

ored Sparrow was reported in Flagstaff 14 Apr (JP). Well w. of this species' normal wintering area or migratory route in the state, 2 Lark Buntings were found near Colorado City 14 May (F. Dunell, *vide* K Grandison). Extremely scarce in se. Arizona, particularly in spring, 2 Harris's Sparrows were in Portal 25–26 Apr (DJ), and another 2, in alternate plumage, were at San Bernardino N.W.R. 3 May (RWe). Very late was a white-lored White-crowned Sparrow at Portal 4 Jun (RWe). As in recent springs, Rose-breasted Grosbeak numbers were impressive, with no fewer than 17 individuals found statewide 7 Apr–31 May.

A singing male Western Meadowlark adjacent to a lush field in the Sulphur Springs Valley 19 May (SH) was noteworthy, as this species does not breed anywhere in se. Arizona. A Common Grackle was reported

from Flagstaff 4 May (†CL); this species is a very casual visitor, mainly in fall and winter, to Arizona. A female Purple Finch, casual in spring in Arizona, was at a Patagonia feeder 12 Mar–10 Apr (T. Staudt et al., ph. M. Coker). Cassin's Finches were reported widely around se. Arizona, mainly in the Huachuca and Chiricahua Mts., with groups of up to 20+ seen. Numbers were also seen in Flagstaff, and along the Mogollon Rim, suggesting a widespread movement into Arizona—but from where? A Red Crossbill at Canyon de Chelly 26 Apr (LN) was away from usual areas of occurrence in pine forests in n. Arizona. Large numbers of Pine Siskins were reported during the spring in most of the mountain areas of the southeast. After a lackluster winter for Lawrence's Goldfinch around s. Arizona, scattered individuals turned up at a number of odd loca-

tions from near Yuma to Carr Canyon to the B.T.A. More interesting were two pairs thought to be nesting at H.R.P. near Wickenburg 12–16 Mar (*vide* TC) and a nest with 3 young at B.T.A. 10 Apr (CST, *vide* TC).

**Observers:** Moez Ali, Charlie Babbitt, Tom Beatty, Chris D. Benesh, Jerry Bock, Matt Brown, John Coons, Troy Corman, Henry Detwiler, Pierre Deviche, Jeff Estis, Keith Graves, Stuart Healy, John & Marty Hirth, Rich Hoyer, Dave Jasper, Keith Kamper (Tucson RBA), Melody Kehl, Chuck LaRue, Michael Marsden, Tracy McCarthey, Larry Norris, Scott Olmstead, Molly Pollock, John Prather, Kurt Radamaker, Gary H. Rosenberg, Will Russell, Peter Solomon, Dave Stejskal, Mark M. Stevenson, Rick Taylor, Carl S. Tomoff (Prescott), Richard Webster, Janet Weitzman (Maricopa), Erika Wilson. 🐦

Following a very mild, mostly storm-free late-winter season, which produced relatively weak snowpack accumulations, spring 2005 started fast and furious. Much of the Region was enveloped in a record-warm, high-pressure surge in April, which set the tone for incredibly early and synchronous arrival dates. In particular, areas between Ketchikan and Anchorage posted several record-early arrivals, but even the Interior had very early birds. Observers were likewise impressed at the early onset of breeding for most summer visitors.

This season's warm, mostly settled air must have influenced the Aleutian Low in such a way for it to have had a minor impact in the Region's western interface with north-bound Asian birds: only one large late-May anticyclone produced significant fallouts in the Aleutians and Bering Sea outposts this season.

### LOONS THROUGH RAILS

Continuing the trend of the past decade or so, Arctic Loons were well represented, with up to 4 noted around Shemya I. 16 Apr–7 May (CS, MS) and a peak of 12 counted passing Gambell 6 Jun (PEL et al.). Single Pied-billed Grebes, rare to casual in spring, were reported from Ketchikan 15 Mar (SCH, AWP), possibly a winter bird from s. Southeast, and n. to Juneau 2–9 May (LE, GVV, SZ). An Eared Grebe in alternate plumage was nicely documented from Valdez Arm 21 May (ph. LD, ph. NH, ND, TS). Although the photographs submitted were marginal, this individual is the Region's 2nd substantiated report; the other record is from Fairbanks in early spring. Fourteen Mottled Petrels tallied between Shemya and Attu Is. 29 May (KB, BB) was

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unexpected, as these *Pterodroma* typically reach their n. North Pacific peak in late Aug. Most unusual for the Interior and a first for Fairbanks was a Double-crested Cormorant there 22 May (QE).

