



BC BIRDING

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

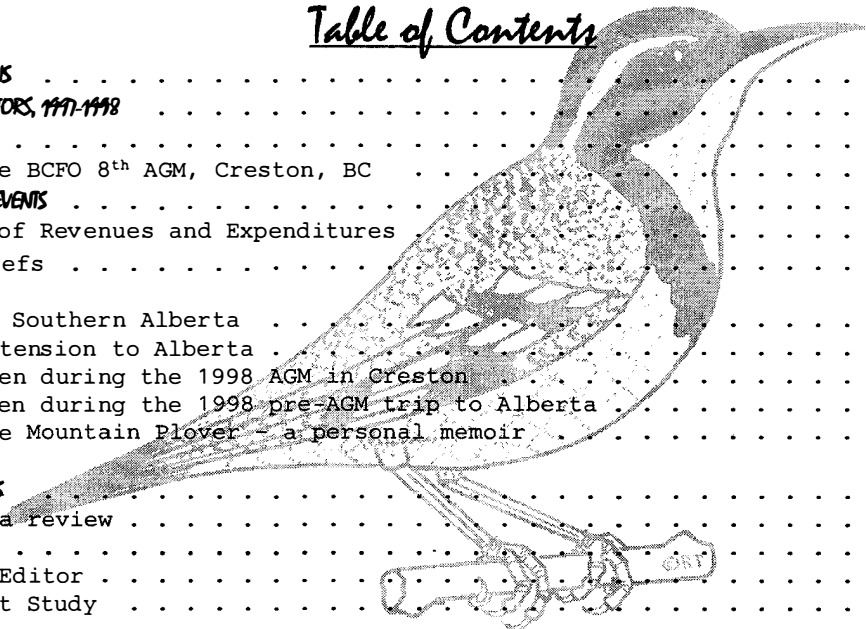
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A subscription to this quarterly is a benefit of membership in the society. Members will also receive a copy of the annual journal, **British Columbia Birds**.

Membership in BCFO is open to anyone interested in the study and 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.

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Membership Dues:

Individual memberships	\$25.00
Library subscriptions	\$25.00
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U.S. and foreign memberships	(US)\$25.00

Memberships are for the calendar year.

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Send material for publication in any format to the editors. We especially welcome bird-finding information for our "Site Guide" series and any articles about birding 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 & December issues.

Advertising rates available upon request.

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Missing Some Earlier Issues?

BCFO still has a limited selection of back copies of both the annual peer-reviewed journal **British Columbia Birds** and this quarterly newsletter **B.C. BIRDING** available for sale. The prices (which include postage and handling) are \$8.00 for the journal and \$3.00 for the newsletter. Contact: Editors c/o PO Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7

EDITORS' NOTES & NOTIONS

September already, my how the time does fly!! We hope everybody has had a good "birdy" summer and we look forward to reports of your exploits for a future issue of this newsletter. Please send any articles, site guides, letters and newsy items in to us as soon as possible because the in-basket really is very EMPTY! Thank you.

This issue contains the minutes and financial statement for the eighth AGM held in Creston this year. Once read, please keep the issue in a safe place in readiness for next year's AGM. In addition to the usual business materials we have impressions from both the AGM and the pre-AGM Alberta trips. For those lucky enough to get to either event read the reports by Tony and Don (and the Birding Belles from Don's vehicle) and relive the enjoyment. For the rest of you envious souls make certain that you register early for next years offerings so you can be a part of the birding experience.

Be certain to read the Letters to the Editors as there are free checklists, bird sightings needed, interesting projects initiated, and some feedback for a previous article. At the very last minute we asked Katy Holm if she could give us a three line synopsis of the first three months of study on a Marbled Murrelet project being undertaken near Victoria. See page 20 for her great executive summary of a very exciting study.

Thanks to Russ Tkachuk for sending us his sketches of the Black-necked Stilt and the Wild Turkey. These sketches enhance and complement the two bird listing pages. Incidentally, Russ also drew the Varied Thrush which graces our cover.

Be certain to read the Duck Pond. Kevin, with the assistance of Marie's excellent photographic skills, has created a very professional product. He also provides a great service to the birding community, both local and visiting, with his creative and informational websites for Victoria, Prince George and now, Nanaimo. Check them out.

Do not forget to read the offerings of both the Field-Naturalist and Capilano College. Let them know you saw them in BC BIRDING as they have given continued support in many ways.

Gotta scoot - the "peeps" are calling us and we have to test S.P. Gay's Shorebird Sizes.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Eighth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of BCFO in Creston has been and gone and we all enjoyed the hospitality and the birds of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area. In connection with the AGM I would specifically like to acknowledge the efforts of all the staff at CVWMA who smoothed our visit there. Our thanks also to Hank VanderPol and Prue Spitman who handled much of the organization for BCFO. I would also like to pass on my personal thanks to Ian Robertson who ran unsuccessfully for the position of Director for 1998-99. I hope we can find a spot for Ian in the future.

The Extension to Southern Alberta was another roaring success, with 34 participants. Many of the faces were also those from the Peace River trip in 1997. Al Wiseley, who is our Membership Secretary, was unanimously applauded for arranging and leading this wonderful four day trip.

I would like to reiterate that the success of these trips is not merely in visiting interesting areas and seeing new birds, but in the social interaction of the participants. It really is the best opportunity for meeting and sharing experiences with like-minded people from around our far-flung province.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm with which the Extensions to the AGM have been met, your directors are anxious to expand our Field Trip programme. Future field trips can be flexible in timing, duration and location. Some trips might focus on a single species e.g. Boreal Owl or Spotted Owl, a group of species e.g. ptarmigan, a specific habitat e.g. alpine or pelagic, or a remote region e.g. Haines Triangle, or Queen Charlotte Islands. We hope to further your interest in, and experience of our BC birds and provide more opportunities to meet your fellow BC field ornithologists. Enjoy your BC fall birding.

Tony Greenfield
President

MINUTES FROM THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CRESTON VALLEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA CRESTON, B.C. - 20 June 1998

submitted by Ken Morgan, BCFO Secretary

The Eighth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO) was called to order by President Tony Greenfield at 15:40 hours on Saturday 20 June 1998. Following the welcoming statement, Tony expressed his thanks to: Hank VanderPol and Prue Spitman for (respectively) organizing and co-ordinating the AGM; the staff of the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA); the many naturalists who helped out with the field trips; and a special thanks to Gillian Cooper (CVWMA) for her assistance.

Minutes

Bryan Gates read the minutes from the 1997 AGM, (published in the 1997 issue of B.C. Birding 7 [3]). It was moved (Jack Bowling) and seconded (Russ Tkachuk) that the minutes be accepted as published - carried.

