Kishchinskiy, A,A., Tomkovich, P.S., Flint, V.E. 1983. Ptitsy basseina Kanchalana (Chukotskiy natsional'nyi okrug) [Birds of Kanchalana River basin (Chukchi National District)]. // Sbornik trudov Zoologicheskogo Museya MGU [Archives of Zoological Museum of Moscow State University]. Vol. XXI. Moscow, Moscow Univ. Press. Pp.3-76. In Russian.

Translated by Jevgeni Shergalin, edited by Oksana Lane

**Red-throated Loon** (RTLO) *Gavia stellata stellata* (Pont). Breeds everywhere within Kanchalan R. basin, but its distribution is uneven. In upper parts of mountain rivers it was much more common than other loon species. In Vstrechnaya River valley rich with lakes there were 6 pairs per 20 sq km. Birds fed more often on the deep river-bed of Vstrechnaya River, "podpruzhennoi" in lower parts of large lakes, more seldom – on these deep lakes, which don't freeze completely. 12 June we observed group displays of loons ("communal display"), accompanied by typical neck bending, wing flapping on water and diving.

Going downstream on Kanchalan River, we observed the RTLOs with the same frequency as in upstream during about 100 km (Table 1). Loons foraged on riverbed of river, and their abundance, to all probability, was explained by the fact that they gathered (concentrated) on the river from extensive territory. During stay 27-30/VI in upper stream of Kanchalan River on tundra lakes at a certain distance from the river we did not see these birds.

At the middle stream of Kanchalan River these loons disappeared and were not sighted up to Tnekveem River mouth; lower we again began to observe them regularly until lower stream of Kanchalan, but in a lesser extent than in upper parts. On this plot of the river stream, considerably more silted, and in lower stream and slower, the RTLOs were feeding almost exclusively in riverine sand-bars and rapids (16 cases of 22), and only twice – in the deep, slow marginal channels of Kanchalan. We observed 4 specimens foraging on 30/VII in the coastal parts of the clean oligotrophic lake with pebble bottom near valley edge.

On nesting lakes several times we saw RTLOs 12-23/VI in upper parts of Kanchalan River and 11-12/VII in the middle of its stream. These lakes were always small, from 20 to 100 km in diameter, flowless (seepage) lakes amidst open tundra, small and completely foodless, often with islets in the middle. Such small lakes by the middle of June already became free from ice. On 16/VI we found an empty nest on one of the islands. On 12/VII we discovered a nest with 2 half-incubated eggs amidst sedge thickets flooded by water and surrounded by lake. The nest was situated in tussock, consisting of several "dernovina" (turf pieces) of sedge (C*arex stans*) with *Comarum* and *Sphagnum*. Not far from these tussocks or as "platforms", made by means of *Sphagnum* and *Comarum* torn off with roots, there were several nests from previous years.

On 31/VII we observed a pair with two downy chicks with Pintail's size on the open lake with old floating vegetation of Vachta on edges amidst tussock stands and low places of above-floodplain terrace. On the floodplain lakes with banks, overgrown by shrubs (where Black-throated Loons of both species inhabited), the RTLOs did not nest.

**Yellow-billed Loon** *(YBLO) Gavia adamsii*. Occurred seldom and almost exclusively in upper stream of Kanchalan River (see Table 1). In the mountain upper parts of this river we saw YBLO on 15/VI on a large lake near edge of Vstrechnaya R. valley. 26-30/VI in upper stream of Kanchalan we regularly sighted the YBLOs, usually in pairs, foraging in the deep parts of riverbeds. They were sighted also on the large open tundra lakes, but we were unable to find their nests. A female collected from a pair on 26/VI, had in ovary a scar from the laid egg. In the middle stream of Kanchalan River we have sighted single birds on 2 and 14/VII, and in lower stream they were absent completely. Kosmin also informed about absence of this loon in the shrubby area of lower part of this river.

Tomkovich, P.S., Sorokin, A.G. 1983. Fauna ptits Vostochnoi Chukotki [Fauna of Birds of Eastern Chukotka]. // Sbornik trudov Zoologicheskogo Museya MGU [Archives of Zoological Museum of Moscow State University]. Vol. XXI. Moscow, Moscow Univ. Press. Pp.77-159. In Russian.

