

HIGH LONESOME BIRDTOURS

GAMBELL II – May 27-June 1, 2011

Trip Report and Annotated Species List

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Dovekie Patrol at the Cliffs

Overall Impressions

Like our first Gambell tour, our Gambell II Tour group was regionally well-represented, with participants from Ontario (Canada), California, Florida, Washington, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Sonora (Mexico). Our totals for the tour were about normal, although we did not enjoy consistent winds from the southwest which is the norm in Gambell in the spring. As a result, this produced fewer than hoped for Asian landbirds and shorebirds on the island, but we did get to view spectacular concentrations of the breeding alcids as well as a few choice North American rarities. The camaraderie of the group was very good, and as usual, the meals were spectacular. Overall, a wonderful trip to one of the furthest outposts of North American birding destinations.

27 May 2011

Our group arrived in Gambell to low clouds and heavy overcast conditions, but we were all excited for the birding to come and we wasted no time in getting established. We quickly made our introductions and got everyone over to the Sivuqaq Lodge which was to be our home for the next week, had a late lunch, and then did the obligatory briefing on the logistics, daily schedules and ATV training.

Gambell is a small Yupik community located only 38 miles from the Russian Chukotskiy Peninsula. It is estimated that the indigenous peoples have lived here for over two thousand years, and this native community of 650 would be our home for the next week as we explored the road system and nearby habitats a multitude of times in search of unusual birds.

After the training and briefings, we headed out to Seawatch to get everyone acquainted with that daily event and to view the alcid spectacle. Then over to the northeast Point to view the thousands of Least and Parakeet auklets on the Cliffs and to get everyone familiar with the area. We had nice but brief views of an Arctic Loon as it flew by, and also got good looks at a Red-throated and several Yellow-billed loons while at Seawatch.

We had a great meal of baked chicken, salad, rice, and a great dessert of strawberry shortcake before going out one more time to Seawatch to view the wonderful and impressive alcid spectacle. Back to the lodge by 10:00 pm and then soon off to bed with high expectations for tomorrow.

28 May 2011

After our obligatory coffee and tea, we headed out to Seawatch where our enthusiastic group experienced increasing wind and cloud cover. We all had good looks at three species of eiders there (several Common, King, and Steller's respectively) as well as Yellow-billed Loon and thousands of Least and Crested auklets. After a hearty breakfast, we headed over to the Far and Circular boneyards and also the Cliffs to see what was about, but only found a fly-by White Wagtail (not bad!), a female Northern Wheatear and an American Pipit. The persistent northeast winds were giving us challenges in terms of finding strays from the Russian Far East, but we were determined to persevere and see all that was out there. Dovekies at the Cliffs were again a no-show, and so we headed south along the mountainside and down to the Far Marsh, southern lakes and the southern bay. Cold and hungry, we headed back to the Sivuqaq for a lunch of turkey noodle soup and sandwiches which really hit the spot.

The winds had shifted from the east to coming from south and were quite strong in the afternoon. If only they could have shifted from the southwest! We spent the afternoon at Seawatch and the Near Boneyard, but we had little success. The WINGS group arrived at 2:30 pm and so the Sivuqaq was absolutely packed. We headed back out after a warming stop and made another round of the Near Boneyard. After a great dinner of macaroni & cheese casserole, salad, broccoli/cauliflower, and carrot cake, we headed back to Seawatch again. Dave K. decided to take several clients out to the Cliffs to see what was about and to hopefully get some photos of the alcids in the evening light while the others stayed at Seawatch. The photo opportunities were not that great, but then we heard on the radio "Ivory Gull at the Point" and we just tore off to the west hoping to see the bird. The bird was flying by us on

the north beach, heading to the east toward the Cliffs (we passed it in transit), but we spotted it and turned around quickly and chased it down. We were rewarded with fairly good looks at this rarity. Unfortunately, several of our group were given the wrong directions and thus headed south rather than around the Point to the north and east and thus did not get to see the bird. With mixed feelings as leaders, David and Dave gathered the group back at the Sivuqaq and we retired by 10:30 pm.

