

June 12 (SOW), down 80% and 83%, respectively, from peak counts in 1992. Notably early—or lost—was a ♂ Chestnut-sided Longspur at Stinking L., July 11 (C. Cooper). One—two Bobolinks were at Parkview June 1 (JEP, JO) & 5 (WW), but no nesting was reported. Notable for the Sacramento Mts. were three Brewer's Blackbirds near Cloudcroft June 22 (CR). Bronzed Cowbirds continued to be successful across the southwest, including seven n. to Glenwood June 17 (SOW) plus singles n. in *Sierra* at Ladder Ranch June 15 (GE) and Truth or Consequences June 21 (JEP). Far north was an ad. ♂ Hooded Oriole near Madrid July 10 (L. Sager). Among the very few Cassin's Finches reported were three—six at Capulin Spring June 6 & 12 (PES) and up to five at Cedar Crest June 1–19 (PES). Six Pine Grosbeaks were at Apache Cr. in the under-birded San Juan Mts., June 2 (JEP). Red Crossbills were conspicuous e. to Angel Fire, Corona, White Oaks, Cloudcroft, and Pinon in June (v.o.); four were in the Guadalupe Mts., July 1 (SW) and several were in the Peloncillo Mts. in July (v.o.), while six near Aztec June 8 (TR) and two on Albuquerque's West Mesa July 6 were in unusual habitat (WH). Single Am. Goldfinches were at Parkview June 27 (PES) and Zuni June 15 and July 8 (DC), increasing to four at Zuni by July 31 (DC). Moderate numbers of Evening Grosbeaks were widespread in the n. mountains; notable were singles at Owl Spring, Chuska Mts., June 9 (JO) and Zuni June 27 (DC), and 12 s. to Cloudcroft June 22 (CR). House Sparrows were discovered much at home in the Guadalupe Mts. at Queen (SW), where they were predicted to multiply with increased development there.

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Alaska Region

T. G. TOBISH, JR.

Except for Southcoastal Alaska, where warm, dry conditions prevailed all season, the Region experienced a mostly cool and damp summer. From initial reports, it appeared that the widespread storm-free and very warm May and early June allowed for an ideal nesting season onset, at least for early arrivals. Early fledgling dates were numerous, at least south of the Alaska Range. The cool conditions that ushered in June north of the Alaska Range brought snow into alpine areas even into July and prolonged the onset of insectivore and higher elevation nesting. As has been the case for the last few years, new data from pioneering sites came in, with exceptional reports from Cape Romzanof, the Pribilofs, the eastern Interior, and in Southeast at the standard hot spots up the Stikine River and at Hyder. With the new (and funded) interest in passerine population and status assessments producing widespread survey crews Regionwide, I have yet to see an increase in summaries of these more systematic studies. Unfortunately, many of these seasonal summaries are published as in-house reports or long term papers well after the fact. This situation is similar to the outer continental shelf studies from the late 1970s—early 1980s, when few of the highlights from Regionwide seabird surveys found their

way to this forum. As is always unfortunate, vast areas of Alaska went uncovered (or unreported), including, this year, the North Slope, most of the Interior, and the Aleutians. And as is normal, documentary evidence of rarer records was sporadic.

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

Loons to Rails

The only summer Arctic Loon account came from Kotzebue with two on freshwater June 9 (BA *et al.*). Now that bird tours no longer take the Seward-Kodiak ferry trip, summer season Gulf of Alaska seabird highlights continue to dwindle. Noteworthy records of out-of-range geese included a single Greater White-fronted Goose at Juneau June 4–July 5 (GVV), rare for SE; and >75 Brant on the Homer Spit June 14 (GCW), probably lingering non-breeders, and another five around Juneau July 4–11 (PS, KB), where casual in summer. Although Green-winged Teal had been a suspected breeder on St. Lawrence I. (see Sealy *et al.*, *Condor* Vol. 73) nesting evidence was produced for the first time this season when a female with a full brood of young was reported from Savoonga June 28 (BA). Most unusual was a ♂ **Cinnamon Teal** discovered at the always productive Kenny L. in the s.e. Interior June 16–July 1 (RLS, TJD, KOD), a 2nd Interior report. Because most spring Eur. Wigeon reports are concentrated in early spring (before mid-May), single drakes at Homer to June 3+ (m.ob.), Anchorage June 26–28+ (TGT), and Juneau June 6



