BIRD SPECIES FOUND AT SHEMYA ISLAND, ALASKA 1999-2010



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Bird Species Found at Shemya Island, Alaska 1999-2010

Michael T. Schwitters

Introduction. Shemya Island, Alaska, lies near the end of the Aleutian chain of islands (52° 43'N, 174° 07'E). It is one of five islands that comprise the Near Islands group. Shemya is managed by the United States Air Force, as Eareckson Air Station, and is a part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Its relatively close proximity to Asia (the Kamchatka Peninsula lies 600 km to the west) allows bird species normally found in Asia to be accessed and studied in this western outpost of North America.

As early as 1975 Daniel D. Gibson conducted a detailed survey (three springs and two falls) of the migrant birds found at Shemya Island (Gibson 1981). Informal and generally brief visits subsequently continued the study of bird species at the island (Gibson and Byrd 2007). A significant effort by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) from 1988 through 2002 identified birds in the winter seasons (Byrd and Scharf 2003). These studies set the baseline of bird study on Shemya. In the spring of 1999 the U. S. Air Force undertook a study of the hazard presented to aircraft by birds using Shemya Island through the resources of the USFWS and Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services (USDA, WS). This most recent effort continues. These studies have shown that Shemya Island represents a national asset to gain access to bird species not usually found in North America.

In the most recent period of studies, 1999-2010, an effort adjunct to the primary study of the bird-aircraft strike hazard (BASH) was undertaken to inventory wildlife found at Shemya Island. This report is intended to summarize that effort and expand the baseline of Shemya bird study. It presents a series of species accounts that summarize the status of birds found at Shemya, and it documents the dates and abundance of bird species encountered 1999-2010 (definitions of abundance follow those used by Gibson and Byrd 2007, see below). Photos obtained during the 1999-2010 studies are also a part of the documentation included in the species accounts. This summary is intended as a detailed guide to the further study and identification of bird species on Shemya. Much of the material presented in the species accounts was originally presented in seasonal annotated lists of birds that were prepared after most of my visits; this effort summarizes and expands on those seasonal products.

Dates of visits. The first visit of the current series of studies at Shemya Island began 27 April 1999. In general, in the first three years, coverage continued spring through fall. I was fortunate to participate in the majority of the visits through the fall of 2010. Coverage in the <u>summer</u> season did not continue after 2001. For most of the visits, lists of bird species were prepared by the participants, though not by all. The dates of visits for which bird lists are available and from which this report is prepared follow: 27 April-11 June 1999, 26 June-27 July 1999, 25 April-26 May 2000, 25 August-17 October 2000, 24 April-12 June 2001, 16 August-18 October 2001, 9 April-11 June 2002, 20 August-16

October 2002, 28 May-7 June 2004, 15 April-14 June 2005, 15 August-21 October 2005, 19 April-9 June 2006, 16 August-20 October 2006, 13 April-11 June 2007 and 10 August-14 October 2007, 14 April- 28 April 2008, 14 May-30 May 2008, 24 April-18 June 2010 and 27 August-15 October 2010. The visits, with documentation, (not all by me) are presented graphically in the figure below.



Visits to Shemya Island, Eareckson Air Station, Alaska

In addition to the visits described above there were brief monthly visits in 2008 and into early 2009. Generally, records of bird species during these brief visits were not documented though some observations and photographs were obtained. As appropriate, these are included in this document.

Contributors. The following individuals provided valuable assistance in compiling this list of birds at Shemya Island: Gene Augustine, Bradley Benter, Catherine Berg, Jenna Boisvert, Clait Braun, G. Vernon Byrd, Rod Carlon, Edward Clark, Michael Cope, J. J. Frost, Norman Garon, Daniel Gibson, Jason Gilsdorf, Bill Henry, Becky Howard, Matt Kenny, Kerrie Kirkpatrick, Robert Martinka, Joseph Meehan, Joe Metzler, Jackie Nooker, Margaret Peterson, Christin Pruett, Paul Reuter, Corey Rossi, David Raines, Constance Schwitters, Larry Schwitters, Rick and Dawn Sexton, Lisa Scharf, Dennis Shirley, David Sonneborn, Bill Taylor, Robert Trotter, Kevin Winker. Jeff Williams compiled and produced the report. Joel Vos, Martin Renner, Jeff Williams, and Brie Drummond graciously provided constructive comments on the manuscript.

Photo-documentation and scientific collecting. The birds encountered were often photographed, and the pictures, as available, are included in the species accounts. During the early years of the study the photographs were obtained using film cameras. These pictures have had to be converted to digital format (with some loss of quality) to be included in this monograph. About 2003 digital cameras became widely available. Digital photography has permitted quick photos, and the digital cameras could be used with spotting scopes, "digiscoping", giving highly magnified images. The photos can be computer enhanced and are easily integrated into this document. Hence, many of the photographs in this paper were taken after 2003.

Collecting of birds of scientific interest was a corollary part of this study. In some cases, particularly with small allusive species, photos were not possible. Photos of the collected birds are included in some cases in the species accounts to provide photo documentation. The scientific collecting was done under permits issued by the USFWS and the State of Alaska, Department of Fish and Game. The specimens reside in the collections of the University of Alaska Museum (UAM), Fairbanks, Alaska.

Summarizing the species accounts. The species accounts present information on about 215 bird species found on Shemya Island (not all of which were observed in the period 1999-2010). There is an account of an additional significant subspecies (Green-winged Teal, North American subspecies) and one of a recognizable hybrid (American X Eurasian Wigeon). Also, two of the species accounts discuss birds that were not identified with certainty (two candidates for each).

Eighty-three species that are discussed are not normally found in North America. Another twelve species were represented by subspecies that originate in Eurasia.

Definitions of status and abundance (Gibson and Byrd, 2007).

Species that occur annually are described as:

Abundant Common Fairly common Uncommon Rare

Species that occur less than annually are described as:

 \geq 30 percent of years are *intermittent*.

 \leq 30 percent of years are *casual*.

1-3 records at Shemya are *accidental* (Gibson and Byrd chose one or two records).

Species Accounts, Birds Found at Shemya Island, Alaska

Taiga Bean Goose (*Anser fabalis***).** This species came into existence when the American Ornithological Union split Bean Goose in 2007. The Tundra Bean Goose (*Anser serriosterous*) is the other half of the split, and is also found in the Aleutians/Near Islands (see next species, below). It seems that the summer and winter ranges of the two species are not totally defined, but apparently both breed across northern Eurasia, with Taiga Bean Goose within the taiga region of eastern Asia and found breeding as far south as Lake Baikal and Amur Basin. This, and the Tundra Bean Goose, both winter in China, Korea and Japan (Shimba 2007). In the Aleutians the Taiga Bean Goose seems to be found least frequently. In the western Aleutians the species is accidental (less than three sightings). On Shemya Island, since the split, Taiga Bean Goose has been identified with confidence just once, though as noted below "Bean Goose" has been found on Shemya some without reference to (at the time) subspecies.

On 27 September 2007 a family unit (one young-of-the-year) of Taiga Bean Geese was found in the floor of the "Grand Canyon". The birds were seen three more times in the same general area before my departure on 15 October. They were subsequently seen from time to time during the winter on the island by an island resident. Their continued presence was likely due to injuries sustained during several attempts by myself to collect the birds. Upon my arrival on 14 April of the next year the three birds were still present (and very flighty). The family was last seen on 23 April 2008 as they flew from the island and landed far out on the Pacific Ocean. The Taiga Bean Goose family is shown below, first three shots, 27 September 2007. Lower right, female?, 16 March 2008 by R. Trotter.



Tundra Bean Goose (*Anser serrirostris***).** This other half of the Bean Goose split breeds across northern Eurasia, but further north into tundra habitat and as far northeast as northeast Siberia and eastern Chukotka (Shimba, 2007). It is found intermittently (not yearly, but in more than 30 percent of the years) in spring and casual in the falls in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd, 2007).

In the 1970's visits to Shemya, Gibson had seen single birds twice in May of 1976 and considered them/it to be of the *serrirostris* subspecies, which today would have qualified the birds as Tundra Bean Geese (Gibson 1981). Tundra Bean Goose (probably) was found four times from 1999 through 2010: There was a single individual, likely the Tundra Bean Goose (my notes specifically state "short bill") 22-24 May 2002 along the shore of Laundry Lake, and with Cackling Geese in the same area, and flying below Cobra Dane (24 May). The same bird (likely) was seen 31 May 2002 with Cackling Geese. On 10 September 2002 a single was seen with Cackling Geese at Kay Lake, my notes indicate I felt the bill was short. Five years later a single Bean Goose was seen flying east to west over the island apparently arriving with (but not in formation with) migrating Cackling Geese on 23 May 2007; the bird did not stop, and a determination of subspecies (then) was not possible. On 18 May 2010, next to the runway a single, quite flighty Tundra Bean Goose was found (not associating with Cackling Geese). Photos of the May 2002 bird (below, left) and the 18 May 2010 bird (below right) are presented.





Greater White-fronted Goose (Anser albifrons). Listed as casual (found less than 30



percent of the years) or intermittent (Gibson and Byrd 2007) in the western Aleutians in the spring and casual in fall. The species was not seen during Gibson's work in the 1970's. The description is precisely what was found in the past two decades with just four records after 1999. A single bird was seen in November of 1996 (Byrd and Scharf 2003). After the turn of the century this species was found on the island on

23 May 2000 (one bird with Cackling Geese). Then "an adult with kink in neck" was at the Lagoon on 30 September 2000. A single was at Jeanne Lake, in fog, and then flying

over the northwest beach road on 2 June 2001. A single juvenile bird was found at Penelope Lake on 17 October 2010. The photo from 2010 on the prior page was obtained by the finder, Robert Trotter.

Emperor Goose (*Chen canagica***).** The entire population of this goose winters in the Aleutian Islands. They reach the Aleutians after staging their migration out of western Alaska at points on the Alaska Peninsula. Some take direct routes and some move island-to-island, reaching their full winter distribution by mid December. The birds reverse their routes beginning in mid March and are mostly gone from the Aleutians by mid April, (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was one of the focuses of the winter USFWS surveys in the 1990s. Those surveys recorded a stable population of about 400 birds using Shemya with some peak counts of near 600 around the island 1989-2001 (Byrd and Schraf 2003).

Only the remnants of the wintering flocks were usually found on Shemya as the spring surveys began, and the first of the fall migrants arrived in the last weeks of my study periods 2000-2010. I observed that the spring departure was quite rapid. In 2002 my earliest arrival (10 April) found 432 in the intertidal zones, and my 14 April 2007 arrival found 231. Numbers rapidly decreased both years in the week that followed. The latest Emperor Geese seen in spring were three on 24-27 May 2007. The arrival of winter birds had only began before my departure in each of the study years with the maximum fall count being 29 on 13 Oct 2002. The earliest arrival was three on 13 September 2007. In all six fall seasons that I was present on the island, Emperor Geese were seen and at least a few were present before 30 September in five of those falls. The earliest fall arrival was recorded on 28 August 2010; that single bird was gone after the second day and the fall arrivals continued with the next Emperor Geese (9) seen on 29 September.

An island resident, R. Trotter (personal communication) has counted the geese as his schedule and road conditions permitted in the winters of 2005-06 and 2006-07 and found totals in excess of 450 birds. The stable population of about 400 birds using Shemya in the winter noted in the 90's appears to be continuing. Photos of Emperor Geese:





Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens***).** The presence of the first Snow Goose at Shemya is somewhat confusing. Gibson and Byrd (2007) report an immature bird on the island 12-18 December 2003, but their citation to C. Eldermire was not found in their list of Literature Cited. However, I had received a personal communication from a USGS biologist, Joel Schmutz, who reported seeing a juvenile Snow Goose with Emperor Geese in January 2003. Internet research shows C. Eldermire is a colleague of Schmutz and was working with geese on Shemya in December 2002 and January-April 2003. The two references are most likely the same bird, though the exact date is unsure. The second Shemya record of Snow Geese came in the spring of 2010. The BASH technician (D. Raines, personal communication) reported seeing a white goose on 18 May. Subsequently, on 27 May two immature Snow Geese were seen flying over the island. One of the birds continued to be seen through 10 June. A distant photo of the two birds together and one of the birds on 28 May 2010 are below.



Brant (*Branta bernicla*). Brant are described as being rare in the western Aleutians in fall and casual or intermittent in midwinter (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The winter surveys, found Brant five times from 1988-2001: November 1988 (one bird), 20 January 1990 (1), 10 December 1993 (2), December 1994 (1) and late October 2001 (two individuals) (Byrd and Scharf 2003). Gibson did not record Brant in his 1970s work on Shemya (Gibson 1981). A resident (Matt Kenny, personal communication) found a bird late February 2005. I found Brant only three times during my time on the island. One was at the Lagoon on 5 May 2000 that continued at the island off and on until 24 May. Two (an adult and a juvenile) were at Scoot's Cove on 7 October 2001. And six were seen flying

past the south beach on 6 October 2002. After a long delay, a single Brant was seen on 12 December 2010 by an island resident (R. Trotter, personal communication) (Photos, scanned from prints, of the 2001 adult and juvenile are below:



Cackling Goose (Branta hutchinsii). This species was the focus of much of our study while on Shemya. During the period of Gibson's original work there were only 2,000 to 3,000 of the (then) *leucopareia* subspecies of Canada Goose in existence. At the close of the 2009-10 winter season USFWS estimated there were about 120,000 individuals in the world with a population that appeared to be leveling somewhat. Gibson saw but five of the geese in the fall of 1987; one was marked with a collar showing it had been translocated to Agattu Island as a part of a USFWS program to form nesting colonies on Aleutian islands that had been made free of Arctic Foxes (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys of the 1990s saw a few of the birds at the beginning or ending of their surveys in the Aleutians.

The period of our surveys at the start of the 21st Century found that Shemya Island had become an integral part of Cackling Goose natural history, and we defined and quantified the use of Shemya by the geese. In 2004 the small subspecies of Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) were split out to become a separate species, Cackling Goose.



It is, specifically, *Branta hutchinsii leucopareia* that is found in the western Aleutians. None of the larger races of Canada Goose or other subspecies of Cackling Goose have been found on Shemya, or elsewhere in the Near Islands for that matter.

The Cackling Goose presence on Shemya is strongly related to the spring migration to, and the fall migration from, other islands in the Near Island group where the species nests. USFWS surveys

show tens of thousands of Cackling Geese breeding on the other four islands of the Near Islands Group: Agattu, Niizki, Alaid and Attu. Attu Island was cleared of Arctic Foxes at the beginning of the 21st Century and the geese are pioneering as nesters there in increasing numbers. On the other three islands, geese were actively introduced in the

1970's 80's and early 90's to establish nesting colonies. Arctic Foxes have not been eradicated from Shemya purposefully to prevent the geese from nesting, which would enhance the threat to aircraft using the island.

In the spring Cackling Geese move westward down the Aleutian chain to breeding sites on nearby islands. Enroute to and, to some extent, after arriving on the nesting islands (mostly Nizki) they use the newly emerging vegetation at Shemya to feed and rebuild fat reserves that would be needed for nesting. Resighting of neckbanded birds



(left) showed that individuals are found on Shemya in the spring only for short times...days to a week. The geese are found throughout the island, favoring disturbed habitats west of the runway, near the runway and north of the active hangers. The spring use of Shemya by the geese is two-phased. The breeding birds arrive first, usually beginning in mid April, peaking about the end of April or early May and diminishing in number in the following two weeks.

About mid May an increasing percentage of the flocks is composed of nonbreeding individuals. This nonbreeding component maintains low to modest numbers until mid June when no geese are to be found, as they seek safe areas to molt their flight feathers. In general, the spring surveys in the first decade of the 2000's showed increasing numbers of birds using Shemya in line with the specie's overall increase in population (about 40,000 in 1999 to nearly 120,000 in 2007). A count of 1,366 on 26 April 2008 was the biggest count of all of our surveys, although an informal count by Gene Augustine, Air Force civilian (personal communication) found more than 1,400 in the spring of 2004.

In the fall geese use Shemya as a feeding location to prepare for (stage) their fall migration back up the Aleutian chain and subsequently to California, their wintering location. Individual geese will spend a week or so feeding on Shemya (usually commuting daily from nearby islands). The same individual will often be found again on the island later in the migration staging period. The fall period of use will bring families with new juvenile birds to build fat reserves needed to power the flights to California. Our fall surveys provided an opportunity to monitor the reproductive success of the geese. Counts of adults and juvenile birds were conducted in the falls as they visited the island. This allowed productivity (= juveniles/total geese) to be calculated; the ratios gradually increased as the fall continued until they leveled out. These final productivity ratios are given in the table that follows. The geese did well in the first decade of the 21st Century.

Productivity	Ratios o	f Cacklin	g Geese	(juvenile/	total) 2002	2-2010
Year:	2002	2005	2006	2007	2010	
Productivity:	40%	55%	34%	49.4%	40.7%	

Cackling Geese will begin to be seen by mid August, with numbers increasing slowly or remaining nearly constant into and through September. A broad peak will be reached by the first week of October and then, as weather conditions permit (favorable winds), flocks will be seen flying east on migration. Only small numbers are found after mid October. Of note is a diurnal variation in the numbers of geese found on Shemya in both spring and fall. The surveys late in the day found significantly more Cackling Geese than surveys conducted in the mornings. This illustrated that geese came over to Shemya from nearby islands to feed and returned (generally) to the other islands at night.

A key element in the <u>fall</u> that determines goose use of the island is the availability

of Crowberries (*Empetrum nigrum*). On Shemya, Crowberries are found in the higher elevation heath habitats. Geese seek the berries as their food of choice in the fall. When the berries have been exhausted, the flocks will seek grasses and forbs in the island's disturbed habitats mostly near the runway and north of the active hangers. The summer of 2001 produced large quantities of Crowberries and the geese



fed in the uplands the entire fall. In other survey years the berries were less productive and movement to disturbed habitats was apparent as migration staging progressed (also signaled by the shift of the color of the goose feces from dark purple to greens and browns).

Figures showing spring migration and fall migration staging numbers of Aleutian Cackling Geese on Shemya are below.



Figure 1. Averages of daily counts of Aleutian Cackling Geese on Shemya Island derived from Roads Surveys conducted in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006 2007, 2008 and 2010. Similar graphs using 1999-2002 data had a peak of 275. The increase in this graph's peak (to 632) is undoubtedly the result in the overall increase in the numbers now using the Near Islands.



Figure 2. Averages of daily counts of Aleutian Cackling Geese on Shemya Island derived from Roads Surveys conducted in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010. This chart is at the same scale as Figure 1, above. The graph using 1999-2002 data peaked at about 425. This graph's peak, 327, represents a decrease in fall goose use of the island, likely related to poor Crowberry production 2005-2007 and aggressive hazing 2008-2010.



Figure 3. This figure combines Figures 1 and 2 to illustrate the scale and temporal nature of the Aleutian Cackling Goose presence at Shemya Island, Alaska, at the end of the surveys in 2010.

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). Tundra Swans are accidental in the outer Aleutians. The only reports being two dead birds, one found on Adak in 1977 and the other on Buldir in 2004; the birds were of the *C. c. bewickii* subspecies (the Adak bird, a juvenile, had been banded and collared in the Russian Far East) (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Shemya has added several sightings of the Bewick's subspecies in recent years. Meehan and Krom (1997) reported a juvenile swan, likely a Tundra Swan, on small ponds until 19 December 1995. On 17–20 October 2005 I observed a juvenile Tundra Swan of the Bewick's subspecies at Upper Lake. On 23 April of the next year (2006) a single Tundra Swan was seen flying high over the island toward the west. The bird vocalized and was an immature individual, possibly the same bird seen the fall before. In the fall of 2007 two Bewick's swans were discovered at Upper Lake on 21-23 October by an island resident, Robert Trotter (personnel communication). Photos:



Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*). Whooper Swans are assessed as an uncommon overwintering species in the central and western Aleutians (a pair did nest on Attu in 1996 and 1997) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Each year the small number of swans arrived in the Aleutians after our 1999-2010 fall surveys on Shemya had ended, and generally returned to Asia before we arrived in the springs. For the same reason, Gibson (1981) did not sight any Whooper Swans, but subsequent winter surveys and island residents have seen the birds fairly regularly, about every two to three years, at least. In the period 1988-2002 the US Fish and Wildlife Service conducted regular coastal surveys in the winter. During those surveys Whooper Swans were reported 24 January 1991 (6 birds), 28 December 1994 (3), 7 November 1995 (1), and 16-18+ December 2000 (one at the Lagoon, Byrd and Scharf 2003)

The first survey of the most recent era of surveys found a family of Whooper Swans (five individuals) on Lower Lake on 27 April 1999. On 9-12 April 2001 we found two adults and a family of five at Upper Lake; the family was present again on 16 April. A defense contractor (Matt Kenny, personal communication) found three individuals on the island in the late February-early March time frame of 2004. Photos scanned from prints:





Gadwall (*Anas strepera*). Gadwall is listed as casual in fall, winter and spring in the western Aleutians. There are three sightings on Shemya in the spring (all late May), including a pair by Gibson (1981) in 1976 and as many as eight in the winter of 1989-89 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

In our ten springs and seven falls on Shemya the species was seen only on one occasion, 10 May 2006. The male was at the Lagoon and was present only one day, photo, right.



Falcated Duck (*Anas falcata*). This species is considered intermittent in spring in the western and central Aleutians, casual or accidental in fall and there are two records each from summers and winters (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found a pair on Shemya in late May 1976 (Gibson 1981). The period of winter surveys did not record the species (Byrd and Scharf 2003). During the period of our studies Falcated Ducks were found in four of seventeen visits on the island.

In our Shemya visits 1999-2010 a single female was found on Antone Lake on 7 July 1999 that was seen several times until 27 July. On 22 September 2002 a drab fall pair was found. A breeding plumaged pair was on the island 28 May-1 June 2004, and an alternate plumaged male was present 23-28 May 2005.



Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*). Gibson and Byrd assess that Eurasian Wigeon are fairly common as migrants in spring and fall in the western Aleutians, but point out that the species has been seen in every month. There has been no indication of breeding in the Aleutians, (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya, Eurasian Wigeon are a fairly common passage migrant in spring and fall. In the 1970s Gibson found numbers of 30-40 (peak was 57 birds on 22 May 1976) in the springs and somewhat lower numbers in the falls (Gibson 1981). Limited observations in 1986 by D. W. Sonneborn (personal communication) show the species still present in migration seasons. Sonneborn found the earliest arrival on the island in the fall of 4 September 1986 (four birds). A review of the winter surveys of the 90's indeed do show that small numbers of Eurasian Wigeon were found in nearly all of the winters and on many of the individual surveys, even in midwinter (usually ones and twos, but a maximum of 15 on 23 December 1991) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

The Shemya surveys of the 1999-2010 era found similar, perhaps even a little stronger¹, numbers. The first spring arrivals were found from 13 April to 25 April. The maximum found on the island was 123 birds on 23 April 2002, but the usual spring peak numbers were 30-50. The returning fall migration began 10-17 September in this period. Fall migration peak numbers occurred from 21 September to 18 October. Peak daily counts were generally 20 to 40, but the highest number was 71 on 1 October 2010. Photo:



American Wigeon (*Anas americana*). American Wigeon is described as intermittent in spring, May-June, in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya, Gibson did not find the species in the 1970s, but beginning in 1981 during the spotty coverage of the next 18 years the species was observed at least six times. Sightings were by T. Tobish on 29 April 1981 (pair), and by D. Sonneborn 18 May-2 June 1988 (one male) (Gibson and Byrd 2007); the period of the USFWS winter surveys added four more records: 28 December 1991 (five birds), October 1992 (three), 10 December 1993 (two males) (Lapinski and Thomson 1993) and January-March 1994 (1-2 birds) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

American Wigeon was located on Shemya at least nine times in the era from 1999-2010: 14-18 May and 3-13 Jun 2000 (pairs or in twos and threes), 28 May 2001 (pair), 8 October 2001 (a single), in 2005 pairs on 11-17 May and 30 May and a single drab bird in the fall on 21 September, a male with a female 13 May 2007, at least six (males and females) toward the end of May 2008 and a single drake for several days beginning 6 October 2010. In most cases the male was easily identified, but the females of the pairs seen were difficult to distinguish between the American or Eurasian species.

¹ But keep in mind that surveys by Gibson in the 70's and Sonneborn in the 80's were done mostly on foot which did not allow comprehensive surveys of the island's lakes, full counts were likely not possible.

Photos below: Upper left to lower right, 11 May 2005, 13 May 2007, 18 May 2008 and 6 October 2010.



Hybrid American X Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas americana X penelope*). One hybrid wigeon was observed on 4-8 June 2005. I describe: "the bird was by itself (on Penelope Lake). It looked overall like a Eurasian Wigeon though the contrast between breast and sides was indistinct. The head pattern was not the characteristic rufous-orange of a Eurasian Wigeon but the 'swoosh' back from the eye that is typical of an American Wigeon was coppery in color. The forehead was white rather than the creamy color of the Eurasian Wigeon." (Schwitters and Schwitters 2005). The bird is shown below:



Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*). The status of this waterfowl species in the Aleutians is somewhat unclear. Gibson and Byrd feel that there is a component that is sedentary and breeding, and in the fall, winter and early spring the species' numbers are significantly enhanced by immigration from elsewhere (Gibson and Byrd 2007). It is difficult with relatively limited study to distinguish passage migrants from birds arriving/departing for/from their winter habitats. Inter-island movement of birds may also confuse the picture derived from snapshots in time and at isolated locations. The USFWS winter surveys consistently found good numbers of Mallards, though counts "were highly variable within winters and among winters". The winter counts in the 1988-2001 period averaged about 50 to 60 birds, but some maximum counts were at or more than 100 birds (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

On Shemya in the 1999-2010 timeframe, observations were mostly made during the traditional migration seasons of spring and fall. The early spring counts would be about 15 to 20 birds. As spring progressed numbers would decline to 5-10 by late spring. The early spring counts likely represented the remnants of the over-wintering population plus resident birds. Additionally, as the decline continued the proportion of male birds seen increased, reflecting resident females going to nest in heavy cover on the island. In most years one to several broods of young Mallards were seen. Broods would be found late in the spring visits (early June) and in some years broods would still be found just after our fall arrivals. As the falls progressed counts would increase to about 20 birds, reflecting the reappearance of the females with some new juveniles. Toward the end of the fall visits Mallard numbers would build gradually, but some years showing one or more peaks. A peak of 42 was noted on 12 October 2005; peaks of 58 and 60 were recorded on 18 September 2006 and 4 September 2010 and on 19 October 2007 88 Mallards were counted. This likely reflected the return to the Aleutians of birds that would over-winter in the island chain or perhaps some that would continue to more southerly locations. In essence, surveys on Shemya confirm the assessment of Gibson and Byrd...a small resident breeding population of Mallards bolstered by immigrants during the winter. Photos of Mallards on Shemya follow below. From upper left to lower right: (drake) 19 October 2005, (hen) 3 September 2005, (ducklings) 5 June 2007, by R. Trotter and juvenile drake and hen, 2 September 2007.





Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*). Northern Shovelers are described as rare or uncommon in spring and fall and intermittent in winter (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970's on Shemya shovelers were found each spring and fall (eight birds maximum in mid May 1975) (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys found shovelers in just two of the winters, one in February 1994 and as many as four February and March of 1997 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

The work on the island that began in the spring of 1999 found Northern Shovelers in nearly every season that surveys were conducted. Seasonal numbers were generally small, two-six, but at least 14 individuals moved through in two springs—2004 and 2007. In the springs many of the birds were in male-female pairs. In summary, the seasonal numbers of birds found through 2010 were: Springs: 1999-11, 2001-3, 2002-4, 2004-14², 2005-6, 2006-11, 2007-14, 2008-3 and 2010-4. In the falls: 2000-6, 2001-2, 2002-10, 2005-6, 2006-5 and 2007-4, and 2010-7. There was never any indication of nesting; the birds were strictly passage migrants with a very small number of holdovers in the winters. In several of the falls it was noted that single birds would remain for extended periods in October; three years found these singles (likely juveniles) still present at the conclusion of the surveys. Photos:



² Extended surveys were not conducted in 2004. A brief visit by D. Sonneborn (pers. comm.) on 19 May and a short visit 28 May-7 June (Schwitters 2004) were the only observations in that year.



Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta***).** Throughout the Aleutians Northern Pintail is "generally rare or uncommon, sometimes fairly common, in spring and fall; and generally rare in winter, except sometimes locally fairly common in central Aleutians; rare breeder throughout" (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Surveys on Shemya confirm that assessment specifically on the island.

The early work on Shemya in the 1970s found pintails were common in every season visited (Gibson 1981). A day count of 198, which included a flock of at least 120, 9-10 May 1977 was the maximum found. Maximum day count in the fall was 16 (1978). The winter work of the '90s found pintails on nearly every survey in tidally influenced habitats. Typically counts averaged 15-20 birds through the period, but in 1994-1996 pintails were found in increased numbers, averaging about 30, and peak counts greater than 60 (normal peak counts had been 25-30) (Byrd and Scharf 2003). There were no surveys in the winters of 97-98 and 98-99. The last two winter surveys of pintails (1999 and 2000) again found numbers consistent with the period prior to 1994.

The most recent surveys (1999-2010) found the abundance of pintails was consistent with the earlier work. This species shows strong and well defined migrations through the island in spring and in fall, with the fall migrations observed in the first decade of the 21st century having larger numbers than in the spring. In the spring of 2002, 48 birds were found on 29 April, the greatest spring count. Fall day maximums in the era were: more than 100 on 22 September 2000, 55 plus a flying flock off the north shore of about 80 on 18 September, and maximums of 92 on 6 October 2006 and 2 October 2007 (Schwitters, et. al., various reports, 2000-2007). Figures of daily counts of Northern Pintails are presented below showing orderly passage migration of the species through the island in spring and in fall. The presence of good numbers of birds at the end of the fall survey periods suggests some may pause on Shemya at least for the first part of the winter.

During the fall periods there was no sign of confirmed nesting by the species on Shemya. Some pintails were observed during the summer surveys (1999-2001) and at the end of the spring period and the beginning of the fall surveys that might suggest breeding.

An interesting event which substantiates that Asian pintails migrate through Shemya Island was my collection of a "second-year male (UAM 22595 [examined]) collected 1 May 2006 in the western Aleutians at Shemya (at 52 43'N 174 07'E) that had been banded 2 February 2006 at Shinhama duck refuge, Ichikawa, Chiba Prefecture, Japan (at 35 40'N 139 55'E)" (Gibson and Byrd 2007).



Figure 4. Averages of daily counts of Northern Pintails in the spring from spring Lakes Surveys done in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006 and 2007.



Figure 5. Averages of daily counts of Northern Pintails in the fall from fall Lakes Surveys done 1999, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006 and 2007. This graph is presented at the same scale as Graph 4, above.

Photos of Northern Pintails taken on Shemya are presented below. From upper left, drake, 30 April 2005, hen/juvenile, 12 September 2006, drake, 23 May 2007, female/juvenile 20 September 2010, pair 22 April 2006 and marked drake 1 May 2006.



Gargany (*Anas querquedula*). Gargany is a species whose status at Shemya seems to have undergone a change in abundance in the past thirty years. The species appears to be less numerous in the 1999-2010 period compared to the 1970s.

Gibson and Byrd describe the species as intermittent in spring and probably intermittent in fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). During his period of study, 1975 to 1978, Gibson found Gargany every spring and fall that he visited. As many as five birds

together were found, 26-27 May 1976 (Gibson 1981). Gargany were not found during the USFWS winter surveys.

In the most recent period of surveys, 1999-2010, Gargany were found only four times, two spring and two fall sightings: a single juvenile 27-29 September 2001, a male fed vigorously and continuously in an ephemeral pond west of Upper Lake 27 May-12 June 2005 and on 3 June 2002 an adult male was collected, UAM 15458, and 18 September 2006 three juveniles stopped briefly at Lower Lake. This was far from the "intermittent" (> 30 percent, but less than annual) reported in the 1970s. Photos:



Baikal Teal (*Anas formosa*). This species is listed as casual in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Before we found the first of the species in the fall of 2000 on Shemya, only two had been identified on Attu during the era of the Attour birding tours; birds had been found in October and November of 1983. On Shemya from the fall of 2000 through the fall of 2007 basic plumaged Baikal Teal were found each fall I was performing surveys. A total of 18 individuals was recorded, a very remarkable milestone. This record suggests that Baikal Teal have either changed their migration patterns in recent years or the species had been overlooked previously (by some very competent naturalists...unlikely), albeit with only limited visitation in the Aleutian autumns.

The Shemya Island record follows. The first for the island (only the third Aleutian record) was on Penelope Lake 24 September 2000. In 2001 one was at Myrtle Lake on 12 September and three together were at North Twin Pond on 24 September. The following fall found one at Grace Lake on 24 September 2002 which was collected, UAM 17699, hatch-year female. 2005 was a good year for the species.



Two were found at Upper Lake on 13 September; one in the afternoon and one in the evening (distinguished by differences in plumage and by differences in the other birds they were closely associated with); The first bird was collected, UAM 21839, hatch-year female. A single individual was found on Jennifer Lake on 23 September and it relocated to a small seep behind the main hangers by 27 September where it was found into 28 September; it gave remarkably close views (five feet from the vehicle). Also on 27 September a fourth Baikal Teal was found on Headquarters Lake.

2006 and 2007 were also strong years for the species. In 2006 four separate individuals were found in a space of five days: 17 September at Lagoon, 18 September at

Lagoon (somewhat different plumage), 19-20 September at Penelope Lake and 21 September at the Lagoon. 2007 provided sightings of three individuals spread over the widest span of time for my records: 5-9 September at Jennifer and then Patricia Lake and collected at the outflow creek from Lower Lake, and different birds 24 September in Myrtle Lake and 14 October in Upper Lake.

The fall of 2010 produced only one Baikal Teal. The juvenile bird was in emergent vegetation on Penelope and was seen briefly and was photographed the day I departed (15 October) by Bob Trotter (R. Trotter, personal communication)

The Baikal Teal found at Shemya normally did not remain for very long, only for a day and some only for hours. Two birds did stop for several days on the island (23-28 September 2005 and 5-9 September 2007). In several cases the teal were tightly associated with Green-winged Teal or Northern Pintails. All were in dull brown basic plumage (though the 18 September bird at the Lagoon, see photo below, was rather bright). This, the samples collected and the fact that none were found in the spring would suggest that the Baikal Teal found on Shemya in the first decade of the 21st century were all hatch-year birds.

Our observations of Baikal Teal on Shemya represent a significant event for the history of the species in Aleutian, Alaska and for North American field ornithology.





Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*), Old World subspecies (*A. crecca crecca*). This subspecies includes what had been considered the Aleutian subspecies *A. c. nimia*. In the Aleutians Green-winged Teal are present throughout as residents and breeders that are uncommon or fairly common. There is an apparent migratory element in the population (possibly on an east-west axis), particularly in the western Aleutians, but the details of that aspect are not yet clear (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

At Shemya, Green-winged Teal are generally the most common species of duck. Gibson's early work found the species to be fairly common and a likely breeding bird. The USFWS winter studies found the species throughout the winter using protected bays and lagoons. During that winter study period the numbers of birds using the island showed a steady increase from one year to the next, with average counts in the late 1980's only 5-10 birds but by 2000 average counts were approaching 100 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Our surveys of spring, summers (1999-2001) and falls produced only general trends that were somewhat difficult to interpret. One reason for the difficulty was that the surveys looked mostly at the island's lakes and the teal often moved to and from the lakes and intertidal zones sometimes several times during the day. The teal also would go to small, hidden waters and not be seen and counted. There was a great deal of variability in the day-to-day counts (particularly during the springs and falls). Some of this variability might be explained by true movements of migrant birds or perhaps inter-island movements. The details of the use of Shemya by Green-winged Teal remain murky.

In general the teal are present in fairly large numbers in the winter. Typically the early spring counts found only small numbers inland but numbers increased during the spring. The peak day counts on the island's lakes in the springs appeared to increase during the early periods of the surveys, but declined later in the decade: 1999-19 birds, 2001-22 birds, 2004 (36 on 6 June), 2005 (40-50 on arrival, 15 April), 2006 (49 birds), 2007 (43 birds), 2008 (28 birds) and 2010 (12 birds). During the few summers surveyed the counts were low, five to less than ten, and mostly males in early summer. The numbers of teal counted in the fall were generally twice to three times those found in the springs. The peak fall day counts by year were: 2000 (74 birds), 2001 (81 birds), 2002 (about 50 birds), 2005 (118 birds), 2006 (125 on 8 October with 105 on Laundry Lake) 2007 (132 birds on 20 September), 2008 (incomplete record) (32 birds) and 2010 (89 birds). For comparison, in the 1970s Gibson's peak spring count was 36+ and in fall 69 birds (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya there was some evidence to suggest annual breeding by the species. Typically, the small numbers of teal seen just before our departure in June were males. This suggested that the females were hidden on nests. There also is limited direct evidence of breeding: four downy young were seen (with a male) on 2 June 1999, in 2006 a ³/₄ grown juvenile was found on 11 August, and a brood of four young were found the next day. Photos of Green-winged Teal:



Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca***), New World subspecies (***A. crecca carolinensis***).** The North American race of Green-winged Teal is recognizable generally only in the spring (alternate plumage) and only the male (vertical white breast stripe). Gibson and Byrd assign its presence in the western Aleutians as "intermittent in spring" (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

On Shemya it was not found during the 1970s. In the epoch of the 1980s D.



3 September 2005

the 1970s. In the epoch of the 1980s D. Sonneborn (Gibson and Byrd, 2007) found the birds every year 1982-1985 in late May. The winter surveys found the North American subspecies four times, 1994/95, 1996 (two males) and 1996/97.

In the period of surveys 1999-2010 A. c. carolinensis was found five times. One was found at Antone Lake 26 May 1999 and provided the first western Aleutian specimen (Gibson, Byrd and Pruett 1999). Additionally, drakes were found the springs of 2002, 2004, two in 2005 and one 2008. The photos show three of the more recent birds. The rather prominent tan outlining of the dark green head marking suggests that some Old World genes are present (particularly the 2004 bird, above, left) in these individuals.



Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*). The species is considered casual in spring and winter in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Four to six birds were found from 2 February through at least 4 March 1993 (Byrd and Scharf, 2003). Gibson's early work found a pair on 5-9 May 1977 (Gibson 1981). Our most recent period of surveys found just one bird, a male 10-13 April 2002 at the Lagoon. Additionally a resident on



the island, Matt Kenney (personal communication 2005) reported seeing a pair of birds he described as "transiting" in February or the first week of March of 2005).

Redhead (*Athya americanna*). Redheads have been found only twice in the Aleutians, and just once in the western Aleutians. That single sighting was on Shemya of three immature females, 21 May through 3 June 1999. The birds were difficult to identify as to species and it was determined they were Redheads only after collecting two the birds. No photos are available.

Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina***).** The occurrence of this Old World species has apparently undergone a significant change in abundance in the outer Aleutians, if the experience on Shemya is an indication. In the 1970's pochards were rare but annual visitors in the spring; as many as nine (including males) were on Shemya 17 May 1975 (Gibson 1981). Gibson and Byrd's (2007) book also reports a pair was seen on the island 30 April 1992. D. Sonneborn (personal communication) in his visits in the 1980s also found pochards on the island; from 1983-1988 Common Pochards were observed in a fairly narrow window of time each May. In summary: several females 26-30 May 1983, at least four (two males and two females) 22-27 May 1985, a male and two females 21-27 May 1986, as many as four females 20-26 May 1987 and 2 or 3 18 May-3 June 1988. However, my experience was that with the exception of a probable juvenile bird on 7

October 2000 at Upper Lake, no Common Pochards were present at Shemya 1999-2008. This lack of sightings came when spring coverage of the island's birds was intensive. The sightless spring was broken in 2010. A single alternate plumaged drake was found on 17 May through 26 May. Photo from 19 May.

Tufted Duck (Aythya fuligula). The species is described as rare to fairly



common in spring (more common) and fall in the Aleutians, being most frequent in the western Aleutians. They have been recorded in every month in the island chain (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found good numbers of Tufted Ducks during migration in both springs and falls on Shemya in the 1970s. Several rather large flocks were observed, 43 on 17 May 1975 and 33 on 23-24 May 1976 (Gibson 1981). The winter work during the 1990s found Tufted Ducks only once, four on 19 December 1994 (Byrd and Scharf 2003). D. Sonneborn (personal communication) reported 2-4 Tufted Ducks on Shemya in late May of 1986 and 2004, but none were reported during an early September 1986 reconnaissance.

During the 1999-2010 period of surveys Tufted Ducks continued to be found during every spring and fall. The spring average was 13 birds moving through during the season. The first spring birds usually arrived late in April or early in May (though there was an early migrant or winter holdover present upon our arrival 15 April 2005). There was usually one or two that lingered into June. Fall numbers were slightly higher than during springs; falls averaged 18 birds (peak day count was 29 on 13 October 2002, but note that intra-island movements and fall plumage rather similar to Greater Scaup and the mixing of the two species in the falls made precise counts difficult. The return migration of Tufted Ducks usually got underway late in September and in some years there were still good numbers present when we departed in mid October (some years (2006 and 2007) saw the arrival of single individuals in August). Some photos of Tufted Ducks.







Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*). Throughout the Aleutians Greater Scaup are uncommon to locally common fall, winter and spring and rare to uncommon in summer (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s the species was found on Shemya during each visit (Gibson 1981); his peak count was 23 on 27 May 1976. In the winters scaup were found most years 1988-2002 in small numbers, one to two, peak was five in February 1991 (Byrd and Scharf 2002). During the spring reconnaissance visits of the 1980s Sonneborn found healthy numbers, peak, 60-62 birds in May of 1984 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

During our most recent period of seasonal surveys the presence of the species was quite irregular. In general, there were migrating birds found in spring and in fall. Most springs the numbers of migrants were small, often without a well defined peak In those springs that had good numbers, the peaks were not consistent; the 2007 peak (34 on 1 May with about 30 present till 18 May) and 2006 (15 on 23 May). Greater Scaup were found in ones and twos in some summers. The falls usually found a small number of birds (less than 5) that could be found off and on from August through September until a definite migration would get underway about the first of October and continued in most years through our departure. The largest number in the spring recorded in the period was 34 on 1 May 2007. In the fall migrations the first birds to arrive were drab and juvenile or female birds.

Greater Scaup are known to nest in the eastern and central Aleutians and as far west in the western Aleutians as Amchitca (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Upon our arrival for the fall season of 2006 we discovered a hen Greater Scaup on Kay Lake (21 August) with two downy young, the first confirmed breeding in the Near Islands. The family moved more than a mile on 9 September to Upper Lake where they remained until the juveniles fledged about 25 September. Photos of Greater Scaup including the juveniles follow.



Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*). In the western Aleutians Lesser Scaup had been recorded only once. Sonneborn found two males and a female on Shemya 28 May-1 June 1988 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On 21 April 2007 a brown scaup with a peaked head was found on Upper Lake. The bird moved among the large lakes in the western part of the island until 5 May when it was no longer found. The photo by Robert Trotter shows the bird; considering the date, it appears likely that it was a female Lesser Scaup. Another female was found on 14 May 2008 at Laundry Lake. D. Shirley found a pair on Middle Lake 26 April through 12 May 2010.





Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*). In the western Aleutians Steller's Eiders are considered intermittent in winter and in spring (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The observations from Shemya would suggest that wintering birds are somewhat more common than birds found in the springs. Gibson located the species in each of his spring visits in the 1970s (five in Alcan Harbor 8-19 May 1977 was his highest count) (Gibson 1981). Steller's Eiders were found at Shemya during half of the 12 winters surveyed 1988-2001. As many as 22 were recorded in the winter of 1989/90; but usually smaller numbers (4-6) were the rule (Byrd and Scharf 2003). During the most recent of the winter surveys, Howard found nine birds in Alcan Harbor, 12-13 January 2001 (Howard 2001). The species was found only once during our surveys. Two females/immature males were in the north shore intertidal zone on 9 May 2001. No photos were obtained.

King Eider (*Somateria spectiabilis*). In the western Aleutians King Eiders are intermittent or casual in spring and fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Nearly all records (about six) are from Attu.

There was one (and only) record from Shemya during our study period. An adult male was observed intermittently at the Lagoon 14 May - 11 June 2002. The bird is shown in the photo, right, a scanned image of a print.



Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*). In the western Aleutians Common Eiders are a common species inhabiting the intertidal zones and near shore waters. The population is apparently sedentary. Their numbers have shown an increase in the years since Arctic Foxes were removed from most of the Aleutian Islands (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

On Shemya in the last decade of the 20th Century eiders were a focus of study in the winter USFWS surveys. That work found average wintering populations ranging between 500-750 individuals (several maximum counts just over 1,000). Overall, there was no population trend in the years 1988-2001 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

We found and censused Common Eiders during beach surveys (about 6-8 per season) during our 1999-2010 visits. Individual counts showed a fair amount of variation due to wave and surf conditions; high surf would push the eiders out to sea (a situation also noted in the USFWS report). Overall, our counts, when averaged, found a small increase in the numbers of Common Eiders found around Shemya. Fall counts averaged higher than spring counts by about 150 birds. The table below presents the seasonal averages for the years 2005-2010.

Seasonal Average Counts of Common Eiders, Shemya Island 2005-2010

Year	Spring	Fall
2005	284	423
2006	311	436
2007	358	556
2010	203	325
As noted above, the eiders in the Aleutians are best described as sedentary. However, they have been found to do inter-island movements, at least in the Near Island group. This conclusion was from work employing satellite telemetry of females captured in the late summer of 2006 (M. Peterson, preliminary results 2006). It should also be noted that few open ocean observations of Common Eiders have been reported which has lead to the conclusion that the birds do not make many, if any, long flights but are restricted to the local "neighborhood". The difference in the spring to fall numbers noted in the table above likely result from females moving to nearby islands (which are foxfree) to nest and the males, to some extent, following.

Common Eiders <u>do</u> nest annually on Shemya. During May surveys of the island's lakes, eiders were occasionally found (birds seeking nest sites). During my one summer of surveys (1999) downy young were noted as early as 29 June (at Antone Lake) and into early July broods at the Lagoon totaling 14 young and a "gang brood" of 12 at the pier (Schwitters 1999). Our mid August returns to the island consistently found mostly grown young with females at the Lagoon and at other sheltered coastal locations and in August of 2007 several rather small ducklings were seen indicating, at least, some females attempted second broods in mid summer (perhaps after earlier nests where destroyed by Arctic Foxes). A selection of photos of Common Eiders follows.





Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*). Harlequin Ducks in the Aleutian Islands are a very curious population. They are uncommon to common year round, more numerous in winter, and the numbers are quite large15,000 in the summer and 147,000 in the winter. Yet the birds do not nest anywhere in the island chain except, probably, the Commander Islands (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson found a maximum of 120 in early September 1978 (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys found winter averages ranging from 200 to over 500 birds and no significant population trend over the period of study 1988-2001 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Our work on Shemya counted Harlequin Ducks on the beach surveys, finding them common in the island's intertidal areas. We too did not see any population trends in the first decade of the 21st Century. In fact, the counts were quite variable ranging from a maximum of 315 on 5 May 2007 and a minimum of just 47 on 19 May 2005. I had data available for 2005-2007. Monthly averages for those three years are graphed below.



Figure 6. Monthly average counts of Harlequin Ducks obtained during beach surveys, springs and falls 2005-2007.

The graph above likely reflects nothing more than some residual wintering birds in April departing in the spring and a remarkably constant average number of birds in the



fall that did not yet reflect returning birds.

Harlequin Ducks apparently bring their young-of-the-year to the island chain to spend the winter and leave them there in salt water habitats while they (adults) seek nesting sites (in currently unknown inland locations) the next spring. This is quite a departure from other waterfowl species whose immature/nonbreeding population accompanies the breeders on the yearly migratory journeys. Photos of Harlequin Ducks are above and below.



Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*). Surf Scoters are considered casual in fall, winter and spring in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya Gibson did not find the species in the 1970s. USFWS winter surveys of the island found a single on 9 November 1990 and three on 24 April 2000 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).



In the first two years (1999-2000) of the most recent Shemya surveys Surf Scoters were found rather regularly. Three were recorded on 17 May 1999, a single on 23-29 May 1999, an adult male was found on 29 February 2000 and three were sighted 24 April 2000 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). I found three on a 6 May 2000 beach survey and a single male in Alcan Harbor on 28



September 2000 (Schwitters 2000). The only other observed was an alternate plumaged male in Shemya Pass with White-winged Scoters on 11 May 2005. This bird was photographed at long range and in poor light, but it was the first photo-documented in the western Aleutians, two of those shots are above.

White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). In the Aleutians White-winged Scoters are a species that migrates to the islands in the fall, over winters, and leaves in the spring. There has been no suggestion of breeding though the species has been recorded in every month. Overall, the abundance of the species decreases westward along the chain (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found them each spring he was present on Shemya in the 1970s; numbers were low (maximum, five, 5 May 1976) (Gibson 1981). During the Shemya winter surveys of the 90s they were found most years, usually in small numbers (although 24 were noted in January of 2000 and eleven were noted during the winter of 1994/95) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

The spring-fall surveys beginning in 1999 found White-winged Scoters every spring, some in good numbers. The few summers surveyed found 2-4 birds off the

northwest shore in 1999. Fall surveys located small numbers, about three, in early October in two years (2000 and 2007). The peak count during our surveys was 68 birds on 29 April 2000. More normal spring day counts were two to 15. The birds were generally found fairly far off shore and they favored waters south through northwest around Shemya. My journal notes show that a pair did make a brief visit to Laundry Lake on 3 June 2005. These distant birds usually did not offer photo opportunities; two shots are shown below.



Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*). Black Scoter is another of the species that come to the Aleutians to over winter, generally arriving in September and departing through May and even lingering into June. They have been seen in the island chain in every month and some have likely nested in the eastern Aleutian Islands (Gibson and Byrd 2007). At Shemya, Black Scoters were seen in each spring and fall visited by Gibson (Gibson 1981). They were found every winter that was surveyed by the USFWS in the 90s. The winter averages were about 50 with a fair amount of variability in the individual counts and the decade of the 90s did show a slight trend of increasing numbers. As many as 231 were counted by Howard on 13 January 2001 (Howard 2001).

Our experience observing during the migration times and several summers '99-'10 found expected numbers and timing for the species. The birds were found off the south side of the island around to Alcan Harbor and were often present upon our arrival. Modest numbers (often 10s of birds) were generally found in the spring with coastal surveys showing fewer birds as the spring progressed. Totals of about 50 were found in 2000 (24 April) and 2006 (19 April) and a single day's count was 82 on 10 April 2001. In the falls the species would be noted early in September (earliest, 1 September 2006 and 2007) and about ten would be counted by our departure in mid October. Interestingly, in October of 2007 a female Black Scoter was found on Patricia Lake, 14 October, and had moved the to Upper Lake the next morning. Another onshore bird was located 29 September 2010 at the Lagoon. Photos of Black Scoters, including the inland birds, are presented below.





Long-tailed Duck (Clangula hyemalis). Long-tailed

Ducks are another saltwater species that arrive in the fall (late), spend the winter and leave (mostly) in the spring. They are less numerous in the western Aleutians than in the east. Since Arctic Fox were introduced in the 1700's there have been no convincing records of breeding in the island chain (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya spring birds were fairly common; flocks of fifty were noted in early May 1976 and 1977 (Gibson 1981). The winter Shemya surveys found "oldsquaw" most years. Averages were 20 to 40 birds (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Our experience at Shemya was right in line with the above assessment. Flocks of 10-20 were present off (often well off) shore in the spring; maximum count was 164 on 6 May 2006 (a "vocal concentration off the end of pier"). The flocks were gone by late May. The feeding flocks were mostly seen off the southeast-south coast and Alcan Harbor. In the fall the species arrived after we had departed in mid October; one exception was a basic plumaged male off the north shore 15 October 2005. Several good photos of Long-tailed Ducks were obtained and are below, including (lower right) a light-plumaged bird at a time (8 May 2005) when it should have been darker...late to molt immature or leucistic individual?





Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*). Bufflehead are rare in the western Aleutians, and are mostly winter visitors/residents (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's work found them each spring on Shemya, with a maximum of eight birds 30 April-15 May 1976 (Gibson 1981). The winter Shemya surveys found Bufflehead every year but one, but in small numbers, generally averaging 3-10, a peak count of 17 in the winter of 1993-94 (Byrd and Scharf 2003). In the winters the birds would be found at the Lagoon (tidally influenced, enclosed "pond" east of the harbor), but would transfer to Upper Lake when that lake would present open water. When flocks were present on the island there was generally a larger number of males than females (Meehan, et.al. 1996 and 1997).

The studies of the 21st Century found Buffleheads every spring and two of six falls. There were usually a few pair and occasional individuals in the spring seasons that were normally gone by mid to late May. The largest assemblage was in 2007 when 13 birds were found on the Lagoon the first day of surveys (13 April) which included two mature males. The flock fragmented as the weeks progressed and counts decreased in number until none were found on 23 May. Prior to our fall departure in two years single males had returned on the island, 2000 and 2006. Photos of Buffleheads found on Shemya follow.





Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*). Common Goldeneye is yet another species that migrates into the Aleutian Island chain for the winter and departs in the spring. Throughout the chain, fall to spring, the species merit an uncommon to common abundance (Gibson and Byrd 2007). At Shemya Gibson found the species every year, spring and fall and described their abundance as uncommon, though peak day counts of 33 on 10 May 1976 and 24 on 4 May 1977 were reported (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys found goldeneyes in all of the winters surveyed with season averages of about 10-15 and several years with peak counts exceeding 20 (41 in the winter 1993/94) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

In the spring and fall (and several summers) surveys at Shemya beginning 1999 Common Goldeneye counts reflected the pattern of an over wintering species. They were present with the biggest counts upon our arrival in April and diminishing in number through May. Figure 7 portrays the daily spring counts of goldeneyes averaged for the year 2005, '06 and '07. These three years were quite similar in numbers and trends. We recorded Common Goldeneye in both spring and fall. There were one or two that would linger into June (likely nonbreeders) in some years. Fall arriving birds usually did not appear until early in October and numbers had usually not built (usually only one or two) by the time of our departures. An anomalous juvenile bird did arrive on 24 August of 2006 and continued till 16 September. The next sighting of the species was not until the more normal date of 7 October.

Common Goldeneyes would generally be noted at Upper Lake and the Lagoon and to a lesser extent, Laundry Lake. They tended to by quite flighty and would often flush at the arrival of the vehicle. This would cause other species present to depart the lakes before they could be studied and accurately counted. Following Figure 7 some photos of Common Goldeneyes are presented.



Figure 7. Three year averages of daily spring counts of Common Goldeneye, from 2005, 2006 and 2007.



Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*). Barrow's Goldeneye is a casual species in the spring in the western Aleutians. Prior to our series of surveys 1999-2010 the species had been recorded in the western Aleutians just ten times, including one sighting on Shemya by D. Sonneborn (a second year male 22-29 May 1985) (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The species was found on Shemya twice during the most recent field work. A male was seen by several surveyors 21 April-11 May 2000; this bird showed great fidelity to Middle Lake. The second bird was a female that arrived at some point in the winter of 2006/07 (R. Trotter, personal communication) and continued on the island until 28 April 2007. No photo of the 2000 bird was obtained. The over-wintering female is shown below; on the left, at the Lagoon, and a poor photo of the same bird with a male Common Goldeneye on Laundry Lake.



Smew (*Mergellus albellus*). Gibson and Byrd describe Smew as rare in the central and western Aluetians in spring and fall, intermittent in winter and casual in midsummer (none seen in August) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). This, and the fact that Smew were not present on Shemya upon our arrival implies the species is a passage migrant in low numbers with a few birds (immatures?) lingering in winter and summer. On Shemya, Gibson found Smew in both spring and fall; as many as six mid May 1975 and two 29 September 1977 (Gibson 1981). A fall female was also observed 19-20 September 1984 by D. Sonneborn (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the period of the Shemya winter surveys Smew were mostly absent; only one "female"³ was reported 1-13 December 1994.

Our series of seasonal surveys found Smew every spring but one (2000) and did not find them during any of the falls. As many as six birds on the island at one time occurred twice, 18 May -7 June 2004 and 9 May 2006. Females (see footnote) recorded in those eight springs outnumbered the alternate plumaged males 26 to 12. I had to wait three springs before a male of the species arrived (two with two females) on Headquarters Lake 21 April 2002. Some photos are presented below.



Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*). In the western Aleutians Common Mergansers are considered a part of the Old World subspecies *M. m. merganser* (but see below). They are rare in the spring and possibly fall, and casual in winter and summer

³ Female for this species refers to both females and juvenile or immature males which are difficult to distinguish in the field.

(Gibson and Byrd 2007). The observations of the species are likely of a small number of migrants moving through the outer Aleutians and of intermittent over-wintering birds with a few nonbreeders finding themselves in the island chain in the summers. At Shemya Gibson found small numbers during his spring (but not fall) surveys in the 1970s (Gibson 1981). The USFWS winter surveys found one or two Common Mergansers in five of 12 winters, some of the birds remained through much of the survey visits. (maximum of five on 7 January 1993) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Beginning in spring of 1999 Common Mergansers were seen every spring that was surveyed, but only once in a fall visit and that was a sighting in August (a female or juvenile 22 August 2001). In the springs, numbers observed were few, 1999 and 2005 (no more than three); modest numbers in 2006 (eight) and fairly strong numbers in 2001, 2002 and 2007 (16-20) individuals.

The spring of 2010 focused attention on Common Mergansers as a graduate level

study of merganser species was in progress through the University of Alaska. The study was highlighting DNA sequencing of the Northern Hemisphere three merganser species. I focused my attention on scientific collection of Common Mergansers and five were obtained. Preliminary results were available at this writing and strongly suggest there may be a third subspecies of Common Merganser found in Alaska and northeast Asia whose DNA is significantly different from those birds found in the rest of Eurasia and in North America (J. Pearce personal



communication 2007). Photos of Common Mergansers are below. A shot of a deformed foot on a female that was collected in the spring of 2007 is shown above. The foot was essentially just one toe.





Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*). Throughout the Aleutians Red-breasted Mergansers are considered uncommon to common fall, winter and spring visitors. There are also quite a few reports of nesting, mostly in the central Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). These authorities note that the species shows a discernible migration in the western Aleutians. Gibson in the 1970s found the species every spring in small numbers (no more than three 10 May 1975) (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys found Red-breasted Mergansers in eight of the 12 seasons also in small numbers (4-5 were usual peak day counts, but 12 in December 1999).

Beginning in the spring of 1999 our surveys found the species during all nine springs and five of the seven falls (none seen in the fall of 2001 and 2002). We also found only small numbers each season. In the spring of 2006 there were eight individuals recorded (other springs about five). The fall of 2007 found at least one family unit (likely two families) and a total of 14 individuals; late September of 2010 had a flock of eleven for half a day. The other falls averaged about 2-3 individuals. Most of the birds seen were females, juvenile or subadult birds, i.e. dull, gray birds. The springs brought only one or two alternate plumaged males through the island each year. After arriving on Shemya it appeared that the birds would spend considerable time in salt water and would only aperiodically be found on the island's lakes. Individuals or pairs would tend to linger for several days or more than a week before moving on. A very few were found into June. Photos from the 2005-2007 period are presented below.





Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*). Throughout the Aleutians Red-throated Loons migrate into the islands in spring, remain through the summer and migrate out in the fall. Their abundance is described as uncommon to fairly common. They are known breeders in the Aleutians. There is no sense of a through-migration by this species (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970's on Shemya Gibson described Red-throated Loon as casual having seen only one in May of 1976 (Gibson 1981). This low abundance was very likely due to the presence of Arctic Fox on many of the islands and the resulting reduction in the breeding population of loons (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Red-throated Loons are rare in winter. The USFWS winter surveys found only two birds at Shemya, March 1994 and January 2000 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Red-throated Loon were found every visit beginning in 1999 and through 2007. Numbers were small: a pair or singles or three. In the springs the first of the species would not be found until late April or, more commonly, well into May (but a single basic plumaged bird did spent two days, 28-29 April 2002). The summer surveys for which records exist indicate small numbers were seen regularly. Our arrival in the falls would usually find the species (often a pair), still in alternate plumage, using the island's lakes.

Our observations confirm the assessment above, that Red-throated Loons arrive at Shemya intending to nest. Nesting success was documented only once. Two fledglings attended by an adult were on Laundry Lake 21 August 2002; only one young bird was seen by the first week of September. Usually a pair of adults would be found on the island in August and would be quite mobile, noted on the large lakes (Laundry Lake preferred) and seen and heard flying to and from the lakes and salt water. My impression is that the birds had attempted to nest but the foxes caused failure. The species is likely having better success at the other (fox-free) Near Islands. My journal notes on 29 August 2005 that "In Shemya Pass, ³/₄ of way to Hammerhead...4 Red-throated Loons". A family group? Some of the photos of Red-throated Loons follow.



Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*). The status of Arctic Loon in the Aleutians is unclear. They are assessed as being "probably rare fall, winter and spring" but there are few supporting data (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 70s Gibson did not see the species nor did he see the similar Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*, Gibson 1981). The winter studies reported the species three of 12 seasons, but with some uncertainty, although two or three were reported with some certainty in the winter of 1999/2000 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Beginning in 1999 our Shemya surveys found the species every spring. As the 21st Century progressed it appeared that Arctic Loon was becoming more and more common. In the last three years of surveys, 2005-2010 it was viewed as a "sure thing" that multiple Arctic Loons would be seen, and even a sheltered cove on the island's west end was dubbed "Loon Cove" due to presence of Arctic Loons being found there. No Arctic Loons were noted in summers and none in falls.

Our spring presence definitely observed northbound migrants. In the first three years (1999-2001) the species was not seen until May, but beginning in 2002 they were

present upon our arrival each year that we visited. Birds continued to be seen (mostly in Loon Cove) well into May. Variation in plumage noted indicated a rather regular turnover of birds. In 2007 there may have been as many as a dozen Arctic Loons that used Shemya as a stopover. A flock of five sleeping birds (tired from migration) was noted on 18 April 2008. Whether this apparent increase represented a true population trend, or whether the species became easier to recognize with experience, is unknown, although I suspect the former. Early in the spring Arctic Loons were found in basic plumage and as the weeks continued birds showing various stages of molt would be seen. Full alternate-plumaged adults would be seen in May. Arctic Loon photos are below.



Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*). Pacific Loons are listed as rare or uncommon in winter in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Additionally, our work on Shemya would suggest they are rare migrants. The loons, particularly in basic plumage, are difficult to distinguish from Arctic Loon and, indeed, were considered the same species until 1985. Also, these birds are found quite far out in near shore waters where distance, waves and poor light complicate identification. The winter surveys state that the species was seen in six of the 12 survey periods, but with some uncertainty (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Pacific Loons were recorded in spring surveys in eight of nine years 1999-2007. They were not found in mid Aprils when we arrive, but would be found sometimes in late April but usually not until May. One was found as late as 8-9 June 1999. Usually only a single bird would be found in a season. Two alternate-plumaged individuals were found together off the south beach 30 June 1999 under good viewing conditions. A third bird, immature, was seen that same summer as late as 8 July 1999. Photo attempts were few. One usable photo was obtained.



Common Loon (*Gavia immer***).** Common Loons are uncommon residents throughout the Aleutians year round. There is little evidence to suggest migration. Records of nesting exist for all of the Near Islands except Shemya. The species is not found any further west that Attu. The birds are rarely seen in groups, usually in ones, twos and

sometimes threes. They forage in the inland lakes and in near shore waters (Gibson and Byrd 2007). At Shemya Gibson found small numbers every season he visited (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys found 1-2 each winter except for one (Byrd and Scharf).

In the first decade of the 21st Century Common Loons were found every visit, spring and fall (except none seen on a short visit 28 May-7 June 2004). The annual pattern was quite similar. Alternate-plumaged adults (one to up to four) were found on the lakes (Lower and Middle Lake preferred) and off shore (both sides, but usually south. The early birds gave the impression they would like to nest. Individuals would be seen off and on through the spring. Fall visits would find the species in perhaps lower numbers with most sightings in the salt water. Basic or juvenile-plumaged birds were noted several times in both spring and late summer.

There was no direct evidence of breeding on Shemya. This is likely due to there being no nest islands on the lakes to provide protection from the island's foxes. Common Loons often provided good photo opportunities; some shots are below:



Yellow-billed Loon (Gavia adamsii). Yellow-billed Loon is a rare visitor to the Aleutians in fall, winter and spring usually September into June (Gibson 1981). The

species was seen once in the 1970s (3 May 1976) (Gibson 1981). Winter surveys found the species four of 12 winters; usually singles were found though three were present in March of 1994 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

At Shemya 1999-2010 we found the species, usually only one, in five of nine springs and two of seven falls. Most of the spring sightings were in the first four years of the study period, though the species was seen fall 2006 and spring of 2007. The birds were always found in near shore waters off the south beach and off of the pier at Alcan Harbor. We noted the harbor birds would respond to our presence by approaching...they appeared to be curious. Photos are below. The large image was taken off the north shore in good light and rather close range shows features that are not totally characteristic of Yellow-billed Loons (shape of collar and rather dull bill); the large white pattern on the back is typical of the species and as seen above the Common Loon in alternate plumage has a very black bill.



Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*). Horned Grebes are rare to uncommon in the Aleutians fall, winter and spring. They are usually found as single or small groups, and there has been no good evidence of breeding (Gibson and Byrd 2007). At Shemya Gibson found four birds during one fall 30 September-3 October 1977 (Gibson 1981). In winters of the 90s the species was present nearly every winter in small numbers (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

The 21st Century surveys to date found Horned Grebes every spring surveyed except 1999 and 2008. There were few seen, usually one off the south shore during

coastal surveys in April into early May (at least three were noted 2005). Several singles and a count of six were recorded in the first month of 2010. In the fall surveys the species was located five of the seven years. The first birds to arrive (mid September) were juveniles and they preferred to forage on the island's lakes: Myrtle, Laundry, Lower and Headquarters. Later in the fall, into October, small groups (adults?) were noted off the south beach in some years (2001 and 2007). Some photos are available and are below.



Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*). This grebe species also over-winters in uncommon abundance throughout the Aleutians. There are also a few summer records, including one on Shemya, 1999 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). They were seen in the 1970s during every season surveyed. This included a remarkable 39 birds on 2 May 1977 (Gibson 1981). Low numbers (1-7) were found most winters that were surveyed in the 90s, 10 of 12 seasons. The most, eleven, was noted on 7 November 1995 in the Bering Sea (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

The spring and fall surveys 1999-2010 observed Red-necked Grebes during every visit. Numbers were not big, two to ten per season (perhaps influenced by the low frequency (~weekly) that we surveyed off-shore waters). I would rate them as uncommon in both spring and fall. The highest counts were 13 on 15 May 1999 and 10 on 26 April 2006 (Shemya Pass). Red-necked Grebes were seen off the north and south shores and in Alcan Harbor and Shemya Pass. Three in obvious juvenile plumage were noted on three falls (2 October 2005, 15 October 2006, 15 October 2007 and 6-10 October 2010). The '06 and '07 juveniles were found on inland lakes: Lower Lake in

2006 and, surprisingly, the small Connie Lake in 2007. A number of the birds provided photo opportunities and are presented below.



Laysan Albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis***).** This pelagic species is uncommon or fairly common all seasons in the seas surrounding the Aleutians. They tend to be more common in the central and western Aleutians. They are on the move (peripatetic) all the time and abundances vary for no well defined reasons. Abundances increased dramatically in the last quarter of the 20th Century associated with an overall increase in breeding numbers noted in western Hawaii (Gibson and Byrd 2007). At Shemya, Gibson found them each spring in uncommon abundance (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys noted them only twice (perhaps a function of viewing conditions or the distance out from the island that they normally fly) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Laysan Albatross were reported from Shemya 1999 through 2010 during every visit but one (fall 2000). My notes show they could be seen any time conditions and inclination allowed. They were mostly seen on the Bering Sea side of the island although they were occasionally seen over the north Pacific (south side). A spotting scope was usually required. From the east point, looking east northeast beyond the distant exposed rocks would usually reveal several birds. In the spring 2000 and the fall 2001 visits the birds were seen in good numbers early but were hard to find later. The spring of 2007 was a banner year for the species. On 28 April 2007 there were "hundreds" seen over the Bering Sea with some feeding and soaring rather close to the north shore. On 15 May 2005 a pod of Killer Whales was accompanied by about 12 Laysan Albatross as the assembly transited to the west, south of Shemya. Such an association had also been reported by D. Sonneborn on 23 May 1986 (personal communication). The distant, moving birds rarely offered photo opportunities but some shots were obtained, below.



Black-footed Albatross (*Phoebastria nigripes***).** This albatross is uncommon throughout the Aleutians and is more abundant in the Gulf of Alaska. Numbers become a bit more numerous in the western Aleutians in the late summer and fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). None were seen from Shemya in the 1970s (Gibson 1981) or during the winter surveys (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

On Shemya in the 21st Century the species was seen five times, all fall visits. On 5 October 2001 an uncommon fishing vessel was moving west, well off the north side of the island. Apparently processing catch, there was a large swam of birds in its wake, gulls and albatross. Most of the albatross were dark birds though Laysan albatross were present in small numbers. The other sightings were all of single dark albatross well off shore with heavy seas: 22 August 2005, 20 September 2006, 8 October 2007 and 3 September 2010. No photos of the species were obtained.

Northern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*). Northern Fulmar in the Aleutians is common at sea throughout the year. There are seven breeding colonies in the island chain; the largest is at Chagulak with 500,000 birds. The closest to Shemya is a small colony (~50 birds) at Attu and one at Buldir (~1,000). The Aleutian fulmars are the dark color morph birds (hence, the presence of light morph Northern Fulmars would strongly suggest birds from the north) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). There was no mention of fulmars in Gibson's work or the winter surveys.

Our Shemya surveys recorded fulmars in just seven of the sixteen visits with records. In half of those seasons two to "several" individuals were recorded (spring '99, spring '05, spring '07 and spring 2010). During the summer surveys of 1999 "fair"

numbers were noted off shore first on 9 July, and the species continued for about one and a half weeks. One weakened bird was found on the south beach road on 20 July. In the fall of 2001 on 30 August I recorded "off east point I see 2 rafts of dark phase Northern Fulmar". The fall of 2007 brought big numbers to Shemya. On 11 August I record "hundreds near shore north side" and the next day, 12 August "thousands" in off-shore kelp. At least during the 1999 and 2007 records I also note that very large numbers of Short-tailed Shearwaters were flowing by the island. During the fall sightings, especially 2007 and 2010, light morph fulmars were noted. The only photos of Northern Fulmar were obtained during 2007. They are below.



Mottled Petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*). Mottled Petrel breeds on islands near New Zealand. In the Northern Hemisphere summer the species is uncommon to fairly common as far north as the southern Bering Sea. Nearly all records are from vessels and concentrated in various straits between islands. Mottled Petrel has been recorded from Shemya only once. On 3 October 2007 viewing from the north point, large numbers of pelagic birds were observed well off shore. Among the Short-tailed Shearwaters, Laysan Albatross, Northern Fulmar and Black-legged Kittiwakes were tens of light gray birds that seemed to soar higher and were faster and showed a kinked wing. One gave a good enough look to reveal the diagnostic "M" pattern of the underwing of Mottled Petrel. No photos were possible.

Short-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*). The small, dark shearwaters discussed here are presumed to be Short-tailed Shearwaters, although Sooty Shearwaters were likely in the flocks observed. No Sootys could be picked out when circumstances allowed a telescopic examination. Short-tailed Shearwaters are a pelagic species that nests in the Southern Hemisphere (islands southeast of Australia). They are one of the most numerous species of bird in the world. In the Aleutian Islands they are common to abundant in spring, summer and fall. The species moves as far as the Chukchi Sea, north of the Bering Strait, in summer. Vast numbers (millions, and a flock covering more than 200 square kilometers) are reported in some Aleutian passes (see photo 6 of reference) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson included the species on his list of birds seen in the 1970s (Gibson 1981). None are included in the winter surveys (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

D. Sonneborn (personal communication) saw the species in large numbers in some of his visits in the 1980s ("clouds of thousands", both sides, for a week in September 1986).

Our surveys that began in 1999, found Short-tailed Shearwaters during most of the seasons visited. Some seasons reported only several being seen and two springs, 2002 and 2005, did not have them on the species lists. In most of the seasons large numbers were seen, often over heavy seas. Spring of 1999 found hundreds through the visit. The summer of that year reported a vast river of shearwaters flowing northwest past the island for a week. Thousands were seen from 18 August until the end of that month in 2001. The fall visit of 2006 recorded thousands in mid August to early September on the north Pacific side, and numerous birds again 6-16 October. The 2007 spring survey period found streams of birds 3 May, 28 May and 4 June. Fall 2007 found a heavy stream (about 100 per minute) passing the south side (flying east) of the island that continued 11-15 August (that calculates to >500,000). Also in that visit large numbers were noted 19 August, 7 September, 10 September (one resting on the Lagoon) and 14 September. Another big show was noted on 8 May 2010; more than 500,000 were estimated that day. Two photos of shearwaters found within range are shown below.



Fork-tailed Strom-Petrel (*Oceanodroma furcata*). Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel is an abundant local breeder in the Aleutians. The total number of breeding birds is estimated at 2,500,000. The closest colony to Shemya is at Buldir where 1,300,000 nest. The birds are present at the nesting colonies May through October. When not at the colonies the birds are over deep water well south of the Aleutians or, to a lesser extent (uncommon) over the deep water of the southern Bering Sea. They are found on a casual or intermittent basis over non-colony islands, usually in fog or storm. They are found rarely in winter (Gibson and Byrd). Gibson found one bird over Shemya in fog 25 May 1977 (Gibson 1981). None were reported in the winters of the 1990's (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Aside from human influenced sightings (see next), Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was observed once on Shemya in the 21st Century. A single bird fluttered ashore over the south beach the afternoon of 27 August 2005 under a low cloud deck.

On 23 August 2006 I responded to a radio call of an injured bird at the pier. Barge unloading was in progress in its second day. A Fork-tailed Storm-petrel unable to fly was found, as were a number of pairs of wings, one pair being light gray (see photo below). Storm Petrels were doubtlessly attracted to the lights on at the pier at night, collided with the lights and ended up on the pier were they were predated by Arctic Fox. In 2007 there were several barge operations where the pier lights remained on for extended periods. As safety concerns, allowed I checked the pier for birds or pieces of birds and found none.

Later in the fall visit of 2006 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel were captured in mist net sets that were intended for plovers. The purpose of the netting was Avian Influenza surveillance. From 19 September through 4 October a total of 19 were captured and most released. Photos from the period of the capture operations follow.



Leach's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*). Leach's Storm-Petrel is an abundant local breeder in the Aleutians, sharing the same colonies as Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel. The breeding population is estimated at 2,500,000 with Buldir having 1,700,000. Nesting through fledging is mid-May through early November. In the summer the birds seek food in the deepest waters usually south of the outer Aleutians and rarely over the deep waters of the Bering Sea. The species winters in tropical waters, but are rarely seen in Aleutian waters (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson did not record the species in the 1970s.

Our surveys found direct evidence of Leach's Storm-Petrel four times and possible indirect evidence once or twice on Shemya. On 30 August 2002 in the early morning I saw a fox pick up a dead bird from in front of Hanger 8. It was a Leach's Storm-Petrel. The hanger has bright lights and the bird must have struck the hanger during the night. That same year on 1 October I received a call of an injured "dove" at the Navy facility. I was escorted to the back of the building (which had a bright flood light) and found a Leach's Storm-Petrel which had likely fractured its clavicle. The finding of pairs of wings at the pier on 23 August 2006 is detailed above. An airfield technician described an injured bird on the ramp 6 September 2010. The dark wings in the photo above are those of Leach's Storm-Petrel. In the spring of 2005 in a conversation with a security officer I was asked if there were bats on the island. He described seeing medium-sized black birds with stiff winged, fluttering flight the early (0300-0400) morning hours around the bright lights of a parking lot on the northwest

corner of the island. These were likely Leach's Storm-Petrel. There are no photos of the species.

Red-faced Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax urile***).** Red-faced cormorant are a common resident and breeder in the Aleutians. The combined Aleutian population of this species and Pelagic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*) is estimated to be 100,000 with Red-faced being slightly more numerous (55-65%). The birds are usually found on off-shore rocks and foraging in near shore waters. Cormorants are normally not found more than 10 km from land. In the Near Islands in the last 20-25 years cormorant populations appear to have suffered an 80% decrease (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was noted in the 1970s (Gibson 1981) and the winter surveys documented the tail of the decline with average numbers of "cormorants" (both species combined) beginning at 800 in 1988/89 and down to under 200 by 1990/91 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Red-faced Cormorants at Shemya in the early 21^{st} Century exhibited a quite predictable and repeatable pattern. The birds would be found mostly on the north beach rocks from the west point to the east point. By late April birds would be seen gathering nesting materials (grass) from the north bluffs. Nearly all of the nests were located on two off-shore sea stacks one about a kilometer from the north beach road and another, more distant rock $\sim 2\frac{1}{2}$ km. north. (see map in photos, below). The summer was spent incubating and feeding the young (lack of summer surveys precluded more accurate dates). In the fall visits the juveniles had fledged by the end of the third week in September. Photos of the species and a map highlighting the nesting rocks are below. Below the photos is a graph showing the monthly averages of cormorants (both species combined) from beach surveys 2005, 06 and 07). The fall data likely reflect the addition of the juveniles. The year-to-year averages were rather constant with the spring standard deviations being ± 32 for the spring monthly averages and ± 44 for the fall averages.





Cormorants, Monthly Averages, 2005-2010



Figure 8. Beach survey counts of cormorant species, Red-faced, Pelagic and Unknown averaged for each month, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010. Combining the spring and fall averages seem to match the lowest numbers found during the winter surveys.

Pelagic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus***).** Pelagic Cormorants are fairly common resident breeders in the Aleutians. There are more breeders in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson also recorded the species at Shemya in the seventies describing them as uncommon breeders (Gibson 1981). The winter visits found the species every coastal survey (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Pelagic Cormorants were sighted during all our seasonal visits beginning the spring of 1999. They were often taken for granted and given little attention on the surveys and were often lumped into "unidentified cormorant species" on Beach Surveys. The birds were found all around the island (as opposed to the Red-faced Cormorants) perched on rocks or feeding in the near shore waters. They were often found on the rocks of the south beach (south from the eastern-most warehouse complex area), the ledge on the south side of the pier and rocks at the island's east point. Some nesting was noted but normally not in colonies, and juveniles were observed with adults in the falls. During the last spring visit (2010) a colony of nesting Pelagic Cormorants was found on the cliffs above Grace Hill Road (the road had been closed for safety concerns). Perhaps of

interest, in the falls, usually early October, flocks of cormorants (species unknown) were seen flying moderately high going east off shore. These flocks looked very much like migrants. The graph above includes Pelagic Cormorants. Some photos follow below.



Gray Heron (Ardea cinerea). Gray Heron is a widespread breeding bird in Eurasia. Its summer range is as far east as Sakhalin Island. Some

eastward movement of small numbers has been noted recent in years (Shimba, 2007). A FIRST RECORD for Shemya (only the fourth North American record) was found 26 April



2010. It was present in the southwest part of the island (sewage lagoon, Lower Lake and adjacent beach areas) for seven days. The bird was quite wary and would not allow close approach. Several photos by island resident Dennis Krug were obtained and are presented above.

Great Egret (*Ardea alba***).** This is a very casual species in the Aleutians. Going back to 1992 there have been individuals found seven times from the central and western Aleutians distributed through the seasons. Additionally, two were found dead (on Buldir, 2006), apparently birds that had arrived over the winter and perished (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Shemya in the first decade of the 21st Century accounted for two of the sightings. A highlight of the spring 2002 visit was the discovery of a long staying Great Egret. The bird was seen briefly on 19 April. It was next found in the south beach intertidal zone on 22 April and it transferred to the north beach bench the next day. It was regularly found foraging on the north beach bench till our departure on 11 June. It was quite flighty and would not allow close approach. It would often fly off to take shelter in pockets on the north beach bluff above the bench. The dark bill during the breeding season indicates it was of the subspecies *A. a. modesta*, from Asia. The island's second record was from 2 February 2006. The flying bird was seen near the cantonment area and was photographed by Rod Carlon of the Buildings and Grounds work center. The photo was forwarded to me by R. Trotter (personal communication). Photos of both birds follow.



Intermediate Egret (*Egretta intermedia*). In Asia Intermediate Egret is a fairly common summer visitor to Japan, but generally not much further north or east (Shimba, 2007). A male in nuptial plumage was found dead on Buldir Island on 16 June 2006

(Gibson and Byrd 2007). On 28 September 2010, I responded to a morning radio call from the BASH Technician at Lower Lake. He had found an all white heron-like bird that had been mobbed by gulls and had retreated to a small stream bed on lake's far side. The bird was collected (right) and measurements revealed it to be an Intermediate Egret. Unfortunately, no photos of the bird alive were obtained. This bird was found the day after a decaying typhoon (Malakah) had passed just north of the Near Islands.



Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). This heron is found in North and South America and in Southeast Asia, east to Honsho (Shimba 2007). In the western Aleutians is has a history of being found early in the spring in very small numbers. One was at Shemya 25 April 1986 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not seen again through 2010.

Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus). Bald Eagles are a common breeding resident in the eastern and central Aleutians. They have been rare breeders in the western Aleutians. Pairs have been observed on Agattu in 1937 and 1963 and also on Buldir. The species has been recorded in the western Aleutians casually in spring and fall. Prior to the 21st Century there is a single record on Shemya, 3 May 1987 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The absence of eagles in the Near Islands is likely a contributing factor which has allowed the strong increase in the number of Aleutian Cackling Geese.

An eagle was seen in the fall of 2002 which may have been a juvenile/immature Bald Eagle. The bird was first seen on 15 September chasing geese near Lower Lake. The light spots on the back were white rather than tan which was seen on White-tailed Eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in the spring of that year and had square tail. The bird returned on 28 September and was photographed on the north beach bluffs, below. Another eagle, most likely a Bald Eagle, made a one day appearance on 23 April 2010 and was photographed by island resident Carl Sagart (below).



White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*). This eagle is a resident as close as northeast Asia. In the western Aleutians the bird could be found at any time. There are records of six transitory birds in the Near Islands and one record from the central Aleutians. Aside from these transients (sightings likely heavily influenced by the presence of observers) there is an unusual record on Attu...observations of a single nesting pair there go back to 1945. During the era of the Attour birding tour (mid 70s-2000) on the island, a pair of nesting birds was confirmed in the Temnac Valley. Only one adult was seen 1983 to 1996 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

During the surveys on Shemya 1999-2010 the species was seen in two seasons: the spring of 1999 and 2002. Gibson observed a third-year bird for two hours at fairly close range over the south side of the island on 16 May 1999. White-tailed Eagles were seen numerous times during the spring of 2002. Single birds were seen 12 through 28 April and 30 May and 1 June; except TWO birds together were observed on south beach rocks on 21 April. These 2002 birds were subadults and would often give good looks. Most recently a subadult was present for several hours on 26 April 2010. Photos below:



Steller's Sea-Eagle (*Halieaeetus pelagicus*). This eagle is another resident of northeast Asia that has occasionally been seen in the Aleutians. It has been seen three times in the western Aleutians (one of these Shemya), once in central and twice in the eastern part of the chain (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The one Shemya sighting was of an adult observed by a volunteer (N. Garon, personnel communication) with the USFWS doing winter surveys in March of 2002. The bird was photographed by Garon (right) and the photo is provided through the courtesy of the Alaska Maritime NWR.



Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). Northern Harrier in the western Aleutians is assessed to be of the nominate subspecies, *C. c. cyaneus*, originating in Eurasia. It is a casual fall and casual to accidental spring visitor in the western Aleutian Islands. It is documented eight times in the Near Islands (four at Shemya) in all seasons (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found and collected the species twice, 23 September-3 October 1977 and 9 October 1978 (Gibson 1981). Winter surveys found the species once, at Shemya, 23 January 1991 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The surveys that began in 1999 found Northern Harrier once. A female/juvenile bird was on the island 11-21 September 2000 (recorded seven times (seen twice on two days) during that period). No photos were obtained of this bird.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis***).** This accipiter is accidental in the western Aleutians. There are just two records in all of the Aleutians and both are from Shemya in the 21^{st} Century (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The first Aleutian record is from 25 May 2001 when a large accipiter was observed in flight in foggy conditions. It was seen again briefly on 27 May (Schwitters and Gibson 2001). The second Aleutian record is from 17 September 2001. A dirty-white raptor was observed perched on an antenna guy wire on the north side of the island. Telescopically, the bird showed dark eyes, faint brown streaking on the breast and faint



rufous in its long tail. The plumage appeared to be much worn (Schwitters and Schwitters 2001). About 50 percent of the birds of the subspecies *A. g. albidus* found in northeast Asia are off-white (Gibson and Byrd 2007). A digitized photo from a film print of the fall 2001 bird is presented and has been enhanced.

Rough-legged Hawk (Buteo lagopus). Birds found in the western Aleutians are thought to be of the Asian *B. l. kamtschatkensis* subspecies and are considered an intermittent visitor April to early June. One visits about once every three years. Summer and fall records do exist, but only one each season. This Asian subspecies is very light-plumaged (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson recorded at least one at Shemya 17-23 May 1976 (Gibson 1981). The species was not reported on Shemya in the winter surveys '99-'01.

Our seasonal surveys that began in 1999 found Rough-legged Hawk several times. The birds were found several times in a visit, but not regularly. It was as though they were in the Near Island Group and would move from island to island to hunt. One was sighted 17 May 1999. Another was sighted three times 11 April-25 May 2002. A



third was seen in the spring of 2005, 28 April and 8 May. This bird was collected, see photo. On 4 October 2007 an apparent young-of-the-year bird was seen at a distance soaring along the north beach bluffs. As recently as 10 February 2008 a Roughlegged Hawk was found on Shemya and photographed (R. Trotter, personal communication). D. Shirley recorded an adult the morning of 29 April 2010.

10 February 2008

Photo: R. Trotter



Eurasian Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus). The

Eurasian Kestrel is a widespread falcon in the Old World. In the western Aleutians it is casual in both spring and fall. In the period 1978-2005 there are nine sightings, of which four were from Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Two were found on Shemya by Gibson (and B. Lawhead) in the fall of 1978 (Gibson 1981).

During the period 1999-2007 the species was seen three times. The first sighting was 17 October 2001 (the day after a canceled flight extended our stay on the island). The bird was in hover flight in front of Building 600. It was found the next day as well over the southwest side of the island. On 16 September 2005 a single juvenile bird was standing on the runway in the morning. It flew off and was resignted by Boisvert and Frost (personal communication). The third sighting was of a bird flying in and landing near the top of the bluff east of Cobra Dane on 21 May 2006. The bird was observed at

fairly long range consuming unknown prey. Photos of the '05 and the '06 birds are below.



Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*). Eurasian Hobby, a small falcon originating in Eurasia, is observed casually in the western Aleutians. Since 1982 the species has been recorded about 16 times in the outer Aleutians with about half of the sightings on Shemya. Some of the sightings involved birds coming aboard ships. The birds were found in spring, summer and fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). There were no records on Shemya prior to 1988 when D. Sonneborn observed one on 26 May (Gibson and Byrd 2007), and no hobbys were seen in the extensive winter surveys of the 1990s.

Since 1999, on Shemya, the species has been seen fairly regularly, three springs and six falls. Some of the birds, once observed would be present at the island intermittently for extended periods though not frequently, suggesting the birds were quite mobile between islands in the area, and that Shemya was just a part of their hunting territory. The record of the species during our seasonal surveys: an adult female 4-10 June 2000, adult 19 September 2000, juvenile male 21 September-5 October 2001, adult 30 May 2004, an adult 24 May 2005, and an adult present the fall of 2007 (present on my 10 August arrival and seen sporadically into October). Two juveniles were found the fall of 2010; one 23-25 September and another (different plumage pattern) in early October. This apparent increase in sightings in the 21st Century of adults and juveniles (including the two juveniles together, 2005) could suggest breeding in the Near Islands beginning after 2000.







Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*). Although more common in eastern and central Aleutians, Gyrfalcons are only casual visitors in spring and summer in the western Aleutian Islands. There are eight modern records in the outer Aleutians (1974-2000) ranging from Buldir to Attu.

The period of Shemya surveys from 1999 through 2010 found the species only once, in the spring of 2000. A Gyrfalcon was seen on 23 April (G.V. Byrd, personal communication). It was later seen (30 April) from the control tower flying, rapidly low across the runway area southeast to northwest and perhaps interestingly "it does not flush 2 CAGO [Aleutian Cackling Geese] that it flys (sic) near" (journal entry from that day) (perhaps raising a question that the species was correctly identified?). No photos taken.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). Peregrine Falcon is found throughout the Northern Hemisphere. In the Aleutians it is an uncommon to fairly common resident and breeder. Nearly all of the Aleutian birds are of the dark *F. p. pealei* race. In 1975 there were 349-554 breeding pairs estimated to be in the entire island chain, and subsequent surveys suggest the numbers have not changed significantly (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found the species every season he visited Shemya with as many as three immature birds in the fall of 1977. Though Peregrine Falcon is not mentioned in the summary paper describing the Shemya winter surveys, individual trip reports from that era, (e.g., Meehan and Krom 1997, Meehan 1997, Howard 2000 and Howard 2001), do list the species, up to three individuals in some surveys.

On Shemya beginning in the spring of 1999 our surveys found peregrines every visit. Typically, in spring only one bird would be seen, though sometimes on several occasions. In the fall, numbers on the island would be higher; both adults and juveniles would be observed and often the juveniles would be seen frequently, at times giving the impression the young birds had taken up fall residence on the island. Up to five birds were noted in the fall of 2005; three together were found the fall of 2010. My journal notes mention light-fronted, potentially non-*pealei* subspecies in fall 2001, spring 2002 and fall 2005 (photo below).



They are found in tropical and temperate Eurasia and routinely as far northeast as the northern Japanese islands (Shimba 2007). None had been found in Alaska until 12 October 2010. One unidentified water bird gave a quick look in a small wetland north of Penelope Lake. The bird was refound in another wetland the evening of 14 October when it gave poor photo opportunities and later was collected. It was a juvenile Moorhen (Withrow Common and Schwitters 2012). I feel the bird came to

Common Moorhen (Gallinula chloropus). Moorhens are common around the world.



Shemya in the same typhoon that passed 27 September 2010, but had not been found earlier due to its stealth until mid October. Photo is from 14 October 2010.

Sandhill Crane (Grus canadensis). Sandhill Cranes are intermittent in the western Aleutians May-September. The origin of the birds that have been observed is uncertain. They appear to arrive and tend to remain in a location for protracted periods on an island or moving between nearby islands. Numbers of birds are typically one to four, but flocks of eleven have been noted; and twelve were seen on Agattu in 1982 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson did not see any cranes on Shemya in the 1970s and none were present during the winter surveys.

The most recent surveys completed in 2010 found Sandhill Cranes in nine of the visits (five spring and four fall). In 2001 a single was observed intermittently 30 April-12 June (end of visit). Two or three were seen from time to time 15 May-27 May 2002. A flock of eleven flew over the island the afternoon of 29 May 2002, flying west. The short visit of late spring 2004 found three birds on 29 May, island residents reported seeing a flock of eleven earlier in the spring. Up to three individuals visited the island in spring 2005 from 11 May through 12 June (nearly the end of the visit). On 2 September of that same year two were observed. And two birds were seen 11-13 October 2006. In the fall of 2010 a flock of eleven was noted 31 August through 12 September. Several of the visitors are shown in photographs below.





Northern Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus). Prior to the fall of 2006 Northern Lapwing had never been documented in North America west of Ohio. On 12 October 2006 a single individual was discovered on Shemya's south side and was collected. Preparation of the specimen revealed the bird to be an adult female with heavy fat (Schwitters 2007). Photos of the collected bird are presented above.

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*). Throughout the Aleutians Black-bellied Plovers are a rare passage migrant in spring (end of May into June) and in fall (end of August into October). The birds observed are usually single individuals or associating with Pacific Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva*) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya Gibson found two juvenile birds in September of 1978 (Gibson 1981) and D. Sonneborn found an alternate-plumaged bird 25 May 1987 and a fall bird on 7 September 1986 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Black-bellied Plovers were found in five of the seasonal visits 1999-2007. The only spring sighting was of an adult on 31 May 1999. One juvenile was seen 12 and 13 September 2000. One was found 6 Sept 2001 and was joined by a second 7 and 9 September, and one continued till 16 September. A hatch-year bird was found and collected (only Aleutian specimen) 20 September 2005, and single birds were seen 28 September, 1 October, and 3-4 October of that year. Our last sighting of the species was with Pacific Golden-Plovers on 11 and 12 October 2007. Photos of birds in 2005 and 2007 were obtained and are below.



Pacific Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*). Throughout the Aleutians Pacific Golden-Plover is a passage migrant in spring (uncommon) and fall (fairly common to common). The birds stop in the island chain traveling to and from breeding sites in Siberia and northwestern Alaska and winter locations on Pacific Ocean atolls. The spring movement is rather rapid from generally mid May into the first week of June. The fall migration is described as "protracted" with the species found from mid August until late October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya in the 1970s the species was found in every visit. Peak numbers in spring were 16 in 1975 and 14 in 1976. Fall maximums were 156 in 1978 and 136 in 1977 (Gibson 1981).

Our Shemya surveys found numbers and timing similar to that described above. The first Pacific Golden-Plovers did not normally arrive until the second week of May
(but three were found 24 April 2006). The birds displayed both winter (those in May) plumage and full breeding plumage. The latest spring birds were recorded on 6 June 2002. Individuals and flocks in the spring would only stop briefly...often gone the next day. Spring flock sizes were normally 2-10, but some rather large flocks were noted, e.g., 50-60, 16 May 2005 and about 50 19 May 2006. Of interest, a **leg-banded plover** was found on 18 May 2008. The bird had been marked 29 March 2007 at American Samoa.

In fall the first of the species was present in mid August, likely before our arrival. The fall migration through Shemva was generally in two parts. The first part was composed almost entirely of molting adults and was low numbers of individuals, 3-15. These adults would move on rather quickly. The second part of the fall migration was composed of young-of-the-year birds and would begin in early September. Numbers would build through September (though with a fair amount of year-to-year variability) reaching a peak about 29 September. Numbers into October usually continued strong with 10's of birds still present at our mid October departures. I suspect plovers could be found through there much of October. The juvenile component would usually be in no hurry to move on. They would be found at many locations and habitats from the south beach, to the runway edges, to the upland heath, to disturbed soils and sparse vegetation in the central and western inland areas. Fall peaks were sometimes guite high; the biggest day count was 316 on 29 September of 2006. Other maximums were 208 on 19 September 2000, 181 on 30 September 2001, 139 on 13 October 2007 and 150 2 October 2010. Since Pacific Golden-Plovers are a species of concern pertaining to aircraft collisions, they were censused regularly. These counts enabled construction of a graph depicting the average daily fall counts in the survey years 2000-2007 (no fall visits 2003 and 2004). It is presented as Figure 9. Following the graph are photos depicting the various plumages of the ployers and some views of ployers in typical habitats.



Figure 9. Daily average counts of Pacific Golden-Plovers on Shemya Island, Alaska, in the fall seasons 2000-2002 and 2005-2007.



Lesser Sand-Plover (*Charadrius mongolus***).** Lesser Sand-Plovers (known in the past as Mongolian Plovers) migrate through the western Aleutians in spring (rare to uncommon) and fall (rare). Observations in the spring are usually from the second week of May to mid June. The fall season sees the species from the third week in August through mid

September. The numbers are generally small, singles or small groups up to seven. D. Sonneborn found a one-day count of 20 on Shemya on 31 May 1983. There have been two sightings in mid summer; one of a male on Attu in distraction display...indirect evidence of breeding (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson found the species in all springs and most fall visits. There were two flocks of five noted (19 May 1976 and 2 September 1978).

Lesser Sand-Plovers were seen in twelve out of 14 migration seasons of field work on Shemya 1999-2007. One spring (1999) and one fall (2001) did not find the species. Many of the seasons only one or two birds were found. Spring 2001 found at least four (perhaps 7). In spring 2002 the island hosted at least 11 birds including a one day total of eight (five on the south beach and three at the Lagoon). In the fall of 2006 at least five (perhaps seven) were found on Shemya. The fall birds all appeared to be juveniles. The migration window during our spring surveys was 12 May to 31 May. In the falls the species was found as early as 1 September and as late as 23 September. Photos of the species follow.



Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*). There are a total of seven records of Common Ringed Plover in the central and western Aleutians. Two of the records are from Shemya. D. Sonneborn found one 23-24 May 1982 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The second Shemya record was from the most recent series of seasonal visits. A female was found and collected on 19 May 1999. There are no photos from Shemya of the species.

Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*). Semipalmated Plover is an uncommon breeder in the eastern Aleutians and, more recently, a breeder in the central Aleutians at Adak. In the western Aleutians the species is casual in spring and fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). It was found once on Shemya in the '70s, a juvenile male on 7 September 1977 (Gibson 1981).

During our surveys on Shemya beginning in 1999 Semipalmated Plovers were found in six of the seasons, three springs and three falls. There was always uncertainty as to whether the birds were Semipalmated or Common Ringed Plovers (see above). For the most part I am quite confident that after 1999 (above) all of the birds were Semipalmated Plovers and the fall birds were all juveniles. Only single birds were found in five of the seven seasons. The spring of 2006 produced at least three individuals. Spring sightings: 19 May 2001, 29 May 2005 (found by R. Trotter) and two birds 23-24 May 2007 (first found by E. Clark) and a single 1-3 June 2007. Fall records: 16-17 September 2000, 14 September 2005 and 9 September 2007. Pictures of some of the birds are presented below.







Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius***).** A fairly common summer visitor to Southeast Asia and to the Russian Far East to the western shores of the Okhotsk Sea (Brazil, 2008). There are three records in the western Aleutians including one from Shemya by Sonneborn 18-19 May 1988 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not seen on the island 1999-2010.

Eurasian Dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus***).** Eurasian Dotterels are casual visitors in the western Aleutians in the fall. The first Aleutian record was from Shemya by Gibson on 17 September 1977 and the species was subsequently seen on five more occasions. These included discovery of two 5 September 1986 by D. Sonneborn on Shemya. Elsewhere in the western Aleutians records were from Attu (September 1983) and Buldir (September 1994) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found single birds on Shemya, the bird noted above and one 8 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

Eurasian Dotterels were found only once on Shemya during the 1999-2010 period. Two juvenile birds were beside the runway 24 August 2005 in drizzle and fog. Pictures follow.



Black Oystercatcher (*Haematopus bachmani*). Black oystercatcher is a fairly common resident in eastern and central Aleutians and is recovering nicely after removal of the Arctic Foxes. In the western Aleutians the species is casual in spring and summer on Buldir. However, in the Near Islands there have been only two sightings. The first bird was at Shemya (see below) and the second on Attu by D. Sonneborn (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The first Near Islands record was on Shemya on 24 May 1999 by Gibson (participating in the most recent seasonal surveys). The bird was observed in flight on that date and probably again on 4 June. Likely the same individual was seen twice during the summer 1999 survey. The bird flew west and low along the south beach on 8 July, and it was observed again on 10 July 1999 coming in over the sea from the north out from the east point, calling and quite high (~400 feet). No photos of this bird were obtained.

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus***).** Black-winged Stilts are accidental visitors in the outer Aleutians. There are but two records. The first was from Nizki Island (just west of Shemya) 24 May-3 June 1983. The second was at Shemya; two birds were found 1 June 2003 (not a survey year) with one continuing through 9 June (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Two photos were obtained by Catherine Berg and where provided courtesy of Alaska Maritime NWR.



Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cinereus***).** Terek Sandpiper is an Old World wader that is found mostly in the western Aleutians (just three records from rest of the chain). It is assessed as intermittent in the spring and casual in fall. In spring there are records of the species in 19 out of 28 years (1975-2002). The spring sightings are usually single birds, but there were exceptional single species flocks of 14 up to 21 (1980-Attu) reported. In the falls there were nine records in 30 years in the western Aleutians. All fall records are single birds except three on Buldir August 1996 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found one bird during his Shemya surveys, 24 May 1976 (Gibson 1981).

Our experience 1999-2010 found Terek Sandpipers in four of the fifteen migration seasons. There was one or perhaps two 25 August through 8 September 2000. A single found 29 May till 4 June 2002. One was seen 17-19 August 2005. And a remarkable group of five together was at Connie Lake and a single on the south beach on 30 May 2007; at least one was present till 1 June. Photos are below.



Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos***).** Common Sandpiper is another Eurasian wader that is found during the spring and fall migration seasons in the outer Aleutians. There have been two records of the species in the central and one in the eastern Aleutians. In the western Aleutians it is considered rare in spring and fall. Going back to 1975 there has been, on average, a record from some place in the western Aleutians every year (24 records/26 years). In the falls the species was noted in about one fall in three (11 records/31 years)...this may reflect an absence in many years of fall observers. This species too, is most often seen as single birds, but there are some observations of flocks. Most notable is a day count on Shemya of 34 (single flock of 15) by D. Sonneborn 29 May 1983. Also of interest is one record of confirmed breeding from Attu in late July 1983 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Common Sandpiper were annual visitors on Shemya in



the 1970s, spring and fall. Up to three were found spring 1976 and again in fall 1978 (Gibson 1981).

In the period 1999 through 2010 Common Sandpipers were less than annual. The species was found in four of seven springs (1999, 2001, 2002 and 2005) and three of six falls (2002, 2005 and 2007). Again, single birds were most commonly found in a season, but up to 10 were seen on 2 June 1999; four found 2001 and four scattered through the fall of 2007. The windows of migration were rather narrow and matched closely those found by Gibson in the 70s...spring: 16 May-3 Jun and fall 24 August-17 September. Common Sandpipers preferred the rocky intertidal habitats on the south shore, but a few were found on the north side and at the Lagoon. Photos of Common Sandpipers from the fall of 2007 are inserted above.

Green Sandpiper (Tringa ochropus). Found only in the western Aleutians and very casual with single Green Sandpipers found only eight times in spring and one in the fall. Two of the spring sightings were from Shemya (1983 (Gibson and Kessel) and 2004, see below) (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

There was one sighting of Green Sandpiper on Shemya in the 1999-2010 time period. A group of USFWS personnel found the bird in one of the south beach warehouse complexes and got less than good views of the very flightly bird on 2 June 2004. No photos were obtained.

Gray-tailed Tattler (*Tringa brevipes***).** Gray-tailed Tattler is a northeast Asia-breeding wader that winters in the tropics. In the western Aleutians they are intermittent in the spring but more frequently found in the fall...rating "uncommon" as they pass through in migration. In the springs they are sometimes found in a "window" of the last week of May to mid June. Returning adults can be found as early as late July into early August and then juvenile birds are found after late August and into October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970's Gibson found one in spring (1976) and one fall (1978). He pointed out the difficulty in differentiating between this species and Wandering Tattler (*tringa incana*) in juvenile plumage when a day count of 24 birds, 3 September 1978, yielded identification by species of only about 1/3 of the birds of the genus (Gibson 1981).

We found on Shemya in 1999-2010 a similar pattern. In three spring seasons there were no Gray-tailed Tattlers found (2000, 2001 and 2005). The other springs would normally find one to four birds (though spring 2007 produced eight). Each fall survey yielded multiple records of the species, as a first guess, if it is a fall tattler it would be a



Gray-tailed Tattler. Up to 25 were counted through the fall of 2007. In many cases we would try to get the birds to vocalize to assist us in identification. The birds would mostly be found in the rocks around the periphery of the island, but this species would also be found along the shores of the inland lakes. Photos of adults are above, and juveniles are below. Below left, September 2006, right, 15 September 2007.



Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*). Wandering Tattlers breed in northern Asia and north western North America. They are found throughout the Aleutians as uncommon passage migrants in the spring and fall going to and from breeding areas to wintering sites on islands in the central Pacific Ocean. In the spring they are found in the Aleutians from the second week of May to mid June, and in fall from July to October. The spring birds are usually singles or small groups up to four, but day counts of 10 to 20 have been noted. The fall migrants are most often singles, some small flocks noted (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya in the 1970s Gibson found the species each season in small numbers (but a day count of 14, 13 September 1977) (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Wandering Tattlers were found in most seasons that were surveyed (although none in spring 2006 and none in falls 2001 and 2002). In spring the species was found from 11 May to 3 June. In fall the birds were recorded 17 August to 30 August. The identification challenge of juvenile birds was also at work in the falls. There generally seemed to be more Wandering Tattlers compared to Gray-tailed Tattlers in spring than in fall; if it were spring the tattler would normally be Wandering. The Wandering Tattlers seemed to be found most always in the rocky areas along the shore (though two were at Jennifer Lake 21 August 2005). Photos of Shemya Wandering Tattlers are below. I also include below a photo of a wintering bird enjoying Palmyra Atoll (1,000 miles south of Hawaii) in November of 2001.







Spotted Redshank (Tringa erythropus). Spotted Redshank is a breeder in Eurasia. It is a casual species in fall in the western Aleutians. There are 17 records listed of the species, nine in fall and eight in spring, most were seen before the mid eighties (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found Spotted Redshanks on Shemva in two of his falls (1977 and 1978, four individuals). In addition to the migration season surveys in the 1970s on Shemya the USFWS undertook an intensive series of fall surveys in the western Aleutians 1974-1978.



They found the species in all of those years (Gibson 1981).

We saw the species only twice. There were two birds, juveniles, present in the



island's interior (Jeanne Lake) 26-27 September 2001. One of the birds had a deformed or injured left leg. A photo was obtained of one of the 2001 birds, and a digitized copy of a print is presented, above, right. The second sighting was in the spring, 18 May 2010. A single bird in full alternate plumage was seen at Penelope Lake in the morning; it was found again that evening in a small upland wetland. A photo of this 2010 bird is above left. The relatively small number of sightings in the past twenty years perhaps

suggests a population decline of the species in East Asia.

Greater Yellowlegs (Tringa melanoleuca). Note: A record by Gibson (12 May 1975) on Shemya is the only one of species for the island (there are five other fall records 1970-1987 in central and western Aleutians) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not found on Shemya 1999-2010.

Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*). Common Greenshank is another Eurasian wader that migrates through the (mostly) western Aleutians rarely in the spring and casually in the fall. In the spring it is found from mid May till the end of May and fall birds have been found mid July to late September (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's work in the seventies at Shemya found Common Greenshank each spring (one day count of 11 with a flock of 9, 25-28 May 1976) and once in the fall (Gibson 1981).

The seasonal surveys 1999-2010 on Shemya found Common Greenshank every spring through 2005 plus 2010 and one fall (2001). The surveys in 2006, 2007 and 2008 were notable for not finding the species. Spring 1999 surveys found two birds (20-21 and 24 May). Two were also seen spring of 2001 (16 May and 18 May). Spring of 2005 recorded five individuals scattered through the last two weeks of May (18, 19, 27 and 29 May). The 2010 bird was present 15-17 June 2010. Photos of Common Greenshank



Lesser Yellowlegs (Tringa flavipes). Lesser Yellowlegs is casual throughout the Aleutians in both spring and fall. Spring records dating back to 1972 number six. There are at least eleven fall records of the species in the entire island chain. It is pointed out that Lesser Yellowlegs found early in spring in the western Aleutians are likely birds that had wintered in Asia (Japan?) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not found on Shemya in the 1970s.

Lesser Yellowlegs were found four times on Shemya 1999-2010. Three records were early spring (Asian migrants), 29 April 2001 26 April 2005 and 27-30 April 2010. The 2001 bird was unusual in that the legs were bright orange (species confirmed by specimen). There were two fall records; juveniles stopped on the island 5-10 September 2001 and again 1 September 2002. Usable photos are available of the 1 September 2002 and 26 April 2005 birds.





Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatillis***).** Marsh Sandpiper breeds in eastern Europe eastward to Lake Baikal and is a rare passage migrant in northeast Asia (Simba, 2007). The species has been found seven times (all Alaska and all in fall) in North America. The initial find was in 1974 on Buldir. Up until 2010 the other records were from Adak (three records) and the Pribilofs (one bird). The early fall of 2010 brought two Marsh Sandpipers to Shemya, 28 August and 7 September. The 7 September bird was at the Lagoon and gave very good views. Two photos of this elegant wader are below.



Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*). Wood Sandpiper is a northern Eurasian breeder (as far east as the Commander Islands) with a rather interesting history in the Aleutians. The species was not recognized in the Aleutians until 1956. Its abundance is highly variable...rare to common in spring in the western and central Aleutians and intermittent in the fall. Additionally, there are a number of incidents of confirmed or presumed breeding in the island chain. In the slow years only one to three individuals will be found. But in "common" years, day counts of tens to hundreds are to be found. In mid May 1976 a remarkable wave of migrants invaded the Aleutians nearly simultaneously (where there were observers) as far east as the central Aleutians (about 150 on Shemya, 123 Alaid, 100 on Kiska, and 65 Adak). 1998 saw another surge of May migrants (with fewer observers in the chain); on 18 May a day count on Attu of more than 700 birds was remarkable. Breeding of Wood Sandpipers was first confirmed in the Aleutians in 1969. In the surge years mating songs were heard, courtship flights observed and copulation seen. In the summer seasons that followed, the species often was seen and they displayed distraction behavior, and there were chicks noted in at least three locations and years (the females are very secretive) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 70s Gibson found the species every spring that he visited Shemya (as many as 142 on 16 May 1976). He found one or two birds in the falls (Gibson 1981).

The seasonal visits 1999-2010 continued the pattern outlined above. Wood Sandpipers were found every visit. In the spring, birds were discovered as early as 9 May (2000). In the falls birds were recorded as early as 13 August (2007) and as late as 24 September (2000). Spring numbers were normally strong with total counts for the seasons in the low 10s. The spring of 2006 was a "surge" year with more than 100 coming onto the island on 16 May. Strong indirect evidence of breeding by the species was observed in one year (summer 1999); in two years, 2002 and 2006, birds present up

to our departure (some exhibiting courtship) strongly suggested breeding later in those summers.

The summer of 1999 was the summer I was on the island (26 June-27 July). Two Woods together were first found near the middle of the three old Birchwood hangers on 1 July. On 6 July my arrival in that area resulted in a noisy aerial distraction display by one

bird. After that, every time I visited the area the (male?) bird would fly in low with calls that continued after the bird landed on elevated structures. Once, as I arrived, I heard a low call from the wet grassy area; the male quickly arrived in distraction display. I walked through the suspected nesting area twice but did not flush a bird. No Wood Sandpipers were found after 22 July.

Some additional photos of Wood Sandpipers are below; they often presented themselves well for pictures.











Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*). Whimbrel found in the Aleutians breed in northeast Asia and winter from Taiwan to Australia and New Zealand. They are described as rare to uncommon in spring and fall in the western Aleutians. In spring they are found from mid May to mid June, and in fall from mid July to mid September. Birds found are usually singles, up to three in spring and singles up to eight in the falls (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya in the 1970s Gibson found the species in every visit, being more numerous in the falls. He had a day count of eleven individuals on 3 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya in the first decade of the 21st Century our experience with Whimbrels closely matched the assessment above. They were found in all of the falls and most of the springs (none spring 2001 and 2006). The fall visits would have more birds (often juveniles) than the springs. The fall of 2001 had up to 15, and the fall of 2006 recorded 10. The maximum spring season count was five in 2005. The other seasonal counts of



the species found one to three. All of the birds observed were of the *N. p. variegatus* (northeast Asia) subspecies; special efforts were usually taken to verify this. All of the spring birds would be found on the beaches, usually the south beach. In fall, in addition to the beaches, birds would be found inland on roads and in the grassy heath. The fall birds would feed on Crowberries (*Empetrum nigrum*). Photos of Whimbels, spring birds above, fall birds (likely juveniles) below, are presented.



Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis***).** Bristle-thighed Curlew breeds in northwestern Alaska and winters in the central Pacific. They normally overfly the Aleutians, but they will stop intermittently throughout the island chain. There are but thirteen spring records 1975-2004 of sightings of the species in the Aleutians (and a single mid summer record (2004, Adak)) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's Shemya field work in the 70s found the species once, a pair on the beach of Loon Cove 17 and 18 May 1975 (Gibson 1981).

From 1999 through 2010 four birds were seen in three years. A single individual was found on North Beach Bench 18 May 1999, and another was seen and heard flying in from the west on 21 May of that same year. Spring of 2000 saw a bird arrive at Scoot's Cove on 14 May and seen again at the Loon Cove Beach the next day. Bird four arrived 21 May 2001, landing in the heath just west of Headquarters Lake; it apparently did not stay long. There have been no



Shemya sightings since 2001. Some film photographs were taken and a digitally processed copy of the 14 May 2000 bird is shown, above right.

Far Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*). Far Eastern Curlew is a large shorebird that breeds in East Asia. It has been found intermittently in the western and central Aleutians in spring and summer (20 times in 34 years, 1972-2006). Three of the

records are from Shemya. D. Sonneborn found one 21-24 May 1987, and single birds were found in 2005 and again in 2006 (see below) (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Surveys in 1999-2007 found the species twice. On 30 May 2005 a bird was on the south beach. On 12 May 2006 one was on the near shore of the Lagoon. Note; perhaps a third bird was found by E. Clark (personal communication) on 23 May 2007 but was not substantiated or documented. Photos were obtained of both birds from 2005 and 2006 and are below.



Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*). Black-tailed Godwit is yet another shorebird species that breeds in the Russian Far East that finds itself from time-to-time in the Aleutians. Described as intermittent in spring in the western Aleutians the species has 18 records from 1976 to 2006. Most sightings were of single birds or pairs. The astounding spring of 1998 observed on Attu found 35 of the species (a flock of 24) on 22 May. Black-tailed Godwits might be found from the third week in May into early June. There are also less than a handful of records from the central Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson had one week (18-24) in May of 1976 when he saw the species (maximum of a pair) (Gibson 1981).

1999 to 2010 at Shemya had five records of Black-tailed Godwits. One was seen on 21, 22 and 24 May 1999 (same bird?). One was well seen in the margin of a small snow-melt pond on 27 May 2005 (photo below left). The third was observed arriving on the island at Penelope Lake the evening of 17 May 2006. There were two in 2010, 19 May at Penelope Lake (below right) and 26 May with Bar-tailed Godwits on the south beach.



Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*). Throughout the Aleutians Bar-tailed Godwits are rare to common in spring and casual in fall. In spring birds might be found from early May to early June. Singles or pairs are often observed, flocks are not uncommon. A flock of 200 was found on Amchitka Island was seen by Kenyon in 1969. The species has been observed to overfly the island chain heading north (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species every spring that he was present on Shemya in the 1970s, but none of the falls. He recorded a flock of 55 on 23 May 1976 (Gibson 1981). D. Sonneborn did find a single fall bird on Shemya 5 September 1986 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Recent work by Bob Gill of the USFWS has done much to gain understanding of Bar-tailed Godwit remarkable migration. Satellite radio GPS transmitters were implanted in wintering birds in New Zealand. The birds moved to the northern Yellow Sea to stage their migration. The next move was nonstop to the Alaska Peninsula, flying south of the Aleutian chain. The birds' breeding season was spent in western Alaska. The fall migration was from staging areas in the Alaska Peninsula non-stop, 11,000 miles back to New Zealand!

Our experience with Bar-tailed Godwits in 1999-2010 at Shemya found the species every spring but only one fall. Spring birds were found as early as 4 May (2005) and as late as 7 June (2007). The largest flock was 16 on the south beach on 15 May 2005; the largest season total was 47 birds in the spring of 2001. In the springs birds would be seen with plumage from winter to full breeding and everything in between. The one fall record was a juvenile bird 15-19 August 2005. Photos follow.





Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*). Ruddy Turnstones nest around the north polar arctic regions. They are found both spring and fall throughout the Aleutians. In the spring they are a passage migrant, but in fall they use the Aleutian Islands to stage their migration south. Hence, they are assessed as uncommon in spring and common in fall. Records indicate most birds in the spring move through from the second week of May through early June. The fall staging period is, as expected, quite protracted with birds found as early as the third week of July and most are gone by mid October. Spring numbers are singles to small flocks, but in fall some large flocks (100s) are noted (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya, Gibson found the species each season he was present, rarely in spring and commonly in fall. His day count maximum was 310 birds 2 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

We found on Shemya 1999-2010 very much as described above. Ruddy Turnstones were found each spring in relatively low numbers. Usually less than 15 birds would be recorded (but 40+ seen 20 May 1999). The earliest spring arrival was 12 May 2002, and the latest was 5 June 2007. The birds would not linger. Each fall a good number of Turnstones could be counted on, usually feeding on the south beach (though some were seen inland). Flocks of several 10s of birds were common and more than 100 were noted mid August 2007, and another count of 100 was on 21 September 2010. In the falls the first birds to arrive were adults, but by the last week of August to the first week of September juvenile birds were most common (with an occasional molting adult). I recorded a flock of 15 arriving on the island on 20 July 1999 and saw the last birds 14 October 2007. Once a good sized flock would arrive members (likely) could be found for several weeks with numbers dwindling away. Some photos of Ruddy Turnstones are below.





Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris***).** Great Knot is a casual species in the western Aleutians. There are three records of the species from that locale. One is from Shemya; Gibson found one on 24 and 27 May 1976 on the south beach. Great Knot was not found on Shemya 1999-2010 (Gibson and Byrd 2007), but one was observed and photographed by Bob Trotter on 24 May 2011, just after my 11 years of study. See photo page 164.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*). Red Knot is another very casual visitor in the Aleutians. In the springs since 1971 there are four records in the Aleutians (last one back in 1982). The falls have had only six records since 1970. There was one summer record at Adak, in 1972 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Four of the fall, Aleutian records are from Shemya. Gibson found the juveniles in the Septembers of 1977 and 1978 (Gibson 1981).

The third fall record from Shemya was from 17 August 2007. A juvenile bird was found on the south beach. The fourth fall record from Shemya was on 30 August 2010, a rather spectacular adult in mostly alternate plumage. The 2007 and 2010 birds were photographed; the bottom photos show the bird with a Ruff and Ruddy Turnstones.



Sanderling (*Calidris alba*). Sanderling are unusual for shorebirds in the Aleutians in that they overwinter, some places in large numbers. There has not been enough information gathered to define a through migration by the species. They can be found throughout the Aleutians from the fourth week of August into May (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found one 30 April 1977 and at least one 8 September 1977 on Shemya (Gibson 1981). The USFWS winter Shemya surveys of the 1990s found Sanderlings in six of 12 winters. There were as many as 10 found in March of 1993 but usually only 4-5 individuals would be found (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

In the field work on Shemya 1999-2010 Sanderlings were found five of the nine springs and all seven of the falls for which data are available. Only one individual was found in three of the springs (1999, 2000 and 2005); up to 11 were noted in the spring of 2001 between 26 April and 14 May. In the fall visits as few as one (17 September 2006) to as many as 24 (2007) were recorded. Sanderlings were found in spring as late as 29 May (2005) and were found in fall as early as 16 August (2007). The greatest flock size seen was 16 juveniles together on the south beach on 9 September (2007). Photos of Sanderlings are below.



Semipalmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*). Note: Semipalmated Sandpipers are casual in the western Aleutians...two spring records and three fall records since 1977 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). One of the fall records (4 September 1977) was by Gibson at Shemya (Gibson 1981). The species was not identified on Shemya after that date.

Western Sandpiper (*Calidris mauri***).** Western Sandpiper is an infrequent visitor in the Aleutians. In the fall it is intermittent; there were seven records from 1972 up to the end of the 20th Century. It is a casual species in spring with seven additional records from 1972 to the present (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s two birds were discovered on Shemya in September of 1977 (Gibson 1981).

Beginning in 1999, Western Sandpipers were found in five of the fall visits (2000, 2002, 2005, 2007 and 2010). In those falls when the species was recorded there were multiple sightings, two to six individuals per season. The earliest one found was 18 August (2005). The latest was found 19 September (2 birds, 2007). There was just one Western Sandpiper found in all of our spring visits; it was in standing water northeast of Hanger 8 on 16 May 2008. Photos follow of several of our Western Sandpipers.



Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*). Red-necked Stint breed around the Arctic portions of the Bering Sea, including Alaska. In the western Aleutians the species is intermittent in both spring and fall. In springs they can be looked for from the third week of May to the first week in June. In falls they might be found from the third week of August to the second week of September (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Red-necked Stints were found every season that Gibson was on Shemya in the 1970s. Numbers were low...no more than two at once (Gibson 1981).

In the period 1999-2010 Red-necked Stint was found every one of the fall surveys and during two of the spring surveys (2002 and 2006). Seasonal numbers were characteristically small, one or two, but five individuals were present in the fall of 2007

and up to ten were observed the fall of 2000. The spring of 2002 experienced a remarkable flight of about 50 individuals that arrived 28 May on the shore of Upper Lake. Birds from this flock continued to be found until 4 June. Fall birds were found as early as 16 August (2005) and as late as 19 September (2007). Photos of the species follow. Additional documentation of this species is in the form of collected specimens at the University of Alaska Museum (UAM).



Little Stint (*Calidris minuta***).** Little Stint is a casual species in fall in the western Aleutians and even less common in the spring. From 1975 to the end of the 20th Century there are six records from the falls and three spring records (first in 1983) (includes a record from Shemya) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's work in the 1970s did not find the species. It should be noted that Little Stint is very similar in appearance to Rednecked Stint and may not be easily separated in the field.

In the period 1999 to 2010 Little Stint was positively identified on Shemya once. On 9 September 2002 two similar small shorebirds were at Upper Lake. There were subtle differences and one was slightly smaller than the other. The two birds were collected and subsequent preparation showed the smaller to be a Little Stint (UAM). There is a second possible record of the species. On 4 June 2007 a very diminutive shorebird was found in the evening at Upper Lake. Tentative identification of Little Stint was based upon the streaking on the breast that went completely across the breast. The bird was still in worn winter plumage (likely a subadult) which seemed unusual. The bird allowed brief observation and pictures (below) before flying off.



Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii***).** Temminck's Stint is a breeder in northern Eurasia and, in spring, intermittent visitor to the western Aleutians, and, in fall, casual in the western Aleutians. Spring birds arrive in a narrow window, 3rd week of May to the 1st week of June (based on 13 records in thirty years). There were four records in fall in the western Aleutians prior to 1999. (There are also five records from the central Aleutians) On Attu, the 17 May 1998 day count was 35 birds. D. Sonneborn found one on Shemya 23 May 1987 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Also, on Shemya, Gibson recorded a spring record (22 May 1976) and a fall record (4 September 1977) (Gibson 1981).

Temminck's Stints were found four times on Shemya 1999-2010, once in spring and three times in fall. Our first was on 30 May 2002 in a small wetland in the "Valley of Death", a female. One juvenile was found near the south beach outflow of Lower Lake on 10 September 2006 and seen again 13 September. A second bird was at Penelope Lake on 1 October 2006. The final bird was on the south beach in rotting kelp on 19 August 2007. Our experience suggests that this species may be more common in the fall than noted above (lack of observers in the fall may play a role). Photos of Temminck's Stints are below.





Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta***).** Long-toed Stints are another Asian breeder that find their way to the Aleutian Islands. In the western Aleutians the species is rare to fairly common in spring and intermittent in the fall. In the spring they are found from the 2nd week of May to early June. Fall birds are mostly found from the 1st week of August through early September. The birds are usually found as singles but up to 10. The fallout on Attu 19 May 1998 found 110+ Long-toed Stints (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found the species every spring and most falls on Shemya. This included a day total of more than 40 on 16 May 1976 (Gibson 1981).

1999 through 2010 found Long-toed Stint six of nine springs (none 2000, 2007 and 2008) and six of seven falls (none 2002). Most season totals were one or two birds, but some springs found good numbers (1999-8, 2002-41+ and 2006-7). On 28 May 2002, 28 birds were flushed from Yellowlegs Marsh and at least 12 more were found elsewhere on the island. Most Long-toed Stints were found in interior wetlands or pond/lake edges, but some were found on the south beach. Some photos of the species follow.





Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii***).** Baird's Sandpipers are generally found as breeders in Arctic North America, and some breed in northeast Asia. They are an intermittent visitor in the Aleutians, mainly in autumn where all records (only nine since 1970) are juveniles. There are two records in the spring, both in the western Aleutians. Several of the records are from Shemya. D. Sonneborn found two birds on 25 September 1984 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). And Gibson found one in spring (16 May 1977) and several in the fall of 1978 (Gibson 1981).

Baird's Sandpiper was recorded twice in the period 1999-2010. One bird was on the south beach on 25 August 2005. Another juvenile was found on south beach near the Lower Lake outflow on 17 September 2006. Photos are below.



Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos***).** This shorebird nests across Arctic North America and northeast Asia. In the Aleutians they are rare to common fall migrants, but only casual to intermittent spring visitors. In the fall, Pectoral Sandpipers can be found from the last week of August into mid October. The birds are usually seen as ones or small numbers, but sometimes large numbers are found (day counts of 50 (Shemya, 20 September 1984, D. Sonneborn), 63, 200 and 466 (Attu, September 2000). Spring records on Shemya are few. D. Sonneborn found one 30 May 1983 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson also found one in the spring (23-26 May 1976) and he found the species every fall (maximum count was 16 on 20 September 1978).

In the period 1999 through 2010 on Shemya **NO** Pectoral Sandpipers were found during spring visits. They were, however, found each fall. The earliest was found 25 August (two birds 2002) and the latest was 13 October (2006). There were always good numbers found each fall. Fall season totals varied from eight (2005) to about 56 (2000). Flocks of 5 to 15 were regularly found. As best as I was able to tell all of the birds were juveniles. Some photos of Pectoral Sandpipers are presented below.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*). Sharp-tailed Sandpipers breed in the Russian Far East. Throughout the Aleutians they are fairly common in the fall, but they are only casual in the western Aleutians in spring. The window of migration in the fall opens quite late (third week of August) and is rather long, closing in the first week of November. The birds were found singly or in small flocks (Gibson and Byrd 2008). In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson found the species only in the falls. He recorded a day count of 45, 9 October 1979 (Gibson 1981).

Our field work on Shemya also found Sharp-tailed Sandpipers every fall and never in the spring. Every bird was a juvenile except for one adult found at Penelope Lake 22 August 2007, quite unusual, and was the earliest the species was found. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers would often be found (in small numbers) through our mid October departures. Seasonal numbers moving through the island were normally good (6 (2002) to 23 (2001)) and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers could be counted on to be seen every fall. Day counts were normally one to three and the birds apparently moved through rapidly or

were quite mobile on the island. The highest day count was 15 on 5 October 2005. Photos of some of the birds are below.



Rock Sandpiper (*Calidris ptilocnemis***).** Rock Sandpipers are breeding birds all around the Bering Sea area. The technical literature divides the species into four subspecies: *C. p. ptilocnemis*: Breeding on the Pribilofs and St. Matthew Island, migrants in the extreme eastern Aleutians.

C. p. couesi: Common to uncommon residents and breeders throughout the Aleutian Islands. These are the birds found at Shemya.

C. p. quarta: Breeding birds of the Russian far eastern islands, Commanders and Kuriles. Some casual migrants might be found in the western Aleutians in the spring.

C. p. tschuktschorum: Breeders around the northern Bering Sea—Chukotski Peninsula, St. Lawrence Island and Seward Peninsula. This subspecies migrates through the extreme eastern Aleutians.

The Aleutian Island birds (*C. p. couesi*) are apparently sedentary on their home islands. They seek roosting and feeding locations along the rocky shorelines in the nonbreeding season. They move inland to breeding territories in the spring and early summer. There is no knowledge of interisland movement. Interestingly, Rock Sandpipers are not recorded on Buldir Island. (all of above from Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species in small numbers in spring in the 1970s, and perhaps observed a *C. p. quarta* on 22 May 1976 (Gibson 1981). Not surprisingly, Rock Sandpipers were found during the USFWS winter survey of the 1990s. The report expressed some frustration in not being able to obtain consistent counts of the species; which was attributed to the bird's high degree of mobility and invisibility in their rocky habitat. They reported large flocks of more than 100 birds (at other times, no birds) with peak counts in excess of 200 individuals (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Our seasonal surveys 1999-2010 found the species every visit. In spring we would arrive about the end of the second week in April. Rock Sandpipers would be found in transition between flocks along the south beach rocks and courting individuals in inland habitats. The "transitioning" would be flocks just inland from the beach, e.g., a flock of 20 near Kay Lake 13 April 2002. The birds would next be found calling/singing and displaying inland 25-28 April. Vigorous courtship would be observed into the first week of May. Individuals and "songs" would be seen/heard inland into June. The one summer survey period 26 June-27 July 1999 found Rock Sandpipers inland upon arrival and distraction display on 30 June. A partially feathered young bird was observed on 5 July. Birds were flocked back together at the pier rip-rap and south beach on 21 July. In the fall visits flocks of Rock Sandpipers would be found upon arrival. Sometimes the flocks would be in the pier rip-rap, the south beach, disturbed soils near the south end of old Runway B or in thin grasses on the west end of the island. Rock Sandpipers were not found in consistent numbers during our formal fall beach surveys (none were found on the spring beach surveys). Peak counts were 56 in fall 2005, 30 in fall 2006 and 58 on 19 August 2007. R. Trotter found 193 birds in the pier rip-rap on 5 August 2007 (personal communication).

The natural history of the Rock Sandpipers on Shemya Island still has some unknowns and perhaps inconsistencies. There are times when it appears there are no birds on the island. There are times in the fall when birds are not accounted for. Questions such as, where do the nonbreeders go during the spring? Or is there movement between Shemya and nearby islands? What seems to be sure is the species breeds in the grassy areas in the interior from about 25 April till mid to late July; though numbers seem to be lower than what might be expected from non breeding counts. Additionally, in late summer through early spring the birds are quite gregarious and are found in rocky habitats on the south and west intertidal areas...the pier rip-rap is a consistent roosting site. Photos of Rock Sandpipers are presented below; included is a remarkable shot by R. Trotter of birds (193) on the pier rip-rap.







Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*). Dunlins of the *C. a. sakhalina* subspecies nest in the northeastern Russian Far East. This is the subspecies identified to be found in the western Aleutians rarely to uncommonly in the spring. In the field it is possible to distinguish Dunlin to subspecies only in alternate plumage (spring). In the fall Dunlins are found rarely in the western Aleutians (subspecies unknown). In spring the species is found from the second week of May to the second week of June. Fall birds might be found from the third week of August all the way into November (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Dunlin were annual in both spring and fall during the field work in the 1970s on Shemya. A day count of 14 was recorded on 9 May 1976; nine were found 11 Oct 1978 (Gibson 1981).

At Shemya in the period 1999-2010 Dunlin were found all spring surveys except two (2000 and 2007). They were recorded in all seven falls. Overall, our experience suggested the species was more numerous in the falls, though not by much. The earliest Dunlin was found on 16 May (2001 and again 2005). The latest spring bird was one on 3 June 2002. The fall window was from 28 August (2001). Dunlin were still showing up in the falls as we departed; latest records were five birds 19 October 2005 and 15 individuals on 18 October 2006. The birds in both spring and fall would normally arrive as singles or twos, some flocks were recorded. A remarkable day count of about 50 was logged on 20 May 1999, and 15 were noted on 18 October 2006. In the fall both adults and juveniles were noted. Dunlin might be found in a large variety of habitats, from the

south beach, the Lagoon, wet areas and along the runway in the sparse grasses (particularly in late fall). Photos of Dunlin follow.



Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*). Curlew Sandpiper is a breeding bird in northern Siberia; its breeding range does not normally extend further east than about 160° east longitude (Shimba 2007). It has been known to nest in northern Alaska (Point Barrow). It is a casual visitor in the western Aleutians in the spring. There are five spring records 1982-2004. Two are from Shemya by D. Sonneborn, 1 June 1983 and one in the period 1999-2007...19 May 2004 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Curlew Sandpiper was seen once in the fall in the western Aleutians and that was on Shemya, 11 September 1977 (Gibson 1981). We did not see the species in our spring and fall surveys 1999-2010. There are no photos of the Shemya birds.

Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*). Broad-billed Sandpiper breeds in northern Siberia and the northern Russian Far East. It is a casual visitor to the western and central Aleutians in the fall. There are only six records of the species in the chain from 15 August – 6 September in the period 1977-2005. Four of the records are from Shemya including one by D. Sonneborn on 3 September 1986 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Gibson had another of the Shemya records when he found at least five 30 August-6 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

I found Broad-billed Sandpiper twice in the seven falls I conducted surveys on Shemya. Both were juveniles (as likely all of the records were). The first was on the shore of the Lagoon 8 September 2000. Bird two was found 15-16 August 2005 on the south beach near the outflow of the small stream that flows under the runway at about mid field. It was with Ruddy Turnstones and was collected the second day. Photos of the 2000 bird (left) and of the 2005 specimen are presented below.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis***).** Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a casual fall migrant in the western Aleutians. This certainly illustrates interesting post breeding dispersal since the species breeds in the central North American Arctic and generally migrates south through central North America. From the 1970s to the start of the 21st Century there are eight sightings recorded, generally in the first three weeks of September (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species on Shemya in the falls of 1977 and 1978 and speculated Buff-breasted Sandpipers may be found annually in fall (Gibson 1981).

We found Buff-breasted Sandpipers in four of seven falls, 2000, 2006, 2007 and 2010. In 2006 there were two birds found (both on the south beach, 16 and 18 September). The 2000 bird was also on the south beach (16 September), and the 2007 bird was along the runway (2 September). 2010 found a single bird in the two burned warehouse complex on 5 September. All of these Shemya birds were juveniles (as are likely all individuals found in the western Aleutians). Photos of Buff-breasted Sandpipers are shown below; they certainly illustrate the advances in photography from 2000 (birds on right) to 2006.



Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax***).** Ruff nest throughout northern Eurasia. In the western Aleutians they are a rare, but annual, migrant in fall and intermittent in spring. All of the fall birds have been juveniles. A good number of records establish the migration window in the fall to be from the 3^{rd} week in August to October, and in spring from the 2^{nd} week in May to early June (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s juvenile Ruff were found every fall on Shemya, and males were seen twice, 1 May 1977 and 14 May 1975 (Gibson 1981).

Ruff at Shemya, since the last of the 20th Century have followed the pattern described above. The species was seen in only two springs. There were two together (a female and a possible immature male) at the engineered wetland 23 May 2005, and two black-maned males in 2006 (17 May and 31 May). In the falls at least one juvenile Ruff was found every year we were present. Several of the fall seasons could be considered "big" years (2000—birds seen almost daily from 24 August to 24 September, 2006—earliest, 20 August and birds found frequently from 27 August to 19 September (season count of 13 individuals), 2007—first found 11 August and five present 16-21 August and one large (male?) juvenile 6 September, and 2010 with a total of eight birds from 31 August through 17 Sepember). Our experience found Ruff to be annual in fall in a period beginning 11 August (2007) and 27 September (2005). Ruffs were found in a variety of habitats, the south beach, margins of lakes and small wetlands and the Lagoon. Photos of some of the birds are presented below.





Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*). Long-billed Dowitchers nest in the northeast Russian Far East, east across northern Alaska to northwestern Canada. They are assessed to be rare in the western Aleutians in the fall and casual in spring (just three records). In the autumns the species can be expected from late August to late September. As many as 15 dowitchers were found in September of 2004 on Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson recorded the first Long-billed Dowitcher Aleutian record on Shemya, 4 September 1978. The species was not seen in any of his other falls (Gibson 1981).

Long-billed Dowitchers were found in all seven falls that we surveyed, but none were seen in the springs. The fall counts were fairly strong. They were as few as four in 2007 and as many as 17 in 2000. This included an eleven-bird flock, 16 September 2000, but, in general, ones to threes were the rule. Our earliest bird was found on 29 August (2006) and the latest was on 10 October (2005). For the most part Long-billed Dowitchers were found in the middle of the island in a relatively small area...North Twin Pond-Shank Pond-Penelope Lake. Our records show only nine were found at western lakes (out of 68). Our experience suggests that the species may have become more frequent in the falls in the western Aleutians (or the sampling that our surveys represented, significantly increased the sample size). Photos of Long-billed Dowitchers follow.



Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). Common Snipe breed across Eurasia as far east as the Commander Islands. In the western Aleutians they are rare to fairly common in spring, and rare to uncommon in fall. They are perhaps casual breeders, as some winnowing flights were observed in spring, a failed nest was found on Attu and some birds were found in mid summer. During the spring birding tours on Attu (many feet on the ground) day counts of 20+ were common, up to 50 were recorded 16-19 May 1998. The spring observations generally fell from the first week of May through early June. In the fall the records were from first week of August into October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya in the 1970s Common Snipe were found every season visited. Up to 20 were found on 15 May 1975 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya Common Snipe was found every spring and fall 1999-2010 that surveys were performed accept for the springs of 2000 and 2010. Multiple birds were usually found in all the seasons. They were found as singles and were often in deep grasses, usually near water and they generally had to be flushed by walking or at times flushed by the vehicle. Spring and fall season counts were two to seven and there seemed to be no seasonal preference. The bird's ability to stay well hidden suggests that more were likely present but not found. Our spring records found snipe from 14 May (1999 and 2001) to 28 May (2002). Fall records are between 20 August (2006) and 13 October (2000). In the mid winter of 2000 Gibson performed some surveys on the island; Common Snipe were flushed from sheltered, spring-fed creeks near the west end of the runway...30 January and 2 March (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Courtship or breeding activity was not observed except for a single courtship flight on 2 June 1999. Common Snipe are a difficult photo target, two pictures are below.



Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*). Red-necked Phalaropes in the western Aleutians are assessed as uncommon to rare in spring and fall. They are more common in the central and eastern parts of the chain. The species breeds in the eastern and central Aleutians and may breed rarely on western islands; nesting is/was heavily impacted by introduced foxes. It is also assessed to be a long term declining species (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found Red-necked Phalaropes on Shemya in every fall visit in the 1970s. This included a day count of eight, 2 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Red-necked Phalarope was found in six of seven falls (not 2006) and one spring (2005). Seasonal numbers were one to three birds; the exception being the fall of 2007, when seven individuals were recorded. These phalaropes would be found on Penelope Lake or foraging among south beach intertidal rocks. The exception to this rule was the spring 2005 bird (a female on 27 May) that was on a small wetland just west of Upper Lake. Photos of Red-necked Phalaropes are below; the poor quality photo of the spring bird is included as documentation of a very uncommon event.






Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*). Red Phalarope is a rare to abundant migrant species through the Aleutians that is usually found in flocks at sea and passes between islands throughout the chain. As many as 8000+ were found 24 May 1972 in Akutan Pass. Storms or fog will sometimes bring small numbers inshore or inland (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s there was a single spring sighting of a female in Alcan Harbor, 21 May 1976, and the species was commonly found off shore every fall (Gibson 1981).

The 1999-2010 field work found Red Phalarope in five of seven fall survey periods, none in the springs. The fall records are of (usually) single individuals (perhaps tired, ill or injured) on shore at lakes or on the south beach and one in Alcan Harbor (season counts of several birds, five (2000)). One was found the early morning of 15 October 2002, dead, in front of Hanger 8 after apparently colliding with the structure at night. In the falls of 2006 and again the fall of 2010 large flocks were observed well off shore from the east point; flocks in 2006 of 400+ birds were noted on 19 and 29 August. And hundreds, perhaps thousands 30 August 2010. The flocks were harassed by Parasitic Jaegers (2006) and Peregrine Falcons (2010). Several photos of Red Phalaropes.



Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*). Black-legged Kittiwakes nest from northeastern Russia across the Bering Sea area and into southeastern Alaska. In the Aleutians they are an abundant or common breeder. In the western Aleutians there is a large breeding colony at Buldir and a smaller colony at Agattu Island and some breeders on Attu and Alaid. In the winter the species becomes pelagic. Juvenile birds fledge in late July to mid August (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The Shemya winter surveys recorded some Black-legged Kittiwakes in the late falls in three years, but did not find the species in mid-winter (Byrd and Scharf 2003). In the 1970s they were found uncommonly in spring and seen commonly in falls (Gibson 1981).

Black-legged Kittiwakes were observed in small numbers in each spring of the period of surveys on Shemya 1999-2010. Often a single bird would be found on the island, and intermittently individuals or small groups would be seen off-shore. The single birds on the island were, I suspect, sick or injured individuals, see especially the photo below. The Species was seen frequently in the falls. In the falls small flocks of kittiwakes would usually be seen in the last half of August; the flocks would often have several fledglings. Then through the rest of the fall visits good numbers would be found off-shore, usually the north and west sides of the island. This was especially the case when the seas were high. The summer survey of 1999 found a loafing flock of 153 birds on the rocks of Shemya's west end on 17 July (nonbreeders?). Some photos of Black-legged Kittiwakes are shown below.



Red-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa brevirostris***).** Red-legged Kittiwake is a gull species of the Bering Sea. More than 80 percent nest in the Pribilof Islands and less than 20 percent nest in the Aleutians. There is a 9000-bird colony on Buldir (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The species was not found at Shemya during the winter surveys (Byrd and Scharf 2003). Gibson found one injured adult bird (3 May 1976) during his Shemya surveys (Gibson 1981).

Red-legged Kittiwake was recorded on Shemya only once 1999-2010. A single individual was found at the surf line of the south beach on 21 September 2001, photo right.



Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*). Black-headed Gulls breed across Eurasia as far east as the shores of Kamchatka. In the western and central Aleutians they are rare in spring, intermittent in summer and casual in fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found the species on Shemya every spring visit from 10 May (1975) to 1 June (1977) and recorded as many as eight adults on 17 May 1976 (Gibson 1981).

Black-headed Gulls at Shemya 1999-2010 were found during most visits. Birds were not found in four visits, two springs (2002 and 2008) and two falls (2001 and 2002). Appearance of the birds seemed to be quite sporadic, although there was some relation to storms. The earliest spring gull was 16 April (2005), latest 13 June (2005). Fall birds were recorded from 9 September (2007) to 16 October (2005). On average the spring seasons found three individuals, and falls found an average of two. As many as seven birds visited in two seasons, spring 2005 and fall 2005. All age classes were found with no particular preference as to season. Black-headed Gulls offered spectacular photo opportunities, and a wide range of plumages and seasons is represented below.





Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea***).** Ross's Gull breeds in northern-northeastern Arctic Russia, disperses eastward in fall and then winters in the western Bering Sea. Our surveys on Shemya 1999-2010 did not record the species. However, contractors did photograph a "pink" gull on a road on the island in October 2000 and brought the sighting to the attention of a USFWS technician. The bird was a Ross's Gull (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The photo was not available.

Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*). Black-tailed Gull is a bird of coastal East Asia, normally found from China, Korea, Japan to the Kurile Islands. From 1980-2000 there were only five records of the species from the central and western Aleutians, including two at sea...a very casual visitor (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Our work on Shemya found the bird during three springs, 2001, 2007 and 2008. In 2001 a very tired adult was found on north beach rocks on 25 April. It was observed flying above the same cove on 27 April. On 1 June of that year another (the same?) was on the sand of the south beach. 2007 found two more birds on Shemya. An adult was found 22 April on the beach below the east approach to the runway. It was collected and is the first Aleutian specimen. On 17 June (after our departure) R. Trotter (personal communication) found and photographed a small immature gull identified as a Black-tailed. Incidentally, an immature Black-tailed Gull had been found on Attu in the last two weeks of May (D. Sonneborn, personal communication). An adult was seen several times in 2008, 15, 22, and 24 May.Photos of these birds are below.





Mew Gull (Larus canus). The "Kamchatka" Mew Gull (*L. c. kamtschatschensis*) breeds in the Russian Far East. It is a rare spring and casual fall visitor in the western Aleutians. Of the five <u>fall</u> records in the 20th Century, two are from Shemya, 2 September 1986 (D. Sonneborn) and 29-30 November 1996 (J. Fischer) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found Kamchatka Mew Gulls in small numbers every spring survey in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

At the beginning of the 21st Century (1999-2010) on Shemya, Mew Gulls were not annual in the springs. They were found in each spring 1999-2001 but not thereafter. The spring birds occurred in a very small "window", 13 through 18 May and a single on 14 June 2010. The species was found in four falls, 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2010. The spring birds (six individuals) were adults (one subadult in 2010). In the falls four of the birds were hatch-year individuals, the others were adults. The fall birds were found from 29 August (2001) through 12 October (2001).







Herring Gull (Larus argentatus). Herring Gulls are widespread in the new and old worlds, but the subspecies *L. a. vegae* breeding in the northern Russian Far East, is only rare in spring in the western Aleutians and is intermittent or casual in the fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species each spring he was at Shemya in the 1970s and once in the fall (20 September-2 October 1978 (Gibson 1981).

Vegae Herring Gulls were found in both spring and fall nearly every season we visited 1999-2010 (none found spring 2002 or the abbreviated visits of 2008). One to three individuals would be found in each spring and fall. Very often when an individual arrived it would continue on the island for extended periods, complicating the accounting. A remarkable 10 Herring Gulls were found 21 May 1999, mostly as pairs. That record was not equaled in our experience through 2010. There were eleven individual birds scattered through the fall of 2005, and six (day count of four 19 April) found in the spring of 2006. Most birds that were found were adults, but several juvenile birds were represented in the falls. R. Trotter (personal communication) did find an adult Herring Gull 29 January 2007. Several photos of the species are presented below.



Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus). In the Old World Lesser Black-backed Gull nest as far east as central Arctic Russia. The easternmost subspecies is *L. f. heuglini* (whose taxonomic position is not yet clear, but is considered by some authorities to be a separate species, Heuglin's Gull, *L. heuglini*). This population is a long distance migrant between Arctic Russia and Africa (Mullarney, et.al. 2004). In all of North America there is only one documented record and it was a bird of this subspecies found and collected at Shemya 15 September 2005 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The large, white-headed (alternate plumaged) gull was distinguished as unusual by having bright yellow legs. It was found foraging in a moist area (site of two burned warehouses) in the southwest portion of the island early in the morning. A hurried, poor quality photo was taken of the adult female before the bird was collected. Photos are below.



Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*). Slaty-backed Gull is a gull of East Asia. In the western Aleutians it is a rare spring visitor. Birds are almost always single individuals found from the later part of April to mid June. The species has been found casually in the summer, and there are hints of nesting and hybridization. In the fall Slaty-backed Gulls are also quite casual with very few western Aleutian records (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species on Shemya in only one spring, at least 12 birds were found in 1977 (Gibson 1981).

Slaty-backed Gulls were regular visitors during the field seasons on Shemya 1999-2010. The species was absent only in the spring of 2002 and the fall of 2002. In the springs the gulls were more numerous than in the falls. Springs averaged three individuals and the falls normally found only one. More than five were found in the spring of 1999 and seven were recorded in the spring of 2007. Noteworthy was an adult Slaty-backed Gull photographed by R. Trotter (personal communication) on 10 April and had (likely) been seen a month earlier. Also a single adult was recorded off and on during the summer (26 June-27 July) 1999. A late bird was found on 18 October 2006. In the spring of 2010 three individuals were found including one whose somewhat light gray back suggests a hybrid. Photos of Slaty-backed Gulls are presented below ordered by age, adults, 3rd year, a second year, an immature and a juvenile.



Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens***).** Glaucous-winged Gulls are widespread throughout the Bering Sea area and found in good numbers down the Pacific Coast of North America as far as northwest Oregon. In the Aleutians they are a common resident and breeder. Their breeding has been strongly impacted by the presence of Arctic Foxes. When foxes are removed from an island the species is one of the first to recolonize. The numbers have remained mostly steady in the eastern and central Aleutians, but there is an apparent decline noted in the western Aleutians (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson noted the species as a resident breeder during the visits (Gibson 1981). The winter surveys on Shemya found counts above 500 at the beginning of the study period, 1988. By the end of the study period, 2001, the counts were down to about or less than 200 gulls (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

On Shemya in the period 1999-2010 Glaucous-winged Gulls where one of the most common bird species found on the island. They would be found year around loafing and feeding around the periphery of the island in all seasons, but significantly more numerous in late summers. The late summer also brings significant numbers to interior locations where they loaf on flat open areas like the old runway, runway tarmac and the north shore of Upper Lake. The day-to-day numbers using the island were variable and dependent to some extend on weather conditions. High seas would at times push gulls into the intertidal zone; other storms would drive the birds from the intertidal rocks and out to sea. Rain storms in the milder months would force earthworms to the surface where the gulls would come onto the island to feed on them on roads and old runways. Glaucous-winged Gulls were always found in the off-shore waters of the Bering Sea and North Pacific.

Beach Surveys were conducted nearly weekly during the seasonal visits. These surveys are summarized in Figure 10. This graph shows how the presence of gulls around the periphery of Shemya increases from low numbers in the winter to a maximum in the late summer. The figure also shows an apparent decline in gull use of the island from 1999 to 2010. The figure presents monthly average bars of Glaucous-winged Gulls from two periods, 1999-2002 (red), 2005-2008 (blue) and 2010 (yellow). Each monthly average bar generally shows a decline from the previous period.



Figure 10. Monthly averages of Glaucous-winged Gulls obtained from Beach Surveys in the periods 1999-2002, 2005-2008 and 2010.

Glaucous-winged Gulls did not nest on Shemya Island. They did nest on offshore rocks off the island's north beach in small numbers, usually only about five nesting birds were detected at the conclusion of the spring seasons. Telescope views of the small islands in Shemya pass revealed that they nested on the grassy top of Hammerhead Rock. Arctic Fox doubtlessly played a major role in keeping the gulls from nesting on the island. After Glaucous-wing Gull chicks fledged in the local area they could be found on the island, beaches and interior, often begging for food. Our fall surveys obtained a ratio of young-of-the-year birds to adults. The results were highly variable, perhaps reflecting the variability of reproductive success. The table below presents age ratios of gulls found in the early fall on the shores of Shemya.Island in the seven years we conducted fall surveys.

Age Ratios (Juvenile/Total number of birds) of Glaucous-winged Gulls

Year	2000	2001	2002	2005	2006	2007	2010
Age Ratio	15.0	3.5	46.0	15.3	22.4	2.1	27.4
(percent)							

In December of 2004 a Sperm Whale carcass washed up on the south beach. For the next year Glaucous-winged Gulls fed heavily on the decaying whale...20-30 birds at a time. During the "whale period" gulls found on the lakes increased as they would use the lakes to clean up after feeding on the oily carcass. Several photos of Glaucous-winged Gulls are shown below.





Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). Glaucous Gulls in the Aleutians are described as rare or uncommon in fall, winter and spring. For the most part the birds are pre-breeding age, though full adults have occurred as well and in almost any season (Gibson and Byrd 2007). During the period of winter surveys USFWS observers recorded the species in five of the twelve years (Byrd and Scharf 2003). Gibson observed Glaucous Gulls every spring and on 30 April 1976 observed more than 15 individuals (Gibson 1981).

During the surveys 1999-2010 Glaucous Gulls were found somewhat intermittently and not every season. None were recorded in the spring and fall of 2000, the spring and fall of 2002, the fall of 2007 and the fall of 2010. Usually one sub-adult would be seen several times during a visit. One immature bird was seen in the last week of June 1999 during that single summer survey with data. In the spring of 2005 at least three birds were seen 15-18 April, perhaps attracted by the Sperm Whale carcass on the south beach (see Glaucous-winged Gull account above). The spring of 2007 found at least one adult, an immature, a 3rd year bird and, on 7 June, an apparently ill immature individual. Three Glaucous Gulls, two subadults and our second adult of the century were found during the abbreviated surveys in the spring of 2008. Perhaps as many as five subadults were seen in the spring of 2010. Several photos of the birds found in the later seasons are shown below.









Aleutian Tern (*Onychoprion aleuticus*). Aleutian Tern breeds on the coasts of the Bering Sea, east to the southwestern Alaska mainland and Kodiak Island. It is uncommon throughout the Aleutian Islands and an uncommon local breeder. Breeding colonies of small numbers of pairs have been located on Attu, Alaid and Nizki in the Near Islands. Aleutian Terns have been observed to prospect Shemya for possible nesting (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was observed each spring survey in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

Aleutian Terns were noted each spring on Shemya and in two falls in the period 1999-2010. In the spring, birds in small flocks or singles would be noted off the south beach and over the southern half of the island's interior. The species was seen as early as 20 May, but more often in the last week of May continuing into early June. A small flock was noted on 26 June of 1999. The impression was that the terns in the springs were seeking nest sites, and in the spring of 2002 six were observed on or near the road near Upper Twin Pond in the island's uplands.

Aleutian Terns were seen in two falls, 2006 and 2007. The 2007 sightings were of several birds seen intermittently over the ocean off the south beach. In August of 2006 there was a strong suggestion that the species may have successfully nested on or very near Shemya. Aleutian Terns were observed circling and calling over the island from 16 (my arrival)-25 August, above the tundra near the ground-to-air-radio site. My impression was that young were calling to be fed and several birds were seen with small fish in their bills. Birds would interact and on one occasion (17 August) two birds tumbled together until they landed in the grass. Unfortunately, the full scope of activity was hidden by the summer fog. A photo of a tern on the road in 2002 and a photo of one collected the fall 2006 are below.





Common Tern (Sterna hirundo). The East Asian subspecies of Common Tern (S. h. longipennis), which nests on the east coast of Russia, has been recorded intermittently in the western Aleutians, including Shemya. The Shemya records include rare spring sightings by Gibson each spring in the 1970s and birds found by D. Sonneborn in the springs of 1983 and 1987 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not identified in the 1999-2007 period. Although it may have been present, it was not recognized in our surveys; it was looked for and considered when terns were sighted.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*). Arctic Terns are uncommon or rare migrants in the Aleutians and are rare to uncommon breeders in the western and central parts of the island chain. They are very long distant migrants, wintering in Antarctic waters. Nesting colonies have been located on Attu and Alaid (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species in most seasons that he visited Shemya in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

Arctic Terns were seen nearly every spring 1999-2010, but none 1999. They were observed in only two falls (2007 and 2010). Single birds or flocks up to twelve were noted. They would be mostly found over the ocean: Alcan Harbor, Loon Cove and two sightings off or on the south beach. In the springs the earliest Arctic Terns were found on 22 May (2006) and the latest observation was 6 June (2007). The birds found would usually remain aloft, foraging over the salt water. Flying birds presented a challenge for photography but some photos were obtained, below.



Pomarine Jaeger (*Stercorarius pomarinus***).** Pomarine Jaeger is an uncommon visitor to the Aleutians in spring, winter and fall. A passage migration is apparent, usually at sea, in the second half of May into early June (usually single birds). The birds are usually the light morph of the species. D. Sonneborn recorded five from Shemya as the only record 27 May 1987, a date corresponding to an unprecedented movement of jaeger species in the Near Islands (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not seen 1999-2010.

Parasitic Jaeger (*Stercorarius parasiticus*). Throughout the Aleutian Islands Parasitic Jaeger is uncommon to fairly common in spring, summer and fall, and an uncommon to fairly common breeder. Most Aleutian Island birds are dark morph. Any light morph birds seen are passage migrants or non breeders (mid summer over high seas) from more northerly subpopulations. The species has increased in the Aleutians with the removal of Arctic Foxes. The species likely nests as close to Shemya as Nizki Island (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's work in the 1970s found Parasitic Jaegers as a casual spring visitor and annual in the falls. He noted singles to up to five individuals (Gibson 1981).

Parasitic Jaeger was recorded during every visit, spring, summer and fall to Shemya 1999-2010. In the spring visits the earliest observation was 26 April 2000 and birds were seen well into June (late June during the one summer visit 1999). In the fall visits the species was seen in the last half of August and records are found until 21 September (two seen southeast of Nizki Island during superb viewing conditions). Nearly all birds were dark color morphs. Light-phase birds were seen several times: 23 May and 3 June 1999, 26 May 2005, 16 May and 7 June 2007 and 11 August 2007. From one to three of the dark birds would typically be seen, and the spring sightings were somewhat more numerous than the fall sightings. In the spring there was some suggestion that jaegers were exploring Shemya as a potential nesting island. Other sightings suggested the birds were returning to Nizki over Shemya or off the south beach after foraging at sea.

An incident that may be of interest took place on 10 May 2000 on the broad north shore of Upper Lake. Two dark-phase Parasitic Jaegers were present. Copulation was observed. A third jaeger arrived and after some short flights attacked the female as she stood on the mud. The attack appeared to be a sharp blow with his wing that sent the female rolling on her side. Some photos of Parasitic Jaegers were obtained and are displayed below. Photos R. Trotter.



Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*). Long-tailed Jaegers are rare visitors throughout the Aleutians in spring, summer and fall. Usually single birds are seen far off shore, but fog or heavy weather will force them ashore (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Adult Long-tailed Jaegers are always light morph (Sibley 2000). Gibson recorded the species on Shemya once in the 1970s, 19 May 1976 (Gibson 1981).

In the period 1999-2010 on Shemya long-tailed Jaegers were recorded six times. They were seen in two springs, 1999 (2 June, fly-by along south beach), and 2006 (15 May, during very high winds, near Upper Lake). The species was seen in two falls, 2001 (29 September, over the east part of the island in the morning and eating Crowberries in the evening) and 2002 (17 September, distant off the east point). In the summer survey of 1999 the species was seen twice: 12 July (flying over the runway) and 17 and 24 July (two birds together feeding on the highlands and flying over the south beach).



Common Murre (*Uria aalge***).** Common Murre is uncommon to common throughout the Aleutians in spring, summer and fall and is a locally common breeder. There are nesting colonies at Buldir and Agattu (Gibson and Byrd 2007). During the USFWS winter surveys at Shemya the species was seen 9 of 12 winters. As many as 60 were seen (November 1988), but usually only one to five were counted (Byrd and Scharf 2003). The 1970s on Shemya found Common Murre in the falls as scattered small groups (Gibson 1981).

Common Murre were found in near shore waters around Shemya during every seasonal visit 1999-2010. Numbers sighted were never too large. In the spring surveys the first birds seen would usually be in the last week of April (earliest 15 April 2007) and very small numbers would be found after that. By June the sightings would increase with a normal beach survey finding about 8-10 individuals. Our returns in the falls would find good numbers off shore and in the harbor. The first surveys, mid August, would find small flocks, often with juvenile birds. The beach surveys would record peak numbers in August into September and the October counts would see decreasing totals. The highest total was 129 birds on 26 August 2006 with most of the birds in Shemya Pass. Beach surveys from 2005-07 are summarized in Figure 12. The one summer survey period (1999) found small numbers and saw birds perched on near shore rocks. The Shemya surveys saw murres that were arriving in late spring to breed on nearby islands and post

breeding birds with their young in the fall. Photos of Common Murre are presented below the Figure.



Figure 11. Common Murres counted on beach surveys, the bars represent monthly averages from surveys conducted in 2005, 2006 and 2007.



Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia***).** Thick-billed Murre is uncommon in spring, summer and fall throughout the Aleutians and is a locally common breeder in the chain. They nest in mixed-species colonies with Common Murre (above) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the winter surveys the species was identified half of the winters surveyed. Numbers counted were small, never more than three or four (Byrd and Scharf 2003). At Shemya in

the 1970s Gibson identified with certainty Thick-billed Murre only once, 12 May 1977 (Gibson 1981). D. Sonneborn did find two alternate plumage birds on 7 September 1996 (personal communication).

Thick-billed Murre was NOT identified during the 1999-2010 period of surveys. I am familiar with the species and would examine close-in murres looking for thickbilled, but never saw one.

Pigeon Guillemot (*Cepphus columba*). Pigeon Guillemot, of the subspecies *C. c. kaiurka*, is found in the western Aleutians (and Commander Islands). The species is fairly common or uncommon resident in all seasons and a common or uncommon breeder (late May to early August) in the chain. They are found in inshore and near-shore marine waters (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the winter surveys on Shemya the species was recorded in nine of the 12 winters, but in small numbers, 7-12 birds (Byrd and Scharf 2003). In the 1970s Gibson described Pigeon Guillemot as rare in spring and not common in the near islands. He saw two birds in two of his May surveys (Gibson 1981).

Pigeon Guillemots were recorded in every seasonal visit (except spring and fall of 2002) to Shemya in the period 1999-2010. In the springs small numbers would be seen, one to three on most beach surveys. Some counts were 8-10. In the spring of 2005 two to four birds were seen on a large off-shore rock on the island's north side suggesting nesting. Fall beach surveys would typically find somewhat larger numbers and some juveniles. Count totals averaged four but some individual counts were as high as 12 to 13. Typically no guillemots would be found after the third week of September. The Pigeon Guillemots would be observed from Alcan Harbor around to the north side of Shemya. Comparing Gibson's experience in the 1970s with our experience of the first decade of the 21st Century it might be inferred that Pigeon Guillemot has become slightly more common at Shemya. The presence of Juveniles in August suggests nesting nearby. Several photos are presented below.



Small Murrelet (*Brachyramphus sp.*). Marbled (*B. marmoratus*) and Kittlitz's (*B. brevirostris*) Murrelets are found in the Aleutians and are described as uncommon to fairly common breeders in rather specialized colonies at mountainous islands with deep, protected bays. Both species have been observed regularly at Massacre Bay on Attu (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Two Marbled Murrelets were recorded at Shemya in the winter of 1995/96 and in December of 1996, and Kittlitz's Murrelet were noted (two individuals) in the winter of 2000/01. Unspecified murrelets were seen in three of the twelve USFWS winter surveys of Shemya (Byrd and Scharf 2003). Neither of these species were seen in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

On three occasions unidentified murrelets were seen in Shemya near shore waters in the 1999-2010 period. Two, likely Marbled Murrelets were described out from the Lagoon on 14 May 2006. Two were in Alcan Harbor on 2 May 2007, and two were noted as probable Marbled Murrelets on 13 September 2007 also in the



harbor. On all occasions identification



and photography were challenged by the birds' vigorous diving. A very poor photo of one of the spring 2007 birds is shown. Then on 2 September 2010 three or four murrelets were found in the harbor and gave fairly good looks. They were Marbled Murrelets. A photo of the 2010 birds is above, left.

Ancient Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*). Ancient Murrelet is fairly common in spring and fall and a fairly common breeder throughout the Aleutians. The nearest nesting colony to Shemya is at Buldir (10,000 birds). The birds nest in underground burrows (end of May-end of July) and arrive at and depart from the burrows during the night. The species winters at sea in the North Pacific (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The winter surveys found four birds once, 11 March 1997 (Byrd and Scharf 2003). Gibson found the species in each of his visits to Shemya in the 1970s, but only in small numbers, no more than six at once (Gibson 1981).

Ancient Murrelets were found in small numbers off Shemya during every spring visit and during four of seven the fall visits 1999-2010 (none in the falls of 2001, 2005 and 2007). The earliest spring record was on 26 April 2006. Sightings of the species were recorded into June. Numbers in spring were usually small (one to three), but some "pulses" were noted (50 in the harbor 2 June 2004 and 51 on 6 May 2006). Ancient Murrelets were found dead on the island on three occasions, perhaps brought onto Shemya by Peregrine Falcons after being captured over the sea. One of the remains was seen being eaten by a Peregrine. In the fall, numbers were even smaller than in the spring. There were no records of more than three individuals at a time. One possible juvenile bird was seen 15 September 2006. The murrelets preferred the north and northwest off-shore waters and especially Alcan Harbor. Some photos were taken, below.



Auklet Species (four) (*Aethia sp.*). Four species of auklet are found throughout the Aleutian Islands: Parakeet Auklet (*A. psittacula*), Least Auklet (*A. pusilla*), Whiskered Auklet (*A. pygmaea*) and Crested Auklet (*A. cristatella*). These species breed at various locations in the island chain; some in very large colonies, e.g., 3-6,000,000 Least and Crested at Kiska. Away from breeding locations these alcid species forage at sea; they are difficult to find and identify from island locations (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson did not record any of these alcids from Shemya in the 1970s (Gibson 1981). The USFWS winter surveys did find an unusual 1-14 Least Auklets on three consecutive surveys in February and March 1997 Byrd and Scharf (2003).

Unidentified Small Dark Alcids (USDAs) were seen from Shemya on several occasions in the 1999-2010 period. The birds were most often seen off the north point of the island. The birds would be very difficult to observe due to distance and flight of the birds behind swells and waves. USDAs were seen 27 August 2005 and were tentatively

identified as **Whiskered Auklet** as they exhibited white under-rumps. USDAs were again seen on 6 May 2006. On 21 September 2006 ocean observing conditions were perfect, flat seas and good light. On that day over Shemya pass **Parakeet**, **Whiskered** and **Crested** Auklets were seen telescopically. On 4 October 2006 a Peregrine Falcon was chased from the remains of its kill; a partial skull was recovered and identified as a **Least Auklet**. Additionally, in 2006 a





juvenile **Crested Auklet** was found near the pier and photographed (above, right). In 2007 **Parakeet Auklet** was seen quite well flying off the north point on 3 October. Also that fall, all dark alcids (**Crested Auklet**) were seen off the north point on 14 and 22 August. 1 September of 2010 produced a rare sighting in the harbor. Three auklets were found in Alcan Harbor; their light rump identified them as **Whiskered Auklets**. Photos of the small birds were obtained, left.

Horned Puffin (*Fratercula corniculata*). Throughout the Aleutians Horned Puffins are an uncommon to common breeder. They nest on most islands and a 20,000 bird colony is on Buldir. The species arrives at nest islands mid to late May and the young have fledged by the first of September. They winter at sea in the North Pacific and are only seen casually in the island chain (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not seen during the Shemya winter surveys (Byrd and Scharf 2003). Gibson sighted them annually from Shemya in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

In the period 1999-2010 Horned Puffins were found on every spring, summer and fall visit. They were never found in any numbers. The first birds would be found 19 to 24 May. The last of the sightings would be in the first week of September (latest 5 September 2001). Beach surveys 2005-2010 showed that the species was recorded usually in the last two spring surveys and the first two surveys in the fall. The most seen was 11 birds on 2 June 2007. They would be seen in Alcan Harbor and off the north shore. In the spring of 2005 (first 22 May) a pair was seen nearly daily in the harbor and the pair was seen copulating on 3 June. Several photos were obtained and are presented below.



Tufted Puffin (*Fratercula cirrahata*). Tufted Puffin are common or locally abundant residents and breeders in spring through fall throughout the Aleutians. The species, a burrow nester, has benefited significantly from the removal of foxes on most islands. As many as 1,000,000 birds are found in the eastern Aleutians and 75,000 in the western Aleutians. Scattered lone birds are found throughout the chain in the winters (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was found in all springs and falls in uncommon to fairly common numbers by Gibson off shore of Shemya in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

Tufted Puffin was found in every season we visited Shemya in the 1999-2010 time frame. After they arrived in the spring and before they left in the fall they were usually found every time they were looked for in waters off of all coasts, sometimes in fairly large numbers. Tufted Puffins arrived in the Semichi Islands before Horned Puffins (above). The first individuals were noted in late April or early May, earliest 23 April 2002 and 2006. Numbers would remain quite low through the rest of the spring visits. Maximum numbers off-shore Shemya in spring was 27 birds on 17 May 1999. Additionally, a "raft" of Tufted Puffins southeast of Nizki Island was recorded on 23 April 2002. Also, a journal entry from 28 May 2006 indicates about a dozen Tufted Puffins on Hammerhead Rock, suggesting nesting less than a mile off Shemya's west shore. In the one summer visit with records (1999) a number of Tufted Puffins were seen flying on shore and perching on the north bluffs (prospecting for nest sites?). In the falls, when we arrived back on the island in mid August Tufted Puffins would be found in large to modest numbers all around the island. As many as 275 (12 August 2007) were recorded on the mid August beach surveys (usually 10s or low hundreds). Adults carrying bait fish were often seen, particularly in the harbor. Birds carrying bills full of fish were also regularly seen flying west toward Nizki and Alaid in the rest of August. Tufted Puffins would decline quite rapidly moving into September and few could be found by mid September. Photos of the species are below.







Common Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*). Common Cuckoo is a Eurasian bird species that breeds (parasitic nester) as far east as Japan and Kamchatka. In the western and central Aleutians it can be found intermittently in spring. The birds are usually found singly, but up to eight birds (including a singing male) were found at Attu 8-10 June 1988. The birds will often continue at a location into midsummer. Prior to the 1999-2010 surveys the species had been found once on Shemya, 22-28 May 1985 by D. Sonneborn. Gibson and Byrd suspect that cuckoos that reach the Aleutians (see also Oriental Cuckoo, below) do not survive (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Common Cuckoo was found on Shemya several times 1999-2010. The spring of 1999 produced three birds...a hepatic color morph female 2 June, single gray-morph individuals seen on 5 and 6 June. A gray individual was in the eastern warehouse complex (now demolished) 30 May 2002. Another Common Cuckoo was found on the bluff above "Cobra Dane Dump" on 31 May 2004. Parenthetically, security personnel identified an illustration of a cuckoo in a bird book as a bird they saw on 6 June 2004. A Common Cuckoo was found at the Lagoon the early morning of 31 May 2010. A hepatic Morph cuckoo (species unknown) gave brief looks along the taxiway 28 September 2010. Two photos of Common Cuckoo are available from our work, including one of the 31 May 2004 bird, that was collected, below.



Oriental Cuckoo (*Cuculus optatus***).** Oriental Cuckoo is another *Cuculus* species found in Eurasia also as far east as Japan and Kamchatka. It is a casual species in the western Aleutians with three records from Attu (1987, 1991 and 2000) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Oriental Cuckoo were found on Shemya twice 1999-2010. An adult male was





23 June 2007 Photo: R. Trotter

found dying along the runway the evening of 20 May 2006. The bird was very emaciated (it tested negative for Avian Influenza). R. Trotter (personal communication) found a hepatic-morph Oriental Cuckoo the evening of 23 June 2007 in the eastern part of the island (missile launch facility). Photos of both birds are presented.

Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiacus*). In the Aleutians Snowy Owls are most common in the western islands,

where they are probably residents and nest regularly on Attu and casually on Buldir. The species is described as casual in fall and winter in the central Aleutians and casual in winter in the eastern Aleutians. On Attu the birds nest in the uplands, but forage over low elevation habitats and move between the islands of the Near Island group. Gibson and Byrd assess the Snowy Owls that visit Shemya as members of a Near Islands resident population. In the Near Islands the owls' diet is mostly birds (Ancient Murrelets and storm-petrels) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson found Snowy Owls only in his spring visits (Gibson 1981). The USFWS winter visits to Shemya found Snowy Owls in two winters (1993 and 1995) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

During our visits to Shemya 1999-2010 Snowy Owls were found sporadically in the springs of the period 1999-2002 (1999, 2001 and 2002); none were found in the other seasonal visits in that period. In those spring visits usually only one individual was found, but perhaps seven birds were recorded in the spring of 2002. However, beginning with the short visit in late spring of 2004 through 2010, Snowy Owls were found every spring and every fall. During the spring visits the owls were more numerous than in the fall visits. The spring of 2005 and 2006 found up to five individuals, spring of 2007 found perhaps 14 owls visiting the island (though some were likely returns of some individuals), perhaps as many as eight (repeats likely) where found in the spring of 2008 and the spring of 2010 found as many as ten. The fall surveys in 2005 and 2006 found just one individual, fall of 2007 recorded three separate individuals. Fall 2010 had one that was present nearly the entire season. This apparent increase in owls corresponded with the removal of foxes from Attu.

Snowy Owls were found in all plumages from totally white males to heavily spotted juveniles. The varying plumages did assist in identifying individuals. The owls did present a challenge in determining age and sex. Note. A highly informative paper describing the aging and sexing Snowy owls is available (Josephson 1980).

Some information on the owls' diet while on Shemya was observed. A female was seen consuming a male Green-winged Teal (9 May 2006). During that observation the owl ejected a pellet that was retrieved. The pellet was the total indigestible remains of a Roof Rat. A second old pellet was recovered that same spring and the contents examined; the skulls of two rodents (at least one Roof Rat) were found. Finally, security personnel shared an anecdote of a Snowy Owl catching, killing and eating (in the beam of their vehicle's lights) an Arctic Fox at night in March of 2006. The owls would often present photo opportunities, below.



Dates of the photos above are:

6 May 2006, 22 May 2007, 1 May 2007 2 October 2006, 24 April 2006, 17 April 2006 27 September 2010, 19 May 2007, 25 April 2005

Short-eared Owl (Asio flammeus). Short-eared Owls are known throughout the Aleutians but the species' status is complex. In the western Aleutians these owls are rare in spring and rare or uncommon in fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). They are transient and may possibly be long distance overocean migrants going to and from Asia and mid Pacific wintering sites. Gibson, in the 1970s, described them as rare but annual in spring and probably in fall at Shemya (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya in the period of surveys 1999-2010 Shorteared Owls were found every spring except 2010 and in one fall, 2010. They were sighted from late April (earliest 25



April 2006) to the start of June (latest 3 June 2001). Only single individuals were seen. One, up to four birds (2007), would be noted in a season. Usually birds would be discovered and not seen again, suggesting a very short stopover; perhaps they found little to eat. There were a couple of years when an individual would possibly be present for up to four days. Several photos of Short-eared Owls were obtained and are presented.







White-throated Needletail (Hirundapus

caudacutus). White-throated Needletail breed in temperate East Asia (Shimba 2007). There are four records from the western Aleutians. The first was from Shemya 21 May 1974 by White and Baird and another on Shemya by D. Sonneborn, 25-26 1985 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). We did not see the bird in the 1999-2010 time frame.

Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*). Fork-tailed Swift is a bird of East Asia. It is a casual visitor in the western Aleutians mostly in the fall, but there are three spring records (including one on Shemya by D. Sonneborn, 24 May 1982). A remarkable flight of Fork-tailed Swifts was recorded in the Aleutians 16-18 September 2004 (we were not on Shemya) when a flock of 40 was at Attu and a flock of 20-30 was at Adak (the only central Aleutian record) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found Fork-tailed Swifts on Shemya in late September of 1977 and 1978 (Gibson 1981).

In our period of studies on Shemya, 1999-2007, Fork-tailed Swifts were recorded three times, all in fall. The first bird was flying in the "Cable Bowl" 30 September 2000. It continued to be found over the island until 2 October. One was found and collected near the old landfill 18 August 2001. The third bird was observed foraging over the harbor and the pier on 19 August 2007; after about an hour it flew out to sea. The fall of 2010 produced our largest showing of the species. Single was at McDonald Point on 3

September. Then on 27 September there were three together foraging over the northeast bluffs (near Queen's Match). They were seen again 28 September; two on 30 September and just one the next day. Photos of these large swifts were taken of the 2000, 2007 and one from 2010.



Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*). Great Spotted Woodpecker is an Old World species that breeds as far east as Kamchatka. It reaches the western Aleutians as a very casual visitor in the spring and fall. At locations other than Shemya there are four Aleutians records, all from Attu (spring-1986, 1989 and 1996 and fall-2000) Gibson and Byrd 2007).

During the 1999-2010 period Great Spotted Woodpeckers were recorded three times. An adult male was first seen 20 September 2000 and three more times around the island through 9 October. A female was flushed from along the north beach road on 11 May 2001. It allowed photos from about 40 yards; it was not seen subsequently. Our final bird was a male north of the Lagoon that was discovered and collected 20 May 2005. Photos of the Great Spotted Woodpeckers are below.



Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*). Brown Shrike is a bird of eastern Asia. Prior to 1999 there were two records of the species in the western Aleutians. The first was at Shemya, 10 October 1978. The second bird was found on Attu 4 June 1984 (both by Gibson) (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The third Aleutian record was from Shemya 6 June 2007. The bird was foraging near several abandoned buildings in the eastern uplands on the island. Photos follow.



Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*). Northern Shrikes originating in Mainland Alaska are casual or intermittent visitors in the eastern Aleutians. However, in the western Aleutians the species is accidental and of the northeast Asian subspecies, *L. e. sibiricus* (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

There are four records of the Asian subspecies; they are from Shemya and from the period of surveys, 1999-2010. On 10 October 2005 a juvenile bird was a storm fallout near Laundry Lake. It was collected for the University of Alaska Museum. The second western Aleutian Northern Shrike was found in the eastern part of the island on 7-8 October 2007 (not storm associated). It was apparently a subadult, though not juvenile, showing only subtle amounts of brown that was so apparent on the 2005 bird. This bird, too, was collected. On a brief visit to the island Jason Gilsdorf found on 17 October 2008 a juvenile. Number four was also a juvenile that was seen once on 1 October 2010. It seems the shrikes have noticeably increased their fall presence in the western Aleutians in recent years.







Common Raven (*Corvus corax*). Common Raven of the subspecies *C. c. kamtschaticus* is found from Siberia, Kamchatka and the Aleutians. They are generally an uncommon resident and breeder throughout the Aleutians, including the Near Islands. They concentrate in the winter about established centers of human activity (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found them common during the 1970s on Shemya (Gibson 1981). The series of winter surveys would count, on average 20-30 ravens each winter. There were some peak counts approaching 60 (1992/93 and 1994/95) (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

Common Ravens were one of the species of interest in the 1999-2010 time period and they were included in numerous roads surveys and there was experimental hazing (including lethal take) to discourage them from coming to the area of the runway. Additionally, procedures and equipment were introduced (burying landfill debris with clean fill and use of, and enforced closing of, steel dumpsters for trash) to make the island less attractive to the species. In the beginning of the study period daily counts of 25 to 30 birds were the norm. After the introduction of hazing the island population would average 20 or fewer individuals. However, superimposed on this average were periods when ravens would come onto the island and boost counts by10 to 20 individuals. These transient birds were referred to as the "gang". Also, there were periods when birds would leave the island for short periods (often associated with fine weather).

The birds that were found on Shemya were, in general, nonbreeding birds. There were, however, during five years that we were present (2001, 2002, 2007, 2008 and 2010) when a pair (perhaps the same pair) of ravens nested on a north facing cliff on the island's north side. The 2001 attempt fledged one young, but the next two nesting attempts ended in failure. In 2008 at least two young were well on the way to fledging when we departed the last of May. The 2010 nest did fledge three youngsters on 27 May and they were still findable in mid June. The early nests were placed each year in slightly different fissures or shallow depressions on the same cliff face; though the 2008 and 2010 nests were in the same spots. Photos of the nest locations and individual nests are presented below.

There were some population trends noted during our experience. The first was the decline in the resident raven population on Shemya after active dispersal and passive procedures were instituted in the 2001-2002 time frame. A second feature of the island population was an increase in the resident numbers in the fall (about the second week of October). This was presumably an addition of some juvenile birds that resulted from nesting on nearby islands. It should also be noted that after lethal take was instituted (about 10 birds per year) the resident population remained unchanged from one year to the next, suggesting take of this magnitude is not detrimental to the Near Island population. Lethal take did tend to concentrate the island's ravens on the north side of the island, particularly in the spring. At the close of the 2010 season, the Shemya Common Raven population can be described as about 20 nonbreeding resident birds. The population would experience sudden and usually brief increases as the gang (the gang would usually be noted as a flock of 10-20 birds, often found foraging on the south shore) came onto the island. Photos of the nests and of some Common Ravens, below.





Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*). The Asian subspecies of this Eurasian species (*A. a.* pekinensis) regularly breeds as close as Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians it is intermittent in the spring and is a casual probable breeder. They have arrived as early as late April. The species has been observed to hold song territories well into the summer on Attu and nesting was suspected. Song territories and likely nesting have occurred on Shemya as well (see below). The species is also intermittent in the fall in the western Aleutians when it has been seen from mid September to mid October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found Sky Larks in each spring and fall visited in the 1970s and found as many as four singing males throughout May 1977 (Gibson 1981).

In the period 1999-2010 Sky Lark on Shemya were not seasonally annual. There were four springs (2000, 2001, 2007 and 2010) and two falls (2000 and 2005) when the species was not recorded. The spring of 1999 found four singing males in late May (first seen 4 May) over the grassy boarder south of the runway. The long duration singing flights continued well into July from three birds and then only by two. In July the birds appeared to expand their territories outward to the north. On 26 July an adult and a probable fledgling were seen to fly south from the runway area and land into grass near what was the eastern most warehouse complex.

A Sky Lark's song was heard once more on 27 May 2002. Aside from that, small numbers of Sky Larks were found in the springs and falls (except as noted above). Up to five were found in late September into October of 2007, and four where scattered out in each of the falls of 2001, 2002 and 2010. Sky Larks are quite camera shy but several photos of a bird on 30 September 2007 were obtained and are shown below.



Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). The Eurasian subspecies of Horned Lark (*E. a. flava*) breeds in northern Eurasia as far east as Anadyrland. It is casual in fall in the western Aleutians. All records are from Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found two birds 19 September 1978 with one individual remaining September 26 (Gibson 1981).

During our Shemya visits Horned Larks were found in just two falls. Two Horned Larks together



were found on the runway apron 14 October 2000 and one was found in the same place on 11 October 2005. In both instances the birds were not seen subsequently. A photo of the 2005 bird was obtained, above.

Tree Swallow (*Tachyceneta bicolor*). Tree Swallow is a North American species which is a casual breeder in the eastern Aleutians. It is casual in the western Aleutians where there are four spring records from Buldir and four records from our visits to Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

On Shemya Tree Swallows were found four times 1999-2010. Juvenile birds were found on the island 30 September 2000 and 20 September 2002. Adult/spring birds were found 13 May 2005, foraging over Scoot's Cove (documented by collection) and briefly over Laundry Lake on 3 June 2007. The collected bird from 13 May 2005 is shown, right.

Violet-green Swallow (*Tachycineta thaiassina*). Violet-green Swallows are found in western



North America as far north as the base of the Alaska Peninsula. They have been recorded in fall in the western Aleutians as an accidental species (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson obtained the only western Aleutian records in the 1970s on Shemya. Four were found in mid September 1977 and two juveniles arrived in early October of 1978 (Gibson 1981). In the period of surveys 1999-2010 there were no Violet-green Swallows seen.

Bank Swallow (Sand Martin) (*Riparia riparia***).** Bank Swallows are found around the northern hemisphere. Birds from North America reach into the eastern Aleutians, but are only casual in the spring in the western Aleutians. In the western Aleutians there are eleven records, two from Buldier, six from Attu and three from Shemya. Two of the records are from the fall including one on Shemya on 4 September 1986 by D. Sonneborn (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

On Shemya in the period 1999-2010 two Bank Swallows were seen. One was over Connie Lake on 8 June 2002, and one was over the center of the island (near Penelope Lake) 31 May 2004. No photos were obtained of these birds.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). Barn Swallows of the subspecies (*H. r. gutturalis*) nest in eastern Asia as near as the Amur River Basin and are a casual visitor in the western Aleutians in spring, summer and fall. Three of the eight western records come from Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s the species was recorded twice, 19 May 1977 and 31 August 1978 (Gibson 1981).

One quite spooky Barn Swallow was observed during the surveys 1999-2010. The white-bellied bird was seen twice, 2 and 6 June 2004. No photos were obtained of the flying bird.

Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). Pacific Wrens (previously known as Winter Wren till split in 2010) are found in North America and Eurasia. They are generally uncommon residents and breeders throughout the Aleutians. There is some indication of interisland dispersal (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species to be quite rare on Shemya in the 1970s. As many as four birds were found on 10 October 1978. He assesses that Winter Wrens do not have a resident population on the island, but feels the birds found there are the result of small immigrations from nearby islands and pointed out that birds were found on Nizki and Alaid in summers and young were seen on Agattu in 1978 (Gibson 1981). During the winter surveys of the island by USFWS 1988-1994 one to three birds were seen each year (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

On Shemya in the early part of the 21st Century Pacific Wren continued to be somewhat enigmatic. As many as four singing males were found in the spring of 1999 and continued to be found into the summer, mostly on the bluffs above the north beach. The species was not seen after that until two or three where seen in the fall of 2002. This absence prompted the author of the first Shemya birding checklist to show Winter Wren as "extripated" on the list. In the last five years of our regular surveys small numbers of wrens were found in most seasons (none found fall 2006 or spring 2008). In the springs the birds were usually located by song. One to four birds were observed in a season and they tended to favor the steep bluffs and cliffs on the island's north side. Several photos of Winter Wrens were obtained, below.



Locustella Warbler species (*Locustella sp.*). *Locustella* warblers, an Asian genus, breed as near as Kamchatka. Two species (*L. ochotenis*, Middendorff's Grasshopper-Warbler and *L. lanceolata*, Lanceolated Warbler) have been observed accidentally or casually in the spring, summer and fall. Middendorff's Grasshopper-warbler has been recorded five times on Attu and Buldir (including a total of at least seven birds 18-25 September 1979 on Attu). There are three records of Lanceolated Warbler from Attu that extended into the summer (including at least 25 birds 4 June – 15 July 1984) (Gibson and Byrd 2007), and there is a record of nesting on Buldir, June-August 2007 (Anderson, Schlawe and Lorenz 2008). Gibson saw an unknown *Locustella* warbler on Shemya 24-25 September 1978; he did not conclusively identify the species (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya 1999-2010 there were no spring or summer *Locustella* warblers observed. However, during a remarkable fallout of Asian passerines on 24 September 2007 a small brown bird was flushed from heavy grass on the north side of the island. It showed a wide tail, diagnostic of the genus, and flew off low and disappeared into the grass, also typical of a *Locustella* warbler. Lack of white tips on the corner of the tail suggests a Lanceolated Warbler. There were no photos from this brief encounter.

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*). This Old World warbler breeds east to the Ural Mountains and winters in sub Saharan Africa. Astonishly, one was found and collected on Shemya by Gibson 9 October 1978. A second Wood Warbler was found on St. Paul Island. On 8 October 2010 a small flighty bird was found at Brambling Bluff and was collected. It was a Wood Warbler. A photo of the collected bird is shown, right.



Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*). Dusky Warbler is a casual visitor to the western Aleutians from the Russian Far East. There are four records (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson has two of those records from Shemya on 18 and 23 September 1978 (Gibson 1981). The species was not found on Shemya 1999-2010.

Kamchatka Leaf Warbler (*Phylloscopus examinandus*). Formerly lumped with Arctic Warblers and now their own species, Kamchatka Leaf Warblers are intermittent migrants to the western Aleutians in late spring, usually the first two weeks of June. They are casual in the fall. Gibson found Kamchatka Leaf Warbler on Shemya twice in the 1970s, 16 Sep 1977 and 25 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

During the recent seasonal observations 1999-2010 Kamchatka Leaf Warblers were far from annual visitors. They were found in three of nine springs and three of seven falls. Of course, since they are small and allusive numerous birds could have moved through the island and were not found. When they were found, in general, multiple birds would be found. In 1999 at least three individuals stopped on the island 2-8 June. Several were seen 9 and 10 June 2002 and a single bird was recorded 4 June 2004. The fall of 2005 produced a strong showing of Kamchatka Leaf Warblers. At least

nine were seen beginning 16 September and continuing all the way through 18 October. In that period birds could be consistently located at "Brambling Bluff" on the island's north side, but birds were also found at several other spots around the island. The next Kamchatka Leaf Warbler fall was 2007. A week long fallout of Passerines that began on 24 September contained modest numbers of the species with 5 found on 25 September, but one to four also found through 1 October. A single bird was also located on 12 October of that year. The fall of 2010 found at least three Kamchatka Leaf Warblers, all at the magic spot of Brambling Bluff. These birds are quite elusive and photos were difficult to obtain. One photo and a photo of a specimen are presented below.



Taiga Flycatcher (*Ficedula albicilla*). Taiga Flycatcher (formally a subspecies of Redbreasted Flycatcher) is an intermittent late spring visitor to the western Aleutians. Birds have been recorded as early as 25 May (1984, Attu) and as late as 10 June (1997, Buldir). Single or two or three birds were usually found, but Attu recorded up to 14, 4-6 June 1987. D. Sonneborn recorded the species on Shemya in late May in 1983 and 1984 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Also on Shemya, Gibson obtained the first Alaska record 1 June 1977 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya in the period 1999-2010 Taiga Flycatchers were found in five of nine springs. Three males were found 2 June 1999. A female was found 7 June 2004. Several males were seen 29 May-3 June of 2005, at least one male and one female were observed 4-7 June 2007 and a single male was found on the south beach dunes on 26 May 2010. Several photos of these tiny, stunning birds were obtained,





Dark-sided Flycatcher (*Muscicapa sibirica*). Dark-sided (formally Siberian) Flycatcher is found casually in spring and summer in the western Aleutians. There are seven records of mostly single birds (but up to eight on Attu 1-5 June 1999) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The only record from fall and the only record from Shemya prior to 1999 was by Gibson, a single immature on 13 September 1977, it was also the first Alaska record (Gibson 1981).

Dark-sided Flycatcher was found on Shemya only once in the early 21st Century. A single individual was found at the Queens Match site the afternoon and evening of 9 June 2007. The bird gave very good looks and afforded detailed study, including the diagnostic dark markings of the undertail coverts. Photos of that bird are below.



Gray-streaked Flycatcher (*Musciacapa griseisticata*). Gray-streaked (formally Grayspotted) Flycatcher breeds in far-eastern Asia as far east as Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island. In the western Aleutians it is intermittent in spring, usually late May into mid June. It is casual in fall as early as 11 September and as late as 10 October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's work in the 1970s recorded five on Shemya 30 May-5 June 1977 (Gibson 1981).

1999-2010 found Gray-streaked Flycatchers on Shemya in two springs, 1999 and 2004, and three falls, 2005, 2007 and 2010. In those years when the species was found there were multiple birds (not in flocks). The spring of 1999 had up to nine individuals from 1 June to 8 June. At least five were present in the spring of 2004 from 2 June to 7 June. The fall of 2005 had singles on 11 September, 5 October and 10 October. The passerine fallout of 24 September 2007 initially found seven birds and 1's and 2's were found each day through 1 October. 2010 had two birds; one at Corbra Dane dump, 19 September, and one on the bluff near the runway hot pad, 2-7 October. Several photos were obtained of Gray-streaked Flycatchers, below.


Siberian Rubythroat (*Luscinia calliope*). Siberian Rubythroat (known colloquially as Kamchatka Nightingale) breeds across much of Siberia as far east as Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians it is rare or uncommon in the spring and intermittent in the fall. In the spring it is found from the third week of May until mid June. In the falls, when present, is found from the second week of September into October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found Siberian Rubythroat on Shemya in the spring of 1977 (31 May-3 June) and

in two of his falls (1977 and 1978) (Gibson 1981).

Siberian Rubythroat was present on Shemya 1999-2010 in all the springs but two, 2005 and the abbreviated visits of 2008. Most years only one or two were seen, but relatively large passages occurred in the spring of 1999 (1-8 June, 7-8 birds some days) and 2004 (30 May-3 June, 9 birds on 1 June). Singing males were observed in some years. Rubythroats were



located in three of the falls: 2005 (one bird) and 2007 (one 16 September and during the passerine fallout, 24 September-2 October, up to 3 birds seen (25 September)). A female (the only female of the species I found) was present 29 September 2010 and a male was found later (6 October). The birds were difficult to get photos of, but this individual was found singing at Queen's Match, in fog, 17 June 2010

Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*). Bluethroat breeds across northern Eurasia and into Alaska. There are no documented sightings of the species in the Aleutians. However, a brief sighting by a very capable observer, B. Benter, USFWS, on 29 May 2005, during a period when a number of unusual Asian birds were being seen, was likely an Aleutian first record. The bird presented a brief diagnostic look (tail pattern) before flying away. (no photo).

Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus***).** Red-flanked Bluetail breeds across Eurasia through southern Siberia to Kamchatka. It is casual in the western Aleutians in the spring; there are eleven records (some from Attu of multiple birds). Through 2006 there was only one <u>fall</u> record, 5-6 October 1993, Attu (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not found in the 1970s.

1999-2010 on Shemya yielded sightings of five individuals. One female was located at an old warehouse in the southwestern part of the island on 19 May 2001. On 19 May 2002 another female was located in exactly the same spot. Another was at the

<u>same</u>! location on 2 June of that same year. The warehouses were burned in about 2004. However, a female was found along a low bluff near the runway's hot cargo pad on 29 May 2005. The final sighting was of an adult male on 29 September 2007 during the remarkable passerine fallout of that fall. It was at the base of the north bluffs. This rare (second) fall record is also the first sighting of a male in the Aleutians. Photos of this species were difficult to obtain, but one was taken of the 2005 bird.



Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*). Northern Wheatear breeds in arctic regions around the Northern Hemisphere from northeastern North America, Greenland, across Eurasia and into Alaska and the Yukon. It winters in sub-Saharan Africa. The species is intermittent in fall throughout the Aleutians from the third week of August into mid September. It is casual or accidental in the western Aleutians in the spring (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found Northern Wheatear only in September of 1977 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Northern Wheatear was found every fall and in one spring. During most of the falls there were one to three individuals found. However, in the fall seasons of 2002, 2005 and 2006 good numbers were found (at least six, 13 and six, respectively). The birds usually were found in sparsely vegetated habitats: roads, gravel pads or runway margins. In the spring of 2005 two birds were found (26 May and 3 June); these represent only the second and third spring records. Several photos of wheatears are shown below.



Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus***).** Swainson's Thrush is a nester in North America's Boreal Forest and mountains of the west and breeds as close to the Aleutians as the base of the Alaska Peninsula. The only record of the species in the Aleutians is from Shemya in the fall of 2001. Two individuals were found along the North Beach Road at the base of the north beach bluffs on 9 October. The next day only a single bird could be located about two miles to the west on the island's northwest side. No photos were obtained, though the bird was collected (an immature male).

Eyebrowed Thrush (*Turdus obscurus***).** Eyebrowed Thrush breeds in the Russian far east as far east as the Kamchatka Peninsula. It is a rare migrant in the spring in the western Aleutians and is considered casual in fall. When found, single birds or small flocks are the rule, but an exceptional day count of 180 birds was recorded on Attu 17 May 1998 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was found each spring in the 1970s from 20 May (1976) to 7 June (1977) (Gibson 1981).

During the most recent series of visits to Shemya (1999-2010) Eyebrowed Thrush was seen about every one of the nine springs (but not spring 2008) and in five out of the seven falls. The earliest spring bird was 10 May (2007), and the latest noted on 4 June (1999). The spring birds were generally found as singles, but there were some good day counts (17 on 15 May 2001, up to five on 1 June 2002 and seven together 2 June 2004).

Fall records from this period would suggest the species is more than "casual" in that season. In the falls Eyebrowed Thrush was found in 2001 (just one bird), 2002 (as many as nine (though likely some repeats) from 26 September through 15 October, 2005 (perhaps seven individuals). In 2007 the species was a major player in the fallout of



passerines that began 24 September.18 were found the first day, including a flock of 10,

and day counts then averaged about ten until 2 October. In 2010 three were located late September-early October. Eyebrowed Thrush frequently provided good photo opportunities and samples are presented above and below.



Dusky Thrush (*Turdus naumanni***).** Dusky Thrush nests across northern Siberia east to Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians it is intermittent in spring from the second week of May to early June and two records in the fall (Attu 1993 and 2000). There are eleven records of spring birds, usually single individuals (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The 1970s found single birds 18 and 24 May 1976 and 24-29 May 1977 (Gibson 1981).

Dusky Thrush was observed twice in spring 1999-2010 on Shemya. Gibson saw one 7 June 2000 and one was observed 14 and 15 May 2001. None were seen subsequently. No photos were obtained.

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). American Robin is widespread in North America. There are three records from the central Aleutians in the fall (Gibson and Byrd 2007). There were no documented records of American Robin in the western Aleutians until R. Trotter superbly photo documented one at Shemya on 11 November 2006. Trotter found yet another robin 9 November 2008. A third was found 3 October 2010 and collected the next day (immature female). Photos of the birds are below.



European Starling (Sturnus vulgaris). European Starling is widespread in Eurasia as far east as about Lake Baikal (casual in Japan) and throughout much of North America after being introduced in the 19th century (as close to the Aleutians as central Alaska). There is only one record of the species in the Aleutians. A single bird was found and collected on Shemva on 12 September 2002. Examination of the specimen revealed that it was most likely a bird from North America (nominate subspecies S. v. vulgaris) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). It might be thought of as the species' completion of its colonization of North America. A photo of the collected bird is shown here (right)



Siberian Accentor (*Prunella montanella***).** Siberian Accentor is an Asian bird that breeds as far east as the northeastern Far East. There are only two records from the Aleutians. They are both from Shemya, 17 and 24 September 1978 (Gibson 1981). None have been found subsequently.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*). Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) is a widespread breeding bird in northern Eurasia. At the beginning of the 21^{st} Century the eastern-most subspecies (*Motacilla flava tschutschensis*) was well known to cross into western Alaska to nest. In 2004 this subspecies was recognized as a separate species, Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*). Eastern Yellow Wagtail is now the species found in Alaska and the Aleutians. In the western Aleutians the subspecies *M. t. simillima* represents most of the birds of this species as opposed to the nominate subspecies M. t. tschutschensis that crosses the Bering Strait to nest in Alaska (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

In the western Aleutians Eastern Yellow Wagtail is rare to fairly common in spring and rare in fall. In spring the species can be found from the second week of May to mid June. There is considerable variability in abundance from one year to the next.

The birds normally are found as singles, twos or threes or scattered parties of up to 12. Day counts have been as high as 72 (Alaid 15 May 1976) and 68 (Shemya 14 May 2001(see below)). In the fall in the western Aleutians the species was found as mostly singles (nine records) from the third week of August to late September (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson's experience with the species in the 1970s found it in spring of 1976 and 1977, up to nine birds 20-21 May 1976. He found it in the fall 29



August -18 September 1978 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Eastern Yellow Wagtail was found each spring with extended coverage (not 2004) and in two falls (2000 and 2006). Spring numbers were usually small with scattered individuals seen through the season (earliest 14 May (2001), latest 3 June (1999)). A remarkable fallout of Asian birds, mostly passerines, occurred on 14 May 2001. On that day 68 (Eastern) Yellow Wagtails were counted and others were likely uncounted. After that event numbers remained high for several days then declined. Fall birds were juveniles. One on 8 Sep 2000 was the earliest and one on 25 September 2006 was the latest of the fall birds recorded. Not many decent photos of the species were obtained.





Gray Wagtail (Motacilla cinerea). Gray Wagtail breeds throughout Eurasia, and the

East Asian subspecies (*M. c. robusta*) breeds as far east as Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians the species is intermittent from the third week of May into June. All but one record were spring sightings (eight records). The species was found once in the fall (20 October 2005), on Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Among the spring records was a single male on Shemya, 29 May 1976 (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya our visits 1999-2010 found the species only three times. The spring fallout of 14 May 2001 contained up to four males.



There was a fall juvenile on 20 October 2005 and a single male seen briefly 31 May 2006, the only other records. A photo of one of the 15 May 2001 birds is shown above.

White Wagtail (*Moatcilla alba*). White Wagtail is widespread in the old world. Birds found in Alaska have the potential of being one of two subspecies, *M. a. lugens* and *M. a. ocularis*. Birds breeding in extreme northwestern Alaska are of the *ocularis* subspecies and those found in the Aleutians are, in general, *M. a. lugens* (formally known as Blackbacked Wagtail, *Motacilla lugens*). In the western Aleutians in spring White Wagtail are rare and the species is known to nest casually in the Near Islands. Spring birds arrive as early as late April and late birds (breeders or potential breeders) linger into summer. In fall many, if not all, may be the juveniles and adults involved in nesting on nearby islands

(Gibson and Byrd 2007). White Wagtails (then Black-backed Wagtail) were noted each spring on Shemya in the 1970s, but none were recorded in the falls (Gibson 1981).

In the period of Shemya studies 1999-2010 White Wagtails were seen in nearly every spring and fall (none seen spring 2006 and none in falls 2000 and 2007). The earliest spring bird found was 25 April 2005 and some years birds were still being seen

upon our June departures. Of particular note was a pair seen in June of 2002. A male and female were noted near the administrative and living structures. The male was observed to behave defensively toward its image in rear-view mirrors of parked vehicles. Upon our return in the third week of August a female White Wagtail and a just fledged juvenile were found in the area of the administrative buildings (right), and the juvenile was observed being fed by the adult.



The fall of 2002 was very productive for White Wagtail sightings with the juvenile and parent seen frequently and numerous visitors (perhaps as many as 11) throughout the fall (latest 15 October). Many of the birds were yellow-headed young-of-the-year. In the other falls when White Wagtails were found (2001, 2005 and 2006) one (2001) to nine (2005) individuals were seen; most showing the markings of juveniles. Photos of the 2002 fledgling and parent were obtained (below) as were several of other birds. These are presented below.







Olive-backed Pipit (*Anthus hodgsoni*). Olive-backed Pipit nests from Eastern Europe across central, northern and East Asia as far east as Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians the species is intermittent in spring and casual in fall. The passage window in spring is generally from the third week of May into early June. In some springs there are singing males, apparently on territory; in 1998 on Attu there is compelling evidence to support nesting. In falls when Olive-backed Pipits are found they have been seen from 14 September to 1 October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson found one spring bird (16 May 1977) and four in fall (14-29 September 1978) (Gibson 1981).

Our Shemya work, 1999-2010, found Olive-backed Pipits most falls and most springs. None of the species was found the falls of 2001 and 2006. Springs with no Olive-backed Pipits were 1999, 2006, 2007 and 2008. In a normal spring with pipits, multiple birds (two to seven) were found. Highlights were: the 14 May 2001 fallout that brought at least eight to Shemya, and a singing male that held song territory on the north beach bluffs 24-31 May 2001. In the falls, Olive-backed Pipits were found as early as 17 September (2002) and as late as 1 October (2007). Fall counts were usually one to three. The species was represented well in the 24 September 2007 fallout, as many as 11

individuals. Tough to photograph, a couple of photos were obtained. They are found below.



Pechora Pipit (*Anthus gustavi*). Pechora Pipit breeds across northern Eurasia as far east as the Commander Islands. It has been found casually in the western Aleutians in spring. The species is very shy and difficult to obtain good views. Most of the records are from Attu but, also a number from Buldier and D. Sonneborn has one record for Shemya, 22 May 1982 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was not found on Shemya in the 1970s.

Pechora Pipit was located on Shemya with confidence only once in the period 1999-2010. The bird gave quick looks in south beach grasses on 22 May 2001. No photos of this stealthy bird were obtained.

Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus***).** This pipit also nests across northern Eurasia to Kamchatka and there are breeding records from St. Lawrence Island and western Alaska. In the western Aleutians Red-throated Pipit is an intermittent visitor in spring and fall. Spring records are from 12 May (1977) to 14 June (Buldir, 1998). In the fall in the western Aleutians the species has been seen from 30 August (Attu 1983) to 8 October (Attu, 1993). On Shemya D. Sonneborn has a spring record, 21 May 1987, with a day count of up to nine birds, and a fall single bird 24 September 1984 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found relatively good numbers in the spring of 1977 and the falls of 1977 and 1978 (Gibson 1981).

In the 1999-2010 study period Red-throated Pipits were quite hard to come by. They were recorded in four springs (2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005) and two falls (2000 and 2005). Except for the fallout of mid May 2001 (several found), only single birds were present in each of the seasons. No usable photos of Red-throated Pipits are available.

American/Buff-bellied Pipit⁴ (*Anthus rubescens*). Understanding of the populations and movements of this species in the western Aleutians is far from being understood. The Subspecies A. r. pacificus is a breeding bird in northwest North America and perhaps northeast Asia. This subspecies nests in much of Alaska including the eastern half of the Aleutians. In the western Aleutians in spring American Pipits of this race are rare or uncommon through-migrants (to northeast Asia) (possibly originating in Asia). Birds of subspecies A. r. japonicus also move through the western Aleutians in the spring (perhaps

⁴ Buff-bellied Pipit is the common name for this species when found in Asia.

southeast Asia to northeast Asia). Fall migrants are also poorly understood. Both subspecies move through the western Aleutians with *A. r. pacificus* more numerous (rare to fairly common) than *A. r. japonicus*. In springs American Pipits have been recorded from 12 May (Shemya, 1977) to 7 June (Shemya 2010) and in fall from 29 August (Buldir, 1974) to as late as 11 November (Shemya, 1988) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya Gibson found *A. r. pacificus* to be annual and rare in spring and fairly common in fall. Several *A. r. japonicus* were also found in the spring during his studies (Gibson 1981).

American/Buff-bellied Pipits were also found on Shemya 1999-2010. The species was found in six (of nine) springs (1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007). Numbers were generally low, one to four in a season. Birds of the form *japonicus* were seen with confidence in two springs. The species was seen in only four (of seven) falls (2000, 2002, 2006 and 2010). 2000 had two birds and 2006 had one. The fall of 2002 had strong numbers with at least eleven individuals between 4 and 20 September. 2010 had just one individual. Photos of an *A. r. japonicus* were obtained in the spring of 2007 (3 June and 2 June) and are below.



Bohemian Waxwing (Bombycilla garrulous). Bohemian Waxwings nest on both sides of the Pacific and North American and Asian subspecies have been recorded in the Aleutians in very small numbers, with a fair amount of uncertainty as to subspecies. The species had not been seen on Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The first, and only, record for Shemya was in the evening of 10 October 2010 when two birds together were at the Queen's Match site. They were not seen again.



Wood-warblers, Family *Parulidae.* Wood-Warblers (a family of many species) are abundant North American breeders. There have been several accidental records from the western Aleutians including four from Shemya. All records have been in the fall. A

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) was seen on Attu 25 September 1984 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). I saw two Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) on Shemya...one 30 September and 1 October 2000. A quick look at another was on 9 October 2006 off the west end of the runway. A female/immature Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*) was see 2 October 2000. Additionally, a Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*) was found on Shemya 3 October 1977 (Gibson 1981). No photos.

Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*). Savannah Sparrow is a common breeding bird in the eastern Aleutians. It is accidental in fall in the western Aleutians. It had been seen once in the western Aleutians by Gibson, four individuals 31 August through 16 September 1977 (Gibson 1981).

During our surveys in the first decade of the 21st Century on Shemya, Savannah Sparrow was found once more, but not until the fall of 2007. One was glimpsed



briefly 25 September during the passerine fallout that began 24 September. It (or perhaps a second) was found on the shore of Penelope Lake the evening of 2 October. A second Savannah Sparrow gave a brief look on the road by the Lagoon on 21 September 2010. A photo of the collected 2007 specimen provides photo-documentation (above right).

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*). Song Sparrow is common throughout North America. Its range extends into southern Alaska and throughout the Aleutian Islands. In the Aleutians it is a resident and breeder. Nesting can begin as early as the end of April with the first broods about 20 days later. Song Sparrows will produce additional nests, young observed as late as early August (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson described the species on Shemya as "resident, breeder, common" (Gibson 1981).

Song Sparrows on Shemya in the period 1999-2010 were found in very good numbers. The species was most generally found around the island's periphery. Ample evidence of their status as breeders was found, e.g., singing males on territory, courtship behavior, birds carrying food and fecal sacks and recently fledged young (some still with vestiges of down). The earliest indication of broods was 23 May (2007) (adult carrying fecal sack). The latest sign of nesting was a just fledged bird 9 September (2007).

Rigorous transects were not conducted to assess the island's population, but the species was included in nearly weekly Beach Surveys performed during the study period (survey length, 16.02 km). As many as 43 Song Sparrows were recorded 28 September 2000 (2.7 birds per kilometer). Data available for the period 2005-2007 were assessed. In those three years the spring Beach Surveys found an average of 0.7 birds per kilometer and the fall surveys found 1.1 birds per kilometer. The higher fall averages likely reflected the addition of young-of the-year birds to the population. By 2010, if anything, Song Sparrows seemed to be even more numerous on Shemya. Photos of Song Sparrows are presented below.



Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla***).** Golden-crowned Sparrow is a breeder in northwestern North America and in Alaska south of the tundra and out the Alaska Peninsula and in the eastern Aleutians. In the western Aleutians it is casual in fall. All five records prior to 1999 were of juvenile birds, including at least four on Shemya 23-26 September 1984 by D. Sonneborn (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Golden-crowned Sparrow was found once. On 24 September 2006 a bird was found near the bluff north of the east end of the runway. It was found the next day along the north bluffs and good looks were obtained. No photos were obtained.

Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). Darkeyed Junco breeds from New England northwestward to the base of the Alaska Peninsula. The species is casual in winter in the eastern Aleutians and casual or accidental in fall and winter in the central Aleutains (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

There are now two records for the western Aleutians. Both are from Shemya...a very out of range "Slate-colored" form seen



well on 9 October 2000. Jason Gilsdorf found and photographed another slate-colored bird on 17 October 2008.

Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*). Lapland Longspur nests in the northern tundra habitats of the old and new worlds. They are an abundant breeding bird throughout the Aleutians found in spring, summer and fall. In the western Aleutians the males arrive from the end of April to the first week of May. Females arrive about a week later. Earliest fledged young may appear the end of June, but more commonly through July and nesting attempts continue well into the summer (late July). In August small flocks (families?) are found and the size of the flocks builds (merge) into early September. Migrating flocks are noted in mid September and most birds have departed by the end of September (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

Our surveys 1999-2010 found Lapland Longspurs following the pattern described above. In seven springs the average first arrival was 3 May; earliest was 26 April (2005) and the latest was 16 May (2002). We usually returned in mid August to find flocks of five to eight birds throughout the island. By early September flocks of tens of birds up to 100 were found (a journal entry of 1 September 2001 indicates a flock >300). Departure from the island was usually 13-20 September. After the major departure, scattered small flocks and individuals were found until the end of September and individuals (late fledged birds?) were found into early October. For the most part, in the spring, arriving flocks were seen coming from the east (some over-flying the island, continuing to the west). Fall departing flocks departed to the east; with some large flocks passing over Shemya coming from the west. In two falls (2000 and 2002) large flocks (a "broken river" of birds) were seen heading off the island to the southwest on 15 September.

Point count surveys were conducted on Shemya 1999 through 2002. Some idea of the density of Lapland Longspurs can be obtained from those data. In the survey area around the runway, characterized by disturbed habitat and grass meadow and Arctic Foxes present, one pair per 10 hectares was detected. Surveys of the area near the runway in 2010 permitted an additional quantification of longspur numbers on the island. An estimate of nests on the island yielded at least 150.

One aircraft strike involving Lapland Longspurs took place on 10 September 2007 as an aircraft taking off struck a flock with little or no damage (though the mission was aborted). Photos of Lapland Longspurs are below and on the following page.





Little Bunting (*Embreiza pusilla*). Little Bunting breeds across northern Eurasia, but not as far east as Kamchatka. There are three records of accidental birds in the fall in the western Aleutians. Two are from Shemya, 8 Sept 1977 (Gibson) and 24-25 September 1984 (D. Sonneborn). The third record is from Attu, 1983 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The species was NOT found on Shemya during our period of study.

Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*). Rustic Bunting breeds across northern Eurasia and as far east as Kamchatka and Anadyrland. In the western Aleutians it is intermittent in spring and casual in fall. It has been found as early as 26 April (Attu 1999) and as late as 17 June (Buldir 1976). An exceptional day count of 193 was recorded on Attu, 17 May 1998. Fall birds in the western Aleutians (nine occurrences) were from 18 September through 19 October (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found Rustic Bunting each season that he visited Shemya in the 1970s (Gibson 1981).

Rustic Bunting on Shemya 1999-2010 was far from annual. The species was seen in five springs...three birds in the 14 May 2001 fallout, four scattered in the spring season of 2005, single birds 2002 and 2006 and two the spring of 2010. The species was present in three falls...perhaps as many as seven 11-18 October 2005, and good numbers in the fallout of 24 September 2007, plus one bird on 14 October. In September 2007 the passerine fallout produced numerous sightings of Rustic Bunting. In the nine days (24 September-2 October), on average, 7 birds were seen per day, with a high day count of 13 (25 September). A juvenile was found on the island 27-29 September 2010. R. Trotter was able to obtain some photos of the difficult birds, below.



Gray Bunting (*Emberiza variabillis*). Gray Bunting breeds on the southern Kamchatka Peninsula and the islands of East Asia to northern Honshu. It has been recorded three times in the western Aleutians. Attu has one of the records, 29 May 1980 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found one, adult male, 18 May 1977 on Shemya (Gibson 1981).

