

BC BIRDING

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Check Out BCFO Website at <http://www.birding.bc.ca/bcfo>. Site courtesy of Kevin Slagboom.

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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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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.

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Where did the year go? Already it is time for Christmas Bird Counts and Season's Greetings again. Thanks to everyone who sent in CBC dates. And the Gold ★ goes to Guy who was able to tell us Nanaimo's CBC date way back in August.

You will notice that this is a "robust" 20 pages again this time. Lots of last minute stuff that just had to go in so enjoy! There are also inserts of several colors which contain important information. Please read and heed those relevant to you. Some are time-sensitive so it would be appropriate to read them right away before they get lost in the paper shuffle.

For those planning to attend the Annual BCFO Conference (and Extension Trip) please read pages 5, 7-8, and the Blue insert. The Pink insert is your renewal form. Renew early to ensure the timely continuation of your membership. The White insert is updated information for your membership directory. The Ivory insert is for your listing data. Remember, Ken needs your data by early January. Thank you all.

In this issue you will find several AGM 2000 photos [thanks to Marie O'Shaughnessy and Marilyn Buhler], CBC dates and contacts, Society News, Bird-Listers' Corner, a newly discovered raptor migration site, a new RBA for the Okanagan, a catalyst bird story, a quick review of Clement's latest checklist, notices of two new BC birding publications, birds of Salal Creek Drainage area, a Site Guide for the Nanaimo Estuary, a cautionary tale, results for the Nocturnal Owl Study, a report of the BCFO Barkley Canyon pelagic trip (complete with photos of a gull species which is still a mythical bird to us), plus Martin's regular columns of upcoming meetings and news briefs. Lots of great reading!

As this is the last issue for the year we would like to thank all those members who assisted BCFO in so many ways during the year - directors for helping to guide our organization, BCFO AGM organizers and assistants for another job well done, trip leaders for taking the time to organize and instruct, the many members who found the time to write, members who participated in various studies and counts, members and organizations who have faithfully supported us year by year. Your assistance in so many ways really is appreciated.

What is in store for you in 2001? Northern warblers perhaps? Plan now to attend the 11th AGM which will be held in Dawson Creek in June. These

annual gatherings are a wonderful way to meet birders from around this "Super-Natural" province of ours. There are always interesting speakers and presentations, super birding, great camaraderie, long days (short nights), and fine food. We hope to see you there.

Season's Greetings and Good Birding from Andy & Marilyn, Editors, BC BIRDING.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This year's Annual General Meeting, held at UBC in August, was rated as a great success by those of you who attended. The technical presentations were excellent, and the field trips were well received, although unfortunately were cut short by scheduling conflicts and time overruns by some of our speakers. We are learning, and your written evaluations following such meetings help us immensely. Financially, however, this AGM was a disappointment. We failed to meet our budget, primarily because attendance was less than expected. That is surprising, given that the meetings were held in the largest city in the province. Nothing exciting to see? No new habitats to explore? Too much traffic? Perhaps. But one thing is certain. This moderate failure had nothing to do with the organizing committee. We owe a great deal of thanks to Ian Robertson, who headed the team; to Jo Ann and Hue MacKenzie, who, by Ian's admission, did the bulk of the work; and to Ev Miyasaki, Larry Cowan, Jude Grass, Marion Porter, Martin McNicholl and Daphne Solecki, each of whom volunteered their time and expertise. Thanks go as well to Wild Birds Unlimited and the Vancouver Natural History Society for arranging displays.

For the year 2001 (as some would argue, the "first" year of the New Millenium we will venture afield again for our "Annual Conference", this time into the other extreme of this spectacular province. Plans are well underway to centre the activities in Dawson Creek, with field trips into the Boreal Plains of the Peace River district, the Taiga Plains of the Fort Nelson district, and perhaps even as far as the Northern Boreal Forest around Haine's Junction. From a birding standpoint, much of the northern region is relatively unexplored - challenging and exciting. Who knows what we may find? (Remember how many species were added to the Manning Park Checklist when BCFO held its meetings there). So, start planning for next June right now. Set aside five to seven days, beginning June 21, 2001, and make a commitment to attend and contribute to an important technical and social event for birds, birders and BCFO. If sufficient interest is shown, we will arrange to rent 12-passenger vans to take members from Vancouver and Victoria, all the way to Dawson Creek and on to the field trips. Your early indication now will allow the Directors to establish a reasonable and attainable budget.

Building BCFO is still my top priority. History has shown that those who become interested in birds become protective of them. They want to continue to see and study birds, and they want to feel assured that others will be able to do the same well into the future. As an issue in the pending federal election, the "environment" is well down the list this time. More than ever it will be up to non-government organizations like BCFO to keep environmental issues in the forefront, and to demonstrate to our politicians that conservation of natural habitats, and the wildlife within them, are essential to all of us. Sign up a new member and be sure to take time out to vote.

Enjoy the winter.

Bryan Gates
President



All Ready to Bird ! BCFO AGM, August 2000

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

by Martin K. McNicholl

- Dec. 17-21 2000 **5th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CORMORANTS**, Freising, Germany.
Contact: Dr. Thomas Keller, Technische Universitaet Muenchen, LG
Angelwandte Zoologie, Alte Akademie 16, D-85350 Freising/Weihenstephan,
Germany; phone +49-8161-715334 or 713114.
- Feb. 7-11 2001 **28th ANNUAL PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP MEETING**, Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii.
<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/PacBirds/index.html>
- April 3-6 2001 **INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE "INTERACTIONS BETWEEN FISH AND BIRDS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT"**, University of Hull International Fisheries
Institute, Hull, UK - for further information contact Dr I. G. Cowx,
International Fisheries Institute, University of Hull, Hull, HU6 7RX,
United Kingdom, Telephone: (44) 1482 466421, Fax: (44) 1482 470129,
Email: i.g.cowx@biosci.hull.ac.uk
- April 3-7 2001 **NAAG 2001 - 10th NORTH AMERICAN ARCTIC GOOSE CONFERENCE**, Quebec, Quebec.
Contact: Gilles Gauthier, phone (418) 656-5507 or Jean-Francois Giroux,
phone (514) 987-3000, ext. 3353.
- May 3-6 2001 **WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**, Fayetteville, Arkansas.
Contact: Doug James, Dept. Biol. Sciences, Univ. Arkansas, Fayetteville,
AR 72701, U.S.A.; phone (501) 575-6364.
- June 22-24 2001 **BCFO 11th ANNUAL CONFERENCE**, Dawson Creek, BC. Contact: Hank VanderPol
(250) 979-0363, rhvander@home.com or Ev Miyasaki (250) 656-8066,
emiyasaki@home.com. See page 5 of this issue for details.
- August 2001 **119th STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**, Seattle,
Washington. Contacts and exact dates not yet announced.
- Nov. 5-8 2001 **PRAIRIE GROUSE TECHNICAL COUNCIL BIENNIAL MEETING**, Woodhouse, Oklahoma.
Contact: Russ Horton (405) 364-7142 or Stephanie Harmon (918) 581-7458
extension 229.
- Aug. 11-17 2002 **23rd INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS**, Beijing, China. Contact:
Professor Xu Weishu, Secretary-General of the 23rd Congress, Beijing
Natural History Museum, 1-1-302, Beijing Science and Technology
Commission Apt., Balizhuang, Haidian District, Beijing 100037, China;
phone +86-10-6846-5605.



BC BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

Cooke Elected President of AOU -While preparing his presentation for our August 2000 AGM, Dr. Fred Cooke mentioned to me that he had been nominated for President of the American Ornithologists' Union. On 24 August 2000, Dr. Margaret Bain, Editor of *Birders' Journal*, phoned with the news that he had in fact been elected during the AGM of the AOU in Newfoundland. As the AOU currently elects a President-Elect two years before his/her term, Fred will not actually assume the presidency until 2002. His election makes him the fourth Canadian President of the AOU. The first was James Henry Fleming from 1932 to 1935, the second was Hoyes Lloyd from 1945 to 1948, and the third was Austin L. Rand from 1962 to 1964. Fleming and Lloyd lived in Canada while President, while Rand was living in the U.S.A. As Fred will be retiring to England next year, he will be the first AOU President to live outside of North America while in office.

Milligan Receives Award -BCFO member Allan Milligan recently received a Special Recognition Award by North Shore Community Services for his voluntary contributions. Allan serves as Trail's Manager for Wild Bird Trust's Maplewood facility in North Vancouver, and participates in lower mainland Christmas Bird Counts -based primarily on Anonymous. 2000. *Wild Bird Trust Wingspan* summer 2000:6.

B.C. Bluebird Enthusiast Dies -Vern Johnson, who founded the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society of British Columbia, died in May 2000 -from Anonymous. 2000. *Bluebird* 22(4):19.

Earl Godfrey Receives Ludlow Griscom Award -Dr. W. Earl Godfrey, author of two editions (1966 and 1986) of "The Birds of Canada," was awarded the Ludlow Griscom Award of the American Birding Association in July 2000. The award is for authors and artists who achieve excellence in publications on identification and bird distribution in North America -based primarily on Anonymous. 2000. *Birders['] Journal* 9:186-187.

Arcese, Gaston and Martin Elected AOU Fellows -Of the 13 members of the American Ornithologists' Union elected to the organization's highest membership category of Fellow at their 118th Stated Meeting in August 2000, at least three have a British Columbia connection. Peter Arcese, now living in Wisconsin, received his doctorate from U.B.C. for his research on Song Sparrows here. Anthony J. Gaston of the Canadian Wildlife Service in Ottawa has done much of his seabird research in B.C., especially on Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands. Kathy M. Martin conducted her M. Sc. research on American Robins on Vancouver Island and now holds a joint appointment with the Canadian Wildlife Service and Faculty of Forestry at U.B.C. -based primarily on Anonymous. 2000. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 138:1. Other Fellows resident in B.C. are: David A. Boag, Fred Cooke, James N. M. Smith and Nicolaas A. M. Verbeek.



