Arctic National Wildlife Refuge:
A Migration Destination for America's Backyard Birds

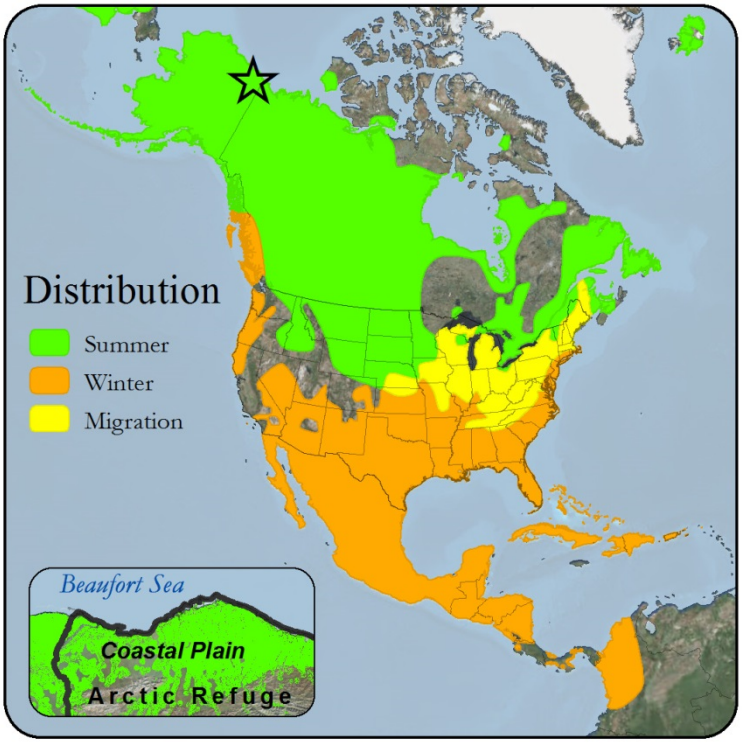
Northern Pintail

All Flyways

Dave Menke, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

An Everyday Connection to the Arctic Refuge

With its long neck and tail, the **Northern Pintail** is one of the sleekest and most graceful of the Arctic-breeding ducks. Northern Pintails winter in all four flyways before making their way north to wetlands and small ponds that they find in the northern continental United States, Canada, and Alaska's Arctic. In years when the prairie potholes of the northern Great Plains dry up, the northern Arctic becomes particularly key to pintails' breeding success and survival.



- Northern Pintails are dabbling ducks and are one of the earliest nesters among ducks.
- Northern Pintails have declined dramatically throughout their range since the 1960s. The 2014 *State of the Birds* report lists pintails as a "common bird in steep decline." Conversion of wetlands to agriculture and urbanization of wintering grounds, along with occasional drought in prairie nesting areas are thought to be some causes.
- About 10,000 pintails nest in the Arctic Refuge's coastal plain, some coming from as far away as Mexico.

The Arctic Refuge

Dave Shaw

Located in the Northeast corner of Alaska, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of America's last wildest places. The coastal plain of the refuge hosts almost 125 species of birds, as well as polar bears, musk oxen, wolves, and the 197,000-animal Porcupine caribou herd during the calving season. National Audubon Society supports a wilderness designation for the coastal plain as a way to protect Northern Pintails and a host of other birds and wildlife.

Seeing the American Golden-Plover in Your State

Contact your local Audubon chapter **www.audubon.org/audubon-near-you** to learn more about birding opportunities in your area.

What You Can Do...

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, or send a letter or email to your members of Congress. Here are some of the key points:

- The Arctic Refuge is important to and belongs to all Americans
- The Refuge is crucial to populations of birds like American Golden-Plovers that you see and value in your state.
- Designating the Refuge as wilderness from oil and gas development will protect plovers and a host of other important wildlife species.

Gary Kramer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service