A REPORT ON THE BIRDS OF NORTHWESTERN ALASKA AND REGIONS ADJACENT TO BERING STRAIT. PART II

WITH ONE PHOTO

By ALFRED M. BAILEY

TUFTED PUFFIN. *Lunda cirrhata.*

The first example of this species to be observed was far out at sea, 1069 miles from Seattle according to the log of the S. S. Victoria, several flocks being seen during the day. They were exceedingly abundant in Unimak Pass on June 15. They were fairly common at King Island on June 27 and at St. Lawrence Island the following day, although there were but few in comparison with the next species. Several birds were seen at Whale Island, near St. Michael, in company with the Horned Puffins, while others were observed at the Corwin coal mine off Cape Lisborne on August 3. We had no opportunity to visit the great colonies of sea birds nesting along the precipitous walls of Cape Lisborne, but from the number of Tufted Puffins seen at sea, there must be quite a colony of them breeding there. Hendee saw no birds of this species in the vicinity of Wainwright. In Bering Strait, off-shore from Cape Prince of Wales, they were exceedingly abundant after June 16, on which date the first birds were seen along the broken shore ice. Great numbers nest on Fairway Rock and the Diomede Islands. They had not begun nesting on June 25, the last time I visited these islands, but were inhabiting the tunnels on the grassy slopes. I believe they re-excavate their old burrows.

HORNED PUFFIN. *Fratercula corniculata.*

These puffins were very abundant at King and St. Lawrence islands on June 27 and 28, doubtless then beginning to lay, but our time was too limited to make any investigations along that line. They seemed to favor the very summit of King Island, which is crowned with boulders, in the crevices of which the birds deposit their eggs. When a shot was fired, flocks of the birds took wing and the whole summit of the island was surrounded by them. They were even more abundant at St. Lawrence Island along the cliffs on the north side, and in the colonies on the southwest near Gambel village. They were also fairly abundant along the cliffs of Providence Bay, Siberia. We collected a series of specimens at Whale Island near St. Michael on July 21; they were nesting there rather abundantly along the sea wall facing the open bay. Three nests were found, in typical sites for this species, far back in deep crannies, and many birds were seen to fly from places which were inaccessible to us. A small flock of about seven individuals was seen at Cape Blossom, probably from the breeding colony on Chamisso Island a few miles away, and several birds were noted in the vicinity of Cape Lisborne and Corwin coal mine on August 3. I was told that they nested abundantly along the cliffs of Cape Lisborne. The species does not range regularly north of there. On Bering Strait it proved a common bird, a number being seen in migration along the open leads on June 16, off-shore from Cape Prince of Wales. It is not as abundant on Fairway Rock as the preceding species, although great numbers nest on the cliffs, usually choosing deep crannies for their sites. They had not begun nesting on June 25 on the Bering Strait islands.

PAROQUET AUKLET. *Phaleris psittacula.*

We arrived off King Island on June 27, a rather blustery day and poor for observations in the early morning; but a great number of sea birds were passing back and forth and among them we recognized many bands of these little white-breasted auklets.

When flying close, and silhouetted against the sky, their red, upturned beaks are prominent. The natives told us the birds had not all arrived and were not breeding as yet. We climbed about the ledges in the little time allowed us ashore, and saw a goodly number, the most favorable place near the village being among the jagged boulders on the summit and in the main colony of auklets situated some distance away.

There is a large nesting colony of sea birds below Gambel village on the southwest side of St. Lawrence Island, which Hendee visited, and he reported a number of this species (as well as of the next two) which were nesting, or preparing to nest, among

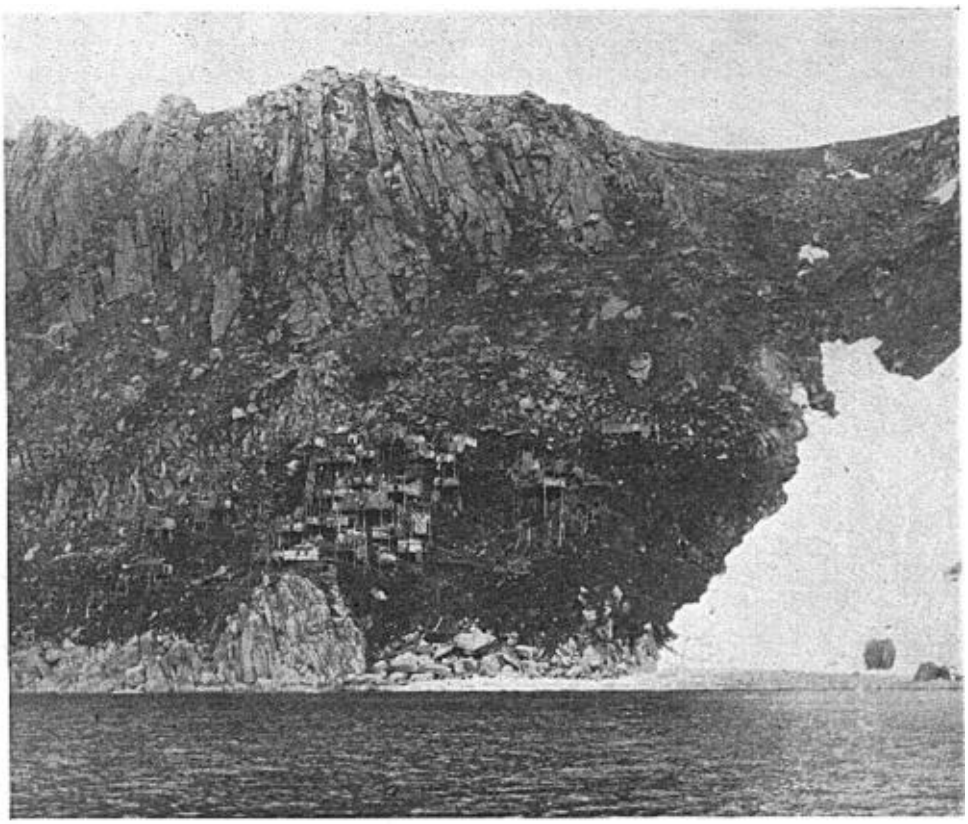

Fig. 19. KING ISLAND, IN BERING SEA. AUKLETS AND PUFFINS NESTED IN THE LEDGES ABOVE THE CLUSTER OF HOUSES.

the gigantic boulders. Some of these rocks were very large, and piled together in such a way as to form caverns into which one could crawl for a considerable distance. The scolding notes of the auklets were heard on all sides, far back where their nests were absolutely inaccessible to us. I visited a fine colony of birds near the reindeer herding camps of Sivunga, on the north shore of St. Lawrence Island, about sixty miles from Gambel. The cliffs rise from deep water to a sheer height of from seventy-five to one hundred feet, and are walled with snow for great distances, the free places being used by cormorants, murres, kittiwakes, and puffins, as nesting sites, while this species of auklet seemed to prefer burrows near the top of the cliff where they could not be molested. The Paroquet Auklets were quite tame and often peered inquisi-

tively at us, even after the murres, cormorants, and other auklets had taken wing.

We did not note these birds north of Bering Strait, but the Eskimos along the Arctic coast claim to know them. On the Diomedes and Fairway Rock they nest in very great numbers, but not until July. The first birds were seen off-shore from Wales on May 22, flying along the drifting pack, and by June 3 they were noted in considerable numbers around their breeding places. While hunting walrus with the Eskimos we continually saw these little fellows in equal abundance with the next species. On Fairway Rock, June 25, I took a few specimens. They were very tame, sitting about on the jutting boulders or flushing from the crevices among the rocks.

CRESTED AUKLET. *Aethia cristatella.*

These are the most beautiful of the northern auklets, and to me, at least, the most interesting. They have been aptly called sea-quail, because of the graceful, recurved plumes of the forehead, an adornment which makes an otherwise drab-appearing little bird conspicuous. They were abundant at King Island on June 27, but not as plentiful as I had expected, doubtless because we did not visit the most favorable place. The natives brought off a string for the captain's mess, and, I must confess, there may be a reason other than their appearance for calling them "sea-quail". In flight, they are easily distinguished from the Paroquet Auklets by their uniform, slaty plumage, as contrasted with the white-bellied Paroquets. The Least Auklet is also white-breasted, but too small to be confused with either of the other birds.

At St. Lawrence Island, these birds were present with the other auklets in both the colonies mentioned above. The summits of the cliffs were lined with a confused jumble of boulders among which this species and the Least Auklets made their homes. I spent a few enjoyable hours watching the active little fellows, but of all the auklets the Crested were my favorites. They struck such grotesque poses, standing duck-like, or strutting back and forth, with neck outstretched and head twisted inquisitively. They were quarrelsome when in company with others, and the dispute invariably started ended in all the contestants rolling among the boulders.

The Crested Auklet seemed to arrive at Bering Strait a little later than the Paroquet Auklet, the first bird seen in 1922 being on May 23, with but very few arrivals after that date until well into June. By June 25, however, they were as abundant as the former species. This is the auklet usually caught by the natives of the Diomedes for food, and when boats call at the island, strings of them are brought aboard for trade.

