

BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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White Backs

Birding and Beyond in Coastal Kenya

Some time ago my father-in-law gave me a drawing. I don't recall the occasion, but the images immediately caught my attention. The drawing is of a flock of ducks lifting off from a sparsely-treed landscape. The sketch is titled "White Backs." I eventually consulted Madge and Burn's waterfowl guide and discovered that my white backs came from Africa. The ducks found a home in my office at the university, and whenever visitors asked about them I retold the story and remarked on the unlikelihood of ever seeing these creatures "in the flesh."

Yet last April found us on a flight headed for Kenya. Together with a small group from A Rocha Canada my wife Jenny and I were travelling to an international conference in the coastal town of Watamu, situated between Malindi & and Mombasa. Delegates from twenty-one

please see Kenya, page 7



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

BCFO objectives include fostering cooperation between amateur and professional ornithologists, promoting cooperative bird surveys and research projects, and supporting conservation organizations in their efforts to preserve birds and their habitats.

Since November, 2003, BCFO has maintained an official partnership with the Changhwa Wild Bird Society, Changhwa, Taiwan.

Membership Dues

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

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

Membership Dues:

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

Memberships are for the calendar year.

Newsletter Submissions

Send material for publication in any format to the editor. Submissions may include bird finding information for our "Site Guide" series and any articles about birding experiences, preferably but not necessarily in British Columbia. A brief biographical sketch (5--100 words) should accompany the article if the editor does not have a recent version or you wish to change it.

Please send newsletter submissions to

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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 appearance in mid-October of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Cawston stirred-up a rather dull autumn birding season. Carloads of birders flocked to see the lone bird and for most of them it performed admirably. The stampede led one birder to try to sell his carbon credits to those who had burnt liters and liters to get to Cawston. I was there on a windy, rainy and cold October 18 but failed to see the Cuckoo. Ten minutes after our carload left the bird was spotted! Some days you can't win!!

The next few weeks were some consolation for missing the Cawston Cuckoo when I saw Black-winged Stilts in Bangkok, Black Kites in Calcutta, Purple Sunbird in Darjeeling, Scarlet Minivets in Sikkim and White-bellied Herons in Bhutan. My species total for the trip was 189 and most were "lifers". I was surprised to see on the Indian subcontinent a number of species that I had seen in North America or Europe; such as Eurasian Wigeon, Pochard, Common Merganser, Northern Harrier, Common Kingfisher, Barn Swallow, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Our birding was principally in western Bhutan, where we were mainly around 2120 m (7000') elevation but sometimes were above 3640 m (12000'). The vegetation varied with the elevation and aspect. But getting off the road to chase-down birds was difficult as the roads follow the contours of steep hillsides, i.e., it was straight up or straight down! The wild cherries were full of pink blooms and a number of other plants were blooming, including several tree orchids, so it may be that October is spring to them, despite the fact that apples and mandarins were being picked! In between monasteries, dzongs (fortresses) and shopping the group in two weeks tallied 156 species. The Bhutanese birding expert accompanying us was impressed by the total for what he considered winter birding. Spring birding trips to the area typically see 250-270 species. I am afraid we rather corrupted the chap because after a week or so he was smilingly referring to the numerous Rufous Sibilas and Hodgson's Redstarts as

"trash birds". A poll of our group for the "best bird" had opinions as varied as the number of birders. However, getting "to-die-for" looks at a group of three Hoopoes was highly ranked as was the Fire-tailed Myzornis, a small but brightly coloured, active bird of oak forests. The Ibisbill, a chicken-sized bird, with a long, down-curved, red bill and long, lavender legs, is a sight that won't soon be forgotten. The sole Black Stork and the Black-necked Cranes got votes. Several of us thought the White-bellied Herons *Ardea insignis* were the cream-of-the-crop. It is not a brilliantly coloured bird and they kinda stand around looking in the water for minutes on end but they are one of the most endangered bird species in the world. The Worldwide population is estimated to be nearly 200 and 26 have been tallied in Bhutan. When we spotted five in one day several of us thought that was Awesome!

At the Black-necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*, throng throng karm or the heavenly birds) festival in the wide, glacial, alpine wetland of the Phobjikha valley (162 km², \pm 2900 m (9500') elev.) there were speeches and singing and dances. Although there was lots of entertainment and stalls selling everything from vegetables and beetle-nut packets to barbie dolls, the purpose of the festival is to convince the local farmers that it is in their interest to protect the cranes. Loss and degradation of habitat in the wintering areas are the main threats to the cranes, where wetlands are being altered by draining, dam construction and grazing. About 150 had arrived for the winter, with another 200 expected, from their nesting sites over the Himalayas in Tibet. This is the largest concentration in Bhutan. We arrived in the valley after dark. It was a clear, cold (below freezing) evening and we stayed close to the bonfire. I was apprehensive about keeping warm overnight in a tent. However, with a flannel-wrapped hot-water bottle, and sleeping bags and mats that are used on high elevation treks, I was amazingly warm, until it was time to get up!!! During the night the cranes called on-and-off and the sky was

brilliant with thousands of stars. Next morning we discovered that our camp was in the middle of a feeding area for \pm 300 Eurasian Skylarks. A couple of Northern Harriers quartered across the marshy valley bottom and cranes started moving from roosting sites to feeding areas. Wonderful to see and hear these magnificent birds.

The BCFO directors met via conference call on October 16 and dealt with a number of items. For example, 1) BC Breed Bird Atlas committee: Tony replaces Jude as BCFO's alternate on the committee.

2) Mailing costs: Ted Goshuluk pointed out that costs of mailing the journal and newsletters to some foreign address is more than the annual dues. Some options included posting pdf file of newsletters and a postal surcharge for foreign addresses.

3) Membership coordinator: Rita Wege wishes to pass the job on. See the advertisement in this issue.

4) Bird checklist: The Birds of British Columbia checklist continues to be popular. Links between the checklist committee and a rare birds records committee were discussed.

Recently a letter arrived from Bird Studies Canada. It dealt mainly with their Baillie Birdathon program and we were pleasantly surprised to find that some Birdathon participants had designated BCFO as their "partner". The result being BCFO received a portion of their pledges. Thank you to those who "partnered" with BCFO! Here's hoping more of you will participate in the Baillie Birdathon and consider naming BCFO as a "partner".

The directors are planning to meet mid-February. If you have any comments, items for discussion or suggestions that would be a good time to get them before the directors as we will be working face-to-face (which I prefer to conference calls).

Jim Ginns, 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/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

Audubon'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

I entered the forest later than I had hoped, having spent more time than anticipated readying *BC Birding* for its December release. Whatever light shone down from the moon and stars was dull, black and grey by the time it reached the forest floor through the thick blanket of low cloud and fog. All contrast was washed out of the landscape like dye from my new warm and fashionably cheap shirt from China. I relied on my headlamp with its dim red light and flashlight with red cellophane taped over its end. About 45 minutes into my walk, following the intermittent pink flagging tape — now dark grey and odd-red, like everything else before me — with which I had marked the trail about a week ago in daylight, I reached the edge of the cliff at the top of the gully. I could hear the faint trickle of the creek below. I uncoiled the rope and threw it over the edge. It sunk out of sight like a steel cable in a river of thick, black oil. I cinched my pack straps and slowly lowered myself over the edge. In a way it was much easier descending in the blackness because I couldn't see how far I had to fall or how far I had to climb up again. The regular knots and loops held my feet and provided grips for my hands. After five minutes I thought I should be near the bottom. In an instant a wave of panic washed over me and I hurriedly and unwisely rushed my movements, hand under hand and feet scrambling for a hold on the flailing rope. I hit the ground hard, lost my balance and fell back under the weight of the pack which, fortunately, cushioned my fall.

I shot up, re-adjusted my pack and headlamp and readied the flashlight for the final walk amongst the rocks and large roots along the creek towards the cave. I felt embarrassed as though having performed this display of clumsiness before a crowd of nimble gymnasts who remained silent and invisible in the surrounding blackness. A partial whinny of a Varied Thrush broke the silence as I walked along the creek. The creek sound was comforting but also annoying and unnerving in some spots as it drowned out hopes of hearing an owl or the

approach of a large, hungry predator. I was somewhat relieved to reach the cave and hear the familiar grumbling, half-muttered cussing, and the muffled, comforting sounds of *Late Night with Norris Bick* from old CBC recordings that played off the shadows of the moss-strewn walls flickering in the light of a distant candle.

The Editor Bird sat hunched over his desk, his long serrated bill turned askew, adjusted side to side as he alternated reading with one eye then the other.

"You are late."

"Yes," I said.

He stared at me through the large dirty spectacles that rested precariously atop his wrinkled cere and flashed his large talons. I threw him a book.

"Webster's!" he belted out. "Rubbish."

He hopped up from his pine perch and a cloud of dust and invertebrate vermin hovered momentarily around him like some vile aura, before settling once again amongst his tattered feathers.

"Just joking," I said, and removed the prize from my pack. "This is for you."

"The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English," Editor Bird read from the cover of the book I held before him.

"First edition, 1911," I said.

Editor Bird chirped and squeaked. He flapped his wings once and I ran for cover from the disease-cloud.

"You have done well. You may take my picture." Editor Bird's beak and dim eyes intoned a smile.

I retreated to the entrance of the cave slightly ahead of Editor Bird who walked awkwardly behind me. Editor Bird twirled around at the entrance of the cave and scratched the ground rapidly. His feathers began to glow. I took many pictures. He stopped suddenly.

"Now, be off," he commanded, "I've got much editing to do."

"Okay, thank you."

And off I went, happily skipping along



Treasurer's report For the year ending December 31, 2006

Below is my statement of revenues and expenditures for the BC Field Ornithologists for 2006. This statement was presented and approved at the annual general meeting in Lillooet on May 26, 2007.

I am pleased to report that our society ran a modest surplus of \$315 in 2006, a marked improvement over our \$2,194 deficit in 2005. Our annual conference extension to Cathedral Park was self-organized which meant no potential profit on this traditionally money-making enterprise. As of the 2005 annual general meeting in Kelowna, your Directors are now able to claim some of their travel expenses. This new cost to the society doubled our meeting costs in 2006. Nevertheless, our financial health remains good and we have not needed to draw on our funds in long-term savings account.

