

## Admiralty Audubon Pipings

### Christmas Bird Count 2014-15

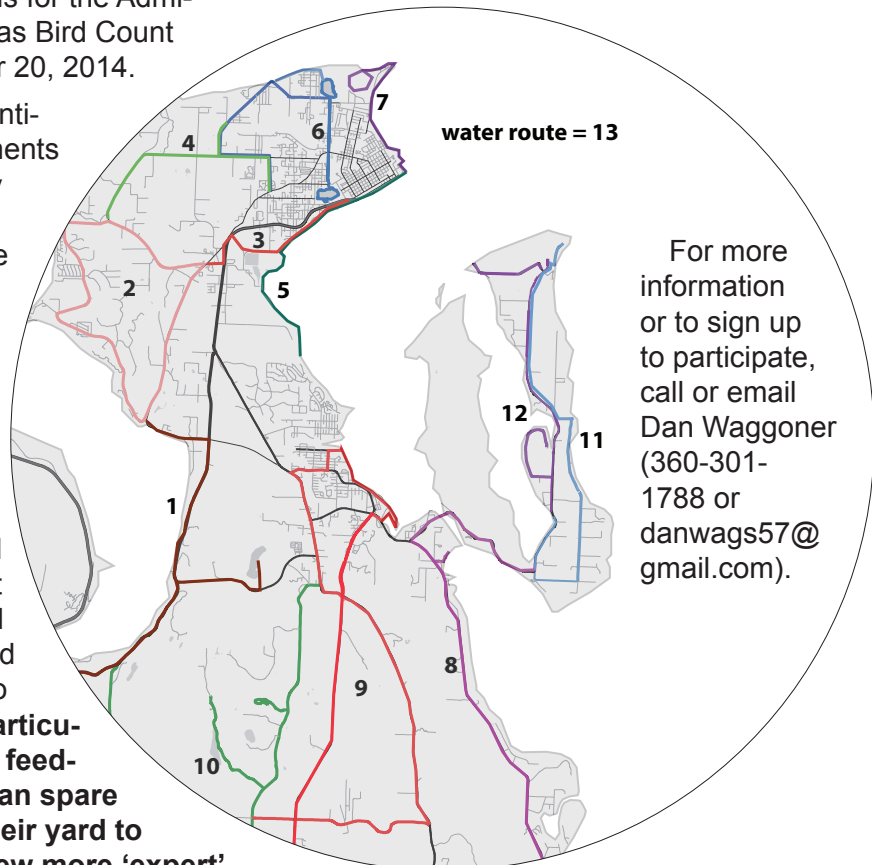
Everybody is invited to join us for the Admiralty Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count (CBC) to be held on December 20, 2014.

The CBC is an organized continent-wide survey which documents every bird seen on a given day from sunrise to sunset. Since the turn of the 20th century, the CBC has contributed to the knowledge base of wintering birds in North America.

The count is an all-day event open to anyone wishing to participate. This is an excellent opportunity for novice bird watchers to join with seasoned veterans and learn more about identifying and finding the local birds. Half-day participants and home feeder-watchers are also welcome. **We would like to particularly encourage anyone with feeders in the count circle who can spare at least one hour to watch their yard to participate; we also need a few more 'expert' field birders as possible team leaders.** Winter feeder watching can be quite rewarding as birds try to expend the least amount of energy to get the greatest amount of food.

The Admiralty Audubon count circle is a 7.5 mile radius centered near Indian Island ship dock and is divided into 13 sections, with a team of 3 or more individuals assigned to each section. Team leaders for each section will make arrangements with the rest of their group for a meeting place and time (usually between 7:30 and 8 am) the morning of the count. Participants should bring cold and wet-weather gear, binoculars, a scope if you have one, lunch and snacks for the day. A notepad and pencil or electronic recording devices, field guides, camera and a thermos with something hot are always good ideas as well.

There will be a countdown potluck after the count at Rosewind Commons at 5:00 pm.



For more information or to sign up to participate, call or email Dan Waggoner (360-301-1788 or danwags57@gmail.com).

#### Routes (more detail to come)

1. Discovery Bay east side to include Anderson-Lake
2. Discovery Bay golf course pond north to Beckett Point and Cape George
3. Larry Scott Trail (good for walkers & bicyclists)
4. Jacob Miller/ Hastings Route including Tibbals Lake, McCurdy Point, Stranger's Lake, along Jacob Miller and Cappy's Trails
5. Point Hudson south: waterfront to Glen Cove to Fort Townsend
6. Happy Valley route, freshwater ponds
7. Point Hudson north including Fort Worden
8. Mats Mats through Oak Bay, Indian Island Park
9. Center Road - Chimacum to Port Hadlock
10. West Valley and Eaglemount: Gibbs Lake, Beausite Lake
11. Marrowstone: east side
12. Marrowstone: west side - Mystery Bay, Kilisut
13. water route: depending on weather - kayak or ferry

## AAS Field Trips

### **Point Wilson, 23 November 2014, 1 pm**

For an afternoon field trip, meet at the parking lot near the Point Wilson Light House at Fort Worden State Park. A Discover Pass is required for parking. We will circle the lighthouse near shore looking for marine birds.

