



Lesser Snow Geese

Snow geese can be told apart from other geese by their white body and head, black wingtips, and pink bill with its identifying black “grinning patch”.

Snow geese eat leaves and shoots of grasses and sedges, clovers and remnants of agricultural crops. Out in the foreshore marshes of the estuary, they dig for roots, and underground starchy rhizomes of marsh plants. They have a serrated edge to their bills which lets them tear at plant material.

Birds wintering in the Fraser River delta get a distinctive rust-coloured stain on their faces from digging through iron-rich soils.



Family group feeding in former corn field



Research bird wearing plastic collar

Researchers have tracked individuals and family groups using radio-transmitters and neck collars. Some individuals have been recorded doing 2,500 km flights from southern Alaska to here in 36 hours

In their wintering areas, family groups can be identified. Young of the year migrate with their parents and are more grey and brown than white.

Blue phase snow geese are rare along the Pacific Coast, but occur every few years. This is a genetic variation in feather colour. Look for a very dark bird with a white head.

Pacific Flyway Lesser Snow Geese nest on Wrangel Island in the Arctic Ocean north of the Siberian peninsula.



Two nesting populations use this island- the geese that winter between the Fraser and Skagit river estuaries (“our birds”), and another populations that winters further south in California.



Birds on nesting ground, Wrangel Island