



*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 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.*

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The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society, Fairbanks, Alaska

Vol. 34 Issue No. 2

www.arcticaudubon.org

February 2012

Arctic Audubon Society & the Noel Wien Library presents...

Ecosystem Reassembly on Kasatochi: Terrestrial Arthropods Three Years Post-eruption

presentation by Dr. Derek Sikes, University of Alaska Museum

Monday, February 13th, 7:00 pm

Noel Wien Library Auditorium

Kasatochi volcano, a small island in the Aleutians, erupted violently on August 8, 2008 burying the island in ash and presumably destroying all life on the island. Derek Sikes, curator of Insects at the University of Alaska Museum, in collaboration with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service visited the island two months before the eruption and each of three years after the eruption to document the reassembly of the ecosystem. Dr. Sikes will describe the insect community before and after the eruption. Despite the survival of some plants, the post-eruption arthropod fauna was subsisting on marine-based necromass. In year three the first herbivorous insects were documented.



*Kasatochi Volcano, October 2008
Photo by Jerry Morris*

Arctic Audubon Offers Small Grants

Application deadline is March 15, 2012

Arctic Audubon Society's Small Grants Program funds conservation related projects that support our mission to protect Alaska's ecosystems by encouraging research, education, and management that will contribute to appreciation and good stewardship of our natural heritage. This year, 2011, will be our tenth year offering small grants.

In 2012 Arctic Audubon will consider applications for small grants of up to \$2,000. Partial funding may be offered. Proposed projects should enhance the understanding and conservation of Northern Alaska's organisms and/or ecosystems. Projects dedicated to increasing public awareness and knowledge of conservation issues are appropriate, as are projects that develop educational tools. Applications must be submitted by March 15th. All applications will be reviewed and a decision announced by the end of March. High school and middle school students and teachers are encouraged to apply. Successful applicants will be expected to submit a report of outcomes and may be asked to give a short public presentation.

Applicants should submit an application consisting of two pages (maximum):

- A one-page cover letter introducing themselves, their interest in the proposal, and **contact information**. Contact information is essential.

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Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count

By Gail Mayo

When we gathered for the 2011 Christmas Bird Count, we had already endured a fair share of cold weather in November. At the time of our count, little did we know how tough winter was about to get for our birds. However, on our coldest day (so far) a rather healthy looking Robin was seen in a chokecherry tree along Riverview Drive.

We saw 6,580 birds of 28 species plus one additional species from count week, a Boreal Owl heard in the west Goldstream area. "We" were 85 people watching birds at 28 feeders and on 43 field trips. On those field trips we spent 120 hours combing 581 miles for birds and saw over 80% of the total number of birds seen. Just about everyone remarked that they didn't see many birds, but collectively they did alright. And, all of the birds were not at feeders, although birds at a feeder are fair game for a party covering neighborhood roads. The number of Downy Woodpeckers seen was high, but nothing else stands out as remarkable.

What is always remarkable to me is that so many folks found bird watching preferable to shopping or other diversions despite the short, wintry day. Thank you to all who participated, and I hope everyone will enjoy the statistics available on our website, www.arcticaudubon.org.

Audubon Alaska Makes the List for "Pick. Click. Give." Campaign

When you register for the Permanent Fund Dividend, think Audubon! In 2012, for the first time, Audubon Alaska will be eligible for the state of Alaska's "Pick. Click. Give." donation program. As part of the application process for online PFD registration, there is a list of nonprofit organizations to which Alaskans can choose to donate some or all of their dividends. Although Audubon Alaska is part of the National Audubon Society, they raise all of their own funding to support the science-based habitat conservation they do across the state. So when you register, look for Audubon Alaska on the list.

eBird: Global Tools for Birders

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/about>

A real-time, online checklist program, eBird encourages users to participate by providing Internet tools that maintain their personal bird records and enable them to visualize data with interactive maps, graphs, and bar charts.

- Record the birds you see
- Keep track of your bird lists
- Share your sightings and join the eBird community
- Contribute to science and conservation

Delta Christmas Bird Count

By Steve DuBois

The 2011 Delta Christmas Bird Count was the 22nd consecutive annual Delta count. This year, the Delta count was conducted on December 17, 2011 in relatively mild winter conditions for the area. The minimum temperature for the day was +16F with a maximum of +36F, and wind was a relatively calm 14 mph out of the east.

This year, there were five parties birding afield and four counters that monitored bird feeders. Counters saw a total of 581 individual birds of 17 different species which is about normal for the Delta count. Noteworthy observations this year were a very high number of 88 Bald Eagles in the count area, and the first Northern Goshawk to be seen during a Delta count. Counters in the field covered about 70 miles by car, about 4.5 miles walking, 3 miles on snowmachine, and 5 miles on cross-country skis. These observers counted 452 individual birds of 13 different species. Counters monitoring bird feeders spent about 15.5 cumulative hours monitoring their feeders and saw 129 individual birds of 10 different species.

The most numerous species seen was Common Redpoll with 169 individuals counted. Common Ravens were the second most abundant with 146 seen. Other species seen included 88 Bald Eagles, 49 Black-capped Chickadees, 46 Mallards, 32 Black-billed Magpies, 18 Boreal Chickadees, 13 Pine Grosbeaks, 9 Common Mergansers, 8 Gray Jays, 2 American Dippers, 2 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 1 Hairy Woodpecker, 1 Hoary Redpoll, 1 Ruffed Grouse, and 1 Northern Goshawk.

Arctic Audubon Small Grants

continued from page one

- A one page project description that includes a budget, timeline, expected outcomes, and how the project relates to the mission of Arctic Audubon.

