

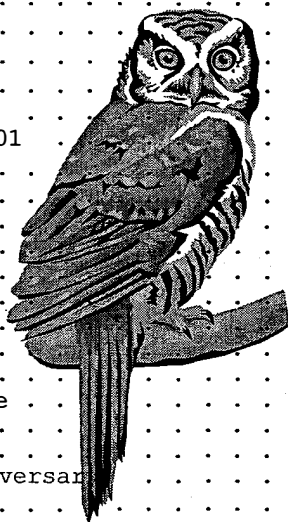
BC BIRDING

ISSN 1206-1611

NEWSLETTER OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
Volume 12 Number 3
September 2002

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

BC BIRDING is published four times a year by
British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO),
P.O. Box 8059, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7.

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
Junior memberships (age under 18)	\$10.00
U.S. and foreign memberships	(US)\$25.00

Memberships are for the calendar year.

For further information, or to join, write to:

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British Columbia Field Ornithologists
P.O. Box 8059
Victoria, BC V8W 3R7

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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EDITORS' NOTES & NOTIONS

We hope everybody had a good summer and that you are preparing for some enjoyable fall birding. Our major birding event this year was the BCFO AGC and the Puntzi Lake extension. Feedback suggests that this AGC was a great success and we certainly had a good time.

If someone lost a men's medium hooded jacket on Becher's Prairie before the extension trip send a note to the Miyasaki's [emiyasaki@shaw.ca] and identify it to them. They will get it back to you.

Many thanks are due members for content in this issue: Eva, Lesley, Nancy and Prue for photos; letter writers; report, column and article writers; Brian Self for including us in the VNHS book auction; and the new members for considering membership with BCFO.

We hope that everyone will find something of interest within these pages. Daniel observed some interesting Bald Eagle behavior; Jack did another super synopsis of the AGC; Viveka and Marilyn both did great writeups for two AGC trips; Gwen provided an excellent report on the extension; Andy S., sent us a detailed 28-page report on a trip he and his wife took through BC just prior to the AGC. We have excerpted the Cariboo portion for this issue; Laurie sent a very good synopsis of the NABS AGM and anniversary; Les updated us on the Avocets; Brian sent us the Vancouver NHS bird book auction info; somebody wrote a poem; your help is needed in a Beached Bird Survey; Martin, Jo Ann, and Glen sent in their news and reports; the quiz has been answered and the winners are... you better check; and yes, there are letters, bird lists and photos as well.

For those who may not yet have heard - Martin McNicholl and the Buhlers were presented with Certificates of Appreciation and life memberships. We were surprised and very honored with the recognition. It is really the authors who keep us in articles for the memberships' interest and enlightenment but our thanks to the Directors for their vote of confidence in us as Editors. As you can see we are still Editors, but on an issue-by-issue basis, until someone steps forward and offers to maintain publication continuity. Keep sending us material for the newsletter until you are advised otherwise.

Members should find an updated membership list as a separate document with this newsletter.

Finally, we must not close without a huge round of applause and thanks for the ongoing Directors, the outgoing Directors, and those who have come forward to assist BCFO grow and develop in the coming years. Your services really do make a difference.

Good birding,
Andy and Marilyn Buhler, Editors



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The **2002 Annual Conference** in Williams Lake, 7-9 June, was very successful. The event was well attended, and we learned much about the birdlife and varied habitats of the Williams Lake area while enjoying field trips to Walker Valley, Dog Creek Road, Becher's Prairie, Horsefly Bay, plus an extra Sunday afternoon walk along the Williams River. For many, the highlight of the weekend was seeing the Northern Hawk Owl nest tree and owl family during the Becher's Prairie trips. The second Becher's Prairie group was treated to a visit to Karen Wiebe's research site on Northern Flickers. We thank Fred McMechan for organizational assistance and leading the Williams River walk, Williams Lake Field Naturalists members, the morning field trip leaders Kristi Iverson, Ken McKenzie, Steve Howard, Leo Rankin, Jim Sims, Phil Ranson, Michaela Waterhouse, as well as Dr. Karen Wiebe of University of Saskatchewan for the demonstration of her Northern Flicker project.

During the afternoon Technical Sessions, we heard informative presentations on 'Ecology of American White Pelicans in B.C.', by Bill Harper, Osiris Wildlife Consulting, Victoria; 'Northern Limits of Flammulated Owl Distribution', by Astrid van Woudenberg, Cascadia Natural Resource Consultants Inc., Kamloops; 'Ecology and Management of Cavity Nesting birds in Central Interior Ecosystems', by Katie Aitken, Centre for Applied Conservation Research, Faculty of Forestry, University of British Columbia; and 'Forest Management: Research Needs, Research Design, and Management Use', by Shawn Meisner, Lignum Ltd., Williams Lake, B.C. Following the Saturday evening banquet, we enjoyed an enlightening and entertaining talk on 'Return of the Raptors' by Dr. Ron Ydenberg, Simon Fraser University. Also on Saturday evening, the first **BCFO Distinguished Service Awards** were presented to our publication editors, Marilyn and Andy Buhler, **BC BIRDING** and Martin McNicholl, **British Columbia Birds**.

Displays were arranged by Dick Cannings for Bird Studies Canada; Krista de Groot on behalf of Partners in Flight; King Campbell, for Ducks Unlimited; and Bob Chappell, of photographs of a Cooper's Hawk nest and nestlings in Victoria. For the donation of Draw Prize items, we thank Dick Cannings, Bird Studies Canada, Tim Horton's Restaurant of Williams Lake, and anonymous donors.

Following the conclusion of the Annual Conference, 29 people, led by Bryan Gates, embarked on an extension trip westward to the Puntzi Lake area, 10-12 June, to further explore the birdlife of the southern Cariboo region. Thanks go to Bryan Gates, Ev Miyasaki, Alan Milligan, and Hank VanderPol who drove the rental vans for three days.

Further, we thank the able staff of the Bil-Nor Restaurant, Williams Lake (conference venue) and Barney's Lakeside Resort, Puntzi Lake.

And finally, a hearty thanks to the BCFO directors and others who worked so hard to make it all happen: Ev Miyasaki, Hank VanderPol (Conference Coordinator), Brian Scott and Russ Tkachuk (Registration desk and packages), Ian Robertson (speakers), Glen Moores (awards), Sandra Kinsey and Laurie Rockwell (Extension), and Bryan Gates (overall guidance). I arranged for the Draw Prizes.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held on Saturday afternoon. The Minutes of that meeting are included elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. Bryan Gates and Russ Tkachuk retired after the maximum six years on the Board of Directors; Laurie Rockwell stepped down after two years service. We thank them all for their dedication during their terms of office. New directors Dannie Carsen (Victoria) and Don Wilson (Kelowna) were elected. Unfortunately, Don Wilson found it necessary to resign shortly after, due to employment commitments. I am pleased to say, though, that Dick Cannings (Naramata) has agreed to join us on the Board. At the time of writing, one vacancy remains on the Board of Directors.

As your new President, I have **three main objectives for the Board of Directors for the coming year:** (1) To continue to try to attract new members, particularly younger people and professional biologists, into our ranks; (2) to assure that our publications continue to flourish; and (3) to continue to work toward the establishment of a competent bird records review committee. The Board will occasionally ask for your help in various ways in achieving these goals.

Jo Ann MacKenzie
President

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SOCIETY NEWS

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

- Sept. 6-8 2002 **WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION 77th ANNUAL MEETING**, Bisbee, Arizona. Contact: Jack Whetstone, 1763 Paseo San Luis, Sierra Vista, AZ 95635, U.S.A.; phone (520) 439-6410.
- Sept. 24-28 2002 **3rd NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS**, a joint meeting of **AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS, SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY** and **SECCION MEXICANA DEL CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL PARA LA PRESERVACION DE AVES**, New Orleans, Louisiana. Contacts: Dr. Thomas W. Sherry, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Organic Biology, 310 Dinwiddie Hall, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118; phone (504) 865-5191 or Dr. Kimberly G. Smith, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AK 72701; phone (501) 575-3251.
- Nov. 6-10 2002 **NORTH AMERICAN SEA DUCK CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP**, Victoria, BC. Contact: Dan Eisler, Centre for Wildlife Ecology, Simon Fraser University, 5421 Robertson Road., Delta, BC V4K 3N2.
- Nov. 6-10 2002 **2002 MEETING, THE WATERBIRD SOCIETY**, La Crosse, WI. Contact: Elizabeth A. Schreiber, Seabird Research, Inc., 4109 Komes Court, Alexandria, VA 22306.
- Jan. 21-25 2003 **NINTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP**, Sacramento, CA. Contact: Scott G. Hereford, phone (228) 497-6322, extension 28.
- March 19-21 2003 **2003 INTERNATIONAL CANADA GOOSE SYMPOSIUM**, Madison, WI. Contact: Ricky Lien, phone (920) 892-8756, extension 3045.
- March 19-23 2003 **WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S 84th ANNUAL MEETING and ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' ANNUAL MEETING**, Delaware, OH. Contact: Edward (Jed) H. Burtt, Jr. Department of Zoology, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, OH 43015-2398; phone (614) 368-3886.
- Apr. 30 -
May 3 2003 **COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING**, Flagstaff, AZ. contact: Mark K. Sogge, Colorado Field Station, Box 5614, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86011; phone (928) 556-7466, extension 232.
- May 18-25 2003 **VIth WORLD CONFERENCE ON BIRDS OF PREY AND OWLS**, Budapest, Hungary. Contact: WWGBP, Box 52, Towcester NN12 7ZW, England; phone/fax ++44-1604-86 23 31.

Lost Jacket

If someone lost a men's medium hooded jacket on Becher's Prairie before the extension trip please send a note to the Miyasaki's [emiyasaki@shaw.ca] and identify it to them. They will get it back to you.

SOCIETY NEWS

BC BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

Awards to Lower Mainland Birders -As usual, most of the people receiving awards from the Vancouver Natural History Society in 2002 for contributions to nature study and/or conservation in the lower mainland include birds among their interests. The Kay Beamish Award for Nature Education was presented to Kyle Elliott, editor of the society's birding section newsletter, The Wandering Tattler, co-author with Wayne Gardner of "Vancouver birds in 1995" (published in 1997) and "Vancouver birds 1996-2000" (in progress), frequent leader of VNHS field trips and co-founder of the society's new Marine Biology section. The other co-founder of that new section, Ann Kent, received one of six Garibaldi Awards for her work with that section, but also contributes articles on birds and bird-feeder raiders to The Vancouver Naturalist and The Wandering Tattler, at least one of which has been reprinted in B.C. Birding. John Chandler, current chair of the Vancouver Rare Bird Records Committee, received another Garibaldi Award for his contributions as a former operator of the VNHS bird alert, frequent leader of field trips, and participant in raptor and Christmas bird counts. The 2002 Frank Sanford Award for Community Service was presented to Wild Birds Unlimited proprietor, John Morton for his work on promoting bird awareness in schools and on the radio, as well sponsoring the VNHS Rare Bird Alert and birding events in the lower mainland -based on Anonymous. 2002. Vancouver Nat. 4(2):9.

Butler Elected -Dr. Robert W. Butler of the Canadian Wildlife Service's lower mainland office was elected to the board of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists during the spring of 2002. British Columbia is well represented on the SCO board, with the current President (Dr. Kathy Martin), Membership Secretary (Dr. Nancy Flood) and Treasurer (Dr. Tom E. Dickinson) all living in B.C., and the Vice-President/President-elect Dr. Jean-Pierre Savard, and three other council members (Dr. Fred Cooke, Dr. Erica Nol and Dr. Karen Wiebe) having conducted ornithological research in B.C. during their careers. -based on Anonymous. 2002. Picoides 15(2):3.

Falls Honoured -Dr. J. Bruce Falls of Toronto was awarded the fifth Distinguished Ornithologist Award of the Ontario Field Ornithologists during the spring of 2002. Although Bruce and his students have studied various aspects of bird and mammal ecology and behaviour, he is probably best known for his research on bird song. His studies have been conducted primarily in Ontario and Manitoba, but while on sabbatical in British Columbia, he collaborated with others (including the compiler of these news notes) on studies of Blue Grouse and Western Meadowlark. -based primarily on J. Iron and R. Pittaway. 2002. OFO News 20(2):1.

