

Field Notes

February 2024



Photo: Thermometer in the seasonal wetlands during the February 2024 cold snap.

Greetings Friends!

We hope you have been enjoying the sunshine and warmer weather the last few days.

We experienced quite the cold snap at the beginning of the month! The seasonal wetland pond, which is thought to be the coldest spot on the Refuge got down to -54.5°F. The Farmhouse thermometer registered -51.5°F, which is the coldest that long time ADFG Biologist Mark Ross has seen on the Refuge.

The sub-zero temperatures did not last too long and 12 days later it was +40°F on the Refuge. Over a 90° increase!

With the sun's return and these warm temperatures we are ready for our spring and summer programs to begin.

The Wildlife Track Walk is happening on the Refuge this Sunday (February 24) at 11am. Participants should meet outside the Farmhouse Visitor Center.

We will also be preparing for our feathered friends' return with Nest Box Building on March 9 and 13 at the Farmhouse Visitor Center. While this event is free, registration is required as space is limited. Check out the information below for details.

See you on the Refuge!

Grace & Melanie
Friends of Creamer's Field Staff

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Track Walk

Discover what animals are doing this winter! We invite you to join us for our Winter Track Walk on Saturday, February 24 at 11:00 AM to learn about animal movements and their tracks at Creamer's Field!

Spend time at a short presentation at the barns, then go for a walk with ADF&G to search for tracks. Dress for the weather! Kids are welcome with parents. Hope to see you here! Call (907) 459-7301 for information.



Nest Box Building

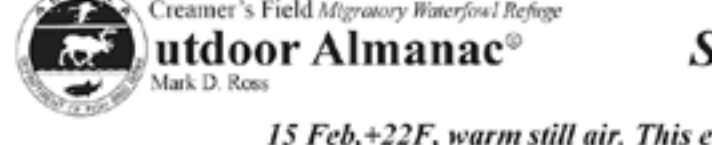
Join the Friends of Creamer's Field and Ducks Unlimited in building a bird box and learning about Alaska's cavity nesting birds! Nest Box Building is happening at 1:00 pm on March 9 and 13 at the Farmhouse Visitor Center.

These events are free, but REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED! Please register your group/family for only ONE session. We have limited supplies, so each group will build ONE bird box together. Parental supervision required.



Field Sketch

Presented by ADFG Biologist, Mark D. Ross



Song of the Shrike

15 Feb, +22F, warm still air. This early afternoon a Northern Shrike sings from the top of poplar trees just west of the big barn.



Tomial teeth, tools of the trade

If a Shrike has an endearing aspect, it's the song.

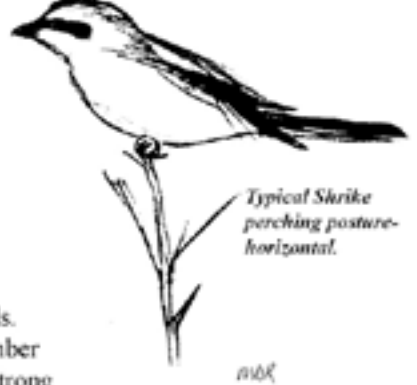
Colloquially called "butcher bird" it's known best for killing, then hanging to cure the carcasses of small mammals and songbirds. But a Shrike is a songbird too, a very rapacious one; it's not a member of the hawk family. About the size of a robin, it lacks talons- the strong curved claws. To make up for this apparent weakness, it substitutes a bill equipped with tomial teeth, small spike-like projections on the upper mandible. They're used like a set of knives or a severing wrench. A shrike strikes its prey repeatedly with the tonged bill

(mandibulation is the science word) then grab its prey by the neck and repeatedly pound it against the nearest hard surface until stilled. The wrench part comes in when twisting the neck; the tomial teeth wedge conveniently between vertebrae facilitating dislocation, then decapitation.

Back to the songbird aspect- a shrike will sing. In best form, a Shrike sings a warbling, disjunct series of sometimes liquidy notes, reminiscent of a mockingbird's song. But as the pleasant melody progresses, the singer will occasionally hit a discordant key; the more familiar raspy, grating, call notes.

Which leads to the thought: Is the bird's raspy call "Shrik, Shrik" the origin of the name Shrike?

Shrike plumage is patterned similar to a mockingbird too.



