

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 34 No.4

APRIL FIELD TRIPS

By Libby Mills

About the field trips

Beginning birders and 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 field trip 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, April 4

**Washington Park
west of Anacortes, WA**

8:300 a.m. to 12:00 or earlier

This bird walk will be geared to beginning birders, but those with more experience will find plenty to see as well. Being on a paved road (which is closed to

Field Trips continue on page 7

APRIL MEETING AND PROGRAM

Diking the Delta by Glen Alexander

Tuesday, April 14, 2015
7:00 Social; 7:30 Program
Padilla Bay Interpretive Ctr.
10441 Bayview-Edison Road
Mt. Vernon, Washington



Digging Drainage Ditch No.18
Near Edison, WA ~ Fall of 1910
Skagit County Historical Museum

In 1863 Samuel Calhoun stood on Pleasant Ridge and looked north across the pristine Skagit Delta. By 1900 almost all of the dikes we see today were completed and the marshes were drained and converted to prime farmland. It's hard to imagine how much work it took for those determined pioneers to complete such a task.

Today those dikes have such a profound influence on our culture, economy and geography. And, of course, habitat for birds. Glen "Alex" Alexander, Education Coordinator at Padilla Bay Reserve, will share some stories and photos to give us a glimpse of that story. We also welcome stories and pictures about the dikes from the audience.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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**Dark-eyed Junco
Slate-colored Race**
Photo by Ron Holmes

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 <http://wa.audubon.org/audubon-locations/>. **To join Skagit Audubon Society** 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 web site. Membership includes all members of your household.
\$20 one (1) year \$40 two (2) years

I wish to donate \$_____ to Skagit Audubon Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Tax #91-1207770

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: www.audubon.org or

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

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



SKAGIT AUDUBON APRIL CONSERVATION REPORT
By TIM MANNS, CONSERVATION CHAIR

When this issue of the *Flyer* appears, the Washington State Legislative session will have about 3 weeks to go, with the finish scheduled for April 26. On Audubon Advocacy Day (February 18) and throughout the session, Audubon Washington staff and chapter volunteers have been focusing on 3 legislative priorities: Governor Inslee's bill to levy a carbon tax on the state's largest emitters and to establish a carbon cap-and-trade system; a bill to improve the safety of oil transport by rail and on marine waters; and improving knowledge and management of the forage fish which are so important to declining marine birds. At this writing in the third week of March, all 3 bills are still in play.

For current information, go to: <http://wa.audubon.org/legislative-session-2015>

To get weekly updates, sign up for Audubon's WaGeneral listserv at:

<http://wa.audubon.org/communication-tools>

Particularly on the carbon and oil bills, Audubon Washington is working closely with Sound Action and the Environmental Priorities Coalition.

Here in Skagit County and nearby, your Audubon chapter has weighed in on a variety of issues since the last *Flyer*. Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) is embarking on projects at Leque Island near Stanwood and at Fir Island Farms/Hayton Snow Goose Reserve to restore estuary habitat important to salmon and other species but largely lost around Puget Sound. We support these projects because habitat restoration is part of Audubon's mission. At the same time, we look for ways to ensure that varied bird habitat is considered and, where possible, enhanced, and that the importance of access for wildlife watching (e.g. birding) is recognized and facilitated.

Skagit Audubon communicated with Washington State Parks about an unpublicized plan for forest thinning in Deception Pass and Dugualla State Parks. The agency is modifying its approach to provide public information about the perceived need for this project and give an opportunity for public input.

The appeal of Skagit County Planning & Development's determination that Shell's Crude-by-Rail East Gate project at March Point does not require a full environmental review was successful. The early March announcement of the County Hearing Examiner's decision was followed a bit later by Shell's announcement that it would in turn appeal, and then that it is suing both the Hearing Examiner and Skagit County over the Examiner's decision. Skagit Audubon has commented at every stage in the lengthy permitting for this project with an emphasis on the need for a careful and complete analysis to determine what would constitute adequate and effective mitigation for possible environmental effects (on Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, the giant March Point heronry, etc.) and potential impacts to human health and safety. The February hearing appeal happened even as a derailed oil train was burning in West Virginia followed by several more such derailments in the following weeks.

