



Bird Checklist:

Iona Island

Richmond

compiled by Rick Toochin

Iona Island, located just north of Sea Island and the Vancouver International Airport, has long been recognized across North America as one of the best places to study shorebirds. The riverbank, Fraser River tidal flat, marsh, grassland and beach habitats attract a wide range of bird species, including many rare and vagrant species.

Area Covered

The checklist area includes Iona Beach Regional Park, a 30 hectare Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) park flanked by 1200 hectares of intertidal foreshore. The checklist area is all of Iona Island including the immediate waters around the Iona South (often called the 'West') Jetty, the North Arm Jetty, a portion of the North Arm of the Fraser River, McDonald Slough, and the Iona-Sea Island Causeway which joins Iona and Sea Islands. The checklist area does not include Sea Island.

Area Map

For more information on this area and for a good map of Iona Beach Regional Park, contact the Greater Vancouver Regional District Parks Department in writing (4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4G8) or by phone at (604) 432-6350.

Explanation of Symbols

seasonal occurrence

- Sp** = spring (generally March through early June), including spring migrants
S = summer resident, including spring arrival and fall departure
F = fall (generally July through November), including fall migrants
W = winter resident, including fall arrival and spring departure)

relative abundance

- a** = abundant (100 or more per day)
c = common (25 to 100 per day)
f = fairly common (5 to 25 per day)
u = uncommon (1 to 5 per day, with at least 10 records per year)
r = rare (1 to 10 records per year), but regular
ca = casual (2 to 10 documented records in checklist area)
ac = accidental (only 1 documented record in checklist area during the specified season)
i = erratic/irregular, numbers fluctuate yearly from abundant to absent

other symbols

- [I]** = introduced species, present more than 10 years
[X] = extirpated, once present but no longer found in checklist area
***** = species has-been documented breeding in the checklist area
(#) = the total number of documented sightings in the checklist area of a casual or accidental species
+ = species requires more information within the checklist area to assess its status accurately

		Sp	S	F	W
RTLO	Red-throated Loon	c	r	c	f
PALO	Pacific Loon	f	ca	f	u
COLO	Common Loon	c	u	c	f
YBLO	Yellow-billed Loon (6) +		ac	ca	ca
PBGR	* Pied-billed Grebe	u	u	u	u
HOGR	Horned Grebe	c	r	c	c
RNGR	Red-necked Grebe	c	r	c	f
EAGR	Eared Grebe	r	ca	r	r
WEGR	Western Grebe	c	r	c	a
CLGR	Clark's Grebe (3)			ac	ca
AWPE	American White Pelican (4)		ca	ca	

		Sp	S	F	W
DCCO	* Double-crested Cormorant	c	c	c	f
BRCO	Brandt's Cormorant	r	ca	r	r
PECO	Pelagic Cormorant	u	u	u	u
AMBI	* American Bittern	u	u	u	u
GBHE	Great Blue Heron	c	c	c	c
GREG	Great Egret (1)		ac		
CAEG	Cattle Egret (3)			ca	
GRHE	Green Heron	r	u	u	ca
BCNH	Black-crowned Night-Heron (7) +	ca	ca	ca	ca
TUSW	Tundra Swan	r	ca	r	r
TRUS	Trumpeter Swan	r		r	r
MUSW	Mute Swan [I] (2)	ac			ac
GWFG	Greater White-fronted Goose	u	ca	u	r
SNGO	Snow Goose	c	ac	c	c
ROGO	Ross' Goose (2)	ac		ac	
BRAN	Brant	r	r	r	r
CAGO	* Canada Goose	c	c	c	c
WODU	Wood Duck +r	r			ca
GWTE	* Green-winged Teal	a	u	a	a
MALL	* Mallard	c	c	c	a
ABDU	American Black Duck [I] (3)				ca
NOPI	* Northern Pintail	c	u	c	a
GARG	Garganey (4)	ac	ca	ac	
BWTE	* Blue-winged Teal	f	f	f	
CITE	* Cinnamon Teal	f	f	f	ca
NOSL	* Northern Shoveler	c	u	c	f
GADW	* Gadwall	c	f	c	c
EUWI	Eurasian Wigeon	r	ac	r	u
AMWI	* American Wigeon	c	u	c	c
CANV	Canvasback	c	ca	c	c
REDH	Redhead	r	r	r	r
RNDU	Ring-necked Duck	r	r	r	u
TUDU	Tufted Duck	r	ca	r	r
GRSC	Greater Scaup	u		c	a
LESC	Lesser Scaup	c	u	c	c
HADU	Harlequin buck +	r	ca	r	r
OLDS	Oldsquaw	c	r	c	f
BLSC	Black Scoter	u	r	u	f
SUSC	Surf Scoter	c	f	c	a
WWSC	White-winged Scoter	r	u	r	f
KIEI	King Eider (2)			ac	ac
COGO	Common Goldeneye	c	r	c	c
BAGO	Barrow's Goldeneye	c	r	c	c
BUFF	Bufflehead	c	ca	c	c
HOME	Hooded Merganser	u	r	u	f
COME	Common Merganser	c	u	c	c
RBME	Red-breasted Merganser	c	ca	c	c
RUDU	* Ruddy Duck	c	r	c	c

