

Oct (WW), Socorro 4 Nov (CR), and Caballo Dam 12 Nov (DE, BN). A Clay-colored Sparrow was w. to near Antelope Wells 1 Oct (NMC). Earliest Field Sparrows were singles at N.R.T. 30 Sep (JO) and near Clovis 4 Oct (WW). A family of Grasshopper Sparrows was in the s. Animas Valley 1 Sep (SOW, PM, AMC, NMC), where 19 Grasshoppers were counted 8 Oct (SOW, PM). A Baird's Sparrow was in Otero Mesa grasslands 13 Aug (RM); another was in the Animas Valley 25 Nov (AMC, NMC, DE). Single Red Fox Sparrows were at Luis Lopez 13 Nov (JO) and B.L.N.W.R. 7–11 Nov (GW). Several White-winged Juncos were reported in n. and c. New Mexico, including singles at Farmington 1 Nov (ph. TR), Eldorado 7–8 Nov (SOW), and R.G.N.C. 5 Nov (LG). Yellow-eyed Juncos were scarce in their Animas Mts. stronghold, with only 2 there 20 Aug and 2 Nov (NMC); a Yellow-eyed that strayed to P.O. Canyon 25 Nov (RTS) provided only the 3rd record there in nearly 3 decades. Single Lapland Longspurs were detected at L.V.N.W.R. 24 Nov (JEP) and Moriarty 26 Nov (BV); early was a Chestnut-collared at E.B.L. 16 Sep (JEP, JO).

Single post-breeding Pyrrhuloxias pushed n. to Belen 30 Sep (C. Brandt) and Casa Colorado 25 Oct (CR). Single male Rose-

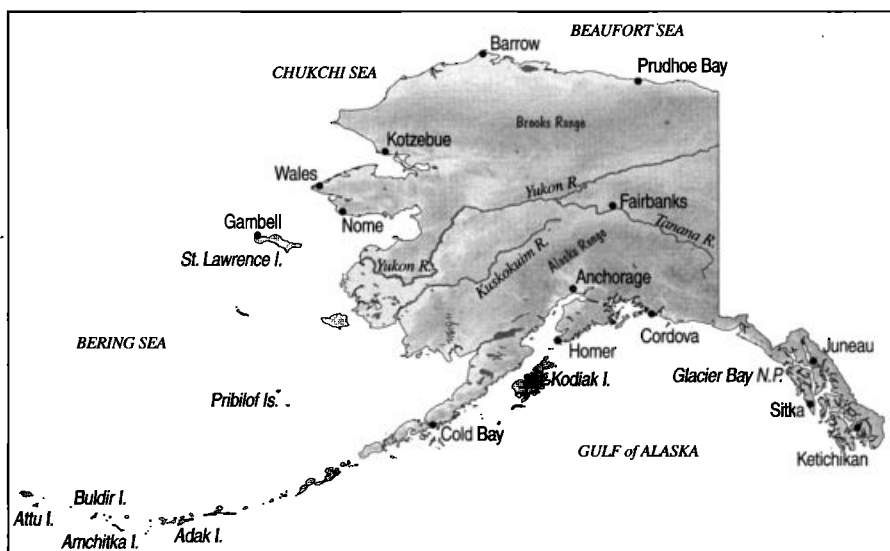
breasted Grosbeaks were at Zuni 16–19 Oct (ph. DC) and near Tijeras 8 Aug (M. Martin). Painted Buntings made an exceptional showing, with 1–7 at 11 locales in *Bernalillo, Socorro, Sierra, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Chaves, Eddy, and Lea* 6 Aug–19 Sep (v.o.). Dickcissels, typically rather scarce, were at 10 locales from the R.G.V. east; w. was one at Tyrone 14 Sep (EL). Three Bobolinks at Tatum 9 Sep (vt. JO) provided the lone report. An Orchard Oriole near Queen 4 Aug (SW) furnished a local first. A female-plumaged **Baltimore Oriole** was at Fort Sumner 30 Sep (JEP, JO). Among the few rosy-finch reports were 48 Brown-capped, 6 Blacks, and 6 Gray-crowned at Abiquiu Dam 18 Nov (SF) and 3 Gray-crowned at Eldorado 12 Nov (A&AL). Cassin's Finches inundated the foothills and lowlands, with numerous reports nearly statewide beginning in early Oct (m.ob.); as usual, a few were accused of being "Purple Finches" or "Redpolls." Red Crossbills invaded submontane areas by mid-Oct; notable were 9 at Conchas L. 29 Nov (WW), singles at B.L.N.W.R. 7 & 20 Nov (GW), 9 at Bosque 26 Nov (DE), 13 at Deming 20 Nov (LM), and 6 at Mesilla 4 Nov (MS, JZ). Pine Siskins had reached the middle R.G.V., s. deserts, and e. plains by mid-Sep. Notably late was a Lesser Goldfinch nest with nestlings in

