

The Occurrence and Identification of Red-necked Stint in British Columbia

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Introduction

The first confirmed report of a Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) in British Columbia was an adult in full breeding plumage found on June 24, 1978 at Iona Island (see Table 1, confirmed records item 1). Recently another older sighting has been uncovered that fits the timing of occurrence for this species in BC and may be valid (see Table 2, hypothetical records item 1). Since the first initial sightings in the late 1970s, there has been a slow but steady increase in observations of this beautiful Asian shorebird in British Columbia and, indeed, across the whole of North America. With an increase in both observer coverage and the knowledge of observers, this species is now known to be of regular, and probably annual, occurrence during fall migration in coastal British Columbia. Additionally, this species is now recorded occasionally during spring migration, indicating that at least a few individuals may be successfully wintering farther south in the western hemisphere.

Identification of this species is straightforward when presented with a full breeding-plumaged adult, but identification of birds in juvenile and faded breeding plumage can be very complicated due to the close similarities to other small *Calidris* shorebirds. This paper describes the distribution and occurrence of the species in B.C., and also examines the similarities of all plumages of Red-necked Stint to species with which it might be confused, most notably Little Stint (*C. minuta*), Semipalmated Sandpiper (*C. pusilla*), and Western Sandpiper (*C. mauri*). It is hoped that the discussions presented here will fuel further interest in this species among birders in British Columbia and hopefully allow more people to be fortunate enough to lay eyes on this elusive shorebird gem.

Distribution

The Red-necked Stint breeds across the high arctic regions of Siberia Russia, ranging from the Taimyr Peninsula west across northern Siberia to the Chukotsky Peninsula. In North America, the breeding range of this species is limited to northern and Western Alaska, particularly along the coastlines of the Seward Peninsula and the coastal regions around Point Barrow. The Red-necked Stint winters widely throughout Southeast Asia, occurring from southern China and Myanmar west through Malaysia, Indonesia, coastal New Guinea, and Australia to New Zealand. The primary migration routes used in spring and fall bring large numbers of this species to Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and the Philippines (Veit and Jonsson 1984).

Away from their limited breeding range, Red-necked Stints in North America are regular (albeit rare to uncommon) as migrants only in the Aleutian Islands and through the Bering Sea of Alaska. Vagrants have been recorded along both coasts of North America, as well as in Hawaii, South America, Europe and South Africa (Veit and Jonsson 1984; Rosair and Cottridge 1995). There are 17 confirmed records for British Columbia, all from coastal regions, with 12 coming from the lower Fraser River Valley (Boundary Bay, Iona Island, Sea Island, Reifel Bird Sanctuary) (see Table 1, confirmed records 1-5, 8-14 and 16). Elsewhere in Canada, this species has been recorded once in Alberta and once in Saskatchewan (Escott 1995, Godfrey 1986).

Identification and Similar Species

It is crucial for observers to be aware of the fact that before attempting to identify any unusual shorebird one must determine the age of the bird in question. Thorough familiarity with all plumages of the more common species in the area, Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, is critical for those attempting to identify stints since the variation within the species often exceeds the differences between the species. It must be stated that, even if the identification seems confirmed, it is highly recommended that photographs be obtained (if possible) to completely eliminate any other similar species. For juveniles and faded adults, photographs may be necessary for full confirmation of the sighting.

The following structural clues will apply to all individuals, regardless of age or plumage:

The Red-necked Stint has a shorter, thicker-based, and more sharply tapered bill than Western Sandpiper, even when compared to shorter- and straighter-billed male Westerns. When compared with Semipalmated Sandpiper, the more strongly tapered bill of Red-necked Stint is an important field mark as Semipalmated is generally known for its straight, nail-like bill with little taper towards the tip (sometimes even appearing slightly bulbous at the tip). The bill of Little Stint is similar to that of Red-necked Stint but slightly longer and noticeably finer, especially at the tip (See Figures 1a-h).

