

# Alaska: Birding & Wildlife | Species List

## June 1 – 14, 2018 | Compiled by Greg Smith



With Guides Greg Smith & Xavier Muñoz and 11 participants



### BIRDS (154 species recorded)

#### Anatidae: Ducks, Geese and Swans (27)

- Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*— Five w/a Cackling Goose along the upper Kougorok were the first
- Snow Goose** *Chen caerulescens*— We had two feeding in Safety Sound with those other large white waterfowl
- Brant** *Branta bernicla*— Small groups were scattered along Safety Sound east of the first bridge
- Cackling Goose** *Branta hutchinsii*— These smaller geese were the more common than the “standard” Canada’s
- Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*— Only a few in the Nome area
- Trumpeter Swan** *Cygnus buccinator*— We saw our first one on a kettle pond near the end of the road in Denali
- Tundra Swan** *Cygnus columbianus*— Scores were seen loafing and feeding in Safety Sound
- Gadwall** *Anas strepera*— Definitely not large number in Safety, but we always managed a pair or two
- American Wigeon** *Anas americana*— Always seemed to have a couple of small groups whenever we birded Safety
- Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*— Very uncommon, with only three birds seen in Nome
- Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*— One pair in the Nome area and that was all
- Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*— Certainly the most common duck after Greater Scaup in Nome
- Green-winged Teal** *Anas crecca*— A score or more in Nome, and all were the North American form
- Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris*— there were probably twenty total scattered on the kettle ponds in Denali
- Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*— The most common of the ducks we saw in Nome
- Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis*— Most scaup on the kettle ponds in Denali were the Lesser
- Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*— Another common duck, mostly at the east end of Safety
- Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*— A few were along the rivers, and all were stunning
- Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata*— A male on Resurrection Bay as we were watching the lunging humpback
- White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*— A few were in mixed flocks offshore of Cape Nome.
- Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana*— The more common of the two scoters we saw in Nome
- Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*— A number of the ponds were always sporting a pair of these fine-lookers

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**Bufflehead** *Bucephala albeola*— The Ranger Pond in Denali had about a dozen every time we passed that way

**Barrow's Goldeneye** *Bucephala islandica*— A few were always on the kettle ponds of Denali

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*— A lone female was mixed in with a group of female Barrow's in Denali

**Common Merganser** *Mergus merganser*— Our first were along the Kougorok Road down close to the coast

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*— We would always seem to find a pair about every half-hour

### Partridges, Pheasants and Allies (2)

**Willow Ptarmigan** *Lagopus lagopus*— Far more common than in the past four years

**Rock Ptarmigan** *Lagopus muta*— We had about six total for the Nome area, and usually in rocky habitat

### Gaviidae: Loons (3)

**Red-throated Loon** *Gavia stellata*— A stunning bird, and relatively common in ponds adjacent to the sea

**Pacific Loon** *Gavia pacifica*— Two nesting pairs, one in Safety and the other a few miles before Curlew Hill

**Common Loon** *Gavia immer*— The usual two suspects were at the south end of Wonder Lake in Denali

### Podicipedidae: Grebes (2)

**Horned Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*— Gorgeous looking birds on Ranger Pond in Denali, just stunning

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*— A few in the Nome area, more in Westchester Lagoon

### Procellariidae: Petrels and Shearwaters (2)

**Sooty Shearwater** *Ardenna grisea*— A flyby as we did our first open ocean crossing out near NW Glacier fjord

### Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants (2)

**Pelagic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*— A few were seen in the Norton Sound

**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*— A yellow-faced individual flew by & then lit off Cape Nome

### Accipitridae: Hawks, Kites and Eagles (5)

**Golden Eagle** *Aquila chrysaetos*— We had at least ten different individuals in Denali

**Northern Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*— A nice adult male was seen perched on the hills above the Kougorok

**Bald Eagle** *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*— Our first were in Denali where they are not at all common

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**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis*— Seen twice from our train to Anchorage

**Rough-legged Hawk** *Buteo lagopus*— Two different individuals in the Nome area, with one being a dark form

### Gruidae: Cranes (1)

**Sandhill Crane** *Antigone canadensis*— Pairs were scattered along Safety Sound

### Haematopodidae: Oystercatchers (1)

**Black Oystercatcher** *Haematopus bachmani*— Two were seen from our NW Glacier boat trip from Seward

### Charadriidae: Lapwings and Plovers (2)

**Black-bellied Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*— Nesting pairs in stunning alternate plumage were along Wooley Lagoon

