

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS NEWSLETTER

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The BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS NEWSLETTER is published four times a year by B.C. Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 1018, Surrey, B.C., Canada V3S 4P5. A subscription to the Newsletter is a benefit of membership in the society. Members also receive a semi-annual journal, BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS.

Newsletter staff:

Editor- Wayne Weber

Bird-lister's Corner- Doug Kragh

Mailing & Distribution- Hue & Jo Ann MacKenzie

Material for publication should be sent to the Editor at the society address in Surrey. We especially welcome bird-finding information for the "Site Guide" series and articles about your birdwatching experiences, preferably (but not necessarily) in B.C.

Membership in British Columbia Field Ornithologists is open to anyone interested in the study and enjoyment of birds in B.C. Our objectives include fostering cooperation between amateur and professional ornithologists and promoting cooperative bird surveys and research projects, and supporting conservation organizations in their efforts to preserve birds and their habitats.

Membership dues: \$20.00 (CAN) per year. Library and institutional subscriptions: \$20.00 (CAN). Memberships in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, \$20.00 (U.S.). Memberships are for the calendar year.

For further information, or to join, write the Treasurer, B.C. Field Ornithologists, P.O. Box 1018, Surrey, B.C. V3S 4P5.

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
1992 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
REVELSTOKE, B.C.

DATES: June 5 to 7, 1992 (Friday to Sunday)

LOCATION: St. Francis Church Hall, 510 Mackenzie Avenue,
Revelstoke, B.C.

PROGRAM: Social on Friday evening, featuring an illustrated talk by John Woods (Mt. Revelstoke/Glacier Park Naturalist) on "Ecology of the Columbia Mountains"; field trips on Saturday morning and Sunday, coinciding with the "Mount Revelstoke Bird Blitz"; guest speakers and business meeting, Saturday afternoon; banquet and banquet speakers, Saturday evening.

Rick Howie (B.C. Parks Branch naturalist) will be the banquet speaker. Afternoon speakers confirmed to date include Syd Cannings, Chris Siddle, Gary Davidson, and Ellen Tremblay.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Suggested Revelstoke area hotels, motels, and campgrounds, with approximate nightly rates, include the following:

Sandman Inn (637-5271): \$72 up
Best Western Wayside Inn (837-6161): \$79 up
Columbia Motel (837-2191): \$36 up
Alpine Motel (837-2116): \$48 up
Revelstoke Lodge (837-2181): \$39 up
McGregor Motor Inn (837-2121): \$55 up
Regent Inn (837-2107): \$55 up
Revelstoke KOA Campground (837-2085): \$15.50 up
Williamson Lake Campground (837-5512): \$13 up

The meeting is being co-hosted by the Friends of Glacier and Mount Revelstoke and by Parks Canada.

Complete details and a registration form will be mailed out by late April. Make plans to attend now!

BCFO OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1991-1992

President:	Douglas Kragh	(phone 464-4441)
Vice-President:	Wayne Weber	(phone 597-7201)
Secretary:	Tom Hanrahan	(phone 464-3744)
Treasurer:	Gary Kaiser	(phone 940-9477)
Directors:	Mike Force	(phone 876-8637)
	Marian Porter	(phone 531-5747)
	Michael Shepard	(phone 388-4227)
	Allen Wiseley	(phone 477-4593)

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Mar. 24-28, 1992 Joint meeting of SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY and NORTHWEST SCIENTIFIC ASSN., Western Washington Univ., Bellingham, Wash. For information, contact Ronald J. Taylor, Biology Dept., Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225-9060.
- Apr. 10-12, 1992 BRANT FESTIVAL, Parksville-Qualicum, featuring Big Day birding competition, Wildlife Art Show, children's activities. For information, contact Brant Festival 92, Box 99, Parksville, B.C. V9P 2G3, or phone 248-4117 or 248-4347.
- Apr. 17-19, 1992 FEDERATION OF B.C. NATURALISTS Annual General Meeting, Loon Lake, University of B.C. Research Forest, Maple Ridge. For information, write the FBCN, 321-1267 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 4A9, or phone 737-3057.
- Apr. 20-26, 1992 AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION biennial convention, Mobile, Alabama. For information, write ABA Convention 92, P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO 80934-6599, or phone 800-835-2473.
- May 1-3, 1992 WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY annual meeting, Sequim, Wash. Field trips will include a boat trip around the seabird colony on Protection Island and a pelagic trip off Neah Bay. For details, phone Tom Schooley (206-357-8851) or write the Washington Ornithological Society, P.O. Box 85786, Seattle, WA 98145.
- May 9, 1992 VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY SPRING BIRD COUNT. For details, phone David Pearce (477-2664).
- May 9-10, 1992 VANCOUVER NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY BIRDATHON. For information, phone Cathy Aitchison (685-7460).
- May 17, 1992 OKANAGAN BIG DAY CHALLENGE, with teams meeting for breakfast at Frank Metcalf and Mary Doherty's home, Vaseux Lake, on the morning of May 18. For information, phone Dick Cannings (734-9489) or Frank Metcalf (738-3397).
- June 5-7, 1992 SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, Revelstoke, B.C. For further information, see the announcement on page 2.

