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# A New Flock of Junior Ornithologists

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This spring, the Forest Service has helped fledge fifty-two Seward Elementary School third and fourth graders to become Junior Ornithologists during this year's Bird Academy. I have coordinated this two-day intensive workshop for the past five years.

Students rotate through five 30-minute presentations for a total of 10 lessons in two days. Mudflat Café, Pass the Parts, Wing, Flight, and Feathers, Binocular Detective, and Bird Banding are just five of the 10 hands-on, action packed workshops the kids take part in.

On the second day, after their

fifth presentation, the students decompressed by listening to music provided by local musician Mike Glaser. The students were swaying and singing along as Mike played his repertoire of bird songs. The event culminated with the five teams playing "Jepro-Birdy" which included actual "Jepro-Birdy" buzzers and categories pertaining to all the sessions they attended.

The success of this event is because of a phenomenal team of presenters from Forest Service, the Kenai Fjords Park Service, and the Alaska Sea Life Center.

This event is followed up with two to three, post-academy class-

room visits for more bird lessons. One of the three classroom presentations is "Bird ID; the 11-Step Program." This presentation is in preparation for the Bird Watching Field trip to the meadow and wooded area near the Seward Airport; the finale for the multi-week bird unit. On this structured excursion, I challenge these new junior ornithologists to utilize and put into practice all of their newfound knowledge. Watching and listening to the students in the marshy meadow, rich in bird sightings, "wing bars, contour feathers, and palmate feet" are the quiet words that drift away on the gentle spring breeze.