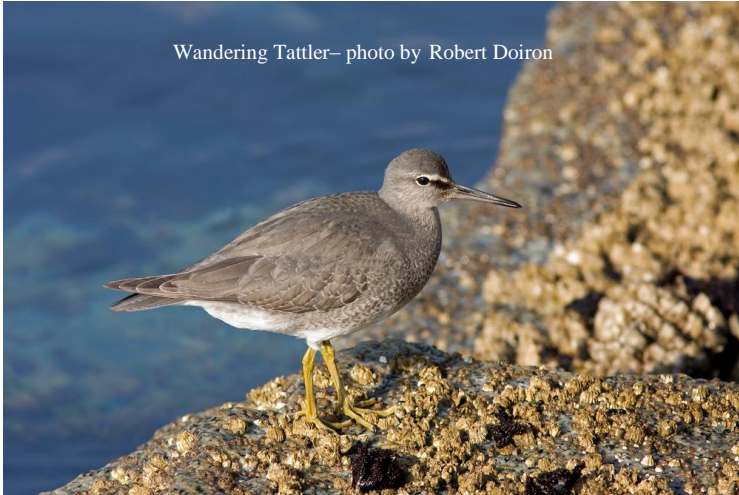


**Victoria Natural History Society
Annual Bird Report
for Southern Vancouver Island
2008**



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 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).

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 2009. Please **do not** write the date in the form 04/06/09.
5. In the case of rare, out-of-season or hard-to-identify species, **field notes are mandatory.**

3. *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 on 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.

The Migratory Bird Calendar consists of a list of (only) 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. 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. At the end of the year, the dots that you have made will enable you easily to see the arrival and departure dates of our migratory birds, and you can then submit these dates with your ABR submission.

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. Send only the important dates.**

4. *Reliability and completeness of the 2008 ABR.*

The ABR cannot possibly pretend to publish every sighting of every bird that has occurred in the Area during the year, and therefore there is no claim to completeness. Perhaps the most obvious remark to make is that we cannot possibly publish your sightings unless you send them to us! Please, therefore, do not assume that the ABR will know of your records merely because you have at some time telephoned them in to a Rare Bird Alert telephone service, or posted it on an electronic chat site, or told someone else about it. Please therefore submit your records direct to the ABR as described in Section 2.

The ABR makes every effort, however, to ensure the reliability of all the records published therein. This is not an easy task, since we hear reports of probable misidentified birds almost on a daily basis. Ensuring the reliability of the ABR is a task that requires the cooperation and help of all observers. In particular, supporting details are absolutely mandatory for species that are rare, or seen out of season, or which are hard to identify. Photographic evidence, of course, is welcome, provided that the birds are not disturbed or harassed, particularly during the nesting season. Photographs, however, cannot always be obtained, and we therefore ask that field notes be made of all rare, out-of-season, or hard-to-identify birds. It is a good idea, therefore, to carry with you at all times a notebook and pencil - and regard these as indispensable as your binoculars. Notes of what features you clearly saw on the bird under observation made at the time of the observation are by far the most valuable. Notes made later in the day (because you forgot to carry your notebook with you!) are also valuable. Most experienced and reliable observers recognise the importance of making notes on the spot and of submitting them to the ABR. It can be very disappointing to lose an exciting record because of lack of documentation, but most birders will agree that the ABR is of value only if the highest standards are maintained to ensure the reliability of the published records.

Reports of the following species were received for 2008, but are not listed in the species accounts. In a few of these cases, the record was excluded with reluctance and only after the most careful consideration by at least two experienced referees (who were not told the name of the observer), who felt that the details submitted were not fully sufficient to establish the occurrence of a rare bird

beyond reasonable doubt. In the great majority of cases, however, the records are excluded because they were submitted with no details.

Arctic Loon	Ash-throated Flycatcher
Yellow-billed Loon	Clark's Nutcracker
Manx Shearwater	American Crow
Swainson's Hawk	Phainopepla
Prairie Falcon	Bohemian Waxwing
Stilt Sandpiper	Prairie Warbler
Franklin's Gull	Palm Warbler
Sabine's Gull	Painted Redstart
Black-legged Kittiwake	Prothonotary Warbler
Elegant Tern	Vesper Sparrow
Common Poorwill	White-winged Crossbill
Alder Flycatcher	Common Redpoll
Least Flycatcher	Hoary Redpoll
Say's Phoebe	

5. *Initials*

The following initials of observers will be found in the text.

AL	Agnes Lynn	MMcG	Mike McGrenere
AN	Ann Nightingale	MR	Mary Robichaud
BB	Barbara Begg	MS	Michael Simmons
BW	Bruce Whittington	RD	Robert Doiron
CM	Corey Melchior	RR	Robin Robinson
CS	Chris Saunders	RWC	R. Wayne Campbell
DC	Danny Carsen	SH	Suzanne Huot
DM	Derrick Marvin	TA	Ted Ardley
GD	Gabriel David	TC	Trudy Chatwyn
HS	Henry Summerfield	TG	Tom Gillespie
IC	Ian Cruickshank	TZ	Tim Zurowski
JK	Jeremy Kimm	WD	Warren Drinnan
		WJMcD	W. J. McDonald

In addition the following abbreviations appear:

ABR	Annual Bird Report
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
GC	Golf Course
m.o.	many observers
RPBO	Rocky Point Bird Observatory
Wild ARC	Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre, Metchoshin

6. *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 or she might expect to see each species in the Area.

7. *Christmas Bird Counts*

Three Christmas Bird Counts are known to have been held in the Area during 2008. 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 2, Duncan	48° 47'.0 N	123° 40'.0 W
Dec 20, Victoria	48° 28'.0 N	123° 24'.0 W
Dec 27, Sidney/Saltspring Island	48° 41'.7 N	123° 25'.7 W

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

No information has been received or (at press time) published concerning a CBC that may have been held at Sooke in December.

8. *Subspecies, Hybrids, Exotics*

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, and that an individual bird cannot normally be assigned to a given population unless its provenance is known. 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".

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".

From time to time an "*exotic*" species turns up - a species that is either known to be commonly kept in captivity, or which is so far from its natural range that it would be thought preposterous for it to have arrived here unaided. The ABR will record occurrences of such birds, but the publication of a record of an exotic species in the ABR does not imply its official inclusion in any particular list; the ABR merely records the occurrence.

9. *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. Ian Cruickshank, Ann Nightingale and Bruce Whittington have also been tremendously encouraging and kindly read through the manuscript, making many useful suggestions, both ornithological and grammatical, though any howlers that remain are my own.

I thank Sara Dubois and Tracy Anderson of Wild ARC, the Wild Animal Rehabilitation Centre, Metchosin, for allowing me to search through their records. 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.

**GREATER WHITE-
FRONTED GOOSE**

Common migrant

Anser albifrons

(0; 7, 0)

One was at Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich, Jan 3 - 4. Up to 9 were seen on several dates in the Sooke area from Jan 6 - Feb 2.

During April, a major northward migration was under way. It started with seven in Esquimalt on Apr 9. On Apr 12, 60 flew over Mt Wells with a further 2 at Island View Beach. Sixty flew over Langford on Apr 19. A further 28 birds were reported in the following few days. Then on Apr 27 an estimated 2000 - 3000 flew over University of Victoria, and an estimated 1000 flew north over Swan Lake, Saanich. Scattered records of small numbers appeared at several locations until the last on May 13.

A major fall migration started on Oct 3, with 90 over Swan Lake and 75 over RPBO. In all during October an estimated 2250 birds were reported throughout the Area. The largest single flock on one date was an estimated 600 on the Cowichan reserve fields on Oct 6. Smaller but still substantial numbers continued to the end of the year, with about 140 in Nov, including c100 in a field south of Chemainus on Nov 6; and 31 in Dec.

A bird bearing characters intermediate between this species and the Canada Goose was photographed at Esquimalt Lagoon on Dec 4. In view of the number of exotic anserids appearing in the area in recent years, it seems possible that this bird was not of wild origin.

BAR-HEADED GOOSE

Presumed escape from captivity

Anser indicus

(0; 0, 0)

One was seen and photographed by m.o. at Esquimalt Lagoon, July 12 - Nov 8. One, apparently a different bird, was seen and photographed at Martindale Flats, Nov 8 - 11. One was seen from William Head Road, Dec 30.



Bar-headed Goose at Esquimalt Lagoon. Photo by Rob Barnes

SNOW GOOSE
Chen caerulescens

Uncommon migrant
(0; 0, 2)

One was at Martindale Flats, Central Saanich, Jan 1 - 5. One was in Sooke on Feb 2, and possibly the same bird was seen in Sooke, Feb 15 - 22.

Seventy flew over Blenkinsop Lake, and seven over Swan Lake, Oct 6. Up to 12 were reported from Martindale Flats on several dates from Oct 24 - Nov 13. Three were at Vantreight's bulb fields, Central Saanich, Nov 1; four at Dinsdale Farm, Cowichan Bay, Nov 3 - 7; two at Tsehum Harbour, North Saanich, Dec 13; 2 at Brentwood Bay from the first week of Dec to Dec 20.

BRANT

Common spring migrant

Branta bernicla

(0; 0, 0)

Three were off Island View Beach, Jan 24, and one on Royal Roads, Jan 26.

The first reported sighting of spring migration was on Mar 2, with 12 at Fort Rodd Hill beach, and 192 were seen off Island View Beach the following day. Smaller numbers were reported during the next several days until 42 were seen on Royal Roads on Mar 15, and apparently a second flock of 192 birds off Island View Beach on Mar 21. From then until mid-April, numerous birds were seen, flocks of more than 100 being 175 off Island View Beach on Apr 8, and 270 there on Apr 25. After that the only spring records were 2 at Fort Rodd Hill beach on May 7; 3 at Cowichan Bay on May 27; one off Bowker Road on June 3, one at Cattle Point on June 4, and one at Clover Point on June 5, these last three reports possibly referring to a single individual.

ACKLING GOOSE

Uncommon migrant

Branta hutchinsii

(2; 7, 38)

Not including the CBC records, listed above, eighty birds were reported from several locations as Cackling Geese from Jan 1 to May 9, and a further 269 in the period Oct 18 to the end of the year. One bird was observed closely and described in careful and satisfactory detail at Gyro Park, Saanich, Oct 8 - Nov 10. The remaining non-CBC 348 reports of this frequently-misidentified bird were unsupported by any details.

CANADA GOOSE

Abundant resident and migrant

Branta canadensis

(3756; 2935, 1638)

Some of the larger counts submitted, other than CBC counts, of this species were: Martindale Flats, 500 on Feb 18; 900 there, Sep 29; 400 there, Nov 1; 1200 there, Nov 8; 500 there, Dec 1. Maber Flats, 1200 on Oct 12. Esquimalt Harbour, 218, Dec 20.

Goslings were first noted on Apr 29, a photograph of them appearing in the *Times-Colonist* of Apr 30. Others were seen on Apr 31 and in the first week of May.

MUTE SWAN

Common introduced resident

Cygnus olor

(8; 25, 15)

Several counts of about 15 Mute Swans at Esquimalt Lagoon were reported during the year. The species was recorded in all CBC circles; other than CBC reports, the only localities from which Mute Swans were reported were Cherry Point (12 there on Mar 9), Saanichton Bay and Witty's Lagoon. Reports of this species from other locations will be welcome. It is suspected that this species is under-reported.

TRUMPETER SWAN

Common winter visitor

Cygnus buccinator

(990; 344, 418)

The single Trumpeter Swan that stayed at Esquimalt Lagoon during 2007 remained there during all of 2008.

Apart from this exceptional occurrence, the last large group in the spring was 190 in Duncan on Mar 1, though stragglers were recorded until Apr 25.

Returning birds in the fall were first reported on Oct 18. By Nov 14 there were 70 at Tod Creek Flats, 130 at Martindale Flats on Dec 7, and 97 on Elk Lake on Dec 19.

TUNDRA SWAN

Rare winter visitor

Cygnus columbianus

(0; 0, 0)

Three were reported, but without sufficient details, from the Duncan area in Jan and Mar. Up to five were reported from the Martindale area between Nov 2 and Dec 4, but there were differing opinions about their identities, and no field notes were received of these birds.

Only one convincing record of this species was received in 2008, namely of a bird at Swan Lake carefully described on Oct 26.

WOOD DUCK

*Uncommon resident and
common winter visitor*

Aix sponsa

(29; 48, 0)

At both ends of the year, several Wood Ducks frequented Mystic Pond, King's Pond and Bow Park in Saanich. Twenty were counted at Mystic Pond in Jan, and 15 in Oct and Nov, with slightly smaller numbers at the other two locations. Other locations for the species were Duncan sewage ponds, Cowichan Bay Dock Road (25 there on Nov 15), Somenos Lake, Trevlac Pond, Wain Road, Florence Lake, Viaduct Flats, Blenkinsop Lake, Beckwith Park, and Langford Lake. Successful breeding was recorded at three of these locations. Ducklings were first noted on May 8.

