



**“In search of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper”  
27th June – 11th July 2011**

**SYSTEMATIC LIST**

The taxonomy and English names used in this checklist generally follow *The Clements Checklist of the Birds of the World* by James Clements with revisions made where an alternative name/taxonomy is considered more appropriate.

This systematic list was compiled by Chris Collins (based on the figures agreed at the nightly logs) and includes all species recorded between departing Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy on the afternoon of 27 June and flying out of Anadyr on 11 July.

Accurately counting seabirds at sea is extremely difficult (eg as one can never be sure which birds are following or revisiting the ship), so the system outlined below was adopted, with this also used for the more numerous landbirds:

1-10 = actual number seen  
11-100 = A  
101-1,000 = B  
1,001-10,000 = C  
10,001-100,000 = D

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**BIRDS**

**Tundra Bean Goose** *Anser serrirostris*

A total of seventeen birds were seen across four dates with the highest number being eight at Meinypil’gyno on 8 July.

**Greater White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*

This species was only seen in the latter stages of the expedition with A logged at Anastasiya Bay on 6 July and Meinypil’gyno on 8 July. The only other sighting was two birds on 5 July.

**Emperor Goose** *Chen canagica*

At least sixteen birds were seen at Meinypil’gyno on 8 July with five recorded there the previous day.

**Brent Goose** *Branta bemiola*

Eleven birds at Meinypil’gyno on 8 July were the only sightings on the expedition.

**Eurasian Wigeon** *Anas penelope*

Seen on seven dates with the highest count being on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) when approximately one hundred individuals were noted.

**Eurasian Teal** *Anas crecca*

Seen in small numbers on five dates with the first birds being at the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka (28 June) where a low A was recorded. The final sightings were in Anastasiya Bay where two were seen on 6 July.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Only seen during the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River (28 June) when A was logged with similar numbers on Karaginskiy Island (1 July).

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*

The only sightings of the voyage were at the Zhupanova River with a low A recorded.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta*

Recorded on eight widely spread days across the expedition with A logged on four occasions.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*

Eight birds on the Zhupanova River (28 June) were the only records of the voyage.

**Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila*

Birds were noted on seven dates with the highest counts being on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) and at Anastasiya Bay (6 July) where B was logged on both occasions.

**Steller's Eider** *Polysticta stelleri*

Approximately 140 individuals were seen along the shoreline of Verkhoturova Island (2 July).

**King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*

A total of at least fifty birds were recorded across three dates. The highest count was c. 40 individuals on the final full day of the expedition (9 July), with a low A logged at Anastasiya Bay (6 July) and a single male at the Goven Peninsula (2 July).

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*

A common species with A or B recorded on ten dates.

The relevant subspecies here is *v-nigra*, which unlike the birds in Northern Europe has bright orange feet and bills.

**Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus*

This fabulous looking duck was seen in moderate numbers (ie typically a single figure count to a low B) on an almost daily basis with records on eleven dates.

**White-winged Scoter** *Melanitta (fusca) stejnegeri*

Recorded on eight dates but almost always in small numbers (ie a low A or single figure count).

There is an increasing debate as to the species limits within the Velvet/White-winged/Stejneger's Scoter complex and if the birds in Eastern Russia are treated as different from Europe and North America, those seen on the trip would become known as Stejneger's Scoters.

**Black Scoter** *Melanitta americana*

Another duck species which was recorded on a regular basis with sightings on nine dates. The highest counts were in Anastasiya Bay (6 July) where the number seen was thought to be approaching one thousand individuals.

Like the previous species, there has been a debate as to whether there are one or two species within this complex, although it is now widely accepted that the birds in North America and Eastern Russia are specifically distinct from those in Europe.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*

This widespread species was first recorded on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) and was then noted on a daily basis between 4-8 July inclusive. On most occasions, A was logged.