		Sp	S	F	W					Sp	S	F	W					Sp	S	F	W		
TUVU	Turkey Vulture		r	u		REKN	Red knot	r	ca	r	ac	MAMU	Marbled Murrelet	f	f	f	f						
						SAND	Sanderling	c	r	c	c	ANMU	Ancient Murrelet	r		r	r						
OSPR	Osprey	r	r	r	ac	SESA	Semipalmated Sandpiper	r	ca	f		RHAU	Rhinoceros Auklet	r	r	r	r				ca		
BAEA	Bald Eagle	f	u	f	f	WESA	Western Sandpiper	a	u	a	r												
NOHA	Northern Harrier	u	u	u	u	RNST	Rufous-necked Stint (5)		ac	ca		RODO	* Rock Dove [I]	c	c	c	c						
SSHA	Sharp-shinned Hawk	u	r	u	u	LIST	Little Stint (2)		ac	ac		BTPI	Band-tailed Pigeon	r	r	r	r						
COHA	Cooper's Hawk	u	r	u	u	LESA	Least Sandpiper	c	u	c	ca	MODO	Mourning Dove	r	r	r	r						
NOGO	Northern Goshawk	r		r	r	WRSA	White-rumped Sandpiper (6)		ac	ca													
RTHA	Red-tailed. Hawk	f	f	f	f	BASA	Baird's Sandpiper	r		f		BNOW	* Barn Owl	u	u	u	u						
RLHA	Rough-legged Hawk	u		u	u	PESA	Pectoral Sandpiper	r	ac	c													
GOEA	Golden Eagle (4)	ac	ca		ac	SHSA	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper			u	ac	GHOW	Great Horned Owl (1)								ac		
						ROSA	Rock Sandpiper	r		r	r	SNOW	Snowy Owl	u								u	
AMKE	American Kestrel	u	r	u	r	DUNL	Dunlin	a	r	a	f	BUOW	Burrowing Owl (8)	ca			ca					ca	
MERL	Merlin	r	r	r	u	CUSA	Curlew Sandpiper (5)				ca	LEOW	Long-eared Owl (3)	ac			ac					ac	
PEFA	Peregrine Falcon	r	r	r	u	STSA	Stilt Sandpiper	ca	ac	r		SEOW	Short-eared Owl	r	r	r	r					f	
GYRF	Gyrfalcon				r	SBSA	Spoonbill Sandpiper (1)				ac	NSWO	Northern Saw-whet Owl (2)										ca
						BBSA	Buff-breasted Sandpiper				r												
RNPH	* Ring-necked Pheasant [I]	u	u	u	u	RUFF	Ruff	ca	ca	r		CONI	* Common Nighthawk		r	r							
RUGR	Ruffed Grouse (3)				ca	SBDO	Short-billed Dowitcher	c	r	u													
						LBDO	Long-billed Powitcher	f	u	a	r	BLSW	Black Swift	f			f						f
VIRA	* Virginia Rail	r	r	r	r	COSN	Common Snipe	u	r	u	f	VASW	Vaux's Swift	f	f	f							
SORA	* Sora	u	f	u		WIPH	* Wilson's Phalarope	u	u	u													
COMO	Common Moorhen (1)	ac				RNPL	Red-necked Phalarope	r	ca	u		ANHU	Anna's Hummingbird (1)	ac									
AMCO	* American Coot	f	u	f	f	REPH	Red Phalarope (2)				ca	RUHU	Rufous Hummingbird	c	f	f							
SACR	Sandhill Crane (6)	ca			ca	POJA	Pomarine Jaeger (2) +				ca	BEKI	* Belted Kingfisher	u	u	u	u						
						PAJA	Parasitic Jaeger	r	ca	u													
BBPL	Black-bellied Plover	c	r	c	f	LTJA	Long-tailed Jaeger (4)		ac	ca		RBSA	Red-breasted Sapsucker (1)										ac