**American Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*— Found in different areas of Nome & also in alternate plumage

**Pacific Golden-Plover** *Pluvialis fulva*— Only one pair was seen, and that was along the Wooley Lagoon

**Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus*— Seen regularly nesting along the gravel shoulders of roads. 27

### Scolopacidae: Sandpiper and Allies (19)

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*— A few were seen in the flats and on dome-top nesting sites

**Bristle-thighed Curlew** *Numenius tahitiensis*— Only one seen & this individual was a challenging 2<sup>nd</sup> year bird

**Hudsonian Godwit** *Limosa haemastica*— Seen off of the mudflats near Westchester Lagoon

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*— Three were at the Sinuk River bridge

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*— Found on a Norton Sound beach in a mixed flock

**Black Turnstone** *Arenaria melanocephala*— Found on a Norton Sound beach in a mixed flock

**Surfbird** *Calidris virgata*— Found on a Norton Sound beach in a mixed flock

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*— Found on a Norton Sound beach in a mixed flock

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*— Found on a Norton Sound beach in a mixed flock

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla*— Only two were seen on the entire trip in the Nome area

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*— The common sandpiper of the Nome area

**Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri*— Scattered and nesting in the grassy areas of Safety Sound

**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*— A few were in Westchester Lagoon on the island

**Wilson's Snipe** *Gallinago delicata*— Nesting, winnowing and in most wetland habitats of Nome

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*— A very common bird in the Nome area

**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia*— Two were seen in the Nome area, but more common as we headed south

**Wandering Tattler** *Tringa incana*— A few along the interior rivers of the Nome area

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*— Seen in Westchester Lagoon feeding in the shallow wetlands



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**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*— Also seen in Westchester

### **Stercorariidae: Jaegers and Skuas (3)**

**Pomarine Jaeger** *Stercorarius pomarinus*— This barrel-chested pirate was seen just once a day in the Nome area

**Parasitic Jaeger** *Stercorarius parasiticus*— We only saw two, but both gave us great flying auditions

**Long-tailed Jaeger** *Stercorarius longicaudus*— The common jaeger, and it always put on stunning aerial displays

### **Alcidae: Murres, Auklets and Puffins (9)**

**Common Murre** *Uria aalge*— Common on our NW Glacier boat trip once we got to the Chiswells

**Thick-billed Murre** *Uria lomvia*— Seen offshore along Safety Sound on a very calm day

**Pigeon Guillemot** *Cephus columba*— Only a few seen in NW Glacier fjord

**Marbled Murrelet** *Brachyramphus marmoratus*—A group of five were seen in the fjord

**Kittlitz's Murrelet** *Brachyramphus brevirostris*— Only two, but they were fairly close

**Ancient Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*— Two flocks, one of 15 and a second of three in the Chiswells

**Parakeet Auklet** *Aethia psittacula*— A few small groups out of Seward totaling maybe a dozen

**Horned Puffin** *Fratercula corniculata*— The more common of the two puffins out of Seward

**Tufted Puffin** *Fratercula cirrhata*— Equal numbers flying and foraging in the water

### **Laridae: Gulls and Terns (10)**

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*— A few were always seen off of Cape Nome, common in Seward

**Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*—Really only a few were seen in the Nome area, low numbers this trip

**Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*— One was seen in Westchester Lagoon

**Mew Gull** *Larus canus*— Definitely the most widespread and common gull of the area

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*— A few were seen in the Nome area, usually with Glaucous Gulls

**Slaty-backed Gull** *Larus schistisagus*—We saw four different individuals of varying ages

**Glaucous-winged Gull** *Larus glaucescens*— The common gull of saltwater areas south of Seward Peninsula

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*— The big gull in the Nome area, and always with those translucent wing tips

**Aleutian Tern** *Onychoprion aleuticus*— We only saw three of these terns, all down by the Bonanza bridge

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*— Common in all parts of our tour stops

### **Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves (1)**

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia*— A few were scattered in the Anchorage downtown area

