



"The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997

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2013 Grand Prize Literature Winner

Bailey Anderson, an 11th Grader at Chignik Lagoon School, won the grand prize in this year's Alaska Migratory Bird Calendar Contest.

Spectacular Shorebirds by the sea,
Who migrate far and wide for all to see.

You squawk, caw, and cry
About all the wondrous sights
Of shores you've seen.

Migrating north or south in the seasons,

To escape the winter cold,
To find the summer warmth.

Nomads of the air,
Who move where you please.

Come back and tell me
Of all the sights you've seen
And all the flights you've taken.

Come back to see me.

For more information, or to order a free printed or electronic copy, contact Visitor Service Manager Julia Pinnix. Julia_Pinnix@fws.gov. (907) 246-1211. P.O. Box 277, King Salmon, AK, 99613.

Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuges

Newsletter - Spring 2012



Insects on *Angelica lucida* at Ruth Lake, Becharof NWR. USFWS/Julia Pinnix

Unexpected Diversity of Bees Found

Refuge Biologist Dominique Watts began collecting bees last year out of curiosity. No inventory has ever been done of pollinators on the Alaska Peninsula. Since bees are on the decline in many parts of the contiguous United States, Dom wondered what might be found here, and whether these bees, too, are in trouble. What he learned was startling.



Dom Watts netting bees. USFWS/Julia Pinnix

Dom tried a variety of collection methods, recruiting assistance from other staff members and volunteers. He preserved the specimens in 100% ethanol and sent them to his partners in the US Department of Agriculture's Bee Biology and Systematics Laboratory. "I expected to find maybe 4 or 5 species," Dom said. But preliminary results showed at least 15 different species, including 2 that are critically threatened elsewhere.

James Strange is conducting DNA research on bumblebees for the USDA. Using DNA analysis and microscopic identification methods, he has verified 9 species of bumblebees so far in Dom's specimens. Terry Griswold is an expert in the smaller bees and has been crucial in identification of small bee specimens.

Samples of bee species were taken opportunistically in 2011, piggybacking on other projects. This will continue in 2012. Dom encourages anyone throughout the Alaska Peninsula to send or bring him samples of bees or wasps. He recommends putting them into a freezer for a few hours to kill them. The bee can then be brought to the refuge office or sent to Dom. Keenly interested people can contact Dom to ask about borrowing a bee collection kit: 907-246-3339.

Continued on next page

Kanatak Trail Gains National Recognition

In May, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar is expected to sign a document giving National Recreation Trail (NRT) status to the Kanatak Trail. The National Trail System Act of 1968 authorized creation of a national trail system, recognizing exemplary trails of local and regional significance. The Kanatak Trail, in Becharof National Wildlife Refuge, is an ancient route used for centuries to cross from the Pacific Ocean to Becharof Lake to reach Bristol Bay.

In 2011, we were awarded a Recreational Trails Grant (administered by the Alaska Division of Parks and Recreation) to clear brush from the route. Head-high alder and willow were obscuring the trail. The grant allowed us to bring in a Student Conservation Association crew. Working closely with elder Paul Boskoffsky and with archeologist Tom Prang, the crew cleared 5 miles of the trail, allowing it to be used today by hikers.

There are 15 other trails in Alaska with NRT status. Three are managed by the USFWS. One is St. Paul Island High Bluffs Trail in the Pribilof Islands, part of the Alaska Maritime NWR. Two are water routes in Kenai NWR: Swan Lake Canoe Route and Swanson River Canoe Route.

The Kanatak Trail is certainly one of Alaska's most remote NRTs. Access is by floatplane on the west end, or small wheeled aircraft at low tide on the east end. Boats can reach the trail from Becharof Lake, or on the Pacific side under the right weather conditions.

For maps or more information, contact the King Salmon Visitor Center: (907) 246/4250; or Visitor Services Manager Julia Pinnix, (907) 246-1211, Julia_Pinnix@fws.gov. A brochure is also available on our website: <http://becharof.fws.gov>.



