

PARKSVILLE QUALICUM BEACH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

**ESTIMATED DAILY BRANT COUNT REPORT
2016**

ARROWSMITH NATURALISTS
for
THE NATURE TRUST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Sandra Gray, count coordinator and compiler

The 2016 **Brant primary counts** covered the full length of the Parksville Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area (PQBWMA). Each of the seven primary counts took place between February and April over a 1 – 2.5 hour time period between 10:30 am to 2:30 pm on the dates shown in **Table 1**. Observers met at a central location then divided into 1, 2 or 3 groups, each group with their assigned area to cover, with all counting at the same time in order to avoid double counting.

In addition to the primary counts, **incidental counts** as seen in **Table 2**, were done by individuals or small groups of observers as they recorded Brant numbers during their visits to the PQBWMA shoreline January through April. The incidental counts show the concentrations of Brant at specific locations, some counts were as short as ten minutes with most about two hours in length.

Count locations:

Area 1- Little Qualicum River, Kincaid Rd, Qualicum Beach

Area 2- Seacrest Pl, Butterball Dr, Johnstone Rd, Admiral Tryon Blvd West and East, Columbia Beach

Area 3- French Creek Marina, Parksville Bay, Mariner Way, Rath Trevor Provincial Park

Total mileage of approximately **1030 km** was accumulated by participating volunteers on the seven primary counts, including round trip from home. There was considerable additional mileage on incidental counts that was not recorded.

The seventeen 2016 Brant count volunteer observers were: Sandra Gray, Dan Gray, Roger Simms, Elaine LeFebvre, Dave Hutchings, Dave Erickson, Jim Goodwin, Lynne Brookes, Derrick Grimmer, Jane Towill, Tom Constable, Lou Poncelet, Helen Poncelet, Alison Bakker, JR Rardon, Rob Schippers and Jeanne Schippers.

Sandra Gray
May 20, 2016

date	<u>primary</u> <u>Brant</u> <u>counts</u>	PQBWMA – BRANT COUNT 2016 – Table 1 Remarks: eg. location, conditions, disturbance
Feb 19, 2016	347 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #1. We had choppy seas, big waves, strong winds and some rain for our first Brant Count. Gulls were mostly huddled in protected spots. In deeper water we could see some Brant, scoters, diving and dabbling ducks, and sea lions between the wave crests. Largest groups of Brant were at Rathtreavor. 14 observers.
Feb 29, 2016	759 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #2. It was windy with choppy seas. A prime feeding time just before the lowest tide of the day. Gull and diving duck numbers are rising. Herring fishery assessment in progress with opening soon. Dogs off leash in Area 2 which also held the largest groups of Brant at Seacrest. 9 observers.
March 4, 2016	1115 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #3. Rain and very strong winds made it hard to hold binoculars still ... the Lion of March was growling today. Many small groups of Brant were seen out on the Strait of Georgia and flying about between the crashing waves. Largest concentrations of Brant were at Qualicum Beach viewing stand, between Seacrest and Johnstone Rds and at Rathtreavor Beach where 600 were feeding along the tideline. Eagles and breaking waves were the major disturbance factors. 8 observers.
March 18, 2016	623 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #4. Sunny skies, no clouds, calm seas. Huge raft of diving ducks in Parksville Bay, mostly scoters, scaup, LT Ducks, Harlequin, goldeneye, Bufflehead. Many people and some dog disturbance at Rathtreavor. Recent herring activity: March 3-6- Baynes Sound, Denman; March 6- Georgia Strait opening; March 9- heavy spawn Comox; March 14- Seacrest to Columbia Beach, Area 2; March 16- French Creek to Parksville Bay, Area 1. 10 observers.
April 1, 2016	1616 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #5. Calm seas gave good visibility including clear views of resting and flying Brant out on Georgia Strait. A very large raft of 12,000+ diving ducks and many thousands of gulls were spread from Qualicum Beach to Columbia Beach. Paddle boarders caused some disturbance to the migrating waterfowl and gulls. People and dogs on the beaches were mostly absent today. Brant and other birds were feeding on herring roe that was spread along the shoreline and floating in the shallows. Sea lions and harbour seal numbers have dropped, small groups could be seen resting/floating with flippers up. Herring fishery is closed here. Area 2 and Rathtreavor had the largest concentrations of Brant today. 7 observers.
April 12, 2016	1820 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #6. We started at Rathtreavor and were met with strong winds and whitecaps on a high tide, only a few Brant could be seen. Brant were concentrated at: Parksville Community Park (253); Admiral Tryon West (616); Qualicum Beach viewing stand (425); Little Qualicum River (350). While in Area 2 we saw a large group of Brant and gulls disturbed several times by eagles and strong wind gusts, as there were very few people and no dogs on the beach. By the time we reached the Little Qualicum River seas had calmed with views of huge rafts of diving ducks, 600+ wigeon and Brant were clearly visible as they dabbled at the herring roe and seaweeds present at the tide line. 4 observers.
April 22, 2016	496 daily total Brant PQBWMA	Primary Count #7. Calm seas with very little wind made viewing conditions good including clear views way out on Georgia Strait. The very low tide had all Brant at the tide line feeding with minimal disturbance or flying by in small groups. Largest groups of Brant were at Rathtreavor and Parksville Bay. American Wigeon, Bufflehead, scoters, Red-necked Grebe and Bonaparte's Gulls where the other most numerous birds present. One Whimbrell was seen at the mouth of the Englishman River. 5 observers.

