

**GRAND ALASKA PART I:  
NOME & THE  
PRIBILOFS**

**JUNE 9 – 17, 2013**

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Our 2013 Grand Alaska Part I tour began, as usual, in Nome, my favorite place to bird in all of North America. There is something indescribably special about the area surrounding this old gold rush town. The mix of special breeding birds on the tundra and large numbers of migrants staging at Safety Lagoon and other points along the coast, coupled with the very real chance of finding some rare stray from eastern Asia always makes for exhilarating birding. When you throw in a full complement of large mammals (Musk Ox, Moose, Grizzly, Reindeer), a kaleidoscope of emerging spring wildflowers, impressive sub-Arctic scenery and a real wilderness feel, all set to 24-hour daylight, what's not to love? As is the case with other high-latitude spots, no two springs or even short visits to this region are the same, and that unpredictability only serves to add to the excitement of a trip here.



**Willow Ptarmigan, Nome, AK, June 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**

This year was no different. After checking into our hotel and grabbing lunch, we headed out the Teller Road, hoping to score on Rock Ptarmigan and several other species that we had just seen the day before with our Gambell-Nome group. But weather conditions had changed dramatically in the intervening 24 hours. The entire Nome area had been

cloaked in fog the previous day, which was a damper for displaying shorebirds, but a boon for ptarmigan wary of being picked off by a Gyrfalcon. Now, with the fog lifting, and the alpine tundra bathed in sunlight, we found an abundance of singing and displaying shorebirds (including both species of golden-plovers and a very confident pair of Red Knots that foraged without apparent concern while a nearby lone male was relentless in his overhead aerial song bouts), but nary a Rock Ptarmigan was to be found! We did delight in watching a Short-tailed Weasel (or Ermine) zigzagging his way through the alpine block fields, no doubt looking for shorebird nests to pillage. Long-tailed Jaegers and Rough-legged Hawks patrolling the tundra, and male Willow Ptarmigan along the road edges provided other “welcome to Alaska” moments on this, our first day in the field.



**Long-tailed Jaeger, Nome, Alaska, June, 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**

The next few days were a blur, as we concentrated our efforts on the other two major roads, the Kougarok and the Council. As is always the case, birding highlights were so numerous that it is difficult to single out just a few. However, it would be difficult to top the dazzling male Bluethroats that performed so well along the Kougarok Road. These iconic little colonizers from the Old World are spectacular for their aerial song bouts as well as their vivid colors, and they have been an annual highlight of our Alaska tours ever since 1987, when we were the first group to discover them breeding in the Nome area. Sadly, we could not relocate the Bristle-thighed Curlew that we had seen so nicely just a few days earlier with the Gambell-Nome group, no doubt in large part because we hit a warm, sunny day, the kind of weather in which the curlews and other large shorebirds are

often inactive. Some folks did get nice looks at a male Rock Ptarmigan during the hike, which was a good pick-up during what was clearly a down spring for the species. We did have superb views of multiple Arctic Warblers, which had only arrived in full force in the Nome region within the previous few days. A fabulous pair of Ospreys (rare in the Nome region) refurbishing their nest atop the bridge over the Kuzitrin River was a welcome sight since high winds had blown much of the nest down just three days earlier. The Council Road treated us to scope-filling studies of a nesting Gyrfalcon with three fuzzy chicks and more distant, but still exciting studies of a sow Grizzly and her cub. A Double-crested Cormorant at Safety Sound was exciting for its local rarity, but not nearly as exciting to us as the two Slaty-backed Gulls (one adult and the other nearly so) in the same area, or the four Aleutian Terns that were sitting on the nearby sand spit. Late in the day, as we were skirting the coast, someone spotted a flock of eiders flying parallel to us. A quick binocular check revealed both Spectacled and Kings among the group, so I gave chase. Luckily, we were on a very straight stretch of road that hugged the immediate coastline, enabling me to overtake the eiders, get a short distance in front, and then stop in time to watch them fly past once again. Photos revealed 9 Spectacled Eiders (including 3 adult males) and 3 Kings—a real bonus given that we had missed Spectacled Eider at Gambell the week before. An optional post-dinner excursion out the Teller Road on our last night produced multiple Rock Ptarmigan for the folks who had missed the male seen by some during the curlew hike, and also turned up our only Black-bellied Plover and Ruddy Turnstones for this section of the trip. Finally, I would be remiss not to mention our multiple encounters with Musk Ox, including a herd that was frequenting the coastal strip near the Nome River mouth.



