



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Alaska I 2013 (Parts I & II)**

May 31, 2013 to Jun 17, 2013  
Megan Crewe & Pepe Rojas

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.*

Few places in North America evoke the "last frontier" feeling that Alaska does. It's vast (twice the size of Texas) and wild (fewer than one million people live there) and much of it is unlike anywhere that most of us have ever been. It's a land of rolling tundra covered hills and deep green seas, where jagged pack ice stretches to the horizon and glacier scoured mountains hulk above seemingly endless spruce forests. It's a place where you might share a road with a mob of shaggy Muskox or a line of trim Dall's Sheep, where Dall's Porpoise might ride your boat's bow wave with joyous abandon, and where the lonely cries of Red-throated Loons, the fluting whistles of Gray-cheeked and Varied thrushes and the throaty chuckles of puffins, murres and auklets are part of the tour's soundtrack.



*We got up close and personal with thousands of Least Auklets in their colonies on Saint Paul. Photo by guide Megan Crewe.*

We had some fabulous wildlife encounters on this year's tour. In the vagrant department, top prize went to the male Ruff in Barrow, a vision in black and white that alternated between feeding frenetically and

displaying to every passing Pectoral Sandpiper. Our long climb up "The Hill Across from Coffee Dome" brought us splendid views of a quiet Bristle-thighed Curlew -- after more than a few anxious moments where we thought we might miss it. An Arctic Loon floated below a convenient bridge, so close we could clearly see its hunter green throat, as well as its distinctive flank patch and heavy bill. A Gyrfalcon perched for long minutes on a rocky outcrop, then a higher boulder, then disappeared down the river valley with a few flicks of its powerful wings. A small flotilla of Spectacled Eiders glided regally on a half frozen tundra pond (once they woke up, that is). A gorgeous male Bluethroat danced among newly leafed willow bushes. Extravagantly crested Bohemian Waxwings decorated spruce tops. A ghostly white Snowy Owl sat on a tundra mound.

Particularly fun was the chance to experience "our" shorebirds, which we normally see only as brownish-gray and white sprites flitting along tidelines or pond edges, in all their breeding glory -- boldly colored, hovering over tundra ponds or zooming around in humming display flights, singing their hearts out. The hive of activity along Saint Paul's seabird cliffs, where thousands of murres, puffins, auklets, fulmars, cormorants and gulls jostled and called and preened and snoozed on ledges or hunted for fish in the clear waters below, were a real treat too. Of course, it wasn't just the birds that we enjoyed; mammals too provided some highlights. Endearing Sea Otters floated, tiny paws waving, in pea green glacial waters. Blond-furred Grizzlies foraged on willow-cloaked hillsides -- or snoozed in big furry piles. Orcas hunted around our boat, so close we could hear them breathe. A massive herd of Muskox, looking rather like so many mobile rocks, foraged along the seaside, with a dozen youngsters bouncing among them. Spindly-legged Moose calves gamboled after their lanky mothers. And who will soon forget that massive Polar Bear nosing around the carcass pile on the pack ice, occasionally lifting its nose for a sniff in our direction?!

Thanks so much for joining Pepe and me for our Arctic adventure; it was good fun sharing some time in the field with you. We hope to see you all again someday, somewhere! -- Megan

**KEYS FOR THIS LIST**

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: \* = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

**BIRDS**

*Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)*

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (*Anser albifrons*) -- A wary trio grazed in a wet patch near the end of the runway on Saint Paul Island, keeping a watchful eye on the bus when we stopped, and dozens of pairs wandered across the tundra or snoozed on pond edges in Barrow.

**SNOW GOOSE** (*Chen caerulescens*) -- A flock of 15 or so birds flew past while we birded on our first afternoon at Barrow.

**BRANT (BLACK)** (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) -- Several big flocks loafed in Safety Sound east of Nome, and we saw a handful of others around the pond that held our Spectacled Eiders in Barrow.

**CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*) -- Common in Anchorage, with smaller numbers around Denali and Nome. The most common subspecies over much of our tour route is "parvipes".

