

Lesser Yellowlegs

Tringa flavipes

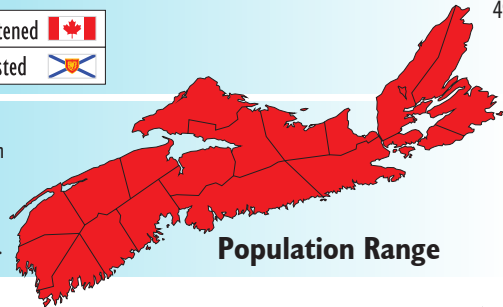
Threatened 

Not listed



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Nova Scotia falls along the southbound migration path of the Lesser Yellowlegs as it makes its way to its wintering range in Central and South America.



Population Range

Habitat

During their migration, Lesser Yellowlegs utilize both freshwater and marine shoreline habitats in Nova Scotia and are often found in saltmarshes, muddy and sandy shorelines, and occasionally in freshwater wetlands. It breeds in the Boreal region, nesting close to a variety of different wetland types such as bogs, fens, marshes, and ponds.



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Species Description

The Lesser Yellowlegs is a medium sized (23-25 cm long) shorebird with long, bright yellow legs. It is a long and slender bird, with a straight, thin, black bill about the same length as its head. It has greyish-brown plumage, with darker wings, fine grey streaking on the head, neck and upper breast, mostly white underparts, and a white eye-ring. Its colour appears washed out when in non-breeding plumage. When flushed, Lesser Yellowlegs give a distinctive one- or two-note high-pitched call.

Look for Lesser Yellowlegs from July to October during their fall migration south, or less commonly during their spring migration from April to May.

Interesting Points

- Canada is home to the majority (64%) of the world's Lesser Yellowlegs, and its population has shown a strong decrease since the 1970s.
- It uses its thin bill to grab small fish, worms and aquatic insects while it walks through shallow water.
- It closely resembles the Greater Yellowlegs in appearance yet is actually more closely related to the Willet.



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Similar Species

Greater Yellowlegs:

Difficult to distinguish from the Lesser Yellowlegs at a glance. Larger (29- 33 cm long) with a longer, thicker, slightly upturned bill. Tends to frequent saltwater habitat more often than Lesser Yellowlegs.



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Stilt Sandpiper:

Slightly smaller (20- 23 cm long) with a drooping bill and proportionately larger head. Legs may appear greenish and plumage on back lacks silvery checkered appearance.



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Threats to Survival

- Shoreline hardening (seawalls, riprap, bulkheads, etc.) resulting in the loss of essential foraging and roosting habitat.
- Sport and subsistence hunting in its southern winter range.
- Conversion of wetlands used as stopover sites into agricultural land.
- Loss of wetland breeding habitat due to drier boreal climate.
- Climate change (severe weather events impacting migration, rising sea levels).



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Shoreline hardening

How You Can Help

Learn to recognize these species and keep an eye out for them during their stopover in the fall. If you have spotted one, take a photograph, record the location, and report your sighting to eBird or iNaturalist. Help monitor shorebirds by participating in the Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey. Advocate for climate change initiatives, and the protection of the province's coastal habitats.



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Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

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

Info: www.sararegistry.gc.ca; www.naturecounts.ca/nc/socb-epoc

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

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