

FIRST SPECIMEN OF A ROBIN (*TURDUS MIGRATORIUS*) AND THREE IMPORTANT SIGHT RECORDS FROM ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND, BERING SEA, ALASKA

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A recent paper by Sealy et al. (Condor, 73:322, 1971) documents the first sight record of a Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. During my stay on St. Lawrence Island in July 1971, I found the remains of an adult Robin; the specimen (University of Alaska Museum No. 3263), found 22 July, in the headwaters of the South Fork of the Moghoweyik River, consisted of a feathered breast, back, neck, and skull. The feathers on the back were still partly sheathed, indicating the bird was molting. The condition of the carcass, stage of molt, bill color, and time of year when found suggested the bird had died the previous year (1970) either during or just before migration, and spent the winter under the snow.

Robins are abundant during the summer on the Seward Peninsula (Kessel, Checklist of birds of the Seward Peninsula, Alaska, 1 p. Mimeo., 1968; Roseaneau, pers. comm.) and according to several Eskimos (Donald Ungott, Vernon K. Slwooko, Sr., and Marvin Walunga), one or two Robins have been observed for the past several springs on the west end of St. Lawrence Island. One Robin was shot on the southeast side of Sevuokuk Mountain by Vernon K. Slwooko, Sr., in the spring of 1971, but no specimen was saved.

Sealy et al. (op. cit.) listed the Robin as accidental on St. Lawrence Island and suggested that the islands' lack of arborescent vegetation made it unsuitable as nesting habitat for Robins. On the Seward

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COVERING OF STORES BY WHITE-BREASTED AND RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES

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Nuthatches occasionally cover stores of food with bits of bark or lichens. I have noted this 4 times for the Red-breasted (*Sitta canadensis*) and 23 times for the White-breasted (*Sitta carolinensis*) Nuthatch in Maryland and New Hampshire, beginning with a first observation in 1953. The only reference known to me for an American species is that of Skutch (1969), who wrote that "I once saw a White-breasted Nuthatch hide a bit of food in a crevice in bark, then stuff fragments of bark to cover it." There are, however, a number of references to the habit in European species including those of Richards (1949) and of Löhrl (1958) for the European Nuthatch (*S. europaea*) and of Löhrl (1961) for the Corsican Nuthatch (*S. whiteheadi*), a close relative of the Red-breasted Nuthatch.

The manner of covering stores by *S. carolinensis*

Peninsula, however, Robins commonly nest on cliffs and in rockpiles, as well as on beams and in rafters of old cabins scattered throughout the area (Roseaneau, pers. comm.). *T. migratorius* might nest on St. Lawrence Island, and on the basis of the few sight records, should be classified as accidental. However, judging from Robin nesting habitat on the Seward Peninsula, suitable nesting habitat does not seem lacking on St. Lawrence Island and should not be considered the limiting factor.

Another species of interest, and one more common in the southern Bering Sea region, the Whiskered Auklet (*Aethia pygmaea*), was observed by Vernon K. Slwooko, Sr., Abraham Kaningok, and me on 20 July 1971, at Tatik Point near Kongkok Basin. Neither of the Eskimos had seen this species on the Island before, but both had seen pictures of the bird previous to the sighting. The only other record of *A. pygmaea* on St. Lawrence Island is a specimen taken at Gambell by Silook in 1931 (Friedman, Condor, 34:257, 1932).

On 23 July 1971, I flushed a Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*) from its nest of four eggs on the high tundra between Gambell and Kavalghak Bay. This bird feigned injury near me for 10–15 min, enabling clear and positive field identification. Sealy et al. (op. cit.) included *T. flavipes* in the avifauna on St. Lawrence Island on the basis of one previous sight record by Thompson (Condor, 69:411, 1967) at Northeast Cape; however, no specimen or photograph has yet been obtained.

Finally, I observed a pair of Upland Plovers (*Bartamia longicauda*), the first observation of this species by a person not resident on the Island. The pair was observed on 22 August 1972, feeding in disturbed ground near a sled trail about 5 miles S of Gambell. Both birds were approached closely and eventually flushed, thereby enabling clear field identification. Before this sighting, the Eskimo with whom I was traveling (Marvan Walunga) had assured me he had seen Upland Plovers on several occasions during the past, always in similar high, dry tundra.

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followed any one of three patterns (table 1). (1.) After poking or hammering food into a storage crack or crevice, the bird most commonly snatched bits of closely adjacent lichen or bark without moving its body from where it had been working, all of this happening so quickly as to demand close attention by the observer. (2.) Less frequently, this species sought a piece of bark from a distance. For example, on 20 November 1966, I watched a bird (low down in an old maple stub and in direct sunlight) take a piece of beechnut out of storage in one place, restore it in a crevice in rotten wood, hammer it down well, and then move five times up to 10–12 cm away to collect bits of bark approximately 1 cm long to hammer down over it. (3.) On two other occasions I saw White-breasted Nuthatches fly to another tree to collect bark for covering, one such piece being 2 cm in length.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch used only the first of these methods to cover food stores. Considering that both Red-breasted and White-breasted Nuthatches have numbers of competitors for their food stores, there may be a survival advantage to covering them quickly, or not at all, in order not to attract attention to the hiding place, especially when they are travel-