B.C. Field Ornithologists Bird Records Committee Report for 2018

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Abstract: In 2018, the British Columbia Bird Records Committee reached decisions on 46 records. Of these records, 37 were accepted to the Main List, three to the Provisional List, and five were not accepted (due to identification not being established). An additional record was accepted, though later removed from the Review List. Six new species were added to the Main List, and two new species were added to the Provisional List. Records submitted involved birds seen between 1994 and 2018. The committee, in association with the BCFO, prepared an updated provincial bird checklist which was published in August, and is freely available online. The provincial checklist now stands at 523 species on the Main List, with an additional 12 species on the Provisional List.

Keywords: rare bird reports, British Columbia, checklist

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This is the sixth annual report of the B.C. Bird Records Committee (hereafter committee) since its re-instatement in 2013. Details on the committee's mandate, history, operating guidelines, and past decisions can be found in Hentze (2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018). One committee member (Jeremy Gatten) rotated off in early 2018, and a request for applications for committee membership was posted to the BCFO website and regional listservs. Two expressions of interest were received by the posting deadline, and after deliberation by the committee and ratification by the BCFO Board of Directors, Catherine Craig was added to the committee. Committee membership otherwise remained consistent from the previous year, and included Peter Candido, Chris Charlesworth, Michael Force, Nathan Hentze (Chair), Guy Monty, and Mike Toochin. Members serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

In total, the committee reached decisions on 46 records in 2018. These include 37 accepted to the Main List, and five not accepted due to issues of identification. Accepted records included six new species added to the Main List, and two new species added to the Provisional List. Details on all these records are provided below. Submitted records included observations from 1994 to 2018. The committee periodically updates its database of all reviewed records, which is posted online at the BCFO website. The committee would greatly appreciate receiving submissions for any records, past or present, not in this database. During 2018, the BCBRC also compiled an update to the provincial bird checklist. This checklist was published in hard-copy by the BCFO and is also available online. As is typical for published material, the checklist is already outdated by recently added species. However, in addition to a species list, the checklist provides a broad overview of the breeding and wintering ranges for all species in the province, and it is hoped that this list will be useful to both resident and visiting birders. Up-to-date details on committee membership, the Review List, checklist, rare bird report form, committee decisions, photos of many of these records, and other information can be accessed from the BRC section of the BCFO website (http://www.bcfo.ca).

The following is an account of all records reviewed and adjudicated since the previous report. Bird species are listed taxonomically and with naming following the seventh edition of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Check-list of North American Birds (1998) and subsequent supplements up to the 59th (Chesser *et al*. 2018). Provincial firsts are written out in uppercase. The number in brackets following the species name refers to the unique Bird Records Committee Number assigned to the record. Primary finders/observers are listed for accepted records only and are designated by (†). If more than one observer is listed, an asterisk (*) indicates those who submitted details. In some cases an observer other than the original finder submitted a report or supplemental evidence (*e.g.* photographs). Although the committee appreciates receiving reports from the original finder(s),

details from subsequent observers are also encouraged and welcomed. If photos (ph), video (v), or sound recordings (so) were provided, that is also noted after the observer's initials. Descriptions of records are based on comments and discussion provided from individual committee members during official committee business. For many records, an attempt is made to provide brief context or background information on provincial occurrence and vagrancy patterns.

Bird Records Committee Decisions

Accepted Records

Main List

Accepted records are ones for which the committee has received documentation that conclusively supports the identification. In addition, accepted records are believed to pertain to wild birds that arrived in British Columbia without the active intervention of humans. Records that are provincial firsts are accepted to the Main List if they are accompanied by physical evidence (*i.e.* photograph, video recording, sound recording, and/or specimen). Records of non-firsts may be accepted without physical evidence if the provided notes are detailed enough to eliminate other species.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (2) (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) – (2017-023)