**Common Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*

Only seen on three dates with the first sighting being during the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka (28 June) where two were noted.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*

This species was recorded on a daily basis between 1-6 July (Karaginskiy Island-Anastasiya Bay) with A or B noted on each occasion. The only other record was a lone bird on the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River (28 June)

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*

Seen in moderate numbers on a regular basis with sightings on eight days.

**Rock Ptarmigan** *Lagopus muta*

Two birds on Medney Island, Commander Islands archipelago on 29 June were the only records on the expedition.

**Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*

Seen on six dates with the highest count (A logged) being whilst cruising on the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka on 28 June. Subsequently a total of fifteen birds were noted across five dates.

**Black-throated Diver** *Gavia arctica*

A number of divers were seen where the views were not good enough to be sure if this species or the subsequent one was involved. However, confirmed Black-throated Divers were noted on three dates (3-6 July) with a total of ten birds being recorded.

**Pacific Diver** *Gavia pacifica*

The only confirmed Pacific Divers were three individuals which were seen near Meinypil'gyno on 7 July.

**White-billed Diver** *Gavia adamsii*

Somewhat surprisingly only two individuals were seen during the expedition with one in Anastasiya Bay on 6 July and the other at Meinypil'gyno two days later.

**Red-necked Grebe** *Podiceps grisegena*

The only sightings were four birds on 5 July.

**Laysan Albatross** *Phoebastria immutabilis*

This species was only seen on the first four days of the voyage (Petropavlovsk-Commander Islands) with the maximum day count being a low A.

**Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

An extremely common bird throughout the voyage which was logged on a daily basis except for 5 July. The highest counts were around Medney Island (29 June) where D was logged (ie at least 10,000 individuals).

Almost all the birds seen during the first half of the voyage were "Blue Fulmars", however, midway through the trip there was an abrupt change and these were replaced by pale birds.

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

Only ten individuals were recorded, with all these encountered during the first three days of the expedition.

**Short-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus tenuirostris*

Only recorded at the two ends of the voyage with birds recorded on 28-29 June and 7 and 9 July. The highest count was off Medney Island (29 June) where a low B was logged.

**Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel**                      ***Oceanodroma furcata***

This species was seen in reasonable numbers on the first four full days of the trip (ie 28 June-1 July) with A or B logged on each date.

**Leach's Storm-Petrel**                      ***Oceanodroma leucorhoa***

The only sightings were near Medney Island (29 June) with a low A logged.

**Red-faced Cormorant**                      ***Phalacrocorax urile***

A fairly range-restricted species which was only seen in the early stages of the trip with B recorded on both days in the Commander Islands (29-30 June). The only other sightings being in Avacha Bay, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy (27 June) where five were noted.

**Pelagic Cormorant**                      ***Phalacrocorax pelagicus***

A comparatively common and widespread species with birds logged on nine dates and A or B recorded on each occasion.

**Osprey**                      ***Pandion haliaetus***

The only sighting was a lone bird seen on the Goven Peninsula zodiac cruise (2 July).

**White-tailed Eagle**                      ***Haliaeetus albicilla***

Somewhat surprisingly this species was seen less frequently than Steller's Sea-Eagle with a total of seven birds seen between 4-6 July inclusive.

**Steller's Sea-Eagle**                      ***Haliaeetus pelagicus***

One of the undoubted highlights of the expedition and seen on five dates. The first was only seen briefly in Avacha Bay, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy (27 June), however, the following day at the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka everyone got some stunning views during the zodiac cruise with an incredible fifty birds being recorded. Whilst the majority of these with sub-adults, we also saw adults at three occupied nests.

**Rough-legged Buzzard**                      ***Buteo lagopus***

The only sighting was on 5 July whilst exploring the Chukotka coastline for Spoon-billed Sandpipers.

**Eurasian Hobby**                      ***Falco subbuteo***

A lone bird on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) was the only sighting of the voyage.

**Gyr Falcon**                      ***Falco rusticolus***

Three birds were seen on 5 July whilst exploring the Chukotka coastline for Spoon-billed Sandpipers.