(PS), and a pair at St. Paul I., June 24–28 (m.ob.) were all significant. The Anchorage bird was only the 2nd in summer for UCI. For some reason, Ring-necked Ducks pushed beyond their normal summer range, which is concentrated in the e. Interior. Four at Sitka June 6–26 (MW) were most significant offshore and the first there in summer this century. Well w. were three males at St. Michael on Norton Sound June 26 (JM, MS) and a pair at Mountain Village June 30 (DB). This summer's peak count was an impressive 55 in the Broad Pass lakes near Cantwell June 15 (WINGS). Three Com. Mergansers at Savoonga June 30 (BA) were odd for so late in the season at St. :Lawrence I., where there are few summer records.

An Osprey nest discovered on the Norton Sound coast at Unalakleet July 16 (JM, MS) was most unusual and only the 2nd or 3rd breeding record beyond the taiga of the w. Interior. Although with little supporting data, observers noted increasing Bald Eagle numbers. In the e. Interior, Bald Eagle nest productivity and success were well above the past 5-year average and near-record highs, while >340 represented a new local high for a 20-mi stretch of coast near Sitka (*fide* MW). They were otherwise ubiquitous even in midseason from UCI (Palmer to Portage) to the w. Kenai Pen. (Cooper Landing to Homer) (m.ob.). A single Virginia Rail was called up from Juneau's Eagle R. sedge marsh June 23, which has produced birds the past 3 summers (PS). Sora reports came in from the standard locales, >three in the e. Interior June 13–26 (TJD) and one at Petersburg's Blind Slough June 23 (PJW).

Shorebirds to Alcids

Southbound shorebird passage began on schedule, when peeps turned up from Anchorage to Homer by June 23 (m.ob.), but was otherwise uneventful, perhaps because of mild, storm-free, midseason conditions. Wader highlights focused on southbound Palearctic forms or out-of-range/odd-date individuals, including a single Semipalmated Sandpiper from Kenny L., July 1 (TJD), rare for the e. Interior, and two Red Phalaropes inshore at Homer on the puzzling date of June 14 (DC). Northeast Asian notables discovered at St. Paul I., the Region's key fall passage site, included first arrivals such as two Pacific Golden-Plovers July 23 (SS), a single Common Greenshank July 1 (DK), providing one of few local fall records, Gray-tailed Tattlers July 14, with a peak of six through July (SS), one Red-necked Stint July 1 (DK), and a latish Sharp-

tailed Sandpiper July 22 (RH). As with most summer periods, it was an eventful Larid year. A first-summer Com. Black-headed Gull was described from the mouth of Nilumat Cr. near Cape Romanzof June 10 (†BJM, CH, PZ), a first local report, and, more importantly, the same observers submitted details for a first-summer Little Gull at Cape Romanzof, with kittiwakes June 1 (†BJM CH). Although Little Gull continues to be described and identified by experienced observers—in summer and fall and mainly from SE—this 2-year gull has yet to be substantiated in the Region. Mew Gull was documented as a breeder on Revillagigedo I. in mid-June when a nest was located at a lake near Ketchikan (AR, *fide* SCH). I am not aware of other Mew Gull nest reports s. of Petersburg. There was a flurry of Ring-billed Gull sightings from the Juneau area, with up to two at a time there June 15–July 20 (PS, KB, GVV). Above-average numbers of California Gulls summered around Ketchikan, with a *maxima* 15 June 15 (SCH). The first “fall” migrants arrived there July 29 (SCH).

