

# BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST

ISSN 1192-0270

Volume 6, No. 3

September 1996

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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 Wiseley, 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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Suddenly it's September and another issue must get to press! Thanks are clearly due to everyone who made the AGM such a success. A lot of things happened at this year's AGM and Lloyd has carefully reported them. Mike presented financial reports for BCFO which covered our five years as a society. We only have room for the current report in this issue but earlier reports will be printed in future issues. Changes have been made in the composition of the Board -- welcome to all new members and many thanks to both continuing and retiring members for all their efforts over the years. Ken will revive the BIRD LISTERS' CORNER for us. Check for an insert in this issue. Tony, your new president, presents some plans for BCFO and requests members' input. Bryan, your new vice-president, also submitted a report -- on a post-AGM field trip. We must, however, apologise to Martin who submitted us a whole page of UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS plus an article on the current status of species name changes. Next issue for certain Martin! Also a request to all members -- next issue is the Christmas Bird Count issue so please send us your dates and contacts as soon as you have them so we can include the information in the December issue. **DEADLINE Nov 15.**

In addition to Society information we include a great Site Guide from Dannie. We have an interesting article on the perception of color from Roy in Saskatchewan (we heard him at a VNHS meeting and nabbed him to write us an article) and Eric deftly lures us on through his chase for the ultimate bird. Perplexed puzzlers -- Jeremy reveals all! Check page 8 for the few EVENTS we could fit into this issue. They are happening soon so get registering. David Pearce forwarded us a letter outlining a very exciting concept for birders and naturalists to start thinking about (page 13). And for those who enquired: "No, we haven't forgotten about the name change and we will keep you posted." When you read the LETTERS section on page 17 be advised that we (the EDITORS) responded to each of the requests as best we were able. For those of you with Internet connections look for our promo on the Birding Canada web site (<http://www.interlog.com/~gallantg/canada/> click **Birding Societies or Clubs**. Thanks to Gord Gallant). We are also being asked to do something with Birders Journal but I am not certain what the something entails at press time -- check next issue. Birding (ABA's Journal) and Yukon Birder have both given us permission to reprint a couple of articles and Winging It has reprinted certain of ours. We are getting both national and international coverage so come on you closet authors, send us some of your thoughts, sightings, articles, Site Guides, letters, etc. Help us to keep the BCFO momentum going and everyone will benefit in the long run. Good Birding. ☺

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**BCFO OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, 1996-1997**

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## President's Report

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by Tony Greenfield, President

At the director's meeting of the Society after the AGM in Manning Park on 15 June, I was honoured to be asked to serve as President of BCFO for 1996-1997. I was delighted to accept.

Lest BCFO be thought of as being too bureaucratic, I am happy to report that at a hastily convened meeting of the Directors after the AGM there was clear evidence that the birds take precedence. Most of the directors were late for the meeting and arrived with spurious tales of "chasing a mockingbird in McDiarmid Meadows."

My first duty is to thank retiring President Marian Porter for her two years of service. Marian has delivered BCFO to your new President in fine shape, and I look forward to building on her achievements. Thanks also to two stalwart directors, Mike McGrenere and Ken Morgan, who both chose to retire. Their wise counsel will be missed.

We welcome aboard new directors Bryan Gates (Vice-President), Ev Miyasaki (Treasurer), and Jack Bowling and Russ Tkachuk as directors.

As always, our special thanks to Andy and Marilyn Buhler, our super-efficient Newsletter Editors. In a very real sense, the Newsletter is the glue that bonds BCFO together throughout the year and it is always a happy day when it appears in my mailbox. Andy and Marilyn have also taken on the task of formatting the Journal, and we feel very fortunate that it is in their capable hands. This should circumvent some of the production hitches that resulted in the late delivery of Volume 3.

As BCFO enters its sixth year of operation, we are in very good shape to move forward. We have a membership base of over 200, a committed Board of Directors, adequate finances, an excellent Newsletter, a Journal almost back on schedule, a functioning rarities committee, and the 1997 AGM in Prince George already on track. New initiatives already under way are the Sightings Supplement edited by Jack Bowling, and the Listing Report undertaken by Ken Morgan.

An ongoing drive to boost BCFO membership is clearly in order, and the Directors will take the appropriate steps to do this. It would be very helpful if existing members would encourage others to join, an obvious channel would be through existing naturalist societies around the province. Please contact me if you would be willing to distribute BCFO's membership brochure to your local club.

There are numerous new initiatives that BCFO could undertake. These include:

- a BCFO sponsored provincial checklist
- field trips to specific areas of BC
- expeditionary trips to remote corners of BC
- foreign field trips
- research projects, either internal or in conjunction with other agencies

If you can think of other new directions for BCFO, please call me or any of the directors.

In the meantime, go forth and enjoy the birds of our fantastically diverse province. As this is written (early August) the timeless wonder of seasonal change proceeds on the Sunshine Coast. Our local highlights in the last week include plenty of southbound shorebirds, including a first-ever fall record of Wilson's Phalarope, a juvenile Green Heron in predictable post-breeding dispersal, the first Red-necked Grebe of the fall, the first pintails, and Green-winged Teal, a juvenile Saw-whet Owl, and a mixed flight of 100 Common Nighthawks plus Black Swifts and Bonaparte's Gulls feeding over Sechelt on an unknown insect hatch. On the negative side, the swallows (except Barn) have left and the Swainson's Thrushes are silent.

Similar scenarios are unfolding everywhere, so be thankful you are a BC ornithologist ... and enjoy.

Good Birding, Tony Greenfield.☺

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**British Columbia Field Ornithologists  
Sixth Annual General Meeting, June 15, 1996  
Manning Park Lodge, E.C. Manning Provincial Park, BC**

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by Lloyd Esralson, Secretary

The Sixth Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO) was held at Manning Park Lodge in E.C. Manning Provincial Park on June 15, 1996. The meeting was called to order at 3:37 pm with Marian Porter in the chair. The following is a summary of the meeting.

#### Introduction

The president, Marian Porter, welcomed the members to the business meeting. Thanks were extended to all the members who had worked so hard for the organization, giving great hope for the future of the organization.

#### Minutes

The minutes for the 1995 Annual General Meeting that was held in Sidney at the Dunsmuir Lodge were printed and distributed in the March 1996 edition of the **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST** 6(1): 3-5. Gwynneth Wilson of Kelowna moved acceptance of the minutes, Peter Blokker of Vernon seconded the motion and it was unanimously accepted.

#### Financial Report

The financial report, prepared by Duncan Forbes from Victoria, was presented by Mike McGrenere. This covered, in detail, the financial statements for the years 1991 - 1995 as well as the budgets for 1994 - 1996.

Mike reviewed the 1995 statement of income and expenditures, assets and liabilities. In his report Mike pointed out that the 1995 report, written by Dannie Carsen, appears to differ from the present report but that this was due to the use of different categories. Questions were taken from the floor and explained. It was noted that there is \$250.00 from the 1991 AGM for which we still have to reimburse someone whose name is missing from the records. Mike is tracking this person down as it remains as a liability on our books. The problem of postage was also addressed. It was noted that bulk buying and varying weights of the Journal make it difficult to predict current and future expenses. The last issue was considerably lighter because of the lighter cover, and therefore postage was less. The Legal and Audit budget were expensed out of the 1995 budget and are now irrelevant for the 1996 budget. Comparative pricing of Post Office Boxes was noted.