British Columbia Field Ornithologists Eleventh Annual Conference June 22-24, 2001

The 11th Annual Conference will be held at the **George Dawson Inn**
in **Dawson Creek, B.C.** on the weekend of **June 22-24, 2001.**

Events:

- Reception on Friday evening
- Birding field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings
- Annual general meeting and technical presentations on Saturday afternoon
- Banquet on Saturday evening

Transportation & Accommodation:

Transportation and accommodation are up to the individual(s) to arrange. Rooms at the George Dawson Inn are offered at the corporate rate depending on availability.

Registration:

The conference fees are:

Conference only (includes all events except banquet)	\$25
Banquet only	\$25
Conference and banquet	\$50
Non-member surcharge	\$25

A registration form is provided as an insert.

The deadline for registration is May 1, 2001.

For information contact: Hank VanderPol (250) 979-0363 email: rhvander@home.com
Ev Miyasaki (250) 656-8066 email: emiyasaki@home.com

What Our Society Does

by Hue MacKenzie
15341 - 21st Avenue
Surrey, BC V4A 6A8

Members are sometimes asked "What does the BC Field Ornithologists do?" This is difficult to answer given the fact that we have only one general meeting each year plus an occasional field trip. As a result most of us rarely get together to talk and exchange our views on the achievements of the society.

This article is an initial step in assembling the answers. First, of course, are our publications, the quarterly BC BIRDING and the annual British Columbia Birds. Both have become well-respected under the capable management of our hard-working editors.

British Columbia Birds [the Journal] has featured numerous peer-reviewed papers on birdlife in our province. These have included observations on bird behaviour, new breeding records, range extensions and first or rare observations in BC. Special study topics have included: the morphology and taxonomy of Steller's Jays; and outbreak of salmonellosis in Pine Siskins; and the breeding biology of an American Avocet colony. Regular reviews of books relating to birds of British Columbia and adjacent areas also appear in the Journal to inform members of their availability and subject matter. These are just a few examples, for more, refer to your back issues of British Columbia Birds.

BC BIRDING [the Newsletter] is, of course, the way we inform each other of the current activities of our society. In addition, notes and brief accounts of birding activity and observation are reported. The newsletter also serves as a bulletin board to announce upcoming events. Among these are: (1) annual and periodic meetings of ornithological societies; (2) close to 60 annual Christmas Bird Counts; (3) workshops and symposia on various species and families of birds; (4) annual and regional meetings of our fellow natural history societies; (5) bird "blitzes", festivals, special surveys and fund-raising events organized to support bird-related activities in BC. The purpose of all these announcements is to give our members information about events of which they might not otherwise be aware.

BC BIRDING also contains site guides to birding areas throughout the province. This is a means of informing us about birding locales which we may have heard of but know little about. It is a useful aid to us in planning birding trips to places we seldom visit and broadening our knowledge of BC's natural areas. We always welcome reports of areas which members have visited.

Your Directors also respond to requests for assistance, received from individuals and groups. These vary in nature depending on the needs faced by the requester(s). Some are asking for our endorsement of a concept without financial or physical aid from us. In other cases the need is publicity for an event or activity. Still others are requesting the participation of our members by undertaking surveys or other field activities. Finally there are those who need financial contributions to their projects.

It should also be remembered that an important aspect of the Society's activity is carrying out our original objectives:

- (1) to provide professionals and amateurs with a means of sharing our knowledge, questions and overall interest in the study of birds,
- (2) to provide a newsletter as a way of communicating with each other,
- (3) to publish a journal containing accounts of recent studies of ornithological significance and research results,
- (4) to assemble periodically for the purpose of exchanging information, receiving reports on ongoing studies, enjoying field trips and getting to know each other.

We want your opinions on this subject. Please give us your comments either in a letter to the Editors, the Directors, or the author. Your ideas will contribute to the achievement of the Society's objectives.

Hue MacKenzie, Archivist, BCFO



BCFO POST-11th ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXTENSION TRIP PROPOSALS

The BCFO Directors are planning an extension trip to follow the annual BCFO Conference, to be held in Dawson Creek, BC, from June 22-24, 2001.

Two proposals are outlined for the membership to review, of which **only one will actually be implemented if there is sufficient interest**. In order to finalize one of those trips, the Directors need to have feedback from those members who are **SERIOUSLY** thinking of going on the trip. The estimated cost of both options are based on a maximum of ten (10) participants. Fewer participants will increase the cost.

We only need feedback from those members who are **SERIOUSLY** thinking about going on either of the two proposed trips.

OPTION A: HAINES ROAD EXTENSION

Haines Road is the convoluted area where BC's north-western corner juxtaposes with coastal Alaska and the south-western corner of the Yukon. Haines Road runs from Haines Junction, Yukon, for 245 kms to Haines, Alaska (at Tidewater). Along the length of the road 80 kms falls within BC, and despite the fact that most people remain blissfully ignorant that BC even has a panhandle, it is well known to birders, who have compelling reasons to visit this remote area. It is compelling for ornithological reasons, but also, in a province famous for its scenery, perhaps the greatest superlatives should be reserved for the magnificence of the mountain panoramas here. It is truly breathtaking.

Traditionally, Haines Road has been known among BC birders for four species that breed here, but are rarely encountered elsewhere in the province:- Gyrfalcon, Arctic Tern, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Smith's Longspur. In addition, all three species of ptarmigan are possible, with Willow Ptarmigan being common. There is also a wide variety of other northern, high elevation, and shorebird breeding species:- Northern Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Short-eared and Boreal Owls, Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Blackpoll Warbler, American Tree Sparrow, Brewer's "timberline" Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Snow Bunting, Rusty Blackbird, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Pine Grosbeak, White-winged Crossbill and Common Redpoll.

PROPOSED ITINERARY

22nd - 24th June 2001 BCFO Annual Conference in Dawson Creek;

25th June - Depart Dawson Creek, night in Fort Nelson;

26th June - Fort Nelson to Watson Lake;

27th June - Watson Lake to Whitehorse;

28-30th June - Birding on Haines Road, returning each night to sleep in motel in Haines Junction;

1st July - Birding the Whitehorse area;

2nd July - Trip concludes in Whitehorse.

Participants will have the option of flying out of Whitehorse to Vancouver at their own expense, or returning in the trip vehicle to Dawson Creek. The latter option will involve two or three days of driving with little birding and additional expense for motels and meals.

COST

The seven (7) day trip cost will be approximately \$800. This will cover transportation and accommodation. Meals and any other costs will be at the participants' own expense. This trip does involve a large amount of driving in a van.

OPTION B:**FORT NELSON EXTENSION**

This trip involves less time, is cheaper, and requires less driving than Option A.

The Fort Nelson Lowlands offer most of BC's Peace River specialties. Hopefully, most of these species will have been recorded at the BCFO Annual Convention field trips in Dawson Creek. However, the Fort Nelson Lowlands afford better opportunities for Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Cape May and Bay-breasted Warblers, all of which are difficult in the Dawson Creek area. In addition, many so-called "eastern" species can be found, such as Canada, Magnolia, Blackpoll and Mourning Warblers, Philadelphia Vireo, Swamp Sparrow, and others.

The day outing to Stone Mountain Provincial Park offers a complete change of habitat. From the spruce and aspen forests of the lowlands we will ascend to the pass where the Alaska Highway crosses the northern Rocky Mountains. Here, in alpine habitat, all three ptarmigan species are possible. Other species we will look for include American Golden Plover, Boreal Owl, Boreal Chickadee, Lapland Longspur, and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch.

PROPOSED ITINERARY

22nd - 24th June 2001 BCFO Annual Conference in Dawson Creek;

25th June - Depart Dawson Creek, birding stops at Beatton Provincial Park and Charlie Lake in the Fort St. John area. Night in Fort Nelson;

26th June - Fort Nelson area, Parker Lake, Clarke Lake, Kledo Provincial Park;

27th June - Liard Highway;

28th June - Stone Mountain Provincial Park;

29th June - Return to Dawson Creek with roadside birding stops;
Trip concludes in the afternoon.

COST

The cost will be approximately \$450. This will cover transportation and four (4) nights accommodation. Meals and any other costs will be at your own expense.

Feedback from seriously interested participants can be sent in via:

1. Mail to BCFO post box using the form on the Ivory-colored insert, or
2. Telephone Laurie Rockwell at (250) 494-7558, or
3. E-mail Laurie Rockwell at hardrock@vip.net.

Please respond at the latest by January 31, 2001. Based on these responses we will develop one of the proposed trips. Further information will then be communicated to you, either in **BC BIRDING**, or in another fashion.



**BCFO Barkley Canyon Pelagic
Saturday, 23 September 2000**

by Russell Tkachuk,
Box 132
Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W0

The alarm clock rang loudly and shrilly. It was 07:20 hrs. Eventually I reached over and shut the alarm off. In the next bed, Tony Greenfield gave no indication that he even heard the alarm. Both of us were in a motel room in Ucluelet planning to go on a pelagic trip. Why was I feeling so groggy? - then I remembered. The previous night we made the mistake of watching the Sydney Summer Olympics on TV. One interesting event followed another. My last hazy memory was at 02:00 hrs of a high jump event in heavy rain --. Sleep deprivation seems to be a common ailment of mine during BCFO events!

As we walked to the restaurant for a quick breakfast (we were to meet at the boat pier in 30 minutes) our spirits perked up. There were only a few high red-coloured clouds in the west and it was calm and warm. Such conditions meant that our pelagic trip would be on. Fall pelagic trips in the North Pacific are problematic. The weather can turn nasty in a very short time. For example, in September and October out of three attempts during the past four years, I was successful in completing only a single pelagic trip from Ucluelet.

