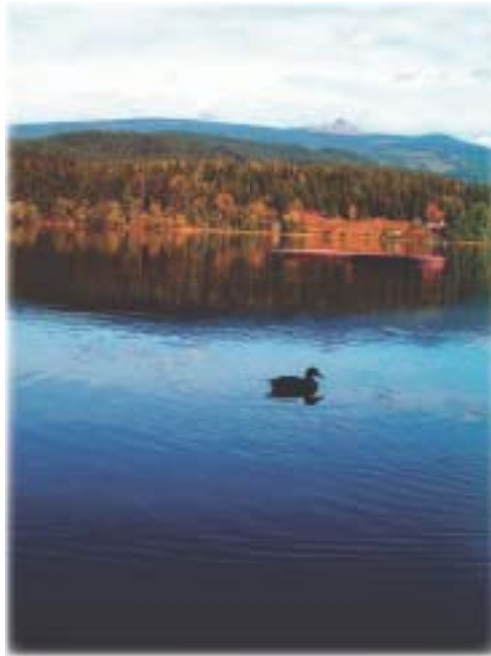


BC BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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Volume 18 Number 4 / December 2008



Jana Sasaki

Dutch Lake, Clearwater, B.C. An AGM field trip.

BCFOs 19th Annual Conference

The 2009 BCFO conference will be held at the Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge, June 26-28, 2009. Further information is contained in this issue but we will start here with the field trips.

IDA DEKELVER'S PROPERTY

It is about a 10 minute drive from the BCFO venue at ~ 400 m (1300 ft) elevation to Ida Dekelver's property at ~ 670 m (2200 ft) elevation. Rubber boots may be desirable as the 32 hectares (80 acres) have considerable boggy, marshy land and a clearing, unused for many years, has become a shrubby grassland. A Cedar-Hemlock zone with willows and other wetland vegetation covers the banks of Candle Creek. Some drier forested areas occur as well. Ida has gathered local artifacts to display in an old museum on the property.

Possible bird sightings include: Sparrows - Lincoln's, Chipping, and Song; Hummingbirds - Rufous and Calliope; Woodpeckers - Red-naped Sapsucker, Northern Flicker, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Three-toed; Thrushes - Swainson's and Varied; Flycatchers - Least and Dusky; Warblers - American Redstart,

please see Clearwater, page 4



In This Issue

BCFO 19th Annual Conference: field trips.....	1
BCFO Officers and Directors; Membership Information.....	2
Editor's Notes and Notions / Internet Sources	3
BCFO research grants / Annual conference field trips	4
Annual conference details	5
Annual conference schedule	6
Upcoming meetings and events.....	7
<i>B.C. Birding</i> news briefs	8-9
British Columbia Bird Sightings .	9-10
Advertisements.....	11-12

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

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

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

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

Membership Dues

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

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

Membership Dues:

Individual memberships	\$30.00
Library subscriptions.....	\$30.00
Junior memberships (age under 18).....	\$20.00
U.S. and foreign memberships.....	\$30.00 (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

Guy L. Monty (Editor, *BC Birding*)
P.O. Box 303, Nanoose Bay, BC V9P 9J9
250-821-8888 / guylmonty@gmail.com

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

Advertising

Advertising rates are available upon request.

BCFO Website

<http://www.bcfo.ca>



Retiring Editor's Notes and Notions

by *Phil Henderson*

Holy Cowbird! Five years have gone by since I took over the editorship of *BC Birding* from Andy and Marilyn Buhler. Now, Guy and Donna Monty have kindly agreed to step in and take over as editors. So this is my official last issue, the last issue being my unofficial last issue as I waited, hopefully, for someone to jump in and carry the torch. I say "my" last with a bit of reservation because the newsletter is really a compilation of (mainly) members contributions; it is you, the reader and BCFO member who fills the pages and stimulates the readers. As an editor I hope that I have represented each contributor faithfully and fairly and presented their material in a clear, legible and possibly sometimes attractive manner.