Bryan Gates of Victoria moved acceptance of the 1995 financial report, Dannie Carsen of Victoria seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

#### Membership Report

Allen Wiseley, Membership Coordinator, was called upon to present the membership report. Allen noted that the past year had gone by relatively smoothly, with good response to renewal notices in the Newsletters of December 1995, and March 1996. Further renewal notices were also sent to un-renewed 1995 members in the June 1996 Newsletter and in the recent Journal mailings. The executive approved a membership drive through mailing lists of similar organizations as a result of our membership lagging somewhat in the years 1993 and 1994. A new brochure has also been designed and distributed. The membership now stands at 206 as of June 13, 1996, compared to 215 for 1995 at the September AGM last year. The 1995 total has increased to 222 since that time and it is anticipated that the 1996 total will surpass the total for 1995. The membership renewal has been coordinated by Tony Greenfield and Allen expressed his thanks for all of Tony's effort. Questions were received from the floor. Interest was expressed in having all members receive the recently updated list. Use of e-mail was questioned and Allen noted that many members have supplied this information and it is being tabulated. In addition Allen's e-mail address was published in the last Newsletter. Ripples still exist from 1994. Please let Allen know if there are any concerns so that they can be rectified.

Newsletter Report

The report on the Newsletter was presented by Marilyn Buhler on behalf of Andy and herself. Marilyn thanked all of the authors who have contributed material over the past year. She noted the great pleasure that greets each fresh manuscript, letter or note that appears in their mailbox. Please keep them coming.

Marilyn also drew our attention to a recent publication that is a five year, author, title and subject index to the **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST**. It is available at the AGM special price of \$2.00. If copies are still available after the AGM they can be purchased from the Buhlers for a cost of \$3.50 with the increase being used to cover postage and handling.

She reported that the bottom of the in basket was again visible and this caused considerable concern. As a result Marilyn did her usual to encourage, cajole and otherwise entice the members to contribute to upcoming issues. In conclusion she noted the success of the last five years and her desire to continue that pattern for the next five.

Journal Report

Martin McNicholl presented the report on the status of our Journal.

Volume 3 (1993) of **British Columbia Birds** was mailed in April 1996, about a year after the former editor Wayne C. Weber turned over the manuscript to the BCFO board. President Marian Porter encountered numerous mysterious problems in reformatting the computer disc and in having the printer produce the issue. Many thanks were given to Wayne Weber for putting this issue together (and the two preceding issues) and to Marian for shepherding it through its printer problems. The final step of getting it into the members' hands through Canada Post happened very quickly thanks to the efforts of Hue and Jo Ann MacKenzie.

Volume 4 (1994) was mailed out by Mike McGrenere in May. Andy & Marilyn Buhler were very fast in reformatting it after Martin had edited the full text and the printers in the Victoria area were also quick to produce it. Martin noted the excellent job that the Buhlers have done in improving the look and lay-out of the Journal.

Considerable progress has also been made in the production of Volumes 5 and 6. Martin hopes to have Volume 5 complete in the early fall and Volume 6 by the end of the year. Although the Journal is not yet back on schedule, considerable progress has been made thanks to the efforts of many individuals. Thanks were expressed to all who had contributed to this process.

President's Report

Marian Porter, in her report to the members, thanked all who have worked hard in the last year. She particularly wished to thank Martin McNicholl for his efforts with the Journal, the Buhlers for their work on the Newsletter and Mike McGrenere for bringing the finances into focus. With these major efforts completed we are now in a solid position to expand our horizons as an organization. We hope to increase our contribution to local groups and their concerns regarding birds and conservation in the near future. This AGM was a small step in that direction where we initiated a partnership with the Manning Park interpretive staff to join in and help with the Manning Park Bird Blitz.

In her report Marian noted that we are now in the best position we have ever been in the history of the BCFO. The Journal is now up and running with a dedicated editorial board. There is now a workable schedule and a realistic budget for each issue. In addition we are gathering the support of respected scientists and their students and have increased the number of contributors to regular articles. Jack Bowling has agreed to be the new editor of the sightings supplement of the Journal and since he is the regional editor for the National Audubon Societies' **Field Notes** we are happy to have him. Ken Morgan will author the Bird-Listeners Corner if we agree to play by Ken's listing rules. More will be heard on this in the Newsletter.

Charitable organization status has now been received and this gives us the potential to accept donations, apply for grants and utilize different opportunities to increase our already healthy finances.

Election of Directors

Mike McGrenere assumed the chair for the election of the Directors. The following members indicated a willingness to serve as directors for the 1996/97 year. These included Marian Porter, Tony Greenfield, Lloyd Esralson, Allen Wiseley, Martin McNicholl, Jack Bowling, Russ Tkachuk and Bryan Gates.

In the call for further nominations Mike was asked to describe the involvement that could be anticipated for Directors. He outlined that there would probably be 4 to 5 meetings with these normally being held in Vancouver or Victoria. Efforts have also been made to hold one meeting in the home town of each member living outside of these two centres. The duties of the treasurer were also outlined and the responsibilities were described as manageable.

Following this Marilyn Buhler nominated Everard Miyasaki as a Director. This was seconded by Bryan Gates. With nominations closed, the nine members were elected as Directors by acclamation.

Note: At the Board of Directors meeting that was held subsequent to the AGM, the following positions were filled:

Tony Greenfield	President	Jack Bowling	Director
Bryan Gates	Vice-President	Martin McNicholl	Director
Lloyd Esralson	Secretary	Marian Porter	Director
Everard Miyasaki	Treasurer	Russ Tkachuk	Director

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm with thanks to all those attending. ◀

EDITORS' NOTE: BCFO Seventh AGM 1997 to be held in Prince George area. Thanks Jack!!

**Report of the Auditor Presented at the 1996 AGM  
of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists**

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Re: Financial Statements 1991 - 1995

Dated 12 June, 1996

I have reviewed the financial records of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists, ("BCFO"), for the period commencing 10 February, 1991 through to 31 December, 1995.

I reviewed all deposits and cheques issued, and matched as many as possible with the available invoices, vouchers and other written documentation. There were some missing invoices and information, which particularly affected 1991 & 1992. As a consequence, completely accurate figures could not be obtained for all categories under both incomes and expenditures.

In order to confirm BCFO's principal assets, I reconciled the Bank Chequing and the Savings Accounts as at 31 December in each year with the statements from the Bank. I also checked each deposit, cheque payment and all other transactions appearing on the statements.

In order to complete the review of the finances of the BCFO it was necessary to set up and prepare books of account based upon the available records. I established accruals for expenses incurred by BCFO prior to the year end but not paid for at the year end; and I also made provision for the expected recovery of part of the GST paid.

I then completed and printed the financial statements for each of the years 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 & 1995.

I trust that all the Financial Statements will be accepted and approved at the AGM. Thank you for this opportunity to provide a service to the members of the BCFO.

Yours truly,  
Duncan Forbes  
713 Kelly Road, Victoria, BC V9B 2A8  
(original letter is signed)

**INCOME & EXPENDITURES**

For the Year Ended 31 December, 1995

	1995	1994	BUDGET 1996
<u>Income</u>			
Memberships	5,713.49	4,539.35	5,625.00
AGM Fees	5,389.61	3,125.00	2,250.00
Other Income	330.63	80.00	120.00
Interest	158.45	54.86	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	<b>\$11,592.18</b>	<b>\$7,799.21</b>	<b>\$7,995.00</b>
<u>Expendures</u>			
Advertising	72.00	122.00	125.00
AGM Expenses	4,272.39	2,724.41	1,750.00
Postage	1,464.07	1,100.60	1,000.00
Printing	1,299.84	1,466.17	2,000.00
Journals (Accruals)	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Stationery	422.94	82.11	0.00
Legal & Audit	600.00	65.00	600.00
PO Box Rental	98.00	106.00	120.00
Miscellaneous	343.29	418.09	400.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<b>\$10,572.53</b>	<b>\$8,084.38</b>	<b>\$7,995.00</b>
<u>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the Year</u>	<b>\$1,019.65</b>	<b>(\$285.17)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

**BALANCE SHEET**

As at 31 December, 1995

<u>ASSETS</u>	1995	1994
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Bank - Chequing	1,253.72	1,979.64
Bank - Savings	5,971.23	2,375.66
Receivables	700.00	450.00
TOTAL ASSETS	<b>\$7,924.95</b>	<b>\$4,805.30</b>
<u>LIABILITIES &amp; MEMBERS' EQUITY</u>		
<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
Payables	4,850.00	2,750.00
<u>Members' Equity</u>		
Accumulated Surpluses	3,074.95	2,055.30
TOTAL LIAB'S & EQUITY	<b>\$7,924.95</b>	<b>\$4,805.30</b>
<u>SUMMARY OF ACCUMULATED SURPLUSES</u>		
Balance at 1 January	2,055.30	2,340.47
Surplus for the Period	1,019.65	
(Deficit) for the Period		(285.17)
Balance at 31 December	<b>\$3,074.95</b>	<b>\$2,055.30</b>

**IN MEMORIAM**

We cannot let this issue go to press without paying tribute to a man who, in so many ways, has contributed to the enjoyment we all derive from our birding. Roger Tory Peterson, aged 87, died at his home in Old Lyme, Connecticut on Sunday, 28 July 1996.

