

BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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15th Annual BCFO Conference in Parksville, August 26-28

This year's Annual Conference represents a return to the Coast after an interval of five years. The field trips will provide an opportunity to see the wide diversity of birds that will have dispersed after breeding, or be in southward migration mode. To whet your appetite we have included Guy Monty's personal list of birds observed in the Parksville area in the last week of August from 2000-2004. That's organized notekeeping! Further, the *bcbirdingvanisland* website (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcbirdingvanisland/>) confirms August had the second highest total of species in 2004.

The technical presentations will focus on coastal topics, although they have much wider relevance. Dr. Peter Arcese (University of B.C.) will be the banquet speaker. He has been studying song sparrows on Mandarte Island for over two decades, and the results of that work are soon to appear in a book he is co-authoring with Dr. Jamie Smith. We look forward to hearing part of that story.

Ian Robertson and Wayne Diakow

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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.

Since November, 2003, BCFO has maintained 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. A brief biographical sketch (5--100 words) should accompany the article if the editor does not have a recent version or you wish to change it.

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 15th of the month preceding the March, June, September, and December issues.

Advertising

Advertising rates are available upon request.

BCFO Website

<http://www.bcfo.ca>



President's Report

Welcome to Summer, fellow BC birders!

This will be a short message from me. I've been travelling a lot in the past four months, but I have been remembering the British Columbia Field Ornithologists.

I wanted to talk about biodiversity, birding during the off-season, and travelling. But I'll just give you an outline today. I was in northwestern and northeastern India and mountainous Bhutan for a couple of months where the bird community is determined by the monsoons and elevation. Now I'm working in British Columbia's Peace country where summer/winter seasons and latitude are leading dicatators.

It seems that India and Bhutan are interesting for birding all year round. But what about British Columbia? It can be interesting also. It's just that we are more familiar with "our" birds. This leads me to the BCFO's Annual Conference this year in Parksville the end of August.

August seems to be a slow month for BC birders. When the Prince George Naturalists Club drew up the first edition of their checklist with bar graphs, there was very little information from August. I spoke to someone from the Okanagan at that time (about 10 years ago), and the

situation was similar there. Just after that, my husband and I did a Big Day in August.

We documented the second record for Black-and-White Warbler for the Prince George checklist. It's just a matter of being out there birding. Birding in BC has changed a lot in the past 10 years. But remember, the birds have wings, and they are changing their behaviour also.

On our overseas birding trips, we either meet up with a local or make prior arrangements with a birding tour company for a day or for several weeks. These locals are familiar with "their" birds but they enjoy sharing them with their overseas visitors.

And it's not always because they are a business. Some of these contacts are new friends who enjoy showing visitors around. It also gives them an excuse to get out birding

themselves! One new friend from Dehra Dun, India, saw a lifer Brown Bullfinch because we were there. (The bullfinches were vagrants.)

I, also, have found it enjoyable to bring visitors out birding when visiting my home area of Prince George. I get to see the dull and common with the fresh eyes of a visitor.

So, to those of you familiar with the central Vancouver Island area, come to the Annual Conference! Show the rest of us what there is to see. Maybe we'll see "that rare bird." Maybe you'll get a chance to ask me about White-winged Duck, Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal, fantails, laughing thrushes, bush warblers, and yuhinas and how they compare to BC birds.

Sandra Kinsey, President



LOCATION		ALTITUDE (FEET)
KHOSELA	-	5042
DUNGUNG	- 11	3373
LANGTHEL	- 16	3738
YOURMU	- 21	3634
REFEY	- 27	4588
KUENGARABTEN	- 43	5905
BUBJA	- 47	6064
TRONGSA	- 67	7342



Internet Sources

BCFO

<http://www.bcfo.ca>

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/>

Bird Source

Audobon's and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's' interactive bird information site, featuring "eBird"

<http://www.birdsource.com/>

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/checklist/index.php3>

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/>

British Columbia Birds

Notes and papers.

Our technical journal is badly in need of significant birding observations. Publication is being held up. The Directors and editor have started a program to contact potential authors, but meanwhile, your notes on rare birds and similar subjects are welcome. Please contact friends who have things that should be recorded, reviews of a species, etc. This is the best place to get these observations recorded for the future.

If in doubt, contact the editor. He can also provide instructions on format. His contact points are given near the front of this newsletter and in the membership directory.

Book reviews

If you would like to review books that come in to the journal, please let the editor know the topics that interest you. Sometimes we also get recordings. You get to keep the book or CD.

The journal could also make use of black and white drawings or photos to liven up the cover and pages.

John Sprague, Editor vol. 13+

Request for digital images of BC Birds

Do you have a good digital image of a BC Bird? The BCFO is encouraging members to submit digital photographs that can be used on our website. We can't compensate you for the use of your image but we will acknowledge the photographer. We can also reduce the resolution of your digital photo to discourage people from copying it off of our website. Please submit your image, along with a suggested caption, the image date, & location to

andy.stewart@shaw.ca



Editor's Notes and Notions

This rather late edition of *BC Birding* thankfully still precedes the AGM to be held in Parksville this month. See further details of this exciting event elsewhere in this edition. (I have included some AGM announcements from the March issue of *BC Birding* as a reminder to those who may have forgotten and to prompt those undecided potential participants to send in their registration forms.) I thank Inez Weston for letting me know that the sign outside the Bayside Oceanfront Inn actually displays "Quality Bayside Oceanfront Inn." This may save some confusion on the part of attendees. It also points out that keen field observation skills of BC Field Ornithologists need not be limited to birds.

As mentioned on the front page, Guy Monty has provided an impressive list of birds (page 8) that he has seen in the Parksville area during the period in which the BCFO annual conference takes place. Tony Greenfield presents a comprehensive site guide to the many good birding areas of the Sunshine Coast, and Don Cecile provides a summary of noteworthy sightings throughout BC during the winter of 2004/2005.

I hope that everyone has had some good bird watching outings during the spring and the month of June despite no formal congregation of BC Field Ornithologists. I'm sure there will be a tale or two exchanged during the August meeting. Although spring is the time of intensive birding throughout the province I look forward to a spring-like ornithological re-invigoration during the annual conference in August.

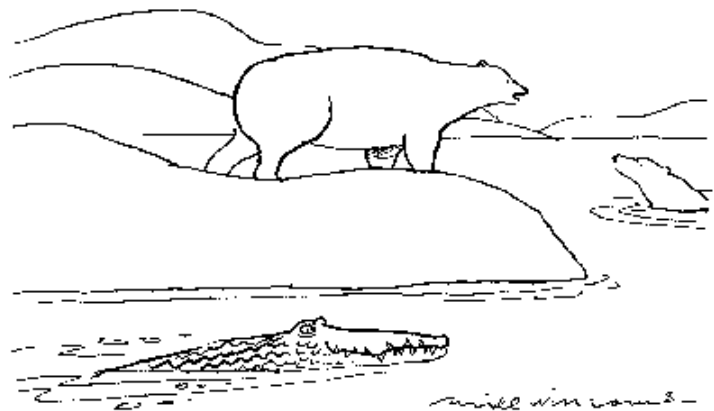
Of course, birds wait for no one and discovery is not limited to season or location. There remains much to learn about the birds of British Columbia and all members of the BCFO — amateurs and professionals — contribute to this collective knowledge that will ultimately help sustain British Columbia's

biological diversity.

Remember that this publication (for less technical and non academic items) and especially our annual publication *BC Birds*, BCFO's technical and scientific publication, are important repositories and sources of information. If you have any items of interest, from field observations to scientific studies, that you think may fit into one of these publications, please contact myself or Dr. John Sprague, the Editor of *BC Birds*.

