SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS:
Winter: December 2011–February 2012

Sub-regional Compilers:
Steven C. Heinl, 2603 4th Avenue, Ketchikan, AK 99901
Andrew W. Piston, P. O. Box 1116, Ward Cove, AK 99928

This report summarizes bird sightings from Southeast Alaska for the winter season, which
covered December 2011 to February 2012, and is intended to provide interesting observations for
inclusion in an Alaska-wide column written by Thede Tobish for the journal North American Birds
(published by the American Birding Association http://www.aba.org/). Generally we report on sightings
of birds that are out of range or out of season, noteworthy breeding records, unusually large or small
numbers of a particular species, unusual migration dates, etc., and so on, and so forth.

December typically marks the tail end of the fall migration for late-lingering species, but cold
weather and snow in November and December likely resulted in just a few early December sightings of
some species (e.g., Bonaparte’s Gull, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Savannah Sparrow) and a lack of semi-
hardy stragglers past early December. Many passerines that regularly spend the winter in the region were
present in low numbers—some observers even commented on the scarcity of Dark-eyed Juncos! There
were many noteworthy finds, highlighted by interesting alcids in the Sitka area, including a well-
documented Thick-billed Murre, and rare winter records of Brant, Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, Rough-
legged Hawk, and Greater Yellowlegs. More unusual were the third Southeast Alaska record of McKay’s
Bunting at Gustavus and the first report of Ruffed Grouse in the Skagway area.

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
particularly appreciated the extensive reports from Nat Drumheller (Gustavus), Matt Goff (Sitka), and
Bonnie Demerjian (Wrangell), and benefited from access to sightings entered into eBird (www.ebird.org)
which we’ve incorporated into this report. Gus van Vliet, Nat Drumheller, Mark Schwan, Matt Goff, and
Dave Sonneborn provided information and reviews of the final draft of this summary. Past seasonal
reports (since fall 2008) are posted at the Juneau Audubon website (http://www.juneau-audubon-
society.org/SE%20AK%20Birding.html).

Names and Initials of observers cited in the text or who reported sightings: Brad Benter (RBB), Kaylauna Churchill (KC), Ernie DeBoer (ED), Bonnie H. Demerjian (BHD), Nat K. Drumheller (NKD), Cheryl A. Fultz (CAF), Steve Gilbertson (SG), Matt R. Goff (MRG), Nick R. Hajdukovich (NRH), Steven C. Heinl (SCH), Gerry Herbrandson (GH), Brad L. Hunter (BLH), Jim Johnson (JJ), Elaine Furbish-Klensch (EFK), Jerrold F. Koerner (JFK), Mike G. Konsler (MGK), Laurie A. Lamm (LAL), Jim H. Lewis (JHL), Richard E. Lowell (REL), Jim Mackovjak (JM), Sean Neilson (SLN), Eric V. Parker (EVP), Bill H. Pawuk (BHP), James F. Pilkington (JFP), Andrew W. Piston (AWP), Lucy Pizzuto-Phillips (LPP), Kathy M. Ripley (KMR), Patty A. Rose (PAR), Carol L. Ross (CLR), Ken Russo (KR), Jim F. Saracco (JFS), Connor Scher (CS), Mark W. Schwan (MWS), Greg Streveler (GPS), Paul M. Suchanek (PMS), Marlys E. Tedin (MET), Harold Vanselow (HV), Phoebe Vanselow (PBSV), Bob Vathke (BV), Julie Vathke (JV), Gus B. van Vliet (GBV), Marge L. Ward (MLW), Susan Wise Eagle (SWE), Butch Young (BY), Will T. Young (WTY).
SPECIES ACCOUNTS:

BRANT: Small numbers of Brant were found in the Gustavus area all winter (where there were only two prior winter records), including maximum counts of seven at Gustavus 4–19 February 2012 (NKD, JFS, JM) and 12 at Pleasant Island 18 February (NKD). Two Brant also spent most of January–early February 2012 at Sitka (EVP, MRG). The Brant is a casual or, at best, very rare winter visitant along the coast of Alaska east of the traditional wintering location at Izembek Lagoon on the Alaska Peninsula.

