

Admiralty Audubon Pippings

AAS Field Trips for March & April 2020

1st Tuesday Birding at Point Hudson 3 March 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.*

1st Saturday Nature Walk at Fort Flagler 7 March 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.*

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

Meet at Velocity Coffee at 8:30am 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 to Point Hudson and back entering all of our findings into eBird. This is the last in a series of three introductory eBird field trips highlighting different areas. 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 4 April 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.*

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Birding Cape George Section of Larry Scott Trail Saturday, 25 April 2020, 9am

Everyone is to meet at the Larry Scott Trail Cape George road parking lot at 9am for a 2.5 to 3 mile round trip walk along a moderate, easy trail through Douglas Fir, some open horse pastures, across some private access roads and over a small hill looking for forest birds. Wear warm layers of clothing, gloves, hats and weather proof shoes or boots. Bring binoculars, bird books and cameras.

Anyone interested in carpooling should meet at the Park and Ride across the street from Safeway by 8:45am. Directions from Hwy 20 intersection with Mill Road: Turn west onto Mill Road and then left onto Discovery Road. Proceed 0.6 mile, turn right onto Cape George Road. Drive past Nelson Landing Road, turn left into the entrance of the Larry Scott Trail parking lot on the left. Trail maps are provided courtesy of the Jefferson Trails Coalition at www.olympicdiscoverytrail.org. *Contact Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul for any questions: 360-379-8564 pvanderheul@gmail.com.*



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Marsh Wren, Kah Tai, 2018.

New AAS Board Chairs!

The Admiralty Audubon Board welcomed with great enthusiasm two new Chairs this year. Clara Mason, a member since almost forever, has stepped up to be our new Membership Chair. Clara served as Programs Chair for our chapter in the past. She describes herself as very detail-oriented, a welcome characteristic for someone keeping track of our member roster.

When Dan Waggoner indicated that he was stepping down and we needed a new Christmas Bird Count Chair, we happened to catch another veteran chapter member, Monica Fletcher, in a deliberative moment and she agreed not only to handle our CBC, but she has also become our Conservation Chair! We haven't had a Conservation Chair in years, so it will be wonderful to have a chapter representative in that capacity again as we work with other chapters in our state and around the country. Monica is also extremely well-grounded in eBird usage, and eBird is the way we will all be keeping track of both our regular counts and our CBC efforts. We will try to get a brief biography from each of our two new Chairs so they can tell you a bit more about themselves and their interests in our next newsletter.

Photos: upper - Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes, and lower - Hooded Merganser pair, Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park, 31 January 2020.

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AAS Kah Tai Workparties for March & April 2020

Sunday, 15 March 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 pulling Scot's Broom and other invasives and picking up garbage. Please 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, 19 April 2020 from 9am to noon - Earth Day Event!

There will be a work party in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and 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 Kah Tai parking lot off of 12th Street, behind Henery's Hardware. Walk to the Benedict Street trail across the street from the Port Townsend Garden Center. There you will find the white pickup truck. *For information call 360-385-0307 or email ptrose53@gmail.com.*

Rosemary Sikes
AAS Programs Chair

AAS Community Programs for March & April 2020

Port Townsend Community Center, Lawrence & Tyler

the public is invited

Thursday, 19 March 2020, 7:00 pm

Birdscaping

[This program was originally scheduled in January 2020 but our speaker lives in Port Angeles and Port Angeles had SNOW! Lots of snow and impassable roads.]

Carolyn Wilcox, your home birdscaping consultant and wildlife guide for Experience Olympic (<http://experienceolympic.com>), will share her expertise from living on a small urban-forest edge lot in Port Angeles near Valley Creek.

Many 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, Yellow-rumped



Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Fort Flagler, 1 January 2019.

Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Fox



Varied Thrush, home landscape, March 2017

Sparrow! In fact, her yard count currently stands at 65 species. 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!

Thursday, 16 April 2020, 7:00 pm

Birding Northwest Ecuador

Admiralty Audubon's April program presents a new focus for Beverly McNeil's photography. Beverly has given us several colorful and informative programs with images of the avian and general faunal diversity of Costa Rica.

In January 2020, Beverly and friend Andrea, along with five others, went on a two-week birding tour in



NW Ecuador. Ecuador features 128 hummingbird species, compared with Costa Rica's 52! Bev is excited to share with you some closeup images of some incredibly beautiful and colorful Hummingbirds, Tanagers, Antpittas, rare Oilbirds, Cotingas, Toucans, and many others, including the amazing Swordbill Hummingbird!

