

AVIAN HABITAT CLASSIFICATION FOR THE
NABESNA ROAD BREEDING BIRD TRANSECT
WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

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The Avian Habitat Classification for the Nabesna Road Breeding Bird Transect:

Constructed by Brina Kessel, the avian habitat classification system for Alaska primarily bases avian habitats on the life form and height of the vegetation, topography, and the physical nature and relative moisture content of the substrate.

It is not a vegetation or landform classification system, but one describing habitats used by birds which takes into account meaningful characteristics that obviously affect the ecology of the community under study (Kessel, 1979). The two morphologic features with the greatest impact on Alaskan avian community ecology relate to the occurrence and characteristics of water and of woody plant growth.

The avian habitats identified on the Nabesna Road Breeding Bird Survey transect are as follows:

1A Lacustrine waters and shorelines: All surface waters of lakes and ponds and their immediate shorelines; includes associated "aquatic meadows" of submerged and floating vegetation, and open or sparse emergent vegetation.

1B Fluvial waters and shorelines: All flowing surface waters, i.e., streams and rivers, and their immediate shorelines. Shallow drains and rivulets, too small or shallow for swimming birds, are not included.

5A Dwarf shrub mat: Dominated by woody shrubs <0.4 meters high, often prostrate in form. In addition, may include varying amounts of sedge, grass, forb, moss, lichen, and much of the ground may be bare. Typical plant components include Empetrum nigrum, Vaccinium vitis-idaea, Ledum palustre, Betula nana, Salix species, Dryas species, Arctostaphylos species, etc.

5B Low shrub thicket: Closed, open, or sparse stands of shrubs 0.4 - 1.1 meters high.

5C Medium shrub thicket: Closed, open, or sparse stands of shrubs 1.2 - 2.4 meters high. Often a thin strand of medium shrub thicket (Salix species) can be found growing on the disturbed margin along the Nabesna Road.

6B Coniferous forest: Closed or open stands in which coniferous species comprise 90 percent or more of the tree canopy.

For comparison with the avian habitat classification system, the corresponding vegetation type is listed next to the avian habitat type for each station along the Nabesna Road Breeding Bird Survey transect. Vegetation types follow the 1986 revision of the Alaska vegetation classification, by Viereck et al.

1A1k Closed white spruce forest: Canopy cover of white spruce (Picea glauca) is between 60% and 100%.

1A2 Open spruce forest: Canopy cover of spruce is between 25% and 59%. The forest can be either white spruce, black spruce (Picea mariana) or mixed white and black spruce.

1A2e Open white spruce forest: A white spruce forest with a canopy cover between 25% and 59%.

1A3 Spruce woodland: Canopy cover of spruce (white, black or mixed spruce) is between 10% and 24%.

2B2 Open Tall Scrub: Between 25% and 74% cover of shrubs over 1.5 meters in height and:

2B1 Closed Tall Scrub: More than 75% cover of shrubs over 1.5 meters in height. Often a thin strand of tall scrub thicket (Salix species) can be found growing on the disturbed margin along the Nabesna Road.

2C2 Open low scrub: Between 25% and 74% cover of shrubs between 0.2 and 1.5 meters in height. Graminoid species such as Eriophorum species and Carex species are abundant in this vegetation type.

Table 1. Avian Habitat for the Nabesna Road Breeding Bird Survey Transect.

Sta #	Avian Habitat ¹	Viereck Veg Type ²	Station Description
1	6B	1A2	Mp 37 ³
2	6B/5A	1A3/2C2	
3	1B	1A2e	Jack Creek
4	6B	1A1k	
5	6B	1A2	Wide dry gravel pile and Boyden Creek
6	6B	1A2	SE end of small road bypass, <u>Phacelia mollis</u> on disturbed roadside.
7	6B/1B	1A2	Radiator Creek, NW end of small road bypass.
8	6B	1A2	On hill curving around to the right
9	6B/5A	1A2/2C2	Mp 33
10	6B	1A2	
11	6B	1A2	Mp 32
12	6B/1B	1A2e	Lost Creek, gravel substrate, tall shrubs
13	6B	1A2	Mp 31
14	6B	1A2	
15	6B	1A2e	Mp 30 in bushes, drier site, before Trail Creek
16	6B	1A2e	After Trail Creek
17	6B	1A2e	Mp 29, before Sportsman's Lodge
18	6B	1A2e	NW end of Sportsman's Lodge Airstrip
19	6B/1A	1A2	Mp 28, west of Twin Lakes
20	6B/1B	1A3	Culvert/small creek
21	6B	1A2	Small gravel pit on either side of road
22	6B	1A2	Small culvert
23	6B	1A2e	Mp 26, near Little Jack Creek
24	6B	1A2e/1A3	Just before Bertrand's Lodge
25	6B	1A2	Mp 25
26	6B/5A	1A2/2C2	Tanada Lake Trail
27	6B	1A2	Descending down hill to a lake
28	6B	1A2/1A3	
29	6B/1A	1A2	Long Lake
30	6B/1A	1A2	Rock Lake
31	6B	1A2	Mp 22
32	6B	1A2	
33	6B	1A2	Mp 21
34	6B	1A2e	A hill can be seen off to the right.
35	6B	1A1k	20 Mile timber stand, past Caribou Creek
36	6B	1A2e	By small culvert
37	6B	1A2	
38	6B	1A2	On top of a hill
39	6B	1A2	Mp 18 (in bushes), past lake on right

¹ Avian habitat classifications follow Kessel, 1979. Refer to page 2.

² Vegetation type classifications follow Viereck, 1986. Refer to page 3.

³ A milepost (Mp) marker was found. Sometimes the milepost markers are

upright,

sometimes they have fallen over into the bushes on the side of

the road.

Table 1 cont.

Sta #	Avian Habitat ¹	Viereck Veg Type ²	Station Description
40	6B/5B/1B	1A3/2C2	Just past a lake, abundant <u>Betula papyrifera</u>
41	6B	1A2	Mp 17 ³ , lake on left
42	6B	1A2	
43	6B/5A	1A2/2C2	
44	6B/5A	1A2/2C2	
45	6B	1A2	
46	6B	1A2	
47	6B	1A2	
48	6B	1A2	Near gravel pit on the north side of the road
49	6B	1A2	
50	6B/1B	1A2	Mp 12, near Caribou Creek

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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