

Admiralty Audubon Pippings AAS Field Trips

January & February (& a March preview) 2020

Winter Birding Fort Worden

Thursday, 16 January 2020, 9 am

Dress for the weather and come enjoy a walk to look for winter migrants and resident species. **Please text the Trip Leader the day before the walk to confirm the meeting place.** Trip Leader: Sue Thompson, harmonybyear@gmail.com or 206-618-9759.

Become an eBirder: Intro to using eBird in your birdwatching life

Saturday, 18 January 2020, 8:30-11:30am

Meet at the Reveille restaurant in Fort Worden and gather to sort out a few basic points of how to "eBird". eBird is a user-friendly smart phone application that connects your bird watching to real citizen science across the globe. Participants will need binoculars, a smart phone, and eBird downloaded onto their phones. We will get started with basic use and some shortcuts while drinking coffee or tea, then we will walk from Fort Worden Commons to Battery Hill and back entering all of our findings into eBird. This is the first in a series of three introductory eBird field trips highlighting different areas. Future trips (with different coffee shops) include Kah Tai in February, and Point Hudson in March. **These trips require pre-registration and are limited to ten people,** Questions on how to download eBird can be answered by email or phone. Trip Leader: Monica Fletcher, monicaflet@gmail.com or 360-379-3136.

1st Saturday Nature Walk at Fort Flagler 1 February 2020, 9am

Meet at the usual boat ramp just north of the Beachcomber Cafe in the lower campground. We first walk to the end of the spit toward Rat Island. This takes about an hour. We then drive to Marrowstone Point near the USGS Fisheries lab. We walk to the point to scope birds. Optionally, we will visit the sewage ponds and finish up by noon. Wear layers depending on the weather. To carpool from PT, please meet at the Park and Ride near Safeway at 8:30am. Trip Leader Gary Eduardo Perless: 360-643-3529 or gperless@gmail.com.

note that the tardiness of this newsletter means that three of our January birdwalks have already happened - New Year's, 1st Saturday and 1st Tuesday. Thanks, Paula and Gary!

1st Tuesday Birding at Point Hudson 4 February 2020, 9am

Meet at the raingarden by the beach at the very end of Jefferson Street (where there is parking). This will be a short walk to note what species are in our area. Trip Leader Gary Eduardo Perless: 360-643-3529 or gperless@gmail.com.

Become an eBirder: Lesson 2 at Kah Tai Saturday, 15 February 2020, 8:30-11:30am

Meet at Sunrise Coffee in the Boat Haven at 8:30 am and gather to sort out a few basic points of how to "eBird". See 18 January birding info for what you'll need and what you'll learn. We will get started with basic use and some shortcuts while drinking coffee or tea, then we will walk to Kah Tai Lagoon and back all entering our findings into eBird. This is the second in a series of three introductory eBird field trips highlighting different areas. A future trip is planned at Point Hudson in March. **These trips require pre-registration and are limited to ten people.** Questions on how to download eBird can be answered by email or phone. Trip Leader: Monica Fletcher, 360-379-3136 or monicaflet@gmail.com.

Become an eBirder: Lesson 3 at Point Hudson Saturday, 14 March 2020, 8:30-11:30am

This third eBird lesson will start at Velocity Coffee. Check the March newsletter for more details.

New Board Members!

Wonderful chapter members have stepped forward for our Membership Chair, Conservation Chair, and new CBC Chair! We will wait to announce them until the AAS Board meets later this month to formally approve the applications.



Bearded Seal, Svalbard, 2019.

© Johanna King

In Memoriam: John Comstock

John A. Comstock, age 73, passed away October 13, 2019 at his home on Marrowstone Island, with his wife and daughter at his side.

After serving in the US Navy as a sonar technician on the USS Blueback, John attended Reed College and obtained a degree in Mathematics and Natural Sciences in 1970. He was a nature and science enthusiast and his work as a biomedical engineer included cancer research, molecular evolution, and bird genetics. He generously contributed his time and energy to many community efforts, including the founding of the Biota of Marrowstone Island Project and the renovation of the Fort Flagler State Park Interpretive Trail. Above all else, John was an avid birder and enthusiastically shared his lifelong passion with everyone he met.

John is survived by his wife, Jo Ann Comstock; daughter and son-in-law, Robin and Dave Murray; grandchildren, Kieran and Linnea Murray; mother, Enid Verbon; and brother and sister-in-law, Steve and Julie Comstock.