SOCIETY NEWS

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE: As you have probably surmised, the Newsletter is running a little behind schedule; this issue, originally scheduled for December 1991, is therefore titled the February 1992 issue, but is covered by your 1991 dues. However, we are also sending it to all new members for 1992, so that these members should receive 5 issues for their 1992 dues. We are committed to getting back on schedule shortly, so that there should be four more issues mailed by the end of 1992, in addition to the four already mailed. The next issue will be Volume 2, Number 1.

BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS-- The first issue of our journal has been delayed by unforeseen problems, including a major breakdown of the Editor's computer (now repaired!), but it is now in an advanced state of preparation, and should be delivered to the printer within a month. It will be sent to everyone who paid dues for 1991; some extra copies will be printed and offered for sale separately to new members. We apologize to our members and to the authors for the delay, but we are sure you will find Issue #1 worth the wait. We already have almost enough material for Issue #2, and we are pleased that shortage of material is NOT a problem. Thanks to our contributors, and keep the good stuff coming!

A PROVINCIAL BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE was appointed at the January 1992 BCFO Directors' meeting, and plans to have its first meeting at our 1992 AGM in Revelstoke. The initial members are: Jack Bowling, Prince George; Wayne Campbell, Victoria; Dick Cannings, Vancouver; Gary Davidson, Nakusp (chairman); Chris Siddle, Vernon; David Stirling, Victoria; Hank Vander Pol, Victoria; and Wayne Weber, Delta. The committee will have its work cut out for it!

BCFO NEEDS A LOGO! If any of our members has artistic talents (or even a good idea for a logo, accompanied by a rough sketch), please submit a design or suggestion to President Doug Kragh at 1547 Angelo Avenue, Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3B 1C8. We need something distinctive and attractive to use on our publications, letterhead, T shirts (if and when we sell them), etc.

NOMINATIONS FOR BCFO DIRECTORS: There will be at least one vacancy on the BCFO board to be filled at our AGM business meeting on June 6. None of our 8 present directors is from the B.C. Interior, and we would very much like at least one Interior director! This person should be able to attend 2-3 directors' meetings per year, mostly in the Lower Mainland. We cannot provide travel expenses, but billeting could be arranged. If interested, please contact our Secretary, Tom Hanrahan, 3187 Beacon Drive, Coquitlam, B.C. V3C 3W7 (phone 454-3744).

CONGRATULATIONS to BCFO members Shirley and John Dorsey of Aldergrove (formerly Richmond), whose first child, Kathleen, was born on January 3, 1992.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PELAGIC BIRDING TRIPS FROM WESTPORT, WASHINGTON are scheduled for May 16, July 18, August 1, 15, 22, and 28, September 8, 12, 13, and 26, and October 10 and 11, 1992. Species to be expected include Black-footed Albatross; Northern Fulmar; Pink-footed, Flesh-footed, Buller's, Sooty, and Short-tailed Shearwaters; Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel; Red and Red-necked Phalaropes; Pomarine, Parasitic, and Long-tailed Jaegers; South Polar Skua; Black-legged Kittiwake; Sabine's Gull; Arctic Tern; Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets; and Tufted Puffin. Several species of whales and porpoises are also likely.

The cost is \$59 (U.S.) per person. For further information, or to make reservation, write T.R. Wahl, 3041 Eldridge, Bellingham, WA 98225, or phone (206) 733-8255.

MOUNT SEYMOUR/CYPRESS PROVINCIAL PARKS BIRD PROJECT-- Al Grass and Vic Adamo of the B.C. Parks Branch are gathering information on the birds of Mount Seymour and Cypress Provincial Parks in the Vancouver area. One of the purposes will be to produce new bird checklists for both parks. A checklist for Mount Seymour was issued in 1978, but it is now very outdated; no checklist has been published yet for Cypress Provincial Park. A detailed report summarizing all the information received on the birds of each park will also be prepared.

If you have any information on the birds of these two parks, even a small amount, we would greatly appreciate a copy of your notes. All contributions will be gratefully acknowledged. If you wish, we would be glad to send you a copy of the old Mount Seymour checklist and maps of both parks.

Please send your bird sightings and correspondence to: Seymour/Cypress Bird Project, B.C. Parks, 1610 Mount Seymour Road, North Vancouver, B.C. V7G 1L3. Thank you!

OLD PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRD BOOKS FOR SALE-- Are you interested in buying (or selling) old or out-of-print bird books from the Pacific Northwest? If so, please write Alan Contreras, 22-4098 Market St. NE, Salem, OR 97301, U.S.A. for a list of available titles (including many from B.C.), or to offer items for sale. (ED. NOTE: Alan Contreras is a BCFO member and former president of Oregon Field Ornithologists.)

THE WESTERN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL STUDIES (WIGS) is a new organization, based in Victoria, which emphasizes natural history research and education. The major goals are:

- a) to provide naturalists with the opportunity for "hands-on" research experience. Naturalists with all levels of experience are invited to take part, and novices are definitely encouraged to join.
- b) to study and quantify natural phenomena, particularly where little or no baseline data are available.
- c) to organize workshops and courses on a variety of natural history topics.

WIGS' programs fall into three major categories:

1. Workshops and Courses. An integral part of the program will be to provide opportunities for naturalists to learn more about wildlife.
2. Research Expeditions. These will vary in length from two days to several weeks. The focus will be on gathering data in little-studied areas. Participants will be encouraged to take part in planning the trips, as well as following up with analyzing the data.
3. Ongoing Local Research. Mainly low-budget projects in southwestern B.C. Examples include hawk migration watches, seawatches to study movements of marine birds, and a biological inventory of the Oak Bay islands.