Happy birding.

Phil Henderson, Editor



"You know this global warming you mentioned..."

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



PARKSVILLE

15th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, August 26, 2005

7:00 - 9:00 pm	Registration – Tidal Room, (Quality) Bayside Oceanfront Inn, Parksville, B.C.
7:30	Welcome
7:00 - 9:00 pm	Social Hour(s)

SATURDAY, August 27, 2005 (Note: Breakfast and Lunch on your own.)

5:00 & 6:00 am	Field Trips – depart Bayside Oceanfront Inn. Return by 11:00 am
12:00 - 1:00 pm	Lunch (on your own)
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Technical Session (pm) – Tidal Room, Bayside Oceanfront Inn <i>Terry Martin</i> , independent research biologist, Quadra Island Brant migration on central Vancouver Island - timing, numbers and evidence of disturbance <i>Katie Christie</i> , University of Victoria Salmon-derived nutrients in riparian foodwebs: implications for passerines.
2:00 - 2:30 pm	Break
2:30 - 3:45 pm	Technical Session (cont.) <i>Tania Tripp</i> , Madrone Environmental Services Ltd., Duncan Regional variation in the territorial call of Western Screech-owls <i>Neil Dawe</i> , Canadian Wildlife Service, Qualicum Beach Bird conservation and economic growth
3:45 - 5:30 pm	Annual General Meeting - Tidal Room, Bayside Oceanfront Inn
6:00 - 7:00 pm	Social Hour - Tidal Room, Bayside Oceanfront Inn
7:00 - 9:30 pm	Banquet - Tidal Room, Bayside Oceanfront Inn Guest Speaker: Dr. Peter Arcese , University of British Columbia

SUNDAY, August 28, 2005 (Note: breakfast on your own.)

5:00 & 6:00 am	Field Trips – depart from Bayside Oceanfront Inn, Parksville. Return by 11:00 am
12:00 pm	Lunch (no host) & Annual Conference Adjournment - Tidal Room, Bayside Oceanfront Inn



BCFO ANNUAL CONFERENCE FIELD TRIPS

The following descriptions provide a flavour of the field trips we are offering at the annual conference this year in Parksville, and the birds we might encounter. In the company of super observers, fall migration is one of the best times of year to be out in the field. We hope you don't miss it!

Nanaimo:

This outing will focus on a combination of birds found in the drier Douglas fir forests surrounding Westwood Lake; a freshwater marsh within urban Nanaimo at Buttertubs Marsh, and Vancouver Island's largest estuarine habitat, the Nanaimo River Estuary.

Possible species include American Black Duck, Green Heron, Peregrine Falcon, Virginia Rail, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Band-tailed Pigeon, Anna's Hummingbird, Hutton's Vireo, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager.

Easy walking over moderate distances (1+ kilometer at each site). Gumboots necessary for the estuary.

Rathrevor/Nanoose Peninsula:

In Rathrevor Provincial Park, we will search for migrant passerines and shorebirds. From there we will make a number of stops on a driving tour of the Nanoose Peninsula, with equal parts of marine birding from the rocky headlands and shoreline, and forest birding in some of the most northerly Douglas-fir/Garry oak habitats on Vancouver Island. We will finish with a walk on the Nanoose estuary.

Possible species include Greater White-fronted Goose, Harlequin Duck, Merlin, Black Turnstone, Red-necked Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Swift, Cassin's Vireo, Hutton's Vireo, Townsend's Solitaire, Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Easy walking over short distances.

Englishman River Estuary:

This tour will be spent entirely on the Englishman River Estuary, as we work our way upstream from marine areas at the mouth of the river, through the estuary proper, and then to forested areas along the river.

Possible species include Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Black Oystercatcher, Pacific-Golden Plover, Bonaparte's Gull, Marbled Murrelet, Black Swift, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hutton's Vireo, American Dipper, Hermit Thrush, Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Easy walking over moderate distance (4+ kilometer).

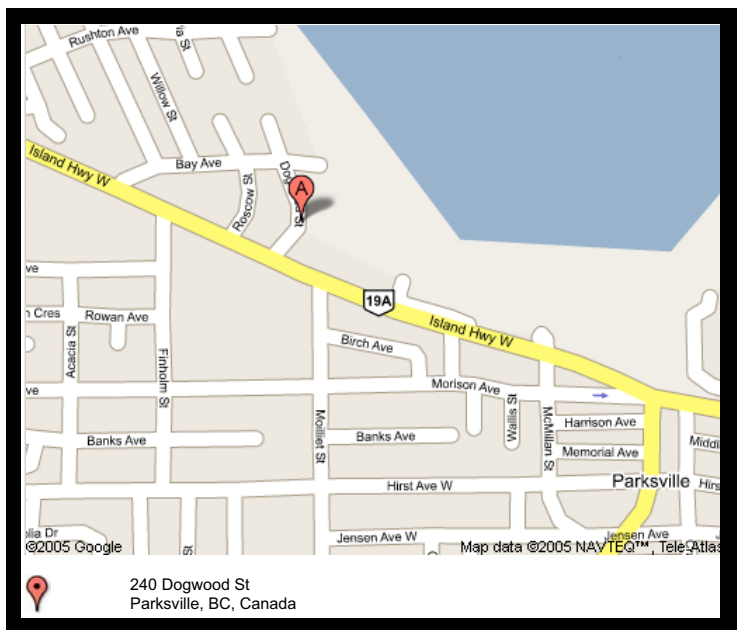
The Qualicum Rivers/Deep Bay:

This outing will begin at the Little Qualicum River Estuary, with searches for early returning waterfowl and gulls. At the Big Qualicum River fish hatchery we will seek migrant passerines and other forest birds. Continuing north on the scenic, old Island Highway, our final destination will be the beaches of Deep Bay.

Possible species include early southbound marine species, Black Oystercatcher, Red-necked Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger, Heerman's Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Tern, Marbled Murrelet, Rhinoceros Auklet, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hutton's Vireo, American Dipper, Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Easy walking over short distances.

