

LECONTE'S SPARROW IN SOUTHEASTERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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All published British Columbia records of the LeConte's Sparrow are from the Peace River District^{1 2} (R. W. Campbell pers. comm.). In 1976, while conducting avian surveys along the Columbia River between Canal Flats and Edgewater, B.C., a small population of LeConte's Sparrows was discovered. At least four singing males were heard and observed, a description of which is on file at the B.C. Provincial Museum in Victoria.

The four birds were in wet sedge meadows surrounded with clumps of willows. Two birds were located near the junction of Horsethief Creek and the Columbia River on 8 June 1976 and the other two were observed on the Canadian Wildlife Service sanctuary near Wilmer on 9 June 1976.

These records are apparently not the first for southeastern British Columbia. Francis King (pers. comm.) first identified LeConte's Sparrows on her ranch near Golden in 1962. Since this initial observation, they have been recorded inconsistently in the ranch's hay meadows. Between 14 June and 11 July, 1977, she heard "maybe 4-5 birds" of this species. Rick Howie confirmed the observation.

In Kootenay National Park, a single LeConte's Sparrow was heard singing at Dog Lake on 27 May 1975.⁴ On June 23, 1977, one was heard singing near Mount Fernie Provincial Park. (Van Tighem pers. comm.).

It appears that the LeConte's Sparrow is widely distributed but perhaps local along the Columbia Valley and possibly the Kootenay Valley from these records. The population appears small and restricted by the species' habitat preference.

McCaskie has summarized records of the LeConte's Sparrow in the far western United States.³ These include three records from California, two from western Colorado, three from Utah, one from Idaho and one from Washington. All are west of the continental divide. With the exception of the Washington record for (29 May, 1964), all records are in the period of 28 September to 6 May suggesting either migrating or wintering birds.

Considering habitat, dates and the birds' singing behaviour, it appears likely that a small breeding population exists in the Columbia Valley.

All the LeConte's Sparrows observed along the Columbia River were on the river's flood plain where sedge meadows and agricultural hay meadows exist. Any man-induced changes that might affect water levels along this water course could have serious effects on this population, the only suspected breeding population of this species west of the continental divide.

- ¹GODFREY, W. E. 1966. Birds of Canada. Nat. Mus. Can. Bull. 203.
- ²MUNRO, J. A., and I. M. COWAN 1947. A review of the bird fauna of British Columbia. B.C. Prov. Mus. Spec. Publ. No. 2. Victoria.
- ³McCASKIE, G. 1975. LeConte's Sparrow in California and the western United States. *Western Birds* 6:65-66.
- ⁴VAN TIGHAM, K. J. 1977. The avifauna of Kootenay National Park. Parks Canada, Radium, B.C. (unpublished).

DOUBLE-BROODED YELLOW WARBLER?

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During the summer of 1978 I had the opportunity of observing a very interesting Yellow Warbler nest at Whyewold, Manitoba, on the north shore of Lake Winnipeg.

On 26 May I noticed a female picking up tiny pieces of discarded paper off a main sidewalk near a store. She flew into a honeysuckle bush, about 2.5 m high, at the edge of a Manitoba Maple hedge, 3 m in height, and wove this material into her nest.

When completed, the nest was a deep and bulky creation of plant fibres, bits of leaves, kleenex, fluffy cotton, paper and white string, and was built in the crotch of vertical branches of the honeysuckle. On 2 June as I passed, the female flew off the nest and I noticed two warbler eggs.

I observed the nest nearly every day but, because it was in such a vulnerable location (being on a lot next to a store, with cars and people

coming and going), I was concerned that someone would tamper with the nest if I made my observations too obvious.

On 16 June I noticed the female feeding chicks and, on the 19th, could see movement among the downy chicks. I continued my daily observations and, on the eve of the 23rd, I noticed the nest was empty. While standing still for a few moments, I saw both parents with food in their beaks when they flew into the hedge to feed the fledglings. For several days thereafter I could hear the adults and the young in the hedge and surrounding trees.

I thought this was the end of all their nesting activity for the season but, on 7 July, I was very surprised to see a female warbler sitting on the same nest. Reasonable inference leads me to believe that the same pair of warblers decided to raise a second brood in this very same nest. There were three warbler eggs.

I visited the nesting area regularly and on 17 July I noticed one newly hatched chick and two Yellow Warbler eggs. I kept up my daily observations and on 27 July at 7 p.m. I found the nest empty; droppings were on the foliage of the honeysuckle bush, and I could hear the adults and fledglings in the hedge.

I have searched various authorities to see if a Yellow Warbler raises two broods during a season and in the same nest; I have been led to conclude that this particular nesting was a rare occurrence.^{1 2 3 4 5}

In the fall I decided to take the nest to Mr. Herb Copland of the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, (because of the various materials used in its construction and because I had, by this time, discovered it was two-storied). He examined it carefully and wrote me as follows: