

GRAND ALASKA: GAMBELL/NOME PRE- TRIP

JUNE 2 – 10, 2010

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TOUR REPORT
GAMBELL/NOME, ALASKA
June 2–10, 2010

By Kevin Zimmer

Our Gambell/Nome trip commenced with a late morning flight to Nome, and with relatively little delay (during which, Jonathan found a Northern Shrike hanging around the Bering Air terminal, that we were all able to see!), we were soon winging our way toward St. Lawrence Island. By mid-afternoon our Bering Air flight was touching down on the airstrip at Gambell. The short hike from the airstrip to the lodge produced the usual Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings in the near boneyard, and then it was time to get down to the business of baggage distribution and getting settled into our rooms. We were just getting geared up to head out on our first excursion when the crackle of the radio brought news of a Stonechat that had just been found by other birders working the base of the mountain! In no time we had organized ATV “taxis” to get us quickly to the spot, and soon we were part of a large assemblage of birders patiently stalking the Siberian rarity as it disappeared amongst the hundreds of lichen-covered rocks in the boulder field, only to reappear, perched jauntily atop a rock, for scope views. At some point, and thankfully, only after everyone had enjoyed good scope views, the Stonechat decided it had performed long enough, and winged its way well up the side of the mountain, never to be seen again. Such is the immediacy of birding Gambell—a rare bird is found, a chase ensues, and within an hour or two, win or lose, it is but a memory.

In high spirits, we began the hike back to the lodge with the intent of quickly checking the northeast marsh and the far boneyard before heading in for dinner. This plan soon went out the window with the news that a Lesser Sandplover had just been found on the lower slopes of the mountain north of the boneyard. So began another chase (with radioed apologies to Jen for putting her dinner on hold), this time on foot. Once again, our efforts met with success, as we caught up with the pretty little plover in almost the same location as we have found individuals of this species on at least two or three previous trips. Now we really did have to get back for dinner, allowing only a brief pause to focus our binoculars on one of the resident pairs of White Wagtails. Back at the lodge, it was a tired, but happy group of birders—barely on the island a few hours, and already with two Asiatic vagrants under our belts! Jen’s fine cooking revived our energy sufficiently for a post-dinner hike to the near boneyard, which paid off in the form of a dapper male Rustic Bunting that had been seen off-and-on prior to our arrival, but which was not to be seen again after our encounter.

Over the next four days we settled into a routine of daily checks of the near and far boneyards, the base of the mountain, the northeast marsh, the airport pond, and the boatyards, punctuated by numerous sea watches of varying duration. On Day 2 we journeyed to the far end of Troutman Lake where a pair of rare Common Ringed Plovers showed off every subtle field mark that distinguished them from the more common and expected Semipalmateds. White Wagtails proved unusually cooperative this trip, with

nearly every walk through the boatyards producing good views. The boatyards also produced our second biggest rarity of the trip, in the form of a female Common Rosefinch. This vagrant actually stuck around for several days (and was still present when we left the island), having discovered that the multiple bowhead whale skulls (from this spring's whale harvest) scattered around the boatyard actually made for giant suet feeders!

Of course, Gambell is about much more than just Siberian vagrants. Sea watches from Northwest Point are always a high point of birding here, and this year was no different. The daily commutes of hundreds of thousands of alcids past the Point is spectacle enough to justify the trip, but it is accentuated by the excitement that comes with never knowing what will fly by next. The sheer numbers of Crested Auklets, Least Auklets, and murrelets of both species were, as always, staggering, and we never ceased to be amused by the fact that nearly every flock of murrelets seemed to be led by a single Horned or Tufted puffin. Migrant waterfowl, loons, and shorebirds were uncharacteristically absent this year, although we did see large numbers of King and Common eiders, more Black Guillemots than usual, and a sprinkling of all three jaegers along with some Pacific, Red-throated, and Yellow-billed loons. We got lucky when an Arctic Loon gave us a close pass on our last morning's sea watch, and when four subadult male Spectacled Eiders flew past us on another sea watch.

