

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 30 No. 5

MAY FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills

About the field trips

Beginning birders and their friends are always welcome on Skagit Audubon field trips. Membership in Skagit Audubon is encouraged but not required for participation. Please be prepared for the weather with suitable clothing, and bring field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes. Carpool whenever possible and contribute to the driver's expense. Watch the email reminders for the latest information, including any changes and/or additions to the field trip schedule. To be added to the email distribution list contact Libby Mills: libbymills@gmail.com

If you plan to join a field trip some place other than the described starting point, call the trip leader the day before to ensure a successful rendezvous. Trip plans may change.

Saturday, May 7 Kiket Island, Kukutali Reserve 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Skagit Audubon will have another chance to visit the most recent addition to the State Park around Deception Pass. Accompanied by State Park Ranger Jack Harrt, we'll enjoy birds, forest flora, and walk the length of the reserve currently open to the public. The trip is limited to 12 people at a time. We will run two 2½ hour trips back to back. The first will leave the meeting place in the Swinomish tribal casino parking lot **across the street from the gas station** in the State Park's 12-

**Kiket Island and other Field Trips
continued on page 5**

MAY MEETING AND PROGRAM

Saving Pelican 895

Directed by Taylor Brodsky

Tuesday, May 10, 2011
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Center
10433 Bayview-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, Washington



Brown Pelican

Audubon worked with HBO on the release of this exciting new documentary about bird rescue efforts during and after the Gulf oil spill that began April 20, 2010. *Saving Pelican 895* covers the amazing work done during the BP disaster by dedicated wildlife professionals and volunteers to save birds in the wake of this environmental catastrophe.

The Brown Pelican had just emerged from 45 years on the endangered species list, only to be imperiled by the oil spill just 5 months later. This DVD documents efforts to save the 895th surviving oiled Brown Pelican in Louisiana. Included are behind-the-scenes views of the bird rescue, recovery, rehabilitation and release efforts in which Audubon and many others were involved.

More than 8,000 birds were collected during the BP oil spill. Rescuers were able to return 1,246 birds to the wild. The rescue successes documented here are an inspiring example of the impact that the hard work of a small group of people can have on a large scale event.



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Three Northern Pintails
Photo by Joe Halton

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTIONS

General membership meetings of the Skagit Audubon Society are held at the Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 1043 Bayview-Edison Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA—7:00 PM Social/ 7:30 PM Program—on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June. The board of directors meets at the same location at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month.

Skagit Audubon Society (SAS) membership provides a local chapter affiliation and newsletter, **The Flyer**, for individuals who want all their funds to benefit their local chapter. Newsletters from additional chapters can be sought by contacting their websites and membership chairs from links at www.audubon.org/states/wa/. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** please use the form below.

National Audubon Society (NAS) membership is separate from SAS membership and includes Audubon magazine. National Audubon membership does not provide Skagit Audubon membership; however, NAS will assign you an affiliation with a local chapter. To change your chapter assignment call 800-274-4201. **To join National Audubon Society** use the form below.

Skagit Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

Skagit Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership in the Skagit Audubon Society includes 10 issues of our newsletter, *The Skagit Flyer*, available on our website . Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years

I wish to donate \$ _____ to Skagit Audubon Society.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____ Email _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

Skagit Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1101
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1101

Please do not share my personal information with National Audubon Society. (It is the policy of SAS not to share information with any other groups.)

Using the form below to initially join the **National Audubon Society** will ensure that the **Skagit Audubon** chapter receives a cost share to support local programs.

National Audubon Society Membership Form

Annual membership to the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to *Audubon* magazine. Membership includes all members of your household.

