

Alaska

Daily Itinerary

May 30: All day in the Anchorage area including visits to Kincaid Park, Ship Creek, Campbell Tract, Westchester Lagoon and Connor's Bog.

May 31: St. Paul excursion cancelled due to Covid, so we pivoted to Denali NP with birding stops at the Willow Sockeye Burn and Byers Lake. We also had crystal clear views of Denali as we drove north.

June 1: All day in the Fairbanks area including visits to Tanana Lakes, Creamer Migratory Wildlife Refuge, the airport float ponds and a private residence with a Boreal Owl nest site.

June 2: Denali NP entrance road to the Savage River bridge. And 4.5 hour drive back to Anchorage with a few roadside stops on the Parks Highway. After dinner we birded Lake Spenard and Lake Hood near the hotel in Anchorage.

June 3: Redux of several sites visited earlier, but without Kurt. These included Kincaid Park, Westchester lagoon, Campbell Tract trailhead and the Arctic Valley Ski area.

June 4: Searching for Northern Hawk-Owl (unsuccessfully) on the Glenn Highway between MP 118-127.

June 5: Anchorage to Seward with stops at Potter Marsh, Crow Creek Road, The Bear Lake salmon weir, Two Lakes park, Seward waterfront and Ava's feeders. After lunch and a break we visited the Lost Lake trailhead and returned to Ava's feeders. After dinner we drove to Lowell Point.

June 6: All day boat trip in Resurrection Bay with visits to the Chiswell Islands and Northwestern Fjord.

June 7: A gray rainy day spent driving from Seward back to Anchorage with a few stops along the way. A rather uneventful day with no new trip birds.

June 8: Morning flight to Nome and an afternoon drive on the Nome-Council road. Highlight was a Brambling near Cape Nome and 7 Sabine's Gulls at the mouth of the Nome River.

June 9: All day on the Nome-Council road as far as MP 58. Highlights included a Gyrfalcon nest with 3 chicks at the bridge at the East Fork of the Solomon River. Other memorable events were a young grizzly bear and a Northern Wheatear at Skookum Pass.

June 10: All day on the Kougarok road as far as MP 72.5 at Coffee Dome where we had good luck with Bristle-thighed Curlew, our primary target bird for this day. After dinner we finally had success seeing Emperor Goose on the Nome-Council road after three previous unsuccessful attempts.

June 11: All day on the Teller road including a stop at MP 34 where we saw Rock Ptarmigan and a pair of breeding Red Knots. We eventually made our way to the village of Teller at the end of the road where we found several White Wagtails, Black Guillemot and a very close Pomarine Jaeger. There were also several Ringed Seals feeding close to shore on the spit. On the drive back we had a vary serendipitous encounter with a Bluethroat at MP 37 (thanks to Stephan and Claudia).

June 12: On our final morning in Nome we all had great looks at Stejneger's Scoter near Cape Nome thanks to Suzanne's sharp eyes. This Eurasian scoter was perhaps our best bird of the entire tour! We then took a noon flight back to Anchorage where the remainder of the day was spent preparing for our flight to Utqiagvik.

June 13: A few hours were spent this morning spent at Kincaid Park in an unsuccessful attempt to see White-winged Crossbills. Later we took an afternoon flight to Utqiagvik and after dinner drove along Cake Eater Road searching for eiders.

June 14: All day in the Utqiagvik area including a morning sea watch from a bluff at the Nunavat gravel pits, a drive along the coast road toward Point Barrow and birding along Cake Eater and Nunavat roads.

June 15: Return this morning to Cake Eater Road where we had our best views of King, Steller's and Spectacled eiders. Later we visited the Inuit Heritage Center before having lunch at the hotel. Afterward to the airport for flight back to Anchorage.

ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

ANATIDAE

- 1. Emperor Goose (*Anser canagicus*) Three were finally seen on the Nome-Council road after three previous unsuccessful attempts. A rare but regular visitor to the Nome area.**
- 2. Snow Goose (*Anser caerulescens*) Scattered migrant flocks were seen in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome and Utqiagvik.**

3. Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) There were a couple of small flocks on the Kougarok road in Nome and many on the tundra around Utqiagvik. At the latter site this is an abundant breeding species and there we saw 100+ daily.
4. Brant (*Branta bernicula*) Several hundred were in the lagoons along the Nome-Council road in Nome. A few were also seen around Utqiagvik. All were of the *nigricans* race which is the form seen on the west coasts of the U.S. and Canada.
5. Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) Two were seen on the Teller Highway at the Penny River bridge. In this part of Alaska the Cackling Geese are of the subspecies *taverni*, the largest subspecies of Cackling Goose and very difficult to separate from the *parvipes* race of Canada Goose which is not known to occur around Nome. Irregardless, this is a difficult identification made more complicated by the fact that *taverni* and *parvipes* have been documented interbreeding in parts of Alaska.
6. Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) We saw small numbers of Canada Goose around Anchorage and in Fairbanks. These were all “*Lesser Canada Geese*” belonging to the race *parvipes*, the smallest race of Canada Goose and very tricky to separate from the larger races of Cackling Goose.
7. Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) Small numbers were seen on in marshy areas around Anchorage and on the Glenn Highway. This is the swan associated with wetland areas in southern Alaska and does not occur in tundra habitat.
8. Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) 100+ were seen in the lagoons along the Nome-Council road and smaller numbers were present in the tundra around Utqiagvik. This is a well named species breeding on high arctic wetlands.
9. Blue-winged Teal (*Spatula discors*) An uncommon species at best on our tour route. Thanks to Suzanne’s sharp eyes we saw a single male in a roadside pond on the Glenn Highway.
10. Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) Fairly widespread in the Anchorage area and as far north as Denali. There were also a few present in the Fairbanks area, but farther north this species becomes rather scarce and was absent from Nome and Utqiagvik.
11. Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*) This species is generally uncommon in Alaska and was seen only at Lowell Point south of Seward where a pair was seen on Resurrection Bay.
12. Eurasian Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) Although a fairly regular species in the Nome area, we saw only a single bird in a lagoon on the Nome-Council road.
13. American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*) Very common around Anchorage, Seward, Nome and Denali.

14. Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) Seen in small numbers around Anchorage, Seward and as far north as Denali. Farther north it becomes scarce, so a single bird on the tundra outside Utqiagvik on our last day was a surprise.
15. Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*) This was the most common dabbling duck of the tour occurring in good numbers well into the high arctic wetlands. We saw 250+ daily in and around Utqiagvik.
16. Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) A few were seen in the Anchorage area and around Nome. All were the American Green-winged Teal, *Anas crecca carolinensis*, showing a vertical white stripe on the shoulder.
17. Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*) Uncommon to rare on our itinerary. We saw singles in Fairbanks, on a roadside pond on the Parks Highway and at Nome. There were also 5 present on Lake Hood near our hotel in Anchorage on one of our evening excursions.
18. Redhead (*Aythya americana*) Seen only on Lake Hood near our hotel in Anchorage. This is a rare species anywhere on this tour route.
19. Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*) A few were seen in the Anchorage area and on the Parks Highway on the way to Denali. Generally uncommon on this itinerary.
20. Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*) Very common at most of our venues, although less so around Utqiagvik where only a few were noted.
21. Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) Far less common than the previous species. We had good comparisons of the two scaup species at Lake Hood near our Anchorage hotel where a large flock contained both species. Contrary to information in most field guides, the color of the head sheen is not a reliable way to separate the two species.
22. Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*) The smallest of the four eider species with behavior during the breeding season more reminiscent of a dabbling duck as it feeds on invertebrates in shallow tundra melt ponds. A very handsome duck that eventually showed well in the tundra pools around Utqiagvik.
23. Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*) This is the most difficult eider and it has become increasingly hard to find in recent years. We had good luck with this species on Cake Eater Road and the views became increasingly better each time we visited. On our final morning drive we saw at least nine and were able to finally obtain some reasonably decent photos.

24. King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) We usually see this species in small numbers at Nome, but this year they were absent. Fortunately good numbers were present around Utqiagvik and we saw 40+ in some of the melt ponds near the landfill.

25. Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) 40-60+ were seen in the lagoons along the Nome-Council road on every excursion there.

26. Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) Extremely common at Lowell Point in Seward where we saw 50+. There were also good sized groups seen from the spit in Teller and at Cape Nome. A few were also seen in Ship Creek in Anchorage.

27. Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*) The only encounters with this species were on the Glenn Highway, where we saw several males in a territorial dispute, and at Byers Lake on the way to Denali, where a pair was drifting on the edges of the mostly ice covered lake.

28. White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) A few scattered sightings including Byers Lake on the way to Denali, in Fairbanks at the float plane pond at the airport, and at Cape Nome.