29 May 2011

Up at 5:00 am, we had our coffee and tea before heading out in two parties to Seawatch and to the Cliffs to see what might be about. Low clouds and dark skies promised rain, and it delivered later in the morning. David's group at the Cliffs found five Dovekie high on the rocks for the first sighting of the spring season, and all had good views of the birds on the rocks near where they were to establish their nesting burrows. Dave's group at Seawatch observed some Spectacled Eiders and a probably Artic Loon fly-by before the real excitement came over the radio "Great Knot flying by the Point." Most or all of the participants were able to get on to the bird as it flew past us at full speed heading northeast around the point, and David Hollie managed a few images (included in the species account).

We returned to the Sivuqaq for our full breakfast and then packed up for the morning rounds, but the weather had worsened with rain falling steadily. We hung out at the Sivuqaq for about one hour, and then when the rains abated and a heavy mist and low cloud cover enveloped the island, we decided to wait it out until after lunch.

With the rain and heavy mist disappearing, we ventured out in to the boneyards and south to the marshes, but did not dig up anything of great interest. We returned to the Sivuqaq for a fine dinner of Jen's wonderful meatloaf, vegetables, salad and carrot cake. We returned to Seawatch in the evening to see what was about, and saw at least 300,000 alcids fly by the point, several White-winged Scoters, and three species of eiders. We all got a lesson on the 3rd cycle plumage of "Vega" Herring Gull, which is not pictured in the field guides thanks to Dave K., but a lesson learned by all and I certainly learned a great deal by the identification! Back to the Sivuqaq by 10:00 pm and to bed shortly after.

30 May 2011

Following on the already well-established pattern, we had an early light breakfast and then headed to Seawatch to see what was about... We were greeted with the normal large numbers of alcids racing back and forth along the Point, and we did see two very nice Emperor Geese as they passed by fairly closely. A fly-by Red-necked Grebe was also a nice addition for the morning. After our full breakfast, we make the usual rounds around the Cliffs and Troutman Lake to the southern marsh and then back to the boneyards in the afternoon. We did not have anything special interest, and did not produce any species of rarity. Still hoping for a change in the winds....

Dinner was spinach lasagna with salad and zucchini, a great way to end the day thanks to Jennifer's great cooking! One more full day on the island, and we were hopeful for something unusual tomorrow!

31 May 2011

After coffee and tea, we went out to Seawatch again to see what was about. We did not have any loons this morning, but did have good numbers of alcids again, and seeing Northern Fulmars from just off the beach is always a treat. After breakfast, we again made the rounds through the boneyards and then south to the Far Marsh. As we approached the south end of Troutman Lake, we heard that the WINGS group had found a stunningly plumaged adult Red-necked Stint, and we were off. All of our group got to view this rarity from quite close, and we stayed in the area for nearly an hour before fanning out and looking for other species.

After lunch, we continued back around the lake and then heard that a Black-headed Gull had been found on the eastern part of Troutman Lake. We hustled over there and got good views through the scope of this Eurasian Gull. Also, we were able to study a second-cycle Slaty-backed Gull that afternoon in the same area. Feeling fairly tired, we were ready to call it a day and head back in to the Sivuqaq when we heard about a swallow which was flying over the Near Boneyard. Any swallow on Gambell is noteworthy, and so we blasted over to see a lone Cliff Swallow flying over... rather lost. Reminding ourselves that an "eastern" vagrant was just as interesting on Gambell as a "western" vagrant from Russia, we then headed back to the lodge just as it was beginning to rain lightly.

We had a wonderful farewell dinner of pork loin w/ cherry sauce, polenta, salad and mixed vegetables. Jen just outdid herself with this meal! Another half-day on Gambell and then back to Nome for some birding before the group either continued on or headed back to the Lower 48.