RTLO – *Gavia stellata* (Pontopp.).
Numerous, regularly breeding species in the lowland areas of the coastal tundras only in the northern half of Eastern Chukotka. In the south of the region 3 male RTLOs were collected 12-17/VII 1970 by Khrenov near Achchen Lake. In the moss-grass swampy tundra, adjoining to Uelen lagoon and Inchoun lagoon in 1974-1976 this species density during nesting period was 1-2 birds per 1 sq km. In 1979 on the plain tundras to S-W if Uelen in the territory of 65 sq km 3 birds were counted, and in 1980 – 1 brood of the RTLOs was recorded.

We have noticed the first birds in 1979 near Goryachie Klyuchi (Hot Springs) on 9/VI: 2 pairs swam and vocalized on a small lake with melting water above the ice surface. In 1974 they were sighted already in the first days of June. Nests were located on small (50-150 m in diameter) lakes, partly overgrown by Arctophila and sedge. In the lowland of Hiparctic lake to west of Goryachie Klyuchi the Loons bred in 1975, 1978-1980, using the same lake, and flew 4-6 km to feed. Majority of the RTLOs began egg laying on 18-20/VI, but on 27/VI 1980 a nest of the single breeding pair did not contain eggs yet. Chick hatching took place around the middle of July: on 21/VII 1979 near Uusenveem River delta a one week old chick was sighted, on 5/VIII 1978 and 12/VIII 1979 near Dezhnevskie Knolls – the downy chicks, and 17 and 18/VIII 1979 near Dezhnevskaya lagoon – 2 broods of feathering non-flying chicks were observed. Out of 7 full clutches 5 contained 2 eggs (in each) and 2 – 1 egg (in each). 5 broods consisted of two chicks each and one – of 1.

Non-breeding loons or pairs that lost clutches are common during summer. However they stay not only on lagoons and small lakes of the nesting type, but also on large deep lakes. A certain number of the RTLOs perish in the fishing nets annually.

**Yellow-billed Loon** *(YBLO) Gavia adamsii* (Gray). Numerous, regularly breeding representative of the fauna of lakes in the coastal moss-grass swampy tundras in the north of Eastern Chukotka. As a whole, in number the YBLO yields to the RTLO and Beringian Loon. The average abundance of the YBLO within landscape – 0.6 birds per 1 sq km, however in some area the species density is sufficiently higher than average and reaches 1.5-2.5 birds per 1 sq km. Such sites, in particular, are swampy lowland sites of Uusenveem and Utavaam Rivers. For nesting the YBLOs use lakes of different sizes and origin, located near river-beds of rivers. These sites are narrow, shallow, old beds of rivers without fish, and extensive deep lakes, rich with fish. On Utavaam River the YBLOs nest far from the sea, but don't penetrate into mountains. On 31/VII 1976 a pair with brood was discovered on a large lake on the lower sites of a river exit from the mountains onto plain, situated approximately one km from the river and 30 km from its mouth. In vicinities of Koolen' Lake they are not sighted.

YBLOs appearance on nesting sites coincides with the beginning of opening of rivers and lakes. In 1974 the YBLOs were recorded in the mouth floods of Uusenveem River 6/VI, and in anomalously cold 1975 – two weeks later (Sorokin, 1977). Egg-laying initiates on average during 18-25 June. Nests are constructions typical for loons, but larger in size. Diameter of 6 nests on the average is 61, cup diameter – 36 cm. Out of 8 full clutches, studied during different years, 5 contained 2 eggs (in each) and 3 – 1 (in each). Broods included 1, 2 and 2 chicks. The downy chick with penetrating sheaths of primaries on 21/VII 1979 weighed 510 g.

The YBLOs quite often nest during several years in the same place. According to the observations in lower Uusenveem River in 1974, 1975 and 1976 a pair nested on a big lake with

flowing water, each year placing nests in a new location, but not far (100-200 m) each from other. In 1975 and 1976 another pair was recorded, it laid its clutch on the peat island amidst extensive and also flowing lake (lake with running water). In 1971 and 1974 the clutches were found on an island – a tussock near bank of small shallow old bed. In 1974 in similar conditions another pair nested and on the same site a brood was discovered 21/VII 1979. In 1975 both of these old beds remained under ice during June and nesting was impossible. The following year was normal in terms of weather, but loons did not nest on old beds. The lakes, with running water of any size, are released from ice relatively early and therefore, present more stable conditions for nesting.

It's interesting to note, that in unfavourable 1975 the abundance of the YBLOs decreased insignificantly (RTLOs and YBLOs – much less), dates of nesting almost did not change, however the number of breeding pairs decreased (from 3 to 1 on the same territory)

These loons regularly move along river-bed of river, to all probability, to feed, and can be sighted both on river-bed and on lagoons where they quite often get trapped in the fishing nets and are shot by hunters.