



Published twice a year by the Alaska State Office of the National Audubon Society

Birds Tell Us We Must Act Now!

The *Survival by Degrees Alaska Climate Brief* looks at threats facing birds in Alaska

In *Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink*, Audubon scientists studied 604 North American bird species using 140 million bird records, including observational data from bird lovers and field biologists across the country. What they found is that two-thirds of North America's birds are threatened with extinction from climate change. The report also shows that if we act now and slow the rate of global warming, we can help up to 76 percent of those birds.

Over the past year, the science team took a closer look at Alaska-specific climate threats and how they impact ecosystems here in Alaska where temperatures are rising at a rate much faster than in the rest of the country. Annual precipitation is increasing, while available moisture is decreasing. Over time, vegetation distribution will change, as will insect populations. In other words, climate change is affecting the food, water, and shelter that birds rely on in Alaska.

Data from the Alaska report demonstrates how birds are early responders to the climate crisis and can be important indicators of large-scale ongoing and future ecological change. While the report does not assess the effects of climate change on people, we know that the fate of humans and birds are deeply connected. The big take-away is that #BirdsTellUs we must act now to reduce global warming and mitigate climate impacts. Learn more at ak.audubon.org/survival-degrees-storymap

Here are several key steps that you can take to help:

1. Ask your elected officials to expand consumer-driven clean energy development that grows jobs in your community—like solar or wind power.
2. Advocate for natural solutions, from increasing wetlands along coasts and rivers that absorb soaking rains to protecting forests and grasslands that are homes to birds and serve as carbon storage banks.
3. Ask elected leaders to be climate champions by supporting legislation like the Growing Climate Solutions Act.
4. Take the pledge at act.audubon.org/a/birds-tell-us ■



King Eider. Photograph by Milo Burcham



Orange-crowned Warbler.
Photograph by Milo Burcham

For more than 40 years, Audubon Alaska has worked to conserve Alaska's birds, wildlife, and the habitat crucial to them. Audubon Alaska is financially independent, raising all our own funding—this means your support is critical to protecting the birds and wildlife you care about.

Audubon Alaska Staff

Natalie Dawson
Executive Director

Sara Fatimah
Communications and
Engagement Associate

David Krause
Director of Conservation

Rebecca Sentner
Senior Communications Manager

Kassandra Smith
Finance and Operations Associate

Audubon Alaska Board Members

Evie Witten (Chair)

John Alexander

Jenna Hamm

Cynthia Jacobson

Aaron Lang

Julianne Lamsek

Jerome McCluskey

Richard Monkman

Scott Rupp

Dave Secord

Anne Wilkas

Audubon Alaska

431 West Seventh Ave., Suite 205

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

907-276-7034

Website:

AK.Audubon.org

Newsletter design and layout by
Eric Cline of TerraGraphica



Printed on recycled paper

Federal Public Lands Update *(see map on page 3)*

The transition from the Trump administration to the Biden administration has been a welcome shift for federal public land management and many of our conservation priorities. We remain steadfast in our commitment to legally challenging previous agency actions in each of these important landscapes and working with the new administration to advance protections for these places. Here are some updates on our work to ensure protections and responsible management of federal public lands in Alaska.