WOOD DUCK: A drake Wood Duck at Gustavus 17 December 2011–2 January 2012 (PBSV, HV, m.obs.; Figure 1) provided only the 2nd local record. The Wood Duck is a rare, annual visitant to Southeast Alaska, and this bird was the third recorded in Southeast in 2011.

Figure 1. Wood Duck at Gustavus 2 January 2012. *Photo by Nat K. Drumheller*

GADWALL: Although the Gadwall is found throughout Southeast Alaska during the winter, it is generally rare (Kessel and Gibson 1978) or locally uncommon. Forty Gadwall at Gustavus 19 February 2012 (NKD) was a large count for anywhere in Southeast during the winter and matched an old report of 40–50 at the Excursion River 23–24 December 1958 (Wik and Streveler 1968).

EURASIAN WIGEON: A Eurasian Wigeon was found at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 1 February 2012 (PMS, LAL). This species is a very rare winter visitant to Southeast Alaska, and most records come from this location.

HYBRID WATERFOWL: Several interesting hybrid waterfowl were reported this winter. A drake American Wigeon × Northern Pintail hybrid spent its 2nd consecutive winter at Petersburg (REL; Figure 2). Interesting hybrids in the Juneau area included single Mallard × Northern Pintails at Eagle Beach 4 December 2011–25 February 2012 (also present in spring 2011; PMS, MWS) and the Mendenhall Wetlands 13 January 2012 (PMS), and a Common × Barrow’s goldeneye at Fritz Cove 8 December 2011–17 February 2012 (PMS).

KING EIDER: A female King Eider at Gustavus 24 December 2011 was a nice find and provided a first local winter record (NKD; Figure 3). This species is a casual visitant to Southeast Alaska, primarily in winter and spring.
Figure 2. This apparent male American Wigeon × Northern Pintail returned to the harbor in Petersburg for its 2nd consecutive winter; here photographed 13 January 2012. The bird has the body plumage and long, narrow bill, and bill pattern of a Northern Pintail, but the breast is pinkish, like an American Wigeon, and the head pattern is a freaky combination of both species. Photo by Richard E. Lowell

Figure 3. Female King Eider at Gustavus 24 December 2011. Note the small gray bill, distinctive pale eyebrow, and dark “smile” at the base of the bill, characteristic of this species. Photo by Nat K. Drumheller

LONG-TAILED DUCK: High counts of Long-tailed Ducks in Wrangell Narrows, Petersburg, included 1100 on 6 February 2012 (JFP) and 1400 on 29 February 2012 (BY), and a maximum count of 2400 on 20 February 2012 (BHP). Wrangell Narrows has long been known as a favorite wintering site for this species; e.g., Ira N. Gabrielson estimated 10,000 Long-tailed Ducks in Wrangell Narrows 24 February 1944 (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959).

HOODED MERGANSER: Gustavus birders said it was a “good winter” for Hooded Mergansers, including a maximum of 10 on 20 February 2012 (NKD, JFS, et al.). The Hooded Merganser is an uncommon winter visitant throughout Southeast Alaska.
WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN: Although the White-tailed Ptarmigan is an uncommon high-elevation resident in northern Southeast Alaska, including the Glacier Bay area, it is not an easy bird to see. A White-tailed Ptarmigan flying low across the Gustavus golf course 6 December 2011 was, therefore, a nice find at low elevation (NKD).

RUFFED GROUSE: A belated report, but still of great interest, were sightings of Ruffed Grouse at Skagway in October. One was photographed at Skagway 22 October 2011 (near “overlook”, MGK) and observed again the following day (KR, EFK), and singles were subsequently observed ½ mile away at the AB trailhead 24 October 2011 and at 800–1000’ elevation on the AB trail 30 October (MGK).

