



The Redpoll

Newsletter of the Arctic Audubon Society

Fairbanks, Alaska

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www.arcticaudubon.org

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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.

Arctic Audubon Society presents...

Alaska Pollinators: Their Importance and How They're Struggling *presentation by Jessica Rykken, Lisa Hay, and Dawn Cogan*

Monday, February 3rd, 7:00 pm

Noel Wien Library Auditorium

Jessica Rykken will discuss pollinator diversity, natural history, and threats. Alaska has a fascinating diversity of native pollinators, including bumble bees, solitary bees, and flower flies. Jessica will also share some of the research projects going on in Denali National Park and Preserve, looking at pollinators along elevation gradients and the phenology of plants and their pollinators.

Jessica Rykken is an entomologist working in Denali National Park and Preserve. She has conducted insect inventories and related research in national parks for the last fifteen years, including Boston Harbor Islands, Shenandoah, Olympic, North Cascades, and several Alaskan parks.

Lisa Hay will describe how pesticides used by local mosquito spray companies are killing area honeybees. These chemicals are lethal to all insects and aquatic life. They have also been shown to kill local songbirds. Learn what chemicals are being used and what you can do to protect your area.

Lisa Hay is a five-year Beekeeper who has become very active collecting data on how to over winter honey bees in the Interior of Alaska, as well as other issues that affect honeybee health. She spends her off time working as a psychotherapist doing rehabilitation with violent offenders and working with individuals who have complex PTSD, anxiety, depression and ADHD.

Dawn Cogan will talk about the benefits of beekeeping, where to find equipment locally and out-of-state as well as share her family story of medicinal benefits of beekeeping.

Dawn Cogan was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. She has a BA in Management Communications, a teacher's certificate through UAF and a M.Ed. in Education Leadership from UAA. Dawn is a master gardener and beekeeper in Fairbanks. She is currently the Site Administrator of IDEA.

Photos top to bottom: Flower Flies in rose, Dawn Cogan beekeeping, honey harvest in the fall.



The Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve is
ready to grow—and YOU can help!
See pages 6-7

Arctic Audubon Society Receives Audubon in Action Grant

Arctic Audubon Society has been awarded an “Audubon in Action” grant to continue and expand last year’s project, *Birds that Connect Us: Arctic Refuge Outreach and Advocacy*. In 2019 we began a “pilot project” by designing and printing a postcard with a national map connecting Arctic Refuge birds with migration destinations in the Lower 48, based on a US Fish & Wildlife Service map. We used these at community events to encourage connections and advocacy for the Arctic Refuge.

The \$7,500 grant will be used to hire an intern, produce printed material, and possibly travel within Alaska. Project goals include:

- Update Arctic Refuge Bird Migrations project materials, consisting of detailed species accounts of one or more migratory birds associated with each state and linked to the Refuge—along with newsletter and press release templates for Audubon Chapters in every state. An intern will update these materials with new data.
- Update Arctic Refuge Bird connections fact sheets and materials such as *Birds that Connect Us* postcards and posters for use by Audubon Chapters in Alaska and the Lower 48.
- Identify volunteers among Arctic Audubon members who have strong Lower 48 connections or travel regularly to strategically important states and facilitate engaging with local Audubon chapters and participating in local advocacy meetings or at bird festivals. We will query our members at our monthly meeting about Alaskan and other bird festivals they may attend in the coming year where they may be willing to do volunteer outreach. This is a critical time for advocacy during the BLM’s consideration of the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program EIS final decision this year, an imminent threat to this biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A proactive campaign for restoring protections for the Arctic Refuge requires an increased magnitude of outreach.



Lilly and Joe Green look at bird migration routes on Arctic Audubon’s poster version of the “Birds that Connect Us” postcard.



Darla Theisen adds a postcard to the mailbox at the 2019 Spring Migration Celebration in Fairbanks.