Hiker at Kanatak Pass.
USFWS/Julia Pinnix

Diversity of Bees, *continued*



Bombus moderatus is one of the most common bumblebees. *B. balteatus*, on the other hand, has been collected at only one location. The Western bumblebee, *B. occidentalis*, is in dramatic decline from California to British Columbia, where it is an alpine bee. As alpine areas shrink from globally increasing temperatures, this bee, along with animals like the pika, are struggling to survive. In our area, the Western bumblebee is a tundra species.

B. polaris is the Arctic bumblebee, and a species of concern, according to the Xerces Society for invertebrate conservation (www.xerces.org). It is in severe decline throughout much of its range. Covered in dense "fur" and with a higher body temperature than other bumblebees, it pollinates blueberry, willow, Arctic poppies, and roses. Only 2 individuals were collected last summer.

A subgenus of bumblebee, *Psithyrus*, is called the cuckoo bee for its parasitic habits. Unable to collect its own pollen, it lives in other bumblebee colonies. Five samples have been collected, but these are not yet identified to species level.

Although bumblebees are a more visible type of bee, there are at least 3 smaller kinds Dom has collected. *Andrena* are miner bees, living in little burrows in sandy soil. At least 2 species have been identified here. Another parasitic bee, *Nomada*, is particularly common. These look like little wasps, maybe half the size of a honeybee. A few *Lasioglossum* (known as sweat bees) have been collected. They are most common in the tropics, and do not sting or bite. *Nomada* and *Lasioglossum* samples are not yet identified to the species level.

Safety Policy Triggers Training

The USFWS created a new national policy strengthening safety for flying in planes or helicopters. Any person planning to fly in a floatplane, or in any aircraft with an extended over-water flight plan, must take a day-long course in water-based self-rescue. This policy applies to aircraft chartered or operated by the USFWS, and to any person on board, including staff as well as volunteers.

Known as "dunker" training, the course is offered by the Aviation Management Directorate through the Interagency Aviation Training Division. An April class was held in King Salmon and Naknek. It includes class time discussing self-rescue after water crashes. But the primary portion of the class is hands-on, in a swimming pool.

Two students sit in a cage simulating an aircraft cockpit, wearing seatbelts and flight helmets. The cage is tipped into the pool, where helpers turn it to simulate a turbulent crash. Instructors monitor the two above and below water, watching to be sure they follow the correct procedure and that they are safe.

At the end of the Naknek class, every participant stated that they felt more confident about being able to extricate themselves from a water crash.



Bill honors Pete. USFWS/Julia Pinnix

Pete Finley Honored

After 22 years in law enforcement for the USFWS, Pete Finley has turned in his badge. Refuge Manager Bill Schaff presented Pete with an award in March recognizing his many years of service in law enforcement. Pete will continue to fly as a pilot for us. As a Refuge Operations Specialist, he also assists in refuge management.



Dunker training in action. USFWS/Julia Pinnix

Ron Britton Assists Office in Gulf



Fairhope office. USFWS

In November and December, Ron Britton, one of our Wildlife Biologists, was asked to go to Fairhope, Alabama, on a five week detail. Tasked as the Acting Field Supervisor, Ron's experiences as the USFWS national spill response coordinator were useful in assisting with the management of the office's organization and work load until a permanent field supervisor can be

hired. He helped with the evaluation of the organizational structure and branch functions of this very new and unique damage assessment and restoration office.

Dedicated solely to the damage assessment and restoration work on the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the USFWS opened the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Office in Fairhope. Centrally located along the Gulf, the Fairhope NRDAR Field Office represents a new concept. The assessment and restoration branches are responsible for tackling the daunting and long-term task of coordinating the damage assessment and restoration projects proposed by each of the states affected. These studies are designed to quantify spill injuries and to determine the best possible methods to restore fish, wildlife, and their injured environments.

Refuge Staff Share Knowledge

This winter, refuge staff traveled to conferences to share their work and knowledge with others. Biologist Dom Watts was selected to present a paper at the Wildlife Society Conference in Hawai'i. His paper was entitled "Seasonal Dietary Variation and Use of Marine Resources by Wolves in Southwest Alaska." Dom's co-author, running the stable isotope analysis, is Seth Newsome of the University of Wyoming.

