

Admiralty Audubon Pippings

Field Trips for September & October 2020

For our July/August newsletter, we noted that Jefferson County was in Phase 2 of Washington State's 'Safe Start' planning for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. Well, we still are in Phase 2, thanks to some local gatherings that weren't as careful as they should have been and some folks who brought a little Covid back with them from out-of-county visits. We are very happy to report that we remain in the zero-death category, and hope for Phase 3 soon. We continue with some socially distanced birding opportunities. To participate, contact the Trip Leader to reserve your spot. Don't plan to share equipment, and carpooling outside of households is not advised. Don't forget to wear your mask!

Fort Worden State Park

Friday, 11 September 2020, 9am

Please meet at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center parking area next to the pier in Fort Worden. Dress for the weather. *Trip Leader Beverly McNeil: Call 360-301-4745 or email blmcneil59@gmail.com for details.*

Fort Worden State Park

Friday, 18 September 2020, 9am

Please meet at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center parking area next to the pier in Fort Worden. Dress for the weather. *Trip Leader Beverly McNeil: Call 360-301-4745 or email blmcneil59@gmail.com for details.*

Zoom Birding and Nature 'Walks'

Some of our members may enjoy some of the Zoom programs put on by our friends at the Dungeness River Audubon Center. AAS Board members Ron and Rosemary Sikes have watched the Center's programs on woodpeckers, on raptors, and on trees for salmon. They report that the programs are well done and worth watching. In this time of COVID it is a welcome opportunity to have an online option to enjoy the natural world. The next program is September 9 on owls; go to <https://dungenessrivercenter.org/> for more information. Once you sign up, the Dungeness River Center will automatically send an email about the next program. The Center will likely add other opportunities to their repertoire, and also offers a series on the Dungeness Watershed as a paid subscription.

1st Saturday Nature Walk at Fort Flagler 3 October 2020, 9am

Meet at the boat ramp on the south side of the Beachcomber Cafe. 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. *Trip Leader Gary Eduardo Perless: 360-643-3529 or gperless@gmail.com.*

1st Tuesday Birding at Point Hudson 6 October 2020, 8:30am

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.*

Fort Worden State Park

Monday, 26 October 2020, 9am

Please meet at the Port Townsend Marine Science Center parking area next to the pier in Fort Worden. Dress for the weather. *Trip Leader Beverly McNeil: Call 360-301-4745 or email blmcneil59@gmail.com for details.*

Migratory Bird Treaty Act - Saved!

We reference National Audubon on this VERY good news: United States District Court Judge Valerie Caproni ruled on 11 August 2020 that the legal opinion which serves as the basis for the federal government's rollback of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not align with the intent and language of the 100-year-old law. In her ruling, Judge Caproni found that the policy "*runs counter to the purpose of the MBTA to protect migratory bird populations*" and is "*contrary to the plain meaning of the MBTA*".

This is underscored by Judge Caproni's own words from the opening of her ruling: "*It is not only a sin to kill a mockingbird, it is also a crime. That has been the letter of the law for the past century. But if the Department of the Interior has its way, many mockingbirds and other migratory birds that delight people and support ecosystems throughout the country will be killed without legal consequence.*"

Nest Boxes for Quimper Wildlife Corridor

The Jefferson Land Trust Preserve Manager recently approached our AAS Board about the possibility of collaborating on building, installing, and maintaining nest boxes on several of the Land Trust's 23 Nature Preserves. It is proposed that we could start with the Quimper Wildlife Corridor, where it may be easier to clean the boxes on an annual basis. Being in the Port Townsend area and at a public access Preserve area might also mean that reports of nest box use, and birding reports in general, would be more readily available.

Although getting started on such a project is complicated by the pandemic, we are sure to find some very enthusiastic carpenters and handypersons among our membership. Some planning is ahead, to determine the most logical nest box configurations for species expected to use them. It would seem that nestbox building might be an ideal socially distant activity.

If you are even a little handy with a hammer and saw and have an interest in providing nest boxes for our wonderful local Preserves, please send an email to admiraudub@gmail.com and we will keep you informed of any progress toward this goal.

Planning for the Christmas Bird Count

It's the longest continuous wildlife census in the world. Will the pandemic disrupt the Christmas Bird Count? We certainly hope not!

This will be the 121st year for the Count. While it might be a bit more of a challenge to socially distance and count, we remain hopeful for better days ahead for all of us. In normal years, we would be starting to recruit counters. Since this isn't a normal year, if you're able to participate in this important census, please keep your calendar open for probably a Saturday in mid-December and our brand-new Christmas Bird Count Chair will keep us informed as the date approaches.