I have enjoyed my time as editor of *BC Birding* and thank all of the contributors, big and small, the directors and of course Rita Wege, past stalwart membership gal, and Ted and Jenifer Goshulak who have efficiently and cheerfully ensured that the newsletters were delivered.

One of the issues that concerned me when I first pondered this position was the politics: the differences of opinions that can split members and fractionalize an organization. In any group in which people are passionate about their subjects (and I challenge anyone to name a group more passionate than birders) there will be differences of opinion. This is a good thing. I hope people will continue to voice (and write) their opinions and others will, firstly, accept them and then either support them if they agree or challenge them if they don't. It is sometimes difficult to isolate an opinion from the person giving the opinion, much the same way it is difficult to isolate a particularly bad

haircut (butchered scalp) from its unfortunate owner, or a sublime coif from the radiant coifee. Either way that coif may soon change, as may one's perception of it. My pre-editor fears were quelled in discussions with people before taking this post and laid to rest during my term. It seems that, no matter the differences, in the end all parties realize the penultimate interest is the flock (the BCFO) and the ultimate interest is the birds which the BCFO serves.

BCFO is an important voice for the birds and, by association, the natural features of this province on which they rely. I am honoured to have served as editor of *BC Birding*, a perch and conduit for important voices to entertain, inform and challenge.

Wayne Diakow deserves heaps of gratitude for once again putting together the AGM, this year in Clearwater in June. Details are provided in this issue. A separate registration form and waiver are included with this issue, as is a list of accommodations near Clearwater. Check the BCFO website for updates. Martin McNicholl keeps us current with lists of meetings and events and news briefs of interest to members. Don Cecile is back with his round-up of bird sightings for Winter and Spring, 2007/2008.

I thank all members for these past five enjoyable years.

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 Breeding Bird Atlas

www.birdatlas.bc.ca

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.

<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>

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.

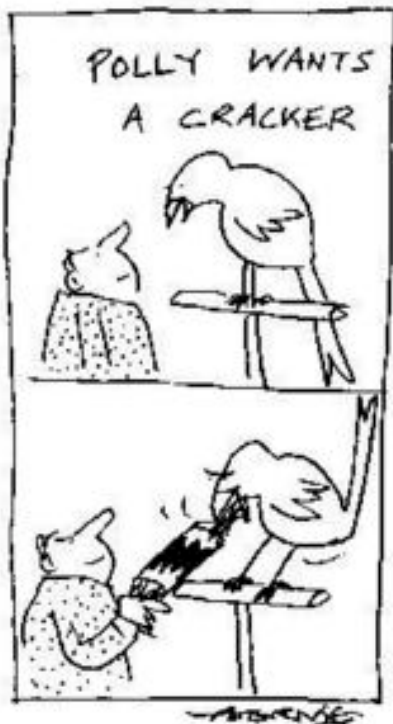
<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/>



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 up to a \$1000 limit and within the financial strength of the organization will be considered, with any larger requests requiring approval at the AGM.
6. Applicants should obtain a copy of the grant policy and the application guidelines from a member of the executive before any submission.



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

Clearwater cont. from page 1

and Wilson's; Kinglets - Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned; Vireos - Cassin's, Red-eyed and Warbling; Jays - Gray and Steller's; along with Cedar Waxwings, Black-capped Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Pine Siskins, Winter Wrens, Ruffed Grouse and maybe a Red-tailed Hawk, Wilson's Snipe or American Dipper. Brown Creepers have been seen nearby.

DUTCH LAKE

If you plan on camping and bringing a canoe, you could launch from a campground into a little gem of water, Dutch Lake, in the center of the community. With an island to canoe around, this small lake has a beautiful vista of Raft Mountain. Otherwise you can walk around the lake itself.

You can expect to see a Common Loon and likely a Common Merganser. Other possibilities are Spotted Sandpiper, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Mallard, and perhaps an Osprey or Bald Eagle. Of course there should be warblers, sparrows, etc. that frequent the vegetation along the lake shore.

