

CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE LETHBRIDGE AREA



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August 2021

Welcome to the Lethbridge area! The City of Lethbridge is situated on the Oldman River in southern Alberta's prairie landscape. The Montana border lies approximately 75 kilometres to the south, while the Rocky Mountains rise from the prairies about 100 kilometres to Lethbridge's west. Alberta's largest city, Calgary, lies 150 kilometres to the northwest.

Lethbridge and its environs comprise an array of habitats, including cropland, native grassland, coulees, riparian cottonwood forest, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, wetlands, and urban areas. These habitats have supported, at one time or another, no fewer than 340 bird species, which are included in this checklist. The Lethbridge area, as defined for the purposes of this checklist, falls within a circle 160 kilometres in diameter, centred on the City of Lethbridge. The area lies within the traditional territory of the Blackfoot people.

We hope that you enjoy the many birds that the Lethbridge area has to offer!

Birding Hotspots

Where best to go looking for birds depends in large part on the time of year, the time of day, the weather, and the species sought. With that in mind, we've listed many of the more productive birding hotspots that fall within our checklist circle below.

There are many excellent places to bird within Lethbridge. A significant proportion of the city has been designated parkland, and its river valley boasts an extensive park system stretching from Cottonwood Park in the southwest to Pavan Park in the north. Elizabeth Hall Wetlands, located just south of Highway 3, is a particularly good birding locale, where more than 170 species have been reported. Above the river valley, Henderson Lake and Nicholas Sheran Park are often productive.

Beyond the city, the checklist circle includes several provincial recreation areas and three provincial parks: Park Lake, located northwest of Lethbridge; Woolford, situated east of Cardston; and Little Bow, which sits on Travers Reservoir east of Champion.

Lakes and reservoirs with good access points and birding potential include Tyrrell Lake, Stirling Lake, the Milk River Ridge Reservoir, St. Mary Reservoir, Waterton Reservoir, Clear Lake, Keho Lake, Taber Lake, Fincastle Lake, and Horsefly Lake. The multitude of sloughs that dot the prairie landscape, many of which are seasonal, can also be excellent spots to bird.

Much of the open country within the checklist circle is cropland, which is unfortunately poor habitat for all but a handful of generally common bird

species. Where native prairie can be found, grassland birds can often be found as well. For larger areas of native prairie, look north and east of Taber, north and east of Turin, or on the Milk River Ridge.

Should you find yourself in Magrath, Fort MacLeod, or Taber, consider visiting Jubilee Park and adjacent trails, River Valley Wilderness Park, or the MD of Taber Municipal Park, respectively. These parks host many of the breeding birds that can be found in Lethbridge's river valley, and birding them can also yield many migrant songbirds in season.

Seasons

Spring (Sp) = March, April, May

Summer (Su) = June, July, August

Fall (F) = September, October, November

Winter (W) = December, January, February

Abundance Codes

C = Common	You should see this species within the appropriate habitat at the right time of year.
U = Uncommon	Even within the appropriate habitat at the right time of year, you'll likely have to do some searching for this species.
R = Rare	Even within the appropriate habitat at the right time of year, you're lucky to see this species. They occur seldomly.
V = Vagrant	You're very lucky to see this species! This code is reserved for those birds that are vagrants to the checklist circle and are not expected at any time of year.
* = Irruptive	Species with an asterisk following their name are irruptive; that is, their numbers can fluctuate drastically between years, such that they may be common one year but uncommon, rare, or absent the next. Most irruptive species are irruptive during the winter months.

Note that codes may represent abundance during only part of a season. For example, Yellow Warblers are listed as common in spring, but they do not become common until mid-May; they are altogether absent in March and

April. For more detailed information about seasonal occurrence, we recommend that you consult eBird's robust and growing database.

Breeding Status (B)

- = Breeding This species has been confirmed to breed within the checklist circle.

- ? = Suspected This species is suspected to breed within the checklist circle, but conclusive evidence remains lacking.

Species are ordered in accordance with the 2019 version of Clements Checklist.

