

The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

Vol. 31 Issue No. 1

October 2008



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.

Inside...

ABO Raffle	2
Alaska IBA Map	3
Birdathon Report	2
Calendar	4
Membership Form	4
Tangle Lakes Update	3
Wilderness Week	2

Arctic Audubon Society presents...

How I Spent My Summer Vacation

7:00 pm, Monday, October 13, 2008

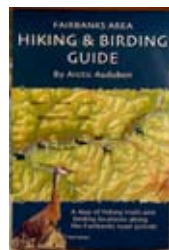
Noel Wien Library Auditorium

Our speaker for the October Audubon program is... YOU! Come trade tales of your summer adventures with fellow Audubon members and nature enthusiasts. Whether your summer vacation was spent in your backyard or in some far-flung corner of the state, we want to hear about it! As always, refreshments will be served. If you wish to participate, please keep the following in mind:



1. Try to limit yourself to 10 slides or photos. Pick "the best of the best" to share with everyone.
2. Keep your stories to 10 minutes or less. We want to give as many people as possible a chance to share.
3. Old-fashioned slides or new-fangled digital photos are fine. Audubon will provide a digital and a slide projector, as well as a laptop.
4. If you plan on sharing digital photos, bring them on a CD or memory stick so we can load them onto one laptop. Please arrive 15 minutes early to load photos. You may also submit digital photos ahead of time via email to arcticaudubon@gmail.com. Email submissions should be sent no later than Sunday, October 12th.

Photos: Above, Lauren Attanas gets friendly with a Snow Goose on the Ikpikpak River Delta; below left, Brook Gamble, Dave Shaw, and Becky Baird raft the Nenana River; and below right, Ken Whitten photographed a moose family in Denali Park.



The Fairbanks Area Hiking & Birding Guide is sold in Fairbanks for \$12 at the Alaska Bird Observatory Education Center, Beaver Sports, Friends of Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center, Geophysical Institute Map Office, and Gulliver's Books. Maps can be ordered via email at arcticaudubon@gmail.com.

E-Delivery of Arctic Audubon's newsletter, The Redpoll, is now an option. Contact the newsletter editor at zalar@alaska.net to receive your newsletter via email instead of by postal delivery.

Farthest North Birdathon

by Sherry Lewis

The 2008 Farthest North Birdathon took place May 10-June 15. Thirteen teams braved rain, snow, mosquitoes, piles of junk food, and rafts of scaup to raise over \$10,000 to support bird research, education, and conservation in Fairbanks. Thank you to all who participated and sponsored teams!

Arctic Audubon's Birdathon team—The Ruby-Crowned Bikers—included Frank Keim, Stan Justice, Henrietta Rexroad, and Sherry Lewis. We started our Birdathon day at Creamer's Field anticipating a busy birding day. We checked out the bird banding area, and then stopped at Kessel Pond, where we were excited by a Stilt Sandpiper. We continued to the Alaska Bird Observatory to check out the Great Horned Owl nest and saw three fluffy white young, but no adults. Biking down College Road, we stopped at a little pond. As we were trying to figure out the shorebirds, an immature Goshawk swooped in missing the ducks. As it was settling into a tree, a Sharp-Shinned Hawk flew by.

We pedaled over to the Georgeson Botanical Gardens and were surprised to find a couple of Whimbrels in the experimental farm fields. Bohemian Waxwings were gorging on last summer's chokecherries. We continued birding while cruising along Sheep Creek Road to the peat ponds. There we saw a number of ducks, swallows, and Red-Winged Blackbirds. A delicious afternoon meal, cooked by Jen Keim, was thoroughly enjoyed at the end of our trek. We ended up spotting 63 species and had a successful, gas free Birdathon!

Proceeds from The Farthest North Birdathon support education, research and conservation programs for the Arctic Audubon Society and the Alaska Bird Observatory. Next year please consider joining or supporting a Birdathon team.



