

# BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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Great Blue Herons, Salt Spring Island.

John Sprague



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## A Sad Heron Story

This is about one Great Blue Heron causing the death of another. If anyone has seen similar violent fratricide among herons, I would be interested to hear about it.

There is often a "resident" heron fishing from a little reef in front of our place on Salt Spring Island. Over the years it has been common to see a resident chase away another incoming heron. Normally the newcomer flies away well ahead of the pursuer, with no physical contact, but in December of 2005 there was a fight that led to the death of the newcomer.

Lois and I were eating dinner as dusk crept in. A heron flew onto the little bit of reef that showed above the tide, and I remarked that it was almost too dark for the bird to see any fish. Suddenly we noticed this resident fly to the other end of the reef and engage in a brief, wild aerial

*please see Sad Heron, page 15*

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*BC Birding*, ISSN 1206-1611, is published four times a year by British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO), P.O. Box 8059 Victoria, B.C. V8W 3R7

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

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 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://www.bcfo.ca>



## President's Report

Did you find yourself very very busy with volunteer activities the past couple of months? I was surprised when I stopped and reviewed what I was doing already this new year. It was as if all the forces converged on me this year. Are January and February supposed to be a slow time of year when one would have plenty of time for meetings and the like? But I like winter and winter activities, especially when there's a decent amount of snow and the temperatures remain below zero. Birding seems to be better then also. Perhaps it has been no busier than usual, it was just that I was home for these months this year, and playing catch-up from being away in December, and no big trip in the immediate future.

We explored some of the Yucatan peninsula in December. With our impeccable timing for recent trips to Mexico, we arrived about five weeks after Hurricane Wilma devastated the Cancun area. Aside from the ubiquitous Great-tailed Grackles and the trademark Magnificent Frigatebirds, there wasn't too much around for avian life. Birding was tough. But not as tough as survival had been for the birds. The area had already started to green up by the time we arrived; insects were starting to live again. Some birds were returning even though the mangroves were still grey. Once we left the coastline and headed inland, the terrible destruction from the hurricane decreased. Flooding was the biggest problem. At Coba, the parking lot for the ruins was still underwater. Nevertheless, the relaxed pace, the miles of natural forest and the lack of traffic made travelling and birding much more enjoyable at Coba. There were birds to see and

hear, and we could see and hear the birds!

Some of the best birding is at the *ruinas*. The Mayans are very proud of their culture and government has protected many of the large and small ruins. There hasn't been the money to restore all the sites, so much of the natural mature forest vegetation remains.

An interesting aspect to the Mayan culture is the importance that birds played. Many bird species have Mayan names. The knowledge is still passed on from one generation to another of when each bird species is in which habitat and when they move off to another area/habitat to feed on such and such. This is useful information for ornithologists trying to conserve birds and for birder tourism.

The highlight of our trip was participating in a Christmas Bird Count in Celestun, a small, quiet fishing and tourist town on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The Celestun Estuary is famous for it's breeding colony of flamingos. Before Hurricane Gilbert, many Canadian ducks used to winter here in the estuary. There were not many tourists in town when we were there, but it would get busy right at Christmas time.

It was a fluke that we connected with some locals. We were walking down a quiet, rural, dirt secondary road catching the late-afternoon bird activity. It was a good stretch of road. There was very little traffic, so when a van stopped and asked us what birds we had seen and what were we looking for, it was easy to stop and chat. An invitation to the CBC being held the next day was enthusiastically accepted.

We were fortunate to spend the day with two birders from the state's capital city of Merida. Barbara McKinnon, originally from the United States, has done a lot for conservation and education in the Yucatan for many years. She has worked with Nature Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service. Through her, we met some of the estuary guides who were passionate about birding. The guides were able to put in a few hours of birding for the CBC before they had to go to work. Rodrigo Migoya is director of Ninos Y Crias (Kids and Critters); he studied waterfowl for his PhD in Manitoba for a few summers (another Canadian connection!). The third fellow with us was the younger brother of the young man who had issued the invitation to the CBC the day before. Henry was still learning to identify the birds of his area.

There's so much more I can say about birds and birding in the Yucatan, but it's time to get back to British Columbia where we are fortunate enough to have a high level of public awareness of our natural environment and where poverty is not one of the key threats.

I'd like to bring you up-to-date on what we have covered in the Board meetings held since my last report. Much of the time has been spent on planning this year's Annual Conference and Extension. You'll find a registration form, field trip descriptions, draft schedule and more in this newsletter. If you have any suggestions for 2007 or later, please do submit your suggestions to the Board.

We received and approved one application for a grant. The next



## President's Report cont.

deadline is July 1 if you have a project in mind.

Some of the Board's time has been taken up with discussing the invitation to participate in a bird records committee suggested by the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies (BCfWS) and the resulting issues raised. I would like to assure the membership the BCFO board is giving careful thought to the invitation, considering all aspects and repercussions. In our reply letter, we initiated discussion on what we would like the committee to look like. For instance, if we participated we would like to have input into policies and the terms of reference. We are looking into the future. And we want everyone happy.

I've noticed the birds are starting to prepare for spring even here in Prince George where we are finally having a bit of decent winter weather. The Gray Jays and Common Ravens are carrying nesting material; the chickadees and woodpeckers are pairing up. As you are out there birding, and whether you are just enjoying being out or enjoying taking notes on sightings and behaviour please make some time for your organization, the BC Field Ornithologists.

**Sandra Kinsey**, President

## Internet Sources

### BCFO

<http://www.bcfo.ca>

### Alaska Bird Observatory

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

### Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies

<http://www.wildlifebc.org>

### Bird Studies Canada / Long Point Bird Observatory

<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/bscmmain.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>

### SORA: Searchable Ornithological Research Archive

Search and retrieve online publications from The Auk (1884-1999), The Condor (1899-2000), Journal of Field Ornithology (1930-1999), North American Bird Bander (1976-2000), Pacific Coast Avifauna (1900-1974), Studies in Avian Biology (1978-1999), Wilson Bulletin (1889-1999). All articles are available as DjVu's and PDF's.

<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/>



## Editor's Notes and Notions

Spring has not yet sprung but it is coiled, the grass is part riz, and there are other signs. Of course, this all depends on where you live in this great province and you may well be cursing me for writing about signs of springs so prematurely. I know of no appropriate rules of etiquette regarding weather. (Usually Canadians brag about the weather, especially the exceptionally cold and adverse but I will stop short of wishing that on you, dear reader.) The other morning an American Robin and a House Finch were singing in the neighbourhood at first light. Indian-plum (coastal native shrub) has bloomed, its flowers already in decay. Yesterday we visited the Ladner shoreline where eight Snowy Owls sat atop the scattered logs awaiting the zeitgeber that will usher them north. Glenn Ryder tells me that the ticks, those creepy harbingers of spring, are already out on Sumas Mountain in Abbotsford.

Twitchers and itchers take note. Those of you itching to divulge your new 2005 list totals to Listers' Corner, surpass others, or establish lists for new areas, itch no more.

The salve is in this issue: a note plus an two-sided insert explaining slight modifications to last year's Bird Listers' rules and soliciting your 2005 totals. I offer my apologies for not having included this in the December edition. The results will be printed in the June edition.

This issue begins with a sad, but interesting, account of murder on a rugged reef of Salt Spring Island, provided by resident biologist (and *BC Birds* editor) John Sprague. Wayne Diakow provides information on July's AGM to be held in Kelowna and Dick Cannings provides information on the Extension trip planned for Cathedral Provincial Park immediately afterward. You should also find in your envelope an insert with a conference registration form and a waiver of liability, and an insert for accomodation at the UBC Okanagan campus.

Two letters arrived in response to Bruce Whittington's article in the last issue of *BC Birding* regarding a provincial repository for wildlife data, a bird records committee and data access. These are published in

the *Letters to the Editor* section. This is a complicated and important issue that, hopefully, will be resolved soon.

Martin McNicholl provides his round-up of upcoming meetings and birding news and Don Cecile presents the collection of interesting Bird Sightings for Fall, 2005.