**Peregrine Falcon**                      ***Falco peregrinus***

A total of six birds were seen across four dates.

**Sandhill Crane**                      ***Grus canadensis***

This species was recorded on a daily basis between 4-8 July with a total of 28 individuals recorded with another two birds seen whilst exploring around Anadyr on 10 July. The highest count was on 6 July (Anastasiya Bay) where fourteen birds were noted.

**Pacific Golden Plover**                      ***Pluvialis squatarola***

The only records were four birds on Karaginskiy Island on 1 July.

**Mongolian Plover (Lesser Sandplover)*****Charadrius mongolus***

This species was first noted at Nikol'skoye on Bering Island (30 June) where five were seen. It was then logged on a daily basis between 4-7 July.

**Common Ringed Plover*****Charadrius hiaticula***

Seen in small numbers on a daily basis between 4-8 July and also reasonably common around Anadyr (10 July).

**Eurasian Oystercatcher*****Haematopus ostralegus***

The only sighting was a lone bird at Tintikun Lagoon on 3 July.

**Common Sandpiper*****Actitis hypoleucos***

Another species where the sole record was a single bird at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July).

**Grey-tailed Tattler*****Heterosceles brevipes***

Only two birds were noted with the first being a 'fly past' off the Kamchatka coast a few miles north of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy (27 June) and the other being at Nikol'skoye, Bering Island (30 June).

**Common Greenshank*****Tringa nebularia***

Two were seen during the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka on 28 June.

**Wood Sandpiper*****Tringa glareola***

A single bird was recorded during the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River on 28 June with the only other sightings being on 5 July whilst exploring the Chukotka coastline for Spoon-billed Sandpipers and at a marsh east of Anadyr (10 July).

**Far Eastern Curlew*****Numenius madagascariensis***

Good numbers were recorded on the Zhupanova River zodiac cruise (28 June) with A logged. Single birds were also seen on 27 June, 4 July and 6 July.

**Black-tailed Godwit*****Limosa limosa***

The only record was a lone bird whilst cruising on the Zhupanova River (28 June).

**Ruddy Turnstone*****Arenaria interpres***

A single bird at Meinypil'gyno (7 July) was the sole sighting.

**Great Knot*****Calidris tenuirostris***

Two birds were seen whilst searching for Spoon-billed Sandpipers on 4 July.

**Red-necked Stint*****Calidris ruficollis***

Seen on a daily basis from 1-6 July with single figure counts on three dates and A logged on the other days. The only other sighting was a lone bird at Meinypil'gyno on 8 July.

**Temminck's Stint*****Calidris temminckii***

A total of four birds were seen across three dates between 4-8 July.

**Long-toed Stint*****Calidris subminuta***

This species almost certainly breeds on the small marsh at the mouth of the Zhupanova River and three birds were seen there on 28 June. The only other sightings were on 4-5 July with two individuals and a low A recorded respectively.

**Rock Sandpiper*****Calidris ptilocnemis***

One of the speciality waders of the voyage, with two birds seen on both days in the Commander Islands (29-30 June).

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

Good numbers of summer plumage birds were seen near Nikol'skoye, Bering Island (30 June) with at least one hundred individuals logged. Similar numbers were then noted the following day on Karaginskiy Island where this species presumably also breeds. The only other sightings were on 4 July.

**Spoon-billed Sandpiper** *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*

Three days of the expedition were set aside for searching locations which had not been previously surveyed for this species. On the last of these dates (5 July), four birds/three territories and one nest containing three eggs were found – a “lifetime birding highpoint” for all those fortunate enough to be involved !!

The following day, the group divided into two at Meinypil'gyno and we visited two territories where birds were watched at their monitored nests.

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Only seen on three dates with a low A logged on the Zhupanova River zodiac cruise (28 June), five on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) and two on 5 July whilst searching for Spoon-billed Sandpipers.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

Good numbers were seen on the numerous pools on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) with at least fifty birds recorded. The species was then seen on a daily basis between 5-9 July with the highest count being a low B (ie at least one hundred individuals) near Meinypil'gyno on 7 July.