These sightings represented the first documented records of this grouse in the Skagway area, and the gray plumage of the bird photographed on 22 October suggested that it was an example of *Bonasa umbellus yukonensis*, the subspecies found throughout the Interior of Alaska (Gibson and Kessel 1997) but not documented in Southeast (Figure 4). The darker, browner subspecies *umbelloides* is resident in riparian zones of the major mainland rivers of Southeast Alaska (Gibson and Kessel 1997), including the Taku, Stikine, Salmon, and Unuk river drainages.

![Ruffed Grouse](image.jpg)

Figure 4. This Ruffed Grouse photographed 22 October 2011 represented the first documented record for the Skagway area. The bird’s gray plumage suggests subspecies *yukonensis*, which is found in the Interior, vs. the browner *umbelloides*, which is known in Southeast Alaska from the Taku, Stikine, Unuk, and Salmon river drainages. *Photo by Mike G. Konsler*

RED-THROATED LOON: Red-throated Loons are rare to uncommon winter visitants in Southeast Alaska. Observations of 11 (13 January 2012; PMS) and 9 (28 January 2012; GBV) at Juneau represented very large winter counts for this species. Ten at Bartlett Cove, near Gustavus, 4 December 2011 was also higher than average, and one–four were present at that location through the remainder of the winter (NKD). Four Red-throated Loons at Ketchikan 15 January 2012 (AWP) represented a high winter count for that location as well.
PACIFIC LOON: Larger-than-average numbers of Pacific Loons wintered in the Ketchikan and Juneau areas, as indicated by a single flock of 450 at Ketchikan 10 January 2012 (SCH), and new local high counts of 400 at Juneau on 14 January 2012 (GBV) and 2 February 2012 (GBV).

PIED-BILLED GREBE: A rare winter visitor in Southeast Alaska, single Pied-billed Grebes were observed at Ketchikan 1 December 2011 (JFK) and 15 December 2011 (AWP, WTY), and at Sitka through early January (MRG, LPP).

RED-NECKED GREBE: Red-necked Grebes were present in larger-than-average numbers in the Ketchikan area all winter, including new local high counts in Clover Pass of 75 on 29 January 2012 (WTY) and 101 on 5 February 2012 (AWP, SCH). This species was also thought to be more numerous than average in the Sitka area (MRG).

WESTERN GREBE: Western Grebes wintered in typical numbers at traditional locations in the Ketchikan area, including maximum counts of 220 near Bold Island 17 December 2011 (SCH), 400 in Clover Pass 5 February 2012 (AWP, SCH), and 270 in Tongass Narrows 11 February 2012 (AWP). In northern Southeast, where this grebe is rare, two were at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 1 December 2011, at least one of which lingered through the end of the period (PMS, m.obs.).

FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL: Very interesting were several observations of Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels on the Inside Passage: one in western Frederick Sound 12 February 2012, three in Frederick Sound/Stephens Passage 21 February 2012, and five in Frederick Sound 23 February 2012 (JFP). Previous mid-winter records of this species on inside waters included seven at Pt. Couverden, northern Chatham Strait, 17 February 2009 (PMS), and 50–100 that came aboard a vessel anchored in Frederick Sound 19 February 2007—the latter birds were observed at night during a snow storm (JT, photo). This storm-petrel is known to winter offshore in the Bering Sea and in the Gulf of Alaska (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959, Boersma and Silva 2001), and Day (2006) considered it to be rare in the Gulf of Alaska in December and March. These sightings of multiple birds suggest it might also be expected more frequently on inside waters than has been previously known.
BRANDT’S CORMORANT: The usual very small numbers of Brandt’s Cormorants were found in the vicinity of Ketchikan; maximum was five on 24 January 2012 (SCH, AWP, RBB).

PELAGIC CORMORANT: The Pelagic Cormorant is a fairly common to common winter resident throughout most of Southeast Alaska. Notable observations this winter included a count of 41 at the Sheep Creek delta, Juneau, 24 February 2012 (GBV), which was double the previous local high count for this species, and a concentration of 600 inside Saginaw Bay, Kuiu Island, 17 February 2012 (JFP).