In late March, issues for Skagit Audubon have included opposing state legislation that would undercut WDFW's and Tribal collaborative work with local residents to manage elk-related problems in the Skagit Valley and Washington Department of Natural Resource's permitting of a timber harvest in an area of diverse wetlands and important habitat adjacent to Mount Vernon's Little Mountain Park.

!!! GOOD NEWS (So Far) REGARDING SAFE OIL TRANSPORT IN WASHINGTON STATE !!!

HB 1449, Oil Transport Bill, passed the State House floor vote March 5th! **Jennifer Syrowitz**, Washington State Audubon Chapter Conservation Manager, sends thanks to all who helped this happen. A few weeks ago I ran into our 40th District's Representative Jeff Morris (D) and was able to thank him personally for his part in passing this bill. Jeff Morris mentioned that the letters and other communications he receives from Washington State's Audubon Societies tend to be well thought out and meaningful. At this writing, the Oil Transport Bill is under consideration in the State Senate. – *Jackie Boss, Publications Chair, Skagit Audubon Society*



January 18 through March 18, 2015

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 at birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org or 360-387-7024.

WATERFOWL

Greater White-fronted Goose 2 on Minkler Flats on 1-24 (GB)

Snow Goose 1 "blue" goose on the Samish Flats on 2-16 and 3-4 (JB)



Wood Duck 2 at Milltown on 2-13 (GB); 2 pair at Gages Slough, Burlington, on 3-13 and 3-18 (RH)

Wood Duck
Photo by Ron Holmes

Eurasian Wigeon 10 at the West 90 on 2-20 (BK); 2 near Cockreham Island on 2-28 (GB); 9 on the Samish Flats on 3-17 (PP)

Canvasback 2 on Beaver Lake on 2-13 (GB); 1 on Beaver Lake on 2-17 (BK); 1 on Lake Erie on 3-7 (SAS)

Redhead 1 on Lake Erie on 1-25 (GB); 4 on Lake Erie on 3-7 (SAS)

Black Scoter 1 drake off March Point on 2-8 (GB)

Long-tailed Duck 33 at Samish Island Public Beach on 2-20 (BK)

GALLINACEOUS BIRDS

Ruffed Grouse 1 at Barnaby Slough on 3-7 (GB)

LOONS

Pacific Loon 80 on Utsalady Bay (Skagit Bay) on 2-17 (PP)

VULTURES

Turkey Vulture 1 at Butler Hill on 3-4 (RH); 4 flying over Mt. Erie on 3-7 (SAS); 1 near Green Road, Burlington on 3-8 (TM)

HAWKS and EAGLES

Red-tailed Hawk 1 light morph Harlan's on Samish Flats on 2-14, 3-7 and 3-13 (AW)

Rough-legged Hawk 1 dark morph male on Estes

Road on 2-14 (AW)

Golden Eagle 1 on Samish Flats on 2-21 (GB); 1 at the Samish T on 2-21 and 1 on Sullivan Rd on 3-7 (AW)

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, and ALLIES

Spotted Sandpiper 1 in La Conner on 3-10 (BK, KK)

Lesser Yellowlegs 1 appears to be wintering at the Skagit Game Range, seen on 2-28 and 3-8 (GB)
rare in winter

Marbled Godwit 1 at March Point on 3-14 (GB)

Long-billed Dowitcher 3 at Big Indian Slough on 3-14 (GB, originally found by KK)

ALCIDS

Rhinoceros Auklet 60 off Green Point, Washington Park, Anacortes, on 3-1 (GB)

GULLS and TERNS

Western Gull 3 at Jensen Access on 2-13 (GB)

Herring Gull 1 at Jensen Access on 2-13 (GB)

Thayer's Gull 1 at Burlington on 1-18, 2 on 2-5, and 1 on 2-7 (GB)

Glaucous Gull 1 at Burlington on 2-5 (GB)