Rosemary Sikes
AAS Programs Chair



photos: upper - Velvet-purple Coronet Hummingbirds. 14 January 2020; lower - Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, 17 January 2020, both NW Ecuador.



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Photos: upper left - Least Sandpiper on beach east of Cape George, 15 September 2019; upper right - Upland Goose and chick, southern Argentina, January 2020; lower: Common Merganser female surveying her domain, Duckabush River, 2 February 2020.

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.

Not So Mundane

A movement caught my eye on the chilly January day. The glimpse had come from under the leafless branches of some willows and cottonwoods. A small pond was tucked in this thicket at Magnuson Park in Seattle. I froze but could see nothing until I slowly crouched down. There, floating on the water, was a football-sized mass of feathers, tan along the waterline and blacker above. It had two black eyes that glared at me from a smallish head, probably pondering if I was friend or foe. A tiny Pied-billed Grebe drifted less than 20 feet from me.

Typically, they slink away, so I decided to settle here and see what it would do. These grebes are permanent residents in the Puget Trough, but over much of the United States, they are migratory. People seldom see them flying because they travel at night and rarely fly to escape a disturbance. Usually, Pied-bills dive and swim away, often undetected. People on birding outings will often comment, "Oh, it's just a grebe," wanting I presume to see something more colorful, bigger, less mundane.

Their distribution is fascinating with breeding populations in both North and South America. Although a few are in Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and Central America, generally, a big geographic gap exists between those groups on each continent.

For North America, the animation of weekly abundance data from eBird showed that in January, Pied-bills were concentrated in Florida and along the Southeast coastal plains and across into Texas and Northeastern Mexico. Lots were also in the central valley of California and then a few here in Puget Sound. Some were scattered elsewhere, especially Central Mexico and near the Gulf of California. By March, birds had moved into

the Great Plains and by late April had extended into the Canadian prairies, Central Washington, and British Columbia. Their numbers in the Southeast had plummeted by April, but those in central California remained pretty constant.

In South America, the migration was in the opposite direction. In late January, lots were in Northeastern Brazil and then scattered to northern Argentina. As the year progressed, they migrated south to breed from Southern Brazil into Central Argentina. A few were also in Chile, Equator, and Columbia. Of all the grebe species in the Western Hemisphere, Pied-bills have the most extensive distribution.

The one in Magnuson Park slowly turned a complete circle while keeping one eye on me. Water droplets were beaded on its back and sides. The feathers seemed slicked down but waterproof. The bill still had the black ring mid-way out and the bluish-white base. Usually, they lose that band, and the bill becomes more yellowish-brown in the non-breeding season. Perhaps, its breeding hormones were still flowing here in January.

It radiated a sense of pride, confidence. In Celtic mythology, the grebe guards the spirit world and helps humans find beauty where they otherwise might not. The contours of its body, the S-shape of its neck, tautness of its muscles all projected splendor. Suddenly, the grebe just sank out of

sight, hardly making a ripple. No dive, it just dropped as if it was a rock gently placed on the surface. The bird must have compressed its body feathers, squeezing out the trapped air, and tightened its chest muscles to make its air sacks smaller, decreasing its buoyancy. I shook my head as I got back to my feet. Birds are so marvelous.



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Pied-billed Grebe, Magnuson Park.

Thomas Bancroft

Banner
Design and Art by
Larry Eifert©



Admiralty Audubon Society PO Box 666 Port Townsend WA 98368



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Shining Sunbeam Hummingbird, NW Ecuador, 11 January 2020.

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Facebook: <https://facebook.com/admiraltyaudubon>

Farewell, PTSightings

We report with regret that our chapter's Sightings webpage has been discontinued. Sightings never had a phone app interface and with the proliferation of apps like eBird, Sightings wasn't being used by our members so frequently as it once was. We thank Sandra Stowell and MJ Pruitt for providing Sightings to

us for so many years. It won't be as personal and immediate to report to eBird, but note that our new Conservation Chair is holding eBird lessons on her birdwalks! eBird is also the direction that the Christmas Bird Count is taking for CBC reporting, so it's time we join that effort to make our observations more accessible and useful.