

A REPORT ON THE BIRDS OF NORTHWESTERN ALASKA AND
REGIONS ADJACENT TO BERING STRAIT. PART X [concluded]

WITH TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

By ALFRED M. BAILEY

PALLID HORNED LARK. *Eremophila alpestris arcticola*.

An Eskimo boy with a bow and arrow shot one of this species at Wales on June 5. It was the only Horned Lark we secured anywhere in the north.

NORTHERN RAVEN. *Corvus corax principalis*.

A few of these birds were seen daily by Hendee on St. Lawrence Island, where they were preying upon the cliff-nesting birds. The robbers were seen to carry off eggs on several different occasions. I saw ravens on St. Lawrence also, and one at Providence Bay, Siberia, July 6. Late the following winter, when travelling down the coast by dog sled, I first met the species at the Corwin Coal Mine above Cape Lisbourne. One was feeding March 19 on refuse thrown out by the natives. Two were seen the following day at Cape Lisbourne and others a few days later at Kotzebue and at Chamisso Island. They winter in the Arctic, their presence being dependent on food and the protection offered by the mountain ranges. Several were seen about Wales on April 2, and the natives told me a pair nested on the spur of Cape Mountain.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD. *Euphagus carolinus*.

Mr. Brower sent us a Rusty Blackbird that was collected just back of the village of Barrow in July, 1924. He says the birds are not uncommon to the eastward of Barrow near Cape Halkett, where they follow the reindeer herds. The specimen sent, apparently an adult female, was badly mutilated, having been shot with a .22 rifle. It is Museum no. 10904.

ALEUTIAN ROSY FINCH. *Leucosticte griseonucha*.

Hendee observed this species commonly on Unalaska the latter part of September. Rosy Finches frequented the rocky bluffs along the beach, and often their notes could be heard high up on the cliffs when the birds were invisible.

HOARY REDPOLL. *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*.

Hoary Redpolls were numerous about Nome during June, when they were nesting in willow thickets. Two nests were found June 19, one containing five badly incubated eggs and one with five naked young. The nests were placed within a few feet of the ground and were compactly built. A base of "Alaska cotton" had been used, with the bulk of the nest made from coarse grasses, possibly the stems of the "cotton" plant, and they were lined with a thick layer of ptarmigan feathers. The parent birds sat very close and flushed only when within arm's reach. I took a specimen at Emma Harbor, Siberia, on June 30 and we found them abundant at St. Michael and Cape Blossom July 18 to 23 and August 1.

When going from Wainwright to Cape Prince of Wales by dog sled I saw eight redpolls the middle of March at Cape Beaufort, the last highland along the Arctic coast as one goes toward Barrow, and one was seen at Kotzebue. I was unable to determine the species.

REDPOLL. *Acanthis linaria linaria*.

Hendee collected two of this species at Wainwright June 13, 1922, and between June 17 and 24 they were common. They migrated in small, loose flocks, uttering a feeble call continually. One other was seen in the village on July 5. I found them common along Mint River, near Wales, the second week in July, where they were associated with the Hoary Redpoll.

SNOW BUNTING. *Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis*.

In the vicinity of Nome Snow Buntings were not plentiful and were more or less restricted to the piles of debris thrown up by the dredges. Here they were nesting among the rocks. We found a nest with two eggs at King Island, June 27, and the species was very common at St. Lawrence Island, July 1 to 8. It was also common at Emma Harbor, a few pairs being seen high among the sterile hills, the only signs of wild life noted there. A few were seen at Whalen, July 11, and they were abundant at Point Hope, August 2, young birds on the wing being noted. A few were observed at Demarcation Point, August 15, and they were very common around the



Fig. 46. NEST AND EGGS OF SNOW BUNTING AT WALES, ALASKA; JUNE, 1922.

village at Wainwright during the latter part of August. September was ushered in with gray skies and flurries of snow, so that although there were many birds the first two weeks, they became fewer in numbers until, after the middle of the month, only an occasional straggler was seen, one each on September 19 and 23, and two on October 5.

The first arrival of the spring was a Snow Bunting which was seen in the village on April 11, but it was a month later before others appeared. They were numerous after the middle of May and were beginning to nest on June 15. They chose varied nesting sites, from bird houses erected for their special benefit to old canoe frames, and they nested also under the moss along the tundra ravines. Young birds were hatched in a box on July 7 and other young were leaving the nest on July 13. A set of fresh eggs was also secured on this date. Fully fledged young were seen by the first of August.

I saw a male on a great pressure ridge of ice when following along the coast about ten miles above Cape Beaufort on March 17, and another at the Eskimo village of Wevok under the walls of Cape Lisbourne two days later. Two others were seen at Cape Espenberg on April 2 and the first arrival at Wales was on April 11. Another was seen on May 2, and on May 5 one was noted following the lead offshore. From this date on, they were quite common about the village. The males were the first arrivals, no females being seen until May 25. While the snow remained on the tundra and mountain tops these beautiful little fellows stayed around the village, but as soon as the higher benches were cleared they left, except for a scattered few.



