

Marshnotes[®]



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY
SPRING 2024**

BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

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

dedicated to the conservation and study of migratory waterfowl

Marshnotes:

Editor: Kathleen Fry

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Submissions for Marshnotes may be sent to the email and postal addresses below marked for attention of the Marshnotes Editor. **Deadline for the next edition: July 15th, 2024.**

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George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary:

Prices: (effective September 1st, 2022)

Daily Admission:

Adults: \$8.00
Seniors: \$6.00 (65+ years)
Children: \$6.00 (2-14 years)

Bird seed: \$2.00/bag

Annual Memberships:

Family: \$100.00
Individual: \$ 50.00
Life: \$1,000.00

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Assistant Manager: Evan Gogal
Gift Shop Manager: Varri Raffan
Biologist: Marissa Sasaki
Education: Dani McRobbie
Maintenance: Phoenix Black
Field technicians: Kristina Breit
Kiera Fritsch

Hours of Operation:

Reservations are required for all visitors.
Open 9:00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. every day except Mondays. (closed Mondays)

The Sanctuary is wheelchair accessible



We now send out a tweet from our Twitter account @ReifelSanctuary when it looks like there is a weather alert, all reservation spots are full, or something interesting has been seen. Facebook account BCWS2023 has also recently been set up.



Where's the Road?

In late January, when we had just recovered from a short but extremely cold week, with temperatures down below -15°C , a sudden change in the weather brought a dump of 30 cm of snow. It was enough to make it difficult for the first staff on scene on the 17th to get the front gate open and to determine exactly where the edge of the pavement was along the driveway.

The Mallards had some difficulties too. Upon hearing the arrival of a vehicle, a small flock flew out from under the Warming Hut where the snow had been compacted by them overnight. They landed (sort of) in the pristine big thick blanket of powdery stuff. It was more like they disappeared completely down into it. Poof! Gone!

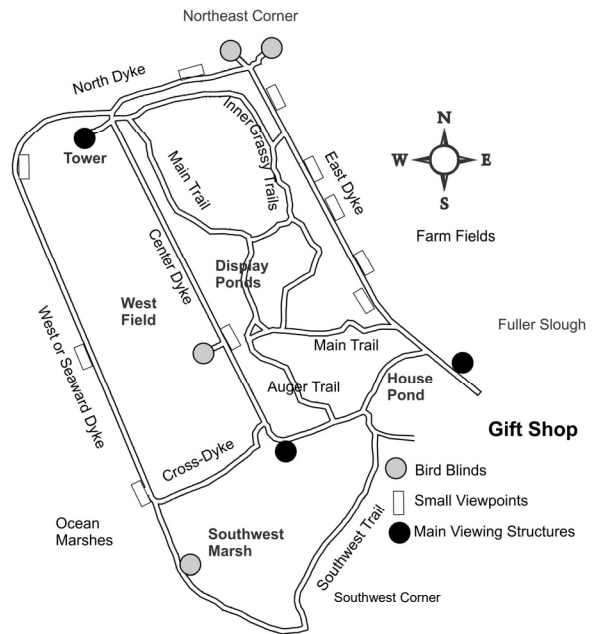
Sanctuary Locations Map

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

About Our Covers

Front Cover: Ruddy Duck
 © Jim Martin
 Back Cover: Cooper's Hawk
 © John Whitmore

Marshnotes is issued four times a year but is now available only in electronic format on our "Archives" page at www.reifelbirdsantuary.com/archives.html. If you would like to be notified when a new edition is posted, email memberships@reifelbirdsantuary.com.



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Kathleen Fry
 Kathleen Fry
 Varri Raffan

Manager's Report

Happy New Year! Visitor use over the first quarter of 2024 (14,442) was higher than in 2023 which had factors such as Westham Island bridge closures and some construction activities affecting access. January was cold and clear for a week, with light snow on the 8th. Temperatures then dropped down to some record-breaking lows (recorded as -15°C here) from the 11th to the 15th. Snow followed on the 17th and 18th that took four days to clean up. From the 23rd to the end of the month, heavy rains set in, with some local flood warnings. We were happy to see that the new Ducks Unlimited Canada water control on Fuller Dyke could be manipulated to ease the risk of waters rising behind the Museum. We were also very happy to see the end of January.