Wayne Diakow, Director



AUGUST CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND BIRDS

Greater White-fronted Goose	Sora	Mourning Dove	Swainson's Thrush
Canada Goose	American Coot	Barn Owl	Hermit Thrush
Mute Swan	Sandhill Crane	Western Screech-Owl	American Robin
Trumpeter Swan	Black-bellied Plover	Great Horned Owl	Varied Thrush
Wood Duck	Pacific Golden-Plover	Northern Pygmy-Owl	European Starling
Gadwall	Semipalmated Plover	Barred Owl	American Pipit
American Wigeon	Killdeer	Common Nighthawk	Cedar Waxwing
American Black Duck	Black Oystercatcher	Black Swift	Orange-crowned Warbler
Mallard	Greater Yellowlegs	Vaux's Swift	Yellow Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Lesser Yellowlegs	Anna's Hummingbird	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Cinnamon Teal	Solitary Sandpiper	Rufous Hummingbird	Black-throated Gray Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Wandering Tattler	Belted Kingfisher	Townsend's Warbler
Northern Pintail	Spotted Sandpiper	Red-breasted Sapsucker	MacGillivray's Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Whimbrel	Downy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Ring-necked Duck	Ruddy Turnstone	Hairy Woodpecker	Wilson's Warbler
Greater Scaup	Black Turnstone	American Three-toed Woodpecker	Western Tanager
Lesser Scaup	Surfbird	Northern Flicker	Spotted Towhee
Harlequin Duck	Sanderling	Pileated Woodpecker	Chipping Sparrow
Surf Scoter	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Vesper Sparrow
White-winged Scoter	Western Sandpiper	Willow Flycatcher	Savannah Sparrow
Black Scoter	Least Sandpiper	Hammond's Flycatcher	Fox Sparrow
Bufflehead	Baird's Sandpiper	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Pectoral Sandpiper	Cassin's Vireo	Lincoln's Sparrow
Barrow's Goldeneye	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Hutton's Vireo	White-crowned Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Short-billed Dowitcher	Warbling Vireo	Dark-eyed Junco
Common Merganser	Long-billed Dowitcher	Gray Jay	Black-headed Grosbeak
Ring-necked Pheasant	Wilson's Snipe	Steller's Jay	Lazuli Bunting
Ruffed Grouse	Red-necked Phalarope	Northwestern Crow	Red-winged Blackbird
White-tailed Ptarmigan	Parasitic Jaeger	Common Raven	Western Meadowlark
Blue Grouse	Franklin's Gull	Purple Martin	Yellow-headed Blackbird
California Quail	Little Gull	Tree Swallow	Brewer's Blackbird
Pacific Loon	Bonaparte's Gull	Violet-green Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Loon	Heermann's Gull	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Bullock's Oriole
Yellow-billed Loon	Mew Gull	Bank Swallow	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Pied-billed Grebe	Ring-billed Gull	Cliff Swallow	Pine Grosbeak
Red-necked Grebe	California Gull	Barn Swallow	Purple Finch
Western Grebe	Herring Gull	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	House Finch
Brandt's Cormorant	Thayer's Gull	Bushtit	Red Crossbill
Double-crested Cormorant	Western Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Pine Siskin
Pelagic Cormorant	Glaucous-winged Gull	Brown Creeper	American Goldfinch
Great Blue Heron	Caspian Tern	Bewick's Wren	Evening Grosbeak
Great Egret	Black Tern	House Wren	House Sparrow
Green Heron	Common Tern	Winter Wren	
Turkey Vulture	Common Murre	Marsh Wren	
Osprey	Pigeon Guillemot	American Dipper	
Bald Eagle	Marbled Murrelet	Golden-crowned Kinglet	
Northern Harrier	Ancient Murrelet	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Rhinoceros Auklet		
Cooper's Hawk	Rock Pigeon		
Red-tailed Hawk	Band-tailed Pigeon		
American Kestrel			
Merlin			
Peregrine Falcon			
Virginia Rail			

Compiled by *Guy Monty*.



BCFO ANNUAL CONFERENCE FIELD TRIPS

The 2005 BCFO Annual Conference will be held at the Bayside Oceanfront Inn in Parksville. In spite of the cost challenges – high summer season, on the beach – we think we have arranged comfortable surroundings for reasonable rates, though room rates are higher than we would expect in the Interior. In identifying the following options, please be aware that available rooms will disappear quickly as summer approaches, so book early. At the Bayside, we have blocked 13 rooms at \$109 (the other 11 rooms are already booked!), and 10 rooms at \$139. Below are some preferred locations mostly within walking distance of the Bayside, with their August rates (excluding applicable taxes).

Ian Robertson, Director

(Quality) Bayside Oceanfront Inn (250-248-8333 / toll free: 1-800-663-4232)
240 Dogwood Street
Room rates: \$109 – streetside; \$139 - beachside (single and double occupancy)
Website: www.baysideoceanfrontinn.com

V.I.P. Motel (across from the Bayside) (250-248-3244 / toll free: 1-800-663-7300)
414 W. Island Hwy
Room rates: \$99 (single occupancy); \$109 (double occupancy)
Website: www.vipmotel.com

Paradise Sea Shell Motel (next door to the Bayside) (250-248-6171 / toll free: 1-877-337-3529)
411 W. Island Hwy.
Room rates: \$79.95 (double occupancy), \$89.95 (with fridge + microwave)
Website: www.paradiseseashellmotel.com

Paradise Resort and RV Park (adjacent to Paradise Sea Shell) (250-248-6612)
(opens middle of March)

Various **Campgrounds** (book early – demand will be high)

BCFO EXTENSION, AUGUST 28-31, 2005: THE WEST COAST (INCLUDING PELAGIC TRIP)

Immediately following our AGM in Parksville (August 28), BCFO will conduct an Extension Tour based in neighbouring Port Alberni. Field trips from Port Alberni will commence August 29 and run until August 31.

The highlight of the Extension will be a 7 hour pelagic trip from Bamfield that will access BC's rich pelagic zone. Likely species encountered will include Black-footed Albatross, Northern Fulmar, 3 species of shearwater, petrels, phalaropes, jaegers, kittiwakes, Cassin's Auklet & Tufted Puffin. Laysan Albatross is possible along with other possible rarities, and various cetaceans.

On the second day of the tour we will visit the Tofino-Ucluelet area on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Shorebirds will be the main focus of our attention, and there is a wide variety of habitats including mudflats, sandy beaches and rocky shorelines, all with their attendant species.

On the morning of the third day we will bird productive habitats in the Nanaimo-Duncan area, before the tour ends in Nanaimo in the afternoon.

The tour cost of \$450 includes the pelagic trip, all transportation and accommodation (double occupancy),

and 3 packed lunches. It does not include breakfasts and dinners. The pelagic portion of the tour would normally be priced at \$150.

Tony Greenfield, Director



Membership Notes

1. Address mailing labels will now have your membership expiry date printed on them as follows EXP: Dec 2005
2. Membership is based on a calendar year and expires in December.
3. The March issue of BC Birding will be sent to members who have not renewed but their name will be removed before the June issue if they have not renewed.
4. New members who join after October will have their membership expire the following December (ie. the membership is for 15 months).
5. There is a time lag between when your cheque for renewal is received in Victoria and when I receive that information in Nelson, so there may be times when your expiry date is incorrect. This is mostly true if your cheque is sent just prior to a mailout.
6. Three renewal notices are sent out - the first with the September issue, the second with the December and the third with the March issue.
7. Please feel free to contact me either by phone (250-354-1685) or email (rwege@telus.net) if you have any concerns or questions regarding your membership. I'd be happy to answer!

Rita Wege

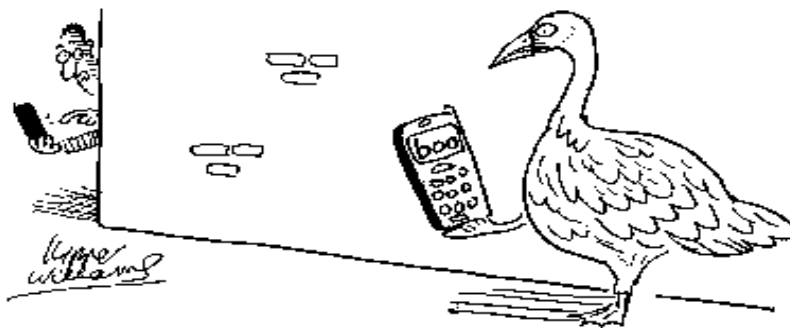
UPDATE: Request for donations of back issues of BC Birding

Thank you very much to Eric Tull and Fred Simpson who generously donated many back issues of BC Birding. We have now filled our gaps in the archival collection and most gaps in the library. However we still require the following issues for the BCFO library and our second set of newsletters to trade with the Peregrine Fund library. If you have the following issues and no longer require them we would be very grateful for your donation: **Vol. 1, no. 2** (2 copies needed) and **Vol. 11, no. 2** (one copy already obtained but another needed). Please send your donations to Krista De Groot, 5421 Robertson Rd. RR#1, Delta, BC, V4K 3N2 Thank you!

