

RECENT DATA ON STATUS OF SOME INTERIOR ALASKA BIRDS

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Little ornithological work had been done in interior Alaska—the taiga region between the Alaska and Brooks ranges—prior to 1945; and it was not until the biological programs at the University of Alaska began to develop about 1950 that ornithologists became resident in the area on a year-round basis. It is not surprising, therefore, that the rate of accumulation of new information on the status of the various birds of the region is still high. The present report seeks to bring up to date published information on the status of a number of the less common species observed in the region in recent years. In addition to the paucity of previous ornithological work in the region, two other major factors contribute to the length of the following summarization of new information: (1) severe drought conditions in the Canadian prairie provinces in the late 1950's and early 1960's apparently resulted in the northward displacement during the breeding season of certain prairie species of waterfowl as far north as Alaska (Hansen and McKnight, 1964); and (2) aberrant weather conditions, resulting in a very late spring, apparently caused an unusual spring passage of shorebirds through interior Alaska in 1964.

Many people have contributed to compilations of this report; authority for specific observations is given in the text. We particularly appreciate the generous cooperation received from Calvin J. Lensink, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Donald E. McKnight, U.S. Army Medical Service Corps; Peter E. K. Shepherd and Robert B. Weeden, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; Karl B. Schneider and L. Gerard Swartz, University of Alaska; and other students and staff of the University of Alaska.

LIST OF SPECIES

Chen caerulescens. Blue Goose. The first occurrence of a Blue Goose in Alaska was observed on 4 May 1963, at Creamer's Dairy, Fairbanks, when a single bird was seen feeding in the fields among Snow Geese (*Chen hyperborea*), Canada Geese (*Brania canadensis*), White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*), and other waterfowl by David L. Anderson, Mrs. Dan Eagan, and members of the Fairbanks Garden Club. The arrival of this Blue Goose, which stayed in the area for several days, coincided with the main 1963 passage of Snow Geese through interior Alaska.

Anas strepera. Gadwall. The only specific published record of the Gadwall in interior Alaska is that by Dixon (1938:33) where he reports it as "one of the rarer species of ducks breeding in the McKinley region. . . . Anderson reported it as breeding regularly at Wonder Lake, where we found a pair on July 19, 1926." In recent years, several other observations have come to our attention. Adolph Murie (*in litt.*), in his many years of study in Mt. McKinley National Park, has seen this species there once, in August 1940. In the Tetlin Lake region (63° 05' N, 142° 40' W) Donald E. McKnight (*in litt.*) saw a pair on a small pond on 25 June 1960; and he writes of an adult male seen on Island Lake on 19 May 1961, and a flightless adult male that was trapped and collected at Merganser Lake on 12 July 1961. Karl B. Schneider collected an adult male (UA 2395) at Gasoline Lake near Tetlin on 23 September 1964. Near Fairbanks, Springer observed a pair on a pond near the Little Chena River on 21 July 1960; and on 3 August 1960 he saw three Gadwalls, one an adult male, at the same pond. At the Fairbanks International Airport, Kessel and a group of students watched an adult male for some time on 17 May 1965. Peter E. K. Shepherd and Calvin J. Lensink report that to their knowledge none has been positively identified on the Minto Lakes Flats or the Yukon Flats, respectively.

Anas discors. Blue-winged Teal. Since mid-1950, the Blue-winged Teal has become a regular inhabitant of the major waterfowl areas of interior Alaska; it has been seen every summer in the Tetlin, Minto Lakes, and Yukon Flats areas. Some breeding has occurred in the interior Alaska population, the greatest number of broods (16) being counted in the region around Tetlin Lake in

1959 (Hansen, 1960:136). In 1960 three broods were seen at Tetlin (Hansen and McKnight, 1964); three fully feathered immatures (1 ♂ and 2 ♀) that would not fly were caught by Shepherd in a baited trap on 22 August at Minto Lakes (64° 55' N, 148° 45' W); and Shepherd trapped an immature male Blue-winged Teal at Minto Lakes on 25 August and another on 30 August.

In 1961 Ruth Schreiber and Springer watched a Blue-winged Teal nest at Smith Lake, College. The nest contained eight eggs on 4 June, but was empty on 21 June, the eggs apparently having hatched. The female was never identified on the nest, but from 4 June through 9 July a pair of Blue-winged Teal was constantly in the area, and the feathers and down of the nest were identified at the U.S. National Museum as belonging to this teal. In 1961 this species was recorded for the first time on the Yukon Flats, and during this season, according to Lensink, although it was always scarce, it was more numerous and widespread on the Flats than it has been since. In this year a brood of young was observed at Scaup Lake (66° 21' N, 146° 10' W), about 30 miles southwest of Ft. Yukon on 17 August; two were banded (Lensink, *in litt.*). Hansen and McKnight (1964) recorded four broods at Tetlin in 1961.

No broods were recorded in interior Alaska in 1962 or 1964, but on 17 July 1963, Henry A. Hansen and Dwain A. Davies saw a brood on Butterfly Lake near Tetlin (Schneider, personal communication); and on 4 August 1963, Lensink (*in litt.*) saw two unaccompanied Class IIc young on a lake near the Upper Mouth of Birch Creek (66° 30' N, 146° 10' W) in the Yukon Flats.

