31st Alaska Shorebird Group Annual Meeting (Hybrid)

February 23rd, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Attendance

In-Person: Amy Gambrill (Road to Recovery), Amy Pocewicz (USFWS), Arin Underwood (ADF&G), Callie Gesmundo (USFWS), Carly Eakin (USFWS), Courtland Brown (LEYE working group), Dan Ruthrauff (USGS), David Mizrahi (NJ Audubon), Donna Dewhurst (USFWS – retired), Erin Cooper (USFS), Jeff Wagner (ADF&G), Julie Hagelin (ADF&G), Katie Christie (ADF&G), Kelly Srigley Werner (LEYE Working Group), Kyle Shaney (UT San Antonio), Laura McDuffie (USGS), Lauren Cusimano (Audubon), Lee Tibbitts (USGS), Lilliana Naves (Audubon Alaksa), Lindsey Nietmann (ADF&G), Maureen de Zeeuw (BOEM), Megan Milligan (UAF/AKCFWRU), Patrick Donnely (Ducks Unlimited), Rachel Gingras (ADF&G), Rachel Richardson (USGS), Rick Lanctot (USFWS), Sadie Ulman (USFWS), Sam Wolfe (Manomet), Sarah Saalfeld (USFWS), Zoey Chapman (Manomet).

Online: Amal Ajmi (USFWS), Andres Rosales (University of Saskatchewan), Bob Gill (USGS – retired), Christiana Teye (University of Maine), Colleen Handel (USGS), Erik Osnas (USFWS), Feipeng Huang (University of Massachusetts Amherst), George Matz (Kachemak Bay Birders), Gwen Baluss (USFS), Hannah Vincelette (USFWS), Hunter Wells (Iowa State University) Ingrid Harrald (UAF), Jaime Welfelt (USFWS), Jenell Larsen Tempel (ADF&G), Jim Johnson (USFWS), Kayla Shively (WCS), Kristin DeGroot, Kristine Sowl (USFWS), Kristy Gurney (Environment and Climate Change Canada), Kyle Cutting (NPS), Kylee Dunham (Cornell), Lauren Attanas (ABR), Marcy Melville (Friends of AK National Wildlife Refuges), Mogan Ziegenhorn (Manomet), Rachel Richardson (USGS), Rebecca McGuire (ABR), River Gates (National Audubon), Rozy Bathrick (University of Massachusetts Amherst), Sam Simon (UAF), Sarah Hoepfner (WCS), Scot Flemming (Environment and Climate Change Canada), Shelby McCahon (University of Idaho), Stan Senner (Audubon - retired), Steve Lewis (USFWS), Vijay Patil (USGS).

9:00 – 9:10 Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements (*Arin Underwood)*

9:10 – 9:30 Shiloh Schulte Remembrance (*Rick Lanctot, Sam Wolfe*)

- Check out Shiloh A. Schulte, PhD Memorial to learn more about his contributions to the shorebird world and share any tributes or memories you may have.

9:30 – 10:15 Shorebird Activities of Interest Updates

- **Road to Recovery Opportunities (*Amy Gambrill*)**
    - The Road to Recovery (R2R) is an independently funded initiative with a broad network of partners focused on conservation for tipping point species (i.e., 112 species that have lost >50% of their populations), including 20 species that breed in Alaska.
    - Presentation highlighted Alaska shorebird working groups, shared examples of Recovery Wheels in action, and described how R2R's team (including social scientists, species

