

BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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Blue-chested Hummingbird

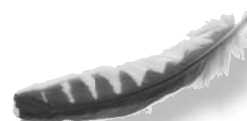
Rand Rudland

Birding in Panama

As we winged our way south across the Gulf of Mexico, en route from Houston, Texas to Panama City, and crossed over the eastern extension of the Yucatan Peninsula, I looked down from 35,000 feet into the green expanse of the tropical forest below and felt a rising tide of expectation as I contemplated the birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and flora down below.

Visiting foreign lands is always a riot of new impressions and experiences, and arriving in Panama City is no exception. From your first breath the heat, humidity and the distinctive aroma of tropical decomposition assails your senses.

please see Birding in Panama, page 12



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BCFO Officers and Directors

PRESIDENT

Jim Ginns
1970 Sutherland Road, Penticton, BC V2A 8T8
250-492-9610 / ginnsj@shaw.ca

PAST PRESIDENT

Sandra Kinsey
9860 Alpine Drive, Prince George, BC V2N 5W7
250-963-8381 (phone/fax) / sjkinsey@direct.ca

VICE PRESIDENT

Kevin Bell
1302 Sunnyside Drive, North Vancouver, BC V7R 1B1
604-980-9085

TREASURER

Andrew Stewart
3932 Telegraph Bay Road, Victoria, BC V8N 4H7
250-477-1328 / andy.stewart@shaw.ca

RECORDING SECRETARY

Laure Neishe
186 Dewdney Cr., Penticton, BC V2A 7Z6
250-490-3635 / natureniche@shaw.ca

DIRECTORS

Wayne Diakow
9840 Waller Court, Richmond, BC V7E 5S9
604-275-2753 / wdiakow@shaw.ca

Jude Grass

17375 27A Avenue
Surrey, BC V3S 0E9
604-538-8774 / judegrass@shaw.ca

Tony Greenfield

P.O. Box 319, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0
604-885-5539 / greenfieldtony@hotmail.com

Les Gyug

3130 Ensign Way, Westbank, BC V4T 1T9
250-769-5907 / Les_gyug@shaw.ca

John Vooyo

3721 Nicola St., Abbotsford, BC V2T 4Z9
604-850-3757 / mvarts@shaw.ca

MEMBERSHIP

Rita Wege
718 Stanley St., Nelson, BC V1L 1N5
250-354-1685 / rwege@telus.net

ARCHIVIST

Hue MacKenzie
15341 - 21 st Ave, Surrey, BC V4A 6A8
604-538-1676 / motmot@telus.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Phil Henderson
P.O. Box 615, Fort Langley, BC V1M 2R9
604-888-1571 / strix@uniserve.com

JOURNAL EDITOR

John Sprague
474 Old Scott Road, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2L7
250-537-0760 / sprague@saltspring.com

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Ted Goshulak
9578 - 212 B St., Langley, BC V1M 1N4
604-888-0408 / tgosh@twu.ca

LIAISON, CHANGHWA WILD BIRD SOCIETY

Jo Ann MacKenzie
15341-21 Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 6A8
604-538-1676 / j.a.mackenzie@telus.net

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 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

The winds (November 15) are howling up Okanagan Lake and there are multitudes of beautiful white caps heading north. Just as I (JG) sat down (about 7 am) for a cuppa 12 Bohemians lit (and desperately hung on) in one of the Ponderosa pines. A couple of minutes later a Raven went by sideways. Which way did it really want to go? It was followed by a Red-tail Hawk that managed to make a swipe at the waxwings and send them off. We may grumble about the winds but to a bird every gust can be life threatening. I (JG) wonder whether they understand the dangers or if they just get-on-with-it?

At or before the Kelowna AGM three members (Sandra Kinsey, Dick Cannings and Brian Self) ended their terms on the Board of Directors. Although, as a Director, we saw some of the contributions they made to the running of the BCFO, we feel sure the full extent of the time and effort they devoted to the organization was considerably greater. To them a sincere thanks from the Directors and the membership!

Your Directors met via a conference call on the evening of October 24. Andy organized and led the session. The list of officers and directors was finalized (see Officers and Directors on page 2). It was evident that while everyone had concern for the organization and wanted to help, all were stretched pretty thin. The result was that Kevin and Jim will cooperate on handling the duties of the President. Andy agreed to run the financial operations, Laure Neish steps into the Recording Secretary's job and Jude Grass, whom many of you know, joins the Board as a director.

Rita via Andy reported that BCFO has 260 members and is slowly rising as forms are returned.

Over half the Directors are from the Lower Mainland and three are from the Okanagan, so we are planning a meeting in early February in Manning Park. Kevin is putting together the agenda. Let him know if you have topics for the Directors to consider.

We are lucky to have Wayne organizing the AGM (this is his third for BCFO). Take a look at the details elsewhere in this issue of *BC Birding* and mark it on your calendar.

**Jim Ginns, President, and
Kevin Bell, Vice President**



From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.

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

Anne Murray
Delta, BC

Thede Tobish
Anchorage Alaska

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/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/>

British Columbia Conservation Data Centre

Information on plants, animals and ecosystems at risk in British Columbia.

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>

eBird Canada

Online interactive program for storing, sharing, sorting and assembling bird sightings.

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

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

Point Reyes Bird Observatory

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

Rocky Point Bird Observatory

<http://www.islandnet.com/~rpbo/index.html>

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

This editor is short on notes and notions, so thank God for the many talented and industrious BCFO members who continue to submit interesting items to keep you informed and challenged.

Winter complainers will take comfort in Tony Greenfield's article on birds in Panama which begins and takes up a sizable and interesting chunk of this edition and which also might indirectly take up a sizeable chunk of the upcoming March edition if Tony uses those Panamanian observations to further fatten his lists for the Bird Listers' Corner. Yes, the Bird Listers' Corner is back, and this time Wayne Weber and I actually remembered to put in the December issue where it belongs. The announcement is in this newsletter, but I'm not telling you where since if you can find some retiring, cryptic, ground skulking birds in thick brush, then surely finding the announcement will be easy; or consider it punishment for those accidental, lucky observations that required no work, but instilled great envy in your still cursing birding colleagues. Should you not find it, you will notice the brightly coloured inserted form. The warmth continues with Gwen Nicol's summary of a July bird walk in the Okanagan. Some might suspect that this was sent earlier for the last edition and somehow misplaced by the editor; others might consider that it resulted from the editor's uncanny knack for comforting *BC Birdings'* kindly, terrific and very generous readers with more thoughts of warm days birding, as a blanket of cold air and snow snuffs out the dying embers of summer.

Don't skip over the *Officers and Directors* listing on page 2. There you will find all the hard working members who keep this organization flying. You may also notice that there have been some recent changes, most notably that of Jim Ginns and Kevin Bell assuming the presidency and vice-presidency, respectively, and



Jude Grass's arrival on board as a new Director. Jude is introduced formally on page 8.

The multi-talented, indefatigable Andy Stewart has donned the frequently cast-off Treasurer's hat to present the club's financial picture. I re-present information on acquiring back issues of *BC Birds* and *BC Birding* and also the plea by our esteemed Editor of *BC Birds* for more submissions of articles and other items. Martin McNicholl, the esteemed past Editor of *BC Birds*, presents his roundup of meetings, events, and news briefs of interest to BC birders. Wayne Diakow provides a teaser for the upcoming BCFO AGM and Ian Routley embellishes this with two stunning photographs. Les Gyug presents a preliminary summary of observations of the effects of fire on the bird community on Okanagan Mountain Park and John Voos observes behavioural adaptation in the much maligned House Sparrow. The esteemed former editor of this publication, Andy Buhler, writes of his and Marilyn's bird surveys at a recently dedicated nature preserve at Swan Lake in Vernon. Dick Cannings explains the nifty attributes of a powerful, useful, and possibly addictive new tool for birders: eBird Canada. Don Cecile's wrap-up of Spring 2006 observations of birds in BC, which is a little late through no fault of his, provides tantalizing reading. We'll catch up soon enough. Lastly, the Buhlers have again compiled the list of Christmas Bird Counts, a time-consuming job that is most appreciated. Pick your locale and join in.

Thanks to everyone who contributed their time and effort to BCFO this year.

Merry Christmas? Once again I turn that over to the inimitable Benjamin Zephaniah.

Phil Henderson, Editor

Talking Turkeys

Be nice to yu turkeys dis christmas
Cos turkeys jus wanna hav fun
Turkeys are cool, turkeys are wicked
An every turkey has a Mum.
Be nice to yu turkeys dis christmas,
Don't eat it, keep it alive,
It could be u mate an not on yu plate
Say, Yo! Turkey I'm on your side.

I got lots of friends who are turkeys
An all of dem fear christmas time,
Dey wanna enjoy it, dey say humans destroyed it
An humans are out of dere mind,
Yeah, I got lots of friends who are turkeys
Dey all hav a right to a life,
Not to be caged up an genetically made up
By any farmer and his wife.

Turkeys jus wanna play reggae
Turkeys jus wanna hip-hop
Can yu imagine a nice young turkey saying,
"I cannot wait for de chop"?
Turkeys like getting presents, dey wanna watch christmas TV,
Turkeys hav brains an turkeys feel pain
In many ways like yu an me.

I once knew a turkey called Turkey
He said 'Benji explain to me please,
Who put de turkey in christmas
An what happens to christmas trees?'
I said, 'I am not too sure turkey
But it's nothing to do wid Christ Mass
Humans get greedy an waste more dan need be
An business men mek loadsa cash.'

Be nice to yu turkey dis christmas
Invite dem indoors fe sum greens
Let dem eat cake an let dem partake
In a plate of organic grown beans,
Be nice to yu turkey dis christmas
An spare dem de cut of de knife,
Join Turkeys United an dey'll be delighted
An yu will mek new friends FOR LIFE.

- Benjamin Zephaniah

From The Faber Book of Christmas (Simon Rae, ed., Faber and Faber, London. 1996).
Check out Benjamin's web site at <http://www.benjaminzephaniah.com/>



Summer Birding in the Okanagan

On Sunday July 16, 2006 Pam Laing led birders from Prince George, Revelstoke, Castlegar, Rossland, Vancouver and Mill Bay up the Beaver Lake road from Winfield. As it ascends, the different habitats yield a wide variety of species and we tallied approximately 50.