\$20 for one-year introductory membership with one chapter affiliation

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Telephone No. _____

Clip form/Mail to/Payable to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center Y21
P.O. Box 422246-2246
Palm Coast, FL 32142

www.audubon.org

For members receiving a paper copy of The Skagit Flyer, the mailing label includes your membership expiration date in the upper right corner. If that date is highlighted in orange it is a reminder that your membership is about to or has expired. All other members will receive an email notice when their membership is about to expire. The Skagit Flyer is published monthly from September through June. Unsolicited material for the next month's Flyer should be sent to the editor by the third Saturday of the current month. For questions or problems about your Skagit Flyer subscription, contact membership chair: Sheila Pera, skagitmembers@gmail.com



Go Wild, Go Birding

Go Wild, Go Birding! is the **International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) 2011** theme, chosen to highlight a focus on reaching out to involve youth, their families, and adults in learning about birds, birdwatching, and bird conservation and having fun doing it!

PRESIDENT'S MAY MESSAGE:

By **Tim Manns**

In 1993 the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center established the tradition of celebrating International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) the second Saturday of May. Across the U.S. and in Mexico and Canada, organizations and agencies hold events and sponsor activities encouraging people to learn about migratory birds and their dependence on widely dispersed habitats. Marking this special day has evolved into activities throughout the year organized by a nonprofit group devoted to coordinating IMBD across the Western Hemisphere. It's called Environment for the Americas and you can read all about it and IMBD events at <http://www.birdday.org/>.

The way Skagit Audubon marks International Migratory Bird Day is by doing a county-wide bird count. It is a way of taking the pulse of the migration each year. This is our local continuation of the former North American Migration Count, which many birding groups still do across the U.S. Skagit Audubon Member, Gary Bletsch, kindly organizes the teams, which will each focus on a part of Skagit County. To participate on Saturday, May 14th, contact Gary: garybletsch@yahoo.com

I was thinking about this essay in March around the time NPR aired a short item on National Audubon's quest to interest younger people in birding. For so many, interest in birds has led to an engaging lifetime pursuit and also a broader interest in and concern for the environment and for conservation in general.

Each of us has a story about how we became interested in birds, and for many of us it dates back to

childhood. My story has to do with Mrs. McCarthy, my second grade teacher, and then later, college classmates who invited me along on an independent study they were doing at a local cemetery famous as a migratory bird stopover. As I looked at the IMBD website today and then at the sites for the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/scbi/migratorybirds/default.cfm>) and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/page.aspx?pid=1673>), I found they all have interesting information about migration but also lots of material and activities for children to learn about birds and bird migration. I believe we have more opportunities than we realize to share our interest in birds with children and other young people. Whether it's our own children, grandchildren, or neighbours, school classes, scouts, or other youth groups, there are ready avenues for us to share our enthusiasm and knowledge. Those websites are just a few of the places where information and educational activities are available for you to use or to suggest to others. Here's a simple way to start: bring new, potential birders along on a Skagit Audubon field trip or volunteer to lead one yourself that's especially tailored for kids. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day on May 14th by bringing a young friend along who you'd like to introduce to the world of birds and the wonder of migration. You'll be fostering the next generation of conservationists.

Get Started.....Go Birding!



This column reports submitted sightings. Any rare sightings should be accompanied by detailed written documentation and if possible a photograph. A second person to verify rare sightings is extremely helpful. Do not hesitate to call any observer to help document unusual sightings. Also do not hesitate to call if you need clarification on locations.

Please submit your sightings to **Pam Pritzl**
ppritzl@frontier.com or 360-387-7024.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Goose 1 on Samish Flats on 4-8-11 (GB)

Snow Goose 2 blue geese on Fir Island on 3-27-11 (RM); 2000 on Fir Island on 4-8-11 (GB); 2 blue geese on Fir Island on 4-9-11 (RM)

Cackling Goose 1 on Minkler Flats on 3-27-11 (GB)

Trumpeter Swan 11 on Minkler Flats on 3-27-11 (GB)

Tundra Swan 33 on Samish Flats on 4-08-11 (GB)

Wood Duck 3 near Lyman on 3-19 (GB); at Skagit Game Range on 4-8-11 (JB, MB)

Eurasian Wigeon 1 at Skagit Game Range on 4-8-11 (GB)

Barrow's Goldeneye 1 at Concrete on 3-26-11 (GB)

