

Admiralty Audubon Pipings

AAS Field Trips for March & April 2015

Dungeness Wildlife Refuge Field Trip: Saturday, 14 March 2015

The Refuge, located at the end of Voice of America Road, Sequim Washington, is celebrating its 100th year since President Woodrow Wilson signed Executive Order 2123 which created the Dungeness Spit Reservation as a refuge preserve and breeding ground for native birds. For more information visit <http://www.dungeness100.com>.

We will carpool from the Park & Ride across from Safeway in Port Townsend. Meet there at 8 am. Wear sturdy shoes, layered warm clothing, hat, gloves, binoculars and spotting scope if you have one. Bring a sack lunch, water or another drink as it will be about a 5 hour plus day before returning home. It'll probably take about 45 minutes to drive there. The walk will start about 9 am. Participants are welcome to meet us at the refuge info kiosk/entrance station for the bird walk.

Our bird walk will start at the refuge information kiosk/entrance station. March 14 is one of the Saturday monthly free event days celebrating the first 100 years. Contact Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul at 360-379-8564 or pvanderheul@gmail.com

Larry Scott Trail Bird Walk: Saturday, 11 April 2015

Admiralty Audubon Society field trip bird walk on the Larry Scott Trail will take place at 10 am. Meet at the Milo Curry Trailhead parking lot (a fourth of a mile west of Four Corners Road off Discovery Road).

The spring migratory birds should be passing through the forest to nesting areas. We will visit a pond along Discovery Bay Road to view wintering water birds. It will be about a 3 mile walk round trip. For more information contact Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul at 360-379-8564 or pvanderheul@gmail.com

Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park Workparties (& more) March & April 2015

Sunday, 22 March 2015: 9 am - noon

Celebrate Spring! Remove invasive species! Pick up trash! Weed wrenches and trash bags will be provided. Dress for the weather. The white Chevy pickup with tools, sign in sheets, water, tea, treats, etc. will be parked near the Benedict Street entrance. For more information, phone 385-0307 or email b1rdbrush@gmail.com.

Earth Day/Arbor Day

As a part of our City's Earth Day/Arbor Day events, we will improve our urban forests with trash pick-up and/or invasives removal.

Saturday, 18 April 2015: 9 am - noon

Meet at Bishop Park entrance. Email admiraudub@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday, 19 April 2015: 9 am - noon

Meet near the bathrooms at Kah Tai. Phone 385-0307 or email b1rdbrush@gmail.com for more information.

Please Join or Renew

As discussed in 2014 at meetings and in newsletters, AAS has transitioned to an annual membership period from January 1 to December 31. This simplifies bookkeeping for our volunteers but more importantly provides the Board a better estimate of our budget for the coming year. If you have not paid dues in the last two months, it is very likely you are late. If you get a paper newsletter, your due date is shown on the upper part of the label. Electronic members will receive an email shortly if they have not paid 2015 dues. If you are a National Audubon member only, you can receive the electronic newsletter if you let us know that you want to, but AAS cannot send a paper copy unless you are an AAS member. We depend primarily on dues to cover liability insurance, room rental, newsletter and other costs. Please help keep Admiralty Audubon active.

Rick Jahnke,
Admiralty Audubon President



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Middle left: Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex includes Copalis, Quillayute Needles & Flattery Rocks NWRs, created in 1907 by Theodore Roosevelt as a seabird preserve with over 600 sea stacks, islands, rocks and reefs, and 120 miles of remote coastline.

Upper left: Fixed-wing 'Puma' drone used in National Wildlife Refuge surveys.

Upper right: A Fiery-billed Aracari from southern Costa Rica.

Lower right: A subset of the 21 Great Blue Herons observed on a small island at the southern end of Port Townsend Bay and photographed in a single image. There are 10 GBH visible in this photographic subset.



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AAS Programs March & April 2015

The public is invited: Port Townsend Community Center, Lawrence & Tyler

Thursday, 19 March 2015; 7 pm

Wildlife Response

To Unmanned Aircraft Systems During Refuge Wildlife Monitoring Efforts

Sue Thomas is the Wildlife Biologist for the Washington Maritime National Wildlife Refuge Complex (NWRC) with 18 years of experience in wildlife biology and a focus on Ornithology. Starting with the US Forest Service, she moved to the US Fish & Wildlife Service. She transferred to NWRC in 2009 where she conducts annual seabird colony counts within the Washington Islands NWRs; midwinter waterfowl and shorebird surveys on Dungeness NWR; and research and monitoring of seabirds on Protection Island and San Juan Islands NWRs.

Each year, use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS or 'drones') is increasing, but what are the consequences to wildlife? A pilot(less) project on closed Refuge islands along the outer coast of Washington assessed the level of disturbance to seabirds and marine mammals. Additional objectives included assessing whether UAS can be used in place of traditional aircraft during annual aerial surveys and assessing photo quality. Results from test flights of two different types of units will be presented, including a fixed wing "Puma" (p. 2) and a rotary blade "Quadcopter" model (photo above), both owned and operated by NOAA.



Top: a rotary-blade 'Quadcopter' used in wildlife surveys. Bottom: Hummingbirds in profile, Costa Rica.

Thursday, 16 April 2015; 7 pm

Birding and More in Costa Rica: Pura Vida ('pure life')

Beverly McNeil and Ed Robeau will present a show of Costa Rica nature from their 5 week trip together and Bev's 2 week solo trip. Costa Rica has approximately 800 species of birds identified in their small country, along with the other amazing flora and fauna rarely seen elsewhere.

Hiking and nature photography are Bev's biggest passions, with her favorite subject being birds. She is a self taught photographer which began about 15 years ago while hiking with her mother in Colorado photographing wildflowers; the passion "blossomed" from there on.

