



Alaska Species List

August 7-14, 2017

Peg Abbott and Dodie Logue, guides, with 11 participants: Kathleen, Frank, Debra, Neil, Kate, Mike, Sue, Cathie, Nicole, Robert and Lynda

(#) = the # of days of 8 field days in total seen

HO = Heard only

LO = Seen by leader only

Ducks, Geese, and Swans

Anatidae

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* (2) – We had good scope views of six that perched beside a kettle pond part way between North Face Lodge and the higher tundra reaches of the park. They were preening and resting. The next day we saw a larger group of 12 in flight.

Brant *Branta bernicla* (1) – We saw a lone bird at sea on the blustery day of our Northwestern Glacier cruise.

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii* (1) – We caught this one on the fly, driving back past Potter's Marsh they were quite close to the road, adjacent to Lesser Scaup for size comparison. Nice!

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (3) – We had scores of them feeding on the coastal mudflats of the Coastal trail in Anchorage. They were great to hear flying overhead at Westchester Lagoon. Another group flew over us at the Anchorage train station our final night, saluting us with their haunting cries.

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator* (5) – We saw a good number of pairs, the first en route to Seward in some of the deeper, lush wetlands. Several had almost adult-sized young. Tern Lake's pair had two young but the four managed to stay just out of good photo range. The family at Seward's Nash road had flown off, but we saw them several more times, including from the train. Two elegant adults were quite close to the road our second day of outings from North Face Lodge, we watched them feed and preen.

American Wigeon *Anas americana* (3) – Seen at Westchester Lagoon and on two days in the kettle ponds at Denali.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (4) – Just a few individuals, but present in several wetlands of Anchorage and Denali.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* (2) – Seen both days on the kettle ponds at Denali, again best told by the shape of their great long sloping bill.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* (3) – We could pick this duck out by its elegant neck and shape, all were in non-breeding plumage.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* (6) – The second most common species to Lesser Scaup, first seen at close range in Westchester Lagoon, then at most other wetland locations.

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* (1) – We had one textbook female with the spot on her check with Sam’s group on an outing, seen with her brood in a kettle pond from North Face Lodge, a nice comparison to the much more numerous Lesser Scaup.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affini* (6) – The most frequently encountered duck, seen in most of the kettle ponds that were occupied. They still had large broods in Westchester Lagoon and Connor Lake in Anchorage, and we even spied them from the train.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* (1) – One individual with young, seen in the scope across Connor Lake in Anchorage, as we marveled at Moose and Pacific Loons.

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta fusca* (2) – Seen at a good distance across Wonder Lake the first day, and then a large raft of several dozen birds by Dodie’s group the second day from North Face Lodge.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* (3) – What a lovely duck, even in its transition plumage. We had several lone birds, one per pond, often seen with Lesser Scaup.

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola* (1) – Just one off-plumage probable female, diving constantly in one of the kettle ponds coming and going from North Face Lodge into the park’s high country.

Barrow's Goldeneye *Bucephala islandica* (2) – We got better and closer looks in the kettle ponds of Denali, seen in several of them, up to 6 individuals one day.

Goldeneye, sp. (1) – There were big numbers of goldeneye far across Westchester Lagoon, 50 or more, but even with the scope we could not see them well enough to call, this time of year with ducks in their eclipse plumage it can be challenging!

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* (1) Seen on one day at the Bear Creek fish wier, a female with a large brood swam very near.

Partridges, Grouse, Turkeys, and Old World Quail

Phasianidae

Spruce Grouse *Falcipennis canadensis* (2) – A lone individual gave us a glimpse as we drove into Denali, coming back out a larger brood and adult crossed the road and lingered, some right next to the van.

Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus* (2) – Driving in and out of Denali, we would spot this fairly common species but usually we had them on one side of the bus or another. Then, we had good looks at this species from the bus, as we were driving out!

Rock Ptarmigan *Lagopus muta* (1) – A few were seen on our hikes the day we went back into the park at higher elevation than the more commonly encountered Willow.

Loons

Gaviidae

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica* (1) – Two were seen well in the scopes at Connor Lake in Anchorage, a very impressive bird in breeding plumage.

