

# BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST

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The **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST** is published four times a year by **British Columbia Field Ornithologists, PO Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7**. A subscription to this periodical is a benefit of membership in the society. Members will also receive a copy of the annual journal, **British Columbia Birds**.

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

**Membership dues:** Individual memberships or library subscriptions, \$25.00; junior memberships (age under 18), \$10.00; U.S. and foreign memberships, \$25.00 (\$US). Memberships are for the calendar year. For further information, or to join, write: **Allen Wisely, Membership, British Columbia Field Ornithologists, PO Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7**.

Send material for publication in any format to the BCFO Newsletter Editors (see page 2). We especially welcome bird-finding information for the "Site Guide" series and any articles about birdwatching experiences, preferably (but not necessarily) in British Columbia. **Deadline for receipt of material for publication is the 15th of the month preceding the March, June, September and December issues.**

Editors for the **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST**: A. & M. Buhler  
Distribution of **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST**: Allen Wiseley

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**EDITORS' NOTES AND NOTIONS**


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A great big "Thank You" to everyone who sent us material early so that we could get this issue almost completed before we went away on holidays. We arrived back in BC on Thursday, reoriented our biological clocks, and by Sunday night this issue was ready for the printers. We had a great time in southern England. Met lots of relatives and they helped us tally about 113 species, including a Spoonbill, a pair of Redstarts and several Stone Curlews! Marilyn drove while I navigated and we had a rule that neither of us could 'bird' while the vehicle was in motion -- traffic and roundabouts took up all our energy and attention at those times. If you plan to go birding in southern/southeastern England in the near future give us a call and maybe we can help with some pointers.

Allen Wisely has told us that questions regarding membership can now be addressed to him electronically through [sylvialh@islandnet.com](mailto:sylvialh@islandnet.com). This should speed up any enquiries.

Marilyn and I have put together and published a five year index to the **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST**. The index is an Author/Title/Subject indexing from 1991-1995. It does not index submissions to **British Columbia Birds**. Copies of the index will be available for sale at the 1996 Annual General Meeting [\$2.00/copy] and will also be available by mail from the Editors for \$3.50/copy [\$2.00 + p&h]. Only 50 copies of the index have been published as we undertook the venture privately. Any funds over and above our out-of-pocket costs for the index will be donated directly to the BCFO.

What has this issue in store for you? Larry has provided a great site guide for the Colony Farm Regional Park and has also provided a new checklist for that area. Elsie takes us through the avifaunal changes she has observed during the creation of a new golf course in the Vernon area. Les provides another look at birds and forestry practices. Jerry relates how he successfully combines two interests and becomes a more observant birder. Brian is in at the birth while Prue is in at a demise. Mabel takes us along with her on her trip to Nome and, finally, through the courtesy of Jeremy Baumbach and Cameron Eckert, we provide you with a little birding challenge Yukon style. Enjoy!

Good birding and we hope to see you in June at this year's AGM. ☺

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**BCFO OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1993-1994**

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**SOCIETY NEWS**


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Our mailbox does not appear to have any missives from the directors so we will just send out a few notes of our own.

The major information is the Annual General Meeting, which will be held at Manning Park Lodge (14-16 June, 1996) in conjunction with the Manning Provincial Park Bird Blitz. This is a major opportunity to provide direct input into the organization so please get involved in any way you can -- with the meeting agenda, with the direction of BCFO, or by volunteering to let your name stand as a director for the BCFO Board of Directors. As a provincial organization we would like to have representation from throughout the province.

We hope you will have noticed that there have been not one, but two, issues of **British Columbia Birds** in your mailboxes during the last couple of months. A lot of time, energy and effort by a number of BCFO members has helped to get our journal back "on track" again. Thanks are due to the many members who submitted articles, who reviewed submissions, who reviewed books, who provided editorial nudges and expertise and who ensured that the final product reached your doorways.

The British Columbia Field Ornithologists has been an organization for just over five years. Brian Self, one of the founding members, has provided us with a light-hearted look at the early days. (see pages 16-17). During those five years the organization has had fifteen people serve as officers and directors. They have kept the organization afloat through both smooth and stormy times and certainly deserve our thanks and continued support. Also during those five years at least 83 people have submitted articles, letters, comments, etc. to allow us to provide members with interesting and informative publications on an ongoing basis. Keep up the good work and the next five years will surely build upon the accomplishments of the last five. ☐

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**


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compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

- June 2-15, 1996 **SOUTHERN ALBERTA AND CALGARY AREA.** Fully escorted birding trip for ten people. Fly from Vancouver/Victoria. Total cost \$1,525 including taxes. Possible species include Sharp-tailed & Sage Grouse, Mountain Plover, Baird's & LeConte's Sparrows, McCown's & Chestnut-collared Longspurs. Contact: Derrick Marven, 1887 Frances Street, Duncan, B.C. V9L 4Z9; phone (604) 748-8504.
- June 8-9, 1996 **STRATHCONA PARK BIRD SEARCH.** This is a Strathcona Wilderness Institute Annual Event. Birders are needed to record birds in the Park. Hike, canoe or ski anywhere in the Park. Camping will be available at Buttle Lake. For further information please contact: Betty Brooks, 1630 Seaview Road, Black Creek, B.C. V9J 1J5. Phone (604) 337-8180
- June 14-16, 1996 **BCFO 1996 Annual General Meeting,** will be held at Manning Park Lodge in conjunction with the Manning Provincial Park Bird Blitz. Arrive appropriately prepared for bird blitzing, fine food, super speakers, timely topics, and an awesome AGM. Remember -- BCFO 'members make the meeting'. Please get involved in any way you can, with the meeting, with the direction of BCFO, with articles or information for our two publications, by volunteering to let your name stand as one of the BCFO Board of Directors. We again look forward to seeing everybody at this annual get-together of birders from throughout the province.
- June 14-16, 1996 **WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS AND COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS** Joint Meeting, Estes Park, Colorado. Contact: Raymond Davis, CFO, Box 481, Lyons, CO 80540, USA; phone (303) 832-5332.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS** (continued)

- June 22-28, 1996 **OKANAGAN REGION.** Fully escorted birding trip for six people. Leaving from Victoria. Total cost \$ 925 including taxes. Possible species include Chukar, Gray Partridge, Black-backed, Three-toed & White-headed Woodpeckers, Williamson's Sapsucker, Gray Flycatcher, Sage Thrasher. Contact: Derrick Marven, 1887 Frances Street, Duncan, B.C. V9L 4Z9; phone (604) 748-8504.
- Aug. 2-7, 1996 **SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING,** Nassau, Bahama Islands. Contact: James Wiley, 2201 Ashland St., Ruston, LA 71270, USA; phone (318) 274-2499.
- Aug. 13-17, 1996 **114th STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION & RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING,** Boise State University, Boise, Idaho, USA. Contact: Marc Bechard or Al Dufty, AOU/RRF Local Committee, 556 Flying Hawk Lane, Boise, ID 83709-7289, USA; phone (208) 385-3530 -- Bechard; or (208) 385-3263 -- Dufty.
- Aug. 15-18, 1996 **CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION 25th ANNIVERSARY AND THE MANITOBA NATURALISTS SOCIETY 75th ANNIVERSARY,** Winnipeg, Manitoba. Contact: Wes J. Tretiak, CNF Conference Registrar, 306-2393 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB. R3T 2H4; phone (204) 261-1966.
- Aug. 20-24, 1996 **SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL GROUSE SYMPOSIUM,** Fort Collins, Colorado. Contact: Clait E. Braun, Wildlife Research Center, 317 West Prospect Road, Ft. Collins, CO 80526, USA or Kathy Martin, Canadian Wildlife Service, 5421 Robertson Rd., R.R.#1, Delta, B.C. V4K 3N2; phone (604) 946-8546 or (604) 822-9695.
- Aug. 23-26, 1996 **SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING,** University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B. Contact: Tony Diamond, Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B. E3B 6E1; phone (506) 453-5006 in a.m. Atlantic time or (506) 453-4926 in p.m.
- Sept. 13-15 1996 **WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING,** Portland, Oregon. Contact: Bob Altman, 18000 SE Vogel Rd., Boring, OR 97009, USA; phone (503) 658-2537.
- Oct. 18-20 1996 **JOINT ANNUAL MEETING ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS & GEORGIA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY,** Jekyll Island, Georgia. Contact: Bill Lovejoy, 233 S. Edgewood Drive, Statesboro, GA 30458, USA; phone (912) 681-2516 or Eugenia Thompson, 2015 Morton Road, Athens, GA 30605; phone (706) 549-7318.
- \*\*\*\*\*1997\*\*\*\*\*
- Feb. 5-9 1997 **SECOND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE BIOLOGY AND CONSERVATION OF OWLS OF THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE,** Winnipeg, Manitoba. Contact: James R. Duncan, Manitoba Conservation Data Centre, Department of Natural Resources, Box 24, 1495 St. James Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0W4; phone (204) 945-7465.
- July 21-26 1997 **JOINT ANNUAL MEETING ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION & COSTA RICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY,** Costa Rica. Exact location and contacts not yet announced.
- \*\*\*\*\*1998\*\*\*\*\*
- Aug. 16-22 1998 **TWENTY-SECOND INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS,** Durban, South Africa. Numerous field trips to various parts of southern Africa are planned in addition to scientific program. Contact Secretary-General Dr. Aldo Berruti, Department of Ornithology, Durban Natural Science Museum, Box 4085, Durban, South Africa. ☐

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**SITE GUIDE: COLONY FARM REGIONAL PARK  
(Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam, B.C.)**

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by Larry Cowan  
1988 Campbell Avenue  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 4T2

Colony Farm Regional Park is a 592 acre area straddling the lower end of the Coquitlam River near its confluence with the Fraser River. It extends north from the Mary Hill Bypass, east from Lougheed Hwy in Coquitlam, and west from Mary Hill Road in Port Coquitlam. The northern boundary is Indian Reserve #2 (IR#2).

If you use Hwy #1 from the West, take exit 44. Stay right, taking the route marked for Pitt Meadows. This road veers left under the Port Mann Bridge and comes to signal lights.

- 1) If you proceed directly through these lights the road puts you on the Mary Hill Bypass. This will take you to the eastern side of the Park. Turn left at the first street which will be Mary Hill Road. Proceed north to the parking area on your left (approx. 1 km).
- 2) If you turn left at the signal lights the road will put you on United Blvd. Proceed in the right-hand lane. After passing a set of traffic signals stay right and exit onto Lougheed Hwy East. The first lights you come to will be Colony Farm Road. Turn right and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road.

During 1995 Colony Farm was designated a regional park by the Provincial Government. This was the result of many local, and not so local, individuals and naturalist organizations making both public and politicians aware of the area's importance as a wildlife refuge for animals and as an open area for passive human recreational activities. The Farm provides a vital link in a wildlife corridor that stretches from the mountains in the north to Surrey Bend on the south shore of the Fraser. The local MLA and MP's support should be acknowledged. They played a part in swaying other political support in favour of the area becoming a park.

The Colony Farm Land Use Study Steering Committee had countless meetings and several public forums and informational Open Houses. These efforts raised community awareness so that informed decisions could be made on Colony Farm's future. Although designated as a park, not all areas are earmarked for wildlife. Two hundred and seventy-nine acres have been set aside for wildlife, 187 acres for agriculture, 130 acres for Integrated Management (to research the compatibility of wildlife and agriculture), seven acres of allotment gardens and the balance for parking and other uses.

The Park contains a wide range of habitats supporting both resident and migrant birds and mammals in all seasons. The Farm's 'old-field habitat' is of particular interest as it represents one of the largest areas of its kind west of the Pitt River. Other habitat types in, or bordering on, the park are riparian, deciduous woods, mixed deciduous and coniferous woods, bog and several small marshes. In an extended 'Colony Farm' the Fraser River and the Coquitlam Wildlife Management Area (CWMA) are also home to many bird species.

The CWMA is a large stand of cottonwoods south of the Mary Hill Bypass and east from the mouth of the Coquitlam River. This is the location of a substantial breeding colony of Great Blue Herons. In recent years there have been up to 40 active nests at the site. This location is also a good spot to see Bullock's Orioles which also breed in these woods. Tree Island, just off the mouth of the Coquitlam River, has in past years had an active Bald Eagle nest. At various seasons of the year both Common and Red-throated Loons along with Horned, Red-necked and Western Grebes have been observed feeding near the mouth. Recently a lone Trumpeter Swan was seen upstream of the Bypass Bridge. A landfill site on the south shore of the Fraser opposite here attracts thousands of gulls that can be seen roosting on sandbars and in over-flight. Glaucous-winged Gulls are the most common gull. Mew, Ring-billed, California, Thayer's and Herring Gulls can be spotted on occasion by patiently scoping the roosts.

**COLONY FARM REGIONAL PARK** (continued)

Colony Farm itself has been a much overlooked birding area. However in the last few years, due to the confirmed nesting of Western Kingbirds and two years ago the Least Flycatcher, many birders have discovered its great abundance of bird species. Other local rarities to attract birders are the Lazuli Bunting, Eastern Kingbird (both nesting species), Green Heron and a breeding pair of Barn Owls.

There are two parking areas from which to start your walks. One is the Forensic Psychiatric Institute (FPI) parking lot at the east end of Colony Farm Road that is accessed from Lougheed Hwy. This lot is open for birders and other park visitors use. A short walk southward along the dike will find you at the confluence of the Coquitlam and Fraser Rivers. As previously described look for waterfowl on the rivers and raptors such as Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcon (when he's not catching Rock Doves off the Port Mann Bridge) and Osprey in season. The fields south of the FPI and west of the dike were actively farmed up until last year when construction of a new facility was started. This field hosts large gull roosts during different times of the day. American Pipits often use this field during their migration stop overs. On April 5, 1995 Mountain Bluebirds were observed in patches of tall grass on the far west side along the CP Railway line. Look in the ditches for Wood and other duck species. Last year during our Vancouver Natural History Society Big Day while we were going to a secret location to tick a Barn Owl, we saw a Sora in the ditch. Numerous sparrow and warbler species can be seen in the hedgerows and trees here and south of the Bypass. Check out the sometimes large flocks of Canada Geese for a Greater White-fronted or Snow Goose. On one occasion a Trumpeter Swan joined the Canadas to feed.

Walking west from the Parking lot along Colony Farm Road can be productive. A circle route can be started from here taking you west to the CP Railway line. Look for Bullock's Oriole in the mature trees along the road. In the fields look for ducks in winter, Northern Harriers at any season. Keep an eye open for sparrows in the hedgerows. At a small marsh on your right watch for Red-winged Blackbirds, Marsh Wrens and possibly Virginia Rail. Yellow-headed Blackbirds have also been seen in the Park. At the railway tracks (**CAUTION: heed trains!** This is a very active line), turn north along the roadway paralleling the tracks. After a short walk you will come to a small pond on your right. There is a trail here which will take you back to the Coquitlam River if needed. Watch for ducks and a possible Hooded Merganser or Bufflehead on the pond. This pond is actually a widening of Mundy Creek.

Continuing along the gravel road will take you past several smaller old-field areas. At about a kilometer from the start of the road you will see buildings on your left across the Lougheed Hwy. At this point you should have reached a large marshy area on your right. I have not fully explored this marsh but it is reported to hold American Bittern. Just past here look for a short trail on your right that will take you back to the river. When you reach the river trail you have the choice of going north or south. The trail north travels through a mixed forest setting with the usual assortment of forest dwellers. This trail is interesting but can be a muddy experience if we have had wet weather. Eventually this trail takes you to Pitt River Road. If you cross the Bailey Bridge (soon to be a larger cement bridge that is under construction as of this writing) you will find a trail running south to return you through the woods back to Colony Farm. If you miss the trail you will come to a dike which would also take you back to the farms.