Victoria – 2017 January 18 to March 19 – Liron Gertsman†* (ph), John Peetsma*

Two Pink-footed Geese were discovered in Martindale Flats on the Saanich Peninsula on January 22. Upon review of photographs by another observer, it was noted that the birds had been present since at least January 18. The geese were wary, and present in association with Canada (both resident types and "Dusky" *Branta canadensis occidentalis/fulva*) and Cackling Geese (*B. hutchinsii*). These geese were mobile, being located at multiple locations around Victoria, and were documented moving back and forth between the Saanich Peninsula and Duncan (a straight-line distance of less than 25 km). The two birds remained together, one a first-cycle (second-year bird), and the other an adult (Pers. comm. P. Pyle). While the identification was never in doubt, serious questions on provenance are always raised for vagrant waterfowl – one of the more commonly kept groups of birds. Members of the committee and others were involved in contacting government regulators, waterfowl collectors, and other members of the avicultural community. Pink-footed Geese are rare in captivity, both in North America and in Eurasia (Reeber 2015). There are two birds registered (as legally required) in British Columbia, both in the Lower Mainland, and both birds were reportedly still in captivity at the time of the Victoria sighting. Pink-footed Geese are also believed to be rare in western states, if kept at all. A voluntary census of captive waterfowl tallied only 45 Pink-footed Geese in public and private collections in North America in 2015 (IWWA 2015). In contrast, there were 289 Bar-headed Geese, 349 Baikal Teal, and 500 Northern Pintail reported (IWWA 2015). These birds displayed no morphological (*e.g.* clipped hind toes, bands, feather wear, or clipped wing feathers) or behavioural (*e.g.* tame) signs of captivity. Pink-footed Geese were formerly casual in North America, but sightings have increased greatly over the past two decades, corresponding with a ten-fold increase in Greenland and Iceland populations (Howell *et al.* 2014; Reeber 2015; eBird 2018). Mlodinow and Aanerud (2008) note that Washington (and by extension B.C.) lies directly on a 180° misorientation path for Greenland or Iceland-breeding Pink-foots. The only other West Coast record is of two birds in Hoquiam, Grays Harbor County, from 2003 November 05 to 2004 January 10. That record was ultimately not accepted by the Washington Bird Records Committee (Mlodinow and Aanerud 2008) owing to the possibility of captive origin and a lack of vagrancy pattern to western North America. Since that time there has been an additional (also unaccepted) record from Nebraska (2006 January 30; Brogie 2007), and very recently from Colorado (2018 December 11 to 2019 January [still present at time of writing]; eBird 2018). The timing of all of those sightings fit the trend of accepted sightings elsewhere in the U.S. and Canada, supportive of wild birds. Howell *et al.* (2014) state that over the past 25 years, records of this species have gone from being suspected escapes to expected vagrants. We predict the same will be true of western North American records if current trends continue.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) – (2018-033)

Victoria – 2018 April 02 – Geoffrey Newell†

Tufted Duck is a rare Eurasian species that is nevertheless regularly sighted along the West Coast of North America. It is not currently a review species in Washington, Oregon, or California, where records are predominantly distributed from October to April. This record, while later than many provincial sightings, maintains this same general temporal trend. Unlike most provincial records (potentially due to the less conspicuous plumage of females), this one pertains to an adult female. Tufted Ducks are known to hybridize with congenerics (Randler 2001; Reeber 2015), and the committee considers

this when evaluating records of this species. Such hybrids account for at least some reports in western North America (Hamilton *et al.* 2007), and could occur in the province. Provenance is also a consideration for rare waterfowl. Tufted Ducks are kept in captivity, though are less common in North America than some other potentially wild-occurring species such as Baikal Teal and Falcated Duck (IWWA 2015), and this species has a strong pattern of vagrancy to the region.

King Eider (*Aythya fuligula*) – (2018-016 and 2018-020)

1) 2018-016: Tsawwassen/Vancouver – 2017 October 24 to December 16 – Michael Klotz† (ph)
2) 2018-020: Qualicum Beach – 2018 March 12 to April 02 – Neil Robins†*, John Purves†, Blair Dudeck (ph)

King Eider is the most frequently detected eider species in the province, and sightings, while rare and unpredictable, are expected in coastal areas. Most sightings are of male birds in association with scoters, as is the case for both of these records. The first was of a bird in apparent second-alternate plumage present near the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal. Sightings of a King Eider from various locations around the Vancouver waterfront from December 04-16 are believed by the committee to refer to this same individual. The second was of a bird present off Qualicum Beach in association with large rafts of scoters which congregate in the area annually during the Herring spawn. It is possible that both records involved the same individual bird moving around in the Salish Sea, though this is not known for certain so the records are considered unique.

COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorusa*) – (2018-022)

Tlell, Haida Gwaii – 2018 June 10–15 – Michael Richardson† (ph, so), Mary Helmer (ph), details provided by Melissa Hafting

Any Old World cuckoo is an exciting find in North America, where almost all records are from Alaska. Howell *et al.* (2014) list Common Cuckoo as rare and intermittent from late May to early July on the western Aleutians, and very rare to accidental eastward through the Aleutians to the Alaska mainland. Elsewhere on the coast there is a record from Sitka, Alaska (2015 June 08; eBird 2018) and near Monterey, California (2012 September 28 to October 02; Pike *et al.* 2014). There are fewer records of identified Oriental Cuckoo in Alaska, and it appears to be less numerous in spring than Common (Howell *et al.* 2014). The separation of Common from the very similar Oriental Cuckoo by visual means is challenging, and only rufous-morph adult females, and rufous-morph juveniles are readily identified (Howell *et al.* 2014). They are vocally distinct, however, and fortunately male cuckoos often call in the spring. This luckily held true for the Haida Gwaii bird, confirming the identification. The habitat (less forested) and time of year also appear to favour Common.

Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythropthalmus*) – (2018-011)

Winfield (Lake Country) – 2014 July 03–07 – Doug Kragh†, Michael Force†* (ph)

Black-billed Cuckoo is a skulking species which breeds regularly as close as Alberta and Montana (Hughes 2018). Despite this, it is seldom detected in the province. The majority of reports are from June and July and from the southern interior (Toochin and Cecile, n.d.,a). This record was of a probable second-year individual, first detected by call, and seen well by many observers during its stay.

Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*) – (2018-014)

Powell River – 2017 September 06 to 2018 March 16 – Ken Pritchard†* (ph), Kathie Pritchard†* (ph)

This male Costa's Hummingbird overwintered in a residential area where it regularly attended a feeder. Although the breeding range of Costa's Hummingbird has remained relatively stable over time, many records of vagrants have occurred throughout the Pacific Northwest up to Alaska (Baltosser and Scott 1996), and reports are increasing in the province. Records in the Pacific Northwest are predominantly of adult males, though it is not known if this reflects an observer bias as females are harder to identify, or if this represents a true difference in dispersal or vagrancy between the sexes (Baltosser and Scott 1996). Unlike this overwintering bird, most records in the province are from April and May and may represent spring overshoots or potentially post-breeding dispersal. Hybridization is known in this species, particularly with Anna's Hummingbird (Baltosser and Scott 1996), and the committee evaluates all submitted reports for this potential. In this record, the photographs showed no indication of hybridization.

Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus*) – (2018-030 and 2018-041)

1) 2018-030: Boundary Bay, Delta – 2018 May 21 – Cole Gaerber† (ph)
2) 2018-041: Revelstoke – 2018 August 23 to September 04 – Don Manson† (ph)

Snowy Plovers breed regularly as close to the province as Midway Beach, Washington (less than 200 km from the nearest point of land in B.C.). Despite this, the species remains casual in the province. Spring records, such as 2018-030 (an adult male), likely pertain to spring overshoots from this coastal population. More significant is record 2018-041 from Revelstoke, an apparent first interior provincial record. The origin of this adult bird is harder to surmise. It may have originated from one of the interior-breeding populations, which exist as close as inland Oregon, Montana, and Saskatchewan (Page *et al.* 2009).

COMMON RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – (2018-038)

Oyster Bay (near Campbell River) – 2018 September 5–6 – Guy Monty* (ph), Vibeke Pedersen (ph)

Common Ringed Plover is a predominantly Palearctic-breeding species which ranges from Greenland east to Siberia and the Chukotski Peninsula (AOU 1998). In North America, the species breeds regularly only on Ellesmere, Bylot, and eastern Baffin islands in Nunavut, and on St. Lawrence Island in Alaska (AOU 1998). Three subspecies are generally noted: nominate *hiaticula* which is largely resident in western Europe, highly migratory *psammodroma* from Nunavut, Greenland and Iceland, and *tundrae* from northern Scandinavia to St. Lawrence Island (Wiersma *et al.* 2018). Outside of its breeding range, this species is casual to eastern North America, and accidental in the West beyond Alaska. There are two other accepted records south of Alaska in western North America: Washington (2006 September 23; Aanerud 2011) and California (2011 August 19–26; Sterling and Easterla 2012, Nelson *et al.* 2013), plus another recent record from California (2018 October 8–14). The separation of Common Ringed Plover from Semipalmated Plover can be difficult, and is aided by vocalizations which are distinct. Unfortunately, vocalizations were not noted for this current record as the identification was made retroactively from photographs, which were taken independently on two separate dates by separate observers. The photographs showed an adult bird in alternate plumage with relevant field marks supporting the identification of Common Ringed. These include a very thick breast band which can be seen extending completely across the breast without noticeable narrowing, extensive black in the face contrasting with the distinct, whitish supercilium, a parallelogram-shaped auricular, broad black at the bill base extending below the gape line, no visible eye ring, a white forehead patch nearly reaching the eye, and long, tapered bill. Toe webbing, which differs subtly between the two species, could not be assessed with these photos, though the balance of other features were sufficient for accepting this record as a new species for the province.

Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*) – (2018-019)

Ladner (Reifel Bird Sanctuary) – 2017 October 03 – Quentin Brown† (ph)

This juvenile Ruff was found at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary where it was seen foraging in company with a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Ruff is one of the more regularly occurring Eurasian shorebirds on the West Coast, and is not currently on the review list of any Pacific state due to its frequency of occurrence. While it also occurs with some regularity in British Columbia, few records have been submitted to the committee. The majority of records along the Pacific Coast are from August and September, with small numbers wintering in California (Hamilton *et al.* 2007). Barring declines in populations that serve as the source for western North American records, its occurrence is predicted to continue as a rare fall migrant in the province.

Scripps's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus scrippsi*) – (2018-008 [2] and 2018-009 [2])

1) 2018-008: 48.248738, -125.799568, near Nitinat Canyon – 2016 September 07 – Ryan Merrill† (ph)
2) 2018-009: 48.236998, -125.660527, near Nitinat Canyon – 2017 September 07 – Ryan Merrill† (ph)

Scripps's Murrelet breeds on the Channel Islands of southern California and islands off Baja California from February to June. During this time, most records are closer to breeding sites. Following breeding, individuals and pairs range northwards as far as 52.5° N (Karnovsky *et al.* 2005, identified as Xantus's Murrelet [Scripps's or Guadalupe murrelets]). Most non-breeding records are over the continental shelf at depths of 20-1000 m and from 20-150 km from shore (though they may range upwards of 500 km from shore) (Karnovsky *et al.* 2005). Kenyon *et al.* (2009) display 22 records of Xantus's Murrelet in B.C. waters from 1971 to 2006. Records from Oregon to B.C. occur from June 20 to October 31 with most records from mid-July to early October (Kenyon *et al.* 2009). These current records each involve a pair of birds, interestingly sighted on the same date one year apart. The locations were close to the Canada-U.S. border. The

photographs were sufficient to identify the birds to species – both Guadalupe and Craveri's murrelets are similar. While this species was listed as accidental in Campbell *et al*. (1990a), it regularly occurs near the shelf edge and beyond from summer through early fall, with few records owing to limited observer coverage in that zone.