recovery specialists, and international partnerships), tools, meetings (including monthly webinars, engagement sessions, consultations, regiareeetings, and NCTC workshops), and funding pathways (grants will be available annually from 2026-2028 for working groups at 3 different tiers depending on where they are in the process) can help advance Alaska shorebird recovery.
    - For more information visit: r2rbirds.org
- **Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative (*River Gates*)**
    - The Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative is a collaborative effort intended to coordinate conservation at the scale used by migratory shorebirds.
    - The initiative's priorities are shorebird conservation along the Pacific Flyway via supporting partners and projects, building partnerships, education, and workshops.
    - 2025 updates:
        - With the loss of USFWS/USAID funding, many shorebird programs and projects focused on conservation in Latin America have been cancelled ($9 M).
        - Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative Story Map has been updated to include additional projects providing an overview of the partnerships and showcasing accomplishments. These projects are couched into seven strategies (cultivate and empower conservation constituencies, manage and conserve existing habitats, create conservation initiatives with natural resource industries, strengthen compliance and enforcement, develop environmental and wildlife protection policies, improve knowledge of present and future habitats, and increase partner and stakeholder capacity). Updated story map can be found here: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/29d46002ee574d5b9ccd4ea46589abfd
        - Provided a couple of examples of shorebird capture and training sessions in Colombia, Chile, and Argentina.
- **Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group (*River Gates*)**
    - The next Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group meeting will be held in La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico – November 9-13, 2026
        - The meeting will include a science program, workshops, side meetings, travel awards, NABC training, and lifetime and student achievement awards
- **East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership's Shorebird Working Group (*Rick Lanctot*)**
    - There are many people across the world participating in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership, with David Li as the chair.
    - Current activities of the Shorebird working group include development of a color marking protocol, EAAF sister site exchange program, Dunlin tracking effort, Bar-tailed Godwit outreach, Nordmann's Greenshank task force, webinars, small grant program ($5000), outreach, and development of a 2026-2030 work plan.
- **Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival *(Erin Cooper*)**
    - Focuses on regenerative tourism, an approach that aims to leave destinations better than they were found, focusing on restoring ecosystems and empowering local communities.

    - The festival involves local and international speakers, art workshops, birding ID classes, an art show, school classes, and visiting groups.
    - This year they also celebrated the 35th anniversary of the WHSRN dedication.
    - Cultural exchange program in which Cordova indigenous community hosted members from Molokai community. They were very excited to see kolea in Alaska.
    - International speaker resighted a Hudsonian Godwit in Cordova that they had banded in Chile – perfect tie into the theme of connectivity!
- **Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (*Erin Cooper*)**
    - CRIMBI is an ecotourism group that meets around the shorebird festival with the initiative of conservation, increasing knowledge base, partnerships, education, and funding. However, support for Latin America has become increasingly difficult.
    - CRIMBI will hold a virtual meeting in April 2026 for check-ins and updates.
- **Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival (*Marcy Melville*)**
    - The Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival will be held May 6-10, 2026 in Homer, Alaska.
    - Based on previous years they are expecting around 130+ species, 200 events, 900 attendees, and $50,000 to local businesses.
    - Events in 2026 include an art project, movie night, trivia night, bird calling contest, keynote speakers, birder's coffee, learning activities, arts and entertainment, field trips, and a junior and teen birder's program.
- **Expanding Manomet's International Shorebird Survey in Alaska (*Dan Ruthrauff*)**
    - Manomet's International Shorebird Survey (ISS) is a 50+ year program focused on long-term standardized surveys of shorebirds at stopover sites.
    - Currently, only 1 site in Alaska participates (Kachemak Bay).
    - ISS surveys have been instrumental in demonstrating declines of shorebirds in recent papers such as those by Rosenberg et al. 2019 and Paul Smith et al. 2023.
    - Participating in ISS surveys is simple: anyone can participate, requires 3 visits to a stopover site per year to count shorebirds using standardized protocols.
    - If interested in participating reach out to Lisa Schibley (lschibley@manomet.org).

10:15-10:35 Shorebird Outreach Updates

- **Shorebirds for Today and Tomorrow: Culture- and Place-Based Learning at Yup'ik Schools and Communities (*Liliana Naves*)**
    - Shorebirds for today and tomorrow is a learning and conservation outreach program centered on shorebirds and the Yup'ik culture and language.
    - The program includes a classroom kit, which is offered to local educators and distributed upon request, as well as in-person activities in local schools and communities.
    - In 2022-2025, the program distributed 155 classroom kits, reaching 35 communities and about 5,200 students.
- **3 Billion Birds Committee (*Callie Gesmundo*)**
    - 3 Billion Birds Committee is a group of biologists creating a campaign to help birds in Alaska.