1 June 2011

The weather remained unchanged, and thus we ventured forth for our last morning at Gambell determined to find something memorable. We were not disappointed. While birding along the eastern side of Troutman Lake we looked up to see a lone large goose flying over without any speckling on the belly. Almost certainly a Tundra Bean-Goose, we did not have the luxury of studying it on the ground at leisure as it flew directly overhead and to the north where the WINGS group got on to it as well. Lehman and others felt that this bird was probably a Tundra, but we did not get diagnostic views.

We headed back to the Sivuqaq for the last time, gathered our gear and then headed to the airport for our flight to Nome. We regretted having to leave, but knew that we had some good birding to come in the Nome area in the afternoon. Our flight out went well, and we landed in Nome, made shuttle arrangements and got our rental vehicles. After a quick lunch in town, we headed south toward Safety Sound. Along the way we scored several new species for the trip, of which Bar-tailed Godwit and Aleutian Tern were prizes. We also viewed a cow moose with a calf in seemingly strange habitat near Safety Sound, far from where we would have expected them to be.

After a great dinner at the Airport Pizza restaurant (which served a great deal more than just ordinary pizza), we organized and headed back to the airport for our departing flight. Those staying on for the Nome Extension prepared for the following days, but for most of us it was back to Anchorage and then the Lower 48, with fond memories of Gambell at the edge of the Alaskan frontier.



“Sunset” to the west of Gambell

ANNOTATED TRIP LIST

Order *Anseriformes*—Family *Anatidae*: Ducks, Geese, & Swans

Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* / **Tundra Bean-Goose** *Anser serrirostris* We had a lone bean-goose sp. fly over us while at the Cliffs on 1 June 2011. Although viewing if from directly underneath the flying bird, we did note that it was slightly larger than a Greater White-fronted Goose, with a slightly longer neck, dark bill, and had no speckling or barring on the undersides. While the chances of this being a Tundra Bean-Goose are much greater than it being a Taiga Bean-Goose, to be totally objective on this (given the difficulty of identifying this species from Taiga Bean-Goose), this identification should best be

left as bean-goose sp. For those willing to go out on a limb, the chances of Tundra Bean-Goose are very much higher, as per MacKay's, Lehman's and Dunn's opinion.

Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* Three were seen on 29 May 2011 and an single near the Far Marsh on 31 May 2011 were about normal for the tour.

Emperor Goose *Chen canagica* Uncommon (but regular to Gambell in the spring), we recorded them on three different days, with a high count of two on 29 and 30 May 2011.

Brant *Branta bernicla* Fairly common spring migrant, we saw this species on every day and recorded a high of 59 on 29 May 2011.

Cackling Goose *Branta hutchinsii* Eight were seen to the south of Nome on 1 June 2011 before departure to Anchorage.

Tundra Swan *Cygnus columbianus* Uncommon spring migrant at Gambell, we found birds on three days with a high count of three individuals on 1 June 2011.

American Wigeon *Anas americana* While not at Gambell, we did see two birds to the south of Nome on 1 June 2011 for the only sighting of the trip.

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* Two birds were seen south of Nome on 1 June 2011.

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* A regular spring migrant to Gambell, we recorded this species daily, with a high count of nine on 31 May 2011.

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* Uncommon to fairly common spring migrant to Gambell, we found them in the Far Marsh nearly daily throughout the tour, with a high count of seven on 27 May 2011. We did not observe any Common Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*) while on the trip (potential future ABA split).

Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* A fairly good year this year overall, we recorded them on two days while at Seawatch, and we found an additional two in Nome just before the tour ended.

Steller's Eider *Polysticta stelleri* Another fairly good year for this Threatened species, we saw up to five on two occasions while along the coast and a Seawatch on 28 and 30 May 2011.

Spectacled Eider *Somateria fischeri* One of the most hoped-for species on the tour, we were not disappointed with the overall totals. We recorded them at Seawatch or at the south bay on two days, with a high count of ten+ on 30 May 2011.