29. Stejneger's Scoter (*Melanitta stejnegeri*) Perhaps the best bird of the entire tour. A nice male was with a flock of White-winged Scoters off of Cape Nome and was seen well by everyone through the scope. This was a recent split from White-winged Scoter and is known as Velvet Scoter in some references. Differentiating field marks from White-winged Scoter include a large knob at the base of the bill, black flanks and a yellow patch along the cutting edge of the bill. This was a really nice way to conclude our visit to Nome.

30. Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*) Two landed briefly on one of the lagoons on the Nome-Council road. A few people saw them through the scope before they moved on.

31. Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) An abundant species around Utqiagvik where we saw 100+ daily.

32. Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) A pair was seen several times on Lake Spenard and Lake Hood near the hotel in Anchorage. A single male was at Tanana Lakes in Fairbanks and another was in a roadside pond on the Glenn Highway. An uncommon species on this tour.

33. Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) There were 6-10 on Lake Hood in Anchorage. A few were also seen at the airport in Fairbanks and in a roadside pond on the road to Denali.

34. Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*) It was a good year for this species. 15+ were seen on Lake Spenard and Lake Hood in Anchorage each time we visited those sites. We also saw a few at Lowell Point in Seward and on the Glenn and Parks highways.

35. Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) A pair flew over while we were searching for Chestnut-backed Chickadee near Girdwood. There were a few more at Beluga Point between Anchorage and Seward and a single male at Ship Creek in Anchorage.

36. Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) Very common around Nome where we saw them daily.

PHASIANIDAE

37. Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*) Nice roadside views of this species along the Denali NP entrance road, the first 35 miles of the Teller road and on the Kougarok road.

38. Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*) This species has become more difficult in recent years and we only saw two on the ridge at MP 34 on the Teller road. This was while we searched for Red Knots.

39. Spruce Grouse (*Canachites canadensis*) We had excellent views of this often difficult bird on our first morning at Kincaid Park in Anchorage. A male was seen at close range perched in a spruce and also displaying briefly on the ground.

PODICIPEDIDAE

40. Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*) Several birds in breeding plumage were at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks. Another was seen in a roadside pond on the Parks Highway as we returned to Anchorage from Denali.

41. Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) Abundant in the Anchorage area. One in the Bering Sea near Nome was surprising.

COLUMBIDAE

42. Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) There were many outside our hotel in Seward and a few others in the Anchorage area.

GRUIDAE

43. Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*) Fairly common and seen on most days of the tour. The largest concentration was at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks where we counted 52.

HAEMATOPODIDAE

44. Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*) A pair was seen near Northwestern Fjord during our boat trip out of Seward.

CHARADRIIDAE

45. American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*) A few birds in breeding plumage were seen around Nome and Utqiagvik.

46. Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*) We saw a pair at from the bridge at the Nome River mouth on our first visit there. They are generally fairly common around Nome, but we never encountered them there again.

47. Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) Fairly widespread and seen in Anchorage, Utqiagvik, Nome and Fairbanks. One was on a nest near the Cripple River bridge on the Teller road.

SCOLOPACIDAE

48. Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*) These were cooperative this year on Coffee Dome where in less than an hour we had good views of two on the ground and another in flight. We were lucky as other groups had more difficulty this year. Coffee Dome is the only known accessible breeding site where you can see this species.

49. Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) Just two sightings this year and both at Nome; one on the Kougarok road and another on the Nome-Council road.

50. Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) Nice views at the Nome River mouth with a high count of 7 birds on one of our visits.

51. Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) As usual there were a couple of birds hanging around the mudflats near Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage. Very unusual was a pair on Cake Eater Road in Utqiagvik and 3 at the Nome River mouth. This species is very rare at either of the latter two sites.

52. Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) One was at the Nome River mouth and a couple more were seen around Utqiagvik.

53. Black Turnstone (*Arenaria melanocephala*) A single bird was seen at the Nome River mouth but only on one of the several visits we made there.

54. Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) After a cold and windy search we finally turned up a pair on the MP 34 ridge on the Teller road. There was also one on the trash beach in Utqiagvik.

55. Surfbird (*Calidris virgata*) Two were seen on the mudflats at Westchester lagoon in Anchorage.

56. Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) Two were seen on the trash beach in Utqiagvik.

57. Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) Fairly common around Utqiagvik where we saw 5-10 each time we visited Cake Eater Road.

58. Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) Just a single bird found by Andy on Cake Eater Road in Utqiagvik. These generally prefer gravelly areas for breeding and most of the good habitat in Utqiagvik was still snow covered.

59. Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*) Just a single bird was seen on the mudflats near Westchester Lagoon. This species is uncommon on this tour, so its general absence was not a surprise.

60. White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) We saw 3-5 birds on Cake Eater Road and two others at the Naval Arctic Research station in Utqiagvik. This is usually an uncommon bird around Utqiagvik, but they seemed more prevalent this year. Perhaps they were pushed to the roadsides due to much of the tundra being covered with snow.

61. Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) 20-40 were seen daily around Utqiagvik where this species is a common breeder. Males inflate their neck sacs and make a hollow booming sound during during their display flights.

62. Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) Common around Nome and Utqiagvik. Males have a hovering display flight and are quite pugnacious with each other. Very different behavior than what most birders are used to seeing during migration when they mass in large flocks on mudflats.

63. Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri*) 40-60 were seen on the Nome-Council road in Nome. They were especially conspicuous at the mouth of the Nome River.

64. Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus griseus*) Two were seen on the mudflats near Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage. This is the dowitcher associated with marshy wetlands in southern Alaska during the breeding season.

65. Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) Three were seen huddled along the shore at the airport pond in Fairbanks and two others on Cake Eater Road in Utqiagvik. This is the dowitcher associated with high arctic tundra during the breeding season.

66. Wilson's Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) Heard winnowing frequently in and around Nome. 20+ flushed from roadside on the morning we drove the Kougarok road.

67. Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) Abundant and seen daily around Nome and Utqiagvik.

68. Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) Common around Utqiagvik where we saw 100+ daily in the melt waters along Cake Eater Road.

69. Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) Uncommon on this tour route. One was seen on the edge of the ice at Byers Lake on the way to Denali. In Nome we saw one on the Kougarok road and another on Teller road.

70. Solitary Sandpiper (*Tringa solitaria*) Another uncommon species that generally nests farther south. We saw just one and that was at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks.

71. Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*) Singles were seen on the mudflats at Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage, at Lowell Point in Seward and from the Penny River bridge on the Teller road.

72. Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) The only one was seen in a pond near the Willow-Sockeye burn as we returned from the Black-backed Woodpecker site.

73. Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) Very common around Anchorage where we saw several males performing their courtship flight. Others were also seen in Fairbanks and on the road to Denali.

STERCORARIIDAE

74. Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) 4-6 were seen daily around Utqiagvik where this is the most common breeding jaeger. We also had one on the spit in Teller.

75. Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) Seen in small numbers around Nome and Utqiagvik. This is the only jaeger that feeds primarily on small birds and their eggs during the breeding season.

76. Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) There were many around Nome where we saw 10-15 daily. Some of these were on nests, but others were likely migrants moving through the area on the way to breeding grounds farther north.

ALCIDAE

77. Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) Very common on the boat trip out of Seward. There were several hundred breeding on the cliffs on the Chiswell Islands. We also had a few at Cape Nome and along the spit at Teller.

78. Black Guillemot (*Cepphus grylle*) Three were seen in flight from the spit at Teller where this species occurs regularly.

79. Pigeon Guillemot (*Cepphus columba*) Very common in inshore waters around Seward. We had good looks from shore at Waterfront Park and many more during the boat trip.

80. Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) On our first afternoon in Seward we had a flock of 8 in Resurrection Bay near the Iditarod Memorial. We also a couple during the boat trip.

81. Kittlitz's Murrelet (*Brachyramphus brevirostris*) Just one bird was seen near Northwestern Fjord during our boat trip. This species is closely associated with shallow water around tidewater glacial runoff and is never seen in numbers on this tour.

82. Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) Several groups flushed from in front of the boat as we traveled between the mouth of Northwestern Lagoon and Cape Aialik during our boat trip out of Seward. I counted a total of 39, the largest number I have recorded on this tour.

83. Parakeet Auklet (*Aethia psittacula*) A group of 14 was seen at Chiswell Islands during our boat trip. This was our only chance to see this species after our trip to St. Paul was cancelled, so everyone was quite happy with the encounter.

84. Horned Puffin (*Fratercula corniculata*) Very common during our boat trip from Seward. We also had a few flybys while seawatching at Cape Nome.

