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**PO Box 45507,
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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

PO Box 45507, Westside RPO, Vancouver, B.C., V6S 2N5

Annual Membership Dues:

Canadian General Membership	\$30
Canadian Junior Membership	\$20
U.S. & International Membership	\$35

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

Please send newsletter submissions to

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

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Advertising rates are available upon request

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www.bcfo.ca**

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Cover Story ~ Russell's Big Year



It is with much flapping of wings, clacking of bills, and other forms of applause, that we congratulate Russell Cannings. After 10 long months of hustling his binoculars from one end of the province to the other, he has broken the long standing record for the

most species seen in British Columbia in one year. On October 5th, 2010, Russell was able to find a previously reported Tropical Kingbird at the Reifel refuge, toppling the old record of 364 species, set by Mike Toochin almost a decade ago. As luck would have it, Mike was standing nearby when Russell realized he had broken the record, and was one of the first to congratulate Russell on his incredible achievement.

The story isn't over though, as there are still weeks to go in the year, and Russell continues to pick up some spectacular birds in a "November to remember". Lets hope that December is just as good, and that Russell's list continues to climb right up until New Years!

Russell's Big Year Blog
<http://bcbigyear.blogspot.com/>

INTERNET SOURCES

BCFO

<http://www.bcfo.ca/>

BC Breeding Bird Atlas

<http://www.birdatlas.bc.ca/english/index.jsp>

Biodiversity BC

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

Biodiversity Centre for Wildlife Studies

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

Birding in British Columbia (General Information)

<http://www.birding.bc.ca/>

BIRDNET (Ornithological Council)

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/>

Bird Source (Audubon & Cornell Lab of Ornithology)

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

eBird Canada

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

Bird Studies Canada / Long Point Bird Observatory

<http://bsc-eoc.org/bscmain.html>

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

[http://www/\[wrc/isgs/gpv/birds/](http://www/[wrc/isgs/gpv/birds/)

Point Reyes Bird Observatory

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

Rocky Point Bird Observatory

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

AOU Check-list of North American Birds, 7th Edition

<http://www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3>

Bird Wing Image Database

<http://www.pugetsound.edu/x5662.xml>

Michael Shephard's Bird Information Site

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

Mike Yip's Vancouver Island Bird Photos Site

<http://vancouverislandbirds.com/>

SORA: Searchable Ornithological Research Archive

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

ABA Rare Bird Blog

<http://birding.typepad.com/peeps/>

BC Interior Bird Chat Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcintbird/>

Sunshine Coast Bird Chat Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sunshinecoastbirding/>

Vancouver and Lower Mainland Bird Chat Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bcvanbirds/>

Vancouver Island Bird Chat Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BCVIBIRDS/>

West Kootenay Bird Chat Group

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wkbirds/>



BRITISH COLUMBIA BIRDS NEEDS SUBMISSIONS

... of original manuscripts on wild birds in British

Columbia. This is the

journal of record for reporting rarities or range expansions, the general status of species, avian ecology and behaviour. We publish new observations on birds, or even a single bird. Suitable topics include distribution, abundance, extralimital occurrence or range expansion, reviews of status, banding, identification, plumage variation, moult, behaviour, feeding, breeding, habitat, ecological relationships, reviews, or history and biography of ornithology. Information for authors is available on the BCFO website at:

www.bcfo.ca/journal-author-invitation.php

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 **British Columbia 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.

President's Message

Thinking back over the summer and remembering a very wonderful BCFO Conference in Revelstoke where our hosts were the Friends of Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks. We had a wonderful weekend of field trips to great birding areas, excellent speakers and of course the AGM meeting. Over 65 members attended. Chris Charlesworth then led a very successful extension trip, eastward through the Rocky Mount Trench, Mountain National Parks to the Prairie foothills. . Full details of the Conference are included in this edition of the newsletter but I would like to take this opportunity to thank Wayne Diakow and Les Gyug who put in a lot of time to organize our 20th Annual BCFO Conference. Wayne made the initial contact with the Friends group and who worked with the Powder Spring Inn where our workshops, meetings, and meals were held. Les arranged the four afternoon speakers as well as the banquet speaker and worked on the extension trip.

There were several changes to the BCFO Board at our AGM. Special Thanks go to Kevin Bell, who as President guided the BCFO over the past two years (he is staying on the board as Past Pres.) and Laure Neish who has stepped down from the board as Recording Secretary. We welcomed two new members, George Clulow as Vice President, and Dr. Mary Taitt who has taken on the role of Recording Secretary.

Looking to the upcoming year, the elected board is dedicated to working on a number of new initiatives put forward at the AGM as well as some issues that the board has already agreed to initiate. Plans are always underway for next year's Conference/AGM. The Board has a two day Strategic Planning Session and Board Meeting planned for mid October. Results of which will be announced in our next newsletter. The Board is still looking for input from our members on projects, issues, or things that you would like to see the BCFO undertake. Please forward them to me, or, any of the board members and we will respond to you.

Good Birding

Jude Grass, President



Editor's Notes

Greetings BCFO'ers, and welcome to the fall 2010 edition of BC Birding.

We hope you will enjoy this issue, and thank all of those who provided the excellent copy for this edition. The call for more articles has been met, and we are receiving more interesting and useful copy every month. Thank you! Please keep it coming.

Some of you may be miffed that this issue does not contain the Listers Corner information for 2009. We apologize for that, but circumstances beyond our control have conspired to keep that article from publication this year. We hope to have a new author for this important column for 2011, and if anyone would care to volunteer to be the list-keeper, we are certainly interested in hearing from you.

Note that there have been some changes to the BCFO board and officers. A hearty welcome to Mary Taitt and George Clulow, who joined the board at the 2010 AGM, and a big THANK YOU to outgoing President Kevin Bell, who was a joy to work with, and kept the previous AGM's lively and entertaining. We'll miss you Kevin.

Although this has been a trying year for the newsletter editors, we are happy with the support being shown by members and the new board, and we look forward to promoting the new initiatives in the works at the BCFO. Stay tuned to future issues for announcements about some new projects, progress on ongoing projects, and of course announcements about the 2011 AGM.

See you in the field,
Guy and Donna Monty
Editors

Letter to the Editor

I am starting a campaign to stop free-roaming cats from killing millions of birds, by urging BC municipalities to start cat licensing. Established cat licensing programs currently exist in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Toronto and Ottawa, to name a few. Below is an open letter to BC municipalities, which you are welcome to publish.

Mark Haddas
Vancouver, BC



Open Letter

Subject: BRITISH COLUMBIA'S BIRDS NEED YOUR HELP

Formal Request: A CALL TO ACTION FOR BC MAYORS, COUNCILLORS AND MUNICIPAL STAFF

Submitted By:

The Problem

For well over a century, BC's birds have faced an increasing number of threats to their survival. Challenges include loss of habitat due to agriculture, logging, residential and commercial development, pesticide use, hunting, disease, the introduction of invasive species, and predation by domestic and feral cats, as well as some dogs.

As the State of the World's Birds 2010 report recently identified numerous species in trouble, officially adding climate change to the list of threats, it's clear the ominous prediction by Canadian naturalist Trevor Herriot may be coming true. We are destroying our bird populations, and their epitaph will read: "Death by Too Many Cuts."

The Responsibility

Over 300 species of birds breed each year in BC - more than any other province in Canada. Sixty-five species breed nowhere else in Canada and for several species, BC holds the majority of the world population. Situated along the Pacific Flyway that extends from Patagonia to Alaska, our province is also one of the world's top birding destinations.

For these reasons, every municipality plays a pivotal role in bird conservation efforts. As stewards of local environments, urban and rural, you must do your part to help our birds safely feed, nest and raise their young. It's a responsibility municipalities can't turn away from or rely on others to manage. Every year, millions of BC's birds are needlessly killed. This means every municipality has the ability— independently and collectively—to make a significant difference.

What Municipalities Can Do – Immediate Priorities

1. **Update Animal Control Bylaws and Adopt Cat Licensing:** It's spring 2010 and almost every municipality in BC is facing the impacts of cat overpopulation, both domestic and feral. Current strategies, saddled by archaic animal control bylaws, are not working. The reason: Current bylaws do not address the root cause of the problem—Irresponsible Cat Owners. As a result, BC's breeding birds and their valuable fledglings will again face killing fields in every municipality. With over 2 million domestic and feral cats in BC, most allowed free-roam, predation rates are out of control. To make matters worse, this "cut" to BC's birds is entirely preventable. A few municipalities have made progressive changes. Most, however, still stuck in the past on this issue, continue to do nothing. **ACTIONS REQUESTED:** Upgrade animal control bylaws to include progressive controls on free-roaming cats, spay-neuter requirements, public education and cat licensing as part of a Responsible Cat Ownership Program in BC.

Established cat licensing programs currently exist in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Toronto and Ottawa, to name a few.

2. **Say "NO" to the controversial practice of TNR or trap-neuter-return as a feral population control strategy.** A select group of feral cat activists have been hard-selling municipal staff and politicians with inflated claims, emotional pleas and pseudo-science. Real scientists have weighed in on TNR. It's bad for cats, bad for birds, and a potential disaster for the environment and public health. TNR also creates a liability and municipalities are unprepared for the consequences. Please see attachments.
3. **Update Bylaws for Pesticide Use:** The Community Charter gives local governments the ability to make pesticide by-laws that prohibit their use for the purpose of maintaining landscapes on residential or municipal land. The environmental concerns are soil, water, or air pollution and damage to non-target organisms including plants, birds, wildlife, fish, crops, and of course – people. The main causes of this harmful pollution are inappropriate application, spray or vapour drift, spills, backflow, and improper disposal of chemicals or containers. By creating progressive bylaws governing pesticide use and following safe practices, every municipality in BC can make a difference.

What Municipalities Can Do – Ongoing and Long-term

1. As residential and commercial developments are proposed and planned, ensure an environmental review is completed, and consult with local and provincial conservationists and experts.
2. Step-up Public Education – Environmentally, many citizens are way ahead of you, some are well behind. For both groups, offer leadership and direction that will build a green municipality.
3. Set goals for Environmental Stewardship, Responsible Pet Ownership and Community Conservation. Get creative, win awards or simply reap the benefits of a healthy and progressive municipality that takes care of its people and its birds.

Find this letter at:

http://www.birdsphotography.com/cats/to_bc_municipalities.html

Other Resource Links related to letter:

Longcore, T., C. Rich, and L. M. Sullivan. 2009. Critical assessment of claims regarding management of feral cats by trap-neuter-return. *Conservation Biology* 23(4):887-894

www.ammoland.com/2009/12/13/court-orders-stop-feral-cat-tnr/

www.tnrrealitycheck.com/municipalities.asp

www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fvN7FNUPas

www.birdsphotography.com/cats/by_dauphine_cooper.pdf

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## Cat Licensing

Conservative estimates suggest that in Canada, free-roaming cats are killing more than 165 million birds each year. In the US, cats kill hundreds of millions of birds and more than a billion small mammals each year.