King Eider *Somateria spectabilis* Good numbers seen daily while along the coast or at Seawatch. We estimated a high count of sixty on 1 June while at Seawatch, but the large raft of 3,000+ at the south bay on 30 May 2011 was a spectacular total.



Mixed eider flock

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima* To complete the eider grand slam, we saw small numbers on several days throughout the tour, mostly as fly-bys at Seawatch. We found twelve while at Safety Sound south of Nome on 1 June 2011.

Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* While at Seawatch we recorded them on several days, with a high count of 26 on 30 May 2011. We also found ten while in the Nome area on 1 June 2011.

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* We found seven on 28 May 2011 for the only sighting for the Gambell tour this year.

White-winged Scoter *Melanitta fusca* We had ten+ come by us at Seawatch on 30 May 2011, all of which were the North American *M. f. deglandi*.

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana* Seen on two days while in Gambell, we found four on 29 May 2011 and six on the following day while at Seawatch.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* Moderate numbers passing the coast daily, we recorded them on almost every day (save the day we did not spend much time at Seawatch). A high count of sixty was recorded on 28 and 30 May 2011.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* Seen almost daily, we found a high of fifty-one while at Seawatch on 28 May 2011 which was an unusually high total for a one-day total.

Order Galliformes—Family Phasianidae: Grouse

Willow Ptarmigan *Lagopus lagopus* Two were seen on our final day before departure from Nome.

Order Gaviiformes—Family Gaviidae: Loons

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata* Uncommon migrant through the area, we recorded a respectable four on two days total while at Seawatch, and an additional seven before we departed Nome on 1 June 2011.

Arctic Loon *Gavia arctica* A true rarity and a much-hoped-for species, we saw one on 27 May 2011 and another on 29 May 2011 while birding at Seawatch. The white in the flank was seen well, but I do not think that anyone obtained photos of this species while on Gambell.

Pacific Loon *Gavia pacifica* A “slow” year for this species, we did manage to see between two and seventeen on most days of the tour, with the high on 27 May 2011. Apparently Lehman had a high of 188 passing Seawatch on 8 June 2011, so while missed a high count, we did get good looks on most days.

Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* A very good spring by Gambell standards, we were able to see fly-bys at Seawatch on three consecutive days, with a high count of three on 29 and 30 May 2011.

Order Podicipediformes—Family Podicipedidae: Grebes

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena* An average year, we saw one bird on 29 May 2011 and two on 30 May 2011.

Order **Procellariiformes** —Family **Procellariidae**: **Shearwaters and Petrels**

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* Personally one of my favorite species, we recorded good numbers daily from the Seawatch and north beach areas, depending on the walrus carcass-cleaning by the locals. We recorded a high count of thirty on 28 May 2011.

Order **Suliformes** —Family **Phalacrocoracidae**: **Cormorants**

Pelagic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus* Common migrant and breeder in the Gambell area, we recorded them every day in good numbers while at Seawatch with a high count of 30 on 28 May 2011.

Order **Accipitriformes** —Family **Accipitridae**: **Hawks, Eagles, & Allies**

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* We did not see any while in Gambell, but we recorded one in the Nome area on 1 June 2011 before departure.

Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus* This is an uncommon summer breeder on Gambell, we recorded single individuals on only two days while there. This probably represented a single un-mated individual. Last year we found up to four (two pair) and so what happened to the others during the year is a mystery.

Order **Gruiformes** —Family **Gruidae**: **Cranes**

Sandhill Crane *Grus canadensis* Uncommon passage migrant, our birds were on their way to Russian breeding grounds. We found between two and twelve individuals nearly daily while in Gambell.

Order **Charadriiformes**—Family **Charadriidae**: **Lapwings and Plovers**

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* Continuing the trend at Gambell, we were able to find one individual on three different days while touring the Near Marsh and the Far Marsh. This species is a rare breeder in the area, and we heard that after the tour, Lehman reported that this lone individual had paired up and was attending a nest.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* Common summer breeder in the Gambell area, we recorded between two and six daily while on our rounds. Quite an aggressive species, we observed several territorial disputes with the lone Common Ringed-Plover.