Andy Stewart, Treasurer

British Columbia Field Ornithologists

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures (Unaudited) For the year ended December 31, 2006

	2006	2005
Revenue		
Membership	\$6,799	\$6,008
Conference extension	-	7,614
Conference fees	3,480	2,695
Donation income	2,568	639
Donations off set expenses	1,968	1,811
Barn Owl project	-	16,505
Interest	1,204	903
Advertising	937	250
	<hr/> \$16,956	<hr/> \$36,426
Expenditures		
Conferences extension	-	6,645
Conference facilities	3,586	2,528
Newsletter	2,857	2,795
Donations	1,260	1,150
Journals	2,579	5,115
Stationery	-	249
Future Printing of Journal	28	100
Bank charges	12	97
Insurance	750	750
Web site	452	420
Memberships	40	15
Barn Owl project	497	16,418
Bookkeeper	229	195
Meetings	4,351	2,158
	<hr/> \$16,641	<hr/> \$38,620
Surplus (deficit) for the year	\$315	(\$2,194)

the trail in the darkness which seemed not dark at all. In no time I was up the rope and back on the trail to the road.

"Now *that* is a lifer," I kept repeating to myself. But in what category? Hmmm?

I downloaded the pictures from the camera. They showed a bright whitish green glow and the faint outline of Editor Bird; surely not enough to convince the authorities of the veracity of this sighting, of the existence of Editor Bird. I fell into great despair and developed an odd and persistent itch that baffled my family doctor and the specialists. Whenever I tapped the computer keyboard, the tips of my fingers would itch terribly. When I picked up a pen, the surface of my fingers that contacted the pen itched. I tried pencils but with no luck. I tried a Blackberry but my itch persisted and my fingers turned purple-red. The itch spread to the palms when I tried a Palm Pilot. I could not edit this newsletter.

Desperate beyond all measures, I could think of only one solution. I caught the next flight to Jamaica. There, Doctor Bird told me what I had to do (and charged a lot of loot for it). I flew to Senegal where in the dry savannah I found the cure.

I barged into Editor Bird's cave in the middle of daylight and placed the wriggling sack before him.

"Excellent," said Editor Bird as he opened the sack. "A Secretary Bird. I should have had one ages ago."

"The itch," I shouted. "What about the itch?"

Editor Bird slid his glasses down to the tip of his bill and peered over them at me.

"I'm afraid I know nothing of the itch."

At that moment I could have sworn I saw a big-jawed flea-like creature stick its tongue out at me from the safety of its huge host's dusty feathers.

Eventually the itch faded, and with it any hopes that readers of this newsletter would believe this story, which upon reflection, does seem a little implausible.

Sometimes the truth is like that.

Phil Henderson, Editor



Balance Sheet
At December 31, 2006

	2006	2005
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash in banks	\$53,731	\$53,163
GST Receivable	316	664
Total Assets	<u>\$54,047</u>	<u>\$53,827</u>
Liabilities and Members' Equity		
Current liabilities		
Deferred revenue	\$2,983	\$2,578
Prepaid memberships	750	1,025
Deferred Barn Owl Project	10,536	10,790
Future payable	4,950	4,922
	<u>\$19,220</u>	<u>\$19,314</u>
Members' Equity		
Balance, beginning of the year	34,513	36,707
Net earnings for the year	315	-2,194
Balance, end of the year	<u>\$34,828</u>	<u>\$34,513</u>
Liabilities and Members' Equity Total	<u>\$54,047</u>	<u>\$53,827</u>

2008 BCFO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I am very excited to announce that our 2008 BCFO Conference is going to be held in the very pretty and birdy city of Creston, BC. I remember as a kid growing up in Vancouver but spending summers away with our family in different locations in BC as my father was a bridge builder at that time. We were lucky enough to spend the summer of 1961 and 1963 in Creston, so I have always had a place in my heart for this beautiful place.

The Conference will be held from Friday, May 23 to Sunday, May 25, 2008. More information, including registration forms will appear in the next newsletter. As of this time we are still working on an extension for the Conference and this will be announced also in the next newsletter.

Wayne Diakow



Birding in Kenya cont. from cover

countries were gathering to wrestle with issues of conservation, poverty and hope. The birding opportunities would be limited, but given A Rocha's commitment to the study and conservation of the natural world, birding was "on the agenda."

After landing early one morning in Nairobi we had a layover before transferring to a smaller plane for our trip to the coast. Looking out of the windows of the waiting area we saw Marabou Storks circling high over the outskirts of the city. On and above the tarmac Black Kites were constantly maneuvering in search of food. In the ditches surrounding the runways were Cattle Egrets as well as a Gray Heron. On the roof of a nearby building a group of Pied Crows was making its presence known. And in the air above us, Little Swifts and African Palm-Swifts were going about their daily business.

Eventually our airplane arrived, and we flew off to the coastal city of Malindi. On route we had a fleeting glimpse of Mt. Kilimanjaro off in the distance. Upon arrival in Malindi, I looked out of the airport and saw Wire-tailed Swallows perched on the power lines surrounding the terminal.

Arriving a few days early for our meeting we had the opportunity to stay at the A Rocha Kenya field study centre in Mwambe. The centre is situated on the edge of the Indian Ocean and is the focal point for scientific research as well as environmental education to the surrounding villages. Within a ten kilometre radius there are four important bird areas (IBA's) and a further two IBA's within thirty-five kilometres. The two IBA's we visited (twice, in fact) were Mida Creek and the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. Together they form a UNESCO biosphere reserve.

After 36 hours, and 10 time zones in transit, what could be better than to head for the beach? There to welcome us were familiar species: Black-bellied Plover, Sanderling, and Ruddy Turnstone; as well as the less familiar: Terek Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Common Sandpiper, Curlew Sandpiper, and Lesser and Greater Sandplover, to name just a few. Back up at the centre, a short walk along a nature trail added Common Bulbul, Fork-tailed Drongo, Mouse-coloured Sunbird, and, overhead, a Bat Hawk to our list.

The next morning a number of us, together with some UK colleagues, decided to explore Mida Creek. Mida Creek is a large, almost landlocked, saline lagoon, 580 hectares in size. It is a major stopover point for migratory birds, especially shorebirds. In July 2003, a 270 metre long swinging walkway was constructed. Twenty local tour guides were trained to assist visitors to the site, thereby creating an ecotourism base for the local community. When we arrived at the Creek, we quickly realized that the tide was rapidly coming in over the mangrove forest. So we clambered along the walkway to the blind at the end. Two lovely Great Flamingos and a Little Stint were the only birds remaining. In an effort to salvage something from our visit we headed back to the forested area near the visitors' centre. There we found Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, African Paradise-Flycatcher, Pale Batis, Amethyst Sunbird, Pale Flycatcher, African Pipit, Black-headed Batis, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Dideric Cuckoo, African Black-headed Oriole, as well as a skulking Woolly-necked Stork. On our drive back to Mwambe we saw Red-backed and Lesser Gray Shrikes hunting in a field.



Daniel Tay

Fisherman in dugout canoe at Mida Creek, with Crab Plovers and other shorebirds in the foreground

The next day, an early morning expedition was planned for the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest. This forest is the largest block of indigenous coastal forest remaining in East Africa. It is considered to be the second most important forest for bird conservation in Africa. At 41,676 hectares in size, it is home to over 270 species of birds. The forest itself is made up of three very distinct habitats, each with its own flora and fauna. The three forest types are brachystegia woodland, cynometra forest and thicket, and mixed forest. The Arabuko-Sokoke Forest is rich in biodiversity with over 250 species of butterflies, more than 700 species of plants, 41 species of snakes, 21 species of lizards, and more than 40 species of mammals. Many of these species are endangered. For the birder there are the “Sokoke Six”—five globally threatened (Sokoke Scops-Owl, Sokoke Pipit, East Coast Akalat, Amani Sunbird, and Clarke’s Weaver),

plus one globally endangered species, the Spotted Ground Thrush. Of these six species we saw four, striking out on the Akalat and the thrush (which was not yet back from its wintering grounds in South Africa). One of my personal highlights was watching our guide, Albert Baya of Spinetail Safaris, disappear into the cynometra thicket and then reappear an hour later with the good news that he had located the daytime roosting site of a pair of Sokoke Scops-Owls. After we had been walking along the elephant trails in the dense forest for approximately 20 minutes Albert motioned to us to stop: there, about three or four metres above our heads, was the pair of owls, together with an owlet. Other birds that we saw on this visit to the forest included Bearded Scrub-Robin, Eastern Nicator, Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike, Tropical Boubou, Black-backed Puffback, Pied Cuckoo, Green Woodhoopoe, and Lizard

Buzzard. Albert’s identification skills were phenomenal; without his assistance our tally would have been greatly diminished. In addition to the birds, we also saw several species of mammal: Golden-rumped Elephant-Shrew (or Sengi), Four-toed Elephant-Shrew, Sykes Monkey, Yellow Baboon, and Red Duiker, as well as two species of reptile: the Red-tailed Sun Lizard and a large Monitor Lizard.

Once the conference began, the frequency of birding excursions diminished, but at

our resort, Turtle Bay Beach Club, there were birds to be seen as well. We saw three species of weaver—the Golden Palm Weaver, the African Golden-Weaver and the Black-headed Weaver—during our stay; and a plethora of Golden Palm Weaver nests dotted the foliage near any source of water. One afternoon, while lying by the water, I heard a commotion. Looking up, I saw a number of weavers frantically diving at something in the branches of the palm trees. That something turned out to be an African Harrier-Hawk, which successfully raided a number of nests.

We timed our second visit to Mida Creek so that we would arrive at approximately an hour before high tide. As we walked out on the mudflats, carefully avoiding the razor clams, we saw Crab Plover, Sacred Ibis, Little Egret, Whimbrel, and Common Ringed Plover feeding at the water’s edge. In the distance, we scoped a large flock of Greater Flamingos feeding by Whale Island. Once the tide had again covered the base of the mangrove forest, we headed back to dry land and birded in the forest remnant. There we encountered Ring-necked Dove, Yellow-fronted Canary, Purple-banded Sunbird, and Lesser Cuckoo. Looking back over the mangrove, we spotted an African Fish-Eagle flying leisurely across the horizon.

When we returned to the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest again a few days later, the sights and sounds were a little more familiar. As we climbed out of the bus, we were greeted by a flock of Trumpeter Hornbills that we met again later that day. As they had at Mida Creek, A Rocha Kenya, together with the Kenya Wildlife Service, had created a nature trail and viewing platform in the forest. It was here that we again encountered the hornbills, this time at closer range. It was also here, high up on the viewing platform, looking out over a seasonal swamp,



Jenny Goshulak on walkway.

