SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS:
FALL SEASON - August to November 2008

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The following report is a summary of the interesting bird sightings from Southeast Alaska for the fall period, which covers August to November 2008. Of note this fall was a late movement of sparrows into the region at the end of October and into November, along with unusual numbers of late lingering warblers (many of which continued to linger into December). Much larger than normal numbers of Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, and Wilson’s warblers, Fox, Lincoln’s, and *Zonotrichia* sparrows were present during November. This fall also saw a nice selection of interesting species, including the first Southeast Alaska record of the Cassin’s Finch, the second documented Southeast Alaska record of the Turkey Vulture, and a sprinkling of Red-throated Pipits.

For the second year in a row, the fish processing plants in Ketchikan joined together to fully utilize most of their fish waste. Rather than pumping waste into Tongass Narrows on the Ketchikan waterfront, most of the fish waste was delivered to a floating processing barge where it was rendered into fish oil and other products. As a result, relatively few gulls congregated on the waterfront during the summer months. In years past, the Ketchikan waterfront hosted thousands of gulls during the fall migration, including hundreds, or even thousands, of California Gulls and small numbers of Ring-billed Gulls, and one or more Franklin’s Gulls were found nearly annually. Ketchikan’s open-pit garbage dump was modified in 1995 so that gulls no longer congregate there during migration and winter—now this. The lack of human waste at Ketchikan means poor gull viewing opportunities and makes one wonder if it is even worth living in Ketchikan anymore.

We would like to thank all of the people that directly sent us observations, shared their photographs, and answered our inquiries about their sightings, all of whom are cited below. We were particularly pleased to receive extensive reports from Rich Gordon, Nat Drumheller, and Matt Goff.

TUNDRA SWAN: Larger than normal numbers of Tundra Swans were observed migrating past the Juneau area, with at least six flocks reported over a five-day period 16–20 October 2008 (m.ob.); maximum was a flock of 112 in Gastineau Channel on 19 October 2008 (P. M. Suchanek). The latter flock contained two birds that had been banded in southwest Alaska at King Salmon (July 2006) and Bethel (July 2008; fide C. R. Ely).

SNOW GOOSE: A regular fall migrant in Southeast Alaska, this species was recorded moving through Southeast Alaska from 23 September–3 October 2008. A flock of 150 was observed flying over Gastineau Channel, Juneau, on 23 September (B. A. Peluso) and flocks were observed flying south over the Ketchikan area on 1 October (two flocks; R. E. Neterer; flock of 40 birds, A. W. Piston) and 3 October (two flocks totaling 150 birds, S. C. Heinl and A. W. Piston).

WOOD DUCK: A female bird was shot by a hunter near Petersburg on 23 November 2008 (T. S. Thynes, photo). This species was considered casual in Alaska through the early 1990s, but has recently occurred nearly annually in Southeast Alaska, primarily from fall through spring. This duck has recently been found nearly annually in fall, winter, and spring in Southeast Alaska, with at least 22 records since 1987.
EURASIAN WIGEON: Single birds were found near Juneau on 27 October and 29 November 2008 (P. M. Suchanek), and at the Salmon River, near Gustavus, on 8 November 2008 (N. K. Drumheller). This species is a rare, regular migrant in Southeast Alaska.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL: One at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, on 18 October 2008 was late (B. A. Agler).

CANVASBACK: This species is a rare fall migrant in Southeast Alaska. At the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, where small numbers of this species are regularly found, two males were present on 2 October 2008 (R. Gordon), five birds on 17 and 20 October (P. M. Suchanek), and one was there on 20 November 2008 (M. Schwan). Another male was found at Sitka on 8 November 2008 (M. R. Goff).

REDHEAD: Normal small numbers were present through most of October at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, with maximum five on 20 October 2008 (R. J. Gordon).

RING-NECKED DUCK: A count of 25 at Sitka’s Swan Lake on 25 November 2008 (M. R. Goff) was a larger than average for Southeast Alaska.

RUDDY DUCK: Two were at Juneau on 20 October 2008 (G. B. van Vliet, D. MacPhail, P. M. Suchanek, R. J. Gordon). This species is a casual fall migrant in Southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

YELLOW-BILLED LOON: Very small numbers of Yellow-billed Loons summer annually in Southeast Alaska. An alternate-plumaged adult was at Pearse Canal 6 August 2008 (J. H. Lewis). The first fall migrants were reported from the Juneau area on 18 October (two; P. M. Suchanek) and 19 October 2008 (one; P. M. Suchanek).

PIED-BILLED GREBE: Normally a rare, regular fall migrant in Southeast Alaska, an immature at the Mendenhall Wetlands on 12 September 2008 was the only Pied-billed Grebe reported (R. J. Gordon).

WESTERN GREBE: A flock of about 1000 was found in Zimovia Strait/Chicagof Pass, adjacent to Wrangell Island, through 7 November 2008 (B. H. Demerjian). This was a large count, though this species can be locally common at favored areas on inside waters from Sumner Strait south.

NORTHERN FULMAR: A single dark-morph bird in Clarence Strait, near Gravina, Island 28 October 2008 following stormy weather provided only the 2nd Ketchikan area record of this pelagic species (S. C. Heinl). This species is common off the outer coast of Southeast Alaska and BC (Willett 1915, Sanger 1972, Campbell et al. 1990a).

FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL: Fair numbers of Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels were found inshore at Sitka between 19 September and the 3rd-week of October, with a maximum of 50+ on 20 September 2008 (M. Ward, M. Tedin). Five were also observed in Clarence Strait, near Gravina Island, on 28 October 2008 (S. C. Heinl). This species is a rare, irregular visitant to inside waters in the Ketchikan area in the fall.

LEACH’S STORM-PETREL: One was found dead at Sitka on 24 September 2008 (M. R. Goff, photo). This highly pelagic species occurs much less frequently near shore than the Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel.
FRIGATEBIRD SP.: A female or immature frigatebird observed in Lynn Canal, near Funter Bay, on 23 August 2008 was a spectacular find and the first report of a frigatebird in Southeast Alaska (H. MacKenzie). There were five prior reports of *Fregatta* in Alaska between late June and mid-September, but only one was conclusively identified to species: a Magnificent Frigatebird photographed at Belkofski Bay, Alaska Peninsula, on 15 August 1985 (Gibson and Kessel 1992). While most of the unidentified birds likely pertained to Magnificent Frigatebirds, California records of the Great Frigatebird (3) and, recently, the Lesser Frigatebird (1) suggest that both of those species could also potentially occur in Alaska. Separation of these species “represents, perhaps, the most difficult identification challenge in any seabird group” (Harrison 1983), and careful study or excellent photographs would be required to identify frigatebirds to species (see Howell 1994, Sullivan et al. 2007).

TURKEY VULTURE: An adult at Juneau on 24–27 September (J. Wise, Figure 1; P. A. Rose, Figure 2) and 3 October 2008 (B. Wright) provided the first local record and only the 2nd documented Southeast Alaska record. Vultures have been reported in Alaska between late April and September, and across nearly the entire length of the state; however, there are probably fewer than five well-documented records.

Figure 1. Needless to say, seeing a Turkey Vulture in Alaska would be a heart-stopper, but seeing a bird sitting on a stump with the classic wings-out pose is too much. This adult Turkey Vulture photographed at Juneau on 24 September 2008 provided only the 2nd Southeast Alaska record. *Photo by Jodi Wise*
Figure 2. Same Turkey Vulture as in Figure 1, here chased by a Common Raven at Juneau on 27 September 2008. Note the small head, long, two-toned wings, and long tail. *Photo by Patty A. Rose*

**SORA**: One was found at Juneau’s Pioneer Marsh on 8 September 2008 (P. M. Suchanek), a location where this species bred in 2007 and was observed in summer of 2008. This species is a rare migrant and local summer visitant and breeder in Southeast Alaska, primarily on the mainland (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

**AMERICAN COOT**: This species is a rare but regular migrant and winter visitant to Southeast Alaska. Coots were reported from several locations, including maximum counts of six at Juneau on 11 November 2008 (M. Brown), and a high local count of seven at Swan Lake, Sitka, 18–30 November 2008 (M. Ward, M. Tedin).

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER**: Large numbers of Black-bellied Plovers lingered in the Gustavus area, with 30 still present on 13 October 2008 (N. K. Drumheller).

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER**: This species is a rare to uncommon fall migrant in Southeast Alaska. Small numbers were reported at Juneau, including two on 23 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon) and a single on 29 and 30 August 2008 (P. M. Suchanek, R. J. Gordon). At Gustavus, one was found on 14 August and two on 28 August 2008 (N. K. Drumheller, photos).

**PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVER**: This species is an uncommon migrant in Southeast Alaska. Small numbers were reported from several locations, with high counts of 15 at Gustavus on 18 October 2008 (N. K. Drumheller, photos) and late birds at Juneau on 20 October 2008 (R. J. Gordon) and Gustavus (two) on 27 October 2008 (N. K. Drumheller).

**UPLAND SANDPIPER**: The Upland Sandpiper is a casual migrant in Southeast Alaska, but for the 2nd straight fall small numbers were found in the Juneau area both at sea level and in the alpine. Single birds were found at the Mendenhall Wetlands on 18 and 19 August (G. B. van Vliet, P. M. Suchanek), and 8 September (P. M. Suchanek), and two birds were found in the Mount Roberts alpine at 2000 foot elevation on 30 August 2008 (P. M. Suchanek).

**HUDSONIAN GODWIT**: A few Hudsonian Godwits were found in the Juneau area following larger numbers in late July (P.A. Rose, Figure 3). Maximum was 13 on 1 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon), and two on 29 August 2008 were the latest (P. M. Suchanek).
RUDDY TURNSTONE: One at Gustavus on 27 October 2008 was very late (N. Drumheller).

RED KNOT: This species is a casual fall migrant in Southeast Alaska. Four were found near Gustavus on 28 August 2008 (N. K. Drumheller, photo).

WESTERN SANDPIPER: Late migrants were observed at Gustavus on 4, 8, and 13 October 2008 (N. Drumheller). Small numbers were also found at Juneau in October; 30 birds on 19 and 20 October 2008 were the latest (R. J. Gordon).
BAIRD’S SANDPIPER: Two at Eagle Beach, near Juneau, on 3 October 2008 were late (M. W. Schwan).

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER: This species made an excellent showing in Southeast Alaska, where it is normally a casual fall migrant. Single birds were found near Gustavus on 24 and 27 September, and 3, 12, 25, and (two birds) 27 October 2008 (N. K. Drumheller, Figure 4). Another single was found at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, on 20 October 2008 (R. J. Gordon).

ROCK SANDPIPER: The progression of wintering Rock Sandpipers into the Gustavus area, where large numbers regularly winter, was nicely documented this fall. The first arrival was noted on 4 October, followed by one on 8 October, several on 13 October, 10 on 18 October, 100 on 25 October, 250 on 27 October, and about 400 on 27 November 2008+ (N. K. Drumheller).

DUNLIN: The progression of Dunlin through the Gustavus area was also nicely documented in fall 2008. The first arrivals were 66 on 4 October, followed by 900 on 25 October, 2,500 to 3,000 on 27 October, and 2,400+ on 29 November 2008+ (N. K. Drumheller). Included in the 25 October 2008 observation was a single bird with colored leg bands that had likely been banded on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta—banded birds from that area have been found wintering at Gustavus over the past few years (N. K. Drumheller).

STILT SANDPIPER: Small numbers of this casual to locally rare (Juneau) migrant were observed this fall. One at Gustavus on 25 August 2008 (N. Drumheller, photo) was followed by two at the same location on 26 August 2008 (B. B. Paige). Small numbers were found in the Juneau area 17–27 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon, m.ob.), with a maximum count of 21 at the Mendenhall Wetlands on 25 August 2008 (P. M. Suchanek).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER: This species is a casual fall migrant in Southeast Alaska. One was found at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 29–31 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon, P. M. Suchanek).

RUFF: This species is a casual migrant in Southeast Alaska. A juvenile at the Mendenhall Wetlands on 19–27 August 2008 (P. Rose, photo) marked the 3rd fall in a row that this species was found near Juneau.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER: One at Eagle Beach, near Juneau, on 6 and 12 October 2008 was late (M. W. Schwan).

WILSON’S PHALAROPE: A fresh-plumaged juvenile was found at Juneau on 11–12 August 2008 (P. A. Rose Figure 5; P. M. Suchanek). This species is a casual migrant in Southeast Alaska, primarily during late spring, and most records are from the Juneau area.

SABINE’S GULL: A juvenile bird was at Eagle Beach, near Juneau on 10 August 2008 (P. M. Suchanek photo, G. Baluss). This pelagic species is found primarily off the outer coast and is rare on inside waters of the Alexander Archipelago.
MEW GULL: The “Kamtchatka” Gull (*Larus canus kamtschatschensis*) found at Juneau’s Mendenhall Wetlands in late July was relocated on 11 August (R. J. Gordon) and 8 and 15 September 2008 (P. M. Suchanek; Figure 6).

RING-BILLED GULL: Normal small numbers were present on the Ketchikan waterfront August-September. This species is a rare migrant in northern Southeast Alaska, where a few were reported in the Juneau area: singles on 17 and 19 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon), two on 19 August 2008, and two on 16 September 2008 (P. M. Suchanek).

WESTERN GULL: A 3rd-summer bird at Ketchikan on 19 September 2008 was judged to be very close to a pure Western Gull (S. C. Heinl); however, a 2nd-winter bird at Disappearance Creek, Prince of Wales Island, on 27 October 2008 was a Glaucous-winged x Western hybrid (S. C. Heinl).

CALIFORNIA GULL: A single bird was at Gustavus on 24 and 27 September 2008 (N. Drumheller). The maximum number reported in the Juneau area was 19 on 17 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon). Peak counts at salmon spawning streams in southern Southeast Alaska included at least 1,000 birds at the Carroll River mouth on 4 September 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl) and 500 at Disappearance Creek, Prince of Wales Island, on 7 and 8 October 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl).

LESser BLACK-BACKED GULL: Presumably the same adult individual that has been present in the Juneau area since 1991 was observed at the Mendenhall Wetlands on various dates in August (P. M. Suchanek, R. J. Gordon) through at least 3 September 2008 (B. A. Peluso).

SLATY-BACKED GULL: A 3rd winter bird was found near Ketchikan on 2 November 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl, photo). This species is a rare fall migrant along the south coast of Alaska.
Figure 6. Asian “Kamchatka” Mew Gull (*Larus canus kamtschatschenis*) on the left, with two North American Mew Gulls (*L. c. brachyrhynchus*) on the right. This 2nd-year bird had been present on the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, since late July, and represented the first record for Southeast Alaska (photographed here on 8 September 2008). Features to note include the distinctly larger size compared to the North American Mew Gulls, including larger bulk, longer legs, heavier bill, and slightly darker gray shading on the back and wing coverts. The fine, sharply-demarcated brown markings on the head, neck, and chest are quite unlike what is typically shown by the North American race and more reminiscent of the Ring-billed Gull—and entirely consistent with *L. c. kamtschatschensis*. See Howell and Dunn (2007) for a good overview on identification of this race. *Photos by P. M. Suchanek*

GLAUCOUS GULL: This rare fall migrant made a nice showing in Southeast Alaska. Single birds at Juneau on 19 August 2008 (P. M. Suchanek) and 16 September 2008 (P. A. Rose), and Sitka on 16 September 2008 (M. Ward, M. Tedin) were early. Additional birds were reported at Sitka on 25 November 2008 (M. Ward, M. Tedin), and as many as six 1st-year birds were found in the Ketchikan area 25 September–16 November 2008+ (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl).

