

SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Previously unreported in New Mexico, a probable **Henslow's Sparrow** was at Bosque 28-29 Apr (J. Place, DH), reportedly singing on the latter date; details are under review. Notably late, a White-throated Sparrow was singing at Corrales 6 May (DK). Lingering from winter were single Harris's Sparrows at Luis Lopez 23 Apr (JO) and near L. Roberts 25 Apr (CR). A White-winged Junco at Sugarite S.P. 5 Mar (ph. DC) provided a local first. Very far n., a singing male Northern Cardinal at Maxwell 7-26 Apr (ph. DC) provided the first certain *Colfax* record. The season produced another strong Rose-breasted Grosbeak showing, with one to 3 at 18 sites 26 Apr—30 May (m. ob.), including w to Cliff (S. Stoleson), Silver City (DZ), and Separ (LM). Birders seeking Lazuli Buntings near Pojoaque 31 May found a male Indigo instead (BZ). Single Varied Buntings at Guadalupe Canyon 10 May (NM-C), San Andres N.W.R. 20 May (CR), and Walnut Canyon, Carlsbad Cavern N.P. 28 May (WW) implied that those three core populations were persisting. Early was a Painted Bunting at R.S. 26 Apr (JEP); n. were singles singing near Radium Springs 31 May (MS, JZ) and N.R.T. 27 May (JEP). Early was a Dickcissel at Fort Sumner 14 May (WW).

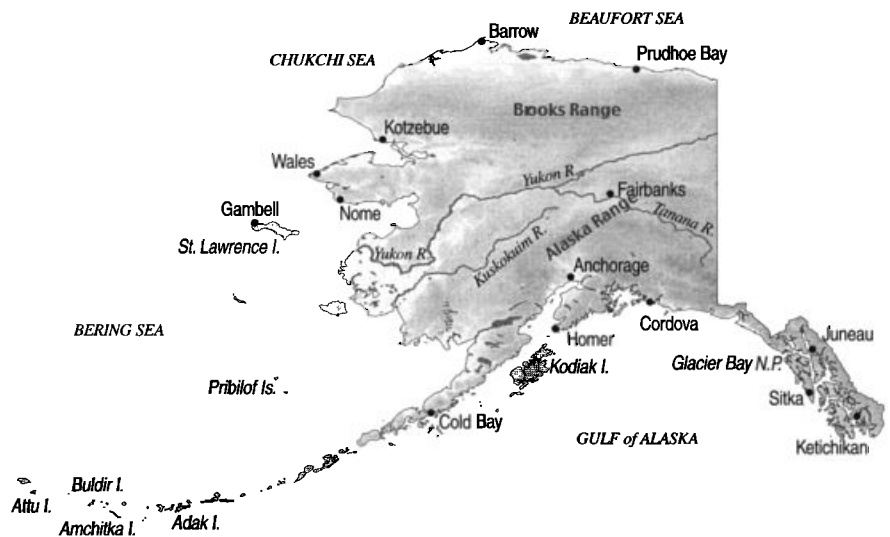
A singing Bobolink at N.R.T. 14 May (WW) provided a local first. Brewer's Blackbirds are rare nesters in c. New Mexico, so noteworthy were 6 breeding at the Paako Ridge golf course n of Sandia Park 6 May (HS) and another 6 breeding in e. Albuquerque 25 May (HS). Common Grackles pushing w. included singles at Quemado 7 Apr (ph. JO), Sapillo Cr., Grant 25 Apr (CR), and Deming 11 May (LM). Continuing a worrisome trend, Bronzed Cowbirds were at multiple sites in *Hidalgo*, *Luna*, *Dona Ana*, and *Eddy* (m. ob.); n. were singles at Silver City (EL), Percha (GE), Roswell (WW), B.L.N.W.R. (GW), and Oasis S.P., Roosevelt (JEP) 6-27 May. Another unfortunate sign of the times: the 517 Brown-headed Cowbirds in Grant 11 May (DZ et al.) made it the most numerous species counted in the county that day! Orchard Orioles increased their presence in n.-cen. areas, with one to 3 near Clovis 17-25 May (JEP, JO), one at Tolar 26 May (WH), and 2 at Fort Sumner 19 May (DE, BN); very far n. was an ad. male at Maxwell 12 May (ph. DC). A Hooded Oriole at Hillsboro 21 Apr was out of place (CR). An ad. male **Baltimore Oriole** strayed to Mills Canyon 22 Apr (DC); a young male was at N.R.T. 28 Apr (JEP, ph. JO). Scott's Orioles on their ne. frontier included singles at Quarai 11 May (HS) and near Sabinoso 5 May (JO) and 2 at N.R.T. 28 Apr & 4 May (JEP, ph. JO). Last of the Sandia