The cold snap froze all of the ponds and even some foreshore marsh areas overnight. A few Ring-necked Ducks, American Coots, and Wood Ducks spent days bunched together in the channel off North Dyke, kept ice-free by the flows from the water control structure there. Hand warmers and a shop work light were needed to keep hummingbird feeders from freezing. The cold weather brought in Red-breasted Sapsuckers to brighten up what was otherwise a white and grey landscape dotted with roving packs of Black-capped Chickadees and Spotted Towhees. The 15 Sandhill Cranes from December were here all January and became our best friends, either roaming the ice of House Pond looking for us or arguing over who could huddle on the deck of the house. When it snowed, they spent their days in the oldfield habitats of the Coast Guard, presumably hunting voles, then their numbers dwindled to just 4 birds within a few weeks.

In February and March, weather was less dramatic, although quite windy, particularly in late March. Wintering owls remained visitor favourites, although it was not a peak year for seeing Northern Saw-whet Owls, as only a few were present over the winter. The last sighting of this small owl species was on April 7th. In late winter, there were glimpses of Short-eared Owls in flight over the tidal marshes. The pair of Great Horned Owls roosted near last year's nest along the driveway from early February to the 25th, when they suddenly relocated to some other locale. Last year's nest was in poor shape after winter storms, so they may have found another nest site. A Barred Owl was present periodically in different parts of the Sanctuary. A Barn Owl roosted sometimes near the house from mid-February to the end of March, and a Long-eared Owl was seen briefly in the flooded woodlot off Southwest Marsh for a few days late January, a few days in mid-February and one day in mid-March. This species seems to only like that out-of-bounds woodlot when winter rains have made the trails into treacherous waterways, with or without ice.



Evan servicing nest boxes. Photo: Marissa Sasaki

In early February, our team refurbished all of the Wood Duck nest boxes, checking them for signs of last year's occupancy, and supplying them with fresh wood shavings. This is also when we check some of the viewing structures for damage and try to keep the wildlife from chewing on things around the buildings. Squirrels, rats and mice are really busy during the cold months. For a week in late February, a few bats were using our bat boxes, but then they disappeared.

In March, we began to see the departure of some of our feature wintering birds. One of the two Black-crowned Night-Herons that had spent the winter here disappeared the first week in March, with the second one gone by the end of March. Snow Geese flocks were more noticeable in late March offshore and in nearby farm fields, fueling up for their long migration to Wrangel Island, Russia. Many of our wintering waterfowl species are at peak numbers in March before they migrate out of here in April.

From mid- February onwards, we also started to see signs of birds getting ready for spring. Bushtits, Anna's Hummingbirds, Canada Geese and nearly all of the ducks were into courtship displays, as well as the Sandhill Cranes, which were observed mating as early as February 6th. A few Canada Geese and Mallards were likely on nests by the end of March, with some predation as usual of these early nests. As

usual, one pair made a nest in the daffodils of the Museum garden.

The first Anna's Hummingbird and Bushtit nests were seen on March 7th. Rufous Hummingbirds started arriving March 13th, but we did not find one of their nests until mid-April. These three species have been very busy building various nests out of mosses, lichens and spider webs, and lining them with soft materials such as cattail seedheads and pussywillows.

The crane pair was on their nest island February 24th checking it out, but have spent many weeks since then trying to scare off their 2021 offspring Evan, as well as another visiting crane that seemed about the same age as Evan. As far as we can tell, the resident pair has made at least two nests which have been abandoned or been predated. The first one was in the cattail marsh north of the crane island on the 31st of March, but by April 2nd, the pair had left it and were on the house lawn, along with Evan. By April 7th, the female was sitting on a nest (and egg) on one of the islands in Southwest Marsh, but a raccoon was nearby, and the next day they had abandoned that nest. They still have time to try again.



Mixed Minnows

Photo: Kathleen Fry

Every year, we have consistent American Bittern sightings along the Southwest Trail, usually near a sign about that species. This year, we used a small minnow trap to assess what was in the shallows of their feeding area and were amazed at the number of small fish caught just overnight. Three-spined

Sticklebacks were the majority of the fish caught, but there were also Predacious Diving Beetles, Brassy Minnows, and Fathead Minnows.