Alaska Bird Observatory Raffle!

An original handcrafted table by John Wright and Nancy HausleJohnson

Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20 and are available at ABO. Drawing is December 19th.

For information call (907) 451-7159

Alaska Wilderness Week Report

By Frank Keim

“Politics, as usual,” one Democratic legislative aide said to us, as we were quizzing her about the energy bills that would be introduced later in the week. The week, you ask?

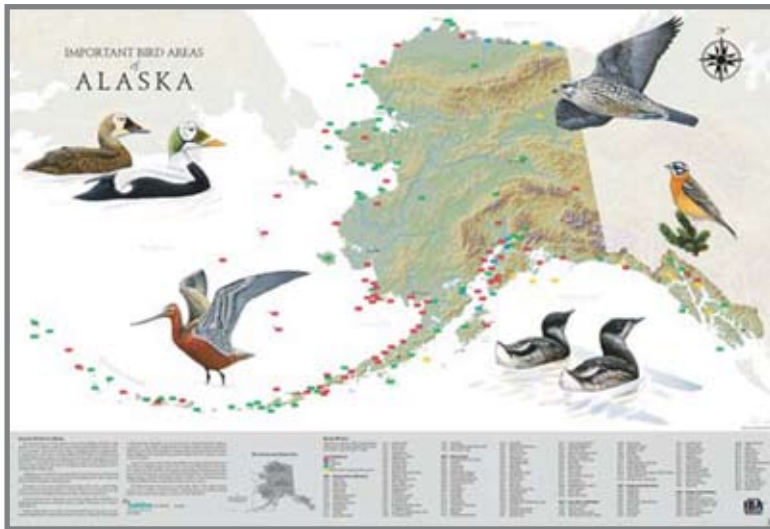
Alaska Wilderness Week—five days when volunteer activists from all over the United States come to Washington, D.C. to defend the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Teshekpuk Lake in northern Alaska, and much of the American Outer Continental Shelf from a big push by irresponsible oil companies and many of their allies in Congress to open new places to drilling. Almost 150 participants from all walks of life, including many Native Americans from northern Alaska and northern Canada, came to the nation's capital September 6–10, to politely express their outrage against the mistaken notion that more drilling for oil and gas is the only way for America to solve the problem of high gas and heating oil costs.

As an Alaskan, I accompanied volunteers from Maine, North Carolina, and New York to their meetings with legislative staff of their states' Congressional delegation. Together with participants from other states, we joined a rally on the Capitol lawn against “Big Oil” to counter a “drilling push” press conference by some industry advocates. We also enjoyed a reception hosted by the Canadian Embassy to thank Americans helping to preserve the habitat of the Porcupine Caribou herd, which spends about half the year in north-west Canada. During our last night in D.C. we attended a Congressional reception, which gave us the opportunity to applaud some of Congress's environmental leaders and to meet their staff.

Everyone we met with thought there were other more creative solutions to this problem, including conservation, efficiency and alternative technologies, such as wind, solar, tidal, river and geothermal power, as well as many others.

Unfortunately these aides also felt that probably nothing at all would get done by Congress this session. “We'll be lucky to get a Continuing Resolution to fund the government through this November passed,” they complained. “But the Arctic Refuge will probably be safe, at least for this year.”

We were heartened by this sentiment, but we weren't about to sit back on our haunches and wait and see. Not by a long shot. We vowed to continue fighting this battle when we got home. Letters, emails, phone calls, faxes, editorials and letters to the editor are important tools we can all use to try to keep these special American lands and waters safe from the clutches of big oil.



Map of Alaska Important Bird Areas

By Taldi Walter, Audubon Alaska

Is it any surprise that Alaska has more globally significant bird habitats than any other state in the union? Over the last seven years, Audubon Alaska has combed Alaska for areas essential to the survival of bird populations. There are currently 145 sites statewide that are officially identified as Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The majority of them are also recognized as globally or continentally significant. In fact, Alaska has almost half of all globally significant IBAs identified in the United States.