Advocating with YOU for Alaska Lands & Wildlife

Arctic Audubon Society tries to keep abreast of Conservation issues that are close to our area (all of Alaska north of the Alaska Range)—a huge number of issues! We advocate in various ways, including signing on to letters from groups with similar objectives, attending briefing sessions, submitting written reports, following Alaska Legislature issues with help from the Alaska Center and local reports, and trying to keep up on local concerns like proposals for buffer zones to protect wildlife populations.

More importantly we urge our members to respond to their own concerns with their own expertise. We are currently actively responding to the Ambler Road Proposal, the National Petroleum Reserve Impact Statement and the oil Development Proposals for the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We use the expertise of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center to guide us through 1,000-page Impact Statements. We urge our members to follow issues and act on them. Yes, as Arctic Audubon we (the board) represent you, but your individual comments are valuable as well.

Planning Begins for 50th Anniversary of Earth Day

Planning Meeting January 28th, 7 pm

If you were alive in 1970, do you remember where you were for the first Earth Day celebration? On April 22nd, 1970, 20 million Americans—10% of the U.S. population at the time—took to the streets, college campuses and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet. The first Earth Day in 1970 launched a wave of action, including the passage of landmark environmental laws in the United States.



Folks from the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition, Green Star and the Alaska Peace Center are working on plans for marking the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. A week-long celebration is in the works with activities scheduled from Sunday, April 19th to Saturday, April 25th (which is also Spring Migration Celebration).

Help Plan Earth Day Celebrations

Groups and individuals planning events during Earth Week are invited to meet with us to coordinate and promote activities. The next planning meeting is scheduled at 7 pm at Fairbanks Lutheran Church (across from library) on January 28th. For more information, please contact:

Susan Grace, blackdog@ptialaska.net, or
Charley Basham, charley.basham@gmail.com, 479-2006

Christmas Bird Count Results

The 2019 Fairbanks Christmas Bird Count took place on December 14, and it was a remarkable day in many ways. One hundred fourteen people spent the day watching their feeders and driving, hiking, skiing, snow-shoeing, and dog-sledding the count circle to find 30 species and 4,622 birds total.



Ruffed Grouse by Ken Whitten

Notable sightings included finding all four species of our winter owls—Boreal, Great-horned, Northern Hawk-owl, and the elusive Great Gray! A Sharp-shinned Hawk was seen in the Chena Ridge counting area. This is only the second sharpie seen in the history of the Fairbanks count. The multiple Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers seen may be due to milder winters allowing more southern species to extend their ranges north. Extremely low numbers, 37 and 32 individuals respectively, of the highly eruptive Redpolls and White-winged Crossbills were recorded. Noticeable misses for the count were Robins and a Golden-crowned Sparrow that had been visiting a feeder, but couldn't be found on count day.

Make sure to take a look at the full count synopsis online at www.arcticadubon.org. This year—2020—will be the 60th CBC in Fairbanks. We hope you can be part of this historic event!

Join the Next Great Backyard Bird Count February 14-17, 2020

Join in the worldwide Great Backyard Bird Count February 14-17, <https://gbbc.birdcount.org/>. Scientists use information from the Great Backyard Bird Count, along with observations from other citizen-science projects and eBird, to get the “big picture” about what is happening to bird populations. Participation is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Create a free GBBC account if you have never participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count or any other Cornell Lab citizen-science project or have not participated in the GBBC since 2013. Or use your existing GBBC or eBird username and password.
2. Count birds for 15 minutes or more on one or more days of the GBBC. Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like. Submit a separate checklist for each new day, for each new location, or for the same location if you counted at a different time of day. Estimate the number of individuals of each species you saw during your count period.
3. Enter your results on the GBBC website by clicking the “Submit Observations” tab on the home page. You may also download the free eBird Mobile app to enter data on a mobile device.

Bird in Nome this Summer

UAF Summer Sessions & Lifelong Learning is offering two four-day birding trips to Nome, May 25-29 and June 1-5. These four-day classes are limited to 8 people. Nome is a special place for birders. It is located at a crossroad between two continents—North America and Asia—and unlike most remote, undeveloped areas, it has a great road system. The short list of year-round resident birds is joined by a vast number of summer breeding birds migrating to the area from the Americas, Pacific Islands, Asia and beyond. Last year birders saw 99 different bird species in just four days! For more information, contact UAF Summer Sessions at 474-7021 or www.uaf.edu/summer/travel/upcoming.php.