Mareca penelope. European Widgeon. This widgeon was seen for the second time near Fairbanks, Alaska, during the spring of 1964; a single male had been previously recorded on 9 May 1954 (Kessel, 1955:372). On 29 April 1964 Lensink and Schneider reported an adult male in spring plumage at Creamer's Dairy; a number of other people observed it during the following week as it fed with other migrant dabblers. On 24 May, when unseasonable weather apparently forced over 1000 dabblers back to Creamer's Dairy, Ruth Schreiber saw two adult male European Widgeons among the Pintails (*Anas acuta*) and American Widgeons (*M. americana*).

Aythya americana. Redhead. Since 1959 Redheads have been seen frequently in interior Alaska, and on some of the larger areas of waterfowl habitat they are considered as a fairly common duck. They do not, however, appear to be establishing themselves well as breeders, although there are breeding records for almost every year since 1959. Hansen and McKnight (1964), from the Tetlin Lakes area, report three broods in 1959 and six broods in 1960. At Minto Lakes, Shepherd (personal communication) saw a brood of five on 15 July 1961, and a brood of eight on 5 August 1962.

On the Yukon Flats, Lensink (*in litt.*) reports that 14 "locals" were banded during the summer of 1961, and in 1962 the young reported by Yocom (1965:103) was taken. Lensink also reports a nest with seven eggs on Marten Lake (66° 22' N, 147° 55' W), 15 miles west of Beaver, on 6 July 1962, and that a brood was seen on this same lake later in the summer. In 1964 Redheads were still fairly common on the Yukon Flats, and Lensink saw at least one brood with three or more Class Ib young on Ohtig Lake (66° 35' N, 143° 45' W), 40 miles east of Ft. Yukon, on 1 August 1964.

Aythya collaris. Ring-necked Duck. The Ring-necked Duck has been seen in limited numbers in interior Alaska every year since 1957 (Hansen, 1960; Kessel, 1960:481; and subsequent unpublished records). But the great majority of these ducks are apparently nonbreeders. We are aware of only three breeding records, none of which has been recorded in the literature. The first observation was of a female with a brood of five newly hatched young seen by Henry A. Hansen and McKnight on a pond near the north shore of Tetlin Lake on 21 July 1960 (McKnight, *in litt.*). The other observations are from the Yukon Flats where two broods, one of five Class Ic young and the other of seven Ib young, were seen on 14 August 1964, on Gamble Slough (66° 10' N, 148° 50' W), 10 miles northeast of Stevens Village (Lensink, *in litt.*).

Oxyura jamaicensis. Ruddy Duck. The Ruddy Duck is a rare species in Alaska. Prior to 1959 only two occurrences had been reported, one near Petersburg on 15 August 1916, and one at Northway on 1 June 1957 (Hansen, 1960). Between 1959 and 1963, however, a number of observations of this species were made in interior Alaska. On several occasions in 1959, ruddies were seen at Tetlin Lakes, and the first breeding record for Alaska was recorded (Hansen, 1960). None was seen in 1960, but on 12 June 1961 McKnight and Ray Parent saw an adult male at

Gasoline Lake in the Tetlin area. In 1962 Springer saw an adult male on Smith Lake at College on 26 May, and he collected it on 27 May (UA 2018); the testes measured 23.5×10.7 and 28.0×10.1 mm. Alta Crawford watched an adult male at Harding Lake ($64^{\circ} 25' N$, $146^{\circ} 50' W$) on 29 July 1962; and Shepherd saw a female at Minto Lakes in August 1962. On 21 July 1963 Shepherd watched a brood of three Class Ia Ruddy Ducks at Minto Lakes. Lensink is unaware of any records of Ruddy Ducks on the Yukon Flats, and no 1964 Alaskan records have come to our attention.

Buteo harlani. Harlan's Hawk. *B. harlani* and the Red-tailed Hawk (*B. jamaicensis*) occur regularly in interior Alaska during the spring and fall migrations and during the breeding season. According to Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959), O. J. Murie found *harlani* nesting at Kechumstuk in east-central Alaska on 19 and 20 April 1921 (although this is early in the season for an established nest). Dixon (1938) reports seeing *harlani* at several sites in Mt. McKinley National Park in 1926, and records a breeding pair at Wonder Lake on 19 July 1926. Tom J. Cade found a nest of *harlani* at College from which one young was fledged in 1950, and another nest near the mouth of the Chena River that had a chick still mostly in down on 8 July 1951. Between 19 July and 19 August 1951 Cade (MS) located four nests along the Yukon River between Fortymile, Y.T., and Circle, Alaska; and he commented that "all the nesting pairs at the sites . . . were uniformly dark. . . . Some of these birds had tinges of brown in the tail but for the most part they appeared distinctly whitish. . . ." During this month along the Yukon River, Cade saw only one adult bird with a typical brick-red tail. In 1952, in traveling the Taylor Highway from near Tok, Alaska, to Dawson, Y.T., Kessel recorded a Harlan's Hawk on 11 July at Mile 79 and another at Mile 150, about halfway between Boundry and Dawson; no other buteos were seen. On 14 July 1963 Springer collected a specimen at Ferry ($64^{\circ} 01' N$, $149^{\circ} 08' W$) that proved to be *harlani*; its mate, however, was a normal color-phase Red-tailed Hawk. In mid-June 1964 Kessel observed two pairs of hawks that were apparently territorial near Tetlin Lake, and all four birds appeared to be *harlani*.

