1985 ALATNA RIVER RAPTOR SURVEY

V.I.P. DAVE PRICE EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

The following report includes both bird and mammal sightings or signs made during our trip on the Alatna, July 2-15, 1985. We are both amateur birders but what we may have lacked in technical skills we tried hard to make up on tenacious observation. Many hours were spent simply sitting and observing in habitats likely to attract raptors.

Being unfamiliar with the country we chose a lot of our observation points simply by guess work. If we had the trip to do over again, we would plan our steps to spend more time in some areas and less time in others. I will try to include these recommendations in this report.

Judy Liedberg felt (and we agree) that this survey probably would have produced better results if it could have been timed a couple of weeks earlier. While we did find some raptors and located three nests there really wasn't much activity. However, the habitat was certainly suitable and food sources were abundant. I am sure this area supports more raptors than we were able to observe.

Both of us whole-heartedly concur with Judy's opinion that the way to approach this survey is to allow plenty of time and patience to simply look. So many things can be missed when trying to deal with the logistics of travel, camp, & patrol. A team of two, intent on observation gave us pretty good opportunities to really look at what is out there. It helped us too, that Cathy is an enthusiastic botanist so what I missed by looking up, Cathy caught by looking down!

You will find our report in two parts. I will cover the bird and wildlife observations as well as a report on two black bear incidents and numerous sightings of planes flying over the area as we were asked to watch for. Cathy will complete a general review of the trip, visitor contacts, and a listing of plants & trees she found. Both of our reports will refer to the Survey Pass 1:250,000 topo map which depicts campsites and areas surveyed on each day of our trip. This is an understandable and useful way to pass on the information not only of sightings, but frequency of sightings, and a better idea of what areas might be more closely observed in the future.

We certainly enjoyed the opportunity to participate in this project. We found it to be a great learning experience but also a wonderfully fulfilling journey into one of the last great remaining wildernesses in the U.S.

The entire experience was very well laid out and organized. The efforts of Judy Liedberg are commendable, making it not only convenient and hassle free for V.I.P.'s but also she made us feel like we were important contributers to the park. In addition the generous hospitality provided by Judy and her husband were greatly appreciated. Mary Karraker, Craig Johnson, Debby Remillard, and Dennis Divoky also contributed significantly to the success, comfort, and pleasure of our trip.

The following pages are a detailed review of our report.

July 2, 1985

Tree identification: Along river, alder/willow/spruce and at campsite along river.

Birds:

Arctic Terns.....5

Lesser Yellowlegs.....6
(probably nesting around Kutuk Lake)

White Crowned Sparrow.....3

Female Common Golden Eye.....1

Female Bufflehead.....2

Spotted Sandpipers.....8

Female Red-breasted Merganser.....1

Unidentified Gulls.....7
(too far away to identify, maybe Mew & Herrings)

Animals:

Bull Moose at Kutuk Lake, moose tracks everywhere.

Beaver at campsite.

Toad or frog in alder/willows about 200 ft. from river. Unfamiliar with frogs, it was 1 1/2 in. long, with black 'mask' to pointed nose. Ridges down back. Gold color with black spots.

July 3, 1985

Tree indentification: Riverside alder/willows up to rock ridges with spruce predominant.

Birds:

Slate Colored Juncos.....less than 10

Repeat Bird Species:

Arctic Tern

Lesser Yellowlegs

Spotted Sandpiper

Female Bufflehead

Female Red-breasted Merganser

* Immature Golden Eagle (1) hunting below cliff face perched on snag.

* Pair of Merlins harassing Golden - at cliff face.

Animals:
Beaver, red squirrel

July 4, 1985

Tree identification: Alder/willow, checked out high south facing rock cliffs, spruce forests.

Birds:
Myrtle Warbler.....10
Kingfisher.....2
Robin.....8
Common Flicker.....1
Tree Swallows.....10
Mew Gulls.....5
Herring Gulls.....2
*Sharp shinned hawk.....1 (spotted below cliff face, just above tree tops)

Repeat Species:
Slate colored Junco
Spotted Sandpiper
Lesser Yellowlegs

Animals:
Black bear-see bear incident

July 5, 1985

Riverside up to cliff faces, north and east facing slopes primarily.

Birds:
Gray Jay.....6
Raven (heard).....1
Downy Woodpecker.....1
Boreal Chickadee.....3
Bohemian Waxwing.....7
Hermit Thrush.....3
Says Phoebe.....2
*Merlin seen flying over our observation ridge to the south. Landed in spruce across draw from us. Watched area for 1 1/2 hrs. no more activity. A nest likely.

Repeat Species:
Spotted Sandpiper
Slate colored Junco
Myrtle Warbler
(F) Red-breasted Merganser

Animals:
Red squirrel

July 6, 1985

Tree identification: Riverside, up to spruce/alder, ridges & on up to tundra.

Birds:
Water Pipit.....7
Bank Swallows.....12

Repeat Species:
Spotted Sandpiper
Robins
Raven
Gray Jays
Slate colored Juncos
Boreal Chickadees
Lesser Yellowlegs
Downy Woodpecker
King Fisher

Animals:
Grizzly tracks above tree line; bear scat in spruce/alder marsh.
Pica on tundra/talus. ?

July 7, 1985

Location: Riverside, spent much time observing southfacing cliffs just above river.

