

The season's weather was variable: August was mostly hot and dry until the third week, when it turned wet; September was cool, often windy and wet; October started out wet and windy but ended cold and snowy; and November was milder and occasionally rainy on the coast and snowy inland. However, buried in the broad monthly descriptions were some notable weather events. A freak snowstorm in the Peace River Valley 15–16 September downed numerous trees and probably killed many migratory birds. The Polar Jet Stream's path, scraping the southern Alaskan shore on its way to British Columbia during the first half of October, brought storms but also a healthy invasion of "Sibes." Finally, a strong cold northerly flow straight from the Mackenzie Delta in mid-October apparently redirected many Prairie Flyway waterfowl migrants such as Tundra Swans toward the eastern parts of the province. Generally, passerines had a good summer, as evidenced by near-record totals banded at Vaseux and record-high numbers banded at Rocky Point Bird Observatory.

### LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

A Red-throated Loon was at Vaseux L. 12–13 Nov (DB et al.), a very rare s. interior record. Western Grebes, rarely reported from the Peace R. area, included singles on Big L., n. of Chetwynd, 26 Oct (MP) and Swan L. 4 Nov (MP). The province's first photographically documented Manx Shearwater and 4th record overall was of a bird near Victoria 8 Aug (ph. JJ et al.). An American White Pelican, very rare along the s. coast, landed near a private dock on Powell L., where it allowed people to feed and pet it 6 Sep (FS). The invasion of Brown Pelicans continued, with at least 16 birds reported, 11 from Carmanah Pt. on the w. coast of Vancouver I. 23 Oct (JE). Very rare on Vancouver I., a juv. Black-crowned Night-Heron was in Ucluelet 14–17 Aug (BSI et al.); very rare in the Okanagan, 4 circled Deadman's L. 19 Aug (DB). A *Plegadis* ibis, casual in the Region, was in the Queen Charlotte Is. 13–14 Oct (ph. BC, MC) for a first local record. Cattle Egrets staged their best invasion since the fall of 1992, with 68 reported and the most northerly near 115 Mile on 11 Nov (KD). The 3rd Okanagan record and first fall record of Green Heron came from Vaseux L. 3 Sep (DB). Many flocks of southbound Tundra Swans were reported e. of the Fraser R. during the cold snap in mid-Oct; many sizeable flocks of 75–100 followed the Robson Valley (RZ). Snow Geese were also reported more than usual in the cen. interior, with a new interior high count of 55 over the Quesnel airport 18 Oct (JB). Very rare in the interior, a single Brant at Vanderhoof 19 Sep (NK, MP) provided a first local record. A color-banded Brant seen in spring at Parksville had been banded in the Lena River Delta, Russia in Jul 2003—over

# British Columbia

5000 km away (GLM). An astounding total of 760 Turkey Vultures was recorded at Rocky Point B.O. 26 Sep (DA). A few Ospreys were very late on Vancouver I., with the latest at Tofino 27 Nov (RC). Prairie Falcons are very rare along the coast; most there are suspected of being escaped birds. One such bird, on Mandarte I. 8 Sep, was in a mistnet eating captured European Starlings but managed to free itself as the bander approached (KE).

### SHOREBIRDS THROUGH ALCIDS

An American Avocet made a rare appearance in Metchosin 8–11 Oct (JJ et al.), and a flock of 7 was record late in Salmon Arm 3–10 Oct (CC, TF et al.). The family of Black-necked Stilts at T'Kumloops Marsh included 3 juvs. capable of flight 22 Aug (RH)—a 2nd successful nesting in the province. The Salmon Arm mudflats, just a few km in length, produced 26 species of shorebirds this fall (Table 1).

Among the numerous yellowlegs present in Salmon Arm was a leucistic Lesser 20–28 Aug (ph. DGC et al.). A pair of juv. Long-billed Curlews, rare on the coast, strolled among the tourists at Chesterman Beach, Tofino 3–11 Aug (ph. AD et al.). Hudsonian Godwits, rare away from the Peace R. area, were reported seven times, with the most notable being a juv. at Robert L., Kelowna 29 Aug (RyT). A wonderful opportunity to study godwits occurred in Boundary Bay, as a trio of juvs.—one Bar-tailed, one Marbled, and one Hudsonian—was discovered 5 Sep (RTo). Bar-tailed Godwits are still rare in the Region, but 3 were reported from Boundary Bay, and another was at the Rocky Point B.O. 28–29 Aug (DA, JJ). An ad. Black Turnstone furnished a 5th interior record, and the first since 1979, in Salmon Arm 22 Aug (ph. DGC et al.). The province's 9th and 10th records of Little Stint involved single juvs. at Boundary Bay 11 Sep (†RTo) and Iona I. 14–15 Sep (†RF).

Above-average numbers of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers occurred this fall, with 16 juvs. reported; the only interior report came from Salmon Arm 18–24 Sep (DGC et al.). This fall migration involved at least 50 Buff-breasted Sandpipers. Nine found in Salmon Arm 25 Aug (DGC) tied the provincial high count but was soon outdone by coastal counts of 16 (all juvs.) at a turf farm in



### Donald G. Cecile

7995 Wilson-Jackson Road

Vernon, British Columbia V1B 3N5

(dcecile@telus.net)

Delta 24–31 Aug (ph. RTo et al.) and 15 at the Sandspit airport, Queen Charlotte I. 30 Aug (PH, MH). Eight reports of single Ruffs made a seasonal high; the only interior record was of a juv. near Prince George (a first local record) 2–4 Oct (CA, ph. JB et al.).

A Black-headed Gull, casual along the coast, joined the large flock of Bonaparte's Gulls in Active Pass 25 Oct (JAM). For the 4th consecutive year, a Lesser Black-backed Gull appeared in Vernon, although this is the first that could be a returning bird, an ad. seen 9, 12, & 26–30 Nov (ph., †DGC et al.). Wayward young Ancient Murrelets

Table 1. Record-high counts of shorebirds at Salmon Arm, British Columbia.

Species	Count	Date	Observer(s)
Black-bellied Plover	28	19 Sep	CC, RyT
American Avocet	7	10 Oct	CC, TF et al.
Greater Yellowlegs	163	20 Aug	DGC
Solitary Sandpiper	18	20 Aug	DGC
Spotted Sandpiper	41	20 Aug	DGC
Upland Sandpiper	2	20–21 Aug	DGC et al.
Semipalmated Sandpiper	45	28 Aug	DGC
Baird's Sandpiper	260	22 Aug	DGC
Stilt Sandpiper	48	25–28 Aug	DGC
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	9	25 Aug	DGC
Short-billed Dowitcher	8	29 Aug	CC, CoC
Long-billed Dowitcher	134	18 Sep	DGC



This Manx Shearwater, the first photographically documented in British Columbia, was in the Juan de Fuca Strait 8 August 2004. Photograph by Jukka Jantunen.

were discovered in the interior at Salmon Arm 1 Aug (ph. SP) and along the s. shore of Quesnel L. 5 Sep (†WCR). A pair of ad. Xantus's Murrelets furnished the 6th provincial record from offshore waters off Tofino 25 Sep (†AD).

### OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

When Snowy Owls began to arrive at Iona I. on 30 Oct (PC), it was hoped that an invasion might follow, but numbers increased only to 4 by 4 Nov (m.ob.). Northern Hawk Owls were noted moving southward, with a single bird in Kelowna, in the Okanagan Mountain Park fire burn area 31 Oct (MS), and at least 5 from the Cariboo–Chilcotin, the earliest being a single at 139 Mile 24 Oct (PR, KA). Accidental in the Lower Mainland, an ad. Boreal Owl was picked up alive after a collision with a window in Tsawwassen 3 Oct (*vide* CCI). The province's 7th record of White-winged Dove came from Rocky Point B.O. 7 Oct (†GLM, PG). A White-throated Swift, in a small flock of Black Swifts, surprised observers at Englishman R. estuary 11 Sep (†GLM, BD), for one of very few coastal records. A Northern Rough-winged Swallow was exceptionally late at Reifel Refuge 23 Nov (JI). Bank Swallows, rare on Vancouver I., were reported from Rocky Point B.O. 9 & 30 Aug (DA) and in Courtenay 11 Sep (JF). The Region's 7th Western Scrub-Jay, initially found in Squamish 23 Jun, was seen occasionally through 27 Nov (ph. GrD, MaD). Casual in the Lower Mainland, an imm. Ash-throated Flycatcher was in Delta 12 Oct–15 Nov (CG, MT et al.).

Chickadees of at least three species were on the move. One hundred Black-capped Chickadees were tallied in the Osoyoos Oxbows 26 Nov (DB), while Mountain Chickadees staged an invasion into the Lower Mainland, with singles at South Surrey 9 Oct (RTo) and Langley 16 Oct (DTy) and record-high numbers up to 20 at Reifel Refuge 2–27 Oct (JI et al.); a single bird was at Tumbler Ridge in the Peace R. area (where rare) 20 Nov (ph. CH). A Chestnut-backed Chickadee, recaptured 18 Sep at the Rocky

Point B.O., became the oldest on record: 8 years and 3 months old, with its original capture there 2 Aug 1997 (DA). Chestnut-backed Chickadees were outside of usual range in Princeton 11 Nov, with 9 birds at three feeders there (*vide* RJC). Rock Wrens continue to appear on Vancouver I., where rare, with a single at McMicking Pt., Oak Bay 2–22 Oct (m.ob.). A Sage Thrasher, rare in the province and accidental along the s. coast, was at Brunswick Pt. 19 Nov (ph. GP). The province's 2nd but first photographically documented Gray Wagtail was an imm. at Carmanah Pt., on the w. coast of Vancouver I. 26 Oct (ph. JE, JaE). A Sky Lark on the outer coast at Jordan River 28 Oct (RS, ph. TA) generated some discussion as to whether it was of the Asian race or a wanderer from the small surviving population on nearby Victoria. A Warbling Vireo was very late in Salmon Arm 25 Sep (DGC, CC).

Warblers of many species were found w. and s. of typical range this fall: a Chestnut-sided Warbler was near the U.S. border along Chopaka Rd. 2 Sep (DTy); a Magnolia Warbler, a Blackpoll Warbler, and a Black-



This adult Black Turnstone, a coastal species, surprised observers at Salmon Arm, British Columbia 22 August 2004: it has been nearly 30 years since one has been found in the interior of the province. Photograph by Donald G. Cecile.

and-white Warbler were banded at Vaseux L. 3 Sep (TH, RCa); another Magnolia Warbler was at Salmon Arm 3 Oct (RyT, CC); 2 Cape May Warblers were at William's Lake 23 Oct, with one remaining through 30 Oct (PR); an imm. male Blackburnian Warbler, the region's 9th record, was at Amphitrite Pt., Ucluelet 22 Sep (†RTo); a Palm Warbler was at Osoyoos 6 Oct (DB); another Blackpoll Warbler was at Reifel Refuge 19 Sep (JF, RTo); 6 American Redstarts produced a new Vancouver area high count in Queen Elizabeth Park 29 Aug (LJ); an imm. Ovenbird was at Aldergrove 21 Sep (ph. JD, SD); and a late Wilson's Warbler was at Tofino 11–25 Nov (AD). A late Yellow-breasted Chat was banded at Vaseux 19 Sep (TH).

A Western Tanager was record late at Salmon Arm 3 Oct (DGC). A Dickcissel, discovered in the bulb fields of cen. Saanich 13 Oct (BG et al.), furnished a 14th Regional record. Vancouver's 2nd Nov record of Chip-

ping Sparrow came from Brunswick Pt. 12 Nov (JV). A Lark Sparrow, accidental on the coast, was at Parksville 23 Nov (JH et al.)—in the same location as one two years prior! A Grasshopper Sparrow surprised observers at Whiffin Spit in Sooke 21–25 Nov (TP, †JG). Lapland Longspurs were unusually prevalent on the Queen Charlotte Is., with an astounding count for a coastal area of 354 at Masset 13–14 Oct (MH, PH). A Bobolink, accidental in fall in the Lower Mainland, was at Sea I. along the airport fence 11 Sep (MKM), and a record-late bird was heard calling overhead at Salmon Arm 18 Sep (DGC). A Regional high count of 48 Common Grackles was established at a feeder in Arras 28 Aug (MP), with the last noted there 24 Oct (MP). A species that usually departs the interior in Aug, a late Bullock's Oriole was at Tofino 30 Oct (AD).

**Contributors** (subregional editors in bold-face): David Allinson, Kris Andrews, Cathy Antoniazzi, Ted Ardley, **Jack Bowling** (Prince George, weather summary), Doug Brown, Peter Candido, **Richard J. Cannings** (South Okanagan), Russell Cannings, **Chris Charlesworth** (Kelowna), Connor Charlesworth, Brian Charman, Margaret Charman, Colin Clasen, Ralph Crombie, Grant Danielson, Marcie Danielson, **Gary S. Davidson** (Kootenays), Ken Day, Bill Diamond, John Dorsey, Shirley Dorsey, **Adrian Dorst** (Tofino-Ucluelet), Kyle Elliot, Janet Etzkorn, Jerry Etzkorn, Jamie Fenneman, Michael Force, Trevor Forder, Roger Foxall, Bryan Gates, Jeremy Gatten, Pierre Geoffray, Carlo Giovanelli, **Peter Hamel** (Queen Charlotte Is.), Jack Hammonds, Margo Hearne, Charles Helm, Rick Howie, Todd Hunter, John Ireland, Jukka Jantunen, Len Jellicoe, John Kalman, Nancy Krueger, **Kevin Louth** (Vancouver), Jo Ann MacKenzie, Martin K. McNichol, **Guy L. Monty** (cen. Vancouver I.), Sarah Petznick, **Mark Phinney** (Peace River), Guy Piccavance, Tom Plath, Mireille Poulin, **Phil Ranson** (Cariboo), Will C. Russell, Rick Schortinghuis, Brian Slater, Fiona Southworth, Mike Tabak, **Rick Toochin** (Vancouver), Danny Tyson, John Vooyo, Rick Zammuto. 🌟



This young Ancient Murrelet, one of two discovered in inland provincial waters this fall, was captured and later released at Salmon Arm, British Columbia 1 August 2004. Photograph by Sarah Petznick.