



Where are the White Tailed Ptarmigan on Vancouver Island?



The Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucurus saxatilis*) is found exclusively on Vancouver Island. "This small, chicken-like bird is one of the few that lives in the alpine year round. Ptarmigan always have a distinctive white tail and wings, but their body feathers change from white in the winter to a mottled brown in summer and fall. These wily birds are able to hide in plain sight in the alpine, subalpine, heather, or on rocky slopes. In summer, they are often found near snow field edges. Ptarmigan are sometimes confused with blue grouse, which move up into the alpine in late summer. Blue grouse have a gray-blue band on their dark tail.



Photos by S. Ogle

WINTER PLUMAGE.

Note coloured bands on legs

SUMMER PLUMAGE

White Tailed Ptarmigan SITING RECORD CARD

AREA SURVEYED

Loc : General (eg Strathcona Park) _____

Specific (eg Mountain or Ridge) _____

Date: month, day, year ____/____/____ Time in ____ out ____

SIGHTING INFORMATION

OF BIRDS IN GROUP _____ Habitat _____

adults # young .eg alpine, subalpine forest, heather, rock (specify male or female if known)

LOCATION BY: GPS or NTS Map (circle one)

ZONE (e.g. 10U) _____ NORTHING _____ EASTING _____

NTS MAPSHEET NO.: _____ and North American Datum (NAD) used 27 or 83 (circle one)

OR GPS PRECISION (+/- metres) _____

Comments (e.g., behaviour, plumage colour, size of chicks, predators in vicinity)

Observer name and address _____



The 2001/2002 Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan Conservation Project is financially supported by Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Important Bird Areas program, and with technical assistance from UBC. This public outreach and education initiative has grown to become a community partnership, relying on volunteers and local hiking clubs, coordinated by Strathcona Wilderness Institute.



White Tailed Ptarmigan

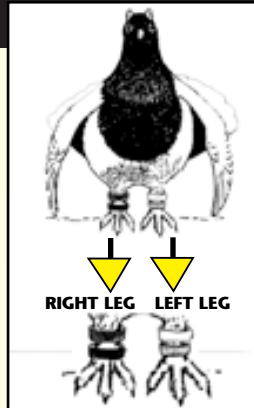
The Vancouver Island White-tailed Ptarmigan is on the "Blue List" of British Columbia, which means that they are designated as vulnerable to declines from either human activities or natural events. Two areas on Vancouver Island have been designated as Important Bird Areas for Ptarmigan: Strathcona Park and Mt. Arrowsmith area mountains.

In 1995 research was initiated to determine distribution, abundance, and status of this listed subspecies. This research, combined with observations from hikers and naturalists, showed that White-tailed Ptarmigan occur in low numbers, but are widely distributed across Vancouver Island. They have been found in alpine areas on south, central and northern Vancouver Island, from Mt. Brenton to Tsitika Mountain.

Over 300 white-tailed ptarmigan were colour banded across Vancouver Island. The banding of individual birds helps in the study of their population ecology and behaviour. We currently need information on locations of Ptarmigan - and you can help! We would like you to read and record the colour bands on each leg of the Ptarmigan when you visit the alpine. Please consider recording your Ptarmigan observations, using the data cards located at selected trail heads. Thank you and good birding!

Kathy Martin Department of Forest Sciences University of BC

White Tailed Ptarmigan SITING RECORD CARD



COLOR BAND INFORMATION

Birds will have two bands on each leg. Please record colours seen on each leg making sure to record colours on each leg, top and bottom.

Banded birds will have a combination of four of the following colours:

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| Red | Pink |
| Blue | Black |
| White | Green |
| Orange | Yellow |

COLOUR BAND INFORMATION OF ADDITIONAL BIRDS SEEN

BIRD 2	Right leg	Left Leg	BIRD 3	Right leg	Left Leg
Top	_____	_____	Top	_____	_____
Bottom	_____	_____	Bottom	_____	_____

Please drop observations in box or send to
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