Wear sturdy walking shoes and warm clothing as often there is a chill wind blowing at Point Wilson. Trip Leader: Ron Sikes (360-385-0307 [sikes@olympus.net](mailto:sikes@olympus.net)).

*Public comment for the Electronic Warfare Environmental Assessment (see p. 4) has been extended again, until 28 November 2014. Send comments to [gtwahl@fs.fed.us](mailto:gtwahl@fs.fed.us). Subject line must read Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment. ([http://data.ecosystem-management.org/nepaweb/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=42759](http://data.ecosystem-management.org/nepaweb/nepa_project_exp.php?project=42759))*

### **Fort Flagler, 29 November 2014**

At 9 am we'll start the field trip at Portage Bridge Park, Indian Island. It'll be the first right after crossing the portage bridge. There will be stops along Indian Island checking out the mud flats for shorebirds and a Mystery Bay stop before heading out to Fort Flagler RV campground located at the end of Campground Road. We will walk the spit scoping the Port Townsend Bay and the Kilisut Harbor for wintering ducks, grebes and shorebirds. Be prepared for cold wet weather with gloves, hats, layers of clothing, binoculars, and raingear. Anyone wanting to carpool from Port Townsend should meet at the Park and Ride near Safeway by 8:30 am. I'll meet everyone at the Indian Island Portage Park. Trip Leader: Paula Vanderheul (360-379-8564 or [pvanderheul@gmail.com](mailto:pvanderheul@gmail.com)).

## AAS Field Trip Reports

### **13 September, Anderson Lake State Park**

Eight bird watchers including two first timers attended the field trip. A perfect sun shining calm morning at Anderson Lake State Park. At the boat ramp we scoped families of Pied-billed Grebe, one Caspian Tern fishing, a Kingfisher, 2 Ring-necked Duck immature female, a flock of Violet-green Swallows fly-catching over the lake, and 3 Hooded Mergansers. Along the shoreline Common Yellowthroat calling, Red-winged Blackbird, a Starling, a flock of Pine Siskins landed in willow trees providing good looks of their fresh plumage, at the same willow tree area we saw a Myrtle Yellow-rumped and a Black-throated Gray Warbler, Song Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, and Downy Woodpecker. We walked south following the grassy field where a small flock of Savannah Sparrow, Marsh Wren singing, Northern Flicker, Raven calling, and a Turkey Vulture flew over. Near the parking area was Black-capped Chickadee and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Lots of large dragonflies working along the edge of the lake. Two Coyotes came out of the forest crossing the road heading towards the south end of the lake. 24 species of birds for the two and half hours of birding. *Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader.*

### **18 October, Dungeness Bay**

There were 6 hardy people braving bright sunlight and pleasant light breezes on the field trip to Dungeness Bay. With stops at the Gardiner Boat Ramp, John Wayne Marina, Port Williams, 3 Crabs, Oysterhouse Park and Cline Spit Park, at least 43 species were sighted. These included: Dark-eyed Junco, California, Mew, Ring-billed and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Ducks were Wigeon, Harlequin, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Pintail, Hooded Merganser. Also the following: Pelagic and Double-crested Cormorants (100's), Brewers and Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds. Western Meadowlark, Cackling and Canada Goose, Bald Eagles (15-20), Red-tailed Hawks, Anna's Hummingbirds, Common and Pacific Loons, Marbled Murrelet, Pigeon Guillemot, Horned Grebes, Marble Godwits, Common Raven, American Crow, European Starling, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Great Blue Heron, Surf Scoters, California Quail (flock of 25 plus others), Eurasian-collared Dove, Rock Pigeon, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, American Robin, Black-bellied Plover. *David Gluckman, Trip Leader.*

**AAS Program -  
20 November 2014**

**THE PUBLIC IS INVITED:**

**Port Townsend Community Center  
Lawrence and Tyler  
Thursday, 20 November 2014, 7 pm**

**Brazil's Pantanal**

Johanna King visited the Fazenda Barranco Alto, in Brazil's Pantanal, arguably the world's largest marshland, in September of last year. In a little more than a week she saw over 160 species of birds, and numerous other creatures, including a giant anteater and a tapir. Though difficult to reach, the Pantanal offers an exciting and stimulating adventure for anyone who is willing to fly an hour west of Campo Grande, which is itself a two hour flight west of Sao Paulo. The weather was dry and hot, and she traveled around the huge cattle ranch by jeep and boat. In this unique area of the world, people have found a way to combine ranching with wildlife preservation and a deep commitment to the environment.

*Rosemary Sikes*

AAS Programs Chair

**Photos**

In a grayscale edition it is difficult to appreciate beautiful bird photos, so use your imagination a little.

Top and middle photos are provided by Johanna King, but unfortunately your newsletter editor neglected to get their names. The top fellow is a beautiful sky blue with bright yellow eye ring and stripe behind the beak. The middle bird has a blue eye and a coral beak. Don't miss the program to find out who these birds are!



**Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park  
Workparties  
November & December 2014**

**Sundays, 16 November &  
14 December 2014  
9 am - noon**

Work party events in the Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park will be:

**Planting** - We will be planting trees and shrubs during our November 16th and December 14th, 9 to noon Sunday Work Party. If you plan to help with the planting bring a shovel. If you have it bring a mattock (aka: Pulaski tool), for chopping thru horsetail rush and grass, and a pot or bucket for saving your refill dirt. Careful planting will be more important than number planted.

**Pulling Scotch Broom** - pullers will be provided.

**Trash pick up** - bags provided.

The white chevy pickup with tools, sign in sheets, water, tea, treats, etc. will be parked near the Benedict Street entrance east/southeast of the little pond.

For more information phone 385-0307 or email sikes@olympus.net.

*Ron Sikes*

**We Have Scrub Jays!**

AAS member Karen

DeLorenzo sent along a photograph documenting her recent PT uptown garden visitor, a Scrub Jay. If you'd like to see the photo (bottom left) in color, please visit our Facebook page <https://facebook.com/admiraltyaudubon>



### Electronic Warfare Training

The President of Admiralty Audubon sent the following message, approved by the Admiralty Audubon Board, to the US Forest Service re: Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare Range Environmental Assessment:

On behalf of Admiralty Audubon Society, Port Townsend, Washington, I welcome this opportunity to comment on the Pacific Northwest Electronic Warfare (EW) Range Environmental Assessment (EA). Admiralty Audubon recognizes the strategic need to provide our pilots with frequent and advanced training. Nevertheless, we find that the present version of the EA is deficient in several areas and do not agree with the Navy's assessment that the environmental impacts are not significant. We recommend that the U.S. Forest Service not approve or permit the proposed actions. Below are presented several issues that support our recommendation.

**1. The western side of the Olympic National Park has a unique soundscape.** A location in the Hoh River valley was identified as the quietest place in the lower 48 with respect to anthropogenic sound (see onesquareinch.org for further info). This aspect of the region has been discussed widely in the media, see for example: 1) America's Vanishing Silent Spaces, Newsweek, by Julia Baird (3 June 2010) or 2) A man speaks up for silence, by Lynda V. Maples, Seattle Times (1 August 2005). In 2005, this unique aspect of the Olympic National Park was noted by the park superintendent at the time, Bill Laitner, who stated "It is definitely a priority to

maintain that natural quiet." Through the years, Gordon Hempton (founder of onesquareinch and responsible for audio measurements documenting absence of anthropogenic sound), has contacted commercial airlines (flying at much greater altitudes than the planned Navy flights) and has had partial success in convincing them to alter flight routes to avoid this region to help preserve the soundscape. This unique aspect has not gone unnoticed and many of the tourists who come to this region annually do so explicitly to experience this unique natural soundscape.

The noise assessment in the EA in general compares the impact of predicted EW range noise to more traditional settings (urban, suburban, rural) which do not represent the rare, natural background conditions of this area. A much lower and documented baseline for ambient anthropogenic sounds should be employed to examine the impacts of the proposed operations on this area. Discussions of construction sounds at building 104 and whether added noise will interfere with sleep or verbal communications miss entirely the questions concerning the degradation of this unique environment.

Portable diesel generators required for the mobile emitters and frequent overflights by fighter jets (at 9,000 - 15,000 feet, audible for many miles in all directions) will certainly degrade the soundscape of this location and make it less desirable for tourists - a hardship for an already economically challenged region. A full assessment of the impacts of planned operations on the soundscape should be provided by the Navy see p. 5

AAS Membership Form 2015  
<http://admiraltyaudubon.org>

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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**  
**or pay online at the Membership link via PayPal or credit card**

*Membership includes 6 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!*

to the Forest Service and public.

