

Marshnotes[®]



**BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY
WINTER 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

The contents of Marshnotes may not be reprinted without written permission of the Editor.

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

Recommended citation for this issue:

Marshnotes Winter 2024, (K. Fry, Editor).

British Columbia Waterfowl Society. Published February 2nd, 2024.

www.reifelbirdsantuary.com/marshw2024.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: April 15th, 2024.**

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

Marshnotes, Snow Goose Festival and the Snow Goose logo are all registered trademarks of the British Columbia Waterfowl Society.

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

Executive:

President:

Jack Bates

Vice President:

George C. Reifel

Treasurer:

James A. Morrison

Secretary:

Barney W. Reifel

Directors:

Jack Bates

Clayton Botkin

F. Wayne Diakow

Kevin Husband

Mark McDonald

James A. Morrison

Gerald S. Oyen

Barney W. Reifel

George C. Reifel

Liam Reifel

Kenneth I. Thompson

Committee Chairs:

Buildings/ Grounds:

Barney W. Reifel

Community Relations:

George C. Reifel

Interpretation/Education:

F. Wayne Diakow

Outreach:

George C. Reifel

Staff:

Sanctuary Manager:

Kathleen Fry

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.

Bird of the Year: Gray-crowned Rosy Finch

Monthly Highlights :

January	February	March	April
Blue-winged Teal	American Pipit	House Wren	Pelagic Cormorant
May	June	July	August
American White Pelican	Gray Catbird	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Evening Grosbeak
September	October	November	December
Black Phoebe	Gray-crowned Rosy Finch	Rusty Blackbird	American Avocet

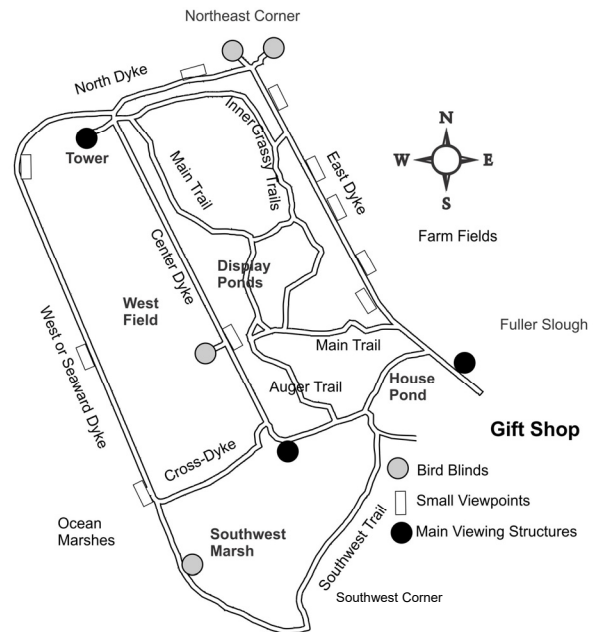


Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
Photo: Melissa Hafting

Total # Species seen in 2023: 179

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: Male Hooded Merganser
© Dan Parlee
- Back Cover: Female Hooded Merganser
© Dan Parlee

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.

Contents

Page	3	Bird of the Year	Varri Raffan
	4	Bird Highlights	Varri Raffan
	7	2024 AGM Notice	
	8	Manager's Report	
	10	Tracking the Wild Geese January 2024 Update	Kathleen Fry
	11	2023 Ladner Christmas Bird Count Highlights	Kathleen Fry
	11	The Volunteer Corner	Yousif Attia
	11	Why be a member	

Bird Highlights

The bird species list for October 2023 ended at 108 and was compiled from reports coming in from staff, volunteers, and visitors. Larger numbers of northern waterfowl, birds of prey and Lesser Snow Geese are now showing up.



