Admiralty Audubon Pipings

AAS Field Trips

May & June 2012

**Saturday, 26 May 2012 - The Evening Birds of Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park.** Meet at the Park restrooms at 5 pm. We will spend an hour or so in the Park looking for birds on the uplands and on the lagoon. Please RSVP to make sure no changes had to be made after the newsletter was printed. Ron Sikes, Trip Leader; 360-385-0307 or sikes@olympus.net.

**Friday, 15 June 2012 - Anderson Lake - field trip to 1061 Anderson Lake Rd, Chimacum.** We will walk on C- Olympic Trail-1.14 miles to enjoy the flora, fauna, spring migrant movements and singing. Meet at the restroom parking area at 9:30 am. Discovery Pass is required. Dress for possible muddy conditions. Paula Vanderheul, Trip Leader. If you want to carpool, contact pvanderheul@gmail.com or 360-379-8564.

**MINI-TRIPS** – For the next few months and throughout the summer, some Birding Field Trip Leaders have agreed to lead trips around the area as part of their normal birding activities and would enjoy company without spending energy on announcing and coordinating trips. If you are interested, check [http://admiraltyaudubon.org](http://admiraltyaudubon.org) for the latest offerings. If this works out to everyone’s satisfaction, we will continue them throughout the year. These will be great opportunities for less experienced birders to improve their skills and everyone to learn about new locations.

*Please note that the participants in all field trips accept all risks and Admiralty Audubon accepts none. Wear appropriate footgear and clothing for the weather, don’t bring pets, and contact the Leader to guarantee that room is available. Contact David Gluckman at 360-379-0360 and cgluckman@aol.com.*

In Memoriam

Admiralty Audubon Society founder and force of nature Eleanor Stopps died on 25 April 2012 at the age of 92. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in March.

One of her many accomplishments is the establishment of the Protection Island National Wildlife Refuge. She lobbied for over a decade and testified before the Washington State Legislature and US Congress to achieve that status for the island. Protection Island was the only Refuge established during the eight years of the Reagan Administration.

In interviews, Eleanor stated that she’d worked in sales when she was a young person, and that she enjoyed sales, particularly when she believed in what she was selling. Friends have said that she counseled never to take ‘no’ for an answer if you knew you were trying to do the right thing. She believed that the unique and precious nesting habitat represented by Protection Island needed to live up to its name and she sold the idea with graciousness and calm determination.

She wanted no funeral or memorial service. But while she was still conscious and in her unfailing good humor, she willingly agreed to the idea of a memorial sculpture, as long as it was a tribute to Protection Island. Gulls, guillemots, auklets, eagles, and seal pups were all mentioned as possible inclusions. The sculpture would also serve as testimony that one person can make a difference.

Friends and family are beginning the process necessary to bring that sculpture to fruition. Location and design are under active consideration and a number of possible sculptors have been considered. A fundraising effort will begin as soon as the details of the effort are more clearly focused. A website has been set up to post information as plans coalesce and to facilitate the collection of donations ([http://eleanorstopps.blogspot.com](http://eleanorstopps.blogspot.com)). An account for donations will be established shortly at First Federal Bank in Port Townsend. Contributions toward this lasting tribute to a great lady and her lifetime of accomplishments will be most welcome.

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For paper newsletter recipients:

Please look at your address label! The date (month-yr) your membership expires will be on the label. We won’t include a dues letter inside except as a final reminder if you are six months late. Prompt renewal is always appreciated! If the date disagrees with your records, let us know.

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May 2012
AAS Program
17 May 2012, 7 pm  
The public is invited  
Port Townsend Community Center  
Lawrence and Tyler  

Images Of The Galapagos  
Professional photographers David and Casey Gluckman and Stephen and Suzanne Cunliffe will present their slide/video show about the wildlife and scenery of the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador taken in January 2012. Their travels on the 295 foot ship, National Geographic Endeavor, crossed the equator 4 times and stopped at eight major Galapagos islands. They worked side by side with National Geographic photographers in documenting the birds and other terrestrial and marine wildlife. In addition to displaying their professional quality images they will discuss photo techniques and general facts about many of the animals they photographed. The program is free and open to the public.

Clara Mason  
Programs, Admiralty Audubon  

2012 Earth Day Events  
Admiralty Audubon members had a busy Earth Day weekend. On Saturday, 21 April, AAS had a booth at the Earth Day event in uptown next to the Farmer’s Market. We have been helping collect signatures on a petition to ban ‘disposable’ plastic grocery bags in our city and the petition passed 1000 signatures during the event!

Plastic grocery bags that are used at the checkout counter are treated as single use items but they do not decompose and, when not properly disposed of, pose a serious risk to marine and bird life and are a major source of litter.

On Sunday, 22 April, AAS members joined others in the community to plant five wax myrtle shrubs along the south shore of Kah Tai Lagoon, in honor of Eleanor Stopps. Chapter Vice-President David Beattie reported a sighting of a Myrtle race Yellow-rumped Warbler near the Landes edge of the Park. This is a fairly unusual sighting, as the Myrtle race is an eastern race of the species.

Clara Mason  
Programs, Admiralty Audubon  

AAS Annual Potluck Picnic  
Sunday, 10 June 2012, 1 pm  
Pope Marine Park  
Pope Marine Park on Water Street (next to the new Northwest Maritime Center) will be the setting for our annual “end of the year” potluck picnic. Come early to bird along the waterfront. Bring a dish to share and your table setting (plate, utensils, cup). Relax and enjoy visiting with other Chapter members.

Clara Mason  
Programs, Admiralty Audubon  

Bird Survey Report Update  
In the process of analysing the field results for our two-year bird survey at Kah Tai, we were fortunate to gain access to several historic bird lists and surveys from the area, thanks to diligent record-keepers among the Friends of Kah Tai. Their archives yielded a copy of a bird survey performed from June 1978 to June 1979 by Eleanor Stopps and Bernard Beck, the first President of AAS. Also discovered were surveys done by Bess Dickerson (1982); AAS member (and former AAS President) Janet Kearsley and Dennis Paulson (1985); and an anonymous survey from August 1996 through September 1998.

The Stopps-Beck survey is a special treasure. It was done on a Tahoma Audubon form, with ‘Tahoma’ crossed out and ‘Admiralty’ written above it in Eleanor’s hand. Our chapter was only a year old at the time and we didn’t have our own bird lists yet. The results of their count are what was reported in the 1980 grant proposal written for Land and Water Conservation Funds to create Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park. The final grant Project Resume highlights that ‘Audubon Society identified lagoon as fragile shoreline habitat’. Letters of support from Admiralty Audubon and the National Audubon Board of Directors figure prominently in the final grant documents that were transmitted between the State Intergovernmental Agency for Outdoor Recreation (now RCO) and the Federal Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (now NPS) that completed the process for the federal grant to create the park.
AAS Field Trip Report March-April 2012

Skagit Valley Trip, 3 March 2012. Trip Leader Dan Waggoner. Due to weather and ferry cancellations we only had 4 members on our field trip. We had a great day and the rain held off till the drive home. We saw a total of 66 species for the day. The only disappointment was that we struck out on a Snowy Owl. Spent time looking at the differences between Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. They are actually not easy to separate in the field without good looks. Highlights, besides the swans were thousands of Snow Geese, 150+ Bald Eagles (including 30 in one tree!), Northern Harriers, Rough-legged Hawks, Eurasian Wigeons, Red-throated Loon and a Northern Shrike.