Applications are due March 15, 2011. Please submit by email to arcticaudubon@gmail.com or by mail to Arctic Audubon, PO Box 82098, Fairbanks, Alaska 99708.

Arctic Audubon Society is a nonprofit conservation organization based in Fairbanks, Alaska. As a chapter of the National Audubon Society our region encompasses the area north of the Alaska Range, including the North Slope and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. For more information about Arctic Audubon visit our website at www.arcticaudubon.org.

Please direct questions to arcticaudubon@gmail.com.

Will the Railroad Spray Herbicides?

By Gail Mayo

What, I said, not again! It seems that we are continually confronting the railroad on this issue of spraying herbicides. But, we are given a chance to comment. I urge everyone who cares about this issue to take just a few minutes to comment. It will be easy if you check in with the organization Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) at www.akaction.org.

The issue is the railroad's plans to spray herbicides along 60 miles of its line north of the Alaska Range. The project's name is Alaska Railroad Corporation Clear-Fairbanks Pesticide Use Permit. The comments are due by March 12, 2012 and can be delivered by email to rebecca.colvin@alaska.gov.

Spraying herbicides threatens human health as well as salmon streams, drinking water sources, berry picking areas and the overall ecological processes of each area. The chemicals to be sprayed are a proprietary combination and include glyphosate. Learn more from the ACAT website.

WANTED: Gray-headed Chickadee Sightings!

Gray-headed Chickadees are among the rarest breeding birds in North America and occur only in Alaska and northwest Canada. The distribution of this uncommon, unstudied species is not certain and historical accounts suggest it occurred in Interior Alaska. Travis Booms, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, requests YOUR help in documenting where this bird occurs in Interior Alaska.

Please photograph any possible sightings of this bird and send the photograph, along with date and location information, to Travis Booms, travis.booms@alaska.gov. Because Gray-headed Chickadees look very similar to other chickadees, only photographs that allow positive species identification will be useful. Gray-headed Chickadees differ from Black-capped Chickadees by lacking the pure black cap and from the more similar Boreal Chickadee by having:

- grayish head instead of brown
- larger white cheek patch that extends towards the back of the neck
- whiter sides instead of buffy brown

For more information or to report a sighting, contact Travis Booms, 459-7335 or travis.booms@alaska.gov.

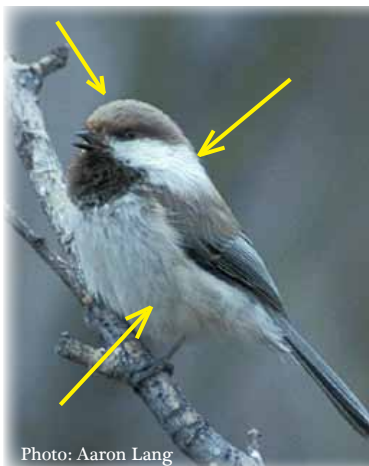


Photo: Aaron Lang

Great Backyard Bird Count

February 17–20, 2012

The 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held February 17–20, 2012. The GBBC is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are across the U.S. and Canada. 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.

Each checklist submitted by these citizen scientists helps researchers at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society learn more about how birds are doing—and how to protect them and the environment we share. Last year, participants turned in more than 92,000 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded.

For more information, visit www.birdcount.org. Or contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-2473 or Citizen Science at the National Audubon Society at (202) 861-2242 ext 3050. The Great Backyard Bird Count is made possible, in part, by generous support from Wild Birds Unlimited.

Yakutat Tern Festival, May 31–June 3

Celebrating Birds in Culture

The First Annual Yakutat Tern Festival was held June 2–5, 2011, with great success. The festival planning committee is currently planning for an even better festival in 2012. One of the largest and southernmost known breeding colonies of Aleutian Terns exists here. The Aleutian Tern has a limited range throughout Alaska and eastern Siberia and Russia, and very little is known about this species, including its migration patterns. The Yakutat area is currently at the forefront of Aleutian Tern research, including studies on population trends, nesting ecology, and migration patterns.

Participants of the festival will enjoy birding activities, natural history field trips, art exhibits, educational events for kids and adults, Native cultural presentations and speakers with professional stature representing a wealth of information about the Yakutat area. The 2012 theme, *Celebrating Birds in Culture*, focuses on the significance of birds in Native American culture.

For information regarding the festival, visit the website www.yakutatternfestival.org or phone Susan Oehlers (907) 784-3359 or Walter Porter (907) 784-3025. In the lower 48 states, contact Mike Denega (530) 306-4936.



Arctic Audubon Society
PO Box 82098
Fairbanks, AK 99708

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Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Ecosystem Reassembly on Kasatochi by Dr. Derek Sikes, Monday Feb. 13, 7 pm, Noel Wien Library
Dr. Sikes will describe the insect community before and after the volcanic eruption in 2008.

Great Backyard Bird Count, February 17-20.

Information on how to participate on page 4.

Keith Echelmeyer Memorial Ski, Saturday, March 5

Arctic Audubon Small Grants Applications due March 15, 2012. Details on page 1.

Field Trips: Birding on Saturday Mornings, 8:00 am

May 5 - Waterfowl Identification

May 19 - Shorebird Identification

May 26 - Songbird Identification & Birding by Ear

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

email address: arcticaudubon@gmail.com

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Web Site: Tom Green (452-6370)

Alaska Audubon Board: Dave Shaw (590-7023)

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: _____

City State Zip

☐ 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 C2ZA520Z
Fairbanks, AK 99708

☐ Chapter Only Membership, \$10

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