Ted Goshulak



that I saw my White-backed Ducks. At the edge of the water, a small group of them was swimming in company with a few White-faced Whistling-Ducks and a Little Grebe. In the foreground, an African Jacana was scavenging in the reeds, and further back an Intermediate Egret and a Hadada Ibis were gingerly stalking through the higher grass.

Back at Turtle Bay, I arranged to walk the beach with a UK birder early the next morning; he had seen a small number of White-browed Coucal moving through the low scrub the morning before. At our home latitude the sun rises and sets at a leisurely pace, but here at the equator these solar events occur rapidly. So up I rose, and we walked the beach together...no coucals in sight. The next morning would be my last chance for a (solitary) morning walk and so I went looking again for these non-parasitic cuckoos. With their habit of skulking in shrubbery, undergrowth, and dense waterside vegetation they are more often heard crashing about than seen. Not finding them in the prescribed locations, I continued walking down the beach until I caught sight of a bedraggled bird sitting high on a palm snag. It was a weather-worn European Roller that was taking a break on its migratory route north. I then decided to turn around and head back to the resort. Just before turning up from the beach I noticed a small alleyway parallel to the edge of the resort. It was here that I heard the White-browed Coucal calling to one another, and a short while later two or three coucal heads popped up out of the scrub brush.

By now our time at Watamu was over, and we headed back to the airport. There, while waiting for the luggage from a previous flight to be unloaded, I stepped out of the waiting area and scanned the surroundings. On the outer perimeter of the runway a

Zanzibar Bishop was foraging on the ground, along with a scattering of Barn Swallows and House Sparrows. As I looked toward the horizon, I noticed a circling of Hooded Vultures off in the distance undoubtedly in search of scavenging opportunities.

Let me make a few personal observations at this point. First, the number of cuckoo species we encountered was a total surprise to me. We saw six in total (African, Lesser, Common, Pied, Dideric, and White-browed Coucal). They were also amazingly numerous: in one three-hour period another group from our conference counted over 1000 Lesser and Common Cuckoo flying over their observation post at Mida Creek. After I arrived back in Canada, Colin Jackson, national director of A Rocha Kenya, sent me an e-mail in which he remarked that this number of cuckoos had been observed at a number of locations in East Africa. Second, the variety of species in Kenya staggers the imagination (almost 1000 species countrywide). Three UK birders in our group went on a three-day safari after the conference. One of them, Dave Bookless, had done most of his birding before and during the conference (together with me). By the end, we had both seen around 110 life species. After the short safari, which took place in different habitats, his number of lifers grew to over 300 species. Given this rich biodiversity and breathtaking scenery, I would highly recommend a trip, short or long, to this part of Kenya.

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Related Websites

To view photos from our trip, copy and paste the link below into your browser's address bar: <http://photoshare.shaw.ca/view/9609637671-1186182388-29668/96096>

A Rocha Canada: <http://en.arocha.org/canada/> A Rocha Kenya: <http://en.arocha.org/kenya/>

ASSETS (Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Ecotourism Scheme): <http://www.assets-kenya.org/>

Spinetail Safaris: <http://www.assets-kenya.org/spinetailsafaris.htm>

Turtle Bay Beach Club, Watamu, Kenya: <http://www.turtlebay.co.ke/>

Trip List

The species list for the Kenya trip begins on the following page.



English Name	Scientific Name		Place	Date
	Genus	species		
African Pied Wagtail	Motacilla	aguimp	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Pied Crow	Corvus	albus	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Black Kite	Milvus	migrans	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Cattle Egret	Bubulcus	ibis	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Little Swift	Apus	affinis	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Gray Heron	Ardea	cinerea	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Marabou Stork	Leptoptilos	crumeniferus	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Long-tailed Cormorant	Phalacrocorax	africanus	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
African Palm-Swift	Cypsiurus	parvus	Jomo Kenyatta Intl Airport	04/13/07
Wire-tailed Swallow	Hirundo	smithii	Malindi Airport	04/13/07
Bat Hawk	Macheiramphus	alcinus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Common Ringed Plover	Charadrius	hiaticula	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Common Bulbul	Pycnonotus	barbatus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Mouse-colored Sunbird	Cyanomitra	veroxii	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus	adsimilis	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
African Pied Wagtail	Motacilla	aguimp	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Black-headed Heron	Ardea	melanocephala	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Green-backed Camaroptera	Camaroptera	brachyura	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Black-bellied Plover	Pluvialis	squatarola	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Common Sandpiper	Actitis	hypoleucos	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Lesser Crested Tern	Sterna	bengalensis	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus	fuscus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Sanderling	Calidris	alba	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Terek Sandpiper	Xenus	cinereus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Temminck's Stint	Calidris	temminckii	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Ruddy Turnstone	Arenaria	interpres	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Lesser Sandplover	Charadrius	mongolus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Greater Sandplover	Charadrius	leschenaultii	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Curlew Sandpiper	Calidris	ferruginea	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Sooty Gull	Larus	hemprichii	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Gull-billed Tern	Gelochelidon	nilotica	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Little Egret	Egretta	garzetta	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Whimbrel	Numenius	phaeopus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Common Cuckoo	Cuculus	canorus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Barn Swallow	Hirundo	rustica	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Eurasian Hobby	Falco	subbuteo	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Lesser Cuckoo	Cuculus	poliocephalus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
White-fronted Plover	Charadrius	marginatus	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/14/07
Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus	adsimilis	Mwambe Field Study Centre	04/15/07
Rock Pigeon	Columba	livia	Watamu	04/15/07
African Pipit	Anthus	cinnamomeus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus	trochilus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
African Paradise-Flycatcher	Terpsiphone	viridis	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus	adsimilis	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Black-headed Batis	Batis	minor	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Pale Batis	Batis	soror	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa	striata	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Yellow-throated Longclaw	Macronyx	croceus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Barn Swallow	Hirundo	rustica	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Amethyst Sunbird	Chalcomitra	amethystina	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Greater Flamingo	Phoenicopterus	roseus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Little Stint	Calidris	minuta	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Woolly-necked Stork	Ciconia	episcopus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Pale Flycatcher	Bradornis	pallidus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Red-backed Shrike	Lanius	collurio	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Lesser Gray Shrike	Lanius	minor	Mida Creek	04/15/07
African Black-headed Oriole	Oriolus	larvatus	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Dideric Cuckoo	Chrysococcyx	caprius	Mida Creek	04/15/07
Mombasa Woodpecker	Campethera	mombassica	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Collared Sunbird	Hedydipna	collaris	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Bearded Scrub-Robin	Cercotrichas	quadrivirgata	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07



English Name	Scientific Name		Place	Date
	Genus	species		
Eastern Nicator	Nicator	gularis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Lesser Cuckoo	Cuculus	poliocephalus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Green-backed Camaroptera	Camaroptera	brachyura	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Forest Weaver	Ploceus	bicolor	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike	Prionops	scopifrons	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Red-capped Robin-Chat	Cossypha	natalensis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Amani Sunbird	Hedydipna	pallidigaster	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Eastern Olive Sunbird	Cyanomitra	olivacea	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	Chlorocichla	flaviventris	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Tambourine Dove	Turtur	tympanistria	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Black-headed Apalis	Apalis	melanocephala	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Tropical Boubou	Laniarius	aethiopicus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Yellow Flycatcher	Erythrocercus	holochlorus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Black-bellied Glossy-Starling	Lamprotornis	corruscus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Bat Hawk	Macheiramphus	alcinus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Common Cuckoo	Cuculus	canorus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
African Black-headed Oriole	Oriolus	larvatus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Sokoke Pipit	Anthus	sokokensis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Black-backed Puffback	Dryoscopus	cubla	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Barn Swallow	Hirundo	rustica	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
African Palm-Swift	Cypsiurus	parvus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Pale Batis	Batis	soror	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Common Scimitar-bill	Rhinopomastus	cyanomelas	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus	adsimilis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Clarke's Weaver	Ploceus	golandi	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Lizard Buzzard	Kaupifalco	monogrammicus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Northern Brownbul	Phyllastrephus	strepitans	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Green Barbet	Stactolaema	olivacea	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Retz's Helmetshrike	Prionops	retzii	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Gray-headed Kingfisher	Halcyon	leucocephala	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Red-tailed Ant-Thrush	Neocossyphus	rufus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Green Woodhoopoe	Phoeniculus	purpureus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Sokoke Scops-Owl	Otus	irenae	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Western Tinkerbird	Pogoniulus	coryphaeus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Golden Palm Weaver	Ploceus	bojeri	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
Black-headed Weaver	Ploceus	melanocephalus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
Eurasian Hobby	Falco	subbuteo	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
Black-headed Heron	Ardea	melanocephala	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
African Harrier-Hawk	Polyboroides	typus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
Common Bulbul	Pycnonotus	barbatus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
African Palm-Swift	Cypsiurus	parvus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
African Golden-Weaver	Ploceus	subaureus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/16/07
Pied Cuckoo	Clamator	jacobinus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/16/07
Ring-necked Dove	Streptopelia	capicola	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Yellow-fronted Canary	Serinus	mozambicus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Crab Plover	Dromas	ardeola	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Greater Flamingo	Phoenicopterus	roseus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
African Fish-Eagle	Haliaeetus	vocifer	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Purple-banded Sunbird	Cinnyris	bifasciatus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Sacred Ibis	Threskiornis	aethiopicus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Little Egret	Egretta	garzetta	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Gray Heron	Ardea	cinerea	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Little Egret	Egretta	garzetta	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Terek Sandpiper	Xenus	cinereus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Whimbrel	Numenius	phaeopus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Black-bellied Plover	Pluvialis	squatarola	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Sanderling	Calidris	alba	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Lesser Sandplover	Charadrius	mongolus	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Black Kite	Milvus	migrans	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Common Ringed Plover	Charadrius	hiaticula	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Lesser Cuckoo	Cuculus	poliocephalus	Mida Creek	04/19/07



