The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society Fairbanks, Alaska

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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.

Join Us for Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, January 2nd, 2016

On Saturday, January 2nd, Fairbanks bird enthusiasts will bundle up and take to the woods and fields to count as many of the birds within a 177 square mile circle as possible. This will be the 55th annual Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count and anyone who would like to help is invited to participate. Information on the count circle is inside this newsletter. Join us for a fun day birding or watching your bird feeder (within the count circle) and a potluck compilation dinner afterwards. We can pair you up with other birders or you can cover an assigned area on your own, but you do need to contact your area coordinator.

The Fairbanks Count will be part of the 116th Annual Christmas Bird Count, a winter tradition organized by National Audubon throughout the American hemisphere. Each count is run in the same way each year; the same size circle defines the count area, the same time period is used and the effort made to find birds is recorded as well as the collected data, the weather, and habitat conditions. For more than a century this citizen-based conservation effort has resulted in a huge and valuable database for understanding bird population dynamics. This information is used to develop conservation strategies for birds and their habitats and to evaluate climate change. The database is available for anyone to view and/or use via the National Audubon website, www.audubon.org.

Additional Interior Christmas Bird Counts

- The Delta Junction Count on Sunday, January 3rd will be coordinated by Jeff Mason 907-803-2111.
- The Denali Park Count will be January 2nd, and the coordinator is Nan Eagleson, 907-683-2822.

Arctic Audubon Small Grants Program Donation

Enclosed is my donation of $_____ to support the Small Grants Program that provides funding for conservation related projects that support Arctic Audubon's mission (see above).

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

City *State* *Zip*

Mail your donation with this form to Arctic Audubon Society, PO Box 82098, Fairbanks AK 99708

Ruffed Grouse photo by Ken Whitten

Changes to Small Grants Program

At the most recent meeting of the Arctic Audubon Society Board, the small grants program was modified so that the grant submission date will occur in the fall. This was done to see if it will encourage proposals for projects throughout the year. A committee of interested members will be formed to broaden the base of commitment to the program. Contact any board member to express your interest.

Originally, more than 15 years ago, the small grant program was funded by money we raised during the spring birdathon and generous donations from supporters. We no longer have birdathon income so we fund small grants on a yearly basis depending on our financial situation.

We welcome your support and participation in the small grants program!

Read about one of this year's Small Grants projects on page 5 of this newsletter. This grant supported a popular program in Fairbanks schools and had a surprising turn of events.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain photo by Ken Whitten

New Senate Bill to Protect Arctic Refuge has Historic Levels of Support

By Beth Peluso, Audubon Alaska

On December 2, U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced a bill to designate the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as Wilderness. This legislation has historic levels of support with 34 Senators. The new senate bill offers a sensible alternative to drilling bills and parallels legislation to protect the Arctic Refuge coastal plain introduced in the House of Representatives earlier this year.

The coastal plain of the refuge hosts nearly 125 species of birds, as well as polar bears, musk oxen, wolves, and the 197,000-animal Porcupine caribou herd during the calving season. Audubon Alaska supports a Wilderness designation for the coastal plain as a way to protect Brant, American Golden-Plovers, Tundra Swans, and a host of other birds and wildlife.

"The Arctic Refuge is a stunning, unique American treasure, which supports millions of birds that migrate to all fifty states", said Jim Adams, Policy Director for Audubon Alaska. "This is a truly extraordinary place that deserves permanent protection."

Since the Arctic Refuge's creation, support for protection has been diverse and extensive. Nearly 1 million Americans have asked President Obama for the strongest possible protections for the Arctic Refuge.

Earlier this year, Obama announced a historic wilderness recommendation for the Refuge that includes its biological heart – the coastal plain – as well as the Brooks Range and Porcupine Plateau. Collectively, these areas represent the largest wilderness recommendation ever made for a single unit of public land.

The sensitive coastal plain provides crucial habitat for muskoxen, wolves and migratory birds, calving grounds for caribou, and denning areas for female polar bears and their cubs.

