

**FIELD REPORT**

**GRAND ALASKA: PRIBILOFS  
& ANCHORAGE PRE-TRIP  
MAY 21–29, 2023**



Red-faced Cormorant, St. Paul Island, AK (© Michelle Sopoliga)

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# GRAND ALASKA: PRIBILOFS & ANCHORAGE PRE-TRIP MAY 21–29, 2023

By Michelle Sopoliga  
with some wording by Kevin Zimmer



Birding on St. Paul Island, 2023

We kicked off our 2023 Alaska program with the Pribilofs & Anchorage Pre-Trip to our Grand Alaska: Nome & Gambell Tour. As a first-time guide, I was nervous, but was lucky enough to work with a wonderful group of people who, despite a few typical-for-Alaska challenges, made the experience relatively easy, fun, and unforgettable. Due to a change in flights to the island and a canceled flight that kept us on the island for an extra night, we spent an incredible five nights on St. Paul Island, rather than the typical two to three nights, allowing us to get to know the island and birds better than we could have hoped for.

After an introductory dinner and night in Anchorage, we made a very brief stop for some birding at nearby Lake Spenard in the morning (**2 Barrow's Goldeneyes, 12 Red-necked Grebes, 4 Red-necked Phalaropes, and a couple of Long-tailed Ducks were the stars**), before heading to the airport for our scheduled flight to St. Paul Island. As with last year, we experienced no weather-related delays on our way to the island and enjoyed an uneventful three-hour flight, interrupted only by the standard refueling stop in Bethel.



Two of at least 50 Bramblings seen, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)

After arriving in **St. Paul** and checking into our rooms, St. Paul Island guide Sulli Gibson immediately drove us out to Antone Lake to begin our birding adventure. St. Paul is famous for Asian vagrants, and we were about to begin the royal treatment. When we arrived at the lake, Sulli revealed that one of the other St. Paul guides, Luis Gles, had found a very rare ABA bird, a **Common Pochard**, that morning. Common Pochards are Eurasian diving ducks that look very similar to a Redhead, but don't make it to North America very often. We got great looks at him as well as an even more-rare for the island female **Canvasback**. **Black-legged** and **Red-legged kittiwakes** were flying on and around the lake while we watched the ducks. Off to an impressive start, we were then whisked away to the main crab pots and saw two vagrant **Hawfinches** and about 25 vagrant **Bramblings**. After dinner, we went back out to the crab pots and saw a staggering 50 Bramblings. Visiting the salt tidal lagoons, old town/downtown, and the small boat harbor turned up a **Bar-tailed Godwit**, **Red-faced Cormorants**, **Glaucous-winged and Glaucous gulls**, a **Short-billed Dowitcher**, a couple of **Snow Buntings**, and **Lapland Longspurs**. We were also treated to the abundant and very large Pribilof subspecies of **Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches** and **Rock Sandpipers**, which we got very used to seeing during our time on the island. A couple of **Snow Geese**, which are considered rare for the island, were seen daily on Polovina Lake.





Pribilof subspecies of Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)



Pribilof subspecies of Rock Sandpiper, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)

Luis took us birding the next day for our first full day on St. Paul and got us excellent views of the cliff-nesting seabirds that St. Paul Island is famous for at Ridgewall. We saw about 1,000 **Common** and **1,500 Thick-billed murre**s standing side by side. **Red-legged Kittiwakes** gave us enough opportunity to see them well and often enough to be able to differentiate them from the much more numerous but very similar **Black-legged Kittiwakes**. **Horned and Tufted puffins**, as well as **Parakeet, Least, and Crested**

**auklets** flew back and forth, landing on the rock ledges below our feet. **Red-faced Cormorants** and **Northern Fulmars** could be seen flying by and landing on the surrounding cliffs as well, and we were buzzed by a couple of **Parasitic Jaegers** as we watched the show below. There were three distant **Ancient Murrelets** on the water, and a couple of **Pacific Wrens** sang to us and provided everyone with good views of another Pribilofs subspecies.