W. Earl Godfrey -The gentleman "dean" of Canadian ornithologists died on 8 June 2002 at the age of 91. Godfrey was the Curator of Ornithology at the National Museum of Canada/Canadian Museum of Nature from 1947 to 1976 or 1977. The best known of his many publications were his two books on the birds of Canada, published in 1968 and 1986. His efforts were recognized by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists' first Doris Huestis Speirs Award for Contributions to Canadian Ornithology in 1986, the Ontario Field Ornithologists' first Distinguished Ornithologist Award in 1997 and by the American Birding Association's Ludlow Griscom Award in 2000. A race of Varied Thrush was also named after him. -based on C. Lindgren. 2002. Man. Nat. Soc. Bull. 28(6):6, supplemented by my own biographical files and by J. Berowitz. 2002. Globe & Mail 6 July 2002:[], with thanks to Hue and Jo Ann MacKenzie for a copy of the latter.

MacKenzies profiled -New BCFO President Jo Ann MacKenzie and BCFO Archivist Hue MacKenzie are profiled in a delightful profile and partial biography by Marian Coope in *Discovery* 31(1):6-10, 2001

**British Columbia Field Ornithologists
Minutes of the 12th Annual General Meeting, 8 June 2002
Bil-Nor Restaurant, Williams Lake, B.C.**

1. Call to Order

President Bryan Gates called to order the Annual General Meeting of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO) at 4:05 p.m., and welcomed those present.

2. Minutes of the 2001 Annual General Meeting

The meeting was held 23 June 2001, in Dawson Creek. Secretary Jo Ann MacKenzie read out the Minutes, which had been published in the September, 2001 issue of *BC Birding*.

Motion: To approve the Minutes; by Dick Cannings, 2nd by Bernie Spitmann. CARRIED.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Glen Moores presented the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the year ended 31 December, 2001. Revenue for the year was \$26,912; Expenditures were \$19,806, with a surplus for the year of \$7,107.

The Balance Sheet, at 31 December 2001, shows a balance of \$22,898, with Liabilities and Members' Equity Total of \$28,319.

Motion: To accept the Treasurer's Report; by Dannie Carsen, 2nd by Bob Chapell. CARRIED.

5. Membership Report

Russ Tkachuk presented his report. Membership varies during the calendar year, with maximum numbers usually occurring after the Annual General Meeting. Renewal notices were sent out three times during the year, with the September, December, and March newsletters.

To date, membership stands at 203. Unlike the past three years, members who had not renewed by the end of March, were *not* contacted by telephone or e-mail.

A Membership List for the year 2001 was distributed with the September 2001 newsletter; another distribution is planned for September 2002, and will incorporate at least 53 changes to the previous list. A "Welcome" list of new members who joined during part of 2000 and 2001 was published in the June 2002 newsletter.

Our website, www.birding.bc.ca/bcfo, is used by more people every year. We are indebted to Kevin Slagboom of KS Design for providing this site, at no cost to BCFO. A direct BCFO link was added to the first page of the site for easier access.

6. Newsletter Report

BC BIRDING co-editor Marilyn Buhler presented the editors' report, and thanked Russ Tkachuk and Sheila Mosher for providing labels and mailing the issues. Three of the year's four issues contained paid advertising and Marilyn asked that members mention *BC BIRDING* when patronizing the vendors.

Several editorial and technological improvements have occurred over the years, enhancing the look of the newsletter. However, Marilyn reminded members that she and Andy have served as newsletter editors for 10 years and would like to step down; that it is time for someone else to take over. They would give a new volunteer every assistance.

7. Journal Report

British Columbia Birds editor Martin McNicholl continues to recover from serious illness. His ill health has been partly responsible for delays in the publication of the journal. The other major delay factor is the time taken by some authors and reviewers to complete their work. Each issue of the journal usually consists of a

major paper, four notes or rarity reports and six book reviews. At present, there are no lead papers finalized although some have been reviewed and editing is underway. Several shorter items have been finalized and assigned to specific issues. Martin expects to complete proposed edits on the remaining manuscripts on hand during the summer, and hopes to achieve his goal of having the journal back on schedule by the end of the year.

Martin thanked editorial board members Ken Morgan and Dr. Mary Taitt for their assessment of manuscripts, and Andy and Marilyn Buhler for formatting tasks. Members and non-members were thanked for submitting material, suggesting the journal to other potential authors, agreeing to undertake reviews of books, and/or submitting photographs. Members were encouraged to continue to support the journal, so that incoming editor, Dr. John Sprague will have adequate material to start volume 13 at the end of 2002.

8. President's Report

Bryan Gates outlined achievements of the past year, and goals yet to be attained. The Board is committed to re-establishment of a BC Bird Records Committee, a single, small committee, whose decisions will be based on personal knowledge and experience, extensive technical references, and direct contact with and referral to appropriate North American and world experts. Director Brian Scott was thanked for leading this initiative. Hue and Jo Ann MacKenzie were thanked for sending letters of acknowledgment to those who submitted bird records for review prior to dismantling of the former committee.

One of the most important aspects of our year is the Annual Conference and extension trip, when our members assemble to learn about current BC bird research and explore habitats. Special thanks this year go to Directors Hank VanderPol, Sandra Kinsey, Laurie Rockwell and Ian Robertson for arranging events at Williams Lake and Puntzi Lake.

Retiring Membership Chair and Director Russ Tkachuk was thanked, having served for three years, for soliciting new members, reminding delinquent ones, and assembling membership lists for the convenience of all. Glen and Judy Moores, and Marie O'Shaugnessy were thanked for redesigning the information and membership pamphlet. Kevin Slagboom was thanked for donating his time and computer expertise in providing us a link on his www.birding.bc.ca web site.

The Board continues to consider the best arrangements for possible affiliation with Wild Bird Trust of BC and the bird data centre planned by that organization. We share members with WBT and we appreciate what can be done to protect our natural resources. Assembly and distribution of information about birds, their biology and habitats is critical to the promotion of research, guidance of land developments, and maintenance of healthy biodiversity. We should all commit to contributing data to this facility when it is up and running.

Field trips should be held at times during the year other than at the Annual Conference, and can be organized by anyone. Our pelagic trips have been well received, and *Pelagic 2002*, out of Port McNeill is almost fully committed.

Bryan again urged members to contribute material to **BC BIRDING** and **British Columbia Birds**. New editors (or editor) for **BC BIRDING** are needed now as the current editors wish to step down.

Editorship of our technical journal, **British Columbia Birds**, will soon pass to Dr. John Sprague, who last year volunteered to take on the role. Current editors of our publications, Marilyn and Andy Buhler, and Martin McNicholl, were thanked for their time and expertise.

Directors were thanked: Vice President and Secretary Jo Ann MacKenzie; Treasurer Glen Moores; Membership Chair Russ Tkachuk; Promotions Chair Ian Robertson; Annual Conference organizers Hank VanderPol, Sandra Kinsey and Laurie Rockwell; and Brian Scott who is leading the effort to re-establish the bird records committee.

Thanks also to Hue MacKenzie for continuing as our society Archivist.

Ian Robertson and his family must be recognized again for opening their Langley home for most of our board meetings.

The Board has taken steps toward:

- BCFO participation in the Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture with the North American Bird Conservation Initiative;
- periodic use of colour photographs in our journal;
- an annual or periodic award to recognize a member or members who have contributed significantly;
- our logo on a new checklist of the birds of British Columbia, to be released by Wild Bird Trust later in June;
- a portable display for promoting BCFO at related conferences and meetings;
- an expanded web page to inform and promote membership.

Bryan concluded by thanking the membership for their support and confidence, and urged members to achieve satisfaction by contributing to the society in every way possible.

9. Election of Directors

Ian Robertson presented the slate of nominees for 2002-2003. Don Wilson (Kelowna), not present at this meeting, and Dannie Carsen (Victoria), were nominated. Standing for re-election for a 2-year term were Sandra Kinsey (Prince George), and Brian Scott (Langley). There were no other nominations.

These candidates were declared elected by acclamation. One directorship remains open.

Jo Ann MacKenzie (Surrey), Glen Moores (Brentwood Bay), Ian Robertson (Langley), and Hank VanderPol (Kelowna) are completing the first year of a 2-year term, and are not candidates for re-election at this time. (Hank has served 5 of a maximum of 6 consecutive years on the Board.)

10. Other Business

(a) Motions: None

(b) Annual Conference 2003: The East Kootenay is being considered, possibly the Radium or Invermere areas.

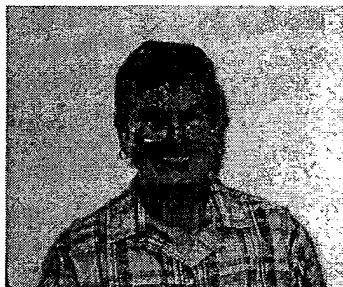
(c) Other: Wayne Weber suggested that the Board and newsletter editors consider some sort of column on bird sightings of interest in each issue of the newsletter, as most provincial and state newsletters include this feature.

Ian Robertson asked the Board to consider creating a category of membership for students, beyond the existing "Junior membership, age under 18", and suggested an annual membership fee of \$15.00.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn; by Jack Bowling, 2nd by Nancy Krueger. CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned by Bryan Gates at 5:20 p.m.



(Signed by) Jo Ann MacKenzie
Secretary
20 June 2002

British Columbia Field Ornithologists
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
For the year ended December 31, 2001
(Unaudited)

	Budget		
	2001	2001	2000
Revenue			
Membership	\$ 6,120	\$ 6,000	\$ 5,789
Conference extension	11,988	4,500	-
Conference fees	3,450	3,000	3,040
Donations	1,039	2,000	1,939
Field Trips	4,200	4,000	4,444
Advertising	75		-
Interest	41	700	770
	<u>26,912</u>	<u>20,200</u>	<u>15,982</u>
Expenditures			
Conferences extension	7,011	3,400	5,231
Conference facilities	1,844	3,000	2,257
Printing	1,536	1,700	680
Postage	1,322	1,100	359
Donations	426	1,000	1,760
Travel	1,544	2,000	4,082
Field trips	3,668	4,000	137
Stationery	118	200	461
Miscellaneous	135	200	-
Future Printing of Journal	2,200	1,200	1,200
	<u>19,806</u>	<u>17,800</u>	<u>16,167</u>
Surplus (deficit) for the year	<u>\$ 7,107</u>	<u>\$ 2,400</u>	<u>\$ (185)</u>

Balance Sheet: December 31, 2001

	2001	2000
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and term deposits	\$ 27,363	\$ 20,919
Receivables	956	755
Total Assets	<u>28,319</u>	<u>21,674</u>
Liabilities and Members' Equity		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 405	\$ 405
Deferred revenue	417	3,078
Future payable	4,600	2,400
	<u>5,422</u>	<u>5,883</u>
Members' Equity		
Balance, beginning of the year	15,791	15,976
Net earnings for the year	7,107	(185)
Balance, end of the year	<u>22,898</u>	<u>15,791</u>
Liabilities and Members' Equity Total	<u>\$ 28,319</u>	<u>\$ 21,674</u>

Bryan Gates, Director

Glen Moores, Director

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

From: David Sterling, Victoria, BC

A Late Entry in the Great Spring Snow Bunting Spectacle -
and why were they there. [see *BC BIRDING* 12(2):17]

In mid-April way back in the past millennium when I was gum-booting it through the snow, mud and melt water of the spring thaw near Athabasca, Alberta, I was privileged to witness a half section (320 acres) of farmed land covered with Snow Buntings. The buntings rose, whirled, massed and settled presenting a remarkable sight in the spring sunshine. Their liquid calls and the roar of their wings produced a wild cacophony clearly heard a half mile away. My conservative, semi-educated guestimate was a total of 250,000 birds plus or minus a few thousand or so. The field had not been fully harvested because an early autumn snow storm had flattened the wheat and weeds leaving a cornucopia for the buntings on their spring journey to the Arctic.