If you want to stretch your legs, you have the option of walking the cross-country ski trails through mixed forest at the north end of the lake to seek Dark-eyed Juncos, chickadees, nuthatches, woodpeckers (Downy, Hairy, Pileated, Three-toed, Red-naped Sapsucker, and Northern Flicker), kinglets, vireos, jays, sparrows, and some warblers. You can then loop back along the Clearwater River Trail.

BLACKPOOL MARSHES: RON AND TINA COLBORNE'S PROPERTY

About a 15 minute drive from the BCFO venue to the marsh just off the highway south of Clearwater at an elevation of about 400 m (1300 ft). The habitat includes extensive cattail marshes along Lost Creek bordered by rocky cliffs and open fields. The trail, actually an old gated road to walk, ascends into mixed forest and clearcuts to an elevation of about 670 m (2200 ft).

Possible bird sightings near the marshland include Sora, Red-winged, Yellow-headed, and Brewer's Blackbird, Marsh Wren, warblers (Common Yellowthroat, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Wilson's and Nashville), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Violet-green Swallow, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Warbling Vireo, Varied Thrush, Steller's Jay, Western Tanager, Red-tailed Hawk, Western Meadowlark, Long-billed Curlew, and a variety of waterfowl. There are further possibilities in the mixed forest above the marsh.

TROPHY MEADOW HIKE

A 13 km, 40 minute drive (~ 1000 m elevation gain) from the Clearwater Valley Road near Spahats Falls winds through Cedar-Hemlock forest to the parking lot at approximately 1700 m elevation. Depending on the amount of time spent viewing birds, the hike might be roughly be a 4 hour (6 km) return trip with fairly easy grades to an old cabin with about a 200 m elevation gain. (Those wanting to get a few hundred meters higher in the alpine for a better chance to see ptarmigan may need to walk faster or skip some of the species lower down.)

After a ten minute hike through part of an old replanted clear-cut, a good trail through Engelmann Spruce - Subalpine Fir may reveal Hermit and Varied Thrush, Gray and Steller's Jays, Mountain and Boreal Chickadees, Red Crossbill, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Dusky and Spruce Grouse, Dark-eyed Juncos, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatches and Winter Wrens. About an hour from the trailhead the Trophy Meadows appear, perhaps covered in Glacier Lilies at the end of June. The meadows may sport Chipping, Lincoln's, Savannah, Fox, White-crowned, and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Above the meadows in the alpine, American Pipits, Gray-crowned Rosy Finches, and White-tailed Ptarmigan may be seen.



CLEARWATER

BRITISH COLUMBIA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS 19TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 19th Annual Conference will be held at the Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge in picturesque Clearwater, B.C. on the weekend of June 26-28, 2009. This year will incorporate some new ways of dealing with the conference.

Most importantly there will be just one flat rate for the Conference, this one price will include the “meet and greet” on Friday night which will include cheese, meat and veggie platters and non-alcoholic beverages. The bar will be open from 6:00 until 10:00 and all drinks and wine are \$4.00 per serving. Also included are 1) breakfasts both days which will be bagels and cream cheese, assorted muffins, toast, jams, jellies, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, water and juices; 2) lunches both days which will include soup, sub sandwiches, pasta salad, coleslaw, fruit platter, desserts, tea, coffee and juices and 3) the banquet dinner.

The banquet will be held at the Ski Hill Lodge in Clearwater. This will include pork loin roast, stuffed chicken breasts, Baron of beef, salads, wild rice, potatoes, steamed veggies and desserts.

In the past our conferences have barely broke even and it has become an accountant’s nightmare to keep track of who paid for what, especially when people change their minds. The directors decided that the changes were necessary; it is actually how most other conferences are charged.

OTHER EVENTS



Birding field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Annual general meeting and technical presentations on Saturday afternoon at the Ski Hill Lodge in Clearwater.

Guest speaker at the Banquet on the Saturday night.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCOMODATION:

Transportation to the conference and accommodation are up to the individual(s) to arrange. Camping is available at many spots including Birch Island Campground (250-674-3991), Clearwater/Wells Gray KOA (250-674-3909) or the North Thompson River Provincial Park Campground (250-674-2194).