Common Loon *Gavia immer* (3) – Seen on Tern Lake at the junction of Homer and Seward highways, then also on Wonder Lake, a family group. We also had an adult with one youngster at a good distance in Wonder Lake, Denali.

Grebes

Podicipedidae

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* (2) – Westchester Lagoon and then again at Tern Lake in proximity to the loons, scope views.

Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus* (2) – Both days in Denali, Peg sighted one on a kettle pond and Dodie and Margo’s group found several at Wonder Lake, a distant raft.

Shearwaters and Petrels**Procellariidae**

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* (1) – Quick views of perhaps a dozen or so, the Captain spotted them first on our return from the Chiswell Islands coming back from the glacier in Seward. It was very rough in this section, and this species just crested over the waves with perfect ease. But as humans, not all could rise to the challenge on the pitching seas!

Cormorants**Phalacrocoracidae**

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* (1) – Seen in the Seward Harbor area.

Red-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax urile* (1) – We had one seen pretty well on the way out of Resurrection Bay, perched on a rock as the waves rocked us to and fro. The Captain then lined us up with a nesting area en route back, we did have three cormorants there, but with the huge swells and rain, it was tough to see their color, again at the ocean edge of Resurrection Bay, we clearly saw only the shape and the lack of Pelagic's white side-rump patches.

Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus* (1) – Quite a good number seen, two or three at a time, around the Chiswell Islands at various islands and flying between them.

Osprey**Pandionidae**

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (2) – Debra spotted this species by a regal looking nest on our train ride back from Denali. We had a very brief glimpse of one in Denali, called out by Sam on our walk the first introductory morning.

Hawks, Kites, Eagles, and Allies**Accipitridae**

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (3) – Seen well in Anchorage, at Potter's Marsh, and then in Seward.

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus* (4) – Another species on a high cycle at Denali National Park, due to high productivity of red-backed voles, we saw over a dozen on several days!

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* (1) – Seen on the back side of Potter's Marsh, harassing a juvenile Bald Eagle above our vans.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* (2) – Great views in Denali on several occasions.

Cranes**Gruidae**

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis* (2) – Peg and Dodie had two on a walk to Westchester Lagoon, but they were not there when we returned the following day. Cathy saw two as we pulled out of Potter Marsh, and then a couple were seen in wet meadows as we headed down to Seward.

Oystercatchers**Haematopodidae**

Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani* (1) – Peg spotted a pair that all got to see as the Captain slowed our cruise down to search a known nesting area in Resurrection Bay outside of Seward.

Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies**Scolopacidae**

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* (1) – Seen at Potter Marsh, good views.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* (1) – Seen at Potter Marsh, preening at close range from the viewing platform.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* (2) – Fairly common around small ponds along the Coastal Trail in Anchorage and at Westchester Lagoon.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (1) – A few mixed in with the Greater Yellowlegs at Potter’s Marsh south of Anchorage.

Upland Sandpiper *Batramia longicauda* (1) Seen on the strenuous hike, coming down from the ridge in Denali by Dodie and Nicole.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* (1) – Half a dozen or so at Westchester Lagoon.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata* (1) – Over a dozen at Potter’s Marsh, easy to see off the boardwalk, scope views.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* (1) – Seen on one day, our cruise from Seward, two little “flocklets”

Auks, Murres, and Puffin

Alcidae

Common Murre *Uria aalge* (2) – Great to see them in their realm, so comfortable at sea in the productive waters of the Chiswell Islands. Some were close to shore in the Seward harbor and off the viewing deck of the Sealife Center. We saw several still on nest cliffs attending young. Sadly our sea conditions were just too rough to approach the outer island cliffs where their more robust cousins reside, they were present the day previous but we missed them.

Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus columba* (2) – We found several quite close in the Seward harbor, then many out at sea, mixed in with other species in feeding areas.

Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus* (2) – We got closer views along the road beyond the Sealife Center that parallels the harbor, but also saw them from the ship before we hit choppy waters, best views in the cove we dropped kayakers off at by Fox Island from Seward.

Kittlitz's Murrelet *Brachyramphus brevirostris* (1) – Very good looks of this species in the ice-fragments as we approached Northwestern Glacier on the cruise from Seward.

Cassin's Auklet *Ptychoramphus aleuticus* (1, LO) – Peg got a focus on this species, mixed in with some Rhinoceros Auklets others were keen to see. Normally we find them, but never in large number, this year was true in that pattern.

Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata* (1) – We found a good-sized raft of this species once in the shelter of Northwestern Fjord, and then were able to approach several pair as we made our way up the sound.

Horned Puffin *Fratercula corniculata* (1) – Common and such fun to see, we had our first looks near a cave in the Fox Island bay as we dropped off the kayakers. There were hundreds and hundreds out to sea, when we’d slow to view the nest cliffs there were many in the waters around us.

Tufted Puffin *Fratercula cirrhata* (1) – We had wonderful looks at this handsome species, which is abundant in the Chiswell Islands. We found them feeding and on nest cliffs. It was great the next day to see them at the Sealife Center (non-releasable education birds) so we could really study them.

Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers

Laridae

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* (1) – Very common in the Chiswell Islands, seen coming out of Resurrection Bay as soon as we hit the productive upwellings and currents. We saw them hovering and feeding over “bait balls” in the islands, at one point a massive Humpback Whale made several dozen of them scatter.

Mew Gull *Larus canus* (6) – An almost every day bird, missing only from North Face Lodge deep into Denali, but present there by the entrance.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* (3) – Seen on the mudflats at Anchorage, and one individual was found on an outing to the kettle ponds by McKinley Bar in Denali.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* (3) – Present in good number in Anchorage off the Coastal Trail and at Seward by the waterfront and out to sea.

Pigeons and Doves

Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* (4) – Seen in and around Anchorage on several days.

Typical Owls

Strigidae

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeu* (3) – Great views in Denali, where this species is reaching a high number in their cycles. Really great to watch them fly and hunt. Debra commented on how long their wings were after seeing an example in the park Visitor Center.

Kingfisher

Alcedinidae

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* (4) – We saw one at Westchester Lagoon, then got very good views in the Seward area. One posed just off the boardwalk at Potter Marsh, a fairly commonly encountered species.

Woodpeckers and Allies

Picidae

Downy Woodpecker *Picoides pubescens* (2) – Seen on the coastal trail to Westchester Lagoon, and another posed for us near the feeders we visited in Seward off Salmon Creek Road.

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus* (2) – Also seen by the feeders in Seward, posing for us.

Caracaras and Falcons

Falconidae

Merlin *Falco columbarius* (6) – We had no expectation of this being a species we'd see regularly. One flew over us the feeder site in Seward and then perch for scope views. We caught flight views of several, and in Denali we encountered families with probably youngsters dueling in the sky, trying out their wings. As we left Denali, one perched docile and tolerant on the rail of a bridge as our huge bus roared by!

Gyrfalcon *Falco rusticolus* (1) – We were thrilled to have good views of this iconic species of the north. The park reports indicated that it was a good year for this species, with several eyries successful, but they had left the nest sites and we were not sure we'd find them. Above the Big Sable we found two perched together, high on a hilltop but quite visible in the scope. Then we caught up to one perched on a parking bumper of a pull out! Our other van was below the pull out, and with luck it went that direction, they got views of it down near the road. Red-backed voles were plentiful, and the young had a good chance of survival.

Tyrant Flycatchers

Tyrannidae

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum* (4) – We found this species right away on our first walk to Westchester Lagoon. They were present in trees near the feeder site in Seward, and at Potter's Marsh.

Shrikes

Laniidae

Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor* (1) – We spied one bird, a fledged juvenile hunting, near one of the kettle ponds as we stopped for ducks on the first day outing with Sam from Denali.

Jays and Crows**Corvidae**

Gray Jay *Perisoreus canadensis* (4) – Alaska’s version is a very dark, sooty gray. We saw them all of the days at Denali, where some very bold ones came in close by Wonder Lake.

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri* (2) – Seen in a residential area outside of Seward, at Alyeska Resort, and in the Seward area.

