



## The BIRDS OF COLONY FARM REGIONAL PARK (Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam)

Colony Farm Regional Park offers excellent opportunities to see birds and other wildlife. The park is located along the Coquitlam River and contains a range of habitats important to wildlife, including wetlands, forests and meadows. Of particular importance is the old-field habitat – one of the largest protected areas of such habitat in Greater Vancouver.

Most of the park offers easy flat terrain along hard-packed gravel trails. The Coquitlam River divides the park into approximately two equal halves which are joined within the park by the Millennium Bridge.

Colony Farm is managed by Metro Vancouver Parks and in addition to birding, offers walking, botanizing, running and cycling opportunities. To prevent disturbance of wildlife and destruction of fragile habitats, dogs must be kept on a leash at all times. Many bird species nest on the ground in the fields, so please stay on the dyke trails. More information and trail maps can be found on the Metro Vancouver Parks [website](#).

This checklist (*overleaf*) includes Colony Farm Regional Park, adjacent areas visible from the park, and the Coquitlam River Wildlife Management Area. Most of the information is based on the status of each species over the

past 10 years, represented by black bars. Red bars indicate historical status for species that no longer occur in the months indicated. The information is derived from records and experience of many observers, including over 1400 lists of birds submitted to [eBird](#), an online database. An additional list of species that were on the earlier (1996) checklist but for which documentation is lacking, is also included.

**Habitat** Colony Farm Regional Park occupies an area of about 262 ha (655 acres) and consists predominantly of open field habitat with shrubs, trees, and water channels bordering the field margins and dykes. The Coquitlam River meanders through the centre of the park. The river is shallow and silty here and has wide shrub-filled banks. A pond and wetland area were created on the east side of the park near the Shaughnessy Street entrance. The Pumphouse Trail runs beside the pond and is a good viewing place for waterfowl, especially in the fall and winter months. Although the entire park is important to wildlife only some fields (mainly on the Port Coquitlam side) are designated in the Park Management Plan for wildlife habitat (111 ha). The remainder of the fields are designated for either agricultural use (75 ha) or integrated management which is intended to be a blend of wildlife use and compatible agriculture (46 ha).

**Birds** About a dozen species recorded in the park are threatened or endangered. Birders can see 50-60 species during a spring visit, or 20-30 species in winter. Species to look for include Virginia Rail and Sora, which can be found at the pond at any time of the year but most often in spring and early fall. In early spring, watch for Mountain Bluebirds which stop-in during migration. Later in spring, Cinnamon Teal often appear. The park has a small population of

Lazuli Buntings, a rare species in Vancouver. They breed in the mixed field and shrub area west of the Forensic Institute. Green Herons can sometimes be seen along the ditches beside the Coquitlam River during the summer months. Summer is also a good time to see large numbers of Black-headed Grosbeaks and Band-tailed Pigeons, which are attracted to Elderberries in the fields. In winter, Northern Shrikes can be found hunting from perches on top of the bushes. In the checklist, the asterisks beside species' names indicate birds known to have nested in the park. Several additional summer species undoubtedly nest here, such as Virginia Rail, Sora and Brown Creeper, but to date we lack evidence. Reports of breeding evidence are welcome at [BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com](mailto:BurkeMtnNats@gmail.com).

**Other Wildlife** An endangered land snail, the Oregon Forestsnail, is found here. Other endangered species that potentially or are known to occur are Snowshoe Hares, Western Painted Turtles and Pacific Water Shrews. It is possible to see deer, coyotes and the occasional bobcat in the park. Several species of bats can be seen.

**Trails** The Traboulay PoCo Trail runs through the park along the east side of the Coquitlam River and provides easy access into and out of the park on its north and south sides. This trail circles the city of Port Coquitlam. The complete circuit is about 25 km.

Once the new Metro Vancouver water main is constructed, a new trail will be created on top of it. This will follow the west side of the park from the Forensic Institute up to the Lougheed Highway and provide a loop trail around the fields. The expected completion is late 2016. A new Sheep Paddocks Trail will be constructed in 2016; this trail will be close to the Lougheed Highway on the northwest side of the park and

provide access to the Mundy Creek Trail to the south and the northern park entrance on the Pitt River Road.

**COQUITLAM ENTRANCE** Immediately over the railway tracks on Colony Farm Road (off from the Lougheed Highway), there is a small parking area that provides access to the Mundy Creek Trail. The larger main parking area is 1.2 km further down Colony Farm Road. Here there are washroom facilities, picnic tables and an information kiosk with maps. An organic community garden, open to the public, is located here as are two remaining heritage buildings from the time when this was a working farm. From here, one short trail leads to the west of the Kwikwetlem First Nations community to the mouth of the Coquitlam River. An excellent route for birding is along the Garden Trail, over the Millennium Bridge, along the dyke north to the Pumphouse Trail to the pond.

**PORT COQUITLAM ENTRANCE** There is a trailhead (with an information kiosk) leading into the park with a small parking area on Shaughnessy Street. The trail here is the Pumphouse Trail leading to the pond and wetland area. There is also a northern park entrance accessed from the Pitt River Road near the Red Bridge. This is not part of the park, but from here you can walk or cycle south into the park, passing a swampy side channel of the Coquitlam River on the way.

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Funding for this leaflet was provided by  
TD Canada Trust and by



The Colony Farm Park Association