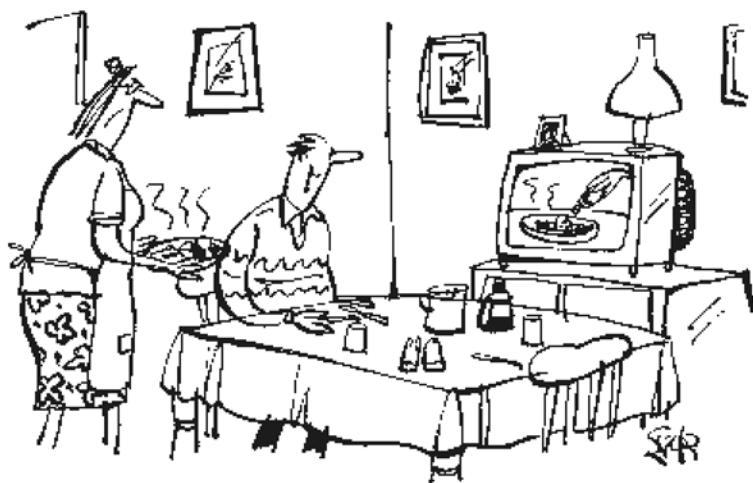
Our first stop was to identify a Western Wood Pewee spotted on a nest, revealing at least three young. Nearby was a Clark's Nutcracker. Further on we watched House Wrens busy near a nest cavity. Western Kingbirds, Vesper Sparrows, Lazuli Buntings and Western Meadowlarks were common. Other species "ticked" were Red-naped Sapsucker, Red-eyed Vireo, Western

Bluebird, Varied Thrush, Gray Catbird, Nashville Warbler, Macgillivray's Warbler, and Bullock's Oriole. At the lake were Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Barn Swallow.

On our return we were lucky to make it past a couple of areas of grass fire attended by several fire and emergency vehicles.

Our thanks to Pam for a most rewarding morning.

Gwen Nicol



"Mmmm, that looks delicious."

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.

Treasurer's report: For the year ending December 31, 2005

The year 2005 was a year of interim treasurer's starting with Ian Robertson who valiantly stepped into the void to replace Glen Moores, who resigned at the end of 2004. Brian Self was elected as our treasurer at our annual meeting in Parksville but soon discovered that his busy travel schedule would make it impossible for him to carry out these duties. As your current treasurer I am providing the following statement of revenues and expenditures for 2005.

As you will note the BCFO ran a small deficit in 2005. This \$2,194 shortfall was entirely the result of publishing three volumes of British Columbia Birds. Our financial health remains excellent and we continue to maintain a sizable surplus in our long-term savings account.

Andy Stewart, Treasurer



British Columbia Field Ornithologists

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures (Unaudited)

For the year ended December 31, 2005

	2005	2004
Revenue		
Membership	\$6,008	\$6,275
Conference extension	7,614	5,590
Conference fees	2,695	6,613
Donation income	639	355
Donations off set expenses	1,811	4,589
Field Trips	-	79
Barn Owl project	16,505	809
Interest	903	844
Advertising	250	10
	<u>36,426</u>	<u>25,164</u>
Expenditures		
Conferences extension	6,645	5,601
Conference facilities	2,528	2,819
Printing	1,329	1,683
Postage	1,465	1,644
Donations	1,150	2,510
Travel	1,802	4,622
Journals	5,115	40
Stationery	249	86
Future Printing of Journal	100	800
Bank charges	97	-
Insurance	750	500
Web site	420	552
Memberships	-	15
Barn Owl project	16,418	809
Bookkeeper	195	
Meetings	355	200
	<u>38,620</u>	<u>21,879</u>
Surplus (deficit) for the year	(\$2,194)	\$3,284

Balance Sheet At December 31, 2005

	2005	2004
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash in banks	\$53,163	\$47,419
GST Receivable	664	635
Total Assets	<u>\$53,827</u>	<u>\$48,055</u>
Liabilities and Members' Equity		
Current liabilities		
Deferred revenue	\$2,578	\$1,722
Prepaid memberships	1,025	1,025
Deferred Barn Owl Project	10,790	3,779
Future payable	4,922	4,822
	<u>\$19,314</u>	<u>\$11,348</u>
Members' Equity		
Balance, beginning of the year	36,707	33,423
Net earnings for the year	-2,194	3,284
Balance, end of the year	<u>34,513</u>	<u>36,707</u>
Liabilities and Members' Equity Total	<u>\$53,827</u>	<u>\$48,055</u>



New Director

Jude Grass has joined the directorship of BCFO.

Jude Grass, Surrey

Jude Grass has had a life long interest in natural history. She worked as a park naturalist for both B.C. Parks (3 years) and Greater Vancouver Regional District Parks for twenty years. She is active with Federation of B.C. Naturalists currently serving as Lower Mainland Regional Coordinator. She has been involved with the Vancouver Natural History Society (VNHS) since the early 1970s and has served as VNHS President and is currently a Board Member and Birding Section Committee Chair. She has coordinated the VNHS Monthly Raptor Counts since the mid-70s; the Ladner Christmas Bird Count since 1975; and was the original Bald Eagle Survey coordinator in the Lower Mainland in the early 1980's. In 1977 Jude started The Wandering Tattler - the VNHS - Birding Section monthly (Sept. to Apr.) newsletter, and after a few years off, she is again editor. She is also a member of the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies, Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia, B.C. Field Ornithologists, BC Waterfowl Society, Bird Studies Canada, Nature Canada, Burke Mountain Naturalists, and Langley Field Naturalists.

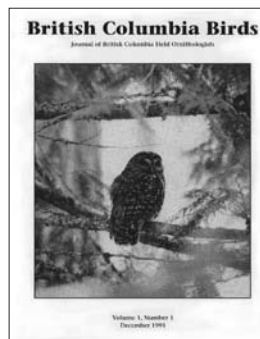


BACK ISSUES OF BCFO NEWSLETTERS AND JOURNALS AVAILABLE

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.

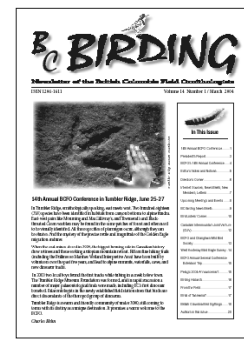
For journals contact:

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.

Journal Articles On-line All feature articles and notes published in Volumes 1 – 13 of British Columbia Birds are available from our website www.bcfo.ca. Articles can be down-loaded individually as PDF files using Adobe Reader, version 5 or greater.

BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS

If you have an interesting observation on birds, please write it up and submit to our journal. The editor hopes to put out a special issue devoted to a bunch of short notes on rarities, unusual behaviour, etc. Publication in the journal gets your observation recorded for posterity and the world will find it on the web at www.bcfo.ca. Follow the format in recent issues. If in doubt, send a rough draft and the editor will help.

Professionals should be submitting more papers; some of your publications deserve to be in the journal. And we really need offers to review books and CDs, which you get to keep. Finally, if you have a photo or drawing of birds which could be published, please send it/them in. Contact John Sprague at the address shown near the front of newsletter.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

compiled by *Martin K. McNicholl*

- February 7-11 2007 34TH ANNUAL MEETING, PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP, Pacific Grove, Calif. Contact: Jim Harvey, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, 8272 Moss Landing Rd., Moss Landing, CA 95039, phone (831) 771-4434, e-mail Harvey@mlml.calstate.edu OR Hannah Nevins, phone (831) 771-4422, e-mail hnevins@mlml.calstate.edu.
- February 21-24 2007 SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING, Victoria, B.C. Contact: Elke Wind, [no address yet indicated]; phone (250) 716-1119; e-mail ewind@telus.net.
- May 3-7 2007 FEDERATION OF B.C. NATURALISTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Okanagan University College overlooking Kalamalka Lake, B.C. contact details not yet announced.
- May 22-25 2007 88TH ANNUAL MEETING, WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Boston, MA. Contact details not yet announced.
- September 12-16 2007 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Fogelsville, Pennsylvania. Contact: Daniel Varland, Rayonier, 3033 Ingram St., Hoquiam, WA 98550, phone (360) 538-4582; e-mail daniel.varland@rayonier.com.
- September 22-28 2008 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Missoula, Montana. Contact details not yet announced.
- September 29-
October 4 2009 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Pitlochry, Scotland. Contact: Ruth Tingay [address and phone number not yet announced], e-mail dimlylit100@hotmail.com.

B.C. Birding News Briefs

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

New Tumbler Ridge Checklist – B.C.F.O. members who attended the Tumbler Ridge AGM in 2004 were pleased to receive both a checklist of the birds of that area and a typed list of addenda. These have now been spliced together in a revised checklist by Charles Helm, totaling 227 species. This 2006 revision, published by the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies in Victoria, incorporates the changes in names and checklist order announced by the American Ornithologists' Union in 2006 and earlier.



LILLOOET

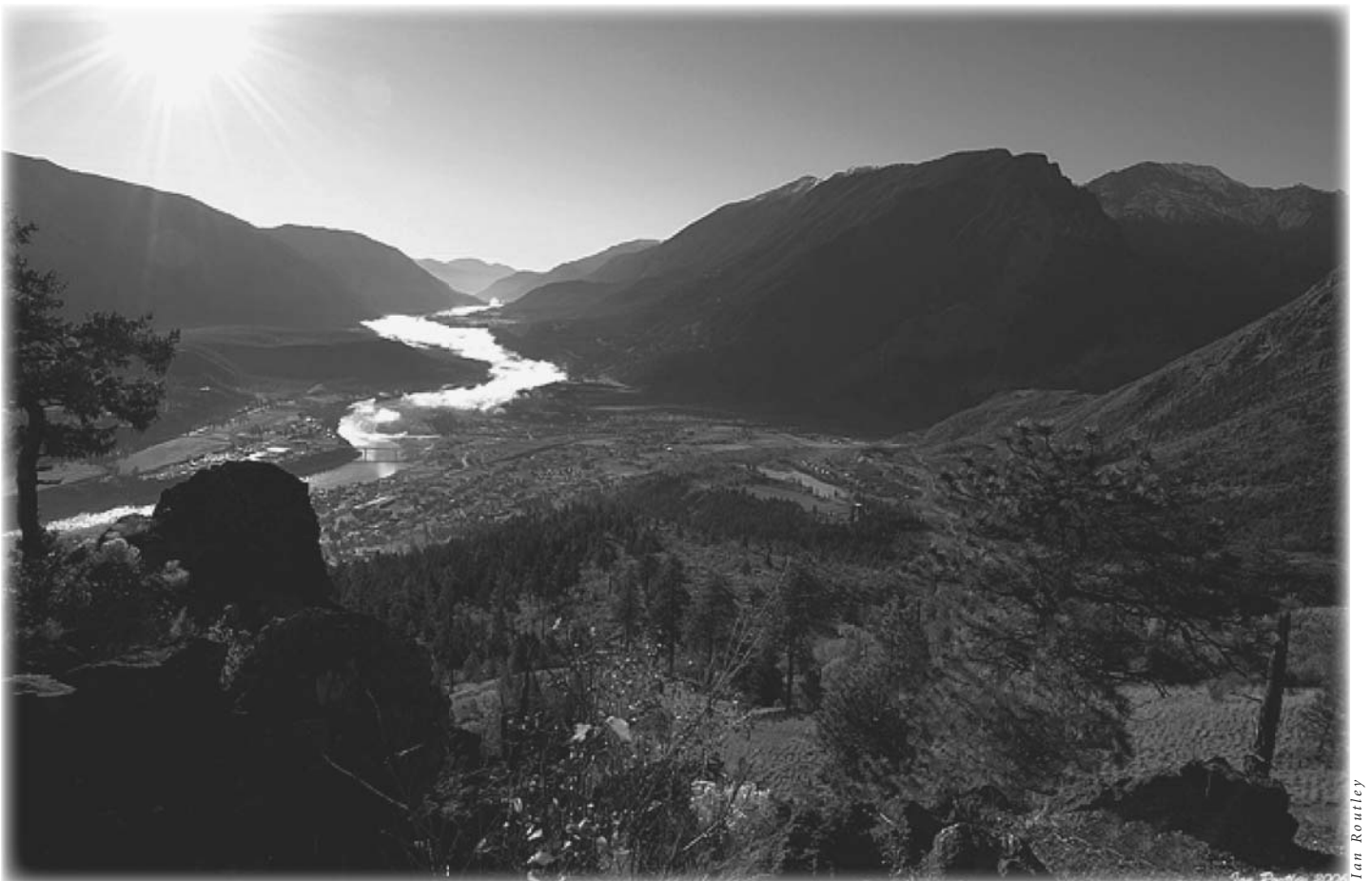
17th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