PIGEONS and DOVES

Mourning Dove 54 off March Point on 2-8 (GB)

OWLS

Western Screech-Owl 1 in Hockson-Hoogdal area on 2-10 (GB)

Great Horned Owl 1 at Butler Hill on 3-19 (RH); 2 at the Skagit Game Range on 3-21 (SAS)

Northern Pygmy-Owl 1 at Rockport SP on 1-17 (GB)

Short-eared Owl 4 on Samish Flats on 2-23 (RH); 1 on Samish Flats on 3-12 (RH); 2 at the West 90 on 3-17 (PP)

HUMMINGBIRDS

Rufous Hummingbird 1 male at Camano Island home on 2-28 (PP)

FALCONS

American Kestrel 1 female at Butler Flats on 2-21 and 3-17 (RH)

Merlin 1 at North 90 on 3-7 (AW)

Peregrine Falcon 1 on Sunset Road on 3-7 (AW); 1 on Samish Island Road on 3-7 (AW); 1 on Sullivan Road on 3-17 (PP)

Skagit Audubon Field Notes is continued on page 5



Skagit Audubon Field Notes is continued from page 4

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Say's Phoebe 1 at Corkindale on 3-16 (GB); 2 near Marblemount on 3-18 (BK, KK)

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 at Channel Drive on 3-8 (KK)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Camano Island home from 1-29 to present (PP); 1 at Judy Reservoir on 2-13 (GB)

LARKS

Horned Lark 6 on Valley Road near LaConner on 3-21 (SAS)

SWALLOWS

Tree Swallow 50 at Lake McMurray on 2-22 (GB); 3 at Green Road Marsh on 3-8 (TM)

Violet-green Swallow 1 each at Clear Lake and Beaver Lake on 3-14 (GB)

Barn Swallow 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 1-25 (GB)

BUSHTITS



Bushtit pair at nest feeding young at the Skagit Game Range on 3-7 (KK)

Bushtit

Photo by Joe Halton

DIPPERS

American Dipper 2 at Pomona Grange County Park on 2-17 (BK)

THRUSHES

Mountain Bluebird 3 near Marblemount on 3-16 (GB); 2 near Marblemount on 3-18 (BK, KK)

WAXWINGS

Cedar Waxwing 39 on Lincoln Hill, Mount

Vernon on 3-12 (TM)

WOOD WARBLERS

Northern Waterthrush 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 1-25 and 2-13 (GB); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 2-7 and 2-24 (BK, KK)

Orange-crowned Warbler 1 in La Conner on 3-10 (BK, KK); 1 at suet feeder at home in Anacortes on 3-17 (JBo)

Yellow Warbler 1 male on suet in Burlington backyard on 3-18 (LE)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

White-throated Sparrow 1 in Sedro-Woolley on 2-5 (GB); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 2-16 (JB); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 2-24 (BK, KK)

Dark-eyed Junco 1 "slate-colored" male at Butler Hill on 3-12 (RH)

BLACKBIRDS and ORIOLES

Western Meadowlark 3 along Burmaster Road on 3-5 (BK)

Brown-headed Cowbird 1 male at Samish Flats on 3-12 (RH)

FINCHES and ALLIES

Red Crossbill flock feeding on Douglas fir cones, Goose Rock, Deception Pass SP on 2-15 (CEG); 4 pair regularly seen at Camano Island home during March (SRP)

Evening Grosbeak 15 at Butler Hill on 3-17 (RH)

(JB) Joan Bird; (JBo) Jackie Boss; (LE) Larry Edwards; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (CEG) Carolyn and Ed Gastellum; (RH) Ron Holmes; (BK) Bob Kuntz; (KK) Kraig Kemper; (TM) Tim Manns; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (SRP) Sheila and Ron Pera; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Society Field Trip; (AW) Andrea Warner

SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING ~ APRIL

BY JOAN MELCHER

April's hikes will range from Puget Sound to the Chuckanuts. Unexpected circumstances such as unforeseen trail problems, weather, logging, construction or road conditions may cause cancellations or changes in the following hikes. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times. All the hikes are on a Wednesday. Call if you have questions anytime up until 7:45 the morning of the hike. **Contact: Joan Melcher: 360-424-0407 or jdmelcher@comcast.net**

WED. – APRIL 1 – LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PRESERVE

This trail is on the east side of Lookout Mountain

above Lake Whatcom. It opened in 2013. This basic

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Skagit Audubon Hiking is continued from page 5

loop is 5.3 miles, which includes a side trail to a lookout. The elevation gain is 600 feet. Other options available include additional hiking above the Preserve and/or driving to and hiking the Stimpson Family Nature Preserve. The Preserve trailhead is located a mile or so south of the Stimpson Family Nature Reserve on the Lake Louise Road. Whatcom County hikers should drive directly to the trailhead. Other hikers meet at the Chuckanut Drive Park & Ride in Burlington at 8:30 a.m. These people will drive to the trailhead by way of the Alger-Caine Lake Road, the South Lake Whatcom Boulevard, and the Lake Louise Road. We will meet at the trailhead about 9 a.m. WTA bus service is available from Bellingham to the trailhead.

WED. – APRIL 8 – WASHINGTON PARK, HEART LAKE, & LAKE ERIE

Terry Slotemaker, 360-293-6514, or his designee, 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.

WED. – APRIL 15 – WALLACE FALLS

This hike is through forest and near spectacular waterfalls north of Gold Bar along the Stevens Pass Highway. **Meet at 8 a.m.** in the S.E. corner of the Mt. Vernon Safeway parking lot. Seattle, Snohomish County, and Camano Island hikers can go directly to the trailhead. Car pool according to your chosen option.

OPTION 1: This seven mile loop to the top falls has a 1,400 ft. elevation gain; **Return time is 2 p.m.**

OPTION 2: This is a 9.8 to 14 mile loop with a 1,800 ft. elevation gain to Wallace Lake. **Return time is 4:00 p.m.**

A Washington State Discover Pass is required for parking at Wallace Falls State Park!

WED. – APRIL 22 – PINE AND CEDAR LAKES & RAPTOR RIDGE

Hike to two very pleasant lakes in the Chuckanut Mountain area. This hike is up to 9.4 miles one way with shuttle cars returning hikers to the original trailhead. There is a 1,900 ft. total elevation gain. The 1.7 mile uphill route from the Pine/Cedar Trailhead is steep. The 5.4 mile down-hill route via the new Raptor Ridge Trail down to Lost Lake Trail which continues down to the North Chuckanut parking lot is less steep and will lead to Arroyo Park, the Interurban Trail, and finally the North Chuckanut parking lot. **Meet at 9:00 a.m.** at the North Chuckanut parking lot located off Chuckanut Drive just north of California Street at about milepost 18.5. At that time we will pool rides to the Pine/Cedar Lakes trailhead based on the time one wishes to arrive at the North Chuckanut parking lot at the end of the day. Some will need to be shuttle drivers back to the Pine/Cedar Lakes trailhead. First return to the North Chuckanut Trail head will be 2:30 p.m.; second return will be 3:00 p.m. Hikers may leave when they return to their cars except for those who will be involved in shuttling drivers back to the Pine/Cedar Lakes trailhead.

WED. – APRIL 29 – HOYPUS POINT, HOYPUS HILL, & ALA SPIT

There are many hiking opportunities on Hoypus Point. To Ala Spit via the most direct trail route and back is 6.5 miles. Other trails can be added to increase the mileage for the day. This hike is selected on this day because there will be a low tide around 10 a.m. and hikers should be able to access the Spit. The Hoypus areas are in Deception Pass State Park. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the trailhead at Cornet Bay in Deception Pass State Park. Cornet Bay has docking facilities and a rest room. You may leave when your carload is back to the trailhead. Most people return between 12 and 1 p.m.

A Washington State Discover Pass is required for your vehicle!