More Information

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eBird: www.ebird.org/explore

Acknowledgements

This checklist would not have been possible without the contributions of many people beyond the four compilers. We would like to acknowledge the work of W. Sharp and W. Gierulski on previous iterations of the checklist. We also thank the staff of the Helen Schuler Nature Centre for their assistance and constructive feedback. Finally, we are grateful to all of those who have shared their avian observations in the Lethbridge area.

Online Access

Note that an electronic copy of this checklist can be found on the University of Lethbridge's institutional repository, OPUS (opus.ulethbirdge.ca).

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
<i>Geese and Swans</i>						
	Snow Goose		C	R	C	R
	Ross's Goose		U	R	U	R
	Greater White-fronted Goose		R	R	U	R
	Tundra Bean-Goose					V
	Cackling Goose		R		U	U
	Canada Goose	•	C	C	C	C
	Trumpeter Swan	•	U	R	U	R
	Tundra Swan		C	R	C	R
<i>Ducks</i>						
	Wood Duck	•	R	R	R	R
	Garganey		V	V		
	Blue-winged Teal	•	C	C	C	R
	Cinnamon Teal	•	C	C	U	
	Northern Shoveler	•	C	C	C	R
	Gadwall	•	C	C	C	R
	Eurasian Wigeon		R			R
	American Wigeon	•	C	C	C	R
	Mallard	•	C	C	C	C
	American Black Duck			V	V	V
	Northern Pintail	•	C	C	C	R
	Green-winged Teal	•	C	U	C	R
	Canvasback	•	C	U	C	R
	Redhead	•	C	C	C	R
	Ring-necked Duck	•	U	R	U	R
	Greater Scaup		U	R	R	R
	Lesser Scaup	•	C	C	C	R
	Harlequin Duck		V		V	V
	Surf Scoter		R		U	
	White-winged Scoter	•	U	R	U	R

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Black Scoter				V	
	Long-tailed Duck		R		R	R
	Bufflehead		C	U	C	R
	Common Goldeneye	•	C	U	C	C
	Barrow's Goldeneye		R	R	R	R
	Hooded Merganser		U	R	U	R
	Common Merganser	•	U	U	U	U
	Red-breasted Merganser		U	R	R	R
	Ruddy Duck	•	C	C	C	R

Upland Game Birds

	Ring-necked Pheasant	•	C	U	U	U
	Gray Partridge	•	U	U	U	U
	Ruffed Grouse	•	R			
	Greater Sage-Grouse		V			
	Sharp-tailed Grouse	•	U	U	U	U
	Wild Turkey		V			V

Grebes

	Pied-billed Grebe	•	U	U	U	R
	Horned Grebe	•	U	U	U	R
	Red-necked Grebe	•	U	U	U	R
	Eared Grebe	•	C	C	C	R
	Western Grebe	•	C	U	C	R
	Clark's Grebe	?	R	R	R	

Pigeons, Doves, and Cuckoos

	Rock Pigeon	•	C	C	C	C
	Band-tailed Pigeon			V		
	Eurasian Collared-Dove	•	C	C	C	C
	White-winged Dove		V	V		
	Mourning Dove	•	C	C	C	R
	Yellow-billed Cuckoo			V	V	

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Black-billed Cuckoo			V		
<i>Nightjars and Hummingbirds</i>						
	Common Nighthawk	•	R	U	R	
	Common Poorwill			V	V	
	Ruby-throated Hummingbird		R	R	R	
	Black-chinned Hummingbird		V	V		
	Anna's Hummingbird				V	
	Rufous Hummingbird		R	R	R	
	Calliope Hummingbird		R	R	R	
<i>Rails, Coots, and Cranes</i>						
	Virginia Rail	•	R	R		
	Sora	•	U	U	R	
	American Coot	•	C	C	C	R
	Yellow Rail		V			
	Sandhill Crane		R	R	U	
	Common Crane		V			
	Whooping Crane			V	V	
<i>Shorebirds</i>						
	Black-necked Stilt	•	C	C	R	
	American Avocet	•	C	C	R	
	Black-bellied Plover		C	U	U	
	American Golden-Plover		R	R	R	
	Semipalmated Plover		U	U	U	
	Piping Plover	•	R	R		
	Killdeer	•	C	C	C	R
	Upland Sandpiper	•	U	U	R	
	Whimbrel		U	R		
	Long-billed Curlew	•	U	U	R	
	Hudsonian Godwit		R	R	R	
	Marbled Godwit	•	C	C	U	

