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.

Fairbanks 60th Christmas Bird Count–Pandemic Style!

Count Day is Saturday, December 19th
Compilation via Zoom, Sunday, December 20th

By Laurel Devaney

If you need something to look for in this dark winter season, how about spotting an over-wintering American Robin or a flurry of feeding waxwings? All local birders have reason to celebrate because the 121st National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count and the 60th in Fairbanks will take place despite the pandemic! Our count this year will take place on Saturday, December 19, with count week starting on December 16 and ending on December 22. Detailed information can be found on pages 3-4 of this newsletter.

In order to stay safe while we count, some changes will be in place. Our traditional potluck and compilation meeting will be replaced with a Zoom meeting on December 20, 2-4 pm. Social distancing and/or masking are required at all times for parties in the field. Carpooling may only occur within existing familiar or social “pod” groups. Activities must comply with all current state and municipal COVID-19 guidelines.

We also have some changes in our longtime list of area coordinators. John Wright has stepped down from coordinating the University area and has been replaced by Dave Hejna. Dave has a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Science from Paul Smith’s College in upstate New York and worked for the Alaska Songbird Institute this summer. Longtime Fairbanks CBC and East Goldstream coordinator Gail Mayo will be replaced by Maria Berger. Maria is a semi-retired naturalist guide and biologist with an MS and BS in Wildlife Biology. She guides for Murie Science and Learning Center in Denali National Park and on a small boat in Prince William Sound each summer. Thanks so much to John and Gail for dedicating so many years to the Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count. Many thanks to Dave and Maria for stepping up!

Final results will be published in a future newsletter and on our website, www.arcticaudubon.org.

Christmas Bird Count data is online from 1900 to present at https://netapp.audubon.org/cbcobservation/.

Annual Meeting & Election of Arctic Audubon Officers

Arctic Audubon will hold a brief annual meeting and election of officers during the Christmas Bird Count Zoom meeting on Sunday, December 20, 2-4 pm. All Arctic Audubon members are invited to join us for a brief annual meeting to elect 2021 officers. Please forward nominations for officers to Pam Miller (President) at pammillerarctic@gmail.com. Nominations will also be accepted at the meeting. The current officers are:

- President: Pam Miller
- Vice President: Darla Theisen
- Secretary: Jamie Marschner
- Treasurer: Mary Zalar

The meeting link is listed on page 3 of this newsletter, on Arctic Audubon Society’s Facebook page, and on the website, www.arcticaudubon.org.
The Redpoll December 2020

Message from the President:

Celebrate Arctic Refuge 60th Anniversary with Action!

by Pam Miller

We celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on December 6, 2020! The idea for this Refuge was ambitious—to preserve a large enough corner of Alaska so that a full spectrum of arctic and subarctic ecosystem retained its wholeness—and it also came from a place of humbleness. Change was coming fast to Alaska on the cusp of Statehood and oil discovery at Prudhoe Bay.

The remarkable ecologist Dr. David Klein, who passed away in November after a very long life, was a keen observer of the relationships of plants, animals, rivers. I wrote of a short walk together on a river bar in the Arctic Refuge on a trip with reporters (see Ptarmigan vs Raven, Redpoll January 2019).

As we sauntered about willows, Dave said,

Keeping moving is a strategy for caribou feeding, and also to keep them from the predators. All of those interconnections are part of the system, the physical parts, the timing of the snow leaving, the biological effects like insects and vegetation. The age of the animals results in different nutritional requirements. The riparian areas tend to be used more by males. The cows and calves are more vulnerable because they can’t see bears or wolves hidden behind the shrubs until they are right upon them. Most of the Golden Eagles that feed on caribou calves are young ones, three to four years old.

Dave cautioned us,

Be careful not to dwell solely on caribou because the whole system is interrelated. It’s an intricate, dynamic system. That’s too much for both George Bush’s and Dick Cheney to appreciate. This is the kind of diversity that you don’t see from the air. When Senator [Frank] Murkowski takes a bunch of Senators around and they say it’s a barren wasteland, they don’t see these details. Around the polygons near the coast, with sedges and marsh in the center or in troughs, the caribou and muskoxen work their way feeding around these.

