

The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

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www.arcticaudubon.org

November 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.

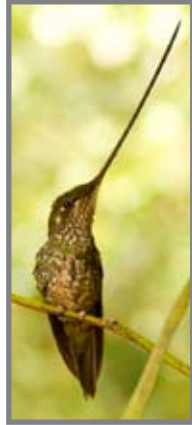
Email Delivery of Newsletter

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Birding in Ecuador

presentation by Jim DeWitt & Ron Teel

Monday, November 9th, 7:00 pm
Noel Wien Library Auditorium



Ron and Mary Teel, Jim and Nancy DeWitt, Nick Hajukovich, and two Missouri birders spent two weeks in northeastern Ecuador this past winter. Destinations ranged from 14,000 feet in the Andes to the Amazon Basin. The bird life was truly extraordinary. Ron Teel and Jim DeWitt will share their photos and stories from one of the world's very best birding countries.

The photo to the left is a Sword-billed Hummingbird and above right is a Hoatzin. Both photos by Ron Teel.



Join In Local Bird Counts & Contribute to Citizen Science

Fairbanks FeederCount: November 13, December 12, & March 6

Participate in scientific research from the comfort of your own home by joining the Fairbanks FeederCount. Bird populations are dynamic and we can learn a lot by simply tracking where birds are. Fairbanks FeederCount helps us document winter bird population trends in the Fairbanks area. To participate, just download instructions and a data sheet from the Alaska Bird Observatory's website at www.alaskabird.org. Click on the Citizen Science link on the side of page and scroll down to Fairbanks FeederCount. Then count the birds visiting your bird feeder on the three count days. This year's counts will take place on November 13th, December 12th, & March 6th.



Female Grosbeak
photo by Ken Whitten

Bird Identification & Birdfeeding Workshop: The Alaska Bird Observatory will host a winter bird ID and bird feeding workshop to prepare for the Fairbanks FeederCount on Wednesday, November 4 at 7 PM at the ABO Center for Education & Research, 418 Wedgewood Drive in Fairbanks. This workshop is free and open to the public. Call 451-7159 or visit www.alaskabird.org for more information.

Thanksgiving Bird Count is November 26th

It is time to get ready for the annual Thanksgiving Bird Count! This annual count takes only one hour on Thanksgiving Day. Details and the count form are found on pages 2-3.

Christmas Bird Count Scheduled for December 19th

In a departure from tradition, Arctic Audubon will hold the Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 19th. Usually the count is held after Christmas, but we're hoping to include participants before they head off on holiday travel. Details and area coordinators will be announced in the December issue of this newsletter.

Thanksgiving Bird Count

by Dr. John G. Hewston, Humboldt State University

It is time to get ready for the annual Thanksgiving Bird Count! This count takes place on Thanksgiving Day and lasts 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.

Last year 495 counts were made in the eleven Western States and Alaska. The participants tallied 163 species inside their circles at count time. For the second year in a row the Junco was most numerous, but the usual three species which lead the list annually were there again. Numbers reported were:

2,989	Dark-eyed Junco
2,200	House Sparrow
1,945	House Finch
899	Pine Siskin
872	Black-capped Chickadee

Rounding out the top ten were California Quail, Mourning Dove, American Gold Finch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and White-crowned Sparrow. Dropping out of the top ten last year were the Steller's Jay (11th) and the Golden-crowned Sparrow (13th).

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

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



Photo by Anne Ruggles

Two jackets donated by Patagonia will be included in a silent auction with proceeds to benefit the Farthest North Birdathon. On the left in the photo, Sherry Lewis models the Patagonia R4 Fleece Jacket, Men's XL, suggested retail \$225. On the right, Mary Zalar models a Women's INA Down Parka, size medium, suggested retail \$350. Try them on and make a bid!

New Trail at Tanana Lakes Recreation Area

by Steve Taylor and reprinted with permission from Interior Trails Quarterly

A new 3,000-foot non-motorized trail and trailhead parking area were built this summer as part of the ongoing work on the Tanana Lakes Recreation Area in Fairbanks. The parking area also serves a 1,000-foot nature trail, which follows along the northern shore of a shallow lake and leads to two bird-watching platforms. The parking area, off the South Cushman Street Extension near Rifle Range Road, can accommodate 8-10 cars.

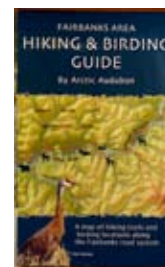
The longer trail parallels the northern shore of the same lake, though a portion of the trail is set back from the shore. This non-motorized trail leads to a new picnic area/play field and will eventually make a loop around the South Cushman ponds. Both trails are now open for pedestrian use, though the parking lot that serves both is not.

A road has also been built north of the lake from the South Cushman Street Extension to a 50-car parking lot, which will serve the picnic area/play field. However, the new road, large parking lot, and picnic area/play field are not yet open to the public. Recently, gates have been installed on several roadways to control vehicle access to the area.

For more information on the project, please contact Project Coordinator Steve Taylor at 907-459-1074 or staylor@fnsb.us.

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.





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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Birding in Ecuador, November 9, 7:00 pm at the Noel Wien Library Auditorium

Jim DeWitt and Ron Teel will share photos and stories of their birding trip.

Thanksgiving Bird Count, November 26

Details on page 2 & 3.

Thanksgiving for the Birds, Nov. 28, Noon–4 pm

Learn about winter birds and make bird feeders at Creamer’s Field Farmhouse Visitor Center.

Green Holiday Sale, December 5, 10 am–5:30 pm at the Alaska Bird Observatory. See page 2.

Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count, December 19

Details will be published in the December issue of *The Redpoll*. Plan to participate!

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

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.