

The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

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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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Join Us for a Seasonal Feast of Birds

by Gail Mayo, Count Coordinator

Please plan to join us for the annual Christmas Bird Count—it will be the 47th time Fairbanksans have demonstrated their verve and talent for finding birds in a sometimes bleak land. Last year 89 observers plus 39 feeder watchers identified and counted 10,077 birds representing 24 species. In Alaska we were one of 36 count circles recording 140 species and 142,821 individuals. In all of North America we were one of 2,052 counts (1,624 in the United States) in which 57,851 observers spied 69,354,406 birds of 1,894 species.

Amongst all those counters, Fairbanks managed to see the highest number of Three-toed Woodpeckers (4) and Boreal Chickadees (298). We were edged out of the record for Ravens (2,376 to our 1,459) by a California count. This pyramid of information came from volume 61 of *American Birds*, *The 107th Christmas Bird Count*.

Christmas Bird Count is a long standing American tradition. It is in this spirit that many of us most enjoy the day, no matter how cold or snowy it may be. It feels good to break away from the holiday rush and instead spend at least part of the day out of doors searching for birds with your friends and neighbors. After over 100 years of gathering numbers the Christmas Bird Count is used to track changing bird populations and discover trends. The Fairbanks count is reaching toward 50 and represents a useful tool for understanding bird populations in the north. Plan to join us on December 29th to be part of the fun and part of the history. Hope to see you there.

Natural History of Golden Eagles in Denali

presentation by Dr. Carol McIntyre, wildlife biologist

Tuesday, January 8, 7:00 pm

Noel Wien Library Auditorium



Often known as Alaska's "other" eagle, Golden Eagles are one of the most common raptors living in foothills of the central Alaska Range. Golden Eagles originating in this region of Alaska are migratory, with many individuals traveling from 2,000 kilometers to more than 10,000 kilometers annually between

Alaska and their wintering areas across southwestern Canada, the western United States, and northern Mexico. Carol will discuss some of the results of her 21-year study of Golden Eagles in Denali National Park and Preserve highlighting their nesting ecology, migratory journeys, and conservation issues.

Carol McIntyre is a wildlife biologist with Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska where she has been studying Golden Eagles and other birds since 1987. She received her M.S. from University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and her Ph.D. from Oregon State University.

Golden Eagle photos are by Carol McIntyre



Fairbanks Hosts 13th Biennial Alaska Bird Conference

March 3–7, 2008



One of the photos in the new "Fairbanks Area Hiking and Birding Map" is of Mary Teel hiking the Pinnell Mountain Trail near Eagle Summit. Photo by Ron Teel

Arctic Audubon Publishes Hiking and Birding Map

The Arctic Audubon Society is pleased to announce the publication of its new *Fairbanks Area Hiking and Birding Map*, which will finally be available by sometime around Christmas. With graphics by Elizabeth Clark, it is a very beautiful fold-out map. On the back it contains detailed descriptions of the 35 birding and hiking locations indicated on the map. These descriptions are interspersed with color photos provided by both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local photographers. At the top of the map itself is an annotated bird list of all the birds that are regularly found in the Fairbanks area.

The map's primary author is Frank Keim, and it is fashioned after a similar map written and produced by Stacy Studebaker and Hans Tschersich from the Kodiak Audubon Society. Gail Mayo also contributed greatly to the map with her time and effort.

The map will be sold for \$12 and will be available at the Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center Gift Shop, the Alaska Bird Observatory, and other Fairbanks locations to be determined.

The Local Planning Committee is delighted to announce that Scott Weidensaul will be the special guest and keynote speaker at the 13th Biennial Alaska Bird Conference to be held in Fairbanks next March. An acclaimed author and naturalist, Mr. Weidensaul has written more than two dozen books on natural history, including his widely acclaimed *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, which was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction. Other recent titles include *The Ghost with Trembling Wings: Science, Wishful Thinking and the Search for Lost Species*, about the search for animals that may or may not be extinct; *Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul*, an ambitious journey to take the pulse of America's wildlife and wildlands; and his most recent book, *Of a Feather: A Brief History of American Birding* which traces 400 years of ornithological history. In addition to writing about wildlife, Mr. Weidensaul is an active field researcher whose work focuses on bird migration.



