

## EARECKSON AIR STATION

Eareckson Air Station's (EAS) mission is to provide a weather and emergency divert airfield, support tenant units and provide support for ship emergencies. A Base Operational Support contractor, managed by the 611th Air Support Squadron headquartered at Elmendorf Air Force Base, accomplishes the mission for the U.S. Air Force. EAS is located on the Great Circle Northern Air Bridge air routes to Japan, China, Indo-China and other destinations in Asia and the Pacific. It is frequently employed as a refueling stop for military flights. As a strategic vantage point, EAS's location provides early warning capabilities and communications. EAS's first military function was in 1943 as a runway for bombers.

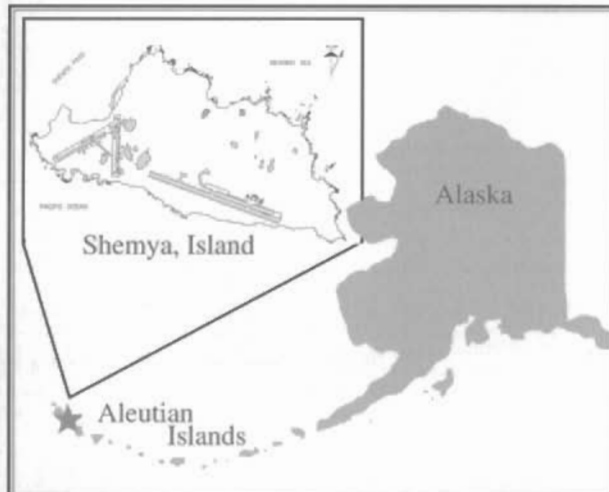
Owned by the U.S. Air Force, EAS occupies the entire Island of Shemya. Located 1,500 miles southwest of Anchorage, Alaska, Shemya lies at the far western end of the Aleutian Islands. Known as the 'Black Pearl of the Pacific' or 'The Rock', it is 1.5 by 3.5 miles. Shemya is in the eastern hemisphere, and only 450 miles from the Russian Kamchatka Peninsula. The entire island is also part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

The Aleutian climate is moderately cold, very foggy and windy with daily rain or snow in the winter. Habitat vegetation is wet tundra groups of grasses, sedges and heath. Large numbers of seabirds, waterfowl and songbirds use the island at various times of the year. The greatest diversity occurs during spring and fall when many migrating species, including the Aleutian race of Canada Goose, and numbers of Asiatic vagrants, stop to feed on Shemya and nearby islands.

Initial bird studies were led by Daniel D. Gibson, Univ. of Alaska Museum, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, from 1975-1977. They provided the first records of Shemya birds and their movements (See Condor 83:65-77). During these original surveys, many exciting Asian bird species were seen for the first time in Alaska and in the U.S.! Management of bird populations, to reduce bird aircraft strike hazards (BASH), led to studies of bird species and how they used the island. Previously, much BASH work has been done at facilities across the country, however, very little was known about birds of this remote site. Additional Air Force sponsored studies in 1990's through 2001, have provided the first year-around statistics of species using these islands with their abundance and times of occurrence.



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For further information contact the  
Natural Resource Program Manager, 611th  
Civil Engineer Squadron, Elmendorf AFB at 907-552-0788.

## BIRD CHECKLIST SHEMYA ISLAND, ALASKA



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Aleutian Canada Geese Photo by Michael Schwitters



Department of Defense and Partners in Flight are cooperating on an international program to promote conservation of resident and Neotropical migratory birds. For information, visit <http://www.dodpif.org>, or call Department of Defense, Partners in Flight at 840-253-5675.



