

Admiralty Audubon Pippings

2014 Christmas Bird Count

On Saturday December 20th, 46 participants made our annual Christmas Bird Count very successful. On count day we tallied 15,287 birds of 114 different species. The 114 species was one more seen than last year and tied for the highest count since 2000. Wind made the birding tougher than usual but somehow the rains held off. One of the reasons for the higher count is that we had about a dozen more participants than last year.

The highlight birds were Blue-winged Teal, Canvasback, Yellow-billed Loon and Cassin's Auklet. The two Blue-winged Teals, first ever reported on the Admiralty count, were found on Marrowstone Island by John Comstock and his group. The two Canvasbacks were seen by Bruce Marston and his group on the pond next to the Discovery Bay Golf Course. Two Yellow-billed Loons were located at the Lower Port Hadlock boat launch by Paula Vanderheul and her group. Bob Boekelheide, on the boat piloted by Randy and Quenn Charrier, had a single Cassin's Auklet on Port Townsend Bay.

According to Audubon records for our count, high counts were attained by Mallards: 1568, Common Goldeneyes: 532, Common Mergansers: 224, Great Blue Herons: 143, Dark-eyed Juncos: 585, and Red Crossbills: 63. The high count for the Great Blue Herons can be attributed to Paula finding 80 herons roosting on a small island in the Lower Port Hadlock area.

Birds reported during count week but not on count day include Orange-crowned Warbler, Red-breasted Sapsucker and Great Horned Owl. Misses, though none are easy to find this time of year, were Pileated Woodpecker, Sharpshinned Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Yellowlegs, Virginia Rail and Townsend Warbler.

After a long cold, windy day, about half of the participants headed to the potluck at the Rosewind Commons. Nothing like good foods, good drinks and good friends. Thank you to our hosts Sandra Stowell and MJ Pruitt.

Dan Waggoner
CBC Chair, AAS

AAS Field Trip Reports

23 November 2014 - Point Wilson to the beach just west of the Marine Science Center Pier: Wind-driven waves occasionally sent water over the jetty around the lighthouse. Out in the waves were a small group of Surf Scoters, and some Harlequins. We moved to the middle of the point to be more out of the wind. Lighting was good but seeing birds among the waves was challenging.

Our next move was to the calm beach just west of the Marine Science Center Pier. Here we enjoyed the bright sun and were able to spot more birds. We had eleven participants. Our sightings included Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Pacific Loon, Horned Grebe, Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorant, 2 pair of adult Bald Eagles, Black Oyster Catchers, Sanderling, Mew Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Rhinoceros Auklet, Rock Pigeon, Pacific Wren, and House Finch. *Trip Leader Ron Sikes.*

1 January 2015 - Chimacum Creek Park/Irondale Bay: Thirteen birders arrived for the New Year's Day walk along the trail of Irondale Bay/Chimacum Creek Park. It was a cool calm 30 degrees with lots of duck species to study. About 400 American & 1 Eurasian Wigeon; 8 Gadwall; 15 Green-winged Teal; 110 Mallards; 12 Northern Pintail; 25 Bufflehead; 30 Horned, 2 Western & 1 Red-necked Grebe, 8 Hooded & 10 Red-breasted Merganser; 1 Belted Kingfisher, 20 Surf Scoter, 15 Common Goldeneye, 20 Double-crested & 1 Pelagic Cormorant; 6 Pigeon Guillemot; 2 Marbled Murrelet; heard one loon species; 2 Lesser & 2 Greater Scaup; 1 Great Blue Heron, 2 Black-bellied Plover; 15 Bonaparte's, 10 Mew & 20 Western/Glaucous-winged Gull; 1 Rock Dove; 1 Lincoln & 5 Song Sparrow; 5 House Finch; and 15 Crow. A great morning walk with many new faces joining many regular birders to start off 2015; 31 bird species, a harbor seal, and black porpoise rising up showing its fin. *Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul.*



© David Gluckman



Right top & middle: Cedar, a Red-tailed Hawk, and Pele, an American Kestrel, are both West Sound Wildlife raptors who will visit Port Townsend on 22 January 2015. Join us to meet these beautiful birds and learn about their species.



© David Gluckman



© David Gluckman



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Left top: In case you had any doubt about why Red-tailed Hawks have their name, this bird was photographed by David Gluckman in Gardiner. Middle: A Cooper's Hawk hoping for a meal the easy way, from a neighborhood feeder. Bottom: The famous Brambling, or Bramble Finch, that visited Paula Vanderheul's black oil sunflower seed feeder in October and stayed around to be admired by dozens of avid birders who wanted to add this Northern European/Asian native to their life lists without having to leave Jefferson County. This is the photo that made it into the newspaper. You can read the article from a link on our website (<http://admiraltyaudubon.org>). Right, bottom: Bighorn Sheep photographed by David Gluckman in Yellowstone National Park. Presentation on 19 February 2015 is by David and Casey Gluckman.

