Get Outdoors with Christmas Bird Count!
Fairbanks Count is Saturday, December 30th

In 1901 “citizen science” was not a concept, and birds were an endless source of food and feathers to all but a few. Luckily there was a small group who decided to count birds on Christmas Day instead of shooting them which was the custom. The Christmas Bird Count (and Audubon) grew from that small beginning to its present spread over the Western Hemisphere involving thousands of people. The information gathered over the ensuing 117 years has proven to be a valuable resource for understanding bird conservation. Consider joining a Christmas Bird Count this year.

The 2017 Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count will return to its usual format—count birds all day followed by a potluck and summary in the evening at the UUFF building on Pikes Landing Road. All ages are welcome to attend and there will be fun prizes for the best stories as determined by the crowd. Specific information on how to participate is included in this newsletter.

New this year: Kids Christmas Bird Count!
Join Tricia Blake from the Alaska Songbird Institute for a guided Christmas Bird Count especially for kids and families at Creamer’s Field on Saturday, December 30. After learning about common species and practicing with binoculars (some available to borrow), we will head out on our count! Dress warmly and be prepared to be outside; hot cocoa and snacks will be provided. All ages are welcome, but kids under age 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Register by December 28 by emailing Tricia.Blake@aksongbird.org or calling ASI at 888-2121.

Christmas Bird Counts in Arctic Audubon Society’s Region
Cantwell – December 17– coordinated by Jill Boelsma, alaska-jill@gmail.com
Delta Junction – December 16– coordinated by Jeff Mason, jdotmason@gmail.com
Denali Park – December 30 – coordinated by Nan Eagleson, 907-683-2822 (home), 907-750-3744 (cell)
Eagle Community – December 19– coordinated by Marlys House, mhouse@agsd.us
Tok – December 18 – coordinated by Tim Lorenzini, USFWS Tetlin NWR, 907-883-9419 Timothy_lorenzini@fws.gov

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Hardy Voices Needed for Protection
by Pam Miller

On December 7th we celebrated the 57th anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, established by President Eisenhower’s administration to preserve its unique wildlife, wilderness and recreational values.

Simply Shameful Sneak Attack: In the dark of night on December 2, 2017—ironically the anniversary of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act—the U.S. Senate passed legislation to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Senator Lisa Murkowski snuck a rider into the massive Tax Reform bill using the expedited budget process. “Opening the Arctic to drilling as part of this tax plan is simply shameful,” said David Yarnold, National Audubon Society’s president and CEO. “The Arctic Refuge isn’t a bank—drilling there won’t pay for the tax cuts the Senate just passed. The American people don’t support drilling in the Arctic and it’s up to the House to reject this flawed bill,” he said.

Senator Murkowski’s rider in the Tax bill to open the entire Coastal Plain to oil and gas will eviscerate the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by stripping existing protections for fish, wildlife, and subsistence uses on the Coastal Plain, the Refuge’s biological heart. Further, the legislation adds the oil and gas program for the Coastal Plain as a purpose of the Refuge with BLM in charge, and fully opens the entire 1.5-million-acre Coastal

continued on page two
More than 200 species of birds migrate through six continents and all 50 states to breed in the Arctic Refuge. In his essay “Wings over Winter Snow,” Frank Keim notes that only 26 hardy bird species remain year round in significant numbers within the entire Arctic Refuge (in the book *Arctic Wings: Birds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*).

Species found in the southern part of the Refuge’s boreal forest include Boreal, Black-capped and Gray-headed Chickadee; Spruce, Sharp-tailed, and Ruffed Grouse; American Three-toed, Downy, Hairy, and Black-backed Woodpecker; Boreal, Great Gray, Great Horned, and Northern Hawk Owl; Northern Goshawk; White-winged Crossbill, and Pine Grosbeak.

Only a half dozen or so species are considered permanent residents of the Coastal Plain—Common Raven, Rock and Willow Ptarmigan, Snowy Owl, Gyrfalcon, and American Dipper, with Common and Hoary Redpoll occasionally seen and Ivory and Ross’s Gull seen rarely.

The American Dipper resides in the warm open waters of Sadlerochit Spring on the Coastal Plain year-round. At Arctic Audubon’s December program on winter birds, Dr. Ed Murphy said, “the Dipper has the greatest ability to thrive in the harshest winter conditions.”

Plain to oil and gas exploration, development, and production to functionally turn it into an industrial zone. Prior to the vote, 37 leading Arctic wildlife scientists united to oppose drilling in the Arctic—making clear that wildlife and oil drilling don’t mix in the Refuge. Read more of their comments at www.audubon.org, click “news” tab.

The Tax Bill now goes to conference with the House; their bill did not include the Arctic Refuge provisions and many moderate Republican members are speaking up for its protection. There are also many controversial provisions in the Tax bill itself with greatest tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Americans. President Trump calls for the bill by Christmas, so take action now!

In 1986, Arctic Audubon Society “adopted” the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as part of the National Audubon Society’s “Adopt-a-Refuge” program when the Interior Department was poised to recommend oil and gas development, not wilderness designation for its Coastal Plain “1002 Area.” We are now at this unexpected turning point given that just last year the Interior Department recommended Wilderness designation for the Coastal Plain and other lands in the Refuge as part of the Arctic Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan public process.

At this most critical moment for the future of the Refuge, Audubon is fighting in the halls of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC and asking its 1.2 million members across the country to demand that Arctic Refuge drilling be removed from the Tax Bill. Arctic Audubon has a special role being the closest chapter to the birds, caribou, polar bears, and people that depend on this Refuge for survival. Please write letters to the editor and ask your friends and relatives in the lower 49 to call their members of Congress to support this vital bird nursery and ask them to oppose any bill that includes Arctic Refuge drilling.