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Crockett Lake, Naval Training, & the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Our chapter recently received an email from a birder who lives outside Coupeville near Crockett Lake on Whidbey Island. The writer expressed serious concerns about the flight path used by the Navy for their touchdown exercises through the area. The jets apparently fly on the same route as the many flocks of migratory geese and other species using Crockett Lake and were observed to be disrupting migratory patterns. AAS Board member Ron Sikes provided the following information: The former tidal lagoon that is now Crockett Lake is described in the Important Bird Areas of Washington, an Audubon Washington publication, and a National Audubon project to identify critically important places for birds of the United States. I quote from this publication under "*Birds and Habitat. Crockett Lake supports extraordinarily large numbers of shorebirds during autumn migration. The lake is a critically important migration staging area for 17 species of shorebirds, and for raptors such as Peregrine Falcon and Merlin that follow the migration south. The lake provides winter habitat for Bald Eagles and nine species of ducks. Whidbey Audubon Society has observed 213 species at the site. The largest concentration of Least Sandpipers ever recorded in Washington (5,000) occurred here in 1999. The lake also provides a rich foraging site for Great Blue Herons during the breeding season.*" In addition the lake has become a post breeding summer stopover for a flock of American White Pelicans. (Note the photo of American White Pelicans on page 3, a few of a group of at least 50 using Crockett Lake this week).

Our Board has made contact with the Whidbey Audubon chapter to discuss the most effective ways our chapters can work together to protect our migratory species in this area. On page 1 of this newsletter, we celebrate the prohibition of incidental take of migratory species via the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Photos clockwise from upper left page 3: Sanderling, Point Hudson, 21 August 2020; recently fledged Osprey, Fort Flagler, 27 August 2020; Bald Eagle at Kah Tai, July 2020; American White Pelicans above the beach at Crockett Lake, Whidbey Is., 1 September 2020; Short-billed Dowitcher, Point Hudson 21 August 2020, Long-billed Dowitchers, Kah Tai, August 2020.

Page 2. A helpful comparison of the difference between Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, August 2020, Kah Tai.

Shorebirds, raptors, and pelicans!





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photos clockwise from upper left: two fledgling Cedar Waxwings just out of the nest in the cemetery at Fort Worden, August 2020; fledgling Hermit Thrush.,home landscape, 7 August 2020; fledgling male Wilson's Warbler, Anderson Lake, 2 July 2020; fledgling Bald Eagles sparring, North Beach, 31 July 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.

Admiralty Audubon Nature Prize(s) - Jefferson County Virtual Fair 2020

The pandemic affects our lives in ways both great and small. One of the small ways we've all been affected is with the loss of many local activities, including the Jefferson County Fair. Our chapter has had the opportunity to support local artists and photographers with the award of our modest monetary prize for best Nature photograph at the Jefferson County Fair in years past, but there was no actual, in-person Fair this summer.

However, the creative folks on the Fair Board decided to hold a virtual arts competition and the AAS Board agreed to provide judges and the same modest award in the Nature category as in prior years.

Two of our chapter's stellar photographers, Johanna King and Craig Wester, agreed to judge the competition submissions and agreed on first place. But they also agreed that a second photo was a very close competitor to the winner. Consequently, our chapter President decided to personally contribute a modest monetary award for second place.

Congratulations to our winners - Helen Weismeyer for 1st Place and Sophia Lukin for 2nd Place in Admiralty Audubon's Nature Category! We are also happy to note that Ms. Lukin entered the competition in the teen category. Each winner will also receive a one-year AAS membership.

Judging comments included: *judge 1: My top choice is #41. It is a lovely composition, with multiple layers - the sky, the sea, the field. And the tree*



#41 - 1st Place Winner: Helen Weismeyer



#61 - 2nd Place Winner: Sophia Lukin

is a good focal point. #61 - I like the moody, cool look of this one. All the horizontal lines are attractive - river, mountains, fog.

judge 2: #41 is a nostalgic landscape with old buildings and beautiful autumn colors. I think it would easily be most folks' choice. Mine too. Quiet and pastoral.

I went back and forth between #61 and #41. #61 has really pleasing repeating lines and layers and reflections. And some mystery with the large sand bank.

Banner
Design and Art by
Larry Eifert©



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Bald Eagle and recently deceased gull meal, Point Wilson, 3 August 2020.

Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

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Oregon grape at Kah Tai © James Holb



Serviceberry at Kah Tai ©James Holb