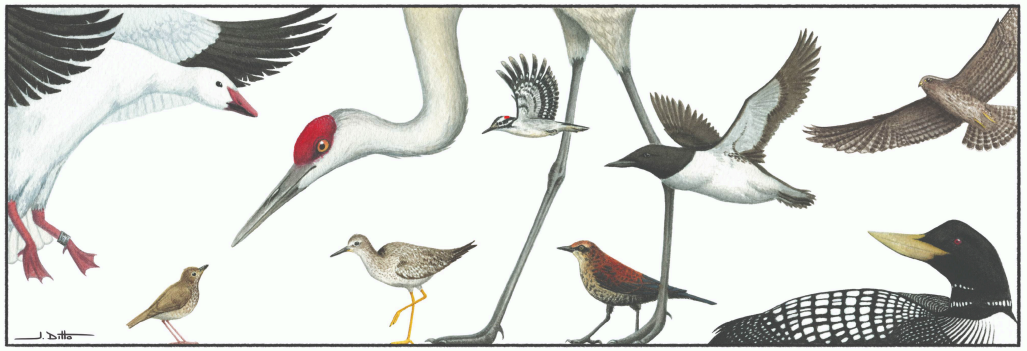
NEXT STEPS FOR BIRDS



ALASKA BIRD CONFERENCE

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 2026



December 7-11, 2026

Integrating community knowledge, scientific inquiry, and conservation to highlight next steps for Alaska's birds

Marriott Anchorage Downtown, Anchorage, Alaska
www.alaskabirdconference.org

Cover Logo Art: Julia Ditto (Julia Ditto Illustrations)

Cover Photo: Rachel Richardson (USGS Alaska Science Center)
Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia)* at St. George Island, Alaska



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Welcome!



The inaugural Alaska Bird Conference took place in 1985 in Anchorage, emerging from a shared need for better information exchange among professionals in government, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector who work with Alaska's diverse bird populations. Since then, the conference has continued on an approximately biennial schedule.

This year marks the 21st Alaska Bird Conference. The event regularly attracts 150 participants who gather to share research findings, discuss emerging issues, and highlight new initiatives in bird conservation and management. The conference remains committed to fostering a welcoming and collegial environment, providing opportunities for students and early-career professionals while serving as a valued gathering for the broader Alaska bird community. Its continued success is made possible by the dedication and support of numerous volunteers, partner organizations, and sponsors.

As bird populations respond to a rapidly changing world, the tools and approaches used to study and conserve them continue to evolve. These changes present both significant challenges and new opportunities. In recognition of this, the conference theme, "**Next Steps for Birds**," focuses on three key topics: communicating science and conservation more effectively, tracking changes in the abundance and distribution of Alaska's birds, and conserving Alaska's long-distance migrants throughout their annual cycle, including in the Neotropics.

Through plenary presentations and focused discussions, conference participants will work together to identify priorities, opportunities, and actions to advance bird conservation. The resulting series of "**Next Steps for Birds**" recommendations will be shared on the conference website following the conference.

The conference was organized by John Pearce (retired USGS Alaska Science Center, Associate Center Director for Ecosystems), with significant assistance from a Planning Team and financial sponsors, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Divisions; USGS Alaska Science Center; Alaska Department of Fish and Game Threatened, Endangered, and Diversity Program; Alaska Songbird Institute; Audubon Alaska; Anchorage Audubon Society; a private donation; North Pacific Research Board; Marine Minerals Administration; Ducks Unlimited; Alaska Ocean Observing System; National Park Service; ABR, Inc.; and many other sponsors (see sponsors, pg. 21).

About the Logo Artist: *Julia Ditto*

Julia Ditto is an Anchorage-based science illustrator and artist with a background in ecology and climate science. In 2021, she graduated from Alaska Pacific University with a BS in Environmental Science and a minor in Outdoor Studies. Her senior thesis joined wilderness travel, field science, and art by exploring techniques in science illustration during her expeditions across the Brooks Range (2019–2021). In 2023, she earned a Graduate Certificate in Science Illustration at California State University Monterey Bay. Julia's work has appeared in ***Scientific American***, ***Smithsonian***, and ***Nature*** publications, among numerous other media and press outlets.



J. Ditto ILLUSTRATION

juliaditto.com



2026 Isleib Award Recipient: *Richard Lanctot*



The 2026 Isleib Award of the Alaska Bird Conference recognizes Dr. Richard "Rick" Lanctot for his extraordinary leadership in advancing the global knowledge and conservation of Alaska-breeding shorebirds. Serving as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service–Alaska Shorebird Coordinator since 2002, Rick has built a strong scientific foundation and diverse collaborations necessary to conserve shorebirds in Alaska and throughout their global flyways.