SA Long overdue and expected, but nonetheless astounding, was the confirmation of Slaty-backed Gull as a breeder in Alaska. A pair was flushed off a nest which contained one egg July 3 (†BJM, JM) in a Glaucous Gull colony on Aniktun I., s.w. of Cape Romanzof. Impressive numbers of Slaty-backed had been present in the Cape Romanzof area all season, beginning with a June 7–10 peak of >56 mostly ad. birds attracted to a late herring run on Nilumat Cr. A foraging Caspian Tern, noted along the shore of Neragon I. near Cape Romanzof June 3 (BJM) provided a 2nd local record and a hint of things to come. Observers revisited the sandy sections of this island July 2–3 and found 3 scattered Caspian Tern nests, one with 4 eggs initiating hatch, the other 2 with one egg each (†BJM, CH, JM). These are Alaska's first certain Caspian Tern nests, which extend the Region's breeding range an additional >1000 km w. and beyond e. Prince William Sound, where these colonizers had been previously assumed to be nesting. Suitable coastal sandy estuary habitat that supports gull nesting colonies anywhere in the Region should be closely checked for this recent colonizer to Alaska. Both of these first nest records will be further summarized elsewhere.

Black Terns returned to the Upper Tanana Valley in the e. Interior for a 3rd consecutive year. A pair was noted on Eliza L. along the Alaska Hwy., July 14–22 (†TJD, DWS, DFD). These upper Prairie nesters must be more regular than previous records indicated in the vast lake and marsh-covered sections of the Interior Southeast Alaska's 5th Marbled Murrelet nest was discovered, with a single chick present, on Prince of Wales I., June 7 (PJW). Impressive Marbled Murrelet onshore counts of 1475 near Juneau June 16 and 2800 at Glacier Bay's Bartlett Cove July 26 (KB) were most unusual for relatively small areas and for midsummer.

Doves to Thrushes

Three Morning Doves along the clearing at the edge of Hyder June 1–5 (TJD) were unprecedented for spring, when there are few confirmed reports. Another Yellow-billed Cuckoo managed to meet its demise in SE, this time a window-kill recovered at Juneau July 22 (*fide* RGC), the Region's 2nd. In the face of a long-term declining British Columbia population, we have no clue of the origin of Alaska's 2 records Three N. Pygmy Owls between the Stikine R. and Mitkof I., June 22–July 7 (PJW) were standard for summer, while the only Barred Owl was noted from n. of Ketchikan July 11–15 (SCH) in an area of previous reports. At least two Com. Nighthawks rebounded to the Tok area June 4–July 21 (RAR, TJD, DWS, KAR, DFD), where specific site tenacious behavior continues to be suspicious. At least three Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were rediscovered in isolated forest at Ten Mile Hill, s.e. of Northway June 12 (TJD), and two juveniles accompanied a male were there by June 14 (†TJD, DWS), in the same area where a nest was located last summer. Another Yellow-bellied was heard-only farther south near Glenallen June 16 (†TJD). Three-toed Woodpeckers are scarce in SE away from the Mainland and s. of Admiralty I., so a nest with one juvenile discovered at Princess Bay, Revillagigedo I., June 17 (MB, *fide* SCH) certainly furnished a first island record and one of few from SE. Undeniably clear details were submitted of a ♂ Pileated Woodpecker from the Salmon R. forests above Hyder June 5 (†BN, KB, JH, MA), from the same area where another (or the same bird) had been reported in summer 1995. We now have about 4 good descriptions of Pileateds from the Region.

Four individual Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were noted, and except for the single in Fairbanks June 17 (JW), all came from the e. Interior, where a recent flurry of obser-

vations continues. The Richardson Hwy singing skulker was refound at Mile 158.1 June 15, and two others displayed between Mileposts 78 & 79 of the Taylor Hwy., June 23 (†TJD). The obligatory Least Flycatcher was one reported from Haines June 16 (BA), a first local sighting. Noteworthy as casual away from the SE Mainland was an E. Kingbird at Thorne Bay, Prince of Wales I., June 4 (PJW), certainly a first for that large island and one of few for the Archipelago. Also rare offshore for SE were groups of three N. Rough-winged Swallows each, at Prince of Wales I., June 9 (PJW), and around Ketchikan June 13–21 (SCH). Barn Swallows failed to return to the Portage pioneer colony, but one extralimital reached Nome June 7 (VENT), where distinctly casual. Another Arctic Warbler was refound way e. in the Interior in the Upper Cheslina R., June 27 (TJD), the easternmost site for this trans-Bering Straits migrant. An ad. Golden-crowned Kinglet carrying food in the Kaltag woods was at the extreme n.w. edge of possible habitat July 9 (BA), and way beyond any other known fringe nest sites. At the s. periphery of the Region's known breeding range, Bluethroats were confirmed breeders when 5 nests fledged young in the Cape Romanzof canyons June 29+ (CH, BJM). Unlike from within the known breeding range on the Seward Pen. and into the Brooks Range, these Romanzof birds rarely associated with low shrub thickets, but rather preferred vegetated rocky ravines. A ♀ Bluethroat wandered to the Arctic Coast at Prudhoe Bay June 2 (EEB), a 2nd local spring report. Hermit Thrush was also confirmed as a breeder at Cape Romanzof when one nest was discovered July 6 and fledglings were noted at several sites by July 8 (BJM).