Peterson, in his 1934 book, **A Field Guide to the Birds**, introduced his unique system of identification using "field marks". Birding has lost a dedicated friend, but Roger Tory Peterson's legacy will live on in his many books, art, and recordings.

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**List of Birds Seen During the Sixth BCFO AGM**


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compiled by Michael Tilitsky, Manning Park Naturalist

Common Loon	Willow Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo
Great Blue Heron	Hammond's Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler
Mallard	Dusky Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Harlequin Duck	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler
Common Goldeneye	Horned Lark	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Barrow's Goldeneye	Tree Swallow	Townsend's Warbler
Common Merganser	Violet-green Swallow	MacGillivray's Warbler
Turkey Vulture	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Osprey	Cliff Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Northern Goshawk	Barn Swallow	Western Tanager
Swainson's Hawk	Gray Jay	Spotted Towhee
Red-tailed Hawk	Steller's Jay	Chipping Sparrow
Golden Eagle	Clark's Nutcracker	Savannah Sparrow
Spruce Grouse	American Crow	Fox Sparrow
Blue Grouse	Common Raven	Song Sparrow
White-tailed Ptarmigan	Black-capped Chickadee	Lincoln's Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Mountain Chickadee	White-crowned Sparrow
Killdeer	Boreal Chickadee	Dark-eyed Junco
Spotted Sandpiper	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Snipe	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Brewer's Blackbird
Barred Owl	White-breasted Nuthatch	Brown-headed Cowbird
Black Swift	Brown Creeper	Pine Grosbeak
Vaux's Swift	Bewick's Wren	Cassin's Finch
Calliope Hummingbird	Winter Wren	Red Crossbill
Rufous Hummingbird	American Dipper	White-winged Crossbill
Belted Kingfisher	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Pine Siskin
Red-naped Sapsucker	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Evening Grosbeak
Red-breasted Sapsucker	Townsend's Solitaire	
Williamson's Sapsucker	Swainson's Thrush	<b>Sightings New to Manning's List</b>
Downy Woodpecker	Hermit Thrush	American Redstart
Hairy Woodpecker	American Robin	Northern Waterthrush
Three-toed Woodpecker	Varied Thrush	Northern Mockingbird
Northern Flicker	American Pipit	Veery
Pileated Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	Hermit X Townsend's Warbler
Olive-sided Flycatcher	European Starling	
Western Wood-pewee	Solitary Vireo	

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**


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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.

**EIGHTH ANNUAL WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE** will take place September 26-29, 1996 at Ocean Shores in Gray's Harbor county. The theme of this year's conference will be "Shorebirds and Seabirds of Washington". Activities will include field trips in prime birding habitats, a pelagic trip, speakers, and more. For further information contact: Bill & Nancy LaFramboise (509) 627-3695, e-mail wlafra@oneworld.owt.com

Oct. 17-20 1996 **FEDERATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA NATURALISTS FALL GENERAL MEETING**, Celista, BC. Contacts: North Shuswap Naturalist Club, Box 162, BC V0E 1L0; phone Vera Gottlieb (604) 679-8812 or Joan Phillips (604) 955-6311.



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## The Unlisted Albatross

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by Eric MacBean  
2498 Kings Avenue  
West Vancouver, BC V7V 2C6

"The lister can never sink back in restful contemplative bliss but is forever ordained to wander over the face of the earth in pursuit; unremitting, soul-searing mindless pursuit..." Jean Piatt<sup>1</sup>

Is it my imagination, or have we listers been getting a hard time of it lately from our fellow-birders? For myself, let me admit at once that I have become a hard-core member of that sect -- a compulsive, an obsessive, a pathological lister.

It did not start that way. Once I, too, could take pleasure in all that Nature offered without any attendant compulsion to tick its gifts off in a notebook; nor, I like to believe, did I experience too much chagrin should I miss any of those offerings. Was I forewarned, perhaps, by the jeers of number one on my North American list -- the American Robin -- which followed me around St. John's on a thirsty (and fruitless) search for a welcoming pub on that Sunday evening, so long ago and my first evening in Canada, after a long wearying flight from England to Newfoundland?

But times change. Forty-four years later, I must admit that sweeter by far, now, than such mundane expressions as "The bar is open", "Your horse won", or "Your X-ray is normal" are those magical words "Over here, it's in my 'scope". I must admit, too, that, not only am I a lister, but slow deterioration of my eyesight and rapidly degenerating arthritis have turned me into a lazy lister (if I can get away with it). The arduous scanning of thousands of scaups for one with a tuft on its head, or the checking of great flocks of gulls for one with a big pink bill dipped in ink, is something I prefer to leave to younger and more resilient birders who will, I can only hope, prove generous enough to share their discoveries with me.

Alas, like the ageing raptor whose forays meet with less and less success, any lucky moment last year seemed to be more than offset by those dread words when the greeting is not "It's here in my 'scope" but rather "It just flew" or "You left too soon" -- too late, too early, too slow or too impatient, too unlucky or just too old. That, for me, sums up the close of 1995.

The year started off well enough with several lifers on a trip to Central and Western Florida, although it ended with a near-mugging in St. Petersburg, a lecture from a young police officer that I had been most unwise to walk around THAT district, and ABA list number 568, four Monk Parakeets (Yes, I know they are an introduced species but they are countable!)

Following on this, an obliging Costa's Hummingbird near Vancouver and a very courteous Wandering Tattler waiting for us on a log boom in Victoria's outer harbour on the BCFO field trip, though both seen before in California, gave a small boost to my Canadian list. After that, nothing. Indeed, worse than nothing -- four fruitless hours searching through countless pipits in the furrowed fields of Saanich culminated two days later with the discovery that EVERYONE had GREAT views of the Yellow Wagtail ten minutes after my departure.

As if that was not enough, only a few weeks later, but within hours of my discharge from hospital, John Ireland called to tell me that there was an easy-to-find Boreal Owl at the Reifel Sanctuary. I did succeed in getting my shoes on before my wife threatened to call a psychiatrist if I interrupted my convalescence to face the Vancouver rush hour. My suggestion that her priorities were at fault fell upon deaf ears.

These debacles were followed by three fruitless trips to Pitt Meadows in search of a Red-shouldered Hawk and the year ended with a sense of failure and frustration.

In this mood, totting up my 1995 lists, I made a New Year's resolution to pack a bag ready for the first rarity to show itself in BC and when, six weeks into the year, a Falcated Teal was reported back again near Tofino, there was no alternative but to catch the first ferry to Nanaimo.

**Unlisted Albatross** (continued)

The weather co-operated. The ferry ride was followed by an enjoyable trip across Vancouver Island under blue skies and past snow-covered hills. As the trip neared its terminus, the old familiar mix of anxiety and excitement came back to me -- the prospect of a new life bird, the first in almost a year! Recalling the Terek Sandpiper ten years earlier, I had little doubt that the right location would be obvious from the line of parked cars bearing Washington, Oregon, and even, California plates, leading to groups of birders with the prize in their 'scopes.

However, the road down to the beach was deserted and, at first glance, so too were the miles of desolate mudflats at its end. Had all the other birders already been here and, lacking an appreciative audience, had the birds gone as well?

