

Alaska Songbird Institute

*Conserving Alaska's boreal songbirds
through ecological education & research*

2013 Year in Review

THANK YOU!

It has been just shy of a year since the Alaska Songbird Institute was officially founded on a snowy January morning in April's kitchen. At that time our goal was to adopt two long-term research and education projects at Creamer's Field in Fairbanks. By March we solidified our partnership with the North Star Community Foundation, our partner and fiscal sponsor who has provided essential support this year. A talented and energetic group of volunteers formed our Board of Directors. By late May we launched the Swallow Ecology Project. The banding station opened in August, just in time to document fall migration and productivity in this unusual year, and to welcome over 1,200 visitors.

Now that winter has arrived, we are taking stock of our whirlwind year and working to craft a vision for our projects and for what the Alaska Songbird Institute will become. If you would like to join us in this process, please get in touch! Share your thoughts or join one of our advisory committees: research, education and outreach, or fundraising. Check our website for details.

Thanks again to our generous volunteers and to all our donors from Barrow to Florida! You have provided us with time and energy, supplies, encouragement, ideas, and financial support. *We would not be here without you.*

CREAMER'S FIELD MIGRATION STATION

On August 8, 2013, the Creamer's Field Migration Station (CFMS) on Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks, reopened under the auspices of the Alaska Songbird Institute. Our first year, the 22nd fall migration season for CFMS, was a success! We owe much of this success to the outpouring of support we received from volunteers, financial supporters, including our Adopt-a-Net Sponsors, and members of the community. We can't thank you enough!

This fall 35 community volunteers helped collect data, band birds, and educate visitors about songbird migration and ecology. Together we banded over 1,000 birds of 27 species and taught 45 classes from 13 schools (1,200 people!) about songbird research and conservation. Our most unusual bird was a Western Palm Warbler captured on the last net check of the day during the last week of banding. The handsome young male is just one of a handful of Palm Warblers captured at CFMS over the years. Thanks go out to the **Alaska Department of Fish and Game**, our **Adopt-a-Net Sponsors**, and our crew of dedicated **volunteers**. We plan to open for spring migration next year, and will be accepting new volunteers. Keep an eye on our website and facebook page for updated information and training opportunities.

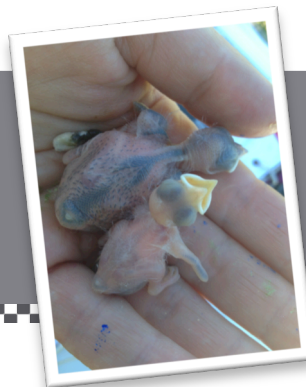


Staff:

April Harding Scurr,
Research Director
Tricia Blake,
Program Director

Board of Directors:

Beth Peluso, President
Sally Andersen, Vice President
Amy Turner, Treasurer
Tricia Blake & April Harding Scurr, Co-secretaries
Ed Murphy



SWALLOW ECOLOGY PROJECT

Learning the fundamentals of science one nest box at a time

This summer, amidst a genuine Alaskan heat wave, 16 kids (ages 10-16) logged over 750 hours at Creamer's Field. Together we chronicled the timing and fate of 28 nests (a decrease of 25% from recent years), built 30 new nest boxes, banded 169 birds, recorded growth rates of 122 chicks, and deployed 14 geolocators! Work was accomplished by participants in our mentoring and high school internship programs. These programs provide kids with the unique opportunity to jump into the nitty-gritty work of field biology – fostering the development of skills essential to science including patience, curiosity, and ingenuity.

Why Tree Swallows? Why Creamer's Field? Tree Swallows are neotropical migrants (birds who breed north of the

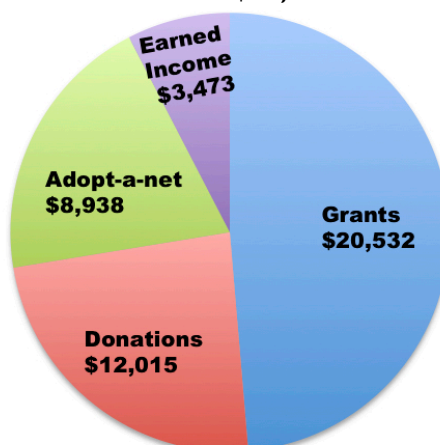
Tropic of Cancer and winter south of that latitude), and Fairbanks is close to the northern limit of their breeding range. There is growing evidence to suggest widespread population decline of aerial insectivores in North America, with particular concern for northern ecosystems and long distance migrants. Nesting swallows have been monitored at Creamer's Field since 1999, and continuing long-term studies like this can shed light on how and why populations might be declining amidst changing environmental conditions. In the years ahead we will continue to monitor local populations while collaborating to develop a network of researchers and citizen scientists monitoring *Tachycineta* species in Alaska.

This project was funded by the Skaggs Foundation, Melinda Gray Ardia Environmental Foundation, USFWS *Connecting People With Nature*, BP, Flint Hills Resources, and donations to the Alaska Songbird Institute. We are also grateful to: Julie Hagelin and Laurie Boeck, AK Dept. of Fish & Game; Becky Windsor and Dan Ardia, *Golondrinas de las Americas*; Audrey Taylor, University of AK; Steve Matsuoka, USFWS; and David Bradley, Bird Studies Canada & University of Guelph for their support.

Photos left to right: a male swallow wearing a geolocator. If retrieved in 2014 the tiny data logger will provide insight into the bird's migratory route and wintering grounds; the crew; 6-day old chicks. Growth rates were obtained via measurements at days 3, 6, & 10; building new nest boxes

2013 Financial Review

Income: \$44,958*



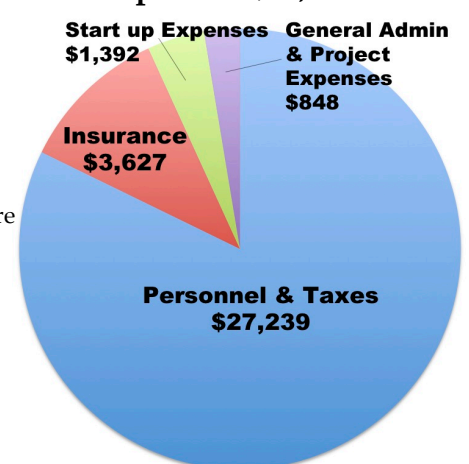
GRANTS: BP, Flint Hills Resources/Koch Industries; Skaggs Foundation; ConocoPhillips Alaska; Melinda Gray Ardia Environmental Foundation; University of Alaska; Arctic Audubon Society

ADOPT-A-NET SPONSORS: ABR, Inc. *in memory of Betty Anderson*; Alaska Feed Company; Dr. David Sonneborn; Design Alaska; Laurel Devaney & Ken Russell; Martha Hanlon Architects, Inc.; Nancy Kilgore & Curtis Thorgaard; North Pole Physical Therapy; Randy Meyers; Dr. Ron & Mary Teel; Rotary Club of Fairbanks; Ted Swem; Totem Ocean Trailer Express

DONATIONS: Received May 1-Nov 1, 2013

IN KIND SUPPORT: \$12,480: Includes office space, monitor, printers, propane, port-a-potty, geolocators, intern stipend, and field & office supplies.

Expenses: \$33,123*



* through Nov 1, 2013