Springer spent the summer of 1964 in the area of Ferry and obtained some significant observations on the status of *harlani* and *jamaicensis* in this area. Springer found three nests, all similar and placed from 60 to 75 feet above the ground on top of old squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) nests in tall spruce trees. The first nest was found in late May and contained two eggs on 2 June; the female was a very dark, typical Harlan's Hawk and the male a typical, light, Red-tailed Hawk. The second nest, which had two young (one 1-2 days old, the other 5 days old) and one well-incubated egg on 14 June, belonged to two typical Red-tailed Hawks. The third nest, with three $2\frac{1}{2}$ -week-old young on 1 July, belonged to a female *jamaicensis*, but the identification of the male remains uncertain. The male's tail showed *harlani* characteristics, but its body was unusually light for *harlani*. Mixed pairs of the two "species" have been previously reported in Alaska (cf. Gabrielson and Lincoln, 1959, for McCarthy), but Williamson *et al.* (1965:73) have found only Harlan's Hawks breeding in the Cook Inlet and Kenai Peninsula regions.

A heavy flight of buteos passed through the Ferry area during the fall migration of 1963. Springer noted that *B. harlani* started its migration earlier than *B. jamaicensis*, with the heaviest flights being in late August and early September. The migration of the Red-tailed Hawk was heaviest during the first half and the middle of September. In both "species" the adults migrated earlier than the immatures.

Porzana carolina. Sora. The first Alaskan record of a Sora was a male specimen collected by Urban C. Nelson near the Juneau airport on 21 October 1956 (Nelson, 1958:142). The second record was from a small, bullrush-filled pond about one mile southeast of Tetlin Lake; here, McKnight heard at least two Soras calling on 6 July 1961; he collected an adult male (UA 1846) on 8 July (McKnight, *in litt.*). Attempts to locate a nest were unsuccessful. A third Alaskan record was obtained in 1964 when Curtis H. Sherwood found a dead Sora at the edge of a freshwater creek on the Sherwood Farm not far from the Juneau airport on 2 June. This specimen (UA 2391) was a female with an undeveloped ovary.

Fulica americana. American Coot. Between 1960 and 1964 there has been a series of observations of coots in the vicinity of Tetlin Lake and in the Yukon Flats. In the Tetlin area an adult coot was seen on 8 August 1960 at Gasoline Lake by McKnight and Galen McWilliams; another

was seen on 18 August 1960 at Fish Lake by James H. Branson; and Neil Argy saw one on Butterfly Lake in early August 1961. Schneider saw one at Butterfly Lake on 12 June 1963, and he watched a female at the northeast edge of Tetlin Lake from 11 September to 1 October 1964, at which time he collected it (UA 2393). In the flats near Ft. Yukon, Jay N. Eisenhart saw a coot in summer 1960 on a lake near the portage between Beaver Creek and Birch Creek (66° 15' N, 146° 00' W), and he saw another on 24 June 1961, on a shallow lake near Beaver Creek (Lensink, *in litt.*). Lensink collected a female (UA 2367) at Ohtig Lake on 10 August 1962. The specimen weighed 415 g, the skull was clear but hard, and a 15 mm bursa was present; the ovary contained irregular-sized ovules, 17 of the larger ones being 2 mm in diameter, indicating that the ovary had been active earlier in the season. Prior to these records, the only other reported occurrence of the coot in interior Alaska comes from Dall and Bannister (1869), who mention a specimen obtained by a Mr. McDougal in the Ft. Yukon area prior to Dall's visit in 1867.

Charadrius vociferus. Killdeer. It now appears that Killdeer may wander in some numbers, at least in some years, northwest of their usual breeding range in northwestern British Columbia. Over the years, widely scattered records have been reported from Yukon Territory and throughout most of mainland Alaska (Rand, 1946; Drury, 1953; Gabrielson and Lincoln, 1959; Irving, 1960; and Kessel, 1960). They have been noted regularly in the Cook Inlet area since 1955, and at least one probable instance of breeding is known at Anchorage (Williamson *et al.*, 1965). The first interior Alaska record was of a pair observed at College on 12 May 1953 (Kessel, 1960). In early June 1959 McKnight saw an individual at Butterfly Lake near Tetlin. In 1963 observations indicated that Killdeer were unusually abundant and widespread: between 11 and 27 May at least three and perhaps four individuals were seen around Fairbanks; on 8 June Springer watched one near the head of Kokechik (Igiak) Bay on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (Kessel *et al.*, 1964:37); and on 25 June and on several occasions thereafter, Lensink and Eisenhart saw a pair near the Ft. Yukon airfield. The behavior of this Ft. Yukon pair convinced Lensink and Eisenhart that it was nesting, but neither eggs nor young were located. Lensink and Eisenhart saw a pair at the Ft. Yukon airfield again on 7 May, 1 June, and 28 July 1964. Steven B. Young and Michael C. Smith of the University of Alaska observed another individual at Creamer's Dairy near Fairbanks on 15 May 1965.

