

20 (RF) and Silver City Oct. 8–11 (EL). A Green-tailed Towhee was early at San Andres N.W.R., Aug. 25 (MW). A Rufous-crowned Sparrow was at Santa Fe Sept. 7 (L. Herrmann), where rarely reported. Clay-colored Sparrows were, unusually, widely reported from the R.G.V. eastward and in the southwest, Aug. 21–Oct. 16 (v.o.). A Field Sparrow was early at R.G.N.C., Oct. 2 (LG); two were at Conchas L., Oct. 16 (JO). Early flocks of migrant Lark Buntings were at Los Lunas Aug. 5 (WH) and Bernardo Aug. 9 (SOW), at San Andres N.W.R. by mid-August (MW), and were common in s. New Mexico by Aug. 20 (BN, DE). Baird's Sparrows go unreported for years, so one—two were noteworthy at Santa Teresa Oct. 10–26 (v.o., ph. BZ, JO); another Baird's was reported at Toston L., *Lea*, Oct. 2 (SW). Single Fox Sparrows banded at Dripping Springs Oct. 8 and Nov. 5 (CS) were the only reports. A Golden-crowned Sparrow was at Kit Carson S.P., Albuquerque, Nov. 24 (JEP, JO), the 3rd record in as many winters there; another was banded at R.G.N.C. (WY). Unexpected was an early possible Lapland Longspur at E.B.L., Sept. 27 (LG *et al.*). Lingering Com. Grackles in the north included one at Morgan L., Nov. 5 & 11 (TR), two at Des Moines Nov. 19 (JO), and 12 at Conchas L., Oct. 29 (MP)—with one still there Nov. 6 (JO). Two Orchard Orioles strayed N to R.G.N.C., Aug. 20 (ph. LG). Cardueline finches were either unusually scarce or badly under-reported. The only Pine Grosbeak was one at Tres Ritos Aug. 19 (CR) and the only Cassin's Finch was at Albuquerque Oct. 19 (WH). Numbers of House Finches were down in the Santa Fe area (SOW) and were "greatly reduced" in the Silver City area (D&MZ). A bright spot, however, was a female/imm. **Purple Finch** at Conchas L., Oct. 22 (JEP, ph. JO) and a probable Purple there Oct. 25 (LG, SC). Red Crossbills were especially scarce, with reports of only three at Zuni in August (DC), a few at Los Alamos until early October (PRS), and one at Albuquerque last seen Oct. 7 (JO). Migrant Pine Siskins were evident in the lowlands but were reported dying in Los Alamos and Santa Fe (PRS). The very few Evening Grosbeaks were confined to the far north, where some were reported dying in early August at Chama (*vide* L. Schulte) and two were found dead at Los Alamos Aug. 23 (B. Lewis).

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Purple Finch at Conchas Lake State Park, New Mexico, Oct. 22, 1994. The species is a scarce visitor in the state. Photograph/ Jerry Oldenettel.

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Alaska Region

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With a limited core group of resident observers scattered around a dozen of Alaska's communities, the Region has rarely had the coverage or results from a Fall season as were realized in 1994. "Eastern" forms dominated the season's rarity list and, for the first time in years, most of the notable reports came from the Mainland and north of Southeast. One of this season's sub-plots was the northward invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches. Mild conditions prevailed well into mid-November, at least in the southern portions of the Region; freeze-up was protracted and late, and early season storm systems tracked out of the Aleutians and north of the Alaska Range. The Aleutian Low was parked well south (perhaps free of an El Niño influence) and generated moisture-rich, warm cyclones all season that deposited heavy snow in a regular weekly pattern across most of the Mainland and especially in the northern half of Southeast. Given this storm track, an Asiatic component was surprisingly absent from the season's highlights. Contrasting cold and clear high pressure dropped into the Region from the High Arctic by early November and, with the heavy snows, quickly ended a string of very late lingering species' reports. Although the season ended in more typical winter conditions, it was nicely punctuated with record-late finds for a host of species, and unprecedented



numbers of semi-hardy species remained at many locales. For example, at least six species set new record-late departures from Upper Cook Inlet, other very late finds were made in the eastern Interior, and late warblers were nearly too common and widespread to list. We continue to find that Fall passerine migration spreads well into November, and only really ends after a lengthy period of near-zero conditions.

