

# british columbia–yukon region

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The summer can be summed up as dull, dreary, and wet. The few hot spells that occurred only lasted a few days at a time—except in the Yukon, which started out hot but joined the damp party by the end of June. It was not until the very end of the reporting period that warmer weather took hold. One of the more salient repercussions of a wet summer following last year's scorcher was the triggering of heavy conifer cone crops in the boreal forests of the central and northern interior. As happened in the previous 1992/1993 hot/cool-wet succession, crossbills invaded in droves to feast on the abundant seeds. The cool weather also resulted in a very gradual meltdown of the heavy winter snowpacks through spring and summer; thus we avoided widespread flooding over the southern half of the Region, but lake and river levels remained very high.

## LOONS THROUGH HAWKS

An apparent late migration wave on 11 Jun at Larsen L., s.e. Yukon, produced an impressive concentration of breeding-plumaged loons, with 30 Pacific, 15 Common, and a record-setting seven Yellow-billed (CE, MG). Very rare in the Yukon, a Pied-billed Grebe was at Larsen L. 14 Jun (CE, MG). A census at Cecil L. in the Peace R., BC, 11 Jul tallied an astounding 2451 Eared Grebes (DGC). The W. Grebe breeding season at Salmon Arm and Okanagan L., BC, was a total "washout:" no nests were successful (RJC). Predation and high water appeared to be the main causes of failure. Clark's Grebes found in the interior at Salmon Arm 16 Jun included a male (FK) as well as an apparent female paired with a W. Grebe (RJC, KF); another single Clark's Grebe was at the n. end of Okanagan L. 29 Jul (RJC).

For the 2nd time this year, an imm. **Short-tailed Albatross** was reported from the Queen Charlotte Is., this time e. of Cape St. James 25 Jul (*vide* TG). Small flocks of Am. White Pelicans in the s. interior in mid-June were surprising; Feldman found 17 at Salmon Arm 14 Jun, Axhorn observed

24 at Vaseux L. on 17 Jun, and 25 birds (the same group?) were reported from Swan L., Vernon, 18 Jun (*vide* KMC). At least three visited the Strait of Georgia area in the spring and early summer, ranging as far N as Campbell R. where two frequented Tyece Spit and vicinity 4–7 Jul (KH et al.). A **Red-faced Cormorant** in definitive alternate plumage was well seen flying past the entrance to Dixon Entrance 20 Jun (MF). A single Great Egret observed in the vicinity of Campbell Creek/Shumway L. 20–22 Jun (KAS et al.) was unusual in interior British Columbia. Snowy Egrets at Salmon Arm 23–26 Jul (JM, HGo, RWy et al.) and Williams L. 28 Jul into early August (SH et al.) were also rare interior occurrences. Four Brant at Judas Cr., YT, 7 Jun (CE, PS) were late spring migrants. Three Harlequin Ducks along the upper Beaver R.—two males 18 Jun and a female 25 Jun—added to the few records of this species for the s.e. Yukon (HGr, CO). Very rare in the Yukon, three Black Scoters (an ad. male, a first-year male, and a female) at Judas Cr. 7 Jun provided the first documented Whitehorse-area record (CE, PS, HGr). Another species unusual in the Yukon was a male Hooded Merganser observed at Larsen L. 13 Jun (CE, MG).

The 9 Jun appearance of a Broad-winged Hawk at Willowbank Mt. in the Blaeberry Valley (DL) was unexpected. An adult at Mackenzie, BC, 27 Jul (LL, DB, SKi) provided the first documented record for that area, but even more exciting was the discovery of an immature at the same location 30 Jul (DB, LL, SKi)—considerably farther southwest than other suspected breeding locations. The imm. Broad-winged was calling frequently, as though begging.

## PLOVERS THROUGH WOODPECKERS

A late migrant Am. Golden-Plover was at Nanaimo R. Estuary 1 Jun (GM). A single Semipalmated Plover at Alki L., Kelowna, BC, 20 Jun (JW) provided one of the very few June records of the species in the Okanagan Valley. In British Columbia, the number of breeding Am. Avocets appears to be on the rise. Northwest of Clinton, a pre-



viously unreported colony (*vide* LGy) had at least 32 avocets 1 Jun, including 12 sitting on nests. Although avocets have probably bred in the Cariboo for many years (Cooper 1983, *Murrelet* 64: 47–48), this was the first documentation of a "large" colony in the region. The only other currently known in the province, at Alki L., had 14 nests occupied as of 2 Jun (*vide* LGy), 4 of them on man-made floating platforms. A Willet at Alki L. 11 Jun (JW) added to the handful of reports of this species from the provincial interior. An Upland Sandpiper was seen on several occasions at the Ft. Nelson airport, BC, 14 Jun–18 Jul (JCB, DGC); although the species is rare during the breeding season in that area, nesting habitat for Uplands is good at the airport. By mid-June the southward movement of shorebirds was evidenced by scattered reports from around the province; by early July, shorebird migration was in full swing, with thousands already at Iona I. by 2 Jul (RT). Semipalmated Sandpipers put in a strong showing with 250 at Iona I. 2 Jul, 200 there 8 Jul (RT), and 80 at Robert L., Kelowna, 16 Jul (CC).

A Long-tailed Jaeger at L. Laberge, YT, 23 Jun was the first record for the Whitehorse area (MC, AM). This spring and summer, Franklin's Gulls were reported in s. British Columbia more frequently than usual. One was at Iona I. 16 Jun (RT), and a group of ten were at Alki L. 17 Jun—seven-eight adults in breeding plumage and two-three in intermediate winter/summer plumage (JW); seven were still there 29 Jun

(JW). A first-year Little Gull was at Iona I. 16 Jun–21 Jul (TP); interestingly, there had been many Little Gull observations in the w. states in late winter and spring. A first-summer Ring-billed Gull at Turner L., n.e. Yukon, 2–3 Jul was well outside its normal range (CE, MG). On 24 Jun, a pair of aggressively territorial Glaucous-winged Gulls greeted Cecile at the Grant I. gull colony on Okanagan L., but no nest was located. Although this species rarely breeds away from the coast, nesting was possible at this locale. Daily checks of a small flock of Mew Gulls perched on the only rock in Tabour L., n.e. Yukon, produced a crescendo of gull rarities, with a first-summer Glaucous 24 Jun, a first-summer Glaucous-winged 25 Jun, and a breeding-plumaged Sabine's Gull 26 Jun (CE, MG). Eight Caspian Terns at Cottonwood Beach, Stuart L. (Fort St. James), 28 Jul (RRa) were noteworthy in c. British Columbia, and two at M'Clintock Bay 12 Jun provided a 4th Yukon record (JH). Nisutlin Delta, YT, hosted 60 Arctic Terns (48 adults and 12 juveniles) 30 Jul (CE, PS). A Forster's Tern at Iona I., BC, 17–18 Jun (MW) was at an unusual location for this time of year.

A 17 Jul aerial survey of 112-km<sup>2</sup> Herschel I. on the Yukon's n. coast tallied a stunning 104 Snowy Owls, including 35 pairs (with 4 confirmed nests) and 34 singles (DC, SKo, EJ, FE, LGo). Although we occasionally find large wintering concentrations (e.g., 107 on the Ladner CBC 22 Dec 1973), this summer count at Herschel was unprecedented. A Red-naped Sapsucker photographed on Quadra I., BC, in June (CTS) provided the first record of the species for the Campbell R. area. A Pileated Woodpecker along the La Biche R. 11 Jun (CE) put in a rare Yukon appearance.

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH ORIOLES

Eight Yellow-bellied Flycatchers sang on territories at Larsen L., YT, 11–14 Jun (CE, MG), and two individuals singing on a 20 Jun BBS provided a first Whitehorse-area record (CE). Rare on the coast, a Least Flycatcher was found at Currie Cr. near Duncan 4 Jun (MGS); two were at Pitt Meadows in June (RT, DT et al.), and one was in Vancouver 22 Jun (KSr). The E. Phoebe first reported 31 May at the Alaksen W.M.A., Delta, BC, was present until at least 11 Jun (WE). Unusual on the coast during summer, individual Say's Phoebes were in Langley near Campbell R. Park 24–25 Jun (AT) and at Rocky Pt. 25 Jul (DEA). Well outside its normal range, an E. Kingbird was at Jackfish Cr. headwaters, n.e. Yukon, 3

Jul (CE, MG). Although E. Kingbirds are regular visitors to the e. side of Vancouver I., they rarely make it over the mountains to the w. slopes; a single bird at the Somass R. Estuary 20 Jun (SMc) provided the first record for the Alberni Valley.

A singing Blue-headed Vireo along the upper Whitefish R. 15 Jun (CE) provided s.e. Yukon's northernmost record, while three counted on the Rancheria BBS 13 Jun were at the w. limit of this species' Yukon range (HGr). A pair of Blue Jays, a rare breeding species w. of the Rockies, was discovered nesting in Kimberley, BC, 5 Jun (BA, HA). Rarely reported from the Yukon, a Gray-headed Chickadee along Thomas Cr., n.w. of Old Crow Flats (Vuntut N.P.), 8 Jun was an excellent find (DH, RM). A confused Gray Catbird landed on the foc'sle railing of a research vessel 6 nautical mi w. of Triangle I. 24 Jun (MF) and established a surprising outer coastal record for this interior species. Single Cedar Waxwings, rarely reported in s. Yukon, were at Larsen L. 14 Jun (CE) and at the upper Whitefish R. 17 Jun (CE, MG).

A singing Nashville Warbler found along Copper Haul Rd. 20–21 Jun (CE, PS, m.ob.) established the Yukon's first well-documented record; close examination indicated that it belonged to the e. subspecies *ruficapilla*. Another individual well n. of its normal range was at Ft. Nelson, BC, in late June (*vide* JCB), and a singleton at Ralph River Campground, Butte L., 12 Jun (JF) was noteworthy. Rare but regular in British Columbia, a Chestnut-sided Warbler was at Tranquille 27 Jun (RRi, CR). Two singing Palm Warblers in n.e. Yukon—one at Tabour L. 25–26 Jun (CE, MG) and another at Turner L. 1 Jul (CE)—provided the first documented Yukon records for this species and a notable range extension. A Black-and-white Warbler, usually found only in the n.e. corner of the province, was at Pitt Meadows 6 Jun (HM, JT). In British Columbia, Am. Redstarts occur mainly e. of the Cascade/Coast Mountains; a single bird at Port Hardy 11 Jun (JCB) provided one of the few Vancouver I. observations ever. The Yellow-breasted Chat first reported at Sea I. 31 May was present until at least 23 Jun (*vide* Vancouver RBA). On 21–22 Jun, a rare bird survey conducted by members of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists tallied 19 chats in the Okanagan and adjacent Similkameen valleys (*vide* RJC).

An almost completely albino Chipping Sparrow was a curious sight at Larsen L., YT, 12 Jun (CE). An extraordinary count of 18 "Timberline" Brewer's Sparrows was

made at treeline along Mt. Granger in Whitehorse 9–10 Jul (MG). Two Brewer's Sparrows, rarely reported from s.e. British Columbia, were near the Duncan R., Kootenay L., 10 Jun (GS). The Okanagan/Similkameen watershed rare bird survey on 21–22 Jun produced an amazing 75 Lark Sparrows probably representing at least 50 pairs (*vide* RJC). On 12 Jul Cecile made a high count of eight Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows at Boundary L., Peace R. area. A single Swamp Sparrow seen and heard 6 Jul near Meadow Cr. in the Kootenays (GSD, GS, RWe) provided the first summer record of the species for s. British Columbia. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was at Willowbank Mt. in the Blaeberry Valley 9 Jun (DL); although normally rare w. of the Rockies, there were numerous reports of these grosbeaks from the w. United States this spring and summer. Unusual n. of s. British Columbia, a Lazuli Bunting was at Francois L. 3 Jun (KW). Even more noteworthy were Lazulis alongside the Hart Hwy 17 km w of Chetwynd, BC, 30 Jun (MP, CA) and two individuals 23 and 25 km w. of Chetwynd 9 Jul (DGC). A putative hybrid Indigo × Lazuli bunting was at Tranquille 30 May–4 Jul (†RRi, †SR, †WCW). Rare anywhere in the north, a male Yellow-headed Blackbird was just s. of the Yukon border at the s. end of Teslin L., BC, in early June (MC). Six Brewer's Blackbirds were at Upper Liard 28 Jun (MH, PH). In the breeding season, Rusty Blackbird is rare and local in s. British Columbia, so a pair taking food to a nest e. of Vernon 4 Jul (PG, KMC) was noteworthy. A first-year male Bullock's Oriole at Race Point Rd., n. of Campbell R., 9 Jun (VH) provided the northernmost Vancouver I. record of this species.