Fig. 47. NEST AND EGGS OF ALASKA LONGSPUR AT WALES, ALASKA; JUNE, 1922.

They began nesting about the middle of June, but their nests were placed so far under the huge boulders which cover the mountains that they were very difficult to secure. Their nesting habits at Wales are in interesting contrast with their habits farther up the coast, where no rocks are to be seen. There they build under the moss and overhanging banks wherever they can hide their nests.

ALASKA LONGSPUR. *Calcarius lapponicus alascensis*.

Very common upon the tundra at Nome during June, where undoubtedly nesting, although we were not successful in locating any nests. They were plentiful at King Island, and a nest with three fresh eggs was taken there from under a large rock, being found by flushing the old bird. They were also numerous at St. Lawrence Island and at Emma Harbor; a nest with four fresh eggs was found at the former place. A few birds were seen at St. Michael July 18 to 23, at Cape Blossom August 1, at Point Hope August 2, and at Demarcation Point August 15, while they proved abundant at Wainwright during August. The greater part of the population of this

species migrated south during the first week in September, when the first snows of the season covered the tundra; a few scattering individuals were seen up to September 13.

At Wainwright the following season they were common, making their first appearance over the ice and around the village, where later they nested in great numbers. The first eggs were found on June 13, the nest being typical of the species in that it was lined with deer hair and ptarmigan feathers, and was placed on the side of a tundra hummock.

The first young were observed on July 1, and a set of fresh eggs was taken the same date. Four males collected on July 8 were molting; two had molted all except the first two or three primaries, and the new feathers were nearly an inch long. The primary coverts were almost full length. Late in July the adults were much dilapidated in appearance, few birds having more than two or three tail feathers. By the first week in August many had completed their fall molt.

A few longspurs were seen at Wales on May 27 and they were abundant the day following. They were beginning to nest by June 11 and a nest containing five eggs was found on June 13. After that date eggs were found commonly upon the tundra in sites similar to those found at Wainwright. The first young were observed on July 4. Hendeë found this species abundant at Unalaska early in September.

ALEUTIAN SAVANNAH SPARROW. *Passerculus sandwichensis sandwichensis.*

One of the interesting records made in the Arctic was the taking of one of this subspecies, an adult female, at Wainwright, October 5, 1921. Snow covered the tundra to such a depth that the grass seeds and willow twigs were barely exposed, and ice was already eight inches in thickness on the tundra ponds.

WESTERN SAVANNAH SPARROW. *Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus.*

These sparrows were fairly abundant around Nome, and a small series was collected June 21, 1921. Two were seen on King Island, June 27, and a few at St. Michael, July 18 to 23. I saw but few at Wales during June, 1922, the first making its appearance on the 11th. They were present in small numbers upon the grassy parts of the tundra throughout the summer. At Mint River, where there was an abundance of willows and long grass, they were common. I found a nest containing three small young on July 8. It was located by flushing the parent bird, and was made of fine dried grass tucked near the roots of a wind-blown clump. Although a good many of these sparrows were seen daily, no other nests were found.

GAMBEL SPARROW. *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli.*

These birds were noted at Nome, and a small series was taken there among the alders and willows between June 20 and 23. At Wainwright, in 1922, Hendeë secured two specimens on May 29.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW. *Zonotrichia coronata.*

The only records for this species were made at Nome, June 20, when several of the birds were seen upon the tundra, and at Golovin Bay the following fall, where Hendeë collected one on September 2.

WESTERN TREE SPARROW. *Spizella monticola ochracea.*

The first of this species was observed at Wales on May 27, 1922, and after that date a few were seen upon the tundra and in the willows along Mint River. They were not common at Wales.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO. *Junco hyemalis hyemalis.*

A male, the only record for 1921, was taken at Wainwright September 16. In the spring a few of this species were observed in migration at Wales, the first making its appearance on May 18. Others were seen about the village every day for the rest of the month, after which time none was seen.

ALEUTIAN SONG SPARROW. *Melospiza melodia sanaka*.

Hendee reports these birds as fairly common at Dutch Harbor, around the docks and abandoned houses, on September 24.

FOX SPARROW. *Passerella iliaca iliaca*.

Fox sparrows were abundant in the vicinity of Nome, young birds being on the wing June 20, while other birds were just laying. A nest with four eggs was taken at Nome, and a few birds were observed at Cape Blossom, August 1. At Wainwright on September 30 a female was collected.

BARN SWALLOW. *Hirundo rustica erythrogastra*.

We found a pair nesting under the porch of one of the houses near the barracks at St. Michael on July 20, 1921.

TREE SWALLOW. *Iridoprocne bicolor*.

A few of these birds were noted at St. Michael between July 20 and 23. They were seen entering the crannies of the old buildings where they were probably nesting.

BANK SWALLOW. *Riparia riparia*.