**Gyrfalcon with chicks, Nome, AK, June 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**



**Musk Ox, Nome River mouth, Nome, AK, June 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**

The Pribilofs leg of our tour began, as it so often does, with a weather-based “hold” of our scheduled flight out of Anchorage. Upon finally getting clearance to take off (meaning that the ceiling at St. Paul was above the minimums), we headed for Dillingham, where we refueled and got one last weather update before launching our final push for St. Paul. Well into the flight, I noticed that we were banking without descending, and although the pilot made no announcements for the next 15 minutes, I knew what this meant—we were circling the island because it was too foggy to land. Finally, the pilot announced what was happening, with the warning that the conditions had worsened, and that if things didn’t improve within the next 20–30 minutes, he would be forced to turn around and head back to Anchorage. After a tense 15 minutes, the plane abruptly started to descend—clearly, the pilot had decided to give it a go. The descent seemed interminable, especially given that we could not make out even a sliver of land or water. There was nothing to see but fog, fog, and more fog. And then, without warning, the ground was rushing up to meet us, and within mere seconds, we had touched down. All things considered, it was a remarkable demonstration of skill and nerve by the flight crew, and one that elicited a big cheer from us when we realized that we would not be turning around for a flight back to Anchorage.



**Tufted Puffin, St. Paul Island, AK, June 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**

Upon arrival, we learned from local guides that the vagrant picture was pretty bleak, except for the White-tailed Eagle that had been present, at least on and off, since last year. Unfortunately, as had been the case in 2012, the eagle was playing hard-to-get, appearing seemingly at random at scattered locations across the island, and seldom in the same spot twice. We never did connect with it. But then again, Asiatic vagrants should always be thought of as a bonus—icing on the cake if you will. If they're there—terrific, but if they aren't (and there's a reason those things are called "accidentals"), hey, the real show, as always, is on the cliffs. Reef and Ridgewall produced as always, but I particularly enjoyed our hike to Zapadni Cliffs, my favorite of St. Paul's many bird cliffs. The repeated point-blank views of Horned and Tufted puffins, Thick-billed and Common murres, and Parakeet, Crested, and Least auklets made the hike more than worthwhile, and is an experience that I find more impressive with each exposure. We were also treated to Northern Fulmars gliding past at eye level, as they played in the winds swirling above their nesting ledges. Red-faced Cormorants showed nicely at North Point (Marunich), as did a posse of four migrant Parasitic Jaegers that flew past the point. Flocks of elegant Harlequin Ducks frequented the harbor and several coastal locales, noisy Rock Sandpipers were seen displaying with one wing up across the tundra, and hulking Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches always seemed to pop up wherever we went. A nearly adult drake King Eider hanging out in the harbor area was a treat, as were the bathing Red-legged Kittiwakes at Antone Lake on our last morning. The biggest highlight for most of us was the fabulous Snowy Owl (a rare migrant here) that sat indifferently as we approached to within photographic range. Once this bird made a real move, it was not to flee from us, but rather to launch a stealth assault on the Least

Auklets adorning the tops of the boulders along the beach. The owl, on what was clearly not his first rodeo, deftly picked off one of the little gnomes—not often that one gets to watch a Snowy Owl snag a Least Auklet!



**Snowy Owl, St. Paul Island, AK, June 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**

Our departure from St. Paul was not without some suspense of its own. Pen Air decided to make an unscheduled stop at nearby St. George Island, for the purpose of dropping off some FAA technicians who had been waiting for three days for the weather to clear enough for them to reach the island so they could perform some equipment checks and maintenance. The weather conditions at St. George were not what they were at St. Paul, and we endured yet another suspenseful landing in the fog. Sitting on the airstrip at St. George, our flight crew was awaiting a flight manifest from the ground crew when one of the ground personnel ran out to the plane. Nope, she didn't have a manifest (turns out there wasn't one because no new passengers were getting on), but she was hoping to score some cookies from the Pen Air flight attendant! Once this transaction was successfully completed, we were cleared for takeoff—only in Alaska! On top of everything, the guys getting off at St. George had over 900 lbs. of gear between them, which meant that because of weight limitations, Pen Air had bumped most of our luggage from the flight—something they neglected to tell us until we arrived back in Anchorage. Fortunately, our bags caught up with us the following day.