From: David Robinson and Susan Rothstein

After reading the recent article on Bald Eagles attacking Great Blue Herons I thought I should relate our recent experience. Susan Rothstein and I were at Blackie Spit in south Surrey on May 11, 2002. As is commonly the case the east shore of the estuary of the Nicomekl River was lined with many Great Blue Herons at the time. Susan first noticed an adult Bald Eagle pursuing a heron near the mouth of the Nicomekl (the heron appeared to be an adult, but we can not absolutely confirm this). The heron was squawking and trying to elude the eagle, but it was apparent that the eagle was gaining on it. After a 30-second chase that had the eagle almost catching the heron in mid-air, the heron took a desperate last-minute evasive move and landed in water about chest deep on the bird. The eagle turned, swooped down and landed on top of the heron, pushing it under water. The eagle was about chest deep in water at this point. After holding the heron down for about twenty seconds the eagle proceeded to swim to shore, towing the heron behind it. After about a four-minute swim the eagle reached shore (about a kilometre from our location), and began plucking and consuming the heron. The above action was viewed through X8 binoculars and a X45 spotting scope.

From: Betty Lunam, Courtenay BC

I thought you might be interested in this event, which my daughter Suzanne Anderson, her friend Karen O'Neil, Jim and myself, and other people out for a walk, witnessed.

Saturday evening June 8th, at the Courtenay Air Park Lagoon, we watched a mature Bald Eagle ("she") which had been harassing a Greater White-fronted Goose near the mouth of, and in the middle of, the Courtenay River. The goose would dive under at each pass of the eagle. This went on for perhaps ten minutes. The eagle took three breaks, sitting each time on a marine marker on the river. A second eagle ("he") then joined the "game" and, after at most three joint consecutive passes where the goose hardly had a chance to come up, he dove striking the goose and proceeded to swim to shore (butterfly stroke) dragging it along. He then lifted the goose up on to a low piling in the river close to shore, plucked it while, we believe, it was still alive, and fed on it. I then went to the car, an eight or nine minute fast walk, to get my scope. The feeding and plucking was still going on at my return and I was told that the eagle ignored a small craft going by. However, when a second craft went by, he flew up to a marine marker. At this time she came down and fed on the dead goose for a considerable time.

The sun had gone down and, just as we thought we would not see the end of the saga, the feeding eagle flew up with the then totally plucked and bloody goose carcass and took it to the nest. We rushed to an area where I had been surveying eagle nests just in time to witness the young being fed.

From: Eve Neale, Tatla Lake, BC

I was away at the meeting of the BC Field Ornithologists in Williams Lake when this event took place. My neighbour was good enough to record the event for me. I think it is worth passing this on to you.

On 10 June 2002, about 1:35 pm, our neighbour returned from fishing and noticed a disturbance at the eagles' nest at the top of the driveway. Two eagles were flying about the nest and crying. The neighbour rushed up the driveway with binoculars. With the nest in view, our neighbour could see immediately that a small bear was actually in the nest and was feasting on the young eagle or eagles. Young eagles had not been seen at this stage but the adults had been seen bringing feed to them .

The bear remained until 2:30 pm then climbed down below the nest and went to sleep sprawled comfortably on some large branches. This nest is located on top of a 70 foot fir. The neighbour left for several hours and returned to find the bear gone.

Later that evening both the bear and the eagles returned. The bear was lying below the nest and the eagles were flying above him crying. The bear slept in the tree that night. The eagles returned in the morning and the bear was sitting in the nest eating something, perhaps fish scraps. This time one of the eagle's talons connected with the bear's head and the bear was off the nest in the blink of an eye. He hung around lower in the tree. Finally the neighbour got tired of watching so left.

The neighbour returned the next afternoon and the bear was gone. About 9:30 pm the tree was checked again and the bear was sleeping under the nest.

The third morning the bear was seen climbing back into the nest. The eagles had returned and once again kept pestering the bear. The bear backed off and left the tree - not seen again. The eagles remained around the nest for two more days and then flew off not to return.

I was truly fascinated by this incident, unfortunately no pictures were taken.



The Puntzi Lake 'Fishers'

Bald Eagle attack on adult Great Blue Heron

by Daniel Bastaja
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It was with great interest that I read the article about apparent attacks on adult Great Blue Herons by Bald Eagles in the June 2002 issue of BC BIRDING (volume 12, no.2). At Blackie Spit in south Surrey, BC on the afternoon of Saturday, June 30th, 2001 I had a front row seat to just such an attack.

I was at the entrance to Farm Slough, just southeast of the spit itself, when I happened to notice on the far side of the Nicomekl River estuary, an adult Bald Eagle in hot pursuit of an adult Great Blue Heron on the wing. The heron swerved and dodged and flew tighter and tighter circles but could not seem to shake the eagle. After a solid minute of this pursuit the heron landed, about 20 metres from shore, in water a few feet deep. I was amazed to see the eagle land on the water directly in front of the heron and, flipping on its back and partially outstretching its wings for support, lunge with its talons at the body of the heron. The eagle stretched out its claws to the maximum extent while keeping its head back to avoid the beak thrusts directed at its head by the heron. In a flash I had the action targeted in my 80 mm scope with a X30 wide-angle eyepiece.

The eagle managed to get a lock on the body of the heron and, righting itself in the water, proceeded to use its wings to row itself to shore, dragging the mostly submerged heron behind it. Once it got to shore, the eagle released its prey and stood off a few feet. The heron was still alive, left on its back at the water's edge, slowly thrashing its head and legs. Expecting to see the eagle finish off its prey, I was surprised when it chose to completely ignore the object of its exertions.

Ten minutes passed before the mortally wounded heron managed to get to its feet. After several minutes on its feet, glaring at the eagle from about three or four feet away, the heron attacked! Though it could barely walk it staggered straight at the eagle, thrusting at it time and again with its beak, trying to drive it off. The eagle backed off perhaps a foot or two but basically stood its ground. When the heron realized it couldn't drive its tormentor away, it gradually staggered away. A few times it tried to fly but it was just so badly wounded there was no hope. Just to walk was difficult enough. Eventually the heron managed to put about 30-40 feet between itself and the eagle and that was where I left them.

By the time I left the area, it was well over half an hour since the eagle had brought its prey to shore, yet it made no effort whatsoever to finish the bird off or even keep the distance close when the heron started to move away. I thought it kind of odd that the eagle would go through such effort to land a sizeable meal and then totally ignore it. The only thing I could think of was that the eagle figured it had used enough energy and would wait for the heron to die before feeding.

I was not the only birder to witness this particular attack. During the entire time, there were three other birders on the opposite side of Farm Slough witnessing the same attack and, like me, they were glued to their scopes. Due to the distance and water separating us, I never had any communication with them or determined who they were but perhaps they will recognize the incident from this account and share with us their impressions of this unusual event.



BCFO 12th Annual General Conference, 2002

synopsis provided by Jack Bowling

Jo Ann Mackenzie, our new BCFO president, asked me to write a bit about the recent BCFO 2002 meeting in Williams Lake. I warned her that I could only speak for myself so if others want to chime in, write it up and submit it!

Friday, June 7, 2002

I was stuck at work until the late afternoon so I didn't hit the road until 5:15pm. Surprisingly little traffic on Highway 97 south from Prince George so I rolled into the Bil-Nor restaurant at 8 pm to find the social in full swing. Lots of old faces to greet and a few new ones, too, which is an encouraging sign. Finally got to meet Phil Ranson and Steve Howard after years of seeing each others' names in print. Apparently Phil thought I was some stodgy old wheezer. Only some days, Phil! Everybody was looking forward to the weekend. The weather looked promising: the low pressure system that had dumped snow and hail on the higher road elevations for travelers was on its way out and a ridge of high pressure was building in from the northwest. Fresh northwest winds were blowing but the skies were clearing. Packed it in relatively early to be rested for the next morning's field trip.

Saturday, June 8, 2002**Morning Field Trip - Dog Creek**

The morning dawned sunny but still windy which might keep songbirds deeper in the bushes. I joined my group for the journey south to Dog Creek and back. I had never been to this part of the province so I was stoked. Looking at an atlas, I had imagined that the area was relatively flat. Well, parts of it are but I forgot that the Fraser River has had many, many years to carve its way through the bedrock. To say that the vistas on approaching the river are stunning is an understatement -- they are awesome! The highlight for me was the magnificent basaltic bluff ten or so kilometers north of Dog Creek. Here we found a pair of Prairie Falcons and a ewe Bighorn Sheep with three little ones in tow. Bryan Gates and Ian Robertson assured me that this species usually has only one lamb but the females and young ones usually end up forming herds of their own. I tried to put myself in the falcons' place. What a stunning place to call home. Here from their eyrie, their unobstructed front porch view would be southwest over the Fraser Canyon and the countryside beyond. Life must be good here. Some White-throated Swifts showed up, wheeling and dashing in the afternoon sunshine. Dog Creek itself is tucked into the valley bottom with lots of riparian vegetation along the creek. Chock full of birds, too. A great place to which I will return often.

We were late (as always with birders) getting back for lunch so we shovelled it in. The afternoon paper sessions were all lined up and we started almost on time.

Technical Sessions

To those who couldn't stay awake for the afternoon sessions, here is my only admonition: don't do it again! First up was Bill Harper who has been studying the American White Pelicans of the province. This one was near and dear to a Prince George birders' heart since we are as curious as Bill about the semi-disconnected pelican population of Tachick and Nulki Lakes south of Vanderhoof which numbers about 70-80 adult breeding age birds. How are they associated with the Stum Lake breeding colony? Are they just "floaters", birds that for whatever reason lost, or could not find, a mate? One bird there had been banded at Stum Lake twelve years ago. Or is there an undiscovered breeding colony in the area? Unlikely given the conspicuousness of this species but stranger things have happened. Lots to learn here.

Next Astrid van Woudenberg filled us in on her Flammulated Owl work. Since Rick Howie and I had done our own field work on the distribution of this species around Kamloops in the early 1980s, I was curious to see what had been discovered in the intervening years. I was glad to see that Astrid had come up with the same idea that Rick

and I had way back then -- that the natural grasslands seem to be the important limiting factor. The 'Flam' population around Williams Lake has no Ponderosa Pine flicker cavities in which to nest, but there are natural grasslands. In fact, when driving home on Sunday, I noted that the grasslands extended as far north as Marguerite. I wouldn't be surprised to find this species tucked into isolated pockets right to the edge of the grasslands; and with global warming, this range should extend northward with time. Near-cavity videotaping has confirmed that the owl's diet consists largely of tree and bush crickets, and moths. The crickets are tied to the grasslands as well. Ongoing research should illuminate other differences between more southerly pine/Douglas-fir populations and more pure Douglas-fir populations farther north.

Katie Aitken then related her work with cavity nesting birds in the Central Interior. She is just in the first few years of research but has discovered already that sapsucker cavities are important for secondary cavity nesters. In fact, her research suggested that it would be hard to find an old sapsucker or flicker cavity that wasn't being used by some type of secondary cavity nester in the aspen groves. Contrarily, cavities in the more continuous conifer forests are largely used by small mammals rather than birds.

Then we got the viewpoint from the industry side: Shawn Meisner of Lignum Ltd. which is one of the major players in the forestry business in Williams Lake. The fact that a private forest company has a biologist on staff was not lost on anybody. In fact, every forest company that I know of has biologists on the payroll. Shawn laid out the problems and possible paths to solutions that he faces when trying to log forests in a more ecological manner. He asked us naturalists to be his eyes and ears. Since we are more finely tuned to the natural world than many of his colleagues, he relies on us to let him know when he may be messing up. It wasn't stated, but the corollary should also be true: if we notice forest companies doing something right, we should also let them know.