**Grey [Red] Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Recorded at both ends of the expedition with a total of seven birds on 28-29 June, one on 7 July and a low A on 9 July.

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

This species was seen on every day of the trip with B or C logged on each date except 28 June when A was recorded.

**Red-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa brevirostris*

This North Pacific endemic was only seen around the Commander Islands (29-30 June) with A logged on both dates. The best views of the expedition were during the zodiac cruise along the North-West coast of Medney Island when we enjoyed some exceptional views of several birds.

**Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini*

Just three of these gorgeous Arctic breeders were seen, with two on the approach to Meinypil'gyno on the morning of 7 July and one the following day shortly after leaving this area.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

Seen on six dates, with the highest count being a low B during the zodiac cruise up the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka Peninsula on 28 June.

**Kamchatka Gull (Common/Mew Gull)** *Larus (canus) kamtschatschensis*

This putative split does seem quite different from Common/Mew Gull and, for example, has an almost apricot-coloured bill, red eye-ring and brighter legs than the birds in Europe. It was seen on eight days (28 June plus daily sightings from 30 June-6 July) with A logged on six occasions.

**Vega Gull** *Larus vegae*

Seen on six dates, with the highest counts being at Meinypil'gyno (7-8 July) where this species was extremely common with a high B (ie close to 1,000 individuals) logged on both days.

**Slaty-backed Gull**                      ***Larus schistisagus***

By far the commonest gull species and recorded on every day of the voyage. Although there were a couple of dates when only a single individual was noted (29-30 June: Commander Islands where this species is replaced by Glaucous-winged Gull), on all other days it was seen in good numbers with the highest number being in Olyotorskiy Bay where D (ie 10,000+) was logged.

**Glaucous-winged Gull**                      ***Larus glaucescens***

This species was only recorded on the first four days of the voyage with the highest counts being around the Commander Islands where several hundred were logged each day (29-30 June).

**Glaucous Gull**                      ***Larus hyperboreus***

This species was fairly common around Meinypil'gyno with A logged on both days (7-8 July) and a similar number the following day too. Prior to then, a total of only six individuals were recorded with these being across four widespread dates.

**Aleutian Tern**                      ***Sterna aleutica***

The only sighting was a single bird in Olyotorskiy Bay on 3 July.

**Common Tern**                      ***Sterna hirundo***

The birds in this part of Russia are of the black-billed subspecies *longipennis* and were seen on seven widely spaced dates with A or B logged on six occasions.

**Pomarine Skua**                      ***Stercorarius pomarinus***

A total of four birds were seen across three dates.

**Arctic Skua**                      ***Stercorarius parasiticus***

Seen on a daily basis from 4-7 July with single figure counts on three dates and A logged on 7 July. The only other birds were on 1 July (Karaginskiy Island) where eight individuals were recorded.

**Long-tailed Skua**                      ***Stercorarius longicaudus***

Seen on a regular basis during the second half of the trip with sightings on seven dates between 1-9 July although on most days only a single figure count was recorded. This species was, however, very common at Meinypil'gyno with approximately 150 individuals on the tundra on 8 July.

**Common Guillemot**                      ***Uria aalge***

Seen on a daily basis throughout the voyage with A logged on five dates, B on three occasions, C on four days and D once. The highest numbers were on Verkhoturova Island (2 July) where thousands of individuals breed.

**Brunnich's Guillemot**                      ***Uria lomvia***

Marginally less common than Common Guillemot with records on eleven dates with the largest numbers on 9 July, ie the day before arriving at Anadyr.

**Pigeon Guillemot**                      ***Cephus columba***

This species was seen on seven widespread dates throughout the trip with A recorded on each occasion.

**Spectacled Guillemot**                      ***Cephus carbo***

This species breeds in small numbers in Avacha Bay, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy and four birds were seen shortly after leaving the wharf on 27 June. Very unexpectedly, a lone bird was also seen off Verkhoturova Island (2 July) where this is presumably only a vagrant.

