

A BIRDS OF ATTU, ADAK, & THE ALEUTIANS



Terek Sandpiper, Attu, May 26, 2016 (Neil Hayward)

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ATTU 2022—BIRD NOTES

This is a summary of bird species recorded on Attu and birds seen on the pelagic section between Adak and Attu. This will hopefully be instructive reading before the trip, helping you to focus your study on species likely to be seen. Some of the species are extreme rarities that we're not likely to encounter, but since there's a historical precedent for their vagrancy in the Aleutians, they should at least be on our radar. Records from the last century are mainly sourced from *Attu: Birding On The Edge* (Watters, 2003). Attour led 23 spring trips between 1977–2000, and four fall trips in 1979, 1983, 1993, and 2000. More recent records are from Howell, Lewington and Russell (2014), eBird, as well as notes from Zugunruhe trips. The latter led trips in the spring of 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 (not 2020, 2021). This writer was co-leader on Zugunruhe Attu tours in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Rarities to the American Birding Association (ABA) Code 3 and above are indicated by code number after the species name. In the main accounts, numbers in square brackets, [X], indicate number of individuals recorded. Maps and population numbers for breeding seabirds are from Vernon Byrd, Renner and Renner 2005.

Emperor Goose

This elegant goose winters on Attu, but presumably most, if not all, have left by the time we arrive. Recent records on Attu: Jun 2, 2013; May 28, 2014; May 19–22, 2016; May 26, 2019. The species has been recorded six years this century in May–June on Adak.

Greater White-fronted Goose

Only recorded once this century on Attu: May 25–28, 2019, when we also had a Taiga Bean-Goose. Attour only had three spring records. Uncommon on Adak, with spring records in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2018, and 2021.

Lesser White-fronted Goose [5]

Two North American records since 2000, both on St. Paul: Jun 21–26, 2013; and May 26–27, 2020. This species is globally endangered, and sightings will probably only become less frequent.

Tundra Bean-Goose / Taiga Bean-Goose [3]

“Bean Geese” (before they were split) were recorded in 14 years by Attour. Identification to species is not trivial, there is clinal variation between the two and some argue that they shouldn't have been split in the first place! We've seen both species, all Tundra except for one Taiga—and the latter really jumped out at us; the bird was big, and the neck was obvious.

Tundra records

- Attu: May 26–Jun 1, 2017; and May 31–Jun 5, 2019.
- Adak: May 3–12, 2008; May 6, 2009; May 18–24, 2015; May 12, 2018.

Taiga records

- Attu: May 25–Jun 5, 2019; Jun 1, 2017, 2017 (but see checklist comment below).
- Adak: Jun 3, 2006; May 18, 2009

Check out this checklist from Henderson Marsh in June 2017:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S37329412>. I wouldn't feel confident with any of these birds.

Brant

Four spring records from Attou, and only one spring record since: May 30–Jun 3, 2019.
Uncommon spring migrant on Adak.

Cackling Goose

The Aleutian subspecies, *leucopareia*, was on the brink of extinction in the 1970s. There were fewer than 1,000 birds, and those were restricted to islands such as Buldir on which foxes had not been introduced. Following the eradication of foxes, and reintroductions to islands from Buldir and captive-breeding populations, the subspecies has bounced back dramatically. They are now extremely common on Attu (and Adak) and will likely be the first species we'll see as we get close to Attu. They are somewhat of a pest now, littering the island with goose poop.

Whooper Swan [3]

The only records of nesting Whooper Swans for North America are from Attu in 1996 and 1997. There have been no records on Attu since 1999, when swans were seen in May, although there have been a good number of records elsewhere in western Alaska, and more recently from Washington State and British Columbia.

Records in western Alaska this century include:

- Shemya: Mar 21–29, 2008; Apr 12, 2009; Apr 2, 2011; Apr 4–14, 2012; Mar 18, 2016; Dec 29, 2021–Jan 13, 2022.
- St. George: May 15–28, 2003.
- St. Paul: Nov 13, 2018.
- Adak: Feb–Mar 2008; Feb, Apr, 2009; Apr + Oct, 2010; Oct–Nov, 2011; Mar, May 2012; Dec 2013; Dec 2016; May, Dec 2021.

Baikal Teal [4]

Only recorded in the fall, with three records on Attu: Nov 5, 1983; Sep 17, 2006; Aug 20, 2017.
One record for Adak: Sep 9–13, 2012.

Garganey [4]

The population of this species is thought to be declining. It used to be an annual fall migrant to Attu (and perhaps still is?), with spring records in May up to 1994. The latest spring record was Jun 5, 1987, with five birds. Since then, the only record on Attu has been Sep 2001.

There have been records elsewhere in Western Alaska:

- Shemya: May 2005, 2018; as well as fall records in Sep and Oct.
- Adak: May 2011; and fall records in Aug and Sep.
- St. Paul: only fall records, in Sep and Oct.

Northern Shoveler

Annual on Adak, less than annual on Attu.

Gadwall

Uncommon on Adak with spring records this century: May 3–Jun 10, 2008; May 19–28. Uncommon in spring on Attour trips, and not recorded on Attu since.

Falcated Duck [4]

Only one record on Attu this century: Jun 6, 2006. Historically, recorded on the Attour trips: May 27–31, 1980; May 20–Jun 1, 1982; Jun 6, 1985; May 20, 1987; May 12–27, 1991.

Elsewhere, the bird has been recorded more frequently this century:

- Shemya: May 2005, 2015, 2021; Sep 2018
- Adak: May 2002, 2009; Jun 2018
- St. Paul: May 2000

Eurasian Wigeon

Common. Recorded on every spring trip on Attu.

American Wigeon

Much less common on Attu than the preceding species. Attour recorded this duck in only seven springs. This century, it's been recorded only in 2016 and 2018. Almost annual in small numbers on Adak.

Eastern Spot-billed Duck [4]

The only records from Western Alaska this century are both from Adak: May 2007, and May 2021. The only record from Attu is of one returning bird in 1993–1994, seen offshore around Krasni Point, and near the Runway Ponds.

Mallard

Very common. Recorded on both Adak and Attu in the spring.

Northern Pintail

Common, usually recorded on both Adak and Attu in the spring.

Green-winged Teal

Very common duck on both Attu and Adak. Two subspecies meet in this part of the world: the Eurasian subspecies *crecca*, and North American *carolinensis*. These two taxa are considered separate species by some authorities (but not the AOS/ABA). The American subspecies *carolinensis* is uncommon on Adak, where it is usually outnumbered by *crecca*. That's about as far west as the American taxon is found; all recent records on Attu are the nominate Eurasian *crecca* (although note that Attour did have an American subspecies). As well as checking subspecies, 2e should be looking through these flocks for Garganey!

Canvasback

Two spring records from Attour: May 17–20, 1989; May 20, 1990. No records since. The species is a rare winterer on Adak, with a late date of May 3, 2008.

Common Pochard [3]

A regular wintering species / spring migrant to Attu (no fall records). In the Attour days, they were recorded in 14 out of 23 years. Since then, there have been **no records on Attu!** The only records this century from Western Alaska are:

- St. Paul: May 2006, 2007, 2017, 2018; Oct 2014
- Adak: May, Jun 2009; Jan 2020

Tufted Duck [3]

A regular wintering species / spring migrant to Attu. Seen on the last six Zugunruhe trips, with a max count of 20 in 2016, though most years were ones and twos. Annual on Adak, although not always seen in May–Jun.

Greater Scaup

Common, usually recorded on both Adak and Attu in the spring.

Steller's Eider

Rare, but the most likely “rare” or non-Common eider. The species apparently winters around Attu but is usually gone before spring trips; Attour recorded the species on only seven trips.

There is only one documented record this century from Attu of a female, May 29–Jun 4, 2014. Adak has a few records this century, including a long-staying spring bird from May 15–Jun 6, 2011.

Spectacled Eider

Rare. One individual on Attu from May 17, 1993–2002. No other spring records. Two fall records on Attu: Sep 19, 2001; Sep 13, 2018 (Mark Obmascik!). Only one record for Adak: Sep 28, 2021.

King Eider

Rare. Not recorded on Attu this century, although Attour recorded every spring except four years. Shemya has one record from May 17, 2002, which is the only record west of Adak this century. Adak has a handful of recent records: May 14–19, 2005; May 18, 2011; May 15, 2013; May 16–Jun 6, 2019.

Harlequin Duck

Common on Attu, but apparently do not breed. Seen every day, with a high count of 175. Less common around Adak.

Surf Scoter

Unrecorded on Attu. Uncommon and less than annual spring migrant on Adak, which is about as far west as this species ranges.

White-winged Scoter

Less than annual on Attu and not as common as Black Scoter, with Attour recording the species on 15 spring trips. Records this century on Attu include May 29, 2014; May 26, 2016 [2]; Jun 22, 2018 [2]; May 31, 2019.

These records are all before the split with Stejneger's Scoter, and future trips should carefully document any "white-winged" scoter. Annual in good numbers on Adak.

Stejneger's Scoter [3]

White-winged Scoter was split in 2019 into three species: White-winged Scoter (breeds and winters in North America); Stejneger's Scoter (breeds in northeast Eurasia); and Velvet Scoter (western Eurasia). There are two records of Stejneger's Scoter from Attu: Aug 20, 2017; Jun 22, 2018 [2]. Shemya reported a bird on May 24, 2021. The species has yet to be recorded on Adak. Nome may be the most reliable place to find this duck in the ABA region, with records from May 31 into June.

Black Scoter

The most common scoter. Annual on Adak and almost annual on Attu.

Long-tailed Duck

No spring records this century. Attour would record these early in the trips (they overwintered in good numbers), although not every year. The species is annual in spring on Adak in very small numbers.

Bufflehead

Annual and reliable in small numbers on Adak. Much less common on Attu; recorded this century only in 2012 and 2017.

Common Goldeneye

Annual in small numbers. Always worth checking for the rarer Barrow's Goldeneye.

Barrow's Goldeneye

Recorded by Attour on five spring trips. Since then, two spring records this century: May 21–23, 2017; May 26, 2018. Adak has a handful of records: May 18–19, 2007; May 12–21, 2008; May 20, 2010; May 13–13, 2018.

Smew [3]

Recorded almost annually by Attour (17 springs). Less common on Attu now, but still seen on the following Zugunruhe trips: May 22–23, 2012; May 31–Jun 6, 2013 [2]; May 22–Jun 1, 2017. We've seen birds on Smew Pond, as well as Runway Ponds. In all cases, the ducks are extremely skittish, and most views are of startled birds in flight. Adak has been a reliable place in the spring, although no records since 2016: May 12, 2005; May 18–24, 2006 [2]; May 14–20, 2007; May 19–21, 2008; May 16–20, 2010; May 12, 2011; May 19–20, 2014; May 14–28, 2015 [2]; May 12–13, 2016 [2]. The 2016 pair was on Contractor Marsh, although others have been on Clam Lagoon.