Financial Report

Treasurer Ev Miyasaki distributed copies of the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures and presented the Treasurer's Report for the year ending December 31 1997. He reported that: we had a surplus of \$3,972; that revenues and expenditures increased (due to the Peace River Extension); that cash was up by approximately \$4,000, but \$1,900 was offset by liabilities for the December Newsletter printing due in January and the delay of publishing the 1995 journal in 1998. For 1998, the directors have budgeted a surplus of \$1,250 (based upon an anticipated increase in membership).

Ev discussed the issue of travel expenses for directors to attend director's meetings. He noted that the BCFO bylaws specify that directors are not to be reimbursed for out of pocket travel expenses to attend director's meetings. Ev noted that this makes it difficult to recruit directors from outside of the lower mainland/southern Vancouver Island. Ev also noted that while the bylaws could be changed by a special resolution, the BCFO could get into a situation where it couldn't afford that level of expense. Jim Fliczuk moved to change the bylaws to allow reimbursement of director's travel expenses (to attend directors meetings); seconded (Hue MacKenzie) - carried.

Membership Report

Al Wiseley began by stating that because the renewal slips were not sent out with the December Newsletter, the organization had ended up in a "catch-up" situation. As of the AGM there were 204 members, down 10-15 compared with other years at this time. There were approximately 50 individuals who had not renewed their 1997 membership; of those 13 were first-time members; and there were 22 new members for this year. Al suggested several approaches to recruiting new or lapsed members; including contacting previous members to remind them of their lapsed memberships and/or to discuss concerns; the establishment of a Membership Committee to investigate different options and launch a membership drive; and the use of the Internet to promote the organization and to win back old members. Hue MacKenzie asked whether we had considered sending out a mailing to determine why individuals had allowed their membership to lapse - Al replied that he felt that the phone call approach would be better.

Newsletter Report

B.C. BIRDING Co-Editor Marilyn Buhler thanked all contributors (Tony Greenfield for the President's Report; Martin McNicholl for Upcoming Events; Ken Morgan for Bird-Lister's Corner). She also thanked businesses that had advertised in the newsletter and especially Bruce Whittington of the Field Naturalist for selling copies of the newsletter. Marilyn reminded everyone to contribute to the newsletter in the form of either an article, a site guide or a notice of an upcoming event.

Journal Report

Journal Editor Martin McNicholl summarized recent journal progress. The 1995 issue was completed in Nov. 1977, but wasn't mailed until Feb. 1998. The 1996 and 1997 issues are close to completion; whereas, the 1998 issue has not been started (in terms of Martins editing responsibilities). Martin noted that he was (cautiously) optimistic that by the next AGM, the journal would be entirely on schedule. Martin thanked: Al Wiseley for tracking members for each year and generating mailing list; Andy and Marilyn Buhler for getting the journal into "publishable" shape; Mary Tate and Ken Morgan for internal review of manuscripts; and all of the external reviewers.

President's Report

President Tony Greenfield thanked those who had presented reports and then introduced the Board of Directors and Gary Davidson (Co-ordinator of Bird Records Committee) to the audience. Tony expressed his gratitude to the Buhlers for all their work, stating that they were the "glue that held the organization together". He also thanked Martin McNicholl

for the high degree of professionalism that he brought to the journal. Tony mentioned that the BCFO brochure had been sent out to every Federated Naturalist Club in the province to distribute to their members. It was also sent to most Christmas Bird Count co-ordinators for distribution. All BCFO members were encouraged to try to recruit new members.

Tony briefly described the Wild Bird Trust (WBT); an organization with certain differences that complemented the BCFO. While Tony felt that the WBT was a passive organization with an emphasis on conservation; the BCFO's main reason was to undertake field ornithology. Tony acknowledged that there had been complaints about the BCFO being just a "birding club" - but he felt that the BCFO actually brought the field naturalists and the professionals together.

Tony mentioned that we are always looking for ideas for field trips, AGM locations and Extension destinations. He noted that it may be difficult to continue running Extensions along with the AGM's. It is always a balancing act trying to find new birding areas with an AGM location that can accommodate the participants, but yet is not so remote as to drastically limit the number of participants. Jim Fliczuk suggested that we hold "Extensions" not tied to the AGM - Tony responded that other trips could be organized. Marion Porter remarked that the BCFO needed a Trip Co-ordinator - Tony agreed and commented that the directors needed members to come forward to volunteer to help out with that and other jobs.

Special Resolution

Don Wilson reported that a property owned by the City of Kelowna, currently supporting breeding American Avocets, is threatened by the expansion of the landfill. Don read out a resolution and asked the BCFO to endorse it; however, the wording was quite weak. It was moved (Bryan Gates) that the BCFO does support the motion in principal, but recommended that Don Wilson and Les Gyug should work with the Board of Directors to tighten up the wording; seconded (Hue MacKenzie) - carried.

Election of Directors

Russ Tkachuk read items 17,18 and 19 of the BCFO Bylaws concerning election of directors. At each AGM, all directors must resign. All directors resigned and all agreed to stand for another year. Russ asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Marion Porter nominated Ian Robertson, seconded by Al Wiseley - Ian accepted. Given that there was a full slate of directors (nine), and ten running, this necessitated an election. Jim Fliczuk volunteered to scrutinize the election. The election was then held, with only those members in good standing permitted to vote. Jim Fliczuk and Russ Tkachuk left the room to count the ballots. All extra ballots were destroyed.

Other Business

While the ballots were being counted, Tony Greenfield asked if there was any other business. Nancy Ricker inquired if the BCFO should budget money each year to cover directors travel expenses. Paul Wadden suggested that there could be an honorarium paid to each director (to offset expenses), thereby reducing the probability of all directors residing in the lower mainland/southern Vancouver Island area. Peter Blokker offered that with charitable status, the directors could be issued receipts (totaling out of pocket expenses) for income tax purposes. Ev Miyasaki stated that there would need to be a change to the bylaws to allow that. Marilyn Buhler suggested that we should initiate actions to change the bylaws in order to reimburse directors for travel expenses to attend director's meetings.

It was moved (Hue MacKenzie) to accept in principal the concept of providing some financial support to the directors for expenses incurred to attend director's meetings; seconded (Frank Paul) - carried.

Ruth Travers asked if a member could make a donation to the BCFO directed towards reimbursing director's travel expenses, in return for a tax receipt. Tony Greenfield indicated that was possible.