Dom was also a guest speaker at the Anchorage Zoo in February, discussing his research on wolves. The zoo holds a Wildlife Wednesday free lecture series on the second Wednesday of each month from October to April. Dom's talk covered the ecology of wolves in Southwest Alaska.



*Dom in the field.
USFWS/Julia Pinnix*

Biologist Susan Savage delivered a presentation on her ptarmigan research for the Boreal Partners in Flight



*Susan presenting.
USFWS/Julia Pinnix*

(BPIF) annual meeting in December 2011. BPIF is a coalition of biologists, land managers, and the public working together to help conserve bird populations throughout northern Alaska. No studies of ptarmigan abundance have ever been done on the Alaska Peninsula. Susan shared the results of the first season's research at the conference.

Susan also delivered a presentation in March for the Yaquillrit Kelutisti (Keepers of the Birds) Council at their annual meeting in Naknek. The council reports to the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC), a group including the USFWS, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and representative of Alaska's Native population. The AMBCC's primary purpose is migratory bird conservation through development of recommendations for the spring/summer subsistence harvest. (Contact the AMBCC Office, USFWS, 1011 E. Tudor Rd., MS 201, Anchorage, AK, 99503, for more information.) Susan discussed bird resources of the Bristol Bay Region, particularly for waterfowl and shorebirds. She also delivered a report on Alaska Peninsula bird projects.

In November 2011, Visitor Services Manager Julia Pinnix attended the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Conference in Minneapolis, MN. NAI is an organization dedicated to advancing the profession of natural and cultural heritage interpretation. Julia gave two presentations. One was on delivering environmental education in rural Alaska. The other was a discussion of techniques for interpreting climate change.



*Julia with students.
USFWS/Liz Julian*

Lind Now a Captain for Refuge

Captain Orville Lind recently completed all requirements to earn his 100 Ton Masters Merchant Mariner Credentials for operation of our research vessel *Arlluk*. In 2011, he apprenticed with Captain Linn Foust for completion of the required sea-time to obtain his license. Captain Lind will operate the *Arlluk* full time this summer along the Pacific coast, supporting a wide variety of missions. As a former commercial fisherman and captain on the Pacific side of the Peninsula, Lind has the local knowledge of the coastline that is valuable to refuge operations.

We also plan to bring our smaller boat, the *Refuge Runner*, into operation on Becharof Lake. Both boats are expected to expand opportunities for staff to reach refuge lands where we have had limited access before, as well as providing support for law enforcement and for ecological and biological research.



*Orville Lind on Refuge Runner.
USFWS/Julia Pinnix*

Refuge Pilot Now Instructor

Law Enforcement Officer and Pilot Jim Wittkop completed training this winter to become a certified flight instructor. The course was through CP Aviation in Santa Paula, CA. Jim already has around 4,500 hours of flying experience, but says reviewing policies and procedures is always a good idea. He hopes to put his new certification to good use here in Alaska, training other pilots.



Jim Wittkop. USFWS/Tom Prang

2nd Annual Speaker Series Covers Climate Change, History, and More

This winter's Second Annual Speaker Series began in January with a showing of "Green Fire," the first feature-length film about conservationist Aldo Leopold. Accompanying the film, Biologist Ron Britton and Visitor Services Manager Julia Pinnix presented overviews of the conservation work currently being done on our refuges.

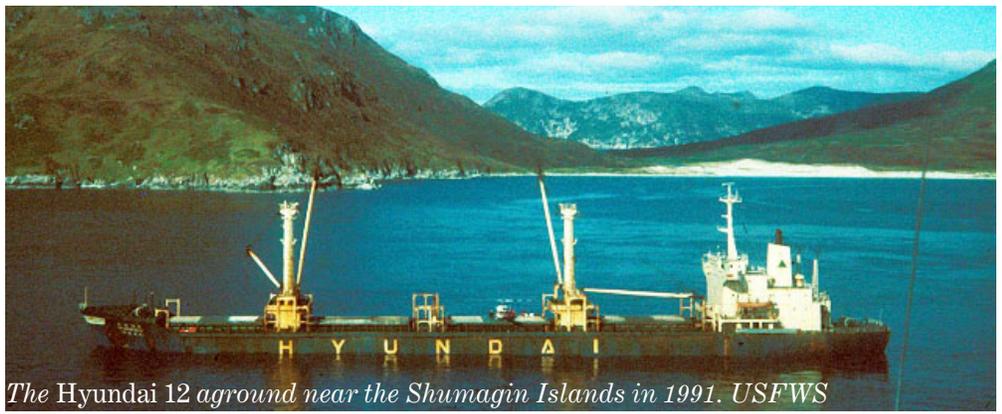
In March, Dr. Patricia Heiser from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, described her research on post-Ice Age climate change. Dr. Heiser uses tree core samples for her study. She asks for anyone cutting trees in the area to contact her: she would very much like to have cross-sections of local spruce trees.