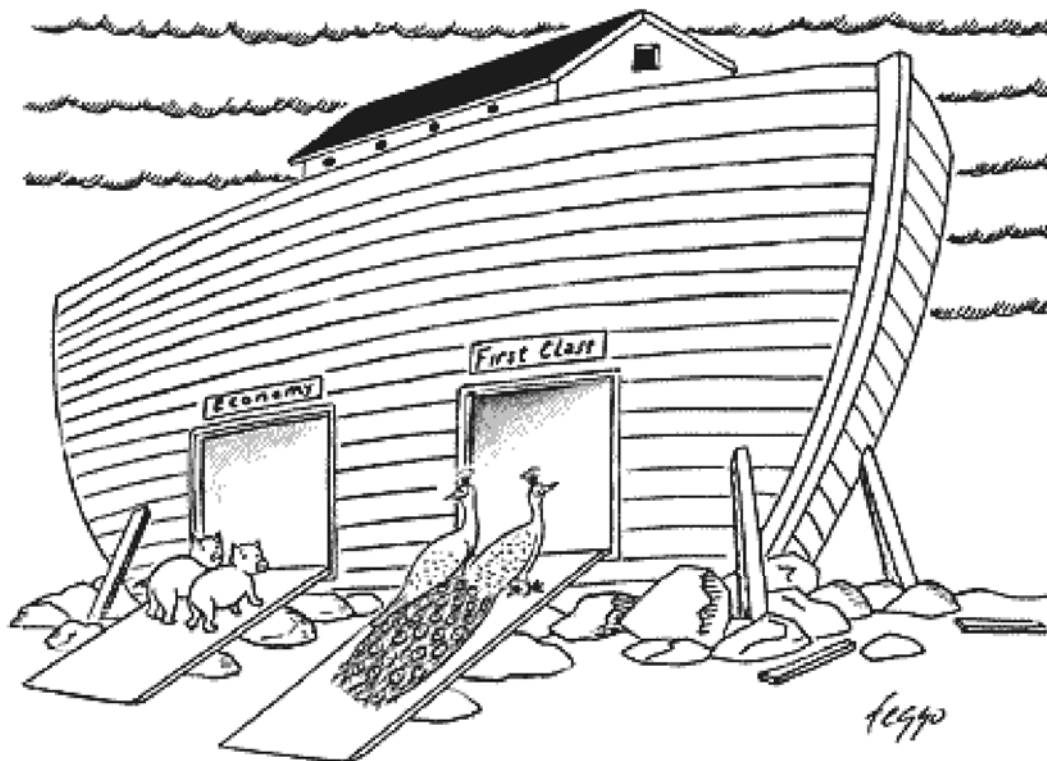
Paul St. Pierre, acclaimed author and Chilcotin (BC) and Sinaloan (Mexico) duck hunter, provides two humorous and interesting accounts of observations of some of the birds he does not shoot.

I included two photographs with Sandra's President's Report last issue but I forgot to provide any information. The photographs show Sandra and Lairds' raptor migration monitoring camp at Pine Pass in the fall of 2005.

To wrap up this issue we have four pages of advertisements for bird and natural history excursions far and wide.

Joyous spring bird watching.

**Phil Henderson**, Editor



From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



## Letters to the Editor

**Bruce Whittington** has raised a number of important issues regarding BCFOs involvement with a proposed BC Records Committee being put forward by the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies (BCWS). With the number of issues or “Baggage” associated with BCWS, I will be taking a “wait and see” approach before submitting any data, photographs or sight records to any project that involves the BCWS, including the BC Records Committee.

**Paul Levesque**, Black Creek, BC

**We as birders should** ask many questions regarding the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies (BCFWS) request to become the newest guardians of bird records for British Columbia. I have many concerns regarding the lack of disclosure of this process; to date I have not seen anything other than blind faith to act as a guide. The question of what is the process being proposed needs to be fully and openly disclosed.

I also have concerns over how this information is to be used when again there has not been open public disclosure on the new process. Who ends up being influenced by all our data? Government? Industry? Biologists? I think it wise to finally ask what will be the filtering process used to weed out bad information from the good. If this information is to be published and used to govern how bird populations and the environment are managed, then the data needs to be thoroughly screened. It concerns me when I read on Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies (BCFWS) reports (see “*Evaluating influences of climate change on historical trends in bird species*”) with inaccurate information regarding wintering populations of birds on Vancouver Island and the Lower

Mainland. People should wonder how the data is followed up and birds that are easily misidentified are filtered out. It is clear after reading the account of Swainson’s Thrush that misidentified Hermit Thrushes or possibly Fox Sparrows account for the entire data set. To date there is only one confirmed record for BC of a wintering Swainson’s Thrush from Vancouver found on a Christmas Bird Count in the mid 1980s. This concern over the processing of the data arises when one reads on page 25, “When observations for the entire Province are combined there is an apparent trend, a modest increase in over-wintering birds the past ten years.” What is this based on and where are all these wintering Swainson’s Thrushes?

If this is the type of document that BCWS produces, it will ultimately influence politicians and government and then we are all in serious trouble. It simply doesn’t make the case for Global warming because it is based on faulty data.

I encourage everyone to read this document and ask themselves the previously mentioned questions.

**Rick Toochin**, Surrey, BC



# 16<sup>TH</sup> Annual Conference of the BCFO

## Conference Schedule

(Please note all events will take place at UBC Okanagan Conference Centre, Kelowna)

### FRIDAY, July 14, 2006

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7:00 – 9:00 pm	Registration – UBC Okanagan Conference Centre
7:30 pm	Welcome
7:00 – 9:00 pm	Social Hour

### SATURDAY, July 15, 2006

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6:00 am	Field Trips – depart UBC Conference Centre, return by 11:00 am
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Catered Lunch for those who have ordered
1:00 – 2:00 pm	Technical Session – Monashee Room
Speaker A	TBA – See June Newsletter
Speaker B	TBA – See June Newsletter
2:00 – 2:30	Break
2:30 – 3:45	Technical Session – Monashee Room
Speaker C	TBA – See June Newsletter
Speaker D	TBA – See June Newsletter
3:45 – 5:30 pm	Annual General Meeting – Monashee Room
6:00 – 7:00 pm	Social Hour - Monashee Room
7:00 – 9:30 pm	Banquet - Monashee Room

### SUNDAY, July 16, 2006

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6:00 am	Field Trips – depart UBC Centre, return by 11:00 am
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Catered Lunch for those who have ordered & Adjournment



## Conference Field Trips

### White Lake:

We will drive south to White Lake through Ponderosa Pine forest to arid sage brush habitat.

Possible species include Say's Phoebe, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western & Mountain Bluebirds, Lazuli Buntings, Brewer's and Grasshopper Sparrows, Golden Eagle, White-throated Swift, Sage Thrasher, and Canyon Wrens.

### Predator Ridge and Silver Star Mountain near Vernon:

Predator Ridge is arid grassland with aspen grove and some ponds, on the road to Silver Star ski area we will be traversing pine & Douglas-fir forest.

Possible species may include Least and Willow Flycatcher, Lazuli Bunting, Clay- Colored Sparrow, Swainson's Hawk, and Pine Grosbeaks.

### Beaver Lake Road and Robert Lake:

We will drive to Winfield which includes the Beaver Lake Road on through arid grassland, aspen forest and Ponderosa Pine and Douglas-fir forest.

Bird species possible are Western Meadowlark, Vesper and Clay-Colored Sparrows, House Wren, Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Lazuli Buntings, Red-Naped Sapsuckers, Varied Thrush, Hermit and Swainson's Thrush and back at Robert Lake possible nesting American Avocet.

### Scenic Myra Canyons:

This route will enter pine and Douglas-fir forest with rock outcroppings.

Birds we may encounter include Pygmy Nuthatch, White-Throated, Vaux's and Black Swifts, Winter Wren, Flycatcher species Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager, Veery and other thrushes.

### Mission Creek:

Birders may want to hike sections of Mission Creek in a self-guided walk where they may find Least and Willow Flycatchers, Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, American Dipper, and Osprey.

Wayne Diakow, Director



## BCFO Conference Venue and Accommodations

The 2006 BCFO Annual Conference will be held at the UBC Okanagan Conference & Accommodation Centre in Kelowna, BC. In spite of the cost challenges (high summer season in the Okanagan) we think we have arranged very comfortable surroundings at extremely reasonable rates. There are 4 main types of rooms (see form insert) and there are options for people who want to have kitchen units.

We will be having a catered lunch on Saturday at noon after the morning field trips, a banquet on Saturday night and a catered lunch on the Sunday following the morning field trips. PLEASE CONTACT THE CENTRE TO MAKE YOUR OWN RESERVATIONS. Also we must know on your registration form whether you will be coming to the banquet and/or the Saturday & Sunday lunch.