Announcement of Election Results

Russ Tkachuk passed the results on to Tony Greenfield who announced that all directors (from 1997) were re-elected. Jim Fliczuk recommended destroying all of the ballots; seconded by Jack Bowling. On behalf of the BCFO, Jack Bowling thanked Ian Robertson for allowing his name to stand.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 17:05 hours.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

- Sep 7-11, 1998 **AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**, Monterey, California. Contact: ABA 1-800-850-2473
- Sep 24-27, 1998 **FEDERATION OF BC NATURALISTS FALL MEETING**, Vernon, BC. Contact Candis Elkerman, Box 1434, Vernon, BC V1T 6N7, phone Peter Mayfield (250) 549-8478, Pat MacAllister (250) 558-0043 or Edith Levy (250) 549-2449.
- Sep 25-27, 1998 **WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION 73RD ANNUAL MEETING**, Marconi Conference Center, Marshall, California. Contact Kay Loughman, 393 Gravatt Drive, Berkeley, CA 94705, USA, phone (510) 841-7428.
- Sep 29-30 1988 **SECOND INTERNATIONAL BURROWING OWL SYMPOSIUM**, Ogden, Utah (in conjunction with Raptor Research Foundation meeting). Contact: Geoff. Holroyd, Canadian Wildlife Service, Room 200, 4999-98 Ave. Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2X3, phone (403) 495-8089.
- Sep 30-Oct 4 1998 **RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING**, Ogden, Utah. Contact: Carl D. Marti, Department of Zoology, 2505 University Circle, Weber State University, Ogden, UT 84408-2505, USA; phone (801) 626-6172.
- Oct 1-4 1998 **WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING**, Arcata, California. Contact: Ron LeValley, Mad River Biologists, Box 3020, McKinleyville, CA 95519, USA; phone (707) 822-6393.
- Oct 21-26 1998 **COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**, North Miami Beach, Florida. Contact: Peter Frederick, Department of Wildlife Ecology & Conservation, Box 110430, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-0430, USA; phone (352) 846-0565.
- Oct 23-25 1998 **ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING**, Eastham, Massachusetts. Contact: Jerome A. Jackson, Box Z, Mississippi State, MS 39762, USA; phone (601) 325-7939.
- Mar 30-Apr 2 1999 **COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**, Portland, Oregon. Contact to be announced.
- June 10-13 1999 **WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY 80TH ANNUAL MEETING**, Waterville, Maine. Contact: to be announced.

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES
Year Ended December 31, 1997

	1997	1996
REVENUES		
Memberships	\$ 5,804	\$ 5,751
AGM extension	5,602	-
AGM fees	3,325	2,389
Advertising	484	-
Interest & other income	442	86
	15,657	8,226
EXPENDITURES		
AGM extension	5,329	-
AGM facilities and services	2,192	1,625
Printing	2,233	2,148
Postage	1,357	3,189
Stationery	447	181
Miscellaneous	127	145
	11,685	7,288
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	\$ 3,972	\$ 938

BALANCE SHEET
At December 31, 1997

	1997	1996
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 12,288	\$ 7,659
Receivables	687	230
	\$ 12,975	\$ 7,889
LIABILITIES & MEMBERS' EQUITY		
Current Liabilities		
Payables & accrued liabilities	\$ 4,715	\$ 2,800
Deferred revenue	275	1,076
	4,990	3,876
Members' Equity		
Accumulated surplus		
Opening balance	4,013	3,075
Surplus for the year	3,972	938
	7,985	4,013
	\$ 12,975	\$ 7,889
DIRECTORS:	Bryan Gates, Director	Everard Miyasaki, Director

Natural History

at • C A P I L A N O C O L L E G E

Saskatchewan: Last Mountain Lake

Visit Canada's oldest bird sanctuary for a fall birding spectacle with David Stirling. The trip is timed to the fall migration of whooping and sandhill cranes, geese, hawks and thousands of other waterbirds. *October 2-8*

Mexico's Copper Canyon

This maze of small canyons in the Sierra Madres is a unique and isolated wilderness. The landscape, varying from pine-forested mountain tops to lush riverside tropical forests boasts birds and plants from the deserts of the U.S. as well as the rainforests

of Central and South America. Join naturalist Syd Cannings and local birding guides. *January 21-31*

Southern California

Join biologist Dr. Nancy Ricker on a tour of the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, the Anza-Borrego desert and the Laguna Mountains. The Salton Sea is a magnet for birds year-round and a wintering refuge for thousands of migratory waterbirds. Regions nearby attract many songbirds. The book, *Down and Dirty Birding*, rates this region as one of the ten hot spots in North America.

February 23-28

Amazon Rainforest & the Galapagos Islands

With biologist Marja de Jong Westman experience the profound biological diversity of the Amazon jungle while staying at Sacha Jungle Lodge in Ecuador. Then follow in Darwin's footsteps to study the unique plants and animals of the Galapagos Islands while aboard the luxurious '98 yacht, the Andando.

Optional excursion to Machu Picchu. *April 12-29*

Great Zimbabwe & Madagascar

Led by ecologist Dr. Keith Wade, this tour takes you through Zimbabwe's nature reserves, the cultural highlights of the Great Zimbabwe Ruins and Victoria Falls, and a camping safari along the Zambezi River to view some of Africa's more remote parks and wildlife areas. *May 13-31*

Oregon's Malheur National Wildlife Reserve

Ornithologist and naturalist Dr. Nancy Ricker will take you exploring in the marshes, lakes, alkali flats and sagebrush habitats of this wonderful wildlife reserve in southern Oregon. *May 1999*

Please call **Great Expeditions** for tour information/registration at (604) 257-2040 or 1-800-663-3364.

Find out more about our tours and destinations at one of our travel lectures. Call Cacilda Tang at Capilano College, (604) 984-4909 for travel lecture information.



Capilano College Continuing Education
2055 Purcell Way
North Vancouver, BC, V7J 3H5

B.C. BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

New "North American" check-list published -

After several postponements, the American Ornithologists' Union has (1998) published the seventh edition of its "Check-list of North American birds." Like the sixth (1983) edition, the seventh includes Central American and Caribbean bird species. Although Hawaii is not biogeographically part of the Americas, the check-list includes its bird species, like most North American field guides, in keeping with its political status as a state of the USA.

British Columbia checklist updated -

The indefatigable R. Wayne Campbell has compiled an updated checklist of all bird species known to have occurred in British Columbia to the end of 1997. The list includes 481 species, of which three are thought to have been extirpated from the province. Symbols indicate known breeding in the province and extralimital occurrence. The list is published as *Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia Special Publication No.1*, April 1998.

Cowan Receives Speirs Award -

A special highlight of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists 1998 annual meeting in Vancouver was the awarding of the Doris Huestis Speirs Award to Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan on 4 August. The award honours life-time achievements in ornithology in Canada. The award was presented by SCO Past President, Dr. David N. Nettleship, who read out congratulatory faxes from several prominent colleagues before presenting the plaque. Dr. Cowan then addressed a very attentive audience with a mixture of humour and serious concern over recent societal trends that will likely have negative effects on bird populations and our abilities to study them. Further details on the award will be published in *Picoides*, the news bulletin of SCO.

