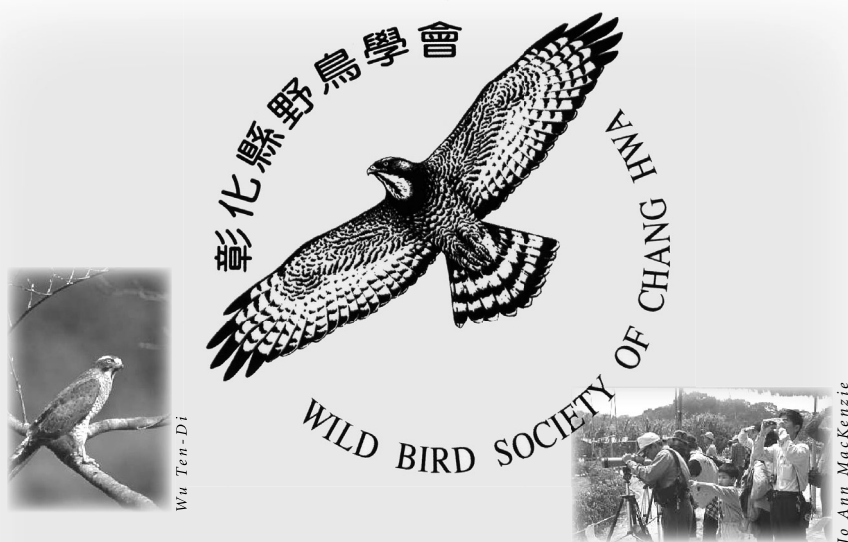


# BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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## Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle Bird Fair, Taiwan

The Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle Bird Fair is held in late March on Pa Kua (Bagua) Mountain, a small mountain on the outskirts of the city of Changhwa, in west-central Taiwan. The fair is the biggest annual event of the Changhwa Wild Bird Society, BCFO's partner organization in Taiwan.

The Gray-faced Buzzard (*Butastur indicus*), still referred to in Taiwan by the old name of Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle, breeds in northeast Asia, and winters in southeast Asia. Their northward migration peaks in late March. Many follow a route that takes them over Taiwan, where hundreds can be observed on a good day as they fly along mountain ridges. Pa Kua Mountain, in the Tri-Mountain (Pakuashan) National Scenic Area, is an excellent place to watch for them. Some of the birds seek trees on the mountain to pause and roost.

Thirty to 40 years ago, large numbers of these raptors were shot as they passed over Pa Kua Mountain in March. An old saying was that "10,000 come to Pa Kua hill; 9,000 stay" — that is, dead. They were killed for sale and export to Japan for taxidermy purposes. Raptors, symbolic of power, were commonly sold as mounted specimens for display

*please see Taiwan Bird Fair, page 17*



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A subscription to this quarterly is a benefit of membership in the society. Members will also receive a copy of the annual journal, *British Columbia Birds*. Membership in BCFO is open to anyone interested in the study and enjoyment of wild birds in British Columbia.

BCFO 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.

BCFO maintains an official partnership with the Changhwa Wild Bird Society, Changhwa, Taiwan.

## Membership Dues

*Please send membership requests, or requests for further information, to*

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

### Membership Dues:

Individual memberships .....	\$25.00
Library subscriptions.....	\$25.00
Junior memberships (age under 18).....	\$18.00
U.S. and foreign memberships.....	\$25.00 (\$US)

Memberships are for the calendar year.

## Newsletter Submissions

Send material for publication in any format to the editor. Submissions may include bird finding information for our "Site Guide" series and any articles about birding experiences, preferably but not necessarily in British Columbia.

*Please send newsletter submissions to*

Phil Henderson (Editor, BC Birding)  
Box 615, Fort Langley, BC V1M 2R9  
604-888-1571 / strix@uniserve.com

*Deadline for the receipt of material for publication is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the March, June, September, and December issues.*

## Advertising

Advertising rates are available upon request.

## BCFO Website

<http://birding.bc.ca/bcfo/>



## President's Report

This is BCFO's most active time of year. We focus much of our collegial activity on our annual conference. However, organizing an annual conference provides an occasionally uncomfortable mix of excitement and stress for your Board of Directors and our local organization team in Tumbler Ridge.

The choice of Tumbler Ridge has apparently been a good one. Our members seem to like to visit northeast BC, and registrations at this writing (June 7) are higher than for any conference two and a half weeks in advance. In Tumbler Ridge we have had excellent support from Dr. Charles Helm and our caterer, Sheila Proehl. But, as many of you noticed our first choice (actually, our second – we'll get to that below) of preferred accommodation will not be ready on time. The absence of contact information at that venue in March, hence its absence in the March Newsletter and its registration forms necessitated a time consuming supplemental mailing in April. When we finally got the necessary information, doubts began to emerge about completion dates.

These doubts were confirmed in May thanks to Charles Helm's probing, but by that time most of you had made reservations at what had been our first choice. Well, you say, if it was your first choice why didn't you say so in the beginning?? (I knew being on the executive was going to have its embarrassing moments!) The reason was that when we enquired in January our first choice could not guarantee the number of rooms we needed. So, we had to chose a venue under construction with an intended May opening. Enough of explanations, but I apologize as many of you scurried to find a hotel at a reasonable price that might be open in late June.

I've attended each BCFO meeting since Revelstoke in 1992, and our presidents have always attended the annual conference. This year my work load will prohibit my attendance, and as that thought began to sink in, I realised that that same work load was interfering with me adequately performing my duties as your president. So, I have reluctantly resigned as president, but I will remain on the Board. That means, as some of you due process people might have noticed, that there will be an acting president, Sandra Kinsey at the annual conference. I want to first thank Sandra for immediately taking over the reigns of the organization, making sure all necessary annual conference arrangements were being taken care of, and second to Marilyn Buhler for assisting Sandra and taking over responsibility for coordinating catering and hospitality. Best wishes to you all in Tumbler Ridge.

*Ian Robertson, Past President*



## BCFO Library

BCFO has started a member library! The BCFO has obtained books, reports and magazines through donation that are available for loan to any member. A list of our current small collection is posted below. We have also been given the opportunity to trade 30 of our duplicate journals and reports with the library of the Peregrine Fund ([www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org)) to access issues of journals that would be of interest to our membership.

We request that any outstanding BCFO books or new donations of books, magazines, videos, or journals be brought to the attention of Krista De Groot, volunteer librarian. Items for loan can be requested (see contact information below) and returned through mail, via any Board member, or at the Annual General Meeting. Thank you for helping us keep BCFO books available for the use and enjoyment of all members!