- TRUMPETER SWAN** (*Cygnus buccinator*) – Multiple pairs seen on our final day around Denali -- including at least two sets bugling on "Swan Lake", where we stopped for our pictures of the mountain in all its glory. A pair in a roadside pond en route to Seward (Swan Lake II) appeared to be using a muskrat or beaver lodge for a nest platform.
- TUNDRA SWAN (WHISTLING)** (*Cygnus columbianus columbianus*) – Hundreds dotted the back bay along the Council road east of Nome, and numerous pairs paddled in the tundra ponds around Barrow.
- GADWALL** (*Anas strepera*) – A few scattered birds, including a male floating with a pair of White-winged Scoters in the float plane lake along the Denali Highway, and a pair seen by some of the group at Westchester Lagoon.
- AMERICAN WIGEON** (*Anas americana*) – Regular throughout much of the tour, including a single male slipping into Lake Hood on the very first morning of the tour, several pairs in the float plane lake on the Denali Highway and dozens paddling in the back bay along the Council Road east of Nome.
- MALLARD** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Small numbers in various places around Anchorage and Denali, and a surprising pair in one of the ponds on Saint Paul Island, where they're quite rare.
- NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) – Regular in small numbers across much of our tour route, including two males which circled low over Lake Hood our first morning, fleeing the omnipresent float planes, scattered birds around Denali, and a few handsome males in the chilly lakes around Barrow.
- NORTHERN PINTAIL** (*Anas acuta*) – Abundant on Saint Paul Island, where every little pond seemed to have a pair or two -- including one alert drake that made a good reference point for our migrant Bar-tailed Godwit! Also common around Denali, Nome and Barrow.
- GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EURASIAN)** (*Anas crecca crecca*) – Small numbers of distinctively marked males -- which show a horizontal white line along the scapulars rather than a vertical white line on the breast -- and a bewildering array of hybrids seen on Saint Paul.
- GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN)** (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – Regular in small numbers throughout much of the tour, including some in nice comparison with the previous species on Saint Paul and scores in the back bays east of Nome.
- RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) – Surprisingly, we found only a single pair, diving in a lake along the Denali Highway -- good spotting, Jeff!
- TUFTED DUCK** (*Aythya fuligula*) – A pair hunted along the icy edge of Anton Lake on Saint Paul Island, eventually pausing long enough for the wind to catch that distinctive top knot of the male.
- GREATER SCAUP** (*Aythya marila*) – Common throughout, with especially nice studies of the birds loafing on an island near the parking lot at Westchester Lagoon -- conveniently right beside the next species for easy comparison.
- LESSER SCAUP** (*Aythya affinis*) – Far less common across Alaska than the previous species. We had fine views of several, showing their distinctively peaked heads and the small nails on their bills, at Westchester Lagoon.
- STELLER'S EIDER** (*Polysticta stelleri*) – Pairs paddled and preened in several little ponds on the tundra around Barrow, including two birds (proving surprisingly elusive) right among the shacks in the hunt camp, one pair along Freshwater Lake road, and several birds along the Gaswell road.
- SPECTACLED EIDER** (*Somateria fischeri*) – Yahoo!! After MUCH searching, we finally spotted six birds -- four males and two females -- snoozing on a lake edge along the Gaswell road. Eventually, they woke up and went for a swim, allowing us to study that snazzy plumage under more satisfying conditions.
- KING EIDER** (*Somateria spectabilis*) – A young drake (missing the big orange bill knob of a full adult) floated on the far side of the harbor near the restaurant at Saint Paul, giving us good scope views; he'd been in the area for a while, and may be injured. We saw various others -- including several swimming adult males -- in tundra ponds around Barrow.
- COMMON EIDER (PACIFIC)** (*Somateria mollissima v-nigra*) – As its name suggests, this was the eider we saw most regularly, with dozens swimming, sleeping or flying around Nome, and a flock of 15 or so flying over our heads on Freshwater Lake near Barrow.
- HARLEQUIN DUCK** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) – Dozens floated, dove or snoozed around the edges of Saint Paul Island, including a handful sleeping on a rocky jetty across the harbor from the seafood packing plant. We saw others around Nome, including a few pairs swimming upstream in the rushing river en route to Coffee Dome.
- SURF SCOTER** (*Melanitta perspicillata*) – A dozen or so snoozed on the far end of the float plane lake along the Denali Highway, their heads tucked firmly under their wings.
- WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (NORTH AMERICAN)** (*Melanitta fusca deglandi*) – A pair snoozed on the float plane lake along the Denali Highway, and we saw others with a huge scoter flock rafting in the sea near the Safety Sound bridge east of Nome.
- BLACK SCOTER** (*Melanitta americana*) – A pair dozed among the sleeping Surf Scoters on a float plane lake along the Denali Highway, and hundreds rafted offshore east of Nome.
- LONG-TAILED DUCK** (*Clangula hyemalis*) – Dozens on the ponds, harbor and sea around Saint Paul, a handful along the Denali Highway, and others around Nome and Barrow.
- BUFFLEHEAD** (*Bucephala albeola*) – A diving female entertained us during our first visit to Westchester Lagoon, a pair swam on a pond in Denali NP and a handful of others dotted various ponds along the Denali Highway.
- COMMON GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala clangula*) – More than a dozen floated among the scaup on Lake Hood our first morning, though most fled when the first float plane took off. A handful of females and immature males -- and one adult male -- dropped back into a far corner, allowing scope views.
- BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** (*Bucephala islandica*) – A pair floated and preened in an icy lake near where we turned around on the Denali Highway -- nice spotting, Eleanor -- and others snoozed on "Swan Lake" south of Cantwell, and in one of the bays on our Kenai Fjords boat tour.
- COMMON MERGANSER** (*Mergus merganser*) – A female snoozed along the edge of a stream near Seward, rousing to have a bit of a stretch and a preen while we watched from a convenient bridge, and most of the group saw a trio of males flying along the Solomon River near the Gyrfalcon nest.
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** (*Mergus serrator*) – Small numbers of pairs in the ponds and lagoons around Nome, with a few on the river along the Kougarok road.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

- WILLOW PTARMIGAN** (*Lagopus lagopus*) – Nice studies of several males on our Denali NP tour, but our best views came along the Council road east of Nome, where a very unwary pair cavorted across the road in front of us.

**ROCK PTARMIGAN** (*Lagopus muta*) – A distinctively white male up the hill from the Eielson visitor's center was a bit distant, another male foraging on a grassy ledge (conveniently close to a male Willow Ptarmigan perched in a nearby little willow tree) was a bit closer, but our best views came on our way back down the hill after spotting the Bristle-thighed Curlew -- when Rachel very nearly stepped on one!

#### Gaviidae (Loons)

**RED-THROATED LOON** (*Gavia stellata*) – An adult in full breeding regalia floated on a small pond along the Denali Highway, and many others swam or flew around Nome -- including a few pairs diving along the surf line between the dredges. [N]

**ARCTIC LOON** (*Gavia arctica*) – Spectacular views of one, showing well its hunter green throat and distinctive white flank patch, just below the big bridge at Safety Sound east of Nome -- great spotting, Ed! We had some nice comparisons between it and some nearby Red-throated and Pacific loons.

**PACIFIC LOON** (*Gavia pacifica*) – One, showing nicely its distinctively frosty, puffy head, floated on the main pond at Westchester Lagoon on our first visit there, and we saw others along the Denali Highway and around Nome.