Squatarola squatarola. Black-bellied Plover. There appears to be a regular spring passage of Black-bellied Plovers, especially in late May, through northeast interior Alaska and the eastern Brooks Range. Lensink (*in litt.*) finds them a common spring migrant through the Yukon Flats, although not nearly as abundant as the Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*); Irving (1960) found that a few migrated through Anaktuvuk Pass in the central Brooks Range each spring; and Kessel recorded two transients at Lobo Lake (68° 21' N, 143° 56' W) on 1 June 1956 (Kessel and Schaller, 1960). Southwest of the upper Yukon River and the Tanana Hills, however, interior records of the Black-bellied Plover are rare. Springer trapped, banded, and released an adult male in breeding plumage at Ft. Wainwright near Fairbanks on 30 May 1962; and on 16 May 1965 Steven B. Young and George E. Hall III independently identified an individual feeding among about 200 migrant Golden Plovers at Creamer's Dairy. Shepherd has not seen Black-bellied Plovers during his many years of study at Minto Lakes, although Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite what we consider a questionable observation of five at Minto Lakes in early June 1951. Adolph Murie (1963) does not list the species for McKinley Park, but Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite a late July record. The only other fall record is a winter-plumaged bird observed by Springer at Ft. Wainwright on 3 September 1960.

Arenaria interpres. Ruddy Turnstone. Records for Ruddy Turnstone are rare in interior Alaska, although Irving (1960) recorded it as a regular but "hasty" spring migrant through Anaktuvuk Pass on the Brooks Range between 1949 and 1954. Only one other interior record is known to us. Springer watched a Ruddy Turnstone in breeding plumage as it fed about a shallow pond with other shorebirds at Ft. Wainwright on 23 and 24 May 1961; its occurrence at this pond coincided with the presence here of a Hudsonian Godwit (see below), the first observation of this latter species in interior Alaska.

Arenaria melanocephala. Black Turnstone. There have been no previously published records for interior Alaska of the Black Turnstone, although such occurrences might be expected in view

of the number of records of this species occurring casually away from the coast from Yukon Territory to western Arizona. On 25 July 1959 John S. Weske observed three of these turnstones at Lake Minchumina (64° 52' N, 152° 15' W), 150 miles southwest of Fairbanks; and on 26 August 1963 William J. Robertson collected one at Lake George (63° 48' N, 144° 26' W), about 40 miles southeast of Delta Junction. The plumage of the specimen (UA 2382) appears to be that of an immature bird. The bird was fat but weighed only 97.5 g as compared with adult specimens in the University of Alaska Museum which range from 110 to 130 g; the sex of the specimen was not determined because of destruction of the gonads.

Bartramia longicauda. Upland Plover. The status of the Upland Plover in Alaska is unclear, but it apparently nests in widely scattered localities from south-central Alaska (cf. Williamson *et al.*, 1965) to the Brooks Range. Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite breeding evidence for the upper Kobuk River, vicinity of Ft. Yukon, 200 miles northeast of Ft. Yukon, and McKinley Park. In 1956 Kessel and Schaller (1960) found the species breeding in the upper reaches of the Sheenjek River and possibly in the headwaters of the East Fork of the Chandalar River. Frederick C. Dean (MS), from 5 to 19 August 1963, watched up to five Upland Plovers which he believed to be a family group at the headwaters of the Noatak River. Robert A. Rausch, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, found a nest with two eggs at Delta Dry Bar (63° 45' N, 146° 50' W, 1600 feet alt.) on 2 June 1961. Also, there is evidence of a probable breeding locality at Donnelly Dome (63° 48' N, 145° 45' W): a male (UA 358) with enlarged testes (14 × 7 mm) was collected in this area on 20 May 1952; a bird that acted as if it had young was observed here by Weeden on 8 July 1961; a female (UA 2019) with several enlarged follicles (8 mm diam.) in the ovary was collected on 24 May 1962; and Weeden noted two territorial pairs in the area throughout the summer of 1964. Weeden also reports that a pair of these sandpipers stayed throughout most of the summer of 1960 at Eagle Summit (65° 29' N, 145° 23' W), although he found no nest or young.

A small though definite spring migration of these sandpipers apparently occurs through interior Alaska each year. Dates of occurrence in the vicinity of College are as follows: 2 birds, 25 May 1952; 1 bird, 21 May 1953; 1 bird, 17 May 1954; 5 birds, 15 May 1955; 1 bird each, 12 and 15 May 1957; 1 bird, 13 May 1962; 1 bird, 30 May 1964; 3 birds, 17 May 1965. Weeden cites first spring observations of Upland Plovers at Eagle Summit on 24 May 1960, and 17 May 1961; and Lensink finds them a regular migrant in small numbers at Ft. Yukon and reports first observations on 15 May 1962; 13 May 1963; and 19 May 1964.

Few data are available to indicate fall movements, but a number of July observations are probably of postbreeding birds. Most of Weeden's records at Eagle Summit are from late June to early August; at College, a single bird was seen sitting on a utility pole in the same locality on 4 July by Janet Kozlowski and on 13 and 18 July 1962, by Weeden; and at 4000 feet on Mt. Fairplay (64° 40' N, 142° 12' W), Weeden saw an Upland Plover on 16 July 1962. Some birds remain in Alaska into late August and early September. Kessel observed one on 27 August 1952 at Eagle Summit; Springer saw one near North Pole, 14 miles southeast of Fairbanks, on 25 August 1960; and Williamson *et al.* (1965) collected a specimen at Anchorage on 9 September 1962.

Erolia fuscicollis. White-rumped Sandpiper. No interior records of the White-rumped Sandpiper are given by Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959), so an observation by Springer of a single individual at Ft. Wainwright on 29 May 1961 is significant. This bird fed all day about a shallow pond in company with a Lesser Yellowlegs (*Totanus flavipes*) and two Pectoral Sandpipers (*Erolia melanotos*); it allowed observation from 15 feet, and several pictures were obtained. In addition to this record, two observations of migrants have been recorded from the Brooks Range: Irving (1960) tells of two males that were collected by Simon Paneak at Anaktuvuk Pass on 1 June 1954; and Kessel (Kessel and Schaller, 1960) saw two individuals and collected a male (UA 837) near Table Mountain (68° 20' N, 143° 55' W) on 8 June 1956.