Back in Anchorage, we said our goodbyes to some folks who were leaving, while those continuing on to Part II of Grand Alaska enjoyed a relaxed day of local birding. I never cease to be amazed by the wealth of birding and wildlife viewing opportunities available within the Anchorage city limits. Of particular note was the flock of 14 Hudsonian Godwits loafing on a small grassy islet in Westchester Lagoon, while we enjoyed nearby close comparisons of Greater and Lesser scaup, foraging Red-necked Grebes, and scope views of a pair of Bald Eagles atop their massive nest on the far side of the lagoon. At other stops we enjoyed a nice assortment of boreal forest passerines, among them a very responsive Northern Waterthrush, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and a pair of Boreal Chickadees. Our biggest prize was a male Spruce Grouse feeding in the middle of the trail. It allowed a fairly close approach, and then, when I played a few hen Spruce Grouse calls, the bird went into full courtship mode, fanning his tail and really strutting his stuff, all the while continuing to walk nervously toward us. At the last minute, the grouse decided we weren't a roving flock of available females after all, and he flew up to a nearby spruce to collect himself. All in all, it was a remarkable show from one of the most easily missed birds of the boreal forest. We concluded our day of Anchorage birding with a visit to Potter Marsh, where we were treated to stellar studies of a lovely Horned Grebe (in full breeding plumage) near its nest, proving once again that part of Alaska's appeal is the opportunity to enjoy familiar birds in different plumages and unfamiliar settings.



**Spruce Grouse, Anchorage, AK, June 2013 (photo by Kevin J. Zimmer)**



Despite some fog and drizzle at Nome, and our slight delays and suspenseful flights to and from the Pribilofs, we were actually very lucky with the weather throughout our trip, but several groups were not as lucky with the weather as we were. In closing, I would like to share a poem, copyright 1983 by Larry A. Beck (and shared by Bering Air back in 1989). It nicely cuts straight to the one unchanging, undeniable truth about air travel in Alaska—everything you do is “weather permitting.”

### Weather Permitting

Way up in Alaska, wherever you are  
If you're headed out close or you're headed out far  
And you're going by plane you can add (and it's fitting)  
I'll be there good buddies, weather permitting.  
It could really care less what you're planning on doing,  
An operation, oration, a wedding or wooing  
When you go to the airport you may need your knitting  
For you'll only be flying with weather permitting.  
I have fretted and stewed, I have stamped on the floor,  
I've shouted and screamed and I've started to roar  
But there's no use in fuming or fussing or snitting,  
You'll always face this: It's weather permitting.  
So don't get disheartened in the far golden north  
If you suffer delay as you sally on forth.  
Just learn to relax without fretting or quitting,  
You can depend on one thing, it's weather permitting.  
When the rich folks all come with their clothing so fine  
With their high fashioned wardrobes and special French wine  
They'll stop for awhile then continue their flitting,  
Go on with their jet setting, weather permitting.  
And whether you're working or playing around  
Flying through mountains or over the sound,  
In what kind of season your travels are hitting  
I will guarantee this: it's weather permitting.  
And it gets in your blood then wherever you go  
So I said to my sweetie, Hon I love you so  
She said I adore you, come close where I'm sitting  
And I'll do what you want me to, weather permitting.  
And when the Grim Reaper comes I can see it all clear,  
I'm alone in my shroud, Happy Heaven is near  
I'm coming, Saint Peter, this old world I'm quitting  
And I'll be along soon, weather permitting.

Valdez Airport  
First Draft  
October 8, 1983

Copyright 1983  
Larry A. Beck

It was great fun traveling and birding with each of you, and, as always, I genuinely enjoyed sharing the natural history marvels of North America's last frontier.

