SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS:
Winter: December 2015–February 2016

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This report summarizes bird sightings from Southeast Alaska for the winter season, December 2015–February 2016, 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/nab](http://www.aba.org/nab))—sightings of birds that are out of range or out of season or occur regularly in small numbers, noteworthy breeding records, unusually large or small numbers of a particular species, unusual migration dates, etc., and so on, and so forth.

Winter 2015–2016 was the second warmest in Alaska dating back to 1925. Maximum daily temperatures never fell below 32°F at Sitka, and did so on only one day at Ketchikan. Not surprisingly, the winter snowfall was exceptionally light, particularly at Juneau, where the final season total of 18.3 in. tied for the lowest on record (and all but 2 in. of that occurred in December). There were certainly some nice finds this winter, but the number and variety of semi-hardy song birds that lingered to December and into the winter seemed normal or less than one might have expected (or hoped for) given the extraordinarily warm fall and winter. American Robins, for example, were reported in relatively low numbers and went completely unreported at Ketchikan and Sitka.

I would like to thank the people who shared observations and photographs and answered inquiries about their sightings, all of whom are cited below. I particularly appreciated Matt Goff’s extensive information on bird sightings in the Sitka area. This report also benefited from access to sightings entered into eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org))—at least 75% of the sightings included here had been entered in eBird. I would like to thank Gus van Vliet for reviewing the eBird data from Juneau, and Gus, Nat Drumheller, Andy Piston, and Matt Goff provided information and reviews that improved the final draft of this summary. Past seasonal reports (since fall 2008) have been archived at the Juneau Audubon website ([http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/SE%20AK%20Birding.html](http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/SE%20AK%20Birding.html)).

Southeast Alaska: “Southeast Alaska” as a biogeographic region was defined by Kessel and Gibson (1978) as all of Alaska east of Cape Fairweather and south to Dixon Entrance.

Checklist of Alaska Birds: A list of all the species of birds known in Alaska (currently up to 510 species) is compiled and maintained by the Alaska Checklist Committee and is available free online at [http://www.universityofalaskamuseumbirds.org/products/checklist.pdf](http://www.universityofalaskamuseumbirds.org/products/checklist.pdf).

Names and Initials of observers cited in the text or who reported sightings: Beverly A. Agler (BAA), Robert H. Armstrong (RHA), Gwen S. Baluss (GSB), Lynn E. Barber (LEB), Ryan Carpenter (RC), Jason Colon (JC), Amy C. Courtney (ACC), Bonnie H. Demerjian (BHD), Boris Dobrowolsky (BD), Philip S. Doherty (PSD), Nat K. Drumheller (NKD), Cameron D. Eckert (CDE), C. Elaine Furbish (CEF), Connor P. F. Goff (CPFG), Matt R. Goff (MRG), Rowan B. L. Goff (RBLG), Pendleton Grey (PG), Alice Hanson, (AH), Joel Hanson (JH), Steven C. Heinl (SCH), Jerrold F. Koerner (JFK), Laurie A. Lamm (LAL), Kris R. Larson (KRL), Hank P. Lentfer (HPL), Jim H. Lewis (JHL), Richard E. Lowell (REL), Mary McCafferty (MM), John McDermott (JMM), Amy Millsaps (AM), Cody Millsaps (CM), Jessie Millsaps (JM), Sean L. Neilson (SLN), Eric V. Parker (EVP), Andrew W. Piston (AWP), Jennifer Price (JP), Kurt Rieselbach (KR), Patty A. Rose (PAR), Jim F. Saracco (JFS), Jeffrey F. Sauer (JFSa), Fay Schaller (FS), Steve Schaller (SS), Mark W. Schwan (MWS), Marsha Squires (MS), Owen Squires (OS), Paul M. Suchanek (PMS), Chuck P. Susie (CPS), Shyloh van Delft (SV), Gus B. van Vliet (GBV), Christine Williams (CW), Jan Wrentmore (JW), Brenda Wright (BW), E. L. “Butch” Young (ELY).

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1 [https://www.climate.gov/news-features/event-tracker/where-oh-where-has-alaska%E2%80%99s-winter-gone](https://www.climate.gov/news-features/event-tracker/where-oh-where-has-alaska%E2%80%99s-winter-gone)
SPECIES ACCOUNTS:

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: Late Greater White-fronted Geese lingered to 4 December 2015 at Gustavus (NKD) and 15 December 2015 at Auke Lake, near Juneau (GBV). More unusual were two that spent the entire winter at Hoonah (ACC). There are not many mid-winter (i.e., January–February) records of this species in Alaska.

SNOW GOOSE: A Snow Goose at Blind Slough, Mitkof Island, 30 December 2015 (REL) was extremely late. Another spent the entire winter in the Juneau area, where it was observed through 10 March 2016 (GBV; m.obs.). There are few mid-winter (i.e., January–February) records of this species in Alaska.

TUNDRA SWAN: An immature Tundra Swan at Bartlett Cove 17 December 2015 (NKD; Figure 1) was very late.

WOOD DUCK: A drake Wood Duck found at Sitka 7 February 2016 (AH, JH; Figure 2) stayed through the entire winter (fide MRG). This duck is a rare, annual visitant to Southeast Alaska, primarily from fall through spring.

EURASIAN WIGEON: Rare in winter, a drake Eurasian Wigeon was observed at the Mendenhall Wetlands, near Juneau, 14–15 January 2016 (PAR, MWS).

NORTHERN SHOVELER: At least three Northern Shovelers were present all season at the Mendenhall Wetlands (PAR), and two more were at Eagle Beach 18 January 2016 (MWS). This species is rare in mid-winter in Southeast Alaska.

CANVASBACK: A Canvasback at Starrigavan, near Sitka, in early December 2015 stayed for nearly a month (MRG). This species is a rare winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

Figure 1. Although it is easy to see the smaller size, smaller bill, and thinner neck of the immature Tundra Swan (2nd from left) compared to the immature Trumpeter Swan (3rd from left) in this photo taken at Bartlett Cove 17 December 2015, judging those features and identifying a lone immature swan can be maddeningly difficult. Photo by Nat K. Drumheller
Figure 2. Nice waterfowl finds in the Sitka area included a Wood Duck (left; 14 February 2016; photo Matt R. Goff) and a Redhead (right; 26 December 2015; photo Chuck P. Susie).

REDHEAD: Single Redheads were found at Thimbleberry Lake, near Sitka, 16 December 2015+ (CPS) and at the Mendenhall Wetlands 28 December 2015–3 January 2016 (LAL; m.obs). This species is a rare winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

PIED-BILLED GREBE: Single Pied-billed Grebes found during the fall lingered to 9 December 2015 at Gustavus (NKD) and 6 January 2016 at Ketchikan (LEB). Another was reported on the Sitka CBC 3 January 2016. This species is a rare, regular winter visitant.

EARED GREBE: An Eared Grebe was reported at Eagle Beach, near Juneau, 4–5 December 2015 (GBV; m.obs.); photos of the bird were obtained under tough conditions and were not identifiable. There are fewer than 10 Alaska records of this species and only one Southeast record (Juneau 20–21 May 2000; North Am. Birds 54:316). This species nests as close as central interior British Columbia (Campbell et al. 1990).

WESTERN GREBE: The Western Grebe is a rare but regular visitant in very small numbers to northern Southeast Alaska, where seven at Gustavus 19 December 2015 provided a new local CBC high count (fide NKD). This species is locally common in southern Southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978); e.g., maxima at three regular wintering locations along the Ketchikan road system were 40 in Tongass Narrows 6 January 2016 (LEB), 425 near Bold Island 31 January 2016 (SCH), and 410 at Back Island, Clover Passage, 15 February 2016 (SCH).

FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL: Two Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels were observed near Lemesurier Island, Icy Strait, 19 January 2016 (NKD). Similar sightings in recent years suggest this species is probably a regular winter visitant on inside waters. It is known to winter offshore in the Bering Sea and 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.

BRANDT’S CORMORANT: The usual small numbers of Brandt’s Cormorants wintered in the Ketchikan area; maximum five on 14 February 2016 (SCH).

GREAT EGRET: A Great Egret flew past shocked observers at Gustavus 8 December 2015 (NKD, SLN), but was not seen subsequently. This sighting represented only about the 12th for Southeast Alaska, and only the 2nd in winter.
NORTHERN HARRIER: Single Northern Harriers were observed in the Gustavus area 16 December 2015 and 22 January 2016 (NKD). This hawk occurs sporadically along the south coast of Alaska after November, and there are few mid-winter records for Southeast.

RED-TAILED HAWK: Single late Red-tailed Hawks were reported at Gustavus 2–8 December 2015 and 16 December 2016 (NKD) and on the Wrangell CBC 19 December 2015. One was also observed near Sitka 17 December 2015 and 7 January 2016 (CPS, photo), and another was reported mid-winter at Ketchikan 9 February 2016 (AWP, SCH). This species is a rare winter visitant in Southeast Alaska and has been reported nearly annually since winter 2003–2004.

AMERICAN COOT: An American Coot at Ketchikan 14 February 2016+ (JHL, et al.) and another reported on the Petersburg CBC 19 December 2015 provided the season’s only reports of this rare winter visitant.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER: Single Black-bellied Plovers were observed at the Beardslee Islands 20 February 2016 (NKD) and Gustavus 27–28 February 2016 (JFS, NKD). This species is quite rare after November, and there were only two prior mid-winter Alaska records.

KILLDEER: Impressive counts of 29 Killdeer at the Mendenhall Wetlands on 11 December 2015 (John Doty) and 23 there on 13 December 2015 (GBV) were among the highest Alaska counts of this uncommon shorebird. The record high count in the Juneau area is 30 at the Mendenhall Wetlands 19 August 2004 (PMS), which probably also represents the largest count for the state.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER: For the second consecutive year, a Spotted Sandpiper spent the entire winter in the Sitka area (MRG; CPFG, photo). There are probably fewer than 10 Alaska winter records.

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER: Two Long-billed Dowitchers found on the Juneau CBC 2 January 2016 (LAL; m.obs.; Figure 3) were observed through at least 5 March 2016 (MWS) and provided only the 5th mid-winter report for Alaska—all of which are from Juneau and Gustavus.

WILSON’S SNIPE: Wilson’s Snipes were reported in normal numbers—perhaps less than would have been expected given the warm winter. Six at Lemon Creek 27 December 2015 (GBV) were followed by at least three singles elsewhere in the Juneau area through late January (m.obs.). One was reported on the Thorne Bay CBC 19 December 2015, three were reported on the Sitka CBC 3 January 2016, and one was observed at Gustavus 12 January 2016 (NKD).
COMMON MURRE: Unprecedented numbers of Common Murres were observed in parts of Southeast Alaska beginning in late fall and extending into the winter—probably a result of poor feeding conditions in the Gulf of Alaska that resulted in a significant die off of murres from Prince William Sound to the Alaska Peninsula\(^2\). Common Murres were apparently present in Glacier Bay in unusually high numbers during the summer, and they were observed more regularly from shore in late fall at Gustavus and Bartlett Cove than usual (*fide* NKD). On 14 November 2015, Hank Lentfer witnessed extraordinary numbers of Common Murres streaming out of Glacier Bay and heading southwest past Point Carolus (“several hundred going past at any second, quite unlike anything he had previously witnessed there”; *fide* NKD). A total of 4,300 murres tallied on the Gustavus CBC 19 December 2015 provided the 2\(^{nd}\) highest local CBC count (*fide* NKD). At both Gustavus and Sitka, murres exhibited unusual behavior (lethargic or swimming in areas not normally observed) and dead murres were found on beaches (NKD, MRG). A similar die-off was observed in the Sitka area in winter 2011–2012, though this year seemed a little worse (MRG). Murres also dispersed to areas where they are not normally encountered; e.g., sightings of large flocks, possibly hundreds, near Wrangell in late fall (Peter Branson; *fide* BHD), and up to 70 at Skagway, at the head of Lynn Canal, 19 December 2015 (*fide* CEF).

A major influx of murres occurred in early December in the Juneau area, particularly at Auke Bay and in lower Lynn Canal. Only 150 murres were observed at Auke Bay 25 November 2015 (GBV); however, thousands were concentrated there by early December (m.obs.), apparently taking advantage of abundant feed, and numbers peaked at an estimated 5,000 on 9 December 2015 (GBV). Larger than average numbers were observed throughout the Juneau area all winter.

Common Murres appeared healthy and in normal numbers at Ketchikan, where maximum was 1500+ on 15 February 2016 (SCH).

MARBLED MURRELET: An estimated 1,425 Marbled Murrelets at Mountain Point 31 January 2016 (SCH) provided a larger than average count for the Ketchikan area.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed into December at Bartlett Cove (one, 17 December 2015; NKD), Point Gustavus (four, 19 December 2015; NKD), and Juneau (three through 12 December 2015; GBV, BAA, PAR, OS, MS). This species is a very rare winter visitant to inside waters, but likely winters regularly in Cross Sound and Icy Strait (fide NKD).

BONAPARTE’S GULL: Single late Bonaparte’s Gulls were observed at Auke Bay 12 December 2015 (GBV) and Ketchikan 19 December 2015 (AWP).

CALIFORNIA GULL: Three California Gulls at Ketchikan 27 February 2016 (SCH, LEB, JHL) provided the 2nd earliest local spring arrival date. This species is an early migrant but it normally arrives at Ketchikan in mid-March (Heinl and Piston 2009).

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: Eurasian Collared-Doves presented interesting patterns of abundance across the region. The largest numbers were reported at Sitka, where 83 were recorded on the CBC 3 January 2016, and the total number in the area was thought to be close to 100 birds (MRG). Small numbers at Hoonah grew to nine birds 16–22 January 2016, a new local high count (ACC). Maximum counts of 3–5 birds were reported on the Craig/Klawock CBC 19 December 2015, at Gustavus 11 December 2015 (NKD), and at Petersburg 14 January 2016 (ELY). At least three were present at Juneau to early January (MWS, GBV), but none were observed thereafter until what appeared to be a new bird made a one-day appearance at van Vliet’s feeders. Finally, this species all but disappeared from the Ketchikan area after early January, and it was difficult to find for the first time in six years. Feeders that host numbers of collared-doves are also frequented by Accipiters, which clearly like the taste of collared-doves—Northern Goshawk sightings increased noticeably during the last four or five winters in the Ketchikan area (see also Figure 4).

MOURNING DOVE: A very late Mourning Dove was reported at Sitka 1 December 2015 (RBLG). This species is an annual, rare fall visitant to Southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978), primarily from August to October.

NORTHERN HAWK OWL: Single Northern Hawk Owls were found this winter at Skagway on 16 December 2015 and 21 February 2016 (JM). This owl is very rare in Southeast Alaska and most reports are from the northern mainland.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL: Good numbers of Northern Pygmy-Owls remained throughout the winter in the Gustavus and Juneau areas following one of the most impressive fall showings in a long time. Seven on the Gustavus CBC 19 December 2015 (NKD) provided a new high count, and singles were reported on 34 days in the Juneau area (m.obs.). Normal small numbers were reported elsewhere: one at Hoonah 13–14 February 2016 (ACC), at least two at Sitka (CPS, MRG), and singles at Ketchikan 8 January 2016 (PSD; Figure 4), 20 January 2016 (JFK), and 21 February 2016 (SCH).

SHORT-EARED OWL: As usual, small numbers of Short-eared Owls were found this winter at Gustavus and Juneau. Maximum counts were three on the Gustavus CBC 19 December 2015 (fide NKD) and three at Juneau 19 and 26 December 2015 (GBV).

BOREAL OWL: Single Boreal Owls were photographed at Hoonah 15 January 2015 (CW; fide ACC, photo), at Douglas Island, near Juneau, 29 January 2016 (fide GBV; photo), and at Gustavus 31 January 2015 (SS, FS; Figure 5). This species’ status in Southeast Alaska is poorly known but scattered sightings around the region suggest it is a rare migrant and winter visitant (or resident?).
ANNA’S HUMMINGBIRD: At least seven Anna’s Hummingbirds survived the mild winter in the Juneau area—an unprecedented number for that location (m.obs.). Elsewhere, at least a dozen were reported at Ketchikan, five were reported on the Sitka CBC 3 January 2016 (probably more were present during the winter; MRG), and singles were reported at Skagway (through 8 December 2015; JW), Gustavus (through 4 December 2015; NKD), Wrangell (CBC on 19 December 2015), and Petersburg 1–6 February 2016 (ELY).

Figure 4. A Northern Pygmy-Owl on a freshly-killed Eurasian Collared-Dove at Ketchikan 8 January 2016. Although pygmy-owls are known to have killed birds as large as quail (Holt and Petersen 2000), killing a collared-dove, a bird that averages more than twice the weight of a pygmy-owl, is an impressive feat. Photo by Philip S. Doherty

Figure 5. Boreal Owl at Gustavus 31 January 2016, one of three reported in Southeast Alaska this winter. Photo by Steve Schaller
RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER: A Red-breasted Sapsucker at Juneau 4 January 2016 (BW) provided a very rare mid-winter report for the Juneau area.

NORTHERN FLICKER: Single Northern Flickers were observed in the Juneau area 20 December 2015 (MM) and 21 January 2016 (JFSa), and in the Gustavus area 12 January 2016 and 1 February 2016 (NKD). This species is very rare on the northern Southeast Alaska mainland and is not observed annually at either location during the winter.

AMERICAN KESTREL: A male American Kestrel was observed near Naukati, Prince of Wales Island, through 15 December 2015 (KRL; Figure 6). This species is casual in the winter in Southeast Alaska.

Figure 6. Male American Kestrel near Naukati, Prince of Wales Island, 15 December 2015. *Photo by Kris R. Larson*

GYRFALCON: At least two Gyrfalcons were found at Gustavus this winter—one on 5 December 2015 and another 11 January 2016 that stayed into March (NKD; Figure 7). Most Southeast Alaska reports of this very rare visitant come from the Gustavus and Juneau areas.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: Ruby-crowned Kinglets lingered well into the winter at Gustavus and Juneau. Two were found at Gustavus 3 December 2015, followed by singles 11 December 2015 and 27 January 2016—the latter provided the first local mid-winter report (NKD). Singles were found in the Juneau area 19 December 2015 (GBV), 7 January 2016 (GBV), 10 January 2016 (PAR), and 18 January 2016 (LAL). Singles were also reported on the Wrangell CBC 19 December 2015 and Sitka CBC 3 January 2016. This species is casual in mid-winter in Alaska.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD: Three Mountain Bluebirds were found at Point Gustavus 19 December 2015 (NKD), and another was found in Gustavus 29 January 2016 (NKD). This species is a locally uncommon spring migrant and casual or rare fall migrant and winter visitant in Southeast Alaska, and it occurs primarily on the mainland.
Figure 7. Two photos of an immature Gyrfalcon at Gustavus 22 January 2016 (left) and 8 February 2016 (right). Features that separate this species from the Peregrine Falcon include the relatively weak (narrow) “mustache” mark below the eye (much wider and bolder in Peregrine Falcon) and wing tips that reach only slightly more than half way to the tip of the long tail (the wingtips of a sitting Peregrine Falcon would reach the tip of the tail). Photos by Nat K. Drumheller

AMERICAN ROBIN: The winter showing of American Robins was certainly less than would have been expected given the warm winter. Sightings included one at Gustavus through at least 9 January 2016 (NKD), one at Hoonah 17 February 2016 (ACC), at least one at Petersburg 2 January–16 February 2016 (ELY), and two–three at Juneau through 7 January 2016 (BAA, GBV). None were observed at Sitka or Ketchikan all winter; however, spring migrants arrived at Ketchikan 21 February (three; AWP, SCH), and small numbers were present thereafter. Three at Juneau 27 February 2016 (JC) were probably also early migrants.

AMERICAN PIPIT: A late American Pipit at Ketchikan 28 December 2015 (SCH) provided the season’s only report.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Bohemian Waxwings made a poor showing in Southeast Alaska this winter. One small flock of 10 was present at Ketchikan through late January (SCH, AWP), four were at Sitka 11–15 January 2016 (JP), six were at Juneau 17 January 2016 (MWS), and singles were observed at Gustavus 4 December 2015 (NKD) and Skagway 19 December 2015 (BD, CDE, SV).

MCKAY’S BUNTING: Two McKay’s Buntings at Gustavus 4 December 2015 (NKD; Figure 8) provided the 3rd local record and only the 4th Southeast Alaska record. 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 8. A McKay’s Bunting (the whitest bird at the bottom of the photo) with Snow Buntings—one of two at Gustavus 4 December 2015. *Photo by Nat K. Drumheller*

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: A Yellow-rumped Warbler at Juneau 12 December 2015 (GBV) lingered to at least 15 January 2016 (m.obs.). Two Yellow-rumped Warblers were found at Ketchikan 3 January 2016—a Myrtle Warbler (SCH) and an Audubon’s Warbler (JFK; Figure 9). The latter bird survived at Koerner’s suet feeders well into April. This species is a casual winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

SPOTTED TOWHEE: The Spotted Towhee found at a Juneau feeder in October successfully completed its 3rd consecutive winter at that location and was observed through 13 March 2016 (KR).

SAVANNAH SPARROW: A Savannah Sparrow at Sitka 11 December 2015 (EVP, photo) spent the entire winter, and another was observed at Hoonah 7–19 January 2016 (ACC). This species is very rare in Southeast Alaska in mid-winter.

Figure 9. This male Audubon’s Warbler visited Jerry Koerner’s suet feeders at Ketchikan 3 January 2016+. *Photo by Steven C. Heinl*
LINCOLN’S SPARROW: A Lincoln’s Sparrow lingered well into December 2015 at Sitka (MRG). Two at a Ketchikan feeder to at least 24 February 2016 (JFK) provided the only mid-winter report.

SWAMP SPARROW: A Swamp Sparrow at Sitka 11 December 2015 (EVP; Figure 10) lingered through at least 3 January 2016. This species is a casual or very rare winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Single White-throated sparrows at Gustavus 4–9 December 2015 (NKD) and Sitka 1 January 2016+ (HPL; Figure 10) provided the season’s only reports.

HARRIS’S SPARROW: A Harris’s Sparrow at Juneau 1 December 2015 (PG; Figure 11) was a great find. This species is a very rare or casual migrant and winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

Figure 10. Nice winter sparrows at Sitka included a Swamp Sparrow 11 December 2015 (left; Eric V. Parker) and a White-throated Sparrow 1 January 2016 (right; Hank P. Lentfer).

Figure 11. More nice sparrow finds included a Harris’s Sparrow at Juneau 1 December 2015 (left; Pendleton Grey) and a Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrow at Sitka 11 December 2015 (right; Eric V. Parker).

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: Single Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrows spent the entire winter at feeders at Ketchikan (JFK), Hoonah (ACC, photo), and Sitka (EVP; Figure 11).
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW: Golden-crowned Sparrows spent the winter at Ketchikan (two; JFK, SCH), Hoonah (one; ACC), and Sitka (one; MRG).

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD: A flock of up to 15 Red-winged Blackbirds spent the winter at Lemon Creek, Juneau (MWS, GBV, PAR)—possibly the only location in Alaska where a flock is regularly found during the winter. A male was observed at a Ketchikan feeder through 6 December 2015 (SCH), and that bird or another was found about six miles away 27 February 2016 (SCH, JHL, LEB). Another at Gustavus 16 December 2015 (NKD) provided only the 3rd local winter record.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK: Two Western Meadowlarks found at the Mendenhall Wetlands last November were observed intermittently through at least 30 January 2016 (GBV; m.obs.). This species is a casual visitant to Southeast Alaska.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD: A Rusty Blackbird spent the entire winter at Hoonah (ACC; Figure 12). This species is a rare winter visitant to southeast Alaska (Kessel and Gibson 1978).

BREWER’S BLACKBIRD: A female Brewer’s Blackbird found at Hoonah last October spent the entire winter (ACC; Figure 12). This species is a casual visitant to Southeast, but it has been found nearly annually over the last 15 years.

BRAMBLING: A Brambling found at Sitka in November remained through 3 December 2015 (SCH). This Eurasian finch is a casual migrant and winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY-FINCH: A Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch at Gustavus 19 December 2015 (NKD, photo) provided the winter’s only report.

FINCHES: The winter food supply was apparently not sufficient to support some of Southeast Alaska’s nomadic finches: Although widespread, Pine Siskins were present in well below average numbers. Common Redpolls were also present in small numbers all winter, but limited in range to the northern mainland. Red and White-winged crossbills, in particular, were quite scarce, and sightings of White-winged Crossbills were limited in range to the northern mainland.

HOARY REDPOLL: A Hoary Redpoll was reported at Juneau 1 January 2016 (PAR, BAA), and two were reported at Gustavus 20 January 2016 (NKD). This species is casual or very rare in Southeast Alaska—most reports have been from the Juneau area.
Figure 12. A female Brewer’s Blackbird (left) spent all winter with a male Rusty Blackbird (right) at Hoonah—here photographed 6 January 2016. Photo by Amy Clark Courtney

LITERATURE CITED