In late winter, there is a tendency for some visitors to focus solely on feeding the ducks during their visit, often with excess seed and attempts to pet, chase, or handle the birds. These activities are not compatible with the primary goal of the Sanctuary, which is to optimize and provide natural safe habitats for wild birds, as they nest, winter, or migrate through the area. We encourage the exploration of a diversity of other nature themes during visits. From April onwards, most waterfowl are gone from the Sanctuary and other smaller birds are focused on raising their young. Our website has some ideas for different monthly topics (see www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/kidsnature.html).

Staff provided some family-oriented presentations during Family Day and during Spring Break for schools in March:

February 19th: Duck Identification. Marissa Sasaki (waterfowl characteristics and how to identify some of our common species);

March 20th: Migration Madness. Evan Gogal (waterfowl migration, including participation in a Snow Goose survival game);

March 22nd: The Creatures of the Night. Dani McRobbie and guest John Saremba, of the Burke Mountain Naturalists (bat biology and conservation);

March 26th: Blooms for Hummingbirds. Marissa Sasaki (hummingbird and plant walk to show the birds and the native plants that are significant to them).

We hope to continue with these drop in theme talks as time permits. They will be posted on our website page www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/planning.html or on the booking system if you wish to register for them ahead of time. One upcoming talk in May will focus on the aquatic life critical to some of the Sanctuary's birds.

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

Life in the Ponds and Its Importance to the Birds of the Sanctuary

What do all Swallows, Flycatchers, Kingfishers, Herons, Northern Shovelers, Diving Ducks, and most Shorebirds species all have in common?

Most of their diet consists of either flying insects, aquatic forms of the same insects, other aquatic invertebrates such as plankton, and /or small fish.

Join us on May 25th at 1030 am to learn about the importance of our pondlife. Meet at the front door of the Museum for a slide show followed by a look at some live examples of these organisms.

Tracking the Wild Geese

Spring 2024 Update on the Snow Geese and the Canada Geese tracking project began last spring.



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See our website page for a project overview.
www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/trackingwildgeese.html

Thirteen Snow Geese wearing advanced technology neck collars are making their way north to Alaska and then on to their nesting grounds at Wrangel Island, Russia. Starting in mid-March, they began moving out from their wintering areas in the Fraser and Skagit River deltas.

Male Snow Goose X17 was captured and collared a year ago on the Fraser Delta. We now have a whole year of data on his travels to Wrangel Island and back, and his movements within the Fraser Delta this past winter. He did not move to the Skagit estuary in Washington this winter as some birds have done in past years. He left the Fraser Delta on 18 March, taking a slightly inland route past coastal inlets as far as Bella Coola, then to the Stikine Estuary in SE Alaska. He hasn't been heard from lately because he is somewhere between Anchorage and Wrangel Island and not close enough to cell towers to download his location data.

Twenty additional geese were collared in Washington State at the Skagit estuary in February this year. Of these, twelve escaped predation and hunting and are now migrating north. Seven are following the BC coastline like X17. The remaining five geese migrated due east to Montana and/or Alberta and are now moving through northern Alberta, presumably to cross the Northwest or Yukon Territories on the way through Alaska to Wrangel Island.

By 30 April, five geese were near Anchorage, Alaska, with another one nearby along the coast at Yakutat. The location of two others (X17 and X13) is unclear. "E.T. Phone home!" comes to mind. Data will become available when the birds are in range of cell towers, which may not be until fall.

The geese that flew east spent a week near Brooks AB, followed by a few weeks near Edmonton. The unusual track of Snow Goose X21 (image to the right) shows it is now moving into the far northwest corner of Alberta into Peace River country. The other four birds are now following that track.

The Skagit-to-Alberta routes are of interest, as the majority of Fraser-Skagit birds are thought to use coastal routes. A migration route through Alberta increases the distance to fly and also the likelihood of mixing with other populations of Snow Geese.

Over the summer, the project will focus on Canada Geese that are also wearing collars, with the aim of documenting their summer foraging and moult migration patterns.

