

JOPPA FLATS EDUCATION CENTER
Mass Audubon
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ALASKA – BROCHURE – 2018 – Final (09/18/17)

**ALASKA: EXPLORING ANCHORAGE,
THE KENAI PENINSULA, AND NOME
WITH PRIBILOF ISLANDS EXTENSION**



Bull Muskox, Council Road, Nome

June 10 - 18, 2018

Leaders

David Moon and Bill Gette

ALASKA: ANCHORAGE, THE KENAI PENINSULA, AND NOME



Red Fox



Willow Ptarmigan



Lapland Longspur



Pacific Golden-Plover



Short-eared Owl



Long-tailed Jaeger

ALASKA: ANCHORAGE, THE KENAI PENINSULA, AND NOME

Introduction

Alaska is an incredible wildlife viewing destination. Our itinerary includes visits to three areas that offer rich histories, majestic landscapes, diverse habitats, and a wide variety of birds, mammals, and wildflowers.

In Anchorage, we'll visit Spenard Crossing and Westchester Lagoon to see a variety of waterfowl, including Red-necked Grebes in breeding plumage; drive up Arctic Valley Road to explore a boreal forest; and take a leisurely walk along forest trails at the Campbell Creek Science Center to see breeding land birds.

On the Kenai Peninsula, we'll visit Tern Lake to see Arctic Tern, Red-throated Loon and a wonderful variety of wildflowers; stop at the Bear Creek Fish Weir to view salmon swimming upstream to spawn and American Dipper; and take a cruise through Resurrection Bay and into Kenai Fjords National Park to see magnificent glaciers, many species of alclids, and marine mammals, including Humpback Whale and Sea Otter.

On the Seward Peninsula at Nome, we'll explore the three "roads to nowhere"—Kougarok, Council, and Teller. We'll devote an entire day to each road.

Along Kougarok Road, we'll look for Arctic Warbler, Bluethroat, and Bristle-thighed Curlew. Council Road, which passes through Safety Sound, offers excellent opportunities for viewing a large variety of waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as, Muskox, Lapland Longspur, and Long-tailed and Parasitic jaegers. Teller Road, which leads 73 miles to the Inupiat village of Teller, is the best place to see Willow Ptarmigan, Pacific Golden-Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Rough-legged Hawk, Short-eared Owl, and Northern Wheatear.

Sunday, June 10

Our program begins at the Courtyard by Marriott on Spenard Road in Anchorage at 6:00 p.m. (The hotel is within a mile of Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, and the hotel provides a free shuttle.)

During our welcoming gathering, we'll review our exciting itinerary, answer any logistical questions, and prepare for our adventure in the Anchorage area on Monday.

Lodging: Anchorage

Monday, June 11

We'll have a 7:00 a.m. departure and drive the short distance to Spenard Crossing, a city park that offers excellent opportunities to see many species up close. On prior visits, we have seen Red-necked Grebe, Arctic Tern, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Hudsonian Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Mew Gull, and Black-billed Magpie.



Red-necked Grebe

From Spenard Crossing, we'll join the Glenn Highway and drive to Arctic Valley Road, located a few miles east of Anchorage. We'll make many stops along this dirt road that ascends to a small ski area. In 2017, we saw Spruce Grouse, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wilson's Snipe, five species of sparrows (Lincoln's, Savannah, Fox,

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Monday, June 11 (Continued)

White-crowned, and Golden-crowned), Common Redpoll, Snowshoe Hare, and Black Bear.



Lincoln's Sparrow



Black Bear Cub

We'll return to Anchorage for lunch and then visit Westchester Lagoon and the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail that overlooks Knik Arm. In the lagoon and along the coastal wetlands, we'll look for waterfowl and shorebirds.

In the late afternoon, we'll have an optional trip to the Campbell Creek Science Center where we'll walk along beautiful forest

trails searching for land birds, including Varied Thrush and Orange-crowned Warbler.



Orange-crowned Warbler

Lodging: Anchorage

Tuesday, June 12

This morning, we'll depart our hotel at 7:30 a.m. and follow Route 1 south to Potter Marsh. The marsh typically has shorebirds, terns and gulls, Sandhill Crane, and nesting waterfowl.

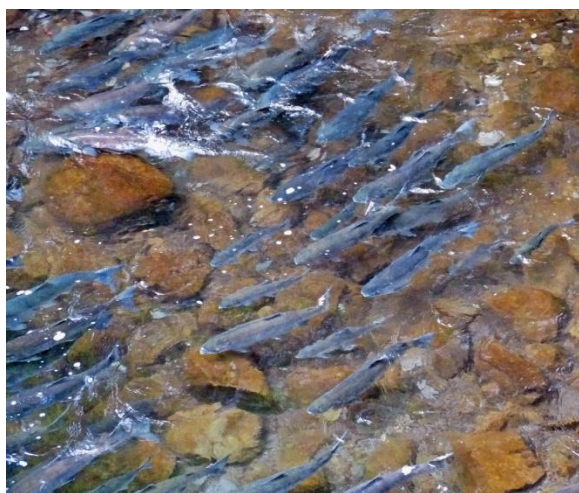
Continuing south, our route takes us along the north shore of Turnagain Arm. We'll make several stops to view wildlife in the inlet and scan the mountainsides for mammals and birds. In 2016, we saw several Dall Sheep in this area.

Passing through an extensive wetland at the east end of Turnagain Arm, we'll enter the Kenai Peninsula. Again, we'll make many stops to view wildlife and take photos of the spectacular scenery with the u-shaped, glaciated valleys and snow-covered mountain peaks. This is a truly beautiful part of the world.

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Tuesday, June 12 (Continued)

We'll leave Route 1 at Tern Lake and then follow Route 9 through Moose Pass to the Seward area. Highlights from our 2016 and 2017 trips were our visits to the Bear Creek Fish Weir. Salmon pass through the weir to reach their spawning areas. At the weir, we have seen American Dipper, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Varied Thrush, and Bald Eagle.



Salmon in Bear Creek



American Dipper

We'll drive the short distance into Seward where participants will have free time to explore the waterfront, have lunch, and visit the Alaska Sealife Center (admission not included in the program fee).

By late afternoon, we'll drive the short distance to the Best Western Plus Edgewater Hotel that's situated overlooking Resurrection Bay.

In the early evening, we'll offer a short, optional birding program in the Seward area.

Lodging: Seward

Wednesday, June 13

Today, our program is a cruise into Resurrection Bay and Kenai Fjords National Park. This is an extraordinary opportunity to see tidewater glaciers, beautiful coastal mountains, and exciting wildlife.

In Seward Harbor, look for Black-legged Kittiwake, Glaucous-winged Gull, and Sea Otter. Scan the mountains above the town for Mountain Goat.

On previous cruises into Resurrection Bay, we have seen Common Murre, Marbled Murrelet, Ancient Auket, Parakeet Auklet, Horned Puffin, Tufted Puffin, Pigeon Guillemot, Rhinoceros Auklet, Pelagic and Red-faced cormorants, plus a variety of mammals, including Humpback Whale, Dall's Porpoise, and Steller Sea Lions.



Aialik Glacier

Lodging: Seward

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Thursday, June 14

We'll departure Seward by mid-morning and drive back to Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport for an afternoon flight to Nome. En route to the airport, we'll make several stops. With favorable weather conditions during our flight to Nome, we should have views of Cook Inlet and the snowcapped Alaska Range.

Upon arrival in Nome—no Cinnabon or Starbucks shops in this airport—we'll transfer to the Aurora Inn. After check-in, we'll purchase food for future meals and bird several excellent places near the inn.



The Iditarod Arch, Front Street, Nome

Within a mile of the Aurora Inn are the East End Park ponds. These ponds and the surrounding tundra are excellent places to see land birds, ducks, loons, and shorebirds, especially Red-necked Phalaropes.



Red-necked Phalaropes (Pair)

Slightly farther down the road is what appears to be a “ghost ship”— the Swanberg dredge. This will be just one of the many artifacts you'll see of Nome's gold rush history. Glaucous Gulls and Common Ravens have nested on the dredge.

Lodging: Aurora Inn, Nome



Swanberg Dredge

Friday, June 15

Please Note: The day-to-day itinerary described below could change based on weather conditions and reported wildlife sightings. Each morning, we'll decide which road offers the best viewing.

We'll leave the Aurora Inn at 6:00 a.m. and explore Kougarok Road. This dirt road begins at the edge of the Bering Sea at Mile Marker 0 and follows the Nome River Valley north. The broad lowland meadow and tundra at the beginning of the road soon narrow in the Kigluaik Mountains. Kougarok Road crosses many fast-flowing streams and passes through wetlands with willows and alders. The stream-side vegetation hosts Fox Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Arctic Warbler, and Gray-checked Thrush. At Mile Marker 72, we'll hike (fairly strenuous) up to a ridge covered with stunted tundra vegetation in hopes of finding the elusive Bristle-thighed Curlew.