Dr. Heiser also appeared at Bristol Bay School in Naknek, where she spoke to students from grades 4-12. For Lake and Peninsula Borough schools, we tried a new approach. From the King Salmon L&P office, Matthew Stark arranged a web link for schools to participate. 9 schools connected for Dr. Heiser's presentation on the post-glacial landscape of the Alaska Peninsula.

John Branson, historian for Lake Clark National Park, did 4 presentations in April. He began with a talk in our office conference room on John Clark. Many of Clark's descendants live in the region. At the Bristol Bay School in Naknek, he shared the story of Dick Proenneke, who settled in what is today Lake Clark National Park. He adapted the same presentation for a web conference for the Lake and Peninsula Borough schools.

At an evening presentation at the Naknek Native Village Council, John showed film footage taken circa 1947 in this area. He asked audience members to share what they recognized in the film, from individuals to locations.

The final speaker in the series was Katmai National Park's Whitney Rapp, who spoke in May. Whitney discussed invasive plant species, explaining what they are and what damage they can do. Her goal is to increase general awareness of problem plants so people can take action quickly, preventing small infestations from getting out of control.



The Hyundai 12 aground near the Shumagin Islands in 1991. USFWS

Spill Response Planning Needs Everyone

Our coastline habitats are susceptible to oil spills, being located along the great North Pacific shipping lanes. Accidents are inevitable. The USFWS encourages and supports a collaborative effort between state, federal, and local governments, Native villages, and other organizations to try and design spill response plans.

Last summer, refuge staff joined personnel from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation on refuge vessel *Arlluk* to evaluate sites around Kodiak and the Shelikof Straits. These are included in the Kodiak Island Subarea Plan, part of a state contingency plan for oil spill response. These sensitive sites were selected through a long process that is now scheduled to begin in the Bristol Bay area.

The second worst marine oil spill in U.S. history occurred when the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound, Alaska, in 1989. Oil from this spill reached Alaska Peninsula shores. The USFWS was able to bring together responders from all over the country, resulting in the development of significant response strategies for wildlife and their habitats along remote and rugged Alaska coastlines.

Other major accidents have occurred in our area since then: the *Hyundai 12*, a huge grain ship grounding in October 1991 on the Shumagin Islands; and the *Selendang Ayu* in 2004, which broke in half and spilled over 300,000 gallons of fuel on the west side of Unalaska.

Numerous smaller accidents occur every year. Just this winter, several captains ran their small fishing boats ashore on refuge lands in severe weather to try and save themselves and their vessels. We will have to survey the sites during better weather this spring/summer to determine if there were impacts.

How can we be better prepared for another large spill off Alaska shorelines? Many communities are joining together this summer to discuss the development of oil spill response plans in Bristol Bay, Western Alaska, and the Northwest Arctic. Stay tuned, and through this newsletter, we'll keep everyone updated on our progress!



Refuge Manager's Choice for Artwork

Hope Swanson, a student of Bristol Bay Christian Learning Center in Naknek, won the Refuge Manager's Choice award for her superb poster entry.

2012 Calendar Contest Honors Shorebirds

This year, the Alaska Migratory Bird Calendar Contest singled out shorebirds. Using “Spectacular Shorebirds” as a theme, students from communities near wildlife refuges around the state turned in posters and literature entries. Entries are organized by age and judged at each refuge.

