Introduction to Alaska’s Birds
BIOL F195 (1 Credit, P/F)
May 2015

May 12, 13, 14, 15: 6:00-9:00 PM  Irving 103—this location needs updating
May 16: 08:30-12:30  Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge

Sue Guers  
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Recommended Field Guide:  

Recommended Bird Song CD:  

Recommended Website:  
Cornell Lab of Ornithology, All About Birds, www.allaboutbirds.org

A high-quality pair of binoculars or a spotting scope would be useful but are not required.

Course Description:  
This course is an introduction to identifying and appreciating Alaska’s avifauna. It includes lectures and field trips to become familiar with birds common to interior Alaska. We will discuss natural history, migration and overwintering strategies, behavior, and avian conservation.

For the field trip to Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge on Saturday, students should be able to walk up to 2 miles on uneven ground and have their own transportation.

ADA Compliance: I will work with Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

Course Goals and Student Outcomes:  
The goal of the course is to give students the basic tools to identify birds. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Pick out features of birds that will help identify them to their family groups or species.
- Use of a field guide
- Listen for bird song
- Focus a spotting scope or pair of binoculars
- Understand the aspects of a species’ life history that makes it unique

Course Schedule:  
Lecture (12 May): The Basics of Birds and Bird Indentification  
Lab: Passerines

Lecture (13 May): Avian Migration  
Lab: Waterfowl and Passerines

Lecture (14 May): Overwintering Ecology  
Lab: Shorebirds and raptors

Lecture (15 May): Bird Conservation  
Lab: Shorebirds and raptors

Field Trip (16 May): Students will visit several local habitats (forests, fields, wetlands, and ponds) to identify a wide variety of species in the field.

Grading Policy: To receive a passing grade, attendance is mandatory for all lectures and for the field trip.