Rick's scientific contributions have played a major role in highlighting migratory connectivity and the global importance of Alaska for shorebirds. He has authored over 130 peer-reviewed publications and mentored over two dozen graduate students and numerous volunteers, building the next generation of scientists and conservation practitioners. Rick and many collaborators have tracked over ten Arctic-breeding shorebird species, generating information crucial for the conservation of stopover sites and identification of threats. He is widely recognized for his knowledge about the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, having led collaborative studies spanning the entire species' range from the top of North America to the pampas of South America.

Rick's leadership has been central to understanding how Arctic-breeding shorebirds are responding to a changing climate. Building on research from the 50s–70s, he and his colleague Dr. Sarah Saalfeld have stewarded some of the Arctic's longest-running datasets on shorebird ecology, demography, and population dynamics. Rick, together with Dr. Stephen Brown, established the Arctic Shorebird Demographic Network—to standardize data collection and management across nearly 20 circumpolar sites—and co-led the Alaska Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM), which generated population estimates for northern and western Alaska.

Translating science into coordinated action, Rick has served on many international entities including the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group, Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative, Shorebird Science and Conservation Collective, the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership's Shorebird Working Group, and the Alaska Shorebird Group. Rick also served as the U.S. shorebird expert for the U.S.-Japan Migratory Bird Treaty, strengthening international cooperation for conservation of transboundary migratory species.

Rick's unflagging dedication, integrity, and generosity make him a trusted partner to researchers and practitioners across the globe. His influence extends well beyond his own work: he has fostered a community of people dedicated to conserving shorebirds across their entire annual cycle.

Tom Fondell Memorial Student Travel Award

2026 Recipients:

James Golden (Colorado State University; PhD student)
Sebastian Zavoico (University of Alaska Fairbanks; PhD student)
Arrow Myers (University of Alaska Fairbanks; MS student)
Lillian Downing (University of Alaska Fairbanks; BS student)

Tom Fondell grew up loving the outdoors. He worked his way through college and earned a bachelor's of science degree in wildlife management from the University of Minnesota in 1979. After college, Tom volunteered for the Peace Corps and spent eight years in Malawi and the Central African Republic. Teaching beekeeping was one of his passions.



After some temporary jobs, such as banding ducks in the bayous of Louisiana, Tom moved to Alaska to work on northern pintail ecology with the U.S. Geological Survey Alaska Science Center. A few years later, he entered a master's degree program at the University of Montana where he focused on the effects of livestock grazing on nesting and survival of grassland birds, which culminated with a highly cited paper in the journal Biological Conservation.

Tom returned to the USGS Alaska Science Center in 1997, and over the next two decades he led research statewide on population ecology of Arctic waterbirds, such as Brant, White-fronted Geese and Dusky Canada Geese.
His work was valued by state and federal agencies and continues to be used to analyze annual monitoring data, directly impacting harvest management decisions in the Pacific Flyway.

Tom was a talented and dedicated biologist who was happiest when working in wild places. Those who shared field camps with him knew Tom to be tireless and to have a positive attitude regardless of conditions. He was deeply concerned with the state of the planet and passed on a legacy of environmental stewardship. He was an extremely generous individual who was quick to assist others. His esteemed personal integrity served as a model for younger biologists, who often had difficulty keeping up with him on the tundra. In recognition of his career and strong support of student research, the Tom Fondell Memorial Student Travel Award was created in 2018.

Silent Auction & Merchandise





Handmade artwork
Gift certificates
Adventures & experiences
Vintage bird decor

This year's silent auction features hybrid bidding, with items displayed at the conference and online. Scan QR codes to bid in-person, or bid remotely using the link—everyone is welcome to participate! Proceeds support student conference attendance through the Tom Fondell Memorial Student Travel Award.

Submit your bids online:

https://givebutter.com/c/alaskabirdconference2026/auction

Bidding opens: 9:00am Dec 7th
Bidding closes: 6:00pm Dec 10th



Alaska Bird Conference t-shirts are available for purchase online through a BirderyTees campaign!
10% of each purchase directly supports the student presentation awards.

Purchase online:

https://birderytees.com/collections/al?ref=AlaskaBirdConference

Schedule At-A-Glance

Monday, December 7 @ USGS Alaska Science Center & Marriott Anchorage Downtown (Fairbanks Room)	
9:00am–12:00pm	Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting @ *USGS Alaska Science Center*
1:00–4:00pm	Boreal Partners in Flight Meeting @ *USGS Alaska Science Center*
6:30–8:30pm	Opening Reception & Bird Trivia organized by Alaska Songbird Institute @ *Marriott Anchorage Downtown* *Drinks available for purchase, food not provided*
Tuesday, December 8 @ Marriott Anchorage Downtown (Fairbanks Room unless noted otherwise)	
8:30–8:45am	Welcome & Announcements *Coffee and light breakfast items provided*
8:45–9:45am	Invited Speaker: Caroline Van Hemert, "Using Storytelling as a Catalyst for Change"
9:45–10:15am	Break *Refreshments provided*
10:15–11:45am	Presentations & Working Session: "Communication as a Conservation Strategy"
11:45am–1:30pm	Lunch *On your own*
1:30–3:30pm	Scientific Program: Conservation Partnerships & Avian Health and Anthropogenic Risk
4:00–6:00pm	Special Event: Networking Tables *(Anchorage Room)* & Student/Early-Career Development Discussion *(Fairbanks Room) Light appetizers provided*
Wednesday, December 9 @ Marriott Anchorage Downtown (Fairbanks Room unless noted otherwise)	
8:30–8:45am	Welcome & Announcements *Coffee and light breakfast items provided*
8:45–9:45am	Invited Speaker: Nick Bayly, "The Tropical Connection: Conserving Alaska's Long-Distance Migrants in the Neotropics" *Presenting virtually*
9:45–10:15am	Break *Refreshments provided*
10:15–11:45am	Presentations & Working Session: "Full Annual Cycle Conservation"
11:45am–1:30pm	Lunch *On your own*
1:30–3:15pm	Scientific Program: Environmental & Ecological Traits *Fairbanks Room (online & in-person)*
1:30–3:30pm	Scientific Program: Avian Migration & Stopovers *Denali/Kenai Room (in-person only)*
4:00–6:00pm	Special Event: Poster Session *(2nd floor foyer)* & Art Vendors *(Anchorage Room)* *Light appetizers provided*
Thursday, December 10 @ Marriott Anchorage Downtown (Fairbanks Room unless noted otherwise)	
8:30–8:45am	Welcome & Announcements *Coffee and light breakfast items provided*
8:45–9:45am	Invited Speaker: Chris Wood, "Advancing Bird Monitoring in Alaska: Building from eBird to Decision-Ready Data"
9:45–10:15am	Break *Refreshments provided*
10:15–11:45am	Presentations & Working Session: "Advancing Monitoring Methods"
11:45am–1:30pm	Lunch *On your own*
1:30–3:45pm	Scientific Program: Genetics & Life-History Characteristics *Fairbanks Room (online & in-person)*
1:30–4:00pm	Scientific Program: Population Monitoring *Denali/Kenai Room (in-person only)*
5:00–7:30pm	Special Event: Dinner Buffet, Award Presentations & Closing Comments
Friday, December 11 @ USGS Alaska Science Center	
8:30am–12:00pm	Fundamentals of eBird Data Access – Matt Strimas-Mackey, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
1:00–5:00pm	Google Earth Engine for Flyway Conservation: Monitoring Habitat Change Across the Full Annual Cycle – Dr. Patrick Donnelly, Ducks Unlimited and University of Montana

Tuesday, December 8

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)
*denotes online presentation

8:45–9:45am

Invited Speaker: **Caroline Van Hemert**

"Using Storytelling as a Catalyst for Change"



Dr. Caroline Van Hemert is an Alaskan author, adventurer, and wildlife biologist. Her 2019 book, *The Sun is a Compass*, won the Banff Mountain Book Award for Adventure Travel and was cited as one of the best outdoor books of 2019 by *Outside*, *Bustle*, and *Forbes.* Caroline's journeys have taken her from the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean to the legendary Greek Isles. Along the way, she has been outsmarted by Cheeto-eating crows, stalked by predatory bears, tailed by orcas, and humbled by 10-g chickadees that shiver through winter nights.

Caroline's writing has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Audubon*, *Outside*, *Washington Post*, and more. With her husband and two young sons, you can find her somewhere between a cozy home in downtown Anchorage, a remote, off-grid cabin near Haines, Alaska, and aboard a sailboat. Caroline holds a PhD in wildlife biology and an M.A. in creative writing. Her current book project, *Upwellings,* explores how surprise endings in the natural world can help us rethink the future.

10:15–11:45am

Working Session: Communication as a Conservation Strategy

Moderator: John Pearce

10:15–10:30am	Introduction to the session	John Pearce
10:30–10:45am	Integrating culture, art, and science in avian conservation programs	Shelby Morgan & Tricia Blake
10:45–11:00am	What we heard: listening to partners to shape the delivery of the 2026 Birds of Conservation Concern report	*Deborah Kornblut & Callie Gesmundo

11:00–11:30am

Breakout Group Discussion:

- Identify a new audience that has not yet been engaged
- Learn which viewpoints and partnerships can strengthen science communication efforts
- What communication format would make a conservation message resonate with the intended audience?

11:30–11:45am

Report key takeaways from breakout groups

11:45am–1:30pm

Lunch (On Your Own) Afternoon science presentations start at 1:30pm sharp!

