



Mission of Arctic Audubon:
Earth has unparalleled natural diversity, productivity, and beauty, and provides for life. Recognizing the full value of nature, we work to protect Alaskan ecosystems by encouraging research, education, and management that will contribute to appreciation and good stewardship of this natural heritage. We also strive to conduct our own lives in harmony with nature.

The Arctic Audubon Society publishes *The Redpoll* for its members monthly fall through spring. National Audubon Society (NAS) dues are \$35; new members are \$20. NAS membership includes local chapter dues. Chapter only membership is \$10 and includes the newsletter.



Participate in
Thanksgiving Bird
Count and Fairbanks
FeederCount
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The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

Vol. 29 Issue No. 2

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The role of habitat assessment in big game management

presentation by Tom Paragi, ADF&G

Monday, November 13, 7:00 pm

Noel Wien Library Auditorium



Moose in willows

photo by Tom Paragi

Moose and caribou are important in the culture, sustenance, and livelihood of many Alaskans living in the boreal forest region. However, the unequal distribution of people and game on the landscape, the influence of the rising cost of fossil fuel on transportation, a growing human population, and divergent public values on wildlife management make the job of wildlife managers more challenging than ever.

Tom Paragi will begin by characterizing some key principles of big game management and how the 1994 “intensive management law” is being implemented in interior Alaska. The law lists habitat enhancement through fire management or forestry practices as a tool for recovering or maintaining abundant populations of big game. Public criticism has largely focused on predator control and rarely has recognized recent efforts at forage evaluation and habitat enhancement.

Following this brief introduction on the broader issues, most of the talk will focus on:

- how habitat influences moose populations in boreal forest,
- practical considerations in assessing forage abundance at the large scale of Game Management Units, and
- how habitat assessment may play a role in prioritizing where recovery efforts for moose populations may be most effective.

The different technical challenges of recovering low moose populations in rural areas vs. controlling abundant moose populations near urban centers will also be discussed.

Tom Paragi has served as a wildlife biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Fairbanks since 1999 to evaluate methods for enhancing wildlife habitat in the boreal forest. His research has involved forestry practices and prescribed fire, and he has worked with land managers to encourage wildland fire where wildlife habitat is a primary objective. He moved to Alaska in 1985 and has worked for the U.S. Forest Service on the Chugach National Forest and for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on several national wildlife refuges across Alaska. Tom is a member of Arctic Audubon and has degrees in wildlife management from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and the University of Maine.

Time for Fairbanks FeederCount

The Fairbanks FeederCount is a citizen science program sponsored by the Alaska Bird Observatory (ABO) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. It is designed to track long-term trends in abundance and large-scale movements of winter bird populations in the Fairbanks area. Combined with information from the Christmas Bird Count, these observations provide a snapshot of the population status of our hardy winter residents.

Participants count birds at their feeders on three Saturdays (or within a week of that date) over the winter and report their findings on a datasheet. Participation is free. This winter's target dates are November 18, December 12, and March 3.

Forms and count instructions are available on ABO's website, www.alaskabird.org/ABOFeederCount.html, or at the ABO Center for Education & Research during normal business hours. Please call 451-7159 if you have any questions.

One Day in October Along the Tanana

by Gail Mayo

The descending grays of winter are felt most acutely before snow settles in to brighten our landscapes. The cloudy skies of late September stretched on into October this year, until Friday the 13th. Morning clouds diminished as a bright sun warmed the afternoon. We assembled a cook-out, binoculars, and jackets and headed to Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest where a tall bluff overlooks the Tanana River and its floodplain. A thick fog covered the flats south of the river, but the mountains lined the horizon with unusual clarity.

We strolled the edge of the bluff, enjoying the sun-warmed scent of sage growing along the steep drop-off. We sat, dangling our legs over the edge and quietly traded thoughts and news for our ears were tuned to the sky, alert for sounds of the final ritual of fall. The faintest commotion caught our attention and we turned, looking and listening to locate its source. There they are!

Off to the east in an undulating "V" flashing white and black, about 30 Trumpeter Swans headed toward the mountains. Flying fairly high in the deepening sky, we watched until they became specks and then disappeared. Again the gabbling commotion and another smaller flock passed over, followed by some stragglers. A squirrel chattered in the tall spruce below us, and a trio of jays floated by. More swans and then a short serenade from an Evening Grosbeak perched in a small aspen tree right over our heads.

We moved into a forest opening to start our cooking fire. More swans. We returned to the bluff to finish a perfect day, watching alpenglow paint the mountains as sunset colors deepened in the western sky. Suddenly our ears caught the swan sound echoing about us, and two large groups passed close overhead, trumpeting and whistling southward into the night.

Teshkepuk Lake

by Stan Senner, Executive Director of Audubon Alaska

Many of you have been tracking the fate of Teshkepuk Lake in the northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) and know that last January the Secretary of the Interior signed a decision to allow oil and gas leasing in the critical goose and caribou habitat around the lake. Audubon Alaska does not oppose expanded leasing in NPR-A, provided that the most important of its wildlife habitats—such as the area around Teshkepuk Lake—are protected. Accordingly, Audubon was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit challenging Interior's decision to lease the area north and east of the lake.

On September 25th, a federal district court issued a decision that puts the Teshkepuk Lake lease sale on ice because of Interior's failure to fully consider the cumulative effects of oil and gas activity in both northeast and northwest NPR-A. This decision gives Audubon and others more time to make a stronger case for permanent protection of this vital Arctic wetland. We'll keep you posted.

2006 Thanksgiving Bird Count Form

Thanksgiving (window watch) Bird Count

Counter's name and mailing address:

_____ Zip _____

Location of Count _____

Date: _____ Temp. _____

Time: Begin _____ End _____

Weather _____

Habitat type _____

Feeders/baths (types) _____

Feeders/baths (number) _____

Procedures for Count: Select a circular area on the ground (may include water area), 15 feet in diameter, to include feeders, bird baths, shrubs, etc., as you wish. Imagine the circle extending upward as a cylinder. Count the numbers of individual birds of each species that come into this circle (or cylinder) during exactly **one hour**. Try to judge as best you can the actual number of individuals that are making visits to the Circle or that fly through the imaginary cylinder. Try **NOT** to count the same individual bird over and over again! Please print clearly the number for each species in the "In Circle" column. If you wish to report any seen outside the Circle, list them in the "Outside" column.

Pick any ONE-HOUR period during the day—and make the count on Thanksgiving Day! Please send your count results (even if you see no birds at all) to:

Dr. John G. Hewston
 Natural Resources Building
 Humboldt State University
 Arcata, CA 95521



Record your observations on the field form below.

Species Seen	In Circle	Outside
California Quail		
Rock Pigeon		
Mourning Dove		
Anna's Hummingbird		
Northern Flicker		
Woodpecker: _____		
Steller's Jay		
Blue Jay		
Western Scrub Jay		
Black-billed Magpie		
Common Raven		
American Crow		
Chestnut-backed Chickadee		
Black-capped Chickadee		
Mountain Chickadee		
Red-breasted Nuthatch		
White-breasted Nuthatch		
Northern Mockingbird		
American Robin		
Golden-crowned Kinglet		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		
Cedar Waxwing		
European Starling		
Yellow-rumped Warbler		
Spotted (Rufous-S) Towhee		
White-crowned Sparrow		
Golden-crowned Sparrow		
Fox Sparrow		
Song Sparrow		
Dark-eyed Junco		
Red-winged Blackbird		
Purple Finch		
House Finch		
Lesser Goldfinch		
American Goldfinch		
Pine Siskin		
Evening Grosbeak		
House Sparrow		
Other species:		

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Upcoming Events--Mark Your Calendar

Farthest North Conservation Film Festival

November 10-11 at Pioneer Park. Information at www.farnorthfilms.com or 456-0528.

Habitat Assessment and Big Game Management, Monday, Nov. 13, 7:00 pm, Noel Wien Library

Tom Paragi of ADF&G will discuss issues of game management and how habitat assessment may play a role in population recovery efforts.

Thanksgiving for the Birds, Saturday, Nov. 25

Family activities from Noon-4 pm at the Creamer's Field Farmhouse.

Arctic Audubon Board Meeting, Monday, Dec. 5, 5:30 pm, UAF Natural Sciences Facility

Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, December 30

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

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Birding Hotline (907) 451-9213

Updated by Laurel Devaney & Ken Russell

Report interesting bird sightings;
learn what others have spotted.

also at

www.virtualbirder.com/vbirder/realbirds/index.html

National Audubon Society New Member Form

Introductory rate, \$20

Two Year membership, \$30

Student or Senior rate \$15

Membership includes both National Audubon and the local chapter, Arctic Audubon. You will receive National Audubon's magazine, *Audubon*, and Arctic Audubon's newsletter, *The Redpoll*.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City

State

Zip

I do not want the Audubon Society to share my name with other organizations.

Amount enclosed: \$_____ (Make check payable to National Audubon Society)

Send to: Arctic Audubon Society

PO Box 82098

Fairbanks, AK 99708

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Chapter Only Membership, \$10

For membership in Arctic Audubon Society *only*, check box and make check payable to Arctic Audubon.