**A Sweep Through Southern Alberta --
1998 BCFO Pre-AGM Birding Trip**

compiled by Don Wilson
#201 - 3160 Casorso Road
Kelowna, BC V1W 3L7

Although you will find another and more detailed account of our highly successful and immensely enjoyable pre-AGM extension trip to Southern Alberta, I was asked by Marilyn and Andy to collect a few impressions and memories from the five who journeyed from Kelowna.

Netty Overhoff recalls our visit to Writing-on-Stone and the spectacular way the nighthawks swooped in from foraging flights over the Milk River and came to a dead stop, on large cottonwood limbs as though suddenly snapped on with velcro. Didn't they blend well with those branches?

I'll never forget my (Don Wilson) first looks at McCown's Longspurs. Jack Bowling had heard them from our van. We stopped on that lonely stretch of gravel grandly identified as Route 501, and climbed a slippery bank. That brought us face-to-face with a very chilly wind but also to the courtship flights of the longspurs.

We were all impressed with the richness of Pakowki Lake. There can not be too many other areas in western Canada that boast the species list of this spot. I was particularly impressed as I had driven by in early September a few years ago and had seen very little due to drought conditions that year.

Gwynneth Wilson summed up the next afternoon to the Onefour area as follows:

After a morning of rain, fog and biting cold winds, we drove south onto the open plain at Onefour near the US border. This is an area where the elusive Mountain Plover and Sage Grouse have been reported and miraculously the sun shone and the wind dropped as we got out of the cars. Our leaders suggested a sweep of the area to see if we could flush the birds. Everyone spread out and advanced toward the horizon. As we did so birds flew up at every side - calling, displaying, and singing - McCown's and Chestnut-collared Longspurs, Sprague's Pipit, Vesper Sparrows, Long-billed Curlews, Marbelled Godwits. As some people stopped to look at the birds, others to admire the carpet of wildflowers at their feet, yet others quickly disappeared in the distance and, because of the undulations of the terrain, I soon found myself alone in a sea of grass, covered by the immense Prairie sky, the only sound the call and songs of innumerable birds - an unforgettable experience.

I could only add that, while we did not find the plover or grouse, just south of Onefour our van did find and photograph a Loggerhead Shrike's nest with five or six near-to-fledging young. In the same area Netty remembers walking up to a man-made Ferruginous Hawk nest. The nest contained two fluffy white young, black beady eyes and very sharp beaks.

What Elke Fischer recalls among many good memories was Police Point Park on Thursday morning seeing a Brown Thrasher and watching White Pelicans gliding along the South Saskatchewan River. The expectation of seeing a reported Scott's Oriole really had various groups carefully scanning the cottonwoods.

Lesley Robertson focused on the Kininvie Marsh just off the Trans-Canada south of Brooks. What impressed her was how quickly the soil dried and even started cracking after the brief thunderstorm we encountered. Black-necked Stilt was very common there and seemed

quite put out with our group. Was this the only place we saw Pied-billed Grebe she wondered? It was nice to see Red-breasted Mergansers as well. As we traveled a few kilometres further Vicki Troup spotted a tiny dot which turned out to be a Burrowing Owl - a lifer for many!



Lethbridge's Helen Schuler Nature Centre was remembered with delight by Elke and Netty. Both remarked on watching a Downy Woodpecker young's first flight, the Great Horned Owl babies and, for my group, the Cooper's Hawk. Will any of us not recall the song of the House Wren following that visit?

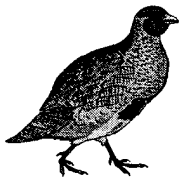
So many highlights - so little space! A very big thank you to all the organizing committee members and the drivers who put many thousands of kilometres over the four days. They were long, long days but well worth it.

PS: Did any of you hear of the rain in the Medicine Hat, Cypress Hills and Onefour area a week or so after we visited? The weather channel said 218 mm at Cypress Hills in 48 hours. That's about 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " - and we thought we had rain!!

BCFO pre-AGM Extension to Alberta - June 16-19 1998

by Tony Greenfield

In 1997, 34 BCFO members participated in a highly successful post-AGM extension to the Peace Country of BC. In 1998 a similar number made the trek from Creston to Southern Alberta, and many of the same faces were evident, suggesting a large core of members committed to this type of outing. The Extension was arranged before the AGM this year, to maximize visiting at the peak time for bird activity in Southern Alberta.



A 5 AM departure from Creston created some consternation for the caffeine-fiends among the group but everyone survived until breakfast in Cranbrook. After crossing the Crowsnest Pass into Alberta, we soon began to see birds typical of the high grasslands of the Pincher Creek - Fort McLeod area with Golden Eagle and Swainson's Hawk noted, and a Gray Partridge foraging in the gravel at road edge allowed leisurely views of this hard-to-find-in-BC bird.

Our first destination in Alberta was the fascinating Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park with its badlands topography and riparian woodlands. The weather was not co-operating here with cold temperatures, rain and a strong blustery wind belying the mid-June date. Birds were quite hard to find, but a Brown Thrasher certainly indicated that we were now east of the Rockies. A spirited debate here centred on the exact speciation of the Spotted / Rufous-sided Towhees, with reference to the amounts of spotting and the minutiae of their dialect.

The next stop was Pakowki Lake, en route to Medicine Hat. We viewed the wet muddy margin of the huge lake close before us, and it produced many species of shorebirds, ducks, gulls, herons etc. with a wholly Prairie flavour. Highlight species for BC birders were White-fronted Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, White Pelican and Black-crowned Night Heron.

After overnighting in Medicine Hat we drove south the next day through the sagelands of eastern Alberta. Some of the vehicles stopped at Red Rock Coulee where the highly sought after Baird's Sparrow was singing among the sage, and the only Rock Wren of the trip was observed. Further along the road at a spectacular eroded badlands canyon we

became acquainted with the tinkling song and the disappearing aerial display of Sprague's Pipit. It took Al Wiseley, our esteemed trip leader and Alberta expert, to put a species name on the unidentified song.

In the afternoon we gained permission to enter the grazing reserves of Ag-Can near Onefour, to search for one of the rarest of all Canadian species, the Mountain Plover. Although that bird eluded us we were thrilled to search these overgrazed grasslands where such Prairie icons as Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspur and Sprague's Pipits were in full song. We also noted Upland Sandpipers and Long-billed Curlews.

After Onefour we searched a sage flat for an equally desirable Prairie species, the Sage Grouse but drew a blank whilst finding other typical Prairie species such as Ferruginous Hawk and Loggerhead Shrike.

Some of the vehicles returned to Medicine Hat via Cypress Hills Provincial Park where this higher, wetter, forested ecosystem produced birds such as those unlikely to be found on the treeless Prairie just a few kilometres away.