Birds:
Glaucous winged Gull- by edge of river
Gyrfalcon- observed for about 2 minutes, flying above spruce trees then up towards the cliffs, steady wing beats, little soaring, disappeared over ridge top. Gray in color, face markings very indistinct.
Nest spotted- south facing slope, below overhang. On cliff face about 400 ft. above river (see location on map). Observed nest for several hours, no activity. Nest appeared to be old but still in relatively good shape. Large.

Repeat Species:
(F) Mergansers, Tree Swallows, Spotted Sandpipers, Bank Swallows, Arctic Tern, Myrtle Warbler, Herring Gull.

Animals:
Prints of moose and young near campsite.

July 8, 1985

Tree identification: Riverside, gravel bar, alder/willow/spruce.

Birds:
Orange Crowned Warbler.....4
Wilson's Warbler.....3

Animals:
Black bear (see incident report)
Moose & wolf tracks

Repeat Species:
Tree & Bank Swallows
Juncos
Raven
Spotted Sandpiper
Golden eye.....35
(F)Golden eye
Hermit Thrush

July 9, 1985

Location: Riverside, observing rock cliffs along river, N,S,&E facing primarily.

Birds:
Nothing new; spotted sandpipers & juncos only repeats

Animals:
Red squirrel, possible bear den on steep upper cliffs. Heard Thrushes but can't confirm calls.

July 10, 1985

Tree identification: Riverside, spruce/alder forest, walk up Nahtuk Creek bed, time observing South facing slopes above Alatna between Nahtuk & Millichetah Creeks. Hiked in to Takahula Lake.

Birds:
White winged Scoter
(F) Surf Scoter
Nest (see map location) south facing slope with overhang on cliff face 800 ft. above river. Location about 2 miles SE of cabin at the confluence of Alatna & Nahtuk Creek
Nest observed for 1 1/4 hrs., no activity.
Nest about 30 ft. from top of cliff face.

Repeat Species:
Juncos, Robins
Hermit Thrush, Mew Gulls
Gray Jays, S. Sandpipers
Fledging White-crowned Sparrow
heard Woodpecker drumming,
(F) Red-breasted Merganser

Animals:
Moose at campsite crossing river, one beaver on Alatna at campsite, two beaver and an active lodge on NW shore of Takahula Lake. Bear scat around lake in alder/willow tussocks & marsh.

July 11, 1985

Location: Riverside, very little observation today; weather & recovering & cleaning up.

Repeat Bird Species:
Gray jays
Mew Gulls
Juncos
Robin

Animals:
Red Squirrel

July 12, 1985

Location: Riverside, tussocks, open ridge top aboe cliffs on E shore of Takahula.

Birds:
Violet green Swallows.....10
(M) Scaups.....1
(F) Scaups.....3
Greater Yellowlegs (probably) perched on top of spruce but too far off to identify, at S. of Takahula.
Golden Eagle- soaring at about 600-800ft. to the SE of campsite.

Repeat Species:
Gray Jays
Juncos
Warblers
Arctic Terns

Animals:
Black bear with two cubs of year on marshes S. of Takahula. Moose on south shore, beaver lodge on SE shore, red squirrel.
Note: The marshes & pot holes to the south of Takahula have a lot of potential for a variety of waterfowl & wading birds.

July 13, 1985

Location: River travel most of day, did spend some time observing rock cliffs and concentrated on south facing slopes between camps of 7/12 & 7/13.

Birds:
Solitary Sandpiper.....1
Common Tern.....3
Bonapartes Gull.....2
(F) Mallard.....1
*Nest (see location map) 300 ft. above river on south facing cliff about 3 miles down river from Takahula Lake. Nest under over-hang about 75 ft. from top of cliff. This nest observed off and on for several hours with no acitivity although golden eagle seen in vicinity on 7/12.

Repeat Species:
S. Sandpiper,Boreal Chickadees
Robin, Thrush, Bohemian Waxwings
Gray Jays, Juncos, Bank Swallows
Lesser Yellowlegs, Mew Gulls

Animals:
One young moose sitting by edge of river alone. Made no attempt to move as we passed within 25 yds.

July 14, 1985

Location: River travel pretty much all day.

Birds:
Rusty blackbird.....2
Albino blackbird was sighted at 17:20 and was observed for 1 minute to within 25 ft. Weather overcast with a threat of rain. Albino had pink legs & eyes, all white plummage. Was very active with two adult rusty blackbirds along river edge in mixed alder/willow/birch/spruce. On Survey Pass 1:250,000 topo the location would be 243 degrees from North end of Iniakuk Lake, 160 degrees from South end of Takahula Lake.

Animals:
Nothing except moose tracks everywhere.

July 15, 1985

Location: At take out point breaking camp and storing gear.

Birds:
Just got a brief look at what I'm sure was an Eastern Phoebe. Grey with dark head, light throat & breast, no wing bars, long tail, but no usual tail-wagging habit. Heard varied Thrush also.

Repeat Species:
Bohemian Waxwings, Raven, Mew Gulls

Animals:
Nothing, not even moose tracks.