the Animas Valley 2 Oct (AMC, NMC) Evening Grosbeaks joined other finches on the move, with moderate-sized flocks in the north Aug–Sep and in the west, the R.G.V., and the e plains Oct–Nov; far afield were singles in *Union* 11 Oct (LF), near Clovis 7 Oct (JO), and e. of Carlsbad 5 Oct (*vide* SW).

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# Alaska



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**A**utumn 2000 produced a cascade of classic west-to-east trending anticyclones that dominated weather patterns and local conditions for nearly the entire Region. Fast-moving, often intense storms tracked across the North Pacific–Bering Sea interface all season. Many of these systems were subtropical typhoon spin-offs, generated in the Northwest Pacific Basin (between 15° and 45° N latitudes) that, in September, traveled in a swath some 400–600 km south of the western Aleutians. Other more typical autumn storms entered the Bering Sea after having formed in the East Siberian Sea or over the Kolyma region of Northeast Asia. Northerly flows and rain dominated the Bering Sea outposts (Nome and Gambell), while constant precipitation, warmer conditions, and wind from all directions blanketed the central

and western Aleutians. These repetitive and fast-tracking systems often joined other storms in broad low-pressure troughs in the North Gulf, which apparently kept the southern half of the Mainland unseasonably mild and with little snow all season. At the end of the period, freeze-up was still occurring at various sections of the state, while snow depths were a fraction of the norm and low temperatures were across-the-board above long-term averages by double-digits. Coverage from the Bering Sea–Aleutian outposts was the best in many years, punctuated by numerous highlights from Northeast Asia and the Alaska Mainland. Elsewhere, late arrivals to wintering areas and very late departures of regular migrants were repeated themes from all areas. Attu Island saw its last formal bird tour, as Attour Inc. closed shop in early October after a five-week foray. In a grand farewell gesture, a Great-spotted Woodpecker flew by the closing-up crew as they made their way to the plane!

**Abbreviations:** ABO (Alaska Bird Observatory); North Gulf (North Gulf of Alaska); SE (Southeast Alaska); SC (Southcoastal Alaska); SW (Southwest Alaska); U.C.I. (Upper Cook Inlet); Y-K Delta (Yukon-Kuskokwim River Deltas); Referenced details (†), specimens (\*), photographs (ph.), and videotape (v.t.) are on file at the University of Alaska Museum. *Italicized place names* denote especially unusual locations for the noted species.

### Loons Through Rails

Despite excellent sea-watch coverage, no Arctic Loons were identified moving past Gambell. At least 5 in the Nome area between 25 Aug–2 Sep (WINGS) and a single in basic plumage at Attu 26 Sep–2 Oct (ATTOUR) were more significant; casual in the Aleutians, the latter appears to be the first in fall. Two Pied-billed Grebes in the Ketchikan area 16–29 Oct (SCH, AWP) furnished the season's only report. Noteworthy Red-necked Grebes included 3 around Gambell 10–14 Sep (WINGS) and 6 in Nome 2 Sep (WINGS), areas where uncommon to rare, and an unusual single-day count of 12 from Attu 28 Sep (ATTOUR). A few early November birds from Anchorage (DFD) and one from King Salmon 4 Nov (DR) were late even for mild conditions. After the past few year's increases, an imm. Short-tailed Albatross off Kodiak 9 Nov (DM) provided, disappointingly, the sole report. Pink-footed Shearwaters, annual in small numbers in the massive Gulf and North Pacific/Bering Sea shearwater flocks, were finally documented by photos of a single bird in the North Gulf 13 Aug (ph. DWS), and formally added to the Alaska list. Another was noted far-



Furnishing one of few records for St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, and fairly close to the Asian continent, was this juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Gambell 29 August 2000. Photograph by George Nixon.

