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NOTES ON BIRDS
OF THE KODIAK-AFOGNAK ISLAND GROUP

BY VICTOR H. CAHALANE

DURING the autumn of 1940, while gathering field data for the National Park Service, I spent about two weeks in the region of Shelikof Strait, southwestern Alaska. I arrived at Kodiak on September 25 and departed for Seward on October 11. Parts of two days (September 29 and October 10) of this period were devoted to field work in the vicinity of Kodiak village and four days (September 30 to October 3, and October 8) in cruising along the northern and western coasts of Kodiak Island as far south as Larsen Bay and Uyak 'village.' Visits were made ashore at two points on southern Afognak Island, on Raspberry Island, and in Viekoda, Terror and Larsen Bays on Kodiak Island. In making this cruise in the seiner 'Hazel M,' I am greatly indebted for the help of my companion and pilot, N. J. Benson of Kodiak, Wildlife Agent of the Alaska Game Commission.

I had no opportunity to collect specimens, but kept notes on the birds observed. Because of the relative scarcity of field notes on the birds of this region, especially so late in the season when danger of fierce storms discourages excursions by boat, these sight observations may be worth recording. With the single exception of the Gadwall

(*Chaulelasmus streperus*) all species seen by me have already been recorded in Friedmann's list of 'The Birds of Kodiak Island, Alaska' (Bull. Chicago Acad. Sci., 5, no. 3: 13-54, Sept. 10, 1935).

Kodiak Island is 105 miles in length, in a northeast-southwest direction, and 60 miles wide at right angles to this. The west side is fissured by long, narrow fiords. Afognak and Raspberry Islands, which once formed the northern portion of the pre-Kodiak land mass, are now separated by the narrow Raspberry and Kupreanof Straits. They are both considerably smaller in size than Kodiak Island and are much lower in elevation.

With the exception of the northeastern and entire southern portions of Kodiak Island, the shores rise fairly steeply from the sea. The rugged, completely barren central ridge of Kodiak rises, on one peak at least, to approximately 4200 feet. Most of the rounded slopes below approximately 3000 feet (which include all of Afognak and Raspberry Islands) are clothed in dense grass, and patches of alders and willows (modified Arctic Zone). The single exception is the fairly dense spruce forest (Hudsonian Zone) fringing some of the lower areas of Afognak Island, and the northeastern portion of Kodiak Island north of a line between Point Chiniak and Outlet Cape.

PACIFIC LOON, *Gavia arctica pacifica* (Lawrence).—All loons identified belonged to this species. They were common on the coastal waters and inlets from Kodiak village to Uyak Bay. Loons were especially numerous in Kupreanof Strait, October 1, and in Raspberry Strait on the eighth.

HOLBOELL'S GREBE, *Colymbus grisegena holboelli* (Reinhardt).—This grebe was numerous in Uyak Bay. A few were seen in Kupreanof Strait.

HORNED GREBE, *Colymbus auritus* Linnaeus.—I saw several Horned Grebes in Viekoda and Terror Bays, October 1.

BLACK-FOOTED ALBATROSS, *Diomedea nigripes* Audubon.—A number were seen October 2 off the western coast of Kodiak Island between Uganic Bay and Cape Ugat. With a few gulls, these albatrosses were the only birds that continued an active hunt for food on a day so windy that our seine-boat was throttled down to half-speed. While we labored and rolled over huge waves that appeared to be 30 feet high, the albatrosses soared over the crests and skimmed down the troughs with the greatest of ease.

WHITE-CRESTED CORMORANT, *Phalacrocorax auritus cincinatus* (Brandt).—Cormorants, apparently all of this species, were abundant. Almost as soon as our pilot had cut his motor and moored the plane

in the harbor of Kodiak village, one of these birds swam up to inspect it, curiously. For the following ten days, as long as I was on water, cormorants were never far away. They were very common and characteristic on Kupreanof Strait and numerous in Viekoda and Uyak Bays. The population was even heavier in the bays of the Katmai National Monument.

COMMON MALLARD, *Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos* Linnaeus.—A large number of Mallards were feeding with other ducks at the head of Terror Bay and in the marshy stream flowing into it (October 2).

