

9 (CM); a male Painted near El Paso Gap, w. Eddy, (JO) provided a local first. Dickcissels summer regularly in fields s. of Ft. Sumner, where the high this season was six July 8 (WH).

Bobolinks summer regularly only in the Los Ojos-Parkview area, where there were one–three June 12–13 (JEP, DE); unusual was a singing male in *Sandoval* s. of Fenton L. June 27–28 (PF). Single Com. Grackles at Aztec June 5 & 15 (TR) demonstrated continued presence in the northwest. Bronzed Cowbirds pushed n. in the e. plains and Pecos Valley, including four in *Union* June–July (LF), singles at Tucumcari July 18 (ph. JO) and Ft. Sumner July 19 (ph. JO), and five at Roswell June–July (SB). Orchard Orioles n. of usual were three w. of Tucumcari July 7 (WW) & 18 (JO) and another n. of Tucumcari July 18 (JO), plus singles at Ft. Sumner July 19 (JO), Bosque Redondo June 27 (JEP), and B.L.N.W.R. June 18 (WH).

Unusual was a Pine Grosbeak singing at Chama June 20 (JO).

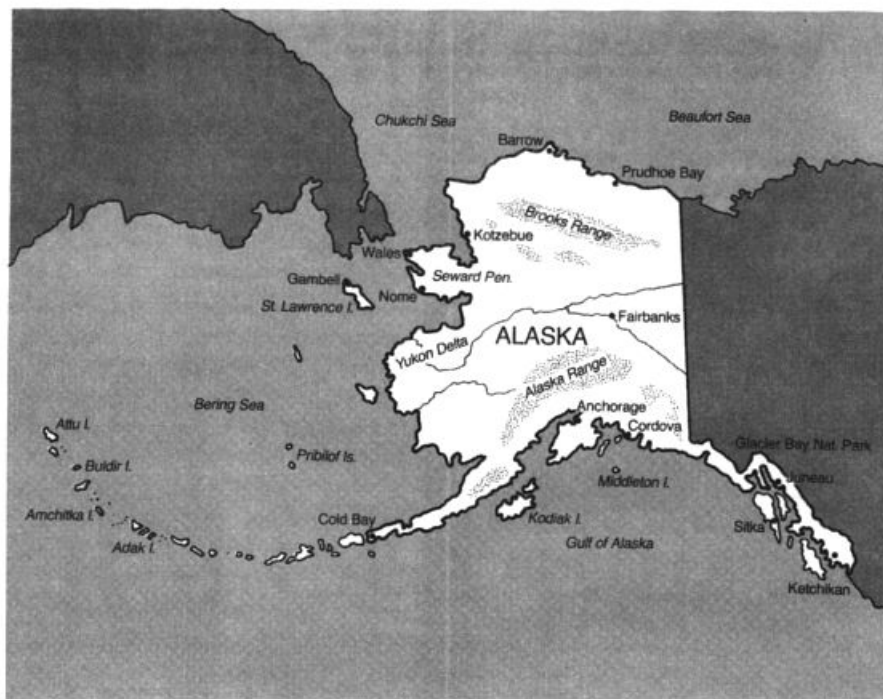
Noteworthy was a House Finch nest on the Oklahoma line in *Union* (LF). Red Crossbills were widely reported in the north and west, with highs of 23 on Golondrina Mesa, *Rio Arriba*, June 30 (CR), 150 at Mt. Taylor July 3 (WH), and 17 at Zuni June 16 (DC); peripheral were one in the Chuska Mts. July 25 (TR), five in the Sandia Mts. July 4 (CR), and two in the Black Range June 12 (PB). The only Evening Grosbeaks were in the north, with 10 near El Rito June 20 (JEP) and a high 60 near Angel Fire June 21 (CR).

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alaska region



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As the historic El Niño's winter/spring influences faded from Alaska by mid-summer, cooler wet weather filled in behind and summer barely materialized across at least the North Gulf Coast. Warmer temperatures began to prevail only by the end of the period. Heavy cloud cover, intermittent and persistent light rain, and very cool temperatures were this season's norm. For instance, portions of Upper Cook Inlet had rain on 25 of July's 31 days. North across the Mainland, cool conditions dominated. Local precipitation was more normal. When cooler parameters follow a protracted break-up, shorebird breeding fares poorly and there was at least local implication that such was the case, e.g. parts of the North Slope and Upper Cook Inlet.