Ruddy Duck 2 on Judy Reservoir on 3-19-11 (GB)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ruffed Grouse 1 at Everett Lake on 3-26-11 (GB)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 1 at Skagit Game Range on 3-20-11 (RH)

RAPTORS

Bald Eagle 1 on nest at Skagit Game Range on 3-20-11 (RH)

SHOREBIRDS

Greater Yellowlegs 3 at Skagit Game Range on 3-20-11 (RH)

Black Turnstone 1 at March Point on 3-19-11 (GB)

Wilson's Snipe 1 at Padilla Bay on 4-8-11 (JB, MB) through 10/9 (RM), 1 continuing through at least 10/11 (MB)

JAEGERS, GULLS

Thayer's Gull 2 on Samish Flats on 3-27-11 (RM); 2 at Channel Drive on 3-27-11 (RM)

Western Gull 1 at March Point on 3-19-11 (GB)

Glaucous-winged Gull x Herring Gull 1 at Channel Drive on 3-27-11 (RM)

Glaucous Gull 2 at Channel Drive on 3-27-11 (RM)

OWLS

Northern Pygmy-Owl newly fledged in a fir tree along the tracks south of Larabee Park on 2-8/9/11(LMD)

Barred Owl 1 at Beaver Lake on 3-19-11 (GB)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Rufous Hummingbird 2 at the Skagit Game Range on 4-8-11 (GB)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker x Red-naped Sapsucker hybrid on Barnaby Slough on 3-23-11 (RM) photo

FLYCATCHERS

Say's Phoebe 1 at Rockport on 3-23-11 (RM); 1 at Marblemount boat launch on 3-26-11 (GB)

Black Phoebe 1 at Skagit Game Range on 3-19-11 (GB); 1 continues at Skagit Game Range (RM)

SHRIKES

Loggerhead Shrike 1 at base of Sauk Mountain on 3-26-11—fifth county record (GB); 1 at Rockport on 3-27-11 (RM); 1 at Concrete on 3-27-11 (MaB)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 near Minkler Lake on 3-27-11 (GB)

LARKS, SWALLOWS

Violet-green Swallow 2 at Lyman on 3-19-11 (GB)

WRENS

Marsh Wren many singing at Skagit Game Range on 3-20-11 (RM)

THRUSHES

Mountain Bluebird 4 at Corkindale on 3-23-11 (RM); 2 at Marblemount on 3-23-11 (RM); 8 at Concrete on 3-23-11 (RM); 11 at Marblemount on 3-23-11 (fide Paul Wegener); 1 at Corkindale on 3-26-11 (GB)

SPARROWS

Savannah Sparrow 1 east of Lyman on 4-2-11 (GB)

White-throated Sparrow 1 at Skagit Game Range on 4-8-11 (JB, MB); 1 at feeder east of Lyman throughout period (GB)

BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES

Red-winged Blackbird many at Skagit Game Range on 3-20-11 (RH)

Western Meadowlark 4 at Skagit Game Range on 3-19-11 (GB)

FINCHES, WEAVER FINCH

Purple Finch 3 at Marblemount on 3-26-11 (GB)

Red Crossbill continuing at feeder on Camano Island (PP)

American Goldfinch 1 at feeder east of Lyman on 4-9-11 (GB)

Bobcat 1 at Marblemount boat launch on 3-26-11 (GB)

(JB) Joan Bird; (MaB) Matt Bartels; (MB) Mitch Blanton; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (LMD) Lee and Mary Sue Dallas; (RH) Ramona Hammerly; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (PP) Pam Pritzl



Kiket Island and other Field Trips continued from Page 1

passenger van at 8:00 a.m. The second group will leave at 10:20 a.m. and return at 1:00 p.m. Please sign up for this free trip with Libby Mills, libbymills@gmail.com or call: 360-757-4139 (home) or 360 -708-6975 (cell). This will be first come-first-served beginning with the wait list from our February trip. You must re-contact Libby if you are interested in going on our spring trip. Your space will be reconfirmed by email or phone, as required.

**Saturday, May 14
Spring Migratory Bird Count**

Gary Bletsch and Skagit Audubon Society
Saturday, May 14, 2011, is the date set aside for the North American Migration Count. Once again, Skagit County will be one of the three counties in our state which continues to participate.

If you would like to be a part of this count, please contact Gary Bletsch at: garybletsch@yahoo.com for further information.

**Saturday, May 21
Seattle City Light Sites in Skagit Valley
8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Seattle City Light, the public utility which owns and operates the hydropower project on the Skagit River, also buys and protects conservation lands in the Skagit Valley. Seattle City Light ecologists, Ron Tressler and Anna Kopitov, will co-lead this trip to Seattle City Light's property in the Barnaby Slough vicinity and other sites if time permits. We'll visit a good mix of habitats (open water, wetlands, riparian areas, coniferous forest, ...) where we should see a variety of resident and migratory birds. This trip will also be a great opportunity to learn about the location of City Light properties in the Skagit where birders are welcome. Meet in the parking lot of the National Park Service/U.S. Forest Service office in Sedro-Woolley (810 State Route 20 just before Highway 9 North) at 8:00 AM to arrange carpools. Bring a lunch and birding gear, and dress for the weather, remembering it is often wetter upriver. Leaders: Ron Tressler (Ron.Tressler@seattle.gov, 206-386-4506), Anna Kopitov, and Tim Manns (bctm@fidalgo.net, 360-336-8753).



Greater Yellowlegs
Photo by Joe Halton



Ring-necked Duck
Photo by Joe Halton

**Tuesday, May 31
Guemes mountain, Spring Birds, and Wildflowers
8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Meet at the Guemes Ferry parking area for carpooling to Guemes Island. We will catch the 8:30a.m. ferry. The field trip will take about two hours, but we'll go at a leisurely pace since the first return ferry isn't until 1:00. Return: on your own according to the wishes of your carpool; include time to get your car in line. At publication of this newsletter the Guemes Island car ferry is being maintained and not in service. It is scheduled to run again by May 22. Check in with trip leaders in late May if you plan to attend.

Bring: Lunch and water, or enjoy lunch at Anderson's store near the Guemes ferry.
Join Skagit Land Trust Guemes Mountain Stewards, Ed and Carolyn Gastelum, and Libby Mills to hike the new trail to the top of Guemes Mountain. Co-Land Stewards and Guemes residents, Marianne Kooiman and Joost Businger, will meet us at the top to share their very personal story of leadership in helping the residents of Guemes Island protect this unique mountain bald habitat with 360 degree views to the Olympics, Mt. Baker, and the islands. Michael Kirschenbaum, SLT Stewardship Director, will join us to give a history on the successful partnering that led to the preservation of the Guemes Mountain Conservation Area.



Song Sparrow
Photo by Joe Halton

Blrds pictured on this page were spotted on the April 16TH field trip to Birch Bay, Semiahmoo, and Blaine. Field Trip Leaders: Joan Bird & Andrea Warner. Photos are by Joe Halton taken at different times & places.



Hikes in May will take us from the North Cascades National Park to the shores of Puget Sound. As usual, weather, logging, construction or other unexpected conditions might cause changes or cancellations in the following hikes. Call JOAN MELCHER 360-424-0407 or email at jdmelcher@comcast.net for information on or questions about the following. All the hikes are on Wednesdays. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times.

MAY 4 THUNDER CREEK

Hike up to 12 miles round trip, up to 1,000 ft. total elevation gain on one of the best forest hikes in the North Cascades. Meet at 7:30 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. Return time is 3:30 p.m.

MAY 11 WASHINGTON PARK, HEART LAKE, AND LAKE ERIE

Terry Slotemaker, 360-293-6514, will lead us on these two hikes scheduled in the spring to take advantage of wild flowers in bloom. Meet at 9 a.m. in **LOT A** at Washington Park in Anacortes. To get to Lot A turn right just at the park entrance. The sign says, "Picnic Area" with an arrow pointing to the right. A child's play area is close to this large parking lot. When you return to your car, you may leave for the Heart Lake hike. To get to Heart Lake, drive toward Anacortes from Washington Park. Turn right on D Avenue. Then turn left onto 32nd Street. Then turn right on H Avenue, which will lead you to the Heart Lake Road and the parking lot.