GADWALL

Common winter visitor

Anas strepera

(4; 74, 1)

Records to June 19 and from Sep 22. There were no breeding records, but there were June sightings from two possible favourable locations. Gadwall were recorded at many freshwater locations, with the largest numbers (up to 30) being at Viaduct Flats and Quick's Bottom. During cold weather, when many ponds were frozen, six were on the salt water of Esquimalt Harbour on Dec 20.

EURASIAN WIGEON

Common winter visitor

Anas penelope

(12; 15, 5)

There were about 37 reports of Eurasian Wigeon during the year, involving about 40 birds, although in reality the species can usually be found wherever and whenever there are large herds of American Wigeon. The largest number reported from any one location was six at Panama Flats on Nov 14. The last spring record was three at Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, on Apr 10, and the first fall record was one at Viaduct Flats, Saanich, on Oct 7.

AMERICAN WIGEON

Abundant winter visitor

Anas americana

(2564; 2169, 1523)

Records to May 26 and from Aug 27, apart from a single bird with an injured wing which was at King's Pond, Saanich, until July 22. Counts of 200 or more were 340 at Mystic Pond, Nov 5; 200 at

Martindale Flats, Nov 8; 435 at Oak Bay, Nov 9; 700 at Victoria GC, Dec 25.

MALLARD

Abundant resident and winter visitor

Anas platyrhynchos

(2700; 4377, 685)

Ducklings were first noted on May 1, with several such reports in the following few days. By May 7, 16 ducklings were evident at Swan Lake.

Among the larger flocks counted was an estimate of 900 at Martindale Flats on Nov 8; 410 at Esquimalt Harbour and 115 at Clover Point on Dec 20. The latter two flocks were on saltwater during a period when many freshwater ponds were frozen.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL

Uncommon summer visitor

Anas discors

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 13 to July 16, plus convincing and well-described late reports in Oct as follows: one at Swan Lake, Oct 9 - 16; one at Viaduct Flats, Oct 11. Perhaps 16 individual birds in all were reported.

A pair was at Swan Lake for much of the summer, though breeding was not reported. Up to seven were at Raper's Pond from May 18 - 26.

CINNAMON TEAL

Uncommon summer visitor

Anas cyanoptera

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 12 - May 30 plus one on June 23. Localities from where the species was reported were Swan and Blenkinsop Lakes, Raper's Pond, and Duncan Forest Museum Pond. About 14 birds in all were involved, including three pairs at Swan Lake on May 10.

NORTHERN SHOVELLER

Common winter visitor

Anas clypeata

(109; 91, 9)

Records to May 26 and from Aug 10. No very large counts were made, the largest being 13 at Esquimalt Lagoon on May 11. This common species was doubtless much under-reported.

**WHITE-CHEEKED
PINTAIL**

*Presumed escape from
captivity*

Anas bahamensis

(0; 0, 0)

What is presumed to have been the same bird that was seen in 2007 was at Beckwith Park, Saanich, from June 16 - 19, and the presumed same bird again at Beacon Hill Park from July 15 - Nov 3.

NORTHERN PINTAIL

Common winter visitor

Anas acuta

(1674; 268, 19)

Records to May 14 and from Aug 10. Larger counts included 180 at Esquimalt Lagoon (where they are remarkably tame) on Mar 2; 35 at Viaduct Flats, Oct 1; 40 at Swan Lake, Oct 5 -15; 150 at Martindale Flats, Nov 8; c100 at Panama Flats, Nov 9.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL

Common winter visitor

Anas crecca

(699; 243, 74)

Records to May 23 and from Aug 19. Larger counts included 42 at Tsehum (Shoal) Harbour, Sidney, on Apr 12; 60 at Esquimalt Lagoon on May 11; 70 at Swan Lake on Oct 13; 75 at Tsehum Harbour on Dec 13; and 66 on salt water during cold weather at Esquimalt Harbour on Dec 20.

A carefully-described bird bearing the characters of the nominate race *crecca* was at Quamichan Lake on Jan 2.

CANVASBACK

Common winter visitor

Aythya valisineria

(8; 32, 0)

Records to Apr 8 and from Oct 11. Larger counts included 40 at Elk Lake, Jan 23 - 27; 30 at Quamichan Lake, Apr 8; 26 at Panama Flats, Nov 14; 30 at Elk Lake, Nov 29

REDHEAD

Uncommon winter visitor

Aythya americana

(0; 0, 0)

Four pairs were at Viaduct Flats, May 14.

One was at Viaduct Flats, Oct 1-12, three were there on Oct 19, and two there on Dec 6; one was at the Forest Museum Pond, Duncan, on Oct 26; one on Elk Lake, Nov 4.

All of these birds were either photographed or carefully described or seen by m.o., and the identification of all of them is secure.

RING-NECKED DUCK

Common winter visitor

Aythya collaris

(198; 232, 7)

Records to May 16 and from Sep 13. Larger counts included 60 at Viaduct Flats, Jan 11; 80 at Blenkinsop Lake, Feb 28; 65 at Viaduct Flats, Oct 1; c200 at Quamichan Lake, Oct 20; c200 at Langford Lake, Nov 30.

GREATER SCAUP

Common winter visitor

Aythya marila

(75; 123, 45)

Difficulties of identification make exact arrival and departure dates uncertain, but certain records were to Apr 12 and from Oct 8. An undescribed straggler at Esquimalt Lagoon on July 17 was reported as a Greater Scaup. The largest single count other than CBC data was of 20 at View Royal on Dec 13 -- very different from the hundreds that used to be regular at Clover Point in the late 1960s.

LESSER SCAUP

Common winter visitor

Aythya affinis

(920; 12, 12)

Difficulties of identification make exact arrival and departure dates uncertain, but certain records were to May 16 and from Sep 8, although four birds at Swan Lake on May 19 were probably of this species. An estimated thousand birds were seen at the Duncan sewage works on Feb 23. Other notable counts included 100 at Esquimalt Lagoon on Mar 22; and 60 on Quamichan Lake on Oct 6.

HARLEQUIN DUCK

Common resident

Histrionicus histrionicus

(0; 89, 60)

Seen commonly around the coast all year. 52 were counted at Reay Creek, Sidney on June 7; and 25 from Harling Point to Gonzales Bay, Oak Bay, on Dec 25. A pair was noted *in copulo* at Ogden Point on Mar 16.

SURF SCOTER

*Common winter visitor and
uncommon resident*

Melanitta perspicillata

(142; 162, 216)

Recorded in all months, though few between mid-June and mid-Aug. Counts of 100 or more at one location included 150 flying east off Beechey Head on May 12; 110 off Sayward Beach, Aug 22; 549 in Cordova Bay, Sep 13; 170 off Warrior Point, North Saanich, Oct 28.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER

*Common migrant and
winter visitor*

Melanitta fusca

(10; 19, 34)

Records to May 12 and from Aug 7. Other than CBC figures, only 116 birds (including 34 at Cherry Point). While this is doubtless not the absolute number of birds in the area, it does indicate the relative scarcity of this species compared with the Surf Scoter.

BLACK SCOTER

Uncommon winter visitor

Melanitta nigra

(1; 0, 4)

One off Clover Point, Jan 24. Other than this and CBC data, all sightings were off Island View Beach. One or two were there from Jan 25 to Apr 18, and one there from Nov 15 to Dec 7.

LONG-TAILED DUCK

Common winter visitor

Clangula hyemalis

(0; 91, 102)

Records to Apr 14 and from Aug 29. Apart from CBC data, the largest counts were 144 in Cordova Bay, Jan 13; and 32 off Cy Hampson Park, Dec 27.

BUFFLEHEAD

Abundant winter visitor

Bucephala albeola

(394; 1267, 714)

Records to May 16 and from Oct 14. Generally seen in large numbers all round the coast and on many freshwater lakes and ponds. 193 in Cordova Bay, Jan 13; 115 on Beaver Lake on Apr 18; more than 200 off Island View Beach on Oct 26.

COMMON GOLDENEYE

Common winter visitor

Bucephala clangula

(188; 293, 327)

Records to Apr 30 and from Nov 12. Observers are asked to keep a look out for this species during October.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE

Common winter visitor

Bucephala islandica

(99; 12, 91)

Records to Mar 17 and from Nov 17. This species is surely under-reported. Apart from CBC data reports were received of only 65 birds (including 36 at Brentwood Bay on Nov 17) during the year. While it is probable that numbers were down in 2008, observers are asked not to overlook this species, especially from the northwest shoreline of the Saanich Peninsula, Sooke, and the Cowichan River.

HOODED MERGANSER

Common resident

Lophodytes cucullatus

(113; 264, 66)

Present throughout the year in saltwater and freshwater habitats. Sample counts received were 25 at Mystic Pond on Nov 5; 34 at McIntyre Reservoir on Nov 14; 33 at Oak Bay on Dec 29.

COMMON MERGANSER

Common resident

Mergus merganser

(390; 320, 209)

Present throughout the year. Wild ARC received (possibly unnecessarily) on three occasions during the period June 29 - July 6, ducklings that had “fallen from the nest hole” (which is, of course, what they normally do).

Eighty flew over Swan Lake on Dec 1, and 303 were counted in Pedder Bay on Dec 28, but we still lack reliable counts of the large flock that habitually winters on the waters of Elk/Beaver Lakes.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

Abundant winter visitor

Mergus serrator

(28; 343, 455)

Records to May 22 (though most had gone by mid-May) and from Sep 3, though not commonly observed until towards the end of Oct.

Among the larger counts submitted were: 402 in Cordova Bay on Jan 13; and 102 off Cy Hampson Park on Dec 27.

RUDDY DUCK

Uncommon winter visitor

Oxyura jamaicensis

(1103; 11, 0)

Records to Apr 17 and from Sep 16.

The area around Duncan is clearly the stronghold of this species. Most records were from Quamichan and Somenos Lakes. Fifty were on Somenos Lake on Jan 19, and 250 on Quamichan Lake on Feb 2. In the south of the Area, the only reports were from Elk and Swan Lakes, where they were recorded at both ends of the year. About 50 were on Elk Lake on Feb 1 - 2. Twelve were there on Nov 29. From one to three were on Swan Lake, Oct 12 - Dec 2.

An unstated number were reported from Cowichan Bay on Jan 4 - 6. Apart from that, there were about 20 reports, mostly of single birds, although 10 were counted in Cordova Bay, Jan 13.

PACIFIC LOON

Common winter visitor

Gavia pacifica

(27; 59, 47)

Records to May 17 and from Sep 14, apart from one isolated but well-documented record of one on Cordova Spit on July 20.

100 were seen in Active Pass on Nov 22 (a very small number compared with historical records from this area), and 70 off Beechey Head on Dec 4.

COMMON LOON

Common winter visitor and uncommon resident

Gavia immer

(19; 15, 24)

Recorded in all months except July. Full breeding plumage first noted on Apr 6. Although few particular records (and no indication of breeding) were received of this familiar bird, the Common Loon was the feature species of the Jan - Jun 2008 issue of the journal *Wildlife Afield* (Volume 5, Number 1), a very full and comprehensive account of the history and status of the species in British Columbia.

PIED-BILLED GREBE

Common resident

Podilymbus podiceps

(20; 34, 1)

Pied-billed Grebes were reported from many of the larger bodies of fresh water in all months from throughout the entire area. Among the larger numbers reported were 17 at Swan Lake on Aug 5, and 16 at Quamichan Lake on Sep 29. Four young were seen at Viaduct Flats on Aug 5, and a stripy-headed young was seen being fed fish by an adult on Blenkinsop Lake as late as Nov 8.

HORNED GREBE

Common winter visitor

Podiceps auritus

(25; 46, 90)

Recorded at the beginning of the year until Apr 24. 59 were counted in Cordova Bay on Mar 9. There were no reports in May, but one was reported on June 27 and again on July 28 at West Bay Marina. Two were off Witty's Lagoon on Aug 16. Otherwise fall arrival was not generally noted until Sep 27.

RED-NECKED GREBE

Common winter visitor

Podiceps grisegena

(5; 18, 4)

Records to May 17 and from Aug 31. An unusual record was of one that struck a window on View Street in downtown Victoria on Sep 20. The bird was taken to Wild ARC for treatment.

EARED GREBE

Uncommon winter visitor

Podiceps nigricollis

(0; 4, 0)

Other than CBC data, the only records were of four off Mount Douglas Beach on Jan 6 and Jan 29; and 2 in Cordova Bay on Jan 13.