My binoculars soon found wigeon close to shore to the north and the 'scope produced some pintail further out and a few Bufflehead away across to the East. I rested my arms and my eyes and searched again, and yet again. As a vague sense of panic crept over me with the fading light, I realized that the term mudflats was a misnomer since, unless it was my imagination, ducks appeared where none had been before. Others mysteriously disappeared, hidden, I finally realized, by slight elevations in the mud.

At last, with only ten minutes left of the time I had allotted, I found a different duck in my 'scope and, with that same adrenaline rush so often experienced before, turned up the power to maximum magnification. There it was, in the distance, much too far to photograph, but, unmistakable bird number 569, a male Falcated Teal!! I would return in the morning to photograph it. Now it was time for that celebratory drink.

But alas for the best laid schemes... by the time I had breakfasted, it was no longer quite dark, but then it was not very light either, for a thick mist blanketed everything. The euphoria of the previous evening left me as I set off south towards Ucluelet. A photograph would be impossible now and I had no witness to this sighting. Perhaps I might even have been the victim of an illusion. In fact, this whole listing business was really something of an illusion. The critics were right. It was a bit pointless, surely, to drive this distance just to see a duck never seen before by me -- probably just an escapee anyway. In any event, recalling all the lost opportunities through the past years, 569 was no big number to boast about.

Occupied by these morbid meanderings, I had not realized that the sky was now brightening, the mist no longer so thick. Gradually, the perfect outline of a sphere of golden light became visible. The day showed some promise after all. When the sign came up for the Wickaninnish Inn I turned towards the coast.

Now I am not, as a rule, a sunrise person. Sunset, yes. Sunset is a hot shower and a cold Martini, followed by a dinner where the day's list is discussed; and, if the shepherds have it right, then red skies at night offer the prospect of an early start to another great day in the open. But sunrise is apt to strike a chill note -- evoking memories from long ago of sleepless hours, as a messenger boy, in an air-raid shelter, ending with the bicycle ride home through the acrid smell of homes destroyed or, years later, the weary drive along a dirt road through the snow, after spending half the night aiding the stork to bring another new life to an already impoverished Newfoundland family. More recent years have meant a grey wintry light slowly giving shape to strutting Sage Grouse displaying their charms against a bleak landscape; or the time when the safety of harbour is left behind to face the heaving white-capped menace of the open ocean, trusting an unknown skipper and a scopolamine patch to see one safely through the day.

My first intention had been to bear left to a spot where, as I recalled, rocks jutting into the surf offered the possibility of a Wandering Tattler (Yes, even then I was thinking of my year list). Instead, for some reason, I turned right, into an empty parking lot. There was nobody in sight. Finding a trail, I headed through stunted trees towards the sound of the surf; and, then, quite suddenly, the trees opened up and there, before me, bathed in morning sunlight, was the open ocean.

Dawn had now brought colour to the sands stretching for miles along the sea edge. As far as the eye could see, great waves rolled ceaselessly towards shore,

**Unlisted Albatross** (continued)

cresting as they neared into giant breakers which pounded, foaming, up the beach. Wisps of cloud scudded across a cerulean sky. The scene was devoid of people, of beachgoers, of swimmers rash enough to face those seas. No man-made sounds, no rumble of traffic or drone of aircraft intruded. Only the cries of a few gulls could be heard faintly above the roar of the ocean. As I breathed in the fragrance of nature, my senses overwhelmed, I knew that this dawn was different.

I raised my binoculars to search beyond the breaking waves. Was it my imagination or were there dark shapes circling out there in the distance? I could make nothing out through the spindrift before my eyes began to water and I was forced to shut them.

Now the shapes took form. Shearwaters of course. Hundreds, no thousands, Sooties, Short-tailed, a few Pink-footed, even a Flesh-footed. Fulmars and auklets rode the waves while kittiwakes wheeled overhead. As I travelled out to the horizon, beyond the reach of any 'scope, their place was now taken by larger shapes, their great wing-spans gliding over the sea; and, there surely, amongst the Black-footed Albatrosses was a White-bodied one. Was this the Laysan I missed at the BCFO two years ago? As I watched it, a Long-tailed Jaeger drifted across -- surely the one I missed, taking the wrong ferry last fall. There, too, were Leach's Petrels, always missed in the past, on the Atlantic or the Pacific. Could there be yet more life birds out there? But, yes, indeed, for there, beyond doubt, was another white Albatross. This one had a white back and a yellow tinge to its nape, its field marks as familiar as those of the White-tailed Eagle, the Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel or the Greater Frigatebird, or any of the exotics for which a West Vancouver birder must always be prepared, should any choose to stray up Burrard Inlet.

And then, at last, I saw it far, far out, soaring above the seas in effortless flight, the greatest of them all and the last on my life list, the Wandering Albatross. My journeys were over. There was nothing left to seek. I could return home, fulfilled and spend the rest of my days pottering around our Seniors' Centre. Billiards, perhaps, in the mornings, bridge in the afternoons. No more breakfast calls to the bird alert, no frantic chases across town before the sun went down. No fretting that I might miss the latest rarity. My list complete, there were no birds left to seek and, so, none to be missed.

I opened my eyes. A mist had veiled the horizon, which was now as obscured as my insubstantial dreams. I was back to bird 569. There were many more species yet unseen and many miles to go if I was to find them.

As for the Falcated Teal -- it had been all but forgotten in the grandeur of that sunrise -- a sunrise which I would never have seen without that insatiable drive to add one more check to my life list.

Yet, walking back to the car, I knew that I was not quite ready for a future whose greatest thrill would be making three no trumps doubled. A future without the prospect of another dawn at Point Pelee, without another sunset in Arizona -- next year perhaps... or the year after.

The birds, as yet unseen by me, might be of little importance, their listing as much an illusion as the Wandering Albatross which would, almost certainly, remain forever unnumbered, an unattainable goal. But the excitement of the adventures for which it provided the excuse and impetus was real and, for that, I gave thanks to the duck that was different -- and to all those other birds remembered in the past and, hopefully, anticipated in the future.

Before I had reached the parking lot the search for bird 570 had already begun. A silhouette -- perhaps, on top of a Saguaro in the arid desert; perhaps, hidden, camouflaged, beside an alpine trail; or maybe, just maybe, outlined as a great white bird soaring out over the Pacific. I would have to find out. It was time to move on.¶

<sup>1</sup>Jean Piatt. Adventures in Birding: Confessions of a Lister. New York: Knopf, 1973.

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**BIRD-LISTER'S CORNER**


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by Ken Morgan  
 1945 Lands End Road  
 Sidney, BC V8L 5J2

During a BCFO directors' meeting, somewhere near the beginning of 1996, I must have suffered a momentary lapse of sanity because I volunteered to resurrect the BIRD-LISTER'S CORNER. The last time this column appeared in the **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST** was in the June 1994 issue (vol.4, no.2).

Choosing to be somewhat autocratic in my approach to this column, I have decided to set my own guidelines and initially, the areas to be covered. Do not despair, I have provided space on the listing form for those of you who want to provide totals for other areas. I will include other areas if at least ten (10) people show interest in a particular location.

The areas I have chosen are:

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. within Canada (620)             | 9. Southern Interior Mountains      |
| 2. within British Columbia (468)   | Ecoprovince                         |
| 3. Vancouver Island (366)          | 10. Sub-Boreal Interior Ecoprovince |
| 4. Queen Charlotte Islands (222)   | 11. Northern Boreal Mountains       |
| 5. Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince | Ecoprovince                         |
| (excluding Vancouver Island and    | 12. Taiga and Boreal Plains         |
| the Queen Charlotte Islands)       | Ecoprovinces (two ecoprovinces      |
| 6. Georgia Depression Ecoprovince  | combined)                           |
| (including Vancouver and Victoria  | 13. Vancouver Checklist Area (364)  |
| checklist areas)                   | 14. Victoria Checklist Area (331)   |
| 7. Southern Interior Ecoprovince   | 15. North Pacific Pelagic Waters    |
| 8. Central Interior Ecoprovince    |                                     |

The boundaries for areas 5 through 12 (Ecoprovinces of British Columbia) are shown on a map on an accompanying insert. For more detailed maps, see pages 59 - 145 of **The Birds of British Columbia** (Campbell et al. 1990<sup>1</sup>).

