

# **Gustavus Bird Sightings**

**December 2011 - February 2012**

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NKD was out of the area from 14 January to 6 February.

## **Brant**

Two from 9 December to 9 January, usually on the Salmon River. -NKD, JFS

One on about 25 January on Pleasant Island. -GPS

Seven from 4 to 19 February on the Salmon River. -JM, NKD, JFS

Five on 17 February on the beach west of town. -NKD

**Twelve** on 18 February flying along the shore of Pleasant Island. -NKD

Four on 20 February in Bartlett Cove. -NKD

Prior to this winter, there were only two winter records for Brant in Gustavus/Glacier Bay. One bird on the 1972 Christmas Bird Count and three birds on 25 December 2010.

## **Wood Duck**

One on 17 December on a pond near the airport. -PBSV, HV

One, presumably the same bird, on 24, 25, and 29 December and on 2 January on the Good River in west Gustavus about 1.8 miles from the location of the original sighting. -LMP, MW, NKD

This is the second record for Wood Duck in Gustavus/Glacier Bay and the first winter record.

## **Gadwall**

One to ten Gadwalls were on rivers in the Gustavus area through the period. Gadwalls are considered uncommon in Gustavus in winter. The highest numbers are usually found at the mouth of the Bartlett River in Bartlett Cove, and **forty** were there on 19 February. My personal previous high count was twenty-eight at that location in February 2010. -NKD

## **Lesser Scaup**

Three on 1 and 2 December on the gravel pit ponds north of town. -NKD

## **King Eider**

One on 24 December off the beach west of town. -NKD

This is the first winter record for Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

## **Hooded Merganser**

It was a good winter for Hooded Mergansers with small numbers being seen through the period on a pond near the airport and on the Salmon River. -NKD, JFS, and others.

The maximum was ten on 20 February. -NKD

### **Ptarmigan**

A **White-tailed Ptarmigan** on 6 December flying low across the golf course in town was an unexpected sight. -NKD

One ptarmigan, either Rock or Willow based on the description, on 7 December was on the beach east of town. -EHJ

Another, said to be a Willow Ptarmigan, was in town on 13 December. -LP

Gustavus residents say that Willow Ptarmigans are fairly common in winter on Pleasant Island. Maybe ptarmigan were moving through Gustavus in early December to wintering grounds?

### **Red-throated Loon**

One to four were seen regularly through the period in Bartlett Cove, where they are often found in winter. At least **ten** were there on 4 December. -NKD

Red-throated Loons are considered uncommon in winter in Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

### **Sharp-shinned Hawk**

One on approximately 28 December in town. -JL

Both adult and first year hawks attacked the birds at my feeder in town from 6 January through the end of the period. -NKD

One adult on 17 February in the Glen's Ditch neighborhood. -JGS

One first year bird found dead on 26 February in town. -KN

### **Merlin**

One on 29 December and 8 February on the beach west of town. -NKD

### **Peregrine Falcon**

One on 17 December on the beach near Point Gustavus. -NKD

One on 16 February on the beach east of town. -NKD

### **Killdeer**

Two on 17 December (JFS) and one on 24 and 27 December along rivers west of town. -NKD, JJ

### **Black Oystercatcher**

One on 17 February in Bartlett Cove was the first I have seen in winter, although they are sometime found in the Beardslee Islands in December on Christmas Bird Counts. -NKD

### **Sanderling**

Sanderlings were present through the period along Gustavus beaches with a maximum estimate of 180 on 16 February east of town. -NKD

### **Rock Sandpiper**

Rock Sandpipers were present in small numbers through the period along Gustavus beaches.

The only dates on which I encountered more than 30 Rock Sandpipers were 18 and 24 February with at least 400 estimated on both days. On both these dates the Rock Sandpipers were with the Dunlin flock east of town near Rink Creek, and on both dates a Rock Sandpiper with colored leg bands was seen. According to Dan Ruthrauff (USGS), this bird had been banded on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta in 2007 (44 birds) or in 2008 (1 bird). Rock Sandpipers with this band

combo had also been sighted in Gustavus in December 2008, December 2009, and February 2010. -NKD

### **Dunlin**

Dunlin were present through the period along Gustavus beaches with a maximum estimate of 2,500 on 13 January near the mouth of Rink Creek east of town. A Dunlin with colored leg bands was seen on 13 January and 24 February. According to Dan Ruthrauff (USGS), this was one of 12 adults banded on 9 September 2010 on the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta. Birds with this band combo had also been sighted in Gustavus in January 2011 and in Taiwan in December 2010. -NKD

### **Wilson's Snipe**

One from about 12 to 18 December along the Salmon River. -MB

One on 24 December, **five** on 26 December, and one on 13 February west of the Salmon River. -NKD

### **Gulls**

Apart from Glaucous-winged Gulls and Mew Gulls (both common), the only other gulls seen during the period were one **Thayer's Gull** on 9 January on the Salmon River (NKD), one **Herring Gull** on 25 February in Bartlett Cove (NKD), and ten **Black-legged Kittiwakes** on 17 December at the mouth of Glacier Bay (GPS, SLN).