Wayne Diakow, Director





## BCFO AGM Extension Trip to Cathedral Lakes, July 16-18, 2006

### Please read this message!

This year's BCFO Annual General Meeting will be held in Kelowna July 14-16. The post-AGM extension will be in Cathedral Provincial Park southwest of Keremeos, July 16-18. The extension will be led by Dick Cannings, who has birded the Cathedral Lakes area numerous times.

Unlike previous extensions, there will be no overall set fee for this trip—but participants are responsible for their own travel and lodging arrangements. Because rooms are in short supply at Cathedral Lakes and bookings fill up quickly, it is essential that persons wishing to go on this extension **make lodging arrangements as soon as possible**. Camping arrangements are not so time-sensitive (see below).

#### 1. The site and the birds

Cathedral Lakes is a stunning alpine area in the North Cascades with premium high-elevation hiking and birding opportunities. Species regularly seen here include: White-tailed Ptarmigan, Spruce Grouse, Blue Grouse, Prairie Falcon, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Horned Lark, American Pipit, Pine Grosbeak and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch. Boreal Owls are present but may be difficult to find in mid-summer. Mountain goats are seen by hikers almost daily. Cathedral Lakes Lodge provides very comfortable lodgings; there are campsites nearby as well. The lodge and campsites are located in subalpine forests at Quiniscoe Lake at 2000 metres (6800 feet) above sea level; from there a system of trails leads to the alpine tundra Rim Trail at 2500 metres (8200 feet) elevation. Hiking the Rim Trail requires a reasonable level of fitness; sections of the trail are steep and the air is

noticeably thin, though distances are not particularly long (8 km at most per day). Most of the guided hikes on this extension will use the Rim Trail or similar high-elevation routes; birders wanting more relaxed hikes could walk by themselves in the subalpine forests around the lakes. You can get more details on the site at these two websites:

Cathedral Lakes Lodge: <http://www.cathedral-lakes-lodge.com/>, or call 1-888-255-4453.

Cathedral Prov. Park: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/cathedra.html>

#### 2. Getting There

Participants will need to drive or arrange to carpool from Kelowna to the Cathedral Lakes base camp on their own. This is about a 2-hour drive from Kelowna. From the base camp you will take a one-hour 4-wheel drive trip up to Cathedral Lakes Lodge. This trip is included in the price of accommodations at the lodge, but there is a fee for campers (\$85 return). We will be taking the 2 p.m. trip up to the Lodge on Sunday (though if you want, you could catch the last "bus" at 4:30 p.m.); participants can choose which trip to catch down on Tuesday—"buses" leave at 9 a.m., 12 noon and 3:15 p.m.

#### 3. Lodging

Cathedral Lakes Lodge provides a variety of rooming options, all with full board (and the food is excellent). We will be arriving on the afternoon of Sunday, July 16 and leaving on the afternoon of Tuesday, July 18 (i.e. two nights). Room rates at the lodge (for 2 days with full board and transportation from base camp) vary from \$291 to \$396 per person. You

can view the details on the lodge website shown above. The least expensive option, the Harvie Walker cabin, needs a group of 5 to 7 people to book it, so get your gang together and book early! Details are available on the Lodge website or by calling 1-888-255-4453.

#### 4. Camping

Cathedral Park has three walk-in campgrounds. The Quiniscoe Lake campground is only 100 or 200 metres from the Lodge, so you don't have to carry your gear very far. More secluded camping is available at Lake-of-the-Woods and Pyramid Lake, both about 1 km from the Lodge. Camping costs \$5 per person per night, so the total fee for the trip per camper would be \$95 (including the trip up to the Lodge but not including food). Campers should make transportation reservations with the Lodge at 1-888-255-4453.

So... book early and we hope to see you at Cathedral Lakes!

**Dick Cannings**, Recording Secretary



## Upcoming Meetings & Events

compiled by *Martin K. McNicholl*

- April 27-28 2006 BIODIVERSITY SYMPOSIUM: CONSERVING BIRDS IN HUMAN-DOMINATED LANDSCAPES, location not indicated. Contact: biodiversity@amnh.org.
- May 4-7 2006 FEDERATION OF B.C. NATURALISTS SPRING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Courtenay, Vancouver Island. Contact: Comox Valley Naturalists Society, Box 3222, Courtenay, B.C. V9N 5N4; phone Frank Hovenden (250) 338- 9962 or Margaret Hampshire (250) 339-7861; e-mail corresponsingsec@comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca details.
- July 6-9 2006 NATURE CANADA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Red Deer, Alberta. Contact: Bill Heinsen, Red Deer River Naturalists, Box 785, Red Deer, Alta. T4N 0A1; Phone (403) 347-8200; e-mail: rdrn@rttinc.com.
- July 14-16 2006 B.C. FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE, Kelowna, B.C. Contact information elsewhere in this newsletter.
- August 13-19 2006 24TH INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Hamburg, Germany. Contact: IOC 2006, Institute of Avian Research, An der Volgelwarte 21, 26386, Wilmsheaven, Germany.
- August 23-26 2006 4th NORTH AMERICAN DUCK SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP, Bismarck, North Dakota. Contact: Mike Johnson, phone (701) 328-6319; e-mail mjohnson@state.nd.us.
- August 26-30 2006 LIMNOLOGY AND WATERBIRDS 2006, Eger, Hungary. Contact: SandorAndrikovics, Dept. Zool., Esterhazy College of Education, H-3300 Eger LeanyaskaStr. 6, Hungary; phone 36(36)520-462; e-mail aquabird2006@aries.ektf.hu OR Joseph Kerekes, Environ. Canada, 45 Alderney Dr., Dartmouth, N.S. B2Y 2N6; phone (902) 426-6356; e-mail joe.kerekes@ec.gc.ca.
- September 1-3 2006 9th SEABIRD GROUP INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, location and contact details not yet announced.
- October 3-7 2006 4TH NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS –JOINT MEETING OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION, 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 Alcantara e-mail jlalcant@colpos.mx.



## B.C. Birding News Briefs

*Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl*

**Phil Gehlen** –An e-mail of 4 December 2005 from Marilyn Buhler brought news that B.C.F.O. lost a prominent member in early December 2005 with the death of Phil Gehlen of Vernon. He compiled the local Christmas bird Count for several years and published a significant distribution note (on Great-tailed Grackle) in the newsletter in 1994. See obituary by Chris Siddle elsewhere in this issue for more details.

**Dick Cannings Awarded** –Congratulations to B.C.F.O. Vice-President Dick Cannings on his receipt of the Thomas G. Brydges Award from the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network at a recent national science meeting in Penticton. –based on Anonymous. 2006. *Wandering Tattler* 29(5):8.

**Anthea Farr Awarded** –Langley's Anthea Farr, a former President of the Langley Field Naturalists and former editor of the Langley Field Nat. Newsletter was awarded one of three Federation of B.C. Naturalists' Club Service awards at their 2005 fall meeting in Lillooet for her work in these and several other LFN positions, her contributions to environmental education and her participation in Christmas Bird Counts, raptor surveys and other projects –based on J. Best. 2005. *B.C. Nat.* 43(4):9- 10 and A. Griffiths. 2005. *Langley Field Nat. Newsletter* Dec. 2005:1.

**Journal Name Change** –A 1 December 2005 letter to members of the Wilson Ornithological Society from President Doris J. Watt announces that the Wilson Bulletin, one of the World's foremost ornithological journals, will change its name to Wilson Journal of Ornithology, starting with the March 2006 issue. This journal was first published as Ornithologists' and Oologists' Semi-Annual (volumes 1-3, 1889-1891), then changed to Wilson Quarterly 4-5 (1892-1893), then to Wilson Bulletin 6-117 (1894-2005).

**U.S. Status of Marbled Murrelet?** –The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced in October 2005 that it intends to initiate a proposal to de-list Marbled Murrelet from Threatened status in the U.S., a proposal favoured by some, but not all, of the service's officials and opposed by several environmentalists. –based on Anonymous. 2005. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 169:2.