The number of globally significant IBAs identified in Alaska should come as no surprise when one considers the diversity and quality of habitat found in this 365 million acre state. Alaska has more than 47,000 miles of marine shoreline, 100,000 glaciers, more than 3 million lakes and rivers, and a diversity of habitats that range from temperate rainforest to Arctic tundra. Alaska's IBAs include coastal nesting grounds for about 90% of the world population of Emperor Geese, staging areas for tens of thousands of Bar-tailed Godwits, the ice-bound, at-sea wintering area for many of the world's Spectacled Eiders, and nesting sites for a variety of endemic species.

With hopes of increasing awareness and understanding of Alaska's IBAs, Audubon Alaska recently released a poster-sized map that highlights the 145 identified sites, plus a handful of potential sites that are likely to meet listing criteria in the near future. Not only is the IBA map informative, but original artwork by David Allen Sibley makes it a striking piece. Sibley's illustrations include the Spectacled Eider and Marbled Murrelet, both species of global conservation concern. Audubon Alaska hopes to continue to add new IBAs to the list, but focusing on protection and management of existing IBAs is a priority for Audubon Alaska.

To get a copy of Alaska's IBA map please visit the Audubon Alaska website, www.audubonalaska.org/BirdSci_IBAs.html or call the office (907) 276-7034.

Tangle Lakes Update

Reprinted with permission from *Interior Trails Quarterly*

Monitoring Mining Activity in Tangle Lakes

People concerned about potential affects of mining in the Tangle Lakes region have been trying to monitor exploration activities this summer.

Pure Nickel, Inc., received a state permit to do exploratory drilling in the area this summer, according to an email put out by Ruth McHenry of the Copper Country Alliance. One cluster of drill sites is on the southwest slope of the mountain just east of the lakes. Activity there could be visible from the lakes and the Denali Highway. Another set of holes was to be drilled in the Eureka Creek and Fish Lake areas.

McHenry asked people to document what they see and hear and note how it affected their experience. She asked that a copy of the notes and any photos be sent to her at:

Copper Country Alliance; HC 60 Box 306T; Copper Center AK 99573 (907-822-3644).

Sustainable Foot Trail Built

A large section of a new trail at the Tangle Lakes Campground was built this summer under the guidance of the BLM Glennallen Field Office. The first section of the sustainable foot trail was built in June by members of an interagency training class with participants from various government agencies. An SCA conservation crew then continued construction throughout the month of July, despite extreme amounts of rain and even some snow.

By the beginning of August nearly 1,400 feet of new trail was built. An additional 600 feet of trail will be built in 2009 to complete the trail and tie into existing trail overlooking the lower Tangle lakes and the Landmark Gap area. Vegetation mat removed from the trail construction process is being used within the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District to rehabilitate illegal sections of ORV trail. BLM hopes these mats will transplant successfully and help to naturally revegetate illegal sections of trail, reducing the need for physical barriers such as signs and gates, which can be unsightly and costly.

(Submitted by Cory Larson)



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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

How I Spent My Summer Vacation, Monday, 7 pm, October 13th; Noel Wien Library Auditorium.
Creepy Critters Program, Saturday, October 25th, Noon–4 pm, Creamer’s Field Farmhouse.
Arctic Audubon Board Meeting, October 28th 5:30 pm, Rm 300, Reichardt Bldg at UAF
Remember to VOTE on November 4th
NAEC Auction, Saturday, November 8th, at Wedgewood Resort. This year’s theme is “Celebrate Sustainability.” Information at www.northern.org.
Fairbanks FeederCount Dates:
 November 5, December 13, March 7. Information at www.alaskabird.org or 451-7159

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.

National Audubon Society
New Member Form

- Introductory rate, \$20
- Two Year Membership, \$30

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 would like to receive email announcements from Arctic Audubon Society. My email address is:

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.