Admiralty Audubon Pipings

AAS Field Trips
July & August 2017

Friday, 14 July 2017 - Anderson Lake State Park

Meet at the very first entrance at 9:00 am. Bring rain coat just in case, wear boots or sturdy shoes and bring your water and snack. We will go around the lake on the outer trail and plan on 2 to 3 hours. Bring binoculars. I have spotted a Nuthatch nest and Red-breasted Sapsucker nest right off the trail and hopefully they will have not fledged yet.

I would like to limit the group size for up to 6. We can also carpool from my house as it is near SR 20. If you’re driving, don’t forget your Discover Pass! Contact Trip Leader Beverly McNeil if you plan to join us 360-385-9730 or blmcneil59@gmail.com.

Saturday, 5 August 2017 - Evening Birdwalk at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park

Meet in Port Townsend at 6:00 pm at the parking lot off 12th Street near the utility building. We will meander the trails scouting for views of a variety of bird species in bushes, trees and lagoon. Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul 360-379-8564 or pvanderheul@gmail.com

Thank You, Friends of Fort Worden

In the Friends of Fort Worden’s recent newsletter, we see this good news:

“Have you wondered why the ever-taller grass in Chinese Gardens remained unmowed until June 26? Blame the Savannah Sparrow. Though only 5.5 inches long and weighing less than an ounce, this bird has clout!

Savannah Sparrows usually arrive in spring and depart in fall. They breed and nest in open areas with low vegetation, making Chinese Gardens an ideal site for family planning. Our enlightened park staff are sensitive to the sparrow and delay mowing (which is mandated owing to fire danger) until the birds have had the opportunity to raise one or more broods.”

Mowing in nesting season was a concern discussed by our AAS chapter leaders with park staff in recent years. Success!

Save the Date for ACOW!

The Audubon Council of Washington (ACOW) will hold its annual meeting this year on Saturday, 14 October 2017 at the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Center in Sequim, hosted by Olympic Peninsula Audubon and Northwest II Audubon Chapters (NWII is Admiralty Audubon and Kitsap Audubon in addition to OPAS).

Agenda, keynote speakers and other information will be available soon and will be highlighted in our next newsletter.

We’re all aware of major changes that are altering bird ranges and survival. ACOW represents an opportunity in our peninsula backyard to hear what National Audubon and Audubon Washington are developing with programs to understand these changes and strategies to help mitigate them.

The most productive programs at the state and national level have engaged citizen scientists. The Christmas Bird Count is a highly visible example of the application of citizen scientist-collected data to the understanding of changes in species distributions. A new Audubon community science program is Climate Watch (see below).

Climate Watch

Audubon’s Climate Watch is a new community science program that explores how North American birds are responding to climate change. After the 2014 release of the Audubon Birds and Climate Change report, Climate Watch was developed to engage citizens in the observation of changes in distributions of targeted species in two distinct seasons, late January and early June. Target species are observed in specific locations for set time periods.

For 2017, the target species have been three species of bluebird and four species of nuthatch. These species offer strong predictions for range shifts that can be tested by Audubon researchers with data provided by citizen participants.

More information about Climate Watch can be found at http://www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch-program.
Purple Martins in the OCEAN Program

Port Townsend schools Superintendent’s newsletter for February 2017 highlights that students in Port Townsend’s OCEAN Program began a project in which they learned about Purple Martins with Admiralty Audubon Secretary Ron Sikes. They made boxes to create nesting environments for the martins in cooperation with the Port of Port Townsend. The boxes were mounted at Point Hudson and are both beautiful and successful in attracting Purple Martins. We’ve had very positive comments from other chapter members asking about the boxes and while we can’t take credit for the students’ boxes, we will take credit for Ron Sikes!

Admiralty Audubon members and friends maintain successful Purple Martin boxes at the Boat Haven and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center. Our chapter has had boxes at Kah Tai Lagoon which did not attract martins in their first location, but the boxes have been moved to another site on the lagoon perimeter and we hope for better luck. Purple Martins are seen hawking insects high above the lagoon during their nesting season.

Trail Repair at Kah Tai

Admiralty Audubon’s June 18 Kah Tai weeding workparty and potluck evolved into a mostly gravel-hauling party and potluck. City parks staff brought in more than ten yards of 5/8”-minus gravel. Members of the Port Townsend Trails Crew and the city’s volunteer Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Board (NMTAB) joined chapter members to haul and spread gravel on about 2/3 of the trail along the southern edge of the lagoon. City parks staff spread the remaining gravel during the week after the workparty.