Order Charadriiformes —Family Scolopacidae: Sandpipers, Phalaropes, & Allies

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* Not found while in Gambell, we did locate two while in the Safety Sound area to the south of Nome on 1 June 2011.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* We found one just to the south of Nome along the river on the last day before departing.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* A magnificent find for those who were able to get on to it, we had one fly by us at Seawatch on 29 May 2011. David Hollie was able to photograph it (below) as it rocketed past and continued to the north.



Great Knot (photos by David Hollie)

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* Quite a rare species in Gambell, we had one at the Far Marsh on 1 June and an additional four near the mouth of the Nome River later that day before departure.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* We recorded far fewer numbers of this migrant and breeder this year, with counts of between one and ten (several occasions), almost all of which came from the Far Marsh while the birds were establishing territories.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* Averaging between one and three sightings per year, we were not disappointed as we were blessed with a very brightly colored bird discovered at the Far Marsh on 31 May 2011. We observed it throughout the morning and then relocated it in the afternoon in the same area. Excellent photos were obtained.



Red-necked Stint

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* Not recorded while in Gambell, we found two while birding to the south of Nome on 1 June before departure.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* Uncommon to fairly common migrant to Gambell, we found them on three days while at the Far Marsh. We found an additional six on 1 June near Safety Sound before the tour ended.

“Bering” Rock Sandpiper *Calidris ptilocnemis tshuktschorum* Always a treat to see in breeding finery, we were able to admire this species on several occasions, all south of Troutman Lake on the hillside to the east and south of the marsh. We found a high of four on 28 May 2011. According to Lehman, this species has been in a slow and steady decline in the Gambell area, for as yet unknown reasons.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Fairly common to common migrant and breeder at Gambell, we recorded up to eighteen of these strikingly-plumaged birds daily, primarily to the south of Troutman Lake.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Lower numbers than average, we found up to eight in the Far Marsh at also at least three in the Near Marsh on several occasions. We also had another near Safety Sound on the last day of the tour.

Wilson’s Snipe *Gallinago delicata* One was found on our last day near Safety Sound to the south of Nome.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* Common migrant and breeder to the area, we recorded small numbers daily, particularly at the Far Marsh. We found a high number of ten on 30 May 2011.

Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius* Passing the Point in much lower numbers than normal, we only recorded two on 28 May 2011. Apparently, according to Lehman, numbers increased after we left.

Order Charadriiformes —Family Laridae: Gulls and Terns

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* Common migrant past the Point, we recorded between 25 and 500 daily while at Seawatch, which was no doubt a result of the time (or lack thereof) spent at Seawatch).

Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea* One of those “electric” species for North America, several of us were fortunate to hear the radio transmission late in the evening on 28 May 2011 that one adult was passing the Point and heading north. For those that got the directions given to them correctly, they were able to get on to the bird along the North Beach for brief but good looks as the bird continued on to the north and out of sight.

Sabine’s Gull *Xema sabini* Uncommon passage migrant to the area, we had one fly by the Point on 28 May 2011. Paul Lehman noted that he saw a total of seven during the entire spring, thus a good find for us.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* One first-cycle individual was located on the east side of Troutman Lake on 31 May 2011, a lifer for some and certainly an Alaskan bird for many.

Mew Gull *Larus canus* While we did not record any while in Gambell, we did find at least 25 individuals while in Nome and at Safety Sound to the south before departure.

“American” Herring Gull *Larus argentatus smithsonianus* Not recorded while at Gambell, we did find up to 25 while in Nome on the last day before departure.

“Vega” Herring Gull *Larus argentatus vegae* The second-most common gull to be found in the Gambell area, we recorded between 8 and 30 individuals daily, mainly at the Point and near the dump or at Troutman Lake.