GUADALUPE MURRELET (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*) – (2018-037)

132 nmi SW of Estevan Pt, 47.592° North, 128.052° West – 2018 July 09 – Michael Force†*, Chris Hoefer† (ph)

See the Scripps's Murrelet account above for general information, most of which also applies to this species. Unlike Scripps's Murrelet, Guadalupe Murrelet breeds only on islands off Baja California, Mexico. Kenyon *et al.* (2009) state that on average, Scripps's Murrelets were detected over shallower waters (946 m ± 286.1 SE, n=12) and closer to shore (56 km ± 7.9 SE, n=12) than Guadalupe Murrelet ([2,150 m ± 336.2 SE, n=1] and [170 km ± 50.1 SE, n=10] respectively). To the committee's knowledge, this record represents the first photographed record for the province, and thus it was eligible for addition to the Main List. Fitting with the literature, this bird was seen at an ocean depth of 2,600 m and ~230 km from the nearest point of land. The sea surface temperature was 15.7° C. It is possible that Guadalupe Murrelet is regular in the province far offshore, and may even outnumber Scripps's Murrelet at times (*e.g.* Mlodinow *et al.* 2002).

Parakeet Auklet (*Aethia psittacula*) – (2018-028)

Clayoquot Canyon, ~50 km west of Tofino – 2018 March 29 – Joachim Bertrands† (ph)

As with the above *Synthliboramphus* murrelets, Parakeet Auklet is likely much more regular in the province than current records indicate. Kenyon *et al.* (2009) list 24 sightings in provincial waters from 1982 to 2007. The species is regular as far south as California, which had 294 accepted records before removing it as a review species in 2012 (Tietz and McCaskie 2018). Washington State removed this auklet from review in 2010 (WBRC 2018). This current record was of an adult bird seen from a chartered pelagic trip out of Tofino.

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) – (2018-017)

Penticton – 2017 November 17–18 – Chris Charlesworth† (ph)

Little Gull is a rare but regular species in the province. Though the committee has reviewed few reports, there are numerous sightings in the province and the species appeared to be nearly annual (*e.g.* Toochin and Cecile n.d.,b). Over the past decade sightings appear to have declined in coastal British Columbia, but are increasing in the interior. This record fits that current trend. Interior records in both spring and fall, and of adults and immatures (such as this bird), raise the interesting possibility that this species is breeding somewhere in the central or northern interior of the province. North American breeding records were limited to a period from 1962 to 1989 in the Great Lakes basin, Hudson Bay/James Bay lowlands, and southern Minnesota (Ewins and Weseloh 1999), but there is potential that the species continues to breed on the continent (Howell and Dunn 2007).

Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) – (2018-042)

Vanderhoof – 2007 November 10–11 – Jeremy Gatten†*, Nathan Hentze†*

Ross's Gull is a small, near-mythical Arctic gull which, to birders' delight, occasionally wanders south. It is one of the least known gulls, and much basic life-history information is lacking for this species, despite being listed as Threatened in Canada (COSEWIC 2007; Maftei *et al.* 2012). The only photographed record in the province is of an immature seen off Clover Pt., Victoria on October 27 and November 09, 1966 (Campbell *et al.* 1990a). This current record involved a pink-tinged, adult bird seen well by multiple observers as it foraged, flew, and rested on Tachick Lake, near Vanderhoof in the central interior. It is of note that this gull was found on the exact date that an Ivory Gull (BCBRC #2015-046) was located in Abbotsford. It is also of note that an Arctic Tern (photographed), was present at the same time and location as the Ross's Gull, possibly representing the latest date in the province for that species. There is a strong breeding-site association between Arctic Terns and Ross's Gulls (Mallory *et al.* 2006; Egevang and Boertmann 2008; Maftei *et al*. 2012), though migration and wintering ranges for the species are vastly different. The only known near-shore congregations of Ross's Gull occur off Point Barrow, Alaska, where a large portion of the estimated global population migrates between late September and late October (Maftei *et al.* 2014). Sightings south of the Arctic are scattered and sporadic, but have occurred as far as southern California, and very close to our borders in the Yukon and Washington (eBird 2018).

Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*) – (2018-004)

Gingolx (Kincolith) – 2017 May 04 – Jeremy Gatten† (ph)

This bird was photographed on the mudflats where the Kincolith River drains into the Nass River, in a seldom-birded area of the province. An adult bird, this distinctive gull was well photographed, becoming the second documented record for the province. This species is distinctive compared with other regularly occurring species. The extralimital Olrog's and Belcher's gulls are similar, but these can be ruled out by size, bill size, lack of white primary tips, darker irides, and blacker mantle. Black-tailed Gull has a known pattern of vagrancy to North America from East Asia, and records in North America have occurred year-round (Howell *et al.* 2014).