Day three began with a visit to Police Point Park on the South Saskatchewan River within the city of Medicine Hat. The riparian cottonwood association here produced a variety of species with Yellow-breasted Chat a major highlight. In the afternoon, en route from Medicine Hat to Lethbridge, we visited Kininvie Marsh near Brooks. Just as we arrived a Prairie thunderstorm broke, but within minutes the sun was shining again and we were able to admire the fantastic number and diversity of birds sharing this wetland. Highlight species were the hundreds of Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets along with other typical birds such as Black Terns and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. A Western Tanager was noted by the parking lot and 34 birders were left pondering what brought this woodland species to the middle of the bald prairie. Adjacent to the Kininvie Marsh is a known location for that increasingly uncommon Prairie icon, the Burrowing Owl. Sharp eyes among the BCFOers managed to pinpoint something that might or might-not be an owl hiding in the grasses. It was one of those will-o-the-wisp sightings where one minute it looked like an owl and seconds later you doubted your eyes. Closer inspection eventually revealed that it was in fact the wanted quarry.

After dining in Brooks, we visited Lake Newell, en route to our motel in Lethbridge and were rewarded with a fine variety of shorebirds, including an aggressive Hudsonian Godwit which flew at my van. Driving into Lethbridge that night the radio played Gordon Lightfoot's "Alberta bound" which seemed wildly appropriate.

On the fourth and final day we birded the Helen Schuler Nature Centre on the Oldman River in Lethbridge. Highlights here were the Lark Sparrows at the feeders around the Centre, and along the trails both nesting Coopers Hawk and Great Horned Owl. A final stop in Alberta was made at Lundbreck Falls where a variety of birds more familiar to BC's mountainous topography than Alberta's grasslands was added to our trip list.

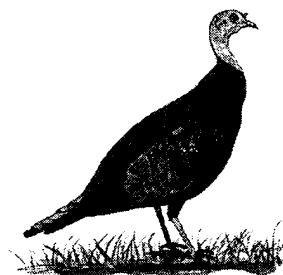
The trip tallied 158 species in total, and we saw all of southern Alberta's regular target birds, with valiant efforts made for the super-rare Mountain Plover and Sage Grouse.

Al Wisely, BCFO's Membership Secretary and an expert Alberta birder, was unanimously praised for planning, organizing and leading this foray into this fascinating ecosystem. Al was presented with a book at the AGM banquet in Creston and we all thank him for his effort and expertise.

EDITORS' NOTE: From the feedback it sounds as though everyone had a really great time on the Alberta trip. Thanks again, Al, from the many satisfied participants.

Bird Species
Seen During the 1998 AGM in Creston, BC (140)*
 compiled by Hank VanderPol

Pied-billed Grebe	Red-naped Sapsucker (C)	Wilson's Warbler
Horned Grebe	Downy Woodpecker	Western Tanager
Red-necked Grebe	Hairy Woodpecker	Black-headed Grosbeak (C)
Eared Grebe	Three-toed Woodpecker (C)	Lazuli Bunting
Western Grebe (C)	Northern Flicker	Spotted Towhee
Double-crested Cormorant	Pileated Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow (C)
American Bittern (C)	Olive-sided Flycatcher (C)	Clay-colored Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Western Wood-Pewee	Savannah Sparrow
Canada Goose	Willow Flycatcher	Fox Sparrow (C)
Wood Duck	Least Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Hammond's Flycatcher (C)	White-crowned Sparrow
Mallard	Dusky Flycatcher	Dark-eyed Junco
Blue-winged Teal	Western Kingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Cinnamon Teal	Eastern Kingbird	Western Meadowlark
Northern Shoveler	Tree Swallow	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Gadwall	Violet-green Swallow	Brewer's Blackbird
American Wigeon	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Canvasback	Bank Swallow	Bullock's Oriole
Redhead	Cliff Swallow	Pine Grosbeak (C)
Ring-necked Duck	Barn Swallow	House Finch
Lesser Scaup	Gray Jay (C)	Red Crossbill (C)
Common Goldeneye	Steller's Jay (C)	Pine Siskin
Barrow's Goldeneye (C)	Black-billed Magpie	American Goldfinch
Bufflehead	American Crow	House Sparrow
Common Merganser	Common Raven	
Ruddy Duck	Black-capped Chickadee	*Unmarked species seen on both
Turkey Vulture	Mountain Chickadee (C)	the Alberta trip and the Creston
Osprey	Chestnut-backed Chickadee (C)	AGM. Those marked (C) were seen
Bald Eagle (C)	Red-breasted Nuthatch	only at the Creston AGM and not
Northern Harrier	Brown Creeper (C)	in Alberta.
Cooper's Hawk	House Wren	
Northern Goshawk (C)	Winter Wren (C)	Total count for Alberta and
Red-tailed Hawk	Marsh Wren	Creston was 196 species.
American Kestrel	Golden-crowned Kinglet (C)	
Ring-necked Pheasant	Ruby-crowned Kinglet (C)	
Blue Grouse (C)	Western Bluebird (C)	
Ruffed Grouse (C)	Mountain Bluebird	
Wild Turkey (C)	Townsend's Solitaire (C)	
Virginia Rail	Veery	
Sora	Swainson's Thrush	
American Coot	Hermit Thrush (C)	
Killdeer	American Robin	
Spotted Sandpiper	Varied Thrush (C)	
Common Snipe	Gray Catbird	
Ring-billed Gull	Cedar Waxwing	
California Gull	European Starling	
Herring Gull	Cassin's Vireo	
Forster's Tern	Warbling Vireo	
Black Tern	Red-eyed Vireo	
Rock Dove	Orange-crowned Warbler	
Mourning Dove	Nashville Warbler (C)	
Great Horned Owl	Yellow Warbler	
Black Swift (C)	Yellow-rumped Warbler (C)	
Vaux's Swift (C)	Townsend's Warbler (C)	
Black-chinned Hummingbird (C)	American Redstart	
Calliope Hummingbird (C)	Northern Waterthrush	
Rufous Hummingbird (C)	MacGillivray's Warbler (C)	
Belted Kingfisher	Common Yellowthroat	