**Cats should be kept indoors.**

[www.birdsphotography.com/cats/](http://www.birdsphotography.com/cats/)





## BCFO 2010 AGM Field Trip Checklist

|    | A                     | B                    | C                                   | D                                        | E                                  | F                          |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|    | Species               | Wop<br>Lake (2)<br>* | Mount<br>Revelstoke<br>Nat Park (2) | Airport Marsh &<br>Machete Island<br>(2) | Blanket<br>Creek Prov.<br>Park (1) | Three<br>Valley<br>Gap (1) |
| 1  | Canada Goose.         | X                    |                                     | X                                        | X                                  | X                          |
| 2  | Wood Duck.            |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 3  | Gadwall.              |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 4  | American Wigeon.      |                      |                                     | X                                        | X                                  |                            |
| 5  | Mallard.              | X                    |                                     | X                                        | X                                  |                            |
| 6  | Blue-winged Teal.     | X                    |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 7  | Cinnamon Teal.        |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 8  | Northern Shoveler.    |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 9  | Green-winged Teal.    | X                    |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 10 | Ring-necked Duck.     |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 11 | Lesser Scaup.         |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 12 | White-winged Scoter.  |                      |                                     |                                          |                                    | X                          |
| 13 | Bufflehead.           | X                    |                                     | X                                        | X                                  |                            |
| 14 | Barrow's Goldeneye.   |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 15 | Hooded Merganser.     | X                    |                                     |                                          |                                    |                            |
| 16 | Common Merganser.     | X                    |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 17 | Ring-necked Pheasant. |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 18 | Common Loon.          | X                    |                                     | X                                        | X                                  |                            |
| 19 | Pied-billed Grebe.    |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 20 | Great Blue Heron.     |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 21 | Turkey Vulture.       |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 22 | Osprey.               |                      |                                     | X                                        | X                                  |                            |
| 23 | Bald Eagle.           | X                    | X                                   | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 24 | Cooper's Hawk.        |                      | X                                   |                                          |                                    |                            |
| 25 | Red-tailed Hawk.      |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 26 | American Kestrel.     |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 27 | Merlin.               |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 28 | Semipalmated Plover.  |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 29 | Killdeer.             |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 30 | Spotted Sandpiper.    | X                    |                                     | X                                        | X                                  | X                          |
| 31 | Marbled Godwit.       |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 32 | Baird's Sandpiper.    |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 33 | Wilson's Snipe.       | X                    |                                     |                                          |                                    |                            |
| 34 | Wilson's Phalarope.   |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 35 | Black Tern.           |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 36 | Rock Pigeon.          | X                    |                                     |                                          |                                    |                            |
| 37 | Long-eared Owl.       |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |
| 38 | Short-eared Owl.      |                      |                                     | X                                        |                                    |                            |

|    |                                |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | Black Swift.                   | X |   | X |   |   |
| 40 | Vaux's Swift.                  | X |   | X | X |   |
| 41 | Calliope Hummingbird.          |   | X |   |   |   |
| 42 | Rufous Hummingbird.            | X |   | X | X |   |
| 43 | Belted Kingfisher.             | X |   |   |   |   |
| 44 | Red-naped Sapsucker.           | X | X | X |   |   |
| 45 | Downy Woodpecker.              |   | X | X |   |   |
| 46 | Hairy Woodpecker.              | X |   | X |   |   |
| 47 | Northern Flicker.              | X | X | X | X |   |
| 48 | Pileated Woodpecker.           | X | X | X |   |   |
| 49 | Olive-sided Flycatcher.        |   | X |   | X |   |
| 50 | Western Wood-Pewee.            | X |   | X | X |   |
| 51 | Least Flycatcher.              |   |   | X | X |   |
| 52 | Hammond's Flycatcher.          | X | X | X | X |   |
| 53 | Dusky Flycatcher.              | X |   | X |   |   |
| 54 | Eastern Kingbird.              | X |   | X |   |   |
| 55 | Gray Kingbird.                 | X |   |   |   |   |
| 56 | Cassin's Vireo.                | X | X |   | X |   |
| 57 | Warbling Vireo.                | X | X | X | X |   |
| 58 | Red-eyed Vireo.                |   |   | X | X |   |
| 59 | Gray Jay.                      |   | X |   |   |   |
| 60 | Steller's Jay.                 | X | X | X | X |   |
| 61 | American Crow.                 | X | X | X | X |   |
| 62 | Common Raven.                  | X | X | X | X |   |
| 63 | Tree Swallow.                  | X |   | X |   |   |
| 64 | Violet-green Swallow.          | X |   | X |   |   |
| 65 | Northern Rough-winged Swallow. | X |   | X | X |   |
| 66 | Bank Swallow.                  |   |   | X | X |   |
| 67 | Cliff Swallow.                 | X |   | X |   |   |
| 68 | Barn Swallow.                  |   |   | X |   |   |
| 69 | Black-capped Chickadee.        | X | X | X |   |   |
| 70 | Mountain Chickadee.            |   | X |   |   |   |
| 71 | Chestnut-backed Chickadee.     |   | X | X | X |   |
| 72 | Red-breasted Nuthatch.         | X | X | X | X |   |
| 73 | Brown Creeper.                 |   |   |   | X |   |
| 74 | Winter Wren.                   | X | X |   | X |   |
| 75 | Marsh Wren.                    |   |   | X |   |   |
| 76 | American Dipper.               |   |   |   | X |   |
| 77 | Golden-crowned Kinglet.        | X | X | X | X |   |
| 78 | Ruby-crowned Kinglet.          |   | X | X |   |   |
| 79 | Mountain Bluebird.             |   |   | X |   |   |
| 80 | Townsend's Solitaire.          |   |   |   | X |   |
| 81 | Veery.                         | X |   | X |   |   |
| 82 | Swainson's Thrush.             | X | X |   |   | X |

|     |                                |           |           |           |           |          |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 83  | Hermit Thrush.                 |           | X         |           |           |          |
| 84  | American Robin.                | X         | X         | X         | X         | X        |
| 85  | Varied Thrush.                 | X         | X         | X         | X         | X        |
| 86  | Gray Catbird.                  | X         |           | X         |           |          |
| 87  | American Pipit.                |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 88  | Cedar Waxwing.                 |           |           | X         | X         |          |
| 89  | Tennessee Warbler.             |           | X         |           |           |          |
| 90  | Orange-crowned Warbler.        | X         |           |           |           |          |
| 91  | Nashville Warbler.             |           | X         |           |           |          |
| 92  | Yellow Warbler.                | X         |           | X         | X         | X        |
| 93  | Magnolia Warbler.              | X         |           |           |           |          |
| 94  | Yellow-rumped Warbler.         | X         | X         | X         | X         | X        |
| 95  | Townsend's Warbler.            | X         | X         |           |           |          |
| 96  | Blackpoll Warbler.             |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 97  | American Redstart.             | X         |           | X         | X         |          |
| 98  | Northern Waterthrush.          | X         |           | X         |           |          |
| 99  | MacGillivray's Warbler.        | X         | X         | X         | X         |          |
| 100 | Common Yellowthroat.           | X         |           | X         |           |          |
| 101 | Wilson's Warbler.              | X         | X         | X         | X         |          |
| 102 | Scarlet Tanager.               | X         |           |           |           |          |
| 103 | Western Tanager.               |           | X         | X         |           |          |
| 104 | Chipping Sparrow.              | X         | X         | X         | X         |          |
| 105 | Clay-colored Sparrow.          |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 106 | Savannah Sparrow.              | X         |           | X         |           |          |
| 107 | Fox Sparrow.                   |           | X         |           |           |          |
| 108 | Song Sparrow.                  | X         |           | X         | X         |          |
| 109 | Lincoln's Sparrow.             |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 110 | White-throated Sparrow.        |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 111 | Dark-eyed Junco.               | X         | X         | X         | X         |          |
| 112 | Black-headed Grosbeak.         | X         |           | X         |           |          |
| 113 | Lazuli Bunting.                |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 114 | Red-winged Blackbird.          | X         |           | X         |           |          |
| 115 | Western Meadowlark             |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 116 | Yellow-headed Blackbird.       |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 117 | Brown-headed Cowbird.          |           |           | X         | X         |          |
| 118 | Bullock's Oriole.              |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 119 | Pine Grosbeak.                 |           | X         |           |           |          |
| 120 | Red Crossbill.                 |           | X         |           | X         |          |
| 121 | White-winged Crossbill.        |           | X         |           |           |          |
| 122 | Pine Siskin.                   | X         | X         | X         | X         |          |
| 123 | American Goldfinch.            |           |           | X         |           |          |
| 124 | Evening Grosbeak.              | X         | X         | X         |           |          |
|     | <b>Total Species Seen: 124</b> | <b>62</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>97</b> | <b>43</b> | <b>8</b> |



## BCFO Extension Trip to the Prairies, 2010, May 30- June 2, 2010

*By Les Gyug, with major contributions from Chris Charlesworth*

As the BCFO AGM in Revelstoke wrapped up, most folks packed up their gear and started heading for home, except for 11 stalwarts that were game for more birding to the mountains and prairies. Following the Sunday morning field trips and then lunch at the Powder Spring Inn pub in Revelstoke, we headed out to pack us all into the van. Among others, Tony Greenfield was there to wish us well and send us off. Tony had organized and run many wonderful and successful birding extension trips for BCFO AGMs over the years, but other plans had kept him unable to commit to running extension trips in the past few years. We were glad to see him there, and wondered if he wished he might have been going along as well perhaps missing the shared adventures and sense of camaraderie that comes with these trips.

Organizing a trip like this was something new for me, and I was glad that intrepid bird guide Chris Charlesworth had agreed to be the birding leader of the trip.

First stop on the way from Revelstoke to Banff was in the Beaver Valley of Glacier National Park. The birding was pretty good. Highlight for all was a

gorgeous male MAGNOLIA WARBLER that put on quite a nice show at eye level. Also there were several beautiful AMERICAN REDSTARTS, an ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, a MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER, a NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH, a HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER and a WARBLING VIREO. But any of the TOWNSEND'S WARBLERS present refused to show themselves. Overhead we had VAUX'S SWIFT, OSPREY and RED-TAILED HAWK. Along the Beaver River we had a pair of SPOTTED SANDPIPERS. The stop was an excellent start to our birding.

