

Roosevelt May 26 (CR), and the Animas Mts., May 31 (AC, CS). A Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Alameda Mar. 3 (CR, PRS, CS); another banded at Ropes Spring May 1 (WH, ph. MW) provided a San Andres Mts. first. Single Harris' included an immature at Mesilla Apr. 1 (BT) and an adult at White Sands N.M., May 2 (JM). A Yellow-eyed Junco that strayed to P.O. Canyon May 5 (RS) furnished one of the few non-winter records for the Peloncillo Mts. North was an E. Meadowlark at Navajo, McKinley, May 11 (DC). Two Rusty Blackbirds were still at Santa Rosa Mar. 3 (ph. JO). Noteworthy for s.w. New Mexico were six Com. Grackles at Deming Mar. 9 (RF). Bronzed Cowbirds appeared in Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Doña Ana, Otero, and Eddy in May (v.o.); n. were two at Carrizozo May 24 (CR). Moderate numbers of Cassin's Finches were in the Black Range and San Mateo Mts. mid-March into April (v.o.), and 12 were in the Pinos Altos Mts., Mar. 9 (D&MZ), but the species was relatively scarce elsewhere, including its usual n. highlands haunts. Red Crossbills likewise were most in evidence in the s. mountains, particularly in Catron, Grant, Sierra, and Lincoln (v.o.). Evening Grosbeaks were widespread in the w. two-thirds of the state, including 100 at Silver City Apr. 28 (EL), 30-40 in the Pinos Altos Mts., Apr. 25 (RF), and 184 at Santa Fe May 11 (CR *et al.*).

Corrigendum

The 14 Black-bellied Plovers reported at B.L.N.W.R., Apr. 22, 1995 (AFN 49:288) actually were Killdeer (*vide* CR).

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Alaska Region

T. G. TOBISH, JR.

After above-average temperatures covered the Region from March into May, an anticipated early and heavy spring passage did not materialize. Although there were pockets of record-early arrivals, especially waterbirds, the migration was protracted and most groups were late with scant numbers. A sampling of new record-early arrivals for local sites included new early dates for nine species in the Upper Tanana Valley, six species at Prudhoe Bay, and three species for Upper Cook Inlet. Otherwise, typical spring concentration points produced rather poorly, perhaps due in part to poor habitat conditions. Because of the winter's late-to-develop and below-average snowpack, with the associated record-deep frosts, early season water habitats were missing or, as in the case of intertidal zones along the North Gulf, still iced-in into May. The Cook Inlet waterfowl and shorebird migrations were late and minimal, while better-than-average numbers of waterbirds were noted in non-traditional Southeast Alaska sites. The season was also clearly limited and punctuated by the record-late and cool season noted across the Continent's northern tier.

With the apparent absence of an El Niño cycle, the Aleutian Low was firmly established by mid-April, when a long series of standard easterly moving anti-cyclones washed across the North Pacific-Bering Seas

interface into the North Gulf Coast. The subsequent Aleutian-Bering Sea Asiatic migration was exceptional, if early, as noted from excellent observer coverage from St. Lawrence Island to Attu Island. Given this and last year's strong Asiatic component, coupled with an essentially absent El Niño system, it is clear that conditions generated by a strong El Niño cycle produce poor numbers and low species diversity of Asiatics in the Aleutian/Bering Sea zone. Following the weakest winter southward advance of Bering Sea pack ice ever, this mass quickly retreated into the Chukchi Sea, which allowed for an early and concentration-poor eider, loon, and jaeger passage, as noted from St. Lawrence Island and Nome.

More than ever before, data from the standard migrant outposts was supplemented by several summer-season like field camps and visits to more remote sites. Excellent early arrival and synchronous data, and previously unrecognized concentration areas, were delineated from these areas, which included Cinder River near Bristol Bay, Annette Island and Berners Bay in southern and northern Southeast, respectively, and at Cape Romanzof in Southwest Alaska. These data are illustrative of the numerous site and information gaps that are as yet to be pioneered within the Region.

Abbreviations: North Gulf (*North Gulf of Alaska*); PWS (*Prince William Sound*); SE (*Southeast Alaska*); SC (*Southcoastal Alaska*); SW (*Southwest Alaska*); UCI (*Upper Cook Inlet*).

