

## **Admiralty Audubon Pipings**

### **In Memoriam**

#### **Gabriel E. Ornelas, 1938-2017**

Gabe and Robin Ornelas arrived in Port Townsend in 1996 after Gabe's retirement from a career of public service with the Marine Corps Military Police, NY/NJ Port Authority Police, and ultimately in the Los Angeles Police Department for 31.5 years. Gabe didn't lose a step in retirement; he and Robin continued to exemplify public service, with the North Olympic Salmon Coalition, the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, Jefferson Land Trust, Jefferson County Historical Society, and numerous other recipients of their volunteer efforts.

Gabe was a dedicated birder. He and Robin often spent winter months exploring the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail and many birding hotspots in Arizona. Although Robin spearheaded the successful fundraising effort to honor Admiralty Audubon's founder Eleanor Stoppes and the Protection Island story with a Tony Angell sculpture of courting Pigeon Guillemots, we can be sure that Gabe supported her efforts wholeheartedly. Robin negotiated some ideal nesting habitat for those guillemots, where they court on a basalt pedestal in front of the Northwest Maritime Center.

'Gabe and Robin' were one word to many of us, 'Gabe-n-Robin', so much a partnership of love and respect that it will be difficult to imagine it any other way. If you saw Robin in her Victorian best at the Museum, you knew that dapper tophat was right behind her. If Gabe was counting salmon for NOSC, you knew she was working right next to him. Gabe always said that Robin was the best partner a cop could ever have.

Gabe died of pneumonia on January 8, 2017. Robin suggests that if you want to honor Gabe's life in a way he would appreciate, donations can be made in his name to Admiralty Audubon. A celebration of Gabe's life will be held at the Northwest Maritime Center on May 13, 2017 at 4 pm.

### **AAS Field Trips**

#### **for March & April 2017**

##### ***Saturday, 18 March 2017 - South County***

We will meet at the small park and ride at the intersection of Center Valley Road and Highway 104 at 7:30 am. There will be stops at Tarboo Valley, Quilcene Bay, Mount Walker (if the road is open), Dosewallips State Park, Duckabush River and Lake Leland. Bring a lunch or snack food. Dress for the weather. Please email a confirmation in case of cancellation. Trip Leader Dan Waggoner: [danwags57@gmail.com](mailto:danwags57@gmail.com).

##### ***Saturday, 25 March 2017 - Spring Migration at Fort Flagler***

We will meet at the sewage pond parking lot at 9 am to walk around the pond and down to the beach looking for shorebirds and waterfowl, then drive to the campground road out to the RV camping area to walk the Spit between Kilisut Harbor and Port Townsend Bay. Those interested in carpooling from Port Townsend should meet at the Haines Place Park & Ride near Safeway by 8:30 am. 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. Bring your binoculars, spotting scope, field guides and dress in warm layers, hats, gloves, and hiking boots for comfort. Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader: 360-379-8564 or [pvanderheul@gmail.com](mailto:pvanderheul@gmail.com). A Discover Pass is required.

##### ***Friday, 7 April 2017 - Fort Flagler area***

To carpool, let's meet at Haines Place Park & Ride at 7:30 am. If not carpooling, then meet us at Fort Flagler at the parking lot at the campground near the spit where the Brants hang out at about 8:00 am. There are other nearby trails to explore as well. Let's plan on at least 2 to 3 hours and bring raingear, snacks, water and binoculars. I don't have a scope so if someone wants to bring one, that would be welcome. A group no larger than six people would be ideal. Contact Trip Leader Bev McNeil for questions at 360-385-9730.



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Clockwise from upper left:  
Trumpeter Swans and a Bald Eagle, Skagit County, February 2017;



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Vermillion Flycatcher, Big Bend, Texas, 2012;

White-necked Jacobin Hummingbird male, January 2017, Costa Rica;

Great Antshrike female, February 2016, Costa Rica;

Atlantic Puffins, Iceland, June 2016;

Sunbittern displaying near a trail in Costa Rica, January 2017.



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## **AAS Community Programs March & April 2017, 7:00 pm**

*the public is invited;*  
**PT Community Center, Lawrence & Tyler  
Costa Rica, Revisited**

**16 March 2017**

Beverly McNeil is pleased to present a show of her 2016 Costa Rica photographic adventure with intimate images of varied species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. These images were captured while hiking through the jungles of three different micro climates over a period of three and a half weeks. She is anxious to share the beauty of Costa Rica's Pura Vida with you. You can also see more of her nature photography at the Port Townsend Gallery at 715 Water Street.

## **Iceland Birding Adventures**

**20 April 2017**

(Due to an unforeseen scheduling conflict, Johanna King's Iceland presentation was postponed in January and David Gluckman stepped up with a wonderful presentation in its place. Johanna will bring us her Iceland adventure in April. Please see the January newsletter for a more complete description of her presentation.)

Early last June, Johanna had the opportunity to join a small birding group sponsored by Wildlife Iceland. In all, 70 species were seen; of those, about half were familiar ones like Horned Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneyes, and Harlequin Ducks. Less familiar ones included the fabulous Gyr Falcon, the Barnacle Goose, and the Eurasian Oystercatcher. Most birds were in breeding plumage, and were courting, sitting on eggs, or already tending chicks.

Special highlights included seeing hundreds of Northern Fulmars on one side of a small boat and humpback whales on the other, looking at many thousands of nesting Northern Gannets, auks of various species, and Black-legged Kittiwakes on the Langanes Peninsula, and seeing a Rock Ptarmigan in the midst of changing from winter to summer plumage.

