

# ALASKA MAINLAND

JUNE 14 - 25, 2005

**LEADERS:**  
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**COMPILED BY: BARRY ZIMMER**

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June 14 - 25, 2005

Leaders: Barry Zimmer & Marshall Iliff

## Itinerary:

June 14 - arrival in Anchorage

June 15 - morning flight to Nome; Teller Road to MP 40, Woolly Lagoon (55 species)

June 16 - Kougarak Road to MP 72 including Pilgrim Hot Springs and Coffee Dome curlew hike for half of group (63 species; 73 total)

June 17 - Council Road to Council (MP 73) (78 species; 93 total)

June 18 - Kougarak Road to MP 20; return to Anchorage with afternoon birding at Westchester Lagoon (51 species; 109 total)

June 19 - Anchorage to Seward with stops at Potter Marsh, Granite Creek & Trail River campgrounds, Summit Lake; evening option along Resurrection Bay (57 species; 130 total)

June 20 - all day boat trip to Kenai Fjords National Park (28 species; 142 total)

June 21 - Nash Road, Bear Creek, Summit Lake, Ship Creek Hatchery (44 species; 151 total)

June 22 - Glenallen Hwy to MP 124, drive to Denali with some roadside birding (38 species; 156 total)

June 23 - bus ride into Denali National Park to Fish Creek, evening option to Otto Lake & Stampede Lane (44 species; 160 total)

June 24 - Denali Hwy to MP 119; return to Anchorage (53 species; 165 total)

June 25 - departures home or on to Barrow extension

## Key:

N = Nome and surrounding Seward Peninsula

A = Anchorage and surrounding areas

S = Seward, Kenai Fjords, Summit Lake, Granite Creek & Trail River

D = Denali National Park & Denali Hwy

G = Glenallen 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:

Red-throated Loon N,G---nice breeding-plumaged birds; scope views of birds on nests

**Arctic Loon** N---great studies of a pair beyond Safety Sound; rare US visitor

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

Common Loon N,S,D---one on Safety lagoon was noteworthy  
**Yellow-billed Loon** N---fly-by along the Council Road for some; always a good find in Nome; completed a five loon day for some!  
 Red-necked Grebe N,A,S,G,D---repeated excellent views including adults with young on their backs  
Horned Grebe A,D---more conspicuous than usual with pairs at three different locations  
 Sooty Shearwater S---a couple of close fly-bys on our boat trip  
 Double-crested Cormorant S  
 Pelagic Cormorant N,S  
 Red-faced Cormorant S---about 20 on our boat trip  
 Trumpeter Swan S,G---fewer than usual  
 Tundra Swan N---up to 400 in one day  
Greater White-fronted Goose N---pair with goslings along the Kougarok; very uncommon breeder on Seward Peninsula  
 Canada Goose A---presumed to be of the small "Lesser Canada Goose" group *parvipes*  
 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*  
 Brant N,S---the western race *nigricans* (a possible future re-split)  
 American Wigeon N,A,S,D  
Gadwall N---very uncommon  
 Green-winged Teal N,G,D  
 Mallard N,A,S,D---a couple in Nome where very uncommon to rare  
 Northern Pintail N,A  
 Northern Shoveler N  
 Canvasback A---female with chicks at Potter Marsh; uncommon  
Redhead A---three found by Amy & Karin on Spenard Lake the last evening; very uncommon  
 Greater Scaup N,A,G,D  
 Lesser Scaup N,A,D---generally less numerous than preceding species  
 Common Eider N---nice studies of v-nigra subspecies along Safety Lagoon  
 Harlequin Duck N,S---always spectacular  
 Long-tailed Duck N  
 Black Scoter N---seemingly more numerous than usual with a few pairs out the Kougarok Road and some small flocks off the Council Road  
 Surf Scoter N,D---particularly well at Otto Lake  
 White-winged scoter N,D---great studies on the Denali Hwy  
 Common Goldeneye D---despite protest from some, a lone female of this species was identified at Otto Lake  
 Barrow's Goldeneye S,A---female with young on Summit Lake and a pair with young at Ship Creek  
 Bufflehead D---one of our last new birds  
 Red-breasted Merganser N  
 Common Merganser S  
Osprey A---very uncommon but seemingly increasing in the Anchorage area  
 Bald Eagle A,S,D---repeated excellent views  
 Northern Harrier N,D  
 Red-tailed Hawk S,D---the "Harlan's" subspecies  
 Rough-legged Hawk N---including two nests, one of which had two tiny chicks  
 Golden Eagle N,D  
 American Kestrel D---by some from the shuttle bus  
 Merlin S,A---particularly well at Ship Creek  
 Gyrfalcon N,D---three adults seen and two nests with young; all gray morphs  
Peregrine Falcon N---wonderful display of bird dive-bombing a raven at Cape Nome  
Spruce Grouse S---attack hen with chicks taking on a small dog; walk away scope-filled views of this always very tough species  
 Willow Ptarmigan N,D---after several "good" ptarmigan years, this was clearly a "crash" year around Nome with only one bird seen our last morning; however, this species seemed to be more

