



British Columbia Wildlife Watch is the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' program designed to promote viewing opportunities within British Columbia. The protection of wildlife and their habitat, and a positive, safe experience for the viewer are the primary objectives of this program. For more information contact the Ministry office in Surrey [(604) 582-5200; 10470 -152nd Street, Surrey, B.C. V3R 0R3].

Squamish Estuary Access

These are three easy access points to the estuary.

Vancouver Street - From Highway 99 turn onto Cleveland Avenue, the main road into downtown Squamish. At the end of Cleveland Avenue turn right onto Vancouver Street. Where the road ends a wooden trail map marks the way onto the estuary trails.

Third Avenue - One block before Vancouver Street ends turn left onto Third Avenue. Continue straight across the narrow bridge to various estuary viewpoints.

Squamish Estuary Dyke - From Highway 99, 1.5 kilometres north of the Cleveland Avenue traffic light, turn left onto Industrial Way (Squamish Industrial Park). Continue to the end and turn right onto Queens Way. At the end of Queens Way turn left onto Government Road. Cross the railroad tracks and continue 1.3 kilometres. Look for the estuary access sign and turn right onto a gravel road that leads to the dyke road. Turn left and continue 4 kilometres through the estuary to the mouth of the Squamish River.



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Bird Checklist:

Squamish Estuary

Squamish

Compiled by **Jim Wisnia**

The Squamish Estuary is located at the head of Howe Sound, a steep-walled fjord, and just one hour's drive north from Vancouver. Spectacular panoramic vistas provide a backdrop for a range of habitats, including deep marine, river, slough, intertidal mudflat, saltwater marsh, meadow, mature spruce forest, mixed forest, freshwater wetland, riparian and modified.

The late fall salmon runs of the Squamish River and its tributaries attract British Columbia's largest congregation of wintering Bald Eagles. The eagles are best viewed in December and January. Trumpeter Swans can also be seen on any winter day. The Squamish Estuary is identified as a wildlife viewing site by **British Columbia Wildlife Watch**, the provincial wildlife viewing program.

In addition to wildlife viewing, nature study and photography, this area offers other recreation opportunities, including wind surfing, sailing, paddling, river rafting, rock climbing, mountain biking, hiking, running and fishing. A steep 1.5 hour hike up the Stawamus Chief trail provides a bird's eye view of the estuary.

Area Covered

The checklist area includes upper Howe Sound north of a line from Britannia Beach to Woodfibre, and all of the Squamish River floodplain south of the Mamquam River.

The following is a list of the bird species that may be observed in the Squamish Estuary. The status of each species is indicated by an abundance level in each season. The standard four letter code is shown for each species. Many species are likely more abundant than indicated. **Note:** The order of birds is based on the most recent listing from the American Ornithological Union, and will differ from the order used in older checklists.

Explanation of Symbols

Seasonal Occurrence

Sp	Spring	March - May
S	Summer	June - August
F	Fall	September - November
W	Winter	December - February

Relative Abundance

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

Other Symbols

*	breeding documented or highly suspected in area
+	need more information to accurately assess status
[I]	introduced species

		Sp	S	F	W
RTLO	Red-throated Loon	r	ac	r	u
PALO	Pacific Loon			ac	r
COLO	Common Loon	u	r	u	u
YBLO	Yellow-billed Loon	ca	ca		ca
PBGR	Pied-billed Grebe	ca	ca	r	ca
HOGH	Horned Grebe	f		f	f
RNGR	Red-necked Grebe	r	ca	r	r
EAGR	Eared Grebe +				ac
WEGH	Western Grebe	f		u	u
AWPE	American White Pelican		ac		
BRCO	Brandt's Cormorant		ca		ac
DCCO	Double-crested Cormorant	c	f	c	c
PECO	Pelagic Cormorant	u	r	u	u
GBHE *	Great Blue Heron	f	f	f	f
GREG	Great Egret			ac	
GRHE	Green Heron +		ac		
TUVU	Turkey Vulture	r	r	ac	ca

		Sp	S	F	W
GWFG	Greater White-fronted Goose	ca	ca	ca	ac
SNGO	Snow Goose +	ac		ac	
CAGO *	Canada Goose	c	a	c	a
TRUS	Trumpeter Swan	u	ac	f	f
WODU *	Wood Duck	r	u	ac	ca
GADW	Gadwall	ca	ca	r	u
EUWI	Eurasian Wigeon +			ac	ac
AMWI	American Wigeon	f	u	f	u
GWTE *	Green-winged Teal	f	u	c	u
MALL *	Mallard	a	a	a	a
NOPI	Northern Pintail	f	ca	u	u
BWTE	Blue-winged Teal	r	ac		
CITE	Cinnamon Teal	r	ac		
NOSL	Northern Shoveler	r	ac	r	
CANV	Canvasback	ca		ca	ca
REDH	Redhead +	ac			
RNDU	Ring-necked Duck	r	ca		
GRSC	Greater Scaup	f		ac	f
LESC	Lesser Scaup	c		ca	u
HADU	Harlequin Duck +	r			
OLDS	Oldsquaw +	ca			ca
BLSC	Black Scoter +	ca	ac		
SUSC	Surf Scoter	u		ac	u
WWSC	White-winged Scoter +	ca			
COGO	Common Goldeneye	c	ca	f	c
BAGO	Barrow's Goldeneye	c		r	c
BUFF	Bufflehead	a		c	a
HOME *	Hooded Merganser	r	r	u	u
COME *	Common Merganser	c	c	c	f
RBME	Red-breasted Merganser	r	ca	r	u
RUDU	Ruddy Duck +	ac			ca
OSPR *	Osprey	ca	ca		ac
BAEA *	Bald Eagle	f	u	f	a
NOHA	Northern Harrier	r	ca	r	ca
SSHA	Sharp-shinned Hawk		ca	r	r
COHA	Cooper's Hawk		ca	ca	ca
NOGO	Northern Goshawk		ac	ac	ca
RTHA *	Red-tailed Hawk	ca	r	r	r
RLHA	Rough-legged Hawk +				ac
GOEA	Golden Eagle +	ca			
AMKE	American Kestrel	ca	ac	ac	
MERL	Merlin		ca	ca	r
GYRF	Gyr Falcon +			ac	
PEFA *	Peregrine Falcon	ca	r	ca	ca
RNPH	Ring-necked Pheasant [I] +				ac
BLGR *	Blue Grouse +				ca
RUGR *	Ruffed Grouse	ca	r	ca	r
VIRA	Virginia Rail	ac	ca	ac	ca
SORA	Sora +	ac			
AMCO	American Coot			ca	ac
SACR	Sandhill Crane	ca			

		Sp	S	F	W			Sp	S	F	W
BBPL	Black-bellied Plover +			ac	ac	DOWO	* Downy Woodpecker	r	r	r	u
*KILL	* Killdeer	r	ca	ca	r	HAWO	* Hairy Woodpecker	r	r	r	r
BLOY	Black Oystercatcher +	ac				NOFL	* Northern Flicker	f	f	f	u
GRYE	Greater Yellowlegs	ca	ca	ca		PIWO	* Pileated Woodpecker	r	ca	r	ca
LEYE	Lesser Yellowlegs		ca	ac		OSFL	Olive-sided Flycatcher +		ac		
SOSA	Solitary Sandpiper +			ac		WWPE	Western Wood-Pewee +		ca		
*SPSA	* Spotted Sandpiper	r	f		ca	WIFL	* Willow Flycatcher	r	u		
SAND	Sanderling +				ac	HAFL	Hammond's Flycatcher		ca		
WESA	Western Sandpiper	ca	r	r	ca	PSFL	* Pacific-slope Flycatcher	r	u		
LESA	Least Sandpiper	ca	r			WEKI	Western Kingbird +		ac		
BASA	Baird's Sandpiper +		ca			EAKI	Eastern Kingbird		ca	ac	
PESA	Pectoral Sandpiper +			ca		NOSH	Northern Shrike			ca	r
DUNL	Dunlin +				ac	CAVI	Cassin's (Solitary) Vireo	ca	ca	ac	
STSA	Stilt Sandpiper +		ac			HUVI	Hutton's Vireo	ca	ac	ca	
LBDO	Long-billed Dowitcher		ca	r		WAVI	* Warbling Vireo	r	r	ca	
COSN	Common Snipe	ca		r	r	REVI	* Red-eyed Vireo	ca	r		
PAJA	Parasitic Jaeger +			ac		STJA	* Steller's Jay	u	u	f	u
BOGU	Bonaparte's Gull		ca	ca	ca	CLNU	Clark's Nutcracker			ac	
MEGU	Mew Gull	f	r	c	a	NOCR	* Northwestern Crow	c	c	c	a
RBGU	Ring-billed Gull	ca	ca	ca	r	CORA	* Common Raven	u	u	u	u
CAGU	California Gull	ac	ca	ac	ca	HOLA	Horned Lark +	ca			ac
HEGU	Herring Gull		ca		r	PUMA	Purple Martin +		ac		
THGU	Thayer's Gull	ca		r	c	TRSW	* Tree Swallow	f	f		
WEGU	Western Gull +				ca	VGSW	* Violet-green Swallow	f	f		
GWGU	* Glaucous-winged Gull	a	a	a	a	NRWS	* Northern Rough-winged Swallow	f	f		
GLGU	Glaucous Gull			ac	ca	BKSW	Bank Swallow +		ca		
CATE	Caspian Tern	r	r	ca		CLSW	* Cliff Swallow	ca	r	ac	
COMU	Common Murre +	r	ac		r	BASW	* Barn Swallow	f	c		
PIGU	Pigeon Guillemot +				ca	BCCH	* Black-capped Chickadee	f	f	c	c
MAMU	Marbled Murrelet +	ca	ac		r	CHCH	* Chestnut-backed Chickadee	r	u	ca	ca
RODO	* Rock Dove [I]	c	c	c	c	BUSH	* Bushtit	u	u	f	u
BTPI	* Band-tailed Pigeon	r	f	ca	ca	RBNU	* Red-breasted Nuthatch	ca	ca	ac	ac
MODO	Mourning Dove +	ac				BRCR	Brown Creeper		ca	ca	ac
WSOW	Western Screech-Owl +				ca	BEWR	Bewick's Wren +		ac		ca
GHOW	Great Horned Owl +			ca	ca	WIWR	* Winter Wren	u	u	r	u
SNOW	Snowy Owl +				ac	MAWR	* Marsh Wren	ca	ca	ac	ca
NPOW	Northern Pygmy-Owl +			ac	r	AMDI	American Dipper	ac		ca	r
BAOW	Barred Owl +	ac		ac	ac	GCKI	* Golden-crowned Kinglet	u	ca	f	f
SEOW	Short-eared Owl +	ac		ac		RCKI	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	u	ac	ca	r
NSWO	Northern Saw-whet Owl +				ca	MOBL	Mountain Bluebird +	ca			
CONI	Common Nighthawk	r	r	r		TOSO	Townsend's Solitaire +				ac
BLSW	Black Swift +	i	r			SWTH	* Swainson's Thrush	u	c		
VASW	Vaux's Swift +	ca	i			HETH	Hermit Thrush +	ca			ac
WTSW	White-throated Swift +	ac				AMRO	* American Robin	c	c	f	r
ANHU	Anna's Hummingbird +				ac	VATH	* Varied Thrush	u	ca	r	u
*RUHU	* Rufous Hummingbird	c	f								
BEKI	* Belted Kingfisher	u	u	u	u						
*RBSA	* Red-breasted Sapsucker	ca	ca	ca	ca						