Northern Shrike

Photo: Evan Gogal

October 1 – October 7

A great variety of birds were seen this week with a total of 89 different species. The 4 American Avocets who first joined us back on September 11th are still feeding at the south end of the West Field. At the front gate on the 7th we had a late sighting of 1 Barn Swallow. On the same day a Northern Shrike was located in a tree along the edge of the West Field. Even though the Northern Shrike is classed as a songbird it behaves like a hawk and has a hooked beak which helps in ripping meat apart. Like hawks it also perches high on tree tops watching for large insects, mice and small songbirds. Lacking talons, a shrike will stun or kill flying birds with a blow from their powerful beak. They're also known to cache their prey on a spine or thorn of a plant or on barbed wire. This method has given them the nickname "butcher bird". Most Northern Shrike sightings are from October to April, especially along the Seaward Dyke. New arrivals this week included Greater Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Horned Grebe and Barred Owl.

October 8 – October 14

Out of the 5 possible grebe species, 3 were present this week (Pied-billed Grebe, Red-necked Grebe and Horned Grebe). The 2 missing were the Western Grebe and Eared Grebe. Deeper water is the best place to look for these fish eating duck like divers. Two other diving duck species that area also found in deeper water are Bufflehead and Ruddy Duck who both showed up on the 10th. On the 14th there was a high count of 15 Hooded Mergansers.

October 15 – October 21

Sightings worth mentioning in this period were Black Phoebe and Gray Catbird both on the 15th and 4 Brewer's Blackbirds on the 21st. We don't expect to find Cinnamon Teal and Blue-winged Teal at this time of year but a Blue-winged Teal was seen on the 17th and a Cinnamon Teal on the 18th. On the 21st, a Barred Owl was in a tree around the Center Dyke bird blind and there was a late sighting of a Brown-headed Cowbird. The first of the Eurasian Wigeon showed up in this week.

October 22 - October 28

Of the 80 species recorded this month we had 1 new bird to be added to the Sanctuary checklist. It brings the Sanctuary checklist to 300 species recorded since opening in 1963. The new bird was the Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. There were 3 or 4 of them seen on logs outside the Seaward Dyke. The piled up logs there, accumulated from high tides over many years, are also good areas to find American Bittern, Virginia Rail, Western Meadowlarks and Short-eared Owls. Our first Northern Saw-whet Owl was found in a Holly bush along the East Dyke October 22nd. The first fly over of Trumpeter Swans was on the 23rd. On the 25th a Short-eared Owl was seen flying over the foreshore logs. For a short time the original group of 4 American Avocets became 5 but the extra one only stayed with them until the 31st. Mixed flocks of Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, and Common Redpolls are now being noticed and usually all flying together in a twittering fast moving flock.

November 2023 ended with 109 species which was 11 more than November 2022. Each week averaged 85 species. At this time of year if you join the Sunday morning bird walk, starting at 10:00 am, you are pretty much guaranteed to see 45 of those species on 1 day. This month brings larger numbers of Trumpeter Swans, Lesser Snow Geese and a bigger variety of diving and dabbling ducks.

October 29 – November 4

The first Fall sighting of a Common Merganser was on October 29th. The Black Phoebe has been showing up consistently around the Washrooms, Gift Shop and Warming Hut. There must still be a good amount of bugs in the area as it survives strictly on insects caught on the wing. November 3rd was a 4 owl day with 1 Northern Saw-whet Owl behind the big Sign Kiosk, 2 Great Horned Owls in a cedar tree along the driveway and 1 Barred owl at the Northeast Corner. Although warblers are hard to locate at this time of year we did have a Wilson's Warbler and a Yellow-rumped Warbler on the 4th.

November 5 – November 11

With a total of 82 species in this week, there were plenty of highlights. Mild dry weather could be one reason we are still seeing Barn Swallows on the 9th.

There are obviously still enough insects to sustain the swallows and the Black Phoebe which is still being seen around the washrooms and the Warming Hut. Not a new bird for the Sanctuary checklist, but rare for the Sanctuary was a Rusty Blackbird eating Hawthorn berries near the front entrance on November 7th. The last record for this species was October 21st, 2003.