Audubon-Riedel Nature Reserve is Ready to Grow!

Your Donation Will Help



Since 1984, Arctic Audubon Society has owned the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve—160 acres of undeveloped land near 5-Mile Chena Hot Springs Road. In Fall 2019, UA Land Management offered two adjacent 40-acre parcels for sale—see the map on the next page. Arctic Audubon Society and Gail Mayo successfully bid on the parcels. Gail intends to gift her parcel to Arctic Audubon Society in memory of Larry Mayo, longtime conservationist and Arctic Audubon board member.

To complete this purchase, Arctic Audubon Society's goal is to raise \$20,000 toward the purchase price of \$45,100. Your donation is welcomed to help Arctic Audubon buy the 40-acre addition to the Nature Reserve. Donations can be made at www.arcticaudubon.org or with the donation form on the next page.

The Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve Story

The Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve began in 1984 with a gift by Elonore and Charles Riedel to the Arctic Audubon Society of 160 acres of forested land located at 5 Mile Chena Hot Springs Road. This gift stipulates that the undeveloped land is to remain in its natural state for the enjoyment by all people forever.

In 1951, Elonore Riedel became the owner of this property through homestead rights. Following her marriage to Charles, they acquired 40 acres adjacent to the homestead and built their home. The original 160-acre homestead was deeded to Arctic Audubon on December 31, 1984.

A tributary to Steele Creek begins on the property. This area is permafrost-influenced, poorly drained, and vegetated with plants adapted to cold soil conditions. Surrounding this swamp are relatively steep slopes that form ridges and low hills. Several boreal forest cover types are associated with the various aspects of the land. Most of the well-drained slopes are covered with aspen, birch, and occasional white spruce. Wildlife in the area includes most species representative of boreal forest systems. A few trails traverse the land where Elonore used to ride her horses.

There is no physical access to the 160-acre parcel. In 1985, the Riedels were interested in selling their home on an adjacent 20-acre parcel. Arctic Audubon negotiated a real estate agreement to purchase the home. We proceeded to develop plans to convert the house to a nature center and visitor facility, which required major fundraising. We held an auction, began to plan a major capital campaign, hired a part-time grant writer, and submitted a grant proposal to the State of Alaska Legislature. We received a \$30,000 grant from the state. Over \$20,000 was raised through other activities.

Our fundraising efforts fell short of our goal in 1985, and we were not able to purchase the Riedel house. As it turned out, Elonore became seriously ill and it was best for them to remain in their home and close to medical facilities in

