

# The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

Vol. 32 Issue No. 3

[www.arcticaudubon.org](http://www.arcticaudubon.org)

December 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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## Share in this Holiday Tradition:

### Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count on December 19<sup>th</sup>

Join the Arctic Audubon Society for the annual Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. CALL TODAY\* to join in and enjoy the winter birds for fun and for science. The count circle (see page 3) includes the top of Ester Dome, parts of the Chena and Tanana Rivers, the dump, and plenty of typical Interior habitat. Plan to join us after dark for the compilation and potluck dinner (meat provided) at the Kunkel Community Center on Goldstream Road near Ivory Jack's.

This year is the 110<sup>th</sup> count for the continent, and the 49<sup>th</sup> count for Fairbanks. Next year will be a landmark count for us. We would love to have your ideas for celebrating 50 years of Christmas Bird Counts in Fairbanks. Our count has certainly grown over the years, yet some of the same people who gathered for the first count are still counting. It is amazing that Fairbank's birders' sharp eyes have found 68 different species alive in the "dead of winter" over the course of 49 counts. We welcome you to join them and discover the enjoyment from a day outside helping to build a database of information on bird population trends unmatched by any other wildlife census. See you there!



Pine Grosbeak  
Photo by Ken Whitten

*\*It is important to contact your area coordinator as soon as possible. See the enclosed information page with the area maps and contact information.*

## Goldstream Valley Area May Lose Protections

Reprinted with permission from the December 2009 edition of the Interior Trails Quarterly

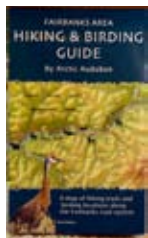
The Goldstream Public Use Area, a popular winter playground just north of Fairbanks, is in danger of losing its protected status next year. The area was created in 1990, but the law that created it has a 2010 sunset provision, which means the area will no longer have special protection.

The nearly 2,000-acre area extends east up Goldstream Valley from Ballaine Road. A very small portion of it lies on the west side of Ballaine. It has a network of trails that are used extensively in the winter by snowmachiners, mushers, skiers, winter bikers, runners, walkers, and snowshoers. Much of the area is boggy in other seasons, but it is still used by berry pickers, canoers, bird watchers, and hunters.

Senator Joe Thomas plans to submit a bill this session that would either extend the sunset provision or eliminate it, making the public use area permanent. However, getting the bill passed in just one session will be difficult, says Grier Hopkins, an aide to Thomas.

Thomas needs support from people who want the public use area to remain. His office can email a letter of support to which people or groups can add their name. If you are interested in helping, contact Hopkins (phone: 907/456-8161; email: Grier\_Hopkins@legis.state.ak.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, and Gulliver's Books. Maps can be ordered via email at [arcticaudubon@gmail.com](mailto: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 Arctic Audubon Newsletter

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



This newsletter is printed on *Harbor 100* paper that uses 100% post-consumer recycled materials and is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. According to the Grays Harbor Paper website ([www.ghplp.com/paper.html](http://www.ghplp.com/paper.html)) no trees are cut down and no fossil fuels are burned in the production of *Harbor 100*.

## New Waterford Trail Parking Area Created

Reprinted with permission from the December 2009 edition of the Interior Trails Quarterly

The Waterford Trail now has better parking thanks to the Goldstream Alaska Road Service Area and some volunteers. The trail is north of Goldstream Valley and takes off from the intersection of Waterford and Molly roads. For years trail users who drive to the trailhead have had to park on the side of the road. In winter, this meant risking getting stuck in the ditch if you pulled over too far or parking too far out in the road, creating a traffic hazard.

This year the road service area, along with help from neighborhood volunteers, widened a spot on the shoulder of Molly Road for parking. Trail users who are driving up Waterford Road, should turn onto Molly Road and drive past the first driveway on the right. The parking area is on the north side of Molly just a little past the driveway.

## Alaska Bird Observatory Events

**December 12:** Second day of the Fairbanks FeederCount. Count form is on ABO's website, [www.alaskabird.org](http://www.alaskabird.org), under Citizen Science.

**February 17, 7:00 pm:** Kanuti Whimbrels: Unlocking the mystery of their southward migration with biologist Chris Harwood at the Alaska Bird Observatory.

**March 6:** Third and final day of the Fairbanks FeederCount. Please return your datasheets to the Alaska Bird Observatory!