ther e. in the Gulf off Cape Yakataga 23 Aug (†AD). This year's Bering Sea Short-tailed Shearwater peak reached an impressive ~700,000 per day, as estimated from Gambell's Northeast Pt. 5 Sep (WINGS). Dispersing Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels reached farther n. in the Bering Sea than typical, with one inshore at Nome 2–3 Sep and 3 off Gambell 6–7 Sep (WINGS). Although Fork-taileds commonly range into the s. Bering Sea in late summer, they are casual north of 60° N, apart from few anecdotal records historically referenced from "the Bering Strait" and "about St. Lawrence I." and a single contemporary Nome report. Another Fork-tailed wandered far up Lynn Canal, where there are few sightings, near Haines 22 Aug (AD). Casual so far into the Bering Sea, was a single Double-breasted Cormorant at St. Paul I. 15 Aug (ST PAUL). The post-breeding Great Blue Heron dispersal was rather typical, with a peak 8+ around Kodiak 15–16 Oct (RAM). Two at Seward 26 Nov (RLS, NS, TT) and a single farther n. near Palmer 27 Oct (*vide* RLS) were more unusual and at sites where a few occasionally winter.

Rarely noted at any season in the Aleutians, a Greater White-fronted Goose hung around Shemya 30 Sep–6 Oct (CS, MS). Record-early at the e. edge of its normal winter range was an Emperor Goose at Kodiak 27 Aug (RAM). Arriving birds were otherwise on time at other wintering sites in the Aleutians. Swans were widely dispersed and tardy, lingering well into freeze-up in SC and portions of SE. Near record-late for the central Bering Sea coast were single Tundras at Golovin 11–23 Nov+ (ph. EB) and near King Salmon 21 Nov (DR). An imm. Trumpeter hung on at Kodiak, where casual, 24 Nov (†RAM). More significant was an ad. Whooper Swan that kept company with the *Golovin* Tundra Swan 11–23 Nov+ (ph. \* EB). There are only a handful of Bering Sea Whooper records away from the Aleutians, including at least two similar late autumn accounts from the Pribilofs and no fall reports from the Mainland. As expected in a mild and protracted season,

even the less hardy dabblers (American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler) were exceedingly late and present in good numbers away from immediate coastal sites (e.g., Anchorage area) well into Nov. Late groups of American Wigeon, including 2 in King Salmon 25 Nov (DR) and 300+ from the Juneau area to 27 Nov+ (SZ), exemplified this temperate fall. Other waterfowl highlights were remarkably few but included a group of 9 Canvasbacks at King Salmon 12 Oct (DR), where rare and not annual, notably late arriving Steller's Eiders at Kodiak winter sites 25 Nov (RAM), and an extralimital pair of Hooded Mergansers in Portage, U.C.I., 24 Aug (WINGS).

Raptor summaries also portrayed a very late season, revealed by 11 & 19 Nov reports of single Northern Harriers in Anchorage (TT, LJO, *fide* RLS), the latest ever in fall for U.C.I. A mid-sized *Accipiter* scattered Attu birders as it briefly reoriented over Casco Cove 27 Sep (ATTOUR). It disappeared before a definitive identification could be made. The only other *Accipiter* to appear at Attu was another odd-sized individual in fall 1983. Casual offshore and late for SE was an American Kestrel in Ketchikan 9 Nov (JFK). A single Merlin turned up at Attu 27–28 Sep (ATTOUR), the first in several years for the Aleutians, where sporadic and occurring mainly in fall/winter. A small rail flushed out of a sedge pond near Barbara Pt. astonished Attu birders 20–21 Sep. After carefully working the bird and getting five short-range flight views, collective impressions focused identification to an imm. **Baillon's Crake** (*Porzana pusilla*) (ATTOUR, JH, †BC, †PEL, †RLS, †TT et al.). Although imm. Baillon's resembles another Palearctic long-distance migrant rail, Little Crake (*P. parva*), this Attu bird showed the distinguishing field traits of nominate *pusilla*. The northern extent of nominate Baillon's breeding range is poorly described in the literature, but apparently extends to the Ussuri-Amur R. valleys at similar latitudes to Attu, and also includes Hokkaido (Without a photo or specimen, Baillon's Crake will reside on the Alaska unsubstantiated list.)