The head of Red-necked Stint typically appears squarer than Little Stint, Western Sandpiper or Semipalmated Sandpiper, and usually shows a rather steep angle between the forehead and base of the bill. The body of Red-necked Stint often appears rounder-bellied than Western or Semipalmated Sandpipers, while at the same time showing a longer, more attenuated rear end due to the bird's longer primary projection (the primaries extending past the tip of the tail when folded). The belly of Little Stint also appears rounded, with the attenuated rear-end appearance even more pronounced. Of

course, such subtle structural clues require extensive field experience to fully understand and, even with this field experience, are usually more useful when in direct comparison with other similar species (See Figures 1a through 1h).

The legs and feet of Red-necked Stint are blackish in all plumages, as in Little Stint and both Western and Semipalmated Sandpiper (although some juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers can have paler olive legs), with the legs typically appearing slightly shorter than in Little Stint. The feet, however, lack the partial webbing between the toes that is present in two sandpipers. Although requiring a very close look, this mark can help distinguish Red-necked Stint from Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, although it should be noted that it does not help in differentiating individuals from Little Stint as that species also lacks this partial webbing. It should be noted that this field mark requires extremely close scrutiny to determine and is best left to photographs to confirm.

Figure 1: Adult Plumaged Stints and Sandpipers



Figure 1a
An adult Little Stint molting into breeding plumage.
Photo taken in the Netherlands on May 5, 2005 by Pim A. Wolf.



Figure 1b
An adult Little Stint in full breeding plumage. Photo taken in the Netherlands on June 5, 2005 by Pim A. Wolf.



Figure 1c

An adult Red-necked Stint in full breeding plumage. Photo taken in the Netherlands on July 4, 2004 by Pim A. Wolf.



Figure 1d

Another view of an adult Red-necked Stint in breeding plumage. Photo taken in the Netherlands on July 4, 2004 by Pim A. Wolf.



Figure 1e

An adult Semipalmated Sandpiper in full breeding plumage. Photo taken at Iona Island Sewage Ponds in Richmond BC on July 24, 2005 by Rick Toochin.



Figure 1f

Another view of an adult breeding plumaged Semipalmated Sandpiper. Photo taken at Iona Island Sewage Ponds in Richmond BC on July 24, 2005 by Rick



Figure 1g

An adult Western Sandpiper molting into breeding plumage. Photo taken on April 23, 2004 at French Creek on Vancouver Island BC by Mike Yip.



Figure 1h

An adult Western Sandpiper in worn breeding plumage. Photo taken on July 19, 2005 at the base of the Roberts Bank Coal Port Jetty in South Delta BC by Rick Toochn.

Figure 2: Juvenile Plumaged Stints and Sandpiper



Figure 2a

A brightly colored juvenile Little Stint. Photo taken in August 2004 in Finland by Jorma Tenovuo.



Figure 2b

A head on picture of a brightly plumaged juvenile Little Stint. Photo taken on September 20, 2004 in Finland by Markus Keskitalo.



Figure 2c
A bright juvenile Red-necked Stint. Photo taken in July 1997 in Japan by Mike Danzenbaker.



Figure 2d
A side view of a bright plumaged juvenile Red-necked Stint. Photo taken in early September 2005 in Beidahe, Hebei, China by Alister Benn.



Figure 2e
A close up frontal view of a juvenile Red-necked Stint. Photo taken in July 1997 in Japan by Mike Danzenbaker.



Figure 2f
An extremely buffy juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper. Photo taken on July 25, 2004 at Iona Island Sewage Ponds in Richmond BC by Rick Toochin.



Figure 2g

A juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper. Photo taken on August 12, 2005 at the foot of 80th Street in Boundary Bay BC by Rick Toochin.



Figure 2h

A side view of a juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper. Photo taken on August 15, 2005 at the foot of 104th Street in Boundary Bay BC by Rick Toochin.