As far as I know, no one has compiled species totals for many of the Ecoprovinces; therefore we eventually could help fill some knowledge gaps.

The numbers in parentheses after categories 3, 4, 13 and 14 represent the species totals that W. Weber presented in **BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST** Vol.3 No.3, September 1993. I am sure that many (all?) of the totals listed are no longer accurate and I am relying upon the contributors to bring me up to date. When you fill out the accompanying form, please help me by including the most recent, accepted totals for all the areas that you know of. Primarily because of space restrictions, we will only be printing the names and totals of those contributors who have seen **50% or more** of the total species in an area (if the total is known).

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, R.Wayne; et al. The Birds of British Columbia. Volume 1, Non-passerines. Victoria, BC: The Royal British Columbia Museum, 1990.

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**Ken's Listing Rules**


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- For the first 2 areas (Canada, BC) all species including those seen out to the 200 nautical mile (approx. 370 km) limit, are to be counted.
- For areas 3 and 4 (Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands) include only those marine species seen no more than 5 nautical miles (9.6 km) from land.
- For areas 5 through 12, use the Ecoprovince boundaries; areas 5 and 6 should include marine birds seen no more than 5 nautical miles from land.

**Ken's Listing Rules** (continued)

- To be counted in category 15 (North Pacific Pelagic Waters), a species has to have been seen no closer than 5 nautical miles from land, north of the Tropic of Cancer (23°27'N) and south of the Aleutian chain. However, unlike ABA rules, birds seen beyond the 200 nautical mile limit are also acceptable. The only species that can be considered in this category include: albatross, fulmar, gadfly-petrels, shearwaters, storm-petrels, tropicbirds, pelicans, gannets, frigatebirds, phalaropes, skuas, jaegers, gulls, kittiwakes, terns and alcids -- misguided passerines, etc. cannot be included.
- Phone-in totals will NOT be accepted. I will only list those totals that reach me by mail by, or before, 31 January.
- If I do not receive a listing form on time, I will re-print totals from the previous year. If a person does not submit a form for two (2) consecutive years, he or she will be dropped from the list.☐

**Proposal:**  
**A Community-Based Environmental Inventory,**  
**Monitoring and Analysis Program**

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To: British Columbia Field Ornithologists

Royal Roads University, T.E.R.F. The Ecodata Research Foundation and HGI Inc. are planning to create a central repository and clearinghouse for natural resource and spatial attribute data in British Columbia, as shown in the attached report. As you may be aware, one of the primary interests of Royal Roads University will be environmental and economic sustainability. The formation of a central repository for all natural resource and environmental data would be clearly compatible with this mandate.

Our approach would be to initially create a database of natural resource information to identify who currently maintains what data and where it is located. The objective is to prevent duplication of data capture and to eventually integrate all data from the diverse resource sectors into one database. This data would then be made available to government agencies, community and environmental groups and First Nations to help make informed land use decisions that could affect the future of the community and the environment. In turn these groups will be trained to capture their own data and send it to the central database, like DFO's Stream Survey and Stream Keeper programs.

We are applying for funding from Forest Renewal B.C. to set up this program and would appreciate a letter of support from your group. We have enclosed a form letter for your use if you wish to use it. If you have any questions or would like any further information you can contact Steve Grundy at Royal Roads (391-2579), David Pearce at T.E.R.F. (658-0295) or Mark Law at HGI Inc. (389-2050). Please forward your letters of support by August 15, 1996 to myself at Royal Roads.

Yours truly,  
[letter signed by David Pearce for]  
Stephen Grundy,  
Coordinator,  
Environmental Programs  
Royal Roads University, 2005 Sooke Rd., Victoria, BC V9B 5Y2☐

EDITORS' NOTE: The foregoing was received along with a letter-of-support form and a copy of the proposal. These were forwarded to Tony Greenfield, President, BCFO.

**Site Guide: Douglas Lake Country in a Wet Year  
(Westwold to Quilchena via Minnie Lake)**

by Dannie Carsen  
801 Lily Avenue  
Victoria, BC V8X 3R7

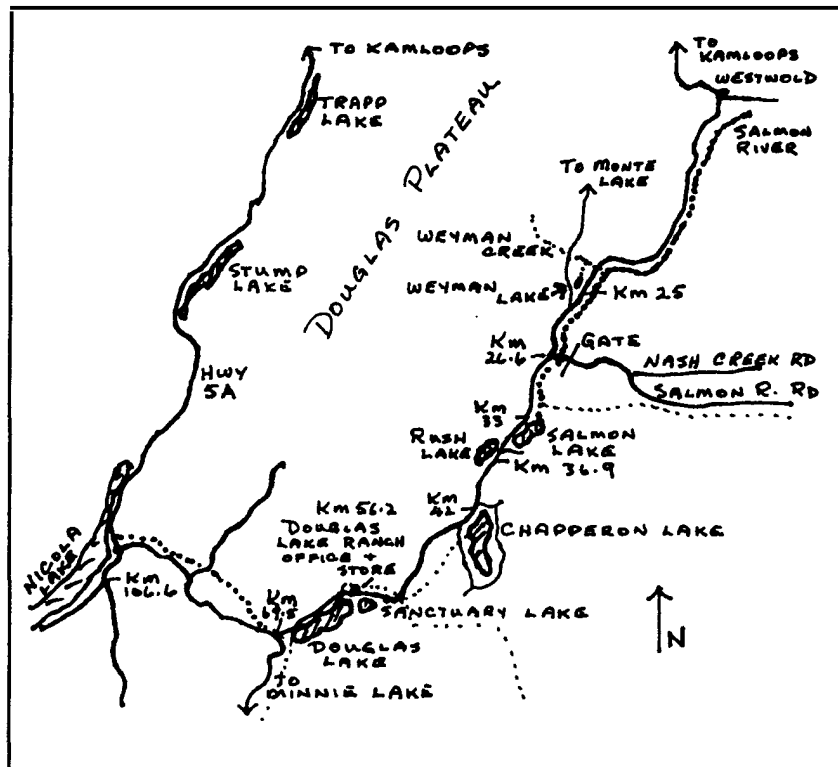
Douglas Lake Ranch is private property stretching from the Monte Lake junction (25 km from Westwold) until just east of Nicola Lake. The countryside is undulating grassland with copses of trembling aspen and wonderfully birdy riparian areas near creeks, ponds and lakes. Northern slopes on the Westwold side are carpeted with interior Douglas fir, ponderosa and lodgepole pine. Susan and I visited in late May during 1994, 1995 and 1996. Due to the unseasonable rains during the spring of 1996, many spring migrants stayed late in the Douglas Lake area leading to a wider variety of species observed than usual. The landscape was much greener with a lot more water in ponds and sloughs than observed in earlier visits.

Start from Westwold, which is about 65 km west of Vernon on highway 97. Go through Westwold and turn left off the highway (southwest on Douglas Lake Road). You pass through a broad green valley and some pretty bottom land along the Salmon River. Watch the cottonwoods along the river for Vaux's Swifts and other riparian species such as Veery. As you gain elevation, the valley narrows, the road turns to winding gravel and the trees change to interior Douglas fir sprinkled with ponderosa pine. Near the top of the hill (around km 23 or 24) the landscape opens up to more trembling aspen. There are nice views of the Salmon River on the left hand side of the road. Right around here we saw a small cinnamon black bear rambling down the old road as you look down the slope. There were Red-naped Sapsuckers nesting and a Gray Jay flew by to keep us company.

At the km 25 sign, there is a small lake (Weyman Lake?) on your right hand side, just at the junction with the Monte Lake Road. Pull off the road here and park. Early morning birding has been very fruitful here for waterfowl and wetland species. We have observed Gadwall; Green, Blue-winged and Cinnamon Teal; Bufflehead; Lesser Scaup; American Wigeon; Northern Pintail; Ring-necked Duck; Wood Duck; Northern Shoveler; Ruddy Duck; Horned Grebe; Pied-billed Grebe; American Coot; Common Snipe; Spotted Sandpiper; Sora; and Black Tern. The changeable sky over the little lake at dawn was memorable.

My 1996 field notes read:

"Just the eastern rim of the sky is light. Then, a pink glow suffuses the east. Mist rises from the lake in clouds. Grass is stiff with frost on a May morning. Birds sing. The clear whinny of a Sora enlivens me and I walk a few paces. Canada Geese fly overhead with companionable honks. A Ruffed Grouse drums in the distant pine and fir forest. First my fingers, then my ears, back and legs cool. A masked yellow bandit hunches defiantly on a willow. 'Whicity, whicity, which' fills the cool air. A small sparrow with a buffy breast looks at me suspiciously. A Black Tern flies slowly out of the mist and circles rising and falling making its own ethereal pattern on the lake."



Map 1: Westwold to Douglas Lake

**Site Guide: Douglas Lake Country** (continued)

Susan and I always enjoy the wide variety of species to observe at Weyman Lake. In 1995, I heard and photographed a Gray Flycatcher near the Merritt Forest District sign at the junction of the Monte Lake and Douglas Lake roads. I walked up the hillside past an old road into the aspen. There were some dead aspen snags and the gray was sitting in one of them, singing away "Chulip zang chulip, chulip zwee". The photograph shows a pale gray bird with some brown on the lower mandible.

Walk from Weyman Lake down the main road a few kms to the turnoff to Salmon River. Turn left and walk 0.5 km down to the bridge over the Salmon River. Logging has opened up the understory and you can see a good variety of warbler, flycatcher, woodpecker and swallow species down to the bridge. Nashville, Orange-crowned, and Yellow Warblers as well as Dusky and Willow Flycatchers have been heard. From the lake to the river we have also recorded Violet-green, Northern Rough-winged, Tree, Bank and Cliff Swallows. Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers and Red-naped Sapsuckers have been observed. Right at the little bridge over the Salmon River is a great spot to observe birds. If you stand on the bridge, squadrons of Cliff Swallows come out to investigate. On May 29, 1996 I photographed a Harris' Sparrow and a Clay-coloured Sparrow which walked right up to us. The birds were so tame that I had to back up to get them into focus!

Susan and I usually observe around 40 species in our two hour walk from Weyman Lake to Salmon River and back. Watch for Swainson's Hawk and a variety of other raptors. A Douglas Lake cowboy was riding fence near the bridge and we asked him about the Harris' Sparrow. He had seen a few of them this year. We watched the young cowboy ride up the ridge as he checked the fence line out of sight.

American Kestrels and Ospreys abound along the road as you drive the 6.4 km from the Salmon River road to Salmon Lake at km 33. Watch for Western Bluebird along this stretch as well as Long-billed Curlew. Salmon Lake resort has RV parking, cabins and a small store. Near Salmon Lake watch for Short-eared Owls and Sandhill Cranes in season. The western end of the lake is excellent birding; you can expect Sora and Virginia Rail as well as scoters during migration. Grasshopper Sparrows are reported to have nested near the lake in the 1960's, but their current status is unknown. At km 36.9 you can scope the shoreline of Rush Lake for a variety of ducks (including Canvasback) in spring.

The cattleguard at km 42 is near a sign entitled "Chapperon Indian Reserve #5" which identifies the boundary of first nations land fronting Chapperon Lake. This is a beautiful, fairly undisturbed piece of grassland with a wonderful riparian tangle right at Chapperon Lake. In spring and fall, Chapperon is an important staging area for Sandhill Cranes. We observed a Turkey Vulture and Mountain Bluebird from the highway and a Grasshopper Sparrow closer to the lake. One of the best sightings of the trip was the seven American White Pelicans that circled overhead like Halifax bombers, white glinting off their wings in the morning light. We observed over 20 species right at Chapperon Lake.

At km 52.5 is English Bridge over the Nicola River. This is a good area for Vaux's Swift, Great Horned Owl, and Long-billed Curlew. Watch for a Great Blue Heron nesting colony nearby. There is an airstrip at km 54-55. Drive down a little hill towards Sanctuary Lake which allows a nice view of the "Home Ranch". Turn left at the Douglas Lake Ranch sign (km 56.2) and drive 0.4 kms to the store, gas pumps, and office. The store is a nice spot to get an ice cream on a hot day.

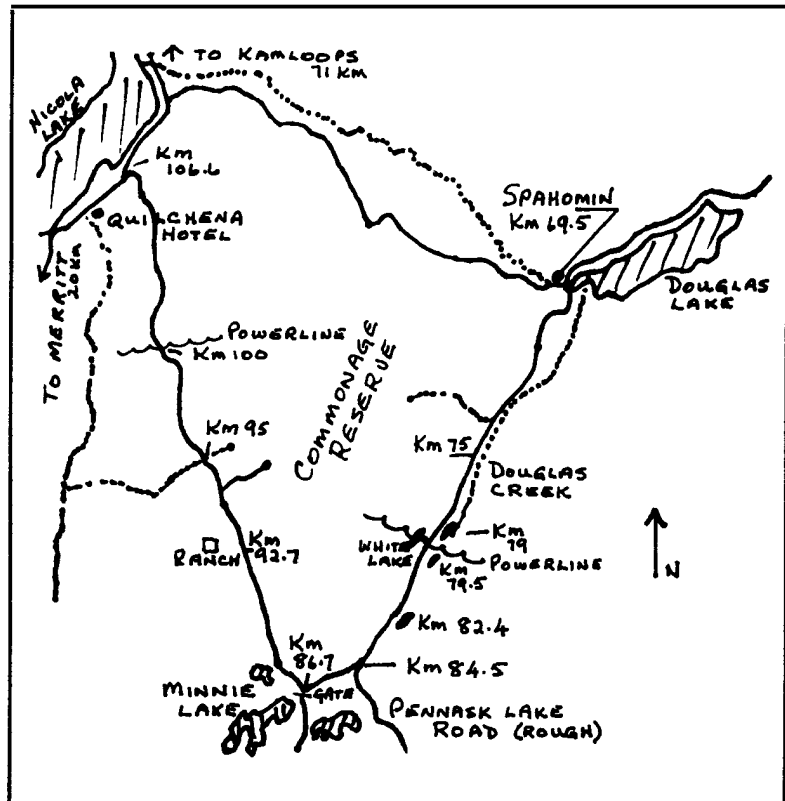
Drive 13.3 kms to Spahomin at km 69.5. It is always worth checking the hay pastures here for Bobolinks. Turn left (southwest) onto the Minnie Lake road which is a winding gravel road a bit smaller and less travelled than the Douglas Lake road. (The Minnie Lake road inscribes a V on the map with the bottom of the V at Minnie Lake and the top at Nicola and Douglas Lakes.) Travel 6 kms until you reach a little creek on the left hand side of the road around km 75. This is a pretty little spot to stop and have a tea break.

At km 79 there is a little lake near the powerlines where we saw Vesper and Savannah Sparrows. The larger lake at km 79.5 (White Lake) had a pair of Wilson's Phalaropes and Eared Grebes in 1996. I feverishly set up the tripod and camera just in time to see a pair of Red-tailed Hawks fly in and frighten off the phalaropes before I could get a picture!

### Site Guide: Douglas Lake Country (continued)

American Avocets have been seen regularly for the last five springs in the powerline area and have nested near White Lake. In 1996 the ponds in this area were extensive, on both sides of the road. Scope them all carefully for shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. At km 82.4 I photographed a female Red-necked Grebe sitting on a nest near the shore of a little pond. Watching the light change as the sun goes down was wonderful here. The sunset over the ponds drained the light from the surrounding grasslands and moved colours to monochrome hues.