Krista DeGroot

BCFO NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST ISSUE

Leah Ramsay	Victoria
Amelie Rousseau	Lazo
Marc Sole	N. Vancouver
Henry Harbert	Medford, OR
Michael Barry	
Lancaster	Oliver, BC



From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

compiled by *Martin K. McNicholl*

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| March? 2006 | SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING, Olympia, Wash. Dates, exact location & contact details not yet announced. |
| Aug. 13-19 2006 | 24th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Hamburg, Germany. Contact: IOC 2006, Institute of Avian Research, An der Vogelwarte 21, 26386, Wilhelmshaven, Germany. |
| June 15-18 2005 | COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA. contact Luke George, Dept. of Wildlife, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521, phone (707) 826-3430, e-mail tlg2@humboldt.edu . |
| August 23-27 2005 | 123RD STATED MEETING OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, Univ. of California-Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, Calif. Contact: Stephen I. Rothstein, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution & Marine Biology, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106, phone (805) 893-2834, e-mail rothstei@lifesci.ucsb.edu . |
| August 26-28 2005 | B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS 15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Parksville, B.C. details outlined in B.C. Birding 15(1):6-8; contact details presumably elsewhere in this issue. |
| August 27 2005 | BIODIVERSITY CENTRE FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES 1ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, location not yet announced (somewhere in the B.C. lower mainland); contact: R. Wayne Campbell, Biodiversity for Wildlife Studies, Box 32128, Victoria, B.C. V8P 5S2; phone (250-477-0465); e-mail editor@wildlifebc.org . |
| Sept. 2005 | FEDERATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA NATURALISTS ANNUAL FALL MEETING, Lillooet, B.C. |
| Sept. 28-1 Oct. 2005 | WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS 30TH ANNUAL MEETING, Santa Maria, Calif. Contact: Catherine Waters (address not indicated), phone (562) 869-6718; e-mail: cpannellwaters@yahoo.com . |
| October 12-16 2005 | RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING, Green Bay, WI. Dan Varland, Rayonier, 3033 Ingram St., Hoquiam, WA 98550, phone (360) 538-4582, e-mail daniel.varland@rayonier.com . |
| October 20-22 2005 | 20TH TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Contact: Madeleine Link, mailing address unknown, phone (763) 694-7851, e-mail ttss@threeriversparkdistrict.org . |
| October 20-22 2005 | SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING, Halifax, N.S. no mailing or phone contact yet announced; e-mail: Andrew.Boyne@ec.gc.ca OR mleonard@dal.ca . |
| November 24-27 2005 | WATERBIRD SOCIETY SPECIAL MEETING ON AVIAN DISEASE & THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS, Tainan, Taiwan. Contact information not yet announced. |
| March? 2006 | SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING, Olympia, Wash. Dates, exact location & contact details not yet announced. |
| Aug. 13-19 2006 | 24th INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Hamburg, Germany. Contact: IOC 2006, Institute of Avian Research, An der Vogelwarte 21, 26386, Wilhelmshaven, Germany. |
| Oct. 2-7 2006 | 4TH NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS - JOINT MEETING OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS, WATERBIRD SOCIETY & WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY WITH MEXICAN HOSTS, Veracruz, Mexico. Additional ornithological societies may also participate. Contact: Charles M. Francis, National Wildlife Research Centre, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0H3, phone (613) 998-0332, e-mail charles.francis@ec.gc.ca OR Jose Luis Cantara, e-mail jlalcant@colpos.mx . |



B.C. BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

New Campbell Valley Checklist -The Langley Field Naturalists and Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies recently published a seasonal checklist of the birds of Langley's Campbell Valley Regional Park by Anthea Farr and Kathy Masse.

Efforts Awarded -The three top 2004 awards of B.C.'s Wild Bird Trust were awarded to Al Grass (Conservation and Education Award) and Derek J. Matthews and Patrick F. Mooney (President's Awards) at the trust's annual general meeting on 27 November 2004, when volunteer awards were also given to Tyrone Liebenberg, John Lowman, Rob Lyske, Gordon F. Morgan and Janice Wilson (Anonymous. 2005. *Wild Bird Trust Wingspan* winter/spring 2005:10-12).

Plaques Recognize Reifel Contributions -A highlight of the annual general meeting of the B.C. Waterfowl Society at their George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary on 6 April/05 was the presentation of plaques in recognition of 20 years of outstanding service to John Ireland as Sanctuary Manager and Varri Johnson as Gift Shop Manager and to Patricia Banning-Lover for editing *Marsh Notes* for several years and Roy Hamaguchi for enhancing that newsletter with outstanding colour photographs of many of the sanctuary's avian inhabitants.

Gerry Powers Awarded -Work on behalf of birds formed the core contributions for which Gerry Powers was awarded the Club Award of the Central Valley Naturalists recently. These contributions included organization of Christmas bird, raptor nest and swan surveys in the Fraser Valley, as well as his Presidency of the Orphaned Wildlife rehabilitation Society (OWL). -based on J. Saaltink. 2005. *B.C. Nat.* 43(1):26.

Fraser River Delta Designated Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve -During my dozen years as Chair or Acting Chair of the Canadian Section of the International Council for Bird Preservation (since replaced by Birdlife International), the most time-consuming B.C. issue was the attempt to get some sort of protection for Mud Bay and/or the Fraser River delta, largely supporting various initiatives of the late Dr. Barry Leach. I was therefore very pleased to accept an invitation from the Vancouver Natural History Society to be one of their representatives at the official designation of the Fraser River Delta as an international hemisphere reserve in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network on 29 April 2005. A veritable who's who of lower mainland naturalists and ornithologists, including many BCFO members, attended on behalf of several lower mainland, provincial, national and international agencies, businesses, governments, naturalist societies and ornithological groups, hosted by the Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society.

Additonal Meeting Announcement

submitted by Wayne Weber:

September 9-12, 2005 WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING, Bellingham, Washington. For further information check the WOS website at www.wos.org.



West Nile virus – Be On the Lookout for Dead Corvids

West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne infection first isolated in the West Nile area of Uganda in 1937. Since 1999 when it was first detected in New York City, WNV has spread across North America. BC is one of the last areas to remain free of the virus, however, we expect it will arrive in BC soon, probably in the summer of 2005. We think that it will enter the province in birds that migrate along the Pacific flyway from areas such as California. California had a large outbreak of WNV infections in 2004. The virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by biting an infected bird.

The BC Centre for Disease Control is asking birders to help with surveillance for West Nile virus this summer. Birds are the primary carriers of West Nile virus and can spread the virus to different areas along their flight paths. Corvids are especially sensitive to West Nile virus and most will die from it. Dead corvids (ravens, crows, magpies, jays) have been shown in other areas of Canada to often be the first indicator that West Nile virus has entered an area. We will be testing some dead corvids for the virus as well as monitoring reports of dead corvids across the province in order to determine when WNV enters BC and where it is. If you find dead corvids please assist us by filling out an online Dead Bird Sighting Report form, or by checking with your local Health Authority to see if they need to have the bird for testing. For more information on contacting your local health Authority as well as other information about West Nile virus, go to www.bccdc.org.

Tips for the handling of Dead birds

- Ensure you and your clothing do not contact the bird or its blood, secretions or feces.
- Live, sick birds should be killed humanely before disposal. Handle live birds with gloved hands.
- Use heavy-duty leak-proof rubber gloves (as used in house cleaning) OR use several leak-proof plastic bags as a glove.
- Do not touch dead or live birds with bare hands. Grasp the bird with your hand protected by several layers of leak-proof plastic bag and then turn the bags inside-out over the bird so it ends up inside the bags, with your hand on the outside.
- Handle the bird so that beak or claws do not puncture bag or gloves.
- Ensure the bird is double bagged. Dispose of carcass with your usual household trash or bury the carcass according to local bylaws.
- Always wash your hands after disposal of any dead animal (even though gloves were used).
- To report a dead bird sighting on-line, please visit <http://www.bccdc.org>

There is no evidence that people can get West Nile Virus from handling live or dead infected birds. The above precautions should be taken when handling and disposing of any animal carcass.

