

The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

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www.arcticaudubon.org

April 2009



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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Farthest North Birdathon: May 9th-June 14th

Each year during spring migration, Arctic Audubon Society and the Alaska Bird Observatory (ABO) team up for their annual fundraiser, the Farthest North Birdathon. This is a fun way to raise money for both organizations, get outside to enjoy Spring, and learn more about the birds that migrate to Alaska each year. Birders of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to participate! Many thanks to our corporate sponsors—Yukon Title Company Inc and Alaska Airline—for their generous support.

Participants choose any 24-hour period between May 9th and June 14th for their Birdathon. You ask friends and family to pledge money based on how many bird species you can find on your Birdathon day. Then you go on your own search for birds or join one of the several guided Birdathon outings. You can even just count the species that come to your feeder. Details are available at the Alaska Bird Observatory, 451-7159, and on the pledge sheet on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter.

Guided Birdathon Walks

Both Arctic Audubon and ABO offer guided Birdathon walks and spring field trips for novice or experienced birders. Audubon's field trips are listed in the article below.

- **Adult Guided Birdathon, Saturday May 16, 8:00 am:** Join Sue Guers, manager of ABO's bird banding station for an all day birding trip around Fairbanks. Bring a sack

continued on page two

Spring Migration Celebration

Saturday, May 2nd, Noon–4:00 pm

Welcome back our migratory birds and join in the fun at the annual Spring Migration Celebration, Noon to 4:00 pm on Saturday, May 2nd. "Celebrating Birds in Culture" is this year's theme. Scheduled to coincide with the peak of bird migration, there will be talks, birding walks, wildlife viewing, and activities for the whole family such as puppet shows, crafts, and games. Activities will take place at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center downtown and the Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center.

This event is cooperatively presented by Alaska Bird Observatory, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Public Lands Information Center, Arctic Audubon Society, Camp Habitat, Ducks Unlimited, Friends of Creamer's Field, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Wildlife Society.

Volunteers are needed to help with this event. Please contact Gail Mayo, 479-2954, to offer your help.



Arctic Audubon Spring Field Trips

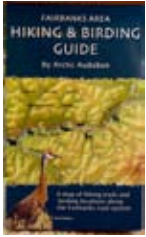
Arctic Audubon sponsors three birding field trips in May, led by local birding experts. All field trips meet at 9:00 am at Creamer's Field Farmhouse back by the big barns and last 2-3 hours. Bring binoculars, a snack, and rubber boots if you have them.

May 9 Waterfowl identification with Jim Zelenak

May 16 Shorebird identification with River Gates

May 23 Songbird identification and birding by ear with Steve Springer

Fairbanks Area Hiking & Birding Map



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.

Alaska eBird

Alaska eBird is a great way to record your observations, manage your life list, and help contribute to avian monitoring and conservation in Alaska. Visit the Alaska eBird website, which includes photos, interesting birding news and features, as well as observation records:

<http://ebird.org/content/ak/>

Email Delivery of Newsletter

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

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lunch, water, appropriate clothes and footwear. Transportation will be car-pooling. Meet at the Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center back by the big barns. \$60 minimum pledge or donation.

- **Evening Guided Birdathon, Tuesday, May 21, 7:00 pm:** Join Sherry Lewis of Arctic Audubon for an evening walk around Creamer's Refuge. Meet at the Creamer's Field Farmhouse Visitor Center back by the big barns. Minimum donation of \$10.
- **Evening Guided Birdathon, Thursday, May 28, 7:00 pm:** Join Gail Mayo of Arctic Audubon for a walk around Smith Lake and the University Ski Trails. Meet at the Ski Hut on upper campus next to the Geophysical Institute. Minimum donation of \$10.

