

British Columbia & Yukon

of Terrace 13 Jan (VG), well n. of normal; it remained for two weeks. Many lakes, normally frozen during C.B.C. season, remained open; and thus waterfowl were up in number and diversity (Table 1). A Bewick's Swan was at the e. end of Nicomen I. 12 Jan (JV et al.).

RAPTORS THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Red-tailed Hawks lingered late in the n.-cen. interior, with the most notable being 2 at the P.G. airport 15 Dec (P.G.N.C.), the first on the local C.B.C. since 1989. An imm. dark-morph Harlan's Hawk, a Yukon winter first, was seen along the North Klondike Hwy. near Whse. 23-24 Dec (KO et al.). As noted in the fall, Rough-legged Hawk distribution was unusual; they not only arrived late, they stayed n. longer than usual, as evidenced by the record 11 on the P.G. C.B.C. 15 Dec (P.G.N.C.) and the 5 on the Fort St. James C.B.C. 4 Jan (m. ob.). Single imm. Golden Eagles, casual in winter in the Yukon, were in Whse. 24 Dec (BD), at the Tagish dump 3 Jan, and at the Takhini Hot Springs near Whse. 4 Feb (LC). An American Kestrel was very late at McBride 3 & 15 Dec (ES).

A Virginia Rail furnished a 2nd winter record for the Williams L. area 13 Jan (PR, AR). Sandhill Cranes were well out of place in the Kootenays, with one near Nakusp late Nov to mid-Dec (OH) and another at Slocan Park 22 Dec (GH). A Marbled Godwit found 16 Dec at Charlotte, Q.C.I. (BE) furnished a first winter record for the islands. Dunlin are very rare in the interior during winter. Two furnished a first winter record at Williams L.

4 Dec (KA), and Vernon had a single at Head of the Lake 13 Feb+ (BC et al.). The late-fall Red Phalarope mini-invasion of the s. coast continued into Dec: a conservative count of 25 off the Ogden Pt. Breakwater, Victoria 20 Dec (m. ob.); a single at the base of the Tsawwassen Jetty 15 Dec (ph. FB); and at Tofino, 8 on 15 Dec; 5 on 17 Dec; 8 on 28 Dec; and a single 2-5 Jan (AD, GB). The largest group was of 30 at a fish farm at Sulphur Pass in

early Jan, with a few remaining there to 29 Jan (JuB). A Wandering Tattler, very rare in winter, was in Victoria at Odgen Pt. 3 Dec+; this young bird challenged birders' knowledge of tattler identification.



It was very mild for the first half of the period for the whole Region and then progressively colder for the northern parts during the latter half, as Arctic air gradually worked its way in from the northeast. There were few coastal storms, as most tracked northward into Alaskan waters. As expected, the mild start resulted in new records of birds lingering farther north than usual, especially waterbirds, as many larger lakes remained open until mid-December, and raptors, as snowpacks were minimal right across the Region until the first snowstorm the third week of January.

Redpolls were conspicuous by their relative absence until after the northern freeze-up. This was a winter without any winter finch incursions, and there was no sign of a southward movement of owls. The mild weather resulted in five new winter records for the Yukon. Again this winter, Barn Swallows arrived in late winter in unprecedented numbers.

Abbreviations: P.G. (Prince George), P.G.N.C. (P.G. Naturalists Club); Q.C.I. (Queen Charlotte Is.), Whse. (Whitehorse, Yukon).

LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Yellow-billed Loons have been reported with increasing frequency in the interior: a single was on Osoyoos L. 23 Feb (CC, RJC, RC); one was on L. Laberge 12 Dec (BD, HG) for a first Yukon winter record. Pacific Loons remained late, with 2 on L. Laberge 1 Dec (BD et al.) for a first Yukon winter record. For the 3rd year in a row, an ad. Pied-billed Grebe was along the Crooked R., 100 km n. of P.G., 12 Jan (P.G.N.C.). An Eared Grebe, very rare in the s. interior in winter, was on Nicola L. 11 Jan (WW). A Great Egret was 60 km w.



This Lesser Black-backed Gull at Vernon, British Columbia 8 December 2002 to at least 15 February 2003 (here) furnished a second Okanagan record and a first Christmas Bird Count record for British Columbia. Photograph by Donald G. Cecile.