Tuesday, December 8

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)

1:30–3:30pm

Fairbanks Room (online and in-person): Conservation Partnerships & Avian Health and Anthropogenic Risk

Moderator: Sarah Hoepfner

Time	Title	Presenter
1:30–1:45pm	Initiating Ducks Unlimited's Alaska initiative	Brandt Meixell
1:45–2:00pm	A wildlife task force partnership in Prince William Sound, Alaska	James Herbert
2:00–2:15pm	From aviary to Arctic: leveraging managed waterfowl and shorebirds to improve field research	Jacob Kraemer
2:15–2:30pm	Creamer's Field Migration Station at 35 years: recent observations and directions at North America's northernmost passerine banding station	Robert Snowden
2:30–2:45pm	**Break**	
2:45–3:00pm	Highly pathogenic avian influenza is established among wild birds in Alaska: implications and next steps	Andrew Ramey
3:00–3:15pm	Cumulative effects influence northern boreal breeding bird abundances in a mining impacted landscape	Austin Zeller
3:15–3:30pm	Better delineating anthropogenic risk to marine birds: ghost ships in the Bering Strait	Ben Sullender

Abstracts available for viewing in supplemental booklet (https://alaskabirdconference.org/program/)

4:00–6:00pm

Student/Early-Career Development Discussion & Networking Tables

@ Marriott Anchorage Downtown

Student/Early-Career & Networking Event

Tuesday, December 8, 4:00–6:00pm

Student/Early-Career Development Discussion:

@ Fairbanks Room, Marriott Anchorage Downtown

Curious about careers working with Alaska's birds? This interactive event will bring students at all stages together with professionals and mentors from a range of backgrounds (e.g., federal and state agencies, universities, NGOs) who work with birds in Alaska. You will have the chance to ask questions, hear real stories from panelists, and learn about various strategies, challenges, opportunities, and diverse career paths in bird research, conservation, and management. Whether you are deciding on a major, thinking about grad school, or preparing for your next step, this session is designed to support you.

Who can participate: This event will be open to students and early professionals at all stages (e.g., high school, undergraduate, graduate, post-doc, early career).

What to expect: This event will involve a mix of panel and breakout discussions. The opening panel session will give panelists a chance to introduce themselves and answer general questions from participants (approx. 30 minutes). For the remainder of the event, students will break into smaller groups to engage in more in-depth discussions with panelists about professional development, navigating graduate school, fieldwork opportunities, agency hiring pathways, or opportunities in specific sectors. Panelists and mentors will be recruited from a range of career stages (mid – and advanced) and professional sectors.

Networking Tables:

@ Anchorage Room, Marriott Anchorage Downtown



Organizations participating in the event:

ABR, Inc. – *Adrian Gall*
Audubon Alaska – *Lauren Cusimano*
Alaska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit – *Megan Milligan*
ADF&G Threatened, Endangered, and Diversity Program – *Julie Hagelin and Katie Christie*
Alaska Ocean Observing System – *Sheyna Wisdom*
Alaska Songbird Institute – *Tricia Blake*
Bird TLC – *Laura Atwood*
ConocoPhillips Alaska – *Chrissy Pohl and Wendy Mahan*
Ducks Unlimited – *Brandt Meixell*
Marine Minerals Administration – *Maureen DeZeeuw*
University of Alaska Fairbanks Institute of Arctic Biology – *Phred Benham*
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services – *Carly Eakin*
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Birds – *Amy Pocewicz*
U.S. Geological Survey Alaska Science Center – *Danielle Gerik, Sarah Schoen, Vijay Patil*
Wildlife Conservation Society – *Kayla Shively*

Wednesday, December 9

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)
*denotes online presentation

8:45–9:45am

Invited Speaker: **Nick Bayly***

"The Tropical Connection: Conserving Alaska's Long-Distance Migrants in the Neotropics"



Nick's love of birds began at the age of seven and more than 30 years later, birds continue to be his primary passion. Having completed his PhD on migratory birds at the University of Sussex, UK, Nick crossed the Atlantic in 2007 and has been working in the Neotropics ever since. As a founding member of the Colombian NGO SELVA, he leads the organization's award-winning Migratory Ecology program that today spans multiple countries and species. Over the last 15 years, he has trained over 100 Latin American biologists, supervised PhD and master's students, published more than 50 papers and led the development and implementation of the Conservation Investment Strategy for mid-elevation forests in Central and South America. His current research projects include the Neotropical Flyways Project, which works across six countries to uncover the mysteries of migration in the Neotropics, and detailed studies of the non-breeding ecology of species like the Cerulean Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, and Golden-winged Warbler. Nick is also committed to conservation, and has spearheaded habitat restoration and protected area creation projects in several regions of Colombia and Costa Rica. Currently, with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, he is coordinating efforts to enhance and manage stopover habitats for Olive-sided Flycatchers, Blackpoll Warblers, and Gray-cheeked Thrush in Colombia.

10:15–11:45am

Working Session: Full Annual Cycle Conservation

Moderators: Deborah Hahn and Julie Hagelin

10:15–10:30am	Introduction to the session	*Deborah Hahn & Julie Hagelin
10:30–10:45am	Beyond the breeding grounds: how Southern Wings connects Alaska's long-distance migrants to hemispheric conservation	*Deborah Hahn & Bradley Wilkinson
10:45–11:00am	Full annual cycle habitat monitoring for shorebirds of the Pacific Americas - linking Alaska migrants to the Western Hemisphere	Patrick Donnelly

11:00–11:45am

Panel Discussion and Audience Participation:

- *How does Alaska-based breeding bird monitoring and bird migration data fit into non-breeding conservation actions?*
- *How can Alaska organizations support research and conservation efforts on the non-breeding grounds (funding, equipment, student projects, etc.)?*

11:45am–1:30pm

Lunch (On Your Own) Afternoon science presentations start at 1:30pm sharp!

