

B I R D   S I G H T I N G S   I N

"KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK"

AND VICINITY

1969

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SEASONAL NATURALIST

COMMON LOON

During the summer, two or three were heard calling as they flew overhead in the extreme southeastern portion of the Park and above the Columbia River Valley.

RED-NECKED GREBE

April 27, 9:30 A.M., one male and one female were seen one mile south of Radium in a backwater of the Columbia River. The male was swimming around in the middle of the slough, while the female stayed amongst some reeds. Calls were exchanged frequently, and small courtship gestures were noticed. Habitat: swampy river bottom, marsh with dry birches and light douglas fir forest on the east; poplar grove, then ridge of conifers on the west.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: cool (50°F.), calm, clear, few clouds.

Other red-necked grebes were seen at various times on the sloughs west of Radium.

PIED-BILLED GREBE

April 27, 11:30 A.M., one pair was seen  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium in a Columbia River backwater. Both birds were preening and swimming.

Habitat: (see foregoing species).

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: warm (70°F.), slight wind, clear.

GREAT BLUE HERON

April 27, 9:45 A.M., one was seen  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Radium along the Columbia River. It flew along a pond's edge then landed on a mud flat.

Habitat: river bottom, with mud bars and backwaters; dead trees in water.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: cool (55°F.), calm, clear, a few clouds.

AMERICAN BITTERN

July 6, 6:30 P.M., one was heard in some tall reeds in a slough one mile south-west of Radium.

Habitat: river bottom pond; reeds growing profusely along the edges; poplars and conifers nearby, giving way to dense douglas fir and lodgepole pine forests on either side.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear, sunny.

CANADA GOOSE

April 27, 9:30 A.M., six geese one mile south of Radium along the Columbia River. They were sitting and dozing on a mud bar, and as the morning progressed they became more active.

Habitat: mud bar on the edge of a poplar forest; much dead and drifted wood; mud bar skirted by tall green grasses and shrubbery.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: cool (55°F.), calm, clear, a few clouds.

MALLARD

May 7, 6:50 P.M., one pair  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of Radium, swimming in a backwater of the Columbia River.

Habitat: river bottom pond surrounded by reeds, poplar trees and conifers, in that order.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: warm (75°F.), calm, clear, cloudless skies.

BALDPATE

April 27, 9:45 A.M., one male was flying about 200 feet above the Columbia River one mile southwest of Radium.

Weather: 55°F., calm, clear, few clouds.

SHOVELLER

April 27, 9:45 A.M., one male was flying about 300 feet above the Columbia River one mile south of Radium.

Weather: cool (55°F.), calm, clear, few clouds.

WOOD DUCK

A pair was spotted one July morning at about 5:30 A.M. on a slough west of Radium and beside the Columbia River.

Weather: cold (40°F.), calm, partially cloudy, no sun.

Reportedly seen in June at McKay Creek reservoir.

REDHEAD

July 6, 7:00 P.M., one male flew along the shore of a swamp  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium.

Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear, sunny.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

CANVASBACK

July 6, 6:45 P.M., one pair was seen near a muskrat house on a backwater slough of the Columbia  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium.  
 Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear, sunny.

LESSER SCAUP

A small group of about eight was seen on Kootenay Pond in July.  
 Habitat: a small acre-size pond at the base of a mountain near Kootenay Warden Station; gravel bottom, and surrounded by a coniferous forest.  
 Weather: cool (50°F.), calm, overcast,  
 Altitude: 4500 feet.

COMMON GOLDENEYE

April 27, 11:30 A.M., one pair was swimming and diving in a small pond  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium.  
 Habitat: scrubby willows along roadside, old poplar groves, a few conifers, swamps, drowned trees.  
 Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear, few clouds.  
 Altitude: 2600 feet.