**Krista De Groot**, 5421 Robertson Rd. RR#1, Delta, BC, V4K 3N2 / [kdegroot@sarsensystems.com](mailto:kdegroot@sarsensystems.com) / 604-435-0979

### Journals and Magazines

BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS	Vol. 9
BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS	Vol. 10
BIRDWATCH CANADA	Fall 2003, No. 25
WORLD BIRDWATCH	Vol. 25, No. 3
WORLD BIRDWATCH	Vol. 25, No. 4

### Technical Reports/Papers

AUTHOR(S)	YEAR	TITLE
Boyd, W.S., J-P.L. Savard and G.E. John Smith	1989	Relationships Between Aquatic Birds and Wetland Characteristics in the Aspen Parkland, Central British Columbia
Butler, R.W. and R.J. Cannings	1989	Distribution of Birds in the Intertidal Portion of the Fraser River Delta, British Columbia
Butler, R.W. and R.W. Campbell	1987	The birds of the Fraser River delta: populations, ecology and international significance
Darling, L. M. (editor)	1999	At Risk: Volume 1 Proceedings of a Conference on the Biology and Management of Species and Habitats at Risk, University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops, B.C., February 15-19, 1995.
Darling, L. M. (editor)	1999	At Risk: Volume 2 Proceedings of a Conference on the Biology and Management of Species and Habitats at Risk, University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops, B.C., February 15-19, 1995.
Dawe, N.K., R. Buechert, T. Barnard and C. Cook	1995	Bird use of the Fanny Bay - Little Bay wetlands, Vancouver Island British Columbia 1990-1991
Dawe, N.K., T. Martin, T. Barnard and A. Koch	1994	Bird use of the Cluxewe River Estuary, Vancouver Island, British Columbia 1990-1991
Derocher, A.E., G.W. Kaiser, F. Cooke, I.A. Manley and M.J. Gill	1996	Research on Marbled Murrelets in the Desolation Sound area during the 1994 breeding season
Harfenist, A., P.E. Whitehead, W.J. Cretney and J.E. Elliott	1995	Food Chain Sources of Polychlorinated Dioxins and Furans to Great Blue Herons ( <i>Ardea herodias</i> ) Foraging in the Fraser River Estuary, British Columbia
Harfenist, A.	1994	Effects of Introduced Rats on Nesting Seabirds of Haida Gwaii
Hatfield, J.P. and G.E. John Smith	1995	Waterfowl Responses to Seasonally Flooded Fields on Alaksen National Wildlife Area, 1980-1991
Hawkings, J.S.	1987	Population Status of Migratory Waterbirds on the Yukon Coastal Plain and Adjacent MacKenzie Delta
Morgan, K.H., J-P.L. Savard, and S.P. Wetmore	1991	Foraging Behaviour of Forest Birds of the Dry Interior Douglas-fir, Ponderosa Pine Forests of British Columbia
Nixon, W., and J. Majiski	1991	Breeding Waterfowl Surveys in the Liard Plain and Teslin River Basin, Northern British Columbia, 1989
Rodway, M.S.	1990	Attendance Patterns, Hatching Chronology and Breeding Population of Common Murres on Triangle Island, British Columbia Following the Nestucca Oil Spill
Rodway, M.S.	1989	Distribution and Abundance of Waterbirds in Barkley Sound and the Long Beach/Tofino/Grice Bay Area in Spring 1989 Following the Nestucca Oil Spill
Rodway, M.S.	1989	Foraging Activity of Migrating Brant at Stubbs Island in April 1989 Following the Nestucca Oil Spill
Savard, J-P.L., D.A. Seip and L. Waterhouse	2000	Avian Diversity in relation to logging in the coastal rainforest of British Columbia
Savard, J-P.L., and M.J. Lemon	1994	Geographic Distribution of the Marbled Murrelet on Vancouver Island at Inland Sites During the 1991 Breeding Season
Summers, K.R., K. Fry and R. McKelvey	1996	Aerial Surveys of Waterfowl and Gulls on the Fraser River Delta, 1995-96
Vermeer, K. and R.W. Butler (editors)	1997	The ecology, status and conservation of marine and shoreline birds in the Strait of Georgia, British Columbia
Vermeer, K. and K. H. Morgan (editors)	1997	The ecology, status and conservation of marine and shoreline birds of the Queen Charlotte Islands
Vermeer, K. and J.C. Castilla	1989	Trace Metals in the Marine Bird Food Chain Downstream From the El Salvador Copper Mine, Chile
Wilson, L.K., I.E. Moul, K.M. Langelier and J.E. Elliott	1995	Summary of Bird Mortalities in British Columbia and Yukon 1963-1994



## Editor's Notes and Notions

June is the ultimate month for most birds and birders in the northern hemisphere. Most birds have settled into their territories and are busy defending these spaces from bothersome males of the same species and attracting and keeping gals with whom they have only one intention – produce young. The gals, too, are like minded and, having invested more in their reproductive offerings, try to find the right male, he with that winning combination of good looks (bright, well-groomed plumage), bravado (daring challenges to rival males), voice (an unerringly confident song), and riches galore (territory full of resources and devoid of threats). Of course, there may be rebel males who do things a little differently and rebel females who appreciate their uniqueness, which may result in rebel youngsters who, eventually (thousands or millions of years), may split from the original group of conformists.

It seems to work differently for birders. They come from all walks of life, occur in all sizes and shapes, with all styles of dress, and with many different dispositions and attitudes, but all are united in their excitement for the birds of June. Instead of splitting, birders tend to join into one group of happy eccentrics feverishly searching here and there for glimpses of small feathered creatures who would sooner have no part of them. And so the BCFO birding clan soon descends upon Tumbler Ridge to stalk the local birds and make nervous the local folk. Of course, that wonderfully named group TROG (Tumbler Ridge Ornithological Group) has no doubt sobered up the local folk to the notion of bird watching. Perhaps non-birders are the anomalous group! In any case, this AGM event is certain to inspire

much discussion and excitement amongst all.

Regretably, I have had to withdraw from the BCFO AGM due to work commitments, but do plan to be in the area shortly after the meeting and so will hopefully pick up on the spirit of those who attended, and spot some interesting birds. No doubt it will be a very fun and interesting event. I had looked forward to meeting other members of the BCFO, most of whom I have only communicated with via e-mail, and to exploring the Tumber Ridge area for birds, both present day and prehistoric as Dr. Helm will discuss in his presentation. I will have to await future opportunities to do so.

This issue offers a variety of interesting articles covering a vast geographical area, including Ken Morgan's much anticipated Bird Listers' Corner results, which should have appeared in the March issue (as traditionalists will note) but didn't. Jo Ann MacKenzie and Simon Liao offer a glimpse of a hugely popular bird fair in Taiwan, Gary Davidson contributes two articles on his ornithological explorations from his temporary home in Tasmania, Gwen Nicol contributes an interesting (Canadian) version of a "dust bath" by chickadees in the Kootenays in *From the Field*, Martin McNicholl offers up an assortment of interesting meetings, events and news briefs, Krista De Groot discusses the BCFO library and its collections, and Christianne Wilhelmson of the Georgia Strait Alliance presents information on the issues regarding off-shore oil exploration in BC.

I would like to thank Ian Robertson for his fine job at the helm during my time as Editor. Ian has been very supportive of my efforts and was

the first to contact me, and to twist my arm, regarding this position. He will assuredly remain an active participant in the workings of the BCFO.

**Phil Henderson**, Editor



## Director's Corner

With director representation from the Okanagan, Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, Prince George and the Lower Mainland it is not always practical for us to meet in person on a monthly basis. Therefore the March and April 2004 Director's meetings were held by conference call but were extremely productive. As the Annual General Meeting approaches, more and more of our meetings are spent discussing details and logistics of the meeting and field trips. Ian Robertson and a number of directors reported out on their progress in addressing accommodation needs, meals, field trips, extension, BCFO participation on the South Peace Bird Atlas, presentations and the reception. Members should have now received a supplemental mail-out sent by the president, Ian Robertson, with

additional information for the Annual Conference and Extension. We have since confirmed that the registration procedure with the Wilderness Lodge is working well. Final logistical information on the conference, field trips and logistics will be sent out with confirmation packages, once members have registered. Our BCFO library is growing steadily and directors discussed trading duplicate issues with the Peregrine Fund library (see report in this issue for more details). Ian Robertson and Andy Stewart have been working on a plan to help promote our journal to solicit more submissions and Andy Stewart has agreed to act as the official board liaison with the editor of BC Birds. Andy Stewart is also submitting a proposal on behalf of the BCFO to help fund a multi-year Barn Owl

inventory project on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands archipelago. More details on this project will be forthcoming in the next issue of BC Birding. Finally, as the AGM and director elections approach, we are seeking new directors to fill several positions. Jo Ann MacKenzie has graciously accepted to oversee the nominations board. Any member interested in becoming a director or in nominating someone for the role should contact Jo Ann (j.a.mackenzie@telus.net or 604-538-1676) or download a nomination form and follow instructions on our BCFO website ([www.birding.bc.ca/bcfo/index.htm](http://www.birding.bc.ca/bcfo/index.htm)) before the next Annual General Meeting.