Our judges this year were: Joyce Alto, Rod Cyr, Kelly Chase, Kevin Payne, and Tom Prang. The winners they selected were sent to Anchorage and entered into the final competition for printing in next year’s calendar. Bailey Anderson of Chignik Lagoon was picked as the state’s Grand Prize Winner for literature! Refuge Managers also select an entry in each category for the Manager’s Choice award. Our manager, Bill Schaff, chose a remarkable poster by Hope Swanson of Bristol Bay Christian Learning Center in Naknek; and a poem by Erin Pedersen of Chignik Lagoon. Every participant receives a certificate, and winners also receive prizes.

Grade	Name	Poster	Literature	Location
K-2	Ella Gooden	P		Chignik Bay
K-2	Owen Young	P		Port Alsworth
K-2	Zoe Smith	P		Port Alsworth
K-2	Sam Smith		L	Port Alsworth
K-2	Daniel Wardell		L	Port Alsworth
K-2	Micah Estrada (State Winner!)		L	BBBS Naknek
3-5	Jamie Chernikoff	P		Egegik
3-5	Simeon Zackar	P		Kokhanok
3-5	Valencia Mann	P		Kokhanok
3-5	Malea Voran		L	Port Alsworth
3-5	Mikayla Bindon		L	BBBS Naknek
3-5	Lucy Young (State Winner!)		L	Port Alsworth
6-8	Isabella Erickson	P		Chignik Lagoon
6-8	LeLani Kiana (State Winner!)	P	L	CLC Naknek
6-8	Gregory Harris	P	L	CLC Naknek
6-8	Brenna Dube		L	BBBS Naknek
9-12	Tyler McCormick	P		Chignik Lagoon
9-12	Jennifer Shryock	P		Naknek
9-12	Hope Swanson (State Winner & Manager’s Choice!)	P	L	CLC Naknek
9-12	Bailey Anderson (Grand Prize!!)		L	Chignik Lagoon
9-12	Erin Pedersen (Manager’s Choice!)		L	Chignik Lagoon



Refuge Manager’s Choice for Literature

Erin Pedersen, Chignik Lagoon:

Flying from place to place
They almost never leave a trace.
Except for their prints in the sand,
When they finally settle on the land.

Never staying for very long,
They only pause to rest their wings,
And then they fly away,
Looking for their homes along the way.

They settle and caw,
Abiding nature’s law.



Making a nest,
They can finally rest.

Ending their journey,
They finally stay
And don’t have to feel the wind blowing
them away.



Sea Otter Pup Rescued in Port Heiden



Lillionna Kosbruk with otter in Port Heiden. Photo courtesy of Nicole Stover

14 year-old Lillionna Kosbruk shares her story of a rescued sea otter. Folks in Port Heiden sent the otter to King Salmon, where we helped Alaska SeaLife Center veterinarian Pam Tuomi prepare it for travelling to Seward on Pen Air. The otter arrived in excellent condition and will someday be housed at a licensed aquarium. Good work, Lillionna and friends!

It was cold that day, really cold. In fact, it had been cold all winter, and the bay around Port Heiden had been locked in ice for months. Sea otters were on land looking for food and open water.

I was riding with my mom to find my dad, who had hunted two sea otters [permitted for Alaska Natives only]. When we found him by the beach, I had to put my dad's two otters in the truck, and while I was doing it, my dad's friend passed me with a small furry creature in his arms. I didn't pay much attention, and I didn't even think it was alive... until I heard the horrible scream. I thought they'd caught a bird, since they make such strange sounds when you catch them. I quickly loaded the last otter. Then I jumped into the truck, where my mom was holding whatever was screaming.

It was a baby sea otter! Oh, my gosh, it was so cute... and it made so much noise! As soon as I held it in my arms, it looked straight into my eyes... and screamed. I asked where its mother was, and my dad's friend said that he was alone when he found him. So I asked my mom what we were supposed to do with it. She thought we could maybe send it off to an animal rescue place, but we didn't know where, so we stopped to see if the teachers knew. Two of them had lived in Seward before coming to Port Heiden, and knew about the SeaLife Center there. They said they'd call the Center and get back to us. So we drove home with the little otter, who peed on me right when we pulled out.