**Murrelet Book Illustrated by Jones** –Field sketches by B.C.F.O. member Paul Jones, discoverer of Canada's first Marbled Murrelet documented nest and driving force of "Friends of the Caren," are featured prominently in a new book, "Rare Bird," by Maria Mudd Ruth, published by Rodale Press in 2005. According to a press release about the book, the efforts of Paul and "Friends of the Caren" in preserving the old growth forest as part of Spixyus Provincial Park are featured in the book, along with other research efforts on Marbled Murrelets along the Pacific coast in both Canada and the U.S.A.



## BCFO RESEARCH GRANTS

BCFO encourages submissions of proposals for financial assistance for bird surveys and other ornithological research. It also wishes to foster greater connection between applicants and the society. Potential applicants are reminded that

1. requests for funding must be for planned, rather than completed, projects.
2. under normal circumstances, applicants should be, or be willing to become, members of BCFO.
3. projects and their results are to be reported in either BCFO's journal, *BC Birds*, or the BCFO Newsletter.
4. in order for BCFO directors to give a timely response to project proposals, deadlines for submission are January 1 and July 1.
5. all reasonable requests will be considered within the limits of the society's financial strength.

### BCFO NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST ISSUE

Abbie Sherwood, Salt Spring Island  
Elke Fischer, Kelowna  
Mary Andrews, Victoria  
Ray Sturney, New Hazelton  
Bog Gregs, Salt Spring Island  
Kristina Kezes Victoria  
Shirley McLean, Grand Forks  
Katie Aitken, Vancouver  
Liz Brennan, Fairmont Hot Springs  
Seanna Johnston, Salt Spring Island

## Bird Quiz: Canadian Warblers

Okay, this quiz may have been unfair and either extraordinarily difficult or inexcusably daft, based on the responses (none), but I offer no apologies. I do, however, apologize most whole-heartedly for admixing the bonkers Canadian turkey-necked warbler with any serious ornithological thought, and add a vehement apology for the possible resultant, horrendously misconstrued and vile notion that the turkey-necked warbler resembles or represents Canadian culture. The TNW probably is, in fact, the Canadian cultural anti-christ.

Without further ado, I give you the answers to these dumbfounding questions.

**Q** *Who was an online British Music Magazine referring to in the following description: "Bonkers Canadian turkey-necked warbler...?"*

**A** Celine Dion. (See <http://playlouder.com/news/+celine-dion/>.)

**Q** *A recent reviewer described Orenda Fink's Invisible Ones as "the kind of record Canadian warbler \_\_\_\_\_ might have made if she'd stopped moping over ex-boyfriends and picked up her backpack." Fill in the blank.*

**A** Sarah MacLaughlin. (See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2005/10/15/bmpopcds15.xml#7>.)

**Q** *What BC warbler starts its jumble of excited notes with a sharp "chip"?*

**A** Canada Warbler.

**Phil Henderson**

## Doug Tarry Young Ornithologist's Workshop

Attention Parents and Keen Teen Birders!

The 2006 Young Ornithologist's Workshop will be held at Long Point Bird Observatory from Friday 28 July to Sunday 6 August 2006. This intensely-packed week of activities focuses on field ornithology and includes bird banding, censussing, field identification, birding field trips, guest lectures, and much more!

Come make new friends from across the country with similar interests in the world of birds. Six lucky applicants (ages 13-17) will be selected for the Doug Tany Bird Study Awards and recipients will have all expenses (except travel costs) paid.

Applications are due 30 April 2006. For additional information and an application form, contact: Landbirds Programs Coordinator at Bird Studies Canada (email: [lpbo@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:lpbo@bsc-eoc.org)), or visit the BSC web site ([www.bsc-eoc.org/lpbo/yow.html](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/lpbo/yow.html)).

## Ontario Checklist

The Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) has just released the biennial update of its Ontario Bird Checklist. The 2006 checklist incorporates the recent changes in the taxonomic order published by the American Ornithological Union. It is anticipated that any future amendments, with the exception of a possible reassignment of the position of the woodpeckers, will be minor.

For those who may be birding in Ontario, copies of the checklist can be obtained from OFO Sales for \$1.50 each including postage. Please contact Wendy Hunter at [wendy\\_hntr@yahoo.ca](mailto:wendy_hntr@yahoo.ca). Each checklist can be used five times.

Contributed by **Bill and Nancy Logan**



## You can Shovey Lovey Dovey

TEACAPAN, SINALOA, MEXICO.

It's time somebody told a few truths about birds.

Doves for instance, including the Dove of Peace. Exactly how sweet is a dove's temperament? I can tell you. It compares unfavorably with that of a junkyard dog.

I have half a dozen tiny doves called Incas living in my patio. They have soft but quite gorgeous colors. Remember, clothes do not make the gentleman.

Most mornings I throw in front of my door a handful of assorted bird seeds, the type sold to the cagebird crowd. All seed eaters love them. As soon as one of my Inca tenants alights and stretches out his little head to grab a sesame he is approached by another Inca who is holding one wing aloft, like the sail on a schooner. This is lovey dovey talk for, "I am going to beat the living sh\_\_ out of you". Number One bird flies away. Number Two bird, before he can get a bite, is also driven off by a bird with a wing held aloft in the warning signal. So it goes with all the others: arrive hungry, threat from fellow dove, depart hungry.

Sometimes the attacker comes forward with both wings held high. This translates as "I am REALLY going to beat the sh\_\_ out of you; when I am through you are only going to be able to fly small, short circles for the rest of your life."

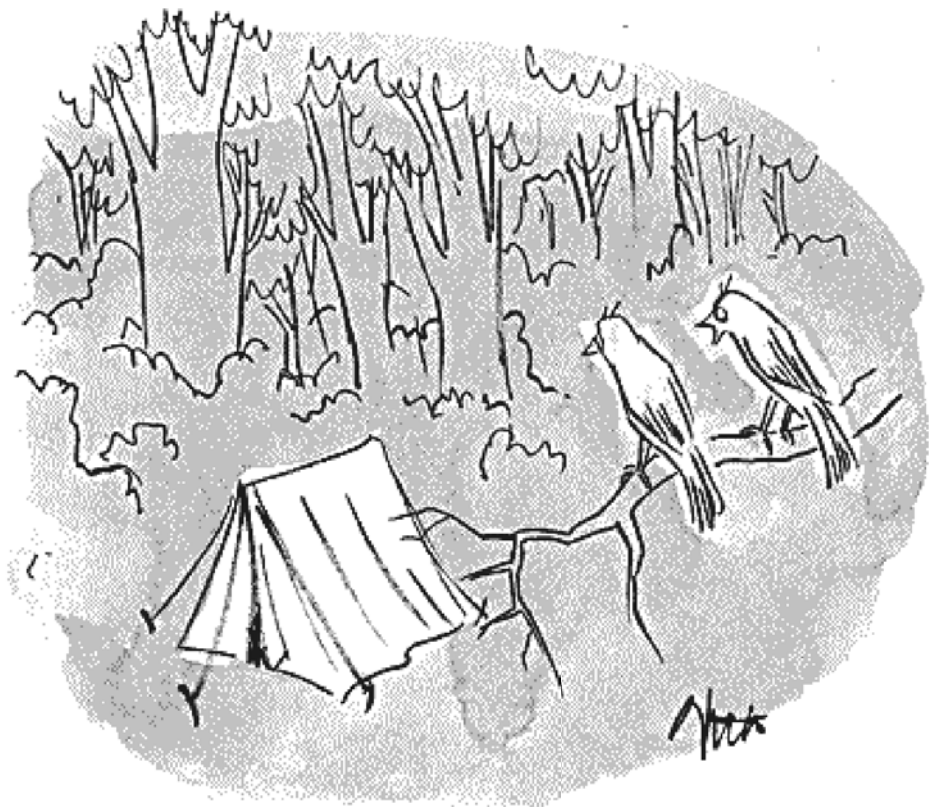
What about the baby doves? There are no baby doves. How could there be with such parents? Perhaps somewhere, somehow, male and female Incas get together long enough to reproduce and have the patience to wait until the kid is big

enough to fight with. However, I doubt it. My guess is that mine are originals, off the ark, too mean to die because that would let some other dove get their share of something they didn't want to eat.

So how do my seeds ever get eaten? I'll tell you and you will understand dove character even better. Other little birds, tiny little warblers, sparrows and buntings feed cheerfully and unchallenged. It's not other birds that doves object to. What they cannot tolerate, what drives an Inca out of his tree, is seeing one of his own kind putting its knees under the dining table.