Dick Cannings then gave us a rundown on his 'fledgling' (sorry) Nocturnal Owl Survey in B.C. There is still lots of fine tuning to be done with the protocols. The Prairies and eastern Canada do not have the elevational and/or latitudinal clines that we do here in our province so we cannot just borrow their protocols and expect them to work. And the fact that the beginning of the Great Horned Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl calling periods differ by up to a couple of months in most years doesn't help. Then add in the fact that some owl species' calling periods are somewhat variable from year to year anyway and it doesn't get any easier. Oh yeah, then there is the weather -- many northern B.C. surveyors couldn't get out onto their routes until May this year due to snow. It will take quite a few years to get a handle on how to survey owls properly in this province. Thanks to Dick for beginning the process.

All in all, a superb technical session. Bird research is far from dead in the province.

Annual General Meeting

This was the most pleasant AGM I can remember since there were no contentious issues to discuss. Bryan Gates and Russ Tkachuk had reached the end of their maximum six year "sentence" on the executive so they stepped down. Laurie Rockwell also reluctantly relinquished his seat. Thanks to all for their stellar work and support. Dannie Carsen of Victoria and Don Wilson of Kelowna were elected as replacements but we are still one short of the nine required. If there is anybody out there who feels they can contribute, please step up. I did my stint and I learned so much. In the subsequent post-AGM executive meeting, Jo Ann Mackenzie was elected as our new president. I am sure she and the rest of the board will do a great job.

Social Hour and Banquet

Great food and a care-free atmosphere. Had lots of time to talk with the others about what they saw on their various morning field trips. All the birds seem to be in their usual locations. Perhaps one day somebody will try to find out what drives the distribution of magpies in this province. There is lots of good habitat for them along the

Dog Creek road but we saw nary a one. The food was fantastic. I would recommend the Bil-Nor restaurant to anyone.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ron Ydenburg 'The Return of the Raptors'

There are those moments in life when you realize you are in the presence of great intellect. I had expected a treatise on the recovery of species such as the *anatum* Peregrine Falcon. Instead, we were treated to the presentation of a thesis so remarkable that it could really shake things up in the bird management world.

Here was a man the same age as myself who had been conducting research on shorebirds in North and South America and Europe for the past twenty or so years. During this time, raptor populations had recovered across North America after the banning of DDT. However, this was accompanied by a contemporaneous decrease in the numbers of shorebirds at various migration staging areas, particularly the Western Sandpiper. Naturally, like every good scientist, Ron was curious if there was any direct relationship. Enter John Ireland, longtime caretaker of the Reifel Sanctuary at the mouth of the Fraser River, and a shorebird biologist himself. John presented his data of the past twenty years on the number of Peregrine Falcons present along the sandpiper staging areas of the Fraser River delta. I suspect there must have been a few Eureka's! expressed when they melded their data. There was a conspicuous spike in the number of Peregrines during the May northbound migration of the Western Sandpiper. Way too much of a spike to be due to chance. The unmistakable conclusion was that the Peregrines were following them like a pack of ravenous wolves.

But there was much more, way too much to relate here. The end conclusion is that there is a much finer-tuned predator/prey relationship between the Western Sandpiper and the Peregrine Falcon than people realized. And probably one that is self-regulating in ways that bird biologists have heretofore un-imagined. Is mankind messing around with that relationship by artificially rearing Peregrines? I was awestruck by the probity of analysis as Ron picked up the pieces of the jigsaw and put them together. His and John's thesis is currently before the review board of the illustrious journal, 'Nature'. If the board has any smarts at all, they will trumpet this research and give it the attention it deserves. Much debate will be elicited.

I must say that I felt selfishly validated when Ron said that his work would not have been possible without years of data produced by naturalists such as ourselves. This may be so, but we need visionaries like Dr. Ydenburg to put all the data together. This was by far the best presentation I have heard in many years and I just thank my lucky stars that I was able to be there for it.

We stepped out of the hall to find the wind had died. Perfect owling weather... but unfortunately nobody had the stamina required for that. I think we need a morning and a night shift at these AGMs.

Sunday, June 9, 2002

Morning Field Trip

We woke to crystal clear skies and no wind. It would be much warmer today. There was a buzz in the air because the Becher's Prairie gang had seen the Northern Hawk-Owl and branching chicks there yesterday. A big gang piled into the vehicles and we were off west on Highway 20 to the pulloff onto the Rock Lake area. Our leaders had warned us that the road was rough and they weren't kidding. Deeply rutted and guess what -- lots of rocks! Becher's Prairie is well named with everything you would find in Saskatchewan and southern Alberta: aspen copses set apart by pothole lakes and wide open spaces. Only the occasional forest fragment of Douglas-fir and pine spoiled the illusion.

On the way in we stopped to admire the numerous ducks. Ian Robertson couldn't help exclaiming wonderment at the increase in Gadwalls since he was a younger biologist 30 years ago, a trend noted continent-wide. We were shown BC's largest known garter snake hibernaculum, a beautiful huge boulder honeycombed with numerous mini-caves. There was a

good opportunity to point out to the 'Coasties' in the group the differences in the Dusky Flycatcher's song as compared to the more familiar Hammond's, and its drier, more open, habitat preferences.

And then finally we were at the Northern Hawk-Owl site where one of the babes was out in plain view on a fallen log. It didn't take the mother long to show up and announce her displeasure at the gathering of photographers around her young one. I wanted to take my share of photos as well but I overcame the urge and left well enough alone. Not that I am holier-than-thou; I just felt like an intruder.

Dr. Karen Wiebe has been doing flicker studies in the same area and she was kind enough to invite us to watch while she weighed some nestlings. She pulled no fewer than nine hissing, naked young from the aspen nest hole, the living remainder of the eleven eggs laid. It was discovered that the young were now about six times heavier than at hatching. At this stage, they can often put on as much as ten grams of fat per day. The size difference among siblings is startling and the runt is not likely to make it. The chicks will be banded once the feathers erupt and sex can be discerned.

From Becher's, we headed off to Farwell Canyon. I first came to this area in 1977 and have only been back a few times since. A spectacular area with magnificent hoodoos and silt bluffs above the now raging Chilcotin River, a few kilometers upstream from its confluence with the Fraser River. I was standing in front of one of the moist draws that feed into the river when I thought to myself: "moist microclimate in a dry zone just like Woodhaven in Kelowna". For those not familiar with Woodhaven, it is a bit of interior cedar belt stuck in the middle of the Mission area of south Kelowna famous for harbouring Western Screech-Owls. I wishfully gave a few toots but none of the cavities in the cottonwoods gave up any owls. Something to be watched for, though, given that they have recently been discovered near Pemberton.

A quick trip back and we all dispersed. Those going on the extension had another night in town while other unlucky souls such as myself had to return home. The Williams Lake area has a lot to offer a nature lover and I was glad we had the opportunity to learn some of the secrets of this part of the interior. This AGM continued the linking of bird researchers and birders, something that needs to be maintained and enhanced. Perhaps we need some field camps? See you all next year if not sooner!

BCFO - Sunday Afternoon River Walk

by Viveka Ohman
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The Sunday afternoon river walk began at 2:30 pm and ended by 4:45 pm.

Following a busy BCFO Conference, Fred McMechan led a group of 20 or so birders on a pleasant afternoon walk in a valley beside Soda Creek some 12 km northwest of Williams Lake. It was a riparian habitat so we were treated to sights and songs of various species of vireos, warblers, flycatchers, thrushes and also some waterfowl and raptors. Birders on the walk tallied an approximate total of 40 species, seen and heard by most. One empid was seen on its nest. An accipiter soaring high in the sky challenged us all for a time as we speculated upon its correct identification. Finally, while some of us were still wondering, the 'experts' determined it to be a Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Warblers were numerous with a Nashville Warbler being a highlight. The quiet, but undeniably catharus-like, song of a Veery - "veer, veer, veer" - came from low in the forest understory. As we neared the end of the walk some of us were treated to great views of a Calliope Hummingbird perched in shrubbery beside the trail, showing off his brilliant gorget. A great afternoon and a fine end to the first phase of the conference. The walk thrilled and delighted all who participated.

Walker Valley Field Trip, 8 June 2002

by Marilyn and Andy Buhler

The drive up from the lower mainland on Friday had been cold. Saturday morning was a little warmer but there was still a chilly wind blowing as we gathered at 5:45 am in the parking lot of the Scout Island Nature Centre in Williams Lake. The previous evening attendees at the Annual General Conference had signed up for various field trips and this morning we were on the road by 6 am. Our vehicle headed south from Williams Lake as we were to meet our trip leaders at the rest stop at the 108 Ranch. We did not stop to bird during the hour-long trip south, partly because we had a deadline and partly because there was not very much bird activity along the highway.

Upon arrival at the 108 Ranch rest stop we met up with Kristi Iverson and Ken MacKenzie, our trip leaders. Kristi and Ken live in Lac la Hache and bird this area regularly. There was a small lake at the rest stop so we started our tally with American Crow, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow Warbler, Song Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Willow Flycatcher, Brewer's Blackbird and Tree Swallows.

We redistributed passengers and headed off into a residential area. After navigating several twists and turns we stopped, parked the cars on the road shoulder, and got out at what appeared to be still part of the subdivision. After a quick stroll through an empty lot we reached a gate that allowed us into one of the Walker Valley greenbelt areas. A Common Raven 'cronked' as it flew over, several American Robins searched for breakfast and a large flock of Canada Geese protested our progress.

There are a couple of lakes in the 108 Ranch development and they have greenbelt areas surrounding them and connecting them to each other. The greenbelt area we entered is used for both horse and cattle grazing and for recreation - and what better recreation than birding!

The walk took us through an active horse pasture and down into the valley proper. Not many birds were seen flying or were heard calling because of the steady wind. However, at the lake proper we were treated to Barn Swallow, Black Tern, Lesser Scaup, Mallard, Pied-billed Grebe, Bufflehead, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, Wilson's Phalarope, Ring-necked Duck, American Wigeon, American Coot, Redhead, Killdeer, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Cinnamon Teal, and Common Loon. Since the water was fairly high it was not possible to actually circumnavigate the lake so we decided to bird down and back along just one side of the lake.

One of the highlights early in our walk was the sighting of a pair of Sandhill Cranes accompanied by their two rust-coloured young. They were across the lake foraging within a herd of cattle but everyone did get good views of them. As mentioned, the lake held a number of species and what made it especially enjoyable was that one of our group was a novice birder. Nearly every species was a lifer for him. What a great opportunity to share enthusiasms and to encourage a new birder.

We continued through the grassland and followed a meandering path within shrubby willows, cottonwoods and aspen along the lakeshore. All this time the cold wind had been our constant companion. It made the aspens tremble noisily and did a good job of masking most bird calls. However, we did note Warbling Vireo, European Starling, Pine Siskin, Northern Flicker, Red Crossbill, Black-capped Chickadee, Belted Kingfisher, Marsh Wren, Brown-headed Cowbird, Bald Eagle, Purple Finch, Western Wood-pewee, Red-naped Sapsucker, Cliff Swallow, Violet-Green Swallow, Chipping Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler and an Alder Flycatcher. It also affected the birds. We discovered several Willow Flycatchers perched near the base of the shrubs and hawking for insects from about two feet off the ground.

The feisty little Calliope Hummingbirds we saw were hanging onto swaying branches for dear life. On our way back to the cars we were greeted by a Western Meadowlark and, to watch us leave, a Red-tailed Hawk circled overhead.

All too soon it was time to head back to Williams Lake. The wind had not gotten any warmer but the birding had been good and we had been shown a part of the province that was new to us. Thanks to our guides Kristi Iverson and Ken MacKenzie.

BCFO Conference Extension Trip - Puntzi Lake 2002

by Gwen Nicol
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Twenty-eight eager members departed Williams Lake at 6:15 am Monday, June 10th. Just out of town Eve Neale, fellow member and invaluable local guide, was waiting for us by the side of the road. She was so inconspicuously dressed in birding green that we almost missed her! We proceeded west on Highway 20 across the mighty Fraser to Moon Road. On a dirt bank at the edge of the narrow road was a Townsend's Solitaire's nest - a few twigs precariously placed at eye level. The road led to an expanse of pasture where we spotted a Long-billed Curlew feeding. Unfortunately, we could not find the young curlews which were seen earlier by the field trip participants. We returned to the highway, and passed the soaring Loran C transmitter tower, an integral part of the Coast Guard navigation system for the West Coast. Near it is a track into Becher's Prairie, part of the upper grasslands of the Cariboo-Chilcotin. Small lakes and patches of trees make it a birder's delight.