*Report submitted by Krista De Groot*



## Call for Nominations for the Board of Directors, 2004 Election

If you are a member in good standing, and wish to nominate someone to serve a 2-year term, please and print and complete the *Nomination for Director* form, and mail it to the Secretary.

EXTRACT: "British Columbia Field Ornithologists, Constitution and By-laws"

By-Laws, Part 3—Directors and Officers

19) Nominations for new Directors may be made by any Member, and must be sent to the Secretary in writing, together with the signed consent of the nominee. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Annual General Meeting, but must be accompanied by the nominee's written consent, or if the nominee is present, the nominee must give verbal consent.



## Internet Sources

### BCFO

<http://www.birding.bc.ca/bcfo/>

### Alaska Bird Observatory

<http://www.alaskabird.org/>

### Bird Studies Canada / Long Point Bird Observatory

<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/bscmain.html>

### Birding in British Columbia

General interest information including bulletin board, checklists, rare bird alerts, book reviews, etc.

<http://www.birding.bc.ca/>

### BIRDNET

Site of the Ornithological Council.  
<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/>

### District of Tumbler Ridge

<http://www.district.tumbler-ridge.bc.ca/>

### Life Histories of North American Birds

A.C. Bent's series published online.  
<http://birdsbybent.com/>

### Master Guide to the Warblers of Canada

Site produced by the Gov't of Canada and Gov't of Alberta featuring summary accounts of all the warblers plus links to excellent photographs of living birds and skins. Also includes quizzes.

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/warblers/index.htm>

### Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/birds/>

### Point Reyes Bird Observatory

<http://www.prbo.org/cms/index.php>

### The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, Seventh Edition

<http://www.aou.org/aou/birdlist.html>

### The Condor

Online editions from 1899-2000. All articles available as DjVu's and PDF's.  
<http://elibrary.unm.edu/condor/>

### The Wilson Bulletin

Online editions from 1899-1999. All articles available as DjVu's and PDF's.  
<http://elibrary.unm.edu/wilson/>

## BCFO New Members since March 2004

Karin Arkinstall  
John Henigman  
Harold King  
Sherry L. Lidstone  
Richard Mooney  
Bob Parsons  
Iris Anne Peters  
Brent Phillips  
Mark Phinney  
Judy Winterbottom

## BCFO Journal *BC Birds* Back Issues Available

Back issues of the BCFO's annual journal *BC Birds* are available from the British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO), P.O. Box 8059 Victoria, B.C. V8W 3R7. The price is \$8.00 for the most recent issue (Currently No. 10) and \$2.00 for earlier editions.

## Announcement

Birds, Big Game and Natural History - A Safari of Southern Africa

Letaka Safaris of Botswana is one of southern Africa's premier birding and natural history tour companies. Grant Reed of Letaka presented an excellent slide-illustrated talk to the Victoria Natural History Society last November, and offered a special tour to VNHS members and others from British Columbia. Letaka will return a percentage of the costs to the participants' parent organizations. I am putting a group together, a maximum of 14 people. There may still be room for a few members of BCFO to be part of that group.

The 16-day safari will begin from Johannesburg on January 16, 2005, and will include exceptionally wild areas of Botswana, with excursions into Zambia and northern Namibia. Final costs, flights, in-transit accommodations, etc. are being arranged. An extension to the Cape Town region may also be possible.

I led a tour of southern Africa in 1994, and was with the United Nations in Namibia for its independence election in 1989. This is a fascinating and wild part of the world, one that birders and anyone interested in natural history will truly enjoy.

If you are interested in joining the group and want more details, please contact me at 250-598-7789 or by email at [bgates@pacificcoast.net](mailto:bgates@pacificcoast.net)

**Bryan Gates**, Past BCFO President

## Canada Praised for Restoration Funding in Iraq

Birdlife International has recently praised Canada's commitment of \$3 million towards restoration of the Mesopotamian marshes in southern Iraq at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The marshes were severely degraded during the 1990's primarily by upstream dam construction in Turkey, Syria and Iraq. They comprise only 7 % (130,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of their original area but are still one of the largest wetland complexes in the Middle East with regional and global significance to biodiversity and culture. The University of Waterloo Wetlands Research Centre will direct restoration efforts.

Birdlife International have classed it as an Endemic Bird Area (EBA). EBAs are areas where the distributions of two or more restricted-range species (endemics) overlap. The Mesopotamian marshes supports almost the entire population of the Basra Reed-warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*.

See [http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/06/mesopotamia\\_marshes.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/06/mesopotamia_marshes.html) and [http://news.gc.ca/cfmx/CCP/view/en/index.cfm?xml\\_search=true&articleID=85969](http://news.gc.ca/cfmx/CCP/view/en/index.cfm?xml_search=true&articleID=85969)



## Upcoming Meetings and Events

Compiled by *Martin K. McNicholl*

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| June 25-27 2004     | <b>BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS 14TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE</b> , Tumbler Ridge, B.C. contact: Tony Greenfield, Box 319, Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0; phone (250) 855-5539 OR Glen Moores, Box 277, Brentwood Bay, B.C. V8M 1R3; phone (250) 652-7072.  |
| July 30-2 Aug. 2004 | <b>18TH ANNUAL MEETING, SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY</b> , New York City. Mailing or phone contact not yet announced.   |
| Aug. 16-21 2004     | <b>122ND STATED MEETING OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION &amp; SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING</b> , Universite' Laval, Quebec, Que. Contact: Andre' Desrochers, Department des Sciences du Bois et de La Foret, Universite' Laval, Ste-Foy, QC G1K 7P4; phone (418) 656-2131, extension 2908 OR Jean-Pierre Savard, Can. Wildl. Serv., Box 10100, Ste.-Foy, Que. G1V 4H5, phone (418) 648-3500. |
| Aug. 23-27 2004     | <b>19TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ZOOLOGY</b> , Beijing, China. Contact details not yet announced.  |
| Sept. 8-12 2004     | <b>29th ANNUAL MEETING, WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, WESTERN BIRD BANDING ASSOCIATION 79TH ANNUAL MEETING &amp; OREGON FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' 25TH ANNUAL MEETING</b> , Ashland, Oregon. Contact details not yet announced.   |
| Nov. 10-13 2004     | <b>RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2004 ANNUAL MEETING</b> , Bakersfield, CA. Contact: Daniel E. Varland, Rayonier, 3033 Ingram St., Hoquiam, WA 98550, U.S.A.; phone (360) 538-4582.  |
| 2005                | <b>123RD STATED MEETING OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION</b> , Univ. of California-Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, Calif. Dates & contact details not yet announced.   |
| 2005                | <b>SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING</b> , Halifax, N.S. Dates & contact information details not yet announced.  |
| Aug. 13-19 2006     | <b>24th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS</b> , Hamburg, Germany. Contact: IOC 2006, Institute of Avian Research, An der Vogelwarte 21, 26386, Wilhelmshaven, Germany.  |
| Oct. 2006           | <b>4TH NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS</b> , Veracruz, Mexico. Exact dates & contact details not yet announced.  |





