

B_C BIRDING

Newsletter of the British Columbia Field Ornithologists

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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 Changhua Wild Bird Society, Changhua, 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:

General membership (Canada)	\$30.
Junior membership (Canada)	\$20.
U.S. and International Membership	\$35.

Newsletter Submissions

Send material to the Editors at jmryder@telus.net (MS Word format preferred but not essential) or mail to BCFO at above address. Submissions may include bird finding information for our "Site Guide" series, articles about birding experiences, casual observations of bird behaviour, photos, and other topics of interest to birders, preferably but not necessarily in British Columbia.

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

Advertising Rates

Full page: \$125 per issue or \$112.50 each for 4 or more issues
Half page: \$75 per issue or \$67.50 each for 4 or more issues
Quarter page: \$40 per issue or \$36 each for 4 or more issues.

BCFO Website: www.bcfo.ca

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COVER STORY

Snowy Owls by Mark Habdas – These are some of the many Ookpiks now wintering at Boundary Bay. This photo was taken from a respectful distance without disturbing the birds.

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 submission of proposals for financial assistance for bird surveys and other ornithological research. It also wishes to foster greater connections 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 making a submission.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As Robbie Burns said....

*"The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley"*

And that appears to be what happened to our **Summer BC Birding** newsletter....

We thought we were close to getting the June 2011 edition out, and then it seems the Editor said there was not enough material, and so the newsletter went hold, and our editor went north to work...and he would not be back until October. Guy indicated in September, via email, that he would like to give up the Editor role. Thankfully, one of our board members has volunteered to work on the December 2011 edition, along with another BCFO member who will assist with the layout.

We owe a big thanks to June Ryder and Mark Haddas for stepping forward, pulling things together and getting the current edition out. June has put many hours into this, basically starting from scratch.

I would like to thank Guy for his work on the Newsletter. As you can appreciate, when you rely on contracts for your income, you have to take work when it comes, and other things have to be set aside. Thank you Guy for the issues you did pull together – they were great.

Since our AGM in Fort St. John the Board has had two directors' meetings, and one strategic planning meeting where we looked at the major projects that we would continue to work on in 2012. These include final updating of the new website. Most of the work in designing and filling this site has been done by George Clulow (a totally new experience for him!!). I am sure that our members will soon enjoy visiting the site and find it very informative and easy to navigate.

We are going to continue the two day field trips and the 2012 schedule will be out soon: again George is taking the lead.

We talked about increasing our profile in the birding community through naturalist clubs, birding groups, and the academic and profession associations. This still needs work but is something we will put some effort into once the website is up and running.

BCFO AGM - June 1-3, 2012 - planning is well underway with Wayne Diakow and Les Gyug working with the host club, the Vermillion Forks Naturalists in Princeton. We will be offering a variety of field trips, and a series of speakers as well as our AGM meeting and Banquet and a great extension trip starting on June 3. Mark your calendar now.

Good Birding

Jude Grass, President

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2012

! PLEASE READ CAREFULLY --- NOTE CHANGES !

Personalized membership renewal forms are being sent to those members whose memberships expire on 31 December 2011. This form will show the contact information and privacy and newsletter distribution instructions that we have received from you. If this information is correct, just complete the annual fees section and return the form to BCFO with your payment. If you wish to correct or update the information, we ask

On this form you will be asked to select how you would like to receive the quarterly Newsletters -- whether as paper copies delivered by Canada Post or as electronic copy that you download from the BCFO website. As a result of a motion passed at the 2011 AGM, we are asking members to pay the costs of postage and printing if they prefer to receive paper copy. This charge will be reviewed each year and adjusted if necessary in accordance with actual costs. For 2012, the extra cost is \$12, (except for members who do not have access to e-mail).

If your membership does not expire in 2011 you will not receive a membership renewal form this year. Should you wish to extend your membership even if it does not expire until 2012 or later, or should you wish to make a donation, please contact the Membership Coordinator for a form or complete and mail to BCFO the *Membership Application and Renewal Form* that is posted on the BCFO website at: <http://www.bcfo.ca/membership.php>

Please note that the BCFO By-Laws (Part 1, Section 4) state that *"The annual Membership dues shall be payable on the first day of January. A member shall be considered in arrears if dues are not received by the first day of March and is no longer considered to be a Member in good standing."* We therefore greatly appreciate your consideration in sending us your dues by the end of the year; however, if we have not heard from you by the end of January, we will be sending you a reminder to remit your dues no later than 1 March 2012 so that your membership doesn't lapse.

Larry Cowan, Membership Coordinator

EDITORS' NOTES

Greetings to all BCFO Members and welcome to the December issue of *BC Birding*, now under new editorship.

Before putting together this issue, neither of your new editors has had experience with editing and compiling an entire issue of a newsletter, and we have compiled this issue under some time constraints. So please bear with us while we find our feet. This issue will probably appear to you as relatively plain, compared to the attractive designs and decorations that previous editors –Guy and Donna – employed. So for now, look to the words and photos for interest and excitement, and expect the newsletter style to improve in subsequent issues. Also, you will probably notice that we have had to squeeze much material into this issue because of the backlog. As new editors (and as we become older editors too) we will always be open to suggestions and advice about contents and presentation, so please get in touch if you have some ideas or comments. Mark will be primarily looking after photos, design and layout; June will be looking after words and text.

With regard to both format and contents, we are now looking forward to operating under fewer constraints than previously because more than half of our members have opted to receive the full colour newsletter as it appears on the BCFO website, rather than a black and white paper newsletter delivered by Canada Post. This has resulted in considerable savings on the costs of printing and postage. We hope that many more of you will take up this option (although paper-copy will remain available – especially for members who do not have e-mail). Because an electronic newsletter has a much freer format than a paper issue, i.e., pages do not have to be produced in multiples of four, we are moving toward easily accommodating more (or less) material and, for example, including more and/or larger photos without a significant increase in cost.

Some people have asked if BCFO's journal, *BC Birds*, is "going electronic". The answer is "no". It will continue to appear both as a physical entity delivered to your doorstep *and* in electronic form on the BCFO website.

We took on the task of editing *BC Birding* because we feel strongly that our newsletter is an important component of what BCFO does, and that it is part of the "glue" that holds our organization together. It provides members with information about upcoming events, write-ups about recent events such as BCFO field trips, and it includes accounts of the birding activities, observations and adventures of individual members. To maintain this level of interest, however, *we need your contributions*. These can range from an account of a formally scheduled BCFO field trip to interesting photos of birds or birders accompanied by a couple of lines of text. So please support your newsletter by sending us material to include.

Note that this issue includes the forms for "Lister's Corner": they can be found as loose pages in paper copies and as a separate file on the website.

Best wishes for a happy Christmas Bird Count season!

June Ryder
Mark Haddas



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 internet access, on BIRDNET at www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/ornithol/birdmeet.html.

Thanks to Jude Grass for contributions to this issue of this compilation.

Events in 2011:

December 14, 2011-January 5, 2012 - 111th CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, at many localities throughout North America and some elsewhere. For B.C. dates, localities and coordinators, see the detailed listing elsewhere in this issue.

Events in 2012:

January 9-12 - SEVENTH NATIONAL QUAIL SYMPOSIUM, Tucson, Arizona. Contact [no individual, address, phone number or e-mail indicated]: website: <http://www.azgfd.gov/quailvii>.

March 20-23 - 2012 ANNUAL MEETING, SOCIETY FOR NORTHWESTERN VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY, Hood River, Oregon. Contact details not yet announced.

April 12-15 - JOHN SCHARFF MIGRATORY BIRD FESTIVAL, Burns, OR (Malheur National Wildlife Refuge). Schedule of events to be posted by February 1. For information, check the festival website at <http://www.migratorybirdfestival.com>, or contact the festival office in Burns (phone, 541-573-2636; email, info@migratorybirdfestival.com).

May 4-6 - GRAYS HARBOR SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL, Hoquiam, WA. Schedule not yet finalized. For information, check the festival website at <http://www.shorebirdfestival.com>, or phone the festival office in Montesano, WA at 360-289-5048.

May 4-6 - SKAGIT VALLEY BIRD BLITZ. For further details, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/pages/conferences/conferences.html>, or contact the organizer, Kelly Pearce (email, kpearce@uniserve.com; phone, 604-869-6745).

May 7-13 - WINGS OVER THE ROCKIES birding festival, Invermere. Schedule of events not yet finalized. For information, check the festival website at <http://www.wingsovertherockies.org>, or contact the Pynelogs Cultural Centre in Invermere (phone 1-855-342-2473; email, info@wingsovertherockies.org).

May 10-13 - B.C. NATURE CONFERENCE & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Kelowna, hosted by Central Okanagan Naturalists Club. For details, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/pages/conferences/conferences.html>, or contact Betty Davison at the BC Nature office (email, manager@bcnature.ca; phone, 604-985-3057).

May 17-21 - MEADOWLARK FESTIVAL, Penticton, BC. Schedule not yet finalized. For details, check the festival website at <http://www.meadowlarkfestival.bc.ca/#>.

June 1-3 - BC FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Princeton. Full details on this meeting will be included in the March 2012 newsletter, or check our website!

June 2-6 - B.C. NATURE SALTSPRING ISLAND CAMP. For details, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/pages/conferences/conferences.html>, or contact Betty Davison at the BC Nature office (email, manager@bcnature.ca; phone, 604-985-3057).

June 8-11 - WASHINGTON ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY annual conference, Spokane, WA. Details should be available by February 1; check the WOS website at <http://www.wos.org>.

June 15-17 - MANNING PARK BIRD BLITZ. For further details, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/pages/conferences/conferences.html>, or contact the organizer, Kelly Pearce (email, kpearce@uniserve.com; phone, 604-869-6745).

August 14-18 - 5TH NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS, joint meeting of American Ornithologists' Union, Association of Field Ornithologists, Bird Studies Canada, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, La Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservación de las Aves en México, Society of Canadian Ornithologists, Waterbird Society, & Wilson Ornithological Society, 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; website: <http://www.naoc-v2012.com>.

Sept. 27-30 - B.C. NATURE CONFERENCE & FALL GENERAL MEETING, Nanoose Bay & Parksville area, Vancouver Island, co-hosted by Arrowsmith and Nanoose Naturalists. For details, check the BC Nature website at <http://www.bcnature.ca/pages/conferences/conferences.html>, or contact Betty Davison at the BC Nature office (email, manager@bcnature.ca; phone, 604-985-3057).

Events in 2013:

Oct. 21 - 25 - 2013 RAPTOR RESEARCH FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEETING WITH NEOTROPICAL RAPTOR NETWORK & WORLD WORKING GROUP ON BIRDS OF PREY AND OWLS, Bariloche, Argentina. Contact: Libby Mojica [no address or phone number yet announced]; e-mail: ekmojica@wm.edu.

B.C. BIRDING NEWS BRIEFS

Compiled by Martin K. McNicholl

Thanks to Andrew C. Stewart for ensuring that I was aware of one of the news items in this compilation.

Sandercock Appointment

A former Simon Fraser University student, Brett K. Sandercock, was recently appointed Editor of *Studies in Avian Biology*, a monograph series published by the Cooper Ornithological Society. He and U.B.C.'s Kathy Martin are two of the three editors of the series' 39th volume, due for publication in spring 2011 on ecology, conservation and management of grouse. –based on Anonymous. 2010. *Ornithological Newsletter* 198:1.

Paul A. Stewart Award to U.B.C. Student

One of ten students who received Paul A. Stewart awards for oral presentations at the 2010 Wilson Ornithological Society in Geneva, New York was Kira Delmore of U.B.C., who spoke on "Divergent migratory behaviors as post-zygotic barriers to interbreeding in hybrid zones." –Anonymous. 2010. *Ornithological Newsletter* 198:2.

Struan Robertson

Birders attending annual meetings of the Wild Bird Trust of B.C. will no doubt remember the prominence of a camera documenting mingling and display perusal by the members. The death of Struan Robertson on 17 March 2011 ended his photographic documentation of that society's events, as well as his numerous other contributions to WBT, including assisting with reception, updating sightings, proof-reading and cartography. –based on P. M. Banning-Lover. 2011. *Wild Bird Trust of B.C. Wingspan* winter/spring 2011:3.

Barn Swallow Threatened

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) recommended adding Barn Swallows to Canada's list of species at risk at the level of Threatened. A ten-year review of the status of Long-billed Curlew retained its status as of Special Concern. –based on Anonymous. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 27 May 2011:2.

McTaggart-Cowan Award to Anna Roberts

Anna Roberts, the founding President of the Williams Lake Field Naturalists, received the 2011 McTaggart-Cowan Outstanding Naturalist Award of Nature B.C. at their annual general meeting in Williams Lake. Her contributions to nature study are diverse, including studies on and publications about lichens, vascular plants, butterflies and various birds in the Cariboo-Chilcotin area, as well as B.C. generally. Her contributions to ornithology include a local bird checklist, founding and compilation of a local Christmas bird count, studies of Mountain Bluebirds and initiation and coordination of a local bluebird nest-box trail. She has also been one of the leading contributors to conservation and environmental education efforts in the Williams Lake area, including participating in the establishment of the Scout Island Nature Centre, conservation of wetlands and the planning processes of two provincial parks. –based on Anonymous. 2011. *B.C. Nature* 49(2):13.

McCall Receives Community Achievement Award

A photograph published in *Vancouver Sun* on 27 April 2011 includes Jeremy McCall in a group of about 45-50 recipients on 20 April 2011 of British Columbia 2011 Community Achievement Awards presented by B.C. Lieutenant Governor Steven Point and Deputy Premier Kevin Falcon. The anonymous article does not name the recipients or indicate for what contribution(s) they have received the awards, but Jeremy, a former President of both Nature B.C. and Nature Vancouver, has contributed

substantially to numerous conservation efforts in both Greater Vancouver and B.C. as a whole. –based on J. Sullivan. [Nature Vancouver] e-mail Update 4 May 2011.

Solecki Honoured

A 10 May 2011 news e-mail to members of Nature Vancouver (Vancouver Natural History Society) contains a gracious thank-you from Daphne Solecki for being awarded a Life Membership. Daphne served in several positions in VNHS, including as President and also served as President and in other roles in the Federation of B.C. Naturalists (Nature B.C.). She also founded the Young Naturalists. She has participated in Christmas bird counts and contributed to several bird-oriented projects. –based partly on Nature Vancouver e-mail message of 10 May/11.

New Researcher Hired by Bird Studies Canada

Bird Studies Canada's first Post-Doctoral Fellow, Sampath Seneviratne, has been hired in B.C., where he will be studying speciation and hybridization in woodpeckers. –based on Anonymous. 2011. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 13 May 2011:2-3.

U.B.C. Students Receive 2011 Baillie and Taverner Awards

Kira Delmore of the Department of Zoology at U.B.C. was awarded the 2011 James L. Baillie Award of the Society of Canadian Ornithology to help in her PhD study of the role migration could play in maintaining reproductive isolation between songbirds, focusing on the Russet-backed and Olive-backed races of Swainson's Thrush. One of this year's two Taverner awards went to U.B.C.'s Ryan Germain for Ph.D. studies under Peter Arcese on phenotypic and environmental effects on timing of breeding in the famous Mandarte Island population of Song Sparrows. –based on I. Warkentin. 2011. *Picoides* 24(2):7-8.

Latest A.O.U. Name Changes

Shortly after returning from a hospital stay in early July 2011, I received the latest draft of a paper on Cuban warbler flocks to be delivered by Paul B. Hamel in early August at a symposium in Sri Lanka. As I worked my way through the manuscript, I noticed that a whole bunch of warblers were listed under the genus name *Setophaga*, previously restricted to the redstarts. Knowing that Paul was unlikely to make such an error without catching it in proof-reading, I assumed he must have seen the July 2011 issue of *The Auk* with the 52nd supplement of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds. Sure enough, that issue arrived about two weeks later with 40 North and Central American and Caribbean species of wood-warblers formerly in the genera *Parula*, *Dendroica*, some *Wilsonia*, and three other non-B.C. genera now in the genus *Setophaga*, and the order in which they are listed has been shuffled. Species of *Setophaga* on the B.C. checklist are now in the order: Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Hermit Warbler and Black-throated Green Warbler. Interestingly, although the "type genus" (*Parula*) of the wood-warbler family, Parulidae, no longer exists that family name has been retained.

Other splits, lumping and recognition of accidentals brings the total list of recognized species in the area to 2,078. Additional changes affecting species that occur in B.C. are: Common

Moorhen has been split, with the Eurasian species retaining that name and the North American species becoming Common Gallinule, *Gallinula galeata* [formerly Florida Gallinule]. Snowy Plover, *Charadrius nivosus* has been split back out of Kentish Plover (*C. alexandrinus*). The wheatears, including Northern Wheatear, have been transferred from the thrushes, Turdidae into the Old World Flycatcher family (Muscicapidae). Tennessee, Orange-crowned and Nashville warblers have been transferred from the genus *Vermivora* into *Oreothlypis*, Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers (*Oporornis philadelphia* and *O. tolmiei*), have been transferred into the genus *Geothlypis*. Although Hooded Warbler was among those transferred into *Setophaga*, the other B.C. *Wilsonia* species (Wilson's and Canada warblers) were transferred into the genus *Cardinella* – *C. pusilla* and *C. canadensis*. The order in which the B.C. wood-warblers are now listed is: Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-White Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Hooded Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, the warblers now in *Setophaga* (see above), Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Painted Redstart and Yellow-breasted Chat. Additional changes proposed, but not yet discussed involving B.C. species include division of Mallard and Mountain Chickadee, re-splitting of Yellow-rumped Warbler into two to four species and changes to the English names of *Troglodytes* wrens. –based on R. T. Chesser, R. C. Banks, F. K. Barker, C. Cicero, J. L. Dunn, A. W. Kratter, I. J. Lovette, P.C. Rasmussen, J. V. Remsen, Jr., J. D. Rising, D. F. Stotz and K. Winker. 2011. *Auk* 128:600-613.

Yorke Edwards

Naturalist educator Roger Yorke Edwards, Director of the Royal B.C. Museum from 1975 to 1984 died on 16 August 2011 at the age of 86. After growing up in Toronto, where he participated in the Royal Ontario Museum's Intermediate Naturalists' Club along with such other future notable naturalists as Robert Bateman, John Crosby, J. Bruce Falls and Bristol Foster, Yorke undertook a M.Sc. on botany and zoology at U.B.C. under Ian McTaggart-Cowan. While a research officer in the B.C. Forest Service, he conceived and implemented much of the nature interpretation program of B.C. provincial parks, introducing the interpretive signs, nature houses and nature trails that visitors now enjoy and the much-appreciated naturalist talks that recent governments have mostly eliminated. His success with this program caused him to be invited by the Canadian Wildlife Service to set up wildlife centres across Canada, including the one at Creston, B.C. He then became Assistant Director of our provincial museum in 1972, before becoming Director. He was responsible for the development of many of the museum's projects, research and publications and wrote widely in nature magazines and scientific publications. Until a few months before his death, a column of his west coast observations accompanied the minutes of the nearly monthly minutes of Toronto's exclusive Brodie Club, of which he was a Corresponding Member. –based primarily on a Royal B.C. Museum Press Release by J. Harding of 22 August 2011, forwarded by Robert Puls on 22 August 2011, subsequently published by Rob Cannings 2011. *B.C. Nature* 49(3):11.

Travelling Siskin

A band on a leg found with a wing on 2 April 2010 By Bob Weeden near Fulford Harbour, Salt Spring Island, B.C. had been placed on a Pine Siskin in Burdett, New York, 2,900 miles [4,666 km.] away on 16 April 2009. –based on J. Gregoire and S. Gregoire. 2011. *North Amer. Bird Bander* 36:29-30, with additional details supplied by e-mail by John Gregoire 28 August 2011.

Allan Charles Schutz

Vancouver area birders lost another prominent member on 8 May 2011, when Allan Schutz died at the age of 88. Allan, a retired forester, frequently attended Birders' Nights of the Vancouver Natural History Society and some annual meetings of B.C.F.O. He was a frequent traveler to distant lands, especially in Africa. –based on Anonymous. 2011. *Vancouver Sun* 21 May 2011 & *The Province* 21 May 2011, as reprinted in *Wandering Tattler* 35(1):11, 2011

John Joseph Garnham

The Delta Naturalists lost a prominent birder on 20 August 2011 with the death of John Garnham, a former R.C.M.P. officer, whose many interests included birdwatching. He was an enjoyable participant in the Reifel/Westham islands portion of recent Ladner Christmas bird counts. –based partly on Anonymous. 2011. *Wandering Tattler* 35(1):11, 2011.