English Name	Scientific Name		Place	Date
	Genus	species		
Curlew Sandpiper	Calidris	ferruginea	Mida Creek	04/19/07
Trumpeter Hornbill	Ceratogymna	bucinator	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Sombre Greenbul	Andropadus	importunus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Crested-Flycatcher	Trochocercus	cyanomelas	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Eurasian Golden Oriole	Oriolus	oriolus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Green Barbet	Stactolaema	olivacea	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Fork-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus	adsimilis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Common Cuckoo	Cuculus	canorus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Goshawk	Accipiter	tachiro	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Eastern Olive Sunbird	Cyanomitra	olivacea	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Collared Sunbird	Hedydipna	collaris	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Mombasa Woodpecker	Campethera	mombassica	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Bearded Scrub-Robin	Cercotrichas	quadrivirgata	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Eastern Nicator	Nicator	gularis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Black-headed Apalis	Apalis	melanocephala	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Short-tailed Batis	Batis	mixta	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Golden Oriole	Oriolus	auratus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Black-headed Oriole	Oriolus	larvatus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Fasciated Snake-Eagle	Circaetus	fasciolatus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Paradise-Flycatcher	Terpsiphone	viridis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Green-backed Camaroptera	Camaroptera	brachyura	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Sokoke Pipit	Anthus	sokokensis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Pale Batis	Batis	soror	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Black-headed Weaver	Ploceus	melanocephalus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Amani Sunbird	Hedydipna	pallidigaster	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Cuckoo	Cuculus	gularis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Fischer's Turaco	Tauraco	fischeri	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Fischer's Greenbul	Phyllastrephus	fischeri	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Jacana	Actophilornis	africanus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
White-backed Duck	Thalassornis	leuconotus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
White-faced Whistling-Duck	Dendrocygna	viduata	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Intermediate Egret	Egretta	intermedia	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Great Egret	Ardea	alba	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Little Grebe	Tachybaptus	ruficollis	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Malachite Kingfisher	Alcedo	cristata	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Black-headed Heron	Ardea	melanocephala	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Hawk-Eagle	Aquila	spilogaster	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Hadada Ibis	Bostrychia	hagedash	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
African Harrier-Hawk	Polyboroides	typus	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Red-eyed Dove	Streptopelia	semitorquata	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike	Prionops	scopifrons	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Violet-backed Starling	Cinnyricinclus	leucogaster	Arabuko-Sokoke Forest	04/21/07
Great Crested Tern	Thalasseus	bergii	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Saunders's Tern	Sternula	saundersi	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Sooty Gull	Larus	hemprichii	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Common Sandpiper	Actitis	hypoleucos	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Pied Crow	Corvus	albus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
African Palm-Swift	Cypsiurus	parvus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Collared Sunbird	Hedydipna	collaris	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Barn Swallow	Hirundo	rustica	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
African Golden Oriole	Oriolus	auratus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Common Bulbul	Pycnonotus	barbatus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
African Pied Wagtail	Motacilla	aguimp	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
Golden Palm Weaver	Ploceus	bojeri	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/23/07
European Roller	Coracias	garrulus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/24/07
White-browed Coucal	Centropus	supercilius	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/24/07
Common Bulbul	Pycnonotus	barbatus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/24/07
African Golden Oriole	Oriolus	auratus	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/24/07
Ring-necked Dove	Streptopelia	capicola	Turtle Bay Beach Club	04/24/07
Zanzibar Bishop	Euplectes	nigroventris	Malindi Airport	04/24/07
Hooded Vulture	Necrosyrtes	monachus	Malindi Airport	04/24/07



A New Checklist of British Columbia Birds: BC attains 500 species

In May 2007 an updated checklist of the birds of British Columbia was published. It proved to be an auspicious time to produce the list as the new total of species was exactly 500.

In attaining 500 species the province of British Columbia joins an exclusive club of just 4 states that have reached this level, California with 634 species, Texas (630), Arizona (535) and New Mexico (518). Three more states are poised to reach 500 species with Florida and Oregon already at 498 and Alaska at 497. A further 10 states and 2 provinces have recorded more than 450 species.

The four states to have attained 500+ species are also the four states that are contiguous with Mexico, attesting to the importance of southern species in boosting total diversity. It may come as a surprise that a Canadian province would be the first state or province away from the Mexican border to reach the lofty total of 500 species.

British Columbia is blessed with many attributes that contribute to its avian diversity including its size, location and an unparalleled biogeographic diversity. In size it is almost 40% larger than Texas, and bigger than California, Washington and Oregon combined. The location of the province is unique as it is not only adjacent to the Pacific Ocean but also, surprisingly, encompasses the "eastern" avifauna of North America. Birders will be familiar with the range maps of supposed "eastern" species such as Cape May Warbler and many others that stretch westward in a thin line across the boreal forest of Canada through British Columbia as far as eastern Yukon.

The biogeographic diversity of the province is astounding. From west to east it stretches from the pelagic zone of the open Pacific Ocean through the hyper maritime rainforests of Vancouver Island to the rainshadow Mediterranean-type climate around

the Strait of Georgia. Eastward from there are the successive ranges of the western cordillera from the Coast Range to the Rockies. From south to north the zones extend from the hot, dry Okanagan Valley, a northern extension of the Great Basin, through intermontane grasslands to the massive expanse of the boreal forest and the westernmost extension of the Prairies in the Peace River region. Altitudinally the province rises to a height of 4663 metres (15,300 feet) at Mt. Fairweather.

Recent additions to the BC Checklist include species

from the four directions: Whiskered Auklet from the north, Sedge Wren and Pine Warbler from the east, Painted Bunting from the south and Black-tailed Gull from the west. In 2006 Lesser Nighthawk was recorded for the first time.....out in the open Pacific on a pelagic trip! Two of the greatest rarities on the BC list are a 1979 Spoon-billed Sandpiper from Asia and a 1997 Xantus's Hummingbird from Mexico.

The checklist is a cooperative initiative of the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies (BCWS), the BC Field Ornithologists (BCFO), and Nature Vancouver. These organizations have come together to pool their collective databases and expertise to produce the checklist.

"The Birds of British Columbia" is a 14 page stapled booklet with a full colour photograph of BC's provincial bird, the Steller's Jay, on the cover. It can be ordered from the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies at PO Box 32128, Victoria, BC, Canada, V8P 5S2, or through their website at www.wildlifebc.org. The price of \$3.00 includes postage and handling and can be paid for through the website using Pay Pal.

Tony Greenfield

Tony Greenfield was the BCFO representative on the Checklist Committee that produced the new checklist. Tony would like to thank Wayne Weber for his insights into those species that should be included on the BC checklist. Dick Cannings was consulted concerning the status of Cordilleran Flycatcher in BC, and Rick Toochin and Margo Hearne likewise for Black-tailed Gull. Thank you all.

Final decisions concerning the species to be included were taken by the Checklist Committee, with representatives from BCFO, Nature Vancouver and the Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies.

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:

Neil K. Dawe
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For newsletters contact:

Ted Goshulak
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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 cheque 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.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

compiled by Martin K. McNicholl and Wayne C. Weber

The following meetings and other events are those that take place in B.C. and immediately adjacent areas or that potentially include information on birds that occur in B.C. Information on additional meetings are listed in the bimonthly Ornithological Newsletter and, for readers with internet access, on BIRDNET at www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/BIRDMEET.html.

- February 6-9 2008 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IRIDESCENCE, Arizona State University. Contact: Lisa A. Taylor: mailing address not yet announced; phone (480) 965-2593; e-mail: LISA.A.Taylor@asu.edu.
- February 13-16 2008 4TH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN FLIGHT CONFERENCE, McAllen, Texas. Contact: Terry Rich, 5815 Peachtree St., Boise, ID 83703-3125; phone (208) 378-5347; e-mail: terry_rich@fws.gov.
- February 27-29 2008 JOINT ANNUAL MEETING MONTANA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY & SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY, Missoula, Montana. Contact: Contact Vickie Edwards (no mailing address or phone) at vedwards@co.missoula.mt.us or mailto:vedwards@co.missoula.mt.us or visit the website at <http://www.montanatws.org/>.
- Feb 27 – Mar 2 2008 PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP 35TH ANNUAL MEETING, Blaine, Washington. For information, contact Tom Good (e-mail, tom.good@noaa.gov; no address or phone no. given. Meeting information available online at <http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org/>, or phone OSU Conference Office at 1-800-678-6311.
- March 4-7 2008 12TH BIENNIAL ALASKA BIRD CONFERENCE, Fairbanks, Alaska. Contact: Nancy DeWitt, Alaska Bird Observatory, Box 80505, Fairbanks, AK 99708; phone (907) 451-7059; e-mail: ndewitt@alaskabird.org.
- Mar 9-Apr 12 2008 BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL, Qualicum, BC. For information, contact Robin Rivers (no mailing address: phone 866-288-7878, or e-mail at rrivers@naturetrust.bc.ca, or visit the website at www.brantfestival.bc.ca.
- March 28-30 2008 OTHELLO SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL, Othello, WA. For information, write Othello Sandhill Crane Festival, PO Box 542, Othello, WA 99344, or phone 866-726-3445, or visit website at www.othellosandhillcranefestival.org.
- April 17-20 2008 21ST BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY, Whitehorse, Yukon. Contact (mailing addresses not yet announced): John Cornerly, phone (303) 933-9861; e-mail: johncornerly@msn.com OR Madeleine Linck, phone (783) 694-7851; e-mail: ttss@threeriversparkdistriict.org.
- April 18-20 2008 2008 ANNUAL MEETING, WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY & ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, Mobile, Alabama. Contact: Frank Moore, Dept. of Biol. Sciences, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Dr., Box 5018, Hattiesburg, MS 39406; phone (601) 266-4748; e-mail: Frank.Moore@usm.edu.
- May 2-4 2008 GRAYS HARBOR SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL, Hoquiam, WA. For information, Contact Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival, PO Box 470, Montesano, WA 98563 (phone: 800-303-8498), or visit the website at www.shorebirdfestival.com.
- May 7-13 2008 WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES BIRD FESTIVAL, Invermere, BC. For information, write Pinelogs Cultural Centre, Box 2633, Invermere, BC V0A 1K0, or phone 888-342-9464, or visit the website at <http://www.adventurevalley.com/wings/registration.htm>.



