

the clouds. Upon arriving in Barrow and after checking into our hotel, we headed out into the tundra for an afternoon of birding none of us will ever forget. Spectacled, Steller's, and King Eiders, a flyover Yellow-billed Loon, courting Red-necked Stints, tons of breeding plumaged Red and Red-necked Phalaropes, a Snowy Owl, Sabine's Gull, and, oh yes - TWO ADULT ROSS'S GULLS that flew right past us in their pink-bodied, ring-necked splendor. Wow!

Though we found all of our Barrow targets on the first afternoon, the second day was perfect for savoring the shorebirds in their breeding plumage, enjoying more eiders and gulls, and we even stumbled upon a migrant Arctic Warbler, perhaps the northernmost ever for North America, while scoping Black Guillemots and a Semipalmated Plover out on Point Barrow. This was all the more sweet as we had missed this late spring migrant in Nome - they simply hadn't shown up yet.

Before leaving Barrow, we had time to study a shorebird that had caught Chris's eye - a super rare Common Ringed Plover, perhaps from Eurasia or maybe one of the very few that breed in North America. After a delay due to fog, our flight arrived back in Anchorage with enough time to enjoy a lovely final dinner near the airport. Barb and Ann kindly gave a lovely reading of a poem that they composed to document our trip, which was a perfect way to end our adventure. With their permission, I've reproduced it at the end of the trip list.

Thanks to everyone for making this adventure so special. I'm still pinching myself over the luck of seeing both Ivory and Ross's Gulls on a June tour in Alaska, in addition to everything else that we discovered along the way. Chris and I had a great time, appreciated your flexibility, and look forward to traveling with you again in the future.

Cheers, and good birding!

-- Tom Johnson

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*) – We found these tundra-nesting geese in Nome and Barrow.

EMPEROR GOOSE (*Chen canagica*) – We were lucky to see two of these local and beautiful geese feeding along Safety Sound near Nome.

BRANT (BLACK) (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) – We found these dark Brant during each of the three phases of this tour. Flocks were migrating along the coast in Nome; two flocks passed overhead during our boat trip out of Seward; and singles dotted the tundra in Barrow.

CAKTLING GOOSE (*Branta hutchinsii*) – These were the small, white-cheeked geese that we observed in Nome. The Cackling/ Canada Goose complex is a messy group, taxonomically; these were likely Taverner's Cackling Geese, though I won't bet the rent that the final word has been written on white-cheeked goose subspecies in Alaska.

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*) – The white-cheeked geese that we saw in the greater Anchorage area were Canadas. [N]

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*) – One was at the back of Tern Lake; we had nice scope views. [N]

TUNDRA SWAN (WHISTLING) (*Cygnus columbianus columbianus*) – Lots were in Nome (we estimated 100 along the Council Rd.), and we also saw a few in Barrow.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – Several were along the Coastal Trail in Anchorage; a pair was seen daily in Barrow, too.

AMERICAN WIGEON (*Anas americana*) – Common in Anchorage and Nome. [N]

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Seen in small numbers at widespread freshwater locations. [N]

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Common at many freshwater sites.

NORTHERN PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*) – Common at many sites - hundreds were in Barrow. [N]

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (AMERICAN) (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) – Common at most freshwater locations visited.

CANVASBACK (*Aythya valisineria*) – At least 3 were in a mixed flock of divers at Safety Sound near Nome.

REDHEAD (*Aythya americana*) – Two were in a mixed *Aythya* flock in Safety Sound near Nome.

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – We saw a pair in a roadside ditch near Potter Marsh - the light was perfect for a good look at the male's ring, rarely seen in the field.

GREATER SCAUP (*Aythya marila*) – This was the common scaup of the tour.

LESSER SCAUP (*Aythya affinis*) – Two were at Westchester Lagoon at the beginning of the tour.

STELLER'S EIDER (*Polysticta stelleri*) – We had lovely views of these stunners in Barrow. Our one-day high count was 6 individuals. Most were in pairs.

SPECTACLED EIDER (*Somateria fischeri*) – This was voted the group's favorite bird of the tour, and with great reason. This threatened species put in some wonderful appearances along the roads outside of Barrow. It felt surreal to watch the single male that was dabbling at close range in the roadside pool.

KING EIDER (*Somateria spectabilis*) – Fairly common in Barrow - a female on a pond in town was the first bird we stopped to look at after leaving the airport. We saw over 25 Kings and Queens on our first afternoon in Barrow.

COMMON EIDER (PACIFIC) (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*) – This distinctive subspecies of Common Eider was a regular sight in Nome. Males have an outrageous carrot orange bill.

HARLEQUIN DUCK (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) – We saw small numbers on a few occasions on rivers near Nome.

SURF SCOTER (*Melanitta perspicillata*) – We saw this seaduck at Nome and in Seward, where a flock of 24 was a nice sighting.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER (NORTH AMERICAN) (*Melanitta fusca deglandi*) – Fairly common offshore at Nome. We scoped these hard in search of males of the Siberian subspecies (species?), but came up empty on that front.

BLACK SCOTER (*Melanitta americana*) – Common in flocks offshore (beyond the gold mining boats) at Nome.