Tributes to B.C. Naturalists Featured in Historical Issues of *Canadian Field-Naturalist*

An announcement by Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club President Ann MacKenzie and Publications Chairman Daniel Brunton in *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 125:1, 2011 notes that it is the first issue that will be published primarily on the inter-net, although it will still be available in print. Biographies of two B.C. naturalists highlight the historical last entirely print issue and historical first primarily internet issue. The first issue to be available primarily by internet contains a biography of Hue Norman MacKenzie, one of the pillars of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists Club prior to moving to British Columbia (D. F. Brunton. 2011. *Can. Field-Nat.* 125:76-79), while the last primarily print issue contains a tribute to Ian McTaggart-Cowan by Rod S. Silver, Neil K. Dawe, Brian M. Starzomski, Katherine L. Parker and David W. Nagorsen (*Can. Field-Nat.* 124:367-383. Both Cowan and MacKenzie published several contributions in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*.

Welcome, Catherine Jardine

The B.C. office of bird Studies Canada recently hired Catherine Jardine as a database technician focusing on B.C. programs, but also contributing to a national inter-agency program on wing energy vs. bats and birds. She has previous experience with Brown Kiwi, seabirds in the Gulf of Maine, Kakapo [an endangered flightless parrot], Burrowing Owls and prairie songbirds. –based on Anonymous. 2011. *Bird Studies Canada Latest News* 18 Nov. 2011:1-2.

Edgar T. Jones

Edmonton, Alberta bander Edgar T. Jones died on 3 October 2011, according to the Edmonton Nature Club e-mail coordinator Marvyn Patterson (e-mail of 4 October 2011). "Eddie" was for many years one of the National Audubon Society screen tour speakers that spoke on natural history and conservation topics around North America. He often was among those banding the largest number of birds in a given year in the Western Bird Banding Association region of Canada and the U.S. and he also banded some birds in B.C. His contributions to about 1980 were summarized in "Edgar T. Jones: Edmonton bird bander." pp. 20-24 in M. M. McNicholl (Ed.). 1981. Bird banding in Alberta. *Alberta Naturalist* Special Issue No. 2).

New Hemispheric Ornithological Society?

A new Western hemisphere-wide society, possibly publishing several new journals, is being considered by the Council of the American Ornithologists' Union and some of the other societies affiliated through the Ornithological Societies of North America (Anonymous. 2011. *Ornithological Newsletter* 204:1). This may involve the merger of some of the societies and/or their journals, but at least one of the World-wide specialist societies has already expressed strong reservations. Stay tuned!

In Memoriam: Ronald Pelham Walker, October 1930 - Sept 2011

Ronald (R.P.) Walker of Christina Lake, passed away September 4th, 2011 in the Palliative Care Unit at Grand Forks Boundary Hospital. It is with a profound sense of loss that the birders and naturalists of British Columbia mark his passing.

The family has lost an incredible husband, father and grandfather. Ron is survived by his wife, Ollie of 59 years; children: Danny (Teresa), Robert, Gordon (Leslie), Pat (Gavin), Allen, Keith (Kathy), and Susan (George); grandchildren: Christina, Gareth, Angela, Alexa, Caden, Danielle, Alex, Sean, Mathew and Zachary; brother, Brian (Pat) and sister Joan.

Ron was a Meteorological Technician on Old Glory Mountain near Rossland, BC from 1950 to 1952 when he met Ollie Phillips, his future wife. After a short time at Sandners Sawmill at Christina Lake, he began his career at the Cascade Border crossing as a Customs Inspector, where he stayed until retirement.

As well as raising seven children, Ron and Ollie have owned and operated Silver Birch Resort at Christina Lake since 1953. Ron was the Regional District Director, Area C, for 11 years, where he was instrumental in bringing many improvement projects to the community. He was the president of the Naturalist Club for many years, as well as an active volunteer in many areas within the community. One of his special projects was the creation and maintenance of the many Blue Bird trails.



Ron was a long-time member of the Boundary Naturalists, serving many terms as president. His encyclopedic knowledge of birds and plants made him a favourite choice as a speaker and leader of hikes. Always enthusiastic and humorous, whether instructing one to "listen for birds in the bush or look at the ground by your feet", or sharing his experiences of his world-wide adventures illustrated by the wonderful slides he has amassed, Ron was always sharing his knowledge (the consummate teacher). Over the years this vast collection of facts and photographs were shared with publications: *The Birds of British Columbia* and *The Plants of the Southern Interior*.

He travelled to Kenya, Mexico, South Africa, Texas (drove to see the Whooping Cranes), Ecuador, Arizona (drove to see the Elegant Trogon), Galapagos Islands, Costa Rica, Australia (3 times), Singapore, Peru, Papua New Guinea, Brazil, New Zealand, India, The Caribbean, Vietnam, Lesotho, England, Borneo, Madagascar,

He managed to see and record over 3500 birds on his life list. Ron was not just a birder he was a "complete naturalist". Ron will be greatly missed.

Reminiscences by Bill Merilees

"Describing Ron Walker.....many words come to mind....friendly, outgoing, talkative, diligent, self confident, enthusiastic, perceptive, prepared, knowledgeable, opinionated and pragmatic."

".... he loved to tell stories and share anecdotes, and of these he had a vast repertoire. Most had a humorous component that would produce a chuckle."

"In 1968 when the West Kootenay Bird Study Group came together through staff at Selkirk College, Ron became one of its earliest participants. As this group evolved, the West Kootenay Naturalists Association was formed. Later, the Boundary Naturalists Association formed in Grand Forks. Ron became one of its most energetic leaders."

"Like most naturalists a few specimens, found as casualties, would accumulate in the family freezer. This occurred to such an extent that once Ollie slapped a frozen woodpecker on his dinner plate in protest!"



RALPH RITCEY WINS STEVE CANNINGS AWARD FOR 2011

Ralph Ritcey of Kamloops, retired wildlife biologist with the BC Ministry of Environment and long-time activist member of the Kamloops Naturalists Society, has been named by BC Field Ornithologists as the winner of the Steve Cannings Award for 2011.



Photo: Rick Howie

This annual award for outstanding contributions to ornithology in BC, presented by BC Field Ornithologists each year since 2007, was renamed last year after the late Steve Cannings of Penticton, who was a renowned amateur ornithologist, nature photographer, and conservationist.

Ralph Ritcey worked as a wildlife biologist for the BC Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Branch, and later the Wildlife Program of the BC Ministry of Environment, for more than 30 years. For much of that time, he served as the Regional Wildlife Biologist for the Thompson Region. He participated in biological surveys of several major provincial parks, including Wells Gray, Tweedsmuir, Mount Robson, and Bowron Lakes, and co-authored reports on the birds of those parks. Especially noteworthy was a report on the birds of Wells Gray Provincial Park, issued by the BC Parks Branch in 1967, which was co-authored by Ralph and Yorke Edwards.

Since his retirement, Ralph has continued to be an active observer and recorder of birds in the BC Southern Interior, and an active member of the Kamloops Naturalist Club. For many years, he has written a monthly summary of noteworthy bird sightings for the Kamloops Naturalists newsletter. Each year since 1999, he has organized the club's Birdfest or Big Bird Day in late May, an event somewhat like a Christmas Bird Count, in which teams of observers in the northern and southern halves of the Kamloops area compete to see who can find the most species of birds. In addition, for several years he has organized the Kamloops Naturalists' annual Photo Contest, a time-

consuming job which includes photos of birds as well as other natural history subjects.

Finally, Ralph has been a significant contributor to the BC Breeding Bird Atlas, having put in 129 hours of observation time over 3 seasons. Most of this has been in Atlas Square 10FB72, which includes Tranquille and the lower watershed of the Tranquille River, an area which has long been one of Ralph's favourites. As of the end of last year, a total of 136 species of confirmed, probable, and possible breeders had been tallied in this atlas square, nearly all of them by Ralph himself, a total exceeded by only one other atlas square in the province.

Ralph was not able to attend this meeting himself, but we take great pleasure in announcing this award, and we intend to present it to him in person at a suitable occasion in Kamloops.

A WARM WELCOME TO NEW BCFO MEMBERS

Ryan Cathers, (Nanaimo)	Jerry McFetridge (Quesnel)	Heather Meier (Prince George)
Judith Kline-Chrysler (Terrace)	Megan Bailey (Fort St. John)	Andrew Tyrrell (Fort St. John)
Bob Dyer (West Vancouver)	Andrea Paetow (Burnaby)	Jenny Macintosh (Vancouver)
Bill Stewart (Courtenay)	Sherry Tucker(Nanaimo)	Leona Breckenridge (White Rock)
Christopher Stephens (Parksville)		Kenneth Walton (Stratford, Ontario)

BCFO CONFERENCE 2011 EXTENSION TRIP: PEACE RIVER REGION AND FORT NELSON LOWLANDS

Text and photos by Russell Cannings

The annual general meeting of the BC Field Ornithologists was held in Fort St John this year. Following the meeting, Russell led the Extension Trip to Fort Nelson and back, with 12 keen participants. Here's his story¹

June 12: Evening birding around Taylor and Watson Slough

A final lunch-mixer this afternoon signaled the beginning of the "BCFO Extension Trip Version: 2011." The tour officially started at 7pm as we left the hotel in two vans (a bit of a tight squeeze for 13 people but we made it work!) and headed for the small town of Taylor overlooking the narrow Peace River Valley. Both conference field trips had birded this vicinity, so now we spent our time watching the hummingbird feeders at one house where Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have been known to occur. The owners Dave and Mary are very welcoming to birders and had set up a fire-pit and put out chairs upon our arrival—luxury birding!

We sat and chatted, marveling at the impressive garden and of course looking at the birds: **Purple Finches** dashed to and from the seed feeders, while **House Wren**, **Swainson's Thrush**, **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** and **Clay-coloured Sparrows** sang from the surrounding bushes. Dave showed us an Eastern Phoebe nest inside a nearby barn, and several **Common Nighthawks** called overhead as dusk set in. At the hummingbird feeder, there wasn't much action, only one or two **Calliope Hummingbirds** in attendance. Then all of a sudden, a larger bird buzzed by—female **Ruby-throated Hummingbird**! Unfortunately it only stayed for an instant then disappeared before everyone could get satisfactory looks.

After waiting a while longer we thanked Dave and Mary, then headed back up the highway to Fort St. John. Marsh bird time! Since 2009, Watson Slough (on Hwy 29 at Bear Flats) has become known as a reliable site for Yellow Rail. It also happens to be a reliable site for millions of mosquitoes but birds like this require a blood sacrifice! Upon arrival we bumped into birders who had just heard two rails at the NE end of the marsh. We were in the central unit where the sedge is most extensive (Yellow Rails are short and dumpy compared to their relatives so they prefer damp sedge to water-filled cattail marshes), and we didn't have to wait long! Within minutes we could hear three **Yellow Rails** ticking at once! So that means there are probably at least five in the area—and this is supposed to be a mythical bird in BC?!

Soon after this, I picked out a **Nelson's (Sharp-tailed) Sparrow** singing nearby. It was now too dark to find him but everyone present was pleased to hear this strange "hushy" song.



The gang patiently awaits the appearance of a Yellow Rail at Watson Slough

By 11pm it was simply too buggy to stay—put any longer so we called it a day, adding a nesting **American Kestrel** and a singing **Swamp Sparrow** to our list as we left the marsh.

June 13: Fort St John to Fort Nelson via Pink Mountain

After breakfast we left Fort St John and headed to nearby Baldonnel, essentially a suburb of Fort St. John, just past the airport. We had just received a hot tip that a Connecticut Warbler could be found along one of the side-roads here. As luck would have it, the male was singing loudly as we pulled up and after a bit of coaxing, everyone managed some fantastic looks at both male and female **Connecticut Warblers** as they darted between black spruces. This was a life-bird for many present and a big treat for everyone as this species is notoriously difficult to see whether it be on the breeding/wintering grounds or on migration. Also it was interesting to find this pair in a black spruce bog as the preferred COWA habitat is usually old-growth aspen stands with little to no understory. Here's the video link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcDyRcsmSkk>

From Baldonnel we headed north up the Alaska Highway for a few hours until we reached the settlement of Pink Mountain, where we had lunch. Then the gang embarked on what would be the greatest challenge of the trip—trying to take two fully loaded minivans up to the top of Pink Mountain. We had to deal with large puddles, rough patches of road where we risked bottoming out, and snow drifts.

Slowly but surely we nosed our way up through the forest, picking up our only **Dusky Flycatcher** of the trip, before

¹ Thanks to Russell for permission to abstract this from his blog at: <http://russellcannings.blogspot.com/2011/06/blog-post.html>



Pink Mountain road

reaching the alpine. Up top we had looks at a lovely **Townsend's Solitaire** from the vans; then it was time to hike!

The group formed a wide line to sweep for ptarmigan. Pink Mountain, a unique outlier of the Northern Rockies, is home to a small population of Rock Ptarmigan—the main reason for our visit. **American Pipits** and **Horned Larks** popped up for brief flurries of song along the high ridge-lines, while in the subalpine willow and fir scrub, **Golden-crowned Sparrows** chased each other around and a male **Northern Harrier** patrolled the meadows for rodents. Kevin Neill spotted a **Moose** swimming across a lake way down in the valley, while up on the mountain, **Hoary Marmots** inspected us with mild curiosity.

Shortly after we formed the ptarmigan-line someone yelled out, "There's one!" I got it in the bins and immediately realized it wasn't a Rock but a male **Willow Ptarmigan**! An unexpected but very welcome bonus! All three ptarmigan species have been recorded on this mountain but Rocks are by far the most regular residents. After a few minutes of "oos" and "aahhs" from the group, the ptarmigan obviously decided enough was enough and launched into a frenzied display-flight then disappeared behind another hillside.



Pink Mountain summit

After four hours on the mountain we returned to the highway where we chanced upon the previously unknown "Pink Mountain Sewage Ponds" behind the gas station. The two postage stamp-sized ponds produced our only **Greater Yellowlegs** of the trip, as well as several new broods of **Mallard**. From here it was a

two-and-a-half hour drive north to Fort Nelson, passing through seas of black spruce along the way.



Willow Ptarmigan on Pink Mountain

June 14: Fort Nelson area

5 am saw us at the Fort Nelson Demonstration Forest for some pre-breakfast birding. The forest was disappointingly quiet but gradually we started building a decent list including **Ovenbird**, **Magnolia Warbler**, **Canada Warbler**, **Blue Jay** (scarce and very local this far north), **Alder Flycatcher**, and **White-winged Crossbill**. Unfortunately, the hoped for (Eastern) Winter Wren and Cape May Warbler—both here last year—did not show for us.

After breakfast we headed west out of town, stopping briefly to admire a flock of 42 **Sandhill Cranes** feeding in some ploughed fields. We turned up the Liard Highway (Hwy 77) and stopped at the Beaver Lake Rec Site—another good site for Cape May Warbler and Winter Wren. No warbler, but we could immediately hear the fluty song of a distant **Winter Wren**, along with a distant calling **Boreal Chickadee**. On the small lake we noted two male **Ring-necked Ducks** and a lone **Barrow's Goldeneye**. Several groups of **White-winged Crossbill** chattered overhead, and a single **Common Nighthawk** called in the distance.

We continued up the highway, crossing the mighty Fort Nelson River then turning onto a west-leading forestry road. The side-road I had intended to concentrate on was gated so—time for a walk! Once again, the forest was surprisingly quiet, but soon we were able to get good looks at **Magnolia Warblers**, a **Canada Warbler**, a singing **Ovenbird**, several **American Redstarts**, roving bands of **White-winged Crossbills**, a pair of **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**, and a couple **Red-eyed Vireos** (just to name a few). Best of all, our main target along this road—**Bay-breasted Warbler**—was singing behind a stand of spruce by the cars when we got back! I got out the tape and tried to coax it in but at first nothing happened. As the bird continued to sing, I began to wonder if this was just a redstart mimicking a bay-breast, so I played a redstart recording. Within seconds, a bird came buzzing in and Kevin shouted, "Bay-breasted Warbler!" Odd that it responded only to a redstart, but we weren't complaining! I had told everyone that he would probably keep to the mid-level branches but then all of a sudden he dropped right down onto the ground in front of us and started running up and down a log right at my feet! I scrambled to take some photographs but only managed to get a video of him singing in a spruce after he crossed the road. Here's the video link (enjoy!)-
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhulvEhYaoQ>

Satisfied with our find, we returned to the Fort Nelson area and stopped at Parker Lake. Several **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers**

gave us brief glimpses as they chased each other through the spruce-tamarack woods beside the lake, while **Marsh Wren** (near the northern end of their range) and **Common Yellowthroat** chattered from the cattails. Out on the lake we scoped a lone **Surf Scoter** among more common species, including a pair of **Trumpeter Swans**.

In the hot afternoon we paid a visit to the Fort Nelson Sewage Lagoons. Very little on the ponds but we did tally our one and only **Northern Pintail** of the trip. After dinner we visited the FN Demo Forest once again, and somehow managed to get lost on one of the many side-trails. Lots of bugs and 13 pairs of wet shoes later, we made it back to the parking lot, stopping to gawk at a singing male **Canada Warbler**.

June 15: Fort Nelson back to Fort St John

Since we were still missing Palm Warbler and some of us still had not seen a Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, we returned to Parker Lake. It had rained recently, so we decided to walk along the muddy road rather than risk getting a van stuck on the final day of the tour. A singing **Black-and-White Warbler** teased us with its rusty-wheel whistles but did not allow a clear view, then right on cue, a male **Palm Warbler** popped up! The light wasn't good, but through the scope everyone had great views of this muskeg-loving warbler. Our luck continued once we got to the lake when a **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** came into view and sat patiently for everyone to get a good look. To cap it off, we had nice looks **Swamp Sparrows** moving through some low alders.

To break up the trip south we stopped in at Andy Bailey Regional Park. The forest and wetland habitat here is fabulous but birdsong was pretty meager. Most conspicuous were the **Ovenbirds** but a male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** is always a





Yellow-bellied Flycatcher at Parker Lake

crowd-pleaser. This is where we also saw our only **Belted Kingfisher** of the trip.

We got back to FSJ in the early afternoon, returned the vans and said our goodbyes. All in all it was a great tour for birds, but particularly for weather. The Peace and Fort Nelson regions are notorious for prolonged thundershowers and high winds in June but we escaped this for the most part! As you can see from the Extension Trip list (below), the variety of habitats visited allowed for an attractive and well-rounded list! Together with the weekend conference in Fort St John, I think we all had a fantastic time.

EXTENSION TRIP LIST

Canada Goose	Killdeer	Cliff Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Trumpeter Swan	Spotted Sandpiper	Black-capped Chickadee	Clay-coloured Sparrow
Gadwall	Greater Yellowlegs	Boreal Chickadee	Vesper Sparrow
American Wigeon	Wilson's Snipe	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Savannah Sparrow
Mallard	Bonaparte's Gull	House Wren	Nelson's Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Winter Wren	Fox Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Common Nighthawk	Marsh Wren	Song Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Lincoln's Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Calliope Hummingbird	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Swamp Sparrow
Redhead	Belted Kingfisher	Townsend's Solitaire	White-throated Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Swainson's Thrush	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Northern Flicker	Hermit Thrush	Dark-eyed (Slate-coloured) Junco
Surf Scoter	Pileated Woodpecker	American Robin	Western Tanager
Bufflehead	Western Wood-Pewee	European Starling	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Common Goldeneye	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	American Pipit	Red-winged Blackbird
Barrow's Goldeneye	Alder Flycatcher	Cedar Waxwing	Brewer's Blackbird
Ruddy Duck	Least Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	Common Grackle
Ruffed Grouse	Dusky Flycatcher	Orange-crowned Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
Willow Ptarmigan	Eastern Phoebe	Yellow Warbler	Purple Finch
Common Loon	Warbling Vireo	Magnolia Warbler	White-winged Crossbill
Osprey	Red-eyed Vireo	Bay-breasted Warbler	Pine Siskin
Bald Eagle	Gray Jay	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler	House Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Blue Jay	Palm Warbler	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Black-billed Magpie	Black-and-White Warbler	
Red-tailed Hawk	American Crow	American Redstart	
American Kestrel	Common Raven	Ovenbird	
Merlin	Horned Lark	Northern Waterthrush	115 species
Yellow Rail	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Connecticut Warbler	
Sora	Tree Swallow	Common Yellowthroat	
	American Coot	Bank Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Sandhill Crane	Barn Swallow	Canada Warbler	

	<p>British Columbia Field Ornithologists 22nd Annual Conference Will be held in PRINCETON June 1 – 3, 2012 Hosted by the VERMILLION FORKS NATURALISTS <i>The main conference will be followed by an Extension Trip – location to be specified</i></p>	 <p><i>Look for registration details in the March newsletter</i></p>
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Two-Day Field Trips for Members

Looking back, looking forward



Great birding, different habitats, unfamiliar locations, friendly groups, and expert leaders made this new BCFO undertaking a great success. And participants were emphatic: "Let's do more of these in 2012".