WESTERN GREBE

Locally common winter visitor

Aechmophorus occidentalis

(11; 5, 0)

The largest group of Western Grebes was, as usual, on Royal Roads, where sample counts at the beginning of the year were 200 on Jan 16; 350 on Jan 26; 185 on Feb 10; 20 on Mar 22. 97 were off Cherry Point, Duncan, on Jan 13, and 13 there on Mar 9. The only other reports at the beginning of the year were one at Whiffen Spit, Jan 7; three off Clover Point on Jan 12 and one there on Feb 1; one off East Sooke Park on Feb 14; an unstated number off Devonian Park, Mar 22; 1 at Somenos Lake, Mar 29; 110 at Fulford Harbour, Saltspring Island, Apr 19 and 22, the last spring record.

Fall arrival was noted on Sep 20, when 6 were at Beecher Bay. This had grown to 10 by Sep 27, on which date an unstated number were seen off Sooke. The Royal Roads flock had grown to 70 by Nov 30.

PINK-FOOTED SHEARWATER

Rare migrant

Puffinus creatopus

(0; 0, 0)

Three off East Sooke Park, Sep 28. Notes by CS:

The 3 pink-foots were in the company of sooties making size comparison easy. A fair bit larger than the sooties. Mottled brown on top white under the wings. Less rapid wing beats and more laboured wing beats than the sooties. Wings wider than sooties. The large group of birds were following the herring heading slowly east, sometimes just floating and sometimes flying short distances to keep up.

SOOTY SHEARWATER

Uncommon migrant

Puffinus griseus

(0; 0, 0)

Seventy-six in Juan de Fuca Strait off Rocky Point on Sep 7 (MMcG) and an unrecorded number off East Sooke Park, Sep 28 (CS).

FORK-TAILED STORM-PETREL

Rare migrant

Oceanodroma furcata

(0; 0, 0)

A bird found on Prior Street, Victoria, on Feb 12 was taken to Wild ARC for treatment. Other reports of this species during the year were not supported by details.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL

Rare migrant

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

(0; 0, 0)

A bird found at Ogden Point on Aug 9, and another found at Songhees on Oct 3, were taken to Wild ARC for treatment, but unfortunately neither survived. Other reports of this species during the year were not supported by details.

BROWN PELICAN

Rare migrant

Pelecanus occidentalis

(0; 0, 0)

One off Dallas Road, Victoria, and one off the Sidney waterfront on June 26. Six off Tower Point on Aug 23, and two there on Aug 30. One off Pedder Bay and one off RPBO, Aug 27. One off Clover Point, Sep 20. A pelican reported off Dallas Road on Dec 27 is

presumed to be of this species. Two were seen and photographed by SH at Esquimalt Lagoon on Dec 28.

BRANDT'S CORMORANT *Common migrant and winter visitor*
Phalacrocorax penicillatus (4; 2061, 332)

Records to Mar 15 and from Sep 1. There were no reports of this species between these dates. The two largest groups reported were 72 off Ten Mile Point on Dec 20, and 280 flew east off Trial Island on Dec 25. No reports were received from Active Pass, traditionally a location where many of these cormorants can be spotted. It is possible that this species is being under-reported.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT *Common resident*
Phalacrocorax auritus (430; 566, 9)

Seen throughout the year in both saltwater and freshwater habitats. The largest concentration reported from any one place was 160 at Pedder Bay on Dec 28.

PELAGIC CORMORANT *Common resident*
Phalacrocorax pelagicus (6; 96, 178)

Seen throughout the year in saltwater habitats. The largest concentration reported from any one place was 68 in Cordova Bay on Sep 13.

AMERICAN BITTERN *Rare migrant*
Botaurus lentiginosus (0; 0, 0)

An American Bittern were present at Swan Lake, Saanich, from Feb 11 to May 8, and again from Sep 18 to Oct 13. This is the fourth year in a row that this species has been seen there.

GREAT BLUE HERON

Ardea herodias

Common resident

(42; 42, 30)

Although this remains a common and familiar bird in the Area, considerable predation and other disturbance from Bald Eagles at nesting colonies has been observed. An article in the *Times-Colonist* on May 29 quoted Provincial Biologist TC as saying that there are 30 nests in the Cuthbert Holmes Park heronry, and that these may have involved birds from the now largely abandoned heronry at Beacon Hill Park. She is also quoted in the June 4 *Times-Colonist* as saying that the Cowichan heronry, the largest on Vancouver Island, which has held more than 90 nests in recent years, was abandoned in 2008, but that some birds are having a second attempt nearby. In addition to disturbance from eagles, the heronries are under threat from development. In the Nov 27 *Times-Colonist*, she reports that only 9 chicks survived from 37 nests at Cuthbert Holmes Park, and that colonies at Chemainus Estuary and at Ladysmith have been “decimated”. There were about 12 active nests at the Mystic Pond heronry, and an unknown number at Mt Newton Cross Road.

IC reports an interesting observation of a tame heron at Beacon Hill Park accepting fish offered by humans on Feb 16.

GREEN HERON

Butorides virescens

Uncommon, occasionally breeding, summer visitor

(0; 0, 0)

All 2008 records are: One at Somenos Marsh, Duncan, Apr 17; a nest with four eggs found in Saanich, May 19; one at Swan Lake, Saanich, May 27 and June 13; one at Florence Lake, Aug 22; one photographed by CM at Duncan Forest Museum, Sep 22, and seen there again on Oct 6; one at Beaver Lake Ponds, Saanich, Dec 7.

TURKEY VULTURE

Cathartes aura

Common summer visitor and migrant, occasional resident

(0; 3, 0)

In the first two months of the year there were 28 reports involving 23 birds, all from the south of the Area. The first was on Jan 16 at Albert Head Lagoon.

From mid-March onwards they were seen daily through the spring and summer.

A pair nested successfully and young were photographed on the nest in July on the Saanich Peninsula. Other nests were found near Sooke and on one of the Gulf Islands. Four young were known to have fledged.

The first moderate-sized migrating kettle reported in late summer was 73 birds over Pedder Bay on Sep 12. Many kettles of 50 or more birds were seen mostly from East Sooke Park or the Duncan area during Sept, but the largest counts were made from RPBO, a sample of which includes: 135 on Sep 14; 650 on Sep 22; 250 on Sep 23; 160 on Sep 26; 500 on Sep 28; 465 on Sep 29; 250 on Sep 30; 168 on Oct 1; 228 on Oct 2; 244 on Oct 8. Records continued during the remainder of Oct, one in Duncan on Nov 19 and the last report of the year was of three on the Victoria CBC, Dec 20.

OSPREY

Common summer visitor

Pandion haliaetus

(0; 0, 0)

The first sightings of the year appear to be one in Esquimalt on Apr 6, followed by one over Island View Beach two days later. By the second week of April they were being seen generally. BB reports two to four adults in the Wain Road area of North Saanich, though breeding there was unsuccessful. RWC reports that a male arrived at the nest at the University of Victoria playing field on April 10, followed by the female six days later. Two juveniles left the nest for a short flight on July 19. The female and one young remained at the nest site until Oct 8. The breeding season for that family lasted 182 days, or half a year. IC reports two young and an adult on the nest at Cordova Spit on Aug 29. Three successful nests were reported from the Duncan area.

BALD EAGLE

Common resident

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

(380; 176, 65)

Successful nesting in urban areas was reported from Victoria GC, Oak Bay fire station, and North Saanich. Large concentrations were reported as follows: 72 at Quamichan Lake on Jan 2; 279 at Cowichan Bay on Nov 20; 45 at Goldstream Park on Dec 3, and 35 there on Dec 12. On Nov 10, one was noted flying far out to sea over the Strait of Juan de Fuca until out of sight.

NORTHERN HARRIER *Uncommon to common migrant*
Circus cyaneus (6; 3, 2)

Not including the CBC numbers given above, there were reports of what were probably 65 different birds from widely scattered areas throughout the Area, distributed by months as follows:

Jan: 2	July: 1
Feb: 3	Aug: 7
Mar: 3	Sep: 24
Apr: 2	Oct: 12
May: 2	Nov: 4
June: 1	Dec: 4

In compiling these numbers, an attempt was made to exclude what were probably multiple sightings of individual birds. For example, many sightings at Martindale Flats from Oct 28 to Nov 29 may have been of a single bird; likewise what was probably a single harrier was frequently seen at Maber Flats from Sep 14 to the end of the year, although it was briefly joined by a second bird there on Dec 15.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK *Migrant and winter visitor*
Accipiter striatus (6; 10, 8)

This frequently-misidentified bird continues to cause difficulty, partly because many observers are reporting them without any details, and some observers have reported “several”, without giving any indication of numbers or locations. There were reports of about 172 birds during the year, of which 62 can be regarded as satisfactory, the remaining 110 lacking convincing (or any) detail. Convincing records were to Apr 9 and from Aug 12.

Eighteen recorded at RPBO on Sep 22 is indicative of a peak passage in mid-to-late September.

COOPER’S HAWK *Common breeding resident*
Accipiter cooperii (4; 27, 9)

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.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK

Rare resident

Accipiter gentilis

(0; 0, 0)

Seven reports were received during the year, of which five are excluded on the grounds that no details were supplied. One bird was injured following a window-strike in Metchosin on Oct 20; it was taken to Wild ARC, where it was successfully treated and released. One was carefully observed and described by two observers on Dec 28. Notes by AL as follows:

Large Hawk perched in deciduous tree overlooking partially frozen pond full of 200 ducks, near a barn. Appeared larger and stockier than Red-tailed Hawk that we just observed at similar distance shortly before. Also had comparison of mature Cooper's Hawk circling nearby during observations. Cooper's Hawk appeared much smaller. Overall brown colour points to immature bird. Lighter feathers underneath showed as the wind blew them around. Obvious pattern of white spots across wings, almost like a wingbar, attracted our attention. Also white supercilium was very distinct. Generally light around the yellow eye. Chest whitish with dark markings similar to immature Cooper's. Dark, obvious hawk-like hooked bill. Tail fairly broad, not obviously barred but our view was slightly obscured by branches, tip clearly had fine white margin. Tail did not appear excessively long. Obvious fluffy long, tawny, slightly dirty-looking undertail coverts with some streaking. Beige-yellow feet. Didn't really see legs as they were hidden. Did not hear it at all. Did not see the bird fly. Perched for at least half an hour, never spread its wings.

Optics Pentax - 80 objective, 20-60 power

Distance from Bird 70m

BROAD-WINGED HAWK

Rare migrant

Buteo platypterus

(0; 0, 0)

Acceptable records for which detailed notes or photographs were obtained were as follows: Three reports of single birds at RPBO, all carefully described by detailed field notes: One on Sep 16 (GD); one on Sep 17 (MR); one on Sep 22 (IC). There is no means of knowing whether these were three different birds, or multiple sightings of one or two. However, two were seen and one photographed by RR on Mount McDonald on Sep 17.

Other reports of this species during the year were not accompanied by convincing, or any, detail, and are excluded.



Broad-winged Hawk over Mt McDonald. Photo by Robin Robinson.

RED-TAILED HAWK

Common resident

Buteo jamaicensis

(30; 47, 18)

As is usual for common resident species, few significant reports were received, although 22 were counted over East Sooke Park on Sep 22, and 20 over Beechey Head on Sep 28.

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK

Rare winter visitor

Buteo lagopus

(0; 0, 0)

One was seen at RPBO and carefully described by IC and MR on Oct 17. One was photographed by BW and carefully described by IC at Swan Lake on Nov 4. One was seen by m.o., one of whom (MS) provided convincing details, at Maber Flats from Dec 15 to the end of the year.

Other reports of this species during the year were not accompanied by convincing, or any, detail, and are excluded.



Rough-legged Hawk over Swan Lake – photo by Bruce Whittington

GOLDEN EAGLE*Rare resident**Aquila chrysaetos*

(1; 0, 0)

One was seen at Viaduct Flats and carefully described by MR on Apr 22. One was seen and carefully described by IC at RPBO on Sep 26. One was photographed in the Sooke Hills.

Fifteen further reports of this species throughout the year were not accompanied by convincing detail, and are excluded.

AMERICAN KESTREL*Uncommon migrant and
winter visitor**Falco sparverius*

(1; 3, 1)

A pair reared two young on the Saanich Peninsula, and were seen throughout the year in the general vicinity of the nesting site.

One or two kestrels were seen regularly during the year in all months from the Martindale Road area and around Victoria International Airport. Apart from these localities, and CBC data, monthly totals (not including multiple sightings of the same bird) reported were as follows:

Jan: 4	July: 0
Feb: 0	Aug: 1
Mar: 2	Sept: 16
Apr: 0	Oct: 0
May: 0	Nov: 3
June: 1	Dec: 1

Localities from which they were reported, apart from the above-mentioned, were Macaulay Point (Esquimalt), Langford Lake, Cordova Spit, Mount Tolmie, Cooperidge Road (Central Saanich), Tower Point (Metchosin), Wain Road (North Saanich); East Sooke Park; Malcolm Road and Centennial Park (both Central Saanich).

