

ON SOME BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS ^{1, 2}

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FIELD PARTIES from the National Museum of Canada studied the bird life of the central British Columbia coast from northern Vancouver Island to the Bella Coola area during the period 1935-1938. Mr. H.M. Laing who was in charge of the parties has published some of the more interesting records obtained (1942, *Condor*, 44, pp.175-181) I have prepared a report on the complete collection, but as its publication may be indefinitely delayed I am presenting here some of the more interesting records. Mr. Laing's excellent field notes have been freely drawn upon, and I have also included some data from other sources that have accumulated at the National Museum. In the following "Brooks and Swarth, 1925" refers to Brooks and Swarth, 1925, A Distributional List of the Birds of British Columbia, *Pacific Coast Avifauna*, No. 17, Berkeley, California.

Branta canadensis occidentalis (Baird)
WHITE-CHEEKED GOOSE.

First seen on north Vancouver Island on the arrival of the 1935 party at Port Hardy in late August. The geese remained there during the party's stay (Aug. 21-Sept. 4). Probably they were locally raised birds. Numbers were seen around the north end of the island to Quatsino (Oct. 2.); some of these were perhaps migrants.

In 1936 a party of 8 geese, probably a family of local birds, was seen August 13 on Bute Inlet; and during the stay on Kingcome Inlet Sept. 9 to Sept. 26 a few small flocks stayed on the tidal flats. The local people said these geese had been raised locally.

In the Rivers Inlet area in 1937 this goose was a common resident, apparently breeding wherever conditions were favorable. All specimens taken were in breeding condition. The broods with the parents were all small; one pair had but one young, another 4 and another 2.

The first part of August the adults were strong on the wing, as were the young.

These birds are said to pass the winter on Calvert Island, using the beaches when the lakes were frozen, and on the Shumahalt River flats of Owikeno Lake.

In 1938 this goose was reported at Stuie in June, a small flock on the wing. They were said to have bred formerly in a slough of the river near the Bryneldsen Pool; on July 18 Laing found a deserted nest with 5 eggs in the Bryneldsen meadow, a mile above Stuie.

Eight specimens were taken; 1 ♂ imm., 1 ♀ ad., Port Hardy, Aug. 24, 1935; 2 ♂ ad., 2 ♀ ad., 1 ♂ imm., 1 ♀ imm., Calvert Island, Aug. 3-5, 1937. These agree well with Queen Charlotte Island birds (*occidentalis*) in their dark underparts, and in size, and differ strikingly from the pale breasted *canadensis* from southern British Columbia.

This extends the known breeding range of this form southward from the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The weights of the specimens were, male adult, 9 and 10 lbs., (the latter thin); immature male, 8.5 lbs.; adult female, 8.25 and 8.5 lbs.; immature female, 6 lbs.

Columba fasciata fasciata Say BAND-TAILED
PIGEON

Patch's Bella Coola record (1922, *Can. Field-Nat.* 36, p. 133) is based on a feather picked up there by H. I. Smith and identified by Mr. Taverner. Laing, in 1938, secured additional data from the area. He found a few summering in the valley, seeing them in June at Hagensborg, and in June and July at Stuie, where he thought they bred (no specimens).

In a letter in the Museum files from Mr. Will Robinson of Terrace, B.C., dated Aug. 26, 1928, he states that Mr. Frickman of Terrace saw a number of Band-tailed Pigeons through the early summer. After they banded together, when one flock of about 100 was seen in late July, they disappeared.

Further south, in 1937 Laing found them in the Rivers Inlet region near McLaughlin Creek (June 30, a flock of 10 or 15, another giving mating display), Owikeno Lake (about July 17 to 21, occasionally seen) and Rivers Inlet cannery, (1 seen, Aug. 13). In 1936 he

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2 — Received for publication, Feb. 5, 1943.

recorded them at Fawn Bluff (scarce, 1 or 2 seen), Thurlow Island (2 seen), Stuart Island, (2 seen, July 21) and Horseshoe Lake, (fairly common June 19 to July 18) (no specimens).