**Kittlitz's Murrelet**                      ***Brachyramphus brevirostris***

This species is now categorised as critically endangered by Birdlife International due to "an extremely rapid population decline". Despite this, however, twenty two individuals were recorded between 5-8 July with the highest counts being eight individuals on both 6 and 7 July (ie day south of Meinypil'gyno and the morning the ship arrived there).

**Ancient Murrelet** *Synthliboramphus antiquus*

The only sightings of this species were in Avacha Bay, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy after leaving the wharf (27 June) with at least one hundred individuals noted.

**Parakeet Auklet** *Aethia psittacula*

Seen on five dates with the highest numbers being recorded whilst zodiac cruising Ariy Kamen Island (which is just offshore from Bering Island in the Commander Islands archipelago) where B was logged.

**Least Auklet** *Aethia pusilla*

A total of four birds were seen with three in the Commander Islands (29-30 June) and one on 9 July whilst cruising north towards Anadyr.

**Whiskered Auklet** *Aethia pygmaea*

This species is usually reasonably numerous in the Commander Islands but was only seen in inexplicably low numbers with two birds on 29 June and one individual the following day.

**Crested Auklet** *Aethia cristatella*

This species was logged on seven dates during the voyage with these being recorded in two discrete blocks with birds daily between 29 June-2 July and again on 7-9 July inclusive.

The highest counts were on 2 July (am: Verkhoturova Island; pm: Goven Peninsula) when C was logged.

**Horned Puffin** *Fratercula corniculata*

This species was seen on the majority of days during the voyage (11 days) with A logged on most occasions. The highest counts were around Medney (29 June) and Verkhoturova (2 July) islands where B was recorded.

**Tufted Puffin** *Fratercula cirrhata*

Undoubtedly one of the 'classic' alcids of the Russian Far East and seen on every day of the voyage. On seven dates B was logged, with the highest number being around Verkhoturova Island (2 July) where this species breeds in good numbers and the day count was C, ie at least one thousand individuals.

**Common (Eurasian) Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

Somewhat surprisingly the only record of the expedition was at least one bird heard calling at the Zhupanova River (28 June).

**Pacific (Fork-tailed) Swift** *Apus pacificus*

This species was only seen on two dates with one at the Zhupanova River (28 June) and A logged whilst looking for Spoon-billed Sandpipers on 5 July.

**Eurasian Nutcracker** *Nucifraga caryocatactes*

Two Nutcrackers were seen at Tintikun Lagoon on 3 July.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*

This species was only recorded at the Zhupanova River (28 June) with A logged.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

There were single figure counts of this species on nine dates between 28 June-8 July with a very low A (ie a few more than ten) also recorded on 4 July.



**Sky Lark** *Alauda arvensis*

This species was recorded on five dates during the voyage with the first sightings at the Zhupanova River (28 June) where A was logged.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The only sightings of the trip were lone birds on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) and at Meinypil'gyno (8 July).

**House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*

Seen on a daily basis at Meinypil'gyno (7-8 July) plus the previous two days.

**Willow Tit** *Poecile montana*

According to 'Birds of East Asia' (M. Brazil 2009), Marsh and Willow Tits are much closer in appearance in Eastern Russia than in Europe with calls and colouration not considered entirely reliable ways of separating them. Indeed, to complicate matters even further, whilst some birds in this region resemble the birds in Europe, those at the Zhupanova River in Kamchatka seem quite different having generally frostier plumage, darker wings and a short, but nevertheless noticeable, shaggy crest. Given the habitat where these birds were seen (28 June: six individuals), they were considered to presumably be Willow Tits although there were obvious differences from the birds all who saw them were familiar with.