Protect Yourself When Outdoors!

- If you can, avoid being out from dusk to dawn as mosquitoes that can carry WNV tend to be active at these times.
- Wear protective light coloured clothing, especially outside in the early evening and at dawn when mosquitoes are most active. This includes long-sleeve shirts or jackets and long pants that mosquitoes cannot bite through. Tuck your pants into socks for extra protection.
- Use mosquito netting for babies and toddlers in cribs and strollers.
- Use mosquito repellent. Putting on personal insect repellents that are federally registered, such as those that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) is an effective way to protect yourself from mosquito bites.

Ian Roe

BC Centre for Disease Control, 655 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4R4

(submitted by **Andrew Stewart**)



Back Issues of BCFO Newsletters and Journals

If you are missing past issues of *BC Birding* or *British Columbia Birds* you can purchase most volumes by contacting the people listed below. Back issues of the journal *British Columbia Birds* can be acquired for \$5.00/ea or the *BC Birding* newsletter for \$2.00/ea (prices include postage) from the following people.

For journals contact:

Marilyn Buhler
#7 - 1700 Deleenheer Road
Vernon, B.C. V1T 9S9
brdrs@shaw.ca

For newsletters contact:

Ted Goshulak
9578 - 212B Street
Langley, B.C. V1M 1N4
tgosh@twu.ca

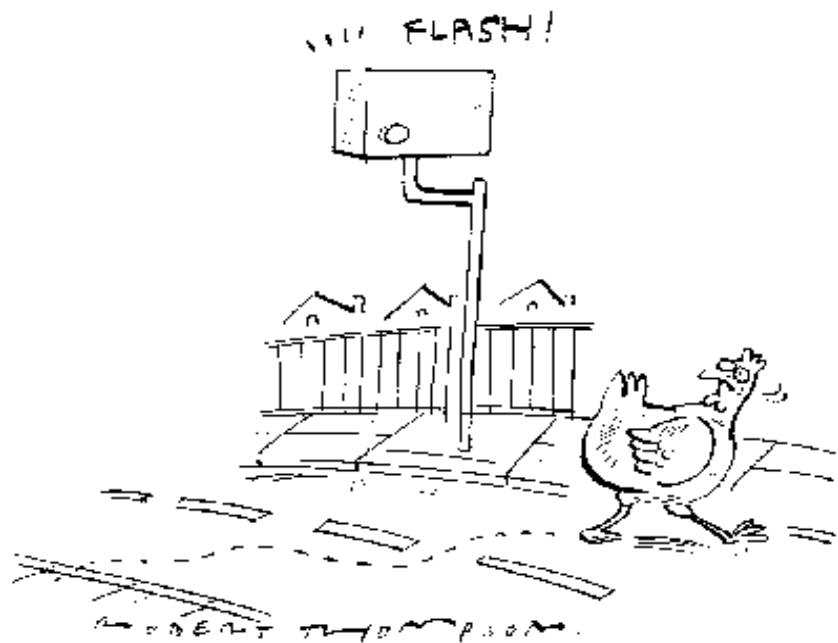
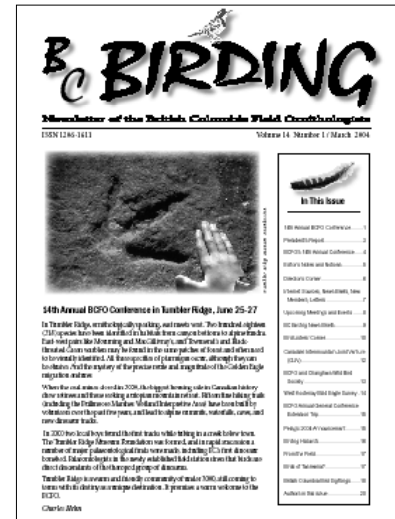
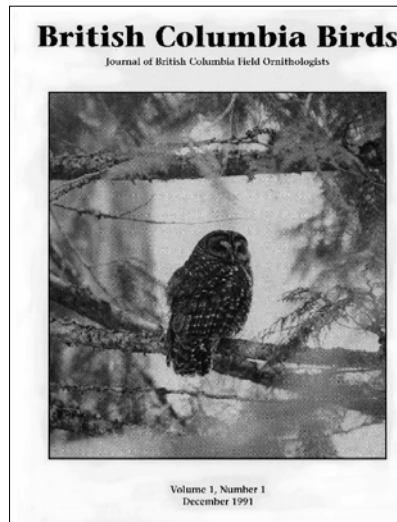
All journal back issues are currently available, except for Volume 8 of *British Columbia Birds* which is out of print. Please pre-pay your order by check or money order made out to BC Field Ornithologists.

Andy Stewart, Director

Journal Articles now On-line

All feature articles and notes published in Volumes 1 – 10 of *British Columbia Birds* are now available from our website www.bcfo.ca. Articles can be down-loaded individually as PDF files using Adobe Reader, version 5 or greater. Based on the recommendation of our current editor, John Sprague, the board of directors took this move to increase awareness and availability of our journal. This is one of several steps the BCFO board plans for 2005 to improve on the number and quality of submissions to *British Columbia Birds*.

Andy Stewart, Director



From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



SITE GUIDE: THE SUNSHINE COAST

Introduction

The Sunshine Coast is an excellent area to bird year round with its wide variety of habitats and four distinct seasons. Habitats cover the gamut from marine to alpine. In between there are estuaries and intertidal mudflats, rocky shores, beaches, spits, islets, and wave-washed rocks. There are woodland ponds, freshwater lakes, airports, golf courses and pastures. There are rural, urban and suburban landscapes. There are vast expanses of coniferous forest, both old growth and second growth, and ranging from Douglas Fir at low elevations, through Western Red Cedar and Western Hemlock, to Balsam, Yellow Cedar and Mountain Hemlock above 1000 metres. There are deciduous stands of alder and maple, and arbutus groves on rocky headlands at sea-level. Finally there is much alpine and sub-alpine terrain with the highest peaks reaching 2500 metres.

The climate is basically Mediterranean, with warm, wet winters, and dry, sunny summers. The mild, ice-free winters of the Strait of Georgia attracts many species of wintering waterbirds, while 60+ species of birds arrive from points south to breed in the summertime. During the spring and fall seasons other species migrate through the area.

It is possible to record 50 species of birds in a few hours at any season. On a monthly basis 80-100 species is possible in the winter, with 125+ possible in May and September. About 200 species are recorded in any one year, and the all-time checklist is just under 300.

Many of the Sunshine Coast's birds may be seen in non-specific locations. Loons, grebes, cormorants, ducks, gulls and alcids might be seen on salt water anywhere along the coast. Similarly, raptors, woodpeckers, flycatchers, thrushes, vireos, warblers, sparrows and finches are widely present in forests, gardens and clearings everywhere. However, there are certain locations that constitute the birding hotspots of the Sunshine Coast, where specific habitats bring together exceptional numbers and variety of birds.

These locations follow:

1) Chaster Park & The Esplanade, Gibsons

This beachfront area and the 2 km long Esplanade allow excellent views of many loons, grebes, cormorants, ducks, gulls and alcids. Viewing seasons are spring, fall and winter, as the ocean is generally devoid of birds in summer.