Watch for the left turn to Penask Lake at km 84.5. The Penask Lake road is suitable for trucks and four-wheel drives but for a passenger car or van it is a bit rough. The first 8 kms are fairly good, then you turn right (south) on a much poorer road which winds up and down a powerline trail for 19 kms to the Coquihalla highway. Adventurous birders can listen for a Northern Waterthrush at Quilchena Creek (around 18 kms from the Minnie Lake turnoff).



Map 2: Douglas Lake - Minnie Lake area

At km 86.7 there is a sign identifying Minnie Lake road with a gate. There is no access to this area. It is often worth a visit to Stoney Lake. You can contact Douglas Lake Ranch about the lodge at Stoney Lake which offers bed and breakfast. Between Minnie Lake and Quilchena check all the lakes and ponds for shorebirds and waterfowl. A ranch house may be seen on the left at km 92.7.

Watch for a pond at km 95 where I observed an American Black Duck in 1995. Small copses of trembling aspen and willow along creeks and marshes are great areas to observe a variety of birds including nesting Long-eared Owls. Ferruginous Hawks have been reported along this stretch of road in spring. There are another set of powerlines at km 100. We have often observed Swainson's Hawks, Northern Harriers, and Lark Sparrows in this area of expansive native grasslands. Grassland species such as Sharp-tailed Grouse, Short-eared Owls, Long-billed Curlew, Clay-coloured Sparrow, and Horned Lark have been recorded by other birders in this area. There is a good raptor migration here in spring and fall. Lapland Longspur have been seen in September and Snow Buntings and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch in winter.

Just 106.6 kms from the Westwold turnoff, you reach Highway 5A. From this junction you can turn left and drive a few kms to the Quilchena Hotel, an historic site with a neat bar and sitting room. Near Quilchena, there is some good birding as described by Wayne Weber in his Monck Park Site Guide (BCFO 1(4): 13-16, 1992). You can also refer to Rick Howie's Merritt to Kamloops Highway 5A Site Guide (BCFO 4(1): 9-12, 1994). Rick provided good supplemental information about other species not seen on our spring trips and kindly suggested some revisions for usability.

Please remember that the Douglas Lake Ranch prefers that birders use the main roads and stay in established campsites such as Salmon Lake. That means no driving on the rangeland or walking off the main road without permission. ☐

EDITORS' NOTE: Birders may also like to peruse "Tour 11: Over Douglas Lake Range" and "Tour 13: Over the Hills to Minnie Lake", published in Backroads of British Columbia by Liz & Jack Bryan, Sunflower Books, Vancouver, BC. c1975, Revised 1981.



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**LETTERS TO THE EDITORS**

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Letter from Bruce Whittington of the field-naturalist

Congratulations on another issue, packed as usual with good stuff. I read them all cover to cover.

I'm writing specifically, though, to comment on the name suggestions for the newsletter. While it is probably obvious to you, many other members may not be aware that the suggested name **Field-Notes** is the name of the newsletter published monthly by the field-naturalist. I'm sure you will agree that the possible confusion resulting from BCFO's use of the name would be undesirable.

Personally speaking, I agree with the many who have spoken in favour of *The Varied Thrush*. It's a western species, is undeniably striking, and has a pretty song. I also wondered about *Selasphorus*, which means "carrying the light" - perhaps that's a little hard to live up to. *Columba* comes nicely close to Columbia, and the Band-tailed Pigeon is a western species, but there is the problem of Rock Dove. *Bucephala* fits because B.C. is really the only province where all three *Bucephala* species can regularly be seen. But it means "bull-headed" which might cast unkind aspersions on editors. Another - *Cinclus*; a species almost restricted to B.C. in Canada, and the word means "a bird". For that matter, *Dipper* - and damn the Americans. This species also occurs over a wide area of B.C., through more of the year, than Varied Thrush; it has unique behaviour, and one of the best songs of any of our birds. Yes. I think I like this best, either in Latin or English.

I hope you find these musings food for thought. Meanwhile, keep up the good work with the newsletter, you really are the tie that holds the members together.

Note from Barb & Ev Miyasaki

For those BCFO members who were fortunate enough to see the warbler purported to be a hybrid Hermit X Townsend's Warbler near Strawberry Flats in Manning Park during the 6th AGM, check out the following article: Bruce Mactavish. Hybrid Hermit X Townsend's Warbler in Newfoundland, *Birder's Journal* 5(1): 33-34, 1996.

E-mail from mikes@... Victoria area

Hi! ... We are just considering getting into birding in greater depth. Can you recommend some birding areas and/or contacts in the Victoria area?

E-mail from carol@... United States

Andy, ... Have you any recommendations for birding in Scotland in September?

FAX from Michael Bergman, Sweden

To: British Columbia Field Ornithologist

Hello! My name is Michael Bergman and I'm working as a fireman. 27/7 we going to Edmonton to play the world championship in icehockey. After that I'm going to Jasper NP and Banff NP, to see the birds in the area. I wonder if you could send over some information about the birds in these parks, and good birding spots where you can take good photos. Maybe you have something about Inglewood Bird Sanctuary and Edmonton Bird Club. Best Regards, Michael Bergman, Fire Department, Upplands Vasby

Note from Andy Stewart, BC Environment Victoria, BC

When birding in the Victoria area birders are requested to watch for colour banded Cooper's Hawks. "From late June through early July 1996, over 90 nestling Cooper's Hawks were fitted with red [females] or black [males] colour bands in the Greater Victoria area. This colour banding project is part of a larger research study on the breeding ecology of Cooper's Hawks in urban Greater Victoria. Naturalists in this area can greatly assist this study by watching for these colour banded hawks.

Colour bands were placed on the LEFT leg and are uniquely coded with two vertical alphanumeric characters. [read code downwards toward the foot] ... If you observe a colour banded hawk, please record the band colour and code [if possible], date and time, and your precise location."

Please report Cooper's Hawks with colour or standard\* bands to: Andy Stewart, Wildlife Branch, BC Environment, 780 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1X4. Phone 387-9780. (\* In 1995 nestlings were banded with standard aluminum USF&W bands on the RIGHT leg and these should also be reported to Andy Stewart.)

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## The Colour of Birds

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by Roy John  
1 - 613 McPherson Avenue  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0X7

I have been asked on several occasions to describe the reasons for the colour of birds. In attempting to understand why we see such glorious colours in bluebirds and tanagers we need a grasp of our perception of light.

Every day we are bathed in energy from a nuclear reactor we call the sun. Some of this energy we can see (light), some we can feel (heat or infra-red radiation), and some we notice indirectly (ultraviolet or UV radiation which causes sunburn and skin cancer). To see birds we use that radiation we call "light", actually white light. White light is composed of a broad range of different lights (or energies) we call colours. We see these in a rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. When added together they form a brighter light, white.

Light can be bent, scattered or focused (the reflector in your flashlight reflects and focuses light into a beam). Tiny particles can also bend (or refract) light but they do not bend all colours to the same extent. Blue is more strongly scattered and this is what gives the sky its colour (Why is the sky blue Daddy?). Raindrops or water particles give us rainbows and dust in the air provides red sunsets and sunrises.

This light alteration is called Tyndall scattering and is used by birds to get "blue" feathers. Each feather has a transparent outer layer covering a spongy, bubble-filled layer that scatters the light in the same way as atmospheric dust. In the Stellar's Jay other light energies (colours) are absorbed by a backing layer of black pigment called melanin.

The second way to achieve colour is with pigment, a substance that absorbs light. What we see is the light that is not absorbed but reflected back. So a "red" pigment absorbs blue and green light but not red. Birds synthesize red, orange and yellow pigments from the carotene (as in carrots) they get from plants. Black, grey, brown (including variations like chestnut) are made internally by the bird from amino acids. The only green pigmented birds I know are Touracos, whose pigment is called touracoverdin. Pigments are soluble and can be extracted by grinding in alcohol or fat. (Carotene is not soluble in water, so you will not extract it by boiling carrots. Try frying them in pale-coloured oil.) Blue colour cannot be extracted because it is an illusion of light. (Although you can see the melanin in a jay's feather by holding it against the window. You will be sensing transmitted instead of reflected light.)

