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1980 MIGRATORY BIRD REPORT
AMCHITKA ISLAND, ALASKA.

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by Patricia Heglund and Barry Reiswig

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Aleutian Islands
Weekly survey and independent
observations

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS UNIT
ALASKA MARITIME NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE REFUGE
ADAK, ALASKA
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November 1980

8p

The Amchitka Island 1980 Migratory Bird Report has been subdivided into separate reports:

- The Breeding Bald Eagle Population of Amchitka Island, Alaska
- The Peregrine Falcon Breeding Population of Amchitka Island
- The Waterfowl Banding Report
- The 1980 Migratory Bird Report
- Aleutian and Arctic Tern Nesting Study
- Glaucous-winged Gull Nesting Study.

All reports have been compiled under this cover sheet, 1980 Migratory Bird Report, for ease in locating them. There are also separate copies under their respective topics in the Biological Files.

I. WEEKLY BIRD COUNTS

Weekly bird counts were made from 4 January to 18 August 1980. Twenty-seven counts in all were made. One to six observers completed each count. The standard route from Pumphouse Lake to Main Camp included 14 stops (see illustration 1). Time out for each count was approximately 3 hours. A table of weather conditions is given in table 1.

Special thanks goes to observers Kevin Brennan, Beth Wojtowych and Dora Cox, and recorder Doreen Brennan.

Results

Forty-eight species comprising 23,820 individuals were counted (see table 2). Not all counts were completed when heavy fog severely limited visibility.

II. SPECIES LIST FOR 1980

A total of 60 species were recorded for Amchitka Island during 1980 (see table 3). Observations were made from 1 January to 6 October, 1980, when the field station was closed. All observations were recorded on 3x5" orange cards and filed for future reference.

III. SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Aleutian Canada geese were first spotted 29 April 1980. Thirty-six birds were observed travelling NW past Kirilof Dock. None of the birds were collared. On 21 May 1980, a wild gander joined the release flock at Main Camp. It was captured, sexed and banded.

Whooper swans were last seen 23 March 1980. Nineteen swans were observed on a small pond approximately 6.4 km ^{NW} from the main propagation facility.

The Emperor geese had returned to Amchitka by 5 October 1980, when 6 were spotted off St. Makarius Point.

Short-eared owls were sighted throughout the season. On 14 April 1980, what appeared to be 2 pairs of owls were sighted immediately beside the fuselage of the wrecked C-47 transport plane by Kirilof Dock. No nests were found.

Other birds which put in a rare appearance this year are recorded in table 4.

Two unusual species were recorded for the first time this year. A documentation for each species sighting is included in this report.

Brown-headed gull (Larus brunicephalus)

On July 17, 1980 two birds that best fit the description of immature brown-headed gulls were sighted feeding on the beach where Jones Creek flows into Constantine Harbor. They were sighted several days thereafter in the vicinity of Constantine Harbor and Fox Runway.

Description. As recorded by YACC enrollee Patricia Heglund and Assistant Refuge Manager Barry Reiswig.

Head
white,
molting on
cheeks

Two large birds, somewhat smaller than a Glaucous-winged gull. ~~White all over.~~ Back and wings: pale gray. Bill color: red-orange. Leg color: red-orange. Head: white. There was a black band at the tip of the tail and when the bird flew, black wing tips were exposed.

Long-legged buzzard (Buteo rufinus)

On 22 June 1980, a buteo best fitting the description of a long-legged buzzard was observed on the road near the 13 mile marker. Skies were clear and visibility was exceptionally good at 50 miles. The bird was observed for approximately 15 minutes when a parasitic jaeger harassed it into flying seaward.

Description. As observed by YACC enrollees (Bio-Techs) Patricia Heglund and Beth Wojtowych.

The bird was the size of a Red-tailed hawk. Body was of overall mottled golden coloration. Black eye-stripe, black bill tip, yellow-gold bill. Yellow-gold legs and talons.

(In flight the bird had a buteo tail, unbarred and colored a solid orange/tan. The wings had dark carpals underneath and black wing tips.

The bird was sitting in the road and was almost hit by our truck. It flew to a nearby hummock on the roadside 10 feet away and as we drove up to snap a photo it flew to a road post. As we again approached to photograph, a jaeger flew at it, flushing the bird northeast over the tundra toward the Bering Sea.

B E R T A N G
Illustration 1. Road map of the weekly bird count.

