

**Rare Species observed on Fraser River Ecological Reserve #76 Islands**

Submitted May 2020 (photos by Bev and Bill Ramey, unless otherwise noted)

**Liverwort:** *Riccia frostii*

Identified by Terry Taylor during the Wardens tour on October 7, 2011.

Photo by Rosemary Taylor:



**Western Toad**

Seen every couple of years, often several small ones in spring (having overwintered but not grown much), plus at times large toads.



Western Toad (April 24, 2018)





Western Toad (April 24, 2018)



Western Toad August 20, 2011

### **Lady-Beetle**

Native 9-spot Lady Beetle, location information sent to Conservation Data Centre (sighting April 24, 2018)



Native 9-spot Lady Beetle, together with leaf-eating beetles.

### **Western River Pearl Mussel**

Shells (empty) found on several times: Dec 2014, April 2016, March 2017, Oct 2017, Oct 2019. Reported to Conservation Data Centre  
Identified by staff at Ministry of Environment as the endangered Western River Pearl Mussel



These photos from Dec 7, 2014





### **Burrowing Owl**

Seen only once (April 12, 2014). We hope it was migrating to the interior and had stopped to rest on the Ecological Reserve gravel bars. The sighting and photos were reported to Burrowing Owl Recovery Team and captive breeding program. Leg bands were not observed as the owl's legs were hidden and we did not want to disturb the owl.)



Burrowing Owl glaring over rim of old tire, flotsam, on gravel bar. Photo taken with zoom and then cropped, so we were not as close to the owl as the photo makes it appear.

## Spring Migration of Birds

Although not one particular rare species, it appears that the Fraser River ER Islands provide important habitat for some bird species during spring migration. As the surrounding mainland has become increasingly developed, this ER may now be functioning as critical habitat.

Black bellied Plovers are using the islands as loafing and resting areas during their migration in early April on their way to breeding/nesting in far north tundra of Alaska, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Here's numbers observed in April, and note the largest number, 275, in 2015.

April 13, 2013 – 200

April 12, 2014 – 35

April 10, 2015 – 275

April 10, 2016 – 150

April 24, 2018 – 6 (likely after peak migration)

April 29, 2019 – 2 (likely after peak migration)



The Black-bellied Plovers in breeding plumage are located in front of the gulls. They blend into the gravel river rock shoreline, looking almost like stones. We use a spotting scope to count them (April 10, 2016)





The Black-bellied Plovers show more readily in this photo taken April 10, 2015.

Other bird species are also using the islands during spring migration. Here's some examples;

Northern Shoveler – 30 observed April 24, 2018

Violet-green Swallow and Tree Swallow – hundreds are observed in early April feeding and flying high or swooping low, over the Fraser River and ER islands.

Common Merganser often seen, but in late April, numbers seen are higher. For example, 60 observed April 29, 2019.

American Pipit – loafing and feeding in early seral vegetation along gravel bars – 30 seen April 12, 2014