Erolia alpina. Dunlin. The Dunlin is a coastal species in Alaska and is only rarely found inland. Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite no inland records, but Irving (1960) records the species as an irregular visitor at Anaktuvuk Pass between mid-May and mid-June. Two recent observations indicate that a few individuals of this species also pass through the interior valleys during their northward migration. Kessel watched a breeding-plumaged Dunlin feeding about the shores of a gravel pit at the Fairbanks International Airport on 23 May 1958. On 18 May

1964, during the peak of an unusually large shorebird migration at Minto Lakes, Shepherd (personal communication) sighted a flock of 20 to 25 individuals; and on 16 May 1964 one was identified by Eisenhart near Ft. Yukon (Lensink, *in litt.*).

Ereunetes mauri. Western Sandpiper. Published records of this sandpiper in interior Alaska are few. Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite only four records, and Dixon (1938) cites one. As more observers take up residence in the interior, however, it seems probable that we will discover this species to be an uncommon but fairly regular migrant through this area, associating especially with the common Semipalmated Sandpiper (*E. pusillus*) and Least Sandpiper (*Erolia minutilla*). Following are recent interior records of the Western Sandpiper that supplement the published ones referred to above: Kessel watched one on 21 May 1958, as it fed about the edge of a pond at the Fairbanks International Airport with a number of other shorebirds, including 25 Semipalmated Sandpipers. Springer saw one individual on 8 July, two on 22 July, and three on 30 July 1960, as they fed with other peeps around the edges of a shallow lake on Ft. Wainwright near Fairbanks. Weeden saw one at Eagle Creek, near Eagle Summit, on 22 May 1960, and another in the same area on 19 July 1963. Shepherd reports that he sees Western Sandpipers rarely during spring migration at Minto Lakes; during the peak of a large shorebird migration on 18 May 1964, he counted at least six Western Sandpipers as they fed scattered among other peeps, and he reports seeing other individuals occasionally during the week preceding and following 18 May 1964. Steven B. Young, at Creamer's Dairy, saw two of these sandpipers on 15 May 1965, and one on 16 May 1965.

Tryngites subruficollis. Buff-breasted Sandpiper. This sandpiper is rare in interior Alaska. Irving (1960) records it as a late-May migrant at Anaktuvuk Pass in the Brooks Range, but Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite only two records for interior Alaska—an early specimen from near Eagle and an observation by Olaus J. Murie in May 1921 along the Robertson River. More recently Kessel observed two separate individuals on 28 July 1956 at Minto Lakes; and several sightings were made during May 1964.

We had an unusually large shorebird migration through the Fairbanks area during the last half of May 1964. Dunlins, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and Hudsonian Godwits (see below) were recorded; and Golden Plovers, Whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus*), Pectoral Sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitchers (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) were present in greater numbers than usual. Between 15 and 22 May Shepherd saw a total of about 100 Buff-breasted Sandpipers as they fed with other migrant shorebirds at Minto Lakes; on 26 May Kessel and Ruth Schreiber watched a group of seven as they fed and courted at the Fairbanks International Airport; and on 30 May Kessel saw another individual with about 20 Golden Plovers at the University of Alaska Experimental Farm at College. Lensink noted this species at Ft. Yukon for the first time in 1964; he first saw a flock of five birds on 25 May and continued to see them in "fair numbers" for several days thereafter (Lensink, *in litt.*).

Because of the 1964 situation in interior Alaska, it is significant that Buff-breasted Sandpipers were present in large numbers during the summer at Pt. Barrow for the first time in recent years, and that several nests and broods were observed (Richard T. Holmes, *in litt.*).

Limosa haemastica. Hudsonian Godwit. An increasing number of observations are being made each year of the Hudsonian Godwit in Alaska (cf. Williamson and Smith, 1964:41). The first recorded observation for interior Alaska was a single bird observed by Springer as it fed on 23 and 24 May 1961, in a shallow pond on Ft. Wainwright. In 1964, coincident with an abnormal spring shorebird migration, this species was seen three times in the interior: Ruth Schreiber counted 15 of these godwits at the Fairbanks International Airport on 26 May, and she and Kessel saw one there on 30 May. Shepherd saw six Hudsonian Godwits at Minto Lakes on 27 May 1964. On the morning of 17 May 1965 Kessel and several others watched two spring-plumaged birds feeding along the shore of a pond at the Fairbanks International Airport; that evening George E. Hall III saw five at the same locality. One godwit was seen here again on the following day.

Crocethia alba. Sanderling. Few records of Sanderlings have been reported from interior Alaska, and most of these apparently have been of fall migrants. John S. Weske saw one on Ft. Wainwright on 6 September 1959. Weeden saw four with a flock of Pectoral Sandpipers on 3

September 1959, at Minto Lakes; and at Eagle Summit he saw a Sanderling on 30 August 1959, and another on 8 September 1960. A total of nine of these birds was seen by several biologists on three occasions on the Yukon Flats during the last half of August 1962 (Yocom, 1964:30).

