

west were two at Zuni July 18 (DC). Savannah Sparrows were feeding fledglings at Los Ojos July 14 (CR) and were detected in moderate numbers elsewhere in the north, including 22 at Angel Fire June 28 (CR) and 43–45 on surveys at Maxwell N.W.R., June–July (DM). The same Maxwell surveys found 60 singing Grasshopper Sparrows June 7–8 and 77 July 5–6 (DM) and others were at 8 additional locales in 6 e. counties (v.o.), including a nest with young near Clayton June 22 (ph. HS). In the southwest, 39 in the Animas Valley and 19 in the Playas Valley June 8–9 (SOW) further documented a 4-year decline there. In the Animas Mts., 28 Yellow-eyed Juncos—including one group of 12 juveniles—were at 9 sites June 22–24 (AC, NMC).

Bobolinks again summered at Los Ojos, with \leq one present June–July (v.o.). Bronzed Cowbirds were n. to the San Francisco and Gila valleys, with \leq four at Glenwood June–July and several near Cliff (v.o.), and included parasitism of at least one Willow Flycatcher nest (RWS). Small numbers of Pine Grosbeaks were near Cumbres Pass July 15–16 (JE, JO), at the Santa Fe Ski Basin July 8 & 15 (JP, JO), and w. of Mora June 11 (TH). Cassin's Finches were in low numbers in the San Juan, Sangre de Cristo, Jemez, and Sandia mountains, with apparently locally produced young at Los Ojos July 14 (CR) and Cedar Crest July 27–31 (PES). Red Crossbills were in 6 mountain ranges statewide, including an apparent breeding pair in the Animas Mts., June 23 (NMC, AC).

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Alaska Region

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For all sections of the Region, except for Southeast, summer 1995 was consistently wet, cool, cloudy, and windy, and could only be characterized as dismal. The usually dominating and influential Aleutian Low moved into a position in the Bering Sea-North Pacific interface more characteristic of a non-El Niño cycle, and regularly ushered low pressure systems across the Aleutians into the Gulf of Alaska. The resultant cool, cloudy, and wet conditions often reached well into the Interior. Southeast, miraculously, experienced sunny and warm conditions, with many near-record high temperatures on a regular basis, especially early in the season. As with most summer Alaska reports, rarities and extralimital reports outnumbered otherwise noteworthy breeding finds. The continued strong coverage in the Pribilofs provided more than the average summer highlights, and exhaustive (and exhausting) coverage throughout the eastern Interior led to a preponderance of the season's highlights. Coverage was sufficiently complete elsewhere—nearly all the hotspots and outposts were visited—that 1995 ended up with a near-record number of highlight species.

Abbreviations: SE (*Southeast Alaska*); North Gulf (*N. Gulf of Alaska*); UCI (*Upper Cook Inlet*); †, *, tape (*tape recording*), all on file at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks Museum.

Loons to Rails

Another Manx-type shearwater was reported in the Gulf of Alaska from the Kodiak ferry July 17 (†CD), in the same time frame and general location as the previous >6 Alaska site records of similar pale-vented birds. As with essentially all of the Region's other rarer *Puffinus*, there is still no photographic or specimen documentation. Out-of-place Greater White-fronted Geese included one at St. Paul I., June 16 (VENT) and a group of four at Northway in the e. Interior into mid-June (SJ). The pair on Wonder L. in w. Denali N.P., June 8 (FIELD GUIDES) was probably from the recently discovered breeding population of "Tule" White-fronteds that nest in *Carex* pools of retreating glaciers n. from the Cook Inlet Basin into the Alaska Range foothills. The Region's first early summer Ross' Goose in a long time was a single reported in a flock of fly-by Snows at Pt. MacIntyre near Prudhoe Bay June 21 (RNF, KDB). Nearly all of Alaska's recent records of this casual visitor come in mid-summer from the Teshekpuk L. Snow Goose molting areas. The few noteworthy summer dabbler reports included Falcated Teal well to the east, including a single at Adak I., June 9 (LS) and a pair at St. Paul from June 19–24 (YO, SS), and extralimital Gadwall, with a pair at Nome's Safety Lagoon June 9, \geq five in the Prudhoe Bay area June 4–11 (RNF, KDB, CMS) and three at Barrow June 25–26 (both VENT). Although Ring-necked Duck is an occasional and local nester in the limited suitable habitat on the Mainland SE rivers, 2 broods