2) Roberts Creek Estuary & Pier

The small estuary of Roberts Creek, which can be viewed by walking out along the pier is a very birdy location in spring, fall and winter. A wide variety of species are always present and include loons, grebes, cormorants, Great Blue Heron, ducks, Bald Eagle, shorebirds, gulls, alcids, Belted Kingfisher and American Dipper. Noteworthy species that are almost always present in season, and easy to observe, are Harlequin Duck, Hooded Merganser, Black Oystercatcher, and Marbled Murrelet (flying by in pairs offshore). Bald Eagles perch in the surrounding trees (look for their white heads in the top of tall trees), listen for the very noisy Belted Kingfisher, and look for the dippers in the creekbed, especially in the fall and early winter when they consume salmon eggs.



3) Wilson Creek Estuary

Formerly this was one of the Sunshine Coast's premier birding locations, but recent development around the estuary and tampering with the estuary itself has diminished its importance. The estuary is tiny, but encompasses the only real mudflat on the mainland side of the Strait of Georgia between Pender Harbour and the Fraser Delta. Consequently, in the spring, summer and fall it attracts a regular flow of migrant shorebirds and over 20 species of shorebirds have been recorded here. In spring, fall and winter the estuary is home to a variety of waterbirds.

The beaches, gravel flats and scrubby vegetation surrounding the estuary were formerly the single best location on the Sunshine Coast for rare passerines. The potential for rarities is now diminished, but amazing birds do still appear here, for example a Sage Thrasher on 21st April 2001. This proves the powerful attraction that estuaries hold for migrant birds, and the area is always worth checking. Some of the other outstanding species that have been recorded here over the years include Ash-throated Flycatcher, Say's Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Rock Wren, Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee, Snow Bunting and Lesser Goldfinch.

4) Mission Point & Davis Bay

Davis Bay is the waterfront area where Hwy 101 fronts the ocean. At Davis Bay park at the south end and walk back along the beach for 200 m to the shingle spit which is the estuary of Chapman Creek, known as Mission Point. Mission Point is the single most important birding location on the Sunshine Coast.

Davis Bay hosts a wide variety of waterbirds in spring, fall and winter, but like most saltwater habitats it can be devoid of birds in the summer. In season look here for loons, grebes, cormorants, ducks, shorebirds, gulls and alcids. In winter there is usually a loose flock of scoters at the south end of Davis Bay that often contains all 3 species, Black, Surf and White-winged. Harlequin Ducks are common on the water close to the shoreline, and Black Oystercatchers forage at the waterline. During the summer months Caspian Terns frequently patrol Davis Bay, just offshore, and make spectacular dives into the water for fish. Ospreys may also be seen fishing here.

During spring, fall and winter, at low states of the tide, Mission Point may host thousands of birds and it is often possible to find over 30 species here. All of the birds visible at Davis Bay may also be seen at the point. The single main attraction at Mission Point is the large wintering flock of the "rocky shorebirds" consisting of Black Oystercatchers, Black Turnstones, Surfbirds and Rock Sandpipers. These 4 species commingle at the waterline and frequently there are hundreds of turnstones and Surfbirds with the smaller Rock Sandpipers (usually about 30) harder to find in the large flock. Turnstones and Surfbirds are present irregularly from July on, but the Rock Sandpipers are not reliable before November. From November until mid-April this flock is exceptionally reliable at this location and is present on 100% of winter days, though they do not spend the whole day here. The best time to visit is low tide and the birds will NOT be present at high tides. If you visit and the birds are not present, return later and you may be lucky.



Mission Point is an excellent place to observe gulls and over the years an impressive 15 species of larids have been recorded here. During the winter the flock may number 2500+ birds with most being Glaucous-winged, followed by Mew. In the late summer and fall Bonaparte's and California are also common. During the winter the large flock usually contains at least one Herring and one Thayer's gull, but it can be a challenge to find them among the hundreds of birds. Gull experts should check the flock here, as rarities are always possible. Watch for flocks of Common Terns offshore in September, sometimes pursued by a Parasitic Jaeger.

Mission Point is also the best place to observe the Sunshine Coast's 5 alcids, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Marbled and Ancient Murrelets and Rhinoceros Auklet. Marbled Murrelets are commonly seen offshore, rapidly flying low over the water. Ancient Murrelets sometimes occur in huge numbers, on the few days in November and December when they stage a flight along the Sunshine Coast.

5) Sechelt Airport

This has become a favoured location for local birders. As with many other airports around BC the short grass habitat amid the coniferous forest is attractive to a wide variety of birds. Access to the airport is open at the present time, but birders are reminded to stay completely away from the vicinity of the runways and to confine their presence only to the open area ABOVE the runway.

Rarer raptors noted here include Northern Harrier, Short-eared Owl and Pygmy Owl in the fall and early winter. Wilson's Snipe is regular in wetter areas. In open areas with brush Mountain Bluebirds and Townsend's Solitaires have appeared in winter and especially during the spring migration. American Pipits are abundant migrants. Twelve species of sparrow have been recorded including rarities such as Tree, Vesper and Lark. Willow Flycatchers and Black-headed Grosbeaks breed. In the surrounding brush and forest Hutton's Vireos are common, Bewick's Wrens are possible and Bushtits have been regular in recent years. Western Meadowlarks are regular in the fall and early winter.

For much of the 1990's, a small colony of Lazuli Buntings bred, but recent brush cutting may have extirpated them. This has also been the only regular location for Chipping Sparrows on the Sunshine Coast. In 1999 a major West Coast rarity, a Hooded Warbler, was present for a few days and seen by many. In the fall of 2003 and 2004, a banding project was conducted at the airport by Amelie Rousseau, and produced 3 species new to the Sunshine Coast, Dusky Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler and Palm Warbler. Other rare species banded were House Wren and Nashville Warbler.

6) Head of Porpoise Bay & The Sechelt Marsh

Porpoise Bay contains many sp of waterbirds in winter, and the mud flat at the head of the bay is good, at low tide, for shorebirds in the summer and fall. Look for Pectoral Sandpipers in September.

Sechelt Marsh is a small pond with an abundance of Mallards and other common species, but many other rarer ducks have appeared including Canvasback, Redhead



and Tufted Duck. Blue-winged and Cinammon Teals appear in May and Green Heron and Gray Catbird have also occurred. The trees and bushes surrounding the Marsh can be good for a wide variety of passerines at any season. Recently, this has been the most reliable location for Black-capped Chickadees which are presently colonizing the Sunshine Coast.

7) Porpoise Bay Provincial Park & Angus Creek Estuary

The mature forest here is good for all 5 common woodpecker species plus other birds of similar habitat such as Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper. Varied Thrush is common in the winter, and warblers and vireos in the spring and early summer.

The most interesting habitat in the park is the area around the estuary of Angus Creek. The mudflats here host shorebirds in the summer, the marsh holds Virginia Rails and Common Yellowthroats, the grassy area has Lincoln's and Savannah Sparrows and possibly even a Lapland Longspur in September and October, and the bay has many waterbirds in winter. American Dippers are always in the lower reaches of Angus Creek during winter as they search for salmon eggs.

8) Wakefield Creek

The viewing area is at the foot of a short cul-de-sac immediately north of the Wakefield Inn. Wakefield Creek enters the Strait of Georgia here and the area attracts a variety of ducks, shorebirds and gulls. This is a good location to observe the many species of waterbirds between the mainland and the Trail Islands, including loons, grebes, cormorants, ducks, gulls and alcids. It can be a good location in September to look for migrating Common Terns and Bonaparte's Gulls being harassed by Parasitic Jaegers. I once observed 2500 Marbled Murrelets here in a feeding frenzy, and on another occasion 2000 Brandt's Cormorants.