## Plovers Through Woodpeckers

Widespread Bering Sea/Aleutian Is. coverage this season produced a nice cross-section of Asian shorebirds. Elsewhere highlights focused on late reports. Palearctic notables included at least one juv Common Ringed Plover at Attu 9–11 Sep (ATTOUR), a brief juv. Spotted Redshank on Attu's South Beach 26 Sep (ATTOUR), some of the season's highest ever Wood Sandpiper counts, with 11 from St. Paul I. 27+ Aug (ST PAUL) and a trip total of 7 from Attu 30 Aug–17 Sep (ATTOUR), a season peak count of 17 Gray-tailed Tattlers at Attu 30 Aug–28 Sep (ATTOUR), 2 and one Common Sandpipers (not annual in fall) each from Attu 4 Sep (ATTOUR) and St. Paul I. 5–8 Aug (ST PAUL), a casual-in-fall Terek Sandpiper at Shemya I. 25 Aug–8 Sep (CS, MS), and above-average stint counts, with 11 Red-neckeds 23–28 Aug and 2 Temminck's 25 Aug, both at St. Paul I. (ST PAUL). Immediately in the range of all previous reports was a juv. **Broad-billed Sandpiper** photographed at Shemya 8–9 Sep (CS, ph. MS), the Region's first since 1989. Buff-breasted Sandpipers and especially Long-billed Dowitchers made some of their best ever Bering Sea showings. Juv. Buff-breasted appeared at Gambell, where there are few records, 29 Aug (WINGS, ph. G. Nixon) and St. Paul I. 21 Aug (ST PAUL), and 2 more were at Attu 3–9 Sep (ATTOUR). Possibly related to this Bering Sea drift beyond their limited North Slope range, singles also wandered to the North Gulf, where casual in fall, at Homer 11 Sep (†BC) and near Juneau 20 Aug (CE, PS). Long-billed Dowitchers arrayed in a broad front across Bering Sea outposts, where more regular and widespread in fall, but in typically small numbers. Record peak counts from the w. Aleutians, where first found in 1978, included a flock of 11 at Shemya 16 Sep (CS, MS) and 8 at Attu 27 Sep (ATTOUR). Other impressive maximum counts were 150+ flocked at Nome's Safety Lagoon 25 Aug and ≤40 offshore at Gambell 29 Aug (WINGS). Late-season occurrences included a single Black-bellied Plover from Juneau 18 Oct (BA), one of few Nov U C I Killdeer at Anchorage on the 10th (MRD) and, near record-late for the Region, a Greater Yellowlegs over Anchorage's Klatt Bog 26 Nov (SDS). Post-breeding dispersal carried 2 **American Avocets** well n. to the Susitna R. Delta w of Anchorage 5 Aug (†DM), Alaska's 2nd report. The other was a May 1981 site record from Valdez.

Another South Polar Skua was described off Kodiak 6 Aug (ES, PL) in an area of the North Gulf where probably annual. Perhaps because of the mild and protracted fall, noteworthy gull prospects were few. An adult Ring-billed Gull reached Anchorage 14 Sep (RAM, DWS), where

casual. The fall's peak California Gull numbers were below-average in the Ketchikan area, at about 550 18 Aug (SCH), while 200 together near Juneau 13 Aug (GVV) may have been a local record. Extralimital Slaty-backed Gulls included an ad. near Juneau 2–3 Aug (GVV, ph. PS) and a late single away from the coast at Bethel 3 Oct+ (FB). Given lack of fall timing and geographic movements in the e. Bering Sea, Ivory Gull reports from areas around Kotzebue Sound and Nome were of interest. A group of 6 fed inshore near Cape Krusenstern 25–26 Oct (*vide* RU and RM) and one was at Nome 3 Nov (*vide* RM).