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GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

A Mew Gull, rare away from the coast, was at Nelson 25 Dec—1 Jan (EM, RWr). An ad. Herring Gull, a Yukon winter first, was on L. Laberge 1 Dec (BD, CE, HG). Iceland Gulls continue to be reported with increasing frequency. An ad. was at the landfill in Delta 22 Dec—12 Jan (ph. RTo), a first-basic bird there 22 Feb (JJ, RTo), while a second-basic bird was at Lost Lagoon, Vancouver 26 Dec (†TG). The Region's 6th and 7th records of Lesser Black-backed Gull included a first-winter bird in Vernon 8 Dec—15 Feb (ph., †DGC, m. ob.) and an ad. (possibly the same bird since winter 2000-2001) in Delta 8 Dec (†RTo, †MMe et al.) and 31 Jan (RTo, JF). An ad. Slaty-backed Gull was in Delta 5 Dec (†RTo). Yukon winter records of Glaucous Gull more than doubled: an ad. was on L. Laberge 1 Dec (BD, CE, HG), another ad. was in Whse. 31 Dec (CE), and an unaged bird was in Silver City 14-15 Jan (LH, JS) and possibly the same bird at the Destruc-

tion Bay dump 16 Jan (MF). Cassin's Auklets rarely wander to inshore waters, so finding an ad 15 Jan (ph. RB) swimming in the Fraser R. in Surrey was a surprise.

Rarely encountered this far n. in winter, a juv. Barn Owl was captured in Lumby 19 Dec (CM) and sent to a rehabilitation center. An Anna's Hummingbird survived in Smithers at an artificially-warmed feeder until 7 Feb (ph. GG); another flew over downtown P.G. 3 Jan (JB). Perhaps the earliest returning Rufous Hummingbird ever was along the Juan de Fuca Trail near Botanical Beach 8 Feb (MGS, CSh).

WOODPECKERS THROUGH FINCHES

Rarely encountered during winter in the Kootenays, a Lewis Woodpecker was in Salmo 12 Jan (DH). An imm. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was in Surrey 29 Dec (†RE, †JF), Vancouver's 8th record. Single Northern Shrikes, rare in winter in the Yukon, were at: Haines Junction 27 Dec (CD, LD),

Whse./Riverdale 6 Jan (AS), and Horse Cr., L. Laberge area 24 Jan—21 Feb (KO). American Crows were very late in Dawson Cr., where 69 remained 4 Jan (MP). Violet-green Swallows arrived in the lower mainland 2 Feb (RT), well ahead of schedule but amazingly *behind* Barn Swallows (Table 2)! Typically, Violet-greens arrive 40-50 days ahead of Barn Swallows. Even Cliff Swallows were 40 days ahead of schedule, with singles at Iona 29 Jan (RTo) and Burnaby L. 25 Feb (DP). Tree Swallows did not arrive until 23 Feb at Reifel (JI).

Rock Wrens are very rarely encountered in winter in the n. Okanagan, where one was present 15-16 Dec (GSD et al.) in Vernon. An astounding 149 American Dippers were tallied on the Lilloet C.B.C. (m. ob.). Very rare in winter in the Okanagan, a Yellow-rumped Warbler was in Kelowna 9-11 Jan (CC). An ad. male Hooded Warbler furnished the Region's 3rd record when discovered on the Duncan C.B.C. 28 Dec (MMG,

Table 1. Late waterfowl records in British Columbia and Yukon Territory, winter 2002-2003.

SPECIES	NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	OBSERVERS
Trumpeter Swan	13	3 Dec	Johnson's Crossing, YT	HG
	7	4-16 Dec	L. Laberge, YT	BD, HG
	1	9 Dec	Tagish, YT	HG
	12	10 Dec	Haines Junction, YT	LHo
	6	21-22 Dec	Lewes Dam, YT	HG, CE
Tundra Swan	3	16 Dec	L. Laberge, YT	HG
	3	4 Jan	Stuart L., Fort St. James	LL
Greater White-fronted Goose	1-2	7-27 Feb	Kelowna	LR et. al.
Snow Goose	1	6-11 Jan	Kelowna	BC et. al.
American Wigeon	3	14 Dec	McBride	ES
Mallard	16	4 Jan	Dawson Creek	MP
Blue-winged Teal	1	6 Dec	Osoyoos	DB
Northern Pintail	1	1 Dec	L. Laberge, YT	CE, HG
	1	14 Dec	McBride	ES
Lesser Scaup	up to 13	1-24 Dec	L. Laberge, YT	BD et. al.
	1	9-19 Jan	Carcross, YT	BD et. al.
	1	4 Jan	Fort St. James	JB, JAV
Ruddy Duck	3	11 Jan	Nicola L.	WW
Harlequin Duck	1	28 Dec	Smithers	RO et. al.
White-winged Scoter	1	14 Dec	Kelowna	CC et. al.
Long-tailed Duck	up to 3	1-24 Dec	L. Laberge, YT	BD, CE, HG
Bufflehead	up to 4	2 Dec - 28 Feb	Carcross, YT	BD, CE, HG
Barrow's Goldeneye	1	7-12 Dec	L. Laberge, YT	BD, HG
	1 (same?)	26 Dec - 23 Feb	Yukon R. Whse.	JH et. al.

SA Again this year, Barn Swallows staged a northward migration in late winter. There were 264 Barn Swallows reported, of minimally 102 different individuals, between 22 Dec and 26 Feb, with the vast majority of these birds seen from the lower mainland after mid-January. Typically, Barn Swallows arrive in mid-April, with the occasional few overwintering in the lower mainland. The past two winters, however, indicate that imm. birds in particular wander north from mid-January through February. What was different from last winter was not only the astounding number of birds involved but also that Cliff Swallows were included in the northward push and that 3 Barn Swallows furnished first winter records for the interior. Moreover, one of the interior Barn Swallows crossed the 51st parallel to reach Green L.!

Table 2. Summary of Barn Swallow observations in British Columbia, winter 2002-2003.

NUMBER	DATE	LOCATION	OBSERVER(S)
1	22-29 Dec	Tsawwassen	<i>fide</i> PC
1	12-13 Jan	Reifel	Jl
1	15 Jan	Reifel	Jl
3	16-17 Jan	Reifel	Jl
1	18-19 Jan	Reifel	Jl
3	21 Jan	Ucluelet	BSI, dagger
1	21 Jan	Clover Pt., Victoria	MGS
10	22-23 Jan	Reifel	Jl
10-12	24 Jan	Reifel	RT0, Jl et al.
4	24-25 Jan	Iona	<i>fide</i> RT0
1	25 Jan	Ucluelet	BSI
4	26 Jan	Reifel	Jl
2	27 Jan	Osoyoos	DB
22	28 Jan	Reifel	Jl
20-30	29 Jan	Reifel	RT0
16	31 Jan	Reifel	<i>fide</i> RT0
2	1 Feb	Reifel	BK
1	4 Feb	Long Beach, Tofino	AA
25	8-9 Feb	Reifel	Jl, McD
1	9-11 Feb	Green L.	DR, ph.
4	15 Feb	Sea Island	PC
6	17 Feb	Boundary Bay	RT0, DP
1	17 Feb	Campbell River	JF
18	18 Feb	Reifel	Jl
8	19 Feb	Reifel	MKM
7	25 Feb	Burnaby L.	DP
20-30	26 Feb	Serpentine Fen	CGi

RS); this striking bird remained in the area until 31 Dec (DM, DS). A male Black-throated Blue Warbler was near Cranbrook 11 Dec (RG) and furnished an 8th provincial record.

Single American Tree Sparrows, casual in winter in the Yukon, were in Whse. 27 Dec (HG) and on the Haines Junction

C.B.C. 28 Dec (WR). A Lincoln's Sparrow was near Kelowna 2 Jan (CC, CS) and provided one of few winter records for the Okanagan. An imm. White-crowned Sparrow, casual in winter in the Yukon, was at Pilot Mt. near Whse. through Feb (BM, m. ob.). All four Zonotrichia sparrows were found this winter in the Cariboo-

Chilcotin region, with a Golden-crowned Sparrow at Green L. 19 Dec (DR) the rarest of the lot. A White-throated Sparrow was also a rare find near Progress 21 Dec and 11 & 25 Jan (MP).

Casual in winter in the cen. interior, Western Meadowlarks were found at two northern locations this winter: Mackenzie 15 Dec to end of Jan (Lambies) and in a barn in the Kitsguel Valley n. of Smithers until the barn cat found it 14 Dec (MON, JON). Kelowna's Great-tailed Grackle continued to survive at its favorite shopping mall throughout the winter. Pine Grosbeaks, along with most winter finches, were not prevalent this winter; thus it is remarkable that 2 were seen near Tofino, where casual, 29 Dec (GB). Three female or imm. House Finches, casual in the Yukon, were at two Whse. downtown feeders 24 Dec+ (HG et al.). These finches managed to survive a -38° C cold spell. A single Pine Siskin was a rare find near Progress 20 Dec—4 Feb (MP).

Addendum: The Yukon's 4th record of Red-breasted Sapsucker, an ad., came from Whse./Hillcrest 21-22 Sep 2002 (LCA, RMA).

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