Because of agency research reporting schedules, I receive few breeding season summaries for passerines, so there was little indication either way about that group's successes. This summer's less-than-stellar weather factors must certainly have been dominated by a broad southeast flow, as the season's highlights were punctuated by extralimital and casuals from Southeast Alaska and points farther east. These rarities were focused in the greater Anchorage

area, no doubt a result of the extensive coverage at that entry point. Seabird numbers, distribution and rarities included more than the usual noteworthy highlights, mainly from the Bering Sea/North Pacific interface, where last season's record high surface temperatures didn't materialize. With Terry Doyle gone from the eastern Interior and no Hyder visits reported, exceptional records and highlights were lacking compared to past summers.

Abbreviations: North Gulf (*North Gulf of Alaska*); SE (*Southeast Alaska*); SC (*South-coastal Alaska*); SW (*Southwest Alaska*); UCI (*Upper Cook Inlet*).

LOONS TO RAILS

A party of at least six Com. Loons in Safety Lagoon near Nome July 25–26 likely represented staging failed breeders from the e. sections of the Seward Pen., where they are quite rare migrants and possible breeders. Most Seward Pen. reports are singles. Hearsay Arctic Loon reports continue to increase from the Nome area, but very few are substantiated. Visitors are cautioned that this Palearctic form is a casual migrant between n. Norton Sound and Wales—the Gambell seawatch continues to be the most consistent spot.

MacIntosh's annual Bering Sea transects turned up a brown imm. Short-tailed Albatross over the shelf in the outer reaches of the Bristol Bay basin (†RAM); there were no other reports. This summer's extensive Laysan Albatross reports finally gave firm credence to the past few year's surmise that this species is booming. Dozens of Laysans were present throughout the season in the zone bordered by Kodiak, the mouth of Kachemak Bay, and the Shumagin Is. (m ob.). But even taking into account repeat sightings of ship-followers, the 117 tallied from the greater Unimak Pass area June 12 (HG et al.) was obviously without contemporary precedent. Yet another **Manx Shearwater** (still unsubstantiated by photo or specimen) was described in shelf waters n of Cold Bay June 8 (†RAM), about the 5th from the Region and the Bering Sea's first

Trumpeter Swans continue to show expansion in SC, where at least two remained in habitat at Kodiak to June 3+ (RAM, JBA), the first in summer for the archipelago; and another pair successfully bred along the Turnagain Arm road system near Portage (RLS et al.). Several immatures also visited Potter Marsh near Anchorage into mid-June.

Small groups of presumed failed breeders/one-year-old Greater White-fronted Geese loitering around Wonder L. in Denali NP in early June (NS et al.), could have been "Tules" at the poorly delineated n. edge of this subspecies' breeding range. Odd date and location Brant were unusual at Sitka, where seven hung around June 12–July 7 (MLW, MET); at Kodiak, with another eight found July 3 (RAM); and two at St Paul I. June 8–July 17 (FIELD GUIDES et al.). Although non-breeders often continue to migrate N along the Bering Sea coast well into June, there are few summer SC reports and fewer previously from SE. Also without mid-season precedent was a group of 12 "Aleutian" Canada Geese at St. Paul I. July 12 (ST PAUL). Blue-winged Teal were pressing beyond their rather restricted e. Interior range, highlighted by a single at Nome June 15 (WINGS, GHR ph.) and another on Anchorage's coastal trail mudflats July 8–14 (RLS, NS). Although there may be historic evidence of Bering Sea coast records, there is no modern Blue-winged Teal report from w Alaska. Unusual summer season Cinnamon Teal included a single drake at Juneau June 8 (PS) and two males at Sitka's Swan L. June 27 (†MLW, MET), a local area first. Extralimital single Gadwall were noted

from Denali N.P. June 4 (NS) and on the North Slope, where casual, at Barrow June 27 (VENT). Away from standard Bering Sea outposts, unusual summer Eur. Wigeon continue to turn up, this year with singles at Kodiak June 3 (RAM) for a first local summer record; at Barrow June 27 (VENT); and another along Anchorage's tideflats mid-June–July 5 (RLS, NS et al.). The season's only noteworthy diving duck finds included a rare Bering Sea drake Barrow's Goldeneye at St. Paul I. June 8–9 (ST. PAUL), and a single Com. Merganser in productive Wonder L., Denali N.P., June 6 (NS). Common Mergansers are distinctly rare n. of the Alaska Range, and referred to as casual in the Park.

After several years of poor or no substantiation, the Taku R. Steller's Sea-Eagle has again been seen in the same sections of that river's Taku Inlet, this season between June 19–July 16 (*vide* GVV). Juneau area observers produced several Golden Eagles at the Coast Range Front, including a pair at a nest on Mt. Juneau June 24 onward and at least four other pairs at various other drainages on the road system (RTW, RJG, GVV, MSS). Historic nesting evidence in the Coast Range was first reported from many of these same areas, but few other breeding data exist. The alpine areas of SE's Mainland hold promise for other new finds, since these areas remain nearly inaccessible and produce significant data nearly anytime someone gets there. Likely one of few summer SE reports was an Am. Kestrel near Juneau July 6–22 (PS).

The season's only rail report was a single Sora calling near Juneau June 20 (MWS). A pair of Sandhill Cranes with a single downy young in muskeg on c. Prince of Wales I. in extreme s. SE June 9 (VF) represented one of few nest records for this isolated population. There is no specimen evidence to date to assign these birds to subspecies, but they have to be either *tabida*, which breeds to the south on the Queen Charlottes, or *rowani*.

SHOREBIRDS TO ALCIDS

An abundance of significant shorebird records graced the summer reports, in part due to better mid-season coverage of outposts and perhaps because of poor nesting conditions from n. areas. A Mongolian Plover at Nome's Safety Inlet was unusual June 14–15 (FIELD GUIDES, WINGS), probably a non-breeder. Killdeer made news beyond its restricted and local c. Interior strongholds, with a single at Nome June 8 (*vide* WINGS); a pair at a nest with 4 eggs near Barrow June 26–27 (VENT), that

constituted the North Slope's first documented breeding; and another suspicious pair at an Anchorage gravel pit all season (RLS).

Most of the remaining shorebird highlights included southbound and wandering Asiatics from St. Paul I. in the Pribilofs, including up to three Wood Sandpipers, rare after mid-June, July 10–13 (ST.PAUL), two+ Gray-tailed Tattlers July 25–30 (WINGS, ST.PAUL); and the first southbound ad. Red-necked Stint July 26–27 (ST.PAUL). There was another site-tenacious pair of Solitary Sandpipers in the Juneau glacier forelands June 30 onward (RJG). The SC's and Anchorage's remarkable 7th Terek Sandpiper was found again off the Coastal Trail July 8–15 (DWS, TGT) Whimbrels paired and in distraction in Olga Flats meadows on Kodiak July 11–15 (RAM), were well s. of known nesting areas. A Marbled Godwit apparently summering in Anchorage June 23–July 24 (NS, DWS) was out-of-pattern. An itinerant Temminck's Stint described from the North Slope at the Colville R. Delta's Inland Waters June 27 (†NS), was a first Arctic Slope report. Extreme extralimital White-rumped Sandpipers in July included one each from the Denali Hwy. July 18 (WINGS, †GHR) and at St. Paul July 22–27 (WINGS, ST.PAUL). There was verified Kodiak area nesting by Terek Sandpipers with juveniles from Olga Flats July 11–13 (RAM). Stilt Sandpipers included an odd Bering Sea coast overshoot from Nome June 16 (WINGS); and one record-early southbound at Juneau July 30 (PS, GVV, RJG). A pair of Wilson's Phalaropes appeared near Juneau June 1 (PS), where they remain casual.

This year's UCI breeding shorebird staging activity focused on the e. side around Anchorage and included near record one-day counts of 250+ Hudsonian Godwits and 4000 Short-billed Dowitchers into early July (m.ob.).

Unusual gulls turned out an average showing, highlighted by the Bering Sea's 3rd (?) **Franklin's Gull**, an adult e. of the Pribilofs June 18 (†RAM, ph.); another sub-ad. Com. Black-headed Gull in Anchorage July 20–21, a 6th UCI report; a wandering ad. Ring-billed Gull from Kodiak June 2 (JBA), where casual; and arriving California Gulls near the n. end of their post-breeding range June 9 with a local peak of 25 July 22 (PS, GVV).

As in previous years when sea surface conditions affect North Gulf breeding success, Black-legged Kittiwakes wandered into

UCI June 6–21 (m.ob.), where they have been casual, mostly in late spring. This season's record numbers included a peak 35 off Anchorage's Coastal Trail June 10 (TGT). Caspian Tern reports beyond the standard Prince William Sound sites produced another pair in Anchorage July 20 (RLS), the 6th for UCI; a single in coastal habitat n. of Petersburg in Thomas Bay July 26 (JD, *fide* SCH); and a local maximum of 20 from the Juneau area June 21 (MWS, GVV), where courtship behavior had been noted in typical breeding habitat earlier in the month.

