

## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

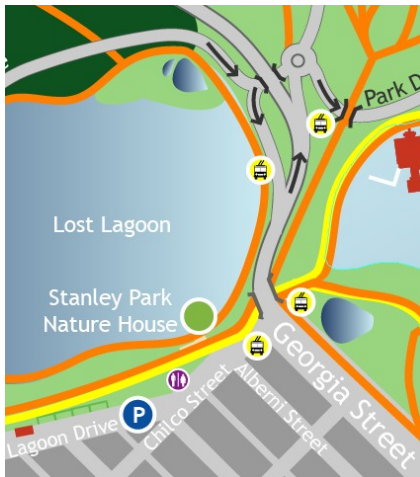
Welcome to the Stanley Park Ecology Society bird monitoring team. This program runs once per month, on the second Sunday of the month at 10 :00 a.m. Bird counts run rain or shine, although they may be postponed in case of storms. These surveys are used to monitor long-term population trends in the Park, and have been running monthly for over ten years. Thank you for volunteering to contribute to this valuable data set.

**Duration:** 2.5-3 hours

**Location:** Meeting at the Lost Lagoon Nature House, located at the base of Chilco and Alberni Street, shown in the map below.

**Survey route:** We follow trail around Lost Lagoon, and then around Beaver Lake.

**What to bring:** Please bring binoculars if you have them, otherwise there are some available to borrow at the Nature House before the count. Be sure to wear comfortable footwear and dress for the weather, as the trails can become muddy after rain.



**What to expect:** Bird abundance and diversity varies across the seasons, but we usually see 30 -45 species per survey. Winter brings many waterfowl species to the lagoon, that migrate to the arctic in the summer. Spring has many migrant songbirds moving through the Park, pausing to feed on their way to northern breeding grounds. Summer has the lowest diversity, as most waterfowl have left and migration has completed, but many songbird species remain in the Park to nest. Fall migration usually has fewer migrating birds stopping in our area, but unusual species can sometimes be found.

Becoming familiar with the species ahead of time will maximize your learning during the survey, but it is optional. All the surveys are done in groups. Whichever stage you are at, the bird survey is an opportunity to learn with the group, and we will go over the identification of each species as we encounter them in the field. To get the most out of the surveys, you can review the commonly encountered species in the following guide.

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### Survey protocol

- All birds are counted that are seen or heard.
- Exception: flying birds are counted only if they are flying back into the area already surveyed. If they are flying in the direction we are walking, we will not count them. This minimizes double-counting as we may encounter them again farther ahead.
- We will only count waterbirds in one half of Lost Lagoon at a time, as we will count the birds on the other side when we walk to the other side of the lagoon.
- Swallows flying above Lost Lagoon are counted all at once from the Nature House at the beginning of the survey, counting all swallows above the entire lagoon. As we keep moving, it would otherwise be impossible to keep track of which swallows were already counted.
- In order for the survey to be comparable between months, surveyors must stay as a single group. Birds seen by someone away from the group cannot be counted.
- Only birds seen after the official start time can be counted.
- For the data to be comparable, the same route is followed each month. Birds seen from a viewpoint away from the usual route cannot be counted.
- Recordings are not used to call in birds, as this would bias the survey results between months.

## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

**This package includes a guide to the 33 most common land birds that are seen on the surveys.** If you are just starting out and want to maximize your learning, you can begin by reviewing the most abundant species (coded with green highlighting). Learning the names and general appearance of these species will make it much more meaningful to encounter them during the survey. You can expect to see or hear all or almost all of the green-coded species during the survey. Once you are comfortable with these, you can move on to the blue, and then the yellow-coded species. You can expect to see most of the blue-coded species and many of the yellow-coded species each survey, depending on the season. Keep in mind that many of our songbirds migrate away for the winter, and many of our waterbirds migrate away for summer.

### General tips

	Colour pattern is the easiest way to learn the species, but with practice, shape and size are the most useful clues.
	For brown streaky songbirds, pay close attention to beak shape and the stripe pattern on the head.
	Gulls, sandpipers, and flycatchers are the trickiest birds to ID in our area – feel free to ignore them in the beginning.
	Song is often a more reliable field mark than appearance. It takes more practice to learn but will allow you to detect species that are otherwise very difficult to see.
	In the winter, waterfowl are one of the best groups to start learning ID – we usually see a good variety on our surveys and they allow better views than songbirds.
	Once you have identified a bird, take some moments to observe its behaviour and become familiar with its silhouette – this will help you narrow down future IDs quicker.

### Resources

Recommended field guides (books are available to browse in the Nature House)

- The Sibley Guide to Birds
- National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America
- [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org) (free online bird guide from Cornell University)

Recommended Apps

- Merlin Bird ID (free)
- iBird (not free)

Learning bird song

- Larkwire (app or computer program. This is how SPES' survey leader learned song ID)
- Xeno-Canto ([www.xeno-canto.org](http://www.xeno-canto.org)) and Macaulay Library ([www.macaulaylibrary.org](http://www.macaulaylibrary.org)). Free databases containing sound recordings of most bird sounds you could hear.





## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

### Checklist

Abundant Over 100 per year	Common 10-50 per year	Fairly common 4-10 per year	Rare Less than 1 per year
American Widgeon	Green-Winged Teal	Pied-Billed Grebe	Blue-Winged Teal
Mallard	Northern Shoveller	Rufous Hummingbird	Ruddy Duck
Wood Duck	Bufflehead	Varied Thrush	Tufted Duck
Lesser Scaup	Common Goldeneye	Common Redpoll	Greater White-Fronted Goose
Canada Goose	Common Merganser	Red-Breasted Nuthatch	Snow Goose
Glaucous-winged Gull	Hooded Merganser	Black-Throated Grey Warbler	Trumpeter Swan
<b>Juvenile Gull (not identified)</b>	Ring-Necked Duck	Orange-Crowned Warbler	Bonaparte's Gull
Spotted Towhee	Double-Crested Cormorant	Wilson's Warbler	California Gull
Pine Siskin	Mew Gull	Yellow Warbler	Herring Gull
Black-Capped Chickadee	Ring-Billed Gull	Golden-Crowned Sparrow	Thayer's Gull
Chestnut-Backed Chickadee	Bald Eagle	White-Crowned Sparrow	Caspian Tern
Dark-Eyed Junco	Anna's Hummingbird	Pacific-Slope Flycatcher	Least Sandpiper
Song Sparrow	Northern Rough-Winged Swallow	Steller's Jay	Pectoral Sandpiper
Northwestern Crow	Tree Swallow	Downy Woodpecker	Red-Necked Phalarope
Rock Pigeon	Violet-Green Swallow	Red-Breasted Sapsucker	Wilson's Snipe
	Swainson's Thrush		Sora
<b>Very common 50-100 per year</b>	American Goldfinch	<b>Uncommon</b>	Virginia Rail
	House Finch	1-4 per year	Horned Grebe
Mute Swan (relocated 2016)	Brown Creeper	Gadwall	Peregrine Falcon
Olympic Gull (hybrid)	Cedar Waxwing	Northern Pintail	Red-Tailed Hawk
American Coot	Yellow-Rumped Warbler	Barrow's Goldeneye	Sharp-Shinned Hawk
Great Blue Heron	Fox Sparrow	Canvasback	Turkey Vulture
Barn Swallow	House Sparrow	Greater Scaup	Hermit Thrush
American Robin	Pacific Wren	Cackling Goose	Townsend's Solitaire
Red Crossbill	Ruby-Crowned Kinglet	Pelagic Cormorant	Brown-Headed Cowbird
Bushtit	Common Raven	Long-billed Dowitcher	Bullock's Oriole
European Starling	Northern Flicker	Spotted Sandpiper	Common Yellowthroat
Red-Winged Blackbird		Green Heron	MacGillivray's Warbler
Golden-Crowned Kinglet		Cooper's Hawk	Savannah Sparrow
		Merlin	White-Throated Sparrow
		Barred Owl	Bewick's Wren
		Black-Headed Grosbeak	Hammond's Flycatcher
		Purple Finch	Olive-Sided Flycatcher
		Western Tanager	Western Wood Pewee
		Townsend's Warbler	
		Warbling Vireo	
		Willow Flycatcher	
		Belted Kingfisher	
		Hairy Woodpecker	
		Pileated Woodpecker	
		Band-Tailed Pigeon	





## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

### Small Birds 1

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Notes	Appearance
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Common, mostly in spring	Small, with wingbars and a white eyering. Red crown often hidden. No stripes on face.	Prefers waterside and bushy habitat. Abundant in April.	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Very common	Small, with wing bars and striped face, no white eyering. Gold crown often hidden	Prefers coniferous trees	
Black-capped Chickadee	Abundant	Black-and-white head, cream sides, grey back.	Prefers deciduous habitat, including urban areas.	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Abundant	Black-and-white head, brown sides and back.	Prefers coniferous habitat.	

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### Small Birds 2

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Appearance
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Very common	Yellow patches on the lower back and "armpits", yellow or white throat. Males are boldly patterned, while females are brown with duller yellow patches.	
Notes	There are two types of this species which may be split into separate species. We most often see the yellow-throated "Audubon's", but the white-throated "Myrtle" can be seen as well.		
Bushtit	Very common	Very small, plain grey, long tail.	
Notes	Males have brown eyes, females have yellow eyes. In winter, travels in flocks.		
Brown Creeper	Common	Small. Mottled brown above, white below, long thin beak.	
Notes	Hard to spot. Usually seen creeping up the side of evergreen trees. Long claws let them hop up vertical surfaces.		
Pacific Wren	Common	Small, compact shape. Rich brown colour, short tail often held up, faint brown eyebrow stripe.	
Notes	This species was recently split from another species, the Winter Wren. Despite their small size, they have one of the most complex songs in our forest.		



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### Finches

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Male Appearance	Female Appearance
Pine Siskin	Abundant winter, uncommon summer	Crisply streaked brown with yellow patch on wings and tail. Males and females look alike.		
Notes	Easiest to ID by voice. Thinner beak than other finches. Very noisy, travels in flocks, often high in evergreens. Some winters flocks can be 100+.			
House Finch	Common	Streaked pale brown, short thick beak. Male has orange to red wash on chest and head. Wings not patterned unlike siskin.		
Notes	Common in urban areas			
American Goldfinch	Common	Bright yellow with black wings. Male has a black cap. Moults to greyish-brown in the winter. Distinctive white bars on black wings..		
Notes	Distinctive flight call sounds like "Po-ta-to chip!"			
Red Crossbill	Very common	Males are red, females are yellow. Black wings, crossed bill		
Notes	Rarely actually seen, usually heard overhead in flocks at the top of evergreens.			

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### Sparrows

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Appearance
Fox Sparrow	Common winter and spring	Similar to Song Sparrow, but plain face, yellow lower beak, crisp triangular chest spots.	
Notes	Very variable across the continent. Ours are in the "Unalaschcensis" group which are most brown. Very common on ground or bushes in bushy habitats.		
Dark-eyed Junco	Common, mostly spring	Small, dark hood, pink/orange sides, white outer tail visible in flight. Towhees have a similar pattern, but are larger, have a dark bill, and white spots on back.	
Notes	Males have a black hood, while females have a grey hood. There are many types of Dark-eyed Junco, our type is called "Oregon" Dark-eyed Junco. Forages on the ground or in bushes, in the forest or urban areas.		
Song Sparrow	Abundant	Similar to Fox Sparrow but grey eyebrow, brown striped face, blurred brown streaks on chest, and grey/pink beak.	
Notes	Very variable across North America. Our type is called morphna and is greyer than other Song Sparrows.		
Spotted Towhee	Abundant	Robin-sized, long tail, black hood, white spots on back. Similar pattern to junco, but much bigger, with brighter sides and spots on back.	
Notes	Males have a black hood, while females have a grey hood. Forages on the ground.		
House Sparrow	Common	Male: grey cheks and crown, brown eye patch, white wingbar. Not streaked like most other sparrows.	
Notes	In a different family than our sparrows: the 'Old World Sparrows'. Introduced from Europe		



