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Northerners face the twin challenges of monitoring long-term trends while also responding to imminent threats to birdlife posed by development. This year, shorebird surveys across northern Yukon and Northwest Territories collected baseline population data for the Bird Conservation Region known as the Arctic Plains & Mountains. In the southwestern Northwest Territories, an intensive field study of the effects of a pipeline corridor in the northern boreal forest found surprisingly high diversity and productivity of songbirds in the Fort Simpson area. These are two very different studies, but hopefully both will help understand and relieve the spiraling pressures on northern bird populations. Birdwatchers also play an essential role in bird conservation in this vast Region: reports from a few new observers can provide much-needed information. Despite the great distances between Regional outposts—for example, nearly 3500 km separate Herschel Island, Yukon from Akimiski Island, Nunavut—there is a shared passion that links people to the northern wilderness. If your summer travels take you to the North, please share your sightings and stories.

In the Yukon, a brief spell of warm weather in June gave way to a relatively cool summer. In Northwest Territories, June was slightly warmer and wetter than the norm for much of the Mackenzie Valley, while July was close to seasonal norms.

WATERFOWL THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

The increasing overlap in the breeding range of Trumpeter and Tundra Swans in the nw. corner of the Region means that careful field identification is essential. A pair of Trumpeter Swans on a nest at Tombstone Park, cen.

Yukon established the first confirmed breeding record for the Dempster Hwy. (CE). A pair of ad. Tundra Swans was at Tweed L., NWT 1 Jun (OB, SDe, CS); another was at Belot L., NWT 27 Jun (OB, ph. SDe, CS). An imm. Whooper Swan, the first to be photographed in the Yukon, was at Herschel I. 26 Jun–6 Jul (ph. LJM, DA, ph. MB, WB, KM). A late report of a male Eurasian Wigeon at Henderson Corner, cen. Yukon 4 May (CD) provided one of the few Dawson area records. The arrival of Long-tailed Ducks at Iqaluit, Nunavut seemed a bit late this year, but some were observed in melting ponds by 11 Jun

(MM). A count of 13 Red-throated Loons was recorded at Herschel I., Yukon 13 Jun (PS). Red-throated Loon numbers appear to be stable at Nanisivik, Nunavut, with nesting pairs on most small lakes; a nest there had one egg 25 Jun and 2 chicks by 29 Jul (CK). Two Yellow-billed Loons were seen at Cambridge Bay, Nunavut 8 & 10 Jul (RK, EET). A high breeding density of Red-necked Grebes, about 50 pairs nesting in *Equisetum* marshes, was recorded on a survey of Little Atlin L., s. Yukon 14 Jun (CE, EN). A tally of 27 Double-crested Cormorant nests 31 May provided the first breeding record for Akimiski Strait islands, Nunavut (KA). A Turkey Vulture seen 1 Jun provided the first record for Akimiski I., Nunavut (RB, SH).

A Pacific Golden-Plover, a first for Northwest Territories, was at Tuktoyaktuk 11 Jun (ph. DM). Two ad. Common Ringed Plovers with a chick were noted at Nanisivik, Nunavut 21–29 Jul (TB; CK). Three pairs of Upland Sandpipers were at Duke Meadows, sw. Yukon 5 Jul (RF). A pair of copulating Hudsonian Godwits on Akimiski I., Nunavut 1 Jun suggested local breeding, but no subsequent nest was found (SB). A count of 24 Marbled Godwits, including numerous pairs on territories, was made on Akimiski I. 3 Jun (KW). A late but noteworthy report was of 2 Ruddy Turnstones at Surfbird Mt., near km 100 on the Dempster Hwy, cen. Yukon 31 May (SF, BL). Surfbird reports, all from the Yukon, included a singing male at Surfbird Mt., near the Dempster Hwy. 31 May (SF, BL), one at Blueberry Ridge along the Dempster Hwy. 7 Jun (BL), another singing in the Richardson Mts., 40 km n. of the Eagle R., 12 Jun (SF, BL), 4 at Incline Mt. along the Dempster Hwy. 20 Jun (SF, BL), and 4 at 2000-m elevation in the Quill Cr. drainage, sw. Yukon 20 Jul (ph. DD). The Yukon's first Red-necked Stint, a bird in stunning breeding plumage,

was a great midnight find at Herschel I., n. Yukon 10–11 Jun (ph. PS, SDe, IM, WN). Other scarce shorebirds recorded during Canadian Wildlife Service surveys on the Yukon's North Slope were 2 Black-bellied Plovers seen w. of Komakuk 11 Jun (PS) and 3 White-rumped Sandpipers at Herschel I. 10–11 Jun (ph. PS). Baird's Sandpiper was reported to be commonly nesting in tundra above Arctic Bay, Nunavut 20 Jul (TB). A number of species normally seen in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut but absent this year during 6–10 Jul were White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Red Phalarope; as well, there were lower-than-normal numbers of Pectoral Sandpipers and Ruddy Turnstones (RK, EET).

GULLS THROUGH FINCHES

An amazing 57 Long-tailed Jaegers—a species not previously detected in the area—were loafing on the ice of Colville L., NWT on the morning of 5 Jun (OB, SDe, CS); this event was definitely related to weather, as a bitterly cold system had rolled in from the Beaufort Sea the previous day. Two ad. Little Gulls, casual in s. Yukon, were spotted among a late flock of migrant Bonaparte's Gulls at Twin Lakes 6 Jun (ph. DM). Two ad. Little Gulls were reported from Akimiski I., Nunavut 3 Jun (JI). A count of 23 Iceland and 38 Glaucous Gulls was made at Arctic Bay, Nunavut 1 Jun (CK). An ad. Slaty-backed Gull greeted an Eagle-Eye tour at Cambridge Bay, Nunavut 7–8 Jul (ph. RK, EET). Nesting of Glaucous and Thayer's Gulls in Nunavut's High Arctic was about a week late this season (MM). Single ad. Glaucous-winged Gulls were seen at Herschel I., n. Yukon 12 Jun (ph. PS) and at Whitehorse, s. Yukon 5 Jun (CE, DM) & 1 Jul (ph. CE). A high count of 25 Sabine's Gulls was made at Cambridge Bay, Nunavut 9 Jul (RK, EET). Ivory Gull is exciting wherever it is encountered; 3 were seen on the ice of Admiralty Inlet, Nunavut 15 Jun–1 Jul (PN), and one was seen with a flock of Glaucous and Thayer's Gulls attracted by a Narwhal feeding on Arctic Cod at Victor Bay, Nunavut 31 Jul (CK); one must marvel at the beauty of such a scene. A Caspian Tern seen just along Klunane L., just s. of Congdon Cr., sw. Yukon 5 Jul, followed a sighting of 2 at Kelsall L., on the Haines Summit just s. of the Yukon border 3 Jul (RF). An impressive 300 Arctic Terns were at a colony at Colville L., NWT 29 Jun (OB, SDe, CS).

A Eurasian Collared-Dove was seen briefly at Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 16 Jun (ph. WR); however, recent releases of this species in Petersburg, se. Alaska have muddied the waters around the provenance of

this bird. A Mourning Dove at Tulita, NWT 6 Jul (ph. RD) provided the first local record. Short-eared Owl nests have become increasingly noteworthy, as the species is now considered of "special concern"; a nest with six eggs was recorded at Akimiski I., Nunavut 2 Jun (SB). A Yellow-bellied Flycatcher banded at Teslin L. 11 Jun was the first seen there through the "spring" banding season (ph. BS). The known range of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in cen. Yukon was fleshed out somewhat with counts of 3 near Mayo 7 Jun (MOD), 8 on the Goldfield roads near Dawson 24 Jun (PS, SDa), and 2 at Faro 27 Jun (PS, SDa). Three hatch-year Least Flycatchers, at the far nw. edge of their range in cen. Yukon, were banded at Shell Cr. along the Yukon R. 22 Jul (ph. TMK, BS). The Mount McIntyre B.B.S. in Whitehorse, s. Yukon on 16 Jun found Dusky Flycatchers well below their typical treeline breeding grounds this year (CE)—no doubt a result of heavy snow conditions in alpine areas late into the spring. An Eastern Phoebe, well beyond its range, was singing at Henderson Corner, cen. Yukon 6 Jun (DM).

Rare on the Yukon's North Coast were a Tree Swallow between the Firth R. and Babbage R. 13 Jun (PS) and a Barn Swallow at Herschel I. 29 Jun (MB). A flock of 80 Bank Swallows circling and drinking from Rabbitkettle L., Nahanni National Park Reserve, NWT, then heading southeastward 30 Jul (DT), was a sure sign of fall migration underway. A Blue-headed Vireo at Swan L., s. Yukon 9 Jun (v.r. BD) was a first record for the Whitehorse area; another singing in Deadmen Valley 13 Jun (DT) was the first for Nahanni National Park Reserve. Red-eyed Vireo is very rare in the Whitehorse area, s. Yukon; reports this year included singles in downtown Whitehorse 13 & 15 Jul (RP; DS, MS), at Little Atlin L. 14 Jun (CE) & 16 Jun (BD), and on the Atlin Rd. 17 Jun (PS). Winter Wren, scarce in s. Yukon, was heard near Rancheria 17 Jun (HG). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets, rare n. of the s. edge of the Yukon, were at Little Salmon L. 26 Jun (CE, PS).

A pair of Northern Wheatears was seen at a nest at Arctic Bay, Nunavut 20 Jul (TB). An American Robin nest (with four eggs) was reported from Arviat, Nunavut 12-16 Jun (ph. AU). A study around Ft. Simpson, NWT found Swainson's Thrush to be the most common breeding bird, while Red Squirrel was identified as the predator responsible for most nest failures; significant nest predation by Sharp-shinned Hawks was also an unexpected find (EB). Rare songbirds noted at Akimiski I., Nunavut included a Gray Catbird 1 Jun (NS) and a Northern Mockingbird the next



Herschel Island on the Yukon's north coast has a well-deserved reputation as an outstanding rarity hotspot. Following close on the heels of the Yukon's first Red-necked Stint was this first-year Whooper Swan, seen on the island 26 (here 29) June through about 6 July 2006. Photograph by Malcolm Boothroyd.

day (ph. SB). Another Northern Mockingbird was in Ft. Simpson, NWT 27-28 Jun (ph. DT); interestingly, it was in exactly the same place and time (within a week) as a mockingbird seen two years earlier. Brown Thrasher reports from Nunavut included one at Arviat 3-14 Jun (ph. LJS, JS) and one singing at Akimiski I. 9 Jun (SB). Cedar Waxwings staged one of their periodic mini-invasions in the Whitehorse area, s. Yukon this summer; a pair was confirmed nesting (five eggs) at Marsh L. in late Jun (ph. DP).

Tennessee Warblers continue to be seen in high numbers in se. Yukon; a count of 22 was recorded on the Rancheria B.B.S. 17 Jun (HG). Reports of Cape May Warblers well w. of their range included males in Whitehorse 1-7 Jun (ph. PS; CE; MB), at Haines Junction, sw. Yukon 10 Jun (MOD), and on the s. side of Chilkat Pass just s. of the Yukon border 3 Jul (RF). Five Townsend's Warblers were tallied along the Top-of-the-World Hwy., cen. Yukon 23 Jun (PS, SDa). A single Black-and-white Warbler was heard in Deadmen Valley, Nahanni National Park Reserve, NWT 13 Jun (DT). A female Western Tanager, w. of its range, was banded at Teslin L. 4 Jun (ph. BS). Lark Sparrows are known to wander northward in summer; one found at Colville L., NWT 29 Jun (OB, ph. SDe) may now mark our northernmost record. A high count of 8 Smith's Longspurs was made at Tweed L., NWT 7 Jun; this species was later confirmed breeding there (OB, SDe). Yellow-headed Blackbirds breeding in the Yukon? Well, not

yet—a distance of just 150 km separated a male near Carcross in late May (ph. BW) and a female near Haines Junction, sw. Yukon in early Jun (ph. JO). A male Brown-headed Cowbird was a surprise visitor to Arviat Nunavut 3-8 Jun (ph. LJS, JS). There was no hiding for the brilliant male Baltimore Oriole that stood out like a fiery blaze against the brown spring vegetation at Arviat, Nunavut 3 & 6 Jun (ph. LJS).

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