

Marshnotes®



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY
FALL 2021**

BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

Managers of the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary Since 1963

dedicated to the conservation and study of migratory waterfowl

Marshnotes:

Editor: Kathleen Fry

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Submissions, articles, photographs and letters for publication may be sent to the above email and postal addresses marked for attention of Marshnotes Editor. Please include your telephone number or email and the Editor will contact you.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF MARSHNOTES

October 15th, 2021



Planning a visit? Remember to visit our website to book your visit, but also check out our Twitter account @ReifelSanctuary to see if anything notable has been seen.

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Hours of Operation:	9:00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. every day except Mondays. (Closed Mondays) Reservations are required for visits. The Sanctuary is wheelchair accessible.
Admission: Members:	Free
Non-Members:	Adults: \$5 Children (2-14 yrs) and Seniors (60 years +): \$3
School Groups:	Special discounts available; pre-booking is required.

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Notices

Ladner Christmas Bird Count December 19th.

At the end of the year, these annual bird counts are scheduled across North America to track trends in bird species. Details for area leaders and how to participate will soon be posted for the Ladner, Vancouver, and Surrey-White Rock counts. Check the Birds Canada website www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count/ later this month.

Attention Program Leaders

If you are bringing a large group such as a school class or birding group, contact us a couple of weeks ahead of time to discuss your needs. If you qualify, we can schedule your group and make arrangements outside of the usual on-line booking system for your participants. They just need to check in under the name of the group booking. Contact us for more information at 604-946-6980.

About Our Covers

Front Cover: Black-necked Stilt

© Jim Martin

Back Cover: American Wigeon

© Ted Gough

Editor's Note:

Please refer to the location map to the right to locate place names used in the Marshnotes articles.

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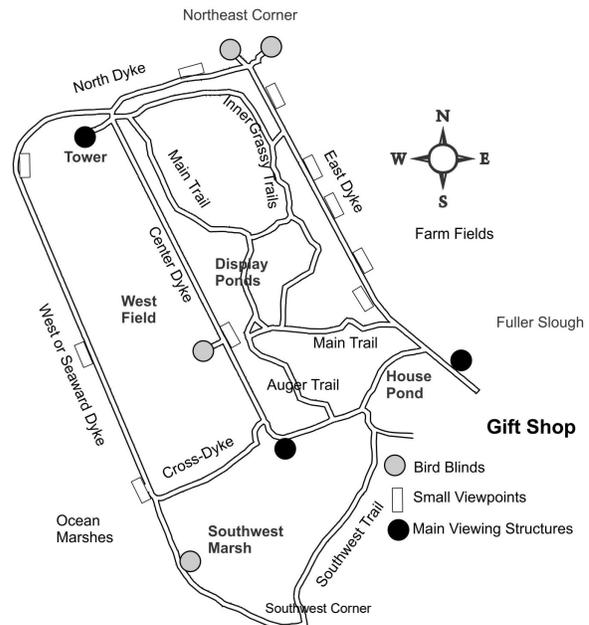
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2022 Calendars Are Here!

We are pleased to announce that our 18th annual calendar is now for sale at the Gift Shop just in time for Christmas. Many thanks to all of our members who contributed photographs for this project.



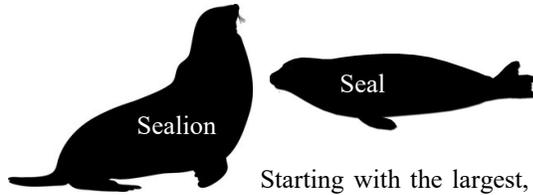
Sanctuary Locations Map



Kathleen Fry
Kathleen Fry
Varri Raffan
Varri Raffan

The Sanctuary's Mammals

The mammals in this article are all documented to occur in this area, and visitors often have many questions about them, so we offer this summary.



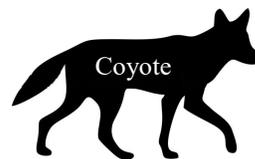
Starting with the largest, there are three species of Pinnipeds (large marine mammals with flippers) that can be seen in local offshore waters, but not in our ponds. Both Steller's Sealions (*Eumatopia jubatus*) and California Sealions (*Zalophus californianus*) are present at the mouth of the Fraser River in April and May, honing in on salmon and eulachon fish runs. Although they are not actually seen in the Sanctuary, they often haul out along shoreline area in social groups in the Ladner area and along the Steveston jetty off of Richmond. Their hoarse barking calls can be heard from East Dyke or at our tower from a distance of many kilometers.