GADWALL, *Chaulelasmus streperus* (Linnaeus).—N. J. Benson, warden of the Alaska Game Commission who accompanied me on my trip in Shelikof Strait, shot two Gadwalls at the head of Terror Bay, on October 2. I made no other observations of this species. Friedmann does not mention it in his list and it therefore is an addition, although the specimens were not saved.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL, *Nettion carolinense* (Gmelin).—Teals were numerous nearly everywhere in the waters around Kodiak Island in early October. There were numbers in Viekoda Bay. At the head of Terror Bay they were feeding in the company of Mallards. A constant procession of ducks of both species was moving between the open bay and the marshy pools in the great flat. The greatest numbers of teals were found in Raspberry Strait.

GREATER SCAUP DUCK, *Nyroca marila* (Linnaeus).—'Bluebills,' presumed to belong to this species, were fairly common in the northern and western bays of Kodiak Island.

WESTERN HARLEQUIN DUCK, *Histrionicus histrionicus pacificus* Brooks.—Harlequins were abundant in Viekoda, Terror and Uyak Bays, October 2 and 3.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER, *Melanitta deglandi* (Bonaparte).—In the waters visited around Kodiak Island, White-winged Scoters were the most conspicuously numerous of all the waterfowl. Viekoda and Terror Bays and Kupreanof Strait seemed to be the most favored areas. On October 8, as we sailed from Raspberry Strait across the front of Afognak village toward the bay of the same name, the water was covered with enormous flocks of scoters, almost entirely White-wings. They rose in front of us in clouds, and for a long time separate small flocks were milling around or getting out of our way.

AMERICAN SCOTER, *Oidemia americana* Swainson.—I identified a small number of American Scoters in Viekoda Bay and a large number in Uyak Bay.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, *Mergus serrator* Linnaeus.—This species was generally very abundant in waters around Kodiak and Afognak Islands. Just above the cascade on Afognak River, on October 8, I surprised a pair. They were swimming in the large pool at the head of the falls when I appeared on the rocks just above and only about 75 feet away. The male hesitated only briefly. He dived, came up in the swift current and went downstream with a rush, passing through a great waterwheel that arched over the rocks at the head of the cascade. The female dived hurriedly a number of times and finally flew directly into the air out of the last dive and disappeared downstream among the spruces.

NORTHERN BALD EAGLE, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus alascanus* Townsend.—Several Bald Eagles usually were seen in a day's travel along the northern and western coasts of Kodiak Island. Two or three, for example, were seen in a few hours in Viekoda Bay, October 1.

RED PHALAROPE, *Phalaropus fulicarius* (Linnaeus).—N. J. Benson told me that in August, 1940, he had seen a flock of "at least five thousand" of the "whale birds" in Shelikof Strait.

NORTHERN PHALAROPE, *Lobipes lobatus* (Linnaeus).—Quite numerous everywhere around Kodiak Island.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL, *Larus glaucescens* Naumann.—In all areas visited around Kodiak and Afognak Islands, Glaucous-winged Gulls were numerous to abundant. Hundreds were congregated on the morning of October 1 in Kupreanof Strait, southwest of Afognak village. Here they were feeding in the tide-rip on the vigorously jumping herring.

PACIFIC KITTIWAKE, *Rissa tridactyla pollicaris* Ridgway.—An interesting spectacle of thousands of Kittiwakes was afforded in Kupreanof Strait on the morning of October 1, when the tide-rip forced a school of herring to the surface. The following day was clear but very windy—a poor day for fishing by any except the most expert fliers. The Kittiwakes evidently found it too rough. On the smooth, wet gravel beach forming the south side of outer Uyak Bay, Kodiak Island, I saw great flocks of these birds, arranged in row on row, all facing into the wind to avoid ruffling their feathers.

One of the notable wildlife assets of the Kodiak-Afognak group is the great Kittiwake colony on the southern end of Whale Island. Excepting only the White-winged Scoter in autumn, the Kittiwake is the most abundant bird in this general area.

CALIFORNIA MURRE, *Uria aalge californica* (Bryant).—Friedmann states that the Murre appears to be a common bird on Kodiak Island.

I saw the species in only one area—Uyak Bay, on October 3—where it was plentiful.