The only interior spring records are from the Brooks Range. Irving (1960) recorded the species at Anaktuvuk Pass between 1 and 6 June 1949 and on 29 May 1952; based on these records and on conversations with residents of the village, Irving believes that this species is an uncommon though frequent migrant through the pass. Kessel saw two Sanderlings and collected a male (UA 836) near Table Mountain in the eastern Brooks Range on 8 June 1956 (Kessel and Schaller, 1960).

Phalaropus fulicarius. Red Phalarope. Two spring-plumaged Red Phalaropes were observed by Shepherd on the Minto Flats on 30 May 1964. Shepherd, who has had experience with this species on the coast of Alaska, watched the birds for from 5 to 10 minutes from a distance of about 10 feet as they fed on the waters of a small slough. This phalarope is rare in interior Alaska; Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite only two earlier (both prior to 1900) records, one from Ft. Yukon and the other from Ft. Reliance. Irving (1960) reports Red Phalaropes as familiar migrants through Anaktuvuk Pass in the Brooks Range during the last half of May.

Steganopus tricolor. Wilson's Phalarope. The first observation of the Wilson's Phalarope in Alaska was made by Earl L. Schene on 20 May 1962, on the Columbia Creek Flats, approximately Mile 125-130 on the Taylor Highway (64° 26' N, 141° 25' W). The bird was feeding about 10 feet from the road in a shrubby, sedge-marsh area which supported half a dozen small, temporary ponds. Schene obtained a readily identifiable colored photograph of the bird. This record is far beyond the usual northwestern edge of the species' range—central British Columbia and Alberta (approx. 54° N)—but Weeden and James E. Hemming have recorded this phalarope at an intermediate locality. On 5 June 1964 they watched a pair of Wilson's Phalaropes feeding on a large patch of mud which was on floating ice in the middle of a small pond at Mile 114.5 on the Haines Road, Y.T. (= 38 miles southeast of Haines Junction and approx. 60° 25' N, 137° 10' W).

Rissa tridactyla. Black-legged Kittiwake. Accidental, inland records of the Black-legged Kittiwake have been recorded from many of the northern United States (A.O.U., 1957). But the first such record for the interior valleys of Alaska was obtained by L. Gerard Swartz and William J. Robertson when they collected a specimen (UA 2394) on 7 September 1964, at Lake George. The specimen was an immature male weighing 378 g; the left testis measured 6 × 2 mm, the right 7 × 1 mm. Another specimen in the University of Alaska Museum (UA 1469; immature female) was found dead in mid-October 1953 on a beaver house near Huslia, Alaska, along the Koyukuk River, about 150 miles inland from either Kotzebue Sound or Norton Sound.

Xema sabini. Sabine's Gull. This gull, too, has been recorded as an accidental visitor in many of the inland United States (A.O.U., 1957), and Irving (1960) records it as a visitor at Anaktuvuk Pass in the Brooks Range of Alaska. The first record for the interior valleys of Alaska, however, is a specimen collected on 17 July 1964, at Lake George by Swartz and Robertson. The specimen (UA 2392), a male weighing 194.6 g, was an adult in summer plumage with a number of white winter feathers coming in on the forehead, lores, and ventral portion of the head.

Picoides arcticus. Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker. The Northern Three-toed Woodpecker (*P. tridactylus*) is the common three-toed woodpecker of interior Alaska, whereas *P. arcticus* appears uncommon but widespread. Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) cite only nine observations from interior Alaska, six by Olaus J. Murie between 1920 and 1924. In addition to these records, Dixon (1938) reports an adult female collected on 8 May 1932, near Windy (63° 28' N, 148° 50' W) on the Nenana River; Irving (1960) tells of a specimen collected by Charles Sheldon on 22 April 1954, along the Kobuk where Sheldon indicates that the species is well-known; and Adolph Murie (1963) records an observation made at the headquarters area of Mt. McKinley National Park in September 1962. Recent records from the Fairbanks area include a male seen on Ft. Wainwright by W. T. Van Velzen on 15 June 1961; an individual seen on the University of Alaska campus by a student, Mark A. Bartholomew, on 19 December 1962; and two observations by Springer: the first on 15 November 1960, at Birch Hill, and the second, an adult male collected on 9 September 1962, in the Ft. Wainwright military reservation. Springer saw another of these

woodpeckers on 29 October 1963 near Ferry. On 15 July 1964 a male was collected (UA 2390) by Schneider at Tetlin Lake.

Nucifraga columbiana. Clark's Nutcracker. The well-known wandering behavior of the nutcracker has brought a few individuals to widely scattered parts of Alaska, mostly south of the Yukon River (Gabrielson and Lincoln, 1959). The only records published for the interior forests are of three specimens reported by O. Murie (1924:481) from Takotna, Farewell Mountain, and 24 miles from Chatanika, respectively. On 7 September 1963 a Clark's Nutcracker was identified by John Dawson on the University of Alaska campus at College; this bird stayed around until 18 September, on which day the identification was confirmed by Kessel and a readily identifiable photo was obtained by George Cresswell. Local publicity of this College record brought two other 1963 nutcracker observations to our attention. The Robert Buzbys watched at least five nutcrackers (a family group?) for about a week around 12 September 1963, as the birds fed about their cabins and garbage dump at or just below timberline on Dry Creek (63° 55' N, 147° 25' W). Mrs. Buzby obtained some photographs of these birds which have enabled us to verify the species identification. During mid-August 1963 Mrs. Boyd J. Blair of Liberty Bell Mine near Ferry watched two birds, apparently of this species, for several days; she particularly noticed the black and white wings and tail, and she described the birds as looking like a cross between the Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*) and the Black-billed Magpie (*Pica pica*), two species common in the Ferry area. The Liberty Bell Mine is approximately 50 airline miles west of the Buzby's Dry Creek cabins.