There is a one-time membership fee of \$10.00. For more information or for a list of current programs, please phone Michael Shepard at 380-7615 or 388-4174 or Mary-Anne Montgomery at 380-7152, or write to WIGS at 1241 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2A4.

(ED. NOTE: BCFO supports WIGS' approach of encouraging amateur participation in research projects, and we may in future co-sponsor some projects with WIGS.)

Birding & Natural History Tours

England & Scotland

June 11 - 29, 1992

Join Rob Butler of the Canadian Wildlife Service and Peter Newbery of the Royal Society For The Preservation of Birds on this escape into the English countryside and Scottish Highlands to view some of the most beautiful birdlife in Europe. Accommodations in country inns and lodges; English breakfast and boxed lunches included. Limited to 14 members. Fee: \$3795

The Galapagos Islands & Ecuador

November 19 - December 10, 1992

The abundance of birdlife in this region is enormous. From the vantage point of La Selva's Jungle Lodge, deep in the Amazon Jungle, you will view spectacular birdlife and wildlife. Then, spend a week exploring the Islands on the yacht *Andando*, with daily shore excursions for closer encounters. Early bookings recommended. Fee: Not yet available.

For further information on these and other Natural History Programs, contact:

GREAT EXPEDITIONS

**5915 West Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C. V6M 3X1**

(604) 263-1476

Toll-free in B.C.: 800-663-3364

ON THE EDGE OF HEARING

By Brian M. Kautesk

6-1661 East 10th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 1X6

(ED. NOTE: Before Brian's untimely death last October, he had written several short articles on his birding experiences in various parts of the globe. We plan to publish these at intervals over the next couple of years, and we hope our readers will enjoy them.)

Of the thirteen species of cotingas occurring in southeastern Brazil, I was now gazing at my eleventh, and the last to be expected (barring the rare and local Shrike-like Cotinga and the mysterious Kinglet *Calyptura*, unrecorded in a hundred years). I was looking at Tijuca atra, the Black-and-gold Cotinga, a black crow-sized bird with a yellow eye-ring, an orange bill, and large golden patches on each wing. In fact, it was rather plain-looking, compared to its gaudy relatives such as the sleek, streamlined Swallow-tailed Cotinga, or the shocking neon-blue Banded Cotinga. As a group, the cotingas are best known for their beauty, not their voices, except for the Screaming Piha, that noisy, indefatigable quintessence of the Amazon.

I don't know when I first heard it or became conscious of it-- that sound-- it was so strange, so alien, so subtle. Had it not been pointed out to me, I would not have guessed it to have come from any bird, and it was not like any insect, either. It sounded like an extremely high-pitched tuning fork on the edge of hearing, an all-pervading electric hiss coming from all directions at once. It was an elemental scream, like the creaking of the rotating galaxy, or the bursting and popping of uncountable hydrogen ions in the silence and infinity of black space.

So it was, with a sense of wonder, I stood there that cold, knife-edged morning in the high country of Itatiaia. Approaching closer, I finally saw the orange bill slivered open, vibrating with this strange utterance of dark beauty and unknown significance, in the cold shock of a splintering sunrise.

Of course, Brazil's birdlife is more than its cotingas. Brazil is Streamer-tailed Tyrants, antpipits, tit-spinetails, monjitas, reedhaunters, scythebills, nothuras, and plovercrests. Brazil is stalking the Canebrake Ground-creeper at dawn and hoping to see the Tawny-browed Owl at dusk. It is the Spotted Bamboo-Wrens that slink through bamboo jungles and bizarre Saffron Toucanets calling from their nest-holes. It is the Black-hooded Antwren, one of the rarest passerines on earth, with only 30 individuals surviving. Brazil is finding and recording the song of the rare and electrifying White-bearded Antshrike, and seeing the peculiar Three-toed Jacamar.

But of all my memories of Brazil, my most vivid is of the Black-and-gold Cotinga, hidden away in shadowed glens of green-black jungles, quietly and eternally translating nature into poetry.

BIRD-LISTER'S CORNER

by W. Douglas Kragh and Wayne C. Weber
 1547 Angelo Avenue, Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3B 1C8 (Kragh) and
 51-6712 Baker Road, Delta, B.C. V4E 2V3 (Weber)

The listing totals below, for Canada and for British Columbia life lists, are based on the Listing Report Forms returned to Doug Kragh, plus some totals phoned in to the authors. In Volume 2, Number 2 of the Newsletter, we will report totals for National Parks, Provincial Parks, and local checklist areas. Another Listing Report Form will be sent out with the Newsletter later this year, probably with Volume 2, Number 3. Thereafter, we will continue to send out Listing Report Forms once a year, and print a few pages of listing totals in every second issue. We hope this will be satisfactory to everyone. By keeping the listing totals to a short report in every second issue, we hope those of you who are bored to tears with lists will not feel cheated out of more valuable information. We welcome your comments!