As we made our way through Golden we saw a BIGHORN SHEEP alongside Hwy 1. Further east we had a large BLACK BEAR right alongside the hwy that appeared to be feeding on dandelions. Further along we saw yet another BLACK BEAR, this one with two cubs, feeding along the railway.

At Moraine Lake we encountered a brief snow squall that melted as it hit the ground. Fortunately this was the only taste we got of snow, as two days previously most of southern Alberta had been hit with a major





snowfall that might have given us the chills if we had been trying to drive and bird in those conditions. At the AGM, some of us had been checking the weather networks and weather cams in Alberta to see if the trip might be a bust, but thankfully that was all over by the time we got there. That same weather system did account for much of the “singing in the rain” that the birds were up to during much of the weekend in Revelstoke at the AGM, but the weather had broken by the time we got to Alberta.

Moraine Lake was still largely frozen and in the only small patch of open water we could find neither Harlequin Ducks nor American Dippers. A BOREAL CHICKADEE was briefly seen high in the spruce and one or two people caught a glimpse of a GRAY JAY in the storm. Highlight here for our leader and several others was a rather tame PORCUPINE feeding right beside the parking lot. We added RED SQUIRREL to the mammal list here too. A late check-in at the Bow View Lodge in Banff, and off to supper by 9 PM. MULE DEER was added to the trip list as we walked right by one feeding on lawns as we trekked the block to the restaurant.

Monday morning, and a 6 AM start with cool, foggy 3 degree weather at Vermilion Lakes. Birds were pretty active out there as we made our way to the far end of the road and worked our way back over the course of an hour and a half (all before breakfast). First thing we saw were two ELK crossing the road: new for our mammal list. Also new to the mammal list was a MUSKRAT swimming around in a beaver pond. In the woods along the road we had RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES, MOUNTAIN CHICKADEES, TOWNSEND'S, YELLOW, WILSON'S, and MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLERS, and hybrid

Audubon's X Myrtle YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS. Other species included WARBLING VIREOS, GOLDEN-CROWNED and RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS and CHIPPING SPARROWS. A number of silent 'TRAILL'S FLYCATCHERS' kept frustrating us—Willow or Alders?—we'll never know. On the lakes we had GREAT BLUE HERONS, BLUE-WINGED and GREEN-WINGED TEAL, MALLARD, CANADA GOOSE, BUFFLEHEAD, COMMON MERGANSER and a COMMON LOON on a nest. Seeing the loon on the nest caused a number of us to have the same thought—about to reach for the GPS units, we realized we were not in BC anymore, so it didn't matter which Breeding Bird Atlas square we were in. A BALD EAGLE and a MERLIN represented the raptors.



After breakfast we packed up and made our way east to Bear Hill in the foothills where it didn't take us long to find our three target birds, all of which showed off better than Chris had ever seen! TENNESSEE WARBLERS sang and hopped around in small aspens right at our feet (almost) as did a stunning male CAPE MAY WARBLER.

A WHITE-THROATED SPARROW came right in and gave us great views; a BOREAL CHICKADEE came right down to eye level for all to see, while a number of pure 'MYRTLE' YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS appeared as well. At least four SWAINSON'S THRUSHES hopped about on some moss and through some small trees while a CASSIN'S VIREO sang from the firs.

We then made our way east through Calgary where Timmy's provided a welcome coffee and lunch stop. At Strathmore we turned north on Hwy 21 where we checked some potholes between there and Drumheller, finding AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, FORSTER'S TERN, BLACK TERN, 'Western' WILLET, an assortment of ducks and an assortment of swallows. CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS and GRAY PARTRIDGE were found at several stops. Numerous SWAINSON'S HAWKS kept our eyes towards the sky as did a NORTHERN HARRIER male. At one point both RED-TAILED and SWAINSON'S HAWKS cruised right beside each other in the sky providing better comparisons in the bins than I've ever seen in a field guide.

A relative early stop for the day in Drumheller allowed us to walk a little along the trail on the Red Deer River before supper where we found LARK SPARROW, GRAY CATBIRD, BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE, DOWNY WOODPECKER and AMERICAN GOLDFINCH, all of which were new for the trip list. A number of SWAINSON'S THRUSHES hopped about in strange places as did more 'TRAILL'S FLYCATCHERS', some YELLOW WARBLERS and an immature male AMERICAN REDSTART. COMMON GRACKLES flew overhead a couple of times as well, all within sight of



Drumheller's 30-m tall *Tyrannosaurus rex* (to which most of us remarked when first putting bins on it—"There's people in its mouth."—because, being a tourist *T. rex*, you could pay to climb up the stairs inside its belly if you wished.)



On Tuesday, we awoke to beautiful sunny skies in Drumheller and made our way east to Handhills Lake. We walked around the west side of the lake for a while searching for Piping Plovers, but found nothing along the shore but KILLDEER and several foraging AMERICAN AVOCETS.. In the grass near the lake we had fantastic views of a LECONTE'S SPARROW, as well as the more abundant CLAY-COLORED SPARROWS and our first SAVANNAH SPARROWS for the trip. A HORNED LARK came in to investigate, providing us with the first visual of this species for the trip. We then decided to walk over to the north end of the lake where a sandy shore looked promising for plovers, and indeed it was. We saw a single male PIPING PLOVER running to and fro along the shore, a lifer for a number of people present! A wily COYOTE seemed to be eyeing the plover as well as it trotted around and then lay down. At one point someone asked where the plover was, and several of us answered that it was midway between the coyote and the avocet. Several AMERICAN AVOCETS were seen nearby sitting on nests. As we walked along the shore back towards the van a MARBLED GODWIT made several passes overhead, calling loudly. A distant SPRAGUE'S PIPIT was heard singing his beautiful song.

We got into the van, drove only a few hundred meters and Chris heard another SPRAGUE'S PIPIT singing out the window. We stopped set up the scopes and eventually had great views of a few pipits in the grass.



In the same area, we watched a pair of **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKES** at fairly close range. As we drove along gravel roads, making our way south towards Dinosaur Provincial Park, we stopped several times to search for Baird's Sparrows, which we never did find. We did however get **LONG-BILLED CURLEWS**, more **MARBLED GODWITS**, **WILLETS**, and one of the greatest highlights of the day, a pair of **FERRUGINOUS HAWKS** and their nest, with at least one chick. We saw several **PRONGHORN** and added **WHITE-TAILED JACKRABBIT** to the trip list that morning too.

We had a picnic lunch at Dinosaur Provincial Park, but our picnic was interrupted by appearances of **BROWN THRASHERS**, **LEAST FLYCATCHERS**, **BALTIMORE ORIOLES**, **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS** and **LARK SPARROWS**. After lunch we went for a walk up a streamside riparian shrub community adjacent to the sagebrush and prickly pear cactus uplands, and found **SPOTTED TOWHEE**, **HOUSE WREN**, **VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW** and **ROCK WREN**, all new for the trip list. One of the **HOUSE WRENS** was seen entering an old cliff swallow nest that it seemed to have appropriated as its own.

To finish off the day we stopped near Tilley along a gravel road just off the Trans Canada Hwy and had fantastic looks at about half a dozen **CHESTNUT-COLLARED LONGSPURS** singing in the air and sitting nicely atop bushes. We then made the 3.5 hour



Photo credits:

*L. Gyug* Extension Photos **1, 2, 7**     *K. Andrews* Extension Photo **3**     *C. Charlesworth* Extension Photos **5, 6**

*D. Chapman* **4** - American Avocet Alki Lake at the Kelowna Landfill 16-5-10.

drive back to Banff where again, a late check in, and supper by 9 PM, which, by popular demand, was at the same small restaurant as on Sunday night.

Wednesday morning, another 6 AM start for which everybody was, once again, on time or ahead of time, with an hour at the Cave and Basin Trail in Banff Nat. Park. Birding was great! Art Martell found a lovely female **BLACKPOLL WARBLER** feeding low down right in front of us. She was joined by a rather drab female **CAPE MAY WARBLER**. Later on near the marsh boardwalk we had a male **BLACKPOLL WARBLER** as well.



A male **TENNESSEE WARBLER** was singing loudly there too. In the marsh we got great views of a **VIRGINIA RAIL**. **LINCOLN'S SPARROWS** sang from the edge of the marshes and a number of **ELK** roamed about.

After breakfast we packed up and headed back towards Revelstoke. We stopped for a stretch at Rogers Pass where we had **STELLER'S JAY** and **VARIED THRUSH**, both new to the trip list. Back in Revelstoke before noon and we said our goodbyes. Our final tally was 128 species of birds. All in all, it was an excellent trip with good birds, lifers for a number of folks, good food, and most importantly, good company. Just about everything a good bird field trip should be.

# BCFO AGM EXTENTION TRIP List – Banff & Drumheller, Alberta May 30 – June 2, 2010

*Compiled by Chris Charlesworth*

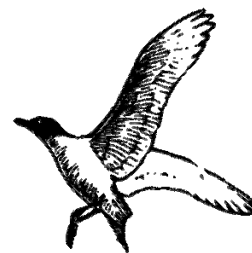
## Bird List

**Canada Goose** – Common on lakes and ponds.  
**Gadwall** – Fairly common on prairie potholes.  
**American Wigeon** – A few on prairie potholes.  
**Mallard** – Common on prairie potholes.  
**Blue-winged Teal** – Numerous at Vermilion Lake near Banff & on prairie potholes.  
**Cinnamon Teal** – One seen from vehicle on pothole near Brooks, AB.  
**Northern Shoveler** – Common on prairie potholes.  
**Northern Pintail** – Fairly common on prairie potholes.  
**Green-winged Teal** – A few on prairie potholes.  
**Canvasback** – A few on prairie potholes.  
**Redhead** – A few on prairie potholes.  
**Ring-necked Duck** – Small group seen on pothole, W. of Calgary.  
**Bufflehead** – A few at Vermilion Lk and on prairie potholes.  
**Barrow's Goldeneye** – Small numbers seen on prairie potholes.  
**Hooded Merganser** – Small numbers on prairie potholes.  
**Common Merganser** – Male seen at Vermilion Lakes near Banff.  
**Ruddy Duck** – Seen once on prairie pothole near Brooks.  
**Gray Partridge** – Seen a couple of times in grassland areas near Drumheller.  
**Ring-necked Pheasant** – Seen and heard near Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Common Loon** – Seen on nest at Vermilion Lake near Banff.  
**Red-necked Grebe** – Seen once on pothole near Brooks.  
**American White Pelican** – Seen several times by Drumheller & at Dinosaur Pk.  
**Great Blue Heron** – Seen at Vermilion Lk near Banff.  
**Osprey** – Seen overhead at Beaver Valley in Glacier Nat. Pk.  
**Bald Eagle** – One ad. at Vermilion Lakes in Banff.  
**Northern Harrier** – Seen several times over open fields in prairies.  
**Swainson's Hawk** – Most common buteo seen in prairie areas.  
**Red-tailed Hawk** – Fairly common on open prairies.  
**Ferruginous Hawk** – Pair with young in nest seen S.E. of Drumheller.  
**American Kestrel** – One seen at picnic area in Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Merlin** – One at Vermilion Lk in Banff.  
**Virginia Rail** – One seen exceptionally well in marsh at Cave & Basin in Banff.  
**American Coot** – Seen at Vermilion Lake in Banff and on prairie potholes.  
**Black-bellied Plover** – Small group seen flying over Handhills Lake.  
**Piping Plover** – Just one seen at N. end of Handhills Lake.  
**Killdeer** – Common throughout.  
**American Avocet** – Numerous at Handhills Lake and other prairie potholes.  
**'Western' Willet** – Fairly common on prairie potholes.  
**Spotted Sandpiper** – Common along shorelines throughout.  
**Upland Sandpiper** – One seen on fencepost on open prairie S.E. of Drumheller.  
**Long-billed Curlew** – A few seen on open prairie S.E. of Drumheller.  
**Marbled Godwit** – Seen at prairie potholes including Handhills Lake.  
**Wilson's Snipe** – Often heard 'winnowing' at prairie potholes.