BUFFLEHEAD

July 6, 6:40 P.M., one pair was seen swimming in a small pond on the east side of the railway tracks about one mile south of Radium.  
 Habitat: few reeds, many large willows around edge of pond, then poplars and pines.  
 Altitude: 2600 feet.  
 Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear, sunny.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER

July 14, 12 noon, thirty-four scoters were swimming in a group around Floe Lake in the Park's northern end. The lake is cold, glacier-fed, and almost at tree line; much rugged and rocky terrain with the alpine larch being the predominant tree.  
 Altitude: about 6500 feet.  
 Weather: cold (40°F.), overcast, slightly windy, a bit of snow, some sunny periods.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK

April 27, 10:00 A.M., one bird was seen  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Radium, above the Columbia River. It flew from about river level (2600 feet) up to the lip of the "bench" and began to soar about 300 feet in the air.

Habitat: The dry bench land consists of various grassy slopes and scattered patches of douglas fir trees.

Weather: warm (65°F.), calm, clear.

May 12, 10:15 A.M., one adult was seen flying and alighting in douglas fir stands  $1/8$  mile south of the administration building.

Altitude: 3300 feet.

Weather: cool (50°F.), calm, cloudy.

RED-TAILED HAWK

May 10, 11:40 A.M., one male seen at Nixon Lake. He alighted in a tree, calling constantly, then flew northeastwards and out of sight.

Habitat: spruce-fir forest, dense undergrowth, trees to water's edge, much peat and sphagnum moss.

Altitude: about 4500 feet.

Weather: warm (75°F.), calm, clear, cloudless.

GOLDEN EAGLE

April 27, 9:45 A.M., one adult was seen two miles south of Radium above the Columbia River. It was soaring at about 400 feet above the river bottom.

Weather: cool (60°F.), calm, clear.

OSPREY

July 14, 4:30 P.M., one osprey was flying above Floe Lake and towards the northeast. It was being chased by what looked like Canada Jays.

Habitat: cold, glacier-fed lake, almost at tree line; rugged and rocky terrain, with alpine larch being the predominant tree.

Altitude: about 6500 feet.

Weather: cold (40°F.), overcast, slightly windy, snowing lightly, some sun.

April 27, 10:00 A.M., one pair was seen  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Radium by the Columbia River.

Habitat: river bottom with swamps, ponds, and backwaters; scattered poplar groves, with many dead or dying trees; river valley sides skirted by douglas firs.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: warm (60°F.), calm, clear.

SPARROW HAWK

May 5, 1:35 P.M., one male flew near the administration building.  
 Habitat: Interior Douglas Fire Zone.  
 Altitude: 2300 feet.  
 Weather: hot (80°F.), calm, hazy, no clouds.

May 10, 8:50 A.M., one male was seen a mile north of the start of the Nixon Creek Trail.  
 Habitat: Transition Zone.  
 Altitude: 3600 feet.  
 Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, no clouds.

May 28, 10:25 A.M., one male spotted near south end of Vista Lake, near Banff - Kootenay boundary.  
 Habitat: Engelmann spruce - subalpine - fir - lodgepole pine burn.  
 Altitude: 5400 feet.  
 Weather: cool (50°F.), breezy, sunny.

BLUE GROUSE

April 30, 4:30 P.M., one female seen 1/8 mile south of administration building along the Redstreak Road.  
 Habitat: Interior Douglas Fir Zone.  
 Altitude: 3300 feet.  
 Weather: cool (60°F.), calm, heavy clouds.

May 31, 10:10 A.M., one male hooting 1/8 mile south of administration building above Redstreak Road.  
 Weather: cool (55°F.), calm, hazy, damp.

SPRUCE GROUSE

April 28, 8:00 P.M., one male seen a few hundred feet north of the Radium Hot Springs Lodge.  
 Habitat: Interior Douglas Fir Zone.  
 Altitude: 3300 feet.  
 Weather: cool (60°F.), calm, clear.