After a solid breakfast of bacon, eggs, toast and lots of coffee, we met the rest of the birders at the Princess Pier. Over the years, I have discovered that I seem to be immune to seasickness even in heavy seas. Thus, prior to pelagic trips, I have gradually declined to follow the precaution of not consuming fatty foods to the extent that now I ignore them.

We were to go out in two boats so we divided into two groups, one of 20 and one of 14 birders. I ended up with the larger group on the bigger Coho Princess. We left the dock at 08:18 and slowly travelled through the inner Ucluelet harbour. Upon reaching the Ucluelet Inlet exit we began our cruising speed of approximately 14 kph on a bearing of 208°. Our intention was to reach Barkley Canyon which is located approximately 46 km SW from Ucluelet. This area usually has a higher concentration of birds because of increased nutrient and marine organism levels in its surface waters caused by up-welling water. By noon we had travelled 76 km (47.4 miles) and were approximately 20 km past the shallows of La Pérouse Bank. This meant we were over Barkley Canyon at N48° 19.990' W126°00.056', where the water was approximately 700 - 730 meters deep.

Pelagic trips out of Ucluelet seem to have predictable birding areas. One encounters numerous gulls near the coast, especially if there are commercial fishing boats working the area. This is a good place to look for the handsome Heerman's Gull. Over the next 10 km or so, bird sightings are not that common. However, one always has to be on the lookout for such interesting birds as Black-legged Kittiwake and various shearwaters. Bird numbers then increase gradually until they peak at Barkley Canyon.

The Barkley Canyon area has been fished for hake for a number of years, more recently by large Polish and/or Russian fishing ships. When these large vessels are fishing, they attract many birds, presumably because of the vast quantities of "fish waste" they discard. Unfortunately for us, today such ships were not present and bird numbers are on the low side. Still, we found some interesting birds as we sighted a Black-footed Albatross, a South Polar Skua and several Red Phalarope. The Black-footed Albatross definitely seemed to be attracted by our chumming (with fatty chicken skin and popcorn relished with fish oil) as it deliberately and slowly circled both boats several times. The "perfect warm and calm summer" weather that we encountered probably did not work to our advantage because the absence of wind meant our chumming would not attract many birds that can detect odours. When I asked our captain how today's calm and warm (14°C) day compared with previous trips this year, he replied, "This is the finest summer day of the year" - and today was the last day of his season!

All too soon, at 12:40 hrs, we had to turn back home. We had arranged to hire the two boats for eight hours. Due to the long travelling times involved, we had only around one hour of viewing time over Barkley Canyon. As we started back, it was very exciting to see a flock of 50 Sabine Gulls and more Red Phalarope. Six Humpback Whales were sighted,

as well as a huge Gray Whale which must have been approximately 20 meters (over 60 feet) long! A little later, we also encountered a flock of 15 Short-tailed Shearwater.

We reached the dock at 16:10 hrs and, as satisfied birders, disembarked. Many had added lifers to their lists. It had been a very pleasant day. I look forward to pelagic trips because, in a manner of speaking, they are one of the last frontiers in birding where one can discover new birds for one's life list or add a bird species for an area. This did not happen to me during this trip, but the next time we *WILL* see that Laysan Albatross, or possibly even a Juan Fernandez Petrel!

A list, with numbers seen in brackets, of the 31 bird species and the six mammal species is given below. The birds seen in the inner harbour and elsewhere in Ucluelet are not listed.

SPECIES SEEN

BIRDS

Pacific Loon (3)	Double-crested Cormorant (1)	Heermann's Gull (10)
Common Loon (2)	Pelagic Cormorant (25)	California Gull (1000)
Black-footed Albatross (1)	Surf Scoter (30)	Glaucous-winged Gull (100)
Northern Fulmar (75)	White-winged Scoter (1)	Sabine's Gull (88)
Pink-footed Shearwater (25)	Red-necked Phalarope (10)	Black-legged Kittiwake (1)
Sooty Shearwater (200)	Red Phalarope (5)	Common Murre (200)
Short-tailed Shearwater (15)	South Polar Skua (2)	Marbled Murrelet (2)
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel (30)	Pomarine Jaeger (3)	Cassin's Auklet (2)
Leach's Storm-Petrel (1) (SO)	Parasitic Jaeger (5)	Rhinoceros Auklet (4)
Brandt's Cormorant (5)	Long-tailed Jaeger (1) (BVD)	Horned Puffin (1) (BVD)
		Tufted Puffin (1)

MAMMALS

Humpback Whales (6)	California Sea Lion (10+)
Dall's Porpoise (10+)	Steller's Sea Lion (1)
Harbor Porpoise (10+)	Gray Whale (1)

A number of other expected birds were seen along the shoreline both as we left and as we returned to Ucluelet. These brought the total to 48 species seen from the boats. A black bear was also observed on a nearby beach as we returned.

I would like to thank Bryan Gates for organizing the pelagic trip and for checking the species list. Thanks go also to Bryan Gates, Tom Plath and Ken Morgan for acting as trip co-leaders. Abbreviations used: **SO** = single observer, **BVD** = better view desirable.



Sabine's Gulls
from BCFO trip.
Courtesy:
Jo Ann MacKenzie
September, 2000

Birds Observed in the Salal Creek Drainage and Surrounding Alpine Area

by Kenneth G. Wright
6090 Blink Bonnie Road
West Vancouver, BC V7W 1V8

When the weather forecast called for a continued high pressure airmass and climbing friend Brian Thompson invited me on a three day hiking expedition to Athelney Pass, I could hardly refuse. October 17, 1999 brought clear skies and the promise of mild afternoon temperatures. We left Pemberton in the morning and drove west up the Lillooet River road. The snow line appeared surprisingly low on the mountains (approx. 900 m), compared to what we expected. This observation was confirmed as we ascended the logging spur to our start point and encountered 5-10 cm of fresh snow on the road at 1000 m. Once we climbed to the top of the clearcut in Salal Creek (15 km northwest of Meager Creek), we parked and shouldered our packs, destined for an old deserted mining exploration cabin located at Athelney Pass, some 17 km beyond.

Walking through the old growth Balsam Fir and Mountain Hemlock was relatively easy, in spite of the absence of a trail and 15-20 cm of snow cover. However, there were a couple of heavy blowdown and avalanche chute sections that made things more challenging. Several flocks of Golden-crowned Kinglets and the occasional Red-breasted Nuthatch were heard vocalizing as we hiked.

After one and a half hours we emerged, feet soaked from the forest onto the beautiful open gravel bars of Salal Creek where we ate a much needed lunch under the beautiful fall sun. In spite of the snow cover, the afternoon was wonderfully mild (+13°C) and conducive to hiking in shorts and t-shirt. Over lunch I scanned the infinite mountain ridges above for goats and migrant raptors, though none were seen. While hiking beside the creek I was alerted by the piercing low-pitched call of the American Dipper as it flew by downstream low over the clear mountain water. The next several hours were surprisingly quiet birdwise and only the occasional kinglet was noted.

With daylight hours diminishing and falling temperatures we continued up the sinuous mountain creek. Just ahead lay our most challenging portion of the hike in, a 300 m climb up a moraine with large, sharp snow-covered granitic boulders. The climb luckily proved uneventful. Alpenglow was appearing on the glaciers above us when we achieved the top of the climb. Darkness was quickly approaching and we were disappointed not to see the cabin we expected. The true pass was actually about 3 km ahead of our position. Although we were carrying a tent and self-contained, we decided to press on for the more comfortable accommodation at the pass. A thick crust of snow covered the jagged rocks over the remainder of the hike and the meandering creek was partially ice-covered. So the terrain did not meet our hopes for an easy walk over flat meadows and sand. We arrived at the old cabin exhausted at 19:15 under partial moonlit conditions. A quick hot meal was followed by eleven hours of soundless sleep.

On October 18 I awoke to a crisp morning (-5°C) surrounded by spectacular 2700 m peaks and a large glacier less than one km away. Things were very still on this cool morning. As the sun finally reached the south facing alpine slope above us, I heard a lone Clark's Nutcracker as it patrolled the sun-warmed White-bark Pine. A lone Mountain Chickadee also broke the morning silence. Our destination for today was the adjacent peak to the south - Ochre Mountain, named for its distinctive colouration created by the rich iron content. Hiking the steep alpine meadows immediately above the cabin, I was surprised by the apparent absence of birds. Only a few Pine Siskins were present. However, it was a treat to hike on bare ground while we ascended the first slope. The snow situation rapidly changed on the approach to Ochre with drifts over knee depth (50 cm). The snow was less deep on the final approach and ridge of the 2550 m peak. We spent two lazy hours on the summit enjoying the amazing 360° view of the spectacular Coast Range. The sun was intense and the ambient temperature approached 12°C. Aside from a single Common Raven, no other birds were observed.

The hike-out day (October 19) arose with crystal clear skies and we set off late, enjoying the warmth of the morning and putting off the arduous hike back out. A Common Raven flew overhead as we hiked on the crunchy snow. We came across a convergence of recent tracks in the snow. Closer examination indicated the tracks to be of a Grizzly Bear sow and cub that had been feeding on a Mountain Goat carcass. The skull and hide remained

intact on the snow. Aware of a possibly aggressive but well-fed Grizzly, we quickly left the area after photographs were taken and a quick scan for the bears.