**Itinerary:**

- 6/10 - Anchorage to Nome: group convenes in mid-day after arrival of late morning flight from Anchorage, and check-in at the Aurora Inn in Nome. Following lunch, we embarked on our birding excursion out the Teller Road at 1430h, birding our way out to MP 40 and the turn-off to Woolley Lagoon and back (arriving back in Nome for dinner at 2000h). Drizzle & fog in a.m., clearing to mostly sunny by mid-afternoon.
- 6/11 - Nome: breakfast at 0630h, depart 0815 for all-day birding along the Council Road (Nome River Mouth, Cape Nome, Safety Lagoon, Safety Sound, Solomon) to Skookum Pass (ca. MP 53, elevation 1500'), with picnic lunch, and back, arriving back in Nome at 1915h. Foggy conditions for most of a.m along the coast, but sunny and nice inland, and along the coast in the afternoon.
- 6/12 - Nome: breakfast at 0600h, departing at 0730h for all-day birding (with picnic lunch) along the Kougarok Road. DW took part of the group to MP 72 to hike for the Bristle-thighed Curlew, while KJZ continued with the rest of the group (most of whom had done the hike and seen the curlew just 3 days earlier on the Gambell/Nome tour) to the end of the road (MP 85.5). We all reconvened at the Kuzitrin River for the return drive to Nome (arriving back for dinner at 1900h). Weather was clear, sunny, and warm, with high temperature of 68F.
- 6/13 - Nome: Breakfast at 0700h, followed by optional post-breakfast sea watch across street from hotel. Mid-morning devoted to packing and checking out of hotel and checking in at airport for our return flight to Anchorage. Following lunch at Subway, we drove to the airport and caught our Alaska Airlines 1250h departure for Anchorage (via Kotzebue, north of the Arctic Circle), and arriving in Anchorage at 1550h. Weather in Nome was sunny and warm (ca. 60F).
- 6/14 - Anchorage to St. Paul Island: Our scheduled late morning departure on PenAir to St. Paul Island was delayed in leaving Anchorage by about 1 hour due to weather at St. Paul. Eventually, we got clearance, and after a brief refueling stop at Dillingham, we made our way to St. Paul, where we ended up circling the island for 30 minutes, hoping to catch a window in the fog. Somehow, the pilot managed to land the plane in what was the densest fog conditions I can ever remember landing in (< 0.25 mile horizontal and about 70' vertical visibility!) — all the locals were pretty amazed we landed too! Conditions were dense fog, drizzle, and temperature in the high 30sF — in other words, the weather was typically Priblovian! After checking in to the hotel, we went directly to dinner, with a post-dinner excursion to the harbor area, the Salt Lagoon, and out to Antone Lake & Slough.
- 6/15 - Pribilofs: Breakfast at 0730h, followed by full day of birding on St. Paul Island, with morning (harbor area, Antone Lake, Ridgewall, SW Point and Reef Cliffs),

- afternoon (harbor, Antone Wall, North Point) and post-dinner (harbor, Northeast Point, Hutchinson Hill, Webster Lake, etc.) excursions.
- 6/16 - Pribilofs to Anchorage: breakfast at 0730h, followed by all-morning bird at Antone Wall and Zapadni Cliffs (0800–1200h); lunch and late-afternoon flight back to Anchorage (with brief stop at St. George), arriving in Anchorage about 2030h.
- 6/17 - Participants continuing on Grand Alaska Part II have a day of birding in the Anchorage area. Those not continuing on Part II travel home today. Participants continuing on Part II had breakfast at 0730h, with 0830h departure for Kincaid Park, with remainder of morning at DeLong Lake & Park. We had lunch at the hotel, followed by an afternoon excursion to Westchester Lagoon and Potter Marsh. In the evening, we met up with inbound participants for Grand Alaska Part II for our intro dinner.

### Key:

- A = Anchorage area  
 N = Nome area  
 P = Pribilofs (St. Paul Island)  
 \* = heard only

### Birds:

- Greater White-fronted Goose** (*Anser albifrons*) - N (6 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12)
- Emperor Goose** (*Chen canagica*) - N (1 bird that flew right in front of our van and then disappeared into the fog beyond Safety Sound on 6/11. Unfortunately, only one or two people besides me got any kind of look at it.)
- Brant** (*Branta bernicla*) - N (Daily, with a peak of 400+ between Safety Lagoon and Solomon on 6/11.) {These were all typical western *nigricans*, formerly called “Black Brant”.}
- Cackling Goose** (*Branta hutchinsii*) - N (2 along the Teller Road on 6/10, and 8+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.) {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, although many of the birds seen are suspiciously suggestive of that species.}, P (Flock of 15+ were mostly of the distinctive Aleutian subspecies *leucopareia*, but there were 2 of the smaller, darker subspecies *minima* as well.)
- Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*) - A (Westchester Lagoon & Potter Marsh. These are all one of the small races of Canada Goose, and are confusingly similar to the *taverneri* Cackling Geese that we saw at Nome.)
- Tundra Swan** (*Cygnus columbianus*) - N (Daily, with 100+ along the Council Road on 6/11.)
- American Wigeon** (*Anas americana*) - N (4 on 6/11, 8 on 6/12) and A
- Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) - N (1 male along the Kougarok Road on 6/12), A

**Northern Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*) - N (lone males on 6/11 and 6/12)

**Northern Pintail** (*Anas acuta*) - N (Common; seen daily in good numbers.), P

**Green-winged Teal** (*Anas crecca*) - N (A few *carolinensis* types seen each day.), P  
(Here, we saw both the widespread, North American subspecies *carolinensis*, and the Eurasian subspecies *crecca*, which is treated by some taxonomists as being specifically distinct [= Common Teal, or Eurasian Green-winged Teal].)

