

The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

Vol. 29 Issue No. 5

March 2007



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.

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Marathon Migrants: Shorebirds of Alaska's North Slope

presentation by Audrey Taylor

Monday, March 12, 7:00 pm

Noel Wien Library Auditorium



A handful of peeps!

The North Slope of Alaska teems with bird life in the short Arctic summer, and many of these visitors are shorebirds that migrate here from far-flung corners of the world. This presentation will illuminate some of the fascinating natural history characteristics of Arctic-breeding shorebirds and describe some recent developments in our understanding of their unique biology and ecology. You'll also learn why an Alaskan shorebird biologist would go to China in January!



Audrey Taylor holding a Red-necked Phalarope

Audrey Taylor spent many summers during her formative years on the coast of Maine, but moved to Alaska to study her favorite coastal species (shorebirds) in 2003. She has an undergraduate degree in Natural Resources from Cornell University and an MS in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University. She is currently working on a PhD in shorebird ecology at UAF.

Audubon Field Trips for the Spring Season

- March 24 Owl listening field trip. Meet at the Farmhouse at Creamer's Field at 8 pm to listen to recorded owl calls and then carpool to hopeful listening sites. A map of locations for listening will be available. Dress appropriately to be standing outside for up to 20 minutes at each stop. For more information, contact Tom Green at 452-6370 or fftkg@uaf.edu.
- May 5 Waterfowl field trip. Meet at Creamer's Refuge back by the big barns at 9 am. Bring binoculars, a snack, and rubber boots if you have them.
- May 12 Shorebird field trip. Meet at Creamer's Refuge back by the big barns at 9 am. Bring binoculars, a snack, and rubber boots if you have them.
- May 19 Birding by ear. Check for time and location in next month's *Redpoll*.
- May 23 Birdathon walk with Sherry Lewis, 7 to 9 pm. Meet at Creamer's Refuge back by the big barns. Minimum \$5 donation to participate.
- May 26 Birdathon Walk with Gail Mayo, 9 to 11 am. Meet at the west end of west ridge, UAF campus. Minimum \$5 donation to participate.

Arctic Audubon Offers Small Grants

Arctic Audubon Society's Small Grants Program funds conservation related projects that support our mission to protect Alaskan ecosystems by encouraging research, education, and management that will contribute to appreciation and good stewardship of our natural heritage.

In 2007, Arctic Audubon will consider applications for small grants of up to \$2,000. Partial funding may be offered to successful applicants. Projects should enhance the understanding and conservation of Alaska's organisms and/or ecosystems. Projects dedicated to increasing public awareness and knowledge of conservation issues will also be considered. High school and middle school students and organizations are encouraged to apply.

Applicants should submit a cover letter introducing themselves, a single page description of the project, a budget, and a timeline for completion. Successful recipients will be expected to submit a report of outcomes and be willing to give a short presentation on the project (if requested).

Applications are due March 15, 2007. For information about Arctic Audubon Society, please visit our website at www.arcticaudubon.org. Please direct questions and submit all materials to arcticaudubon@netscape.net.

Alaska Spring Birding Festivals

Fairbanks Spring Migration Celebration

Saturday, April 28th, Noon-4:00 pm

Activities for all ages at three locations: Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, Alaska Bird Observatory, Alaska Public Lands Information Center.

Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival

May 3-6, 2007 in Cordova, Alaska

Many activities, workshops and community events are offered throughout the festival. More information is available online at www.cordovachamber.com or by contacting the Cordova Chamber of Commerce at 907-424-7260 or cchamber@ctak.net.

Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival

May 10-13, 2007 in Homer Alaska

This year's festival will be a weekend of celebration, education and exploration for birders of all ages and abilities. The festival program and registration information is available at www.homer.alaska.org.



© Ken Whitten



Electronic Recycling

Saturdays, April 21st and 28th

10:00 am to 4:00 pm



Interior Alaska Green Star, along with several supporting groups, is planning the second annual Electronic Recycling event to be held in Fairbanks. Last year's e-recycle event was held on one Saturday in April at the Taku parking lot on the UAF campus, targeting the general public. This year the plan is to expand to two events on consecutive Saturdays in April and target small businesses and non-profits along with the general public. The first will be on April 21st at the UAF Taku parking lot; the second will be the following Saturday, April 28th, at the Lathrop High School parking lot.

Televisions, computers and monitors, laptops, keyboards, mice, modems, external drives, scanners, printers, copy machines, VCRs, DVD players, stereos, radios, phones, fax machines, camcorders, electric typewriters, microwave ovens, coffeemakers will be accepted. Fees for recycling range from \$5 to \$25. Visit the website, iagreenstar.org, for more information.

Volunteers needed !!!

These events will require a variety of volunteer helpers to make them a success and run smoothly. We will need people to greet and process arrivals, note inventory and label pallets, a couple of certified forklift drivers, and of course some strong folks to unload and then stack PCs and other electronics. The event will run from 10 am to 4 pm with each day divided into two volunteer shifts of about 3.5 hours.