- May 12-15 2008 CONFERENCE ON SPENT LEAD AMMUNITION: IMPLICATIONS FOR WILDLIFE AND HUMANS, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho. Contact [no individual named]: The Peregrine Fund, 5668 West Flying Hawk Lane, Boise, ID; phone (208) 362-3716; e-mail: tpf@peregrinefund.org.
- May 16-19 2008 MEADOWLARK FESTIVAL, Penticton. Contact [no individual indicated]: address not yet published; phone: toll free 1 (866) 699-9453; e-mail: meadowlarkfestival@osca; web site: www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca.
- May 23-25 2008 B.C. Field Ornithologists ANNUAL MEETING, Creston, B.C. Contact Information not yet available, but check the website at <http://www.bcfo.ca/>.
- May 29-June 1 2008 B.C. NATURE SPRING 2008 CONFERENCE, Penticton, B.C. Contact: Glenda Ross [address not yet published]; phone (250) 493-7500; e-mail: glendaross@shaw.ca; web site: www.members.tripod.com/~sonc/ OR www.bcnature.ca.
- June 6-8 2008 WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY annual conference, Walla Walla, WA. Contact information not yet announced; check the webpage at <http://www.wos.org/WOSConf.htm>.
- June 12-15 2008 NATURE CANADA ANNUAL MEETING, Montreal, Quebec. Contact details not yet published.
- June 23-29 2008 AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION, Salt Lake City, Utah. For information, write American Birding Association, 200-4945 North 30th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80919, phone Brenda Gibb at (800) 850-2473 ext. 230, or visit the website at <http://www.americanbirding.org/mtgs/2008snowbird/info.html>.
- summer 2008 NATURE VANCOUVER SUMMER CAMP 2008, near Smithers, B.C. Exact date not yet announced (late July or early August). Contact: Kitty Castle [address not announced]; phone (604) 980-9464; e-mail: kcastle@shaw.ca.
- August 6-9 2008 126th STATED MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING & SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL MEETING, Portland, Oregon. Contact information not yet announced.
- Aug 30-Sep 6 2008 AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION REGIONAL CONFERENCE, Victoria and Vancouver, BC. Contact information, same as for the Annual Convention on June 23-29.
- September 22-28 2008 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Missoula, Montana. Contact: Kate Davis, Raptors of the Rockies, Box 250, Florence, MT 59833; phone (406) 829-6436; e-mail: raptors@montana.com.
- November 10-14 2008 THIRD NORTH AMERICAN SEA DUCK CONFERENCE, Quebec, Que. Contact: Michel Robert [address not yet published]; phone (418) 649-8071; e-mail: michel.robert@ec-gc.ca.
- September 29- RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Pitlochry, October 4 2009 Scotland. Contact: Ruth Tingay [address and phone number not yet published], e-mail: dimlylit100@hotmail.com.

Thanks to Peter Blokker, Jim Ginns and Jo Ann MacKenzie for contributing information included in the compilation in this issue.



B.C. Birding News Briefs

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

Vultures Rejoin Raptors & Megaceryle Returns – The latest (48th) supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union check-list of North American birds (*Auk* 124:1109-1115, 2007) has little effect on B.C.'s list. The most significant change is the tentative return of New World Vultures (Cathartidae) back out of the Ciconiiformes (storks and relatives) to the beginning of the Falconiformes (diurnal raptors), the position they occupied until 1998 –BUT “although its true phylogenetic position remains uncertain.” Another change is the restoration of the genus *Megaceryle* for Ringed and Belted kingfishers, which were lumped into *Ceryle* in 1983. A couple of species “splits” and acceptance of a few “accidentals” as verified bring the species total for North and Central America and the Caribbean to 2,046. Two potential species splits discussed, but not yet acted upon were the separation of White-winged and Black scoters into two species each. Stay tuned!

Wiebe Elevated –Dr. Karen L. Wiebe of the University of Saskatoon was elected a Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union during its 125th stated meeting in Wyoming in August 2007. Karen continues to study hole-nesting birds near Williams Lake and has published a major paper, a note and a book review in *B.C. Birds*, as well as serving as a manuscript reviewer. Dr. Spencer G. Sealy of the University of Manitoba, whose Ph.D. research was on alcids in B.C. and Alaska, continues to serve as Editor of the society's journal, *The Auk*. –based on Anonymous. 2007. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 180:1-2.

B.C. Students Receive Travel Awards –Included among the 60 students receiving Marcia Brady Tucker Awards to travel to the aforementioned AOU meeting in Wyoming were Alan T. Brelsford, Elaine F. Camfield, Amy G. Wilson and Scott Wilson, all of U.B.C. –based on Anonymous. 2007. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 180:1-2.

BCFO Award for Ornithology nominations requested

Last year, the BCFO presented its first “Award for Ornithology” to Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan. We expect to present this award annually in future, with the award to be announced, and if possible presented to the recipient, at the Annual General Meeting.

The purpose of the award is as follows: to recognize an individual who has made significant contributions over a long period of time to ornithology in British Columbia in any one or more of the following three areas: (1) research on bird biology or ecology, or detailed documentation of the avifauna of a portion of B.C.; (2) conservation of birds or of bird habitats in B.C.; (3) public education about birds in B.C.

We hereby request nominations from the membership for candidates for the Award for Ornithology. Nominations should include at least a brief statement of why, in the nominator's view, the candidate is deserving of the award. Nominations should be sent in writing to Wayne C. Weber, Chairperson of the Awards Committee, at one of the following addresses:

E-mail : contopus@telus.net

Regular Mail: 51-6712 Baker Road

Delta, BC V4E 2V3

The recipient of the award is recommended by a 3-person Awards Committee and approved by the BCFO Board prior to the award being presented. Any persons nominated for the award in a given year who are unsuccessful do not need to be renominated, but will automatically be carried over for future consideration.

All nominations for the award will be gratefully received, and thanks in advance to any nominators out there!



Morris Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*

Once upon a time in Vancouver, British Columbia, a charismatic bird from southeast Asia, the Crested Myna, was introduced and became established. This bird flourished and lived happily all over the Lower Mainland for about 100 years. Then in March 2003, the last bird died and the species became extirpated as a countable BC and ABA species.

Crested Mynas were first reported as a wild bird in North America in 1897 when the BC Provincial Museum became aware of two pairs in Vancouver. The population grew into the thousands, but was reported to be down to about 2500 in 1959 and to less than 100 in the early 1990's.

The death in March 2003 was actually not the final hurrah for the species in North America. On 31st May 1986

wildlife rehabbers Clint & Irene Davy had received into their care two Crested Myna nestlings that had been picked up from the ground after falling from a nest in Kitsilano. One of the nestlings soon died, but the other was nursed to health and eventually adulthood by Clint & Irene. They planned to release the bird back into the wild, but were advised against this because of the few birds that remained in the wild in Vancouver. So, the bird stayed with Clint & Irene, was duly christened Morris Myna (a play on the British car, the Morris Minor, for those who missed it!) and eventually moved to Gibsons with the Davy's. When the last wild bird perished in March 2003, Morris Myna became the lone surviving Vancouver hatched Crested Myna on the planet.

News has just reached us that on Friday, 5th October 2007, Morris Myna died in his sleep in Gibsons after a long and feisty life. In attaining the age of 21.5 years Morris became possibly the oldest Crested Myna on record.

This appears to be the final word in the fairytale of the Vancouver mynas. Unfortunately they did not live happily everafter.

For more on the life and times of Morris Myna go to <http://www.gibsons.wildliferehabcentre.org/morris.html> or Google 'Crested Myna'. Thanks to Clint and Irene Davy for caring for Morris during his long lifetime.

Tony Greenfield

Bridge Baffles Birds

by Liz Osborn, CurrentResults.com

Ten years after Confederation Bridge opened to link Prince Edward Island with mainland Canada, migrating seabirds still have trouble getting past the lengthy structure. It's not immediately obvious to many scoters that they could fly over or under the bridge.

Birders have noticed scoters on their fall or spring migrations being stopped by the bridge, as if it were a giant fence. Even though the bridge sits 40 metres above the waters of Northumberland Strait, scoters won't pass underneath.

About half the scoters encountering Confederation Bridge circle, gain height, and fly overtop. But a flock can make several attempts, approaching the bridge and then veering away, before some birds build the confidence to get past.

Often birds land on the water in front of the bridge, where they will stay for hours. Others fly parallel to the 13 kilometre-long span, heading towards shore.

A decade of observations reveals that seabirds haven't become accustomed to the giant bridge over time. In fall just over half (53%) of scoters on average fly directly overtop, while in spring only one-third (34%) do.

References

Katherine Bunker-Popma. 2006. Scoter, *Melanitta* spp., Migrations Interrupted by Confederation Bridge: An update. Canadian Field-Naturalist 120(2): 232-233.

Journal Article

Colin MacKinnon and Andrew Kennedy 2006. An Observation of the Spring 2006 Migration of Black Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, in Northumberland Strait, Interrupted by the Confederation Bridge, New Brunswick – Prince Edward Island. Canadian Field-Naturalist 120(2): 233-234.

submitted by **John Sprague**



Members interested in BC birding history might like to read the following article from the Vernon Paper. The museum in Vernon has a whole little room dedicated to Allan Brooks materials and it is well worth a visit if you are coming through Vernon. They are still appealing for funds to meet the \$25,000 price tag.

Andy Buhler

The Morning Star, Sunday July 22, 2007

Museum buys rare guide, by Richard Rolke

Preserving history has come with a hefty price. The Greater Vernon Museum went to the extreme measure of paying \$25,000 to ensure Allan Brooks' first illustrated field guide remained within the public domain.

"The price tag was daunting but when you realize its importance, the price tag was not an inconvenience," said curator Ron Candy.

Brooks was an ornithologist and wildlife illustrator who lived in Okanagan Landing in the early 20th century. His work appeared in the National Geographic magazine. But the field guide in the museum's possession predated Brooks' fame. He wrote and illustrated the book in 1888 when he was just 19 years old and living in the Fraser Valley.

"A lot of it (his career) began right here with this guide. This represents his starting point," said Candy.

Within the leather-bound cover, there are 131 pages of Brooks' own penmanship and 173 hand-drawn illustrations of birds.

"It's in amazing condition. The drawings and colours are crisp," said Candy.

Brooks gave it to a friend — Sydney Williams — in 1889 and it remained in Williams' family until being purchased by the Greater Vernon Museum.

"It's never been published and never copied," said Candy.

Candy first became aware of the guide six years ago, and in 2006, the family contacted the museum and offered it the first opportunity to purchase the book.

The Greater Vernon Museum has the only permanent gallery dedicated to Brooks.

"They, in their hearts, wanted it to come here," said Candy.

For Candy, it was imperative that the museum act fast.

"We knew other collectors and museums would want it. We knew there would be considerable competition for it," he said.

Fundraising was launched immediately and \$4,500 was collected in a year. But with the museum needing to make a firm commitment, reserves were accessed to cover the rest of the \$25,000.

As a result, the museum now owns a one-of-a-kind field guide, but it's financial resources are depleted. The hope is the community will bolster that situation.

"It's a leap of faith, but when people see it, the money will come forward. I am confident we will raise the funds," said Candy.