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Ruddy Turnstone		R		R	
	Red Knot		R	R		
	Stilt Sandpiper		U	U	U	
	Sanderling		U	R	R	
	Dunlin		R	R	R	
	Baird's Sandpiper		C	C	C	
	Least Sandpiper		C	C	C	
	White-rumped Sandpiper		R	R		
	Buff-breasted Sandpiper			V		
	Pectoral Sandpiper		U	U	U	
	Semipalmated Sandpiper		C	C	C	
	Western Sandpiper		V	V	V	
	Short-billed Dowitcher		R	U	R	
	Long-billed Dowitcher		U	C	C	
	Wilson's Snipe	•	C	C	U	R
	Wilson's Phalarope	•	C	C	U	
	Red-necked Phalarope		U	U	U	
	Red Phalarope			V	V	
	Spotted Sandpiper	•	C	C	U	
	Solitary Sandpiper		U	U	U	
	Greater Yellowlegs		U	C	C	
	Willet	•	C	C	R	
	Lesser Yellowlegs		U	C	C	

Jaegers, Gulls, and Terns

	Parasitic Jaeger				V	
	Long-tailed Jaeger			V	V	
	Black-legged Kittiwake				V	V
	Sabine's Gull		V	V	V	
	Bonaparte's Gull		R	R	U	

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Little Gull			V	V	
	Franklin's Gull	•	C	C	C	
	Short-billed (Mew) Gull				V	V
	Ring-billed Gull	•	C	C	C	R
	California Gull	•	C	C	U	R
	Herring Gull		U	R	U	R
	Iceland Gull		V		V	
	Lesser Black-backed Gull		V		V	
	Glaucous Gull		V			
	Caspian Tern	•	R	R	R	
	Black Tern	•	U	U	R	
	Common Tern	•	U	U	R	
	Arctic Tern		V			
	Forster's Tern	•	U	U	R	

Loons, Cormorants, and Pelicans

	Red-throated Loon			V	V	
	Pacific Loon				V	
	Common Loon	?	U	R	U	
	Yellow-billed Loon				V	
	Double-crested Cormorant	•	C	C	C	R
	American White Pelican	•	C	C	C	R

Waders

	American Bittern	•	R	R	R	
	Great Blue Heron	•	U	U	U	R
	Great Egret		V	V	V	
	Snowy Egret		V		V	
	Cattle Egret			V	V	
	Green Heron			V		
	Black-crowned Night-Heron	•	U	U	U	
	White-faced Ibis	•	U	U	U	R

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
<i>Vultures, Ospreys, Eagles, and Hawks</i>						
	Black Vulture				V	
	Turkey Vulture	?	U	U	U	R
	Osprey	•	U	U	U	
	Golden Eagle	•	U	U	U	U
	Northern Harrier	•	C	C	C	R
	Sharp-shinned Hawk	•	R	R	U	R
	Cooper's Hawk	•	U	R	U	R
	Northern Goshawk		R	R	R	R
	Bald Eagle	•	C	R	C	C
	Broad-winged Hawk		R	R	R	
	Swainson's Hawk	•	C	C	C	
	Red-tailed Hawk	•	C	C	C	R
	Rough-legged Hawk		C		C	U
	Ferruginous Hawk	•	U	U	U	R
<i>Owls</i>						
	Barn Owl		V	V	V	V
	Western Screech-Owl		V			
	Eastern Screech-Owl		V			
	Great Horned Owl	•	U	U	U	U
	Snowy Owl*		U		U	U
	Northern Hawk Owl		V		V	V
	Northern Pygmy-Owl				V	V
	Burrowing Owl	•	R	R	R	
	Barred Owl					V
	Long-eared Owl	•	R	R	R	R
	Short-eared Owl*	•	R	R	R	R
	Boreal Owl					V
	Northern Saw-whet Owl	•	R	R	R	R