    - There are currently 6 categories (make your space safe for birds; prevent collisions; keep birds safe from domestic pets and invasive species; hunt, fish, and recreate responsibly; consumer choices; citizen science for birds) around which messages are being built.
    - Future work:
        - Hope to build out how these messages can be communicated to different audiences.
        - Once the Alaska bird decline paper is released, hope to have an Alaska-coordinated campaign like the 3 Billion Birds campaign.
- **Alaska Bird Signs (*Callie Gesmundo*)**
    - This effort is to place interpretive signs strategically around the state in the hopes to inform the public about the importance of shorebirds and habitats they rely upon.
    - Future signs in the works include three at Eareckson Air Station on Shemya Island, one at Utqiagvik, and one at Cheney Lake.
- **Anchorage Bike to Work Day (*Callie Gesmundo*)**
    - For the past three years, USGS and USFWS have teamed up to host a bird-themed treat station for the Alaska Bike to Work Day.
    - Information at the station has been focused around a variety of bird-related outreach efforts including loons, line, and lead; reducing collisions; bird friendly coffee; and increased interest in birding (eBird/Merlin).
    - "Treats" have included samples of bird friendly coffee, coloring pages, bike handle birds, etc.
    - This year the station will be moved to West Chester Lagoon so visitors will also be able to have the opportunity to observe birds while they are stopped at the station.
- **World Migratory Bird Day (*Callie Gesmundo*)**
    - Migratory Bird Day will be celebrated on May 9 this year. Like in the past, we will be hosting "little sits" along the Coastal Refuge where the public can stop by and observe birds.
- **Audubon Birding Trails (*Lauren Cusimano*)**
    - This presentation highlighted Audubon Alaska's birding trails and festivals as tools for conservation, education, and sustainable economic development across the state.
    - The Anchorage Birding Trail will be launched in the Spring of 2026. It will be on a digital, web-based, interactive platform and include 35 sites across the Anchorage Bowl divided among three habitat types: coastal, freshwater forest, and alpine.
    - Have also developed the Utqiagvik birding trail in coordination with the birding festival.
    - Future work: bring the Utqiagvik Birding Trail online, makeover the virtual Southeast Alaska Birding Trail for a more streamlined experience, and as part of the Audubon-wide website update, all trails will be found on a new, online hub.
    - The hope is to situate birding trails within Alaska's growing bird tourism economy.
- **Alaska festival coordination (Lauren Cusimano)**
    - This presentation outlined recent efforts to strengthen bird festivals—especially in rural communities—through coordinated support, partnerships, and long-term investment.
    - Recently, Audubon was able to organize a meeting to get festival organizers together to discuss challenges and create recommendations to support birding festivals especially in rural or remote areas (e.g., reduce travel barriers).

10:50-11:50 Research Presentations

- **Red Knot abundance and diet at an important Alaskan stopover: Controller Bay (*Jenell Larsen Tempel)***
    - Surveys for Red Knots in Controller Bay were conducted during May 2022, 2023, and 2024.
    - They were unable to estimate spring stopover abundance in 2022, but estimates were approximately ~8,928 knots (95% CrI:4,937-16,833) and ~16,588 knots (95% CrI:12,398-22,777) respectively in 2023 and 2024.
- **Environmental DNA Application to the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) *(Christiana Teye*)**
    - The environmental DNA recovered from Red Knot fecal samples in Controller Bay revealed key prey taxa, demonstrating the usefulness of the eDNA approach for studying shorebirds' diets at stopover sites.
    - Red Knot diet was more diverse than previously indicated, suggesting we may need to rethink shorebird diets.
    - Question: can you determine abundance of food items in diet using this technique? Answer: no, the information we have from eDNA only gives us presence/absence, not abundance.
- **Lesser Yellowlegs with a greater impact: identifying stopover habitats for conservation within the Prairie Pothole Region (*Hannah Vincelette*)**
    - Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) is an Alaska-breeding, long-distance migrant experiencing population declines.
    - Nearly half of the population passes through the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR), an extensive wetland complex that serves as an important stopover area.
    - This study will use GPS telemetry (i.e., locations from 115 tracking devices) and citizen science data (i.e., eBird) to identify habitat selection patterns in the PPR using multi-grain resource selection functions.
    - Resource selection functions will be compared between the two data collection methods (i.e., GPS and eBird).
    - Results will be used to inform targeted wetland conservation strategies to support Lesser Yellowlegs recovery.
- **What's up with Uplands in Alaska? Understanding breeding population structure and potential threats (*Kirsty Gurney*)**
    - The grassland-dependent Upland Sandpiper is a species of conservation concern, threatened by habitat loss, agrochemical exposure, and the cumulative effects of disturbance throughout migration.
    - However, limited knowledge of migratory connectivity, genetic structure, and variability in risk constrains targeted conservation efforts for this species.
    - This study investigated movement patterns of 121 tagged birds breeding in Alaska and Canada.
    - Results indicated that birds breeding in Alaska and western Canada utilized similar wintering areas but were distinct from wintering areas from birds breeding in eastern Canada. Suggesting migratory connectivity between these two populations.
    - Genetic analyses also showed a similar gradient from west to east, with possible isolation between populations.