Here, in winter, a small, rocky hill is the largest den of hibernating garter snakes in this province. Various species were busy at each lake. These included a large colony of Eared Grebes, Barrow's Goldeneye, the three teals, Gadwall, Ring-necked and Ruddy Ducks. Horned Larks and Vesper Sparrows sat singing on the rocks strewn across the landscape and an Olive-sided Flycatcher called for a brew. We were privileged to watch Prof. Karen Wiebe of the University of Saskatchewan deftly removing Northern Flickers from trapdoors in nests, weighing the numerous young, and grading the shaft colour of an adult male with a colour chart - like choosing paint! All these details were meticulously recorded by her research assistant. Karen led us to the nest site of a pair of Northern Hawk Owls where we had excellent close viewing of the adults and two young out of the nest. The young owl's plumage blended perfectly with the dappled colour of the aspens making them almost invisible.



Dr. K. Wiebe with G-BAG

After a picnic lunch at Bull Canyon on the Chilko River, the feature stop of the afternoon was the Chilcotin Marsh, a large breeding area for Black Terns, Sandhill Cranes, yellowlegs and others. As we drove in we were stopped in our tracks by an agitated Killdeer. On careful inspection Bryan found its eggs in the gravel. Again we marveled at nature's camouflage. We saw both species of yellowlegs, once standing conveniently side by side on an old rail fence. We were treated to a display of poetry in motion by a large flock of Wilson's Phalarope as they wheeled and flashed in low circles over the water.

On to Puntzi Lake, Barney's Lakeside Resort, and superb home cooking! (Take note - the ownership will change this fall and the cook will be leaving with her co-owner / husband.) We instantly felt at home when we saw the hummingbird feeder outside the office, one of many feeders and nest boxes throughout the property. Barney's is best described as rustic, with old wood cabins and camping spots ('facilities' near by!) and one newer bunkhouse with two bathrooms en suite. The fun was deciding who would sleep where? Due to their kind inclusion of the two remaining 'wait listed' members, Bryan and Hank found themselves sleeping in the TV room of the bunkhouse. Since all other rooms were accessed through this room it was about as private as a Greyhound depot! Much appreciated, guys!

We were greeted at Barney's by some very vocal White-crowned Sparrows which seemed to sing all day. Other avian residents were Mountain Bluebirds busy feeding nestlings, Mountain Chickadees, and a pair of Merlins which added some excitement that evening when a few of us were fortunate to witness the mid-air exchange of food between them. Puntzi is fished by American White Pelicans as well as by humans. A raft of pelicans could be seen in the distance. After dinner some members accepted the offer of a closer look in a small boat. Bonaparte's Gulls were seen along the way. Later they heard that Puntzi has a reputation for some mean waves. The call of the wild from the Common Loon echoed about our cabins during the night.

Breakfast at Barney's is served from 3 am to 6 am. After a meal fit for a logger at 5 am we headed down Airport Road in search of Sharp-tailed Grouse. Fanning out on foot in the area of a known lek we flushed a bird twice. The second time the grouse flew high enough for all to see. We continued on foot to a thin strip of forest near the marsh where a Great Horned Owl family was reported. We located two owls and had good views of them. (lifers for at least one of us). A Bald Eagle perched on a distant tree and a few lucky members heard an American Bittern.

We drove from lodgepole pine country south on Eagle Lake Road to Douglas-fir habitat. The distant Coast Mountains were visible a few times. Along the way to Tatlayoko Lake we made several roadside stops to look and listen while Bryan did his best to call a Northern Pygmy Owl with his grandson's toy hooter. Red-tailed Hawk, Cassin's Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Redstart and Evening Grosbeak were some of the morning's species. We passed scenic, secluded guest ranches. One near Tatlayoko has since been purchased by the Land Conservancy. We found a splendid location for a leisurely picnic lunch in the sunshine. We could look across Tatlayoko at the high, rugged mountain on the opposite shore and scan for goat or eagle. A White-winged Scoter floated by, Pine Siskins fed noisily, and Common Ravens watched. After lunch most braved the heat and hiked up a trail seeking some mountain species. We were rewarded by several silent Clark's Nutcrackers, Townsend's Warbler, a Cooper's Hawk hotly pursued by a murder of Crows, a brilliant Western Tanager, Hairy Woodpecker and Calliope Hummingbirds.

After dinner that evening we birded a gravel road, braving the mosquitoes and a stampede of 'wild' horses. We ambled down a promising track until we suddenly saw a residence. We hightailed it before any shots were fired. We spotted a pair of Pintails in dense vegetation and heard Hermit Thrush, Sandhill Cranes and a Sora. As the light faded Bryan hooted for owls and someone thought they heard a Saw-whet, another a distant Northern Pygmy. Then, we all were astonished by the arrival of two Short-eared Owls that flew overhead several times, and obligingly landed close to us. An exciting finale!

Overnight the clear, fine weather held, and it was a chilly 4°C again at breakfast time. We had a short drive to Chilanko loop where we spent a very pleasant couple of hours strolling along a creek, through what sounded like flycatchers' alley, to the opposite side of the marsh visited the previous day. We had excellent views of a singing Northern Waterthrush, and Marsh Wren. We heard Lincoln's and Savannah Sparrows, an elusive Ruffed Grouse drumming several times, and the call and boom of a Common Nighthawk. A pair of Hooded Mergansers added to our list and we were amused by a family of Common Loons with their chicks riding high and dry at the stern.

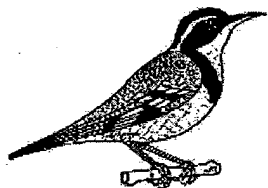
We said goodbye to Eve who lives near Tatla Lake, and drove east to Hanceville, then south on Big Creek Road which looped to Farwell Canyon. After a few stops to search unsuccessfully for grouse and Bobolink we arrived at Fletcher Creek campground, elevation 4,000', for another picnic beside the lake. A flotilla of Surf Scoters sailed about, a lone Horned Grebe with them. A pair of Red-necked Grebes busily arranged vegetation on their nest raft, and Cedar Waxwings fluttered in the lakeshore brush. A Red-naped Sapsucker masquerading as a Red-breasted caused considerable discussion, but patiently stuck around until we reached consensus.

On a dusty road toward Farwell canyon Allan's vehicle was delayed by a flat tire - the only hitch in our 730 km trip. We waited for them as we overlooked the canyon with its superb view of the opposite cliffs, plateau and sand dunes. Alas, no California bighorns in sight, nor Prairie Falcon. We descended to an old ranch site beside the Chilcotin River and squinted up at White-throated Swifts, barely visible dots against the cliff high above. As it was mid-afternoon and very hot we did not linger in the canyon.

Of course, I have mentioned only some of the 127 bird species seen or heard during the trip. Remarkably, we didn't see a moose, and only a couple of folk saw a bear near Barney's on Monday evening.

Our thanks to Bryan Gates, (a 'natural' leader) and Hank VanderPol for their excellent organisation as well as driving. Thanks also to our other drivers Ev Miyasaki and Allan Milligan. Perfect weather and good company made it a totally enjoyable trip.

Welcome to Our Newest Members



Gail Gleason
Steve Howard
Pam Laing
Ed McDonald
Istvan B. Orosi
Clara Rommerdahl
Julie Steciw

Andrew Stepniewski
Wade Tokarek
Michaela Waterhouse
Kristy Wideski
Frans Woons
Mark Yunker



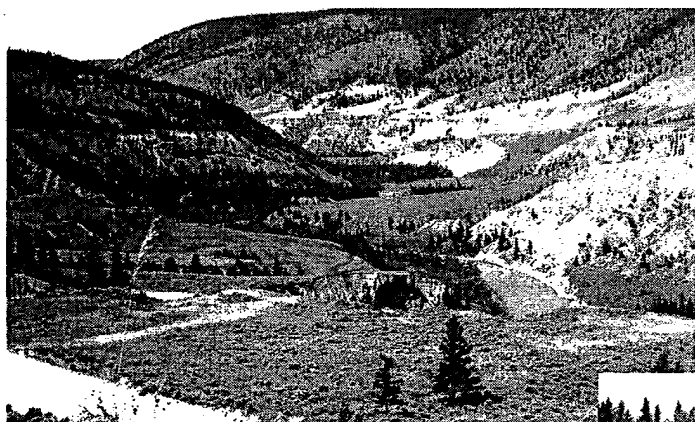
"What is that man smoking?"



Sandhill Crane chicks



Jo Ann giving award to Martin McNicholl



Farwell Canyon vista



Seeking birds

Somewhere up a mountain road



Northern
Flicker
by Dr. Karen Wiebe

This drawing will
grace the cover of
Volume #10 of
British Columbia
Birds



"Well, they did say there were good birds over there."

Birding, Hiking and Touring British Columbia**16 May-11 June 2002**

(excerpted from a much longer submission)

by Andy Stepniewski
291 Windy Point Drive
Wapato WA 98951**The Cariboo: 20-25 May 2002**

North from Cache Creek, we again quickly lost many signs of spring as the highway quickly ascends to the Cariboo Plateau country. Our first major birding stop was at the 100 Mile House Visitor Centre lake and marsh. The Chamber of Commerce really has done a nice job of promoting this birdy place. It is easy to scope from the road on two sides and a trail provides access to the more secluded backside. We had nice views of many water-birds; perhaps most notable was a male Long-tailed Duck, amongst about 15 species of waterfowl. Both Sora and Virginia Rail kept up a lively dialogue in the marshes. The pond had four species of grebes, including Pied-billed, Horned, Red-necked and Eared. Swarms of swallows flitted and darted about low over the water, too. Yellow-headed Blackbirds were numerous, also.

The following morning, though very cool and wet, we again visited the marsh and took the trail into the spruce and alder woods fringing the lake. There were loads of migrants on the move, present for a short period, then mostly gone. We observed numbers of Warbling Vireos, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped (both Myrtle and Audubon's), Townsend's and Wilson's Warblers. I thought it was dramatic evidence the tremendous pull these migrants feel; they push on even in the face of pretty adverse conditions.

On arriving in Riske Creek later on the 21st, it was cold and windy; the deciduous trees and shrubs still mostly leafless. The surrounding conifer forest seemed cold and lifeless. The thought of warmth and greenery pulled us like a magnet down in elevation. South from Riske Creek 15 kilometres on a good, but steeply descending road (with many switchbacks) is the overlook of Farwell Canyon on the Chilcotin River. At river level was a landscape utterly different from the cold lodgepole pine dominated Chilcotin country above. A tongue of shrub-steppe habitat, dominated by dense big sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass extends north to here. The habitat, to me appeared to be in pretty good condition. It especially looked good for Brewer's Sparrow, because of the vigorous growth of native grasses. Checking the records, it appears Brewer's Sparrows have made it here, though successful breeding is not yet proven. We observed both Bald and Golden Eagles one Rock Wren, many Vesper Sparrows and small numbers of Western Meadowlark. The cliffs here are really impressive, and it was our first view of the Chilcotin River, made muddy by spring runoff. We took a short hike through the grasslands, admiring the Rocky Mountain junipers, lush native grasses and savoring the memorable scenery, especially the hoodoos.

We checked into the Chilcotin Lodge in Riske Creek, run by a Dutch couple, and evidently catering mainly to European visitors. Rufous Hummingbird, Say's Phoebe, Tree and Cliff Swallows, and Mountain Bluebird were conspicuous around the lodge. We were awakened to the gentle chattering of Cliff Swallows swirling outside our window. They attempt to nest under the eaves, but their efforts are stymied by a daily hosing from the fastidious Dutch proprietor. I mentioned to him these birds had traveled all the way from South America and were the same species as whose arrival is celebrated at Mission San Juan Capistrano in southern California. Their arrival here certainly isn't celebrated. I hope my comments on the swallows might prompt him to adopt a different attitude. I rather doubt it, though.