AGPL	American Golden Plover	r	ca	r		FRGU	Franklin's Gull	ca	ca	r	ac	DOWO	Downy Woodpecker	r	r	r	r						r
PGPL	Pacific Golden Plover +	r		r	ac	LIGU	Little Gull (11)	ac	ac	ca		HAWO	Hairy Woodpecker (4)										ca
SNPL	Snowy Plover (2)	ac	ac			CBHG	Common Black-headed				ac	NOFL	Northern Flicker	f	ca	f	u						
SEPL	* Semipalmated Plover	f	r	f	ac		Gull (1)					PIWO	Pileated Woodpecker (1)				ac						
KILL	* Killdeer	f	f	f	u	BOGU	Bonaparte's Gulf	c	f	c	r												
						HMGU	Heermann's Gull (3)		ac	ca		OSFL	Olive-sided Flycatcher +	r	ca	r							
BLOY	Black Oystercatcher (6)	ca	ac		ca	MEGU	Mew Gull	c	r	c	a	WWPE	Western Wood-Pewee	r			r						
						RBGU	Ring-billed Gull	f	f	f	f	WIFL	* Willow Flycatcher	u	u	u							
BNST	Black-necked Stilt (1)	ac				CAGU	California Gull	f	f	f	u	LEFL	Least Flycatcher (1)				ac						
AMAV	American Avocet	ca	r	ca	ac	HEGU	Herring Gull	u	ca	u	u	HAFL	Hammond's Flycatcher +	r			r						
						THGU	Thayer's Gull	c	ca	c	f	PSFL	Pacific-slope Flycatcher +	r			r						
GRYE	Greater Yellowlegs	c	r	c	u	ICGU	Iceland Gull (2)				ca	SAPH	Say's Phoebe (4)	ca			ca						
LEYE	Lesser Yellowlegs	u	r	c	ca	WEGU	Western Gull	r	ca	r	r	TRKI	Tropical Kingbird (1)										ac
SOSA	Solitary Sandpiper	r		r		GWGU	* Glaucous-winged Gull	a	a	a	a	WEKI	Western Kingbird		r		ac						
WILL	Willet	ac	r	ca	ac	GLGU	Glaucous Gull (6) +	ca			ca	EAKI	Eastern Kingbird		r								
WATA	Wandering Tattler	ca		r		BLKI	Black-legged Kittiwake (11)	ca	ac	ca	ac	STFL	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (1)		ac								
SPSA	* Spotted Sandpiper	f	f	f	ca	SAGU	Sabine's Gull (7)	ca	ac	ca	ac												
UPSA	Upland Sandpiper (4)				ca	CATE	Caspian Tern	f	f	f		HOLA	Horned Lark	r			r						r
WHIM	Whimbrel	u	r	u	ac	COTE	Common Tern	c	r	c													
LBCU	Long-billed Curlew	r	ca	r		ARTE	Arctic Tern (7) +		ac	ac	ca	PUMA	Purple Martin (5)	ca	ca		ac						
HUGO	Hudsonian Godwit	ca	ca	r		FOTE	Forster's Tern (6)			ca	ca	TRSW	* Tree Swallow	a	c	r							
MAGO	Marbled Godwit	ca	ca	r		BLTE	Black Tern	r	r	r		VGSW	* Violet-green Swallow	a	c	r							
RUTU	Ruddy Turnstone	r	ca	r								NRWS	* Northern Rough-winged	c	f	c							
BLTU	Black Turnstone	r	ca	r	u	COMU	Common Murre	f	r	f	f												
SURF	Surfbird	r		r	r	PIGU	Pigeon Guillemot	f	f	f	u	BKSW	Bank Swallow	r	ca	u							

