

Pen., a male near MP 38 on the Council Rd. 7 Jun (VENT) e. and inland of Nome was most unusual and away from normal coastal sites. Heidl found another singing **House Finch** in Ketchikan 11 Jun (†SCH), a local 2nd and the Region's 3rd ever.

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British Columbia–Yukon



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The summer season saw many species exhibiting range expansions, particularly northward and westward, among them Great Egret, Canyon Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Tennessee Warbler, Lazuli Bunting, and Blue Jay. Some species seemed to be displaced due to prairie drought conditions, e. g., Franklin's Gull and Swainson's Hawk. Other conditions may have prohibited breeding, thus accounting for the large concentration of Long-billed Curlews in the central interior. A healthy number of outstanding rarities included

Magnificent Frigatebird, British Columbia's first Whiskered Auklet, Sprague's Pipit, Dickcissel, and Great-tailed Grackle.

Abbreviations: B.C.F.O. (British Columbia Field Ornithologists), Chichester (Chichester Bird Sanctuary, Kelowna), C.I.P. (Cottonwood Island Park, P.G.), F.F.T.W. (Forests for the World, P.G.), F.S.J. (Fort St. James), P.G. (Prince George), Q.C.I. (Queen Charlotte Is.), R.P.B.O (Rocky Point Bird Observatory s. Vancouver I.), U.N.B.C. (University of Northern British Columbia), Whse. (Whitehorse, Yukon).

LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

The only interior report of Yellow-billed Loon

was an ad. 7 Jun (RS) on Ross L. near New Hazelton. Clark's Grebes returned to Salmon Arm, where one of 2 birds was paired with a Western Grebe 2 Jun (RyT) and remained through the period. A female **Magnificent Frigatebird** was sighted from a whale-watching boat out of Tofino 18 Jun (MW). A recently-fledged juv. American Bittern was brought in to P.G.'s Northern Raptor Preservation Society's bird hospital 18 Jul (ph. CM, RM) but unfortunately died a few days later. Great Egrets continue to occur with greater regularity in the s. third of the province, where they are seen annually. Sightings are most numerous for late Apr to mid-May, suggestive of spring overshoots, whereas post-breeding dispersal produces a scattering of sightings mainly from Aug–Dec. This summer, however, produced an unusual number of egrets and from a variety of locations. It should be interesting to see if this is indicative of a larger post-breeding dispersal for the coming fall season. Single birds were reported from Scout I., Williams L. 24 Jun+ (PR, m. ob.); Mt. Lehman, Abbotsford 30 Jun (LM); and Tsawwassen 2-8 Jul (CWr, PL et al.). Well n. of its usual range, a Black-crowned Night-Heron was seen in a field near Dunster 29 Jul (DA, MA) and furnished the most northerly record for the Region. A pair of Gadwall at Stokes Pt. 19 Jun on the Yukon's N. Coast (Arctic Ocean) was at the limit of the species's range (PJ). A raft of 6 ad. Black Scoters was on Eaglet L. 50 km ene. of P.G. 29 Jul (MA, DD, HD)—both an early date and a surprisingly large number.

Broad-winged Hawks are known to nest in the Peace R. area; however, summer sightings in the n.-cen. interior seem to suggest that they are more widespread. A pair at U.N.B.C. was seen sporadically through the period, but they managed to elude nest-seekers, so incontrovertible evidence of breeding in the area still

awaits us. One light-morph ad. was at Tudyah L., n. of McLeod L., 23 Jun (MP, KL). The pair of Swanson's Hawks first discovered in spring was found at the nest near Rolla 6 Jun (JF). If successful, this would be the first nesting in the ne part of the province. Near Trapp L. s. of Kamloops, a very late female Rough-legged Hawk was studied 17 Jun (RH). The Fraser/Chilcotin R. basin was surveyed for nesting raptors this summer, with four nests of Prairie Falcon and five nests of Golden Eagle being found (*vide* JH). All three ptarmigan species were seen at Mt. Victoria in the Dawson Range, Yukon 9 Jun: 4 Willow, 6 Rock, and 3 White-tailed (CE, AM). A female Rock Ptarmigan with 8 small young was seen on top of Mt McIntyre 2 Jul (HG, RH), a rare Whse. area breeding record.