We were especially fortunate on our last evening at Gambell, when Paul Lehman radioed in that an Ivory Gull had just flown past him (headed north) at the Point. I roared out to the north beach on an ATV to see if the bird had put down anywhere, but it hadn't. Nonetheless, there were big flocks of Brant on the move, not to mention impressive numbers of passing Steller's Eiders. We decided to shuttle everyone out to the Point for a late evening sea watch, with the hope that the Ivory Gull might return. This strategy paid off soon after we were all assembled at the Point, when what was presumably the same Ivory Gull came winging its way back past us. This charismatic species has suffered global population declines in the past decade, and with projected climate change, it could be in serious trouble. In recent years it has been missed on more trips than it is seen, which was not the case just 10–20 years ago. We also witnessed plenty of whale activity this year—mostly a succession of gray whales. Our second morning provided the clear conditions needed to scope the upper slopes of the mountain for the relatively few breeding Dovekies that sit out on the rocks amidst thousands of more common auklets. After a bit of scope work, we picked out at least five Dovekies from the hordes of Crested, Least, and Parakeet auklets, all of which treated us to excellent views.

A trip to Gambell is always memorable, as much for its glimpse into Bering Sea culture and the adventure of birding one of America's few remaining frontiers as for any birds seen. Just knowing that the snow-capped peaks glimmering some 40-odd miles in the distance were part of the Russian Far East and mainland Asia lent an exotic quality to our experience. It will also be hard to forget the strips of blackened seal and walrus drying on traditional drying racks, ATVs humming across the landscape, seemingly endless treks through soft gravel, stubbing our toes on walrus skulls while birding the boneyards, and, of course, "Ya wanna buy some carvings?"

Nome was a different world, with its bustling, frontier atmosphere, and a network of fabulous roads penetrating a variety of tundra habitats. Bird diversity was much higher here, and mammals were much more in evidence. This latter fact was highlighted by impressive numbers of muskox, some of them quite close to the road. One large herd that we saw on our way out the Kougarok Road was still in the same place when we came back by hours later, but this time they were bunched together in what appeared to be a defensive position. I stopped to see what was going on, and immediately spotted a grizzly on a slight ridge not far from the muskox herd. Seemingly alarmed by our presence, the bear abandoned whatever thoughts he had of taking on a whole herd of muskox, and decided to get out of Dodge! Our birding at Nome was equally noteworthy, ranging from displaying male Bluethroats to an aerial song display from a Bristle-thighed Curlew, not to mention both Rock and Willow ptarmigan, eye-level views of a Gyrfalcon and its downy chicks in the nest, gorgeous American Golden and Pacific Golden plovers in high breeding plumage, Aleutian Terns, a Northern Shrike harassing a Rough-legged Hawk, a point-blank Rusty Blackbird, abundant Arctic Warblers, and a most cooperative male Northern Wheatear.

An early spring, following a winter that was light on snow, meant that all of the roads in the Nome area were completely open and in better than normal condition. This allowed us to get to the end of the Council Road (something we accomplish on only about one out of every three or four trips), where we birded the only spruce forest accessible from Nome. Our efforts were rewarded with nice views of Gray Jay, Varied Thrush, and a responsive pair of Boreal Chickadees. Nome always produces something unexpected, and this year's surprises came in the form of an adult Bald Eagle over the Pilgrim River, and a breeding-plumaged Common Loon in the coastal lowlands of the Council Road.

A trip to this region always highlights the ephemeral, transient nature of birding in the arctic and subarctic regions. Rare birds arrive without warning and leave without notice; conditions are optimal one moment and inhospitable the next. One has to admire the feathered wanderers that return again and again from more hospitable climes to fulfill their reproductive destinies in lands that can be so capriciously unpredictable and unforgiving. Seemingly fragile, always restless, they strike out each spring for this land at the edge of the Bering Sea. And each spring, we wait, anticipating their arrivals, and reveling in our unexpected discoveries. It is a drama that I look forward to repeating, year after year, with undiminished anticipation.

Itinerary:

6/02 - met in Anchorage

6/03 - late morning flight to Nome, followed by flight to Gambell (arriving ca. 4:00 p.m.). Our first excursion was a focused chase to the east side of the lake for a Siberian Stonechat that was found just as we were getting our bags into our rooms!)

