

May 5, 2009

The 12th Annual Tofino Shorebird Festival A Great Success!



TOFINO BC -- Over 100 people attended the 12th Annual Tofino Shorebird Festival, a weekend of talks & slideshows, film events, guided birding and interpretive walks held in the Tofino area May 1-3, 2009.

The 2009 Shorebird Festival included a talk by Yuri Zharikov (Monitoring Ecologist for the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve) about the use of maps and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to predict shorebird distribution in intertidal areas, guided birding sessions with Tofino bird expert [Adrian Dorst](#) and avid local birder Pete Clarkson, an interpretive walk with naturalist Silva Johansson about shorebird diets, and a reception featuring art work and writing about birds and the Tofino Mudflats by Wickaninnish Elementary School Students.

The weekend's highlights included the sighting of two Red Knots, a very rare shorebird (listed on Canada's Species At Risk list), several close encounters with flocks of feeding Whimbrels (large shorebirds with a long down-curved bill), and a young Peregrine Falcon making numerous attempts to capture a Dunlin from amongst a flock of over a thousand birds.

The festival is organized and sponsored by the [Raincoast Education Society](#), a community-based charitable organization dedicated to helping shape an environmentally sensitive future for the Clayoquot and Barkley Sound region through education and community stewardship. The goal of the Shorebird Festival is to increase awareness about and appreciation for the migratory shorebirds that visit the [Tofino Mudflats](#) and Tofino area beaches each spring during their long migration northward to their Arctic breeding grounds. The festival forms an important part of the Society's Tofino Mudflat Wildlife Stewardship Project (funded by the [Habitat Conservation Trust Fund](#)), designed to increase awareness about the ecological and social importance of the Tofino Mudflats and to inspire both local residents and visitors to care for the mudflats and the wildlife that use them.

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Dozens of species of migratory shorebirds (any of numerous wading birds that frequent mostly seashores and estuaries) such stop at the Tofino Mudflats to rest and feed on invertebrates

living in the mud. The Tofino mudflats are the only area on the west coast of Vancouver Island known to support large numbers of shorebirds, and are thought to be second only to the Fraser River Delta in importance as a feeding and resting site for Western Sandpipers in British Columbia. They are designated an [Important Bird Area](#) of Canada and lie within the [Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve](#).

The 2010 Tofino Shorebird Festival will be held over a weekend in May 2010. Specific dates will be finalized early in 2010, please check the website of the Raincoast Education Society for updates and schedules.

For more information, please contact:

Raincoast Education Society
Tel (250) 725-2560
info@raincoasteducation.org



Whimbrel

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Species List from 2009 Shorebird Festival

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover
Greater Yellowlegs
Whimbrel
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Dunlin
Sanderling
Red Knot
Short-billed Dowitchers

Ducks

Mallard
Gadwall
Northern Pintail
American Wigeon
Northern Shoveler
Green Winged Teal
Common Merganser
Bufflehead

Geese

Greater White-fronted Goose
Canada Goose

Raptors

Bald Eagle (juvenile and adult)
Peregrine Falcon
Osprey

Gulls

Glaucous-winged Gull

Swallows

Barn Swallow

Wrens & Sparrows

Winter Wren
Belted Kingfisher
White-crowned sparrow