As is always the case when good birders take up with pelagic research vessels in the Bering Sea, interesting reports were submitted from the north Aleutian Basin in the south-central Bering Sea.

Loons to Diving Ducks

Single Pied-billed Grebes were found around Juneau Sept. 30–Oct. 4 (DC *et al.*) and later at Petersburg's Blind Slough Nov. 25 (PJW). Perhaps because of the late season, W. Grebe season peaks were well below average, with only 216 (<50% of average) counted in Sumner Strait Oct. 9 (PJW), and a combined 240 in the greater Ketchikan area (SCH) in November. Northernmost for the fall was a single off H. Douglas I., north of Juneau, Nov. 12–18 (GVV). Short-tailed Albatross made its best showing since the early 1980s, with up to seven individuals (maximum = three at once), identified by distinctive plumage, located Aug. 1 (EM) and Sept. 1–13 (RF, ph.) around the n. Aleutian Basin in the vicinity of 55°–58° N, 167°–177° W. Dispersing Great Blue Herons were commoner than usual to the north and west. Singles reached Anchorage, where casual, Sept. 1–13 (*fide* RLS, m.ob.); the mouth of both the Kenai and Anchor Rivers Sept. 15 (RD, GVB); and Homer Spit Sept. 1–Oct. 18 (*fide* GCW). The Kodiak area produced at least three Sept. 2+ (RAM).

Fall aerial surveys in the e. Interior continued to show an expanding Trumpeter Swan population, up 28% from 1993, at least in the Upper Tanana R. Valley. Record-high counts were made of both broods and cygnets (*fide* TJD). Emperor Geese staging around Izembek Lagoon peaked fairly early at 7593 Oct. 11 (CPD, CFZ). The main *Branta* departure from Izembek was somewhat late for both Brant and Canada Goose Oct. 26 and Nov. 2–4 (CFZ, CPD). An ad. ♂ Wood Duck, Alaska's first specimen, was taken by a hunter out the Kodiak road system Nov. 9 (DS, *fide* RAM+). Most of the recent reports have been from late fall. Eurasian Wigeon were in above-average numbers with three around Kodiak Sept. 18–Oct. 29 (RAM), single males near Juneau Oct. 29–Nov. 6 (PS *et al.*) and Petersburg Nov. 6–26 (PJW), and a peak of >30 from Izembek Lagoon Sept. 22 (*fide* CFZ *et al.*). The undisturbed wooded lakes

on the Anchorage area's military bases continued to provide ideal staging and probably breeding habitat for Ring-necked Ducks. Up to 91 were counted Oct. 10 (very late) from 4 lakes on Ft. Richardson (DFD), establishing a new high count for the Region. An additional >six were noted Oct. 6 in Anchorage (TGT). The season's peak Steller's Eider tally from Izembek Lagoon staging areas reached 57,050 Dec. 1 (CPD *et al.*). Hooded Mergansers made a very strong showing, at least within the traditional fall range in Southeast. Peak counts included six on Mitkof I., Sept. 25 (PJW), eight near Ketchikan Oct. 23 (SCH), and >seven around Juneau Nov. 13 (GVV). The only extralimital report was of a single female at Seward Oct. 1–Nov. 30 (PJW, RLS, TGT, WS). Casual in Southeast was a ♀ Ruddy Duck in Petersburg's productive Wrangell Narrows Oct. 7 (†PJW).