COMPLETE BIRD SPECIES LIST, JULY 2-15, 1985
ALATNA RIVER

BY DAVE PRICE & CATHY COOK, V.I.P.'s

MALLARD	SCAUP	BUFFLEHEAD
COMMON GOLDENEYE	WH. WINGED SCOTER	SURF SCOTER
RED BREASTED MERGANSER	SHARP SHINNED HAWK	GOLDEN EAGLE
LESSER YELLOWLEGS	SOLITARY SANDPIPER	MERLIN
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL	GYRFALCON
HERRING GULL	BONAPARTE'S GULL	MEW GULL
ARCTIC TERN	COMMON TERN	SAY'S PHOEBE
BELTED KINGFISHER	COMMON FLICKER	DOWNY WOODPECKER
VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW	TREE SWALLOW	BANK SWALLOW
COMMON RAVEN	BOREAL CHICKADEE	GRAY JAY
AMERICAN ROBIN	HERMIT THRUSH	WATER PIPIT
BOHEMIAN WAXWING	ORANGE CROWNED WARBLER	WILSON'S WARBLER
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER	RUSTY BLACKBIRD	DARK-EYED JUNCO
WH. CROWNED SPARROW		

PROBLEM SIGHTINGS OR UNCONFIRMED CALLS; see report

GREATER YELLOWLEGS	JULY 12
EASTERN PHOEBE	JULY 15
GREY-CHEEKED THRUSH	various times
VARIED THRUSH	JULY 15
YELLOW WARBLER	various times

UNUSUAL SIGHTING;

ALBINO RUSTY BLACKBIRD JULY 14

RAPTOR NESTS;
July 7
July 10
July 13

AIRCRAFT SIGHTINGS

ALATNA RIVER JULY 2-15, 1985

July 2
17:15 - heard plane N of Alatna traveling W to E
17:35 - heard plane S of Alatna Arrigetch Peaks area

July 3
12:10 - single engine tail dragger, white/red stripes going downriver

July 5
10:00 - heard plane N of Alatna traveling SE to NW
11:45 - heard plane S of Alatna traveling downriver
13:10 - C-185? Yellow with white on floats traveling downriver

July 6
10:45 - heard plane S of Alatna traveling upriver
13:45 - plane on floats traveling S-SW behind Arrigetch
15:10 - red or orange beaver w/white silver floats from Arrigetch up Nahtuk
16:25 - heard plane N of Alatna headed NE
16:50 - beaver (probably same one as on 15:10) E to W on S of Alatna
17:50 - beaver W to E on S side of Alatna

July 7
11:50 - beaver red/orange traveling SW to NE about over Takahula Lake
16:35 - beaver red/orange traveling E to W north side of Alatna
17:40 - heard plane traveling W to E north of Alatna

July 9
13:35 - bell jet ranger blue w/red & white flying at 400 ft up Alatna
13:55 - jet ranger (N1YG) low going downstream noticed litter on L skid this time
18:30 - heard large plane (DC-3?) traveling W to E or NW to SE

July 10
11:15 - heard plane W side of Alatna traveling NW
13:10 - heard plane traveling downriver

July 11
04:00 - heard plane taking off from Takahula
20:20 - heard plane traveling upriver
21:00 - heard plane taking off from Takahula, possibly even two or three of them

July 12
12:55 - C-185(?) yellow w/white on floats E to W over Arrigetch
13:30 - orange beaver from Brooks Range Aviation landed @ Takahula Lake & unloaded passengers (see visitor contact report)
13:43 - beaver took off
14:50 - heard plane over Takahula, couldn't note direction of travel
19:00 - heard plane sounded large (DC-3?) traveling to SE
20:10 - heard plane E of Alatna traveling NW to SE

July 13
09:40 - C-185 white on floats going up river
15:10 - red w/white on floats, possibly a beaver traveling W to E
16:15 - white fixed wing, no floats traveling up river about 800 ft
16:20 - white fixed wing downstream over Tobuk over ridge from Alatna
17:45 - heard plane traveling upstream

July 14
22:25 - red/white on floats headed up the Help-Me-Jack drainage

July 15
14:20 - N714 made contact w/us then flew on to Walker Lake
16:00 - N714 landed on Alatna tricky upstream landing should find a better spot for any future trips
16:50 - N714 took off to return to Bettles

1985 ALATNA RIVER RAPTOR SURVEY

BY Cathy Cook

June 30

Arrived in Fairbanks late Saturday evening. Arriving in town a day early offered a good opportunity to review gear and needed essentials, acclimate to the area and purchase any additional items needed for the project. Having lodging and being met by our project leader, Judy Liedberg, at the airport greatly helped diminish any apprehensions about the project and logistics.

July 1

Orientation to the survey area: Meet with Judy to discuss project specifics, went over Survey Pass Quadrant(project area), arranged specifics on getting the rest of equipment for the project in Bettles (tent, radio, shotgun/shells, float bags, survey pass map). Received quadrant maps, fuel, reference books from main office in Fairbanks.

There was time to read through old trip reports on the Alatna and this was helpful in our final decision of using a two-person folboat instead of a raft to survey the Alatna drainage. I would recommend a similar orientation to other VIP's not familiar with the area. Commercial flight on Frontier Airlines from Fairbanks to Bettles. Arrived in Bettles at 3:30 p.m.

We had mailed to Bettles the majority of our non-perishable food items. This saved on time spent on purchasing and organizing food items in Fairbanks.

Obtained needed equipment from Craig Johnson, and reorganized personal gear, food, and group equipment to be prepared for early flight from Bettles to the Alatna in the a.m.