AAS Programs January & February 2015

The public is invited:

**Port Townsend Community Center
Lawrence & Tyler**

Thursday, 22 January 2015; 7 pm

West Sound Wildlife Raptors Visit

Admiralty Audubon will welcome Pele, an American Kestrel, and Cedar, a Red-tailed Hawk (both shown p.2), when West Sound Wildlife Shelter staff members Susan Ford and Fawn Harris bring raptors to the Community Center. Susan is a Licensed and Registered Veterinary Technician/Wildlife Rehabilitator and Fawn volunteers as a Wildlife Care Steward.

The birds and other wildlife that are brought to events like these are all rescues who have been rehabilitated to the extent they can be, but their injuries or life circumstances prevent them from living wild. Those rescues that are adaptable to human audiences serve as ambassadors for wild members of their species. West Sound Wildlife Shelter provides injured, orphaned, and sick wild animals a second chance at life and promotes the well-being of wildlife and their habitats through public outreach, education, and involvement.

Thursday, 19 February 2015; 7 pm

Fall in Yellowstone National Park - Animals and Water

Professional Photographers David and Casey Gluckman will present a one hour program on Yellowstone National Park showing some of the animals and scenery of one of our country's national treasures. Leaving the geysers for another time, the Gluckmans will show telephoto closeups of rarely shown portions of hot springs along with birds and other animals preparing for winter. They'll also discuss some of the difficulties and rewards of photographing such an open and varied landscape.

Bighorn Sheep (p. 2) are among the examples of Yellowstone wildlife in the scenic autumn surroundings.

Rosemary Sikes
AAS Programs Chair

Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park Workparties January & February 2015

Sunday, 18 January 2015: 9 am - noon

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

- Pulling Scot's Broom - pullers provided
- Trash pick up - bags provided

The white chevy pickup with tools, sign in sheets, water, tea, treats, etc. will be parked next to the loop trail near the new bench near Chase Bank.

Sunday, 22 February 2015: 9 am - noon

Work party events will include potting 160 native plants at 716 14th Street in Port Townsend. Please bring a hand trowel and a bucket to put the potting soil in.

For more information, phone 385-0307 or email b1rdbrush@gmail.com.

Ron Sikes

Best-laid Plans & Short Notices



upper: A copy of Sibley's and a spotting scope accompany one of the dedicated birders on a calm New Year's Day trip. lower: Seven of the thirteen attendees line up to peer through scopes. Photos courtesy Artemis Celt.

That New Year's Day birding trip (p.1) to Chimacum Creek Park/Irondale Bay came about on short notice in part because our scheduled field trip in late November had to be cancelled on the morning of the event due to ice and snow. When the weather report suggested New Year's Day was

feasible, Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul asked to notify membership via email and Facebook. Something worked!

AAS Field Trips for January & February-ish (March 1)

Saturday, 17 January 2015: Fort Casey

LEAVE YOUR CAR IN PT. Meet at the Port Townsend Ferry Terminal to catch the 9:30 am ferry to "Coupeville". You are responsible for your passage on the ferry. Arrive "Coupeville" about 10 am. Gather in the ferry terminal before walking over the hill in Fort Casey to the shoreline on Crockett Lake. Then walk up through forest and out onto grass shrub-land before descending to the campground and circling back to the ferry terminal. If time permits we will cross the highway and view Crockett Lake.

We will plan to catch the 11:45 am ferry back to Port Townsend about 12:15 pm. Bring lots of warm clothes, comfortable walking shoes (walk is about 1.5 to 2 miles). Also bring a packable lunch, snacks, water and binoculars. The leader will bring spotting scope. Please RSVP in case of unfavorable weather, unless you want to do the trip by yourself. The field trip will be canceled due to high wind warnings or heavy rain warnings.

In case of unfavorable weather prediction we may do a walk along the PT waterfront and/or the Larry Scott Trail west of the PT Boat Haven. RSVP 385-0307 or email b1rdbrush@gmail.com.

Right: Short-eared Owl with vole, under attack by a Harrier. Skagit County, Sammish Flats. See it in living color on the 1 March field trip. Photo courtesy David Gluckman.



Saturday, 14 February 2015: Cape George section - Larry Scott Trail (LST)

Meet at the Larry Scott Trail - Cape George road parking lot at 10 am for a 2.5 - 3 mile round trip walk along a moderately easy trail through Douglas Fir, some open horse pastures, across some private access roads and over a small hill looking for forest birds.

