

Stishov, M.S., Maryukhnich, P.V., Lobkov, E.G. 1988. Beloklyvaya gagara [Yellow-billed diver]. // Resursy redkikh zhivotnykh RSFSR, ikh okhrana i vosproizvodstvo [Resources of rare animals of the RSFSR, their conservation and reproduction]. Moscow, CNIL Glavokhoty RSFSR Press. Pp.50-52. In Russian.

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Translated by Jevgeni Shergalin, edited by Oksana Lane

On Aion Island (West Chukotka) from 23rd May to 15th July 1987 we regularly observed the pairs in western and south-eastern parts of the island (Fig.2) and have found a nest with 2 eggs.

Fig.2. Yellow-billed Loon on Aion Island. Points indicate the confirmed regions of occurrence, by black colour – region with maximal density.

The species was most common in the valley of the biggest on the island Ryveem River, in the area with wide swamps (up to 1-1.5 km) above-flood-plain terrace and where a number of lakes of different sizes are rather well developed. Pairs were observed on the biggest lakes in the bed of a former river and main riverbeds. On average one pair was recorded per 2-3 km of the valley survey route (density is about 5 pairs / 10 sq km). Twice the birds were observed, to all probability, leaving the nests. In both cases proposed nests were situated on small islands amongst lakes in the former river bed; in one case – near a colony of Glaucous Gulls and Herring Gulls.

A pair of loons was observed on three large at least 1.5 sq km thermo-karst lakes (one on each), situated to the west and south-west from the middle stream of Ryveem River. Density for thermo-karst hollows (depressions) of this region was on average about 1.5 pair / 10 sq km, and for the region as a whole – 0.15-0.20 pairs / 10 sq km.

In the south-east of the island we constantly observed loons at the sites where extensive, almost flowing together, strongly swamped thermo-karst hollows, divided by comb-shaped remains of the hilly high plain dominated. On the study site 4 pairs were recorded and judging by the behaviour they were breeding birds. On 22 June a nest was discovered on the edge of semi-flooded narrow cape, juttet out at 20-25 m into a large lake with about 2 km diameter. Average YBLO density on the thermo-karst swamped surfaces with lakes in this region was about 3, and for the region as a whole – about 1.5 pair/10 sq km.

In the described regions of the island we have observed loons on each of the survey routes, while on inner water bodies of the island we did not see any birds, in spite of the abundance of the same type of lakes. Thus
Thus, even within limits of relatively small island, the Yellow-billed Loon's distribution appears to be of an interrupted or spotted nature. Average population density on the island was 1.8 pair / 100 sq km. According to our calculations, there are a total of approximately 30 breeding pairs on Aion Island. Yellow-billed Loons were regularly sighted also in the coastal waters. Per 10-km route on southern shore on 28 June in Malyi Chaunskiy Strait we recorded three groups of 4, 3 and 7 specimens. A pair was observed 25-26 June near Achekuul Cape, on the eastern bank of the island, and 9 July a single bird in the sea near Aion settlement, on the north-western shore.

Lobkov, E.G.

We observed on the Lopatka Cape (south of Kamchatka) in 1987 a light (weak) migration of loons of different species, mainly Red-throated Loon, starting on 25 August. Its intensity increased by the middle of September, and reached the maximum in the last decade of September and first half of October. Yellow-billed Loons for the first time were noticed 22 September, and it is likely they were missed earlier due to difficulties of identifying birds flying far from the shores.

Practically all loons fly over the coastal belt of the ocean along the eastern bank of Lopatka Cape, and upon reaching the cape, they cross The Pervyi Kuril'skiy [First Kuril] Strait approximately by diagonal to the Okhotsk bank of Shumchu Island (Kurbatova Cape), or go out in the Sea of Okhotsk. Small number of birds, crossing the first Kuril Strait, flies over the Sea of Okhotsk in the northern direction. In quiet weather, when the sea is calm, we noticed loons, flying in a straight line along eastern bank of Lopatka Cape and further along the direct line along eastern bank of Lopatka Cape and further to the ocean side of Shumshu Island (in direction of Babushkina Cape). Passage was absent completely on the western coast of the Lopatka Cape. Only twice we observed single birds, passing over the strait from the Sea of Okhotsk to the Pacific Ocean.

Yellow-billed Loons fly mainly above water, near the coast of Lopatka Cape, but small number of birds (especially during calm or weak winds) crosses the peninsula above land at a great distance from the Cape. They usually fly as single birds, in pairs, groups of 3-4 individuals and flocks of 5-17 birds.

In the peak days we counted from the observation point up to 70-1500 Yellow-billed Loons at 3 hours from sunrise, which represents from 14 to 24% of all passed Loons. During those observations with binoculars we covered the coastal belt of the Strait of 300-400 m wide (in the cloudy weather) to 1000 m (in the quiet clear weather). The biggest by amplitude peaks of passage were registered on 3-5 and 7 October. During 30 hours of observations (10 observation periods) in the morning hours from 22 September to 11 October) near Lopatka Cape about 3500 specimens have flown through. There is no doubt that passage continued also after completion of counts.