

The Skagit Flyer

Skagit Audubon Society
A Chapter of National Audubon Society

www.skagitaudubon.org

Vol. 34 No.8

NOVEMBER 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, November 7

**Blaine, Semiahmoo,
Birch Bay State Park,
and Sandy Point**

8:15 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We will begin birding at Blaine on the incoming tide, then move on to Semiahmoo and Birch Bay ending at Sandy Point.

Field Trips continue on page 6

NOVEMBER MEETING AND PROGRAM

VISIT THE MARITIMES IN JUNE

by Dennis Paulson

Tuesday, November 10, 2015

7:00 Social; 7:30 Program

Padilla Bay Interpretive Center

10441 Bayview-Edison Road

Mt. Vernon, Washington



Atlantic Puffins

Photo by Dennis Paulson

Join Dennis Paulson and Netta Smith on their visit to Newfoundland and Nova Scotia in June 2014.

They found the provinces beautifully scenic and relaxing, not as many biting insects as expected, but not as many forest birds either. Neotropical migrants are declining all the time, and that decline is much more evident in the East than in the West (at this point we should consider ourselves fortunate). Nevertheless, they were able to find some of the characteristic eastern birds, and the spectacular seabird nesting colonies that were easy to visit in each province made the trip an outstanding success.

Dennis Paulson, retired a decade ago from being Director of the Slater Museum of Natural History, University of Puget Sound, has been a professional biologist and naturalist all of his adult life. He began studying natural history as a boy and is a world expert on dragonflies. He is the author of nine books, including *Shorebirds of North America* and *Dragonflies and Damselflies of the West*, and 90 scientific papers on birds and dragonflies. He is the primary instructor for the Master Birders program run by Seattle Audubon.



SKAGIT AUDUBON

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Long-tailed Duck

Look for them on Nov. 7 & 14
Field Trips. Info. on p. 1 & 6

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 <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. _____

Please mail chapter-created new membership forms to address below: (Payable to same)

National Audubon Society, Inc.
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014
Attn: Chance Mueleck

Y21
For membership related questions and address:
Email: customerservice@audubon.org
Phone: (844)428-3826

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: Pam Pritzl, Membership@skagitaudubon.org*



Tis' the Season ~ Changes are coming. Shifting weather patterns are bringing in our winter residents. It's time to get final bird observations and schedule hikes for your 2015 list. Decisions on gift giving and end of the year donations are on your to do list, too. So before your calendar fills up, take time for Skagit Audubon.

Some of the best birding trips are those just after a weather front. Migrating birds are coming into our County for the winter months. Large numbers of Snow Geese, swans, hawks, falcons and owls are usually observed on the Skagit and Samish Flats starting in November and December. Head to shoreline parks and trails to see a variety of loons, grebes, alcids and ducks. Great access areas are Padilla Bay, Washington Park, and Rosario Head on Fidalgo Island. Go to our website, skagitaudubon.org. Find recent bird sightings and birding Skagit locations under the heading **Birding**. Under **Activities**, find a scheduled field trip in an area that interests you.

Now that your outdoor activities are scheduled, it's time to turn your attention to gift giving. Consider a tax deductible donation to Skagit Audubon Society. Our Education programs have reached 1,169 participants through October. We need more supplies and materials to continue our outreach. Your generosity will keep these programs thriving. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with tax #91-1207770.

So grab your weather gear, hiking boots, binoculars and a pen to get outdoors, watch birds and sign your thoughtful donation to Skagit Audubon. Together we can make a difference connecting people of all ages to nature.

SKAGIT AUDUBON NOVEMBER CONSERVATION REPORT
By TIM MANNS, CONSERVATION CHAIR

The 45-day comment period on what to include in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Shell Anacortes Crude-by-Rail project continues through November 5. By that date, please submit your ideas on potential impacts of the project that should be studied and for which mitigation should be devised or determined impossible. On the Department of Ecology's website you can read how to comment:

www.ShellRailEIS.PublicMeeting.info . Contact me at conservation@skagitaudubon.org if I can help. The potential effects on the March Point heronry, largest in the Northwest, and, if a spill should occur, on Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, have been the special concerns of Skagit Audubon since the rail project was announced. Crude oil unit trains coming to March Point begin their journey in the Bakken fields of North Dakota, passing through many communities and crossing many waterways before reaching Skagit County. Thus, the potential impacts of this local project have a wide geographic span. This is just one of many planned projects in the Northwest involving rail transport of volatile crude oil in rail cars acknowledged unsafe.