LISTING DATA: DECEMBER 1991

BRITISH COLUMBIA (448 species)

TOTAL	PERCENT	BIRDER	ADDRESS
392	87.5	Mike Force	Vancouver, B.C.
390	87.1	Wayne Weber	Delta, B.C.
389	86.8	David Stirling	Victoria, B.C.
381	85.0	Doug Kragh	Port Coquitlam, B.C.
379	84.6	Jo Ann MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
378	84.4	Hue MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
375	83.7	Dick Cannings	Vancouver, B.C.
372	83.0	Thomas Plath	Burnaby, B.C.
371	82.8	Brian Kautesk	Vancouver, B.C.
364	81.3	Chris Siddle	Vernon, B.C.
359	80.1	Tony Greenfield	Sechelt, B.C.
358	79.9	Wayne Diakow	Richmond, B.C.
355	79.2	Audrey Viken	West Vancouver, B.C.
353	78.8	Colin Butt	Surrey, B.C.
353	78.8	Gary Davidson	Nakusp, B.C.
353	78.8	Danny Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C.
351	78.3	Peter Hamel	Toronto, Ontario
350	78.1	Robin Weber	Prince Rupert, B.C.
342	76.3	Mike McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
339	75.7	David Mark	Amherst, New York
338	75.4	Steve Cannings	Penticton, B.C.
338	75.4	Bryan Gates	Victoria, B.C.
338	75.4	Stefan Zarembo	Burnaby, B.C.
336	75.0	Mary Collins	Vernon, B.C.
336	75.0	Rick Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C.
335	74.8	Linda Van Damme	Nelson, B.C.

TOTAL	PERCENT	BIRDER	ADDRESS
332	74.1	Barb McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
329	73.4	Lloyd Esralson	Surrey, B.C.
323	72.1	Hank Vander Pol	Victoria, B.C.
322	71.9	Barbara Begg	Sidney, B.C.
319	71.2	Jack Williams	White Rock, B.C.
302	67.4	Steve Johnson	Sidney, B.C.
298	66.5	Ken Morgan	Sidney, B.C.
276	61.6	Peter Axhorn	Sooke, B.C.
272	60.7	Chris Sandham	Victoria, B.C.
271	60.5	Blake Maybank	White's Lake, N.S.
267	59.6	Elsie Nykyfork	Vernon, B.C.
263	58.7	Laurie Rockwell	Summerland, B.C.
260	58.0	Jerry Herzig	Princeton, B.C.
250	55.8	Maurice Ellison	Trail, B.C.

CANADA (596 species)

TOTAL	PERCENT	BIRDER	ADDRESS
483	81.0	Hue MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
483	81.0	Jo Ann MacKenzie	Surrey, B.C.
481	80.7	Peter Hamel	Toronto, Ont.
458	76.8	David Stirling	Victoria, B.C.
454	76.2	Thomas Plath	Burnaby, B.C.
449	75.3	Blake Maybank	White's Lake, N.S.
443	74.3	Mike Force	Vancouver, B.C.
440	73.8	Doug Kragh	Port Coquitlam, B.C.
436	73.2	Wayne Weber	Delta, B.C.
428	71.8	Brian Kautesk	Vancouver, B.C.
427	71.6	Dick Cannings	Vancouver, B.C.
423	70.5	Jack Williams	White Rock, B.C.
419	70.3	Colin Butt	Surrey, B.C.
410	68.8	Audrey Viken	West Vancouver, B.C.
410	68.8	Mike McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
406	68.1	Stefan Zaremba	Burnaby, B.C.
401	67.3	Barb McGrenere	Victoria, B.C.
400	67.1	Mary Collins	Vernon, B.C.
399	66.9	Allen Wiseley	Victoria, B.C.
388	65.1	Steve Cannings	Penticton, B.C.
382	64.1	Chris Siddle	Vernon, B.C.
380	63.8	Hank Vander Pol	Victoria, B.C.
374	62.8	Tony Greenfield	Sechelt, B.C.
370	62.1	Barbara Begg	Sidney, B.C.
367	61.6	Gary Davidson	Nakusp, B.C.
366	61.4	Ken Morgan	Sidney, B.C.
353	59.2	Danny Tyson	North Vancouver, B.C.
350	58.7	Linda Van Damme	Nelson, B.C.

THE SITE GUIDE: COWICHAN BAY AND DUNCAN, B.C.

By Keith Taylor
1559 Bay Street, Victoria, B.C. V8R 2B5

NOTE: This account is excerpted, with permission, from A Birder's Guide to Vancouver Island by Keith Taylor (1990), published by the author. It is available from selected bookstores and mail-order bookshops, or may be ordered direct from the author (write Keith at the above address or phone 595-5561 for ordering information).

Driving north on Highway 1, 50.9 km from Victoria (a 45 minute drive), turn right onto Bench Road (at the Shell station). Drive 0.8 km to Cowichan Bay Road, turn left onto Cowichan Bay Road, and continue for an additional 0.9 km. You will have reached the Cowichan Bay Dock Road, also known as the CNR Dock Road (large sign). Turn right, looking at the edges of the waterways for Green-backed Heron (uncommon, mid-April to August) hidden in the brushy margins. [ED. NOTE: Beware of large trucks on this road!!]

After driving an additional 0.7 km you will see a wet field on the right. This area has produced many rarities including Great Egret and Ruff. Many species of shorebirds are well represented here, including both species of dowitcher. (The Long-billed Dowitcher is the more common of the two here.) Lesser Golden-Plovers (uncommon fall) may be seen here, as well as Semipalmated Sandpipers, which are found among the many Western and Least Sandpipers. Wilson's Phalarope (fairly rare) has nested here. Occasionally Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, and Northern Pintail have remained in summer to nest. Among the many Pectoral Sandpipers in the fall, the very rare Sharp-tailed Sandpiper has been recorded. This is possibly one of the better locations to search. Virtually all of the rarer shorebirds could show, especially the Stilt Sandpiper.