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

Yellow Rails put on quite a show at the s. end of Swan L. in the Peace R. area, with 2–3 territorial males calling 19 Jun–4 Jul (JF, MPh, m. ob.) A Virginia Rail well n. and e. of its usual range at McQueen's Slough ne. of Dawson Creek was thought to be territorial 21 Jun (MPh) Following an unprecedented spring invasion of **Black-necked Stilts**, the last remaining individual was reported from Lesser Green L., in company with five nesting pairs of American Avocets 23 Jun (LG). On 3 Jun there were 21 active avocet nests at Alki L. n. of Kelowna (LG, RyT). At Beaver Ranch Flats (Guichon Ranch, n. of Nicola L.) 11 Jun, there were 7 avocets (WD), and by 18 Jun, 3 downy chicks were observed (RH). On 19 Jun, a 2nd nest was located (LR), both confirming nesting for the first time in this area in 10 years. Census work conducted 5–6 Jun (LG et al.) showed that avocets had abandoned the Little White L. colony and had dispersed to form four new colonies that in total contained 35 avocets. The territorial pair of Upland Sandpipers at Fort Nelson Airport endured a barrage of adoring birders 26 Jun–7 Jul (m. ob.). Possible distraction behavior was observed 7 Jul (BS, MB), although no young were seen. Other potential ne British Columbia nesting sites include Coal Creek Rd. e. of Kiskatinaw Park, where 4 were seen 27 Jun (JF), and Braden Rd. n. of Progress, where a single bird was seen 27 Jul (JF) Whimbrel are very rare migrants through the cen. interior, thus 6 in a field on Cranbrook Hill, P.G. 3 Jun (DL, CLL) was significant. A huge assemblage of 23 ad. Long-billed Curlews was on a field w. of McBride 14 Jun (ES), and the count there was up to 31 ads. 17 Jun (ES). This occurred at a time when ads. should be escorting young ones around in family groups, but the observer found them

surprisingly quiet and approachable, which seems to suggest that there had been a wide-spread curlew nesting failure in the Robson Valley. An ad. Ruff was discovered at Iona I. 11 Jul (RT0), one of few records for early Jul. Reports of Wilson's Phalarope from the Yukon included a pair at The Ndu L. 6 Jun (CE, AM), which provided an extension to the species's known range; 2 females at Judas Cr., Marsh L. 15 Jun (PJ); 7 at Swan L., n. of Whse. 12 Jun (HG, BSi); and 2 juvs. at the Whse. sewage lagoons 26–29 Jul (CE).

A subad. Long-tailed Jaeger was seen from shore at Clover Point, Victoria, where considered casual 9 Jul (†PL, vt. CWo). Perhaps due to the Prairie drought, Franklin's Gulls were unusually abundant in the Peace R. area, with 2000–3000 at Charlie L. Fort St. John 26 Jun (MTo, ST0) and another 1500 at the E.S.J. sewage lagoons on the same day (GM). At least one individual was displaced as far as Marsh L. 15 Jun (PJ), where a second-summer bird provided the 2nd Whse. area and 3rd Yukon record for the species. A **Black-headed Gull** became the 270th species to be recorded at R.P.B.O. 10 Jul (DA). At Christmas Island, in Salmon Arm, a local Ring-billed Gull counter reported that the number of nests reached 750 (TB); also at this location 17 Jun were 2 Caspian Terns (DGC), an ad. Herring Gull, and an ad. California Gull, the latter two not yet confirmed as breeders here. A second-summer Glaucous-winged Gull was discovered on Stuart L. near E.S.J. 11 Jun (MGS, RRa) and remained there through the 19th (ph. CA, NK), a long overdue addition to the local checklist area. Summer rarities at the Whse. landfill included a second-summer California Gull 21–22 Jun (CE), a first-summer Glaucous Gull 24–30 Jul (CE, LC), and an ad. Glaucous Gull 27–30 Jul (CE). Black-legged Kittiwakes, following their above-average showing this spring in nearshore waters, were seen more regularly throughout the summer as well, with up to 7 seen from R.P.B.O. 10 Jul (DA). A Forster's Tern at Brunson L. 30 Jun (*vide* PR) is only the 2nd reported occurrence of this species in the Cariboo. Rare along the lower mainland, Black Terns were well represented this summer, with 2 over the Reifel parking lot 13 Jun (JI) and a single at the outer ponds on Iona 23 Jun (DBa).

MURRELETS THROUGH PIPITS

Ancient Murrelets surprised observers in Tofino with numerous summer sightings: a pair of ads. were off Cleland I. 14 Jun (*vide* AD); 6 were in offshore waters 19 Jun (AD), among them a chick still covered in down, attended by parents and incapable of flight; a

dead juv, capable of flight was also discovered on the same day; another dead chick was brought to the dock in town with many of its flight feathers still in the pinfeather stage, and 3 were seen near Tofino 27 Jun (JW). One might conclude that Ancient Murrelets are nesting in closer proximity to Vancouver I than the Q.C.I.; however, this species does exhibit rapid postbreeding dispersal. Potentially the Region's first **Whiskered Auklet** was sighted 172 nmi w. of Tasu Sound, Moresby I., Q.C.I. 7 Jun (MF).

Following this winter's Northern Hawk Owl invasion, breeding was confirmed for the PG area 13 Jun (*vide* JB), and the nest at Becher Prairie, Riske Creek produced 4–5 juvs. 17 Jun (PR). A **White-throated Swift** was well away from its s. interior range when sighted over Oak St. in Vancouver 3 Jul (RT0), one of few records for the area. A Lewis's Woodpecker was near the n. edge of its range at McBride 11 Jun (*vide* ES); the closest nesting area is in the Thompson Valley. Very rare in the Peace R. area was a juv. Red-breasted Sapsucker s. of Pouce Coupe 31 Jul (JF). Our knowledge of the distribution of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in the n. was edged ever forward with 2 singing birds at Keno City, Yukon 9 Jun (CE); 3 were noted at their regular location on the Mt. McIntyre B.B.S. near Whse. 13 Jun (CE). Furnishing one of few records for the lower mainland was an Alder Flycatcher at Colony Farm 22 Jun (D'Ty). Least Flycatcher sightings are slowly on the increase in the lower mainland: one bird was at Grant Narrows R.P. 9 Jun–1 Jul (KE, CA1). A singing Hammond's Flycatcher at Ethel L. 7 Jun (CE) established a new c. Yukon location for this species. Blue Jays continue to expand their range in British Columbia, with a probable breeding pair in Kimberley 16 Jul (RGo) and a single bird well n. of usual range in Fort Nelson 26 Jun (JB). A staggering 3000 swallows—mostly Bank, but also Tree, Violet-green, and Cliff—were staging at the Whse sewage lagoons 26 Jul (CE). Two Northern Rough-winged Swallows, rare in the Yukon, were in the company of a group of Bank Swallows along the Yukon R. at Wolf Cr Campground 9 Jun (PJ). Dewdrop Ecological Reserve w. of Tranquille produced a **Canyon Wren** for the first local sighting in 33 years. This may well be the most northerly record ever. Confirmation of this sighting was made 21 Jun (MH, RH). A Gray-cheeked Thrush was found singing on Mt. McLearn, just inside the boundary of Muncho L. P.P. 28 Jun (B.C FO), which likely defines the ne. edge of the species's range in the province. Gray Catbirds are accidental in the Peace R. area, yet this summer singing males furnished the 3rd and 4th area

records: Clayhurst Crossing 8 Jun (JF) and McQueen's Slough 21 Jun (MPH). A report of a *Lanius* species 19 Jun (IA) at Pritchard, e. of Kamloops, was almost certainly a Loggerhead. Further expansion of the Northern Mockingbird's range included singles from Chetwynd golf course 28–29 Jun (SB, PS) and Colleymount on Francois L. 1 Jul (KW, CWa). The find of the season was a male **Sprague's Pipit** 26–30 Jun (MT, ST et al.) at the Fort Nelson Airport. The bird apparently acted like any other courting Sprague's, with alternating sessions of air and ground time. This constitutes one of very few records for the province and the first modern sighting away from Riske Cr.

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Recently Tennessee Warbler numbers have been increasing in the cen. interior, but this year there was an explosion. Singing males popped up all over the P.G. area from widely scattered locales. Likely the best indicator was the McLeod L. B.B.S. on 20 Jun, where numbers mushroomed to 11 singing males from the usual one or 2 (CA, JB). The increase in Tennessee Warblers was also noted along Rancheria Loop Road, near Upper Liard, Yukon 17 Jun (HG), where 15 were found. It would seem likely that some of these birds may find their way into the Okanagan this coming fall or perhaps even along the coast. Continuing the two late May sightings of **Chestnut-sided Warblers**, there were an additional 2 singing males, one along McKinney Rd. e. of Oliver 14–23 Jun (PH, RTo), the other along a power-line cut n. of Sechelt, Sunshine Coast 15 Jun–


mid-Jul (ph. CC, DBr, RWC). Townsend's Warblers were reported in low numbers from Whse., Teslin, Montana Mt., Dawson City, and Paint Mt. near Kluane L.; this species apparently has been increasing along the N. Klondike R. in recent years (GB). A singing male Black-throated Green Warbler was near Kleedo Creek, Mile 340 of the Alaska Highway 10 Jul (BS, MB). This species is apparently spreading slowly northward into the Fort Nelson Lowlands, likely via the e. foothills of the Rockies. A Blackpoll Warbler, a rare sight, was on Scout I., William's L. 2 Jun (TG). Also rare was an American Redstart along the nature dyke in Pitt Meadows 15–16 Jun (PC). American Redstarts continue to have a toe-hold in the Whse. area, with 2 at Huanka Cr. on the Atlin Rd. 17 Jun (PS) and one at Beaver Creek 7 Jun (MG). Three new locations of singing Ovenbirds in the P.G. area were detected: F.F.T.W. through the period (KF, m. ob.); 33 km s. of McLeod L. 20 Jun (CA, JB); and Crooked R. 100 km n. of P.G. 21–29 Jun (CMcG, JMcG). Yellow-breasted Chats are very rare in the lower mainland; one individual was in Pitt Meadows 10 Jun (RWO), and a pair was seen off and on 10–23 Jun (KR) at Colony Farm. If breeding can be confirmed, this would constitute only the 2nd nesting record from the s. coast.


Rose-breasted Grosbeaks continued to increase at widely scattered locations across the s. half of the province: a male visited a feeder at Florence L. near Victoria 12 Jun (*vide* DM); a female visited a feeder in P.G. 5 Jun (TG); and yet another was near Kaslo 13 Jun (LS). A Vesper Sparrow, very rare on the outer

coast, furnished the 2nd local record 2 Jun at the Long Beach Airport near Tofino (*vide* AD). In recent years, Lazuli Buntings are turning up in the cen. interior with regularity. A male attended a feeder in McBride 4–10 Jun (*vide* ES), another male was near Quesnel 5 Jun (AL), and a female turned up at Colleymount in mid-Jun (KW). A male Indigo Bunting was a very rare find in downtown Sechelt 5 Jun (AS). Furnishing the 7th documented record in the province, an ad. male **Dickcissel** visited a feeder at Francois L. 20–26 Jun (ph. KW, CWa). This would also constitute the most nw occurrence in the Region. A Clay-colored Sparrow singing at Wye L. in Watson L. 11 & 14 Jun provided a rare Yukon record (PJ). A singing White-throated Sparrow was noted right at the edge of its range on the Rancheria B.B.S. route 16 Jun (HG). A female Brewer's Blackbird, very rare in the Yukon, was reported by two independent observers in downtown Whse. 2 Jun (HH; NH). Kelowna's **Great-tailed Grackle** continued to be seen throughout the period (m. ob.).

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