Although most authors describe Marbled Murrelets as common to abundant in SE coastal waters, counts of 1000+ off the Juneau area's Benjamin I. and 400 in nearby Auke Bay June 14 (GVV) were impressive for mid-breeding season.

COLUMBIDS TO FRINGILLIDS

Local Ketchikan area breeding was confirmed for Band-tailed Pigeons when three juveniles showed up with seven adults s. of town June 18 (†AH). This Columbids' SE breeding and summer range remains poorly delineated with most records focused on the Mainland river systems.

It was a very average owl summer. All the unusual sightings were represented by singles, highlighted by a rare summer season Juneau area N. Pygmy Owl June 16 (GVV); only one Barred Owl, this time from s. of Juneau through mid-June (*fide* GVV); and a midday-hunting Great Gray Owl in the e. Interior Northway muskegs June 5 (TGT), where there have been consistent recent spring/summer observations. A calling Boreal Owl in the Juneau area sub-alpine woods June 25 (RJG) represents one of few non-winter finds for SE.

With Doyle's departure from Tok, overshoot summer *Empidonax* reports were non-existent—only the calling Hammond's Flycatcher near Juneau through mid-June (GB, *fide* GVV) was notable away from the SE river cottonwoods. At the n. end of the species' annual overshoot range, another N. Rough-winged Swallow was noted at Juneau's Mendenhall Wetlands June 21 (DWS), but no others were reported. This season's odd location Barn Swallows included Bering Sea singles, without subspecies recognition, from St. Paul I. June 7–30 (ST. PAUL) and n. near Nome June 12 (ATTOUR) where there are about 7 previous records.

Following the weak Attu spring reports, a female Siberian Rubythroat briefly skulked around St. Paul I., where casual,

June 13 (VENT). Varied Thrush was added to the Pribilof list when a single hung around the Webster L. area June 16 (FIELD GUIDES). Although this taiga breeder occasionally reaches the Bering Sea coast, we have few island reports beyond. Still casual in the Region, an imm. **Northern Mockingbird** surfaced in the same Anchorage neighborhood July 30 (DWS, TGT) where the first was located several years ago. Difficult to re-find, it was last noted into August. The season's only surprise Red-throated Pipit was a bright male photographed near Wooley Lagoon near Nome June 18 onward (*fide* VENT, ph. BRZ). Over the past decade with improved local coverage, this Palearctic visitor—which breeds annually at Wales—has been located sporadically in the greater Nome area. Cedar Waxwings made a nice showing off the SE Mainland, with a single in Juneau June 28 (SZ), three at Prince of Wales I.'s Salmon L. July 31 (SCH), and another single on the outer coast at Sitka July 30 (MLW, MET).

Another singing **Cassin's Vireo** appeared in the Hyder area's Fish Cr. alder canopy June 29 (†AD), but none made it to the Juneau site that had produced recent records. Heintl again found an active Warbling Vireo nest in Ketchikan June 20–July 1 onward (†SCH), in the same area where he revealed the first local nest in 1996. The only Red-eyed Vireo appeared in Juneau, a 2nd local report, July 12 (GVV, SZ, PS). This year's only Tennessee Warbler made it s. of the Alaska Range to Anchorage June 11–13 (CMH, †RLS et al.). This territorial bird constituted SC's first record besides the few fall Middleton I. reports. Potter Marsh held UCI's 3rd Com. Yellowthroat June 18–23 (RLS, DFD, TGT) and the summer's only extralimital find.

An active W. Tanager pair carrying nest materials and acting site tenacious near Juneau June 7 (GVV, PS, RJG) presented rare nesting behavior away from the SE Mainland river corridors. At least three other unattached males were found in the area June 7–20 (MWS, GVV, DWS, SZ). As is typical, there were few notable Emberizid reports. Only the Am. Tree Sparrow on territory at Juneau's Mendenhall Forelands June 6–24 onward (PS, RJG, MWS) was exceptional as one of few ever summer SE reports. The Region's 12th Yellow-headed Blackbird, an ad. male, turned up at Anchorage's Westchester Lagoon June 20 (EEB, DFD, RLS, TGT et al.). We now have 4 SC records. Crossbills maintained much the same numbers and patterns of the past

few years, with White-winged staging a minor increase into SC to at least the Alaska Range in early June.

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