Hooded Merganser

Unrecorded on Attu. The only Aleutian record is from Adak: May 26–27, 2018.

Common Merganser

Recorded almost annually on Attu by Attour, and all records seem to be of the palearctic nominate race, *merganser* (Goosander). Records this century on Attu: Jun 1–4, 2014; May 20, 2016; May 20–26, 2017; May 29, 2018; May 25–Jun 2, 2019. Less common on Adak, with the last record from 2018. Interestingly, both sub-species have been recorded on Adak. When seen well, identification to subspecies should not be problematic. According to National Geographic:

Old World “Goosander” (nominate *merganser*) lacks visible dark bar on wing. Note different bill shape and feathering around bill. Adult males have different head shape with steeper forehead and puffier rear to head.

Red-breasted Merganser

Common. Recorded daily on both Attu and Adak.

Rock Ptarmigan

Breed on Attu and Adak. There are 10 subspecies in Alaska, including:

- *evermanni* on Attu and Agattu.
- *townsendi* on Kiska (and Little Kiska, Amchitka, and Little Sitkin).
- *atkhensis* on Adak (and Tanaga, Kanaga, and Atka).

Anecdotally, this species was very common on Attu from Attour days when they could be found wandering around near sea level. That’s not the case now—you need to hike up a mountain (e.g., Weston) to see them. On Adak, they are usually much easier, and a drive around Clam Lagoon will often flush a few.

Horned Grebe

Uncommon to rare on Attu. Recorded only two years this century: May 18, 2012; and Jun 3, 2017. Annual on Adak.

Red-necked Grebe

The most common grebe on Attu, and seen almost annually: 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2019 (missed in 2017 and 2018). Annual on Adak.

Oriental Turtle-Dove [4]

Two historical records from Attu: May 20–Jun 10, 1989 (third North American record); May 26–Jun 3, 1996. The only records from Western Alaska this century are:

- Dutch Harbor: Jun 2, 2018.
- Gambell: Oct 2011.

Common Cuckoo [3]

Recorded by Attour on 10 of their spring trips. Almost all were in the first week of June, although the earliest was May 21, 1994. Since then, recorded only once on Attu: May 31, 2013 [2]

The species is more regular on Adak (certainly better coverage, and perhaps the later date helps). Spring records on Adak: Jun 30, 2009; Jun 17–19, 2011; Jun 6–8, 2014 [2]; May 26–May 30, 2021.

Oriental Cuckoo [4]

Not recorded on Attu since Attour trips, for which there were three spring records: Jun 4, 1987; May 27–30, 1991; Jun 3–5, 2000. There have been records elsewhere this century:

Shemya: Jun 23, 2007.

St. Paul: Sep 2004; Jun 2–16, 2014; Jun 5–9, 2018.

Adak: Sep 2004.

White-throated Needletail [5]

Two records from Attu last century: May 24–25, 1978; May 27, 1984. The only western Alaskan record this century is from St. Paul: Jun 29–Jul 1, 2015.

Pacific Swift [4]

Previously known as Fork-tailed Swift, this species is more commonly recorded in the ABA areas as a fall migrant, but with some good chances in the spring throughout western Alaska:

Attu: Jun 3–4, 1987; May 14, 1992; Sep 2004; Oct 2000, 2010.

Shemya: Aug 2007; Sep–Oct 2010.

St. Paul: Jun 6, 2011; Jun 14; Jul 2010; Aug 2003; Sep 2013.

Adak: Sep 2004, 2021.

Sandhill Crane

Seen by Attour in eight years springs, and then only as flyovers. Not seen on Attu this century, although Shemya has springs records from five years this century. Seen on Adak in four springs this century.

Black Oystercatcher

Very rare on Attu. The large distance between Buldir and the Near Islands may be too great for individuals to fly. The only records from Attu are: Jun 26, 2006, and Jun 1, 2017. Common on Adak, and usually seen around Clam Lagoon.

Black-bellied Plover

Recorded by Attour on five springs, and once since then on May 30, 2013. One spring record for Adak on May 17, 2021.

American Golden-Plover

Unrecorded on Attu. One spring record on Adak: May 21–24, 2005.

Pacific Golden-Plover

Recorded annually on Attu by Attour (peak May 21) and Zugunruhe Tours. Most are calling flyovers. Annual also on Adak.

Lesser Sand-Plover [3]

Formerly common; Attour recorded this plover in 20 spring trips. Since then, the species has only been recorded in two springs: May 24, 2012; May 25–Jun 4, 2019 [multiple birds]. The distribution pattern seems to peak earlier than Terek Sandpiper / Common Sandpiper (last week of May) when we typically arrive, so it may be that we are missing most of these by getting to Attu later. Although we found these birds on Alexai Point, they generally favor more sandy beaches.

In May 2018, we stopped at Kiska due to bad weather, and found a bird on the harbor beach on May 21–22. Shemya has been more reliable this century: May 18–20, 2002; May 17, 2006; May 19–20, 2008; May 18+25, 2011; May 24–26, 2015; May 22, 2016; May 15–Jun 5.

The species is more common as a fall migrant (four years) on Adak, but with the following spring records: May 16, 2002; Jun 3, 2005; May 25, 2017.

Common Ringed Plover [3]

Despite this species breeding in western Alaska (St. Lawrence Island) it is recorded mostly as a fall migrant and is much rarer in the spring. Attu, for example, has only one spring record: 16–26 May 1982, and at least four fall records, all in Sep. St. Paul only has 1 spring record: Jun 11, 2018. Both this species, and Semipalmated Plover are rare on Attu, and so any *Charadrius* plover we find is going to be scrutinized carefully! (We have seen Semipalmated Plover on Adak, where it's less uncommon.)

Semipalmated Plover

Four spring records from Attu: May 27, 1992; Jun 1–2, 1998; Jun 13, 2000; May 20, 2012. Common spring migrant (and breeder) on Adak.

Little Ringed Plover [5]

The only records from the Near Islands are Attu on May 19–29, 1986, and Shemya on May 18, 1988. There have been no records in North America this century.

Bristle-thighed Curlew

This species probably migrates further north than Attu, although Attour did detect some as spring migrants: May 29, 1986; May 17, 1984; Jun 2–4, 1993; May 16+22, 1999. There have been none recorded on Attu since 1999. Adak seems to have more luck (or more observers?), with records in: May 23–24, 2007; May 17, 2008; May 25–26, 2014. The species is not uncommon as a spring migrant on St. Paul.

Whimbrel

Attour reported this bird every spring except 1988. It has only been recorded twice on Attu since then: Jun 2, 2013; May 31, 2014. Both records involve the pale-rumped Siberian subspecies, *variegatus*. The species is more common on Adak, although less than annual. Almost all records on Adak involve the Asian *variegatus* subspecies, although there are records of the brown-backed *hudsonicus* subspecies that breeds in North America. Attu and Buldir both have single records of *hudsonicus*.

Far Eastern Curlew [4]

Attour recorded this species on 10 spring trips, usually the last week of May and the first week of June. Since then, there have been 3 records on Attu: May 31, 2013; Jun 1, 2017; May 27, 2018. These records were all either on, or flying over, Alexai Point. Shemya has records during the same time period: May 12, 2006; May 19–20, 2021. Adak has also been a good place to see this species, which we've seen twice upon our return from Attu: May 24, Jun 9, 2005; May 26–Jun 4, 2017; May 29–Jun 2, 2016.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Recorded annually by Attour. Since then, it's been less than annual (although with much less coverage): May 15–24, 2012; Jun 3–4, 2013; May 30, 2014; Jun 1, 2017; May 27–29, 2018. The species is annual to Adak, often coming in off north winds (which seems poor weather for every other species).

Black-tailed Godwit [3]

Formerly relatively common during the Attour days, with the species recorded in 13 spring trips with a range of dates from May 19–Jun 10. Most years there were fewer than three birds, but incredibly in 1998 there was a peak of 35 birds! It took almost 20 years before the next post-Attour record: May 26–28, 2018. We found this bird in one of the ponds between the runway and Casco Cove, near Kingfisher Creek. Other records from western Alaska:

Shemya: May 27, 2005; May 26–27, 2011; May 24–26, 2015; May 25, 2019.

Buldir: May 28, 2018.

Adak: May 27–31, 1998; May 13, 2005; May 21–30, 2009; May 22–28, 2015.

Ruddy Turnstone

Recorded by Attour every spring. Rarer since then, with singles on Jun 2, 2013; May 22–29, 2017; and 1–2 birds on May 25–26, 2019. Rare, but essentially annual in spring on Adak.

Great Knot [4]

All three records of Great Knot on Attu are from Alexai Point: May 10, 21, 1998; Jun 4, 2000; May 25–26, 2019. Other spring records include:

Shemya: May 24, 1976; May 24, 2011.

Adak: Jun 4, 1971.

St. Paul: May 29–30, 1996; May 21–22, 2000; May 23–26, 2007.

Despite the rarity of this species, its more common than the following species.

Red Knot

One record from Attu on May 20 and 22, 1979. Shemya also has only one record, from Aug 17, 2007. There are three records from Adak: Dec 8, 2010; Nov 1, 2011; Sep 11–14, 2016.

Ruff [3]

A regular spring migrant to Attu, being recorded on 14 out of 23 spring Attour trips (May 14–Jun 8). Not recorded on Zugunruhe trips, and not recorded at all on Attu this century. Nearby Shemya has spring records in May 23, 2005; May 17–31, 2006. We've had more luck with Ruff in the spring on Adak, with May records in 2005, 2014, 2015, 2016.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper [3]

Almost exclusively a fall migrant (and then of juveniles) to western Alaska, although there are a few spring records:

Attu: recorded on 6 Attour spring trips, with the last one being Jun 4, 2000.

Shemya: 1 spring record May 23–24, 2018

Adak: no spring records

Curlew Sandpiper [3]

There are only two historical records on Attu: May 20, 1982; Jun 5, 1996. The species has not been recorded in the Aleutians since 2000. St. Paul is a better place to find this vagrant in Alaska: May 20–24, 2018 (only spring record); and a few Aug and Sep records.

Temminck's Stint [3]

The nemesis bird! At least for this writer. This species seems to have been an almost regular spring migrant, with birds recorded in 1979, 1981, 1982, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1998, and 1999.

Some years, there were incredible numbers (40+ in 1991). Since 1999, there have been no records on Attu. Nearby Shemya has had more luck recently with three records: May 27, 2005; Sep 10, 2006; Aug 19, 2007. Adak is arguably the best place now to find this bird in the ABA area, although note the very narrow window of records in May (when we're in Attu!):

Adak: May 27–28, 2016; May 25, 2018; May 26, 2021; Sep 2004.