Loons to Waterfowl

Because of the early northward retreat of Bering Sea pack ice, the loon and eider migration past Gambell's Northwest Cape was early and uneventful. For the first



time in years, very few Arctic Loons were found there all season. An alternate-plumaged Arctic Loon, described from St. Paul I., June 14 (WINGS), was one of very few confirmed Pribilof reports. A single Pied-billed Grebe was located May 4 (SCH) on the same Annette I. ponds which produced the Region's first and only breeding record. An imm. Brown Pelican excited the Ketchikan waterfront Apr. 18 (SCH), where it eventually ended up captured and corralled in the marina offices after being harassed by dogs on the docks. Although in good shape, it was reluctant to leave the area and was sent to the Sitka Raptor Rehabilitation Center for eventual transport to California. A few days after this event, a local commercial fisherman volunteered that this individual had boarded his vessel "two to three days s. of Ketchikan, in n. British Columbia." Although this record is, therefore, easily dismissed as a ship-assisted visitor, a Brown Pelican's presence in n. British Columbia is unprecedented.

Two ad. **Whooper Swans**, first located on a rarely checked Attu I. lake May 20, remained attached to the area into June, when the pair was accompanied by five cygnets June 5+ (ATTOUR). This constituted the latest Aleutian "spring" record and the Region's first breeding event. Although this Palearctic form breeds at similar latitudes as Attu to the Sea of Okhotsk, it is apparently sporadic and local as a nester on Kamchatka. Lake Nicholas, where the pair bred, is one of the largest freshwater bodies in the w. Aleutians and is nestled within extensive willow thickets that must provide similar habitat to Kamchatka breeding sites. Only Agattu I., east of Attu, has anything remotely similar to this area. A late-winter aerial survey of 65 Trumpeter Swans Mar. 27 (SCH) was encouraging, and one of the highest tallies from s. SE away from the Mainland, at Prince of Wales Island. A reconnoitering pair of Trumpeters up Taku Inlet s. of Juneau May 14 (RJG) was in a new area and very suspect. Most unexpected was an ad **Ross' Goose** that showed up in Anchorage with Canadas (*B. c. taverneri*) Apr. 11–16+ (ph. DFD, ph. DWS, REG, LJO, TGT, TE). This High Canadian Arctic nester is probably annual on Alaska's North Slope—it has bred once there, where it has been found in very small numbers at Snow Geese molting sites after early July. The Region's only other spring report was an April bird on the Stikine R. Delta.

Since the early season waterfowl movement was protracted and uneventful, highlights were few and included: a repeat of last year's pair of **Falcated Teal** at St. Paul I., June 12–18 (late) (St. Paul Tours, WINGS),

where casual; a pair of N. Shovelers prospecting into the Bering Sea to St. Lawrence I. at Savoonga June 2 (JFK *et al.*); a good high count of seven Tufted Ducks e. to St. Paul I., June 1–10 (St. Paul Tours); a late-winter ♂ King Eider from Juneau Mar. 15 (RJG, GVV), casual for SE; the persistent ♂ Spectacled Eider at Attu, where it has been apparently resident since 1993 (ATTOUR); six Steller's Eiders from Prudhoe May 28 (EEB), the 4th ever and earliest in spring for the e. North Slope; and the earliest-ever Ruddy Duck, a drake near the e. end of the Alaska Hwy May 10 (RAS). The extreme importance of local herring spawns to migrant and late-winter staging waterbirds was again underlined, this time for Surf Scoters near Pt. Higgins, n. of Ketchikan. At least 15,000 birds had amassed in a 2 mi stretch of nearshore waters for most of the week of Apr. 10 (SCH). This herring spawning area changes each year, but the timing coincides with a late-season/pre-migration staging of opportunistic scoters. Herring and Eulachon mass spawns support significant percentages of several populations of migratory waterbirds in the Region, especially larids, shorebirds, and scoters, from Cook Inlet into SE each year. We have only begun to identify specific sites and numbers, timing and species involved.