Figure 2i

A juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper showing extreme color variation. Photo taken on September 12, 2005 at the foot of 96th Street in Boundary Bay BC by Rick Toochin.



Figure 2j

Another angle of the same juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper. Photo taken on September 12, 2005 at the foot of 96th Street Boundary Bay by Rick Toochin.



Figure 2k
A group of juvenile Western Sandpipers.
Photo taken on August 27, 2005 near the
end of the Iona Island South Jetty in
Richmond BC by Rick Toochin.



Figure 2l
A bright juvenile plumaged Western
Sandpiper. Photo taken on August 27, 2005
near the end of the Iona Island South Jetty in
Richmond BC by Rick Toochin.

The Identification of adults in bright breeding plumage anywhere in B.C. should present few problems, particularly when compared to similarly-plumaged Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, but this species can be highly variable with regard to the extent of red on the throat and face and care may be required when confronted with individuals with reduced red, particularly when compared with Little Stint (See Figure 1a compared to Figure 3b). When in full breeding plumage, such as those individuals seen on the coast in late June and July, the red throat and face of Red-necked Stint should catch the observer's eye immediately and allow for quick identification (See Figure 1c and Figure 1d).

The following additional field marks should prove helpful when confronted with a faded or worn adult (such as in mid- to late summer) and a thorough knowledge of these additional features may be necessary for identification in some cases.

The Red-necked Stints seen on the coast in late June and through July are often in full breeding plumage, at which point the entire head, throat, and upper breast are rich rusty-red (except for narrow blackish streaks on the crown and a small pale area around the base of the bill), eliminating confusion with any other species. Spring Red-necked Stints in very fresh breeding plumage have extensive red on the face and throat, as in full breeding plumage, but the red colouration is often paler and more washed out and the narrow blackish crown streaks are edged with frosty-white. From mid-July through August, however, observers may be confronted with worn, faded breeding adults which

may appear superficially similar to our other small sandpipers, most notably breeding Little Stint, although the reddish colouration on the head and breast of Little Stint is slightly more orange-tinged than in Red-necked Stint. When worn, the throat and supercilium of Red-necked Stint become gradually whiter and the red colouration becomes less extensive, until at the extreme it is reduced to a pale reddish wash across the upper breast and on the crown, nape, and auriculars (Lewington *et al.* 1991). As well, the auriculars and lores become increasingly dusky, eventually appearing to form a narrow dark mask across the face. The pale supercilium often splits up the forehead, a feature shared with (and even more prominent in) Little Stint but not Western or Semipalmated Sandpipers (Lewington *et al.* 1991). Breeding-plumaged Western Sandpipers throughout the summer have all reddish tones on the head restricted to the auriculars, crown, and upper nape, never extending anywhere onto the throat or upper breast as in Red-necked Stint (See Figures 1g and 1h and compare to Figures 1c and d). Breeding-plumaged Semipalmated Sandpipers generally lack any reddish tones on the head, making separation from adult Red-necked Stint straightforward (See Figures 1e and f and compare to Figures 1c and d).

A critical feature for separation of adult Little and worn adult Red-necked Stints is the distribution of dark speckling on the breast. In Red-necked Stint, these dark speckles are below the pure reddish breast, even when worn, whereas in Little Stint the reddish colouration across the upper breast is peppered with dark speckles throughout (Lewington *et al.* 1991) (See Figure 1b and compare to Figure 1c).

In Red-necked Stints, the dark spots below the red throat form a necklace across the upper breast, extending only slightly down the upper sides. In both Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, these dark spots extend further down the sides to the upper flanks, often appearing as more extensive streaks (Compare Figure 1c-d and 3a-b to Figure 1e-f and Figure 1g-h).

