

B.C. Field Ornithologists Bird Records Committee Report for 2022

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Abstract: In 2022, the British Columbia Bird Records Committee reached decisions on 15 records. Of these records, 14 were accepted to the Main List, and 1 was not accepted. Of these accepted records, none were new to the Main List. The records reviewed involved birds seen between 2021 and 2022. The provincial checklist now stands at 534 species on the Main List, with an additional 10 species on the Provisional List.

Key words: rare bird reports, British Columbia, checklist, Bird Records Committee

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This is the tenth annual report of the B.C. Bird Records Committee (BRC or committee) since its re-instatement in 2013. Details on the committee's mandate, history, operating guidelines, and past decisions can be found in previous annual reports and on the BCFO website. Two committee members, David Bradley and Cathy Antoniazzi, reached their term limits and rotated off the committee in early 2022. Catherine Craig, having officially left the committee in late 2020, but functioning as chair throughout 2021, rotated off later that year. Prior to their departure, a request for applications for committee membership was posted to the BCFO website and regional listservs. After ratification by the BCFO Board of Directors, Michael Force returned while Liron Gertsman joined as a new member. Joachim Bertrands was selected internally as chair in early 2022. Current committee members are Joachim Bertrands (chair), Dianne Cooper, Ian Cruickshank, Jeremy Gatten, Mark Phinney, Michael Force, and Liron Gertsman.

In total, the committee reached decisions on 15 records in 2022. These included 14 accepted to the Main List, and one not accepted due to identification not being established. No new species were added to the Main List. Details on all these records are provided below. Submitted records involved observations from 2021 to 2022.

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. 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 list-

ed taxonomically and with naming following the seventh edition and supplements of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) Checklist of North American and Middle American Birds (Chesser *et al.* 2022). Provincial firsts and new additions to the Main List 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 provin-

cial firsts are accepted to the Main List if they are accompanied by physical evidence (*i.e.*, photograph, video recording, sound recording, or specimen). Records of non-firsts may be accepted without physical evidence if the submitted notes are detailed enough to eliminate other species.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) – (2022-013)

Clark's Marsh, 108 Mile Ranch, Walker Valley — 21 July 2021 — Paul Foth†(ph)

This record is one of a single bird photographed extensively and described in detail, with no doubt about identification. This record is from relatively far north compared to most records in the province, an increasing trend in the last few years.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) is yet unrecorded in the province, though there are records from Washington (WBRC 2022), Montana (MBRC 2012), and Alberta (eBird 2023), besides more potential birds of hybrid origin. It is expected to eventually occur in the province and should be considered for any ibis sighting here.

Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) – (2022-015)

McMicking Point, Victoria — 23 November 2022 — Geoffrey Newell†(ph)

This record was extensively described by an experienced observer and poor photos, seemingly supporting the description and record, were submitted jointly. The description excluded the two most similar species—Pacific and Common Loon—and this record was subsequently accepted.

Obtaining self-explanatory photos of this species in the province still seems a difficult task, with distance and/or in poor winter weather conditions often being contributing factors. 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 considering multiple field marks, an approach evident in this report.

Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) – (2022-005)

~50 km West of Tofino — 27 March 2022 — David M. Bell†, Joachim Bertrands (ph), m.obs.

This bird was extensively photographed during an 8-hour pelagic birding tour off Tofino. Light wing patches could potentially indicate a bird of 3–5 years old (Konno *et al.* 2018).

Historically the Short-tailed Albatross was a regularly occurring albatross to coastal British Columbia, but sightings ceased following the near extinction of the species (Camp-

bell *et al.* 1990). 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. 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).

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) – (2022-09), (2022-011), and (2022-012)

Cape Sutil, Port Hardy, Vancouver Island — 28 July 2021 — Evan Larsson†(ph)
Hecate Strait, North Coast — 24 May 2022 — Joshua Brown†(ph)
Southeast of Calvert Island, North Coast — 25 May 2022 — Joshua Brown†(ph)

All three records were well documented, and all concerned birds observed from a vessel. The black-and-white pattern, rump, undertail, and flank colour, description, and time of year all pointed toward this species and pointed away from the possibility of rarer shearwaters (*i.e.*, Newell's or Black-vented Shearwater).

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 2022). 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. This current record fits a trend in B.C. and the wider Pacific Northwest of predominantly summer records.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) – (2022-010)

Ogden Point and McMicking Point — 17–18 December 2021 — David Caudwell†, Geoffrey Newell(ph)

On the evening of 17 December 2021 at Ogden Point, D. Caudwell obtained relatively poor photos of a female-type King Eider. The bird was not relocated at this location the next day. However, a female-type King Eider, presumably the same individual, was observed flying multiple times past McMicking Point (~7 km east of Ogden Point), and subsequently photographed. The description as well as photos taken on both occasions clearly show a female-type King Eider, with upturned gape, warm-brown plumage tones and appropriate head shape. Other eider species can be distinguished by a combination of these characteristics when

in female-type plumage (Reeber 2015; Howell and Zufelt 2019).

