

Birds of Izembek Lagoon/Cold Bay, Alaska:

23 August - 15 November 1988

By (alphabetically):

Karen Kinchloe

Mike North

Lee Tibbitts

Dave Ward

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Alaska Fish and Wildlife Research Center

1011 E. Tudor Rd.

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Common Loon. Common; observed 25 August - 15 November. Peak count: 15 on 16 October.

Pacific Loon. Uncommon; observed 20 October - 15 November. Peak count: 4 on 20 October.

Red-throated Loon. Rare; 2 observed on 20 October, possibly 1 on 3 November.

Red-necked Grebe. One observation 12 September; common 2 October - 14 November. Peak count: 44 on 9 November.

Horned Grebe. One observation on a freshwater lake 24 September; abundant on Cold Bay 29 September - 13 November. Peak count: 80 on 9 November.

Short-tailed Shearwater. Rare; 1 on 2 September; 2 dead birds on Cape Glazenap 29 August.

Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel. Rare; 2 observed on 17 and 18 September; 1 dead bird found on Cold Bay 1 October donated to Izembek NWR collection.

Double-crested Cormorant. Uncommon; observed 2 September - 12 November. Peak count: 10 on 6 October.

Pelagic/Red-faced Cormorants. Common; observed 29 August - 12 November. All or most were Pelagic Cormorants. Peak count: 37 on 12 November.

Tundra Swans. Uncommon; observed 26 August - 10 November. Peak count: 33 on 16 October.

Canada Goose. Abundant; observed 23 August - 14 November. Peak count: 45,231 on 18 October; most probably Taverner's Canada Geese. Outward migrations noted 22, 23, 24 and 30 October, 2, 3 and 8 November. Apparent incoming migrants (from NE, but flying into Cold Bay from the SE) noted 23 October and 3 and 4 November. Flock of 9 Cackling Canada Geese observed 2 September, one single observed 27 and 28 October; 3 collared Cackling Canada geese observed 20 October in Moffet Lagoon.

Brant. Abundant; observed 23 August - 15 November. Peak count: 143,503 on 12 October. Outward migrations noted 22, 23, 30 and 31 October, and 2 and 3 November.

Emperor Goose. Abundant; observed 2 September - 15 November. Peak counts: 3492 on 12 October, 3403 on 18 October.

Greater White-fronted Goose. Rare, but in greater numbers than in previous years; observed 1 adult 22 September, 4 immatures 13 October, 2 immatures 24 October, and 2 of unknown age 2 November.

Snow Goose. Rare, but in greater numbers than usual; observed 2 on 12 September, 15 on 15 October, 1 on 24 October, 1 immature on 4 November, and 1 adult on several occasions from 8-27 October.

Mallard. Abundant; observed 24 August - 14 November. Peak count: 300 on 2 November. Brood of 4 ducklings observed 3 September.

Gadwall. Uncommon, localized; observed 2 on 22 September, 7 on 20 October, and 42 on 10 November.

Northern Pintail. Abundant, but numbers considerably reduced from 1987; observed 24 August - 6 November. Peak count: 4856 on 1 September. Dirk Derksen observed a brood of Class II ducklings 29 September.

Green-winged Teal. Very common; observed 29 August - 11 November. Peak count: 200 on 16 September. One Common Teal observed 13 October.

Eurasian Wigeon. Uncommon, localized; observed 25 on 27 September, 20 on 13 October, 1-3 on 20 October, and 2 on 24 October (another 37 wigeon not identified to species on 24 October were probably Eurasian Wigeon). All Eurasian Wigeon were observed on Izembek Lagoon except for one immature male collected 20 October on an inland Lake (bird now in Izembek NWR collection).

American Wigeon. Common but localized; observed 2 September - 20 October.

Peak count: 1000 on 13 October.

Northern Shoveler. Rare; observed 5 on 11 and 24 September, 1 on 20 October, and 150 during aerial survey 2 November.