MERLIN

*Common migrant and winter visitor;
uncommon resident*

Falco columbarius

(4; 9, 7)

Two pairs bred successfully on the Saanich Peninsula.

Other than those, and CBC data, approximate numbers of sightings of Merlins reported by month, were as follows:

Jan: 7	July: 6
Feb: 7	Aug: 11
Mar: 1	Sept: 21
Apr: 2	Oct: 15
May: 0	Nov: 6
June: 2	Dec: 7

These reports came from numerous localities throughout the area from Sooke to Duncan.

PEREGRINE FALCON

Common resident

Falco peregrinus

(5; 3, 3)

Recorded in all months from widespread locations throughout the Area. Other than CBC records, monthly totals (after allowance for multiple sightings of the same individuals) were:

Jan: 7	July: 2
Feb: 7	Aug: 8
Mar: 7	Sept: 29
Apr: 2	Oct: 15
May: 3	Nov: 9
June: 1	Dec: 3

VIRGINIA RAIL

Uncommon resident

Rallus limicola

(0; 5, 0)

There were many more records this year than in 2007. Even so, there were no reports of this normally resident bird in the period May 13 to Aug 3 inclusive. It sounds unlikely that Virginia Rails were absent from the area during the summer, so observers are asked to keep a look out for this sometimes difficult bird.

In the Jan - May period, Virginia Rails were detected at Viaduct Flats, Rithet's Bog, Blenkinsop Lake, Swan Lake, and Stoneridge Wetland, although none were reported from Quick's Bottom. An

injured bird picked up on Apr 23 at Crease Avenue, Saanich, was taken to Wild ARC for treatment.

In the Aug to Dec period, they were detected at all of the above locations (including 5 at Swan Lake in Nov, and 3 at Rithet's Bog and 3 at Viaduct Flats in Oct), as well as at Quick's Bottom, MacIntyre reservoir, Panama Flats and RPBO.

SORA

Uncommon summer visitor

Porzana carolina

(0; 0, 0)

All records are: One seen by m.o., and photographed, at Swan Lake from Mar 3 to May 9. A juvenile bird was seen there on Oct 18. One or two Soras were heard at RPBO on several dates from Aug 6 to Oct 5. One picked up at Prior Street, Victoria on Apr 29, and one picked up in Saanich on Aug 15 were taken to Wild ARC for treatment, and were successfully released.

AMERICAN COOT

Common winter visitor

Fulica americana

(456; 270, 3)

Records to Apr 26 and from Sep 13, although it was not until the beginning of Oct that coots were being generally observed. C400 were counted on Elk/Beaver Lake on Jan 27, and c300 were there on Nov 4.

SANDHILL CRANE

Uncommon migrant

Grus canadensis

(0; 0, 0)

The only spring record was of one seen, and photographed by CM, at Sahilton Road, Duncan, May 10 - 19.

Ten flying over Ten Mile Point on Sep 1 were the first of 57 cranes seen throughout the Area during Sept. A further 42 were seen during Oct, including 16 over Cattle Point on Oct 7. The last report was of two photographed by CM at Cowichan Bay on Oct 24.

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER *Common migrant and winter visitor*
Pluvialis squatarola (0; 31, 22)

Records to Apr 22 and from July 29. Reports of 30 or more birds at one location were 50 at Bowker Avenue, Oak Bay, Mar 15; 75 there on Sep 14; 89 there on Sep 21; 36 at Cattle Point on Oct 25; 40 at Rat Point and 60 (possibly the same group) at nearby Rutland Road, Oak Bay, Dec 4.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Rare migrant*
Pluvialis dominica (0; 0, 0)

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER *Rare migrant*
Pluvialis fulva (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. A juvenile Golden Plover was photographed by TA on Cordova (Saanichton) Spit on Sep 2 and even the experts were divided on which species it was.

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

Spring passage was brief, sightings being confined to the period from May 3 to May 14, a total of 11 birds in all. Fall passage was reported from Aug 25 to Sep 26, involving 20 birds. The largest groups were nine on Sidney Island Spit on Aug 26, and six on Cordova Spit on Aug 31.

KILLDEER *Common resident*
Charadrius vociferus (23; 66, 39)

Downy young were first noticed at Island View Beach, on Apr 14. A nest with four eggs was located at RPBO on May 19. The largest single group of Killdeer reported was c40 at McIntyre reservoir, Central Saanich, on Sep 1.

BLACK OYSTERCATCHER

Common resident

Haematopus bachmani

(0; 33, 28)

Among the larger groups of this common resident to attract observer attention were 37 counted at Esquimalt Lagoon on Oct 8; and 28 at Cattle Point on Nov 9.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER

Common summer visitor

Actitis macularius

(1; 3, 0)

One on the Duncan CBC on Jan 2; one at Saxe Point on Jan 9 and Feb 2; one at Witty's Lagoon on Jan 26; one at Macaulay Point on Jan 26.

After that, there were no further reports until May 2, after which they were being generally seen both along the seashore and in inland areas. Four seen at Martindale Flats on June 6 may be suggestive of possible breeding.

Apart from CBC records, the last one reported to the ABR was a single at Duncan on Sep 4.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER

Uncommon migrant

Tringa solitaria

(0; 0, 0)

All records are: one to three at Rithet's Bog, Saanich, Apr 29 - May 3; one at Hastings Flats, May 3; one at Rithet's Bog, July 21; one in Metchosin, Aug 14. This uncommon species is occasionally misidentified, so observers are reminded that details of their sightings would be helpful.

WANDERING TATTLER

Uncommon migrant

Tringa incana

(0; 0, 0)

Two at Ogden Point, May, 1 - 6; one at Beechey Head, May 12; one or two at Ogden, Holland and Clover Points (possibly the same two birds at all locations), Aug 2 - Oct 1. On this latter date, a bird was photographed at Ogden Point by RD; close examination of the original photograph clearly shows the long nasal groove on the upper mandible, characteristic of this species rather than that of its congener the Grey-tailed Tattler, *T. brevipes*.

**GREATER
YELLOWLEGS**

*Common migrant and winter
visitor; perhaps uncommon
nonbreeding resident*

Tringa melanoleuca

(1; 3, 0)

Records to May 11 and from July 27. No sightings were reported between these dates. Observers are asked to keep a lookout for this species in June.

WILLET

Rare migrant

Catoptrophorus semipalmatus

(0; 0, 0)

One was photographed by CM at Whiffen Spit on Oct 19.

Other reports of this rare species during the year were not supported by adequate, or any, detail.



Willet off Whiffen Spit, Sooke. Photo by Corey Melchior

LESSER YELLOWLEGS

Common migrant

Tringa flavipes

(0; 0, 0)

Very few records of this species were reported in 2008; it was almost certainly under-reported. All reports received were five at Cowichan Bay Dock Road, May 30; 1 at RPBO, July 22; one there, Aug 5; one at Witty's Lagoon, Aug 31; two at Island View Beach at the rather late date on Sep 20; one, undescribed, at Cowichan Bay Dock Road, on the extraordinarily late date of Oct 6.

WHIMBREL

*Common migrant and
uncommon winter visitor*

Numenius phaeopus

(0; 0, 0)

The first report of this species in 2008 was of one at Island View Beach on Apr 15. The annual gathering of Whimbrel at Victoria GC began with eight on Apr 17, growing to a maximum of 28 on May 1; the last report from Victoria GC was of an unspecified number there on May 14. The only further record reported to ABR during the year was of two at Esquimalt Lagoon on May 28. This species was therefore scarcer than usual in 2008, or else it was under-reported.

MARbled GODWIT

Uncommon migrant

Limosa fedoa

(0; 0, 0)

One was with the Whimbrels at Victoria GC from Apr 30 to May 14. Three were at Whiffen Spit, Sooke, Oct 4.

BLACK TURNSTONE

*Common migrant and
winter visitor*

Arenaria melanocephala

(3; 139, 54)

Records to May 13 and from July 24. Observers are asked to keep a lookout for this species between these dates. Several flocks of 30 to 40 or more birds were reported from widespread locations during the last four months of the year.

SURFBIRD

Common migrant and winter visitor

Aphriza virgata

(0; 23, 0)

Records to May 3 and from Aug 21. The largest single flock reported was 30 at Rat Point, Oak Bay, on Dec 4.

SANDERLING

Common winter visitor

Calidris alba

(0; 52, 5)

Several birds (up to a maximum of 12) were seen at Ogden Point, Ross Bay or Clover Point (possibly the same birds) from the beginning of the year until Apr 19. Up to six at Ogden or Clover Points from Aug 2 to the end of the year; six off Rutland Road on Nov 3 may have been the same or a different group. Three were at Sidney Island Spit, Aug 26 - 30. Three on Island View Beach, Sep 7.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER

Rare migrant

Calidris pusilla

(0; 0, 0)

Three were seen on Sidney Island Spit on July 6 (MMcG) and one at Witty's Lagoon on Aug 31 (IC). Convincing field notes and other details were supplied for these sightings. Insufficient details were supplied for sightings of nine or more additional reports of this frequently-misidentified species.

Observers are reminded that these Annual Bird Reports do not publish reports of rare or frequently-misidentified species that are unsupported by adequate field notes or other details, although the sightings may well be valid.

WESTERN SANDPIPER

Abundant migrant

Calidris mauri

(0; 0, 0)

Acceptable records were from Apr 19 to May 13 and from July 2 to Oct 4. 200 were estimated at Witty's Lagoon and another 200 at Ayum Creek on Aug 31, and there were many reports of flocks of 50 or more birds during July and August. Reports received of birds seen well outside the normal migration seasons for this species were not accompanied by sufficient detail for inclusion in this Report.

LEAST SANDPIPER

Abundant migrant

Calidris minutilla

(0; 1, 0)

The brief spring passage was reported from Apr 22 to May 13. The largest single flock during this period was c50 at Duncan Forest Museum Ponds on May 5. Fall passage was reported from July 6 to Sep 3. The largest single flock during this period was c100 at Sidney Island Spit. Two very late birds were reported with no supporting details from Whiffen Spit on Oct 4, and one well-described was accepted by the Victoria CBC compiler from Gonzales Bay on Dec 20.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER

Uncommon migrant

Calidris bairdii

(0; 0, 0)

Single birds were reported from Clover Point on July 17 and Aug 20, and from Sidney Island Spit on Aug 26, Sep 7 and Sep 12. Convincing details of the Aug 20 bird were provided by MR.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER

Uncommon migrant

Calidris melanotos

(0; 0, 0)

All reports were: Two, Hastings Flats, Apr 30; one, McIntyre Reservoir, July 17; two there, Sep 17; two, Island View Beach, Sep 20; one, RPBO, Sep 22; three rather late undocumented birds, Whiffen Spit, Oct 4.

ROCK SANDPIPER

Uncommon winter visitor

Calidris ptilocnemis

(0; 0, 0)

The only record of this species reported to the ABR during 2008 was a well-described bird off Rutland Road, Nov 3 - 4, and presumably the same bird at Cattle Point on Nov 5.

DUNLIN

Common winter visitor

Calidris alpina

(0; 1073, 180)

Records to May 4 and from Sep 21. Numerous reports were received of flocks in the 50 to 100 range.

**BUFF-BREASTED
SANDPIPER**

Rare migrant

Tryngites subruficollis

(0; 0, 0)

One reported on Sidney Island Spit on Aug 26. This bird was seen at the same locality and on almost the same date as the 2007 bird.

SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER

Common migrant

Limnodromus griseus

(0; 0, 0)

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER

Common migrant

Limnodromus scolopaceus

(0; 0, 0)

From one to three birds were seen at Sahilton Road, Duncan, Jan 19 - Feb 18.

An unstated number reported from Witty's Lagoon on May 4 was the only spring report received by the ABR.

Fall passage was from July 24 - Oct 28.

It is encouraging that a few observers are now submitting careful field notes on these birds. None of the field notes received, however, made it possible to determine without ambiguity or beyond doubt as to which species were involved. In many, and perhaps even most, circumstances, it may not be possible to be completely certain of the identification of every dowitcher seen. Observers are encouraged to make every effort to document carefully any individuals that they believe they have been able to identify with certainty.

WILSON'S SNIPE
Gallinago delicata

Common fall migrant and winter visitor

(3; 18, 9)

We continue to report all snipe records under the heading of Wilson's Snipe, while continuing to encourage the development of methods for distinguishing this species from *G. gallinago* under field conditions.