**Kamchatka Leaf-warbler/Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus examinandus/borealis*

A recently published paper in the British Ornithologists' Union's journal *Ibis* has proposed splitting Arctic Warbler into three species. If these recommendations are followed, two 'species' were seen on the expedition with the birds heard at the Zhupanova River (28 June) and seen on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) being Kamchatka Leaf-warblers whilst further north, these were replaced by Arctic Warblers (3 July: A; 6 July: 1).

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Seen on a daily basis between 1-3 July inclusive and also heard during the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River (28 June). The highest numbers were at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July), where this species was moderately common and a low A was logged.

**Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*

The only place where this species was recorded was near the mouth of the Zhupanova River (28 June), although birds were also heard on 2-3 July (Verkhoturova Island and Tintikun Lagoon).

**Middendorff's Warbler** *Locustella ochotensis*

This species was first encountered at the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka (28 June: low A) with single figure counts also at Verkhoturova Island and Tintikun Lagoon (2-3 July).

**Taiga Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicilla*

The only record was a lone bird at the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka (28 June).

**Rufous-tailed Robin** *Luscinia sibilans*

This species was heard singing at the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka (28 June).

**Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

Only seen on two dates, with three individuals at the Zhupanova River, Kamchatka (28 June) and a single bird at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July).

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*

A total of seven birds were recorded with two on Karaginskiy Island (1 July), one at Anana Bay (4 July) and four on the mountain walk at Bukhta Petra (6 July).

**Northern Wheatear**                      *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Three birds were seen at Meinyopil'gyno on 7 July.

**Dusky Thrush**                              *Turdus eunomus*

Single individuals were recorded on Verkhoturova Island (2 July) and at Bukhta Petra (6 July).

**Siberian Accentor**                      *Prunella montanella*

The only sighting of this species was after the conclusion of the voyage with a single male on the outskirts of Anadyr on the morning of 11 July. This species was, however, also heard singing at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July).

**Eastern Yellow Wagtail**                      *Motacilla [flava] tshutschensis*

The taxonomy of the Yellow Wagtail complex remains controversial, although many authorities now split it into two, with the birds in this part of Eastern Russia now being part of Eastern Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla tshutschensis*.

Birds were seen on a daily basis between 1-6 July and also on 28 June at the Zhupanova River. On most dates, A was logged although a low B (ie at least one hundred individuals) was recorded on 5 July.

**Grey Wagtail**                                      *Motacilla cinerea*

A total of four birds were seen, with two at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July) and the same number on 6 July.

**White Wagtail**                                      *Motacilla alba*

White Wagtails were seen on nine dates between 28 June-8 July with a low A logged on most occasions.

**Pechora Pipit**                                      *Anthus gustavi*

Single figure counts of this species were made on six dates (28 June-5 July), although a low A was recorded on Medney Island on 29 June where this species is moderately common.

**Red-throated Pipit**                              *Anthus cerinus*

The commonest of the three pipit species seen on the expedition with good numbers (A or B) logged on four dates between 1-7 July and single figure counts on two other days during this period.

**Buff-bellied Pipit**                              *Anthus rubescens*

This species was only recorded during the first half of the expedition with a total of seven birds between 29 June-3 July.

**[Eurasian] Wren**                                      *Troglodytes troglodytes*

This species was recorded on both days in the Commander Islands (29-30 June) although many more individuals were heard than seen.

**Lapland Bunting**                              *Calcarius lapponicus*

A reasonably common species in the Commander Islands with a low A logged on both islands (29-30 June). Good numbers were also seen on Karaginskiy Island (1 July) with four further birds seen subsequently.

**Snow Bunting**                                      *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Another reasonably numerous species in the Commander Islands with four birds on Medney Island on 29 June and nine around Nikol'skoye the following day. This species was also seen on a daily basis between 4-8 July with fourteen individuals recorded.

**Little Bunting**                                      *Emberiza pusilla*

This species was not seen on the voyage, although a single individual was recorded whilst birding around Anadyr on the morning of 11 July.

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*

This species was only recorded during the zodiac cruise on the Zhupanova River where it was heard singing (28 June).