Both Red-necked and Little Stints are separable from Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers by upper part colouration, as the scapular feathers of both have bold, rounded black centres, distinct reddish edges, and whitish tips (Lewington *et al.* 1991, Veit and Jonsson 1984). Western Sandpipers also have rusty-red scapular feathers, but in that species the red colouration is located near the base of each feather, separated from the whitish featheredge by an anchor-shaped black band. Semipalmated Sandpiper also has black feather centres, like Red-necked and Little Stints, but largely lacks the reddish colouration (although some have a slight reddish tinge along the edges) and the black centres are less rounded. The mantle on Red-necked and Little Stints shows a

series of blackish lines with two whitish lines along the edge of the scapulars forming a whitish “V” when viewed from behind (Lewington *et al.* 1991). Although a similar field mark is shown by Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, it is much more noticeable in the stints. With Little Stints showing bold mantle “V” markings and Red-necked Stints showing softer less defined mantle “V” markings (Lewington *et al.* 1991, Grant *et al.* 1984). Additionally, even in the brightest breeding plumage, the wing coverts and tertials of Red-necked Stints are always grayish or brownish with paler feather edges (some tertials occasionally with reddish edges in the brightest adults) (Veit and Jonsson 1984). This feature is a good field mark for separating adults from adult Little Stints, which show extensive rufous feather edges on the upper wing coverts and tertials in breeding plumage (Veit and Jonsson 1984)(See Figure 1c and compare to Figure 1b).

The Identification of juvenile Red-necked Stints in British Columbia is very difficult given the similarities to other juvenile peeps, especially juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers, and extreme caution is necessary when attempting to identify such a subtly distinctive plumage. Variation within the small *Calidris* sandpipers is very extensive, often confusing even shorebird experts, and a cautious approach must be taken with vagrants such as Red-necked Stints. Juvenile Red-necked Stints can vary from dull-plumaged birds resembling Semipalmated Sandpipers to brighter, rustier birds more similar to Little Stints, with the brightest and freshest-plumaged birds occurring earlier during migration with the brightest juvenile Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers (the latter is a particularly important pitfall for those not familiar with the plumage). The subtle structural differences of individual *Calidris* species becomes even more important than when confronted with adults, and as a result it is highly desirable that photographic evidence be obtained of suspected juvenile Red-necked (or Little) Stints (See Figures 3c-e and Figure 3f).

One feature of the two juvenile stints that may help separate them from juvenile Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers is the “capped” appearance of the head which is created by the brighter, rusty crown contrasting sharply with the grayish nape. This collared pattern is most obvious when viewed from behind or above and is much more prominent in Red-necked and Little Stints than the two sandpipers, although those species can also show a suggestion of the pattern (See Figures 2a-b along with Figure 2c and compare to Figures 2g-h and 2k-l). As well, the sides of the crown of Red-necked Stint tend to be paler and more finely streaked than the centre of the crown, a feature that can be used to separate such individuals from juvenile Semipalmated Sandpiper with its usually more uniform crown (Lewington *et al.* 1991). Another feature that is shared by the two stints but is not as prominent on the two sandpipers is the split

supercilium. On Red-necked Stints and, especially, Little Stints, the whitish supercilium splits in front of the eye, with a narrow spur running up the side of the forehead and, often, along the side of the crown in addition to the supercilium (Lewington *et al.* 1991). This forehead pattern is best observed when viewing the bird head-on or from above, although it is not nearly as prominent as on juvenile Little Stints (See Figure 2b). In Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers this feature is absent or much reduced and is never as prominent as in the two stints. Additionally, the supercilium of Red-necked Stints is usually interrupted above the eye by a diffuse, dusky area, a feature typically not shown by the other species with which it can be confused (Lewington *et al.* 1991). The ear coverts of Red-necked Stints tend to look more uniformly dark than on Little Stints, which often has a paler area behind the eye (Lewington *et al.* 1991).

The sides of the neck and sides of the breast in juvenile Red-necked Stint are usually washed with buff and finely streaked, a feature which can be used to separate those birds from juvenile Little Stints which tends to have the buff wash and slightly more prominent streaking extend across the upper breast (Lewington *et al.* 1991)(See Figures 2c-e and compare to Figures 2a-b and Figure 3f).

