

**D**awson City is well known as a vibrant and charismatic northern community. It is also home to a fascinating and distinctly northern birdlife. The region lies along the Tintina Trench, a major migration route, and features a variety of habitats including White and Black spruce forests, stands of Trembling Aspen and Alaska Birch, pockets of Balsam Poplar along the rivers, small marshes and fens, and higher elevation shrub-tundra habitats. This is the traditional territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

The Dawson checklist summarizes the seasonal status of 164 species which have been recorded in the area, with confirmed breeding records for 43 species. The information here draws on observations that go back well over one-hundred years, yet there is still much to learn. A few species expected in the Dawson area, such as Wandering Tattler, Arctic Tern, and Smith's Longspur, have not yet been reported. As well, there are relatively few confirmed breeding records, even for common species; and fall shorebird migration is not well defined. However, the area has turned up some remarkable rarities including King Eider, Red-legged Kittiwake, Turkey Vulture, and Siberian Blue Robin. It is the kind of place where anything seems possible. By submitting your observations you can make a real contribution to our understanding of the birds of the Dawson area.

## SEASONS

**SP Spring:** March 1 – May 31  
**SU Summer:** June 1 – July 31  
**F Fall:** August 1 – November 30  
**W Winter:** December 1 – February 28

## FREQUENCY and BREEDING CODES

**C Common:** expected in appropriate habitat.  
**U Uncommon:** expected but not always seen.  
**R Rare:** annual in low numbers or very localized.  
**ca Casual:** at least 2 records but not every year.  
**ac Accidental:** recorded only once.  
**\*** **Confirmed Breeding:** Observations of an active nest or dependent, flightless young.

## DOCUMENTING BIRD SIGHTINGS

Contribute to our knowledge of the Yukon's birdlife by sending written or photo documentation of rare, casual, or accidental species or those not on the checklist, and details of breeding observations to:

### Yukon Bird Club

Box 31054, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada, Y1A 5P7  
 e-mail: yukonbirdclub@gmail.com

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✓ SPECIES	SP	SU	F	W
Greater White-fronted Goose	U		R	
Snow Goose	ca			
Brant		ca		
Canada Goose *	C	C	C	
Trumpeter Swan	R	ca	ca	
Tundra Swan	R		ca	
Gadwall		ca		
American Wigeon *	C	U	U	
Mallard *	C	U	U	
Blue-winged Teal	R	ca	ca	
Northern Shoveler	C	U	U	
Northern Pintail	C	U	U	
Green-winged Teal *	C	U	U	
Canvasback	R		ac	
Ring-necked Duck	U	R	R	
Greater Scaup	ca			
Lesser Scaup	C	U	U	
King Eider	ac			
Harlequin Duck *	U	U	U	
Surf Scoter	U	R	R	
White-winged Scoter	R	R	R	
Long-tailed Duck	R	R	R	
Bufflehead	C	U	U	
Common Goldeneye	ca			
Hooded Merganser		ac		
Common Merganser	U	U	U	ca
Red-breasted Merganser	U	U	U	
Ruffed Grouse *	C	C	C	C
Spruce Grouse *	C	C	C	C
Willow Ptarmigan	R		R	U
White-tailed Ptarmigan	ac			
Sharp-tailed Grouse *	R	R	R	R
Red-throated Loon	R	U	R	
Pacific Loon	R	R		
Common Loon	R	R	R	
Yellow-billed Loon		ac		
Horned Grebe	U	U	R	
Red-necked Grebe			ac	
Turkey Vulture	ac			
Osprey	ca	ca	ca	
Bald Eagle *	C	C	C	
Northern Harrier	C	U	R	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	R	R	U	
Northern Goshawk *	R	R	R	R
Swainson's Hawk	ac			
Red-tailed Hawk	U	U	U	
Rough-legged Hawk	ca		ca	
Golden Eagle	R	R	R	
Sora *	R	R	R	
Sandhill Crane	U	R	U	
Black-bellied Plover	ac	ac	ac	
American Golden-Plover	U			
Semipalmated Plover	R	R		
Killdeer		ca		

