

Baseline Bird Survey HandyDart site, Burnside Rd.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory

170-1581H Hillside Ave
Victoria, BC, V8T 2C1

3 July 2023



Stream restoration along Burnside Road (Ann Nightingale)



*Conservation through monitoring,
research, and public education*

Baseline Bird Survey at Burnside Rd. HandyDart site.

Conduct:

This survey was conducted at the site from 06:00 to 07:00 on Monday 3 July 2023.

Two surveyors from Rocky Point Bird Observatory covered the area to determine the number of individual birds of which species were to be found in the area.

Surveyors: Kim Beardmore, Ann Nightingale

The survey was carried out by both stationary observation and walking the area, noting all avian species seen and heard.

Summary:

Conditions for detection of birds in the area, both visually and aurally, were good. The weather was clear with no precipitation and little wind. Given the early hour on a holiday weekend, there was relatively light traffic on local roads, therefore vehicle noise was not especially troublesome. The area was well-covered.

Observations were made by the two surveyors over a period of one hour. The area was covered as shown on the map below (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Map of area surveyed.

Fig 1 provides an accurate depiction of the route followed by the surveyors (in blue) but does not show the recent construction underway to the east and north of the route shown. The reconfigured stream has been planted extensively with native plants which seem to be doing well despite the dry conditions which have prevailed for much of the spring and early summer this year. As these plantings mature, they should provide excellent habitat for ground and low bush nesting birds as well as forage opportunities for birds year-round.

Findings:

On 3 July, 72 individuals of 16 species were encountered. The counts of birds by species detected in the survey area are listed below (Table 1). For comparative purposes the species and bird counts for the previous survey at this site on 29 May 2022 are included in the table.

We were impressed with the reconstituted stream and the extensive native plantings. We observed bird activity throughout the area, although, not as much as might have been expected at this time of year absent the obvious disruptions caused by construction activity close by. Once construction is completed and the plantings have matured, we expect the area will provide excellent habitat and become very attractive to all forms of wildlife including both resident and migratory birds of a wide variety. A raccoon was seen foraging in the creek along Burnside Rd. during the survey.

Table 1. Birds detected at the HandyDart location.

Species	29 May 2022 Count	3 Jul 2023 Count
California Quail (<i>Callipepla californica</i>)	1	1
Rock Pigeon (<i>Columba livia</i>)		2
Eurasian Collared Dove (<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>)		1
Anna's Hummingbird (<i>Calypte anna</i>)	3	
Glaucous-winged Gull (<i>Larus glaucescens</i>)	2	
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	1	
Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)	4	
Northern Flicker (<i>Colaptes auratus</i>)	1	
Pacific-slope Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>)	1	
American Crow (<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>)		10
Warbling Vireo (<i>Vireo gilvus</i>)	1	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee (<i>Poecile rufescens</i>)	2	7
Bushtit (<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>)		22
Bewick's Wren (<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>)	1	
European Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	9	1
Swainson's Thrush (<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>)	1	
American Robin (<i>Turdus migratorius</i>)	12	7
Cedar Waxwing (<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>)	2	6
American Goldfinch (<i>Spinus tristis</i>)	2	4
House Finch (<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>)		2
Chipping Sparrow (<i>Spizella passerina</i>)	1	
Song Sparrow (<i>Melospiza melodia</i>)	8	3
Spotted Towhee (<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>)	8	5
Brown-headed Cowbird (<i>Molothrus ater</i>)	2	1
Orange-crowned Warbler (<i>Leiothlypis celata</i>)	1	
Yellow Warbler (<i>Setophaga petechia</i>)	1	
Total individuals	64	72
Total species	21	16



Fig. 2. (clockwise) American Robin (Ann Nightingale), American Goldfinch, American Crow, Bushtit (Kim Beardmore)



Fig. 3. Landscape along the stream (Kim Beardmore)

It is worth noting that species detected in the area pre-construction (May 2021) that were not observed on either of the surveys listed in this report include: Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*), Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina*),

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*), Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*), Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*), Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*), Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*), Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), and Wilson's Warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*). We expect most, if not all, of these species will return once construction is complete, given the restoration of the creek and surrounding area.

Recommendations:

It will be of interest to note the natural values of this area over time. To that end we recommend a nesting bird survey be conducted in May/June of the year following completion of construction on this site.

As noted above, the plantings appear to be doing well but, we did note that invasives such as Scotch broom and Himalayan blackberry are already in evidence. We recommend early action to eliminate these while they are easily seen, and their root systems are not yet well-developed making removal relatively easy.



Fig. 4. L to R: Scotch broom, Himalayan blackberry (Kim Beardmore)

End Note:

We noted with admiration efforts to protect the Killdeer nests and fledglings in the vicinity.



Fig. 5. Nesting area protection (Ann Nightingale)

All photos were taken on site during the survey.