Harbour Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) are much smaller, and can be seen in closer to the dykes at high tides. They have their pups out on offshore sandbars in mid-summer and their sausage-shaped bodies can sometimes be seen out there from the tower.



There are two members of the Mustelidae or Weasel family here, and they are often mistaken for one another. Both are semi-aquatic and use underground dens. River Otters (*Lontra canadensis*) are present all year in the Fraser River estuary. These large sleek animals have short legs and webbed feet and a tail that is quite wide at its base, tapering out to a point at the end. When present, they are very noticeable in the Sanctuary, as they scare most waterfowl from the ponds even if they are preying on slow-moving fish such as Prickly Sculpins. In winter, we see and hear them swimming around Carp as ice begins to form on the slough along the driveway. Family groups explore the ponds in mid-summer once young are weaned and can eat on their own. In the fall and winter, social groups of adults and families can visit the ponds and sloughs for a few weeks, and we sometimes find communal latrines ("toilet areas with scats, urine and other scent markers") as their late winter mating season approaches.

American Mink (*Neogale vison*) are smaller than otters and are abundant in the Sanctuary year-round. These small cat-sized animals have short furred tails of a consistent width down their length. Mink are equally fast on land or in water when looking for fish and birds to eat, and have discrete underground burrows near the water. Along with Racoons, they significantly impact waterfowl during nesting season. They can climb trees to enter Wood Duck boxes for eggs (or hens), they eat eggs from duck nests and can kill waterfowl ranging from ducklings to adult Canada Geese. We see and hear them close at hand in late May and June during mating season, as the floor space under the Gift Shop seems to be a place for their romantic interludes. Key driftwood logs on the foreshore also seem to be community marking spots for them. Earlier this year we were able to capture some interesting nocturnal scent marking behaviour at one site using a motion-sensitive wildlife trail camera. The video can be viewed on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/F7r-ykjsPPo>.



Coyotes (*Canis Latrans*) are in the Canidae family along with wolves and foxes. Although they visit some Sanctuary trails at night and leave behind scats, they are rarely seen during the day when visitors are here. When Snow Geese are present in winter, coyotes are one of their main predators, skulking along field edges and creeping up on the flocks. We mainly see them at low tide in the offshore marshes and in overgrown grassy areas hunting for voles and other rodents the rest of the year.

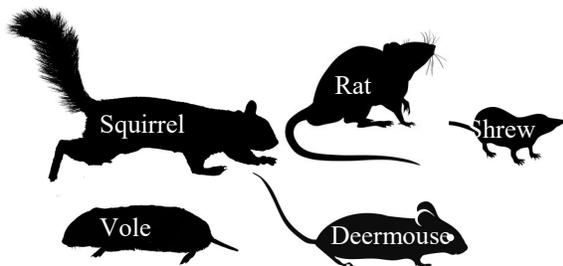


Racoons (*Procyon lotor*) are present all year here and have unmistakable black mask markings on their faces. In spring, they search all the shorelines of the Sanctuary for duck and goose nests, and eat any eggs they find in the process. They are omnivorous, though and also eat many berries and other foods such as invertebrates. Racoons have occupied at least 2 of the Barn Owl nest boxes off and on, as apparently these make good dens if they can not find a more natural site like a hollow tree. Young Raccoon kits are mobile and can leave the den by late June, and we often then find family groups up in some of the cherry trees near the entrance or exploring other easily accessed foods. Throughout the fall and winter, females still have their young with them, but these are encouraged to leave in early spring in favour of a new litter, so we sometimes see these older kits looking for new homes or fighting to gain territories.

All of the previous animals are potential predators of birds, but the following animals are Rodents and they generally are more hazardous to the plants of the Sanctuary and the more chewable parts of buildings and other structures.