LEAST AUKLET. *Aethia pusilla.*

This is the most abundant of the auklets. It was noted at King Island in considerable numbers, flocks of them working close to the "Bear", while individuals and pairs were observed on the face of the cliffs. At St. Lawrence Island we saw thousands of them in the breeding colony at Sivunga, where they were preparing to nest among the rocks and rounded boulders. It was a wonderfully picturesque colony, with an immense snow-bank along the sea wall, inaccessible cliffs and dark-colored rocks which were relieved by the greenish moss, the bright beaked auklets and puffins, and the sun-lit clouds on the horizon. The auklets were in such flocks that they looked more like swarming bees than birds, and when they alighted, a dozen or more would often be perched upon a single boulder. That night, as we headed toward East Cape, Siberia, thousands of this species were continually flushing ahead of the "Bear", only to alight again a short distance ahead.

These birds are caught in great numbers by the natives, by means of dip nets which are suddenly thrust in the air from a place of concealment as a flock darts by close to the boulders. They are used for both food and clothing, the breast skins being

carefully removed and degreased and then sewed together into "parkas". Many of the natives were clothed in these bird-skin shirts.

In 1922, a few Least Auklets were seen in the drift ice at Wales on May 22, and by June 3 they were abundant. Early in the morning of the latter date we were sailing along under the walls of the Little Diomede, keeping watch for walrus herds, when countless numbers of auklets were continually flushing before our oomiak. They were feeding in pairs at this time, and as they flushed they gave timid cries of alarm. They seem to feed early in the morning and late in the evening, at which times great lines of them were moving to and from the nesting places. In the middle of the day, we often saw enormous "rafts" of birds floating about in the openings among the ice cakes, literally thousands of them in a band.

MARBLED MURRELET. ***Brachyramphus marmoratus.***

Only one specimen of this species was secured, an adult male collected by Hendee at Unalaska on September 24, 1922.

KITTLITZ MURRELET. ***Brachyramphus brevirostris.***

This bird seems to be a species of the ice floes. Hendee extended their known range along the Alaskan coast far into the Arctic, by taking two specimens on June 9 in a lead in the ice-pack off-shore from Wainwright. The natives there call them "ig-ir-ook", although some of the old-timers claim never to have seen them before. It is possible they confuse these birds with the auklets which are said occasionally to wander northward.

On April 28 I took one in the winter plumage at Cape Prince of Wales. It was feeding along the broken shore ice, and the next day I saw two others, of which I secured one in the typical spring plumage. The Wales natives called it "ey-ah-azruk" and said the birds nested on Wales Mountain, but I did not see a bird after the above date on the American side of Bering Strait. On June 3 when we were drifting with the pack ice along the Siberian shore near East Cape, two of these murrelets were flushed. They uttered alarm notes similar to those of baby chicks.

MANDT GUILLEMOT. ***Cepphus mandti.***

This species is irregular in its appearance in the vicinity of Wainwright but, according to the natives, is rather common all winter in the open leads far off-shore. A few pairs are usually seen daily when one is seal hunting. The natives gravely informed me that these birds live under the ice when the leads close, as do the seals! The first birds make their appearance when the old ice comes in, in the fall, according to Allen, although we did not make an observation until January 6, when a pair of birds in winter dress was seen. Natives reported a few in the off-shore leads during the latter part of January, but it was not until March 31 that Hendee secured a specimen. This was nearly white except for the dark wings, but was already beginning to assume its spring plumage. Another specimen, slightly darker, was taken on April 17, and two others were observed on May 7 and May 10. Two birds were collected on May 25 and one on June 1.

At Wales I found this species to be numerous as soon as the leads opened in the spring and they doubtless occur much farther south during the winter months. I collected a female in winter plumage on April 28, and a number of others were seen. At this time Bering Strait is choked with ice, great ice fields crushing back and forth with the changing currents; and violent winds are of daily occurrence, so that it is only occasionally that specimens can be secured. I hunted along the edge of the shore ice, and only when on-shore winds blew was it possible to recover specimens by the

use of the "nixik" line (a native contrivance) from the top of the fifteen-foot ice wall. These birds were seen throughout May and one specimen was killed on May 23 which the wind carried away off-shore before I could secure it. On May 29 a few were seen in the drift ice.

PIGEON GUILLEMOT. *Cepphus columba.*

These graceful little divers are common about the islands of Bering Sea and are to be found nesting in practically all places where auklets occur and in a good many where they do not. A few were observed at King Island June 27; and at St. Lawrence Island they were abundant, nesting along the cliffs near Sivunga and below Gambel. They were common at Emma Harbor, Siberia, a nest with two eggs being located in a cavern which was almost completely blocked with snow, the nesting site appearing more like a refrigerating plant than a place in which to rear young birds. A few were seen at Whalen, near East Cape, July 11, and several at Teller, July 29. They were not positively identified in Bering Strait the following spring until June 3, when a number were seen along the Diomedes. They were very abundant there during the nesting season and a few birds were noted along the walls of Cape Prince of Wales during the latter part of June.