Forty-three birds were reported from the beginning of the year to May 5. One was photographed at King's Pond in the first week of June. Seventy-two were reported from Sep 11 to the end of the year.

An unusual record was of one found at the car-wash at Quadra and McKenzie, Saanich, Oct 27, taken to Wild ARC for treatment.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE *Rare migrant*
Phalaropus tricolor (0; 0, 0)

One at Raper's Pond, Saanich, May 25 - 27 (AL, MR).

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

Four off Clover Point, May 26, and two there, May 30. Abundant offshore from July 25 to Sep 11, with a count of 225 off Tower Point, Metchosin, Aug 30. Two off Race Rocks, Oct 12. Two off Cattle Point, Oct 24.

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

One seen and convincingly described off Race Rocks, Oct 12 (MR, IC).

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

Spring records extended from Apr 20 to May 3, a rather short interval. None were reported in June. Fall records started with 16 off Beechey Head on July 25. An estimated 4000 were in Active Pass on Sep 25. Counts of from 200 to 500 were made from RPBO or off East Sooke Park from mid-Oct to mid-Nov.

The last report was of six off Ogden Point on Nov 28.

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

The first reported Heermann's Gull of the year was seen on July 2 at Clover Point. From July 14 to Oct 28 they were seen regularly, the largest count reported being 73 at RPBO on Sep 30. After that,

numbers were much diminished, with the last four birds being reported on Nov 11.

MEW GULL

*Abundant winter visitor and
uncommon non-breeding resident*
(878; 668, 137)

Larus canus

Reported in all months except June. No records from May 26 to July 24. Among the larger estimates reported were 500 at Clover Point, Feb 1; 1000 on Witty's Beach, Feb 17; 300 at Beechey Head, July 25; 460 between Harling Point and Gonzales Bay, Nov 11.

RING-BILLED GULL

Uncommon migrant
(0; 0, 4)

Larus delawarensis

One seen and convincingly described, Coburg Peninsula, July 13 and Aug 4. One, Sidney Island Spit, Aug 26 - 30. One seen and convincingly described, Island View Beach, Sep 10, and two there, Oct 26; one convincingly described and photographed, Coburg Peninsula, Sep 28. "Many" at Cowichan Dock Road, Oct 26. One found at Save-On-Foods, Blanshard Street, taken to Wild ARC for treatment Nov 10.

CALIFORNIA GULL

Abundant migrant
(0; 2, 0)

Larus californicus

Spring records from Mar 25 to May 31. No further records until July 4. During September, total counts of California Gulls at RPBO (2483) exceeded those of all other identified gulls (2338) together. One observer estimated c1100 at Esquimalt Lagoon on Sep 13. The last Nov record was on Nov 22, although two were accepted for the Victoria CBC on Dec 20.

HERRING GULL

Uncommon winter visitor
(4; 4, 1)

Larus argentatus

Apart from CBC records, there were reports of 57 Herring Gulls during the periods Jan 1 - Feb 23, and Aug 21 - Dec 16. Observers are requested to supply details on Herring Gulls that they report. Only one bird, on Nov 22, was described from field notes.

THAYER'S GULL

Common winter visitor

Larus thayeri

(52; 428, 9)

Records to June 15 and from Sep 21. On Oct 13, an estimated 500 were counted in a trip from Victoria Harbour to Race Rocks.

WESTERN GULL

Uncommon winter visitor

Larus occidentalis

(2; 3, 6)

Sixteen were reported up to Apr 13, and 11 from Aug 27. Few of these were described, and, of those that were, all but one bore characters intermediate between this species and other large *Larus* gulls. One bird, described in careful detail, including a dark mantle, was seen by IC in Tolmie Park, Saanich, and may have been close to a "pure" Western Gull.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL

Abundant resident

Larus glaucescens

(1588; 6392, 858)

No particular reports were received of this abundant and familiar resident gull.

GLAUCOUS GULL

Uncommon winter visitor

Larus hyperboreus

(4; 1, 0)

All credible records, for which convincing details were received, are: One photographed at Quamichan Lake, Jan 1. One, Goldstream Park, Jan 4 - 5. One, Lakes Road, Duncan, Jan 10, 20. Two, Esquimalt Lagoon, Jan 20. One, Cordova Bay GC, Mar 11. One, Cattle Point, May 1. One, McHugh Road, Central Saanich, May 10.

CASPIAN TERN

Common nonbreeding summer visitor

Sterna caspia

(0; 0, 0)

There were numerous records from many locations in the south of the Area from Apr 24 to Sep 1. Up to 27 birds were noted at Esquimalt Lagoon during most of May and June, and 28 were noted at Sidney Island Spit on Aug 26. The ABR received no records of proof of breeding. The Ogden Point site where breeding was

suspected but not proved in 2007 was visited, and there was no proof of breeding there. As in previous years, very aggressive behaviour of this tern towards raptorial birds was noted. For example two Caspian Terns attacked and chased no less a bird than a Peregrine Falcon at Cordova Spit on June 8.

COMMON TERN	<i>Rare fall migrant</i>
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	(0; 0, 0)
ARCTIC TERN	<i>Status unknown</i>
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	(0; 0, 0)

In the absence of details, these two species, among the most notoriously difficult bird pairs to separate, are treated together.

All reports received were: One at Island View Beach, July 14; three at Tower Point, Aug 30; one at Harling Point and one at Clover Point, Aug 5.

PARASITIC JAEGER	<i>Rare fall migrant</i>
<i>Stercorarius parasitica</i>	(0; 0, 0)

The only report received was of two at Race Rocks, Oct 12.

COMMON MURRE	<i>Common migrant and winter visitor</i>
<i>Uria aalge</i>	(4; 1701, 70)

Records to Feb 24 and from July 25. That is to say, there were no sightings of this species reported to the ABR in the period Feb 25 to July 24 inclusive. The largest numbers reported were in Sep, with 3000 - 4000 estimated between Victoria Harbour and Race Rocks on Oct 12. Begging young were noted off Race Rocks on Sep 26.

PIGEON GUILLEMOT	<i>Common resident</i>
<i>Cephus columba</i>	(2; 47, 124)

Breeding plumage first noted in early Feb. The largest single count from one location was 348 in Cordova Bay on Sep 13 (MMcG).

MARbled MURRELET

*Uncommon migrant and
winter visitor*

Brachyramphus marmoratus

(1; 11, 3)

Records to Apr 26 and from June 8. That is to say, there were no sightings of this species reported to the ABR in the period Apr 27 to June 7 inclusive. The largest numbers reported were c50 at Beecher Bay on Sep 20, and c50 off Cattle Point on Nov 16. Several observers confirmed the tendency of this species to occur in pairs.

ANCIENT MURRELET

*Uncommon migrant and
winter visitor*

Synthliboramphus antiquus

(0; 483, 0)

In contrast to 2007, this species was abundant during much of Jan, c2500 being reported on one day off Clover Point. Numbers fell off during Feb, and the last spring report was of 2 seen from the *Coho* ferry in the Strait of Juan de Fuca on Mar 7.

In the fall, Ancient Murrelets were first reported on Nov 11, when hundreds were reported, mainly flying east, off Clover and Harling Points. Reports of this species continued through to the end of the year.

RHINOCEROS AUKLET

*Common nonbreeding summer
visitor and uncommon
nonbreeding resident*

Cerorhinca monocerata

(1; 7, 0)

The single bird seen during the Duncan CBC was the only report of this species during Jan. A few birds started to appear from the beginning of Feb, and on Mar 7, 80 were seen from the *Coho* ferry. They continued in small numbers during early summer, with larger numbers (such as 60 at Beechey Head on July 25) appearing as the summer progressed. Eighty were counted again from the *Coho* ferry on Aug 24, and c100 were estimated during a trip from Victoria Harbour to Race Rocks on Oct 12. This was, however, the last report of this species until Dec 4.

ROCK PIGEON

Common introduced resident

Columba livia

(76; 756, 0)

Numerous flocks reported from throughout the area, in both urban and rural surroundings. Among the larger flocks reported were c75 at a dairy farm on Wain Road in North Saanich, c50 at Clover Point and c50 at the Walmart shopping centre in Saanich.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON

*Uncommon resident; locally
common fall migrant*

Patagioenas fasciata

(1; 0, 6)

The great majority of records were from East Sooke and Metchosin (including RPBO) in Sep and early Oct. For example, 425 were reported from RPBO on Sep 22, 200 in East Sooke Park on Sep 27, and 160 at RPBO on Oct 7.

Outside Sooke and Metchosin, there were about 30 reports from various parts of Saanich, and other sightings from Oak Bay, Florence Lake, Thetis Lake, Shawnigan Lake, Francis-King Park, Duncan, and the species was seen regularly in Ladysmith from Mar to Sep, with a maximum of 35 there on Sep 23.

Apart from CBC data, there were no reports from anywhere in Jan, Feb, Nov and Dec.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE

Uncertain origin

Streptopelia decaocto

(0; 2, 0)

Up to five birds, for which full and satisfactory details are available, were reported from Sooke in the period Apr 11 - May 15. One was seen there again in July and again in Oct.

While there have been previous reports of this species in recent years, none has been supported by satisfactory, or any, details, and therefore these Sooke birds constitute the first acceptable records from the area.

Field notes of a bird seen on the Dallas Road waterfront on Nov 5 may have pertained to this species, but cannot exclude the possibility that the bird there was an escaped Ringed Turtle Dove *S. risoria*, and indeed seem to fit this domestic species more closely than *decaocto*.

No details have been received of other sightings of this species during the year, including CBC data.

Observers should be aware that the rather similar domestic Ringed Turtle Dove (also known as Barbary Dove) *S. risoria* is extensively kept in captivity locally, and that careful field notes describing sightings of either species are mandatory before publication in the ABR.

MOURNING DOVE

Locally common resident

Zenaida macroura

(0; 31, 11)

Seen throughout the year in most months (no reports from May or September) in various locations in Central and North Saanich, especially in the Martindale/Island View area, and at the Vantreight's bulb farms, the largest number seen together being 22 at McHugh Road, Central Saanich, on Nov. 7. Reports from outside Central and North Saanich were from Devonian Park, several Saanich locations, and Moss Street, Victoria.

COCKATIEL

Escaped cage bird

Nymphicus hollandicus

(0; 0, 0)

One flying freely on Mount Douglas, May 26. There is no evidence of a sustaining feral population.

YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO

Very rare migrant

Coccyzus americanus

(0; 0, 0)

One seen by three observers on Wilfert Road, Colwood, Aug 12. Notes by KW as follows:

“One, stunned after window hit, Wilfert Rd, close up, on the pavement, stunned, but moving about on the ground, we watched it for 10 minutes. Long yellow curved bill, brown on top, no striping, white on the bottom, very long tail, rufous when it spread its wings. When it moved and spread its wings to reveal the red underneath – the giveaway.”

BARN OWL

Rare resident

Tyto alba

(0; 0, 0)

A pair nested on the Saanich Peninsula, where it was photographed with four young on June 14.

All other records were: One in Central Saanich, Feb 10; one near Happy Valley Road, Langford, Feb 26 and Mar 8; one, Lochside Drive, Saanich, Mar 15; one, West Saanich Road, Central Saanich. These last two records pertain to injured birds found and taken to Wild ARC for treatment.

GREAT HORNED OWL

Common resident

Bubo virginianus

(4; 8, 0)

Recorded in all months, from approximately 19 well distributed locations, mostly from the southern half of the Area. Nesting was recorded from at least seven locations; at least 15 young were fledged. Wild ARC received 3 injured Great Horned Owls for treatment during 2008.

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL

Rare resident

Glaucidium gnoma

(1; 0, 0)

A pair nested and bred successfully at the same Saanich Peninsula location as in 2007, one bird being seen there as late as Oct 18.

Other records were: One, Mount Wells, Jan 26 and Apr 6, 25, 27; one, Millstream Lake Road, Feb 10; one, Petworth Road, Feb 19; one, East Sooke, Oct 5; one, Metchosin on Oct 6; three, Happy Valley Road, Sooke, Dec 23.

BARRED OWL

Common resident

Strix varia

(1; 3, 3)

Recorded in all months. It is estimated that the reports received involved about 78 individual birds from about 49 separate locations. All reported locations were from the Greater Victoria area including the entire Saanich Peninsula, and East Sooke. Habitats varied from urban (behind the Royal British Columbia Museum) to wilderness (Roche Cove). No reports were received from the north of the Area.

One report was received of successful nesting, with two young. Wild ARC received 26 injured Barred Owls for treatment during 2008.

LONG-EARED OWL

Rare

Asio otus

(0; 0, 0)

One found dead, killed by car, Long Gun Place, Saanich (RWC), on Nov 11.