Despite the financial uncertainty, Candy is confident that the museum made the right decision when the guide was purchased.

"It's where it's supposed to be," he said.

For other information on or by Allan Brooks members might consider the following items.

1. Allan Brooks, Artist-Naturalist / Hamilton M. Laing. 1979. British Columbia Provincial Museum special publication #3.
2. Article in Condor 1925 on Distribution of birds in British Columbia (160 pages) available through SORA at: http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Condor/cooper/SGML/pca_017/pca_017.html
3. Report by Francis Kermode published 1904 for the Provincial Museum, Victoria, entitled: Catalogue of British Columbia Birds available in plain ASCII text through Project Gutenberg at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/6329> . This report uses many of Brooks' sightings in the annotations.

Andy Buhler



Still no Eskimo Curlew: the birds of Ekati, NWT

I was sitting at home one morning last March when my phone rang and a voice enquired if I was interested in doing some bird survey work. "Where?" I asked. "At the Ekati diamond mine in the Northwest Territories". Well that piqued my interest right away and I soon accepted the offer. The project was for a Vancouver environmental consulting company and was part of the ongoing monitoring that is required at major mine sites. Actually, it wasn't quite that simple. It turned out there were many hoops to jump through before they were going to let any old birdwatcher set foot in this hallowed place. It began with an orientation meeting in downtown Vancouver, followed by medicals, vaccinations, criminal record checks, fingerprinting, first aid courses, resumes, character references and multiple form filling.

Eventually, on 31st May, I flew from Vancouver to Edmonton, Yellowknife and on to Ekati where I stayed from the 1st to the 14th of June 2007. The mine is situated in the Lac de Gras area at latitude 65°N, about 300 kilometres northeast of Yellowknife and 200 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle, close to the NWT-Nunavut border. Its location really defines "the middle of nowhere" with featureless, rolling tundra in all directions. This is the Barrenlands, a land of trillions of boulders, and a million lakes and ponds, largely still frozen. Snow patches covered about a quarter of the landscape, lying in the hollows and north facing aspects. The flora, largely mosses and lichens, ekes out a tenuous existence within a few centimetres of the ground.

The Ekati mine was the first in Canada's new diamond mining industry, and was discovered by the now legendary Chuck Fipke, who

literally found the needle in the haystack as he searched for diamonds in the inhospitable vastness of northern Canada. Ekati, now majority-owned by BHP Billiton of Australia, the biggest mining company in the world, is a huge operation with hundreds of people working 12 hour shifts, 24/7, to get the diamonds out. I found it interesting that it takes thousands of tons of supplies, in the way of fuel, machinery, food and for travel and manpower to extract the diamonds. Yet at the end of every day the product of all this effort and expenditure can be contained in a 2 litre coffee can. However, that can contains about \$3,000,000 worth of diamonds, or over \$1 billion in a year. There is also a glaring, fundamental disconnect between the cold, grey reality of Ekati, where huge trucks haul 100 ton loads of kimberlite from deep holes in the ground, to the end product, the tiny sparklers decorating the fingers of happy brides and the rich and glamorous women of the world.

Spring was late arriving in 2007, and the weather in the first two weeks of June was unrelentingly wintry with daytime temperatures of 0 – 4 °C and a perennial 20 knot northeast wind blowing in from the Arctic that created wind chills down to –12 °C. Into this hostile weather and landscape we came to run transects, counting all the birds seen and heard along bearings, as we hiked across the rocks, tussocks, snow banks and wetlands that constitute the tundra.

Habitat types on the Barrenlands are very limited. The most common is a dry heath-tundra with extensive boulder fields and a dwarf flora only a few centimeters tall. There are also large expanses of grassy marsh and shallow wetlands with water a few

centimeters deep. There are also deeper ponds and bigger lakes that were all still frozen over in early June, with melting only just beginning around the margins. Another common feature of the Barrenlands are the eskers, long sinuous ridges of fine grained outwash material deposited by streams under the ice sheets, that proved attractive to a few species of birds. A few higher, rocky crags that rise above the general elevation. Trees are barely represented in this hostile environment, but there is the occasional tiny patch of dwarf spruce and balsam fir, and small patches of dwarf birch, alder and *Vaccinium* in suitable locations. The human influences on this remote landscape are insignificant and largely confined to the camp buildings, the kimberlite pits, waste rock piles and a limited road system.

The environmental monitoring has been ongoing for more than a decade and the bird survey transects are the same ones every year. The transects are conducted on bearings with three surveyors walking side by side, about 25m apart, for a few hundred metres and then returning along the same bearing. All birds seen or heard within the plot are tallied. For the purposes of the monitoring there are regular plots and control plots. The regular plots are close to human influenced mine activity such as buildings, roads, pits, tailing ponds and airstrip, while the control plots are in remote locations accessible only by helicopter.

During the summer millions of birds migrate into this remote landscape to breed, and in early June we also caught the tail end of the northward migration of Tundra Swans, Canada Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese and Snow Geese that were heading for the Arctic coastal plain to breed.



Watery habitats such as the shallow marshes and the ice free edges of the bigger ponds and lakes hosted a variety of waterbirds including Common and Pacific loons and 9 species of duck. Two species of gull were observed, mainly Herring, with a minority of Glaucous.

Shorebirds are a significant feature of the Barrenlands avifauna and 11 species were noted. They are most abundant in the wet, grassy, shallow pond habitat type, where 5 species of calidrids (Pectoral, White-rumped, Least, Semipalmated and Stilt) can be found, with Least being abundant and Stilts surprisingly common. A sixth calidrid, Baird's Sandpiper, was very uncommon, and was confined to the dry, elevated habitat of the eskers. Semipalmated Plovers, Red-necked Phalaropes and Wilson's Snipe also frequented the wetter habitats. One unexpected species we recorded was a single Ruddy Turnstone, the first ever for the survey. I suspect this was a tardy migrant, as the species breeds only on the Arctic coastal plain and the Arctic islands. The final shorebird species recorded was American Golden Plover which frequents higher and drier habitats.

Raptors were poorly represented in the area, with only Rough-legged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and Short-eared Owl seen. Peregrines have opportunistically taken to nesting on the vertical walls of the kimberlite pipes of the mine, and the "Rough-legs" were also nesting on the rocky wall of a drainage channel excavated by the mine. Short-eared Owls were a regular sight patrolling over grassy habitats.

Perhaps the most iconic bird of the Barrenlands is the ptarmigan and two species are present, Willow and Rock. Willow Ptarmigan are abundant and they are characteristically seen crouching atop a prominent boulder, usually on the southwest side, to avoid

the worst of the freezing northeast wind. The birds were easy to spot on the tundra as they were still largely in their white winter plumage. They are quite tame, but when alarmed they flush and whirr away, protesting like demented sheep. Willow Ptarmigan are abundant and ubiquitous, with Rock Ptarmigan present in a ratio of about 1:10.

If ptarmigan are the icon of the Barrenlands, the most beautiful bird is certainly the Long-tailed Jaeger. It is always a thrill to see this species, with its graceful flight, long, streaming tail feathers, and lemon-coloured throat. It is especially welcome to observe this species regularly as it is so difficult to see elsewhere, with its essentially pelagic migration and wintering range. Parasitic Jaegers are also present and Ekati is within the breeding range of both species.

In the two weeks I was at Ekati I observed 13 passerine species. Finches and sparrows are abundant, and the three commonest species are Lapland Longspur, Savannah Sparrow and American Tree Sparrow, in that order. It is actually difficult to convey exactly how common the longspurs are. In the right habitat of tussocky grass, they are abundant, with closely distributed breeding territories, and as we walked the transects longspurs popped up constantly. The species is a real treat, as the males are resplendent in their black, white and rufous plumage, and their musical flight song is the memorable sound of the tundra, and is heard only on the breeding grounds. Savannah Sparrows are abundant in almost all grassy areas, and the same is true for Tree Sparrows in any brushy habitat.

Harris's Sparrows are common in the most barren of the boulder fields. The Ekati area is in the geographic centre of their breeding range and it should be remembered that this species is,

for all intents and purposes, Canada's only endemic breeding species. White-crowned Sparrows are sparsely present and are the least common of the sparrows. Both species of redpoll are present, twittering constantly as they fly overhead.

Of the remaining passerine species American Pipits and Horned Larks are fairly common on the dry heaths, while Common Ravens are extremely scarce. In two weeks we recorded three Yellow Warblers which are at the extremity of their northeastern range in this area. American Robins were recorded only twice, but one of these was a male bird that was present for the entire two weeks I was there. This bird had apparently established a territory around the helicopter base, a collection of a couple of buildings and associated human stuff. For two weeks this bird sang, promoting the merits of his lonely outpost, in the forlorn hope of attracting a non-existent female.

One of my clearest memories of the birds of Ekati relates to a Gray-cheeked Thrush. This species was present in small numbers, often using the few patches of stunted conifers. On one of the coldest days with a vicious northeast wind blowing hard, in the course of a transect I noticed a small brown bird cowering in a depression behind a rock. It proved to be a Gray-cheeked Thrush that just sat there with its head sunk in its shoulders. At the risk of sounding too anthropomorphic, this bird had the most miserable body language, and everything about it said "why the heck did I migrate thousands of kilometers from the nice, warm Amazon to this god forsaken, freezing tundra?"

On our last morning at Ekati we conducted an official Breeding Bird Survey on a route along one of the haul roads. At latitude 65N the survey had to begin at 2.30 AM, so we reluctantly arose at 1.15, grabbed



a coffee, and drove to the start point. The weather that day was absolutely abominable, with a temperature below freezing, a howling gale, drifting fog, and snow showers. The survey results reflected the weather and I was skunked with zero birds seen or heard at numerous of the 50 three minute stops. I can truthfully say that in a lifetime of birding this was the worst experience I have ever had, and the conclusion of the route was a cause for ecstatic celebration, as much for surviving it as anything else. Bottom line..... don't call me for the Christmas Bird Count here!

The Barrenlands are home to various mammals and during two weeks at Ekati we saw herds of caribou daily and also Grizzly Bear, wolves, fox, Arctic hares, ground squirrels and lemmings. The caribou we saw were actually the tail end of a massive migration that sees thousands of animals moving back north in the spring to their summer range on the Arctic coastal plain in the vicinity of Bathurst Inlet.