The hardy Dipper is tough and gives hope as we continue the hard work on these winter days with actions to protect the future of the Arctic Refuge.
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. 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 UUFF, 4448 Pike’s Landing Road, across from the Princess Hotel. The door will open at 4:00 pm. Arctic Audubon will provide 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 888-2121 by 6:00 pm.

Final results will be available on our website, [www.arcticaudubon.org](http://www.arcticaudubon.org), and published in a future newsletter. Christmas Bird Count data is online from 1900 to present at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).
### 2017 Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count Data Entry Sheet

**Area:** _____________________________

**Observer:** _____________________________

**Observer:** _____________________________

**Observer:** _____________________________

**Observer:** _____________________________

#### 2017 DATA ENTRY SHEET

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Field Count</th>
<th>Feeder Count</th>
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<td>2017</td>
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#### Add'tl Species

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<td>Golden-crowned Kinglet</td>
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*Additional Species seen during count week

**CBC Day Species:** 21 27 30 27

**Week Species:** 25 27 34 28

Sponsored by Arctic Audubon Society


Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
by Joyce Potter

Inspired and informed by Arctic Audubon Society’s efforts to present informational programs on climate change over the past year, I become active in the Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition (FCAC). FCAC is made up of people concerned about educating themselves and others about effects of climate change and seeking viable solutions and adaptations to meet the growing needs of Alaska’s many peoples, communities and habitats. Its aim is to work towards fair, equitable and just transitions in our economies, communities and politics that will lead to equitable, resilient communities and relationships with each other as well as respect for the earth.

Recognizing the strengths, knowledge and talents within the coalition, FCAC formed six Working Groups—Interfaith, Renewable Energy, Politics and Policy, Keep it in the Ground, Resilient Economies, and Kids for Environmental Action. The Coalition has been sponsoring movies, talks by scientists, economists and strategists as well as marches, meetings with politicians, native leaders, faith leaders, workshops and listening sessions.

The Interfaith Working Group to which I belong, represents many different faith traditions and has dedicated itself to education and outreach. Their hope is to inspire faith leaders and their communities to become involved as well as to provide a space for scientists and faith leaders to put aside their differences and recognize the need to work together to protect the environment. Another goal is to amplify the message from Native communities about defending their sacred lands. To these ends, the Interfaith Working Group recently hosted a panel discussion between scientists, faith leaders, and the audience entitled “Faith and Science: Listening to the Earth.” It was well attended and opened up insights and ways that science and faith can support each other and inform and inspire others to become involved. On November 27th, the Interfaith Working Group held a candlelight walk and prayer gathering to support the Gwich’in people in their stand against drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a place that is sacred to them as The Place Where Life Begins.

On December 2nd, the Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition and its working groups gathered to envision and set goals for the coming year as well as visualizing an equitable and sustainable transition to a way of living in harmony with the earth and each other led by Native spokespersons. The goals set for the coming year include continuing to build an active base, defending the Refuge, looking toward the 2018 elections, solidifying relationships, adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change, and working toward solar panels on at least one non-profit.

The Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition is open and welcoming to all those interested in learning about and seeking solutions to climate change, www.fairbanksclimateaction.org.

Comments Due January 31st for Ambler Road Project EIS

Fairbanks BLM office is seeking comments on a proposed road from the Dalton Highway to the Ambler Mining District. The road will cross State, Native Corporation and Federal lands managed by BLM and National Park Service. The road will be 211 miles of new gravel road with no public access built to provide industrial access to the Ambler mining district. The road will cross the southern foothills of the Brooks Range including parts of Gates of the Arctic National Park. This road was proposed by AIDEA (Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority).

A Fairbanks meeting held in late November was well attended, but every comment submitted will be considered and counted until January 31, 2018. Please visit the website www.blm.gov/AmblerRoadEIS or more information. Plan to submit a comment. Arctic Audubon will be developing comments to submit over the next few weeks.

Submit written comments by January 31st:
Email: blm_ak_aks0_amblerroad_comments@blm.gov
Fax: (907) 271-5479
Mail: Ambler Road Scoping Comments, 222 West 7th Ave., Stop #13, Anchorage, AK 99513

Small Grant Program Update

The Arctic Audubon Small Grants program initiated in 2004 to fund conservation related projects that support our mission to protect Alaska’s ecosystems by encouraging research, education and management that contribute to appreciation, and good stewardship of our natural heritage. In a typical year we awarded grants totaling $2000, but in some years we awarded more, depending on our fiscal situation. We developed a protocol for advertising, evaluating, and processing grants.

Our most recent grant cycle was 2015. In response to the suggestion that we invite grant proposals in the fall to encourage more interest from schools, we skipped spring 2016 and hoped to offer grants in the fall. However, no one was able to chair the project. Our present situation remains the same—we have funds to offer small grants and would like to do so, but we have no one to oversee the process. If you are still reading and would like to get involved, please talk to any board member and discuss your thoughts with us. We would like to continue to offer the grants and would continue to be involved as a board. You would not have to be a board member.
National Audubon Society Membership with Chapter Membership, $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: _____________________________________________

___________________________________________________

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, make check payable to Arctic Audubon Society. You will receive postcard notices or newsletters from the Chapter.

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Arctic Audubon Society publishes postcard notices or newsletters for its members monthly fall through spring. National Audubon Society (NAS) dues are $20. NAS membership includes local chapter membership. Chapter only membership is $10 and includes the newsletter.