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



BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

Report on the 63rd Annual General Meeting

The 63rd Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at the Sanctuary. BCWS President Jack Bates called the Meeting to order at 7:15 pm and welcomed everyone. A quorum was in attendance. Moira Moore acted as recording Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE 62nd AGM: The Minutes of the 62nd Annual General Meeting, held on Wednesday April 19, 2023, were approved.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: The financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2023, along with the Accountant's Report prepared by KPMG, were presented by the Society's Treasurer Jim Morrison together with some brief remarks. Questions from members in attendance were responded to by the Treasurer.

APPOINTMENT OF THE ACCOUNTANTS FOR 2024: KPMG were appointed as the Society's Accountants for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024, with remuneration to be determined by the Board.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The President introduced the Society's Directors and all members who were present and gave a brief report on the Society and the Board's activities for the year 2023, noting the Society remains in a strong financial position. He thanked the staff and volunteers including the Directors for their contributions to the Society in 2023.

During 2023 the BCWS contributed \$10,000 to the Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust for the 2023-2024 Greenfields winter cover crop program. This program supports both wintering waterfowl and the local agricultural community. This amount is less than in previous years due to a grant that is currently contributing to the program. The BCWS will continue to provide financial support for habitat improvement and waterfowl research projects relevant to its mission as they arise.

SANCTUARY MANAGER'S REPORT: The Sanctuary Manager's report was pre-circulated to the Board and members attending prior to the meeting.

In 2023, maintenance focused on water control structures and shoreline restorations in the first half of the year. Ducks Unlimited Canada replaced a critical water control structure for managing water flows between Roberson Slough and Fuller Slough.

Many thanks to the volunteers who have helped to keep the Sanctuary a special and welcoming place for visitors. Our volunteers engage in a variety of activities such as leading bird walks, maintaining trails, filling bird feeders, bird surveys and monitoring sensitive species.

The British Columbia Waterfowl Society thanked two Directors who retired from the Board at the AGM. James Morrison who served for 43 years and Gerald Oyen who served for 22 years.

Our website www.reifelbirdsantuary.com continues to function as our main communication tool for the public and as an education link for teachers and students. Our Twitter (X) account @ReifelSanctuary is working effectively to alert visitors of closures due to weather or other events. A Facebook page was created and is useful in conveying information to the public.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS: In accordance with the Society's Bylaws, three Directors were elected for a two year term by acclamation: Jack Bates, Wayne Diakow and Stephen Matthews.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

The British Columbia Waterfowl Society
gratefully acknowledges the continuing support of its Accountants

KPMG LLP

8506 200 Street, Langley BC V2Y 0M1

Bird Highlights

January 2024 ended with 90 species recorded for the month.

December 31, 2023 – January 6, 2024

Unfortunately the 4 American Avocets couldn't extend their stay into the New Year to be counted for our 2024 species list. They were last seen December 31st. However they did make it to the list for the annual Christmas Bird Count on December 17th, 2023. On January 1st a Barn Swallow showed up which is definitely a good bird for this time of year. On the 6th 8 Ruddy Ducks were located in the deep channel of water west of the wooden Viewing Platform. Since September we have had 1 or 2 showing up but 8 Ruddy Ducks on one day turned out to be one of the highest counts for the Sanctuary. These compact diving ducks have a stiff upright tail, a pale blue beak and pale cheek patches. The males have a rich chestnut colored body when in spring breeding plumage. Even though they are a diving duck you will often see them slowly sink below the surface rather than plunge. To do this they press their beaks against their chest, dispersing air trapped in their feathers. Grebes will also use this method to quietly slip from sight. Our sightings list for this week compiled by staff and visitors ended with 70 bird species.



Wilson's Snipe

Photo: Dan Parlee

January 7 – January 13

It takes patience to find Swamp Sparrows but 1 was recorded along the North Dyke on the 9th. They are best seen in late fall into winter within wet heavily bushed areas and brackish marshes. January 13th we had an unusually high count of 9 Red-breasted Sapsuckers spotted in various areas in the Sanctuary. We don't have a lot of Varied Thrush each year but this is the best time of year to look for them especially around bushes and trees that produce berries and fruit. Their call, a long single quavering whistle note, is distinctive and can be heard in forested areas. A few birds of note from this week's list were Sora, Wilson's Snipe, Merlin and Northern Shrike.