## B.C. Birding News Briefs

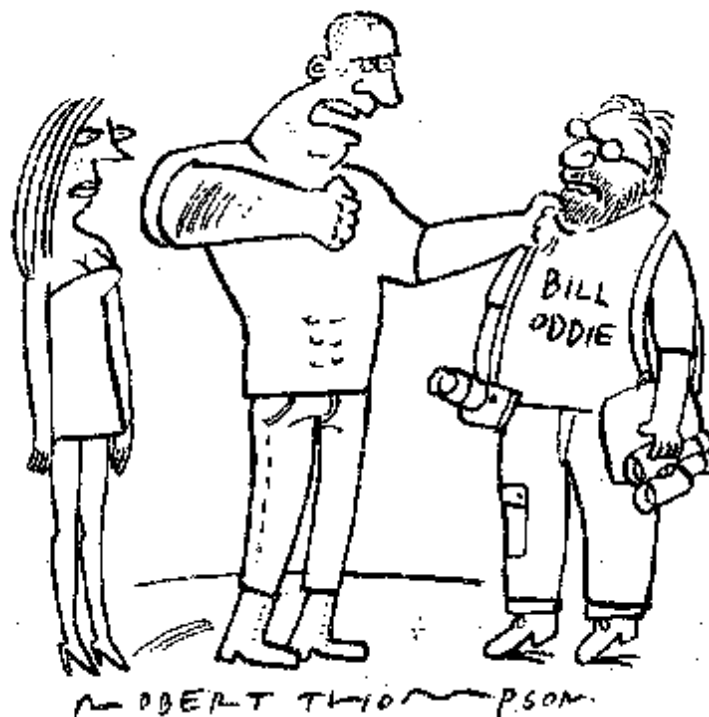
Compiled by *Martin K. McNicholl*

**Rex Kenner Awarded** -Prominent lower mainland birder, Dr. Rex Kenner, was awarded the Entomological Society of Canada's prestigious Norman Criddle Award for contributions to entomology by an amateur during a 2003 joint meeting of the Entomological societies of B.C. and Canada. Rex was recognized for his volunteer work at U.B.C.'s Spencer Entomological Museum and for scientific and other publications on dragonflies and other insects -based on Anonymous. 2004. *Vancouver Nat.* 6(1):7.

**B.C. Loses Two Birders** -B.C.'s birding community recently lost two active birders: Ruth Kuhl of The Boundary Naturalists and Joan King of Oliver, who died on 20 Dec. 2003. Ms. King organized the Oliver-Osoyoos Christmas Bird Count for 20 years and taught birding to Elderhostellers for a decade. -based on Anonymous. 2004. *B.C. Nat.* 42(1):2.

**Birders Journal Extinct** -A primarily Canadian journal, *Birders* [sic] *Journal* featured primarily distributional material. Seasonal reports from across Canada constituted the bulk of its text, but its 75 issues, published between 1991 and 2004, also contained numerous articles and notes on rare occurrences and identification features, with occasional behavioural notes and forays into non-Canadian topics. -based partly on The Editors [M. Bain and P. Holder]. 2004. *Birders* [sic] *Journal* 75:2.

**Nearly Hatched Journal** -A new journal, *Wildlife Afield*, is scheduled to appear in July or autumn 2004. Its format and exact content have not yet been defined, but as the journal of a new Centre for Wildlife Vertebrates its focus is likely to centre on abundance and distribution of B.C. amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. -based partly on R. W. Campbell, M. I. Preston and L. M. Van Damme. 2004. *Centre for Wildlife Studies Report* No. 2:2 and partly on pers. comm. from R. W. Campbell 4 & 20 April 2004.



"Oi! Are you looking at my bird?"

**Editor's Note:**

Bill Oddie is a well known British bird-watcher who has produced many TV programmes and written many articles and books in Britain. He is a member of numerous conservation organizations.

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



## BIRD-LISTERS' CORNER

By Ken Morgan

Welcome back to Bird-Lister's Corner, and a big thanks to the 38 contributors who submitted their records. Although the total number of contributors is down from last year's total of 47, I suspect that the drop is largely my fault. I will try harder to be on time.

The development of this report has been somewhat perplexing. With the 'apparent' extirpation of the Crested Myna from the Greater Vancouver area (and consequently from BC, Canada, and ABA reporting areas), I had to decide whether or not I should deduct the species from the area totals, as well as from the numbers that people sent me. Quoting an email sent by Hank Vanderpol: "*ABA rules specify that an introduced species, such as the Crested Myna, cannot be counted in the ABA totals if the species becomes extirpated. That does not apply to native species, only introduced ones. So the Myna is off any North American list.....*". However, because I hadn't stated in the previous article that we would no longer include Myna (and subsequently reduce the area totals accordingly), I ended up with a situation where I suspected that most people had counted Myna in their totals, but a small number indicated that they had deducted it. After a lot of thought and several email "discussions" about this, I decided that the fairest thing to do would be to include the species this year and ask the membership to decide what they wanted to do from now on. For those who had either indicated that they had dropped Crested Myna from their totals, or it was obvious that they had deducted it (i.e., totals down one from last year), I added one back on to their totals. I also tried contacting some of the contributors (only those who had sent me totals via email) to determine if they had been included the species or not. In the end, I hope that I have credited all of you with the right numbers and I apologize in advance for any mistakes made.

I feel that the issue of whether or not we adopt the ABA "rules" covering the loss of an introduced species warrants discussion by the membership as a whole. I fully agree with the idea of adding to or subtracting from your life lists when a taxonomist determines (through genetic analyses) that 2 species should be lumped or 1 split into 2. However, I don't really agree with the premise that an introduced species should be "erased" from the collective history (i.e., our lists) if it happens to become locally extinct. What are the rules pertaining to a species that goes extinct globally? Or, and I know that this is absurd, but what would the ABA say if the Crested Myna was to have gone extinct everywhere BUT Vancouver? Would they have insisted that the species no longer existed while it still was living in the "wilds" of Vancouver? One contributor, perhaps in a moment of Canadian nationalism, speculated on what the ABA would have said if the Myna had existed in Seattle or some other US city, and then had been extirpated from N. America. That contributor suggested that the rule may not have applied under those circumstances. I personally won't speculate on that scenario, but it is intriguing. Anyway, I suggest that the BCFO membership should decide what we should do – do we have to follow the ABA and deduct Crested Myna from our various local/provincial/national and ABA listing area? Or do we include it in all BUT the ABA area or ....?

Anyway, back to the lists. Repeating what I did last year, I calculated for each contributor the percent increase between '02 and '03. To offset differences in difficulty to add species to small versus large lists, I calculated the increase based upon the number of new species observed relative to the number of species the



person hadn't seen for an area, rather than an increase over the total a person had already seen. For each of the listing areas (other than North Pacific Pelagic Waters) the following tables list the total number of species each person reported, the percent of the total number of species in that area (% TOT) and the percentage increase (% INCR) over the past year. If a person didn't send me totals last year OR the number for this year did not change from last year, "- -" appears in the % INCR column. In each of the listing area I have indicated the person who had the highest percent increase (indicated by a \*) as well as the runner up (\*\*). Due to continued low number of contributors sending me totals, I am considering dropping the following areas: Kamloops (3 contributors), Sunshine Coast (3), Queen Charlotte Islands (4), West Kootenays (5), Prince George (5) and Creston (5). If you feel passionately about those areas, please be sure that next year you send me your lists for those areas – and also, try to convince more people to send in their totals.

In my last article, I smugly suggested that because of my trips to Brazil, Australia and New Zealand in '03, I would easily win the honour of the person with the greatest increase to their World list. I had not counted on Mike Tootchin seeing 519 new species in 2003 (compared with my 496)! Although I am heading to a meeting in Uruguay this August (and no doubt will do more South American birding), I have learned my lesson. For 2003, the following people proportionately reduced their "to see" list the most: M. Tootchin (World), R. Tkachuk (ABA), J. Vooys (Canada), L. Jellicoe (BC), J. Sprague (Alberta), B Begg (Vancouver Island), V. George (Queen Charlotte Islands), J. Vooys (Vancouver), D. Allinson (Victoria), L. Law (Okanagan), T. Greenfield (Sunshine Coast), H. MacKenzie (W. Kootenays), and J. Vooys (Washington). Congratulations to all of you.



### World (9838 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Jo Ann MacKenzie	3953	40.2	0.88	Hank Vanderpol	1407	14.3	--
Hue MacKenzie	3952	40.2	0.88	Laird Law	1377	14.0	0.01
David Stirling	3656	37.2	0.61	Bryan Gates	1314	13.4	0.01
Roger Foxall	3313	33.7	0.06	Don Wilson	1148	11.7	0.30
<b>Mike Toochin</b>	3100	31.5	<b>7.15 *</b>	Ken Morgan	1128	11.5	<b>5.39 **</b>
Stefan Zarembo	2990	30.4	2.28	Val George	1099	11.2	2.76
Ron Walker	2924	29.7	--	Andy Buhler	880	8.9	--
Mike Mulligan	2562	26.0	--	Marilyn Buhler	880	8.9	--
Barbara Begg	2403	24.4	0.88	John Sprague	834	8.5	0.20
Dale Jensen	2246	22.8	--	Rand Rudland	811	8.2	1.88
Eric Tull	1797	18.3	--	David Allinson	614	6.2	--

### A.B.A Area (927 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Mike Toochin	754	81.3	--	Mabel Crocker	577	62.2	0.28
Mike Mulligan	748	80.7	--	Ken Klimko	573	61.8	7.09
Roger Foxall	741	79.9	4.12	Bryan Gates	560	60.4	0.27
Hank Vanderpol	725	78.2	2.88	Barbara Begg	552	59.6	0.27
Stefan Zarembo	713	76.9	--	Andy Buhler	521	56.2	4.47
Jo Ann MacKenzie	700	75.5	--	Marilyn Buhler	521	56.2	4.47
Hue MacKenzie	695	75.0	0.43	Ken Morgan	521	56.2	--
<b>Russ Tkachuk</b>	686	74.0	<b>13.93 *</b>	Ron Walker	516	55.7	--
Dale Jensen	674	72.7	--	Gwen Nicol	497	53.6	--
David Stirling	664	71.6	0.38	Laird Law	459	49.5	0.21
Eric Tull	654	70.6	--	Laure Neish	453	48.9	<b>7.42 **</b>
David Allinson	612	66.0	0.63	Murray Brown	448	48.3	--
Tony Greenfield	599	64.6	0.61	Eva Durance	434	46.8	--
John Sprague	598	64.5	5.19	Peter Blokker	395	42.6	--
Don Wilson	590	63.7	4.26	Rand Rudland	394	42.5	0.19
Marika Ainley	584	63.0	0.58	John Voos	394	42.5	5.16
Gwynneth Wilson	582	62.8	5.74	George Innes	324	35.0	--
Lloyd Esralson	581	62.7	0.57				

### Canada (638 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Roger Foxall	514	80.6	0.79	Gwynneth Wilson	404	63.3	--
Hue MacKenzie	512	80.3	0.79	Murray Brown	399	62.5	--
Jo Ann MacKenzie	511	80.1	--	John Sprague	397	62.2	<b>4.74 **</b>
David Stirling	483	75.7	0.64	Mike Mulligan	396	62.1	--
Eric Tull	482	75.6	--	Don Wilson	395	61.9	--
Mike Toochin	481	75.4	--	Peter Blokker	390	61.1	--
Marika Ainley	468	73.4	1.16	Andy Buhler	378	59.3	--
Dale Jensen	462	72.4	--	Marilyn Buhler	378	59.3	--
Russ Tkachuk	457	71.6	0.55	Ken Klimko	372	58.3	1.85
Stefan Zarembo	445	69.8	0.52	Laird Law	371	58.2	0.74
Hank Vanderpol	441	69.1	1.98	Rand Rudland	367	57.5	0.37
David Allinson	439	68.8	0.99	<b>John Voos</b>	363	56.9	<b>5.17 *</b>
Barb Begg	430	67.4	0.95	Len Jellicoe	360	56.4	4.14
Ken Morgan	423	66.3	1.38	Ron Walker	356	55.8	--
Tony Greenfield	419	65.7	0.45	Mabel Crocker	343	53.8	0.67
Lloyd Esralson	416	65.2	0.89	Gwen Nicol	339	53.1	--
Bryan Gates	411	64.4	0.87	Laurie Rockwell	311	48.8	--
Eva Durance	409	64.1	--	George Innes	216	33.9	--



### British Columbia (482 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Mike Toochin	435	90.3	--	Ron Walker	348	72.2	--
Jo Ann MacKenzie	423	87.8	--	John Vooy	347	72.0	3.57
Hue MacKenzie	421	87.3	1.61	Laird Law	345	71.6	0.72
Dale Jensen	416	86.3	--	Andy Buhler	341	70.8	0.70
David Stirling	414	85.9	1.45	Marilyn Buhler	341	70.8	0.70
Tony Greenfield	405	84.0	1.28	Gwynneth Wilson	339	70.3	1.38
David Allinson	398	82.6	2.30	Eric Tull	335	69.5	--
Hank Vanderpol	392	81.3	--	Peter Blokker	332	68.9	--
Bryan Gates	389	80.7	3.13	Rand Rudland	332	68.9	0.66
Russ Tkachuk	388	80.5	1.05	Marika Ainley	321	66.6	2.42
Roger Foxall	386	80.1	3.96	<b>Len Jellicoe</b>	320	66.4	<b>8.99 *</b>
Lloyd Esralson	378	78.4	4.59	John Sprague	319	66.2	<b>4.68 **</b>
Barb Begg	376	78.0	1.85	Eva Durance	318	66.0	--
Ken Klimko	372	77.2	4.35	Laurie Rockwell	308	63.9	--
Stefan Zarembo	371	77.0	0.89	Gwen Nicol	287	59.5	--
Val George	368	76.4	--	Mabel Crocker	274	56.9	--
Murray Brown	367	76.1	--	Mike Mulligan	245	50.8	--
Don Wilson	361	74.9	--	George Innes	182	37.8	--
Ken Morgan	356	73.9	--				

### Alberta (403 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Eric Tull	349	86.6	--	Bryan Gates	222	55.1	--
Mike Mulligan	319	79.2	--	Dale Jensen	178	44.2	--
David Stirling	284	70.5	--	Peter Blokker	175	43.4	--
Hue MacKenzie	244	60.6	--	Don Wilson	129	32.0	--
Roger Foxall	241	59.8	--	Ken Morgan	123	30.5	--
Jo Ann MacKenzie	239	59.3	--	<b>John Sprague</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>2.82 *</b>
Hank Vanderpol	239	59.3	--	George Innes	34	8.4	--

