SUMMARY OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA BIRD OBSERVATIONS:
Winter: December 2017–February 2018
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This report summarizes bird sightings from Southeast Alaska for the winter season, December 2017–February 2018, 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.abab.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 birding seemed about average—not many semi-hardy species lingered into the winter and numbers of sparrows, robins, and others appeared to be pretty standard compared to most winters. A Dusky Thrush at Sitka was certainly the highlight, and it represented only the 3rd Southeast Alaska record and 2nd winter record for Alaska. A King Eider at Gustavus and a Ruddy Duck at Sitka were also noteworthy, and it was a great winter for rare finches.

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 reports from Matt Goff (Sitka), Bonnie Demerjian (Wrangell), and Elaine Furbish (Skagway). This report also benefited from access to sightings entered into eBird (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 enormous quantity of eBird data from Juneau, and Nat Drumheller and Matt Goff provided information and reviews that improved the final draft of this summary. Any errors or misconceptions regarding status and distribution are mine alone. Past seasonal reports (since fall 2008) are archived at the Juneau Audubon website (http://www.juneau-audubon-society.org/SE%20AK%20Birding.html).

Southeast Alaska: The biogeographic region of “Southeast Alaska” was roughly outlined by Kessel and Gibson (1978, p. iv) to include the Alaska mainland and islands east of (approximately) Cape Fairweather and south to Dixon Entrance, and ocean waters up to 200 nautical miles offshore.

Checklist of Alaska Birds: A list of all the species of birds known in Alaska (currently up to 521 species) is compiled and maintained by the Alaska Checklist Committee and is available free online at http://www.universityofalaskamuseumbirds.org/products/checklist.pdf. The phylogenetic sequence of the orders, families, genera, and species of birds was changed substantially by the American Ornithological Society in their most recent supplements to the Check-list of North American Birds (Chesser et al. 2016 and 2017). Those changes were adopted in the latest Checklist of Alaska Birds and are also reflected in this report.

Names and Initials of observers cited in the text or who reported sightings: Debbie Ackerman (DA), Beverly A. Agler (BAA), Andrew Beierly (AB), Joanne Beierly (JB), Jennifer A. Cedarleaf (JAC), Amy Clark Courtney (ACC), Peggy Cowan (PC), Matthew Danihel (MD), Bonnie H. Demerjian (BHD), John Doty (JD), Nat K. Drumheller (NKD), Betsy Fischer (BF), C. Elaine Furbish (CEF), Connor P. F. Goff (CPFG), Matt R. Goff (MRG), Nicholas R. Hajdukovich (NRH), Sudie Hargis (SH), Steven C. Heinl (SCH), Elizabeth Hooge (EH), Brad L. Hunter (BLH), Stefanie Jenkinson (SJ), Ian Johnson (IJ), Kassie Pesch-Johnson (KPJ), Laura Kaltenstein (LKA), Jerrold F. Koerner (JFK), David J. Krause (DJK), Logan Kluting (LK), Kittie L. LaBounty (KLL), Laurie A. Lamm (LAL), Jim H. Lewis (JHL), Benjamyn L. Limle (BL), Richard E. Lowell (REL), Mary J. McCafferty (MJM), Paul H. Norwood (PHN), Cathy Parker (CP), Eric V. Parker (EVP), Andrew W. Piston (AWP), Pam T. H. Randles (PTHR), Kurt Rieselbach (KR), Kathy M. Ripley (KMR), Kyle Farley-Robinson (KFR), Patty A. Rose (PAR), Deborah D. Rudis (DDR), David Russell (DR), L. R. Slim Schonert (LRSS), Mark W. Schwank (MWS), Stan Selmer (SS), Marsha Squires (MS), Chuck P. Susie (CPS), Denise Y. Turley (DYT), Isaac VanDiest (IV), Gus B. van Vliet (GBV), Phoebe B. S. Vanselow (PBSV), Roland Wirth (RW), Jan Wrentmore (JW), E. L. “Butch” Young (ELY).
SPECIES ACCOUNTS:

SNOW GOOSE: A Snow Goose at Gustavus 6–18 December 2017 (NKD; Figure 1) provided one of few local winter records. Another at Juneau 26 December 2017 was present all winter (GBV; m.obs.; photo), the 2nd winter in a row at that location. There are few mid-winter (i.e., January–February) records of this species in Alaska.