The brushy margins along the road are good for finding various sparrows, warblers, and Rufous Hummingbirds. This is a good area for finding vagrants such as kingbirds and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Watch for Black Swifts high overhead in early June. Bank Swallows can be seen during the fall migration. Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Purple and House Finches are seen in season. Northern Harrier, Peregrine Falcon, and Merlin are possible.

Continue to drive or walk for another 0.6 km. On the left on Cowichan Bay are many feral Mute Swans (resident) and Ring-billed Gulls (late June to early November, with a few into December). This is the best place on eastern Vancouver Island for seeing Ring-billed Gulls (up to 60 daily); they are uncommon elsewhere on the east coast. Look for the Purple Martin nest boxes on the pilings on the right (south) side of the road. The pilings are out on the mud flats, or in the bay at high tide. This is the most convenient and reliable spot on southern Vancouver Island to see Purple Martins (mid-April to late August). The nest boxes on the left are full of Tree Swallows. An Osprey nest will be seen atop a man-made structure on the left (north) at the edge of the lumber yard. Check for numerous waterfowl in winter on the bay, including Barrow's

Goldeneye amongst the logs. An occasional Caspian Tern may be seen in summer (May to July) flying over the bay. Sandhill Cranes are rare but regular migrants in mid-September in the grassy fields in the estuary.

Retrace your route to the CNR Dock Road sign and park your car. Walk over the bridge to the right and walk along the gravel dike road immediately on the left. Red-eyed Vireos will be found in the cottonwoods. An occasional Black-headed Grosbeak may be in the area. Green-backed Herons have been seen along the creek, partially concealed by brush, where the dike road turns sharply to the right and swings around close to the main river. Walk back to your car.

The Cowichan Bay Road has now changed its name to Tzuhalem Road. Turn right off CNR Dock Road, stop at the second bridge (0.5 km) to look for Green-backed Herons, and continue on another 0.9 km to the fourth bridge. A walk on the dike road to the left will produce Red-eyed Vireos and Black-headed Grosbeaks and another chance for Green-backed Herons. Cattle Egret has been recorded once at the farm on the right (October to December).

Continue Along Tzuhalem Road to the junction of Trunk Road and Tzuhalem Road, and turn right toward Maple Bay. Drive for 2.9 km, then turn right onto Kingsview Road (at the properties). Continue for 0.8 km, then turn right onto Belcarra Road for another 0.8 km, then left onto Chippewa for 0.3 km; park at the end of Chippewa. From this point walk along the wide trail for 400 paces until you see the ecological reserve sign on your right. A few more metres on the narrow trail will bring you to a steel fence. Here is an ecological reserve, Mount Tzuhalem, where nesting boxes have been placed for Western Bluebirds. Walk the many trails in the more open areas to find them. The bluebirds are usually found 750 paces beyond the steel fence, the most reliable area to find them on the Island. Occasionally Townsend's Solitaires are found in April migration. This is an interesting area to visit; the view is magnificent.

Retrace your route to Tzuhalem Road and Trunk Road, turning right on Trunk Road toward Duncan. After driving a short distance you will cross over a small bridge. Turn left on the dirt road. This is the entrance to the Duncan sewage lagoons. Check the creek here for Green-backed Herons; possibly the best area on the Island for them is to walk north toward Somenos Lake. Yellow Warblers, Willow Flycatchers, and Black-headed Grosbeaks will be heard in the willows here. As parking may be a problem, you may want to drive to the far side of the lagoons. Continue driving on Trunk Road, turn left at Marchmount Road to its end and park. To reach the sewage lagoons from downtown Duncan, turn right at the lights at Trunk Road and drive straight onto Marchmount to its end (1 km). There are "postings", but birders are tolerated. The aesthetics are not pleasant, but the ponds are good for ducks, especially Wood Ducks (common in summer, scarce late winter). Tufted Duck has been recorded in April in the last three years among the hundreds of Lesser Scaup. Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal are regular in late summer. Various gulls are recorded in season. Bonaparte's Gulls (July to November) commonly perch on the power lines, and the fairly rare Franklin's Gull is annual here (September to October). Up to eight were seen here in 1987. They have been seen into December some years. In early June keep a watchful eye overhead for Black Swifts.

Red-eyed Vireos are found in the cottonwoods along the river. For those looking for Wood Ducks unsuccessfully in winter, check along the river or drive back to Duncan, turn left at the lights, and drive to Boys Road (0.8 km). Just over the steel bridge you will see a Chinese restaurant. Behind the restaurant there are ponds that Wood Ducks frequent in winter.