common than usual in the Denali area with a total of 19 seen  
 Rock Ptarmigan N---as with Willow, numbers of this species were way down in Nome, but we did manage six individuals with some excellent views  
 Sandhill Crane N  
 Black Oystercatcher S  
 Pacific Golden-Plover N---gorgeous breeding-plumaged birds  
 American Golden-Plover N---ditto  
 Black-bellied Plover N---perhaps the most beautiful of the three  
 Semipalmated Plover N,S  
 Wilson's Snipe N,A,D---some in trees!  
 Short-billed Dowitcher A---subspecies *caurinus*  
 Hudsonian Godwit A---great views of birds at about 50 feet!  
 Bar-tailed Godwit N---*baueri*  
 Whimbrel N,D  
 Bristle-thighed Curlew N---great views for the seven who made the rugged hike up the dome; this species is less than 50 - 50 on any given tour  
 Lesser Yellowlegs A,D---also in trees  
 Spotted Sandpiper N,A,S,D---with spectacular views at Ship Creek of one avoiding a Merlin  
 Wandering Tattler N  
 Ruddy Turnstone N---stunning in breeding plumage  
Black Turnstone N---one pair along Safety Lagoon; very uncommon  
Red Knot N---a nice find along the Teller Road  
 Semipalmated Sandpiper N  
 Western Sandpiper N  
 Least Sandpiper D---one pair along Denali Hwy  
 Dunlin N  
Rock Sandpiper N---subspecies *tschuktschorum*; very uncommon and local  
 Red-necked Phalarope N  
 Parasitic Jaeger N---both light and dark morphs  
 Long-tailed Jaeger N---one of the most common and conspicuous birds around Nome  
 Mew Gull seen daily in numbers  
 Glaucous-winged Gull S  
 Glaucous Gull N  
 Herring Gull N,A---"Vega" Gull at Nome and "American " Herring Gull around Anchorage' already split by Clements and could be a future split by the AOU  
**Slaty-backed Gull** N---an increasingly regular visitor to Nome; great scope views  
 Bonaparte's Gull A,D  
 Black-legged Kittiwake N,S---by the thousands in Kenai Fjords  
 Arctic Tern almost daily  
 Aleutian Tern N  
 Common Murre N,S  
 Thick-billed Murre N---only one seen distantly from Cape Nome; none on the boat trip  
**Black Guillemot** N---great views of this very rare species in the Nome area  
 Pigeon Guillemot S  
 Marbled Murrelet S---about 50 from the boat  
Kittlitz's Murrelet S---after some effort we had a half dozen or more near Northwest Glacier; great views on the water!  
Ancient Murrelet S---more numerous than usual with 100+ from the boat; easily missed  
Parakeet Auklet S---as with Ancients, this species was more numerous than usual with about 80 seen from the boat  
 Rhinoceros Auklet S  
 Horned Puffin S---about 750 seen  
 Tufted Puffin S---about 500 seen  
 Rock Pigeon A,S---two in Seward were a surprise  
Northern Hawk-Owl G,D---our best year ever for this species with six on the Glenallen Hwy, one from the shuttle bus in Denali, and five more on the Denali Hwy; usually we struggle to get