RUFFED GROUSE

April 27, 9:00 A.M., two males (grey phase) seen fifteen miles east of Radium near the Kootenay River.  
 Habitat: Transition Zone.  
 Altitude: 3600 feet.  
 Weather: cool (60°F.), calm, clear.

SORA

July 6, 7:00 P.M., one was heard along the ponds along the Columbia River  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile southwest of Radium.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear.

COOT

April 27, 9:30 A.M., six were seen in a backwater of the Columbia River one mile southwest of Radium. They were swimming, feeding and flying.

Habitat: swampy river bottom, marsh dry benches on east with patches of douglas fir, and on west - poplar groves, and coniferous forests.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: cool (60°F.), calm, clear, few clouds.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER

July 14, 4:30 P.M., one was seen along the shore of Floe Lake. It was running along, teetering often, and feeding.

Habitat: cold, glacier-fed lake, almost at tree line; alpine larch predominant.

Altitude: 6500 feet.

Weather: cold (40°F.), slight wind, snowing lightly, overcast.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER

May 7, 3:00 P.M., one observed at the Paint Pots. It walked along the edge of one pool, then flew erratically into the forest and above the trees.

Habitat: Engelmann spruce - subalpine fir zone.

Altitude: 5500 feet.

Weather: warm (70°F.), calm, clear.

HERRING GULL

April 27, 11:35 A.M., one seen  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium near the Columbia River.

Habitat: scrubby lands along road, old poplar groves, a few conifers, large swamps.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: cool (65°F.), calm, hazy.

BLACK TERN

This bird species was seen often near the Columbia River west of Radium.

MOURNING DOVE

Seen frequently on the drylands south of Radium and above the Columbia River.

OWLS

Two large owls were seen during the summer, both in the late evening, but neither was identified. *Both seen just north of Iron Gate Tunnel ~ 11:00 P.M.*

COMMON NIGHTHAWK

This bird was seen more often than most birds, particularly in the Radium area.

SWIFT

July 10, 11:15 A.M., one swift flew over the Columbia River viewpoint of the Redstreak Nature Trail at about 300 feet. It appeared to have some white underneath, but it was gone in a flash, and I observed it without binoculars. Weather: warm (70°F.), breezy, sunny.

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD

One male was seen  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium in early July. It was at a poplar tree which a yellow-bellied sapsucker has riddled with holes.

In mid-July another male flew close over a group of park visitors on the Redstreak Nature Trail near the dead lodgepole pine.

BELTED KINGFISHER

April 27, 10:45 A.M., one was heard two miles south of Radium from above the Columbia River.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: warm (65°F.), calm, clear.

RED-SHAFTED FLICKER

April 27, 1:45 A.M., one female was calling from a dead stump overlooking the Columbia Valley directly across from the mouth of Horsetheif Creek, approximately two miles south of Radium.

Altitude: 2800 feet.

Weather: 65°F., calm, clear.



PILEATED WOODPECKER

April 27, 11:20 A.M., one was flying south  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Radium.  
 Altitude: 2600 feet, Columbia River Valley bottom.  
 Weather: 70°F., clear, calm, light clouds.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER

April 27, 10:15 A.M., two males were fighting around a tree  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Radium above the Columbia River.  
 Habitat: dry bench land with patches of conifers.  
 Altitude: 2700 feet.  
 Weather: 60°F., clear, calm.

NORTHERN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER

June 11, 9:50 A.M., one male was feeding on a fir tree about one mile up the Kindersley Pass Trail.  
 Habitat: douglas fir/spruce forest.  
 Altitude: 4000 feet.  
 Weather: hot, calm and clear. (See also Summer Project report).

VIOLET GREEN SWALLOW

Throughout the summer, from the last part of April onwards, there were a few around Radium. I saw a few along the Kootenay River also.

TREE SWALLOW

Several were seen at the end of April. During an extensive snowfall, many were perched on the wires overhead behind the Radium Lodge. Seen often all summer at the Junction.