When we got home, my little brother and I took the otter out back to keep him cool, and we just watched him crawl around on the tundra. It made me pretty sad, because he never stopped crying the entire time. It seemed like all his crawling around was an effort to find his mother. An hour later, it was time to take him to the school. The teachers had contacted the Alaska SeaLife Center and gotten instructions for caring for the otter until he could be flown out. It was pretty awkward walking through the gym with a screaming otter in my arms. The game just stopped, and everybody stared as I passed.

It was hard to give him to the teachers. He was too cute, and I wanted to keep petting him and holding him in my arms... even if he was screaming. But it made me really happy to know that he would be taken care of.

Injured Wildlife: Who Do You Call?

Resources are limited for dealing with injured wildlife in rural Alaska. The first consideration is your own health and safety. By the time wildlife are approachable by humans, they are often too sick to recover. If you spot an injured bird during business hours (8 am to 4 pm), call our office in King Salmon: 907-246-3339. After hours, you can leave a message on the voicemail for the Bird Treatment and Learning Center (Bird TLC) in Anchorage: 907-562-4852. Small songbirds should usually just be left alone—they can seldom survive handling and transport. But larger birds, like bald eagles, often respond to veterinarian care. If you are in a remote area and must handle the bird yourself, call for instructions first if you can. Always wear thick gloves, and protect your eyes. You may need blankets or towels to safely restrain the bird.

If you see a large number of sick or dying birds, call our office in King Salmon during business hours, or call 1-866-5BRDFLU (1-866-527-3358). If there is no obvious cause of sickness or death, like hitting powerlines or buildings, a disease could be the cause, and could put you at risk. Be ready to identify the type of bird, its symptoms, the date and time found, and the location. Do not handle sick or dead birds.

It is illegal under the Marine Mammal Protection Act to touch a marine mammal without the proper authorization. This is to protect both you and the animal. Although you have the right intentions, you may actually cause more harm to the animal by picking it up. For example, walrus and sea otter are susceptible to domestic pet diseases.

On the other hand, in remote areas, there are unlikely to be authorized personnel or veterinarians to help. If you see a marine mammal you believe is in distress, or out of its natural habitat, and want to help, you should call the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward (1-888-774-7325, 24 hours), or the Marine Mammals Management Office of the USFWS in Anchorage (1-800-362-5148, business hours). The USFWS can verbally authorize someone to pick up the animal. They can guide you in how to care for the animal and transport it to the correct facility. A 24 hour emergency hotline for dead or injured marine mammals is: 1-877-925-7773.

Even dead animals can be useful. Dead eagles are sent to the National Eagle Repository in Colorado, where the feathers and other parts are made available for education and to Native Americans for religious purposes. The bodies of dead marine mammals may hold clues that help us discover information important to subsistence users and wildlife managers. Please call the Marine Mammals Management office to report dead marine mammals and learn how to safely ship the carcasses. Your help is invaluable! Remember: wear gloves when handling dead animals and wash your hands when you finish. Dead foxes, coyotes, wolves, and lynx should not be touched. They may be carrying rabies.



Biologist Dom Watts with injured eagle in Naknek. USFWS/Liz Julian



Spring Waterfowl Hunting Season Reminders

Thanks to renegotiation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, rural Alaskans may now legally hunt birds in spring and collect bird eggs in summer. This international treaty with Canada and Mexico was aimed at protecting migratory birds, but did not include an allowance for traditional spring/summer harvests in Alaska. The rules for spring hunting were in place starting in 2003.

To ensure hunting regulations protect both the right of Alaskans to hunt birds in spring/summer as well as conserving bird populations now and in the future, the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC) was created. The council includes Alaska Natives, the USFWS, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, all acting as equal partners. In Bristol Bay, rural Alaskans are represented by the Yaquillrit Kelutisti Council (contact Frank Woods at Bristol Bay Native Association for more info).

Lead Shot is Illegal for Hunting Waterfowl

Lead pellets are eaten by waterfowl. Lead poisons them and the animals and people that eat them.

Protect Wildlife.

Protect Yourself.

Use non-lead shot for hunting.



Spring hunting rules include: birds must not be wasted; they cannot be given away or sold to people who are not permanent residents of eligible areas; taxidermy is not allowed; there are some species that may not be hunted; and there are seasons for each region of Alaska.

