



August 5 - 13, 2019

Alaska Sampler

With Guides Greg Smith & Karen Worcester and 12 participants: Wendy, Camille, Trina, Margaret, Cathy, Ann, Patty & Kevin, Peggy & Mike and Kathy & Bob

Compiled by Greg Smith



BIRDS: 91 species recorded

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS – Anatidae (17)

Brant *Branta bernicla* – Only one seen for the trip was on a rock out by Ailiak Point

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii* – A few were seen at Westchester Lagoon and around Potter Marsh

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* – Seen in various locations throughout the trip

Trumpeter Swan *Cygnus buccinator* – A pair at Westchester and again at Potter Marsh

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus* – Three were seen from the Denali train at an urban recreation lake in Wasilla

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* – Flyover

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* – A couple of eclipse-plumaged males were in Potter Marsh

American Wigeon *Mareca americana* – Fairly common around Potter Marsh

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* – Both Potter Marsh and Westchester Lagoon help lots of eclipse-plumage individuals

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* – A female with four young ducklings were pretty late in the season at Westchester

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* – Scattered around any freshwater mud

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* – A group of six mixed-gender birds were at Potter Marsh

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* – Birds in Westchester were all of this species

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* – The common scaup on the Denali kettle ponds

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* – A female with young on Wonder Lake was a surprise, and a treat

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta deglandi* – A flock of about 23 birds did a flyby during our time out at the Chiswells

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* – A hatch-year male was on one of the Denali kettle ponds

PARTRIDGES, PHEASANTS, AND ALLIES – Phasianidae (1)

Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus* – Small family groups were along the side of the road near the east end of Denali Park Road

GREBES – Podicipedidae (2)

Horned Grebe *Podiceps auratus* – We had two young of the year on Wonder Lake

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* – Numerous pairs with half-grown young dotted Westchester Lagoon

PIGEONS AND DOVES – Columbidae (1)

Rock Pigeon (I) *Columba livia* – Flocks in Seward and in Anchorage's developed core

CRANES – Gruidae (1)

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis* – A juvenile and an adult along the edge of Cook Inlet gave us good looks

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES - Scolopacidae (8)

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* – We had a few birds on the island near the canoe launch on Westchester Lagoon

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* – A Westchester group of thirteen were very confiding

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata* – We had a half-dozen feeding/roosting out in the open at Potter

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* – One flyby out on Resurrection Bay

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* – Seen most easily along the shore of Westchester Lagoon

Wandering Tattler *Tringa incana* – A group of three feeding along the shore of Resurrection Bay gave us ideal looks

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* – Small groups of 5 – 10 were scattered around Potter and Westchester

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* – Not nearly as many as the Greater, and also not as shy

AUKS, MURRES, AND PUFFINS – Alcidae (9)

Common Murre *Uria aalge* – Uncommon out on the Chiswells, but more common than the Thick-billed

Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* – One on the water and six on a steep, rocky cliff which was about as many as we could've expected

Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus Columbia* – Not common at all, and closer to Seward than away

Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus* – We saw about sixteen adults and two juveniles

Kittlitz's Murrelet *Brachyramphus brevirostris* – Took a lot of looking, but we found four in Cataract Cove

Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus* – Two on the water near Ailiak Point were all we could spot, but that was very good for this time of year

Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata* – Six in a flying strung-out line flying by, and one on the water were all we could turn up

Horned Puffin *Fratercula corniculata* – Not as common as the Tufted, but they were more inclined to get into the fjords

Tufted Puffin *Fratercula cirrhata* – The more common of the two puffins, but never seen in the fjords

GULLS AND TERNS – Laridae (6)

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* – Common nesters on the Chiswells, with most of their young close to full grown

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus Philadelphia* – An adult still in alternate plumage was working the mudflats of Cook Inlet

Mew Gull *Larus canus* – Done nesting and mostly gone, but there were a few adults and immatures on the flats of Cook Inlet

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* – One and then a second were seen on the Salmon Reek near Ava's place

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* – The common large gull in this part of coastal Alaska

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* – We only saw two of this species as opposed to six weeks ago when they were nesting

LOONS - Gaviidae (1)

Common Loon *Gavia immer* – First we heard them calling while having lunch on Blueberry Hill, then we saw them

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS – Procellariidae (2)

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* – Numbers seemed to be way down compared to previous years

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* – Only one positive ID, and that was a bird that landed next to the boat

CORMORANTS - Phalacrocoracidae (2)

Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus* – More common out on the Chiswell Islands

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auratus* – More common closer to the mainland

OSPREY - Pandionidae (1)

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* – The only one seen was circling over Westchester Lagoon

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES – Accipitridae (5)

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* – We had three soaring above on our drive into North Face Lodge

Northern Harrier *Circus cyaneus* – We had at least three different individuals in the kettle ponds area at the west end of Denali NP

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* – One of the small foray groups had a single bird fly over Nugget Pond up at Camp Denali

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* – Not as common as earlier in the summer as they were probably feeding on salmon in the river

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* – Seen by clients on the drive from Anchorage to Seward

OWLS - Strigidae (1)

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* – Seen by a few on our drive into North Face Lodge

KINGFISHERS - Alcedinidae (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megasceryle alcyon* – We had two chasing one another on the back of Potter Marsh

WOODPECKERS - Picidae (1)

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus* – One female put in a couple of appearances at Ava's feeders

FALCONS AND CARACARAS -Falconidae (1)

Merlin *Falco columbarius* – It looked like a young bird as it chased yellowlegs over the water's surface at Westchester Lagoon

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS - Tyrannidae (1)

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum* – We found one at Bird Point working the alders

SHRIKES - Laniidae (1)

Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor* – A group of us found a hatch-year bird near the kettle ponds on our day back in the park

CROWS AND JAYS - Corvidae (5)

Gray Jay *Perisoreus canadensis* – A confiding individual at the Denali RR Station gave us great looks

Steller's Jay *Cyanocitta stelleri* – We had one calling while flying overhead at the Bear Creek fish weir

Black-billed Magpie *Pica hudsonia* – Seen every day of the trip, thus showing how adaptable this corvid is in surviving

Northwestern Crow *Corvus caurinus* – Only in the Seward/Resurrection Bay area of the trip

Common Raven *Corvus corax* – Another very adaptable species given the different habitats we found this bird in

TITS AND CHICKADEES – Paridae (2)

Black-capped Chickadee *Poecile atricapillus* – Seen on the Tony Knowles Trail and again at Potter Marsh

Boreal Chickadee *Poecile hudsonicus* – Two people in the group had a bird along the road near Moose Creek

NUTHATCHES – Sittidae (1)

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis* – Two were seen on the Potter Marsh boardwalk

TREECREEPERS – Certhiidae (1)

Brown Creeper *Certhia Americana* – Heard well and seen briefly at the Bear Creek fish weir

KINGLETS - Regulidae (1)

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* – Seen up near North Face Lodge and again at the Teklinika rest area

LEAF WARBLERS – Phylloscopidae (1)

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* – Seen by a few of us while eating our first evening meal, then by others after dinner

THRUSHES – Turdidae (1)

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* – A few were seen running around the grounds at Denali Visitor Center

PIPITS AND WAGTAILS - Motacillidae (1)

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens* – One was seen on the moderate hike out of North Face Lodge

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS – Fringillidae (2)

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* – Seen very well at Ava's feeders

Pine Siskin *Spinus pinus* – The most abundant bird at Ava's feeders

NEW WORLD SPARROWS – Passerellidae (7)

American Tree Sparrow *Spizelloides arborea* – We saw at least a couple of this species in mixed sparrow flocks

Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca* – Seen at Ava's feeders, both adults and juveniles

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* – Slate-colored families were at the Denali RR Station and at the Teklanika rest stop

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* – The second most common sparrow species in the park on this trip

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* – Seen a number of times with the best look from the Potter Marsh boardwalk

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* – The *kenaiensis* race was seen well at Ava's feeders

Lincoln's Sparrow *Melospiza lincolnii* – Seen at least twice, Potter Marsh and Ava's feeders

NEW WORLD WARBLERS – Parulidae (7)

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* – Seen on a restroom break along the Denali Highway

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* – A small migrating group on the Potter Marsh boardwalk came in close for good views

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* – Heard at our restroom break on the Denali Highway

Yellow Warbler *Setophaga petechia* – Seen best along the Tony Knowles Trail foraging in cottonwoods

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronate* – Seen on walk along the Potter Marsh boardwalk

Townsend's Warbler *Setophaga townsendi* – Seen on an early morning walk along the Seward shoreline

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* – We found our first one in the morning light at Ava's feeders

MAMMALS: 17 species recorded

Red Fox *Vulpes Vulpes* – Looks at this sly one were only had by two different individuals on our trip

American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* – Seen in the Seward area on our full day in the area

Brown (Grizzly) Bear *Ursus arctos* – We had eight of these on our drive in – three sows and five cubs
Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina* – Seen during our Seward boat cruise to NW Glacier, mostly at the base of the glacier
Steller's Sea Lion *Eumetopias jubatus* – Resting on the rocks associated with the Chiswell Islands
N. Sea Otter *Enhydra lutris* – We saw at least twenty of these sea weasels on our Seward boat trip
Moose *Alces alces* – Our first sighting was along the boardwalk at Potter Marsh
Caribou *Rangifer tarandus* – We got to see a number of bulls and two cows along our ride into North Face Lodge
Dall Sheep *Ovis dallii* – Seen on the last two days of our trip in Denali, very high on the ridges
Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus* – We saw two individuals just outside of Resurrection Bay
Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* – Our best view was of an individual lunge-feeding at the entrance to Harris Bay
Killer Whale (Orca) *Orcinus orca* – We had three different sightings, but it wasn't until our third that the two animals came swimming over towards our boat
Snowshoe Hare *Lepus americanus* – Seen on the road just after our stop at Tolkat
Hoary Marmot *Marmota caligat* – How do you get cuter than this mammal?
Arctic Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus parryii* – Very common along the road side in Denali NP
American Red Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* – Seen on our Westchester Lagoon walk
Beaver *Castor canadensis* – When we walked over to view the salmon at Potter Marsh, one decided it was time to put on a show