**Ring-necked Duck** (*Aythya collaris*) - A (2 males at Potter Marsh.)

**Greater Scaup** (*Aythya marila*) - N (Common; daily in good numbers.), P, A

**Lesser Scaup** (*Aythya affinis*) - N (1 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12), A (Lake Spenard and Westchester Lagoon)

**Spectacled Eider** (*Somateria fischeri*) - N (A flock of 9 [3 adult males with the rest being mostly varying ages of immature males], with 3 King Eiders, that blasted past us along the shoreline a mile or so beyond Safety Sound on 6/11. It was a wild chase, and pretty unexpected, especially after missing the species at Gambell.)

**King Eider** (*Somateria spectabilis*) - N (The aforementioned 3 birds in with the flock of 9 Spectacled Eiders on 6/11.), P (1 nearly adult male hanging out in the harbor on 6/15-16.)

**Common Eider** (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*) - N (20+ along the Council Road on 6/11.) {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*) - N (Daily, with counts ranging from 2–16.), P (Common; non-breeding birds seen daily in good numbers around the harbor, at Southwest Point, and at North Point in particular.)

**Black Scoter** (*Melanitta americana*) - N (23 seen in the Safety Lagoon complex on 6/11; also a few seen along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.) {This species has recently been split from Common Scoter, *M. nigra*, of Europe.}

**Long-tailed Duck** (*Clangula hyemalis*) - N (Seen daily in small numbers, with a high count of 12 along the Council Road on 6/11.), P (Daily in small numbers.)

**Common Goldeneye** (*Bucephala clangula*) - A (Lake Spenard/Hood)

**Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*) - A (Lake Spenard/Hood)

**Common Merganser** (*Mergus merganser*) - P (1 immature male at Antone Lake was an unexpected migrant.)

**Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*) - N (Common; Seen daily, with high of 40 along the Council Road on 6/11, and 16 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.), P

**Spruce Grouse** (*Falcapennis canadensis*) - A (Crippling views of a stunning male bird observed at point-blank range for several minutes! I wasn't hearing of any other groups seeing this species this spring.)

**Willow Ptarmigan** (*Lagopus lagopus*) - N (Daily counts of 10 [Teller Road], 3 [Council Road], and 6 [Kougarok Road] were about half of the numbers we were seeing during the Gambell-Nome Tour just days earlier. As spring advances, these birds "brown-up" and retreat back from the road with the receding snow, making them much harder to detect. Groups that came a week after us struggled to find even a few birds.)

- Rock Ptarmigan** (*Lagopus muta*) - N (1 was seen quite closely by DW and a couple of the curlew hikers on curlew mountain on 6/12. KJZ led an optional post-dinner excursion later that night out the Teller Road, specifically to look for Rockers where we had seen them with the Gambell-Nome group. We succeeded in finding 5–6 males, and getting exceptionally close views.)
- Red-throated Loon** (*Gavia stellata*) - N (Seen daily, with a high of 30+ along the Council Road on 6/11.)
- Arctic Loon** (*Gavia arctica*) - N (1 seen from the sea watch on 6/13 was our only record, after having seen 1–2 birds beyond Safety Sound with the previous group.)
- Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*) - N (6+ along the Council Road on 6/11; also seen from the sea watch on 6/13.)
- Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*) - A (DeLong Lake and Westchester Lagoon)
- Horned Grebe** (*Podiceps auritus*) - A (A fabulous breeding plumaged bird near its nest at Potter Marsh.)
- Red-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps grisegena*) - A (Westchester Lagoon – Many fewer than normal, without much evidence of active nesting.)
- Northern Fulmar** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) - P (Fewer than normal on the cliffs.)
- Double-crested Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) - N (1 seen and photographed at Safety Sound on 6/11 had been hanging in the area for a few weeks. This was the first time I have seen this species at Nome after nearly 30 years of visits.)
- Red-faced Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax urile*) - P (Fabulous views, particularly of the birds on the rocks at North Point.)
- Pelagic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*) - N (2 along the Council Road on 6/11.)
- Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) - N (A pair attempting to nest on the bridge over the Kuzitritin River gave great views, as they did for our previous group. This is a rarity in the Nome area.)
- Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - A (Nesting pair at Westchester Lagoon.)
- Northern Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*) - N (Single females seen on 6/11 and 6/12.)
- Rough-legged Hawk** (*Buteo lagopus*) - N (3 along the Teller Road on 6/10, 3 along the Council Road on 6/11, and 2 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)
- Golden Eagle** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) - N (2 soaring above the Council Road on 6/11 was our only record.)
- Sandhill Crane** (*Grus canadensis*) - N (4 along at Safety Lagoon on 6/11 and heard along the Kougarok Road on 6/12: Less conspicuous this year than usual.)
- Black-bellied Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) - N (Only 1 female bird seen along the Woolley Lagoon road [the only known breeding site in the Nome area] on the optional post-dinner cruise on 6/12.)
- American Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis dominica*) - N (2 along the Teller Road on 6/10, and 3+ along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)
- Pacific Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis fulva*) - N (6 along the Teller Road on 6/10, and 2 there on the post-dinner cruise on 6/12.)
- Semipalmated Plover** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) - N (1 along the Council Road on 6/11 and 2 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.), P
- Spotted Sandpiper** (*Actitis macularius*) - N (2 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)