Luis getting us close-up views of a variety of alcids, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)



Thick-billed and Common murres, sharing the cliffs with a Black-legged Kittiwake, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)



**Red -legged Kittiwake, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

We then revisited the **Common Pochard** that was still at Antone Lake. A few **Hawfinches and Bramblings** were still at the crab pots, and we got our first good looks at two different eider species in the harbor: three **King Eiders** and a very scrappy male **Spectacled Eider**.

After lunch, we headed to Hutchinson Hill. As we were driving, we saw a huge goose circle around and land on Barbara Lake, just out of view. We almost brushed it off as a White-fronted Goose until it flew up and circled around again, giving me good enough looks through binoculars to realize that it was actually a Bean Goose! It landed out of view again, but this time we stopped to get better looks. We called all of the other birders over and were able to get everyone on the bird. After plenty of good looks and photographs of the bird all around, it was determined to be a **Taiga Bean-Goose**, since it was very large and had a large, ski-sloped shaped bill. Bean geese are notoriously difficult to identify to species, so I was very glad when everyone agreed on the id. This was a super cool life bird for most of us on the island!



**Taiga Bean-Goose and Aleutian Cackling Geese, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**



Continuing on to Hutchinson Hill, we drove by a **Short-eared Owl** and found our only **Snowy Owl** of the trip. Luis lined us up to sweep for the recently reported **Rustic Buntings**. We got brief views of a pod of **Orcas** swimming just off shore and very close views of **Northern Fur Seals** on shore. We came up short on Rustic Buntings but were able to get onto two of them at Polovina Hill just after that while unsuccessfully looking for recently reported Eyebrowed Thrushes there.



**Northern Fur Seal, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

That evening, we made our way to Antone Slough and searched for **Common Snipe**. We lined up to sweep for it, and one flew up, allowing confirming photos. It circled around and landed in the mudflat right in front of us, allowing for excellent looks at a bird that is usually only seen in the air. I, of course, couldn't get my camera on it before it walked away into the brush. While we enjoyed the cooperative snipe and some other nearby shorebirds, such as a **Semipalmated Plover** and **Least Sandpipers**, another vagrant, a **Slaty-backed Gull**, circled in over Antone wall and landed on the shore of Antone Lake in perfect view of the group, the perfect ending to a very good day of birding.



**Slaty-backed Gull, St. Paul Island, AK, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

After an amazing first full day of scoring looks at almost all of our target birds and then some, we were able to slow things down and really enjoy the regular/common birds of the island for the rest of the trip. We started by going to Reef Point Cliffs, where we experienced another round of excellent views and photos of Horned and Tufted puffins, Red-faced Cormorants, and Black and Red-legged kittiwakes, as well as Parakeet, Crested, and Least auklets.



**Tufted Puffin, Reef Point Cliffs, St. Paul Island, AK (© Michelle Sopoliga)**



**Crested and Parakeet auklets, St. Paul Island, AK (© Michelle Sopoliga)**





**Least and Parakeet auklets, St. Paul Island, AK (© Michelle Sopoliga)**



**Black-legged Kittiwake, St. Paul Island, AK (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

At the nearby Seal Blind, we added a **Red-necked Grebe** to our island list and got better looks at about six **Ancient Murrelets**. At Cup and Saucer, we got to see another Asian vagrant, a **Wood Sandpiper**. After lunch, we hiked through “the quarry,” hoping to finally get eyes on the previously reported, but yet to be seen by our group, Eyebrowed Thrush. No luck yet on the thrush, but the quarry provided excellent landscape views, so

we stopped to take a group photo. We also got the opportunity to stop by the local museum to learn more about the culture and people of the Pribilof Islands.



**St. Paul Island tour group, AK, May 2023**

After dinner, we decided to switch from birds to mammals, hoping to see a recently reported nearby herd of caribou. After searching the valley and realizing that the caribou were no longer in the area, we stopped by Polovina Hill in hopes that the elusive Eyebrowed Thrush would finally show itself. We tried turning Snow Buntings into McKay's Buntings (unsuccessfully) and scanned the hillside for a while. Just as we were about to give up for the evening, an **Eyebrowed Thrush** was spotted by the third St. Paul Island guide, Mariah Hryniewicz. A second Eyebrowed Thrush was also spotted, and we were finally able to get good looks at our last known previously reported Asiatic vagrant target of the trip.