While we are in the midst of our cold, rainy or snowy winter weather (take your pick) we can still dream about early summer with warm weather and great birding. So let's talk about our 2007 BCFO Annual General Meeting and Conference which will be held this year in the beautiful community of Lillooet, BC. The conference will be held on the weekend of May 25, 26 and 27, 2007. We are still in the process of

nailing down our field trips but we will have a great mix of walks including riparian habitat, canyons, lakes and ponds, grasslands and mountains. In other words, a bit of everything except pelagic species. Lillooet has some great birders who are very excited and passionate about their area and personally, since I have never really birded this area, I could not be more thrilled about the prospects. We

have great chances to see nesting Long-billed Curlews, Chukars, Black-throated Gray Warblers and grassland sparrows along with higher montane species. Of course, there will be some great informative workshops and talks.

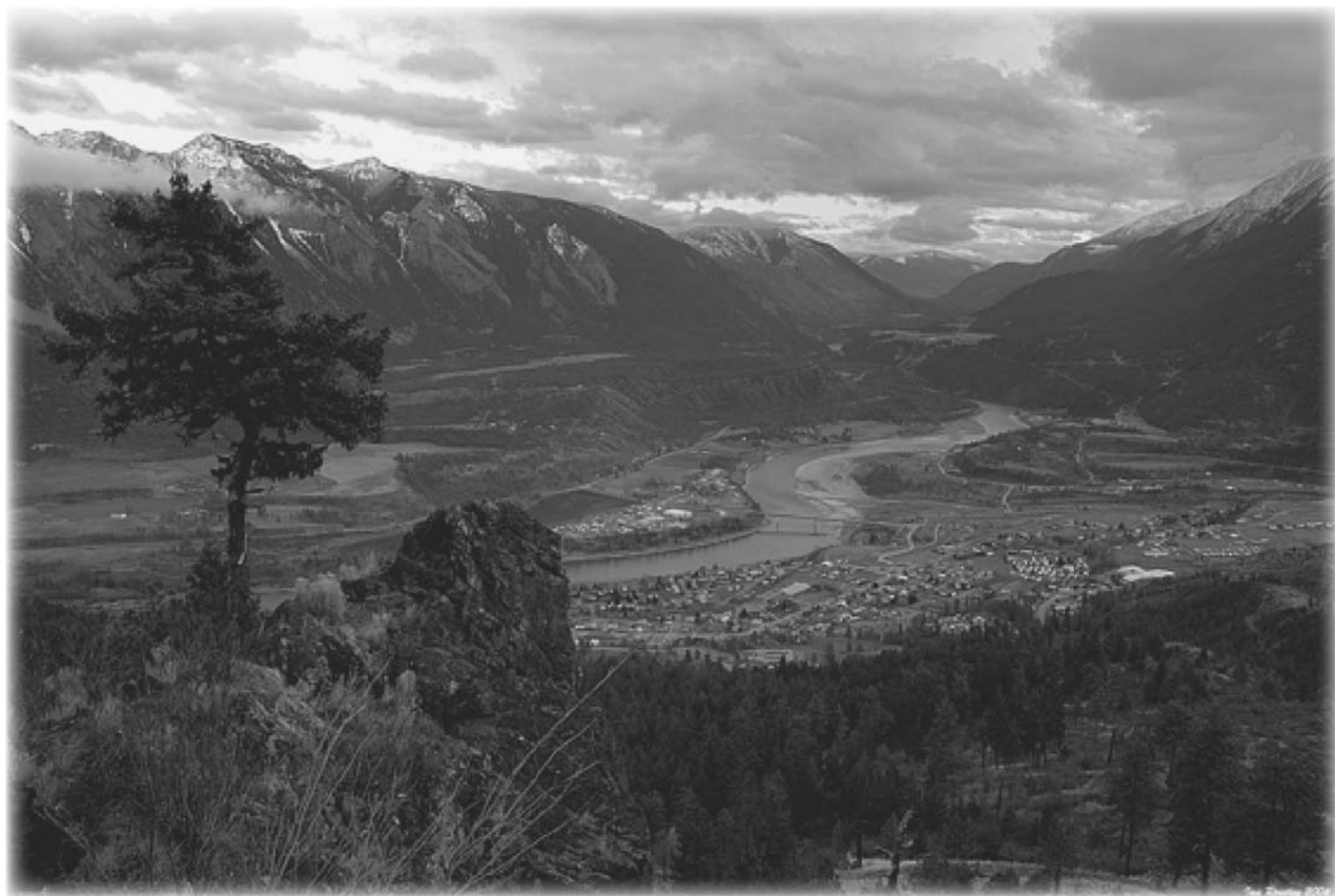
We will be holding our main dinner at the Native Friendship Centre and we should be able to accommodate 80-85 registrants, so look for our Registration form in our next



View of Lillooet from Red Rock

Ian Routley





Ian Routley

View of Lillooet from Red Rock

newsletter and sign up early.

Lillooet is located at the junction of Highway 12 and Highway 99, 180 kms (106 mi) north of Hope and 340 kms (213 mi) northeast of Vancouver. At an elevation of only 250 m (820 ft.), Lillooet's climate combines the sunny skies of the interior with the moderating influences of the coast. Lillooet has one of the most pleasant climates in Canada, four distinct

seasons without extremes: early sunny springs, warm dry summers, long mild autumns and short winters with just a touch of snow. Lillooet is situated on the banks of BC's mighty Fraser River, affording visitors a wonderful display of nature's beauty. Those who arrive from the south by road are privy to some of BC's most awe inspiring sights - everything from roaring river canyons to majestic mountains.

Stay tuned for our next newsletter. We look forward to seeing you in Lillooet in May, 2007!

Wayne Diakow

Birding in Panama (continued from page 1)

Panama and its capital, Panama City, are not well known to North Americans, and what we do know is largely outdated as new realities replace stereotypes of malaria and yellow fever, corrupt dictators and dysfunctional banana republics. The city is on the Pacific side of the area that was formerly the Canal Zone which the Americans recently ceded back to Panama. Panama City with an economy based on banking, commerce, tourism and foreign (mainly American) retirees is a boomtown of glittering skyscrapers, redolent of Vancouver. More is to come, with an imminent 104 storey building that will be the highest in Latin America. One major plus for life within the old Canal Zone, and a fact that Panama is rightly proud of, is that the tap water is safe to drink and the food safe to eat.

The Panama Canal dominates both the scenery and the economic life of the

old Canal Zone as huge ships deliver stupendous loads of containers filled with Chinese products to Atlantic markets. The Canal is an ingenious engineering marvel utilising locks at both ends to raise the ships 26 metres as they traverse the height of land between the Atlantic and the Pacific. A visit to Panama is incomplete without a visit to the Miraflores Locks where a viewing platform allows close-up views of giant ships magically rising within the locks.

The geography of the Canal Zone is extremely confusing. The natural inclination is to think of Panama as running north-south, but it actually trends east-west. The exact geography of the area leads to an interesting and anomalous feature whereby it is actually possible to be on the Pacific coast of Panama and still observe the sun rising over the Pacific Ocean. You may need to look at a map to

understand the specifics of this.

Panama is, and always has been, a fulcrum of trade and cultural exchange between the Atlantic and the Pacific, but its position as a land bridge between North and South America and between the Pacific and the Caribbean has produced one of the richest ecosystems in the world. Thus, Panama with an area one twelfth that of British Columbia, hosts an astonishing 954 bird species. The country is also notable for the 25% of its land mass preserved within national parks. Also, if Stanley Park in Vancouver is the urban representative of the temperate Pacific rainforest, then Metropolitan Park in Panama City serves the same function for the tropical rainforest.

Our first destination in Panama was the Canopy Lodge in El Valle de Anton, located in the huge caldera of an extinct volcano with cloud enshrouded peaks rising all around. This wonderful



Rand Rudland

Howler Monkey



Rand Rudland

Black-breasted Puffbird



new eco-lodge has been created by a birder for birders, and hummingbird feeders are strategically located and other feeders are well stocked with ripe bananas to attract a variety of birds. The rooms are beautiful but the heart of the facility is the patio which serves as an open air dining room. Here there are couches and chairs and a comfortable wall for lounging whilst drinking coffee and watching the passing parade of birds at the feeders or in the surrounding rain forest. A stream fronts the patio and attracts other birds.

One of the first birds we saw at the Canopy Lodge was the spectacular Rufous-crested Coquette foraging at flowers in the garden. Other hummers at the lodge feeders were Violet-headed, Rufous-tailed and Snowy-bellied Hummingbirds, Garden Emerald, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, White-vented Plumeleteer and Purple-crowned Fairy. The feeders at the lodge attract Rufous Motmot, Bananaquit and a variety of other species including noisy Dusky-faced Tanagers and electric coloured Crimson-backed and Lemon-rumped Tanagers. On field trips in the El Valle area we found many species including White Hawk, Bat Falcon, Striped Cuckoo, Mottled Owl, Black-throated Trogon, Tody Motmot, Blue-throated Toucanet, Cocoa Woodcreeper and Black-faced Antthrush. Another outing produced hundreds of migrating Broad-winged Hawks overhead.

One memory of life at the Canopy Lodge is how unnecessary an alarm clock is. Each morning at dawn you will be awoken by the incredibly loud song of the Bay Wrens that inhabit the dense jungle which crowds around the lodge. Winter Wrens have nothing on this bird!