Mourning Doves were found only at Ketchikan, with 3 in the vicinity late Aug–18 Sep (MW, TG). Dispersing Northern Hawk Owls approached the Bering Sea coast, with one at Nome 2 Sep (WINGS) and 3–5 all season around King Salmon (DR, SS). Four Short-eareds around Nome to at least 15 Sep (WINGS) were tardy. Single **Fork-tailed Swifts** arrived in synchrony at Shemya I. 30 Sep–2 Oct (CS, MS) and farther w. to Attu 1 Oct (ATTOUR, †PEL). Of the approximately dozen Alaska records, there is nearly an even fall/spring split. **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** "invaded" the w. Aleutians, where 2 different individuals foraged along the Attu shoreline 10 Sep and 5 Oct (ATTOUR) and at least one sought out drift logs on Shemya I. ±70 km to the e. 20 Sep–9 Oct (CS, MS). There are only two prior Alaska records, both from Attu in spring, and several old October specimens from Commander I. Accidental in SE was a Black-backed Woodpecker in the subalpine woods at 1800' near Juneau 1 Oct (PS).

## Flycatchers Through Finches

A slow season for flycatchers found a rare offshore Alder Flycatcher at Ketchikan 13 Sep (SCH), the only highlight. Late and unlikely swallows included an imm. Tree Swallow described from Shemya I. 30 Sep–1 Oct (CS, †MS), and for the 3rd year since 1996, *November* Cliff Swallows were in the Juneau area, with 3 on 5–8 Nov (PS, MWS). There are only two other w. Aleutian Tree Swallow reports, both from spring. An imm. Ruby-crowned Kinglet (apparently *R. c. calendula* by plumage) ventured into the Aleutians for the first time, reaching Attu's willow thickets 22 Sep (LJO, †RLS, †TT), while another found St. Paul I. the same day (ST PAUL) for the 4th report there in the past five autumns. There are few other Bering Sea records. Possibly record-late for the Interior was a Ruby-crowned in Fairbanks 25 Nov (ABO). The Region's 9th overall and the Aleutians' 3rd (all from fall) **Dusky Warbler** skulked briefly in the Attu umbel thickets 2 Sep

(ATTOUR, †PEL). Despite great prime-season coverage, the Bering Strait return passage of Bluethroats must have been earlier than usual, because the Gambell middens produced only 3 individuals late Aug–8 Sep (WINGS). Casual in the w. Aleutians, single Bluethroats were flushed out of Attu forbs 2 & 22 Sep (ATTOUR). Mild conditions may have permitted more than typical numbers of Townsend's Solitaires to wander and linger, with 4 in Anchorage 5 Nov (*vide* DFD), one rare offshore in SE at Ketchikan 1 Oct (SCH, AWP), and at least 3 and one in the Juneau area 20 Sep (PS) and 2 Nov (BA), respectively. A **Dusky Thrush** feeding on Mountain Ash berries in Attu's Massacre Valley 1 Oct (ATTOUR) furnished a 2nd island and 3rd Aleutian fall report; most of the Region's other records are from spring. A bright Olive-backed Pipit, documented in the Gambell middens 5–6 Sep (WINGS, vt. GHR), was a first in fall for the Bering Sea away from the Aleutians. Earliest of the few previous fall SC reports was an imm. Cedar Waxwing in Bird Cr. near Anchorage 11 Sep (†BC). There are now about three U.C.I. site records.

It was perhaps a record year for extreme late-date and Bering Sea Parulids. Gambell middens produced 3 warbler species, where any are casual, highlighted by 3 Orange-crowns, described as nominate *celata*, 8 Sep (WINGS, vt. GHR), a Yellow 3–5 Sep (WINGS, vt. GHR), and one and 2 Wilson's 1 & 8 Sep (WINGS). There are about two previous fall Yellow and 3 Wilson's Warbler records for St. Lawrence I. Another Orange-crowned appeared at St. Paul I. 23 Sep (ST PAUL), where only slightly more expected, at least after decent coverage there from the past decade. Offshore Yellow-rumped included (probably) 2 at St. Paul I. 22–23 Sep (ST PAUL), only the 3rd in the Aleutians, one at Shemya I. 30 Sep–1 Oct (CS, MS), while a female Wilson's Warbler described from Shemya 2 Oct (CS, †MS), is likely the first ever from the Aleutians w. of Unimak I. Late or otherwise notable warblers included one Orange-crowned in Juneau 5 Nov (PS), a Magnolia, casual in fall, described also in Juneau 2 Sep (†PS), an especially late (for the Bering Sea coast) Yellow-rumped at Kotzebue 27 Oct (†RM), a Townsend's in Juneau 5 Nov (PS), and another November Wilson's, in Anchorage on the 4th (TT). Three Western Tanagers were unusual offshore in Ketchikan 14 Sep (SCH), while late was one in Juneau 22 Sep (RR).