John's family asks that if you want to honor him, you consider donating to one of the following organizations: Hospice Foundation for Jefferson Healthcare, National Audubon Society, Center for Biological Diversity, Jefferson Land Trust, or Friends of Fort Flagler State Park.

John started our chapter's First Fridays at Fort Flagler Nature Walks a few years ago, and continued to lead them into mid-2019. We are grateful for this gift to our chapter and our community, as his idea is carried on by others in the chapter.



© Beverly McNeil
Common Merganser female in the rain, Marrowstone/Nordland, 29 December 2019.



© Artemis Celt
Red-breasted Merganser male in the rain, Chimacum Creek Park, 1 January 2020.

AAS Kah Tai Workparties January & February 2020

Sunday, 12 January 2020 from 9am to noon

There will be a workparty sponsored by AAS at the Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park in Port Townsend. We will be planting native trees, pulling Scot's Broom and other invasives and picking up garbage. Bring a shovel if you want to plant trees. Bring work gloves. Scot's Broom pullers, garbage bags, and grabbers provided. Park at the Chase Bank parking lot at the corner of Hwy 20 and Kearney Street. Look for the white pickup truck near the bench closest to Chase Bank. Refreshments provided. Call 360-385-0307 or email ptrose53@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday, 9 February 2020 from 9am to noon

There will be a work party sponsored by AAS at the Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park in Port Townsend. Please bring work gloves. We will provide Scot's Broom pullers, garbage bags and grabbers. Park at the Chase Bank parking lot at the corner of Hwy 20 and Kearney Street. Look for the white pickup truck near the bench closest to Chase Bank. Refreshments provided. For information call 360-385-0307 or email ptrose53@gmail.com.

Rosemary Sikes
AAS Programs Chair

AAS Community Programs for January & February 2020
Port Townsend Community Center, Lawrence & Tyler
the public is invited

Thursday, 16 January 2020, 7:00 pm
Birdscaping

“Birdscaping”—Inviting Birds to Your Yard, will be presented by Carolyn Wilcox, owner and guide for Experience Olympic Tours on the Olympic Peninsula. Carolyn will share her expertise from living on a mall urban-forest edge lot in Port Angeles near Valley Creek. More than 20 species of birds have accepted Carolyn’s invitation to winter over in her yard, including Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush, Townsend’s Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Fox Sparrow! Carolyn will explain how to create varied bird habitat with dead wood (snags, nurse logs, brush piles), hedges, native plants, feeders, nest boxes, and water features—all while promoting the safe movement of birds throughout the surroundings. She will also cover ways to avoid rats, mice, and other interlopers. Come learn from Carolyn and begin to plan for a bird bonanza in your yard this season!



above: Carolyn Wilcox with a *Bufo* sp. in her home garden, courtesy C. Wilcox. right: Walrus, Svalbard, 2019.

Thursday, 20 February 2020, 7:00pm
Climate Change Up Close & Personal

In late July, Johanna King had the good fortune to visit the Norwegian islands of Svalbard, located at 78° - 80°N, only a few hundred miles from the north pole. There she, along with 11 other passengers, cruised the northern part of the archipelago for a week and a half. There was no darkness, so they observed from the ship, traveled out in zodiacs, and went ashore whenever wildlife was encountered, without reference to the clock.

The relative lack of avian diversity was more than made up for by numbers - at one location, there were close to 100,000 Brünnich’s Guillemots nesting in the cliffs. Also seen in very large numbers were Northern Fulmars, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Glaucous Gulls, and Arctic Terns. Many species were nesting, and in especially beautiful plumage. Two very special sightings were Ivory Gulls and a Sabine’s Gull.

Many mammalian species were also seen, including walrus, several species of seals, Arctic foxes, Svalbard reindeer, and polar bears.

This polar habitat is disappearing fast with global warming, and the temperatures were moderate throughout the trip. Glaciers were calving and retreating at an unprecedented rate, and roaring waterfalls were everywhere. The good news is that the light was excellent for photography, and Johanna was able to capture these phenomena for us all to see. The bad news is that it may soon be impossible to capture these same images.





© Varn Brooks

Lincoln's Sparrow on aspen along the Larry Scott Trail, 15 November 2019.



© Varn Brooks

Surfbird on the rocks behind Quimper Mercantile, 15 November 2019.



© Carolyn Wilcox

Townsend's Warbler, common here in summer, rare in winter. Come to our January program for more!