Slaty-backed Gull *Larus schistisagus* Presumed to be a second-cycle bird, one was located on the east side of Troutman Lake on 31 May 2011

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* Not recorded while in Gambell, we did locate one individual near Safety Sound on 1 June 2011 just before departure.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* By far the most numerous gull while in Gambell, we recorded between 45 and 210 daily while at the Point and at the Cliffs. At least one hundred were loafing on the ice at Troutman Lake on 28 May 2011.

Aleutian Tern *Onychoprion aleuticus* One was seen at Safety Sound on 1 June 2011 before our return to Nome and then departing flights.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* At least 15 were seen while in Nome and at Safety Sound to the south of town on 1 June 2011.

Order Charadriiformes —Family Stercorariidae: Jaegers

Pomarine Jaeger *Stercorarius pomarinus* Common passage migrant to Gambell, we found between two and ten nearly daily on our excursions.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus* Slightly less common as a passage migrant to Gambell, we recorded between one and six daily.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* Fairly common passage migrant (and probable breeder south of town), we found between two and six nearly daily.

Order Charadriiformes —Family Alcidae: Auks, Murres, & Puffins

Dovekie *Alle alle* FINALLY we located the few breeders on the Cliffs on 29 May 2011. Five were seen on that day, and an additional two were seen on 1 June before departure. Late snowmelt and snow-covered rocks were our excuse, but this species can be tricky in Gambell, and was missed on our first tour this year.

Common Murre *Uria aalge* Fairly common at the Point, we found between three and thirty throughout the tour.

Thick-billed Murre *Uria lomvia* Common to abundant while at Seawatch and at the Point, we recorded between 25 and 300 daily.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grille* Seemingly a good year for this species, we recorded between one and five daily while at the Point. We were able to closely study the plumage differences between this and the following species.

Pigeon Guillemot *Cephus columba* Fairly common to common passage migrant to the Gambell area, we recorded between ten and seventy daily on our visits to the Point and the north beach areas.

Parakeet Auklet *Aethia psittacula* Common breeder on Gambell, we found between five and one-hundred daily without really trying while at the Point and at the Cliffs to the east.

Least Auklet *Aethia pusilla* Abundant breeder on the cliffs on the north and also to the south below Gambell, we found up to 5000 daily.

Crested Auklet *Aethia cristatella* Abundant breeder in the Gambell area, we saw thousands daily while at the Point. Our high count of 50,000 in two hours paled in comparison with the estimated 2 MILLION that Lehman found passing the Point in 2 ½ hours on 8 June 2011!

Horned Puffin *Fratercula corniculata* A late arrival to the Gambell area for breeding, we found between one and twenty daily, with numbers increasing toward the end of our visit.

Tufted Puffin *Fratercula cirrhata* While this is another late arrival to the breeding cliffs, we found up to twenty-five daily while in Gambell.

Order **Passeriformes** —Family **Corvidae: Crows and Jays**

Common Raven *Corvus corax* Fairly common while in Gambell, especially around the Point and at the dump, we recorded between two and five daily

Order **Passeriformes** —Family **Hirundinidae: Swallows**

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* Not recorded in Gambell, we did see at least six on 1 June 2011 in Nome and at Safety Sound.

Violet-green Swallow *Tachycineta thalassina* Two were south of Nome on 1 June 2011 for the only sightings on the tour.

Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* OK folks, take a deep breath here. While not rare on the mainland, we found one flying over the Near Boneyard on 31 May 2011. Eastern migrants to the west are supposedly just as interesting as western Russian migrants to the east (Gambell), right? This was one of the first sightings in several years at Gambell. We also had two more in the Nome area on 1 June 2011.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* While not recorded in Gambell, we did find one near Nome on 1 June 2011.

Order **Passeriformes** —Family **Turdidae: Thrushes**

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* A lone bird was seen in the Far Boneyard on 27 May 2011 for the only sighting on the tour.