RED-TAILED HAWK: A Red-tailed Hawk at Sitka was observed on three different days between 27 December 2011 and 18 February 2012 (MRG). This hawk is a very rare winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: A Rough-legged Hawk at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 11 December 2011–17 January 2012 (GBV et al.; Figure 6) established a 1st local mid-winter record. This raptor is a casual winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

AMERICAN COOT: Two coots at Sitka in December, one of which lingered through the end of the period (MRG, LPP, CS, photo), provided the only report and made for a poor showing for this species in Southeast.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS: For the 2nd winter in a row, a Greater Yellowlegs wintered at Ketchikan where one was photographed 20 January 2012 (JHL; Figure 7). This species is a casual winter visitant in Alaska.

Figure 6. Rough-legged Hawk at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 11 December 2011. Photo by Gus B. van Vliet
ROCK SANDPIPER: Rock Sandpipers were found in small numbers at favored Gustavus beaches, with maximum of 400 on 18 and 24 February 2012 (NKD). For the fourth consecutive winter, Drumheller found a colored-banded bird that had been banded on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in either 2007 or 2008 (fide Dan Ruthrauff, USGS).

DUNLIN: The Gustavus Dunlin flock peaked at 2500 at the mouth of Rink Creek 13 January 2012 (NKD). A color-banded bird, observed 13 January and 24 February, was one of nine Dunlin banded at the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta on 9 September 2010—birds with that band combo had previously been sighted at Gustavus in January 2011 and in Taiwan (!) in December 2010 (fide Dan Ruthrauff, USGS; NKD).

WILSON’S SNIPE: Considering the very cold weather present for much of the winter, Wilson’s Snipe sightings were noteworthy at Gustavus (up to five on 26 December 2011 and one to 13 February 2012; NKD), Ketchikan (19 February 2012; AWP, SCH, WTY), and the Juneau area (singles 14 January 2012, MWS; and 27 January 2012, GBV). This species is very rare in mid-winter in Southeast Alaska.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: A Black-legged Kittiwake at Ketchikan 2 January 2012 (AWP, photo) was a nice find from a location where there are few previous winter reports. Ten were also reported at the mouth of Glacier Bay 17 December 2011 (GPS, SLN). This species is sparsely distributed in the Bering Sea and throughout Gulf of Alaska in winter (Hatch et al. 2009) and is a rare winter visitant to inside waters.

BONAPARTE’S GULL: Late Bonaparte’s Gulls at Ketchikan 4 December 2011 (AWP, SCH) and Juneau 1 December 2011 (PMS) represented the last fall migrants from the region.

SLATY-BACKED GULL: A 2nd-cycle Slaty-backed Gull was found at Ketchikan 14–17 December 2011 (JHL, AWP, SCH; Figure 8). This Beringian species is very rare along the south coast of Alaska during the winter.
Figure 8. This 2nd-cycle Slaty-backed Gull at Ketchikan 14 December 2011 provided a nice study. The bird was identified by the combination of slate-gray mantle and covert feathers, reddish streaking on the neck and breast, plainly patterned wing coverts, blackish primaries, and stout, straight bill. *Photo by Jim H. Lewis*

**COMMON MURRE:** Common Murres were found in large numbers throughout Inside waters this winter. High counts included 2,900 on the Gustavus CBC 17 December 2011 (*fide* NKD); 1100 at Clover Passage, near Ketchikan, 4 December 2011 (AWP, SCH); 1600 at Mountain Point, Ketchikan, 24 January 2012 (AWP, SCH, RBB); 1500 at Turnabout Island, Frederick Sound, 22 February 2012 (JFP); 1500 at Five Fingers, Frederick Sound, 7 February 2012 (JFP); and 2000 at Fritz Cove, near Juneau, 6 February 2012 (GBV). There were also reports of sick and dead murres, most notably in the Sitka (*fide* MRG; Figure 9) and Skagway areas; e.g., more than 35 dead murres were found in early January at Skagway where this species is normally a rare winter visitant (*fide* EFK).

