

Marshnotes®



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY
SUMMER 2023**

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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Circulation: 1,800. Published four times a year.

Recommended citation for this issue:

Marshnotes Summer 2023, (K. Fry, Editor).

British Columbia Waterfowl Society. Published July 15th 2023.

www.reifelbirdsantuary.com/marshsum2023.pdf.

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: October 15th, 2023.**

The British Columbia Waterfowl Society,
5191 Robertson Road,
Delta, British Columbia
V4K 3N2

Telephone: 604 946 6980

Facsimile: 604 946 6982

Website: www.reifelbirdsantuary.com

Email: bcws@reifelbirdsantuary.com

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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:

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Individual: \$ 50.00

Life: \$1,000.00

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Gift Shop Manager: Varri Raffan

Maintenance: Dave McClue

Field technicians: Kristina Breit

Kiera Fritsch

Biologists: Evan Gogal

Marissa Sasaki

Education: Dani McRobbie

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.

Call for Photos for the 2024 Calendar

If you have some good photos of our Sanctuary's birds and would like to offer them for our annual calendar, please email or send them in. We are looking for a range of species that would represent bird life at the different months of the year.

Deadline for submissions:

August 15th

Criteria:

Horizontal photos only,

Minimum 4 MB size for good reproduction. Max file size 8 MB. Only photos taken at the Sanctuary

Submit only 5 of your best please.

You can drop off these photos as 5 X 7 prints or email them to me at varri@reifelbirdsantuary.com.

Varri Raffan, Gift Shop Manager.



The 2023 Calendar was a very popular gift item purchased at the Gift Shop this year.

Sanctuary Locations Map

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

About Our Covers

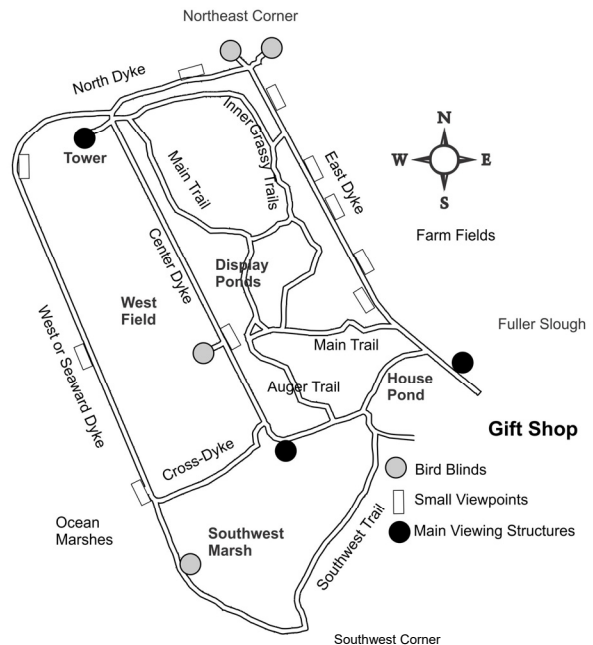
Front Cover: Wood Duck Pair

© Jim Martin

Back Cover: American White Pelicans

© Gary Sadler

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Contents

Page	3	Call for photos for the 2024 Calendar
	4	Bird Highlights
	8	Manager's Report
	10	Field Notes
	11	The Volunteer Corner
	12	Why be a member

Varri Raffan
 Varri Raffan
 Kathleen Fry
 Kristina Breit / Kathleen Fry

Bird Highlights

In April 2023 Delta had 11 days of rainfall with a high of 14 degrees ,making it a comfortable month for some spring bird watching. The grand total for the month was 101 bird species, averaging 77 per week.



Tree Swallow

Photo: John Whitmore

April 2 – April 8

Throughout April various migrant species make an appearance, with some staying to nest and some passing through. Blue-winged Teal, Long-billed Dowitcher, Violet-green Swallow, Cliff Swallow and Savannah Sparrow were all reported this week. We haven't seen a Pileated Woodpecker for years at the Sanctuary, but a female showed up on the 5th and stayed until the last week of April. Some of you who bird at in forests such as Capilano River watershed north of Vancouver or UBC Endowment Lands have probably come across them. A few species such as the Black-crowned Night-Heron, Trumpeter Swan and Sharp-shinned Hawk have moved on and we are now down to very few Golden-crowned Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos.

April 9 – April 15

Tree, Violet-green, Cliff, Northern Rough-winged and Barn Swallows are all present this week. Barn and Tree Swallows will be the only ones that will stay and nest in our area. It was encouraging to read an article published by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) written in May 2021 that Barn Swallows are now designated as a species of "Special Concern" which is a positive change from the "Threatened" list they were on in May 2011. Caspian Terns are now being heard overhead. They are about the size of a medium gull with an orange bill, black cap and a dark patch under each wing tip. Caspian Terns are very hard to locate in the sky but the adults have a distinctive scratchy call, sounds somewhat like cats fighting, which helps draw your attention to them. A few of the bird highlights from this week's 74 species were Common Goldeneye, Wilson's Snipe, Yellow Warbler and Savannah Sparrow.

April 16 – April 22

A single male Cinnamon Teal was spotted in the House Pond on the 16th. Since the Great Horned Owls abandoned their nest along the driveway at the end of March we haven't had many sightings. This week both the male and female were seen sitting in a Cedar tree near their nest, but made no moves to start nesting again. There is still a good sized flock of Lesser Snow Geese being seen south from the Observation Tower. Nesting starts in early June on Wrangel Island Russia for the Lesser Snow Geese so these remaining birds seem to be in no hurry to head north. April 22nd saw the first spring records of Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. This week turned out to be a very active week with a total of 84 different bird species recorded. Some other notables were Greater White-fronted Goose, Pelagic Cormorant, Barn Owl, Barred Owl and Pileated Woodpecker.

April 23 – April 29

On the 27th the first 4 Purple Martins were noticed sitting on the newer nest boxes erected just north of the Observation Tower earlier this month. The first hatch of 5 gosling appeared on the 25th. A Western Tanager was found along the East Dyke on the 28th. These brightly colored birds are here for a short time from May to September and are best found high in the conifers. During breeding season they eat mostly insects, especially wasps, ants, termites, crane flies and even dragonflies (after they have removed the wings and sometimes the legs). This week was the best opportunity to see good numbers and a variety of warblers, with people recording 7 of the 10 warblers on our checklist. The lovely songs from Swainson's Thrush are now being heard throughout the trails. Songs from many birds are best heard in April as they advertise for and try to lure a mate. On the 29th a single Osprey was noted flying over the Sanctuary. At this time of year we start to see flycatchers and shorebirds arriving and at the same time see the departure of the Eurasian Wigeon, Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and Fox Sparrows.



Canada Goose gosling

Photo: John Whitmore



Willow Flycatcher

Photo: Dan Parlee

In May we still have some of the winter species present in with new spring arrivals, making May one of the better months to get a good crossover of bird species. The total count for May 2023 was 102 different bird species.

April 30 – May 6

For you folks that enjoy photographing hummingbirds May is the best month to see both Anna’s and Rufous Hummingbirds along trails and at our feeders. Looking back at my previous bird sighting records, it was interesting to note that the very first Anna’s Hummingbird to be seen at the Sanctuary was on September 11, 2008, but it wasn’t until the fall of 2013 that this species stayed the winter. Another bird that we now see year round is the Eurasian Collared-Dove, first seen here on August 12, 2007. Warbler viewing still remains good. Cedar Waxwings haven’t been here since the end of February so it was nice to see their return this week. The highlights from this week with 85 species were Cackling Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Lesser Yellowlegs, Turkey Vulture, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Black-headed Grosbeak and Bullock’s Oriole who were all either first returns for the spring or birds not seen every year.



Eurasian Collared-Doves

Photo: John Whitmore

May 7 – May 20

In the Sanctuary May is the start of shorebird viewing as many species have a short stopover on their way northward to their breeding grounds. Another Western Tanager was seen on May 10th along the driveway and 3 male Blue-winged Teal in the House Pond. Sadly, as we came to work on the morning of the 15th, we found that the Sandhill Cranes had lost their eggs to some type of predator. On the 16th a Spotted Sandpiper turned up in the Southwest Marsh. In past years we have had Spotted Sandpipers nest here but it has been a while since we’ve seen their small adorable chicks. Also on the 16th approximately 12 American White Pelicans were visible from the Observation Tower. Diving ducks migrate out of here for the summer, but we’re now seeing the return of various flycatchers and vireos species to our area. Belted Kingfisher, Turkey Vulture, Peregrine Falcon and Cassin’s Vireo were 4 other highlights rounding out this 2 week reporting period.



