

after November. Rarer still after November were single **Savannah Sparrows** at feeders in Eagle R. late December–Feb. 10+ (LM, RD, DWS, RLS, DFD) and Palmer Dec. 21–Jan. 6 (*fide* DWS). These constituted the first winter reports for SC—there are few other documented Alaska winter records. The only Lincoln's Sparrow report beyond the CBC period was a single in Anchorage all season (*fide* DFD, RLS). An average four White-throated Sparrows were reported, all singles, from Kodiak all period (CH ph., RAM), Juneau Dec. 1–19+ (ph. DM), Sitka Jan. 13–Feb. 21 (MLW, MET), and Ketchikan to Jan. 24+ (SCH). Two Harris's Sparrows in Sitka Dec. 12–Jan. 10+ (MLW, MET) were the only reported. Aside from a decent CBC tally of 12 Dec. 19, White-crowned Sparrows were way down Regionwide. Anomalous was a single at a *Dillingham* feeder Jan. 2–Feb. 12+ (CP, ph. RM), one of few Bristol Bay/Bering Sea coast winter records.

Out of range for the season were 15+ Snow Buntings near elevation 4000' in the Chugach Mts. above Anchorage Feb. 13 (BM). Although it was tempting to consider these early spring migrants, given the heavy snow and cold conditions, I think they were wintering birds navigating for windblown habitats. Good numbers of Bramblings returned after a several-winter hiatus. Singles were described from *Dillingham*, n. and w. of usual winter sites, Jan. 2–Feb. 12 (CP, ph. RM); Kodiak Dec. 23 through the period (JD ph., RAM); and in Homer, where the first bird, found during the December CBC, was joined by six by the end of February (SS, NS, RK).

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british columbia –yukon region



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The winter weather was most interesting as the cool La Niña waters of the eastern Pacific contrasted with an anomalously warm pool off Japan. The result of this pattern was the generation of a strong westerly storm track slamming onto the southern sections of the coast. Indeed, it was the stormiest winter on the coast since that of 1971–1972. Heavy rains fell on the lowlands, and the deepest coastal mountain snowpack in many years accumulated by the end of the period. Interior precipitation was also bountiful over the southern three-quarters of British Columbia, especially in the mountains. About the only thing people didn't complain about was the temperature, which remained above normal in most areas. Larger lakes in the southern interior were mainly ice-free through the winter. The Yukon was too far removed to be affected by all this, its weather being colder and snowier in December, still on the cold side but drier in January, and milder and generally dry in February.

Abbreviations: B.C. (*British Columbia*).

LOONS THROUGH DUCKS

A winter rarity in the interior, a single Pacific Loon was at the head of Okanagan L. Dec. 6 (DGC). On the N. Arm of the Fraser

R., off Sea I., a Clark's Grebe was found Feb. 25 (MKM). Extremely rare in nearshore waters, a juv. **Short-tailed Albatross** was photographed off Langara I. Jan. 19 (RL). Northern Fulmars rarely enter the Strait of Georgia, making one off Newcastle I. Dec. 17 (GAP) noteworthy. Brown Pelicans lingered unusually late with the last reported in mid-January from Pedder Bay (GF). The 1238+ Sooty Shearwaters at Rose Spit Dec. 23 (MH, PH) represented an unusually high number for the season. Although increasing steadily in the interior of Washington, Double-crested Cormorants are still relatively rare in the B.C. interior. A single bird observed at various locations on Okanagan L. during January was last reported from Sandy Beach near Vernon Jan. 31 (DGC).

An imm. Ross's Goose was at Campbell R. Nov. 24–Dec. 2 (JI, VH, ES); another was at Como L., Coquitlam, from late in 1998 through the end of the period (m.ob.). Unusually far north, a Wood Duck observed on the Williams L. CBC Jan. 2 (JiS, PR et al.) provided the first winter record for that area. A flock of 21 Mallards tallied at McIntyre Cr. wetlands during the Whitehorse CBC Dec. 26 provided a record-high winter count (CE). This is still the only known regular winter location of Mallards in the Yukon. Blue-winged Teals are rarely reported in B.C. during the winter, but six were tallied on the Vaseux L. CBC Jan. 1 (ILR). A male Tufted Duck visited Lost Lagoon, Stanley Park, Feb. 25 (EW). A White-winged Scoter at Duck L. Dec. 5 (BK, MAB) was a rather late fall straggler.