Greater Scaup. Very common; observed 31 August - 11 November. Peak counts: 450 on 16 September and 425 on 2 November. One brood of 4 ducklings observed 1-23 September.

Common Goldeneye. Very common on freshwater lakes; observed 12 October - 15 November. Peak count: 175 on 27 October.

Bufflehead. Common on freshwater lakes; observed 9 October - 14 November.

Peak count: 100 on 4 November.

Oldsquaw. Uncommon/common on salt water; observed 12 October - 12 November.

Peak count: 60 on 2 November.

Harlequin Duck. Very common on salt water; observed 3 September - 13 November.

Peak count: 133 on 10 October.

Steller's Eider. Abundant on salt water, only one observation on freshwater;

observed 25 August - 15 November. Peak count: 16,490 on 4 November.

Numbers seem to be down from 1987.

White-winged Scoter. Uncommon on salt water; observed 31 August - 13 November.

Peak count: 55 on 29 September.

Black Scoter. Common; observed 31 August - 15 November. Peak count: 125 on 2

November. Four broods observed off and on into late October.

Common Merganser. Uncommon; observed 24 September - 14 November. Peak count:

49 on 27 October.

Red-breasted Merganser. Uncommon; observed 7 September - 14 November. Peak

count: 180 on 26 October.

Northern Harrier. Rare; single birds observed 25 September, 1 and 12 October, and 7 November.

Osprey. Rare; 1 observed 21 October by K. Kinchloe.

Rough-legged Hawk. Uncommon; observed 23 August - 12 October. Peak count: 8 on 9 September.

Bald Eagle. Common; observed 29 August - 15 November. Peak count: 24 on 11 November. Age ratio: 46.6% were immatures (n = 103).

Golden Eagle. Rare; 1 immature observed 1 October by M. North, 1 adult observed 12 October by K. Kinchloe.

Description of immature on 1 October:

- 1. white pattern was striking and well defined;
- 2. from above, the tail was white with a broad black terminal band, tail color from below not noted;
- 3. from below, the wings had prominent white patches centered in the wings, not on the underwing coverts;
- 4. the white patches were also clearly evident from above, but appeared smaller, more circular, located at base of primaries;
- 5. the dorsal aspect of the head and neck had a noticeable golden-bronze cast.

[Observed at 200 m, soaring above observer and later in valley below observer.]

Gyrfalcon. Common; observed 24 August - 14 November. Peak count: 4 on 4 different days. One white-phase individual observed twice.

Peregrine Falcon. Uncommon; observed 2 September - 15 November. Peak count: 2 on 5 different days.

Merlin. Rare; observed on 3 October by all 4 authors, and on 6 and 24 October by M. North.

Willow Ptarmigan. Common; observed 24 August - 6 November. Peak count: 150 on 6 November. Less numerous than in 1987.

Rock Ptarmigan. Rare; confirmed sightings of 1 on 4 September and 9 on 13 November, but probable sightings on 17 September and 3, 4 and 11 November.

Sandhill Crane. Rare; observed 2 on 25 and 30 August, 4 on 3 September.

Semipalmated Plover. Rare; observed 1 on 26 August and 5 on 29 August.

Lesser Golden-Plover. Common; observed 3 September - 29 October. Peak count: 47 on 20 October.

Black-bellied Plover. Rare; 6 observed on 13 October and 5 on 18 October by L. Tibbitts and K. Kinchloe.

Ruddy Turnstone. Uncommon; observed 23 August - 13 October. Peak count: 50 on 30 August.

Black Turnstone. Rare; 1 observed 26 August by L. Tibbitts and M. North; flock of 15 observed by M. North on 20 September is hypothetical.

Description of single bird observed at 20 m with binoculars 26 August:

1. same size and shape as a ruddy turnstone it was with;
2. all black head except for faint stripe behind the eye;
3. black head, white belly;
4. solid dark bib;
5. orange legs;
6. white streak down back noticeable when bird "hunched" its shoulders (or back).