Crest rosy-finches were 2 Gray-crowns, 10 Blacks, and 5 Brown-capped 3 Mar (CB), while a mixed flock of 12 was at the Taos ski area 8 Apr (TG); unusual at 2100 m were 4 Brown-capped drinking from a puddle in the Manzano Mts. 1 Apr (V. Sutherland). A Pine Grosbeak was w. of Angle Fire at Palo Flechado Pass, *Colfax* 23 Mar (DC). Cassin's Finches were unusually prevalent in the sw., including 4 near Kingston 24 Apr (CR), 40 at Emory Pass 20 Apr (JEP), and one at Silver City 28 Mar & 2 Apr (EL); e. were 5 Cassin's at Mills Canyon 9 Mar (DC). Six Red Crossbills in the Manzano Mts. 10 Mar increased to 17 by May, when ads. were feeding fledglings (TH). Notably early for the n. was a Lesser Goldfinch at Mills Canyon 2 Mar (DC). Late American Goldfinches included 2 each at Silver City 31 May (EL) and Maxwell 28 May (DC), plus 11 at Clayton 25 May (CR).

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Punctuated with several late-winter snowstorms, spring 2002 was cold, slow-to-warm, and relatively dull in the context of the past decade's seasons. Especially in the Bering Sea, where Asian species were sporadic and generally under-represented, rarer species and concentrations of migrants were fewer than what has come to be the norm. A season-long

weak and unfavorable storm track contributed to this poor showing in the western Aleutians and at Gambell; only the Pribilofs were productive, with a mix of offshore vagrants from both continents. Early snowmelt and subsequent open habitats were felt to be contributing factors in the rather weak passage of birds at Gambell and Nome. Elsewhere, from the Southeast and the south-central mainland, all but geese and shorebirds were notably, often significantly late by up to two weeks in several cases.

Abbreviations: A.B.O. (Alaska Bird Observatory); SE (Southeast Alaska); SC (Southcoastal Alaska). Referenced details, specimens, photographs, and videotape are on file at the University of Alaska Museum. Italicized place names denote especially unusual locations for the noted species.

LOONS THROUGH RAILS

At least 4 Arctic Loons around Shemya I. 10 Apr—1 May+ (CS, MS) continued the trend of recent w. Aleutian spring reports. Singles were otherwise mostly sporadic at the Gambell sea-watch (m. ob.). The season's only Pied-billed Grebe was a migrant in Juneau 6 May (GVV, PS). The latest Western Grebe account included a group of 20 in Carroll Inlet near Ketchikan 23 May (MAW). Most Westerns depart s. SE winter sites by early May.

An intriguing Red-faced Cormorant description from Gambell 24-26 May (HLE, †PD) is likely the first St. Lawrence I./n. Bering Sea report since the late 1800s. Ardeids dropped into the w. Aleutians (where casual) again early in the season, with a **Great Egret** at Shemya 19 Apr—11 Jun+ (CS, MS ph.) and an ad. **Black-crowned Night-Heron** to the w. at Attu 10-11 May (KW, DWS; first specimen for the state). Given the observers' arrival date and prior weather conditions, it is possible that the night-heron arrived with the same system as the Shemya egret in Apr—all of the previous Aleutian night-herons are from Apr.

The season's lone Bean Goose was photographed at Shemya 22-31 May (CS, MS ph.). Weather apparently concentrated both the timing and distribution of geese in the s. half of SE, where Ketchikan and Juneau observers made atypical inshore high counts of Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Canada Geese (as well as Brant), all focused in the 22 Apr—1 May period (SCH, AWP, TLG, SZ). This spring's latest winter or out-migrant Whooper Swans lingered at Shemya 9-12 Apr, with 5 still present through the 17th (CS, MS ph.).

Palaearctic waterfowl made a strong early season showing in the w. Aleutians, where observers found excellent concentrations: 127 Eurasian Wigeon 23 Apr and 4 Smew 21-27 Apr were remarkable at Shemya (CS, MS). Regional highlights were otherwise a little light, including a Wood Duck pair, now nearly annual in SE, from Juneau 26 Apr (MLK), 35 Eurasian Wigeon at St. Paul I. (ST PAUL) and up to 3 in Ketchikan 21-28 Apr (AWP, SCH), an excellent spring count of 29 Blue-winged Teal from Juneau 26 May (PS, MS), a late drake Garganey from Shemya 3 Jun (CS, MS), a well-documented nominate-type Green-winged Teal from *Ketchikan* 21 Apr (a first local record; AWP, SCH ph.), a rare w.

