

# The Birds of Gambell and St. Lawrence Island, Alaska

by Paul E. Lehman

Western Field Ornithologists' Special Publication (publication planned for late 2019)



St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, sits in the northern Bering Sea, closer to the Chukchi Peninsula of Russia than the nearest point on the Alaska mainland near Nome. Since famed explorer Vitus Bering set foot here in 1728, this island has been a place of great interest to naturalists, but its remoteness limited serious study until relatively recently. It supports immense colonies of breeding seabirds, impressive migrations of Arctic breeders, and is a hotspot for rare and out-of-range birds. Gambell has become a popular destination for those who want to experience bird life at the very edge of North America. Western Field Ornithologists is proud to sponsor and publish this new landmark book summarizing knowledge of its birdlife.

This 350-page book by Paul Lehman is the first complete and detailed treatment of our knowledge of the birds of this fascinating island and the surrounding waters, from the early explorers through 2018. Because of access and logistical difficulties, most of what we know about the birds of St. Lawrence Is. comes from the vicinity of the island's two villages, Gambell and Savoonga, however the book includes all records from St. Lawrence Island. The book is beautifully illustrated with more than 700 color photographs of the island and its habitats, and a majority of the bird species, including many documentary photos of rare occurrences.



The text includes introductory sections on the physical setting of the island, and its climate and vegetation. Past ornithological work is described in detail, including Paul's own extensive observations made during spring and fall migration seasons over the past 26 years. The influences of weather are critical in understanding migration events at Gambell, and Paul presents a cogent, but detailed, summary of these dynamics. The book will also include an extensive gazetteer of locations on the island.

The bulk of the book is devoted to accounts of the 288 species that have been documented on the island. These include a remarkable 19 first

North American records (7 in spring, 12

in fall)! Each account summarizes the seasonal occurrence and abundance of the species, and all are rich in details such as arrival and departure dates, numbers seen, evidence of breeding and breeding population size, routes of migratory movement, comparative status in adjoining regions, and, where appropriate, subspecies identified.



Paul Lehman is unequalled in his experience and knowledge of St. Lawrence Island birdlife. Since 1989, he's spent weeks to months at a time, almost every year, studying and documenting the birds there. He's

authored numerous articles on St. Lawrence Island birds, including documenting a number of first North American records. He has a long-standing interest in bird identification, distribution, migration, and vagrancy. Paul is the principal range-map maker for several of the most popular field guides, including the National Geographic Society, Sibley, and Peterson guides. He was editor of ABA's "Birding" magazine for eight years, and has been a tour leader throughout North America for well over 20 years. The thoroughness and scholarship that Paul Lehman brings to this book guarantee that it will remain the definitive work on the ornithology of this fascinating region for decades to come. Paul currently resides in San Diego.