Lunch was spent on a ridge of a moraine just above the upper section of Salal Creek. Two American Dippers were heard from the cascading stream below. While thoroughly scanning the dry south-facing ridge above, I was awarded to a great view of a solitary Golden Eagle as it soared along the ridge top, 300-500 m above me. It disappeared as quickly as it came into view as it flew around the corner. Over the next portion of the hike, little bird and wildlife activity was noted as we plodded along the extensive snow-covered gravel bars and forest. After nearly six hours had elapsed since we set off this morning, we entered the final phase of the hike. This portion, through the old growth forest that is extensively flagged for logging by Howe Sound Timber was more lively with birds than I expected. Several flocks of Golden-crowned Kinglets with the odd Red-breasted Nuthatch were chattering in the forest canopy. A single Varied Thrush was flushed from the ground, where it was procuring the berries of a Sitka Mountain-Ash. When I crested a ridgeline, I was abruptly startled by a Blue Grouse that exploded into flight for a safe arboreal perch.

Emerging from the ancient forest at dusk, my aching body was definitely ready for a break. I stood beside the truck on the cut block admiring the sunset and the expansive yellow and orange hues of Black Cottonwood on the upper Lillooet River below. A small chunky bird flew past my viewscape above the forest I just hiked through. My suspicion from the birds "jizz" was that of an owl. Within minutes, a Northern Pygmy-Owl began hooting and a duet started between two birds. It was so disheartening to think that this very forest that these owls live in will be imminently destroyed by clearcut logging.

In all, only 12 bird species were noted. I look forward to returning to this most spectacular area on future treks to expand on this.

Salal Creek and the alpine surrounding is one of the very few watersheds that haven't been completely roaded due to logging practices in this area. I urge anyone to voice their feelings about this area or other nearby watersheds scheduled to be logged. Please write to: Squamish Forest District Office, Attention Mr. Bob Doyle, 42000 Loggers Lane, Squamish, BC, V0N 3G0 and carbon copy it to Hon. Gordon Wilson, Minister of Forests, Room #236 East Annex, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4.



What a Hoot! B.C. Nocturnal Owl Survey

by Dick Cannings
S.11, C.96, RR #1
Naramata, BC V0H 1N0

The British Columbia Nocturnal Owl Survey had a tremendous start in 2000. Thanks to the efforts of about 150 cold-hardy surveyors, more than 140 routes were surveyed and 233 owls of ten species reported. In addition, six (6) Ruffed Grouse and four (4) Blue Grouse were heard drumming and hooting. Northern Saw-whet Owls were the most commonly encountered (108 on 50 surveys), followed by Great Horned (52 on 27 surveys) and Barred (34 on 24 surveys) Owls. Other owl species were: Barn (2), Flammulated (7), Western Screech (15), Great Gray (1), Northern Pygmy (3), Long-eared (8) and Boreal (8). Jack Bowling came up with the most owls on an 'official' survey with ten on Bowron River -- seven (7) Northern Saw-whet, two (2) Great Horned and a Barred Owl. Laird Law and Sandra Kinsey had 11 at Chubb Lake, but it was one of ten surveys they did on that route. Considering this seemed to be a low year for Boreal and Northern Saw-whet Owls, these results are very promising.

If you would like to participate in the BC Nocturnal Owl Survey in spring 2001, contact: Dick Cannings, Bird Studies Canada; S.11, C.96, RR#1; Naramata, BC, V0H 1N0 (dickcannings@home.com; 250-496-4049).



BIRD-LISTERS' CORNER

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

Hello again. As has been the case since I resurrected the Listers' Corner in 1996, this is your annual reminder to start tallying up your regional bird lists. For those who haven't submitted lists before I am requesting that you send me the total numbers of species you've seen in a particular region throughout your life; not just within the past year. To remind everyone again, the column on the listing form labelled "**Accepted Total (if different from what is listed)**" is for contributors to send me the most accurate regional totals. As I don't subscribe to any listing source, I rely entirely upon the membership to provide me with the most up-to-date area totals. Please, if you notice that I have given the wrong total for an area, let me know by listing the correct number in the right-hand column. The totals listed after each area (below) are those that I presented in **BC BIRDING** (March 2000, V.10, #1). Another reminder - I only accept lists that reach me by the end of January (2001) - so please send me (by mail or email only) your totals as soon after the New Year as possible. An ivory insert is provided for your mail-in convenience.

In the June issue of **BC BIRDING** (V.10, #2) Adrian Leather wrote to Andy and Marilyn Buhler condemning the 'sport' of listing and implied that the pages devoted to Bird-Listers' Corner were wasted space. As the writer of Listers' Corner I was initially annoyed by some of Adrian's comments; e.g.: "...have a problem with people who persist in trying to make a simple and wonderful hobby ... into something even more scientific and mysterious, as if to isolate themselves and the hobby, even more, from the general populace" and "...to reduce such an incredible pastime to self-glorifying league tables seems somewhat pathetic." I began to write a rebuttal but then common sense prevailed and I decided to wait to see how other's felt. I was gratified to see in the next issue (V. 10, #3), that at least some members had strong enough opinions about those 'wasted' pages to write to the editors (Thanks Larry, Calvin and Doug).

And now, it is my turn to throw 'political correctness' aside and comment on Adrian's opinions. Shortly after I volunteered to sit on the board of the BCFO I agreed to resurrect the Listers' Corner. I wasn't much of a lister at that time and I took on the job ONLY when it became apparent that no one else was going to manage that column. Four years later I'm glad I did; I feel I am now a better birder, I am more careful in my identifications, I keep better notes, but perhaps most importantly, through writing the column I have got to know many more members of our organization. However, it also represents one more demand on that ever-shrinking pot of 'spare time' - if Adrian wants to take over this column, he is more than welcome to do so.

Adrian and I have never met, so I won't presume to know anything about his conservation beliefs nor about his efforts to help protect the birds that are there for his 'wonderful hobby'. However, in all the years as a member of the BCFO I don't recall hearing his name when the Directors asked for assistance. For those of you who don't know me, I would like to make it clear that I consider myself not only a birder, but an ornithologist who is devoted to trying to better understand the physical and biological factors that control the distribution and abundance of birds, in order to better protect them. I am always looking for better ways to try to reduce the impacts that society has on the birds and the habitats they depend upon. Therefore, BIRDING for me is a hobby, a passion, a science, a profession and most of all a never-ending mystery. To call birding 'a simple hobby' suggests to me that Adrian has not delved very deeply into the wonderfully complex world of birds. But then as Adrian suggested, this is simply my opinion.

I have never expected everyone to read the Listers' column; I for one seldom read the site guides. But, I feel that if the newsletter and indeed the BCFO are to succeed and grow, we must always try to appeal to all interests.

Getting back to the Listers' Corner - I have slightly modified the boundaries of one of the listing regions. Answering the suggestions of a few hard-core pelagic birders, I moved the northern boundary of area 17 (North Pacific Pelagic Waters) from the Aleutian chain to the Bering Strait, and moved the land-ward boundary nearer to shore. Instead of a

species having to have been encountered no closer than five (5) nautical miles from land, any pelagic species seen two (2) or more nautical miles from land may now be counted. Hopefully these changes will prompt a few more people to provide numbers for that area.

Listing Areas:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) A.B.A Area ¹ (917 species) | 10) Princeton Area ⁹ (250) |
| 2) Canada ² (632) | 11) Kamloops Checklist Area ¹⁰ (295) |
| 3) British Columbia ³ (484) | 12) Sunshine Coast Checklist Area ¹¹ (277) |
| 4) Alberta ⁴ (394) | 13) West Kootenay Checklist Area ¹² (285) |
| 5) Vancouver Island (387) | 14) Prince George Checklist Area ¹³ (268) |
| 6) Queen Charlotte Islands ⁵ (250) | 15) Creston Valley ¹⁴ (265) |
| 7) Vancouver Checklist Area ⁶ (406) | 16) Washington State ¹⁵ (454) |
| 8) Victoria Checklist Area ⁷ (353) | 17) North Pacific Pelagic Waters |
| 9) Okanagan Valley Checklist Area ⁸ (316) | |

- ¹ = ABA area species total (1999) provided by B. Scott.
² = Canada species total (1999) provide by B. Scott.
³ = BC species total (1999) provide by W. Campbell.
⁴ = Alberta species total (1998) provide by B. Korol.
⁵ = Queen Charlotte Island species total (1996) provided by P. Hamel.
⁶ = Vancouver Checklist Area species total (1998) provided by M. McNicholl.
⁷ = Victoria Checklist Area species total (1998) provided by B. Gates.
⁸ = Okanagan Valley Checklist Area species total (1999) provided by G. Wilson.
⁹ = Princeton Area species total (1999) provided by J. Hertzig.
¹⁰ = Kamloops Checklist Area species total (1994) based on checklist by R. Howie.
¹¹ = Sunshine Coast species total (1999) provided by T. Greenfield.
¹² = West Kootenay Area species total based on checklist by G. Davidson (1998).
¹³ = Prince George Checklist Area species total (1998) provided by C. Antoniazzi.
¹⁴ = Creston Valley species total (1996) based on checklist by L. Van Damme.
¹⁵ = Washington State species total provided by W. Weber.



Birds of the World: A Checklist

by James F. Clements

A quick review by David Stirling
330 - 1870 McKenzie Avenue
Victoria, BC V8N 4X3

I am moving my "ticks" from Clements' 4th edition to Clements' new 5th, a rather tedious but happy task when you are around the 3,500 species mark on your life list. Clements, *Birds of the World*, official checklist of the American Birding Association is here and all you listers -- I mean those persons who have an obsession to keep track of birds seen and where -- must get on with it if you want to keep accurate records and have your totals printed in the ABA yearly *List Report*, Burke Korol's *Listers Corner* and *BC Birding*.

In the modern business world it is a time of implosion [lumping], in the world of ornithology it is a time of explosion [splitting]. There are now 204 bird families recognized versus 195 in Clements 4th edition. It is here that major changes have taken place. Some families have been combined, others split and the order of families has been thoroughly messed about. In species, there are 130 lumps and 156 splits for a total of about 9,800 species [I counted 9,748] recognized by the scientific community. Eight species have been deleted. Eighty five, considered to be extinct since the year 1,600, are listed separately, not in the main text as formerly. The inclusion of subspecies with their ranges has increased the size of the book to a huge 865 page 11½ x 8½ x 2 inch volume.