The 2011 series started in March in Parksville with Guy Monty viewing the bird (and mammal) spectacle associated with the annual herring spawn.

In May, Jude Grass led a trip to the infrequently visited, and very under-birded Skagit Valley.

Preceding this year's AGM in Fort St. John, two-days' birding, led by Nancy Krueger visited sites around Prince George (Day 1), and enroute to Fort St John (Day 2).

The Fraser Delta in November was the location for the final field trip of the year led by George Clulow, where members viewed raptors, massed shorebirds and waterfowl.

As we go to press, plans are being made for the 2012 series of two-day field trips which will visit new areas, focus on different birds, and provide more excellent leaders from among our membership.

Currently under consideration are trips to: South Okanagan; Salmon Arm; Kamloops; Victoria/Beachy Head/Coho Ferry. Look for confirmed locations and dates in the March issue of Birding. Don't miss out on the 2012 series as we work to make these trips a BCFO tradition.



TWO DAY FIELD TRIPS FOR MEMBERS, 2011

SKAGIT VALLEY, MAY 27–28

by Jude Grass with photos by Al Grass

DAY 1: SKAGIT VALLEY

Our group met at Tim's in Hope and then our small, but dedicated band of birders, headed into the Skagit Valley. The group consisted of Adrian Leather of Quesnel, Clive Keen of Prince George, Jo Ann Mackenzie of Surrey and Roy Yates of Langley, and was led by Al and Jude Grass.

Skagit Valley Provincial Park is located in the North Cascade Mountains 35 kilometers southeast of Hope, approximately 150 kilometres east of Vancouver. First established in 1973 as a recreation area, it received official park status in late 1995. The park contains 27,948 hectares of forest, river and marshland habitat and is situated along the Canada- United States border. It is a wonderful area for watching wildlife (birds and mammals) and is a favourite spot for fishermen, hikers, and botanists.

The trip was designed to do the Skagit Valley from Hope to the US border on Friday (60 km each way) and then bird the local hotspots in and around Hope on Saturday.

Our trip was leisurely, stopping along the road next to the river, or small lakes, or wetland areas before reaching the park entrance. We had excellent looks at **Harlequin Ducks** (which breed along the Skagit) and **American Dippers** as well a variety of waterfowl on Silver Lake. It was here that we noted where rocks had been blasted to widen the road and the old round holes used for the dynamite now are used by nesting Violet-green Swallows. (Photo #1)

When we reached the park entrance we stopped and spent some time looking along the road and in the forest. There were lots of spring wildflowers, including wild ginger in bloom. We then proceeded to the Mile 26 Bridge Day Use Area where we had our first look at the Skagit River. We then stopped at a number of the fishing bars, which are good spots to access the river for ducks well as adjacent forest areas to look for warblers and flycatchers.

Shortly after noon, we arrived at the International Point Day Use Area where the Ross Lake picnic area and campground are located. We had our lunch by the Ross Lake Reservoir and then walked through the campground looking for birds and mammals. Interestingly, you can walk across the unguarded border to the boat launch and interpretation building and to the US

campground. Visitors to that site have to come through Canada to get to the American park.



Blasting holes in rock that Violet-green swallows were nesting in near Silver Lake on the Skagit Road.

After lunch and a walk we got into the vehicles and headed back up to the Chittenden Bridge and a walk along the wonderful nature trail through forest and open meadows – and the mosquitoes had not arrived yet!!! While birds continued to be our main focus, wildflowers, a snake, and spring fungi did grab our attention and were the subject of many photos.

Another wonderful spot is the Whitworth Meadow. This was originally the homestead of an early pioneering family who lived along the Skagit River. When the area was made a Recreation Area, part of it was developed as a campsite where horse people could stay, along with their horses, before heading out on some of the local equestrian trails. A large portion of this site is a wild meadow surrounded by forests and is wonderful for birds, butterflies and wildflowers.

By this time it was starting to get late in the afternoon so we headed slowly back, stopping at some of the fishing bars we had missed in the morning. We arrived back in Hope after 6pm and met for dinner at a local restaurant before turning in for a good night's rest.

Highlights: Harlequin Duck, American Dipper, Cassin's Vireo, Osprey, Hammond's Flycatcher, Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lincoln's Sparrow.

.DAY 2: CHEAM WETLAND & HOPE AIRPORT

Saturday morning we again met at Tim's in Hope and headed west towards Chilliwack to visit Cheam Lake Wetlands Regional Park near Popkum. This park is located on the site of an old marl mine; when the area was mined out, the site was turned into a wetland.

Cheam Lake Wetlands protects 93 hectares of marsh, lake and uplands, and is home to many different bird, animal and insect species. This nature park has sensitive habitat that is perfect for nature appreciation along 2 kilometres of nature trails. The website <http://www.greatervancouverparks.com/Cheam01.html> has some excellent pictures of the park and its wildlife. There is also a checklist of birds for the park.

Highlights: Peregrine Falcon, Ring-necked Duck, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Virginia Rail, Black-throated Gray Warbler. In total, we saw 46 species at this site.

Hope Airport and surrounding residential and farming area have produced many interesting birds over the years. It is not a heavily birded area but is definitely worth a stop and drive/walk around the airport perimeter. As you leave Hope heading toward Vancouver on Hwy 1, there are signs from the highway to the airport. A report from earlier in the week had noted that a Bobolink and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak had been seen in the area around the airport. We were unable to locate either of these, but did find some other good birds.

We spent most of the afternoon here driving and walking along local roads. We met a gentleman who lived near the airport and who Al had known many years ago in the BC MOE and in Skagit Valley. He invited us onto his property where we found **Lazuli Buntings**.

Highlights: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager, Turkey Vulture, and Chipping Sparrow. Total: 22 species at this site.



*Looking at the Lazuli Bunting near the Hope Airport.
L-R: Clive, Adrian, Jude and Jo Ann.*



Well, it wasn't all bird watching: Clive admires a garter snake

PRINCE GEORGE AREA, JUNE 9-10

Text and photos by Clive Keen

This field trip was scheduled for the two days prior to the AGM so that members could enjoy some birding in a new area en route to Fort St. John.

Participants: Mike Fung, Mark Habbas (Vancouver); Gord Dubois, Dennis Leonard (Clearwater); Agnes Lynn, Jim Fliczuk (Victoria); Roger Simms (Parksville); Robyn Abaer (Revelstoke); Dave Riley, Margaret Cuthbert (White Rock); Clive Keen, Heather Meier, Nancy Krueger, Leader (Prince George).

A week before the AGM pre-trip, just three BCFO members had signed up to sample Prince George's birdiest areas, but at 5:45 am on the day, there were a baker's dozen of us sorting out the car pooling. Trip leader Nancy Krueger, having heard that the group particularly wanted to find Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, soon sped us off on the 90 k trip to the Bowron Forest Service Road, where they were alleged to be abundant.

We fed quite a lot of mosquitoes on that forest road. Some peckish blackflies too. My electric tennis racket, which should be considered a compulsory accessory for northern birding, did noble work, but the sound of exploding insects detracted a little from the silence necessary for YBFL spotting. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers refused to break the silence, and a **Tennessee Warbler** had to fill the void, singing prettily on an exposed branch for the photographers. Some good sightings of **American Redstarts**, **Townsend's Warblers**, and those glorious **Magnolias**, along with the usual forest-road suspects, soon followed, proving that the long drive eastward wasn't in vain.

Next up was a trip to the Purden Ski resort, which offered the possibility of higher-elevation rarities. In the winter, bird feeders put out by resident skiers tempt species such as the less-common types of Chickadee, but the feeders were all empty that day. Instead, we spent a happy twenty-five minutes in pursuit of a songster, finally getting good views of an eloquent **Wilson's Warbler**. The small rivulet flowing through the resort also gave us **Northern Waterthrush** and **Steller's Jays**, while the only raptor of the day – a **Red-tailed Hawk** – flew overhead, as did **four species of swallow**.

Purden Lake Provincial Park was next, yielding two of the few shorebirds - **Spotted Sandpiper** and **Killdeer** - guaranteed to hang around Prince George in mid-June. **Orange-crowned** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** accompanied our lunch.

Heading back toward Prince George, we stopped at the Bowron River and Willow River rest areas, seeing hundreds of **Cliff Swallow** nests, and firmly nailing **Alder, Hammond's, Least, and Dusky Flycatchers**, along with **Cassin's and Warbling Vireos**.



Tennessee Warbler on Bowron Forest Road

For some reason the idea of heading to the Shelley septic lagoons didn't seem to excite anyone but me. Odd that. But, as the group decided that there was at least an hour left with no other options, we went reluctantly to the aromatic ponds. And yet it was perhaps the day's most productive spot: thirteen species of waterfowl were found there, all offering easy views. The **Cinnamon Teal** and abundant **Ruddy Duck** were particularly pleasing for some. **Common Yellowthroat** and **Wilson's Snipe** added to the orchestra, though it was only two of us, lingering, that caught a glorious close-up whinny of a **Sora**. We left just in time, as two large trucks had drawn up, each proudly bearing the motto "This truck really sucks!" Really pongs, too.

In all, we saw 62 species on this day.

On June 10, many of the BCFO participants extended the pre-trip by heading in convoy to Fort St John. Still no Yellow-bellied Flycatchers en route, though. The extension trip was the event for them. At Fort Nelson, YBFL seemed all over the place. I even got a half-decent photo of one.

FRASER DELTA, NOVEMBER 12-13

Text: George Clulow (Leader)

Photos: Leona Breckenridge and George Clulow

While there's always hope for good weather when birding BC's South Coast in November, expectations should be for rain. And for the hardy group of eight who came from as far afield as Quesnel and Victoria to bird the Coast this November, expectations were met. Participants were Adrian Leather, Agnes Lynn, Leona Breckenridge, Dave Cuthbert, Marg Cuthbert, Marian Porter and Val George.

We made a cracking start at Blackie Spit with good views of the expected **Long-billed Curlew** and **Marbled Godwits**, and were treated to good numbers of ducks, grebes, loons, and other shorebirds expected for the time of year. A cooperative **Cooper's Hawk** captured the group's attention for a while. As the rain started in earnest, and we departed the spit, a somewhat late **Bonaparte's Gull** provided a nice farewell.

Birding the farmland around Mud Bay we found a **Rough-legged Hawk**, which augured well for our raptor sightings, but only if the rain would stop! Soon after, we sighted our first **Eurasian Collared-Dove** – a now ubiquitous bird around Boundary Bay.