Potluck Tally Rally on July 12th

The Birdathon Potluck & Tally Rally is scheduled for Sunday, July 12, 4:00 pm at ABO. Everyone is invited to enjoy Birdathon stories, great food, and the awards ceremony. Prizes are awarded for a variety of categories, and Alaska Airlines has generously donated two round-trip airline tickets (travel from Fairbanks to Seattle only). To be eligible for prizes, **participants must turn in the Counter's Report Form by Friday, June 26th. Only pledges turned in by July 8th will count towards awards.**

Arctic Audubon Road Cleanup

Friday, May 15th, 5:00 pm

Join Arctic Audubon on Friday, May 14th, 5:00 pm to clean up our adopted scenic mile of Ballaine Road. Families and friends are welcome to join us anytime during the evening. Our adopted mile extends south on Ballaine Road from the intersection with Goldstream Road. Watch for the blue "Adopt a Highway" signs. We will meet at the intersection of Trice and Ballaine Road and watch for birds as we pick up trash.

Small Grants Awarded

On March 24th, the Arctic Audubon Board of Directors met to consider five grant proposals submitted for the 2009 small grant program. All the proposals were good so there was some deliberation involved in picking proposals that seemed to best meet our criteria.

Interestingly we settled on two proposals to study shorebirds. One will enable Brooke Hill to enlarge her search for radio transmitters placed on Dunlin chicks in order to better understand the factors that influence chick survival. Brooke is continuing her study of Dunlin (*Calidris alpina arctica*) chick survival in northern Alaska as part of her Masters Degree program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The other proposal is part of Nathan Senner's PhD program at Cornell University. Nathan has been working with Hudsonian Godwits (*Limosa haemastica*) for five years. This summer he will attach data loggers, weighing 1.4 grams, to Godwits at several sites in Alaska and Canada. Arctic Audubon's contribution will help fund his work on Susitna flats. He will also be working in the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.

Arctic Audubon is eager to follow the results of these two investigations.



Pledge Tracking Sheet

Counter Name: _____

Team Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Page _____ of _____

Please Print Legibly

Donor Name	Address	Phone	E-mail	Pledge	Amount Due	Paid	ABO	AUD
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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR BIRDATHON COUNTERS:

- If donor is NOT a current member of ABO or Arctic Audubon, for a \$30 pledge the donor may choose an introductory membership in either organization; for a \$50 pledge the donor is eligible for a new membership in both organizations (ABO & Audubon will send newsletters outside the US via email only).
- Please make **checks payable to Arctic Audubon Society** because Audubon is processing and depositing all donations this year. ABO receives the same percentage of funds raised as in previous years.
- We are unable to accept credit card payments this year (sorry!).
- Donor addresses must be included on this form so that we can send tax receipts and a thank you letter.
- Obtain pledges before your count and record them on this sheet. You may make copies of this form or request more from the Alaska Bird Observatory.
- **You are responsible for collecting all your pledges.** We will not be invoicing donors this year.
- This form should be returned with payments to Alaska Bird Observatory, 418 Wedgewood Drive, Fairbanks, AK 99701. Please do not send cash. Questions? Call (907) 451-7159.
- To be eligible for prizes you must return your **Counter's Report Form (available at ABO) by Friday, June 26rd** before 5PM! Pledges must be turned in by Wednesday, July 8th. Tally Picnic is Sunday, July 12.

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Farthest North Birdathon Sponsors



Sandhill Crane Festival to Feature Alaskan Artist Mavis Muller

Festival Dates: August 21–23, 2009

As we welcome our migratory birds back this month, it seems odd to think about seeing them off again in August. However, this is the last Arctic Audubon newsletter until fall and our only opportunity to mention the annual Tanana Valley Sandhill Crane Festival scheduled for August 21st–23rd.

Featured speaker Mavis Muller is an accomplished artist of contemporary basketry, photography, poetry, and storytelling. She uses art as a means of environmental advocacy and education, as well as designing workshops which guide people to access their bond to the land. She is especially inspired by Sandhill Cranes, whose migratory routes she has followed for over 20 years. When she returns to Alaska each spring, she sets out to weave stories of the cranes in with the natural materials that she gathers from outside of Cranehaven Studio of Art & Nature, her studio-home on the Kenai Peninsula where Sandhill Cranes are frequent visitors. Visit her website at www.mavismullerart.com.