The Collared Kingfisher, found from the Red Sea to the South Pacific Islands, has 49 subspecies. There are 40 subspecies of the Eurasian Jay and 39 subspecies of the Song Sparrow to mention two others. Scops Owls, *Otus*, -- 41 species, with a total of 80 subspecies. [It seems that every country and island in the eastern hemisphere has a Scops Owl.] Other features include a gazetteer with geographic coordinates for over 2,000 places mentioned in the text; a table showing world distribution of total bird species and endemics by country, [Columbia has 1,725 species, New Guinea has 330 endemics], major references for each family and a user friendly index of scientific and common names.

Errors and omissions? Yes. At web site <http://www.ibispub.com> you can obtain four pages of corrections. Most of these are changes in the ranges and scientific names of subspecies and some spelling errors that careful editing should have caught. There are some new splits since the checklist was published. Examples: The Black-billed Magpie is split into two species. The North American form remains the Black-billed Magpie while the Eurasian form -- you guessed it -- is now the Eurasian Magpie. The Crested Caracara, now two species, remains the Crested Caracara in North America; in South America, it is the Southern Caracara.

Clements *Birds of the World* contains a wealth of information not only for listers but also for everyone interested in the world of birds. *Birds of the World: A Checklist*, 5th edition, James F. Clements. Ibis Publishing, 3420 Freda's Hill Road, Vista, CA, 92084-7466. Obtainable from The American Birding Association Sales, PO Box 6599, Colorado Springs, CO, 80934-6599. Price US \$39.95



EDITORS' NOTE: Thanks to Ginny Porter for the graphic!

Beware - Not All Owls are in Your Field Guide*

by Gary Davidson
Box 294
Nakusp, BC V0G 1R0

After hearing only one Barred Owl on a McIntyre Lake route and striking out completely on the Brouse route near Nakusp, I decided to do a third one near Edgewood. With the abundance of open area and the nearby forest cover, I had hoped this route would be better. And it was! We found a Long-eared Owl at stop #7 and a Northern Saw-whet Owl at stop #10. The Long-eared was a big surprise - they are very rare in this area, though the bottomland habitat in the Inonoaklin Valley, with deciduous thickets surrounded by open fields, is ideal. This bird was making a series of fairly typical "owl-like" hoots as Long-eareds should. But in the days following the sighting, I read a number of reference books and listened to several bird tapes and could not find any reference to the exact call I had heard. This actually is not unusual, many individuals within a species have their own variation of their call. But something about this one left me with a nagging doubt. So I went back, armed with tapes, tape recorder, and flashlight.

This time I arrived at the site before dark - during the survey it had been very dark, no moon, and I had not been certain precisely where we were. In the daylight I could now see we were on Highway 6, directly across from the ostrich farm. It occurred to me that this was probably a good location for owls since the large amounts of ostrich food would probably attract mice. There were no owls calling yet, but soon after dark I heard the same *hooo hooo hoooo-ooooo* that I had heard before! I took out my tape recorder and played the Long-eared Owl call, but there was no response! The other owl I had considered was Great Grey Owl, but there was no response to that tape either. I drove around to the other side of the field in an attempt to get closer to the owl. From here the sound was louder and definitely closer. Still no response to my tapes. I decided to try and track it down with my flashlight, hoping that the ostrich farm owners would not come out to see who was snooping around their ostrich! Despite being fairly close a number of times, I did not locate any owls! At this point, a third possibility occurred to me, but I had not brought tapes or books covering this species. I decided to head for home, still not sure what I had heard.

When I got home, I immediately went to investigate my latest theory. I looked in my *Birds of the World*, found the species, and searched for a description of its call. And there it was, "...in the spring the males gives a deep, booming call, *boo booo boooo-hooooo*." I had just spent two hours not seeing what was right under my nose - all this time I had been listening to the mating call of the ostrich.



*Reprinted with permission of the author and of The BC Nocturnal Owl Survey 2000 editor, Dick Cannings.

GUIDELINES FOR SITE GUIDES

Site Guides should be about two to three 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.



B.C. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DETAILS 2000/2001

This listing of Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) is published as a service to BCFO members who would like to take part in CBCs in their local area or further afield. The listings provide count date, contact name and telephone number. This information also appears on the BCFO website at - <http://birding.bc.ca/bcfo> - courtesy of webmaster, Kevin Slagboom. A **DNA** indicates that the Date was **Not Available** at press time. Data were accurate as known to the Editors on 19 November 2000. Please check with the area organizers for any late-breaking changes. Additional Washington counts and contacts (with contacts' email addresses) may be found at the Washington Ornithological Society website: <http://www.wos.org/WACBCs.htm>

Locality	Date	Organizer(s)	Phone No.
Abbotsford / Mission	29 Dec 2000	Lynn Miller	(604) 826-3839
Bamfield	22 Dec 2000	Anne Stewart or Alan Berger	(250) 728-3469 (250) 479-2446
Bowen Island	DNA	Allan Shatwell	(604) 947-2133
Castlegar / Trail (WKN)	6 Jan 2001	Dorothy Beetstra	(250) 368-9716
Chilliwack	16 Dec 2000	Annabelle Rempel	(604) 823-6549
Comox / Courtenay	17 Dec 2000	Barbara Sedgwick	(250) 335-0064
Cranbrook	26 Dec 2000	Mildred White	(250) 427-3605
Creston	27 Dec 2000	Sheila Reynolds	(250) 866-5453
Deep Bay	28 Dec 2000	Barbara Sedgwick	(250) 335-0064
Duncan	30 Dec 2000	Derrick Marven	(250) 748-8504
Fauquier	DNA	Ruth Bumpus	(250) 269-7481
Fort St. James	30 Dec 2000	Joanne Vinnedge	(250) 996-7401
Galiano Island	30 Dec 2000	Mike Hoebel	(250) 539-2003
Golden	27 Dec 2000	Ellen Zimmerman	(250) 348-2225
Kamloops	16 Dec 2000	Rick Howie	(250) 578-7542
Kelowna	16 Dec 2000	Chris Charlesworth or	(250) 765-2303 (250) 718-0335
Kimberley	30 Dec 2000	Mildred White	(250) 427-3605
Kitimat	DNA	Dennis Horwood	(250) 632-2004
Ladner	23 Dec 2000	Jude Grass (w) or (h)	(604) 432-6393 (604) 520-3706
Lake Windermere District	26 Dec 2000	Larry Halverson	(250) 342-3305
Lardeau	27 Dec 2000	Gail Spitler	(250) 366-4601
Masset	26 Dec 2000	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Mackenzie	17 Dec 2000	David Lambie	(250) 997-6876

Locality	Date	Organizer(s)	Phone No.
Mayne Island	DNA	Doreen Tamboline	(250) 539-2730
Nakusp	6 Jan 2001	Gary Davidson	(250) 265-4456
Nanaimo	30 Dec 2000	Guy Monty	(250) 754-4635
Nelson	16 Dec 2000	Rita Wege	(250) 354-1685
Oliver / Osoyoos	30 Dec 2000	Tom Ethier or Joan King	(250) 496-4171 (250) 495-6907
Parksville / Qualicum	16 Dec 2000	Will Lemon	(250) 757-2387
Pender Harbour	20 Dec 2000	Tony Greenfield	(604) 885-5539
Pender Islands	DNA	Mary Roddick	(250) 629-3308
Penticton	17 Dec 2000	Dick Cannings	(250) 496-4019
Pitt Meadows / Maple Ridge	30 Dec 2000	Kees Vandenberg	(604) 463-8743
Port Alberni	31 Dec 2000	Sandy McRuer	(250) 723-5436
Port Clements	30 Dec 2000	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Prince George	17 Dec 2000	Cathy Antoniazzi	(250) 562-2845
Prince Rupert	6 Jan 2001	Robin Weber	(250) 627-1129
Princeton	29 Dec 2000	Madelon Schouten	(250) 295-7078
Quesnel	23 Dec 2000	Adrian Leather	(250) 249-5561
Revelstoke	16 Dec 2000	George Winingder	(250) 837-3655
Rose Spit (tide & weather permitting)	DNA	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Salmon Arm	DNA	Frank Kime	(250) 835-8537
Saltspring Island	17 Dec 2000	Nancy Braithwaite	(250) 537-9335
Saturna Island	DNA	Harvey Janszen	(250) 539-5150
Shuswap Lake	DNA	Rick Howie	(250) 578-7542
Skidegate Inlet / Sandspit / Queen Charlotte Islands	16 Dec 2000	Margo Hearne	(250) 626-5015
Smithers	DNA	Rosamund Pojar	(250) 847-9784
Sooke	23 Dec 2000	Jack McLeod	(250) 642-5369
Squamish	17 Dec 2000	Jim Wisnia	(604) 898-2000
Sunshine Coast	16 Dec 2000	Tony Greenfield	(604) 885-5539
Terrace	26 Dec 2000	Diane Weismiller	(250) 635-6984
Vancouver	17 Dec 2000	Adrian Grant Duff	(604) 263-7957
Vaseux Lake	1 Jan 2001	Dick Cannings	(250) 496-4019