This first-summer Slaty-backed Gull was found at the dump at Barrow, Alaska, June 22, 1995. Photograph/Gary H. Rosenberg.

located in Habitat Slough on Prince of Wales I., July 7 (MAA) were the first for the Alexander Archipelago. The best suitable nesting habitat for Ring-necked Gulls away from the Mainland in SE is found on the s. trio of Prince of Wales, Annette, and Duke Islands. The only summer Tufted Duck report was a pair at St. Paul June 12–24 (SS *et al.*). Near record Ruddy Duck numbers were gathered in the e. Interior, beginning with a female at the traditional Northway nesting lakes June 18 (TJD), and peaking with 30 near Tetlin July 13 (TJD, HKT). More unusual to the south were two on the Nabesna Rd., July 4 (RIE, *vide* TJD).

A calling Virginia Rail in suitable *Equisetum* fringed ponds along Ketili Cr. on the Stikine R., July 2–3 (SCH, PJW, tape) was a surprise and provided the 3rd Alaska record. Although the Juneau area's birds (*see Summer 1994*) were rumored to have been present again, no details were received. One calling Sora from the Ketili Cr. ponds July 3 (PJW, SCH) and \geq six from 4 locales in the Interior's Tetlin-Northway Flats June 13–July 13 (TJD) were about average from the standard sites. A single on the tide flats at Hyder June 17–18 (TGT, RLS) was new for that site up Portland Canal. The Tetlin area's Gasoline L. again produced nesting Am. Coots, with eight adults and six young noted July 13 (TJD).

Plovers to Alcids

This season's shorebird highlights included a decent showing of rarities but a southbound passage otherwise short on noteworthy concentrations even at traditional staging sites. The only July Mongolian Plover report came from Adak July 6 (LS). An extralimital Killdeer was noted well to the west at Bethel June 28 (BJM), and a pair with two young at

Ft. Yukon (DWS) July 15 constituted about the 5th documented Alaska breeding record. The other scattered shorebird highlights included three southbound Gray-tailed Tattlers at St. Paul July 18 (SS, DK); a **Common Sandpiper** at St. Paul June 10–11 (SS *et al.*); an odd single Bristle-thighed Curlew July 13, also at St. Paul (AM, CM, *vide* SS); two Red Knots at Anchorage June 2 (FIELD GUIDES, = 2nd UCI record); \geq two Ruff-necked Stints at Barrow June 25–26 (VENT); two Stilt Sandpipers at Kotzebue July 12 (JR), where this North Slope nester has been detected casually in July recently; and a Ruff at Prudhoe Bay June 21 (DMT, RNF), where this form has been annual recently.

As is typical for the summer season, there was a nice showing of rarer *Larids* from throughout the Region. Common Black-headed Gulls were widespread and included \geq two at St. Paul June 6–July 31 (SS *et al.*) and singles at the Nome R. mouth June 11, at Anchorage June 20–28+ (TGT, DFD, m.ob.) and at Buldir I., July 16 (ILJ, JF). Most surprising was the sub-ad. Black-tailed Gull located on Homer Spit June 15 (ph. BG, EP, WINGS, ph. GCW, m.ob.). This individual in active molt, about the Region's 6th, remained in the same area to at least July 25 and was seen by dozens. It constituted the first for the North Gulf Coast and links the Ketchikan and Bering Sea records. Up to eight Slaty-backed Gulls provided a good summer count from the Nome dump June 9–14 (VENT). This active dump, just inland from town, has been underbirded in the past, but remains one of the best Seward Pen. sites for this dark-backed gull. Another Slaty-backed, a distinctive first-summer bird, was at the Barrow dump June 22 (WINGS, ph. GHR), while one wandered E to the Prudhoe dump June 19–21 (RNF, KDB, DMT). Significantly early if a mi-



Oriental Turtle-Dove at Dutch Harbor, Alaska, June 10, 1995. This species has been found in western Alaska a number of times since the mid-1980s. Photograph/H. John.

grant, and unusual inshore in SE, was an ad. Sabine's Gull off Kuiu I., July 13 (PJW). Caspian Tern reports beyond Prince William Sound were limited and included \geq five at Homer June 26–July 5+ (RK, GCW, TJD) and two at Seward June 29 (TGT, GHR). Single **Common Terns** (black-billed *longipennis*) were sighted at Nome June 11 (VENT) and at St. Paul June 12–15 (FIELD GUIDES, SS). Two Black Terns at Midway L., e. of Tok, July 17–22 (TJD, TGT, LJO) represented the 2nd appearance of this marsh nester in the Upper Tanana V. in as many years (*see Summer 1994*) and the Region's 7th ever.

