

Victoria Natural History Society

Annual Bird Report

2006



Compiled and edited by Jeremy Tatum

The continuation of this project depends on birders submitting their records for inclusion. You may send your sightings, preferably in taxonomic order, to

Jeremy B. Tatum

205-1680 Poplar Avenue,

Victoria, British Columbia,

Canada V8P 4K7

or by email to jtatum@uvic.ca If you use email, please submit .doc or .pdf files.

An Annual Bird Report calendar is available for download from the Victoria Natural History website at <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/annualbirdcount.html>

INTRODUCTION

1. *Object of the Annual Bird Reports*

The Annual Bird Reports (ABR) for southern Vancouver Island are intended to place on permanent record the sightings of birds each year in the following area, hereafter referred to as "the Area":

The portion of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands south of latitude 49° N (but also including all of Thetis and Galiano Islands) and east of longitude 123° 50' W, including the Canadian Gulf Islands and the Juan de Fuca, Haro and Georgia Straits as far as the U. S. border. That is, the portion of Vancouver Island east of a line from Ladysmith to Otter Point.

The participation of all who watch birds in the Area, whether amateur naturalists or professional ornithologists, is cordially invited.

2. *How to send records for publication in the ABR*

Please send your records either on paper by conventional mail (the preferred method) to:

Jeremy B. Tatum
205-1680 Poplar Avenue
Victoria, British Columbia
V8P 4K7

or by email as a .doc file or as a .pdf file to jtatum@uvic.ca

Please do understand that, in order for your records to be published in the ABR, **it is necessary to submit your records to the Editor of the ABR!** Please do not assume that someone else has done so, or that it suffices if you have posted your sighting on some website, or have telephoned it in to some Rare Bird Alert telephone service, or that somehow by some miracle the Editor knows what birds you have seen. I can publish only those records that are sent to me. Indeed, as you read through this ABR, if you notice that some exciting bird that you saw in 2006 is not listed here, the most likely reason for its omission is that you did not send the record to the ABR and so I didn't know about it!

Please send in your records either quarterly (i.e. after March, June, September and December) or once a year, whichever is more

convenient to you. Please, however, try to send in your records before the end of January of the following year. We shall try our best to accommodate late reports, because we know that many of you have busy schedules, but it will become increasingly difficult to do so as time goes on, and very difficult indeed from March onwards.

Your submissions should be **species-by-species in taxonomic order** (please **not** day-by-day or trip-by-trip). You may use either the old order, starting with the loons, which is the order that is in many of your field guides, or the new order, starting with the geese. Either is acceptable, though it is hoped that most observers will soon be becoming familiar with the new order, which is the order used in the present Report.

Please be sure that your report includes your name and a contact address (conventional or email) or telephone number.

For each record, please include the following information:

1. The name of the species, written out in full. Please do not use abbreviations or four-letter codes.
 2. The approximate number of birds. In the case of large flocks, it is not expected that an exact number be provided – just your best estimate.
 3. The location where you saw the bird(s). If you can, please give the municipality where the locality is.
 4. The date when you saw the bird(s). Please write the name of the month in letters. For example, 4th June 2007. Please **do not** write the date in the form 05/06/07.
 5. In the case of rare, out-of-season or hard-to-identify species, **field notes are mandatory**. This is explained in more detail in the next section.
3. *For which species do we need records?*

For the purpose of answering this question, I shall place birds into three categories: (a) *Common resident species* (b) *Common migratory species* (c) *Rare, out-of-season and hard-to-identify species*.

about Apr 3 they were regular in all areas, until about the third week in August, when they disappeared from the vicinity of Victoria and Sooke. American Goldfinches continued, however, in Duncan to the end of the year, and, as seen above, some were found during the Victoria and Sidney/Saltspring Island CBCs in December.

EVENING GROSBEAK

*Irregular; often common
spring migrant
(5, 0; 11, 2, 30)*

Coccythraustes vespertinus

Reported in all months except May and June, and from widespread locations in Sooke, Victoria, Duncan and Ladysmith. Most observers reported "a few", or "several" or "a flock"; hence it is difficult to estimate actual numbers. 10 to 12 were reported from Mount Prévost, Duncan, on Apr 18. 17 were counted at Sooke on Nov 20, and 25 there on Dec 3.

HOUSE SPARROW

*Abundant urban resident
(283, 652; 2296, 455, 234)*

Passer domesticus

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species. However, gathering of material for nest-building was noted in Saanich on Mar 28.

- (a) Common resident species. By this, I mean species that you are likely to see on any day of the year in suitable habitat. Examples would be Mallard, Pelagic Cormorant, Glaucous-winged Gull, Starling, Northern Flicker, Northwestern Crow, American Robin, Spotted Towhee, Song Sparrow, House Finch.

Probably most observers will not submit any particular records of such species, and usually the account in the ABR will be correspondingly short. In particular, please do not send in long lists of how many of such species you saw each day or on each trip. If you have any particular observations of special interest, (e.g. the date when you first saw Mallard ducklings, or if you saw a flicker with intermediate characteristics, or an albino Robin, or a particularly immense flock of Starlings), by all means submit such records. Likewise if you have made a particular study of one or more species, let us have a brief summary of your main conclusions. For example, if you have made daily counts in your garden of the number of chickadees you saw, and you have noticed that they are more abundant in some months than others, it would be appropriate to record that. But please do not send to the Editor the detailed daily counts.

- (b) Common migratory species. We are thinking here of such species as Bufflehead, Western Sandpiper, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Violet-green Swallow, Yellow Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow. What we are interested in here is arrival and departure times. This would include the date when you saw the first "early-bird" pioneer of the season, as well as the date on which the bulk of the birds arrived, after which the species could be seen on almost a daily basis. It would include the date after which most of the birds had gone, and the date when you saw the last lazy straggler.

Recording these dates is made much easier for you by means of the Migratory Bird Calendar, which is described separately in section 4.

- (c) Rare, Out-of-season and Hard-to-identify birds. For the purpose of this Section, a rare bird is one that most birdwatchers (other, perhaps, than the most active and energetic) are unlikely to see every year. An out-of-season bird would be a House Wren or a Barn Swallow in winter, or a Bufflehead or Golden-crowned Sparrow in summer. There are perhaps some observers who do not think that any birds are hard to identify, and have complete confidence in their

ability to identify all birds. Their confidence in their superabilities may not be shared by others, but at least they may allow that there are some species that at least are frequently misidentified, if not by themselves, by others of lesser ability. They must allow that, unlike themselves, not all birdwatchers are instantly able to distinguish at a glance between Long- and Short-billed Dowitchers, Common and Arctic Terns, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, when seen briefly at a distance.

Indeed, anyone who is charged with the responsibility of keeping accurate bird records is aware that reports of misidentified birds are a daily reality. It is therefore mandatory that all reports of rare, out-of-season and hard-to-identify birds must be accompanied by details, such as what features you clearly saw on the bird you were looking at the time of your observation, which enabled to you to identify it without ambiguity, how long you saw the bird, and at what distance.

It is understandable that some birdwatchers are reluctant to supply such details. The reasons may range from a slight annoyance that they are being asked to submit their records for scrutiny by someone who may well be a good deal less experienced or knowledgeable than they are, to a simple desire just to enjoy watching birds without being bothered by what they perceive to be boring bureaucracy. Such feelings are understandable. However, the Editor cannot possibly be expected to decide who are the "good" birdwatchers whose word alone is sufficient, and who are the less reliable whose records must be subject to scrutiny. He has to be able to supply the evidence that will satisfy all readers of the ABR that a given record is valid, and he can do this only on the strength of the details provided by the observer. The Annual Bird Reports will be read by others perhaps 50 years hence, when readers are unlikely to know whether the observations were credible or not without adequate documentation.

The most experienced and reliable observers fully understand the need to supply details of their observations, and indeed welcome the independent scrutiny. We understand that some may find this tiresome; all we can say is that, when you find a rare bird, we would love you to share that observation with us, and we would love to publish it and add it to the permanent record of bird sightings in our Area – but we do need to know all about it!

associating with a flock of Pine Siskins and was about the same size as them makes it likely that the bird was indeed a Common Redpoll.

PINE SISKIN

Usually uncommon resident and abundant winter visitor, but also irregular and irruptive.

Carduelis pinus

(0, 16; 904, 194, 1762)

Most observers reported that the Pine Siskin was exceedingly scarce from Jan to Aug, and indeed none at all were reported during that period from the Duncan area, and none from Sooke during Jan to June. One observer who keeps regular records at Dunn Avenue in Saanich reported that a bird seen there on Oct 20 was the first there since Spring 2004. The 16 reported on the Sidney/Saltspring Island CBC on Jan 2 were the only January reports. There was one report (location and number not given) in February, on Feb 27, and none from anywhere in March. There was 1 report (location and number not given) on Apr 8, and 3 birds at Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, on Apr 13. 2 were seen at Mount Douglas Beach, Saanich, on May 17, and 1 at Metchosin (Witty's) Lagoon on May 21. The only June report was of 1 at RPBO on June 1. Siskins were reported on five dates in July, and on 3 dates in August.

From Sept 6 onwards Pine Siskins started to be seen more or less regularly in small numbers, and flocks of from 10 to 60 were reported from many locations, from Sooke, the Saanich Peninsula and Ladysmith throughout Sept and Oct. During Nov flocks of Pine Siskins became a sufficiently regular and familiar sight that observers generally stopped keeping records of every individual sighting. 200 at Slack Point, Ladysmith on Nov 25, and another of similar size in North Saanich on Dec 6 were the largest single flocks reported. As the CBC numbers above testify, by the end of the year the species was back to its usual large winter numbers.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

Uncommon resident, common summer visitor

Carduelis tristis

(23, 17; 41, 5, 0)

From the south of the Area there were, in addition to the Sidney-Saltspring Island CBC, 3 reports in Feb and 3 in Mar. A few, however, overwintered in the Duncan area and were seen on almost a daily basis throughout the first three months of the year. From

IC reports results of daily counts at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, as follows: "Numbers were high in Jan, with a peak of 45 on Jan 21. Numbers decreased from Jan to May, with maximum daily counts going down from 35-45 in Jan to 10-20 in May. Numbers stayed low through the summer, increasing in the fall and again in Dec, with 65 on Dec 18 and 28. These are the highest counts at this location since I started keeping records in 2002."

RED CROSSBILL

Loxia curvirostra

Irregular irruptive visitor

(17, 3; 0, 5, 198)

This species was very scarce during the first half of the year. A total of 20 were recorded on the two January CBCs, for Duncan and Sidney/Saltspring Island. None at all were reported from the Victoria Area in the first two months of the year. During that period, the species was reported from the Duncan area on Jan 28 and Feb 10 only. There was only one report from the entire Area during March, namely 2 at Kerryview Drive, Saanich, Mar 30. 1 was also seen there on Apr 8, and a few were on Mount Prévost, Duncan, on Apr 18. After that, there was one report on July 23, and nothing further until Aug 3, when the species was reported from Duncan. Then, during the period Aug 7 – 19 a large flock was reported from Sooke, plus a handful of sightings from unstated locations during the last ten days of August. By the third week in Sept, flocks of up to 20 birds were being reported from several locations, mostly in the Sooke area. The majority of reports during Oct also came from Sooke, though a few birds were also reported from Victoria and from Duncan. By November, Red Crossbills were becoming scarce again, with just two reports received, from unstated locations, on Nov 14 and 15. The only reports for December were the CBCs, the large count of 198 cited above being from Sooke on Dec 23.

COMMON REDPOLL

Carduelis flammea

Rare winter visitor

(0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

There were reports of 3 birds, as follows. 1, for which no details are available, reported from Cinnabar Road, Sooke, Nov 13. 1 at Cordova Bay Road, Saanich, during the Victoria CBC on Dec 16, for which satisfactory details were supplied. 1 seen briefly at Woodhaven Terrace, Saanich, Dec 25. While the notes of this bird that could be obtained during just a brief sighting were not strictly sufficient to identify the bird with certainty, the fact that it was

4. *Migratory Bird Calendar.*

In order to help observers to determine arrival and departure times of common migratory species, a most useful Migratory Bird Calendar has been devised, and we strongly recommend that you obtain a copy. It is available of the Website of the Victoria Natural History Society at <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/ABR%20Calendar.pdf>, or you can ask me to send you a copy by conventional mail. In the latter case, a couple of stamps to help with the postage would be appreciated.

There has been quite a lot of misunderstanding about the use of the Migratory Bird Calendar, so I shall try to describe it and its use here. It consists of a list of the Common Migratory Birds that are regularly seen in the Area, and, following the name of each species, is a line of 365 small boxes, one for each day of the year. Its use could not be simpler. All you are asked to do at the end of a day's birdwatching is to place a dot in the box for that date against every common migratory bird that you have seen that day.

It must be emphasised that the list includes only common migratory birds. It does not include, and is not intended to include, resident species, or rare species.

At the end of the year, while you are preparing to send your records in for publication in the ABR, you merely glance over the dots you have made for the year, and, for each species, you will easily be able to see: (a) the date when you first saw a given species; (b) the date after which sightings of the species became more or less regular; (c) the date after which the bulk of the species had departed; and (d) the date when you last saw an individual of the species. You can then report your sightings something like this:

Barn Swallow. First seen, one at Swan Lake, April 10
Regularly seen from April 18
Scarce after September 12
Last seen, two at Rithet's Bog, September 23.

Please note that the Calendar is for your use and convenience, and most observers will find it very easy and convenient to use and to extract these dates at the end of the year for each common migratory species. I must ask, please, do NOT send your completed Calendar to me.

5. *Reliability and completeness of the 2006 ABR.*

Readers will want to know how reliable are the records in the ABR, and how complete is it?

This 2006 ABR differs from the 2005 ABR in a fundamental way. As explained in the Introduction to the 2005 ABR, the 2005 ABR was intended merely as an illustration or example of what an Annual Bird Report would look like. It was to show users what to expect. It was not intended as an official, 100% reliable report, and for that reason nearly all records of sightings submitted, except the obviously quite mistaken, were published with virtually no pretence of quality control or critical appraisal. It doubtless contained many wrongly-identified birds. And because it was merely an introductory "sample" ABR, many observers were unaware of its existence, and the 2005 ABR is undoubtedly extremely incomplete, with many good records lacking.

It was intended that the 2006 ABR would be the first "official" ABR, and was intended not as a mere "example", but as a reliable and complete record of the birds seen in the Area in 2006. To what extent have we succeeded?

It has to be admitted – not nearly as well as we would have hoped. It is undoubtedly not at all complete, and many sightings are omitted. There are two reasons for this. One is that some observers, including a few of the most energetic and productive birdwatchers in the Area, for one reason or another, did not submit their records. That this was disappointing is an understatement; I can only plead that they will submit their records for 2007. The second reason is that some observers who did submit their sightings gave no details about their sightings of rare birds, and there was no alternative but to omit such records.

This is a great pity, for 2006 was a year in which a great many really unusual birds were reported, and we are losing these interesting records for ever, simply because of failure to supply the most basic of details. For example, in 2006 there were unsupported reports of sightings of the following 37 species, which are omitted from the 2006 ABR. In a very few of these cases it was felt that the details supplied demonstrably did not refer unambiguously to the species claimed; but in nearly all of these cases the Editor received *no details whatever* about the sightings, in many cases not even the

wing, white belly, black eye." In addition, DM obtained a superb close-up photograph to solidify the certain identification.

GREY-CROWNED ROSY FINCH*Rare migrant**Leucosticte tephrocotis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 was found at Clover Point by MY, where it was seen by m.o. from Oct 20-23. MY obtained a superb close-up photograph, and detailed field notes were obtained by AN and MR.

Another was seen and successfully photographed by JKE at the KOA campground on the Malahat, from Nov 30 to Dec 6.

PINE GROSBEAK*Rare winter visitor**Pinicola enucleator*

(0, 0; 44, 0, 0)

Four were seen by m.o. south of Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, Dec 3 to Dec 5. These birds were photographed by TA and EPe, and detailed field notes were obtained by MR.

No details were received on 1 reported from Foul Bay Road, Oak Bay, on Jan 6, or 40 reported from Jocelyn Hill on Dec 16, and a few seen there on several dates to the end of the year. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that good field notes of rare birds are essential to establish a firm record, and that reports of rare birds unaccompanied by any details inevitably invite questions about their reliability.

PURPLE FINCH*Common resident**Carpodacus purpureus*

(82, 55; 72, 14, 15)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species.

HOUSE FINCH*Abundant resident**Carpodacus mexicanus*

(166, 307; 1176, 400, 94)

An albinistic or leucistic bird was reported from Pear Street, Saanich, on Oct 8, and another similar bird was reported from Falstaff Road, View Royal, on Oct 25.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD *Common summer visitor*
Molothrus ater (1, 11; 4, 0, 0)

In addition to CBC records, out-of-season, and undescribed, reports were received of single birds at unstated locations on Jan 20 and Feb 10, and 12 birds at Vantreight's bulb fields, Central Saanich, on Feb 12. Field notes on all birds seen out of their normal season are helpful. Spring arrival was noted from Mar 29.

The species was still numerous on Sept 4 and 5, but after that date there were no further reports until Oct 24, and the last October record was on Oct 26. Additional reports of out-of-season, and undescribed, birds were reported on Dec 3, Dec 7 and Dec 16.

No host records were received. They would be welcome.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE *Rare summer visitor*
Icterus bullockii (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A nesting pair was watched by m.o. from May 12 to June 22 (when fledglings were noted) at a location near John and Wilson Roads, North Saanich, where nesting has been observed in recent previous years.

A nesting pair was watched by m.o. from June 18 to June 24 (when fledglings were noted) at Welch and Livesay Roads, Central Saanich. 3 reports of birds at various points in the Martindale Valley were received in May and June, and it is not clear whether these were additional birds to the Welch/Livesay family. One was recorded at RPBO on May 30, and 2, well described, were seen at Salisbury Way, Saanich, on Sept 13.

BRAMBLING *Rare winter visitor*
Fringilla montifringilla (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 appeared at a feeder at a residence at Cowichan Lake Road, Duncan, from Jan 28 – 31, reappearing from Feb 20 – 28. Although this very rare bird was seen by m.o., it is disappointing that only one submitted detailed field notes. MR wrote "Lighting was good and I was only about 4 m from it. About the same size as nearby juncos and Purple Finches. Orange breast and shoulder, yellow pointed bill, mottle grey head and back, long tail. Black and a little white on the

name of the observer. Many of these records were posted anonymously on the Rare Bird Alert telephone messages, or were posted on a Web site, or were heard about secondhand.