Many Skagit Audubon members are aware that the authorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund expired September 30th. Established in 1964, this fund has used the revenue from off-shore oil leases to buy conservation and recreation lands adding to or creating national, state, county, and local parks and preserves all across America. It was a farsighted idea to begin with and has benefitted virtually every person and many species in this country. Fortunately, members of the Washington State delegation are pushing for the program's renewal. Please contact your member of Congress and Senators Cantwell and Murray to thank them and ask them to keep it up until the Land and Water Conservation Fund is restored.

Lastly, a local opportunity to make a difference for birds. The Smithsonian Institution and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service show that free-roaming cats in the U.S. kill approximately 2.4 billion birds every year (<http://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/cats-and-birds/>). In its recent revision of the city's animal ordinance, Anacortes did not do as many other municipalities in the U.S. and move towards regulating cats just as dogs are restricted in their wandering about. Live in Anacortes? Contact your city council members and mayor to express concern about the loss of birds to free-roaming cats. Request that your city join others in addressing this problem. Want to see the Anacortes animal ordinance revised? Contact Martha Hall to coordinate efforts (pondfrog.mh@gmail.com).



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: 360-387-7024** or **birdsightings@skagitaudubon.org**

WATERFOWL

Cackling Goose 30 at the Skagit Game Range on 10-11 (BK); 110 with 1250 snow geese along Dry Slough Road on Fir Island on 10-12 (BK)
Trumpeter Swan 1 on Butler Flats on 10-10 (GB)
American Wigeon x Eurasian Wigeon hybrid 1 at March Point on 10-11 (GB)
Cinnamon Teal 2 at the Skagit Game Range on 10-3 (GB)
Canvasback 1 on Lake Erie on 10-10 (GB)
Redhead 1 on Lake Erie on 10-10 (GB)
Surf Scoter 3 on Judy Reservoir on 10-9 (GB)
unusual on fresh water here
Long-tailed Duck 2 in Fidalgo Bay, outside the marina on 10-14 (VBK)

LOONS

Pacific Loon 1 at Green Point, WA Park, Anacortes on 10-11 (GB)

GREBES

Western Grebe 3 off Green Point, WA Park, Anacortes on 10-10 (VBK)

HERONS and ALLIES

American Bittern 1 at North Fork Access on 10-10 (GB); 1 at Hayton Reserve on 10-10 (GB)
Great Egret 1 at Channel Drive on 9-20 (GB); 1 at Channel Drive on 10-3 (RM); 1 at Port Susan Bay on 10-6 (PP); 1 at March Point on 10-8 (PP); 1 at March Point on 10-11 (GB)
Green Heron 1 at pond on Blodgett Road, Mount Vernon on 9-21 (BK); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 9-26 (GB); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 10-3 (SAS)

HAWKS, EAGLES and ALLIES

Northern Goshawk 1 at Corkindale Creek on 9-21 (RM)
BROAD-WINGED HAWK 1 at Corkindale on 9-27 (GB) **UNUSUAL**
Golden Eagle 2 at the Hardy Burn on 9-27 (GB)

PLOVERS

American Golden-Plover 2 on the Samish Flats on 9-20 (GB); 1 at Samish Island on 9-21 (RM); 1 at Jensen Access on 9-21 (RM); 5 in field on road

to Jensen Access on 10-7 (JA)
Pacific Golden-Plover 1 at Samish Island on 9-21 and 10-3 (RM)

SANDPIPERS, PHALAROPES, and ALLIES

Greater Yellowlegs 109 at Jensen Access on 9-30 (RM)



Greater Yellowlegs
Photo by Ron Holmes

Whimbrel 1 at Jensen Access on 9-21 (RM)
Long-billed Curlew 1 at March Point on 9-21 (RM); 1 at March Point on 9-26 (GB); 1 at March Point on 10-13 (RM)
Red Knot 1 at Jensen Access on 9-21 (RM); 2 on Samish Island on 10-3 (RM)
Sanderling 15 at March Point on 9-20 (GB); 5 at March Point on 9-26 (GB)
Dunlin 1 at March Point on 10-10 (GB)