After 3 days at the Canopy Lodge we

moved to a sister property the Canopy Tower. The tower sits atop Semaphore Hill surrounded by primary forest with abundant birds and wildlife. From this vantage point the Canal is visible to the south and Panama City to the east. Hawks, vultures (including King Vulture) and various swifts fly overhead, Keel-billed Toucans, Blue Cotingas and Slaty-backed Forest Falcons may be seen perched in treetops, while North American wood warblers of the “confusing fall warbler” variety can be studied at eye level (most proving to be Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted and Blackburnian). The inescapable soundtrack to life at the Canopy Tower is the vocalization of the Green Shrike-Vireo. However, after a week at the Tower you may still not have added this bird to your seen list. The Tower also has hummingbird feeders that attract Long-tailed Hermits, Blue-chested, Snowy-bellied and Violet-bellied Hummingbirds, Green-crowned Brilliants and showy White-necked Jacobins. A Three-toed Sloth disrupted our lunch one day when he was discovered eating his lunch only metres away at eye-level in the top of a tree. However, with sloths you don’t need to rush for your binoculars!

It is a short drive alongside the Panama Canal from the Canopy Tower to the Camino de Oleoducto, better known as Pipeline Road, one of the most famous birding destinations in the world. I first came to know of Pipeline Road in the 1980’s when I read reports of Christmas Bird Counts from the Pacific side of the Panama Canal Zone. This count reported 325+ species each year, which indicates the fabulous diversity of the area with many of the species from exotic families such as the antbirds and manikins.

So it was with a sense of manifest destiny that we arrived early one

morning at the insignificant gate across the gravel road, which reminded me very much of a gate across a BC logging road. The road is level with primary forest on either side, containing the usual mix of tropical species: deciduous trees with enormous spreading canopies, palms, and openings where fallen giants allow light to reach the forest floor and the pioneering cecropias to establish. One has to be alert for birds at all levels of the forest from the damp, dark floor, to the shrub layer, to the high canopy, and beyond into the ether as hawks and vultures kettle overhead.

Alexis, our guide, knew all the vocalizations of the many possible species and was alert to any movement that might indicate a bird or mammal. He was also adept at whistling the many songs and call notes of the birds and he used these to maintain contact with the birds so that we might observe them. He was also blessed with persistence.

During our two visits to Pipeline Road we observed many species ranging from a Black Hawk-Eagle kettling overhead with vultures, to raucous Mealy Parrots, trogons, Blue-crowned Motmot, Cinammon Woodpecker, a flock of Purple-throated Fruitcrows, a Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser, (doing what leaf-tossers do besttossing leaves, if you missed the point) and various flycatchers and tanagers. Many of these species are loud and colourful and inhabit the forest canopy, but Pipeline Road is most famous for its cryptically dark and secretive species of the forest floor. These birds, collectively known as the antbirds, are split into various families: antshrikes, antwrens, antvireos, antthrushes and antpittas. Patience is generally required to observe these species because of their secretive dispositions and the tangled vegetation and low light conditions



in the forest. Many of the species are rare, of localized distribution, or thinly populated. On our two visits we observed several species including Ocellated Antbird and Streak-chested Antpitta.

Of all the hard to observe antbirds, the antpittas are probably the most notoriously difficult. They can be quite vocal, indicating their presence, but to actually see one is another matter. Our guide, Alexis, heard a Streak-chested Antpitta calling (described as a far-carrying series of clear melancholy whistles), and with infinite skill and patience he actually produced an observation of this wraith of the tropical rainforest. Having heard the bird Alexis began whistling back to it. The birds are extremely wary and do not actually approach the caller, but they do keep whistling which allows you to track them through the forest. Consequently, we left the trail and followed the invisible source of the vocalizations, but with every 10 metres we moved forward, it seemed the birds retreated 10 metres. Alexis had obviously played this game before and with great persistence of whistling and stalking he eventually managed to spot a movement and get our group into a position where we could see the bird. There were actually 3 birds together and we all eventually had good views of this super elusive quarry in the dim light of the forest floor. While stalking small, brown antpittas is an acquired taste, for the committed naturalist it ranks up there with the appreciation of fine wines for the oenophile or the tasting of rare truffles by the gourmand.

Speaking of small brown birds. During our time in Panama we saw a few Swainson's Thrushes, perhaps the very same birds that frequent my garden in the summertime. It's certainly different though seeing this bird among the motmots and manikins of Pipeline Road rather than with the towhees

and wrens of coastal BC. Swainson's Thrush is a long distance migrant that breeds in Canada and winters from Mexico to Argentina.

Our group paid a second visit to Pipeline Road three days after the first and we had two very good additional species. The first was a spectacular Great Jacamar perched on a sunny branch, showing off its iridescent colours to maximum effect. Then driving home along the road Alexis suddenly leapt from the vehicle and ran to an insignificant creek and we heard him whisper the word "Agami". We soon realised he was using the past tense, indicating that he had seen an Agami Heron but that it was no longer there. Once again we stalked the bird with no great expectation we would ever find it but Alexis's acute vision soon located the bird that was barely visible through a heavy curtain of sticks and branches about 25 metres away. This bird was truly hard to see with much of its body hidden, but there was the unmistakable eye and bill of a heron as it stood motionless in the dim light of the forest. In the whole world of birds this is one of the most elusive of all species and it is a major event to observe one. Ridgely in 'The Birds of Panama' describes it as "shy, solitary and rarely encountered". It was a life bird for Alexis, the first one he had ever seen on Pipeline Road or anywhere else, so we reveled in our good fortune and the skill of our guide.

The other famous birding location in the Canal Zone is Achote Road on the Caribbean side of the minor height of land that divides Panama. It is not far from Pipeline Road but comes with a different cohort of birds. It is also different in that it is a disturbed ecosystem with villages and cleared smallholdings. It is also intensely hot and humid in the midday sun, to the point where body temperature, air temperature and humidity all seem to register in the high 90's (Fahrenheit).

Birds seen on Achote Road included Squirrel Cuckoo, Keel-billed Toucan, Golden-collared Manikin, Cinnamon and White-winged Becards, Spot-crowned Barbet, Shining Honeycreeper, Yellow-backed Oriole and a local speciality, White-headed Wren.

On our last full day in Panama we took a boat ride on Gatun Lake, which is part of the Panama Canal, to Barro Colorado Island, the famous tropical research station of the Smithsonian Institute. After negotiating the dock with its sign 'Beware of the Crocodiles' we walked the forest trails of the island and had excellent looks at Crested Guans and Great Tinamous, birds that are usually difficult to find because of hunting pressures in less protected areas.

One night at the Canopy Tower we made a nocturnal expedition riding in the back of a truck with Alexis scanning the forest with a powerful light. The object of this exercise is to pick up the "eyeshine" of any species that happens to look towards the light. It is an amazingly effective technique for finding birds and mammals in the darkness. Our outing did not produce any owls but we did find Common Potoo and Common Pauraque. Mammals observed were Derby's Woolly Opossum, Common Opossum, Hoffman's Two-toed Sloth, Kinkajou, Rothschild's Porcupine and Agouti. Our guides did show us "staked out" Mottled Owl and Spectacled Owl on daytime trips.

The birds of Panama were our main focus but there is much to see besides. Tropical mammals were frequently encountered and we saw four species of monkey. In addition to the mammals mentioned above we also saw the world's largest rodent, the pig-sized Capybara, and my favourite, a Northern Tamandua or Anteater. Reptiles included American Crocodile, lizards and iguanas. In



forest environments the fabulous Blue Morpho butterflies were commonplace and I especially remember the astounding Helicopter Damselfly, a giant beauty of the insect world.

One major highlight of the tour was being the beneficiary of the absolute skill and professionalism of our Panamanian guides. Traditionally, bird tours from North America and Europe were guided by leaders from those areas. Sometime ago I began to hear stories of the skills of local bird guides in the Amazon and the preternatural abilities they brought to bird finding and identification in their native habitats. We had two local guides, Tino at El Valle de Anton and Alexis at the Canopy Tower. Both of these young men were superlative at their jobs. As one expects from bird guides, they could identify all the birds by sight or sound. That is standard practice. However, these two were also possessed of an exquisitely honed ability to detect birds in the dark forest that sat motionless or made barely

perceptible movements among the leaves and branches. Additionally, both guides not only knew the vocalizations of all the birds, but could reproduce those sounds. Tino especially, kept up an almost constant whistling back and forth to whatever species we were chasing. With this technique the bird would either approach and reveal itself or at least would allow us to track its source. Tino went to great lengths over 3 days to show us the elusive Tody Motmot and thanks to his persistence we finally saw the bird. He would have considered any other outcome an unforgivable failure. Alexis scored with the Streak-chested Antpitta and the Agami Heron (both described above).

While we were grateful and impressed with the skill of these young guides, there are also important forces at work here. As residents of these irreplaceable tropical ecosystems are incorporated into the fabric of the ecotourism industry the spin-offs of stable, well

paid employment are seen to be advantageous to the local people and economy and conservation becomes integral to the inhabitants. In this way we help to protect endangered ecosystems throughout the world.

In 12 days in Panama our group saw and heard 315 bird species and 21 mammals, but those cold statistics say nothing of all we saw and learned about the incredible richness of the neotropical ecosystem. It also says nothing about human memory and our acquaintance with the Streak-chested Antpitta, the Agami Heron, the Great Jacamar and the Rufous-crested Coquette. Now those are stories we can tell to the grandchildren, along with the hope that these birds and ecosystems will survive to be appreciated by future generations.

Tony Greenfield



Birding at dawn at canopy tower



Yellow-crested Caracara on Achiote Road



Birding on Pipeline Road

The Effects of the 2003 Fires on Okanagan Mountain Park Birds

The Central Okanagan Naturalists Club (CONC) and the South Okanagan Naturalists Club (SONC) have conducted the Okanagan Mountain Park Critter Count (formerly known as the bird blitz) since 1993. The park was closed in 2004 and 2005 for safety reasons, so 2006 was our first chance to conduct the count after the major fire of 2003, and to turn the count back into an annual event. Saturday, June 3, 2006, saw 7 parties come from the Kelowna (CONC) end of the park, and 4 come from the Penticton (SONC) end. Thirty-six people with a total of 55 party-hours covered 11 of the major trails in the park. We had 11 years of data prior to the fires (1993-2003), and now had one year of post-fire data to compare it with.

In 2006 we counted 107 bird species, which was well above the average of 96 per year, and was the highest ever, beating the old record of 106. The average number of species counted on each route jumped to 40 in 2006 from the pre-fire average of 35. Total number of birds counted was 1,757 which was slightly less than the pre-fire average of 1,938.