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The Alaska Bird Conference schedule and registration information is available at www.alaskabird.org. Mr. Weidensaul will give two presentations as part of the conference:

Tuesday, March 4, Free Public Program—“Living on the Wind: The World of Migratory Birds”

Join naturalist and author Scott Weidensaul on an exploration of how and why birds migrate, and the conservation challenges that face them, based on his book, *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*. The program ranges from the doorstep of the Aleutians in Alaska, and the frozen edge of Hudson Bay in Canada, through the rainforests of Central and South America to the grassy pampas of Argentina, and is filled with the drama and sweep of this remarkable phenomenon.

Thursday, March 6, Keynote Address – “Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul”

In 1955, naturalists Roger Tory Peterson and James Fisher published their bestselling book *Wild America*, chronicling a now-legendary 30,000-mile trip across North America. Fifty years later, author Scott Weidensaul has retraced their epic journey, to see what we've gained and lost, and to catch a glimpse of what the future holds for wildlife and wild lands.

47TH ANNUAL FAIRBANKS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
Saturday, December 29, 2007 during daylight hours
Compilation Potluck dinner at 5:30 pm at the Girl Scout Hall

To participate contact the coordinator of the area in which you want to count. Please call or e-mail soon to give the coordinators time to organize. If you have no preference, or can't reach your coordinator please call or e-mail the compiler, Gail Mayo at 479-2954 or mayogail@gmail.com.

West Goldstream

Andrea Swingley
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University

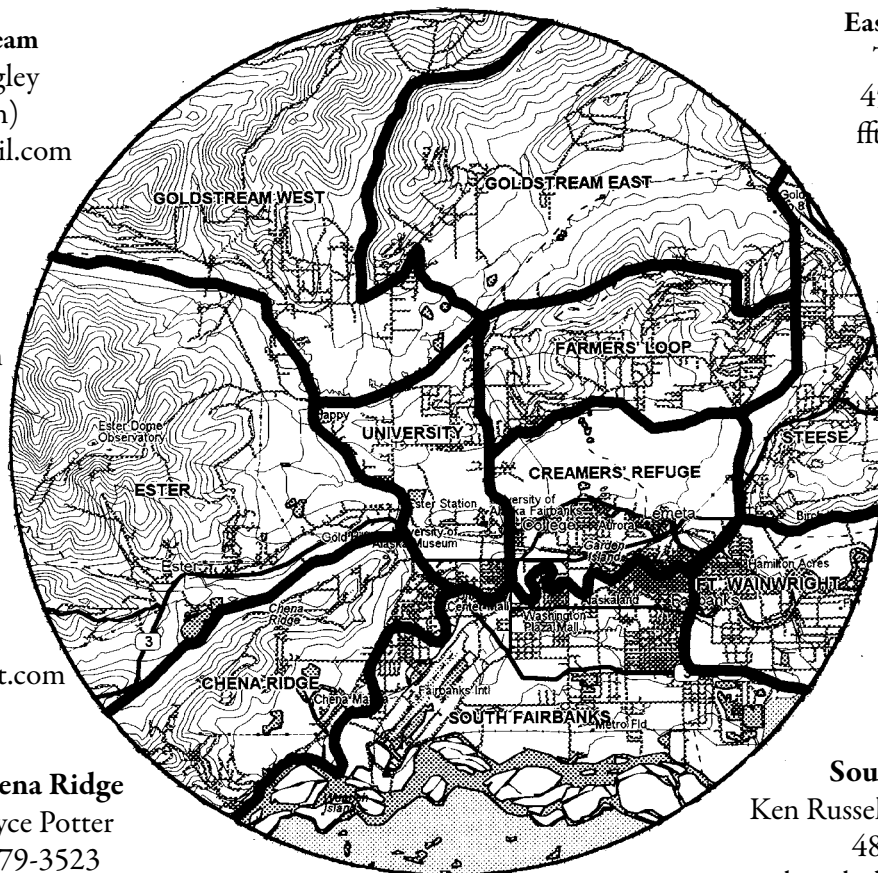
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 452-6370 (h)
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Steese/Wainwright

Pam Bruce
 488-0283
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Creamer's Refuge

Mark Ross
 459-7301 (w)
 mark.ross@alaska.gov

South Fairbanks

Ken Russell & Laurel Devaney
 488-8170 (h)
 laurel_devaney@fws.gov

Each Christmas Bird Count lasts 24 hours and covers a 177 square mile circle that is 15 miles in diameter. Centered on the intersection of Yankovich and Dalton Trail, the Fairbanks circle includes Ester Dome, parts of the Tanana and Chena Rivers, the dump, Ft. Wainwright cooling ponds and plenty of typical Interior habitat.