If we have a naturally green bird, a Budgerigar, which loses its yellow pigment it looks blue. If we breed out its spongy feather cells it no longer reflects just blue light, but all light and looks white. If we take out the spongy cells but leave the pigment it looks yellow.

The slide of the Green Heron shown at a recent Victoria Natural History Society meeting illustrates the reflected light phenomenon well. The colours you see will depend on the light and your position in relationship to the bird. Under rare conditions with the light at an extreme angle, it can be a stunning royal blue. More typically you will see blue light shining through yellow pigment to give green. Fairly often the light will be too poor (not enough energy) to pass into the feathers and out and the bird will appear dirty brown or black.

As pigments are subtractive, the more you add, the duller your colour. (Remember mixing all the paints in your box as a child; you got muddy brown. With a perfect pigment mix you would have got black.) Light is additive and combining colours makes things brighter. So the reflected light on an Anna's Hummingbird's carmine red throat is shiny and bright, rather than soft and matt as on an American Robin's pigmented stomach.

Now when you look at a bird, even an European Starling, you can wonder at what clever tricks nature has pulled to make it look that way. Or you can now ponder why and how an apple turns red!☺

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**Post-AGM Princeton Field Trip**


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by Bryan Gates  
3085 Uplands Road  
Victoria, BC V8R 6B3

Following the Manning Park Bird Blitz, a group of 13 keen birders joined Jerry and Kim Herzig for a Sunday morning tour of the hills overlooking their home town of Princeton, BC and a search for birds that frequent the vast grasslands and cattle ranches of that area. We hiked about 10 km, exploring green plateaus, potholes and wet gullies, some of which are shrouded in aspens, firs, and pines.

For coastal birders, among the highlights were Horned Larks, which nest in these higher grasslands, along with Vesper Sparrows and many Western Meadowlarks. We were all confused for a while by the song of a male Lazuli Bunting, well hidden in the aspens, but later views of this dryland species were excellent and gave us all a chance to tie the sound to the sight.

A female Ruffed Grouse gently enticed us away from her tiny, cryptically coloured chicks hidden in a moist thicket, and two pairs of Red-naped Sapsuckers squabbled over territories in a deciduous copse which, like most of the wet areas, had been well trodden by cattle.

Our climb to the summit of the high cliffs overlooking the Similkameen valley was rewarded even before we got to the top. Four White-throated Swifts, which Jerry informed us had nested there for a number of years, squealed low over our heads, providing brief but superb views of both dorsal and ventral plumage patterns.

Head-on views of female Mountain Bluebirds twice fooled a number of us into calling "Townsend's Solitaire", but there was no mistaking the brilliantly blue male Mountain Bluebirds nearby. And we never did agree to the identity of empids and pewees trading places at one aspen grove!

Probably the most memorable highlight was a steep, long, break-neck dive by a pair of Golden Eagles, from high in the hills above us, down to the field next to us. For a moment the birds were hidden from our view, but they soon arose and flew at eye level close past our group, their golden heads glowing in the sunlight. Magnificent birds!

It was a great outing and a good way to end an eventful AGM and Bird Blitz. The list of 49 species seen at Princeton follows.

Our thanks to Jerry and Kim -- for a forced march, but an excellent morning.

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**Bryan's Listing of Birds Observed on the Princeton Trip**


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Mallard	Horned Lark	European Starling
Barrow's Goldeneye	Tree Swallow	Warbling Vireo
Killdeer	Violet-green Swallow	Yellow Warbler
Golden Eagle	N. Rough-winged Swallow	MacGillivray's Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Lazuli Bunting
American Kestrel	Barn Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Ruffed Grouse	Clark's Nutcracker	Savannah Sparrow
Rock Dove	Black-billed Magpie	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	American Crow	Chipping Sparrow
White-throated Swift	Common Raven	Lincoln's Sparrow
Calliope Hummingbird	Black-capped Chickadee	Western Meadowlark
Northern Flicker	Mountain Chickadee	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-naped Sapsucker	Red-breasted Nuthatch	House Sparrow
Eastern Kingbird	House Wren	Pine Siskin
Western Wood-Pewee	Mountain Bluebird	House Finch
Dusky Flycatcher	American Robin	
Willow Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	

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**AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE**


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**Dannie Carsen**

Dannie is a Victoria birder and natural history writer who enjoys annual vacations into the interior of BC. During May and June of 1996 Dannie and his wife Susan visited the Okanagan, Douglas Lake Ranch, Merritt, Dog Creek, Gang Ranch, and Bella Coola and enjoyed a month of great birding.

**Bryan Gates**

Bryan, a Registered Professional Biologist with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks in Victoria, has birded actively for the past 12 years. In his spare time he serves as a lecturer, scientist and bird specialist on natural history trips to various parts of the world, and teaches introductory ornithology and bird identification at Camosun College in Victoria.

**Roy John**

Roy, an avid naturalist for over 45 years, came to Canada in 1965. He helped found Lambton Wildlife Inc. in Sarnia, Ontario. Since then his work as a specialist on the impact of mining has taken him all over Canada and he has served on numerous naturalist boards and committees. Currently he and Stephanie live in Saskatoon where they enjoy seeing huge flocks of cranes and waterfowl, graceful antelope and prairie wildflowers.

**Eric MacBean**

Eric says he was "... introduced to birding when I went to Newfoundland in 1952 to work as Medical Officer, serving South Coast Outports from a 40' cruiser...". Although there was a hiatus while later working and raising family in Ontario, Eric came to BC in 1975 and, with a family grown was able to reindulge himself. He only developed into a lister when, after a major illness, he found it a great motivation to get up and about again.

**Michael Tilitiski**

Michael, a park naturalist at E.C. Manning Provincial Park, orchestrated the Manning Bird Blitz to meld with our BCFO AGM. Thanks to Michael for his assistance and for compiling the bird list from the AGM/Blitz. We enjoyed his entertaining and informative presentations during the AGM. ◀

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**Checklist of Whistler Birds**


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During the reception at the 6th AGM Max Gotz, a BCFO member from Whistler, gave us a copy of the latest checklist from the Whistler area. "The Whistler checklist area is roughly bounded by the Squamish-Cheakamus divide in the west, Cheakamus-Lillooet divide in the East, Rutherford-Soo divide across to Mt. Moe in the north and Cloudburst Mtn. to the Glacier Pikes in the south." [area noted on checklist.] The four-fold checklist is printed on sturdy bond; provides some habitat information; and includes habitat codes, abundance codes and breeding status for the 177 species listed. For further information, or to purchase copies of this checklist, please contact either: 1). N. Ricker/V. Troup, Biology Department, Capilano College, 2055 Purcell Way, N. Vancouver, BC V7J 3H5 or 2). B. Max Gotz, Box 291, Whistler, BC V0N 1B0. e-mail bmg@whistler.net. All profits go to environmental charities. ◀

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**Jeremy's Answers to Tricky Word Puzzles for Birders**


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| 1. Smooth flutist = Sandpiper                | 11. Big gulp = Purple Martin*            |
| 2. Carrot top = Redhead                      | 12. Crazy door = Nuthatch                |
| 3. Fitness centre fight = Sparrow            | 13. Holy humor = Godwit                  |
| 4. Extruda - prod = Longspur                 | 14. Battle distortion = Warbler          |
| 5. Typical nut = Common Loon                 | 15. Never having to say you're... = Sora |
| 6. Senior female = Oldsquaw                  | 16. Gnat grabber = Flycatcher            |
| 7. Garden variety pot-shot<br>= Common Snipe | 17. Owner of a Bic lighter = Flicker     |
| 8. Liberal survey = Redpoll                  | 18. Resin lollipop = Sapsucker           |
| 9. Tarp return = Canvasback                  | 19. Do it on a donkey = Pintail          |
| 10. Cat alarm clock = Kittiwake              | 20. Loot (a) hotel = Robin               |

\* Jeremy suggests that a Big Gulp is a Large Swallow (Purple Martin) ◀