CASPIAN TERN: As has been the case in recent years, this species was found in good numbers in the Gustavus area during August. The maximum count was 16 adults and eight juveniles on 19 August 2008, and two adults and two juveniles on 2 September 2008 were the latest reported in that area (N. K. Drumheller, Figure 7). Several were also reported in the Sitka area, with a high count of four on 25 August 2008 (M. R. Goff, photo).
PARAKEET AUKLET: One was observed in Cross Sound from the Alaska Marine Highway ferry on 5 August 2008 (M. W. Schwan details; P. M. Suchanek). This auklet has bred in very small numbers at the three major seabird breeding colonies along the outer coast of Southeast Alaska (St. Lazaria, Hazy, and Forrester islands; Jones et al. 2001; however, there are apparently very few Southeast Alaska reports beyond the immediate vicinity of those colonies.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON: This pigeon is a regular summer visitant to southern Southeast Alaska. An immature bird was photographed at a Ketchikan feeder on 25 September 2008 (I. Fultz; Figure 8). An adult at the same feeder on 15 October 2008 was the latest ever reported at Ketchikan by nearly two weeks (C. A. Fultz; K. Davidson, photo).

MOURNING DOVE: At least eight birds were reported in Southeast Alaska between 12 September and 4 November 2008, from six locations, including Ketchikan (J. F. Koerner), Kupreanof Island (P. S. Doherty), Juneau (P. A. Rose, J. F. Sauer), Wrangell (B. H. Demerjian), Gustavus (N. K. Drumheller, photo) and Sitka (JC, M. R. Goff). This species is an annual, rare fall visitant to Southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

SNOWY OWL: One was apparently killed on the Sitka airport on 26 November 2008—the only report of the season (M. R. Goff).

NORTHERN HAWK OWL: Single birds were found in the Juneau area on 6 September 2008 (G. Baluss), 30 September 2008 (T. Walden, L. Sterling, photo), and 1 November 2008 (G. B. van Vliet; P. A. Rose, Figure 9), and near Gustavus 27 November 2008+ (N. K. Drumheller). This species is very rare in Southeast Alaska, but is reported more regularly in northern Southeast.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL: This species was reported in below average numbers in fall 2008. A few were reported around Gustavus (N. K. Drumheller) and one was reported near Sitka (fide M. R. Goff). None were reported from Juneau or Ketchikan.
Figure 8. This Band-tailed Pigeon was identified as a hatching-year bird by the uniform pale edges of the wing coverts and by its lack of a white neck ring. *Photo by Ian Fultz*

Figure 9. Northern Hawk-Owl at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 1 November 2008. *Photo by Patty A. Rose*
BARRED OWL: Single birds were reported at Gustavus on 7 October (N. Drumheller) and 29 and 30 October 2008 (A. Banks), at Hetta Lake on Prince of Wales Island on 25 September 2008 (A. W. Piston), and at McDonald Lake on the mainland north of Ketchikan on 30 September 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl).

SHORT-EARED OWL: This species was seen in good numbers in Juneau in early November, with small numbers still present at the end of the period. Unfortunately, Juneau airport staff apparently killed an outstanding 15 Short-eared Owls during 2008, presumably mostly during the fall (M. Schwan, P. M. Suchanek).

BOREAL OWL: One was photographed near Ketchikan on 8 November 2008 (C. Thompson, Figure 10). This species is likely a rare resident in Southeast Alaska, but its full status is not known and this bird provided only the 3rd local record.

Figure 10. This Boreal Owl provided only the 3rd local record at Ketchikan on 8 November 2008. This species’ status in Southeast Alaska is poorly known. Photo by Carl Thompson

COMMON NIGHTHAWK: This species is a rare fall migrant on and near the mouths of the mainland river systems in Southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978). Two birds were found in the Juneau area this fall: a juvenile was found roosting on a rock near the 3,000 foot level of Gastineau Peak on 20 August 2008 (P. M. Suchanek, Figure 11), and another was reported in the Mendenhall Valley on 3 September 2008 (G. Baluss).

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD: One at Ketchikan on 8 September 2008 was very late and provided only the 3rd local September record (A. W. Piston). This species generally departs the region by mid-August.

EMPIDONAX SP.: A Hammond’s-like Empidonax at Juneau on 4 October 2008 was extremely late (R. J. Gordon) and provided one of few October records for the state.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER: One at Sitka on 29–30 September 2008 provided one of the latest records for the state (V. Vosburg, M. R. Goff; Figure 12).