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Friday, June 15 (Continued)

Throughout the day, we'll scan the mountain cliffs and rock outcrops for nesting raptors. In 2017, we found the nest of Gyrfalcons.
Lodging: Aurora Inn, Nome

Saturday, June 16

We'll have a 6:00 a.m. departure and follow the Council Road to Mile Marker 73 on the banks of the Niukluk River. Council Road offers the greatest variety of bird species due to the diversity of habitats.

Driving east along the Bering Sea, we'll round Cape Nome and enter Safety Sound. The marshland behind the barrier beach is the best place to see a variety of waterfowl. In 2017, we saw many species, including four Eurasian Wigeons, two Redheads, and at least 150 Tundra Swans. The grasslands along Safety Sound host large numbers of Lapland Longspur, Savannah Sparrow, and displaying Semipalmated and Western sandpipers. We have seen both Long-tailed and Parasitic jaegers hunting over this area.

The rock revetments and sandy beaches along the road are great places for shorebirds, including Surfbird.



Surfbird

As we approach Bonanza Bridge (Mile Marker 33), we'll watch for Aleutian Tern. Just over the bridge, we'll stop to see "The

Last Train to Nowhere," a relict of the failed Council City and Solomon River Railroad.



Steam Engine at Bonanza Bridge

North of the Bonanza Bridge, Council Road begins a gradual incline to Skookum Pass at approximately 1,000 feet above sea level. We'll stop here to view the beautiful tundra wildflowers and look for the Northern Wheatears that nest in this area.

Near the end of Council Road, we'll enter a small area of Boreal Forest. We've found nesting Blackpoll Warblers and Common Redpolls here.



Common Redpoll

Lodging: Aurora Inn, Nome

Sunday, June 17

Today, we'll again leave the Aurora Inn at 6:00 a.m. and head west along the Teller Road. Our final destination is the Inupiat village of Teller, a community that relies largely on subsistence hunting and fishing.

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Sunday, June 17 (Continued)

Along Teller Road, we'll encounter breathtaking landscapes with snowcapped mountains, large rivers, and vast expanses of open tundra. Near Mile Marker 12, we'll bird the area along Penny River. Here, we've seen Arctic Warbler, Fox Sparrow, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and several species of wood-warblers, including Yellow, Wilson's, Orange-crowned, and Northern Waterthrush.



Gray-cheeked Thrush

At Mile Marker 26, we'll stop at the Sinuk River. Here, we've found Semipalmated Plovers nesting in the gravel along the river, Glaucous Gulls feeding with Arctic Terns, and a Bluethroat in the stunted vegetation.



Semipalmated Plover

We'll allocate considerable time to exploring the Woolley Lagoon area near

Mile Marker 40. This has been the most reliable place for seeing Pacific Golden-Plover and Northern Wheatear. North of Woolley Lagoon, we've seen a number of exciting birds. Long-tailed Jaegers, Rough-legged Hawks, and Short-eared Owls patrol the open tundra. In 2017, we found a pair of Bar-tailed Godwits defending their territory against a Whimbrel.



Bar-tailed Godwit (Female)

We'll make a brief stop in Teller to buy snacks at the Teller Native Store before returning to Nome.

Lodging; Aurora Inn, Nome

Monday, June 18

We should have a few hours in Nome prior to our afternoon flight to Anchorage. We'll use this time to look for species we may have missed.

We'll be sure to stop at a gift shop in Nome that sells locally made art and jewelry.

Our program ends at the Courtyard by Marriott on Spenard Road in Anchorage.

Photographs by Bill Gette

ALASKA: ANCHORAGE, THE KENAI PENINSULA, AND NOME

Considerations

1. Scheduled events are subject to change depending on weather conditions and other factors.
2. We start early and are busy all day. Remember, this is a birding trip—not a vacation!
3. Ground transportation and lodging during the program dates, the boat cruise into Resurrection Bay, and interpretive materials are included in the program fee.
4. Round trip flights from Anchorage to Nome are included in the program fee.
5. Meals and personal items are not included in the program fee.
6. While in Nome, we'll start our programs at 6:00 a.m. and will be away from any facilities (e.g., restrooms, restaurants) until late afternoon.
7. In Nome, participants will be responsible for preparing their own breakfasts and lunches. There is a well-stocked grocery (Hanson's Trading Company) in Nome. Each room at the Aurora Inn has a small refrigerator, microwave, and coffee maker.
We'll stop at Hanson's each evening. We suggest that you bring a cold pack and freezer bag for your picnic lunches.
8. Nome is a frontier community. Many of the facilities show the effects of harsh winter weather and relatively poor economic conditions. The residents are very friendly and helpful.
9. There are several restaurants in Nome for our evening meals. While the buildings are well worn, the service and food are good. We will suggest restaurants. Restaurants are within walking distance of the Aurora Inn.
10. Weather in Nome, as it is in most of Alaska, is unpredictable and can change quickly. During our 2016 trip, we had mostly sunny weather. In 2017, we had fog and light rain in the early morning with clearing midday. In 2017, our low daytime temperature was 43°F, and our high was 58 °F.
To be comfortable, bring turtlenecks, a heavy fleece, windbreaker, and light coat. Bring a daypack to carry your clothing and personal items.
11. Be sure to bring binoculars and camera. If you don't already have good optics, our Alaska trip is a great excuse to buy some. Bring a telescope if you wish. If not, the leaders will each have a telescope you can use.
12. Bears, both Black and Brown (Grizzly), are resident in the Anchorage area, on the Kenai Peninsula, and on the Seward Peninsula (Nome). For your safety, it is imperative that you stay with the group when in the field. In 2017, we saw three Black Bears in Anchorage area parks and three Brown Bears within 12 miles of Nome.
If you need to relieve yourself, please ask the leaders to suggest a safe place.
13. Muskoxen, those magnificent animals of the far north, are relatively common on the Seward Peninsula. Some of the Muskox around Nome have become habituated to humans. Stay away from them! A Muskox that feels threatened or is protecting its young is very dangerous. You can get great photos from a considerable distance.

ALASKA: ANCHORAGE, THE KENAI PENINSULA, AND NOME

Considerations (Continued)

14. Be on time. The surest way you can show respect for your fellow travelers is to be on time.
15. At Joppa Flats we strive to provide exciting educational experiences. We want everyone to have a great time. If you have concerns or you need help, please talk to the leaders as soon as possible.
16. We recommend that you consider purchasing trip cancellation insurance in case you or a family member become sick or injured prior to departure. We have had good service from Allianz Travel Insurance (Global Assistance).

While Nome has a large, new hospital, you may not want to stay there if you become sick or injured during our trip. We strongly recommend that you purchase Emergency Medical Transportation insurance. Again, we have used Allianz. For about \$50, one can buy \$50,000 in coverage.

Program Cost (Per Person)

Members: \$3,600
Non-members: \$3,700
(No Senior Discounts)

Note: Single rooms are very expensive; therefore, we don't offer them.

A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit of \$500 is required at the time of registration.

Final payment is due on April 7, 2018.

Important Note

Please do not make your flight arrangements before consulting with David Moon.

For additional information, please contact:

Joppa Flats Education Center
1 Plum Island Turnpike
Newburyport, MA 01950
978-462-9998
dmoon@massaudubon.org



Golden-crowned Sparrow



Whimbrel

Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center

ALASKA: ANCHORAGE, THE KENAI PENINSULA, AND NOME

Cancellation Policy

If you must cancel your trip with us, we can offer full refunds (less the initial deposit) up to 60 days before departure. Cancellations made less than 60 days before departure are non-refundable, unless we are able to replace you with another paying participant. In any case, your initial deposit is non-refundable.

Registration Form (Alaska 2018)

Name(s): _____

Membership #: _____

Address: _____

Tel. # Days: _____

Evenings: _____

E-mail: _____

Deposit Enclosed: \$ _____

(\$500 per person. Please make check payable to *Massachusetts Audubon*. Please note the cancellation policy above.)

ALASKA: PRIBILOF ISLANDS EXTENSION

Introduction

The Pribilof Islands, located in the Bering Sea 771 air miles west of Anchorage, are often referred to as the “Galápagos Islands of the North.” They get this title due to the islands’ similar volcanic origins and isolation from other land masses, and the abundance of wildlife, often seen in very close proximity.

During our Pribilof Islands adventure, we will explore St. Paul Island which is famous for its seabird nesting colonies. The steep cliffs along the western and southern coasts of the island provide nesting sites for thousands of seabirds. St. Paul also hosts huge rookeries of Northern Fur Seals.

St. Paul is an extraordinary place to watch and photograph wildlife.

Extension - Tuesday, June 19

Today, participants will have a day on their own to explore the Anchorage area. We highly recommend that participants visit the Alaska Museum of Natural History and other cultural sites in the Anchorage area.