### **Ancient Murrelet**

Five on 17 December along about 1/2 mile of shoreline at Point Gustavus. -NKD

This is the first winter record for Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

### **Eurasian Collared-Dove**

Two were present through the period at Laurie Ross's home in town where they have been over the last year. The doves were absent for about two weeks in the first half of February, but returned. -LMR, NKD

### **Snowy Owl**

The remains of a Snowy Owl were found on 17 February along the shore of Bartlett Cove. Most of the owl had been consumed and the remains looked like they had been there for more than a month. -NKD

### **Northern Pygmy-Owl**

One on 16, 18, and 23 December and on 15 and 20 February at my home in town. -NKD

One on 28 December north of town at the gravel pits. -NKD

One on 11 February in town. -JFS

One on 16 February east of town along the beach. -NKD

One on 7, 14, 20, and 26 February at bird feeders in the Glen's Ditch neighborhood. -JGS, LMR

One on 29 February in the Good River neighborhood. -PB

### **Barred Owl**

One on 4 January in west Gustavus. -SLN

One on 1, 8, 21, and 22 December and on 28 February near my home in town. -NKD

### **Short-eared Owl**

Short-eared Owls were seen regularly from 20 December to at least 6 January in the beach uplands within a mile of the Salmon River. -LMT, NKD, LMR

At least three on 30 December near the Salmon River. -NKD

One on 6 February on the golf course. -EHJ

One on 18 February east of town near Rink Creek. -NKD

### **Northern Saw-whet Owl**

One on 9 December near my home in town. -NKD

One on 3 February was photographed in town. -BV, JV

Another small owl on about 3 February that was probably a Northern Saw-whet Owl was in a shed in town. -DL

One on about 8 February in west Gustavus. -SN

### **Downy Woodpecker**

One on 14 December and 8 February near the Salmon River. -NKD

Two on 17 December in town. -BV, JV, RFWY

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

One on 7 December in town. -NKD

### **Northern Shrike**

Northern Shrikes were seen regularly through the period along Gustavus beaches, in the state Crane Flats, on the golf course, and at bird feeders. -NKD, LMR, JFS

Two on 3 January were near the Salmon River. -NKD

Northern Shrikes are considered uncommon in winter in Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

### **Steller's Jay**

Steller's Jays were common in Gustavus through December and into January with as many as ten at a time coming to feeders in town. Numbers began dropping in January and they were more scarce in February. -NKD, JV, BV, and others.

### **Red-breasted Nuthatch**

At least one through the period until 9 February at my home in town. -NKD

### **American Pipit**

One on 4 December in Bartlett Cove. -NKD

### **American Tree Sparrow**

American Tree Sparrows were present through the period and were often seen near the town dock at seed I put out. There were at least forty at that location on 2 January. -NKD

American Tree Sparrows are considered uncommon in winter in Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

### **White-Crowned Sparrow**

A first year White-crowned Sparrow was present through the period until at least 19 February near the town dock where it was coming to seed I put out. -NKD, JFS, PBSV, HV

### **Golden-crowned Sparrow**

Two first year Golden-crowned Sparrows were present through the period until at least 19 February near the town dock where they were coming to seed I put out. -NKD, PBSV, HV

### **Lapland Longspur**

At least one on 26 December west of the Salmon River with Snow Buntings. -NKD  
Four on 1 January, **fourteen** on 3 January, eight on 8 January, and nine on 9 January along the Salmon River. -NKD  
The previous high count in winter, that I am aware of, was ten on the 1969 Christmas Bird Count.

### **McKay's Bunting**

One on 26 and 27 December west of the Salmon River with about 150 Snow Buntings. -NKD, JFS, JJ  
One on 2 January on the golf course with 200-300 Snow Buntings. -NKD  
This is the second record for McKay's Bunting for Gustavus/Glacier Bay and the first winter record.

### **Rusty Blackbird**

Rusty Blackbirds were seen from 10 December to 10 February in town with a maximum of 14 on 10 February. -NKD, PBSV, HV

### **Pine Grosbeak**

Pine Grosbeaks were more numerous this winter than they have been in many years. They were heard and seen daily during December, often in multiple locations. Numbers declined through the period, and they were only occasionally heard and seen in February. -NKD and others.

### **Red Crossbill**

None reported.

### **White-winged Crossbill**

White-winged Crossbills were heard and seen a few times in February. -NKD

### **Common Redpoll**

Common Redpolls were fairly common through the period with flocks of 50 to 120 birds being seen regularly. -NKD

### **Pine Siskin**

Small numbers of Pine Siskins were seen through December. Numbers began picking up at the end of December. By mid February a flock of about 300 Pine Siskins was coming to my feeder in town daily. -NKD