Wednesday, December 9

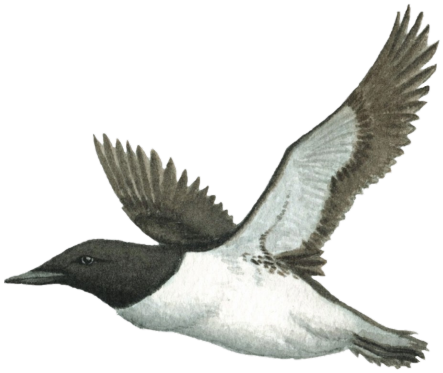
Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)
*denotes online presentation

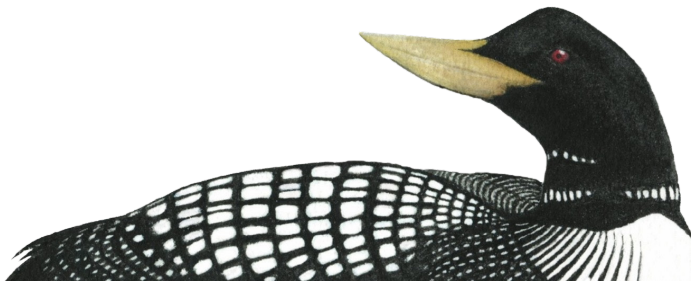
1:30–3:15pm

Fairbanks Room (online and in-person): Environmental & Ecological Traits
Moderator: Anne Schaefer

Time	Title	Presenter
1:30–1:45pm	Linking thermal physiology with avian distribution surveys to assess population vulnerability to rapid warming	Phred Benham
1:45–2:00pm	Recent population and ecological changes in American Dippers (*Cinclus mexicanus*) in Southcentral Alaska	Anna Reichenbach (B)
2:00–2:15pm	Late-winter icing leading to a die-off of overwintering waterfowl at Izembek Lagoon	Alison Williams
2:15–2:30pm	**Break**	
2:30–2:45pm	Annual survival of threatened Spectacled Eiders during a period of low sea ice in the Bering Sea	*Daniel Rizzolo
2:45–3:00pm	Environmental conditions drive Dunlin (*Calidris alpina arcticola*) use of roadsides during the pre-nesting period in Alaska, USA	*Aaron Yappert
3:00–3:15pm	Effects of weather and smoke exposure on Tree Swallow fledging success	*Megan DiSaia (M)

Abstracts available for viewing in supplemental booklet (https://alaskabirdconference.org/program/)





Wednesday, December 9

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)

1:30–3:30pm

Denali/Kenai Room (in-person only): Avian Migration & Stopovers

Moderator: Maren Duffy

Time	Title	Presenter
1:30–1:45pm	Contrasting wintering strategies of Fork-tailed and Leach's Storm-Petrels from Gulf of Alaska breeding colonies	Brie Drummond
1:45–2:00pm	Does foraging landscape or somatic state have a greater influence on movement ecology in a long-lived Bering Sea seabird?	Danny Casner (M)
2:00–2:15pm	The role of tracking data in assessing important migratory stopover sites: an example with Alaska-breeding curlews and godwits	Dan Ruthrauff
2:15–2:30pm	**Break**	
2:30–2:45pm	Red Knot passage population size and migratory ecology underscore Controller Bay, Alaska as a vital stopover site	Jenell Larsen Tempel
2:45–3:00pm	GPS telemetry reveals social structure and movement patterns of territorial and floater Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)	Stephen Lewis
3:00–3:15pm	Seasonal distributions of Lesser Canada and Taverner's Cackling Geese: assessing prior research using modern technology	Michael Guttery
3:15–3:30pm	"Dual-use" habitats of *Contopus cooperi* (Olive-sided Flycatcher): Important spring stopovers of Alaska populations coincide with shrinking, high-occupancy breeding habitat in Northern California	Julie Hagelin

Abstracts available for viewing in supplemental booklet (https://alaskabirdconference.org/program/)

4:00–6:00pm

Poster Session & Art Vendors

@ Marriott Anchorage Downtown

Poster Session

Wednesday, December 9, 4:00–6:00pm @ 2nd Floor Foyer

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)