6/04 - Gambell

6/05 - Gambell

- 6/06 - Gambell
 6/07 - Morning birding at Gambell, followed by lunch and more birding while waiting for fog to clear for our return flight to Nome. The fog delay meant a later-than-planned arrival in Nome, which precluded any further birding.
 6/08 - All day on the Kougarok Road (to MP 72), including a successful hike for the Bristle-thighed Curlew, with lunch in the field, and returning at 5:30 p.m.
 6/09 - All day on the Council Road (all the way to Council at MP 75), with lunch in the field and returning for dinner at 8 p.m.
 6/10 - Short a.m. trip out Teller Road to MP 44, returning to hotel by 10:00 in time for departing participants to pack, check out of hotel, check in for the flight to Anchorage, and eat lunch. Flight to Anchorage left about 1:15 p.m.

Key:

G = Gambell
 N = Nome area
 * = heard only

Birds:

- Brant** (*Branta bernicla*) - G, N (Only a single bird seen during our first few days at Gambell, followed by flocks totaling 300+ on our final evening and another 140 on our last morning. As usual, they were common in the Safety Lagoon complex and along the coast at Nome.) {These were all typical western *nigricans*, formerly called “Black Brant”.}
- Cackling Goose** (*Branta hutchinsii*) - N (Seen daily at Nome, with one-day highs of 10–15 birds) {Birds in this region belong to the subspecies *taverneri*, which is large compared to other members of this recently split {from Canada Goose} species. They are confusingly like the *parvipes* subspecies of Canada Goose, which is not known to occur here.}
- Tundra Swan** (*Cygnus columbianus*) - G (1 bird at the south end of Troutman Lake on 6/4), N (high count of 400+ along the Council Road on 6/9.)
- Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) - N (Seems to be increasing in the Nome region. We had 3 together between Safety Lagoon and Solomon on 6/9.)
- American Wigeon** (*Anas americana*) - N (daily, with high of 30 birds)
- Northern Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*) - N (daily, with high of 30 birds)
- Northern Pintail** (*Anas acuta*) - G, N (daily at both locations; common at Nome)
- Green-winged Teal** (*Anas crecca*) - N (daily, with high of 30 birds) {All birds seen this year were of the widespread North American race *carolinensis*.}
- Greater Scaup** (*Aythya marila*) - G (virtually absent from seawatches this year), N (daily, with high counts of 100+)
- Steller’s Eider** (*Polysticta stelleri*) - G, N (Single males seen from the Point on the mornings of 6/4 and 6/5, with 1 female seen on the evening of 6/5. Numbers picked up dramatically on 6/6, when 4 were seen on the morning seawatch, and 20+ were seen on the evening sea watch [just a fraction of the 180+ that were seen by P. Lehman that night, most of which passed through during the hour that