Aleutian Canvasback, a drake at Shemya 10-13 Apr (CS, MS), another casual-in-SC Tufted Duck at Kodiak 26-27 May (RAM), and 2 Smew from St. Paul I. 5-11 May (ST PAUL). Rivaling any previous extralimital eider reports in the Region was the female Steller's Eider from Creamers Field in *Fairbanks* 18-19 May (*vide* DDG, ABO), certainly a first for the Interior.

Notable raptor reports included an Osprey in the Bering Sea, where casual, at *Gambell* 2 Jun (HLE, WINGS), at least one, and possibly 2 imm. **White-tailed Eagles** at Shemya 18 Apr—1 Jun (CS, MS ph.) that must have wintered in the w. Aleutians, and an extremely early w. Aleutian Northern Harrier at Shemya 18 Apr (CS, MS). Single American Coots showed up in Ketchikan 25 Apr (SCH) and Juneau 27 Apr and 12 May (MS); spring migrant coots are casual in SE.

PLOVERS THROUGH DOVES

The northbound shorebird passage was slow to develop, relatively quiet, and lacked the expected significant coastal concentrations. The Palaearctic component was also weak, except for one storm-induced fallout in late May. Notable Asian waders included: a maximum of 8 Mongolian Plovers at Shemya 29 May (CS, MS) and a single at S. Paul I. May 30 (ST PAUL); only one Common Greenshank at Shemya 2 Jun (CS, MS); a season high 10 Common Sandpipers e. to St. Paul I. 31 May (ST PAUL), with a single at Gambell 5 Jun (HLE, WINGS); one and 5 Terek Sandpipers at Shemya 29 May—4 Jun (CS, MS) and St. Paul I. 31 May (ST PAUL), respectively; one Temminck's Stint from Shemya 30 May (CS, MS); and a group of 7 Ruffs from Gambell, where occasionally found in flocks, 3 Jun+ (HLE, WINGS).

A late-May storm deposited unusually high stint numbers in the w. Aleutians, including 50 Red-neckeds and 40+ Long-toeds at Shemya on the 28th (CS, MS) and a good tally of 5 Red-neckeds e. to Adak I. on the 31st (PB). There have been several late-May storm events that deposited similar shorebird numbers. Other noteworthy shorebird reports included a first documented (pending receipt of photograph) *Bering Sea* Upland Sandpiper at St. Paul I. 31 May (ST PAUL). Two exceptional season highs were of 30+ Marbled Godwits in s. SE at Annette I. and Ketchikan 27 Apr—7 May (SCH, AWP) and 100+ Semipalmated Sandpipers at Juneau 17 May (GVV, RJG). Casual in the Bering Sea, up to 3 Short-billed Dowitchers were seen at St. Paul I. 30-31 May (ST PAUL), and the spring had perhaps the best-ever Wilson's Phalarope showing, with 2 each in Juneau 17-30 May (GVV, MS, PP) and



A Great Egret was a great find at Shemya Island 19 April to 11 June and beyond. This bird presumably of the subspecies *modestus*, which ranges regularly to the Amur River mouth in Siberia, over 2000 km away. Note the partly dark bill. *Photograph by M.T. Schwitters.*



An excellent count of 10 Common Sandpipers was made on St. Paul Island 31 May 2002, with this bird photographed two days prior. *Photograph by Susan Hengeveld.*

Fairbanks 23 May (ABO, JG)—Kodiak's first ever was a single 26-27 May (RAM ph.) Wilson's Phalarope remains casual at best in spring, with most reports from late season in the Interior.

Juneau birders found and documented a first-summer **Little Gull** there 28 May (PS ph.), a first spring record of this casual Alaska visitor. Casual in spring in the Region, ad. **Franklin's Gulls** showed up at extreme locations, with singles at *St. Paul I.* 20 May (ST PAUL, ph.) and Juneau 23 May (SS, JS). The Pribilof bird becomes the Bering Sea's 3rd documented report. Unusual n. in the Bering Sea was an ad. **Black-headed Gull** at Gambell 31 May—2 Jun (HLE, WINGS). Extralimital Slaty-backed Gulls included an ad. up into Cook Inlet, where casual, in the Kenai area 15-22 Mar (RD ph.), and 2 ads. in Kodiak 10 Apr—31 May (RAM). Migrant Sabine's Gulls were in unprecedented numbers inshore in Ketchikan, with a peak 225 in one flock 30 May (SCH). The season's only **Common Tern** was an early single at *St. Paul I.* 4 May (ST PAUL). SE's first contemporary **Black Tern** was documented in Juneau, where a definitive ad. was photographed 23 May (ph. PS et al.). Nearly all of the few reports from the past decade came from Jun in the Interior. Five Kittlitz's Murrelets in small groups were discovered up Lynn Canal n. of Juneau 7 Apr (AD)—possibly indicative of wintering grounds or a stopover area to known Glacier Bay breeding areas.