one or two; voted the second favorite bird of the tour  
 Short-eared Owl G,D--our first spotted by Amy  
 Rufous Hummingbird S---less conspicuous than usual  
 Belted Kingfisher D  
 Downy Woodpecker S---nest with young  
 Three-toed Woodpecker S---after much effort we had great views thanks to Marshall and his red cap!  
 Northern Flicker G---"Yellow-shafted"  
 Olive-sided Flycatcher D---heard only  
 Western Wood-Pewee A  
 Alder Flycatcher N,A,S,D  
Say's Phoebe N---very uncommon  
 Horned Lark N,D  
 Tree Swallow almost daily, including in Nome where there are basically no trees!  
 Violet-green Swallow A,S,D---spectacular views of this stunning species at Summit Lake  
 Bank Swallow N,A  
 Cliff Swallow N,D  
 Yellow Wagtail N---subspecies tschutschensis  
 American Pipit N  
 Golden-crowned Kinglet S---an agitated male about ten feet away near Seward was a favorite for both Marshall and I  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet S,A,D  
 Bohemian Waxwing D---one perched along the Parks Hwy and a pair along the Denali Hwy  
 American Dipper N,S---great studies  
 Gray-cheeked Thrush N,D  
 Swainson's Thrush D  
 Hermit Thrush N,A,S,D---perhaps the best song in North America  
 American Robin almost daily  
 Varied Thrush S,A,D---great scope views; another top song contender  
 Arctic Warbler N,D---superb views of this specialty  
 Bluethroat N---two males in one spot put on an incredible show of skylarking; voted the favorite bird of the tour  
 Northern Wheatear N---nice views of this uncommon and local species  
 Black-capped Chickadee A  
 Chestnut-backed Chickadee S---the chestnut-sided subspecies rufescens  
 Boreal Chickadee S,D---uncommon  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch S  
 Northern Shrike N,D---two in Nome and three from the shuttle bus; always uncommon  
 Gray Jay S,D  
 Steller's Jay S---dark race lacking white spots on crest and around eye  
 Black-billed Magpie A,S,G,D  
 Northwestern Crow S---"just a durned old crow" according to Leonard  
 Common Raven seen daily  
 European Starling A---small flock in Palmer spotted by Amy; generally rare in Alaska  
 Pine Grosbeak S---excellent views of females near Seward  
 White-winged Crossbill S,D---a good year for this irruptive species  
Red Crossbill S---a pair overhead along Nash Road; unexpected here  
 Common Redpoll N,S,D  
 Hoary Redpoll N  
 Pine Siskin S  
 Orange-crowned Warbler almost daily, including seeing the orange crown on a few  
 Yellow Warbler N,A,D  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler A,S,D---Myrtle types  
 Townsend's warbler S---superb views of this striking species  
 Blackpoll Warbler N,D,G  
 Northern Waterthrush N,S,D

Wilson's Warbler N,A,S,D  
American Tree Sparrow N,D  
Savannah Sparrow N,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,D  
White-crowned Sparrow almost daily  
Golden-crowned Sparrow N,A,S,D  
Dark-eyed Junco A,S,D---Slate-colored types  
Lapland Longspur N---spectacular in breeding plumage  
Snow Bunting N---ditto  
Red-winged Blackbird A---uncommon  
Rusty Blackbird N

total species - 165

### **Leader only birds:**

Snow Goose  
King Eider---distantly from Fat Freddie's  
Sabine's Gull

### **Mammals:**

Arctic Ground Squirrel  
Red Squirrel  
Snowshoe Hare  
Arctic Hare---leaders only in Nome  
**Short-tailed Weasel**---a nice find along the Denali Hwy  
Common Muskrat  
American Beaver---tentatively identified by Marshall, though some questioned his knowledge of beavers  
Red Fox---great view of one with a ground squirrel on our trip to Otto Lake  
**Gray Wolf**---great spotting by Marshall of a gray individual on the bus ride in Denali  
Mountain Goat  
Moose---several great views including one about ten feet from the van on our way back from Otto Lake  
Caribou---"Barren Ground" Caribou in Denali and a large herd of "Reindeer" in Nome  
Dall's Sheep---including head-butting rams  
Musk Ox---three separate groups along the Kougarak Road, one within a couple hundreds yards during our picnic lunch!  
Grizzly Bear---mother with three grown young in Nome spotted by Karin; thirteen on the shuttle bus ride into Denali including one right on the road next to our bus  
Black Bear---one from the gas stop in Girdwood; uncommonly seen  
Harbor Porpoise  
Dall's Porpoise---speedy "mini-Orcas" bow-riding our boat  
Sea Otter---great views of these cute critters in Kenai Fjords  
Steller's Sea Lion---close views of huge bulls and their harems  
Harbor Seal  
Spotted Seal

total species - 22

### **Butterflies:**

Old World Swallowtail

Canadian Tiger Swallowtail

White-veined Arctic

Ross's Alpine

Mustard White

Phoebus Parnassian---stunning butterfly at Pilgrim Hot Springs

another parnassian species seen by Marshall and others along the Denali Hwy, but I have forgotten the species

fritillary/ checkerspot species (along the Denali Hwy)

unidentified blue species

total species - 9

**Significant others:**

Leilani & Aki the Hula Girls

Sitka---the official tour mascot

a view of the tip of Mount McKinley our last day

the best weather ever for an Alaska tour!