    - When investigating exposure to chemicals among populations, it was found that all individuals had at least one chemical detected with the most detections from fungicides and insecticides.
    - Regional differences were found in exposure rates to fungicides, with higher detection rates in the western population. No regional differences were found, however, in insecticide exposure, although differences in years were detected.
    - Question: why do you suspect you saw a year effect in insecticide rates? Answer: the differences were likely related to differences in when birds were caught each year. In one year, birds were caught while incubating, while in the next year birds were caught while attending broods. Therefore, we suspect the differences in insecticide values were due to the time since exposure to chemicals with incubating birds likely to have higher concentrations than brooding birds as brooding birds had more time to metabolize chemicals they were exposed to during migration.
- **Environmental Responsiveness of Hudsonian Godwit Chicks (*Feipeng Huang*)**
    - This presentation discussed the growth, movement, and survival of Hudsonian Godwit chicks in Beluga, Alaska in relation to their ability to respond to environmental variation during the short sub-Arctic summers.
    - Objectives were to determine if chick movements varied based on sex, age, or weather.
    - It was found that there were few sex differences in growth or survival rates, although females did show higher growth rates. On average, peak growth occurred after peak invertebrate abundance.
    - Will now investigate how predation risk influences movement patterns.
    - Question: did you see a difference in survival between years associated with a phenological mismatch? Answer: yes, it did appear that survival declined in years with greater phenological mismatch.
- **Direct and indirect effects of agriculture and drought on shorebird refueling in the Prairie Pothole Region (*Shelby McCahon*)**
    - This presentation discussed agricultural practices and drought in relation to direct and indirect effects on shorebird refueling, fat levels, and prey availability during spring and fall migration in the Prairie Pothole Region
    - Neonicotinoids are a seed treatment that can cause chemical runoff from agricultural fields into wetlands.
    - While neonicotinoids are rapidly metabolized they suppress shorebird appetites and kill invertebrates lowering food availability.
    - Neonicotinoids were detected in 50% of water samples, 1/3 of shorebird samples, and in 50% invertebrate samples.
    - Surrounding cropland cover around wetlands was directly associated with reductions in macroinvertebrate biomass, shorebird fattening, and shorebird uric acid levels.
    - Shorebirds captured during drought conditions had lower fat levels and fewer neonicotinoid detections in their plasma.
- **Update on EAAFP Sister Site Exchange Activities: A Visit to Higashiyoka-Higata (*Kayla Shively*)**
    - Since it was formalized in 2023, the sister sites of Qupaluk, Alaska and Higashiyoka-Higata, Japan have been working on mainly planning of shared goals between the sites such as ways to improve knowledge and education about Dunlin.

- In 2025, a visit to the Higashiyoka-Higata site was arranged to commemorate the site and the creation of a new visitor center.
- Highlights of the trip included presentation by local drumming group, Ramsar kids club, tidal flats menu, traditional art activities, in person meetings, tagging of Dunlin to determine movements between Japan and Alaska, and seeing how well site managers are connecting people to the wetlands.
- Future work will include additional in person meetings, supporting more Dunlin tagging efforts, artist exchange, and continuing to connect students and graduate students in exchange opportunities.