Marine Spit at Fort Flagler, 4 April 2012. Trip Leader Paula Vanderheul. The field trip was enjoyed by John and Diane Obermeyer visiting from Grand Rapids MI, Jennifer W. from Pt Townsend, Elaine E from Pt Ludlow, and the field trip leader’s grandson Andrew from Pt Hadlock. A beautiful day for walking the shoreline! We had wonderful views of Brants, Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Bufflehead, two Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, two Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, all three Cormorants, a breeding plumage Common Loon, breeding plumage Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, and a good number of shorebirds near the point of the spit...100 Black-bellied Plover, six Black Turnstone, five Sanderling, two Western Sandpiper, eight Dunlin, and Glaucous-winged Gull. A great time for us all. A total of 48 species.

The Other End of the Lens

Our very own Field Trip Chair David Gluckman was featured recently in the Seattle Times (http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/outdoors/2018012465 Hartography22.html). He was captured in his familiar role of wildlife photographer at the Crane Festival in Othello WA. David is not usually on the receiving end of a lens, but here he is in his field camouflage (preferred because it doesn’t show dirt, he insists) and armed to the teeth with his cannon-like 600 mm lens (right, photo by Christy Karras).

Fort Worden, 27 April 2012. Trip Leaders David Beatty, David Gluckman and Dan Waggoner led this trip through upper Fort Worden, accompanied by 20+ lucky birders. We were amazed by a raptor migration spectacle including 30+ Red-tailed Hawks, 5 Bald Eagles, 4 Turkey Vultures, 3 Cooper’s Hawks and 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, and we were entertained by the display flights of a couple Anna’s Hummingbirds. Sightings included Double-crested Cormorants, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Rock Pigeons, Rufous Hummingbird, Hammond’s Flycatcher (probable), Crow, Violet-green and Barn Swallows, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Bewick’s Wren, Pacific Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Starlings, Orange-crowned Warbler, Spotted Towhee, Song, White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Pine Siskins, American Goldfinches and House Sparrows. Five of David Gluckman’s photos are at http://www.flickr.com/photos/37079820@N07/

GBBC 2012 Final Results

The Great Backyard Bird Count is complete. Ranks listed are for counts reported for the US and Canada. Port Townsend: #1 - Black Turnstones; Port Ludlow: #3 - Pacific Loons; Brinnon: #9 - Brants, one of only two west coast locations in the top 10; Nordland: #8 - Black-bellied Plovers; #15 - Dunlin. Port Townsend ranked #30 for Common Goldeneye, the only west coast location in the top 30, and #33 in Ruddy Ducks as one of only two Pacific Northwest locations in the top 40.
Eleanor Stopps: Friend, Bird Lover, Protector of Protection Island

I first met Eleanor when I interviewed her for the Jefferson County Historical Society many years after she was able to get Protection Island preserved as a National Wildlife Refuge. We became instant friends, she just had that kind of personality. Eleanor never tired of talking about the island with the same passion and dedication she had always had.

Eleanor continued to keep watch over the island to the end and would always write a letter or make a call if she felt there were possible changes to the habitat and kept in touch with and was always consulted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife who oversee the island.

My last visit with Eleanor, just five days before her passing, she was still reminiscing about the times she and Zella* would go to the island and band birds, and about the clinic for sick and injured birds they ran in Seattle for years. Her family had placed a birdbath and suet feeder outside her window and she was naming all of the birds that had come to visit it as we watched a towhee taking a bath.

Eleanor was very proud of founding Admiralty Audubon and mentioned it frequently, even during our last visit. She got her love of birds from her father and then later Zella. She loved all birds, but gulls had a special place in her heart because of her times banding gulls with Zella on Protection Island. At her home on Mats Mats Bay, the gulls would come to her window and knock on the window when they wanted to be fed; she kept a bag of dog food right by the door and would throw a handful out for them.

Eleanor was never boastful or wanting of recognition for what she did, but she was very proud of the many awards she had received and displayed them prominently on her wall, one being the Oak Leaf Award, the highest award given nationally by the Nature Conservancy.