Rusty Blackbird

Photo: Dan Parlee

Four species of gulls (Glaucous-winged, the more commonly seen, plus Bonaparte's, Short-billed, and California), were all present this week. I leave gull identification up to expert birders as there are so many traits to learn on each species. With their breeding plumage, 1st or 2nd year winter plumage, is it a 1st or 2nd or 3rd or even 4th year bird? Definitely years of practice is needed. One thing I do know about gulls is that they seem to be the only birds happily flying around on really windy days.

November 12 – November 18

Driving in on the 12th produced a single Canvasback in Robertson Slough. On the 13th a Northern Shrike was found along the outer grassy Seaward Dyke and on the same day a 2nd Black-crowned Night-Heron showed up in the Fir tree in front of the museum. With the branches so dense it was very hard to get a clear line of sight. We find that once the sun comes out, the Black-crowned Night-Herons tend to move to the outer edges of branches in order to soak up any heat from the sun. A Bohemian Waxwing and a Sora were located on the 15th. White-throated Sparrow, Western Meadowlark and American Bittern were all reported on the 18th. Of the 109 species seen this month, 89 of them were spotted in this week.

November 19 – November 25

On the 22nd we had 5 Barn Swallows flying over the parking lot. Common Mergansers coming from the fresh water lakes and rivers of the woodlands in northern BC and southern Yukon are now showing up at the Sanctuary. Male Common Mergansers are very

noticeable, with their large white streamlined bodies, dark green heads and red bills. These fish eating diving ducks are between 21"-27", almost the size of a Snow Goose. Their name *merganser* in fact means "diving goose". Have a look in Robertson Slough as you drive in to spot these birds typically seen between November and March. Females have a rusty ragged head crest and white chest. American Coots are also showing up in bigger numbers than last year. These funny charcoal colored duck-like birds produce a strange little sound which is hard to describe. With lobed toes they are adept at diving and swimming. The channel of water heading west from the wooden Viewing Platform is a good spot to check for them as is the grass around the picnic tables.



Common Merganser

Photo: Michelle Bachar

November 26 – December 2

Offshore viewing still remains good using a scope from the tower. Seed feeders are topped up every day or two and are actively visited by Dark-eyed Juncos, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-winged Blackbirds, and White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Until now, I had forgotten an interesting fact about Red-winged Blackbirds that I had read about a long time ago in a book called "Life of Birds" by Joel Carl Welty. It's an older publication from 1963 which states it is "a comprehensive survey of all that is known about birds". Red-winged Blackbirds are seen here throughout the year, and feed on grain in the winter, insects in the spring and berries and other fruit in the summer. As their diet changes from soft easily digested food of summer to the harder grains of winter they have the ability to increase the muscle structure of their gizzard which aides in breaking down the grain. So next time you have a Red-winged Blackbird eating seed from your hand they are literally "crushing it". This week had a 5 owl day, with a Short-eared Owl found hunting on the outer foreshore. December 2nd one of our team from the bi-weekly bird surveys turned up an American Tree Sparrow along the house driveway.

December is a good month to spot a good selection of birds of prey. Out of the 97 species seen this month 13 of them were birds of prey.

(...../continued page 6)

(...../continued from page 5)

December 3 – December 9

Visible markings of birds in flight can be a useful way to make a positive ID. The Dark-eyed Junco is one example. This small songbird with a dark hood, pinkish sides and a white breast, and the best way to identify them in flight is by the white edged tail feathers. Northern Flickers are also easily recognized in flight by flashes of red feather shafts under the wings and a white rump patch. The white rump patch on the Northern Harrier is also a quick way to recognize this hawk in flight. Larger numbers of Trumpeter Swans are now visible feeding on grasses and left over potatoes in nearby farm fields. You can also see them feeding out in the estuary from the Observation Tower.

