

Gustavus Bird Sightings
December 2010 - February 2011
Nat Drumheller, natdrumheller@hotmail.com

Contributors: Nate Borson (NB), Nat Drumheller (NKD), Dena Matkin (DM), Sally McLaughlin (SAL), Janet Neilson (JN), Kim Ney (KN), Kimber Owen (KSO), Laurie Ross (LR), Jeff Sauer (JS), Marieke Slovin (MDS), Greg Streveler (GPS), Phoebe Vanselow (PBSV)

NKD was out of the area from 14 January to 3 February.

Brant

Three were west of town on 25 December. -MDS (A photo taken through a scope shows the birds well enough to identify them.)

Trumpeter Swan

Trumpeter Swans were seen regularly through the period. -multiple observers
Forty-one were counted on 18 December during the Christmas Bird Count. -multiple observers
Thirty-five were at the mouth of the Bartlett River in Bartlett Cove on 17 December. -NKD
Thirty-two were in Bartlett Cove on 20 January. -PBSV
Thirty, of which twelve were immature birds, were in Bartlett Cove on 6 February. -NKD

Gadwall

Small numbers were seen through the period on rivers in Gustavus and at the mouth of the Bartlett River in Bartlett Cove. The high count was fourteen at the mouth of the Bartlett River on 12 February. -NKD

Canvasback

Two were in Bartlett Cove on 15 December. -NKD, PBSV

Black Scoter

As usual, Black Scoters were seen through the period near the beaches west of town.
Four hundred were estimated in one flock on 9 December. -NKD
Four hundred and seventy-eight were counted on 18 December on the Christmas Bird Count with four hundred west of town (NKD) and seventy-eight near town (MDS). This is a new high count for the area.

Hooded Merganser

Hooded Mergansers have become increasingly rare here in recent years, so it is worth noting one was on the Good River on 19 February. -NKD

Red-throated Loon

I saw Red-throated Loons in Bartlett Cove on six dates during the period with a high count of four on 18 February. -NKD
One was off Gustavus on 1 January. -NKD

Yellow-billed Loon

One was in Bartlett Cove on 3 January. -NKD

Western Grebe

One was in Bartlett Cove on 14 December. -NKD, JS

One was in Bartlett Cove on 3 January. -NKD

Sharp-shinned Hawk

One was in town on 19 December. -SAL

One was at my cabin in town on 14 February. -NKD

Red-tailed Hawk

One dark Red-tailed Hawk flew from Gustavus over Pleasant Island on 13 December. -NKD

Merlin

One was along the park road north of town on 1 January. -NKD, MDS

One was above the beach east of the town dock on 7 January. -NKD

Peregrine Falcon

One was along the beach east of town on 3 January attacking a flock of Dunlin. -NKD

Sandhill Crane

Three Sandhill Cranes were seen in late November (PBSV). Up to three cranes continued to be seen and/or heard around Gustavus by multiple observers into early December. It appeared that these were two adults and one juvenile. The last time the juvenile crane was reported was in the state Crane Flats west of town on 12/9 (NKD). Two adult cranes continued to be seen through 29 December by multiple observers. A dead juvenile crane was found in the state Crane Flats on 1 January (NKD, MDS).

Dunlin

Dunlin were seen regularly through the period with high counts of about 2,500 east of town near Rink Creek on 7 January and 5 February. -NKD

On 7 January and 5 February there was at least one Dunlin that had been banded in August 2005 at the Tutakoke River on the YK Delta. Two hundred and eighty-six Dunlin were banded at that time and at least one bird from that group has been seen every winter in Gustavus since December 2005.

Also observed on 7 January was a bird banded at Tutakoke on 9 September 2010. Twelve adults were banded at that time. Another bird from this group was sighted in Taiwan in December 2010.

Sightings by NKD.

Banding and related information and from Dan Ruthrauff, USGS.

Sanderling

Sanderlings were seen regularly through the period with a high count of about two hundred east of town near Rink Creek on 7 January with a large Dunlin flock. -NKD

Rock Sandpiper

Based on my observations, Rock Sandpiper numbers were low this winter. It is possible they stayed well west of town beyond the area I frequented.

The high count for the period was one hundred and seventy-five on 18 December. -NKD
Ninety were near town on 31 December. -NKD

Long-billed Dowitcher

One was south of the airport on 2 January. This bird flushed from a stream and then landed within view briefly. It was identified from Short-billed Dowitcher by its call. -NKD

Wilson's Snipe

Two were in west Gustavus on 3 December and one was there on 18 December. -DM
One was south of the airport on 20 and 21 February. -NKD

Eurasian Collared-Dove

At least one Eurasian Collared-Dove continued in town through December and into early January. -NKD and others

Four collared-doves were seen in town in the Glen's Ditch neighborhood on 7 January and were heard cooing. At least two were seen and heard regularly through the end of the period at this location and were seen mating and carrying sticks into a spruce tree on 14 January. -KSO, LR, and others

These are the first winter records for Eurasian Collared-Dove in the area.