The most consistent difference between juvenile Red-necked Stints and the other small *Calidris* sandpipers is the pattern of the mantle and scapular feathers. When fresh, both Red-necked and Little Stints have distinctive stripes down each side of the mantle, often referred to as white “braces,” giving the birds the appearance of having a white “V” down the back when viewed from behind (Lewington *et al.* 1991, Veit and Jonsson, 1984)(See Figure 2b and Figures 2d -e). These white “braces” generally become much less distinctive or even almost absent in Red-necked Stints as the plumage becomes worn whereas in Little Stints they tend to remain bold and distinctive throughout juvenile plumage, allowing this feature to be used to separate the two stints in late summer when in faded plumage (Lewington *et al.* 1991). The mantle feathers of the stints in particular tend to be richer and brighter rufous than in Western or Semipalmated Sandpipers, adding further contrast to the white and dark mantle stripes (Lewington *et al.* 1991). This “streaked” appearance of the mantle is particularly useful when separating juvenile stints from juvenile Semipalmated Sandpipers, as that species tends to have a more “scaled” or “scalloped” pattern on the mantle due to the very fine pale fringes on the feathers (See Figure 2g-2j). The upperparts of worn juvenile Red-necked Stints can often approach the appearance of juvenile Western Sandpipers, with the bold rufous scapulars contrasting with the duller, grayer mantle and wing coverts, although the brightness of the scapulars and their subsequent contrast are typically not quite as apparent as on the sandpiper (Lewington *et al.* 1991). A further distinction

between these two species is the face pattern, which appears “cleaner” in Western Sandpipers with a bolder, broader, unbroken whitish supercilium (Lewington *et al.* 1991). The breast of Western Sandpipers also tends to have slightly more extensive fine streaking, although this is most apparent only on fresh birds (See Figure 2k and Figure 2l).

The scapular feathers of Red-necked Stints offer a further distinction from Little Stints and the two North American peeps. In Red-necked Stints, the lower scapulars are dull grayish with buffy or rufous-buff fringes and a dark, anchor-shaped distal area, fading to dull grayish with paler fringes when worn (Lewington *et al.* 1991). In Little Stints, these lower scapulars have fully dark centres with narrow whitish and rufous edges, giving the bird an overall brighter rufous appearance on the upperparts. This contrasting, brighter rufous appearance is also enhanced by the extensive rusty edges to the dark wing covert and tertial feathers in Little Stints (Lewington *et al.* 1991). In Red-necked Stints, these feathers are duller grayish with pale edges (sometimes tinged with some rufous on the wing coverts), often giving the wings a washed-out, grayish appearance (Veit and Jonsson 1984)(Compare Figure 2d with Figure 2a to see differences). The scapulars of Western Sandpipers differ from both Red-necked and Little Stints in being more extensively rufous towards the base with blackish marks towards the tips and pale fringes, especially when fresh (Lewington *et al.* 1991)(See Figure 2l). In Semipalmated Sandpipers the scapulars are more akin to Red-necked Stints, although the more prominent pale fringes give them a scaly appearance (Lewington *et al.* 1991)(See Figures 2g-i).

The identification of breeding-plumaged Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), a common migratory species along the coast of British Columbia, can cause unexpected confusion for observers unaware of the similarities between that species and Red-necked Stint. Breeding-plumaged Sanderlings often begin to appear along the B.C. coast early in fall migration (July), at the same time when most occurrences of breeding-plumaged Red-necked Stints have been recorded in the province. Compared to Red-necked Stint, Sanderling is a much larger and noticeably chunkier shorebird, a fact that is especially evident when it is seen in the vicinity of Western or Semipalmated Sandpipers. When direct comparison to other small sandpipers is not possible, the most reliable plumage feature to separate Sanderling from Red-necked Stint is the presence of dark spotting throughout the red face and neck color (Chandler, 1989). Red-necked Stint, in comparison, has black spotting restricted to a band across the upper breast below the extent of red colour, with the red face and throat unspotted. Sanderling is a longer-billed, longer-legged species than Red-necked Stint and, with exceptional views; the

absence of a hind toe in Sanderling can also be used to differentiate the two species (Chandler 1989).

Another species closely resembling breeding-plumaged Red-necked Stint is breeding-plumaged Spoon-billed Sandpiper (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*). This critically endangered species has occurred once in British Columbia (Iona Island, Vancouver: July 30-August 3, 1978) (Campbell *et al.* 1990, Paulson 1993). According to BirdLife International, the current world population of Spoon-billed Sandpipers is thought to have declined from 4000-6000 breeding pairs to less than a 1000 breeding pairs (Tomkovich *et al.* 2001). The Spoon-billed Sandpiper is a widely migratory species wintering in select regions of South East Asia from Thailand to Bangladesh and breeding in the Far East of Russia (Tomkovich *et al.* 2001). Because Spoon-billed Sandpipers are highly migratory there is always an extremely remote chance of another bird finding its way down the West Coast of North America. When possible, this species is best separated from Red-necked Stint by the thicker bill base and unique spatulated bill tip (Hayman *et al.* 1986). The brick red face, throat, and upper breast of a breeding-plumaged adult Spoon-billed Sandpiper are similar to that of a breeding Red-necked Stint, but the dark breast streaks extend lower on the breast and down the flanks (Hayman *et al.* 1986). The top of the forehead, crown and hindneck are suffused with chestnut-red and dark brown (Hayman *et al.* 1986). The supercilium is chestnut-red and suffused with dark brown in front of the eye, fading to whitish behind the eye (Hayman *et al.* 1986). The whitish feathering around the base of the bill in the Spoon-billed Sandpiper is also more extensive than on Red-necked Stint (Hayman *et al.* 1986). On the back there is a well defined pale mantle "V" on Spoon-billed Sandpiper, and the dark feather centres and yellow-chestnut feather fringes of the scapulars extend further down on the wing towards the coverts than on adult Red-necked Stint (Hayman *et al.* 1986). "Spoon-billed Sandpipers have a distinct feeding behaviour that is unique among all the world's sandpipers, moving their head from side to side using their spatulated bills to catch their intended prey (Hayman *et al.* 1986).

In the unlikely event that Spoon-billed Sandpiper ever occurs again in British Columbia it is important for observers to be aware of the best distinguishing field marks.

The call notes given by Red-necked Stint include coarse, almost squeaky *chit*, *prip*, and *pit-pit-pit* notes, sounding lower-pitched than the short, dry *stut* call of Little Stint and approaching the lower *cherk* or *chru* calls of Semipalmated Sandpiper (Hayman *et al.* 1986). The call notes of Red-necked Stint differ greatly from the sharp, high-pitched, almost grating *jeet* or *cheet* calls of Western Sandpiper. Red-necked Stint also sometimes gives a short trill when flushed (Hayman *et al.* 1986).

Occurrence and Documentation

Red-necked Stint in British Columbia is primarily a bird of fall migration along the coast, with the majority of records concentrated around the shorebird meccas of the lower Fraser River Valley. Elsewhere along the coast, fall records have come from the Queen Charlotte Islands, southern Vancouver Island, and the Gulf Islands. This species is much rarer in spring, although a couple of spring records exist for the lower Fraser River Valley and one for eastern Vancouver Island. Although no records exist, it could potentially also turn up with flocks of migrating peeps anywhere in the interior of the province. Whenever found in British Columbia, this species is invariably found in association with other small *Calidris* sandpipers, particularly Western and Semipalmated Sandpipers, occurring in habitats such as mudflats, sandy beaches, and sewage ponds. Within these flocks, adult Red-necked Stints are usually very obvious with their extensively red head, although faded adults may require closer scrutiny to pick out. In British Columbia, all but one of the confirmed records of Red-necked Stint are of adult birds in breeding plumage, indicating the relative ease at which this plumage is located and identified compared to juveniles. The single confirmed record of a juvenile bird is of one photographed in late fall at Iona Island near Vancouver. Although unconfirmed, several other credible records of juvenile Red-necked Stint exist for the coast of the province, their status as hypothetical because these records lack of photographic evidence.