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE: One at Sitka on 28–29 September 2008 (V. Vosburg, M. R. Goff; Figure 12) was late, and provided first local record (fide M. R. Goff).
Figure 11. This Common Nighthawk was a lucky find in the alpine near Juneau on 20 August 2008. The pale-tipped primaries and rather plain tertials identify it as a hatching-year bird. *Photo Paul M. Suchanek*

Figure 12. Two *Contopus* flycatchers were found at Sitka at the end of September. The Western Wood-Pewee (left) on 28 September 2008 apparently provided the first Sitka record, while the Olive-sided Flycatcher (right) on 29 September 2008 was one of the latest to be recorded in the state. *Photos by Matt R. Goff*
EASTERN KINGBIRD: One at Bartlett Cove, near Gustavus, on 21 September 2008 was the 4th local record (E. Mount, Figure 13; N. K. Drumheller, photo). Although this species is a rare, regular visitant, it is found primarily during the summer, June–August, and there are few later records for the state.

![Immature Eastern Kingbird near Gustavus on 21 September 2008.](photo.jpg)

Figure 13. Immature Eastern Kingbird near Gustavus on 21 September 2008. *Photo by Emily Mount*

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: This species was reported to be present in above average numbers at several locations spread throughout Southeast Alaska, including Gustavus, Sitka, and Ketchikan. Drumheller reported that numbers increased in late August, and up to five birds at one time could be seen at his feeder through October and November. This species was regular in ones and twos at Ketchikan during the same time period (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl, J. H. Lewis). At Sitka this species was described as unusually abundant (M. R. Goff), including at least ten birds visiting a local feeder during the period (K. LaBounty).

TOWNSEND’S SOLITAIRE: This species is a rare migrant and probable breeder in Southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978). Four birds were found in the Juneau area between 30 August and 10 November 2008 (R. J. Gordon).

EASTERN YELLOW WAGTAIL: An apparent adult yellow wagtail was seen briefly and from a distance at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, on various dates between 11–24 November 2008 (R. J. Gordon details, M. W. Schwan, G. B. van Vliet, P. M. Suchanek details, P. A. Rose details, et al.). This species is a common migrant and breeder on the western Alaska mainland, occurring less commonly across northern Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978)—it is a casual migrant on the Pacific Coast south of Alaska, primarily in the fall. This bird was extremely late, however, as there are no November Alaska records and there are no accepted records of this species on the west coast later than October. There are only two prior records (one documented) for Southeast Alaska.
**RED-THROATED PIPIT:** This primarily-Old-World species made an unprecedented showing in Southeast Alaska: one (apparently adult) was found at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, on 16–17 September 2008 (M. W. Schwan, R. J. Gordon details), two were found near Gustavus on 24 September, with one remaining on 25 and 30 September and 20 October (N. K. Drumheller; Figure 14), two were found near Bartlett Cove on 11 October 2008 (N. K. Drumheller, photo), and one was found at Disappearance Creek, Prince of Wales Island, on 7–8 October 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl details, photos). There were only three prior Southeast Alaska records of this species, which is a casual fall migrant along the Pacific Coast east and south of the Bering Sea region. As was the case in other years when this species was found in Southeast Alaska, it was also a banner year for finding this species elsewhere on the Pacific Coast to the south, particularly in California.

![Figure 14. Red-throated Pipit near Gustavus on 25 September 2008. Field marks shown in these excellent photos include the sharp, bold black streaking on the crown, back, and underparts, the two contrasting paler buff lines down the sides of the back, and the heavy black malar line that forms a patch at the base of the neck. The underparts are evenly colored pale cream, with no contrast between breast and belly. Not visible in the photos were the bird’s pink legs. Photo Nat K. Drumheller](image)

**ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER:** A few birds lingered through November (and into December) at Ketchikan; latest, two on 28 November (S. C. Heinl).

**YELLOW WARBLER:** A single bird at Juneau 20 October 2008 (G. B. van Vliet, R. J. Gordon), and two on 21 October (M. W. Schwan), were the latest noted, and provided some of the latest local records (*fide* P. M. Suchanek). This species usually departs Southeast Alaska by mid-October, although stragglers have been noted into November and there is one December record for the state (5 December 2002 in Ketchikan).

