



Creamer's Field

Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

1300 College Road,
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

"a place for wildlife and people"



Creamer's Field BirdWatch 2020

April 24- May15

This is the **53rd annual elementary school BirdWatch**. It may be the longest running annual conservation education program in Fairbanks- maybe in the state of Alaska. It started back in spring of '67 when the dairy was up for sale and the community rallied to save the fields from development. This program will look a bit different this year, but **the goal remains the same: to have students enjoy the splendor of spring migration.**

We adapted the format to serve students attending with a parent or a household. **We ask that all participants follow the health mandates and guidelines.** We have set up 3 separate stations that can be self-run by following the instructions listed in this packet. We ask students to sign up using the acuityscheduling link:
<https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=19428068>

When you arrive at Creamer's Field...

...and before you start in on the BirdWatch activities in this packet, be sure to take a few minutes or more to relax and look around; take in the sights and sounds of the migration scene. Look all through the fields, and in the air; get a perspective of the place and the wildlife. Then after a few minutes have fun with your activities.

***Please Note: All ages are welcome to attend the BirdWatch program, but the activities are designed primarily for 3rd grade and older.**



BirdWatch Themes:

Our stations deal with primarily with bird **identification and observation skills**. The goal is that students will appreciate and enjoy wildlife while learning. Some facts that the students pick up at BirdWatch may be forgotten, but the main themes, the skills, sights and sounds associated with the experience is what they will remember.

- Birds **migrate** to areas where they can reproduce successfully find adequate food, shelter, and protection from predators.
- Good **habitat** is important for the birds in their summer and winter ranges but is especially critical along the migration routes.
- **Refuges**, such as Creamer's Field, provide and protect this habitat.

Recommended Materials:

- Students should first review and color the **Spring Guide to Birds** (PDF attached). The PDF can be printed double-sided (8.5x11) and folded into a booklet or pick-up a Spring Guide in the farmhouse entryway.
- We encourage students to bring binoculars if they have access to them. We realize that not every student will be able to bring their own pair; we've tried to adapt these activities so they can be done regardless.
- Field guides are useful too but not required.
- Worksheets are available in this packet.
- Writing and drawing tools
- Clipboard

General Format:

The program consists of **three stations** located around Creamer's Field

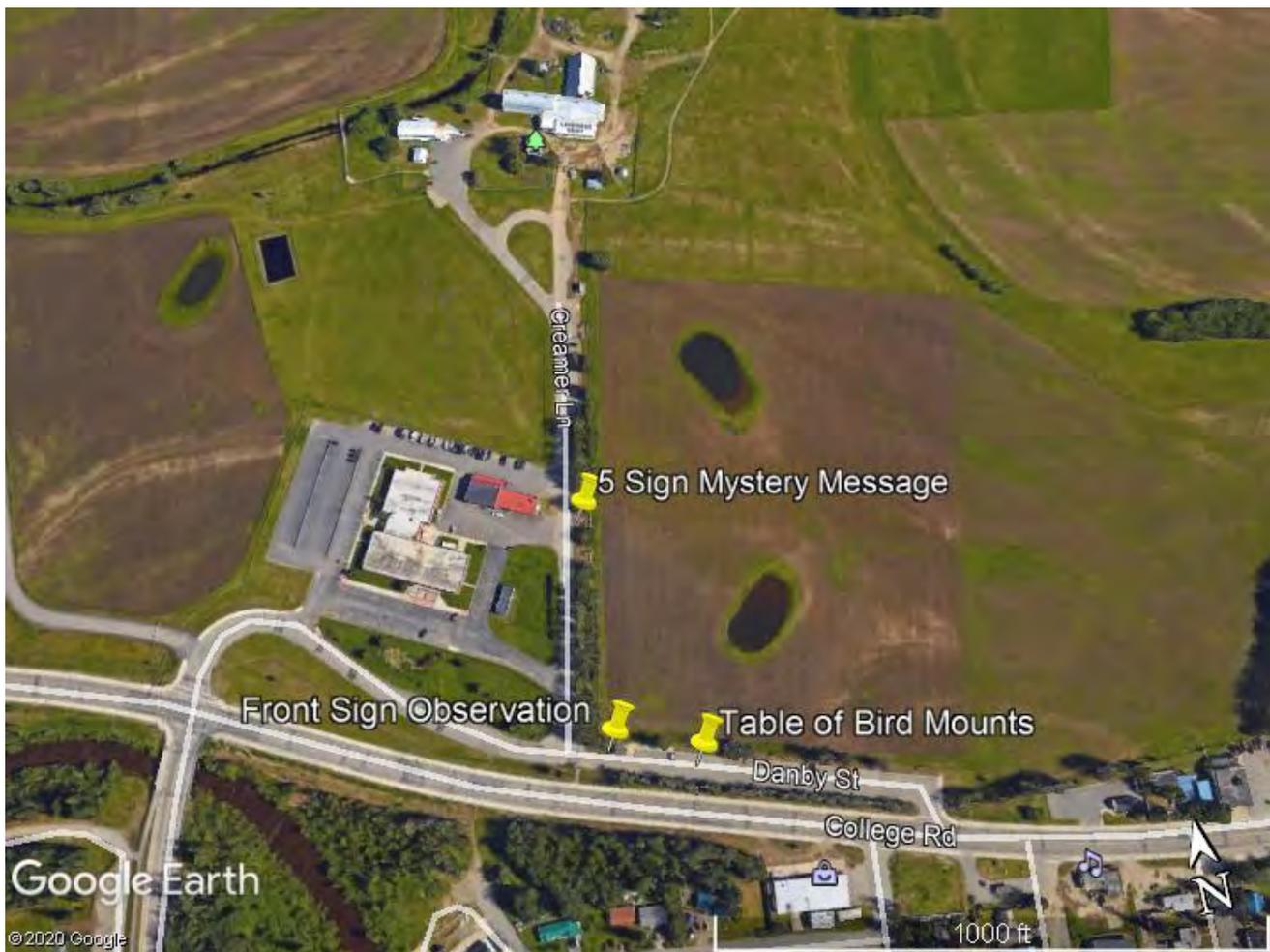
The activities are described in this packet:

- **Front Sign Observation**-----page 5 - 7
- **Find the Mystery Message**-----page 3
- **Table of Bird Mounts**-----page 4

Extra activity---BirdWatch Bingo----page 8



Map of station locations:



Questions?

Call Mark D. Ross, ADFG, BirdWatch coordinator
at 459-7301

Find the MYSTERY MESSAGE (see the map of stations to find start location).

*out in the fields to the west are 6 words. To understand the message, find the six words and arrange them into a complete sentence. Please **keep OFF the road** when searching for the message.*

- 1.) Scan the area with your eyes and locate the words. The words are on signs.
- 2.) Use your binoculars to read the signs. Some signs will be close and some far, so focus the binoculars* to read.
- 3.) After you have found all six words, arrange them into a complete sentence and you've solved the mystery message.

*To do this activity **without** binoculars simply find the signs just using your eyes. You may need to move around a bit to find all of them.

Here are some tips for using binoculars correctly (ask a grownup for help):

- 1.) Adjust the width of the eyepieces to fit your eyes to get a single circular image.
- 2.) Hold binoculars steady by holding them firmly with both hands and with elbows comfortably near their bodies.
- 3.) Turn the focus knob with a finger to bring things that are far or near into clear focus.



If you find something and want to see it through binoculars:

Spot it with your eyes, then (while keeping your eye on it) bring the binoculars up to your eyes. It is harder to search for something with the binoculars- it's much better to find it with your eyes first, then use the binoculars.

Record the 6 mystery words here.

Arrange them into a complete sentence to decipher the message.

TABLE OF BIRD MOUNTS

Visit the table of bird mounts to get an up close look at some of our migratory bird species.



- 1.) Take a look at the table of bird mount. Looking with just your eyes, try identifying a few and comparing them to the birds out in the fields.
- 2.) This is a good time to take out your Guide to Spring Birds at Creamer's Field and see if you can identify some of the bird on the table.
- 3.) Study the different physical adaptations of the birds (size, shape, color, diving, dabbling, etc.).



Please do view the items closely, but please do not touch the mounts and items and please practice good hygiene and personal spacing.

FRONT SIGN OBSERVATION with two worksheets

By reading and studying the front signs at Creamer's Field You can learn more about conservation and the wildlife at Creamer's Field.

Let the signs guide you in discovery of the answers to the **two worksheets**:

Worksheet 1.) Sign Study- page 6

Worksheet 2.) The bird missing from the big sign- page 7

Procedure:

- 1.) Find the arrays of signs in the front parking lot area.
They are in groups of three, with three others by the front log bus stop.
- 2.) Read your worksheet questions and visit the signs to find your answers.

North America's LARGEST waterfowl. When these signs were painted, seeing a Trumpeter Swan here was very rare. Their populations declined dramatically in 1900's, where there were only about 70 swans left in the wild. Efforts to limit hunting and protect swan habitat have brought their numbers back up. In 2016, 150 swans were counted here at one time.

Worksheet 1.) Study the Signs

Read the signs to learn more about Creamer's Field and answer the following questions:

See if you can answer the following questions by reading the interpretive signs around the refuge:

1.) By looking at the painting and other drawings, list or draw some characteristics of waterfowl (ducks, geese, and swans) that you notice.

2.) Search the signs and the fields for the 3 species of geese that can be spotted at Creamer's field. Can you name the 3 species?

3.) Why do ducks, geese, and cranes like to feed in open areas?

4.) Who farms and manages the field today?

5.) Which songbird is the first to arrive during spring migration?

6.) Birds fly north driven by the urge to _____.

7.) What is the name of the duck with the long tail?

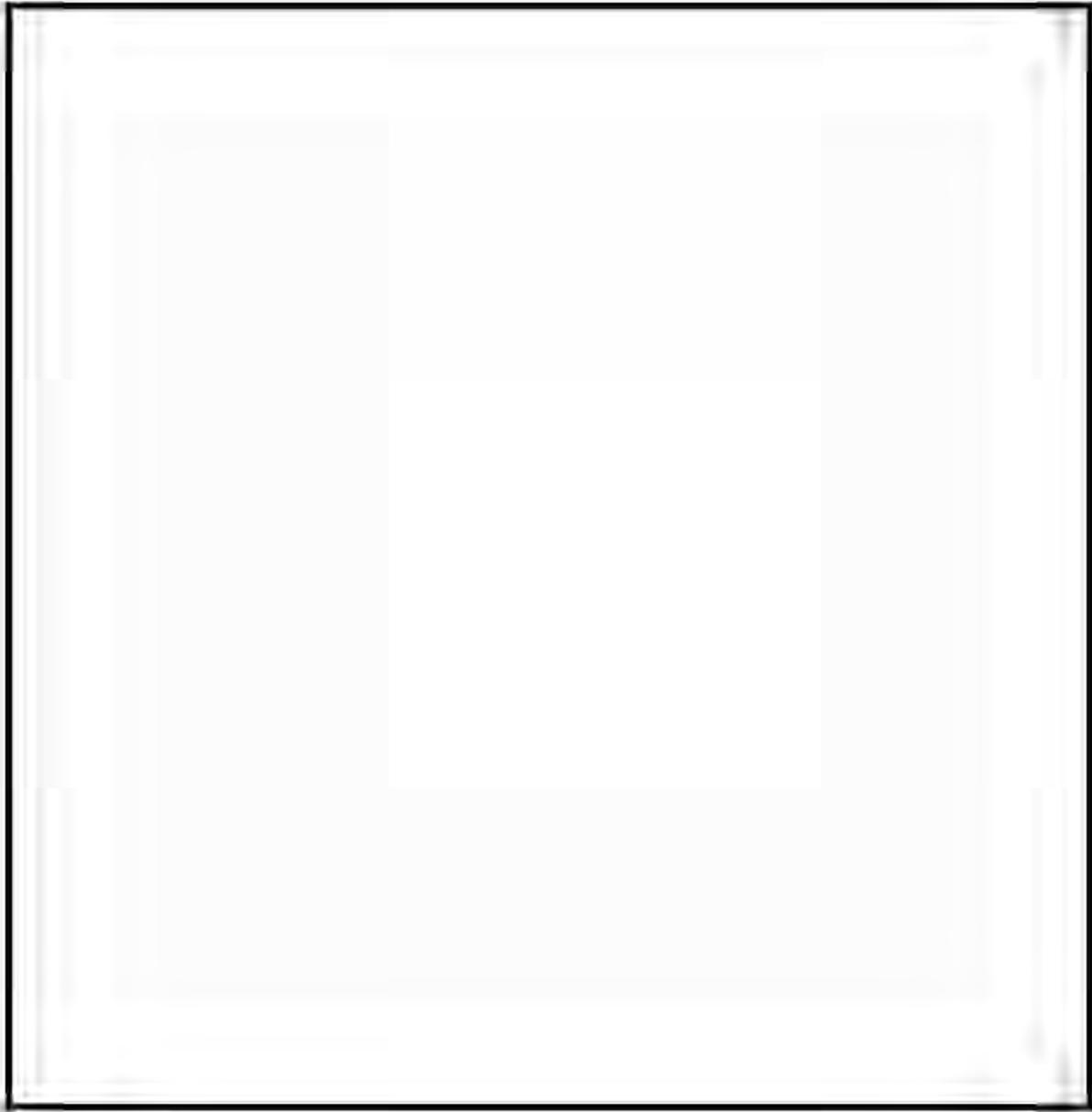
8.) What is the name of the tall grey bird with the red head?

Worksheet 2.) Which bird is missing from the Big Panels?

A conservation success story

By the log bus stop, Find the two **Big color Display** panels with the birds most likely to be seen at Creamer's Field. These pictures were painted 50 years ago. Which bird is missing from the paintings?

Try sketching/drawing the missing bird here:



Search the fields and see how many you can count. Remember, don't confuse the with the Snow geese. Look at the signs to see some of the differences.

If you need a clue, see page 5

BirdWatch Bingo

Fill out your bingo sheet by searching the fields and skies for birds and bird habitat.

A Bird Flying Overhead	Free Space for Habitat	A Canada Goose	A Bird Standing on One Leg	Open Water
A Duck	Grain on the Fields	A Bird Resting or Sleeping	Snow on the Ground	A Bird That's Alert
A Bird Singing	A Bird with Orange Feet	Free Space for Creamer's Field	A Bird Walking	A Bird Feeding
A Sandhill Crane	A Bird preening (cleaning its feathers)	A Bird You Can Hear but Can't See	A Swan	A Bird Landing in the Water
A Bird Landing on the Fields	A Group of Birds or a Flock	A Bird With a Green Head	Free Space for Wildlife	A Bird Calling on the Fields

Time your **Bingo** attempts-
How long did it take to make **Bingo**?