**Wilson's Phalarope** – Fairly common on prairie potholes.  
**Franklin's Gull** – Small numbers seen near ploughed fields and at Handhills Lk.  
**Ring-billed Gull** – A few seen in Drumheller.  
**California Gull** – Fairly common at prairie potholes.  
**Forster's Tern** – One seen on pothole just S. of Drumheller.  
**Black Tern** – A few seen at prairie potholes.  
**Rock Pigeon** – Common in cities and towns.  
**Mourning Dove** – A few seen here and there.  
**Vaux's Swift** – Two seen overhead at Beaver Valley in Glacier Nat. Park.  
**Belted Kingfisher** – Seen along Red Deer River in Drumheller.  
**Downy Woodpecker** – One along Red Deer River in Drumheller.  
**Northern Flicker** – Seen along Red Deer River in Drumheller.  
**Pileated Woodpecker** – One heard at Vermilion Lakes in Banff.  
**Least Flycatcher** – Seen and heard at Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Hammond's Flycatcher** – Heard and seen in Beaver Valley, Glacier Nat. Park.  
**Say's Phoebe** – One heard and seen in Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Western Kingbird** – One seen along roadside near Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Eastern Kingbird** – A few seen along roadside in Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Loggerhead Shrike** – Pair seen near Handhills Lake.  
**Cassin's Vireo** – One singing at Bear Hill, E. of Banff.  
**Warbling Vireo** – Seen in Glacier Nat. Park and Banff Nat. Park.  
**Gray Jay** – One at Moraine Lk in Banff Nat. Pk, & another along Hwy 1 at Field.  
**Steller's Jay** – One seen at Rogers Pass Centre.  
**Black-billed Magpie** – Fairly common in all areas throughout.  
**American Crow** – Fairly common in all areas throughout.  
**Common Raven** – Common throughout. Young in nest at Vermilion Lk in Banff.  
**Horned Lark** – Seen well at Handhills Lake.  
**Tree Swallow** – Common throughout.  
**Violet-green Swallow** – A few seen at Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Bank Swallow** – Common throughout.  
**Cliff Swallow** – Fairly common throughout.  
**Barn Swallow** – Uncommon throughout.  
**Black-capped Chickadee** – Pair along Red Deer River in Drumheller.  
**Mountain Chickadee** – Seen at Bear Hill, Cave & Basin & Vermilion Lk in Banff.  
**Chestnut-backed Chickadee** – in Glacier Pk at Beaver Valley & Rogers Pass.  
**Boreal Chickadee** – Seen at Moraine Lake and Bear Hill near Banff.  
**Red-breasted Nuthatch** – Fairly common in Banff and Glacier Nat. Parks.  
**House Wren** – Seen nesting in Cliff Swallow nest at Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Golden-crowned Kinglet** – Heard and seen in Glacier and Banff Nat. Parks.  
**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** – Heard and seen in Glacier and Banff Nat. Parks.  
**Swainson's Thrush** – Seen at Bear Hill & along Red Deer River in Drumheller.  
**American Robin** – Common throughout.  
**Varied Thrush** – Heard at Rogers Pass Centre.  
**Gray Catbird** – Seen by Red Deer River in Drumheller & at Dinosaur Prov Pk.  
**Brown Thrasher** – Several seen in Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**European Starling** – Common throughout.  
**American Pipit** – Half a dozen seen along shore at Vermilion Lk in Banff.  
**Sprague's Pipit** – Seen well in fields near Handhills Lake.  
**Cedar Waxwing** – A few along Red Deer River in Drumheller.  
**Tennessee Warbler** – Seen well at Bear Hill and Cave & Basin near Banff.



**Orange-crowned Warbler** – Seen in Glacier and Banff Nat. Parks.  
**Yellow Warbler** - Seen by Red Deer River in Drumheller & at Dinosaur Prov. Pk.  
**Magnolia Warbler** – Male seen well in Beaver Valley, Glacier Nat. Park.  
**Cape May Warbler** – Male seen well at Bear Hill. Female seen at Cave & Basin.  
**Yellow-rumped Warbler** – Audubon’s and hybrids in W., Myrtles at Bear Hill.  
**Blackpoll Warbler** – Male and female at Cave and Basin in Banff.  
**American Redstart** – Seen well in Beaver Valley, Glacier Nat. Park.  
**Northern Waterthrush** – Heard at Beaver Valley, Glacier Nat. Park.  
**MacGillivray’s Warbler** – Found at Beaver Valley, and at Cave and Basin.  
**Common Yellowthroat** – Seen well at Vermilion Lk & Cave & Basin in Banff.  
**Wilson’s Warbler** – Heard at Vermilion Lake in Banff.  
**Spotted Towhee** – Heard at Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Chipping Sparrow** – Common throughout.  
**Clay-colored Sparrow** – Common in prairie regions.  
**Vesper Sparrow** – Common on prairies.  
**Lark Sparrow** – Seen by Red Deer River in Drumheller & at Dinosaur Prov. Pk.  
**Savannah Sparrow** – Seen at Handhills Lake and on nearby prairie.  
**Le Conte’s Sparrow** – Seen well at Handhills Lake.  
**Lincoln’s Sparrow** – Seen at Cave & Basin in Banff.  
**Song Sparrow** – Fairly common in riparian and marshy areas throughout.  
**White-throated Sparrow** – Seen well at Bear Hill, E. of Banff.  
**White-crowned Sparrow** – Heard at Cave & Basin in Banff.  
**Dark-eyed Junco** – Found in Banff townsite.  
**Chestnut-collared Longspur** – Several stunning males off Hwy 1 near Tilley.  
**Red-winged Blackbird** – Common in wetland and marshy areas throughout.  
**Western Meadowlark** – Common in prairies.  
**Yellow-headed Blackbird** – Fairly common at prairie potholes.  
**Brewer’s Blackbird** – Common near towns and in agricultural areas.  
**Common Grackle** – A few seen in Drumheller & at feedlot S.E. of Handhills Lk.  
**Brown-headed Cowbird** – Common throughout.  
**Baltimore Oriole** – Several at Dinosaur Prov. Park.  
**Pine Siskin** – A few in Glacier and Banff Nat. Parks.  
**American Goldfinch** – Fairly common in rural and suburban areas.  
**House Sparrow** – Common in cities and towns.

## Mammal List

|                              |                   |               |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Snowshoe Hare                | Porcupine         | Elk           |
| White-tailed Jackrabbit      | Common Muskrat    | Moose         |
| Eastern Gray Squirrel        | Coyote            | Bighorn Sheep |
| Red Squirrel                 | Black Bear        | Pronghorn     |
| Richardson’s Ground Squirrel | White-tailed Deer |               |
| Columbian Ground Squirrel    | Mule Deer         |               |

## B.C. BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl



### Cypress Provincial Park Bird Checklist

A highlight of a recent Nature Vancouver birders' night was the distribution of an updated checklist of birds identified in Cypress Provincial Park, West Vancouver. This 2010 edition of eight fold-out pages outlines seasonal status and relative abundance of 125 species, describes the area briefly, outlines five recommended birding areas and includes several other features. It was published by Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society and Nature Vancouver. No authors are indicated on the checklist, but an article by Katharine Steig (*Vancouver Naturalist* 12(1):1, 2010) identifies eight prominent contributors, including B.C.F.O. members Al and Jude Grass, June Ryder and Brian Self.

### Sunshine Coast Bird Checklist

A highlight of the 2010 B.C.F.O. annual general meeting in Revelstoke was the distribution by former President Tony Greenfield of a new eight fold-out page checklist of 303 bird species confirmed to have occurred along the Sunshine Coast, with bar graphs indicating months of occurrence, asterisks denoting 126 breeding species and other codes, and thickness of lines or numbers indicating seasonal status, relative abundance and/or numbers of records. A drawing of a Black Oystercatcher by another former B.C.F.O. director, Russ Tkachuk, graces the front panel.

### Ian McTaggart-Cowan (1910-2010)

An e-mail from Wayne C. Weber of 19 April 2010 to several groups brought the news that Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan passed away on 18 April 2010, a few days before what would have been his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. As the only co-author of the two most recent treatises on British Columbia's birds and a significant contributor to all three aspects of ornithology recognized by B.C.F.O.'s outstanding ornithologist award (conservation, education and scientific research), he was presented with the inaugural award in 2007 -see M. K. McNicholl. 2007. *B.C. Birding* 17(3):1 & 5-7 and references therein. In addition to his many contributions and awards summarized in that article, Dr. McTaggart-Cowan was one of the 14 founders and first Vice-President of the B.C. Waterfowl Society (Anonymous. 2010. *Marshnotes* spring 2010:11).

### June Ryder Honoured

B.C.F.O. Treasurer June Ryder received the 2009 "Volunteer of the Year Award" of the Wild Bird Trust of B.C. at their 2009 annual general meeting (Anonymous. 2010. *WBT Wingspan* winter/spring 2010:10).

### Coope Profiled

B.C.F.O. member Marian Coope, a prominent participant in the Vancouver Natural History Society's Birding Section and Editor of *Discovery* for several years, wrote or commissioned biographical profiles of several prominent VNHS members during her editorship. The new editor convinced Marian to write an autobiographical profile (M. Coope. 2009. *Discovery* 38:7-12 & 14) in which we learn of Marian's background in numerous parts of the World, how Mike Force correcting her on bird anatomy in a Spanish class led to her prominence in VNHS and other details of her interesting life.

### B.C. Ornithologists Highlighted

Two of the four plenary sessions of the 80<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society in February 2010 in San Diego, California were by B.C. ornithologists. David B. Lank of Simon Fraser University spoke on "Why are Ruffs the most interesting birds in the World?" and Kathy Martin of

U.B.C. discussed “The World Wide Web: how excavators and decay shape cavity nesting bird communities.” –based on Anonymous. 2010. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 195:1-2.

### **Sandercock Doubly Elected**

Brett K. Sandercock, a former Simon Fraser University student, was elected Editor of *Studies in Avian Biology*, a monograph series, at the 80<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society and as a Councillor of the American Ornithologists’ Union at their 128<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in San Diego, Calif. in February 2010. –based on two anonymous notes in *Ornithol. Newsletter* 195:1-2 & 2-3.

### **Travel Awards to B.C. Students**

A joint committee of the American Ornithologists’ Union, Cooper Ornithological Society and Wilson Ornithological Society awarded travel grants to help 100 students attend their joint annual meetings in San Diego in February 2001. B.C. recipients were Kristina Cockle and Andrea Norris of U.B.C., Samantha Franks of Simon Fraser University and Thibault Grava and Erin O’Brien of the University of Northern B.C.

Mark Drever of U.B.C. received one of seven post-doctoral travel awards. –based on Anonymous. 2010. *Ornithol. Newsletter* 195:2-3.

### **B.C. Students Win Presentation Awards**

Congratulations to Marie-Helene Brule of Simon Fraser University for winning the best student paper presentation of the Society of Canadian Ornithology at their annual meeting in San Diego for “Mating system and breeding ecology of an endangered tropical shorebird in a saturated habitat” and to Angelique Grava of the University of northern B.C. for receiving honorable mention for her talk on “interspecific dominance relationships between Mountain Chickadee and Black-capped Chickadee and their implication on life history.” –based on E. Nol. 2010. *Picoides* 23(1):5.

### **Hannon Awarded**

Dr. Susan Hannon of the University of Alberta was awarded the 2010 Speirs Award of the Society of Canadian Ornithology (D. M. Bird. 2010. *Picoides* 23(1):6-8). Sue was the immediate Past President of SCO at the time of the award. Her Ph.D. research was on Sooty Grouse near Courtenay, B.C., supervised by Fred C. Zwickel.

### **Steve Cannings Awards**

An e-mail of 9 May 2010 from Wayne C. Weber to the board of B.C.F.O. announced the recommendation of the B.C.F.O. Awards Committee [Dick Cannings, Martin K. McNicholl and Wayne C. Weber] of Madeloun Schouten of Princeton and Dr. Jeremy Tatum of Victoria for the third and fourth annual awards, now named the Steve Cannings Award. The board approved and this selection was announced at the annual general meeting banquet of 29 May in Revelstoke. Details of the ornithological contributions of these two awardees to British Columbia ornithology will be summarized in detail in future newsletter articles. Previous recipients were the late Ian McTaggart-Cowan (2007) and David Stirling (2008).

### **Butler Awarded**

Dr. Robert W. Butler, formerly with the Canadian Wildlife Service and currently B.C. Program Scientist with Bird Studies Canada, recently received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Capilano University for “his contributions to the scientific community.” His environmental education efforts, contributions to scientific research on herons and shorebirds and contributions to science and conservation were mentioned in the citation. –based primarily on Anonymous. 2010. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 4 June 2010:3.



## 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 is listed in the bimonthly *Ornithological Newsletter* and, for readers with inter-net access, on BIRDNET at [www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/ornith/birdmeet.html](http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/ornith/birdmeet.html).

### EVENTS IN 2011:

**February 1-3 2011, GYRFALCONS & PTARMIGAN IN A CHANGING WORLD**, Boise, Idaho. Contact: Peregrine Fund, no person named & mailing address and phone number not yet announced; e-mail: [tpf@peregrinefund.org](mailto:tpf@peregrinefund.org); website: [http://www.peregrinefund.org/gyr\\_conference/](http://www.peregrinefund.org/gyr_conference/).

**March 9-13, 81<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL MEETING, COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, ANNUAL MEETING, WILSON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY & ANNUAL MEETING, SOCIETY OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS**, Kearney, Nebraska. Contact: Mary Bomberger Brown, Rm. 304, Oliphant Hall, Univ. of Tulsa, 600 S. College Ave., Tulsa, OK 74104; phone (918) 631-2762; e-mail: [mary-brown@utulsa.edu](mailto:mary-brown@utulsa.edu).

**March 13-16 2011, 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WATERBIRD SOCIETY & NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKING GROUP**, Grand Island, Nebraska. Contact: Katharine C. Parsons, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Box 1770, Manomet, MA 02345; phone (508) 224-6521; e-mail: [katharineparsons@gmail.com](mailto:katharineparsons@gmail.com); web-sites: [http://www.waterbirds.org/annual\\_meeting](http://www.waterbirds.org/annual_meeting) or <http://www.nacwg.org/> OR Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, Platte River Whooping Crane Trust, 6611 W. Whooping Crane Dr., Wood River, NE 68883; phone (308) 384-7209; e-mail: [fschavez@whooping.org](mailto:fschavez@whooping.org).

**July 26-29 2011, 129<sup>th</sup> STATED MEETING, AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**, Jacksonville, Florida. Contact details not yet announced.

**August 2011, ANNUAL MEETING, SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS**, Moncton, New Brunswick. Contact: Marc-Andre' Villard, Dept. de Biologie, Universite de Moncton, Moncton, NB E1A 3E9; phone (506) 858-4334; e-mail: [villarm@umoncton.ca](mailto:villarm@umoncton.ca).

### EVENTS IN 2012

**August 14-18, 2012 5<sup>TH</sup> NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS**, Vancouver, B.C. Contact: Kathy Martin, Dept. of Forest Sciences, 3041-2424 Main Mall, Univ. of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z4; phone (604) 822-9695; e-mail: [kmartin@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:kmartin@interchange.ubc.ca).



### New BCFO members

**Madelon Schouten**  
(Princeton)

**Chris Charlesworth**  
(Kelowna)

**Cam Gillies**  
(Windermere)

**Giles Shearing**  
(Revelstoke)

**Dr. Jeremy Tatum**  
(Victoria)

**George Clulow**  
(Burnaby)

**Clive Keen**  
(Prince George)

**Susanne Sloboda**  
(Maple Ridge)

**David Boyd**  
(Vancouver)

**Mike Fung**  
(Vancouver)

**Christine Rock**  
(Vancouver)

**Janice Wilson**  
(West Vancouver)

**Bernard Schroeder**  
(Nanaimo)



## Independent Birding in Costa Rica

*By Sandy McRuer*

Last March, my wife and I took a 16-day vacation in Costa Rica. I am an avid birder. But she isn't. And so during our planning we had to make some compromises. A packaged birding tour was out. Fortunately, several recent developments have made it much easier to do a bird watching holiday on your own in this country.

The first development is the publication of a Birding-Finding Guide to Costa Rica, by Barrett Lawson, published last year. Not only does it include all the usual birding locations such as Carara, and Monteverde National Parks, Rancho Naturalista, San Gerardo de Dota, and La Selva Biological Station, but it also offers other fascinating locations as well. It comes complete with reasonably good maps describing how to get there, and lists of birds you will likely come across at each location. The first section deals with Costa Rica's geography and climate and addresses how birding is different in the tropics than in temperate climates. At the back of the book is a list of sought-after species and the best places are to find them. I'm sure a person planning an independent birding vacation would find it a very valuable tool. And even when you are there, I recommend bringing it.

There is also a recent field guide called The Birds of Costa Rica by Richard Garrigues, published in 2007. It is much more compact than the older and more bulky, A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica by Stiles & Skutch, published in 1990. However, the knock on it is that the illustrations tend to be paler than the birds appear in life. But it still has become the preferred guide because the range maps and text are in the same locations as the illustrations.

A great development is that you can now rent a GPS unit with your vehicle. While you might first wonder at this, you will find it is essential for navigating in Costa Rica even if you are fluent in Spanish. There are two reasons for this. First, signage in the country is terrible. You won't know what highway you are on or how far it is to your destination. Street names are not labeled. And driving is a little chaotic, especially around San José, the capitol. A GPS unit puts all that anxiety behind you. They are very easy to operate. And they actually speak to you when a turn is coming up telling you which way to turn. They also tell you how far you need to drive to a turn off, giving you plenty of warning. They even warn you

when you are about to come upon one of the numerous narrow bridges or road slumps. Pretty well all the accommodations are in the GPS units as well as all the ATMs and gas stations.

Another consideration is that the roads are getting better in much of the country. Most are paved. It is still a good idea to rent a small SUV with 4WD though, because there are times when you may want to go on gravel roads. My experience with these roads is that they were tame compared to back roads on Vancouver Island, where we live. However, we were visiting during the tail end of the dry season. So during the rainy season things could be very different.

A final development is that you can book a private itinerary through at least a couple of travel agencies specializing in birders coming to Costa Rica. Costa Rica Gateway and Wildbird Tours both are located in Costa Rica and are run by very keen and competent birders who have run tours there for years. With the help of the bird-finding guide, and in consultation with these travel agencies, you can make informed decisions about where you want to go.

We chose Costa Rica Gateway and were very happy with what they provided. The company is run by Kevin Easley. He often guides tour groups in the country as well as providing custom itineraries. And so we happened to meet him a couple of times while he was conducting one of his tours.

As we were getting in after dark, we opted to have a driver pick us up at the airport and take us to our first hotel. We also used a driver to take us to our next two birding lodges, Rancho Naturalista, and Savegre Mountain Lodge. This was because we had to drive through the chaotic traffic of downtown San José. Then we rented a vehicle from a place near the San José airport for the rest of the trip.

The birding everywhere was incredible! We ended up with 383 species of which 180 were new to me despite three previous trips to various locations in Mexico. Toucans, manakins, parakeets, tanagers, honeycreepers, motmots, euphonias and many other exotic birds are easily seen. And not only were the birds great, there were all kinds of other animals too. We saw Crocodiles, sloths, monkeys, cotamundis, agoutis, bats, tyras, peccaries and amphibians as well as numerous varieties of lizards

But if you want to get the most out of your experience, I do recommend you hire local guides. We didn't always because we wanted to do other things sometimes and because we wanted to try it on our own. However because of their local knowledge, we saw way more stuff with guides than if we were alone. But some of our best and most rewarding experiences were when we were on our own. There are lots of guides around. But make sure you find ones that know the birds well. The travel agencies I mentioned can set them up for you or you can find them as you go. For instance there seems to be guides hanging around the entrance to Carara National Park for anyone who will hire them. You will also find that although the guides know the English names of the birds well, and some English to help you find them in the bushes, their English is sometimes very limited after that.