85. Tufted Puffin (*Fratercula cirrhata*) Very common during our boat trip from Seward.

LARIDAE

86. Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*) Abundant on Resurrection Bay where we saw 1000+ nesting on the cliffs on the Chiswell Islands. Lesser numbers were seen on the Bering Sea around Nome and roosting on the sandbars at the mouth of the Nome River.

87. Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) An elegant little gull that was seen at the mouth of the Nome River and on the tundra in Utqiagvik. At the former site there were 7 individuals resting on a sandbar providing great scope views.

88. Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) Formerly known as Mew Gull, this species was abundant around Anchorage, Seward and Nome.

89. Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) This is a relatively uncommon species on this trip and we saw just two sitting on a gravel bar at the spit in Teller. These were of the *Vega* race which are slightly darker mantled than the Herring Gulls found in the lower 48 states.

90. Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*) One first cycle bird was seen at the landfill in Utqiagvik where it engendered some debate as to its identity.

91. Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) Very common around Seward and on Resurrection Bay where it is the dominant large gull. 100+ were along the edges of the lagoon near Northwestern Fjord.

92. Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) An abundant breeder around Nome and Utqiagvik. There were 100+ at the landfill in Utqiagvik.

93. Aleutian Tern (*Onychoprion aleuticus*) 20+ were around the mouth of the Nome River, generally the best place to get good views of this species on this tour.

94. Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) Abundant throughout the tour including some on the snow covered tundra outside Utqiagvik.

GAVIIDAE

95. Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) One was on Lake Spenard near our hotel in Anchorage, but they were especially common in the small roadside ponds near town on the Nome-Council road.

96. Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) This is the most common loon of this tour and we saw many decked out in their handsome breeding plumage around Nome and Utqiagvik. A female was also seen on a nesting platform at Connor's Bog in Anchorage.

97. Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) There were a few at Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage and in roadside ponds on the road to Denali.

98. Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) We had 13 flybys while standing on a bluff at the edge of the sea in Utqiagvik. One flew low below the horizon giving everyone a good view of its large yellow bill. A difficult bird this year due to the lack of open water offshore, so I was very happy to see them.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

99. Red-faced Cormorant (*Urile urile*) Nice views of 10-15 during our boat trip out of Seward including one sitting on a nest in a cave at the Chiswell Islands.

100. Pelagic Cormorant (*Urile pelagicus*) 5-10 were seen around Resurrection Bay and from Cape Nome. They were very common around Teller where we saw 40-50 while standing on the spit.

101. Double-crested Cormorant (*Nannopterum auritus*) 25+ were seen in the lower part of Resurrection Bay. We also saw a few during our boat trip, but these were all just a few miles from Seward.

ACCIPITRIDAE

102. Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) Nice looks at one subadult bird on the Nome-Council road.

103. Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) Males were seen on Coffee Dome and the Teller road.

104. Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Very common around Anchorage and Seward. Less so in Fairbanks and on the road to Denali, but several were seen there as well.

STRIGIDAE

105. Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*) A nesting pair was inside the airport perimeter in Utqiagvik. Snowy Owls have declined precipitously around Utqiagvik in recent years. Much of the decline has been attributed to nest failure caused by human disturbance.

106. Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) Three were seen on the Nome-Council road with a couple providing very nice views. Another distant bird was seen flying over the ice on the Chuckchi Sea during our sea watch at Utqiagvik.

107. Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) This was an excellent pickup and helped ease the sting of not being able to go to St. Paul. We had nice views of a female peering out of a nest box at a private home in Fairbanks. A bird that you may never see again.

PICIDAE

108. American Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides dorsalis*) One very territorial male put on a nice show for us at Kincaid Park in Anchorage.

109. Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) A pair showed well at the Willow-Sockeye burn where I have seen this species since 2017. This is a rare species in Alaska and far outnumbered by American Three-toed Woodpecker. It is actually surprising that they are still in this area as the burn occurred in 2015 and the area is being developed rapidly.

110. Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*) One responded to playback at Westchester Lagoon and a pair was attending the feeders at Ava's place outside Seward.

111. Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*) Fairly common in forested areas. We saw them at Kincaid Park, the Willow-Sockeye burn, Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge and Ava's feeders. There were at least three at the latter site.

112. Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) A pair was seen at the Willow-Sockeye burn. An uncommon bird on this tour route.

FALCONIDAE

113. Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) One flew over the road while we were driving on the Teller road.

114. Gryfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*) This was definitely one of the highlights of the tour. A nest with 3 chicks was under a bridge over the East Fork of the Solomon River. Later in the day we saw one of the adults sitting on a ridge above the river valley and had excellent views through the scope. This species is never a guarantee on this tour, so this was very exciting for everyone.

115. Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) Nice looks at a flyover bird on the New Landfill road outside Utqiagvik.

TYRANNIDAE

116. Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) A very responsive individual put on both vocal and visual displays in the parking area for the Lost Lake Trail near Seward.

117. Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*) One was heard only at Kincaid Park in Anchorage on our second visit there.

118. Alder Flycatcher (*Empidonax alnorum*) These were just beginning to arrive at the start of our tour and numbers increased slowly throughout. We encountered them on the road to Denali, on the road to the Arctic Valley Ski area, Kincaid Park and at the Campbell Tract trailhead where we saw the dipper nest.

119. Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*) A very nice territorial male was seen at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks. This is a rare bird anywhere else on this tour route.

120. Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) Three were seen on the Nome-Council road: one near the bridge over the East Fork of the Solomon River and a pair a few miles farther down the road. Generally uncommon and seen only on this stretch of road between Nome and Council.

CORVIDAE

121. Canada Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*) A family group of 4-6 was seen well at the Willow-Sockeye burn. A few more were seen distantly as we searched for Northern Hawk-Owl on the Glenn Highway.

122. Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) A pair was seen in a residential area of Anchorage and another pair during our lunch stop at Two Lakes park in Seward.

123. Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) Very common around Anchorage and Seward. Less so around Denali and on the Glenn Highway, but we saw a few at both of the latter venues.

124. American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) Fairly common from the Girdwood area south to Seward. The subspecies of American Crow in this part of Alaska was formerly considered a distinct species and was known as Northwestern Crow. It has a lower pitched and more guttural call than the American Crow and is found in coastal areas from southeastern Alaska to Washington.

125. Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) Very common and seen almost daily including as far north as Utqiagvik.

PARIDAE

126. Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) Fairly common around Anchorage and Seward.

127. Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*) A pair responded to playback on Crow Creek Road near Girdwood. This is about as far north as one can expect to find this species.

128. Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*) A pair was feeding young in a nest near our hotel in Anchorage. We also saw a pair at the Boreal Owl site in Fairbanks.

ALAUDIDAE

129. Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) There was a pair seen at Skookum Pass on the Nome-Council road. This is an uncommon species on this tour and these were the first I had seen in the Nome area.

HIRUNDINIDAE

130. Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) These were very common around Anchorage and Seward. 30+ were seen on one of our evening visits to Lake Hood. They were fairly common as well around Nome.

131. Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*) Fairly common, but less so than Tree Swallows. The best views were at Service High School in Anchorage where they were nesting in vent pipes on the side on the building.

132. Bank Swallow (*Riparia riparia*) There were several seen at Lake Hood on one of our evening visits there. A pair was also noted flying over the Nome River on the Kougatok road.

133. Cliff Swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) Great views of several nesting birds at Service High School in Anchorage where this is an uncommon species. Strangely they become more common farther north and we saw colonies at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks and under bridges on the Kougatok road and the Teller road.

PHYLLOSCOPIDAE

134. Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*) This is the only species of Old World warbler that nests in the U.S. The most accessible place to see them in around Nome where they don't usually arrive in numbers until around June 10th. This year they seem to have come a bit earlier and we had good views of them on the Kougatok road and heard many others singings their mechanical trill on the Teller road.

REGULIDAE

135. Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*) A fairly common breeding bird around Anchorage, Seward and Fairbanks. We heard and saw them almost daily when birding these areas.

136. Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) A pair responded vigorously to playback on Fiddle Way in Fairbanks. This is an uncommon species in this part of Alaska. Several more were heard at Two Lakes park in Seward where they are more expected.

SITTIDAE

137. Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) A few were seen at Kincaid Park, Fairbanks and in the Seward area.

CERTHIIDAE

138. Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) Another uncommon species on this tour with just a single encounter of a pair on Fiddle Way near Fairbanks.

TROGLODYTIDAE

139. Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*) This is a fairly new species resulting from the three-way split of Winter Wren. We had very nice views of a singing male on the Two Lakes Trail in Seward.

CINCLIDAE

140. American Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) This is always a crowd pleaser and we had several nice encounters that included an adult feeding young under a bridge at the Campbell Tract trailhead in Anchorage. We also saw them at the Bear Creek salmon weir near Seward and at the Penny River bridge on the Teller road.