Thanks to 2008–09 Program Presenters

Arctic Audubon Society appreciates all the friends who have presented programs for us this past year. As we gather energy for the coming summer, we hope that all of our readers will gather more experiences in nature to share with us next fall and winter.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to our opening program in October, “How I Spent My Summer,” Taldi Walter of Audubon Alaska, Dave Shaw of the Alaska Bird Observatory, Pam Miller from the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Link Olson from the UA Museum of the North, UAF graduate student Teri McMillan, Melissa Sykes of Friends of Creamer’s Field, and River Gates, UAF graduate student and small grant recipient.

Fairbanks is Focus of Museum Exhibit

April 4th–May 10th at UA Museum of the North

Reuse, recycle, reflect as residents envision and create buildings and shape our local environment into the 21st century. *RENEW: Fairbanks Cityscapes* is a special exhibit at the UA Museum of the North that looks at changes in Fairbanks through the eyes of artists, architects and community planners. The exhibit features an eclectic mix of objects from the museum’s fine arts and archaeology collections, photographs, loans from community members, video footage from the archives at UAF’s Rasmuson Library, a virtual tour of historic Fairbanks and planning maps from the Fairbanks North Star Borough and Fairbanks Downtown Association used to illustrate potential future land uses.

Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Update

Information from FNSB website www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/ParksandRecreation/

On September 29, 2008 the FNSB began construction to develop a 1,000 foot nature trail along the northeast shore of a preserved lake within Tanana Lakes Recreation Area. Trail crews have brushed the trail corridor and installed several bird viewing platforms. The FNSB will hire a contractor this fall/winter to complete the gravel work. The final product will be a 6-foot wide gravel path with four bird viewing platforms.

Additional park access roads, amenities and a nature trail will be designed this winter. Look for progress next summer and in the mean time drive on out to Tanana Lakes and see our progress.

If you are interested in receiving further information on the effort to develop the recreation area or wish to discuss the project with staff from Parks and Recreation, please contact Steve Taylor at 459-1074 or staylor@co.fairbanks.ak.us to be added to the project’s e-mail distribution list.

Wild Arts Walk

Sunday June 7th

Noon–5:00 pm

Stroll through the Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge amid a colorful assortment of artists and musicians as they demonstrate their skills and display their work in this festive fundraising event. Admission is \$10 (children 17 and under are free) and includes a choice of pastries and bagels, and a hot beverage.

A fundraiser for Friends of Creamer’s Field, this event is sponsored by Design Alaska.

Antarctic Travel Incentive Benefits Arctic Audubon

Have you been thinking about a trip to Antarctica? If so, one of the premier Antarctica tour companies has offered a special incentive to travelers referred by Arctic Audubon Society.

Cheesemans Ecology Safaris is offering a donation of \$500 to Arctic Audubon for anyone referred by our Chapter who signs up for either of two voyages this year:

- Expedition to South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, October 15 to November 8, 2009.
- Expedition to Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, December 28, 2009 to January 25, 2010.

Full itineraries for both of these trips are available online at www.cheesemans.com/antarctica. Cheesemans' voyage to the great Southern Ocean has come to be well known as the most in-depth way to see this incredible environment and, most especially, its tremendous seabirds and other wildlife.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is a family-owned and operated safari company founded in 1980. We have remained small in pursuit of quality over quantity, and have tailored all our safaris to provide the maximum wildlife and birding experience. Ultimately we see our safaris as a way to encourage and support wildlife conservation in the richest ecosystems on the planet.

Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion

Audubon recently released a new study using Christmas Bird Count Data. These analyses would not have been possible without the hard work of CBC participants and the many chapters that organize and lead counts. We thank all that have participated over the years for their effort. The study explored if birds had shown significant shifts in their winter distribution over the last 40 years. As we all know, birds are good indicators of the environment. We think birds provide important information to people on changes in the environment and human quality of life. Audubon has a goal of working bird indicators into regular reviews of how the environment in the US is doing and hopefully helping drive policy and funding that benefits the environment and birds. These analyses of the CBC dataset on winter distribution are part of that effort.

The report, *Birds and Climate Change*, is available on Audubon's website and provides more details on the analyses and results. To download the report at www.audubon.org, click on the "Download Report" link on the left side of the page or on the image of the report cover.