In addition to accommodating numerous birders and others appreciative of a nature respite, the trail takes a lot of foot and bicycle traffic as a popular and peaceful route between east and west Port Townsend. When the trail gets muddy in the rainy season, users go off-trail to keep from getting wet in the puddles, but that damages the habitat on either side of the trail as the trail itself is widened by users.

Thanks to the trails crews, advisory board members and city parks staff for helping to protect habitat with some well-placed gravel.
Field Trip Reports

**Larry Scott Trail Cape George section, Saturday, 20 May 2017:**

Admiralty Audubon field trip with 5 birders observed 37 species: Canada Goose 5, Mallard 4, Northern Shoveler 1, Pied-billed Grebe 2, Turkey Vulture 4, Northern Harrier 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 1, Bald Eagle 2, Red-tailed Hawk 1, Rufous Hummingbird 2, Red-breasted Sapsucker 1, Northern Flicker 1, Olive-sided Flycatcher 1, Pacific-slope Flycatcher 3, Cassin’s Vireo 1, American Crow 2, Common Raven 2, Violet-green Swallow 10, Barn Swallow 10, Black-capped Chickadee 1, House Wren 2, Marsh Wren 2, Bewick’s Wren 2, American Robin 4, Orange-crowned Warbler 3, Yellow Warbler 2, Black-throated Gray Warbler 1, Wilson’s Warbler 3, Dark-eyed Junco 3, White-crowned Sparrow 8, Song Sparrow 3, Spotted Towhee 5, Black-headed Grosbeak 3, Red-winged Blackbird 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 2, Purple Finch 2, American Goldfinch 2. *Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul.*

**Anderson Lake State Park, Friday, 16 June 2017:**

Seven birders enjoyed a great Admiralty Audubon birdwalk with lots of bird songs and sightings with 38 species observed: Wood Duck 1, Double-crested Cormorant 1, Turkey Vulture 4, Bald Eagle 1, Red-tailed Hawk 1, Mourning Dove 1, Rufous Hummingbird 4, Belted Kingfisher 1, Red-breasted Sapsucker 3, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Willow Flycatcher 5, Pacific-slope Flycatcher 3, Hutton’s Vireo 1, Warbling Vireo 2, Northern Rough-winged Swallow 4, Tree Swallow 8, Violet-green Swallow 4, Barn Swallow 5, Chestnut-backed Chickadee 4, Red-breasted Nuthatch 2, Golden-crowned Kinglet 6, Swainson’s Thrush 5, American Robin 12, European Starling 2, Cedar Waxwing 10, Orange-crowned Warbler 6, Common Yellowthroat 4, Black-throated Gray Warbler 2, Townsend’s Warbler 2, Wilson’s Warbler 6, Dark-eyed Junco 2, White-crowned Sparrow 1, Savannah Sparrow 2, Song Sparrow 3, Spotted Towhee 2, Black-headed Grosbeak 3, Red-winged Blackbird 6, American Goldfinch 4. *Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul.*

New Species for Kah Tai

A Nashville Warbler was sighted at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park on May 2, followed by a report of two Lazuli Buntings on May 9. These two new species bring the number of bird species observed in the park to 161 since formal record keeping was started by our chapter founder, Eleanor Stoops, and our first chapter president, Bernard Beck, in 1977-78.

Photos on page 5, Clockwise from upper left: Bushtit nest observed along the Kah Tai Lagoon trail and the Bushtit responsible for that nest, bearing a twig in a blooming serviceberry tree, June 2017; Chukar in Hell’s Canyon, 2016; well-camouflaged Common Snipe at Ridgefield NWR, May 2017; Cedar Waxwing at Kah Tai, June 2017; Burrowing Owl with no interest in concealment, Malheur, 2017; Great-horned Owl nearly invisible in habitat, Ridgefield NWR, May 2017.
Admiralty Audubon held its annual elections in May and nobody new came forward. This board is ‘old’, both literally and figuratively. We all love what we do and are happy to keep doing it. But we surely could use some new blood.

We have been doing without a Conservation Chair for years, even though one of our chapter region’s school districts has an exciting Maritime Discovery program well underway and we have no one to be part of it. We had Helen Engle’s son as our school superintendent for five years when that program was conceived and realized, and we didn’t have an Education Chair! Step up, folks!