Right now, the Trump Administration rushes to sell off the Arctic Refuge’s oil from under its community of life to the highest oil company bidder and also to permit damaging 3-D seismic exploration—expect a quickie comment period on an Environmental Assessment that might run from December 11-25. We need to take action now.

But change is coming with President-elect Joe Biden, a longtime Arctic Refuge supporter. While we must take every chance to oppose Trump’s dark moves to desecrate the Arctic Refuge, it is also key to continue pressing Biden to take promised actions on Day 1 to protect the Arctic Refuge by halting the lease sale and 3-D seismic as significant to addressing the climate crisis.

Action Needed Now—Comment on Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain Lease Sale

The Department of Interior issued a call for nominations and comments on 32 massive potential oil and gas lease sale tracts which BLM delineated covering the Arctic Refuge’s coastal plain. This move opens a 30-day comment period and precedes a Notice of Lease Sale. Please join us in submitting comments to the BLM opposing lease sales on the coastal plain. Comments are due by December 17.

Tips for Writing Comments

Your comments should express opposition to leasing all tracts on the coastal plain and will be most effective if substantive and fact-based rather than emotional or philosophical. Highlight issues of concern, like the human rights of Arctic Indigenous peoples, insufficient Environmental Impact Statements in the planning phase, climate impacts, and impacts on caribou, polar bears, and migratory birds.

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center has outlined key points to make that will guide you in effective inclusion of your specific knowledge of the Coastal Plain. See their website, www.northern.org/featured/take-action-comment-period-opens-for-blms-call-for-nominations-for-the-arctic-refuge-coastal-plain/.

Find more talking points from inadequacies in the Draft EIS phase at www.northern.org/news/arctic-refuge-draft-eis-talking-points. Our thanks to the Northern Center for providing detailed and helpful information to enable thoughtful advocacy.

How to Comment:

The agency is only accepting hard copies, and comments must be received by December 17, 2020. Please include your name, phone number, address, and email. Please submit your comment one of these ways:

- Email your comments to Emily Sullivan, NAEC’s Arctic Program Coordinator, at emily@northern.org with the subject line Arctic Refuge Public Comment. NAEC will hand deliver all comments submitted to Emily to ensure they are counted.
- Mail your comments to: State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, 222 West 7th Avenue, Mailstop 13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7504.

All comments must be received by December 17.
60TH ANNUAL FAIRBANKS 2020 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
Saturday, December 19th, 2020

Compilation Zoom Meeting, Sunday December 20th, 2-4:00 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.

Goldstream West
Brian Lawhead, 455-6849
lawhead@mosquitonet.com

Ester
Claire Stuyck
803-260-2471
clairestuyck@gmail.com

University
Dave Hejna
716-951-0213
dhejna@s.paulsmiths.edu

Chena Ridge
Joyce Potter
479-3523
jpotter.alaska@gmail.com

South Fairbanks
Ken Russell & Laurel Devaney
907-750-3027
devaneylaurel@gmail.com

Goldstream East
Maria Berger
474-0724
mariaberger.ak@gmail.com

Farmer’s Loop
Jamie Marschner
458-0462(h)
jamie.marschner@gmail.com

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

Steese & Wainwright
Melissa Sikes
347-1802
melsikes5@gmail.com

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 landfill, 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, i.e. they are flying low (at or below the treetops), 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.

As a pandemic safety measure, there will not be an in-person compilation this year. Instead, we will be meeting via zoom at 2:00 pm on Sunday, December 20 to share the results of the count. The meeting link is listed below and on Arctic Audubon Society's Facebook page and website, www.arcticaudubon.org. Area Coordinators will also provide the link to count participants. All are welcome to attend the compilation meeting. However, please get your count data to your area coordinator in advance of the meeting so we can share final results. If you can't reach your area coordinator, you can also call 907-750-3027.