Black-headed Grosbeak

Photo: Dan Parlee

May 21 – May 27

Moving into the end of this month it becomes a much quieter time for waterfowl viewing and bird watching in general. This will remain the case until about the middle of August when shorebirds return from their breeding grounds. Singing birds are still heard throughout the Sanctuary and on most morning, around the Gift Shop and the House, you could hear the strong songs from Bullock’s Orioles and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Nests from Black-headed Grosbeaks have been located in the past but nothing was confirmed this year. We were able to find 2 Bullock’s Oriole nests this year, one at the beginning of the East Dyke and one at the north end of the outer Seaward Dyke. In the later part of this week we saw the departure of the last few Snow Geese. Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets are found most of the year at the Sanctuary but by the end of May they are gone, with the Ruby-crowned Kinglets nesting in the Dry Interior, and the Golden-Crowned Kinglets nesting in southwest mainland and Vancouver Island.

(...../continued page 6)

(continued from page 5)

In June you will notice waterfowl are well in to their annual molt and don't look anything like their photos in field identification guides. This year had a very low count of waterfowl offspring. Hopefully there are still nests to hatch but I think the various egg eating predators have had a big year. There was a total of 94 species observed for June 2023.

May 28 – June 3

Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal and Blue-winged Teal were all present this week. In the Display Ponds 18 Blue-winged Teal were seen, this being one of the higher counts in recent time. June 1st a Red-necked Phalarope joined the Wilson's Phalaropes that have been feeding in West Field. A female Yellow-headed Blackbird was seen in the outer marsh on the 3rd. Young Great Blue Herons are independent and noticeable now as they forage on low tide mud flats. I can generally gauge when tide is on the rise because you start to see lots of Great Blue Herons flying in as it gets too deep to feed. In front of Tsatsu Shores near the ferry causeway, Mud Bay and Brunswick Point are also good areas to watch them feeding on low tide.

June 4 – June 10

As we move further into summer the number of species diminishes, and we enter the “summer doldrums”. With only 61 bird species recorded in this period, let's instead take a look at the other animals you might come across at the Sanctuary. Visitors have been reporting mink darting across trails, turtles sunning on logs, carp cleaning up leftover grain at Fuller Slough, Little Brown Bats and of course



Brown Creeper

Photo: Dan Parlee

Dragonflies, Damselflies, Butterflies and even Sphinx Moths (Hawk Moths) can be found. Some of you might have seen Sphinx Moths visiting your garden flowers at dusk. When feeding, their movements are similar to hummingbirds and they even have a long proboscis to probe flowers in search of nectar. Over the years I have personally had a few that have fed just before dark at my honeysuckle. They have a wingspan of 70mm to 90mm and a body length of around 70mm. June 6th along the driveway one of the members was able to locate a Least Flycatcher. This is an uncommon species for the Sanctuary but it could not be relocated again. This week was very good for viewing other flycatchers such as Olive-sided, Willow, and Pacific-slope Flycatchers and a Western Wood-Pewee. June 8th 2 new Mallard broods with 13 ducklings altogether showed up in the House Pond. There was a bit of confusion for a while when they swam too close to each other and the young got mixed up and ended up with the wrong parents. But after a bit of loud peeping and chasing of each other they got sorted out and continued on their way.

June 11 – June 17

It has been a number of years since we have had any sightings of Gray Catbirds at the Sanctuary but on the 15th and 16th 2 of them turned up not far down the East Dyke. Their loud calls, sometimes sounding like a cat, was how they were originally located. We were filling 5 hummingbird feeders daily through May, but feeder activity has slowed down now, as many plants are now in flower, plus many of these hummingbirds have now continued in their migration. Many of them move to more mountain wildflower meadows after nesting. A few Rufous Hummingbirds tend to stay until the end of August but after that they make their way south to Mexico for the winter.