STURNIDAE

141. European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) Fairly common in Anchorage.

TURDIDAE

142. Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) Fairly common in the coastal rainforests around Seward. Our best views were at the Lost Lake Trail parking area where one perched atop a spruce for several minutes.

143. Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) Very common in the Nome area where 20+ were heard daily and many were also also seen. We also heard one at a roadside stop on the road to Denali.

144. Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) These were very common around Anchorage and 20+ were heard daily when we birded that area. The highest concentration was at Kincaid Park where we had 10+ on each visit. We also had a few farther north on the road to Denali and on the Glenn Highway.

145. Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) Rather scarce, but present from Girdwood south to Seward where they seem to replace Swainson's Thrush. We recorded them daily while in that area, but most if not all were heard only.

146. American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) Very common and recorded daily everywhere except in Utqiagvik.

MUSCICAPIDAE

147. Bluethroat (Luscinia svecica) This Alaska specialty almost escaped us as they simply were not displaying in all of the usual places. The cold, windy weather on our final two days in Nome didn't help, but thanks to a serendipitous encounter with Stephan and Claudia's Rockjumper group, we finally had killer looks at MP 37 on the Teller road.

148. Northern Wheatear (Oenanthe oenanthe) This long distance migrant reaches the eastern edge of its breeding range in northwestern Alaska and along with Bluethroat, is one of the two Old World Flycatchers that regularly breeds in North America. We had a nice roadside view of an active male at Skookum Pass on the Nome-Council road.

BOMBYCILLIDAE

149. Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) This is an uncommon bird on this tour route and we saw one only because of our unexpected trip to Fairbanks due to the St. Paul excursion being cancelled. A very cooperative individual responded well to playback in the flooded birch forest at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge.

MOTACILLIDAE

150. Eastern Yellow Wagtail (Motacilla tschutschensis) This is another Eurasian species whose breeding range barely reaches into Alaska. We had a responsive pair in the old village of Solomon on the Nome-Council road. Another was seen well from the van along the edge of the road as we were leaving Teller.

151. White Wagtail (Motacilla alba) At least three birds made the long drive to Teller well worth the time and trouble. At our first stop Andy immediately spotted one on the wires above the van and eventually a pair engaged in an aerial chase. Later a third was seen on the spit which was almost certainly not one of two we had seen in town.

FRINGILLIDAE

152. Brambling (Fringilla montifringilla) This colorful Eurasian finch was our only vagrant passerine of the tour and we had very good looks at a singing male in a thick willow patch near Cape Nome. Definitely one of the top birds of the tour.

153. Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) Fairly common and recorded in small numbers almost everyday including at the feeders in Utqiagvik.

154. Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*) We had two sightings of this finch of the far northern arctic: one perched on an old sofa in Teller and another at the feeders in Utqiagvik. There were

quite likely many more as most of the redpolls we saw were poor views or birds that flushed from the roads and were left unidentified.

155. White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) A disappointing experience with this one. They are erratic and difficult to pin down, but a large flock was being seen at Kincaid Park for a few days prior to our return from Nome. We made an unscheduled morning trip before flying to Utqiagvik, but only had a couple of flyovers.

156. Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) These were scarce this year and we saw only a few at Ava's feeders in Seward.

CALCARIIDAE

157. Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) Very common on the tundra around Nome and Utqiagvik where we saw 20+ daily. This is a very charismatic little bird with a buoyant, larking display flight.

158. Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) People were surprised at the abundance of this species around Utqiagvik where they nest in vent pipes and cavities they find in buildings. They also use nest boxes that locals attach to their houses. Their behavior and habitat here is very much like what we expect of House Sparrows and Irvin stated that he had lost some degree of respect for them after his Utqiagvik experience. We also saw a few on the Teller road outside Nome.

PASSERELLIDAE

159. American Tree Sparrow (*Spizelloides arborea*) These were seen on the entrance road into Denali NP, where we had our highest count of 12+. We saw fewer numbers on the Glenn Highway while looking for Northern Hawk-Owl and on the Kougarok road in Nome.

160. Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) We saw two races of Fox Sparrow on the tour: *unalaschensis* or "Sooty Fox Sparrow" on the road to Arctic Valley Ski area and at Ava's feeders, and *zaboria* or "Red Fox Sparrow" in the boreal forests along the Glenn Highway and in the willows around Nome. The strangest sighting of all was of one that appeared briefly on the bluff during our sea watch in Utqiagvik, an area where there is virtually no habitat for this species.

161. Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) Very common around Anchorage, Seward, Fairbanks and on the Denali NP entrance road. All seen were the "slate-colored" types.

162. White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) Very common and recorded daily in all localities except Utqiagvik.

163. Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) These were most common at the Arctic Valley Ski area where we saw and heard 6-10. We also heard a few on the Nome-Council road and on the Teller road.

164. Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) Common around Fairbanks, on both the Glenn and Parks highways and along the Nome-Council road.

165. Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) Just a single bird at Ava's feeders near Seward. The Song Sparrows in this area are of the large, dark coastal race *kenaiensis*.

166. Lincoln's Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*) Very close views at a pond near the Willow-Sockeye burn and on the Glenn Highway while looking for Northern Hawk-Owl. We also heard one singing at Potter Marsh.

ICTERIDAE

167. Rusty Blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) A few scattered sightings of single birds including at Creamer's Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Fairbanks, at a roadside pond on the Parks Highway as we returned from Denali, Potter Marsh and on the Teller road.

PARULIDAE

168. Northern Waterthrush (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) Common in most any wetland habitat. Many were heard daily in all localities except Utqiagvik.

169. Orange-crowned Warbler (*Leiothlypis celata*) Very common around Anchorage and Seward where its dry trill was a constant auditory backdrop for our activities. There were also a few around Nome.

170. Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*) Fairly common around Fairbanks and Seward; less so but also present around Nome especially on the Nome-Council road.

171. Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*) Uncommon on this trip with just a few at the Willow-Sockeye burn and around Fairbanks. We had one in the scope for an extended time on the Glenn Highway while searching for Northern Hawk-Owl.

172. Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*) Common around Anchorage, Seward, Fairbanks and Denali.

173. Townsend's Warbler (*Setophaga townsendi*) Very nice views of this colorful warbler at the Boreal Owl site in Fairbanks. We also had a few in Girdwood on Crow Creek Road and at Two Lakes park in Seward.

174. Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*) Fairly common around Anchorage, Seward, Fairbanks, Denali and Nome.

MAMMALS

1. Snowshoe Hare (*Lepus americanus*) Seen on the Denali entrance road and on several roads in Nome.
2. Arctic Ground-Squirrel (*Spermophilus parryii*) Fairly common on the tundra around Nome.
3. Red Squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) Common around Anchorage, Fairbanks and Denali.
4. American Beaver (*Castor canadensis*) A small population makes. Living along the Nome River, but it was very strange to see one on the rocks at Cape Nome.
5. Common Muskrat (*Ondatra zibethica*) There were a couple seen at Lake Hood in Anchorage.
6. North American Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*) Great roadside views of three of these interesting animals on the entrance road into Denali NP.
7. Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) One was seen on the Kougarak road in Nome.
8. Sea Otter (*Enhydra lutris*) 10-15 were seen in Resurrection Bay with especially good views during our boat trip there.
9. North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) One was cavorting in a roadside pond on the Glenn Highway.
10. Steller's Sea Lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) We saw several groups loafing on the rocks at the Chiswell Islands during our boat trip.
11. Harbor Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) A few were resting on the large ice floes near the base of Northwestern Fjord.
12. Ringed Seal (*Phoca hispida*) There were a few feeding about 50 meters from shore on the spit at Teller.
13. Brown Bear ssp. Grizzly (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) The inland race of Brown Bear is known as "Grizzly Bear" and is the expected bear on most of this tour route. We had a nice look at a year old bear lumbering across the tundra at Skookum Pass on the Nome-Council road.
14. Muskox (*Ovibos moschatus*) Quite common around Nome where we encountered several large groups.
15. Moose (*Alces alces*) Surprisingly we only saw these on the entrance road to Denali NP and on the Parks Highway on the return trip to Anchorage from Fairbanks.

16. Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) A herd of about 15 was seen on our early morning drive along the entrance road to Denali NP.
17. Mountain Goat (*Oreamnos americanus*) Several small groups were seen between Anchorage and Seward including at Beluga Point and during our boat trip.
18. Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) Nice looks at 3-5 during our boat trip on Resurrection Bay.
19. Orca (*Orcinus orca*) We encountered several pods during our boat trip on Resurrection Bay.
20. Dall Porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*) Fairly common in Resurrection Bay.