**THICK-BILLED MURRE:** A Thick-billed Murre was nicely documented amongst a flock of 1,000 Common Murres at Nakwasina, near Sitka, 5 February 2012 (MRG; Figure 10). The winter status of this species in Southeast is far from clear; it is rare in the Gulf of Alaska (Day 2006) and off British Columbia (including observations on nearshore waters in Hecate Strait; Kenyon *et al.* 2009).

**MARBLED MURRELET:** Large counts of Marbled Murrelets at Ketchikan’s Clover Passage included an estimated 2850 on 4 December 2011 (AWP, SCH) and 1200 on 5 February 2012 (AWP, SCH). Clover Passage is a well-known concentration area for this species (Heinl and Piston 2009). A nice count of 800 was made near Turnabout Island, Frederick Sound, 22 February 2012 (JFP).
Figure 9. Bald Eagles took advantage of sick Common Murres in the Sitka area (here 2 January 2012). *Photo by Matt R. Goff*

Figure 10. Nice comparison of Thick-billed Murre (left; Sitka 5 February 2012; *photo Matt R. Goff*) and Common Murre (right; Ketchikan 10 January 2012; *photo Steven C. Heinl*). The main differences visible in these photos are the bill pattern and shape. Note the white “tomial line” at the base of the upper mandible of the Thick-billed Murre (lacking on the Common Murre) and the distinctly curved upper mandible, which imparts a blunter bill tip than the gradually tapered bill of the Common Murre. The Thick-billed Murre also lacks streaking on the flanks and has blacker plumage and a larger, blockier head than the Common Murre. Winter-plumaged Thick-billed Murres have more black on the head than winter Common Murres (which have white on the head above the eye), but many winter Common Murres show more extensive dark on the head than illustrated in field guides (see Gaston and Hipfner 2000).

**ANCIENT MURRELET:** Five Ancient Murrelets near Point Gustavus 17 December 2011 provided the first local winter record (NKD, photo), and another at Ketchikan 8 January 2012 provided only the second local winter record (AWP, SCH). This species is a rare winter visitant in Southeast Alaska and along the British Columbia coast north of southern Vancouver Island (Campbell *et al.* 1990, Kenyon *et al.* 2009).
RHINOCEROS AUKLET: Several Rhinoceros Auklets were found in the Sitka area during February, including at least two birds on 5 and 19 Feb 2012 (MRG; Figure 11). This species is a rare winter visitant in Southeast Alaska and along the British Columbia coast north of southern Vancouver Island (Campbell et al. 1990, Kenyon et al. 2009), and the bulk of the eastern Pacific population appears to winter off California (Gaston and Dechesne 1996).

HORNED PUFFIN: For the second consecutive winter, a Horned Puffin was found near Sitka (19 February 2012, MRG; Figure 11). Horned Puffins disperse into oceanic habitats after breeding (Sanger 1972, Gould et al. 1982, Day 2006) and much of the population is thought to winter south of Alaska (Piatt and Kitaysky 2002). Kenyon et al. (2009) reported that Horned Puffins were widespread during winter surveys off the coast of British Columbia, but they were typically well offshore and nearly all sightings were south of 50° N.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: Eurasian Collared-Doves wintered in numbers in southern Southeast Alaska, with at least 50 birds wintering at Ketchikan (AWP, SCH, JFK) and smaller numbers (1–4 birds) present through mid-winter at nearly all Southeast Alaska communities north to Gustavus (m. obs.).

SNOWY OWL: The remains of a Snowy Owl were found on 17 February along the shore of Bartlett Cove near Gustavus. Most of the owl had been consumed and the remains looked like they had been there for more than a month (NKD).

BARRED OWL: The Barred Owl is a rare to uncommon resident throughout Southeast Alaska. This winter’s reports included a hooting bird at the Harris River trail, Prince of Wales Island, 25 February 2012 (MNC) and singles recorded at Gustavus on six dates in January and February 2012 (SLN, NKD).