Unfortunately, the coastal plain is the most threatened part of the Arctic Refuge because the oil and gas industry has targeted it for development. Disregarding the ecological, cultural, and spiritual values of the coastal plain, a number of bills have been introduced in this Congress to open the area to industrial development. This new bill in the Senate, combined with the House bill, could finally provide permanent protection.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was first established as the Arctic National Wildlife Range on December 6, 1960, by President Dwight Eisenhower. In 1980 Congress passed, and President Jimmy Carter signed, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The act designated Wilderness for most of the original range area, while expanding the acreage to the south and renaming the entire area the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Stay tuned for an Audubon Alaska email action alert supporting the new bill in the next few weeks!

From the President

by Sherry Lewis, President

Observing nature can be so interesting, fun, and entertaining. In these quieter months of winter, there is time to enjoy the smaller details as well as grand ones, like the aurora. Today I saw my red squirrel "Feisty" stick his head up from a hole in the snow, and then munch on seeds under the feeder. I thought maybe he had just been down in a depression. Later I saw him disappear down the hole and pop up 15 feet away by the other feeder. I never knew red squirrels dug long snow tunnels and a neither had a biologist friend. And was the moose looking in my window by the TV watching the football game?

You have a chance to get out and observe nature by participating in our Christmas bird count. You can count birds at your feeder or join a group and count outside in your area. To participate, contact an area coordinator listed on the next page.

The Audubon Board is happy to welcome Dan McGauhey as our Conservation Chair. We hope to see you all at some of our informative monthly presentations at the library. Please note, there will be no program in January.

As the sun is setting, I am watching six Black-capped Chickadees getting their last nourishment to survive the cold night.

Happy Solstice, Sherry

55TH ANNUAL FAIRBANKS 2015 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

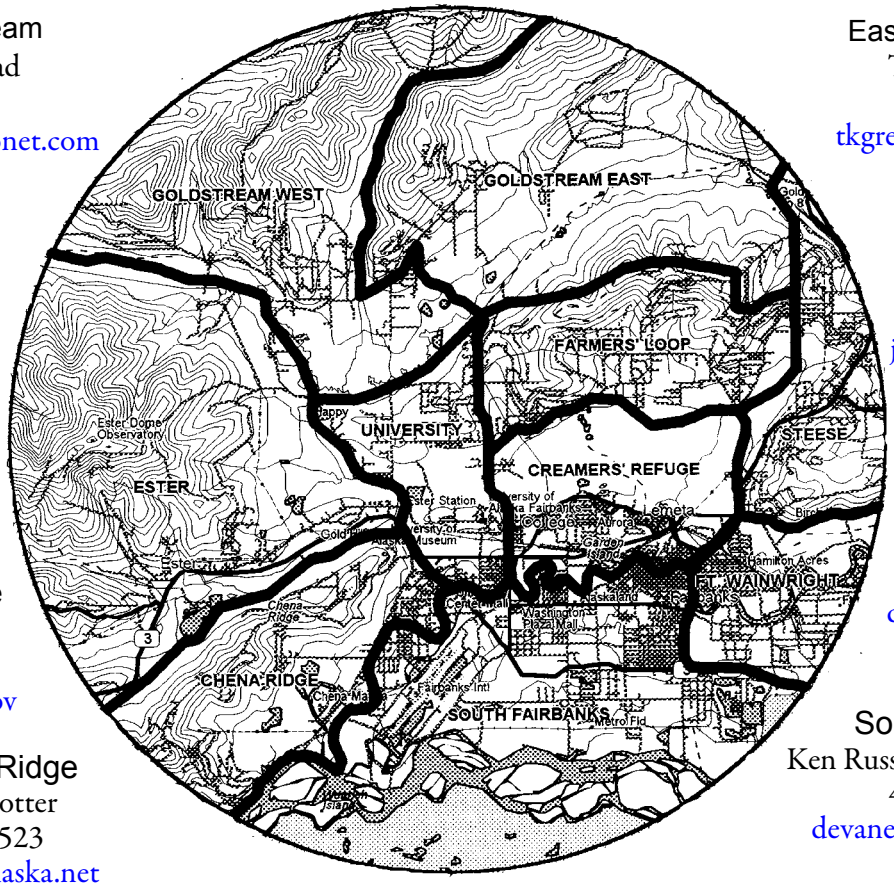
Saturday, January 2nd, 2016

Compilation Potluck Dinner at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 5:00 pm