### **Strigidae: Owls (2)**

**Northern Hawk Owl** *Surnia ulula*— Ann did a superb job finding three different individuals for us in Denali

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**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*— Our moderate hikers had the only one of the trip on their hike in Denali

### **Trochilidae: Hummingbirds (2)**

**Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*— Seen at Ava's feeders in Seward

### **Alcedinidae: Kingfishers (1)**

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon*— Seen flying along the Salmon River in Seward at Ava's

### **Picidae: Woodpeckers (4)**

**Downy Woodpecker** *Picoides pubescens*— Coming into Ava's peanut butter feeders at Seward

**Hairy Woodpecker** *Picoides villosus*—A very cooperative adult was foraging alongside the Eagle River trail

**American Three-toed Woodpecker** *Picoides dorsalis*— Two adults did an incubation exchange in Eagle River

**Northern Flicker** *Colaptes auratus*— Heard at Ava's feeders

### **Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras (2)**

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*— A fly-by across a slope on a glacial moraine was a treat

**Gyr Falcon** *Falco rusticolus*— First one seen was along the Council Road above the Solomon River

### **Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (3)**

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** *Contopus cooperi*— Heard and seen at the south end of Wonder Lake

**Alder Flycatcher** *Empidonax alnorum*— Seen during our lunch break at Denali's Two-Rock pullout

**Say's Phoebe** *Sayornis saya*— One was seen on the Teller Road as we started to climb into the hills

### **Corvidae: Crows and Jays (4)**

**Gray Jay** *Perisoreus canadensis*— First one was on the trail at Eagle River

**Black-billed Magpie** *Pica hudsonia*— Pretty common in downtown Anchorage

**Northwestern Crow** *Corvus caurinus*— Seen along most of the Seward waterfront

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*—There always seemed to be a pair about every five miles in the Nome area

### **Alaudidae: Larks (1)**

**Horned Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*— Seen up around the Skookum Pass area on Council Road

### **Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins (4)**

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor*— The most common swallow in the Nome area, and Alaska

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**Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina*— A couple were seen in the Nome area & more common southward  
**Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia*— Seen along the Council Road where the sand & gravel quarries were located  
**Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*— Nesting under some of the upper Kougorok bridges

### Paridae: Tits and Chickadees (2)

**Black-capped Chickadee** *Poecile atricapillus*—Seen in all areas of suitable habitat  
**Chestnut-backed Chickadee** *Poecile rufescens*— One came into the feeders at Ava's in Seward

### Sittidae: Nuthatches (1)

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta canadensis*— We saw one enjoy the peanut butter feeders at Ava's in Seward

### Certhiidae: Creepers (1)

**Brown Creeper** *Certhia americana*— Four different birds along the Eagle River trail system

### Troglodytidae: Wrens (1)

**Pacific Wren** *Troglodytes pacificus*— Heard along the Eagle Creek trail system

### Cinclidae: Dippers (1)

**American Dipper** *Cinclus mexicanus*— An adult feeding a fully-fledged young ten feet off of the Eagle River trail

### Regulidae: Kinglets (1)

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula*— First bird was seen along the Eagle River trail system

### Phylloscopidae: Leaf-Warblers (1)

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*— Seen and heard up Moose Creek Road in Denali

### Muscicapidae: Old World Flycatchers and Chats (2)

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*— A nice male put on an aerial show along the Kougorok  
**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*— Seen twice, at Skookum and on the Teller Road

### Turdidae: Thrushes (5)

**Gray-cheeked Thrush** *Catharus minimus*— Very common along the roads in the Nome area  
**Swainson's Thrush** *Catharus ustulatus*— Seen well and heard along the Eagle River trail system  
**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus*— Heard numerous times at the south end of Wonder Lake  
**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius*— Pretty common everywhere, including the Nome area  
**Varied Thrush** *Ixoreus naevius*— Seen and heard along the trail at Eagle River

### Motacillidae: Wagtails and Pipits (2)

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**Eastern Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla tschutschensis*— Always saw a few each day in the Nome area

**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*— A few were in the pass areas near Nome

### **Calcariidae: Longspurs (1)**

**Lapland Longspur** *Calcarius lapponicus*— Common in the sandy, grassed areas along Safety Sound

### **Parulidae: New World Warblers (7)**

**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis*— Just about every creek/river had a few singing in the treetops

