



Long-billed Dowitcher
 Shorebird with very long, straight bill used to probe mud like a sewing machine. Has white eye-line. Brownish but rustier in breeding plumage. Flocks often mixed with similar-looking Short-billed Dowitcher. Long-billed gives sharp keek call. Short-billed call is tututu.



Greater & Lesser Yellowlegs
 These common wading birds have long, yellow legs, long neck, and long bill. Greater's bill is longer than its head. Lesser's bill is about equal to its head length. Greater's call given in sequences of three or more (tututu). Lesser's call is a single or double note.



Black Turnstone
 Stocky, black shorebird with white belly and short, black bill. Winter resident along rocky shores and beaches. Forages on rocks, prying off mussels, and turning rocks and shells to look beneath. White stripes on wings and back are visible in flight.



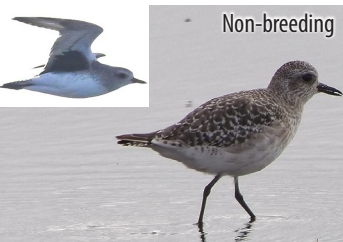
Sanderling
 Small shorebird with short, straight bill. Most often seen in very pale grey non-breeding plumage. Common winter resident. Small flocks run rapidly up and down the beach where wave action makes invertebrate prey available.



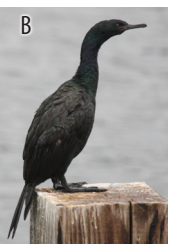
Western Sandpiper
 This is the most abundant migrant shorebird on the B.C. coast, with flocks of up to 100,000. They have a long, drooping bill, rufous back, and black legs. Look for flocks from April to early May and July to October. They feed on coastal mudflats, such as Brunswick Point and Boundary Bay.



Dunlin
 Larger than the Western Sandpiper and has a longer, drooping bill. The breeding adult has a black belly, seen locally in April and May. It is a very common winter visitor, on bays, tidal flats, and agricultural fields. Very large, swirling flocks move with precision - an awe-inspiring sight.



Black-bellied Plover
 Fairly large shorebird with short, black bill. Black armpits visible in flight. Non-breeding is speckled brownish. Breeding has black face, breast and belly, with black speckled back. Common in large flocks on tidal mudflats and in fields from August to May.



Cormorant (Double-crested, Pelagic, Brandt's)
A. Double-crested Cormorant has an orange-yellow throat patch.
B. Pelagic Cormorant is smaller with a thin bill and has a white flank patch in summer.
C. Brandt's Cormorant has a blue throat patch and wispy white feathers in breeding plumage.



Pacific Loon
 Breeding plumage has pale, grey head with vertical black-and-white stripes on the neck, and checkered back. Non-breeding plumage has dark back of neck sharply separated from white front of neck. Has thinner bill than Common Loon.



Common Loon
 Common winter resident. Breeding plumage has black head and collar with black-and-white striped "necklace", and heavily checkered back. Non-breeding plumage is plainer with jagged border between dark on back of neck and white on front. Thick bill.



Caspian Tern
 This large, gull-like bird visits Delta in summer. It is often seen diving for fish in Boundary Bay, or flying overhead, calling raucously. It has pale grey back and wings, white underparts, a black cap, coral red bill, and slightly forked tail.



Bonaparte's Gull
 Smallest gull in BC. Breeding adult has black head. Bill is dark and thin. Legs are red and wingtips are black. Wintering adults and immatures have white head and black ear spot. In BC, seen mainly during migration in spring and fall.



Short-billed Gull
 Renamed in 2021 when Mew Gull was split into 2 species. Small gull with short, thin, yellowish bill, yellow legs, dark eyes, and black wingtips. Immature is brownish with black-tipped pink bill, pink legs and brown wingtips.



Ring-billed Gull
 Medium-sized gull with black band on yellow bill, yellow legs, pale eyes, and black wing tips. Immature has pink legs, black-tipped pink bill, and black wingtips.



Glaucous-winged Gull
 Large gull with red spot on large yellow bill, pink legs, dark eyes, and grey wingtips. Immature is brownish including wingtips, with black bill and pink legs. The most common gull on the BC coast. Hybridizes with other gulls causing identification challenges.

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Waterbirds & Shorebirds in Delta

The Fraser Delta is world-renowned for waterbirds and shorebirds that feed and rest here on migration. Some visit for a few days while others stay for weeks.