Certhia familiaris. Brown Creeper. In spite of the fact that only one observation of Brown Creepers had been reported for interior Alaska prior to 1960—Charles Sheldon's male specimen collected on the Toklat River in Mt. McKinley National Park 21 October 1907 (Dixon, 1938)—the species appears to be resident in small numbers in the vicinity of Fairbanks. Peter McLaughlin, a University of Alaska student who knew his bird identification well, heard and saw a Brown Creeper on the university campus at College on 11 April 1961. Between 28 September and 14 November 1961, Van Velzen (1963a:371) made a series of observations on what was probably a family group of creepers in a spruce woods on Ft. Wainwright; during this period he collected three specimens (UA 1888, 1889, and 1890), all with incompletely ossified skulls. On 15 May 1962 Springer revisited this woods on Ft. Wainwright and saw another individual. During the fall of 1964 Michael C. Smith watched what appeared to be another family group in the U.S. Forest Service Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest (64° 45' N, 148° 28' W). He observed one creeper on 11 August, two on 12 August, and at least three on 27 August; three were still in the area when he revisited it on 23 September.

Sialia currucoides. Mountain Bluebird. Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) report fewer than a dozen records of the Mountain Bluebird for interior Alaska, all from east-central Alaska as far west as College. In addition, a bluebird was reported from Delta Junction (64° 03' N, 145° 44' W) on 23 May 1962, and was verified as an adult male Mountain Bluebird by Springer on 31 May 1962. Springer received another report of a bluebird being sighted on 1 June 1965, between Delta Junction and Big Delta, approximately 10 miles from the 1962 locality. He subsequently observed the bird (a male not in full adult plumage) on 2, 3, and 7 June 1965.

Sturnus vulgaris. Starling. The first observation of the Starling in interior Alaska was made by Kessel (1960) on 4 May 1960. Since that time several more occurrences have been recorded within the region. On 22 October 1961 Springer and Van Velzen watched one at the Ft. Wainwright dump, and on the following day Van Velzen saw two at the same locality. Two birds were seen again at the dump on 24, 28, and 29 October 1961, respectively, but attempts to collect them were unsuccessful. Yocom (1963b:544) saw three Starlings with a loose flock of Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolinus*) at Ft. Yukon on 2 September 1962. Springer saw another adult sitting in a spruce tree near Ferry on 18 September 1963, and was again unable to obtain a specimen. A field crew working for C. E. Hopla of the University of Oklahoma found a dried Starling carcass at Manley Hot Springs (65° 00' N, 150° 37' W) during the summer of 1964.

Dendroica townsendi. Townsend's Warbler. The Townsend's Warbler usually gets north only to south-central coastal Alaska and southern Yukon Territory, and prior to 1965 there had been only two records of this species in interior Alaska. The first record was obtained by David G.

Frey, Indiana University, who saw a Townsend's Warbler in Fairbanks during the last of May 1961. The second record was of a male with an unossified skull (UA 2415) that was caught in a mist net on the University of Alaska campus on 29 August 1963 (White and Brooks, 1964).

In 1965 in mature spruce-birch woods, however, the species was relatively common, at least within a 20-mile radius of Fairbanks. George E. Hall III, University of Alaska, identified the first male on 30 May along Yankovich Road, College; a female was seen in the same area later in the day. On 3 June, Kessel and Hall found a pair at the University of Alaska Experimental Farm, 1.3 miles south of the 30 May site; this second pair had not been present on 25 May. Kessel returned to Yankovich Road on the morning of 9 June and counted at least six singing males during a walk along about a mile of trail through the tallest spruce. On 11 June Kessel and Michael C. Smith visited the Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest about 20 miles west of Fairbanks and counted 32 singing males during a 4-mile walk through the forest; at one locality at least six birds were heard singing simultaneously. On 19 June about 13 miles northeast of Fairbanks at Mile 9 on the Chena Hot Springs Road, Kessel heard two Townsend's Warblers singing in a spruce-birch woods.

In view of the numbers of both males and females in the region and the territorialism exhibited by the males, we believe that the species was breeding during the 1965 season, although we lack direct evidence. The male of the pair at the Experimental Farm was still singing on 7 July. On 13 July there was little song at the Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest, but Kessel saw several individuals flitting among the spruce. On 6 August David F. Hatler of the University of Alaska saw a Townsend's Warbler in a large, mixed flock of warblers, flycatchers, and thrushes moving through woods on the University of Alaska campus.

Agelaius phoeniceus. Red-winged Blackbird. Prior to 1964 there had been no published records of the occurrence of Red-winged Blackbirds in interior Alaska, but recent field observations indicate that the species has established itself as a summer resident at least in the upper Tanana Valley. During June 1964 two observations were made of red-wings at Scotty Creek (62° 40' N, 141° 30' W); at least a pair and two males were at Lake George; and the species was widely distributed, although uncommon, in the area of Tetlin Lake (Kessel, 1966). As might be expected, collected specimens have been identified as *A. p. arctolegus*.