Apparently the species occurs in numbers and probably nests at least occasionally as far north as the lower Skeena River.

Tyrannus verticalis Say ARKANSAS KINGBIRD

Brooks and Swarth (1925, p.73) had no definite record for Vancouver Island. There is a specimen in the National Museum from Ucluelet taken by C. H. Young June 19, 1909. There is now a sight record for near Comox (1931, *Murrelet*, 12, p. 83).

Empidonax trailli trailli (Audubon) ALDER
FLYCATCHER

Two specimens from the Bella Coola area (Kimsquit, 1 ♂ ad., July 13, 1939; and Hagensborg, 1 ♂ ad., July 6, 1938) agree with eastern birds in their greenish upperparts, distinct wing bars and small bills. This represents the south-westerly limit of the range of this form.

Empidonax trailli brewsteri Oberholser
LITTLE FLYCATCHER

An adult male and female from Horseshoe Lake, Stillwater, June 21 and July 2, 1936, are closer to specimens of this race from southern British Columbia than they are to the Bella Coola birds (*trailli*). They are somewhat intermediate, as the female with a very large bill has rather distinct wing bars, and the male, with obscure wing bars, has a small bill, but they are best referred to this race which thus is near its northwestern limit at this point. I have seen no specimens of *adastus* Oberholser.

Empidonax hammondi (Xantus)
HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER

Brooks and Swarth (1925, p.75) give this species as reaching the coast only in the south. That it occurs along the coast as far as Dean Channel is shown by the following specimens from the Museum expeditions: Horseshoe Lake ♂, ♀, July 2, 12, 1936; Stuart Island, 2 ♂, July 22, 28, 1936; Rivers Inlet, 1 ♂, July 14, 1937; Hagensborg, 1 ♂, 1 ♀, June 14, July 8, 1938; Kimsquit, 4 ♂, June 20-July 7, 1939. No specimens of *wrighti* were taken in this area.

Myiochanes richardsoni richardsoni (Swainson)
WESTERN WOOD PEEWEE

Two specimens from Hagensborg, June 13 and 15, 1938, extends the known range northward in the coastal area from the vicinity of Vancouver and Alta Lake.

Petrochelidon albifrons albifrons (Rafinesque)
CLIFF SWALLOW.

Brooks and Swarth (1925, p. 104) said that the Cliff Swallow had not been found on Vancouver Island, nor northward along the coast, and there appear to be no subsequent published records for this area. We have no pertinent specimens, but a number of manuscript notes that have accumulated in the National Museum as follows: Comox, V. I.- common throughout the summer, 1922, breeding on the buildings in Comox village; flocks of swallows worked over the camp and the nearby tidal meadows and these always included a number of Cliff Swallows; recorded June 28 to Aug. 15 (*Ms.* P. A. Taverner); has bred there every year since (letter, 1933, H. Laing): Duncan Station, V. I. - a colony established itself in a barn at Duncan Station, V. I. during the war (1914-1918) and have now (1927) spread to several other colonies in the neighborhood (letter, G. D. Sprot): Saanich Peninsula, Cobble Hill, Duncan and Chemainus, V.I. - quite common; (letter G. D. Sprot): Coal Harbor, V. I. - one seen July (letter, 1933, H. M. Laing): Sayward, V.I.- two seen Aug. 13, 14 and a nest or two on barn; (*Ms.* 1936, H. M. Laing): Rivers Inlet - a pair took up residence at the cannery, they were seen June 5 and several times later, then disappeared (*Ms.* 1937, H. M. Laing).

Perisoreus canadensis griseus Ridgway
GRAY JAY

Specimens taken at Horseshoe Lake, Stillwater (1 ♂ ad., 2 ♀ ad., 1 ♂ imm., 1 ♀ imm., June 20-23, 1936) and in the lowlands of the Bella Coola area (Hagensborg, 1 ♂ ad., 2 imm., June 25, July 2, 1938 and Kimsquit, 1 ♂ ad., 1 ♀ imm., July 12, 21, 1939) extends the known range of this form northward from Alta Lake and Lillooet.

These specimens are indistinguishable from Vancouver Island birds.

It is interesting that the coastal lowland birds are this form, while inland, in the mountains above Stuie the quite different *canadensis* occurs.

Laing's notes however record that the species was common from the valley floor to timber line in the Bella Coola area. A series of specimens from intermediate localities would be very desirable, to demonstrate what happens when *canadensis* and *griseus* meet.

Taverner has suggested that this form intergrades with *canadensis* (1938 *Birds of Canada*, p. 303). While I agree with him that the differences shown by *obscurus* and *canadensis* are only of subspecific value, and the two forms certainly represent each other in this area, my material does not demonstrate intergrading. The Hagensborg and Kimsquit birds, with brownish tinged plumage, shaft streaks of the feathers conspicuous, and very reduced white tips to the remiges, contrast with the Stuie mountain birds with blue grey unstreaked plumage, and larger white tips to the remiges.

Dendroica magnolia (Wilson)

MAGNOLIA WARBLER

There seems to be but a single British Columbia record south of Tacla Lake and Quesnel, the one from Field, (Brooks and Swarth, 1925, p.109), so it is advisable to place on record a specimen, an adult male taken July 25, 1890 by Spreadborough at Revelstoke.

Seiurus noveboracensis linnaeus McCabe and Miller.

BRITISH COLUMBIA WATER-THRUSH

The 1938 party made several sight records of water-thrushes at Stuie between June 18 and July 26. The birds were occasionally heard in song.

A specimen taken July 22, at Stuie was a female with wing length of 72 mm. In its darker colored upperparts it agrees better with five specimens of this race from Hazelton, Vanderhoof, Yahk and Elko than it does with four specimens of *notabilis* from Chitina River, Glacier, Alaska.

A specimen taken at Loughborough Inlet on Aug. 27, 1936, was probably a migrant. It is a female, with a wing length of 73 mm. In color of upperparts it compares well with specimens of this species from Alaska, but below is somewhat yellow and cannot be distinguished with certainty from some eastern specimens.

Pinicola enucleator carlottae Brooks

QUEEN CHARLOTTE PINE GROSBEEK

Brooks (1939, *Murrelet*, 20, p. 57-59) has recorded this race from Vancouver Island, as accidental at Okanagan and has suggested it may be the breeding bird of the coastal ranges; Laing, 1942, *Condor*, p. 181 suggests the same thing. Laing on Rivers Inlet found this species from June 26 to Sept. 8, 1937 and took several specimens. In identifying them I have gone over all the British Columbia material in the National Museum as follows: Queen Charlotte Is., 1 ♂, 1 ♀, July 15, 1910; Lillooet, 1 ♂, 1 ♀, July 11, 19, 1916; Head of Rivers Inlet, 1 ♂, 1 ♀, 1 sex?, July 2, 3, 1937; Rossland, 1 ♂, 1 ♀, July 15, 16, 1929; 1st Summit Skagit River, 1 ♂, Aug. 18, 1905; and Osoyoos 1 ♀, Sept. 28, 1928.

The measurements are given in Table I. Except for the September specimen these may be considered breeding birds.

Table I

		Wing		Exposed Culmen	
		♂	♀	♂	♀
Queen Charlottes	July 15, 1910	113 (red)	105	14.7	14
Lillooet	July 11, 19, 1916	116 (red)	111	15	14.5
Rivers Inlet	July 2, 3, 1937	107 (grey)	108 (108 sex?)	14.2	15 (15 sex?)
1st Summit, Skagit River,	Aug. 18, 1905	113 (grey)		14.5	
Osoyoos	Sept. 28, 1928		116		14.5
Rossland	July 15, 16, 1929	113 (red)	114	16	15

On the basis of size it does not seem possible to separate any of these birds. I have no topotypical *montana* but Ridgeway's (1901, *Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus.* No. 50, p.60) measurements for *montana* wing ♂ 119.89 - 123.44, ♀ 118.11 - 119.13; exposed culmen ♂ 15.49 - 17.27 are so much larger that it seems advisable to consider all these birds *carlottae* in size.