It is suggested, however, that you take the trail **SOUTH** rather than north. It is a long walk back to your car taking the northern route. The trail south will take you along the Coquitlam River which should be scanned for ducks, mergansers and Great Blue Herons perched in the trees. Ducks to be looked for are Wood, Mallard, American and Eurasian Wigeon and Gadwall. Bufflehead and Common Goldeneye are also often seen. When you again find yourself back to the open farm lands watch for other waterfowl on the river and ditches. Some species seen are Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler and Northern Pintail. These species are best looked for in spring and fall. In fall, winter, and early spring watch for Northern Shrike in all field habitat. There are at least three shrikes present in the park most years. Check those shrikes carefully, Loggerhead Shrike have been reported on two occasions. The FPI buildings will soon be visible to the south. On your walk back to your car watch for Ringed-necked Pheasant, Spotted Towhee and Song Sparrows year round. Savannah, Fox, Golden-crowned, White-crowned and Lincoln's Sparrows can be seen in the right seasons. During migration American Tree and White-throated Sparrows have been located. Rufous Hummingbirds are common in spring and summer.

**COLONY FARM REGIONAL PARK** (continued)

The second parking spot from which to start is located on Mary Hill Road on the Farm's east side. The paved parking area is on your left about 1 km north from the Mary Hill Bypass just before the electric power lines. This is my favorite starting place. It offers, in spring especially, a chance of seeing many of Colony Farm's specialty birds, namely Western and Eastern Kingbirds and Lazuli Bunting. The dike trail proceeds downhill crossing the farm until it branches at the river. This stretch alone can take a 1/2 hour if you take it all in. Lazulis can sometimes be seen directly below the parking area and Eastern Kingbirds tried in vain to nest on top of the first hydro tower last year. You have the chance of seeing all of the swallow species normally found in the area along this stretch -- Tree, Violet-green, Cliff and Northern Rough-winged. The Bank Swallow is not common but is seen most years in migration usually in the late summer. Both Vaux's and Black Swift can be seen at the Farm -- the Vaux's generally in pairs with the Black in larger flocks feeding high over the river. The Western Kingbirds are most likely to be in the field to your right. They have nested the last two years on the second tower. They have nested in one of the corners at the point near the top of the tower where it narrows before again widening. They are present from late May through to August. In late march and through April look for migrating Mountain Bluebirds. Listen for Marsh Wren and Common Yellowthroat calling from the foliage along the ditch.

In fall and winter Short-eared Owls are often seen hunting fields on either side of the dike and if you are lucky maybe one of the resident Barn Owls will make a rare daylight hunting sortie. Also targeting the large population of Townsend's Voles are Northern Harrier, Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks. The Great Blue Heron is another predator hunting voles. In recent years another predator, namely the coyote, has found the fields very productive. The area has an increasing coyote population with most visits to the park producing a coyote or two.

The dike from the parking area ends at a 'T' junction at the river. Here scan the river banks for Belted Kingfishers and a possible Green Heron. Cattle Egret and Black-crowned Night-heron have also been reported from the Farms. A total of 23 species of waterfowl have been recorded over the years. The dike splits at the river into one going left (south) towards the Mary Hill Bypass and a stand of cottonwoods and right (north) towards the mixed woodlot (where the confirmed breeding pair of Least Flycatchers were found) and the bog along the north dike heading east again. Both directions have opportunities for many species.

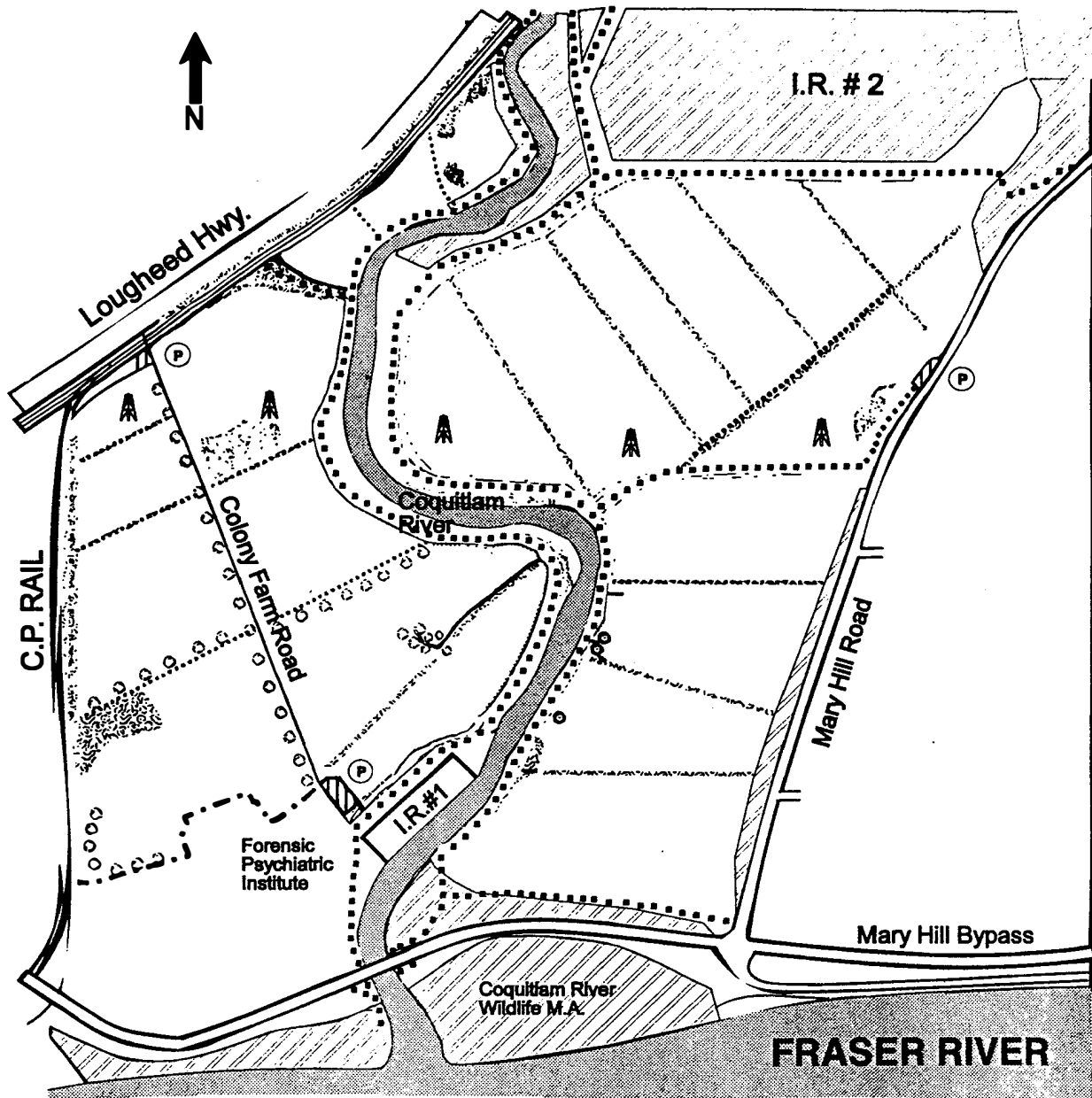
The dike to your left can be taken through the stand of cottonwoods over several bridges and under the Bypass Bridge. Crossing this bridge will allow you to access the west side of the Park. Look for Lazuli Bunting, American Goldfinch, numerous sparrow species and Eastern Kingbirds on your walk to the trees. When the fruit is ripe on the elderberry shrubs it can attract large numbers of Band-tailed Pigeons.

The dike to the right provides a circular route back to your car. Watch for Eastern Kingbirds on your left and many of the numerous resident Rufous Hummingbirds. Common Snipe can often be seen along this section near dusk. As you approach the woodlot watch in spring for Yellow-rumped, Wilson's, Yellow, and Black-throated Gray Warblers. Once you reach the area where you have the woods on the left and fields on the right it sometimes is difficult to decide which habitat to watch. Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers can commonly be seen and heard in the woods. Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos can also be heard and seen here. The common flycatchers to see are Willow and Western Wood-Pewee. Watch and listen for Common Ravens flying over the Farms heading north to the mountains. Proceeding north you will come to a fork in the dike. Going to the left will take you through the woods to eventually make your way to Pitt River Road. A short distance up this dike a trail leads to the left. A short distance up from here is a pond which can produce waterfowl, woodpeckers and other forest birds -- worth the short walk. Taking the dike to the right (east) takes you alongside a bog on your left. Merlin are sometimes present patiently sitting and waiting for an unwary passerine to happen by. This is also a popular spot to see Kestrels. At the end of this dike is a house which is situated on IR#2. You will likely be greeted by their dog which I have always found friendly. A road runs uphill at this point and takes you to Mary Hill Road. Proceed to your left. This will take you back to your vehicle but do not stop looking for birds. Many good sightings have been made along this stretch of road. It is best to cross to the paved sidewalk. The traffic moves very fast through this area and because of the turns vehicles can appear out of nowhere.

COLONY FARM REGIONAL PARK (continued)

A bird checklist which was produced by the Burke Mountain Naturalists is currently being updated in co-operation with the 'BC Wildlife Watch' program and should be obtainable soon by contacting Wildlife Watch, BC Environment, 10334 - 152A Street, Surrey, BC V3R 7P8.

The preliminary list follows showing species, seasonal occurrence and relative abundance. It will make you aware of the many species that occur here that I did not mention. ◀





Seasonal Occurrences

Sp = spring      March - May  
 S = summer      June - late August  
 F = fall          late August - November  
 W = winter        December - February

**Preliminary  
 Bird Checklist for  
 Colony Farm Regional Park**

Relative Abundance

c = common; should be found on most visits in suitable habitat  
 f = fairly common; may be found in suitable habitat  
 u = uncommon; not easily found, present in limited numbers or secretive  
 r = rare; can be present but in very low numbers, may be difficult to find  
 ca = casual; very rare, 1-3 records known  
 ac = accidental; not seen every year, outside normal range

Other Symbols

\* = species has been documented breeding in the checklist area

	<u>Sp</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>Sp</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
Red-throated Loon	ca		r	r	American Kestrel *	r	r	r	r
Common Loon	r				Merlin	r	r	r	r
					Peregrine Falcon		r	r	
Pied-billed Grebe	u	u	u						
Horned Grebe			r		Ring-necked Pheasant *	c	c	c	c
Red-necked Grebe	ca		u	u					
Western Grebe			u	u	Virginia Rail	ca			
					Sora	ca			
Double-crested Cormorant	ca		u	u	American Coot	ca			u
American Bittern	r	r	r	r	Killdeer *	r	f	r	r
Cattle Egret			ca	ca					
Great Blue Heron *	c	c	c	c	Lesser Yellowlegs	r			
Green Heron *		u	u		Spotted Sandpiper	r	u	r	
Black-crowned Night Heron				ca	Pectoral Sandpiper		ca	r	
					Long-billed Dowitcher			r	
Tundra Swan	r				Common Snipe	u		u	u
Trumpeter Swan	r								
Greater White-fronted Goose	ca		r		Mew Gull	c	u		u
Snow Goose			ca	ca	Ring-billed Gull				ca
Canada Goose *	c	c	c	c	California Gull				ca
Wood Duck *	c	c	c	c	Herring Gull				ca
Green-winged Teal			c	c	Thayer's Gull				ca
Mallard *	c	c	c	c	Glaucous-winged Gull	c	c	c	c
Northern Pintail		ca		u	Caspian Tern	ca			
Blue-winged Teal *	u	u							
Cinnamon Teal *	u	u			Rock Dove *	c	c	c	c
Northern Shoveler	ca		ca		Band-tailed Pigeon		c		
Gadwall	u	u	u	u	Mourning Dove	r	r	r	
Eurasian Wigeon				r					
American Wigeon	f		f	c	Barn Owl *	r	r	r	r
Canvasback				r					
Ring-necked Duck				r	Great Horned Owl *	r	r		
Greater Scaup				u	Short-eared Owl	u			u
Lesser Scaup	ca			u					
Common Goldeneye	r			u	Common Nighthawk		r		
Barrow's Goldeneye				r					
Bufflehead			c	c	Black Swift	r	u		
Hooded Merganser	u		c	c	Vaux's Swift	u	r		
Common Merganser *	u	u		f					
					Rufous Hummingbird *	c	c		
Turkey Vulture	r	r							
					Belted Kingfisher	r	r	u	u
Osprey	u	u	u						
Bald Eagle *	u	u	c	c	Red-breasted Sapsucker			u	u
Northern Harrier	u	u	c	c	Downy Woodpecker *	c	c	c	c
Sharp-shinned Hawk	r		r	u	Hairy Woodpecker	u	u	u	u
Cooper's Hawk	r		u	u	Northern Flicker	c	u	c	c
Red-tailed Hawk *	c	c	c	c	Pileated Woodpecker *	u	u	u	u
Rough-legged Hawk			u	u					

	<u>Sp</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>Sp</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
Olive-sided Flycatcher		r	u		Northern Shrike	ca		u	u
Western Wood-Pewee *	u	u	ca		Loggerhead Shrike				ca
Willow Flycatcher *	c	c	r						
Least Flycatcher *		ca			European Starling *	c	c	c	c
Hammond's Flycatcher	r								
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	r	u	r		Solitary Vireo			r	
Western Flycatcher *	r	f			Hutton's Vireo	ca			
Eastern Flycatcher *	r	c			Warbling Vireo *	ca	f		
					Red-eyed Vireo *		u		
Tree Swallow *	c	c							
Violet-green Swallow *	c	c			Orange-crowned Warbler	u	u	u	
N. Rough-winged Swallow *	c	c			Yellow Warbler *	c	c	f	
Bank Swallow		ca			Yellow-rumped Warbler	u		u	
Cliff Swallow	u	f	r		Blk-throated Gray Warbler	ca	ca		
Barn Swallow *	c	c	r		MacGillivray's Warbler			r	
					Common Yellowthroat *	c	c	r	
Steller's Jay	u	u	u	u	Wilson's Warbler	u	ca		
Northwestern Crow *	c	c	c	c	Western Tanager	ca	ca	ca	
Common Raven	u	u	u	u	Black-headed Grosbeak *	c	c	ca	
					Lazuli Bunting *	r	c		
Black-capped Chickadee	c	c	c	c	Spotted Towhee *	c	c	c	c
Chestnut-backed Chickadee				r	American Tree Sparrow				ca
					Savannah Sparrow *	c	c	r	
Bushtit *	c	c	c	c	Fox Sparrow	ca			u
					Song Sparrow *	c	c	c	c
Red-breasted Nuthatch				u	Lincoln's Sparrow	ca		ca	
					White-throated Sparrow			ca	
Brown Creeper	u	u	u	u	Golden-crowned Sparrow	r		ca	ca
					White-crowned Sparrow	u	u	r	
Bewick's Wren *	c	c	c	c	Dark-eyed Junco			f	u
Winter Wren	u	u	r	u	Red-winged Blackbird *	c	c	c	c
Marsh Wren *	c	c	c	c	Yellow-headed Blackbird		ca		
					Brewer's Blackbird		u	r	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	u	r	c	c	Brown-headed Cowbird *	c	c		
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	u		u		Bullock's Oriole *	u	u		
Mountain Bluebird	r								
Townsend's Solitaire	ca				Purple Finch	r	r	r	
Swainson's Thrush *	c	c			House Finch *	f	f	f	f
American Robin *	c	c	u	u	Red Crossbill	r	ca	r	r
Varied Thrush	ca			u	Pine Siskin	ca	ca	c	c
					American Goldfinch *	f	c	c	r
Gray Catbird			ca		Evening Grosbeak			ca	u
American Pipit			f		House Sparrow *	u	u	u	u
Bohemian Waxwing				ca					
Cedar Waxwing	f	c	u						

If you get a chance to bird Colony Farm Regional Park I hope you enjoy the varied habitats, birds and wildlife species found there. ☺

### GUIDELINES FOR SITE GUIDES

Site Guides should be about 2-3 pages in length. They should include a map (hand-drawn is fine) with distances to viewing areas clearly indicated from the starting point. Landmarks and terrain should be noted, along with the birds seen in season. Any unusual or special species should be given and a local contact person is always helpful information. Hazards and closed areas should also be indicated so that we may all experience safe birding. Items of historical or geological interest along the route should also be noted. Many birders are interested in a broad range of natural history areas and it is nice to be able to stimulate the grey cells while patiently and quietly awaiting the possible appearance of an elusive lifebird. ☺

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**Birding on Predator Ridge Golf Course**

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by Elsie Nykyfork  
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In 1991, while birding on the Commonage Road in Vernon, I noticed bulldozers were working on an area just south of the McKay Sewerage Pond. They were creating the strangest looking thing with lumps, bumps, flat areas and enhancement of the lakes. After a few visits it suddenly dawned on me, "That's going to be a golf course!". I watched the development grow and lamented to myself the loss of yet another good birding area. About the same time as this was all happening I was asked by the North Okanagan Naturalist President, Phil Renson, to form a Bluebird Survival Program. One of the first places we asked to join the Program was the Predator Ridge Golf Course.