WED. – MAY 6 – LOST LAKE TRAIL

Hike to a mirror lake in a rock trench on Chuckanut Mountain. Both options below will utilize a new trail. The Rock Trail was completed in 2014, connecting the Cyrus Gates Overlook with the Lost Lake Trail in the trench below. There are two

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Skagit Audubon Hiking is continued from page 6

options:

Option I is a **STRENUOUS** 10 mile hike with an elevation gain of 2,400 feet. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Lost Lake parking lot (formerly known as the Clayton Beach lot) at the south end of Larrabee State Park off of Chuckanut Drive. Return time for this hike is 3 p.m.

Option II is a much less strenuous 7.2 mile hike with several hundred feet of elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the North Chuckanut parking lot

located on the east side of Chuckanut Drive between the Old Samish Highway and California Street. This is about milepost 18.5. Option II hikers will pool rides and drive to the Cyrus Gates Overlook where the hike will begin. Return time to the North Chuckanut parking lot will be 2 p.m. Drivers will need to be shuttled back to the Cyrus Gates Overlook. **A Washington State Discover Pass is required for parking at both Larrabee State Park and the North Chuckanut parking lot!**

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cars until 10:00 a.m.), it is especially suited to folks who have difficulty walking on rugged trails. The first half mile is level, so anyone with limited mobility or in a wheelchair is invited to join the group for this part of the walk. The loop road runs through fir forests along the edge of Guemes Channel and Burrows Channel, providing opportunities to view the sea birds with our scopes (Pigeon Guillemots, Cormorants, Marbled Murrelets, Black Oystercatchers, Harlequin Ducks, Great Blue Herons, various Gulls, Surf Scoters, Red-necked Grebes, and others are likely) - as well as the various Sparrows, Wrens, Chickadees, Kinglets, Woodpeckers and other forest birds. We'll meet at 8:30 in the parking area near the restrooms (just past the boat trailer lot, near the beginning of the one-way loop road). We'll walk the road slowly (a little over 2 miles) and we'll stop along the water's edge. The walk may very well end by 11:00 a.m., depending on sightings and desires. To get to Washington Park, follow the San Juan Ferry signs through Anacortes (at the roundabout go north on Commercial to 12th St., then west on 12th St., which becomes Oakes Avenue). At the traffic light just above the ferry, keep to the left and continue on Sunset Ave. to its end at the park. Bring your binoculars (and scope if you have one) and dress for the weather. We'll go rain or shine!

Please Contact Leader: Libby Mills at 360-708-6975 or libbymills@gmail.com



**Field Trip 3/7/15:
Deception Pass
West Beach**
*Photo by Sheila
Pera*

**Saturday, April 18
Wiley Slough, Fir Island, and
Skagit Game Range
7:00 a.m. to noon**

Meet at the Boat Launch parking lot at 7:00 a.m. to catch the morning birds, spring migrants, and plan to walk the easy flat trails. We hope to be seeing Yellow-rumped Warblers, some shorebirds and the end of the winter waterfowl season.

Please Contact Leader: Bob Kuntz at 360-424-9099 or annebobkuntz@gmail.com
A Washington State Discover Pass is required for your vehicle!

**Thursday, April 23
Whatcom County Shores
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.**

The trip will start at Blaine Harbor, and move on to Semiahmoo, Birch Bay State Park and Sandy Point. Depending on how the time goes, we may make other short stops on the way to Sandy Point from Birch Bay State Park. Our stops will focus on water birds, targeting all three Scoters, three Loon species, Grebes, and Long-tailed Ducks, plus shorebirds, e.g. Sanderlings, Black Turnstones, and Dunlin. Bring binoculars, scopes, lunch, and wind and rain gear. If coming from south of Bellingham, meet (before and plan to leave) at 8:30 AM to arrange carpools at the Chuckanut Park & Ride lot just south of Exit 231 off I-5. We'll join the leader at 9:15 a.m. at the Arco Gas Station on Slater Road. Take I-5 Exit 260, turn right from the off ramp and you'll see the Arco station on your right.