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

East Goldstream
Tom Green
452-6370
tkgreen@alaska.edu



University
John Wright
479-0194

Farmer's Loop
Jamie Marschner
458-0462(h)
jjmarschner@alaska.edu

Ester
Philip Martin
479-7384
martin@mosquitonet.com

Steese/Wainwright
Dan McGauhey
451-0776
danmcg@acsalaska.net

Creamer's Refuge
Mark Ross
459-7301 (w)
mark.ross@alaska.gov

South Fairbanks
Ken Russell & Laurel Devaney
488-8170 (h)
devaneylaurel@gmail.com

Chena Ridge
Joyce Potter
479-3523
jpotter@alaska.net

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 volunteers willing to cover assigned areas.

- **Field observers** cover an assigned area and record species, numbers, and effort. Please use the data sheet on the next page.
- **Feeder watchers** participate by counting the largest number of birds of each species seen together on that day. Please use the data sheet on the next page.
- 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.
- **How to count Ravens:** Ravens should be counted only if they are using the habitat, ie they are flying low (at or below the tree tops), feeding, or hanging around. This will help eliminate duplicate counts of commuting Ravens.
- **Large flocks** should be counted as closely as possible. Please note the time and place large flocks are sighted so we can eliminate duplication.

Plan to join us at 5 pm for the compilation and potluck dinner at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Pike's Landing Road, across from the Princess Hotel. Directions at www.uuff.org/about/find-us/. Doors will be open shortly after 4 pm. Arctic Audubon will provide meat and drink. Bring your bird count data and some food to share. We look forward to seeing you there. Christmas Bird Count data is online from 1900 to present at www.audubon.org.

If you can't attend the compilation potluck, be sure to contact your area coordinator on the 2nd. Our goal is to have the data complete on the day of the count. Final results will be available on our website, www.arcticaudubon.org, and published in a future newsletter.

2015 Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count Data Entry Sheet (January 2, 2016)

2015 DATA ENTRY SHEET

Area: _____

Observer: _____

Observer: _____

Observer: _____

Observer: _____

		2011	2012	2013	2014
Parties		71	71	71	74
Miles — Car		475	552	513	515
Miles — Foot		60	54	66	74
Miles — Ski/SShoe		16	60	32	39
Miles — Other		31	37	27	17
Hours — Car		67	69	77	78
Hours — Foot		38	37	47	56
Hours — Ski/SShoe		8	23	12	16
Hours — Other		6	10	8	6
Hours — Feeder		53	50	48	84

Additional Species Observed During Count Week	Feeder Count	Field Count		2011	2012	2013	2014
			Mallard	360	354	465	473
			Northern Pintail				
			Common Goldeneye	42	22	24	8
			Barrow's Goldeneye		18	6	
			Common Merganser	4	9		9
			Goldeneye sp.			3	2
			Duck sp.				
			Ruffed Grouse	13	11	6	20
			Spruce Grouse	2	5		1
			Willow Ptarmigan	49	*		
			Sharp-tailed Grouse		1	1	13
			Grouse sp.				
			Ptarmigan sp.	1			
			Bald Eagle				
			Sharp-shinned Hawk				
			Northern Goshawk	1	1	*	1
			Peregrine Falcon				
			Rock Pigeon	384	321	452	531
			Great Horned Owl	4	*	*	1
			Northern Hawk Owl				
			Great Grey Owl		1		
			Boreal Owl		*	*	1