Adult Red-necked Stints generally appear with the first waves of adult Western Sandpipers, from late June through July, with the brightest birds found earlier during migration. This time represents the peak of occurrence of the species in B.C., although the difficulty of locating and identifying faded adults and juveniles likely obscures its true status through the remainder of fall migration. Juvenile Red-necked Stints probably associate with migrating juvenile Western Sandpipers, which begins in late July and continues to early October. The three spring records of Red-necked Stint are all in May with returning flocks of adult Western Sandpipers. Two of these spring records were preceded by fall records the previous year, suggesting that either the same birds are involved in both fall and spring or that multiple Red-necked Stints are passing through this region each fall, with the few that survive the winter reappearing the following spring. The latter hypothesis seems much more likely.

Although a great deal of luck is required when searching for Red-necked Stint in B.C., a key to success may be monitoring the major weather systems in the North Pacific from late June through October. Large, fast moving low-pressure systems tracking from the northwest that bring strong winds to the Pacific coast of Canada sometimes bring with them an assortment of unusual long-distance migrants from Alaska and northeastern

Siberia, including Red-necked Stint. Low-pressure centres can travel from the Aleutians or the Bering Sea region south to coastal British Columbia within a 24-hour time period. Remnants of typhoons in the western Pacific can also track from the vicinity of Japan to the British Columbia coast within 3 days, possibly influencing bird migration patterns of these strong offshore migrants. The larger and faster-moving the storm is, the better can be the results for overall shorebird numbers and the chances of finding a Red-necked or Little Stint. As an example, a juvenile Little Stint found at the tip of the Iona South Jetty on October 5, 1999 was found immediately following a rapidly moving weather system that moved from Alaska to the south coast of British Columbia in approximately one day (M. Meredith of Environment Canada in Toronto pers. comm.). This type of weather pattern also holds true for finding other rare but regularly occurring Asian shorebird species in British Columbia such as Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruff and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. There is no guarantee that these large low pressure systems will produce these exotic rarities from Asia, but this type of weather does help increase the likelihood of these birds making their way to areas south of Alaska to British Columbia. Being aware of this fact can only help observers search for a Red-necked Stint in their local shorebird spot.

Figure 3: Recent BC Records of Red-necked Stint and Little Stint



Figure 3a

This adult breeding plumaged Red-necked Stint was found at the mouth of the Englishmen River Mouth in Parksville represents the first confirmed record for Vancouver Island and one of a very few Spring records for the West Coast of North America away from Alaska. This photograph was taken on May 7, 2005 by Guy Monty.



Figure 3b

Though slightly out of focus this image of an adult Red-necked Stint (the bird in the upper left of the picture) shows a variant plumaged bird with reduced red on the face and throat. As a result this bird has a paler head and face than is normally expected on a bird in early July but has the rich red color on the lower throat. The long wing extension and body shape combined with the dark centered scapulars are indicative of this species. Besides the lower red breast another good mark in the lack of side and flank streaks on this bird when compared to the adult Western Sandpiper (the bird on the lower front right side of the picture). This bird was found at the Iona Island Sewage Ponds in Richmond BC during the more expected month of July when the majority of BC records have occurred for this species. Photograph was taken on July 2, 2005 by Rick Tootchin.



Figure's 3c-e

The pictures below show the first photographed juvenile Red-necked Stint outside of Alaska. This bird was found on October 28, 1999 at Iona Island Sewage Ponds in Richmond, BC. These photographs were taken on November 14, 1999 by Jo Ann MacKenzie.