Figure 1.—Snow Goose with Canada Geese at Gustavus 6 December 2017. Photo by Nat K. Drumheller

CANADA GOOSE: Single Lesser Canada Geese (subspecies parvipes) were reported at Gustavus 6 December 2017 (NKD) and in the Juneau area 9 December 2017 and 19 February 2018 (GBV). This subspecies, which is smaller and much paler than our resident Canada Goose (subspecies fulva), is casual in Southeast Alaska in winter.

NORTHERN SHOVELER: Late Northern Shovelers included three at Sitka 17 December 2017 (DYT) and one at Gustavus 16–18 December 2017 (PBSV; NKD). Three–four were also observed at the Mendenhall Wetlands through mid-December, and at least two were observed there into January–February (PAR, GBV, MWS, LAL, NRH). This species is rare in mid-winter in Southeast Alaska.

GADWALL: The Gadwall is a rare or uncommon winter visitant to Southeast Alaska, but larger numbers are found locally, for example, in the Glacier Bay and Juneau areas. A count of 59 at Juneau’s Sheep Creek Delta 4 February 2018 (ACC) established a new local high count and 41 at Gustavus 7 January 2018 (NKD) was among the larger counts for that location.

EURASIAN WIGEON: Rare in winter, single Eurasian Wigeon were reported at Sitka (a female all winter; CPFG et al.; photos) and the Mendenhall Wetlands 21–15 February 2018 (NRH, photo).

AMERICAN WIGEON: An estimated 535 American Wigeon at the Mendenhall Wetlands 23 February 2018 (NRH) established a new mid-winter maximum for the Juneau area.

MALLARD: Although Mallards are certainly a common winter sight throughout most of Southeast Alaska, 1700 tallied on the Gustavus CBC 16 December 2017 was nearly 400 more than the previous high for that location (fide NKD).
CANVASBACK: Single Canvasbacks (possibly the same bird) were observed in the Juneau area at Twin Lakes 10–12 December 2017 (GBV, MWS, JD, PAR) and the Mendenhall Wetlands 21–25 February 2018 (NRH, GBV). Another was observed at Bartlett Cove, Glacier Bay, 5 December 2017 (NKD). This species is a rare winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

KING EIDER: An immature male King Eider added spice to the winter birding at Gustavus 19–25 February 2018 (NKD, photo). There are about 25 Southeast Alaska reports, nearly all from winter and spring.

HARLEQUIN DUCK: An evening gathering of 160 Harlequin Ducks at Auke Bay 25 February 2018 (NRH, GBV) provided the largest winter count ever for the Juneau area.

RUDDY DUCK: A Ruddy Duck was observed at Sitka 13 December 2017–25 January 2018 (CPFG, DYT, DIK, MRG; Figure 2). It spent most of its time at Swan Lake; however, it moved to the nearby Indian River estuary during the time the lake was frozen in early January. This species is casual in Southeast Alaska, primarily as a late-fall migrant, and there are few mid-winter Alaska reports.

PIED-BILLED GREBE: Two or three Pied-billed Grebes were observed in the Ketchikan area: singles on 6 December 2017 (JHL), 16 December 2017 (SCH), and 26 January 2018+ (Ben Limle et al.; Figure 3). This species is a rare, regular winter visitant.

WESTERN GREBE: Five Western Grebes recorded on the Gustavus CBC 16 December 2017 (fide NKD) was an impressive number, as this species is rare north of Sumner Strait.

Figure 2.–Sitka’s Swan Lake provided some hot birding this winter. In addition to a female Ruddy Duck, shown here 21 December 2017 (with a Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Ring-necked Ducks), the lake hosted a female Eurasian Wigeon, a Virginia Rail, a Swamp Sparrow, and a California Gull. 

*Photo by Matt R. Goff*
EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE: The status of the Eurasian Collared-Dove continues to be in flux, declining in some areas and increasing in others. The decline has been most dramatic in the Ketchikan area, where only two or three were present through the winter (AWP, SCH), and at Sitka, where the species went unreported. At least six were recorded on the Petersburg CBC 16 December 2017 (fide BLH).

Collared-doves appeared to fare better in the northern inside areas of Southeast Alaska. Two at Gustavus through 12 January 2018 (NKD), at least eight in the Juneau area all winter (m.obs.), and at least five at Hoonah all winter (ACC) were all fairly similar abundances to last winter. Sixteen collared-doves at Skagway 7 December 2017 (DA; Figure 4), however, set a new local high count. Even more interesting, two of those birds were identified as juveniles as they lacked the black neck collar shown by adults. Collared-doves begin the first prebasic molt 3–4 weeks after hatching; however, birds hatched in late summer or early fall may slow down molt and suspend or arrest molt November–March (Romagosa 2012), so a bird without a neck ring in December may be older than it might otherwise seem. Courtship behavior was also observed at Skagway in mid-December, and a freshly broken egg about the right size and color for a collared-dove (and just about unheard of for any species at that time of year) was found on 25 December 2017 beneath a spruce tree that collared-doves had been roosting in for months (JB; Figure 4). In Britain and Germany, collared-doves breed mainly from March to October, but breeding can occur year-round in warmer climates (Romagosa 2012), a category for which Skagway clearly does not qualify.

ANNA’S HUMMINGBIRD: Anna’s Hummingbird numbers continued to be strong through the winter, at least at Ketchikan, where 10 were recorded on the CBC 16 December 2017 (fide AWP) and a conservative 20 were present along the entire road system (m.obs.). The one-day high count at Sitka was four on 19 and 21 January 2018 (CPFG, MRG, SCH), though more were certainly present (fide MRG). At least three were at Gustavus through 7 December 2017 (NKD), and an adult male present through the entire period established the 1st local over-wintering record (NKD, EH). Elsewhere, at least two Anna’s wintered in the downtown Juneau area (m.obs.) and three were recorded on the Petersburg CBC 16 December 2017 (fide BLH).
Figure 4.—Eurasian Collared-Doves were busy at Skagway this winter. Fifteen of 16 birds (left) that established a new local high count 9 December 2017 (*photo by Debbie Ackerman*). A freshly broken egg (right) was found 25 December 2017 beneath a spruce tree where collared-doves had been roosting (*photo by Andrew Beierly*).

**VIRGINIA RAIL:** The same cat that caught a Virginia Rail last winter at Swan Lake, Sitka, caught a Virginia Rail in the same location on 26 December 2017. The bird appeared relatively unharmed and was released back into the marsh (Rena Wild, photo). How many Virginia Rails are in that marsh each winter? Most of the 20 or so Alaska records are from the Southeast Alaska mainland, but multiple records at Sitka and Klawock and one at Ketchikan suggest this species could turn up virtually anywhere in Southeast Alaska.

**AMERICAN COOT:** Rare but regular in winter (Kessel and Gibson 1978), single American Coots were observed at Sitka to at least 20 December 2017 (CPFG, MRG, DJK, DYT), at Ketchikan to at least 4 February 2018 (SCH, JHL, AWP, BLL), and at Petersburg through the winter (REL).

**SANDERLING:** A Sanderling was observed on several dates at Sitka, including 31 January and 8 February 2018 (CPFG, JAC, photo) and later found dead (*fide* MRG). This species is found regularly in winter at Gustavus, where maximum was 120 on 16 February 2018 (NKD), but it is seldom reported elsewhere in Southeast Alaska in winter.

**DUNLIN:** Maximum counts of Dunlin were below average at both Gustavus (2200 on 3 December 2017, NKD) and Juneau (300 at Salmon Creek Delta on 12 January 2018, SH), where large numbers usually winter.

**ROCK SANDPIPER:** Maximum numbers of Rock Sandpipers at Gustavus and Juneau were also below average: 200 at Gustavus 3 December 2017 (NKD) and only seven (!) at Juneau 13 December 2017 (GBV).

**WILSON’S SNIPE:** Typical small numbers of Wilson Snipe were reported this winter. High counts were four at the Mendenhall Wetlands 21 February 2018 (SH), three at Bartlett Cove 18 February 2018 (NKD), and two at Ketchikan 11 February 2018 (SCH, AWP). Singles were also reported at Sitka 11 January 2018 (EVP) and 18 February 2018 (CPFG).

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER:** For the 4th consecutive year, a Spotted Sandpiper over-wintered at the Indian River estuary, Sitka (DJK, CPFG). Photos of the bird taken in April showed it to be a second-year bird, so it could not have been a bird that wintered there in the past. This shorebird is very rare in Southeast Alaska after September and there are only two other mid-winter reports (Juneau, Mitkof Island).
BONAPARTE’S GULL: Single Bonaparte’s Gulls at Petersburg 15 December 2017 (ELY) and Juneau 16 December 2017 (BAA) represented late fall migrants.

CALIFORNIA GULL: Single adult California Gulls were found at Ketchikan 16 December 2017 (AWP, IV) and Sitka 15–27 January 2018 (AWP, SCH, CPFG; Figure 5). This species is a casual winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

ICELAND GULL: Single Kumlien’s type Iceland Gulls (Larus glaucoides kumlieni) were reported at Ketchikan 9 January–18 February 2018 (SCH; Figure 6) and Sitka 13 February 2018 (CPFG; Figure 6). There are around 10 photo-documented records of this subspecies in Southeast Alaska.

Figure 5.—Adult California Gull at Sitka 18 January 2018—one of two found in Southeast Alaska this winter. *Photo by Steven C. Heinl*

Figure 6.—Very rare in Alaska, two Kumlien’s type Iceland Gulls were documented this winter, a 1st-cycle bird at Ketchikan (left; photo by Steven C. Heinl) and an adult (shown next to an adult Thayer’s Gull) at Sitka 13 February 2018 (right; *photo by Connor P. F. Goff*).

YELLOW-BILLED LOON: Yellow-billed Loon reports seemed fewer than normal, at least in some locations (e.g., Ketchikan). Singles were reported at Gustavus 7 January, 21 January, and 14 February 2018 (NKD), Juneau 19 December 2017 (PAR) and 20 January 2018 (ELY), Hoonah 16
January 2018 (ACC), and Sitka 27 January 2018 (CPFG), and at least one was observed most of the winter at Ketchikan (JHL, BLL).

BRANDT’S CORMORANT: Single Brandt’s Cormorants were observed on only six dates at Ketchikan (SCH, AWP); perhaps a return to more normal numbers compared to some recent winters.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: Double-crested Cormorants are rare on inside waters of northernmost Southeast Alaska so singles at Gustavus 16 December 2017 (NKD) and Pt. Couverden 27 December 2017 (ACC) were noteworthy.

Figure 7.—Great Blue Heron snacking on a tasty vole at Starrigavan Estuary, near Sitka, 14 January 2018. *Photo by Chuck P. Susie*

RED-TAILED HAWK: A Red-tailed Hawk at Sitka 21 January 2018 (DR) provided the only report. This species is a rare winter visitant to Southeast Alaska.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: A Rough-legged Hawk was unusual at Petersburg 4 February 2018 (REL); this species is a rare migrant in Southeast Alaska, but there are few prior mid-winter reports.

SNOWY OWL: A Snowy Owl at Sitka 22 December 2017 (Brooke Schafer) provided the only report. This species is an irregular visitant to Southeast Alaska (Gabrielson and Lincoln 1959), primarily in late fall.

NORTHERN HAWK OWL: A Northern Hawk-Owl entertained Juneau birders at the Mendenhall Wetlands from 26 December 2017 through the rest of the winter (m.obs.; fide GBV). This owl is a rare visitor to the northern Southeast Alaska mainland.
Figure 8.—This Barred Owl turned up in a Ketchikan backyard 21 December 2017. Although a rare or uncommon resident throughout most of southern Southeast Alaska and north along the mainland, Barred Owls are not reported much during the winter; one hooting on five nights during January–February at Gustavus (NKD) provided the only other report. *Photo by Kathy M. Ripley*

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL: After a great fall showing, only three Northern Pygmy-Owls were reported at Ketchikan—singles 30 December 2017 (SCH, JHL), mid-January 2018 (JFK), and 10 February 2018 (AWP). Singles at Gustavus 3 and 19 December 2017 and 13 January 2018 (NKD) and Juneau 19 December 2017 (PAR) provided the only other reports.

SHORT-EARED OWL: Single Short-eared Owls at the Mendenhall Wetlands 23 February 2018 (NRH, photo), where annual or nearly so in winter, and at Skagway 23 January 2018 (CEF) provided the only reports of this rare winter visitant.

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER: A Red-breasted Sapsucker was found at Gustavus 5 February 2018 (NKD, photo), where there are not many winter records, and two were at Hoonah 25 February 2018 (ACC et al.; photo). Nine sapsuckers were found in woods bordering the beach at Ketchikan during an extreme cold snap 31 December 2017 (AWP; photo). Major cold-snaps in several recent winters have resulted in similar influxes of sapsuckers to the beach fringe in the Ketchikan area (e.g., more than 35 birds in January 2005; Heinl and Piston 2009); which suggests this species is present during the winter in larger numbers than previously thought—at least in the southern portion of the region. Several were also found during December at Sitka (DYT, MRG), where small numbers are also regularly found during winter.

NORTHERN FLICKER: A Northern Flicker at Hoonah 14 January 2018 (ACC) provided one of only a few local winter records.

AMERICAN KESTREL: An American Kestrel at Ketchikan 3 December 2017 (SCH, BLL; Figure 9) was late.

MERLIN: Single Merlins were reported at Juneau 21 December 2017 (KFR), Ketchikan 16 December 2017 (SCH), and Haines 1 January 2018 (MD, SJ). Singles were also reported on nine dates over the winter at Gustavus (NKD).

PEREGRINE FALCON: Peregrines were reported only at Gustavus (one, 25 February 2018; NKD) and Juneau (one, 21 February 2018, GBV, NRH).
NORTHERN SHRIKE: Exactly as expected, multiple Northern Shrikes wintered in the Gustavus area (NKD) and single birds were recorded on many days through the winter in the Juneau area (m.obs.). Both areas offer extensive suitable habitat.

Figure 9.—An American Kestrel perched briefly on a boat in the Air Marine Harbor shipyard at Ketchikan 3 December 2017. *Photo by Steven C. Heinl*

BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE: Black-billed Magpies are common in winter on the northern Southeast Alaska mainland, but are less numerous farther south. Singles were observed at Wrangell 12 December 2017 (BHD) and Petersburg 15 December 2017 and 2 January 2018 (ELY), where rare, and another was present all winter at Ketchikan (m.ob.), where not reported annually.

AMERICAN CROW: The vocalizations of a crow at Juneau (Auke Bay) 1 December 2017 sounded typical of American Crow, the third late-fall observation in the last four at that location (GBV). The American Crow is known to occur with certainty in Alaska only at Hyder (based on specimens collected there in 1986 and 1987; Gibson and Kessel 1992). It otherwise ranges east of the Coast Mountains north to adjacent north-central interior British Columbia (Campbell et al. 1997) and has been reported with increasing frequency north to southern Yukon (Alexander et al. 2003). American and Northwestern crows differ subtly at best. Indeed, they are thought to be “not distinguishable by appearance and doubtfully identified by voice” (Sibley 2014) and “perhaps not safely separated... by in-hand criteria alone” (Pyle et al. 1997). Some authorities consider them to be conspecific (e.g., see A. M. Rea in Phillips 1986 and Verbeek and Butler 1999).

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: Numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches dropped into the winter months following a good fall showing across northern Southeast Alaska. Gustavus was the stronghold, where high counts were five on several days through mid-January and one–two were maximum through February (NKD). Other reports included one at Juneau (DDR), up to four at Sitka (DYT, CPFG, KLL), and one at Skagway 1 February 2018 (JW).

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: Late Ruby-crowned Kinglets included singles at Juneau 9 December 2017 (PAR, BAA), Ketchikan 10 and 24 December 2017 (SCH, BLL, AWP), and Sitka 14
December 2017 (CPFG). Singles at Sitka 12 January and 20 January 2018 (MRG, CPFG, photo) provided the only mid-winter reports.

TOWNSEND’S SOLITAIRE: A Townsend’s Solitaire at Ketchikan 10 January 2018+ (JHL; Figure 10) provided only the 2nd local winter record. This species is a rare winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

Figure 10.—This Townsend’s Solitaire at Ketchikan 12 January 2018 provided the 2nd local winter record. Ketchikan’s 1st winter record was a bird found by the same observer in same patch of berry bushes almost exactly five years earlier on 5 January 2013. *Photo by Jim H. Lewis*

DUSKY THRUSH: A Dusky Thrush at Sitka from 1 December 2017 through the end of the period (MRG, m.obs.; Figure 11) provided the 3rd Southeast Alaska record. In Alaska, this Asian species has occurred primarily as a casual migrant to the western Aleutian and Bering Sea islands (Gibson and Withrow 2015). A Dusky Thrush that spent the winters of 2012, 2013, and 2014 at Anchorage provided the only other Alaska winter record.

Figure 11.—Dusky Thrush at Sitka 1 December 2017 (left) and 3 December 2017 (right). *Photos by Matt R. Goff*
AMERICAN ROBIN: Typical very small numbers of American Robins were observed throughout the winter around Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan (m.obs.), including a maximum 15 at Sitka 13 December 2017 (CPFG) and a roving flock of up to 20 at Ketchikan (AWP, SCH, JHL). Singles were also reported at Gustavus 3 and 20 December 2017 (NKD), Hoonah 1 January 2018 (ACC), and Haines 3, 9, and 20 February 2018 (MD);

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Bohemian Waxwings were reported in modest numbers. Maximum for the season was 66 counted on the Skagway CBC 16 December 2017 (fide CEF). One at Juneau 17 December 2017 (GBV, BAA, PAR) was followed by flocks of 12 on 9 January 2018 (GBV) and 20 on 13 February 2018 (SH). A flock of 15 was observed at Sitka 11 January 2018 (DYT) and singles were found there on several dates through February (MRG, CPFG). Other reports included 12 at Hoonah 9 January 2018 (ACC, photo), two at Haines 14 January 2018 (SJ, MD), and singles at Gustavus 16 January 2018 (NKD) and Ketchikan 3 February 2018 (JFK).

AMERICAN PIPIT: Two American Pipits at Ketchikan 3 December 2017 (AWP, SCH, BLL) represented late fall migrants, and one at Sitka 2 January 2018 (MRG) provided the only mid-winter report.

EVENING GROSBEAK: A flock of four Evening Grosbeaks at a Juneau feeder 17 December 2017 (PAR, BAA, GBV) grew to seven birds late December, all of which remained through the winter (m.obs.; Figure 12). Two were seen periodically at a Hoonah feeder starting 3 February 2018 (IJ, KPJ; fide ACC), and a female was found at Ketchikan 3 February 2018 (AWP, photo). This species is a very rare visitant to Southeast Alaska.

PURPLE FINCH: It was a good winter for Purple Finches in Southeast Alaska, following multiple late fall reports at Ketchikan and Sitka. As many as three were reported at Sitka all winter (CPFG, PHN, MRG, DYT; Figure 14); at least one visited a Ketchikan feeder all winter (JFK), and another was observed there 1–16 February 2018 (KMR, photo). Singles were also found at Gustavus 15–20 January 2018 (NKD; Figure 14) and Hoonah 22–23 February 2018 (ACC, photo), both of which established 1st local records. This species is a rare fall migrant and winter visitant at Ketchikan (Heinl and Piston 2009) and casual or very rare elsewhere in Southeast Alaska (Gibson and Kessel 1992).

COMMON REDPOLL: Common Redpolls were present all winter across the northern Southeast Alaska mainland, though there were no reports of more than 100 birds, and they were much less numerous and less frequently reported in the Alexander Archipelago.

HOARY REDPOLL: Single Hoary Redpolls were reported at Juneau 17 December 2017 (BAA, PAR) and 11 February 2018 (LRSS). This species is casual or very rare in Southeast Alaska; most reports have been from the Juneau area.

RED CROSSBILL: Red Crossbills were mostly reported in small numbers at Gustavus, Juneau, Hoonah, Sitka, and Ketchikan; maximum was 95 at Gustavus 5 February 2018 (NKD), followed by 50 at Hoonah 10 December 2017 (ACC), and 35 at Juneau 16 January 2018 (GBV). In late winter, Red Crossbills began visiting feeders at Gustavus and Sitka (NKD, MRG), a behavior rarely observed in Southeast Alaska.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL: Fair numbers of White-winged Crossbills were present in the Gustavus area this winter, with maximum 150 on 19 January 2018 (NKD). Very small numbers were otherwise reported at Juneau (m.obs.) and Hoonah (ACC), and a single bird was reported at Sitka 24 December 2017 (MRG).
Figure 12.—All seven Evening Grosbeaks that spent the winter in the downtown Juneau area were nicely captured in one photo 21 February 2018 (top; photo by Nick R. Hajdukovich). Lots of photographs were obtained, including these close ups of a male 19 December 2017 (bottom left; photo by John Doty) and a female 23 December 2017 (bottom right; photo by Amy Clark Courtney).
Figure 13.–Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches at Auke Bay 26 February 2018. The bird on the right exhibited the gray hood of subspecies *littoralis*, which breeds in Central, South-central, and Southeast Alaska, and the bird on the left exhibited the gray cap and brown cheeks of subspecies *tephrocotis*, which breeds in the Brooks Range and interior Yukon and British Columbia and is a rare migrant and winter visitant in Southeast Alaska. *Photo by Nick Hajdukovich*

Figure 14.–Purple Finches made a good showing in Southeast this winter, including a male at Gustavus 15 January 2018 (left; photo by Nat K. Drumheller) and an immature male or female at Sitka (one of several) 29 December 2017 (right; photo by Don Kluting).

**PINE SISKIN**: Pine Siskins were more numerous in northern Southeast Alaska (common in some areas) than in the southern half of the region. They were especially common at Gustavus, where there were many observations of more than 100 birds, including 450 on 19 January 2018, and people started to complain about the “siskin problem” at their feeders (NKD).

**AMERICAN TREE SPARROW**: Tree sparrows were present in lower numbers than usual at Gustavus, where maximum was only 11 on 21 January 2018 (NKD), and only one was reported at Juneau 18 December 2017 (PAR, GBV). Singles (as many as three birds total) were reported on four dates at Sitka (PHN, LK, LKa), and one was reported at Ketchikan 19 February 2018 (SCH, BLL, JFK, photo), where they do not winter annually.
FOX SPARROW: Typical small numbers of wintering Fox Sparrows were observed at Sitka (maximum four, 24 January 2018, SCH) and Ketchikan (maximum six, 3 February 2018, AWP). Singles were also reported on one–four days at Juneau, Hoonah, and Petersburg (MJM, MS, SH, ACC, ELY). The only Fox Sparrow observed at Gustavus this winter was a Red Fox Sparrow (subspecies zaboria) 4–15 December 2017 (NKD, photo), a rare migrant and winter visitant in Southeast Alaska.

LINCOLN’S SPARROW: Late Lincoln’s Sparrows were reported at Petersburg 17 December 2017 (ELY) and Sitka through 19 December 2017 (DYT, photo). Singles spent the entire winter at Ketchikan JHL et al.; Figure 15) and Sitka (EVP, CP, MRG), and another wintering bird was reported at Haines 18 February 2018 (MD). This species is a rare, regular winter visitant.

Figure 15.—Rare sparrows at Ketchikan included a Lincoln’s Sparrow (left; 6 January 2018) and a Swamp Sparrow (right; 14 January 2018). *Photos by Jim H. Lewis*

SWAMP SPARROW: A Swamp Sparrow lingered from fall through the entire winter at Ketchikan (JHL, SCH, AWP; Figure 15), and another was found at Ketchikan 3–6 December 2017 (SCH, AWP, JFK). This species has been considered a casual winter visitant in Southeast Alaska, but one or
two are expected at Ketchikan during late fall and early winter. Singles were also reported at Kruzof Island 22 December 2017 (RW; Figure 16) and Sitka 15 January 2018 (AWP, MRG, SCH, photo).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: Up to seven White-throated Sparrows wintered at Ketchikan feeders (KMR, JFK, JHL, AWP, SCH), a good showing following a subpar fall migration there. One or two also wintered at Sitka (PHN, DYT; Figure 16), one wintered at Gustavus (NKD, photo), and another at Juneau 25 February 2018 (GBV, NRH, photo) certainly also wintered locally.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: Standard small numbers of White-crowned Sparrows wintered throughout Southeast Alaska: one at Haines 24 February 2018 (MD), two at Hoonah through 3 January 2018 (ACC), two at Petersburg (ELY), at least three in the Juneau area (BF, PC, GBV, NRH), four–five at Ketchikan (JFK, JHL, SCH), and at least five at Sitka (m.obs.). Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrows (subspecies pugetensis) were documented at Ketchikan 16 December 2017 (two) and Sitka 18–23 January 2018 (three; SCH, photos).

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW: Very small numbers of Golden-crowned Sparrows were reported through the winter: at least three at Ketchikan (JFK, AWP, JHL) and at least one at Sitka (m.obs.).

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD: Juneau’s regular wintering Red-winged Blackbird flock hit a maximum of 20 birds on 23 February 2018 (KR), the 3rd largest winter count there. Two were also found at Ketchikan 16 December 2017 (AWP, IV), one of which spent the entire winter.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD: Up to two Rusty Blackbirds were observed at Sitka through 1 January 2018 (MRG, CPFG; Figure 17), one of which was reported 1 February 2018 (CPFG). This rare winter visitant is reported most regularly in the Juneau area; however, six there 22 February 2018 (NRH) provided the only local report.

Figure 17.—Male Rusty Blackbird at Sitka 1 January 2018. Photo by Matt R. Goff
LITERATURE CITED