Black-billed Magpie *Pica hudsonia* (7) – Almost an everyday bird, we found them in a variety of habitats, many family groups with young with short tails. A noisy crew was busy around the Copper Whale Inn and served as our alarm clocks. The only day we missed them was the all-day boat trip from Seward.

Northwestern Crow *Corvus caurinus* (2) – Seen in Seward, quite tame around the fish docks, parking lots, and forest edge of town.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* (7) – Commonly seen, on all but the boat day from Seward.

Alaudidae**Larks**

Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris* (1) – Seen on Highway Pass in Denali, on one of the hikers outings, in the same area as we encountered pipits.

Chickadees and Titmice**Paridae**

Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus* (7) – First seen just outside our windows at the Copper Whale Inn of Anchorage, we encountered them at many of our stops.

Boreal Chickadee *Poecile hudsonicus* (2, HO) – Peg and Dodie found this species with ease on our scouting day, but when returning to the spot the next day they stayed shy, calling from dense spruce. We heard them at Wonder Lake near the campground, and then Peg and Dodie had terrific views at the Botanic Gardens of Anchorage where they occurred together with Black-capped Chickadees in a mixed flock, great to compare calls and views.

Nuthatch**Sittidae**

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis* (2) – Seen and heard off the coastal trail to Westchester Lagoon, and then again at the feeder site in Seward.

Kinglets**Regulidae**

Golden-crowned Kinglet *Regulus satrapa* (1) – A few were seen at Potter’s Marsh in tree tops and flying.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* (1) – Seen at Ana’s feeders in Seward.

Old World Flycatchers**Muscicapidae**

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (1) – High country tundra at Denali, a pair was seen not far from the Eielson Visitor Center.

Thrushes**Turdidae**

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus* (1, LO) – Dodie found this by the bridge below North Face Lodge, singing. We also had one land on the road as we searched for species beyond the Sea Life Center in Seward.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* (2) – Potter’s Marsh and the walk in Anchorage near the Coastal trail, and then again as we came back from Seward at one of our stops.

Wagtails and Pipits

Motacillidae

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens* (2) – We saw this species while on our hikes in the tundra. Several flew over as we paused for our picnic lunches.

Waxwings

Bombycillidae

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulous* (2) – Peg and Cathy spotted a flock coming in to land on a conifer at the head of Wonder Lake and got the scope on them for good views. We had another group while walking the road near our final rest stop at the Teklanika River Overview, one of our last stops in Denali, and Bob got some great photos.

Wood-Warblers

Parulidae

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* (5) – We had several in willow and shrub habitat, one confusing us a bit in Seward at the feeders. They were along the coastal trail in Anchorage, and around the lodge at Denali.

Blackpoll Warbler *Setophaga striata* (1) – Several were seen in the alder shrubs and spruce near North Face Lodge on our walks the introductory morning.

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronate* (3) – Seen in Seward in the tall conifers, then seen on two days in Denali around our lodge.

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi* (1, LO) – Peg had one by the van as she waited in the parking lot, surrounded by thick spruce at Aleyeska Resort. It moved off too quickly for others just gathering up to see.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* (3) – We caught a migratory wave of this little species, still in bright plumage. Sam had 87 walking up Moose Creek and alerted us, we watched several dozen find night shelter by the lodge, and woke the next morning to many of their little chips. We kept seeing them in small number then throughout our time in Denali.

Emberizids

Emberizidae

American Tree Sparrow *Spizella arborea* (2) – We had good views outside the lodge in cottonwood and willow habitat, and then a few as we explored the park.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* (3) – We had several of this species at Potter Marsh, posing for great looks and then a few around Seward. We found them again in shrubbery clusters of the spongy tundra of Denali.

Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca* (1) – Found in Denali National Park in small number, seen on one day we spent time checking the ponds as we ventured out towards the park from North Face Lodge.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* (2) – Seen at Potter Marsh, in Seward where one was signing as we left the port for our all-day cruise.

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolni* (3) – We had one individual at the feeder area in Seward, then one that hung out in the shrubbery and young cottonwoods by North Face Lodge.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* (3) – Quite a common sparrow, seen frequently and in good number, both adults and juveniles.