The fire of 2003 changed the habitat from closed forest over most of the park to a mosaic of burned and unburned patches. Less than 1% of the park's 103 km² area remained untouched by the fire. High or extreme fire activity covered 66% of the park area, and moderate or low fire activity covered 33%. Natural reseeding has occurred in most places in the upper reaches of the park where the Lodgepole

Pine forests burned very hot. In the lower reaches, the Ponderosa Pine and Douglas-fir forests burned in patches and many of the larger trees also survived the fires that burned around them. Throughout the park, burned-over aspen groves are suckering with 2-3 m tall stands already in place.

The biggest increases in bird numbers were for species that like post-fire habitats: 26 Mountain Bluebirds were counted where they had never been previously recorded on count days prior to the fire; 51 House Wrens were counted (up from a previous high of 6 on any count day prior to the fires); 24 Song Sparrows (up from 10); 16 Brewer's Blackbirds (up from 6); 13 Olive-sided Flycatchers (up from 3); and 4 Lazuli Buntings (where only 1 had ever been counted in the entire previous 11 years of the count). Woodpecker numbers were well up: 39 Hairy Woodpeckers were counted (up from a previous high of 11), 11 Downy Woodpeckers (up from 4), 10 American Three-toed Woodpeckers (up from 7), and one Black-backed Woodpecker, which was a new species for the count list.

The largest declines were for species that prefer intact or closed forests. Species with new low totals included: Ruffed Grouse (2 counted compared to pre-fire range of 5-28); Golden-crowned Kinglet (3 compared to pre-fire range of 4-80); Red-breasted Nuthatch (38 compared to pre-fire range of 39-126); Townsend's Warbler (15 compared to pre-fire range of 22-126); Orange-crowned Warbler (3 compared to pre-fire

range of 5-33); and Nashville Warbler (8 compared to pre-fire range of 32-83). While I've always thought of Yellow-rumped Warbler as a forest species as well, they seemed to be quite content living in the burned forests, and the total of 80 counted in 2006 was eerily close to the pre-fire count average of 81. The only common species "missing" from the park was Pine Siskin, but they have been missing other years even before the fires, and were very uncommon this year in forests outside the park as well.

Without the help of the many avid volunteers who helped this year, and throughout the years since 1993, we would only be guessing at the changes to the park's birds after the big fire of 2003. As it is, we know that no common species were eliminated, and that habitat was created for many species. In the future we hope to be able to determine the differences pre- and post-fire based on more than just one post-fire count day, and look at the long-term trends as the habitats continue to change.

Les Gyug





Les Gyug

Okanagan Mountain Park, Divide Lake Trail, June 3, 2006

Behavioural Adaptation in House Sparrows

The House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* is known to have spread over most of North America after its initial introduction from Europe to New York City in the 1850s. Christmas Bird Counts, as well as other studies, have shown that its numbers are in decline. This decline, it has been suggested, is linked to the reduced numbers of horses as a result of the introduction and spread of the automobile in the 20th century. These birds are not fussy eaters, as is commonly seen outside fast food establishments. However, in large measure, undigested grain in horse manure used to supply the House Sparrow with a constant source of food. This source is now much reduced.

Books on bird feeding suggest that if you want to have House Sparrows visit your feeders, offer them cheap mixed seeds. Conversely, if you do not want

House Sparrows to dominate your feeding stations, it is recommended that instead of mixed seeds, fill your feeders with Black Sunflower and Niger seed.

I believe the House Sparrow is learning to adapt! Since January 2000 I have been feeding birds in my backyard using a variety of feeding stations. I have noticed that when I stopped offering mixed seeds, initially House Sparrow visits are drastically reduced. However, in the last two years they have returned, even though I offer only Black Sunflower and Niger seed. They not only visit my large feeding tray like juncos and towhees, but also hang on to a dangling mesh feeder

like chickadees and sit along with House Finches on tube feeders. They also clutch onto suet cake feeders as readily as woodpeckers. I suppose that like for humans, "necessity is the mother of invention." Are only my local House Sparrows adapting?

John Vooy



"Yes, I have a nest egg. It's in a hedge fund."

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



Swan Lake Nature Preserve, Vernon BC

About the Preserve

Patience and persistence provide properties: and after nearly 83 years this has proven true for Vernon. Welcome soon to the Swan Lake Nature Preserve at the south end of Swan Lake. A partnership of five organizations has been able to purchase nearly 51 hectares (125 acres) of prime wetland habitat shown in the picture above thereby partially fulfilling a proposal made back in 1922 by James A. Munro, then Chief Migratory Bird Officer for BC, that Swan Lake should be set aside as a sanctuary for migrating and nesting birds.

Although attempts had been made over the years to purchase lands around Swan Lake they were, for various reasons, unsuccessful. In 1968 the North Okanagan Naturalist Club (NONC) had prepared a brief, complete with flora and bird survey data, detailing the benefits of having a year-round sanctuary. Benefits were shown both in enhanced habitat for birdlife and a spin-off for the town in "ecotourism" appeal. Sufficient funding and support could not be rallied at that time. Further attempts to reach agreements with the property owners in 1991 and 1994 were unsuccessful. However, in 1991 Nature Trust, working with NONC, was able to purchase a small property along the east side of the lake (the Kaminski property). Although not sufficient for ecotourism appeal, this undeveloped property does protect a short swath of lakeshore habitat for birds.

In 2005 the Swan Lake Committee was fortunate to be the recipient of the first BC Trust for Public Lands grant. This fund required that the applicant(s) come up with at least matching funds if they wished to be recipients. The Committee secured a partnership involving Greater Vernon Services Commission, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, NONC and the Bishop Wild Bird Foundation and were able to meet the criteria of BC Trust for Public Lands and also meet the asking price of \$1.55 million needed for purchase. Handshakes all around and the property is now preserved.

The land purchase, however, is just the start. Cattle had been grazing over a large portion of the property. Haying is still

being undertaken. BX Creek (major water source into the lake) needed cleanup. Areas of shrubs and trees cleared during the early days of agriculture in the valley needed to be replanted. In short, these wetlands are now in need of a habitat refurbishing in order to attract and retain their historic flora and fauna.

In early 2006 a tree-planting project was initiated in order to protect portions of Swan Lake Creek (outlet for the lake) banks and to enhance habitat options for passerines. Volunteers have planted five hundred cuttings of black cottonwood and Pacific willow and more are to come. A regular plant and animal (including birds) survey was initiated in early 2006 and will continue until there is at least a year's worth of baseline data. Although haying is still allowed in portions of the preserve, the cattle are gone and the soil and plant life can begin to recover. Once the surveys have all been completed, management plans and land use areas for the various partners can be determined. Trails, blinds and hides can be considered and birders will then be welcomed to check out and enjoy a real wetlands experience.

What might you see in the Preserve?

In March 2006 Marilyn and I were fortunate to be asked to assist with the bird surveys. Through the use of several birding teams, survey data was collected on an almost daily basis. We are still the "Friday morning team" and in April we were joined on Fridays by Barb and Ev Miyasaki, also recent retirees from Victoria and enthusiastic birders. Our first year of

survey data is not yet complete but to whet your appetites for visiting the Swan Lake Nature Preserve we will offer some of our findings.

Our survey generally starts along BX Creek, a watercourse canopied along its length in the preserve with tall willows and a few mature cottonwoods. It is the only real treed area in the preserve although a couple of old cottonwoods have remained along a spring-fed ditch. We noted the changes over the seasons as "chips" from Song Sparrows started being edged out by American Robins looking for nesting sites. American Goldfinches, House Finches, and Northern Flickers showed up. Later in the year Yellow Warblers arrived along with Yellow-rumped Warblers, Warbling Vireos, Western Tanagers, Black-capped Chickadees, Cedar Waxwings and a few Empid flycatchers. Red-winged Blackbirds, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Marsh Wrens, White-crowned Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows and Common Yellowthroats all showed up, and we had rare sightings of Great Horned Owl, Barn Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Waterthrush, Solitary Sandpiper, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, American Redstart, McGillivray's Warbler, and Western Wood-Pewee. Magpies, ravens, crows, starlings, Ring-billed Gulls, Bald Eagles and fairly regular flights of Great Blue Herons from their rookery to the lake were also observed.

Early in the year we were treated to sightings of a small flock of American Tree Sparrows in the southeast corner of the preserve. Rock Pigeons, Mourning



Morning Star, Vernon, BC

Swan Lake Nature Preserve, Vernon BC



Doves and Brewer's Blackbirds are quite commonly seen in that same area, as are Killdeer and an occasional covey of geographically-challenged California Quail loudly proclaiming the area to be "Chicago!" Pheasants, snipes, Soras, and Virginia Rails have all been flushed from the fields and reeds, as have a rare Long-billed Curlew and a migratory flock of six Short-eared Owls. A Northern Harrier (or two) regularly hunts the open fields and the reed-beds and they are often joined in the early mornings by a coyote or two. Rough-legged Hawks and Turkey Vultures were seen in flight over the area. Tree Swallows set up housing in one of the two bird boxes and they hawked the fields with Barn, Violet-Green and Northern Rough-winged Swallows. After the hay was harvested we noted a flock or two of American Pipits and several American Kestrels checking out scattered seeds and lethargic grasshoppers. Both Eastern and Western Kingbirds and Say's Phoebe also visited to hawk insects from their perches on the fence. On our last survey we sighted a small migratory flock of Lincoln's Sparrows among the Song Sparrows.

The lake provides quite good views of a variety of waterfowl. Over the year we have observed large flocks of American Coots, reasonable numbers of Mallards, Redheads, Lesser and Greater Scaup, American Wigeon with a Eurasian Wigeon thrown in for good measure, Northern Pintail, Common and Barrow's Goldeneye, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Gadwall, Common Merganser, Canada Geese, Pied-billed Grebe, and also the occasional Red-necked Grebe, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, Common Loon, Tundra Swan and Hooded Merganser. Wood Ducks have been sighted in the reed-margined outlet stream.

So, that is just a taste of the Swan Lake Nature Preserve. Although access is currently limited to survey participants, we look forward to its ongoing development and hope soon to welcome all birders to one of the natural gems of the North Okanagan.

Andy Buhler

eBird Canada

Bird Studies Canada launched eBird Canada on October 24th at the website www.ebird.ca. What is eBird? It's a web-based bird sightings database, first developed by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in 2002. Participants can enter their bird sightings online, then freely explore the entire database through maps a multitude of graphing options. eBird even acts as a listing program, generating lifelists for any location, province or country, and bar-graph checklists for any location. Raw data can be downloaded through the Avian Knowledge Network. eBird has proven very popular since Version 2 was announced in fall 2005, and now over 25,000 checklists are entered every month—that's about 8 million bird records per year. There are over 40,000 eBird checklists from Canada representing about a half million records, and British Columbia is leading the way with about 18,000 checklists.