Our larger rodents are Beavers (*Castor canadensis*) and Muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*). In the water, these can sometimes be mistaken for one another, although beavers are a much larger animal and have a distinctive flat rounded tail. Beavers are resident here, and you can see where they have cut down trees and eaten the smaller branches, bark and buds along some of our trails. They tend not to build noticeable lodges here, opting instead to create homes in the banks of the dykes close to water level. In fall, they get very busy collecting their winter food supply which they cache for eating later. There is an old dam along the Inner Grassy Trail, but mostly they manipulate water levels by plugging the water control structures when they disagree with our planned water levels. Muskrats are much smaller and have a distinctive long rat-like tail. They forage on smaller plant material such as marsh plants and grasses. Their dens are underground burrows along the shoreline, and they are sometimes predated by Mink, who then take over their dens.



Other Sanctuary rodents include the following:

- Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
- Norway Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)
- Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*)
- Townsend's Vole (*Microtus townsendii*)
- White-footed Deermouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
- Western Jumping Mouse (*Zapus princeps*)
- Vagrant Shrew (*Sorex vagrans*)

All of these rodents rely primarily on fruits, seeds, berries, grasses, and invertebrates found at ground level, but can be a problem because of their tendency to chew things like walls, nest box holes, and even plastic containers to get at enticing foods. Eastern Grey Squirrels come in two colour phases, greyish and

black but are all the same non-native species. They make winter nests called "leys", but can also take over wooden nest boxes. They are abundant here. Squirrels and the two rat species are responsible for most of the wildlife damage to wood structures on site. Townsend's Voles and White-footed Deermice are probably the main foods of local hawks, owls, herons, cranes, coyotes and mink, as they are abundant and their tunnels are only shallowly buried in grassy areas. Western Jumping Mice (not illustrated) are seldom seen, but Vagrant Shrew families are sometimes seen on trails such as the East Dyke in summer. Shrews have a distinctive pointed head shape, and focus on earthworms, spiders, and small invertebrates for their diet.



There are also three species of bats in the area but visitors and staff rarely see them, as they become active from sunset onwards into the night. We find these small insectivores roosting in odd places like in the split rail fence railings, hanging on a building next to a Barn Swallow nest, or in a small place between boards in our lumber pile. Not being experts on their identification, we have assumed they may be the Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), but Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) and Yuma Myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*) are also in this area. This summer, at least one species made good use of the bat box at the front of the Warming Hut, as there were bat droppings on the deck in late summer.

Bats hibernate, then emerge in the spring and spend the summer constantly foraging. In the case of female bats, they need to eat enough food to nurse their young (called "pups") during the summer. Fall is mating season, but also a season to build up their energy reserves for the winter hibernation. These nocturnal animals all have secret lives!

Mammals can be interesting diversions if you have come for a visit to mainly watch the birds. We ask all visitors, though, not to feed any of these species, and just enjoy taking photographs. They have sharp teeth, and you may also cause some harmful scenarios where animals you fed then approach other visitors. Given the scenario this year at Stanley Park, we do not want to travel that road.

Text: Kathleen Fry, R. P. Bio.,
Sanctuary Manager

(Clipart images are from various free website sources)

Manager's Report

July was a very hot and dry month. Temperatures were in the mid 20^s all month, rising to 30.1 C on the 30th. This month we doubled the amount of available daily reservation spots to help reduce the competitive scramble for spots. You still need to go on line early to book for weekends, but for the most part, weekdays can be booked up until 3 pm the day before.

In August, there were a few days of rain, but then a couple of extremely hot (32.5 C!) days on the 12th and 13th, then finally cooler days for the last half of the month. August is a particularly good month for detailed shorebird watching,. Time to try identify Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers and to look for Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers and the Phalaropes! At this time of year, species such as the Barn Swallow and Purple Martins are finally fledging the last clutches of the summer.

September was wetter than usual this year, with rain on half of the days and a few periods of high winds. Mushrooms are very showy this year, and a flurry of warblers and shorebirds has now mainly passed heading southwards. The very striking Black-necked Stilt drew many birdwatchers from the 9th onwards for 11 days. This species has not been seen in the Sanctuary since 1987.

