



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Alaska Jackpot Birding

Gambell – The Siberian Express

26th May to 3rd June 2022 (9 days)

The Pribilofs – Auks & Asian Vagrants

4th June to 7th June 2022 (4 days)



Steller's Eider by Stephan Lorenz

Gambell is a small, timeless Yupik village on remote St. Lawrence Island in the Bering Sea. Located just off the Siberian coast, it is possible on clear days to see Siberia, 35 miles in the distance. This site has been inhabited for some 2000 years now. Whales, Walrus, seals, Polar Bear and birds account for much of the local diet. High Arctic species and Asian vagrants are a big draw at Gambell. Most of the Asian species recorded in North America have been seen in Gambell and its environs. Being that there are no roads here, we spend the bulk of our time within a few miles of town, but there is plenty to keep us busy. Huge colonies of Parakeet, Least and Crested Auklets nest on the cliffs and Northwest Point provides a “super-highway” for seabirds passing very close by the island on migration, and usually

yields Arctic, Pacific, Red-throated and Yellow-billed Loons, Little Auk (Dovekie), Emperor Goose and even on occasion, Ivory Gull, not to mention other seabirds and ducks. The centuries old bone yards attract vagrant passerines, and with the right weather, stunners such as Eurasian Bullfinch, Hawfinch, and Common Cuckoo among a much longer list of other rare visitors. Many are the possibilities at this remote Bering Sea outpost, and the marsh and wetlands are often superb for shorebirds and typically yield several prime Asiatic shorebirds, and at times scarce breeding species such as Common Ringed Plover.

The Pribilof Islands are a storied archipelago, smack in the middle of the Bering Sea and anchored 600 miles from mainland Alaska. Well known as a key part of the Alaska Purchase in 1867, and rich in history and as the largest Aleut community today, Saint Paul Island has long been famous among birders as well, in particular for hosting some of the largest colonies of alcids (auks and other seabirds) in the world, as well as the largest Northern Fur Seal colony on Earth. An isolated and charming island, the natives have long had a mind for wildlife and ecotourism, and in addition to the stunning breeding seabirds, Asian vagrants also visit St. Paul in May and June. We shall hope for a few of the long list of possible vagrants, along with the amazing resident species. The undoubted highlights of this adventure are the huge colonies of seabirds nesting on the cliffs and in the rocks on the island, including Parakeet, Least and Crested Auklets, Horned and Tufted Puffins, Thick-billed and Common Murre, Northern Fulmar and both Black-legged and Red-legged Kittiwakes.

THE TOURS AT A GLANCE...