Wild Turkey by Russ Tkachuk

Bird Species Seen During the 1998 pre-AGM trip to Alberta (158)*

compiled by Don Wilson

Pied-billed Grebe	Long-billed Curlew (A)	Cassin's Vireo
Horned Grebe	Marbled Godwit (A)	Warbling Vireo
Red-necked Grebe	Long-billed Dowitcher (A)	Red-eyed Vireo
Eared Grebe	Common Snipe	Tennessee Warbler (A)
American White Pelican (A)	Wilson's Phalarope (A)	Orange-crowned Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Franklin's Gull (A)	Yellow Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Ring-billed Gull	American Redstart
Black-crowned Night Heron(A)	California Gull	Ovenbird (A)
White-faced Ibis (A)	Herring Gull	Northern Waterthrush
Canada Goose	Caspian Tern (A)	Common Yellowthroat
Wood Duck	Common Tern (A)	Wilson's Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Forster's Tern	Yellow-breasted Chat (A)
Mallard	Black Tern	Western Tanager
Northern Pintail (A)	Rock Dove	Lazuli Bunting
Blue-winged Teal	Mourning Dove	Spotted Towhee
Cinnamon Teal	Black-billed Cuckoo ? (A)	Clay-colored Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Great Horned Owl	Brewer's Sparrow (A)
Gadwall	Burrowing Owl (A)	Vesper Sparrow (A)
American Wigeon	Common Nighthawk (A)	Lark Sparrow (A)
Canvasback	Belted Kingfisher	Lark Bunting (A)
Redhead	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (A)	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Baird's Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Hairy Woodpecker	Song Sparrow
White-winged Scoter (A)	Northern Flicker	White-crowned Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Pileated Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Bufflehead	Western Wood-Pewee	McCown's Longspur (A)
Hooded Merganser (A)	Alder Flycatcher (A)	Chestnut-collared Longspur(A)
Common Merganser	Willow Flycatcher	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-breasted Merganser (A)	Least Flycatcher	Western Meadowlark
Ruddy Duck	Dusky Flycatcher	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Turkey Vulture	Say's Phoebe (A)	Brewer's Blackbird
Osprey	Western Kingbird	Common Grackle (A)
Northern Harrier	Eastern Kingbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk (A)	Horned Lark (A)	Bullock's Oriole
Cooper's Hawk	Tree Swallow	Purple Finch (A)
Swainson's Hawk (A)	Violet-green Swallow	House Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	White-winged Crossbill (A)
Ferruginous Hawk (A)	Bank Swallow	Pine Siskin
Golden Eagle (A)	Cliff Swallow	American Goldfinch
American Kestrel	Barn Swallow	House Sparrow
Merlin (A)	Black-billed Magpie	
Prairie Falcon (A)	American Crow	
Gray Partridge (A)	Common Raven	
Ring-necked Pheasant	Black-capped Chickadee	
Sharp-tailed Grouse (A)	Red-breasted Nuthatch	
Virginia Rail	Rock Wren (A)	
Sora	House Wren	
American Coot	Marsh Wren	
Black-bellied Plover (A)	American Dipper (A)	
Semipalmated Plover (A)	Mountain Bluebird	
Killdeer	Veery	
Black-necked Stilt (A)	Swainson's Thrush	
American Avocet (A)	American Robin	
Greater Yellowlegs (A)	Gray Catbird	
Lesser Yellowlegs (A)	Brown Thrasher (A)	
Willet (A)	Sprague's Pipit (A)	
Spotted Sandpiper	Cedar Waxwing	
Upland Sandpiper (A)	Loggerhead Shrike (A)	
Whimbrel (A)	European Starling	

*Unmarked species seen on both the Alberta trip and the Creston AGM. Those marked (A) were seen only in Alberta and not at the Creston AGM.



Black-necked Stilt by Russ Tkachuk

In Search of the Mountain Plover - A Personal Memoir

by Tony Greenfield
PO Box 319
Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0

It was July 1982 and perhaps the most eagerly awaited of my birding journals was the late lamented "Birdfinding in Canada." That month there was an article by Alex Gray and Dave Mark entitled "In Search of the Mountain Plover." In January 1983 there was also an article "Big Denizen of the Sage" by Gerry Bennett (on finding Sage Grouse in Canada)

These articles kindled a flame in me for they contained a potent mix of pheromones :- rare and elusive Canadian species requiring a chase in a remote and "new-to-me" region of Canada.

That was 16 years ago and the passage of time had only mellowed the inner emotion surrounding the idea. So it was with an air of elation that I read BCFO's Alberta itinerary would visit the minuscule known Canadian range of the Mountain Plover.

Fast forward to June 17, 1998, about noon, and we had just driven south from Medicine Hat. Coincidentally, in 1981, Mark and Gray also began their Mountain Plover search on June 17th - a nice synchronicity.

The Centre of their search was a "place" called Onefour and my anticipation mounted as we neared this famed location. Onefour is not a town, but an agricultural research station studying cattle grazing in this remote and unpopulated stretch of Alberta's southern grasslands (Onefour refers to section 1, sub-section 4 of some land unit.) While we dallied with permission at the research station (with its stunning 1940's Department of Public Works architecture) an unlikely event unfolded here in the middle of the bald prairie. Three ornamental blue spruces beside the headquarters were suddenly besieged by a flock of crossbills! It seemed ironic that BCFO's path should intersect with those White-winged Crossbills here, a million miles from any other conifers. The birds allowed close, leisurely views that fully revealed their stunning pink and black plumage with the two white wing-bars -- probably the best looks most of us will ever have of this delightful species. Did I really come all the way to Onefour to see White-winged Crossbills?

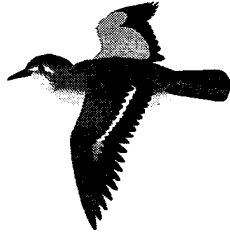
A few minutes later we piled out of our vans at a horizon-busting swath of overgrazed grassland that was to be our search area for Mountain Plover. An initial effort to begin the search was thwarted when a pair of birds with an initially perplexing, but soon to be distinctive jizz, flew by. I reached into my ornithological mind for the trigger- of course, Upland Sandpiper. The birds called "tulip, tulip" to confirm, and briefly settled on the ground, allowing some to get decent views of this desirable species.

After this fortunate digression we set off again and our small group fanned out wider and wider to cover the maximum amount of ground. I waltzed fearlessly across the Prairie enjoying the suddenly warm zephyrs and peeling layers of clothing. The air was full of birdsong with the dominant song having a skylark-like quality that brought boyhood memories of Lincolnshire flooding back.

Today, on this Alberta prairie, these lark-like birds were Chestnut-collared and McCown's Longspurs with the former having the stronger lark quality and McCown's a more tinkling version. Having sorted out the longspurs I turned my attention to another exquisite Prairie songster, and one that I only became familiar with two hours earlier in a badlands south of Manyberries. If Chestnut-collared Longspur sounds like a Skylark, Sprague's Pipit certainly behaves like one, as it ascends to disappearing height warbling its little heart out.

After 45 minutes of walking across the short grass in a straight line towards the horizon, I reached the edge of a badlands - maybe it's the end of the Earth? I'm alone on the Prairie and feeling deeply inspired by the vastness of this horizontal landscape where the earth and the sky kiss on the far horizon, with only the towering cumulus clouds for vertical reference. To the south the low golden drumlins merge imperceptibly into Montana and to the south west the Sweetgrass Hills Range, redolent of some famous Arizona mountain range.

Standing at the edge of the badlands, I reluctantly conclude that I didn't see any Mountain Plovers during my Prairie reverie. A small point, as I exult in wish fulfilment in three tenses - fulfilment of the 1982 dream, being here now, and I shall return again for the plover!