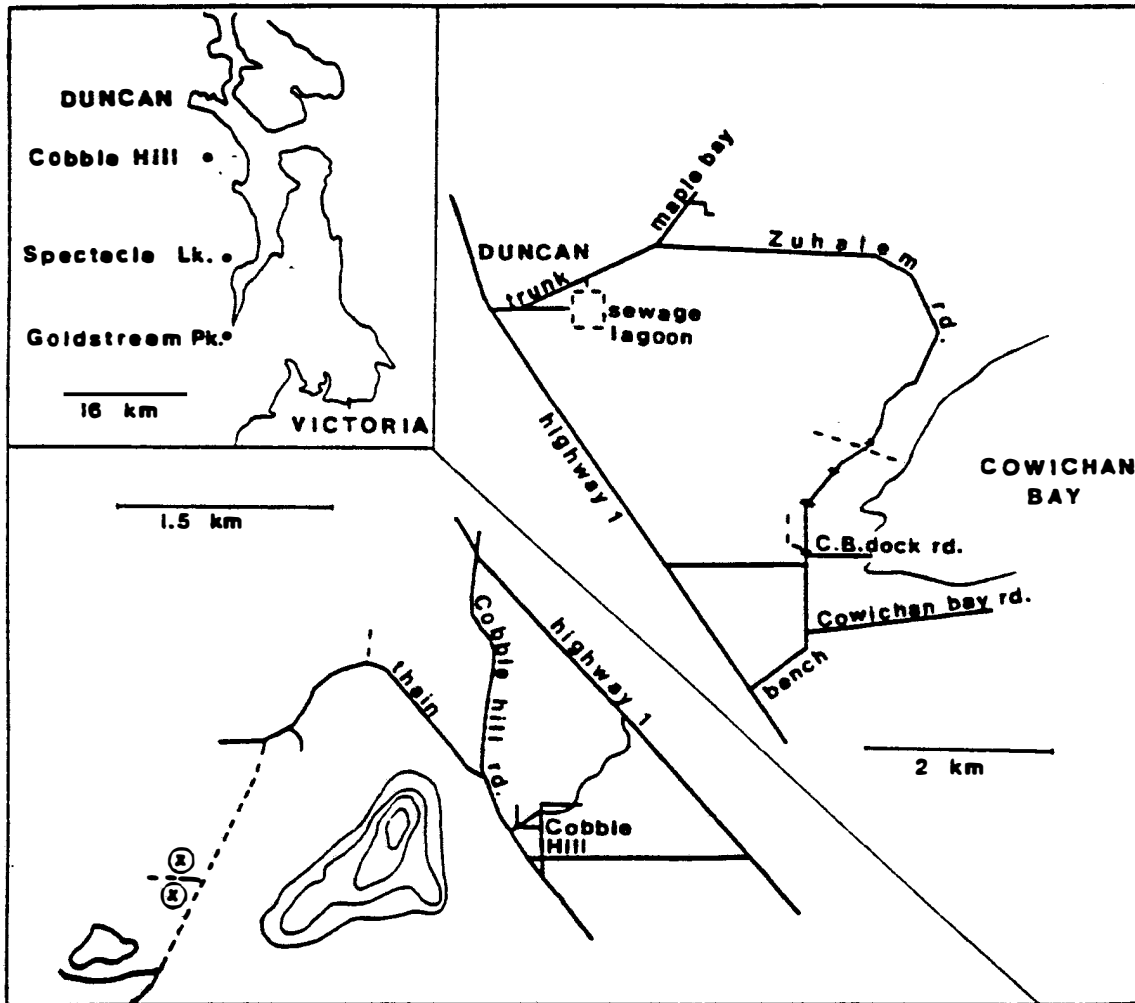


Figure 1. Maps of Duncan and Cobble Hill areas, with inset showing location on Vancouver Island. (Drawing by Keith Taylor)

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

A CHECKLIST OF B.C. BIRD CHECKLISTS, by Wayne C. Weber
THE SITE GUIDE: PRINCETON, B.C. AREA, by Madelon Schouten and
 Jerry Herzig
BEACHED BIRD SURVEYS: DECEMBER 1991 UPDATE, by Alan E. Burger
ODE TO A CODE, a poem by Eric V. Johnson

THE SITE GUIDE: MONCK PROVINCIAL PARK & VICINITY, B.C.

By Wayne C. Weber
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The Nicola Valley of south-central B.C. has always been one of my favourite birding areas in the province. Although it lacks some of the South Okanagan specialties such as Canyon Wren and Sage Thrasher, the valley supports most of the typical bird species of the dry interior valleys. Furthermore, the valley is sparsely settled; Merritt, the only sizable town, has only about 6,000 residents, and one can watch birds without feeling hemmed in by humanity as is often the case in the Okanagan. Although I birded the valley a few times in the 1960s and 1970s, I came to know it well in 1980, when I worked as a seasonal naturalist for the B.C. Parks Branch at Monck Provincial Park on Nicola Lake. Since then, I have visited the valley almost every spring and summer, and occasionally in fall and winter as well. This account will focus mainly on Monck Park and adjacent areas along the shore of Nicola Lake.

From downtown Merritt (the intersection of B.C. Highways 8 and 5A), proceed northeast toward Kamloops on Highway 5A. At 11.4 km, just past the hamlet of Nicola and just before reaching the west end of Nicola Lake, the Monck Park road branches off on the left. This 11.9-km road traverses a variety of habitats, including ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forest, sagebrush, irrigated alfalfa fields, rocky bluffs, and lakeside marshes and willow thickets. A morning's birding here between late May and July can produce a list of 50 to 70 species of birds.

At about 2.1 km from Highway 5A, where the road overlooks alfalfa fields, marsh, and the shallow west end of Nicola Lake, park your car on the road shoulder. Several pairs of Bobolinks nest here, and the males can be seen in display flights over the fields and marsh. (Although Bobolinks are localized, there are other colonies at the north end of Nicola Lake, near the Quilchena Hotel, and at scattered other locations in the valley.) A scope is needed here to scan the lake and marsh. Waterfowl species to be expected here in summer include Canada Goose, Mallard, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, American Wigeon, and Redhead. Common Loons nest in the area, and can often be seen on the lake with their downy black chicks. The bordering marshes are used for nesting by Pied-billed Grebes, American Bitterns, Soras, Common Snipe, Wilson's Phalaropes, and many Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. In spring (April) and fall (October-November), the westernmost 3 km of Nicola Lake is a regular migration stopover for Tundra Swans, diving ducks such as Canvasbacks, Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, and hundreds of American Coots. Only in winter, when this section of the lake is usually frozen, do birds become scarce.

On the opposite (north) side of the road, scattered ponderosa pines provide breeding habitat for Chipping Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Cassin's Finches. The towering cliffs beyond have been used some years by nesting Golden Eagles; they should be watched for all the way from here to Monck Park. Rock Wrens, scarce in the valley, are possible at the base of the cliffs here and at

one or two other spots along the Monck Park road.

At km 3.2, the road comes close to the marsh and its bordering fringe of willows, water birch, and small cottonwoods. The deciduous shrubbery should produce such species as Eastern Kingbird, Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Oriole, and Song Sparrow. The alfalfa fields which the road then crosses, with their bordering trees, are home to American Kestrels, Killdeer, Mourning Doves, Barn Swallows, American Crows, Brewer's Blackbirds, and Savannah Sparrows.

At km 6.2, a spur road on the right leads to the Harmon Estates subdivision of summer homes along the lakeshore, and the road swings away from the lake for a short distance through an open ponderosa pine stand. A huge pine snag north of the road here has supported an Osprey nest for years; if this nest is gone, look for Osprey nests in other large trees near the lake, or the birds themselves fishing anywhere along the lakeshore. Other snags here have been used by nesting Northern Flickers, Mountain Chickadees, Pygmy and White-breasted Nuthatches, and House Wrens. The road then climbs and crosses an extensive stand of sagebrush, home to Western Meadowlarks, and Vesper Sparrows, and Mountain Bluebirds. (Look for Golden Eagles again to the north.)

A gravel road takes off to the left at km 9.6, and can be followed for several km along steep forested slopes above the lake before it splits in two and gradually degenerates into 4-wheel drive roads. Look for Townsend's Solitaires, which nest in cutbanks along the road. The predominant Douglas fir-ponderosa pine forest is interrupted by several small aspen groves with Dusky Flycatcher, Warbling Vireos, and Orange-crowned Warblers. At about km 7 from the Monck Park road, an extensive burned-off area supports a few pairs of Lewis' Woodpeckers, rare in the valley. Common Poorwills can be heard and seen at dusk around rock outcrops and boulders in this same area.

Just past the gravel road junction, at km 9.8, is the entrance to Monck Provincial Park. This 87-ha park, established in 1951, consists mainly of Douglas fir and ponderosa pine forest. A 71-site campground is open from May to October, but is often full in summer. The road winds down to the lakeshore, offering some spectacular views across Nicola Lake, and terminates at the picnic area and boat launch at km 11.9.

Common birds in Monck Park include Mountain Chickadee, White-breasted, Red-breasted, and Pygmy Nuthatches, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Tanager, and Cassin's Finch. At night, Great Horned Owls can be heard, and the Flammulated Owl has been heard at least once, calling from the hillside above the campground. Vaux's Swifts have been noted entering a large hollow pine snag near the boat launch, and they probably nest there. Nicola Lake off Monck Park is deep, and waterbirds seen there in summer are likely to be confined to the occasional Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, or Western Grebe.

Birding can also be good along Highway 5A on the southern and eastern sides of Nicola Lake, but the traffic is heavy at times, so be sure to pull well off the road. At 14.0 km from Merritt (2.6 km from the Monck Park turnoff), the highway enters a large marsh, reaching the other side at 14.8 km. An early morning stop here may produce American Bittern, Virginia Rail, and Sora; you can scarcely miss the many Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Common Yellowthroats. At

km 15.8, a small rest area by the lakeshore provides a good vantage point to scan the lake for waterbirds, especially in spring and fall, when migrating ducks and grebes may be present. Farther along, several large colonies of Cliff Swallows nest on the steep bluffs above the road. The sparsely-wooded hillsides above are home to a few Western (Pacific-Slope?) Flycatchers, Nashville Warblers, and Lazuli Buntings, as well as commoner species.

At about km 23.2, the topography changes sharply as the road begins to cross the wide, flat delta of Quilchena Creek. The Quilchena Hotel at km 23.7, a historic building, has a good coffee shop and is a convenient place to stop for lunch. It is also a good place to stay, as long as you don't mind rooms without individual baths. The cultivated fields along the highway near the hotel feature American Kestrels, Bobolinks, and Savannah Sparrows. The fringe of cottonwoods along Nicola Lake has breeding Veeries and Northern Waterthrushes, and usually one or more nesting pairs of Ospreys.

The Minnie Lake road, a good two-lane gravel road, takes off to the right at km 25.7, traversing the relatively undisturbed native grasslands. This road is worth an entire Site Guide in itself. Suffice it to say, however, that along the first 20 km of this road, the careful bird-finder can consistently find Swainson's Hawks, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Long-billed Curlews, Horned Larks, and Mountain Bluebirds, as well as a wide variety of aquatic birds on the lakes and ponds beside the road.