The third record was on Shemya 27 May 2005, an adult male, found by B. Benter. It was seen several times that day near the outflow creek from Lower Lake. A photo is presented, right.





Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*). Reed Bunting is found as a breeder in central and east Asia, including Kamchatka. It has been a casual visitor in the western Aleutians. The species was sighted on eight occasions 1975-1999. Records are from Buldir, Attu and Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). An adult male was found on Shemya 4 June 1977 (Gibson 1981).

The second Shemya record was an adult male on 4 June 1999 from the island's north side. There were no subsequent records. No photos are available.

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*). Snow Bunting is a circumpolar breeder in Arctic regions. Throughout the Aleutian Chain it is an uncommon to common resident and breeder. A shuffling of winter flocks is evident in April (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found the species on Shemya as a fairly common breeder (Gibson 1981). Winter surveys by the USFWS found Snow Bunting to be the most common passerine species. Their coastal surveys found considerable variability, but averages of 30 were found (did not include inland birds, whose numbers varied with snow cover) and peak counts often exceeded 50 and some years were more than 100 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Snow Bunting exhibited a well defined pattern that showed both summer breeding and winter residence by good numbers of birds from

elsewhere. Our arrival in early spring (mid April) would find small flocks (8-50). As spring progressed the bulk of the birds would leave. By mid May all that remained were several (6-10) pairs that were in preferred territories (males singing) in rocky and boulder areas (below control tower, the harbor rip rap, several boulder fields below the north beach bluffs, the bluff north of the hot cargo pad and behind Hanger 7 and 8). The one summer survey (1999) and the early days of the fall surveys found juvenile birds and family groups. By the end of September modest flocks of a few 10s of birds were to be found around the island and as October progressed several larger (100-200) flocks were seen. Though there were no winter surveys after 2002, the winter surveys referenced above indicate Snow Buntings over-wintered until the onset of early spring prompted dispersal/migration. The origin of the fall-winter-early spring flocks is unknown, but may have been inter-island, altitudinal migrants or, less likely, migration from mainland locations. Photos of Snow Buntings follow.







McKay's Bunting (*Plectrophenas hyperboreus*). McKay's Bunting nests only on St. Matthew and Hall Islands in the northcentral Bering Sea. Winter dispersal takes the species to the coastal areas of western Alaska. Casual or intermittent winter birds are found in the eastern Aleutians, and the central Aleutians has casual or accidental winter visitors (Gibson and Byrd 2007).



McKay's Bunting has been found once in the western Aleutians. That record is from Shemya 2-4 May 2005. A bird with noticeably white back and wings was found among a small flock of Snow Buntings along the south beach road. It gave brief looks that day and the next. It was collected on 4 May. It was a male McKay's Bunting. A photo of the collected bird is shown above.

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*). Brambling is a nester across northern Eurasia from Scandinavia to Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians it is rare to fairly common in spring and rare in fall. The earliest spring Brambling was 1-2 May (2002) and birds were found until 12 June (2000). There is a single record of nesting birds from Attu, 1996. Spring numbers vary considerably from year to year, singles, twos and threes and flocks up to 12. Day counts of more than 100 birds (one, 360+ birds 17 May 1998, Attu) have been reported. In the fall the species is found from the second week of September through mid October. In the fall ones and twos are found with day counts rarely approaching 20 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s Gibson found Brambling on Shemya each season that he visited. Maximum spring count was 17 (29 May 1976) and fall maximum of 24+ 28 September 1978. He makes a convincing argument that Brambling in the Near Islands are moving at the eastern limit of their normal migration, where their Aleutian stopover serves to orient the birds for their next stop (Gibson 1981).

On Shemya 1999-2010 Brambling was found every season. They were (as expected) more common in spring than fall. The biggest spring showing was in 2001 when large numbers arrived in the 14 May fallout...on 14 May a day count of 63 with a flock of 25 and 16 May a count of 176 (flock of 40+). In other springs never fewer than seven were found and usually the season counts were in the low 10's. 2005 found more than 100 and 2010 had a flock of 40. Several falls had season counts of about forty or more individuals...fall 2002 and the fall of 2005, as well as the fallout 24 September to 1 October 2007 when about 30 individuals likely came on the island. The fall of 2010 had singles and small flocks with a total for the season at various locations at 44. Bramblings could be found almost anywhere on the island, but the beach road habitats seem to be favored. In the falls the birds are attracted to the Kamchatka Thistle (*Cirsium kamtschaticum*) (the low bluff north of the sewage treatment plant and selected spots at the base of the north beach bluffs were favored). Several photos of Brambling follow.





Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*). Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch breed in western North America including the eastern Bering Sea islands and the Aleutian chain, including the Commander Islands. Throughout the Aleutians they are considered an uncommon to common resident and breeder. In general, winter flocks begin to disperse the end of March. On islands were the species nests incubation begins around early May. Nesting can continue through the summer with triple-brooding possible. Flocks reform in late summer and some inter-island dispersal is noted. Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch benefited from construction in the Aleutians during and post World War II, using the structures for nest sites (Gibson and Byrd 2007). On Shemya in the 1970s Gibson described them only as "resident breeder, uncommon" (Gibson 1981). During the Shemya winter wildlife surveys of 1988-2002 the species was recorded in small numbers in most years (none noted in 1988-89 and 2001-02). Average beach counts were two to 10 birds, though some counts found 20-30 individuals. As with Snow Buntings, these surveys reflected birds in the coastal habitats where numbers were influenced by snow cover on the island's uplands (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

In 1999-2010 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was very difficult to come by on Shemya. The species was found only in six of the 16 visits. This was likely the result of the time-frame of the visits. Island residents advised us of the presence of the birds during the winter season. In the early part of the decade some residents would have bird feeders on their window sills and described rosy-finches coming to feed and hanging (perching) on the sides of the buildings. After wildlife feeding was prohibited, R. Trotter (personal communication) described small numbers of rosy-finches around abandoned structures in the eastern part of the island in the winter of 2007-08.

The first of the species that we found on Shemya was on 15 May 2001 (back when wildlife was being fed). It was seen on the lawn of the living quarters and had an avian pox which probably delayed its spring departure. The next bird was found in rocks on the north beach 4 June 2004; this was during a short visit and no follow-up observations were possible to explore possible nesting. Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch was found again on the north beach rocks on 17 April 2005 when two birds were present. The two continued and were joined by a third adult the last week of May and the three were last seen 1 June. This may have represented a nesting attempt, though no indicators were seen other than the birds being found in appropriate nesting habitat. The species was last seen late in our fall 2006 visit; the sightings obviously represented fall inter-island dispersal. On 16 October 2006 in the early afternoon flocks of 40, 70 and 30 birds were seen over the eastern part of the island. The weather was clear and the fall's first substantial snow was visible on the mountains of Attu. The next day at about the same time and place a flock of 40 "rushed" over the island flying east. A single bird was found on 18 October on a rock face on the island's northeast shore. And on the visit's final day, 19 October, another flying flock was seen, as were three foraging birds. In the spring of 2010 two birds were found. One on the north bluff on 9 May and one at the Cobra Dane dump on 21 May. The fall of 2010 found a small flock near the power plant the day after the first snow was seen on the peaks of Attu.

The Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches are inter-island, and altitudinal migrants in the Near Islands. They apparently winter on the low elevations (including Shemya) and go to breed at mountain locations (Attu) in the summers. Two photos of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were obtained.





Pine Grosbeak (*Pinicola enucleator*). The subspecies *P. e. kamtschatkensis* from northeast Asia is possible to be found on Shemya, as three spring records are from Attu 1976 (singing red male), 1983 and 1989 (females) (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

The first and only record for Shemya is from the last two weeks of May 2008. On 15 May two immature birds were found behind Hanger 7. A third, similar, bird was found the next day (right) and it was seen at various



locations in the areas of the north central part of the island through 30 May.





Common Rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*). Common Rosefinch is a breeding bird across northern Eurasia as far east as Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians it is intermittent in late spring and early summer and there are two records from the fall. Gibson and Byrd cite eight spring records from Attu and Buldir. Red males were observed May 2000 and 21 June 2004 on Buldir. The two fall records were from Shemya. D. Sonneborn found two females/immature males 24 September 1984 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The other Shemya fall record was by Gibson when a female/immature male was observed 31 August 1977 (Gibson 1981).

Common Rosefinch was found just two seasons in the period 1999-2010 on Shemya. It was seen in the southwest part of the island on 8 June 2007. The bird was collected the following day. The spring of 2010 presented two sightings of Common Rosefinch. Two female/juvenile plumaged birds were found 13 June first along the runway and later along the north beach road. A third rosefinch was found and gave good looks near the east end of the runway in the evening of the same day. Below is a photo of the 2007 bird and one of the (same) collected bird to provide photo-documentation.



Common Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea***).** Common Redpoll breeds across northern Eurasia and North America. The species migrates to temperate latitudes for the winter (Shimba 2007). In the western Aleutians the species is rare or uncommon at any season, and occasionally common. Expect singles up to small flocks less than 10. The western Aleutians have seen irruptions of the species in midsummer and winter (Gibson and Byrd 2007). The 1970s on Shemya found the species in rare numbers in each season visited (Gibson 1981). During the winter surveys in the 1990s Common Redpolls were found in four winters (peak was 20 in January 1996 (Byrd and Scharf 2003).

In the period 1999-2010 on Shemya our visits usually found good numbers of Common Redpolls. They were recorded every season except the summer visit of 1999 and the fall of 2002. My journals show only one bird was found in spring 1999, spring 2004 (10 day visit) and spring 2007. Visits in fall 2000, spring 2001, spring 2002, fall 2007, spring 2008, spring 2010 and fall 2010 found modest numbers (13, 11, 8, 8, 6, 18 and 3 respectively). Other seasons had good numbers of Common Redpolls including flocks of birds. The fall of 2001 had a flock 20-30 on 3 October; spring 2005 also had a flock of 20-30, 11-17 September; spring 2006 had a large irruption when more than 100 arrived briefly on the island on 29 May, and the fall of 2006 had a flock of 35-40 on 2 and 3 October. Finally, R. Howard (personal communication) reported a large number of

Common Redpolls on Shemya 10-17 December 2000 (10-100 birds). Photos of Common Redpolls are below.



Hoary (Arctic) Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*). Hoary Redpoll breeds in tundra habitat in the Arctic of Eurasia and North America and are sedentary to partially migratory (Shimba 2007). In the western Aleutian Islands the species is intermittent to casual in any season. The careful study of birds on Attu during the period of Attour found good evidence of breeding Hoary Redpolls in 1979, '81, '82 and '93 (Gibson and Byrd 2007). In the 1970s on Shemya, Gibson found only one Hoary Redpoll, 9-14 May 1975 (Gibson 1981). Winter surveys on Shemya did not locate Hoary Redpolls.

In the period 1999-2010 on Shemya, Hoary Redpolls were sought whenever the more abundant Common Redpoll were encountered. Hoary Redpolls are at times difficult to distinguish from their common cousins as they exhibit a wide range of plumage variation between the lightest Common Redpolls and the lightest Hoary Redpolls (most difficult in fall). Hence, some of our records are open somewhat to

question. A single Hoary Redpoll was seen 21 September 2000 (Commons seen earlier that day). A Hoary Redpoll was seen with a Common Redpoll on 22 May 2001 (high confidence). The species was seen three times in the spring of 2005: one, 17 May, one with four Common Redpolls 23 May and two along the runway (after studying a flock of 12 Commons – high confidence) on 26 May. The fall of 2006 found a pink male on 11-12 October. It is pictured right, note the minimal streaking on the undertail coverts, diagnostic of



Hoary Redpolls (Sibley 2000). The spring of 2008 (27 May) found two Hoary Redpolls. In the spring of 2010 a flock of seven was found on 29 May, and two birds were found with Common Redpolls on 3 May.

Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*). Pine Siskin is a breeding bird of North America as far west as Kodiak Island. The species is a casual visitor in the Aleutians fall, winter and spring (eastern Aleutians). In the western Aleutians it had been recorded twice (prior to 2007) (Gibson and Byrd 2007). A flock of up to eight was found on Shemya along the coast 17 January to 5 February 1996 (Meehan, et. al. 1997).

Pine Siskin was found on Shemya twice in the period 1999-2010. A single immature



male was found and collected 8 October 2001. A second siskin was located and photographed by R. Trotter (personal communication) on 15 October 2007. This fall bird was indistinguishable from Eurasian Siskin.

Oriental Greenfinch (*Carduelis sinica*). Oriental Greenfinch is a breeding bird of East Asia to include Kamchatka and Sakhalin Island into Manchuria and southern China. The northern population is migratory (Shimba 2007). The species has been found in the western Aleutians intermittently in the spring (mid May to mid June) and casually in falls (late August to late September). Records come from Buldir, Attu and Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). Gibson found a family group of four on Shemya 5 September 1977 and possible additional birds through 18 September of that year (Gibson 1981).

The most recent series of surveys on Shemya, 1999-2010, recorded Oriental Greenfinch in only one season, spring 2007. A flock of five birds was flushed west of the sewage treatment plant on 17 May; they could not be relocated. Two birds were seen flying northeast of Upper Lake the evening of 21 May. No photos were obtained.

Eurasian Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*). Eurasian Bullfinch breeds across northern Eurasia to Kamchatka. In the western Aleutians it is a casual spring visitor; there are eight records from Attu, Buldir and Shemya (Gibson and Byrd 2007). It was recorded once in fall (a female on Shemya 27 September 1977) (Gibson 1981).

There are three spring records of Eurasian Bullfinch from Shemya, all in the period 1999-2010. A female was on the island 15-23 May 2001. The spring of 2005 was a phenomenal bullfinch season. Up to seven birds were present 27 May to 6 June. Five of the birds were bright red males (photo below, left) (three together) and there was one pair. In the spring of 2010 D. Shirley located a male (below, right) on the road by June Lake.





Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*). Hawfinch breeds in northern Eurasia from Europe through southern Siberia to East Asia including south-central Kamchatka (Shimba 2007). They are intermittent in spring in the western Aleutians. They are found from the second week of May to mid-June. There is one mid-summer record on Buldir 9-26 July 1991 (Gibson and Byrd 2007).

In 1999-2010 at Shemya, Hawfinch was found only in spring, one to three in each of five years. One was recorded 8 June 1999. Two, a female and a male, separately, on 14-17 May and 22-23 May 2001, and perhaps a third 3-6 Jun. In 2002 one bird was seen at and below a window sill bird feeder at Building 599. The next Hawfinch was found between Loon Cove and the harbor 28 May-3 June 2005 it was in very worn winter plumage. Spring of 2008 found one (perhaps up to three) 15-26 May. Four of the birds were photographed and they are below.



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Great Knot observed on Shemya Island on 24 May 2011. Photo by Robert Trotter.

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Parasitic, 115 Pomarine, 115 Junco, Dark-eyed, 150 Junco hyemalis, 150 Kestrel, Eurasian, 59 Kittiwake Black-legged, 102 Red-legged, 103 Knot Great, 84, 164 Red, 84 Lanius cristatus, 128 Lanius excubitor, 128 Lapwing, Northern, 64 Lark Horned, 132 Sky, 131 Larus argentatus, 107 Larus canus, 106 Larus crassirostris, 105 Larus fuscus, 108 Larus glaucescens, 110 Larus hyperboreus, 112 Larus ridibundus, 104 Larus schistisagus, 108 Leucosticte tephrocotis, 156 Limicola faleinellus, 96 Limnodromus scolopaceus, 99 Limosa lapponica, 82 Limosa limosa, 81 Locustella sp., 134 Longspur, Lapland, 151 Loon Arctic, 42 Common, 43 Pacific. 43 Red-throated. 41 Yellow-billed, 44 Luscinia calliope, 138 Luscinia svecica, 138 Mallard, 16 Melanitta fusca, 32 Melanitta nigra, 33 Melanitta perspicillata, 32 Melospiza melodia, 149 Merganser Common, 38 Red-breasted, 40 Mergellus albellus, 38 Mergus merganser, 38 Mergus servator, 40 Moorhen, Common, 63 Motacilla alba, 144 Motacilla cinerea, 144 Motacilla tschutschensis, 143 Murre

Common, 116 Thick-billed, 117 Murrelet Ancient, 119 Species, 119 Muscicapa griseisticata, 137 Muscicapa sibirica, 137 Needletail, White-throated, 126 Night Heron, Black-crowned, 56 Numenius madagascriensis, 80 Numenius phaeopus, 79 Numenius tahitiensis, 80 Nycticorax nycticorax 56 Oceanodroma furcata, 50 Oceanodroma leucorhoa, 51 Oenanthe oenanthe, 139 Onychoprion aleuticus, 113 Owl Short-eared, 125 Snowy, 124 Oystercatcher, Black, 71 Parulidae, sp, 147 Passerculus sandwichensis, 149 Petrel Mottled, 49 Phalacrocorax pelagicus, 53 Phalacrocorax urile, 52 Phalarope Red. 102 Red-necked, 101 Phalaropus fulicarius, 102 Phalaropus lobatus, 101 Philonachus pugnax, 98 Phoebastria immutabilis, 47 Phoebatria nigripes, 48 Phylloscopus borealis, 135 Phylloscopus fuscatus, 135 Phylloscopus sibilatrix, 135 Pinicola enucleator, 157 Pintail, Northern, 18 Pipit American/Buff-bellied, 147 Olive-backed, 146 Pechora, 147 Red-throated, 147 Plectrophenax hyperboreus, 154 Plectrophenax nivalis, 153 Plover Black-bellied (Grey), 64 Common Ringed, 68 Pacific-Golden, 65 Lesser Sand, 67 Little Ringed, 70 Semipalmated, 69 Pluvialis fulva, 65 Pluvialis spuatarola, 64 Pochard, Common, 25

Podiceps auritus, 45 Podeceps grisegena, 46 Poysticta stelleri, 29 Prunella montanella, 143 Pterodroma inexpectata, 49 Puffin Horned, 121 Tufted, 122 Puffinus tenuirostris, 49 Pyrrhula pyrrhula, 160 Raven, Common, 129 Redhead, 25 Redpoll Common, 158 Hoary, 159 Redshank, Spotted, 75 Rhodostethis rosea, 105 Riparia riparia, 133 Rissa brevirostris, 103 Rissa tridactyla, 103 Robin, American, 141 Rosefinch, Common, 157 Rosy-Finch, Gray-crowned, 155 Rubythroat, Siberian, 138 Ruff, 98 Sanderling, 85 Sandpiper Baird's. 90 Broad-billed, 96 Buff-breasted, 97 Common, 72 Curlew, 96 Green, 73 Marsh, 77 Pectoral, 90 Rock. 92 Semipalmated, 85 Sharp-tailed, 91 Terek. 71 Western, 86 Wood, 77 Scaup Greater, 27 Lesser, 28 Scoter Black, 33 Surf, 32 White-winged, 32 Shearwater, Short-tailed, 49 Shoveler, Northern, 17 Shrike, Brown, 128 Northern (Great Grey), 128 Siskin, Pine, 159 Smew, 38 Snipe, Common, 100

Somateria mollissima, 29 Solmateria spectiabillis, 29 Sparrow Golden-crowned, 150 Savannah, 149 Song, 149 Starling, European, 142 Stercorarius longicaudus, 116 Stercorarius parasiticus, 115 Stercorarius pomarinus, 115 Sterna hirundo, 114 Sterna paradisaea, 114 Stilt, Black-winged, 71 Stint Little, 87 Long-toed, 89 Red-necked, 86 Temminck's, 88 Storm-Petrel Fork-tailed, 50 Leach's, 51 Sturnus vulgaris, 143 Swallow Bank, 133 Barn, 133 Tree, 132 Violet-green, 133 Swan Tundra, 11 Whooper, 12 Swift, Fork-tailed, 126 Synthliboramphus antiquus, 119 Tachycineta bicolor, 133 Tachycineta thaiassina, 133 Tarsiger cyanurus, 139 Tattler Gray-tailed, 73 Wandering, 74 Teal Baikal, 21 Green-winged, Old World, 23 Green-winged, New World, 24 Tern Aleutian, 113 Arctic, 114 Common, 114 Thrush Dusky, 141 Evebrowed, 140 Swainson's, 140 Tringa brervipes, 73 Tringa erythropus, 75 Tringa flavipes, 76 Tringa incana, 74 Tringa glareola, 77 Tringa melanoleuca, 75

Tringa nebulara, 76 Tringa ochropus, 73 Trings stagnatillis, 77 Troglodytes troglodytes, 134 Tryngites subruficllis, 97 Turdus migratorius, 142 Turdus naumanni, 141 Turdus obscurus, 140 Turnstone, Ruddy, 83 Uria aalge, 116 Uria lomvia, 117 Vanellus vanellus, 64 Waxwing, Bohemian, 148 Wagtail Eastern Yellow, 143 Gray, 144 White, 144 Warbler Arctic, 135 Dusky, 135 Wood, 135 Wheatear, Northern, 139 Wigeon American, 14 Eurasian, 14 Hybrid, American X Eurasian, 15 Whimbrel, 79 Woodpecker, Great Spotted, 127 Wood-warblers Townsend's, 149 Yellow-rumped, 149 Wilson's, 149 Wren, Pacific, 134 Xenus cinereus, 71 Yellowlegs Greater, 75 Lesser, 76 Zonotrichia atricapilla, 150



Attachment 2: Map of Lake Names, Shemya Island, Alaska





Bolo	d* = Breeding	A	Μ	J	J	А	S	0	Ν	D	J	F	Μ
WA	TERFOWL (cont.)												
	King Eider		а										
	Common Eider												
	Harlequin Duck												
	Surf Scoter	С	С									С	
	White-winged Scoter												
	Black Scoter												
	Long-tailed Duck												
	Bufflehead												
	Common Goldeneye												
	Barrow's Goldeneye	с	с							с			
	Smew						С			с			
	Common Merganser								С	с	с		
	Red-breasted Merganser												
LOC	NS and GREBES												
	Red-throated Loon												
	Arctic Loon									с			
	Pacific Loon												
	Common Loon												
	Yellow-billed Loon	i	i				i		i		i	i	
	Horned Grebe	-	-						-				
	Red-necked Grebe												
ALB	ATROSSES, SHEARWATERS,	а	nd	F	۶E	TF	RE	LS	3				
	Lavsan Albatross	Í											
	Black-footed Albatross						с	с	Π				
	Northern Fulmar		i	i									
	Mottled Petrel							а					
	Short-tailed Shearwater							-					
	Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel		с			с	с		Т				
	Leach's Storm-Petrel	m	с			с	с						
COF	RMORANTS												
	Red-faced Cormorant*												
	Pelagic Cormorant*												
HEF	RONS and BITTERNS												
	Gray Heron		а										
	Great Egret	а										а	
	Intermediate Egret						а						
	Black-crowned Night-Heron	а		_									
HAV	VKS, EAGLES and FALCONS												
	Bald Eagle	а					а						
	White-tailed Eagle	а	а										
	Steller's Sea-Eagle												а
	Northern Harrier						с	с			с		
	Northern Goshawk		а				а						
	Rough-legged Hawk	с	с					с				с	
	Eurasian Kestrel		с				с	с					
	Eurasian Hobby												
	Gyrfalcon		а										
	Peregrine Falcon												
RAI	_S and COOTS												
	Common Moorhen (Asian)							а					
CRA	ANES												
	Sandhill Crane												
PLC	VERS												
	Northern Lapwing							а					
	Black-bellied Plover		i				i	i					$\ \overline{\ } \ $

Γ.

Bold* = Breeding	A	М	J	J	A	s	0	Ν	D	J	F	М
PLOVERS (cont.)										_		
Pacific Golden-Plover	Π									Π		
Lesser Sand-Plover	m	Π			Π						1	
Common Ringed Plover	m	а										
Semipalmated Plover	m	i	i			i						
Little Ringed Plover	m	a	÷.			·						
Eurasian Dotterel	m	Ĩ			С	С						
OYSTERCATCHERS					0	U						
Black Ovstercatcher	111	a		a								
STILTS and AVOCETS		ľ		ч								
Black-winged Stilt			a									
	Δ	11	띠	5	ш					щ	ш	
Terek Sandniner	Ĥ				~	2						
Common Sandpiper		i	;		:	i						
Groop Sandpiper			- -		÷	-						
Crow toiled Tettler			a		-							
					-	-						
Wandening Tallier												
		а				С						
Greater Yellowlegs		а	÷									
Common Greenshank		1	1			С						
Lesser Yellowlegs	С	С				С						
Marsh Sandpiper		а										
Wood Sandpiper	ļ											
Whimbrel		μ.										
Bristle-thighed Curlew		С										
Far Eastern Curlew		С										
Black-tailed Godwit		С										
Bar-tailed Godwit					i							
Ruddy Turnstone												
Great Knot		а										
Red Knot	ш	Ш			С	С	Ш			Ш		
Sanderling												
Semipalmated Sandpiper						а						
Western Sandpiper		а			i	i						
Red-necked Stint		С										
Little Stint						а						
Temminck's Stint		а			С	С						
Long-toed Stint												
Baird's Sandpiper		С			С	c						
Pectoral Sandpiper		i										
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper												
Rock Sandpiper												
Dunlin												
Curlew Sandpiper		а	а			а						
Broad-billed Sandpiper					С	с						
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Π					с						
Ruff	Π	с										
Long-billed Dowitcher	m				Π							
Common Snipe	m	Ĩ			T			m				
Red-necked Phalarope	m	a			Π		m	m		Ħ		
Red Phalarope	m	a			Î							
GULLS and TERNS		<u>~</u> ۱			1.00							
Black-legged Kittiwake										Π	Π	
Red-legged Kittiwake	m	a			T	a				-		
Black-headed Gull	h	Ĩ			H	Í	۲	m		-		
Ross's Gull	h	h			Ť		а	m		Ť		

Bold* = Breeding	A	М	J	J	А	s	0	Ν	D	J	F	М
GULLS and TERNS (cont.)												
Black-tailed Gull	С	С	С									
Mew Gull		i	i			i	i	i				
Herring Gull (vegae)										а		
Lesser Black-backed Gull						а						
Slaty-backed Gull				а								
Glaucous-winged Gull												
Glaucous Gull												
Aleutian Tern					с							
Common Tern		с										
Arctic Tern					с							
JAEGERS												
Pomarine Jaeger	III	а										
Parasitic Jaeger	m											
Long-tailed Jaeger	h	с	С	С		с						
AUKS MURRES and PUFFINS			•			-						
Common Murre	m	Π										
Thick-billed Murre		а				а			i	i	i	
Pigeon Guillemot		Ĩ				ŭ			i	i	i	
Marbled Murrelet	┢──	C		-		c	-		- C	.	m	
Kittlitz's Murrelet	┢──								0			
	h											2
Barakeet Auklet	┝╍╍					2	2					a
						a	a					
Least Auklet					_	_	a				a	a
					а	a						
						а						
	H											
										Ш		
CUCKOOS	IIII											111
			С									
	Ш	а	а									
OWLS	1	-										
Snowy Owl												
Short-eared Owl						а						
SWIFTS	TTT	1										
White-throated Needletail		а										
Fork-tailed Swift		С			С	С	С					
WOODPECKERS												
Great Spotted Woodpecker		а				а						
SHRIKES												
Brown Shrike			а				а					
Northern Shrike							С					
CROWS and JAYS			_	_								
Common Raven												
LARKS												
Sky Lark												
Horned Lark							а					
SWALLOWS								•				
Tree Swallow		с	с				с					
Violet-green Swallow						а	а					
Bank Swallow		с			Π	с						
Barn Swallow		а	а		а							
WRENS		_										
Pacific Wren												
OLD WORLD WARBLERS												
Locustella Warbler (sp)						а						Π
	للشنيه	وأوادته	and a second	وأستعجم	وأختجه		للشنع	للمتحج	an ini	and the second second	and also	and shares
Bold* = Breeding	А	Μ	J	J	А	S	0	Ν	D	J	F	Μ
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OLD WORLD WARBLERS (cont.)				-								
Wood Warbler							а					
Dusky Warbler	Π					а						
Kamchatka Leaf Warbler	Π		i			i	i					
OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS												
Taiga Flycatcher	Τ	i	i		Π						Π	
Dark-sided Flycatcher	m		а			а						T
Grav-streaked Flycatcher	T		i			i	i					
THRUSHES												
Siberian Rubythroat	III	III										
Bluethroat	m	а										
Red-flanked Bluetail	h	С	С			с						
Northern Wheatear	m	a	a			-						
Swainson's Thrush	m	-					а					
Evebrowed Thrush	m						ŭ					
	h	c	c				-					
American Robin	-		Ŭ				2	2				
							u	u				
European Starling	T	T			Π	2					ТП	
				ш		a						
Siberian Accentor	TIT	IIII				~						
						d					Ш	
	IIII	1										
						С						
	-	С					С					
			_			_	-					
Olive-backed Pipit		-										
Pechora Pipit		a	Щ.									
Red-throated Pipit		1	1			1	1					
American Pipit								а		Ш		
WAXWINGS	TTT											
Bohemian Waxwing							а			Ш		
WOOD-WARBLERS	T	TTT			F FFFF							
Yellow-rumped Warbler	ļ					а						
Townsend's Warbler	ļ						а					
Wilson's Warbler							а					
SPARROWS, BUNTINGS and allies	}										1111	
Savannah Sparrow						а						
Song Sparrow												
Golden-crowned Sparrow						а						
Dark-eyed Junco							а					
Lapland Longspur												
Little Bunting	ļ				а							
Rustic Bunting												
Gray Bunting		а										
Reed Bunting			а									
Snow Bunting												
McKay's Bunting		а										
FINCHES												
Brambling												
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch												
Pine Grosbeak	Γ	а										
Common Rosefinch			с		с	с						
Common Redpoll												
Hoary Redpoll		с				с						
Pine Siskin	Π						а			а		
Oriental Greenfinch	m	2				2				Ш		

Bold* = Breeding	AM	JJ	AS	sic	N	DJ	١F	М
FINCHES								
Eurasian Bullfinch	С	с		;				
Hawfinch		сс	;					



Far eastern Curlew

214 confirmed species and counting....

17 species confirmed breeding

This checklist was compiled from data in the reports:

Schwitters, Michael T. 2014. Bird species found at Shemya Island, Alaska 1999-2010. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report. Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Homer, Alaska.

Gibson, D. and Byrd, G.V. 2007. Birds of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska. Series in Ornithology 1. Nuttal Ornithological Club and American Ornithologists Union.

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