When asked by Libby Palmer of the Marine Science Center why she did what she did she said, “What else could I do? This is the only thing that could be done for the birds. It had to be done…and there was no one else around to do it. So I did. You know its about our own survival too. Feeding those birds outside the window reminds me each day…of how we all help each other in this world. Most people think about our problems today as being beyond them. People told me it was hopeless, but it can be done. I just never would take no for an answer. Whenever I see it I’m reminded all over again of what a special place this is.”

*Zella Schultz, artist, author of “On the Wings of the Wild Wind”, and Fish and Wildlife person who Eleanor met and banded birds with. Zella had been working to get protection for Protection Island for years before meeting Eleanor and after Zella’s unexpected death, Eleanor continued the work, selling Zella’s original art work and prints to raise money to purchase lots on the island which had been previously sold.

Robin Ornelas
Member, Admiralty Audubon

Eleanor offers lunch to a member of her favorite species, at home on Mats Mats Bay, summer 2011. Photo by Robin Ornelas.
A Final Spring Cleanup at Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park
27 May 2012

Come join us for the last Kah Tai weed pull and garbage pickup workparty before summer Sunday, May 27 from 9:30am to 12:30pm. The Scot’s Broom will be blooming to make it easier to spot them. Park at the Chase Bank parking lot. Wear work clothes and bring work gloves. Weed wrenches, garbage bags, water, and homemade cookies will be provided for volunteers. For more information contact Rosemary Sikes (rosemarysikes@olympus.net or 385-0307).

Rosemary Sikes
President, Admiralty Audubon

Nontoxic Lagoon

The urban myth that Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park is contaminated by heavy metals has been dispelled with a little legwork from some Admiralty Audubon members and some impressive record-keeping by the Friends of Kah Tai to uncover the 1986 student report that started the whole misguided mythology.

The simple end to a convoluted story is that the park was sampled by the State Department of Ecology in 2001 and no contamination of human or environmental concern was found, but the DOE did not forward the final report to the City. The full report has now been shared with the City and the Port. Anyone else who wants it is welcome to a copy.

Habitat Protection

You might wonder what habitat your Audubon Chapter is working to protect with our ‘habitat protection fund’ and efforts. A few of the many examples: The first such effort for AAS was getting National Wildlife Refuge status for Protection Island in 1982.

In 1999, AAS donated a $5000 match toward land and easement acquisition in the Quimper Wildlife Corridor. The Corridor consists of 176.6 acres of easements to date, protected by the Jefferson Land Trust.

Our chapter donates $400-$500 each year to the Jefferson Land Trust (http://saveland.org), in support of their efforts to preserve open space, working lands, and habitat.

AAS has been involved in protecting and improving habitat at Kah Tai for more than 30 years (see for example: Bird Survey Report Update on page 2 of this newsletter).

A modern iteration of the Kah Tai Alliance was formed in September 2000 and included Admiralty Audubon, Jefferson Land Trust, Friends of Kah Tai, People for a Livable Community and Port Townsend High School Environmental Club. The Alliance proposed an Adopt-A-Park program to the City and stepped forward to adopt Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park in 2001 as Port Townsend’s first Adopt-A-Park effort.

In 2011, Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park was officially re-adopted by Admiralty Audubon and the Friends of Kah Tai.

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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

Membership includes 5 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!
Admiralty Audubon Officers and Board

President: Rosemary Sikes 360-385-0307 rosemarysikes@olympus.net
Vice President: David Beatty 360-774-1847 djb38@olypen.com
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Program & Publicity Chairs Needed

AAS needs a new Program Chair and a new Publicity Chair in the fall. Both positions have been filled by dedicated members who have decided that it is time for someone else to take a turn. Please consider applying for one of these positions. The Program Chair makes possible our monthly public programs by locating interesting speakers and organizes our June potluck. The Publicity Chair keeps the public informed about our monthly programs, birding walks and other events. Contact the chapter president (contact info above) for more information.

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Brown Creeper, Certhia americana