Right now eBird allows you to report sightings from Canada, the United States and Mexico, and future plans see it covering all of Central and South America as well. It is a checklist program, that is bird sightings are entered in checklists that record the exact location, date, time and effort involved for each sighting. This ancillary data allows eBird data to be used to monitor bird populations in a much more powerful way than programs that involve single species sightings that have no effort data associated with them. And how will eBird Canada be different? It is simply a Canadian gateway to eBird, with features such as bilingual data entry and retrieval and Canadian birding news on the main page. In a way, it's also eBird Version 3, since it has features not yet available on the regular eBird site (www.ebird.org), including the option of reporting age

and sex data and providing comments on individual sightings. Behind the scenes, Bird Studies Canada will be working with Cornell to improve Canadian data entry and output. If you've already entered data on eBird, great!—data entered through eBird Canada will be visible from the main eBird page and vice versa.

Data Entry: Entering bird sightings is easy. You first have to tell eBird where you went birding. That can be done by either zooming in on a map then clicking on the spot, or by entering coordinates obtained from a map or a GPS unit. Once you've entered the coordinates for a certain location, you don't have to do it again—you can simply select it from a list next time around. The next step is indicating what effort you put into birding at that location—it could be casual observations, stationary counts, travelling counts or intensive area surveys. These effort data allow eBird to take account of changing levels of effort when calculating species abundance patterns. Finally, you're presented with a checklist, where you can fill in numbers (or just X's if you haven't kept track of numbers) beside each species seen. The checklist is derived from your location and the time of year, so you don't have to wade through every species in North America.

If you already enter your bird sightings into a program such as AviSys, Excel or Access (or any database) please get in touch with me about the new bulk upload tool! You won't have to enter all that data again. I've already uploaded several large databases from individuals as well as club programs such as the Squamish Estuary Conservation Society and the Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory.



Exploring the Database: You can look at eBird data in a multitude of ways. If you ask for data from one species—Bald Eagle for instance—you’ll quickly see a map of North America showing where all Bald Eagle sightings have come from. And each dot is shaded to show how often Bald Eagles are seen there. You can then click on various tabs to look at the frequency of Bald Eagle sightings throughout the year, the maximum numbers, average numbers, etc. If you are interested only in Bald Eagle sightings from BC, you can restrict your query to BC (or any other state, province, or location). You can also restrict the mapping function to any time of year, so you can find out if Bald Eagles move around in different seasons. If you’re interested in all the birds from a particular location—for instance Clover Point—you can easily generate a checklist from that “Birding Hotspot” and see what species have been seen there and how often they are seen through the year (remember—this checklist is generated from eBird data, so if there isn’t much data from your

favourite birding spots it’s up to you to enter some!). If you have a place you often record bird sightings from, e.g. your backyard, you can generate a bar-graph checklist for that site as well. Or you can get checklists from any bird hotspot, province, state or country.

And remember—eBird will keep track of your personal lists as well. On “My eBird” you can quickly see how many species you’ve reported on your “lifelist”, or from any country or province, in your life or in any year. You can print out all those lists, complete with where and when you first reported each species.

Quality Control: The same program that creates the checklists you use for data entry (in BC these are separated by coast and interior) also flags records that exceed set limits. So if you report a Northern Wheatear in any month, 12 Wilson’s Warblers in February or a Snowy Owl in July, the program will ask you if you’re sure you haven’t made a typographical error. If you haven’t, it will congratulate you on your sighting, but flag it for scrutiny by a regional

editor. The editor will likely contact you to get details on the sighting to make sure it is legitimate before allowing it to be “visible” through the public website.

In preparing for the possibility of launching eBird Canada, I entered a few year’s data from my notebooks, bulk uploaded 10 more years worth, and admit that I’m thoroughly hooked on the program. It’s great fun looking at the bar-graph checklist for my yard as well as the lists of birds I’ve seen on trips to more exotic locales. The data entry wasn’t all that onerous—it even brought back many pleasant memories of exciting birding adventures and good times in the field with friends.

If you have any questions or comments about eBird, please get in touch with me. I think you’ll enjoy this program!

Dick Cannings

S11 C96 RR1
Naramata, BC V0H 1N0
250-496-4049
dickcannings@shaw.ca

eBird Canada

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Birding News and Features
[Welcome to eBird Canada!](#)
This is eBird Canada, the web-based program where your bird sightings make a difference! Bird Studies Canada has teamed up with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to create a Canadian gateway to the eBird database, featuring bilingual data entry and retrieval, and the latest Canadian birding news. Sightings entered through this website will go into the main eBird database, so will be visible through all other eBird portals. And conversely, you can explore all the eBird data from eBird Canada. If you'd like to find out more, click the image at right. Photo: Varied Thrush / Ralph Hodken.

CHECKLIST TOTALS:
number of eBird checklists from each province and territory as of 26 October, 2006

- Alberta — 1943
- British Columbia — 17031
- Manitoba — 1326
- New Brunswick — 615
- Newfoundland & Labrador — 532
- Northwest Territories — 2508
- Nova Scotia — 3892
- Nunavut — 2818
- Ontario — 5685
- Prince Edward Island — 423
- Quebec — 2289
- Saskatchewan — 948
- Yukon — 468

British Columbia Bird Sightings: Spring 2006

March had a cool first half and a milder second with minimal precipitation except over the Northeast and along parts of the coast. April was unsettled and showery the first half with a drier ending. May started cool and unsettled but soon turned summery. This lasted until the final week when the ridge of high pressure crashed. The Southeastern corner got the worst of it during this time as rapid mountain snowmelt combined with heavy rain leading to widespread lowland flooding. The last few days of the period saw a cold front descend from the Yukon bringing a return to winter for the northern fringe of British Columbia, much to the peril of early nesters.

Abbreviations and symbols: m.obs.: many observers; ph.: photographed;

Loons through Shorebirds

A Ross's Goose, seen on both sides of the British Columbia/Alaska border, at Hyder, was with 106 Snow Geese 12-13 May (ph. LD) as it was kept to the periphery of the flock. A **Bewick's Swan** remained in Delta to 25 Mar (ph. CCl, WA). A King Eider was seen from the tip of the Iona South Jetty among a flock of scoters 14 Apr (GP). Rare in spring in the interior, an imm. Yellow-billed Loon and a moulting Pacific Loon were on Kalamalka L. 17 Mar (CS), holdovers from the winter. A late Yellow-billed Loon was near Robson Bight (famous for its attraction to Killer Whales) 8 May (GLM). A single adult Clark's Grebe was a surprise find in Kelowna at the mouth of Mission Creek 8 May (CC). The best concentration of migrating American White Pelicans was from Skaha L. Penticton 21 Apr when 85 touched down (BH). A Brown Pelican was discovered in the Alert Bay municipal dock 26 May (JT) and was behaving as though it was sick/injured while a flock of 22 off Lennard I. near Tofino was the largest reported 26 May (IC). Double-crested Cormorants were found in very small numbers in the southern interior with a peak of 3 flying away from the Grant Island gull colony 19 May (DGC, EN). As usual, a few Great Egrets were located in the south with singles: seen flying n. over Oliver 14 May (BL); and at Cowichan Bay 6 May (DM). The only report of White-faced Ibis involved a sizeable flock of 10 at Elizabeth Lake 23 May (DN).

An astounding sight of **500** Bald Eagles occurred when a few birders visited a site that produces garden mulch with fish entrails near Beaver Cove, n. Vancouver I. (GLM, DMO) when they returned 7 May to this location there were in excess of **700** eagles present. One alder tree snapped as 20 Bald Eagles perched in it and another 30 were dispersed from its base as the tree snapped. Swainson's Hawks, away from their southern interior haunts included singles: over Mount Douglas, Victoria, 3 May (RTo); and very rarely seen this far north and west in the province, a single was at Contact Creek 20 May (RD, BF). Very rare in spring migration in the interior, a Black-bellied Plover was at Stuart Lake 27-28 May (GL, RR). The trend of early arriving northbound shorebirds

on the outer coast continued this spring with a Pacific Golden-Plover at the Long Beach Golf Course 27 Apr (AD); 4 Greater Yellowlegs in Tofino 31 Mar (RC); 3 Marbled Godwits there 4 Apr (AD); and 15 Short-billed Dowitchers 5 Apr (GB). The only spring report of Bar-tailed Godwit came from the north of Vancouver I. with a single at the Quatse Estuary in Port Hardy 24 Apr (GLM). Rare in spring in the interior, a Sanderling was at the mouth of Mission Creek, Kelowna 6-7 May (RyT).

Gulls through Finches

A visit to the Grant Island gull colony (host to 4 species of nesting gulls) furnished a record-early egg-laying date of 13 Apr for California Gull and 14 Apr for Ring-billed Gull (DGC, EN). While Iceland Gulls can be found anytime from Nov through Apr, there is often an increase in sightings during their northward movement in Mar/Apr as evidenced by the single adults: in a large gull flock in Mud Bay, Kelowna 4 Mar (RyT, CC); and at Little River, e. coast of Vancouver I., 7 Apr (m.obs.). Vernon's **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was again relocated at the mouth of Vernon Creek 4 Mar (BP), a holdover from winter. Adding to the winter influx of coastal Slaty-backed Gulls, a near ad. Slaty-backed Gull was at Kye Bay, Comox 12 Mar (ph. JJ) then later found at Qualicum Beach 17-20 Mar (m.obs.), another ad. at Willow Point, Campbell River 17 Mar (JJ) and a 3rd winter SBGU at Little Qualicum Estuary 22 Mar– 2 Apr (ph. GLM, et. al.). Very rare in the province away from the Creston Valley, a single Forster's Tern was at Swan Lake, Vernon 27 May (RyT, TF). Eurasian Collared-Doves are resident in Cawston but in recent years they have been observed from as far away as Kelowna and Whistler. It is not known whether these individuals are indeed strays from the Cawston population or whether some of them are indeed escapes or from another source farther south. One individual was in West Sechelt (m.obs.) another was in Comox that was with a flock of Band-tailed Pigeons 16 May (ph. MJ) another was in Kelowna 26 Apr and 7 May (MB, JA).