**COMMON LOON** (*Gavia immer*) – Scattered birds, including the "morphing" bird on the big lake at Westchester Lagoon (near the Pacific Loon), and several on ponds along the Denali Highway.

#### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**RED-NECKED GREBE** (*Podiceps grisegena*) – Particularly common at Westchester Lagoon, where many pairs floated on the main pond or snoozed on nests tucked along its edges. [N]

#### Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

**NORTHERN FULMAR** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) – Dozens of pairs nuzzled each other on the cliffs at Ridge Wall, and others glided past below us there, showing their splotched, frosty upperwings to perfection. They hold their wings very stiffly when they flap. [N]

#### Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

**DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) – Very common around the Kenai Fjords, with a very unexpected single bird loafing among the gull roost along the Council road east of Nome -- well out of range!

**RED-FACED CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax urile*) – Scores in flight over Saint Paul island, but our best views came at Tolstoi cliffs, where we found numbers sitting on wet grassy nests or perched on narrow ledges above the sea. We had a handful of others on ledges (or flying past) on our Kenai Fjords boat trip. [N]

**PELAGIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*) – Quite common on the Kenai Fjords boat trip, including a few sprinkled on rocks near the Harbor Seals and many singletons winging past.

#### Pandionidae (Osprey)

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Two nesting on the big bridge right before the climb up to Coffee Dome were a surprise; this species is rare on the Seward Peninsula. [N]

#### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**GOLDEN EAGLE** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – A couple of distant birds soared over a ridge in Denali NP during our bus tour, but our best views came along the Council road east of Nome, where we watched a gorgeous adult power past right in front of the vehicles -- great spotting, Dale!

**NORTHERN HARRIER** (*Circus cyaneus*) – Single birds low over open areas of tundra around Denali on most of our days in that region, including one female flashing her distinctive white rump patch while she quartered past us as we watched a distant Grizzly.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** (*Accipiter striatus*) – Many in the group spotted one while Pepe and I set up lunch in a Parks Highway rest area en route to Denali, another little male flapped over while we ate our lunch at the Eielson visitor's center in the park itself, and a final bird caused great consternation among the sparrows when it zipped past over the float plane lake on the Denali Highway.

**BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – Very common across most of the tour route, though a third year bird along the Solomon River east of Nome was a surprise. We had especially nice views of several adults -- and at least one fluffy youngster -- in a huge stick nest over the water at Westchester Lagoon. [N]

**RED-TAILED HAWK (HARLAN'S)** (*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*) – One bird, looking distinctively dark, circled over the spruce forest edging the Parks Highway; unfortunately, it had vanished by the time we decanted from the vans.

**ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK** (*Buteo lagopus*) – A distant bird hovered over the tundra on the hill across from Coffee Dome, raising our hopes (in vain, as it turned out) of an attack from nest-protecting curlews. Those in Pepe's van had fine views of another perched beside the Kougarok road on our drive back south to Nome.

#### Gruidae (Cranes)

**SANDHILL CRANE** (*Grus canadensis*) – A distant bird -- long neck stretched out and trailing long legs -- flew past the airport (dwarfed by a jumbo jet taking off behind it) while we birded around Lake Hood our first morning, a pair foraged in a marsh beside the highway just outside Anchorage, and scores of ferrous-stained birds fed in the back bays east of Nome.

#### Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** (*Pluvialis dominica*) – Small numbers around Nome and Barrow, including a pair patrolling near the Kougarok road, seen as we worked our way toward Coffee Dome, and others scattered across the wet tundra along Freshwater Lake and Gaswell roads.

**PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER** (*Pluvialis fulva*) – A trio scurried along the fringes of the Nome River mouth, searching for tidbits in the soggy tundra.

**SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – Small numbers on Saint Paul island, including a pair at Dune Lake, where the male made several loud display flights over the marsh, with others on the mudflats at Westchester Lagoon, and a few along the gravel bars on the Nome River.

#### Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

**BLACK OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus bachmani*) – One rested atop a pointed rock high over the water on an island in the Chiswells, and a second bird rummaged along the kelpy tideline on another island, both seen during our Kenai Fjords boat tour.

#### Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)



- SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – A very spotty bird called from the end of one of the float plane docks our first morning around Lake Hood, a few folks saw one along the Denali Highway, and we spotted another along a creek on the Teller road northwest of Nome. There's no question at this time of year as to how they got their name!
- WANDERING TATTLER** (*Tringa incana*) – One seen several times along the edge of Salt Lagoon on Saint Paul island. It bore a remarkable resemblance to a rock, particularly when it was standing still! Ed and Doug spotted another on one of the gravel bars along the Nome River as we travelled up the Kougarok road.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – Scattered birds wandered on the mudflats (or flew, calling, over the main pond) at Westchester Lagoon on each of our visits.
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – It always seems a bit surreal to see shorebirds standing atop spruce trees, as several of our Lesser Yellowlegs were. In addition to those loudly singing birds, we spotted others patrolling the edges of the float plane lake along the Denali Highway.
- UPLAND SANDPIPER** (*Bartramia longicauda*) – Another treetop bird, singing briefly from the top of a tall spruce before dropping down to the tundra below -- great spotting, Jeff! It took some patience, and some careful tracking, but we all eventually had scope studies of one or both members of a pair along the Denali Highway.
- WHIMBREL (AMERICAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*) – A pair of calling birds flew up to chase some passing Long-tailed Jaegers away from Coffee Dome. Ed, Dan and Doug spotted others along the rocky coastline in Seward.
- BRISTLE-THIGHED CURLEW** (*Numenius tahitiensis*) – Wow! We had just about given up -- after all, two other groups had also thrashed around on the tundra hills without success shortly before our arrival -- but some outstanding spotting by Doug netted us wonderful views of a single, well-camouflaged bird.
- HUDSONIAN GODWIT** (*Limosa haemastica*) – Quite scarce this year, with only a few distant birds probing on the expansive mudflats off Westchester Lagoon on each of our visits.
- BAR-TAILED GODWIT** (*Limosa lapponica*) – A rather drab female poked and probed on a mounded island at one end of Saint Paul island's Dune Lake on our final afternoon there, letting everybody get a look in the scope before she jumped up and headed north. We spotted several other pairs foraging on the little islands in the back bays along the Council road east of Nome.
- RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – One zoomed around over Saint Paul island's Dune Lake on our final afternoon, before finally disappearing north in the general direction of the next pond. We saw a couple of others poking along the sandy edge of Safety Sound.
- BLACK TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria melanocephala*) – A single bird flew past us as we drove along the Council road -- fortunately, since we discovered the Arctic Loon when we turned around to chase it! After some searching, we eventually relocated the turnstone, rummaging in a patch of detritus washed up on the beach below the Safety Sound bridge.
- SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris pusilla*) – Quite common in Nome and Barrow, where dozens hovered over the tundra, sounding like little B movie spaceships, or rummaged along the edges of ponds and lakes.
- WESTERN SANDPIPER** (*Calidris mauri*) – Several big flocks foraged on the mudflats surrounding the back bays along the Council road, east of Nome.
- LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – One rummaged on a tiny island in Saint Paul island's Dune Lake, proving a bit of a challenge to find amid the vegetation -- nice spotting, Ed!
- PECTORAL SANDPIPER** (*Calidris melanotos*) – A male, looking quite pot-bellied thanks to his breeding season air sacs (used for noisy display flights), flew in and landed on Saint Paul island's Dune Lake while we searched for the Bar-tailed Godwit, and we saw dozens (scores? hundreds?) of males zooming low over the tundra in Barrow, their air sacs humming.
- ROCK SANDPIPER** (*Calidris ptilocnemis*) – Almost ridiculously common on Saint Paul island, with dozens displaying over the tundra or chasing each other around pond edges virtually everywhere we went.
- DUNLIN** (*Calidris alpina*) – Quite common around Nome, often foraging in mixed flocks with smaller peeps, and a handful of others on the tundra in Barrow.
- RUFF** (*Philomachus pugnax*) – Thanks to a timely text message from Mark Garland and careful tracking by some Cape May friends, we got storming views of a white ruffed male along Barrow's Road.
- SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus griseus*) – Uncharacteristically scarce this year, with only a single bird seen at Westchester Lagoon. Unfortunately, it flew off while most of us were still working our way through the scaup flock.
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*) – Several handsome pairs probed the tundra around Barrow.
- WILSON'S SNIPE** (*Gallinago delicata*) – Most common around Denali, where we watched one foraging in a marshy area near the Denali Highway and saw (and heard) many others in their roller coaster display flights high above their territories. We also had a few displaying above the Kougarok road north of Nome.
- RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – Seen nicely on Saint Paul island, where several pairs foraged along the edges of Salt Lagoon one afternoon (including one pair that got all x-rated on us) and others showed in nice comparison with the next species on Dune Lake. We had dozens of others around Nome and Barrow, including one spinning around and around in a tiny roadside puddle along Gaswell road.
- RED PHALAROPE** (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) – Lovely views of a pair that made many, many passes over Saint Paul island's Dune Lake before finally settling down into the marsh right in front of us, with dozens of others in the tundra puddles around Barrow. This species is considerably bigger than the previous one.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (*Rissa tridactyla*) – Very common on certain legs of the tour, with hundreds on Saint Paul's seabird cliffs, thousands milling around their breeding areas on the Chiswell Islands, and small numbers among the larger gulls east of Nome. [N]
- RED-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (*Rissa brevirostris*) – One of the highlights of the Pribilofs, sprinkled on ponds and shorelines across the island. The gang bathing at Weather Bureau lake were particularly entertaining -- and seen in nice comparison with the more common Black-legged Kittiwakes.
- SABINE'S GULL** (*Xema sabini*) – Some great spotting by Pepe netted us all-too-brief views of two high-flying birds winging past over the back bays east of Nome.
- BONAPARTE'S GULL** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*) – A mix of adults and juveniles foraged on (or flew over) the mudflats at Westchester Lagoon, and we found other scattered adults perched or flying along the Denali Highway. It's always a bit weird to see gulls perched in spruce trees!

**MEW GULL (AMERICAN)** (*Larus canus brachyrhynchus*) – Very common through much of the tour, missing only from Saint Paul and Barrow. We saw a few nesting on the gravel bars along Savage River in Denali NP. [N]

**HERRING GULL (AMERICAN)** (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) – Few and far between, with our best view coming at the big gull roost east of Nome, where they're pretty rare. Most of the "Herring Gull" types we saw around Anchorage were hybrids -- crossed with Glaucous-winged Gulls.

**HERRING GULL (VEGA)** (*Larus argentatus vegae*) – One flew over Dune Lake on Saint Paul island, showing the distinctively darker mantle of this subspecies.

**SLATY-BACKED GULL** (*Larus schistisagus*) – Two immature birds loafed among a big mob of Glaucous Gulls on a sandy spit east of the Safety Sound bridge.

**GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL** (*Larus glaucescens*) – Several youngsters seen in good comparison with nearby young Glaucous Gulls on Saint Paul island, and hundreds of all ages around Seward. The young of this species are quite dirty looking compared to the pristine white of the next species.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** (*Larus hyperboreus*) – Abundant around Nome and Barrow, including a few dozen deferring to the Polar Bear around the carcass pile. We had a handful of ghostly-pale youngsters in nice comparison with the grubbier-looking youngsters of the previous species on Saint Paul.

**ALEUTIAN TERN** (*Onychoprion aleuticus*) – A group of seven hovering around (and landing on) a little islet in the Nome River mouth was a highlight of our last morning's outing there.

**ARCTIC TERN** (*Sterna paradisaea*) – Regular throughout, missed only on Saint Paul. The one struggling to swallow a fish near the parking lot at Westchester Lagoon was especially entertaining -- and photogenic. [N]

#### *Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)*

**POMARINE JAEGER** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) – Reasonably common around Barrow, where they patrolled the pack ice looking for tidbits or rested on ice shelves with their distinctively twisted tail feathers silhouetted against the gleaming whiteness.

**PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) – Most common around Nome, where we watched several pairs hunting over the tundra around the back bays. We had a single bird fly past Anton Lake while we were on Saint Paul island, and saw others along Freshwater Lake in Barrow.

**LONG-TAILED JAEGER** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) – Particularly common around Nome, with dozens resting (nesting?) on the tundra east of town and others soaring gracefully over the hills and rivers along the Kougarok road.

#### *Alcidae (Auks, Murres, and Puffins)*

**DOVEKIE** (*Alle alle*) – Well this one was certainly unexpected! There are thought to be fewer than 60 of these breeding in the Bering Sea and we saw at least one, and possibly two birds. They look rather like miniature murres -- though they're not much bigger than Least Auklets.

**COMMON MURRE** (*Uria aalge*) – Small numbers of this species mingled with the far more common Thick-billed Murres on Ridge Wall, but the roles were reversed in the Kenai Fjords, where thousands of Common Murres rafted on the deep, chilly waters. These are smaller billed and dark chocolate, rather than black, in color.

**THICK-BILLED MURRE** (*Uria lomvia*) – Hundreds and hundreds of these dapper alcids jostled for position on the cliffs around Saint Paul island, and a handful stood on ledges above a Black-legged Kittiwake colony in the Chiswell Islands off the coast near Seward.

**PIGEON GUILLEMOT** (*Cepphus columba*) – A couple of individuals -- one in fine breeding plumage near the Cannery Cliffs, the other still in its patchy winter covering near Reef Rookery -- floated just offshore at Saint Paul island, and others paddled through the sunkissed seas of the Kenai Fjords.

**MARbled MURRELET** (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) – Astoundingly, we saw only a single bird while on our Kenai Fjords boat trip -- and that one flew off shortly after we spotted it. Those that birded around Seward before heading back to Anchorage (rather than heading to Homer) had fine views of one (between dives, anyway) right beside the road south of town.

**ANCIENT MURRELET** (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) – At least four floated among the masses of Least Auklets in the harbor on Saint Paul island, where they aren't particularly common, and several small rafts of them dotted the waters among the thousands of murres around the Kenai Fjords. Their gray backs and black heads helped to distinguish them from the more uniformly colored auklets.

**PARAKEET AUKLET** (*Aethia psittacula*) – Common on Saint Paul, where pairs squabbled with their neighbors on ledges and hundreds floated on (or dove beneath) the sea. We saw a small group of them in the lee of one of the Chiswell Islands (where they're far less common) while on our Kenai Fjords boat trip.

**LEAST AUKLET** (*Aethia pusilla*) – Hundreds and thousands in whirring flocks all along the rocky coasts of Saint Paul island, including scores standing like belaying pins along a rusting ship hulk below Tolstoi cliffs and zillions churning over the rocky breakwater beside Anton Lake.

**CRESTED AUKLET** (*Aethia cristatella*) – A little cluster of these dark little seabirds squabbled on a ledge at Saint Paul island's Ridge Wall, and dozens floated in big rafts just offshore near the seafood processing plant after breakfast our final morning.

**RHINOCEROS AUKLET** (*Cerorhinca monocerata*) – Good numbers of these chunky alcids, which are closely related to the puffins, in big rafts near the start of the Aialik Bay. Their "horns" showed nicely, thanks to flat seas, strong sunlight and close views!

**HORNED PUFFIN** (*Fratercula corniculata*) – The birds on Saint Paul's breeding cliffs gave us fine views as they courted, preened, snoozed and checked out the neighbors, and we saw hundreds on the surface of the waters (or flapping overhead like so many gnats) around the Chiswell Islands on our Kenai Fjords boat trip. We saw others whizzing by offshore near Nome.

**TUFTED PUFFIN** (*Fratercula cirrhata*) – Even more common than the previous species on the cliffs of Saint Paul island, with others scattered on the waters below or zooming past in pairs and small groups. We had hundreds of others on the waters of the Kenai Fjords NP.

#### *Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)*

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) [H]

#### *Strigidae (Owls)*

**SNOWY OWL** (*Bubo scandiacus*) – Talk about an 11th-hour save! After two days spent cruising the small network of roads around Barrow, we struck pay dirt, and spotted a ghostly white male perched on a mound beyond the airport -- fortunately minutes before thick fog rolled in yet again!

**SHORT-EARED OWL** (*Asio flammeus*) – One glided past over foggy hills while we walked back to the bus from Tolstoi cliffs our last morning on Saint Paul Island, and some fine spotting by Pepe netted us another crouched in the grass just beyond the Safety Sound bridge east of Nome.

#### *Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)*

**RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD** (*Selasphorus rufus*) – Spectacular looks at a penny-bright male in various trees around a feeder in Seward.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – One flew over Westchester Lagoon on our first visit there, and another intently watched the pond below a telephone wire near the start of the Denali Highway.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides dorsalis*) – A territorial male drumming on a particularly noisy bit of dead stump was the highlight of our visit to Hillside Park on the tour's last afternoon.

