

ALASKA MAINLAND

JUNE 13 – 24, 2009

LEADER: BARRY ZIMMER

COMPILED BY: BARRY ZIMMER

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Alaska Mainland

June 13 - 24, 2009

Leader: Barry Zimmer

Itinerary:

June 13 - arrival in Anchorage; late night trip to Westchester Lagoon (23 species)

June 14 - flight to Nome; Council road to MP 45 (53 species; 67 total)

June 15 - Teller Road to MP 40, Wooly Lagoon, Council Road to MP 50 (74 species; 88 total)

June 16 - Kougarok Road to MP 70 (Kuzitrin River), Teller Road to MP 35 (57 species; 99 total)

June 17 - Port of Nome, Council Road to MP 22; return to Anchorage (58 species; 100 total)

June 18 - Anchorage to Seward with stops at Potter Marsh, Turnagin Arm, Johnson Pass Trailhead, Granite Creek Campground, Summit Lake, Bear Creek (54 species; 123 total)

June 19 - all day boat trip to Kenai Fjords National Park (24 species; 136 total)

June 20 - Nash Woods, Seward, Bear Lake, Trail River Campground, Granite Creek Campground, drive to Anchorage, Westchester Lagoon in evening (45 species; 142 total)

June 21 - drive to Denali with some roadside birding, Denali Hwy to MP 118 (38 species; 149 total)

June 22 - bus ride into Denali National Park to Eielson Visitor Center, Otto Lake, evening option to Denali Hwy to MP 109 (32 species; 151 total)

June 23 - Denali Hwy to MP 101; return to Anchorage with some roadside birding, Westchester Lagoon (43 species; 155 total)

June 24 - departures home or on to Barrow extension (155 total species)

Key:

N = Nome and surrounding Seward Peninsula
A = Anchorage and surrounding areas (Potter Marsh, Turnagin Arm, Girdwood, etc.)
S = Seward, Kenai Fjords, Summit Lake, Granite Creek
D = Denali National Park & Denali Hwy

bold-faced species indicate birds of rare, casual or accidental occurrence

underlined species indicate birds of very uncommon occurrence or species which occur regularly but in such low densities as to be easily missed

Birds:

Brant N---the western race *nigricans* (a possible future resplit)
Cackling Goose N---although very difficult to separate from *parvipes* type Canadas, all "white-faced" geese on the Seward Peninsula are of the large Cackling Goose group *taverneri*
Canada Goose A---presumed to be of the small "Lesser Canada Goose" group *parvipes*
Trumpeter Swan D
Tundra Swan N---up to 250 in one day
Gadwall A---uncommon
Eurasian Wigeon N---nice male along the Council Road
American Wigeon A,N
Mallard A,N,S
Northern Shoveler N,A
Northern Pintail N,A
Green-winged Teal A,N
Canvasback N,A---a very impressive 37 in one spot at Nome and female with chicks at Potter Marsh; uncommon
Ring-necked Duck A,D---uncommon
Greater Scaup A,N,S,D---almost daily
Lesser Scaup N,A
Common Eider N---nice studies of v-nigra subspecies along Safety Lagoon
Harlequin Duck N,S---always spectacular; many great views
White-winged Scoter N---very distant views on Bering Sea
Black Scoter N
Long-tailed Duck N
Bufflehead D---one of our last new birds
Common Goldeneye D---two females along Parks Hwy
Barrow's Goldeneye S,D---four stunning males in the Seward area and a lone male and lone female near Denali
Common Merganser N,S,D---uncommon in Nome
Red-breasted Merganser N

Willow Ptarmigan N,D---superb studies of males, one female and chicks; 21 total not counting chicks

Rock Ptarmigan N---six total with great, close views

Red-throated Loon N---nice breeding-plumaged birds; up to 25 in a day

Arctic Loon N---good studies of a three beyond Safety Sound; rare US visitor

Pacific Loon N,S---spectacular breeding-plumaged birds

Common Loon N,S,D---very uncommon in Nome

Horned Grebe A,D---one at Potter Marsh was spectacular; uncommon

Red-necked Grebe A,N---fantastic views including birds on nests

Sooty Shearwater S---two from the boat; a couple others left unidentified

Short-tailed Shearwater S---one from the boat

Double-crested Cormorant S

Red-faced Cormorant S---about 75 in and around small nesting colony on the Chiswells; excellent views

Pelagic Cormorant N,S

Bald Eagle A,S,D---54 in one day!