CALIFORNIA MURRE. *Uria troille californica.*

No specimens of this species were taken in 1921, so positive records for its occurrence can not be given; it is so similar to the next species that sight records from a ship are impossible. No large colonies of murres were breeding during our cruise in Bering Sea, but from the number of California Murres known to breed near Unimak Pass and at the Pribilof Islands, many of the thousands of murres seen there on June 15 and 16 were doubtless of this species. As the "Victoria" roused up the flocks of feeding birds, they rose against the wind, pattering away over the water in the manner so characteristic of murres, and headed away in the direction of the Pribilofs.

Specimens which had not yet assumed their spring plumage were collected in May at Cape Prince of Wales from large flocks of Pallas Murres, as well as occasional single specimens shot along the shore ice. No adults were identified on the Diomedes.

PALLAS MURRE. *Uria lomvia arra.*

The great colonies of Pallas Murres throughout the islands of Bering Sea have been so well known and described, especially about the entrance to Unimak Pass, on the Pribilof and St. Lawrence islands, as to make further notice almost superfluous. This species was in abundance in the waters adjacent to the breeding islands, as we steamed by about the middle of June, and they were noted in numbers at King Island on June 27. During the week of July 1 to 8, Hendee reports them as extremely numerous on St. Lawrence Island, where they were just beginning to nest. Ravens and kittiwakes were seen to fly off with their eggs. In the evening we saw great strings of them returning to their nesting ledges, whence they had straggled during the day. A few murres were seen daily between the 1st and 7th of July at Emma Harbor, and the natives told me they nested in a great colony on the southward entrance to Providence Bay. Countless numbers nest on the Diomedes and on the bluffs of Cape Lisborne, the latter being well above the Arctic Circle.

In the spring of 1922 Hendee saw them flying northward over the ice at Wainwright in flocks of hundreds, on May 9 and 10, there being no lead of open water at that time, only small holes. The flight continued for several days, whenever the wind was from the south, or when it was calm. Some southward flights occurred, but only a small percentage of those seen going north. At Cape Prince of Wales, the first

specimen, one in winter plumage, was observed on April 28. By the 8th of May they were extremely common in their northward migration, and I collected a good series of birds at this time. They flew in compact flocks at great speed, sometimes high in the air, or again dropping low over the water. Invariably they skirted the edge of the pack along the open lead, keeping well to the seaward side. Great numbers are taken by the natives for food. On the Diomedes on June 3 I found them abundant, the faces of the cliffs seeming alive with them and the air filled with darting birds. They did not begin to nest until the latter part of June, only one egg being seen on Fairway Rock on June 25.

Denver, Colorado, January 12, 1925.

THE TIMBERLINE SPARROW
A NEW SPECIES FROM NORTHWESTERN CANADA

By HARRY S. SWARTH and ALLAN BROOKS

(Contribution no. 442 from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology of the University of California)

DURING the summer of 1924 the two authors of the present paper were collecting birds together in the Atlin region, in the extreme northwestern corner of British Columbia. One of the most interesting of our finds was the discovery, in the higher parts of the mountains of that region, of a *Spizella* apparently distinct from any other known species. This bird is closely similar to *Spizella breweri* in general appearance, but it differs appreciably from *breweri* in details of structure and coloration. This northern *Spizella* we propose to name

_Spizella taverneri_*, new species
Timberline Sparrow

TYPE.—Male adult; Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, no. 44856; Spruce Mountain, at 5000 feet altitude, 10 miles east of Atlin, British Columbia; August 8, 1924; collected by H. S. Swarth; original no. 13048.

DIAGNOSIS.—Most nearly like *Spizella breweri*. Slightly larger, with (usually) rather longer tail, and with weaker, more slender bill. Coloration darker than in *breweri*, with heavier streaking on top of head and back, darker flanks, and a tendency toward the development of narrow streaks on breast and flanks. Bill and feet darker than in *breweri*: "bill black at tip; upper mandible brownish, lower mandible flesh; feet pale drab, tarsus brownish flesh" (Brooks' field notes).

SPECIMENS EXAMINED.—Adult male, 3; adult female, 4; immature, first winter plumage, 4; juvenal, 6; molting from juvenal to first winter, 6. Total, 23.

It seems best to accord this form specific standing, rather than to regard it as a subspecies of *breweri*. The characters of *taverneri* seem constant. At any rate, in the series at hand there is none that could be confused with *breweri*, and in extensive series of *breweri* (numbering some hundreds of skins, from many localities) we have found no specimen of equivocal character. The difference in bill alone seems diagnostic. This member is slender and dark colored in *taverneri*, relatively stubby and pale colored in *breweri*. In the dried skin this feature is retained to its full extent, so that the darker bill of a specimen of *taverneri* appears in strong contrast to that of any *breweri* with which it is compared.

* Named for P. A. Taverner, Ornithologist, Canadian Geological Survey, Ottawa, Canada.