Locality	Date	Organizer(s)	Phone No.
Vernon	17 Dec 2000	Phil Gehlen or Mary Collins	(250) 524-8053 (250) 524-5673
Victoria	16 Dec 2000	Dannie Carsen	(250) 595-2773
Wells Gray Park	DNA	Trevor Goward	(250) 674-2553
Whistler	19 Dec 2000	Karl Ricker	Dec 16-17 only (604) 938-1107
White Rock and Surrey	30 Dec 2000	Viveka Ohman or Ian Robertson	(604) 531-3401 (604) 530-1080
Williams Lake	30 Dec 2000	Anna Roberts	(250) 392-5000
Interior Swan-and-Eagle Count	14 Jan 2001	Rick Howie	(250) 578-7542
** WASHINGTON STATE BORDER AREAS **			
LOCALITY	DATE	ORGANIZER(S)	PHONE NO.
Bellingham	17 Dec 2000	Joe Meche	(360) 738-0641
Everett	30 Dec 2000	Mary Teesdale	(360) 734-9077 (after 14 Dec)
North Cascades	DNA	Bob Kuntz	(360) 424-9099
Oak Harbour / Whidbey Island	16 Dec 2000	Bob Merrick	(360) 678-3161
Padilla Bay	DNA	Kraig Kemper	(206) 789-9255
Port Gamble	15 Dec 2000	Scott Hall	(360) 698-1246
Port Townsend	DNA	Richard Johnson	(360) 385-5418
San Juan Ferry (Anacortes to Victoria)	20 Dec 2000	Jim Duemmel	(360) 733-3448
San Juan Islands Archipelago	16 Dec 2000	Barb Jensen	(360) 378-3068
Sequim-Dungeness	18 Dec 2000	Bob Boekelheide	(206) 681-4867
Skagit Bay	31 Dec 2000	Art Campbell	(206) 783-2449

Great Backyard Bird Count - The Cornell Laboratory's 4th annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held from February 16-19, 2001. Over 100,000 feeder watchers have participated in the past in this count. It is free and you can join in by logging on to <http://www.birdsource.org> on the Internet and clicking on your state or province. All reports are taken over the Internet, but some Wild Bird Unlimited stores also accept reports. Color maps of the results are updated hourly and there are maps from previous years available. You report all birds but this year the focus is on quail and several species of woodpeckers. The greater the number of participants the better the data and everyone should participate. - Compiled by Rick Blom

News item from **Bird Watcher's Digest Newswire** at <http://www.Birdwatchersdigest.com>.

"Stuffed" Catalyst Birds!

by John Vooy's
3721 Nicola Street
Abbotsford, BC V2T 4Z9

As a youngster in both Holland and after immigrating to Ontario, I always loved the outdoors (perhaps it was in my genes, since my uncle was a Park Warden in Holland). My interest in birding, in particular, was sparked by seeing stuffed birds in a glass case in an elementary classroom. This interest was further fostered by a student teacher who took me on my first birding trip. It was the middle of an Ontario winter, but I was hooked. A summer job gave me enough money to buy a 7x50 binocular and a Golden Book Bird Guide. In Grade 8 I bought a Peterson and joined the McIlwraith Ornithological Club in London, Ontario.

In 1958 my family moved to Surrey, BC and so I took up birding in the West. What an opportunity to expand one's life list! By then I had quit school after Grade 9 and worked full time for the New Westminster Parks. I soon met a fellow Surrey birder and artist, Glen Ryder. I also met Canon Martin W. Holdom, of Crescent Beach, who had started the Surrey Christmas Count in 1937. He soon got me involved, and by the early 1960's I took over compiling the count lists.

By the late 60's other things began to draw my interest: courtship, marriage, children, and studies. All of this cut into my birding time and I basically gave it up after reaching some 300 on my life list. I finished Grade 12, went to university and taught high school for seven years. Later I went to Seminary and have been teaching at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford for the last 21 years.

In the fall of 1999 I read about "Project Feeder Watch" in Sylvia Pincott's 'Backyard Habitat' column in an Abbotsford paper. I decided to join since we had feeders up anyway. This was the catalyst to get me back into serious birding.

Birding has sure changed during my nearly 30 year hiatus - rare bird alerts, internet sites, egroups, and a plethora of field guides. It is fabulous.

I have had a great year 2000 trying to redo my lifelist. It is also nice to get a few new ones in the process (the Garganey!!). Thanks to a lot of people on the way: birders who have let me look through their scope (I hope to afford one soon); who gave advice and directions to good birding sites; as well as those who have led hikes I have been on - Tom Plath, John Ireland, and Dan Bastaja.



New RBA for Kelowna

The Okanagan Valley has now got a rare bird alert hotline. Chris Charlesworth states: "I have been struggling away to make this happen for almost a year and now finally it's going ahead. With sponsorship from the Tumbleweed Nature Store (67 Front Street) in Penticton, the Okanagan Valley Rare Bird Alert will begin operation on October 26, 2000. The number will be 250-491-7738."

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS**Editors, BC BIRDING**

We are enclosing our recently published book on the Western Grebes presence in the Salmon Bay of Shuswap Lake.

It details our ten year survey of the Western Grebe breeding colony, the presence and interaction of the Clark's Grebe, our opinions, and perhaps what the future holds for the colony in the Salmon Arm Bay.

It has been published by the Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society (S.A.B.N.E.S.), a society of local people formed to manage the foreshore marshes, and inshore waters, for the owners, Nature Trust of BC.

All money received from the sale of the book, which costs \$5.00, will go to the society for its work on the Salmon Arm foreshore, the marsh areas, and inshore waters. In particular to maintaining and developing of Western Grebe habitat. Copies are available from:

S.A.B.N.E.S.
P.O. Box 27
Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4N2

Thank you for your kind attention.
Frank Kime, Director and Past President - S.A.B.N.E.S.

EDITORS' NOTE:

"Dancing in the Bay" : Salmon Arm' is the cover title of this 15 page booklet about 'The Western Grebe and Clarke's Grebe in the Salmon Arm Bay of the Shuswap Lake from the years 1990-2000' by Frank and Doris Kime. The booklet has been published on good quality glossy bond and contains several excellent color photos of the Salmon Arm Bay area and of both Western and Clarke's Grebes. Tables for total numbers of adult grebes, breeding survey numbers, status and location of nesting areas, and young from nests are presented. Findings are discussed and interpreted. Possible reasons for population fluctuations are provided and the future population status of the grebes in this area is considered. An appendix contains a graphical synopsis of survey findings and also provides tips, based on calls and/or plumages, for the identification and differentiation of Western and Clarke's Grebes. A very professionally presented booklet which we thank Frank Kime for bringing to our members' attention.

Marilyn & Andy Buhler, Editors of BCFO

... I am enclosing a brochure which we produced last Spring and placed in the Chambers of Commerce of both Cranbrook and Kimberley for free distribution to visitors to the area. It gives only a sample of what can be seen but members of the club will gladly expand that information. Now that we have made a start I hope we can keep going and compile lists of birds to be found in specific spots for this coming year.

Regards,

Mildred White
Rocky Mountain Naturalists
Box 791
Cranbrook, BC V1C 4J5

EDITORS' NOTE: We have received permission to reproduce the "Circle Tour of the Cranbrook-Kimberley Area". It should appear in the March 2001 issue. Thank you for thinking of us Mildred. We are certain members will find the guide very useful for birding in your special region of the Kootenays.



Site Guide: The Nanaimo River Estuary

by Guy L. Monty
Station A, PO Box 2205
Nanaimo, BC V9R 6X6

The Nanaimo River Estuary is the largest estuarine system on Vancouver Island and the fifth largest estuary in British Columbia. It is an area rich in birds, mammals, aquatic creatures, and a great diversity of plants. There are also several species of rare butterflies, such as the Field Crescent, which until recently was believed to be extirpated from Vancouver Island. Surprisingly, it is also one of the least studied estuaries on Vancouver Island and has been generally overlooked by birders and naturalists.

In May of 1998, Bill Merilees and I formed the Nanaimo Estuary Study Group. Our goal was to initiate a series of studies that would indicate whether or not this area was, as we suspected, a regionally significant wildlife area. In November of 1998 I began a year long, twice weekly survey of all birds occurring on this estuary. From November 5, 1998 to October 26, 1999 I recorded 248,268 individual birds of 182 species in the study area. Included in these totals are six Red Listed species, and 16 Blue Listed species, as well as 25 species considered to be "rare" in the central island area. Most significant, were the large numbers and diversity of species of birds wintering in the study area. A maximum of one day count was recorded for 56 species that was higher than maximum counts recorded in similar studies of other estuaries on Vancouver Island. For certain species, such as Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Least Sandpiper, Short-eared Owl and Savannah Sparrow, the numbers recorded during this study are likely second only to those for the Fraser Delta within the Georgia Depression Ecoprovince. A comprehensive report on the findings of this study, funded in part by the BC Field Ornithologists, will be published by the Canadian Wildlife Service sometime early in 2001. In addition to the 182 species recorded during the survey period, the Nanaimo Field Naturalists have records of an additional 29 species, bringing the total to 211 species. This works out to about 55 percent of the 387 birds seen on Vancouver Island, and 76 percent of the 277 species recorded in the Nanaimo checklist area.

Although sandwiched between the urban sprawl of Nanaimo to the west and north, and the increasingly industrial Duke Point area to the east, the Nanaimo River corridor remains largely rural or wild, and terminates in a rich and beautiful tidal estuary. The total size of this estuary equals about 900 hectares. 173 hectares of upland habitat is owned by the Nature Trust of British Columbia and is managed as wildlife habitat by the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry also oversees 20 hectares of crown land on Oak Island. The remaining 700 hectares is largely tidal delta, (of which about 35 percent is used as a log storage area), or altered estuarine habitat that has been diked and drained and is owned by a few hay and cattle farmers and the Snuneymuw Native Band.

The main access point to the Nature Trust lands is a parking lot at the north end of Raines Road. To reach Raines Road take the Cedar Road exit off the Island Highway at the south end of Nanaimo. Travel east on Cedar Road for 3.1 kilometers, crossing the Nanaimo River. Immediately after crossing the river there is a crossroads. Going right takes you to the village of Cedar, a good place for gas, snack, or lunch. The road to the left is Raines Road. Proceed north on this road for 2.3 kilometers to reach the parking area, and please drive slowly as you are passing through the Native Reserve.