This analysis should be performed relative to the unique soundscape that characterizes this region and not to generic sound baselines established for other, more anthropogenically-impacted areas.

**2. The EA assumes no economic impact and therefore categorically excludes this from the analysis.** For reasons stated in comment 1, the planned range will alter the attractiveness of this region as a destination for tourists and there is potential for significant economic impact. Since this region is already economically stressed, even small variations in overall economic activity may result in large, relative impacts. The Navy should, therefore, assess the potential economic impact before deciding whether or not to proceed.

**3. The Navy's assessment includes little discussion of indirect impacts of EMR on wildlife and does not incorporate the most recent, best available science.** It has long been known that many migrating birds, especially under overcast conditions, rely on the earth's magnetic field for orientation and navigation (e.g. Gill, 1990) and Engels et al. 2014 documents that low levels of EMR interferes with the birds' geomagnetic navigation system. The importance and implications of these results have further been discussed by Morrison (2014) and Kirschvink (2014). These articles have been published in *Nature*, one of the most prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific publications world-wide - this is not "internet" publishing. The Navy's EA does not acknowledge this potential impact. As use of magnetic navigation is widespread in nature, these results may have general applicability.

As part of the Pacific Flyway, the Pacific coast is a critical pathway for migratory birds, with an estimated 1 billion birds migrating along the flyway annually. Many of these are long-distance migrants, which may be especially vulnerable to interference with their geomagnetic navigation system. Lost and disoriented birds may or may not reach their destinations or live to reproduce.

In their five-year strategic plan, the National Audubon Society specifically advocates for the protection of coastal species and habitats with the goal of supporting a healthy Pacific Flyway.

In general, taking or adversely impacting migratory birds is prohibited as part of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Exceptions are allowed, however, for military readiness training. Nevertheless, as stated on page 3.2-3 of the Navy's EA, "...the Armed Forces must confer and cooperate with USFWS on the development and implementation of conservation measures to minimize or mitigate adverse effects of a military readiness activity if it determines that such activity may have a 'significant adverse effect' on the population of a migratory bird species." Since successful migration is critical to the survival of a migrating species, potential navigational impacts must be evaluated. However, these potential impacts are not considered in the current EA and hence the potential impacts were not assessed.

**4. As has been acknowledged publicly by Navy representatives, this process was not properly noticed.** While the deadline for comments has been extended twice, this remedy has unfortunately resulted in confusion as citizens and organizations have encountered inconsistent deadlines listed in various publications with some erroneously concluding that the comment period had already closed.

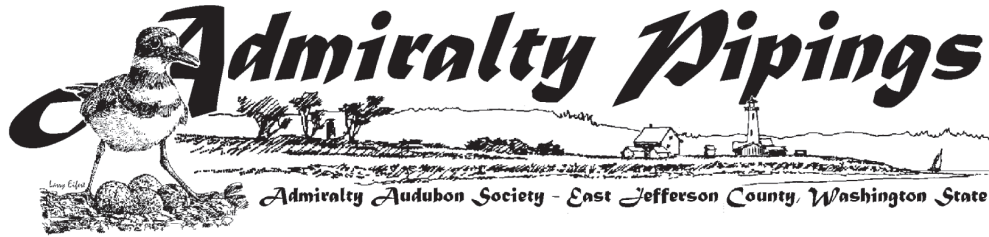
**5. The EA argues that establishing this new range is environmentally beneficial by reducing the fuel consumption for training missions.** While carbon dioxide emissions are of environmental concern, such emissions are only one of many criteria that need to be weighed to assess net environmental impact. As EW training ranges already exist elsewhere, the added impacts of establishing an additional range in this environmentally unique, natural area must be included as well. The present EA does not assess the relative benefits of impacting a greater portion of our remaining natural areas for military training.

To conclude, Admiralty Audubon Society recommends that the Navy's EA and its associated Findings of No Significant Impacts not be adopted. The deficiencies documented above are significant and must be addressed. For these reasons, the EA does not meet the requirements of law and a full environmental impact statement under NEPA must be prepared.

*[For more information, see box on page 2]*

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Banner  
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Western Sandpiper, Dunlin and Greater Yellowlegs at Kah Tai  
© Artemis Celt.

## Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

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## Dues are due on January 1, for everyone

In order to simplify dues collections for our chapter, the Board voted to make all dues payments due at the beginning of each year rather than having a few memberships come due each week throughout the year. For those who are new members and joined in the last quarter of this year, you can prorate for 2015 if you choose to do so. There are a few members who pay ahead of schedule. In fact, we have one member who is due on January 1, 2017, and one who pays five years at a time. Our dues-paying members are what keep our chapter running, and your support of Admiralty Audubon is appreciated.