9) Sargeant Bay Provincial Park

This park contains a variety of habitats from the saltwater of the bay, the grassy berm, the freshwater and cattails of Colvin Lake, and a series of trails above Redrooffs Road that wend through conifer forest to Triangle Lake.

Colvin Lake and the extensive cattail area are home to the usual denizens of marshland such as Common Yellowthroat and Red-winged Blackbird. Virginia Rails are year round residents. The forested trails leading to Triangle Lake host a variety of birds in summer, with flycatchers, vireos and warblers well represented, and also Western Tanagers and Black-headed Grosbeaks. Up to 5 species of woodpeckers occur throughout the park year round, and all 5 regular Sunshine Coast owl species are possible.

10) Smugglers Cove Provincial Park

There is a cornucopia of habitats here containing a wide variety of species. In the summer the forest is home to Empidonax flycatchers (Hammond's and Pacific-slope), vireos (including Hutton's) and warblers (including Black-throated Gray).



In winter the sheltered waters of Smuggler's Cove have various ducks. From the trail's end at Welcome Pass there may be Black Turnstones, Surfbirds and Harlequin Ducks on the rocky shore, and alcids (Common Murre and Marbled Murrelet) in the pass proper. In 2004 a Tufted Puffin was well photographed in the pass by a kayaker.

11) Lily Lake, Pender Harbour

This shallow woodland lake right beside Hwy.101 is always worth checking. In summer it has breeding Common Loons. At other times of the year it has a variety of waterbirds including Pied-billed Grebes and Ring-necked Ducks. Frequently Painted Turtles may be seen sunning on logs.

12) Oyster Bay

This large, shallow, protected bay has a wide variety of waterbirds through the winter, including loons, grebes, geese, ducks and gulls. A Yellow-billed Loon was easily observed here during the winter of 1995-6.

13) Ruby Lake Lagoon

Thanks to Aldo Cogrossi, the bird-loving proprietor of the Ruby Lake Resort who spends a small fortune feeding the birds, the Ruby Lake Lagoon is an excellent place to observe many waterbirds. The Lagoon is now famous for its large breeding population of Wood Ducks and on the first weekend in May the resort hosts the Wood Duck Festival. During the winter months many ducks of numerous species are present. Aldo also maintains numerous nestboxes that are home to various swallows in summer. Bald Eagles and Turkey Vultures (summer) are common.

14) Egmont Wharf & Skookumchuck Narrows

The waters of Sechart Inlet leading to the Skookumchuck Narrows are nutrient rich, and during the winter there can be hundreds of loons, grebes, cormorants, ducks, gulls and alcids present. Two species that are particularly attracted to this location (winter) are Marbled Murrelets (sometimes hundreds) and Bonaparte's Gulls (upto 2,000).

15) Offshore Islets & Wave-washed Rocks

All along the Sunshine Coast are numerous islets and low, wave-washed reefs and these are some of the most interesting and productive bird habitats. White Islet, off the Wilson Creek area, is one of the most important bird locations in the area. It is a roosting area, both day and night, for thousands of marine birds, especially gulls and cormorants, is a foraging area for hundreds of Black Turnstones, Surfbirds and Rock Sandpipers, and is a nesting sanctuary for Glaucous-winged Gulls, Black Oystercatchers and Pigeon Guillemots. It is also a haul-out for Steller's and California Sealions.

Many wave-washed reefs are potential locations for Wandering Tattlers in May, July and August.



16) Tetrahedron Provincial Park

The Tetrahedron plateau is the high, mountainous area “behind” the Sechelt-Gibsons area. The prominent peaks are Tetrahedron (1739m), Panther Peak (1690m), and Mt. Steele (1650m). The region is accessed by logging roads, and then well defined trails. The trails begin at about the 1000m level so high elevation forest species such as Northern Goshawk, Three-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Pine Grosbeak and White-winged Crossbill are possible.

A trail leads above treeline on Mt. Steele and in this true alpine habitat Rock Ptarmigan have bred. American Pipits are also regular breeders. At the very peak of the mountain, around the snowbanks, Gray-crowned Rosy Finches are regular. Similar habitat and species occur on both Panther Peak and Mt. Tetrahedron, though they are both more difficult to access.

17) Spipiyus Provincial Park & the Caren Range

The other accessible mountain area on the Sunshine Coast is the Caren Range, which is the mountainous ridge that forms the spine of the Sechelt Peninsula. This area achieved fame twice in the early 1990's. Firstly, when some of the oldest known trees in Canada were found here, including a yellow cedar stump with 1736 rings and the area is referred to as “the oldest known forest in Canada”. Secondly, after an intensive research project involving many people, the remnant stand of old growth trees yielded the first ever nest of a Marbled Murrelet in Canada. In midsummer the murrelets are very active from about 4.15 to 6.00AM as they fly in with food for their nestlings, and announce their presence with a “keer, keer” call. Eventually the ancient stand of trees was protected and given park status with the name Spipiyus, the native Sechelt's name for the Marbled Murrelet.

Other species to look for on the Caren Range include Blue Grouse, Three-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, and Black and Vaux's Swifts. Lyon Lake has nesting Barrow's Goldeneyes and Mew Gulls, and Fox Sparrows have nested nearby. The old growth forest has a large summer population of Hermit and Varied Thrushes, and the dawn chorus here in June is a thing of exquisite beauty.

Tony Greenfield



British Columbia Bird Records: Winter, 2004-2005

Yet another mild winter with the only icy winter interlude worth mentioning being the first two weeks of January. As in the past few winters, the transition to mild conditions was sudden; indeed, coastal regions received a record hosing for a week or so. Snowfall was light everywhere and many valley bottom locations were snow-free by the end of the period, even in the far northeast corner where they experienced their warmest February in nearly 40 years!

Abbreviations: CBC, Christmas Bird Count; ph, photographed; vt, videotaped; †, field notes submitted.

Loons through Shorebirds

An imm. American White Pelican was in White Rock 2&5 Jan (phVO et. al.) and then an astounding flock of 15 was seen flying low over nearshore waters into a strong headwind at the Iona Jetty 17 Jan (CCo, SA, †JT). Following an impressive autumn invasion, a few Cattle Egrets lingered into winter with several at Princeton 1 Dec (MS), 1 at Highland Valley 20 Dec (RH), 2 at Castlegar 5 Dec (GL) and a single at Creston 24 Dec (LVD). The latter location had a flock of 22 that had dwindled down with several reported dead (*fide* GSD). Tundra Swans showed early signs of movement with 10 appearing on the lake in front of Vernon Creek 28 Jan (DGC). Open water attracted 2 imm. Trumpeter Swans well north to Dawson Creek 2 & 14 Feb (MP) and a few Mallards managed to remain north with a male in Dawson Creek 2 Jan (MP) and a female 2 & 14 Feb on Swan L. (MP). Red-breasted Mergansers were early with 3 at the mouth of Vernon Creek 6 Feb (CS). A single Ruddy Duck furnished a first winter record for the Williams Lake area 19 Dec (PR).

Remarkably early were 6 Turkey Vultures feeding on after-birth of newborn calves in Salmon Arm 10 Feb (TH). A juvenile/first-winter eagle of indeterminate species was found in the Goldstream estuary near Victoria 8 Dec (vt DCo), and seen irregularly to at least 21 Dec (m.obs.). Many worldwide raptor experts who have viewed the video suggest that this may be a hybrid Bald X Steller's Sea Eagle. Enough features of the bird are not right for either species, but its large size and bright yellow bill were striking and also perplexing. However, it is hoped that the bird may return in subsequent years for further study. One speculation put forth is that this may be offspring from the long-standing Juneau, Alaska Steller's Sea Eagle that is now perhaps breeding with local Bald Eagles. Small numbers of Gyrfalcons were reported from scattered locations around the province with the most noteworthy a dark morph bird found dead near Tofino, for a fourth local record, 13 Dec (*fide* AD). Wild Turkey numbers are increasing and its range is spreading. They have been well-established in the East Kootenays, in Creston, and up the east side of Kootenay Lake. They are now moving further west

with reports from: Kaslo with 6 on their CBC, and with reports from the Pend D'Oreille Valley near Trail; and 78 were reported from the West Kootenay winter bird count; reports also came from the Slocan and Arrow Lakes valleys also (*fide* GSD). Casual in winter along the south coast, a Marbled Godwit was discovered during the Victoria CBC 18 Dec (m.obs.)