December 7th Bohemian Waxwings were seen along the driveway. Since the Lesser Snow Geese started showing up in large numbers from Wrangel Island, off the north coast of Russia, we have rarely seen them feeding during the day in the farm fields of Westham Island. However it's a different story when it comes to the wee hours. This is when they move in from the outer marshes and forage in the surrounding grassy fields until just before day light when they lift off and head back to the foreshore to rest for the day. As a resident of Westham Island I can vouch for this over night feeding activity happening over the past few weeks and even last fall. Obviously there is enough ambient light between street lights, moonlight, lights from hot houses and other buildings for them to navigate, let alone using their built in instincts. Could it be that they have figured out during hunting season they don't get shot at in the dark of night? Things that make you go "Hmmm".

December 10 – December 16

On the 11th, near the beginning of the East Dyke a Hairy Woodpecker was found. This woodpecker is larger by approximately 2-3" over the Downy Woodpecker. Besides the larger size it has a longer bill and tends to have more of a beige belly as opposed to the white belly of the Downy Woodpecker. The males of both species have a small red patch on the back of head. Along with the year-round American Robins, we are now seeing more Robins moving in from the North and Interior areas. Big numbers are seen throughout the Sanctuary especially feeding on the berries of Hawthorn trees. We had a surprise sighting on the 16th of 4 Mourning Doves. It seems since the "invasion" of Eurasian Collared-Doves that have moved in from the east, the Mourning Doves have become less noticeable. The last Mourning Dove seen at the Sanctuary was by the Gift Shop in January 2016. It is quite interesting to watch the Bald Eagles collecting sticks from the trees around the parking lot. They fly over the top of a tree and grab on to a branch with their talons and snap it off as they fly back to

their nest where they are putting on a new layer. The small amount of snow we had must have made up the Black Phoebe's mind to start heading further south because we haven't seen it since.



American Bittern

Photo: Ben Lambert

December 17 – December 23

Highlights from this week's list of 78 bird species were American Bittern, Ruddy Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Northern Shrike, Lincoln's Sparrow and Western Meadowlark. Throughout the winter expect to see small flocks of American Goldfinch around the Sanctuary. Typically you think of them, especially the males, as being a bright yellow with black wings, tail and a black forehead. But they are now in their somber winter plumage which is more like that of the brownish gray immature birds. When you see a flock, check and see if there are Pine Siskins mixed with them as they both travel together and feed on the same types of food.

December 24 – December 30

With 13 species of ducks and 3 species of geese, waterfowl viewing appears to be at a peak. As staff were closing up on Christmas Eve they had a very unusual sighting for this time of year of a Turkey Vulture. These are usually only seen from May to September. December 29th a Short-eared Owl was located out in the foreshore marsh. December 30th was the last day that we could find the 4 American Avocets that had been with us since September 11th. Not sure if they will still pop up in a nearby area or if they are actually on their way to spend the winter in southern Texas and south through Mexico into Guatemala. This concludes the last quarterly report of bird highlights for 2023. Hope to see you all in 2024. Who knows maybe 2024 we'll be able to add another new bird to the Sanctuary checklist bringing it to 301 species. Happy birding.

Text: Varri Raffan
Gift Shop Manager

Notice to all Members of the
BRITISH COLUMBIA WATERFOWL SOCIETY

The Bylaws of the Society provide for the election of six (6) Directors by the Society membership in addition to the appointment of six (6) Directors from Stakeholder groups. The six elected Directors each serve a two year term, with three to be elected at each Annual General Meeting.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held at the Lecture Hall at

The George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary

5191 Robertson Road, Ladner British Columbia
of the Sanctuary at

7:00 p.m. on Wednesday April 17th, 2024.

The Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to advise the membership that two incumbent Directors

James Morrison
Wayne Diakow

will be seeking re-election for a further term.