I suppose I could put an end to Noah's crazy experiment by getting out the shotgun and finishing off the last of his illbred passengers but what the hell, there'd be such a kalakalama from the ecologists and other naysayers that it doesn't seem worthwhile.

**Paul St. Pierre**, January 2006,



"It's called urban sprawl"

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



## Bird Body Odor Bad

TEACAPAN, SINALOA, MEXICO.

It's time for some more plain talk about birds, about whom I have learned more than I really cared to know. Birds and I spend a lot of hours together here. My time is sometimes spent at the computer, committing lofty thoughts to print or, more often, in a lawn chair reading my buddies, Schopenhauer, Mike Cervantes and other uplifting authors. All the while the birds, so far as I can see, are just fooling around. They don't take anything seriously.

Dr. Paul Ehrlich offered scientific proof that half the world's people would die of starvation by 1990, Lake Erie would be deadlier than the earth's core by 1992 and that the sky would fall on us no later than 2003. These birds don't care. They never cared. They keep flitting around as if nothing was wrong.

Well some things are wrong, and wrong with them, too. Let's begin with them.

As an observer, I can testify to a few hard, gritty facts.

You have heard, perhaps, that the early bird gets the worm? Worms in Mexico are safe as in God's vest pocket, because there are no early birds here. Maybe there are no early worms here either, in which case it all balances out but I am talking about the birds. Most birds here don't believe the sun is up until a couple of hours after the actual event.

True, this village's roosters crow frenziedly to greet every dawn but they start crowing about 10 p.m. and by 6 a.m. next morning, when the sun finally arrives, they are so hoarse from a long night of raucous yodelling that there isn't a peep left in one of them. Come dawn, like the rest of the bird kingdom, the roosters settle

in for a nice long nap, confident that somebody will shake them awake if it's anything important; Dr. Ehrlich will do it, perhaps, although the man puts me to sleep.

So, once they do arouse themselves to another day of fooling around, what do the birds in my yard do first?

Get washed?

Not on your Nelly. The water's too cold.

I have a tiered fountain in the yard which plays 24 hours a day and provides free bird baths in various bowls which are just the right size for all comers: itty bitty birds, eentsy weentsy birds, small bird, bird birds and ostriches. They can use these at any time and I will say I have always appreciated that they don't ask for fancy shampoos or leave wet towels lying around.

However there is no bird, nay, not a one, who gets around to sniffing its armpit on my patio before 2 p.m. At about that time one of them decides to take a ducking. Once he does everybody wants in. Red, yellow, blue, orange and green; striped, spotted, bicolor, tricolor, every old colour and shape, they happily splash themselves and one another for two busy hours. Then suddenly they quit.

This crowding instinct is a cultural thing, of course. These are Mexican birds.

The trait can be observed when humans are on our immense ocean beach nearby. Most days it is empty for as far as you can see and, they say, as far beyond that again. However, Sundays and holidays humans do appear. The gringos can be spotted in ones, twos, occasionally three

to a bunch, spread across two or three miles of sand, like raisins in a poorhouse bun. They exude a brittle, thin but perceptible hostility to anybody who comes closer than ten meters.

In one place on the beach, however, 17 Mexican families are trying to occupy a patch of sand just big enough for one family. The Mexicans are breathing in one another's carbon dioxide, drinking beer and Coke, laughing, making jokes, singing and cheerfully inviting newcomers to join them. Like the birds in the fountain, they are overjoyed about absolutely everything. I don't know what time they get up or how often they wash.

**Paul St. Pierre**, February 2006



## Sad Heron (continued from page 1)

dogfight just above the water. The other bird appeared to be a second heron (it was). They quickly went down into shallow water near the end of the reef. The resident stood on the other bird and held it underwater for about a minute, occasionally flapping wings and occasionally thrusting its head underwater. The victim's head appeared a few times, but the rest of it was submerged. We were still unsure what kind of bird it was. The resident then used the victim's body as a platform, boosted itself up and flew away. It was airborne surprisingly fast considering that it had been flat on the surface of the water. The victim gradually emerged, turned itself upright, and started moving slowly towards shore, 20 metres away. That area inside the reef was too deep for walking, and the bird looked to be floating with a waterline and posture that was similar to an enlarged Western Grebe. Its glacially-slow movement was apparently because it was swimming with its feet, something I had not seen before. It never attempted to use its wings. We got good looks with a light-gathering scope and it was a Great Blue Heron. We lost sight of it when it reached the overhanging bank and we did not want to disturb it by going down for a look.

The next day, I went onto the beach and indeed there was a heron on that bit of shoreline, in front of the neighbour's place. It must have been the same bird. As I walked closer, it walked away and occasionally raised its wings canopy-fashion, for assistance in stepping from ridge to ridge. The wings did not look damaged but the bird clearly did not want to fly, or could not. I got to about 15 metres of it; a much greater distance would normally trigger a fly-away. So I backed off and went to call the wildlife rehabilitation people.

They came in 45 minutes but we did not find the bird on that stretch of beach. It seemed unlikely that it had flown away and it also seemed unlikely that it had walked out of sight along the shore. The wildlife people packed up their nets and left.

We should have looked farther along the shore. The following day I was still concerned and went looking for a goodly distance towards the point. And sure enough, there were the fresh remains of a heron with a gull picking at them. The body was too torn up to tell what had happened.

Well I'm a biologist and fully appreciate territorial defence to preserve one's interests, and I know about survival of the fittest. But it's a real stretch to rationalize how a species can benefit from a behaviour-trait of within-species murder. Herons have enough problems with pillaging eagles, without doing themselves in. If you have seen similar violent examples among herons, I say again that it would be interesting to hear from you.

**John B. Sprague**

## Phil Gehlen

Birders throughout British Columbia were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of veteran birder Phil Gehlen in Kelowna on 2 December 2005.

Born in Shaunavon on March 8, 1938, Phil grew up in rural southwestern Saskatchewan. He moved to the West Coast and began a long career in real estate appraisal. He worked for the BC Assessment Authority in Surrey and later in Vernon, and it was clear at his memorial service on December 8 that he was a popular and well-respected supervisor who took pains to train new employees well.

Phil's passions included birding and nature photography. Soon after his arrival in Vernon, Phil began to regularly patrol his local "patch", Okanagan Landing and the Vernon Commonage. He was an excellent field man and added several birds to the local checklist as well as being involved in various local conservation projects. Birders speak of Phil's enthusiasm and his willingness to show others the special birds he had discovered. He was the compiler of Vernon's Christmas Bird Count, an eager participant in Penticton's Meadowlark Festival's big day contests which raises money for habitat protection, a faithful contributor to birding magazines such as *Birders' Journal*, and a staunch supporter of Coldstream's Bishop Bird Sanctuary.

Family was very important to Phil who loved to share his knowledge and respect for nature with his wife, Dolly, their children and their grandchildren. Phil will be remembered as a warm and witty man and an outstanding naturalist. He is deeply missed by the birders and naturalists of the North Okanagan and by all who knew him.

**Chris Siddle** based this obituary upon a memorial note written by one of Phil's sons, Calvin Gehlen.



## Bird Listers' Corner

Due to an unfortunate oversight, we neglected to include this announcement, and the Listing Report Form, in the December 2005 edition of *BC Birding*. We apologize for this glitch, and we wish to assure all our members that the "Bird-Listers' Corner" is alive and well, and that we plan to continue this feature in the newsletter.

The "Listing Report Form" has only a few changes from last year's. One of the main changes is the reduction in the listing threshold for the ABA Listing Area from 500 species to 400 species, to accommodate several members whose lists are between these

two totals. (For those of you who are not members of the American Birding Association, the ABA area is basically equivalent to "North America north of the Mexican-U.S. border", i.e., Canada and the U.S., but not including Hawaii or Greenland.) We have also added or updated several threshold values for National Parks, but we have received no updates for species totals for local checklist areas.

Please report your totals as of Dec. 31, 2005, and do not include any species first seen in 2006. The deadline for reporting list totals to me is April 30, 2006. You may send it to me by mail at 51-6712 Baker Road, Delta, BC V4E

2V3 or (especially if you have only a few lists to report) by e-mail to me at [contopus@telus.net](mailto:contopus@telus.net). Comments, criticisms, and suggestions about this column are also welcome, and may be sent to me at either of these addresses.

Good luck and good birding to all of you, and I'd like to encourage as many of you as possible to send in your listing reports.

