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24th Annual Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival Scheduled for May 8-11 – Register Now!
Community of Cordova and Chugach National Forest set to welcome millions of shorebirds back to Alaska

Cordova, ALASKA, The Cordova Chamber of Commerce and Chugach National Forest-Cordova Ranger District are hosting the 24th annual Copper River Shorebird Festival May 8-11, 2014. Registration is now open for festival activities including the Great Cordova Birding Challenge and field workshops for artists. Participants will hear from renowned Swedish artist and illustrator, Lars Jonsson and Susan Bonfield, Executive Director of Environment for the Americas (EFTA).

Each spring a migration of over five million shorebirds to the magnificent Copper River Delta draws birding enthusiasts, experts and scientists from around the globe to Cordova for birding outings, photographic opportunities, speakers, workshops, events and more. The Delta is the largest contiguous wetland on North America's Pacific Coast, and integral part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, and international coalition and strategy to conserve shorebirds.

Keynote speaker Lars Jonsson will lead a painting in the field workshop for artists. The workshop is \$200 and preregistration is required. Jonson was born in Stockholm, Sweden and spent his youth outdoors observing and sketching birds. As a teenager, he joined the Swedish Society for the Protection of Nature. When he was only fifteen years old, Jonsson exhibited paintings at the Natural History Museum in Stockholm. He rose to prominence as a painter of bird life soon thereafter. Jonsson has travelled around the world to draw and paint birds as an illustrator for field guides and highly regarded internationally for the sensitivity and skill of his paintings.

Guest speaker, Susan Bonfield will lead a kid's birding workshop-registration is required and space is limited. Bonfield is the executive director of Environment for the Americas, a non profit organization that promotes bird conservation through research and and community outreach. After studying Black-legged Kittiwakes in Alaska, she returned to the lower 48 where she has since gained experience in bird research and education throughout the United States. She has created education programs in the U.S. and Mexico, assisted with workshops on bird monitoring and conservation in both countries, taught basic identification courses, and led Elderhostels and youth science programs.

Along with expert speakers and guides, the festival includes informative and fun activities for the whole family. The Net Loft, a store for traditional handcrafts, will host a Mother's Day project for kids and moms. A

“Tour de Peeps” bicycle tour search out birds in the scenic landscape surrounding the Copper River Delta. Three art exhibits will showcase works by local artists including Karl Becker; and artists from across the United States. The annual Birder’s Breakfast at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, the 4H Dinner, and Birders Bash, at the Reluctant Fisherman overlooking the Cordova Harbor, on Saturday are two of the weekend’s food festivities.

The weekend culminates in the Great Cordova Birding Challenge, where teams of novice and experienced birders compete to see how many species they can identify within either a 24-hour or an 8 hour time period.

Registration fees cover shuttle service to Hartney Bay during prime viewing hours, a Copper River Delta field trip to see many other birds that nest on the delta, and entry to the keynote and guest speaker address. Registration costs are \$65 for individuals, \$25 for students and \$225 for a family of four.

The Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival is brought to you by the Cordova Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Forest Service-Cordova Ranger District, with support from Alyeska Pipeline Services, The Eyak Corporation, Alaska Airlines, local volunteers and numerous local small businesses.

For a complete festival schedule and information on events and accommodations, contact the Cordova Chamber & Visitor’s Center at **907-424-7260** or www.cordovachamber.com.