

Dear Friend,

Happy holidays! I hope you enjoy this issue of Audubon Alaska's e-news. In this email:

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### 1. Scientists Urge Obama to Safeguard Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Last week, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 170 scientists sent a [letter to President Barack Obama](#), urging him to permanently secure the ecological integrity of the Refuge's coastal plain. Among many other issues, the letter describes concerns that oil and gas development could decrease reproductive success in **muskox** and **caribou**.



Read the [scientists' letter](#), Audubon's [press release](#), and Audubon's [Special Report on Birds and Oil Development in the Arctic Refuge](#).

Other new papers on the Arctic:

- [Audubon's scoping comments](#) for the area-wide plan for the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska's Western Arctic
- [From the Arctic to Your Backyard: Arctic Birds That Migrate to Your State](#)
- [Audubon's comments](#) on the draft supplemental environmental impact statement on Lease Sale 193 (oil and gas leases in Alaska's Chukchi Sea)

### 2. Good News for the Campbell Creek Estuary and Mendenhall Wetlands

The Municipality of Anchorage has finally purchased the 60-acre **Campbell Creek Estuary tract**, thanks to the tenacity of many individuals and groups, especially the Great Land Trust. The land

is part of two [Important Bird Areas](#) (IBAs): the [Campbell Creek](#) and [Anchorage Coastal](#) IBAs. Read [Audubon's letter](#) describing the bird resources there and urging the Mayor's support of the purchase.

And in Southeast Alaska, the [Mendenhall Wetlands](#) in Juneau have been spared from a road causeway that was proposed through the heart of this globally significant IBA. In October, Juneau voters resoundingly defeated the proposition. The wetlands are important for more than just birds; this place provides habitat for black bear, salmon, harbor seals, Dolly Varden, river otters, and many other species of mammals and fish. Read [Juneau Audubon's September 2010 newsletter](#), which describes concerns with the project.

### 3. 'Tis the Season... for the Christmas Bird Count!

Now in its 111th year, Audubon's [Christmas Bird Count](#) is a favorite winter tradition for many birders and families, and it's a **fun and fabulous** (albeit chilly) **way to help conservation!** Your observations will contribute to one of the world's most extensive databases of bird population trends and will help researchers, conservation biologists, and others to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. [More on how the Christmas Bird Count helps birds.](#)

Here are links to more information:

- [How to get involved](#) (with link to registration)
- [Search for a Christmas Bird Count nationwide](#)
- [Christmas Bird Counts in Alaska](#): count dates, contact information, information where to meet, etc. *(If you're organizing a count in Alaska that is not yet on our list, please email Beth at [BPeluso@audubon.org](mailto:BPeluso@audubon.org) so we can help you spread the word!)*

### 4. Alaska Bird Conference Ovations

Thanks again to all the presenters, volunteers, sponsors, organizers, and vendors who made this year's **Alaska Bird Conference** a smashing success. If you missed the conference or lost your program, you can download the [complete booklet with abstracts here](#) (8-MB PDF file).

A special shout-out to **Dirk Derksen**, this year's recipient of the prestigious **Isleib Award**. Throughout his career Dirk has been a talented researcher, a mentor to many, and a devoted supporter of science-based conservation. Congratulations, Dirk, and thanks for your commitment!

### 5. Interview with the Koehlers: The Director's Cut

Speaking of committed conservationists, our [full, uncensored interview with Bart and Julie Koehler](#) is now online. If you read the interview in our print newsletter, you only got a taste of it! In the online, director's cut version, Bart and Julie share hilarious stories about Gray-headed Chickadees (by their former name), kayaking amongst whales, the ups and downs of volunteering for Audubon, what inspires them, and why they've chosen to [name Audubon Alaska in their will](#). I really hope you'll read this interview—Bart and Julie's stories were the most inspiring stuff I've heard all year.

### 6. 2011 Alaska Migratory Bird Calendar: Celebrate Birds in Culture

The [2011 Alaska Migratory Bird Calendars](#) are here! These wall calendars feature gorgeous, prize-winning art and poetry from K–12 students from across rural western and northern Alaska.

This year's theme is the importance of birds to Alaska Native cultures. Our calendar supplies are very limited, so email me today if you'd like a copy: [LCosta@audubon.org](mailto:LCosta@audubon.org).

### 7. WatchList Trivia (with PRIZE for first three correct answers)

I will send a FREE [Anchorage Birding Map](#) and plush, singing **Hermit Thrush** to the first three people who email me ([LCosta@audubon.org](mailto:LCosta@audubon.org)) with the correct answer to this question:

**Of all the birds on the [2010 Alaska WatchList](#), which species had the highest count (i.e., number of individual birds recorded) in last year's Christmas Bird Count?**

- a. **Surfbird**
- b. **Emperor Goose**
- c. **McKay's Bunting**
- d. **Steller's Eider**
- e. **Black Scoter**

Hint: This species was recorded in counts at Glacier Bay, Homer, Izembek, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mitkof Island, Narrow Cape – Kalsin Bay, Sitka, Unalaska, and Wrangell Island. Take a guess, or browse the [historical results](#) from Christmas Bird Counts past.

### 8. Thanks and Happy New Year!

**It's been a great year here at Audubon Alaska—thanks to your support.** We scored major conservation wins at the Colville River Delta and Teshekpuk Lake. We released our 2010 Alaska WatchList and organized the 14th Alaska Bird Conference. We continued research on Marbled and Kittlitz's Murrelets in Glacier Bay. We advocated on conservation issues like the Sealaska bill in the Tongass, Cook Inlet beluga whales, the proposed road through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, and black bear trapping regulations, among others.

**In 2011, we hope to accomplish even more.** We are adding a biologist to our staff, expanding our Important Bird Area program, continuing to advocate for deferrals of oil/gas leasing in the Arctic Ocean, and pushing for permanent protections in the Tongass and Western Arctic.

**Thank you so much for your support of Audubon Alaska. You help make our work possible.** Audubon Alaska is proud to be a part of the National Audubon Society, but we raise our money separately and receive no funding from the national office. We really do rely on your support to keep our programs strong and our office open. To that end, **I invite you to [make a tax-deductible gift online](#) today.** If you've already made your year-end contribution to Audubon Alaska, many thanks!

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Thanks for reading Audubon Alaska's e-news. I welcome your comments and questions by email ([LCosta@audubon.org](mailto:LCosta@audubon.org)) or by phone (907-276-7034).

Wishing you a jolly new year,  
Lorelei

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 send me an email to let me know.

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Photograph of caribou on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.