There are 1200 acres of land on the Golf Course property and three natural lakes, one marshy pond and two man-made lakes. The natural watercourse has been used to create a network of lakes which attract countless waterfowl and small birds. The surrounding wooded area has Ponderosa Pine, Interior Douglas Fir, Red Cedar Birch, Trembling Aspen and an abundance of fruit-bearing shrubs and vines. Within these areas I have observed coyote, black bear, deer, porcupine, red squirrel, chipmunk and weasel.

In the first year of operation twenty boxes were put up on the Commonage Road and the perimeter fence lines plus a few boxes at the edge of the forested area. Result -- we had three boxes used by Western Bluebirds and they fledged 18 birds in our first year. Tree Swallows and House Wrens used the balance of the boxes. While I was checking my boxes I was, naturally, birding. Forty-two species were seen on the golf course in 1992 and the list has now grown to 113 species seen. [see list page 13]

The Yellow-headed Blackbird has found the reeds around the large lake and makes a colourful addition to the area. Marsh Wren and Sora are also in the reeds on this lake. One morning at 6 am (beat the golfers!) I was checking the area of the lake and out walked a Virginia Rail right onto the grass. What a surprise and pleasure for me! Coots, Ruddy Duck, Canada Goose, Redhead, and scaup all use this lake, some of them stopping to nest and rear their young. The surrounding "natural" long grass is nesting area for Savannah Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, California Quail, Meadowlark and Ring-necked Pheasant. There are three long grass areas like this on the property.

I now have Phyllis Irvine to help me with the 50 boxes our trail has grown to. I also go many times on my own, just to walk the seven (7) km of paths around and through the woods of the inner grounds. I absorb the wonderful, peaceful feeling and watch the birds.

There has been an expansion in the number of holes added to the Course in the last couple of years. The Course twines in a large loop through the trees with natural rock bluffs and forest in the middle and surrounding area. Townsend's Solitaire nest here. I put eight (8) new boxes in this area last fall and now hope for nuthatches and chickadees. Squirrels chew the edges of the holes in the boxes which are put up in wooded areas. I have put a metal face plate on around the hole to slow them down. We have White-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Chickadee, House Wren, Tree Swallow, Mountain Bluebird and, of course, Western Bluebirds using our boxes. There is much diversity of habitat on these grounds. They range from open dry-grass to forest and lakes so in 1995 I was able to submit 113 Nest Record Cards from the Golf Course to Wayne Campbell. The fact that a golf course is in the middle of the nest record area does not seem to matter too much.

On the grounds there is an old farm house and some old log barns. The Cliff Swallows have up to 75 nests here each year. A Say's Phoebe selects one clay base and builds her nest on top. She is early so can just raise one brood there before she is evicted by the Cliff Swallows. Her second brood is usually in the barn. A Red-tailed Hawk raised three (3) young in the "outback". The next year a Great Horned Owl raised Two (2) chicks in that same nest. I wonder who gets it for 1996?

**Predator Ridge Golf Course** (continued)

There has always been a picturesque little lake nestled in the trees here. For years the local hiking group would hike from Ellison Park, through the woods and over the hill, to have lunch at this beautiful spot. They called it Birdie Lake. I advised the grounds superintendent about this and the name has been carried on. The lake area has been enhanced, but you can still sit on the bank and observe Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, scaup, Mallard, Canada Goose, Coot, Redhead to name a few. Many of these stay to nest near the lake. The reedy end of the lake has the usual compliment of Red-winged Blackbird and Yellow-headed Blackbird. The Northern Oriole hangs her dainty basket nest on a branch along the edge of the lake. The Spotted Sandpiper decided to nest at #14 hole. The grounds staff put a little fence of sticks around the nest site and "Spotty" successfully raised her brood.

The Bluebird Trail on the Golf Course has become so extensive and successful that Phyllis and I now have the use of a golf cart to help on the inner part of the trail. We still have to hoof it for the outer 25 boxes on Commonage Road and the perimeter fences. We have fledged as many as 66 Mountain and Western Bluebirds in a given year. Always looking for more though.

Predation by Tree Swallows overnesting is sometimes bad. The chipmunk is impossible to keep out. One of our boxes kept him well fed on eggs and nestlings last year. A House Sparrow got away on me and had seven (7) hatchlings in a box. I decided to leave the nest (just this once). Just before I went away from the box a small thin squirrel came down the fir tree and went into the box. I banged on the box. He came out and was furious with me. He went back in again and this time paid no attention to me at all. He took a hatchling out, sat on the branch and ate it. I left as he cleaned off his paws and went back for another one. I have a metal squirrel guard on this box but this squirrel is thin enough to go right in. The next week when I checked out this box the squirrel had four (4) young in it. Bull snakes usually clean out a couple of nests a year. They leave the nest intact in the box but all the eggs or young are gone. The adults will usually have a second brood.

Last year I had three (3) Tree Swallow boxes invaded with black mites. The mites are disgusting. They swarm all over the box and contents in a moving black sheet. It is hard to believe young fledged from these nests. I do not know the answer to ridding a box of mites. Any suggestions out there? Blow-flies are another problem. We have had some success with putting a one inch high wire mesh under the established nest.

It is February 19, 1996 as I write this and I am getting anxious to put on my "Birder's Vest" loaded down with screw driver, pliers, screws, nails, and a packet of nest box cards so that I can be off to discover what we get in 1996. There is bound to be some treasures.

The grounds staff and owner-managers of Predator Ridge Golf Course are very cooperative and they are learning their birds as well. It is such luxury to go birding, stop for coffee in the beautiful club house and, after a short rest, go at it again! Sorry the golf course is not open to public birding.

Before the Golf Course was built this was a raptor and forest bird area. With the opening up and enhancing of the lakes, and the grassland no longer being grazed by range cattle, I feel this golf course has not taken anything away from the area. It has created a greater diversity of habitat for both birds and other wildlife.

I understand there are some houses to be built on the property over the next ten years. We'll see what develops but there should still be 400 or 500 acres left for the birds and me. ♣

Editors' Note: Elsie provided us with a list of the birds she has seen a Predator Ridge Golf Course and it follows on the next page. In the September 1994 issue of BCFO [BCFO 4(4): 19-20] Tony Greenfield also gave us an article about changes in bird diversity on the then new Sechelt Golf and Country Club. It might be quite interesting to get an update on both of these golf courses in a few years time to see whether the golf course habitat changes remain beneficial to birds and birding.

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**Predator Ridge Golf Course Bird List**


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Canada Goose	Common Nighthawk	American Robin
Mallard	Calliope Hummingbird	Gray Catbird
Gadwall	Rufous Hummingbird	Northern Shrike
American Wigeon	Common Flicker	American Pipit
Northern Shoveler	Red-naped Sapsucker	Bohemian Waxwing
Blue-winged Teal	Downy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Cinnamon Teal	Hairy Woodpecker	Starling
Ruddy Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Warbling Vireo
Redhead	Eastern Kingbird	Nashville Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Western Kingbird	Yellow Warbler
Greater Scaup	Western Wood-Pewee	Wilson's Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Say's Phoebe	Common Yellowthroat
Barrow's Goldeneye	Hammond's Flycatcher	Black-headed Grosbeak
Common Goldeneye	Least Flycatcher	Lazuli Bunting
Bufflehead	Willow Flycatcher	Rufous-sided Towhee
Common Merganser	Pacif. Slope Flycatcher	Vesper Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Tree Swallow	Savannah Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Violet-green Swallow	Song Sparrow
Sora	Rough-winged Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
American Coot	Cliff Swallow	Clay-coloured Sparrow
Killdeer	Barn Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco
Spotted Sandpiper	Steller's Jay	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Snipe	Clark's Nutcracker	Snow Bunting
Ring-billed Gull	Black-billed Magpie	Western Meadowlark
Turkey Vulture	American Crow	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
Swainson's Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Brewer's Blackbird
Osprey	Mountain Chickadee	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Kestrel	Brown Creeper	Northern Oriole
Merlin	White-breasted Nuthatch	Western Tanager
Prairie Falcon	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Pine Siskin
California Quail	House Wren	American Goldfinch
Ring-necked Pheasant	Winter Wren	Red Crossbill
Rock Dove	Marsh Wren	Cassin's Finch
Mourning Dove	Western Bluebird	House Finch
Great Horned Owl	Mountain Bluebird	Evening Grosbeak
Great Gray Owl	Townsend's Solitaire	House Sparrow

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**Tricky Word Puzzles for Birders**


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by Jeremy Baumbach  
 c/o Yukon Bird Club, Box 31054  
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Jeremy Baumbach is currently the treasurer of the Yukon Bird Club. Since birds are few in the -40° C winter weather Jeremy creates word puzzles both to wile away those long nights and to entertain his Northern birding buddies. With the permission of both Jeremy and Cameron Eckert, editor of The Yukon Warbler, we reprint [The Yukon Warbler Spring 1995] the following word puzzle for your entertainment. Jeremy says, "These word puzzles challenge birders to identify various Yukon birds by the following clues. For example: 'Polar twist' -- Arctic Tern." Good Luck!

- |                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Smooth flutist          | 11. Big gulp                      |
| 2. Carrot top              | 12. Crazy door                    |
| 3. Fitness centre fight    | 13. Holy humor                    |
| 4. Extruda - prod          | 14. Battle distortion             |
| 5. Typical nut             | 15. Never having to say you're... |
| 6. Senior female           | 16. Gnat grabber                  |
| 7. Garden variety pot-shot | 17. Owner of a Bic lighter        |
| 8. Liberal survey          | 18. Resin lollipop                |
| 9. Tarp return             | 19. Do it on a donkey             |
| 10. Cat alarm clock        | 20. Loot (a) hotel                |

Editors' note: Answers in next issue. Some are "challenging".

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## Riparian Birds and Timber Harvesting in the Okanagan Highlands

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by Les Gyug  
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After three years, 101 bird species and 10,000 bird observations, I can say that, "Yes, riparian areas are as important to birds as people think they are", and, "Yes, timber harvesting is a major determinant of which species will continue breeding there".

Let's look at the numbers. Thirty-seven percent of the bird species rely on riparian areas in the Okanagan Highlands. Another 7% are swifts or swallows that often (but not always) rely on riparian areas. That leaves 56% of the bird species, none of which are completely reliant on upland areas. So, the uplands hog 90% of the area of the Okanagan Highlands, can only support about half the species, and turn out to have no exclusive species. No matter how the feller buncher\* slices, those riparian areas are irreplaceable!

The good news about riparian birds in the Okanagan Highlands is that 22 lake or wetland species did not appear to be adversely affected by clearcutting in adjacent areas. Even better news is that the new Forest Practices Code riparian guidelines will provide reserve zones, wildlife tree areas, and stream protection that will keep another nine species happy (at least on larger streams, lakes and wetlands).

The bad news comes for six other species of the Okanagan Highlands that like the riparian spruce forests and that just cannot stomach the upland lodgepole pine wildernesses. These species do not stand much of a chance against the feller bunchers because there will not be any forest reserves to speak of along smaller streams or along any streams that do not support fish. The news is a bit better on streams wider than 1.5 m that contain fish: the guidelines dictate that skinny forest corridors (40 - 60 m total width) shall be left, but even these will not be wide enough for Townsend's Warblers or Winter Wrens. These two species would not cause such a problem on the coast or in the Kootenays where they will use a variety of forest types, but in the biological deserts of the lodgepole pine plateaus, the riparian spruce stands are real oases.

Partial cutting was a mixed blessing, depending on the level of cut. Light partial cutting (16% - 33% removal) did not change the breeding bird communities in riparian forest corridors, at least as long as a few wildlife trees were left behind somewhere for the cavity nesters. Heavy partial cutting (48% - 85% removal) was like inviting lots of clearcut birds in as party guests, but only after kicking out the forest bird hosts.

For those who would like a few more details, the project reports can be obtained in either short and sweet, or long and dry, versions from the author, or from BC Environment, 2547 Skaha Lake Road, Penticton, BC V2A 7K2. I would also like to thank Dennis St. John and Don Wilson who persevered in helping to collect those 10,000 observations. ◀

Editors' Note: \* Yes, we did ask -- a "feller buncher" is a type of mechanical tree-harvesting device which can embrace a tree, cut the tree off near its base, and then continue on cutting more trees until up to five or six trees are held in its steely embrace. It then deposits the cut trees in a pile ready for transport.

Readers might also be interested in re-reading Les' previous article about tree patches in the March 1995 issue of this newsletter -- BCFO 5(1): 16, 1995.

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## Bird Watching With a Different Aspect

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by Jerry Anderson  
RR #4  
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I have been bird watching for about 20 years and I guess I would consider myself as an average birder, going out on most weekends to some interesting place and hoping to see something new or different or listening to the bird alert to rush out to see a Bobolink or Mongolian Plover or a wagtail and to put a tick on my Victoria List, my BC List or my Life List. But all that changed about 3 years ago when we went to Parksville to the Brant Festival. While at the carving show, looking at some of the bird carvings, I thought maybe I could do something like that. So two years ago I started carving. Sometime prior to this my wife had given me a mounted Harlequin Duck for Christmas and I thought this would be a good subject to start with. I obtained a large chunk of basswood and started carving. As I have been a woodworker most of my life, the carving process was not too daunting, but when it came to painting, it was a little more difficult, but eventually it was done. We could hardly wait until the Brant Festival came around again. We entered "Harley" in the novice class and what a surprise when we arrived back after the judging and discovered a first place ribbon!

"Hey, maybe this isn't so difficult after all, so next year, what to carve? I'm a birder, I know what birds look like, it should be a snap."

However, when it comes right down to it, looking at birds through your binoculars as they flit through the branches or straining your eyes at ducks that are little specks on the horizon is not quite the same as having a bird in your hand. I had been missing a lot of the details needed to carve and paint a life-like bird. So, now we both look at birds a little more closely. For example on a Bufflehead drake, there is a thin black line that sometimes shows on the side of the bird. What is this black line? Is it actually the upper edge of the side pockets or is it the black of the outer wing showing through? Side pockets are another term that was new to me, whoever noticed where duck's wings went when they were folded? The wings disappear under the side pocket feathers to keep the flight feathers dry and protected. Or what about the female Harlequin Duck, a nice little, plain brown duck with a couple of white spots on the face? How many people have seen the deep purple speculum that is covered most of the time? Or the black and white tertials on a drake American Wigeon, or have you ever been close enough to a very common American Robin to see the faint white edgings on some of those red breast feathers.

Carving is like holding the bird in your hand or at least seeing it up close. So now when we go birding it is not just to see another bird and put another tick on our list, it is a time to study some of the things that make up a bird, feather structure, how long are the legs or how the toes and claws curl around a branch. How do the wings fold across the rump, how many primary feathers and how many tail feathers? I am sure that being a birder has made carving a little easier and that carving has made me a more observant birder and together the two hobbies keep us quite busy. ◻

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### Question for the Quarterly

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1. Why do some cormorants stand with their wings outstretched? [See below]
  2. Do all species of cormorants exhibit this behavior? [Sorry, not answered here.]
- Since no one sent us any answers, or even guesses, we did some last minute searching ourselves. This time we went more hi-tech. We scanned a BioAbs database on a University of Victoria Library computer, found two potential articles, and then e-mailed the search results to our home computer. Amazing!!! -- now what was that question again? We did not read the articles but Woodward Library at UBC has them.
- 1) Sellers, R.M., 1995. "Wing-spreading behaviour of the Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*." *Ardea* 83(1): 27-36, abstract "... The results are discussed with respect to five proposed functions of wing-spreading (wing-drying, thermoregulation, balancing, intraspecific signalling and as an aid to swallow fish) and it is concluded that they support overwhelmingly the wing-drying (or more generally plumage-drying) explanation, with the ultimate goal of conserving metabolic energy."
  - 2) Gremillet, D., 1995. "Wing-drying in cormorants." *J. of Avian Biology* 26(2): 176.

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**And Now We Are Five -- Years Old That Is!**

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by Brian Self  
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Marilyn Buhler, associate editor of the BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST, called recently and asked whether I would write an article explaining my role in how the British Columbia Field Ornithologists (the organization) got its start in life. My first reaction was to deny everything, to say it was not really my fault, that I was pressured into it. But then I thought, "No, here's my chance to put a bit of stick about" -- to bare all (in a literary way), to exonerate myself with the British Columbia birding community, so to speak".

So here is what really happened --

It started with a call from Wayne Weber. This is usually bad news because it means that he wants you to do something, or the something he wanted you to do last time was not done the way he wanted it done -- and you will have to do it again. However, this call was different. Wayne only wanted me to attend a meeting. I was so relieved at not having to do something, or not having to do something over again, that I agreed to turn up. Upon reflection my initial agreement may have been my first mistake. Quite a number of "somethings" had to be sorted out and done after I had agreed to attend that meeting.

"It's time we had a provincial organization for the birding community in B.C.", Wayne announced over the phone. "Oh Lord!" I thought, "not ANOTHER organization. He will think of even more things for us to do". However, as Wayne went on to expand about what he thought such an organization could achieve it made enough sense for me to want to talk it over with a few local Vancouver birders. One of the attractions for me was the proposal to establish a provincial records committee. Having had a couple of recent Lower Mainland sightings rejected by the VNHS\*\* Rare Birds Record Committee, I thought that if I could get some input into an equivalent provincial body, that body might look a bit more favourably upon any submission I might make to them in the future. Sometimes a quiet word in the right ear can go a long way!

I seem to remember that we held our first meeting on a wet December night. We discussed aims, realistic goals, some dreams -- but the general consensus was that the project was worth carrying on further. More meetings were held at about monthly intervals, often taking too long and not always completely amicable. We got bogged down over a constitution, over the name of the organization, and over probably a whole lot more which I do not remember now, but gradually things took shape. Wayne was the driving force in those early meetings, pulling together other societies' constitutions and bylaws for us to read and setting impossible deadlines -- well, that was nothing new!! At the outset we were all from the Vancouver area but we were unanimous in our decision that it was very important to get some significant representation from other parts of the Province. Phone calls were made, ears were bent, coercion was applied as needed. Even so, I see from my notes, the "steering executive" were all Lower Mainlanders: Wayne Weber, Doug Kragh, Tom Hanrahan, Mike Force, both of the MacKenzies (Hue and Jo Ann), Allan Poynter and myself, Brian Self. Early in 1991 Mike McGrenere joined us from Vancouver Island -- to everyone's relief I think.

Somehow or other we produced a first newsletter within four months of our inaugural meeting and a second newsletter in July. To the amazement of many, we held a successful General Meeting at the end of August 1991. Many people worked very hard on this meeting and we were rewarded by a turnout of approximately 80 members. This attendance was a bit of a relief because some of the fees charged were needed to pay for rooms we had booked to hold the meetings in. Some private money had been paid out to reserve the space but we were by no means certain that we could recover it all. It all worked out much better than we could have imagined. We really were up and running! Proper elections were held with me chairing the election committee (clever move this because I could not be asked to run for office AND organise the election). To our relief we got our hoped for representation from other parts of the province. Our out-of-town attendance at the AGM showed there was a genuine widespread interest in making the BCFO work.



**And Now We Are Five...** (continued)

After this hurdle had been cleared my role became one of being just another member and I could sit back and complain or criticise with a clear conscience. Not that there has been over-much to complain about really. The Newsletter is a bit spasmodic\*\* in its appearance and the Journal even more so but we have held some good field trips and all of the AGM's I have attended have been just great. One always leaves them with a good feeling, having met or re-met birding friends from all around the Province. We seem to have a lot in common and the BCFO gives us the opportunity to get together and strengthen those birding bonds. I hope it continues so for many years. Now, about my sighting records -- I still have a bone to pick with the Provincial Records Committee...☞

EDITORS' NOTES: \* We are not exactly certain what this means either...  
 \*\* Vancouver Natural History Society  
 \*\*\* Sorry, we could not let this pass without comment -- the BRITISHCOLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST is now published regularly every March, June, September and December. Maybe Brian's "a bit spasmodic" means "quarterly"?

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### Cannibalistic Crows

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by Prue Spitmann  
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Last New Year's Eve we had been enjoying a rather leisurely breakfast, checking out the many visitors to our feeders, between sips of coffee. The peace of the moment was soon shattered by the persistent squawking of crows, seemingly more urgent than the usual familial bickering. We looked out through the breakfast nook window and saw an immature Bald Eagle standing atop a huge Douglas fir in the neighbour's yard. The tree had been topped a few years back but still stands about sixty feet (18 m) high, providing a great lookout for an assortment of gulls, doves, robins, and the occasional hungry Merlin or Sharp-shinned Hawk.

The eagle was standing on prey, ignoring the attack of five angry Northwestern Crows. A quick peek through the telescope confirmed that the hapless victim was also a crow, probably the sixth member of the same clan. In all likelihood the crows had been harassing the eagle in flight and one of them had unwittingly flown just a tad too close!

We watched as the eagle began to pluck its kill whilst the crows divebombed it in a frenzy. Feathers, large and small, were quickly ripped away and fluttered to the ground. Soon the eagle began to eat and we were surprised to see how daintily it dined, carefully retrieving even the smallest pieces of flesh. Eventually the crows yielded to the hopelessness of their task and mostly sat staring in silence from branches just below the main event. However, one sassy corvid, the lone exception to this mass surrender, continued in a frantic assault upon the assassin, pulling on its tail in a series of aerial maneuvers. This bizarre behavior had no effect at all and the crow, its distress quite forgotten, then planted itself between the feet of the eagle and happily fed on the entrails of its former partner! Amazingly, the eagle seemed to be either unconcerned or unaware of its impromptu breakfast guest.

As the lord of the sky tidied up his meal table all five crows discreetly moved out of range onto lower branches, probably having learned an important lesson. The whole exercise took approximately twenty minutes from start to finish.

This is the first time we have ever witnessed such cannibalistic behavior among crows and we would be interested in knowing whether other birders have had similar experiences.☞

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**Trip to Nome with Goldeneye Tours, June 1995**

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by Mabel Crocker  
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We flew from Victoria International Airport to Seattle with a stop for customs at Port Angeles airport. After a short wait in Seattle, we boarded our plane to Anchorage, Alaska. This was a beautiful trip with spectacular views of the Coast Mountain Range covered in snow and glaciers.

At Anchorage we put our watches back one hour, Alaska time being an hour behind us. After another short wait we got onto the plane to Nome. This plane had only a few rows of seats then a blank wall. Most of this large plane was actually taken up with cargo. Since there are no roads into Nome, all freight goes in either by sea or air. The first barge of the season was just unloading in Nome when we arrived June 9th. We got to Nome at 8:30 pm. Here we were met by our tour guide and we were given a tour around the town before being taken to the house where we were to stay. I saw my first life bird, a Glaucous Gull! There were only four people on this very personalized tour. We all stayed in a two-bedroom house where we were able to make some of our own meals if we wished.

Nome itself was an interesting place. It started out as a gold rush town, gold having been found on the beach here. Some panning is still done along the sea shore. Approximately 4000 people live in Nome, with half of these being native Indian and Eskimo. The town has several restaurants and a hotel. It is not a very pretty town because nothing is ever thrown away -- just left where it was last used. This, unfortunately, gives the town a rather messy appearance.