GAMBELL

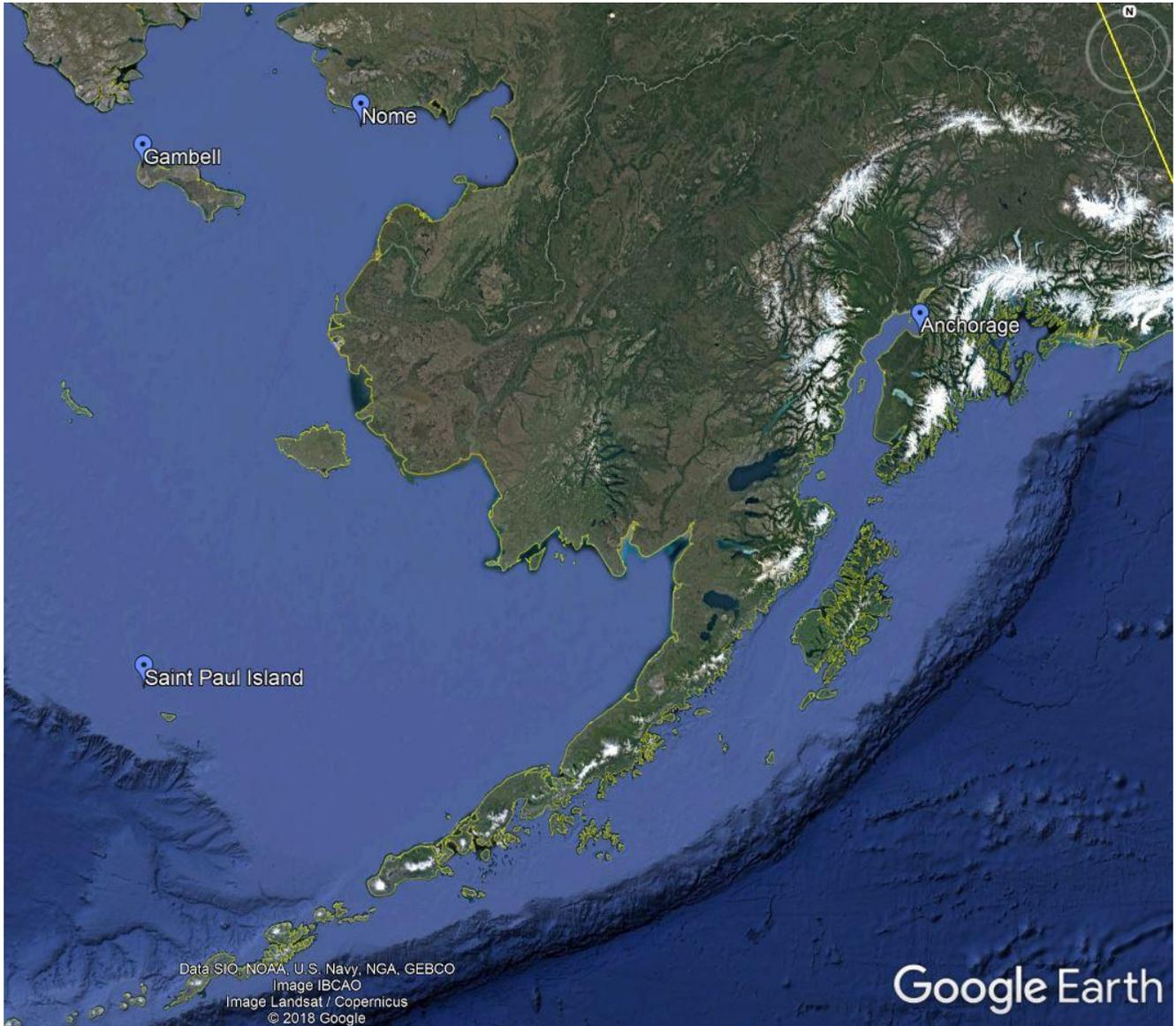
Day 1	Arrive in Anchorage
Day 2	Anchorage to Gambell via Nome
Days 3 to 8	Birding Gambell
Day 9	Depart from Gambell to Anchorage, via Nome

THE PRIBILOFS

Day 1	Arrive in Anchorage
Day 2	Anchorage to St. Paul Island
Day 3	Birding on St. Paul Island
Day 4	Morning birding on St Paul Island, late PM depart for Anchorage



TOUR MAP



Gambell – The Siberian Express



Red-necked Stint by Stephan Lorenz

Day 1: Arrival into Anchorage. We'll meet in Anchorage at in the lobby of the Coast International Hotel at 18:30 for a welcome dinner. After dinner, we'll do an hour or so of initial birding. We can usually find a pair of nesting Pacific Loons close-by and, if we're lucky, even an American Dipper.

Day 2: Anchorage to Gambell via Nome. After breakfast we head back to the airport. Anchorage Airport is often busy with the tourist season starting, so we want to be there well in advance of our departure time. Our first flight will take us to Nome, before our second flight to Gambell, with our plan being to arrive into Gambell this afternoon in time for a late lunch. After checking into our hotel, we will receive instruction on safety and operation of our rented 4 wheel ATV's (one ATV per two guests). It is important to pay attention and listen carefully, and to abide speed limitations, loads, restricted areas, etc. These will be our main method of transport here, when we are not on foot. Night and dinner at our hotel in Gambell.

Days 3 to 8: Gambell. Our time on Gambell will follow a similar routine each day. We often start the day with a short sea watch, since it is very active in the morning and late afternoon. Sometimes, we will split up to cover more ground. While birding, we will be in radio contact all the time, and to achieve maximum success at locating any rarities that might be discovered, we stay in contact with other groups on the island as well.

Meals are prepared by our fine chef, and coordinated with the other visitors to the island, as dining space is shared and



Common Ringed Plover by Stephan Lorenz





Walrus by Stephan Lorenz

limited. Breakfast will typically be at approximately 7:00, with lunch around 13:00 and then dinner at about 18:30.

Seawatching: Takes place out on the Northwest Point, just outside of town and past the dump. This is an excellent place to observe the variety of seabirds, eiders, ducks and alcids that cruise by very closely. It can be quite cold and windy on the point since we'll be facing directly towards the mountains of Siberia, 35 miles away. We often see several species of cetaceans surfacing within 100 yards of the shoreline, and sometimes even Walrus.

whale, walrus and sea lion carcasses. The locals dig in the boneyards, looking for 'old' ivory which is quite valuable. The Near Boneyard merges with the village on the SW side, a couple of hundred yards from our lodgings. Typically, we often find Red-necked Stints and Common Ringed Plovers here. In addition, this is the location of many of the vagrant passerines that move through, starting in the last week of May and continuing into the first week of June. The Far Boneyard is flush up against the mountain, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from our lodgings. It has been very productive for passerines, and we will check it several times daily. There are a couple a smaller boneyards between the mountain and the village that sometimes yield birds of interest too.

The Boneyards: The boneyards are the local 'dumps' used for centuries to dispose of

The Marshes: The Near Marsh lies between the Far Boneyard and the Lake. As snow melts from this rather small area, shorebirds begin coming in to feed and rest, usually in ones and twos. Many of the best shorebird sightings occur at this marsh. The Far Marsh lies at the south end of Troutman Lake, about 2 miles from the Village. This marsh is much larger than the Near Marsh, but it can be difficult to negotiate because the water can be knee-high or higher. There is an excellent vantage point from the road running alongside, which is another location for shorebird vagrants.

The Far Lake: Lies about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile beyond the big lake and is usually frozen in until the very last days of May or the beginning of June. Has been the location of some significant sightings.

The Alcid Cliffs: These run all along the mountain from the lake to the sea. We'll visit them in an effort to get better looks at the rare, breeding Little Auk. The mountainside can also be a productive birding site.

Day 9: Depart from Gambell and fly to Anchorage, via Nome. After breakfast we take our flight back to Nome. Again, much depends upon weather, and we'll let you know the day before about approximate time,



Eyebrowed Thrush by Stephan Lorenz





White Wagtail by Stephan Lorenz

but we must be packed and ready to depart early in the morning. From Nome we then catch our late evening flight back to Anchorage. Where the tour ends upon arrival into the Ted Stevens airport. Those wishing to continue onto The Pribilofs/St. Paul, will return to the Coast International Hotel for the night.

WEATHER: The weather is frequently an issue on Gambell. We hope for strong South-westerly winds to push in Asian vagrants migrating up the Bering Sea. Westerly and North-westerly winds are good as well. Southerly and Easterly winds are likely to bring in birds from the Alaska mainland. This is jackpot birding at its best, and there's nothing we can do about the weather of course, except to hope for the best. Flights can be

problematic due to weather. Bering Air has a representative on the island who makes the call to Bering telling them if its ok to fly from Nome. We appreciate your understanding, as we have no control over this process. Bering will fly if they think it is safe. The good news is that we only need concern ourselves with this process on our first day and our last. Please remember that we do not cover additional costs incurred due to weather or mechanical delays. If you obtained a good travel insurance policy (strongly recommended), you are apt to be in a good position for reimbursement of additional costs.



The Pribilofs – Auks & Asian Vagrants



Tufted Puffin by Dave Kutilek

Day 1: Arrive in Anchorage. We'll meet in Anchorage at the Coast International Hotel at 18:30 for a welcome dinner. After dinner, we'll do an hour or so of initial birding. We can usually find a pair of nesting Pacific Loons close-by and, if we're lucky, nesting American Dipper.

Day 2: Flight to St Paul Island.

Following a scrumptious breakfast at the Coast, we will proceed to the airport this morning for our flight to St. Paul, departing at about 11:30 with an expected arrival time at about 15:30. After checking into our very comfortable accommodations on St. Paul, we'll do a bit of birding before dinner, probably getting our first good looks at Red-legged Kittiwake, and chasing any Asian vagrants that may have been discovered recently. Post-dinner, we will continue our exploration of the island, where we will be spending the next three days.



Least and Crested Auklets by Alasdair Hunter

Day 3: Birding St Paul Island. After breakfast each morning, we bird until





King Eider by Forrest Rowland

here include pelagic species such as Steller’s Eider, Emperor Geese, and occasionally Yellow-billed Loon. An obvious attraction to spending ample time in St. Paul is looking for vagrant species that have been seen here over the years, with possibilities including Wood Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Common Greenshank, Terek Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, and even Lesser Sand Plover, Common Cuckoo, Brambling, Rustic Bunting and Eye-browed Thrush, Siberian Rubythroat, among many others. Just as at Gambell, we’ll need some luck with the weather and the right winds for birds from Asia, but typically there are at least a few interesting vagrants around, and sometimes there are many. Fingers crossed! Mammals are a surprisingly wonderful attraction here too. This is world’s largest Northern Fur Seal colony, which gives the island its centuries-old history, known as the “soft gold rush” for fur and pelt in Alaska before it was part of the United States of America. The island has its own Caribou (Reindeer) herd, dozens of lovely Arctic Fox families, even an endemic Shrew, four only on St. Paul! Marine mammals spotted from shore, in the past, have included Orca, Stellar’s Sea Lion, and more.

Day 4: Morning birding on St Paul Island, late PM depart for Anchorage. After packing our bags in the morning, we will then spend the rest of the day birding until about 14:00, when we’ll then prepare to depart the island. Our plane typically leaves between 15:00 and 16:00, and we should arrive in Anchorage at around **18:30**, where our tour will conclude.

lunch, and then again until dinner in the early evening, followed by yet another short stint afield until 22:00 or so, depending on the day. We will also spend at least one morning at the sea cliffs observing the vast array of nesting birds. Red-faced and Pelagic Cormorants, Northern Fulmar, Black-legged and Red-legged Kittiwakes, Tufted and Horned Puffins, Common and Thick-billed Murre, and Crested, Parakeet and Least Auklets all breed along these cliffs.

Even Ancient Murrelets are seen in small numbers, and regular if rare



Pacific Loon by Ignacio Yufera



FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for these tours are displayed on our website, please click on the below links.

The tour price includes

Gambell – The Siberian Express

- Roundtrip flights: Anchorage to Gambell;
- Free shuttle to and from Coast International Inn in Anchorage;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 of the tour to breakfast on day 9;
- Drinking water throughout the tour;
- All lodgings as per the itinerary;
- Ground transportation;
- ATV rental;
- All taxes and reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services; and
- Tips for local guides and services.

The Pribilofs: Auks & Asian Vagrants

- Return airfare from Anchorage to St. Paul Island;
- Free shuttle to and from Coast International Inn in Anchorage;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 of the tour to lunch on day 4;
- All lodgings as per the itinerary
- Ground transportation;
- Taxes and reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services.
- Tips for local guides and services.

Tour prices EXCLUDE:

- ANY international airfares.
- Any airfares other than stated above, taxes and visa costs;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Special gratuities (guide & boat tips); and
- Telephone calls, laundry and items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share. Please note that the single supplement is noted in the unlikely event that there is a single available in Gambell, however, this is highly unlikely.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually



4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.

b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated leader at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

Tiping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, porters and restaurants) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS

Gambell – The Siberian Express.

The tour will commence in Anchorage with our first dinner together at 18:30 on day 1. The tour will depart from Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Anchorage in the early afternoon of day 1, please arrive earlier in the day or preferably the day before. The tour concludes on the evening of day 9, after dinner in Nome (IATA: OME), before we arrive back into Anchorage.

The Pribilofs: St Paul Island

The tour will commence in Anchorage with our first dinner together at **18:30** on day 1. The tour will conclude at around **18:30** in Anchorage on day 4 upon arrival back into Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS

Ted Stevens International Airport, Anchorage (IATA: ANC) is the main port of entry for flights for these tours. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