### Vancouver Island (387 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
David Allinson	331	85.5	3.45	Jo Ann MacKenzie	248	64.1	--
David Stirling	329	85.0	3.33	Roger Foxall	233	60.2	1.91
<b>Barb Begg</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>4.41 *</b>	Eric Tull	186	48.1	--
Bryan Gates	318	83.0	<b>4.35 **</b>	Lloyd Esralson	182	47.0	0.49
Ken Morgan	266	68.7	--	John Sprague	174	46.3	2.35
Mike Toochin	265	68.5	--	Peter Blokker	172	44.4	--
Hue MacKenzie	248	64.1	0.71	George Innes	20	5.2	--

### Queen Charlotte Islands (250 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Ken Morgan	134	53.6	--	Mike Toochin	80	32.0	--
<b>Val George</b>	126	50.4	<b>0.80 *</b>	Bryan Gates	74	29.6	--

### Vancouver Checklist Area (406 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Mike Toochin	348	85.7	3.33	<b>John Vooy</b>	250	61.6	<b>6.02 *</b>
Jo Ann MacKenzie	341	84.0	2.99	David Stirling	242	59.6	--
Hue MacKenzie	336	82.8	--	Bryan Gates	235	57.9	--
Lloyd Esralson	312	76.9	3.09	Don Wilson	233	57.4	0.57
Stefan Zarembo	306	75.4	--	Eric Tull	192	47.3	--
<b>Ken Klimko</b>	300	73.9	<b>5.36 **</b>	Rand Rudland	135	33.2	1.81
David Allinson	277	68.2	--	George Innes	134	33.0	--
Roger Foxall	276	68.0	5.07	John Sprague	107	26.4	0.33



### Victoria Checklist Area (362 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
David Allinson	318	87.9	<b>6.38 *</b>	Bryan Gates	308	85.1	3.57
David Stirling	317	87.6	4.26	Mike Tootchin	241	66.6	3.20
Hank Vanderpol	312	86.2	3.85	Lloyd Esralson	141	39.0	--
Barb Begg	309	85.4	<b>5.36 **</b>				

### Okanagan Valley (329 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Don Wilson	283	86.0	--	Ken Klimko	225	68.4	0.95
Gwynneth Wilson	283	86.0	2.13	<b>Laird Law</b>	216	65.7	<b>8.13 *</b>
Judy Latta	281	85.4	--	Lloyd Esralson	205	62.3	4.62
Laurie Rockwell	269	81.8	1.64	John Vooys	191	58.1	4.17
Peter Blokker	262	79.6	5.63	Bryan Gates	188	57.1	1.40
Mike Tootchin	261	79.3	4.23	Rand Rudland	163	49.5	--
Eva Durance	257	78.1	--	Eric Tull	162	49.2	--
Laure Neish	253	76.9	<b>6.17 **</b>	Gwen Nicol	154	46.8	--
David Stirling	242	73.6	3.33	John Sprague	137	41.6	3.03
Hue MacKenzie	236	71.7	--	George Innes	35	10.6	--
Jo Ann MacKenzie	233	70.8	--				

### Kamloops Checklist Area (295 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
David Stirling	198	67.1	--	Lloyd Esralson	69	23.4	--
Don Wilson	91	30.9	--				

### Sunshine Coast (292 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
<b>Tony Greenfield</b>	262	89.7	<b>6.25 *</b>	Rand Rudland	217	74.3	<b>5.36 **</b>
Russ Tkachuk	239	81.9	2.00				

### West Kootenay Area (313 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Gwen Nicol	230	73.5	--	David Stirling	141	45.1	--
Jo Ann MacKenzie	179	57.2	--	Don Wilson	71	22.7	--
<b>Hue MacKenzie</b>	169	54.0	<b>0.69 *</b>				

### Prince George Checklist Area (283 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
<b>Laird Law</b>	254	89.8	--	Bryan Gates	91	32.2	--
Don Wilson	190	67.1	--	John Sprague	68	24.0	--
Peter Blokker	149	52.7	--				

### Creston Valley Area (283 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Gwen Nicol	148	52.3	--	Don Wilson	68	24.0	--
Bryan Gates	125	44.2	--	George Innes	39	13.8	--
Mike Tootchin	112	39.6	--				

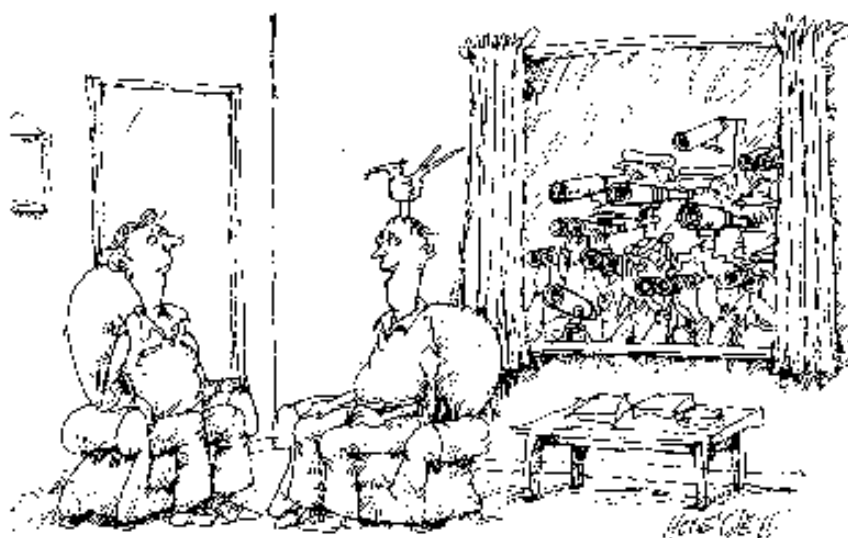


### Washington State (475 species)

NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR	NAME	TOTAL	% TOT	% INCR
Jo Ann MacKenzie	346	72.8	--	Lloyd Esralson	228	48.0	<b>1.59 **</b>
Hue MacKenzie	340	71.6	--	Ken Klimko	184	38.7	1.02
Mike Toochin	305	64.2	--	David Allinson	183	38.5	--
David Stirling	254	53.5	--	Bryan Gates	125	26.3	--
<b>John Vooy</b>	241	50.7	<b>2.09 *</b>	Eric Tull	120	25.3	--
Roger Foxall	239	50.3	--	George Innes	39	8.2	--
Dale Jensen	229	48.2	--				

### North Pacific Pelagic Waters

NAME	TOTAL	NAME	TOTAL
David Allinson	75	Mike Toochin	55
Lloyd Esralson	61	Jo Ann MacKenzie	48
David Stirling	60	Bryan Gates	45
Val George	58	John Vooy	26
Ken Morgan	58		



"Apparently, it's quite rare."

*From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.*



## Off-shore Oil Issues

For many on the coast, the announcement that the Federal moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration might be lifted came as a shock. Over the last 30 years, coastal BC has been in the rather unique position of having its shoreline protected from the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry, as well as from tanker traffic. But in the end, a moratorium is simply a cap that can be removed at the will of a government, and the current BC government's desire to get the oil and gas industry 'up and running' by 2010 was the only catalyst needed to get the review process underway.

The current review is focused on lifting the moratorium in the Queen Charlotte Islands basin, however, there is no reason to believe that once lifted there, it won't be lifted coast wide. So why bring this industry to our coast?