As with the warblers, the season's sparrow highlights focused on Bering Sea extralimitals and scattered late departures. Gambell middens attracted an American Tree Sparrow 29 Aug–1 Sep, a Sooty Fox Sparrow 8–10 Sep, and single Golden-crowned Sparrows 29 Aug–5 Sep and 13

Sep (WINGS, vt. GHR); all are casual offshore. Note that *unalaschcensis*, *sinuosa*, *insularis*, and *zaboria* Fox Sparrows have all been documented by specimen or photos from various Bering Sea islands. Equally unusual off the Mainland and casual in the Aleutians, was a Dark-eyed Junco 9 Oct (CS, MS) at Shemya. Notable late sparrow reports included a casual SC Chipping Sparrow at Seward 26 Nov (RLS, NS, TT), a single Savannah also at Seward 26 Nov (RLS, NS, TT), and 3 White-crowns in Kotzebue 31 Oct (RM). The jewel of this year's sparrow highlights had to be the fresh **Clay-colored Sparrow** that joined juncos at a Ketchikan feeder 7–14 Nov (JFK, AWP, ph. SCH), representing the latest of the two previous autumn records. Even with decent Bering Sea coverage, only a single Rustic Bunting could be found, at Attu 1 Oct (ATTOUR). Juneau birders elevated **Lazuli Bunting** to the Alaska list with excellent documentation of a female-type there 5–11 Oct (ph. PS et al.). Two prior sight records from spring are the Region's only other reports. Alaska's 3rd overall and first autumn **Bobolink** appeared at a Ketchikan feeder 10 Oct (ph. †JFK). Two overshoot reports from Hyder and Barrow are the only prior reports of this species, which breeds in se. British Columbia and occasionally wanders coastally to Vancouver I. Bramblings were unremarkable this season, with a below-average peak of only 11 from Attu 23 Sep (ATTOUR); 2 at Gambell 8–13 Sep (WINGS) were more noteworthy because they are not annual there. Gambell's premier find this season was a female **Common Rosefinch** in the middens 10 Sep (WINGS, vt. GHR), only the Region's 3rd in autumn. Casual in SC and comparatively early was an imm. male Purple Finch described from Soldotna 15 Sep (†BH). Most SC records are from coastal feeders later in the season.

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# Yukon



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**Y**ukoners endured a cool and wet early fall season that moderated toward the end of the season, with temperatures not dipping below minus 20°C in late November. As record high-water conditions prevailed throughout the season, prime shorebird and waterfowl locations, for example the Nisutlin River Delta, were washed-out, leaving Whitehorse birders to settle for the local sewage lagoons. Regular checks there turned up a remarkable 24 species of waterfowl and 25 species of shorebirds.

**Abbreviations:** BC (British Columbia).

## Loons Through Waterfowl

Red-throated Loons moved through the Whitehorse area in moderate numbers, the high count being 8 at L. Laberge 20 Sep (HG). A

remarkable year for Yellow-billed Loons in s Yukon continued, with  $\pm 13$  individuals 21 Sep–24 Nov in the Whitehorse area (BD, CE, HG, JJ, AR). A lone Snow Goose, rare in the area, was seen near Koidern Lodge, sw. Yukon, 9 Oct (HH). A storm from the s. grounded an amazing flock of 1500–2000 Tundra Swans on Marsh L. 2 Oct (DP, DS). A flock of 28 Gadwalls at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons 14 Oct established a record count for the Yukon (CE). A male Eurasian Wigeon at the Whitehorse lagoons 18 Sep provided the Yukon's first fall record (CE). Impressive numbers of waterfowl were observed at the Whitehorse sewage lagoons through the fall, with especially high counts of American Wigeon, with 2000 on 6 Sep (CE, HG), and Northern Shovelers, with 2500 on 6 Aug (CE, HG). A female Harlequin Duck was at Tagish at the late date of 24 Nov (JJ). A movement of Long-tailed Ducks was noted, with counts of 150 at Schwatka L. 13 Oct and 100 at the Whitehorse lagoons 14–18 Oct (CE). Ruddy Duck numbers at the Whitehorse lagoons peaked at 54 on 17 Aug, including a female with 3 small ducklings (CE), establishing the first confirmed breeding record for Whitehorse.