The Sandhill Crane family have kept us busy as they explored the Sanctuary. From July 17th onwards they caused some concern because of their seeming desire to tour the parking lot with their young colt, but it turns out they wanted to dig up the juicy grass of the septic hill and picnic area lawn for worms. For the last half of July and into August the parent birds chased off "Louie" their 2018 offspring, who seemed to want to visit the Sanctuary and/or the family group with a couple of other cranes. He was last evicted on August 22nd, and then the family focused on flying lessons for young "Evan". We do not know the gender, but this is the name used so far for this young bird.. Later on in the fall, when its voice changes, we will find out if it is a boy or girl. By August 28th "Evan" mastered fairly lengthy elevated flights over the Sanctuary, so the crane family began exploring nearby farm fields. They were sometimes absent during the day for a few weeks in early September, as they were off with other local foraging flocks in nearby fields. Eventually they joined a large flock of Sandhills in East Delta in late September and early October.

Large gatherings of Sandhill Cranes in Delta start in early September. When corn, barley and potatoes are harvested, remnant crops left in the fields provide easy food for cranes, as well as geese and ducks. A

Exiting Safely At The Gate

Please slow down for the speedbumps just before the gate and stop at the Stop sign. We installed these to ensure safe exits.

Stop even if the gate is open. It is a Stop sign.

Gates are open during arrival times, but are closed the rest of the day. A sensor in the road opens them to allow a vehicle to exit. The sensor is right at the speed-bump and Stop sign, so stop there to make it work. Stay in place until the gate opens, as it swings opens towards your vehicle. It closes after you have passed through the gate.

If you are following a car that just went through the gate, please **be aware that the gate could be starting to close and it is unsafe to try race through it.** Stop at the stop sign, as then the sensor tells the gate to stop shutting and to open more fully again for a safe exit.

group of 30 cranes were seen using the Sanctuary as a night roost September 6th and had been reported in the area a few days before that. Small groups of between 6 and 16 flew over the Sanctuary during the day for the next few weeks. Our family was in with them some days, and sometimes off tearing up the picnic area grass again! A group of 30 cranes in fields south of the Sanctuary on September 19th and 20th included our family. By the end of September, our three birds joined 60 or 70 cranes in corn and barley stubble fields between River Road and Highway 99. This area is used each fall by cranes, possibly serving as a fall staging and socializing area. Our family has returned here as of the Thanksgiving weekend.

Generally we expect the return of our large waterfowl wintering populations in September, as well as the Snow Geese from Wrangel Island. American Wigeon numbers slowly increased over this month. They are early migrants, and travel south from Alaska nesting areas in small flocks, intermingled with Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Mallard and Northern Pintail. Numbers of all of these duck species rise in October. Snow Geese arrived in the Delta area in small scouting parties in late September, and within a few weeks, the fields all over Westham Island were covered in large flocks. Dr. Sean Boyd reports high numbers of young in the flocks, and the estimated population leaving Wrangel Island for the Fraser and Skagit estuaries was 170,000 to 180,000. This will be better calculated in the annual mid-winter census, though.

Text: Kathleen Fry, R. P. Bio.,
Sanctuary Manager

Bird Highlights

Bird highlights are compiled from observations collected from the Sunday bird walk, the bi-weekly bird survey crew and from members, visitors and staff throughout the week. All this input is written up and posted on the window of the Gift Shop each Sunday morning. You can also view all previous weekly lists on our website. We thank all who take the time to jot down their sightings in the “Bird Sightings Log Book” located on the deck of the Gift Shop.

July 2021 had a grand total of 85 species. Although most of the Mallards and Canada Geese have already had their young in May and June, you can still find hatchlings from the later nesters, the Wood Ducks and Gadwalls.

July 4 – July 17

Over this 2 week period 76 species were observed. The first brood of 4 Gadwall was noticed on the 10th and the last hatch of 9 Mallards was noticed on the 11th. Shorebird viewing has been very good. The increasing amount of shorebirds congregating here has caught the eye of a Peregrine Falcon who can be seen most days actively hunting over the West Field and Southwest Marsh. We had another Turkey Vulture sighting this week along with the first sighting of a Belted Kingfisher. On the 17th an Eastern Kingbird was seen perched on the tree tops edging the West Field.