On the morning of the 22nd, we began our exploration of Becher's Prairie near Riske Creek in earnest, regardless of the weather or the advance of spring. This is a famous landscape for the naturalist, with numbers of 'prairie' pothole lakes, fringed by productive marshes, patches of spruce, lodgepole pine, and Douglas-fir, aspen copses, and expansive grasslands. I judge that grazing has moderately impacted wildlife values on these grasslands, but due to the region's fairly ample precipitation, these important habitats may be pretty resilient. Birds are abundant and varied here. We thoroughly enjoyed driving the 2-tracks (cautiously because some were still wet) and walking the grasslands.

We noted an abundance of water and marsh birds on and around the numerous wetlands. Common species included Red-necked and Eared Grebes (a few Horned), Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Barrow's Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Sora, American Coot, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Common Snipe, Tree Swallow, Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Savannah and Lincoln's Sparrows, and Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

Species that we found uncommon included Common Loon, Cinnamon Teal, Common Goldeneye, Greater Scaup (Drummond Lake), Surf and White-winged Scoters (Drummond Lake), Bald Eagle, Sandhill Crane, Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew, Semipalmated, Least, and Baird's Sandpipers, Red-necked Phalarope, American Pipit, Song Sparrow, and Lapland Longspur (one in female plumage).

The various aspen copses, though still only partially in leaf, held the following common species: Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ruffed Grouse, Red-naped Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Dusky and Least Flycatchers, Warbling Vireo, Common Raven, American Robin, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, and Wilson's Warblers, and Chipping Sparrow.

Conifer stands held Pileated Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Hammond's Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, Common Raven, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and Pine Siskin.

The grasslands held a few Horned Larks (particularly lake edges), and many Savannah and Vesper Sparrows.

We tried to follow the site description in Taylor's guide*, but found directions confusing. Also, we had to be very careful as many of the 2-tracks were quite muddy.

In the afternoon, we drove west towards Stum Lake in hopes of observing pelicans. On reaching Alexis Creek, we headed north on Stum Lake Road, which seemed logical. Soon, the road faded into a muddy 2-track and we were forced to turn around. Inquiring with natives, it appeared we needed to take a left short of Anah Lake, then follow another convoluted series of instructions. We carefully followed these directions, only to be thwarted by infamous 'Chilcotin mud'. We retreated, without seeing pelicans. We were amused by the locals comments on the regions roads: "The roads are good if it's dry, that's the way it is in this country."

We returned to Becher's Prairie and camped in a spot I judged good for owls. Alas, it rained a cold sleet; the owls had other ideas and stayed quiet.

Early morning on 23 May, we commenced a drive of 2-tracks in the prairie area and soon came upon a solitary Sharp-tailed Grouse by the roadside. This obliging individual appeared a bit nervous at first, but soon went back to feeding and allowed us good viewing and photographic opportunities. We also spent a couple hours on the grassland by the Coast Guard loran site, where Sprague's Pipit had nested some years ago. This, it turned out, was probably pure fantasy; the pipits have not been seen here for at least 10 years.

South from Highway 20, Moon Road parallels the gorge on a bench high above the Chilcotin River, muddy brown and in flood during our visit. At a small meadow with quaking aspen is a view of Doc English Bluff, a picturesque cliff towering high above the river, and site of an ecological reserve. This cliff is well known among birders as hosting the northernmost nesting colony of White-throated Swifts (though we had trouble finding it, perhaps because it was so cold). Obliging, however, was an adult Golden Eagle, which soared closely overhead. Among botanists, the limestone cliff is known as harboring a number of rare plants. After traveling through Douglas-fir forest with a remarkable moss and lichen groundcover, the road enters a bench, partly grassland, partly pasture. In places, trembling aspen thickets occur. Along this stretch were numbers of Long-billed Curlews, Their raucous cries seem louder than usual, perhaps because we were in a gorge and their cries echoed. One was even perched atop a high Douglas-fir, an odd place for a grassland bird! From a grassy overlook, we had views of this awesome river far below.

Ellen used this opportunity to take photos while I studied the landscape. North facing aspects were densely clothed in places in a Douglas-fir forest, as yet unlogged, probably on account of the steep slopes in the gorge. South slopes, on the other hand, were dry and sparsely covered with Douglas-fir, Rocky Mountain juniper and various bunchgrasses. We enjoyed a scramble up this slope to a fine overlook of the region. Blue Grouse, Dusky Flycatcher, Cassin's Vireo, and Townsend's Solitaire were notable on this jaunt. In the mammal division, we did see a few bighorn sheep, for which this region is a stronghold.

Later in the day, we drove to Alkali Lake where pelicans had been spotted a number of times this spring. Alas, we were skunked once again. But, we found the numbers and variety of waterbirds on the lake impressive, including numbers of Surf and White-winged Scoters, likely migrants.

From here, the low elevations along the Fraser River beckoned once again. It turned out to be a long ways past Dog Creek on a very steep gravel road in wonderfully rugged terrain to a primitive campsite on the Fraser River. We camped near the mouth of Churn Creek, the north end of a new provincial park, that protects a large portion of this rugged canyon country. This very dry region has extensive bunchgrass mantled benches above the river, impressive multi-hued cliffs and scattered areas of Douglas-fir forest and patches of riparian growth, which were actually spring green! At dusk on the 23rd May, we walked uphill on the empire valley Ranch Road on the west side of the Fraser River and heard Chukar and Common Poorwill near the first major area of cliff.

On the morning of the 24 May, we repeated this hike, but went past our previous evenings spot on the road to the nice riparian area visible from our Fraser River campsite. The weather had cleared some and migrants, including warblers and sparrows, especially Chipping, were seen in abundance. We watched many sparrows flying in a northwest direction all morning long; it was obvious a great many individuals were on the move. We saw one Bald Eagle, several Red-tailed Hawks, one Golden Eagle, flushed at least three Chukar, heard a number of Dusky Flycatchers, Warbling Vireos, Western Wood-Pewee, Eastern Kingbird, and saw numbers of Orange-crowned, 'Audubon's', Townsend's, and Wilson's Warblers. Numbers of Western Tanagers were also on the move. Several other sparrows were also notable. Most interesting was a Lark Sparrow right in the campsite. Moving north along the sage-covered bench near the river was one Clay-colored Sparrow, one Brewer's Sparrow, and lots of Chipping Sparrows. In the campsite's tall cottonwoods was one male Bullock's Oriole. That night, we elected to motel it in Williams Lake to clean and rest up a bit.

In Williams Lake, I phoned Phil Ransom, a local expert, who gave us exciting news which had us once again en route to Becher's Prairie on the morning of the 25th. In the winter of 2000-2001, Phil told us, a large number of Northern Hawk-Owls wintered in interior British Columbia. Evidently a few remained to breed, for this was the second year a pair nested in the Riske Creek area. Following his directions, we came to a boggy section in the two-track which made us nervous about driving farther. So, we walked the last several kilometres to the trembling aspen copse where the owls were nesting. Walking along the track, we noted some new arrivals, including Olive-sided and Willow Flycatchers as well as more Least Flycatchers. Warbling Vireo had also become more noticeable. North from Rock Lake, in an aspen copse, we found the owls. On approaching the area, raspy calls, very much like that of a begging juvenile Great Horned Owl, alerted us that we were probably close to the owls. The nest was in a four metre high aspen stub. We believe the owlets had hatched as both the adults were out of the nest. An adult went on a hunting foray, returning in ten minutes to the snag, then feeding the young a vole.

We enjoyed one final view of the pothole lakes that dot this region. Rock Lake seemed to be particularly attractive to Eared Grebe. We watched several pairs perform their beautiful *pas-de-deux*. When we returned to the car we bumped into three Williams Lake birders scouting for the upcoming BCFO Annual Conference. We had a short conversation about the Becher's Prairie Grasslands and I wondered aloud if the area's military status might aid in achieving greater protection for this very nice chunk of habitat.

After all these trips into the Becher's Prairie area from different directions, we were finally figuring out how the roads really connected. This exceptional area really deserves an accurate site guide.

The local birders we met said they had seen three American White Pelicans on Williams Lake that morning. As we were still 'pelican-less in British Columbia', we left in search of these birds. Though we spent an hour or so searching at both ends of Williams Lake, they had evidently moved on. We saw lots of other neat birds, though, including three Sandhill Cranes and a pair of Bullocks Orioles, at the south end of the lake. In brush by the roadside, we heard and had good views of Clay-colored Sparrow, whose song reminds me of a rattlesnake buzz. We also kept an eye out for Black Swift which they had reported being at Scout Island (a really nice wetland area at the north end of Williams Lake) the evening before. The swifts had evidently moved on for we did not see them, either.

*Taylor, Keith. *A Birder's Guide British Columbia*. Birdfinding Guides, Victoria, BC.

BCFO AGM, June 2002 - Williams Lake area Bird List

compiled by Hank VanderPol

Common Loon	Ring-necked Pheasant	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Blue Grouse	Say's Phoebe	Yellow Warbler
Red-necked Grebe	Ruffed Grouse	Western Kingbird	Magnolia Warbler
Eared Grebe	Virginia Rail	Eastern Kingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Western Grebe	Sora	Horned Lark (prairie race)	Townsend's Warbler
American White Pelican	American Coot	Tree Swallow	American Redstart
Double-crested Cormorant	Sandhill Crane	Violet-green Swallow	Northern Waterthrush
Great Blue Heron	Killdeer	N. Rough-winged Swallow	MacGillivray's Warbler
Canada Goose	Greater Yellowlegs	Bank Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Wood Duck	Spotted Sandpiper	Cliff Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Long-billed Curlew	Barn Swallow	Western Tanager
Mallard	Common Snipe	Gray Jay	Lazuli Bunting
Blue-winged Teal	Wilson's Phalarope	Steller's Jay	Spotted Towhee
Cinnamon Teal	Bonaparte's Gull	Black-billed Magpie	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Ring-billed Gull	Common Raven	Clay-coloured Sparrow
Gadwall	Herring Gull	American Crow	Brewer's Sparrow
American Wigeon	Black Tern	Black-capped Chickadee	Vesper Sparrow
Redhead	Rock Dove	Mountain Chickadee	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Mourning Dove	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Greater Scaup	Northern Hawk Owl	House Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Common Nighthawk	Winter Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Surf Scoter	White-throated Swift	Marsh Wren	Dark-eyed Junco
Barrow's Goldeneye	Calliope Hummingbird	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Bobolink
Bufflehead	Rufous Hummingbird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Red-winged Blackbird
Hooded Merganser	Belted Kingfisher	Mountain Bluebird	Western Meadowlark
Common Merganser	Red-naped Sapsucker	Townsend's Solitaire	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Veery	Rusty Blackbird
Osprey	Hairy Woodpecker	Swainson's Thrush	Brewer's Blackbird
Bald Eagle	Northern Flicker	American Robin	Brown-headed Cowbird
Northern Harrier	Pileated Woodpecker	Varied Thrush	Northern Oriole
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Gray Catbird	Purple Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Western Wood-pewee	Cedar Waxwing	House Finch
Red-tailed Hawk	Alder Flycatcher	Eurasian Starling	Red Crossbill
Golden Eagle	Willow Flycatcher	Solitary Vireo	Pine Siskin
American Kestrel	Least Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo	American Goldfinch
Merlin	Hammond's Flycatcher	Red-eyed Vireo	Evening Grosbeak
Peregrine Falcon	Dusky Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler	House Sparrow