With the recent Canada Goose split, many coastal observers commented on and/or documented migrant Cackling Geese in route to points north. Confusion still exists with various subspecies within this new group, and I urge readers to find an old but still relevant treatise of the two new species groups by

### Thede Tobish

2510 Foraker Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99517

(TGT@alaska.net)



Alaska's observers made a good effort to report extralimital and/or migrant Cackling Geese this season. This *minima* Cackling Goose was found with locally breeding *parvipes* Canada Geese in Anchorage on 25 April 2005. Photograph by Thede Tobish.

Johnson et al. (1979). Morphological characteristics of Canada geese in the Pacific Flyway. Pp. 56-80 in: Jarvis, R. L., and J. C. Bartonek, eds., *Management and Biology of Pacific Flyway Geese*. Oregon State University Bookstores, Inc., Corvallis, Oregon.). Among the usual scattering of lingering Emperor Geese from various wintering sites, at least one loitered extremely late and at the e. fringe of the winter range around Glacier Bay 28 Apr–24 May (ND, BP). Typical in spring was a nice assortment of less common waterfowl from both ne. Asian and Pacific flyways: a handsome Falcated Duck from Shemya I. 23–28 May (CS, ph. MS); a spring peak of 30 Eurasian Wigeons also at Shemya 27 Apr (CS, MS); above-average numbers of Blue-winged Teal across Southeast, with a pair in Kodiak 5 May (JM; a first appearance there in 19+ years); at least 3 Cinnamon Teal in Juneau 30 Apr–31 May (GVV, PS, LE, MS, NM), where now nearly annual; a single Garganey at Shemya 27 May–early Jun (CS, ph. MS); a Tufted Duck, well inland at Kenny L. 26 Apr (no details; RM, CE) and another male at Kodiak 13 & 15 May (JM, RAM); several eiders rare in the Southeast, including a Steller's n. of Juneau 22 Apr (ph. PS) and an imm. King very late in Juneau 26 May (ph. PS); and up to 4 Ruddy Ducks at Kenny L. 16–23 May (PEL, LD, NH, ND). Bering Sea specialties included unusual numbers of Greater Scaup offshore, with 16 counted at Gambell 5 Jun (PEL); a drake Surf Scoter in Shemya Pass 11 May (CS, MS), one of few Aleutian records w. of Unalaska; and up to 5 Common Goldeneyes offshore at Gambell 4 Jun+ (PEL).

Spring hawk-monitoring sites turned in some surprising numbers this season. At Gunsight Mt., at mile 119 on the Glenn Hwy. where the Talkeetna meet the Chugach Mts., the total counts 26 Mar–1 May (*vide* CP, RD) included 252 Golden Eagles, 357

Rough-legged Hawks (150 light morphs), 568 Harlan's Hawks (28 light morphs), 63 *calurus* Red-tailed Hawks, 293 Northern Harriers, and 137 Sharp-shinned Hawks. Along the Richardson Hwy. near Delta Jct., a few hours on 17 Apr (LD, NH) produced 35 Rough-legged, 195 Harlan's, and 7 *calurus* Red-tailed Hawks. Additional raptor highlights included an odd-date Bald Eagle concentration of >100 birds around Sitka 20 Mar (MLW, MET), possibly gathering for an impending herring spawn, an extremely early Red-tailed Hawk in Ketchikan 2 Mar (SCH, AWP), which may have been a winter bird, a rare Golden Eagle offshore at Sitka 30 May (MLW, MET), and another Eurasian Hobby, again at Shemya I. 24 May (CS, ph. MS). On the heels of a previous Feb bird from the same vicinity, a Virginia Rail set up territory in a Gustavus area sedge marsh 23 May+ (PV, ND). There are a few other summer records, of a (possibly returning) bird in a similar marsh near Juneau. Soras made



This Eurasian Barn Swallow, which arrived with Violet-green Swallows in Anchorage, Alaska 1 May 2005, was intriguing: it was the earliest Barn Swallow arrival ever, for any subspecies. Photograph by Thede Tobish.

news in Southeast, early and in high numbers, including at least 3 on territories around Juneau 27 Apr+ (GVV, MB et al.), a single 21 May and then 3 in Haines 29 May (PEL, AD, LD, NH, GHR, TT), and another in Gustavus 24 May+ (ND, PV, BP).