The Geological Survey of Canada estimates there are 9.8 billion barrels of oil and 25.9 trillion cubic feet of gas in the Queen Charlotte Basin. Some estimates say that the potential total downstream benefit of offshore oil exploration would be in excess of \$500 billion, and could contribute direct GDP of \$3 billion annually to the province. This sounds like a good thing for the BC economy, but true economic benefits are not an easy thing to measure. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives indicates most jobs in offshore oil and gas come from building the oil rigs, and it's more than likely that the rigs used in BC will be built in China or South Korea, where wages are lower and the industry is subsidized. Also, current analysis of the economic benefits don't take into consideration the negative economic impacts to the many businesses that rely on both the reputation and the reality of the natural beauty, and clean coastal environment, of British Columbia. They also don't factor in the costs of

using fossil fuels. The costs of climate change impacts, including forest fires and flooding, far outpace estimated profits from oil and gas.

There is also a great deal of concern about the potential for environmental damage that could come with the offshore oil and gas industry. The harm of seismic testing on fish and whales during exploration, the chronic oiling of birds during drilling, the risks of a catastrophic oil spills, the production of toxic drilling muds and air pollutants, and the risks that come with drilling in an earthquake zone. Though technology has changed, the fundamental risks to the environment inherent in this industry have not, and we have to wonder if the risks are worth it in order to drill reserves that some say could feed US consumption of oil and gas for as little as 6 months.

The Federal process reviewing the current moratorium began last year with the Royal Society of Canada's scientific panel review. This panel was directed to find out if there were any scientific reasons that the moratorium shouldn't be lifted. Though the panel identified a long list of knowledge gaps regarding the Queen Charlotte basin, they still somehow concluded that there were no scientific gaps that should preclude the lifting of the moratorium. There were many questions about this stage of the review, as scientists were only given a two week window to submit their comments. This narrow window excluded many experts, and leaves the final conclusions open to question.

In April and May of this year, the second phase of the review began with a separate panel hearing comments from the public. This panel visited 11 coastal communities, including Queen Charlotte City, Masset, Kitimat, Victoria, and Vancouver; however

they did not visit communities in the mid- Island of Vancouver Island. There have been many concerns raised about this phase of the review as well, most notably the issue of perceived bias and potential conflict of interest regarding two of the three panel members. One panel member tried to organize local governments to support lifting the provincial and federal moratoria, while another is on the Board of Directors of an energy company. There have been no issues of perceived bias regarding the third member, an environmental and natural resources lawyer. The panel will present the results of their report to the Minister of Natural Resource Canada sometime this summer.

The final phase of the review is focused on First Nations engagement. A facilitator has been named for this process; however, details of how this engagement will take place are unclear. Some First Nations, such as the Haida, are refusing to have anything to do with the review, as they believe that offshore oil drilling should not be considered until Haida aboriginal title is resolved.

The review of the federal moratorium is the first step in bringing the offshore oil and gas industry to BC. There are many other hurdles, such as First Nations title, that still remain. However, the lifting of the moratorium could mean a rush to get the oil flowing before the real impacts of what that means are really understood.

The conclusions of the federal review will likely be known later this year.

**Christianne Wilhelmson**, Georgia Strait Alliance, Nanaimo, BC

For further information on offshore oil and gas moratorium: [www.GeorgiaStrait.org](http://www.GeorgiaStrait.org) / [www.OilFreeCoast.org](http://www.OilFreeCoast.org) / [www.MoratoriumPublicReview.ca](http://www.MoratoriumPublicReview.ca)





## Taiwan Bird Fair (continued from page 1)

in Japanese homes. In east Asia in general, and Taiwan in particular, the Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle became an endangered species.

In 1991, Changhwa mathematics teacher Simon Liao, newly awakened to birding, decided that something should be done to stop the slaughter of Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagles as they passed over his city's suburbs. He knew that education was an effective way to raise public awareness. Simon set up a team to go to local schools and speak to the students, explaining that shooting the harmless hawks should stop.

In the spring of 1992, Simon saw that the shooting of the Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagles at Pa Kua Mountain had stopped. Enlisting the aid of the media and accompanied by reporters, he went to nearby farms and villages and asked why people who used to shoot the raptors, were no longer doing so. The response from many adults was that the children teased them for shooting, saying that "Birders say we shouldn't kill the hawks. So, we stop."

At about that time, pressure was being brought to bear by the United States and other nations to cease trafficking in endangered species of many kinds, in many countries. The government of Taiwan took notice, and acted accordingly. The Taiwanese government went a step further than most, levying severe penalties; a fine of NT\$ (New Taiwan dollars) 300,000 to NT\$1,000,000 (\$12,000 to \$40,000 CDN) for harming any wild bird, and doubled that fine for killing an endangered species or shooting a bird in a reserve. The new laws were enforced. In a famous 1992 case, a woman caught with 98 dead Brown Shrikes (*Lanius cristatus*), was sentenced to a fine of NT\$1,000,000,

and 2 years' probation.

The same year, the Changhwa Wild Bird Society, formed by Simon Liao in 1991, took on the duty of spreading the word for protection of wild birds, especially the Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle. The Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle Bird Fair was inaugurated on Pa Kua Mountain, and is still held annually on a weekend around March 20, the peak of the migration period. Every year, more than 50,000 people go to the fair to watch for the raptors, visit the display booths, enjoy instrumental and choral music by school children, watch dramatic skits which include English-as-second-language students displaying their English skills, and listen to speeches by local and federal officials. This huge undertaking is supported by 600 to 700 volunteers, many of whom are young teachers-in-training. At BirdLife International's 1999 conference, the Gray-faced Buzzard-Eagle Bird Fair was declared a model for the world.

On March 22, 2003, our Canadian birding group, which included five BCFO members, attended the fair and saw first-hand its enviable success. During a few minutes of the fair's Opening Ceremonies, we looked up to see a kettle of 60 Gray-faced Buzzards soaring overhead. We were grateful for the work and dedication of the Changhwa Wild Bird Society that made that special moment possible.

**Jo Ann MacKenzie and Simon Liao**



Liao Ming-Huei and Jo Ann MacKenzie

Hue MacKenzie



## Birds of Tasmania - 2

Last edition, I introduced you to two of Tasmania's endemic bird species. This time we'll look at four more. There is a large family of birds in Australia called honeyeaters. As the name suggests, their primary food source is nectar from flowers. Unlike North American hummingbirds that hover in front of small plant flowers, the honeyeaters favour flowering trees. This means there is no need to hover, they just perch on the branch and eat. Australia has a tremendous number of flowering trees, and hence a large number of honeyeater species: almost 60 in total. Four members of this family are found nowhere in the world except Tasmania: Yellow-throated Honeyeater, Strong-billed Honeyeater, Black-headed Honeyeater, and the Yellow Wattlebird. All four are quite common and not hard to find.

The first day we arrived at our new house I heard a very strange, rather unpleasant and definitely un-birdlike sound coming from one of the trees in the garden. It didn't take long to find the source. It was a large greyish bird, with a long slightly curved beak, and two long, yellow flaps of skin, or wattles, hanging down the sides of its head. It was a Yellow Wattlebird. After hearing it just once, it was a sound I now recognise immediately. Because it is quite large, about 40 cm in length, it often feeds lower in the trees, avoiding the flimsy branches higher up.

The Yellow-throated, about half the size of the wattlebird, is much more of a songster. It has a variety of sounds, many of them quite loud for a bird of its size. I can now identify a lot of the sounds this species makes, but the sounds are so variable, I am still confused by this one sometimes. It is a fairly colourful bird, having a green back, grey head and breast with a bright yellow throat.

The other two, the Strong-billed and

the Black-headed are somewhat similar in appearance at first glance. They are also smaller than the others, at only 16 cm and 13 cm respectively. Their small size gives them much more agility. They are able to feed on flowers high in the trees out at the ends of the top branches. This makes them harder to see clearly and usually give the viewer a stiff neck! (A bit like watching warblers at home.) Neither of these species has easily identifiable songs and calls. I hope that with more practice I will start to recognise them more readily, but at the moment, I'm not having much luck!