The object of the count is to observe birds in as much of the count circle as possible without duplication. Because our daylight time is limited we need many field observers willing to cover assigned areas. **Each bird must be identified** (at least to genus). Birds are also counted at feeders by observers who record the largest number of birds of each species seen together on that day. **Field counters and feeder counters should contact their area coordinator.** Please use the data entry sheet on the reverse side to record your observations and bring it to the compilation potluck. During "count week" (the three days before and after count day), additional species seen or heard within the count circle can be added to the final list of species observed.

Plan to join us after dark for the **compilation and potluck dinner (meat provided) at the Girl Scout Hall**, on the southeast corner of the College Road and Old Steese Highway intersection, across the road and to the east of the Bentley Mall. **Doors open at 5:00, dinner at 5:30.** We are looking forward to seeing you there.

A \$5 fee is required from all field observers over 18 years old. All observers under 18, feeder watchers and owl listeners are not required to pay, but will not receive the CBC issue of *American Birds* if they do not pay. Make sure we have your correct mailing address, and tell us **if** you do not wish to receive the CBC issue.

The Christmas Bird Count is on-line with data from 1900 to present at: www.audubon.org

If you can't attend the potluck be sure to contact your area coordinator before 5 pm

2007 Audubon Christmas Bird Count (108th); the 47th in Fairbanks, Alaska December 29, 2007

2007 DATA ENTRY SHEET

Area: _____	Parties	2003	2004	2005	2006
_____		75	80	65	86
_____	Car	684	535	489	527
_____	Foot	70	76	67	66
Observer: _____	Ski/SShoe	4	27	29	73
_____	Other	23	33	25	10
Observer: _____					
_____	Car	85	79	72	78
_____	Foot	49	54	58	47
Observer: _____	Ski/SShoe	2	13	11	30
_____	Other	3	7	5	2
Observer: _____	Feeder	204	204	181	66
Add'l Species Observed During Count Week					
	Feeder Count				
	Field Count				
		27	122	106	188
	Mallard				
	Northern Shoveler				1
	Common Merganser	1	8	10	21
	Duck sp.				1
	Sharp-shinned Hawk				1
	Northern Goshawk	2	1	3	2
	Merlin				0
	Gyrfalcon				0
	Spruce Grouse	*	2	18	0
	Willow Ptarmigan	3			3
	Ptarmigan sp.	2			0
	Ruffed Grouse	14	9	22	18
	Sharp-tailed Grouse		1		0
	Rock Pigeon	131	123	545	134
	Great Horned Owl	*	2	6	0
	Northern Hawk Owl		*	8	0
	Great Grey Owl				0
	Boreal Owl	*	3	3	0
	Downy Woodpecker	13	21	23	22
	Hairy Woodpecker	19	30	33	26

Add'l Species	Feeder Count	Field Count	2003	2004	2005	2006
		3-toed Woodpecker	1	5	3	4
		Black-backed Woodp'r			1	0
		Woodpecker sp.	5	3	7	0
		Gray Jay	92	127	161	125
		Black-billed Magpie	5	17	9	6
		Common Raven	2007	1767	1644	1459
		Black-cap'd Chickadee	644	851	1177	1012
		Boreal Chickadee	107	239	217	298
		Chickadee sp.	5	56	46	20
		Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	4	4	5
		Brown Creeper	1			0
		American Robin	3	5		0
Add'l Species	Feeder Count	Field Count				
		Bohemian Waxwing	193	131	143	188
		Northern Shrike	*			0
		Golden-crowned Sparrow				0
		White-crowned Sparrow				0
		Lincoln Sparrow				1
		Dark-eyed Junco		1		4
		Snow Bunting				0
		Pine Grosbeak	101	84	35	197
		Common Redpoll	290	4001	798	3064
		Hoary Redpoll	69	64	5	25
		Redpoll sp.	369	4192	879	3248
		Pine Siskin				
		White-winged Crossbill	4	311	4	4

Bird Count Total	4113	12180	5910	10007
Day Species	22	25	26	24
Add'l Species	4	1	6	4
Week Species	26	26	32	28

* Additional Species

Sponsors - Arctic Audubon Society and Alaska Bird Observatory

11th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count “Count for Fun, Count for the Future!”