Acanthis hornemanni. Hoary Redpoll. The Hoary Redpoll is a winter resident in interior Alaska, arriving in the Fairbanks area in late September and early October and leaving in the spring by late April and early May. While in the interior, it associates in mixed flocks with the more common *Acanthis flammea*. Normally the subspecies of Hoary Redpoll frequenting interior Alaska is *A. h. exilipes*. On 28 March 1964, however, Springer trapped a large, very light-colored, immature male redpoll at Fairbanks which proved to be of the nominate race, *A. h. hornemanni*. The specimen (UA 2389) was very fat, and, with its esophageal pouch empty, it weighed 20.9 g after being kept in captivity for two days. Measurements taken on the freshly caught live bird were as follows: exposed culmen, 9.8 mm; nostril length, 8.3 mm; wing chord, 84.2 mm; flattened wing, 86.8 mm. Our identification of this specimen as the nominate subspecies has been confirmed by Roxie C. Laybourne of the U.S. National Museum.

According to the literature, *A. h. hornemanni* is the least wide-ranging of all the redpolls, breeding on Ellesmere and Baffin islands and northern Greenland and sometimes getting as far south in winter as Churchill, Manitoba, the Great Lakes, and Quebec. Springer's record appears to be a considerable westward extension of known occurrences.

When trapped on 28 March 1964, this bird was with a small flock of *A. f. flammea* and *A. h. exilipes*. It was trapped during the second of three redpoll movements noted in the Fairbanks area during the spring (late February to 1 March; 26 March to 9 April; and 12 April to 16 April).

Acanthis flammea. Common Redpoll. *Acanthis flammea* is found in interior Alaska throughout the year, although considerable migratory movement is evident within the species both in fall and in spring. This is the only redpoll present during the summer; *A. hornemanni* may be found with it in mixed flocks during the winter (see above). On 13 April 1964, during the last of three spring redpoll movements about Fairbanks, Springer trapped a large-billed immature male redpoll that was later verified by Roxie C. Laybourne at the U.S. National Museum as being *A. f. holboellii*. This specimen (UA 2388) was a very fat bird weighing 14.5 g, including 0.6 g of seed

in the esophageal pouch. Other significant measurements taken from the freshly killed specimen were as follows: exposed culmen, 11.4 mm; nostril length, 9.1 mm; wing chord, 74.9 mm; flattened wing, 77.4 mm.

A second large-billed, immature male redpoll was trapped by Springer on 27 January 1965, at Fairbanks. This midwinter bird also appears to have the measurements of *A. f. holboellii*: exposed culmen, 12.0 mm; nostril length, 10.0 mm; wing chord, 70.2 mm; flattened wing, 71.9 mm.

The status of *holboellii* is unclear and its validity as a subspecies is uncertain, but it is still recognized by the American Ornithologists' Union. In the past, several other occurrences of this form have been reported for interior Alaska, but Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) accept only a specimen taken by Dice at Tanana on 3 December 1911 (Dice, 1920).

Spinus pinus. Pine Siskin. We believe that the Pine Siskin is more frequent in interior Alaska than records suggest and that the complete absence of interior records in Gabrielson and Lincoln (1959) is more likely due to a lack of knowledgeable observers in the area than to the absence of the species. While the species is by no means common, a number of observations have been made in recent years. Kessel and Cade saw two Pine Siskins about three miles southwest of College on 26 May 1952. Between 9 and 16 July 1960, at Ft. Wainwright, Springer watched several flocks, totaling about 50 birds, feed daily in the vicinity of a small pond in a mixed forest containing tall spruce; they disappeared after 16 July. On 17 September 1961 Van Velzen (1963b) netted and banded a siskin near Fairbanks. On 22 June 1962, while collecting redpolls near College, a student, Joseph T. Okedara, shot a siskin that had been feeding together with some redpolls on weed seeds. In 1963 White (1964) netted a male and a female siskin near Fairbanks with a flock of Common Redpolls on 13 July; and he took another male with more redpolls at the same locality on 22 July. On 4 August 1963 Springer observed four siskins in tall spruce about three miles north of Ferry; and on 13 September 1963 Ruth Schreiber watched eight to 10 Pine Siskins as they fed with 50 White-winged Crossbills (*Loxia leucoptera*) at Big Delta. In 1965 student Ronald Byrom sighted a siskin on 26 April as it flew calling overhead at College. At Big Delta Springer saw and heard a siskin on 7 July and observed a small flock of them on 2 September; an adult siskin was collected in a mist net at Big Delta on 20 July 1965.

Spizella passerina. Chipping Sparrow. The status of the Chipping Sparrow in Alaska has been reviewed through 1959 by Kessel (1960); at that time, aside from several widely scattered Alaskan records, the species was reported for the first time nesting in the vicinity of Tetlin Lake and of Big Delta. More recent observations in the Tetlin Lake area, especially in the lowlands east of Tetlin Lake, indicate that the species is well established in this part of Alaska. McKnight, who worked in the region throughout the summer of 1960, saw the species repeatedly during that summer (*in litt.*). Yocom (1963a) reported several observations at Tetlin Lake in 1962, including adults with young on 17 July. Between 8 and 16 June 1964 Kessel found them uncommon but widely distributed through the area; during this time she counted at least 10 Chipping Sparrows scattered over a 30-square-mile area. During the first week of August 1964 Schneider reports that juvenals of this species moved into his camp site in large numbers.

An observation by Hemming (*in litt.*) on 22 July 1964 extends the known breeding range of this species in Alaska to Mile 74 on the Taylor Highway (near Chicken); here Hemming flushed a bird from a nest that was about four feet up in a willow and contained a single egg.

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