June 18 – July 1, 2023

On the 25th an Eastern Kingbird along with 2 of the smaller falcons, Merlin and American Kestrel, were spotted. It is unusual to find Red Crossbill at this time of year but on the 25th and again on July 1st people reported them. The best months to watch for them at the Sanctuary is February and March. Not having had many ducklings so far this season we were happy to watch a brood of 6 Gadwall in the Inner Ponds on the 25th. July 1st from the Observation Tower 6 American White-Pelicans were located as they flew northeast along the marsh. Although we have Red-breasted Nuthatches throughout the year we see more of them in the winter months. But we were fortunate to find a family of young Red-breasted Nuthatches at the North East corner. Their nest would have been hard to locate as they nest in cavities or crevices in mature trees. Another bird that is a cavity nester is the Brown Creeper. If you locate one, watch the feeding behavior. Brown Creepers, whose coloration blends very well with the tree bark, start at the base of a tree circling upward in search of insects and when they

reach the top they'll flutter down to the base of a new tree trunk and start upward again. Red-breasted Nuthatches tend to start at the top of a tree and work downward using their long toes to cling to the bark.

Both Sora and Virginia Rail turned up this week. People often ask about the best places to look for them. That would be around edges of reeds, cattails, bulrushes, but I think it is more of being at the right place at the right time. Good luck. There is always a nemesis bird.



Bullock's Oriole and nest Photo: Dan Parlee

The following is a reprint of my article from the 2018 Summer Marshnotes answering questions about some of our common birds.

Some Songbird Nesting Facts

Nesting time brings up various questions from the public and one of the most common inquiries is "How long will it take nesting birds to hatch?" Most of the time a bird has chosen an unusual or inconvenient spot to build its nest, such as in a hanging basket, planter box, above a doorway, in stacked up lawn furniture, on a covered boat or in patio decorations. I have put together some useful information to help give readers some time frames for the top six bird species that we are questioned about.

American Robin

The female and male both assemble their nest from twigs and grasses and the female will lay on average 4

eggs. They will take 2 weeks to hatch and another 2 weeks to fledge. Be aware that American Robins can have up to 3 families in one year and may even reuse the same nest again if they were successful in rearing their young.

Barn Swallow

Both female and male Barn Swallows partner up to build their nest which is made of mud daubs, straw and then lined with feathers. You will see them attached under roof overhangs and sometimes on ledges above doorways. On average they will lay 4 to 5 eggs which take 13 to 17 days to hatch and then an additional 18 to 23 days until they are ready to leave the nest. They can raise a second brood at the same nest site if they start early enough.

Bewick's Wren

The female and male will build their nest which consists of grass, twigs and feathers in a natural cavity, bird box or knot hole. On average the female will lay 5 to 7 eggs which take only 14 days to hatch and 14 days to fledge. The Bewick's Wren will only raise a single family each spring.

Black-capped Chickadee

Both parents will help with the construction of their nest which could either be in a nest box or natural cavity. It will take roughly 10 to 14 days to excavate and line the cavity with plant down, moss and feathers. Once the 5 or more eggs are laid they will take 11 to 13 days to hatch. Another 14 to 18 days to leave the nest. Again you could see re-nesting if they start early enough and conditions are optimal.

House Finch

The female will sit on 2 to 6 eggs in her nest which she alone has built out of twigs, grass and leaves. Incubation time is 12 to 14 days with fledging taking place in 11 to 19 days. Keep in mind that House Finches can have up to 3 broods and even reuse the same nest.

House Sparrow

Once the nest is built, either in an artificial or natural cavity, the female will lay approximately 4 to 6 eggs and incubate them for 10 to 13 days. After hatching it will take another 14 to 17 days before young leave the nest. House Sparrows will also have more than one brood.

The above information is found in a very useful book named "The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds" by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin and Darryl Wheye. Even though this book was published in 1988 it has always been a great reference guide to me.

Text: Varri Raffan
Gift Shop Manager

Manager's Report

After the greatly reduced visitor numbers in February and March due to bridge closures and construction work here, it was rewarding to see visitor numbers for April, May and June slowly creeping up to more ideal levels. We are managing visitor capacity levels so that the parking lot and facilities are full so that most people can visit if they plan ahead, but still maintain a maximum limit to the number of people. Every Sunday, though, we turn away many visitors that just stop by, only to find all spots are reserved, so remember to book your visit. Total visitors over the three months were 14,185, (compared to 12,999 of last year and 11,786 of 2021).