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides glaucoides*) – (2017-043)

Okanagan Landing – 2016 January 22–24 – Chris Siddle† (ph)

This report, including photographs, was submitted as per the committee's request for records potentially pertaining to the nominate subspecies of Iceland Gull. There was no doubt that this was an Iceland Gull, but conclusively determining that this bird was of the nominate subspecies was more difficult given the extreme range of variation shown by this complex. Indeed, over the course of this review, Iceland Gull was lumped with Thayer's Gull (*L. g. thayeri*) (Chesser *et al*. 2017). Ultimately the committee took a conservative approach, and while some features appeared consistent with *L. g. glaucoides*, the record was only accepted to the level of Iceland Gull, with a note that this was possibly the nominate subspecies. Subsequent to this review, the committee entirely removed Iceland Gull from the Review List.

Short-tailed Albatross (3) (*Phoebastria albatrus*) – (2018-031)

48°57'23.9″N 126°40'48.9″W, west of Tofino – 2018 March 24 – Mike Toochin†, Melissa Hafting* (ph)

Historically the Short-tailed Albatross was a regularly occurring albatross to coastal British Columbia, but sightings ceased following the near extinction of the species (Campbell *et al.* 1990b). With a still low but increasing population, sightings in the province appear to be increasing (COSEWIC 2013). Modern sightings are concentrated along the shelf edge (Piatt *et al*. 2006; Kenyon *et al*. 2009). Kenyon *et al.* (2009) note that sightings occurred year-round, with 85% between May and November. This particular record involved three juvenile Short-tailed Albatross seen behind a commercial fishing boat with a large number of Black-footed Albatross. As with this record, most sightings in the province are of juvenile or immature birds, with only about 5% of recent, age-determined records pertaining to adult-plumaged birds (COSEWIC 2013).

Mottled Petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*) – (2018-005 and 2018-006)

1) 2018-005: 29 nm southwest of Carmanah Point – 2012 March 03 – Ryan Merrill†* (ph), Scott Mills†
2) 2018-006: 40 nm southwest of Carmanah Point – 2012 March 03 – Ryan Merrill†* (ph), Scott Mills†

Both of these records were part of a series of Mottled Petrel sightings from a NOAA research cruise. Record 2018-005 was of a bird completely in B.C. waters. Record 2018-006 was of a bird seen just inside the maritime border between B.C. and Washington. Mottled Petrels, and *Pterodroma* petrels in general, occur far offshore, and are thus rarely encountered by birders, even on pelagic trips. Mottled Petrel breeds in New Zealand and migrates to the northern Pacific. Between 1975 and 1989 most Mottled Petrels in the northeastern North Pacific occurred between May and September (the non-breeding season) (Kenyon *et al.* 2009). In contrast, between 1996 and 2006 the highest densities of birds occurred October through April (the breeding season). Due to the species' far offshore distribution, it is likely to remain an expected but very infrequently encountered species in provincial waters.

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) – (2018-040)

Gordon Channel, 50° 55.737′ N, 127° 42.454 W – 2018 July 10 – Jared Towers† (ph)

This species appears to be increasing in the North Pacific, and is now frequently seen from Washington to California where it has been removed from all three states' review lists. For example, Washington had 44 accepted records when the species was removed from that state's review list in 2008 (WBRC 2018). This species may be nesting, or at least prospecting for nests, in the North Pacific including within B.C. (Force *et al*. 2006). It seems likely that Manx Shearwater is much more numerous in the province than the current number of reports indicates. For an excellent, though decade-old, summary of Manx Shearwater in B.C.

refer to Force *et al*. (2006). This current record fits a trend in B.C. of predominantly summer records.

NAZCA BOOBY (*Sula granti*) – (2018-021)

48° 39.0 N, 126° 40.0 W, Pacific Ocean near Station P4 – 2012 May 24 – Michael Bentley† (ph)

Nazca Booby breed mainly on the Galapagos and Malpelo islands off western South America, but with small populations as far north as Islas Revillagigedo southwest of Baja California, Mexico (Pitman and Jehl 1998). This species was formerly considered conspecific with Masked Booby, of which there are no provincial records. Prior to 2012, the only confirmed sighting north of Mexico was of a first-cycle bird which rode a fishing boat north from Baja to San Diego from 2001 May 27-29 (Garrett and Wilson 2003). There have now been 17 accepted records in California, all since 2013 (Tietz and McCaskie 2018). The only other accepted record north of California was of an adult bird seen 2017 August 24 near the entrance to Cook Inlet, Alaska (Gibson *et al.* 2018). The B.C. record pertains to an adult bird seen and photographed as it approached a research vessel. The orange bill, orange iris, and white central rectrices differentiate adult Nazca from the similar Masked Booby.

Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) – (2018-025)

Penticton – 2018 May 23 – Eric Newton†

This record conforms to the majority of Ferruginous Hawk records in the province, being from spring/summer and from the southern interior. This record is of an adult bird, seen well in flight. Satellite tracking of juvenile and adult Ferruginous Hawks from Washington has shown that the Rocky Mountains are not a strong barrier to dispersal for this species, and individuals of both ages crossed between Washington and Alberta via various routes through southeastern British Columbia (Watson 2003). This indicates that Ferruginous Hawk occurrence in the province may be due to multiple factors, including spring overshoots or potentially occasionally nesting birds in the spring/summer (notably in the Okanagan or Nicola regions), and dispersal to fall and winter ranges in the autumn through the Kootenays.

