**Bird Photography in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia**

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**Where are the best places to photograph birds near Vancouver?**

* Your back yard bird feeders
* George Reifel Bird Sanctuary, Delta, BC
* Boundary Bay
* Brunswick Point
* Tsatsu Shores, Tsawwassen, for Great Blue Herons (other GBH rookeries are located near Chilliwack, in Stanley Park, and at Ambleside Park in West Vancouver). The Tsatsu Rookery is the largest in British Columbia.
* Fraser Valley (Harrison Mills, Nicomen Slough for Bald Eagles in November; Brackendale for Bald Eagles in Winter)
* Burnaby Lake
* Maple Wood Flats, North Vancouver
* Deboughville slough, Coquitlam
* Elgin Park, South Surrey
* Blackie Spit, South Surrey
* Grant Narrows, Pitt Meadows, is great for ospreys, as well as other birds
* Richmond Nature Park
* Iona Beach, Richmond, for swallows, red winged blackbirds, yellow headed blackbirds, ospreys, terns.
* Centennial Beach for gulls, ducks, eagles, shore birds
* Colony Farm, Coquitlam.
* Blackie Spit, Surrey

**When is the best time to photograph birds near Vancouver?**

* Fall (and winter, too, is great for birds migrating from the north to our area. Raptors follow their prey, so owls, falcons, hawks, and eagles are all plentiful). Snow Geese and Swans arrive usually in October
* Cormorants and grebes feed in the Fraser River in the Fall and Winter.
* Bald eagles renovate their nests in the Fall after they return from their feeding migration.
* Bald eagles attract a lot of attention on 72nd Ave in the winter months.
* Snowy Owls, when they come to our area, can usually be found on the salt marshes at the foot of 72nd Ave.
* Short eared owls and Northern Harriers hunt the salt marshes of Boundary Bay, and Brunswick Point in the Winter months.
* In the spring, many opportunities are available for photographing nesting birds all over the area. Bald eagles, great blue herons, great horned owls, and humming birds all nest early, at the beginning of March. Bald eagles are predictable, sometimes only a day or even hours different from previous years. Almost every year, a sandhill crane pair in the Reifel Bird Sanctuary hatch one or more young.
* Ospreys nest later, usually early June.
* Each species of swallow arrives and nests at different times in the spring, some as late as June.
* Song birds begin nesting early in the spring, and may continue late into summer

**What is the ideal photographic gear for photographing birds?**

Camera body:

* High ISO capability
* Fast writing to a digital card. XQD is best.
* Very fast autofocusing capability
* Back button focussing capability

Lenses:

* Long lenses for reach. Ideally, a 400 mm, 500 mm, or 600 mm lens work best for reach.
* A 1.4x teleconverter adds to the lens reach. A 600 mm lens becomes an 840 mm lens.
* Lighter lenses are being developed that allow for hand held options. Newer cameras have high ISO capabilities, making “fast lenses” less important.

Tripod and head:

* A tripod that will hold your camera and lens securely
* Wimberly head allows for smooth movement for tracking

**Camera Settings**

* Auto ISO
* Auto white balance

**Post Processing Recommendations**

* Lightroom
* Photoshop
* Topaz Studio and Topaz standalone aps like aiGigapixel and their newest standalone ap aiSharpen

**Displaying Your Work**

Facebook:

* Canadian Bird Photographer
* British Columbia Birds
* Lower Mainland Raptors
* Photography – Nature, Wildlife, and Landscape

Flickr

Instagram

Redbubble

**Resources:**

* Useful books:

*Birds of Southwestern British Columbia, Richard Cannings, et al*

*The Birder’s Guide, British Columbia*, Keith Taylor

*National Audubon Society, Field Guide to Birds, Western Region*

*Peterson Field Guides, Western Birds, Roger Tory Peterson*

* Websites
  + Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [*www.birds.cornell.edu/*](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/)
  + Birding in British Columbia, <https://birding.bc.ca/>
  + British Columbia Field Ornithologists
* Organizations:
* David Hancock Wildlife Organization

https://hancockwildlife.org/

* Apps:
* iBirdPro
* Sibley Birds
* BirdsEye