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
<i>Kingfishers and Woodpeckers</i>						
	Belted Kingfisher	•	U	U	U	R
	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	•	R	R	R	R
	Red-naped Sapsucker	•	R	R	R	
	Red-breasted Sapsucker		V			
	Lewis's Woodpecker		V			
	Red-headed Woodpecker		V	V		
	Red-bellied Woodpecker		V			V
	Downy Woodpecker	•	C	C	C	C
	Hairy Woodpecker	•	U	U	U	U
	Pileated Woodpecker	?	R	R	R	R
	Northern Flicker	•	C	C	C	C
<i>Falcons</i>						
	American Kestrel	•	U	U	U	R
	Merlin	•	U	U	U	U
	Gyr Falcon		R		R	R
	Peregrine Falcon		R	R	R	R
	Prairie Falcon	•	U	U	U	U
<i>Flycatchers</i>						
	Olive-sided Flycatcher	•	R	U	R	
	Western Wood-Pewee	•	U	C	R	
	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		V	V	V	
	Alder Flycatcher	•	R	R	R	
	Willow Flycatcher	•	R	R	R	
	Least Flycatcher	•	C	C	U	
	Dusky Flycatcher		V	V	V	
	"Western" Flycatcher [†]		V	V		
	Eastern Phoebe		R	R	R	

[†] Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Cordilleran Flycatcher, the two species that comprise the "Western" Flycatcher complex, are not distinguishable by appearance in the field.

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Say's Phoebe	•	U	U	U	
	Great Crested Flycatcher			V	V	
	Western Kingbird	•	C	C	R	
	Eastern Kingbird	•	C	C	R	
	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher		V	V		

Vireos and Shrikes

	Cassin's Vireo		V	V	V	
	Blue-headed Vireo		R	R	R	
	Philadelphia Vireo		R	R	R	
	Warbling Vireo	•	U	U	U	
	Red-eyed Vireo	•	U	U	U	
	Loggerhead Shrike	•	U	U	R	
	Northern Shrike		U		U	U

Jays, Magpies, Crows, and Their Allies

	Steller's Jay		V		V	
	Blue Jay	•	C	U	C	C
	Black-billed Magpie	•	C	C	C	C
	Clark's Nutcracker				V	
	American Crow	•	C	C	C	U
	Common Raven	•	U	U	U	U

Chickadees and Larks

	Black-capped Chickadee	•	C	C	C	C
	Mountain Chickadee				V	V
	Boreal Chickadee				V	V
	Horned Lark*	•	C	C	U	U

Swallows

	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	•	U	U	R	
	Purple Martin		R	R		
	Tree Swallow	•	C	C	R	
	Violet-green Swallow	•	U	U		

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Bank Swallow	•	C	C	R	
	Barn Swallow	•	C	C	U	
	Cliff Swallow	•	C	C	R	
<i>Kinglets, Nuthatches, and Creepers</i>						
	Golden-crowned Kinglet		U	R	U	R
	Ruby-crowned Kinglet		U	R	C	
	Red-breasted Nuthatch	•	C	U	C	C
	White-breasted Nuthatch	•	U	R	U	U
	Brown Creeper		R	R	U	U
<i>Wrens, Dippers, and Starlings</i>						
	Rock Wren	•	U	U	R	R
	House Wren	•	C	C	C	
	Pacific Wren				V	V
	Sedge Wren			V	V	
	Marsh Wren	•	C	C	U	
	Carolina Wren				V	
	American Dipper				V	V
	European Starling	•	C	C	C	C
<i>Mimics and Thrushes</i>						
	Gray Catbird	•	C	C	C	R
	Brown Thrasher	•	U	U	U	R
	Sage Thrasher		V	V		
	Northern Mockingbird	•	V	V	V	V
	Mountain Bluebird	•	U	U	U	R
	Townsend's Solitaire		U	R	U	R
	Varied Thrush		R	R	R	R
	Veery	•	R	R	R	
	Gray-cheeked Thrush		R	R		
	Swainson's Thrush		C	U	U	
	Hermit Thrush		R	R	U	R