- 1) In the Arctic, we are hopeful that federal oil and gas leasing policy updates and actions by the new administration and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will bring protections to the special areas within the National Petroleum Reserve (NPR-A), including Teshekpuk Lake. We also hope our litigation will re-instate the 2013 Integrated Activity Plan (IAP) with updated improvements that reflect our national commitments to net zero emissions on our federal public lands.
- 2) The coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge remains the cornerstone of Alaska's ecologically intact Arctic. Protection of the coastal plain could come through commitments made by the new administration or through continued litigation over the oil and gas leasing program. We are also hopeful that a federal review of our nation's oil and gas leasing program on public lands will remove future fossil fuel development that does not meet our national climate goals.
- 3) The proposed Ambler Road, which would slice through one of the largest roadless areas of North America, remains an issue under review by the Biden administration. The state of Alaska continues to try to find funding to keep the project alive at the cost of communities and public lands that would be impacted by an industrial access road and the beginning of a mining district development that would spread over 200 miles of interior Alaska boreal forest.
- 4) The BLM has already announced it is going to review the Trump-era decision to open D1 lands within the Kobuk Seward Resource Management Plan. This action would have opened over 9 million acres of lands to potential mineral development, allowing for the privatization of public lands with no public process.
- 5) The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can and should issue a veto on the permit for the Pebble Mine, and the Call to Protect Bristol Bay will push for protections to the clean waters of one of the world's largest wild fisheries.
- 6) In the Chilkat Valley, the Palmer Project/Constantine Mine has recently shifted ownership, with the Japanese smelter company, DOWA, now the majority owner of the mine. At the same time, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) is trying to convince the community of Haines to build an ore terminal in one of the most productive estuaries in Southeast Alaska, home to hooligan and herring, and the world's largest congregation of Bald Eagles.
- 7) The fate of the National Roadless Rule on the Tongass remains in the hands of the Biden administration while the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) simultaneously requests input on new actions to curb the impacts of climate change. Our voice remains clear and concise: there is no stronger natural solution to climate change than the preservation of old growth forests. The best carbon sequestration technology is that of an ancient tree in the Tongass.


Stewarding our public lands is good for birds, fish, and other wildlife, and it provides mental, physical, and cultural well-being for all people. That's why we will continue to work to ensure these places are kept safe and protected now and in the future. ■