**Wayne C. Weber**, Listing Editor

## Chang Hua Wild Bird Society, November, 2005. (News of BCFO's partner society in Taiwan)

While I was in Taiwan in November 2005, BCFO member Simon Liao and I went to the Chang Hua Wild Bird Society office, in Simon's home

city of Chang Hua. I had been there once before, to present a talk at an evening meeting, but this was my first visit during a working day. Two of the CHWBS volunteers, Stacey Sung and Dita Wang were at work—Stacey at one of the computers and Dita preparing the November issue of the society newsletters for mailing. That issue of the newsletter contains an article by Madelon Schouten, of Princeton, BC, about a visit to

Princeton by the Taiwanese guests who had come to Vancouver for the Canada-Taiwan Bird Fair, held on September 10, 2005. Madelon's article is presented in Chinese and English.

Simon moved back to Taiwan in October, and is again active in the Chang Hua Wild Bird Society. The CHWBS has a membership of about 2,000, with many dedicated volunteers.

**Jo Ann MacKenzie**



Newsletter, November, 2005



Simon Liao and Stacey Sung

(Photos: Jo Ann MacKenzie)





## British Columbia Bird Records: Fall 2005

August was mostly hot and dry over the southern half of the province while more showery weather dominated the north. September was more hit and miss in many sections with coastal sections in particular feeling the change at the equinox to a more stormy pattern which continued through October. Meanwhile after the first light snowfall the first week across the interior, NE BC enjoyed a dry and warm October, so much so that the local elk populations were coaxed into a second rutting season there. The weather became much more active in November with a colder Arctic airmass sweeping in from Nunavut across the interior and outflowing onto the coast. Coastal sections saw out the period from under their first snowfall of the upcoming winter as the Arctic and Pacific streams collided. Stunning rarities included: Pine Warbler, Sedge Wren, Northern Wheatear and Baird's Sparrow.

Abbreviations: †: field notes submitted; ad.: adult; imm.: immature; juv.: juvenile; m. obs.: many observers; ph.: photographed; RPBO: Rocky Point Bird Observatory; vt: videotaped

### Waterfowl Through Cranes

A sub-adult male King Eider drew much attention when it showed up in Vancouver 30 Oct – 3 Dec (BiB et al.) where there are a dozen previous records. Finding all 4 regularly occurring species of loons at a single location is noteworthy along the coast yet unheard of in the interior, yet amazingly this happened on Charlie L. 25 Sep (MP). Migrating Pacific Loons have been noted along the Pine Pass corridor in early Oct in the past but little is known about the regularity of this occurrence. 141 Pacific Loons, which may have been forced down by strong headwinds, came to rest on Boundary Lake 25 Sep (JJ). Pacific Loons in such numbers is unheard of elsewhere in the region's interior. Careful examination of a large staging flock of Western Grebes produced a Clark's Grebe at Union Bay, Courtney 23-30 Oct (†ph. JF, †GLM et al.). This represents the first Clark's Grebe for the Comox Checklist area and the first confirmed sighting for Vancouver Island in over ten years. Always exciting to find, a Laysan Albatross was observed from a cruise ship in Queen Charlotte Sound 10 Sep (RF). A pair of imm American White Pelicans were discovered at Esquimalt Lagoon near Victoria 22– 23 Aug (ph. †MOS, m.obs. ). This species has remained unrecorded in Victoria for at least a decade or more. Since Brown Pelicans were prevalent along the coast during summer it was not surprising that a few were found into the fall with single immatures: at Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary 3 Sep (†JJ) and at Iona 29 – 30 Oct (ph.WA, et al.). Few Great Egrets were reported this season with singles: in Ucluelet 1 Sep (BSI) and later relocated along the Lower Kennedy R. 13 Sep (GB et al.); at Grand Forks 12 Oct (ph. BB); and at Wardner 18 Sep (DN). Although a single Cattle Egret arrived very early at Fauquier, 19 Sept (GSD) this did not translate into a good showing of them this fall. An ad. Gray morph Gyrfalcon returned to its favourite wintering locale in Kelowna for its 6th consecutive year 12 Nov to end of period ( CC et al.). Sandhill Cranes exhibited a more protracted migration this fall with sizeable flocks still being

reported in early Nov such as the flock of 200 reported from the Highland Valley near Kamloops 3 Nov (fide RH) and smaller flocks later with 30 winging south near Penticton 6 Nov (BH) and 25 in Savona 13 Nov (fide RH). Typically, their migration peaks in early Oct and peters out by mid month.

### Shorebirds Through Alcids

Indications were that arctic breeders had a very productive summer. Across the province, shorebirds in particular were in larger than usual numbers (see Table 1) although weather may have also influenced this perception. Strong winds through the Yukon strait off the Beaufort Sea on 9 Aug, may have shifted the migratory movements of otherwise southeast bound shorebirds more westerly. This 'eastern invasion' involved mainly Baird's, Semipalmated, and Stilt Sandpipers, and produced new provincial record totals (see table 1).

A juv. Pacific Golden-Plover at Lakeview Marsh, near Dawson Creek 8 Sep (MP, JJ) was a rare find e. of the Rockies. A Semipalmated Plover was extremely late in Victoria 23 Nov (CSa). Rarely encountered on the outer coast, especially during fall, a Long-billed Curlew was at Dare Beach, West Coast Trail, 14 Aug (ph. JE). This fall furnished a record number of Bar-tailed Godwits with at least 5 juveniles involved, four of which were found in Boundary Bay, in singles or in pairs 23 Aug – 28 Oct (RTo et al.), one in flight over Parksville 3 Nov (†GLM), and the latest was at Blackie Spit, White Rock 4 – 13 Nov (m.obs). A splendid male Ruff was with a large flock of Western Sandpipers along the Iona s. jetty 2 Sep (MMN). Buff-breasted Sandpipers were again reported in larger numbers than usual, although not as many as the fall of 2004. Singles were found: at RPBO 19 Aug, for a first local record (CSa); another touched down in the Highland Valley, Kamloops 12 Sep (RH) for a 4th local record; at Sandy I., e. coast of Vancouver I. 15 Sep (GLM, AM); and along the Williston L.



**Table 1: New local high counts established for various shorebirds (\* denotes new provincial high total)**

Species	Date	#	Location	Observer
Black-bellied Plover	11 Sep	36	Salmon Arm	DGC
American Golden-Plover	12 Sep	9	Salmon Arm	CS
Semipalmated Plover	12 Aug	41	Salmon Arm	DGC
Semipalmated Sandpiper	13 Aug	1200	Salmon Arm	DGC
	13 Aug	1500*	Boundary Bay	RTo
Baird's Sandpiper	13 Aug	400	Boundary Bay	RTo
Pectoral Sandpiper	11 Sep	600	Salmon Arm	DGC
Stilt Sandpiper	19 Aug	157*	Salmon Arm	DGC
Long-billed Dowitcher	11 Sep	840	Salmon Arm	DGC

causeway, Mackenzie 28 Aug (JJ). Salmon Arm, in recent years, has proven to be one of the most reliable locations for 'buffies' with at least 10 different juvs. found between 22 Aug and 8 Oct (TH, DGC et al.). A moulting ad. Red Knot in Salmon Arm 4 Sep (ph. DGC) furnished a first local record and the 6th interior record. Sharp-tailed Sandpipers away from the coast included a pair of juvs in Salmon Arm 11-17 Sep (ph. DGC et al.), and another juv at Becher Dam 18 Sep (PR) produced a first Cariboo record. The Region's 8th and 9th **Little Stint** records both came from Boundary Bay with a basic adult 5 Aug (ph. RTo) and a juv 14, 20, 21, 30 Sep – 7 Oct (ph. RTo, et al.). To top off the 'eastern invasion' an adult White-rumped Sandpiper furnished a 9th Vancouver record at Iona Island Sewage Ponds 22 – 26 Aug (JK et al.). A moulting juv. Little Gull provided a 3rd Comox area record when seen from a boat off Sandy Island 15 Sep (ph. GLM, AM). A basic IV **Lesser Black-backed Gull** still in wing moult was discovered in Vernon 25 Nov to end of period. This individual represents the 5th site record pertaining to at least 4 different individuals, all of which appear to be graellsii. As with most years, a small number of Sabine's Gulls pass through the interior. This year was no exception with an adult in Burton 3 Sep (GSD); an adult and juv. On Williston L. 4 Sep (JJ); 3 imm. at Burton 14 Sep (GSD); single imm. at Burton 16 Sep (GSD); a juv at Nicola L. 16 Sep (RTo) and a very cooperative juv in Salmon Arm 17 Sep (ph.DGC, PB, RTO). Rarely encountered in the interior, an imm. dark morph Long-tailed Jaeger, furnished a 2nd West Kootenay record 30 Oct at Nakusp (GSD). A 1st basic Common Tern was very late in Comox 23-20 Oct (JF, ph. GLM, et al.). An imm. Arctic Tern was discovered along the Penticton waterfront along with 15 Common Terns 18 Sep (RTo), which furnished the 3rd Okanagan record. A basic ad. Arctic Tern was at

Blackie Spit, White Rock 15 Sep (DTy) yet trips out of Tofino failed to yield Arctic Terns (fide AD). A murrelet swimming in the rapid moving waters of the Fraser R. at Hell's Gate 15 Aug (vt. Ed LeGrand) was later identified as an Ancient Murrelet upon examination of photos (DGC). Another displaced Ancient Murrelet was found flying down Williston L. 28 Aug (JJ).

#### Doves Through Grackles

A **White-winged Dove** at Dare Beach near Carmanah Point 17 Aug (ph JE, †NH), furnished a 9th Regional record. Another female Barn Owl with brood patch was captured at 150 Mile House 1-3 Aug (fide PR), extending their known breeding area in the province. A Flammulated Owl was picked up starved in Sardis 28 Nov (fide GG), well away from its s. Interior range and two weeks later than the previous latest date for Canada. Snowy Owls made their best appearance on Vancouver I. since 1996/97 with over 20 reports (fide GLM). An unbanded imm. Burrowing Owl was picked up from the Zeller's Store in Campbell River and taken to Mountaineer Avian Rescue (MB). A Common Poorwill with a broken collarbone was found in Princeton 16 Oct. (MS) and sent to wildlife recovery; this is two weeks later than the previous latest record for BC. A Lewis's Woodpecker was discovered at RPBO 6 Sep, s. Vancouver I. where they historically bred. A Red-naped Sapsucker was away from its interior haunts as it ventured to Reifel Refuge 18-24 Sep (m.obs), while this species is rare but regular along the south coast in spring it is much less frequently seen in the fall. A record-late individual was found dead in Summerland 17 Nov (JGi). The pair of White-headed Woodpeckers that were frequenting Anarchist Mtn., Osoyoos, may have successfully bred last summer as one local reported seeing up to 5 individuals flying together 13 Sep (SL). A Least Flycatcher, rare on



Vancouver I. was observed at RPBO 20 Sep (GLM). A record-late date for Hammond's Flycatcher was established at RPBO 15 Oct (GD). Dusky Flycatchers rarely stray to Vancouver I. with a pair at RPBO 17-18 Sep (GD, DA). Rare along the coast and more often found in spring than fall, an imm. Say's Phoebe was at Piper's Lagoon, Nanaimo 18 Oct (ph. RP, AP) and later relocated 29 Oct at Neck Point (NR). Annual in small numbers along the coast, an Ash-throated Flycatcher was at RPBO 5-6 Sep (CS, DA, GD). A Tropical Kingbird was an overdue first for RPBO 8 Oct (DA, GD). A juv. Western Kingbird, rare on Vancouver I. was at the Cape Scott lighthouse 29 Sep (JB). A Clark's Nutcracker was at R.P.B.O for a 2nd local record 10 Aug (fide DA), this species rarely wanders to Vancouver I. Rare on Vancouver I., an early Bank Swallow was at Kye Bay, Comox for a 3rd local record 11 Aug (JF) and within their more usual fall window, another furnished a long overdue 1st record for Nanaimo 5 Sep (GLM). Cliff Swallows were exceptionally late in the interior with 7 seen entering Cliff Swallow nests to spend the night 10 Nov at Little Bear Ranch, East Ootsa (NN, GN). Oddly, this species seems to disappear in early fall (Aug/Sep) and then occasionally and suddenly, a few "arrive" in Oct/Nov. A Rock Wren made a rare appearance along the Iona I. south Jetty 21 Oct - 19 Nov (PC et al.). Another regional first, and disappointingly another one-day wonder, a **Sedge Wren** was discovered at Cecil Green Park, Vancouver 29 Oct (†ph. PC et al.). On the other hand, a very cooperative **Northern Wheatear** furnished a 2nd regional record and the first since 1970! At least 400 birders from British Columbia, Alberta, Washington and Oregon came to see this bird. This wheatear was present in the Columbia Beach area, e. Vancouver I. 7 - 20 Oct (ph. RH, GLM et al.). Casual in the region, an imm. Brown Thrasher was at McQueen's Slough in Dawson Creek 8 Sep (JJ). Tennessee Warblers are rare south of Prince George and they can be hard to identify. Banders at Vaseux initially mistakenly identified one as a rather 'crisp' Orange-crowned Warbler 11 Aug (SL, ph. BL), other singles were discovered along the south coast at Reifel 15 Aug (†RL) and Vancouver 9 Sep (†PC). Nashville Warblers are rare on Vancouver I. yet one was discovered at RPBO 22 Sep (JG, GD, GLM). Townsend's Warblers are lingering later and in greater numbers in recent years. This fall was particularly noticeable with the species remaining rather widespread on Vancouver I. into late Nov (GLM). A **Blackburnian Warbler** furnished the 2nd Vancouver Island record in Courtenay 8 Sep (†JF) and the 10th Regional record. By far the rarest of all warblers found this fall was a male **Pine Warbler** at a Lillooet feeder 29 Nov (vt. IR, VR) for a 2nd provincial record. Unfortunately, it remained a one-day wonder despite efforts to relocate it. Also rare on Vancouver I., a juv male American Redstart was banded at

RPBO 28 Aug (ph. DA, GD) for a 2nd local record. Clay-colored Sparrows were much more prevalent along the coast this fall rarely encountered on Vancouver Island, one was at a vagrant trap, the lighthouse at Cape Scott 29 Sep (JB), one at RPBO 25 Sep (GLM), and three were along the south coast: at Iona 5-6 Sep (†MT); Iona 11 Oct (ph. PC); and Blackie Spit, White Rock 7 Nov (†DTy). A few Lark Sparrows wandered to the coast with singles at: Columbia Beach, Parksville 28 Aug (JF); and at Sayward estuary 25 Sep (CVN). Another stunning find was a **Baird's Sparrow** reported from Holden Creek, Nanaimo River Estuary 9 Sep (†GLM). There is one previously confirmed record for the province, however a specimen record of questionable origin from 1889. An ad. male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was very late in Tofino 14 Nov (RC, SB). Common Grackles at a feeder in Arras furnished a new provincial high total with 93 present on 15 Aug (MP).

**Compiled by Donald G. Cecile**

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## Authors in this Issue

### Jo Ann MacKenzie

Jo Ann's interest in creatures of the wild began in very early childhood in Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.A. 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.

She was a signatory to the partnering agreement between BCFO and the Chang Hua Wild Bird Society in November, 2003. She is Executive Secretary of the International Taiwan Birding Association (Canada) and Advisor to the Taiwan International Birding Association (Taiwan)

### Paul St. Pierre

Paul St. Pierre divides his time between Fort Langley, the Chilcotin, and Sinaloa, Mexico. He is an award winning author (Western Writer of America Spur Award; Terasen (BC Gas) Lifetime Achievement Award 2000), a journalist, playwright, scriptwriter, a former federal MP for Coast Chilcotin (1968-1972), and former police commissioner. He was the sole writer for the acclaimed television series *Cariboo Country* which aired on CBC from 1959 to 1967. Of his literary efforts he has been known to say that it is indoor work and there is no heavy lifting.

### Chris Siddle

Chris is a former regional editor for Field Notes (American Birds) and a contributing author to *The Birds of British Columbia* (Campbell et al., 1990-2001).

### John Sprague

John B. Sprague is a retired aquatic biologist living on Salt Spring Island. Before breakfast, he scopes the bay for waterbirds.



"You bet I'm depressed; my life needs structures, rules, a sense of conformity . . ."

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



# Birds on the Bay

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Boundary Bay, Canada's top-rated Important Bird Area, is a major stop-over on the Pacific Flyway. Habitats support more than 333 species, some rare and endangered.