MAY 18 EBEBY'S LANDING AND THE KETTLES AT FORT EBEBY STATE PARK

Today's hike will be done in two sections. Each car of hikers will be its own group so plan on riding with others who will do the same hike as you. The first hike will be a 3.6 mile loop hike up the bluff, down to the beach, and back to the cars. Low tide

Of -3 feet about noon. One can add 2 miles to this hike by walking to the cemetery and back. The next hike will be a self-guided hike on the Kettles trails near Fort Ebey State Park. Miles hiked here depend on the individual. There should be wild rhododendrons in bloom. Meet at 9 a.m. at the March Point Park-n-Ride. (At the stop light at the intersection of HWY 20 and the Christianson and March Point Roads, turn RIGHT and then an immediate RIGHT turn onto the frontage road and soon turn LEFT into the Park-n-Ride.) **OR** meet at Ebey's Landing at 9:45 a.m.

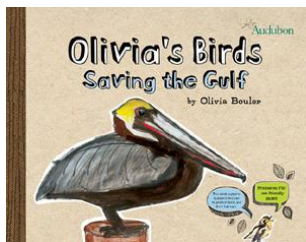
MAY 25 SKAGIT RIVER GORGE

The trail below the Ross Dam Trailhead to the base of Ross Dam is still closed due to a huge rock slide that occurred last year. Therefore this hike will begin and end near the North Cascade Institute above Diablo Dam. Hike 2.6 miles (about 800 ft total elevation gain) east to the Ross Dam View point near the power lines or 3.6 miles (about 1,600 ft total elevation gain) east to the Skagit River. There are great views of the Skagit River Gorge along the way. There should be wild flowers. Meet at 8:00 a.m. on the east side of the Sedro-Woolley Food Pavilion parking lot. Return to cars by 2:00 p.m.

JUNE 1 SAN JUAN ISLAND

Hike on trails at American Camp, Whale Watch Park/Limekiln State Park, and English Camp. Meet at 8:15 a.m. at March Point Park-n-Ride to pool rides. No ferry walk-ons as we will need cars on the island. We will take the 9:30 a.m. ferry from Anacortes, arriving in Friday Harbor at 10:35 a.m. Return ferry sailings are 4:15 and 6:25 p.m. Car pool according to return times. People staying on the island for dinner will take the 6:25 p.m. sailing back.

11 Year Old Writes Oil Spill Book



Olivia's Birds Saving the Gulf
Now available from Sterling Publishing

One 11 year-old girl can make a difference-as budding ornithologist and artist Olivia Bouler has proven, raising over \$175,000 for the Gulf oil spill recovery. Devastated by the disaster and eager to do her part, Olivia wrote a letter to Audubon, "11 years old and willing to help" offering her own bird paintings to raise contributions for Gulf recovery efforts. The idea took flight, and Olivia proceeded to send out over 500 paintings, many of which are captured in this lavish picture book that recaps her valiant campaign to save birds affected by the spill.

Written in her own words, this unique introduction to backyard and endangered birds features Olivia's hand-drawn illustrations, bird facts, and full-color photos celebrating Olivia's campaign. Olivia's Birds supports Audubon's conservation mission, including Gulf Coast cleanup efforts and is printed on FSC eco-friendly paper.

