

Gustavus Bird Sightings

March - May, 2012

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Cold temperatures kept ponds around town frozen through March. Ponds began to thaw in April when temperatures regularly went above 50 degrees, nearing 60 degrees on several days. May was unusually cool and wet with daytime temperatures in the 40s and low 50s and only one day in the entire month without precipitation. Green up was late and the arrival of many birds was later than normal.

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Bruce Paige returned to Gustavus on 8 May.

On 2 May I began regular trips into Glacier Bay as a National Park Service marine mammal observer aboard cruise ships. -NKD

Brant

Twenty-one on 7 April were the first reported. -NKD

Brant were then seen regularly through the end of the period along Gustavus beaches and in Glacier Bay. -NKD, BBP

Some high counts: four hundred on 21 April east of town, two hundred on May 1 west of town, three hundred on 8 May east of town, two hundred on 10 May in Johns Hopkins inlet at the top of Glacier Bay. -NKD

Cackling Goose

One on 9 April was the first reported. -NKD

Small numbers were seen regularly from 27 April through the end of the period along Gustavus beaches and along the Salmon River. -NKD, BBP

Some high counts: **eighty** on 6 May in the west arm of Glacier Bay (NKD), twenty-five on 12 and 18 May (BBP), twenty-three on 23 May (NKD, BBP).

Eurasian Wigeon

One on 4 March in town. -NKD

Two on 21 April and one on 28 April east of town near Rink Creek. -NKD

One on 1 May west of town. -NKD

Redhead

Three on 8 and 9 May on a pond near the airport. -BBP, NKD

Ring-necked Duck

Thirty-five on 8 May on ponds near the airport was a high count. -NKD

Yellow-billed Loon

One on 28 April near the town dock. -NKD

One to four were seen regularly from 17 May to the end of the period in the west arm of Glacier Bay with five there on 19 May. -NKD

One on 20 May in Bartlett Cove. -NKD

Osprey

One on 28 April east of town. -NKD

One on 16 May over Bartlett Cove. - TL

One on 20 May near town. -BBP

Golden Eagle

One on 5 May in the upper west arm of Glacier Bay. -NKD

Peregrine Falcon

One on 4 March west of town. -NKD

One on 28 April near town. -NKD

One on 10 May west of town. -BBP

One on 18 May near town. -BBP

One on 21 and 30 May east of town. -BBP

American Coot

One from 24 April to 8 May on a pond near the airport. -NKD, JFS, BBP

Shorebird high count

A minimum of 30,000 shorebirds were east of town near Rink Creek on 30 April. Most were **Western Sandpipers** with an estimated several thousand **Dunlin**, one thousand **Short-billed Dowitchers**, 400 **Black-bellied Plovers** and small numbers of other shorebirds. -NKD

The peak in shorebird numbers was brief. There were only about 9,000 shorebirds on 28 April in the Rink Creek area and 3,000 shorebirds on 1 May west of town. -NKD

American Golden-Plover

One on 15 May west of the Salmon River. -NKD

Ninety on 17 and 18 May on the golf course. -BBP, NKD

Numbers of American Golden-Plovers on and around the golf course steadily declined in the days after 18 May with only five there on 23 May. -BBP, NKD

Pacific Golden-Plover

One on 30 April east of town near Rink Creek. -NKD

Four on 4 May on the golf course. -NKD

Nineteen on 9 May on the golf course. -NKD

Five on 10 May west of town. -BBP

Twenty-one on 12 May on the golf course. -BBP

Nine on 14 May on the golf course. -NKD

Three on 16 May east of town. -BBP

Three on 17 May on the golf course. -BBP
Two on 19 and 20 May on the golf course. -NKD, BBP

Solitary Sandpiper

Two on 4 May at a pond in town. -NKD

Hudsonian Godwit

One on 8 May near the mouth of the Salmon River. -NKD
Three on 10 May at the mouth of the Salmon River. -BBP
One on 15 May east of the town dock. -BBP

Bar-tailed Godwit

One on 8 and 10 May at the mouth of the Salmon River. -NKD, BBP



This Bar-tailed Godwit was with Marbled and Hudsonian Godwits at the mouth of the Salmon River on 8 and 10 May. Photographed here on 8 May by Nat Drumheller.

Marbled Godwit

Six on 8 May at the mouth of the Salmon River. -NKD
Two on 10 May at the mouth of the Salmon River. -BBP
Two on 11 May south of Bartlett Cove. -KU
One on 23 May near the town dock. -NKD

Red Knot

Seven on 9 May, three on 10 May, and two on 12 May near the Salmon River. -NKD, BBP
Three on 14 May and seven on 15 May east of the town dock. -BBP

Pectoral Sandpiper

The high count was six hundred and seventy on 18 May on the golf course. -BBP

Aleutian Tern

One on 17 May, two on 22 May, and four on 29 May at the entrance to the west arm of Glacier Bay. -NKD

Caspian Tern

Four on 8 May near town were the first reported. -NKD

Small numbers were then seen regularly near town and in Bartlett Cove through the end of the period. -NKD, BBP

The high count was nine on 16 May east of town. -BBP

One on 22 May was in Queen Inlet in Glacier Bay. -NKD

Long-tailed Jaeger

Eleven on 27 May at the entrance to the west arm of Glacier Bay was an unusually high number. -NKD

Thick-billed Murre

One on 16 May near Gloomy Knob in Glacier Bay's west arm was a first spring record and one of only a few records for Glacier Bay. -KJ, EJ



This Thick-billed Murre (left) with the Common Murre (right) was in Glacier Bay on 16 May near Gloomy Knob. -Photo by Kurt Johnson

Horned Puffin

At least one on 20 May in Glacier Bay. -CJN This was the only report for the period. I did not start seeing Horned Puffins in Glacier Bay until June which was late. -NKD

Eurasian Collared-Dove

The two resident doves at Laurie Ross's home were not seen there after sometime in early April.

One on 18 March in town. -NKD

One on about 27 March at Elfin Cove near Cross Sound that stayed for a while. -BS

One on 5 April and 28 May in town near the Salmon River. -BS, NKD

One on 14 May in town. -SAL

One on 22 May in Queen Inlet in Glacier Bay. -NKD

Great Horned Owl

One to two through the first half of March in the Rink Creek area. -WC

There were later observations in the Rink Creek area by other observers without details.

Northern Pygmy-Owl

One on 1 and 4 March in town. -JS, LMR

One almost daily from 3 March to about 17 March in the Good River neighborhood. -PB

One on 3 March near the beach west of town. -NKD

One on 13 March in town. -LN

One on 23 March at Bartlett Cove. -PBSV

One heard on five dates from 11 March to 7 April near my cabin in town. -NKD

One on 28 March in the Good River neighborhood. -NKD

One on 4 April in town. -PBSV

One on 28 May hooting at about 500 feet elevation near the Falls Creek road east of town. -BBP

Short-eared Owl

One to two from 6 April to 28 April around the Salmon River and golf course in town. -NKD, KN

One on 28 May west of the Salmon River. -NKD

Northern Saw-whet Owl

One on 1 March in town. -KN

One on 14 March and on several later dates in the Rink Creek area. -WC

One heard regularly from 3 April through late May in the Good River neighborhood. -PB and others

One seen on 4 and 5 March near my cabin in town. One heard there on 4 April and then nightly from 8 April through the end of the period. This owl entered a nest box briefly on a number of dates prior to hooting. There were no indications of nesting in the nest boxes. -NKD

Vaux's Swift

Two on 23 and 26 May and one on 28 May over a pond near the airport. -NKD, BBP

Rufous Hummingbird

Two different birds on 12 April were the first reported. -JO, JFS

Downy Woodpecker

One on 19 March near the airport. -NKD

American Three-toed Woodpecker

One on 24 April at Bartlett Cove. -NKD

At least three drumming on 20 May at Bartlett Cove. -NKD

Olive-sided Flycatcher

One on 19 May, two on 20 May, and one on 27 May at Bartlett Cove. -NKD

One on 5/28 near the airport. -NKD

Western Wood-Pewee

One on 5/20 at Bartlett Cove. -NKD

One on 25, 26, and 28 May near the airport. -BBP, NKD

Warbling Vireo

One on 28 May near the airport. -NKD, BBP

This is only the second or third record for Gustavus/Glacier Bay depending on whether you consider the May and June 2010 sightings as one or two records. (Note: this was followed by two other sightings at different locations in June.)

Horned Lark

One on 21 April east of town. -NKD

Thirteen on 28 April east of town. -NKD

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

One on 23 May over a pond near the airport. -Bruce Paige

Cliff Swallow

One on 23 and 25 May over a pond near the airport. -NKD, BBP

Red-breasted Nuthatch

None reported.

Golden-crowned Sparrow

Two birds that wintered near the town dock continued to come to bird seed there through March. -NKD

Small numbers of **Common Redpolls** were in the area during the first week of March.

Pine Siskins were seen in small numbers through the period with a high count of two hundred on 3 March. -NKD

The only crossbills reported were a few **Red Crossbills** on 28 May east of town near the Falls Creek road. -BBP