

# Short-billed Dowitcher

*Limnodromus griseus hendersoni/griseus*

## STATUS

Threatened 

Not listed 

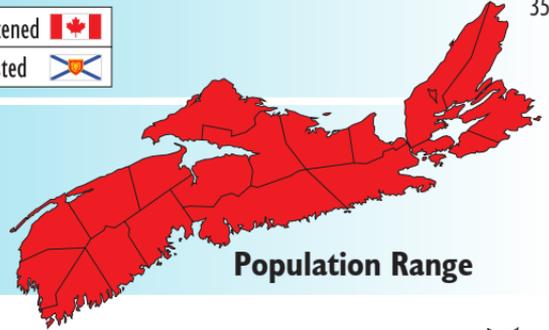


© TYLE BLANET

## Species Description

The Short-billed Dowitcher is a medium sized (25-29 cm) shorebird with a football-shaped body, short neck, and moderately long legs. Despite what its name suggests, it has a very long, straight bill. Its non-breeding plumage is brownish grey with barring on its flank. Its breeding plumage consists of varying tones of orange that may range from its neck to underparts. When foraging, its back appears flattened, and its head moves up and down in a sewing-machine like pattern.

May be found throughout Nova Scotia during its migration. Winters from the Atlantic coast of the US to Central and South America.



Population Range

## Habitat

Found primarily in coastal habitats such as salt marshes, lagoons, sandy or rocky beaches, and tidal flats in protected bays as it migrates through Nova Scotia. It may also be observed stopping inland at freshwater wetlands and ponds with muddy margins, or manmade environments such as flooded farm fields. It primarily forages in habitats where only a few inches of water cover a muddy bottom.



© OLIVIA BIRCHELL



© CARTER FEHRMAN

Generally observed in coastal habitats and wetlands from July to September.



## Interesting Points

- Three subspecies of Short-billed Dowitcher breed in Canada; *hendersoni* in central and western Canada, *griseus* in northeastern Canada, and *caurinus* from Alaska to southern British Columbia.
- Although it is not a short-billed bird, its name aims to differentiate it from the Long-billed Dowitcher, which has a slightly longer bill.
- During migration it often flies and forages with other shorebird species, such as the Red Knot.



© TYLE BLANET



© MARY KENNEDY

## Similar Species

### Long-billed Dowitcher:

Similar in size (approx. 29 cm), longer bill, and rounder belly. Back appears humped while foraging.



© TYLE BLANET

### Stilt Sandpiper:

Smaller (approx. 22 cm), drooped tip of bill, longer greenish-yellow legs.



© TYLE BLANET

## Threats to Survival

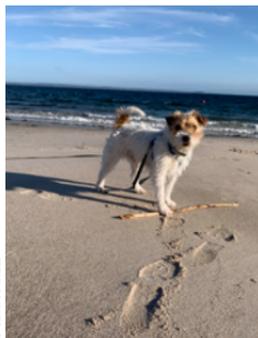
- Shoreline hardening (seawalls, riprap, bulkheads, etc.) resulting in the loss of essential foraging and roosting habitat.
- Disturbance from people and off leash dogs.
- Breeding, foraging, and wintering habitat loss (melting permafrost, advancement of tree line in sub-Arctic, rising sea levels, urban development).
- Sport and subsistence hunting in its southern winter range.
- Conversion of wetlands used as stopover sites into agricultural land.
- Mortality and delays during migration caused by increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events and strong winds.



© MARY KENNEDY

## How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and keep an eye out for them during their stopover from July to September. 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. Keep dogs on leash at beaches where birds are present. Advocate for climate change initiatives, and the protection of the province's coastal habitats.



© OLIVIA BURDELL

Dogs on-leash help shorebirds

## Contacts, Information & Sighting Reports

**Contact:** NS Department of Natural Resources: [biodiversity@novascotia.ca](mailto:biodiversity@novascotia.ca)

**Info:** [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** 1-866-727-3447, [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org), [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org)

**Stewardship:** Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey: [shorebirds@ec.gc.ca](mailto:shorebirds@ec.gc.ca)