American Black Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Yellow-billed Loon	Least Flycatcher
Clark's Grebe	Eastern Phoebe
Magnificent Frigatebird	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Black-crowned Night-Heron	Tropical Kingbird
Broad-winged Hawk	Clark's Nutcracker
Swainson's Hawk	Bank Swallow
Rough-legged Hawk	Nashville Warbler
Golden Eagle	Magnolia Warbler
Gyr Falcon	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Prairie Falcon	Hermit Warbler
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Black-and-white Warbler
White-rumped Sandpiper	Canada Warbler
Ruff	Yellow-breasted Chat
Arctic Tern	Lark Sparrow
Pomarine Jaeger	Grasshopper Sparrow
Thick-billed Murre	Rusty Blackbird
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Baltimore Oriole
Calliope Hummingbird	

Most of these birds are exceedingly rare in the Area, and many of them are quite unprecedented. Clearly it would be totally irresponsible to publish them in the absence, in most cases, of any details whatever, and it is quite impossible to guess which of them were correctly identified and which were not.

What of the records that *are* published in this ABR? Can it be assumed that all of them are 100% reliable? Unfortunately not. If I were to publish only those sightings for which the observer supplied adequate field notes, the 2006 ABR would be a very slim report indeed. The Editor has been forced, much against his inclination and contrary to scientific integrity, to make a subjective judgment in many individual cases. The reader is therefore cautioned to read carefully the text entry for each bird, and to take note of comments that may accompany some of the records. Thus some reports may be introduced with some such words as "carefully observed and described", and the reader can assume that the Editor is satisfied that there is really no question concerning the credibility of that particular report. Other reports may be indicated as "undescribed",

or accompanied by such words as "unfortunately details are lacking", and, if the reader wishes to take such reports with a large grain of salt, he will encounter no argument from the Editor.

6. *Initials*

It is quite traditional for Bird Reports to publish, following each account of an interesting sighting, the initials of the observer. Indeed, it is quite possible, since all of us are human, that many of us, on reading an Annual Bird Report for an area, look every bit as eagerly for the sight of our initials in print as we do for the actual birds recorded. It is an undeniable pleasure.

Unfortunately, for this year, I have been very sparing in the use of initials. This is because a great many of the records in this *Report* were obtained second-hand, the actual observer not having submitted the records him- or herself. In many cases, the records were extracted from the announcements made anonymously on the Rare Bird Alert telephone service. In some cases the volunteer running the RBA service had kept a record of who telephoned the record, if it was known, but in general I have printed initials only of observers who actually submitted records to the ABR, and in one or two other special cases.

Many of the rare birds sighted during the year have been successfully photographed. Sometimes the photograph may not have been of prize-winning quality but has nevertheless been fully adequate to identify the bird with certainty. In many cases the photographs have been made by highly-skilled photographers and have been of superb quality. Where a photograph has been obtained and was of substantial help in securing the identification, this has been mentioned in the text, with the initials of the photographer.

Observers should note, however, that they cannot expect that someone will be able to photograph every rare bird that they report, and therefore good field notes are still in those cases essential.

I have not published any of the photographs in the *Report* (although I have examined all of the ones mentioned in the text), partly because there have been too many other problems in compiling it (most of which have been the result of observers not supplying details of their sightings, and the consequent time-consuming effort of trying to find out). Publication of a photograph would, of course, require obtaining the permission of the

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

Agelaius phoeniceus

Abundant resident
(535, 270; 574, 8, 312)

As is to be expected for an abundant resident species, few reports were received, though a flock of an estimated 500 birds at Swan Lake on Nov 10 is noteworthy.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK

Sturnella neglecta

Common migrant and winter visitor
(0, 16; 17, 30, 2)

Records to Apr 9 and from Sept 25. By far the greater majority of birds were reported from Vantreight's bulb farms and from the Martindale Valley, both in Central Saanich, and from Whiffen Spit, Sooke, only a few scattered records being reported from elsewhere. Sample numbers were 16 at Vantreight's on Jan 2; 10 near Victoria International Airport on Feb 5, and 10 at Island View Road on Feb 8.

22 on Martindale Flats, Central Saanich on Oct 13, 28 there on Nov 12, and 17 there on Dec 2. Other localities where smaller numbers were seen included Beacon Hill Park (Victoria), Cordova Spit, Mount Douglas, Cattle Point, Uplands Park and Panama Flats.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus

Rare migrant
(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All credible records were: 1 at Wallace/Maber Flats, Central Saanich, Apr 25. 1 at RPBO, May 3 and May 10. 1 at Wallace Drive and Farmington Road, Saanich, May 19. 1 at Galey Farms, Blenkinsop Road, Saanich, Oct 26. 1, Drinkwater Road, Duncan, Nov 8. 1 at Martindale Road, Central Saanich, Dec 9.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD

Euphagus cyanocephalus

Abundant resident
(185, 252; 611, 18, 205)

As is to be expected for an abundant resident species, few reports were received, though a flock of an estimated 200 birds in the Martindale Valley on Dec 26 is noteworthy.

SNOW BUNTING*Rare migrant**Plectrophenax nivalis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 at Clover Point, Oct 3. 2 at Ogden Point, Dec 17.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK*Common summer
visitor**Pheucticus melanocephalus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 30 to Aug 5. No reports were received after that rather early departure date.

LAZULI BUNTING*Uncommon migrant**Passerina amoena*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 on Mount Tolmie, Saanich, May 21 – 30.

PAINTED BUNTING*Vagrant**Passerina ciris*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 at Damelart Way, Brentwood Bay, Mar 21 – Apr 6. This bird was watched on an almost daily basis at close quarters by m.o. Detailed field notes were obtained by BB, AN, MR, JBT, and a photograph was obtained by AN. The bird was in apparently female plumage, though it cannot be entirely excluded that it was a young male. There must inevitably be speculation that this might have been an escaped cage bird. In favour of such a supposition is that the bird is known to be kept commonly as a cage bird in Mexico, and it was so far away from its normal range as to make the occurrence of a wild bird here seem almost unbelievably implausible. Against the supposition is that the bird, which was observed closely and at length, showed no sign of the feather abrasion typical of many caged birds, and the fact that it is illegal to keep this species in captivity in Canada. It is probable that the question cannot be answered either way with complete certainty. The ABR does not rule on the matter, nor on whether it "counts"; it merely records the occurrence.

photographer, and there are also questions as to whether it would be practical to publish colour photographs in the paper edition of the Report. For future editions, however, I would welcome submission of photographs for publication, whether these are of high quality, or merely adequate for identification.

I have also published initials in a few cases where the observer has submitted good field notes. Initials of observers or photographers appearing in this Report are as follows:

AL	Agnes Lynn	EPi	Erika Pieké
AN	Ann Nightingale	IC	Ian Cruickshank
BB	Barbara Begg	JCF	John C. Folinsbee
BJ	Bret Jagger	JE	John Erickson
BW	Bruce Whittington	MG	Mitchell Grant
CP	Chris Powell	ML	Marilyn Lambert
CS	Chris Saunders	MO'S	Marie O'Shaughnessy
DA	David Allinson	MR	Mary Robichaud
DB	Debra Brash	MY	Mike Yip
DDD	D. D. Doyle	PB	Pam Birley
DE	Don Enright	RWCh	R. W. Chappell
DM	Derrick Marven	TA	Ted Ardley
DS	David Stirling	TZ	Tim Zurowski
EPe	Ed Pellizzon		

The following abbreviations also appear:

ABR	Annual Bird Report
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
GC	Golf Course
m.o.	many observers
RBA	Rare Bird Alert (telephone service 592-3381)
RPBO	Rocky Point Bird Observatory
WILDARC	Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre, Metchosin

7. *Names of the birds*

The English and scientific names of the birds, and the sequence of species, are for the most part those given in the Seventh Edition of the Checklist of the American Ornithologists' Union. The small exceptions are that I have used Canadian rather than American spelling in such words as grey, shoveller, colour; I have (for literary reasons) retained Skylark as one word; and I have (for grammatical

reasons) written Golden Plover as separate, unhyphenated words. Since the 2005 ABR, the former Blue Grouse has been split into two species, the name Sooty Grouse being appropriate for the bird that occurs in our Area.

8. Status

Following the name of each species is a two-to-three word indication, in italics, of the status of the bird in the Area - for example, *Common summer visitor* or *Rare migrant*. The terms used are intended to mean roughly as follows:

Abundant. Any observer is likely to see large numbers of the species on any outing in the appropriate season and habitat.

Common. Any observer of average industry is likely to have the species on his year's list.

Uncommon. An observer of average industry may well miss the species on his year's list, but the species is nevertheless recorded by someone in the Area every year.

Rare. The species is not recorded every year.

Summer or winter visitor. The species is seen mostly during the summer or during the winter months.

Migrant. The species is seen mostly during spring or fall migration.

Resident. The species may be found throughout the year.

It is to be noted that the purpose of these status indicators is solely to give observers some idea, within the limits of two or three words, of when and how often he might expect to see each species in the Area, and it is not intended to give an exhaustive account, such as might be expected in a formal scientific paper, of the absolute population of each species. For example, readers should note that the word "resident", as used in these status indicators, merely means that the bird can be seen in any month of the year. It is quite possible that there may be several overlapping populations of the species, some of which are here only during the summer, or during the winter, or during migration season, and there may or may not be any individuals of the species that are truly resident. Provided that the purpose of these two-or-three word status indicators is

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW *Common winter visitor*
Zonotrichia atricapilla (385, 322; 1005, 290, 318)

Records to May 15 and from Sept 14. In addition, a single out-of-season bird was reported from Deer Park Trail, Metchosin on June 1. All observers are reminded that field notes are needed for all out-of-season birds, no matter how familiar they may be in season.

DARK-EYED JUNCO *Common resident*
Junco hyemalis (1948, 1411; 3319, 1129, 1427)

While this species is familiar all year, it is more abundant in the fall and winter months. Two observers in Saanich noted a sharp increase in numbers from Sept 14, and a systematic daily count at a Saanich location showed that peak numbers seemed to be about mid-Nov. Birds with features resembling those of the "Slate-coloured" race were noted at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, on Mar 27-28, and 2 at the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, Colwood, on Mar 30. Another bird resembling the "Slate-coloured" race was again at Dunn Avenue on Oct 3. A partly albinistic bird was reported from Wain Road, North Saanich, on Nov 29 and Dec 2, and a bird described as having a "pale grey hood, black lores, wide pure pink sides and flanks", resembling the "pink-sided" form was reported from Wain Road on Nov 29.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR *Uncommon migrant*
Calcarius lapponicus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All records were:

1 at Victoria GC, Apr 6, 7. 1 at Harling Point, Oak Bay, and 1 at Clover Point, Apr 24 – 26, one of which was photographed by TA.

1 on Christmas Hill, Saanich, Sept 18. 1 on Cordova Spit, Central Saanich, Sept 21, and 3 there on Sept 28. 1 or occasionally 2 at Clover Point, Sept 25 – Oct 13. 1 at University of Victoria, Oct 10.

1 to 3 at Cattle Point, Oct 11 – Nov 5. 1 at Panama Flats, Saanich, Oct 24 – Nov 1.

SWAMP SPARROW*Rare migrant**Melospiza georgiana*

(2, 0; 3, 0, 0)

The 5 CBC reports noted above were presumably accepted by the respective Compilers. One was banded at RPBO on Sept 29. In addition, there were a remarkable number of reports of this species during the year, none of which was accompanied by any acceptable details.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW*Uncommon winter visitor**Zonotrichia albicollis*

(0, 0; 5, 0, 1)

1 reported from Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, on Jan 7, Feb 5, Mar 4 and Apr 12. 1 described in careful detail at Bow Park, Saanich, Feb 3. 1, reported anonymously and undescribed near Blenkinsop Lake, Mar 18.

One was banded at RPBO on Sept 22. There were 2 additional reports in Sept, neither of them described. 8 were reported in Oct, of which details are available for the following three. 1 carefully described at Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, Oct 5. 1 carefully described by AL at Viaduct Flats, Saanich, Oct 7. 1 photographed by TA at Normandy Drive, Saanich, Oct 20. There were 2 reports in Nov. 1 was undescribed. 1 reported with excellent field notes by IC, Dunn Avenue, Saanich, Nov 4 – 7. There were 3 probably acceptable Dec reports (in addition to the CBC reports, which were presumably accepted by the Compilers). One near the same spot at Blenkinsop Lake as the Oct 5 bird, was seen on Dec 4 by m.o., none of whom supplied details. 1 was observed closely (but undescribed) at a feeder in Fairfield Road, Victoria, Dec 4. 1 seen and described at a house in Sooke, Dec 16 and 25.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW*Common resident**Zonotrichia leucophrys*

(39, 101; 199, 83, 36)

Few reports of this common and familiar species were received, though a winter flock of 25 at Vantreight's bulb farm, Central Saanich, on Dec 2 is worthy of note.

understood, this should cause no difficulty. If any of them are thought to be very misleading, the Editor will be glad to consider changing the indication in future issues.

9. *Christmas Bird Counts*

Five Christmas Bird Counts were held in the Area during 2006. All were held within 15-mile diameter circles. The date of each count and the longitude and latitude of each circle centre are given below.

Jan 1, Duncan.	48° 47'.0 N	123° 40'.0 W
Jan 2, Sidney/Saltspring Island	48° 41'.7 N	123° 25'.7 W
Dec 16, Victoria	48° 28'.0 N	123° 24'.0 W
Dec 17, Sidney/Saltspring Island	48° 41'.7 N	123° 25'.7 W
Dec 23, Sooke	48° 20'.0 N	123° 40'.0 W

Following the name of each species you will find five numbers in parentheses. These are the numbers of the species recorded at these five CBCs in order of date.

10. *Subspecies*

For the purposes of this report, I am assuming that a subspecies is a geographically isolated population whose members on average differ slightly in some character from members of another population. I am also taking the words “subspecies” and “race” to be synonymous. In a few cases the difference may be fairly marked and obvious, but in many cases it is small and subtle – a slight difference, perhaps, in the average size, or in the precise shade of colouring that is rarely easily discernible in the field.

Therefore, for the purposes of this report, I am assuming that an individual bird seen in the field cannot generally be placed in a particular subspecies unless its provenance is known (as it might possibly be, for example, from banding records). Therefore, unless there is definite proof of a bird's provenance, any report of a particular subspecies will be preceded with some such phrase as “a bird bearing characters resembling the race xxxxxx”. Where the contributor has described the characters seen on the bird, these will be printed with the record, and any reader is then free to make up his or her own mind.

11. *Hybrids*

For the purposes of this report I am assuming that a bird cannot be said to be a hybrid unless it and its parents were observed at the nest. Therefore any bird reported as a hybrid will be described with a phrase such as “a bird bearing characters intermediate between this species and that species”. Where the contributor has described the characters seen on the bird, these will be printed with the record, and any reader is then free to make up his or her own mind.

12. *Acknowledgments*

I thank Ann Nightingale for her constant encouragement during the writing of the Report, and for the physical preparation of its hard-copy and Web versions. Bruce Whittington has also been tremendously encouraging and kindly read through the manuscript, making useful suggestions, both ornithological and grammatical, though any howlers that remain are my own. I thank Sara and Tracy of WILDARC, the Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre, Metchosin, for allowing me to search through their records, and the Rocky Point Bird Observatory and Donna Ross for providing me with the RPBO records for the year. Dave Allinson kindly sent me observer details of many of the sightings announced on the Rare Bird Alert telephone service. I am indebted to Myke J. Chutter for sending me a copy of the invaluable *2005 British Columbia Summary Report for 5-yearly National Peregrine Falcon Survey*, compiled by himself and including the results of the *2005 South Island Peregrine Falcon Survey* by D. D. Doyle.

Needless to say I am extremely grateful to those observers who sent me their records for publication – especially those who supplied field notes for rarities! Records were received from Lonny Bate, Barbara Begg, Ian Cruickshank, Cam Finlay, Tom Gillespie, Ann Knowles, Agnes Lynn, Derrick Marven, Mike McGrenere, Jack McLeod, David, Jean, Geoffrey and Brigitte Newell, Mary Robichaud, David Stirling, Marian and Henry Summerfield, Bruce Whittington. May they be joined by many more for 2007.

second week in Aug to the third week in Sept. Still in fairly large numbers Savannah Sparrows continued to the end of the year, at least 50 being seen at the Vantreight bulb fields, Central Saanich, in Dec 2, and the three CBCs at the end of the year indicate that there were still many around at the end of December.

FOX SPARROW*Passerella iliaca**Common winter visitor*

(90, 126; 709, 172, 366)

Records to Apr 29 (though scarce after Apr 20) and from Sept 1. Song was first heard on Feb 26.

SONG SPARROW*Melospiza melodia**Common resident*

(128, 155; 738, 215, 301)

No records received of this common and familiar bird. If birds with coloured bands are seen, particularly at Rithet's Bog, but also at other localities, please note the colours of the bands. There will typically be one aluminium and three colour bands. Notice which colours are on each leg, and which bands are distal (nearer the foot) and proximal (nearer the body) and report your sightings to Liana Zanette (lzanette@uwo.ca).

LINCOLN'S SPARROW*Melospiza lincolnii**Common migrant and uncommon winter visitor*

(2, 0; 35, 2, 3)

At the beginning of the year, in addition to CBC records, there were 7 reports in Jan, 6 in Feb, 4 in Mar and 11 in Apr, the last being Apr 28. In addition there was a very late record of one caught and banded at RPBO in the last week of May (date variously reported as May 25 or 28).

At the end of the year, in addition to CBC records, there 3 reports in Aug (the first being Aug 19), 25 in Sept, 24 in Oct, 8 in Nov and 9 in Dec. 9 were counted in the bramble patches in Panama Hill Park Saanich, on Oct 24, and 5 at the Vantreight bulb fields, Central Saanich, on Dec 2. The large number seen on the Victoria CBC is worthy of note.

SPOTTED TOWHEE*Common resident**Pipilo maculatus*

(191, 224; 846, 336, 161)

A common and familiar resident species. No particular reports were received.

CHIPPING SPARROW*Common summer visitor**Spizella passerina*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 17 to Aug 7.

CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW*Vagrant**Spizella pallida*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 was watched daily by m.o. in a garden at Normandy Drive, Saanich, from Oct 2 to Oct 7. Detailed field notes were obtained and submitted by AL and MR, and excellent close-up photographs were obtained by TA. 1 was seen at Galey Farms, Blenkinsop Road, Saanich, on Oct 28, and this bird, too, was clearly photographed by TA. The identity of the birds in these two photographs is unmistakable.

