

Rustic Bunting

Emberiza rustica (Pallas)

RANGE: Occurs annually in North America in the western Aleutian Islands of Alaska and less regularly further east in the Aleutians and on the Alaskan islands in the Bering Sea. Native to northern Europe and Asia, where it breeds from northern Scandinavia, northern Russia, and northern Siberia southeast to southeastern Siberia, northern Sakhalin, the Sea of Okhotsk, and Kamchatka. Winters in eastern China, Japan, and, rarely, the Commander Islands.

STATUS: On the coast, *accidental* in the Georgia Depression Ecoprovince and *casual* in the Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince.

OCCURRENCE: Three records. The first Canadian record of the Rustic Bunting was from the Queen Charlotte Islands, where 2 birds were observed near Queen Charlotte City on 26 October 1971 (Crowell and Nehls 1972a; Godfrey 1986). The second record was of a bird in winter plumage that was present for 88 days at Jordan River, 80 km west of Victoria, from 25 November 1983 to 20 February 1984 (Campbell 1984b; Hunn and Mattocks 1984; Mattocks 1984). It regularly visited a feeder and usually associated with a large flock of Dark-eyed Juncos. It was photographed on 3 December 1983 (BC Photo 883; Fig. 722). On 8 December 1990, a single bird arrived in a backyard in Tofino, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and remained in the vicinity of a feeder until at least 12 April 1991, when it was last reported (Siddle 1991b; Fig. 723).

The Rustic Bunting occurs annually in small numbers as migrants in the Aleutian Islands and irregularly elsewhere in



Figure 722. Rustic Bunting in winter plumage on southwestern Vancouver Island, in the Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince of British Columbia (Jordan River, 80 km west of Victoria, 3 December 1983; Tim Zurowski).

south coastal Alaska (Roberson 1980; West and Bailey 1986). Recently, the species has been seen with increasing frequency along the Pacific coast of North America from British Columbia to northern California (Gilligan et al. 1994; Small 1994).

REMARKS: Two other sightings have been reported. A single bird was found in Coquitlam, east of Vancouver, on 12 December 1988, and another was seen briefly near Port Hardy, on northern Vancouver Island, on 4 January 1991. Both lack adequate details for inclusion here.



Figure 723. During the winter of 1990-91, a Rustic Bunting (centre) visited a feeder almost daily in Tofino, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, in the Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince of British Columbia (Tofino, January 1991; Aurora M. Paterson).