**NORTHERN FLICKER (YELLOW-SHAFTED)** (*Colaptes auratus auratus*) – We heard its loud "clear clear" call near the float plane lake on the Denali Highway, and some of the group saw it bound across the road.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – One rocketed in and landed in a nearby treetop while we birded after our Parks Highway picnic lunch en route to Denali; unfortunately, it quickly zoomed off again before most of the group got to see it in the scope.

**GYRFALCON** (*Falco rusticolus*) – One perched on a tiny bit of cliff near the bridge over the east fork of the Solomon River east of Nome -- great spotting, Rachel!

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – Our best views came near one of the Beehive Islands in the Chiswells, when we found one perched atop a dead tree overlooking a kittiwake colony -- a veritable buffet!

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus cooperi*) – We watched one hunting along the Denali Highway.

**ALDER FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax alnorum*) – Thanks to the late spring, we ran into very few of these this year; we heard one on each of our visits to Westchester Lagoon, and heard another from one of the bridges along the Kougarak road. [\*]

**SAY'S PHOEBE** (*Sayornis saya*) – One hunted down the slope toward the old Gyrfalcon nest in Denali NP, and another called and flitted in the small willows near the bridge over the east fork of the Solomon River near Nome. Hmmm... That was also near a Gyrfalcon nest!

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**GRAY JAY** (*Perisoreus canadensis*) – Regular in the spruce forests around Denali, with particularly good studies and photos of the family group -- mom, dad and at least two youngsters -- mooching around our picnic tables at the East Chutlitna rest area.

**STELLER'S JAY** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) – A couple of birds south of Seward -- particularly the one that perched atop a dead spruce snag -- showed very well for the folks who didn't make the trip to Homer.

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** (*Pica hudsonia*) – Common throughout, with lovely looks at the glossy green body plumage of this widespread corvid at Westchester Lagoon.

**NORTHWESTERN CROW** (*Corvus caurinus*) – On our tour route, this species is common only around Seward. We saw one on the roof of the walkway down to the fjord boats at dinner one night, and spotted others on several of the islets during our boat trip.

**COMMON RAVEN** (*Corvus corax*) – Daily, except for on Saint Paul island, including one "quorking" bird that turned a couple of somersaults over us as it winged along the edge of Lake Hood our first morning.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) – Scores quartered low over the waters of Lake Hood on our first morning's pre-flight walk, a few mingled among the other swallows at Westchester Lagoon, and scattered pairs zipped around some of the cabins in the "hunt camp" area east of Nome. A few of the group also saw some en route to Denali and Seward.

**VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – Normally, this is the most common swallow around Anchorage, but we saw only a few among a big group of Tree Swallows on Lake Hood our first morning. We saw more around Seward, but numbers still seemed exceptionally low.

**BANK SWALLOW** (*Riparia riparia*) – Fair numbers were scattered among the Tree Swallows over Lake Hood our first morning, looking relatively smaller and quite brown. We saw a few others along the Sumik River northwest of Nome.

**CLIFF SWALLOW** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) – Late arriving this year, thanks to some unseasonably cold weather shortly before our tour started. We did find the first few checking out one of the culverts under the Denali Highway on our drive back to Anchorage, and the regular colonies were back under bridges around Nome.

Paridae (Chickadees and Tits)

**BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE** (*Poecile atricapillus*) – Busy pairs rummaged through the birch trees around Lake Hood our first morning, and in trees along the lake edge at Westchester Lagoon on each of our visits there.

**BOREAL CHICKADEE** (*Poecile hudsonicus*) – Scattered individuals, including one near our picnic area en route to Denali, and another rummaging through a skinny spruce tree at Hillside Park our last afternoon.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

**RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) – One hunted along a chain link fence at Westchester Lagoon, a busy pair provisioned a nest near Seward, and another pair flew past (more than once) with mouthfuls of food in Anchorage's Hillside Park.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

**PACIFIC WREN (ALASKAN ISLANDS)** (*Troglodytes pacificus alascensis*) – One singing loudly from rocks near the top of Tolstoi cliffs was an unexpected bonus on our final morning on Saint Paul. This species has been hammered by two hard winters in a row, and has become very scarce on the island.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

**AMERICAN DIPPER** (*Cinclus mexicanus*) – Two birds ferried mouthfuls to a mossy nest atop a light fixture at the salmon counting station near Bear Lake. Eventually, one rested for a few minutes on a metal grate over the river, giving us a chance to study it more closely. [N]

Regulidae (Kinglets)



**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** (*Regulus calendula*) – Heard far more frequently than seen, but a fired-up male in a subdivision near Seward flashed his red crown feathers nicely during a territorial dispute, and most of us saw another singing male near the float plane lake on the Denali Highway.

*Phylloscopidae (Leaf-Warblers)*

**ARCTIC WARBLER** (*Phylloscopus borealis*) – They got progressively closer the further we went up the Kougarak road (north of Nome) until we finally had one foraging in bushes right beside the road -- which distracted most of us from our study of Golden-crowned Sparrow!

*Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)*

**BLUETHROAT** (*Luscinia svecica*) – A lucky stop in "good looking habitat" along the Kougarak road netted us fine views of a male displaying over some scruffy willows. He spent a fair bit of time singing from treetops in between brief display flights.

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – A male bounced up a barren hillside along the Council road east of Nome, skirting the edge of a remnant snow patch and hunting from stony perches.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** (*Catharus minimus*) – Based on song, this was probably the most common *Catharus* thrush along the Denali Highway and the roads around Nome. We had lovely looks at several songsters as they serenaded from treetops.

**SWAINSON'S THRUSH** (*Catharus ustulatus*) – Single birds seen on several days, including one bouncing along beside the vans as we left Brushkana campground (along the Denali Highway), one sitting at eye level along the road through the Byers Lake campground and one singing from a spruce tree near Bear Lake.