VESPER SPARROW*Rare summer visitor**Pooecetes gramineus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 was seen beside the golf driving range in Duncan on Apr 19. AL noted that the rufous lesser coverts were evident immediately after the bird opened its wings. There were a few other reports of this species, unsupported by any details.

SAVANNAH SPARROW*Common summer visitor and uncommon resident**Passerculus sandwichensis*

(0, 5; 23, 21, 2)

Only a few were in the Area at the beginning of the year, as attested by the small CBC totals. Apart from these, there were records on Jan 10, Jan 26, Feb 10, Feb 24. The first spring arrivals were noted on Mar 12, but the species was not being generally reported until Mar 20 onwards. The species was plentiful through the summer, but was particularly numerous everywhere from the

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE*Uncommon migrant**Anser albifrons*

(0, 0; 8, 0, 1)

At the beginning of the year there was one on the Sooke GC on Jan 19. A group of seven were seen near Island View Road, Central Saanich on Feb 5, near Blenkinsop Road, Saanich, on Mar 18, and near Martindale Road, Central Saanich, on Apr 1. Since the same number were seen at each location, it is possible that it was one and the same group, though the fairly large separation in dates suggests that this was not necessarily the case.

There was much migratory activity in the last half of April. Thus 80 were seen over Duncan on Apr 11; 12 in a field south of Island View Beach, Central Saanich, on Apr 14; 40 over Colwood Creek Park, Langford, on Apr 15; c300 flew over Sidney on Apr 18; c120 flew over Esquimalt Lagoon on Apr 19; and c100 were at Somenos Marsh, Sidney on April 27.

One was at Tyee Road, Victoria, from May 6 – 13. Seven (the same group as before?!) were on Martindale Flats on May 7. A single isolated lingerer appeared on Swan Lake on June 3, perhaps to remind observers that reports of out-of-season birds should be accompanied by field notes.

Fall migration started with 11 flying over Island View Beach on Sept 9, but didn't really get going until October. Three were on Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, on Oct 5. "Flocks" over Victoria were reported on Oct 16. Three flew over Blenkinsop Lake and 60 over Panama Flats, Saanich, on Oct 28. None were reported in November. Three were on Martindale Flats on December 19. This group had increased to 8 by December 21, staying there until the end of the year.

SNOW GOOSE*Uncommon migrant**Chen caerulescens*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A single bird was reported from Martindale Flats on the unusual dates of May 6 – 11. Observers are reminded always, please, to supply details of out-of-season birds.

24 flew over Viaduct Flats on Oct 16. A flock (number not given) was reported flying over Swan Lake, Saanich, on Nov 16. Two on

Martindale Flats, central Saanich, on Dec 9 finished a rather lean year here for this species.

BRANT*Common spring migrant**Branta bernicla*

(0, 0; 3, 0, 10)

Spring passage was first noted on Feb 11, when 12 were seen off Island View Beach. Smaller numbers, from 1 to 8, were reported from there and from Clover Point and Cattle Point from then until Mar 17. On Mar 18 there was a minor surge in numbers, with 18 seen off the Coburg Peninsula, Colwood, and a much larger surge starting on Apr 1 with 50 off Clover Point and 40 off Cordova Spit. Herds of comparable size were seen throughout the first half of April, with 90 off Island View Beach on Apr 10 and 160 there on Apr 13. Numbers started to drop off after then, with the last sighting reported being 12 off the Coburg Peninsula on May 2.

Three were seen off Ten Mile Point on Dec 16, and 2 were seen in the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the Coho ferry on Dec 28. December records of this goose are uncommon but by no means unprecedented. Details, including field notes, of birds seen outside the spring migration period are always helpful

ACKLING GOOSE*Uncommon migrant**Branta hutchinsii*

(16, 0; 26, 12, 1)

Since this species has been only recently separated from the Canada Goose and is subject to difficulties in accurate identification, field descriptions of birds believed to be of this species are needed. Thus, although 3 were reported from the Blenkinsop Valley on Jan 7, no details were supplied.

A very detailed set of field notes was received of what was clearly one of the races of Cackling Geese in the Blenkinsop Valley on Mar 15. This bird had a narrow white collar at the base of the black neck, and a stubby bill and steep frons, suggestive of the race *leucopareia*.

An excellent close-up photograph of a Cackling Goose at Queens' Park, Oak Bay, on Oct 30 and Nov 1 was obtained by CS. What was probably the same bird was seen and described in close detail at Cattle Point on Nov 5 and 7. Unlike the March bird, this one had no white collar at the base of the neck.

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER*Common summer visitor**Oporornis tolmiei*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

This common warbler, which frequents the outlying hilly areas rarely visited by many observers, was, as in 2005, sadly neglected. The first sighting was on Apr 25, and there were a satisfying number of sightings during the following few days of April and throughout May. However, there were only 3 reports during June, only 1 in July, and 3 in Aug, the last being on Aug 22. While it is probable that the relative scarcity of reports is due mainly to the difficult habitat of the bird and its silence during the heat of the summer, and not to any real rarity, observers are encouraged to seek out and report this species.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT*Common summer visitor**Geothlypis trichas*

(0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 10 to Oct 10. Satisfactory details were supplied of a bird at Swan Lake, Saanich, during the Victoria CBC on Dec 16.

WILSON'S WARBLER*Common summer visitor**Wilsonia pusilla*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Apart from undescribed and unsupported out-of-season reports, records were from Apr 26 to Sept 3.

WESTERN TANAGER*Common summer visitor**Piranga ludoviciana*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 24 to Sept 22. The species was reported widely from throughout the Area during most of this time period. On May 10 there were particularly numerous reports from Victoria and from Duncan. 10 were seen in the relatively small area of Playfair Park, Saanich, on Aug 27.

PALM WARBLER*Vagrant**Dendroica palmarum*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

There were reports of about 8 individuals of this rare species during 2006, some from unlikely and unprecedented times of year. Only two reports, involving 3 individuals, were supported by adequate details. These were as follows. 2 at Panama Flats, Saanich, Oct 22 – 25. MR noted: "Light conditions good. 25 metres. Dark eye-lines with a pale supercilium on brownish birds with yellow under tail coverts. They were pumping their tails."

1 came regularly to a feeder at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, Dec 22 – 29.

IC noted: "10 feet. The bird bobs its tail up and down constantly. Grey all over except for a very bright yellow patch at the undertail. The grey is light, almost whitish, on the underparts and dark on the upper parts. Quite distinct breast streaks and horizontal dark and light grey lines through the eyes. Throat whitish; crown and wings dark grey."

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH*Rare migrant**Seiurus noveboracensis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 at Mount Douglas Beach, Saanich, Aug 13. The observer noted: "Walking by side of stream. Wagging tail like Spotted Sandpiper. Body held horizontally. Small brown bird, perhaps slightly larger than nearby House Finches. Bill sharp (insect-eating style); dark, but exact colour not recorded. Crown, back, mantle, wings, tail, uniform unrelieved dark brown. Broad pale buff (almost whitish) supercilium extending well back behind eye. Sides heavily streaked, the streaks ending abruptly at white under tail. Legs yellow or perhaps flesh-coloured, the pale colour of the legs standing out in obvious contrast to the generally dark brown plumage of the bird. Watched for two minutes at close range in subdued light. 10 x 40 binoculars."

In addition 3 Northern Waterthrushes were banded at RPBO; one of them at an unstated date between Aug 11 and 24; one of them at an unstated date between Sept 1 and 15; and one of them at an unstated date.

Reports of some 66 more birds thought to be Cackling Geese were received during November and December. However, a photograph obtained of one of them proved, on examination, to be a Canada Goose, and no details are available for any of the remainder.

CANADA GOOSE*Abundant resident and migrant**Branta canadensis*

(1225, 629; 3232, 1318, 978)

This species is abundant at all seasons, with huge flocks at many locations throughout the winter. It is probable that several populations, both migrant and resident, are involved. Estimates of flock size were received as follows: 470 at Saanichton Bay Park on Aug 31; 400 on Viaduct Flats on Oct 16; 420 at Blenkinsop Lake on Oct 28; 1500 on Maber Flats on Nov 6, and 400 there on Nov 18. Goslings were first noted, on Maber Flats, on May 5.

MUTE SWAN*Common introduced**Cygnus olor**resident*

(3, 35; 31, 68, 7)

Few observers took note of this introduced species, though counts were made at Esquimalt Lagoon of 20 there on Aug 6, 17 adults and 6 immatures on Sept 23, augmented by one additional adult on Oct 14. Other locations noted were the Sooke River, Cherry Point, and Saltspring Island, although the species, which attracts little observer attention, is undoubtedly present at other locations. Breeding was recorded on Saltspring Island. It was suggested that this may be the first breeding record for Saltspring Island, but this seems unlikely, since Mute Swans have been present there for many years.

TRUMPETER SWAN*Common winter visitor**Cygnus buccinator*

(839, 15; 230, 65, 0)

Few counts of this species were received at the beginning of the year. A group of 21 at Swan Lake, Saanich, on Feb 11, was unusually large for that location. 120 were counted at Martindale Flats the following day. On Mar 18, 40 were noted at Maple Grove Park, Duncan. It seems likely that the species was undercounted in the spring. A single late straggler lingered on the Cowichan River estuary until as late as June 5.

The first fall record was noted, at Quamichan Lake, on October 24. Thereafter small groups of up to five were noted at several locations throughout the Area, until Nov 4. The first relatively large number was 43 at Maber Flats, Central Saanich, on Nov 5, a date on which several small groups were observed in several Saanich locations. By Nov 12, there were 80 at Martindale Flats, growing to 130 on Nov 18 and 150 on Dec 9. About 50 were present at the Galey Farm on Blenkinsop Road, Saanich, throughout December. Forty were counted near Mount Newton Cross Road, Central Saanich, on Dec 26. On Dec 28 there were 200 at Sahilton Road, Duncan. 200 were counted at Martindale Flats on Dec 30, with an additional 20 on the same day at Panama Flats, Saanich.

TUNDRA SWAN*Rare winter visitor**Cygnus columbianus*

(1, 0; 1, 0, 0)

All records received were: 1 on Jan 14 at Sahilton Road, Duncan; 3 on Feb 5 at Cowichan Bay; 1 on Mar 18 at Maple Grove Park, Duncan; 85 on Apr 2 at Cowichan Bay; 1 on May 22 flying over Sooke; 2 on Nov 12 at Martindale Flats, Central Saanich; 1 on Dec 16 during the Victoria CBC; 1 on Dec 26 at McIntyre Reservoir, Central Saanich.

Of these, the Mar 18, Nov 12 and Dec 16 records were unambiguously and clearly documented, including an excellent photograph by DM of the Mar 18 bird. No documentation of any sort of this frequently-misidentified and uncommon bird was offered with any of the other records, and there is accordingly no means by which their accuracy can be assessed.

WOOD DUCK*Uncommon resident and common winter visitor**Aix sponsa*

(6, 0; 74, 0, 0)

This species breeds in the Area but is sometimes quite secretive during the breeding season, although 15 were present on the Duncan sewage lagoons on July 15. One was recorded on Aug 12 at the RPBO, an unusual location for the species. In the winter months, however, fairly large numbers of them congregate and become remarkably tame at some of the suburban duck ponds in Saanich, such as Mystic Pond, Bow Park and King's Pond. 35 were counted at Bow Park on Feb 18; 25 at Mystic Pond on Oct 6; 50 there on Oct

Whether the absence of birds during the summer is due to observer fatigue, unobtrusive manner of the birds at that season, or a real absence of birds, will be clarified as observers continue to make careful observations of this bird.

No observers reported distinctions between the "Audubon's" and "Myrtle" colour varieties of the species. Generally both seem to occur in our Area, often in mixed flocks. While it is generally supposed that the "Audubon's" variety is the commoner of the two, actual relative counts of the two forms would be of interest to determine whether this is really so.

**BLACK-THROATED GREY
WARBLER***Uncommon migrant and summer visitor**Dendroica nigrescens*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All reports were: 1 at Deep Cove, North Saanich; 3 at Munn Road, Saanich; 1 on Mount Douglas, Saanich; all of these on Apr 25. 5 at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, on Sept 20.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER*Common summer visitor**Dendroica townsendi*

(1, 0; 2, 1, 1)

There were several winter and early spring records at the beginning of the year. Those for which good details were supplied were: 1 at Reading Drive, North Saanich, Jan 23 – Feb 2; 1 seen daily in Duncan, Feb 8 – Apr 7; 1 regularly at a feeder at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, Feb 20 – Apr 3. There were 4 additional reports in Jan., 1 in Mar and 1 in early Apr., for which no details were received and for which, therefore, this *Report* cannot vouch.

Spring arrival was generally noted from Apr 21. Fall departure was difficult to document because several birds stayed for the winter. There were 5 records in Oct from Victoria and Duncan; a small number (unspecified) from points in the Saanich Peninsula in Nov; and 4 from the Victoria area and 1 from Ladysmith in Dec., in addition to the 4 recorded on the three CBCs. Some, though not all, of these were well documented. In any case it is evident that a few Townsend's Warblers did spend the winters at both ends of the year with us.

yellow-green of the back extending up to nape. Back orange-olive fading to yellow-green up to nape. Wings blue-grey with two very distinct wing-bars. Tail short, blue-grey with large white spots visible when flying or hovering. Face blue-grey with very prominent white eye crescents above and below. Chin and throat yellow. Breast – speckles of black below throat and rest speckled rufous and yellow. Lores dark. Belly white. Undertail coverts white. Sides or flanks – small patch or yellow or cinnamon."

YELLOW WARBLER*Common summer visitor**Dendroica petechia*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Some out-of-season reports of this species in March were unsupported by details and are omitted from this *Report*. Otherwise records were from Apr 29 to Sept 23.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER*Common migrant and summer visitor; uncommon resident**Dendroica coronata*

(1, 0; 7, 0, 0)

The only winter records received from the beginning of the year were 1 on the Duncan CBC on Jan 1, 1 at Langford Lake on Jan 3, and 1 at Bowker Avenue, Oak Bay, on Feb 21.

Spring arrival was first noted on Mar 11, and by April this species was common and widespread. A sample count in a small area was 25 in Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, on Apr 30. Reports continued into May, but were becoming scarce by the last week of that month. There were only about half-a-dozen reports during June, up to June 24. In July there were reports on July 9, 11 and 17. The only report for August was 1 on Aug 25. Fall migration started on Sept 3 and continued to the end of October, with the greatest numbers being in the last half of September and the first half of October. 20 were counted at Swan Lake, Saanich, on Oct 3, and 15 at Viaduct Flats, Saanich, on Oct 7. Birds were still being seen throughout November, with 10 at the Royal Scot Hotel, Victoria, on Nov 3; 1 at Durrance Road, Saanich, on Nov 5; 1 at Gordon Head, Saanich, on Nov 9; and 2 on Cordova Bay GC on Nov 11. However, most late November records were from Swan Lake, Saanich, where up to 6 birds were seen on many dates from Nov 9 to the end of the month, and continuing to the end of the year.

12, and 60 there on Oct 21. King's Pond seemed to be slightly out of favour for this species this year. While present there in small numbers, they were never in such numbers as to inspire any observers to make a count.

On July 12 a duck and 2 young were easily observable on Blenkinsop Lake.

GADWALL*Common winter visitor**Anas strepera*

(22, 0; 66, 2, 11)

Few records were received of this now common and familiar winter duck. Departure dates were not clearly recorded, though 3 remained at Panama Hill Park and 1 at Interurban Flats, both in Saanich, as late as June 18. Since a pair of Gadwall was also present at the former location in 2005, observers are encouraged to keep a lookout for evidence of breeding.

The first fall arrivals were 2 birds at Albert Head Lagoon on Aug 16.

EURASIAN WIGEON*Common winter visitor**Anas penelope*

(8, 2; 17, 0, 3)

24 Eurasian Wigeon were reported from locations from Ladysmith to Victoria from the beginning of the year until the last spring record on Apr 20. 10 were reported from locations from Sooke to Victoria from Oct 15 to the end of the year. These figures do not include the CBC data indicated in parentheses above. Further, it is presumed that nearly all records are of males, since females are not easy to spot in a mixed herd of American Wigeon, so the number of Eurasian Wigeon in the area might well be double the number actually reported. Reports of females will be welcome, but field notes will be necessary to ensure accurate identification.

AMERICAN WIGEON*Abundant winter visitor**Anas americana*

(3677, 528; 3874, 488, 629)

Records to May 27 and from Sept 3. Several attempts to estimate the sizes of some of the large herds were made, the largest herd being estimated at about 300. Observers are encouraged to count

some of the larger herds; it is expected that some will be found that have many more than 300.

MALLARD *Abundant resident and winter visitor*
Anas platyrhynchos (4848, 987; 5527, 627, 621)

Ducklings were first noted, at King's Pond, on May 6.

Among the larger herds counted was an estimate of 360 on Martindale Flats on Nov 2, and 400 at Esquimalt Lagoon on Dec 2.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Uncommon summer visitor*
Anas discors (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

As in 2005, few reports were received of this species, and it now seems possible that this is as much a result of a real scarcity of the species as of lack of observer interest. A total of just 14 birds were reported between Apr 27 and Oct 7. Locations were Duncan, and in Saanich and Central Saanich, Rithet's Bog, Martindale and Viaduct Flats, and Swan Lake. Observers are asked to report all sightings of this duck.

CINNAMON TEAL *Rare summer visitor*
Anas cyanoptera (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

The only records received were of a pair at Raper's Pond, Saanich, on May 11, and 1 at Rithet's Bog, Saanich, from June 9 to 20. Unless for some reason observers are not recording this bird, it seems as though it is a good deal less common than often thought. Observers are asked to report all sightings of this duck.

NORTHERN SHOVELLER *Common winter visitor*
Anas clypeata (174, 1; 107, 0, 0)

Recorded at the beginning of the year until Apr 22 (6 at Jenkins' Pond, Saanich), and at the end of the year from Aug 28 (12 at Duncan Sewage Lagoon.) The largest count was 30 at Viaduct Flats on Oct 16.

CEDAR WAXWING *Common resident*
Bombycilla cedrorum (17, 95; 116, 0, 0)

This bird is sufficiently common and familiar as to attract little observer attention. The largest flock reported was of 30 at Slack Point, Ladysmith, on Oct 8. The Cedar Waxwing is a much commoner species than the few reports received would indicate. It is, however, much less common in winter than in summer, and reports of winter sightings are encouraged.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER *Common summer visitor*
Vermivora celata (0, 0; 2, 0, 0)

Overwintering reports at the beginning of the year were of 1 at Swan Creek, Pat Bay Highway, on Jan 12, and 1 at Becher Bay, Metchosin, on Jan 14. Other than these, there were records from Apr 8 to Oct 13. Then, from Nov 23 to the end of the year, 1, described with careful and detailed field notes, appeared at a feeder at Dunn Avenue, Saanich. A second, different individual, also carefully described, appeared at the same feeder from Dec 4 to Dec 10.

TENNESSEE WARBLER *Rare migrant*
Vermivora peregrina (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One was banded at RPBO on Sept 4.

NORTHERN PARULA *Rare migrant*
Parula americana (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Although several reports of this species were made during 2006, only one was supported by convincing details. Observers are reminded that, in order to maintain standards of reliability, reports of rare birds are not considered for publication when unsupported by field notes or other evidence. The only convincing record was of a bird seen by m.o. at Swan Lake, Saanich, Oct 2 – 4. A clearly identifiable photograph was obtained by JF, and field notes were supplied by MR and BB. MR: "I saw the broken eye-arcs, the green triangle on the back, the breastband, the white wing bars, white belly and undertail coverts." BB: "Crown blue-grey with a little of the

during the summer in some of the less-visited parts of the Area, and observers are asked to be alert for and to report such sightings.

Fall birds were first noted on Sept 15, and by mid-October they were being seen generally. More than 20 appeared in a small wooded area in Sooke on Dec 17, when there seemed to be a large irruption of the species there.

GREY CATBIRD *Rare migrant*
Dumetella carolinensis (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 at RPBO was caught, banded, photographed, and audio-recorded on June 6.

EUROPEAN STARLING *Abundant resident*
Sturnus vulgaris (6332, 7262; 3926, 1304, 692)

Few reports of this very abundant bird were received, although 700 were estimated at Dunn Avenue, Saanich on Oct 24, and 500 there the following day.

AMERICAN PIPIT *Common migrant and winter visitor*
Anthus rubescens (1, 0; 4, 0, 64)

Documentation of this species is not without difficulty. On the one hand, during the migration season it is often sufficiently common that observers tend to ignore the species, which is consequently undercounted. On the other hand there is some evidence of misidentification of other birds for this species. In spring there were records from Apr 9 to May 23, all records coming from either the Martindale, Island View or Maber areas of Central Saanich. The largest flock counted was an estimated 150 at Maber Flats on May 5.

There were a few out-of-season reports from midsummer, but these were not supported by details and therefore cannot be accepted as established records. Fall migration was first noted when 8 flew over Cattle Point on Sept 8. 40 were over Island View Beach on Sept 10, and 20 were seen at Swan Lake, Saanich, on Sept 28. No October sightings were reported, though 5 were at Martindale Flats on Nov 12, and 1 at Maber Flats on Nov 18. CBC totals are noted above.

NORTHERN PINTAIL *Common winter visitor*
Anas acuta (581, 0; 646, 1, 1)

Few records were received of this duck at the beginning of the year, and spring departure was consequently poorly recorded. The first returning bird was one that appeared at Rithet's Bog on July 4 and was subsequently seen there during much of the remainder of the month. Two appeared at King's Pond on Aug 22. After that the species, although doubtless here in its usual large numbers, was poorly recorded, though a count of about 200 on Maber Flats was made on Nov 18. Large numbers were also noted at Esquimalt Lagoon, Martindale Flats and Panama Flats.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Common winter visitor*
Anas crecca (590, 40; 334, 40, 0)

Last noted in spring on Apr 22, when 2 were still at Jenkins' Pond, Saanich, The first fall record reported was of 1 at Rithet's Bog on July 4. Larger counts included 70 at Tsehum Harbour, North Saanich, on Nov 4; 70 on Panama Flats, Dec 12; and 200 at Sahilton Road, Duncan, on Dec 28.

A bird bearing characters resembling those of the nominate race *crecca* at Maber Flats from Nov 18 -21 was well described. A second bird described as *crecca* was also reported in December, but field notes are apparently not available.

CANVASBACK *Common winter visitor*
Aythya valisineria (23, 0; 58, 0, 0)

Records to Mar 25 and from Oct 24. 60 were noted at Elk Lake on Dec 14, the largest flock reported.

REDHEAD *Uncommon winter visitor*
Aythya americana (0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

One at Elk Lake, Jan 1; 1 well described at Langford Lake, Jan 15; 1 well described at Ridge GC, Saanich, Jan 23 – Feb 5; 1 closely observed for several weeks by m.o. on King's Pond, Saanich, Mar 16 – Apr 21; 2 on Swan Lake, one of which was well photographed by TA, Oct 24; up to 3, Elk Lake, Dec 2 – 14.

This is an unusually large number of records of this uncommon duck, although nearly all of them were well documented. In spite of the large number of good sightings in 2006, observers are asked still to treat this species as a rather uncommon bird, and to document their observations accordingly.

RING-NECKED DUCK*Aythya collaris**Common winter visitor*

(310, 17; 371, 22, 39)

Last reported in spring on May 18. First reported in fall on Oct 3 with a single on Swan Lake, Saanich. By Oct 30 were counted on Viaduct Flats, Saanich. Dozens were reported from many freshwater locations after then. For example, on May 10, 50 were recorded on Tod Creek Flats and a similar number on Maber Flats. 50 were on Elk Lake on Dec 10, and 30 on Blenkinsop Lake on Dec 25.

GREATER SCAUP*Aythya marila**Common winter visitor*

(166, 49; 8, 33, 124)

While the two scaup species can be readily identified if good views are obtained, distant scaup in choppy seas can defeat the most assiduous of observers. In order that we may accurately determine the arrival and departure times, habitat preferences and relative abundance of these two species, observers are requested not to ascribe their observations to one species or another unless they have had good views and are absolutely certain of their identification.

Recorded at the beginning of the year until Apr 21, except for a drake that was seen at Beaver Lake on June 20 and 22. Summer records of both scaup are of great interest, and observers might bear in mind the possibility of breeding. (The scaup, I mean.) The first fall sighting was on Oct 13.

Observations during the year suggest that the Greater Scaup was far less abundant here in 2006 than the Lesser Scaup. The difference in abundance of the two species was evidently much less marked by the CBC numbers – possibly the result of the distant-scaup-in-choppy-seas syndrome?

Records of Swainson's Thrush were reported from May 8 to Oct 5. No indication was given by those who reported birds in late September or October as to how they were identified. Observers are reminded that hard-to-identify birds require field notes.

HERMIT THRUSH*Catharus guttatus**Uncommon winter visitor*

(2, 8; 8, 1, 11)

Including the 10 CBC records, at the beginning of the year there were sightings of 21 birds until Apr 21, the bird on this last date being well described and certain as to species. There was an extremely late report of a single on May 28, and 2 more on June 24. No indication is available to the Editor as to how these late birds were identified. While it is not impossible that a few Hermit Thrushes may breed in the Area, or at least stay during the summer, this cannot be established as long as observers do not take the elementary step of recording how they identify difficult birds at unusual times of year.

The first fall record was on Sept 21. About 20 sightings were reported from then until the end of the year, in addition to the 20 sightings during the three CBCs in December.

AMERICAN ROBIN*Turdus migratorius**Abundant resident*

(2442, 1876; 2583, 725, 554)

A huge roost of probably more than 1000 birds were noted at the foot of Mount Douglas, Saanich, on Jan 20. About 500 were estimated on Mount Wells, Highlands District, Feb 19. Spot-breasted young were first noted on July 4. About 100 flew west to east at Pedder Bay on Sept 29.

VARIED THRUSH*Ixoreus naevius**Common winter visitor*

(72, 87; 176, 33, 60)

Widespread at the beginning of the year until the end of April, with isolated records until mid-May, although a bird remained singing at Mount Douglas, Saanich, until it was last heard on June 20. There was no proof of breeding there, though it must at least be suspected. It is probable that Varied Thrushes might be found

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET *Common winter visitor*
Regulus calendula (96, 175; 285, 71, 108)

Records to May 6 and from Sept 14. Singing first noted on Mar 18.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD *Rare migrant*
Sialia currucoides (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A good year for this species in our Area. All records are: 1 at Whiffen Spit, Sooke, Apr 4. 2 at Victoria International Airport, Apr 15 – 17. 1 at Mount Douglas, Saanich, Apr 19. 1 at Wallace/Maber Flats, Central Saanich, Apr 23. 1 at Victoria GC, May 2 – 3. 1 at Whiffen Spit, Nov 11 – 12, photographed by CP.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE *Uncommon migrant and winter visitor*
Myadestes townsendi (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 on Jocelyn Hill, Highlands District, Feb 11. 1 appeared on Mount Douglas, Saanich, on Apr 5. From then until May 3 several were seen there almost daily, the largest number recorded on one day being 6 on May 3. Some of these Mount Douglas birds were observed to be feeding on the flowers of the Arbutus trees. Apart from Mount Douglas sightings, other reports were: 2 on Observatory Hill (Little Saanich Mountain), Saanich, Apr 11. 1 at Dunsmuir Crescent, Ladysmith, Apr 15 – 18. 1 on Mount Tolmie, Saanich on Apr 18, and 2 there on Apr 24. 1 in Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, Apr 19. 1 in Bow Park, Saanich, Apr 20. 1 on Mill Hill, Langford, Apr 21.

1 on Mount Wells, Highlands District, Dec 29.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH *Common summer visitor*
Catharus ustulatus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

This is a difficult bird to document accurately. Although its song is a familiar sound heard daily during late spring and early summer, it is a difficult bird to see. During fall migration, when it is not singing, it is difficult to distinguish from the Hermit Thrush.

LESSER SCAUP *Common winter visitor*
Aythya affinis (363, 55; 370, 6, 13)

Little attention was apparently given to this duck, other than to note that it appeared to be far more abundant than its Greater congener. Records to Apr 21 and from Sept 13. The earlier fall arrival time of this scaup compared with the Greater Scaup may be a general feature of the two species, but observers are asked to pay special attention to the arrival and departure times and accurate identification of the two scaup.

HARLEQUIN DUCK *Common resident*
Histrionicus histrionicus (0, 72; 124, 29, 28)

Seen commonly around the coast all year. As a consequence of its daily familiarity, no particular information other than CBC data were received. All records were from the sea coast. There were no records from rivers, and no breeding records.

SURF SCOTER *Common winter visitor and uncommon resident*
Melanitta perspicillata (56, 344; 361, 243, 720)

A huge feeding frenzy of c600 was noted in Ladysmith Harbour on Mar 18 apparently as a result of herring spawning. Records at the beginning of the year until June 23, and at the end from Aug 24. However, it is probable that a few individuals of this duck can be seen in the Area throughout the year, and observers are asked to keep a special lookout for Surf Scoters in the summer months. As part of the Coastal Waterbird Survey, one observer counted 1352 Surf Scoters in Cordova Bay on Oct 8. More than 100 were on Royal Roads on Oct 22, and 64 were counted off Cherry Point, near Duncan, on Dec 10.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER *Common winter visitor*
Melanitta fusca (11, 53; 46, 27, 217)

At the beginning of the year, nearly all records were from Cherry Point, near Duncan, where 51 were counted on Jan 8; 20 on Feb 11; and 22 on Mar 9. However, lack of observer interest elsewhere may have accounted for this rather than lack of birds. Nevertheless it is

clear that the species is much less numerous here than the Surf Scoter. There were isolated summer records on June 21 and July 5 and 9, and no further records until Sept 13. 45 were recorded on Cordova Bay on the same day (Oct 8) that 1352 Surf Scoter were counted at the same location.

BLACK SCOTER *Uncommon winter visitor*
Melanitta nigra (0, 0; 2, 2, 0)

This uncommon scoter is occasionally misidentified, and it is sufficiently uncommon that details of sightings would be welcome in order to ensure accuracy. Most records are from offshore on salt water. A few records from freshwater at unusual locations and at an unexpected time of year unfortunately lacked convincing details.

Otherwise reports received of this species were: 2 on Ross Bay, Victoria, on Jan 16; 1 off Island View Beach, Central Saanich, on Mar 12, and 3 there on Apr 8; 1 off Cherry Point, on Dec 12; 2 in the Juan de Fuca Strait, from the Coho ferry, on Dec 28.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Common winter visitor*
Clangula hyemalis (0, 107; 159, 133, 30)

Recorded in spring until Apr 21. The largest counts were 200 off Whiffen Spit, Sooke, on Jan 11, and 35 off Cattle Point, Oak Bay, on Feb 12. Fall return noted on Oct 17. During a Coastal Waterbird Survey on Nov 12, an observer counted 223 on Cordova Bay.

BUFFLEHEAD *Abundant winter visitor*
Bucephala albeola (326, 1139; 1786, 738, 1873)

In winter, seen in large numbers all around the coast around the entire area, as well as in many large and small bodies of fresh water. By late April Buffleheads were becoming scarce, but a very few remained until as late as May 29.

Fall arrival was first reported on Oct 13, though they were not widely reported until about a week after that date.

Some typical counts at selected locations later in the fall include 430 off Island View Beach, Central Saanich, on Nov 2; 150 off Queens' Park, Oak Bay, on Nov 11; 121 off Cherry Point on Nov 12;

WINTER WREN *Common resident and winter visitor*
Troglodytes troglodytes (134, 166; 386, 144, 132)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species, though counts of 10 at Mystic Vale (University of Victoria) on Nov 17, and 20 at Coles Bay, North Saanich, on Dec 17 are of interest.

MARSH WREN *Common resident*
Cistothorus palustris (9, 1; 41, 5, 3)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species. However, it was present in some numbers all year at such places as Rithet's Bog, Blenkinsop Lake and Swan Lake and doubtless at many other suitable habitats in the Area.

AMERICAN DIPPER *Locally common resident*
Cinclus mexicanus (1, 0; 4, 0, 2)

The only records received were from the Goldstream River. Observers are encouraged to find and count this species at other suitable localities, such as the Sooke Rover. Visitors to these localities are now being asked to pay, and this doubtless discourages visitors and hence leads to this species being under-recorded.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET *Common resident and abundant winter visitor*
Regulus satrapa (670, 878; 2046, 646, 196)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species. 10 on Sidney Island on July 23 are of interest, as indeed are any summer records. While this species is abundant in winter, it should be possible to find a few breeding in the Area in summer.

April. Larger flocks began to develop again in August and 70 were noted at Swan Lake on Oct 27. Nest-building was first noted, at Munn Road, on Mar 5.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH *Common resident*
Sitta canadensis (16, 58; 221, 64, 29)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species.

BROWN CREEPER *Common resident*
Certhia americana (24, 43; 132, 16, 31)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species.

ROCK WREN *Rare migrant or winter visitor*
Salpinctes obsoletus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One, seen by several observers, at Island View Beach, Central Saanich, Mar Jan 26 – Mar 26. This bird was photographed clearly by TA and was carefully described by MR.

One, possibly though not necessarily the same bird, at the same place, also seen by several observers, and carefully described, Oct 17 – Dec 30.

BEWICK'S WREN *Common resident*
Thryomanes bewickii (72, 61; 335, 66, 42)

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species.

HOUSE WREN *Common summer visitor*
Troglodytes aedon (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 28 to Oct 4.

100 at Esquimalt Lagoon on Dec 2. The Christmas Count data confirm that this is a very common duck here in the winter months.

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Common winter visitor*
Bucephala clangula (98, 240; 363, 161, 406)

After the first week in April, this duck was becoming scarce, and only a very few were still being seen during the last week in April. The last spring record was May 2.

The first fall record was Oct 30, although only small numbers were seen in November, and the species did not become a familiar and common daily sight until the beginning of December. On Dec 10, 12 were counted off Island View Beach, and c135 off Cherry Point. 50 were off Island View Beach on Dec 30.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE *Common winter visitor*
Bucephala islandica (53, 181; 34, 52, 77)

To observers who have restricted their activities to the Victoria waterfront and its immediate vicinity, this is a decidedly uncommon bird. Over the Area as a whole, however, records show that, while Barrow's Goldeneye is clearly not as abundant as the Common Goldeneye, it is not at all an uncommon species, though perhaps local, and in some areas it may even be more numerous than the Common Goldeneye. It is not uncommon, for example, along the west coast of the Saanich Peninsula from Brentwood Bay north, in the Goldstream River estuary, and around Duncan and Ladysmith, and there were also records from the Sooke River. For the pleasure of those who keep to the Victoria waterfront, one remained at Haynes Park, Oak Bay, until Apr 4.

The last spring record was Apr 9, and the first fall record was Nov 12, both at Cherry Point, near Duncan. Some of the larger counts, apart from Christmas Count data, were 21 at Pat Bay on Jan 22; 13 at Brentwood Bay on Mar 26; 15 at Cherry Point, on Mar 26, and 18 there on Dec 10.

HOODED MERGANSER*Common resident**Lophodytes cucullatus*

(99, 82; 701, 75, 111)

Present throughout the year in saltwater and freshwater habitats. A favoured spot for these birds is Queens' Park, Oak Bay, where 20 were counted on Aug 22 and again on Nov 11.

COMMON MERGANSER*Common resident**Mergus merganser*

(162, 62; 749, 41, 105)

Although this merganser is known to breed in the area, it is disappointing that no records were received for the breeding season. However, there were some good counts of winter flocks, including the following.

110 were in The Gorge, Victoria, on Mar 8; 35 off Tower Point, Metchosin, on Sept 18; 58 off Island View Beach, Central Saanich, on Oct 14; an impressive 750 on Quamichan Lake on Nov 13; and 200 on Elk Lake on Dec 10.

Although the winter flocks of this merganser prefer freshwater lakes to the sea, records show that they by no means eschew saltwater. The Tower Point, Island View Beach and Esquimalt Lagoon locations are all saltwater, while The Gorge is brackish.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER*Abundant winter visitor**Mergus serrator*

(20, 792; 498, 340, 416)

All records of this winter visitor were, as usual, from salt water. Most birds had gone by the end of April, though a few stragglers remained until May 17. Summer records of this bird are most unusual and must be supported by adequate documentation. Nevertheless, as in 2005, there was a single June report, this time of an injured bird from Sooke, brought to WILDARC for treatment on June 10.

In the fall, the first "early bird" was noted on Sept 23, but October birds were very scarce, and it was not until the beginning of November that the bird was regularly seen on a daily basis.

Some of the larger counts included: 110 off Sayward Beach, Saanich, on Jan 3; 448 in Cordova Bay, Saanich, on Feb 11; 30 in

the species. Observers are asked to pay special attention to this bird, to determine if it really is as rare as received records would indicate.

BARN SWALLOW*Abundant summer visitor**Hirundo rustica*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Several of these birds, some seen perched and at close range by m.o., were at Blenkinsop and Swan Lakes, Saanich, between Jan 22 and Feb 21. These birds appeared to be young birds without the long tail streamers typical of fully adult birds, but were seen well and closely enough to be certain of their identity.

General arrival was noted from Mar 11, an exceedingly early date for this species, which is not normally to be expected much before mid-April. While some observers feel that numbers of Barn Swallows on this continent are becoming diminished, the Barn Swallow is surely one of the most abundant passerine birds to be seen in our Area throughout the summer. On the evening of July 2, the Editor saw an astonishing gathering of what he estimated to be some 2000 Barn Swallows flying over Swan lake or perched in the surrounding cattails, not including countless others in the surrounding fields.

The last Barn Swallows reported were on Sept 16 in Saanich, and Sept 18, from Duncan.

CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE*Common resident**Poecile rufescens*

(368, 640; 1633, 483, 467)

No particular records were received of this common and familiar resident species, although high numbers were noted in a garden at Dunn Avenue, near Swan Lake, Saanich, in September, indicating some possible local movement at that time of year.

BUSHTIT*Common resident**Psaltriparus minimus*

(132, 321; 1274, 299, 165)

A flock of 45 at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, was noted on Jan 22. The observer noted that the winter flocks, typically of c30 individuals, started to break up in March, generally only pairs being seen in

were 2 at Swan Lake, Feb 14. Unfortunately it is also known that Barn Swallows were in that area at the same time, and that some observers were confusing the species. This underlines yet again the importance of field notes for out-of-season birds. When a bird is reported as two different species by different observers, and no details are supplied, there is no basis by which an Editor can decide to accept the report from one observer rather than another.

General arrival in numbers was noted from Mar 11. Then and in the next few days some dozens were noted at Blenkinsop Lake and Munn Road. Fall departure, too, was difficult to determine, partly, doubtless, owing to an inadvertent omission of the species from the bird migration calendar, and also there is some evidence that young Tree Swallows are occasionally mistaken for other species. No sightings were reported after July 23

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW *Abundant summer visitor*
Tachycineta thalassina (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Violet-Green Swallows were reported from Swan Lake in the last week in January, at the same place and about the same time as two other species of swallow were reported. The Editor has no means of determining whether or not all were correctly identified, and can only remind observers once again that details must be supplied of any out-of-season reports of nonresident birds.

General arrival was noted by Mar 7. Departure dates were not noted.

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW *Common summer visitor*
Stelgidopteryx serripennis (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 19 to Aug 29.

CLIFF SWALLOW *Uncommon summer visitor*
Petrochelidon pyrrhonota (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 21 to July 20. It is possible that, as several species of swallow become a common and familiar sight during the summer, this species is being overlooked, for few observers reported

Bazan Bay, Central Saanich, on Oct 30; 53 off Cherry Point on Nov 12; and 100 off Clover Point, Victoria, on Dec 28.

RUDDY DUCK *Uncommon winter visitor*
Oxyura jamaicensis (275, 0; 4, 0, 2)

The Christmas Count data show that Duncan is clearly the stronghold of this species. In the south of the Area sightings are sufficiently infrequent to cause some excitement when one is spotted. At the beginning of the year, in spite of 275 on the Duncan Christmas Count, only a single bird was reported from the south of the Area, namely 1 at Viaduct Flats, Saanich, on March 17. In the fall, either they were more evident or observers were more alert, for there were records of about 16 birds from Sept 28 to the end of the year. These included several at Swan Lake, Saanich, from Sept 28 to Nov 17, peaking at 8 there on Oct 15; 4 at Elk Lake, Saanich, on Dec 10.

CHUKAR *Rare introduced resident*
Alectoris chukar (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One, doubtless introduced by hunting interests, was photographed by EPI on Mt Tzouhalem on Apr 12.

RING-NECKED PHEASANT *Uncommon introduced resident*
Phasianus colchicus (0, 1; 4, 0, 0)

The only record, apart from the scanty Christmas Count data, received of this bird in the entire Area during the entire year was of 4 at Hastings Road on Apr 11. While this paucity of reports no doubt partly reflects lack of interest in an introduced game bird, it is also probable that it is now becoming a genuinely scarce bird. Observers are asked to report all sightings of this species.

RUFFED GROUSE *Rare resident*
Bonasa umbellus (0, 1; 0, 0, 0)

The only record received was of a single bird on the Saltspring Island Christmas Bird Count on Jan 2.

SOOTY GROUSE*Rare resident**Dendragapus fuliginosus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Observers are asked to note that the former "Blue Grouse" has now been divided into two supposedly distinct species, and that "our" bird is now called the Sooty Grouse. Whatever its name, it is evident, from reference to the ABRs for 1970-72, that it is a very much scarcer bird than it was 35 years ago. Nevertheless, a few birds remain. All records received were: 1, Mt Wells, Mar 21; an undetermined number, Mt Prévost, Apr 18; 1, Spectacle Lake, Apr 21; an undetermined number, Mesachie Hill, Lake Cowichan, May 8; and 3 adults and 3 young on Mt Wells, June 23.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL*Common resident**Callipepla californica*

(148, 83; 210, 43, 132)

No particular records, apart from CBC data, were received of this common and familiar bird.

RED-THROATED LOON*Common winter visitor**Gavia stellata*

(0, 10; 18, 1, 19)

Records to Mar 12 and from Nov 11. Only a few records were received, mostly from Cherry Point and Island View Beach. This species was probably under-recorded. To correct this, observers are asked to report all sightings.

PACIFIC LOON*Common winter visitor**Gavia pacifica*

(0, 86; 32, 38, 39)

Recorded fairly regularly until Apr 25. After that, 2 sightings in May, 2 in June and 2 in September. By October it was being seen regularly again. No large flocks were reported, and no reports came from Active Pass.

SKYLARK*Uncommon introduced resident**Alauda arvensis*

(0, 44; 13, 8, 0)

In 2006, apart from CBC records, this bird was reported *only* from the Vantreight bulb fields, Central Saanich. Numerical counts reported from there were: 39 on Jan 2; 127 on Nov 29; 40 on Dec 1; 115 on Dec 2. It seems likely that this introduced bird will eventually be extirpated from Vancouver Island. Observers are particularly asked to reports sightings at locations in addition to the Vantreight bulb fields.

HORNED LARK*Uncommon migrant**Eremophila alpestris*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All records reported were:

1 on Mount Douglas, Saanich, Apr 11. 2 on Brackman Island, near Sidney, Aug 25.

1 at Esquimalt Lagoon, Colwood, Sept 13. 2 at Clover Point and 1 at Esquimalt Lagoon, Sept 14. 4 at Clover Point, Sept 21. 12 on Mount Douglas, Sept 22. 1 at Clover Point, Sept 23.

1 photographed by MO'S at Cattle Point, Oct 16. 1 at Clover Point, Oct 25 -31.

PURPLE MARTIN*Common summer visitor**Progne subis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 17 (when 1 appeared at Ladysmith Harbour) to Sept 1. Reports of 10 or more birds together were: 20 at Ayum Creek, Sooke. 12 over Sidney Island, July 23. 11 over Cordova Bay, July 31. 20 at Pat Bay, Aug 15.

TG reports that 175 nesting pairs were distributed in 13 colonies from Sooke to Chemainus. 417 nestlings were banded.

TREE SWALLOW*Common summer visitor**Tachycineta bicolor*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Difficulty of identifying distant early swallows in dull light and cold and windy weather makes it difficult to determine arrival dates. The first birds reported (although undescribed) as Tree Swallows

birds that are seen in these months. A few were reported from Sooke on July 6, and a large flock, including young, were seen there on July 13. There were a few isolated sightings in early August, but Aug 26 marked the start of a large irruption of this bird. On that date, 23 were seen on Wain Road, North Saanich, and the following day 46 were counted at the same locality, and a further 37 at Cordova Bay, Saanich. By mid-September, several observers were reporting "many" from widespread locations, mostly around the Saanich Peninsula. On Oct 12 an observer noted a "major irruption" in Sooke, and large numbers persisted throughout the Area until the end of the year.

BLUE JAY *Rare migrant*
Cyanocitta cristata (0, 0; 0, 1, 0)

One, well described, was reported from Wain Road, North Saanich, Oct 8 – 9. Possibly (but not necessarily) the same bird was seen by m.o. at West Saanich and Tapping Road, in the Pat Bay area, North Saanich, from Oct 28 to Dec 17. There are also reports of probably the same bird in this area from early in 2007, so doubtless it was present until at least the end of 2006. Excellent photographs of the bird were obtained by AN and MY, and a video recording of the bird was obtained by EPe and shown on television.

NORTHWESTERN CROW *Abundant resident*
Corvus caurinus (937, 638; 6150, 447, 386)

Seen everywhere in large numbers throughout the Area. A concentration estimated at about 1000 was noted at Swan Lake, Saanich, at dusk on Aug 9.

COMMON RAVEN *Common resident*
Corvus corax (231, 67; 304, 70, 149)

Seen everywhere throughout the Area. While often seen in groups of half-a-dozen or so, occasionally some quite large flocks are seen. Reports of 20 or more together in 2006 were as follows. 80 flying from Island View Beach to James Island at dawn, Apr 4. 60 over Mount Work, Apr 1. 22 over Rocky Point and Happy Valley Roads, Metchosin, Sept 22. 110 over Hartland Hills, Oct 18. 40 over Mount Work, Dec 4.

COMMON LOON *Common winter visitor and uncommon resident*
Gavia immer (1, 76; 22, 74, 32)

Summer plumage was first noted on Mar 25. 43 were counted in Cordova Bay on Oct 8. Otherwise no records were received of this species. While it can be seen on any day in winter, it would be interesting to know how often it is seen in the summer months.

PIED-BILLED GREBE *Common resident*
Podilymbus podiceps (8, 10; 76, 4, 16)

This bird is a familiar sight on most of the larger lakes and on a few smaller bodies of water, and occasionally at sea (for example 1 at Brentwood Bay on Feb 11, and 1 off Mt Douglas Beach on Aug 23). Several observers were treated to the easily observable sight of two youngsters riding on the back of a parent in the first week of April on Blenkinsop Lake. 15 were counted on Swan Lake on Oct 10, and 10 on Elk/Beaver Lakes on Dec 10.

HORNED GREBE *Common winter visitor*
Podiceps auritus (2, 73; 46, 135, 269)

Records to May 26 and from Sept 4.

While this grebe is undoubtedly not nearly as abundant as it was two or three decades ago, and is almost absent from much of the Victoria waterfront, records show that elsewhere in the Area it is still by no means an uncommon bird, and may even be making a slight comeback compared with recent years.

All counts received of 10 or more birds at a given locality were:

15 at Cherry Point on Mar 9; 10 off Tower Point, Metchosin on Mar 11; 15 off Cherry Point on Sept 4; 125 on Cordova Bay on Oct 8; 24 off Cherry Point on Oct 15; 44 there on Nov 12 and 41 on Dec 10; 10 in Coles Bay on Dec 17. No counts were received from Pat Bay, generally a good location.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Common winter visitor*
Podiceps grisegena (1, 49; 42, 12, 67)

Records to May 17 and from Aug 20. This grebe is usually seen singly. Counts of 10 or more at a single location were 20 in the San Juan Strait seen from the *Coho* ferry on Oct 22, and 10 on Royal Roads on Oct 28.

EARED GREBE *Uncommon winter visitor*
Podiceps nigricollis (0, 2; 13, 0, 0)

Other than Christmas Count data, the only reports of this bird during the year were 1 in Cordova Bay on Nov 12; and 3 there on Dec 10. Cordova Bay is a favoured locality for this species. Nevertheless, in view its relative rarity and its similarity to the Horned Grebe, brief notes on observations of it will always be helpful.

WESTERN GREBE *Uncommon winter visitor*
Aechmophorus occidentalis (0, 41; 89, 43, 1720)

Records to May 17 and from Sept 17.

General impressions in recent years have been that this grebe has become quite scarce in our Area. It is therefore encouraging that there were numerous reports of large numbers of this grebe in 2006. Its winter local flocking habits result in some observers finding the birds scarce, while others find it common, depending on whether they visit the areas carrying the winter flocks.

One of the better known of the larger flocks is the wintering group on Royal Roads, where several observers reported figures near the beginning of the year of more than 100, the largest number being a careful count of 210 on Feb 19. 21 were counted in West Bay, Victoria, on Jan 21. 70 were counted on Royal Roads on Dec 2, and 17 at Ogden Point on Dec 27. Smaller numbers were reported at various locations around the coast, from Whiffen Spit, Sooke, to Cherry Point, near Duncan. No information was received on the exact location of the enormous numbers reported on the Saltspring Island CBC.

HUTTON'S VIREO *Common resident*
Vireo huttoni (1, 5; 0, 1, 3)

Recorded in all months except June. Records from throughout the Greater Victoria area and the Saanich Peninsula. as well as from Duncan. No reports from the west of the Area.

WARBLING VIREO *Common summer visitor*
Vireo gilvus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from May 9 to Sept 16.

RED-EYED VIREO *Uncommon to rare summer visitor*
Vireo olivaceus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

The first credible report of this uncommon bird was of 1 at Cowichan Bay Road on May 30, and 5 there the following day. Although there were reports of the species before that date, such reports were not supported by details. It is very unusual to find this bird before June. All additional records received were: One was in a garden in Sooke on June 6. One at Haro Woods, Saanich, and 1 at RPBO on June 12. One at Somenos Lake, Duncan, on June 14. One at Swan Lake, Saanich, June 16 – 26.

GREY JAY *Rare winter visitor*
Perisoreus canadensis (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One on Mount Prévost, Duncan, Apr 18. Up to 4 there May 3 and 10. Seen by m.o. and photographed by DA.

STELLER'S JAY *Common resident and irruptive winter visitor*
Cyanocitta stelleri (93, 44; 534, 194, 177)

At the beginning of the year this bird was seen regularly until about mid-April. No reports were received after Apr 17 until July 6. While the species usually leaves urban areas in the summer, it is unlikely that they were completely absent from the Area in May and June, and observers are asked to keep a look out for and to report

EASTERN KINGBIRD*Rare migrant**Tyrannus tyrannus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One at RPBO, June 6 and 12. 1, Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, June 11, observer unknown. Three at Blenkinsop Lake, seen by m.o., June 12. One of these birds was photographed by TA. One, seen by m.o. and well described by MR, at Puckle Road, central Saanich, June 23 – 26. One at Aylard's Farm, East Sooke, June 28. Because this bird is fairly easy to identify, all reports received are published. However, except in those cases specifically noted above, not all sightings were documented and consequently leave themselves open to question. Observers are reminded that rare birds require careful documentation.

NORTHERN SHRIKE*Uncommon winter visitor**Lanius excubitor*

(2, 0; 9, 1, 2)

All records in addition to the CBC records are: 1, Wain Road, North Saanich, Jan 3. 1 near Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, Jan 7. 1, Puckle Road, Central Saanich, Jan 8 and 18. 1, Maber Flats, Central Saanich, Jan 22. 1, Island View Road, Central Saanich, Feb 6. 1, Viaduct Flats, Saanich, Mar 17. 1, McHugh Road, Central Saanich, Mar 18. 1, Puckle Road, Mar 28.

1, University of Victoria, and 1, Whiffen Spit, Sooke, Oct 9. 1, Martindale Flats, Central Saanich, Oct 13. 1, Holland Point, Victoria, and 1, Island View Beach, Central Saanich, Nov 1. 1 between Island View and Martindale Roads, Nov 12 and 18, and Dec 3. 2 there on Dec 30. 1, Swan Lake, Saanich, Nov 17 – 18 and Dec 8 and 25. 1, Puckle Road, Dec 19.

CASSIN'S VIREO*Common summer visitor**Vireo cassinii*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Mar 19 to Sept 23. A pair is believed to have nested in Mount Douglas Park, Saanich.

FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL*Rare migrant**Oceanodroma furcata*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A bird found on April 15 in poor condition at Weir's Beach, Metchosin, was taken to WILDARC for treatment, but it subsequently died.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN*Very rare vagrant**Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One was seen at Esquimalt Lagoon on July 8. Several other reports of this species during the year were not accompanied by convincing details, and at least some of them may refer to the Brown Pelican, of which there were several documented records during the year.

BROWN PELICAN*Rare migrant**Pelecanus occidentalis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A few reports of pelicans, variously described as unidentified pelicans or as White Pelicans, seen near James Island in the last few days of May, may well have been, in fact, Brown Pelicans. One reported as a Brown Pelican (though undescribed) was seen off Clover Point on June 4. One was reported from RPBO on July 23.

Starting on Aug 30, when 5 were seen at Esquimalt Lagoon, there was a veritable invasion of this species. 1 was seen off Baynes Road, Ten-mile Point, Saanich, on Sept 13. Between Nov 10 and Nov 29 up to 4 were seen on Race Rocks and recorded on the webcam installed there and photographed by MO'S and PB. One was seen in the Goldstream estuary, Nov 22-23, where it was photographed by RWCh. This bird subsequently died. 1 was seen off Ten-mile Point on Nov 25. 1 was seen at Metchosin Lagoon during the Victoria CBC on Dec 16. 1 was at Ogden Point from Dec 20 – 29. One (possibly but by no means necessarily the same bird) was at Clover Point also from Dec 20 – 29. Two were there on Dec 27, and were photographed by DB, a spectacular photograph of these two birds appearing in the *Victoria Times-Colonist* of Dec 28. One (again possibly but not necessarily one of the same birds) was at Gonzales Bay, Oak Bay, on Dec 23.

BRANDT'S CORMORANT *Common migrant and winter visitor*
Phalacrocorax penicillatus (0, 77; 866, 79, 1269)

This bird is fairly common but not easy to identify (except in breeding plumage) without making a special effort. These two characteristics result in only a moderate amount of observer interest (other than during the CBC), and consequently it is not easy to keep precise records of its comings and goings. At the beginning of the year there were records until April 21, and then four isolated reports in June and July. The first fall record was on Sept 24. The largest flock reported other than during the CBC was a flight of 150 birds off Clover Point on Nov 15. Observers are reminded that sometimes large concentrations of these cormorants can be seen in Active Pass (no reports from that area were received in 2006) and that sometimes close views and easy identification can be made inside the Ogden Point breakwater.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT *Common resident*
Phalacrocorax auritus (407, 279; 759, 221, 629)

Anecdotal opinions that this species is becoming scarcer than in former years do not seem to be supported by CBC and other counts. Paradoxically the Double-crested Cormorant appears to be sufficiently common all year in both saltwater and freshwater habitats that few observers take special note of it. 120 were noted in Esquimalt Lagoon on Oct 18, and 80 off Cattle Point on Dec 25.

PELAGIC CORMORANT *Common resident*
Phalacrocorax pelagicus (0, 156; 456, 87, 183)

No particular information was received of this species in 2006. This is doubtless merely an indication that it is a common and familiar species throughout the year.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER *Common summer visitor*
Empidonax traillii (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Recorded from May 11 to Aug 28, apart from a single late record on Sept 14. Difficulty of identification of non-singing late-summer *Empidonax* flycatchers makes it difficult to determine departure dates precisely.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER *Common summer visitor*
Empidonax hammondi (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 25 to Sept 22. 7 were seen or heard on Little Saanich Mountain (Observatory Hill) on Apr 27.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER *Vagrant*
Empidonax oberholseri (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One caught, banded and photographed at RPBO, May 28. Other reports of this species during 2006 were unsupported.

PACIFIC-SLOPE FLYCATCHER *Common summer visitor*
Empidonax difficilis (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 13 to Sept 22. An unidentified *Empidonax* was seen at Dunn Avenue, Saanich, on Oct 8.

WESTERN KINGBIRD *Uncommon to rare migrant*
Tyrannus verticalis (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 seen by m.o. at Blenkinsop Road golf driving range, Saanich, May 18 – 21. One, possibly but not necessarily the same bird, at Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, May 25. One, caught, banded and photographed at RPBO, June 3. One, Willingdon Road, North Saanich, June 21. One at Royal Roads University, Colwood, June 9. One at Island View Beach Park, Central Saanich, Aug 30 – 31.

NORTHERN FLICKER*Common resident**Colaptes auratus*

(14, 127; 409, 98, 153)

As a common resident bird, this species is not often reported on. Nearly all of our birds are "Red-shafted" Flickers. However, observers are encouraged to report birds that appear to bear some or all of the characters of the "Yellow-shafted" races. In 2006, such reports were as follows. One reported on Mar 17 as a "Yellow-shafted" individual near Swan Lake, Saanich. One on Mount Tolmie, Saanich, had both malar streaks completely black and a grey crown (characteristic of a "Yellow-shafted" bird), but no red on the nape, while its wing-linings were the familiar red of the "Red-shafted" birds. One, near Swan Lake on Oct 10 had many of the characters of the "Yellow-shafted" Flicker, including a red crescent on the nape, yellow under the tail, grey cap and brown face. Two at Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, on Oct 28 each had red malar streaks but yellow under the wings and tail.

PILEATED WOODPECKER*Common resident**Dryocopus pileatus*

(2, 15; 31, 10, 2)

Spectacular though this bird is, it is sufficiently common and familiar that few observers submitted records, but it seems to be generally distributed in suitable forested habitat throughout the Area.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER*Common summer visitor**Contopus cooperi*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Recorded from Apr 28 to Sept 2.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE*Uncommon summer visitor**Contopus sordidulus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Recorded from May 11 to Aug 28.

AMERICAN BITTERN*Rare migrant**Botaurus lentiginosus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

An American Bittern was present at Swan Lake, Saanich, from Sept 1 to the end of the year. It was frequently seen by m.o., and two observers submitted detailed field notes. Two were reported there on Oct 1 and Oct 16. In view of the secretive nature of the American Bittern, it is possible to speculate that two may have been present through much of the last four months of the year.

GREAT BLUE HERON*Common resident**Ardea herodias*

(34, 67; 115, 22, 19)

20 were reported from Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, on May 5, but no systematic count was reported of the large heronry there, which is believed to contain close to 100 nests. Six active nests were watched at Mystic Pond, Saanich. 35 Great Blue Herons were reported from Sidney Island on July 23.

GREAT EGRET*Rare migrant**Ardea alba*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One was seen at Cowichan Bay on May 6. One was photographed at Witty's Lagoon, Metchosin, Aug 27 – 28.

GREEN HERON*Uncommon, occasionally breeding, summer visitor**Butorides virescens*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All 2006 records are: 1 at Somenos Marsh, Duncan, on Jan 5; 1 there on Apr 22; 1 at Somenos Creek on May 5; 1 at McIntyre Reservoir, Central Saanich, on May 21; 1 at Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, May 23 to June 11; 1 at Holmes Lake, Duncan, on May 23; 1 at Swan Lake, Saanich, June 11 – 25; 1 at Art Mann Park, Duncan, on July 10; 1 at King's Pond, Saanich, on Aug 10; 1 at McIntyre Reservoir, Aug 21 – Sept 6; and 1 at Blenkinsop Lake on Sept 5.

TURKEY VULTURE*Common summer visitor and migrant, occasional resident**Cathartes aura*

(0, 0; 5, 0, 7)

All winter records at the beginning of the year were as follows: 1, North Saanich, Jan 1; 2, Esquimalt Lagoon, Jan 3; 1, Rocky Mountain Road, Metchosin, Jan 14; 1, Kerryview Drive, Saanich, Feb 2; 2, Sooke, Mar 1; 5, Mount Wells, Mar 11; 1, Munn Road, Saanich, Mar 12; 1, Sooke, Mar 16.

From Mar 20 onwards they were seen daily through the spring and summer. A pair was seen mating at Bear Hill, Saanich, on Apr 1.

The first moderate-sized migrating kettle in late summer was 26 birds over Martindale Flats, Central Saanich, on Aug 9. The first large kettle reported was 340 over East Sooke on Sept 14, followed by: 375 over Pedder Bay, Sept 22; 350 over Aylard's Farm on Sept 24; 300 over East Sooke Park, Sept 25; 450-500 over Pedder Bay, Sept 29; 350 over Aylard's Farm, Oct 3; 200 over Pedder Bay, Oct 7. No large flocks were reported after that, but sightings of up to 4 birds at a time were reported on several dates until the last 2 birds of the year on Dec 9.

OSPREY*Common summer visitor**Pandion haliaetus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

The first sighting of the year appears to be 1 over Mill Hill Park on Mar 20. By Mar 30 a pair was observed at the nest near the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, Colwood. Nests were also observed at Edward Milne School, Sooke; West Saanich Road, North Saanich; and the University of Victoria. Apparently there were 3 young at the Sooke nest, none of which survived; 1 young fledged successfully at the University of Victoria.

BALD EAGLE*Common resident**Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

(79, 35; 169, 38, 48)

The only data received on this common and familiar bird were 15 at Active Pass on Feb 23; 12 there on Oct 18; and 14 there on Dec 24. Regrettably, no data were received from the Goldstream estuary.

trunk. Over all black and white plumage [white on black] with a wide wing stripe identified it as a sapsucker. I had it in my binoculars for perhaps 20 seconds. A profile and back view showed a red crown, red throat and a black and white striped face. These field marks eliminated the Red-breasted species. The red throat joining the white below the eye indicated that this was a Red-nape not a Yellow-belly."

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER*Uncommon resident**Sphyrapicus ruber*

(8, 2; 15, 3, 2)

Reports of this sapsucker during 2006 were too numerous and widespread for individual listing. The species was reported from all months except for August, and it was found during all 5 CBCs. Reports were received from Sooke, Langford, Colwood, Metchosin, Florence Lake, Spectacle Lake, Shawnigan Lake, Duncan and Ladysmith. One observer in Sooke was fortunate enough to watch the successful fledging in June of several young from a nest near to his house, and a nest with 5 young was found in May at Otter Point.

DOWNY WOODPECKER*Common resident**Picoides pubescens*

(17, 22; 130, 31, 25)

There were no specific reports of this common and familiar resident, other than the CBCs, which show that the numbers of this woodpecker remain healthy.

HAIRY WOODPECKER*Common resident**Picoides villosus*

(14, 17; 18, 5, 9)

This woodpecker is not seen nearly as often as the Downy Woodpecker, and it is more often (though by no means exclusively) seen in rural rather than urban areas. It was recorded in all months except Apr and Sept, though with just 1 sighting in May. Three semi-urban areas where it was seen more or less regularly through much of 2006 were the campus of the University of Victoria, the Ten-mile Point area, and Mount Douglas Beach Park. An interesting record is one seen on Sidney Island on July 23.

spots apparently being Pedder Bay and Rithet's Bog. Most sightings were of not more than half-a-dozen birds at a time, though 20 at Aylard's Farm, East Sooke, were notable. Details concerning some huge flocks in unprecedented numbers reported from areas frequented by swallows are lacking. Strangely, only 1 report was received from August.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD *Common resident*
Calypte anna (8, 23; 323, 33, 21)

This bird is now a common and familiar sight in Victoria, and it would be difficult to spend a morning birdwatching without seeing several of them. It is also established, though not yet in very large numbers, in Sooke and in Duncan. No sightings were reported this year from Ladysmith.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD *Common summer visitor*
Selasphorus rufus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Mar 22 to Aug 6. It seems unlikely that there were no birds in the Area after that date. Observers are encouraged to make use of the Calendar described in the Introduction to enable them to determine departure dates of migratory species.

BELTED KINGFISHER *Common resident*
Ceryle alcyon (13, 23; 40, 22, 24)

As is to be expected of common resident birds, no particular reports were received of this species. The CBC data show that it is fairly common and widespread throughout the Area.,

RED-NAPED SAPSUCKER *Rare migrant*
Sphyrapicus nuchalis (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Several supposed sightings of this very rare vagrant were reported during the year. Only one sighting was supported by adequate details. One was seen on the campus of the University of Victoria on Apr 24. Field notes by DS: "I was on the path where the Oak Bay compost dump used to lie when a woodpecker flew across in front of me and landed just above eye level on a dead Douglas-fir

NORTHERN HARRIER *Uncommon to common migrant*
Circus cyaneus (4, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Reports of what were probably 39 different birds from widely scattered areas throughout the Area, distributed by months as follows:

Jan: 5	July: 1
Feb: 0	Aug: 5
Mar: 1	Sept: 5
Apr: 1	Oct: 10
May: 2	Nov: 8
June: 0	Dec: 1

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK *Migrant and winter visitor*
Accipiter striatus (3, 2; 13, 5, 8)

In addition to the 31 birds reported during the three CBCs held in the Area, reports of what were probably 38 different birds from widely scattered locations throughout the Area, were distributed by months as follows:

Jan: 3	July: 2
Feb: 0	Aug: 1
Mar: 1	Sept: 5
Apr: 1	Oct: 5
May: 0	Nov: 6
June: 1	Dec: 3

It is problematical, however, how many of these birds were actually Sharp-shinned Hawks rather than Cooper's Hawks, since field notes were lacking for most of them, there was confusion of dates (as to summer month) from different sources, and, in addition to the records cited above, three instances of *Accipiter* identification (involving all three North American *Accipiter* species) during the year were found, on investigation, to be erroneous. The Sharp-shinned Hawk, which is a frequently- and easily-misidentified bird, is believed to be a migratory species, unlike the resident Cooper's Hawk, but arrival and departure dates and even its status as a migratory species will remain uncertain as long as observers continue to fail to supply details of their sightings.

That said, six of the above records may be recorded with little or no doubt as Sharp-shinned Hawks: 2 in Jan and 2 in Sept found injured and treated at WILDARC; 2 seen in Saanich in October and

well described by the observer. The remaining 63 must remain questionable. It may be noted that the six certain records were from winter and fall. None were from the summer

COOPER'S HAWK *Common breeding resident*
Accipiter cooperii (2, 8; 43, 10, 7)

As with many familiar common resident birds, no significant information was reported on this species, which can be seen almost daily in suitable habitat throughout the year.

RED-TAILED HAWK *Common breeding resident*
Buteo jamaicensis (15, 13; 39, 14, 22)

As is usual for common resident species, few reports were received.

Reports were made of several additional species of *Accipiter*, *Buteo* and *Aquila* during the year. One is known to have been erroneous; no details, or inadequate details, were received on the remainder.

AMERICAN KESTREL *Uncommon migrant and winter visitor*
Falco sparverius (2, 5; 3, 1, 0)

Recorded in all months except, strangely, May. Not including CBC data, reports were as follows: One present on Wain Road, North Saanich, from Jan 1 - Mar 6. One at John Road, North Saanich, Jan 2 - 4. One at Puckle Road, Central Saanich, Jan 6 - 18. One, Mount Newton Cross Road, Central Saanich, Feb 5 - 14. One or two at West Saanich Road from Mar 18 to Aug 12; on Apr 18 two were seen there *in copulo*. One at Somenos Marsh, Duncan, Apr 1. One photographed on Mount Douglas, Saanich, Apr 21. 2, Cordova Spit, Central Saanich, July 24.

21 records of separate birds in Sept, and a further 8 records to the end of the year.

(2 were seen there on that date), Nov 18, Dec 16 and Dec 30. 1 at Panama Flats, Saanich, Oct 28. An injured bird was brought, from an unrecorded location, to WILDARC for treatment on Oct 31. 1 was seen at Swan Lake, Saanich, on Nov 10, 12, 18 and 22. 1 was seen and photographed at Somenos Marsh, Duncan, on Nov 15. 1 was seen at Clover Point on Nov 29 and Dec 1.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL *Rarely seen but apparently locally common migrant*
Aegolius acadicus (0, 1; 0, 0, 0)

1 was seen and photographed in the courtyard of the Victoria Public Library Nov 20. Details are not available of one recorded on the Sidney/Saltspring Island CBC on Jan 2, or of additional birds reported as Saw-whet Owls during the year.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK
Chordeiles minor (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from June 3 to the end of August, apart from 2 stragglers over Oak Bay on Sept 22 and a very late record of a single bird over Mount Tolmie on Oct 13. Most reports, and all reports of 12 or more birds, were from July. On July 23, 63 were counted over Colwood Creek Park, and others were reported on the same day from Cordova Bay and from Duncan.

BLACK SWIFT *Uncommon summer visitor*
Cypseloides niger (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All reports were: A large group over Quamichan Lake, Duncan, May 26. 5 at Rocky Point on May 26 and June 2. 6 over Ladysmith, July 18 and 19. 2 there on July 24 and 30. 12 over Pedder Bay on Sept 15. 3 there on Sept 22. A very late (undescribed) bird over Pedder Bay on Oct 7.

VAUX'S SWIFT *Uncommon summer visitor*
Chaetura vauxi (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Records from Apr 24 to Sept 25. All records were from Sooke, Metchosin, Oak Bay and Saanich, the most regular and dependable

within the formal boundary of the southern Vancouver Island birdwatching area (i.e. within the Canadian border), though it cannot have been far outside. Readers may choose according to taste as to whether this record "counts"; we merely record the occurrence.

BARRED OWL*Common resident**Strix varia*

(1, 2; 10, 0, 1)

Recorded in all months except August. It is difficult to assess the exact number of different individual birds that were seen (perhaps about 40), but there seem to have been approximately twice as many reports of this owl as of the Great Horned Owl. 3 nests were reported on, compared with 2 for the Great Horned Owl. WILDARC received 10 injured Barred Owls for treatment, compared with 3 Great Horned Owls. It could be argued that the more numerous reports of Barred Owls are a reflection of its more diurnal habits than the very nocturnal Great Horned Owl, but it is in any case evident that the Barred Owl is unquestionably one of our two commonest owls. Sightings were widespread throughout the region, with records from Sooke, Colwood, Metchosin, throughout the Saanich Peninsula, and Ladysmith.

LONG-EARED OWL*Rare migrant**Asio otis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 at King's Pond, Saanich, on Oct 25. 1 at Swan Lake, Saanich, Dec 30 - 31. This is a very rarely seen bird in our Area. The first was seen by a single observer, and the second by four observers. One set of field notes was obtained for the first bird ("Slim owl with long eartufts close together on head"), and two sets for the second bird. While neither owl permitted sufficiently clear and prolonged views to allow for great detail in the submitted field notes, both owls were seen sufficiently well to leave no doubt about the identification as Long-eared Owls.

SHORT-EARED OWL*Uncommon migrant**Asio flammeus*

(0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

At least 6 birds (possible multiple sightings prevent an exact count) were seen between Oct 12 and the end of the year. 1 was seen at Martindale Flats, Central Saanich, on Oct 12, Nov 3, Nov 12

MERLIN*Common migrant and winter visitor**Falco columbarius*

(3, 2; 13, 4, 3)

As in 2005, and perhaps surprisingly, there were no sightings in May of either Merlin or American Kestrel. Otherwise numbers of sightings of individual Merlins reported by month were as follows:

Jan: 1	July: 8
Feb: 3	Aug: 8
Mar: 3	Sept: 9
Apr: 8	Oct: 14
May: 0	Nov: 3
June: 2	Dec: 4

Observations suggestive of possible breeding in or near the Area were as follows (exact localities suppressed). Nuptial display observed near the north of the Area, Apr 5. Two adults accompanied by two begging young in Saanich, July 11. An adult with two young in the Sooke area, Aug 10.

PEREGRINE FALCON*Common resident**Falco peregrinus*

(5, 2; 9, 0, 4)

Recorded in all months of the year. Other than CBC records, monthly totals were

Jan: 3	July: 6
Feb: 3	Aug: 4
Mar: 3	Sept: 4
Apr: 1	Oct: 11
May: 3	Nov: 5
June: 5	Dec: 5

The most recent provincial Government 5-year survey by DDD, in 2005, revealed that there are about 20 active nests in the area, of which most pertain to the race *anatum*. A comparable survey was not carried out in 2006; however, a bird was photographed at the nest in the Highlands district on June 11. (Exact locality and photographer initials withheld.)

Details are not available of other *Falco* species said to have been seen during the year.

VIRGINIA RAIL*Uncommon resident**Rallus limicola*

(6, 0; 6, 0, 1)

Records from all months except Nov, when the birds were presumably present but secretive and silent. Records were from Langford Lake, Rithet's Bog, Blenkinsop Lake, Quick's Bottom, Swan Lake, Viaduct Flats and from unspecified locations in the Duncan area. Rithet's Bog and Quick's Bottom proved as usual to be the most reliable places to find this species. However, Swan Lake was particularly prolific, with up to 7 heard there during the first and second weeks of Oct. Disappointingly, no evidence of breeding was reported.

SORA*Uncommon summer visitor**Porzana carolina*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All records were: 1 at Rithet's Bog, Saanich, Apr 11 – July 25; 1 brought to WILDARC for treatment, from an unrecorded location, Aug 18; 1 at Swan Lake, Saanich, Sept 22 – Oct 3.