Other spring records in Western Alaska include:

St Paul: May 22, 2000; May 15, 2002.

Long-toed Stint [3]

The most common stint. Attour recorded them every year, often in multiples, and we've had them every year since 2016: May 18–22, 2012; May 20–26, 2016; May 25, 2017; May 24–25, 2018; May 28–Jun 2, 2019. We've had them on rocky beaches as well as marshy habitat in Henderson Marsh as well as the Runway Ponds. Much less common further east, with only one record on Adak: May 31, 2002.

Spoon-billed Sandpiper [4]

The dream bird! Recorded just once on Attu: May 30–Jun 3, 1986. There is one fall record from St. Paul: Aug 20, 1989. The last record in North America was from north Alaska on Jun 27, 1993, and there have been no records since. And given how globally threatened this species is, perhaps we shouldn't hope for any lost birds.

Red-necked Stint [3]

Almost annual in the Attour days (19 out of 23 spring trips), and one of the more common rare shorebirds with multiple individuals seen in one day. Recent records on Attu and Adak include,

Attu: May 26–Jun 1, 2017; May 24–25, 2018; May 28–30, 2019

Adak: May 31–Jun 2, 2002; May 25–27, 2011; May 24–26, 2015 and Jun 13–14, 2015; May 23–26, 2017 (up to 62 birds!!!). The species is also recorded in the fall on Adak.

Sanderling

Rare on Attu, with only a handful of records, mostly of fall birds. There have been no spring records this century. Shemya does have more recent spring records: May 29, 2005; May 20–22, 2008; May 12–15; Jun 2–4, 2021. On Attu, the species is recorded annually as fall migrants, but less than annual in spring.

Dunlin

Attour recorded Dunlin every spring trip except one. Since then, there have been only two spring records: May 21–29, 2017; and Jun 3, 2019; and one fall record on Sep 12, 2004. Dunlin are more common on Adak, but less than annual in spring. The last spring record was in May 2017.

Rock Sandpiper

Common throughout the Aleutians. The subspecies *couesi* breeds on Attu and throughout the Aleutians. The Kamchatka subspecies that breeds on Bering Island and the Commander Islands, *quarta*, is casual migrant to Attu and western Aleutians in spring. But note the difficulty of identifying to subspecies in the field.

Baird's Sandpiper

Attour recorded this species rarely in the fall, and once in the spring: Jun 1–2, 1985. There have been no Attu records this century. Shemya has an old spring record from May 16, 1977, and one fall record in Sep 2021. Adak has fall records from six years, and no spring records.

Little Stint

More commonly found in Alaska in the fall; there's only one spring record on Attu: May 23–25, 1991. There have been no records on Attu this century. Other spring records from western Alaska this century include:

Shemya: May 9, 2019.

St Paul: Jun 16–17, 2017.

Adak: May 28–29, 2018.

Buldir: May 31, 2017.

Pectoral Sandpiper

Common fall migrant for Attour, but only recorded in eight spring trips. Since then, May 27, 2018; May 30, 2019. Uncommon spring migrant to Adak in 2005, 2007, 2018, 2019.

Semipalmated Sandpiper

One record for Attu: May 27, 1980; and one record for Adak: May 24–27, 2018.

Western Sandpiper

Rare. Attour had three spring records: May 20, 1982; Jun 3–4, 1984; Jun 6, 1998. Two spring records on Adak: May 22–24, 2006; May 25, 2016; and May 18, 2021.

Short-billed Dowitcher

Two Attour records: May 22, 1994; and May 19–22, 1997. There have been no records since, and the species is unrecorded on Adak.

Long-billed Dowitcher

Attour recorded this species on 4 spring trips, between May 19–25. There have been none since, although Shemya has two recent spring records: May 8–16, 2011, and May 25–27, 2021. The only spring Adak record is: May 28, 2019.

Solitary Snipe [5]

The first of only two North American records is from Attu: May 24, 2010. The bird was flushed from the stream at the base of Alexai Point (near where we usually stop for lunch / snack!). This matches the micro-habitat preference for this species—often near running water (although on breeding grounds usually at high altitude, 1,500–5,000m). The other record is from the fall at St. Paul: Sep 10–24, 2018.

Common Snipe [3]

Probable breeder on Attu and perhaps Adak, where courtship displays are seen (and heard)—Contractor Marsh for Adak, and Henderson Marsh for Attu. Adak is as far east as this species ranges along the Aleutian chain, and the island provides a great opportunity to see both species (at about the same frequency) displaying.

Wilson's Snipe

The North American species ranges as far west as Adak and is apparently unrecorded on Attu.

Pin-tailed Snipe [5]

Seem to prefer slightly drier habitat than Common Snipe, with records from Attu on: May 25, 1991; May 19–30, 1998; May 31, 2014; May 22, 2016. The only other records in North America are:

St. Paul: Jul 28–Aug 26, 2012.

Gambell: May 26–27, 2016.

Terek Sandpiper [3]

One of the more common of the rare shorebirds, with records from three of the last four spring trips to Attu: May 26, 2016; May 29, 2018; May 28–30, 2019. Most of these were from Alexai Point, with the most recent bird coming from Barbara Point. In the Attour Days, they recorded this species on nine spring trips, with the same timing: the last week of May and the first week of June. Records from Adak are in the last week of May: May 30–31, 2007; May 25–26, 2021.

Red-necked Phalarope

Spring migrant, breeder in eastern Aleutians, and possible rare breeder in western Aleutians. More common as a fall migrant on Attu, where it has not been seen this century in the spring. More common on Adak, especially Contractor Marsh in the spring.

Red Phalarope

Spring migrant throughout the Aleutians, and more likely to be seen at sea on the way to and from Attu. The only Attu records this century are: May 29, 2013 [30]; May 31, 2014; May 30, 2017; and Aug 20, 2017 [1,250].

Common Sandpiper [3]

Like Terek Sandpiper, one of the more reliable of the rare shorebirds, with the same temporal distribution as that species—primarily the last week of May. Attour recorded this species in 21 out of 23 spring trips, from May 16–Jun 10. We recorded this species recently in each of our four last trips: Jun 4, 2013; May 26, 2016; May 30, 2017; May 24–25, 2018; May 28–30, 2019. Most have been seen on rocks, on Alexai Point, Gilbert Ridge, and around Navy Town Beach (very different habitat from the freshwater streams and ponds with which you might be familiar with this species and the similar Spotted Sandpiper). Spring records from Adak are in the last week of May: May 25, 2005; May 26, 2015; May 22–25, 2017.

Green Sandpiper [4]

Spring records from Attu are all from Attour: Jun 13, 1978; May 22, 1979; May 18, 1982; May 21, 1989; May 18, 1998. The species has not been recorded in Attu since. The only records from Alaska this century are:

St. Paul: May 16, 2013; Sep 19–24, 2017.

Gambell: May 24, 2009; Jun 13, 2016.

Gray-tailed Tattler [3]

Both species of tattler were recorded annually by Attour, and in most years (15 out of 22) Wandering Tattler was more common than Gray-tailed. Based on Attour data, Wandering peaked slightly earlier (May 27) compared to Gray-tailed (Jun 1). The ratio between the two species has flipped for recent Zugunruhe trips, with Gray-tailed the most common: May 26, 2016 [5]; May 30–31, 2017 [2]; May 24–25, 2018 [3]; May 28–30, 2019 [at least 6 birds]. Gray-tailed is much rarer on Adak than Attu, with only one spring record: May 23–31, 2006.

Wandering Tattler

Despite seeing good numbers of Gray-tailed Tattlers, we've missed Wandering Tattler on our last three trips. Records this century from Attu are: May 30, 2005 [2]; May 15, 2012 [1]; May 29, 2014 [1]; May 20–26, 2016 [1]. Wandering Tattler is recorded less than annually on Adak in the spring.

Spotted Redshank [4]

Another shorebird whose global population decline has probably contributed to its disappearance from western Alaska. Attour recorded this species in seven springs (between May 18–May 31). Henderson Marsh is probably the best habitat for this species. It has not been seen in the spring this century on Attu. In fact, the only spring record this century from Alaska is from Adak on May 25,29, 2018.

Greater Yellowlegs

No records on Attu. Adak has a single record: Sep 20, 2019.

Common Greenshank [3]

Recorded on 17 out of 23 spring trips by Attour (and never in the fall). Dates are from May 11–Jun 7 with a peak of May 20–21. Records from Attu this century: May 18–23, 2012; May 30–Jun 2, 2017; May 26, 2018; May 30, 2019. Birds have been seen along Navy Beach, and the Runway Ponds. The species is almost annual on Adak: Jun 3–4, 2005; May 19, 2006; May 31–Jun 2, 2008; Jun 3, 2009; May 21, 2011; May 29, 2012; May 22, 2015; May 23, 2017; May 27–28, 2018; May 30, 2019.

Lesser Yellowlegs

One record for Attu: Jun 4, 1988. Adak also has a single record: Aug 5, 2012.

Wood Sandpiper

Arguably the most common “rare” shorebird on Attu, and probably a rare breeder there. The maximum seen was 700 in one day in 1998. It’s been found every year on recent Zugunruhe tours: May 16–17, 2012 [1 max]; May 31–Jun 2, 2013 [1]; May 20–26, 2016 [21]; May 23–30, 2017 [2]; May 24–May 29, 2018 [5]; May 25–Jun 5, 2019 [7]. Henderson Marsh and especially the Runway Ponds have been reliable spots.

Oriental Pratincole [5]

The only Attu record was the first for North America: May 19–20, 1985. Pratincole Cove was named for this bird! We’ll be checking here (and elsewhere) for pratincoles. This would be a huge find!

Pomarine Jaeger

The second most common jaeger, ranging from a high of three birds in 2016, to being entirely missed in 2019.

Parasitic Jaeger

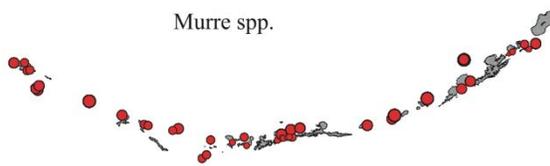
The most common and expected jaeger. This is the only jaeger species to breed in the Aleutians (where most are dark phase birds). Most commonly seen at sea, occasionally from land on Attu and very commonly on Adak, especially loafing around on Clam Lagoon.

Long-tailed Jaeger

The least common jaeger. Reported once this century from Attu: May 23, 2012, and more reliably from Adak.

Common Murre

Nest in mixed colonies with Thick-billed Murres, which are much more abundant. Total Aleutian population of murre species is about 225,000. Colonies throughout the Aleutians, with largest in western Aleutians on Buldir. There's a definite and almost reciprocal distribution pattern for these two murre species: Common near land, and Thick-billed on the open seas. We see this species almost daily from Attu and Adak (and very rarely Thick-billed). High counts in the tens.