JAEGERS

Pomarine Jaeger 2 at Rosario Head on 9-30 (RM); 1 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (RM)
Parasitic Jaeger 7 at Rosario Head on 9-30 (RM); 8 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (RM)

ALCIDS

Ancient Murrelet 1 at Rosario Head on 9-30 (RM)

GULLS and TERNs

Heermann's Gull 800 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (RM)
Common Tern 4 at March Point on 9-25 (BK)

OWLS

Short-eared Owl 1 at Jensen Access on 10-7 (JA)

WOODPECKERS

Red-breasted Sapsucker 2 in Anacortes yard on 9-28 (JB)



Red-breasted Sapsucker
Photo by Ron Holmes

Northern Flicker 1 "yellow shafted" with 3 "red shafted" in Anacortes yard on 10-16 (CJR)

Bird Sightings continue on page 5



Bird Sightings continued from page 4

SHRIKES

Northern Shrike 1 near Cockreham Island on 10-4 (GB); 1 at Port Susan Bay on 10-6 (PP)

VIREOS

Hutton's Vireo 1 at Barnaby Slough on 10-4 (GB)

CORVIDS

Western Scrub-Jay 1 at Burlington home on 9-24 and 10-6 (LE)

Clark's Nutcracker 7 at Corkindale Creek on 9-21 (RM); 3 at the Hardy Burn on 9-27 (GB)

SWALLOWS

Barn Swallow 12 at the Skagit Game Range on 10-10 (GB)

PIPITS

American Pipit 20 near the end of March Point on 10-11 (VBK)

LONGSPURS and SNOW BUNTINGS

Lapland Longspur 2 at Corkindale Creek on 9-21 (RM)

WARBLERS

Northern Waterthrush 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 10-3 (SAS); 1 at the Skagit Game Range on 10-3 (GB)

Yellow Warbler female in Burlington yard on 9-24 (LE); 1 near Cockreham Island on 10-4 (GB)

SPARROWS and ALLIES

American Tree Sparrow 1 in bushes near the Guemes Ferry Terminal, Anacortes on 10-1 (JO)
Chipping Sparrow 1 at Rosario Head on 10-13 (RM)

White-throated Sparrow 1 at the Skagit Airport Ponds on 10-11 (GB)

TANAGERS and ALLIES

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK 1 hatch year male Camano Island home from 10-2 to 10-4 (PP)

UNUSUAL

Black-headed Grosbeak 1 pair in Burlington yard on 9-24 (LE)

BLACKBIRDS and ORIOLES

Western Meadowlark 1 in Concrete on 9-19 (GB); 25 on Dahlstad Road on 10-12 (KJW)

Yellow-headed Blackbird 1 on the Samish Flats on 9-20 (GB); 2 at Hayton reserve on 9-26 (GB)

Rusty Blackbird 1 on Fir Island on 10-10 (GB)

(JA) Jean Ashby; (GB) Gary Bletsch; (JB) Jane Brandt; (LE) Larry Edwards; (VBK) Von & Betty Kuehn; (BK) Bob Kuntz; (RM) Ryan Merrill; (PP) Pam Pritzl; (JO) John O'Connell; (CJR) Cynthia & Jack Richardson; (SAS) Skagit Audubon Field Trip; (KJW) Keith & Jan Wiggers

SKAGIT AUDUBON HIKING ~ NOVEMBER

BY JOAN MELCHER

Cold season hikes begin this month. We move from the high country to lowland hikes near the water and on the foothills. Hikes may be canceled or destinations changed due to weather, logging, construction or unforeseen circumstances. A hike will be canceled if there are high wind warnings, predictions of very heavy rain, flooding conditions, or snowy or icy road conditions. Because this is hunting season, wear a bright-colored item of clothing. All the hikes are on a Wednesday. Dogs are discouraged on Audubon-sponsored hikes. If dogs are on a hike, they must be on a leash at all times. **Call JOAN MELCHER, if you have questions** ~ contact information is below.