		Sp	S	F	W
EUST	* European Starling [I]	c	c	c	f
AMPI	American Pipit	f	ac	r	
BOWA	Bohemian Waxwing +				ca
CEWA	* Cedar Waxwing	f	f	ca	
OCWA	* Orange-crowned Warbler	u	r	ca	
YEWA	* Yellow Warbler	u	u	ac	
YRWA	* Yellow-rumped Warbler	f	r	c	ac
BTGW	* Black-throated Gray Warbler	r	r	ca	
TOWA	Townsend's Warbler	ca	ca	ca	
AMRE	* American Redstart +	ac	ac	ac	
MGWA	* MacGillivray's Warbler	ca	r		
COYE	* Common Yellowthroat	f	f	ac	
WIWA	* Wilson's Warbler	ca	r	ac	
WETA	* Western Tanager	ca	r	ca	
BHGR	* Black-headed Grosbeak	ca	r		
SPTO	* Spotted Towhee	f	f	f	f
ATSP	American Tree Sparrow +				ca
CHSP	Chipping Sparrow +	ac			
SAVS	* Savannah Sparrow	f	f	f	
FOSP	Fox Sparrow			ca	r
SOSP	* Song Sparrow	c	c	c	c
LISP	Lincoln's Sparrow +	ac			
SWSP	Swamp Sparrow +			ac	ac
WTSP	White-throated Sparrow +				ac
WCSP	* White-crowned Sparrow	f	f	u	ca
HASP	Harris' Sparrow +				ac
GCSP	Golden-crowned Sparrow	ca	ca	ca	ca
DEJU	Dark-eyed Junco	f	ca	f	c
LALO	Lapland Longspur +	ac			
SNBU	Snow Bunting +			ac	
RWBL	* Red-winged Blackbird	c	a	f	r
WEME	Western Meadowlark	r		r	
YHBL	Yellow-headed Blackbird +	ca		ac	
BRBL	* Brewer's Blackbird	r	f	f	c
BHCO	* Brown-headed Cowbird	u	u	ca	
BUOR	* Bullock's Oriole +	ca	ca		
GCRF	Gray-crowned Rosy Finch +				ac
PIGR	Pine Grosbeak +				ca
PUFI	* Purple Finch	r	r	r	ca
HOFI	* House Finch	r	f	r	r
RECR	Red Crossbill	ca	r	f	ca
CORE	Common Redpoll +				ca
PISI	* Pine Siskin	f	u	a	a
AMGO	* American Goldfinch	r	u	ca	ca
EVGR	Evening Grosbeak	r	r	r	r
HOSP	House Sparrow [I]		ca	ac	r

Total Species: 207

Other Wildlife

The Squamish Estuary supports a great diversity of fish and wildlife populations. It is a vital link in the life cycles of many fish species, including sockeye, chinook, chum, coho and pink salmon, cutthroat and steelhead trout, and Dolly Varden char. Herring and eulachon runs are sporadic.

In addition to birds, other viewing opportunities are present in the Squamish Estuary. Harbour seals frequent the estuary and sometimes haul-out on log booms. Killer whales and other large marine mammals have been observed in the upper Howe Sound area.

The Squamish Estuary is home to many land mammals that are rarely seen, including black-tailed deer, coyote, raccoon, Douglas squirrel, Northern flying squirrel, muskrat, beaver, bobcat, river otter, mink, spotted skunk, cougar, hare, black bear and many species of small rodents and bats.

Garter snakes are sometimes observed. Frog choruses are best in the springtime.

Report Rare Sightings

This is the first version of the Squamish Estuary bird checklist. It is based on more than five years of monthly counts, 16 Christmas Bird Counts, government documents and many individuals' personal records.

Birders are encouraged to submit detailed sight records for unlisted, casual and accidental species, and for species that appear out of the season(s) shown. Include photographs and written descriptions where possible. Confirmed nesting records are especially requested.

If you have any comments regarding the species listed, the frequency of occurrence, the seasons indicated, or new sighting information please forward your comments in writing to the Squamish Estuary Conservation Society [Box 1274, Squamish, B.C. V0N 3G0].

Viewing Ethics for Conservation

For the sake of wildlife, please follow this advice:

Respect Wildlife - Keep your distance and use binoculars or a telescope. This allows you to observe wildlife without causing them stress.

Respect Habitat - Plants and the landscape are important parts of fish and wildlife habitats. Please do not damage or remove them, and stay on designated trails and roads.

Respect Other People - Respect private property and the wildlife viewing activities of others.

Control Pets - Pets can harm wildlife and hinder viewing opportunities. Keep pets safe by putting them on a leash.