RAPTORS THROUGH ALCIDS

Two ad. Golden Eagles, rare in winter in the Yukon, were first seen Nov. 22 near Deep Cr. at L. Laberge and again Dec. 4 (CE). Two were spotted 2 km s. of Christmas Cr. about 50 km n. of Haines Jct. Dec. 25 (LF). Another was over Whitehorse Feb. 4 (BD, BMu). The deaths of four Golden Eagles in the greater Whitehorse area this winter remain a mystery. One was a radio-tagged individual that had been followed into the Yukon (CM). At least one of the eagles appeared to be emaciated, and the dead birds have been sent out for further assessment.

Perhaps the only regular winter raptor that far north, a Gyrfalcon was at Inuvik Dec 1 (CE). The Prairie Falcon first reported from w. Delta Nov. 13 was still present Feb 14 (RT, DEA). Although more regular in the interior of the province, late season records are few. The single bird in the Creston Valley Dec. 5 (BK, MAB) was noteworthy.

Sixteen Sharp-tailed Grouse were at Inuvik Dec. 1 (CE). The introduced Wild Turkey is locally distributed in the province. The high count this fall was established by 82 birds in the Creston Valley Dec. 5 (BK, MAB). The Penticton CBC Dec. 20 produced a world-record 3533 California Quail (RJC et al.).

Golden-plover spp. are casual in winter in B.C. A single Pacific Golden-Plover was reported from Delta Feb. 27–28 (HM, JAM). The usual gang of large shorebirds continued to be present in the Vancouver area through the winter (m.ob.) with an Am. Avocet at Reifel I. until Jan. 2, a Willet at the base of the Tsawwassen Jetty, a Long-billed Curlew at Blackie Spit, and up to five Marbled Godwits in the Boundary Bay. A Wandering Tattler at Sandilands I. at the mouth of Skidegate Inlet in December was unusually late for this species (AC, BE).

A single Sabine's Gull off the Iona S. Jetty Dec 1 (RT, MME) provided an unusually late fall record. Other rare gulls included an Iceland in Delta Feb. 7 (RT), another (first winter) at Iona Island Feb. 14 (RT, DEA), and one–two Slaty-backed in Delta throughout the period (m.ob.). An adult W. Gull photographed at Vernon Feb. 6 (DGC) furnished the first record for the Okanagan Valley. On Jan. 24, Allinson witnessed a spectacular flyby of Com. Murres in Juan de Fuca Strait off Rocky Pt. An estimated 25,000–28,000 birds were tallied, one of the largest murre concentrations ever recorded in the province.

OWLS THROUGH REDPOLLS

Long-eared Owls are rare outside the s. interior of B.C. and particularly rare on Vancouver I. A single bird along the Somass R Dec. 13–14 (SM et al.) provided the first record for the Alberni Valley; another at the Nanaimo R. Estuary for about a week was first seen Jan. 7 (GM). Anna's Hummingbirds continued to be seen in the Okanagan with at least three in the Westbank/Kelowna area in December and January (EC, CC, ILR et al.). Once again, three Anna's wintered at Queen Charlotte City (BE, PH, CK, DY). Quite surprising was a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker found in Prince George during the

Date	Location	Observer
October 28–November 1	Tofino	RP
October 29–November 3 joined by a second bird November 3	Williams Lake	JW, AR et al.
November 1	Masset	MH, PH
November 1	Ridley Island	<i>fide</i> RRW
November 24–26	Sicamous	BMc et al.
November 26–December 1 (female)	Lavington	PM et al.
December 1–April 5 (adult female)	Campbell R.	HA et al.
December 3–January 16 (male)	Blackie Spit	MPL et al.
December 3–28	Prince George	MPh et al.
December 9–April 8	Port Clements	AL, BL et al.
December 20 (different bird from early December)	Lavington	PJ
December 26 (male)	Head of Okanagan Lake	JoS, PeS

Dec. 20 CBC (*fide* MPH). This species normally winters far south of B.C.

A Say's Phoebe overwintering near Duncan was last observed Feb. 10 (JB, LB, m.ob.), the first winter record for Vancouver I. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet at Rose Spit Dec. 23 (MH, PH) provided the first record for Graham I. Northern Mockingbirds were reported in Richmond, Metchosin, Sechelt, Kaslo, and, most surprisingly, in Prince George on the Dec. 20 CBC (CA et al.). The bird resided in a downtown chimney and remained until at least Jan. 27 (m.ob.).

A few warblers lingered late into the winter season. A Wilson's Warbler at Iona I. Dec. 16 (RT) was particularly noteworthy. More unexpected was a Magnolia Warbler at Port Alberni Dec. 20 (CB, SM). Very rare w. of the Rockies, a male Com. Grackle was at the Douglas L. Ranch Jan. 10–11 (WCW et al.). The Yukon's first winter record for Red-winged Blackbird resulted from a single bird attending a Teslin feeder; it was not seen after Jan. 4 (AJ, MG).

Although much more frequently reported in recent years than prior to 1980, wintering Swamp Sparrows are still rare in the interior of B.C. Cecile et al. found this species at the head of Okanagan L. through much of the period, including three there Jan. 3. The Brambling invasion that started in late October continued into the winter. The table summarizes the observations.

First discovered in late November but not seen through most of the winter, a Purple Finch returned to a Whitehorse feeder Feb. 6–7, providing the first Yukon winter record for this species (HG). Eckert and Sinclair tallied 1827 Com. Redpolls along the South Klondike Hwy. between Whitehorse and Fraser Jan. 16.

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 van der Pol (HVP); Victoria, John Chandler (JC); Vancouver, Jack Bowling (JCB); Prince George & weather summaries, Larry Cowan (LC); Vancouver, Peter Hamel (PH); Queen Charlotte Is., Phil Ranson (PR); Cariboo, Richard Cannings (RJC); Okanagan, Michael Shepard (MGS); Southern Vancouver I., Steve Baillie (SJB); Nanaimo, Sandy McRuer (SM); Alberni Valley, Tony Greenfield (TG), Sunshine Coast.

Other Cited Observers: Al Cowan (AC), Ada Johnston (AJ), Adelia Lowrie (AL), Anna Roberts (AR), Boris Dobrowsky (DB), Brian Eccles (BE), Brian Lowrie (BL), Bob Murkett (BMu), Bob McVicar (BMc), Cathy Antoniazzi (CA), Chris Bibby (CB), Chris Charlesworth (CC), Carol Kulesha (CK), Carol McIntyre (CM), Dave Younger (DY), Eileen Chappel (EC), Ed Silken (ES), Evelyn Whiteside (EW), Allen Poynter (GAP), Gary Fletcher (GF), Guy Monty (GM), Heather Asplin (HA), Hue MacKenzie (HM), Jo Ann MacKenzie (JAM), Laurie Rockwell (ILR), Jim Barnstead (JBa), Jim Ibb (JI), Jim Sims (Jis), Joyce Sinclair (JoS), Jean Waite (JW), Lynn Barnstead (LB), Lloyd Freese (LF), Marc-Andre Beaucher (MAB), Margaret Garolitz (MG), Margo Hearne (MH), Martin McNicholl (MKM), Mitch Meredith (MME), Mark Phinney (MPh), Mary Peet-Leslie (MPL), Phil Jones (PJ), Pat McAllister (PM), Pamela Sinclair (PaS), Perry Sinclair (PeS), Reisa Latorra (RL), Rory Patterson (RP), Robin Weber (RRW), Rick Toochn (RT), Vicki Hansen (VH).

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