Check this link for lots of Motel options: <http://www.gonorthwest.com/BC/okanagan/clearwater/clwaterhotels.htm>
(Note that some of the accomodations listed may be quite far from the conference. Before booking, check the accomodations with those listed on the separate accomodation sheet.)

REGISTRATION

The conference fees are: \$120.00 per person which includes all of the above.

Attendance is limited to BCFO members and spouses/family members. You may join BCFO at the same time as you register for the conference. Please refer to the inside front page of this issue for membership fees.

For information contact: Wayne Diakow at wdiakow@shaw.ca

A registration form is provided in this issue of *BC Birding*



19TH ANNUAL BCFO CONFERENCE @ CLEARWATER, BC

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, June 26, 2009

6:00 – 9:00 P.M. Registration & Social Hour @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge.

SATURDAY, June 27, 2009

5:30 A.M. Breakfast & Field Trips from Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge, return by 11:45.

12:00 – 1:00 P.M. Catered Lunch @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge.

1:00 – 2:00 pm Technical Session @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge.

Speaker A TBA

Speaker B TBA

2:00 – 2:30 Break

2:30 – 3:45 Technical Session @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge.

Speaker C TBA

Speaker D TBA

3:45 – 5:30 pm Annual General Meeting @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge.

6:00 – 7:00 pm Social Hour @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge, (Cash Bar).

7:00 – 10:00 pm Banquet @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge.

Guest Speaker TBA

SUNDAY, June 28, 2009

5:30 A.M. Breakfast & Field Trips from Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge, return by 11:45.

12:00 – 1:00 P.M. Catered Lunch @ Clearwater Ski Hill Lodge and wrap up.



Upcoming Meetings and 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 is listed in the bimonthly *Ornithological Newsletter* and, for readers with inter-net access, on BIRDNET at www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/BIRDMEET.html.

- February 18-21 2009 SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY & WASHINGTON CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY, Stevenson, WA. Contact: Aimee McIntyre [address and phone number not yet announced]; e-mail: mcintam@dfw.wa.gov.
- February 22-25 2009 36TH PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP MEETING, Hakodate, Hokkaido, Japan. Contact details not yet published. Internet information: URL:<http://www.pacificseabirdgroup.org/>
- March 27-30 2009 43RD SEABIRD GROUP AGM & TENTH INTERNATIONAL SEABIRD GROUP CONFERENCE, Bruges (Brugge), Belgium. Contact: Jan Says or Eric Stienen [addresses and phone numbers not yet published]; e-mail: seabirdconf2009@vliz.be.
- April 8-12 2009 2009 ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY & ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS, Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Todd Katzner, Dept. Conservation & Field Res., National Aviary, 700 Arch St., Allegheny Commons West, Pittsburgh, PA 16212; phone (412) 323-7235 x 210; e-mail: todd.katzner@aviary.org.
- April 15-18 2009 79TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Tucson, AZ. Contact details not yet published. Internet information: <http://www.cooper.org>.
- April 30-May 2 2009 B.C. NATURE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Duncan, B.C. Contact details not yet published.
- August 12-15 2009 127TH MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, Philadelphia, PA. Contact: Robert L. Curry, Dept. of Biol., 800 Lancaster Ave., Villanova Univ., Villanova, PA 19085-1699; phone (610) 519-6455; e-mail: curry@villanova.edu.
- August 20-23 2009 28TH ANNUAL MEETING, SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS, Edmonton, AB. Contact: Erin Bayne, Dept. Biol. Sci., Univ. Alberta, CW 405, Biol. Sciences Centre, Edmonton, AB T6G 2E9; phone (780) 492-4165; e-mail: baynee@ualberta.ca OR Susan Hannon, Dept. Biol. Sci., Univ. Alberta, CW 405, Biol. Sci. Centre, Edmonton, AB T6G 2E9; phone (780) 492-7544; e-mail: sue.hannon@ualberta.ca.
- September 29-October 4 2009 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, Pitlochry, Scotland. Contact: Ruth Tingay [address and phone number not yet published], e-mail: dimlylit100@hotmail.com.
- April 15-19, 1910 HAWK MIGRATION ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA CONFERENCE, Duluth, MN. Contact details not yet published.
- August 22-28 2010 25TH INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, Campos do Jordao, Brazil. Contact: Prof. Dr. Cristina Yumi Miyaki [no address or phone number announced]. e-mail: ioc2010@ib.usp.br.
- August 14-18 2012 5TH NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE, Vancouver, B.C. Precise dates to be confirmed; contact information and participating organizations not yet announced.