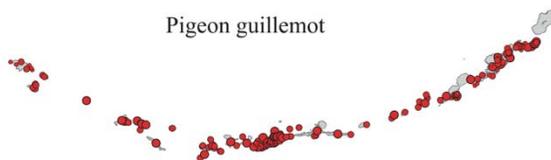


Thick-billed Murre

See Common Murre above for distribution patterns. Common in large numbers out to sea, with high counts in the hundreds and rarely thousands. In good light, color easily separates Thick-billed from Common Murre: black vs brown, respectively.

Pigeon Guillemot

Uncommon breeder throughout the Aleutians (total population about 15,000), with about 300 on Buldir. Seen daily on open sea, usually between 10–80 birds. Two breeding subspecies: *columba* in eastern Aleutians, and *kaiurka* in central and western Aleutians.



Long-billed Murrelet [3]

No records from Attu. The only record from the Aleutians is from Adak on May 17, 2016. This species, breeds around Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk south to northern Japan (Hokkaido), and it's always worth checking every Marbled Murrelet for this species.

Marbled Murrelet

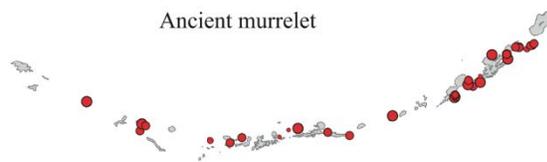
Usually seen in small numbers (tens) around Attu, and especially in western section of Clam Lagoon on Adak.

Kittlitz's Murrelet

Often found in Massacre Bay in small numbers, although missed in 2016. Annual on Adak, where usually easily found among the Marbled Murrelets in western part of Clam Lagoon.

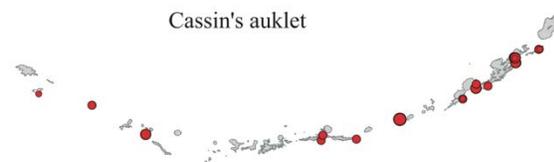
Ancient Murrelet

Breeder throughout the Aleutians (total population about 48,000), with largest numbers on Buldir (none on Kiska). Seen in small numbers (rarely above a few tens) on pelagic sections. Also, from Adak and Attu.



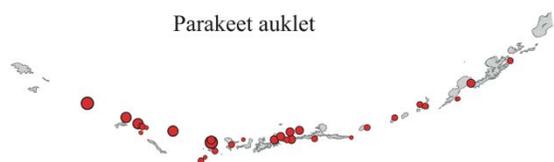
Cassin's Auklet

Breeder throughout the Aleutians (total population about 140,000). Most of the breeding colonies are in the eastern Aleutians with very low numbers on Buldir (400) and more on the Rat Islands (3,500). We've often missed this bird, and when seen, only in 1s or 2s on the pelagic sections, near the Rat Islands, and more reliably closer to Adak.



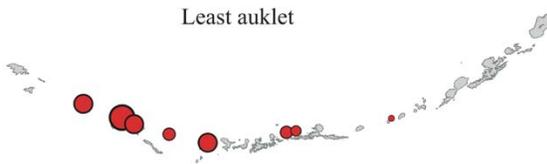
Parakeet Auklet

Breeder throughout the Aleutians (total population about 69,000), with about 12,000 on Buldir and 110 on Attu. Seen daily on pelagic sections, with high counts of up to 50 birds.



Least Auklet

The most common alcid, with a total Aleutian population of more than 5 million birds (at least 1 million of which nest on Kiska). We see these in the tens and hundreds on pelagic sections, and clouds in the thousands at Sirius Point, Kiska. We've often seen predation of Least Auklets by Glaucous-winged Gulls, that pluck them out of the water if the latter are too slow to dive to safety.



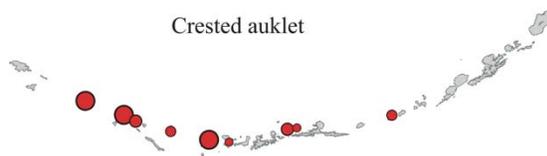
Whiskered Auklet

Common but very local breeder, with Aleutian population at least 100,000 birds. Huge concentrations in Little Tanaga Strait, where we've seen up to 9,000 birds. This is a few hours east of Adak, and we usually visit this on the last day of the trip, after returning from Attu. When we've anchored in the strait the night before, we've had this species land on the boat, and we've had the bird in the hand! Occasionally we've seen small numbers between Adak and Attu, but tough views.



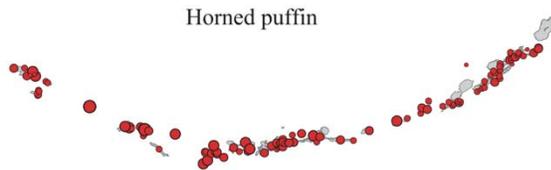
Crested Auklet

Very common in pelagic sections. Seen in tens, sometimes hundreds, and occasionally in the thousands. The Aleutian population numbers at least 1 million birds, with huge numbers on Kiska (Sirius Point) nesting with Least Auklets.



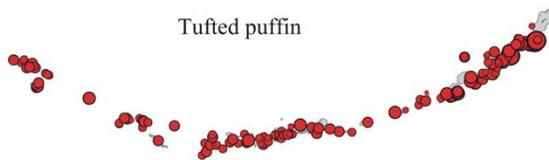
Horned Puffin

Note different biological strategies for the two puffin species. Horned is a crevice nester, and feeds close to shore. Tufted is a burrow nester, and feeds offshore. Seen in lower numbers on pelagic sections than the other species, but still usually seen every day. Does not breed on Attu, but occasionally seen from shore.



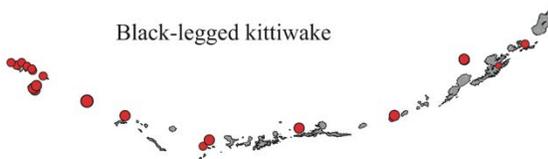
Tufted Puffin

Seen in good numbers on the pelagic sections (in the tens every day), and almost always outnumbering Horned Puffin. Tufted Puffins nest on Attu on “Puffin Island” next to Barbara Point, from which we can get good views. We’ve had high counts of up to 50 birds on Attu. Much less common off Adak.



Black-legged Kittiwake

Common, usually recorded every day at sea in the low tens. Breeds throughout the western Aleutians (population about 53,800) with the largest populations at Buldir (44,280) and Agattu (7,400).



Red-legged Kittiwake

Usually seen in small numbers, usually as we approach waters around Buldir, which is the most significant breeding colony of this species in the Aleutians. (Others include Bogoslof and Koniuji, which are east of Adak.) Aleutian birds represent less than 20 percent of the global population, 80 percent of which breeds in the Pribilofs.



Sabine's Gull

Very rare in the western Aleutians. Recorded by Attour on three fall trips. One record from Adak, May 23–27, 2004.

Black-headed Gull

Almost annual on Attu, with records in three out of the last four years: May 26, 2006; May 22–23, 2007 [2]; May 24–27, 2018. Almost annual on Adak, too, and also missed in 2019.

Ross's Gull

One record from Attu: May 20, 1999, and none from Adak. There are no records from the Aleutians this century.

Black-tailed Gull [4]

There have been two records from Attu: May 29, 1980; May 14, 2000. Spring records this century away from Attu have been Shemya: Jun 17, 2007; May 22, 2008; and Buldir on Jun 8, 2007. Adak has a single record on Jul 7, 2012.

Common Gull [3]

Previously known as Mew Gull (Kamchatka), before split in 2021 of Mew Gull into the Eurasian Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and the North American Short-billed Gull (*L. brachyrhynchus*). Recorded in nine springs on Attu by Attour, although the only spring record this century is from May 13–Jun 13, 2000. More recent records from the western Aleutians are Shemya, May 21, 2011, and Buldir, May 30, 2018. Adak has only two records: Nov 18, 1990; and May 21, 2006.

These birds are *kamtschatschensis* the largest subspecies of Common Gull, with relatively more robust bill that is thicker and more parallel-sided than other races; black extends basally to near tips of primary coverts on P8-P9; P1-P7 usually with white spot between gray and black; mantle medium gray; eye generally pale yellow.

Short-billed Gull

Previously known as Mew Gull, split in 2021 from the three Eurasian Mew Gull subspecies, which are now known as Common Gull. Rarely ranges as far west as Adak (no records on Attu), with records from Adak on: May 21–Jun 2, 2005; May 25–29, 2008; and Dec 8, 2021.

Separation of Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) from Common Gull (*L. canus*) can be challenging. This Eurasian species averages larger in body and bill size, is usually only finely spotted on head and neck in definitive basic plumage, and has more extensive black on outer three primaries, extending to or nearly to primary coverts on outer two primaries. Although this difference is best determined on specimens, it may be discerned in flight or on resting birds. On folded wing, Short-billed shows only a narrow black line along outer primary bordered by gray on remaining primaries visible below tertials and behind line of folded secondaries, whereas Common shows a distinct angle of black from lower edge of tertials forward and down to outer edge of primaries. This feature may not be visible in the field, depending on bird's posture. Adult has yellower bill and legs, the former often with a dark subterminal bar even in summer. In adult *kamtschatschensis* the iris can be pale straw-colored, mid-brown or dark.

Herring Gull (Vega)

Annual on Attu as single birds. All likely to be Vega or Siberian Gull (*Larus argentatus vegae*), which has a darker mantle than American (*smithsonianus*) birds. Herring Gulls have black wingtips, unlike Glaucous-winged Gulls, in which the wingtips are the same color as the mantle. Vega appears as far east as Adak, which is about as far west as *smithsonianus* range, and thus the island hosts both subspecies.

The *vegae* subspecies breeds across northeastern Siberia (east of the Taimyr Peninsula) and on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. It is regular in spring and autumn throughout the Bering Sea region of Alaska and on the western Aleutian Islands. The adult is similar to *L. a. smithsonianus*, but the mantle is medium gray, the orbital ring is orange-red and the legs and feet are often yellow in the western part of its range. First-cycle birds are similar to *L. a. smithsonianus*, but the base of the outer rectrices have extensive pale marks.

Slaty-backed Gull [3]

Two records on Attu this century, both adults: May 17, 2012; and Jun 1, 2014. Recorded annually by Attour except for two years. Less than annual on Adak in spring.

Glaucous-winged Gull

The default gull throughout the Aleutians (total population estimated at 56,500 birds). We usually record this every day of the trip, on Adak, on the sea, and on Attu. Numbers are in the 10s to 100s, although can be scarce on large open areas of sea away from islands. Breeding residents throughout the Aleutians, with colonies on islands that lack foxes, or from which foxes have been removed. Attu may be the largest colony in the western Aleutians, with 5,818 birds.