Figure 3f

This is the first juvenile Little Stint to be photographed in BC. This picture was taken in Boundary off the foot of 96th Street on September 21, 2005 by Rick Toochin.



Figure 3g

This picture shows an adult breeding plumaged Little Stint (the bird in focus in the upper left of the picture) with an adult Western Sandpiper. This bird was found by Tom Plath and represents one of the few records photographed in BC. This picture was taken in the Iona Island Sewage Ponds in Richmond on July 20, 2006 by Walter Ammann.

Table 1: British Columbia Records of Red-necked Stint: Confirmed Records:

1. (1) adult breeding plumage June 24-25, 1978: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Campbell *et al.* 1990)
2. (1) adult breeding plumage July 13-15, 1978: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Campbell *et al.* 1990)
3. (1) adult breeding plumage August 25-26, 1978: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Campbell *et al.* 1990)
4. (1) adult breeding plumage July 3-4, 1986: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Campbell *et al.* 1990)
5. (1) adult breeding plumage June 26-July 5, 1988: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Campbell *et al.* 1990)
6. (1) adult breeding plumage July 18, 1989: Sidney Island, Victoria
(D. Allinson Pers. Comm.)
7. (1) adult breeding plumage June 23-24, 1992: (photo) Sandspit Airport, QCI
(P. Hamel Pers. Comm.)
(2) adults breeding plumage June 25, 1992: (photo) Sandspit Airport, QCI
(P. Hamel Pers. Comm.)
(1) adult breeding plumage June 26-28, 1992: (photo) Sandspit Airport, QCI
(P. Hamel Pers. Comm.)
8. (2) adults breeding plumage July 13, 1992: 112th Street, Boundary Bay (Dorsey 1996)
9. (1) adult breeding plumage May 20, 1997: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Plath 2000)
- 10.(1) adult breeding plumage June 19, 1997: Reifel Refuge, Ladner (Plath 2000)
- 11.(1) adult breeding plumage July 2, 1998: Iona Island, Richmond (Plath 2000)
- 12.(1) juvenile plumage October 28-November 17, 1999: (photo) Iona Island, Richmond
(Bain and Shannon 1999)
- 13.(1) adult breeding plumage May 15, 2003: 96th St. @ The Mansion, Boundary Bay,
Delta (Bain 2003a)
- 14.(1) adult breeding plumage August 7, 2003: 104th St., Boundary Bay, Delta
(Bain 2003b)
- 15.(1) adult breeding plumage May 7, 2005: (photo) mouth of Englishman River Estuary,
Parksville (G. Monty Pers. Comm.)
- 16.(1) adult faded breeding plumage July 2, 2005: (photo) Iona Island Sewage Ponds,
Richmond (R. Toochn Pers. Comm.)
- 17.(1) adult faded breeding plumage July 16, 2005: Witty's Lagoon, Victoria
(D. Allinson Pers. Comm.)
- 18.(1) adult faded breeding plumage August 11, 2006: 104th Street, Boundary Bay
(Ilya Povalyaev Pers. Comm.)

- 19.(1) juvenile August 26, 2011: Nathan Hentze et al (photo) Witty's Lagoon, Metchosin (N. Hentze Pers. Comm.)
- 20.(1) adult breeding plumage July 18, 2012: Peter Hamel: Little Spit, Sandspit, QCI (P. Hamel Pers. Comm.)
- 21.(1) adult breeding faded plumage July 27-29, 2012: Kevin Louth et al (photo) 96th St., Boundary Bay, Delta (Toochin 2012)
- 22.(1) adult breeding plumage August 4-5, 2013: John Chandler, mobs (photo) west of 104th St., Boundary Bay, Delta (P. Levesque Pers. Comm.)

Table 2: British Columbia Records of Red-necked Stint: Hypothetical Records:

1. (1) adult breeding plumage July 4, 1961: Sea Island, Richmond (J. Toochin Pers. Comm.)

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