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### Medium Sized Songbirds

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Appearance
American Robin	Very common	Reddish or orangish belly, brown back, lacks black belly band and orange eyestripe of Varied Thrush.	
Notes	Males have redder bellies than females.		
Cedar Waxwing	Common (summer)	Smooth colouring, short crest on head, black mask, yellow-tipped tail.	
Notes	Usually seen perched at the tops of trees, or feeding in berry patches.		
Swainson's Thrush	Abundant	Robin-shaped, pale brown with spotted chest, yellowish wash on throat. Hermit Thrush is similar, with a redder tail, and is usually seen in winter in Stanley Park. Sparrows have shorter beak and less streaked throat.	
Notes	Difficult to see, but often heard. Forest species, rarely found in other habitats.		
European Starling	Very common	Dark, with shiny iridescent feathers and yellow bill. Characteristic triangular wing shape when flying. Immature birds are brown.	
Notes	Introduced from Europe.		
Red-winged Blackbird	Very common	Males are black with red wing patch, females are streaked brown. Female, similar pattern to sparrows or finches, but a longer beak and larger size.	
Notes	Males can often be seen displaying at Beaver Lake.		


## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

### Larger Landbirds

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Appearance
Northern Flicker	Common	Unique pattern of spotted chest, black necklace. Wings and tail flash red when they fly. Males have a red moustache stripe.	
Notes	There are two varieties in North America. Our western variety is called 'red-shafted' and has red underwings and tail; the eastern variety is 'yellow-shafted'.		
Northwestern Crow	Abundant	Black. Rounded tail. Smaller than raven, with thinner neck.	
Notes	Most areas in North America have the similar American Crow. The Northwestern Crow is unique to coastal BC/Alaska.		
Common Raven	Common	Black. Diamond-shaped tail. Much bigger than crow, with heavier bill and long beard-like throat feathers.	
Notes	Most common away from humans in the park. Usually heard before seen.		
Bald Eagle	Common	Adults have a white head and tail, juveniles are mostly brown with irregular white markings on the body.	
Notes	Breeds in Stanley Park		
Rock Pigeon	Abundant	Very variable colouring, recognized by shape. Usually grey but can be black, pink, or white. The resident Band-tailed Pigeon has a bright yellow beak and never approaches humans.	
Notes	Most common near humans in the Park. Pigeons inside the forest away from roads are often less-common Band-tailed Pigeons.		

## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

### Hummingbirds

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Sex	Appearance
Anna's Hummingbird	Common, some birds present all year round	Green and grey, with no rufous or orange colour in males or females.	Male	
Song	High, scratchy song sung from perch, or low "Zicka-zicka-zicka" when in flight. Also chirps.		Female	
Rufous Hummingbird	Common in summer	Always some rufous colour: very orange in males, and at least some orange on the sides and tail base in females	Male	
Song	Low, chirping "chuppity chuppity chup." Unlike Anna's, the wings of males make a high-pitched ringing sound when they fly.		Female	

## Stanley Park Ecology Society: Bird Monitoring Program

### Swallows

Species	Abundance in Stanley Park	Identification	Notes	Appearance
Barn Swallow	Common	The only swallow with a long, forked tail or an orange belly. Blue on top.	High-pitched chirps and clicks. Sounds like laughter	
Tree Swallow	Common, mostly spring	Blue on top, white below. Unlike Violet-green Swallow, there is a sharp, straight separation between the top and bottom colours, with no white on the back and no white above the eye.	Call rich chirps, like falling rain	
Violet-green Swallow	Common	Green-violet on top, white below. Look for white patches on the bird's flanks extending towards the back, and a white stripe above the bird's eye. You can see the flank patches best when they are facing away from you in flight.	At a distance, colour difference from Tree Swallow is less noticeable. Call, Sharp chirps.	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Uncommon, mostly found at Beaver Lake	Pale brown on top, pale below. No sharp distinction between top and bottom colour, unlike Tree Swallow	Call low, buzzy chirps.	

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