Thanks to Ken H. Morgan for contributing to this issue of this compilation.



B.C. Birding News Briefs

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

New Gull Genera Adopted by A.O.U. and Gulls Shuffled –The 49th supplement to the AOU check-list of North American birds (eighth supplement since seventh edition) contains no “lumping” or “splitting” that affect species documented to occur in B.C. However, the large genus *Larus* that included all but five of the gull species known to have flown into B.C. air space has been split into four genera. The scientific name of Bonaparte’s Gull is now *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*, that of Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, that of Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*, that of Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*, and that of Franklin’s Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan*. The gull species that have been documented to occur in B.C. have also been shuffled into the following order: Black-legged and Red-legged kittiwakes and Ivory, Sabine’s, Bonaparte’s, Black-headed, Little, Ross’s, Laughing, Franklin’s, Black-tailed, Heermann’s, Mew, Ring-billed, Western, California, Herring, Thayer’s, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, Slaty-backed, Glaucous-winged, Glaucous and Great Black-backed gulls. –based on R. C. Banks *et al.* 2008. *Auk* 125:758-768.

Thanks, Ken –An e-mail of 4 September 2008 from former *B.C. Birds* Editor John B. Sprague brought the news that Ken H. Morgan had resigned from the journal’s editorial board. Ken served in this important volunteer capacity from 1994 through 2008, aiding both John and I in evaluating and editing many of the manuscripts submitted during our terms as journal editors. Many manuscripts were improved considerably in response to his advice.

Order Splits? –Birders are used to frequent splitting and lumping of bird species, but shuffling at higher taxonomic levels occurs less frequently. Recent proposals that might be considered in the recent future, however, including splitting of the waterbird order Pelecaniformes into three orders, with tropicbirds and pelicans each elevated to separate orders, splitting of the long-legged wader order Ciconiiformes into two orders, with herons and ibises no longer grouped with storks, the sunbittern family elevated to order level, splitting off from the order of rails, cranes and several small families, the small [five species] potoo family split out of Caprimulgiformes (goatsuckers, etc.) into a new order, splitting Falconiformes into Falconiformes and Accipitriformes and moving Cathartidae [New World Vultures] back out of Accipitriformes again. –based on e-mail from J. Van Remsen, Jr. to other members of the A.O.U. Check-list Committee 30 June 2008, forwarded by R. C. Banks to C.S. Houston and from C.S. Houston to M.K.M.

Speirs Award to Martin –A 25 Sept./08 e-mail from new Society of Canadian Ornithology President David M. Bird to SCO members brought the welcome news that Kathy Martin of the Canadian Wildlife Service and University of B.C. received the 2008 Doris H. Speirs Award for contributions to ornithology in Canada. Kathy and I shared a study area near Courtenay on Vancouver Island when she studied robins for her M.Sc. under Fred C. Zwickel. She then returned to her native Prince Edward Island for awhile, undertook a PhD. Program at Queen’s University and held a couple of other positions in Ontario and Alberta before assuming her present position. She has undertaken considerable research on ptarmigan, alpine birds and forest birds in collaboration with numerous colleagues and students, and has served the naturalist and ornithological communities in various positions, including as President of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