		Sp	S	F	W			Sp	S	F	W
CLSW	* Cliff Swallow	c	c	c	ac	OCWA	Orange-crowned Warbler	c	u	c	
BASW	* Barn Swallow	c	c	c	r	NAWA	Nashville Warbler (4) +	ca		ca	
						YEWA	* Yellow Warbler	f	f	f	
STJA	Steller's Jay +	r		r	r	YRWA	Yellow-rumped Warbler	c		c	u
BBMA	Black-billed Magpie (1)			ac		BTGW	Black-throated Gray Warbler (5) +	ca		ca	
NOCR	* Northwestern Crow	a	a	a	a	TOWA	Townsend's Warbler (5) +	ca		ca	
CORA	Common Raven	u	u	u	u	PAWA	Palm Warbler (3)			ca	ac
BCCH	* Black-capped Chickadee	u	u	u	u	MGWA	MacGillivray's Warbler +	r		r	
CBCH	Chestnut-backed Chickadee (1)				ac	COYE	* Common Yellowthroat	c	c	c	ca
BUSH	* Bushtit	r	r	r	r	WIWA	Wilson's Warbler	u		u	
						WETA	Western Tanager (2) +			ca	
RBNU	Red-breasted Nuthatch (2)				ca	BHGR	* Black-headed Grosbeak	u	u	u	
						LZBU	Lazuli Bunting (1)		ac		
BRCR	Brown Creeper (2)				ca	RSTO	* Rufous-sided Towhee	u	u	u	u
						ATSP	American Tree Sparrow	r		r	r
BEWR	Berwick's Wren	u	u	u	u	CHSP	Chipping Sparrow	r	ca	r	
HOWR	House Wren (1)				ac	VESP	Vesper Sparrow (2)		ac	ac	
WIWR	Winter Wren	r		r	r	SAYS	* Savannah Sparrow	a	c	a	r
MAWR	* Marsh Wren	f	f	f	f	FOSP	Fox Sparrow	u		u	c
						SOSP	Song Sparrow	f	r	f	a
						LISP	Lincoln's Sparrow	f	ca	f	r
AMDI	American Dipper (1)				ac	SWSP	Swamp Sparrow (4)			ac	ca
						WTSP	White-throated Sparrow (2)			ca	
GCKI	Golden-crowned Kinglet	f	ca	f	u	GCSP	Golden-crowned Sparrow	c	ca	c	f
RCKI	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	f		f	r	WCSP	* White-crowned Sparrow	c	c	c	c
WEBL	Western Bluebird (1)			ac		HASP	Harris' Sparrow (5)			ca	ca
MOBL	Mountain Bluebird (6)	ca				DEJU	Dark-eyed Junco	r		r	u
TOSO	Townsend's Solitaire (4)	ca		ca		LALO	Lapland Longspur	u	ac	u	r
SWTH	Swainson's Thrush	u	u			SNBU	Snow Bunting	r		f	u
HETH	Hermit Thrush	u	u	ca		BOBO	Bobolink (8)	ca	ca	ac	
AMRO	* American Robin	c	c	c	f	RWBL	* Red-winged Blackbird	c	c	c	c
VATH	Varied Thrush	r		r	ca	WEME	* Western Meadowlark	u	ca	u	u
						YHBL	* Yellow-headed Blackbird	u	u	r	ca
GRCA	Gray Catbird (1)			ac		RUBL	Rusty Blackbird (3)			ca	
SATH	Sage Thrasher (1)	ac				BRBL	* Brewer's Blackbird	c	c	c	c
						BHCO	* Brown-headed Cowbird	c	c	c	r
AMPI	American Pipit	c	r	c	r	NOOR	Northern Oriole (5)	ac	ca	ac	
BOWA	Bohemian Waxwing (2)			ac	ac	PUFI	Purple Finch	r	r	r	r
CEWA	* Cedar Waxwing	c	c	c	r	HOFI	* House Finch	c	c	c	c
						RECR	Red Crossbill	i	i	i	i
NOSH	Northern Shrike	u		u	u	CORE	Common Redpoll (2)				ca
LOSH	Loggerhead Shrike (3)	ca			ac	PISI	Pine Siskin	c	u	c	r
						AMGO	* American Goldfinch	f	f	f	r
EUST	* European Starling [I]	a	a	a	a	EVGR	* Evening Grosbeak +	r		r	u
CRMY	* Crested Myna [I] [X]	r	r	r	r	HOSP	* House Sparrow [I]	r	r	r	r
SOVI	Solitary Vireo +	r		r							
HUM	Hutton's Vireo (1)				ac						
WAVI	Warbling Vireo +	u		u							
REVI	Red-eyed Vireo (3) +			ca							