## Species Seen on One or More Fairbanks, Alaska (AKFA) Christmas Bird Counts 1965–2009 (x1968)

American Widgeon	Peregrine Falcon	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Mallard	American Coot	Townsend's Solitaire
Northern Shoveler	Rock Pigeon	American Robin
Pintail	Great Horned Owl	Varied Thrush
Lesser Scaup	Snowy Owl	European Starling
Harlequin Duck	Northern Hawk Owl	Bohemian Waxwing
White-winged Scoter	Great Grey Owl	American Tree Sparrow
Bufflehead	Boreal Owl	Savannah Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Downy Woodpecker	Fox Sparrow
Barrow's Goldeneye	Hairy Woodpecker	Lincoln's Sparrow
Common Merganser	American Three-toed	White-crowned Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Woodpecker	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Ring-necked Pheasant	Black-backed Wood-	Dark-eyed Junco
Ruffed Grouse	pecker	Rustic Bunting
Spruce Grouse	Northern Shrike	Snow Bunting
Willow Ptarmigan	Gray Jay	Rusty Blackbird
Rock Ptarmigan	Black-billed Magpie	Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Common Raven	Pine Grosbeak
Bald Eagle	Black-capped Chickadee	White-winged Crossbill
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Boreal Chickadee	Common Redpoll
Northern Goshawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Hoary Redpoll
Merlin	Brown Creeper	Pine Siskin
Gyrfalcon	American Dipper	Source: <a href="http://www.audubon.org">www.audubon.org</a>

# 49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FAIRBANKS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Compilation Potluck dinner at 5:00 pm at the Kunkel Community Center

Please contact the coordinator of the area in which you want to count as soon as possible. If you have no preference, or can't reach your coordinator, contact Gail Mayo, 479-2954 or mayogail@gmail.com

## West Goldstream

Brian Lawhead  
455-6849

lawhead@mosquitonet.com

## University

Gail Mayo  
479-2954

mayogail@gmail.com

## Ester

Philip Martin  
479-7384 (h)

martin@mosquitonet.com

## Creamer's Refuge

Mark Ross

459-7301 (w)

markross@alaska.gov

## Chena Ridge

Joyce Potter  
479-3523 (h)

## East Goldstream

Tom Green  
452-6370 (h)

tkgreen@alaska.edu

## Farmer's Loop

Jamie Marschner  
458-0462 (h)

marschnr@polarnet.com

## Steese/Wainwright

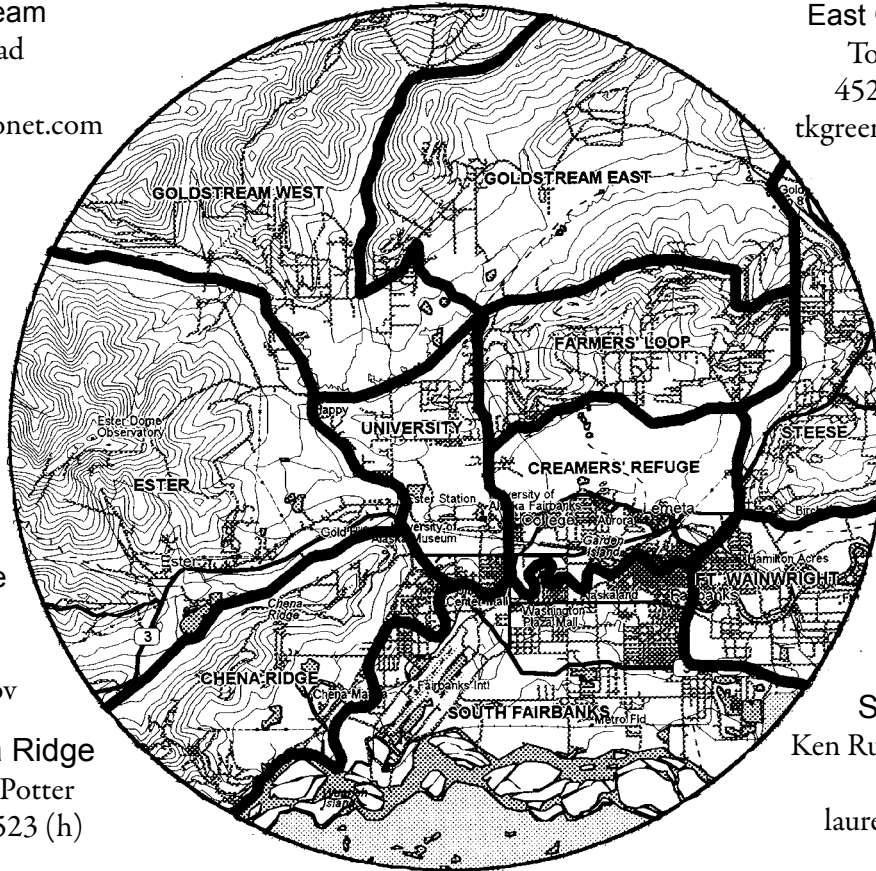
Gail Mayo  
479-2954

mayogail@gmail.com

## 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. The Fairbanks count is centered on the intersection of Dalton Trail and Yankovich Road. The circle includes the top of Ester Dome, parts of the Chena and Tanana Rivers, the dump, and plenty of typical Interior habitat. The **object of the count** is to cover as much of the circle as possible while identifying and counting birds without duplication. Since our daylight hours are limited we need many observers willing to cover assigned areas.

- **Feeder watchers** are welcome to participate by counting the largest number of birds seen together for each species on that day.
- During “**count week**” (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.
- Please use the **data sheet** on the reverse to record participants, numbers of birds and effort (time spent looking by various means). Be sure to contact your area coordinator at or before the potluck.

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

Plan to join us after dark for the **compilation and potluck dinner** (meat provided) at the Kunkel Community Center on Goldstream Road near Ivory Jack's. See directions at [www.goldstreamvalley.net/kunkel](http://www.goldstreamvalley.net/kunkel). Doors will open at 4:00 pm and dinner is at 5:00. Please bring a simple dish to share. BYOEU (bring your own eating utensils) if possible. We look forward to seeing you there!

The Christmas Bird Count is on line with data from 1900 to present at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).

If you can't attend the potluck be sure to contact your area coordinator before 5:00 pm. Data may be reported to 460-4659 after 4:00 pm. Final results will be published in the February issue of *The Redpoll*.

## 2009 Christmas Bird Count Data Entry Sheet

					2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
<b>Area:</b> _____			<b>This Year</b>		Parties:	75	75	80	65	86	70	74
<b>Observer:</b> _____	Car	<input type="text"/>	Miles	Car	649	684	535	489	527	441	609	
	Foot	<input type="text"/>		Foot	69	70	76	67	66	78	46	
	Ski/SnowShoe	<input type="text"/>		Ski/SnowShoe	9	4	27	29	73	20	10	
	Other	<input type="text"/>		Other	4	23	33	25	10	21	25	
<b>Observer:</b> _____					<b>Total:</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>781</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>689</b>
<b>Observer:</b> _____	Car	<input type="text"/>	Hours	Car	84	85	79	72	78	69	83	
	Foot	<input type="text"/>		Foot	44	49	54	58	47	41	34	
	Ski/SnowShoe	<input type="text"/>		Ski/SnowShoe	5	2	13	11	30	12	6	
	Other	<input type="text"/>		Other	1	3	7	5	2	5	4	
	Feeder	<input type="text"/>		Feeder	63	65	51	36	66	65	67	
<b>Observer:</b> _____					<b>Total:</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>194</b>
Additional Species Observed in Count Week	Feeder Count	Field Count										
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>										
			Mallard	84	27	122	106	188	325	237		
			Northern Pintail									
			Common Goldeneye							9	8	
			Barrow's Goldeneye							1		
			Common Merganser	14	1	8	10	21	10	3		
			<b>Duck sp.</b>					1				
			Ruffed Grouse	14	14	9	22	18	12	25		
			Spruce Grouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	18	*	3			
			Willow Ptarmigan		3			3		14		
			Sharp-tailed Grouse			1						
			<b>Ptarmigan sp.</b>		2							
			Bald Eagle					1				
			Sharp-shinned Hawk						1			
			Northern Goshawk	2	2	1	3	2	1			
			Peregrine Falcon						1			
			Rock Pigeon	249	131	123	545	134	277	145		
			Great Horned Owl	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	6		2			
			Northern Hawk Owl			<input type="checkbox"/>	8		1	2		
			Great Grey Owl									
			Boreal Owl		<input type="checkbox"/>	3	3					
			Downy Woodpecker	26	13	21	23	22	22	22		
			Hairy Woodpecker	23	19	30	33	26	26	37		
			3-toed Woodpecker	5	1	5	3	4	2	2		
			Black-backed Woodpecker				1			1		
			<b>Woodpecker sp.</b>	3	5	3	7		1	1		
			Northern Shrike	1	<input type="checkbox"/>				1	4		
			Gray Jay	135	92	127	161	125	87	66		
			Black-billed Magpie	7	5	17	9	6	5	8		
			Common Raven	1,413	2,007	1,767	1,644	1459	1505	991		
			Black-cap'd Chickadee	615	644	851	1177	1012	1011	761		
			Boreal Chickadee	168	107	239	217	298	249	200		
			<b>Chickadee sp.</b>	38	5	56	46	20	28	22		
			Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	5	4	4	5	6	3		
			Brown Creeper		1							
			American Robin	3	3	5			3	1		
			Townsend's Solitaire						2			
			Bohemian Waxwing	347	193	131	143	188	441	318		
			Fox Sparrow									
			White-crowned Sparrow									
			Dark-eyed Junco			1		4	3			
			Snow Bunting									
			Pine Grosbeak	104	101	84	35	197	103	124		
			White-winged Crossbill	420	4	311	4	4	4	580		
			Common Redpoll	1,448	290	4,001	798	3064	399	1375		
			Hoary Redpoll	76	69	64	5	25	29	19		
			<b>Redpoll sp.</b>	3,353	369	4,192	879	3248	1204	4847		
			Pine Siskin									