SHORT-EARED OWL: Short-eared Owls were found regularly at Gustavus from 20 December 2011 to at least 18 February 2012 (maximum, at least three on 30 December 2011; NKD).
BOREAL OWL: One found dead at Juneau 24 February 2012 had apparently been observed in the same area on 19 February 2012 (fide GBV). Another Boreal Owl was photographed at Juneau 29 February 2012 (SG; Figure 12). This species’ status in Southeast Alaska is poorly known but scattered sightings around the region in recent years suggest this species may be a rare resident (or migrant and winter visitant?).

ANNA’S HUMMINGBIRD: This species is a very rare fall and winter visitant to southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978). An adult male was at Ketchikan through at least 24 January 2012 (AWP, SCH), one lingered at Petersburg through 16 January 2012 (GH, photo), and up to two were observed at Sitka through 7 February 2012 (MRG, MET, MLW; photo).

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE: A single Black-capped Chickadee, first found during the fall, lingered at Juneau through 15 December 2011 (PAR). This species is an uncommon resident and probable breeder along the larger mainland river systems of northern Southeast Alaska, but is casual in fall and winter elsewhere (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: One at Gustavus through 9 February 2012 was, surprisingly, the only report of the winter (NKD).

AMERICAN ROBIN: Very few American Robins were reported this winter. Single birds were reported at Sitka on five dates between 31 December 2011 and 20 January 2012 (MRG), and singles were noted at Ketchikan 17 December 2011 (AWP), Wrangell 16 January 2012 (SWE), and Petersburg 14 February 2012 (BHP).
AMERICAN PIPIT: Single American Pipits were observed near Gustavus 4 December 2011 (NKD) and at Ketchikan 27 December 2011, 13 January 2012, and 26 January 2012 (SCH, AWP). There were no winter records at Ketchikan prior to 2005, but small numbers have been found in most winters since that time.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Two Bohemian Waxwings at Juneau on 1 December 2011 (PMS), and 10 at Gustavus through 17 December 2011 (BV, JV) were the only reports from northern Southeast Alaska this winter. Up to 12 birds were at Ketchikan in the southern end of the region 13–29 December 2011 (AWP).

LAPLAND LONGSPUR: Small numbers of Lapland Longspurs often linger in areas with suitable habitat into December, but they are typically absent by the end of the month. Counts at Gustavus of 14 birds on 3 January 2012, eight on 8 January 2012, and nine on 9 January 2012 provided very rare mid-winter reports for Alaska (NKD, photo).

MCKAY’S BUNTING: A McKay’s Bunting amongst a flock of 150 Snow Buntings at Gustavus 26–27 December 2011, and again amongst 200–300 Snow Buntings 2 January 2012 (NKD, JFS, JJ; Figure 13), provided the second local record and only the third record for Southeast Alaska. This Beringian species winters primarily along the mainland bordering the Bering Sea (Kessel and Gibson 1978) and is a casual winter visitant along the Gulf Coast of Alaska.

Figure 13. McKay’s Bunting (right) with two Snow Buntings at Gustavus 26 December 2011. The white plumage, with few markings on the back, rump, and wings, suggest this bird is a male, and made identification relatively easy. Photo by Nat K. Drumheller

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: A Yellow-rumped Warbler at Juneau 2 January 2012 provided a very rare mid-winter record for Alaska (GBV).

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW: Larger-than-average numbers of American Tree Sparrows were found at Gustavus, with a maximum count of 40 on 2 January 2012 at a spot that had been seeded regularly by Drumheller (NKD).

SAVANNAH SPARROW: A Savannah Sparrow at Ketchikan 17 December 2011 was late (JHL).
LINCOLN’S SPARROW: At least two Lincoln’s Sparrows spent the winter at Ketchikan (SCH, JFK), and a single bird survived at Sitka through at least 12 January 2012 (LPP, MRG, photo). This species is very rare in southeast Alaska during the winter.