Caribou on the Arctic coastal plain. Photograph by David Braasch

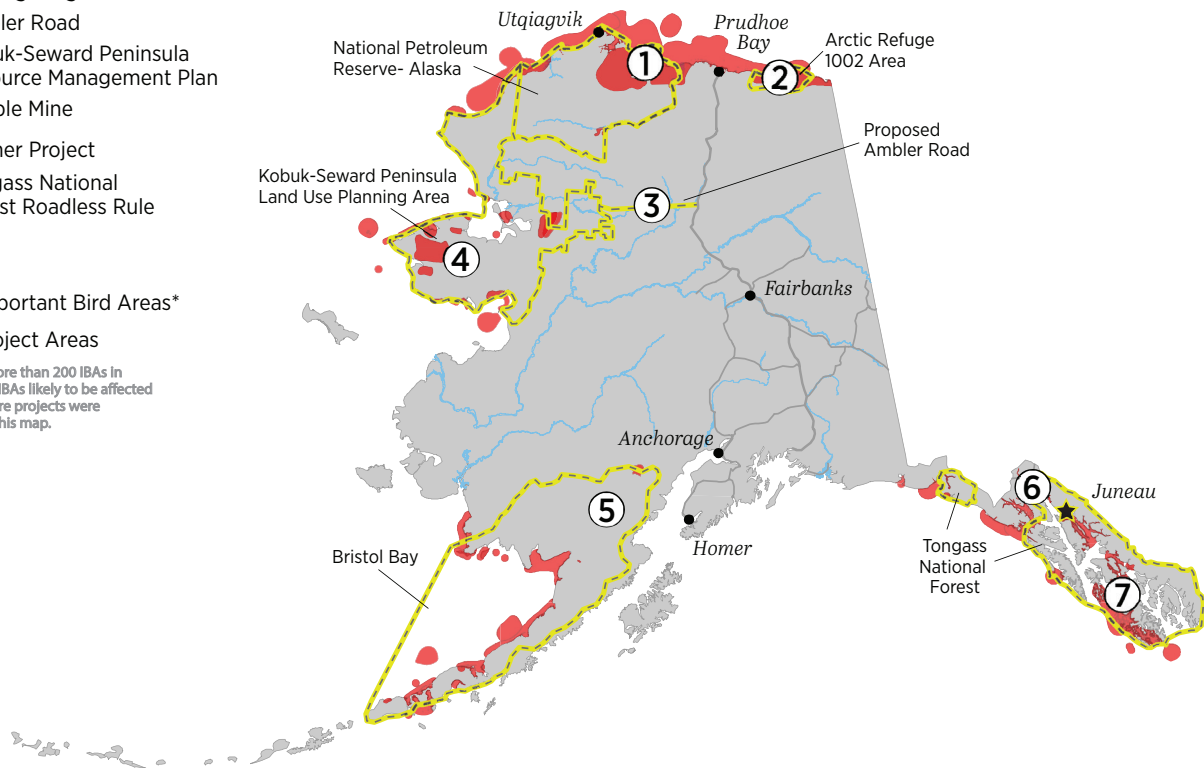
Federal Public Lands Projects

- ① NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan
- ② Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain Leasing Program
- ③ Ambler Road
- ④ Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Plan
- ⑤ Pebble Mine
- ⑥ Palmer Project
- ⑦ Tongass National Forest Roadless Rule

 Important Bird Areas*

 Project Areas

*There are more than 200 IBAs in Alaska. Only IBAs likely to be affected by one or more projects were included on this map.



Alaska's Audubon Chapters

Alaska hosts five National Audubon Society chapters where Audubon members and their families can enjoy and protect local birds and nature.

Anchorage Audubon Society

The Anchorage Audubon Society is a volunteer, nonprofit organization offering bird watching field trips, monthly meetings, natural history programs, newsletters, and special events to highlight birds, wildlife, and conservation issues in Southcentral Alaska.

More at www.anchorageaudubon.org

Arctic Audubon Society

The Arctic Audubon Society is a volunteer, nonprofit organization that works to protect Alaskan ecosystems by encouraging research, education, and management that contributes to appreciation and good stewardship of our natural heritage. Located in Fairbanks, Arctic Audubon Society holds monthly public presentations fall through spring, Christmas Bird Count, and spring bird walks.

More at www.arcticaudubon.org

Juneau Audubon Society

The Juneau Audubon Society is a volunteer, nonprofit organization located in Southeast Alaska focusing on birding, education, and conservation. Local activities include bird watching field trips, Christmas Bird Count, educational presentations, scholarship and internship programs, newsletters, beach cleanups, and other restoration activities.

More at www.juneau-audubon-society.org

Kodiak Audubon Society

The Kodiak Audubon Society is a volunteer, nonprofit organization located on Kodiak offering bird watching field trips, monthly meetings, educational programs, newsletters, and special events to highlight birds, wildlife, and conservation issues on Kodiak Island.

More at www.kodiakaudubon.blogspot.com


Prince William Sound Audubon Society

The Prince William Sound Audubon Society is a volunteer, nonprofit organization located in Cordova providing monthly educational programs about birds and nature. They are involved with the annual Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival.

More at www.coppershorebird.com ■



■ Barn Swallow chicks. Photograph by Milo Burcham

 **Audubon** | ALASKA
431 West Seventh Ave., Suite 205
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

NONPROFIT
ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
ANCHORAGE, AK
PERMIT #726



Printed on recycled paper

Audubon Alaska's 2021 Bird of the Year

Our new Alaska Bird of the Year is the Willow Ptarmigan! These rather rotund northern grouse live year-round in the Arctic and subarctic tundra of Alaska and Canada. As their name suggests, they are often found in or around thickets of dwarf willow. Their gray and brown feathers of summer months change to pure white in the winter making them well camouflaged in all seasons. As this year's "spokesbird" the Willow Ptarmigan will help highlight our work to protect Arctic landscapes for the people, birds, and other wildlife who rely on them.

Order your Bird of the Year hat at ak.audubon.org/birds/audubon-alaska-products today! ■



People of Audubon Alaska

We are excited to announce the addition of two new staff and one new board member to the Audubon Alaska team.



David Krause
Director of
Conservation



Sara Fatimah
Communications and
Engagement Associate



Cynthia Jacobson, Ph.D.
Board Member