Northern Harrier N,D

Northern Goshawk D---distantly from the Denali Hwy

Red-tailed Hawk S,D---the "Harlan's" subspecies

Rough-legged Hawk N---eight seen

Golden Eagle N,D--- ten for the trip (much higher than average) with many great views (particularly around Nome)

American Kestrel D---one flying over the Parks Hwy

Merlin N,D---female dust-bathing along the Kougarak Road and a male spotted by Larry on the Denali Hwy

Gyrfalcon N---one very close gray morph on nest with three chicks; best looks I have ever had; #500 for Mary!; tied for third favorite bird of the tour!

Sandhill Crane N,A

Black-bellied Plover N---lone bird on way to Woolly Lagoon

Pacific Golden-Plover N---gorgeous breeding-plumaged birds

American Golden-Plover N---also in stunning breeding plumage

Semipalmated Plover N

Black Oystercatcher S---nice views of three from the boat

Spotted Sandpiper N

Solitary Sandpiper D---in a tree!

Wandering Tattler N---great study of one along Nome River

Greater Yellowlegs A,D---nice comparisons with Lessers at Westchester

Lesser Yellowlegs A,S,D---in trees as well

Whimbrel N---only a couple

Hudsonian Godwit A---42 in one group

Bar-tailed Godwit N---*baueri*; three total

Ruddy Turnstone N---only two seen

Red Knot N---close views of breeding plumaged birds; very uncommon

Semipalmated Sandpiper N

Western Sandpiper N

Least Sandpiper N---a pair at Grand Central bridge

Rock Sandpiper N---tschuktschorum; very local and uncommon
 Dunlin N
 Short-billed Dowitcher A---flock of 82 at Westchester the last evening; subspecies *caurinus*
 Wilson's Snipe N,D
 Red-necked Phalarope N,A---up to 40 a day in Nome
 Bonaparte's Gull A,D
 Mew Gull seen daily in numbers
 Herring Gull N,A---"Vega" Gull at Nome (13 total) and "American " Herring Gull (*smithsonianus*) around Anchorage; already split by Clements and could be a future split by the AOU
Slaty-backed Gull N---a first year, a second year, and a third year bird around Safety Lagoon; rare but somewhat regular
 Glaucous-winged Gull A,S
 Glaucous Gull N---very common
Sabine's Gull N---very uncommon this late; we had two lone birds and a flock of 20
 Black-legged Kittiwake N,S---by the thousands in Kenai Fjords (10,000+)
 Aleutian Tern N---great studies of about 20 total
 Arctic Tern seen almost daily; over a hundred on some days
 Parasitic Jaeger N---including a couple dark morphs
 Long-tailed Jaeger N,D---one of the most common and conspicuous birds around Nome
 Common Murre S---by the thousands
Thick-billed Murre S--- five on the Chiswells; nice views
 Pigeon Guillemot S---great studies from shore and on the boat
 Marbled Murrelet S---about 10 from the boat, seemed less numerous than usual
Kittlitz's Murrelet S---an impressive 26 near Northwest Glacier; several good views of birds in flight and on the water; more conspicuous than usual
Ancient Murrelet S---nice views of five; always tough and scarce; tied for third favorite bird of the tour
Parakeet Auklet S---brief views of three near Cecil's Cove
 Rhinoceros Auklet S---about 40 seen
 Horned Puffin S---about 600 seen
 Tufted Puffin S---about 1000 seen
 Rock Pigeon A,N---increasingly common; birds in Nome must have been recently released
Northern Hawk-Owl D---superb views after much effort; we spent an estimated eleven hours looking for this one before we were rewarded with spectacular views; voted the second favorite bird of the tour!
 Short-eared Owl N---the most numerous I have ever seen them in Nome with up to ten in one day
 Rufous Hummingbird S---less conspicuous than usual
 Belted Kingfisher D
 Downy Woodpecker A
 Hairy Woodpecker A
 Northern Flicker A---"Yellow-shafted"; thanks to Larry