The season's best alcid report was a single Dovekie at St. Paul, possibly the same as from the spring report (*q.v.*), noted near Zapadne Pt., July 19 (SS). A concentration of >1000 Marbled Murrelets, nearly all adults, at the mouths of 2 bays off n.w. Kuiu I., July 7–8 (SCH, PJW, CJF) was an unprecedented summer event and certainly highlights this species' ability to take advantage of unusual feed concentrations. These are more typical of winter concentrations noted recently in s. SE.

Columbids to Flycatchers

Heinl provided a good outline of Band-tailed Pigeon seasonal distribution in the Ketchikan area, where 2 separate groups of >20 and >30 summered s. and n. of town, respectively (SCH, AH, CJF). These represent the highest summer counts for the Region. The Region's 4th and easternmost **Oriental Turtle-Dove** was found careening around the housing area of Dutch Harbor June 10–July 3+ (BF, \dagger BG, \dagger HLP, ph. HJ, MP, EP, TJD, m.ob.). *Cuculus* cuckoos appeared e. of what is normally expected, with a gray bird June 11 (*vide* SS, DK) and a rufous June 11–16 (SS, VENT), both at St. Paul. The rufous individual was thought to be a Common Cuckoo based on the brief looks of an unbarred pale rump/upptail. Although no comment was included in the gray bird's undertail coverts description, the photos of this bird hint at a pure white undertail indicative of Common. More amazing was the confirmation from farther east that **Common Cuckoos** finally made it to potential Nearctic breeding habitat. A pair was found in active vocal display and courtship in alder thickets at Sand Pt. on Popof I. in the Shumagins June 21 (DDG). At least 8 species of potential passerine hosts were noted in the alders, all feeding new young. This find represents the easternmost Alaska record.

It was clearly approaching a *microtene* population peak on the North Slope, where the season's local high Snowy Owl counts reached 50 birds per day June 25–27+

(VENT) at Barrow and >18 around Prudhoe Bay July 25 (KDB). An average four N. Pygmy-Owls were noted on Mitkof I. in SE, two each in June and July (PJW), the only area of the Region where this diurnal species is detected in summer. More unusual were singles on Kuiu I., June 28 (PJW) and up the Stikine R., July 4 (SCH, PJW). A fresh Barred Owl body feather was picked up near Ketchikan June 14 (*CJF, SCH) and a calling bird was noted in Traitor's Cove in a new area of w. Revillagigedo I., June 15 (SCH). More unexpected was a fledged down-covered juvenile on e. Prince of Wales I., July 1 (DP, *fide* CJF, SCH), well offshore of previous summer reports from s. SE.

Common Nighthawks made a late June push into the e. Interior, where they are casual, with singles described from near Tok June 23 (NG, TJD) and July 16–20 (KOD, †TJD) and farther west from just n. of Paxton June 26 (LG, BF). Nighthawks are known to nest across s. Yukon Territory associated with the lodgepole pine forests of the n. Cassiar Plateau towards Whitehorse and Haines Jct. One of the Region's few summer Anna's Hummingbirds was a molting male at a Ketchikan feeder July 6–31+ (JP). The Region's 2nd-ever **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** nest was located in a paper birch at Ten Mile Hill, 15 mi s.e. of Northway June 14 (ph. †TJD). All but 3 of Alaska's Yellow-bellied records have come from the south-facing hillside birch/aspen forests of the e. Upper Tanana Valley between Northway and the Canada border.

As has been the case for the past decade, Tyrannid highlights were dominated by overshoot-type male *Empidonax* reports. A singing Yellow-bellied Flycatcher reappeared at the same Mile 158 Richardson Hwy location where two were located in 1994 (*q.v.*) June 10–23 (†TJD, WINGS). Another singing bird was heard to the east about 28 mi s.w. of Northway June 27 (TJD). Hyder's 3rd and the Region's 7th **Willow Flycatcher** sang briefly in the productive town thickets June 18 (TGT, RLS). Surprisingly, the summer's only Least Flycatcher was a single up the Stikine R., July 3 (PJW, SCH). The Region's 3rd **Eastern Phoebe** was actively singing from the fringes of Blind Slough near Petersburg June 18. One each from the North Slope and Hyder are the previous records. Once again, the kingbird tandem found the Hyder area, with both an Eastern and a Western arriving June 14 (TGT, RLS, DWS), about the 6th and 5th local records, respectively. Sonneborn ended the summer looking over his shoulder for E. Kingbirds. After Hyder, he ran into singles at Juneau June 16, near Palmer June 29, and far to the north at Arctic Village July 7.