The next day, we got to see a different part of the island, going out to High Bluffs, which was a nice change of scenery. The highlight adventure of the day was marsh stomping at Tim's Pond, hoping to turn up a new duck or shorebird that had yet to be discovered on the island. We didn't turn up anything new until we flushed up the **Siberian subspecies of Whimbrel** right along the road.





Siberian Whimbrel, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)

We were supposed to be going back to Anchorage the next day, but our flight was canceled due to inclement weather in Bethel. Making the most of it, we went back out to Hutchinson Hill to see what we could find. A rare-for the island **Golden-crowned Sparrow** (and our first for the trip) was hanging out around the pallets in the scrape. We lined up to sweep the hillside (having become pros at doing so by now) and were able to scrounge up a few more **Bramblings** and a couple of **Rustic Buntings**. A few **Rock Sandpipers** and **Snow Buntings** decided to walk alongside us, and a **Bar-tailed Godwit** flew in to say hi. A huge Northern Fur Seal stood guard on the nearby rocks.



Brambling, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)





**Rustic Bunting, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

On what ended up officially being our final morning on St. Paul Island, we had a little bit of time to go over to the harbor and check out the eider scene before the plane arrived. A young **Pigeon Guillemot**, a **Pelagic Cormorant**, lots of **Harlequin Ducks**, and both **kittiwake** species made things interesting. Three of the four eider species (**King, Spectacled, and Common Eiders**) showed themselves quite nicely as if to say farewell. Unfortunately, the vans also decided to say farewell to us a little early, and one of them decided not to start. Sulli went to radio for help, but using the collective brain-power of the van, we were able to get the van started again. Adding some excitement to our adventure, we raced over to let Sulli know not to worry. Current crisis averted, we stopped at another part of the harbor, where an **Arctic Fox** posed nicely for a photo. We had been hoping to see a **Red Phalarope**, and right at the last minute, we were able to get excellent looks at a stunning female, along with a **Wandering Tattler**. Phalaropes have reverse sexual dimorphism, so the female is the brightly colored of the two genders. The male is the one that sits on the nest and incubates the eggs, while the female takes off to find another nest to fill with eggs.



**Red Phalarope, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**



**Arctic Fox, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

Due to our extra day on the Pribilofs, we had to cut our Anchorage trip short by one full day. We drove up to Arctic Valley first, hoping to see a Willow Ptarmigan. We searched high and low for one, but were “only” able to find a distant **Rock Ptarmigan** standing on, well, a rock. We were given a glimpse of a **Northern Goshawk** as it flew over the valley. One member of the group photographed a **Merlin**. Some of the more common, yet first for our trip birds that we found included **Hermit Thrush**, the Sooty subspecies of **Fox Sparrow**, **Lincoln’s Sparrow**, **Wilson’s Warbler**, and **Orange-crowned Warbler**.

We then drove to Willow to visit a burn site known for having American Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers. Along the way, we stopped at a park and found an adult **Bald Eagle** and very accommodating **Steller’s Jay**. At Kashwitna Lake, a pair of **Common Loons** was nice enough to swim around close for good scope views. We had a nice lunch at a local rustic restaurant before scouring the burn area for woodpeckers. Maybe it was too late in the day, but we didn’t have much luck finding any woodpeckers until the end of the road, when we were graced by a beautiful **Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker**. We saw three **Bald Eagles** soaring overhead, and an **Osprey** was found sitting on its platform nest. **Swainson’s Thrush** and a couple of accommodating **Canada Jays** also brightened the day. Another bird that we had hoped to find, but were unsuccessful at locating, was a Northern Hawk Owl, which I have seen in the area in the past on multiple occasions. Unfortunately, they hid from us on this trip.