Federation Awards –Rick Howie of Kamloops was the most ornithological of the recipients of the spring 2008 awards bestowed on naturalists by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists. Rick was given the Outstanding Naturalist Award for contributions to the Kamloops and North Shushwap Naturalist Clubs for his efforts in organizing and compiling Christmas Bird Counts at four locations and organizing surveys of waterfowl, eagles, two grouse species and Long-billed Curlews, some of which were published in *B.C. Birding* or its predecessors and for his education and mentoring of many naturalists in interior B.C. Not mentioned in the citation were his contributions to B.C.F.O. or his outstanding owl studies. Bird studies and preservation of bird habitat also featured in citations for the Elton Anderson Award to Fred McMechan of Williams Lake, a B.C. Nature Recognition Award to Richard Armstrong of the Sylix Nation and a B.C. Nature Regional Award to Ralph Ritcey of Kamloops (and formerly Wells Gray Park). –based on P. Westheuser. 2008. *B.C. Nature* 46(3):9-10.

Sealy Doubly Honored –Dr. Spencer G. Sealy of the University of Manitoba recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Pacific Seabird Group (Anonymous. 2008. [*University of Manitoba*] *Faculty of Science Alumni Newsletter* April 2008:3). Seabird aspects of Spencer’s research have been conducted primarily in B.C. and Alaska. Spencer also received the American Ornithologists’ Union’s Elliott Coues Award for “extraordinary contributions



to ornithological research” during the A.O.U.’s 126th Stated Meeting in Portland, Oregon during August 2008 (Anonymous. 2008. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 186:2).

B.C. Student Travel Awards –Alaine Camfield and Danika Kleiber of U.B.C. and Samantha Franks of Simon Fraser University were three of 105 students that received 2008 travel grants to the 126th Stated Meeting of the American Ornithologists’ Union meeting in Portland, Oregon –based on T. Peterson. 2008. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 186:2-3.

Hilda & Werner Hesse –While driving Tony Greenfield and I to a meeting in Sidney on 18 October 2008, R. Wayne Campbell conveyed the sad news that Hildegard E. and Werner H. Hesse had both passed away recently. The Hesses contributed numerous bird records to *Audubon Field Notes/American Birds* from coastal areas of B.C., compiled and participated in Ladner and Christmas bird counts and published notes on birds in scientific journals (See R. W. Campbell *et al.* 1990. *The Birds of British Columbia*. Vol. 1:36-37 and Anonymous. 2006. *Wildlife Afield* 3:86-87).

British Columbia Bird Sightings: Winter / Spring : 2007 / 2008

by **Donald G. Cecile**

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On the whole, this was a colder than normal winter across the region. There were only minor Arctic outbreaks during December but frequent enough to make their presence felt. The big news was the Deep Freeze that set in during the last week of January and the first ten days of February. Bitterly cold air down into the -40s across the northern third of the region, the -30s across central sections and -20s across the southern inland sections held sway during this period. Even on the coast, outflow winds kept things relatively frigid. The traditional winter thaw waited until this episode was over to kick in. Valley and alpine snowpacks were near normal everywhere by the end of the winter season. A persistent pool of warm water out by the dateline built a huge ridge there which anchored a cold trough over the Region through the bulk of the spring season. The result was the coldest spring in over 40 years at most locations. There was even snow at valley level on Vancouver Island in the third week of April, the latest ever. The pattern finally switched to warm and dry the middle of May. Deciduous greenup was a good two weeks late.

Abbreviations and symbols: m.obs., many observers; ad, adult; ph, photographed; †, field notes submitted.