From Hwy 20 intersection with Mill Road: West onto Discovery Road and left again for 0.6 mile to Cape George Road, right about a mile will be Nelson Landing Road on the left, stay on Cape George Road for another 0.6 mile to entrance of Larry Scott Trail parking lot on the left.

Wear warm layers of clothing, gloves, hats, weatherproof shoes or boots. Bring binoculars, bird books and cameras. Carpoolers should meet at the Park & Ride across from Safeway by 9:45 am. Contact Paula Vanderheul for any questions (360-379-8564 or pvanderheul@gmail.com). <http://www.olympicdiscoverytrail.com> for trail maps provided courtesy of the Jefferson Trails Coalition.

Saturday, 1 March 2015: Annual Skagit Valley Trip

is limited to 12 people and 4 cars. We will depart and return from the Port Townsend Ferry. We'll look for Snow Geese, Swans and Raptors. Contact Trip Leader Dan Waggoner for details (danwags57@gmail.com or 360-301-1788).

AAS Membership Form 2015

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

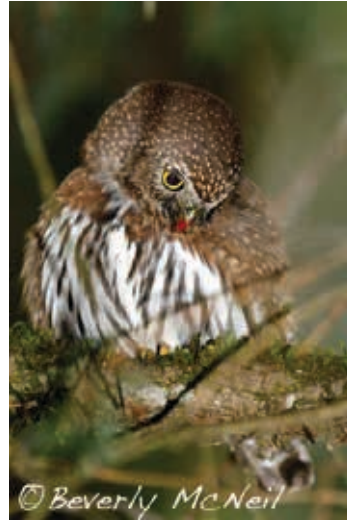
*Membership includes 6 issues of our newsletter per year and the right to vote in chapter elections.
 Chapter programs and field trips are free to the public. We always welcome donations!*



© Beverly McNeil



© Beverly McNeil



© Beverly McNeil

Top: Beverly McNeil captured this Northern Pygmy-owl mid-rodent (note red beak) for a triptych near Whistler, BC. False eye spots of the species are evident in far left picture.

Below: Karen Delorenzo's Scrub Jay was rendered in grayscale last issue; a little space on the color page allows a better hue.



© David Gluckman

Above: David Gluckman found this Barred Owl across from Laurel Grove Cemetery in PT in December 2014. For size comparison, the Northern Pygmy-owl (top row) weighs about 2.5 oz, while a Barred Owl can weigh 1.5 lb, almost a ten-fold difference in mass.



© Johanna King

Left: Johanna King's Red-legged Sereima appeared last issue in grayscale. All of her beautiful bird photos, including the Indigo Macaw (lower left) suffered from a misbehaving projector at her November presentation. Watch our Facebook page for an album of her photos soon.



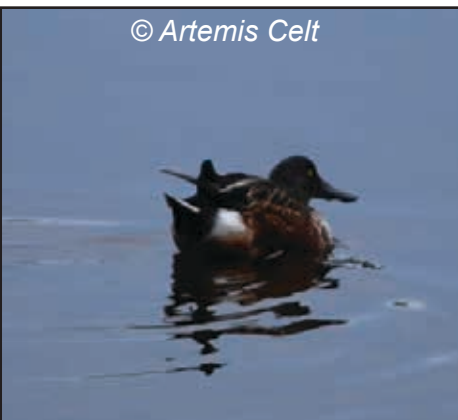
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© Karen DeLorenzo



© Karen DeLorenzo



© Artemis Celt



© James Curtis

Left: Northern Shoveler on Kah Tai Lagoon. The July 2012 AAS KTLNP Bird Survey lists Northern Shovelers as uncommon, seen primarily in spring and fall, but reported in all seasons at Kah Tai. Photo courtesy Artemis Celt.

Above: Black Turnstones in transit at Point Hudson. Port Townsend was #1 in the nation for Black Turnstones in the 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count. Photo courtesy James Curtis.

Banner
Design and Art by
Larry Eifert©



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Cackling Geese in flight at Kah Tai © Tom Butts

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2015 Dues are DUE

If you haven't paid yet, dues for 2015 are now due. Annual dues are \$20 per household. For those who are new members and joined in the last quarter of 2014, you can prorate for 2015 if you choose to do so. Our dues-paying members are what keep our chapter running, and your support of Admiralty Audubon is appreciated.

Education & Conservation Chairs

These important positions are still vacant and the folks on the Board are already wearing multiple hats and can't take on more tasks. If you have an interest in either of these roles for our small chapter, please consider stepping up. The level of engagement is flexible, depending on the time you have available to serve.