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ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD PROGRAMS

Nov. 17, 1976

Dan:

Here is a synopsis of ornithological notes from our field program, summer 1976. It is only an incomplete rough draft of my intended report, but since I am too busy to do any more at the moment, I thought I'd better send what I have on to you. I don't expect much substantive revision or addition of other records. If you have any questions or problems with it let me know... I don't think there's much in it that's new and exciting. Not all records are my own, but I have included only those records I have confidence in.

Since I could not think of a way to get a satisfactory copy, I am sending the originals of the maps that accompany the report. They may be helpful for your reference, but I do need them back (no hurry though).

Also, I have enclosed my photos of Gray-headed Chickadees. You are welcome to make copies if you wish. Please return them, along with the maps to me at the following address:

c/o Rodney Bean  
Environmental Studies Center  
Antioch College  
Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387

My plans for next summer are uncertain, but it is quite possible that I will be ~~ing~~ job-hunting. Do you know what the status of the Buldir I. project is? Is there any point in my applying, and if so, how should I go about it? If you know of anything else along those lines, I would also really appreciate hearing about it.

I hope your article is progressing well.

Regards,  
*Philip Martin*  
Philip Martin

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS FROM  
NORTHEASTERN ALASKA

Observations from Beaufort Lagoon  
and the Kongakut River

Summer, 1976

Philip D. Martin

Two maps accompany this list. One is of the area surrounding Nuvagapak Point, where our party was based July 3-17. The other is a smaller scale map showing the Kongakut River drainage. Numbered red circles indicate locations of our camps; numbered white rectangles indicate, in 5-mile increments, approximate mileage (measured along the center of the river-bed) from the point where the Kongakut River enters the Beaufort Sea. Throughout the report, these mileages will be used to locate sightings, and will be preceded by the initials "K.R." for "Kongakut River". Geographical terms adopted in this report for convenience, but not generally accepted, have been noted on the maps.

For general purposes, the Kongakut valley in the Brooks Range has been divided into three sections: Lower, that portion up to about KR 43 where the North Canyon begins, "Middle", from KR 43 - KR 63, basically the canyon area and the heart of the Range, and "Upper", the long stretch ~~xxx~~ that runs from west to east along the flanks of the Brooks Range.

Three areas where we spent several days have been named: Caribou Crossing camp is located at about KR 28 and is the area where most of the Porcupine caribou herd cross the Kongakut River. It is an area of gently sloping, very tussocky meadows and low elevation peaks. Cottonwood Creek is marked on the map at about KR 55. It is an unusually heavily wooded creek with cottonwood groves extending in a broken chain at least four miles up-stream. Sheenjek camp was located just over the divide from the Kongakut drainage, and was at the edge of the northern-most spruce grove on the Sheenjek River.

Observers who contributed their records are: Lilliana Cruz, Jessica Esslinger, John Horner, James C. Howell, Philip Martin, Kathryn Puckett, Robert Shapiro. Howell is a professor of biology at Antioch College; all the others are Antioch College undergraduate students.

July 24, two were seen at KR 34.

## BELTED KINGFISHER

July 23, one was seen several times on the Sheenjok River, near Sheenjok camp.

## COMMON FLICKER (Yellow-shafted form)

Aug. 1-5, Flickers were seen at Cottonwood Creek. We counted up to six, but there were possibly more further up the valley. They were seen among the cottonwoods and also on the slopes, foraging for blueberries. Several nesting holes were found in the larger trees. Aug. 9, a Flicker was heard calling at about KR 68, where there were many cottonwoods.

## SAY'S PHOEBE

Locally common in lower and mid Kongakut valley. July 23, a nest containing five nearly fledged young was found on a rocky outcrop over-looking the river, KR 34. The nest was built into an over-hanging crevice, the front extending about a foot below the cup's rim. Moss was used in the construction, and the nest was lined copiously with what appeared to be Ptarmigan feathers. We have several other records between KR 35 and KR 55. Phoebes were conspicuous in the vicinity of Cottonwood Creek. Aug. 4, two pairs with fledged broods were seen in the meadows above our camp. Another pair was seen about 2½ miles up the Creek. None were seen after we left Cottonwood Creek until Aug. 20, when one was seen on a gravel bar in the Sheenjok River.

## CLIFF SWALLOW

Cliff Swallows were seen in two localities in the mid-Kongakut valley. At Cottonwood Creek, KR 56, there was a colony on the same bluff which held the Golden Eagle nest. Twenty-three nests were found, at least 17 of which were active. Swallows were also noted at KR 65, although the actual nests were not found.

## GRAY JAY

July 26, one was seen along the small tributary that ran by our camp at KR 38, our northern-most record. Jays were seen in eight other localities, rather evenly distributed along our route, wherever there was tall willow or cottonwood.

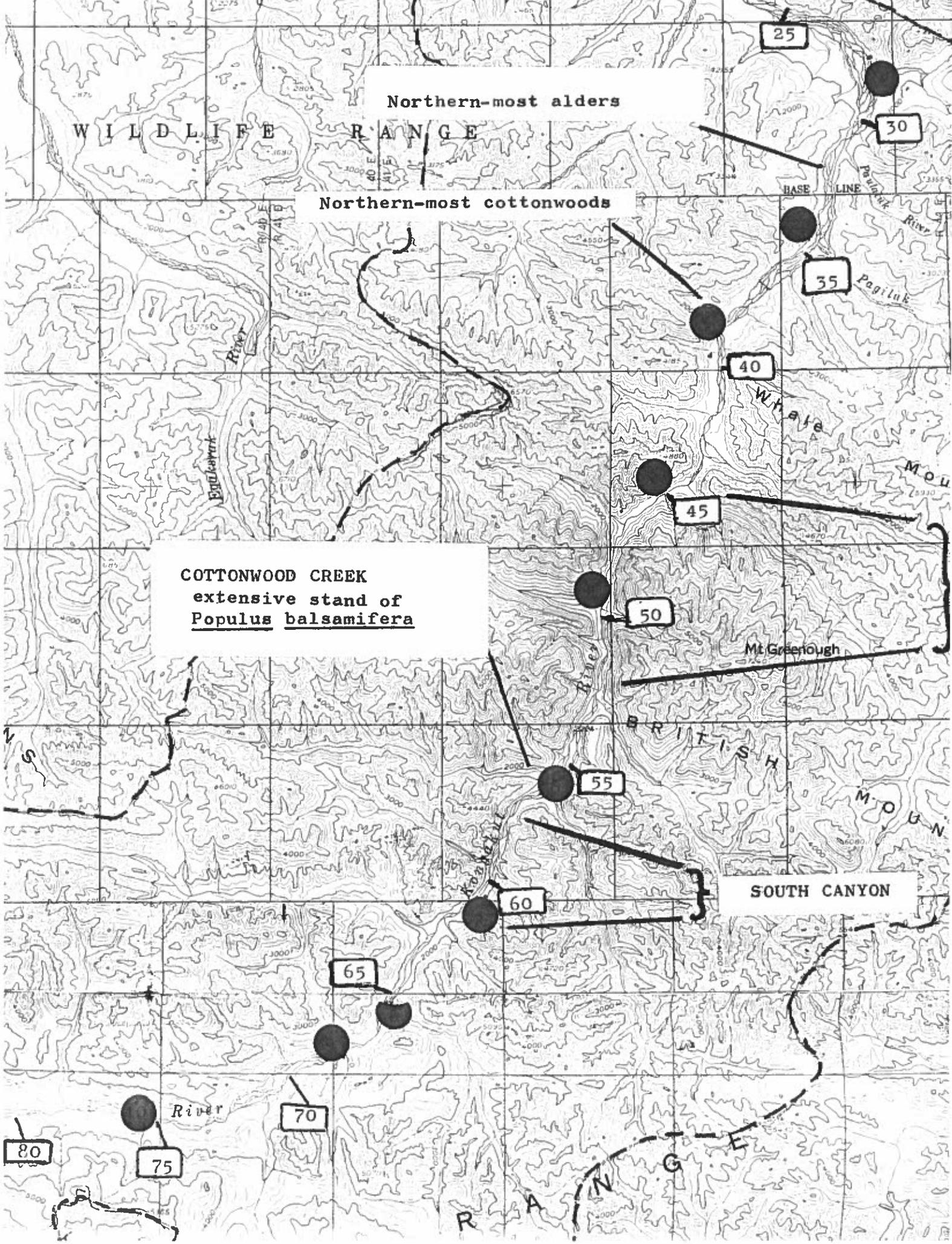
## COMMON RAVEN

We have two records from the Beaufort Lagoon area; July 11, one was seen south of Loon Lake; July 14, one was seen in the Aichilik River delta region.

We saw Ravens fairly frequently in the mid-upper Kongakut valley. We have records of 14 birds in five general localities, from Cottonwood Creek to the Sheenjok Valley.

## GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEE

Probably locally common. Most of our sightings were in the Cottonwood Creek area. Aug. 1, one was seen in a dense cottonwood stand about 1 mile up the Creek; Aug. 3, a pair was seen in the same location; Aug. 4, a pair was seen in willows at our campsite below the bluffs that overlook the Kongakut; Aug. 5, a pair was seen 3 miles up Cottonwood Creek; on that same date a pair was seen along the tributary southeast of Cottonwood Creek. None were seen subsequently until we came to the Sheenjok. Aug. 23, a pair was seen at our camp, and another pair was seen three miles to the north.



W I L D L I F E R A N G E

Northern-most alders

Northern-most cottonwoods

COTTONWOOD CREEK  
extensive stand of  
Populus balsamifera

SOUTH CANYON

80

75

70

65

60

55

50

45

40

35

30

25

River

Mt Greenough

BRITISH

M O U N T A I N

BASE LINE

Pagituk

Whate

Englehart

River

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