Despite our best efforts to stay vertical and view the birds on Boundary Bay at the foot of 104th St., the wind and rain rapidly drove us off the dyke. A quick change of plan was called for to avoid the wind and rain pounding in from the South East. So we headed for Reifel and had lunch in the warming hut while we dried out a little. As it turned out, Reifel was a good choice. Not only were birding conditions reasonable, but the **Snow Goose** flocks in the fields were spectacular, **Trumpeter Swans** had recently returned, and **Black-crowned Night Heron** was a BC

tick for at least one member of the group. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was also a welcome addition to our list. Wild **Sandhill Cranes** (as opposed to the semi-wild resident family) graced the west field and many **Northern Harriers** continually quartered the saltmarsh. We finished the day with **Canvasback**, and the far less common on the Coast, **Redhead**, as our final birds of the day.

We retreated to a Greek Restaurant in Crescent Beach for dinner, libations and birding talk.

The morning of Day 2 found us at Boundary Bay again, but this time actually able to see the huge, wheeling flocks of **Dunlin** and get close looks at **Black-bellied Plover** and the massive rafts of **Pintail**, **wigeon**, and **Mallard** that fill the Bay at this time of year.



Heading west we found **Short-eared Owls** at two locations on the Bay, The Tsawwassen Ferry Jetty was our next stop, and our targets of **Willet** (left) and **Snow Bunting** (above) were soon found, while sea-ducks provided some close-in looks for us.

Brunswick Point was our last stop, and for most of the group it provided the highlight bird of the whole weekend. Far out on the salt marsh, but providing pretty good scope views was a single

Snowy Owl. We didn't know it then, but this bird was one of the advance guard of the huge flight of this species we're seeing this winter. What a great way to finish our weekend – Snowy Owl, ninety-two species, and it wasn't raining!

SPECIES SEEN – FRASER DELTA:

Snow Goose	Red-breasted Merganser	Willet	Bewick's Wren
Brant	Ring-necked Pheasant (I)	Long-billed Curlew	Pacific Wren
Canada Goose	Pacific Loon	Marbled Godwit	Marsh Wren
Mute Swan	Common Loon	Dunlin	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Trumpeter Swan	Horned Grebe	Long-billed Dowitcher	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Wood Duck	Red-necked Grebe	Wilson's Snipe	American Robin
Gadwall	Western Grebe	Bonaparte's Gull	European Starling (I)
Eurasian Wigeon	Double-crested Cormorant	Mew Gull	Cedar Waxwing
American Wigeon	Great Blue Heron	Ring-billed Gull	Northern Shrike
Mallard	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Glaucous-winged Gull	Spotted Towhee
Northern Shoveler	Bald Eagle	Rock Pigeon (I)	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Northern Harrier	Eurasian Collared-Dove (I)	Fox Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Snowy Owl	Song Sparrow
Canvasback	Cooper's Hawk	Short-eared Owl	Lincoln's Sparrow
Redhead	Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Greater Scaup	Rough-legged Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	White-crowned Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Peregrine Falcon	Downy Woodpecker	Dark-eyed Junco
Surf Scoter	American Coot	Northern Flicker	Snow Bunting
White-winged Scoter	Sandhill Crane	Northern Shrike	Red-winged Blackbird
Bufflehead	Black-bellied Plover	Northwestern Crow	Purple Finch
Common Goldeneye	Killdeer	Common Raven	House Finch
Barrow's Goldeneye	Black Oystercatcher	Black-capped Chickadee	American Goldfinch
Hooded Merganser	Greater Yellowlegs	Brown Creeper	House Sparrow [I]

SEED-SPITTING ROBINS

by Bill Merilees

Purple defecations on my steps and patios are an annual indication that birds, robins in particular, have started binging on the fruits of the spurge-laurel (aka Winter Daphne) *Daphne laureola*. These deposits usually include a number of fairly large seeds that have passed through the bird's digestive system. In addition to robins, towhees have also been observed feeding on these fruits. Collectively, this feeding practice might partially explain the incredible increase in distribution and numbers of this non-native shrub in south western British Columbia. In Nanaimo, spurge laurel berries become ripe towards the end of May or early June depending on the warmth of the season.

Another shrub, the Indian Plum becomes ripe shortly after the spurge laurel. This species has somewhat larger fruits but its seeds, like the stone of a peach, are proportionally much larger (photo below). Indian plum is a native species, where only the female shrubs produce fruits.



This past summer, observations were made of a juvenile robin feeding on these fruits. After the bird had swallowed a number of 'plums' it rested on nearby steps for perhaps 10 minutes. During this time it was observed twice to shake its head from side to side then spit out a rather large object. These objects were collected and identified as the seeds of Indian plum.

Although not regularly seen, robins, and apparently, other thrush species as well, regularly regurgitate larger seeds while passing smaller one through their gut. Among our frugivorous birds, the Cedar Waxwing is an acknowledged specialist. Many questions arise as to the co-evolutionary values to birds and plants this interaction might have. In some instances, clean regurgitated seeds have a better germination potential than those defecated. For a detailed discussion on this interesting subject see the paper by Meyer and Witmer (1998).



Photo: Mark Haddas

The regurgitations that most naturalists are familiar with are owl pellets, composed of hair, feathers and bones of their animal prey. Gulls and crows are also noted for their regurgitation of seeds and animal hard parts.

The spitting of individual seeds by robins has been observed by others but having the opportunity to see this act first hand was a novel experience.

Reference:

Meyer, G.A. and M. C. Witmer, 1998: Influence of Seed Processing by Frugivorous Birds on Germination Success of Three North American Shrubs. *American Midland Naturalist*, vol.140, p. 129-139

THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRDCOUNT

February 17-20, 2012, across North America.

The GBBC is open to everyone with an interest in birds.

It's a great learning experience.

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<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html>

BANDING WITH MANUEL IN VERACRUZ, MEXICO

Text and Photos by Mark Haldas



My flight from Vancouver to Mexico City on the 13th of the month with a great number of empty seats was quite comfortable. Even more comfortable was the overnight ADO Platino bus which took me to Minatitlan, a small, not very attractive town in the province of Veracruz. Manuel was waiting for me with a smile, and drove me to the banders' headquarters, an unfurnished four-bedroom house in the centre of town. After a short unpacking he drove me straight to the banding station located next to the local oil refinery. To pass the guarded gate, I had to change into navy-blue overalls and boots.

The local refinery is the main employer for Minatitlan's population. Fifteen years ago, failure of outdated 80-year-old equipment caused a major oil spill. Thirty percent of the 800 hectares of marshes surrounding the refinery, an area rich in wildlife, was contaminated by crude oil. Only three years ago the Mexican government ordered the refinery to begin cleaning up the contaminated area. This work is still in progress, with many hectares still awaiting clean-up.

Money was allocated for environmental research in 2008. At this point, Pemex refinery took the initiative to start bird monitoring, and in October 2010 a full-time, year-round banding station was established with Manuel Grosselet as Master Bander in charge. The station monitors spring and fall migration, as well as winter survivorship and is one of a kind. Since start-up six months ago, over 128 species and 10 000 birds have been banded, and 282 species observed.

Meet the banding team

Manuel Olivier Grosselet, who runs the station, is a legend in North America's banding community. Since 1988, he has participated in various bird monitoring programs in Europe, North Africa, Central and North America, and been recognized by the French and Canadian governments as a specialist in bird

monitoring. He has banded more than 70 000 birds in 10 countries, and personally handled about 500 species. He is a member and advisor of many birding organizations in many countries, as well as author of many publications, books and birding guides. Manuel has many plans. One of his ideas is to create an international training centre for Latin American and other banders. He can be contacted through his website www.tierradeaves.com.

Monroy Ojeda, second-in-command, is a natural Resources Management Engineer, a wildlife management specialist and a very knowledgeable and experienced bander. His international experience includes banding at Long Point, Ontario. Two biology students also assist at the station. Manuel is proud of his team. They work continuously for three seven-day weeks, having the fourth week free to see their families.



Golden-winged Warbler

My first day

My first day of banding ended with 267 birds banded (from 10 nets in four hours). I extracted and banded two firsts for the station: Golden-winged and Chestnut-sided warblers. It was a day of 92 Yellow-breasted Chats, as well as many stunning Painted and Indigo buntings. The number of birds and variety of species was so exhilarating that 30°C heat and tiredness passed without notice. It was an amazing learning experience. I also realized how grateful I should be for my early training with Derek Mathews at our station in Vancouver. Other species included Mourning, Kentucky, Tennessee, Canada, Hooded and Worm-eating warblers, Grey-cheeked Thrush, Spot-breasted Wren, Greyish Saltator, Common Ground Dove, Brown-crested and Great Crested flycatchers, Green-breasted Mango, and Black-billed Cuckoo.

Daily Routine

It's April and spring migration. The day starts at 6 am. with a short drive to the station and the opening of 10 mist nets, which almost instantly are filled with birds of many species. Nets are open from 6:30 to 10:30, so the next four hours are extracting and banding time with no break. Then the nets and poles have to be dismantled and packed into the truck. Arriving back at city headquarters about noon, the next hour is dedicated to computer data entry. At 2 pm the whole team goes for lunch at a local restaurant and then returns to headquarters for rest.



Grey-necked Wood Rail

At 5:30 we drive back to the banding station to set up the nets, making them ready to be opened the next morning. The rest of the evening is dedicated to a survey of the surrounding marshes, one of my favourite activities. We drive and walk around the wetlands, observing flocks of Wood Stork, ibis, and egret, monitoring progress at an Aplomado Falcon nest, and admiring Baltimore, Orchard. Altmira, and Yellow-tailed orioles, and many more species, including the Laughing Falcon. According to local beliefs, his "laughing" call can forecast or ask for rain. Other observed raptors were Roadside, Common Black and Great Black hawks, and Snail and Mississippi kites.

One of the team members, who rotate weekly, stays overnight in a tent to be ready at 2 am to activate playback (sound recording of bird songs) to attract night migrants. This technique proved to be quite effective. One night we went with portable nets to capture a Spot-tailed Nightjar, and another night we photographed a Striped Owl. We return to the headquarters at 8 pm, and at 9 we walk to the restaurant for supper.

Good-bye

My short visit came to an end all too soon. It was time to say my good-byes to Manuel, his team, the friendly atmosphere, and go home. The incredible number

and diversity of the bird species will remain in my heart. I'll be back for the fall migration.

I hope that the vast, beautiful marsh habitats will recover, and will turn into a bird sanctuary. Dreams are free.

VANCOUVER CONNECTION

The reason I was able to get so much from my time at Manuel's station was because of the amount of experience I had previously gained from working at the Vancouver Avian Research Centre (IVARC) here in Vancouver.

IVARC is run by Master Bander and Bander in Charge Derek Mathews. Its focus is to conduct long term, comprehensive monitoring of bird populations. Results will support scientifically defensible strategies for avian and ecosystem conservation in Vancouver's Lower Mainland.. Derek became my mentor and spent countless hours teaching me the intricacies of ageing north American song birds using molt and plumage criteria, as well as honing my net extraction and bird banding skills. For me, the experience with IVARC not only provided an incredible amount to knowledge about bird monitoring and banding, but also helped to link together the way in which our efforts in Vancouver are inevitable linked with those at stations such as Manuel's in Mexico. Are they 'our birds' overwintering in Mexico or 'their birds' breeding here in Canada? Either way, it is impossible to consider Neotropical migrant birds without understanding their fluid lives in four seasons and distant places, or the ecological intricacies they require to survive. Our combined efforts will hopefully help to ensure their survival and remind us that we should not take them for granted.



Spot-breasted Wren

Photographic documentation of this visit can be seen at: birdsphotography.com/mexico_veracruz

TIME RUNS OUT ON NEVADA'S BIRD-KILLING PIPES

Plastic PVC pipes have been used as mining claim markers for some time. Claim-holders used these popular 4-inch diameter white-colored plastic pipes because they are light, inexpensive, and easy to see. If uncapped, they are also bird-killers. Small birds, mostly cavity-nesters, frequently investigate these pipe-openings, often after first perching on top. Once they enter a pipe, the birds become trapped; the width doesn't allow for wing-opening, and the sides are far too smooth to allow climbing out. The pipe becomes a deadly trap.

For example, two inspections in Nevada of 1,177 pipes in 2208 and 2009 revealed 957 dead birds. And again last month, 854 pipes inspected revealed 879 dead birds. Ash-throated Flycatchers and Mountain Bluebirds dominated the mortalities, but other victims included woodpeckers, shrikes, wrens, sparrows, Green-tailed Towhees, and even Western Screech-Owls.

The Nevada practice of using open pipes was not made effectively illegal until a 2009 measure required removal of the pipes, within two-year, and that grace period ended last month. Concerned agencies and conservation volunteers quickly began pulling out the pipes, often in an organized fashion. The Las Vegas-based Red Rock Audubon Society has even sponsored volunteer pole-pulls with the slogan: "Pull, baby, pull!" The estimated number of such pipes in Nevada is probably in the hundreds of thousands. There may also be problems in other western states.

Condensed from an account by Cheryl Ann Friesen, Science Liaison, Willamette National Forest

Article brought to our attention by Jo Ann Mackenzie *Eds. note: PVC pipes are widely used in BC too.*

What's going on here?!?



Standoff between Cooper's Hawk and Steller's Jay Photo by Bob Sterne, Coalmont, BC.
But what is they are they saying? We invite you to put words to this encounter!
E-mail to Editors. Results will be posted in the next BC Birding.

REPORTS FROM BCFO AGM 2011, FORT St JOHN

PRESIDENTS REPORT

I will be keeping my report short, but I will mention some of the highlights from the past year. You will be hearing more from our executive and committee chairs later in this meeting. At the 2010 AGM in Revelstoke a number of suggestions were made from the floor about things members would like to see the board look into. These were noted, and in November the board held a strategic planning meeting where we looked at a number of items that we would undertake in 2011. We wanted to be sure that they were things we knew we could complete or get well underway. We discussed many items, but finally agreed to undertake four items as follows:

- Membership Drive
- Website upgrading
- A series of two day field trips in various locations in the province
- A Bird Records Committee

Membership and Publications

We are still a small organization and between the number of members we have and the cost to produce a newsletter (4 times a year) we are running into financial problems, and therefore have been looking at ways to increase the membership but also decrease the cost of the newsletter. Several options were proposed that included less newsletters or sending out the newsletter electronically.

Website

The board authorized the sending out of a request for proposal for a new website – one that we can manage and that is easy to update and is affordable. George Clulow has been working on this, and we should be able to make an announcement shortly.

Two Day Field Trips

These have been very successful with four offered this year (there is still one left to complete – in Boundary Bay, Delta in the fall). We definitely will be done more trips next year, and we are looking for locations and leaders> Contact George if you have an idea.

Bird Records Committee

A number of individuals have been contacted to be on the committee based on terms of reference developed by Guy Monty, and there will be meetings coming up.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- Gordon Neish who is stepping down as the Membership Chair. Gordon has done a remarkable job updating our data system, keeping the membership list up to date, and reminding members to pay up;

- June Ryder, who will step down as our Treasurer, but will stay on the board;
- Wayne Diakow – for organizing the AGM this weekend;
- Board members and the Committee members who have put in many hours of service with newsletters, journals, archives, organizing events and the accounting, and attending meetings

You are a great group to work with: a BIG THANKS

Jude Grass, President

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of 31 December 2010, the BCFO had two hundred eighteen (218) regular members, six (6) honorary members (including two Steve Cannings Award recipients), and seven (7) institutional members for a total of two hundred thirty-one (231) members.

As of 16 May 2011, the BCFO has two hundred three (203) regular members, four (4) honorary members, and seven (7) institutional members for a total of two hundred fourteen (214) members. There are eleven (11) new members. Twenty eight (28) members in good standing in 2010 have not renewed their membership for 2011.

Of the 207 regular and honorary members, 91 (44%) have opted to access the newsletter from the BCFO website and 116 (56%) prefer to receive the newsletter by mail. One hundred ninety (92%) regular and honorary members have provided e-mail addresses; seventeen (8%) have provided postal addresses only.

The undersigned will be stepping down as Membership Coordinator at the end of this year. It would be desirable to have a replacement named by this fall in order to effect a smooth transition into 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Neish, Membership Coordinator

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2010

In 2010 the Society ended the year with a small surplus of \$662. We were saved from a deficit by the modest profit (about \$2000) we made on the annual conference and extension, publication of only three rather than four newsletters, and a decline in the total cost of newsletters thanks to those members who have agreed to receive the newsletters electronically. Relatively minor sources of revenue that have declined are donation income, bank interest and advertising. Income from membership fees rose in 2010, but in the long term is falling slightly due to a gradual decline in the number of members.

Major expenditures in 2010 (other than the conference and extension) included about \$1400 for printing and postage of the 2009 issue of BC Birds, and newsletter costs of \$2029 for three issues. Research grants, awards and donations, totaling \$2697, consisted of \$2000 to the BC Breeding Bird Atlas, \$500 to Friends of Mt. Revelstoke, and costs for the BCFO's Steve Cannings Award.

Directors and Officers of the Society have been endeavoring to reduce costs by minimizing expenses, in fact most do not claim travel expenses (costs fell from about \$1400 in 2009 to \$560 in 2010). We have also reduced face to face meetings to one a year. In 2010 most directors meetings were telephone conference calls (and since December 2010 we have been using Skype, thereby reduce calling costs to virtually zero for the current year). We have also been looking at ways to increase our membership, for example the recent introduction of attractive 2-day field trips for members – thereby encouraging people to join.

But despite these actions, and despite avoidance of a deficit in 2010, the Society is still skating on thin ice financially. This has the potential to restrict our activities, reduce the vitality of the Society, and limit our contributions to the birding world. (And we don't believe in deficit financing!)

Some of the things we are doing or would like to do that are incurring (or will incur costs):

- rejuvenate the BCFO website (we have a small committee actively engaged in this);
- reactivate a provincial rare bird committee; (this is also ongoing);
- continue to provide modest research grants for bird surveys and other ornithological projects; (we invite applications of up to \$1000);
- continue to make voluntary donations to major projects related to birds and conservation, such as the BC Breeding Bird Atlas;
- conduct activities to increase our membership and to increase the involvement of members;
- publish the normal *four* issues of the newsletter each year;
- maintain *British Columbia Birds* as a respected ornithological journal; and
- hold one face-to-face Director's meeting each year.

In view of ever-increasing costs, we are looking at ways to reduce our expenditures and increase our revenues so that we can engage in these activities. One of the most effective ways to do this is to reduce publication costs for the newsletters, so we

strongly encourage all members (who have e-mail) to receive newsletters electronically. (This would result in an annual savings of up to about \$1700 -- or more as printing and postage costs continue to rise and, incidentally, would remove the strictures on page numbers. The option to continue receiving paper copies will still be available,

I would like to thank the members who have already been receiving newsletters electronically. I hope that many others will follow this example.

J.M.Ryder, BCFO Treasurer

British Columbia Field Ornithologists Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for Year Ending Dec. 31

(Unaudited)		
	2010	2009
Revenue		
Membership	\$5,920.91	\$5,469
Conference fees	\$7,960.00	\$6,270
Conference Extension	\$6,490.00	\$0
Donation Income	\$454.00	\$504
Back issue sales	\$25.32	\$0
Bank Interest (Coast Capital + ING)	\$394.39	\$680
GST/HST Rebate	\$111.95	
Advertising	\$190.00	\$412
Total Revenue	\$21,546.57	\$13,334
Expenditures		
Newsletter Printing	\$985.43	\$969
Newsletter Postage	\$873.30	\$996
Newsletter miscellaneous	\$170.28	\$50
Conference	\$6,431.98	\$5,023
Conference Extension	\$4,613.60	\$0
Journal Printing	\$699.75	\$0
Journal Postage	\$615.91	\$0
Miscellaneous journal expenses	\$96.79	\$119
Research Grants, Awards, Donations	\$2,679.20	\$2,000
Honoraria	\$100.00	\$200
Officers' travel (in-person meetings)	\$559.44	\$1,392
Tele-conference Meeting Expenses	\$972.14	\$646
Misc. Postage	\$118.77	\$26
Photocopying	\$23.67	\$16
Misc. phone calls	\$0.00	\$0
Materials and Equipment	\$78.87	\$198
Bank Fees	\$103.25	\$0
Insurance	\$750.00	\$761
Website	\$749.34	\$953
Memberships & Society Fees	\$60.00	\$25
Book Keeping	\$0.00	\$98
Post Office Box Rental	\$203.20	\$670
Total Expenditures	\$20,884.92	\$14,142
Surplus (deficit) for the year	\$661.65	-\$808

Balance Sheet December 31, 2010

	2010	2009
Current Assets		
Cash in Banks		
ING Direct (savings account)	\$34,943.66	\$34,558
Coast Capital (working account)	\$7,238.52	\$6,963
Total Chequing/Savings	\$42,182.18	\$41,521
Other Assets		
Advertising Receivables	\$0.00	\$0
GST/HST Receivables	\$313.62	\$105
Total Current Assets	\$42,495.80	\$41,626
Current Liabilities		
Prepaid Memberships	\$4,762.29	\$3,045
Future Payable (newsletters, journal)	\$2,550.00	\$1,500.00
Total Current Liabilities	\$7,312	\$4,545

Rare Bird report: March – May 2011

British Columbia

from North American Birds

by Chris Charlesworth



After the heavy snowfalls of late winter, March and April ended up on the cool and dry side throughout much of British Columbia. The air flow changed to easterly in May, which brought copious amounts of rain to the interior. Temperatures climbed, grudgingly, toward seasonal norms by the end of the period.

