

**Gustavus/Glacier Bay Winter Bird Sightings**  
**December 2013 - February 2014**  
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It was a quiet winter. Do I say that every year? This winter was *really* quiet. I was out of town from 23 December to 16 February. It was quiet when I left and it was quiet when I got back. I was told that I did not miss much, other than some seriously wet conditions in January. There were few birds reported. Several residents said there were fewer birds around this winter than in any they could remember.

The Glacier Bay Christmas Bird Count was held on 14 December 2013. Results and participants can be found at: <http://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx>

Birds listed as rare in winter on the 2010 Birds of Southeast Alaska checklist (Steve Heinl) are included here even if they are not considered rare in winter for Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

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**Gadwall**

The usual small numbers were present through the winter on rivers in the area. The high count was thirty-two on 23 February 2014 at the mouth of the Bartlett River where 20 to 40 have been seen in recent winters. -NKD

**Northern Shoveler**

Rare in winter, six Northern Shovelers on 14 December 2013 at the mouth of the Bartlett River was a new high count for the Christmas Bird Count. -HPL

**Black Scoter**

Black Scoters were present through the period at their regular wintering spot along shore west of town. On 8 December 2013 there were a minimum of 300 near Dude Creek with more scoters visible farther west. On 27 February 2014 in good weather, I counted 450 Black Scoters among several groups from Point Gustavus to the Good River. This is similar to my previous high count of a minimum of 420 on 6 February 2012 in this same area. -NKD

**Yellow-billed Loon**

One on 4 December 2013 near the town dock. -NKD

**Double-crested Cormorant**

Two on 14 December 2013 in lower Glacier Bay. -GPS, NKD

**Western Grebe**

Two on 14 December 2013 in lower Glacier Bay. -GPS

### **Virginia Rail**

On 3 December 2013 while skiing along the ditch in the Crane Flats, I flushed a Virginia Rail. It landed at the edge of the ditch in the snow. While trying to get my camera out, the rail watched as I fell on my back and slid into the ditch becoming entangled in my skis, poles, and binoculars. The rail then walked back into the water and let me take photos.

On 15 December 2013 while skiing in the Crane Flats, Larry Platt, Eric Syrene, and Tania Lewis saw TWO Virginia Rails at the same location as the 3 December sighting and then saw the rails again in the Good River near where the ditch joins the river.

On 16 December 2013, I found the two rails in the ditch at the original location and got poor photos of both birds. It seems likely that there were two rails on 3 December and that I did not realize it, since I thought the one rail was quickly changing locations in the ditch. -NKD

This is the fourth local record and 2<sup>nd</sup> winter record.



Virginia Rail in the Crane Flats on 3 December 2013. Photo Nat Drumheller

### **Black Oystercatcher**

Twenty-one on 14 December 2013 in the Beardslee Islands was the second highest count for the Christmas Bird Count. -GPS, SLN

Shorebirds wintered at Gustavus in typical numbers for recent years. My high count was on 20 February 2014 at Rink Creek with a mixed flock containing very rough estimates of 150

**Sanderlings**, 2200 **Dunlins**, and 400 **Rock Sandpipers**.

One of the Dunlin had been banded on the Yukon/Kuskokwim delta, but it was missing a band making it impossible to determine exactly when and where it was banded. -NKD

### **Wilson's Snipe**

One on 5 and 20 December 2013 in the airport ditch at the beach. -NKD

### **Black-legged Kittiwake**

One on 14 December 2013 near the entrance to Glacier Bay was the only report for the winter. -GPS

### **Eurasian Collared-Dove**

Five Eurasian Collared-Doves remained through November 2013 in the neighborhood between the golf course and Glen's Ditch. Several residents in that area said that at least two doves remained through the winter. The doves apparently moved around to different feeders during the winter and began cooing in earnest in early March 2014. -Misc. Observers

### **Great Horned Owl**

None reported.

### **Northern Pygmy-Owl**

One in the Crane Flats on 7 December 2013 and 18 February 2014. -NKD

One on 12 December 2013 and 7 February 2014 in the Good River neighborhood. -HPL, PB

### **Barred Owl**

At least one hooting and/or calling near my residence in town on 2 and 5 December 2013 and on 17 and 27 February 2014. One was seen there on 21 February 2014. -NKD

One on 17 December 2013 was seen in the Good River neighborhood. -HL, MW

### **Short-eared Owl**

One 12-19 December 2013 at the golf course, and two there on 17 December 2013. -NKD, JV, SLN, HH

### **Downy Woodpecker**

One on 7 and 20 December 2013 in the Crane Flats. -NKD

One on 16 February 2014 in the Good River neighborhood. -MS

One on 23 February 2014 in town. -NKD

One on 28 February 2014 at my residence in town. -NKD

### **American Three-toed Woodpecker**

A male on 4 December 2013 was drumming and foraging at the entrance to the Crane Flats, and a female was at that location on 16 December 2013. -NKD

### **Peregrine Falcon**

One on 14 December 2013 in lower Glacier Bay. -GPS

One on 27 February 2014 near Point Gustavus. -NKD

### **Northern Shrike**

Two on 18 February 2014 in the Crane Flats. An immature shrike there on 19 February 2014 was chattering and squeeking as if practicing singing. -NKD

### **European Starling**

Three on 15 December 2013 were foraging along the tide line near the town dock after a severe wind storm. -NKD

### **American Pipit**

One on 2 December 2013 on the beach near the Good River. -NKD

One on 14 December 2013 near the town dock. -JFS

One on 19 December 2013 in town near the school. -JFS

One on 22 December 2013 on the beach at the Good River. -JJ

### **Lapland Longspur**

One on 27 February 2014 at Point Gustavus. -NKD



Lapland Longspur at Point Gustavus on 27 February 2014. Photo Nat Drumheller

### **American Tree Sparrow**

American Tree Sparrow numbers remained low through the winter after a poor showing last fall. My high count was ten on 11 December 2013 near the town dock where I put seed out. -NKD

### **Song Sparrow**

Twenty-six on 14 December 2013 was a new high count for the Christmas Bird Count. Deep snow that day made travel difficult, and most of these Song Sparrows were found along short portions of coastline at Bartlett Cove and in town. -NKD, JFS

### **White-Crowned Sparrow**

An immature White-crowned Sparrow was at my feeder in town from 12 December 2013 through the end of the period. It looked like the usual *gambelii* subspecies to me. -NKD

### **Red-winged Blackbird**

Two on 14 December 2013 at Tell Point along the Bartlett Cove shore were the second record for the Christmas Bird Count, with one in 1996. -NKD



A pair of Red-winged Blackbirds in Bartlett Cove on 14 December 2013. Photo Nat Drumheller

One reason it was so painfully quiet this winter was the lack of wintering finches.

**Pine Grosbeaks** were seen in early December and late February. -NKD, SLN, HPL

Small flocks of **Red Crossbills** were near town 2-4 December, and a single bird flew over on 20 February. -NKD

No **White-winged Crossbills** were reported.

One **Common Redpoll** flew over on 15 December. -NKD

One **Pine Siskin** was at a feeder in town on 14 December. -KSO