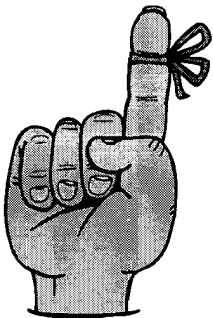


GUIDELINES FOR SITE GUIDES

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. ☺

Christmas Bird Counts

Remember to send us your CBC dates as soon as you know them so that we can be certain to include **your** area in our CBC listings. We need area, date, and contact(s) name & telephone number. Deadline for next issue is the first week of December! Thanks for your assistance.



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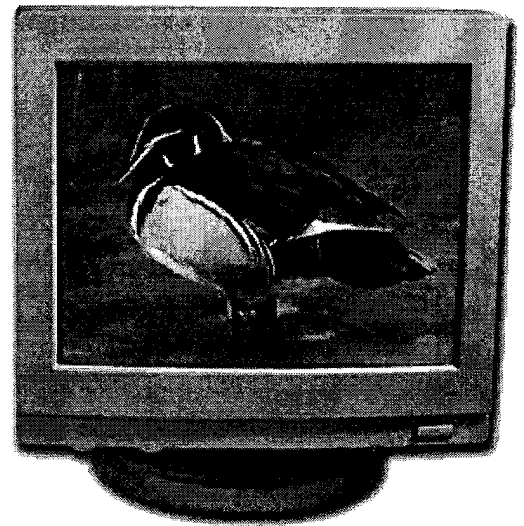
Capilano College Continuing Education
 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, BC, V7J 3H5

The Duck Pond: A Review.

It's a warm day, a drowsy day, a fine Victoria spring day. Bees drone and chickadees chitter in the hawthorn trees blooming nearby. The week has been long and busy. I lean back in my chair, hands behind my head and decide to rest my eyes for "just a few moments". I drift. Then, somewhere on the edge of consciousness, I think that I hear a pond full of ducks. Suddenly there is the pleasant but strident challenge of a Red-winged Blackbird. Some moments later a Wood Duck calls from the reeds. I raise my eyelids and search the edge of the pond. From here all I can see is a little duckling still half hidden in verdant foliage. Oh, now I see mum Mallard with the rest of her brood heading westward. Again the blackbird sends his mighty call. A Great Blue Heron, hunkers his shoulders near the shoreline, and looks somewhat peeved at the noise in his neighbourhood. Now, on the shore, I can see a haughty Northern Shoveler thinking ponderous thoughts. A shift of focus. My vision narrows and there, in fields just beyond the pond, I see a gathering of Trumpeter Swans. What a treat! What next? Oh, look a Eurasian Wigeon comes into view followed a few moments later by a magnificent Wood Duck then a Ring-necked Duck. A wigeon calls. I look again. Still, all I can see is a Gadwall hunkered in the shade of some shoreline branches. Suddenly a Bufflehead bobs into view. What a day! I rest my eyes once more. Suddenly I hear the urgent splashing of many duck feet and the frightened quacks of Mallards taking off from the pond. For a moment I wonder what has spooked them - but then I know! A hand rests upon my shoulder and there standing just behind my chair is Marilyn, my wife of 25 years and the co-editor of **B.C. BIRDING**. With a sigh I hit the <Shift> key. The Duck Pond experience vanishes and page 16 of the next issue of **B.C. BIRDING** reappears upon the screen still awaiting the final editing.

Kevin Slagboom, web designer and ardent birder, provided us with a copy of his very expertly designed "Duck Pond" screen saver for review. Sure I could have told you that it contains 32 of Marie O'Shaughnessey's excellent photo-images and ten clear, crisp audio clips compiled together in a very professional format. I could also have told you that the closeup images fill the screen in random sequence and that the audio clips are just frequent enough to add appeal but not so frequent as to become annoying. I might have said that the screen saver is available on two discs or can be obtained through a unique download process directly from the Internet for a very reasonable price of under \$20. But I didn't. Rather I hope that I let you feel the special ambiance created by the product. For further information or to download a demo copy go to: <http://www.islandnet.com/~boom/birding/>. Enjoy.

Reviewed by: Andy Buhler, Editor



Shorebird Sizes

by S. Parker Gay, Jr.¹

When you see a shorebird that is difficult to identify do you use size as an aid to recognition? For example, if it looks like a peep but is the size of a Ruddy Turnstone, can it be a peep? You could thumb through your bird guide and find that a Ruddy Turnstone should be about 9.5 inches long, while peeps average in the 6-7 inch range. But by that time, the bird has flown away!

To eliminate my own frustration in this regard, I compiled a table that lists the common North American shorebirds in order of size. It has been a big help to me and is

reproduced below. It can be cut out or copied and fastened inside your usual bird guide, if you're so inclined.

Here's an example of an I.D. problem that can be solved with the aid of the table. If you have Killdeer standing in a field next to an unidentified yellowlegs, and the two birds are about the same size, the yellowlegs is a Lesser. Greater is a full three inches longer.

Two words of caution: these are averages for adult birds, and the lengths are from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail, and so are not always a good indication of body size (consider the Long-billed Curlew). However, for a first approximation this table should be useful in many situations. Happy birding!

Common North American Shorebird in Order of Size
(Sizes are average lengths in inches for adult birds)

1	Long-billed Curlew	23.0"	25	Black Turnstone	9.3"
2	American Oystercatcher	18.5	26	Mountain Plover	9
3	American Avocet	18	27	Pectoral Sandpiper	8.8
4	Marbled Godwit	18	28	Rock Sandpiper	8.5
5	Whimbrel	17.5	29	Purple Sandpiper	8.5
6	Black Oystercatcher	17	30	Curlew Sandpiper	8.5
7	Hudsonian Godwit	15.5	31	Dunlin	8.5
8	Willet	15.5	32	Solitary Sandpiper	8.3
9	Black-necked Stilt	14	33	Stilt Sandpiper	8.3
10	Greater Yellowlegs	13.8	34	Red Phalarope	8.3
11	Upland Sandpiper	11.8	35	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	8.3
12	Long-billed Dowitcher	11.8	36	Sanderling	8
13	Black-bellied Plover	11.3	37	Wilson's Plover	7.8
14	Short-billed Dowitcher	11.3	38	Spotted Sandpiper	7.5
15	Common Snipe	11	39	White-rumped Sandpiper	7.5
16	American Woodcock	11	40	Red-necked Phalarope	7.3
17	Wandering Tattler	10.7	41	Baird's Sandpiper	7.3
18	American Golden Plover	10.5	42	Piping Plover	7.3
19	Red Knot	10.5	43	Semipalmated Plover	7.3
20	Killdeer	10.5	44	Western Sandpiper	6.5
21	Lesser Yellowlegs	10.2	45	Semipalmated Sandpiper	6.3
22	Surfbird	10	46	Snowy Plover	6.3
23	Ruddy Turnstone	9.5	47	Least Sandpiper	6.3
24	Wilson's Phalarope	9.3			

¹Reprinted from *Winging It*, 10(4):10, with permission of the editor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

1. Check out what **Cameron Eckert** sent us:

New Checklist of Yukon Birds

The Yukon Bird Club has published a new Checklist of Yukon Birds summarizing the occurrence and breeding status of 272 species which have been documented in the Yukon. Distribution codes indicate which species occur within a limited range in the Yukon and frequency codes indicate species which are either casual or accidental throughout the Yukon.