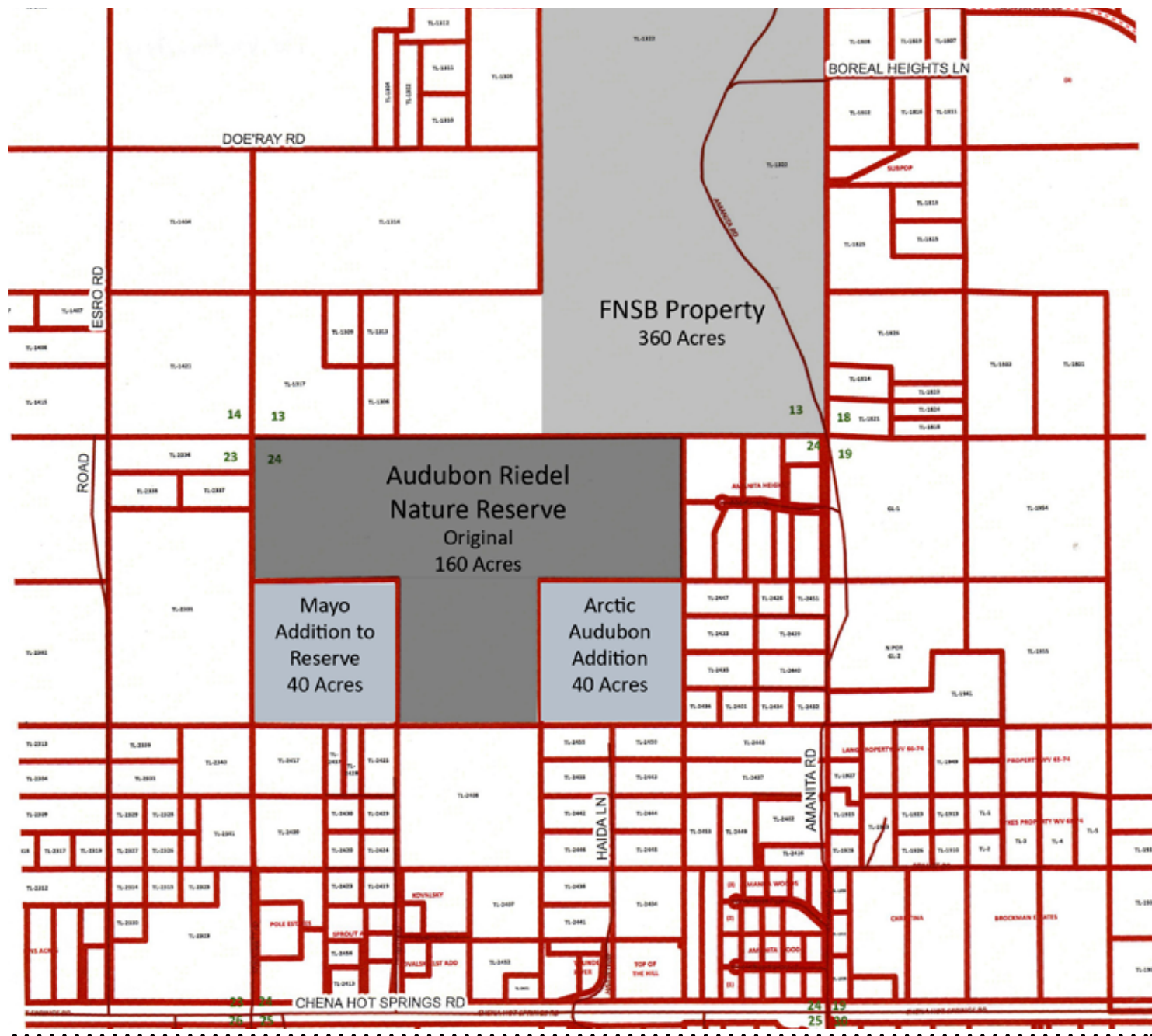
Fairbanks. Elonore passed away in February of 1991. Charles sold the property later in the 1990s.

Arctic Audubon then turned their efforts toward developing physical access to the 160-acre nature preserve. Several legal right-of-ways exist, but all have significant problems. Developing a viable plan for access was difficult and time-consuming. The clock was running out on our \$30,000 legislative grant. It was decided to use these funds to help develop a nature center at the Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. More than \$20,000 remained for the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve.

In 2017, a new effort was launched to achieve physical access to the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve. After much research, bids were obtained to build a ~750-foot driveway off Amanita Road along the State-managed section line easement. Discussion with area residents generated additional access ideas, and the Arctic Audubon Society Board decided to delay driveway construction plans. As an interim solution, an arrangement was made to access the Reserve by parking at a neighbor's property.

In Fall 2019, UA Land Management offered two adjacent 40-acre parcels for sale. Arctic Audubon Society and Gail Mayo successfully bid on the parcels. Gail intends to gift 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.

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. In 1985, Arctic Audubon had initiated negotiations with the Borough to have Audubon manage this land for public use. Decades later, Arctic Audubon is once again in discussion with the Borough to expand and enhance the Nature Reserve by leasing this property.



Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve Donation

Enclosed is my donation of \$_____ for the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve. Arctic Audubon Society is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, tax ID number 92-0081180. You can also use the "Donate" button on the website, www.arcticaudubon.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City

State

Zip

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





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Exciting News from Arctic Audubon! Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve Grows

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

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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.

Arctic Audubon Board of Directors

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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.