MARbled MURRELET, *Brachyramphus marmoratus* (Gmelin).—Some murrelets, presumably this species, were seen in Kupreanof Strait on October 1. I also observed several in Viékoda Bay. The species did not appear common.

HORNED PUFFIN, *Fratercula corniculata* (Naumann).—Said to be an abundant resident. I saw only a few birds in but one area—Viékoda Bay, on October 1.

TUFTED PUFFIN, *Lunda cirrhata* (Pallas).—This is also said to be a common bird, but I observed only a few, all in Viékoda Bay.

WESTERN BELTED KINGFISHER, *Megaceryle alcyon caurina* (Grinnell).—I saw several kingfishers on the small lakes and streams north of Kodiak village, between that place and Mill Bay, September 29.

AMERICAN MAGPIE, *Pica pica hudsonia* (Sabine).—Probably common. Several Magpies were seen in the valley at the head of Terror Bay, and individuals were noted at several other points on Kodiak Island.

NORTHWESTERN CROW, *Corvus brachyrhynchos caurinus* Baird.—This species was very abundant throughout the Viékoda Bay area. I saw a flock of several hundred at the head of Terror Bay on October 1. Here they were congregated on the mud flat and along the mouth of the large creek, feeding, presumably, on animal life exposed by the falling tide.

YUKON CHICKADEE, *Penthestes atricapillus turneri* (Ridgway).—Chickadees, supposed to be of this species and race, were common at all stopping places on Kodiak and Afognak Islands.

DIPPER, *Cinclus mexicanus unicolor* Bonaparte.—Along the Afognak River, on October 8, I saw a number of Ouzels. Two of the birds came to investigate me while I was photographing the cascade or so-called Afognak Falls. One Ouzel perched on a rock only thirty feet away and scolded vigorously for several minutes.

PACIFIC VARIED THRUSH, *Ixoreus naevius naevius* (Gmelin).—This thrush was abundant in the old-growth spruce forest on the shore of Back Bay, south of Afognak village. Its calls and song fairly resounded through the trees on the early morning of October 1 and, with the slanting beams of the sun, created an almost cathedral-like atmosphere.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD, *Euphagus carolinus* (Müller).—During my stay in Kodiak village, October 9–11, Rusty Blackbirds were abundant. Several times I observed flocks of thirty or forty birds foraging in yards and gardens.

BISCHOFF'S SONG SPARROW, *Melospiza melodia insignis* Baird.—This was a common bird, seen in nearly every suitable place where I stopped on Kodiak and Afognak Islands. The species was especially abundant along the Afognak River, and in Viekoda and Terror Bays. It was also observed lurking under the cannery buildings and in nearby alder thickets at Larsen Bay.

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MAJOR CHANGES IN THE BIRD LIFE OF SOUTHERN LOUISIANA DURING SIXTY YEARS

BY E. A. MCILHENNY

PROBABLY no section of North America in its primitive state was richer in bird life through the year than southern Louisiana, and this was especially true of the forests, marshes and prairie areas for fifty miles and more inland from the Gulf of Mexico. It is of interest, therefore, from an ornithological standpoint, to note the marked changes in the birds of this area which have taken place in the more than sixty years during which I have been of a sufficient age to be a close observer of its bird life.

When I was a boy, in the years shortly after the War Between the States, southwestern Louisiana was practically a wilderness. There were no railroads west of the Atchafalaya River, and Bayou Teche was the only stream paralleling the coast from east to west, and that only as far west as New Iberia. The entire coastal area of Louisiana west of Bayou Teche and inland to where the forests began was made up of low, wet prairies or marshes near the coast, and higher, dry prairies farther inland. The only forests in this whole area were lines or groups of trees bordering the streams making inland from the Gulf. These streams were shallow, tidal bayous, navigable only for very small boats and, as their banks were low, there were no settlements along them. This type of terrain, a vast area of public lands, extended west from New Iberia for more than a hundred miles to the Texas line.

At great intervals on the prairies, homesteads had been established by ranchers who were engaged in raising cattle and horses. Large herds of these animals wandered at will, as there were no fences. The prairies were dotted with ponds and sloughs, some of them quite deep, and in summer and winter fairly swarmed with bird life. These prairies were covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, most of which