

The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

Vol. 31 Issue No. 2

www.arcticaudubon.org

November 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.

Citizen Science and the Arctic: Birding for Conservation

presentation by Taldi Walter

Monday, November 10, 7:00 pm

Noel Wien Library Auditorium

Audubon Alaska is drawing on citizen science to help document the importance of the Arctic for birds and their habitats. Taldi Walter will provide an interactive lecture on how to use Alaska eBird, an on-line database, to maintain your bird observations and life list. Taldi will link Alaska eBird to Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the Arctic and provide an update on key conservation issues in the Arctic, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Teshekpuk Lake and other sites in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and offshore in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas. Alaska eBird and IBAs are two key ways that birders can contribute to conservation of these special places.

Taldi Walter was born in Fairbanks and raised in the Flathead Valley of Northwest Montana. Taldi joined the Audubon Alaska staff in June as the Communications & Education Specialist. Previously Taldi was the Alaska Outreach Coordinator for National Audubon Society's Public Policy Office in Washington, D.C. In this capacity, she delivered 110 lectures in 39 states throughout the U.S., highlighting priority Alaska lands issues. Taldi received her Master's in Biology from the University of Central Arkansas. Her thesis work took her to the Atlantic rainforest of Brazil, where she studied rainforest and invasive species ecology.



Long-billed Dowitcher
photo by Ted Swen



Sandhill Crane
photo by Ken Whitten

Crane Viewing Field Trip to Nebraska

Although the last of our Sandhill Cranes flew south in September, now is a great time to think about seeing the cranes again—in Nebraska! Friends of Creamer's Field Director Melissa Sikes has been invited to speak at the Rivers and Wildlife Celebration, March 20–22, 2009 in Kearney, Nebraska. This is a great opportunity to organize a field trip for interested Fairbanksans that would like to view cranes together along the Platte River.

The Rivers and Wildlife Celebration is held each March to celebrate the annual migration of 500,000 Sandhill Cranes and millions of waterfowl through central Nebraska. For more information, visit the Audubon Nebraska website at www.nebraska.audubon.org/RWC-generic.htm and the Rowe Sanctuary website at www.rowsanctuary.org.

Conference registration materials will be available in mid-December. Because of the popularity of this event, reservations must be made early to guarantee viewing time in the blinds and participation in conference events. Contact Mary Zalar, 479-4547 or zalar@alaska.net, or Melissa Sikes, 452-5162 or creamers@ptialaska.net, if you are interested.



Christmas Bird Count

December 27, 2008

The 2008 Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 27th, and the compilation potluck will take place at the Kunkle Center in Goldstream Valley. Details of the count area and area coordinators will be included in the December issue of *The Redpoll*. Save the date!

Events at Creamer's Field



Join Friends of Creamer's Field for these traditional holiday events. All activities are held at the Farmhouse Visitor Center at 1300 College Road, back by the barns. Call 452-5162 for more information.

Thanksgiving for the Birds

Saturday, November 29th, Noon–4:00 pm

Build bird feeders out of recycled materials and wood while learning about our winter birds at this annual after Thanksgiving family fun event! Program is drop-in any time during the hours stated.

Lighting of the Spruce Tree

Saturday, December 6th, 6:00 pm

Bring your friends for caroling and the annual lighting of the spruce tree in front of the Farmhouse Visitor Center, followed by cookies and hot chocolate in the warmth of the Farmhouse!

Holiday Open House and Ornament Making

Saturdays, December 6th, 13th, & 20th, Noon–4 pm

Join Friends of Creamer's Field at the Farmhouse Visitor Center for the annual Holiday Open House and Natural Ornament Making.

Winter Solstice Walk

Saturday, December 20th, 1–3 pm

Dress warmly for the annual Winter Solstice Walk. Meet at the Farmhouse Visitor Center.

Environmental Film Festival

November 17th at The Blue Loon



Patagonia's Wild & Scenic Film Festival, hosted by the Copper River Watershed Project, is scheduled for November 17th, 5:30 and 8:00 pm at The Blue Loon. Tickets cost \$10 and are available at the door. Join us for an inspiring look at what individuals are doing to make changes in their everyday lives for the benefit of rivers and wild places.

This collection of stories looks at some of today's biggest challenges through film's creative lens. We'll also celebrate the world-famous Copper River and have drawings for door prizes and a special prize for new members. For more information see www.copperriver.org, email Kate at kate@copperriver.org or Kristin at crwp@copperriver.org, or call (907)424-3334.

Thanksgiving Bird Count

By Dr. John G. Hewston, Humboldt State University

The Annual Thanksgiving Bird Count is almost upon us again, so here's my usual request for help! Thanksgiving Bird Counts are to take place on Thanksgiving Day and last only ONE hour. The counter chooses the time of day that best fits into his/her holiday schedule. The count is to be made in a 15-foot diameter circle, and most people select a count area visible from a comfortable spot near a window. The same count circles should be used each year—and be sure the birds are within the circle. Counters should send in reports even if no birds are seen during the count hour.

The count circle can be considered a cylinder, and birds passing through the circle/cylinder can be counted. Do not count those flocks of geese or the soaring hawks, eagles and vultures seen 'way up there. Limit the height of your cylinder to where you can be sure the birds went through it. Count individual birds only once! To count species which appear in flocks, make a count each time they appear in the cylinder, but use only the highest number made for one of those counts as your tally for the hour.

Last year 522 counts were made in the eleven Western States and Alaska. The participants tallied 148 species inside their circles at count time. The usual three species held the top positions again, except the Junco led the list. Numbers reported were:

2,580	Dark-eyed Junco
2,571	House Sparrow
2,394	House Finch
941	Black-capped Chickadee
874	Mourning Dove

Rounding out the top ten were California Quail, White-crowned Sparrow, American Gold Finch, Steller's Jay, and Golden-crowned Sparrow.

Started in 1966 by Dr. Ernest Edwards in Virginia, Dr. John Hewston of Humboldt State University has been coordinating and compiling this count in the West since 1992.

Green Holiday Sale

Saturday, December 6th, 10 am–5:30 pm
at the Alaska Bird Observatory

Support local environmental organizations by coming to the second annual Green Holiday Sale featuring nature-themed items. Participating organizations include Alaska Bird Observatory, Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Arctic Audubon Society, and Friends of Creamer's Field. Call 451-7159 for more information.



Arctic Audubon Society
 PO Box 82098
 Fairbanks, AK 99708

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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Citizen Science and the Arctic: Birding for Conservation, Monday, November 10th, 7:00 pm

Public presentation by Taldi Walter; see page 1.

Environmental Film Festival, Monday, Nov. 17th

Patagonia's Wild & Scenic Film Festival at The Blue Loon, 5:30 & 8:00 pm, \$10. Information on page 2.

Thanksgiving Bird Count, November 27th, Anytime!

Details on page 2 and 3.

Thanksgiving for the Birds, Saturday, November 29th

Family activity at Creamer's Field; see page 2.

Green Holiday Sale, Saturday, December 6th,

10 am–5:30 pm at Alaska Bird Observatory

Nature-themed items available for purchase.

Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, December 27th

More information in the next newsletter.

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

email address: arcticaudubon@gmail.com

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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.

National Audubon Society
New Member Form

Introductory rate, \$20

Introductory 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.