Non-lead shot must always be used for waterfowl. Hunters 16 years or older must have both Alaska State and Federal Duck Stamps, as well as a state hunting license (there are exceptions for age, income, and disability). Duck stamps must be signed and in possession when hunting waterfowl. Federal duck stamps raise funds to buy lands that protect bird habitat. Alaska birds need good winter habitat to stay healthy to return to Alaska for nesting in the spring. State stamp fees fund waterfowl conservation projects in Alaska.

Remember, you must have your signed duck stamp with you when you hunt. Your federal stamp is good from June to June-- this is a different schedule from the calendar year state licenses and stamps, so be sure you have both.

For more information, contact the King Salmon Visitor Center: 907-246-4250; or visit the AMBCC website: <http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/Regulations.htm>. The visitor center carries federal duck stamps, or purchase them on-line: www.duckstamp.com. State duck stamps are available at local stores and online at: <http://alaska.fws.gov/duckstamps>.



Please Report Bird Bands

There is *no penalty* for shooting marked birds. Returned bands help biologists get information.

Report your bands here:

1-800-327-BAND
www.reportband.gov

You can also call Susan Savage at the King Salmon USFWS office: 246-3339.



Sig Rauda at work in King Salmon Visitor Center. USFWS/Judith Pinnix

Visitor Center Map Repaired

The map model of the Alaska Peninsula is the centerpiece of the King Salmon Visitor Center, and it just got a makeover. Lights marking landmarks and revealing salmon migration had stopped working. It was time to seek repairs.

Rauda Scale Models of Seattle, WA, custom built the map 15 years ago. They were awarded the repair contract through a competitive process. Sig Rauda, current manager and son of the company's founder, arrived in King Salmon March 25 with Lance Keizer. Both were impressed with the map surface's excellent condition.

Lance explained the history of the map. It was made by Vigo Rauda, Sig's father, each hole drilled by hand to install the lights. Now a computer program controls the light display.

Very high levels of static electricity were found in the visitor center building. Lance and Sig took precautions during the repair to prevent electrical problems, and configured the system for greater protection from static electricity.

Ptarmigan Wings and Crops Needed

If you hunt ptarmigan, please keep wings and crops (with contents) for Susan Savage.

Your help with her study is appreciated!





Phone: 907/246-3339
Fax: 907/246-6696
Web: <http://alaskapeninsula.fws.gov>
and <http://becharof.fws.gov>



Alaska SeaLife Center vet Pam Tuomi with sea otter pup. USFWS/Julia Pinnix

Read the story of the otter on page 6!

New Faces on Staff: Deputy and Specialist



Deputy Refuge Manager Kelly Chase inspecting calendar contest poster entry. USFWS/Julia Pinnix

A new Deputy Refuge Manager joined our staff in early March. Kelly Chase left Columbia National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in eastern Washington State for an opportunity to work in Alaska.

A graduate of Colorado State University, Kelly started working in 2001 for the USFWS at Back Bay NWR, headquartered in Virginia Beach. She was in the Student Career Experience Program, a federal program that helps students find work experience in their field that leads to long-term employment. She moved to Chincoteague NWR in Virginia in 2002, then to Iroquois NWR in western New York in 2006. In 2009, she crossed the country to Columbia NWR.

Kelly is a new pilot, with 150 hours of flight time under her belt. She hopes to make flying part of her job.

Liz Julian has just joined our staff as a Refuge Operations Specialist. This is Liz's second Alaskan refuge. She worked last year out of Galena for the Koyukuk and Nowitna National Wildlife Refuges.

Liz has a family history with the USFWS. Her grandfather helped establish Minnesota's Glacial Ridge NWR in 2004 before he retired. As a volunteer for Rydell and Agassiz NWRs, Liz gained experience that led her to a degree in Natural Resources from the University of Minnesota, Crookston. As a student, she also worked for Deep Fork NWR in Oklahoma.

Galena only whetted her appetite for rural Alaska. Liz is looking forward to continuing to expand her range of skills and knowledge here at our refuge.



Liz Julian with falcon in Galena. USFWS