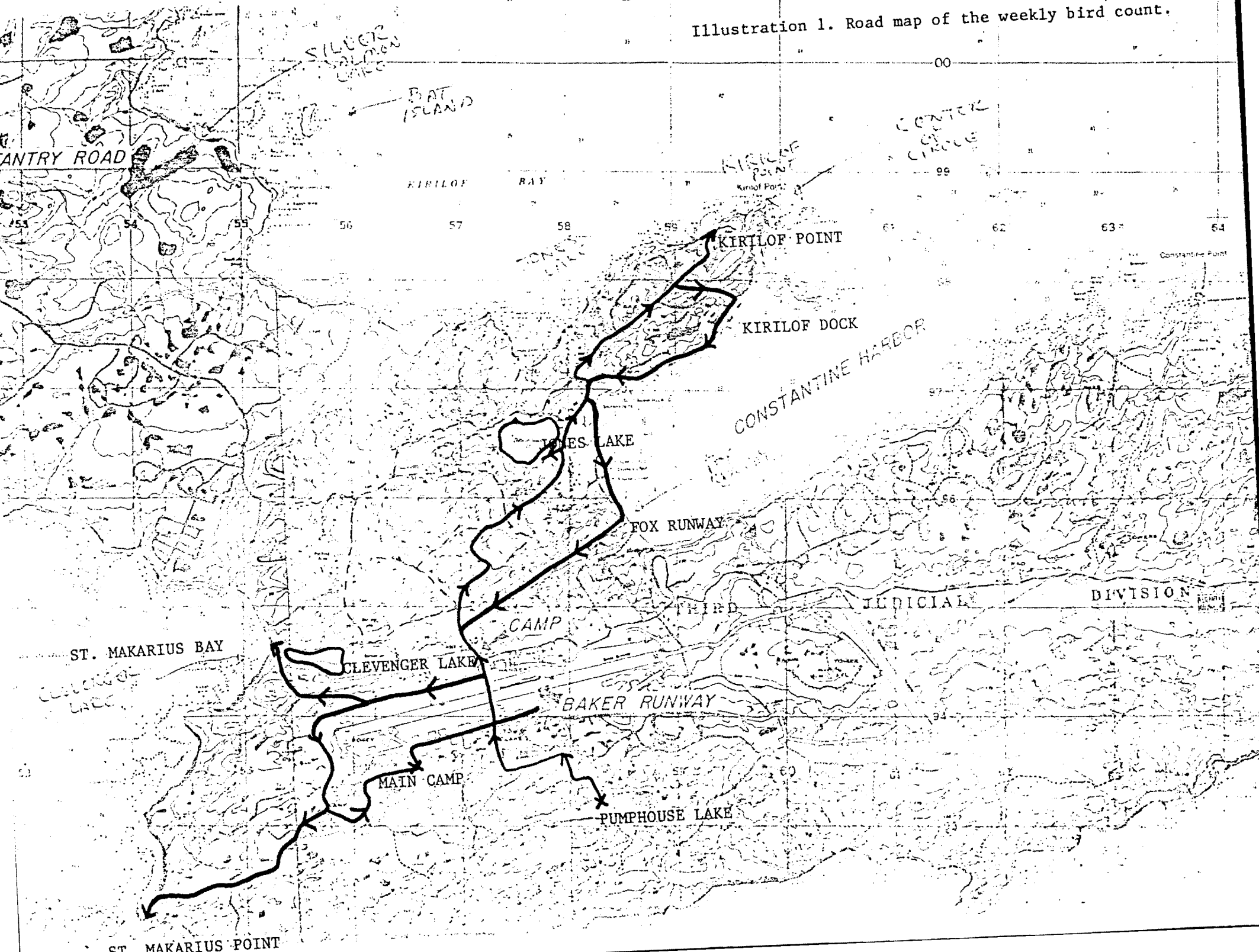


TABLE 1. WEATHER TABLE FOR 1980
WEEKLY BIRD COUNTS

DATE	TIME	TEMP(°F)	WIND DIRECTION	SPEED (KNOTS)	COMMENTS
4 Jan. 1980	1300 - 1500	35°	WNW	35 gusts 45	Ptly cloudy, snow squalls, lakes froz.
11 January	-	35°	-	10	Ptly cloudy, lakes open
18 January	-	25°	NW	10	Ptly cloudy, lakes frozen
30 January	1300 - 1630	33°	SE	30	Clear, lakes frozen
11 February	1325 -	33°	SW	20	Ptly cloudy, lakes frozen
15 February	1400 - 1700	36°	SW	25	Ptly cloudy, lakes frozen
3 March	-	38°	-	30 gusts to 42	Broken skies
10 March	-	37°	WSW	12	Scattered
19 March	-	-	WNW	30	Occas. snow squalls, Ptly cloudy
27 March	-	33°	W	35 gusts to 40	Cloudy
2 April	-	-	SE	5	Broken clouds
10 April	-	-	SSE	43	Cloudy
14 April	-	-	NNE	9	Ptly cloudy
25 April	-	36°	N	40-50	Ovc, drizzle
7 May	-	-	W	25-30	Ptly cloudy
13 May	-	-	WNW	21	Ptly cloudy
19 May	-	40°	WSW	18	Ptly cloudy
28 May	-	-	NNW	10	Breaks in overcast
4 June	-	-	W	13-16	Ptly cloudy
12 June	-	43°	-	-	Ptly cloudy
20 June	-	-	W	15	Ptly cloudy, fog
27 June	-	-	SE	20	Dense fog, Partial Survey
8 July	-	-	NE	21	Sunny, scattered clouds
17 July	-	46°	NE	18	Overcast, fog lifting
30 July	-	48°	WNW	12	Breaks in overcast
12 August	-	51°	WSW	15	Overcast
18 August	1330 - 1600	51°	SW	16	Overcast