January 14 – January 20

As the Sanctuary was closed from the 17th to 20th due to snow, this week's list, with 55 species, was a bit on the short side. With ice on all waterways and snow on the ground, waterfowl moved out to open water of the Fraser River. However, 15 Sandhill Cranes remained and were all standing on the ice of House Pond on the 16th. Yellow-rumped Warblers are one of the last Warblers to leave our area and gone by late November heading to Southern US, Mexico and to eastern Panama and even the West Indies. So it was a surprise, given the weather conditions, to find 1 on the 20th. Another bird not commonly found in winter is the Sora. With most of its habitat frozen, it was likely out of the marsh in search of unfrozen insects, aquatic inverts and seeds. Most Soras winter further south in the United States or even Columbia and Peru where marshes remain ice-free.



Short-eared Owl

Photo: Michelle Bachal

January 21 – January 27

With temperatures rising and waterways thawing, birds started returning and we were back up to 75 species for this period. Offshore viewing remains good with Surf Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, Red-throated Loon, Mew Gull, Ring-billed Gull and California Gull. January 24th 2 Barn Swallows appeared at one of their previously used nests under the overhang of the Gift Shop and then 6 were found on the 27th. The first Brown-headed Cowbird returned on the 21st. Even though we had 75 interesting species recorded for this period visitors are always inquiring if there are any owls. They were pleased to hear we had Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl and Short-eared Owl seen this week. This fall there have been very few Short-eared Owls reported overall. We were lucky enough at the end of the week to see one bird hunting over the outer marsh. Short-eared Owls and Snowy Owls are "diurnal" meaning they hunt through daylight hours as opposed to "nocturnal" owls who hunt at night.

February tends to be a transitional month. With lots of wintering species still present we are also seeing

the return of a few early spring migrants. The number of bird species recorded for February was 99.

January 28 – February 3

Swallow sightings are on the rise. February 2nd 16 Barn Swallows were seen at the Southwest Corner and rising to 27 on the 3rd. February 3rd also saw the first return of Tree Swallows. Most days this week a Merlin was seen in various areas throughout the Sanctuary. A Merlin, which is in the falcon family, is about the size of Steller's Jay and has marking similar to a Peregrine Falcon. Merlins are swift and very agile particularly when catching dragonflies and small songbirds in mid air. Another Falcon, the American Kestrel, has been seen, not at the Sanctuary, but on the wires along Westham Island Road. When hunting a prey item, a Kestrel hovers above to focus on it prior to diving and catching it in its talons. The pair of Great Horned Owls is still sitting together in the Cedar tree near their nest site from last year which had initially belonged to a pair of Red-tailed Hawks. This nest has not fared well over the winter and is need of a great deal of repair. On the 3rd, a pair of Red-tailed Hawks was spotted circling over the nest but to date there has been no progress in revamping the nest.

February 4 – February 10

On the 4th, the afore-mentioned American Kestrel has now made it to the Sanctuary property. Double-crested Cormorants are on our checklist year round but easier to find in the fall from August to November and during the spring migration from March to late May. The Cormorant's diet consists mainly of fish so best to look for them near water. A good place to see them perched on logs is in Fuller Slough. Sometimes after heavy rain you will find them standing with their wings hanging out to dry. Under the Westham Island Bridge is another spot I see them frequently in the spring. Double-crested Cormorants get their name from the two tufted white crests on either side of their head when in breeding plumage. Eurasian Wigeon, Ruddy Duck, American Bittern, Belted Kingfisher and Red-breasted Sapsucker were a few of the highlights taken from this week's list of 79 species.

February 11 - February 24

The pair of Great Horned Owls has now left their daytime roost. The Barred Owl which has been mainly spotted at the Northeast corner has also moved on. Both of these species are early nesters starting as early as the middle of February for the Great Horned Owls and a month later for the Barred Owls. Being a large bird, owls have to start nesting sooner in order to incubate for 28–33 days and then 35-40 days for the young to take flight and to have it all completed in time for fall migration. For comparison, a small bird such as the Anna's Hummingbird takes about 14 days to incubate and then another 14 days for young to fledge. With such a quick process, Anna's Hummingbirds will have time for another family and even a 3rd brood