Gray-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* One bird was located on the cliffs to the east of Troutman Lake on 1 June 2011 before our departure. This species is a trans-Beringian migrant, heading to breeding grounds to the west in the Russian Far East.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus* Not recorded while in Gambell, we did find up to six individuals on 1 June to the south of Nome.

American Robin *Turdus migratorius* At least four were seen while in Nome and to the south toward Safety Sound on 1 June 2011.

Order Passeriformes —Family Motacillidae: Wagtails and Pipits

Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis* We recorded about average numbers for the tour while in Gambell, with up to two birds on 1 June, and also seen on two other days. These birds can be tricky to get on to quickly, and some of our looks were at birds flying over while calling.

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* Uncommon to fairly common migrant and breeder at Gambell, we saw or heard between one and four daily while there. By the end of the season we estimated that a total of three pair had taken up residence in the Gambell vicinity.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* We saw and heard two on 1 June 2011 on the west side of town at the Far Boneyard and on the slopes of the mountain.

American "Buff-bellied" Pipit *Anthus rubescens* About average numbers this year, we heard or saw between one and three daily on our rounds, with most at the Near and Far Boneyard, and also along the mountain slope to the east of Troutman Lake.

Order Passeriformes —Family Calcariidae: Longspurs and Snow Buntings

Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus* Common breeder in the Gambell area, we found between eight and twenty daily during our round of the birding areas.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* Common breeder while in Gambell, we recorded them on each day while there, with a high count of 35 on 30 May 2011. Spectacular birds in breeding plumage!



Order **Passeriformes** —Family **Parulidae: Wood-Warblers**

Orange-crowned Warbler *Oreothlypis celata* Not recorded while in Gambell, we did see one to the south of Nome near Safety Sound on 1 June 2011.

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia* Not recorded while in Nome, we found (or heard) up to three while near Nome on 1 June 2011.

Yellow-rumped "Myrtle" Warbler *Dendroica coronata* One was heard singing to the south of Nome on 1 June 2011.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* One was singing to the south of Nome on our last day, 1 June 2011.

Wilson's Warbler *Wilsonia pusilla* Two were south of Nome in the willow thickets for our only sightings on the trip.

Order Passeriformes —Family Emberizidae: Emberizids

American Tree Sparrow *Spizella arborea* Three were seen and heard singing to the south of Nome on our last day in the area, 1 June 2011.

Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* Two singing in the beach grass habitat to the south of Nome on 1 June 2011 was the only sightings this year (but expected there).

“Sooty” Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca unalaschensis* Common breeder to the east of the Nome lowlands, we found two on the way to Safety Sound on 1 June 2011. Keep track of these sightings, as the AOU might be considering a split of this species complex in the future.

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys* Common breeder on the mainland, we observed or heard four on 1 June 2011 to the south of Nome before departure.

Order Passeriformes —Family Fringillidae: Fringilline and Cardueline Finches

Common Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* Fairly common to common breeder in Gambell, we found them nearly every day in small numbers, with a high count of four on 31 May 2011.

Hoary Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni* Common breeder in the Gambell area, we saw between two (low estimate) and sixteen daily while in Gambell.

Mammals

Arctic Ground-Squirrel *Spermophilus undulatus* Common in the Boneyards and along the Cliffs, we found them daily in fairly good numbers with a high of six on 29 May 2011..

Saint Lawrence Island (Nelson’s) Collard Lemming *Dicrostonyx nelsoni* One or two seen on the foothills of the eastern side of Troutman Lake and near the Point on the tour.

Tundra Vole *Microtus oeconomus* Common in the Boneyards daily, with an estimated high of twenty on 30 May 2011.

Arctic Fox *Alopex lagopus* Between one and two seen daily near the Cliffs.

Gray Whale *Eschrichtius robustus* Up to eight seen daily while in Gambell.

Moose *Alces alces* A cow and a calf were seen near Safety Sound on 1 June 2011 before our return to Nome.





My #1 Safety Officer!!