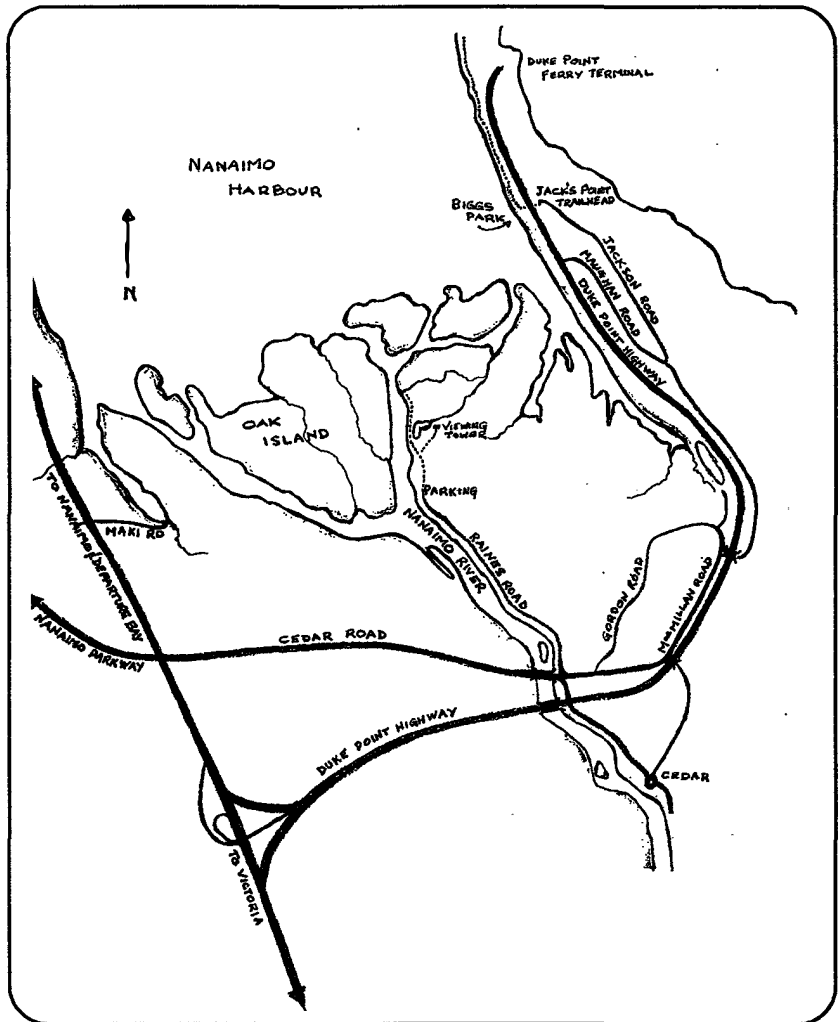
Along this scenic road are several places where you can stop and scope the hayfields and hedgerows for raptors and songbirds, or the river for waterfowl and gulls. During the salmon runs in autumn this stretch of river attracts a large number of gulls, divers and Bald Eagles. Glaucous Gulls are seen here most winters and an Iceland Gull was seen here in 1999.

Upon reaching the parking area you will see a gate and an old road leading towards an ancient Garry Oak to the north, the secondary fork of the Nanaimo River to the west with Oak Island on the far shore and a hayfield to the east. The hayfield is part of the Native Reserve for which there is no access but one can scope the field from the parking lot. In fall and winter this is a great place to watch Northern Harriers, Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, Short-eared Owls and Northern Shrikes, hunting for rodents that move up into the fields to escape tidal flooding. Also watch for Western Meadowlarks on the fence posts. There is a small drainage ditch on the north boundary of this field that attracts shore birds in July and August and waterfowl in winter. In September of this year [2000] a Ruff and two Stilt Sandpipers were found here.

West of the parking area is the secondary Nanaimo River Channel, which is tidal. At high tide this area attracts both dabblers and diving ducks, and waders at low tide. In spring and especially in summer, this is a good area for shorebirds. While Least, and Western Sandpipers, Killdeer and yellowlegs are commonly seen here, locally rare species such as Semipalmated, Sharp-tailed, and Solitary Sandpipers have been seen. August and early September appear to be the best time for shorebird "rarities" locally.

Leaving the parking lot, walk past the gate towards the large Garry Oak. This short stretch of old road that once led to a gravel mining operation is now an excellent place to find songbirds, year round. Fourteen species of sparrows have been seen here over the years including, American Tree, Chipping, Vesper, Grasshopper, Lincoln's, White-throated and Harris's Sparrow. During migration, warbler fallouts have occurred here, and at any time of year the old oak is an active raptor perch. The lucky observer can see three species of accipiter in spring or fall, and a couple of lucky birders saw four species of falcons from here in December of 1998. (American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, and Gyrfalcon).

Proceeding further north you will come to a wildlife viewing tower which stands next to a tidal channel and pond. Pay close attention to the pond as you approach as this is a good place to see river otter or mink. From the viewing tower much of the estuary can be scoped for raptors, waterfowl, or waders. From mid November to February, the old fields around this tower will flood at high tide, sometimes filling up with thousands of waterfowl. American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Mallards are most abundant, but small numbers of Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shovelers, and Gadwall are always present and occasionally a Cinnamon Teal, or American Black Duck will be found. The old fence row that runs parallel to the viewing tower should be checked for Northern Shrikes, Short-



eared Owls, and Western Meadowlarks in winter. In March, Mountain Bluebirds can be found here with some regularity. During the "bluebird invasion" of 1999, 13 Mountain Bluebirds were seen along this fencerow in the last week of March.

Leaving the tower you can walk north or east, across the open fields of gumweed, saltgrass, and salicornia. In fall these areas can hold Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, American Pipits, Western Meadowlarks, and Short-eared Owls. In July and August check the small salt pans for shorebirds. Least Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitchers are most common, but rarer birds such as Semipalmated and Stilt Sandpipers and American Golden-plovers have been seen.

Continuing north you will eventually reach the old outer dike. Beyond here is some great birding but caution is advised. Pay close attention to the tides, not only as it affects the numbers of birds present, but also as a matter of personal safety. Use a tide guide and pay attention to the time. In winter the entire upland area can flood surprisingly quickly, especially if the river is high or a northerly is blowing. The safest route down the estuary is to follow the trail along the river channel. When you reach the area where the river begins to fan out across the tidal flats walk where there is sand or gravel and avoid the mud as it is very easy to become mired or lose a boot. In the grassy areas, Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and American Pipits can be found in the fall, and the muddy margins attract shorebirds in May and summer. With care, during a low tide you can walk almost two kilometers to the north on clean river sand once you have navigated your way past the mud. Keep to the east side of the flats, well away from the booming operations, where knee deep muck discourages birds and birders alike! Out here one can find a good assortment of shorebirds in spring and summer as well as Caspian Terns, Ospreys, Purple Martins, and Peregrine Falcons. When the tide is up, this area can be scoped from Biggs Park and the Jack's Point Trail. Historically, this area hosted huge numbers of bay ducks, scoters, loons and grebes. Unfortunately, in the last fifty years, these numbers have seriously declined, until some species, like Western Grebe and Greater Scaup, are sometimes not present at all. There is still some good birding here though. Yellow-billed Loon and Eared Grebes have been seen here in winter and early spring, and this is one of the better places in Nanaimo to see Caspian Terns in summer and Parasitic Jaegers in the fall.

Returning to the outer dike, walk back towards the parking lot along the river channel trail. The thickets along the river have held Palm Warbler and have been used as roosts for both Long-eared and Short-eared Owls. Also, watch for raptors in the trees on Oak Island.

Oak Island is a remote and wild place, without trails or much human presence. An old orchard is all that remains of a farm abandoned long ago. Oak Island can be reached by canoe or boat in winter or, during summer and fall, one can easily walk across the river in gumboots as most of the flow goes down the west channel. This area contains a number of different habitats, with one of the largest stands of Rocky Mountain Juniper on Vancouver Island, and a forested sandstone outcrop that is home to many of the more typically upland bird species of Vancouver Island. Some of the best birding on Oak Island occurs when the fruit of the crabapples and hawthorns ripen in early fall, coinciding with the onset of the salmon runs. This island is laced with tidal channels and many fish become trapped here. Gull, Turkey Vultures, Bald Eagles, and the occasional black bear are attracted by the stranded fish. It is surprising to see, but even predators such as Red-tailed Hawks and dabblers like Green-winged Teal can be found dining on the abundance of carrion here in October.

After birding the Nanaimo River portions of the estuary, there are still two smaller adjoining estuaries that offer some good birding. To the east is the Holden Creek estuary, and to the west is the Beck Creek / Wexford Creek / Chase River complex.

To reach Holden Creek from the Raines Road parking lot, return to the intersection of Raines and Cedar Road and turn left at the stop sign. Go 400 meters and turn left onto

Gordon Road which is gravel. Proceed for 1.5 kilometers until you pass a cattle farm and the Duke Point Highway can be seen to the east. Turn left onto the gravel road that parallels the highway and park near the gate at the end, as far off the road as you are able.