✓ SPECIES	SP	SU	F	W
Spotted Sandpiper *	C	C	C	
Solitary Sandpiper	U	U	R	
Lesser Yellowlegs	U	U		
Upland Sandpiper	R			
Whimbrel	R	ac		
Hudsonian Godwit	ca			
Surfbird			ac	
Sanderling	ac			
Dunlin	ac			
Baird's Sandpiper	R			
Least Sandpiper	U	R		
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	ac			
Pectoral Sandpiper	U			
Semipalmated Sandpiper	R			
Long-billed Dowitcher	U			
Wilson's Snipe *	U	U	R	
Red-necked Phalarope	R		ca	
Red-legged Kittiwake			ac	
Bonaparte's Gull	U	U	R	
Mew Gull	C	C	U	
Ring-billed Gull	ca			
Herring Gull *	C	C	C	
Glaucous Gull	ca		ca	
Mourning Dove		ca	ac	
Great Horned Owl *	U	U	U	U
Northern Hawk Owl	U	U	U	U
Great Gray Owl *	R	R	R	R
Short-eared Owl	R	ca	R	
Boreal Owl *	U	U	U	U
Common Nighthawk *		R	R	
Rufous Hummingbird		ca	ac	
Belted Kingfisher *	C	C	C	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *	R	U	R	
Downy Woodpecker	R	R	R	R
Hairy Woodpecker	U	U	U	R
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	U	U	U	U
Black-backed Woodpecker			ca	
Northern Flicker *	U	C	U	
American Kestrel *	U	U	U	
Merlin	R	R	R	
Peregrine Falcon *	R	R	R	
Olive-sided Flycatcher	U	U	R	
Western Wood-Pewee	U	U	R	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		R		
Alder Flycatcher *	R	C	U	
Least Flycatcher		ca		
Hammond's Flycatcher *	U	C	U	
Eastern Phoebe		ca		
Say's Phoebe *	U	U	R	
Western Kingbird		ac		
Eastern Kingbird			ac	
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher			ac	
Northern Shrike	U		U	

✓ SPECIES	SP	SU	F	W
Gray Jay *	C	C	C	C
Black-billed Magpie	ca	ca	ca	ac
Common Raven *	C	C	C	C
Horned Lark	U		R	
Tree Swallow *	U	C	R	
Violet-green Swallow *	U	C	R	
Bank Swallow *	U	C	U	
Cliff Swallow *	C	C	U	
Barn Swallow *	ac			
Black-capped Chickadee	C	C	C	C
Boreal Chickadee	C	C	C	C
Red-breasted Nuthatch		R		
Brown Creeper			ac	
American Dipper *	R	R	R	R
Golden-crowned Kinglet			ac	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C	C	C	
Siberian Blue Robin		ac		
Northern Wheatear	ca	ac		
Mountain Bluebird	ca	ca	ac	
Townsend's Solitaire	U	C	U	
Gray-cheeked Thrush	U	C	U	
Swainson's Thrush *	U	C	U	
Hermit Thrush	U	C	U	
American Robin *	C	C	C	ac
Varied Thrush	C	C	U	
European Starling *	ca	ca	ca	
American Pipit	C		C	
Bohemian Waxwing	U	U	U	ca
Lapland Longspur	C		U	
Snow Bunting	C		R	
Northern Waterthrush	U	C	U	
Tennessee Warbler		R		
Orange-crowned Warbler	U	C	U	
Common Yellowthroat	R	U	R	
Yellow Warbler *	U	C	U	
Yellow-rumped Warbler *	U	C	U	
Townsend's Warbler *	R	U	R	
Blackpoll Warbler	R	U	R	
Wilson's Warbler	U	C	U	
American Tree Sparrow	U		U	
Chipping Sparrow *	R	C	R	
Savannah Sparrow	U	U	U	
Fox Sparrow	C	C	C	ca
Lincoln's Sparrow	U	C	U	
White-crowned Sparrow *	C	C	C	
Golden-crowned Sparrow	ca		ca	
Dark-eyed Junco *	C	C	C	R
Red-winged Blackbird	R	R		
Rusty Blackbird	U	U	U	
Common Grackle			ac	
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch	ca		ca	ca
Pine Grosbeak	C	C	C	C

✓ SPECIES	SP	SU	F	W
White-winged Crossbill	U	U	U	U
Common Redpoll	C	U	C	C
Hoary Redpoll	U		R	U
Pine Siskin	U	C	U	
House Sparrow	ac			

**Notes:**

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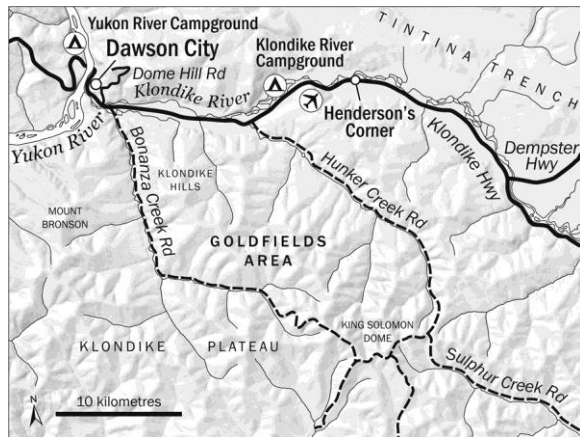
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**Where to find birds in the Dawson area**

The Dawson checklist area encompasses Dawson City, West Dawson, Henderson’s Corner, Sunnydale, the Midnight Dome, the Goldfields, and the North Klondike Highway south to the Dempster corner and the Little South Fork of the Klondike River.