In color the Osoyoos female is considerably paler than any of the others, but otherwise there appear to be no significant differences.

It appears that the breeding range of this race may be much larger than has been thought.

Passerculus sandwichensis anthinus Bonaparte
NORTHWESTERN SAVANNA SPARROW

This species was a summer resident in the Bella Coola area and probably bred there.

Specimens were collected as follows: an adult male at Hagensborg, July 2, and another at Kimsquit, July 12, 1939, and a female Aug. 11, 1939 at Stuie, alt. 5700 feet. The two males are in somewhat worn plumage; the female is very worn, moulting, and with a brood patch evident; their wings measure, male 71,72, female 69 mm. The two males in size, slender bill and brownish upperparts agree well with specimens from Chitina River and McCarthy, Alaska, differing only in having slightly smaller bills and slightly more black in the crown. The female is somewhat greyer, but is best referred to this form. This appears to be the most southwesterly reported breeding station for *anthinus* (in the restricted sense as used by Peters and Griscom, 1933, *Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.*, 80, pp. 445-477)

Passerella iliaca altivagans Riley
ALBERTA FOX SPARROW

No summering fox sparrows were found in the Horseshoe Lake to Kingcome Inlet area

in 1936, nor in the Rivers Inlet area in 1937. In the Bella Coola area in 1938 it was found first on July 30, when an immature bird was taken and another seen on Aug. 2 at Stuie. It was next encountered, Aug. 7, on the Caribou Mountains at 4700 feet altitude, when a female and an immature were taken, and another immature the next day. On Aug. 11 a few more were seen. By Sept. 2, 1938, fox sparrows were present in the heavy sparrow migration, then passing.

The Aug. 7 female is still in nestling plumage; of the other two females from 4700 feet in the Caribou Mountains, one is in worn summer plumage, the other is moulting into first winter plumage. Both compare well with specimens of *altivagans* from McGillivray Creek. Another, referable to this race, was taken on Mount Brilliant, Sept. 6, 1938.

The Stuie immature taken July 30 is only partly in first winter plumage, and though identification is uncertain, appears to be closer to this form than to either *fuliginosa* or *townsendi* that might be expected to breed here.

Rhynchophanes mccowni (Lawrence)
MCCOWN LONGSPUR

Laing took a female May 29, 1930 at Newgate. The only previous records for the province were the three birds taken by Brooks at Chilliwack in June, 1887 and June 1890. (See Brooks and Swarth, 1925, p. 90).

Calcarius ornatus (Townsend)
CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPUR

A female taken May 28, 1930, at Newgate by Laing is the second record for the province. The other record was a female from the Kispiox Valley, 23 miles north of Hazelton July 8, 1921 (Brooks and Swarth, 1925, p. 90).

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

A KITTIWAKE GULL (*Rissa tridactyla*) banded in northwestern Iceland and recovered off Nova Scotia. A Kittiwake Gull banded "as full grown" on May 27, 1938, at Kollsvik in northwestern Iceland for or by Mr. Finnur Gudmundsson of the Bird Ringing Scheme of the Museum of Natural History at

Reykjavik, Iceland, was caught on a fishing-trawl on or about January 13, 1943, by a member of the crew of a fishing schooner operating on Lahave Bank, some distance off Lahave, which is in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia. —T. S. HENNESSY, NATIONAL PARKS BUREAU, OTTAWA.



Rand, Austin Loomer. 1943. "On Some British Columbia Birds." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 57(4-5), 60–63. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.340622>.

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