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# oregon-washington region

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The season was rather wet until mid-July, when summer finally arrived and sunshine became more than a vague memory. The weather undoubtedly depressed land-bird breeding success: A western Washington bluebird project banded only 100 birds compared to 151 last summer (Sam Agnew). The cool, late spring was undoubtedly responsible for very late dates for several northern migrants such as Golden-crowned and Harris's sparrows and Lapland Longspur. The spring's motif of interior birds displaced westward—Eastern Kingbirds and a Black-chinned Sparrow, among others—also continued. And who knows what forces were responsible for a stream of Gulf of Alaska seabirds that continued from the spring: Mottled Petrel and Red-legged Kittiwakes were the summer contribution.

**Abbreviations:** F.R.R. (*Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane Co., OR*); Fields (*Fields, Harney Co., OR*); Malheur (*Malheur N.W.R., Harney Co., OR*); O.R.B.C. (*Oregon Rare Birds Committee*); O.D.F.W. (*Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*); O.S. (*Ocean Shores, Grays Harbor Co., WA*); O.S.U. (*Oregon State University*); S.J.C.R. (*south jetty of the Columbia R., Clatsop Co., OR*). Eastside/Westside refer to the portion of the Region east/west of the crest of the Cascades.

## LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

A Pacific Loon in breeding plumage on Lemolo L., *Douglas, OR*, 15 Jul (R. Maertz) was very unusual on freshwater in summer. Possibly marking the beginning of a 2nd

Willamette Valley breeding colony, a W. Grebe summered at Baskett Slough N.W.R., *Polk, OR* (BTi, RG). Three pairs of Clark's Grebe at F.R.R. all summer (K. Beal) suggested continued breeding at the species' only Westside colony. Pelagic trips in July—two off Westport, WA (TRW), and one off Depoe Bay, OR (G. Gillson)—found very low numbers of N. Fulmar, averaging fewer than 30 per trip, extremely low numbers of Pink-footed Shearwater, averaging only four per trip, and moderately low numbers of Sooty Shearwater, about 1100 per trip. The only Short-tailed Shearwater was one found dead at Newport, *Lincoln, OR*, 11 Jun (O.D.F.W., *vide* HN). Three Manx Shearwaters, now of annual occurrence in Washington, were off Westport 10 Jul (†B. LaBar); one in Admiralty Inlet 3 Jun (†G. Lasley, B. Sundstrom) was only the 2nd record from inland waters. Three **Mottled Petrels** were found dead on Washington beaches (C. Thompson, *vide* T. Hass); summer records are unprecedented.

American White Pelican continues to wander the Westside: one at Baskett Slough N.W.R., *Polk, OR*, was last seen 10 Jun (RG), two were at Crockett L., *Island, WA*, 18 Jun (B. Merrick), one was on the Columbia R. near Portland 18 Jun (J. Cowan) and 25 Jul (*vide* D. Baccus), and two were at Blaine, *Whatcom, WA*, 17 Jul (SM). One Great Egret pair was observed nesting again this year at Ridgefield N.W.R., *Clark, WA*, with unknown success (J. Engler). Great Egret was also reported nesting on a Columbia R. island just n. of Richland, *Franklin* (*vide* DR), apparently a new e. Washington location. Breeding continues at heronries around Coos Bay, OR, a recently established Westside locale. Snowy Egrets were at



Sequim Bay, *Clallam, WA*, 23–25 Jun (L. Newberry, *vide* BB) and Rock I., *Franklin, WA*, 6 Jun (†S. Atkinson); they have become annual vagrants to Washington. Summer records of Black-crowned Night-Heron on the Westside continue to accumulate: there were 3 Oregon reports (TR, B. Combs, BTi, RG) and one from Washington (*vide* BN). The White-faced Ibis found this spring near Othello, *Adams, WA*, remained until 30 Jun (RH). An injured Ross's Goose at Bandon, OR, 28 Jun and later (RL) was a first Coos record. The single Am. Black Duck at Everett, WA, 6 Jun (SM) hopefully represents the last remnant of an inadvertent introduction. Up to two pairs of Redhead at F.R.R. in July (D. Irons) continue to fuel suspicions of local breeding—their only Westside nesting. A pair of Ring-necked Duck nesting near N. Spit of Coos Bay, OR, was at the s. edge of the species' range.

White-tailed Kites continued to provide evidence of range expansion: a pair nested for the 2nd year at Nestucca Bay N.W.R., OR (F. Schrock); one was seen much of the period and suspected of breeding at