From the road you can scope the farm fields for swans, geese, and dabblers, and this is an excellent place in winter to watch Peregrines hunting ducks and killdeer. You can also walk the fields off of the end of this road, but please stay to the edges, especially in spring and summer. These fields are owned by the Nature Trust of BC and are leased to a local farmer who leaves a portion of his crops for wintering waterfowl. Along the east margin of the fields is a saltmarsh that has harbored waterfowl, American Bittern, and Virginia Rails in winter. On the western edge of the fields are hedgerows of Pacific Crabapple and Black Hawthorn which provide some of the best birding in the area. In winter all three species of accipiters, Northern Shrike, American Goldfinch, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Lincoln's and Swamp Sparrow have occurred here. The hedgerows also provide roosting areas for Short-eared Owls and Northern Harriers. A long-eared Owl, very rare locally, roosted here throughout the winter of 1999. In spring Townsend's Solitaire and Say's Phoebe have been seen, as well as some spectacular passerine fallouts. Proceeding northwest you will eventually reach the dike that separates Holden Creek from the Nanaimo River Estuary. The tidal channel north of the dike is usually the last section of the estuary to flood and thus can be very productive for shorebirds about two hours before high tide. Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon all nest nearby and should be looked for in the large firs to the east.

Nearly four kilometers to the west is the Beck Creek/Wexford Creek/Chase River complex. To reach this area, retrace your route to Cedar Road and then back to the intersection at the Island Highway. Turn right onto Route 1, which goes to downtown Nanaimo and go north for 800 meters. At the second stoplight turn right onto Maki Road and head east for 700 meters, parking near the entrance to the Living Forest Campground at the end of the road. This campground is a birdy place in it's own right with reasonable rates for campers.

From the wide spot directly before the campground walk back down the road to where it crosses Beck Creek. From here you can scope this lovely tidal flat surrounded by forest. Again, this area floods later than the main estuary, so two hours or so before high tide is best. August and September seem to be best for shorebirds, and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was seen here with Pectoral Sandpipers in September of 1998. Spring can be good too, with Greater Yellowlegs and Western and Least Sandpipers being most common, however the occasional Whimbrel will be seen here. This is also the best place in the Nanaimo area to see Green Heron. They are regular here from May to late September and likely nest close by. From the parking area there is also a short trail that runs through the forest along the east side of the tidal flats, eventually reaching the point where this estuary meets the Nanaimo River Estuary. This point is a great place to scan for waterfowl, especially Trumpeter Swans, in fall and winter, and shorebirds during July and August. Mute Swans are being seen here more frequently than in the past. The grassy edges of the flat here should also be checked for pipits and longspurs in autumn. Directly north are some pilings where Purple Martin boxes were installed some years ago by the Nanaimo Field Naturalists. Over the last few years however, the bulk of the Martins seem to have moved to the colony at Newcastle Island; but as that colony continues to grow these boxes may become active again.

For more information on the Nanaimo River Estuary contact: Guy Monty (250) 713-0072; The Backyard Wildbird & Nature Store, ask for Colin (250) 390-3669; or The Nanaimo Bird Alert (250) 390-3029. There is also a birding discussion group for Vancouver Island on the internet at: <http://www.egroups.com/bcbirdingvanisland/>



AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

Dick Cannings

When we phoned Dick for his bio he was out of the country - again! Dick has been a great supporter of birding and is very knowledgeable in very many aspects of natural history as demonstrated through his authorship of several books. He is also involved with CBCs in BC, Big Birding Days, Meadowlark Festival, leading local, national and international trips, and a variety of research projects.

Chris Charlesworth

Chris, a member of the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club, has been birding in the Okanagan for about ten years. He has lead many groups birding in the area and welcomes calls from interested visiting birders.

Gary Davidson

Gary, former chairman of the BCFO Bird Records Committee, started birding while he was in University. His favourite birding place is Australia, a country he has visited more than once.

Hue MacKenzie

Hue birded for many years with the Ottawa Field Naturalists and is now an active member of the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists and the Vancouver Natural History Society. He also has volunteered his services as archivist for BCFO and has been gathering together, sorting, and trying to make sense of the past and present BCFO legislation, documents, correspondence, minutes and minutiae.

Guy L. Monty

A native of Washington State, Guy emigrated to Canada in 1990. Since then, he has lived at various locations in BC as diverse as the Sunshine Coast, Ootsa Lake in the Central Interior, and all over Vancouver Island, working as a logger, ranch foreman, wildlife technician, and birding guide. Guy is currently the president of the Nanaimo Field Naturalists, their FBCN director, and organizer of the local Christmas Bird Count. [Thanks to Donna for the area map in the site guide.]

Ken Morgan

Ken started birding as a youngster in Ontario. Although he only birded off-and-on in his teens, he now 'birds' seriously as a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service with a primary interest in seabirds.

David Stirling

David was employed in the Nature Interpretation and Research Division of Provincial Parks. He is involved in organizing and leading world nature tours. He is an honorary life member of the Victoria Natural History Society.

Russell Tkachuk

Russ was active in Manitoba birding and art circles for many years. Now retired in Roberts Creek, on BC's Sunshine Coast, he continues the above activities, and is an active member with BC Field Ornithologists, the Sunshine Coast Natural History Society and the Sunshine Coast Arts Council.

John Vooy

John had a couple of starts at birding but really got "hooked" again when he participated in one of the "Project Feeder Watch" events -- a great way to get back into birding and a very useful project to participate in.

Kenneth G. Wright

Ken is a wildlife researcher presently residing in Lillooet, BC. He is engaged in several studies of riverine birds, especially Harlequin Ducks, and he leads natural history tours in BC and Antarctica.



Raptor Spectacle at Black Mountain

by Chris Charlesworth

725 Richard Road

Kelowna, BC V1X 2X5

On September 19, 2000, inspired by warm temperatures and a strong northward wind, I discovered a mini-spectacle of migrating raptors at Black Mountain, east of Kelowna, BC. Hawks have always been noted "dribbling" through this area during migration, but large numbers of birds have not previously been reported. Nobody had ever gone to Black Mountain at the right time of year and with the right weather conditions to look especially for hawks. As soon as I stepped out of my truck, at a lookout atop Swainson Road, I was shocked at the number of individual birds and the diversity of raptor species I saw soaring overhead.

The biggest surprises were two Broad-winged Hawks. This species is expanding its range west, but records from the southern interior of BC are still sparse. These two birds constituted the fourth and fifth Okanagan Valley records. The two birds were not traveling together. One appeared with a small kettle of Red-tailed Hawks at 10:30 am. It's smaller size, short, broad wings and broad tail were evident even at a great distance. As the bird got closer all of the classic field marks, the black tail bands, black primaries and trailing edge and very pale underwings, materialized. Since I have been looking for this species in BC for over 10 years now, this was a very exciting moment. The second bird appeared at 10:45 and displayed the same field marks as the first hawk. Other uncommon raptors seen at Black Mountain on September 19th included a Prairie Falcon, an immature Northern Goshawk and an adult "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk.

September 20th was a wet day - not a day for hawk watching, but the 21st was a different story. Again, assisted by a north wind, the hawks were jamming the aerial highways above Black Mountain. The previous day's weather system carried some rain into the morning, but by the early afternoon the clouds broke up and the thermals began to give the birds some lift. As the first warm ray of sunlight touched Black Mountain, I watched 24 Sharp-shinned Hawks rise out of the woods, gain elevation and drift south. It was a very memorable experience. At around 2:00 pm another Broad-winged Hawk and another adult "Harlan's" Hawk.

Over the following week the winds died down considerably, and the hawk numbers also decreased. Golden and Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons were added to the count during this period. Smaller numbers of Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks, as well as accipiters and Golden Eagles continued to be counted.

The habitat at Black Mountain is perfect for raptors. The rolling, grassy hillsides are excellent for thermal production. There is probably an abundance of food in the grasslands (or Knapweed-lands if you like). The majority of the hawks observed on September 19th and 21st were not interested in feeding. They were soaring at "cruising altitude" at good speeds, taking advantage of the northerly tailwinds. The presence of migrant hawks at Black Mountain seems very weather dependant. On both the 19th and 21st the winds from the northwest were substantial. Weather systems had ripped through the area on September 18th and 20th, the days before the big migration days. On September 22nd, a ridge of high pressure built over the region and the number of hawks dropped off dramatically.

If a birder wants to observe this mini-spectacle of migrating hawks at Black Mountain, he should watch the weather patterns closely. The prime conditions seem to occur when a low-pressure system is being "swept" away by a strong north wind. Also to the birds' advantage, sunny weather creates strong thermals, giving the hawks some lift. The prime time of the fall, especially for Broad-winged Hawks, throughout our latitude in North America seems to be the second and third week in September. However, some may show up slightly outside this period. If these weather conditions repeat again in September, birders should visit Black Mountain.

Directions: From Kelowna, drive east on Highway 33 and turn left on Muir Road. Take an immediate right on McKenzie Road. Follow McKenzie for a while and turn right on Swainson Road. Park at the intersection of Swainson and Treetop Roads. Black Mountain is the highest peak to the east.

Species	Date				
	Sept. 19	Sept. 21	Sept. 22	Sept. 25	Oct. 1
Turkey Vulture	12	14	1	1	0
Osprey	0	1	1	0	0
Red-tailed Hawk	26	39	10	7	0
Rough-legged Hawk	0	1	1	0	0
Broad-winged Hawk	2	1	0	0	0
Northern Harrier	1	1	1	0	0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	24	2	2	3
Cooper's Hawk	3	0	0	0	0
Northern Goshawk	1	3	0	0	0
Bald Eagle	0	0	1	0	0
Golden Eagle	0	0	2	1	2
American Kestrel	1	2	1	0	2
Merlin	2	0	1	0	0
Peregrine Falcon	0	0	0	1	0
Prairie Falcon	0	1	0	0	0

**British Columbia Field Ornithologists
11th Annual Conference, June 22-24, 2001**

The 11th Annual Conference will be held at the **George Dawson Inn**
in **Dawson Creek, B.C.** on the weekend of **June 22-24, 2001.**

Registration: The conference fees are:

Conference only (includes all events except banquet)	\$25
Banquet only	\$25
Conference and banquet	\$50
Non-member surcharge	\$25

A blue registration form is provided as an insert.

The deadline for registration is May 1, 2001.

See also **Page 5** of this issue for more details.

For information contact:

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