



# Cultural Diversity

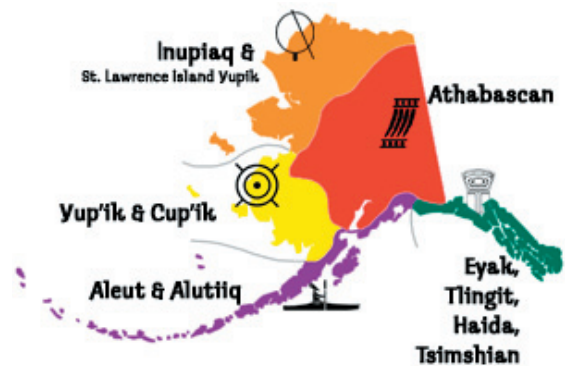
National Weather Service  
Alaska Region Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 1 March 2006

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Welcome to the first edition of the Alaska Region Cultural Diversity Newsletter. A special thanks to the newsletter development team: Nikole Gallegos, Office Automation Program Manager and EEO Committee Chair; Ursula Jones, Administrative Support Assistant at WFO Juneau and the Region's Diversity Catalyst; Wes Adkins, Meteorological Technician at WSO Nome; and Avee Evans, EEO/Diversity Program Manager.

The primary purpose of this newsletter is to share your experiences within our diverse Alaskan communities. This quarterly newsletter will be our forum to advance the profound value of cultural experiences and communicate the value of each and every one of us. The National Weather Service is known for its strong community ties and we, here in Alaska, are definitely no exception.

I encourage each and every one of you to share with us your community's unique cultural traditions and activities. By sharing these experiences with other employees you will allow all employees the opportunity to better understand the numerous Alaskan heritages and ideally build stronger ties across the Region. Whether you are involved in an Alaska Native culture such as the North Slope's Inupiaqs, the Aleutian Chain's Aleuts, or the Tlingit/Haida clan of Southeast, your interactions and stories will educate us about the diverse set of occupations, responsibilities, and challenges you face every day. It will also provide us, as a service organization, a better understanding of how to more effectively communicate our products and services with our users as a whole.



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Thanks for your participation and support of the Cultural Diversity Newsletter. ♦

Laura

**Future articles may be submitted to Nikole Gallegos.**



Tununak Lawrence Jorgensen©

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National Weather Service  
Alaska Region

<http://eoe.arh.nwsar.gov>

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# 1.2.3 Christmas Bird Count

The 40th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) was conducted on December 30, 2005. This annual bird count is in conjunction with the nationwide CBC sponsored by the Audubon Society. The purpose of the count is to identify the species and number of birds at a specified location, as well as monitor how the population is doing for that specific area.

Jim Smith, Meteorological Technician at WSO Cold Bay, and his wife, Elizabeth, participated in this year's event by making up one of five field parties. A total of seven counters conducted the survey from 10:00 to 17:45 Alaska Standard Time and covered a total of 175½ miles by truck, ATV, or on foot for a combined time of 33½ hours in the field. The weather made the count challenging with overcast skies, rain, mist, patchy fog, WNW winds to 23 mph, and a temperature of 36° F. In spite of the weather, the parties tallied a grand total of 2,210 birds representing 40 species. Jim and Elizabeth saw 31 different species and well over 1,000 birds.

For more information on the Izembek NWR visit <http://izembek.fws.gov> and for the Audubon CBS go to <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>. ♦



Photo: U.S. Fish & Wildlife, Alaska

**Double-crested Cormorants**

Common Name	Number
Emperor Goose	263
Brant	60
Mallard	76
Northern Pintail	63
American Green-winged Teal	22
Eurasian Green-winged Teal	1
Steller's Eider	567
Spectacled Eider	2
King Eider	32
Common Eider	1
Harlequin Duck	147
Surf Scoter	1
White-winged Scoter	151
Black Scoter	96
Long-tailed Duck	99
Bufflehead	11
Common Goldeneye	90
Red-breasted Merganser	40
Willow Ptarmigan	18
Pacific Loon	1
Common Loon	9
Horned Grebe	38
Red-necked Grebe	14
Red-faced Cormorant	1
Pelagic Cormorant	92
Bald Eagle	39
Peregrine Falcon	2
Rock Sandpiper	43
shorebird sp.	1
Mew Gull	1
Glaucous-winged Gull	109
Glaucous Gull	3
Pigeon Guillemot	7
Snowy Owl	3
Northern Shrike	1
Black-billed Magpie	30
Common Raven	15
Snow Bunting	37
McKay's Bunting	1
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	23

*Bird Count Numbers*

## Volcano Trip to New Guinea?

Rodger Wilson, Meteorological Technician at WSO Valdez, has held an interest in volcanoes since he was a small child. He remembers watching the Art Linkletter Show, around the age of five, where the kids were asked what they would like to be when they grow up. A boy about the same age as Rodger piped up with, "a volcanologist". Rodger knew exactly what he was talking about and although it was hard to fathom there was such a job at the time, it validated his dream.

In late October of 2005 Rodger learned that Garbuna Volcano, located on New Britain Island, was showing signs of reawakening after nearly 2000 years of silence. New Britain is the largest island of the Bismarck Archipelago and part of Papua New Guinea. With visions in his head of another Pinatubo, Katmai or Krakatoa in the making, Rodger couldn't resist and traveled to New Guinea in mid-November. He accompanied John Seach, a free-lance volcanologist whose narratives, photos and film footage have been featured on the Discovery Channel, National Geographic magazine and numerous other publications.



Photo by U.S. Geological Survey

*Garbuna Volcano Group*

On Rodger's first climb, he was only mildly let down to find that, contrary to earlier reports, a lava dome and lava flow had erupted more recently at the summit—judging by its youthful appearance, "recent" is probably some time in the past one hundred years. Garbuna was also pock-marked with several geologically young craters and a large, active thermal area. This first hike to the crater was chock-full of experiences including areas along the trail to the summit where Rodger and John sensed carbon dioxide gas escaping from the volcano. They were also threatened by a mother cassowary (a rather large, prehistoric-looking and potentially dangerous bird) moving her chicks downslope. Perhaps she was moving them away from the activity and coincidentally across their path? Or was it her path? Earthquakes and volcanic tremors continually occurred



while they were on the summit. Torrential rain in the afternoon produced a lahur (volcanic mudflow) complete with Volkswagen-sized boulders at its leading edge.

On the second climb a beautiful white parrot was found on the ground, adjacent to the low area where nausea had been experienced by all due to the escaping carbon dioxide from the volcano's plumbing. After examining the young bird for injury, Rodger and John's two guides gainfully employed their new bird friend as a surrogate canary in case more potent enclaves of gas were experienced. The guides later kept their new friend as a pet. The volcano was exhibiting more outward signs of unrest during this the second climb. Although it was still rumbling, Rodger was able to collect rock, ash and water samples as well as take photos and measure temperatures of 100° C at several vents.

For the first time in Rodger's volcano travels, he met people who had a real stake in needing to know what was occurring with the volcanic activity. New Britain Island is a tropical version of parts of the Aleutian Chain, or Alaska Peninsula, with a string of active volcanoes from end to end. Inhabitants experience small to moderate eruptions yearly with large ones occurring on decadal time scales. The largest eruption on the planet in 2005 occurred at nearby Manam Volcano almost exactly one year ago. The Manam event displaced tens of thousands of people, yet news reports barely covered this event. Explosions from the eruption were actually recorded by microbarographs in Alaska. Many people still live in refugee camps with minimal provisions. Thus, unfortunately, Papuans are well acquainted with what their volcanoes are capable of doing. Though they were apprehensive about new activity at Garbuna, they weren't overly preoccupied by it—life went on. During their week's stay on New Britain, Rodger and John were able to visit with people in the nearby town of Kimbe and many surrounding villages, outdoor markets, restaurants, stores, resorts and missions. They were able to experience local dishes as well as absorb some of the culture. Rodger enjoyed his trip so much, he has made the decision to return to school and finish his degree in volcanology. ◆

## VALDEZ DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FAIR

ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2005, THE VALDEZ NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE PARTICIPATED IN THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FAIR HELD AT PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE. THE EVENT LASTED EIGHT HOURS AND OFFERED THE COMMUNITY INFORMATION ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR LIFE'S UNEXPECTED EVENTS. THE WEATHER SERVICE PROVIDED NUMEROUS HANDOUTS ON TSUNAMI READINESS. OTHER PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED THE AMERICAN RED CROSS, THE VALDEZ FIRE DEPARTMENT, LOCAL HAM RADIO OPERATORS AND THE U.S. COAST GUARD. ◆



RODGER WILSON & JIM ROBERTS

## *The Wild Pioneers*

Country-Western and Bluegrass are the types of music one would hear while attending a concert of the Wild Pioneers. Don Drew, Lead Forecaster of WSFO Juneau since Spring 1976, has been strumming and singing for the Wild Pioneers for about a year as rhythm guitar player and lead vocalist. The band formed out of a series of jam sessions at the House of Wickersham, the 1898 Victorian home of Alaskan Pioneer Judge James Wickersham which is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Wild Pioneers' latest performance was headlining the Gold Street Music Mid Month Concert on January 21 at the Holy Trinity Church in Juneau. Playing country from the 1940s and 1950s, the band will be participating in the Alaska Folk Festival coming to Juneau April 2-9. In the past they have performed during November's Fish Aid concert at Centennial Hall.

When not headlining concerts, the Wild Pioneers entertain senior citizens every month for a little over an hour at the Wildflower Court on the 3rd Monday and at the Juneau Pioneers' Home on the last Monday. The name "Wild Pioneers", suggested by good friend Elva Bontrager from the House of Wickersham, is derived from the names of those two local senior dwellings. The group includes Drew on Gibson guitar; Gerry



*Wild Pioneers at the Gold Street Music Mid Month Concert on January 21st.*

Fiscus on fiddle; Paul Disdier on dobro; Kirk McBride on standup bass; and banjo players George Trani and Dr. Virgil "The Banjo Doctor" Fredenberg.

The bulk of the music performed by the Wild Pioneers has its origins in the 1940s and 1950s. A few songs come from the 1960s, usually the early 1960s. Some of the songs featured at the Holy Trinity concert included: "I Saw the Light", "Drivin' Nails in My Coffin", "Candy Kisses", and a couple of yodel tunes. The goal of the Wild Pioneers is to continue playing music, learning more songs and instrumental hoedowns, and having a fabulous time while making music.

When he isn't strumming and singing, Drew hosts Juneau radio station KTOO's "Mule Train" show every Tuesday evening from 9 p.m. to midnight—since 1981. For additional information on the House of Wickersham, visit <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/wickrshm.htm> ◆

*JUST IN - This month marks Don Drew's 25th anniversary as the host of Mule Train. On Tuesday, March 14 when he went on the air, Don celebrated his 1,200th live radio show!*