Kamloops birders were surprised by a late lingering



Snowy Owl 9– 29 Apr (fide RH), which furnished a first Apr record for the Kamloops area, and possibly the same bird was later found in the Lac du Bois area n. of Kamloops 29 May (KW). At least 3 Snowy Owls also remained late along the Boundary Bay dyke to 10 Apr (CP) and a single remained at Sea Island to 11 May (MMN). Another lingering Snowy was in the Highland Valley near Kamloops 22 May (fide RH). Black Swifts can be found in large migrating flocks in late May just ahead of stormy weather. On just such an occasion, a record-breaking **1,100** were tallied while feeding over Swan L., Vernon 22 May (DGC, DB). A Calliope Hummingbird, very rare along the coast, furnished a 6th Victoria area record 23 May (RTo) at Mount Newton. A Black Phoebe was discovered 28 Apr at a pond on the campus of Trinity Western University, Langley († SO, ph. MW et. al.) furnishing a 6th provincial record. An Eastern Phoebe was at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory in Metchosin 7 May (GD), a first record for the Victoria area. Say's Phoebes are annual spring visitors to the south coast in late Apr early May, and they were most prevalent this spring with at least 3 individuals found, most significant was the single, found very early at Chesterman Beach 20 Mar (AD) for a 2nd record for the west coast of Vancouver I. An Ash-throated Flycatcher furnished a 3rd RPBO record 24 May (GD). Record-early by nearly a full month, an Eastern Kingbird was found along the Grey Canal Trail in Vernon 8 Apr (CG). Clark's Nutcracker, very rare on the island, one was in a trailer park in Port Alberni 22 Mar (RM). A very early Barn Swallow was with a few Violet-green Swallows in Kelowna 18 Mar (RyT). A male Western Bluebird was investigating a nesting box in Mackenzie, where casual 15 May (ph..VL).

For some unknown reason, there was an unprecedented spring coastal invasion of both Mountain Bluebirds and Townsend's Solitaires with most sightings from Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. A Northern Mockingbird was at Carmanah Point Lightstation 31 May (ph. JE), another was in Osoyoos 2 May (CS). Sage Thrashers returned to the south Okanagan again this spring with the first report of a singing male at White Lake 19 May (CC), with another located at Chopaka 27 May (CC) and once again the species was confirmed breeding with a nest found and two young at Chopaka 30 May (Russell Cannings). Nashville Warbler, rare along the coast, a male was singing 11 May in Victoria (RTo). Very rare in the province, a Hermit Warbler was found on Mt. Tolmie (a well-known vagrant trap) in Victoria 21 May (Bryan Gates et. al.) 2nd record for the Victoria area. Single Palm Warblers were: at Radar L., Dawson Creek, 15 May (Bert Frenz et. al.); and at Steamboat 18 May (Terry Sisson,

Bill Taylor). Arriving rather early, a Yellow-breasted Chat was at one of its preferred s. Okanagan spots 7 May (RC) along famed Rd. 22, Oliver. An extremely early, or possibly a wintering Vesper Sparrow was in Kelowna 13 Mar (CC, DW, NK). Rare on Vancouver Island (aside from the few that are known to nest at the Nanaimo Airport) a single Vesper Sparrow was in Duncan 17 Apr (AT) and most out of place, a single was on the Long Beach Golf Course 21 Apr (AD). A Black-throated Sparrow, casual in the province, arrived with Savannah Sparrows and was later heard singing 27–28 Apr in Gibson's (ph. AS et. al.). A wintering Harris's Sparrow remained rather late at a feeder near Kelowna to 25 Apr (TF). A Black-headed Grosbeak furnished a first record for New Hazelton 13 May (RS) and one of the most northerly records in the province. A second-year Painted Bunting 21 Mar– 4 Apr (JG et. al.) in Brentwood Bay, Victoria, came to a feeder. Considering the date, this individual was likely wintering nearby.

A male Dickcissel was at Jordan R. 27-28 May, a highlight of the Victoria Natural History Society field trip (GT, MR. et. al.). The province's best-known and most reliable Bobolink colony contained 20 males 22 May (DGC, DB). Casual away from the Peace R. area, a Common Grackle was in Tofino 31 Mar (AD). A male Bullock's Oriole made a brief appearance in Prince George north of its southern interior breeding range 17 May (m.obs.). Baltimore Oriole, a bird of the Peace R. area, was well away from its summer haunts, strayed to Jordan R. 30 May (RTo). Duncan's Brambling remained until 18 Mar (GeD, ph. DM) for a 6th Victoria area record. Remarkably late, a singing Common Redpoll was in Kelowna 7 May (CC et. al.) especially when considering their relative absence this winter. Cassin's Finches were unusually prevalent in the central interior with a mid-Mar influx with singles in: Prince George 16 Mar (JB, et. al.); Fort St. James 19 Mar (RR); among others. Following a winter of absence, Evening Grosbeaks began returning in very small numbers 16 Apr, Vernon (PB).

Compiled by Donald G. Cecile

7995 Wilson-Jackson Rd., Vernon, British Columbia V1B 3N5 (dcecile@telus.net)

Contributors (subregional editors in bold-face):

David Allinson (Victoria), Walter Amman, James Anderson, **Cathy Antoniazzi** (c. interior), Peter Blokker, **Jack Bowling** (weather summary), Derek Bullard, Margaret Bryan, George Bradd, **Richard J. Cannings** (s. Okanagan), Russell Cannings, Colin Clasen, Iain Colquhoun, Ralph Crombie, Georgia Darbyshire, Gabriel



David, **Gary S. Davidson** (Kootenays), Luke DeCicco, Ray Delong, **Adrian Dorst** (Tofino-Ucluelet), Jerry Etzkorn, Trevor Forder, Bert Frenz, Jeremy Gatten, Calvin Gehlen, Bob Handfield, Rick Howie, Jukka Jantunen, Malcolm Jolly, Nancy Krueger, Vi Lambie, Barry Lancaster, Gale Lutkehaus, Derrick Marven, Martin McNicholl, Donna Monty, Guy L. Monty, Richard Mooney, Erin Nelson,

Dean Nicholson, Stan Olson, Carlo Pavan, Brent Phillips, **Mark Phinney** (Peace River), Guy Pickavance, **Phil Ranson** (Cariboo), Randy Rawluk, Mary Robichaud, Chris Siddle, Ryan Tomlinson, **Rick Toochin** (Vancouver), Arnold Skei, Ray Sturney, Gail T., Jared Towers, Anton Turner, Karen Willies, Don Wilson, Mark Wynja.

B.C. CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DETAILS, 2004/05

This listing of Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) is published as a service to BCFO members who would like to take part in CBCs in their local area or in nearby areas. It includes the organizer(s) name and contact information plus the scheduled date. This information also appears on the BCFO website courtesy of webmaster Kevin Slagboom.

A DNA indicates that the contact information is valid but the Date was Not Available at press time. Check with the area organizers for any late-breaking changes.

compiled by *Marilyn and Andy Buhler*

Count Name / Location	Date	Coordinator	Telephone	e-mail
Abbotsford / Mission	Dec 29	Lynn Miller	604-826-3839	lynnmelvinmiller@hotmail.com
Apex-Hedley	Dec 15	Eva Durance	250-492-0158	edurance@vip.net
Ashcroft	Dec 24	Karl Ricker Bert Parke	604-938-1107 250-523-9935	bparke@ocis.net
Bamfield	Dec 16	Anne Stewart	250-728-3301	astewart@bms.bc.ca
Bridesville	Jan 1 2007	Doug Brown	250-495-6164	douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca
Bridge Lake	Dec 30	Wendy Marshall	250-593-2327	marshalls@bcinternet.net
Burns Lake / Francois Lake	Dec 30	Judith Kleger	250-695-6585	jude@cyber-solutions.ca
Campbell River	Dec 30	Ed Silkens	250-286-1495	esilkens@oberon.ark.com
Cawston	Dec 31	Doug Brown	250-495-6164	douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca
Chilliwack	Dec 16	Denis Knopp	604-858-5141	bcwild@uniserve.com
Comox	Dec 17	Art Morgan	250-335-0565	canbirdinbc@aol.com
Cranbrook	Dec 17	Greg Ross	250-489-2566	gross@shaw.ca
Creston	Dec 27	Sharon Laughlin	250-428-7289	slscat@xplornet.com
D'Arcy / Devine	Dec 19	Dan Cummings	604-452-3453	
Dawson Creek	Jan 2, 2007	Mark Phinney	250-843-2318	Mark.Phinney@lpcorp.com
Deep Bay	Dec 28	Art Morgan	250-335-0565	canbirdinbc@aol.com
Duncan	Jan 1, 2007	Derrick Marven	250-748-8504	marven@shaw.ca
Fauquier	Dec 17	Ruth Bumpus	250-269-7481	
Fernie	Dec 16	Bob Livsey	250-423-6699	naturebob@telus.net
Galiano Island / North Saltsping	Dec 17	Mike Hoebel	250-539-2003	mhoebel@telus.net
Golden	Dec 27	Ellen Zimmerman	250-348-2225	ellenzim@rockies.net
Harrison	Dec 30	Denis Knopp	604-858-5141	bcwild@uniserve.com
Hat Creek	Dec 17	Ken Wright	250-571-5557	kengwright@telus.net
Kamloops	Dec 17	Rick Howie	250-578-7542	r.howie@shaw.ca
Kaslo	Dec 30	Dirk Pidcock	250-353-7539	edensong@netidea.com
Kelowna	Dec 16	Chris Charlesworth	250-718-0335	c_charlesworth23@hotmail.com
Kimberley	Dec 30	Greg Ross	250-489-2566	gsross@shaw.ca
Kingfisher	Jan 4, 2007	Jan Lacko	250-838-6882	j_lacko@hotmail.com
Kitimat	Dec 16	April MacLeod	250-632-3977	aprilmac@monarch.net
Ladner	Dec 23	Jude Grass	604-538-8774	judegrass@shaw.ca