July 2

Departed Bettles at 11:30 a.m. with all my personal gear, group gear, food bags and shotgun with District Ranger Craig Johnson. Weather, sunny and clear, hopefully a good omen. Landed on Kutuk Lake (SE corner) unloaded all gear, checked radio transmission when Craig was again airborne. This lake provided a good drop off site for a portage over to the Alatna River. Craig returned with folboat at 3:30 p.m. It took 45 mintes to one hour to assemble the boat, this was with the help of an experienced folboat operator!

The Alatna River was at flood stge and was flowing very rapidly. It took about fifteen munutes to survey the banks, look for subm;erged trees now covered by high water, and locate a safe entry point.

Dave Price finally arrived with his personal gear at 5:30 p.m. Packed his gear into the boat quickly introduced to kayaking techniques, and we fortunately were able to manuever around the many sweepers and floating logs being carried down the Alatna. Our first campsite was quickly reached (1 hr paddling) on a gravel bar at the confluence of Pingaluk River and the Alatna River.

July 3 First campsite

Our campsite was located on a high gravel bar with a small creek to the north, cutting us off from the mainland. A sparse gathering of willows offered the

only protection from wind. An early morning and then a late afternoon visit by a single black bear established this campsite as a risky one. Fortunately, our food bags were left unmolested, but this is a good area for black bear, and there were no trees available at this site for hanging food.

RECOMMENDATION

Alert backcountry rangers or other users of black bear activity in this area. Pingaluk River to Noatak River.

Raptor Observation

Using the folboat we crossed the small creek and located a likely spot to climb ashore on the north shore of the Alatna. Wearing head-nets, long sleeved shirts, pants, and a good coating of Cutters, we moved through the boggy mosquito-infested but botanically rich lowland (three species of orchids within the first 20 ft.!). White spruce forest and slowly climbed to a series of ridges with several open-rock faces to scan for raptors. We ascended about 300 feet above the river. Our perch provided a welcome mosquito-free observation point in which to scan several south facing cliffs about 800 feet high. Two species of raptors, several species of passerines were spotted.

We descended about 4 p.m. with plans on returning to scan the area from a higher viewpoint on July 4. NOTE: The Alatna was dropping rapidly from its high-water level. We moved our folboat from the small creek to the mouth of the creek and the Alatna. A silt bar was quickly forming in the small creek. WEATHER: Sunshine, blue skies, low 70's.

July 4

Dave spotted black bear tracks in the mud that now connects our gravelbar to the main land. The bear crossed the siltbar, came directly up to the door of the tent, turned and crossed back to the mainland. Food bags were left untouched.

We were able to wade directly across the creek to the north shore. We ascended about 1000 feet to the highest ridge on the northwest edge of Pingaluk River. We had a great observation point for several cliff areas, and the Pingaluk drainage. Alpine vegetation with scattered stands of wind-pruned white spruce scattered amongst talus was the predominant ground cover. One raptor and several species of passerines were observed. No nests located as yet.

Decended about 4 p.m. I was preparing to try my luck at fishing when a black bear appeared along the banks to the north of our campsite. I shouted to scare him off, but this seemed to only attract his curiosity. It quickly crossed the small creek seperating the gravel bar from the mainland and went directly over to our food bags that were stashed about 150 ft. from our tent. Dave pelted the bear with stones and I covered Dave with the shotgun. The black bear left without getting into any of our secured food bags.

The bear returned again about forty-five minutes later. Yells and a few more rocks finally scared him off. We decided we would have to move camp that night in order to prevent any further bear/human encounters.

We cooked dinner at the campsite, packed up all our gear and finally shoved off into the Alatna about 9:30 p.m. About an hour later we located a good campsite on a gravel bar with excellent view of several cliff areas. Weather: Sunshine, blue skies.

July 5 Second campsite

Gravel bar with good views of cliffs both to the north and south.

We used the folboat to ferry across the Alatna to investigate a series of cliffs and spruce ravines to the south of our campsite. Hiked up to about 2,000 ft. to the top of a ridge that offered a great view of a spruce draw - lots of small passerines in the area. Spotted a probable merlin nest. An intriguing area for wildflowers as well.

Recommendation: I would recommend a further look into this area on the southside of the Alatna. A good series of cliffs and spruce draws made it a good haven for small passerines and small raptors.

July 6

Climb to 4000 feet. Using the folboat, we again ferried across the Alatna to investigate the cliffs on the southside of the Alatna. We decided this was a good location to attemps an arctic peak and get an idea of the over-all layout of the terrain and drainages. We bush-wacked our way through a cover of white spruce and equisetum (horse tails) inter-mixed with willow and alder. It was very hot and steep on the climb up and we kept on getting boxed into thickets of alder and willow. We finally picked our way through a boulder field and were rewarded with an easier route through tundra vegetation in full bloom. It was a slow, gradual march up to the top. The only signs of wildlife were bear tracks very high up near a summit pass and a fleeting glimpse of a Pika. Reached the summit 3 1/2 hours after we departed camp. Spectacular views of the Arrigetch Range, upper Alatna River valley, and our route that lay ahead of us to the east. Our first arctic peak!! Weather: Sunshine, blue skies.

July 7

Broke camp - moved to campsite #3. We paddled downriver about one mile from campsite #2, and stopped to better observe several cliffs on the north that looked like good nesting areas. Nothing noted.

We paddled further and set-up camp on an island gravel bar. Lots of driftwood and shelter from wind. Spent the afternoon in shorts and t-shirts observing several cliffs Dave spotted our first actual nest. We alternated watching the site for several hours, hoping for any raptor activity. Lots of small passerines and shorebirds in the area. No signs of activity at the nest.

Black bear encounter: Finished dinner quickly due to a sudden rain shower about 9:30 p.m. About 12:30 a.m. a loud noise alerted Dave and I, a quick check outside the tent, and Dave spotted a black bear in the area of our food packs. I ran out, picking up rocks, and shouted and tossed stones at the bear. It retreated quickly, easily swimming across the Alatna to the mainland on the south. Surveying our food packs, it ripped a hole in the side of one food bag, and scattered the food from the bag containing our dinners. We were able to salvage most of the spilled grains. Our only real loss was the last remnant of cheese. We cleaned up the area, built a fire and burned any trashed items, and spilled items. It was too late and we were too tired to move camp, so we decided to take turns keeping watch. Since I was wide awake, I took the first shift 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. A steady drizzle was falling, but no return from the bear. Woke Dave about 4 a.m., his turn at the watch. Black bear returned about 4:15 a.m. Dave scared him off again. Changed shifts again at 6 a.m. Both awake at 8.

A steady, cool rain greeted us this morning. Weather: Noted high clouds, cooler

temps and rain moved in by late evening.

July 8

The steady rain encouraged us to both catch up on some lost sleep. It finally cleared enough by late afternoon to fix dinner, wash up and break camp. It was nice to have a day to catch up on journals and read.

Broke camp and started paddling about 7 p.m. A beautiful evening on the water. A nice cool breeze and clear skies. A stiff head wind made some segments a little rough going.

Paddled about one hour to the confluence of the Noatak and Alatna Rivers. Set up camp on the south bank of the Alatna, near the guide cabin. We utilized the cabin to hang our food packs from the rafters of the roofs overhang. We both slept better knowing our food packs were safe. Weather: Rain a.m. clearing late afternoon

July 9 Campsite #4

Very good campsite near guide cabin. Grayling were spotted in small eddies and under logs along the Noatak River and side streams. No luck fishing though.

Located another cabin 1/4 mile S.E. of the guide cabin. No signs of recent activity. The cabin was prepared for winter use, however.

Cabins are surrounded by mature white spruce, quaking aspen forests. Understory with a large variety of herbaceous plants.

Very little bird activity in the area, but plenty of moose and possibly wolf tracks. Spent the afternoon observing cliffs north of the campsite across the Alatna. No activity.

July 10

Young bull moose in velvet wading through the stream directly in front of the tent this morning. A pleasant way to wake up. Explored along the Noatak River drainage this morning. Discovered a moose blind! Newly constructed on a meander between Noatak River and the guide cabin.

Lots of small grayling (fingerlings) along the Noatak. Lots of sign of moose along the Noatak but again somewhat sparse birdlife. Returned to camp at 4:30, fixed dinner packed up our gear and headed downriver to Tekahula Lake. Evening had turned sunny. Breathtaking views along every bend in the river. Stopped 2 miles downriver from Noatak River to observe south facing cliffs. Located our 2nd raptor nest, again apparently already abandoned.

Continued onto Takahula Lake area. Made camp on a large gravel bar on the north side of the Alatna and Takahula Lake. Hiked over to the lake trying to locate the cabin. Lots of intense mosquitos and a heavy rain discouraged us from locating the cabin. Finally back to the camp, wet and tired at 12:00 a.m.

July 11 Fifth campsite

Gravel bar adjacent to Takahula Lake basin. Lots of mosquitos if you wander anywhere near the willows or alders north of the campsite. Much more bird activity in this area.

July 12

Met Kay Roe and Steve ?, local folks from Fairbanks. They were planning on spending two months in the cabin. Cabin was constructed about 40 years ago. Stacked with 3 canoes, and 1 Zodiac raft.

They let us use their Coleman canoe to look for water-birds and explore the edge of Takahula Lake. Weather turned wicked on the return paddle, and we had to battle a head wind and white-caps on the lake. Takahula is the deepest lake in the Arctic, and I definitely didn't want to find myself at the bottom of it. The couple reported catching lake trout, grayling, pike, and sometimes salmon in Takahula.

Headed back to camp, packed up our gear and hit the river about 5:50 p.m. Luckily, the weather cleared and we again had a beautiful evening on the water. Paddled 1 1/2 hours before making camp at the base of what appears to be our last series of cliffs. A high soaring raptor - possibly a Golden Eagle - is spotted as soon as we land. Both of us are pretty tired and quickly make camp.

July 13 Campsite #6

An early morning rain 5:30 a.m. sent Dave scurring to bring in a few clothes left outside to dry. The day finally broke warm & sunny though, very little wind, but many mosquitos. The river has become very lazy here. Good views of cliffs to the south peaks on all three sides, and plenty of area for walking on the gravel bar itself. A very good site. Gray clouds and rain on and off during the day gave us a chance to clean up, catch up on journals and scout the campsite area for wildlife.

Hike to Takahula Lake: Strong winds started howling about 5:00 a.m. and resecured the tent and stayed for a while longer. Awake about 8 a.m. No more storm clouds or mosquitos! We packed up all our gear and took the tent down, the wind would have blown it over, even with all our gear in it.

Paddled over to Takahula Lake basin on the south side of the Alatna. Bushwacked through broken white spruce and low-lying tussock areas. Very tough going through the boggy cotton grass tussocks. Made our way to higher rudges and cliffs on the north east corner of Takahula Lake. Good views of the entire lake from here, and the small drainage creek to the south east. Spotted a young moose resting in a meadow on the east end of the lake, as well as a black bear wiht two cubs playing in the tundra ponds. Lots of shorebirds, ducks, and smaller passerines in the area.

Small float plane came in, landed on the lake, taxied over to the cabin on the northwest shore and unloaded two people and supplies. Hiked down the ridge to the lake edge to try and contact these individuals.

Observed cliffs at campsite for possible nests. Located our third nest on a due-south facing slope. Located at 300 feet up on a rock ledge.

Packed up the boat and departed at 1:30 p.m. stopped at several places along the way to survey cliffs for nests. No further activity, but plenty of shorebirds and passerines.

Spotted a very young moose calf all alone on the river edge. No signs of a cow moose, may have been injured. It didn't seem to want to move. A billowing thunderstorm followed us down river for quite some time. Driving rain and thunder finally caught us at 5 p.m. We pulled ashore, and waited out the storm, within 45 minutes we were back on the river.

Finally stopped for the evening about 8 p.m.

July 14 Campsite #7

Another sunny day on the Alatna!! Lots of finger grayling jumping in the small pool in front of the campsite.

Departed at 12 noon after a large breakfast. Shorebirds and passerines are spotted at less frequent intervals along the river. Observation: Albino Rusty Blackbird with two normal Rusty Blackbirds.

The river has really slowed down and broadened out here, rolling hills and low cliffs of the upper Alatna. Hit a quick thunderstorm at 1:30 p.m. After the squall, we are followed by alternating dark clouds and drizzle, but are able to avoid any lightening activity.

Met up with Jeff Smith, as we near our last two mile stretch on the lower Alatna. He was pulling his canoe through the water, and seemed pretty tired but otherwise in good spirits. Hope everything continues to go smoothly for him. Our last mile of the trip takes us through rolling hills, a recent burn and some low granite cliffs lined with white spruce. Arrived safe and sound at 8:00 p.m. Our last campsite for the trip.

July 15 Campsite #8

Awoke early 7:00 a.m. Last day expectations. Very few gravel bars in this last segment of the river. This straight segment will hopefully give Craig Johnson enough clearance.

Craig arrived with plane at 4 p.m. Dave and I discovered this place was a bad location for pick-up because of the low ridges and bend in the river to the west. There are several gravel bars further down river on this section that would make a better pick-up point. Gear was squeezed in, and we limped back to Bettles at 5:30 p.m. Journeys end.

Total trip length: 34 1/2 miles as the crow flies. From Takahula Lake on, the distance could easily be doubled due to all the meanders - realistically 60 miles.

RAPTOR SURVEY

ALATNA RIVER DRAINAGE JUNE, 1985

FLORISTIC INVENTORY

The overall forest composition is a spruce-birch Interior forest with interspersed muskeg, gravel bar and tundra vegetation. The following inventory will be listed by dates and localities that correspond with campsites along the Alatna River drainage on the Survey Pass quadrant map.

July 3 Pingaluk River and ridges to 1100 feet

Picea glauca	White spruce
Salix artica	arctic willow
Salex alaxensis	Feltleaf willow
Salix spp	Willow
Alnus crispa	Common alder
Potentulla fruticosa	Shrubby Cinquefoil
Ledum groenlandicum	Labrador tea
Eriophorum scheuchzeri	Cotton grass
Equisetiun f.	Horsetail
Carex spp.	Sedge
Epilobiun angustifolium	Fireweed
Hedysarium boreale	Wild sweet pea
Lydadenus elegans	White canas
Cypripedium passerinum	Northern lady's slipper
Cypripedium calceolus	Yellow lady's slipper
Amerarchis rotundefolia	Fly-specked orchid
Penguvicula vulgaris	Bog Violet/Butterwort
Rubus articus	Nagoonberry
Vaciniun oxycoccus	Bog Cranberry
Boschniakia rossica	Broom rape

July 4 Pingaluk River and ridges to 1600 feet

Betula papyrifera	Paper birch
Andromeda polifolia	Bog rosemary
Andropace chamoejasme	Rock jasmine
Mystosis alpestris	Alpine forget-me-not
Silene acculis	Moss Campion

July 5 Hike to NE ridges to 2800 feet adjacent Pingaluk River

Betula nana	Dwarf birch
Betula glandulosa	Shrubby birch
Papover Alaskanum	Arctic poppy
Polygonum bistorta	Pink plumes
Dryas drummandii	Yellow dryas
Empetrum nigrum	Cranberry
Arnica angustifolia	Alpine arnica
Ledum decumbens	Dwarf labrador tea
Valerian capitata	Valerian

July 6 Hike to NE ridges to 4800 feet peak adjacent Pingaluk Creek

Dodecatheon frigidum	Alpine shooting star
Losieleuria procumbens	Alpine azalea
Campanula lasiocarpa	Arctic harebell
Saxifraga punctata	
Cassiape tetragona	Heather
Oxytropis maydellian	
Geum rossi	Ross aven
Boykinia richardsonii	Alaska boykenia