- Wandering Tattler** (*Tringa incanans*) - N (1 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)
- Lesser Yellowlegs** (*Tringa flavipes*) - A (2 at Potter Marsh.)
- Whimbrel** (*Numenius phaeopus*) - N (2 along the Council Road on 6/11, after missing it with the previous group. Numbers of Whimbrels really seem to be down from normal.) {The breeding subspecies at Nome is the widespread North American form *hudsonicus*.}
- Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemasticta*) - A (14 birds roosting on an island at Westchester Lagoon.)
- Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*) - N (2 at the Nome River mouth on 6/11 were the only ones that we could find. This is another shorebird whose numbers in the Nome area seem to have plummeted over the years.)
- Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*) - N (4 seen along the Woolley Lagoon Road on the post-dinner cruise on 6/12.)
- Red Knot** (*Calidris cornutus*) - N (3 along the Teller Road on 6/10, including a displaying male flying wide circles on quivering wings, and a nearby mated pair that didn't seem to care while we approached closely on foot. Also seen again in the same area on the post-dinner cruise on 6/12.)
- Semipalmated Sandpiper** (*Calidris pusilla*) - N (Common along the coast, where we recorded 100+ along the Council Road on 6/11.)
- Western Sandpiper** (*Calidris mauri*) - N (The more common breeding "peep" of the inland tundra in the Nome region; we had 2 along the Teller Road on 6/10, and 20+ along the Council Road on 6/11.)
- Least Sandpiper** (*Calidris minutilla*) - P (An uncommon breeder on the island.)
- Rock Sandpiper** (*Calidris ptilocnemis*) - N\*, P {These Pribilofs-breeding birds are of the nominate subspecies *ptilocnemis*, which is notably paler [more golden as opposed to chestnut above] and brighter in overall appearance, with much more white in the wings and tail, than the subspecies *tschuktschorum* that we often see at Gambell and Nome.}
- Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*) - N (20+ along the Council Road on 6/11.)
- Short-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus griseus*) - A (1 at Westchester Lagoon.)
- Wilson's Snipe** (*Gallinago delicata*) - N (5–10 seen/heard daily.)
- Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) - N (Daily counts of 4, 30+ and 20+), P (Daily; in small numbers.)
- Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) - N (Daily.), P (Daily.)
- Red-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa brevirostris*) - P (Daily. Great views of this localized specialty of the Bering Sea.)
- Mew Gull** (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*) - N (Common.), A (Common.)
- Herring Gull** (*Larus [argentatus] vegae*) - N (Singles seen along the coast on 6/10 and 6/11.), P (1 on 6/15) {Entirely of the Siberian race *vegae*, treated by some as a distinct species, and then called "Vega Gull" or "Vega Herring Gull". Large gulls seen at Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage on the last day appeared to be Herring Gull X Glaucous-winged Gull hybrids.}
- Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*) - N (2 birds, one adult and the other probably a 3<sup>rd</sup>-cycle bird were seen nicely along the beach just beyond Safety Sound on 6/11.)