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) – (2018-034)

Firvale (Bella Coola area) – 2018 May 31 to June 12 – Catherine Carter†, Michael Force* (ph)

Crested Caracara records continue to increase in the Pacific Northwest. This adult bird is the fourth provincially accepted record, and at least one additional report exists which has not yet been reviewed by the committee. Individual birds are capable of wandering over wide areas, and an analysis of 60 California sightings concluded that they represented repeated occurrences of perhaps only 11 individuals over successive years, and that the pattern was consistent with birds moving north as wild vagrants (Nelson and Pyle 2013). Consistent with this, two previous B.C. records were believed to involve sightings of birds originally noted in Washington (Hentze 2015; Hentze 2017). The history of sightings in British Columbia, Washington, and Alberta indicate that this species could conceivably occur at any location in the province.

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – (2017-005 and 2018-026)

1) 2017-005: Richmond – 2016 June 09 – Stuart Mackenzie† (ph)
2) 2018-026: Delta – 2018 May 20 – Rob Lyske† (ph)

Loggerhead Shrike is a rare but regular (annual) species to the province. The pattern of sightings, being concentrated in spring, is strongly suggestive of overshoots from breeding sites in Washington. Record 2017-005 is a re-submission of a previously not accepted record (Hentze 2018). Photographs were previously considered inconclusive, though suggestive of Loggerhead Shrike, but no description was provided. The report was resubmitted with details of the bird and sighting provided, and it was subsequently accepted. Record 2018-026 was well photographed, but as is typical for this species in the province, the bird was present for only a short period of time.

Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) – (2018-012 and 2018-013)

1) 2018-012: Cranbrook – 2017 December 09 to 2018 April 19 – Ryan Tomlinson†, Chris Charlesworth* (ph), Wendy Roberts* (ph)
2) 2018-013: Elko – 2018 January to March (exact dates uncertain) – Bob Livsey*

Brown Thrashers breed as close as Alberta, but typically winter in the southeastern U.S. These two independent records both pertain to wintering birds in the Kootenays. Record 2018-012 was found by observers searching for a Northern Cardinal (BCBRC #2017-051) present in the same area. The exact start and end dates for record 2018-013 were not provided to the committee, but are listed on the BC Bird Alert website as 2018 January 02 to March 19 (https://bcbirdalert.blogspot.com/2018/02/rba-brown-thrasher-in-elko-jan-2-feb.html).

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) – (2018-010)

Comox – 2017 October 24 – Krista Kaptein† (ph)

This wagtail was readily identified as a White based on plumage and structural features. White Wagtail was formerly considered a separate species from Black-backed Wagtail, but they were lumped in 2005 following evaluation of evidence of extensive hybridization between the two forms, and in line with other major authorities who considered them conspecific (Banks *et al.* 2005). The separation of the forms expected to occur in B.C. (*M. a. ocularis* and *M. a. lugens*) can be challenging. This record appeared to pertain to a first-year female of the race *ocularis*. Although *ocularis* is the form that occasionally breeds in western Alaska, records elsewhere along the Pacific Coast are split between *ocularis* and *lugens*. In California "the four fall migrants identified as *ocularis* were found no earlier than 5 October, whereas six of the seven fall *lugens* occurred between 20 July and 7 October" (Hamilton *et al.* 2007, p. 356). Washington lists eleven accepted records, with four each for *lugens* and *ocularis*, and the remainder unidentified to subspecies (WBRC 2018). Of particular note in the Washington records was one bird seen three months after the B.C. record, from 2018 January 24-28 in King County, also identified as *ocularis*.

Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) – (2018-029)

Saanich – 2018 May 19 – Geoffrey Newell† (ph)

Most records of Red-throated Pipit in the province are during the autumn, but in recent years there has been an increase in spring sightings. This adult bird represents the third accepted spring record, and second from this location (Panama Flats, Saanich). All three accepted spring records have been in the Victoria area. The first and second spring records (#2015-018, Hentze 2016; and #2017-020, Hentze 2018) occurred in a similar time period (2010 May 09-11 and 2016 May 04-08 respectively). Red-throated Pipits typically winter from Africa through southeast Asia, but birds that travel down the Pacific Coast of North America may sometimes overwinter in Mexico (Hamilton *et al.* 2007). Birds returning north from overwintering in the New World may be the source of spring records south of Alaska. There are additional spring records from Washington (2004 May 7; WBRC 2018) and Oregon (2004 April 29-31; OBRC 2019).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) – (2018-023)

Quesnel – 2018 June 24 – Dwaine Laxdal† (ph)

