

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*

Ornithological History: Mailliard (1932), no records.

Munro (1950) found Baird's Sandpiper abundant from 12 August to 10 September 1947 during autumn migration. On 28 August [1947], flocks totalling 280 sandpipers were observed feeding on beaches and in shallow water, 100 yards or more from the shore at Sirdar [Duck] Lake. In 1948, 300 birds were recorded on 11 August feeding in a flooded stubble field and an additional nine birds were present at Sirdar [Duck] Lake.

Butler et al. (1986) considered this species to be *rare* but widespread in August.

Creston Valley Status: A *very rare* spring and summer transient and *casual* in autumn.

Occurrence: Baird's Sandpiper occurs irregularly during migration. It has not been observed in the high numbers that were reported by James Munro in the 1940s. Over a 20-year period between 1981 and 2000, the species was recorded only eight times at Duck Lake. There are no records for 2001 and 2002, but between 2003 and 2018, it was noted on 19 occasions. Sightings of 1 to 2 birds account for 44% of all records.

The earliest arrival date is 21 April [2009] when a single bird was seen feeding on mudflats at the south end of Duck Lake (Gary Breault). On 9 May 2008, Peter McIver observed eight birds foraging in the southwest mudflats at Duck Lake for the highest spring count. In 2013, from one to seven Baird's Sandpipers were recorded between 7 and 13 May. During that period,

Gary Breault and I observed this species feeding in a temporary pond in a cattle pasture west of Kootenay River Road.

Since 1981, Baird's Sandpiper has been recorded 21 times during its southbound passage from late July through mid-September, mainly within the Wildlife Management Area. Between 21 August and 1 September 2018, flocks of 8 to 45 birds were observed feeding at the south end of Kootenay Lake (Craig Sandvig, Marcia Long, Hardy Delafield, pers. obs.). A single bird foraging along the Duck Lake shoreline on 15 September 1986 (pers. obs.) and three birds at the same location on 22 September 2008 (Gary Breault) are the latest autumn records.

Database: Occurrence records (41)

Habitat: In migration, Baird's Sandpiper frequents the exposed mudflats at Duck Lake and the south end of Kootenay Lake. It also feeds along the muddy edges of Leach Lake, Dale Marsh, and Kootenay River and at temporary ponds in flooded agricultural fields.

Comments: Some years Baird's Sandpiper can be locally abundant during spring and autumn migration throughout British Columbia (Campbell et al. 1990b). The first confirmed breeding was on 2 July 1996 along the Haines Highway in the extreme northwestern part of the province (Campbell et al. 2001, Van Damme 2007).

Seasonal Occurrence Records

Spring – 15 records from 21 April to 23 May (1 to 8 birds)

Summer – 20 records from 28 July to 31 August (1 to 45 birds)

Autumn – 6 records from 1 to 22 September (1 to 3 birds)

Winter – no records



Almost half of all sightings of Baird's Sandpiper were recorded at Duck Lake.
Photo by Paul Prappas.