BCFO Extension Trip, June 2002 - Puntzi Lake area**Bird List**

compiled by Nancy Kruger

Common Loon	Peregrine Falcon	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing
Pied-billed Grebe	Spruce Grouse	Western Wood-pewee	European Starling
Horned Grebe	Ruffed Grouse	Willow Flycatcher	Solitary Vireo
Red-necked Grebe	Sharp-tailed Grouse	Least Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo
Eared Grebe	Sora	Hammond's Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler
American White Pelican	American Coot	Dusky Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler
Canada Goose	Sandhill Crane	Western Kingbird	Yellow Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Killdeer	Eastern Kingbird	Townsend's Warbler
Mallard	Greater Yellowlegs	Horned Lark	American Redstart
Northern Pintail	Lesser Yellowlegs	Tree Swallow	Northern Waterthrush
Blue-winged Teal	Spotted Sandpiper	Violet-green Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Cinnamon Teal	Long-billed Curlew	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Western Tanager
Northern Shoveler	Common Snipe	Bank Swallow	Lazuli Bunting
Gadwall	Wilson's Phalarope	Cliff Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
American Wigeon	Bonaparte's Gull	Barn Swallow	Vesper Sparrow
Redhead	Ring-billed Gull	Grey Jay	Savannah Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Herring Gull	Clark's Nutcracker	Song Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Black Tern	Black-billed Magpie	Lincoln's Sparrow
Surf Scoter	Great Horned Owl	American Crow	White-crowned Sparrow
White-winged Scoter	Northern Hawk Owl	Common Raven	Dark-eyed Junco
Barrow's Goldeneye	Short-eared Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Red-winged Blackbird
Bufflehead	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Mountain Chickadee	Western Meadowlark
Hooded Merganser	Common Nighthawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Merganser	White-throated Swift	House Wren	Rusty Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Calliope Hummingbird	Marsh Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
Osprey	Rufous Hummingbird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Brown-headed Cowbird
Bald Eagle	Belted Kingfisher	Mountain Bluebird	House Finch
Northern Harrier	Red-naped Sapsucker	Townsend's Solitaire	Red Crossbill
Cooper's Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Veery	Pine Siskin
Red-tailed Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	Swainson's Thrush	Evening Grosbeak
American Kestrel	Northern Flicker	Hermit Thrush	House Sparrow
Merlin	Pileated Woodpecker	American Robin	

American Avocet Conservation Program

by Les Gyug

Central Okanagan Naturalists Club

This is an update on the American Avocet Conservation Program spearheaded by the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club as of June 11, 2002.

First arrived this year on April 4th at Robert Lake, but only in larger numbers (20-30) by third week in April. During late April and May the Avocets were back and forth between Robert Lake and the Kelowna Landfill but by late May had settled in at the landfill. However, all the nesting islands at the landfill from previous years are now peninsulas as water levels are way down. Based on my weekly checks, nesting was late (probably because of unseasonably cool weather through much of April and early May), and there are only three nests there this year as of June 11th, with only 11 avocets present, down from 21 just the week before. In 2001 at the same time, there were 21-23 nests/broods at the landfill and about 50 adult avocets there on each weekly count. Coyote/dog tracks were found in 2002 on all the former nesting islands that are now peninsulas, and this may be partly to blame for the low numbers of nests established.

The five floating nesting platforms we put out at Robert Lake in mid-April 2002 were completely ignored by the Avocets, even though they were feeding in the same areas, and even though they never did seem to nest at the landfill in any numbers.

The City of Kelowna hopes to be designing a small pond this year to the east of the landfill to replace the landfill pond when it gets filled in, and may be building it by next year (2003).

Raven, the Trickster, at Puntzi Lake

She arose in the darkness
No dawn chorus was heard,
And she wandered the campsite
To 'listen' for birds.

Other birders still snoozed on
When she heard the strange wail.
It came from near hut three -
And therein lies a tale.

The weird cry was repeated.
Three times it was heard.
But it wasn't a Screech-Owl,
Great Horned, Barn or Barred.

It was not a Spotted,
Nor Hawk-Owl, nor Flam.
She told all our group later
But we deemed it a scam.

Our 'bird convoy' was leaving.
So she joined with us too.
But she knew in her heart
That her 'night call' was new.

The extension was great.
Lots of good birds were found,
But the miles they were many
'Til we were lodge-ward bound.

The heat and the road dust
Caused most birders to sigh
That a cold brew was needed -
But the resort - it was 'dry'.

On the way to her cabin,
Her mind on cold Kokanee,
She spied an old codger
Just inside hut number three.

She hailed him and asked
If he had brews to spare.
He cackled and said "Sure.
Join me if you dare."

So she told him of birding
And fish 'tales' he expounded.
They drank down cold lagers
'Til the dinner bell sounded.

He declined any payment
But bid her farewell.
So she joined other birders
To respond to the bell.

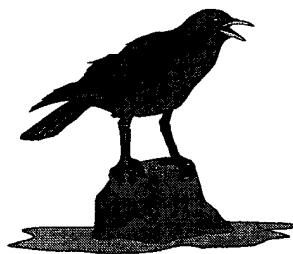
As she went from the cabin
She pulled out a bill,
Left it there as a payment
Tucked in the door sill.

At supper she chuckled.
How refreshed she now felt.
"It's amazing how the dust clears
With brews under your belt."

Leaving early from supper
Several 'dry' birders snuck out
To see if more brewskies
Might still be about.

They located that cabin,
Saw the cash left for beers,
But the place was deserted -
And had been for years!

Anonymous
June 2002



North American Bluebird Society AGM and 25th Anniversary

The theme was 'As The Blue Turns to Silver' when the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) was hosted June 13-16th 2002, at the Penticton Lakeside Resort by its local affiliate, the Southern Interior Bluebird Trail Society (SIBTS), to celebrate its 25th anniversary at its annual general meeting.

The statistics for the event are impressive :

- 285 were registered from 27 states and four provinces and one couple from New Zealand attended the banquet
- 336 participated in at least one paid event
- 231 were hosted on five bus tours of the South Okanagan, plus a special passenger van was hired to accommodate the overflow
- 270 attended the BBQ; 296, the banquet (absolutely scrumptious) and awards ceremony

Key activities included a large, well attended exhibit area (including our own BCFO display), a silent auction, board and affiliate meetings, a BBQ, a banquet and awards evening with guest speakers Mary and John Theberge, who studied wolves in Algonquin Park for 30 years, and a well received Speakers' Programme. Special guest speakers included Dick Cannings, R. Wayne Campbell, Doug Cox (local historian and author), Sherri Klein who operates the South Okanagan Rehab Centre for Owls and wildlife photographers and film-makers Jeff and Sue Turner from Princeton. I had heard that the NABS folk were strictly bluebirders, so I was surprised when more than 50 signed up for Sunday birding tours!

NABS has 3500 members throughout North America. It was started 25 years ago to help our three species of bluebirds recover from rapid habitat loss, which eliminated many of their nest trees. As many of you know, concerned citizens, mostly farmers, in Canada were at the forefront of this movement to establish bluebird 'trails' of nestboxes. Thanks to the foresight of these people, the bluebirds in North America have recovered their numbers to the point where their future is not in jeopardy. The SIBTS, of which I am a member, was started by Vern Johnson of Oliver in 1989. His unique 'Johnson Slotbox', in which a rectangular space under the roof peak substitutes for the usual hole, has been endorsed by the NABS. In my personal experience, it all but eliminates the problem of flickers attempting to enlarge the opening. I heartily recommend them. If you want a blueprint of the box and the 'how to' of placement and other relevant information, contact Sherry Linn at 250-495-7891; goldsream@vip.net. The SIBTS has about 5000 boxes, 3000 of which are monitored, and 250-300 trails in the interior of BC.

The current president of the SIBTS, Sherry Linn, is stepping down after four productive growth years in that executive capacity. She is owed a great debt of THANKS and gratitude for her dedication and passion in helping bluebird recovery and monitoring in southern interior of BC. Co-chairs of the NABS 2002 conference, Terry and Greg Tellier of Penticton worked tirelessly (actually, they are rumoured to have gotten tired, especially near the end of the planning) for three years along with Sherry and her mother Marion, to pull off one of the best NABS conferences ever. Myself, Eva Durance, Jim Shaver, Laure Neish and Jim Ginns donated a paltry two years to this endeavour, primarily planning the field trips. It was very rewarding, though, when we got such terrific feedback from the participants, despite loaned buses whose air conditioning was set for the Lower Mainland, and not the hotter interior!

As those of you who have ever hosted such an event know, nothing happens without the enthusiastic support of the local media, supportive sponsors, local businesses, Chambers of Commerce and the many volunteers who give freely of their time and energy to ensure the overall success of an event. Penticton has the greatest group of volunteers in the province. If you doubt this, just ask Ironman or Elvis Festival participants!

This quote from Ray Harris, Past-President from Fort MacLeod, Alberta, sums it all up, "I would be remiss if I failed to congratulate you and your Interior group on the excellent conference. I have attended ten and none topped Penticton. Location was great. Your tours were a nice mix and we did not have to endure long bus rides. Speakers were tops. The idea of a slogan and logo on everything was a stroke of genius."

In closing I want to thank the executive of the BCFO for generously donating \$250 as a sponsor of the event and Greg Moores for making the portable display on short notice. I recommend that the BCFO executive enthusiastically endorse such events in the future, to support birds and birders, for the results go well beyond the event itself.

Laurie Rockwell
Summerland, BC

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

Daniel Bastaja

Daniel has been a recreational birder for over 30 years. He has been active as a birdwalk leader for Surrey Parks and Recreation, B.C. Wetlands Society and others and enjoys teaching about birding through his website <http://www.birdingfaqs.com>.

Jack Bowling

Keen observer, pithy reporter, great trip leader, knowledgeable meteorologist (how did you think the AGC organizers organized their good weather?) and all round good birder, Jack has written a number of reports for BC BIRDING over the years. However, whether for reasons of anonymity, or just because every time we call he is out birding, we do not have a bio either fresh or on file. Send us one sometime Jack!

Marilyn and Andy Buhler

Marilyn and Andy started 'real' birding about 20 years ago as recorders on a Sechelt Christmas Bird Count. They were both Directors of the then Sechelt Marsh Protection Society and are now members of the Victoria Natural History Society.

Gwen Nicol

Gwen has lived in Trail/Rossland since 1969 when she came to Canada. She grew up on a sheep and wheat farm in Australia and was always interested in nature. She has been an avid birder for over six years.

Viveka Ohman

Viveka had an early interest in birds but really got into birding after several visits to Reifel Wildfowl Refuge. She has been a Vancouver Natural History Society member for 23 years and leads field trips for both the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists and the VNHS. Her most favourite birding spot is Vaseaux Lake.

Laurie Rockwell

Laurie Rockwell had his early tutelage in birding from Jim Grant in the Vernon area. He currently lives in Summerland and is an active member of the South Okanagan Naturalists.

Andrew Stepniewski

A recent recruit to BCFO from near Yakima Washington, Andy, a self-professed 'avid naturalist', was actually born and educated in Canada. After graduation from UBC he was the Parks Naturalist for some years at Garibaldi and Mount Robson Parks. He credits the Cannings brothers with encouraging his early interest in natural history.

Update Your Birding Book Library

The Birding Section of the Vancouver Natural History Society (VNHS) has received a generous donation of bird-related books from Dudley Godfrey, a longtime member. These are being offered to both BCFO and VNHS members by means of an auction. Almost all of these books are hard back bound, with dust jackets and in first class condition. There are no notations in them, other than perhaps the name of the owner on the inside flyleaf. For example, the two volumes of *Birds of British Columbia*, *The Birds of South America* and *Birds of Prey of the World*, all large volumes, are in mint condition.

We will not accept bids on the books until October 1st, 2002. If you are submitting an offer by Canada Post, your letter should not be postmarked earlier than this. We will also take offers by e-mail to brianself@telus.net or by telephone to Brian Self at (604) 732-7128, but not until October 1st. **Closing date for bids will be midnight on October 14th, 2002.** We can offer advice on a book's contents and condition by phone or e-mail. **The prices shown are the minimum bids we will accept, and do not include packaging, postage or parcel delivery costs, these are extra.** Shipping will be at buyers' risk and we regret we cannot accept returns. The book will be sold to the highest bidder and in the event of two or more identical bids, the sale will go to the earliest bid received.