OWLS THROUGH PIPITS

Bared Owl was only mentioned from the Taku R, with a single in floodplain forest 29 Apr (AD). Only one **Common Cuckoo** made the spring report, a gray bird from Shemya 30 May (CS, MS). **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** made long excursions beyond the e. Interior, where they are casual. Singles were substantiated again in late May near Fairbanks in the Bonanza forest area, where a nest was found last spring (*vide* A.B.O.), and s. to the Anchorage Hillside, where SC's second was photographed above Potter Marsh late May to 8 Jun (*vide* DFD; ph. RLS, m. ob.).

One of the Region's earliest ever **Cassin's Vireos** sang briefly near Juneau 23-24 May (MS et al.), where singles have been found periodically since the early 1990s. No doubt lingering from winter was a single **Boreal Chickadee** in the Haines area 6 Apr (AD). This Interior resident is occasional in winter down through the Coast Range to tidewater forests. Migrant Arctic Warblers made a brief showing in the w. Aleutians, with 2 at Shemya 9-10 Jun (CS, MS); northbound *P. b. xanthodryas* remains sporadic in Jun in the w. Aleutians. Siberian Rubythroats arrived on time in the w. Aleutians, 28 May—3 Jun at Shemya, with up to 3 there on the 29th (CS, MS) being the season's peak. Single female/imm. male **Red-flanked Bluetails** (no †) skulked in the Shemya thickets 21 May and 2 Jun (CS, MS), for approximately the Region's 8th



McKay's Bunting, a little-known species to most North Americans, was photographed nicely on 1 June 2002 on *St. Paul Island*, the site where most birders see their "lifer" McKay's. This bird was apparently paired with a Snow Bunting. *Photograph by Susan Hengeveld.*

spring report since the first ever from Attu in early Jun 1982. Eye-browed Thrushes were only reported from Shemya I., with up to 5 around the island 19 May—3 Jun (CS, MS). Surprisingly rare offshore in the Bering Sea, *Gambell* birders turned up an **American Robin** in the middens there 26-30 May+ (HLE, WINGS), only about the 3rd *St. Lawrence I.* spring report. **European Starlings** pioneered a new winter range at Kenai, where a pair was noted 14-15 Mar+ (ph. RD); there are still surprisingly few starling reports on the Kenai Pen. For a season where Palearctic motacillids were poorly represented—e.g., a total 4 **Yellow Wagtails** at Shemya all season—at least 7 **Olive-backed Pipits** were discovered in Shemya thickets 21 May—11 Jun (CS, MS). None were seen elsewhere. **White Wagtails** continue to be scarce or missed at both *Gambell* and the w. *Seward Pen.*, a trend which began in the late 1990s.

WARBLERS THROUGH FRINGILLIDS

Parulids arrived generally up to two weeks late across all arrival fronts in the Region, especially in SE, and there were no reports of vagrants. In contrast, when they were mentioned, **Western Tanagers** were early in SE locales, highlighted by one of the Region's earliest in Ketchikan 19 May (GZ, *vide* SCH), also a first local spring record. Two of Ketchikan's 3 wintering **White-throated Sparrows** lingered at feeders until 19 Mar, while the 3rd sang on territory through 19 Apr (SCH). The season's sole **Rustic Bunting** was a female at Shemya 20 May (CS, MS).

A waif **Common Grackle** appeared near Ketchikan 20 May (vt. JFK), one of few in SE and a local first. Still without a discernible pattern of occurrence, **Bronzed-type Common Grackles** continue to pop up every few years at various locations throughout the Region, mainly between late May and Sep. The nearest known breeding populations extend n. and w. into ne. **British Columbia**. Indicative of the relatively weak showing for Asian passerines were the

small **Brambling** numbers, with a one-day high of only 10 from Shemya 13 May (CS, MS) Normal (that is, only few and local) reports for both crossbill species continued Regionwide, and only Kodiak noted local breeding, with **HY** young found by 15 Apr (RAM). Unique for the season was the single male **Hawfinch** at a Shemya feeder 19-26 May (CS, ph. MS). Readers will be happy to learn that the **House Sparrows** survived the winter in Ketchikan, where the male was last seen 1 May (SCH).

CORRIGENDA

Corrections to the fall report for 2001 include *N. A. B.* 56: 91, there was a *single* **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at *Gambell* 26 Aug (not 26 birds) and another single 17 Sep. On page 92, the caption to the **Black-throated Blue Warbler** is incorrect. The species nests no closer than southeastern Saskatchewan, but there are records of vagrants from points much closer, in **British Columbia** and **Alberta**, for instance.

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