July 7 riverbar campsite 800 feet

Pyrola minor	
Salix alaxensis	
Salex pulchra	
Populus tremuloedes	Quaking aspen
Castilleja caudata	Indian paintbrush
Epilobium macrophyllum	Fireweed

July 9 Noatak creek spruce/birch forest 1000 feet

Picea glauca	White spruce
Populus balsamifera	Quaking aspen
Alnus crispa	Common alder
Monenses uniflora	Single delight
Pyrola grandeflora	Large-flowered wintergreen
Pyrola chlorantha	
Linnaea borealis	Twinflower
Viburnum edule	Highbush cranberry
Rosa acicularis	Prickly rose
Boschniaka rossica	Broom rope
Hedysarium alpinum	Bearflower
Alnus crispa	Common alder
Salix spp.	Willow
Epilobum angustifolia	Fireweed
Dryas drummandii	Yellow dryas
Castilleja caudata	Indian paintbrush
Hedysarium boreale	Wild sweet pea
Sheperdia canadensis	Soapberry

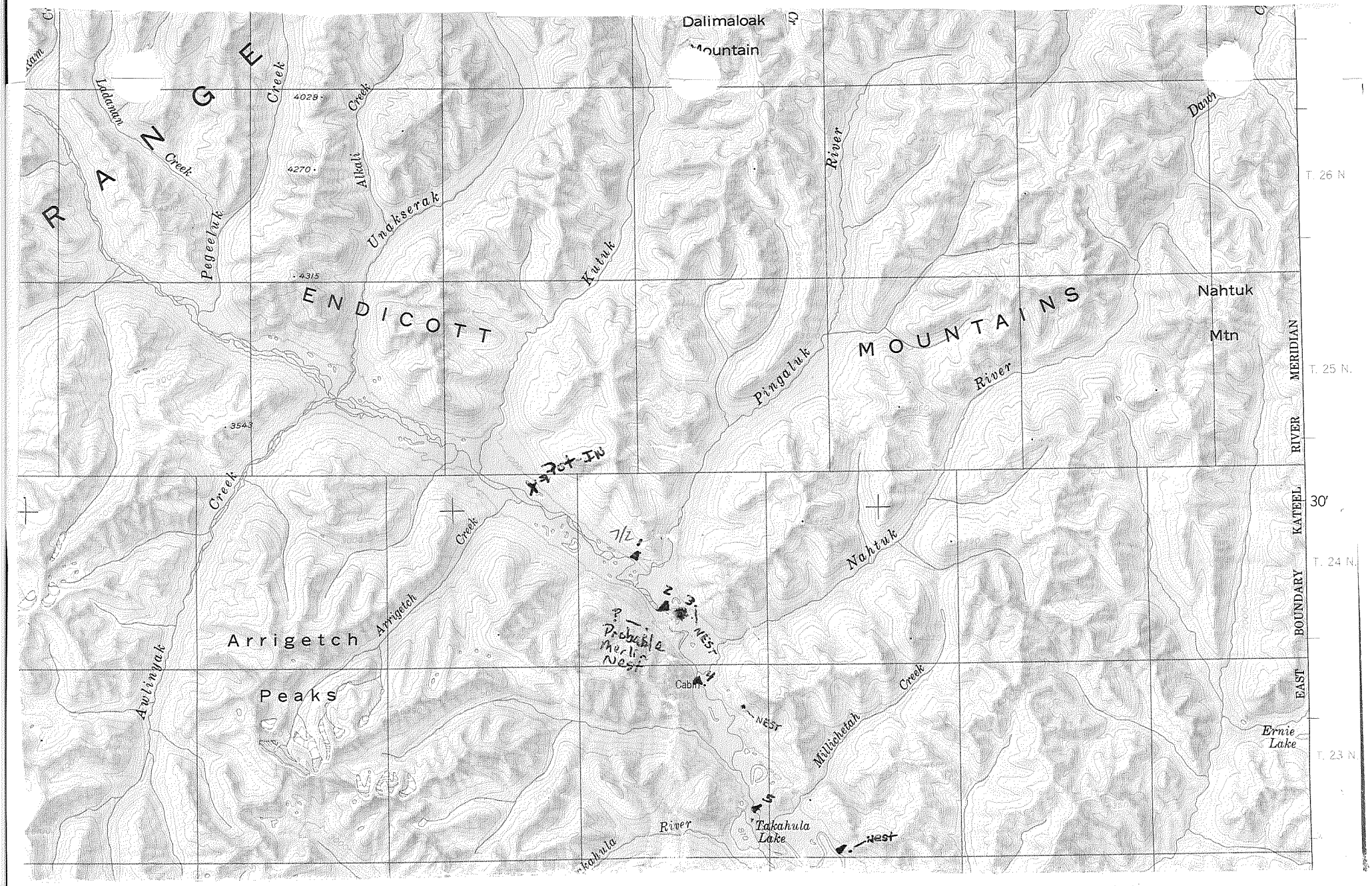
July 12 Takahula Lake general floristic composition
River bank lined with thick stand alder/willow, ridges from 800 ft to 1100 ft NE of river campsite composed of large stands of:

Picea glauca	White spruce
Equiseteum	Horsetail
Pyrola grandiflora	Large flowered wintergreen
Amerarchis rotindifolia	Fly-specked orchid
Cypripedium passerinum	Northern lady's slipper
Zydadenus elegans	White camas
Polygonum bistorta	Pink plumes
Papover alaskanum	Arctic poppy
Valerian capitata	Valerian
Boykenia richardsonii	Alaska boykenia

Ledum groenlandecum	Labrador tea
Gentiana propenqua	Gentian
Phlox sibirica	
Platanthera hyperborea	
Minuartia artica	
Mertensia paniculata	

July 14 Lower Alatna - rolling hills

Allium schoensprasum	Wild chives
Ribes triste	Current
Pannassia Kotzebwei	Grass-of-Parnassis
Stellaria crassifolia	Chickweed



Dalimaloak
Mountain
RANGE
ENDICOTT
MOUNTAINS
Nahtuk
Mtn
Arrigetch
Peaks
Ladanan
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Pegeeluk
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Alkali
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Unakserak
Kutuk
River
Pingaluk
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Nahtuk
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Arrigetch
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Awlinyak
Millichetah
Creek
Takahula
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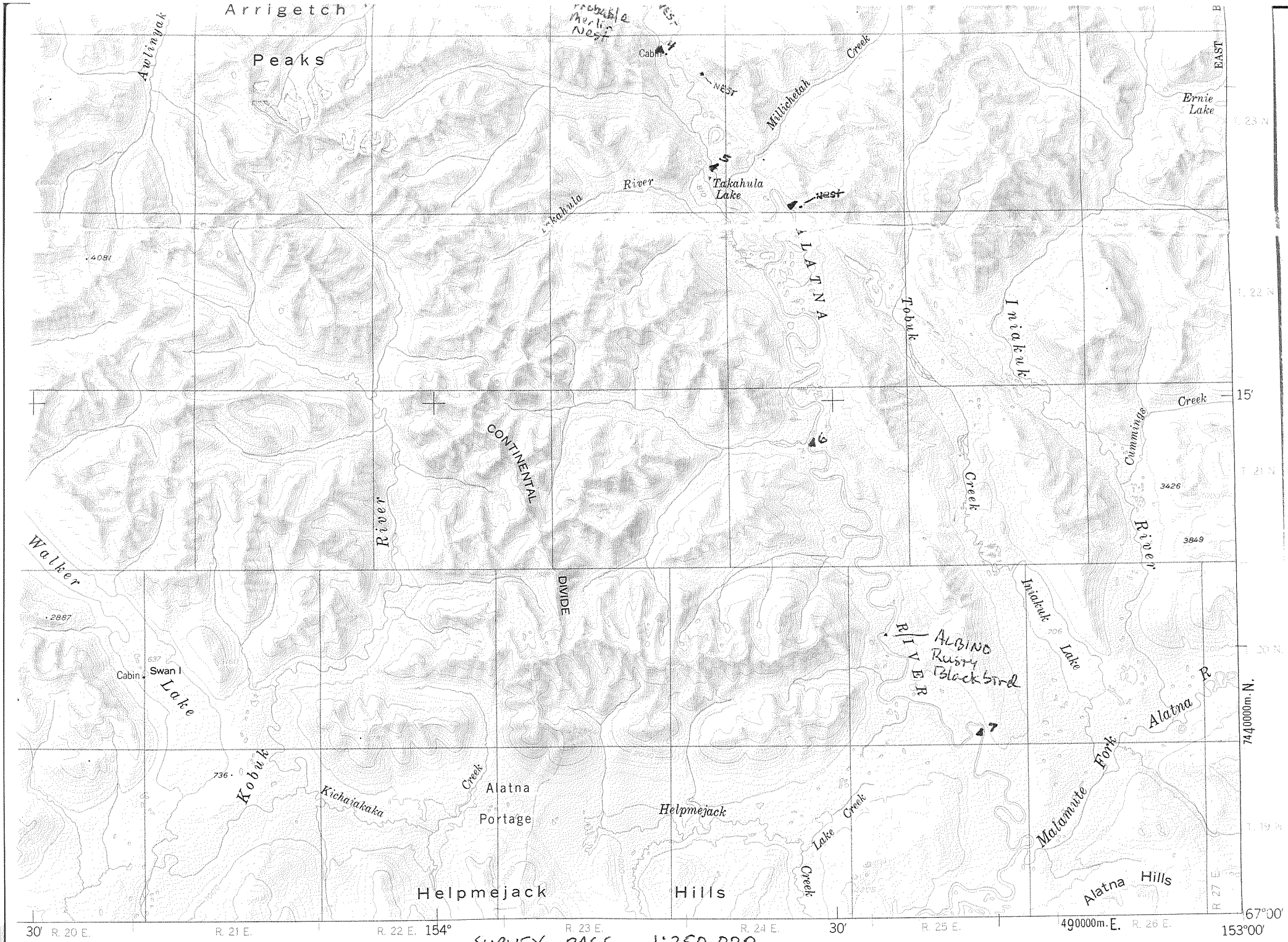
4270
4315
3543
T. 26 N
T. 25 N.
T. 24 N.
T. 23 N.
30'
EAST BOUNDARY KATEEL RIVER MERIDIAN



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