**Glaucous-winged Gull** (*Larus glaucescens*) - N (One 1<sup>st</sup>-cycle bird along the beach beyond Safety Sound on 6/11.), P

**Glaucous Gull** (*Larus hyperboreus*) - N (Common), P

**Aleutian Tern** (*Onychoprion aleutica*) - N (Scope views of 4 perched birds on the sandspit at Safety Sound on 6/11 provided our only record. The late snows and freeze in mid-May might have delayed the arrival and breeding season for this species, which normally has established small breeding colonies in the Nome area by this point in June.)

**Arctic Tern** (*Sterna paradisaea*) - N (Common), A (Common)

**Parasitic Jaeger** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) - N (Singles seen on 6/10 and 6/11.), P (4 migrating past North Point on 6/16.)

**Long-tailed Jaeger** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) - N (8–12 seen daily, including one pair with an active nest.)

**Common Murre** (*Uria aalge*) - P (Common)

**Thick-billed Murre** (*Uria lomvia*) - P (Abundant, and nearly close enough to touch!)

**Parakeet Auklet** (*Aethia psittacula*) - P (Common)

**Least Auklet** (*Aethia pusilla*) - P (Abundant)

**Crested Auklet** (*Aethia cristatella*) - P (Common, although we saw very few on the cliffs.)

**Horned Puffin** (*Fratercula corniculata*) - P (Common)

**Tufted Puffin** (*Fratercula cirrhata*) - P (Common)

**Rock Pigeon** (*Columba livia*) - A (Yawn...)

**Snowy Owl** (*Bubo scandiacus*) - P (A male bird near Antone Wall on 6/16 allowed close approach before flying and ultimately catching a Least Auklet while we watched! This was a special treat, especially during a poor lemming year in which some groups were missing the species at Barrow.)

**Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*) - N (1 seen in the Safety Lagoon area on 6/11. Numbers were down from usual, almost certainly a response to the crash in vole and lemming numbers all over Alaska.)

**Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*) - N (1 seen on our post-dinner drive out the Teller Road on 6/12 was our only record.)

**Gyrfalcon** (*Falco rusticolus*) - N (1 dark-morph adult at an active nest with 3 downy chicks on the Council Road on 6/11. Great views!)

**Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*) - N (1 along the Teller Road on 6/10, and 3 [including a pair at a cliff nest] along the Council Road on 6/11. One of the cliff-nesting pair was very dark; the other three individuals seen were all typically paler tundra-inhabiting birds.)

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** (*Contopus cooperi*) - A

**Western Wood-Pewee** (*Contopus sordidulus*) - A

**Alder Flycatcher** (*Empidonax alnorum*) - A

**Say's Phoebe** (*Sayornis saya*) - N (1 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)

**Black-billed Magpie** (*Pica hudsonia*) - A

**Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*) - N, A

**Tree Swallow** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) - N, A

**Violet-green Swallow** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) - A

- Bank Swallow** (*Riparia riparia*) - N, P (A single bird seen foraging over the town marsh on a couple of occasions on 6/14-15 was unusual.), A
- Cliff Swallow** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) - N (Good numbers seen from the bridges over the Sinuk, Pilgrim and Kuzitrin rivers,)
- Black-capped Chickadee** (*Poecile atricapillus*) - A
- Boreal Chickadee** (*Poecile hudsonicus*) - A
- Red-breasted Nuthatch** (*Sitta canadensis*) \* - A\*
- Pacific Wren** (*Troglodytes pacificus*)\* - P\* (Heard from the cliffs above the Trident plant, but we could never pin the bird down. The past couple of winters have seemingly devastated the island population of these wrens.) {A recent Supplement to the AOU Checklist [July 2010] splits what was called “Winter Wren” into three species: Eurasian Wren, Winter Wren, and Pacific Wren. There are three readily diagnosable subspecies groups of “Winter Wrens” occurring in North America: the eastern *hiemalis* group; the western *pacificus* group; and the Aleutian *alascensis* group. Of these, the western birds differ from the eastern ones in being much more richly buff-colored on the supercilium and underparts, whereas the Aleutian birds differ from all others in being distinctly longer billed and larger. Recently published molecular and vocal evidence shows that the *pacificus* and *alascensis* groups comprise a separate species (= Pacific Wren) that should be treated as distinct from the eastern *hiemalis* group (= Winter Wren), which is apparently more closely related to Eurasian “Winter Wrens” (= Eurasian Wren). The two North American species even contact one another in the Canadian Rockies without evidence of interbreeding. The island populations from the Bering Sea & Aleutians, although even more distinct morphologically, are genetically close to *pacificus*, and will, at least for the present, be included with that group. There are lots of different subspecies involved, and it is still unclear how the taxonomic dust will settle, but tuck that Pribilofs bird away – it could eventually be treated (along with the Aleutian populations) as yet another species distinct from *pacificus*.}
- Arctic Warbler** (*Phylloscopus borealis*) - N (Seen daily, with 20+ recorded along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)
- Bluethroat** (*Luscinia svecica*) - N (2 males seen along the Kougarok Road on 6/12 treated us to fabulous scope views and dazzling skylarking song bouts.)
- Northern Wheatear** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) - N (2 seen nicely along the Council Road leading up to Skookum Pass on 6/11.)
- Gray-cheeked Thrush** (*Catharus minimus*) - N (Common; seen daily in good numbers.)
- Swainson’s Thrush** (*Catharus ustulatus*) - A
- American Robin** (*Turdus migratorius*) - N, A
- Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*)\* - N\* (Heard along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)
- Eastern Yellow Wagtail** (*Motacilla tschutschensis*) - N (Daily in small numbers.)
- American Pipit** (*Anthus rubescens*) - N (2 along the Council Road on 6/11 and 5 along the Kougarok Road on 6/12) {Subspecies *pacificus*, one of the widespread subspecies that breed in North America.}
- Lapland Longspur** (*Calcarius lapponicus*) - N (Common), P (Common)
- Snow Bunting** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) - N (Pair seen off the Teller Road.), P (8+)