The checklist is available for free from the Yukon Bird Club, Box 31054, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5P7. Email: ybc@yknet.yk.ca

2. **Mark Nash** sent us the following e-mail notice:

Hello ! My name is Mark Nash and I was asked to write you to bring your attention to our web site. We currently have two of the three live falcon web camera's up and running on active peregrine falcon nest ledges. The Etobicoke nest page has a live picture (30 - second updates) of the nest that just had a hatch yesterday - one of the four eggs. This morning had a second hatch. Our Hamilton page carries a signal with updated images of four chicks - two weeks old. We are trying to get the site out and share the signal to the global community.

www.peregrine-foundation.ca The Canadian Peregrine foundation

Ps: We will have the Toronto camera up and running by the end of next week. It has four chicks approximately three weeks old.

EDITORS' NOTE: At the 1998 Okanagan Mountain Critter Count post-count barbeque the speaker of the evening was Blake Dickson. He spoke about peregrine releases and the fact that Kelowna was going to have a peregrine release of its own. On July 8th, 1998 we were informed that the young Peregrine Falcons had arrived in Kelowna. Good luck in this venture. For those interested in Peregrine Falcons reintroduction programs do go to the website noted above where there are many interesting and informative links to follow.

3. **Kim L. Gauvin** sent us the following information:

Dear BC Birders,

I would like to inform you of an on-line resource for birders, launched just this week: Birds - A Virtual Exhibition is available at <http://www.chin.gc.ca/birds/>

Eleven young Canadians working collaboratively with museums across the country have created this fascinating on-line resource for public education and enjoyment. With the guidance of staff from museums in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia, the interns worked together, applying their existing and newly developed skills, to create a Web site composed of five sections, each focused on the strength or particular interest of each museum's collection. The outcome, Birds - A Virtual Exhibition, is an exhaustive educational resource which covers a range of topics, including: bird songs (from the Grace Bell Collection of the Royal BC Museum), bird eggs, bird nests, aquatic birds and East Coast birds, from different Canadian viewpoints.

The project, coordinated by the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), was part of an internship component of the Department of Canadian Heritage's Young

Canada Works program, which is part of the Federal Youth Employment Strategy. Through this program, funding was provided to participating museums to hire the interns who gathered and digitized the material for Birds - A Virtual Exhibition. As a result of this program, the interns gained valuable work experience which resulted in several interns being rehired by the museums or obtaining long term employment with other organizations.

Birds - A Virtual Exhibition, available at <http://www.chin.gc.ca/birds/>, will help visitors to better understand Canada's environment and will demonstrate the benefits of employing young Canadians and working collaboratively.

For more information, particularly on the section created by the interns working at the Royal British Columbia Museum, please contact: Elizabeth Taylor, Royal British Columbia Museum tel: (250) 356-8791
If you have any questions or general comments, please contact me. Your feedback would be greatly appreciated.

Regards, Kim L. Gauvin

4. We received this "melodious note" from **John Neville**:

Editors:

In response to the article in **BC BIRDING** June 1998, page 8 "A Chattering of Chickadees?" I submit the following:

Dear Al;

I appreciated your suggestion for a collective name: "A Chattering of Chickadees?" It is descriptive and has a nice ring or 'sing' to it. Your suggestion further provoked me to make a contribution of my own.

Traveling back from Port Renfrew toward Cowichan Bay this June we stopped many times to listen to the Swainson's Thrushes. On one occasion I could hear five separate Swainson's Thrushes plus an American Robin, and a Purple Finch singing at the same location. The song of one bird is beautiful, ethereal, mellifluous, pleasing, etc. It was easy to muster my collective grey cells and come up with "A Choir of Thrushes"!

John Neville
Neville Recording
138 Castle Cross Road
Saltspring Island, BC V8K 2G2

5. **Karen Wiebe** would like some assistance with observations:

Banded Flickers - Observations Wanted

This year at Riske Creek in central British Columbia, I banded 113 adult flickers and 296 nestlings. Adults have three (3) colour leg bands and one (1) aluminum band; nestlings have only one (1) aluminum band on their right legs, If you see a banded flicker, please send the information (date, location, colour combination) to:

Dr. Karen Wiebe
Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan
112 Science Place
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E2
e-mail wiebek@duke.usask.ca

Marbled Murrelet Study on Southern Vancouver Island

by Katy Holm

This summer a reconnaissance study directed by Dr. Alan Burger of the University of Victoria surveyed for breeding Marbled Murrelets in the highly fragmented and relatively dry old-growth present in biogeoclimatic zones Moist Maritime Coastal Douglas Fir (CDFmm) and Coastal Western Hemlock very dry Maritime (CWHxm1). Field researchers Katy Holm, Anna Young and Steve Young surveyed suitable breeding habitats within a study area that extended between Sooke and Mill Bay on the Southeast end of Vancouver Island and also included Saltspring Island. Of the 41 stations surveyed, Marbled Murrelets were detected at 24 stations, 23 of these within the Victoria Watershed and Sooke Hill Wilderness Park Reserve; a continuous block of undeveloped land previously all belonging to the Victoria Water District. Behaviours indicating breeding were observed, and trees in probable breeding stands will be climbed to look for nests in late August. This summer was the first survey season of a two-year project which will determine presence or absence and possibly occupancy of potential breeding stands within the study area.

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

A. G. (Tony) Greenfield

Current president of BCFO and former president of the Sechelt Marsh Protective Society, Tony has been an active birder on the Sunshine Coast for over 20 years.

Martin K. McNicholl

Martin, our present Journal editor, has had an interest in birds from early childhood. An author or co-author of over 200 publications, and board member of 28 organizations, Martin continues his work as a dedicated ornithological field researcher.

Ev Miyasaki


Ev, treasurer of the BCFO and a member of the Victoria Natural History Society, started birding in 1991 shortly after he had received a bird feeder as a gift from his mother-in-law. His favorite birds - those in places he has not been - yet!!

Ken H. Morgan

Ken, secretary of BCFO and a member of the Victoria Natural History Society, started birding as a youngster in Ontario. Although he only birded off-and-on in his teens, he now 'birds' seriously with a primary interest in pelagic birding.

Don Wilson

Don, a retired high school Biology teacher and member of Central Okanagan Naturalist's Club, is co-leader of CONC's birder group. Currently working for Cedar Creek Estate Winery, he has done bird surveys during the last three seasons in both Prince George and Kelowna.



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