For ordering information please contact Rosalyn Garcia, Licensing Manager rgarcia@audubon.org



Great Backyard Bird Count Highlights

Taken from: Cornell Lab eNews

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/press/news-stories/2011summary>

Participants submitted more than 92,000 checklists to the GBBC this year--the third year in a row that checklists topped 90,000. New checklist records were set in 11 states and in 7 out of 13 Canadian provinces and territories, resulting in a new overall checklist record for Canada. Altogether, participants identified 596 species and 11.4 million bird observations. What follows is a look at some of the trends and more notable findings of this year's GBBC, including:

- **Number Crunch**

The most numerous bird counted in the 2011 GBBC was the European Starling—a species that was entirely absent from North America before the late 19th century. One hundred birds were introduced in New York's Central Park in 1890 and 1891. According to *The Birds of North America Online*, the descendants of these few birds now total more than 200 million and are distributed across the entire continent.

The American Robin was the second most numerous species reported this year with more than 800,000 reported from Florida—for the third year in a row, the site of a massive roost near St. Petersburg. Overall, GBBC participants made 1,044,346 observations of robins this year.

- **Increased reports of Evening Grosbeaks**

Although the colorful and gregarious Evening Grosbeak has been declining in overall numbers over the past 20 years, participants reported a surprising increase in the number of grosbeaks this year. The total number of observations for this species is the highest it has ever been during the GBBC, an increase that isn't simply attributable to greater GBBC participation. A closer look finds this upturn especially marked in the northwestern U.S. and in Canada. However, the Evening Grosbeak is also an irruptive species and this increase in reports may simply reflect that. We'll keep monitoring their numbers in future counts to see whether this is indicative of a long-term trend.

- **Are American Crows on the rebound?**

Over the years, we've kept a sharp eye on American Crow numbers during the GBBC. The population took a hard hit when the West Nile virus first found its way into North America in 1999. In the early years of the GBBC, American Crows were always the fourth or fifth most numerous species reported. But after the virus worked its way across the continent, crow numbers fell and were reflected in the GBBC. From 2003 onward, the American Crow never placed higher than the ninth or tenth most numerous species. 2011 marked a change. For the first time in eight years crows have moved up the list and are now at number seven among the most numerous species. Monitoring the crow count in the years ahead will tell us whether this is a one-year fluctuation or evidence of a true recovery for this species from the devastation of West Nile virus.

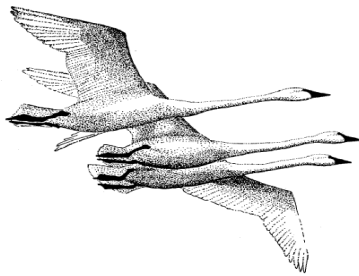
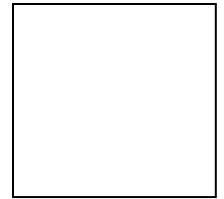
- **Eurasian Collared-Dove makes it to Alaska**

We pay special attention each year to reports of the Eurasian Collared-Dove, an invasive species that was introduced to North America via Florida in the 1980s. In 2011 the species continued its march across the continent, and this year marked the first GBBC report of Eurasian-Collared Dove in Alaska. That is the bird's most northerly reach to date, having moved into western Canada's provinces in recent years on its way north. In Canada, the Eurasian Collared-Dove was reported on 65 checklists this year compared to just 19 last year. The dove has expanded its range from 8 states in 1999 to 40 states and provinces in 2011. It's interesting that the species has made it all the way to Alaska but has yet to be reported anywhere in the Northeast.

And save the dates: the next GBBC is February 17-20, 2012!



SKAGIT AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1101
MOUNT VERNON WA 98273



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check your
address label
for membership
expiration date!

May 2011 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00	4 Hiking: Thunder Creek	5	6	7 Field Trip: Kiket Island, Kukuta;I Reserve
8	9	10 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	11 Hiking: Washington Park, Heart Lake & Lake Erie	12	13	14 Field Trip: Spring Mgratory Bird Count
15	16	17	18 Hiking: Ebey's Landing & the Kettles at Fort Ebey State Park	19	20	21 Field Trip: Seattle City Light Deadline SAS June Flyer
22	23	24	25 Hiking: Skagit River Gorge	26	27	28
29	30	31 Field Trip: Guemes Mountain	June 1 Hiking: San Juan Island	June 2	June 3	June 4

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org

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