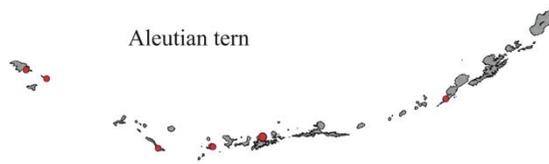
Glaucous Gull

Rare on Attu. We recorded this species bird with in 2017 [1] and 2019 [2]. Attour noted the species in 19 spring trips. More frequent on Adak in the spring, but not recorded every year.

Glaucous Gulls breed north of the Aleutians, from coastal western Alaska around to the north coast, and in the Chukotski Peninsula in the Russian Far East.

Aleutian Tern

Almost annual on Attu (we missed it in 2017), with a flock of 50 birds in 2019. Attour recorded this species nesting around the Runway Ponds, something we've sadly never witnessed. It's unclear whether the species still nests on Attu (we've never seen nesting behavior). The species is more commonly recorded at Clam Lagoon on Adak, although we've often left for Attu by the time these birds first arrive. Their loud, House Sparrow-like calls are often the first clue to their presence.



White-winged Tern [4]

One record on Attu of a single bird on Alexai Point on May 19–21, 1994. There are two records in western Alaska this century: Adak, Jul 5, 2009; and St. Paul, Jun 3–8, 2004.

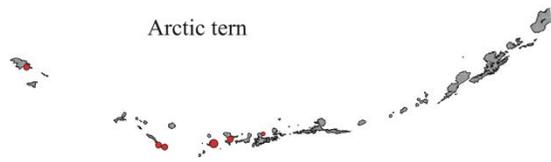
Common Tern

Attour recorded this species in eight spring trips, with only one record since: Sep 10, 2004. Adak also has one record this century, incredibly two days after the Attu record!

This is the *longipennis* subspecies (“River Tern”) which breeds from east-central Siberia east to the Gulf of Anadyr and south to northeastern China. It winters in the western Pacific Ocean south to Australia. In breeding condition, the bill is wholly black (sometimes with a slight reddish base), and the legs and feet are dark reddish brown to black. Compared to *Sterna hirundo hirundo* (central Canada east to western Siberia), *longipennis* also appears rounder-bodied with a smaller, more domed head and slightly longer wings.

Arctic Tern

Adak is the best place to see this species (or better still, in Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage before you get on the plane!). Reported annually on Attu in the 1980s, they then disappeared (one record in 1990s, on May 27, 1992). We only recorded once in 2019, with one bird on May 30, and then a flock of 27 birds on Jun 1.



Red-throated Loon

Common breeding bird on Attu and generally recorded every day. Usually detected by its diagnostic call as it flies overhead.

Arctic Loon [3]

Rare. Recorded only three years this century on Attu. Annual on Adak.

Pacific Loon

Less than annual on Attu, with no more than one bird. Attour recorded both Pacific and Arctic loons on Attu, with the former outnumbering the latter by two to one. Today, like the previous species, Pacific Loons are (much) more reliable at Adak.

Common Loon

True to its name, the most common loon, usually seen every day on Attu.

Yellow-billed Loon

We had one bird in breeding plumage present throughout our last tour in 2019: May 27–Jun 5. Apart from a single record on May 31, 2013, that's the only record this century. The species was formerly recorded every year by Attour. The species is annual on Adak.

Laysan Albatross

This is the trip to see Laysan Albatross! (famous last words...). Seen every day on the open seas. Usually more than 10 a day, average about 100, daily high of 650.

Black-footed Albatross

Usually, the rarest of the three albatross species. Recorded in each of the past four Attu trips. They may move to the area later than Short-taileds, as in two of those years, we only got them on the way back to Adak (late May / June). Numbers:

2016: May 27 [1]; May 28 [3]

2017: May 22 [1]; May 24 [1]; Jun 2 [1]; Jun 3 [2]

2018: May 20 [1]; May 21 [1]; May 30 [1]

2019: Jun 6 [4]; Jun 7 [2]

Short-tailed Albatross [3]

One of the advantages of sailing to Attu rather than flying! This is the largest albatross in the North Pacific with a wingspan of up 94" (Laysan is 85"). We've seen this species on each of our last four trips, although we did miss it on the dedicated pelagic in 2019. Numbers are predicably small, ages indicated where recorded:

2016 [1 bird]

- 5.17: 1 subadult off NW tip of Tanaga. 52°07'0"N 178°19'0"W.

2017 [10 birds]

- 5.22: 1 subadult + 1 adult together. Location not logged, but day 1 out of Adak.
- 5.24: Group of 3 birds and 2 singles. Location not logged.
- 6.02: Adult and subadult Location not logged. Return from Attu.
- 6.03: 1 bird. Location not logged. Return from Attu.

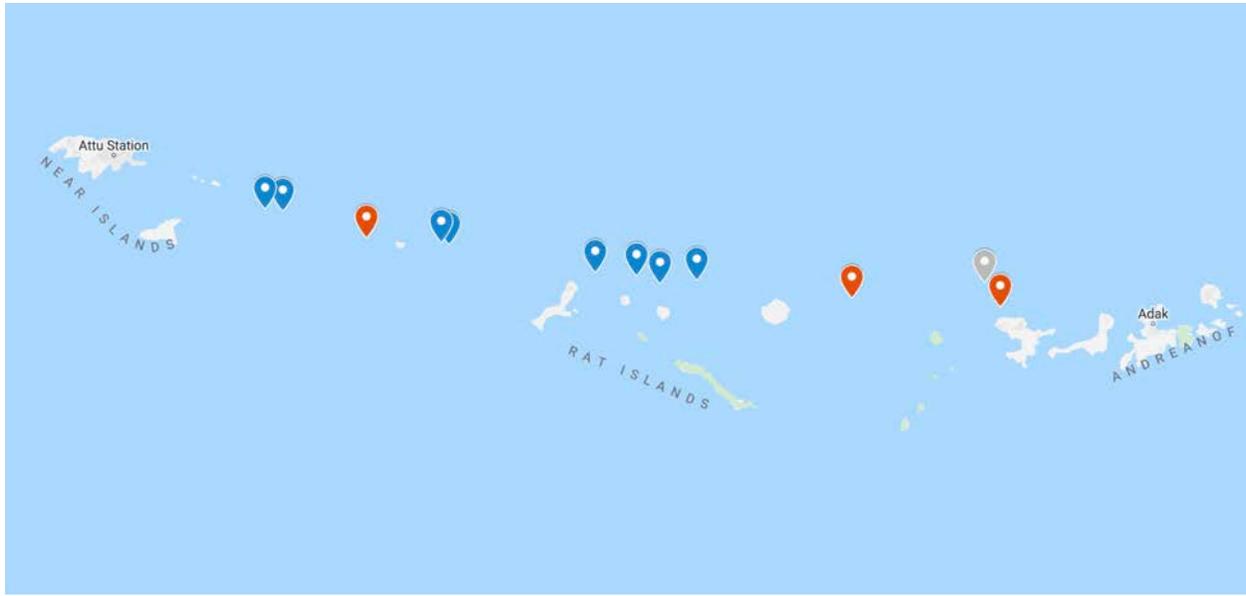
2018[8 birds]

- 5.21:
 - 1 adult between L. Sitkin & Semisopochnoi: 52°07'58.8"N 178°50'38.4"E
 - 1 north of L. Sitkin: 52°06'54.4"N 178°29'17.2"E
- 5.23:
 - 1 subadult east of Buldir: 52°20'52.8"N 176°24'39.6"E
 - 1 (second?) subadult east of Buldir: 52°21'43.2"N 176°20'06.0"E
- 5.24:
 - 3 birds between Buldir & Shemya: 52°32'56.4"N 174°46'17.8"E
 - 1 bird between Buldir & Shemya: 52°32'56.4"N 174°46'17.8"E
- 5.31:
 - 1 bird between Kiska and Segula 52°10'57.5"N 177°50'53.4"E
 - 1 bird NE of Segula 52°09'39.6"N 178°15'18.0"E

2019 [4]

- 5.23:
 - 1 adult north of Tanaga 51°58'17.0"N 178°09'46.4"W
 - 1 subadult east of Semisopochnoi 52°01'35.4"N 179°37'52.0"W
- 6.06:
 - 1 adult and 1 subadult west of Buldir: 52°23'17.9"N 175°35'35.9"E

The species can be found anywhere, although they are using the passes between islands to move between the Pacific and Bering Sea. We usually take the boat north of the Aleutian Islands between Adak and Adak as it's a shorter distance and albatrosses tend to be found when we move past an island into the area above a pass. Sightings are often just fly-bys. Occasionally they will come to the boat. We've never had luck blind chumming, especially as we want to make time and keep the boat moving, but chumming after a sighting, or if a bird is on the water has been productive. [Chumming depends on whatever food scraps we have on board.]



Locations of Short-tailed Albatross in 2016 (gray); 2018 (blue); and 2019 (red).

Note that many (all?) of these birds are banded, and we should try to identify individual whenever possible.

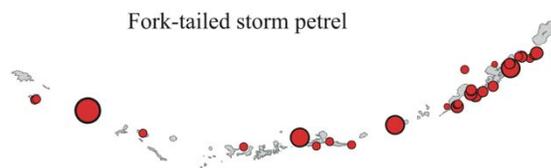
The species is known to breed on only two remote islands in the western Pacific.

1. Torishima (Izu Islands) where 80 to 85 percent of short-tailed albatross breed is an active volcano. The Tsubamezaki colony on Torishima where most of these birds breed, is susceptible to mud slides and erosion. An additional colony on Torishima, Hatsunezaki is located on a less hazardous site.
2. Minami Kojima (Senkaku Islands), to the southwest of Torishima, where volcanism is not a threat, although is under threat from political disputes.

A few individuals have also been relocated to Mukojima (Bonin / Ogasawara Islands).

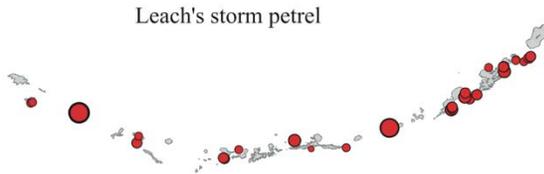
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel

Common. Seen annually often in the hundreds (daily high of 650). Most seen between Buldir and Shemya, near Buldir which is their largest breeding colony in Alaska numbering 1.3 million birds in 1986 (Gibson and Byrd, 2007). Occasionally these birds have ended up on the boat, and on one occasion we've held this species in the hand. (Let us know if you'd like to be woken up in the middle of the night if this happens again!)