On our first morning out we started at the garbage dump. Here there were many more Glaucous Gulls, Slaty-backed Gulls, Herring Gulls, Mew Gulls, and also a Glaucous-winged Gull.

There are only three roads leading out of Nome -- one east, one west, and one north. On this first day we stayed fairly close to Nome itself, going only a little way west where we stopped and checked out the birdlife. At this stop we saw our first Yellow Wagtail, both Hoary and Common Red-polls, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and even Robins. There were lots of ponds around here and only a few scrubby willows and low vegetation since the country is tundra. In several ponds we saw Red-throated Loon and Red-necked Phalarope. At other ponds we saw Oldsquaw, Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser and Green-winged Teal. We also saw Long-tailed Jaeger, Western Sandpiper, and Bank Swallow. After lunch and a rest we went up Anvil Mountain, a small hill above Nome. Here we saw our first Northern Wheatear and American Golden Plover.

Every day we took at least one trip to the wharf and each day we saw something different. On the first day it was a Thick-billed Murre, Black-legged Kittiwake, and Black Guillemot. Each day we went we looked carefully for the White Wagtail.

On our second day we went north for 45 or 50 miles. The north road goes 72 miles to another small settlement. We stopped at likely spots hoping to see a Bluethroat. The weather was cold and blustery and the Bluethroat kept hidden but we did get a beautiful view of a female Northern Wheatear, another very pretty bird. On this road we also saw herds of reindeer. The reindeer are semi-domesticated and are herded by the Eskimo. We saw Harlequin Duck and these were a big thrill for our companions from Iowa. My new bird of the day was a Pacific Golden Plover.

We got out and walked on the tundra for a short way before heading back to Nome. After lunch we took the eastern road out along the Nome River. Here we found lots of backwaters and ponds, many bustling with shorebirds. We saw Red Knot, Wandering Tattler, Sanderling, Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin, Black Turnstones, Semi-palmated Plover, Long-billed Dowitcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Common Eider, lots of Arctic Tern and even an Aleutian Tern, in addition to birds we had seen before and other common western birds.

**Trip to Nome...** (continued)

On our third day we made a very determined try for the Bluethroat. The week before our own trip there had been very nice warm weather and the Bluethroat had been easily seen. We went over 50 miles up the north road, stopping at every likely place and playing a tape but no luck. However, in one spot where we had stopped and walked on the tundra the day before, there was a grizzly bear prowling around. He moved off when we stopped our vehicle so we could not get a picture. On our way back to Nome we saw a Golden Eagle. At Nome we again went down to the wharf and this time we actually saw the White Wagtail. In fact, we saw two of them. They posed, quite tame, on the rocks for us.

On our fourth and last day we went looking for ptarmigan but without much luck. The country was quite rugged. We saw numbers of different birds but nothing new. There were lots of Long-tailed Jaeger, Arctic Tern, Lapland Longspur, red-polls, and gulls. At the wharf we saw a Red-faced Cormorant. After lunch we went back on the eastern road along the sea coast. Here we saw two new birds, an Arctic Loon and a Parasitic Jaeger. Altogether on the trip we saw 73 species, sixteen of which were lifers for me.☐

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**List of the Birds Seen at Nome**


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Red-throated Loon	Wandering Tattler	Black Guillemot
Pacific Loon	Spotted Sandpiper	Short-eared Owl
Arctic Loon*	Whimbrel	Tree Swallow
Pelagic Cormorant	Bar-tailed Godwit*	Bank Swallow
Red-faced Cormorant*	Black Turnstone	Cliff Swallow
Tundra Swan	Red Knot*	Common Raven
Brant	Sanderling	Northern Wheatear*
Canada Goose	Semi-palmated Sandpiper	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Green-winged Teal	Western Sandpiper	American Robin
Northern Pintail	Dunlin	Yellow Wagtail*
Northern Shoveler	Long-billed Dowitcher	White Wagtail*
American Wigeon	Common Snipe	Orange-crowned Warbler
Greater Scaup	Red-necked Phalarope	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Common Eider	Parasitic Jaeger	Yellow Warbler
Harlequin Duck	Long-tailed Jaeger	American Tree Sparrow
Oldsquaw	Mew Gull	Savannah Sparrow
Bufflehead	Herring Gull	Fox Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Slaty-backed Gull*	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Glaucous-winged Gull	White-crowned Sparrow
Golden Eagle*	Glaucous Gull*	Lapland Longspur
Peregrine Falcon	Black-legged Kittiwake	Common Redpoll*
Sandhill Crane	Sabine's Gull	Hoary Redpoll*☐
American Golden Plover*	Arctic Tern	
Pacific Golden Plover*	Aleutian Tern*	
Semipalmated Plover	Thick-billed Murre*	

\*new bird for the author

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**NOTES ON RAVENS**


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We have often suspected that Common Ravens were intelligent birds and this suspicion was confirmed for us this spring when a pair of young ravens started nesting on a stone lintel which had Victoria Public Library inscribed upon it. What better place, they thought, to read up on parenting and to give the youngsters a literary head start! However, they soon discovered that the building had not been an actual library for quite a number of years so they moved their nest to a large cypress in a nearby churchyard. It was nice to see ravens actually nesting right downtown, a habitat which they do not commonly utilize.

On a recent Victoria rare bird tape someone reported that Common Ravens were observed harassing a Red-tailed Hawk. The ravens were flying over the hawk and were seen to be dropping fir cones on it. Has anyone else seen this or similar behavior? Send any notes or observations to the Editors and we will get them into print.☐

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITORS**

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Letter from David Sterling:

I am in favor of calling the newsletter **The Varied Thrush** as suggested in the BCFO Newsletter, March '96. The Varied Thrush has been accepted by naturalists as the unofficial BC bird since the year one.

More ancient history: The Varied Thrush was the bird chosen for the Canadian Nature Federation's 1975 conference in Victoria. The drawing by Victoria birder-artist, Keith Taylor, graced the conference brochures and the cover of the Victoria Naturalist. The Varied Thrush was also used on the 1981 Checklist of Birds of the Provincial Parks which I did for the then Ministry of Lands, Parks & Housing. The same creation by Jim Weston was the logo of the American Birding Association's convention held in Richmond, BC, in 1984, and was the bird of the official pin.

Letter from Diana Axtell:

I vote for the name Field Notes for the quarterly newsletter. ☐

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**AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE**

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Jerry Anderson

A birder for about 20 years, Jerry has recently turned his talents to the artistic rendition of the birds he has seen in the field. His detailed carvings have won awards both in British Columbia and further afield.

Larry Cowan

Larry, an avid birder since 1989, has had a lifelong interest in birds. A member of the Burke Mountain Naturalists and the Vancouver Natural History Society, Larry currently is on the Birding Committee for VNHS and is also one of the people responsible for the running of the Vancouver Bird Alert.

Mable Crocker

Mable, born on Vancouver Island, has been birding since she retired some seventeen years ago. Although she regularly birds around Vancouver Island she really enjoys birding trips and her all-time favorite destination is Point Pelee.

Les W. Gyug

Les developed his interest in birding while working in Glacier and Mount Revelstoke national parks in the early 1980's. He is currently a wildlife consultant principally involved with forestry issues affecting wildlife.

Elsie Nykyfork

Elsie, a frequent contributor to BCFO, has compiled a plant species Herbarium for Shuswap Lake Provincial Park Nature House, monitors bluebird and duck nest boxes and has been an Ecological Reserve Warden, a volunteer park Naturalist and an FBCN Camp Director.

Brian Self

Brian got hooked on birding shortly after his arrival in Canada in the mid '60s. His keen interest in birds has taken him around BC and to both the Yukon and Northwest Territories. A full time customs broker and freight forwarder, Brian would like to devote more time to his natural history pursuits.

Prue Spitmann

Prue and her husband Bernie are avid birders who greatly enjoy birding as often as they can find an excuse. At home Prue's time is divided between keeping a sharp eye on the feeder birds and caring for the resident "flock" of Anna's Hummingbirds, a year-round labour of love. ☐