

February 2013

## Audubon Alaska eNews

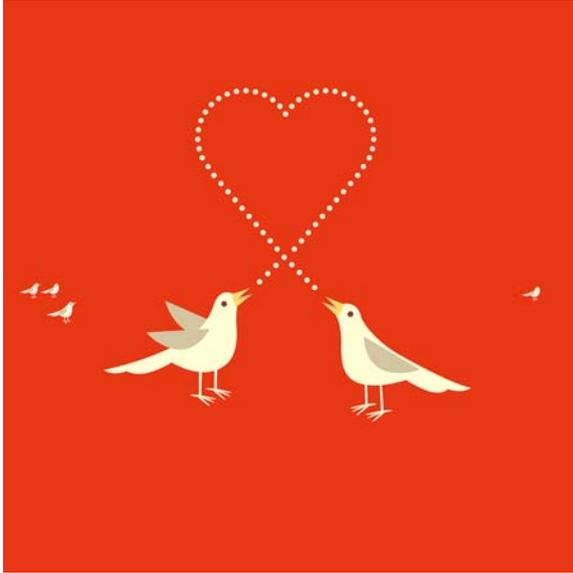
Dear Friend,

Owls are stepping up their activity as their nesting season kicks into gear. The first day of the Great Backyard Bird Count, I heard two Great Horned Owls hooting back and forth in the pre-dawn dark. I was able to spot both, a block apart, silhouetted against the first stirring of light in the sky before both flew their separate ways. Just today I took the photo below of the print of a large owl hunting something under the snow—maybe to bring back a treat for its mate. In this eNews you'll have one last chance to contribute double the love for Alaska birds for our February "I love birds" campaign, find out how to participate in the Great American Arctic Birding Challenge, and enjoy some good news about the Arctic. Don't forget the WatchList Quiz!



1. [Last Chance Today! Double the Love for Alaska Birds in February](#)
2. [Great American Arctic Birding Challenge Kicks off March 1](#)
3. [You Helped Protect 11 Million Acres in the NPRA](#)
4. [Shell Announces "Pause" for Arctic Ocean Drilling Program](#)
5. [Alaska WatchList Quiz](#)

**Last Chance Today! Double the Love for Alaska Birds in February**



Today is the last day of February—and your last chance to double the love you can show for birds. A generous bird lover and supporter of Audubon Alaska’s mission is sharing their love of birds by matching any gift you send us, dollar for dollar, up to \$20,000. Your donation will be doubled! Audubon Alaska couldn’t achieve successes like protecting 11 million acres of wildlife habitat in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska without the support of members like you. [Donate and show Alaska birds some love today!](#)

## **Great American Arctic Birding Challenge Kicks off March 1**

Migration is already starting in some places, even as snow still blankets Alaska—so let the games begin! Arctic-nesting birds have ranges that reach all 50 states and 6 continents, so the migrating birds you see in your backyard or favorite birding spot could be headed to the Arctic for the summer. What better way to celebrate spring and the birds that connect all of us than participating in the Great American Arctic Birding Challenge!

Get together a team of up to six birders and scour the landscape **March 1–June 1** to find as many of the birds as possible on the Great American Arctic Birding Challenge checklist. Submit your checklist by June 1 for prizes and a chance at the 2013 title. Did we mention there are prizes?

For details on rules, prizes, and printer-friendly versions of the checklist and contest flyer, visit Audubon Alaska’s [Great American Arctic Birding Challenge webpage](#).

## **You Helped Protect 11 Million Acres in the NPRA**

Late last week, Interior Secretary Salazar signed the final Record of Decision for the first-ever, area-wide plan for the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, an area

roughly the size of Indiana in the Western Arctic. The plan designates 11 million acres as unavailable for oil and gas leasing, including 3.1 million acres in the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area. Now millions of birds and the Teshekpuk Caribou herd are assured of having the habitat they need in this wetlands wilderness. Other special areas in the Reserve are also protected.

This plan includes *96 percent* of the lands Audubon recommended for conservation. Such a victory would not have been possible without the many letters and comments you submitted over the long fight to protect these very special places.

## **Shell Announces “Pause” for Arctic Ocean Drilling Program**

On February 27, Shell announced it will “pause” its drilling activities in the Arctic Ocean for 2013. The announcement comes after a string of mishaps and bungles stretching back to August, including grounding of the oil rig *Kulluk* near Kodiak on New Year Eve. Early in the new year, the Coast Guard cited Shell’s other drill rig the *Noble Discoverer* for safety violations. The *Kulluk* and *Noble Discoverer* are both headed to Asia for repairs, providing at least a year’s reprieve for Arctic Ocean wildlife.

## **Alaska WatchList Quiz**

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

What WatchList species wears a black mask with its white winter plumage and declined on the Aleutian Islands because of fox farming?

*HINT:* It's a cousin of Alaska's state bird.

**Last Month’s Answer** to “What boreal-wetlands-nesting songbird on the WatchList declined from nearly 13 million birds in 1965 to about 2 million today?” with the hint “This bird's squeaky song might make you want to oil the hinges on a gate” is **Rusty Blackbird**.

Happy birding!

Beth Peluso, Communications Manager

*PS You’ve received this email because, at one point or another, you shared your email address with Audubon. If you’d rather not receive emails from me, just let me know at [bpeluso@audubon.org](mailto:bpeluso@audubon.org).*