Leach's Storm-Petrel

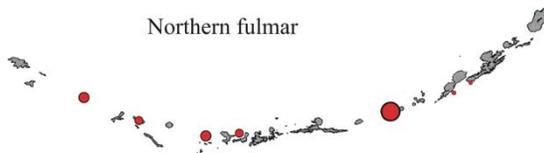
Uncommon but annual in small numbers: 2016 [3]; 2017 [9]; 2018 [3]; 2019 [7]. Usually encountered between Kiska and Shemya, which are presumably nesting on Buldir, the largest colony in Alaska, numbering 1.7 million birds in 1986 (Gibson and Byrd, 2007). As with most storm-petrels, sunrise and sunset often produce the highest numbers. Taxonomically, these birds are: Leach's Storm-Petrel (Leach's) *Hydrobates leucorhous leucorhous*.



Northern Fulmar

Very common. Seen every day on opens seas, usually in the hundreds. Daily high count of 4,500. Breeding colonies on: Bobrof (north of Kanaga), Gareloi, Davidof, Buldir, Attu.

The Pacific subspecies, *F. g. rodgersii* is considered by some to represent a separate species from the Atlantic forms (*glacialis/auduboni*). The Pacific subspecies breeds in the north Pacific on the Commander and Kurile Islands and, in the United States, the Aleutian and Pribilof islands. Polymorphic, with populations largely mixed, with a greater range of colors (and extremes) than Atlantic birds. Most of the Aleutian breeders are dark-morph, with light-morphs typically breeding further north. (We will see both extremes as well as intermediate color forms.) Pacific birds have contrasting dark tails (unlike Atlantic birds) and paler bill with less black.



Mottled Petrel

With the Short-tailed Albatross, one of our major targets for the pelagic section. This is always an exciting species to see, because of their rarity (in the ABA area) as well as their behavior—they zip through and have zero interest in the boat. You have to be quick to get on these birds!

This species is really hit or miss:

2016: May 27 [1]

2017: May 23 [4], May 24 [4], Jun 1 [3], Jun 2, [1]

2018: May 21 [1 north of Kiska]; May 23 [16 west of Kiska]; May 24 [1 east of Shemya]; May 30 [10 east, south and west of Shemya]; May 31 [1, north of Segula]

2019: Not recorded.

This species is more numerous later in the summer, and it's possible we're only seeing early birds, or missing their main arrival. The most reliable spots have tended to be in the far west, close to Shemya, and generally at least as far west of Kiska. Here are locations from the 2018 trip:



Mottled Petrels in 2018.

This species breeds in Oceania (New Zealand and other islands) and spends the boreal summer in the North Pacific and Bering Sea.

Sooty Shearwater

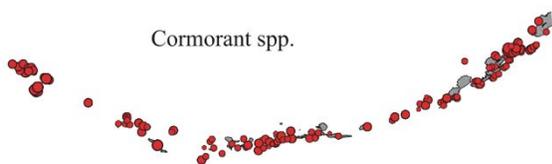
Rare or undetected in western Aleutians. We've never reliably encountered this species between Adak and Attu. This would be a great challenge for the (long) pelagic section—diagnostic photos of Sooty Shearwater! Like Short-tailed Shearwater, this is a Southern Hemisphere breeder that swaps the austral winter for the boreal summer. Usually found east of the Aleutians.

Short-tailed Shearwater

Common throughout Aleutian chain. Averaging in the tens on the open sea, with an exceptional daily high of 1,000. These birds breed on islands southeast of Australia and spend the austral winter in the North Pacific and Bering Sea.

Red-faced Cormorant

Resident breeder throughout the Aleutian chain, including small numbers on Attu and Adak. Surveys this century in the Near Islands suggest the majority (54 percent in the Near Islands and 65 percent in the Rat Islands) were actually Red-faced (Byrd and Willaims, 2004). In our experience, they are never as common as the next species. However, identification to species is not trivial, especially for distant cormorants.



The largest cormorant colonies are in the Near Islands, in the far west of the Aleutians.

Pelagic Cormorant

The default, most common cormorant throughout the Aleutians. Seen every day.

Double-crested Cormorant

Adak is as far west as this species has been recorded, and there are only three winter records for Adak.

Yellow Bittern [5]

The only record from North America is from ponds near Murder Point, Attu on May 17–22, 1989. There have been no records since.

Gray Heron [5]

One unconfirmed sight record from Attour in Apr 1986. No other records from Attu. The only western Alaska records this century are: Shemya, Apr 29, 2010; Nikolski, Apr 6, 2013; and a fall record from St. Paul in Oct 2007.

Great Egret

Only one record from Attu, found on our Zugunruhe trip on May 20–25, 2017. The bird was frequenting the Runway Ponds and was very skittish and flushed at a great distance. This egret was of the larger Asian subspecies, *modesta*, which breeds in southeast Asia from southern Pakistan and northern India through southeast Asia to southern Japan and south through Indonesia to Australia and New Zealand. In breeding season, it has all-black bill, green lores, and pink to purplish-red wash on otherwise dark legs. Adak has records from 2011, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, which are also thought to be *modesta*. Note that eBird calls this form “Great Egret (Australasian)”.

Black-crowned Night-Heron

Not recorded by Attour, but one record since: May 11, 2002. One record from Adak, before our trip to Attu on May 15, 2016. These records are presumed to be of the palearctic nominate subspecies, *nycticorax*.

Osprey

Two records from Attu: Jun 4, 1985; and May 19, 1988. No records since. Shemya recorded the species on May 18, 2019, and Adak on May 18–23, 2006.

Northern Harrier

Recorded by Attour in spring 1982, and more commonly as a fall migrant. Shemya has one spring record in Apr 10, 2012, and a fall record from Sep 2020. Rare in fall and winter on Adak. Until 2017, Northern Harrier and the Old-World Hen Harrier were considered conspecific. There are no accepted records of Hen Harrier in North America, although a severed wing discovered on Attu Island in 1999 may be from this species. If we see a harrier, we're taking lots of photos!

Adult male Hen Harriers are noticeably different compared to their American cousins. They are clean gray above (no dark mottling), have a larger black wingtip that covers six rather than five primary tips, and a medium gray (not black) trailing edge to the secondaries from above. They also tend to be clean white below. Females are difficult to tell apart. Juvenile Hen Harriers are strongly barred below on a rusty background—not clear and rusty below as in Northern.

Bald Eagle

Any eagle on Attu is going to be rare, and it's hard to say which species it might be. Bald Eagle is very rare on Attu. Apparently, the distance from Buldir to the Near Islands prohibits range expansion of this species. The only records this century are: Jul 18, 2004; and May 23, 2017. Shemya reported a bird on May 15, 2021. The species is very common on Adak.

White-tailed Eagle [4]

Famously nested on Attu in 1982 and 1983 in Temnac Valley, which are the only nesting records for North America. No records this century, but a bird was reported from nearby Alaid on Jul 24, 2003. Not recorded from Adak. Shemya and Kiska both have historical records.

Steller's Sea-Eagle [4]

Recorded twice by Attour in 1980 and 1994. Not seen until our last Zugunruhe trip when we had a bird from May 26–28, 2019. It was initially found flying along Gilbert Ridge (near the triangle), and then over Casco Point a few days later. The crew were able to see this bird from the boat during our time there. Shemya reported a bird on Jun 2–3, 2021, so it's possible a bird is currently frequenting the Near Islands.

Rough-legged Hawk

Probably winters on Attu, and Attour occasionally had lingering birds. Not seen on Attu this century, although Shemya has spring records from May 29–30, 2011. Adak has one spring record from 2012.

From Gibson and Byrd (2007) any birds on Attu are likely the *kamtschatkensis* subspecies, which are Asian migrants. Plumage of the North American subspecies *sanctijohannis* is extremely variable, grading from “light morph” to all-dark “dark-morph”. In Eurasia, a cline of decreasing color saturation extends west-east and results in very pale (hoary) birds in Asia, and no wholly dark birds.

Snowy Owl

Seemingly annual on Attu, where they breed, and seen in the last four Zugunruhe trips. We’ve watched territorial pairs around the runway, near the old LORAN station, and on some of the hillsides. Not recorded on Adak.

Short-eared Owl

Regularly reported by Attour, less than annual regular now. This century seen in 2012, 2013, 2017, and 2019. Not uncommon on Adak, where we’ve seen them hunting near the town when driving at sunset.

Great Spotted Woodpecker [4]

Spring records from Attu in April 1986 (possibly the same bird as that found the previous Oct, which was the first record for North America). Again, in May 21–22, 1996. There is a fall record from 2000 on Attu and Shemya, which is the last record from the Near Islands. The only record for North America since then is from St. George on May 6, 2001. There are a lot of telephone poles on Attu, and we spend a lot of time fantasizing about them having woodpeckers on them! One day...

Eurasian Kestrel [4]

Three records from Attour: May 4–7, 1981; Jun 3–4, 1984; May 22, 1997, and no records since. One record from Adak: Sep 15, 2012.

Merlin

Surprisingly rare: only one record from Attour days: Sep 27–28, 2000, and one recent record: Sep 14, 2018. Shemya has one (early) spring record, on Apr 4–9, 2012. Four records from Adak, suggesting wintering: Oct 1990; Mar 2008; Dec 2011; and Jan 2012. Records likely to be nominate *columbarius*.

Eurasian Hobby [4]

Rare spring migrant reported by Attour. Two records this century—both on May 23: in 2016 and 2017. The 2016 bird was seen around the runway area, and incredibly perched for photos. On Shemya the species is more commonly reported as a fall migrant, but spring records include: May 19, 2016; May 27–28, 2021. Not recorded on Adak.

Gyrfalcon

Rare on Attu—only one Attour record!—and note very easy confusion with more common Peregrine Falcon. More frequently encountered on Adak.

Peregrine Falcon

The most common falcon on Adak and Attu. This is the dark *pealei* race that breeds from the coastal Pacific Northwest, through the Aleutians and Commander Islands, and possibly Kamchatka.

Brown Shrike [4]

The only Attour record is Jun 4, 1984. Recorded once since then on Jun 1, 2017. Shemya had a bird in Jun 6, 2007. No records for Adak.

Common Raven

Very common on Attu and Adak. This is the larger Siberian subspecies, *kamtschaticus* which ranges east to Chignik.

Eurasian Skylark

Seen on 17 spring trips by Attour, with late birds suggesting the possibility of breeding on Attu. Seen in spring 2005, and then not again until we saw single birds in 2017 (May 26–29) and 2018 (May 25), with the latter bird singing in display flight. Adak has one fall record, Oct 25, 2010.

Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler [4]

Very rare late spring, summer, and fall migrant to the Aleutians. The only spring records from Attour is on Jun 10–11, 2000. The bird was recorded more commonly in fall, with at least seven birds seen in Sep 1979. There is a record of a singing male on Attu on Jul 16–Aug 10, 1984, as well as a singing bird on Buldir on Jul 27, 1990, suggesting the possibility of rare breeding in the Aleutians. More recently, a bird was reported from Attu on Jun 2, 2005.