Directly opposite the intersection of the Minnie Lake road with Highway 5A is a large shallow slough, backed by a stand of tall willows between the slough and Nicola Lake. This is a good place to see Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, and Wilson's Phalaropes. This is one of the best spots in the valley for shorebirds, and in late spring (May) and late summer (August-September), a number of species such as yellow-legs, dowitchers, Baird's Sandpipers, and Red-necked Phalaropes are possible.

Winter is a quiet season in the Nicola Lake area, but even then, good birding is possible. As long as there is open water at the shallow north and south ends of the lake, there are usually small concentrations of ducks including Mallard, American Wigeon, Redhead, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and Common and Hooded Mergansers. Two or three Bald Eagles are often present at the north end of the lake. Greater rarities are possible. On December 29, 1986, while motoring along Highway 5A toward Kamloops, I saw a bird perched atop the chimney of the Quilchena Hotel, and thought to myself, "That doesn't look like a Starling". When I backed up, to my amazement, it was a Northern Mockingbird! Twenty minutes later, about 3 km from the north end of the lake, a blob out on the lake turned out to be a Yellow-billed Loon-- first record for the valley. The Nicola Valley has not been well studied, and the opportunities are great for new discoveries.

A good guide to the backroads and trails of the Nicola Valley, which I recommend to bird-finders, is Exploring the Nicola Valley by Murphy Shewchuk (Douglas & McIntyre, 1981). Although slightly outdated (it predates the Coquihalla Freeway), it has reasonably good maps and interesting information on both human and natural history of the valley.

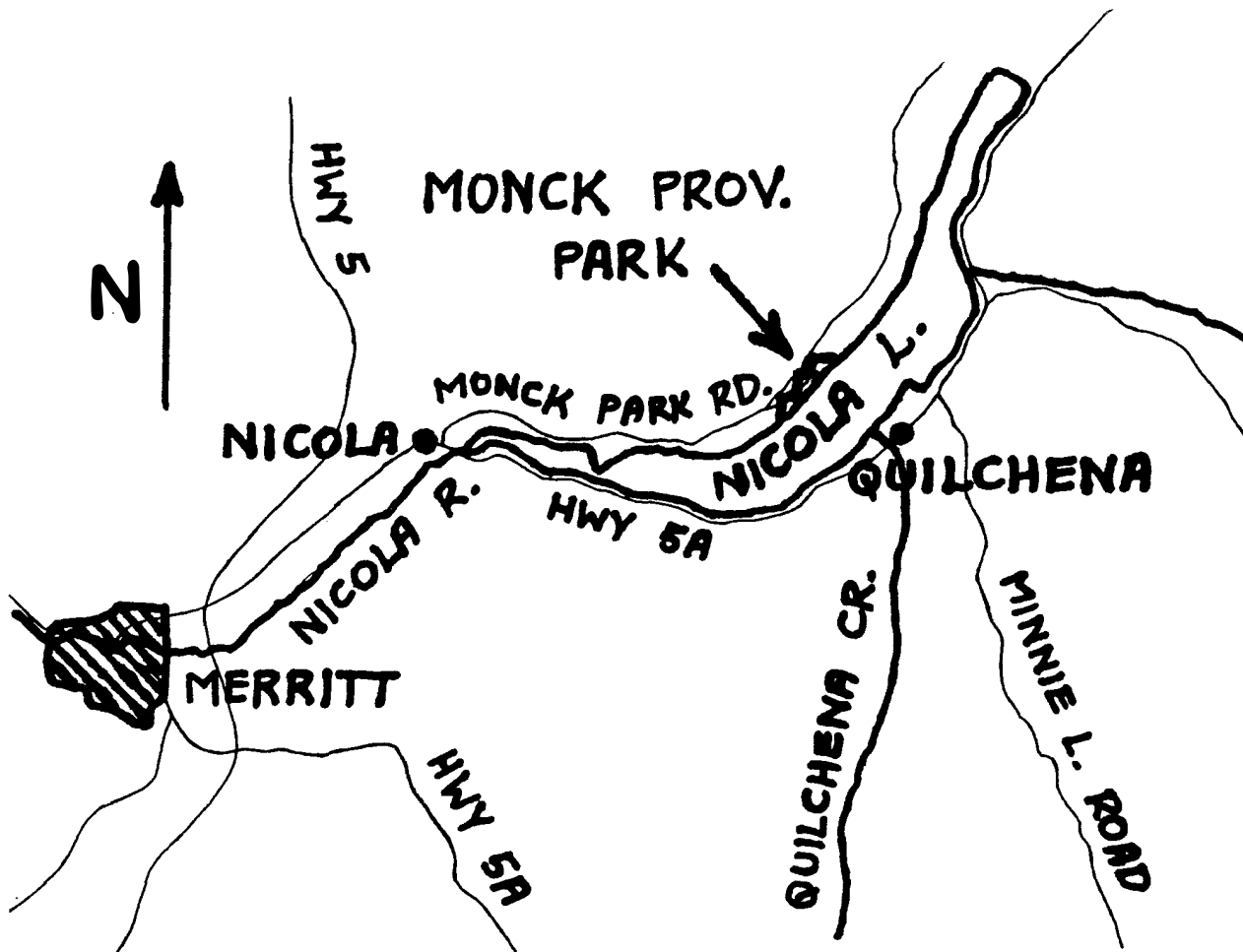


Figure 1. Map of the Merritt-Nicola Lake area. (Drawing by Wayne Weber)

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT.)

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).