

## Selecting sampling locations for the Alaska Landbird Monitoring program: we need your help!

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Members of Boreal Partners in Flight,

We are requesting your help to identify areas that can be reliably accessed for sampling as part of the Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey (ALMS). This past winter BPIF made the decision to create a stratum within the sampling universe that included only areas with reasonable (i.e., cost-effective) access and to begin our monitoring program in that stratum. The ultimate goal would be to sample other less accessible areas in the future for comparison of population trends; these would likely be sampled less intensively in terms of either temporal frequency or spatial distribution. The first step in this process is for each land management unit to identify those areas accessible by fixed wing aircraft, boat, vehicle, or foot. A 1-km buffer around these points of access will be considered for the starting point of survey routes. We will still use the 25-point ALMS grids as sampling units, but will randomly select only from among those that are accessible by these criteria.

Although we did not rule out the use of helicopters, the group recognized that the high costs of chartering helicopters could make it difficult to maintain ALMS routes through time. Access by other means can also be expensive and time consuming so we are putting emphasis on identifying areas that are logistically and financially feasible to access over the long term. If a land manager wishes to include certain areas that are more expensive to access (i.e., helicopter), please feel free to do so. Including these areas will give us much greater assurance that the trends that we detect are truly representative of the populations across the entire landscape.

In order to contribute new surveys to ALMS we now request that you first identify areas of reasonable access with 1-km buffers for the lands that you help manage in Alaska. From these we can randomly select survey routes. Two examples of defining accessible areas are provided below by Steve Kendall of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Please contact Steve (456-0303, [steve\\_kendall@fws.gov](mailto:steve_kendall@fws.gov)) if you need a full description of his work and GIS files. Please send your GIS coverage of accessible polygons with the type of access noted to Colleen Handel. Also please provide us with any criteria you use to further constrain sampling by what you feel was logistically or financially feasible for your land unit. Feel free to contact Colleen Handel or Steve Matsuoka if you need assistance or guidance in this process.

Thank you for your consideration and we hope you will be able to help with the ALMS program.

Colleen Handel  
U.S. Geological Survey  
Alaska Science Center  
1011 E. Tudor Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
907-786-3418, [colleen\\_handel@usgs.gov](mailto:colleen_handel@usgs.gov)

Steve Matsuoka  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Management  
1011 E. Tudor Road, ms 201  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
907-786-3672, [steve\\_matsuoka@fws.gov](mailto:steve_matsuoka@fws.gov)