Lanceolated Warbler [4]

Like the above species, a late migrant, and potential rare breeder. Undoubtedly missed by most spring trips which will have left before these birds potentially arrive. In 1984, there were at least 25 birds reported between Jun 4–Jul 15. The only record this century is from the last Attour trip: Jun 2, 6, 2000. There is a more recent record Buldir with up to three birds present between Jun 8–13, 2007. The species is only known elsewhere as a fall migrant, with two records from Gambell in Sep 2013, and Oct 2015.

Tree Swallow

Unrecorded on Attu, but three records on nearby Shemya: Jun 2, 1993; May 13, 2005; and May 28–30, 2021. Adak has four recent records, all in the last week of May / first week of Jun: Jun 2, 2005; May 22, 2006; May 25, 2008; May 26–29, 2017.

Bank Swallow

Attour reported birds in four springs in the first week of June, plus a bird on May 14, 1977. None reported since (here or on Shemya). Adak has records in four springs, all in Jun, plus a bird from May 26–30, 2006.

Barn Swallow

Our group found the first record for Attu, May 29–31, 2017. And then the second record, the following year on May 24–25, 2018, in the same part of Alexai point as the bird the year before. There are two subspecies (both white-bellied) recorded in Alaska—see below. The 2017 bird looked to be *gutturialis* (the buff-bellied group) based on the incomplete collar. The 2018 bird looked to have a solid collar, suggesting *rustica* (white-bellied). Adak has two fall records: Oct 21, 2011; Sep 26, 2021. Both are white-bellied, likely of the Old World *rustica* group.

The American Ornithologists' Union recognizes two subspecies groups:

1. *rustica* group of the six Old World subspecies:

- Barn Swallow (White-bellied) *Hirundo rustica rustica*.
 - Breeds from western Europe east to Yenisey Basin, Russia.
 - Slightly larger than *gutturialis*; white-bellied or pale buff / pinkish, with complete broad chest band. Throat maroon. Two specimens.
- Barn Swallow (Buff-bellied) *Hirundo rustica gutturalis/mandschurica*
 - *gutturialis*—Breeds from the Himalaya region east and north through much of China to the Kamchatka Peninsula and Japan south to southern China, including Taiwan and Hainan; overwinters from Southeast Asia south to northern Australia and west to India and eastern and southern Africa; accidental in western Alaska—3 specimens. Similar to *H. r. rustica*, but more phenotypically variable. White-bellied with interrupted pectoral band. The breast band is narrower and often broken, the tail is shorter, and the red throat patch is approximately twice as large in size.
 - *mandschurica*. Breeds in northeastern China; overwinters in Southeast Asia. Pale ochre underparts.

2. *erythrogaster* group of the single New World subspecies.

- Barn Swallow (American) *Hirundo rustica erythrogaster*. Similar to *H. r. gutturalis*, but ventrum chestnut (not whitish). Cinnamon-bellied; has broken or faintly connected chest band.

Cliff Swallow

Unrecorded in the western Aleutians. Adak is the furthest west this species has been recorded with three reports: Jun 9, 1999; May 30, 2006; May 17–21, 2009.

Arctic Warbler

Attour recorded “Arctic Warbler” on seven spring trips, with a high count of 19 on Jun 3, 1999. In 2014, Arctic Warbler was split into three species:

1. Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*)
2. Kamchatka Leaf Warbler (*Phylloscopus examinandus*)
3. Japanese Leaf Warbler (*Phylloscopus xanthodryas*)

The three are (essentially) visually identical but differ in voice. The “new” Arctic Warbler (*P. borealis*) breeds across northern Eurasia east into western Alaska. Given the more northerly distribution of Arctic Warbler, and the proximity to Kamchatka, it’s unclear how many (if any) of the old Arctic Warbler records on Attu involved *P. borealis* rather than *P. examinandus*.

Kamchatka Leaf Warbler [4]

Breeds in northeast Russia (Kamchatka), Sakhalin, Kuril Islands and northern Japan (Hokkaido). During Attour days, some of the Arctic Warblers seen on Attu were ascribed to this Asian form, known at the time as the *xanthodryas* subspecies of Arctic Warbler. These have now been elevated to full species and now known to be Kamchatka Leaf Warbler, *P. examinandus*. (The other old “xanthodryas” subspecies was split into Kamchatka Leaf Warbler, and Japanese Leaf Warbler, the latter not having been reported in the ABA region.) Given the short distance to Kamchatka, “Arctic Warbler” records are perhaps more likely to be this taxon. There are no records this century from Attu, although historical records are all in the first few days of June. Buldir has a record from Jun 13, 2007; and Adak on Jun 6, 2018.

Pacific Wren

Resident though hard to detect on Attu. We’ve had most luck with birds heard singing (and briefly glimpsed) at the top of the Gilbert Ridge. On Adak, the coast near the Elfin Forest has been the most reliable.

Subspecies in the Aleutians are:

- *meligerus* from Attu to Buldir I. Similar to *kiskensis* but ventrum darker and duller and dorsum sootier (the grayest subspecies)
- *kiskensis* (Kiska, Little Kiska, Amchitka, Ogliuga)
- *tanagensis* (Tanaga, Adak, and Atka)

Eyebrowed Thrush [3]

Can be common on Attu, with multiple individuals. Attour missed this species in only two years. Records this century include May 30, 2005 [2]; May 25, 2016 [2]; May 23–Jun 1, 2017 [up to 16]; May 24–29, 2018 [3]. Less common on Adak, with single records from May 2015, May 2017, and May 2019.

Dusky Thrush [4]

Attour recorded this handsome thrush on nine spring trips between May 13–Jun 4. The last Attu record was May 14 and 20, 2000, after which there have been no records. Shemya has more recent records from May 24, 2018; and May 21–30, 2021. Adak has only a single record from Nov 2011.

Naumann's Thrush [5]

Dusky Thrush was (finally) split in 2020 by AOS into Dusky Thrush and Naumann's Thrush. There are several historical Alaska records of the *naumanni* subspecies at the time, and the Alaska Checklist Committee subsequently accepted four records: Adak, Oct 22, 1982; Attu, May 20–22, 2000; Gambell, Jun 5, 2015; Shemya, May 30, 2021. There is a large hybrid zone for Dusky x Naumann's, and clean Naumann's should have brown upperparts with no rufous. If we find a "Dusky Thrush" it should be documented carefully.

Gray-streaked Flycatcher [4] (previously known as Gray-spotted Flycatcher)

Recorded on 11 springs by Attour, often in small numbers. Peak in the first week of June. Since then, records on: May 30, 2005; May 31, 2013; Jun 1, 2017; May 25, 2018 (2 birds). The most reliable spot seems to be Gilbert Ridge. In 2018, we had two birds along Gilbert Ridge, initially were feeding on the trail, and then ended up right at the top of the ridge—a reminder to check all the way up the hillside as hike along that section.

Dark-sided Flycatcher [4] (previously known as Siberian Flycatcher)

Recorded by Attour on Jun 17, 1986; May 20, 1990; and Jun 1–5, 1999. The only record since then is from May 31, 2013. A single bird found at the Adak National after returning from Attu on Jun 5–6, 2018 is the only Adak record.

Asian Brown Flycatcher [5]

Two records from Attu: May 25, 1985; and May 30, 2005. These are the only records from the Aleutians. St. Paul has a single fall record on Sep 6–9, 2013, and Gambell has a spring record Jun 9, 1994, and one fall record, Sep 3, 2017.

Rufous-tailed Robin [4]

The first record for North America was on Attu on Jun 4, 2000, at the base of Gilbert Ridge. Similar tail-pumping behavior as Siberian Blue Robin. The only other records from North

America are: St. Paul: Jun 8, 2008; Sep 6–7, 2012; and Gambell, on Jun 20, 2018; and Sep 9, 2019.

Siberian Blue Robin [5]

The first record for North America was from May 21, 1985, on Attu. It was a huge find, and appropriately the “canyon” is now known as Blue Robin Canyon. There was a second record for the ABA on Oct 10, 2012, from Gambell (originally identified as Rufous-tailed Robin).

Bluethroat

Recorded on only three spring Attour trips, with earliest date of May 30. The only record this century on Attu is from our last Zugunruhe trip, on May 31, 2019. We had a bird singing quietly in willows at the end of Henderson Marsh, which then sat up and gave quick but great views. The assumption is that these birds migrate further north to reach Western Alaska, and so rare rarely on a flight path near Attu. Shemya has a single record on May 29, 2005. These are the only records for the Aleutians! The bird is unrecorded on Adak.

Siberian Rubythroat [3]

Only missed on four spring trips by Attour, and sometimes need in good numbers with birds singing and potentially on territory. Peak around Jun 1–3. Records this century: May 30–Jun 4, 2013 [up to 6 birds]; May 23, 2017 [2]; May 29, 2018 [1]; May 27, 2019 [1]. Only one record from Adak in the fall: Sep 26, 2007.

Red-flanked Bluetail [4]

Seen on at least five spring Attour trips (and several fall trips). Only record since in from Casco Cove on May 27, 2010. Shemya has two records: May 19, 2002; and May 27–29, 2005. Not recorded on Adak.

Narcissus Flycatcher [5]

Two records for North America, both from Attu: May 20–21, 1989; May 21, 1994.

Taiga Flycatcher [4]

Previously conspecific with Red-breasted Flycatcher until split (in early 2000s). Attour recorded this species eight times. Since then, only one record, from May 28–31, 2017, which may have involved two birds. We had one bird on the hillside along Casco Cove, which then moved to the willows around the runway. It was singing and was hidden in deep cover for much of the time. Shemya has records from May 29–Jun 1, 2005; Jun 4–7, 2007; Jun 5–6, 2021. Adak has two records, both from the fall: Sep 20–23, 2015; and Sep 25, 2021.

Northern Wheatear

Only one spring record from Attu on May 18, 1998. No spring records from Shemya, only four Sep records. Adak has a couple of spring records: Jun 2, 2008; May 15–18, 2010.

Bohemian Waxwing

No records from Attu this century. Attour recorded the species on May 16–Jun 1, 1983; May 20–25, 1989. And no records on Adak. The Attu records are likely the Asian subspecies *centralasiae*, although this is poorly differentiated from the nominate (Eurasian) *garrulus* subspecies, which is only slightly darker. From Birds of the World: *centralasiae* is described as grayest race with palest cheeks (malar region); compared with *B. g. pallidiceps*, *centralasiae* is paler dorsally and ventrally but often with darker undertail coverts; forehead pale grayish cinnamon, not contrasting strongly with rest of head; malar region without cinnamon; back bright gray with lilac tinge (vs. grayish brown to brown without lilac tinge on *B. g. pallidiceps*); flanks washed pale gray (vs. dark gray).