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Miraculous Migrations	Hummingbird Haven
Raptors Revealed	Ducks - Everywhere a Duck, Duck
Clown Around with the Harlequins	World Oceans Day
Birds of a Feather Flock Together	Scope the Bay
	Dig in for Birds

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## TOURS FOR NATURALISTS

### \*\*\*ALASKA HIGHWAY & NAHANNI\*\*\*

12-19 June 2006 (8 days)

Cost \$2190 (dbl occup) from Dawson Creek, BC

There are a few mythical highways in the world and the Alaska Highway is incontrovertibly one of them. At Mile 310 we will turn east off the Alaska Highway for a side trip to Fort Simpson, NWT, the base for explorations of fabled **Nahanni National Park**. We have a charter flight planned into the park, with lunch at the incomparable **Virginia Falls**.

### \*\*\*YUKON & DEMPSTER HIGHWAY\*\*\*

19-28 June 2006 (10 days)

SOLD OUT

Cost \$2400 (dbl occup) from Whitehorse

30<sup>th</sup> June-9<sup>th</sup> July 2006 Second tour

The Yukon is a fabled land whose very name evokes images of wilderness and a frontier populated by colourful characters. The heart of our adventure is the drive up the **Dempster Highway from Dawson City to Inuvik, and a flight to Tuktoyaktuk on the Arctic Ocean**. The Dempster is the only road in Canada extending north of the Arctic Circle. Along its route we cross two mountain ranges, traverse wild river valleys, muskeg, tundra and the mighty Mackenzie River. At latitude 66N we cross the Arctic Circle, and enter the Land of the Midnight Sun.

### \*\*\*THE SUNSHINE COAST FOR NATURALISTS\*\*\*

17-21 July 2006 (5 days)

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20-29 September 2006 (10 days)

Cost \$1990 (dbl occup) from Las Vegas

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### \*\*\*BC FALL COLOURS/WATERFALLS\*\*\*

13-16<sup>th</sup> October 2006 (4 days)

Cost \$599 (dbl occup) from Vancouver

This tour has the dual objective of visiting a cross-section of BC's waterfalls at the time of year when the interior landscape is ablaze with the golden foliage of maples, cottonwoods, aspen and birch. **We visit Wells Gray PP, "the waterfall park" and admire some of its great waterfalls, Helmcken, Spahats, Dawson and others.**

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BC reg#34425



# BIRDS OF PANAMA

## 24th Oct – 4th Nov 2006: Migration Season

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Little Cuckoo



**Panama** is one of the most famous birding destinations in the world. In an area one twelfth the size of British Columbia can be found over 900 species of birds. There are legendary birding destinations such as Pipeline Road & Achiote Road (both of which we visit).

This fully escorted tour, with leader Dr. Rand Rudland, is based at the Canopy Tower Ecolodge in Soberania National Park, and in El Valle de Anton at the magical Canopy Lodge, located in an extinct caldera and designed by birders for birders. Local guides such as Carlos & Danilo can “whistle in” most of the local species.

**COST:** From Panama City CAD \$3875 (sharing)  
Single Rooms - limited availability CAD \$3475

**GROUP SIZE:** Maximum 10 guests

**MEALS:** all included

**FULLY ESCORTED:** Leader - Dr. Rand Rudland

**CONTACT:** Whiskeyjack Nature Tours

P.O. Box 319, Sechelt, BC, V0N 3A0

Phone: 604-885-5539 Fax: 604-885-2904

E-mail: [tony@whiskeyjacknaturetours.com](mailto:tony@whiskeyjacknaturetours.com)

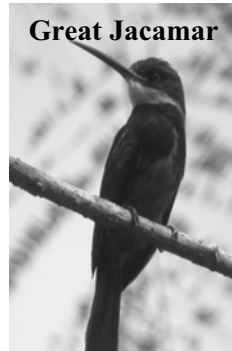
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(All photos by R. Rudland, Panama 2005)

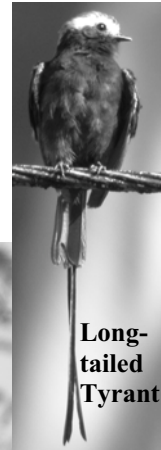
Collared Aracari



Great Jacamar



Long-tailed Tyrant



Slaty-tailed Trogon



Blue-grey Tanager



Up to 300 species of birds are possible, as well as many monkeys, sloths and other rainforest mammals. Blue Morpho butterflies, and others, abound. Frogs and toads can be heard, and often seen with a little searching. Snakes are occasionally seen, but encounters are extremely rare. Rainforest flora is vibrant and varied.

Some of the species we expect to see include **Blue Cotinga, Great Potoo, Bare-crowned Antbird, Black-crowned Antpitta, Lance-tailed Manakin, White-headed Wren, Long-billed Starthroat, White-throated Crane, White Hawk, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Orange-bellied Trogon, Golden-hooded Tanager** & a variety of **motmots, toucans, woodcreepers & puffbirds**. The multitudes of colour & song will keep your eyes & ears on edge for the entire tour.

For mammal enthusiasts, **Howler & White-faced Capuchin Monkeys, Agouti, 3-Toed Sloth, White-nosed Coati, and Anteater** are likely.





# Imagine a tropical island...



## Did You Know?

In December 2005, a Christmas Island Frigatebird stunned scientists by making an epic 4000km, 26-day flight over the ocean, never touching down, eating and sleeping on the wing by gliding on thermal updraughts.



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...ringed by craggy limestone cliffs, where you can sit amongst Booby Bird nests and peer out into the blue haze of the Indian Ocean and watch, mesmerised, as one of the world's rarest and beautiful birds - the Red-tailed Tropicbird - flirts on the updrafts. Imagine no more... welcome to Christmas Island - the bird watching haven that you always dreamed of, but thought never existed.



Strap on the binoculars, power-up the camera and explore this extraordinary ornithological Garden of Eden at the first ever Christmas Island Bird Week. Here you can enjoy some of the most spectacular bird watching experiences the world has to offer. But there are no crowds here, just a team of expert scientists as your guides.

Bird week participants will be invited to:

- Assist 3 expert scientists in their research into tropical seabirds and island endemics.
- Have the chance to catch the majestic Abbott's Booby high in the rainforest canopy and monitor Brown Boobies on the remote rocky coasts.
- Learn first-hand the nesting biology of Christmas Island Frigatebirds and Red-tailed Tropicbirds.

There will also be nightly seminars, seabird identification workshops and opportunities to have a closer look at the island's other extraordinary wildlife, and all on Australia's most spectacular, yet rarely explored tropical island.

**Be amongst the first to discover this unique bird paradise  
by participating in the**



**September 2 - 9, 2006**





Flamecrest

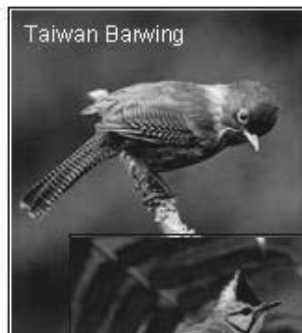
## Birding in TAIWAN

To Portuguese sailors in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was *Iha 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.

**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 12 of Taiwan's 15 generally recognized endemics. There are also many endemic subspecies such as Black-browed Barbet and [Taiwan] Hwamei. Other birds include Malayan Night-Heron, Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Collared Finchbill. On our November trips, we see the globally threatened **Black-faced Spoonbill**. **Fairy Pitta** is present only during the breeding season. We also visit Lanyu Island, with 6 bird specialties of its own, including an endemic subspecies of Ryukyu Scops-Owl.

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!



Taiwan Barwing



Taiwan Yuhina



Black-faced Spoonbill

### NEXT TRIPS:

**2006: May 1–13**, for endemics, Fairy Pitta and Lanyu Island

**November 6–18**, for endemics, Black-faced Spoonbill and Lanyu Island



Fairy Pitta

**PRICE: 13 days:** From Vancouver: \$4900 (sharing); \$5400 (single)  
From Taipei, Taiwan: \$3800 (sharing); \$4300 (single)

**GROUP SIZE:** 6–10, with 3 leaders; Simon Liao, Ten-Di Wu and Jo Ann MacKenzie

**CONTACT:** Jo Ann MacKenzie, 15341 – 21 Avenue, Surrey, BC, V4A 6A8,  
j.a.mackenzie@telus.net tel: 604-538-1676, or  
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