Results of the Fairbanks Christmas Bird count are available at Arctic Audubon's website, www.arcticaudubon.org.



Tongass Attracts Nationally Recognized Scientists

By Matt Kirchoff, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Alaska

In February, Audubon Alaska in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy cosponsored a multi-day conference in Juneau. The conference, attended by leading ecologists from Alaska, British Columbia, and the Pacific Northwest, was aimed at building a scientific consensus for a conservation strategy for the Tongass National Forest.

The Tongass Science Conference was unconventional in that the first two days were conducted without a single PowerPoint presentation! The authors wrote papers, circulated them among the group in advance, and the group discussed each paper in detail.

On the final day, the scientists presented their papers to the public at Centennial Hall. Dr. Jerry Franklin, the grandfather of old growth ecology, kicked off the meeting with a keynote address on the conservation and management of old growth forests from a global perspective. This was followed by papers on island biogeography, concepts of conservation biology, riparian ecology, natural disturbance patterns, and conservation at the watershed scale.

Two evening presentations, open to the public, included *Native Perspectives on the Tongass* by Byron Mallott from the First Alaskans Institute and *Climate Change and the Tongass* by Terry Chapin from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Both evening keynotes were well attended by the Juneau community.

The conference was moderated by professor Emeritus Gordon Orians from the University of Washington, a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the Audubon Alaska Board. The conference was a great success, stimulating lively discussions and new ideas for conservation on the Tongass.

Audubon Alaska intends to publish the papers, incorporating the workshop discussions, in a book or online journal in the near future. A list of the paper titles, abstracts, and presenters is available at www.audubonalaska.org.

Who is Showing Up at Your Feeder?



Sabine Barnum lives on Lake Iksgiza, about 70 miles southwest of Fairbanks. Sabine writes, "My husband and I are the only ones that live here so you can imagine it is pretty quiet around here. Besides having four different feeders with seeds, I always put up suet balls and a platform with some fat on it as the Chickadees really like it. Sometimes I put stuff on the railing of the porch and we actually had a mink that showed up and even got very tame after a while so I could feed it by hand and take pictures really close without it being scared. Another time we had a bigger rascal come around which was a marten. I was very surprised how it was sitting there on that perch chewing away on the fat. Nevertheless I welcome everybody out here especially in these very cold times that we been having lately!"

Photos courtesy of Sabine Barnum



A Flying Squirrel, Black-billed Magpie, and Boreal Owl have visited Susie and Greg Zimmerman's feeders this year. A heated birdbath attracts birds through the winter.

Photos courtesy of Susie Zimmerman



Farthest North Birdathon Sponsor Form

Please accept my pledge of _____ per species or \$_____ total for:

_____ the Arctic Audubon Team, _____ the Kids Birdathon, or _____ both!

Name _____ Phone _____ e-mail _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Mail this form to: Arctic Audubon Birdathon
P.O. Box 82098
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Make checks payable to Arctic Audubon Society



Arctic Audubon Society
 PO Box 82098
 Fairbanks, AK 99708

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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Spring Migration Celebration, May 2, Noon–4 pm
 At Creamer’s Field & Morris Thompson Center
Arctic Audubon Road Clean Up, Friday May 15, 5:00 pm. Meet at corner of Trice & Ballaine Roads.
Farthest North Birdathon, May 9–June 14
 Tally Rally Potluck & Awards, July 12, 4 pm
Audubon Spring Birding Field Trips, Saturdays 9 am
 May 9: Waterfowl Identification with Jim Zelenak
 May 16: Shorebird Identification with River Gates
 May 23: Birding by Ear with Steve Springer
Birdathon Tally Rally Potluck, July 12, 4 pm at ABO
Sandhill Crane Festival, August 21–23, 2009
 Keynote speaker is Mavis Muller. Full schedule of events will be available in mid-July.

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

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 Secretary: Open
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 Education: Open
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 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.

National Audubon Society
New Member Form

Introductory rate, \$20

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
 PO Box 82098 C9ZA520Z
 Fairbanks, AK 99708

Chapter Only Membership, \$10

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