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Wood Thrush		V		V	
	American Robin	•	C	C	C	R
<i>Waxwings, Old World Sparrows, and Pipits</i>						
	Bohemian Waxwing*		U		U	U
	Cedar Waxwing	•	U	C	C	R
	House Sparrow	•	C	C	C	C
	American Pipit		R	R	U	
	Sprague's Pipit	•	R	R	R	
<i>Finches</i>						
	Brambling		V			V
	Evening Grosbeak		R	R	R	R
	Pine Grosbeak*		R	R	U	U
	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch		V		V	V
	House Finch	•	C	C	C	C
	Purple Finch		R	R	R	R
	Cassin's Finch		V		V	
	Common Redpoll*		U		U	U
	Hoary Redpoll*		R		R	R
	Red Crossbill*	•	R	R	R	U
	White-winged Crossbill*		R	R	R	U
	Pine Siskin*	•	U	R	U	U
	American Goldfinch	•	U	C	C	R
<i>Longspurs, Chats, New World Sparrows, and Their Allies</i>						
	Lapland Longspur		U	R	U	R
	Chestnut-collared Longspur	•	U	U	R	
	Smith's Longspur		V	V	V	
	Thick-billed (McCown's) Longspur	•	R	R	R	
	Snow Bunting*		U		U	U
	Grasshopper Sparrow	•	R	R	R	
	Chipping Sparrow	•	C	C	C	

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Clay-colored Sparrow	•	C	C	U	
	Brewer's Sparrow	•	R	R	R	
	Black-throated Sparrow		V	V		
	Lark Sparrow	•	U	U	R	
	Lark Bunting	•	R	R	R	
	American Tree Sparrow		U		C	U
	Fox Sparrow		R	R	R	R
	Dark-eyed Junco		C	R	C	U
	White-crowned Sparrow	•	C	R	C	R
	Golden-crowned Sparrow				V	
	Harris's Sparrow		R	R	R	R
	White-throated Sparrow		U	R	C	R
	Vesper Sparrow	•	C	C	U	
	LeConte's Sparrow		V	V	V	
	Nelson's Sparrow		V	V	V	
	Savannah Sparrow	•	C	C	U	R
	Baird's Sparrow	•	R	R	R	
	Song Sparrow	•	U	U	U	R
	Lincoln's Sparrow		C	U	C	R
	Swamp Sparrow		R	R	R	R
	Green-tailed Towhee			V		
	Spotted Towhee	•	U	U	U	
	Yellow-breasted Chat	•	R	R		

