

Red-necked Phalarope

Phalaropus lobatus

STATUS

Special Concern 

Not Listed 



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Species Description

The Red-necked Phalarope is a small shorebird (18-19 cm long), with a black, needle-like bill. Its breeding plumage can be characterized by red-orange stripes along the base of its neck, extending up the side of its head. The remainder of its plumage is dark grey, aside from its white underside, cheeks, throat and eye spots. Non-breeding plumage includes a white neck, breast, underside, and head, aside from a dark stripe behind the eye and cap on the top of its head.

Occurs offshore of Nova Scotia during migration. Overwinters off the coast of Peru.

Population Range



Habitat

In Nova Scotia, it is primarily found offshore in marine habitats while migrating. It breeds in Arctic or sub-Arctic wetlands, particularly near open sources of freshwater with emergent aquatic vegetation, grasses and sedges.



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Rarely observed from the coast, it is generally observed offshore from July to September during migration.



Interesting Points

- Females are known to desert their nests in search of additional males to mate with during breeding season, leaving the male to care for nests.
- Red-necked Phalaropes form large flocks at sea where they will feed on zooplankton.
- It can move its legs to create a vortex that sucks hard to reach prey to the surface while it spins on top of the water.
- It either breeds or migrates through every province and territory in Canada.



Breeding plumage

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Similar Species

Red Phalarope:

Slightly larger (20-22 cm) with a thicker bill and red breeding plumage extending to the breast and undersides.



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Wilson's Phalarope:

Slightly larger (22-24 cm) with a longer bill and fainter colouration.



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Threats to Survival

- Climate change (loss of arctic breeding habitat, increasing sea surface temperature affecting prey availability).
- Pollution (oiling, ingestion of plastics, contamination of breeding habitat with mercury, pesticides, and other aquatic pollutants).



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In flight

How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and distinguish it from similar species. Document and report any sightings on eBird and iNaturalist. Though Red-necked Phalaropes are not usually detected from the coast in Nova Scotia, participating in the Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey is a way to help increase understanding of shorebird populations. Support efforts to designate protected and conserved areas in marine ecosystems (for migration and wintering) and Arctic ecosystems (for breeding).



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Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

Contact: NS Department of Natural Resources: biodiversity@novascotia.ca

Info: www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Sighting Reports: 1-866-727-3447, www.ebird.org, www.inaturalist.org

Stewardship: Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey: shorebirds@ec.gc.ca