Count Name / Location	Date	Coordinator	Telephone	e-mail
Lardeau	Dec 27	Gail Spitler	250-366-4601	spitler@direct.ca
Lasqueti Island	Dec 30	Sheila Ray		sheilara@siland.net
Lillooet	Dec 26	Ken Wright Ian Routley	250-571-5557 250-256-4062	kengwright@telus.net
Little River / Powell River ferry	Dec 29	Guy Monty		guylmonty@hotmail.com
Logan Lake	Dec 22	Bert Parke Karl Ricker	250-523-9935 604-938-1107	bparke@ocis.net
Lower Howe Sound (West Van; Bowen, Gambier, Boyer, Keats & Paisely Islands)	Dec 28	Loys Maingon	604-886-3854	maingon@uniserve.com
McBride	Dec 17	Elsie Stanley	250-569-2596	stanley8@telus.net
Masset	Dec 16	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	delkatla@island.net
Mayne Island	Dec 16	Michael Dunn	250-539-5745	
Merritt	DNA	Wayne Weber	604-597-7201	contopus@telus.net
Nakusp	Jan 6, 2007	Gary Davidson		gsd37@yahoo.ca
Nanaimo	Dec 27	Bill Merilees Colin Bartlett	250-758-1801 250-390-3669(w)	bmerilees@hotmail.com --
Nanoose Bay	Dec 15	Rhys Harrison	250-468-5466	rhys Harrison@shaw.ca
Narcosli	Dec 16	Tracy Bond	250-992-2295	tbond@quesnelbc.com
Nelson	DNA	Rita Wege	250-354-1685	rwege@telus.net
Oliver - Osoyoos	Dec 30	Doug Brown	250-495-6164	douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca
Parksville / Qualicum Beach	Dec 17	Sandra Gray	250-248-5565	saninerr@shaw.ca
Pemberton / Mt. Currie	Dec 15	Hugh Naylor	604-894-6412	
Pender Harbour	Dec 20	Tony Greenfield	604-885-5539	greenfieldtony@hotmail.com
Pender Islands	Dec 16	Michael Pitt	250-629-6850	
Penticton	Dec 17	Dick Cannings	250-496-4049	dickcannings@shaw.ca
Pitt Meadows	Dec 17	Michael Buckingham	604-467-4901	mbucky@lightspeed.ca
Port Alberni	Dec 30	Sandy McRuer	250-723-5436	smcruer@shaw.ca
Port Clements	Dec 29	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	delkatla@island.net
Prince George	Dec 17	Cathy Antoniazzi	250-562-2845	canton@pgonline.com
Prince Rupert	DNA	Robin Weber	250-624 3207(w)	rweber@citytel.net
Princeton	Dec 18	Dick Cannings	250-496-4049	dickcannings@shaw.ca
Queen Charlotte City	Dec 17	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	delkatla@island.net
Quesnel	Dec 30	Adrian Leather		ade016@quesnelbc.com
Revelstoke	Dec 16	George Winingder	250-837-3655	geowin@telus.net
Rose Spit	Dec 13	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	delkatla@island.net
Salmon Arm	Dec 17	Ted Hillary	250-832-4755	thillary@sunwave.net
Saltspring Island	Dec 17	Gilbert Schultz	250-537-9469	gschultz@saltspring.com
Sandspit	Dec 17	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	delkatla@island.net
South Saltspring Island / Sidney	Dec 17	Ann Nightingale	250-652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
Saturna Island	Dec. 16	Ilka A. Olsen	250-539-9920	aiolsen@telus.net
Shuswap Lake Park	Dec 15	Rick Howie	250-578-7542	r.howie@shaw.ca
Skidegate Inlet	Dec 17	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	peter@birds sanctuary.org
Smithers	Dec 30	Jane Hoek	250-846-9231	4139hija@bulkley.net
Sooke	Dec 23	Denise Gubersky	250-642-3996	dgubersky@telus.net
Squamish	Dec 17	Grant & Marcia Danielson	604-898-9420	myd123@telus.net
Sunshine Coast	Dec 16	Tony Greenfield	604-885-5539	greenfieldtony@hotmail.com
Terrace	Dec 26	Diane Weismiller	250-635-6984	dweismiller@telus.net
Tlell	Dec 30	Peter Hamel	250-626-3585	delkatla@island.net
Vancouver	Dec 17	Adrian Grant Duff	604-263-7957	a-grantduff@shaw.ca
Vaseaux Lake	Dec 20	Dick Cannings	250-496-4049	dickcannings@shaw.ca

Count Name / Location	Date	Coordinator	Telephone	e-mail
Whistler	Dec 14	Karl Ricker Michael Thompson	604-938-1107 604-932-5010	redpath@telus.net
White Rock & Surrey (Langley)	Dec 30	Viveka Ohman	604-531-3401	ohmanv@hotmail.com
Williams Lake	Dec 17	Phil Ranson	250-398-7110	ranson1@telus.net
Swan and Eagle survey	Jan 14	Rick Howie	250-578-7542	r.howie@shaw.ca

South of the border: further information on the Washington Ornithological Society web site (<http://www.wos.org>)

Bellingham	Dec 17	Joe Meche	360-738-0641	joemeche@aol.com
Cle Elum	Dec 14	Michael Hobbs		birdmarymoor@verizon.net
Padilla Bay	Dec 30	Steve Aslanian	360-435-9493	aslanian@whidbey.net
San Juan Islands	Dec 16	Barb Jensen	360-378-3068	skylark@rockisland.com
Seattle	Dec 30	Seattle Audubon Society	206-523-8243 ext 80	adams@seattleaudubon.org
Sequim / Dungeness	Dec 18	Bob Boekelheide	360-681-4076	rivercenter@olympus.net
Tacoma	Dec 16	Faye McAdams	253-942-9233	zest4parus@hotmail.com
Toppenish NWR	Dec 17	Andy Stepniewski	509-877-6639	steppie@nwinfo.net

BIRD-LISTERS' CORNER

The "Listing Report Form" has only one major change from last year's-- the addition of a category for the Yukon Territory, with a threshold of 100 species. This won't help me (my Yukon list is only 87 species!), but I know that several of you have Yukon lists well above 100. Please remember that the threshold for the ABA area list is now 400 species, not 500. (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 received no updates for list totals for local areas. If any of you are aware of updated checklists that have been published in the last year, please let me know or better still, send me a copy.

Please report your totals as of December 31, 2006. The deadline for reporting list totals to me is January 31, 2007. 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. 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



Authors in this Issue

Andy Buhler

Andy Buhler started birding on the Sunshine Coast under the tutelage of Tony Greenfield. Shortly after he moved to Sechelt Andy saw that there was a Christmas Bird Count. That sounded like an intriguing event: after one count both he and his wife were hooked. CBCs led to varied involvement in the Sechelt Marsh Protective Society. Later, "trips to find birds" really got us travelling. We both hope to break 600 next year if the bird gods cooperate. After a move to Vancouver we joined BCFO in its inaugural year and, as many members know, Andy soon became, with the support and able assistance of Marilyn, the editor of *British Columbia Field Ornithologist* and its later incarnation into *BC Birding*. Joining BCFO really involved us in the birding community and BCFO membership has allowed us continued pleasures in our retirement in Vernon. The bird surveys we are currently involved with should help to set the stage for enhanced bird habitat and will create opportunities for birders new and old to gain a greater appreciation of birds and their environments.

Dick Cannings

Dick Cannings was born and raised in the Okanagan, in a family keenly interested in natural history. This early involvement in birds, bugs and plants led him to a university education in zoology, including a BSc degree from the University of British Columbia and a MSc from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Dick was Curator of the Cowan Vertebrate Museum at the University of British Columbia and now works half-time for Bird Studies Canada, coordinating eBird Canada, Canadian Christmas Bird Counts and the British Columbia-Yukon Owl Survey. He has written a number of books and is also the bird co-chair of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Tony Greenfield

In a prior lifetime lasting 35 years, Tony was a reforestation contractor and his company planted 80,000,000 trees in BC & Alberta. Since 2003 he has been operating Whiskeyjack Nature Tours and guiding nature based tours to Arizona, Utah, British Columbia, Yukon and Panama. Tony is a current director of BCFO and a past president 1996-2000, and is president of the Sunshine Coast Natural History Society. He has been studying the birdlife of the Sunshine Coast since 1971 and has completed a book on the waterfalls of British Columbia.

Les Gyug

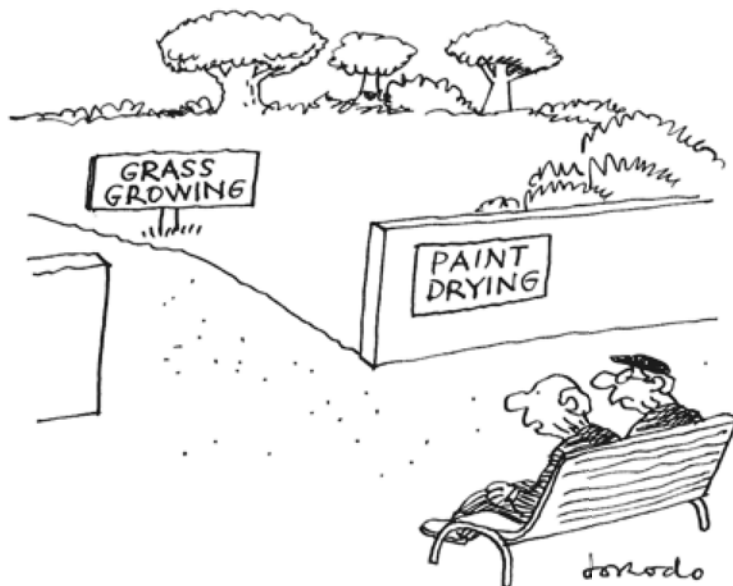
Les has lived in the Okanagan for the past 19 years, and has worked as a biologist in B.C. for the past 25 years, the last 15 as a self-employed consultant. He currently spends most of his work time on species at risk, particularly those likely to be affected by timber harvesting.

Gwen Nicol

Gwen Nicol began birding about twelve years ago. She resides in Rossland but, like the birds, heads south for the winter.

John Vooy's

John Vooy's is a birder living in Abbotsford. He teaches at Columbia Bible College and hopes to retire in a year or so (more time to bird!). John is a Director with BCFO. He restarted his birding, an activity he was involved in during his 'teens and early twenties, in 2000, as a millennial project. He is well on the way to reaching 600 ABA area birds (next Spring in Texas!).



"It beats anything on telly."

From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.



BIRDING IN TAIWAN

Collared Bush Robin, Formosan Whistling-Thrush, Steere's Liocichla, Taiwan Bar-wing, 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 sub-species such as Black-browed Barbet and [Taiwan] Hwamei. Other birds include Malayan Night-Heron, Pheasant-tailed Jacana and Collared Finchbill. Fairy Pitta is present only during the breeding season. We visit Lanyu Island with 6 bird specialties of its own, including an endemic subspecies of Ryukyu Scops-Owl. In November, we see the globally threatened Black-faced Spoonbill which winters in the Tsengwen Estuary.

Want to see one of the rarest birds in the world? Chinese Crested (Matsu) Tern, *Sterna bernsteini* nests in very small numbers in the tern reserve in the Matsu Archipelago.

NEXT TRIPS:

2007: May 7~20: Endemics, Fairy Pitta, Lanyu Island

July 18~20: Chinese Crested (Matsu) Tern ; **July 21~25:** Extension for endemics

November 5~18: Endemics, Black-faced Spoonbill, Lanyu Island

Price: 14 days: From Vancouver : CAD\$5100 (sharing); CAD\$5600 (single)

13 days: From Taipei, Taiwan : CAD\$4000 (sharing); CAD\$4500 (single)

July, 8 days: Contact us for details and price

Early Booking Discount: Register at least 60 days before tour start date; get 5% off tour price.

Group Size: 6~10, with 2 leaders, Simon Liao and Jo Ann MacKenzie

CONTACT:

Jo Ann MacKenzie Tel: 604-538-1676
15341 – 21 Avenue, Surrey, BC, V4A 6A8, Canada
Email: j.a.mackenzie@telus.net

Simon Liao in Taiwan
Email: birdsimon0624@yahoo.com.tw

Mikado Pheasants
Photo: 黃文政

Good birds, Good food, Good friends!



INTERNATIONAL TAIWAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION

<http://www.birdingintaiwan.com>

