

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Christi Banks, CRD Shorebird Festival Coordinator, festival@coppershorebird.com, 907-424-7260

Cathy Renfeldt, Cordova Chamber of Commerce, cathy@cordovachamber.com, 907-424-7260

Michelle Putz, USFS Public Affairs/Partnership Officer, michelle.putz@usda.gov, 907-747-2708

Erin Cooper, USFS Program Manager-Wildlife/Ecology/Vegetation, erin.cooper@usda.gov, 907-424-4757

Cordova Celebrates Over 30 Years of Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival with Virtual + In-Person Hybrid Event

CORDOVA AK, MARCH 9, 2021 – Despite the events of the last year, millions of shorebirds will still be migrating to and through the pristine Copper River Delta this spring. Whether you are planning to stay hunkered down or are looking for an opportunity to spread your wings, you can witness this spectacle of nature by tuning in online or traveling to Cordova, Alaska May 6th - 9th 2021 to celebrate over 30 years of Alaska's oldest birding festival, the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival.

Catering to both virtual and a limited number of in-person event attendees, this bird-centric weekend has something for everyone! The hybrid festival will still offer similar free online content as last year's virtual festival, including live migration updates, daily bird diaries, and virtual opportunities to express yourself or enjoy the ornithological art of others. This year, the festival committee is excited to also bring back some favorite in-person activities with COVID-smart adjustments to keep both the birders and community safe. "We've learned a lot since this time last year," said Cordova Chamber of Commerce executive director, Cathy Renfeldt, "and it turns out that being outside in small groups is not only relatively safe, but healthy for you."

Experts from *Chugach National Forest – Cordova Ranger District* will be on hand and appropriately distanced to help guide birding enthusiasts who venture out with their "trusted bubbles" to see the birds in person. The festival will also offer live, virtually-guided adventures for those at home. Local handcraft and art experts from *The Net Loft* and *Copper River Canvas* will once again offer a selection of virtual and bubble-group workshops so attendees can still walk away with a piece of their own art from the festival. The *Cordova Historical Museum & Copper River Gallery* is featuring "Birds in Art," an exhibit displaying Alaskan-made bird-themed art that will be available to view in person and in a virtual walk-through. In-person attendees may also see more birds by bike or boat with guided tours from local providers. Rounding out the festival will be a variety of kid-friendly activities from the *Prince William Sound Science Center*, some in-person and some virtual.

The festival committee is excited to welcome ornithologist and renowned author, Scott Weidensaul, as a keynote speaker. Weidensaul is the author of more than two dozen books on natural history, including the Pulitzer Prize finalist "Living on the Wind," "Return to Wild America" and "The First Frontier." His newest book, "A World on the Wing" about global migration, will be released in March 2021. Weidensaul is a contributing editor for *Audubon*, a columnist for *Bird Watcher's Digest* and writes for a variety of other publications, including *Living Bird*. He is also an active field researcher, studying saw-whet owl migration for more than two decades, as well as winter hummingbirds, bird migration in Alaska, and the winter movements of snowy owls through *Project SNOWstorm*, which he co-founded.

Registration is open now at coppershorebird.com for \$50/adult and \$25/student. Kids under 12 are always free. Virtual participants can also choose a Free Registration which allows them access to a plethora of online content, but does not include keynote speakers, classes, or discounts on third-party activities. All paid registrants will receive a *Festival Care Package* (including over \$40 worth of festival goodies), which can be received via mail or picked up in Cordova.

More information including links to experience the virtual components of the festival can be found at coppershorebird.com/hybrid-festival. COVID-conscious travelers hoping to attend the event in-person may contact the Cordova Chamber of Commerce for current travel guidelines or request a copy of their event Safety & Mitigation Plan

which follows local, state, and CDC guidance to promote healthy practices and provide a safe festival environment. Alaska Airlines is also offering a discount code on flights to the festival using code ECMD551.

The Copper River Delta is the largest contiguous intact wetland on North America's Pacific Coast; and designated of hemispheric importance by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, an international coalition and strategy to conserve shorebirds. This event helps to celebrate and highlight all migratory birds as it is timed to match World Migratory Bird Day, May 8. The Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival is brought to you by the Cordova Chamber of Commerce, Chugach National Forest-Cordova Ranger District, Prince William Sound Science Center, and The Net Loft traditional handcrafts, with support from US Forest Service, Alaska Airlines, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., Conoco Phillips, Alaska Audubon, local volunteers, and numerous local businesses. For a complete festival schedule and information on events, visit coppershorebird.com or contact the Cordova Chamber at 907-424-7260, www.cordovachamber.com.

###