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March was cool, wet and often windy throughout. April dried out and warmed up a bit. But the weather never really showed promise of the summer to come until the last ten days of May, when hotter, dry weather prevailed. With wet and windy conditions prevailing, a good variety of interior birds was found along the coast, with the outer coast in particular capturing many vagrants.

## GEESE THROUGH SHOREBIRDS

Ross's Geese are very rare in the s. interior but this spring were found at a number of locations: on the early side, a single was in Kamloops 18 Mar (*fide* RH); another was between Pentiction and Summerland 21 Mar–4 Apr (ph. LN et al.); one was in Quesnel 25 Mar (*fide* PR); one was in Nakusp 19 Apr (GSD); one was seen in a flock of Canada Geese over Okanagan Falls 21 Apr (CC); and most remarkable was the report of a flock of 18 near Vernon 3 May (*fide* RJC). An astonishing number of Trumpeter Swans was seen in a field near Vanderhoof, where 900 were counted 24 Mar (CA), nearly doubling the previous high count for the interior. Rare along the coast, Eurasian Teal were found in Mar: in Courtenay 1 Mar (RHi), Maplewood 3–16 Mar (RL), and Victoria 13 Mar (MB). The only Tufted Duck reported was a male seen from the Iona s. jetty 31 Mar (MKM). Casual in the Region, a second-summer male Steller's Eider was found near Gordon's Beach, s. Vancouver I. 26 May (ph. RTo, LH); this bird furnishes the 8th Regional record.

Arctic Loons have long been suspected of frequenting coastal waters, and there are now five reports spanning the past eight years. This spring, an alternate-plumaged ad. was well described with both Pacific and Common Loons

nearby for comparison near Gordon's Beach, s. Vancouver I. 20 May (ph. RTo, LH). The Kootenays experienced a good migration of Red-necked Grebes, with a large aggregation of 58 birds on Arrow L., Nakusp 19 Apr (GSD). Very rare on the coast, a Clark's Grebe was at Jordan R. 15 Apr (ph. RTo, LH et al.). American White Pelicans arrived early on Williams L., with one there 24 Mar (ph. CA), and one spent several weeks on Quamichan L., confirmed 12–14 May (*fide* DM), for a first local record. A tantalizing description of a possible Masked Booby was received, having been seen briefly in flight in Parksville 23 May (†RT, NR); there are no confirmed records for the province.

Very rare along the coast, particularly in spring, a Swainson's Hawk was seen heading northward over Martindale Flats, Victoria 11 May (CSa). A Richardson's Merlin, the prairie subspecies, was seen at Okanagan Lake P.P. near Summerland 21 Apr (RyT). Adding to the few sightings of the past decade in the cen. interior, a Whooping Crane was described from the n. shore of François L, as it flew at a height of 50 m, heading westward 16 May (†KW). Black-necked Stilts made their near-annual pilgrimage into the s. interior: 12 in the Kootenays at Wasa 7 Apr (JM); 5 at T'Kumlups Pond, Kamloops 9–30 Apr (PH, DW, RH), where they were successful nesters two years ago; 7 on Robert L., Kelowna 29 Apr (RC); 5 n. of Osoyoos 9 May (MB); and the last of the spring were 2 at Osoyoos L. 16 May (CC et al.). Rare spring transients in the Kootenays, American Avocets numbered 8 at Elizabeth L., Cranbrook 22 Apr (GR) and one at Burton 15 May (GSD). Greater Yellowlegs continue to push the early arrival envelope, with a record-setting arrival in Tofino 14 Mar (AD, RC); by the usual average arrival date, 26 birds were present 30 Mar (AD, RC). A single Spotted Sandpiper was record early in Oliver, s. Okanagan 6 Apr (DB). Whimbrel is rare in the interior, yet 2 were found this spring: one at Roundup L. in the Cariboo 12 May (ph. PR) and one on the Stump Lake Ranch near Kamloops 14 May (RH). Long-billed Curlews, a grassland species of concern, were found in very good

numbers in the cen. interior: 23 near Vanderhoof 18 Apr (SL) and 26 near Shelly 16 Apr (SL). Very rare in the interior, a Marbled Godwit was at Cranbrook 12 May (KY). Rare along the coast, a Ruff was at Reifel 10 May (JI), and another was at Grice Bay, Tofino 22–23 Apr (†JR, MC).

## GULLS THROUGH THRASHERS

As gull numbers increased in the cen. interior this spring, two rarities were picked out of the flocks in Prince George: a Glaucous-winged Gull was at Cottonwood Island Park 18 Apr (NH et al.); and a Glaucous Gull was there 19 Apr (NH et al.). Both furnished 2nd records for the local checklist area. Among the thousands of gulls feeding on herring roe, an ad. Slaty-backed Gull was located in Qualicum Bay, mid-Vancouver I. 13–15 Mar (AM, RS, JS). Very rarely seen from shore, a basic-plumaged Thick-billed Murre was off Gordon's Beach 20 May (LH, †RTo). Also rather cooperative from shore were single Horned Puffins: off Amphitrite Pt., Ucluelet 15–25 Mar (MT, AF); off Botanical Beach, Port Ren-



This adult male Costa's Hummingbird was a surprise find at Jordan River, on the southwestern coast of Vancouver Island, 7 April 2007. Photograph by Rick Toochin.

frew 27 May (†RTo, LH); and off the s. tip of the Queen Charlotte Is. 22 May (BW, RB).

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue their expansion in the s. interior and along the s. coast. The most significant sighting this season came from Carmanah Point Lightstation,



Normally restricted in British Columbia to the very dry southern interior, a few Sage Thrashers wandered to the coast, such as this individual at Nanaimo River Estuary 14 (here) and 15 April 2007. Photograph by Guy L. Monty.

a well-known vagrant trap on the w. coast of Vancouver I. 16 May (JE). Casual in the province, a male Costa's Hummingbird was heard singing and seen performing territorial flights at Jordan R. on the sw. coast of Vancouver I. 7 Apr (ph. RTo). Another hummingbird rarity was also found at Jordan R., a male Calliope Hummingbird, normally destined for the dry s. interior; it too was a one-day wonder 15 Apr (†RTo). Other interior birds found along the coast include: a Say's Phoebe in Sooke 24 Mar (RTo) and another at Maplewood 6 Apr (MW); and single Western Kingbirds on Mt. Douglas, Victoria 21 Apr (MMG) and in Duncan 2 May (DM).

Very rare in the province, a Loggerhead Shrike was near Knutsford 21 May (ph. GG). Very rare in the w. Kootenays, except the extreme s., a Black-billed Magpie was at Kaslo 27 Mar (DP). Sage Thrashers are very sparsely scattered in the sagebrush habitats of the extreme s. interior, yet remarkably, 2 were found on the coast: one was in North Vancouver 5 Apr (RL), and another was at the Nanaimo River Estuary 14-15 Apr (ph. GLM et al.). The latter furnished a 5th record for Vancouver I., with all previous records occurring in May.

## WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Previously accidental but now annual over the past six years, a Northern Parula was

found singing in s. Surrey 30 May (†CG, ph. PC et al.), falling well within the usual late May-early Jun window for e. passerines. A Chestnut-sided Warbler, however, did not follow the rules of vagrancy, arriving extremely early in Jordan River 1 May (RTo). A Cape May Warbler was a very good find at Tumbler Ridge 26 May (GLM, BSc). Very rare in the Region, a male Hermit Warbler was found within a flock of Townsend's Warblers at Jordan River 21 Apr (†RTo); even more shocking was the discovery of a pair of Hermit Warblers in Sooke Mountain Park 12 May (†RTo, CI). Very rare in the Lower Mainland, a Black-and-white Warbler was found scaling the local Alder and Cottonwoods at Maplewood 21 May (RL). A Brewer's Sparrow was unusual at Wilson Cr., Sunshine Coast 22-23 Apr (AS). Casual in the province, single Black-throated Sparrows were found along the Grant Narrows Nature Trail, Pitt Lake 17-26 May (m.ob., ph. LJ, KL) and along the Nighthawk border w. of Osoyoos 24 May (JG). Also casual in the province and well out of habitat and range, a Sage Sparrow was at Iona I. 14 Mar (†TP), just 75 m from the site of the previous Iona record. This species had not been recorded in the province since Apr 2000. The only report of Harris's Sparrow came from Alaksen N.W.R. 24 May (PD).

Black-headed Grosbeaks rarely stray n. of the Okanagan Valley into the Cariboo, but

one such male was found singing near Milburn L. 11 May (fide PR). Lazuli Buntings were again recorded on the coast in small numbers, the most out of place being a female seen at Carmanah Point Lightstation 25 May (JE) and a male near Long Beach 26 May (GB). Astonishingly early (especially considering the latitude) and setting a record-early arrival date for the province, a male and 2 female Bobolinks were well described visiting a feeder in Quesnel 11-12 May (VW). The only report of Common Grackle away from the Peace R. area involved a single in Tofino 25 May (AD) at the exact location where one was discovered last year. The Bullock's Oriole that wintered just n. of Qualicum Beach returned to the feeder after a 54-day absence 21 Mar-19 Apr (CB). Very rare in the s. interior, a pair of Purple Finches was on Anarchist Mt. 26 May (JG, RS). A diligent observer picked out a Hoary Redpoll from a flock of 400 Commons in Prince George 31 Mar (SL), and 2 were at a feeder in the same area 1 Apr (ph. NH et al.). After a long absence, Pine Siskins returned to the Kootenays in mid-Apr (GSD) and to the Okanagan 24 Mar (DGC). Accidental in the province, a green-backed male Lesser Goldfinch was well described from Lardeau 6 May (MJ); there are only four confirmed records of this species, the most recent from Princeton in May 1999.

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