Title	Author and Date	Minimum Bid
<i>Birds of the Oceans</i>	W. B. Alexander 1928	\$ 15
<i>Birds of America (Volumes I - VII)</i>	John James Audubon 1967	\$ 50 set
<i>Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America</i>	Frank C. Bellrose 1976	\$ 20
<i>Birds of Mexico</i>	Emmet Reid Blake 1953	\$ 10
<i>Birds of the West Indies</i>	James Bond 1974	\$ 20
<i>Birds of British Columbia (Volumes I and II)</i>	Campbell, Dawe; et al 1990	\$ 40 ea
<i>Birds of the World - A Checklist</i>	James Clements 1974	\$ 7
<i>Ducks at a distance (An Identification guide)</i>	C. W. S. leaflet no date	\$ 2
<i>The Life of Birds (Volumes I and II)</i>	Jean Dorst 1974	\$ 25 set
<i>South American Birds (A photographic aide)</i>	John S. Dunning 1987	\$ 15
<i>The Charm of Birds</i>	Viscount Grey 1927	\$ 6
<i>Ducks of Canada and the Northern Hemisphere</i>	John Gooders and Trevor Boyer 1986	\$ 30
<i>Birds of Prey of the World</i>	Mary Louise Grossman and John Hamlet 1964	\$ 65
<i>A Gathering of Shore Birds</i>	Henry Marion Hall 1960	\$ 20
<i>Field guide to the birds of the Galapagos</i>	Michael Harris 1974	\$ 12
<i>Hawaii's Birds (Volumes I and II)</i>	Hawaiian Audubon 1967/68	\$ 14 set
<i>The way of the Hummingbird</i>	Virginia C. Holmgren 1986	\$ 7
<i>Arctic Wildlife</i>	Monte Hummel 1984	\$ 30
<i>Birds of Chile and adjacent regions of Argentina, Bolivia and Peru</i>		
(Volume I)	A. W. Johnson 1965)	
(Volume II)	A. W. Johnson 1967)	\$ 25 set
(Supplement)	A. W. Johnson 1972)	
<i>The Hummingbirds of North America</i>	Paul A. Johnsgard 1983	\$ 20
<i>A Treasury of Birdlore</i>	Joseph Wood Krutch and Paul S. Eriksson 1962	\$ 12
<i>Birds of the West Coast (Volumes I and II)</i>	Fenwick Lansdowne 1976/80	\$ 70 ea.
<i>Birds of the Northern Forest</i>	Fenwick Lansdowne and J. Livingstone 1966	\$ 40
<i>Birds of the Eastern Forest (Volumes I and II)</i>	Fenwick Lansdowne and J. Livingstone 1968/70	\$ 40 ea.
<i>The Birdwatchers Companion</i>	Christopher Leahy 1982	\$ 15
<i>North American Marsh Birds</i>	G. Low and Wm. Mansell 1983	\$ 35

Title	Author and Date	Minimum Bid
<i>The Shorebirds of North America</i>	Peter Matthiessen / Rob and Verity Clem 1967	\$100
<i>The Wind Birds</i>	Peter Matthiessen 1973	\$ 20
<i>Galapagos - Islands lost in time</i>	Tui de Roy Moore 1980	\$ 25
<i>A review of the bird fauna of British Columbia.</i>	J.A. Munro and I. McTaggart Cowan 1947	\$ 5
<i>Occasional Papers of the B.C. Provincial Museum: The Grebes</i>	J.A. Munro 1941	\$ 2
<i>Occasional Papers: Observations of Birds and Mammals in Central B.C.</i>	J.A. Munro 1947	\$ 2
<i>Occasional Papers: The Birds of the East Kootenay</i>	Walter Johnstone 1949	\$ 3
<i>Birds of Mount McKinley</i>	Adolph Murie 1963	\$ 6
<i>More songs of wild birds</i>	Nicholson and Koch 1937	\$ 1
<i>Birds of America</i>	T. Gilbert Pearson and John Burroughs 1936	\$ 20
<i>Field Guide to Western Birds</i>	Roger T. Peterson 1990	\$ 10
<i>Field Guide to Mexican birds (Third edition)</i>	Peterson and E. Chalif 1973	\$ 15
<i>Birds of North America (A personal selection)</i>	Eliot Porter no date	\$ 15
<i>The Birds of South America (Volume I) Oscine Passerines</i>	Robert Ridgely and Guy Tudor 1989	\$100
<i>Canadian Songbirds and their ways</i>	Trudy and Jim Rising 1982	\$ 10
<i>Rare birds of the West Coast</i>	Don Roberson 1980	\$ 15
<i>Saltees - Islands of birds and legends</i>	R. Roche and O. Marne 1977	\$ 5
<i>A guide to the birds of South America</i>	Meyer de Schauensee 1970	\$ 20
<i>A coloured key to the wildfowl of the world</i>	Peter Scott 1972	\$ 7
<i>How to draw birds</i>	Raymond Sheppard 1940	\$ 1
<i>Birds of the South Western Desert</i>	Gusse Thomas Smith 1974	\$ 5
<i>The bird table book in colour</i>	Tony Soper 1977	\$ 4
<i>Birds of Heath and Marshland</i>	O. Stepanek 1962	\$ 8
<i>Portraits of Mexican Birds</i>	George M. Sutton 1975	\$ 25
<i>Birds of Canada</i>	P. A. Tavener 1947	\$ 30
<i>The Hummingbird Garden</i>	Mathew Tekulsky 1990	\$ 10
<i>Fog Swamp</i>	Trudy Turner 1977	\$ 5
<i>Hummingbirds - their life and behaviour</i>	Esther and R. Tyrell 1984	\$ 35
<i>Birdwatching Guide to the Vancouver V. N. H. S. Area of British Columbia (First edition)</i>	V. N. H. S. 1993	\$ 3
<i>Vancouver Birds in 1972</i>	V. N. H. S. 1974	\$ 2
<i>The Book of Owls</i>	Lewis Wayne Walker 1974	\$ 20
<i>Explore the Fraser Estuary</i>	Peggy Ward 1980	\$ 5
<i>Instant weather forecasting in Canada</i>	Alan Watts 1968	\$ 5
<i>Water, Prey and Game Birds of N. America</i>	Alexander Wetmore 1965	\$ 15



Quiz Answers

Thanks to those few of you who responded to our quiz. We did hear some grumblings from people at the last AGM suggesting that the quiz might be rather too difficult to tackle during the summer. Next time we will try to find something a bit less challenging.

The quiz birds were taken from: *Our Heritage of Birds : Peterborough County in the Kawarthas* / by Doug Sadler*. 1983, page 25. Doug stated "It is not always recognized that once all names were local ones. As communications improved, it became necessary for people to understand what others meant by a certain word. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Charles Fothergill used bird names in this area which are no longer accepted."

The book title page states that Doug's publication was produced to celebrate Ontario's natural heritage on the occasion of the province's bicentennial 1784-1984.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Pied-billed Grebe | p. Common Nighthawk | ee. Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| b. American Bittern | q. Chimney Swift | ff. Mourning Warbler |
| c. Green-backed Heron | r. Northern Rough-winged Swallow | gg. American Redstart |
| d. Bufflehead | s. Hairy Woodpecker | hh. Red-winged Blackbird |
| e. Common Moorhen | t. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | ii. Rose-breasted Grosbeak |
| f. Least Bittern | u. Eastern Phoebe | jj. Scarlet Tanager |
| g. Ring-necked Duck | v. Red-eyed Vireo | kk. Purple Finch |
| h. Common Merganser | w. American Robin | ll. Indigo Bunting |
| i. Killdeer | x. Wood Thrush | mm. Dark-eyed Junco |
| j. Greater Yellowlegs | y. Gray Catbird | nn. Vesper Sparrow |
| k. Solitary Sandpiper | z. Red-breasted Nuthatch | oo. Rufous-sided Towhee |
| l. Red Knot | aa. Nashville Warbler | pp. Song Sparrow |
| m. Boreal Owl | bb. Chestnut-sided Warbler | qq. Common Yellowthroat |
| n. Saw-whet Owl | cc. Palm Warbler | rr. White-throated Sparrow |
| o. Northern Hawk-Owl | dd. Northern Parula | |

* Reprinted with permission from Doug Sadler.

A few comments from the quiz entrants

[Peter Blokker] {a consolation prize}

It's too hot to be birding (32°C) and I've been puzzling about the quiz a bit. A few are easy, but I'm afraid that most are wild guesses.

[Eva Durance] {a consolation prize}

Hey, what a lark - so to speak! Here's my best guess at most of the list, though some are quite impossible to even guess at. Common names we use may sound just as strange though a hundred years from now, assuming anyone's around to know them.

[Jo Ann and Hue MacKenzie] {second prize}

'Brain taxer', more like! Went through our old bird books (Taverner; *Birds of Canada* by Alexander Milton Ross, 1872); several volumes at the Vancouver Public Library, including *A History of North American Birds*, by Baird, 1823-1887 in the Special Collections Section, (beautiful illustrations), and I am sure of only a few of the bird names. Most of our answers are just guesses. Some of the bird names, e.g. "Ground Sparrow" were used for more than one species. Charles Fothergill must have had a vivid imagination! "Cox-comical", indeed!!

Internet searches didn't help, either. Couldn't find anything on "Sculthorp". "Pivoine" brought up many references to peonies, Bullfinches and similar birds, several French restaurants, and a French bra! (The implications of the latter boggle the mind...)

For what they may be worth, here are our 'answers' to the Brain Teaser.

[Martin McNicholl] {first prize}

I feel as if I should disqualify myself from your brain teaser because I have a copy of the paper on Fothergill's natural history notes published in 1934 by R. Dalamere Black. The paper was published in *Transactions of the Royal Canadian Institute* 20:141-168, with the modern (i.e. 1934) bird names confirmed by James L. Baillie, Jr. after whom the Baillie Birdathon and Baillie Fund are named. Baillie published a biography of Fothergill in 1944 and several others have been published, as listed in McNicholl (1994)**. I became interested in older bird names soon after starting birdwatching because of the differences in names used in different bird books and checklists, but my interest intensified when compiling bibliographies of publications of birds in Manitoba and Alberta, and later while editing a book on ornithology in Ontario. I became reasonably familiar with old names while working on all three projects. By 'old' names, I mean those used long before those in Black's 1934 paper, as the names given by Black were those used in my first field guide (the 1947 edition of Peterson's eastern guide). Both Black and Peterson used the names of the fourth edition of the American Ornithologists' Union's check-list, published in 1931 and most of those names continued to be used until at least the fifth edition, published in 1957.

To test my memory, I decided to try listing the names without reference to Black's paper...

** McNicholl, M.K. 1994. Brief biographies of Ontario ornithologists. Appendix 1, pp. 315-394 in M.K. McNicholl and J.L. Cranmer-Byng (Eds.). *Ornithology in Ontario*. Ontario Field Ornithologists Spec. Publ. No. 1. Hawk Owl Publishing, Whitby, Ont.

British Columbia Beached Bird Survey

Bird Studies Canada is looking for volunteers to participate in a new program: the **British Columbia Beached Bird Survey**. If you already spend time walking a beach in BC, or would like to start, we hope you'll consider volunteering for this program.

Beached Bird Surveys were formerly conducted in BC from 1990-1994 in the wake of the Nestucca oil spill which killed 56,000 birds off the BC and Washington coast. The purpose of the 2002-2004 surveys is to collect two more years of baseline data. If you would like to volunteer, you will be asked to walk a stretch of beach once every month from August to April, keeping an eye out for beached birds. You will also be asked to note various physical characteristics of the beach (wrack thickness, amount of driftwood), along with weather conditions. The time it takes to survey a beach section depends on the length of beach you wish to survey. The weather will not always be pleasant (!) and you will probably not find beached birds on every survey. However, by participating in beached bird surveys you would be making a significant contribution to environmental stewardship by helping to develop a baseline index of oiled birds in British Columbia.

If you are a keen birder or beachcomber who would like to get involved with this project, or if you would like to learn more about it, please contact:

Jeanne Roy

BC Program Manager-Bird Studies Canada
5421 Robertson Road, RR1, Delta, BC V4K 3N2
phone: 604-940-4696/fax: 604-946-7022
toll-free: 1-877-349-2473 (BIRD)
e-mail: jeanne.roy@ec.gc.ca



Thank-you!