-9501 ext 101 or [sspaeth@saveland.org](mailto:sspaeth@saveland.org).



Volunteers (l-r, standing) Jim Todd, Rick Jahnke, Bjorn Greenman, Rosemary Sikes and Wendy Feltham, (l-r, kneeling) Janice Speck, Ron Sikes and Dan Greenman joined the April 2013 Kah Tai Park clean up and Scot's broom pull, co-sponsored by Admiralty Audubon and the City Parks, Recreation and Tree Board. Volunteers who managed to avoid being photographed include Bill Vogt, Jerry Gilbert, Laurette Gilbert and Debbie Jahnke

### Wenas Audubon Campout

On Memorial Day weekend (24-27 May 2013), the Wenas Audubon chapter would like to invite campers to participate in birding, flower walks, and other activities. This 50th anniversary of the Wenas Audubon campout is open to all.

Wenas Creek Campground is southwest of Elensburg WA. Vehicles require a Discover Pass. Visit <http://www.wenasaudubon.org> for more information, or contact Doris Johnson at [dellenj@comcast.net](mailto:dellenj@comcast.net).

### Joint Conference of Western Field Ornithologists & the Washington Ornithological Society

Black Hills Audubon chapter will host a joint conference for WFO and WOS 22-25 August at the Red Lion Hotel in Olympia. It will feature workshops on fall warblers, sapsuckers, gulls, dragonflies, wilderness first aid and how to use eBird. There is a keynote talk by John Marzluff on corvids, a full set of field trips (including pelagics), photo and bird sound ID sessions and talks on recent regional research. Plenary session will be a talk by Dennis Paulson. Registration will open in early May. Check the WFO website for more information <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org>

### Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park Workparties Continue Monthly Sunday, 19 May and Saturday, 22 June

We're getting a tremendous amount of work done at the Park. Our next monthly work parties at the Kah Tai Park are Sunday, May 19 and Saturday, June 22 from 9am to noon. We 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 Kah Tai Lagoon parking lot next to the bathrooms, behind Henry's Hardware, off of 12th Street. Look for a white chevy pickup and the green volunteer sign near the Benedict Street entrance southeast 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. Hope to see you there. Email [rosemarysikes@olympus.net](mailto:rosemarysikes@olympus.net) or call 385-0307 for more information.

*Rosemary Sikes*  
Programs Chair, Admiralty Audubon

### Indian Island County Park Concerns

Indian Island County Park land has been leased from the state Department of Natural Resources by Jefferson County Parks and Recreation since 1992. It has been continuously maintained as a County Adopt-A-Park by dedicated volunteers, with approximately two miles of trails, beach and boating access, facilities and free parking.

This year the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife has decided to submit a competing application for the lease. Concerns include public access and safety, continuation of maintenance, parking restrictions (it would become a Discover Pass area). The park is a part of the Marrowstone - Indian Island Important Bird Area (IBA).

County Parks Manager Matt Tyler would welcome letters from interested chapter members and others to let DNR know that this park is highly valued by our birding community in its current, well-maintained and freely accessible status. A birdwalk is planned to highlight the park on 24 May from noon - 2pm. For more information, contact Matt at [mt Tyler@co.jefferson.wa.us](mailto:mt Tyler@co.jefferson.wa.us).



Rhinoceros Auklet © David Gluckman

## Leader Article Is For The Birds

Columnist and friend of (most) birds Jan Haliday wrote an amusing and informative article in the 24 April Port Townsend Leader entitled 'What's in Store: Birds Fuel Economy' (<http://ptleader.com/main.asp?SectionID=163&SubsectionID=404&ArticleID=33442>). She addressed the financial impact of birders and other wildlife watchers on the Washington state economy and called favorable attention to bird havens near and dear to our chapter, including Protection Island and Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park. Our chapter founder, Eleanor Stopps, had a hand (or two) in the protection of both those spots.

Jan's article highlights the importance of Protection Island habitat to many species, including the nesting success of Rhinoceros Auklets. The auklet pictured at left looks pretty pleased with the feeding habitat at well.

The sculpture of Pigeon Guillemots to honor Eleanor and the Protection Island story is underway in sculptor Tony Angell's studio. Fundraising is still incomplete and donations for the sculpture would be very welcome.

Checks for 'Admiralty Audubon Society Memorial Fund' or 'AAS Memorial Fund' can be sent directly to First Federal Bank, PO Box 1510, Port Townsend WA 98368. Donations can also be made via a PayPal link at <http://eleanorstopps.blogspot.com>, where you can also follow the progress of this tribute to our chapter founder and to Protection Island.

## Call for Nominations

Our annual chapter elections will take place at the 16 May public meeting. All current officers (see list on page 6) are willing to stand for election for a new one-year term. Only the officers are elected; other chairs are filled by consensus of the board. Any member is welcome to self-nominate or nominate someone else for any position on the board. Our important conservation and education chairs are vacant. We would also welcome some at-large board members. If you would like to make a nomination, please confirm that your nominee is willing to serve and then contact [rjahnke@att.net](mailto:rjahnke@att.net).

### 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!



© David Gluckman  
Red-tailed Hawk

Admiralty Audubon Society PO Box 666 Port Townsend WA 98368



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## Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

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Christmas Bird Count: Dan Waggoner	--	<a href="mailto:danwags57@gmail.com">danwags57@gmail.com</a>
Webmaster: Andrew Reding	--	<a href="mailto:aareding@gmail.com">aareding@gmail.com</a>
Website:	<a href="http://admiraltyaudubon.org">http://admiraltyaudubon.org</a>	

### Next AAS Board Meeting

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

We need Education, Conservation and Publicity Chairs. Please consider applying for one of these important volunteer positions.

### Dues News

**Paper newsletter recipients:** Your address label shows the date (month-year) 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 our chapter's source of operating funds.