Common Snipe. Uncommon; observed 29 August - 22 October. Peak count: 9 on 20 October.

Whimbrel. Rare; observed 2 on 30 August, 12 on 31 August, and 5 on 2 September. Found dead immature bird on 2 September; now in Izembek NWR collection.

Wandering Tattler. Rare; 4 observed on 30 August, and single birds observed 19 September and 8 October.

Greater Yellowlegs. Uncommon; observed regularly 23 August - 27 September, and then 2 on 12 October. Peak count: 42 on 2 September.

Lesser Yellowlegs. Rare; single birds observed on 25 August and 17 September.

Rock Sandpiper. Abundant; observed 23 August - 14 November. Peak count: 640 on 16 October.

Dunlin. Common; observed regularly 26 August - 18 September, with additional sightings 27 September and 16, 18 and 20 October. Peak count: 500 on 28 August.

Western Sandpiper. Uncommon; observed 26 August - 17 September. Peak count: 300 on 27 August.

Semipalmated Sandpiper. Rare; 1 observed 26 August by M. North. Description:

- 1. slightly smaller than the Western Sandpipers it was with;
- 2. markings on its breast were not nearly as extensive as those of the Western Sandpipers;
- 3. bill was short and not downturned, black;
- 4. no reddish color on back, breast, or head;
- 5. black legs

Sanderling. Uncommon/rare; observed 1 on 30 August, 15 on 2 September, 16 on 21 September, 5 on 5 October, and 1 on 24 October. More common on barrier islands, which we did not visit often. (1000 observed in 1987 from 29 October - 17 November.)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Uncommon; observed 86 individuals from 2 September - 14 November. Peak count: 21 on 13 October. One dead bird found 6 October and donated to Izembek NWR collection. Observed only 16 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers in 1987.

Pectoral Sandpiper. Rare; observed 8 on 5 September, 1-3 individuals repeatedly 12-16 September (one collected for Izembek NWR collection), 2 on 28 September, and 1 on 5 October. These were all observed along alder-lined roads, well inland from both the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea. Also observed 1 individual on 10 November in saltmarsh vegetation near Cold Bay. Description of bird observed 10 November by M. North:

1. bill had orange or orange-yellow coloration near the base;
2. breast had an orangish cast, heavily streaked with an abrupt demarcation;
3. crown rufous colored, not solid;
4. the bird had a white lore, a small white patch located above and behind the eye, and a small white patch at the base of the lower mandible;
5. legs more orange than yellow;
6. posture was more upright than that of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper.

Marbled Godwit. Identification tentative. L. Tibbitts, D. Ward, and M. North observed 1 godwit at close range on 25 August. We recorded the following characteristics:

1. barring was present all along the flanks;
2. the tail was finely barred;
3. white line above the eye;
4. overall body color was cinnamon or light brown;
5. the bill was dark overall.

Characteristics 1-4 are suggestive of a Marbled Godwit, characteristic 5 suggests a Bar-tailed Godwit. We neglected to flush the bird to see if it had a white rump patch.

Dowitcher spp. Uncommon; observed 25-31 August (5 total), 17-18 September (6 and 1, respectively), and 6 October (11 total; at least 2 with noticeably shorter bills).

Red Phalarope. Rare; single observations on 4 and 18 September and 5 October. The bird on 5 October was on an inland, freshwater lake.

Red-necked Phalarope. Rare; observed 1 on 26 August, 2 on 4 and 13 September, and 1 on 17 September and 13 October.

Glaucous Gull. Rare; observed 3 on 14 November.

Glaucous-winged Gull. Abundant; observed daily 23 August - 15 November. Peak count unknown.

Mew Gull. Uncommon; observed 23 August - 15 November. Peak count: 20 on 14 September.

Red-legged Kittiwake. Rare; immature bird observed flying over an inland lake on 11 September, following 3 straight days of 40 knot winds. Observed by K. Kinchloe and M. North. Thought to be an odd-plummaged Sabine's Gull until after a field guide was consulted.