Location	Title	Presenter
1A	Emergent algal toxins threaten seabirds, marine mammals and fish in the Bering Sea	Danielle Gerik & Sarah Schoen
1B	Alaska's 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan	Julie Hagelin & Eva Allaby
1C	Multi-species foraging dynamics in a sub-Arctic sound during the non-breeding season	Anne Schaefer
1D	Influences of body mass and nest success on population dynamics of Spectacled Eiders	Arrow Myers (M)
2A	Comparison of physiological response to warming temperatures between Boreal and Black-capped Chickadees	Kolibri Drobish (M)
2B	Using point-of-care (POC) devices to measure body condition of nesting Pacific eider species	Mairin Murphy (D)
2C	Avian community response to Arctic beaver colonization	Sebastian Zavoico (D)
2D	Diet of breeding Red-throated and Pacific Loons along the Beaufort Sea coast inferred from stable isotope and fatty acid analyses	Brian Uher-Koch (D)
3A	Pacific Common Eider in a changing Arctic: long-term patterns in breeding ecology, climate, and human influence	Kayla Shively
3B	Stable δ^2H isotope analysis of American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*) feathers shows a broad range of summer nesting grounds in Alaska	Lillian Downing (B)
3C	Differential migration strategies and effects on demography and population dynamics of Pacific Black Brant	James Golden (D)
3D	From the boreal to the tropical: survival and migration of Alaskan Blackpoll Warblers, a pilot study	Kassie Colson
4A	The phenology and phenomenon of Sandhill Crane spring migration along the Tintina Trench at Faro, Yukon Territory	Rachel Anderson
4B	After AI: from automated counts to population estimates	Charles Frost
4C	Avian diversity and abundance in Portage Valley and Whittier following road construction using comparative point counts	Elle Kauppi (B)
4D	Pioneering Anna's Hummingbirds in Cordova, Alaska	Katherine McLaughlin
5A	The influence of wintering location on annual productivity of Emperor Geese	Riley Marcus (M)
5B	Seabird declines track changing ocean conditions in Prince William Sound, Alaska	Robb Kaler
5C	Next step for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska historical bird data	Tamatha Patterson

Art Vendors

Wednesday, December 9, 4:00–6:00pm @ Anchorage Room

Handmade art available for purchase from the following vendors:

Julia Ditto (2026 Logo Artist)
@julia_ditto_illustration (IG)
https://juliaditto.com/

Arin Underwood
@ternandtide_designs (IG)

Kim McNett
@kimsnaturedrawings (IG)
http://www.kimsnaturedrawings.com

Madison Grosvenor
@maddyg_makes_art (IG)
https://maddygmakesart.square.site

Sabrina Kessakorn
@fc.visuals (IG)

Kate Burt
@_k8creates (IG)

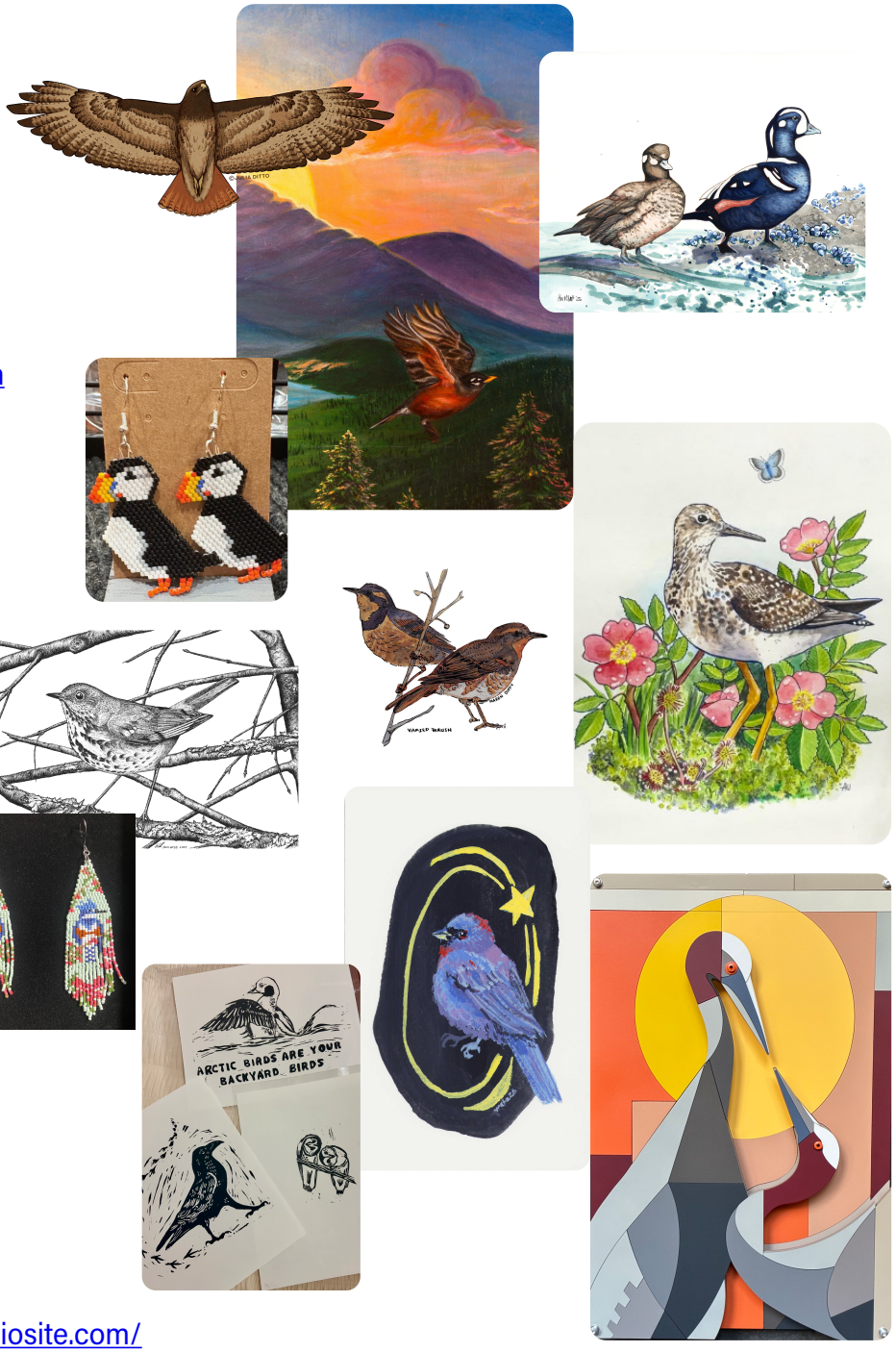
John Webb
Webbdrawsstuff (Etsy)

Maren Duffy
@phoca907 (IG)

Sarah Wright
@oswc.art (IG)

Heather Feil
@posey.creek (IG)

Denise Link
facebook.com/unBEARiedtreasure
https://deniselinkphotography.zenfoliosite.com/



Thursday, December 10

8:45–9:45am

Invited Speaker: **Chris Wood**

"Advancing Bird Monitoring in Alaska: Building from eBird to Decision-Ready Data"



Chris Wood is Director of eBird and Program Director of the Center for Avian Population Studies at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. He leads efforts to advance global biodiversity monitoring through the integration of participatory science, large-scale data systems, and analytical innovation. His work focuses on building partnerships and tools that translate bird observation data into decision-relevant information for conservation, spanning local to global scales, with eBird serving as a core platform for data collection and integration.

10:15–11:45am

Working Session: Advancing Monitoring Methods

Moderators: Chris Wood, Kylee Dunham, Zak Pohlen, and Jim Johnson

10:15–10:30am	Strengthening Alaska's inventory and monitoring – the evolving role of eBird	Zak Pohlen
10:30–10:45am	eBird Alaska monitoring priority reflections: assessing user needs and improvements to drive widespread adoption of monitoring tool	Lauren Oldham
10:45–11:00am	Integrating participatory science and survey data to identify priority areas for waterfowl monitoring	Kylee Dunham

11:00–11:45am

Panel Discussion

The panel discussion will focus on two questions:

1) How to better integrate eBird into Alaska's bird monitoring portfolio?

2) How to bridge the gap between inventory and monitoring and decision support?

This moderated discussion will include opportunities for the audience to ask questions and participate in the discussion.

11:45am–1:30pm

Lunch (On Your Own) Afternoon science presentations start at 1:30pm sharp!

Thursday, December 10

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)
*denotes online presentation

1:30–3:45pm

Fairbanks Room (online and in-person): Genetics & Life-History Characteristics

Moderator: Laura McDuffie

Time	Title	Presenter
1:30–1:45pm	Closing the annual cycle of the American Kestrel: integrated genomic and mark-recapture data link breeding populations to wintering regions	*Christen Bossu
1:45–2:00pm	Integration of genomic and telemetry data from Emperor Geese (*Anser canagicus*) reveals female philopatry and male-biased dispersal among Alaska breeding populations	Eleni Petrou
2:00–2:15pm	Comparing plumage colour and genetics of Pribilof songbirds to mainland Alaska songbirds	Noelle Deane (M)
2:15–2:30pm	Song evolution in Beringia: a comparative genomics and bioacoustics study of the songbirds of St. Paul Island, Alaska	Ray Bennett (M)
2:30–2:45pm	**Break**	
2:45–3:00pm	What limits a declining shorebird population? An integrated population model for Lesser Yellowlegs	Jeff Wagner (D)
3:00–3:15pm	Migratory and dietary carryover effects on body condition and reproductive investment by Tufted Puffins	Rebecca Lavier (D)
3:15–3:30pm	The influence of birth-year and recruitment-year environment on probability of first reproduction in Black Brant	Jordan Thompson (D)
3:30–3:45pm	Wintering at the extremes: contrasting productivity and survival rates in Emperor Geese	Robyn Thomas (M)

Abstracts available for viewing in supplemental booklet (https://alaskabirdconference.org/program/)



Thursday, December 10

Doctoral Student (D)
Master's Student (M)
Bachelor's Student (B)