### PLOVERS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Large Black-bellied Plover concentrations are not often reported, so 200+ migrants counted in Gustavus 11 May (ND) are worth noting. One in the same area 28 Mar (ND) was anomalous and was likely a bird that had wintered in the s. parts of the Region. Only 3 Common Ringed Plovers appeared 2–5 Jun at Gambell (PEL), where they are annual. Alaska's 3rd American Avocet was unexpected up Alaganik Slough on the Copper R. Delta 20–22 May & 1 Jun (MA, ph. TF). Previous records have also been North Gulf coastal birds in spring. Three or more

Common Greenshanks at Shemya I. 18–29 May (CS, MS) was the season's high count, while a Lesser Yellowlegs also at Shemya 26 Apr (CS, MS) was almost certainly a vagrant bird returning from some Palearctic wintering area—there are few w. Aleutian records and none so early. The late May w. Aleutian fallout otherwise produced a Semipalmated Plover 29 May, one Far Eastern Curlew 30 May, at least one Black-tailed Godwit 30 May, and a Temminck's Stint, all at Shemya 28 May (CS, MS). Northbound Marbled Godwits were sporadic, with the season's high count of 33 coming from Sitka 25 Apr–5 May (MLW, MET). Two Sanderlings noted in Fairbanks 23 May (NH. LD) were very rare for the Interior. A small group of Red-necked Phalaropes found near Ketchikan 15 Apr (CF) was record early for that locale and one of the earliest ever for the Region. Probably record early for the Aleutians was a basic-plumaged Black-headed Gull at Shemya 16 Apr (CS, ph. MS).

Noteworthy among the handful of unusual gull reports were a first-year Mew Gull off Gambell, where casual, 5 Jun (PEL) and single Ring-billed Gulls at Juneau 10 May (SZ), in Ketchikan 26 May (SCH, AWP), and at Fairbanks, where casual in spring, 3 May (LD, NH). California Gulls are regular in s. Southeast in spring, but singles at Juneau 12 Mar (PS) and at Haines 21 May (PEL) were unusual. At least 2 apparent Iceland Gulls n. of Juneau 16 May (PS), a lone Slaty-backed at Juneau 12 Mar (PS), and 4+ Glaucous-winged (17 Apr–16 May) and 3+ Glaucous Gulls (20 Apr–1 May) at the Fairbanks landfill (LD, NH) rounded out the gull rarities. In the absence of nearshore pack ice, Ivory Gulls become ephemeral around Gambell in spring, so most records come from early in the season, usually prior to the arrival of bird tour groups. A tally of 79 inshore at Gambell 13 May (ph. BB) may have been indicative of this year's peak northward push and represents one of the highest spring totals on record. Two Caspian Terns inshore near Gustavus 22 Apr (ND) were the North Gulf Coast's earliest and were possibly record early for the Region.

Mourning Doves are still rare in spring in the Region, so one around Juneau 2 May was a good find (LE). Western Screech-Owls were well represented, with singles again heard calling in Seward 15 Mar–early May (PP, BD, RLS et al.) and Sitka, near where the subspecies toptype was collected, 22 Mar+ (MLW, MET), and 2 around Gustavus–Glacier Bay N.M. 12 & 18 Mar (ND, PV, BP). Of the three reports of single Northern Pygmy-Owls—in Sitka 22 Mar (MLW, MET), off Ketchikan 7 May (SCH, AWP), and at Haines 21 & 29 May (PEL et al.)—only the latter was within typical breeding range. Offshore records in Southeast are sporadic and

usually restricted to late fall into winter. Barred Owls are seemingly becoming easier to find in Southeast, and this season's notables away from the typical sites in Juneau and Ketchikan included one in Gustavus 16 Mar (ND, PV) and a single 21 May and then 2 in the Haines area 29 May (PEL et al.). A Northern Saw-whet Owl calling near *Talkeetna* late Feb–8 Mar (DP) was well n. of the species' regular range, which reaches only into the Wasilla–Big Lake forests. Rufous Hummingbird pioneered yet another record-early arrival with a single in Ketchikan 16 Mar (SCH, AWP).

### WOODPECKERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were recorded in a narrow arrival window in the Interior between Fairbanks and Northway Jct. along the Alaska Hwy., with singles appearing first at Midway L. 17 May (PEL), then in Ester, w. of Fairbanks, 23 May (PDM), and finally w. of the Northway turnoff and near Harding L., both 28 May (TT, GHR, LD, NH). This fairly common breeder in the e. half of the Yukon Territory remains a casual spring bird in Alaska's e. Interior. Another Great Spotted Woodpecker surfaced at Shemya 20 May (CS, ph. MS), only the Region's 4th ever in spring. Both Alaska *Empidonax* were generally at the earliest end of their arrival ranges: for instance, Pacific-slope Flycatchers in Ketchikan 27 Apr (SCH, AWP) were record early there by three days, while a single n. in Juneau 4 May (RJG) was similarly ahead of schedule.

The only vireo mentioned by contributing observers was a Warbling, which was a record-early arrival (by three days) for Ketchikan 9 May (SCH, AWP)—and one of the Region's earliest ever. Swallows likewise matched local earliest arrival dates in some areas. Vagrant swallows included a single Violet-green Swallow at Gambell 1 Jun (WINGS, PEL), a St. Lawrence I. first and one of very few from the Bering Sea; a Cliff Swallow at Kodiak (where rare) 4–30 May (ph. RAM); and a white-bellied Barn Swallow (*gutturalis*) in Anchorage 1 May (TT)—an enigmatic, record-early bird that arrived with Violet-green Swallows. This individual almost certainly did not originate from a recent Palearctic wintering area; most Alaska-breeding Barn Swallows reach nesting locales in the 2nd half of May. Old World flycatchers arriving with the late-May w. Aleutian storm included 2+ Red-breasted Flycatchers at Shemya 29 May–3 Jun (CS, ph. MS) and a single Gray-streaked Flycatcher at Attu 30 May (DWS, BB).

Casual in the Aleutians, especially in spring, a single Bluethroat was found at Shemya 24 May (CS, MS), and a single female-plumaged Red-flanked Bluetail was there 29 May (CS, ph. MS), the latter within days of



One of a territorial pair along the immediate coast at Haines, Alaska, this Barred Owl was rumored to have been present since early March 2005 (here 29 May). Photograph by Thede Tobish.

the first found at Attu in 1982. Rarely recorded in spring in the Aleutians was a female Northern Wheatear, also at Shemya 26–27 May (CS, MS). A Juneau Hermit Thrush was exceptionally early 22 Apr (RJG) and may well have been a winter bird from elsewhere in Southeast. Up to 4 Eyebrowed Thrushes skulked around Shemya following the major storm front 21 May–3 Jun (CS, ph. MS); 2 were at Attu 30 May (BB). Continuing recent winter trends in the Anchorage area, record numbers of Bohemian Waxwings made a living through the winter into early spring, exemplified by an amazing aggregation of at least 400 along Anchorage's Ship Cr. 12 Mar (TT), where they hawked the season's first midge hatch. Less than 15 years ago, Bohemians were unheard of past the end of Dec.

### WARBLERS THROUGH FRINGILLIDS

Parulids arrived early across the Region, but highlights were few, including a near-record-early Yellow Warbler for Anchorage 21 May (TT), and 3 singing Common Yellowthroats in the Northway lowlands in the e. Interior 28 May (GHR, LD, NH, TT), where reports may pertain to spring overshoots. Only 3 Rustic Buntings were described, one from Attu 30 May (BB) and 2 from Shemya 23 May and 6–7 Jun (BB, CS, MS). The Region's 3rd Gray Bunting, and the first since 1982, appeared along old runway edges at Shemya 27 May (ph. BB). Although Gray Bunting ranges n. into s. Kamchatka, it is not a particularly long-distance migrant, so it is not surprising that we have such few records. A first for the w. Aleu-

tians, and one of very few in spring or w. of Adak, was a male McKay's Bunting at Shemya 2–4 May (CS, ph. MS); it was apparently independent of and later than migrant Snow Buntings, which are typically moving in the Aleutians in mid-Apr.