My two weeks at Ekati were interesting in every way. It was a great opportunity to experience the Barrenlands, which are a difficult place to access under normal circumstances. For a birder, spending two weeks surveying the birds of the area was exceptionally interesting and supplied some lifetime memories. On the down side, I won't soon forget that perennial, bitter northeast wind, or the Breeding Bird Survey featuring temperatures 20 °C colder than I'm accustomed to on Christmas Bird Counts. Also, I never saw either a diamond or an Eskimo Curlew. Maybe next year?

Tony Greenfield

Species Observed, June 1-14, 2007

Greater White-fronted Goose
Snow Goose
Canada Goose
Tundra Swan
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
Long-tailed Duck
Red-breasted Merganser
Willow Ptarmigan
Rock Ptarmigan
Pacific Loon
Common Loon
Rough-legged Hawk
Peregrine Falcon
American Golden Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Ruddy Turnstone
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Stilt Sandpiper
Wilson's Snipe
Red-necked Phalarope
Herring Gull
Glaucous Gull
Parasitic Jaeger
Long-tailed Jaeger
Short-eared Owl
Common Raven
Horned Lark
Gray-cheeked Thrush
American Robin
American Pipit
Yellow Warbler
American Tree Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Lapland Longspur
Common Redpoll
Hoary Redpoll

48 species

Bird-Listers' Corner

The "Listing Report Form" is essentially unchanged from last year's, but please note that there is now a category for the Yukon Territory, and 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.)

If any of you are aware of updated checklists for local areas 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, 2007. The deadline for reporting list totals to me is February 15, 2008. 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. For areas outside BC, consider submitting your listing totals to CANADIAN LISTERS' CORNER or the AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION (for details, see the Bird-listers' Corner column in the March 2007 of BC BIRDING).

Wayne C. Weber, Listing Editor



Help Wanted

BCFO is searching for someone to maintain membership records. The job entails keeping membership records up-to-date, preparing and printing mailing labels for both the newsletter and journal, and writing a brief report for the AGM. The present membership coordinator Rita Wege will be glad to answer and questions. Give her a call at 250.359.7234. Or contact Jim Ginns (ginnsj@shaw.ca or 250 492-9610).

Book Announcement

The world's 189 most threatened birds; essential reading for anyone interested in birds and their conservation. Birdlife International's Rare Birds Yearbook 2008 is now available. www.rarebirdsyearbook.com.

submitted by **Jo Ann MacKenzie**

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 BCFO's journal, *BC Birds*.
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.

Season's greetings and readings to all BCFO members

Just a quick note to let you know that books and reports owned by the BCFO membership, and which constitute the BCFO Library, are currently held in Vernon.

Krista has compiled quite a range of items but the collection will always welcome donations from the membership. Have any of you received books for review which you now no longer require in your libraries? Send them along. Have any of you had articles published regarding birds or birding in either BC or the Pacific Northwest? Can you spare a copy for the BCFO membership library? Have you found any good links to relevant materials in digital form? I found the following but there must be many more:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/library/FIA/2003/FIA-03-04-0036.pdf> or
http://srmapps.gov.bc.ca/appsdata/acat/documents/documents/r348/HowieandBison2003_1064873633231_44703063e22c455980efa72e1b43dcb5.pdf

Most of you know about SORA and the wealth of information to be found at its link (<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/>) but did you know that there are also a number of interesting BC reports available through the Ministry of Environment webpages:

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wld/pub/pubsearch.html>
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/reports.html> ?

There are also atlases which may be useful to some such as (NORHA), the The North Okanagan Resource / Habitat Atlas:

<http://www.shim.bc.ca/atlases/nord/index.cfm>

I have been having fun tracking down early reports of BC naturalists (and others) through Project Gutenberg (http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page) where I located such gems as Francis Kermode's 1904 "Catalogue of British Columbia Birds"; "A distributional list of the birds of British Columbia" by Allan Brooks and Harry S. Swarth published by the Cooper Ornithological Club in September 1925; and "Check list of British Columbia Birds" by John Fannin in 1891. Project Gutenberg is making many early documents available for no cost in digital form.

For an enlightening and entertaining read look up: "B. C. 1887 : a ramble in British Columbia" by J. A. Lees and W. J. Clutterbuck and published by Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888.

Don't forget that you may borrow BCFO materials from the BCFO Library. All it will cost you is the return postage. Remember to return items in a timely fashion so others can also make use of them.

Send me (Andy) an email note (brdrs@shaw.ca) or give me a call (250-260-7823) to discuss details.

Have a safe, happy and birdy Christmas season and all the best from **the Buhlers** in Vernon.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2007/08

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 further afield. For updates and / or corrections please send details to info@bcfo.ca. A **DNA** indicates that the **Date** was **Not Available** at press time. Data were accurate as known to the compilers on November 30, 2007. Please check with the area organizers for any late-breaking changes. Additional Washington State counts and contacts may be found at the Washington Ornithological Society [<http://www.wos.org/>] website.

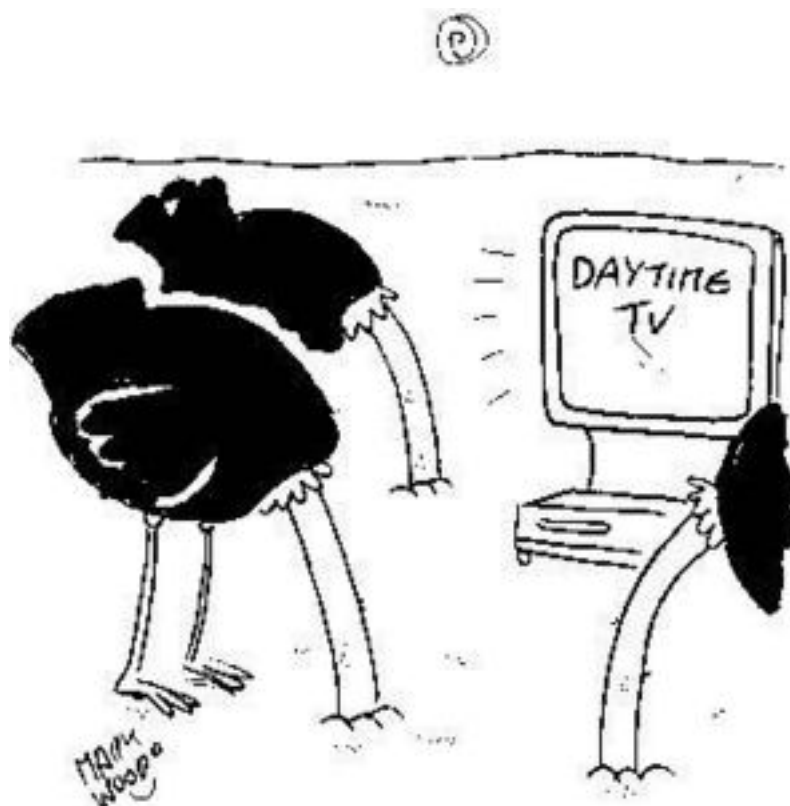
LOCALITY	DATE	ORGANIZER(S)	PHONE #	E-MAIL
Abbotsford / Mission	29 Dec 07	Lynn Miller Stan Olson	604-826-3839	lynnmelvinmiller@hotmail.com smkd@shaw.ca
Apex-Hedley	18 Dec 07	Eva Durance	250-492-0158	edurance@vip.net
Ashcroft	DNA	Karl Ricker	604-938-1107	
Bamfield	15 Dec 07	Anne Stewart	250-728-3301 ext. 226	astewart@bms.bc.ca
Bridenville	5 Jan 08	Doug Brown	250-495-6164	douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca
Bridge Lake	29 Dec 07	Wendy Marshall	250-593-2327	gwmarshall@xplornet.com
Burns Lake / Francois Lake	29 Dec 07	Judith Kleger	250-695-6585	jude@cyber-solutions.ca judeth@telus.net
Campbell River	29 Dec 07	Art Silkens	250-286-1495	esilkens@crcable.net
Cawston	30 Dec 07	Doug Brown	250-495-6164	douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca
Chilliwack	15 Dec 07	Denis Knopp	604-858-5141	bcwild@uniserve.com
Comox	16 Dec 07	Art Morgan	250-335-0565	canbirdinbc@aol.com
Cranbrook	29 Dec 07	Greg Ross	250-489-2566	gsross@shaw.ca
Creston	27 Dec 07	Sharon Laughlin	250-428-7289	slscat@xplornet.com
D'Arcy / Devine	19 Dec 07	Dan Cumming		rdcumming@uniserve.com
Dawson Creek	29 Dec 07	Mark Phinney Meredith Thornton	250-843-2318 250-782-7680	Mark.Phinney@lpcorp.com
Deep Bay	27 Dec 07	Art Morgan	250-335-0565	canbirdinbc@aol.com
Duncan	1 Jan 08	Derrick Marven	250-748-8405	marven@shaw.ca
Fauquier	19 Dec 07	Ruth Bumpus	250-269-7481	
Fernie	15 Dec 07	Bob Livsey	250-423-6699	naturebob@telus.net
Fort St. James	27 Dec 07	Joanne Vinnedge	250-996-7401	Joanne.Vinnedge@gov.bc.ca
Galiano Isl. / N. Saltspring	29 Dec 07	Mike Hoebel	250-539-2003	mhoebel@telus.net
Golden	27 Dec 07	Ellen Zimmerman	250-348-2225	ellenzim@uniserve.com
Harrison River	21 Dec 07	Denis Knopp	604-858-5141	bcwild@uniserve.com
Hat Creek	16 Dec 07	Ken Wright	250-571-5557	kengwright@telus.net
Kamloops	16 Dec 07	Rick Howie	250-578-7542	r.howie@shaw.ca
Kaslo	31 Dec 07	Dirk Pidcock	250-353-7539	edensong@netidea.com
Kelowna	15 Dec 07	Chris Charlesworth	250-718-0335	c_charlesworth23@hotmail.com
Kimberley	5 Jan 08	Greg Ross	250-489-2566	gsross@shaw.ca
Kingfisher	29 Dec 07	Jan Lacko	250-838-6882	j_lacko@hotmail.com
Kitimat	DNA	April MacLeod	250-632-3977	
Ladner	23 Dec 07	Jude Grass	604-538-8774	judegrass@shaw.ca
Lake Country	14 Dec 07	Trevor Forder	250-765-4082	trevorforder@okrestore.com
Lake Windermere District	26 Dec 07	Larry Halverson	250-342-3305	larryrh@telus.net
Lardeau	27 Dec 07	Gail Spitler	250-366-4601	spitler@direct.ca
Lasquetti Island	30 Dec 07	Sheila Ray		sheilara@island.net
Lillooet	29 Dec 07	Ken Wright	250-571-5557	kengwright@telus.net