Characteristics recalled while consulting field guide:

1. had a striking black and white and gray pattern on the wings, much like a Sabine's Gull, but boarders between colors not as sharp;
2. too light overall for an immature Sabine's Gull and no black tail band was noticed;
3. head was white, with 2 dark blotches behind the eye (M. North has observed 2 SAGU with white heads in the arctic, but both had black neck rings - this bird did not);
4. body size of Sabine's Gull or Mew Gull;
5. tail squarish, or slightly notched, in shape.

Bird was flying 150-200 m away; lighting adequate.

Black-legged Kittiwake. Uncommon; observed 4 September - 12 November. Peak counts: 100 on 20 September and 2 November.

Common Murre. Rare on Cold Bay; observed 1 on 19 October and 2 on 2 November.

Pigeon Guillemot. Uncommon on Cold Bay, rare on Izembek; observed 30 August - 11 November. Peak count: 3 on 26 October.

Marbled Murrelet. Rare on Cold Bay; observed 2 on 18 October, 1 on 18 and 27 October, and 1 on 2 November.

Crested Auklet. Rare; observed 1 on 2 October on Cold Bay.

Horned Puffin. Uncommon on Cold Bay; observed 3 September - 28 October. Peak count: 100 on 3 September.

Tufted Puffin. Rare; observed 3 on Cold Bay on 18 September.

Short-eared Owl. Rare; much less numerous than in 1987; observed 1 on 4 September, 4 on 25 September, and 2 on 5 October. Observed 56 Short-eared Owls in 1987 (from 20 August - 18 November).

Belted Kingfisher. Rare; 9 observations from 25 August - 20 October.

Horned Lark. Rare; first observation for Izembek area; 1 bird observed along road 21 October by M. North. Got good look at it through binoculars from 30 m. Description:

- 1. its back was pale brown, much like the color of a Piping Plover;
- 2. its face was unusually bright yellow, with the distinctive black mask;
- 3. it flew much like a Lapland Longspur.

Black-billed Magpie. Very common, much more so than in 1987. Observed 365 from 24 August - 15 November. Peak count: 17 on 22 September. Regular in town after 20 September. Observed only 78 in 1987.

Common Raven. Abundant; observed 23 August - 15 November. Peak counts: 45 on 7 and 10 November.

Black-capped Chickadee. Rare; heard 1 on 27 September. Observed 8 in 1987.

American Dipper. Rare, localized; observed 2 on 24 August, 3 on 5 and 20

October, 1 on 5 and 9 November, and 2 on 6 November. Heard singing on 20 October and 6 November!!

Winter Wren. Rare; 1 observed at 10 m 27 October at Grant Pt. by D. Ward.

Hermit Thrush. Rare; 1 observed on 16 September by M. North.

Gray-cheeked Thrush. Rare; 1 observed on 12 September by M. North.

Swainson's Thrush. Rare; 1 observed 10 September by K. Kinchloe.

Water Pipit. Common; observed 23 August - 27 September. Peak count: unrecorded, but at least 50 on 23 August.

Yellow Wagtail. Hypothetical; M. North got brief glimpse of unusual bird 12 October. Bird was flitting about on open rocky tundra; bobbed its tail several times; had a yellowish wash below and a black eyeline or cheek patch; observed a white flash on its posterior when it flew (i.e., either a white rump patch or extensive white on outer tail feathers). Another possibility: Northern Wheatear? *PP as seen in ...*

Northern Shrike. Common; 71 sightings, usually of single birds, from 3 September - 15 November. Observed only 26 in 1987.

Wilson's Warbler. Rare; observed 4 on 24 August and 2 on 29 August.

Yellow Warbler. Rare; observed 1 on 4 September; 1 unidentified yellowish warbler 6 September.

Rosy Finch. Uncommon; observed 30 October - 13 November. Peak count: 37 on 13 November.

