

# Field Notes

December 2023



Photo by Melanie Graeff.

Happy Solstice, Friends!

Today marks the shortest day and longest night of the year. With the sun at its lowest point in the sky, we will only have 3 hours and 41 minutes of daylight. After today, we will be gaining daylight. My March 19th daytime and nighttime will be equal in length!

We closed out our 2023 program schedule earlier this month with Holiday Crafts and the Luminary Trail. This year we had over 20,000 visitors from 25 different countries, 48 U.S. States, and 3 U.S. territories. We look forward to what 2024 brings and hope you will join us for our full schedule of programs!

Happy Holidays!

See you on the Refuge!

*Grace & Melanie*

Friends of Creamer's Field Staff

## Looking for a last minute gift?

CHECK OUT OUR GIFT SHOP!

**OPEN**  
WEEKDAYS | 9AM - 5PM  
SATURDAY | 12PM - 4PM

**We hope that you will join us for our 2024 programs!**  
Visit [www.friendsofcreamersfield.org](http://www.friendsofcreamersfield.org) for current event information.  
\*Schedule is subject to change\*

## Friends of Creamer's Field 2024 Schedule

<b>February 8</b> Valentine's Day Crafts 4:00pm - 7:00pm	<b>February 24</b> Winter Track Walk 11:00am
<b>March 9 &amp; 13</b> Nest Box Building Various times	<b>April 27</b> Spring Migration Celebration 12:00pm - 4:00pm
<b>June 23</b> Design Alaska Wild Arts Walk 11:00am - 4:00pm	<b>July 21</b> Creamer's Dairy Day 12:00pm - 4:00pm
<b>August 23-25</b> Tanana Valley Sandhill Crane Festival	<b>October 18</b> Creepy Critters 4:00pm - 8:00pm
<b>November 16</b> Thanksgiving for the Birds 12:00am - 4:00pm	<b>December 5 &amp; 6</b> Holiday Craft Night 5:00pm - 8:00pm
<b>December 7</b> Luminary Trail 5:00pm - 8:00pm	<b>June 1 - August 31</b> Guided Nature Walk Wed, Thurs, & Fri   10:00am

[www.friendsofcreamersfield.org](http://www.friendsofcreamersfield.org)  
(907) 978-8457

### Field Sketch

Presented by ADFG Biologist, Mark D. Ross

**Field Sketches:**  
Creamer's Field  
Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

**Bohemian Waxwings**  
are so named due to their long-range wandering in winter. But the waxwings in our area are year round residents, feeding on the abundant fruit of chokecherry trees and other ornamental shrubs planted around town. These frugivorous birds practice "gift-passing". In spring, courting pairs pass fruit back and forth. Groups of birds will pass berries down a line from bird to bird until one individual eats (depicted in drawing above).

**Waxwings are truly beautiful and easy to see.** Silky, silver and cinnamon plumage tipped with white, yellow and a touch of red. They are easy to find and view. Traveling in flocks of 10 to 50 birds they roam around town searching for berries of ornamental trees.

**Waxwings don't really sing but they constantly keep in touch with a pleasant trill even as they feed.**

Red, wax-like nubs on the tips of wing feathers.

Bohemian waxwings sharing a meal.

**Get this image as a Christmas card at Creamer's Farmhouse.**

Buy gifts at Creamer's Field and you'll be giving twice- all proceeds from sales go to Friends of Creamer's Field and the programs they sponsor.

# Thank you, Volunteers!

Words cannot express how truly thankful we are to the volunteers who helped at our community events, led nature walks on the trails, and provided information to visitors while staffing the Farmhouse Visitor Center.

We appreciate each and every one of you! Thank you for your dedication and service to the Refuge!

### Other Happenings in Fairbanks

#### 2023 Christmas Bird Count at Creamer's Field

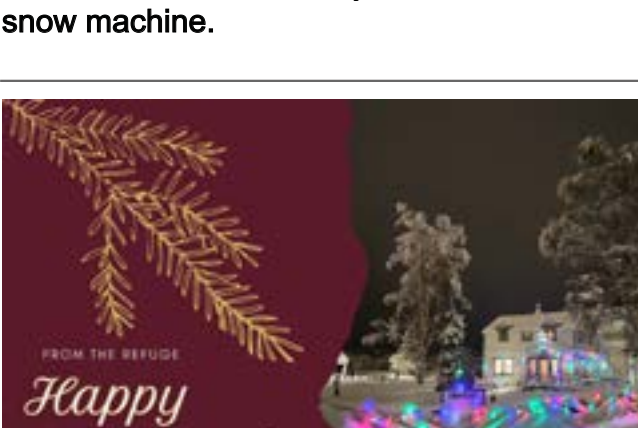
The Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running community science bird project in US history. 2023 is the 124th national count and the 63rd count for the Fairbanks region. Creamer's Field makes up a portion of the survey for the Fairbanks count area. Here on the refuge, the survey utilized 10 volunteers that counted 17 different bird species at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge that included infrequent Snow Buntings, a Bald Eagle, and Willow Ptarmigan! In total, the volunteers covered nearly 88 miles of trails and roads by foot, car, and snow machine.



Photo: Common Raven. Photo by Nate Kibbey.

#### Thank you for being a Friend!

As a 100% community funded organization, your support allows us to offer free educational programs to the Fairbanks community and its visitors. This year we intend to expand our educational outreach, resurface the parking lot closest to the barns, improve trail accessibility, and update our interpretive signage throughout the Refuge.



#### Our Contact Information

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#### Mission Statement

"Inspiring environmental stewardship and lifelong learning through experience, awareness, appreciation and conservation of the natural and historic resources of Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge."