Waxwings to Fringillids

Unprecedented offshore and in summer in SE were two Bohemian Waxwings at Sitka July 1–7 (MW). Cedar Waxwings were only discussed from Ketchikan, with high numbers, including ubiquitous groups of up to eight found throughout June (SCH). The Region's 3rd Warbling Vireo nest, and Ketchikan's first, was discovered along Ketchikan Cr., July 6 (SCH, BH) after two males and a female had been noted in the area since June 13. The season's extralimital Tennessee Warbler turned up well to the north up the Taylor Hwy at Mile 87 June 23 (†TJD). MacGillivray's Warbler was substantiated as an offshore breeder on Revillagigedo I. at Traitor's Cove, where a pair was tending young to Aug. 2+ (SCH). Out-of-range Com. Yellowthroats wandered well N into

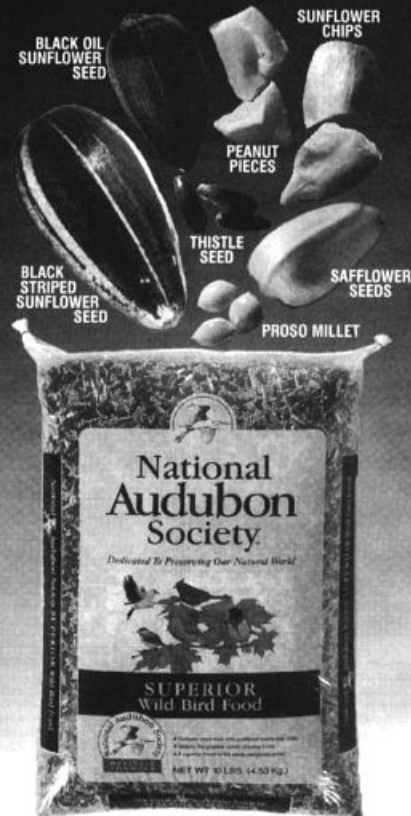
the Interior, singles were singing at Mile 125 up the Taylor Hwy June 22, and southeast of Northway Jct., June 26–27 (*TJD). Single Black-headed Grosbeaks were described from the Hyder woods June 17 (†RL) and up the Stikine R., June 30 (tape PJW). If the Stikine recording is confirmed, it would represent the Region's first substantiated record—these represent Alaska's 5th report and Hyder's 2nd.

Brewer's (Timberline) Sparrows were again located in suitable alpine willows at the s. edge of the Nutzotin Mts. e. of Chisana, where they were only discovered in 1992. This year's observations included a pair gathering food and two other singing males, one of which was located at a new site about 2 mi farther west from previous known areas near Gold Hill July 2–4 (KHG, CG, REG, CMH, LJO, TGT, SV). Red-winged Blackbirds turned up beyond established breeding sites, with a male at Noatak June 13 (TT) and two n. of Ketchikan July 26 (SCH). Very close to SW Alaska's only other record (from June 22, 1994) was another ♀ Purple Finch, described this time from Cape Romanzof thickets June 26 (†BJM). There are now at least 3 summer reports from SW/Western Alaska. White-winged Crossbills were sporadically reported and locally common throughout SC and into the Interior, with increasing, but still low, numbers after early June. An immature-type skulking around Cape Romanzof canyons July 8 was the only exceptional sighting (BJM).

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