SHORT-EARED OWL

Uncommon migrant

Asio flammeus

(0; 0, 0)

All reports received were: One at Cowichan Bay, Jan 15 and Mar 10; two at Swan Lake, Apr 20; two at Maber Flats, Dec 16, and one there on Dec 18.

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET
OWL**

*Rarely seen but apparently
locally common migrant*

Aegolius acadicus

(0; 1, 0)

While some birders were doubtless speculating whether it is the Barred Owl or the Great Horned Owl that is the commonest owl in the Area, 637 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded at RPBO, all but one in the period Sep 16 - Oct 31, and a further 13 were banded at Witty's Lagoon, Oct 16 - 18. In addition, four injured birds were brought to Wild ARC in Sep and Oct, and one further bird was seen at Woodhaven Terrace, Saanich, on Sep 18. This probably answers the question as to which is our commonest owl, at least in September.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK

Uncommon summer visitor

Chordeiles minor

(0; 0, 0)

Records from June 20 to Aug 25 only. Only about 100 birds were reported in all, with the largest single flock being 45 birds over Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, on Aug 3.

BLACK SWIFT
Cypseloides niger

Uncommon summer visitor
(0; 0, 0)

All reports received of this species were: 16 over Ladysmith, June 5; one over Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, June 7; two over Swan Lake, June 10; one at Ladysmith, June 20; one at RPBO, July 21; six, Ladysmith, Aug 3; and one, Ladysmith, Aug 18.

VAUX'S SWIFT
Chaetura vauxi

Uncommon summer visitor
(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 7 to Sep 28. Full and satisfactory details were received of six very early birds over Saanichton on Apr 7 (AN). After that, there were no further reports until May 6. There were reports of no more than ten birds in May, none in June and only one in July. Thirty appeared at Rocky Point on Aug 26, and from then until the last week in Sep, there were numerous reports, mostly from the Sooke or Metchosin areas, except for one bird at Swan Lake on Sep 16. 127 were counted in the first five days of Sep at RPBO. Other high counts included 80 at Pedder Bay on Sep 5 and 40 at Aylard Farm, Sooke, on Sep 2. No reports were received from Rithet's Bog, a locality where swifts have been seen in recent years. The last record was of six over East Sooke Park on Sep 28.

ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD
Calypte anna

Common resident
(11; 329, 36)

An early nest was found at Swan Lake on Feb 9, a fledgling was noted there on Apr 4, and another fledgling at Ladysmith on Apr 8. RWC notes that eighteen nests were reported from widely separated locations on southern Vancouver Island, including Broadmead, Duncan, Malahat, Royal Oak, Sidney, Sooke, Swan Lake, Ten Mile Point, University of Victoria, Uplands, and Victoria, between late January and early July. All but one nest was saddled on the branch of a tree or shrub. A nest built on a wind chime under the soffit of a home in Royal Oak, the first such site recorded for the species, was published by Angela Bull in *Wildlife Afield* 5(1), 26 (2008) (see www.wildlifebc.org). Also, an identifiable female successfully raised two broods at the University of Victoria (Finnerty Gardens).

Twenty were counted on the east side of Swan Lake on Aug 28. On Nov 19, one was observed harassing a Northern Shrike at Maber Flats.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD
Stellula calliope

Rare migrant
(0; 0, 0)

One was well described by MR and photographed by TA and TZ at a private residence in Saanich on Apr 23 - 26.



Calliope Hummingbird in Saanich. Photo by Ted Ardley.

RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD
Selasphorus rufus

Common summer visitor
(0; 0, 0)

Reliable records from Mar 10 to Nov 7. While this is still a common bird, especially in rural areas, it is less so in urban areas than it used to be, and some concern has been expressed that by the time they have arrived, many suitable territories are already occupied by the now very common Anna's Hummingbird.

BELTED KINGFISHER

Common resident

Ceryle alcyon

(20; 17, 18)

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)

One seen by m.o. at University of Victoria, Apr 12. One seen at Goldstream Park on Apr 26 and again on May 11. One found at Tyee Road, Victoria, on Oct 3 was taken to Wild ARC and successfully treated and released. Good attempts at obtaining field notes of these birds were obtained, and it seems safe, on grounds of range, to list them under Red-naped Sapsucker, although the field notes received were insufficient to distinguish them from the unlikely Yellow-bellied Sapsucker or of a hybrid variant.

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER

Uncommon resident

Sphyrapicus ruber

(14; 79, 11)

In spite of the high price of gasoline during the summer of 2008, which doubtless discouraged observers from often visiting the outlying districts where this species is usually encountered, the Red-breasted Sapsucker was well reported this year.

Not including CBC data, records by month were

Jan	9	July	1
Feb	2	Aug	2
Mar	7	Sep	7
Apr	10	Oct	0
May	4	Nov	0
June	8	Dec	18

One was seen entering a nest cavity in Logan Park, Saanich, May 23, and three young birds in a close group were seen in Sep at Munn Road where one or two adults had been seen often earlier in the year. A nest produced three young in Duncan. Wild ARC received five birds for treatment during the year, including a fledgling from Shawnigan Lake.

The most remarkable event of the year was the completely unprecedented number of 79 that were counted on Dec 20 in very cold weather during the Victoria CBC.

DOWNY WOODPECKER *Common resident*
Picoides pubescens (47; 212, 20)

Little information was received about this common resident species. Drumming was first noted on Mar 5.

HAIRY WOODPECKER *Common resident*
Picoides villosus (9; 30, 5)

This woodpecker is not nearly as common as the Downy Woodpecker. Nevertheless, apart from CBC records, there were a further 149 records reported during the year, although none of them were from north of the Malahat. Drumming was first noted on Apr 3. A pair with three fledged young was seen in East Sooke Park, June 8. A pair with one fledged young was seen on Mount Tolmie, June 12. One young bird was seen at Beechey Head, July 26.

NORTHERN FLICKER *Common resident*
Colaptes auratus (101; 374, 62)

While most of our birds are, of course, “Red-shafted” Flickers, there were numerous reports during the months Jan - Apr and Oct - Dec, far too many to record here individually, of birds bearing characters intermediate between those of the “Yellow-shafted” and “Red-shafted” forms. About four of these appeared to be pure “Yellow-shafted”.

PILEATED WOODPECKER *Common resident*
Dryocopus pileatus (8; 30, 15)

Drumming first reported on Mar 9. Fledged young were seen on July 8. Otherwise little in particular to report on this spectacular yet common resident bird.

OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER *Common summer visitor*
Contopus cooperi (0; 0, 0)

Recorded from May 3 to Aug 31.

WESTERN WOOD-PEWEE *Uncommon summer visitor*
Contopus sordidulus (0; 0, 0)

Recorded from May 8 to Sep 19 from 10 locations. Mount Tolmie and Christmas Hill were the areas most frequently cited, particularly Christmas Hill, where three could be seen or heard during much of June.

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

Recorded from May 19 to Sep 4.

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

Records from Apr 28 to Sep 26. While some records were received from early April, such records are outside the normal dates for this species, and, in the absence of any details, such reports must be regarded as unsafe. While good field notes were received of the Sep 26 bird, the bird was not singing, and the prudent may feel that the possibility of its being some other member of this difficult genus cannot be excluded.

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

Records from Apr 15 to Sep 23. No details were received of the bird on the rather early Apr date. Observers are reminded to take note that, in order for reports of difficult species seen on exceptional dates to be published, field notes are mandatory. Good field notes were received of the Sep 23 bird.

WESTERN KINGBIRD

Uncommon to rare migrant

Tyrannus verticalis

(0; 0, 0)

All records as follows. One on Mount Tolmie, May 2 - 5. One on Observatory Hill (Little Saanich Mountain), May 10. One on Mount Douglas, May 5 - 11, and two there May 20 - 21. One at Royal Roads University, June 7. One, Whiffen Spit, June 22.

EASTERN KINGBIRD

Rare migrant

Tyrannus tyrannus

(0; 0, 0)

One at Cowichan Bay Industrial Dock Road, June 27, (JK). Watched through binoculars from as close as five metres. Brief but adequate field notes obtained.

NORTHERN SHRIKE

Uncommon winter visitor

Lanius excubitor

(1; 6, 0)

Records to Mar 22 and from Oct 13. In addition to the CBC records, there were sightings of 3 birds in Jan; 3 in Feb; 5 in Mar; 10 in Oct; 7 in Nov; and 2 in Dec. Locations for these sightings ranged through the Saanich Peninsula, Saltspring Island and in the Duncan and Cowichan Bay areas. There was an interesting observation of one being harassed by an Anna's Hummingbird on Nov 19 at Maber Flats, Central Saanich, where a Northern Shrike was present daily from then until the end of the year.

CASSIN'S VIREO

Common summer visitor

Vireo cassinii

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 6 to Sep 13.

HUTTON'S VIREO

Common resident

Vireo huttoni

(2; 1, 2)

Recorded in all months. Not including CBC data, reports of about 35 additional birds were received, rather uniformly distributed through the year.

WARBLING VIREO

Common summer visitor

Vireo gilvus

(0; 0, 0)

Records from May 2 to Sep 28. Fifteen were counted at Swan Lake on Aug 28.

RED-EYED VIREO

Uncommon to rare summer visitor

Vireo olivaceus

(0; 0, 0)

All records received were: One in the Happy Valley area of Langford, May 19; one at Dock Road, Duncan, June 1; one at Swan Lake, June 24.

GREY JAY

Rare winter visitor

Perisoreus canadensis

(0; 6, 0)

Six were reported on Mt. Work on Dec 20 during the Victoria CBC.

STELLER'S JAY

*Common resident and
irruptive winter visitor*

Cyanocitta stelleri

(82; 295, 97)

Reported throughout the year, but with only two records in June, two in July, and five in Aug. Common from about mid-Sept.

NORTHWESTERN CROW

Abundant resident

Corvus caurinus

(710; 2792, 490)

Gathering of nest material was noted on Mar 14. Otherwise reports consisted for the most part of recording particularly large numbers of this very numerous species. For example, 800 were estimated daily in Jan/Feb over Swan Lake, flying SW in the morning and NE in the evening. 600 flew E off Mt Douglas Beach on Feb 26. 800 were estimated daily in Nov/Dec at Swan Lake, flying SW in the morning and NE in the evening.

Anting was noted at Swan Lake on Apr 16.

COMMON RAVEN

Corvus corax

Common resident

(331; 290, 87)

Three young were noted in the nest on Christmas Hill on May 6.

SKYLARK

Alauda arvensis

Uncommon introduced resident

(0; 1, 30)

The largest counts received for the year were an estimated 30 at the Vantreight bulb fields in Central Saanich on Oct 24, and again on Dec 30. Otherwise no more than ten were reported at any one time, and most sightings were from the Vantreight fields. Three were reported from Victoria International Airport on Mar 2, and six in the Martindale area on Oct 28. It seems that this formerly common bird is now becoming quite scarce, and all records are solicited, particularly from places other than the present main stronghold of the Vantreight fields. Song was first noted on Feb 15.

HORNED LARK

Eremophila alpestris

Uncommon migrant

(0; 0, 4)

No Horned Larks were reported in the first eight months of the year.

All sightings were: One on Christmas Hill, Saanich, Sep 12. Two at Island View Beach, Sep 20. One, East Sooke, Sep 29. Two at Cattle Point, Oct 3 - 6. One at Clover Point, Oct 5 - 13. Four at Vantreight's bulb fields, Central Saanich on the Sidney/Saltspring Island CBC, Dec 27.

PURPLE MARTIN

Progne subis

Common summer visitor

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 14 to Aug 28. Twelve were seen over Island View Beach on June 8, and 14 over Ladysmith on July 24.

TG reports that 109 nesting pairs were distributed in 12 colonies from Sooke to Chemainus. 380 nestlings fledged.

TREE SWALLOW

Common summer visitor

Tachycineta bicolor

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Feb 17 to Aug 4, except for three injured or sick birds brought to Wild ARC for treatment -- one trapped in a horse paddock in Brentwood Bay, Nov 10, and two found on Dec 27, one in Central Saanich and the other with no data.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW

Abundant summer visitor

Tachycineta thalassina

(0; 0, 0)

An unstated number were reported from Cooperidge Street, Central Saanich, on Feb 5. Otherwise spring arrival was first noted on Feb 23. By Mar 11 there were c40 over Swan Lake and c200 over Beaver Lake. Other large counts reported were c250 over Swan Lake on Mar 23; c600 over Swan Lake on May 11; c500 over Beaver Lake on Apr 18.

Most Violet-green Swallows had departed by the end of the first week in Aug, though a few stragglers were seen until the last sighting of three in East Sooke Park on Sep 28.