July 18 – July 24

July is an unusual month to see Rough-legged Hawks, but on the 22nd one was observed flying high over the Sanctuary. At this time of year they should be in up in the northern Yukon and across the Arctic. Another brood of 10 Wood Ducks showed up this week along with a short 1 day visit from 3 other Sandhill Cranes. Along the East Dyke an adult Bullock’s Oriole was observed feeding its young. In past years we have been lucky to locate their unique nest sites but no positive nest sighting this year. Species making the highlight list this week were Merlin, Barn Owl, Great Horned Owl, Spotted Sandpiper and 3 River Otters up to no good chasing ducklings in the ponds along the Auger Trail.

July 25 – July 31

On the 25th of July, right on schedule from previous years, we spotted the first Black-crowned Night-Heron in their “usual area” in the trees overhanging the slough behind the Museum. On July 29th a third brood of 9 Gadwalls was seen, and then on the 30th a late hatch of Wood Ducks. A single Wilson’s Phalarope was found at the north end of the West Field on the 29th. From the Observation Tower on the 31st, a few American White Pelicans could be seen flying southwards. There are a variety of shorebirds moving



Great Horned Owl

Photo: Ted Gough

into our area now and these have increased our weekly list substantially giving a total of 73 species observed.

August kicks off the fall migration. New arrivals of shorebirds, warblers and flycatchers all helped boost the month’s list to 105 species.

August 1 – August 7

Green Heron visit most years in late summer for a few days. On August 7th this year one was found off the east side of the Centre Dyke trail. Adult Green Herons are nicely colored with a glossy blue-green back and a deep chestnut colored neck. Young birds are heavily streaked resembling the American Bittern. The first Greater White-fronted Geese and Red-necked Phalaropes were recorded this week.



Black-crowned Night-Heron

Photo: Ted Gough

August 8 – August 14

Of the 12 different sandpiper species found at the Sanctuary this week, 1 Stilt Sandpiper and 1 Baird’s Sandpiper were most notable. We have not seen an

(..... /continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

American Bittern since March, but one was spotted in the outer marsh at the Southwest Corner. Look for these elusive birds in shallow water among grasses of the marsh where you will also see Red-winged Blackbirds and Marsh Wrens. An adult Great Horned Owl was seen on the 19th, perched in one of the trees above the Inner Grassy Trail.

August 15 – August 21

The first American Coot to be found this fall was on the 15th. A Coot has a chicken like white beak, red eye, charcoal colored body and unique green lobed toes. Although they eat the same food as ducks and hang around with ducks they are not classed as a duck but are in the family of Rails, Gallinules and Moorhens. A good spot to check for Coots is in the channel of water looking west from the Viewing Platform. After the single Stilt Sandpiper sighting of last week, 2 were seen on the 15th and 5 on the 19th, all in the West Field. A Northern Waterthrush appeared in the Northeast Corner on the 19th. On the 21st a mix of adult and juvenile Red-necked Phalaropes were seen in the West Field, and a seldom seen Nashville Warbler was found along the North Dyke. Hutton's Vireo, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Red Crossbill were all new arrivals bringing this week's list to 85 species.



Stilt Sandpiper

Photo: Kathleen Fry

August 22 – August 28

A Northern Waterthrush was seen again on the 22nd. Typically they are best seen in August and September and most of the time you will hear their unique loud high pitched whistle prior to locating them. When searching for this bird with its brown back and heavily striped breast, start looking along edges of ponds where they will be searching for insects and small crustaceans under logs and leaf debris. Like the Spotted Sandpiper the Northern Waterthrush teeters up and down when walking. On the Sanctuary checklist we have 10 regularly seen Warblers and throughout this week we were able to locate 9 of them. Besides our

family unit of 3 Sandhill Cranes 3 others were spotted flying over the outer Marsh on the 28th. Other highlights in this week were Vaux's Swift, Hammond's Flycatcher, MacGillivray's Warbler, Townsend's Warbler and Lincoln's Sparrow.

September 2021 ended 123 species observed, without doubt one of the highest counts ever for a September. The fall high tides still give us great viewing opportunities for shorebirds and marshland birds especially from the Observation Tower.

August 29 – September 4

Late in the day on August 29th 6 Sandhill Cranes were spotted as they flew over the Gift Shop. We can expect to see more cranes congregating in our area prior to migrating south. Each year they have had nightly sleep overs in the West Field, pulling out early each morning to feed in surrounding farm fields.