We all know that Canadian nectar eaters, the hummingbirds, leave in the winter. But Tasmania's honeyeaters are resident. This is possible because food is available year round. There are literally hundreds of flowering trees in Australia but they do not all flower at the same time, as most of our plants do. At all times of the year there are flowers available somewhere.

Although I have spoken only of Tasmania's four endemic honeyeaters, there are fifty other species scattered around Australia. Some are almost as small as our hummingbirds while others, like Tasmania's Yellow Wattlebird, are as big as a Steller's Jay.

Next time I'll introduce you to some more of Tasmania's birds, like maybe the Native-hen, or the Currawong, or the .....

***Gary Davidson, Tasmania***

## Birds of Tasmania - 3

So far I have introduced you to 6 of Tasmania's endemic bird species, species that exist nowhere else in the world except on the island of Tasmania. One of the more comical looking species is the Tasmanian Native-hen. The Native-hen is not really a hen, but is related to the rails and coots. Superficially it looks a bit like a large, long-legged coot. But its behaviour is more like that of a farmyard chicken, except, of course, when it runs into the water and swims strongly to the other side! They are incapable of flight, but have developed long legs, which allow them to run with great speed. They are quite common in Tasmania, feeding in fields, road edges, wetland edges, and more or less any open area with nearby cover. Their harsh, guttural calls can be heard from some distance and always accompany our strolls down the golf course here in Kingston. One reference book describes their calls as: "a wide range of noisy grunts, hoarse rasping sounds". I'd say that sums it up quite nicely!

Another local bird with some interesting vocal skills is the Black Currawong. In addition to the Tasmanian species, there are two other currawong species in Australia. The word 'currawong' is derived from the rollicking sound made by the Pied Currawong of eastern Australia. Currawongs are large, mostly black birds that with an "eat anything" attitude. Their diet includes: insects and grubs found in the bark of trees; eggs and nestlings taken from active birds nests; small mammals and lizards; fruit; grain; nectar; and man-produced garbage. They are also quite tame and will gladly accept a handout from the campsite or picnic table. In fact, if you're not careful they will take it right off your plate.



The Green Rosella is one of a dozen members of the parrot family to live in Tasmania. All of the others, however, can be found in mainland Australia as well. These rosellas are quite common, and can be found in almost any sort of wooded habitat including urban parks and gardens. Like most parrots, these birds are capable of some harsh and non-musical notes. But they can also produce a lovely bell-like tone. Their diet is varied and includes a variety of seeds and fruit. Another member of the parrot family, the Orange-bellied Parrot, breeds exclusively in Tasmania, but since it moves to the mainland for winter is not considered an endemic. This is a rare and endangered bird. It is thought that only 200-300 remain in the wild. Fortunately, the breeding grounds are in the rugged south-west portion of Tasmania. This region is a proclaimed wilderness area, with no road access. If they remained in this habitat year-round there may be less reason for concern. But their habit of moving to coastal Victoria and South Australia for the winter, makes them more vulnerable to predators, and to the habitat alteration so prevalent in developed areas. An active research program is underway in Tasmania to try to learn as much as possible about the species. Captive breeding programs are also in place. It is still not clear whether or not this species can be saved from extinction!

At the time of writing, it is late May. Here in Tasmania that's early winter. The temperatures lately have been 10-12 degrees in the afternoon, not cold by B.C. standards, but certainly not warm. We have a two week school break coming up and Marie and I are flying up to Port Douglas in North Queensland for some sunshine and warmth! North Queensland has a tropical climate, and even in winter

the afternoon temperatures will be 25-30 degrees. Perhaps in my next episode, I'll mention some of the tropical birds I saw in Queensland.

**Gary Davidson**, Tasmania

**Editor's Note:**

For images of the birds mentioned in Gary's articles, please visit the Australian Bird Image Database at <http://www.aviceda.org/abid/>

## From the Field

Last winter an old apple tree had a large clump of snow wedged in the fork of two high branches.

One morning, after a fresh fall of powder, I saw a Black-Capped Chickadee jump into this fluffy topping on the clump and vigorously go through the motions of bathing, flapping its wings to stir up a fine mist. Then it sat and preened in a typical after-bath routine.

**Gwen Nicol**, Rossland, BC.



"OK, Birdman, you're starting to abuse your privileges now."

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



## Authors in this Issue

### Gary Davidson

Gary Davidson, Nakusp's resident birder and pre-eminent British Columbia birder has taken a teaching position in Hobart, Tasmania where he and his wife Marie will live for a year. Gary has contributed bird records from throughout BC. Before moving to Nakusp he explored the Fort Nelson area and co-authored an important paper on the birds of the Fort Nelson area with Tony Erskine in 1976. His contributions in Nakusp and beyond have significantly added to our knowledge of the birds of BC. [Editor]

### Simon Liao

Simon grew up on a farm in Changhwa County, Taiwan. His childhood contact with birds was limited to herding the family's flock of domestic ducks. Many years later, Simon and his young son visited a coastal wetland for the boy's school project on birds. Simon admits that in those days, he knew almost nothing about wild birds, and decided to learn. He founded the Changhwa Wild Bird Society, becoming Executive Secretary and then President. Later, he was elected President of the Wild Bird Federation of Taiwan, and then Vice Chairperson of the Asia District of BirdLife International. He moved to the Vancouver area in 2002, and joined BCFO a year later. Besides birding, Simon's particular interest is in conservation of birds and their habitats, and encouraging international cooperation for conservation. Last year, Simon founded the International Taiwan Birding Association as a bridge between Taiwan and Canada. Simon is President of the ITBA; Jo Ann MacKenzie is Executive Secretary.

### Jo Ann MacKenzie

Jo Ann's interest in creatures of the wild began in very early childhood in Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A. At about age 2, she tried to persuade a neighborhood squirrel to eat walnuts from a spoon. Some 30 years later, her interest focused on birds. She became active in the birding section of the Toronto Field Naturalists and the Ontario Bird Banding Association. Jo Ann and husband Hue moved to the Vancouver area in 1983, and were soon leading field trips for the Vancouver Natural History Society and the White Rock and Surrey Naturalists. They were founding members of BCFO in 1991. Jo Ann was elected to the Board of Directors in 1999, serving as Secretary for 3 years, and President for 1 year, retiring in June, 2003.

### Ken Morgan

Ken has birded on and off since his pre-teens but seriously since his mid-twenties. He is interested in all birds but is most passionate about pelagic seabirds. Ken did his graduate work on forest bird/habitat relationships in Nova Scotia, but almost since his first job with the Canadian Wildlife Service has worked on seabirds. He has been an employee of CWS for 14 years and has written or co-authored over 40 scientific papers on birds.

### Gwen Nicol

Being born into a farming family in NSW Australia Gwen learned to appreciate and respect nature at a young age. In 1969 Gwen came to the Kootenays for a holiday and decided to stay awhile! After living in Trail for a number of years, Gwen married Dr. Bill Nicol and they moved to Rossland. Bill and Gwen travelled extensively in Canada and the wider world before Bill's death in 1991. Gwen has become very interested in birding and is an active member of the West Kootenay Naturalists Club. Gwen spends many happy hours birding, either with friends or on her own. She especially enjoys those trips searching for some elusive rare find such as the White-headed Woodpecker in the Okanagan. Gwen spends most winters in Australia and makes sure that she catches up on her birding while there!