BARN SWALLOW

One or two were around Radium Lodge during the first week in May. Others were spotted throughout the summer here and more predominantly at the Junction.

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW

July 6, 6:30 P.M., a few were flying over a backwater pond of the Columbia River behind Radium.  
 Altitude: 2600 feet.  
 Weather: 70°F., calm, clear.

CLIFF SWALLOW

July 14, 11:40 A.M., several were darting over the surface of Floe Lake and around its shore.

Habitat: alpine larch/spruce forest.

Altitude: 6500 feet.

Weather: cold and overcast, changed to sunny and cool.

GRAY JAY

July 14, 11:10 A.M., a couple were seen along the trail to Flor Lake, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles along it.

Habitat: douglas fir/spruce forest.

Weather: cool and overcast.

A very common bird throughout the Park.

STELLER'S JAY

July 14, 11:20 A.M., one pair was "chattering" and hopping about in some spruce trees half way up the steepest part of the Floe Lake Trail, about 4 miles along its length.

Habitat: douglas fir/spruce forest.

Weather: cool and overcast.

RAVEN

Common resident throughout the Park and vicinity.

CROW

Fairly common in the area, especially in the Columbia River Valley.

CLARKE'S NUTCRACKER

May 28, 10:00 A.M., one was heard on the south side of Vista Lake.

Habitat: Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir/lodgepole pine burn.

Altitude: 5300 feet.

Weather: cool, sunny, small breeze. (See also Summer Project report).

July 14, 12 noon, two were seen at the cabin beside Floe Lake.

Habitat: alpine larch/spruce forest.

Altitude: 6500 feet.

Weather: cold and overcast.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE

Common throughout the Park and area.

MOUNTAIN CHICKADEE

May 15, 8:00 A.M., one male was observed behind the administration building.  
Altitude: 3200 feet.  
Weather: 50°F., clouds, light wind.

BOREAL CHICKADEE

August 22, 11:20 A.M., four were flitting from tree to tree and calling just east of the Banff - Kootenay boundary, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile north of the highway.  
Habitat: Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir forest on edge of a fireguard.  
Altitude: 5200 feet.  
Weather: warm, calm, clear.

RED BREASTED NUTHATCH

Common throughout the Park. Many were heard during the summer, and others were seen around the administration building during the latter part of August. (See also Summer Project report).

DIPPER

July 14, 3:00 P.M., one was seen at Floe Lake on its eastern shore.  
Habitat: alpine larch/spruce forest near timberline.  
Altitude: 6500 feet.  
Weather: sunny, cool, calm.

WINTER WREN

August 15, 1:10 P.M., two singing males and at least one female or juvenile were observed  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile up Verendrye Trail.  
Habitat: thick forest of Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir, dense undergrowth.  
Altitude: 4100 feet.  
Weather: 60°F., calm, overcast.

LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN

July 6, 7:00 P.M., one male was observed beside a backwater slough of the Columbia River behind the Radium dump.  
Altitude: 2600 feet.  
Weather: calm and clear, 70°F.

ROBIN

Common throughout the Park and the surrounding area.

May 28, 9:55 A.M., one male was observed on the south side of Vista Lake.

It was acting as if it had a nest.

Habitat: Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir/lodgepole pine burn.

Altitude: 5400 feet.

Weather: warm, sunny, breezy. (See also Summer Project report).

VARIED THRUSH

May 11, 8:20 P.M., one male was hopping around on an embankment above the parking lot at the McKay Creek compound.

Altitude: 3300 feet.

Weather: cool, clear, calm.

HERMIT THRUSH

Heard in most sectors of the Park. (eg. around McKay Creek compound, administration building, MacLeod meadows).

July 14, one male was seen near the cabin at Floe Lake about 2:00 P.M.

Altitude: 6500 feet.

Weather: cool, clear, sunny.

