

Alaska: Birding & Wildlife Species List

May 31 – June 13, 2017 | Compiled by Greg Smith



Anchorage, Nome, Denali, Seward & Kenai Fjords
With Greg Smith and six participants.

BIRDS (150):

Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans

- Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*— Three on the best “dammed” pond were all we saw
- Snow Goose** *Chen caerulescens*— A flock of twenty-two flew overhead as we birded Grand Central Creek - Nome
- Brant** *Branta bernicla*— Small flocks were regular along Safety Sound
- Cackling Goose** *Branta hutchinsii*— We had at least two up in the Nome area
- Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*— We also had this species along Safety Sound
- Trumpeter Swan** *Cygnus buccinator*— At least two pair in Nome, with one nesting along the Kougarak
- Tundra Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*— Fairly common along Safety Sound
- Gadwall** *Anas strepera*— A male was seen preening on Westchester Lagoon
- American Wigeon** *Anas americana*— Seen almost daily in Nome
- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*— First Seen along the Nome River, very small numbers
- Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*— A few were in small ponds in the Nome area
- Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*— One of the more common ducks, seen at all of the visited locations
- Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*— Small numbers of mostly drakes. Females on nests?
- Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*— Seen on at least two occasions, Nome and Seward
- Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*— Fairly common up in the Nome area
- Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*— The more common of the scaup in the interior and southern areas of our visit
- Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*— Fairly numerous in Teller and along Safety Sound
- Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*— Fairs numbers along Resurrection Bay shoreline
- Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata*— Biggest group was on Wonder Lake in Denali
- White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*— Two small groups offshore in Norton Sound
- Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana*—
- Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*— Pairs were in small ponds around Nome
- Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola*— Mostly females on Ranger Pond in Denali NP
- Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*— A small flock were seen on Wonder Lake
- Barrow’s Goldeneye** *Bucephala islandica*— Most of the goldeneyes we saw in Denali were Barrow’s
- Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*— Three drakes and a hen on the Resurrection River in Seward
- Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*— Mostly pairs were seen along rivers in the Nome area

Partridges, Pheasants and Allies

Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus*— Moderate roads in the Nome area, with smaller numbers in Denali

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Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta*— Not at all common this year in Nome

Gaviidae: Loons

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata*— The most common loon in the Nome area

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica*— Probably saw a dozen in the Nome area

Common Loon *Gavia immer*— Seen on Wonder Lake in Denali

Podicipedidae: Grebes

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*— Common in the Anchorage and Seward areas, and on nests

Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants

Brant's Cormorant *Pjalacorcorax penicillatus* – There were a few in Resurrection Bay

Red-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax urile*— Seen by a couple of folks on our way out to Holgate Glacier

Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*— The common cormorant on saltwater

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus*— Not common, but regularly seen on Resurrection Bay

Accipitridae: Hawks, Kites and Eagles

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*— Seen in both Denali and on the highway to Seward

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus*—At least two were seen on our drive into North Face

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*— One came in for a hunt at Ava's Place...

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*— Very common along the coast around Anchorage and Seward

Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus*— We saw at least ten individuals in the Nome area

Gruidae: Cranes

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*— Sporadic, but seen in Anchorage, Denali and Seward areas

Charadriidae: Lapwings and Plovers

Black-bellied Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*— An alternate plumaged pair were on the Cape Wooley road

American Golden-Plover *Pluvialis dominica*— Seen up on Curlew Hill off of the Kougark

Pacific Golden-Plover *Pluvialis fulva*— The more common of the two golden plovers around Nome

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*— Not as common as in past years around the Nome area

Scolopacidae: Sandpiper and Allies

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*— Only a few and they were along streams near Nome

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*— Sen irregularly around freshwater ponds in most areas except Nome

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*— There were at least a half dozen up on Curlew Hill off of the Kougark in Nome

Bristle-thighed Curlew *Numenius tahitiensis*— We got good looks at three up on Curlew Hill

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*— Seen on Westchester Lagoon, with good looks at two on one of the isles

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*— Two pairs on Cape Wooley Road were stunning in alternate plumage

Black Turnstone *Arenaria melanocephala*— Only one was seen along Safety Sound, not an unusual number

Surfbird *Calidris virgata*— A small flock was seen a couple of times at Safety Sound bridge

Sanderling *Calidris alba*— a few were seen once with the Surfbirds at Safety Sound