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 in late winter or early spring.

Willet (*Tringa semipalmata*) – (2022-014)

Canal Flats, Columbia Lake — 11 May 2022 — Paul Foth†(ph)

Poor photos were submitted to the committee, which, together with the description, undoubtedly confirmed this species, and this record was subsequently accepted.

Willet remains a rare visitor to British Columbia. Sightings are often of the same multi-year overwintering individual in the Lower Mainland. This sighting, however, was a bird on spring migration far from any known returning individual. More records stem from the southeastern part of the province, which is to be expected given that the species breeds commonly on the prairies and winters in coastal California and Oregon, as well as to some extent in Washington (eBird 2023).

Parakeet Auklet (*Aethia psittacula*) – (2022-004) and (2022-006)

Clayoquot Canyon, ~50 km West of Tofino — 27 March 2022 — Blair Dudeck†, Joachim Bertrands(ph), m.obs.

Clayoquot Canyon, ~50 km West of Tofino — 2 April 2022 — Joachim Bertrands†(ph), Dan Pontalti†, m.obs.

The first reviewed record (2022-004) was of a single individual, photographed during a pelagic trip off Tofino. The second record (2022-006) consisted of 5 individuals (separate groups of 2 and 3) counted under the same circumstances. All birds were photographed, and critical characteristics were thus evaluated.

Parakeet Auklet is much more regular in the province than older records indicate. Kenyon *et al.* (2009) list 24 sightings in provincial waters from 1982 to 2007. In recent years, increased observer effort in early spring has repeatedly produced records of this northern alcid. A highly pelagic species during the nonbreeding season, it may follow a more coastal migration route north in spring, during which records off the Pacific Northwest coast show a strong peak (eBird 2023). 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 2022).

Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Setophaga pensylvanica*) – (2022-007)

Catbird Slough, Vancouver — 25 June – 10 July 2022 — Mike Klotz†(ph)

This record was a well-documented bird seen by many observers.

Albeit one of the most regular vagrant eastern warblers, the species has only once been confirmed as breeding in the province. A 1998 record of an adult female feeding two fledglings represents the only confirmed nesting in the province (Campbell *et al.* 2001). Its nearest regular breeding localities are in eastern Alberta.

Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) – (2022-008)

Rocky Point Bird Observatory, Metchosin — 28 September 2021 — David M. Bell†(ph)

This was a record of a bird banded at Rocky Point Bird Observatory. The bird was immediately recognized by the bander in charge as a Hooded/Orchard-type oriole, and subsequent measurements proved to be too short for Hooded but in perfect range for Orchard Oriole. Combined with the bill being not as curved as expected in Hooded, and a combination of tail/wing length, the bird could be identified as a hatch-year female Orchard Oriole.

Given the far eastern range of this species, with nearest breeding populations in southern Saskatchewan, it is no surprise that records in the province are few and far between. Previous records indicate September and October being great months to find this species in B.C., a pattern shared with other eastern species of similar rarity (eBird 2023).

Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – (2022-001) and (2022-003)

Duck Lake, Creston — 13 May 2022 — Lyle Grisedale†, Paul Foth (ph)

Mount Tolmie, Victoria — 23 May 2022 — Geoffrey Newell†(ph)

The first record was well documented with photos and occurred in a valley in B.C.'s southern interior.

The second record was found at a migrant trap near Victoria's suburbs and seen subsequently by multiple observers that same day. Photos and a conclusive description did not leave any doubt about the identification.

Loggerhead Shrike is a rare but regular species to the southern interior of the province. The pattern of sightings, being concentrated in spring, is strongly suggestive of overshoots from breeding sites in Washington. Both these records fit that trend. Records on Vancouver Island remain rare, however.

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 by not accepting these records, the committee is 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 that important features of plumage or behaviour were not observed in the field. Names of observers are withheld from non-accepted reports.

Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria*) – (2022-002)

Vancouver — 18 May 2022

This report lacked critical identification information and does not exclude other yellow finches of which Evening Grosbeak is one of multiple options.

The species has been breeding in the southern Okanagan Valley for a few years now (Bell 2019), but records outside of that region remain rare. Although described as a permanent resident on the Pacific coast north to southern Washington, this species had been expanding its breeding range northwards in recent decades, prior to the first breeding records being recorded in the province (Watt and Willoughby 2014).

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