

Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

A Special Presentation by Vasiliy Baranyuk

Friday, March 30, 12 Noon
Visitor Center Auditorium

Snow Geese and Other Wildlife of the Wrangel Island Nature Reserve, Russia

Wrangel Island, Russia (not to be confused with Wrangell Island, Alaska) is 7,600 km² of the most remote Arctic wilderness on the planet. Located between the Chuckchi Sea and East Siberian Sea, it has been said that the only place harder to get to is the moon. But Wrangel Island has the highest density of polar bear dens in the world; twice as many plants as any other arctic tundra area of similar size; the last place on earth with a thriving woolly mammoth population (dying out only 4,000 years ago); seals, Arctic fox, Arctic wolves, walruses, lemmings, snowy owls; and the only breeding population of snow geese in Russia. This wilderness was declared a World Heritage site, the northern-most World Heritage site, in 2004.

In spite of its remoteness, Vasiliy Baranyuk has studied the island's wildlife for the past 30 summers, with stretches as long as 87 days without seeing another human. Vasiliy is a Russian biologist, specializing in the study of this unique population of snow geese. Wrangel Island's snow geese nest in an interior mountain valley and—like Antarctic penguins—flightless young walk an incredible distance (120 km) from the nesting colony to feeding areas near the sea.

Vasiliy is also an accomplished photographer, with three decades of stunning pictures and videos of the island's wildlife. Through grants from the Pacific Coast Joint Venture and several other organizations, he is conducting a lecture tour of significant wintering areas for these geese from Vancouver, BC to Sacramento, to share his love of the land and wildlife, and especially the snow geese of Wrangel Island. His lectures include videos and photos of this remarkable place and its magnificent inhabitants.



We hope you can join us for this presentation. Feel free to bring a brown bag lunch.
If you have questions, please call the Refuge at (360) 753-9467 or e-mail sheila_mccartan@fws.gov.