Lower Howe Sound	28 Dec 07	Loys Maingon	604-886-3854	maingon@uniserve.com
Mackenzie	DNA	David Lambie	250-997-4033	DLambie@telus.net
McBride	16 Dec 07	Elsie Stanley	250-569-2596	stanleys@compositionsinwood.com
Greater Masset	15 Dec 07	Margo Hearne		delkatla@mhtv.ca
Mayne Island	15 Dec 07	Michael Dunn	250-539-5745	
Merritt	30 Dec 07	Wayne Weber	604-597-7201	contopus@telus.net
Nakusp	30 Dec 07	Gary Davidson		gsd37@yahoo.ca
Nanaimo	30 Dec 07	Bill Merilees	250-758-1801	bmerilees@hotmail.com
Nanoose Bay	14 Dec 07	Rhys Harrison	250-468-5466	rhys Harrison@shaw.ca
Narcosli	15 Dec 07	Tracy Bond	250-992-2295	tbond@quesnelbc.com
Nelson	15 Dec 07	Elaine Moore	250-352-2168	elmodass@telus.net
Oliver / Osoyoos	29 Dec 07	Doug Brown	250-495-6164	douglasbrown01@yahoo.ca
Parksville / Qualicum	16 Dec 07	Sandra Gray	250-248-5565	saninerr@shaw.ca
Pender Harbour	19 Dec 07	Tony Greenfield	604-885-5539	greenfieldtony@hotmail.com
Pender Island	15 Dec 07	Gerald McKeating	250-629-3840	geraldmckeating@shaw.ca
Penticton	16 Dec 07	Dick Cannings	250-496-4049	dickcannings@shaw.ca
Pitt Meadows	30 Dec 07	Michael Buckingham		mbucky@lightspeed.ca
Port Alberni	1 Jan 08	Sandy McRuer	250-723-5436	rainbird@rainbirdexcursions.com
Port Clements	30 Dec 07	Margo Hearne		delkatla@mhtv.ca
Powell River	16 Dec 07	Heather Harbord		hharbord@shaw.ca
Prince George	16 Dec 07	Cathy Antoniazzi	250-562-2845	canton@pgonline.com
Prince Rupert	DNA	Robin Weber	250-627-1129	rweber@citytel.net
Princeton	22 Dec 07	Dick Cannings	250-496-4049	dickcannings@shaw.ca
Quesnel	23 Dec 07	Adrian Leather		ade016@quesnelbc.com
Revelstoke	15 Dec 07	George Winingder	250-837-3655	geowin@telus.net
Salmon Arm	16 Dec 07	Ted Hillary	250-832-4755	thillary@sunwave.net
Saltspring Island	29 Dec 07	Gil Schultz	250-537-9469	gschultz@saltspring.com
S. Saltspring Isl. / Sidney	29 Dec 07	Anne Nightingale	250-652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
Saturna Island	15 Dec 07	Ilka Olsen	250-539-9920	aiolsen@telus.net
Shuswap Lake Park	15 Dec 07	Rick Howie	250-578-7542	r.howie@shaw.ca
Skidegate Inlet	16 Dec 07	Margo Hearne		delkatla@mhtv.ca
Smithers	30 Dec 07	Jane Hoek	250-846-9231	4139hija@bulkley.net
Sooke	22 Dec 07	Denise Gubersky	250-642-3996	dgubersky@telus.net
Squamish	16 Dec 07	Marcia Danielson	604-898-9420	myd123@telus.net
Sunshine Coast	15 Dec 07	Tony Greenfield	604-885-5539	greenfieldtony@hotmail.com
Terrace	16 Dec 07	Diane Weismiller	250-635-6984	dweismiller@telus.net
Tlell	29 Dec 07	Margo Hearne		delkatla@mhtv.ca
Vancouver	16 Dec 07	Adrian Grant Duff	604-263-7957	a-grantduff@shaw.ca
Vanderhoof	16 Dec 07	Karen Krushelnick	250-567-9579	Karen.Krushelnick@gov.bc.ca
Vaseux Lake	27 Dec 07	Dick Cannings	250-496-4049	dickcannings@shaw.ca
Vernon	16 Dec 07	Erin Nelson	250-545-6878	eenelson@telus.net
Victoria	15 Dec 07	Anne Nightingale	250-652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
Whistler	14 Dec 07	Karl Ricker Michael Thompson	604-938-1107 604-932-5010	redpath@telus.net
White Rock & Surrey (Langley)	30 Dec 07	Viveka Ohman	604-531-3401	ohmanv@hotmail.com
Williams Lake	16 Dec 07	Phil Ranson	250-398-7110	ranson1@telus.net



<u>NOTES:</u>				
Interior Swan & Eagle Count	13 Jan 08	Rick Howie	250-578-7542	r.howie@shaw.ca
<u>WASHINGTON</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>BORDER</u>	<u>AREAS</u>	
<u>LOCALITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>ORGANIZER(S)</u>	<u>PHONE #</u>	<u>E-MAIL</u>
Bellingham	16 Dec 07	Joe Meche	360-739-5383	joemeche@aol.com
Cle Elum	19 Dec 07	Michael Hobbs	425-869-2370	BirdMarymoor@verizon.net
Port Angeles	29 Dec 07	Barb Blackie	360-477-8028	blackieb@olypen.com
Pt. Angeles/Victoria Ferry	16 Dec 07	Scott Atkinson	206-406-2306	scottratkinson@hotmail.com
Seattle	29 Dec 07	Seattle Audubon	206-523-8243 ext. 80	adams@seattleaudubon.org
Toppenish NWR	16 Dec 07	Andy Stepniewski	509-877-6639	steppie@nwinfo.net



From The Spectator, London; Courtesy CanWest News Service.

Authors in this Issue

Ted Goshulak

Ted Goshulak is the University Librarian at Trinity Western University, Langley, and an avid birder.

Tony Greenfield

Tony was a founding member of BCFO and served as president 1996-2000. He is a director of BCFO, the BCFO Field Trip Coordinator and is proud to have attended 15 of BCFO's 16 AGM's to date. Tony has been a birder on the Sunshine Coast since 1971, authored the local checklist, writes a birding column in the Coast Reporter, and is president of the Sunshine Coast Natural History Society. Tony is the owner of Whiskeyjack Nature Tours and guides tours in BC, Yukon, the western USA and Panama.

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TOURS FOR NATURALISTS



ARIZONA IN FEBRUARY

21 February-2 March 2008 (11 days)

Cost \$2050 (dbl occup) from Phoenix

Arizona is home to some of the most unique, famous and unforgettable landscapes in the world. The Grand Canyon, the mesas and buttes of Monument Valley and the silhouette of a saguaro against a golden sunset are images so famous that we have grown up with them since childhood.

The tour incorporates all of the elements that make Arizona such a memorable destination and in the space of 11 days we will experience many of its most beautiful and famous landscapes including **The Grand Canyon, Monument Valley,**

Canyon de Chelly, Sedona, the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, and a mystery destination known only to the leader.

Our tour is an introduction to the **landscapes and life zones** of Arizona. It will not be a birding trip per se, but we will certainly observe characteristic species of the Southwest such as **Roadrunner, Cactus Wren, Phainopepla, Gambel's Quail and Gila Woodpecker.**

Join us for a mid-winter tour to the blue skies and fascinating deserts of this famous state.



YUKON & DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

Tour III, 19-29 June 2008 (11 days) Tour IV, 1-11 July 2008 (11 days)

Cost \$2900+GST (dbl occup) from Whitehorse

The Yukon is a fabled land whose very name evokes archetypal images of wilderness and a frontier populated by colourful characters. It is a land of untrammelled wilderness and the midnight sun, the immortal characters, real and imagined, of the Klondike gold rush, Sam McGee and Diamond Tooth Gertie, the heroic men of the Northwest Mounted Police, and the inspiring sentiments of the bard of the Yukon, Robert Service. On this tour we will experience both the natural and human landscapes of this fascinating and beautiful land, visiting the Klondike, the Dempster Highway, the Mackenzie Delta, and the Arctic Ocean.

The heart of our adventure is the drive up the Dempster Highway from Dawson City to Inuvik. The Dempster, 750 kms of

good gravel, is the only public road in North America that extends north of the Arctic Circle. Along its route we cross two mountain ranges, traverse wild river valleys, muskeg and tundra, and cross the mighty Mackenzie River on a ferry. At latitude 66N we cross the Arctic Circle and enter the Land of the Midnight Sun.

The Dempster is renowned as a naturalist's paradise with its varied and beautiful landscapes, large mammals, myriad wildflowers and much sought after birds such as Gyrfalcon, Willow Ptarmigan, Long-tailed Jaeger, Hawk Owl, Wheatear and Smith's Longspur.

Join us on this adventure to the Land of the Midnight Sun, the big country immortalized by Robert Service.....the Yukon.

Leaders: Tony Greenfield & Dr. Rand Rudland

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Collared Bush Robin, Formosan Whistling-Thrush, Steere's Liocichla, Taiwan Barwing, White-eared Sibia, Taiwan Yuhina, Yellow Tit, Flamecrest, Formosan Magpie, White-whiskered Laughingthrush, Swinhoe's and Mikado Pheasants are 12 of Taiwan's 15 generally recognized endemics. (Some authors recognize up to 29.) There are over 60 endemic sub-species such as Black-browed [Taiwan] 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. In May, visit Lanyu Island with 6 bird specialties of its own, including an endemic subspecies of Ryukyu Scops-Owl. The globally threatened Black-faced Spoonbill winters in the Tsengwen Estuary.

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

NEXT TRIPS:

2008: May 5–18: Endemics, Fairy Pitta, Lanyu Island

July 19–20: Matsu; Chinese Crested Tern; **July 21–26:** Extension; endemics

Nov. 4–16: Endemics, Black-faced Spoonbill

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

13 days: From Taipei, Taiwan: \$4000 (sharing); \$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: 1–10, with 2 leaders, Simon Liao and Jo Ann MacKenzie

Private tours can be arranged.

CONTACT:

Jo Ann MacKenzie 15341 – 21 Avenue, Surrey, BC, V4A 6A8, Canada

Tel: 604-538-1676 Email: j.a.mackenzie@telus.net

Simon Liao

Email: birdingintaiwan@yahoo.com.tw, in Taiwan



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<http://www.birdingintaiwan.org>

