

Mineev, Yu.N. 1987. Vodoplavayushchie ptitsy Bolshezemel'skoi tundry. Fauna i ekologiya [Waterfowl of Bolshezemel'skaya tundra. Fauna and ecology]. Leningrad, Nauka Press (Leningrad Branch). 110 p. In Russian.

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Red-throated Loon (RTLO)– *Gavia s. stellata* (Pontopp.)

Distributed in the moss-lichen-willow tundra, i.e. mainly in the belt of the coastal tundras. Kercelli (1911) draws the line of its northern distribution not further than Korotaikha River, and Grigor'yev (1904) and Uspenskiy (1965) consider that in southern tundra the RTLO is rare. According to our observations, this species is extremely rare in lower stream of Pechora River (Ust-Tsilemskiy region of Komi ASSR) and on lakes of the southern shrub tundra.

In the tundra RTLOs appear with the beginning of ice out from the water bodies or under the presence of the upper water on rivers and lakes. In western Taimyr they were observed on 4-13 June (Krechmar, 1966), and Uspenskiy (1965) in Bolshezemel'skaya tundra has recorded them only on 24 June. We observed birds in lower parts of Pechora River at the end of May, and by 1 June they usually begin to appear on the tundra. In the spring during migration and on nesting sites concentrations were not registered.

The beginning of fall migration is related to fledglings acquiring flying skills and takes place in September, and terminates in October as water bodies begin to freeze-over.

Typical habitats – small shallow lakes or simple shallow pools with sizes 2 x 15 m in the coastal tundra. RTLO avoids thickets of grassy vegetation and shrubs and on such water bodies it occurs rather seldom. These habitats are typical also for birds nesting in other tundras (Gladkov, 1951; Spangenberg, Leonovich, 1960; Krechmar, 1966; Kaftanovskiy, Shimbireva, 1967, et al.). In “ernik” belt the RTLO occurs on lakes with shrub vegetation on banks. In the coastal tundra the RTLO constantly feeds in the shallow sea water, near mouth regions of rivers, and less frequently on lakes and channels, connecting lakes and rivers. On rivers the RTLO begins to be sighted relatively often only at the end of July – beginning of August. In contrast to the Black-throated (Arctic) Loon the RTLO does not form great concentrations during feeding. More often small groups (3-4 birds) are observed feeding together.

The RTLO population density in the tundra is not great. In lower stream of More-Yu River in 1974 and 1976 – 0.6, and in 1977 – 0.4 specimens per 1 sq km. Somewhat higher density was found on the shallow Khaipudyr Guba (Bay) – 1 specimens per 1 sq km (1976). The bird numbers decline to the south and at the middle stream of More-Yu River (1974) the density is 0.03 loons per 1 sq km.

Loons begin breeding in the first decade of June. The first eggs in western tundras of the European North of the USSR were recorded on 6-11 June (Gladkov, 1951; Spangenberg, Leonovich, 1960; Kaftanovskiy, Shimbireva, 1967; etc.). Pair bonding, probably, goes on before their arrival to the nesting sites, because the majority of arrived birds already have well developed testis and ovaries. One out of two females collected 6 June 1977 had increased follicles (40 mm). The mating calls can be heard during the entire month of June. Nesting density on the shore of Khaipudyr Guba on average – 1 pair per 1 sq km. Nesting habitat – small lakes 5 x 20 m in size or somewhat larger. Nest is placed on the bank of a lake in the coastal sedge stands (33 % of all nests), but more often in the moss-lichen turf (sod) (67%) near water. Nests are rarely built on small islands in lakes or on small peninsulas. Nest diameter (n=4) – 31-35 cm, cup – 20-22 and depth about 2 cm. The building material consists of aquatic vegetation (water mosses and aquatic plants), mixed with silt, and a mixture – dry sedge or straw-like vegetation. Nests usually are situated on the moist site, and therefore the cup can be slightly wet. The nesting site is used for many years. According to our observations, the old nest on the plot is not reused, but a new nest is usually built within 0.5-4.0 m from the nest of the previous year. During incubation only

incubating (brooding) bird is observed on the nest. On the nest the loon sits tightly and leaves reluctantly. Clutches (n=5), found on 29 and 30 June, were fresh or at the initial stage of incubation. Nests contained 1-2 eggs with sizes (N=3) 71-73 x 42.5-54.0 mm and weight from 68.2 to 72.7 g. Appearance of chicks is recorded 28 July 1976. There are 1-2 chicks in the broods.

Feeding RTLOs (single birds and groups of 3-4 birds) are most active in the evening and morning hours (from 3 until 6 o'clock). The birds forage in the sea during the period of ebbs and flows. Fry and molluscs are found in RTLOs' stomachs.

Panov, E.N. 1973. Ptitsy Yuzhnogo Primor'ya (fauna, biologiya i povedenie) [Birds of South Ussuriland (Fauna, biology and behaviour)]. Novosibirsk, Nauka Press. 376 p. In Russian.

Red-throated Loon – *Gavia stellata stellata* Pontopp.

Rare (in small numbers) migrant species. Occurs more often than other loon species. There are reliable data only on dates of the spring migration. In 1960 birds were observed at sea on 1 May (single bird), 3 May (single and three together), 8 May (single) and 7 May. A male was collected on Askol'd Island on 3 May 1909 (Cherskiy, 1915). Thus, the start of spring migration on the south of Primorie is gravitated clearly to the first decade of May.

Kuznetsov occasionally observed these loons in the fall near Russkiy (Russian) Island (Shul'pin, 1936). Nazarenko informed us, that 8 November 1959 at sea near Mongugai River he saw a flock of 20-25 loons, probably, of this species. Austin (1948) reports the autumn loons in North Korea were harvested on 8, 17 and 18 November.