Double-crested Cormorant Photo: Michelle Bachar

if they start early enough in the spring. Going to the other end of the size scale, the California Condor incubates for 42-50 days and 180 days for young to fledge. A handful of Cedar Waxwings are now being spotted but the large numbers don't show until about the middle of May. On the 23rd 2 Northern Saw-whet Owls were located, with 1 near the Observation Tower and 1 along the East Dyke. On the 24th the first White-throated Sparrow was found near the Ewen Slough blind. American Bitterns are known to be elusive but one bird was very visible from the Southwest Trail near the sign that talks about American Bitterns. Many visitors were able to get lots of great photos of this bird as it walked and fed among the vegetation. Also in this 2 week period we had the first American Pipits and Peregrine Falcon.



American Bittern Photo: Dan Parlee

(...../continued page 10)

(...../continued from page 9)

February 25 – March 2

At this time of year the noise level from honking Canada Geese increases immensely. I call it “Goose Wars” as they are very vocal trying to attract mates and stake claim to nesting territory. Ring-necked Pheasants are not seen very often at the Sanctuary, but if you're lucky, you might see one in the surrounding farm fields. These birds will have been part of a flock released in the fall for hunting season. It was nice to see that 2 males had made it and were feeding along the grassy edges of the driveway. Ring-necked Pheasants were originally introduced to North America from Asia in the late 1800's. The first sighting of a Western Meadowlark was on the 2nd. Although they are called Meadowlarks they are not larks. They are brightly colored members of the Blackbird subfamily. More commonly seen in Alberta and southern Saskatchewan, they can also be found in southern British Columbia. The best place to look for them at the Sanctuary is at the Southwest corner outside the Seaward Dyke between October and March. The American Bittern continues to pose for visitors along the Southwest Trail this week.

March is a great month at the Sanctuary. Trees are starting to show new green growth, early flowering Salmon Berry are attracting Rufous Hummingbirds along with lots of pleasing songs from birds looking for mates. March 2024 had a total of 96 bird species.

March 3 – March 9

Along with the vocal Canada Geese, we are now hearing the Black-capped Chickadees calling out with their 2 tone high and low notes in search of partners. Male Anna's Hummingbirds don't rely so much on songs to attract a mate but make a spectacular courtship sound. They will fly straight up then straight down and at the end of the dive they make an abrupt stop by spreading their tail feathers which gives off a loud explosive sound as the air passes through the feathers and a couple of chittering calls for good measure. All this is done in front of a female who is hopefully watching and properly impressed. The first Anna's Hummingbird nest was found on the 7th. Bushtits are also early nester and can often have 2 broods. By the 7th staff had located 2 Bushtit nests. From the list of 73 species, Cackling Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, American Bittern, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Shrike, American Pipit and Red Crossbills were highlights for the week.

March 10 – March 16

Spring migration is now picking up. On the 13th we had the first Rufous Hummingbird at the window feeder of the Gift Shop and the first Violet-green Swallow spotted flying over Fuller Slough. Waterfowl variety remains high. Back in February we had an exceptionally high count of Northern Shovelers but in

the prior week the report from the bi-monthly bird survey team still counted 577 of them throughout the Sanctuary. The large numbers of Trumpeter Swans seen from the Observation Tower over the winter are now diminishing. Usually by the middle of March most of them have started their northward migration in preparation for nesting. In place of the swans we are seeing flocks of Lesser Snow Geese returning from Skagit Valley, Washington. Prior to making the journey to the cold and snowy climate of Wrangel Island, Russia for nesting, they will spend just over 1 month in the Fraser Delta feeding heavily in order to pack on a few pounds to get them through the nesting season. American Goldfinch plumage has now returned to the bright lemony yellow. These finches are late nesters and don't nest until June or July as they rely on the ripened thistle seed and other wild seeds for feeding their young. Many young songbirds are fed insects when still in the nest, but American Goldfinch parents fill their crops with seeds, and a few insects for protein, then regurgitate it to their young.