date	incidental <u>Brant</u> <u>counts</u>	time (daylight hours)	PQBWMA – BRANT COUNT 2016 – Table 2 Remarks: eg. location, conditions, disturbance
Fall & Winter 2015	7-60		Brant arrived late November. Several local birders reported counts of 7- 60 Brant late November through December.
Dec 20, 2015	16	8am – 4pm	Parksville Qualicum Beach Christmas Bird Count (BCPQ) covers full length of PQBWMA. Members of 2 teams saw Brant near the mouth of Englishman River.
Jan 1, 2016	13	11:30 am – 1 pm	Parksville Bay, Area 3
Jan 13, 2016	23	11 am -1 pm	Brant Point, Rathtrevor, Area 3
Jan 14, 2016	42	12:30-2:30 pm	Rathtrevor, Area 3
Jan 31, 2016	81	12-2 pm	mouth of Englishman River, Area 3
Feb 2, 2016	31	1-1:30 pm	Parksville Bay, Area 3
Feb 10, 2016	286	1-1:30 pm	Rathtrevor, Area 3
Feb 12, 2016	195	12-2 pm	Area 2
Feb 16, 2016	445	3-4:45 pm	Area 2
Feb 20, 2016	56	1:30 – 4 pm	mouth of Little Qualicum River, Area 1
Feb 22, 2016	350	11:30 am - 2 pm	Brant Pt, Rathtrevor, Area 3
Feb 23, 2016	425	1 - 3:30 pm	West end of Admiral Tryon, Area 2
Feb 24, 2016	37	12 – 2 pm	Mariner Way, mouth of Englishman River, Area 3
Feb 25, 2016	535	1 – 5 pm	West end of Seacrest, Area 2
March 5, 2016	145	1:30 pm	Qualicum Beach viewing stand, Area 1
March 6, 2016	110	11 am	Qualicum Beach viewing stand, Area 1
March 7, 2016	182	11:15 am	Rathtrevor Park, Area 3
March 10, 2016	126	2 -2:40 pm	Area 2
March 11, 2016	57	9:30 am – 11:15 am	Rathtrevor Park, Area 3. Orcas visiting Craig Bay.
March 12, 2016	560	12:45 – 2 pm	Area 2. Dogs on leash allowed by owner to flush feeding Brant repeatedly. Mom w/kids taking photos as they flushed Brant. Beach walkers disturbed Brant 8 times.
March 13, 2016	60	12:15 -12:30 pm	Rathtrevor Park, Area 3
March 14, 2016	86	9:30 am -12 pm	Area 2, herring spawn in progress.
March 16, 2016	223	3-5 pm	Parksville Bay, Area 3. Herring fishery in progress.
March 17, 2016	300	11- 11:15 am	Johnstone Rd, Area 2
March 17, 2016	391	3:15 -4 pm	Brant Pt, Rathtrevor, Area 3. Brant disturbed repeatedly by pushy photographer for over 30 minutes.
March 20, 2016	175	10 am – 3 pm	Brant in the Bay, wildlife watch event for Brant Wildlife Festival, at Parksville Community Park, Area 3.
March 22, 2016	0	1 – 2:45 pm	Area 1, no Brant.
March 25, 2016	1475	1 – 4 pm	Area 2
March 26, 2016	1005	2:30 – 3 pm	Area 2
March 31, 2016	1048	1:30 – 3:30 pm	Area 2
April 2, 2016	1190	1:30 – 2:45 pm	Area 2
April 3, 2016	400	10 am	Kincaid Rd, Area 1
April 3, 2016	250	3:30 pm	Qualicum Beach viewing stand, Area 1
April 4, 2016	344	1:30 pm	Rathtrevor, Area 3
April 6, 2016	300	10:30 am	Mouth of Englishman River, Area 3
April 6, 2016	200	2 pm	Qualicum Beach viewing stand, Area 1
April 15, 2016	630	3-4:30 pm	Area 2
April 18, 2016	200	6:30 pm	Parksville Bay, Area 3
April 19, 2016	250	9:30 am	Rathtrevor Park, Area 3