

NOTES ON THE OCCURRENCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SOME
SOUTHEASTERN ALASKAN BIRDS

By G. WILLET

THE RECENTLY published Pacific Coast Avifauna number 17 on the birds of British Columbia, by Brooks and Swarth, was naturally of peculiar interest to the writer, who for a number of years has resided in southeastern Alaska, a territory immediately contiguous to that covered by this distributional list. A large number of the species enumerated in it are common to both British Columbia and southeastern Alaska; and the following notes are submitted with the idea that a comparison of the occurrences of certain of the species in the two localities may prove of interest.

To the writer one of the most interesting features of field ornithology is the fact that the observations of different field naturalists in the same or slightly different localities are almost certain to depart from one another markedly in some features. For instance: The British Columbia list states that *Stercorarius pomarinus* is a scarce migrant along the coast and *Stercorarius parasiticus* fairly common. The writer, only a few miles to the northward, finds conditions reversed in regard to these two species. While residing at Craig, west coast of Prince of Wales Island, *S. pomarinus* was found common in migration each fall between August 5 (1921) and October 7 (1922). A great many were seen each year and a number of specimens were taken, though they were generally wild and hard to collect. They were following flocks of gulls and shearwaters and obtaining their rations in the usual manner. They were apparently rare in spring, a bird seen May 16, 1921, being the only record for that season. Not a single specimen of *S. parasiticus* was ever noted in the vicinity of Craig, the only examples of this species seen in the region being occasional birds well out in the open sea.

Branta nigricans, *Pisobia bairdi*, *Ereunetes pusillus* and *Calidris alba* are all recorded as common along the British Columbia coast. The writer has never seen a living specimen of the first three of these birds in southeastern Alaska, and has not found the Sanderling anywhere excepting at Sitka Bay, where they were not very common. Fred Gray, of Wrangell, has taken two specimens of Black Brant during twenty-five years collecting and considers them very rare in that locality. It seems probable that the species comes south well off-shore and swings in to the coast somewhere south of the Alaska-Canadian boundary.

Rissa tridactyla pollicaris. This bird is listed as a straggler from the north and only a few records mentioned. If no more plentiful than this on the British Columbia coast, the puzzle is, where do they go from here? They are abundant in southeastern Alaska as a migrant only, though sometimes remaining as late as November 12 (1920, Wrangell). My only winter record is of a single immature bird seen on a street in Ketchikan, January 23, 1925. This bird was sluggish and apparently sick. The Kittiwake is abundant in fall migration, usually between August 10 and October 15, and less so in the spring between April 25 and June 1. In the northern half of the Alexander Archipelago it is fairly plentiful throughout the summer months, but apparently non-breeding.

Larus occidentalis. Among the gulls following boats leaving Puget Sound for Alaska there are frequently a few of the above species. The writer has made the trip a dozen or more times and has always been interested in watching to see how far these birds would go before turning back. They have several times followed well into

British Columbia waters, and on one occasion, November 9, 1924, a single bird remained with us as far as the south side of Queen Charlotte Sound, after which it was not further seen.

Xema sabini. The deduction that the line of migration of this species is probably some miles out to sea is undoubtedly a correct one. On August 24, 1917, the writer encountered large numbers of these birds in the open water between Forrester and Dall islands. They were flying south in company with Arctic Terns and Long-tailed Jaegers. They were common in spring migration off Forrester Island June 2, 1916, and May 20 to 30, 1917. Either the dates of their migration or the route of the same must vary, however, as they were not found in the above localities on corresponding dates during 1919 and 1920. Only a few stragglers have been noted along shore and these all immature birds.

Phalacrocorax auritus cincinatus. The status of this bird in southeastern Alaska is apparently about the same as in British Columbia. It is rather common throughout this region in winter, especially where there are schools of small fish. Immature birds are occasional in summer, but I have never seen adults at that season. My earliest fall record for adults is September 11 (1921, Craig), and latest in spring May 8 (1922, Craig). I doubt exceedingly that this bird breeds anywhere on the coast in this region. Careful questioning of many people from different localities has led to no information as to where it does breed.

