

Alaska Sampler: Anchorage, Homer & Seward | Species List August 7 – 15, 2023 | with Naturalist Journeys



With Guide Greg Smith and 6 participants: Meg & Jordan, Diane & Jon, Sharon and Barbara

Compiled by Greg Smith



BIRDS: 71 species recorded MAMMALS: 10 species

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS – Anatidae (10)

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 Tern Lake and again at Potter Marsh, both with young

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

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

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* – A threesome were seen flying over the parking lot at Land's End

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

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* -

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* – Two small flocks were seen winging their way over the waters of Kachemak Bay

Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* – Only one seen and that was on a pond in the Homer area

GREBES – Podicipedidae (1)

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* – Seen on the pond along AK-1 the south side of Turnagain Arm

PIGEONS AND DOVES – Columbidae (1)

Rock Pigeon (I) *Columba livia* – Common around and along the Homer Spit

CRANES – Gruidae (1)

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

OYSTERCATCHERS – Haematopodidae (1)

Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani* – At least ten were seen during our all day boat trip out to NW Glacier

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS – Charadriidae (1)

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* -A small flock paralled us as we were driving out the Homer Spit

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES - Scolopacidae (7)

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

Wilson’s Snipe *Gallinago delicata* – We had a half-dozen fly over the Homer Spit calling

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* – A small group of six were seen flying over the waters south of Harris Bay

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* – Seen most easily along the shore of Cook Inlet and Potter Marsh

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* – At least three were seen in the mudflat adjacent to the Potter Marshboardwalk

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* – Two individuals were along the shore of Halibut Cove with many more at Westchester Lagoon

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* – We had three at Westchester Lagoon

AUKS, MURRES, AND PUFFINS – Alcidae (9)

Common Murre *Uria aalge* – Common out on the Chiswells, and also out on Gull Island

Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* – Six on a steep, rocky cliff out in the Chiswells were about as many as we could’ve expected

Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus Columba* – Not common at all, and closer to Seward than in the fjords neareward. Also a HY on the water adjacent to Land’s End

Marbled Murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus* – We saw lots of adults and juveniles both out of Seward and at the end of the Homer Spit

Kittlitz’s Murrelet *Brachyramphus brevirostris* – Took a lot of looking, but we found four inside the NW Glacier fjord

Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus* – Two were foraging on the water at the end of the Homer Spit

Rhinoceros Auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata* – Three in a flying strung-out line, and a group of four on the water of the NW Glacier fjord

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 out of Seward

GULLS AND TERNS – Laridae (6)

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* – Common nesters on the Chiswells, with most of their young close to full grown. Also, lots of adults and fledged young at the ferry dock on the Homer Spit

Bonaparte’s Gull *Chroicocephalus Philadelphia* – A max of four at Westchester Lagoon, all immature birds

Short-billed Gull *Larus canus* – Done nesting and mostly gone, but there were a few adults and immatures on the flats of Cook Inlet and at Westchester Lagoon

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* – One and then a second were seen on the mudflats of Resurrection Bay

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

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* – We only saw one of this species and this was in the Seward Harbor

LOONS - Gaviidae (2)

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica* – A fine looking breeding pair were on Westchester Lagoon

Common Loon *Gavia immer* – A fine looking alternat-plumaged individual was along the shore at Land's End

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS – Procellariidae (1)

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* – Two were seen offshore during our crossing to Harris Bay

CORMORANTS - Phalacrocoracidae (3)

Red-faced Cormorant *Phalacrocorax urile* – We got a look and a photo of an individual near Cataract Cove in Harris Bay

Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus* – More common out on the Chiswell Islands than close to the inner coast

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auratus* – More common closer to the mainland, with just a few seen

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES – Accipitridae (3)

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* – A very small male blasted through Westchester Lagoon

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* – Not as common as in other years, but probably because of the salmon runs

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

KINGFISHERS - Alcedinidae (1)

Belted Kingfisher *Megasceryle alcyon* – We had singles on two of three days in Homer and a pair at Westchester Lagoon

WOODPECKERS - Picidae (1)

Hairy Woodpecker *Picoides villosus* – A family group of four were foraging at Ava's feeders

FALCONS AND CARACARAS -Falconidae (1)

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* – A young bird was seen pushing kittiwakes into the water as a form of play

CROWS AND JAYS - Corvidae (4)

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

Common Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchus* – 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

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* – We had one at the Alaska Botanical Garden

NUTHATCHES – Sittidae (1)

Red-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta canadensis* - Two were seen foraging at Ava's Place in Seward and also at the botanical garden

LEAF WARBLERS – Phylloscopidae (1)

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* –

STARLINGS & MYNAS – STURNIDAE (1)

European Starling (I) *Sturnus vulgaris* – Seen in Homer and Seward, but in very small numbers

THRUSHES – Turdidae (1)

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

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* – A pretty-bedraggled looking individual out on the Homer Spit among the huts was a surprise

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS – Fringillidae (2)

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* -

Red Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* – Lots and seen very well at Ava's feeders

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

NEW WORLD SPARROWS – Passerellidae (5)

Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca* – Seen at Ava's feeders, and in the hills above Homer - both adults and juveniles

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* – A family group was foraging near the entrance station to the Botanical gardens

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* – Seen in the scrubby willows near Tern Lake

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* – Seen a number of times in the beach grass at Lands End, but with the best look from the Potter Marsh boardwalk

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

NEW WORLD WARBLERS – Parulidae (3)

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* – An individual in the vegetation along the edge of Land's End parking lot

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata* – Seen and heard at the botanical gardens

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* – We found our only one foraging at Ava's feeders

MAMMALS: 10 species recorded

Brown (Grizzly) Bear *Ursus arctos* – We had fifteen or so when we did our bear flight out to Lake Clark National Park & Preserve

Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina* – Seen during our Seward boat cruise to NW Glacier, mostly at the base of the glacier

Stellers 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 of a large bull in velvet in the hills above Homer

Coastal Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus* – Only one, but it was close down to the water on our return to Seward

Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus* – We had at least one sighting just outside of Resurrection Bay

Killer Whale (Orca) *Orcinus orca* – We had one sighting of a lone female feeding on a Steller's Sea Lion, 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 up in the hills above Homer

Arctic Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus parryii* – Seen in among the rock revetment out on Homer Spit

American Red Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* – Seen on our Westchester Lagoon walk