Western Wood-Pewee A---at the secret spot
 Alder Flycatcher A,S,D
Northern Shrike N,S,D---more numerous than usual with six seen; particularly
 unusual was one at Nash Woods
 Gray Jay D---including interesting juveniles
 Steller's Jay S---darker, shorter crested race with dark blue spots on crest
 Black-billed Magpie A,S,D
 Northwestern Crow S---seen best around Safeway
 Common Raven almost daily
 Tree Swallow A,S,N,D
 Violet-green Swallow A,S,D---repeated excellent views of this beauty
 Bank Swallow N,A
 Cliff Swallow N,D
 Black-capped Chickadee A---only one seen for the trip!
 Chestnut-backed Chickadee S---the chestnut-sided subspecies *rufescens*
Boreal Chickadee S---uncommon; great views at Kathy's
 Red-breasted Nuthatch S---ditto
 American Dipper S---great studies of adult with fledged young
 Golden-crowned Kinglet S---nice study
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet S
 Arctic Warbler N,D---superb views of this specialty
Bluethroat N---gorgeous male performed well (maybe my best ever) on the Council
 Road; voted the favorite bird of the tour!
 Northern Wheatear N---always tough; seen best near Woolly Lagoon
 Gray-cheeked Thrush N,D
 Swainson's Thrush D
 Hermit Thrush S,A---perhaps the best song in North America
 American Robin daily
 Varied Thrush S,A,D---great views of several; another top song contender
European Starling A---pair at Westchester our first evening; rare but increasing in
 Alaska
 Yellow Wagtail N---subspecies *tschutschensis*
 Orange-crowned Warbler A,N,S
 Yellow Warbler N,S,A
 Yellow-rumped Warbler A,S,D---Myrtle types
 Townsend's Warbler S---superb views of this striking species
 Blackpoll Warbler N,D
 Northern Waterthrush N,S,D---scope views of one along the Nome River
 Wilson's Warbler N,A,S,D
 American Tree Sparrow N
 Savannah Sparrow N,A,D
 Fox Sparrow N,S,D---"Red" birds (*zaboria*) in Nome & Denali, "Sooty"
 (*unalaschensis*) birds between Anchorage and Seward
 Song Sparrow S---big, dark coastal race *kenaiensis*
 Lincoln's Sparrow S,A
 White-crowned Sparrow almost daily

Golden-crowned Sparrow N
Dark-eyed Junco A,S,D---Slate-colored types
Lapland Longspur N---spectacular in breeding plumage
Snow Bunting N---stunning!
Red-winged Blackbird A---one male at Potter Marsh; uncommon & local
Rusty Blackbird D---responsive male en route to Denali and a pair along the Denali Hwy; uncommon
Pine Grosbeak S---single males near Summit Lake and Bear Creek; can be tough
White-winged Crossbill S,D---flock over Granite creek and pair mobbing the hawk-owl along the Denali Hwy
Common Redpoll N,D
Hoary Redpoll N---good views
Pine Siskin A,S

total species - **155**

Mammals:

Arctic Ground Squirrel
Red Squirrel
Snowshoe Hare---abundant in the Denali region again this year
Red-backed Vole
Common Muskrat---Potter Marsh
Red Fox
Arctic Fox---one in Nome near Safety Sound
Coyote---one spotted by Mary near Denali; very uncommon
Gray Wolf---wonderful, prolonged views of a gray individual near Toklat; seen on about 10% of trips only
Mountain Goat
Moose---a total of seven including a cute calf and a big bull (thanks to Mary)
Caribou---"Barren Ground" Caribou in Denali and "Reindeer" in Nome
Dall's Sheep---close ewes along Turnagin Arm; distant rams in Denali
Musk Ox---many superb views including babies!
Grizzly Bear---fifteen total with six in Nome (one of which was very close!) and nine in the park (including some cubs)
Dall's Porpoise---speedy "mini-Orcas" bow-riding our boat; Jane's favorite!
Humpback Whale-----at least 21 (a record for me) seen from the boat; great, close views
Sea Otter---great views of these cute critters in Kenai Fjords
Steller's Sea Lion
Harbor Seal
seal species (either Spotted or Ringed)---several in Nome

total species - 21

Butterflies:

Mustard White
Magdalena Alpine
Freija Fritillary
Clouded Sulphur

total species - 4

Significant others:

king crab & salmon dinners
blackberry & fruits of the forest pie at Summit Lake
salmon at Bear Lake
Kathy's hospitality at Bear Creek
on time flights with no fog delays!