- Northern Waterthrush** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) - N (Common), A (Great views of a responsive bird at Kincaid Park.)
- Orange-crowned Warbler** (*Oreothlypis celata*) - N (up to 15+/day), A
- Yellow Warbler** (*Setophaga petechia*) - N (12–50/day), A
- Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler** (*Setophaga coronata*) - A
- Wilson's Warbler** (*Cardellina pusilla*) - N (5–10/day), A
- American Tree Sparrow** (*Spizella arborea*) - N (Small numbers seen along the Council and Kougarok roads.)
- Savannah Sparrow** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) - N (Seen daily.), A
- Fox Sparrow** (*Passerella iliaca zaboria*) - N {The Fox Sparrows at Nome are one of the very red subspecies {subspecies *zaboria* which is very similar to eastern *iliaca*}, whereas the ones at Anchorage and Seward (seen on Part II) are very sooty {subspecies *sinuosa*, which is part of the *fuliginosa* group}. Published molecular studies have advocated the splitting of the Fox Sparrow into as many as four separate species, and there are certainly substantial differences in morphology and voice (both songs and calls) between the various populations. So far, the A.O.U. checklist committee remains unconvinced, but keep your eye on this complex for possible splits.}
- Lincoln's Sparrow** (*Melospiza lincolni*) - A
- White-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) - N (Common), A
- Golden-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) - N (5–15+/day)
- Dark-eyed ("Slate-colored") Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*) - A
- Rusty Blackbird** (*Euphagus carolinus*) - N (1 male seen along the Kougarok Road on 6/12.)
- Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis umbrina*) - P {This Pribilofs subspecies is distinguished from others in the complex by its much larger size and by the more extensive gray on the sides of the face.}
- Hoary Redpoll** (*Acanthis hornemanni*) - N (Common, although redpoll numbers were noticeably reduced from all previous years, perhaps as a result of the massive late snowfall. We never did see any definite Commons, which can outnumber Hoaries in the areas of taller willows.)
- Pine Siskin** (*Spinus pinus*)\* - A\*

**Total = 128 species**

**Mammals:**

- Red Squirrel** (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)\* - A\*
- Arctic Ground Squirrel** (*Spermophilus parryi*) - N (The "Lowbush Grizzly"!)
- Muskrat** (*Ondatra zibethicus*) - A
- Arctic Fox** (*Alopex lagopus*) - P
- Brown Bear (Grizzly)** (*Ursus arctos*) - N
- Steller's Sea Lion** (*Eumetopias jubatus*) - P
- Northern Fur Seal** (*Callorhinus ursinus*) - P
- Harbor Seal** (*Phoca vitulina*) - P
- Spotted Seal** (*Phoca largha*) - N

**Short-tailed Weasel (Ermine)** (*Mustela erminea*) - N

**Moose** (*Alces alces*) - N, A

**“Reindeer”** (*Rangifer tarandus*) - N (This is the same species as the native “Barren Ground Caribou” found in other parts of Alaska, but represented here by an introduced subspecies from Greenland.)

**Muskox** (*Ovibos moschatus*) - N

**Total = 13 species**