*Dark-eyed Juncos topped the list of birds caught in Mist Net 4.* Photo by Ken Whitten

## Highlights for Mist Net 4

Adopted by Arctic Audubon Society

In 2009, The Alaska Bird Observatory (ABO) completed their 19<sup>th</sup> year of banding songbirds at the Creamer’s Field Migration Station, and Arctic Audubon Society once again participated by sponsoring Mist Net 4. ABO operated the station with the help of over 60 volunteers with 1,400 hours of service and banded approximately 5,782 birds of 39 species from April 20–September 30, 2008. More than 2,600 people visited the Station and attended banding demonstrations.

Some unusual captures this year include a Wilson’s Snipe, an American Three-toed Woodpecker, a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, a Golden-crowned Sparrow, and five Northern Shrikes. Full details of the banding season are available at [www.alaskabird.org](http://www.alaskabird.org)

Mist Net 4	
Species	Total
Dark-eyed Junco	22
Common Redpoll	11
Yellow-rumped Warbler	10
Black-capped Chickadee	9
Swainson’s Thrush	6
American Robin	4
Orange-crowned Warbler	3
Fox Sparrow	2
American Tree Sparrow	2
Hammond’s Flycatcher	1
Gray-cheeked Thrush	1
Hermit Thrush	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

## Take a Mid-Winter Nature Break With the Great Backyard Bird Count

February 12-15, 2010

Bird watchers coast to coast are invited to take part in the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Great Backyard Bird Count, Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2010. Participants in the free event will join tens of thousands of volunteers of all levels of birding experience to count birds in their own backyards, local parks or wildlife refuges.

Each checklist submitted by these “citizen scientists” helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how the birds are doing—and how to protect them. Last year, participants turned in more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent’s largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

Anyone can take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count, from novice bird watchers to experts. Participants count birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and report their sightings online at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org).

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. For example, 2009 GBBC data highlighted a huge southern invasion of Pine Siskins across much of the eastern United States. Participants counted 279,469 Pine Siskins on 18,528 checklists, as compared to the previous high of 38,977 birds on 4,069 checklists in 2005. Failure of seed crops farther north caused the siskins to move south to find their favorite food.

On the [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) website, participants can explore real-time maps and charts that show what others are reporting during the count. The site has tips to help identify birds and special materials for educators. Participants may also enter the GBBC photo contest by uploading images taken during the count. Many images will be featured in the GBBC website’s photo gallery. All participants are entered in a drawing for prizes that include bird feeders, binoculars, books, CDs, and many other great birding products.

For more information about the GBBC, visit the website at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org). The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from Wild Birds Unlimited.

## Galveston Ornithological Society Offers Bird Photos & Commentary via Email

The Galveston Ornithological Society is offering a free opportunity as part of their environmental education program. They have an email list that anyone can join for as long as they like. The list will provide bird pictures (low resolution to avoid oversize files) and educational commentary on the birds. The email addresses will not be shared and subscribers can get off the list at any time. To join this email list, contact the Galveston Ornithological Society at [galornsoc@earthlink.net](mailto:galornsoc@earthlink.net).



Arctic Audubon Society  
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 Fairbanks, AK 99708

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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

**Fairbanks FeederCount, December 12<sup>th</sup>**

Second day of count; contact ABO for details.

**Christmas Bird Count: December 19<sup>th</sup>**

Annual bird count and compilation potluck; see details on pages 3 & 4. Call soon to participate!

**Audubon Public Program, topic to be announced, Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm, Noel Wien Library**

Join us for our regular monthly program!

**Winter Solstice Walk, Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1–3:00 pm at Creamer’s Field.**

Meet at the Farmhouse Visitor Center; sponsored by Friends of Creamer’s Field.

**Winter Nature Walk/Track Casting Program, Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1–4 pm at Creamer’s Field.**

**Arctic Audubon Board of Directors**

email address: arcticaudubon@gmail.com

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Vice President: Open

Secretary: Open

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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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.