On August 10 Hendee saw a flock of seven at Wainwright, probably stragglers from the rivers to the south. When inland during the winter he watched for nesting holes but did not find any. The natives did not know the birds.

NORTHERN SHRIKE. *Lanius borealis invictus*.

Hendee saw one of this species at Golovin Bay September 2, 1922.

ALASKA YELLOW WARBLER. *Dendroica aestiva rubiginosa*.

Hendee saw one of this species at Wainwright August 17, 1921, and a native brought us a specimen from Icy Cape, which he took on the snow-covered tundra October 8. It was extremely emaciated, although in fine plumage.

SWINHOLE WAGTAIL. *Motacilla alba ocularis*.

This species was observed only at Emma Harbor and Providence Bay during 1921; a few specimens were collected. A nest was found July 5 with five badly incubated eggs, in a little crevice in a crumbling rock cliff facing Providence Bay, about twenty feet from the ground. The nest was of grasses, plastered together with mud and lined with a few feathers, as in a robin's nest. It was fastened rather firmly into the nesting cranny. Unfortunately, I fell with the nest, breaking the eggs. The parent birds hovered overhead all the time I was attempting to climb the rotten walls, one of them having flushed from the nest when I first discovered it.

Only one specimen was seen on the Alaska side and that at Wales on June 23. While travelling down the coast by dog sled I found a mud nest in an abandoned igloo. The native with me told me it was the nest of a little bird "all same snow-bird, little longer". It was similar to the nest which I found in the cliff along Providence Bay, but I was unable to carry it with me for possible identification.

ALASKA YELLOW WAGTAIL. *Budytes flavus alascensis*.

This species is abundant in the vicinity of Nome and St. Michael where we observed a good many although we were unable to locate any nests. At the latter place we saw a number along the beaches, and young birds already on the wing were seen July 20. One that I caught was so covered with oil that it could not fly.

In the spring of 1922 a few were seen along Lopp Lagoon, where, on June 11, they were nesting upon the only spot free from snow. A Mongolian Plover was close to them. A south wind had been blowing for a few days, but had shifted to the north the night before, giving the Old World forms a chance to drift across the strait.

Only a few wagtails were seen around Wales, but they were common along Mint River and at other localities wherever there were willows. I found a nest in the

foundation of an old igloo on July 7, the anxious parents revealing its position. Four newly hatched young were the cause of the old birds' distress.

PIPIT. *Anthus spinoletta rubescens*.

But one of this species was noted during the summer, at Nome June 19. Hendee collected a specimen at Wainwright on September 28.

ALASKA WREN. *Nannus troglodytes alascensis*.

Hendee observed two wrens, presumably of this species, at Dutch Harbor on September 24, 1922. They were in a clump of spruce back from the beach.

KENNICOTT WILLOW WARBLER. *Phylloscopus borealis borealis*.

A dead bird was picked up at Icy Cape about June 20, 1922, and taken to Hendee. He noted the species commonly in the alder shrubs at Golovin Bay on August 31, 1922.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET. *Regulus calendula calendula*.

A single specimen was taken during the fall, a male which a native collected at Cape Halkett and brought to Mr. Brower. He kindly sent it to us with the following data: "The kinglet was collected at Cape Halkett by Sam late in September after the snow was on the ground. It was alive when he caught it, but it soon died of cold and hunger. I have never seen one on the coast before, but the natives tell me they are fairly common inland in the summer where they breed among the willows."

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH. *Hylocichla minima aliciae*.

These birds were seen only at Nome in 1921 and not abundantly although a few were observed daily working about the little brush-bordered streams. They were rather common at Wales in the spring of 1922 between June 9 and 11, on which dates they were moving northward on their spring migration. They seemed to prefer the boulder-strewn parts of the high tundra and were quite wild. The five specimens I collected proved to be males. None was seen after June 11.

WESTERN ROBIN. *Turdus migratorius propinquus*.

We recorded these birds only in the vicinity of Nome, where they were fairly abundant, especially around town. We found a set of four fresh eggs on June 21, the nest being placed in a pile of driftwood back from the beach.

RED-SPOTTED BLUE-THROAT. *Cyanosylvia suecica robusta*.

These beautiful little Siberian birds were met with on June 10 and 11, on which dates they were fairly common on the higher benches of Wales Mountain. I collected a pair for identification only, as I was in hopes they would nest in that vicinity; but none was noted after June 11. I have no doubt, however, that they nest in favorable localities to the north of Cape Prince of Wales.

WHEATEAR. *Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe*.

This species was observed only at Wainwright in 1921, Hendee collecting two of three noted there August 17, and I collected a male of three seen upon the tundra August 21. None was observed after that date, and only one was noted in the spring of 1922, on June 2. At Cape Prince of Wales they were seen on several occasions in the early spring and I collected one on May 23. A few were noted on June 7, and again on June 10, specimens being collected on both dates. They may nest in the vicinity, but I did not see a bird during the summer months. A female taken on June 10 had the ovaries well developed.

Denver, Colorado, September 8, 1925.