Redpoll spp. Common; observed 24 August - 11 November. Peak count: 60 on 6 November. Both Hoary and Common Redpolls were identified, with Commons being the most common.

Fox Sparrow. Uncommon; observed 25 August - 13 October. Peak count: 6 on 29 August.

Savannah Sparrow. Abundant; observed 23 August - 24 September; possibly 1 on 6 October. Peak count: unrecorded, but at least 40 on 26 August.

Lapland Longspur. Abundant 26 August - 25 September, uncommon 26 September - 15 October, also 2 on 29 October. Peak count: 300 on 9 October.

Dark-eyed Junco. Rare; 1 observed in alders along Frosty Road 17 October by D. Ward.

Snow Bunting. Common; observed 13 September - 14 November. Peak count: 60 on 30 October.

Golden-crowned Sparrow. Rare; observed 5 on 24 August, 2 on 14 September, and 1 on 20 September.

Song Sparrow. Rare; observed 1 on 23 and 25 August, 1 on 25 September, and 2 on 9 October.

First and last dates birds were observed at Izembek (23 August - 15 November 1988) and their status.

Species	First Observed	Last Observed	Status
Common Loon	25 August	15 November	C
Pacific Loon	20 October	15 November	U
Red-throated Loon	20 October	03 November (?)	R
Red-necked Grebe	12 September	14 November	C
Horned Grebe	24 September	13 November	A
Short-tailed Shearwater	02 September	02 September	R
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel	17 September	01 October	R
Double-crested Cormorant	02 September	12 November	U
Pelagic/Red-faced Cormorant	29 August	12 November	C
Tundra Swan	26 August	10 November	U
Canada Goose (Cackling)	02 September	28 October	R
Canada Goose (Taverner's)	23 August	14 November	A
Brant	23 August	15 November	A
Emperor Goose	02 September	15 November	A
Gr. White-fronted Goose	22 September	02 November	R
Snow Goose	12 September	04 November	R
Mallard	24 August	14 November	A
Gadwall	22 September	10 November	U
Northern Pintail	24 August	06 November	A
Green-winged Teal	29 August	11 November	VC
(Common Teal)	13 October	13 October	R