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD

April 27, 11:10 A.M., one pair seen  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Radium on the road past the sawmill.

Habitat: scrubby bottom land, with lots of good sized poplars, and a few conifers.

Altitude: 2600 feet.

Weather: 65°F., calm, weak sun.

Bluebirds were seen frequently along the bench lands of the Columbia River Valley, and occasionally along the valley bottoms in the Park. Also, a pair was seen on the burn by Park Warden Station. (See also Summer Project report).

TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE

May 5, 3:30 P.M., one male was observed  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile northeast of the administration building on the east side of Redstreak campground.

Altitude: 3300 feet.

Weather: hot and hazy.

Another was seen one evening in June along the upper part of the Juniper Trail. One was reportedly seen by the Warden on the Vermilion Pass burn.

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

May 5, 1:30 P.M., one male at the administration building.

Altitude: 3000 feet.

Weather: hot and calm.

Although difficult to see, their behavior is quite characteristic, as well as their song. They are widely spread in the Park.

STARLING

Common in Columbia River Valley area.

VIREOS

Many vireo-like birds were seen during the summer, and many were heard. But none was positively identified.

MYRTLE WARBLER

May 28, 11:00 A.M., about twenty pairs were flying about Vista Lake predominantly on the south shore.

Habitat: green Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir forest boarding small mountain lake; surrounding area is a burn.

Altitude: 5300 feet.

Weather: cool, sunny, breezy.

AUDUBON'S WARBLER

May 28, 10:45 A.M., five or six pairs were flying around Vista Lake.

Habitat: (See under Myrtle Warbler).

Altitude: 5300 feet.

Weather: cool, sunny, breezy.

May 4, 11:15 A.M., one pair was moving about on low bench land  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north of Radium.

Habitat: grass/douglas fir/lodgepole pine open bench land.

Altitude: 2900 feet.

Weather: fine.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER

May 12, 2:30 P.M., one male was singing at the top of a douglas fir along the trail to Cobb Lake.

Altitude: 3500 feet.

Weather: 50°F., calm, cloudy.

YELLOW THROAT

Present in the marshes of the Columbia River Valley.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD

Commonly seen in the reeds of backwater ponds in the Columbia Valley.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

In the sloughs of the Columbia Valley.

BROWN HEADED COWBIRD

Several were seen perched on a railway storage shed behind Radium in early July.

WESTERN Tanager

Occasionally a male was seen along the Redstreak Nature Trail behind the Redstreak campground.

GRAY-CROWNED ROSY FINCH

July 14, 12:30 P.M., one male observed feeding on the ground near cabin at Floe Lake.

Habitat: cabin at Floe Lake.

Altitude: 6500 feet.

Weather: cold and overcast.

PINE SISKIN

Abundant throughout the Park, including the Floe Lake area.  
(See Summer Project report).

GOLDFINCH

A few were seen in the Columbia River Valley behind Radium.

RED CROSSBILL

April 28, 4:00 P.M., six adults were feeding near the administration building.  
Weather: cool and overcast.

SLATE-COLORED JUNCO

May 28, 11:55 A.M., two males and one female were spotted on the northeast end of Vista Lake.

Habitat: Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir/lodgepole pine forest burn.

Altitude: 5300 feet.

Weather: cool, breezy, sunny.

One of the most typical birds of the Park; seen very regularly.

(See also Summer Project report).

OREGON JUNCO

April 27, 3:30 P.M., one male was seen on the western slope of Redstreak Mountain,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile southwest of the Radium pool approaching Redstreak campground.

Altitude: 3500 feet.

Weather: warm 75°F., breezy, sunny.

CHIPPING SPARROW

First seen May 12, 3:00 P.M. on the trail to Cobb Lake. One male was feeding on the trail about  $\frac{1}{8}$  mile from the Lake itself.

Altitude: 3500 feet.

Weather: 50°F., calm, cloudy.

Observed regularly throughout the summer.