**Downtown Dawson:** The lush yards and gardens of Dawson City attract many birds. In summer, Yellow Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows seem to nest in every yard, and Cliff Swallows adorn the eaves of buildings with their mud nests. Numerous bird feeders around town attract Downy and Hairy woodpeckers, Pine Grosbeaks, and Common Redpolls at any time of year, as well as Pine Siskins in summer, and a host of sparrows during migration.

**Yukon River Campground:** This forested Yukon Parks campground is just a short ride on the George Black Ferry across the Yukon River from downtown Dawson. The forests are home to Swainson’s and Varied thrushes, Hammond’s Flycatchers, White-winged Crossbills, Townsend’s Warblers, and the occasional Tennessee Warbler. The viewing platform is a good place to watch for Peregrine Falcons which nest on the bluffs along the river; listen for the raucous calls of the begging young later in summer.



**Common Redpoll – a familiar year-round bird in the Dawson area.**

**Klondike River Campground:** This Yukon Parks campground features older White Spruce forests typical of the Klondike River. Watch for Three-toed Woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadees, Yellow-rumped and Townsend’s warblers, Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins (in summer), and White-winged Crossbills. Scan the river for passing Mew and Herring gulls, or Spotted Sandpipers bobbing as they walk along the shoreline. Be sure to keep an eye on your picnic, or a few of the roving Gray Jays, aptly known as Camp Robbers, will help themselves.

**The Goldfields:** The Goldfields area is accessed by the Bonanza Creek Road about 2.5 km east of Dawson, and the Hunker Creek Road about 1.5 km west of the airport. Four-wheel drive may not be essential, but back-road travel requires good judgment. Check the ponds and creeks for ducks, geese, as well as Spotted and Solitary sandpipers. Gray-cheeked Thrush, Fox and Lincoln’s sparrows, Wilson’s Warblers, and Northern Waterthrush are found in wetland shrubs. During the breeding season the forested slopes support a diversity of species including Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Townsend’s Solitaire, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher which is rare in the Yukon.

**Midnight Dome:** A trip up the Dome Hill Road offers views of the midnight sun, and some interesting birds – though probably not at the same time. It is one of the best places for Townsend’s Solitaire. In fall, this area has produced some impressive movements of migratory songbirds with mixed flocks of Blackpoll, Wilson’s, Orange-crowned, Yellow, and Yellow-rumped warblers, White-crowned Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos. Watch also for passing raptors.

**Henderson’s Corner:** This rural neighbourhood located about 22 km east of Dawson, features open pastures with scattered patches of willows, aspen groves, and small ponds. In summer listen for Alder Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, Wilson’s Snipe, and the occasional Sandhill Crane. Check treetops for Northern Hawk Owl and American Kestrel. This rarity hotspot has hosted Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Eastern Phoebe, Western Kingbird, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher.

**Tread lightly**

- ✓ Observe birds and wildlife from a responsible distance, and avoid nesting areas. A bird that displays odd behaviours or calls and flies over your head is asking that you move on, carefully.
- ✓ You may find what appears to be an ‘orphaned’ bird; leave young birds where you find them. The parents are nearby waiting for you to move away.
- ✓ Take photos, but leave plants, animals, and cultural artifacts untouched.
- ✓ Practice no trace camping. Take out all that you bring in and keep a clean camp.

**For more info about wildlife viewing contact:**

**Wildlife Viewing Program, Environment Yukon**  
 Box 2703, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2C6  
 P (867) 667-8291 e-mail: wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca

**Checklist of the Birds of Dawson, Yukon. May 2015.**  
 Compiled by Cameron D. Eckert and Pamela Sinclair with data provided by the Birds of the Yukon Database (Canadian Wildlife Service, Whitehorse) and the Dawson Christmas Bird Count. Photos by Cameron Eckert. Cover – watch for the distinctive shape of a Northern Hawk Owl scanning for prey from its tree-top perch.

ISBN: 978-1-55362-717-3



Checklist of the  
**BIRDS** of  
**DAWSON**  
**YUKON**



**OBSERVERS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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