Typical Shrike perching posture- horizontal.



WE ARE HIRING!

- Position: 2024 Camp Habitat Director
- Location: Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, Fairbanks, AK
- Status: Seasonal position, part-time March-May, full-time June through mid-August.
- Date Posted: January 31, 2024
- Closing Date: Open until filled.
- First Review: February 29, 2024
- Date Available: March 20, 2024 - flexible start date
- Employment Details: \$20-\$23/hour, DOE.
- Job Description: Camp Habitat is a nature education and ecology day camp for youth ages 4-11. There are five (5) camp sessions that run in June and July. The Camp Director's primary responsibility is to oversee the day-to-day camp operations and supervise camp staff. This position reports directly to the Executive Director of Friends of Creamer's Field (FOCF).

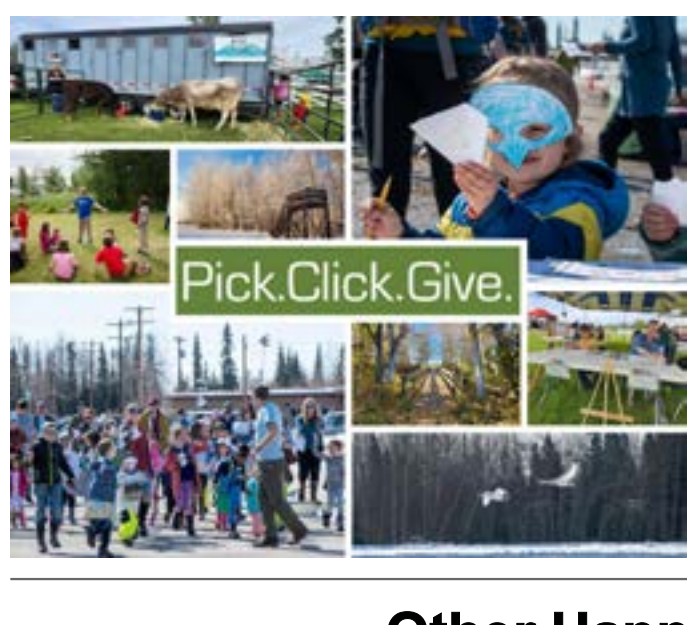
Visit the link below for the full job description, duties, and how to apply.

Check out this year's schedule below. Registration will open on March 18th.

CAMP HABITAT

Nature Sprouts (ages 4-5) - \$210	June 17-21, 2024	9:00a.m.-12:00p.m.
Nature Detectives (ages 6-7) - \$325	June 24-28, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 8-12, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 15-19, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 22-26, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
Water Striders (ages 8-9) - \$325	June 24-28, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 8-12, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 15-19, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 22-26, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
Refuge Adventurers (ages 10-11) - \$325	June 24-28, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 8-12, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 15-19, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.
	July 22-26, 2024	9:00a.m.-4:00p.m.

You may register your camper for one (1) week out of the listed sessions.



Support Friends of Creamer's Field through your PFD!

You can support Friends of Creamer's Field through your 2024 Permanent Fund Dividend by choosing to Pick, Click, and Give!

PFD applications are available from January 1 to March 31.

For more information about the Pick.Click.Give program, visit the link below.

Other Happenings in Fairbanks

Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve: A Tour of the Land, the History, and the Future

March 4, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Carlson Center Pioneer Room
Presented by Arctic Audubon

Listen to Board Members Gail Mayo, Darla Theisen, and Mary Zalar present about the local nature reserve owned by the Audubon Society and how it has influenced their lives. The Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve began 40 years ago due to Elonore Riedel's desire to ensure that her 160-acre homestead would remain intact and undeveloped. In December 1984, Elonore and husband Charles deeded the 160-acre homestead to Arctic Audubon Society. Since then, the Reserve has expanded to 320 acres through a purchase of 40 acres by Arctic Audubon as well as gifts of 40 acres from the Mayo family and 80 acres from the Riedel family. Join us for a virtual tour of this beautiful Reserve near 5-Mile Chena Hot Springs Road. Together we will explore the land, wildlife, trails, history, and future of the Audubon Riedel Nature Reserve. The Reserve has a rich history with many twists and turns along the way. We invite the community to enjoy this land and help us shape its future.



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, application and conservation of the natural and historic resources of Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge."