

Fairbanks and Denali



Landed in Fairbanks 5/22 at about 9pm. After renting a car I saw two muskrats in one of the airport ponds.

05/23 I started out at the Wedgewood Wildlife Sanctuary. A couple of Red Squirrels and a Snowshoe Hare were present. Leaving Wedgewood I went to Creamer's Field. A Beaver was in the Seasonal Wetland pond. A Red Fox was noted in the main field facing the trailhead. Also a few Red Squirrels were present.



Leaving Creamers I went for a hike on one of the UAF trails. Again Red Squirrels and a Snowshoe Hare were noted. This put me about noon so I headed toward Denali. Hiked around the Visitor Center and saw a couple more Red Squirrels. Probably can stop mentioning Red Squirrels.

Departed the hotel at 4:30am on 5/24 and a Snowshoe Hare was outside the Denali Park Hotel. Saw it another time as well.



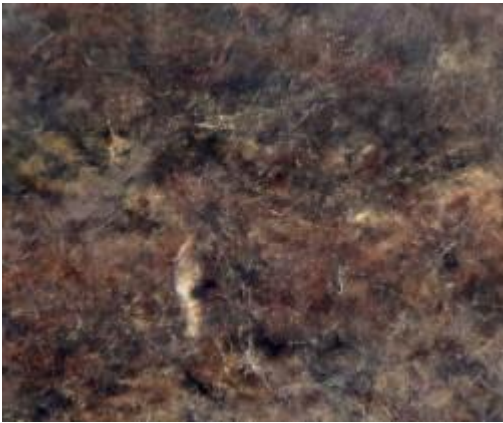
I hiked mostly up the Savage Alpine trail on the west side. Couldn't make it all the way due to ice on the trail. Then hiked down the Savage River and three male Caribou were walking up river. Went back to the visitor Center trails for the rest of the day. Leaving Denali I drove down Stampede Road. Being an "Into the Wild" fan I wanted to say I hiked it, a Moose was on the side of the road during the first mile and three male caribou were just off the road near where the pavement ends, I walked up the NEON boardwalk Charles Hood recommended for possible lemmings, didn't see any. I was there for an hour in the early evening.



The next day 05/25 I was on a 7am bus trip. Thanks to COVID and 50% seating there was no one next to me so I had room for my camera and stuff. A Moose, three Caribou and a Porcupine were spotted within the first 15 miles. Another Porcupine near Primrose Ridge and two other Caribou in the distance. At a rest stop at Teklanika River two more Caribou resting along the river.



The climb up Polychrome mountain yielded a solo Dall ram close to the road. Shortly after we stopped at Polychrome to look at three more sheep in the distance. While looking someone said "LYNX"! About 30 yards away from the sheep there it was sitting up in the wide open at about 1030am. It was far away and I didn't get a good shot. Use your imagination while looking at it. It eventually crouched down in the brush. Obviously Lynx was on my "Not Likely" list. The first Arctic Ground Squirrels were seen in the area also. More were seen along the road while driving.





The turnaround point was Toklat River. Saw a few more sheep, ground squirrels, caribou and a few moose on the way back. No bears or Hoary Marmots.



The morning of 05/26 was an early hike to Horseshoe Lake. A muskrat and three beavers were seen. Subsequent hikes produced birds only.

Another bus ride at 2pm the next day yielded the same aforementioned species, but a Brown Bear was seen rooting around the Savage River and a Collared Pika in the rocks going up Polychrome mountain.





On 05/27 I spent the day birding in Fairbanks. Had to catch a red-eye flight back Friday at 230am.

I had clear views of Denali for three straight days!