Still mostly recorded in fall, another early-season Brewer's Blackbird was found, this year in Juneau 28 Apr (ph. KG). Brown-headed Cowbirds pushed into the Region beyond the more regular sites on the Southeast mainland, with singles in Gustavus 8–14 & 28–30 May (PV, ND, BP), and a male inland at Delta Junction 19–20 May (JM, SD ph.). Cowbirds are casual n. of the Alaska Range. Asian finches showed well in the Aleutians in a narrow late-May window. Bramblings appeared late, with the first found 21 May at Shemya (CS, MS); with the weather changes of late May, numbers swelled to 100+ hereby 28 May. A showy male Common Rosefinch at Attu Jun 3–4 (ph. BB) was a highlight there, as were multiple Eurasian Bullfinches, rare in the Aleutians, including at least 4 around Shemya 27 May–6 Jun (BB, CS, ph. MS) and a female at Attu 30 May (BB). A male Oriental Greenfinch was discovered at Attu 1 Jun (BB). Be-



A House Finch that attended a Valdez, Alaska feeder 23 (here) and 24 May 2005 furnished the state's westernmost record. Photograph by T. S.

yond Ketchikan, where Purple Finch is nearly annual, mostly in late fall, individuals reached the North Gulf Coast, including one in female plumage at Skagway in "early May" (JM) and a male in w. Juneau 28 Apr–2 May (PR, ph. PS). Still casual in Alaska, Houses Finches also made a good showing, with the Region's westernmost turning up at a Valdez feeder 23–24 May (ph. TS) and another in female plumage noted for the 3rd

time in the last four years in Ketchikan 7 May (ph. SCH, AWP). Red Crossbills began pouring into Southeast in early Mar and were inundating feeders well into Apr as far n. as Gustavus (m.ob.). Attesting to a very early breeding season, 2 fledgling Common Redpolls in an Anchorage neighborhood 5 May (TT) were close to the earliest fledging dates on record for the Upper Cook Inlet. Furnishing one of few spring records was an Evening Grosbeak along the Haines Hwy. 21 May (†PEL).

Contributors and observers (subregional editors in boldface): Alaska Bird Observatory (N. DeWitt et al.), B. Alger, J. B. Allen, M.

Anderson, M. Anthony, R. Armstrong, G. Baluss, K. Bell, B. Benter, S. Berns, A. Berry, M. Brooks, G. V. Byrd, L. Craig, P. Davis, J. Dearborn, L. DeCicco (Interior), D. F. Delap, A. DeMartini, N. DeWitt, B. Ditttrick, E. Drew, N. Drumheller, S. DuBois, C. Eames, L. Edfelt, Q. Evenson, T. Fondell, R. M. Fowler, R. Fritz, C. Fultz, D. D. Gibson, K. Glass, R. J. Gordon, T. L. Goucher, N. Haydukovich, K. Hart, S. C. Heinl, High Lonesome Tours (P. Davis, D. MacKay et al.), P. Hunt, B. Hunter, J. F. Koerner, A. Lang, P. E. Lehman, J. Levison, M. Litzow, M. & R. A. MacIntosh, D. MacPhail, J. Mason, John McDermott, R. McHenry, J. Metzler, R. Meyers, N. Mollett, L. J. Oakley, B. Paige, C. Palmer,

W. Pawuk, A. W. Piston, P. Pourchot, G. H. Rosenberg, D. Rudis, K. Russell, J. Sauer, S. Savage, T. Schantz, R. L. Scher, M. A. Schultz, W. Schuster, M. Schwan, C. & M. Schwitters, D., P. & S. Senner, D. Shaw, D. W. Sonneborn, S. Studebaker, P. Suchanek, A. Swingley, M. E. Tedin, T. Tobish, University of Alaska Museum (D. W. Sonneborn et al.), R. Uhl, L. Vallie, G. Van Vliet, P. Vanselow, M. L. Ward, Wilderness Bird Tours (B. Ditttrick et al.), Wings (Jon Dunn et al.), B. & D. Williams, E. White, M. A. Wood, K. Zervos, S. Zimmerman. Referenced details (†), specimens (\*), photographs (ph.), videotape (vt.), and audiotape (v.r.) are on file at the University of Alaska Museum. ☐

