

Endangered Species and Spaces

Home
Up
Table of Contents
Introduction
Classification Systems
Mammals
Amphibians and Reptiles
Freshwater Fishes
Invertebrates
Vascular Plants
Non-Vascular Plants
Plant Communities
Exotic Species
Protected Areas
Summary-Conclusions
Appendix

Birds
Next

[Back](#)

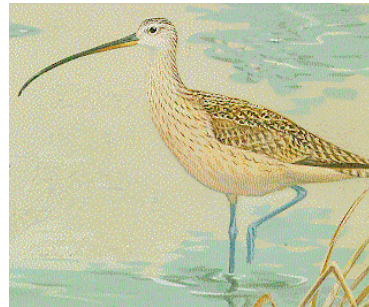
4.17 Long-billed Curlew: *Numenius americanus* (Bechstein)

Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae

Status

Global Rank: G5
Provincial Rank: S3B, SZN
COSEWIC: Vulnerable

Provincial Listing: [Blue list](#)



Distinguishing Features

Canada's largest shorebird, the Long-billed Curlew has an extremely long, slender, down-curved bill. Generally cinnamon-brown coloured, with darker brown mottling on the back. Lack of dark stripes through the eye and on the head distinguish it from other large shorebirds like the Whimbrel. Total length 51-66 cm (Godfrey, 1986).

Distribution

Columbia Basin: Grasslands of the East Kootenays.

British Columbia: Breeding populations occur in the Cariboo-Chilcotin grasslands, on the Thompson Plateau, the Okanagan Valley, and in the East Kootenay. Small populations are also known to occur near McBride, Quesnel and Creston. Recent sightings in Prince George and Vanderhoof area may indicate new breeding populations (Cannings et al. In prep.).

Global: Breeds from sw. Canada south to Utah, New Mexico, and Texas. Formerly east to Wisconsin and Illinois. Winters from California, w. Nevada, Texas, and Louisiana south to Guatemala; also in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida (Godfrey 1986).

Habitat

In British Columbia, Long-billed Curlews nest in large tracts of open grasslands between 280 and 1220 m elevation. Tall thick patches of grasses and shrubs are avoided, and preferred sites have low vegetative cover, usually on flat grassy uplands, open ridges and hillsides. The nest is a depression in the ground, lined with bits of grass and occasionally twigs. Broods tend to be reared in relatively moist habitats, such as seepage sites and hay fields (Godfrey 1986, Cannings et al. In prep.).

Threats

British Columbia population is estimated at 300 - 500 birds. Generally believed to be declining, however East Kootenay population (40 - 50 pair) is increasing (Cannings R.J. In prep.). Breeding Bird Surveys suggest the trend is generally positive in British Columbia with the exception of the Cariboo-Chilcotin grasslands (Cannings et al. In prep.) Habitat loss through intensive agricultural development and overgrazing by livestock is considered responsible for general population. Continued habitat losses are most likely, particularly in areas with rapid urban and agricultural development and areas where there is forest encroachment into grasslands (Cannings et al. In prep.).

Biology

Long-billed Curlews feed on terrestrial insects during the breeding season and aquatic invertebrates on their coastal wintering grounds. Most Long-billed Curlews arrive on the breeding grounds between late March and early April. The average clutch size in British Columbia is 3.6 eggs and the incubation period is 27 - 28 days. Most young are fledged by mid-July. Migration to coastal habitats begins in late July and continues through August (Cannings et al. In prep.).



[[Home](#)] [[Up](#)] [[White throated Swift](#)] [[Great Blue Heron](#)] [[Short-eared Owl](#)] [[American Bittern](#)] [[Swaison's Hawk](#)] [[Bobolink](#)]
 [[Prairie Falcon](#)] [[Peregrine Falcon anatum subspecies](#)] [[Sandhill Crane](#)] [[Canyon Wren](#)] [[Western Grebe](#)]
 [[Western Screech-Owl macfarlanei](#)] [[Flammulated Owl](#)] [[Lewis' Woodpecker](#)] [[Williamson's Sapsucker nataliae](#)]
 [[Sharp-tailed Grouse](#)] [[Long-billed Curlew](#)] [[American Avocet](#)] [[Forster's Tern](#)] [[Bird References](#)]