We drove back to Anchorage after a long day of driving and had a very nice dinner, where co-leader Brian Gibbons met up with us for the remainder of the trip. After dinner, we took advantage of the long daylight and went to Ship Creek Overlook Park, where we got excellent looks at three very handsome **Harlequin Ducks**. Tutorials on the differences between **Short-billed Gulls** and the common Anchorage **Cook Inlet Gulls** also took place. The most common large white-headed gull in Anchorage by far is the Cook Inlet Gull, which is actually a hybrid between Herring and Glaucous-winged gulls. We saw a few to help us with the side by side comparison to the more diminutive Short-billed Gull (previously called Mew Gull). We ended the evening with a super cooperative **Bald Eagle** at the fish hatchery, along with a tutorial about salmon fishing in Alaska.

The final morning of our Pre-Trip was mostly devoted to finding boreal birds that we had missed the previous day, and we didn’t come up short. A local birding friend tipped us off to a **Spruce Grouse** that had been hanging out in a mixed forest near the airport. We went there first, and after about 5 minutes of hiking through some understory, we came to a clearing with about five Spruce Trees that had to be the known location of the bird we were after. We stood around, searching the trees for a few minutes, when all of a sudden, I spotted it about halfway up one of the trees. It walked back and forth along the branch a few times before it flew down and landed practically on our feet! It strutted around and hung out with us for a good 15 minutes before we decided to move on and look for other birds.





**Spruce Grouse (male), Anchorage, May 2023 (photo © Michelle Sopoliga)**

We stopped at Earthquake Park for a minute to talk about the famous 1964 Anchorage Earthquake that transformed the landscape and continues to be one of the largest earthquakes of all time to be recorded in a populated area and were treated to a close-up of a **Northern Waterthrush** and our first **Moose** of the trip. At a nearby burn area, we were finally able to get on a couple of **American-three toed Woodpeckers**. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**, **Canada Jays**, **Black-billed Magpies**, **Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **White-winged Crossbills**, **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Wilson's Snipe**, and great looks at a singing **Lincoln's Sparrow**.

We then drove out to Beluga Point, where we got distant scope views of **Dall's Sheep** up on the cliffs. A soaring Harlan's subspecies of **Red-tailed Hawk** made us do a double take and allowed all good views. A stop at Potter's Marsh got us our only views of **Trumpeter Swans** for the tour.

We had just enough time left before our Pre-trip tour was over to stop by Spenard Crossing and Westchester Lagoon. We ended the trip with amazing views of breeding plumaged nesting **Red-necked Grebes**, **Arctic Terns**, and **Sandhill Cranes**. A couple of distant **Hudsonian Godwits** were found on the mudflats, ending the excursion on a good note.



**Sandhill Crane, Anchorage, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

The week provided us with a truly remote Pribilof Island and not-as-remote boreal forest Alaskan experience. Thank you to our St. Paul Island guides Sulli Gibson, Luis Gles, and Mariah Hryniewicz for showing us what St. Paul Island has to offer. Thanks also go to David Sonneborn for helping me scout and find birds in the Anchorage portion of the trip, to Nome co-guide, Brian Gibbons for joining us for some of the birding in Anchorage, and to Kevin Zimmer for giving me this opportunity and support along the way. A very special thanks goes to the entire group of wonderful participants who I got to guide for my first tour. I am very grateful for everyone's enthusiasm, patience, and help with easing me into the world of guiding.

## **ITINERARY**

**5/21** - Met at 1830h in Anchorage for dinner at Coast Inn at Lake Hood.

**5/22** - Anchorage to St. Paul: breakfast at hotel at 0700h, followed by birding walk to shore of Lake Hood (adjacent to our hotel) from 0800h–0815h; transferred to airport at 830h, to check in for our Ravn Air flight to the Pribilofs. Arrived on schedule at 1500h, check in to our rooms at the King Eider Hotel, and then a check of Antone Lake and main crab pots; dinner; Town Marsh, Salt Lagoon and small boat harbor. Night at St. Paul.