Hypothetical Species

These are species believed to have been correctly identified, but lack satisfactory documentation by either a specimen, an identifiable photograph, or a convincing field description. This list includes Sooty/Short-tailed Shearwater, Swainson's Hawk, Common Ringed Plover, Temminck's Stint, Long-toed Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Tufted Puffin, Red-throated Pipit, White Wagtail; Slack-backed/White Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Clay-colored Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Baird's Sparrow and Cassin's Finch.

Additional Sightings

(date, location, species, number, behaviour)

Total Species: 277

Other Wildlife

In, addition to viewing birds, harbour seals are visible year-round, and in the spring killer whales and sea lions may be observed, There are frog choruses in the spring, and coyotes may be seen occasionally.

This is the first version of the Iona Island bird checklist. It was compiled by Rick Toochn who is solely responsible for the seasonal frequency and relative abundance information which was compiled from all known and verified, published and submitted records, primarily by members of the Vancouver Natural History Society. A special thanks is given to the management and staff of the Iona Island Sewage Treatment Plant for their kindness in allowing birders to have access to the sewage ponds over the past twenty years.

If you have any comments regarding the species listed, the frequency of occurrence, or the seasons indicated please forward your comments in writing to Iona Island Bird Checklist, c/o *Wildlife Watch*, BC Environment, 10334 - 152A Street, Surrey; B.C. V3R 7P8.

Report Rare Bird Sightings

Please record all sightings for species that are out-of-season, that are listed in the checklist as casual or accidental, and that are new to the checklist area. If possible, phone these sightings into the Vancouver Rare Bird Alert (737-9910) so that other birders can confirm your sighting(s). Also, try to document any such species with a photograph or detailed field notes and forward them to the Vancouver Rare Bird Committee, c/o Birding Section Chair, P.O. Box 3021, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3X5.

Iona Island Access

Refer to a detailed Vancouver and area road map.

From Richmond: From Bridgeport Road westbound, travel over the Sea Island swing bridge and immediately turn right onto Grauer Road. Follow the GVRD signs to Iona Beach Regional Park.