**HERMIT THRUSH** (*Catharus guttatus*) – Heard on multiple days around Denali and Seward, but never seen. [\*]

**AMERICAN ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*) – Common and widespread, missing only from Saint Paul.

**VARIED THRUSH** (*Ixoreus naevius*) – Bev spotted our first -- a male singing from a tall spruce well up the hill from the Denali Highway. We had multiple others, including another male singing along the Kougarak road, and a surprising female under the pipes along Gaswell road in Barrow.

*Sturnidae (Starlings)*

**EUROPEAN STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – There was a time -- not too long ago -- when this species made the rarity hotline when it was spotted in Anchorage. [I]

*Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)*

**EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL** (*Motacilla tschutschensis*) – Some of the group saw one flit among the first Muskox herd we saw near Nome, but most didn't get a look. Fortunately, we found a more cooperative bird near one of the big bridges on the Kougarak road; it sat up on the top of a willow, allowing good scope views.

**AMERICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus rubescens*) – Some of the group heard one call as it flew past the Cannery cliffs on Saint Paul island while we searched for the Dovekie on our final morning there, and we saw others striding across the short grass tundra (and in the middle of the road) on our journey up the Kougarak road. [\*]

*Bombycillidae (Waxwings)*

**BOHEMIAN WAXWING** (*Bombycilla garrulus*) – Gratifyingly common along the Denali Highway this year, with at least a dozen or more spotted -- including several sitting atop spruce trees right beside our vans.

*Calcariidae (Longspurs and Snow Buntings)*

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR** (*Calcarius lapponicus*) – Many on Saint Paul island and around Nome, generally singing males which launched themselves skyward to parachute down, trailing their burbling songs. We also spotted a few less colorful females.

**SNOW BUNTING** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) – Two males chased each other across the rocks strewn at the base of the cliff behind Anton Lake on Saint Paul, but our best views probably came in Barrow, where one sang from the roof of the house across the street from our hotel.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – One strutted down a branch along the Denali Highway, and most of us spotted others along the roads out of Nome -- where their loud, rollicking songs were a regular part of the tour soundtrack.

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis celata*) – Common everywhere but Saint Paul and Barrow, including several that made our hearts beat a little faster during our search for Arctic Warbler along the Denali Highway.

**YELLOW WARBLER** (*Setophaga petechia*) – Reasonably common around Anchorage, Denali and Nome, including a couple of bright males chasing each other around in the willows near the start of the Denali Highway.

**BLACKPOLL WARBLER** (*Setophaga striata*) – Males sang from spruce trees all along the Denali Highway, their high-pitched songs a regular part of the tour soundtrack.

**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** (*Setophaga coronata*) – Quite common in Anchorage, including a pair of males tangling near the entrance to the hotel parking lot (literally pinwheeling out of the sky at one point) and a female gathering nest material from a thorny bush near the edge of Lake Hood, with others around Denali, Seward and Nome.

**TOWNSEND'S WARBLER** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Many spotted a singing male while waiting for Pepe and me to finish making lunch en route to Seward. And we all had fine views of another male flicking through a birch tree near the parking lot at Tern Lake.

**WILSON'S WARBLER** (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Scattered individuals flicked through willow scrub around Denali and Nome.

*Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)*

**AMERICAN TREE SPARROW** (*Spizella arborea*) – A singing bird along the Denali Highway provided fine scope views, as did another along the Kougarak road north of Nome.

**SAVANNAH SPARROW** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) – Particularly common around Nome (including dozens singing from piles of driftwood), with others along the Parks Highway south of Denali, and at Westchester Lagoon.

**FOX SPARROW (SOOTY)** (*Passerella iliaca sinuosa*) – Those who travelled to Homer in a last ditch attempt to find Kittlitz's Murrelet saw one; those who stayed in Seward heard several singing (and singing and singing) but never laid eyes on any of them.

**FOX SPARROW (RED)** (*Passerella iliaca zaboria*) – Several of these chunky sparrows gave us fine views as they sang (loudly) from spruce trees along the Denali Highway, and others did the same in willows along the Kougarak road.

**SONG SPARROW** (*Melospiza melodia*) – We heard one singing from one of the rocky islets we circumnavigated on our Kenai Fjords boat trip, and those who birded around Seward had fine views of one scuffling under some bushes in a front yard south of town.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** (*Melospiza lincolni*) – We heard several singing along the Denali Highway. [\*]

**WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (GAMBEL'S)** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*) – Common and widespread across much of the tour route, with especially nice studies of one in a trailside bush at Westchester Lagoon. This subspecies doesn't have dark lores, and has a yellowish-orange (rather than pink) bill.

**GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) – Common around Nome, with multiple singing birds seen well. The black and yellow head stripes of this species signal social status -- particularly important for the birds in their winter flocks.

**DARK-EYED JUNCO (SLATE-COLORED)** (*Junco hyemalis hyemalis*) – Common in Anchorage and Denali, including one singing from the top of a birch tree near Lake Hood our first morning, a few around our picnic site at Brushkana Campground and several chipping birds in the spruce forest at Hillside Park our last afternoon.

#### Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

**RUSTY BLACKBIRD** (*Euphagus carolinus*) – A territorial male came in for a closer look at us while we enjoyed the scoters on a float plane lake along the Denali Highway. He sang a few times from a nearby spruce tree or two before winging away into the surrounding forest.

#### Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

**GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH (PRIBILOF IS.)** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis umbrina*) – Dozens of these huge, dark rosy-finches on Saint Paul island, with particularly nice studies of several on the cliffs at the quarry. This subspecies is considerably larger than are its mainland cousins.

