

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS NEWSLETTER

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B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dates: August 23 to 25, 1991 (Friday to Sunday)

Location: Delta Town & Country Inn, 6005 Highway 17 at
Highway 99, Delta, B.C. V4K 4E2 (Phone: 946-4404)

Program: Field trips on Friday evening, Saturday morning,
and Sunday; guest speakers and business meeting,
Saturday afternoon; banquet and banquet speaker,
Saturday evening.

Rob Butler, Canadian Wildlife Service, will be
banquet speaker; afternoon speakers will include
Jean-Pierre Savard, Sean Boyd, Gary Kaiser, and Dave
Dunbar, on a variety of ornithological topics.

Accommodation: Delta Town & Country Inn, \$66.60 (double);
this is a 10% discount from the normal rate, and is
available if you identify yourself as a BCFO meeting
registrant when you reserve your room. Book early-
late August is a busy time!

Other nearby accommodation:

Best Western Tsawwassen Inn (943-8221): \$80 up

Pillars Inn (943-2214): \$49 up

Tsawwassen Motel (946-4288): \$50 up

Parkcanada RV Park & Campground (943-5811): \$12-\$18

COMPLETE DETAILS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE JUNE NEWSLETTER!

WELCOME TO B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

On behalf of the founding directors of British Columbia Field Ornithologists, I extend a welcome to our fledgling society. Our intent is that BCFO should serve the interests of everyone interested in the study and enjoyment of birds in B.C. We expect that the great majority of our members will be amateur ornithologists and birders, but we hope that some professional ornithologists will join BCFO as well. One of our main goals is to improve communication between amateur and professional ornithologists, and especially to encourage cooperative research projects like bird censuses, Breeding Bird Surveys, migration studies, beached bird surveys, breeding bird atlases, and others that depend on the involvement of large numbers of amateurs. Much of the information on birds that we need to know for research and conservation purposes can only be gathered through the efforts of numerous volunteers, and there is much that both amateurs and professionals can learn from each other.

We have chosen the name, British Columbia Field Ornithologists, to indicate that we are primarily interested in outdoor studies of birds in the wild, not in indoor or laboratory studies. Although laboratory studies are crucial to the understanding of bird biology, we feel that most of these studies will not be of great interest to amateurs.

BCFO had its beginnings in discussions among several of us in the late summer and fall of 1990. Our first organizational meeting was held on December 1, 1990, and subsequent meetings have been held on January 12, February 16, and March 16, 1991. Our founding directors include Mike Force, Tom Hanrahan, Doug Kragh, Hue and Jo Ann MacKenzie, and Wayne Weber. Allen Poynter, Brian Self, and Mike McGrenere have also attended one or more of our meetings, and have made valuable contributions. Our aim is to establish, by this summer, a 9-member board which would include at least two members from Vancouver Island and two from the B.C. Interior. The board would meet no more than 2-3 times per year, which should not be a major demand on anyone's time. If you are interested in serving on the BCFO board, please contact Doug Kragh (464-4441) or Wayne Weber (597-7201), or send a note to the BCFO post office box in Surrey.

I have agreed to edit and produce the BCFO Newsletter four times a year, with planned publication dates of March, June, September, and December. Doug Kragh will be in charge of the "Bird-Lister's Corner", and will also help by preparing maps and figures where needed. This and the next issue of the Newsletter should give you a good idea of the kind of material we wish to include. We want to make birding "Site Guides" a regular feature, and we welcome submissions from members. We don't have a formal set of guidelines for writing "Site Guides", but in general they should be 1-2 pages long (single-spaced), should include a detailed map (Doug can help you draw this), and should include specific road directions, including distances. We also welcome submissions of articles on your birdwatching experiences-- preferably in B.C., but we will publish occasional articles on birds in other parts of North America or even overseas. In general, the Newsletter articles will

be aimed mainly at amateurs, while articles in the journal (British Columbia Birds) should be of interest to both amateurs and professionals. For example, if you want to write an article on a rare bird sighting or on any kind of study designed to gather new information, it should be submitted to the journal.

We are currently putting together an editorial board for British Columbia Birds. We plan to issue our journal twice a year, although our first issue may have to wait until we have sufficient funds (i.e., enough members!) to publish it. In addition to articles on all aspects of field ornithology in B.C., British Columbia Birds will include seasonal summaries of unusual bird sightings around the province (to be provided by Chris Siddle) and reviews of new bird books. We will have more details about the journal in the June newsletter.

Another major goal of BCFO is to establish a provincial Bird Records Committee, which would review records of the rarest bird species in B.C. and publish an annual report in B.C. Birds. Establishment of the Records Committee has been put on the "back burner" for now while we attend to more pressing business, but we hope it will be up and running by early 1992.

Finally, please note that BCFO's first Annual General Meeting is planned for August 23-25, 1991 at the Delta Town and Country Inn, Delta. (Please see the announcement on Page 1!) We hope many of you will be able to attend, enjoy the activities, and help get BCFO off to a solid start.

Even if you do not have time to attend the AGM or submit articles or Site Guides for publication, we would appreciate receiving your letters with suggestions, comments, or criticisms. We want BCFO to be a democratic organization which is responsive to the wishes of its members, and your comments, positive or negative, will help us determine if we are going in the right direction.

Wayne C. Weber
BCFO Newsletter Editor

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEACHED BIRD SURVEYS- Dr. Alan E. Burger of the University of Victoria is coordinating a volunteer Beached Bird Survey, to be carried out at as many sites as possible along the B.C. coast. Each volunteer is asked to walk a stretch of 2-3 km of beach, once a month, and to count and identify all dead birds which have been washed up. The object is to determine normal rates of mortality of marine birds, to establish a baseline against which one can measure the effects of oil spills or other causes of mass mortality.

if you are interested in participating, please contact Dr. Alan Burger, 270 Trevlac Place, RR 3, Victoria, B.C. V8X 3X1 (phone 479-9833). Southern Vancouver Island is fairly well covered now, but cooperators are needed from most other parts of the B.C. coast, especially the Queen Charlotte Islands and the north coast.

A more detailed report on this project will appear in the next BCFO Newsletter.

OKANAGAN BIG DAY CHALLENGE 1991- For those who enjoy birding in the Okanagan Valley in late May, consider taking part in the 6th annual Okanagan Big Day Challenge. This event is a competitive team effort to find as many bird species as possible in the Okanagan Valley on the Sunday of the long May weekend (May 20 this year). For further details, see the article by Dick Cannings in this issue. Each team is led by a top birder who is familiar with the Okanagan, and an effort is made to pair newcomers or beginning birders with an expert. If you don't mind an 18 to 20-hour marathon, this is a good way to get a quick introduction to the birds and birding areas of the Okanagan Valley. All participants are invited to a buffet breakfast at Frank Metcalf and Mary Doherty's house, at the north end of Vaseux Lake south of the Okanagan Falls campground, from 9 a.m. to noon the next day, May 21. Prizes will be awarded and teams will compare notes on the unusual birds they saw.

The Big Day Challenge is also planned as a "birdathon" to raise money for the Nature Trust of B.C. for habitat acquisition in the Okanagan, and teams are asked to solicit pledges from as many friends as possible. The target for this year's challenge is \$10,000 (about \$1000 to \$1500 per team).

If interested, contact Dick Cannings at 3007 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1Z7 (phone 734-9489).

THE B.C. NEST RECORD PROGRAM is a volunteer project designed to gather as much information as possible on nesting biology of birds in B.C., including geographic distribution of breeding birds, nest locations, timing of the nesting season, and breeding success of common species. All nests found with eggs or young, even of common species like American Robin or Barn Swallow, can produce valuable information, but the best information comes from repeated visits to a nest. An annual report on the results is published in the B.C. Naturalist. Even if you only have time to report on 5 or 10 nests, your contribution will be appreciated. For further information and a supply of nest record cards, contact Margaret Harris, P.O. Box 10, Penticton, B.C. V2A 6J9 (phone 492-8958).

THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY (BBS) is a cooperative project supervised by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian Wildlife Service. It involves running a 39.4 km (24.5 mile) survey route by car, once a year, during the month of June or first week of July. The observer stops every 0.8 km (0.5 miles) for exactly 3 minutes and records all birds seen and heard at each stop. About 2000 routes are surveyed every year in North America, including 40 to 50 in B.C. The BBS is designed to measure both short-term and long-term changes in bird populations in a statistically reliable way, and for most species, it is the single best indicator of continental or regional population trends.

Additional BBS observers are needed in several parts of B.C. Coverage in central and northern B.C. would be especially helpful, but there are some vacant routes on Vancouver Island and in the southern Interior. An ability to recognize the songs and calls of

all common bird species is essential, although it is not mandatory that you know the calls of every bird species found in your area. Breeding Bird surveys are not for everyone, as they must be started 30 minutes before sunrise and are often in remote areas, but running a BBS route can be an enjoyable way of honing your skills at identifying bird by ear. It is preferred that observers try to survey the same route every year, but if you will be visiting a remote part of B.C. and can only commit yourself to survey a route once, there are some assigned routes which have never been surveyed.

If you are interested in the BBS and would like to be assigned a route, please contact the B.C. coordinator, Wayne Campbell, Royal B.C. Museum, 675 Belleville Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4 (phone 387-2483), well before June 1 if possible. If you cannot contact Wayne, Dick Cannings (phone 734-9489) or Wayne Weber (phone 597-7201) can also help in assigning you a route.

THE ALBERTA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT will be entering its final season of data collection in 1991, and volunteer observers from B.C. and elsewhere are invited to participate in the big push to fill in all the gaps. Assistance would be appreciated anywhere in Alberta, but volunteers are especially needed to take part in "remote area" trips to northern Alberta and remote parts of the Rockies. Travel assistance, lodging, and logistic support are available for volunteers able to donate at least a week to gathering atlas data in remote areas. Some of the remote sites can be reached by road and canoe, others only by air. Canoeing experience and wilderness camping experience would be helpful. June and July are the key months for atlas work.

For observers with less time available, there are many areas of southern Alberta where atlas data are still needed, and even a day or two of your time can produce valuable information. For more information, contact Albert Brule, Executive Director, Alberta Bird Atlas Project, c/o Provincial Museum of Alberta, 12845 102nd Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5M 0L9 (phone (403) 453-9163).

THE BIRDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, VOLUMES I AND II, by Wayne Campbell, Neil Dawe, Ian McTaggart Cowan, John Cooper, Gary Kaiser, and Michael McNall, was published in November 1990 by the Royal B.C. Museum, and congratulations are due to all the authors, especially to senior author Wayne Campbell, who has devoted much of the last 15 years to this project. Volumes III and IV, covering the perching birds, are in preparation now, with publication expected about 1994. We wish the authors every success in the completion of this huge undertaking. With the release of this landmark publication, our knowledge of the birds of B.C. has entered a new phase. A major book review is being published in the B.C. Naturalist, so we will not be reviewing it in British Columbia Birds.

If you don't yet have a copy of The Birds of B.C., it is still available for \$99.00 (plus tax and shipping costs) from the Royal B.C. Museum Gift Shop, 675 Belleville St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4 (phone 356-0505). Visa and MasterCard are accepted. However, place your order soon, because there are fewer than 100 copies left!

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- May 9-12, 1991 THE FEDERATION OF B.C. NATURALISTS will hold its Annual General Meeting at Prince George. For information contact the Federation of B.C. Naturalists, 321-1367 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 4A9 (phone 737-3057).
- May 11-12, 1991 VANCOUVER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY/B.C. WATER-FOWL SOCIETY BIRDATHON. For information, phone Cathy Aitchison, VNHS (685-7460) or the BCWS office (946-6980).
- May 22-23, 1991 THE SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY (formerly Pacific NW Bird & Mammal Society) will hold its annual meeting at the Menucha Retreat near Portland, Ore. For information, contact Diana Perl, 2501 West Fulton, Seattle, WA 98199 (phone (206) 284-2441).
- June 7-9, 1991 OREGON FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS and WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS will hold a joint annual meeting at Bend, Oregon with field trips to the Cascade Lakes and to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. For information, contact Howard Sands, 10655 Agate Road, Eagle Point, Oregon 97524, U.S.A. (phone (503) 826-5246).
- June 14-16, 1991 BIRD BLITZES at Manning, Wells Gray, and Mount Seymour Provincial Parks. For information, see the March 1991 issue of the B.C. Naturalist.
- June 21-23, 1991 THE WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY will be holding its annual meeting at Okanogan, Washington, with field trips to nearby areas. For information, contact Andy Stepniewski, 2911 Windy Point Drive, Wapato, Washington 98951, U.S.A. (phone (509) 877-6639).
- July 4-7, 1991 THE CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION's 20th Annual Conference takes place at Red Deer, Alberta. For information, contact Jennifer O'Brien, 20 Riverview Park, Red Deer, Alta. T4N 1E3 (phone (403) 346-6814, Sun. or Tues. evenings).
- August 13-17, 1991 THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION will hold its 109th Annual Meeting at Montreal, Quebec. For details, contact AOU Local Committee, McGill Univ., Box 197, Ste.-Anne-de-Bellevue, P.Q. H9X 1C0 (phone (514) 398-7941).
- August 21-23, 1991 FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, Delta, B.C. (See details on Page 1.)

THE WASHINGTON STATE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

by Wayne C. Weber

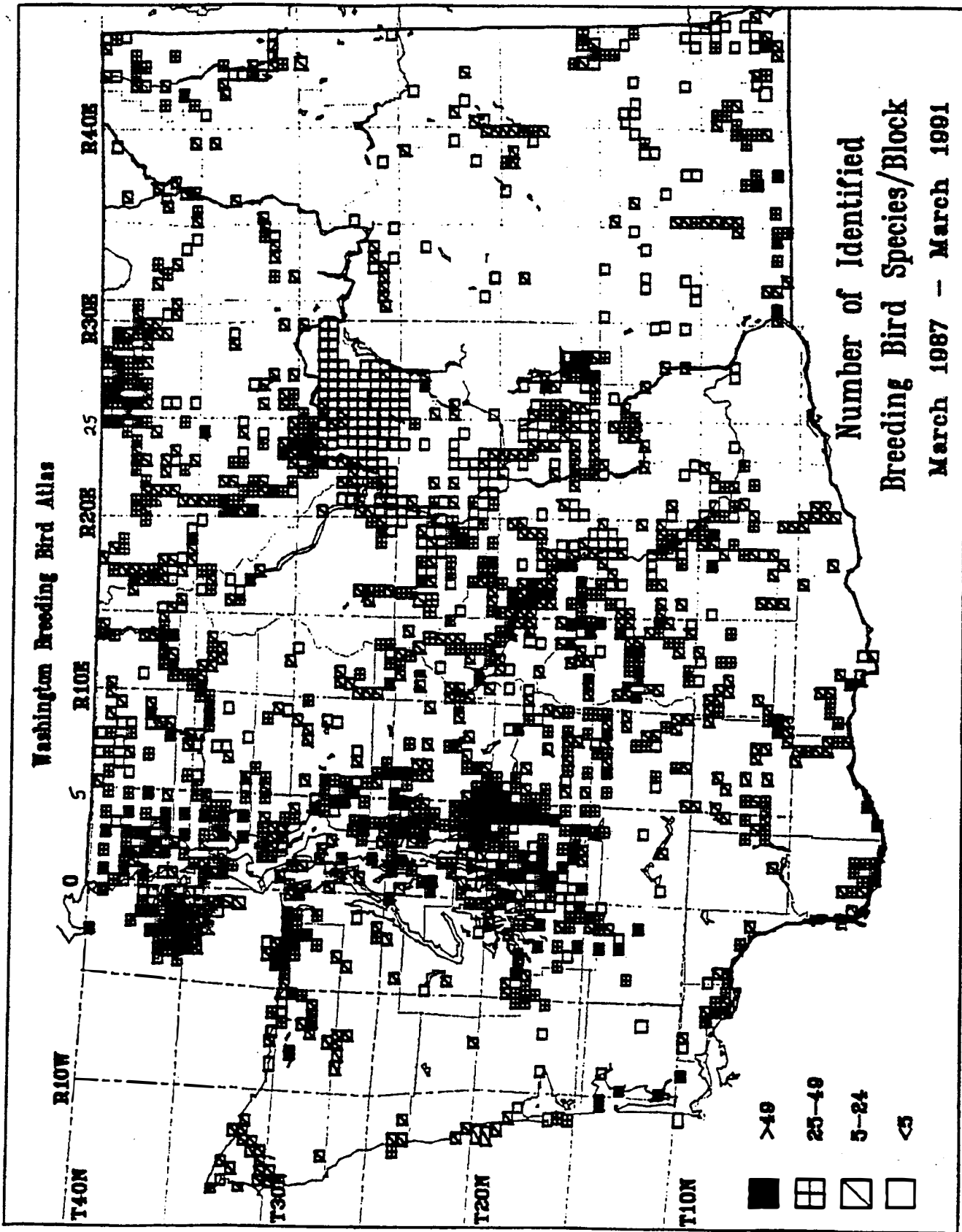
The concept of a Breeding Bird Atlas, in which the breeding distributions of all bird species are mapped on a detailed scale within a defined geographic area, began in Britain in the 1960s. The resulting information is so valuable for a number of purposes, including efforts to preserve threatened bird habitats, that the idea has been widely adopted in North America. Breeding Bird Atlas projects have been completed in Ontario, the Maritime Provinces, and several U.S. states, and the Alberta Breeding Bird Atlas is winding up this year (see ANNOUNCEMENTS). The Washington State Breeding Bird Atlas began in 1987 and will be completed in 1992; thus there are two years left to complete the data collection.

The Atlas is based on the work of volunteer participants who spend up to 20 or 30 field hours in each atlas block. All habitats present are visited, and nesting evidence of various degrees of certainty is recorded according to standardized criteria. For example, discovery of a nest with eggs or young, or observation of an adult bird carrying food, would constitute "confirmed" breeding; observation of a mated pair of birds in suitable habitat, or agitated behaviour or anxiety calls, would constitute "probable" breeding; while any observation of a bird in suitable breeding habitat during the nesting season would constitute "possible" breeding. The objective is to find as many species as possible in your assigned block, and to confirm breeding status for at least 50% of the potential breeding species. Once the magic 50% has been achieved, it is probably more productive to focus your attention on a different block.

Washington State has been divided into about 7800 atlas blocks, each measuring 3X3 miles (5x5 km), or 9 square miles. American land surveys are based on the township (6x6 miles, or 36 square miles), and the minimum goal of the Atlas is to obtain coverage of the southeastern block in each township, which is designated a "priority block". If this goal is achieved, more than 2000 blocks will have been covered.

The accompanying map shows cumulative Breeding Bird Atlas coverage from 1987 through 1990. The Puget Sound region and central Washington are generally well covered, but additional volunteers are badly needed for much of coastal Washington, the Olympic Peninsula, and many parts of eastern Washington. If you have anywhere from one day to a week or more of your time to donate, you can make an important contribution to this valuable project. Even if you are just passing through Washington on a trip to someplace else, your incidental observations at a brief stop may help to fill a gap in the Atlas. An excellent set of maps, the Washington Atlas and Gazetteer, was published recently by the DeLorme Mapping Co.; it can be bought for about \$12.95 at almost every bookstore in Washington. It is basically a complete set of topographic maps of the state, and shows sufficient detail that you can determine the boundaries of any atlas block in the state quite accurately.

Most of the more populous counties in Washington have a county



Atlas Coordinator (see list below). If you wish to be assigned an atlas block in one of these counties, please write or telephone the county coordinator, who will send you an Atlas Handbook and one or several field cards to record your data. If you wish to work in a county not listed, please contact the Atlas Project Coordinator, Dr. Phil Mattocks, 915 East Third Avenue, Ellensburg, WA 98926 (phone (509) 962-2191). Phil can also be contacted through the office of the Seattle Audubon Society, 8028 35th Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98115 (phone (206) 523-4483), which is sponsoring the project. It is hoped that most observers will volunteer to cover a priority (southeastern) block, but offers to cover any block will be appreciated, especially if it is in a poorly-covered part of the state. And, take it from me, "atlassing" can be fun; it is enjoyable to explore backroads in a part of Washington that you might never visit otherwise, and the work is often punctuated by serendipitous discoveries of birds you hadn't really expected to see in that area. So, happy atlassing!

COUNTY COORDINATORS

Benton: Howard Ennor, 224 Thayer Dr., Richland, WA 99352
Chelan: Bert Jahn, 1411 Orchard, Wenatchee, WA 98801 (509-663-3751)
Clallam: Dory & Stan Smith, 120 Olympic View Ave. S, Sequim, WA 98382 (206-683-3442)
King: Ken Brunner, 12541 Fremont Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98133 (206-361-7072)
Kitsap: George Gerdts, 14175 Henderson Road NE, Bainbridge I., WA 98110 (206-842-8138)
Pacific: Alan Richards, HCR 78, Box 559, Naselle, WA 98638 (206-484-7119)
Pierce: Thais Bock, 29620 10th Place S, Federal Way, WA 98003 (206-839-2044)
San Juan: Mark Lewis, P.O. Box 2424, Friday Harbor, WA 98259
Skagit: Bob Kuntz, North Cascades National Park, 2105 Highway 20, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284 (206-856-5700)
Snohomish: Sally van Niel, 4404 222nd St. SW, Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043 (206-778-7568)
Spokane: Dr. Tom Rogers, E. 10820 Maxwell Ave., Spokane, WA 99206 (509-926-7949)
Thurston: Kristin Stewart, 6826 Budd Street NW, Olympia, WA 98502
Wahkiakum: Alan Richards (see under Pacific Co.)
Whatcom: Terry Wahl, 3041 Eldridge Ave., Bellingham, WA 98225 (206-733-8255)
Yakima: Andy Stepniewski, 2911 Windy Point Dr., Wapato, WA 98951 (509-877-6639)

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

THE SITE GUIDE: Duck Lake, Creston, by Gary Davidson
THE SITE GUIDE: Blackie Spit, Surrey, by Jo Ann & Hue MacKenzie
BIRD-LISTER'S CORNER, by Wayne Weber & Doug Kragh

THE OKANAGAN BIG DAY CHALLENGE, 1986-1990

by Richard J. Cannings

The 1990 Okanagan Big Day Challenge did not begin auspiciously for the Meteoric Motmots. We arrived at our starting point, a small creek near White Lake, about 11:50 p.m., in time for a relaxed stroll through the sage-scented air to a stand of large ponderosa pines and cottonwoods that was a known Western Screech-Owl territory. In fact we had it on good authority that the bird was there the night before. At precisely midnight on the 20th of May, we began to whistle (tape recorders are taboo on the Challenge). Then we tooted some more. All we seemed to attract was a team of flashlight-wielding birders walking through the sage toward us--the Baldy BXers, consisting of my brother Syd, Doug Kragh, Xavier Lambin, and Tom Hanrahan. We must have been doing some good imitations, since they had to ask us if that had been the owl calling. It hadn't.

After 30 minutes of fruitless owling and one poorwill, we decided to give up, got back in the car and began bouncing through the sage back to the road. The BXers asked for a ride, but we left them in our dust for the long walk back to their car. Our gamble of driving across the rough rangeland was rewarded a minute later with the hissing of air escaping from our rear tire. We all got out of the car--Brian Self, Morley Adelman, Nancy Baron, Tim Matheson and myself--and threw the diverse gear of five birders onto the grass to get at the spare. I began cursing our luck--if things didn't turn around we would lose the coveted Flammulated Owl award for most species on the day. It didn't get much better; we picked up Sora and Virginia Rail quickly, but arrived at our staked-out owling area at Osoyoos to find seemingly immovable gates across the dykes, blocking access to Saw-whet, Great Horned, and Long-eared Owls. We jogged in half a mile but missed Saw-whets anyway and gave up on the other two. Onto the McKinney Road for Flammulated, but no luck there, either. Panicking, we sped north to Vaseux Lake--2:30 a.m. and only three species in the bag. Maybe Wayne Weber's tactic of sleeping in until 2 or 3 a.m. made more sense than I thought. But our luck changed with a Northern Saw-whet Owl calling along Irrigation Creek as a meteor streaked across the sky at 2:54 a.m. (hence our team name), and we went on to win the Flammulated Owl award with 162 species, the last one a trio of Gray Partridge along the Vernon Commonage road at 8:59 p.m.

So what is this madness all about? The Okanagan Big Day Challenge was born in 1986 when I challenged birders to form teams and compete to see who could have the biggest day on the Sunday of the Victoria Day weekend, starting and finishing in the Okanagan Valley. I had been doing big days for seven years then, inspired by a late-night beer session with George Sirk and Mike Shepard at Shuswap Lake in 1973. They were dreaming of a super day in British Columbia, flying from the Peace River to the Okanagan and on to Vancouver Island. Needless to say, that never came about but I began a series of big days in 1979, alternately going from the Okanagan to Vancouver and staying within the Okanagan. My first

attempt in the valley set a mark of 147, and after a second attempt produced only 139 the next year, I sat down to think why we weren't improving. We had been scheduling these days for the second week in May, and a long look at the possible list showed that it would be best to do a big day in the Okanagan in the last half of May or even early June. A marathon with Rick Howie, Mary Collins and myself on June 3, 1984 tied the provincial big day record of 162, so the next year we tried on May 26 and tallied 164 species. After that, I threw the gauntlet down and haven't looked back.

The rules of the Okanagan Big Day Challenge are basically the same as those for any big day sanctioned by the ABA, but somewhat more relaxed to encourage as many teams as possible to participate. Exceptions include: every team must have a name, teams must begin and end the day within the Okanagan Valley, and no tape recorders or airplanes are allowed. Four major awards are at stake each year. The Flammulated Owl award for most species, the Kootenay Kup for the runner-up (donated by Gary Davidson so he wouldn't go away empty-handed every year), the Oka-noggin, a beer mug donated by Gerry Bennett for the best bird of the day, and the Sour Grapes award donated by Doug Kragh for worst miss of the day.

As summarized in Table 1, 31 teams have reported a grand total of 220 species over the five years of the Challenge. The annual species total has been remarkably consistent, varying from 185 to 188 per year, while the winning team's total has ranged from 156 to 167 species. The individual team totals have ranged from 106 to 167 species, with a mean of 143 and median of 146 species. Fourteen species have been seen by only one team, while 57 have been reported by every team.

On the human side, 54 brave souls have participated, including four who have shown up every year: Mary Collins, Phil Ranson, Wayne Weber, and myself. Seven others have four Challenges under their belts--Gary Davidson, Tony Greenfield, Doug Kragh, Hue and Jo Ann MacKenzie, Laurie Rockwell, and Linda Van Damme. For reasons I cannot fathom, fully half of the participants have taken part in only one Challenge.

The Oka-noggin has been awarded for the last four years as follows: 1987, Whimbrel (second Okanagan record, Mike Force and the "Kootenay Koots"); 1988, Golden-crowned Sparrow (a singing bird in suitable breeding habitat on Mt. Kobau, Tony Greenfield and the "Coasters"); 1989, Prairie Falcon, very rarely seen in spring, Brian Self and the "Sage Thrashers"); 1990, Oldsquaw (very rare in the last half of May, Gary Davidson and the "Pygmy-Owlers").

The Sour Grapes award has honoured such unbelievable misses as House Finch (1987, Kootenay Koots), Warbling Vireo (1988, Bill Crins et al.), House Wren (1989, Sage Thrashers), and Western Tanager (1990, the Harried Northerners). Notice that two teams have won both the best bird and worst miss honours in the same year.

Of course, if you put 25 good birders in the Okanagan Valley in late May and let them loose, you are guaranteed quite a few memorable moments. On the first Challenge two teams found singing Gray Flycatchers, which led to the discovery of Canada's first nest a few weeks later. Franklin's Gulls, essentially unknown in the Okanagan in spring, have been seen on three Challenges, and

Forster's Terns have been reported twice. I have birded the Okanagan all my life, but I've seen five species during the Challenge new to my Okanagan list: the Double-crested Cormorant, Peregrine Falcon, Dunlin, and the previously mentioned Gray Flycatcher and Forster's Tern. Interestingly, two of the Okanagan's most famous specialties, the White-headed Woodpecker and Sage Thrasher, have yet to be seen on an Okanagan Big Day Challenge.

In 1990, the purpose of the Challenge was broadened to include fund-raising for the purchase of habitat in the Okanagan Valley. Pledges were collected for the Nature Trust of British Columbia, and despite the late start, over \$2600 was raised. This year, we are continuing this aspect of the event, and hope to raise even more money for this very worthy cause.

The best part of each Okanagan Big Day Challenge, apart from getting to bed after being up for 36 hours, has to be the Monday brunch, which has been hosted by Mary Collins on her Lavington farm each year. Good food and ridiculous stories are rampant, awards are presented, and bets are made as to the overall species total. Then everyone drives away to find the birds that their team missed the day before. Exciting birds such as Yellow-breasted Chat, Grasshopper Sparrow, Black-chinned Hummingbird, Williamson's Sapsucker, American Avocet, and Wild Turkey, because exciting birding is what the Okanagan Big Day Challenge is all about!

Table 1. Species seen on the Okanagan Big Day Challenge. The numbers indicate how many teams reported each species in each year; the first column is the total number out of 31 teams reporting the species over five years.

SPECIES	TOT	86	87	88	89	90
Pacific Loon	2		1	1		
Common Loon	31	6	6	6	7	6
Pied-billed Grebe	30	6	6	6	7	5
Horned Grebe	19	6	6	3	2	2
Red-necked Grebe	30	6	6	6	6	6
Eared Grebe	23	3	4	4	6	6
Western Grebe	27	6	4	6	5	6
American White Pelican	1	1				
Double-cr. Cormorant	4		4			
American Bittern	18		6	5	3	4
Great Blue Heron	29	5	6	5	7	6
Mute Swan	14	4			6	4
Canada Goose	31	6	6	6	7	6
Wood Duck	14	2	3	3	3	3
Green-winged Teal	31	6	6	6	7	6
Mallard	31	6	6	6	7	6
Northern Pintail	22	5	6	5	2	4
Blue-winged Teal	31	6	6	6	7	6
Cinnamon Teal	31	6	6	6	7	6

SPECIES	TOT	86	87	88	89	90
Northern Shoveler	31	6	6	6	7	6
Gadwall	31	6	6	6	7	6
American Wigeon	30	6	6	6	7	5
Canvasback	8			1	5	2
Redhead	31	6	6	6	7	6
Ring-necked Duck	28	5	5	6	6	6
Greater Scaup	19	4	4	4	3	4
Lesser Scaup	28	6	6	4	6	6
Harlequin Duck	3					3
Oldsquaw	2					2
Surf Scoter	1	1				
White-winged Scoter	14	1	5	5	2	
Common Goldeneye	20	5	5	4	4	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	30	6	6	6	7	5
Bufflehead	29	6	6	5	7	5
Hooded Merganser	11	3	1	1	6	
Common Merganser	29	6	4	6	7	6
Red-breasted Merganser	3	1		2		
Ruddy Duck	31	6	6	6	7	6
Turkey Vulture	16	3	5	2	2	4
Osprey	30	6	6	5	7	6
Bald Eagle	25	3	4	6	7	5
Northern Harrier	18	4	3	5	4	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	18		3	5	6	4
Cooper's Hawk	7	1	1	2	2	1
Swainson's Hawk	26	4	5	5	7	5
Red-tailed Hawk	31	6	6	6	7	6
Golden Eagle	14	2	1	5	4	2
American Kestrel	31	6	6	6	7	6
Merlin	1					1
Peregrine Falcon	1			1		
Prairie Falcon	1				1	
Gray Partridge	2					2
Chukar	16	2	2	3	4	5
Ring-necked Pheasant	31	6	6	6	7	6
Spruce Grouse	3		2		1	
Blue Grouse	1	1				
Ruffed Grouse	30	6	6	5	7	6
Wild Turkey	7	2	1	1	1	2
California Quail	31	6	6	6	7	6
Virginia Rail	17	3	3	5	3	3
Sora	27	3	6	6	6	6
American Coot	31	6	6	6	7	6
Sandhill Crane	3			3		
Semipalmated Plover	3	3				
Killdeer	31	6	6	6	7	6
American Avocet	15		6	6	3	
Greater Yellowlegs	5	2	1	1	1	
Lesser Yellowlegs	8	2	4		1	1
"yellowlegs, sp."	2	1		1		
Solitary Sandpiper	4	2	1	1		
Spotted Sandpiper	31	6	6	6	7	6

SPECIES	TOT	86	87	88	89	90
Whimbrel	1		1			
Long-billed Curlew	24	5	6	4	4	5
Semipalmated Sandpiper	2				2	
Western Sandpiper	1	1				
Least Sandpiper	11	5	2		3	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	7	3	2		2	
Dunlin	5	5				
"peep, sp."	2			1		1
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	1				
Long-billed Dowitcher	3	2				1
Common Snipe	31	6	6	6	7	6
Wilson's Phalarope	31	6	6	6	7	6
Red-necked Phalarope	12		1	2	5	4
Franklin's Gull	3	1	1		1	
Bonaparte's Gull	19	4	5	1	4	5
Ring-billed Gull	31	6	6	6	7	6
California Gull	24	4	4	6	5	5
Herring Gull	14	4	2	2	1	5
Thayer's Gull	4	1				3
Glaucous Gull	1					1
Glaucous-winged Gull	2	1			1	
Common Tern	2	1				1
Forster's Tern	4		3			1
Black Tern	16	1		5	6	4
Rock Dove	31	6	6	6	7	6
Mourning Dove	31	6	6	6	7	6
Flammulated Owl	24	4	4	5	6	5
Western Screech-Owl	8	1	2	2	2	1
Great Horned Owl	20	4	4	6	3	3
Northern Pygmy-Owl	5		1	1	1	2
Burrowing Owl	21	2	5	5	5	4
Barred Owl	20	2	3	4	6	5
Long-eared Owl	12	3	2	4		3
Short-eared Owl	1				1	
Northern Saw-whet Owl	16	2	4	4	3	3
Common Poorwill	26	4	6	4	6	6
Black Swift	4				1	3
Vaux's Swift	20	5	2	4	4	5
White-throated Swift	28	5	6	5	7	5
Black-ch. Hummingbird	17	3	3	6	5	
Calliope Hummingbird	31	6	6	6	7	6
Rufous Hummingbird	30	6	6	5	7	6
Belted Kingfisher	24	5	4	6	4	5
Lewis' Woodpecker	31	6	6	6	7	6
Red-naped Sapsucker	28	4	6	5	7	6
Williamson's Sapsucker	11	1	4	3	2	1
Downy Woodpecker	22	5	2	5	5	5
Hairy Woodpecker	23	3	3	4	7	6
Three-toed Woodpecker	5	1				4
Black-backed Woodpecker	3				1	2
Northern Flicker	31	6	6	6	7	6
Pileated Woodpecker	16	3	2	5	4	2

SPECIES	TOT	86	87	88	89	90
Olive-sided Flycatcher	11	4	3	3		1
Western Wood-Pewee	31	6	6	6	7	6
Willow Flycatcher	3	1			2	
Least Flycatcher	3	1	1	1		
Hammond's Flycatcher	24	4	4	5	6	5
Dusky Flycatcher	31	6	6	6	7	6
Gray Flycatcher	22	2	6	4	6	4
Western Flycatcher	2	1			1	
Say's Phoebe	29	6	5	5	7	6
Western Kingbird	31	6	6	6	7	6
Eastern Kingbird	26	3	6	6	7	4
Horned Lark	1			1		
Tree Swallow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Violet-green Swallow	31	6	6	6	7	6
N. Rough-winged Swallow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Bank Swallow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Cliff Swallow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Barn Swallow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Gray Jay	24	4	5	5	5	5
Steller's Jay	28	6	4	5	7	6
Clark's Nutcracker	28	6	5	4	7	6
Black-billed Magpie	31	6	6	6	7	6
American Crow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Common Raven	31	6	6	6	7	6
Black-capped Chickadee	31	6	6	6	7	6
Mountain Chickadee	30	6	6	5	7	6
Boreal Chickadee	2			1	1	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	31	6	6	6	7	6
White-breasted Nuthatch	17	3	3	2	5	4
Pygmy Nuthatch	25	6	5	2	6	6
Brown Creeper	8	1	1	3		3
Rock Wren	29	5	6	6	7	5
Canyon Wren	24	4	5	5	5	5
House Wren	29	6	5	6	6	6
Winter Wren	10	2	1	2	3	2
Marsh Wren	30	6	6	6	6	6
American Dipper	8		2	1	2	3
Golden-crowned Kinglet	26	6	3	5	6	6
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	31	6	6	6	7	6
Western Bluebird	28	5	6	6	6	5
Mountain Bluebird	25	5	6	5	5	4
Townsend's Solitaire	27	5	5	5	7	5
Veery	7	1	1	3	1	1
Swainson's Thrush	14		5	4	4	1
Hermit Thrush	24	4	3	6	7	4
American Robin	31	6	6	6	7	6
Varied Thrush	25	4	4	5	7	5
Gray Catbird	12		1	5	6	
American Pipit	11	5	1	2	2	1
Cedar Waxwing	19	1	4	5	4	5
European Starling	31	6	6	6	7	6
Solitary Vireo	29	6	5	5	7	6

SPECIES	TOT	86	87	88	89	90
Warbling Vireo	28	5	6	5	6	6
Red-eyed Vireo	2			1	1	
Orange-crowned Warbler	29	6	5	5	7	6
Nashville Warbler	26	4	5	5	6	6
Yellow Warbler	30	6	6	6	6	6
Yellow-rumped Warbler	31	6	6	6	7	6
Townsend's Warbler	30	6	5	6	7	6
American Redstart	2		1		1	
Northern Waterthrush	21	1	6	6	4	4
MacGillivray's Warbler	19	5	3	4	4	3
Common Yellowthroat	31	6	6	6	7	6
Wilson's Warbler	31	6	6	6	7	6
Yellow-breasted Chat	23	4	5	5	5	4
Western Tanager	27	6	5	5	6	5
Black-headed Grosbeak	25	3	6	5	6	5
Lazuli Bunting	26	5	5	5	7	4
Rufous-sided Towhee	30	6	6	6	6	6
Chipping Sparrow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Clay-coloured Sparrow	18	3	3	4	5	3
Brewer's Sparrow	23	4	5	5	5	4
Vesper Sparrow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Lark Sparrow	27	4	6	5	7	5
Savannah Sparrow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Grasshopper Sparrow	14	1	2	4	2	5
Fox Sparrow	14	3	2	3	4	2
Song Sparrow	31	6	6	6	7	6
Lincoln's Sparrow	24	4	5	4	6	5
Golden-crowned Sparrow	5	3	1	1		
White-crowned Sparrow	17	6	2	3	4	2
Dark-eyed Junco	31	6	6	6	7	6
Bobolink	25	4	6	4	6	5
Red-winged Blackbird	31	6	6	6	7	6
Western Meadowlark	31	6	6	6	7	6
Yellow-headed Blackbird	30	6	6	5	7	6
Rusty Blackbird	1			1		
Brewer's Blackbird	31	6	6	6	7	6
Brown-headed Cowbird	31	6	6	6	7	6
Northern Oriole	30	6	6	6	6	6
Pine Grosbeak	13	2	1	3	3	4
Cassin's Finch	30	6	6	5	7	6
House Finch	30	6	5	6	7	6
Red Crossbill	26	6	3	4	7	6
White-winged Crossbill	1					1
Pine Siskin	31	6	6	6	7	6
American Goldfinch	31	6	6	6	7	6
Evening Grosbeak	31	6	6	6	7	6
House Sparrow	31	6	6	6	7	6
TOTALS	220	188	185	186	188	185