Waterbirds encompass a wide variety of birds that live in and around water, including geese, swans, ducks, grebes, coots, herons, cormorants, loons, and gulls. Shorebirds, also known as waders, are seen on beaches, mudflats, farmland, and other stretches of land adjacent to water. Sandpipers and plovers are typically small to medium-sized shorebirds, many of which form large flocks while on migration. Sandpipers commonly seen in Delta include Dunlin, Western Sandpipers and Sanderling. Large numbers of Black-bellied Plover winter on Delta beaches.

Use eBird or iNaturalist apps to identify birds and record their locations.
 Use Merlin Bird ID app to identify birds you see and hear.



Snow Goose
 White goose with black wingtips, and pink bill and legs. Thousands migrate from Russia in fall, returning north in spring. Many stay for the winter. They eat aquatic sedges and leftover crops. Look for them in large, noisy flocks, especially on Westham Island.



Brant
 Stocky, short-necked, small-billed, mostly black goose, with a white neck-ring. A sea goose that migrates through Delta, with some wintering here. Look for them on or near the beach at 12th Avenue dyke in Tsawwassen, from November to May.



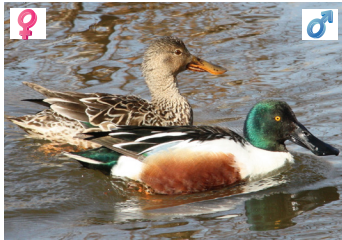
Canada Goose
 Large, brownish-grey goose with white chinstrap on black head and neck. There are resident and migratory populations. Cackling Goose, recognized as a separate species in 2004, is smaller with shorter neck and bill, and has a higher pitched voice than the honking of Canada Geese.



Trumpeter Swan
 Huge, white, long-necked waterfowl with black bill and legs. Large flocks can be seen in fields and on marshy shores from November to March. Occasionally mixed with Tundra Swans which have yellow at the base of the bill. Mute Swans, an introduced species, have orange bills.



Wood Duck
 This beautiful duck is a common resident. Male has a glossy green head with crest, colourful markings, and red eyes. Female is brownish with colourful wing patches, a grey, slightly crested head, and white teardrop-shaped eye-rings. Find them in marshes and wetlands.



Nothern Shoveler

The huge, shovel-like bill sifts surface water for plant food and small aquatic animals. Male has green head, white breast, and rufous flanks, and a black bill. Female is mottled brown with an orange bill. Both have a pale blue wing patch. Common winter residents.



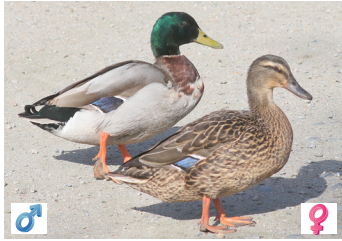
Gadwall

Male is patterned grey and brown with a black rump. Female resembles female Mallard but with a thinner, orange-sided bill. Common year round on fresh and salt water, dabbling for plant material. They are usually seen in pairs.



American Wigeon

Males have brown sides, white forehead, green stripe behind the eye, white hip-patch, and black undertail. Females are brown with grey head. Males make a whistling sound. Among these ducks you may see a similar Eurasian Wigeon, but males have a rusty-red head.



Mallard

Male has an iridescent green head, chestnut breast, and yellow bill. Female is mottled brown. Both have orange legs and blue wing patches (not always visible). Common year-round on salt and fresh water and in fields. One of the few ducks that quacks.



Northern Pintail

Male has a brown head, white breast, and a long “pin” tail. Female is mottled brown with a short, pointed tail. They are abundant winter visitors, found in salt and fresh water and in fields. They dabble in shallow water, feeding on plants and small aquatic animals.



Green-winged Teal

This winter visitor is the smallest of the ducks and is seen on marshes, ponds, and bays. Male has a rufous head, a green stripe behind the eye, a green wing patch, and a vertical white side stripe. Female is mottled brown with a green wing patch.



Harlequin Duck

This beautiful diving duck is a winter visitor. It feeds on molluscs. Males are blue with rusty sides and white patches. Females are brown with a white spot on cheek and near bill. Bill is small. Look for it off the Tsawwassen ferry jetty and at Point Roberts.



Greater & Lesser Scaup

Common winter diving duck. Male is dark on both ends, whitish in middle, with dark iridescent head. Female is brownish with white facial patch at bill base. Greater has rounded head; Lesser head is peaked. Greater prefers salt water; Lesser prefers fresh water.



Ring-necked Duck

Similar to Scaup but both sexes have a white ring near tip of bill. Male has iridescent purple head, black back and breast, grey sides, and white outline at base of bill. Brown ring on neck is hard to see. Female is brownish with white eye-ring. Prefers fresh water.