AMERICAN COOT*Common winter visitor**Fulica americana*

(463, 0, 299, 4, 3)

Records to May 4 and from Sept 3, although it was not until about a week later than this that coots were being generally observed. An unusual record of two on salt water in Cordova Bay was noted on Oct 10. 150 were counted on Elk/Beaver Lake on Dec 10. Counts of the large winter flock on this lake are welcome. No evidence of breeding was reported.

SANDHILL CRANE*Uncommon migrant**Grus canadensis*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

2006 was an exceptionally good year for local records of this bird. The first sighting was of 1 over Happy Valley Road, Metchosin, May 8. From May 17 to July 3 there were numerous sightings from widespread locations, and it was not clear exactly how many birds were involved in total. Two were at Martindale Road, Central Saanich, one was at Victoria International Airport, and 12 flew over Mount Tolmie, in the period May 17 – 23. One was seen from

nestlings were reared, was in North Saanich. Exact nesting localities are withheld.

SNOWY OWL*Rare winter visitor**Bubo scandiacus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Seven reports of Snowy Owls were reported during the year, though some of these were from inexperienced observers who may not have been completely familiar with the species, and in the absence of details it cannot be determined which can be relied upon. Two reports, however, are acceptable. 1 was seen by experienced observers on Trial Island on Jan 8 and 9 and again on Jan 25. 1 was recorded on webcam on Race Rocks on Nov 15.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL*Rare resident**Glaucidium gnoma*

(0, 1; 0, 0, 1)

Reliably recording occurrences of this species is difficult because not all observers are supplying details of their observations. Some reports are based on aural detections only, and it is difficult to assess their reliability. Observers must be aware that, however confident they may be in their identifications, the Editor also receives questionable reports, and cannot distinguish between the questionable and the certain when no details are supplied. Consequently, undocumented reports are not listed here.

That said, several records were unquestionable, and are as follows: 1 was found on Goldstream Heights Road on Mar 13, and was photographed by TA. 1 was found near Shawnigan Lake on Apr 8, and was also photographed by TA. From Apr 24 to June 21 a pair was found by EPe at a nest in a location in Saanich, and they, too, were photographed by TA. One was banded at RPBO at an unstated date between Aug 11 and 24. On Oct 31 an injured bird, found at an unrecorded locality, was brought to WILDARC for treatment.

BURROWING OWL*Rare migrant**Athene cunicularia*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 was seen in Sept and photographed by BJ on board the *Alaska Ocean* in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. It cannot be determined with certainty that at the time of the observation the ship was actually

Highlands 8; Langford 1; Duncan 37; Ladysmith 10. Breeding was suspected in Konukson Park, in the Ten Mile Point area of Saanich.

MOURNING DOVE

Uncommon resident

Zenaida macroura

(0, 19; 22, 6, 0)

All but two records of this species are from Central Saanich, where it is fairly frequently encountered. The most frequent reports were from the Vantreight bulb farm on Central Saanich Road, and the Puckle Road, Island View Road, Welch Road, Martindale Road area of Central Saanich. It was recorded throughout the year and throughout the municipality, counts of 20 or more being: 23 in the 7000 block, East Saanich Road, Jan 8; 40, Wallace Drive, Oct 23. Young were noted on June 24 at Puckle Road. The only reports of a Mourning Dove outside the municipality of Central Saanich were 1 bird at Panama Flats, in the neighbouring municipality of Saanich, on Oct 25; and 1 at Pat Bay, North Saanich, on Dec 3.

BARN OWL

Rare. Resident?

Tyto alba

(0, 1; 3, 0, 0)

Records for 2006 show that this very nocturnal owl may not be as scarce as commonly supposed. In addition to the CBC results, records were as follows. 1 heard at Welch Road, and another at Ridgedown Place, both Central Saanich, on Jan 14. 1 at Quick's Bottom, Saanich, where one has reportedly been for several years, on May 21. 1 on Dallas Road on the Victoria waterfront, July 1 and 2. Exciting photographs of this bird being mobbed by crows were obtained by DE. 1 was killed by a Great Horned Owl near the RPBO on Aug 5. 1 was seen at Mays Road, Duncan, on Nov 13. 1 was seen at Layritz Park, Saanich, where it is said to be seen "often", on Dec 30.

GREAT HORNED OWL

Common resident

Bubo virginianus

(6, 9; 12, 6, 3)

Recorded in all months except November, from approximately 14 well distributed locations throughout the Victoria area and the entire Saanich Peninsula as well as Sooke, Duncan and Ladysmith, though no reports were received from the Metchosin. Reports of two nests were received. One was in a Saanich park and the other, where 3

RPBO on May 25, and 3 were at the Vantreight bulb fields, Central Saanich, on 27. Two flew over Atkins Avenue, Langford, on June 6.

Four were at Glen Meadows GC, North Saanich, on June 8, and what may have been the same four birds were seen on several dates at John Road, North Saanich, from June 11 – July 3.

After that, there was a brief respite until Sept 13 when 1 appeared over Saxe Point, Esquimalt; 15 over Mills Cross Road, North Saanich; and 6 at the Vantreight bulb fields, Central Saanich. From then until late October, all records were: 4 at East Sooke, Sept 14; 13 over Francis Street, Duncan, Sept 21; 4 at Pedder Bay, Sept 22; 12 over Sahilton Road, Duncan, Sept 27; 2 at Panama Flats, Saanich, Oct 1; 5 at Pedder Bay, Oct 7; 3 at Martindale Flats, Central Saanich, Oct 7 – 15, and what may have been the same 3 birds at Viaduct Flats, Central Saanich, Oct 16; 3 at Summit Hill, Victoria, and 17 at Pedder Bay, Metchosin, Oct 17; 3 in the Blenkinsop Valley, Saanich, Oct 22, and what may possibly have been the same 3 birds at Martindale Flats, Central Saanich, on Oct 23 and at Panama Flats, Saanich, on Oct 24.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER

Common migrant and winter visitor

Pluvialis squatarola

(0, 0; 27, 4, 0)

June was the only month in which there were no records of this bird. The last stragglers of the spring stayed on until May 14, while the first returning migrants were a group of 7 on Chatham Island on July 6. That is, there was only a scant eight weeks during which there were no records. The most reliable places to find the Black-bellied Plover in the winter appear to be various places along the Victoria waterfront, particularly the foot of Bowker Avenue, Oak Bay. No very large numbers were recorded in any one location, the largest group being 12 at Cattle Point, Oak Bay, on Nov 8.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER

Rare migrant

Pluvialis dominica

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER

Rare migrant

Pluvialis fulva

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

On account of the difficulty of distinguishing these two species in the field they will be treated together unless clear evidence, such as

carefully-recorded field notes, are provided of one species or the other.

There were only two records of golden plover reported during the year. One, on Trial Island on Apr 22, was reported as *dominica* but was undescribed. The second record was from Cowichan Bay on May 5, the observer being unable to determine with certainty which species was involved. Observers might note, when reporting one or other of two very similar species, that it is more valuable to state, if it is so, that the bird could not be identified with certainty as to species, than to report it with no supporting details as one or other of the species.

SEMIPALMATED PLOVER *Uncommon migrant*
Charadrius semipalmatus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Spring passage was brief, sightings being confined to the period from Apr 19 to May 14, a total of probably not more than about 6 birds in all. Most were from seafront locations such as Clover Point and Esquimalt Lagoon, though there was one inland sighting, from Maber Flats, Central Saanich, on May 5.

Returning migration in late summer was more prolonged and involved many more birds. The first sightings were of a few at Chatham Island on July 6 (10 there on July 10). After that they were apparently seen sufficiently regularly that observers ceased to report all individual sightings, but records came from Whiffen Spit, Witty's Lagoon, Sidney Island, and, especially, Island View Beach, Central Saanich, where a group of 18 were reported on Aug 27, diminishing over the next few days until the last sighting of 7 there on Sept 1. There were no reports from elsewhere after that date.

KILLDEER *Common resident*
Charadrius vociferus (31, 5; 14, 41, 25)

Downy young were first noticed at Maber Flats, Central Saanich, on May 5. This common resident attracted little attention from observers, though 15 at Vantreight's bulb fields, Central Saanich, on July 23, and 30 at Parker Beach, Saanich, on July 29, are worthy of note.

although a few remained to the end of the year to be records on two of the CBCs.

TUFTED PUFFIN *Rare migrant*
Fratercula cirrhata (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

There was an unconfirmed sighting of 1 off East Sooke Regional Park on May 18. 1 was reported from Pedder Bay on June 3. 2 were seen off Sooke on several dates from June 15–23. 1 was off Secretary Island, Sooke, Aug 18. Observers are reminded that this is a rare bird, and all reports should be accompanied by field notes. None of the 2006 reports was so accompanied, and not all reports were entirely above suspicion of misidentification. In the absence of field notes, there is no means of distinguishing questionable from unquestionable reports.

ROCK PIGEON *Common resident*
Columba livia (278, 698; 888, 440, 93)

No records were received of this common, introduced feral species, which is common in urban and suburban areas, but probably not elsewhere. It is good to see a daily flock at Clover Point, many in original "Rock Dove" plumage, even if only to receive hand-outs from visitors, for rocky sea-coast was the original habitat of the ancestors of this long-domesticated bird.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON *Uncommon resident*
Patagioenas fasciata (1, 14; 0, 0, 0)

The great majority of sightings of this bird continue to come from the East Sooke and Pedder Bay area, where flocks of 50 or more are a frequent sight. Thus, 50 were seen over Pedder Bay on Sept 15; 200 over Aylard's Farm, East Sooke, on Sept 24; 35 over East Sooke Park on Sept 25; and 65 over Pedder Bay on Oct 6.

However, records were by no means restricted to that area. Thus 70 were seen over Cordova Bay, Saanich, on Sept 17. Individuals or small numbers were also reported during the year as follows, by approximate numbers per municipality: Victoria 1; Oak Bay 2; Saanich 18; Central Saanich 9; North Saanich 20; Metchosin 2;

reports were of one or two (often the latter, since this species habitually occurs in pairs), though 20 were reported off Race Rocks on June 4, and, as the CBC figures above show, an encouraging number were seen on the Saltspring Island CBC. If this alcid is not being under-reported, then there must be very serious concern about what was once here a very common bird. Observers are asked to take particular note of all sightings of this species.

ANCIENT MURRELET *Uncommon migrant and winter visitor*
Synthliboramphus antiquus (0, 0; 1720, 16, 55)

At the beginning of the year the Ancient Murrelet was recorded on five dates, the last being Feb 13. There was one undocumented out-of-season record in May, but nothing further until Nov 3, when 7 were seen off Ogden Point. From then on, throughout Nov and Dec, the species was plentiful off Victoria waters, as attested by the huge number seen during the Victoria CBC. On Dec 28, 280 were counted in the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the *Coho* ferry.

CASSIN'S AUKLET *Rare winter visitor*
Ptychoramphus aleuticus (0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

Four Cassin's Auklets were reported during the year, though two of them were at unlikely dates, and indeed there were unresolvable ambiguities as to the dates on which they were said to have been seen. The only clear and unambiguous record of this rare alcid was the single recorded on the Victoria CBC on Dec 16, supported by careful and detailed field notes, again illustrating the usefulness of field notes in reporting rare birds.

RHINOCEROS AUKLET *Common nonbreeding summer visitor and uncommon nonbreeding resident*
Cerorhinca monocerata (0, 0; 11, 0, 2)

The first report of the year was on Mar 14, when 1 was seen off Clover Point. By April this summer alcid had become a daily sight. 200 were counted off Race Rocks on June 2. By Oct they were beginning to become scarce, although 20 were seen on Royal Roads on Oct 14. After that, there were only a few scattered records,

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER *Common resident*
Haematopus bachmani (0, 4; 21, 10, 32)

Among the larger groups of this common resident to attract observer attention were 30 counted at Esquimalt Lagoon on Aug 29; 35 there on Sept 11; 43 there on Sept 23; 37 at the foot of Rutland Road, Oak Bay, on Oct 22; and 30 there on Oct 30.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Common summer visitor*
Actitis macularius (0, 0; 4, 1, 0)

The only winter sighting reported at the beginning of the year was one at an unstated location on Jan 15. The first spring record (possibly an overwintering bird) was one at Albert Head Lagoon on Mar 23. After that, there were no further sightings until Apr 10 (1 at Tower Point, Metchosin) and Apr 27 (2 at Witty's Lagoon, Metchosin). After that they were reported regularly until Sept 26. From coastal areas in numbers from 1 to 6, the larger numbers and more regular sightings coming from Bazan Bay (Central Saanich), Mount Douglas Beach and Parker Beach (Saanich), Sidney Island, and Albert Head Lagoon. After that there were single sightings on Oct 8 and Nov 1, but no further winter sightings other than 5 on two of the CBCs. Observers seeking this bird in winter might try Albert Head Lagoon and Parker Beach.

Few inland and no successful breeding records were reported. A rather unsuccessful breeding attempt was noted on Maber Flats on May 21, when a pair in a moment of inattention while *in copulo* were caught by a Red-tailed Hawk.

Observers trying for evidence of breeding might try some of the fields of Central Saanich *at night*, or the marshy surrounds of Langford Lake.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER *Uncommon migrant*
Tringa solitaria (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

All records are: 1 at Somenos Marsh, Duncan, Apr 22; 1 at RPBO, May 20; 2 at Rithet's Bog, Saanich, seen by m.o. and photographed by TA, July 19-25; 1 at RPBO, Aug 16; 1 at Tomlinson and Prosser Roads, Central Saanich, Aug; 1 at King's Pond, Saanich, Aug 26; 1 at King's Pond, Sept 23 – 29.

This uncommon species is occasionally misidentified, so observers are reminded that details of their sightings would be helpful. The Rithet's bird was photographed and good field notes were obtained of both King's Pond occurrences.

WANDERING TATTLER*Uncommon migrant**Heteroscelus incanus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

One at Ogden Point from May 15 – 21, July 20 – Aug 19, and Sept 19. It is possible that this was one bird that was there during the entire period. Two were seen there on July 30 and Aug 13. One observer made a prolonged study and made detailed field notes in order to determine which tattler was involved, and concluded that it was indeed *incanus*.

**GREATER
YELLOWLEGS***Common migrant and winter
visitor; perhaps uncommon
nonbreeding resident**Tringa melanoleuca*

(0, 0; 8, 1, 0)

Few records were received of this familiar species. While it is certainly with us all winter, reports for late May, June and early July are of interest in order to determine without ambiguity whether some birds can indeed be found all year. In 2006 it was not clear whether birds were present in late May or early June, but there were records from June 26 onwards.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS*Common migrant**Tringa flavipes*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Partly owing to some technical problems, little information is available on this species for 2006, except that spring passage was very brief, in the first week of May, while fall passage was prolonged, from Aug 16 to Oct 14. Aug 16 is rather a late date for a first fall sighting, and it is possible that some earlier sightings went unreported. Likewise, Oct 14 is rather a late date for a last fall sighting, and lack of supporting details makes it difficult to assess this record.

Observers are asked to record all sightings of this species in order to make amends for the above-mentioned technical problems, and to

bird, and well illustrate the importance of setting down field notes when an unusual bird is encountered: "Small, slim jaeger; neat, smallish black cap; throat yellow wash and no dark bordering band; central tail feathers very long and pointed, about one third of body length; no white wing patches when the bird flew."

COMMON MURRE*Common migrant and winter visitor**Uria aalge*

(0, 7; 9938, 7, 5254)

While at least a few birds were probably present all year, strangely no reports were received by the *ABR* for the month of August. It is suspected that the Common Murre was rather under-reported, and consequently it is not easy to make useful statements about its occurrence in 2006. More information on the Common Murre would be welcome. Counts of 50 or more in one location were as follows: 100 off Clover Point, Feb 13; 308, Cordova Bay, Sept 10; 50, Royal Roads, Sept 25. 3 injured (oiled?) birds were treated by WILDARC, in Sept, Oct and Dec.

PIGEON GUILLEMOT*Common resident**Cephus columba*

(0, 77; 120, 92, 27)

Breeding plumage first noted on Feb 15. Counts of 50 or more in one location were as follows: 160 off Turgoose Point, Central Saanich, Aug 20; 50 off nearby Saanichton Bay Park (possibly the same group), Aug 25; 283 in Cordova Bay, Oct 8.

MARBLED MURRELET*Uncommon migrant and
winter visitor**Brachyramphus marmoratus*

(0, 7; 11, 0, 51)

Very few records of this bird were reported in 2006. When few reports are made of a species, it is sometimes a matter of "familiarity breeds contempt"; that is, the bird is seen so often every day that it seems to be not worth reporting. Alternatively it could be that the bird is genuinely rare. In the 2005 *ABR* it was speculated that the species was under-reported, the implication being that it was really more common than reports indicated. The fact remains, however, that no reports of Marbled Murrelet were received during the entire months of Mar, Apr, May, Oct and Nov, and during the remaining months it was reported on no more than 15 days. Most of these

Esquimalt Lagoon and Billings Spit, other localities where Caspian Terns were reported from were: Ogden Point, Victoria GC, Cattle Point, Cadboro Bay, Island View Beach, Cordova Spit, Saanichton Bay, Shoal Bay, Sidney Island, Pat Bay.

The tern appears to be quite aggressive towards other species, and, as in 2005, there were reports of aggression towards large raptors. Thus on July 9, 2 were aggressively and persistently attacking a Bald Eagle at Island View Beach, and on the same day 3 were harassing Ospreys at Esquimalt Lagoon.

COMMON TERN

Rare fall migrant

Sterna hirundo

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

ARCTIC TERN

Status unknown

Sterna paradisaea

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

These two species must now be regarded as rarities. While observers continue to neglect to report details on how they have identified the birds they see, these two species, among the most notoriously difficult bird pairs to separate, will be treated together. In 2006, the only report received was of two birds, undescribed, at Sidney Spit on June 9.

PARASITIC JAEGER

Rare fall migrant

Stercorarius parasitica

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

There was a report of 1 bird, undocumented, at Whiffen Spit on May 25. May records of jaegers, while not unprecedented, are very unusual, and observers are reminded, again, that field notes must accompany reports of birds seen outside their usual season. September reports were: 1, Cordova Spit, Sept 5; 1, Loon Bay, Oak Bay, Sept 8; 2 in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, seen from the *Coho* ferry, Sept 24.

LONG-TAILED JAEGER

Rare migrant

Stercorarius longicaudus

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

There was an extraordinary record of this very rare jaeger in a most unusual habitat, namely a small inland farm reservoir on Wallace Drive, Central Saanich, on Sept 4. Seen by 3 observers, the following notes by BB leave no doubt as to the identification of this

take special care to supply details of unusually early or unusually late birds.

