

October 19, 2012

Audubon Alaska eNews

Dear Friend,

Snow is starting to fall and the swans, some of the last migratory birds of the season, are passing high overhead. Never fear though, there is still plenty of bird news happening. In this edition of you can find out how to register for the Alaska Bird Conference, where you can learn about all the newest bird research in the state. You can also learn about a voyage on an icebreaker, and how you'll have a chance to help Teshekpuk Lake in November.

- 1. [Alaska Bird Conference Just Around the Corner! Register Now](#)**
- 2. [Melanie's Arctic Icebreaker Adventures Continue](#)**
- 3. [Protect Teshekpuk Lake in November](#)**
- 4. [Alaska WatchList Quiz](#)**

15th Alaska Bird Conference Just Around the Corner

The 15th Alaska Bird Conference kicks off next Monday, October 22. You can still register online at www.alaskabirdconference.com. In addition to presentations of cutting edge research on Alaska birds, you can also enjoy keynote speaker John Vanderpoel. He is the creator and producer of the critically acclaimed identification videos, the Advanced Birding Video Series with Jon Dunn. In 2011 John set off to attempt a North American Big Year. John's presentation "Full Chase Mode" will include different stories from his Big Year, some humorous and some informative. And you don't want to miss Bird Jeopardy!

Melanie's Arctic Icebreaker Adventures Continue

Don't miss this last week of Audubon Alaska's Melanie Smith's adventures as a seabird observer on the US Coast Guard icebreaker the *Healy* as it travels in the Arctic Ocean. So far she's seen far north birds such as Ivory and Ross's gulls, shot arrows out into the ocean to help study ocean currents, and weathered rough waters on the Beaufort Sea. You can [read her posts on the Audubon Pacific Flyway Blog](#) and [follow the Healy's route on this map](#).

Protect Teshekpuk Lake in November

Rumor has it there will be big news for the Arctic this November as the Bureau of Land Management will release its final management plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

On August 13, 2012, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar announced the proposed “preferred alternative” for managing the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska as part of creating the first-ever area-wide management plan. This alternative, called “B2”, would make several Special Areas, including the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area (a globally-significant Important Bird Area), off-limits for oil and gas leasing. Overall, the B2 alternative provides a responsible balance that would protect about half of the nearly 23-million acre Reserve while still allowing for the vast majority of the area’s oil to be accessed.

The Reserve encompasses an immense and spectacular Arctic ecosystem that provides critical habitat for many species of fish and wildlife. This vast landscape has remained largely unchanged in character over millennia with globally significant wildlife and wilderness values. Four “Special Areas” have been designated in the Reserve by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in recognition of their wildlife and natural values: Teshekpuk Lake, Colville River, Kasegaluk Lagoon, and the Utukok River Uplands. None of them, however, has permanent protection.

This fall, we have an unprecedented opportunity to help protect these extraordinary areas. The BLM is working on a Reserve-wide resource management plan that could help protect the area surrounding Teshekpuk Lake, by designating it as not available for oil and gas leasing under the B2 alternative. **Your voice will be critical** in one last comment period! Visit www.AudubonAlaska.org for more information on sending in your comments.

Alaska WatchList Quiz

The quiz questions are pulled from information about species on the [Alaska WatchList](#), which is available on the Audubon Alaska website.

The prize for this month’s quiz will be an Audubon Alaska ball cap from our new online store.

What [Alaska WatchList](#) species nests only in the Bering Sea region, the majority on St. George Island, one of the Pribilof Islands?

HINT: This small gull has a more common black-legged relative. This was one of the life birds Melanie Smith saw on October 6 on the icebreaker the *Healy*.

PREVIOUS ANSWER: The answer to the last Alaska WatchList question “Many Alaska species migrate long distances to wintering grounds. What Arctic-nesting [Alaska WatchList](#) species winters in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil? (**HINT:** Males

of this shorebird species are known for their dance-floor tactics to attract females during the breeding season.)" is...

Buff-breasted Sandpiper.

Happy birding,
Beth Peluso, Communications Manager

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