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RECORDED
DURING WEEKLY BIRD COUNTS

<u>Species</u>	<u>No. Individuals</u>
Common loon	1
Arctic loon	1
Red-throated loon	12
Red-necked grebe	9
Horned grebe	24
Pelagic cormorant	1945
Emperor goose	2286
Mallard	921
Pintail	582
European widgeon	4
European green-winged teal	1949
Pochard	5
Tufted duck	2
Greater scaup	1345
Common goldeneye	414
Barrow's goldeneye	2
Bufflehead	394
Harlequin	2237
Common eider	542
Oldsquaw	85
Common scoter	3
White-winged scoter	231
Black scoter	6
Red-breasted merganser	109
Long-legged buzzard	ad. 190 juv. 79
Bald eagle	4
Gyr Falcon	11
Peregrine falcon	73
Rock ptarmigan	47
Black oystercatcher	1
Eastern curlew	1
Lesser yellowlegs	4
Ruddy turnstones	93
Rock sandpiper	30
Sanderling	12
Northern phalarope	25
Parasitic jaeger	7098
Glaucous-winged gull	2
Brown-headed gull	46
Arctic tern	369
Pigeon guillemot	423
Horned puffin	583
Tufted puffin	1
Ancient murrelet	53
Winter wren	347
Gray-crowned rosy finch	748
Lapland longspur	525
Snow bunting	
TOTAL = 48 species	23,820 ind.

TABLE 3

TOTAL SPECIES 1980

Common loon	Common scoter	Aleutian tern
Arctic loon	White-winged scoter	Pigeon guillemot
Red-throated loon	Black scoter	Horned puffin
Red-necked grebe	Red-breasted merganser	Tufted puffin
Horned grebe	Rough-legged hawk	Ancient murrelet
Forked-tailed petrel	Long-legged buzzard	Short-eared owl
Pelagic cormorant	Bald eagle	Snowy owl
Whooper swan	Gyr Falcon	Common raven
Aleutian Canada goose	Peregrine falcon	Winter wren
Emperor goose	Rock ptarmigan	Gray-crowned rosy finch
Bean goose	Black oystercatcher	Lapland longspur
Mallard	Black-bellied plover	Snow bunting
Pintail	Eastern curlew	
European widgeon	Lesser yellowlegs	TOTAL SPECIES=60
European green-winged teal	Ruddy turnstones	
Pochard	Rock sandpiper	
Tufted duck	Sanderling	
Greater scaup	Northern phalarope	
Common goldeneye	Parasitic jaeger	
Barrows goldeneye	Pomarine jaeger	
Bufflehead	Glaucous-winged gull	
Harlequin	Brown-headed gull	
Common eider	Black-legged kittiwake	
Oldsquaw	Arctic tern	

TABLE 4

SPECIES OF SPECIAL INTEREST

<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Last Sighted</u>	<u>Observers</u>
Common loon	4/20/80	2	Duck Cove	5/12/78	P. Heglund
	6/21/80	1	Pumphouse L, Const. Harbor		B. Reiswig, D. Cox
Arctic loon	5/7/80	1	Jones Lake	1978	P. Heglund
Fork-tailed petrel	9/7/80	1	Red shed-south entrance	1976	J. Arnold, B. Reiswig P. Heglund, K. Brennan
Bean goose	10/3/80	2	Fox Runway	1976	J. Arnold, B. Reiswig, P. Heglund, K. Brennan
Rough-legged hawk	5/14/80	1	W of fuel tanks on Kirilof Point along road	12/24/78	B. Reiswig
Eastern curlew	5/5/80	1	4 mile marker	1977	P. Heglund
	6/12/80	1	St. Makarius Bay		P. Heglund
Black-bellied plover	6/7/80	2	Fox Creek & Const. Beach	1977	A. Hasha
Lesser yellowlegs	5/19/80	1	In small pond off the road under the SW landing lights	1973	B. Reiswig, P. Heglund
Pomarine jaeger	8/19/80	1	East Cape	1976	P. Heglund
Ancient murrelet	8/2/80	2	Constantine Harbor	1979	B. Reiswig
Snowy owl	7/5/80	1	Chitka Ridge	1979	B. Reiswig
	10/3/80	1	15 mile marker		B. Reiswig, J. Arnold K. Brennan, P. Heglund, D. Cox
Black-legged kittiwake	8/3/80	17	Constantine Harbor	1973	F. Lee, B. Reiswig
Common raven	7/6/80	1	Red shed	1979	D. Cox, B. Reiswig, M. Reiswig
	7/12/80	1	Bridge Creek		P. Heglund, K. Brennan
	8/17/80	7	North Hanger		D. Cox
	10/1-10/7/80	1	Tower		J. Arnold, K. Brennan

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