**MAGNOLIA WARBLER:** An adult male was reported from the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 27 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon). This species is casual in Alaska where it has been reported primarily from the Southeast Alaska mainland.
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: This species lingered late into November (and into December) at Ketchikan, including five birds on 16 November 2008 and singles on 25, 26, and 29 November 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl).

TOWNSEND’S WARBLER: Single late birds were found at Ketchikan on 7 November 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl) and at Sitka on 20 November 2008 (P. Norwood).

BLACKPOLL WARBLER: Single birds were found in the Juneau area on 7–8 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon) and 3 September 2008 (P. M. Suchanek). This species is casual in Southeast Alaska in the fall.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: An immature male at Ketchikan on 26 October 2008 provided a new local late date and was one of the latest ever for the State (S. C. Heinl).

WILSON’S WARBLER: This species made an amazing late fall showing throughout Southeast Alaska. In northern Southeast, singles were noted at Gustavus 27 October 2008 (N. Drumheller), and at Juneau on 1, 15, 23 and 25 November (J. F. Sauer, G. B. van Vliet, R. J. Gordon, P. M. Suchanek). In the southern part of the region, single birds were observed in Wrangell on 5 and 14 November 2008 (B. H. Demerjian), and around a dozen were found in Ketchikan during November including one on 30 November 2008 (J. F. Koerner)—one of the latest dates for the state. There were only three prior November records in Ketchikan.

WESTERN TANAGER: Single birds at Ketchikan 19 and 26 August 2008 (J. F. Koerner) were the only ones reported. This species is a very rare migrant in Southeast Alaska.

SPOTTED TOWHEE: A Spotted Towhee at Juneau on 11 November 2008 was seen intermittently into December (B. Wright; details). Remarkably, all but one of the eight Alaska towhee reports are from Juneau.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW: This species made a stronger than average showing in the Ketchikan area, where it is normally a rare migrant and winter visitant, with numerous observations of ones-twos 26 October 2008+. A flock of five on 4 November 2008 provided a new local high count (A. W. Piston and S. C. Heinl).

CHIPPING SPARROW: This species is a rare migrant in Southeast Alaska. Single birds were found near Sitka on 23-24 August 2008 (M. Ward, M. Tedin) and 18 October 2008 (M. R. Goff, Figure 15), near Juneau on 5 September 2008 (R. J. Gordon), and Ketchikan 2–7 November 2008 (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl).
Figure 15. Juvenile Chipping Sparrow at Sitka on 18 October 2008. Unlike other Spizella, Chipping Sparrows often migrate before completing the molt into 1st-basic plumage and it is not unusual to see migrants with streaked breasts like this bird. In addition to the streaked breast, the dark lores and eyeline, and pinkish bill are also characteristic of this species. *Photo by Matt R. Goff*

FOX SPARROW: This species made a late movement into Southeast Alaska during November. Interior “Red Fox Sparrows” were found in Ketchikan for the second consecutive fall. Prior to 2007, when four birds were found, there had only been one report of this form from Ketchikan. In 2008, at least four birds were present from 5 November 2008 through the end of the period (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl, J. H. Lewis, K. Mix; photos). This form is apparently a rare, annual visitant at Juneau in northern Southeast Alaska (fide G. van Vliet), but is casual in southern Southeast.

SWAMP SPARROW: Single birds were found at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, on 28–29 October 2008 (P. M. Suchanek, R. J. Gordon), and near Ketchikan 20 October–30 November 2008+ (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl; J. H. Lewis Figure 16). This species is casual in northern Southeast Alaska, but has occurred nearly annually in the Ketchikan area in the fall.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: This species is a rare migrant and winter visitant in Southeast Alaska but eleven birds reported in fall 2008 made a nice showing. At least five birds were found in the Ketchikan area, where they are annual in fall, 4 November 2008+ (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl, K. E. Mix, J. F. Koerner, K. M. Ripley). Single birds were found in the Juneau area 23 October–26 November 2008+ (P. M. Suchanek, photo) and 7–27 November (M. Anderson). One was found at Sitka in early October 2008 (JC), followed by two at a feeder on 30 October 2008 and another at the same feeder 18–19 November 2008 (M. Ward, M. Tedin).
HARRIS’S SPARROW: A casual migrant, one was found at Ketchikan 1–4 October 2008 (J. F. Koerner), and two were near Juneau on 7 October 2008 (M. W. Schwan; Figure 17).

SMITH’S LONGSPUR: An adult photographed at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, on 24 August 2008 provided only the 4th record for Southeast Alaska (P. M. Suchanek, B. A. Agler, L. Lamm, G. B. van Vliet, P. A. Rose, et al.; Figure 18).
Figure 18. Smith’s Longspur at the Mendenhall wetlands, near Juneau, on 24 August 2008. This bird is identified by the combination of small, narrow bill, overall buffy or tan appearance including extensively buffy underparts, and whitish cheeks framed by blackish border broken at the rear. There were only three prior records of this species in Southeast Alaska. Photo by Patty A. Rose

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD: A flock of 29 at Juneau’s Mendenhall Wetlands on 3 August 2008 was one of the largest flocks the observer had ever seen there (R. J. Gordon) and eclipsed the flock of 24 that had been reported in late July.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD: Single birds were reported from the Gustavus area on 24 and 25 September and 30 October 2008 (N. K. Drumheller), at Ketchikan on 28 September 2008 (A. W. Piston), and at Sitka on 4 November 2008 (M. R. Goff; Figure 19).

Figure 19. Female Rusty Blackbird at Sitka 4 November 2008. Photo by Matt R. Goff
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD: This species, a rare fall migrant throughout Alaska, made a nice showing this fall. Two at Ketchikan on 28 August (A. W. Piston, S. C. Heinl) were followed by one on 9 September and a group of three birds that strutted majestically through the mall parking lot on 15 September 2008 (S. C. Heinl, photo). A flock of four was found near Juneau on 27 August 2008 (R. J. Gordon, P. A. Rose).

PURPLE FINCH: At least four individuals (three males and one female) were found at feeders in the Ketchikan area in November, three of which lingered through the end of the period (K. M. Ripley, K. E. Mix, S. C. Heinl, A. W. Piston; Figure 20). This species is a very rare fall migrant and winter visitant to the Ketchikan area, but is casual elsewhere in the state.

![Male Purple Finch at Ketchikan 22 November 2008. Compared to the male Cassin’s Finch in Figures 21 and 22, this bird exhibited a shorter bill, darker and more evenly colored wash of red on the upperparts with less contrasting red crown, broad brown streaks on the back, chest, and flanks, and lack of pale eyering. Photo by Steven C. Heinl](image)

CASSIN’S FINCH: An adult male was present from 19–26 October at a feeder near Saxman (L. Kolund; A. W. Piston details, and S. C. Heinl details; Figures 21 and 22). This bird provided the first Southeast Alaska record and only the 4th record for Alaska. This species normally ranges north to southeastern British Columbia (Hahn 1996).
Figure 21. Male Cassin’s Finch at Ketchikan 24 October 2008. Characteristics that separate this species from the very similar Purple Finch include the highly contrasting scarlet cap, long crown feathers, long and heavy bill with straight culmen (top edge of bill), obvious pale lower eye arc, relatively pale rose wash on chest and flanks, and lack of bold streaking on flanks. *Photo by Steven C. Heinl*

Figure 22. Male Cassin’s Finch at Ketchikan on 23 October 2008. Important field marks to note in this photo include the streaked undertail coverts (very fine on this individual), the long bill with very straight culmen, the narrow, well-defined streaks on the back, the unmarked flanks, the pale lower eye arc, and the scarlet cap that contrasts sharply with the brownish nape. *Photo by Andrew W. Piston*
EVENING GROSBEAK: A female was heard calling and seen briefly in flight at Ketchikan on 7 November 2008 (S. C. Heinl). This species is casual in Alaska.

HOUSE SPARROW: Three birds at a Ketchikan feeder on 25 October 2008 provided the 6th local record, and 7th Southeast Alaska record, nearly all of which have been found in October (S. C. Heinl, Figure 23).

Figure 23. Beautiful male House Sparrow at Ketchikan; one of three birds that graced a feeder for one-day on 25 October 2008. Photo by Steven C. Heinl

REFERENCES:

