

british columbia–yukon region



MICHAEL G. SHEPARD

El Niño may have disappeared, but its effects lingered long into the fall season. The scorching weather of early Aug. gradually withered away into Sep., but both months were sunnier and drier than normal just about everywhere. In Oct., clouds and precipitation increased gradually, as Pacific storms began to penetrate inland. This trend would become a steamroller off the ocean in Nov., as storm after storm battered the s. third of British Columbia. Areas farther north escaped most of the rain and remained dry.

Pacific Loons are rare in the s. interior of the province. A single bird was near Castle-gar Nov. 15–17 (BK, RWe, GN). On Sep. 23, 2586 Red-necked Grebes were counted at their Boundary Bay staging area (BES), with the majority off Crescent Beach and off Lilly Point, WA. A Clark's Grebe, the first of the fall on the coast, was off Point Grey Sep. 20 (MP). Two pelagic birding trips off the B. C. coast provided few noteworthy sightings. However, Pink-footed Shearwaters were slightly more abundant than usual, with 100 in the vicinity of La Perouse Bank Oct. 10 (RFo et al.). Small numbers of Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels turned up in Juan de Fuca and Georgia Straits, with a high count of 45 at Rocky Point Oct.

10 (DEA). The main fall movement of Am. White Pelicans was pretty much on time, with small flocks moving S through the interior. About 20 white pelicans were seen circling Mamette L. near Merritt Sep. 23 (KAS), and 56 were in the Creston Valley Sep. 26 (BK et al.). A coastal straggler, perhaps the same bird as seen in Jul., was in Langley Sep. 22 (JSt). There were very few sightings of Brown Pelicans until Sep., when small numbers were reported in Juan de Fuca Strait. In Oct. larger flocks were found, including 42 off Jordan River Oct. 7 (CBr) and 23 at Carmanah Point Oct. 22 (GE). A few Brown Pelicans lingered through the end of the season. Double-crested Cormorants, rare in the interior, were reported as far n. as Summit L. near Prince George, where one was present for about a week around Oct. 13 (KL). Cattle Egrets appeared on schedule again this fall, with one appearing in Sandspit Oct. 25 (MH, PH). This was the first reported from the Queen Charlotte Islands since 1992. The fall Turkey Vulture migration peaked Sep. 26, when 650 birds were over East Sooke Park/Rocky Point Sep. 26 (DEA et al.).

An Emperor Goose, possibly the same individual seen at Porteau Cove in Jul., was on the Sunshine Coast in Aug. (*vide* DBr). Another rare goose, a Ross's, was near Campbell R. from Nov. 24+ (Jlb et al.). At least one Tufted Duck was in the Vancouver area Oct. 28 (RT, JT) to Nov. 7 (*vide* Vancouver RBA). At L. Laberge, a White-winged Scoter Nov. 22 (HG) and an imm. male Surf Scoter Nov. 27 (CE) were the latest ever recorded for the Yukon. A concentration of over 2000 Common Mergansers at Quamichan Lake Nov. 22 (DVM) was amazing. Three Ruddy Ducks on Sch-watka Lake Oct. 9 (CE) provided the Yukon's only fall record this year.

Two imm. N. Harriers just s. of L. Laberge Nov. 22 (CE, PS) provided a record late date for the Yukon. Broad-winged Hawks, very rare in B.C., put in their biggest showing yet, with at least six birds appearing at the s. tip of Vancouver Island. Four adults were seen together at Rocky Point Sep. 20 (DEA). Extremely rare was a

light-morph "Harlan's" Hawk at McIntyre Creek in Whitehorse Sep. 20 & 23 (CE). A Prairie Falcon, a rare visitor to the coast from drier climes, was between Roberts Bank Jetty and Brunswick Point Nov. 13 (RT) through the end of the month.

An Am. Coot, rare in the Yukon during the fall, was seen at Swan L. Aug. 30 (HG). Large numbers of Sandhill Cranes moved through the s. interior in late Sep. and early Oct. The largest number reported was 1120 observed over White Lake near Okanagan Falls Sep. 19 (JSh et al.). The normal assortment of "rare but regular" shorebirds appeared again in the Vancouver area and remained through the end of the period: an American Avocet at Reifel Island Sep. 23 (Jlr), a Willet at the base of the Tsawwassen Jetty Nov. 6, a Long-billed Curlew at Blackie Spit Nov. 9 (RFi), and up to five Marbled Godwits in the Boundary Bay area Oct. 26 (ENR et al.). More exceptional was a single Marbled Godwit at the Delkatla Wildlife Sanctuary, Masset, Nov. 4 (MH, PH). The only report of Upland Sandpiper this fall was one over Grey Canal Trail near Vernon Aug. 20 (CRS). An incredible total of 21 shorebird species was tallied Aug. 16 at the Nisutlin Delta, Yukon (CE, HG, PS). Particularly noteworthy there were a juv. Hudsonian Godwit and a juv. Wilson's Phalarope. Early reports of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers this fall included a juvenile at the Nisutlin Delta Sep. 5 & 6 (CE, HG) and one at the Beck Creek Estuary, Nanaimo Sep. 20 (GMo et al.). A Com. Snipe at Jackfish Bay, L. Laberge, on Oct. 25 (CE, YBC) was the last Yukon shorebird reported this season. This tied the previous late date. Putting in a rare interior appearance was a Red Phalarope at Tranquille Sep. 13–20 (GMi, NS, HS, SR, EM).

Although rare in inshore British Columbia waters, S. Polar Skuas can be regularly found in offshore waters. Single birds were observed Oct. 10 in the vicinity of La Perouse Bank (RFo et al.) and off Port Renfrew (BW et al.). Adult Little Gulls, rare visitors to B.C., were reported off Ent-whistle Drive, Nanaimo, Oct. 2–4 (GMo et al.), Edey Point Nov. 1 (DEA), and the Iona South Jetty Nov. 30 (RT). The Yukon's 2nd

documented Iceland Gull, a first-winter bird, frequented the Whitehorse landfill Oct 12–25, a thrill for Yukon gull enthusiasts (CE, HG, PS et al.). Another rarity, Slaty-backed Gull, was reported Nov. 29 into Dec. at Delta (*fide* Vancouver RBA) and Nov. 28 into Dec. near Duncan (DVM). Sabine's Gulls were unusually widely reported in the interior of B.C. Records included one at Nulki Lake Sep. 5 (CA, NK), one at Tranquille Sep. 8 (SR), one near the mouth of Vernon Creek Sep. 18 (PG), and one near the Kamloops airport dike Sep 19 (SR). Another bird, first found at Vaseux Lake Sep. 21 (ILR), was found dead on Sep. 26 (PA). A Black Tern was at Iona Island Oct. 8 (RWO).

Yellow-billed Cuckoos are casual summer visitors to British Columbia. Almost all records are from near the coast, so one seen in Kamloops Sep. 14 (CR) was most noteworthy. A Long-eared Owl found dead in Nanaimo in late Nov. (GMO) provided the first well-documented record for that area. A record-late Com. Nighthawk was at Nisutlin Delta Sep. 13 (MW). The **Xantus's Hummingbird** present in Gibsons since Nov 1997 was last seen Sep. 21 (*fide* Vancouver RBA). An Anna's Hummingbird, a rare visitor to the interior, was at Westbank Nov. 11–30 (CC et al.). An influx of imm. Lewis's Woodpeckers into the Lower Mainland occurred in Sep. One was in Port Coquitlam Sep. 12 & 13 (LC), two in Bradner Sep. 19, and two at the University of British Columbia Sep. 18–20 (both *fide* Vancouver RBA).

The almost annual occurrence of Tropical Kingbirds in the Tofino area continued this fall. Two were there in early Oct, with one still there Oct. 31 (RP). Elsewhere, one was at Esquimalt Lagoon on Oct 18–25 (GK et al.) and one at Weirs Beach Nov. 21 (AY). Although rare, a few W. Kingbirds turn up on the coast each fall. One was at Port Renfrew Sep. 20 (DBu) and a rather late straggler in South Delta Oct. 25 (NH) & 26 (BK). A minor invasion of Steller's Jays in the Whitehorse area late Sep. through Oct. included reports of single birds at Mary Lake (LJo), Wolf Creek (AJ, LK, HL), and Tagish (WH). These were the first Yukon records since a similar invasion in 1994. Many species of swallows lingered late into the fall this year, with most reports coming from Reifel Island: one Tree Swallow Nov. 22, one Violet-green Nov. 28, eight Barns Nov. 28, and three Cliff Swallows the same day. More unusual was a single Cliff Swallow at Westbank Nov. 11 (CC), providing the latest report ever for the B.C.

interior. Extralimital White-breasted Nuthatches were reported from Cedar Sep. 5 (TFI) and Smithers Nov. 8 (TH). A Brown Creeper at Pine Lake near Haines Junction Aug. 8 provided one of very few documented Yukon records (CE, PS). A Mountain Bluebird was at Porter Creek, Yukon, on the late date of Nov. 11 (EG, KG). The summer invasion of N. Mockingbirds in the B. C. interior gradually tapered off, with last two birds reported from the Greenstone Mountain Road near Kamloops Sep. 18 (EM, LMc).

Although abundant in the north, Tennessee Warblers are relatively rare in s. B.C. One was seen along the Grey Canal Trail near Vernon Aug. 27 (PG). A huge fall-out of 150 Yellow Warblers was observed at Iona Island Aug. 23 (SM). A female Yellow, photographed at Entry Point, Masset, Nov. (PH, MH) provided the latest record ever for the Queen Charlottes and one of the very few Nov. reports for the province. A female Chestnut-sided Warbler was observed feeding young at Puntchesakut L. w. of Quesnel Aug. 21 (GSD, MSD). This is the first breeding record w. of the Rocky Mts. Large numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers were moving S in the Yukon in mid-Aug., with 200 at Nisutlin Bay Aug. 18 (CE, PS). An unprecedented invasion of Black-throated Blue Warblers occurred this fall in the Pacific Northwest. One was near the n. end of Osoyoos Lake on Oct. 10 (LJe, DJ) and one in Kelowna the same day (AG). Fall Palm Warbler records included single birds at Squamish Oct. 4 (RR) and Iona Island Oct. 17 (RT). An Am. Redstart, a rare species on the coast, was banded at Iona Island Aug. 22 (LMi). N. Waterthrushes put on an unusual showing on the coast this summer and fall. In Aug., at least four were at Rocky Point (DGD, DEA et al.) and two at Iona Island (LMi, SM). The last report was of a single bird at Reifel Island Sep. 20 (DSB). Mourning Warblers rarely turn up w. of the Rockies. The single bird found at Sea Island Oct. 26 (RT, MM et al.) was far from its S. American wintering grounds and was apparently still present in Dec. Two Wilson's Warblers at Williams Lake Nov. 1 (PR) provided an exceptionally late interior record.

Clay-colored Sparrows were reported in the Vancouver area on several occasions this summer and fall. Two were at Iona Island in Aug., the first found Aug. 16 (RT, DEA). One was banded there Sep. 20 (LMi). Rare on the coast, a Vesper Sparrow was near Boundary Bay Sep. 20 (BS). A Le Conte's Sparrow, rare in B.C., particularly w. of the

Rockies, was near the Trail Airport Sep. 26 (GN). A vagrant Lark Sparrow was in Tofino Oct. 25 (RP). Swamp Sparrows were widespread in s. B.C. this fall. A rather early one was banded at Iona Island Sep. 12 (LMi). Unusual was the rash of Rose-breasted Grosbeak observations this fall. Records of this vagrant from e. of the Rockies included one at a feeder in Oliver Sep. 21–24 (Tfo, m. ob.), one at 100 Mile House in Oct. (TG), and one at the Wineglass Ranch on the Chilcotin River Oct. 8–13 (LD). A tremendous irruption of Bramblings occurred in B.C. this fall. One was at Tofino Oct. 28–Nov. 1 (RP), one at Williams Lake Oct. 29–Nov. 3 (joined by a 2nd bird Nov. 3; JW, AR et al.), one at Sicamous Nov. 24–26 (BM et al.), one at Masset Nov. 1 (MH, PH), one at Ridley Island near Prince Rupert Nov. 1 (*fide* RRW), and one at Lavington Nov. 26–Dec 1 (PM et al.). A Purple Finch frequenting a Whitehorse feeder Nov. 25–28 (CE, HG) bettered the Yukon's previous late date by about 2 months. A Hoary Redpoll, rarely reported from s. B.C., was at Lavington Nov. 28 (CRS).

Sub-regional Compilers: Burke Korol (BK)—Kootenays, Max Gotz (BMG)—Whistler, Bryan Gates (BRG)—Victoria, Cameron Eckert (CE)—Yukon, David Allinson (DEA)—Victoria, Don Cecile (DGC)—Vernon, Helmut Grünberg (HG)—Yukon, Hank vander Pol (HVP)—Victoria, John Chandler (JC)—Vancouver, Jack Bowling (JCB)—Prince George & weather summaries, Larry Cowan (LC)—Vancouver, Peter Hamel (PH)—Queen Charlotte Islands, Phil Ranson (PR)—Cariboo, Richard Cannings (RJC)—Okanagan, Michael Shepard (MGS)—Southern Vancouver Island, Steve Baillie (SJB)—Nanaimo, Sandy McRuer (SMcR)—Alberni Valley, Tony Greenfield (TGr)—Sunshine Coast.

Other Observers: Al Gemmill (AG), Afan Jones (AJ), Anna Roberts (AR), Arlene Yaworsky (AY), Bonnie Stout (BES), Bob McVicar (BM), Brian Self (BS), Bruce Whittington (BW), Cathy Antoniazzi (CA), Chris Charlesworth (CC), Chris Siddle (CRS), Clara Ritcey (CR), Doug Brown (DBr), Don Buskirk (DBu), Dan Derbyshire (DGD), Dian Jellicoe (DJ), Daniel Bastaja (DSB), Derrick Marven (DVM), Elaine Gustafson (EG), Eric McAlary (EM), Noel Russell (ENR), Gerry Epscorn (GE), Grant Kiddie (GK), Gary Mitchell (GMi), Guy Monty (GMO), Gwen Nicol (GN), Gary Davidson (GSD), Henry

Lewandowski (HL), Helen Saemerow (HS), Laurie Rockwell (ILR), Jim Ibbs (JIb), John Ireland (JIr), Jim Shaver (JSh), Jeff Starchuck (JSt), John Toochin (JT), Jean Waite (JW), Katharine Shewchuk (KAS), Kris Gustafson (KG), Ken Lipinski (KL), Linda Durrell (LD), Len Jellicoe (LJe), Lois Johnson (LJo), Leslie Knight (LK), Libor Michalak (LMi), Lois McAlary (LMc), Margo Hearne (MH), Mitch Meredith (MM), Michael Price (MP), Marie Davidson (MSD), Mary Whitley (MW), Neil Hughes (NH), Nancy Krueger (NK), Nels Saemerow (NS), Peter Axhorn (PA), Phil Gehlen (PG), Pat McAllister (PM), Phil Ranson (PR), Pam Sinclair (PS), Randy Findlay (RFi), Roger Foxall (RFo), Rory Patterson (RP), Reto Riesen (RR), Robin Weber (RRW), Rick Toochin (RT), Rita Wege (RWe), Robert Worona (RWo), Steve Mlodinow (SM), Syd Roberts (SR), Terry Flammand (TFI), Thelma Forty (TFo), Tom Godin (TG), Todd Heakes (TH), Vicki Hansen (VH), Yukon Bird Club (YBC).

Michael G. Shepard, Vision Group International Inc., 5325 Cordova Bay Road, Victoria, BC V8Y 2L3



Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds*2 are keyed on page 24.

oregon- washington region



warm weather encouraged many birds to stay late, including record-late dates for Olive-sided Flycatcher and Gray Flycatcher. A total of 11 passerine species were found a month or more beyond their usual departure date. Adding to this pleasing situation were good movements of montane species into the lowlands, plus a solid movement of several "winter finches" into the Region.

Abbreviations: O.S. (*O.S.*, Grays Harbor, WA); Malheur (*Malheur N.W.R.*, Harney, OR); P.N.P. (*Point No Point, Kitsap, WA*); S.J.C.R. (*south jetty of the Columbia R., Clatsop, OR*); Sauvie (*Sauvie I., Multnomah/Columbia, OR*); W.W.R.D. (*Walla Walla R. delta, Walla Walla, WA*).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

Thirteen reports of Pacific Loon from freshwater areas is somewhat below average for a fall total, and only one Yellow-billed Loon report, at Sequim, *Clallam, WA*, Oct. 4+ (NB, SM) is also well below average. Fifteen Clark's Grebes were reported from the west-side; all but four were from w. Oregon. The numbers and distribution of this uncommon migrant show considerable annual variation. The 9 Regional pelagic trips averaged 100+ Black-footed Albatross per trip, with a high count of 323 off Westport, WA, Aug. 22 (TRW). Both totals are above the long-term average. Four Laysan Albatross were reported off Westport, WA, Aug. 8–Oct. 18 (BrL, TRW, BTw) and none off Oregon. They increased the 1998 regional total to thirteen, about average for the late 1990s. N. Fulmar numbers averaged about 500 per trip and peaked at 1222 off Westport Oct. 18 (TRW), very similar to last fall's excellent numbers. Unusually large counts of Pink-footed Shearwater included a count of 400 from land at Cape Blanco, OR, Sep. 24 (DLA, KC, TR, CD) and 1000 off Depoe Bay, OR, Sep. 12 (MH, GG). Washington pelagic counts were normal, with a peak of 503 off Westport Sep. 12 (TRW). Five Flesh-footed Shearwaters were report-

BILL TWEIT, JEFF GILLIGAN, and STEVE MLODINOW

It was a remarkable fall in Oregon, with seven first state records (**Manx Shearwater, Brown Booby, Wilson's Plover, Common Ground-Dove, Broad-billed Hummingbird, White Wagtail, Louisiana Waterthrush**). Washington did not fare as well, with "only" two first state records. The fall passerine migration was superb, with good numbers of the usual species and an abundance of vagrants. Topping the list were the Region's first Louisiana Waterthrush, Washington's first Golden-winged Warbler, the region's 6th Canada Warbler, and a wagtail that may well represent North America's first White Wagtail of the race *leucopsis*. And ten Tropical/Couch's Kingbirds this fall wasn't bad either. In contrast, most of the "uncommon" shorebird migrants were downright scarce.

The fall seemed to consist of two seasons. Aug. through Oct. were warm and abnormally dry months. The rains finally started in Nov., which was wet, windy, and warm. The 11.62 inches of rainfall in Seattle in Nov. set a new record for the month. The