11:50-12:10 Leveraging eBird to supplement and extend structured monitoring programs (*Kylee Dunham*)

- This presentation reviewed some of the ongoing work between Cornell and AK FWS comparing trends from eBird and BBS and discuss opportunities to leverage eBird data and data products (Status and Trends) to improve monitoring and inform decision-making.
- In general, there were broad scale concordance of significant trends between eBird and BBS at the BCR scale but uncertainty exists in both surveys. Alignment is better in data dense regions and some species were better aligned than others. In Alaska, only 9 species had detectable trends and of those, 2 had conflicting trends between eBird and BBS.
- As there are many areas in Alaska that are data poor, sampling can be guided by a statewide data coverage tool. This tool will identify priority locations for additional sampling through eBird and will map areas of low and high data coverage.
- Next steps include formalizing long-term partnership with USFWS and other agencies, completing trends estimates using ALMS data, customizing the data coverage tool, and meeting with regional partners to identify information needs.
- Another data product that was discussed was bird concentration areas. These areas can highlight most important sites for groups of birds (e.g., shorebirds) throughout the annual cycle and identify important bird areas on a local scale.
- Queston: Do eBird status and trends methods in coastal areas consider tidal stages? Answer: tidal stage has been included in the past, but data layer is no longer being updated so has been removed from the models. Currently, there are various moon variables included in the model that may help to explain some of the tide information.

1:45-1:50 Election of Officers

- **The following positions are open for nomination and election:**
  - Executive Committee Members – 3 positions (currently filled by Kayla Shively, Sam Simon, Shiloh Schulte)
    - Lauren Cusimano was nominated, accepted.
    - Dan Ruthrauff was nominated, accepted.
    - Rebecca McGuire was nominated, accepted.

1:50-1:55 Annual Summary (*Sarah Saalfeld*)

- **Shiloh Schulte Photo contest results**
    - In the field: Sam Simon, Surfbird in hand
    - Wildlife: Arin Underwood, Lesser Yellowlegs at the Coastal Wildlife Refuge
- **Synopsis of annual project/initiative summaries**
    - 19 projects / initiatives, 11 recent publications, 1 unpublished report, 1 news article, and 3 data releases

1:55-3:20 Research Presentations (Continued)

- **Evidence of egg size variation in Utqiagvik shorebirds (*Hunter Wells*)**
    - Objectives of this study are to determine if shorebird egg size is changing over time, if shorebird species affects egg size, and what environmental variables (i.e., seasonality, temperature, snow melt) affect egg size.
    - Species under consideration include Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Red Phalarope.
    - Preliminary results suggest species vary in their response to environmental conditions with some species exhibiting a decline in egg size over time and with timing of snow melt.
- **Multi-species fall migration tracking project (*Rozy Bathrick*)**
    - This presentation looked at migration patterns of the Lesser Yellowlegs through the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR).
    - In general, it was found that 75% of all tracked Lesser Yellowlegs used the PPR, with individuals breeding farther north departing earlier than individuals breeding farther south (although the number of stopover sites used did not differ). Furthermore, individuals traveling from breeding areas farther to the northeast and northwest had greater detour values than those from central breeding areas.
    - Within the PPR, individuals that arrived later tended to stay longer and make more stops within the region. Furthermore, where they bred influenced what areas of the PPR they utilized.
    - Conservation implications: shortened hydroperiods will likely impact later migrants most negatively. However, potholes can be restored and Lesser Yellowlegs are flexible potentially providing some hope for the species.
    - Upcoming work will use post-breeding tracks of shorebirds breeding in Alaska to determine Alaska flyways. Contact Rozy if you have any tracking data you are willing to share for this effort.
- **Surfbird Habitat Use in Interior Alaska (*Sam Simon*)**
    - The objectives of this project are to create a resource selection function for breeding Surfbirds in the Steese National Conservation Area (NCA), create a detailed distribution map for Surfbirds in Alaska, and contribute data to range wide connectivity study.
    - Preliminary results suggest that Surfbirds are selecting breeding areas in Steese NCA that are high in elevation with dryas and lichen cover and avoiding areas with dwarf shrubs with greater slope.
    - Habitat selection results were then used to create a predictive surface of Surfbird nesting habitat within the Steese NCA that can help inform BLM management plans.
    - Future work will focus on creating a statewide distribution map.

- Question: do Surfbirds also nest on shelfs that are at lower elevations than the mountain peak? Answer: yes, we did find this as well.
- Question: are you planning on looking at encroachment of woody vegetation at higher elevations and how this might impact Surfbird habitat? Answer: while this is not in the scope of the work planning to be completed for his Master's degree, it could definitely be incorporated into future work to look at potential habitat changes on Surfbird distributions.
- Question: did you look at whether elevation was correlated with vegetation types? Answer: yes, some habitat types were highly correlated with elevation and when this was the case, they were removed from the model.