Snow Geese

Photo: Michelle Bashar

March 17 – March 23

The first spring Yellow-rumped Warbler turned up on the 19th. Diving ducks such as Bufflehead, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Greater and Lesser Scaup and Ring-necked Ducks are now departing and heading to the Yukon, Alaska and Central BC to nest. Swallow species this week included Tree, Violet-green and Barn. Both Tree and Violet-green Swallows have very pale bellies and iridescent blue and glossy purplish green backs respectively. They look similar in flight but you will notice on the Violet-green Swallows two white patches that almost meet at the top of the base of the tail. Barn Swallows have the rust colored bellies and blue backs along with a forked tail which is longer in adults than in juveniles.

March 24 – March 30

It was nice to see a Mourning Dove feeding along the grass edge just inside the gate on the 25th. We had a sighting in December, but before that there had been



Black-crowned Night-Heron Photo: Ben Lambert

no records since 2019. They are slimmer, smaller and have a longer pointed tail than the Eurasian Collared-Doves. The cooing from Mourning Doves is a slow low mournful sound for which they have been named. We had a rare sighting of 2 Canvasback in the Southwest Marsh on the 28th. One more bird not often seen at the Sanctuary is the Pileated Woodpecker but we were fortunate to have 1 seen for 2 days this week. The first spring return of Savannah Sparrow occurred this week. March 30th, 1 Northern Rough-winged Swallow was spotted over the Observation Tower and

on the same day the last Black-crowned Night Heron and Trumpeter Swan were seen. Coming soon in April we'll have many nesting songbirds and waterfowl. Expect to see young waterfowl early May and into June.

Many years ago I visited a web site produced by Terry Ross, and after having a good giggle, I thought I would share again the following whimsical group names for birds.

A drift of Snow Buntings
 A whirligig of Phalaropes
 An outfield of Flycatchers
 An asylum of Loons
 A hangover of Red-eyed Vireos
 A deck of Cardinals
 A gulf of Swallows
 A blizzard of Snow Geese
 A slyness of Fox Sparrows
 An incontinence of Yellowlegs

Text: Varri Raffan
 Gift Shop Manager

The Volunteer Corner

Special thanks to:

- ◆ Mary Taitt for leading our regular Sunday Bird Walk, and Jim Martin and Brian Self for their year-round hosting of visitors along trails on weekends.
- ◆ John Chandler, Janice White and Dirk Fleming, for helping keeping up our seed supply, and tidying up the trails.
- ◆ Brian Self, Peter Candido, Ben Lambert, Janice White, Dirk Fleming and Sabine Jessen for helping with bi-weekly bird surveys.
- ◆ Margaret Gorham for hosting visitors at the Museum every Sunday.

Note we have a volunteer posting at the Gift Shop for help with trail maintenance over the summer. If you are interested in volunteering, please leave your contact information at our office or send an email to kathleen@reifelbirdsanctuary.com.

Visit www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com and explore the Volunteer page.

Why be a Member?

As a Member, you receive the following benefits:

- FREE admission for a year to the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary .
- Quarterly issue of the BCWS publication "Marshnotes".
- A 10% discount on purchases in the Sanctuary Gift Shop.
- Membership in one of British Columbia's most respected conservation organizations.

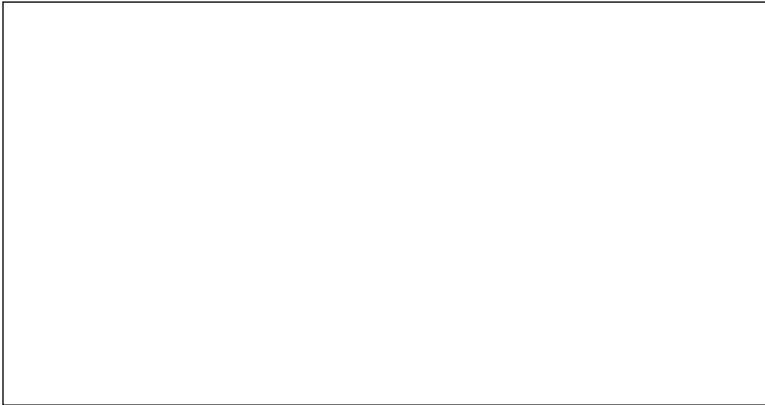
With your support, the British Columbia Waterfowl Society is able to:

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

BRITISH COLUMBIA

WATERFOWL SOCIETY

5191 Robertson Road, Delta, British Columbia V4K 3N2



Immature Cooper's Hawk © John Whitmore