Skylark to Vireos

Following the late spring discovery of nesting Eur. Skylarks at St. Paul (*q.v.*), a 2nd nest with four chicks was located in the same area near the airport June 17 (MD, *fide* SS), but was empty when next checked June 21. Both of these first Alaska nests were likely taken by local foxes. Two adults were last noted in the area June 22 (SS). Tree Swallows reached the Pribilofs in late spring and a pair was feeding two young August 1 (SS), a first Pribilof breeding record. Other notable swallow nest reports included another 2 pair of Barn Swallows pioneering n. into Turnagain Arm at Portage all season (TGT, DFD) for the 3rd consecutive summer, and a pair of N. Rough-winged Swallows with six juveniles on Mitkof I., July 21–22 (PJW), another first local breeding report and one of few away from Hyder, where this species nests annually. Extralimital swallows were concentrated above the Arctic Circle, including a Violet-green at Barrow June 17–19 (FIELD GUIDES), and single Cliff and Barn swallows near Prudhoe Bay June 6 (KDB), June 9 (CMS), and June 20 (RWS) respectively.

– The summer's only Siberian Tit report came from the upper Sheejeck R. riparian woods July 12 (DWS ph.). At least two Red-breasted Nuthatches from last fall's northward invasion (*q.v.*) survived the long winter n. of the Alaska Range; one each was heard near Sourdough on the Richardson Hwy. June 10 and near Tetlin July 13.

– A singing Solitary Vireo was detected in the riparian cottonwoods up the Stikine R., July 3 (SCH, PJW), a first for that corridor and the Region's fifth. Anchorage's and UCI's 4th Warbling Vireo was singing along Chester Cr., June 28 (DWS). This season's Red-eyed Vireos were noted at Hyder only, where two skulked in the creekside thickets June 17–18 (RLS, TGT), about an average showing.

Warblers to Fringillids

An unprecedented three **Tennessee Warblers** were reported from the e. Interior, including singing singles on the middle Richardson Hwy. (Mile 158 adjacent to the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher) June 10–23 (TJD, WINGS) and near Delta Jct., June 25 (PDM, BEL). Another was caught and banded to the east at the mouth of Scottie Cr. near the Canada border June 30 (TJD). Although "white-throated" Yellow-rumped Warblers (*D.c. hooveri*) are the local breeding form throughout SE, *auduboni* is a common nester on the s. Mainland at Hyder and occasionally n. to the Stikine R. This year, Heintz found *auduboni* types out the Archipelago, where this race is casual, with 2 broods near Ketchikan June 24 and July 14

(SCH, CJF). Also notable for offshore in SE, where suitable habitat is very restricted, was a count of eight Com. Yellowthroats on Prince of Wales I., July 7 (MAA).

– For the 4th consecutive summer, Brewer's (Timberline) Sparrows were on territory in the Gold Hill area of the c. Wrangell Mts. After not finding birds in that area in early June, three singing individuals were located in the scrub thickets June 25–26 (†TJD, GHR tape, KOD). This habitat must not be open or productive enough for this alpine breeder until mid-June. A singing Red-winged Blackbird ended up in the St. Paul town marsh June 12–July 11 (RD, SS, m.ob.) and was certainly the first Pribilof and one of few Bering Sea records. Red Crossbills made their 2nd foray in the past 4 years n. of usual areas well into Southcoastal and beyond. Twenty reached the Anchorage area June 16 (OH) and several small flocks were noted elsewhere in the Anchorage Bowl to July 18+ (TGT, RLS, DS). Another >80 were tallied for a Homer area peak June 16 (WINGS). More significantly, an imm. female and two imm. males were captured and banded in Fairbanks July 19 & 30 (PD, *fide* DDG), and ≤three wandered offshore to St. Paul I., July 11–30 (AC, MC, TS, SS). Although there are scattered extralimital records from w. Alaska to the Bering Sea, these are the first ever for the Interior. Pine Siskins also wandered beyond the taiga to the Pribilofs, apparently for the first time, with a single June 15 (VENT) and three noted July 26 (SS). Another single was detected on Anowik I. in the Semidi Is., June 10 (DDG), also a first record for that group.

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