

Endangered Species and Spaces

4.0 BIRDS

British Columbia has an extremely diverse and varied topography and climate, resulting in a great number of biogeoclimatic zones and an equally impressive number of birds that reflect that diversity. The province has the largest number of bird species (452) and breeding birds (297) of any province in Canada. The Columbia Basin is reflective of the province in that it contains a wide array of habitat types from wetlands to grasslands, and from riparian woodlands to old-growth forests. Many of these habitats, however, are under pressure from human settlement, developments and/or resource extraction activities. As the basin's wetlands are drained or filled, birds dependent upon them inevitably decline. The dry intermontane grasslands have been under threat for many years from overgrazing, agriculture or human settlement. Riparian woodlands have been under disproportionate threat, since they are on prime terrain for development. Old-growth forests are still being reduced at a non-sustainable rate, with a direct associated impact on old-growth dependent species.

At this time (March, 1999) there are 78 bird species on the provincial **RED** and **BLUE** lists. Of these, 19 are found in the Columbia Basin (see **Table 5**). Brief species accounts for the 19 species are provided below.

All bird images in this section by John A. Crosby from *The Birds of Canada*, used courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa.

Table 5: Rare Birds of the Columbia Basin

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Provincial List
White-throated Swift	<i>Aeronautes saxatilis</i>	G5/S3,S4	Blue
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	G5/S3B,SZN	Blue
Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>	G5/S2N,S3B	Blue
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	G4/S3B,SZN	Blue
Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	G5/S2B,SZN	Blue
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	G5/S3B,SZN	Blue
Prairie Falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	G5/S2B,SZN	Red
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	G4T3/S2B,SZN	Red
Sandhill Crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>	G5/S3B,SZN	Blue
Canyon Wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>	G5/S3	Blue
Western Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus occidentalis</i>	G5/S1B,S3N	Red
Lewis' Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	G5/S3B,SZN	Blue
Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>	G5/S3B,SZN	Blue
Flammulated Owl	<i>Otus flammeolus</i>	G4/S3,S4B,SZN	Blue
Western Screech Owl	<i>Otus kennicottii macfarlanei</i>	G5TQ/S2	Blue
Williamson's Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus nataliae</i>	G5TU/S1,S2B	Red
Sharp-tailed Grouse	<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus</i>	G4T3/S3	Blue

	<i>columbianus</i>		
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	G5/S2,S3B,SZN	Blue
Forster's Tern	<i>Sterna forsteri</i>	G5/S1B,SZN	Red

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