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

The only sightings were two birds at the Zhupanova River on 28 June.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

Another species which was only recorded at the Zhupanova River (28 June) with two individuals recorded.

**Grey-crowned Rosy Finch** *Leucosticte tephrocotis*

One of the speciality land birds in the Commander Islands with four seen on Medney Island on 29 June.

**Pine Grosbeak** *Pinicola enucleator*

A lone individual at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July) was the only record of the expedition.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erthrinus*

Good numbers were seen at the Zhupanova River (28 June), Tintikun Lagoon (3 July) and at Bukhta Petra (6 July) with A logged at each site. A single individual was also recorded on 5 July at one of the locations which were searched for Spoon-billed Sandpiper.

**Oriental Greenfinch** *Carduelis sinica*

Only recorded on two dates with A logged at the Zhupanova River (28 June) and at Tintikun Lagoon (3 July).

**Common Redpoll** *Acanthis flammea*

Birds were seen on six days with A recorded daily between 4-6 July. All other sightings were single figure counts.

**Arctic Redpoll** *Acanthis hornemanni*

Two individuals were recorded on 6 July during the mountain walk at Bukhta Petra.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*

This widespread species was only seen at Nikol'skoye on Bering Island (30 June).

## **MAMMALS**

### **Kamchatka Marmot**

### ***Marmota camtschatica***

This range-restricted species is endemic to Eastern Russia and has one of the longest hibernation periods of any mammal, with some individuals only emerging for three months every year.

A lone individual was seen on 6 July during the mountain walk at Bukhta Petra on 6 July.

### **Muskrat**

### ***Ondatra zibethicus***

The only sighting of the expedition was a single animal at the Zhupanova River on 28 June.

### **Arctic Ground-squirrel**

### ***Spermophilus parryii***

This species was seen on a daily basis between 4-7 July and also around Anadyr on 10-11 July.

### **Mountain Hare**

### ***Lepus timidus***

Three individuals were seen with the first recorded during the zodiac cruise along the Goven Peninsula (2 July). Single animals were subsequently seen at Anana Bay (4 July) and at Meinypil'gyno (8 July).

### **Red Fox**

### ***Vulpus vulpus***

Two were seen on Verkhoturova Island on 2 July with another recorded a couple of days later in Anana Bay. Unlike Red Foxes in Western Europe which have white bellies, some of the animals in Eastern Russia have red bellies.

### **Arctic [Blue] Fox**

### ***Alopex lagopus***

Six Arctic Foxes were seen on Medney Island (29 June) where there is an endemic subspecies, *Alopex lagopus semenovi*.

By the early 1990s, the population on Medney Island had fallen to less than one hundred individuals as a result of an introduced mite which caused mange amongst the foxes. In 1994 a programme of inoculating cubs with anti-parasitic drugs was introduced and since then the population has increased considerably.

### **Brown Bear**

### ***Ursus arctos***

The expedition was spectacularly successful for Brown Bears with a total of thirty five animals seen. The first sightings were during the zodiac cruise on the Goven Peninsula (2 July) where eleven were recorded including two females which both had two young cubs. The following day two were seen at Tintikun Lagoon and on 5 July, at least ten Bears were seen at one of the sites where we surveyed for Spoon-billed Sandpipers. Nine Bears were then seen on 6 July (Bukhta Petra and Anastasiya Bay) with the final records being three on 9 July at Pika.

### **Sea Otter**

### ***Enhydra lutris***

Sea Otters were only seen at the Commander Islands with at least thirty recorded around Medney Island (29 June) and three offshore from Nikol'skoye, Bering Island the following day.

### **Walrus**

### ***Odobenus rosmarus***

One of the undoubted highlights of the expedition was finding at least five thousand Walruses in the late evening of 8 July whilst heading along the coast towards Cape Navarin. Following a short after dinner zodiac cruise (in rather gloomy conditions) when we were able to watch the animals hauled out on the beach, the decision was taken to spend the night at this location and early the following morning we enjoyed some fantastic views with some of the animals passing a matter of metres from the zodiacs.