1:30–4:00pm

Denali/Kenai Room (in-person only): Population Monitoring

Moderator: Rachel Richardson

Time	Title	Presenter
1:30–1:45pm	Trends in boreal wetland birds using long-term citizen science data	Arin Underwood
1:45-2:00pm	Distance sampling errors bias population size estimates in avian point counts	Emily Weiser
2:00-2:15pm	Updated population trends from the Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey for Interior and Southeast Alaska	Vijay Patil
2:15-2:30pm	Ducks like water: developing a systematic boreal waterfowl survey for the Yukon	Margaret Campbell
2:30-2:45pm	**Break**	
2:45-3:00pm	Kachemak Bay shorebird monitoring project from 2009-2026	George Matz
3:00-3:15pm	Broad-scale predictors of population trends in Alaskan breeding birds	Megan Milligan
3:15-3:30pm	By air, by sea, by land: a spatially balanced statewide survey for Aleutian Terns	Megan Boldenow
3:30-3:45pm	First estimate of Spectacled Eider abundance during winter accounting for survey coverage, flock detection, flock size estimation error, and availability in the survey area	Erik Osnas
3:45-4:00pm	Nest densities at Kigigak Island, Alaska, indicate a severe population decline of Spectacled Eiders (*Somateria fischeri*)	Sarah Hoepfner

Abstracts available for viewing in supplemental booklet (https://alaskabirdconference.org/program/)

5:00–7:30pm

Dinner Buffet, Award Presentations & Closing Comments

@ Fairbanks Room, Marriott Anchorage Downtown

Morning Workshop
Friday, December 11 @ USGS Alaska Science Center

8:30am–12:00pm
Fundamentals of eBird Data Access @ USGS Alaska Science Center
Led by Matt Strimas-Mackey (Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

Workshop Overview

This eBird workshop introduces participants to the fundamental tools and pathways for accessing eBird data. Attendees will learn how to navigate key data products (raw observations in the eBird Basic Dataset and modeled eBird Status & Trend products), understand their structure, and apply best practices for responsible data use. We will use an Alaska-focused case study (oil spill response) to demonstrate how users can use raw and modeled eBird products in a real-world application.

Workshop Prerequisites & Preparation

This workshop is intended to be interactive. All examples are written in the R programming language, and the instructor will work through the examples in real time, while the attendees are encouraged to follow along by writing the same code. To ensure we can avoid any unnecessary delays, please follow these setup instructions prior to the workshop:

- Create an eBird account if you don't already have one and request access to the raw eBird data and/or the eBird Status data products:
  - Best Practices for Using eBird Data: request access to the eBird Basic Dataset
  - eBird Status and Trends: request access to the eBird Status data products
- Download and install the latest version of R. You must have R version 4.0.0 or newer to follow along with this workshop.
- Download and install the latest version of RStudio. RStudio is not required for this workshop; however, the instructors will be using it and you may find it easier to follow along if you're working in the same environment.

Contact Zak Pohlen at zachary_pohlen@fws.gov to sign up for the workshop. We encourage in-person attendance, but a virtual option is available.

Afternoon Workshop
Friday, December 11 @ USGS Alaska Science Center

1:00–5:00pm
Google Earth Engine for Flyway Conservation: Monitoring Habitat Change Across the Full Annual Cycle @ USGS Alaska Science Center
Led by Dr. Patrick Donnelly, Ducks Unlimited and University of Montana

This workshop explores the growing power of Google Earth Engine (GEE), a planetary-scale geospatial platform for ecosystem analysis. The objective is to introduce natural resource professionals to GEE's core concepts and workflows, its utility for efficiently monitoring flyway change across full annual cycles, and its potential impacts on migratory bird communities. The introduction will draw on examples from systems ecology, natural resource conservation, and wildlife management.

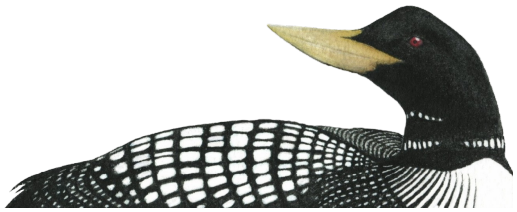
Workshop Prerequisites & Preparation:
To participate in the hands-on exercises, please review and complete the following before the workshop:

- Google Earth Engine Account Setup: You must have an active Google Earth Engine account set up prior to attending.
  - If you do not have an account, sign up at the Google Earth Engine Registration Page using a Google or Gmail account.
  - Follow the prompts to register your account for non-commercial/academic use or link it with a Google Cloud Project. Account approval can take time, so please complete this step well in advance.

Recommended Reading: Before attending, please review the official Get Started with Earth Engine User Guide to familiarize yourself with the interface, the JavaScript Code Editor, and basic Earth Engine concepts.

Experience & Background: Prior coding experience and a basic understanding of remote sensing are encouraged, but they are *not required*. The workshop is designed to guide attendees through core workflows step-by-step.

Contact Jim Johnson at jim_a_johnson@fws.gov to sign up for the workshop.



Thank You!

A special thanks to the following individuals and organizations for coordinating key components of the 2026 Alaska Bird Conference:

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