Snowy Owl

One was east of town along the base of Excursion Ridge on 18 December. -KN, NB

Great Horned Owl

One was seen in town on 31 December. -NKD, MDS

One was seen south of the airport on 20 February. -NKD

Northern Pygmy-Owl

One was seen in town on 1 December and 19 December. -NKD

One was heard at Bartlett Cove on 24 January. -JN

One was heard near my cabin in town on 4, 5, 21, and 24 February. -NKD

One was heard north of town on 20 February. -NKD

Short-eared Owl

One was at the golf course on 25 February. -NKD

Northern Saw-whet Owl

One was seen west of town in the state Crane Flats on 31 December. -NKD, MDS

Anna's Hummingbird

The Anna's Hummingbird seen through the Fall continued to be seen regularly at the Gustavus Inn until 13 January. -NKD, MDS

I believe this is the first winter record for the area.

Downy Woodpecker

Two were in town on 10 December. -NKD

One was west of town in the state Crane Flats on 19 December and 2 January. -NKD

One was south of the airport on 21 February. -NKD

Hairy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpeckers were seen regularly though the period at multiple locations. Five were counted on 18 December on the Christmas Bird Count. -NKD and others

American Three-toed Woodpecker

One was in town coming to a suet feeder for several days prior to 16 December. -KSO

One was at Bartlett Cove on 18 February. -NKD

Northern Shrike

One was above the beach west of town on 1 December. -NKD

One was above the beach east of town on 2 and 7 January and on 5 and 21 February. -NKD

One was in a bog east of town on 9 January. -NKD, MDS

One was at my cabin in town on 14 February where it killed a Pine Siskin. -NKD

Horned Lark

One was along the beach west of town on 18 February with an American Pipit and three Lapland Longspurs. -NKD

Red-breasted Nuthatch

Small numbers of Red-breasted Nuthatches were seen through the period at different locations including a pair that frequented my feeder in town. -NKD and others

Hermit Thrush

One was seen in west Gustavus around 13 December. -GPS

American Robin

Small numbers of American Robins were seen regularly through mid-December. -NKD, MDS

One was north of town on 30 December. -NKD

One was in town on 1 January. -NKD

Two were south of Bartlett Cove on 6 February. -NKD

Varied Thrush

Varied Thrushes were seen and heard in small numbers through the period. In early February there was an increase in numbers and it appeared that Varied Thrushes were moving back into the area from the south. -NKD and others

American Pipit

One was along the beach west of town on 18 February with a Horned Lark and three Lapland Longspurs. -NKD

American Tree Sparrow

American Tree Sparrows were seen in small numbers through the period along the beaches near town where they regularly winter. -NKD and others

Forty were estimated near the town dock on 16 December with another six west of town in the state Crane Flats on the same day. -NKD

Savannah Sparrow

One was near the town dock on 13 and 16 December. -NKD

This adds to a few winter records from 2007 and 2008.

Swamp Sparrow

One was along the shore in Bartlett Cove on 7 December and 3 January. -NKD

One was in the state Crane Flats on 16 December (NKD), 31 December (NKD and MDS), and on 26 February (MDS).

This is only the second winter that Swamp Sparrow has been seen in the area.

White-throated Sparrow

One was at my cabin in town from 13 to 20 December. -NKD, MDS

White-Crowned Sparrow

One was above the beach west of town with American Tree Sparrows on 3 January. -NKD

Lapland Longspur

Lapland Longspurs were seen along the beaches near town on seven dates in December with four on 1, 17, 19, and 29 December. -NKD

Three were on the beaches near town on 15, 18, 25, and 28 February. -NKD

Snow Bunting

Snow Bunting numbers along Gustavus beaches were low this winter. The high count was eighty-three on 18 December on the Christmas Bird Count. -NKD

Rusty Blackbird

Eight were in town on 2 December. -NKD

Ten were at the landfill in town on 7 December. -NKD

One was in town on 12 December. -NKD

Sixteen were along the Salmon River in town on 15 December. -NKD

Twenty were along the Salmon River on 18 December on the Christmas Bird Count. -MDS

Ten were in town on 31 December. -NKD, MDS

Eighteen were singing along the Salmon River in town on 21 February. -NKD

Cones were thick on the Sitka Spruce trees in Gustavus this winter providing an abundance of food for many different birds. On two occasions I watched **Rusty Blackbirds** picking through cones at the tops of spruce trees. **Pine Siskins** and **White-winged Crossbills** were common and widespread through the period with lots of singing. On 18 February a female White-winged Crossbill was seen with nest lining material in her bill. **Red Crossbills** were less abundant, but were also seen and heard regularly through the period in all areas. -NKD