Lodging: Anchorage

Extension - Wednesday, June 20

Today, we will take the 3 ½ hour flight from Anchorage to St. Paul Island. Upon arrival, we’ll check into the King Eider Inn, have a brief orientation, and then have birding around the hotel. We have a good chance of seeing breeding Lapland Longspurs and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches.

Lodging: King Eider Inn, St. Paul Island

Extension – Thursday, June 21, through Saturday, June 23

We will have guided van tours of the 40 square mile island each day. Of particular interest to birders and photographers will be the seabird nesting colonies at Reef Point, Tolstoi Point, Zapadni Point, and all along

Ridge Wall. Our target species will include Horned Puffin, Tufted Puffins, Crested Auklet, Parakeet Auklet, Least Auklet, Thick-billed Murre, Common Murre, Black-legged Kittiwake, Red-legged Kittiwake, Red-faced Cormorant, and Northern Fulmar.

In the wetlands around Polovina Lake and along the eastern shoreline, we’ll look for a variety of shorebirds including Surf-bird, Red Phalarope, Rock Sandpiper, and Wandering Tattler. We’ll also scan Big Lake at the northeast end of the island for nesting waterfowl.

Specialty land birds of the treeless uplands include breeding Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Pacific Wren. We also have a chance of seeing Eastern Yellow Wagtail and White Wagtail.

We’ll be sure to spend time observing the chaotic Northern Fur Seal rookeries. The Pribilof Islands host more than half of the world’s Northern Fur Seals. The spectacles of thousands of seals hauled out of the water, of baby seals bleating for their mothers, and of huge dominant males roaring defiance and vigorously defending their harems are sights to behold. We also expect to see Arctic Foxes scavenging for food in the rookeries and hunting across the island’s barren landscape.

Lodging: King Eider Inn

Extension - Sunday, June 24

We’ll have morning birding prior to our return flight to Anchorage

Lodging: Anchorage

ALASKA: PRIBILOF ISLANDS EXTENSION

Considerations

1. Scheduled events are subject to change depending on weather conditions and other factors.
2. Lodging in Anchorage on Tuesday, June 19, and Sunday, June 24, are included in the program fee.
3. Meals, museum admissions, and other activities in the Anchorage area are not included.
4. Round trip air transportation from Anchorage to St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands, is included.
5. Lodging, meals, and guided tours on St. Paul Island are included.
6. The King Eider Inn has shared restroom facilities.
7. St. Paul Island is located in the middle of the Bering Sea. The weather can be chilly, foggy, and windy. Participants must have clothing for these conditions and dress in layers.
8. The steep cliffs on St. Paul are wonderful places to watch the seabirds flying into and out of their cliff-face nesting areas and displaying breeding behavior. The areas at the top of the cliffs can be slippery and the footing uncertain. The viewing areas are potentially dangerous. Participants must keep a safe distance away from the tops of the cliffs.
9. At Joppa Flats we strive to provide

exciting educational experiences. We want everyone to have a great time. If you have concerns or you need help, please talk to the leader as soon as possible.

10. We recommend that you consider purchasing trip cancellation insurance in case you or a family member become sick or injured prior to departure. We have had good service from Allianz Travel Insurance (Global Assistance).
11. We strongly recommend that you purchase Emergency Medical Transportation insurance. Again, we have used Allianz. For about \$50, one can buy \$50,000 in coverage.

Program Cost (Per Person)

Members:	\$3,950
Non-members:	\$4,050
(No Senior Discounts)	

Note: Single rooms are very expensive; therefore, we don't offer them.

A non-refundable, non-transferable deposit of \$500 is required at the time of registration.

Final payment is due on April 7, 2018.

Important Note

Bill Gette, former Joppa Flats Sanctuary Director, will be the leader of the Pribilof Islands extension. Prior to registering, please contact him for additional information: bill.gette@gmail.com.

Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center

ALASKA: PRIBILOF ISLANDS EXTENSION

Cancellation Policy

If you must cancel your trip with us, we can offer full refunds (less the initial deposit) up to 60 days before departure. Cancellations made less than 60 days before departure are non-refundable, unless we are able to replace you with another paying participant. In any case, your initial deposit is non-refundable.

Registration Form (Pribilof Islands Extension 2018)

Name(s): _____

Membership #: _____

Address: _____

Tel. # Days: _____

Evenings: _____

E-mail: _____

Deposit Enclosed: \$_____

(\$500 per person. Please make check payable to *Massachusetts Audubon*. Please note the cancellation policy above.)