**5/23** - St. Paul Island, the Pribilofs: breakfast at 0700h, depart 0800h for birding at East Landing, Ridgewall, Antone Wall, downtown feeders, and the harbor; lunch from 1200h–1300h; afternoon birding at Barbara Lake, Hutchinson Hill, Webster Lake, Gate Marsh, Polovina Hill; dinner from 1730h–1900h; post-dinner excursion to Antone Slough. Night at St. Paul.

**5/24** - St. Paul Island, the Pribilofs: breakfast at 0700h, depart 0800h for birding at Reef Cliffs & Rookery, Seal Blind, & Cup & Saucer; lunch from 1200h–1300h; afternoon birding at the main crab pots, “the quarry” Kaminista Quarry; dinner from 1730h–1900h; post-dinner excursion to look for caribou and to Polovina Hill

**5/25** - St. Paul Island, the Pribilofs: breakfast at 0700h, depart 0800h for birding at Ridgewall and Southwest Point; lunch from 1200h–1300h; afternoon birding at Tim’s Pond, Tonki Point, Dump Marsh, Southwest Point, High Bluffs; dinner. Night at St. Paul.

**5/26** - St. Paul Island, the Pribilofs: breakfast at 0700h, depart 0800h for birding at Big Polovino Lake, Polovino Hill, Reef Point Cliffs, Marunich; lunch from 1200h–1300h; afternoon birding at Hutchinson Hill, and small boat harbor; dinner. Were supposed to have been picked up today, but the flight was canceled due to weather. Another night at St. Paul.

**5/27** - St. Paul Island to Anchorage: breakfast at 0700h, depart 0800h for birding at Harbor, Big Polovino Lake, and Weather Bureau Lake; lunch and check-in for our return flight to Anchorage, early dinner; flight back to Anchorage happened, arriving about 1930h. Night at the Coast Inn at Lake Hood, Anchorage.

**5/28** - Anchorage: breakfast (0600h) at hotel, with 0700h departure for day-trip up the George Parks Hwy to Willow, Kashwitna Lake and the Sockeye Burn (lunch at Sheep Creek Lodge @ noon) before returning to Anchorage. Dinner at 0900h; after dinner excursion to Ship Creek Overlook Park and Elmendorf Fish Hatchery. Night in Anchorage.

**5/29** - Anchorage: breakfast (0700h) at hotel, departing at 0830h for morning birding at Airport Spruce Grouse spot, Earthquake Park, Campbell Creek Park, Beluga Point, Potter’s Marsh, lunch at hotel; Spenard Crossing, Westchester Lagoon, Ship Creek Overlook Park; **Pribilofs & Anchorage Pre-Trip officially ends with the conclusion of afternoon birding**; Nome & Gambell main tour kicks off with introductory dinner.

## **KEY**

**A** = Anchorage area (Arctic Valley, Beluga Point, Potter Marsh, Westchester Lagoon and Lake Hood/Spenard next to our hotel.)

**P** = St. Paul Island, the Pribilofs

**W** = Wasilla north to Kashwitna Lake and the Sockeye Burn north of Willow

**\*** = vagrant

## **BIRDS**

**Snow Goose** (*Anser caerulescens*) - **P** (2 seen daily at Polovina Lake)

**Greater White-fronted Goose** (*Anser albifrons*) - **P** (3 seen daily at Polovina Lake)

**\*Taiga Bean-Goose** (*Anser fabalis*) - **P** (found at Barabara Lake; seen by all tour groups)

**Cackling Goose** (*Branta hutchinsii*) - **A** (A few birds floating together at Spenard Crossing 5/29 appeared to represent the *minima* subspecies – not much bigger than adjacent Mallards and Greater Scaup, notably dark breasted, and proportionately short-necked and stubby-billed (like the structure of a Ross’s Goose with the plumage of a dark Canada Goose). Cackling Goose is considered rare in Anchorage, where one also has to consider so-called “Lesser” Canada Goose {*B. canadensis parvipes*}. Compared to the latter, *minima*-type Cackling Goose is distinctly smaller, shorter-necked, shorter-billed, and darker breasted.)



**Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*) - **A**  
**Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*) - **A** (One pair at a nest at Potter Marsh on 5/29.)  
**Gadwall** (*Mareca strepera*) - **A** (at Spenard Crossing on 5/29.)  
**American Wigeon** (*Mareca americana*) - **A** (at Lake Spenard/Hood on 5/24; pair at Westchester Lagoon on 5/29)  
**\*Eurasian Wigeon** (*Mareca penelope*) – **P** (seen Antone Lake 5/22, 5/23, and 5/25)  
**Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) - **A, P**  
**Northern Pintail** (*Anas acuta*) - **A** (at Lake Spenard on 5/22), **P**  
**Green-winged Teal** (*Anas crecca carolinensis*) - **P** (We saw generic “Green-winged Teal” almost daily, **A** (on 5/28, 5/29.)  
**\*“Common (Eurasian) Teal”** (*Anas crecca crecca/nimia*) - **P** (Seen 5/23, 5/25. Most males seen appeared to be phenotypically pure (or mostly pure) Eurasian-type birds [with bold facial frames and a long, horizontal white stripe along the folded wing, with no sign of a vertical white bar on the sides of the chest].) {The Europeans treat these birds as being specifically distinct from North American *carolinensis*, but the AOS still treats them all as “Green-winged Teal”. Judging from the number of intergrades we often see in the Pribilofs (1 seen on this trip), it seems as though the Eurasian and North American forms have no problems with interbreeding where they come into contact with one another.}  
**Canvasback** (*Aythya valisineria*) – **P** (female with Common Pochard on Antone Lake.)  
**\*Common Pochard** (*Aythya ferina*) – **P** (male at Antone Lake)  
**Greater Scaup** (*Aythya marila*) - **A, P**  
**Lesser Scaup** (*Aythya affinis*) - **A, P**  
**Spectacled Eider** (*Somateria fischeri*) – **P**  
**King Eider** (*Somateria spectabilis*) - **P**



**King Eider, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

**Common Eider** (*Somateria mollissima*) - **P**  
**Harlequin Duck** (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) - **P**  
**Black Scoter** (*Melanitta americana*) - **P**  
**Long-tailed Duck** (*Clangula hyemalis*) - **A, P**  
**Bufflehead** (*Bucephala albeola*) - **A**  
**Common Goldeneye** (*Bucephala elangula*) - **A**  
**Barrow's Goldeneye** (*Bucephala islandica*) - **A**  
**Common Merganser** (*Mergus merganser*) – **A**  
**Spruce Grouse** (*Falcipennis canadensis*) - **A**

**Rock Ptarmigan** (*Lagopus muta*) - **A**  
**Red-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps grisegena*) - **A, P**



**Red-necked Grebe, Anchorage, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

**Rock Pigeon** (*Columba livia*) - **A**  
**Sandhill Crane** (*Antigone Canadensis*) - **A**  
**Pacific Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis fulva*) - **P**  
**Semipalmated Plover** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) - **P, A**  
**\*Whimbrel (Siberian subspecies)** (*Numenius phaeopus variegatus*) - **P**  
**Bar-tailed Godwit** (*Limosa lapponica*) - **P**  
**Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemasticta*) - **A**  
**Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*) - **P**  
**Rock Sandpiper** (*Calidris ptilocnemis*) - **P** (Seen daily, by far, the most common species of shorebird on the island. All of these were the nominate subspecies *ptilocnemis*.)  
**Least Sandpiper** (*Calidris minutilla*) - **P**  
**Pectoral Sandpiper** (*Calidris melanotos*) - **P**  
**Western Sandpiper** (*Calidris mauri*) - **P**  
**Short-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus griseus*) - **P**  
**\*Common Snipe** (*Gallinago gallinago*) - **P** (1 in Antone Slough 5/23. Sulli lined the group up on a rise above the marsh, and then did a walk-through, which succeeded in flushing the bird for good flight and ground views. Heard and photographed, which showed the tan ground-color of the upperparts, as well as the broad white trailing edge to the secondaries, both features allowing separation from Wilson's Snipe, which is a common breeding bird over large parts of the Alaskan mainland, but which, like Common Snipe, is a rare migrant to the island.)  
**Wilson's Snipe** (*Gallinago delicata*) - **P** (1 bird flushed and seen and heard in flight on 5/24, was "colder" and darker (grayer, not buffy) in color, and lacked the bold white trailing edge to the wing of Common Snipe.), **A**  
**Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) - **A, P**  
**Red Phalarope** (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) - **P**  
**Wandering Tattler** (*Tringa incana*) - **P**  
**Lesser Yellowlegs** (*Tringa flavipes*) - **A**  
**\*Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*) - **P**  
**Parasitic Jaeger** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) - **P**  
**Long-tailed Jaeger** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) - **P**