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*— In small numbers scattered along Safety Sound

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*— The least common of the three small peeps in the Nome area

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Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*— We probably saw about twenty total in the Nome area
Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*— One of the common nesting species along Safety Sound
Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*— Easy to pick out with their rusty breeding plumage
Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*— Seen near the boardwalk on Potter Marsh
Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*— Seen around Westchester Lagoon
Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*— Saw a few with the best look at a displaying bird on Potter Marsh
Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*— Very common in Nome-area ponds

Stercorariidae: Jaegers and Skuas

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*— We saw about a half dozen of these, mostly along Safety Sound
Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus*— Very common around Nome & there were a couple of pair in Denali

Alcidae: Murres, Auklets and Puffins

Common Murre *Uria aalge*— Common is the correct term in Resurrection Bay
Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia*— One was off of the Cape Nome rock quarry with some Common Murre
Black Guillemot *Cephus grille*— Only one seen was under the Safety Sound bridge
Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus columba*— Seen around Resurrection Bay in small groups
Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus*— An amazingly small number were in Resurrection Bay, two only
Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus*— Two small groups on the water as we crossed Ayluk Bay
Parakeet Auklet *Aethia psittacula*— One flew across the bow out at the end of Resurrection Bay
Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata*— Most were seen in the Holgate Glacier fjord
Horned Puffin *Fratercula corniculata*— Seen sporadically in the inner part of Resurrection Bay
Tufted Puffin *Fratercula cirrhata*— We saw at least three. All flying in Resurrection

Laridae: Gulls and Terns

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*— Large nesting colonies out on the islands and cliffs of Resurrection Bay
Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*— Small groups of mostly adult were feeding on plankton at the safety Sound bridge
Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*— We only saw two, and they were mixed in with the Sabine's Gull
Mew Gull *Larus canus*— The common gull of the interior of Alaska
Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*— Only one was seen on the trip
Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus*— First cycle bird was seen on the beach with Glaucous Gulls at Safety Sound
Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens*— The common gull along the coast around Seward
Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*— Very common up along the coast in Nome
Aleutian Tern *Onychoprion aleuticus*— Seen down near the Bonanza bridge along Safety Sound
Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*— Common around water in all areas we visited

Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*— Seen flying around Seward in small flocks

Strigidae: Owls

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*— We did see a few with most in Denali NP

Trochilidae: Hummingbirds

Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus*— Only one seen was an adult male at Ava's feeders in Seward

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Alcedinidae: Kingfishers

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*—We saw one of these crested fish-mongers in the Seward area

Picidae: Woodpeckers

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens*—At Ava's feeders in Seward feeding on a peanut butter log

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus*— Only one seen was in the trees above Alyeska

Northern Flicker *Colaptes auratus*— One flew across the road as we drove into Denali

Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras

Merlin *Falco columbarius*— We saw a pair chasing a Common raven along the Nome-Teller Road

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus*— Seen in Denali NP near Eilson VC

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*— Seen flying above the Boreal forest near the kettle ponds in Denali NP

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*— A solo individual on top of a tree above the kettle ponds in Denali

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum*—The "common" flycatcher in the different areas of Alaska we visited

Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*— Only one was seen on the trip

Corvidae: Crows and Jays

Gray Jay *Perisoreus canadensis*— Best looks were near Wonder Lake in Denali

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri*— Seen along the highway between Seward and Anchorage

Black-billed Magpie *Pica hudsonia*— Everywhere we visited we got looks at these chatterboxes

Northwestern Crow *Corvus caurinus*— Seen in Seward, especially around the bay front campground in Seward

Common Raven *Corvus corax*— This circumpolar bird was everywhere

Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor*— Certainly the most common swallow in the state

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina*— Best looks were at the Talkeetna Lodge

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia*— The colony in the sandy bluff along the Council Road gave us great looks

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*— Only a few blasted through, usually near waterways

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*— They seem to be more common every year

Paridae: Tits and Chickadees

Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus*— Common in the Seward and Anchorage areas

Boreal Chickadee *Poecile hudsonicus*— Seen by a couple on our stop at the Bear Creek weir

Troglodytidae: Wrens

Pacific Wren *Troglodytes pacificus*— Seen briefly on the Lowell Point Road, cautious and skulking as usual

Cinclidae: Dippers

American Dipper *Cinclus mexicanus*— Seen briefly by a few at the Bear Creek Fish weir

Regulidae: Kinglets

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*— Seen in the trees near Alyeska

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Phylloscopidae: Leaf-Warblers

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*— Seen along the Kougarok Road out of Nome

Muscicapidae: Old World Flycatchers and Chats

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*— Seen along the Council Road on the way up to Skookum Pass

Turdidae: Thrushes

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*— The most common of the thrushes in the Nome area

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*— Seen up above in the Alyeska area

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*— Best looks were at the two birds chasing one another above Alyeska

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*— Certainly the most visible of all the thrushes

Varied Thrush *Ixoreus naevius*— Mostly heard and then seen above Alyeska

Motacillidae: Wagtails and Pipits

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis*— Seen in Teller & a few other spots along the roads out of Nome

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*— There were a pair among the houses of Teller

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*— A nice alternate-plumaged bird along one of the passes on the Koukarok

Calcariidae: Longspurs

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*— Very common along Safety Sound

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*— Seen by a few of us above Cape Wooly on the road to Teller

Parulidae: New World Warblers

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*— Very common & vocal along most stream courses out of Nome

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata*— Common along more extensive willow-lined waterways

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia*— Not as common as the other two above, numbers seem to be declining

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata*— Only a few of these high-pitched singers were seen

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*— The Myrtle-form was seen where there were spruce forests

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi*— Seen above Alyeska in the spruce forest

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla*— Common and the males were full of it

Emberizidae: New World Sparrows

American Tree Sparrow *Spizelloides arborea*— Very common around Nome's roads

Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca*— Even more common than the above

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*— An old friend for those of us from the west coast

Golden-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia atricapilla*— Stunning in their breeding plumage

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*— Mostly seen along Safety Sound

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*— Best looks were at the habituated pairs along the Seward Harbor

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolni*— In the marshy areas of Westchester Lagoon

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*— Not common but usually in areas of spruce forest

Icteridae: New World Blackbirds

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*— Seen in Westchester Lagoon

Rusty Blackbird *Euphagus carolinus*— We saw at least five in various places up around Nome

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Fringillidae: Finches

Pine Grosbeak *Pinicola enucleator*— Ava's feeders had a number of these, all different ages and both genders

Red Crossbill - A small flock was working the feeders at Ava's

White-winged Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*— Seen at the Bear Creek Road Maintenance Station on the Council Rd

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*— Definitely common in the Nome area

Hoary Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni*— In the Nome where we could find patches of snow

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus*— Nice-sized flocks at Ava's feeders in Seward

Passeridae: Old World Sparrows

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*— Surprisingly few, and that is a good thing

MAMMALS (21):

Gray Wolf *Lupus* - A single individual carrying a caribou leg near Telktonika

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*— A den with at least two kits visible near the road on Highway Pass in Denali

Grizzly Bear *Ursus arctos*— We saw at least ten in Denali

Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina*— A few were seen on our boat trip in Resurrection Bay

Steller's Sea Lion *Eumetopias jubatus*— A few on the rocks out near the Gulf of Alaska

N. Sea Otter *Enhydra lutris*— Seen in the Seward Harbor and out in Resurrection Bay

Moose *Alces alces*— Seen on more than half of our days

Caribou *Rangifer tarandus*— Best sighting was the group of ~130 cows and calves just west of Stony Hill in Denali

Coastal Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus*— Seen on the mountain cliffs lining Resurrection Bay

Dall Sheep *Ovis dallii*— Best looks were on the hills above Polychrome Pass

Muskox *Ovibos moschatus*— Seen regularly in the Nome area

Killer Whale - A pod seen as returned to Seward gave us some really good looks

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*— We got to see a number of these, but most were moving around

Dall's Porpoise *Phocoenoides dalliseward* — Sightings of these rooster tails made appearances in Resurrection

Harbor Porpoise - Seen off of our Seward boat trip

Snowshoe Hare *Lepus americanus*— A good year for these hares given their numbers

Hoary Marmot *Marmota caligata*— A few were seen in Denali NP

Arctic Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus parryii*— Bear burritos were everywhere especially in Denali

Red Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*— Best looks were in the treed area above Alyeska

Beaver *Castor canadensis*— Seen a few times in the morning hours

Muskrat *Ondatra zibethicus*— Seen briefly on Potter Mash