April, as usual, was a cool and windy month, with the average daily high temperature of 12 C but variable. On the 3rd, we were not too surprised to see a skiff of snow and it froze overnight on the 12th. Two Canada Geese, Daffy and Dilly were at it again ripping up the daffodil bed in the garden along the side of the Museum to make a nest and had 7 eggs by the 2nd. All seemed fine for the next few weeks, but in spite of this, the nest got predated on April 26th when the eggs were about to hatch. Dilly and her friends tried about 4 other creative locations in the garden and around the corner of the building in the next few weeks, only to be predated within only a few days of starting a nest.

May was the highest visitor use month of this quarter with many school groups added to the schedule, and Mallard broods showing up in regular intervals, along with a few Wood Duck broods. The month started with a few days of rain, then some warm dry days with temps over 20 degrees from mid-month onwards, with a high of 25.4 on May 18th. There were no real rainy days from May 5th onwards. June had rain on just 2 days (9th and 19th) . Hottest day was June 23rd at 25.2 C. but the average daily high was 20.5 for the month.

In general, nesting success was low for any of wetland birds that started in March and April and again in early May. We had several sightings of not just the usual Mink, but Raccoons searching along shorelines of House Pond and Display Ponds, and they may have been responsible for major nest losses in late April and again in late May. The variable weather itself might have also been a problem for some species, as there were a few cold spells and periods of heavy rain in April, then a sudden warming up to 22.8 degrees one day around the end of that month. Only one brood of geese hatched in late April, and it was several weeks into May before the first broods of Mallards and any other goose broods showed up. Mallard broods continued to show up but very few geese were produced this year. In July, we were only able to find two goose broods that had survived.

June is the month when waterfowl begin their annual moult to replenish their worn feathers and end up temporarily flightless. At this point, they tend to keep away from possibly dangerous things like humans until they can fly again. June is also a key month when the wetland habitats are generating algae mats and insect larvae are transforming into flying adults, so we start to see flycatchers, bats, and other insectivores capitalizing on these flying foods. Not only did we have bats showing up on our cameras at the front gate at night, but we were mighty surprised June 8th to almost walk into a small brown bat hanging from a branch of an English Hawthorn tree along one of our trails (and then see another on resting on a nearby tree trunk).

The Sanctuary needs lots of maintenance in these months of growing plants and increased public use. Red-flowering Currant bushes were in full bloom early on, but required some wire fencing after a Beaver decided they were quite tasty. Other plants like Blackberry grow about 1 m per week in cane length all summer and need constant trimming. Grass grows on trails and gets mowed until the heat of the summer slows it down. Wooden benches need repairing after a few years, and decks and their railings are also looked at and fixed if needed. Wildlife also get into all sorts of new places when the weather warms up, so the May long weekend "rat rodeo" in the Gift Shop will long be remembered by staff.



Small unidentified brown bat Photo: Kristina Breit

Purple Martin boxes were assessed last year, and we noted that the oldest boxes needed both replacement poles and boxes. Originally, there were 4 poles, each with several boxes on them. These older boxes date back to installations in the 1990s. They were ignored by these large members of the swallow family until the summer of 2013. Nearly all boxes were then in use that year, so in 2014, another pole with 8 boxes was installed further east of these initial boxes. By last spring, several of the original oldest boxes had been lost to storms and the poles themselves were shaky, so three additional poles with a total of 9 new boxes were installed this year in late April. The 2023 installations were placed in between the two sets of boxes.



The new Purple Martin boxes Photo: Kathleen Fry

Usually by June, we have a good sense of whether the Sandhill Cranes would be successful in hatching any young. This year, the Sandhill Crane pair built a nest in the Cattail Marsh and incubated eggs from April 16th to May 15th, at which point they abandoned it, presumably because it had been predated almost at hatch time. After a brief two weeks, they then set up shop on their usual nest island, sitting on two eggs there by May 31st, then abandoning it again June 9th. Bald Eagles and gulls can be a contributing factor to some nest failures. It was a bit alarming to watch a Bald Eagle chasing a young visiting crane for several laps around the Sanctuary on April 13rd as it almost caught it, making us wonder if these birds of prey would also harass our nesting pair as well. We will have to watch eagles more closely next year.