September 5 – September 11

This week we ended with a very impressive list of 102 species. Some of the highlights were offshore species such as Red-throated Loon, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant and Parasitic Jaeger.

On the 9th we had a surprise visit from a Black-necked Stilt, featured on the front cover of this newsletter. It showed up in the House Pond with some Greater Yellowlegs just below the back deck of the Gift Shop. *The Checklist of Rare Birds of the Vancouver Area: Casual and Accidental Records, (2013, Revised edition)* by Rick Toochin shows how rare this species is in BC. The first Black-necked Stilt recorded in British Columbia was in 1971 and the first record of it at the Sanctuary was from April 2nd to May 4th in 1981, followed by visits of at least 13 of these elegant birds from April 17th to 23rd in 1987. All of these previous records were of adults birds, and this most recent 2021 bird was a fall juvenile. We were lucky enough to have this Black-necked Stilt until September 20th. On the 10th a single Common Nighthawk was found in the parking lot and there was another unusual shorebird sighting of a Whimbrel in Southwest Marsh.



Common Nighthawk

Photo: Kathleen Fry

September 12 – September 18

Fishing must have been good in the House Pond this week as most days we watched a mix of 17 female and juvenile Hooded Mergansers all busy catching fish. Some fish were almost too big to swallow, but with perseverance and by getting the fish pointing the right way, they managed. The Belted Kingfisher has been impressing visitors as well, often catching and swallowing some overly large fish such as young Carp and Prickly Sculpin, not just the smaller Three-spined Sticklebacks.



Belted Kingfisher

Photo: Tony Austin

The Black-necked Stilt is still being found in the front and back of House Pond. Watching it feed was interesting as it chose to follow some Northern Shovelers, who pull up food by creating a vortex through swimming in a circle, and then the Stilt would quickly come in and steal what came up. Along the trails, and especially around the feeders, there are now more Golden-crowned Sparrows and Fox Sparrows. On the 18th 4 Parasitic Jaegers were spotted as they flew over the Northwest corner. Meaning “hunter” in German, Jaegers spend most of their lives hunting for food, be it over the ocean in search of fish, which they are known to steal from other birds or over land hunting for lemmings, small rodents and nesting birds.

September 19 – September 25

The first small flock of 30 Lesser Snow Geese was spotted on the 22nd. They will be in the Fraser Delta region until mid-winter and then head further south to Skagit Valley, Washington. On the 23rd there were 2 different reports of White-crowned Sparrows, one at the front gate and another at the Southwest Corner of the Sanctuary. On the 25th, the bird survey crew found the first two juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpipers of the season. We don't have a big window of time for



Northern Shoveler

Photo: Ted Gough

viewing these shorebirds in the fall as they are quickly making their way to Australia and New Zealand for the winter.

September 26 – October 2

This was a great birding week with a total of 89 bird species observed. The major 2 highlights happened on the 30th when a Hudsonian Godwit was found in the House Pond while visitors were concentrating on relocating the other highlight, which was the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. As the hours of sunshine lessen and the water temperatures lower, it is harder to locate the Common Carp, Red-eared Sliders and Western Painted Turtles that were noticeable over the summer. They now burrow down into the mud and stay motionless over the winter going into hibernation or a torpor state. Other highlights for this week were Cinnamon Teal, Ruddy duck, American Bittern, Turkey Vulture, Northern Waterthrush, Western Meadowlark and Brewer's Blackbird.

Regardless if you are visiting the Sanctuary to locate the bird highlights or to just have a peaceful walk surrounded by a lovely natural setting, exciting birds are always present.

Text: Varri Raffan,
Gift Shop Manager

What bird to expect and when... A “Duckumentary”

Hopefully the following “Duckumentary” will help you determine what time of year to find different waterfowl and other species as they show up at the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

The Violet-green and Tree Swallows are the first swallows to arrive back at the Sanctuary in the first part of March. The Barn Swallows follow in early April. By the end of August Violet-green and Tree Swallow have left our area. Barn Swallows depart by the end of September. Some years we do see a handful of Barn Swallows in December and January

The Rufous Hummingbirds show up at the Sanctuary March 15th or 16th like clockwork every year. These hummingbirds will stay until about the middle of August and then they are off to spend the winter in Mexico. Anna’s Hummingbirds are now here all year.