Blackbirds, Orioles, and Their Allies

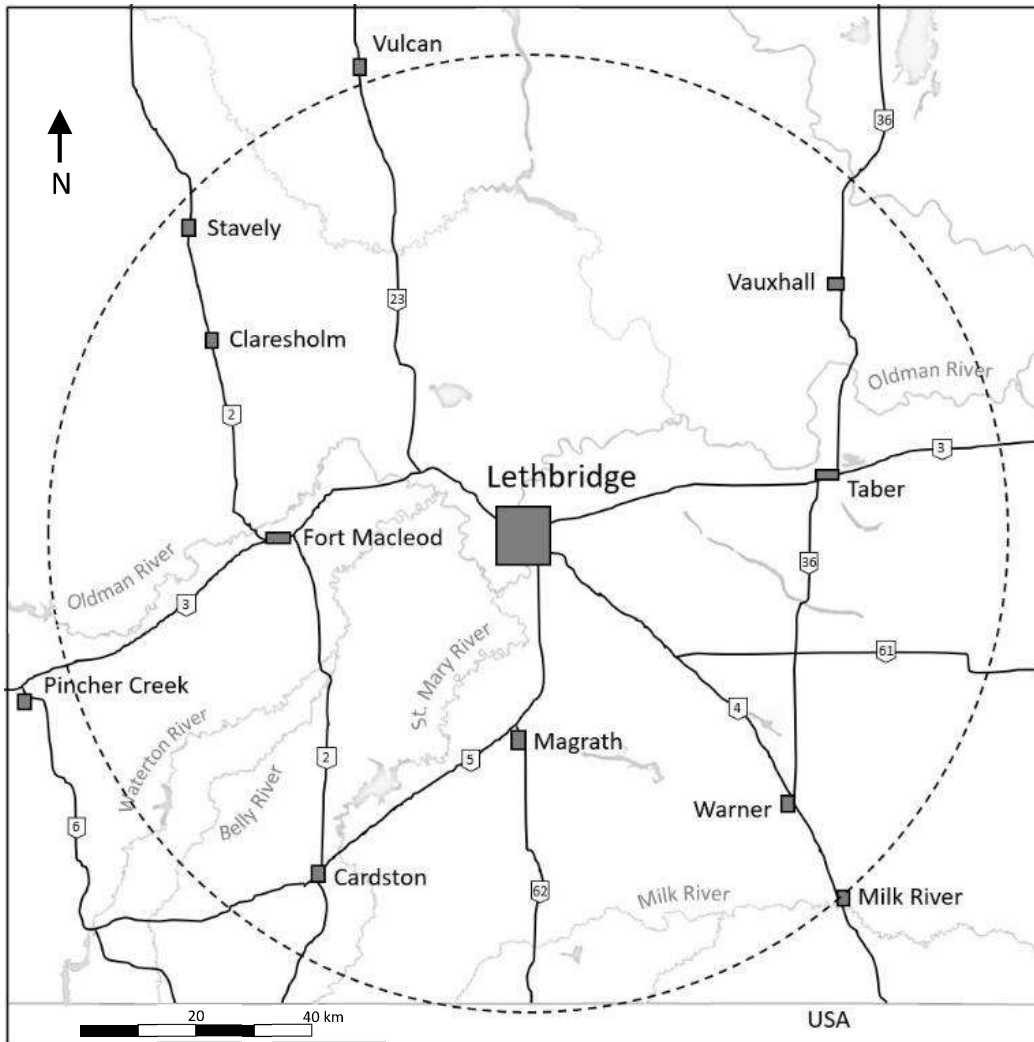
	Yellow-headed Blackbird	•	C	C	U	R
	Bobolink	•	R	R	R	
	Western Meadowlark	•	C	C	C	R
	Orchard Oriole			V		
	Bullock's Oriole	•	R	R		

✓	Species	B	Sp	Su	F	W
	Baltimore Oriole	•	C	C	R	
	Red-winged Blackbird	•	C	C	U	R
	Brown-headed Cowbird	•	C	C	R	R
	Rusty Blackbird		R		U	R
	Brewer's Blackbird	•	C	C	U	R
	Common Grackle	•	C	C	C	R
	Great-tailed Grackle		V	V		

Wood-Warblers

	Ovenbird		R	U	R	
	Northern Waterthrush		R	U	R	
	Black-and-white Warbler		R	R	R	
	Tennessee Warbler		U	U	U	
	Orange-crowned Warbler		C	U	C	
	Nashville Warbler		R		R	
	Connecticut Warbler			R	R	
	MacGillivray's Warbler		R	R	R	
	Mourning Warbler		R	R	R	
	Common Yellowthroat	•	U	C	U	
	American Redstart		R	U	U	
	Cape May Warbler		R	R	R	
	Northern Parula		V	V		
	Magnolia Warbler		R	U	U	
	Bay-breasted Warbler		R	R	R	
	Blackburnian Warbler		R	R	R	
	Yellow Warbler	•	C	C	C	
	Chestnut-sided Warbler			R	R	
	Blackpoll Warbler		U	U	U	
	Black-throated Blue Warbler				V	
	Palm Warbler		R	R	U	

Checklist Area



The region covered by this checklist is delimited by a circle 80 kilometres in radius centred on the intersection of Highway 3 and Mayor Magrath Drive. It encompasses the City of Lethbridge as well as the towns of Stavely, Claresholm, Fort Macleod, Cardston, Magrath, Warner, Taber, and Vauxhall, among others. Note that the circle captures a very small area south of the American border and the southeasternmost forested parts of the Porcupine Hills. Both are seldom birded and are not represented in this checklist.

Cover image: Ferruginous Hawk, sketch created using online converter with photo taken by David Scott in Warner County, August 2017.