A written nomination form has also been received for the nomination of Stephen Matthew for a two year term. If you wish to nominate a candidate for election as a Director at the Annual General Meeting, please complete a nomination form which, in addition to the candidate's written consent, must include a written nomination by two Society members in good standing.

Nomination forms are available from the Sanctuary.

No member may nominate more than one candidate in any one year.
A family membership constitutes one vote at the meeting.

Please deliver the completed nomination form, by mail or fax by

4:00 p.m. March 17th, 2024 to

The Secretary, British Columbia Waterfowl Society
5191 Robertson Road, Delta
British Columbia V4K 3N2
Fax: 604 946 6982

If there are any further nominations received by the deadline, a list of all candidates will be posted on the Sanctuary's website.

Manager's Report

October, November, and December usually have the highest number of visitors of the year, with people attracted by Snow Geese, the return of big flocks of our usual wintering waterfowl, and the possibility of seeing owls. On years with significant cold clear weather fronts from the Arctic, the Lower Mainland sees early arrivals of all the above, but in milder fall seasons, like this year, migration tends to be delayed and less dramatic on the waterfowl front, and the slow arrival of winter makes for some surprising other bird arrivals and departures. A Black Phoebe (flycatcher) and 4 American Avocets drew visitors to watch for them well into December, when both of these species should have been much further south.

This October, temperatures hovered between 15 and 20 C for the first half of the month, then dropped as some heavy rains then cold fronts arrived from the north, dipping down below freezing overnight at the end of the month. These fronts finally brought big flocks of Snow Geese and our Fraser estuary winter waterfowl flocks of Mallards, American Wigeon, Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal. They also brought a few Northern Saw-whet Owls into the area and our resident Sandhill Cranes back from where they had been socializing with more than 70 other cranes near Burns Bog for a few weeks.



October Snow Goose flock just inside Alaksen NWA gates

The first small flock of Snow Geese from Wrangel Island made their way down to Delta by October 5th. For the first half of October, there were only a few thousand of these white geese present, but by the beginning of November onwards, there were big flocks spread over Delta, Surrey and Richmond.

Rainfall over the three months was higher than last year for this period, but lower than 2021 when the big atmospheric river event occurred and caused major flooding throughout the Lower Fraser River (and our

parking lot). Around Remembrance Day this year, a storm warning had people seeking shelter, with over 20 cm falling in one day and wind gusts up to 70 km per hour. The repercussions of storm events, even smaller ones like this, are sometimes not obvious until a few months later. The Spruce tree over by the picnic area, for example, was a former Christmas tree planted there 35 years ago, but it began slowly uprooting just after this November storm due to the wind working away at it and waterlogged conditions around its roots. Just after New Year's, it fell and is now firewood.

Normally, visitor use is at its highest in November, but this year it was much reduced due to the windy, wet weather plus several weeks of restricted access due to reconstruction work at the Westham Island bridge. Lengthy traffic closures for the bridge work were in effect November 14th to 23rd, and many of our scheduled group tours had to be cancelled or were rescheduled. We appreciate the patience shown by teachers and other group leaders. These closures were far less prolonged than the bridge work in late January and February, though, and many thanks to Translink for their efforts to minimize disruption.

From mid-November onwards, Trumpeter Swans were suddenly present, as were thousands of Cackling Geese flying regularly between foreshore and inland farm fields of the Fraser Delta. This seems to have been a good year for this species. For those that are unfamiliar with Cackling geese, this species was only recognized as separate from Canada Geese 20 years ago, and represents the four smallest former "races" of Canada Geese. This year, there were also thousands of ducks offshore and large numbers of Northern Shovelers (700+ just in one pond of the Sanctuary) sifting through the bottom sediments for small food items in November and December.

In the last half of November we also had over 25 Sandhill Cranes present, which spent most of their time feeding in the fields of Alaksen NWA, viewable from our East Dyke. They sometimes were off in nearby farm fields. By the beginning of December, this flock had dwindled down to 15 birds; Our resident pair and their 2021 colt "Evan" and a friend made up a foursome; A pair of adults with a 2023 colt with them was probably a local pair, given their willingness to be amongst the visitors; The remaining 8 cranes were generally more likely to avoid people and feed in nearby farm fields or wild meadows around the Coast Guard navigation towers out of sight.

December also started out very wet, with 50 mm of rain on the 4th, then dropped to freezing temperatures by the end of the first week, with our first snowfall of the season on the 9th, and wet weather for most of the rest of the month except for the day of the Christmas Bird Count. On December 2nd, we were brought a



Sandhill Crane from Whitehorse (front center) in with local birds December 3rd, after very heavy rains overnight. For the first few days, this bird looked particularly dark, as it was very wet.

rescue bird from Whitehorse Yukon. This small Lesser Sandhill Crane had been under the care of the Yukon Wildlife Preserve for a month or so while it recovered from some minor injuries. By the time it was ready to be released, there were no cranes in the Yukon, so it was flown down here under the care of their staff member Neil Tracey. We released the bird into an enclosure next to the Center Dyke blind, hoping it would stay in the area long enough to hear the other 15 nearby cranes. It did not like the enclosure and escaped right away to the edge of the marsh and spent the afternoon soaking up sunshine.

The local cranes have been sleeping overnight in cattail stands of West Field, so we checked that area at dawn the next day and were very happy to see the rescue bird walking in and around the other birds, although it appeared soaked by the overnight rain. When the other cranes flew off to go forage in fields, it did not fly with them but spent the day foraging in the marsh around the blind. This routine became standard for a couple of weeks until heavy rain cause water levels to rise in West Field. The bird then walked the trails over to the meadows behind the house and started to spend time there. This bird was quite strikingly different looking than our usual cranes. Most of our local cranes are considered to be either Greater or the Canadian subspecies of Sandhills. Lesser Sandhills are quite distinctive, being dark, quite small and with a higher pitched call. We have seen other Lessers, usually birds associated with rehabilitation center releases or from flocks passing through southwards down the coast.

One of the important natural feeding areas for wintering cranes is the Coast Guard property south of the driveway. It has meadows of “oldfield (uncultivated) grassland habitats with abundant populations of a favourite food, the Townsend’s Vole. Voles look a bit like a hamsters and build tunnels in the sod layers of the grass. They are a primary food source for owls, hawks, herons, cranes and coyotes, particularly in winter when saturated meadow conditions cause them to live a little closer to the surface. However, in late December, this food source was bringing coyotes and cranes into the same area at the same time, and there were a lot of crane alarm calls ringing from that area on Boxing Day. We then found the partial remains of the Whitehorse bird in the nearby woodlot. We never did see it fly effectively during its short stay, and without strong flight it would have been an easy target for the coyotes.

Once the first Northern Saw-whet Owl was seen October 22nd, we initially assumed that we would only have the usual one or two fall sightings. Then, based on previous years, we expected that there would be none for a while, but records would increase for late December to the end of March, with roost sites then used fairly consistently over the whole late winter. This was an unusual fall, though, and there were 41 separate Saw-whet sightings along trails this fall, dispersed over 22 different locations between October and the end of the year. This fall’s pattern of use was different, but we do not know the cause.

(...../continued page 10)

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

It was interesting to see the variety of fall roost sites chosen, though. The Saw-whet Owl tucked in against the trunk of the Nordman Fir November 3rd must have thought it was a great roost until it was surrounded by photographers! This fir species is native to eastern Europe. We were given a this tree in 2009 and planted it in 2010 when it was just a 6 year old short stubby tree, grown from seed by visitor Burton Taylor. He predicted it might grow as high as a redwood tree at maturity. We hope that is not the case, but it is currently growing into a very attractive densely needled fir about 7 meters high, growing to the left of the big sign kiosk.