From Vancouver: Travel southbound on the Arthur Laing Bridge and take the Richmond exit. Turn left at the first traffic light and then just after this turn, turn left again. At the stop sign proceed straight onto Grauer Road and follow the GVRD signs to Iona Beach Regional Park.

From Surrey/White Rock/North Delta: Take Highway 91 northbound, cross the Alex Fraser Bridge and turn left at the first light. Travel along this 'Richmond Connector' to Shell Road, turn right and travel northbound to Bridgeport Road. Turn left toward the Airport, proceed over the Sea Island swing bridge, and immediately turn right onto Grauer Road. Follow the GVRD signs to Iona Beach.

Recommended Birding Areas

Even, though, birding anywhere at Iona Island. can be both rewarding and fun, the following locations have been proven to be the best.

Please note that the area behind and east of the sewage treatment plant is not open to the public.

Iona Causeway: This land bridge connecting Iona and Sea Islands is good for shorebirds, gulls and even passerines during migration. The best time to look is an hour before to an hour after high tide.

McDonald Slough: Located on the east side of the Iona Causeway, this area is excellent for grebes, goldeneyes, roosting gulls, and the occasional Peregrine Falcon sitting on the log booms.

Old Outflow Pond: Located just past the large yellow gate when first entering the park. Rare species, such as Tufted Duck, have been reported here during the winter months. During the migration periods shorebirds, gulls and passerines may be seen on a regular basis.

Old Outflow Channel: Located on the south side of Iona Island, this channel runs directly from the Old Outflow Pond due west, and parallels the Iona South Jetty to the deep waterline. The best time here is during low tide when a variety of waterfowl, shorebird and gull species may be present.

Gate Parking Lot: Located just past the yellow entrance gate, this bramble, grassy edge and broom habitat is a reliable place for sparrows, warblers, finches and other small passerines, especially during migration.

Inner Ponds: These ponds are located inside the surrounding fence on the west side of Iona Island. Vagrants such as Spoonbill Sandpiper, Rufous-necked Stint, Little Stint, and Curfew Sandpiper have been found here.

Outer Ponds: Located by the outer parking lot on the far west side of Iona Island, this is an excellent place for waterfowl, and annually produces Tufted Duck in the winter season.

Iona South Jetty: This man-made jetty is 4 km one way and is an excellent place to view water birds such as loons, grebes, ducks, and gulls. In the fall months it is one of the best spots in Vancouver to view species like Wandering Tattler, Lapland Longspur, Horned Lark, and Snow Bunting.

Iona Bay: This is the bay between the two jetties. It is excellent for water birds and shorebirds, with the tide determining the number observed.

North Arm Jetty: The habitat of this jetty is excellent for viewing passerines during both migration periods. During the summer. Common Nighthawks can be found flying during the twilight hours. The entire jetty is immense, and is a good day hike in itself. Shorebirds, gulls and many other bird species may be observed.

Outer Parking Lot: Located along the west side of the Outer Ponds. The long grass and broom is a good place to find sparrows and other small passerine species year-round.

Fraser River Log Booms: The log boom area runs the entire north side of the island. The log booms are an excellent place to look for roosting gulls.

Treatment Plant Red Alder Woods: Located just east of the Treatment Plant parking lot, this area is the best place for small birds such as warblers, flycatchers and other passerines. It is most productive during both migration periods.

This checklist has been produced by *Wildlife Watch* with financial assistance from the following:



Vancouver Natural History Society
P.O. Box 3021,
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3X5
(604) 738-3177



**Greater Vancouver Regional District
Parks Department**
4330 Kingsway,
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(604)432-6350



Faradyne System Group Inc.
150A - 4471 No. 6 Road,
Richmond, B.C. V6V 1P8
(604) 278-1887

For more information on this or other wildlife viewing sites please write *Wildlife Watch*, BC Environment, 10334 -152A Street, Surrey, B.C. -V3R 7P8, or phone (604) 582-5200 or 1-800-665-7027.

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