Millions of novice and accomplished bird watchers can make their fascination with nature add up for science and for the future during the 11th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, led by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. During “Presidents’ Day” weekend, February 15–18, 2008, anyone can count birds from wherever they are and enter their tallies online at www.birdcount.org. These reports create an exciting real-time picture of where the birds are across the continent and contribute valuable information for science and conservation.

People of all ages and experience levels are invited to take part wherever they are—at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges, even counting birds on a balcony. Observers count the highest number of each species they see during at least 15 minutes on one or more of the count days. Then they enter their tallies on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site www.birdcount.org.

The web site provides helpful hints for identifying birds. Participants can compare results from their town or region with others, as checklists pour in from throughout the U.S. and Canada. They can also view bird photos taken by participants during the count and send in their own digital images for the online photo gallery and contest.

For more information on how to participate, including identification tips, photos, bird sounds, maps, and information on over 500 bird species, visit www.birdcount.org.

Rivers and Wildlife Celebration

Friday-Sunday, March 14-16, Kearney, Nebraska

Take the ultimate wildlife trip to the friendliest place in Nebraska to see cranes, waterfowl, and local wildlife all in one weekend!

New This Year:

Audubon Chapter Workshop on Friday, March 14:
“Taking Action for Birds in a Changing Climate”

Featured Speakers:

Robert Bateman — acclaimed wildlife artist
Donald Kroodsma — author of “The Singing Life of Birds”
James Mallman — President of Watchable Wildlife, Inc.

Field Trips:

- Crane viewing blinds along the Platte River at Rowe Sanctuary
- Rainwater Basin (wetlands hosting migrating waterfowl)
- Half-day and full-day trips to local birding hotspots
- Pre- and Post-conference field trips TBA

To obtain a registration brochure, call, write, or go on-line:

402-797-2301

Audubon Nebraska, P.O. Box 117, Denton, NE 68339
Nebraska@audubon.org; www.Nebraska.audubon.org

For crane viewing information:

Rowe Sanctuary - 308/468-5282; www.rowsanctuary.org
Presented by Audubon’s Rowe Sanctuary, Audubon Nebraska,
and the Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation

Audubon Election in Northwest Region

Nominations are now open for the Chapter-selected candidate from the Northwest Election Region to the National Audubon Society Board of Directors. Any Chapter in the Northwest Region may nominate one candidate for the board this fall and winter. The election to choose the candidate will be held in the spring.

Nominees should be willing and able to:

- help set overall national policies,
- articulate the issues and concerns of our region,
- participate in fund raising and maintain the fiscal integrity of National Audubon Society,
- attend three Board meetings per year, each three days in length,
- fill the position for the next three years, beginning January 2009.

Contact a Chapter officer with your suggestions. Nominations must be submitted by January 31, 2008.

Alaska eBird

www.ebird.com/ak

A real-time, online checklist program, eBird has revolutionized the way that the birding community reports and accesses information about birds. Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution at a variety of spatial and temporal scales.



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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, Dec. 29

Details on pages 3 & 4.

**Natural History of Golden Eagles, Tuesday, January 8,
 7:00 pm, Noel Wien Library Auditorium**

National Park biologist Carol McIntyre will discuss results of her 21-year study of Golden Eagles in Denali Park.

**My Little Chickadee: Avian Tales of Winter Survival,
 Wednesday, January 23, 7:00 pm, ABO**

Public presentation by Dr. Susan Sharbaugh.

**East African Safari, Monday, February 11, 7:00 pm.
 Noel Wien Library Auditorium**

Ken Whitten shares images and stories of a month-long safari in Kenya and Tanzania.

Alaska Bird Conference, March 3–7, Fairbanks

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

email address: arcticaudubon@gmail.com

President: Gail Mayo (479-2954)

Vice President: Open

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Treasurer: Janet Daley (457-1583)

Education: Open

Conservation: Kristi McLean (479-4874)

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Field Trips: Tom Green (452-6370)

Birdathon: Sherry Lewis (479-0848)

Web Site: Jim DeWitt

Alaska Audubon Board: Frank Keim (451-9308)

**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.