*Rosemary Sikes*  
AAS Programs Chair

## **AAS Kah Tai Workparties March & April 2017**

**Sundays, 19 March & 23 April, 9 to noon:**

We will be removing invasive species and picking up garbage at our March and April workparties at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park, but you get to choose: You can pull Scot's Broom, English Holly or that ever-popular aromatic Spurge Laurel or you can help with the exciting trash pickup!

The focus on holly and spurge laurel in the next two workparties is our annual commitment to three years of maintenance and monitoring of the areas that were tackled as a part of the major effort at Kah Tai by the Urban Forestry Restoration Project's (UFRP) work crews that have removed invasives at Kah Tai in February 2015 and 2016.

Park in the Chase Bank parking lot and look for the white pickup near the closest Audubon (green wooden) bench to the bank. We will provide Scot's Broom pullers and we have five trash grabbers. Please bring work gloves & trash grabbers if you have them. Weed wrenches and refreshments (tea and snacks) will be provided. Information - call 360-385-0307 or email [ptrose53@gmail.com](mailto:ptrose53@gmail.com).

## **Duck Heaven Update**

The upper half acre of the property on the northeast perimeter of Kah Tai is now cleared of invasive blackberries and is surrounded by deer fence, in anticipation of the planting of a Garry Oak grove, along with a variety of appropriate and compatible native understory plants. As soon as the City installs a requested water line for irrigation, we will be able to start planting.

This spring, an Urban Forestry Restoration Project crew will tackle the huge Scot's broom 'trees' growing in the adjacent Decatur public right of way. Once those are removed, we hope to get permission from the City to plant Shore Pine and other deer-resistant natives along the Decatur right of way. The UFRP is a DNR initiative that employs Washington Conservation Corps (Americorps) crews to restore urban forests and watersheds.

### Thanks from Port Orchard

At our October 2016 community meeting, we shared a letter from a 9 year-old Port Orchard bird enthusiast named William, who asked for supplies and tools to help his siblings and cousins learn to identify birds. We were fortunate to have eight fine birding guides just donated to our chapter, so we sent them to William to share with his siblings and cousins.

We received a thank you note:

Dear Admiralty Audubon,

Thank you! We received the bird identification books, maps, bird checklists and brochures. We will learn a lot from these materials.

Sincerely, William

Extra-special is that the thank you note came in a card with a chickadee drawn by William's sister Tabatha.



### Christmas Bird Count Summary

Our Count Circle found 116 species on count day, 3 more count week. We counted more than 19,000 birds, and most amazing of all, we had more than 60 participants!

### Field Trip Report

#### Fort Casey, Whidbey Island, 11 February 2017:

Our group of 15 people had favorable weather with sun and light wind. We enjoyed seeing about 44 species including 15 waterfowl species at Crockett Lake. Among these beautiful ducks was the famous Ruddy Duck. In the Straits some notable sightings were a Brandt's Cormorant and four Western Grebe. The raptors seen included a Peregrine Falcon, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harriers, and several teenage and adult Bald Eagles. Looking west from the ferry parking lot you can see an eagle nest in the tallest Douglas Fir on the horizon. Trip Leader Ron Sikes.

### Training Day at Kah Tai

We were planting Red-flowering Currant and Mahonia along the path between the lagoon and the small pond when a large flock (at least 200) of Northern Shovelers startled into flight from the lagoon. Two Bald Eagles, one adult and one juvenile, were hunting on the lagoon. The adult circled higher and remained aloft while the juvenile made numerous unsuccessful passes over the lagoon chasing the airborne Shovelers back and forth perhaps a dozen times.

We appeared to be witnesses to a training exercise for the juvenile eagle. Also witnessing were small flocks of Ruddy Ducks and Buffleheads, who remained very still on the lagoon surface, hoping not to be noticed, perhaps. It was Great Backyard Bird Count time, but we were all so enthused, we forgot to count!

AAS Membership Form 2017  
<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!*

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clockwise from upper left:  
 Brant taking flight at Three Crabs, Clallam County, February 2017;  
 Two photos, Short-eared Owls, Eide Road, Skagit Wildlife Area, 2017;  
 Columbian Ground Squirrel, Willamette Falls, 2016;  
 Dunlin at Three Crabs, February 2017;  
 White-faced Ibis, Tule Lake Refuge, California, May 2015;  
 Two American Avocets at Tule Lake Refuge, California, May 2015.

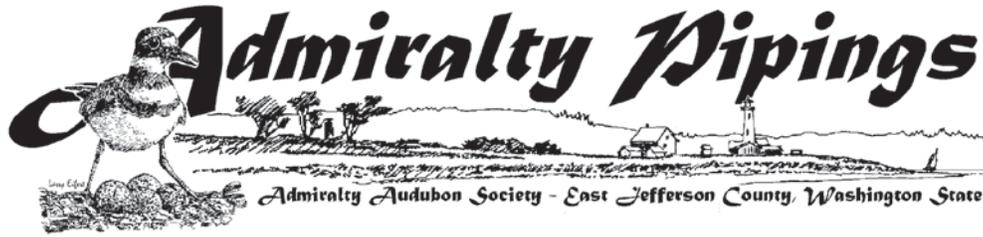


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Long-tailed Tyrant in flight, Costa Rica, January 2017.

## Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

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## Aloura's Art



Aloura Remy recently offered her artwork for sale at an Admiralty Audubon community meeting and donated half the proceeds to the chapter. This talented young person would like to continue to support the chapter with half the proceeds from sales of her artwork. You can help her accomplish her goal (and help our chapter) by visiting her website at <http://alourasart.com>.