# British Columbia



**Donald G. Cecile**

7995 Wilson-Jackson Road

Vernon, British Columbia V1B 3N5

(dcecile@telus.net)

**I**t was a uniformly warm and dry spring across the Region, with only minor showery periods, mostly on the coast. Unlike in cold springs when many northbound migrants are concentrated in valleys, this spring saw few such events, as early receding snowpacks allowed birds to spread out. Weather was unseasonably hot during late April, and there were very few spring fall-outs due to the good weather of late April to late May. Birds migrating during that warm spell produced some early records. British

Columbia's newest vagrant trap, Carmanah Point Lighthouse, which hosted a one-day-wonder Gray Wagtail in the fall, produced a Sage Thrasher and a Common Grackle this spring.

## GREBES THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Rarely found in the Peace R. area, a Western Grebe was at One Island L. 16 May (MP, JG). Brown Pelicans occasionally wander northward as post-breeders, but one 24 km w. of Ucluelet 7 May was exceptionally early (GG). Double-crested Cormorants were more prevalent in the interior than usual; at least 10 birds were reported, the most out-of-place bird being at Crescent Spur 18 May (RZ). At least 4 Great Egrets overshot their mark and were scattered across the s. interior. Waterfowl arrived with no notable delays or concentrations, perhaps due to the fine weather and the general lack of flooded fields. Snow Geese are rarely found in spring migration in the s. interior; thus 4 at Windermere, e. Kootenays 26 Apr were of interest (MdO). Canada Geese arrived early in Dawson Creek 15 Mar (*fide* MP). A Tufted Duck was on Bouchie L., Quesnel 11 Apr (Manfred Roschwitz), furnishing the 5th record for the Cariboo. A Harlequin Duck, rare in the Okanagan, was at Okanagan Falls 15–17 May (male; *fide* DCa). Red-breasted Mergansers are occasionally found inland during migration, e.g., one at Nakusp 5 Mar (GSD) and 2 there 12 Mar (GSD), and a female over Vaseux L. 29 May (RJC).

Very few Broad-winged Hawks were noted on migration, especially considering their increase in numbers and their recent expanding range in the province. Singles were at Nelson 16 May (JA) and at Kilpoola L., w. of Osoyoos 22 May (LR, ED et al.). A pair of Swainson's

Hawks returning to Rolla 27 May (JG), recent arrivals to the Peace R. area, may be the same pair that nested there in 2001. Notable Peregrine Falcons found in the cen. interior included singles in P.G. 26 Mar (NK), at Newlands 22 May (JB et al.), and at Vanderhoof 22 May (*tundrius*; JB et al.). A Gyrfalcon was rather late in Vanderhoof 29 Mar (NK).

Shorebird migration was particularly lackluster in the interior, owing to a scarcity of habitat, but the coast experienced an average spring. Black-necked Stilts were not as widespread as they have been in spring over the past few years. They were reported from their stronghold at Elizabeth L., Cranbrook—a single 19, 20, & 21 Apr (DN et al.) and 4 there 28 Apr (DN). A pair was also found on a small pond near Kimberley 29 Apr (DC). Greater Yellowlegs arrived on the outer coast in Tofino record early 24 Mar (4 birds; GB). Long-billed Curlews are casual visitors to the outer coast, so 3 on Vargas I. near Tofino 11 May (AD, BK) and one on the Englishman R. estuary, Vancouver I. 29 Apr–1 May (GLM, m.ob.) were good finds. Marbled Godwits were very early in Tofino, with 4 on 7 Apr (RC) and peak numbers of 16 on 20–22 May (AD). Travelling w. of their main spring migration corridor, 2 Baird's Sandpipers were identified at Riske Creek 24 Apr (PR). A Red-necked Stint in alternate plumage provided a 2nd record for Vancouver I. when discovered at the mouth of the Englishman R. Estuary, Parksville 7 May (ph. GLM)—the 3rd spring record for the province.

## GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

Heermann's Gulls typically arrive in summer and depart by Oct, but a hardy individual remained along the Victoria waterfront until 8 Apr (m.ob.); there is one previous record of a wintering bird from White Rock in winter 2001–2002. A Glaucous Gull was very late at Long Beach 22 May (AD). A casual visitor to the Peace R. area, a Forster's Tern was at Swan