Join Zoom Meeting: Fairbanks CBC Compilation/ Audubon election
Dec 20, 2020, 2:00 PM Alaska
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81947910446?pwd=KzU0d3k1Uk0reVlkdVhocFlUK01sZz09
Meeting ID: 819 4791 0446
Passcode: 395456
### 2020 Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count Data Entry Sheet (December 19, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field Count</strong></td>
<td><strong>Species</strong></td>
<td><strong>Field Count</strong></td>
<td><strong>Species</strong></td>
<td><strong>Field Count</strong></td>
<td><strong>Species</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11:00 PM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12:00 AM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Species seen during count week**

- Rock Ptarmigan
- Boreal Owl
- Short-eared Owl
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk
- Great Grey Owl
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Peregrine Falcon
- Northern Hawk Owl
- Northern Goshawk
- Boreal Owl

Sponsored by Arctic Audubon Society
Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve Continues to Grow

By Darla Theisen

Since 1984, Arctic Audubon Society has owned the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve—now 240 acres of undeveloped land near 5 Mile Chena Hot Springs Road. When the UA Land Management offered two adjacent 40-acre parcels for sale in 2019, Arctic Audubon Society and Gail Mayo successfully bid on the parcels. Gail gifted her parcel to Arctic Audubon Society in memory of Larry Mayo, a longtime conservationist and Arctic Audubon board member who provided vision, passion, persistence, and leadership for the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve. Arctic Audubon Society continues to accept donations toward the purchase price of $45,100. Tax-deductible donations can be made online, www.arcticaudubon.org/audubon-riedel-nature-reserve, or by mail to PO Box 82098, Fairbanks 99708.

Adjacent to the Audubon Riedel Nature Preserve is 360 acres of Borough land, at one time the site of a seismic device operated by the Air Force and UAF. The seismic site is no longer active and has been dismantled, leaving an open hillside with primitive road access. Arctic Audubon is in discussion with the Borough to expand and enhance the Nature Reserve by leasing this property.

Winter Wonders at Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve

On nearly daily walks through the Nature Reserve, Darla highlights the wonders of the Reserve throughout the seasons. Winter is a wonderland!

• Beautiful packed trails with trees are holding onto the snow creating wonderful snowscapes.
• Lots of tracks and lots of birds. Snowshoe hares, voles and squirrel tracks interspersed with fox and moose tracks.
• There is a moose cow and calf in the area so if you are on the trails be aware as she is very protective. She stomped a dog earlier in the year and has bluff charged me. Lynx have been seen in the vicinity, and one was quite brazen, leaping on a neighbor’s small dog which the owner had to save by hitting the lynx with a chair. It is always a good idea to have a stout walking stick or ski poles for balance and protection!
• Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers are prevalent throughout the reserve as well as chickadees, ravens, gray jays, nuthatches, and grouse. I’m still looking for redpolls and grosbeaks, and occasionally hearing Great Horned Owls hooting in the evening.

Snowshoeing through the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve is a great winter activity during these challenging times. Thank you to all who have donated to the Riedel Nature Reserve towards the purchase of the additional 40 acre parcel.

Report Deformed Beak Sightings

While observing birds at your feeders, you may notice one with a deformed beak. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Alaska Science Center provides excellent information about “Beak Deformities in Landbirds” at www.usgs.gov/centers/asc/science/beak-deformities-landbirds?qt-science_center_objects=0#qt-science_center_objects. These deformities are being tracked, and sightings with photos should be reported to:

Caroline Van Hemert, Ph.D.
Research Wildlife Biologist
USGS Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: (907)786-7167
Fax: (907)786-7021
Email: cvanhemert@usgs.gov
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. Donations to Audubon Alaska also include membership in National Audubon and Arctic Audubon.

Name: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
___________________________________________________
City State Zip
Email Address: ______________________________________

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.