- we were eating dinner]. We recorded another 9 the next morning. This was the best showing for this near-threatened species in many years, and more typical of the counts we used to get in the 1980s and 1990s. We also had a pair (male & female) fly by us at Safety Lagoon in Nome (where rare) on 6/9.)
- Spectacled Eider** (*Somateria fischeri*) - G (4 subadult males flying past the Point on 6/6 was our only record)
- King Eider** (*Somateria spectabilis*) - G (Seen daily, with counts ranging from 120–300/day, all flying past the Point.)
- Common Eider** (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*) - G, N (Seen on 6/4–6 from the Point at Gambell, with a daily high of 35+ on 6/5. Common as a breeding bird at Nome.) {Males of this subspecies, *v-nigrum*, differ from populations in northeastern North America mainly by their bright orange [as opposed to greenish] bill. }
- Harlequin Duck** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) - G, N (These handsome ducks were seen daily at both locations [high count of 20 on 6/6 at Gambell, and 8 on 6/9 at Nome] although they were distinctly less common at both locales than is normal. Breeders at Nome may have been impacted by the very low water levels in all of the rivers – a result of lower winter snowfall than usual.)
- White-winged Scoter** (*Melanitta fusca*) - G (A single bird seen from the Point on 6/7 could not be identified to subspecies.)
- American Scoter** (*Melanitta americana*) - G (2 on 6/6 and 5 on 6/7), N (5–6 on 6/8 and on 6/9) {This species has just been split from Black Scoter, *M. nigra*, of Europe. }
- Long-tailed Duck** (*Clangula hyemalis*) - G, N (Daily at both locales, although distinctly fewer moving past the Point at Gambell than in most previous years.)
- Common Merganser** (*Mergus merganser*) ? - N (Uncommon and localized here. A distant bird at Safety Sound on 6/9 was likely this species, but it disappeared before it could be confirmed.)
- Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*) - G (scattered small numbers moving past the point; fewer than normal), N (common, with daily highs of 50+)
- Willow Ptarmigan** (*Lagopus lagopus*) - N (An early spring meant these birds were less conspicuous than normal, but we still had 6 on the Kougarok Road on 6/8, and 30+ along the Teller Road on 6/10.)
- Rock Ptarmigan** (*Lagopus muta*) - N (Probably not a “down” year, but with little snow and an early spring, males had already moved off the roads and up the slopes, making it more difficult to spot them. Dense fog on the Teller Road didn’t help either! Despite that, we found a nice male on our last morning.)
- Red-throated Loon** (*Gavia stellata*) - G (only 2 seen), N (common)
- Arctic Loon** (*Gavia arctica*) - G (We eked one out on our last sea watch. Loons in general were in short supply as migrants past the Point, with the bulk of birds having moved through earlier.)
- Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*) - G (Many fewer loons passing through than at this same time in most recent years.), N (4 along the coast on 6/9)
- Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*) - 1 along the coast between Safety Sound and Solomon on 6/9 was a surprise (relatively rare this far north, although we have seen individuals here on perhaps 5 previous trips {out of 25 years!}).

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) - G (Singles seen flying over the Point on 6/6 and 6/7.)

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) - N (2 on the Kougarok Road on 6/8)

Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) - G (small numbers seen daily from the Point)

Pelagic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*) - G (common), N (1 seen along the coast on 6/9)

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - N (Rare anywhere in the Nome region. We had 1 adult seen & photographed over the Pilgrim River drainage on 6/8.)

Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) - N (Only 1 male seen along the Kougarok Rd. on 6/8.)

Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) - N (2 seen along the Council Road [1 on a nest] on 6/9.)

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) - N (Singles seen along the Kougarok Road on 6/8 and the Council Road on 6/9.)

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) - N (Seen by some along the Pilgrim River on 6/8.)

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*) - N (Scope studies of downy chicks in the nest, and of one of the parents, first perched on a nearby cliff, and then, later in the day, attending the nest; also more distant views of an adult at another nest –all on the Council Road on 6/9.)

Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) - G (1 on 6/3, followed by 70+ on 6/5), N (2 along the Kougarok Rd. on 6/8, and 60+ along the Council Road on 6/9)

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) - N (1 migrant along the Council Road on 6/9)

American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) - N (8 on the Kougarok Rd. on 6/8, and 2 along Skookum Pass on 6/9.)

Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) - N (2 along the Kougarok Road on 6/8.)

Lesser Sand-Plover (*Charadrius mongolus*) - G (1 seen well by all on the lower slopes of the mountain, north of the pump station on 6/3; a second, brighter-plumaged bird seen by KJZ well beyond the south end of the lake late the following evening appeared to be paired with a duller individual. This is one of the more regular vagrants that we have encountered over the years, both at Gambell and at Nome.)

Common Ringed-Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) - G (3 [a pair and a lone male] at the south end of Troutman Lake on 6/4. This is a rare, but annual visitor and at least occasional breeder. We had exceptional studies.

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) - G (4+ birds seen daily, particularly in the boneyards and at the NE marsh), N (1 along the Kougarok Road on 6/8, and 3 on the Council Road on 6/9)

Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) - N (6 along the Kougarok Road on 6/8)

Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incanus*) - N (1 along the Council Road on 6/9)

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) - N (6+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/8, and 3 along the Council Road on 6/9) {The breeding subspecies at Nome is the widespread North American form *hudsonicus*.}

Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*) - N (Flight views of a singing bird. We heard it just 20 minutes into our hike, and then went another 20-30 minutes before it came flying overhead, calling and singing like mad. The bird stayed high, then tailed

down in the direction of the road before coming back our direction and appearing to land just beyond the slope to our north. We made a direct line for the area where the bird appeared to land [a few hundred meters away], but despite much searching, we were never able to relocate it. We had unambiguous views, and the bird was very vocal, but it was not one of our more satisfying experiences. This is one of the rarest and most localized of all North American breeding birds, and one that is easily missed.)