In April early warblers such as Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and the Common Yellowthroat make an appearance. April has a lot of nesting activity and expect to see the first arrivals of Brown-headed Cowbirds, Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe. Western Sandpipers pass through Delta this month on their way north.

In the middle of May we start to see young broods of goslings and ducklings. This is also a good time to see a variety of flycatchers and warblers as they pass through on their migration north to nest.

June is still a good month to view young birds as they grow and to see waterfowl as they go through their annual molt.

July tends to be our lowest month for a variety of species as most of them are breeding elsewhere.

Early August we start to see the return of Black-crowned Night-Herons. By middle of August the American Coots return from the Interior of BC. From the third week of August through September is the best time to see larger numbers of flycatchers and warblers on their fall passage south.

Shorebirds at the Sanctuary are best viewed in the Westf Field and Southwest Marsh from mid-August to end of September, especially on a high tide.

September brings back a variety of songbirds such as Dark-eyed Junco, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow and Song Sparrows that will mostly winter here. Bird feeders are now set out around the Sanctuary for the songbirds. Sparrows will be with us



Tree Swallow

Photo: John Whitmore

until the end of May when they pull out to go back northward to nest.

Lesser Snow Geese are back in the Fraser River Delta by the last week of September. They will remain in Richmond and Delta until mid-winter then some will move on to Skagit Valley, Washington. In mid-March they will be back again on their northern migration to Wrangel Island, Russia.

The ever popular Northern Saw-Whet Owl arrives towards the end of October. The return of northern diving and dabbling ducks also picks up by the end of October. In November you will notice Trumpeter Swans and peak numbers of Lesser Snow Geese feeding in surrounding fields.

Between December and February is the best time to view birds of prey such as hawks, eagles and Owls.

Text: Varri Raffan
Gift Shop Manager

The Volunteer Corner

Special Thanks to the Following People:

- Jim Martin, Brian Self, Kelly Mitchell, Mary Taitt, Christine Barker, John Chandler and Emma Turgeon for working a regular schedule here each week, helping with crane monitoring, pruning along trails, and answering visitor questions.
- Our mid-august work party participants John Chandler, Kim Tung, Kayla Jones, Syd Akselrod, Michael Baker who helped remove invasive cattail offshore of our outlet control on North Dyke.
- Eric Rossicci and Eileen Axford for bagging bird seed, rain or shine every week.
- Our bird survey team members, Peter Candido, Brian Self, Ben Lambert, Kristina Breit, Josh Lee, Gabby Thompson, and Mike and Sharon Toochin.
- Melissa Hafting from the Rare Bird Alert for letting us know whenever a visitor has reported something rare in the way of a bird sighting here that we missed.

Volunteers Wanted For the Winter:

- ◆ Sanctuary trail hosts for the rest of the fall and into the winter when we will likely have an increase in interest from the public due to the arrival of the Snow Geese and wintering owls. Generally we find it very helpful to have regular volunteers who can be extra eyes out on the trails. They can help our visitors with questions, but also see and report bird species that may go unnoticed.
- ◆ Specific maintenance work parties.

For more information, ask at the Gift Shop or visit our website: www.reifelbirds sanctuary.com and explore the Volunteer page for specific work parties.

Please leave your name and contact information at our office 604-946-6980 or send me an email.

Kathleen (kathleen@reifelbirds sanctuary.com.)

Why be a Member?

As a Member, you receive the following benefits:

FREE admission to the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary for a year.

Quarterly issue of the BCWS publication “Marshnotes”.

A 10% discount on purchases in the Sanctuary Gift Shop.

Membership in one of British Columbia’s most respected conservation organizations.

With your support, the British Columbia Waterfowl Society is able to:

Staff, maintain and expand facilities at the Sanctuary for the benefit of its visitors and members; provide interpretive and education programs, including guided tours for organized groups of all ages; contribute towards important scientific research on waterfowl to determine their life cycle needs for survival; and provide support for like-minded organizations who are working on waterfowl-related projects.