**COMMON REDPOLL** (*Acanthis flammea*) – A bouncy gang of them flicked from tree to tree along one end of Lake Hood our first morning, seemingly only to defy our efforts to scope them! Eventually, one very pink male settled near the top of a birch and allowed leisurely looks, while others descended right to the ground to drink and check for tidbits along a little rivulet by the Millennium Hotel's parking lot. We saw others on Saint Paul island and had one in nice comparison with the next species along the Teller road northwest of Nome.

**HOARY REDPOLL** (*Acanthis hornemanni*) – Wonderful comparisons between this species and the previous in the "crab pot forest" on Saint Paul island, with many others seen around Nome and Barrow. These really do look like little pink snowballs!

**PINE SISKIN** (*Spinus pinus*) – A handful nibbled birch catkins near the end of Lake Hood in Anchorage, seen on our pre-flight walk our first morning, and an adult fed a recently fledged youngster -- which seemed determined to land on at least one of us -- along the Denali Highway. We saw others around Seward.

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## MAMMALS

**SNOWSHOE HARE** (*Lepus americanus*) – Ed was the lucky one who spotted one of these on our tour through Denali NP. The population crashed a couple of years ago, part of a regular 12-year "boom and bust" cycle this species goes through.

**BEAVER** (*Castor canadensis*) – Two -- presumably a pair -- paddled along two rivulets edging the Nenana River, beside the Denali Highway. We saw plenty of evidence of others too, mostly in the form of dams.

**NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE** (*Erethizon dorsatum*) – At least three along the Denali Highway, including one that climbed (rather gingerly) down out of a roadside tree when it saw us.

**ORCA** (*Orcinus orca*) – A big sprawling pod hunted near the mouth of Resurrection Bay, seen on our Kenai Fjords boat trip. A couple of them surfaced repeatedly right around our boat.

**DALL'S PORPOISE** (*Phocoenoides dalli*) – Fabulous views of a gang of them bow riding on our Kenai Fjords boat. They have a distinctive "rooster tail" spray, which is visible from a good distance.

**HUMPBACK WHALE** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) – A mother and calf near the mouth of the Aialik Bay put on a nice show, including a couple of deeper "fluke dives".

**RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) – One trotted through the brush beside our bus in Denali NP.

**ARCTIC FOX** (*Alopex lagopus*) – Fine looks at a number of different individuals on Saint Paul Island, including a creamy one near Anton Lake nursing a very sore back leg, and a feisty one bouncing down the road in front of us (and refusing to move aside) while we drove to Dune Lake one evening.

**BROWN (INCL. GRIZZLY) BEAR** (*Ursus arctos*) – A total of nine in Denali NP, including a mother with three nearly grown cubs feeding along the gravelly bed of a braided river and another sow and yearling cubs snoozing in a big heap near the Eielson visitor's center.

**POLAR BEAR** (*Ursus maritimus*) – Thanks to a tip from a fellow birder, we spent a magical 15 minutes watching a big bear nosing through a carcass pile on the ice west of Barrow. Eventually, it trotted away with a big bit of something clamped firmly in its jaws.

**SEA OTTER** (*Enhydra lutris*) – A few folks saw one floating in Seward harbor the night we arrived in town, but most didn't see one until our boat trip, where we found a handful floating on the surface of the bays, busily rubbing air into their thick pelts.

**STELLER'S SEA LION** (*Eumetopias jubatus*) – A couple of males, looking huge and blond, lounged on the rocky shore of Sea Lion Rock, off the southern edge of Saint Paul island, and two others sparred over fish near the island the next day, seen by some. Our biggest numbers though were on our Kenai Fjords boat trip, where dozens sprawled on rocky outcrops around the Chiswell Islands -- some at amazing heights above the water!

**NORTHERN FUR SEAL** (*Callorhinus ursinus*) – Distressingly few of these had arrived to the island by the time of our tour, though we did find a few big beachmasters near the seal blind at Reef Rookery -- and nearly ran over one huge male along the road near Zapadni our last morning.

**HARBOR SEAL** (*Phoca vitulina*) – We saw the head of one -- looking rather like a gray bowling ball -- sticking out of a kelp bed near Southwest Point on Saint Paul island. But our best views came on the Kenai Fjords boat trip, where we found dozens hauled out on the rocky edges along Resurrection Bay.

**SPOTTED SEAL** (*Phoca largha*) – Several dozen were sprinkled across the ice around Barrow, looking rather like big overstuffed sausages. With scopes, we could see the distinctive spots on their pelts.

**MOOSE** (*Alces alces*) – Common around Denali, with over a dozen more seen on part 2 -- including a cow with twins near one of the bridges on the Kougarak road.



**CARIBOU** (*Rangifer caribou*) – We found a handful of "reindeer" (the Old World subspecies of Caribou) cavorting in a snowbank on Saint Paul island, where they've been introduced, and others along the Kougarak road. We also saw many individuals of the New World subspecies in and around Denali NP, including a big male with a damaged set of antlers.

**MOUNTAIN GOAT** (*Oreamnos americanus*) – Several females with kids on the incredibly steep slopes over the Kenai Fjords; it was amazing how confident those youngsters seemed to be on those slippery graveled hillsides.

**MUSKOX** (*Ovibos moschatus*) – Seen on a couple of days around Nome, including a big group (with lots of youngsters) munching grass near the sea on a foggy afternoon and another (or the same) group near the city end of the Kougarak road as we raced toward our dinner restaurant after seeing the Bristle-thighed Curlew.

**DALL'S SHEEP** (*Ovis dalli*) – Common in and around Denali -- from tiny dots high up on mountain ridges to a group of bachelor males that strolled right past us on the Denali park road.

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## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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**Totals for the tour: 167 bird taxa and 20 mammal taxa**