Phalacrocorax pelagicus robustus. The writer has carefully examined and measured somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty specimens of breeding Pelagic Cormorants from southeastern Alaska, and a number of years ago concluded that there was no valid reason for recognition of *robustus* as a subspecies. The same idea is held by Bent in his *Life Histories*. Slender-billed and heavy-billed birds may be found breeding in the same colonies, and other measurements vary considerably.

Lophodytes cucullatus. On November 24, 1922, at the head of Trocadero Bay, near Craig, while the writer was hiding behind a stump awaiting a flight of geese, three immature Hooded Mergansers swam up to within twenty feet and fed busily for about ten minutes. This would extend the winter range of this bird some distance up the coast.

Fulica americana. Two birds taken at Craig in 1921, a female November 26 and a male December 25, may constitute a northern record for the coast district.

Accipiter velox. Though Brooks and Swarth record this bird, in winter, only in the "extreme south" of British Columbia, it is occasionally met with at that season in every locality visited by the writer in southeastern Alaska. It was seen at Wrangell January 2, 1921, at Craig November 22, 1922, and a female taken near Ketchikan February 9, 1926.

Aquila chrysaetos. The three following are records for the coast district. Female taken by A. M. Bailey near Juneau, September 23, 1920; bird shot by James Lou near Craig February 5, 1923; and another shot by D. Rutherford near Ketchikan January 15, 1924. The feet and legs of these last two birds were brought in for the bounty and were examined by the writer.

Falco sparverius sparverius. A sparrow hawk was seen at Craig September 11, 1919, and another at Wrangell April 11, 1921. A. M. Bailey saw a bird at Craig March 10, 1920, and collected a pair near Juneau September 11 the same year.

Colaptes auratus borealis. A yellow-shafted flicker was shot at Craig October 21, 1919, but was not killed outright and escaped in the thick brush. Another was seen at close range at Wrangell October 11, 1920. On October 3, 1925, a female was collected near Ketchikan. This specimen is a hybrid between *auratus* and *cafer*, but nearer the former in appearance.

Euphagus carolinus. Two birds taken at Wrangell October 10, 1920, and another seen November 30, same year. Male seen in same locality January 2, 1921, and another two days later.

Leucosticte tephrocotis littoralis. Two birds taken by Fred Gray at Wrangell December 30, 1920. Two birds seen by the writer in the same locality April 7, 1921.

Bombycilla garrula pallidiceps. A. M. Bailey saw several flocks at Wrangell November 27, 1919, and the writer saw ten or twelve birds at Ketchikan January 18, 1925.

Bombycilla cedrorum. Three birds seen in a brush thicket in Ketchikan July 14, 1924, and six or eight in same locality next day.

Lanius borealis. Not rare at Wrangell in winter, though rather wild and hard to collect. Earliest seen October 12 (1920), and latest March 5 (1921). Several specimens taken during winter of 1920-21. A male taken at Craig November 30, 1921, was the only one seen in that locality.

Certhia familiaris occidentalis. Occasional throughout the winter at both Craig and Wrangell. Specimens taken at this season in both localities.

Planesticus migratorius caurinus. Fairly common in summer, but much more abundant during migrations, September 10 to October 20, and March 25 to May 12. Rare in winter. One seen January 29, 1923, one December 11, same year, and one February 23-24, 1924, all at Craig. Eggs taken at Ketchikan May 30, 1925.

Ixoreus naevius. Common throughout winter some years, rare during others, and some winters not seen at all. Very abundant at Craig, winter of 1919-20; not seen at all between September 21, 1921, and April 27, 1922; occasional throughout winter of 1922-23. Not seen at Ketchikan during early winter of 1924-25, the first, a single bird, being noted on January 18. Several were seen the day following, and the species was fairly common during the rest of the winter.

Ketchikan, Alaska, February 18, 1926.