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) - N (4 between the Nome River Mouth and Safety Lagoon on 6/9, and 1 along the Teller Road on 6/10.)

Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) - N (2 along the Kougarok Road on 6/8)

Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*) - N (3 at Safety Lagoon on 6/9)

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) - N* (1 heard singing through the fog along the Teller Road on 6/10)

Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) - N (Common in the coastal lowlands.)

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) - G (A few seen on 6/4 and 6/5, but less common than usual), N (Common along the coast on 6/9.)

Rock Sandpiper (*Calidris ptilocnemis*) - G (Leader only. This species was uncharacteristically inconspicuous at Gambell, and our stakeout spot at Nome was enveloped in fog on the only morning available to us.) {Subspecies *tschuktschorum*, which is dingier and darker than the nominate form that breeds in the Pribilofs.}

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) - G (1-2 daily), N (small numbers scattered around Safety Lagoon on 6/9)

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) - G (leader only)

Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) - N (20+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/8; heard along the Council Road on 6/9)

Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) - G (One pair at the northeast corner of the lake and another at the south end of the lake.), N (common)

Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) - G (Only a single group of 3 that flew past during one of our sea watches. As with loons and waterfowl, there were very few migrant shorebirds moving through this year.)

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) - G (common), N (50+ along the coast on 6/9)

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) - G (A single bird, probably a 2nd-year bird based on the miniscule amount of black spotting and the reduced dark smudging around the eye. This species, which is in global decline, is no longer the “given” that it once was at Gambell, and is now missed more than it is seen.)

Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) - N (2 birds on the sandspit at Safety Sound on 6/9.)

Mew Gull (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*) - N (common)

Herring Gull (*Larus [argentatus] vegae*) - G (Daily in small numbers.), N (only 1 at Safety Sound on 6/9) {Entirely of the Siberian race *vegae*, treated by some as a distinct species, and then called “Vega Gull” or “Vega Herring Gull”.}

Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) - N (1 along the beach between Safety Sound and Solomon on 6/9. Uncommon to rare this far north.)

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) - G (common), N (common)

Aleutian Tern (*Onychoprion aleutica*) - N (10+ around Safety Lagoon on 6/9.)

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) - N (common)

Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) - G (3 on 6/6 and 1 on 6/7, all from sea watches)

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) - G (1 on 6/6), N (1 along the Kougarok Road on 6/8 and 5 along the Council Road on 6/9)

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) - N (20+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/8, and several along the Council Road on 6/9. Always one of the treats of birding Nome.)

Dovekie (*Alle alle*) - G (It took a little scope work, but we eventually managed good studies of at least 5 birds on the side of the mountain on 6/5.)

Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) - G (common), N (Small numbers seen offshore from the Council Road on 6/9.)

Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) - G (abundant), N (Small numbers seen offshore from the Council Road on 6/9.)

Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) - G (None the first two days, followed by 2–6 birds seen during each of our sea watches on 6/5–7.)

Pigeon Guillemot (*Cepphus columba*) - G (Seen on every sea watch. The ratio of Pigeons to Blacks varied from 15:1 to as low as 6:1.)

Parakeet Auklet (*Aethia psittacula*) - G (common)

Least Auklet (*Aethia pusilla*) - G (abundant)

Crested Auklet (*Aethia cristatella*) - G (abundant)

Horned Puffin (*Fratercula corniculata*) - G (common)

Tufted Puffin (*Fratercula cirrhata*) - G (common), N (1 seen offshore from the Council Road on 6/9)

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) - N (1 along the Council Road on 6/9)

Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) - N (1 found by Jonathan near the Bering Air parking lot on 6/3 was subsequently found to be nesting in the area. We had another dive-bombing a Rough-legged Hawk near MP 38 on the Council Road on 6/9.)

Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*) - N (2 birds at MP 72 near Council on 6/9.)

Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) - G, N (Seen daily at both locales.)

Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) - N (1 near Skookum Pass on 6/9.)

Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) - N (common)

Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) - N (fairly common along both the Kougarok and Council roads.)

Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) - N (20+ over the Kuzitrin and Pilgrim rivers on 6/8.)

Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) - N (Rare anywhere in the Nome region. We photographed a pair in the Pilgrim River drainage on 6/8.)

Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*) - N (Rare anywhere in the Nome region. We photographed a pair near Council on 6/9.)

Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*) - N (10+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/8, and others heard along the Council Road on 6/9.)

Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*) - N (Prolonged studies of multiple stunning males along the Kougarok Road on 6/8 and of another male along the Council Road on 6/9. This bird is just too cool!)

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) - N (Nice looks at a male off the Pilgrim Hot Springs Road on 6/8.)

“Siberian” Stonechat (*Saxicola [torquata] maurus*) - G {Our first vagrant of the trip, was a female found by Paul Lehman while we were just preparing for our first excursion. After a bit of work, everyone got good looks at this elusive individual as it disappeared and reappeared among the rocks of a large boulder field. It eventually flew way off up the mountain, not to be seen again. Taxonomy in this group is contentious. The A.O.U. still recognizes a single polymorphic species (= Stonechat, *S. torquata*), but recent molecular studies have resulted in some taxonomists splitting this into multiple species, with the *maurus* group (breeding over most of temperate Asia, from about 71° N latitude south to the Himalayas and sw China and west to the Caspian Sea and far ne Europe; wintering from southern Japan south to Thailand, India and ne Africa) treated as a distinct species (“Siberian Stonechat”) from the African resident *torquatus* (“Common Stonechat”) and *S. rubicola* (“European Stonechat”), and sometimes as well from *S. [m.] przewalskii* (“Turkestan Stonechat”) of sw China. There are relatively few records from the A.B.A. checklist area (I’m guessing < 10, with at least 3 previous records from Gambell.)

Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) - G (2 in the boneyards on 6/3.), N (Always amazingly common here.)

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) - N (common)

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) - N (Heard along the Kougarok Road on 6/8, with 3 seen near Council on 6/9.)

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*) - N (10+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/8, and several along the Council Road on 6/9.)

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) - G (We had more quality views of this often elusive species on this year’s trip than any trip in the past ten years!)

American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*) - N (5+ in the high country along the Council Road on 6/9.) {Subspecies *pacificus*, one of the widespread subspecies that breed in North America.}

Orange-crowned Warbler (*Oreothlypis celata*) - N (common)

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) - N (common)

Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*) - N (1 seen near the Pilgrim River on 6/8, and 3 near Council on 6/9 – uncommon and local breeders in the Nome area.)

Blackpoll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*) - N (2 along the Pilgrim River drainage on 6/8, and 3 near Council on 6/9.)

Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) - N (common)

Wilson’s Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) - N (common)

American Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*) - N (common)

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) - N (common)

Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca zaboria*) - N (common) {Subspecies *zaboria*; one of the “Red Fox Sparrow” types.}

White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) - N (common)

Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) - N (common)

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) - N (Rare anywhere in the Nome region. We photographed a pair near Council on 6/9.)

Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) - G, N (Abundant at both locales.)

Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*) - G (A lovely male seen well in the near boneyard on 6/3. It was first found days before our arrival, and then not again after our sighting.)

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) - G (common)

Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) - N (1 female in the Snake River drainage on 6/10.)

Common Redpoll (*Spinus [Carduelis] flammea*)- G (a few seen daily in the boneyards), N (small numbers on both days; greatly outnumbered here by Hoary Redpoll.)

Hoary Redpoll (*Spinus [Carduelis] hornemanni*) - G (1 male in the boneyards on 6/4), N (common)

Common Rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*) - G (1 female seen in the boatyard on 6/5–7 was still there when we left the island, and was seen for some days later. A lifer for your leader! This bird was treating the bowhead whale carcasses like giant suet feeders! It was also feeding on seeds from some of the small herbaceous plants nearby.)

Mammals:

Arctic Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus parryi*) - G, N

Tundra Vole (*Microtus oeconomus*) - G

Moose (*Alces alces*) - N

Muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*) - N

Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) - N

Grizzly (Brown Bear) (*Ursus arctos*) - N

Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) - G

Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) - G

Steller's Sea Lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) - G