She very rarely uses flash and most of her animal images are from handheld and manual focusing using a lens with image stabilization. When birding in Costa Rica she is out her cabin door by 5:30 every morning and hikes 5 to 8 miles to seek and experience as much as possible and every day receives overwhelming rewards. Bev and Ed also have a Certified Wildlife Habitat in their backyard here in Port Townsend.

Birds are a very important part of the natural world for many reasons and the sight of their beauty and behavior keeps Bev and Ed awestruck. Costa Rica keeps calling them back, and Bev just returned in February from another 3 week solo photo adventure...so stay tuned for Costa Rica, Part Two.

Rosemary Sikes

Admiralty Audubon Programs Chair

AAS Field Trip Reports

24 January 2015: Port Townsend to Whidbey/ Fort Casey and back - With moderate temperature and moderate wind we birded out front across and back from PT to Whidbey. We eight had a pleasant walk over to the shore of north-west Crockett Lake. Several hundred waterfowl were feeding and resting on the 'lake', mostly American Wigeon but also many Scaup. Paula said they were Greater Scaup. We also saw beautiful pairs of Pintail and the famous Ruddy Ducks. A handsome male Northern Harrier sailed close by searching the marsh vegetation. There were several adult and juvenile Bald Eagles landed and soaring above. There were woodland songbirds in the forest on our way to the grass-brushland on the bluffs and the area of the gun emplacements. We watched a juvenile Bald Eagle follow a controlled model glider as it looped around just above the top of the bluff. Taking the trail down to the campground we watched a flock of White-crowned and Golden Crown Sparrows feeding. Here we had some lunch before catching the ferry back to PT. We saw Harbor Porpoise and Steller's Sealion. Also seen were Brant, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemots, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Pacific Loons. Along the bluff near the Post Office a Common Raven and a Peregrine Falcon were jousting until the raven flew into a hole in the bluff ending the show. We saw at least 49 species and a good spectrum of our winter bird groups. *Trip Leader Ron Sikes*

14 February 2015: Larry Scott Trail - Cape George Trail Head to mile post 6 and back
 Nine birders joined this beautiful morning finding 24 species of birds, budding spring native plants, some rough skin newts that were photographed by many. The following list of our Larry Scott Trail birds was submitted by Wendy Feltham to the Great Backyard Bird Count that is going on this weekend thru Feb. 16. Canada Goose 1; American Wigeon 10; Mallard 25; Green-winged Teal 13; Bald Eagle 4; Anna's Hummingbird 1; Northern Flicker 8; Hutton's Vireo 4; Common Raven 2; Black-capped Chickadee 6; Chestnut-backed Chickadee 4; Red-breasted Nuthatch 1; Pacific Wren 2; Bewick's Wren 2; Golden-crowned Kinglet 3; American Robin 11; European Starling 8; Spotted Towhee 2; Fox Sparrow 1; Song Sparrow 1; Golden-crowned Sparrow 5; Dark-eyed Junco 6; House Finch 6; Red Crossbill 9. *Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul*

28 February 2015: Skagit County - Because of last minute cancellations, we had a small group of five birders heading out on our annual Skagit trip. We bravely faced a beautiful day of sun, warmth and light winds. Early morning we found a flock of about 2500 Snow Geese, including one dark phase. Flocks of Snow Geese wintering in other parts of the state have been reported because of limited crops of corn in the Skagit areas. One of our trip objectives was to learn how to separate Tundra and Trumpeter Swans.

[cont. on page 5]

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!*

[cont. from page 4]

We started the day by examining stuffed swans at the Breazeale Interpretive Center. Then by luck, we got close enough to some flocks that allowed us to get great looks at the heads of the birds. Tundras have smaller bills with a small yellow patch in front of the eye. Trumpeters have a Canvasback-shaped head with a red grin near the base of the bill. Birds of prey are always a highlight of a Skagit winter trip. Lots of Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, Bald Eagles and Northern Harriers. The Harriers gave us close fly-bys of both brown females and gray males. Most of us got looks at a Northern Shrike. The song of Western Meadowlarks hinted that spring is nearby. *Trip Leader Dan Waggoner.*



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Above: Kah Tai bridge in January light, showing one of the three Aldo Leopold-style benches that AAS contributed to Kah Tai late last year. The benches were built by the PT high school shop class. Middle: Puget SoundCorps crew pulling invasive Spurge Laurel at Kah Tai in February. I-r: Bonnie Reed, Lauren Kemper, Jessey Waters, Selene Convy, and Gabriela Andrews. Not shown - crew leader John Longworth. See story on page 6. Bottom: Spurge Laurel removed along lagoon trail. Yardstick to right for size comparison. Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*) is a listed invasive that many people still plant in their gardens.

Above: A hovering Short-eared Owl (top), a Rough-legged Hawk (middle); and Snow Geese, all in Skagit County.

Banner
Design and Art by
Larry Eifert©



**DUES
ARE
DUE!**

Admiralty Audubon Society PO Box 666 Port Townsend WA 98368



Short-eared Owls sparring © David Gluckman

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Puget SoundCorps

Port Townsend parks were the fortunate recipients of a month of crew effort courtesy of our TreeCity status and DNR's Urban Forestry Restoration Project. A crew of six dedicated Puget SoundCorps (WA Conservation Corps) members removed invasives, focusing on English Ivy at Sather Woods and Haller Fountain, and Spurge Laurel at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Jefferson County reported 109 species, plus a Harrier that didn't get entered due to difficulty accessing the GBBC website. Species count put us in the top 10 counties in the state. We submitted 49 checklists. Our county hotspots were Gardiner Beach (49 spp.) followed by Point Wilson (32 spp.), Fort Flagler (28 spp.) and Kah Tai (25 spp.).