**Common Murre** (*Uria aalge*) - **P**  
**Thick-billed Murre** (*Uria lomvia*) - **P**  
**Pigeon Guillemot** (*Cepphus columba*) - **P**  
**Ancient Murrelet** (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*) - **P**  
**Parakeet Auklet** (*Aethia psittacula*) - **P** (Seen on and from the cliffs at Reef and Ridgeway in good numbers.)



**Parakeet Auklet, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

**Least Auklet** (*Aethia pusilla*) - **P** (Seen in good numbers.)  
**Crested Auklet** (*Aethia cristatella*) - **P**  
**Horned Puffin** (*Fratercula corniculata*) - **P**  
**Tufted Puffin** (*Fratercula cirrhata*) - **P**  
**Black-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa tridactyla*) - **P** (Common; seen daily in large numbers.)  
**Red-legged Kittiwake** (*Rissa brevirostris*) - **P** (Seen daily in small numbers.)  
**Bonaparte's Gull** (*Chroicocephalus Philadelphia*) - **A**  
**Short-billed Gull** (*Larus brachyrhynchus*) - **A**  
**"Cook Inlet" Gull** (*Larus argentatus x glaucescens*) – **A** (Anchorage's common large white-headed gull. Hybrid between Herring Gull and Glaucous-winged Gull.)  
**\*Slaty-backed Gull** (*Larus schistisagus*) - **P**  
**Glaucous-winged Gull** (*Larus glaucescens*) - **P** (The common large gull on the Pribilofs; seen daily.)  
**Arctic Tern** (*Sterna paradisaea*) - **A** (Common, with actively nesting birds at Westchester Lagoon on 5/29.)  
**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*) – **P**  
**Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*) - **A**  
**Northern Fulmar** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) - **P**  
**Shearwater sp.** – **P** (super far away; too far for confident id)  
**Red-faced Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax urile*) - **P** (Still fairly common here [declining dramatically in parts of its range]; seen daily in small numbers.)  
**Pelagic Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*) - **P**  
**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) - **A**  
**Sharp-shinned Hawk** - **A**  
**Northern Goshawk** - **A**



**Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - **A**  
**Red-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo jamaicensis harlani*) - **G** {This region is in the contact/intergrade zone between the widespread western subspecies *calurus*, and the subspecies *harlani* (once considered a separate species = “Harlan’s Hawk”), which replaces *calurus* farther north in interior Alaska.}  
**Snowy Owl** (*Bubo scandiacus*) – **P**  
**Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*) – **P**  
**American Three-toed Woodpecker** (*Picoides dorsalis*) - **A**  
**Downy Woodpecker** (*Picoides pubescens*) - **A**  
**Northern Flicker** (*Colaptes auratus*) - **A** (Yellow-shafted)  
**Western Wood-Pewee** (*Contopus sordidulus*) - **A** (heard only)  
**Alder Flycatcher** (*Empidonax alnorum*) - **A**  
**Canada Jay** (*Perisoreus canadensis*) - **A**  
**Steller’s Jay** (*Cyanocitta stelleri*) - **A**  
**Black-billed Magpie** (*Pica hudsonia*) - **A**  
**Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*) - **A, P** (heard only)  
**Black-capped Chickadee** (*Poecile atricapillus*) - **A**  
**Boreal Chickadee** (*Poecile hudsonicus*) - **A**  
**Bank Swallow** (*Riparia riparia*) - **A**  
**Tree Swallow** (*Tachycineta bicolor*) - **A**  
**Violet-green Swallow** (*Tachycineta thalassina*) - **A**  
**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (*Corthylio calendula*) - **A**  
**Red-breasted Nuthatch** (*Sitta canadensis*) - **A**  
**Brown Creeper** (*Certhia americana*) – **A** (heard only at Spruce Grouse)  
**Pacific Wren** (*Troglodytes pacificus alascensis*) - **P** (Pribilof Island subspecies)



Pacific Wren, St. Paul Island, AK, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)

**European Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) - **A** (This invasive species has really taken off in the Anchorage-Wasilla-Palmer area over the past 20 years. Once a rarity anywhere in the state outside of Juneau, they now can be found nesting in traffic signal lights all over Anchorage!)  
**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*) - **A**

**Swainson's Thrush** (*Catharus ustulatus*) - **A**

**Hermit Thrush** (*Catharus guttatus*) - **A**

**American Robin** (*Turdus migratorius*) - **A**

**\*Eyebrowed Thrush** (*Turdus obscurus*) - **P**

**\*Brambling** (*Fringilla montifringilla*) - **P**

**\*Hawfinch** (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*) - **P**

**Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch** (*Leucosticte tephrocotis umbria*) - **P** (Pribilof subspecies; Common; seen daily in good numbers.)

**Common Redpoll** (*Acanthis flammea*) - **P** (1 redpoll sp. glimpsed on 5/23 could not be identified to species. Another one photographed on 5/26 confirmed Common Redpoll), **A**

**Lapland Longspur** (*Calcarius lapponicus*) - **P** (Common; seen daily, with 10 on 5/24; 75 on 5/25; and 40+ on 5/26.)

**Snow Bunting** (*Plectrophenax nivialis*) - **P**



**Snow Bunting, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

**\*Rustic Bunting** (*Emberiza rustica*) – **P** (multiple birds seen multiple days; crazy good year for them!)



**Rustic Bunting, St. Paul Island, May 2023 (© Michelle Sopoliga)**

**Fox-Sparrow** (*Passerella iliaca*) - **A** (“Sooty” type seen nicely on Arcylic Valley Rd.)  
**Dark-eyed (“Slate-colored”) Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*) - **A**  
**White-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) - **A**  
**Golden-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) – **P, A** (Arctic Valley)  
**Savannah Sparrow** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*) - **A**  
**Lincoln’s Sparrow** (*Melospiza lincolnii*) - **A**  
**Northern Waterthrush** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – **A** (excellent looks at Earthquake Park)  
**Orange-crowned Warbler** (*Oreothlypis celata*) - **A**  
**Yellow Warbler** (*Setophaga petechia*) - **A**  
**Yellow-rumped (“Myrtle”) Warbler** (*Setophaga coronata*) - **A**  
**Townsend’s Warbler** (*Setophaga townsendi*) – **A**  
**Wilson’s Warbler** (*Cardellina pusilla*) - **A**

**Total = 122 species (+ 1 hybrid, 1 subspecies that some experts consider its own species, and 1 unable to be identified to species)**

## **MAMMALS**

**Red Squirrel** (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) - **A**  
**Arctic Ground-Squirrel** (*Spermophilus parryii*) - **A** (Arctic Valley)  
**Arctic Fox** (*Canis lagopus*) - **P**  
**Steller’s Sea Lion** (*Eumetopias jubatus*) - **P**  
**Northern Fur Seal** (*Callorhinus ursinus*) - **P**  
**Harbor Seal** (*Phoca vitulina*) - **P**  
**Killer Whale (Orca)** - **P**  
**Moose** (*Alces alces*) - **A**  
**Dall’s Sheep** (*Ovis dalli*) - **A**

**Total = 9 species**