

(e)agle Newsletter

Virtual Museum Guide

The natural history museum at the ABEF has taken a step into the digital. A QR code for a virtual museum guide is now available. Each specimen has a number associated with their species and interpretation placed around the museum for info. Guests in the past have navigated these numbers with a museum key. Curator of Collections, Katie Dickerson, created and launched the code in June to eliminate the risk of COVID-19 spread through shared use of museum keys.



Creating an easy and efficient way of navigating our museum will help us serve large groups. Along with existing interpretation, guests will be able to learn more about the specimens using their smart phones.

New Indoor Training Space

Over the past few months, the ABEF has been turning a space in our Education Room into a training space. The small aviary, referred to as “the Loft” by staff, is a multi-use space: travel practice destination, free flight-testing space, and photo/video studio. It also functions as a vacation getaway when birds’ regular enclosures require maintenance.



So far, half of our ambassadors have explored the Loft, helping us figure out what works and what improvements can still be made. This inside space will also allow staff to give our supporters and followers live educational programs featuring the ambassadors. We look forward to the possibilities that the Loft will provide in the future.

New Perching

A silver lining of the quiet summer is time to pour into projects. This month staff has been hard at work building new dynamic perching for the aviaries. In the past, perches have been secured to walls, creating a potential for feather damage and requiring labor intensive renovation. New perches are more central and movable. Each aviary can now be adapted to fit specific husbandry, training, and other enrichment needs.



The branches and posts are made from trees on the ABEF property, keeping costs down and allowing staff to experiment with what materials work best. These perches allow for easy rearrangement when staff sees a need. Not only do the new perches look great, they have improved training.

Species Spotlight: Belted Kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*)

The belted kingfisher can be spotted near bodies of water hunting their primary diet of fish, amphibians, and aquatic invertebrates. Found throughout North America, this medium-sized species has a head crest with a blue-gray body and white underbelly. The females can be discerned from the males by having a chestnut band on the chest that is absent in males.



The belted kingfisher has a pointed bill they use to spear their prey with as they dive from heights into the water. Watching this species hunt may allow you to see them quickly hover in place to locate their next meal before plunging after it. This species has a distinct call, described as a “rattle”, that can alert birders to their presence before they come into view. Head to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s page on belted kingfishers [here](#) to learn more!

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www.baldeagles.org 113 Haines Highway Haines, AK 99827 907.766.3094