Enclosed is my cheque or VISA/MasterCard number for:

SINGLE Membership: **\$25**

FAMILY Membership: **\$50**

LIFE Membership: **\$500**

Donation (tax deductible)

VISA MasterCard

VISA or MasterCard # _____

Expiry Date: _____

Name: (Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.) _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____

Please mail to **British Columbia Waterfowl Society**
5191 Robertson Road, Delta BC V4K 3N2

Telephone: 604 946 6980 Fax: 604 946 6982

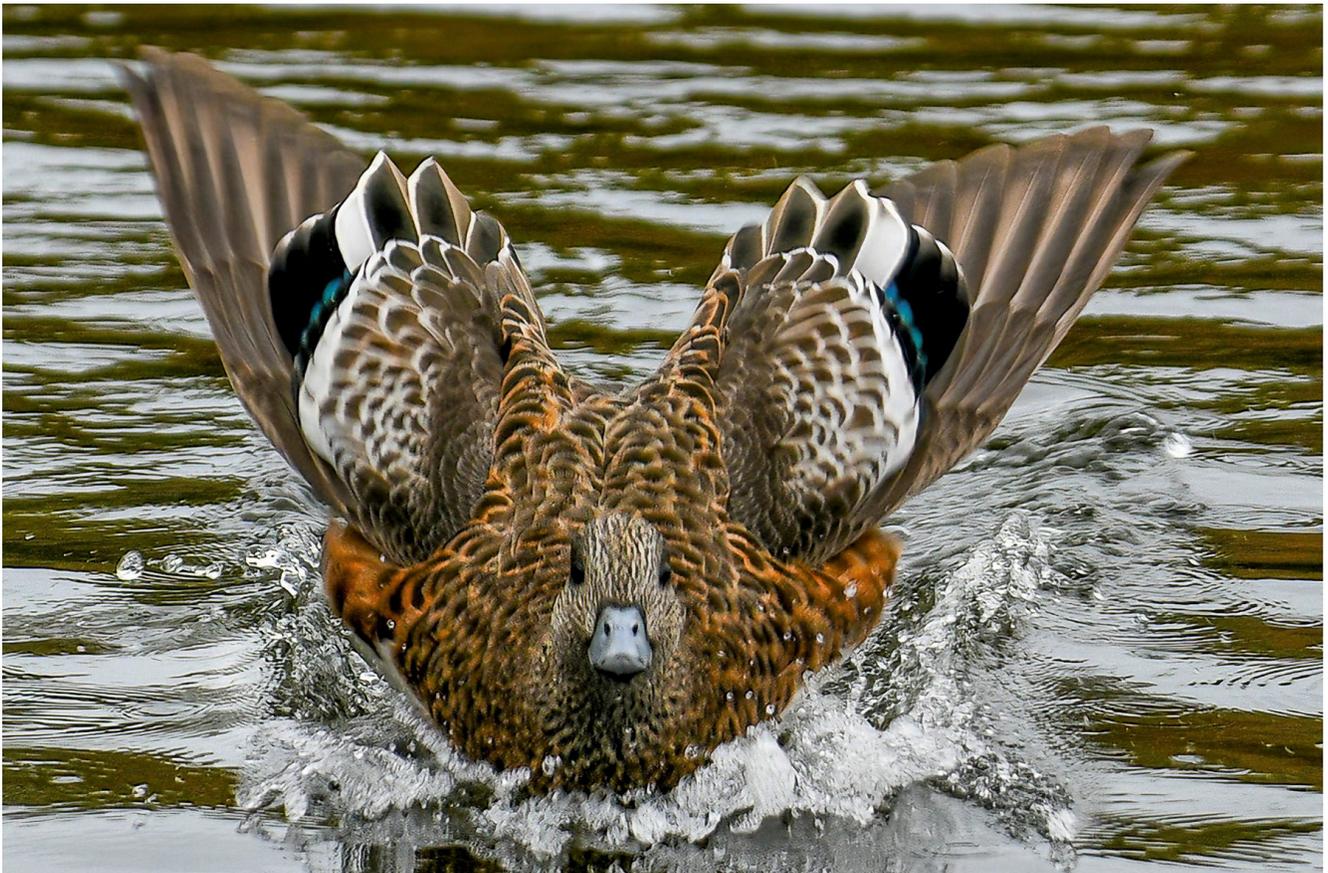
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BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

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