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Oreothlypis celata*—As common as the waterthrush, & much brighter than lower 48

**Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga petechia*—Numbers are not as high as in past years, seems to be on decline

**Blackpoll Warbler** *Setophaga striata*—The common warbler at Eagle Creek and the Council boreal forest of

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Setophaga coronata*— Most all were the Myrtle form, not as common as in past years

**Townsend's Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi*—One was seen in the Eagle River parking lot

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla*— Again, a common warbler whose numbers seem to be declining

### **Emberizidae: New World Sparrows (8)**

**American Tree Sparrow** *Spizelloides arborea*— More common in the Nome area than other places we visited

**Fox Sparrow** *Passerella iliaca*— The “Red” was in Nome and Denali, with the “Sooty” in Seward

**Dark-eyed Junco** *Junco hyemalis*— In all areas south of Nome that we visited

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys*— As far north as Nome, and all points south

**Golden-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia atricapilla*— Just a stunning bird when all tee'd up & singing in the AM sun

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*— Common out on the sandy beach areas of Nome

**Song Sparrow** *Melospiza melodia*— Big chocolate-brown ones at Ava's

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolnii*— A few were in the marshy areas of Eagle River and then in Denali

### **Icteridae: New World Blackbirds (2)**

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus*— Seen flying across the road at Potter Marsh, Anchorage

**Rusty Blackbird** *Euphagus carolinus*— We had at least five along the roads up in the Nome area

### **Fringillidae: Finches (6)**

**Pine Grosbeak** *Pinicola enucleator*— Fine views of this big, colorful finch at Ava's feeders in Seward

**White-winged Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera*— We had a single bird fly over at the Bear River Mtce. Stn. near Council

**Red Crossbill** *Loxia* - A small, mixed-gender flock at Ava's feeders in Seward

**Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea*— Best seen in vegetation along the edge of Nome's roads

**Hoary Redpoll** *Acanthis hornemanni*— There was usually a pile of snow nearby when these birds appeared

**Pine Siskin** *Spinus pinus*— Only seen at Ava's feeders in Seward, a small flock



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### **Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)**

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* – Seen nesting at the Chevron station after our last meal together

### **MAMMALS (20 species recorded)**

**Red Fox** *Vulpes vulpes*— Seen in Nome and then good looks in Denali at a den site

**American Black Bear** *Ursus americanus*— Seen at Eagle River running away from us

**Brown (Grizzly) Bear** *Ursus arctos*— Ten, yes ten on our drive into North Face Lodge

**Harbor Seal** *Phoca vitulina*— A pup on a snowbank at Safety Sound was found again the next day down the road

**Steller's Sea Lion** *Eumetopias jubatus*— Common out on the Chiswell Islands

**Sea Otter** *Enhydra lutris*— Seen numerous times in Resurrection Bay

**Moose** *Alces alces*— Numbers-wise, we saw six at once from an overlook along the Nome River

**Caribou** *Rangifer tarandus*— A cow with a few-days old calf was moving quickly to meet up with the Denali herd

**Mountain Goat** *Oreamnos americanus*— The biggest group was of lambs & ewes in Cataract Cove

**Dall Sheep** *Ovis dallii*— Our drive into Denali gave us our first looks at these shedding sheep

**Muskox** *Ovibos moschatus*— Always plenty of sightings in the Nome area

**Humpback Whale** *Megaptera novaeangliae*— Seen numerous times in Resurrection Bay

**Killer Whale** *Orcinus orca*— We saw at least thirty of these animals in Resurrection Bay & out by the Chiswells

**Dall's Porpoise** *Phocoenoides dalli*— Easily five different groups were spotted out of Seward

**Snowshoe Hare** *Lepus americanus*— The Denali and the Nome population were growing in numbers this year

**Hoary Marmot** *Marmota caligata*— Seen on the rocks out by the home of the Camp Denali owners

**Arctic Ground Squirrel** *Spermophilus parryi*— Lots of bear burritos in Nome and in Denali

**Red Squirrel** *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*— We heard them chattering away mostly, but did see them in Seward

**Beaver** *Castor canadensis*— In one of the Denali kettle ponds, we had an adult being industrious during the day

**Muskrat** *Ondatra zibethicus*— Seen on Westchester Lagoon by a few of the group



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