- **Ecology and connectivity of migrating Surfbirds (*Scott Flemming*)**
  - The objectives of this work are to determine migratory connectivity and variation in movements of different breeding and non-breeding populations and identify key stopover sites.
  - Surfbirds have one of the longest and narrowest nonbreeding distributions of shorebirds in the world yet a very limited breeding range. Why do birds migrate different distances?
  - Over 40 Surfbirds were tagged and analyzed movement data using state-space and hidden Markov models.
  - Preliminary results suggest that breeding locations are not tied to wintering areas. Although breeding (88%) and nonbreeding (100%) site-fidelity was high.
  - Stopover sites during prebreeding tended to be shorter and more spread out, while during postbreeding, stopover sites were fewer and larger with 3 main important sites identified: Prince William Sound, Glacier Bay to Juneau, and Bella Bella, British Columbia, with individuals spending up to 3-4 months in these postbreeding areas.
  - Next steps are to determine sex or age differences and repeatability in migration routes.
  - Question: do you think there is difference in timing of molting for those stopping at post-breeding sites and those that did not? Answer: it is likely that molting is occurring during those long postbreeding stopovers. Future work could use stable isotopes to pinpoint location of molt.
- **Comparing migratory bird surveys on the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area: 2006-2008 versus 2023-2024 (*Rick Lanctot*)**
  - Teshekpuk Lake Special Area (TLSA) was originally designated for geese and caribou but is also important for shorebirds.
  - The objective of this study is to estimate contemporary abundance of breeding shorebirds in this region and assess changes in populations since the previous surveys in 2006-2008.
  - In 2023 and 2024, 171 plots were surveyed for shorebirds and other birds using PRISM (Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring) surveys.
  - Results from this study indicated that the TLSA has very high densities of shorebirds. Compared to past studies, some species appear to be more abundant while others were fewer. These results differ from past studies in areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that showed declines in nearly all species, potentially due to differences in habitat quality between the two areas.

    - Next steps are to refine population estimates and finalize trends, identify important areas within TLSA, evaluate waterfowl data, inform development processes, contribute to North America shorebird population estimates, put our trend data into perspective with other studies, and identify species in need of conservation.
    - Question: have habitat changes occurred within this region that may have improved the quality for shorebirds in the region? Answer: we can't discount it, differences in population trends we are seeing could be habitat driven or could be the result of behavioral strategies for some species (e.g., opportunistic species). However, we do know about some habitat changes such as increased grazing by geese and shrub encroachment that are having deleterious impacts on shorebird habitat in this region.
- **Estimating shorebird abundance on Alaska's North Slope using passive acoustic monitoring (*Morgan Ziegenhorn*)**
    - The utility of passive acoustic monitoring (PAM) for Arctic PRISM surveys hinges on the ability to estimate shorebird abundance using PAM data.
    - To determine the effectiveness of PAM for determining shorebird abundance, autonomous recording units (ARUs) were placed on plots simultaneously surveyed using PRISM (Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring) methods.
    - A novel approach was then used to determine PAM density estimation that used a modified version of traditional distance sampling to estimate abundance from PAM and deep learning outputs.
    - Equations, however, required several inputs that had to be determined independently including detectability from ARU recorders (i.e., measurement of how far away you can hear birds) and cue rate (i.e., how often an individual bird vocalizes).
    - Detectability was determined by independent trials in which vocalizations were played at varying distances from recorders. Confidence scores were then estimated based on varying distances.
    - Cue Rate was determined by following individual birds around and counting how often birds called within a specific time window.
    - Preliminary results indicated that abundance estimates were similar between traditional PRISM surveys and PAM surveys for the species considered, suggesting that PAM methods can successfully estimate breeding shorebird density.
    - Next steps are to improve the detectability models, collect additional data on cue rates, and expand estimates to additional shorebirds and other species.
    - Question: how much does interspecific variation in home range play into density estimates? Answer: while we haven't dealt with this in detail yet, it is possible that we could be detecting birds with the ARUs that are actually nesting off plot.
- **Trends in boreal wetland birds and the value of citizen science in southcentral Alaska (*Arin Underwood*)**
    - The Birds 'n' Bogs program is a citizen science initiative in Alaska aimed at monitoring boreal birds in wetlands. Recent improvements include the use of eBird to document counts and record survey times.
    - The objectives of study was to use the Birds 'n' Bogs data to estimate Lesser Yellowlegs abundance trends, determine what influences bird abundance, and determine best practices for small citizen science programs.