SWAMP SPARROW: A Swamp Sparrow lingered from the fall period at Koerner’s feeding stations in Ketchikan through at least 24 January 2012 (JFK). This species is a casual winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: After a very strong fall showing at Ketchikan, only one White-throated Sparrow lingered to at least 20 December 2011 (JFK). Another was found at Neka Bay, near Hoonah, 20 December 2011 (NRH). This species is a rare migrant and winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW: Two Golden-crowned Sparrows were present at Gustavus until at least 19 February 2012 (NKD, PBSV, HV), four were at Sitka until at least 16 February 2012 (MRG, LPP), and normal small numbers wintered at Ketchikan (maximum, counts of three birds at two different locations on 15 and 17 December 2011; AWP, JFK).

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD: A flock of 25 Red-winged Blackbirds was observed at Juneau’s Pioneer Marsh 12 December 2011 (GBV) and at least 19 birds were still present at Juneau through 12 February 2012 (GBV). This is one of the highest mid-winter counts for this species, matched only by the 20 blackbirds reported at the same locality 17 January 2011. The previous highest mid-winter count in Alaska was a flock of 12 at Juneau 26 February 2010 (North American Birds 64:311). Another Red-winged Blackbird at Wrangell on 3 December 2011 was late (KC).

RUSTY BLACKBIRD: Small numbers of Rusty Blackbirds were reported on the mainland in northern Southeast Alaska at Gustavus 10 December 2011–10 February 2012 (maximum, 14 on 10 February 2012; NKD) and Juneau, where seven were observed 20 January 2012 (GBV). Single Rusty Blackbirds were also found at Ketchikan 8 December 2011 (JHL) and 18 January 2012 (SCH) where there were only two prior winter records.

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH: Six Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were found in downtown Juneau 27 January 2012 (GBV), where the species has been very rarely found during the winter in recent decades (fide PMS, GBV). Kessel and Gibson (1978) considered this species to be an uncommon to rare local winter visitant to Southeast Alaska, with most records from the northern section of the region. Tremendous numbers of rosy-finches were present at Juneau during the winter/spring of 1948, including an estimated 1,000+ birds in late March and early April (Williams 1949).

PURPLE FINCH: The Purple Finch is a very rare fall migrant and winter visitant at Ketchikan (Heinl and Piston 2009). A male Purple Finch spent the winter there, alternating between several different north end feeding stations (JFK, CAF) and a female/immature bird frequented a feeding station in town through 17 December 2011 (JHL; Figure 14).

RED CROSSBILL: After departing the region during the fall, Red Crossbills were virtually absent from Southeast Alaska during the entire winter (m.obs.).

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: The only White-winged Crossbill reports were from February in northern Southeast Alaska at Gustavus (“heard and seen a few times”; NKD) and Juneau (one on 13 February 2012, and 11 on 23 February 2012; GBV).
COMMON REDPOLL: Common Redpolls were fairly common in northern Southeast Alaska this winter, with flocks of 50–120 birds regularly observed at Gustavus (NKD) and numerous observations of a few to 100 birds at Juneau throughout the period (maximum, 125 on 22 February 2012; PMS). Smaller numbers were recorded at Sitka (maximum, 30 on 6 December 2011; MRG), Wrangell (five on 19 January 2012; BHD), Petersburg (one bird on the CBC), and Ketchikan (maximum, six at Ketchikan 4 December 2011 (AWP, SCH).

HOARY REDPOLL: Two Hoary Redpolls were identified at Juneau: a hatch-year bird on 17 December 2011 (GBV, details) and an adult female on 29 January 2012 (PAR, details). This species is considered casual to very rare in Southeast Alaska and there are few documented records south and east of Cordova (Tobish 2009).

PINE SISKIN: Pine Siskins were relatively common through northern Southeast Alaska, but were scarce in the southern half of the region, with only scattered reports at Petersburg, Wrangell, and Ketchikan (m.obs.).

HOUSE SPARROW: At Ketchikan, up to five House Sparrows were present through the winter (ED). The small resident population appeared to have been reduced over the prior winter and sightings were infrequent.

LITERATURE CITED