Swans through Shorebirds

A very late immature swan, thought to be a Trumpeter, was photographed from a distance near Atlin, 25 Jan (ph AL) where any swan would be remarkable in winter. Very rare in winter in the Interior, a male Eurasian Wigeon was along the Penticton beachfront 28 Jan (RJC). An imm Tufted Duck was on Yellow Lake, e. of Williams Lake 13 Apr (ph. PR) and an adult male was at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary in Delta 25Apr– 1 May (m.obs.), an ad male was on O’Keefe’s Pond near Vernon 24 Mar (GSD, CS). Very rare so far north, a pair of Hooded Mergansers was at King Salmon Lake, near Atlin 28 May (MC). A story much more likely to be heard from coastal birders of a trio of loons, actually occurred in the Interior on Osoyoos Lake when Common, a single Pacific and a single Yellow-billed Loon were all observed 13 Jan (LN). During a trip off Ucluelet, a trio of Albatrosses was observed! Among several Black-footed Albatrosses and multiple Laysan Albatrosses, was a single **Short-tailed Albatross** 7 Jan (KC) for a 9th regional record. During a ferry ride on the MV Coho, a Buller’s Shearwater was seen 2 kms south of the Ogden Point breakwater, Victoria 19 Dec (GLM), this species is unheard of in winter, and even less expected in the strait of Juan de Fuca. Most often found in New Zealand waters, a very tired **Cook’s Petrel** was picked up alive in

Lillooet Dec 6 (ph IR, KW) which likely arrived with the recent ‘Pineapple Express’. This bird had crashed into a homeowner’s front door, apparently attracted to the light in a heavy ice-storm.

A Great Egret furnished one of few interior sightings at Salmon Arm 3 May (TH). Casual in spring, a Cattle Egret was a surprise at Otter Lake, near Vernon 18 May (PB) and furnished a first spring record for the Okanagan.

Swainson’s Hawks are very rare along the coast, especially in spring, yet one light morph adult was observed at Derby Reach Regional Park, Langley 5 May (DTy). Kelowna’s returning Gyrfalcon remained until 9 Mar (CC *et. al.*) one of few reported this winter. Long overdue, Canada’s first **Eurasian Dotterel** was photographed at Sandspit Airport, Queen Charlotte Islands, 23 Apr (ph. PH). A single Black-necked Stilt was at the s. end of Columbia Lake, east Kootenays 27 Apr (CG) and 13 there 30 Apr (ED); another single was at Elizabeth L. 28 Apr (DN); and 10 were at Alki L. Kelowna 14 May (RyT) with the furthest west, a pair in Tsawwassen 23 May (TG). Very rare in the interior, a Whimbrel was on the mudflats in the sw corner of Duck L. north of Creston 3 May (MAB). Canada’s 4th CBC record for Pectoral Sandpiper was a single from the Sunshine Coast 15–27 Dec (TG, *et al.*). A single Ruff was found at Beach Grove,



Tsawwassen 12–14 Apr (IP et. al.). Rare on the coast, a pair of Wilson's Phalaropes were discovered and photographed at Holden Creek Nanaimo 24 May (ph RC); and another pair in Victoria 25 May (AL); and then there was evidence of a coastal invasion with 21 at Iona 26 May (MT) and 28 in Tsawwassen 27 May (MT).

Gulls through Finches

While there have been a few prior reports of **Kamchatka Gull** in the region, none has been so well photographed as the individual at Jordan River 26 Dec (ph RTo) this gull is otherwise considered accidental in the Region. An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull, likely a returning individual, remained through the winter wandering between Vernon and Penticton and last reported from Gellatly Bay, Kelowna 6 Feb (EF). A few Slaty-backed Gulls were reported with singles: at the Vancouver Landfill 23 Dec (JK, MT); a basic II was at the Sooke River Estuary 27 Jan (ph RTo, LH); an adult at Boundary Bay 27 Jan (MT, JT) and one remained late in Boundary Bay 6 Apr (MT, JT). Elegant Terns are very rarely reported this far north, one was seen in flight past Jordan River 24 May (RTo, LH). Seen in the company of Common Murres, an adult basic **Parakeet Auklet** (†RTo, LH) was close to shore off Botanical Beach Park, Port Renfrew, otherwise casual in the region and usually well offshore in the deep water zone. Eurasian Collared-Doves now appear to have a foothold in the s. Okanagan with as many as 10 appearing at an Oliver feeder 14 May (SK).