- It was found that the detection rate of Lesser Yellowlegs was generally high and comparable across volunteer skill levels, although detection rates did increase with survey time.
- It was also found that there was a 90% chance that Lesser Yellowlegs abundance decreased from 2014-2025.
- From the social science aspect of this project, it was found that the project provided motivation for volunteers to use eBird, volunteers liked having a specific reason for birding, and volunteering gave them a sense of being a part of the local community.
- Next steps are to look at alternative explanations of Lesser Yellowlegs declines, determine abundance trends for other species, conduct further surveys for volunteers, and complete the 2026 field season.
- Question: how do you deal with new volunteers each year? Answer: we don't want to grow the number of volunteers too much because there are only a finite number of wetlands to survey. Typically, we just replace volunteers when needed.

3:35-3:50 The Alaska Bird Conference

- **Details and committees of the 2026/7 ABC *(John Pearce*)**
  - Planning for the 21st Alaska bird conference has begun. It is likely to be held in Anchorage, Alaska on December 7-10, 2026. Final dates and meeting location will be announced in March (save the date) along with an updated version of the website: alaskabirdconference.org
  - The conference is a chance to bring together folks working on Alaskan birds, provide an opportunity to engage students and establish partnerships.
  - Potential theme for this year's meeting is **The Next Steps**
  - Plan to have 2-3 days of oral and poster presentations that focus on discussion of the next steps for avian research, monitoring, and bird conservation in Alaska. Also include likely one or two evening events for networking such as a storytelling event and awards banquet.
  - Looking for volunteers so please reach out to John if you are willing to help out!
  - Suggestion: with increased rules about travel it would be helpful if we could provide ways to allow people to get here using agency money (e.g., training, no registration fee)
  - Suggestion: in regards to the theme of next steps, it is often hard to know what the future will bring, perhaps think of it as more of future alternatives
  - Suggestion: if not charging registration fees, then perhaps we try to increase funding through sponsorship that could cover the costs of the meeting.
  - Suggestion: creation of a Google form to sign up volunteers and provide suggestions that can be shared with different groups/list serves

3:50-4:50 ASG website audience expansion and update (*Arin Underwood*)

- Brainstorming session to come up with ideas of how the ASG website could reach a broader audience.
  - Example: add additional tab: "How you can help" that contains information on conservation actions for shorebirds, education material, etc.
  - Example: add photos to bird information page

- Breakout groups to answer the following questions:
  - What are the most important conservation actions concerning shorebirds the public can get involved in or be aware of?
  - How can we utilize the ASG website to communicate or influence these actions?
  - Once published, what methods could we use to spread the website as a resource?
- Ideas from the breakout sessions:
  - Concerns:
    - Website is maintained by Zak, so may be a big ask for him to update and keep updated so we should be careful what we bite off and what we are able to keep up with long-term
  - Add additional resources to the website:
    - Bird friendly solutions
    - 7 simple steps
    - Bird friendly coffee
    - Migratory birds and challenges outside of AK
    - Links to preexisting materials – e.g., Audubon
    - Links to flyway conservation groups that they can donate money to
    - Outreach to teachers with simple lesson plans
  - Increase ways to connect people to shorebirds
    - Shorebird chick meme
  - Spreading awareness of website and ASG
    - Engage on social media
    - Cards we can pass out about ASG at festivals, information centers
    - Outreach through festivals, universities, agencies (ADFG, NGOs) can share on their platforms.
  - Create a whole new website. Alaskabirds.com. Combined website for all bird taxa
    - Consolidates all information in one place:
      - Festivals
      - Bike to work week
      - Best practices if you own property
      - Coffee
    - Use search engine optimization so everyone comes to our website
    - Link website to various email list serves
  - Include on website a list of priorities that are in the shorebird plan
  - Project explorer page doesn't have much on it – highlight projects around the state
    - Links to past story maps
- Nest Steps: will get with ABOG for ideas on how to implement this and what can be tackled.