During our research, we discovered that there are several life zones in Costa Rica. We decided that there wasn't enough time to visit them all and still have a relaxed time. So we concentrated on the central mountain valleys, the cloud forest and the pacific slope. This was partly because my wife wanted some beach time and to try out a zip line. The beaches of the pacific are very popular for surfing and most of the all-inclusive resorts are along the west coast of the country, particularly the north-west where the climate is the driest. This area, Guanacaste province, is in the rain-shadow of the trade winds that blow westward across the northern mountains. Here, there are a number of birds not found elsewhere in the country.

After staying the night at the Hotel Bougainvilla near San José we spent the early morning hours birding the 8-acre immaculately kept garden before we departed for a three night stay at Rancho Naturalista. The

birding, the bird guides and the meals were great. The accommodations were pretty so-so, in my opinion. We stayed in two rooms. After spending the night in our first room which was one half of a cabin, we asked to be moved because of the unbearable stench of sewage. The other place was fine except that I picked up a suspected case of bed bugs. The bites were a little itchy and very red and blotchy. Other than that, they didn't bother me. The lodge has a large verandah where five or six hummingbird feeders are hung. The hummingbirds will feed within arm-reach of you. Species include White-necked Jacobins, Brown Violet-ears, Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds and, the Snowcap, the bird the lodge is famous for. They also have feeding platforms where bananas attract abundant Montezuma Oropendolas, Blue-grey Tanagers, Grey-headed Chachalacas and Passerini's Tanagers as well as many others.

We chose San Gerardo de Dota to represent the cloud forest habitat. And we were not disappointed. This area has a number of lodges. We stayed at Savegre Mountain Lodge. We had good meals and very comfortable accommodations. There were several other birding groups present; those who were birding independently like us, and those who didn't have much interest in birds. There are some very good guides there. Owner, Marino Chacon was ours. He is semi-retired but still has excellent birding skills and local knowledge. We were able to see the much sought after Resplendent Quetzals several times both on our own and with Marino. As well as Emerald Toucanets, Tufted Flycatchers, Torrent Tyrannulets, Long-tailed Silky-flycatchers, Fork-tailed Kites, Yellow-thighed Finches and many, many more. There are also trails up the mountain sides and along the Savegre River to two exquisite Falls. Savegre is also within easy driving distance of the Paramo, the highest elevation life-zone in the country. It is above the tree-line and features birds unique to this zone, such as the Volcano Junco.

Our next stop was the Pacific Coast between Jaco and Carara National Park. Because my wife wanted to spend some time on a beach, preferably snorkeling we found an all inclusive resort called Punta Leona. We stayed here for 4 nights. There are two fantastic beaches, swimming pools, tennis courts, a zip-line and many more activities. The area is like a little village for wealthy people as the resort includes many condos. It also has a fairly large area of primary forest where there is a good number of Scarlet Macaws nesting and where a troop of White-faced Capuchin Monkeys reside. They visit the open-air dining hall for breakfast every morning. The resort is committed to keeping this forest intact. Consequently the birding remains good here and all around the resort. You can book a free early morning tour of the grounds with a bird guide. It tends to be a little basic, but it is a nice way to start your first morning there. The resort has also put up a number of nest boxes for the macaws high in large trees. We arrived in the late afternoon just after a thunderstorm. The Macaws were all upset and nosily flying around everywhere.

From Punta Leona we took day trips to Carara National Park and the Tarcoles River. The area around Carara has some of the best birding in the country. This is because it lies between two life zones and close to the Pacific Ocean. So you get birds of the lower rainforest, birds of the driest part of Costa Rica, Guanacaste, and many seabirds, and mangrove birds as well. I regard a visit to the Carara area as essential for birders visiting Costa Rica.

We left Punta Leona to travel north into Guanacaste. Our destination was Hacienda Solimar, a 6000 hectare ranch that is immediately adjacent to Palo Verde National Park. It is a working ranch that raises Brahman cattle, grows sugar-cane, and a variety of fruits as well as raises Tilapia, a vegetarian fish. It has all the same specialties that the park has such as Lesser-ground Cuckoo, Jabiru, Orange-fronted Parakeet, and Double-striped Thick-Knee. In addition, the guide there, Demitrio Peralta, has an incredible ability to imitate birds, essential to attracting them within visual range. The accommodations are a bit rustic. We were put up in a bunkhouse style room with four single beds and a bunk bed. But we didn't have to share, and there was a nice big bathroom with a good shower. Also, by the lodge, was a swimming pool. It was very welcome, as the heat was stifling; in the range between 32-36 °C every day. The meals were also good Costa Rican ranch style fare. We had fresh tilapia one night from the deep ditches that line the wetter areas of the ranch.



Getting to Solimar was a bit of a challenge. Before we left for our vacation, I tried to find it on a map. The only map I found it on was one we bought in Chapters and it wasn't much help. Looking on-line, I finally googled "Hacienda Solimar" and found a website in Spanish that spoke about the farm products the ranch produced. Here I found a rough map with good directions. It was a good thing because there are no signs to this place that is thoroughly off the beaten track.

Make sure you have a full tank of gas when you arrive there if you decide to book this place. I didn't anticipate doing the amount of driving that we did do. So the night before we were to leave, I realized I likely didn't have enough gas to get to the nearest gas station. So I used my limited Spanish and phrase book to communicate the problem that to Demitrio. He directed me to a house in a village in the evening where he left to find the occupant. After a while, he returned with a woman who supplied a funnel, a hose and a Javex bottle with gas in it. Whew! That was close!

After spending two nights at Solimar, we packed up and drove to the Arenal volcano area. Once we got past Cañas, the drive was absolutely beautiful, with rolling hills, pastures, fields, and wooded areas. And as we approached the volcano, there were lovely views of Arenal Lake.

Driving in Costa Rica is very slow. Much of it had to do with the many old trucks that labor up the hills and around the corners. The roads are often very windy as well so that you never get going very fast before you come to another corner. And there are numerous places where there are on-lane bridges and washout where the road is also confined to one lane. As we were on vacation we didn't mind that much. It gave us an opportunity to enjoy the countryside more.

We stayed at Arenal Lodge. It was not our first choice as the place recommended by Costa Rica Gateway, Arenal Observatory Lodge, was full. It was Easter, and Costa Ricans celebrate it with a week-long holiday. The main lodge building is immaculately kept. There is a spectacular view of Arenal volcano, one of the most active volcanoes in the world, and a pool to relax in while enjoying the view. There is a trail along a creek on the grounds. But unfortunately, it is not maintained. Nor is there a map for it. But the birding is pretty good. Outside the dining room, there is a feeding platform where we had stunning views of Green Honeycreepers, Passerini's Tanagers, Palm Tanagers and Rufous-collared Sparrows. There is also a resident free-lying pair of Military Macaws. They are not indigenous being native to Brazil. But they are quite tame. One made it into breakfast one morning to be fed treats before being shooed out.

This was a part of the holiday where we didn't hire a guide at all except for a dawn tour of the Hanging Bridges. Here we booked a tour with two other couples. We got magnificent views of a Rufous Motmot, a Broad-billed Motmot, a White Hawk, a Dull-mantled Antbird, and others. We also went over to the Arenal Observatory Lodge where you are very close to the volcano. You could even hear it burping away and see boulders rolling down its flanks. While we were there, we found our only White-throated Robin, as well as all three Honeycreepers in Costa Rica.

After only two nights in the Arenal area, we had to return to the Central Valley to catch our plane home. We took a leisurely drive (it's always leisurely when you are behind two sugar cane trucks on a winding narrow highway) through some beautiful countryside. We stopped at one of the country's many ziplines on the way and found three busy hummingbird feeders with excellent views of Violet-crowned Woodnymphs, Long-tailed Hermits and Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds.

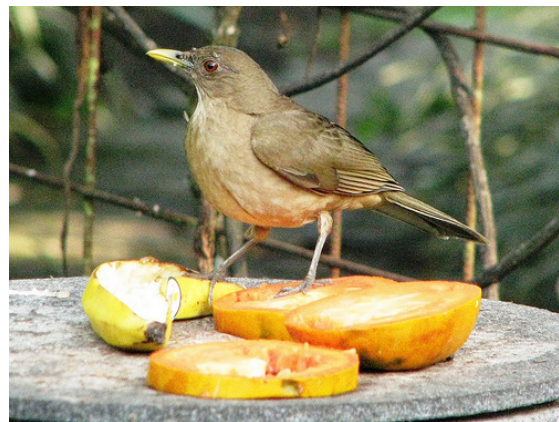
Sixteen days seemed like such a long time to spend in Costa Rica when we were planning this trip. But it went by in a flash. And we feel like we just scratched the surface. It is a fascinating little country with an incredible diversity of plants, animals scenery and people. By doing an independent tour, we feel like we

got to know it in a more personal way. We had opportunities to talk to locals on a more personal level. And we could go at our own pace. On group birding tours, you may see more birds. But you have a guide telling you what a bird is before you can figure it out on your own. I find that it is more rewarding if you have a mix of guides and your own effort to see birds.

People have told me that they thought we were brave traveling on our own. I don't see it that way. Sure, we didn't have a good command of the language and sometimes communication was a little sketchy. But Ticos (Costa Ricans) are a patient lot. It was all a big adventure. We never felt threatened at all. If you prepare properly, and heed any warnings, you can have a wonderful birding holiday in Costa Rica.



**Montezuma Oropendula**



**Clay-coloured Robin**



**Volcano Junco**



**Gray-headed Kite**



## Unusual Feeding Activity

*By G. Allen Poynter, Gibsons, B.C.*

On April 15, 2010, with the morning temperature rising to 12 degrees C, I observed a male Spotted Towhee moving across the top of two bright red rhododendron shrubs and the bird was obviously feeding. The shrubs were in full bloom with flowers completely covering their 0.5 meter height. Using binoculars from a range of only 3 meters I was able to observe the bird moving about on the small opening, the liquid could be clearly seen on the bill of the bird in the process.

After working on at least 20 flowers the towhee left but was observed on the following two days at the same time, performing the same feeding routine. On examining the flowers after the bird had departed there were holes pecked 3 to 5 mm above the flower base and parallel to the storage of nectar in an undamaged flower.

On day two and after the towhee had departed I was surprised to see an adult White-Crowned Sparrow spending at least five minutes duplicating the feeding activities of the towhee.

Obviously the bill shape of the two species had not evolved to extract the nectar from these large bell-shaped flowers, unlike the Rufous Hummingbird that was seen regularly indulging in the nectar source using its long bill and tongue to reach the nectar while it was still on the wing.

