



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 the 59th Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count December 14th

There are many reasons we participate in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. It's a good excuse to get outside at a dark and cold time of year when we sometimes would rather be curled up on the couch with a book. It's also a fun social event and a chance to reconnect with the rest of the birding community. The fact that we're gathering data for the world's longest-running citizen science project is sometimes an afterthought.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count was started in 1900 as an alternative to hunting songbirds over the holidays. Even though the count is somewhat loosely organized, having 120 years of data on bird numbers can document some important trends. As interior Alaska is experiencing rapid climate change, tracking the changing abundance and distribution of our local birds is important.

This year may be more important than any other to continue gathering data on our birds because there's evidence that climate change is causing many effects on them. Swainson's Thrushes—a neo-tropical migrant that should be wintering in South America—were seen in good numbers as late as mid-October. The tiny Wilson's Warbler which feeds exclusively on insects and normally winters in Central America was seen in Fairbanks in mid-November. There are also birds like Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets that seem to be expanding their ranges north as our winters get milder. To get an accurate picture of what's happening to our birds, we need as many people counting as possible.

Want to take part?

The count on Fairbanks will take place on December 14th. Registration is free, and participants can easily sign up by contacting count coordinators Ken Russell and Laurel Devaney at 907-750-3027 or devaneylaurel@gmail.com

There are two ways to participate in the Fairbanks CBC. If you live inside the count circle, you can do a field count or a feeder count. Set out a variety of seeds, suet, and peanut butter in advance to get the birds coming into your feeders. On the day of the count, count the total number of species seen visiting your feeders, and the highest number of a single species seen at any one time. Contact your area count coordinator to get data sheets and instructions.

You don't have to live inside the count circle to participate on a field team. If there's a certain area you want to count in, contact that area coordinator. If you don't have a preference, contact Ken or Laurel to be assigned to a team. If you're a beginning birder, you can still participate in the CBC. Contact your area coordinators and you can be teamed with a more experienced birder.

Plan to bundle up and spend the daylight hours walking, skiing, snowshoeing, or driving through your area to count birds. We hope to see you on December 14 for the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Fairbanks!

Public Hearing on NPR-A Plan December 18th

Teshekpuk Lake Special Area is threatened again! The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) just released a **Draft environmental impact statement (EIS)** in a rushed process to replace the 2013 NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan with one that could offer millions more lands for oil leasing and remove strict protections for Teshekpuk, Utukok, Colville River and other Special Areas designated during the Obama Administration after years of scientific study and local input.

A Public Hearing will be held in Fairbanks Wednesday, December 18 at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center—Open House 6-7 pm and a presentation at 7 pm followed by a public hearing.

A 60-day public comment period is open until January 21, 2020 on the Draft NPR-A IAP/EIS. Those interested in commenting on the EIS can provide testimony online at www.blm.gov/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/alaska/npr-a-iap-eis, email to srice@blm.gov, or send written testimony to BLM, Alaska State Office, Attention — NPR-A IAP/ EIS, 222 W. Seventh Ave., No. 13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599.

59TH ANNUAL FAIRBANKS 2019 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 14th, 2019

Compilation potluck at the 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 Laurel Devaney, 907-750-3027 or devaneylaurel@gmail.com.

West Goldstream

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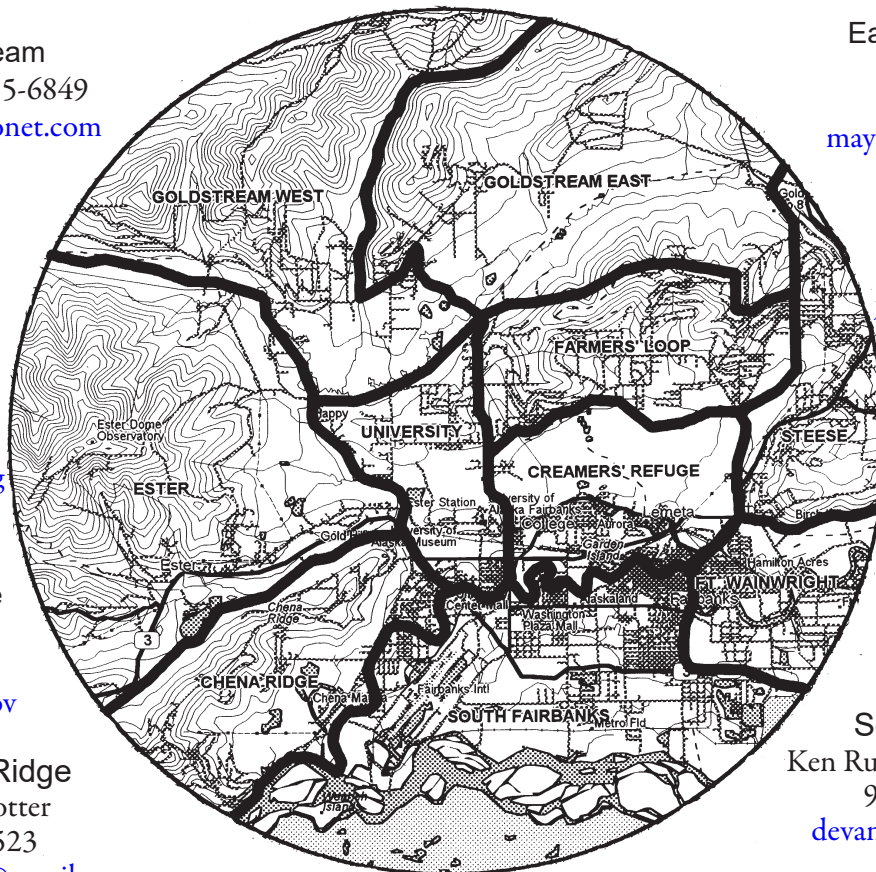
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South Fairbanks

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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 at any one time on that day. Please use the data sheet on the next page. Please avoid overcounting.
- 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 only be counted 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 counting 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 for the compilation potluck at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 4448 Pike's Landing Road, across from the Princess Hotel. The door will open at 4:00 pm. Arctic Audubon will provide baked ham and beverages. We look forward to seeing you there with your data. Our goal is to complete the compilation that day. If you cannot attend, contact your area coordinator on count day or call 907-750-3027 by 6:00 pm.

Final results will be available on our website, www.arcticaudubon.org, and published in a future newsletter. Christmas Bird Count data is online from 1900 to present at www.audubon.org.



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