Gray Wagtail [4]

Attour recorded this species on 13 spring trips, with dates from May 16–Jun 6, and with a median date of May 23. We've had luck in recent years on May 21–30, 2017; and with at least three birds on May 25–26, 2018. We've seen the bird (always very skittish) on streams near the coast, as well high up on waterfalls on Gilbert Ridge. Distinctive call note and very long tail should be diagnostic in flight. The only record from Adak is from the fall: Sep 22, 2009.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail

This was a very common migrant for Attour, with birds seen on every trip, with a wide range of dates, but peaking around May 25. Has not been seen on every Zugunruhe trip, with records from: May 31–Jun 2, 2013; May 25, 2018 [2]; and Jun 5, 2019. We saw these on Alexai Point and Gilbert Ridge.

These birds are often referred to as the subspecies *simillima*, which is larger and brighter than the *tschutschensis* birds that breed in extreme western Alaska. eBird classifies these as the polytypic "Eastern Yellow Wagtail (Eastern)" that includes *tschutschensis* (into which *simillima* may be synonymized) and *plexa* which breeds in northern Russia. According to Gibson and Byrd (2007) *simillima* is separable in the field from *tschutschensis* by "longer wing, more completely yellow throat, brighter green dorsum, more intensely yellow venter, and by less of a tendency to manifest vestiges of a pectoral band." But note that, "intergrades have been identified among specimens taken in western Aleutians in spring".

White Wagtail [3]

There are 9–10 subspecies of White Wagtail, of which two have been recorded in Alaska (and were separate species in the Attour days):

Motacilla alba ocularis. (Known as White Wagtail, *M. alba*)

- The easternmost subspecies, reaches the western perimeter of Alaska in the Bering Strait region where it breeds annually in small numbers.
- 1 spring record on May 17, 1988, and 1 fall record in Oct 1993.
- Like *M. a. alba*, but with a black transocular line [European nominate is white-faced] and secondary coverts forming a white panel (not just wingbars).

Motacilla alba lugens. (Known as Black-backed Wagtail, *M. lugens*)

- is a rare, occasional breeding species in the western Aleutian Islands.
- Recorded annually (missed 3 years) and found nesting on Attu.
- Similar to *M. a. ocularis*, but chin white, mantle and rump black, secondary coverts form a white panel, and remiges of adult male white.

Both *ocularis* and *lugens* occur as vagrants elsewhere in North America.



ocularis (left) and *lugens* (right). Note chin color, as well as back and extent of white in the wing. From Birds of the World.

We found single White Wagtails in 2016 and 2018 and were surprised that both seemed to be *ocularis* (and thus only the second and third records for Attu!), compared to the much more common black-backed *lugens*. White Wagtail records for Attu this century: *ocularis*: May 26, 2016, May 25, 2018; and *lugens*: May 30, 2005 [2]; Sep 17, 2004; Sep 14–19, 2006 [2], Jun 10, 2016. Adak also has records of both subspecies: *ocularis*: May 18–25, 2017, Jun 26, 2012; *lugens*: Jun 6, 2005; Dec 14, 2008; Jan 7–11, 2009.

Olive-backed Pipit [3]

Missed in 2019 but recorded in good numbers the three years before: May 20, 2016 [1]; May 21–Jun 1, 2017 [max of 18 on one day]; May 24–29, 2018 [max of 20 on May 25]. This pipit is very vocal in flight and has a diagnostic flight call that often drew our attention and is worth learning. We've had them all over the island, including sitting on the LORAN station building. This species was a regular for Attou, recorded on 20 spring trips from May 16–Jun 11, with most birds in the last 10 days of May.

Pechora Pipit [4]

Attou record on at least five spring trips, with a date range of May 17–30. Only one record since then: May 21, 2017. Only one very old record from Shemya: May 22, 1982. Not recorded on

Adak. Given the cryptic nature of this species, we've probably walked right by at least one of these...

Red-throated Pipit [3]

Regularly seen by Attour in spring, and comparable in numbers and timing to Olive-backed Pipit (although more common than that species in the fall). Since then, there's only been one record: May 25, 2018, with breeding-plumage birds on Alexai Point, including one bird signing! The only spring record from Shemya this century is Jun 1, 2005. Adak only has 1 record, from the fall: Aug 22, 2003.

American Pipit

Less common than Olive-backed and Red-throated pipits on Attour trips. We recorded twice on our recent trips on the same day—May 25—in 2016 and 2017. At least on the most recent trip, the subspecies was noted as *japonicus*, the Asian subspecies that breeds in eastern Siberia. Compared to the North American *rubescens*, the Asian subspecies has pink legs and feet (compared to darker brown), more heavy ventral streaking, thick, black, triangular malar mark. The black-centered medium coverts have white (not buff) edges forming a more distinct wing bar. Not also the cinnamon underparts. Less than annual as a spring migrant on Adak.

Brambling [3]

Missed in 2019, but found in 2018 [3], 2017 [2], 2016 [7], 2013 [14], 2012 [4]. Annual migrant found on all Attour spring trips. Almost annual in spring on Adak, sometimes in large numbers, but not seen since 2018.

Hawfinch [4]

Seen in three of the last four years on Attu: May 25, 2016; May 21–23, 2017; May 26–29, 2018. Attour recorded this handsome finch every spring after 1986. Annual in spring in Adak, which is the best place to find this, as it readily finds seed.

Common Rosefinch [4]

Recorded once in recent years, with least three birds between May 17–31, 2017. Interestingly, 2017 is the only year the species has been recorded on Adak: Jun 3–10, 2017, when we had a female rosefinch in a mixed flock of Bramblings and Hawfinches! Attour recorded the species in spring in six years, all after May 31. There was also a bird on May 30, 2005. Records from Shemya are from June: Jun 8, 2007, and Jun 17, 2014 [3].

Pine Grosbeak

Three records from Attu: May 22–28, 1983; Jun 9–10, 1989; and May 15–23, 2012. Adak has 1–2 records from Dec 2011–Jan 2012. Western Aleutian records presumed to be of the subspecies *kamtschatkensis*, which is according to Birds of the World, smaller than *flammea* or *leucura* with narrower, blunt, strongly hooked bill; male mantle and back with distinct dusky centers (less distinct on female and immature male) and bright, dark red mottling (lacking grayish) on breast and flanks. Subspecies *kamtschatkensis* has the next deepest and broadest bill, second to *sakhalinensis*.

Eurasian Bullfinch [4]

Four records from Attu: May 18–21, 1978; Jun 10, 1996; May 14–15, 2000; May 30, 2005. There are two records from Shemya: May 27, 2005, and an historical fall record from Sep 1977. No records on Adak.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch

Aleutian breeders (including the Commander Islands) are the very large *griseonucha* subspecies. Usually encountered daily small numbers on Attu, and more commonly on Adak. Note one record of Asian Rosy-Finch on Adak on Dec 30, 2011, the only record for the ABA region.

Oriental Greenfinch [4]

Attour saw this strikingly-marked finch on eight spring trips between May 14–Jun 7, sometimes in flocks. Recorded twice since: May 30, 2005; and May 17, 2012, both single birds. The 2005 bird was in the spruce on Engineer Hill; and the 2012 bird was between the runway and Kingfisher Creek (<https://ebird.org/checklist/S10867518>). One record from Shemya on May 26, 2015. Adak has a single fall record from Sep 2007.

Common Redpoll

Recorded only three times this century: May 28, 2010; May 15, 2012; Jun 3, 2013. Rare in spring on Adak: May 28–31, 2008; May 13–21, 2010; May 20–23, 2015; May 15–18, 2017; May 27, 2018; May 21, 2021.

Hoary Redpoll

Not seen since 2014. Records this century: May 17–22, 2012; May 30–Jun 3, 2013; Jun 1, 2014. Attour noted that this species was significantly more common than Common Redpoll. Recorded on Adak in two springs: May 20–24, 2005; and May 13–29, 2008.

Eurasian Siskin [5]

Only two records from Attu: Jun 4, 1978; and May 21, 1993 [2]. The only record since is a wintering bird on Unalaska, in 2014–2015.

Lapland Longspur

The most abundant land bird in the Aleutians. Birds should be singing and performing their flight displays while we are in Attu. The Alaska birds are the subspecies *alascensis*. Attour recorded a few of the subspecies *coloratus* which breeds on the nearby Commander Islands. The male of the Asian form is “much blacker dorsally than *C. l. alascensis*, with greater secondary coverts and tertials bright rusty brown or chestnut, black of throat connecting solidly with black of flanks, and supercilium whitish; largest race, with longest primary projection” (Birds of the World).

Snow Bunting

Common on Attu, although often at altitude above sea level. Requires more work to find on Adak.

Yellow-throated Bunting [5]

The only North American record is from Attu on May 25, 1998 (in Blue Robin Canyon!).

Reed Bunting [4]

Recorded by Attour in four spring trips, mostly in the last week of May on Attu: May 27, 1977; May 22–24, 1987; May 25–Jun 1, 1989 [3 birds]; Jun 5, 1992. Buldir has one record: May 29–Jun 9, 2005. And there’s one fall record from Gambell, Aug 28–30, 2002.

Yellow-breasted Bunting [4]

Two records from Attu: May 26, 1988; and May 27, 1996. These are the only records from the Aleutians. There is one fall record, from Gambell, Sep 2, 2009.

Rustic Bunting [3]

We took this species for granted in 2016, with sightings on five days between May 20–26, with at least six birds on one day. We then missed it in 2017, 2018, and 2019! Essentially annual for Attour—missed one spring—from May 12 onwards, with peak around May 22. Only one spring record on Adak: May 15–19, 2017.

Gray Bunting [4]

Our group found the fourth record for North America at Alexai Point on May 25, 2018. We were alerted to the bird by its thin call—similar to a Savannah Sparrow. The previous three records were: Shemya, May 18, 1977; Attu, May 29, 1980; and May 25, 2018; and Shemya, May 27, 2005.

American Tree Sparrow

One record in the Aleutians on Adak: Mar 2017.

Savannah Sparrow

There are only fall records from Attu and Shemya. Rare on Adak in the spring: Jun 5, 2005; May 21, 2007; May 20, 2010; May 16, 2021.

Song Sparrow

Very common on Attu especially feeding on the shoreline from which it retreats to vegetation further up the beach. This is a large bird of the subspecies *maxima*, which is found from Attu east to Atka Island (just east of Adak). According to Birds of the World, the bird is “Resident in Alaska in w. Aleutians (Attu I. to Atka I.). Largest subspecies; roughly the size of California Towhee. Characterized by long, diffuse streaking on gray ground color (contrast weak), gray dorsal background color, and long, slender bill.” Often very aggressive to vagrants; we’ve seen flycatchers, etc., chased off by Song Sparrows, who are very territorial (and often have young while we’re on Attu).

Yellow-rumped Warbler

There are only records of the Myrtle subspecies, *coronata*, in the western Aleutians, on Attu, Shemya and Adak. The only spring record for the species was an Audubon’s Warbler, on Attu, May 26, 1980 (Audubon’s).

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