Golden-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia atricapilla* (1) – Seen on the road going in to Connor Lake, heard singing at Wonder Lake, and seen by one of the vans going out into Denali.

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* (3) – Seen at Connor Lake, around Seward, and Denali.

Fringilline and Cardueline Finches and Allies Fringillidae

Pine Grosbeak *Pinicola enucleator* (1) – *What a treat to first hear, then see several individuals of this species at the feeder site in Seward. They were first studied in the trees, and then came down for super looks as they perched in tray feeders!*

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* (1) – A big flock was hanging out in the tall spruces and cottonwoods at Salmon Creek Road in Seward.

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flamme* (2) – Seen at the feeders in Seward, and then in shrubbery around Wonder Lake and its thick conifers, in Denali National Park.

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* (1) – Seen with the crossbills in Seward in trees off Salmon Creek Road.

Mammals

Common Muskrat (1) – Seen on the Coastal Trail to Westchester Lagoon.

Arctic Ground Squirrel (3) – Very common in Denali.

Red Squirrel (2) – Common throughout wherever there were spruce. It was a big cone year and they were busy with these, and also harvesting mushrooms.

Red-backed Vole (1) – Seen on the day we explored the ponds area in Denali.

Snowshoe Hare (2) – A BIG year for this species in Denali, they would come out on the roads and we'd see them five or more at a time. We hoped this abundance might mean we'd encounter a Lynx, the closest we got was to hear that the two Wonder Lake rangers had one come by their cabins one evening as they sat outside, an evening during our stay!

Collared Pika (1) – Dodie and Nicole, our mountain goats, had great looks at this species atop the ridge across from North Face Lodge on their strenuous hiking day.

Porcupine (1) – Sam's group with Peg had pretty good looks of this species, first crossing the road and then moving quickly up into some alders, but showing off its tail and quills.

Caribou (2) – An iconic species of the north, we had super views of them fairly close to the road system and out on our hikes. Very memorable for one group was a dozen or so that crested an adjacent ridge to pose regally, then descend to a creek just below them, cross that and walk very closely by. Several got videos, fun!

Moose (2) – We had good looks at a large bull across Connor Lake in Anchorage, but this year had no luck while in Denali National Park at finding them, save one about five miles away we put a scope on. We did see several from the train, running off into the brush due to the loud sound of the train.

Dall Sheep ((3) – Distant but good views of groups with lambs in Denali, and one fairly large band of rams.

Red Fox (1) – Seen across the lake at Connor Lake in Anchorage trotting along the shore. A few of the vans got to see one near a former den in Denali.

Grizzly Bear (2) – We had super views of this species, coming and going in Denali National Park and on our day outing back into the park. We saw at least three recognizable females with young of different ages, from spring cubs to two-year-old cubs almost the size of their mom. A lone bear kept us from using our picnic site the first night, though we did get to watch it probably just 30 yards away as it ignored us completely, being engrossed in a good find of soapberries. Each group we saw were feeding on berries

and equally engrossed. Behind one female with young in the distance we spotted a very big lone bear, quite dark, likely a male. Most of the bears were of the blond, Toklat variety.

Black Bear (1) – We saw one as we left North Face Lodge on our way out, early, right in the road near some kettle ponds. Not that common in the park, a nice find!

Northern Sea Otter (2) – Right away we saw this species in the Seward Harbor, then found one or two there were quite tame, often appearing as fishing boats came in, they would find parts of halibut and feed on them. Nothing like close-up views. We had a good number on the cruise day from Seward.

Steller Sea Lion (1) – Seen well on the rugged Chiswell Islands, several groups were hauled out, and one was working an area of big swells of small capelin and other fish, along with whales and seabirds, quite a feast!

Harbor Seal (1) – Quite a few were present near Northwestern Fjord hauled up on the ice or swimming between chunks of ice. The young were almost adult size and we saw a nice variety of pelage colors and pattern.

Humpback Whale (1) – At one time on our boat cruise we had three Humpback Whales feeding at a time, right around the boat! Good views on a windy, stormy day, they stayed close to the surface just gorging on the small schools of fish, so dense they rose like columns in the water.