This adult male Golden-winged Warbler, seen briefly but recorded on video, represents the first record for the province. Golden-winged Warbler is an eastern species which breeds from southeastern Saskatchewan to southern Quebec, adjacent states of the U.S., and the Appalachian Mountains (Confer *et al.* 2011). This species is closely related to, and regularly hybridizes with, Blue-winged Warbler (*V. cyanoptera*). These hybrids are common: two principal hybrid phenotypes are widely known as "Brewster's" Warbler and "Lawrence's" Warbler, but backcrosses may span the phenotypic traits between the two parent species. Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that the two species have very little genomic divergence, and that plumage differences are controlled in many cases by few genes operating in a dominant/recessive dynamic (Toews *et al*. 2016). This research could be interpreted as evidence that the two species may actually be one, polymorphic species, but such determinations are beyond this committee's scope. Although hybrids were considered, this bird displayed no phenotypic traits of Blue-winged. Hybrids may be less expected to the west than either parent species. California lists only six accepted records of hybrids despite 133 records of the parent species (Tietz and McCaskie 2018). Adjacent to our region, Alberta has three records of Golden-winged Warbler (September 1985, Slater and Hudon 2002; June 1994, Slater 2001; and July 2015, Hudon *et al*. 2017), Washington two (August 1998 and September 2003; WBRC 2018), Oregon two (June 1977 and June 1983; OBRC 2019), and California has about 80 records year-round, relatively evenly split between spring and fall migrants (Tietz and McCaskie 2018; Hamilton *et al.* 2007).

Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*) – (2018-027)

Summit Lake, West Kootenay – 2018 May 27 – Gary Davidson†* (ph), Julia Flesaker (ph)

This adult male Northern Parula was identified first by its song, and record photos were obtained during the period of observation. Northern Parula is one of the more common of the "eastern" warblers to occur in the West, with over 900 records in California, where it has also bred (Hamilton *et al.* 2007). The species has also been removed from the review list in Oregon (OBRC 2019), though there are only about 19 accepted records in Washington (WBRC 2018). About two-thirds of the records in California are from the spring/early summer (Hamilton *et al.* 2007), a trend which appears to hold for B.C.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – (2018-036)

Vancouver – 2018 June 22 – Cole Gaerber† (ph)

As is the case with many summer records of vagrant warblers, this bird was first detected by its song. Among the more regular of the eastern vagrants, there is even a single breeding record for the province (Campbell *et al.* 2001). In B.C. and Washington, records of this species appear to peak in the summer (especially June, as with this record), and again in September during fall migration (Toochin and Cecile n.d.,c; WBRC 2018).

Hermit Warbler (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – (2018-039)

Mt. Washington, Comox Valley – 2018 June 11 to July 17 – Lori Smith† (ph, v)

This record was of a photographed and video-recorded, adult male Hermit Warbler, originally found on June 11 and subsequently seen by many observers. The extensive hybridization between Hermit and Townsend's Warblers in the Olympic Peninsula and Cascade Mountains of Washington poses challenges when assessing Hermit Warbler records in the province. See Hentze (2018) for a more thorough discussion on this issue. The photographic evidence received on this current bird showed that all visible characteristics were consistent with "pure" Hermit Warbler. In addition, the song was clearly different from those of the local Townsend's Warblers which co-occurred. This individual appeared to be defending a territory, though it is unknown if it bred.

Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – (2018-032)

Vancouver – 2017 December 09 to 2018 April 20 – Wendy Kahle†*, Melissa Hafting (ph)

This first-winter male Summer Tanager was seen by many observers during its extended, over-winter stay in a residential area of Vancouver. To the south of our area, records are concentrated in the late fall/winter and spring (May/June). For example, in Washington, out of ten accepted records there are seven during the winter months (November and December), and three in spring (May and June). In contrast, in Oregon, out of 23 accepted records, 14 are in May/June and only five are from November to February (OBRC 2019). This suggests that separate vagrancy patterns may be involved. Spring records could potentially be overshoots from the south of the western subspecies, *P. r. cooperi*, which would explain the greater number of spring records in Oregon relative to Washington. In contrast, wintering birds in the West, including from within the breeding range of *P. r. cooperi*, are more likely to be of the eastern subspecies *P. r. rubra* (Rea 1970; Robinson 2012).

Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) – (2018-018)

Kimberley – 2017 August 18 – Kathleen Paterson† (ph)

The first accepted record of Northern Cardinal (2017-051), an after hatch-year female, was present in Cranbrook from 2017 November 07 to 2018 February 27. Note that the date range of that sighting was not available as of press time for the 2017 report (Hentze 2018). This current record, also of a female, pre-dates the first. This sighting was from Kimberley, with a straight-line distance of only about 25 km between the two sightings. The committee believes that there is a high probability the two records pertain to the same individual. Reasons for acceptance of the species are more thoroughly outlined in Hentze (2018). This current record creates the new first accepted record for Northern Cardinal in the province.

Provisional List

The committee previously decided that records of provincial firsts need to be accompanied by physical evidence to be accepted to the Main List. Physical evidence could include photographs, videos, sound recordings, or specimens. Records of species that are not on the Main List, but for which the committee believes the identification is conclusively supported by the details provided, and that are believed to pertain to wild, naturally-occurring vagrants (*i.e.* are not escapes), are assigned to the Provisional List.

Guadalupe Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*) – (2018-003)

52.387°N, -132.487° W, about 35 nautical miles west of Moresby Island, Haida Gwaii – 1994 August 02 – Michael Force†

Note that this Guadalupe Murrelet was reviewed prior to the accepted, photographed record detailed above (BCBRC #2018-037). This record was thus accepted to the Provisional List, though the species was subsequently promoted to the Main List. The detailed field notes by an experienced observer clearly eliminated similar species. For more discussion on Guadalupe Murrelet please see record 2018-037 above.