Waterfowl Through Raptors

An unusually large flock of 21 Greater White-fronted Geese was noted in the bay at Salmon Arm 1 May (Geoff Styles et al.). Also unusual for the interior of the province, a flock of 30 Snow Geese was observed over Lake Country 28 Mar (Dean O'Dea, Ann Gibson). At Creston, Duck L. hosted a Ross's Goose 10-15 May (LvD, et al.). The usual smattering of reports of Eurasian Wigeon came from the interior of the province, where they are rare but annual visitors. A male was at Creston 17 Mar (LvD), and another was in the Okanagan Valley at Robert L. in Kelowna 15 Mar (CC). At Penticton, a male was with American Wigeon on a golf course 19 Mar (RCa), and another was at Beaver Ranch Flats in the Nicola Valley 21 Mar (RHo). In the W. Kootenay, a male visited Wasa 24 Mar (RH), and another was at Nakusp 13 Apr (GsD). On Vancouver I., a male Eurasian Teal was seen in farm country near Victoria 13 Mar-2 April (JG). At Talta Pond in the Cariboo, a male **Tufted Duck** was a great find 31 May (Avery Bartels). A survey of the Salmo R. in the W. Kootenay

produced 10 Harlequin Ducks 1 May (Michael McMann). Surf Scoters are rare visitors to the Okanagan, so sightings of 2 off Kelowna (Gwynneth Wilson) 2 at Vaseux L. (RC), both on 17 May, were of note.

A juv. **Short-tailed Albatross** was photographed 20km off Vancouver I., near Ucluelet 8 Mar (Barie Hotchkiss). During a cruise off the B.C. coast, observers counted 11 Murphy's Petrels and 1 Mottled Petrel on 9 & 10 May (MT, ST). Locally rare, a Double-crested Cormorant visited Scout Island Marsh in Williams L. 14 Apr (Kris Andrews). At Tofino, a Great Egret lingered 18-24 Apr (AD et al.), where a much rarer Snowy Egret was seen 20-22 May (Ralph Crombie, AD et al.). At Cattle Egret, very rare in the spring, flew over Robert L., Kelowna 31 May (Pirmin Nietlisbach). An apparent first for coastal British Columbia, an ad. light-morph **Ferruginous Hawk** was photographed at Chilliwack 15 Apr (RT). An ad. Swainson's Hawk was at Colony Farm in Port Coquitlam 14 May (David Schutz). In the Okanagan, a Broad-winged Hawk sailed over the Agricultural Research Station in Summerland 9 May (LN).



This second-cycle Iceland Gull was seen by many during its lengthy stay (here 6 March 2011) at Esquimalt Lagoon near Victoria, BC. Photograph by Robin Robinson.

Gulls Through Shorebirds

Rare but annual in recent years, an ad. Iceland Gull of the *kumlieni* subspecies was at Robert L., Kelowna 14 Mar (CC). On Vancouver I., a second-cycle Iceland Gull remained at Esquimalt Lagoon through at least 6 Mar (Robin Robinson). Also increasing in frequency in British Columbia, an ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull graced Creston 17 & 19 Mar (LvD), with another at Salmon Arm 11 & 14 Mar (TH). Rare anywhere away from the immediate coast, an ad. Sabine's Gull was a nice find at Harrison L. in the Fraser Valley 23 May (RT). At Iona in Richmond, a Black Tern hung around 15-18 May (MT, ST et al.). An American Avocet turned up at Kaslo in the W. Kootenay 17 Apr (Dirk Pidcock); in the same region, 2 were at Columbia L. 21 Apr (Elaine Doran) and 5 at Windermere 17 May (RH). On Vancouver I., an avocet

lingered at the Tofino Mudflats 19-24 Apr (Randy Churchill, AD et al.). Now an annual spring visitor, a Black-necked Stilt was at Duck L., Creston 12 May (*fide* LvD). Two Black-necked Stilts were at Chilliwack 11 May at Prairie Central (Gord Gadsen et al.). Fairly rare anywhere along the coast, a Willet visited Saanichton Spit near Victoria 27 May (JG). A very rare migrant through the interior, an ad. **Hudsonian Godwit** was a fantastic find at Separation L. near Kamloops 3-5 May (Glenn Dreger et al.). At Boundary Bay near Vancouver, an ad. Bartailed Godwit was noted 8 & 10 May (Mike Tabak, John Tabak). A casual migrant in the interior, an ad. Dunlin was at Robert L., Kelowna 16-17 Apr (Ian Walker, CC et al.).

Owls Through Finches

The long-staying Northern Hawk Owl remained on Westham I., Ladner through at least 7 Mar (Pete Davidson, m.ob.). In the Kootenays, one was reported at the Whitewater Ski Area near Nelson 3 Apr (Steve Ogle). A male **Costa's Hummingbird**, first reported at a feeder in Vancouver in Jun 2010, was last reported 8 Apr (BS)! Rare in the Interior Wet Belt, a Lewis's Woodpecker was a good find at Lardeau in the W. Kootenay 22 May (MJ). On Vancouver I., where Lewis's Woodpecker is also a rarity, one was at Tower Pt., Metchosin 9 May (David Allinson). A Red-naped Sapsucker at Camosun Bog in Vancouver, where this species is casual, was seen 24-27 Apr (Christine Adkins). One of the most exciting finds of the period, a **Lesser Nighthawk** was found and photographed at Whiffen Spit, Sooke on s. Vancouver I. 28 May (JG, JK), the 3rd record for British Columbia.

Rare anywhere w. of the Rocky Mts., an Eastern Phoebe was at Serpentine Fen, Surrey 13 May (Jo Ann Mackenzie). Reports of Black Phoebe in s. coastal British Columbia are becoming somewhat frequent with one at Jericho Park, Vancouver 27-28 Apr (Brian Stech et al.) and one at Burnaby 8-9 May (Neil Hughes et al.). Clark's Nutcrackers were seen in unprecedented numbers in low-elevation valleys in the W. Kootenay this spring, with 50 at Lardeau 5 Apr (MJ) and 45 at Nelson 22 Apr (Paul Prappas). Casual on Vancouver I., a Black-billed Magpie made a fine find near Victoria at Happy Valley 3 May (Agnes Lynn et al.). The Western Scrub-Jay, now present for well over a year at Maple Ridge, remained throughout the period (Roger Craik); other singles were at Strathcona Park 4 Mar (Quentin Brown) and Terra Nova 10 May (Les Lee), both locations in the Vancouver area. Increasing but still rare in the Okanagan, a Bewick's Wren was along the Okanagan R., n. of Osoyoos 2 Mar (DB et al.). A Northern Mockingbird graced Hastings Flats near Victoria 17 Apr (JG). A Sage Thrasher was at Duck L., Creston 15 Apr (LvD); this species is casual anywhere in the province away from the South Okanagan. As usual, many reports of Mountain Bluebirds came in from across the s. half of Vancouver Island. A first for the Okanagan, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found and photographed at Keremeos 21 May (Chris McDonald).

At Penticton, a Tennessee Warbler was along the Esplanade Trails 12 May (RC); another was at the Summerland Gardens 18 May (Hank & Carolyn Scarth). A singing male Hermit Warbler near Powell River 29 May (DB) appeared to be pure. North of Golden at the Bush Arm of Kinbasket L., 2 Cape May Warblers were of note 28 May (RC et al.). A Magnolia Warbler at the Reifel Refuge in Ladner 24 Apr (BS) was both early and rare. Stray Palm Warblers were noted at Queen Elizabeth Park, Vancouver 21 May (Jason Jones) and at Swan L., Victoria 24 Apr (*fide* Chris Saunders). An imm. Harris's Sparrow at Mirror L., near Kaslo 9 May was a nice surprise (Lorna Surina), as did another at the Penticton Airport 15 May (LN). A male Rosebreasted Grosbeak visited a



British Columbia's third record of Lesser Nighthawk came from Whiffen Spit near Sooke on Vancouver Island 28 May 2011. The bird was observed and photographed in the late afternoon but was not seen again. Photograph by Jeremy Gatten.

feeder at Lardeau in the W. Kootenay 13 May (MJ). Also in the W. Kootenay, a lucky observer had up to 100 Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches at Rosebud L. (Shirley Coffin). Very rare in the Okanagan, a Purple Finch was in riparian woods along the Okanagan R. 6 Mar (RC). Lesser Goldfinches seem to be expanding northward in the Pacific Northwest, so singles at Pt. Grey, Vancouver 11 Mar and 10 Apr (Stephen Forgacs) and another at a feeder in Sooke 30 Apr-3 May (Jeremy Kimm, m.ob.) were somewhat anticipated.

Cited observers: Doug Brown, Richard Cannings (RCa), Russell Cannings, Chris Charlesworth, Gary S. Davidson, Adrian Dorst, Jeremy Gatten, Nathan Hentze, Ted Hillary, Randy Hopkins, Rick Howie (RHo), Marlene Johnston, Jeremy Kimm, Mike McGrenere, Laure Neish, Brian Self, Mike Toochin, Rick Toochin, Sharon Toochin, Linda Van Damme.

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Taiwan for BCFO Members

2012, March 14–28: 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 Taiwan endemic species is now 23,
according to ***The Clements Checklist of Bird of the World,***
6th edition, updated to Dec. 2010.

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

GROUP SIZE: 3–8, with 2 leaders, Simon Liao and Jo Ann MacKenzie

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Good birds, good food, good friends!

Information about Christmas Bird
Counts – count areas, dates,
coordinator names and their contact
information – is available on the
BCFO website at
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