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Congratulations

2010 Recipients of the Steve Cannings Award:

Madelon Schouten of Princeton, BC. Madelon is being recognized, among other reasons, for completing more Breeding Bird Surveys than anyone else in Canada; for starting two Christmas Bird Counts (White Rock and Surrey in 1971 and Princeton in 1992) and organizing and compiling one of these every year from 1971 to the present day; and for founding two naturalist clubs (The White Rock and Surrey Naturalists and the Vermilion Forks Naturalists) and playing a prominent role for years in both, including promoting interest in birds and bird conservation.

Dr. Jeremy Tatum of Victoria, BC. Jeremy is being recognized largely for his role in starting the first Annual Bird Report in BC, and compiling and editing Annual Bird Reports for the Victoria area from 1969 through 1973 and again from 2005 to the present. Through this work, he strongly encouraged others to keep detailed records of all their bird sightings, and particularly to keep detailed notes on rarities in the Victoria area and in BC. He is also recognized for major contributions to bird conservation and to natural history in general through his long-time involvement in the Canadian section of the International Council for Bird Preservation (now known as BirdLife International) and the Victoria Natural History Society.

Submitted by Wayne Weber



In the BC Breeding Bird Atlas program all species are equally important but as they say in Animal Farm some are more equal than others !
In that spirit, here is the

BC Breeding Bird Atlas Most Wanted List

1. **Species known or suspected to breed in BC for which we have no data at all, or at the most an "X" for "Observed".** These species deserve some special notes of their own.

American Black Duck - This introduced species breeds regularly only in the Nanaimo area. Although many birders don't consider it "countable", we would like to track its breeding numbers and distribution.

American Golden-Plover - A bird of the northwestern mountains, this species may breed as far south as the western Chilcotin Plateau, but little is known about its full distribution in the province.

Baird's Sandpiper - Another bird that breeds, at least occasionally, in the mountains of the far northwest.
Black-legged Kittiwake - May nest in very small numbers somewhere on the north coast.

Cordilleran Flycatcher - The main hurdle in finding breeding evidence for this species in BC is separating it from its essentially identical sister species, the Pacific-slope Flycatcher. The best opportunities to find it would be in the southeastern corner of the province, where you should listen for its two-part "weet-seet" call. But then, the two forms may be lumped by the time the atlas is printed!

Ferruginous Hawk - A rare breeder in the grasslands of southern Interior; most records are from the Nicola Valley.

Franklin's Gull - Large numbers of birds are seen each summer in the Peace River area, but there have been no breeding records as of yet.

Hudsonian Godwit - This large sandpiper breeds, occasionally, in the far northwest, particularly the Haines Triangle.

Mountain Quail - This introduced quail formerly bred on southern Vancouver Island, but is likely extirpated from BC. A confirmed breeding event would thus be quite the news item!

Sprague's Pipit - A grassland species that has bred occasionally in the southeastern Chilcotin Plateau and the northeast prairies.

Thick-billed Murre - A few have bred in the large Common Murre colony on Triangle Island; it should also be looked for in the murre colonies on southern Haida Gwaii.

Wandering Tattler - Perhaps the easiest species in this first list to add to the atlas—it breeds regularly along gravelly rivers in the far northwest.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo - There are no definite breeding records for the province, but it likely bred here in the early 1900s. A few recent records for the southern parts of BC has raised hope that it might yet be found breeding during the atlas period, but the chances are indeed slim.

2. Species for which we only have “possible” breeding evidence (i.e. a bird seen or heard singing in suitable habitat).

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Brandt's Cormorant
Burrowing Owl
Long-tailed Duck
Short-billed Dowitcher

Snow Bunting
Western Gull
White-headed Woodpecker
Bay-breasted Warbler
Black-throated Sparrow

Indigo Bunting
Nelson's Sparrow
Smith's Longspur

3. Species for which we have only “probable” breeding evidence.

American Bittern
Boreal Owl
Lesser Yellowlegs
Caspian Tern
Forster's Tern
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Spotted Owl
Philadelphia Vireo

Black-necked Stilt
Common Redpoll
Greater Scaup
Gyr Falcon
Northern Mockingbird
Palm Warbler
Red-necked Phalarope
Surf Scoter

Common Poorwill
Grasshopper Sparrow
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Yellow Rail
Mourning Warbler
Northern Fulmar

Although there are species from all over the province in these lists, it's easily apparent that a trip to some of the more remote parts of British Columbia could prove quite fruitful in turning a few of these species into “confirmed” breeders. Go North, birders!

BC Breeding Bird Atlas update: Changing ranges in all corners of BC

By Christopher Di Corrado

Season three of the Atlas started early in the spring with a workshop of staff and Regional Coordinators to help priorities areas across the province and fill in the some of the gaps in surveying. While Atlas staff and regional coordinators worked hard over two days of planning, there was a chance for a fun evening social attended by birders, sponsors, and partners who heard entertaining talks about Atlassing past, present, and future, including a timely and whimsical presentation of atlas-sporting events for the “Atlas Olympics.”

The meeting was motivating and with new tools under their belts, coordinators were ready to forge ahead with volunteers at the mid-point of the 5-year project. This year’s surveys resulted in some very interesting records and extensions of ranges, that will continue to keep the Atlas project at the forefront of the most recent and comprehensive information available to biologists, naturalists, and wildlife planners.

Thus far, data entry for 2010 is ahead of the same time last year and hopefully the trend will continue to be our banner year. Over 25,800 hours of surveys are putting well over 220,000 bird records on the maps where they may have not been recorded before or are rarely found. Funding from the Baillie Memorial Fund helped volunteer atlassers reach some remote areas including the Peace, North Coast, and Chilcotin. While data trickle in after the breeding season, some interesting and exciting results are already coming forth.

The western Chilcotin in particular was the hotspot of rare bird activity since the Atlas commenced. One group, including regional coordinator George Clulow where surprised to confirm breeding for Lesser Yellowlegs, which normally nests in the northern half of BC, and Least Sandpiper, a typical tundra/ bog nester only found on Haida Gwaii and the far northwest corner of BC. Amongst other range extensions were at least two Yellow Rails in a nearby area. These secretive nocturnal wetland birds are widely scattered in their usual breeding grounds east of the Rockies and there are a few historical records from the Kootenays. This discovery in suitable habitat extends the range of Yellow Rails from the north-eastern Peace Region nearly 500km westward.

John Woods and Phil Ranson joined a horse-back trip into the Itcha-Ilgachuz Mountains where they were very pleased and surprised to find a small loosely associated colony of breeding American Golden-Plover uttering alarm calls to protect their young. Previously only confirmed to breed north of the Spatzizi Plateau, the sighting extends the range 600km south. Both groups were also able to locate many areas with other more northern species such as Blackpoll Warbler and Grey-cheeked Thrush, as well as having road-side viewing of grizzly bears. The Chilcotin proves to be a BC-birding hotspot that has many unexplored places!

Other surprising records from the Burn’s Lake and Fraser Plateau Regions include House Wren, Rock Wren and Bullock’s Oriole, extending many ranges farther north, and Grey-cheeked Thrushes found by Joanne Vinnedge, provided another southern record. Breeding Swamp Sparrows are also being recorded west of the Rockies in many locations indicating this eastern species is spilling over the mountains and expanding westwards. Further south in towards the Okanagan, Bewick’s Wren is now a confirmed breeder in a few locations, which is a 100-km jump north in range. They were previously only found on BC’s coast and in Washington in the Great Basin area. Another Okanagan specialty the Gray Flycatcher, was found by Wayne Weber near Ashcroft while conducting Western Screech Owl/

Sage Thrasher surveys for the Atlas funded by the Habitat Stewardship Program. While it wasn't found in Canada until the 1980s, the flycatcher hasn't moved much further north of the Okanagan. This record of a singing male extends the range northward about 100km.

All the fun wasn't only to be had in BC's interior. No matter where you look, you'll find some interesting records in many corners of BC. Another big surprise from the far northwest was a new breeding species for BC when flightless young Parasitic Jaegers were found by Dave Fraser on the gravel islands of the Alsek River. They are previously only known to breed along the Alaskan coast and arctic Canada. In the hinterlands of north-western BC, where few birders travel a few species were again placed on the map including Short-billed Dowitcher, Wandering Tattler, and Snow Bunting, and Guy Monty found previously unknown locations of Common Redpoll and Smith's Longspur.

Moving towards the northeast, a few teams of atlasers provided a big boost of records where eastern and western bird ranges meet and overlap, including Townsend's and Black-throated Green Warblers and MacGillivray's and Mourning Warblers. A "new" species was added to the BC-bird list this summer when the Winter Wren was split into Pacific Wren (distributed across the majority of BC) and Winter Wren (from north-eastern BC eastwards). For British Columbians who haven't heard an "eastern" Winter Wren before, it's time for a trip to the Peace or Northern Rockies! The teams also found red-listed Philadelphia Vireos and Canada Warblers extending their ranges west towards the Northern Rockies. In Fort Nelson, Blue Jay has been confirmed by Nancy Krueger as a nesting species, perhaps one of the most northern nesting records. Doug Brown located a Chestnut-sided Warbler in the Peace and Grey Cheeked Thrush near Pine Pass.

The southern Rockies encompassing the famous Flathead Valley was inventoried in an early-July expedition funded by the Y2Y (Yellowstone to Yukon) Initiative. The most interesting record was from Kevin Knight of a Brewer's Sparrow on a bushy-slope area near an old landing-strip. Tennessee Warblers were common and it appears that this species has made a push into BC's southern Rocky Mountains.

Back in the Coastal Mountains, the Community Foundation of Whistler funded surveys around the Whistler area where much of the low-elevation surveys have been completed. Due to a high snowpack coupled with a cold spring, few trips were made into the alpine this year. But what trips they were in late-July, allowed the teams to confirm breeding for almost all species encountered, including White-tailed Ptarmigan, Gray-crowned Rosy-finch, and Golden Crowned Sparrows. Atlas staff, volunteers, and regional coordinators also joined 70 other scientists for the Whistler Bioblitz where Horned Lark was also confirmed as a breeding species.

We continue to invite BCFO members to contribute data and sightings between 2008 and 2012 online, from photocopied notebooks, in conversation, or to their local regional coordinator; your records could add valuable new insight to breeding status and distribution. The Atlas wishes to extend a hearty thank-you to all funding sources in 2010 and again to volunteers who help during a fun summer of intriguing records.



BC Breeding Bird maps are free to view even if you are not registered. Look to the atlas website for opportunities to get to remote areas of BC.

Merlins in Southwest Idaho

Submitted by Bruce Haak

The merlin (*Falco columbarius*) is a small, swift falcon that is found in forest, prairie and arctic habitats. Much of its current continental breeding range lies within Canada and Alaska. Currently, merlins are expanding their breeding range into northern U.S. states, where they remain uncommon breeders.