### **Bearded Seal**

### ***Erignathus barbatus***

This species is usually associated with the far north but a single animal was seen on the morning of 7 July whilst approaching Meinypil'gyno.

**Common [Harbour] Seal**

***Phoca vitulina***

Common Seals were only seen around the Commander Islands (29-30 June) with the highest numbers off Medney Island where A was logged.

**Largha [Spotted] Seal**

***Phoca larga***

The commonest seal with sightings on eleven days. At least one hundred individuals were seen on five dates with good numbers hunting salmon at the river mouth at Meinypil'gyno on both 7 and 8 July. Some of the best views, however, were at the Zhupanova River (28 June) where the animals haul out on sandbars in the river.

**Ringed Seal**

***Pusa hispida***

Single animals were recorded on both 8 and 9 July. The one seen on 8 July (whilst the ship was at anchor off Meinypil'gyno) was incredibly curious and spent over an hour swimming round the *Spirit of Enderby* and also made several attempts to climb into the zodiacs!!!

**Ribbon Seal**

***Histiophoca fasciata***

Another species which is generally associated with sea ice, however, a female was well seen on 3 July.

**Steller's [Northern] Sea-lion**

***Eumetopias jubatus***

This species was seen on three dates with the highest numbers being on a small islet just offshore from Verkhoturova Island (2 July) where there were thought to be up to one hundred individuals present. One of these was branded and it appeared that the animal had been marked on Medney Island which is over 340 miles away.

**Northern Fur Seal**

***Callorhinus ursinus***

Seven were seen around the Commander Islands (29-30 June) with the only other record being a lone individual on 2 July.

**Baird's Beaked Whale**

***Berardius bairdii***

This species is reasonably reliable south of Bering Island in the Commander Islands archipelago and five individuals were seen there on 29 June.

**Orca [Killer whale]**

***Orcinus orca***

At least a dozen animals were seen around the Commander Islands (29-30 June) with some of these showing exceptionally well. A further five individuals were then seen on 2 July.

**Harbour Porpoise**

***Phocoena phocoena***

Two individuals on 3 July were the only sightings of the voyage.

**Dall's Porpoise**

***Phocoenoides dalli***

This species was seen on a daily basis for the first five days of the expedition although on most occasions there were only single figure counts. The only instance when more than ten were recorded was after leaving Bering Island on 30 June.

**Beluga**

***Delphinapterus leucas***

Reasonable numbers of this northern speciality were seen just offshore from the river mouth at Meinypil'gyno on 7 July with at least a dozen individuals present. This species is also common around Anadyr and several were seen prior to disembarking on 10 July with more seen later in the day along the foreshore.

**North Pacific Right Whale*****Eubalaena japonica***

This species is one of the rarest cetaceans on the planet and those who saw two animals in the late evening of 27 June (a matter of hours after leaving Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy) could count themselves as extremely fortunate.

**Sperm Whale*****Physeter macrocephalus***

Two animals were seen on 30 June offshore from Bering Island.

**Northern Minke Whale*****Balaenoptera acutorostrata***

Seen on six dates between 29 June-8 July with single animals on four days and two individuals on the other occasions.

**Humpback Whale*****Megaptera novaengliae***

This species is usually reasonably common around the Commander Islands and eighteen were recorded on 29 June, with fifteen the following day. The only other sightings were towards the end of the expedition with a single animal close to Meinypil'gyno (7 July) and three whilst cruising towards Anadyr on 9 July.

**Grey Whale*****Eschrichtius robustus***

This species was first seen on 5 July when ten were seen. It was, however, common just offshore from Meinypil'gyno (7-8 July) with A logged on both dates and some fantastic looks whilst zodiac cruising. More animals were then seen whilst heading north on 8 July with good numbers at Pika in the late evening of 8 July and again the following morning. Indeed the day count for 9 July was a low B (ie just over 100 animals) demonstrating that this species certainly seems to be recovering from the days when it was hunted.