In general, the crane pair has had no peace and quiet to nest this summer. Evan, their 2021 progeny, has been within calling distance or has wanted to “visit” them whenever they have been incubating. When chased away with violent pecking, he has found other ways to amuse himself. All throughout April and May, we thought a young visiting crane (hatched 2022, based on its plumage) might make a possible playmate for him. Instead, we found Evan chasing the poor young bird, standing on the gravel pile (apparently to

show his superior rank), then standing on a visitor’s car in the parking lot April 22nd poking away at small bits of seeds but also pulling on the rubber trim around the sunroof. He was told in no uncertain terms to get off. On May 5th, he was up again on a car, this time one of our staff vehicles. The younger visiting crane developed a very swollen foot and was taken to Wildlife Rescue Association at the end of May for assessment. At about the same time, another visiting adult crane joined our three-crane family, so we have constantly had four cranes here now for months. We will cross our fingers that Evan will find some friends for next year that take him away to explore other parts of the Lower Mainland.



Evan exploring rooftop habitats Photo: Kathleen Fry

Last but not least, we welcome back Dani McRobbie who has rejoined our staff after taking a year to recover from a bad car accident last spring. Dani has done our education program tours in the past and is slowly getting back into her usual duties.

The following article contains just some of the findings of our field staff as they have monitored some of our numerous nesting birds this summer. I was lucky enough to be walking down East Dyke on June 26th when 8 Wood Duck ducklings emerged from Box 27 in response to calls from the adult female below. The theory that they do not weigh much so they wouldn’t hit the ground with much force.... Not too sure about that! For each duckling, it was more of a nervous energetic leap, a few seconds of free-fall, followed by a THUD! Then some peeping as they picked themselves up and carried on like good little soldiers.

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

Field Notes



Tree Swallow Young

Photo: Kathleen Fry

In the summer, our staff have been monitoring certain Sanctuary bird species for nests and nest success as they come across them. If they are songbirds, making any sense of nest success in particular requires a methodical approach, making notes not just of the birds they see, but what they are doing. If it is a waterfowl species and is not a Canada Goose, good luck finding a nest. For those species, we have recorded the appearance of any new broods when they are fresh.

Kristina Breit has kept all of the records and has summarized all of our various observations so far this summer. These include staff records and observations from visitors reporting about nests and box use. The Environment Canada researchers have been visiting to band hummingbirds and songbirds such as Spotted Towhees. Monitoring is ongoing, though, as many of these species are still nesting. This information is current only to late July.

Barn Swallows have been creating their mud nests on most of the buildings and structures in the Sanctuary.

- # of nests active or already fledged: 52
- Earliest nest seen: At the Gift Shop April 1st.
- Greatest concentration: Under the Warming Hut deck, although the nests above deck get lots of visitor attention.
- We have not yet checked the Swallow Fort in Southwest Marsh this summer.

Waterfowl nest success was poor this year, and also a bit delayed, possibly due to poor weather in April, but also “predation events” late April, and again late May, with many nests affected. These may have been due to Raccoons or other predators.

- First Canada goose brood seen: April 25th (even though many nests were seen in late March and April, most were predated). We predict that only

6 goslings out of 6 broods have survived to date).

- First Mallard brood: May 10th. At least 19 broods have been seen over the past few months up into July.
- First Gadwall brood: June 25th; second on July 13th. This is a late nesting species and we may see more broods
- First Wood Duck brood: May 31st. Three other broods hatched through June.

Purple Martins were first seen around the offshore nest boxes on April 26th, just a few days after some new boxes and poles were installed north of the tower.

- Number of boxes active: 18
- All 9 of the new boxes installed this year have been investigated by the birds.

Adults started feeding young mid-July.

Songbird boxes along trails have been checked out by many birds, based on the 353 observations.

- Breakdown of the 104 boxes with recorded use:
 - Tree Swallow (67)
 - House Sparrow (27)
 - Bewick’s Wren (1)
 - Black-capped Chickadee (8)
- This is not the complete picture as House Sparrows are now re-nesting in at least 10 boxes that were vacated by Tree Swallows fledglings.
- Some natural cavities were used by Black-capped Chickadees, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and European Starling. A Red-breasted Nuthatch family showed up from an unknown nest site.