A male **Costa's Hummingbird**, casual spring vagrant, visited a feeder in Abbotsford 28 Apr to 5 May (GG). Calliope Hummingbirds are very rare on the coast in spring with a single photographed at a feeder in Saanich 23 Apr (ph TZ) and yet another on Burnaby Mountain 3 May (DP, GC). A young male Rufous Hummingbird spent the winter in the Nanaimo area, one of very few winter records 2 Jan–20 Feb (GF et. al.). Williamson's Sapsuckers returned early this year with at least 3 at August Lake sw Princeton 9 Mar (DTy, LG). A White-headed Woodpecker was at Wynndel near Creston 20 Dec (GT) for a third West Kootenay record. Very rare, west of the Rockies, an Eastern Phoebe was at French Creek, Qualicum 22 Apr (ph JP). A Say's Phoebe was seen picking bugs from a sunlit wall at the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus 22 Jan (JP). Rarely observed on the coast but well within their migration window, Say's Phoebes were seen at Rath Trevor PP 17 Mar (GLM); Campbell River Spit 26 Mar (fide GLM), Campbell River 7 Apr (fide CPB) and Iona 23 Apr (MN). Casual in the region, a male **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was at Botanical Beach PP near Port Renfrew 19–25 May (ph RTo). Violet-green Swallows were early at Waldie Island, Castlegar, 19 Feb (PM) and on this same date, 5 early arrivals were along the Sunshine Coast at Ruby Lake (AC). Rare on the coast, especially in spring, a Bank Swallow was at Swan Lake, Victoria 23 May (CSa). Very early returning single Barn Swallows were in Oliver 2 Mar (DB) and Kelowna 7 Mar (CC).

Bewick's Wrens have only very recently been recorded in the Okanagan Valley, one such individual was singing along

Mission Creek, Kelowna 4–24 Feb (ph CC et. al.). A Gray Catbird was found in Kelowna feeding on Mountain Ash berries 22 Dec – 29 Feb for the third wintering record for the province (CC, RyT et. al.) yet another was reported from Castlegar, where it visited a feeder daily from 8 Jan to end of period (ph PM). Rarely if ever does European Starling receive mention but a single bird found as far north as Iskut, BC along the Klappan River 12 Apr (BS).

Very late was a flock of 5 Bohemian Waxwings at low elevation in Vernon 5 May (DGC). A male **Black-throated Blue Warbler** was in Nanoose Bay where it visited suet feeders 16 Dec – 17 Feb (DF, LF, ph MY et. al.) and became by far the longest staying of the previous 17 records. The Spotted Towhee that first appeared in Prince George 2 Nov remained to 26 Jan (HM) well north of its usual winter range. Rare on the coast, a singing Clay-colored Sparrow was at Swan Lake, Victoria 31 May (CSa). Also rarely ever found on the coast, a Brewer's Sparrow was photographed 24 May (ph. RTo, LH) at Port Renfrew. A Vesper Sparrow was a surprising winter find at Nakusp 1–2 Dec (GSD). An imm. Lark Sparrow was a very rare find at Deer Lake Park, Surrey 12 Apr (MN et. al.). Probably a local first, a White-throated Sparrow was photographed at a feeder in Atlin 37 Feb (HDV) during -25 to -37 weather. Rarely observed in the Okanagan, a pair of Snow Buntings was in Penticton 14–17 Apr (ph RJC et. al.). A Brambling was visiting a feeder with juncos and chickadees in Price Creek, just w. of Cassiar Jct. another was visiting a feeder in Belcarra, Vancouver 8–16 Mar (fide RF, ph JR) and a third at Ucluelet 14–20 Apr (BS). Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were abundant in the east Kootenays during the month of Feb with the largest flock numbering 400 (DN) in Invermere and four flocks numbering 600 in Cranbrook 17 Feb (TW, LC). A minor irruption of White-winged Crossbills was detected in the Cariboo in early Dec (PR). A single Hoary Redpoll was with a small flock of Common Redpolls in the Hall Road subdivision, Kelowna 30 Dec (RyT, CC, MF).

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