WHIMBREL

Common migrant and uncommon winter visitor

Numenius phaeopus

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Unusually, there was only one record, at an unstated location, of Whimbrel in the first three months of the year, on Jan 5. The first appearance in the spring seems to have been 1 at Clover Point on Apr 8. 2 were there on Apr 15, and from 1 to 4 were on Victoria GC on most dates from Apr 15 – 19. By Apr 27 there were 12 on Victoria GC, this number steadily increasing until 33 were counted there by May 14. There were 2 at Esquimalt Lagoon and 3 on a ploughed field next to Martindale Road, Central Saanich, on May 13. 4 were at Esquimalt Lagoon on May 15. By May 17 the flock on Victoria GC was down to 5 birds, and no further birds were seen there after that date. A few sightings continued elsewhere in June and July, with 1 at Race Rocks on June 4, and 3 there on June 7; 1 at Loon Bay (Oak Bay) on July 29 and 1 at Clover Point the following day.

There were no August records. From 1 to 3 birds were seen almost daily at Cattle Point or nearby Rutland Road, Oak Bay, from Sept 6 to Oct 31. There were no Nov or Dec records.

All sightings for which locations were given were from the Victoria or Oak Bay waterfront or offshore islands, except for the Martindale birds in May.

LONG-BILLED CURLEW

Rare migrant

Numenius americanus

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

1 was reported from the Duncan golf range on Apr 19. 1 at Martindale Flats on May 18. 1 at RPBO on May 31. 1 at Race Rocks on June 4. The May 18 bird was seen by several observers, one of whom provided brief but convincing field notes. No details were received of the other reports of this rare and occasionally misidentified species.

MARBLED GODWIT*Uncommon migrant**Limosa fedoa*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Up to 4 birds were seen regularly at Victoria GC from Apr 16 to May 7. 1 at Clover Point on Apr 22 may have been one of these birds, or an additional one. 4 were at Witty's Lagoon, Metchosin, on July 30. 2 were seen at RPBO at an unstated date between July 28 and Aug 3. 1 was at Willows Beach, Oak Bay, on Sept 25 and 26, and either this or an additional bird was at the foot of Bowker Avenue, Oak Bay, on Sept 26. One was at Gonzales Bay, straddling the Oak Bay /Victoria boundary, from Oct 8 to Nov 7. This last bird was photographed by AN.

RUDDY TURNSTONE*Uncommon migrant**Arenaria interpres*

(0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

2 were at Clover Point on May 2. 3 were reported from RPBO on May 19. 1 was reported from Tower Point, Metchosin, May 21; 1 from Clover Point, July 26; 2 from Chatham Island, Aug 13; 3 from Race Rocks, Aug 19; 1 from Clover Point on Oct 19. One was on Little Chatham Island during the Victoria CBC on Dec 16.

One of the May 2 birds was photographed by TZ. Satisfactory field notes were made of the Dec 16 birds and a photograph of one of them was obtained by ML. No details are available of the other reports. Observers are reminded to supply field notes of rare and uncommon birds.

BLACK TURNSTONE*Common migrant and winter visitor**Arenaria melanocephala*

(0, 125; 132, 48, 46)

Records to May 4 and from July 22. Observers are asked to keep a look-out for this species between these dates. Several flocks of 40 or more birds were reported from widespread locations during the last four months of the year. The largest single count received was of 107 birds between Holland and Clover Points, Victoria, on Oct 27.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL*Abundant resident**Larus glaucescens*

(2475, 2104; 6254, 788, 913)

This is the most abundant of our larger *Larus* gulls, and may serve as a good example of the adage "familiarity breeds contempt". Apart from the CBC data, the only deliberate count showing a notable large number was a count of 605 in Cordova Bay during a Coastal Waterbird Survey on Sept 11.

GLAUCOUS GULL*Uncommon winter visitor**Larus hyperboreus*

(1, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A Glaucous Gull was reported on the Duncan CBC on Jan 1; at Beverly Road, Duncan, on Feb 8; at Cowichan Valley Secondary School on Apr 2; and at Duncan sewage lagoon on Apr 3. It is possible that these sightings refer to the same individual bird. Good field notes were received on the Feb 8 sightings, including such details as the pink bill with black tip typical of an immature Glaucous Gull. No details were received of a second bird, seen in the Goldstream Estuary on Dec 28 – 29. Although the Goldstream Estuary is a frequently-recorded location for this species, yet again it has to be emphasised that all reports of uncommon or rare birds must be supported by field notes.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE*Rare migrant**Rissa tridactyla*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A sick bird was picked up in Michigan Street, Victoria, on Feb 5, and taken to WILDARC for treatment.

CASPIAN TERN*Common nonbreeding summer visitor**Sterna caspia*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

This now-common tern was reported from widespread locations in the south of the Area from Apr 26 to Sept 11. Most reports were from Esquimalt Lagoon, where half-a-dozen or so could be seen on most days, though 17 were counted there on July 30. However, the largest number reported from a single locality was 50 at Billings Spit, Sooke, on June 15. This locality is perhaps not visited by birdwatchers as often as some other localities, but it is usually a very reliable place to find Caspian Terns in good numbers. In addition to

SLATY-BACKED GULL*Rare migrant**Larus schistisagus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

A large dark winged and dark mantled gull was closely observed and 23 photographs were obtained by CS at Clover Point on Oct 13. The observer reported this as a Slaty-backed Gull and noted: "Large gull, very dark mantle, pink legs, dark streak through eye, Nonbreeding plumages. When it raised its wings you could see the subterminal spots towards the tips."

The Editor and two independent referees have carefully examined three of the best photographs, and, while 100% certainty cannot be reached, it seems that the bird was indeed most likely a Slate-backed Gull. Of the possible alternatives that were considered, only two black-backed species could not be eliminated with total certainty, namely a Western Gull with much darker wings than are typical of local Western Gulls, but consistent with more southerly populations, and a Great Black-backed Gull. Unlikely (and unprecedented) though the latter may be, it had to be considered because of the apparent very large size of the Oct 13 gull in the photographs. An apparently diagnostic feature of the Slaty-backed Gull is the "string of pearls" pattern on the wings. While this is not quite as clear-cut on the photographs as might be wished, it is felt that, when all factors are considered, this bird was indeed most likely a Slaty-backed Gull.

WESTERN GULL*Uncommon winter visitor**Larus occidentalis*

(3, 0; 7, 0, 16)

This, like the Herring and Thayer's Gulls, is another of the common large *Larus* gulls which some observers find to be more trouble that they are "worth". Consequently, little systematic information is received. The CBC data probably give a fairly accurate estimate of the relative abundance of these three species. The birds typically reported locally as "Western Gulls" have wings and mantles scarcely much darker than the other two species, and some observers consider them to be hybrids.

SURFBIRD*Common migrant and winter visitor**Aphriza virgata*

(0, 0; 12, 7, 36)

Records to May 2 and from July 30. Winter flocks were generally a little smaller than those of the Black Turnstone, none larger than 27 being reported. It also seems not to have been so widespread; most reports were from Clover and Cattle Points.

SANDERLING*Common winter visitor**Calidris alba*

(0, 1; 16, 21, 1)

Records to Apr 24 and from Sept 13. Although not all observers reported the locations from where they reported this species, it is probable that all reports refer to a flock that frequented Ogden Point and (probably the same flock) occasionally at Clover Point. From Feb to Apr the flock was up to 10 birds, and in Dec up to 20 were counted. Observers are asked to keep an eye open for birds at other locations in addition to Ogden and Clover Points.

WESTERN SANDPIPER*Abundant migrant**Calidris mauri*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

The brief spring passage was from Apr 19 to May 14. The much longer fall passage appeared to start in a rush on July 2 with no reports before that date, and widespread reports of many birds on that date. The last credible report was on Sept 30. A few reports after that date were not fully convincing.

LEAST SANDPIPER*Abundant migrant**Calidris minutilla*

(0, 0; 1, 0, 0)

The brief spring passage was from Apr 17 to May 20. The much longer fall passage appeared to start in a rush on July 4 with no reports before that date, and widespread reports of many birds on that date. The last credible report during the fall migration months was on Oct 8. However, one was carefully observed and described by experienced observers BW and ML on Chatham Island during the Victoria CBC on Dec 16, for the first acceptable CBC record for the Area.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER*Uncommon migrant**Calidris bairdii*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

3 were seen on Cordova Spit on May 17, and 1 there the following day. 1 on Chatham Island, July 19. From 1 to 3 were seen on the stretch from Island View Beach to Cordova Spit, Central Saanich on several dates between Aug 17 and Sept 10 inclusive. 3 were seen at Witty's Lagoon on Aug 24. 3 were reported from Willows Beach, Oak Bay, on Sept 14. This species, although regular, is sufficiently uncommon that field notes on sightings would be helpful.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER*Common migrant**Calidris melanotos*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

There were surprisingly few reports of this bird, and none in the spring. The few reports received could refer to only two individuals. 1 was at Rithet's Bog, Saanich, on Aug 4, and one was reported from McIntyre Reservoir, Central Saanich, on several dates from Sept 4 to 22. This is an unusually small number of reports of this sandpiper.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER*Rare migrant**Calidris acuminata*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Two occurrences of this rare sandpiper were reported in 2006, both of which were well documented and seen by several observers. One was at Cordova Spit, Central Saanich. Sept 18 and 19. Good field notes, obtained in good light at close range were obtained. The rufous cap and white supercilium indicated that this was a young bird. The second occurrence was at Viaduct Flats, Saanich, from Oct 14 to 16. Field notes were also obtained of this bird, and it was clearly photographed by MG and videotaped by EPe.

ROCK SANDPIPER*Uncommon winter visitor**Calidris ptilocnemis*

(0, 0; 2, 0, 0)

All reports received were: 1 at Clover Point, Apr 6. 1, Victoria GC, Apr 7. Up to 2 at Harling Point, Oak Bay, Apr 13 – 18. 2 at Harling Point and 2 on Trial Island, one of which was photographed by TZ, on May 4. 1 or more between Clover and Holland Points on several dates from Oct 25 – 30. 3 at Gonzales Bay, Oak

HERRING GULL*Common winter visitor**Larus argentatus*

(6, 0; 3, 0, 6)

The common large gulls suffer from a combination of being common, not easy to identify, and not all that interesting to all observers. Consequently little information is received on these species. CBC numbers probably give a not unreasonable picture of the relative abundance of this and the following species.

THAYER'S GULL*Common winter visitor**Larus thayeri*

(205, 11; 931, 4, 2219)

Like the Herring Gull and its close relatives, it is difficult to summon up a great deal of interest in this species, and the only specific report received was of 50 at Prévost Farm Duncan, on Jan 1. CBC data show that the Thayer's Gull is very common in our Area.

Reports during the year that suggest that DNA similarities among several of the large *Larus* gulls may lead to their being "lumped" under one species may come as a relief to some observers.

ICELAND GULL*Rare migrant**Larus glaucooides*

(1, 0; 1, 0, 0)

One seen by several observers near Prévost Farm, Duncan, on Jan 1, during the Duncan CBC. The bird was photographed, and BW provides the following notes:

"The overall pale plumage and lightly speckled tertials indicate Iceland or Glaucous Gulls. The gull was smaller than nearby Glaucous-winged, and similar in size and shape to nearby Thayer's Gulls. The bird's "jizz" was slimmer, longer-winged, and more round-headed than Glaucous-winged. The bill lacked the clear demarcation between the dark area on the bill, and its bright pink base, that are typical of Glaucous Gull at the same age."

Another Iceland Gull was reported on Dec 16 during the Victoria CBC, but convincing details are unavailable.

MEW GULL*Abundant winter visitor**Larus canus*

(2141, 292; 14728, 294, 619)

This very abundant winter gull was seen regularly until about the middle of May. While a few were reported in June and July, not one of these unseasonal sightings was convincingly documented.

Observers are reminded that, even for common and familiar species, details *must* be supplied for out-of-season sightings. It seems likely that the first few returning birds were in the area during July, but owing to possible confusion with other species, precise dates cannot be determined.

RING-BILLED GULL*Uncommon migrant**Larus delawarensis*

(2, 1; 0, 0, 0)

There were a remarkable 16 reports of this uncommon and frequently-misidentified gull during 2006. Of these, detailed and convincing field notes were submitted of 5 of them; no details are available for the remaining 11. Apart from the 3 CBC records in January, sightings were: 1 at Cherry Point, near Duncan, Feb 11; 1 at Cordova Spit, July 4; 1, Saanichton Bay, Aug 5; 1, Mount Douglas Beach, Aug 11; 1, Saanichton Bay Park, Aug 26; 1, Esquimalt Lagoon, Sept 1; 1, Esquimalt Lagoon, Sept 24; 5, West Coast Road, Sept 30.

It cannot be emphasised too much to all observers that field notes of rare and uncommon birds are absolutely mandatory if these *Annual Bird Reports* are to have any credibility. 16 Ring-billed Gulls in one year is a remarkably large number of records; observers cannot expect that such reports will be taken seriously if so many of them are undocumented.

CALIFORNIA GULL*Abundant migrant**Larus californicus*

(1, 0; 7, 0, 7)

In the first half of the year, there were records from Feb 18 to May 17, in addition to 1 CBC report. In the second half of the year, records were from July 1 to Nov 20, in addition to an astonishing 14 CBC reports. December and February records are exceedingly unusual, and observers are again reminded that reports of out-of-season birds must be supported by field notes.

Bay/Victoria, Oct 31 to Nov 5. 2 at Cattle Point on Nov 6. 1 at the foot of Sandgate Road, Parker Bay, Metchosin, on Nov 16.

DUNLIN*Common winter visitor**Calidris alpina*

(0, 0; 217, 169, 8)

Records to May and from Sept 30. Most records were from Clover Point, Esquimalt Lagoon and Whiffen Spit. The largest group reported was 20 at Clover Point on Dec 27.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER*Common migrant**Limnodromus griseus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER*Common migrant**Limnodromus scolopaceus*

(0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Although observers are routinely reporting these species separately, as long as observers continue to supply no details about how they are able to identify the birds, they will be treated together.

In the spring, only six birds were reported, from Apr 14 to May 12. Fall passage was much richer, involving many dozens of birds, and lasted from July 6 to Nov 12. 18 (undescribed but reported as *griseus*) were counted on Chatham Island on July 10. An excellent photograph of what can unambiguously be identified as a Long-billed Dowitcher was obtained at an unstated location on July 10.

There is a general belief that Long-billed Dowitchers have a later passage than Short-billed Dowitchers, and that the two species have different habitat preferences. This cannot be established, however, while observers fail to supply details of their observations.

WILSON'S SNIPE*Uncommon winter visitor**Gallinago delicata*

(2, 2; 16, 3, 20)

For the time being all observations of snipe are being recorded under the heading of Wilson's Snipe. Efforts to develop ways of distinguishing snipe species in the field are to be encouraged.

Reports of snipe were scarce in the first three months of the year. There were 3 reports in January in addition to the 4 on the two CBCs in that month, 1 in February and none in March. April was a little

more productive, with 9 sightings, from Sooke to Duncan, between Apr 9 and Apr 27 inclusive.

Sightings were far more frequent from August onwards. There were reports of 4 birds in August, the earliest being Aug 1; 7 in Sept; 13 in Oct. Only one record was received for Nov, but that was of 6 birds at Swan Lake, Saanich, on Nov 10. There were 8 records in Dec, in addition to the 39 birds located in the three CBCs held in that month. As at the beginning of the year, sightings were from widespread localities throughout the Area.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Irregularly common
fall migrant*
Phalaropus lobatus (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Some confusion as to dates is evident from records received, and as a result it is not possible to be certain as to whether any Red-necked Phalaropes were seen during spring. Late summer passage was from July 23 to Sept 24. No huge concentrations were reported, the largest groups being 40 at Race Rocks on July 23, and 15 off Harling Point, Oak Bay, on Aug 18.

RED PHALAROPE *Uncommon late fall migrant*
Phalaropus fulicarius (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

The birds that had been on Langford Lake at the end of 2005 remained there for a few days in 2006. 17 were counted there on Jan 3 and several excellent photographs were obtained. 3 were also seen off Clover Point on Jan 3, and 5 there on Jan 8. There were no further reports of Red Phalarope during the year.

BONAPARTE'S GULL *Common migrant*
Larus philadelphia (0, 0; 180, 0, 759)

The habit of this gull of concentrating in dense flocks meant that records of large numbers were rather localised; while some observers saw very few Bonaparte's Gulls at all during the year, others, being in the right place at the right time, were fortunate to see very large concentrations of them.

There were no reports of Bonaparte's Gulls before the first sightings of the year on Apr 16 and Apr 25. The month of May

provided an example of the localized flocking behaviour. While several experienced observers recorded no Bonaparte's Gulls at all during May, others were more lucky. For example 100 were reported from Esquimalt Lagoon on May 2, and hundreds offshore from Saxe Point, Esquimalt, on May 10. June, July and August were sparse months for everyone. Only 2 Bonaparte's Gulls were reported in June, from Mount Douglas Beach on June 6. In July, the only sightings, of single birds, were on July 8 and July 29. In August, the only sightings, of single birds, were on Aug 18 and Aug 28.

In September, some observers were still seeing none, while others were encountering many. Thus hundreds were seen in Cordova Bay, Saanich, on Sept 11. But it was on Oct and Nov that truly large numbers were being seen. In particular, an estimated 900 were counted in Active Pass on Oct 21, and an estimated 1100 there on Oct 23. 1800 were estimated off Clover Point on Oct 31, 200 there on Nov 1, an "endless stream" there on Nov 10, and 600 there on Nov 15. After Nov 18, numbers began rapidly to diminish. The only records after mid-December were the close to 1000 located during the Victoria and Sooke CBCs, and 12 at Cattle Point on Dec 25.

HEERMANN'S GULL *Common fall migrant*
Larus heermanni (0, 0; 0, 0, 0)

Apart from a single bird reported from Clover Point, but undocumented and undescribed, on the exceptional (unprecedented?) date of May 24, the first summer migrant spotted was 1 at Clover Point from June 28 at Clover Point. It was seen there on several subsequent days, and was joined by a second bird on July 16. Sightings of small numbers of birds continued through July and August, but numbers did not begin to build up until about Sept 10, when 29 were counted in Cordova Bay. 80 were counted from the West Coast Road on Sept 30. By this time, the gull was sufficiently common that few observers were reporting sightings, but they were still evidently being seen on an almost daily basis until Oct 29. A few lingered on during the first two weeks of November, 10 being seen from East Sooke Road on Nov 10. The last sighting was reported on Nov 18.