Please Contact Leader: Andrea Warner at home phone 360-734-9881 or warneraj@me.com.
A Washington State Discover Pass is required for parking at Birch Bay State Park.



New Safeguards for West Coast Forage Fish

Local Seabirds, Marine Mammals and Fish to Benefit

By Trina Bayard, Ph. D., Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Washington

The future for our west coast marine life just got a little more secure. On Tuesday, March 10, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council approved new protections for forage fish species, a move that signals a shift towards a more ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

The Council is responsible for managing fish stocks in federal waters (3-300 miles) off Washington, Oregon, and California and has been working to develop protective measures for unregulated forage species over the past three years.

Forage fish are increasingly in the limelight for the critical role they play in supporting the marine food web, as well as the rising global demand for fish meal and fish oil. The Council's action takes a precautionary approach to forage management. New fisheries must first demonstrate that harvest will not harm the ecosystem before they are approved. Although some well-known forage species such as anchovy and sardine are managed through existing fishery management plans, many other species, including sand lance, smelt, and pelagic squid, are not.



Tufted Puffin

action to tackle at least one of the threats these birds are facing – diminished supplies of their major food source.”

Among the seabirds that will benefit in Washington state are the Tufted Puffin, which is currently being considered for listing as a state endangered species; the Marbled Murrelet, a state endangered seabird which feed its young with sand lance and smelt; and various auklet and storm petrel species, which feed on a wide variety of forage species. Dozens of other visiting and resident species also rely on forage species.

“Our marine birds face enormous risks,” said Gail Gatton, Executive Director of Audubon Washington, “including ocean acidification, habitat loss, oil spills, and climate change. We’re thrilled that the Council took

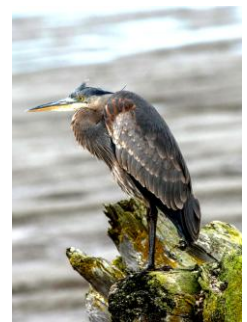
Trina Bayard, Director of Bird Conservation at Audubon Washington, called the Council's decision a win for birds, fish, and people alike. “Forage species are the bread and butter of the marine world, providing food not just for marine birds like the Tufted Puffin and the Western Grebe, but for economically important fish such as salmon and lingcod. The Council has taken an important step to ensure that forage species, and the human, wildlife, and economic values that they support, can be sustained for generations to come.”

Join the Heron Study Team

For the second year, volunteers are gathering data about where and how Great Blue Herons forage, rest, and nest on and around Skagit County's bays. Information collected last year about this iconic and important species has already proven valuable.

Participating need not involve many hours or days.

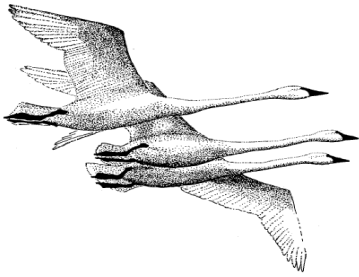
Contact lead volunteer Matt Kerschbaum at: cherrytree2@comcast.net



Great Blue Heron
Photo by Joe Halton



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join the Heron Study Team

Volunteers gather data on Great Blue Herons of Skagit County.

Contact lead volunteer Matt Kerschbaum at:

cherrytree2@comcast.net

See page 8

April 2015 Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
March 29	March 30	March 31	1 Hike: Lookout Mountain Preserve	2	3	4 Field Trip: Washington Park west of Anacortes, WA
5	6	7 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	8 Hike: Washington Park, Heart Lake, & Lake Erie	9	10	11
12	13	14 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	15 Hike: Wallace Falls	16	17	18 Field Trip: Wiley Slough, Fir Island, & Skagit Game Range
19	20	21	22 Hike: Pine & Cedar Lakes & Raptor Ridge	23 Field Trip: Whatcom County Shores	24	25
26	27	28	29 Hike: Hoypus Point & Hoypus Hill, & Ala Spit May 1 Hike: Lost Lake Trail	May 2	May 3	May 4

Visit the Skagit Audubon Society Website at www.skagitaudubon.org The Skagit Flyer is printed on recycled paper

