

FIRST BREEDING RECORD FOR CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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The Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*) is an eastern North American species that breeds primarily in northern hardwood and mixed forests from southern Canada southward through the Appalachian Mountains to northern Georgia (Richardson and Brauning 1995). According to Bent (1953) it is one of the few species of Neotropical migrants that has benefited greatly from human-related activities such as clearing of forests and the subsequent growth of shrubby habitats that it prefers. The Chestnut-sided Warbler is extending and expanding its breeding range westward across southern Saskatchewan to central Alberta (Salt and Salt 1976, Semenchuck 1992, Smith 1996).

In British Columbia, the Chestnut-sided Warbler was first recorded in 1971 at Mount Robson Park (Shepard 1972) and at least 36 additional times between 22 May and 29 September through 1997 (Campbell et al. 2001). During that period males were found in 18 different locations and near Revelstoke they were in full song occupying territories for several weeks during the breeding season.

On 19 August 1998, my wife and I were wandering through the picnic site at Puntchesakut

Lake, in the Chilcotin country east of Quesnel, British Columbia. I saw a small songbird flitting around on, and near the ground, and soon realized it was feeding fledged young. The adult bird was a female Chestnut-sided Warbler. The two fledged young were begging continuously. The adult female was feeding amongst small shrubs and plants in a young trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) forest beside the lake. The habitat was generally very open making the family group quite easy to observe on the ground. Observations continued for about 10 minutes.

In southern Ontario, dates for nests found with eggs (n=156) ranged from 25 May to 22 July and with nestlings from 5 June to 7 August. Also, fledged young being attended by at least one adult have been found in the vicinity of the nest until 18 August (Peck and James 1987, R.D. James pers. comm.). Lawrence (1948) found that young might continue to beg and be fed by the adults for up to 28 days after fledging.

The Chestnut-sided Warbler continues to expand its range in British Columbia, especially in northeastern portions of the province, where additional breeding is suspected (R.W. Campbell pers. comm.).

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About the Author

Gary, who moved to Nakusp in 1975 after two years in Fort Nelson, British Columbia has been busy in a variety of volunteer activities in British Columbia. These include coordinating Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts for over 30 years, serving as the Kootenay Region sub-editor for "*North American Birds*" for over 20 years, and regularly participating in the "*Birds of British Columbia*" project and the British Columbia Nest Record Scheme. He served as the first chair of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists Birds Records Committee for six years and is presently a Director of the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies. Recently, he volunteered to act as the West Kootenay Regional Coordinator for the upcoming British Columbia Breeding Bird Atlas project.