Surf Scoter

Common winter diving duck. Male is black, has white patches on forehead and on back of neck, and large orange bill with a black spot. Female is grey with a white spot on cheek and near the large bill. Look for it off the Tsawwassen ferry jetty and at Point Roberts.



White-winged Scoter

Male is black with white “comma” behind eye; has reddish bill with black knob at base. Female is grey with white spot on cheek and near large bill. White wing patch most visible in flight. Scoters swallow shellfish whole. Shells are crushed and digested by the gizzard.



Bufflehead

This small diving duck arrives in large numbers in mid-October to overwinter. It can be found on fresh and salt water. Male is mostly white, with a black back, and an iridescent, blackish head with a large white patch. Female is grey with a small, oval white cheek patch.



Common Goldeneye

Flocks of this diving duck winter in saltwater. Male is mostly white, with a black head and a round white spot on the face. Female is grey with a brown head and a mostly black bill. Dives mainly for animal prey.



Barrow's Goldeneye

Similar to the Common Goldeneye, but the white patch on the face of the male is crescent-shaped. The bill of the female is usually mostly yellow. Both species have bright amber eyes. Look for both species in deeper coastal water.



Hooded Merganser

Smaller than other mergansers. Male's elaborate crest, white with black border, may be raised high or flattened. Female has a shaggy, rusty crest. Feeds on fish and crustaceans captured in shallow water. Often raises tail when swimming. Found in sloughs and ponds.



Common Merganser

Male is mostly white with green head and thin, red bill. Female is grey with a shaggy, rusty crest, and a white chin. This diving duck eats mainly fish. Merganser beaks are toothed which helps them hold fish. They nest in holes in trees.



Red-breasted Merganser

Similar to Common Merganser but male's crest is shaggy, the bill is thinner, and has white neck ring. Female has a shaggy, rusty crest but does not have white chin. Common in winter on salt water. Feeds on small fish.



Pied-billed Grebe

Small, stocky, brownish waterbird with short neck. Thick, short bill has a black ring on it in breeding plumage. Prefers fresh water. Dives for aquatic insects, crustaceans, and small fish. Year-round resident.



Horned Grebe

Small grebe with short, thin bill, and red eyes. Non-breeding has black back and crown, white neck, throat, and cheeks. Breeding has dark back and head, red neck, and golden “horns”. Our commonest winter grebe. Less common Eared Grebe looks similar in winter.



Red-necked Grebe

Medium-sized grebe with thick, yellow bill, long neck, and dark eyes. Non-breeding is grey. Breeding has red neck, white cheeks, and black crown. Common winter resident. Prefers deep saltwater. Dives for fish and crustaceans.



Western Grebe

Large grebe with long, thin, yellow bill. Black with long, white neck, and red eyes. Dives for fish. Grebes, like loons, have feet set far back on the body and are excellent swimmers and divers, but ungainly on land. Often seen in large wintering flocks.



American Coot

Black, duck-like bird with red eye, pointed, white bill, and long, lobed toes. Common in ponds and marshes, and walking on shorelines. Dives for aquatic vegetation. Male and female look alike.



Sandhill Crane

A tall, stately bird with very long legs; it flies with outstretched neck. Groups are seen in fields during migration and at Reifel Bird Sanctuary, where a pair regularly nests. They have grey plumage and a red patch on the head.



Black-crowned Night Heron

This species is rare in B.C. and is best seen at Reifel Bird Sanctuary where a few winter annually (September to April). It has a shorter neck than the Great Blue Heron. This stocky bird mainly hunts for fish at night.



Great Blue Heron

Delta birds belong to a west coast subspecies. A patient hunter, it often waits in shallow water to spear fish, frogs and snakes or rodents in fields. Its flight profile is distinctive, with its neck folded back. A nesting colony is located near the Tsawwassen ferry causeway.



Belted Kingfisher

Common year-round resident. Slate-blue with shaggy crest and white collar and belly. Female has reddish band along the lower breast. Dives to catch fish and crustaceans with its heavy, straight bill. Often first noticed by its rattling call as it flies.



Black Oystercatcher

Black with reddish bill and eye-ring, this striking shorebird is common on rocky coastlines where it feeds on mussels and other shellfish. Often first noticed by its whistling call as it flies. Look along the Tsawwassen ferry jetty, where pairs frequently nest on the beach.



Killdeer

The Killdeer is a resident shorebird but many also migrate through in spring and fall. It is identified by its double neck band and by its kill-dee kill-dee call. It prefers open habitats like road edges and plowed fields, and nests on the bare ground.