Raptors to Gulls

Perhaps because of mild conditions early in the season, the Region's only hawk watch site along the Alaska Hwy e. of Tok produced only 25% of the numbers of recent 7-year average totals (CM). The few Sora reports were very late, with singles flushed out of reed beds on Mitkof I., Aug 18 and Oct. 31 (PJW). The only later record of Sora was skeletal remains from November in Southeast. American Coots reached average numbers at the standard local Southeast sites: two–three birds each from Juneau Nov. 5 (GVV) and Mitkof I., Oct. 22–Nov. 12 (PJW). More unusual was a single up the Chilkat R. above Haines Nov. 12 (CE, PS). The Terek Sandpiper photographed near Gambell Aug. 25–26 (ph. MH) provided the 2nd fall St. Lawrence I. and n. Bering Sea record. Another Upland Sandpiper passed over Anchorage Aug. 19 (TGT), the 4th Upper Cook Inlet fall report and the 3rd over the observer's house. Certainly the latest ever Bristle-thighed Curlew for the Region was a single at Izembek Lagoon Oct. 8 (JAP). Most Bristle-thigheds depart coastal staging areas by early September. The season's only reports of Rufous-necked Stints came from Gambell, where regular, with up to three present Aug. 13–14 (ph. CE, PS).

The Kodiak Archipelago's 5th South Polar Skua, and the season's only report, was located in a jaeger flock off the Sacramento R. mouth Aug. 25 (JBA). As with most of the Region's rarer pelagics, better observer coverage in the N. Gulf of Alaska in the fall would surely produce more regular reports. It was a spectacular season for gulls, especially where good observer coverage coincided with traditional fish processing sites at Kodiak, Petersburg, Juneau, and Ketchikan. Given recent reports from the late salmon

spawning sites up the Chilkat R. near Haines, that area may become yet another gull hot spot. A very conservative count of four Franklin's Gulls came in from the Ketchikan waterfront Aug. 6–Oct. 1 (ph. SCH) and another lingered around Petersburg Aug. 6–Oct. 5 (ph. PAW). This species is now annual in fall in s. Southeast. Two different Little Gulls, about the Region's 4th autumn sighting, were documented in Southeast. An adult in basic plumage was observed off Hoonah Aug. 8 (†KB) and a juvenile hung around Petersburg Aug. 20–30 (ph. PJW). What is probably one of the westernmost "staging" sites for Bonaparte's Gull, discovered at Izembek Lagoon's Joshua Green R. mouth in fall 1993, produced an amazing peak of >50 birds Oct. 8 (MGS, RWH, CPD, CFZ).

SA Heinl and Walsh continued to provide excellent documentation and commentary on the Western Gull situation in s. Southeast. According to those observers, although many "Western-type" gulls are located in the fall gull hordes at Petersburg and Ketchikan, few of these individuals prove to be "pure" Westerns. Both observers take a very cautious approach to this taxon, and it appears that s. Southeast "Western-type" gulls most often best resemble hybrid Glaucous-winged X Westerns, which is the commonest plumage of similar birds from Puget Sound north. As with other areas where Glaucous-winged Gull hybridizes, it is at best a conjecture to identify these birds by plumage, given the extreme range of intergradation. From this, and other Pacific Northwest observer's viewpoints, fall/winter ad. birds are only considered "pure" if they show the darkest mantle shade, no or minimal head streaking, and a yellowish orbital ring. Based on these criteria, an ad. and a 3rd-winter Western were identified in Ketchikan Nov. 19–26 and Nov. 3 (ph. †SCH) and a probable was found at Petersburg Aug. 20 (ph. PJW). Another >10 hybrid types were noted around Ketchikan Sept. 15–early November (†SCH).

Two remained very late to at least Oct. 27 (CPD, CFZ). The Region's 2nd Heermann's Gull, another juvenile, was discovered Aug. 16–Sept. 23 (ph. †SCH) near the first-ever report from the Ketchikan waterfront. Ring-billed Gulls were widespread and relatively numerous, with a peak count

of 24 at Ketchikan Aug. 21 (SCH). Up to six were noted around Petersburg Aug. 6–Nov. 16 (PJW), and considered extralimital were singles up the Chilkat R. near Haines Oct. 10 (ph. CE, PS) and in Anchorage Oct. 30–31 (2nd and latest ever; DWS, TGT, RLS). Noteworthy California Gulls beyond the standard Southeast sites included seven upriver near Haines Oct. 9 (CE, PS) and a single at Anchorage Oct. 27–28 (DWS, TGT). Distribution of Slaty-backed Gulls coincided nicely with this season's widespread coverage, with at least one at Barrow Aug. 26 (ph. CE, PS); singles at Kodiak Oct. 11 & 31 (RAM); a single adult well inland at Bethel, Oct. 3–6 (local first; BJM); and up to three south in Ketchikan Oct. 25–Nov. 19 (†SCH). Maximum tally included 14 at one time in Nome Aug. 5 (CE, PS).