**NORTHERN ROUGH-
WINGED SWALLOW**

Common summer visitor

Stelgidopteryx serripennis

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 11 to Aug 31. Many of the summer sightings were from Sayward and Mount Douglas Beaches.

BANK SWALLOW

Rare summer visitor

Riparia riparia

(0; 0, 0)

As usual, there were several undocumented reports of this species. Although it was seen and heard at some distance, field notes made by IC of a bird at Swan Lake on June 2 almost certainly referred to a Bank Swallow.

CLIFF SWALLOW
Petrochelidon pyrrhonota

Uncommon summer visitor
(0; 0, 0)

A very early possible record of one at Swan Lake on Mar 16 was unfortunately undescribed. Otherwise records were from Apr 5 to Aug 5. A colony of apparently abandoned nests of the year was located at Mount Newton Cross Road, Central Saanich.

BARN SWALLOW
Hirundo rustica

Abundant summer visitor
(0; 0, 0)

One was at Swan Lake, Feb 28-29 and Mar 9. Three, well described, were there on Mar 18, this number growing to 10 by Mar 31, and most observers were seeing this species from the beginning of April. These reports continue the recent trend of overwintering and early arrival of the Barn Swallow, which formerly was not to be expected until late April.

Among larger counts were some 250 at Swan Lake on Aug 4, 300 there on Aug 15, and 120 there on Aug 26. The last sighting of the year was of two at Rocky Point on Sep 23.

CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE
Poecile rufescens

Common resident
(388; 1612, 432)

Notes on this species by IC: A pair entered and investigated a nestbox at Dunn Avenue, Saanich on Feb 22, and were removing old material from it on Feb 27. One was seen excavating a nest hole in Calvert Park, Saanich, Mar 17. An unusually-plumaged bird with grey on the flanks and on much of the back was paired with a normal Chestnut-backed Chickadee at Saanichton Bay on Mar 23. Gathering of nesting material was noted on Apr 3. A nest hole was located on Apr 10 at Elk Lake six feet below an occupied Great Horned Owl's nest. Courtship feeding noted on Apr 16. By Jun 8, there were fledged young chickadees everywhere. On Nov 10, 60 were counted from Aylard Farm to Babbington Hill, East Sooke Park.

BUSHTIT *Common resident*
Psaltriparus minimus (105; 868, 115)

IC cites 70 as a typical count around Swan Lake in winter, breaking up into smaller flocks in March. Nest-building first noted on Mar 9, frequently on Ocean Spray, *Holodiscus discolor*. Adults were watched entering a nest eight feet above the ground in a Douglas-fir on May 15. On Aug 28, 90 were observed at Swan Lake. A single flock of 64 birds was at Dunn Avenue, Saanich on Sep 3. Seven flew out off Clover Point on Nov 20, returning to land.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH *Common resident*
Sitta canadensis (44; 325, 62)

Notes on this species by IC: Gathering moss for nesting material noted on Apr 3. In early April, a pair was seen disputing ownership of a partially-excavated nesthole with a Downy Woodpecker, 25 feet up in a Douglas-fir snag. The nuthatches won. Other nests found in Douglas-firs, Grand Firs, and Garry Oaks. Adults seen feeding young in the nest on May 12.

BROWN CREEPER *Common resident*
Certhia americana (86; 109, 24)

A nest with six eggs found at University of Victoria on May 6 (RWC). Adult feeding young at nest in Logan Park, Saanich, on May 23 (IC). Young were successfully fledged on May 29 from a nest at Cadboro Bay in an unusual site - in the top of a vertical metal support for wires attached to a telephone pole (RWC). Fledged young seen in East Sooke Park, June 8.

BEWICK'S WREN *Common resident*
Thryomanes bewickii (139; 159, 42)

RWC reports a very late nest in Saanich. A bird was seen carrying nesting material on Aug 25. A nest containing three eggs was found on Sep 6. Nestlings were seen when the nest was checked on Sep 25. The young left the nest Sep 30 - Oct 1, and were seen with the adult later until Nov 10. The previous latest record for Bewick's Wren eggs in British Columbia was July 15. It is possible that this

nesting record might represent a third brood for the year. Details of the observation will be published by RWC in *Wildlife Afield*.

HOUSE WREN

Common summer visitor

Troglodytes aedon

(0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 10 to Sep 12, the bird on this last rather late date being carefully described.

WINTER WREN

Common resident and winter visitor

Troglodytes troglodytes

(108; 329, 77)

A familiar resident bird seen throughout the year, typically on the forest floor in the Salal understorey. IC reports that song was first noted on Feb 12, and was regular from Feb 16. One of the larger numbers reported in a single day from a single locality was 30 including several broods of fledged young, on the Coppermine Trail, East Sooke Park, on June 30. Large numbers were recorded at RPBO during Sept, the largest single-day total there being 45 on Oct 14.

MARSH WREN

Common resident

Cistothorus palustris

(12; 13, 3)

A familiar resident bird seen throughout the year in such places as Rithet's Bog, Blenkinsop Lake, Quick's Bottom and Swan Lake, and doubtless at many other suitable habitats in the Area. Several observers reported nests, from as early as Mar 23. While the species undoubtedly did nest at at least some of these locations, observers are reminded of the habit of male wrens of building "false nests". Fledged young were reported from Swan Lake on June 5.

AMERICAN DIPPER

Locally common resident

Cinclus mexicanus

(3; 1, 1)

Perhaps more because of lack of reporting or visiting, the only months in which Dippers were reported were Jan and Sep to Dec. During both of these periods up to six Dippers were reported from Goldstream Park and from Sooke Potholes. On Oct 24, five Dippers were seen at Sooke Potholes, one of them demonstrating non-stop for several minutes that this species is one of the most talented

songsters in the area. The species is doubtless under-reported since a substantial fee must now be paid to visit both of these well-known localities for the species.

**GOLDEN-CROWNED
KINGLET**

*Common resident and
abundant winter visitor*

Regulus satrapa

(486; 1210, 273)

Recorded in all months of the year. Song first heard on Mar 7. Fledged young were seen at the Coppermine Trail, East Sooke, on June 8, and at Royal Roads University, Colwood, on Jun 15. IC counted 95 at RPBO on Oct 17, and 130 from Aylard Farm to Babbington Hill, East Sooke Park, on Nov 10.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

*Common migrant and
winter visitor*

Regulus calendula

(75; 176, 38)

Song was first heard on Feb 25. In the spring, most Ruby-crowned Kinglets had departed by mid-April, though one was seen on May 2, and a very late, undescribed, bird was reported on May 25. Observers are again reminded that field notes are required for out-of-season birds. First fall arrival noted on Sep 13. Seen regularly from Sep 21. Forty were counted at Swan Lake on Nov 16, but numbers were much reduced after a severe cold spell in late Dec. One frequented a suet feeder in Cadboro Bay from Nov 18 to the end of the year.

WESTERN BLUEBIRD

Rare migrant

Sialia mexicana

(0; 0, 0)

Several Western Bluebirds were seen in very cold and snowy weather in a suburban setting in the vicinity of Fairfield Road and Moss Street, Victoria, during the period Dec 22 - 26. The largest count was 12 on Dec 23, gradually falling to six on Dec 24, three on Dec 25, and one on Dec 26. Detailed field notes and photographs were obtained by IC, and additional photographs were obtained by WJMcD.



Western Bluebird in Fairfield. Photo by W. John McDonald

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD

Rare migrant

Sialia currucoides

(0; 0, 0)

A relatively quiet year for this species compared with recent years. All records are: One photographed by DC at Cordova Spit, Mar 29. Two at Goldstream Heights, Shawnigan Lake, Apr 6. One, Island View Beach, Apr 12.

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE

*Uncommon migrant and
winter visitor*

Myadestes townsendi

(0; 0, 0)

One was seen at Ladysmith on Jan 6. One at Emily Carr Drive, Saanich, Jan 13. One on Mount Douglas, Feb 13. There were about 13 reports of Townsend's Solitaires from Apr 12 to May 10, involving an estimated 15 birds. Most were on Mount Douglas, Mount Tolmie or Observatory Hill. Other locations reported were Cadboro Bay, Langford, Government House, Aylard Farm (East Sooke) and Ladysmith.

In the fall, one was seen at Viaduct Flats on Oct 11.

SWAINSON'S THRUSH

Common summer visitor

Catharus ustulatus

(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, (several demonstrable, if understandable, misidentifications have recently occurred) so field notes would be useful during the period of possible overlap. Records of Swainson's Thrush were reported from Apr 12 (an early date, but song heard) to Sep 24, when one was caught and banded at RPBO.

HERMIT THRUSH

Common migrant and

uncommon winter visitor

Catharus guttatus

(2; 32, 3)

Recorded in all months except July and Aug. Between the beginning of the year until May 3 there were reports of an estimated 89 birds, numbers peaking in Apr and early May. Call notes possibly (although unconfirmed) of this species were heard in the Shawnigan Lake area, June 7. One was heard unmistakably singing in dense conifer and alder forest in East Sooke on June 8.

The first fall report was on Sep 20, with almost daily sightings from then to the end of the year.

AMERICAN ROBIN

Abundant resident

Turdus migratorius

(915; 12811, 3074)

Song was first noted on Jan 14. Fledged young first noted on Apr 25. Several observers reported large flocks of these birds. The largest such count at the beginning of the year was c600 over Dunn Avenue, Saanich, Jan 1, and in the fall c1600 over Swan lake on Oct 12.

VARIED THRUSH

*Common winter visitor and
uncommon resident*

Ixoreus naevius

(121; 641, 32)

The species was regularly reported until May 6. One was seen in East Sooke Park on May 12, and fledged young were seen there on June 8. There were no sightings in July or Aug. Fall arrival in the Victoria area was first noted on Sep 17, after which it was seen regularly until a large influx during the cold weather at the end of Dec.

EUROPEAN STARLING

Abundant resident

Sturnus vulgaris

(2166; 2508, 1253)

Among the larger flocks reported were c900 at Swan Lake on Aug 28. The first out-of-nest fledglings were noted on May 22.

AMERICAN PIPIT

Common migrant and winter visitor

Anthus rubescens

(12; 34, 19)

Recorded in considerable numbers at both ends of the year. For example c40 were seen from Island View Road, Central Saanich on Jan 2; 20 in Duncan on Feb 22 and 30 at Somenos Marsh the following day. Some 200 were at Cowichan Bay Road on Mar 10.

While some observers believed they were present throughout the year, no specific reports were received of sightings in the period Apr 20 to Aug 31 inclusive. Some 50 appeared at Martindale Road and Vantreight's bulb field in the first week in Sept. Among the larger flocks reported were c60 at Martindale Flats on Oct 28 and 45 at Maber Flats, Central Saanich, on Nov 19. A few lingered during Dec, the last sighting being of 2 at Grant Road, Sooke, on Dec 28.

CEDAR WAXWING

Common resident

Bombycilla cedrorum

(4; 93, 6)

Records from all months except Mar and Nov. Whether this is because of absence of reporting or absence of waxwings is open to speculation. Observers are asked to pay particular attention to this species in March in order to determine whether they are genuinely absent then or not. Larger counts received were 114 at Swan Lake on Jan 2; 50 at Hunt Road, Central Saanich, on Jan 18; 120 at Swan Lake on Aug 14; 170 at Quick's Bottom on Oct 1.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER

Common summer visitor

Vermivora celata

(0; 1, 0)

An overwintering bird was seen, described and photographed on several dates from Jan 1 - 27 at Dunn Avenue, Saanich. One was reported, with no details, on Feb 10 at Dallas Road and Government Street, Victoria.

Spring arrival was not recorded until Apr 6, when one was seen on Mount Wells. The species was common thereafter until late Sept. Convincing records after that were one at Rithet's Bog and one at Martindale on Oct 5; one at RPBO on Oct 8; five at RPBO on Oct 10; one at Warrior Point, North Saanich, on Oct 12; one at RPBO on Oct 19, and one at Gordon Head, Dec 27-28.

NASHVILLE WARBLER

Rare migrant

Vermivora ruficapilla

(0; 0, 0)

One was caught, banded and photographed in the hand at RPBO on Oct 8.

The dates of the two records of this species in 2007 were inadvertently omitted from the printed version of the 2007 ABR. The dates were May 8 and Aug 21, 2007.

YELLOW WARBLER

Common summer visitor

Dendroica petechia

(0; 0, 0)

While there were undocumented reports of this species from early Apr, the first acceptable records were from May 1. Most had left by the third week in Sep, although six were at RPBO on Sep 30, and one straggler was seen there on Oct 10.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

Vagrant

Dendroica caerulescens

(0; 0, 0)

An adult male bird was seen and described by CS and MR at Silver Spray, near East Sooke Park on Sep 29.