Hummingbird nests are easier to see before all the leaves on the trees and shrubs start to obscure views of them. As Anna’s Hummingbirds are here year-round and start earlier than the arrival of the Rufous species, more of their nests were seen.

- Rufous Hummingbirds
 - Earliest nest: April 21st
 - Number of nests seen: 4 (ongoing)
- Anna’s Hummingbirds
 - Earliest nest: March 10th
 - Numbers of nests seen: 21
 - Last new nest discovered: July 15th
 - Successful nests: 13 of the 21
 - (Some nests abandoned, lost in storms, predated)

Environment Canada Hummingbird banding has continued with Dr. Christine Bishop, who has now banded hummingbirds at the Sanctuary for the past 8 summers.

- Over 800 hummingbirds have been banded as a result of this study.
- # of Anna’s Hummingbirds banded in 2023: 33
- # of Rufous Hummingbirds banded in 2023: 50

Bushtit Nests are a very distinctive shape but are usually well-camouflaged by the addition of materials from the tree branches that they hang from.

- Earliest nest seen: March 17th
- Number of nests seen: 6
- Successful nests: 5 of the 6

Spotted Towhee nests are very inconspicuous and are usually just off trails in overgrown grassy areas. Environment Canada researchers have visited the Sanctuary every week since the beginning of April looking for any birds they banded last year, and with a particular interest in Spotted Towhees and their nests.

- Earliest Spotted Towhee nest: April 28th
- Number of nests found in the Sanctuary: 19 (ongoing, though, as there are several active nests even at the end of July).

Bullock's Orioles were confusing this year. At one point we thought there were three pairs. One at the entrance, one at North dyke and one on the Seaward Dyke.

- First nest building May 11th on North Dyke (abandoned after a week).
- Constant flights and calls by Gifts Shop last two weeks of May.
- First successful nest seen June 3rd Seaward Dyke (under construction), eggs by June 10th, young have fledged end of June.



Spotted Towhee nest and young Photo: Kathleen Fry

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

Data compiled by Kristina Breit,
Sanctuary Field Technician

The Volunteer Corner

Special thanks to:

- ◆ Mary Taitt for leading our regular Sunday Bird Walk.
- ◆ Brian Self, Jim Martin, John Chandler, Mary Taitt, Dirk Fleming, and Christine Barker for helping keeping up our seed supply, tidying up the trails, and helping put up boxes.
- ◆ Brian Self, Peter Candido, Ben Lambert, and Sabine Jessen for helping with bi-weekly bird surveys.
- ◆ Margaret Gorham for hosting visitors at the Museum every Sunday.

If you are interested in volunteering, please leave your contact information at our office or send an email to kathleen@reifelbirds sanctuary.com.

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

Why be a Member?

As a Member, you receive the following benefits:

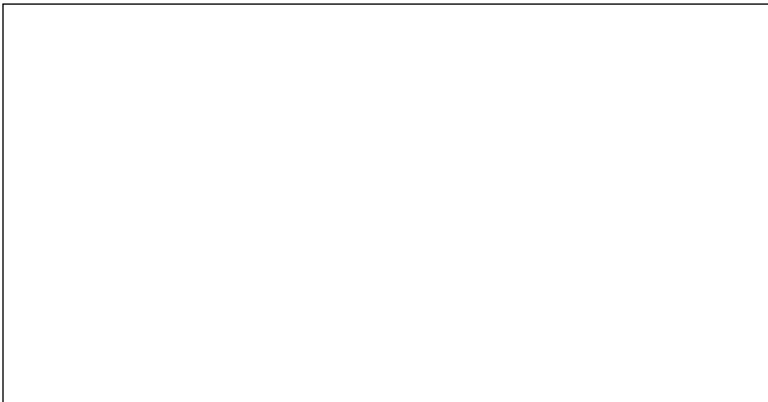
- FREE admission for a year to the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary .
- Quarterly issue of the BCWS publication "Marshnotes".
- A 10% discount on purchases in the Sanctuary Gift Shop.
- Membership in one of British Columbia's most respected conservation organizations.

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



American White Pelicans © Gary Sadler