The two Sabine's Gulls over Cold Bay Nov. 20 (MGZ, CFZ) tied the Alaska Pen. area's latest record—only an old reference of Sabine's Gulls feeding in the Gambell surf in December is later for the Region. The latest Caspian Tern report was a single beyond the "normal" range at the mouth of the Anchor R., Aug. 10 (BL).

Doves to Nuthatches

Mourning Doves are still not annual in the Region, and three around Juneau Sept. 27–28 (GVV), another there Nov. 14 (MS), and one in Ketchikan Sept. 18 (SCH) were more than the usual. Northern Pygmy-Owls irrupted into Southeast in record numbers, with >15 on Mitkof I., Aug. 18–Nov. 12 (PJW), >five in the Juneau area Nov. 1–26 (GVV, SZ, *et al.*) and ≤three noted in Ketchikan Aug. 28–Sept. 30 (SCH). The only Com. Nighthawk report came from Juneau Oct. 23–24 (GVV, SZ). Anna's Hummingbird made what has become, in recent years anyway, an average showing with a pair at a Ketchikan feeder Oct. 2–Nov. 7 (ph. JP, SCH). The male continued through the period. Another male was located in the woods near Petersburg Sept. 16 (PJW). After showing up at a w. Anchorage feeder Sept. 5, a female-plumaged Costa's Hummingbird braved serious snow and cold conditions until it was captured Oct. 16 and flown by Alaska Airlines to the San Diego Zoo (*fide* DWS, PJW, ph. RLS, TGT, ph. DFD). There are now, surprisingly, 3 Alaska records of this desert form; this was the first female-plumaged individual.

The imm. ♂ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found dead, apparently a window kill, at Monashka Bay, Kodiak I., Nov. 15 (*MJ, *fide* RAM) was the Region's first specimen documentation. All but one of the handful of Alaska records have been sightings in the upper Tanana R. drainage, where they have

nested. Nominate *varius* breeds in s. Yukon Territory and n. British Columbia. Alaska's other sapsucker wandered W of its normal range across the Gulf of Alaska to Kodiak, where one appeared Nov. 3+ (JM, RAM). There are now about 12 Kodiak area Red-breasted Sapsucker records of this Southeast form and none w. of here. Also wandering W, and beyond its regular taiga range, was a Hairy Woodpecker at Bethel Sept. 18 (BJM). At least *four* Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, an adult and three juveniles, were netted near Tok in mid-August (*TJD, ph. *et al.*), on the heels of the summer season's several reports (q.v.). These are the first fall reports for the Region and may represent migrants from an e. Interior breeding pocket. Other *Empidonax* pushed the outer limits of their regular departure dates throughout their Alaska ranges. Single Alders were either record late or nearly so at Anchorage Sept. 2 (latest ever locally, RLS) and near Tok Sept. 11 (TJD). The Hammond's Flycatcher caught and banded near Tok Sept. 16 (TJD) set a new late date for the Region. Two N. Rough-winged Swallows at Ketchikan Aug. 30 (SCH) were notable, since there are few fall reports of this casual and very local breeder in Southeast.

SA Red-breasted Nuthatches exploded out from and beyond the South-coastal breeding zone. Individuals arrived early, e.g. Aug. 6 at Tok (CD) and Aug. 9 in Fairbanks (*fide* DDG), n. of the Alaska Range, where they are sporadic in fall in very small numbers, and across a broad front. Reports came in from the w. limits of taiga habitat, upriver of Galena Sept. 3–4 (MS) to far into the e. Interior, at Tok for instance (and most points in-between where observers ventured). They could be found daily throughout the Upper Tanana Valley into December, peaking in mid-September (*fide* TJD). Individuals pushed beyond the taiga, with singles as far west as Cold Bay Sept. 25 (JAP, RWH), Bethel Sept. 30 (BJM), and near King Salmon at Mother Goose L., Aug. 20 (DAD, TDE, JMM). It was certainly only because no reports were received from resident observers at locations n. of these sightings that even more unusual records were not realized. Given this fall's data, the extralimital nuthatch reports from Bering Sea islands previously considered unique make a little more sense.

Wrens to Warblers

Upper Cook Inlet's 3rd and latest Winter Wren was discovered in Anchorage's lower Chester Cr. valley Oct. 30–Nov. 1 (TGT, RLS, DWS). Winter Wren is very rare and local away from the coastal fringe of the N Gulf of Alaska Coast. A *Locustella* warbler flushed 4 times but only glimpsed in flight at Gambell Aug. 26 (MH) may have been a Middendorf's Grasshopper Warbler, but became one that got away. Significant Arctic Warbler reports included two birds each netted at the Fairbanks Alaska Bird Observatory station Aug. 15 and Sept. 19 (A.B.O.) and near Tok Aug. 16 & 22 (†DW, TJD). There are still few records of this *Phylloscopus* in the lowlands away from its Alaska and Brooks Range *Salix* breeding zone. The September Fairbanks bird is the latest in the Region away from the Aleutians. Observers commented on the occurrence of Golden-crowned Kinglets in good numbers at the fringes of its normal range well away from its favored Sitka Spruce/W. Hemlock forest. Individuals ventured W to near King Salmon, with one at Mother Goose L., Sept. 15 (DAD, TDE, JMM), and beyond to Cold Bay, where one caught in a garage Oct. 21 (CFZ, RPS) was believed to be the first record beyond Katmai N.M. Golden-crowns also reached into the e. Interior, where two singles were netted near Tok Sept. 5 & 10 (†CD, TJD), for what appears to be one of few Upper Tanana Valley records.

A shipboard observer persevered pre-dawn conditions chasing glimpsed passerines in the w.c. Bering Sea and actually identified a Siberian Rubythroat Sept. 12 (†RF). Although this skulker is rare but annual in the w. Aleutians in fall, we have had few recent reports from that season. Mild conditions no doubt allowed more than the usual Townsend's Warblers to linger into November+ and around the N. Gulf Coast, where the species is uncommon and local. One was in Hope to Nov. 5 (WT), two stayed in Anchorage all month (DFD *et al.*), and another found in Homer Nov. 11–22 (DE) established only the 2nd local record. Two birds were also reported without details from Mother Goose L. south of King Salmon Aug. 17 (TDE). The season's only extralimital Cedar Waxwing report was Kodiak's 3rd ever Nov. 27+ (GC, AC). This local breeder from Mainland Southeast may prove to be annual in fall into the w. North Gulf Coast.

Fall 1994 was certainly highlighted by far more than average November warbler reports, which nearly outnumbered all previous sightings combined for the month. Orange-crowns included singles in Anchorage Nov. 5 (TGT), where there are few later reports, Petersburg Nov. 12 (PJW), and in Ketchikan

Nov. 15 (SCH), a new local late date. Yellow-rumped, still noteworthy but becoming more common in November, included singles at Petersburg Nov. 5 (PJW) and at an Anchorage suet feeder Oct. 25–Dec. 1 (ph. DFD). Wilson's Warblers are even more unusual in November, so singles at Anchorage Nov. 6 & 9 (TGT, *fide* RLS; new local late record), near Juneau Nov. 6th (DWS), and at Ketchikan to Nov. 12 (SCH) were significant. Notable rarities included Southwest's first-ever—and one of few in fall—**Tennessee Warbler**, netted and collected on the Alaska Pen. south of King Salmon Sept. 16 (*TDE), and single **Palm Warblers** in Fairbanks Sept. 25 (netted, *A.B.O.), at Petersburg Oct. 5 (*PJW), and record late for the Region from Juneau Nov. 6 (DWS). Nearly record late and notable from beyond the Mainland was an Am. Redstart at Ketchikan Sept. 17 (JP).

Towhee to Finches

Alaska's (and Juneau's) 3rd **Rufous-sided Towhee** appeared at a feeder there Nov. 24 and remained in the area into December (no details, *fide* SZ, GVV). Casual from the N. Gulf Coast, and getting late for the Region, was the imm. Chipping Sparrow noted at Seward Oct. 1 (TGT, RLS, PJW). The mid-season storms tracking into the e. Interior, followed by a large Mainland high pressure cell, likely contributed to the appearance of more easterly sparrows into the Region north of more typical sites. A ♀ *inexpectata* Song Sparrow found a Tok feeder Nov. 9–15 (*TJD) provided a first Interior record. This form breeds on the Mainland of Southeast north into n.w. British Columbia and s. Yukon. Two White-throated Sparrows were located with migrant Dark-eyed Junco flocks in Anchorage Oct. 28–Nov. 1+ (*fide* RLS) and Oct. 31–Nov. 2 (TGT *et al.*), the first for Upper Cook Inlet. More expected was one near Ketchikan Nov. 7–9 (SCH). Most surprising, especially given the poor season for Asiatics, was the lone juv. Rustic Bunting at a *Fairbanks* feeder with juncos Nov. 7+ (DDR, DDG *et al.*). This individual, a first Interior record, survived heavy snow and sub-zero weather.

A ♂ Red-winged Blackbird, Southwest Alaska's first, briefly visited a Nelson Lagoon feeder Aug. 8 (JJ, CW, RDW, *fide* CFZ). The nearest known nesting areas are way e. in Anchorage and n.e. in the central Tanana Valley. The fall season ended on an exciting note in Upper Cook Inlet when observers, notified of an "iridescent" blackbird at a Palmer feeder, found a striking ♂ **Common Grackle** (TGT, ph. RLS, ph. DFD *et al.*). This individual, present Nov. 14+, was the Region's first since 1976 and 7th overall. A bland female-type Purple Finch, rare at any

season mainly from Southeast, appeared briefly at a Ketchikan feeder Nov. 29 (†SCH). An Evening Grosbeak, another rare-at-any-season in Southeast, made a similar appearance in Juneau Oct. 12–16+ (GVV, SZ). White-winged Crossbills made a strong and widespread push across the Interior, where they were at least uncommon to locally common all season. Moderate numbers spilled s. of the Alaska Range into Cook Inlet and to Kodiak I., where they seemed on the increase.

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British Columbia/ Yukon Region

JACK BOWLING

Warm weather continued through August and September across most of the Region, turning seasonably cooler in September in Yukon. October was stormy on the coast, while November saw an inexorable push of Arctic air southward, reaching the 49th parallel by the end of the period. The autumn storm trajectory was generally from the west and northwest, which may explain the appearance of Asian vagrants such as Wood Sandpiper and Dusky Thrush. As always, there were species which bucked the mean flow, including an invasion of Blue Jays across the southern tier and a Great-crested Flycatcher on Vancouver Island. The discovery of a Black-vented Shearwater off the Queen Charlotte Islands was no doubt linked to the maturation of the latest El Niño-Southern Oscillation event, which had raised the temperature of most offshore ocean currents about 2° C by the end of the period. Several cooperative banding stations

involving the Canadian Wildlife Service and volunteer birders were set up across British Columbia this season and will contribute greatly to our knowledge base in years to come.

Abbreviations: B.C. (*British Columbia*); N.-W.T. (*Northwest Territories*); Ok. L. (*Okanagan L.*); Ok. Vly (*Okanagan Valley*); P.G. (*Prince George*); Q.C.I. (*Queen Charlotte Islands*); R.P.-M.M.S. (*Rocky Point Migration Monitoring Station, s. tip of Van. I.*); S.T.P. (*Sewage Treatment Plant*); T.I.M.M.S. (*Triangle I. Migration Monitoring Station, off n.w. tip Van. I.*); Van. (*Vancouver*); Van. I. (*Vancouver I.*); Vic. (*Victoria*); Whse. (*Whitehorse*).