Three subspecies of merlins are recognized: taiga, black and Richardson's. The taiga is uniformly brown in color and is the most common subspecies. The black merlin, associated with the Pacific Coast, is dark as the name implies. The Richardson's merlin nests primarily in the prairie provinces and has an extremely pale plumage.

Idaho is the southern fringe of the merlin's breeding range. In 2005, the merlin was listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need within the state. Documented nests are rare, with the last "official" nest verified in 1977. Since then, however, merlins have bred in both northern Idaho and adjacent northern Washington and Montana.

In contrast, wintering merlins are frequently seen at lower elevations in Idaho, particularly in urban areas. They prey on small passerines, especially house sparrows. In 2006, we initiated observations of merlins wintering near Boise in southwest Idaho. The goals of the study were to determine the abundance and distribution of wintering merlins and to document the subspecies present.

In addition to conducting observations and radio-telemetry investigations, we banded over 60 individuals. Of this sample, 10% have been recaptured locally, suggesting that merlins that spend a winter here are likely to return in subsequent years. Some individuals have been recaptured up to three years later within the same winter range.

During the winter of 2010, we deployed colored, numbered leg-flags on some individuals. This is an experiment to see if merlins can be identified in the field, which would negate the need to recapture them.

Two important questions remain to be answered. First, where do breeding merlins from western Canada spend the winter? And second, where do merlins that winter in Idaho spend the summer? To this end, we seek sightings of banded and color-marked merlins. Please forward observations and/or questions to: bruce.haak@idfg.idaho.gov Anyone who encounters nesting merlins is encouraged to: take photos of the subjects; use spotting scopes and binoculars from a distance to avoid disturbing the nest site; and keep notes on prey species captured. Merlins are extremely vocal around nests, especially when delivering food to their growing young. They are often heard before they are seen.

Submitted by Bruce Haak, Idaho Dept. Fish and Game, 3101 S. Powerline Rd. Nampa, ID 83686 (208) 465-8465, ext 353

*Bruce Haak is a Regional Wildlife Biologist with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. A graduate of Oregon State University, Bruce conducted one of the early radio-telemetry studies of the prairie falcon for his graduate research. Later, he was involved with peregrine reintroduction and population monitoring. **Pirate of the Plains**, a natural history account of prairie falcons and the high desert environment of the Pacific Northwest. He is currently studying raptor migration patterns and the urban-adaptation of wintering raptors, with special emphasis on merlins.*

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# July Record of Greater Scaup on the Sunshine Coast

*By Martin K. McNicholl*

During a visit to the west coast by my sister, Sigrid L. Zueff, we spent much of 13 July 2004 with Kevin Young at Sargeant Bay Provincial Park, near Sechelt, B.C. on the “Sunshine Coast.” While picnicking and reading on the beach, swimming in the bay and walking along the beach observing plants, jellyfish and birds, we observed a female scaup well offshore throughout much of our visit.

Although most scaup are away from the coast during the summer months, I see a few fairly often while doing surveys along the Sea and Iona islands coasts while doing bird surveys around Vancouver International Airport and neither species is considered “reportable” in the Vancouver area in any month. I was thus interested to learn from a checklist in a kiosk on the beach that there were no local summer records of either species at this site, at least by 1996 (Greenfield 1996). This added interest to determining the specific identity of the scaup on the bay. Fortunately, she eventually began a prolonged preen, during which she stretched her wings several times, allowing us to identify her as a Greater Scaup.

Greenfield’s (2010) more recent checklist of the entire “sunshine coast” indicates a continued lack of scaup records for June, July and August. Campbell *et al.* (1990) similarly list few summer records for the southern coast of British Columbia away from Greater Vancouver, with two reported by David Stirling at Miracle Beach on Vancouver Island on 13 July 1959 the closest record published to date.

Resident and visiting birders to British Columbia are fortunate in having a rich array of bird check-lists to various communities and parks, many of which were listed in a compilation in an early issue of this newsletter (Weber 1992). Examination of such lists allows visitors to ascertain the significance of each species that they identify in a given area. Publication of records identified by local check-lists as out of the known season of that species locally in *B.C. Birding* or more local newsletters would help local compilers to keep such lists up to date and contribute to the thoroughness of accounts of the avifauna of a given area.

## LITERATURE CITED:

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Greenfield, T. 2010. Checklist of the birds of the Sunshine Coast, British Columbia. Sunshine Coast Natural History Society, [Sechelt, B.C.]. 8 fold-out pp.

Weber, W. C. 1992. A bibliography of B.C. bird checklists. *B.C. Field Ornithologist* 2(1):11-16.

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British Columbia Field Ornithologists: Treasurers Report for 2009

The society ended the year with a deficit of \$807, reflecting a general increase in the costs of many of our activities but little or no increase in revenue: Comparing expenditures for 2009 with those of 2008, you will note a substantial increase in postage costs. This arises largely because we had to pay for several months of mail forwarding due to the change in BCFO's address -- the result of me replacing Andy Stewart as Treasurer. Newsletter costs appear to have declined, but this is largely due to the publication of only 3 newsletters in 2009 c.f. four in 2008. In fact, postage and some printing costs have risen, resulting in an increase in the cost of producing and mailing out newsletters and journals. (Newsletter costs in 2009 included \$996 for postage and \$969 for printing).

Fortunately, the increasing cost of newsletters has been partly offset by the agreement of many members to receive these publications electronically rather than by Canada Post. We thank those members for making this adjustment, and hope that more people will follow their example. On the other hand, some members who prefer paper copy have made small donations to cover the extra costs: we encourage this practice too.

Donations have increased but for a good reason: BCFO granted \$2000 to the BC Breeding Bird Atlas. The cost of Directors meetings (mostly teleconferences) has risen, although your Directors are endeavoring to minimize this expenditure by looking at new ways and means of "meeting". Website maintenance and upgrading are also more mostly, and we expect this trend to continue as we depend more and more on our website to disseminate information and attract new members.

J.M.Ryder, BCFO Treasurer

British Columbia Field Ornithologists Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the year ending December 31, 2009 (Unaudited)

	2009	2008
Revenue		
Membership	\$5,469	\$6,571
Conference fees	\$6,270	\$4,910
Conference Extension	\$0	\$800
Donation Income	\$504	\$481
Transferred from Owl project fund		\$500
Bank Interest	\$880	\$1,117
Advertising	\$412	\$581
Total Revenue	\$13,335	\$14,760
Expenditures		
Conference Extension	\$0	\$800
Conference Facilities	\$5,023	\$5,599
Newsletter	\$2,015	\$3,110
Postage	\$898	\$222
Donations, Research Grants	\$2,200	\$1,310
Travel	\$1,392	\$200
Journal	\$119	\$27
Stationary etc.	\$214	\$0
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$114
Insurance	\$761	\$750
Web Site	\$953	\$419
Memberships	\$25	\$0
Book Keeping	\$98	\$98
Meetings	\$648	\$1,448
Total Expenditures	\$14,142	\$13,893
Surplus (deficit) for the year	-\$807	\$868

Balance Sheet December 31, 2009

	2009	2008
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash in banks	\$41,521	\$42,229
GST Receivable	\$105	\$252
Total Assets	\$41,626	\$42,481
Liabilities and Members' Equity		
Current Liabilities		
Deferred Revenue	\$1,500	\$3,617
Accounts payable		\$1,167
Prepaid memberships	\$3,045	\$2,454
Future Payable		
Total	\$4,545	\$7,238
Members Equity		
Balance, beginning of year*	\$39,388	\$34,376
Net earnings for the year	-\$807	\$868
Balance, end of year	\$38,581	\$35,244
Liabilities and Members Equity Total	\$41,626	\$42,481

* Includes prior year adjustment of \$4144 to offset changes in way that liabilities are assessed.



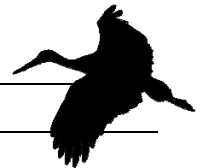
BCFO Advertising Rates for *BC Birding*

Our newsletter goes out quarterly (March, June, September and December) to 280+ members province-wide (some members in other parts of Canada and a few in the US), and has been a subscription-only publication for over 15 years. Ads are usually placed on the outside back cover but there is no guarantee of this; inside back cover and preceding pages will also be used. We accept full, quarter, and half page ads. Charges are per insertion. Payment is to accompany advertising copy. Cheques should be made payable to: BC Field Ornithologists. Receipts will be issued by the treasurer.

Advertising copy must be received by the BCFO Editors by the 15th of the month preceding your required issue date. Ads requiring graphics must be received camera-ready. Text-only ads can be prepared by the Editor, but in either case it is preferable for you to send camera-ready advertisements (files: JPGs, PDF, etc.) so that you retain control over appearance. In the event of any transcription errors the Editors' liability is limited to the rerunning of a corrected ad. Although every attempt will be made to include an advertisement in the issue following receipt of copy, the BCFO Editors and Directors can assume no liability for advertisements which may not be included in the required issue. In the event that copy cannot be included in the appropriate issue for any reason, the advertiser will be notified.

*A reduction of 10% is applied to rates when four or more advertisements are purchased.

BC Birding Ad Rates:



	H*	x	W*	Cost/Insertion	4 or More*
Full page					
Vertical	9.5"	x	7.5"	..... \$125.00	\$112.50
	24 cm	x	19 cm		
Horizontal	7.5"	x	9.5"	..... \$125.00	\$112.50
	19cm	x	24 cm		
Half page					
Vertical	9.5"	x	3.75"	..... \$75.00	\$67.50
	24 cm	x	9.5 cm		
Horizontal	7.5"	x	4.75"	..... \$75.00	\$67.50
	19 cm	x	12 cm		
Quarter page					
Vertical	5.0"	x	3.5"	..... \$40.00	\$36.00
	12.5 cmx		9 cm		
Horizontal	3.5"	x	5.0"	..... \$40.00	\$36.00
	9 cm	x	12.5 cm		



BIRDING IN TAIWAN

TAIWAN for BCFO MEMBERS

2011, March 17-30: SPECIAL TOUR FOR BCFO MEMBERS. BCFO has been invited to Taiwan again. Visit the home area of BCFO's partner society in Changhua, and the popular Bagua Mountain Bird Fair. The rest of the tour will focus on endemic species, with excellent chances for all. The number of endemic species, 15 to 24, varies according to which world checklist you follow.

14 day tour, *FROM VANCOUVER*, INCLUDING AIR, \$4590 (sharing), \$5090 (single). Ask for a detailed itinerary.

GROUP SIZE: 1 – 10, with 2 leaders, Simon Liao and Jo Ann MacKenzie

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

INTERNATIONAL TAIWAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION www.birdingintaiwan.org

Good birds, good food, good friends!