Creamer's Field
Student Activity Book

Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge
Fairbanks, Alaska
Introduction

Welcome to the new *Cremer's Field Student Activity Book!* This book includes a coloring guide to many of the common birds you can see at Creamer's Field. It also includes some pages to use in school and at home.

We hope that you will remember to bring it with you every time you visit Creamer's Field and to share what you have learned with others!

If you have feedback or questions, please contact the Alaska Songbird Institute. This book and other educational materials are available on our website at:


This book was provided for you by the Alaska Songbird Institute with support from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

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Before you go to Creamer's Field...

What kinds of plants and animals do you think live at Creamer's Field? Draw them or describe them here.

What do you hope to see at Creamer's Field? What do you want to learn about? Draw or write about it here.
GWFG

Greater White-fronted Goose
(*Anser albifrons*)

**Cool Fact:** Like many geese, Greater White-fronted Goose pairs stay together for years. Pairs migrate together, often with their young from previous years. Parents and siblings may continue to travel together throughout their lives.
Canada Goose  
*Branta canadensis*

**Food**
- grasses
- grain

**Habitat**
- wetlands

**Cool Fact:** Some Canada Geese do not go as far south in the winter as they used to. Why? What has changed? Scientists think it may be due to changes in farmlands and weather that have made more food available in the fall and winter.
Mallard
(*Anas platyrhynchos*)

**COOL FACT:** The Mallard is the ancestor of nearly all domestic ducks!

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**Food**
- grasses, grain, seeds, & insects

**Habitat**
- wetlands
Northern Pintail
(*Anas acuta*)

**LEGEND**
- Summer
- Winter
- Year round

**Cool Fact:** The Northern Pintail is one of the earliest nesting ducks in North America. They will build their nest and lay eggs as soon as the ice is out in Alaska!
BAEA

Bald Eagle

(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

**Food**
mostly fish & birds

**Habitat**
forested areas near water

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**Cool Fact:** Bald Eagles were taken off the endangered species list in 2007 after 35 years! Eagles almost went extinct because of illegal hunting, loss of habitat, and a chemical called DDT. People used DDT to protect crops from insects, but it accumulated in the environment and harmed many predators, including Bald Eagles. When DDT was banned and eagles were protected, their populations recovered.
PEFA

Peregrine Falcon
(*Falco peregrinus*)

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**LEGEND**

- summer
- winter
- year round

**Food**
mostly birds

**Habitat**
open habitats

**COOL FACT:** The name "peregrine" means wanderer. Peregrine Falcons have one of the longest migrations of any bird in North America. Birds that nest in Alaska may travel over 15,000 miles each year going from Alaska to South America and back!
SACR
Sandhill Crane
(*Grus canadensis*)

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**Food**
- Grasses, grain, seeds, & insects

**Habitat**
- Wetlands

**Cool Fact:** Sandhill Cranes dance! You may see them bow, jump, run, toss sticks or grass, and flap their wings. Cranes often dance to bond with their mate.
Alder Flycatcher
(*Empidonax alnorum*)

**COOL FACT:** Most songbirds need to learn their song from their parents. However, flycatchers and their relatives (called subocines) are born with all the instructions they need to sing the right song.

**Legend**
- 1 white
- 2 black
- 3 bright yellow
- 7 olive green

**Food**
- insects

**Habitat**
- shrubs

**Map**
- North Pacific Ocean
- North Atlantic Ocean
- Caribbean Sea
- South Atlantic Ocean
- South Pacific Ocean
Black-capped Chickadee
(Poecile atricapillus)

BCCH

Cool Fact:
Black-capped Chickadees are the smallest birds that can survive winters in Interior Alaska. Each fall they hide seeds and insects to eat in the winter, and their brains grow new neurons to help them remember thousands of hiding places!

Food
insects & seeds

Habitat
mixed forests

color code
1 white
2 black
3 light yellow
6 gray

LEGEND
summer
winter
year round

ARCTIC OCEAN

ALASKA SONGBIRD INSTITUTE
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
(*Regulus calendula*)

**COOL FACT:** Ruby-crowned Kinglets are tiny birds that lay a lot of eggs. A group of eggs in one nest is called a clutch. A female kinglet's clutch can contain as many as 12 eggs and weigh more than the female herself!
**COOL FACT:** Almost 60% of the world's Swainson's Thrushes nest in the boreal forest. The boreal forest stretches across most of Canada and Alaska and is an important nesting habitat for many of the world's birds.
AMRO

American Robin
(Turdus migratorius)

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Food
insects & berries

Habitat
open woodlands

COOL FACT: The oldest American Robin on record was 13 years and 11 months old!
Orange-crowned Warbler (Vermivora celata)

**Cool Fact:** Orange-crowned Warblers flit through vegetation removing insects from the tips of branches and leaves. This way of feeding is called gleaning.
**MYWA**

**Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler**  
(*Dendroica coronata*)

**Color Code**
1. white
2. black
3. bright yellow
6. gray

**Food**  
insects

**Habitat**  
mixed forests

**Cool Fact:** There are two different kinds of Yellow-rumped Warblers. Myrtle warblers are found in the east and north (including Alaska). Audubon's warblers are found in the west. Both have a yellow spot on their rumps that has earned them the nickname "butter rump!"
Wilson’s Warbler
(Wilsonia pusilla)

**Cool Fact:** Wilson’s Warblers are named for Scottish-American naturalist Alexander Wilson. He traveled throughout North America in the early 1800s watching, painting, and describing the birds he saw.
SCJU

Slate-colored (Dark-eyed) Junco
(Junco hyemalis)

**LEGEND**
- summer
- winter
- year round

**color code**
- 1 white
- 6 gray
- 9 pink

**Food**
- insects & seeds

**Habitat**
- mixed forests

**COOL FACT:** The male Dark-eyed Junco's song is an even trill that many people think sounds like a telephone.
GWCS
White-crowned Sparrow
(Zonotrichia leucophrys)

Color code:
1  white
2  black
5  brown
6  gray

Food
insects & seeds

Habitat
shrubs

Cool Fact: A migrating White-crowned Sparrow was once tracked moving 300 miles in one night!
LISP
Lincoln’s Sparrow
(*Melospiza lincolnii*)

**Food**
- insects & seeds

**Habitat**
- wetlands

**Cool Fact:** Lincoln's Sparrows live and feed in dense grasses and shrubs. They are very secretive.
CORE

Common Redpoll
(*Carduelis flammea*)

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**Food**
- insects & seeds

**Habitat**
- mixed forests

**COOL FACT:**
Redpolls have throat pouches for storing seeds. They may fill their pouches at your bird feeder in winter, and then swallow and digest the seeds during the cold winter night.
Collecting Data

This is an example of a data sheet like those used by the Alaska Songbird Institute. The information on the sheet is from actual birds captured at Creamer's Field. You can add new data from birds you see being banded while you visit ASI.

<table>
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A four-letter **species code** is used to describe the type of bird that was banded. Use the bird pages to figure out what species were banded.

We determine the **age** of the bird and give it a code of 1 (AHY = bird is at least one year old), 2 (HY = bird hatched this year), or 0 (unknown age).

Female songbirds develop a **brood patch (BP)** during the breeding season for incubating their eggs. The BP is an area on the belly without any feathers so the bird's hot skin lays right up against the eggs to keep them warm. We give the BP a score from 0 (no bare patch) to 3 (complete BP).

All birds have a cloaca, or opening through which waste and reproductive material pass. The cloaca of male songbirds enlarges during the breeding season to form a **cloacal protuberance (CP)**. We give the CP a score of 0 (no swelling) to 3 (very swollen).

Each bird gets a metal leg **band** with a unique **number** on it. This makes sure we don't count the same bird twice when figuring out how many birds are around. We can also compare measurements if we catch the bird another time.

- **Wing** and **tail** are measured in millimeters using a special ruler. We record the **time** at which a bird was captured as well as the **net** in which the bird was caught.
- We look for **fat** along the bird's wishbone (also called a furcula) and give it a score from 0 (no fat) to 7 (lots of fat).
- **Weight** is measured in grams using a scale.
Think like a chickadee...

Look around the boreal forest. Can you find food, water, and shelter in your habitat? Where will you build your nest? Draw it. Where will you hide? Trace your path around your habitat.
Birds don't just live at Creamer's Field. They live around your house, too!

What kind of habitat do you live in?

If you live in the forest...
Look for **Northern Shrikes** & **Black-capped Chickadees**.

If you live in the city...
Look for **Pigeons** & **Common Ravens**.

If you live near a field...
Look for **Northern Harriers** & **American Robins**.

If you live near the water...
Look for **Mallards**, **Bald Eagles**, & **Arctic Terns**.

*Can you find these birds?*

What can you do to make their habitat a safe place?
Charlie & Anna Creamer believed in conservation.

Conservation means protecting habitats for wildlife, plants, and all living things.

You can help protect habitats too! Here's are some ideas about how to do it.

☐ Keep habitats clean by putting your trash in the garbage and by picking up trash you see on the ground.

☐ Protect nesting habitats by saving snags (standing dead trees) and building nesting boxes.

☐ Make your home a safe place for birds by keeping your cat inside and asking your neighbors to do the same.

☐ Provide food for birds in winter by building bird feeders. Watch and describe the birds you see.

☐ Teach your friends and family about conservation by telling them what you learned at Creamer's Field!
Your Notes & Sketches
## Creamer's Checklist

### See
- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Canada Goose
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- Bald Eagle
- Peregrine Falcon
- Sandhill Crane
- Alder Flycatcher
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Swainson's Thrush
- American Robin
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warbler
- Wilson's Warbler
- Slate-colored (Dark-eyed) Junco
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Common Redpoll
- barley
- an old nest
- a spruce tree
- an animal track
- sign of a moose
- an insect home

### Hear
- a bird song
- a Sandhill Crane call

### Smell
- a balsam poplar bud in spring
- fall foliage

### Taste
- a spruce needle
- a spring sugar drop

### Touch
- a feather
- a mist net