Raptors to Alcids

Turkey Vultures returned again this year, to quite separate sections of the State. The Region's earliest ever, a single described from a regular Bald Eagle scavenger site near Ketchikan Apr. 25–27 (†DN, †CF), was timed to the coastal British Columbia population, while the other, another single over the Delta Jct. fields May 23 (†SD), was more predictable. These represent the Region's 3rd and 4th substantiated reports. The Attu I. ad. White-tailed Eagle remains ensconced around the e. end of that mountainous island. This year an immature (age not reported) also appeared over Massacre Bay May 23 (ATTOUR). Most confusing was the record-early (by 6 weeks for UCI) Am. Kestrel in Anchorage Mar. 26 (JW). This casual migrant and rare breeder in the Cook Inlet Basin is more typically found n. of the Talkeetna Mts., with early May normal arrivals. Another female, likely an overshoot, was reported well w. of known nesting areas to near the Bering Sea coast at Pt. Romanzof May 14 (BJM).

Since systematic surveys of grouse are rare from anywhere in the Region, this year's repeat surveys from Interior sub-areas were notable. In the e.c. Interior, a repeat of 3 survey routes near Delta Jct. produced more than a threefold increase of Ruffed Grouse from 1994 comparisons (SD). The massive

Tok area burn is apparently at a stage that benefits Sharp-tailed Grouse—up to 26 in a day (Apr. 19) were tallied at several scattered leks into early May (TJD). Record early for the very rare and local e. Interior population was a calling Sora s. of Tok May 11 (†RWV *et al.*). There were no SE reports, where the earliest records come from the first week of May. Also record early for a similar local e. Interior population was a single Am. Coot near Delta Jct., Apr. 28–May 1 (TJD, SD, JH, BL). Most unusual was a Sandhill Crane nest discovered with 2 eggs near Salmon L., Prince of Wales I., in extreme s. SE May 6 (MH). There are less than a dozen SE nest records—this represents the 2nd confirmed from Prince of Wales I. [All of these SE breeders are presumed to represent the more southerly form *tabida*, known from s. British Columbia but as yet uncorroborated from Alaska.]

Although both the timing and concentrations of arriving Nearctic shorebirds were generally late and inconsequential, even at traditional staging sites, Palearctic representatives were numerous, in high diversity, and early—at least in the n. Bering Sea. Pacific Golden-Plovers made landfall in excellent numbers at most regular arrival sites, with a high count of >50 at St. Paul I., May 18 (SS *et al.*). Noteworthy arrivals e. of normal landfall spots were two at Berners Bay n. of Juneau Apr. 28 (KB) and another four from Juneau May 14 (RJG). The season's only Mongolian Plovers included singles at St. Paul May 21 (St. Paul Tours) and Attu May 30 (ATTOUR). Up to three Com. Ringed Plovers were described from Gambell June 1–6 (†GM, WINGS), where they are regular. Exceptionally early Killdeer were on the move, with singles at Anchorage Mar. 25 (TE; = missed record by 3 days) and at Northway May 11 (TJD; = new e. Interior record arrival). Other significant Nearctic shorebird highlights included a Greater Yellowlegs into the Bering Sea at St. Paul, where casual, May 20 (St. Paul Tours); a nice showing within the classic arrival range of Marbled Godwits from most of the N. Pacific landfall sites, including four at Annette I. in s. SE May 4 (SCH; = first local s. SE report) and singles at Cordova May 3 (TS) and Juneau May 19–22 (extremely late, KB); ≤200 Marbleds were already at traditional w. Alaska breeding areas around Cinder R. Lagoon by May 6–10+ (HM, AM-N, CDA); and a ♀ Wilson's Phalarope was again located at Juneau May 8, where this rare spring overshoot may be annual (†SCH). A sampling of the significant Palearctic shorebird spring highlights included: single Com. Greenshanks from sites where they are casual, at Gambell June 1 (WINGS) and St. Paul June 7 (St.

Paul Tours); a Wood Sandpiper at Gambell June 1 (WINGS)—note only one turned up at Attu all spring; high numbers of Gray-tailed Tattlers, with >seven from Gambell May 30–June 7 (WINGS) and >six from St. Paul May 31–June 9 (St. Paul Tours); a Terek Sandpiper at Gambell May 30–June 8 (WINGS); Juneau's 5th Bar-tailed Godwit, a single May 31 (RJG); the Pribilof's 2nd **Great Knot** May 29–30 (RH, SS); a Temminck's Stint from Gambell June 2–3 (†GM, WINGS), the best place for this breeder from nearby Chukotka; and lone Curlew Sandpipers from Attu June 5 (ATTOUR; = 2d spring record from w. Aleutians) and Gambell June 7 (WINGS).

Precise details were submitted for a first-summer-plumaged **Black-tailed Gull** from Gambell June 2–4 (†GM, WINGS), furnishing St. Lawrence I.'s 2nd and the Region's 5th spring report. This year's Berners Bay Iceland (*thayeri*) Gull peak was >12,000, noted May 14 (KB) in sync with the local Eulachon run. This productive stretch of sheltered subtidal area likely supports a significant percentage of North America's *thayeri* during the northbound passage, before these birds move N and E overland to Canadian High Arctic nesting sites. Suspicious paired Slaty-backed Gulls were noted about gull colonies near Cape Romanzof (BJM), with ≥11 tallied May 8–31 (BJM). Ross' Gulls appeared (somewhat late) out of the Bering Sea fog at Gambell's Northwest Pt., June 4–7 (WINGS), with ≥four noted on the later date. Another five were described from Safety, s. of Nome, June 6–10+ (†JB, JT, WINGS). It is not unusual for small numbers of Ross' Gulls to appear in the n. Bering Sea, nearly always at Gambell, at the end of the pack ice retreat and well into June—Nome records are few and rarely include more than singles. Near-record numbers of Com. (black-billed *longipennis*) Terns appeared in synchrony at each end of the e. Bering Sea, with >seven at St. Paul May 28–June 19 (SS *et al.*) and a peak count of eight around Gambell June 1 (WINGS).

Doves to Waxwings

Another **Oriental Turtle Dove**, Alaska's 4th, skulked around Attu's Navy Cove May 21–June 3 (ATTOUR)—it appeared a day later than Attu's first record from spring 1989. Cuckoos, all those with descriptions identified as Commons, made a showing throughout the Bering Sea: from Attu, with one June 10–11 (*ATTOUR); another (singing) single n. to Gambell, where casual, May 31 (WINGS); and two different birds at St. Paul June 7–14 (St. Paul Tours, WINGS). Two N. Pygmy Owls were unusual away from the SE Mainland on Prince of Wales I., especially at a latish win-

ter date of Mar. 26 (MB). None other was reported. Although there were no winter reports from SE, Boreal Owls must have infiltrated the British Columbia Coast Range in numbers. With few Alexander Archipelago records, one discovered on Prince of Wales I., Mar. 30 (†MB, AR) and a carcass recovered n. of Ketchikan Apr. 26 (DR, †SCH) represented big news and the first from SE in years. The Ketchikan area's wintering ♂ Anna's Hummingbird remained to Apr. 17 (JP), while a 2nd male was found at another Ketchikan feeder Apr. 29–30 (SCH). Few "rare" Alaska visitors have shown a greater status change in the Region since Kessel and Gibson's 1978 *Status and Distribution of Alaska Birds* than Anna's Hummingbird. This season's extralimital Rufous Hummingbird reached the Bering Sea coast at Cape Romanzof May 16 (†BJM). Most extralimital Rufous reports typically come after June. Ten years after the first Alaska report, a stunning ♂ **Great Spotted Woodpecker** was scavenging decaying posts and was on the ground at Attu May 21–22 (ATTOUR). The northeasternmost Asiatic race *D. m kamtschaticus*, the subspecies collected from Attu in April 1986 (see Wagner 1988, *Am. Birds* 43:254–257), has been recorded from the Commander I. and breeds to Kamtchatka's e. coast. Northern Rough-winged Swallows were noted away from traditional sites, including singles at Ketchikan May 2 (SCH) and Juneau May 25 (RJG). Up to three appeared at Hyder, where they have nested, May 30–June 4 (TJD).

Two years after a fall/winter irruption took Red-breasted Nuthatches beyond the Alaska Range, singles persisted around Tok May 10–19 (RAS) and farther north at Tanacross Apr. 28–29 (HP). Nuthatches remained at an obvious local population high in UCI, centered around the Anchorage Bowl, where calling birds and pairs could be found in virtually every forested tract. Noteworthy given the species' rarity after a flush of records in the 1980s, two Gray-spotted Flycatchers arrived at Attu June 8–9 (ATTOUR). The majority of the Region's records, since the first from 1956 at Amchitka I., have come from the w. Aleutians after the first days of June. A nice fallout of Siberian Rubythroats hit Attu May 28–June 9, with a daily peak of seven tallied May 30 (ATTOUR). Another ♂ Rubythroat made it to Gambell June 2–7 (WINGS), where there are few substantiated records. Bluethroats appeared at unusual s. Bering Sea sites, including two at Attu June 9 (ATTOUR) providing the 2nd spring and Aleutian record, and a very early single at St. Paul May 23 (St. Paul Tours), which, surprisingly, represented the first

Pribilof record. Still casual in the Region, three **Red-flanked Blue-tails** were described from Attu thickets May 25–June 7 (ATTOUR). There are now 5 Alaska records, 3 in spring and one in fall from the Aleutians, and one other from the Pribilofs Mountain Bluebirds arrived on time Apr 21 at Delta Jct. (*vide* SD). A pair was located at a nest site in the Tok burn May 9–June (TJD, KOD), while the Delta Jct breeding sites were occupied by early June Olive-backed Pipits were described from Attu, with two May 28–30 (ATTOUR), and n. to Gambell, where casual, June 7 (JB, †GM, WINGS). Notable far out in the Bering Sea, a Bohemian Waxwing found at St. Paul village May 22 (St. Paul Tours) furnished a 3rd Pribilof record.

Warblers to Fringillids

The season's only Tennessee Warbler report came from Juneau May 29 (RJG), where presumed Mainland and British Columbia overshoots are probably regular. Given the cool and late spring from points well s. of Alaska, an Orange-crowned Warbler at Ketchikan Apr. 14 (JP) was surprisingly early. Heintz has been systematically separating migrant "Myrtle" and "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warblers in s. SE for the past few years. This year five early birds at Ketchikan Apr. 22 were "clean Myrtles," while ten at offshore Annette I., May 4 were described as Audubon's (SCH). Prior to these reports, *auduboni* had been restricted to the drier s. SE Mainland, mainly at Hyder and up the larger river systems.

Only 4 years after the Region's first **Brewer's Sparrows** were found breeding in the n.e. Wrangell Mts., we now have an extralimital report. A single was singing in the always exciting Hyder edge thickets June 3–5 (*TJD). I am not aware of any previous record from adjacent coastal areas of n. British Columbia. The Ketchikan area's winter **Swamp Sparrow** molted at its favorite feeder and was last seen Apr. 14 (SCH), while another migrant was singing at Juneau's Mendenhall wetlands May 17 (†RJG), a first local and the Region's 2nd spring report. Up to four Rustic Buntings made an appearance at Attu May 26–June 4 (ATTOUR). A brilliant ♂ **Yellow-breasted Bunting** skulked around Attu's Murder Pt. Beach terraces May 27 (ATTOUR), 8 years and a day after the Region's first documented record, also from Attu. Alaska's 2nd-ever report of a ♂ **Bullock's Oriole** was submitted from Ketchikan Apr. 25–26 (†PM, *vide* SCH). Until proper documentation comes in corroborated by more than a single observer, this Icterid, which breeds as close as c

British Columbia, remains on Alaska's Unsubstantiated List. Although Bramblings made a unusually poor showing in the w. Aleutians, with a high count of just five at Attu May 24–June 10, a pair managed to nest. A nest with 2 and then 3 eggs was found in an Attu willow thicket June 9–10 (ATTOUR, PWS), the first for North America. In previous years, when high numbers reached Attu (*i.e.* 1982), singing and displaying birds were found but did not remain. Newly documented for the Region, a ♂ House Finch turned up at Hyder's coastal thickets June 1–2 (*TJD). The subject w. subspecies *C. m. frontalis* was the expected race, which breeds in s.c. British Columbia, but mostly e. of the Fraser R. A fall single-observer sighting from Haines was the Region's only other report. Given the rather poor Fringillid showing from the Aleutians, it was unexpected to get an Oriental Greenfinch report from *St. Paul I.*, June 12–14 (RH, DK *et al.*), the Pribilofs' first and the easternmost for the Region. Four Hawfinches provided the season's high count from Attu May 21–June 7 (ATTOUR). Common Redpolls lingered in strong numbers s. of the Alaska Range into April before dispersing, while White-winged Crossbills remained absent from most of the Region, save scattered local flocks in the Interior and associated with the n. coastal forests.

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British Columbia/ Yukon Region

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"Cold Springs bring Good Birds," so the adage goes. About the only reward from this cold, wet, and generally miserable season was that the saying held true. Still, not all areas bemoaned the weather, as Yukon welcomed more normal rainfall after three dry years. Perhaps it was the low freezing levels and frequent snows along the mountains well into May which led to many anomalous concentrations of returning migrants in the valley bottoms of the interior, as well as record-large flocks of shorebirds on the outer coast. Vagrants of note included Hooded Orioles in Victoria and Coquitlam, a Baikal Teal at Sandspit, and Purple Martins in south Yukon and southeast British Columbia. We welcome the input of Doug Leighton of Banff, Alberta, who makes many sorties into the adjacent Upper Columbia River Valley of British Columbia, and of Max Gotz of Whistler, southwest British Columbia, checking in from the Whistler/Pemberton area. Their reports will help fill some of the large gaps in this huge Region's coverage.

Abbreviations: B.C. (*British Columbia*); B&JGPP (*Burges and James Gadsden P. P.*, 15 km n. of Golden, B.C.); Ok. L. (*Okanagan L.*); Ok. Villy (*Okanagan Valley*); P.G. (*Prince George*); p.v. (*pending verification by responsible Bird Records Committee*); Q.C.I. (*Queen Charlotte Is.*); R.P.B.S. (*Rocky Point Banding Station, s. tip Van. I.*); STP (*Sewage Treatment Plant/Ponds*); Van. (*Vancouver*); Van. I. (*Vancouver I.*); Vic. (*Victoria*); Whse. (*Whitehorse*).

Loons to Cranes

In what has become a regular early-spring event, all 4 expected loon species—one imm. Red-throated,

four basic-plumaged Pacifics, two basic and three alternate-plumaged Commons, and one ad. and one imm. Yellow-billed—were seen at the same time off the Harbour Quay, Port Alberni, Mar. 9 (DGC). A staging raft of 1000 Pacific Loons on Cordova Bay, Saanich, Apr. 15 (DP) was a large flock for the area. A Pied-billed Grebe, rare in Yukon, was discovered at Nares L. near Carcross May 26 (LC, CE, HG, PS), and another was heard calling at Rat L., Carcross Rd., the same day (HG). Normally scarce in the c. interior, Horned Grebes were conspicuous around P.G., with a high 30 at Tabor L., May 6 (CA, HA, JB). The largest reported inland flock of W. Grebes was 229 on Kinbasket L., 50 km n. of Donald, May 11 (DL). A single Clark's Grebe, casual on the s. coast, was in with W. Grebes at Sea I., Richmond, Mar. 9–17 (KR, DTy, †JL, m.ob.). A pelagic trip off Tofino May 15 turned up 20 Black-footed Albatrosses, six N. Fulmars, hundreds of Sooty Shearwaters, 10 Fork-tailed Storm-petrels, 20 Red Phalaropes, and 50 Sabine's Gulls (MGS *et al.*). A flock of 40 Sooty Shearwaters seen from Cleland I., off s.w. Van. I., May 9 (AD) was typical of nearshore spring flocks, with numbers increasing later in the summer. There were 2 reports of Black-vented Shearwater, the first sightings since September 1986 and the first ever in the spring. The first was from a ferry in mid-Georgia Strait off Sandheads Lighthouse May 8 (p.v., †RTo), and likely