© Andy Friedrich

Juvenile Great Blue Herons in nest on dolphin at Coupeville landing, Whidbey Island, 25 July 2019.

AAS Membership Form 2020

<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 'Join' 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! Dues and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Admiralty Audubon is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

2019 Christmas Bird Count

This year was a very successful Christmas Bird Count in two ways. One, great weather, at least for 14 December. No rain, very little wind and sub-freezing temperatures. Usually we face all three of these challenges with a chance of snow thrown in. Two, 117 Species! Tied for the second highest total. Only the 119 species in 2017 topped this year.

I would like to thank all 64 individuals who showed up this year, 56 out in the field and 9 feeder watchers. The Charriers and Bob Boekelheide's effort out in the boat always adds several species and bumps the total number, which, by the way, was 17,258.

This year's misses were few. Greater Scaups were not seen. Only the second miss for this bird out of the 42 years of the Admiralty CBCs. The other miss was the Black-bellied Plover, also its second miss. The plover was included as a count week bird. Birds with low numbers for the count were: Pied-billed Grebe 3, Killdeer 2, Dunlin 7, and Ancient Murrelet 5. Red Crossbills were not seen either. They are an irruptive species and have basically been absent from the county this year.

The birds with CBC high counts were more numerous. They included Red-breasted Merganser 546, Bald Eagle 71, Anna's Hummingbird 81 (this number seems to go up every year), Belted Kingfisher 34, Red-winged Blackbird 340, and House Finch 371.

The following birds are the highlights and, according to the regional editor, should have had Rare Bird Report forms included with their submissions: Ruffed Grouse 4, Yellow-billed Loon 1 (pictures were included on this bird), Northern Pygmy-Owl 1, Northern Shrike 1, Gray Jay 4, Western Scrub-Jay 1, Orange-crowned Warbler 2, Yellow-rumped Warbler 4, White-throated Sparrow 1, and Savannah Sparrow 2. Two count week birds that were not included because of lack of documentation were a possible Chipping Sparrow and American Three-toed Woodpecker. These birds are so extremely unlikely they would require photos.

Again, I would like to thank everyone for another great Christmas Bird Count. As this is my last CBC as the compiler, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for all the help I have received over the last few years. I hope someone steps up to take over this important and rewarding position. (Note from editor - 'someone' has!)

Good Birding,
Dan Waggoner

Admiralty Audubon CBC Chair, Emeritus



© Wendy Feltham

Merlin, checking out the counters with a little blood on his feathers from a very recent meal, Morgan Hill, CBC 14 Dec. 2019.



© Wendy Feltham

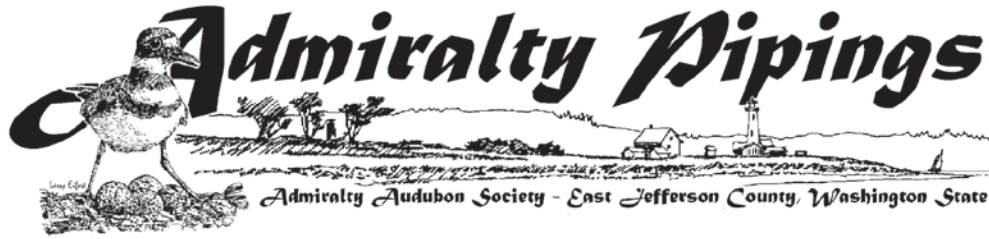
Black Oystercatchers, Hudson Point, CBC 14 December 2019.



© Beverly McNeil

Harlequin Ducks, Diamond Point, 29 November 2019.

Banner
Design and Art by
Larry Eifert©



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© Johanna King



Arctic Tern, Svalbard, 2019.

Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

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Website: http://admiraltyaudubon.org		Facebook: https://facebook.com/admiraltyaudubon

Conservation District Plants

Great news for planting natives! Our County Conservation District is holding their bare root native plant sale this year! Visit <http://www.jeffersoncd.org/> and follow the links to order your plants soon as pre-ordering closes on 30 January. A majority of the natives our chapter has planted at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park, Bishop Play Park, and Salish Coast Elementary School came from our County Conservation District sales.

Full Color Newsletter

You will likely notice that we don't have our color photos all wedged onto pages 2 and 5. We inquired of the Printery about how much more it would cost us to have color anywhere instead of just two pages and learned that the cost for all the printed copies is an additional \$1.50. For ALL printed copies. So, we will no longer worry about that and take the opportunity to showcase our great photographers!