



Alaska: Birding & Wildlife June 1 – 14, 2016 with Greg Smith

Bird & Wildlife List

Ducks, Geese, & Swans – Anatidae

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

A family group of five in one of Denali's kettle ponds gave us great looks.

Brant (*Branta bernicla*)

We saw three different flocks of these sea geese in and near Safety Sound.

Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)

The "common" race of this goose was a common breeder in the Anchorage area.

Canada Goose (*Branta Canadensis*)

Larger and more robust, we only saw a few individuals of this race at Westchester.

Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)

Only nesting pairs of this swan were seen on interior ponds and lakes.

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

Flocks of 50 – 100 birds were seen along the eastern reaches of Safety Sound.

American Wigeon (*Anas Americana*)

Scattered in and around the Anchorage and Denali areas.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Only a few were seen and those were in the Denali kettle ponds and Westchester.

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Probably the third most common duck on freshwater during our trip.

Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

The most common duck on the trip and seen anywhere there were bodies of water.

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

Small groups of males were seen and only a few females. Nesting?

Common Teal (*Anas crecca creca*)

One drake was seen on the kettle ponds in Denali during our North Face Lodge stay.

Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*)

The second most common waterfowl of the trip.

Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affini*)

Much less common than the Greater Scaup, and only away from the coast.

Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)

Only seen in Safety and Norton Sounds, this dramatic-looking sea goose was common.

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

Resurrection Bay had a number of non-nesting birds, as did other areas around Nome.

Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*)

Small, non-nesting flocks were around Norton Sound.

Black Scoter (*Melanitta Americana*)

A solo drake was mixed in with a small group of Surf Scoters.

Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)

Not as common as last year, but pairs were not uncommon in the Nome area.

Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*)

One female on one of the kettles ponds in Denali was all that we saw.

Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)

Wonder Lake had a few of these birds, mostly drakes.

Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*)

A female with a large, young brood gave us great looks at the hotel pond in Seward.

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Seen all over Nome and also quite a few in Denali National Park.

Partridges, Grouse & Turkeys – *Phasianidae*

Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*)

Seen on all of the roads in Nome and just a couple in Denali National Park.

Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*)

One bird was seen on one of the strenuous hikes while at North Face Lodge.

Loons – *Gaviidae*

Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*)

Great looks at stunning pairs on a number of the ponds in the Nome area.

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)

We saw five different individuals, all in the Nome area.

Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)

The best looks were of the pair nesting on Wonder Lake in past year's location.

Grebes – *Podicipedidae*

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

Nesting pairs at Westchester Lagoon had newly hatched young riding on their backs.

Shearwaters & Petrels – *Procellariidae*

Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*)

We saw about a dozen of these birds on our boat trip out of Seward.

Cormorants – *Phalacrocoracidae*

Brandt's Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*)

None in Nome, but we did find them in Resurrection Bay.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

Seen in Resurrection Bay and at Westchester Lagoon.

Red-faced Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax urile*)

Only two were seen, and both were flying birds around the Chiswell Islands.

Pelagic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*)

Seen in numbers at both Nome and Seward, the most common of the cormorants.

Bitterns, Herons & Allies – *Ardeidae*

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea Herodias*)

Only two/three seen on the trip and only in Anchorage.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles & Allies – *Accipitridae*

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

Best looks were of a copulating pair adjacent to Stony Pass in Denali.

Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

The most common raptor in Denali National Park.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Very common in the Seward area and a nesting pair at Westchester Lagoon.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Seen outside of Anchorage and two in Denali National Park.

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)

We were fortunate in seeing three of these stunning raptors in Nome.

Cranes – *Gruidae*

Sandhill Crane (*Grus Canadensis*)

Great to see pairs of these scattered at all of our stops in Alaska.

Oystercatchers – *Haematopodidae*

Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*)

Seen and heard our boat trip out of Seward along the fjord to the Holgate Glacier.

Lapwings & Plovers – *Charadriidae*

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)

Stunning to see these birds in full alternate plumage on nesting territory at Wooley.

American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*)

The males were in full alternate plumage and appropriately “golden.”

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*)

Seen along with the above two plovers in the Nome area.

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)

Scanning gravel bars, especially in Nome, would usually turn up a nesting pair.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferous*)

Only two birds were seen with the first being at Westchester Lagoon.

Sandpipers & Allies – Scolopacidae

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*)

Westchester Lagoon had a number of nesting birds along the shoreline.

Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*)

Birds that were apparently nesting were common along the rivers of Nome.

Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*)

Birds in alternate plumage were foraging in the Anchorage and Denali areas.

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipe*)

Best looks were at a couple of individuals along a kettle pond in Denali.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Individual birds were at the mouth of the Nome River and along the Kougorok Road.

Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*)

An individual bird about three miles short of Council (Nome area) gave us great looks.

Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*)

A flock of about twenty birds in Westchester Lagoon were the best.

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

A pair on the Nome-Teller Road in alternate plumage were probably nesting.

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

Wooley Lagoon had two of these birds foraging among the plovers.

Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*)

Only one was seen on this trip and that was at Safety Sound bridge.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

A group of three were seen at the Nome Bridge estuary.

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Scattered along Safety Lagoon, these striking shorebirds were easy to pick out.

Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*)

Not nearly as common as the WeSa and SeSa, but always a few around in Nome.

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*)

Probably the most of any of the sandpipers in Nome, and always displaying.

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*)

Second most common of the nesting sandpipers in Nome.

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris rufficollis*)

We got to see two of these Asian sandpipers, both in alternate plumage.

Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*)

Seen on the kettle ponds of Denali National Park.

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

One or two heard calling in a mixed flying flock at Westchester Lagoon.

Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*)

Seen on just about any small body of water in the Nome area.

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

Only one was seen in the Nome area, as this is an early migrant.

Skuas & Jaegers – *Stercorariidae*

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

We saw a half-dozen of these robust jaegers, usually singles over the tundra.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

This species was found over land, but always near the coast.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

The common jaeger found all over the tundra, very agile in flight.

Auks, Murres & Puffin – *Alcidae*

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*)

Very “common” out on Resurrection Bay in large floating groups.

Pigeon Guillemot (*Cephus columba*)

Seen best near Fox Island in Resurrection Bay.

Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*)

Very common on our boat trip in Resurrection Bay, especially near treed slopes.

Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*)

A few around the Chiswell Islands, very close to shore.

Cassin's Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*)

A few of these floating nerf footballs in the open water beyond the Chiswells.

Parakeet Auklet (*Aethia psittacula*)

Great looks at a group of three near the Red-faced Cormorant location.

Rhinoceros Auklet (*Cerorhinca monocerata*)

Only seen up in Holgate Arm on the way to the glacier.

Horned Puffin (*Fratercula corniculata*)

The more common of the two puffins and seen closer into Seward than the Tufted.

Tufted Puffin (*Fratercula cirrhata*)

Seen close in to its nesting sites on the Chiswell Islands.

Gulls, Terns, & Skimmers – *Laridae*

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

Anytime we saw whales, they were accompanied by flocks of this kittiwake.

Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*)

Just a couple were seen flying along the shore of Norton Sound.

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*)

Large groups of this stunning gull were roosting on Safety Sound islands.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*)

Common in all of the sites we visited that had ponds of water.

East Siberian Herring Gull (*Larus vegae*)

We probably had a dozen of these birds mixed in with flocks of Glaucous Gull.

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*)

The common gull down in the Gulf of Alaska near Seward.

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

The big gull, and the common gull anywhere on the Norton Peninsula.

Aleutian Tern (*Onychoprion aleuticus*)

A few seen along the shore down near Bonanza Bridge.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

The common tern anywhere we went with water in Alaska.

Pigeons & Doves – Columbidae

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Only in downtown Anchorage, another big city bird taking advantage of feeders.

Typical Owls – Strigidae

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

A good year for this irruptive species with the abundance of prey in Nome.

Kingfisher – Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher (*Megasceryle alcyon*)

There were a couple of birds foraging around Westchester Lagoon and Cook Inlet.

Woodpeckers & Allies – Picidae

Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*)

Common in Anchorage and Seward and all points in between.

Caracaras & Falcons – Falconidae

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

Between the different hikes we took at Denali, we had at least five of these falcons.

Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

Seen along the Nome-Council Road and in Denali near Eilson.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Seen in Seward and then again in Denali National Park.

Tyrant Flycatchers – Tyrannidae

Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*)

Heard singing bring-three-beers at Wonder Lake on one of our naturalist forays.

Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*)

Seen in appropriate habitat anywhere in Denali, Anchorage or the Seward area.

Shrikes – Laniidae

Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)

Best looks were of a nesting pair of these birds next to the road west of Stoney Pass.

Jays & Crows – Corvidae

Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*)

A family group near Moose Creek in Denali perched about ten feet away from us.

Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

Common in Seward and Anchorage, both in the wild and in neighborhoods.

Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*)

Seen everywhere but on the Nome portion of our trip.

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*)

This incredibly adaptable bird was seen all over Alaska, most with young in nests.

Swallows – Hirundinidae

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*)

Very common at Potter Marsh where nesting boxes were put to heavy use.

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)

Three birds were seen foraging over Potter Marsh with numerous Tree Swallows.

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

The Seward Harbor had a number of these birds foraging near the Kenai Fjords dock.

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)

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Their mud nests under the restroom roof at Moose Creek gave us long looks.

Chickadees & Titmice – *Paridae*

Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*)

Certainly common in neighborhoods and forested areas in the lower part of the state.

Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*)

A pair gave us up close looks at the Bear Creek Mtce. Station near Council.

Dippers – *Cinclidae*

American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*)

Two birds were seen in creeks flowing into Resurrection Bay.

Kinglets – *Regulidae*

Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus calendula*)

A common breeder between Seward and Anchorage in forested areas.

Leaf Warblers – *Phylloscopidae*

Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*)

These birds arrived on the Norton Peninsula during our five days in Nome.

Old World Flycatchers – *Muscicapidae*

Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*)

Best looks for most were on the Kougorok Road while watching that blonde grizzly.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Seen a few times, mostly on the Nome-Council Road.

Thrushes – *Turdidae*

Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*)

Certainly the most commonly seen thrush on all of our stops in Alaska.

Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)

Got to see and hear their amazing songs in the forests around the Seward area.

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Found on the tundra, in neighborhoods, and in forested regions everywhere we stopped.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)

Fairly common in the forests of Anchorage and Seward.

Wagtails and Pipits – *Motacillidae*

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*)

Lots of looks, but the best was of a flock arriving off of Norton Sound in migration.

American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*)

The tundra of Denali National Park had a number of these nesting birds.

Longspurs & Snow Buntings – *Calcariidae*

Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*)

Not as common as in past years, but still plenty along Safety Sound.

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)

Great looks at two birds on the snow in hills above Wooley Lagoon.

Wood-Warblers – *Parulidae*

Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)

Common and very loud which made it easy to get good looks in willow riparian areas.

Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*)

Another common warbler of the riparian areas adjacent to creeks and rivers.

Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)

Probably the most common warbler we came across anytime we were near willows.

Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*)

Lots of adult males singing from treetops out by Council made for easy views.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*)

Seen in the forests of Chugach State Park along Turnagain Arm.

Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*)

A few were seen in the forests behind our hotel in Seward.

Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*)

Not as common as in years past, but still an easy bird to find.

Sparrows – Emberizidae

American Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*)

Very common and great looks all around the Nome area on Norton Peninsula.

Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*)

Another very common sparrow in the Nome area and also in Denali National Park.

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)

The *Gambelli* race was common all over the areas we birded in Alaska.

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

Not nearly as common as last year, but still plenty for great looks of this stunner.

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)

Mostly along the side of the road where grasses predominated on Safety Sound.

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)

The Alaska race is darker and larger than those further south and almost as common.

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)

Common in the forested areas of Seward and Anchorage.

Blackbirds – Icteridae

Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)

A few were seen around Westchester Lagoon, but not sure if they were nesting.

Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*)

A solo individual seen feeding on the rocks of Resurrection Bay among GWGulls.

Finches – Fringillidae

Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flame*)

Definitely common and seen mostly feeding on willow/poplar catkins.

Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*)

Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*)

A few seen around Moose Creek during our stay at North Face Lodge.

Old World Sparrows – *Passeridae*

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Seen pandering to locals eating meals on the streets of Anchorage.

Mammals/Other Animals

Common Muskrat

Seen gathering vegetation in Westchester Lagoon.

Arctic Ground Squirrel

Common from Nome to south of Anchorage, aka bear burrito.

Lemming

A few were seen crossing roads in the Nome area.

Red Squirrel

Common in the forests between Seward and Anchorage.

Arctic Hare

Populations in Nome and Denali are on the upswing and made this easy to see.

Caribou

The AKDFG misguided hunting of wolves outside Denali makes for lots of caribou.

Moose

Seen in Nome and especially in Denali National Park.

Muskox

Large groups scattered all over the Norton Peninsula.

Mountain Goat

Seen feeding on the cliffs above the Holgate Glacier.

Dall Sheep

Large groups scattered along the road into North Face Lodge.

Red Fox

A few were seen in Nome and in Denali National Park.

Grizzly Bear

We saw a total of eleven with the best and closest view of a blonde in Nome.

Northern Sea Otter

Seen on Resurrection Bay, especially in the Seward harbor.

Steller's Sea Lion

Groups out on the Chiswell Islands gave us great looks.

Harbor Seal

Seen popping up here and there during our Resurrection Bay boat trip.

Humpback Whale

We saw at least seven of these animals on our Kenai Fjords boat tour.

Fin Whale

Only saw one out on the open water off of the Chiswell Islands.

Dall's Porpoise

Only two small groups of the killer whale-colored porpoise.