Whiskered Auklet (*Aethia pygmaea*) – (2018-002)

52° 33.4′ N, 136° 47.4′ W, about 172 nm west of Moresby Island, Haida Gwaii – 2001 June 07 – Michael Force†

Details on this sighting are fully documented in Force (2002). The committee reviewed that report, and found the details sufficient for eliminating similar species (notably the congenerics, all of which are rare to the province). Note that the Washington record referenced in Force (2002) has since been reconsidered and not accepted by the Washington Bird Records Committee (WBRC 2018). As stated in Force (2002), this record is not south of the known range, but rather farther east.

Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) – (2018-001)

Nanaimo – 2001 February 07 – Guy Monty†

Arctic Loon has long been expected to occur in British Columbia, with birds breeding in Alaska and with records in Washington (five accepted; WBRC 2018), Oregon (two accepted; OBRC 2019), and California (14 accepted; Tietz and McCaskie 2018). This record pertains to a bird seen and described well, but not photographed (in part reflective of the date of the sighting). Birders should review the identification of Arctic Loon, and note that due to posture any loon can appear to have pale flanks. The proper identification requires taking into account multiple field marks, an approach evident in this report.

Non-accepted Records

Identification Not Established

The following reports are ones for which the documentation was inadequate to conclusively determine the species involved. It must be stated that in not accepting these records, we are not indicating that these sightings were necessarily misidentified. Although that may sometimes be the case, it is more frequent that the documentation submitted does not fully eliminate other species, even if they happen to be rarer than the one submitted. This may be due to incomplete submissions, or simply important features of plumage or behaviour not observed in the field. Names of observers are withheld from non-accepted reports.

Scripps's Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus scrippsi*) – (2018-007)

48.263712, -125.817225, near Nitinat Canyon – 2016 September 07

This report mentioned a pair of Scripps's Murrelets seen briefly as they flushed and flew north, near Nitinat Canyon at a water depth of 229 m. While the sighting was made by an experienced observer, the record could not be accepted as no description of the birds was provided, and no photographs were obtained.

Booby sp. (*Sula* sp.) – (2018-024)

Roberts Creek – 2018 May 21

In recent years the number of booby records in the province, and indeed all along the Pacific Coast of North America, has increased. As of this report, British Columbia now has accepted records of Brown, Blue-footed, and Nazca Booby, with an additional unsubmitted report of Red-footed. Thus, it is clearly a species group that birders in the province should be prepared for, in the (still) unlikely event that they find one of these species. This report detailed a bird seen flying southeast off the coast at Roberts Creek which had some features consistent with a booby species. However, the sighting conditions did not permit the observer to make a confident identification, and the lack of observation of certain details prevent the committee from doing likewise.

Eastern Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla tschutschensis*) – (2017-033 and 2018-015)

1) 2017-033: Saanich – 2010 May 16
2) 2018-015: Royston – 2013 October 13 – (ph)

Despite the fact that this species breeds in Alaska and extreme northwestern Canada (to Mackenzie River Delta area), it is significantly rarer anywhere else in North America. There are two accepted records in Washington (WBRC 2018), three in Oregon (OBRC 2019), and 18 in heavily-birded California (Tietz and McCaskie 2018). Neither of these reports could be corroborated to species. In particular, it should be noted that the appearance of other European and central Asian species (such as Citrine Wagtail) indicates that Western Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) could theoretically wander to the province, and must be considered when evaluating wagtail records. Record 2018-013 was photographed, but the photos were unfortunately backlit and few details could be discerned.

Black-throated Blue Warbler (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – (2017-052)

Oliver – 2015 June 06 (so)

This report of a male Black-throated Blue Warbler was accompanied by a sound recording. The sound recording was identified by members of the committee as a Lazuli Bunting. The remaining report details were insufficient for conclusively identifying the bird seen as a Black-throated Blue Warbler.

Origin Uncertain

This category is one for which the documentation conclusively established the identification, but for which there were significant concerns about provenance. In most cases there is a concern that the individual was brought to the province in captivity, from whence it escaped or was released, or that it arrived in the province on its own, but had a captive origin. In most cases this category includes species that are known to be widespread in private collections, and/or which lack known natural vagrancy patterns.

There were no evaluated records classified as "origin uncertain" in 2018.

Updates and Corrigendum

1) BCBRC #2017-051: Northern Cardinal. As mentioned in the Northern Cardinal account above, the full date range for this record is 2017 November 07 to 2018 February 27. The end date was not available by the printing of the previous report (Hentze 2018).

2) BCBRC #2016-026: White-cheeked Starling. In Hentze (2017) the account for White-cheeked Starling erroneously states "The only other sighting was of a single bird in Homer, Alaska, in 1998 April 28 that was ultimately not accepted based on provenance." The correct date should have read 1998 June 1-6, and the bird was not reviewed by the Alaska Checklist Committee. The Tofino record was reviewed by the ABA Checklist Committee subsequent to the BCBRC's decision. The ABA-CLC also did not accept the record, owing to a sign of captivity (missing right hind toe), and potential that a ship-assisted bird may have been restrained or provisioned in passage (Pyle *et al*. 2018).

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