



United States Department of the Interior

KENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Soldotna, Alaska

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Soldotna Christmas Bird Count

DATE: Saturday December 27, 2008

TIME: Meet between 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. to obtain data forms, maps, and assemble in birding groups

LOCATION: Kaladi Brothers Coffee (315 South Kobuk Avenue) in Soldotna

HOURS: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

COST: \$5.00 per participant (free for feeder watchers, and for observers 18 years of age and under) is requested to offset cost of publication of the 109th Christmas Bird Count issue of American Birds.

Local birders from the Kenai/Soldotna area are invited to participate in the 109th Annual Christmas Bird Count to be held Saturday, December 27th, 2008.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is an early-winter nationwide bird census, where volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. The Soldotna Christmas Bird Count originated in 1983 with the center of the 15-mile diameter circle being the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center and covering most of the Soldotna area, including a good stretch of the lower and middle Kenai River.

The Christmas Bird Count began over a century ago when scientist Frank Chapman changed the course of ornithological history. In 1900, Chapman led a small group on an alternative to the “side hunt,” when teams competed to see who could shoot the most game. Instead, Chapman proposed they identify, count, and record all the birds they saw, founding what is now considered to be the world's most significant citizen-based conservation effort.

Participants do not have to be experts, but only have a desire to get outside and look for birds. The birding effort normally concludes at dusk (about 4 p.m.) or when weather precludes any measurable returns. Inexperienced birders will be grouped with more seasoned birders to help familiarize them with bird identification by sight and sound.

Each participant should dress warmly, and try to bring a pair of binoculars and a bird identification book. You may also want to bring a camera to document any rare or unusual sightings. Come and be part of Audubon history in the 109th Christmas Bird Count!

After a great day of birding, all participants are invited to submit their tally sheets and birding photos during a potluck social at 6:00 p.m. at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge’s Environmental Education log cabin, located next to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge headquarters on Ski Hill Road. When you arrive, there will be a sign to guide you down to the Environmental Education log cabin.

For more information, contact Liz Jozwiak at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, (907) 260-2818 or Jack Sinclair, the compiler of the Soldotna Christmas Bird Count at (907) 262-7817.

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