Notes by CS: Black throat, black flanks, white belly and chest going up to the throat; back blue, head blue with black cheeks; white leading edge on upper wing.

Notes by MR: Bright blue back, black face, throat and bill, and very white underside. I have seen this warbler many times in Quebec and Ontario.

**YELLOW-RUMPED
WARBLER**

*Common migrant and summer
visitor; uncommon resident*

Dendroica coronata

(2; 3, 1)

Up to ten were reported regularly at Dunn Avenue and Swan Lake during Jan and Feb. Two were at Topaz Avenue and one at Rithet's Bog, both in Saanich, on Jan 29. Eight at Topaz Avenue on Feb 27.

During early March, numbers at Swan Lake increased from 10 to 20, and c80 were counted there on May 2. After that, there were only a few birds reported for the remainder on the month.

All reports for June-Aug were: two at Eagle Heights, Shawnigan Lake; one, Stewart Mountain Road, June 17; two, Little Saanich Mountain, July 10; one at Florence Lake, Aug 23; one at RPBO, Aug 26.

Regularly seen from Sep 7, with the largest numbers occurring in the latter half of Sep and the beginning of Oct. About 60 were counted at Swan Lake on Sep 23, and c100 (mostly "Myrtles") at Quick's Bottom on Oct 1. On Oct 10, 14 of 40 birds at RPBO were "Myrtles". Small numbers persisted at several locations during Nov and Dec.

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER *Common summer visitor*
Oporornis tolmiei (0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 21 to Sep 24. In spite of high gasoline prices again during the summer, reports of this species were far more numerous in 2008 than in 2007, a total of c36 birds being reported.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT *Common summer visitor*
Geothlypis trichas (0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 10 to Oct 11.

WILSON'S WARBLER *Common summer visitor*
Wilsonia pusilla (0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 20 to Sep 24.

WESTERN Tanager *Common summer visitor*
Piranga ludoviciana (0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 28 to Sep 12, and one straggler (field notes received) on Oct 13.

SPOTTED TOWHEE *Common resident*
Pipilo maculatus (318; 968, 264)

Song first noted on Feb 9. Gathering of nesting material noted on Apr 19. Fledged young seen on May 12. 45 were counted at Swan Lake on Nov 29.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW *Rare winter visitor*
Spizella arborea (1; 1, 0)

Up to three birds that had been at Swan Lake in Dec, 2007, continued there until Mar 13. Satisfactory field notes and

photographs were obtained of these birds. There were unsupported reports of an additional eight birds during the year.

CHIPPING SPARROW *Common summer visitor*
Spizella passerina (0; 0, 0)

Records from Apr 9 to Aug 28.

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW *Rare migrant*
Spizella pallida (0; 0, 0)

One, well described, seen and heard singing at Swan Lake, May 31. Other reports of this species during 2008 were unsupported by any details.

SAVANNAH SPARROW *Common migrant and summer visitor; uncommon resident*
Passerculus sandwichensis (0; 14, 16)

Reported in considerable numbers in all months throughout the year. Although counts of large numbers were mostly from the end of April to mid-November, there were reports of c36 birds from Jan 1 to Apr 8, and 43 in Dec.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW *Rare migrant*
Ammodramus savannarum (0; 0, 0)

One found by MMcG at Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, on Nov 16, was subsequently seen by m.o. until Nov 19. The bird was successfully photographed by TA.



FOX SPARROW

Passerella iliaca

Common winter visitor

(188; 923, 183)

Records to May 12 (though scarce after Apr 22). One caught by a cat at Millstream Road was brought to Wild ARC for treatment on July 9. Fall arrival noted from Sep 5. C40 were counted around Swan Lake on Nov 8.

SONG SPARROW

Melospiza melodia

Common resident

(176; 779, 227)

Singing regularly by Feb 12. Nest-building noted on Apr 3.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW

*Common migrant and
winter visitor*

Melospiza lincolnii

(5; 42, 8)

Records to May 14 and from Sep 3. Fall passage peaked in Sep, when IC recorded 140 birds, dropping to 31 in Oct.

SWAMP SPARROW

Rare migrant

Melospiza georgiana

(1; 1, 0)

This rare bird is now being reported regularly from several locations, but it is difficult to assess reports which lack details. Eight reports of Swamp Sparrows were received during 2008. Convincing and acceptable field notes were received of one at Swan Lake on Jan 6.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

*Uncommon migrant
and winter visitor*

Zonotrichia albicollis

(1; 7, 2)

All reports, other than CBC data and one Saanich sighting at an unspecified date, are:

One at Selkirk Road, Victoria, Jan 19 - Apr 8; one at Chandler Avenue, Victoria, Apr 8; one at Salsbury Way, Saanich, Apr 14; one very late (and undescribed) bird at Gonzales Bay, May 10.

Four caught and banded at RPBO, Sep 23, Sep 28, Oct 1, Oct 6; two Happy Valley Road, Langford, Oct 3; one photographed at Swan Lake, Oct 4 - 6; one at Bow Park, Saanich, Oct 8 and 13; one at Bowker Avenue, Oak Bay, Oct 14; two at RPBO, Oct 14; one at Lochside Park, Saanich, Nov 2; one at Gorge Road, Victoria, Nov 11; one at Swan Lake, Nov 24 and Dec 1 - 4; one at Playfair Park, Saanich, Dec 18; one at Happy Valley Road, Dec 28.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW *Common resident*
Zonotrichia leucophrys (59; 215, 57)

Song first noted on Mar 22. Nest-building noted on May 9.
Eighty were counted by IC at Island View Beach on Nov 2, and 150
there on Nov 14.

HARRIS'S SPARROW *Rare migrant*
Zonotrichia querula (0; 0, 0)

One found by DM at Cowichan Bay Dock Road, Oct 21.
Convincing field notes received from MR.

GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW *Common winter
visitor*
Zonotrichia atricapilla (387; 1331, 134)

Records to May 17 and from Sep 8. 60 were counted at Swan
Lake on Jan 4. An estimate of c400 birds were recorded by IC at
Island View Beach on Nov 14.

DARK-EYED JUNCO *Common resident*
Junco hyemalis (1903; 4167, 974)

Song was first heard on Jan 14. Fledged young of the year were
noted on May 23. Among the larger flock counts reported were 84
at Sunnygrove Terrace, Saanich, on Dec 14.

Birds bearing characters resembling those of one of the "Slate-
coloured" races were seen at Dunn Avenue, Mar 10 - 20; at Fairburn
Drive, Oct 15 - 20; and Rithet's Bog, Oct 18, all in Saanich. The
Fairburn bird was photographed by KM. Birds with more or less
extensive areas of white on the head or body were recorded near the
Duncan Forest Museum on Oct 22; at Thornhill Crescent, Saanich,
Oct 25 - 26; and in Langford on Dec 26. The last two birds were
photographed.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR

Uncommon migrant

Calcarius lapponicus

(0; 0, 0)

All records were:

One on Victoria GC, Apr 21.

Four on Sidney Island, Sep 7; two there, Sep 12; up to five birds on Christmas Hill on several dates from Sep 12 to Oct 16; one at Cattle Point, Oct 13; one at Martindale Flats, Oct 15; one at Macaulay Point, Nov 21.

SNOW BUNTING

Rare migrant

Plectrophenax nivalis

(0; 0, 0)

All records were:

Two at Cattle Point, Nov 4. One at Clover Point, Nov 19 - Dec 6, photographed by CM.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

Rare migrant

Pheucticus ludovicianus

(0; 0, 0)

One, first seen on June 14, was caught, banded, described and photographed at RPBO, June 19. One visited a garden in Broadmead for several days around Sep 18. Other reports of this species during 2008 were not supported by convincing details.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Rocky Point. Photo by Ann Nightingale

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK

*Common summer
visitor
(0; 0, 0)*

Pheucticus melanocephalus

Records from May 1 to Sep 7.

LAZULI BUNTING

*Uncommon migrant
(0; 0, 0)*

Passerina amoena

Up to three were seen on Mount Tolmie on several dates from May 20 - June 11, and up to three on Mount Douglas from May 23 - May 26. One was seen at Providence Farm, Duncan on June 1.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

Abundant resident

Agelaius phoeniceus

(383; 289, 66)

As is to be expected for an abundant resident species, few reports were received, though flocks of an estimated 350 birds in the Blenkinsop Valley and 300 at Martindale Flats on Nov 2 Road are noteworthy.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK

*Common migrant and
winter visitor*

Sturnella neglecta

(0; 28, 20)

Recorded in all months except July and Aug. Reports were too numerous in the remaining months to list individually, though the largest numbers were at Vantreight's bulb fields and Martindale Flats, Central Saanich. The largest single count reported was 32 at Martindale Flats, Oct 15.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

Rare migrant

Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus

(0; 0, 0)

One at Interurban Road Saanich, Apr 30; one, Lochside and Martindale, June 2; one, seen and described at Martindale, Sep 30 and Oct 5.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD

Rare migrant

Euphagus carolinus

(0; 0, 0)

One photographed at Swan Lake on Oct 24. One was seen and described at the pig farm on Lochside Drive near Martindale Road, Central Saanich, on Oct 27. Other reports of this frequently-misidentified species were not accompanied by convincing details.

BREWER'S BLACKBIRD

Abundant resident

Euphagus cyanocephalus

(67; 260, 352)

As is to be expected for an abundant resident species, few reports were received, though a flock of an estimated 300 birds roosting nightly at Swan Lake in Nov is noteworthy.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD

*Common summer
visitor
(2; 3, 0)*

Molothrus ater

Satisfactory notes were received of two at the Martindale-Lochside pig farm on Jan 4 and of one at Island View Road on Nov 2. Apart from these, records were from Apr 10 to Sep 30.

Host records (all of fledged birds seen fed by cowbirds) were: *Orange-crowned Warbler*: Swan Lake, June 3; Christmas Hill, June 10; Saltspring Island, June 15. *Common Yellowthroat*: Swan Lake, June 14 and another there on July 23; one at Viaduct Flats, date not supplied. *Song Sparrow*: Harling Point, June 18; Mount Douglas Beach, Aug 7. *Spotted Towhee*: Swan Lake, Aug 16.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE

*Rare summer visitor
(0; 0, 0)*

Icterus bullockii

A pair were at Happy Valley Road, Langford, May 13, and one at Blenkinsop Lake the following day. Two were at Livesay Road, Central Saanich, May 19 - 29. One at Eagle Heights, Shawnigan Lake, June 7.

PINE GROSBEAK

*Rare winter visitor
(1; 28, 0)*

Pinicola enucleator

One at a feeder, Ardmore Drive, Central Saanich, Mar 3. Six were reported from Mount Wells on Nov 14, and 23 there on Dec 20 in addition to one on Petworth Drive, Saanich. The Mount Wells birds were photographed by RR and seen by several observers. Other reports of this species from single observers and from unlikely times of the year, are excluded from this Report.

PURPLE FINCH

*Common resident
(160; 128, 59)*

Carpodacus purpureus

Few records received, as is usual for familiar common resident species. Song was first noted on Mar 12. Twenty-five were counted at Swan Lake on Sep 19, and particularly high numbers were noted there during Sep and Oct.

HOUSE FINCH

Abundant resident

Carpodacus mexicanus

(246; 904, 238)

Fledged young noted on May 11. A flock of about 240 were reported by IC at Island View Beach on Nov 14, feeding on the seeds of the Sea Rocket *Cakile edentula*.

RED CROSSBILL

Irregular irruptive visitor

Loxia curvirostra

(381; 38, 0)

Recorded in all months except Nov, though with greatly different numbers in the first and second halves of the year. From Jan - June IC recorded an average of 91 birds per month, and from July - Dec, an average of 10 per month, of which most were in Dec. Other observers also noted only small numbers after June. By the date of the Victoria CBC, Dec 20, the species was evidently present again in numbers.

PINE SISKIN

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

Carduelis pinus

(6103; 1460, 791)

Common to abundant throughout the year; recorded in every month.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH

Uncommon resident, common summer visitor

Carduelis tristis

(29; 29, 1)

Reports of 16 birds in the first three months of the year. Common thereafter until the end of Oct. About 25 reports in Nov and Dec, excluding the CBC data.

EVENING GROSBEAK

Irregular; migrant

Coccothraustes vespertinus

(21; 6, 0)

Six at Drinkwater Road, Duncan, Jan 19. One at Kerryview Drive, Saanich, Apr 10; one at Swan Lake, May 17. No further

reports until the last week in July. From then to the end of the year there were reports of about 66 birds not including CBC data.

HOUSE SPARROW

Abundant urban resident

Passer domesticus

(364; 1830, 303)

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

While concern has been expressed that the House Sparrow is declining or even endangered in Great Britain, most observers would agree that the species is doing well here and we need have no immediate such concerns.

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