If you or your organization is interested in helping, please contact Eva Rothman at Eva@iagreenstar.org or (907) 452-4152.

New Greenbelt Project Conserves Open Space in West Fairbanks

By Sally Andersen, Chena Flats Greenbelt Project Coordinator

The Chena Flats Greenbelt Project has announced that a total of 177 acres of wetlands along the base of Chena Ridge have been purchased as the first parcels of a proposed greenbelt. The proposed greenbelt would stretch from the intersection of Chena Pump and Chena Ridge Roads, along the base of the ridge south, all the way to the Tanana River. The goal of the resident-driven Greenbelt Project is to establish a corridor of open space for the purposes of recreation, water conservation, and wildlife habitat.

The properties include some of the best and largest remaining examples of open water and sedge meadow wetlands in the immediate Fairbanks area and provide habitat for moose, swans, cranes, lynx, and other wildlife. Dog mushers, skiers, and snow machiners use this area as well.

Surveys for waterbirds and songbirds were conducted in the spring and summer of 2006. Eight waterbird and 24 songbird species were observed during the surveys, including Rusty Blackbird, Bohemian Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Varied Thrush.

The Chena Flats Greenbelt Project is a collaborative effort involving Fairbanks residents, landowners within the proposed greenbelt, and support from the Interior Alaska Land Trust. Funds for the first two purchases were provided by private donations from area residents, The Conservation Fund, a grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, and a trails grant from the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

For more information or to volunteer, visit the Project's website at www.chenaflats.org.

Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Update

On February 13th, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) hosted a public meeting to present updated information about plans for the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area, a 750-acre multiuse park south of the City of Fairbanks along the Tanana River. FNSB and USKH representatives involved with the project were available to answer questions and explain the maps and information displayed. A proposal may be presented to the Borough Assembly in late April.

The project is a long-range, multi-phased effort, with gravel extraction activities and park development spanning the course of 15-20 years or more. In October 2006, the FNSB contracted with USKH Inc., an Alaska-based architecture, engineering, surveying, and planning firm, to prepare a Master Plan for the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area.

Visit the FNSB website for to view maps and project updates: www.co.Fairbanks.ak.us/ParksandRecreation/OngoingProjects/

A Redpoll Note

By Gail Mayo



A few weeks ago a friend mentioned being out wandering in the woods at night when a small bird flew up from under her feet. This set us to wondering what species it might have been. It did seem a good strategy, and we spooled through the other birds we know of that do use snow as insulation. We wondered, could it have been a Redpoll?

A short visit to *The Birds of North America* confirmed this guess. Several authors have reported observations including Redpolls entering the snow to feed. The Redpoll "makes a roosting chamber in snow. It drops from a tree into the snow making a tunnel 27 to 40 cm. long to a chamber 6 to 11 cm. below the snow surface, breaking the roof to depart." You can access *The Birds of North America* online at

<http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/>

Legislative Fly-In March 11-13, Juneau

Fly-In is an opportunity to develop your activist skills, meet with legislators, and build up knowledge on how to make your voice heard at the capitol and in any campaign! The Fly-In is intended to be one part learning, one part practicing, and one part hands-on experience in our state capitol for anyone who is—or aspires to be—a conservation activist or advocate. Anyone interested in learning more about conservation issues and how to make a difference is welcome to apply.

The Legislative Fly-In is sponsored by the Alaska Conservation Alliance, a state-wide coalition of conservation groups and businesses. For more information or to obtain an application, contact Suzanne Bostrom by email at Suzanne@akvoice.org or call 907-463-3366. *Space is limited, applications should be submitted as soon as possible.*



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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Marathon Migrants: Shorebirds of Alaska’s North Slope,
 Monday, March 12, 7:00 pm, Noel Wien Library
 Audrey Taylor’s presentation on our Arctic birds.

Arctic Audubon Board meeting, Thursday, March 29,
 5:30 pm, Rm 300 Natural Science Facility, UAF

Arctic Audubon Program, Monday, April 9, 7:00 pm,
 Noel Wien Library Auditorium.

Tricia Wurtz’s presentation on invasive plants.

Electronic Recycling, Saturdays April 21 and 28,
 10 am –4 pm. Details on page two.

Spring Migration Celebration, Saturday, April 28,
 Noon–4:00 pm. Activities at three locations.

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

email address: arcticaudubon@netscape.net

President: Gail Mayo

Vice President: Open

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Field Trips: Tom Green

Birdathon: Sherry Lewis)

Web Site: Jim Logan

Alaska Audubon Board: Frank Keim

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.

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 _____

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

Send to: Arctic Audubon Society **A52**
 PO Box 82098 **7XCH**
 Fairbanks, AK 99708

- Chapter Only Membership, \$10

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