Contact: Joan Melcher: 360-424-0407 or jdmelcher@comcast.net

WED. NOV. 4 – LITTLE CRANBERRY LAKE

We'll do a hike around Little Cranberry Lake in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. It is 6.0 miles, with a 670 ft. total elevation gain. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the trailhead located on "A" Ave between 37th and 41st Streets in Anacortes. You may leave when

all in your vehicle return to the trailhead. Historically, all are back by 1 p.m.

WED. NOV. 11 – LOST LAKE

Hike to a mirror lake in a rock trench on Chuckanut Mountain. Both options below will utilize a new trail, The Rock Trail, which was completed in 2014. **Hikes continue on page 6**



Hikes continued from page 5

It connects the Cyrus Gates Overlook with the Lost Lake Trail in the trench below. **A Discover Pass is required for parking in Larrabee State Park.**

Two 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 Chuckanut Drive. Return time for this hike will be 3 p.m.

Option II: is a much less strenuous 7.2 mile hike with several hundred feet of elevation gain. For Option II 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 at 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 Discover Pass is not required for those parking in the North Chuckanut parking lot.**

WED. NOV. 18 – LITTLE MOUNTAIN
Explore the trails on Little Mountain southeast of Mount Vernon WA. It is a part of the Mount Vernon City Park system. A number of options are available. There will be elevation gains. Meet at 9 a.m. on the Little Mountain Park access road. Park on the side of the road, before the gate. (The gate opens at 10 a.m.) The Little Mountain Park access road is off the Little Mountain Road which is off the Blackburn Road. You may leave when you return from the hike.

WED. NOV. 25 – THANKSGIVING WEEK - No hike.

WED. DEC. 2 – EAST SHORE LAKE WHATCOM

The East Shore of Lake Whatcom hike is a fairly level hike among trees beside the east shore of Lake Whatcom. It is 6.25 miles round trip with little elevation gain. Meet at 9 a.m. at the new Chuckanut Drive park-n-ride lot. This lot is on the east side of I-5, off Exit 231 of I-5. You may leave when you return to the trailhead.

Field Trips continued from page 1

Our focus will be on water birds, targeting scoters, loons and grebes, plus shorebirds, e.g. Sanderlings, Black Turnstones and Dunlins. Bring binoculars, scopes, lunch, and wind and rain gear. If coming from the south of Bellingham, meet at 8:15 am to arrange carpools at the Chuckanut park and ride lot in Burlington. We'll meet Andrea at 9 am 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. **Drivers will need a Discover Pass for parking at Birch Bay State Park.**

**Leader: Andrea Warner warneraj@me.com
360-224-9291, 360-734-9881 (cell)**

Saturday, NOVEMBER 14

North Whidbey Island Birding Route

8:30 a.m. to Early Afternoon

Join us as we bird on an auto route visiting Dugualla Bay, Cornet Bay, Swantown, Penn Cove, and more. Meet at the Shell Park 'n Ride located one-half mile east of Sharpe's Corner on SR 20 at 8:30 a.m. We'll search north Whidbey Island hoping to find Long-tailed Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, Harlequin Ducks, and possibly 3 kinds of scoters. We'll seek birds on both fresh and salt water and hopefully

shorebirds, especially at Penn Cove.

Expect minimal walking, as we will depend on binoculars and scopes in these coastal areas. This trip will work for those confined to wheels. The trip will end around 1:00. Dress for the weather and remember it can be cold in the wind this time of year (hot thermos beverages are recommended). Bring scopes, as many birds will be distant.

**Leader: Ivar Dolph, 360-293-5951
or pidolph@frontier.com**

Sunday, NOVEMBER 22

Padilla Bay and Samish Flats

8:30 a.m. to about 12 Noon

Meet at 8:30 at Padilla Bay Interpretive Center parking lot for a morning of exploring the area for winter specialties of Samish flats and Padilla Bay. We'll begin by looking for birds in the uplands of Padilla Bay, then take carpools to the bay and finally, drive onto the flats to search with binoculars and scopes for our favorite winter birds. Bring a hot thermos, scope if you have one, and appropriate clothing. We will end around noon.

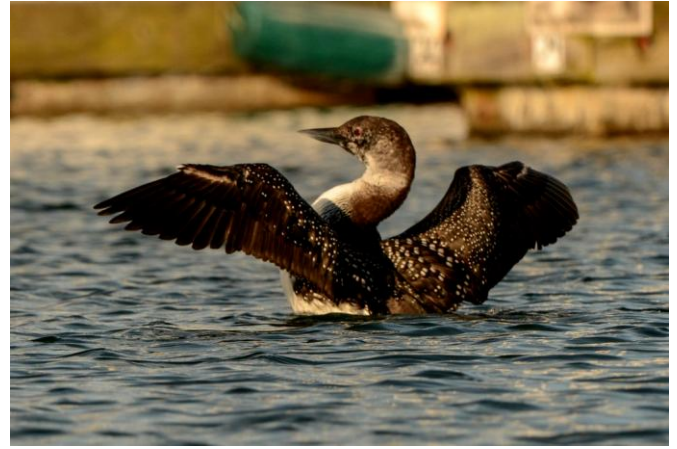
**Bring your Discover Pass to park at "West 90."
Leader: Libby Mills, libbymills@gmail.com
or 360-708-6975**



Going Looney!

By Irene Perry

The Common Loons are back. It's time to look for them in our bays and along our shorelines. Unlike similar sized cormorants who congregate in groups, during winter Common Loons are solitary during the day. At night they will congregate in loose rafts. You've probably seen cormorants on piers or pilings, but Loons stay on the water. Observing these two species as silhouettes in the distance, cormorants sit very low on the waterline with their bills tilted up. Common Loons sit higher and hold their bills level. Both dive for fish and swallow them underwater. Their eyes are adapted for vision above and below water. Cormorants are year-round residents in our area. Common Loons grace our waters during winter. They are a favorite winter resident. For more on the Common Loon go to: <http://www.skagitadubon.org/education/featured-bird-photo>



Common Loon ~ Basic Plumage
Photo by Joe Halton

Question Answered About Sexual Dimorphism of Osprey

At the October general meeting a question was asked,

“What’s the difference between male & female osprey?”

According to Cornell Labs: “Females usually show dark necklace across white breast”

Bill Clark’s [Hawks of North America](#) states females have “short dark streaking forming a necklace across upper breast; rarely do males show a noticeable necklace and females not show one”.

For more information on Osprey go to:

<http://www.skagitadubon.org/education/featured-bird-photo?start=10>



December Potluck and Membership Show



THE TRADITION CONTINUES

When: Tuesday, Dec. 8 Time: 6:45 Potluck ~ 7:30 Program

Program Organizer: Libby Mills

EMAIL PHOTOS TO: libbymills@gmail.com

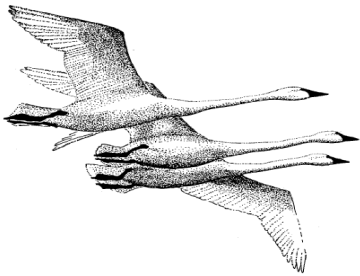
- Libby asks: Send **no more** than 5 pictures in .jpg format
- Include **Name of Photographer, Description of Subject, and Location**
- **Topics** include **Wild Nature, Flowers, Birds and other Animals, Landscapes, Trips, Backyard Habitat, and Hikes**

Pictures should be sufficient resolution to project well: between **300 KB & 1 MB**

Please Send Your Pictures ASAP ~ NO LATER than DECEMBER 1



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DECEMBER ~ POTLUCK
PHOTOGRAPHY MEETING

Tuesday, Dec. 8

!SEND YOUR PICTURES (by Dec. 1) ASAP!

More Info On Page 7

PADILLA BAY
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
Saturday, Jan. 2, 2016

November 2015 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 SAS Board Meeting: 7:00 PM	4 Hike: Little Cranberry Lake	5	6	7 Field Trip: Blaine, Sandy Point Semiahmoo, Birch Bay State Pk
8	9	10 General Meeting: Social 7:00 PM/ Meeting 7:30 PM	11 Hike: Lost Lake	12	13	14 Field Trip: North Whidbey Island
15	16	17	18 Hike: Little Mountain	19	20	21
22 Field Trip: Padilla Bay & Samish Flats	23	24	25 Thanksgiving Week ~ No Hike	26	27	28
29	30	Dec 1	Dec 2 Hike: East Shore Lake Whatcom	Dec 3	Dec 4	Dec 5

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