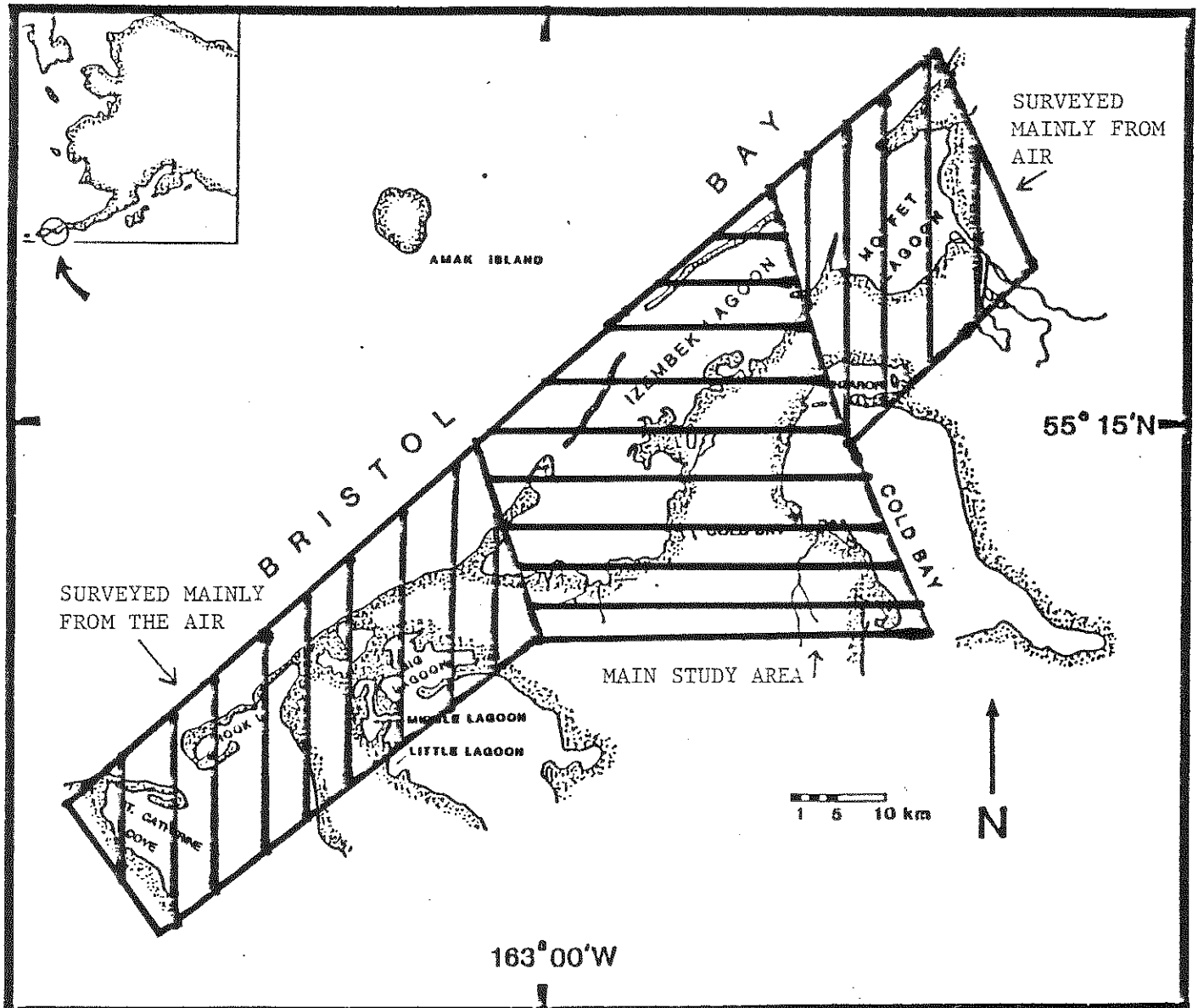
Species	First Observed	Last Observed	Status
Eurasian Wigeon	27 September	24 October	U
American Wigeon	02 September	20 October	C
Northern Shoveler	11 September	02 November	R
Greater Scaup	31 August	11 November	VC
Common Goldeneye	12 October	15 November	VC
Bufflehead	09 October	14 November	C
Oldsquaw	12 October	12 November	U/C
Harlequin Duck	03 September	13 November	VC
Steller's Eider	25 August	15 November	A
White-winged Scoter	31 August	13 November	U
Black Scoter	31 August	15 November	C
Common Merganser	24 September	14 November	U
Red-breasted Merganser	07 September	14 November	U
Rough-legged Hawk	23 August	12 October	U
Golden Eagle	01 October	12 October	R
Bald Eagle	29 August	15 November	C
Northern Harrier	25 September	07 November	R
Osprey	21 October	21 October	R
Gyr Falcon	24 August	14 November	C
Peregrine Falcon	02 September	15 November	U
Merlin	03 October	24 October	R
Willow Ptarmigan	24 August	06 November	C
Rock Ptarmigan	04 September	11 November	R
Sandhill Crane	25 August	03 September	R