Staff do regular owl checks of trails almost daily at this time of year. A pair of Great Horned Owls was fairly consistently seen either along East Dyke or one of the Cedar trees along the driveway. Barred Owls were seen on 49 days of this three month period, so they are probably around most days or over in the adjacent Alaksen National Wildlife Area. Short-eared Owls are also seen hunting out over the marsh. Barn Owls are a protected Species at Risk, and are secretive and easily flushed from their hiding spots. Even staff have had few sightings of them!

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



Nordman Fir and its first Northern Saw-whet Owl (inset)

Tracking the Wild Geese

The Spring 2023 edition of Marshnotes introduced a research study of Dr. Sean Boyd and UBC graduate student Dominic Janus, funded by our Society and the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment and Climate Change Canada. Using neck collars fitted with solar panels and GPS-GSM technology, researchers are hoping to track the use of foreshore marshes, farms, parks etc. by both Snow Geese and Canada Geese. The collars track individual bird locations every 15 minutes.

Updates:

*Some Canada Geese moulting in the Fraser estuary moved to Washington, Oregon and California in the late summer.

*Snow Goose X17 was tracked to Wrangel Island, Russia, and back to the Fraser Delta.

Spring: departure Fraser Delta 15 April, arriving Wrangel Island 4 June (50 days)

Fall: departure Wrangel Island 15 August, arriving Fraser Delta 5 October (50 days)

A new website page www.reifelbirdsanctuary.com/trackingwildgeese.html will be on-line soon to feature this project and summarize tracking results so far.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
WATERFOWL SOCIETY



Collared Snow Goose

Photo Dominic Janus

2023 Ladner Christmas Bird Count Highlights



The Bird Count boat crew

Photo: Melissa Hafting



Birders assembling on Count Day

Photo: Kathleen Fry

The annual Ladner Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Weather on Count day was idyllic with mostly clear skies (no precipitation), light wind, and warm temperatures. Boat coverage of the offshore waters in the circle added many species often missed from land, including a Yellow-billed Loon, Rhinoceros Auklet, and Ancient and Marbled murrelets. Many noteworthy species included American Avocet, Whimbrel, Sora, Bohemian Waxwing, Rusty Blackbird, and Lapland Longspur.

A total of 102 participants reported a very impressive 161,194 birds of 146 species! One additional species was added during Count Week: American Bittern. A count wrap-up was held and well-attended on Sunday evening at the RiverHouse Restaurant.

Text: Yousif Attia, Ladner Christmas Bird Count Coordinator,
Birds Canada

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, 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.

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

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

Why be a Member?

As a Member, you receive the following benefits:

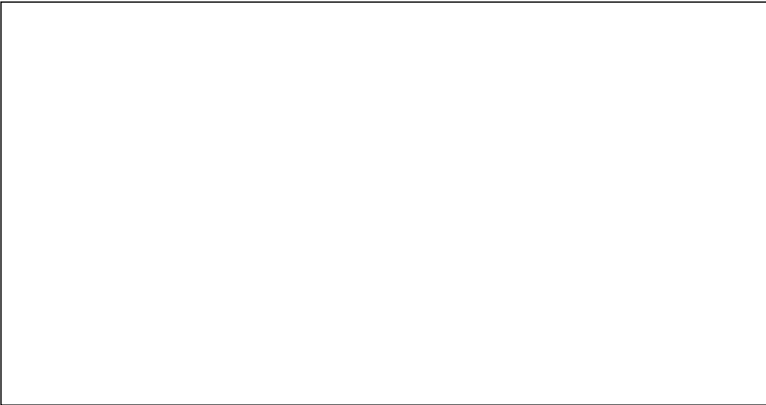
- FREE admission for a year to the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary .
- Quarterly issue of the BCWS publication “Marshnotes”.
- A 10% discount on purchases in the Sanctuary Gift Shop.
- Membership in one of British Columbia’s most respected conservation organizations.

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



Hooded Merganser Female © Dan Parlee