Add'tl Species	Feeder Count	Field Count		2011	2012	2013	2014
			Downy Woodpecker	45	18	13	18
			Hairy Woodpecker	30	26	25	23
			3-toed Woodpecker	2	1	1	1
			Black-backed Woodpecker				
			Woodpecker sp.	10	3		1
			Northern Shrike	2			
			Gray Jay	105	125	65	98
			Black-billed Magpie	12	12	3	5
			Common Raven	1252	807	1134	821
			Black-cap'd Chickadee	800	584	540	537
			Boreal Chickadee	212	194	79	85
			Chickadee sp.	64	62	46	25
			Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	3	9	8
			Brown Creeper	1			
			American Robin	2		2	2
			Varied Thrush				1
			Bohemian Waxwing	60	262	513	502
			Song Sparrow		1		
			White-crowned Sparrow				
			Dark-eyed Junco	3	1	*	1
			Snow Bunting				
			Pine Grosbeak	47	55	147	227
			White-winged Crossbill	1		3	110
			Common Redpoll	1255	2820	552	1662
			Hoary Redpoll	34	47	2	3
			Redpoll sp.	1622	2780	555	2109
			Pine Siskin				
			Ring-necked Pheasant	1			

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bird Count Total	6580	8544	4646	7299
CBC Day Species	28	24	21	27
Week Species	29	28	25	27

* Addtional Species during count week

Sponsored by Arctic Audubon Society

Arctic Audubon Small Grant Helps Replace & Recover Arctic Bird Specimens for Classroom Use

by Jenifer Cameron, FNSBSD Art Coordinator

Hello! It is such a pleasure to report we are in the process of having our lending library of taxidermy birds repaired through an Arctic Audubon Society Small Grant awarded to the FNSBSD Art Center this year. For decades, our taxidermy birds have provided an educational opportunity for all students to learn about, observe and draw from actual specimens. Through the funding provided by this grant, 19 elementary schools (including K-8 schools) will have the opportunity to have five Arctic bird species reside at their school or designated space during the year on a rotating basis as they study, draw and write about the birds. Teachers will engage students in other cross-curricular activities such as geography and math. The bird collection is expected to inspire, educate and connect art with our environment.

We were heartbroken when we lost this group of birds when we originally arranged for repair four years ago. When we realized we probably wouldn't see the birds again, the Art Center began to seek out new bird specimens for our teachers and students to use. Just at this time, the Arctic Audubon grant opportunity became available, and I applied for the grant.

During the application process, I contacted Mike Taras, Education and Outreach Specialist for the Department of Fish and Game in the Wildlife Conservation Division to get some information on how to obtain some bird specimens for taxidermy. Mike was very helpful and willing to set aside some specimens for us for future use if we were awarded the grant. During our conversation, I explained how we had lost our original specimens. Through his subsequent conversations with a Fish and Game Trooper, the original bird collection was recovered and safely delivered back to the Art Center.! We are in the process of having them repaired, paid for with the grant. With any remaining funds, we plan to add new bird specimens to our lending library.

Without the grant opportunity of the Arctic Audubon group, this story would not have had the happy ending it does. Thank you to Arctic Audubon Society donors and volunteers who make Fairbanks a great place to live and learn!

From observation of bird specimens to finished artwork with much conversation and learning in between.

If you would like to support the Small Grants Program, please use the donation form on page one. Many thanks!

National Audubon Society New Member Form

Introductory rate $20

Membership includes both National Audubon Society and the local chapter, Arctic Audubon Society. You will receive National Audubon's magazine, *Audubon,* and postcard notices or newsletters from Arctic Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____ C5ZA520Z

_____

City *State* *Zip*

Amount enclosed: $_____ (make check payable to National Audubon Society)

Send to: Arctic Audubon Society, PO Box 82098, Fairbanks, AK 99708

❑ Chapter Only Membership, $10

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

Arctic Audubon Society publishes postcard notices or newsletters 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.

Local Bird Sightings Reported on

Boreal Birder

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BorealBirder/

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 181
Fairbanks AK

Arctic Audubon Society
PO Box 82098
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count, January 2
Denali Park Christmas Bird Count, January 2
Delta Junction Christmas Bird Count, January 3

Next Fairbanks FeederCount is March 15, 2016. Information at www.aksongbird.org.

***On Safari in East Africa*, presentation by Ken Whitten, Monday, February 1, 7 pm, Noel Wien Library Auditorium**

website: www.arcticaudubon.org
facebook: www.facebook.com/arcticaudubon
email address: arcticaudubon@gmail.com

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