Species	First Observed	Last Observed	Status
Semipalmated Plover	26 August	29 August	R
Lesser Golden-Plover	03 September	29 October	C
Black-bellied Plover	13 October	18 October	R
Ruddy Turnstone	23 August	13 October	U
Black Turnstone	26 August	20 September (?)	R
Common Snipe	29 August	22 October	U
Whimbrel	30 August	02 September	R
Wandering Tattler	30 August	08 October	R
Greater Yellowlegs	23 August	12 October	U
Lesser Yellowlegs	25 August	17 September	R
Rock Sandpiper	23 August	14 November	A
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	02 September	14 November	U
Pectoral Sandpiper	05 September	10 November	R
Dunlin	26 August	18 September	C
Western Sandpiper	26 August	17 September	U
Semipalmated Sandpiper	26 August	26 August	R
Sanderling	30 August	24 October	U/R
Dowitcher spp.	25 August	06 October	U
Marbled Godwit	25 August	25 August	R
Red Phalarope	04 September	05 October	R
Red-necked Phalarope	26 August	13 October	R
Glaucous Gull	14 November	14 November	R
Glaucous-winged Gull	23 August	15 November	A
Mew Gull	23 August	15 November	U

Species	First Observed	Last Observed	Status
Red-legged Kittiwake	11 September	11 September	R
Black-legged Kittiwake	04 September	12 November	U
Common Murre	19 October	02 November	R
Pigeon Guillemot	30 August	11 November	U
Marbled Murrelet	18 October	02 November	R
Crested Auklet	02 October	02 October	R
Horned Puffin	03 September	28 October	U
Tufted Puffin	18 September	18 September	R
Short-eared Owl	04 September	05 October	R
Belted Kingfisher	25 August	20 October	R
Horned Lark	21 October	21 October	R
Black-billed Magpie	24 August	15 November	VC
Common Raven	23 August	15 November	A
Black-capped Chickadee	27 September	27 September	R
American Dipper	24 August	09 November	R
Winter Wren	27 October	27 October	R
Hermit Thrush	16 September	16 September	R
Gray-cheeked Thrush	12 September	12 September	R
Swainson's Thrush	10 September	10 September	R
Water Pipit	23 August	27 September	C
Yellow Wagtail	12 October	12 October	H
Northern Shrike	03 September	15 November	C
Yellow Warbler	04 September	06 September (?)	R
Wilson's Warbler	24 August	29 August	R

Species	First Observed	Last Observed	Status
Rosy Finch	30 October	13 November	U
Redpoll spp.	24 August	11 November	C
Golden-crowned Sparrow	24 August	20 September	R
Song Sparrow	23 August	09 October	R
Fox Sparrow	25 August	13 October	U
Savannah Sparrow	23 August	24 September	A
Dark-eyed Junco	17 October	17 October	R
Lapland Longspur	26 August	29 October	A
Snow Bunting	13 September	14 November	C

Map showing our main study area where most of the observations were made.
Adjacent areas were surveyed occasionally by air.





IN REPLY REFER TO:

AFWRC

United States Department of the Interior

ALASKA FISH AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
1011 E. TUDOR RD.
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

December 5, 1988



T. G. Tobish, Jr.
2510 Foraker Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99517

Dear Mr. Tobish:

Enclosed is a summary of our bird observations for the Cold Bay area for your consideration for inclusion in American Birds regional reports. We had a large number of species show up that were unusual for the Izembek area. These were: Golden Eagle, Osprey, Black-bellied Plover, Black Turnstone, Marbled Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Red-legged Kittiwake, Horned Lark, Swainson's Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, and possibly a Yellow Wagtail. Northern Shrike, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Black-billed Magpie populations were up substantially from 1987, whereas Steller's Eider, Northern Pintail, Sanderling, Dowitcher, and Short-eared Owl populations were down.

Definitions of abundance used in this report are fairly standard. "Abundant" birds were usually present throughout the period and usually observed daily in large numbers. "Common" birds were observed regularly in moderate numbers or were abundant in migration over a short period of time. This definition is a little more liberal when applied to raptors. "Uncommon" birds were observed occasionally in small numbers, or sometimes in larger numbers in localized habitats. "Rare" birds were observed very infrequently, and usually in small numbers (but sometimes in large numbers, as in the case of Northern Shovelers).

A map is enclosed that indicates the areas of our coverage. Most of the goose and some of the duck peak counts were obtained during aerial surveys.

Sincerely,

Michael R. North

Enclosure