Gulls through Finches

Rare in the province, an ad. Little Gull was seen from the tip of the Iona Island South Jetty 23 Dec (†RTo). A first winter Heermann's Gull continued along the Victoria waterfront for the entire winter count period yet was strangely absent during the record-breaking Victoria CBC! Iceland Gulls were found in the southern interior and from the Vancouver area with singles in: Delta 2 Jan & 6 Feb (†MT); Brunswick Point 10 Feb (†BS et. al.); Iona 13-19 Feb (ph. TP); Vernon 3 Feb (DGC); and Shannon Lake, Westbank 7 Feb (MF). The ad. **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, that was in Vernon during Nov, made an appearance at Shannon Lake, Westbank 10 Dec (†MF).

An annual winter visitor to the Vancouver area; an ad. Slaty-backed Gull was in Delta 8 Jan (†RTo, CI). Great Gray Owls and Northern Hawk Owls were reported from widely scattered locations around the province suggesting a widespread movement although they were not in large numbers. Northern Pygmy-Owls, on the other hand, were relatively scarce this winter. Boreal Owls made significant movements into lowland locations with singles: at Reifel 1 Dec (ph JI et. al.); Johnson's Landing 17 Jan (GS); a Vernon tree farm 5 Dec (TE, RM, DGC ph et. al.). An ad. Sky Lark was discovered near the mouth of the Serpentine R., Surrey 10-13 Jan (ph BS et. al.) for a 2nd Vancouver record since 1975. Horned Larks were found in areas where they are very scarce in winter: a single in Lardeau 21-26 Jan (MJ) and four in Dawson Creek 2 Jan (MP).

As has been the case in recent years, there was a late winter influx of Barn Swallows. The vast majority are found along the south coast, but a significant number found their



way into the southern interior. Very late were 2 birds in Kamloops 19 Dec (RH), other noteworthy interior records include: 2 at Gellatly Bay, Westbank 20 Jan (BC et al.); a single at 100 Mile House 28 Jan (TG); 2 near Oliver 5 Feb (ED et. al.); 2 in Penticton 17 Feb (FW); a pair at Vaseux L. 26 Feb (TF, RM), by far this is the most widespread invasion the interior has ever seen during winter. Coast areas furnished 118 records from late Jan into early Mar with a high count of 18 on Sea Island 2 Feb (PC, MT). Rarely found in winter, a Rock Wren was near Vernon 9 Jan (TF). A holdover from the fall, a single Cape May Warbler remained in Williams Lake to 11 Dec (ph AR) for a first provincial winter record. Lingering Yellow-rumped Warblers included singles in Nelson 8 Jan (JA) and Creston 27 Dec (m.obs.). Casual in winter, a Wilson's Warbler and a Western Tanager remained in the Fernwood area of Victoria 1 Dec – 1 Jan (CSh). This represents the 5th winter record of Western Tanager for the province. An ad. male **McKay's Bunting** was periodically found along the Iona Island South Jetty 4–8 & 14–19 Dec (KL et. al.) furnishing a 2nd record for the province and the first Canadian CBC record. This male was traveling with a small flock of Snow Buntings, one of which was thought by many to be a female McKay's Bunting which naturally produced much controversy and careful study. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are rare at anytime of year away from the Peace R. area yet amazingly, two individuals were found along the south coast this winter: an ad. male was in Coquitlam 20 Dec–1 Jan (SV et. al.) for a first Vancouver winter record; and in Tofino, a second-year male visited a feeder 8 Feb (ph LS, PL). There is only one previous winter record for the island. Pine Grosbeaks were more prevalent this winter at lower elevations and nowhere was this more evident than in Victoria where a flock of 30 were on Jocelyn Hill 16 Dec (MMG). Very rare in winter, a Chipping Sparrow was a first for Kelowna's CBC 18-22 Dec (†DGC et. al.). A Golden-crowned Sparrow furnished a first winter record for the West Kootenays when found in Castlegar 16 Feb (PMc). Casual in winter, 3 Yellow-headed Blackbirds were just north of Vernon 2 Jan (JQ et. al.).

Compiled by Donald G. Cecile

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Interesting bird sightings can be sent to following sub-regional editors who will compile and submit the information to Don Cecile (dcecile@telus.net)..

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Tony Greenfield

Tony Greenfield has been recording birds on the Sunshine Coast since 1971. He was a founder member of BCFO and served as President 1996-99. He was re-elected to the executive last year and values the opportunity of being involved in the future direction of BCFO.

Guy Monty

Guy Monty is Director for Nanaimo Field Naturalists Society and works on many bird-related conservation projects. He is a professional birder, a consultant and tour leader.



'Is that an organic, non-fattening, salt-free worm?'

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



Birding in TAIWAN

To Portuguese sailors in the 16th century, it was *Ilha Formosa*, "Beautiful Island," because of its forested beauty. Taiwan still has beautiful forested mountains. Taiwan could also be called a "land of smiles", because of its friendly people.



White-eared Sibia



Formosan Whistling-Thrush

Collared Bush Robin, Formosan Whistling-Thrush, Steere's Liocichla, Taiwan Barwing, White-eared Sibia, Taiwan Yuhina, Yellow Tit, Flamecrest, Formosan Magpie, White-whiskered Laughingthrush, and the elegant Swinhoe's and Mikado Pheasants are some of Taiwan's 15 endemics. There are also many endemic sub-species. Other birds include Malayan Night-Heron, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Collared Finchbill, and Black-browed Barbet. On our November trips, we see the globally threatened **Black-faced Spoonbill**. **Fairy Pitta** is present only during the breeding season.

Taiwan is a safe country, with good infrastructure, a strong conservation movement, classic mountain scenery, friendly people, wonderful food, and much to offer visitors.

Come with us to enjoy the birds and culture of Taiwan!

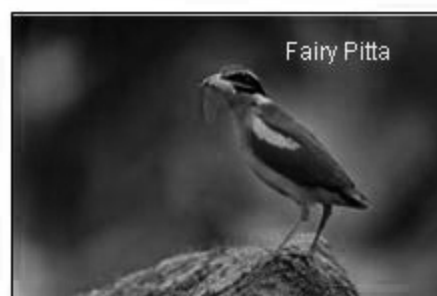


Black-faced Spoonbill

NEXT TRIPS:

2005: November 7–16

2006: May 1–13, for Fairy Pitta;
November 6–18



Fairy Pitta

2005 TRIP COST: From Vancouver, BC, Canada: CAD \$3800 (sharing); CAD \$4300 (single).
From Taipei, Taiwan: CAD \$2700 (sharing); CAD \$3200 (single).

2006 TRIP COST: From Vancouver, BC, Canada: CAD \$4900 (sharing); CAD \$5400 (single).
From Taipei, Taiwan: CAD \$3800 (sharing); CAD \$4300 (single).

GROUP SIZE: 10 participants, with 2 leaders, Simon Liao and Ten-Di Wu.

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Yunlin County, a prime Fairy Pitta area, welcomes you!

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Taiwan Barwing

